

Daily Current Affairs





6

The Hindu



1

**PIB, PRS & Other
newspaper**



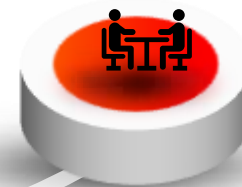
3

**The Indian
Express**



0

Jansatta



2

**Financial
Express**



Download class24



PDF



10 MCQ QUIZ

Always leave things
better than you found
them...especially people.
-Henry Cloud



Complete **Current Affairs 2025–2026**

By Bhunesh Sir

Relevant For Exams By

UPSC Prelims, PSC, SSC, Banking, Railway, Defence, EPFO, IB Among Others

What you'll get

- ✓ **From January 2025 to March 2026**
- ✓ **20 high-priority topics**

Price – 999/-



Class24

Step 1

Welcome to



Mobile No.

Login

Need Help?



Step 2



Hi, Abhijeet Kumar Singh

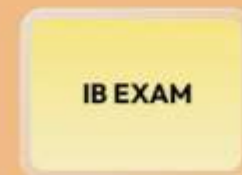


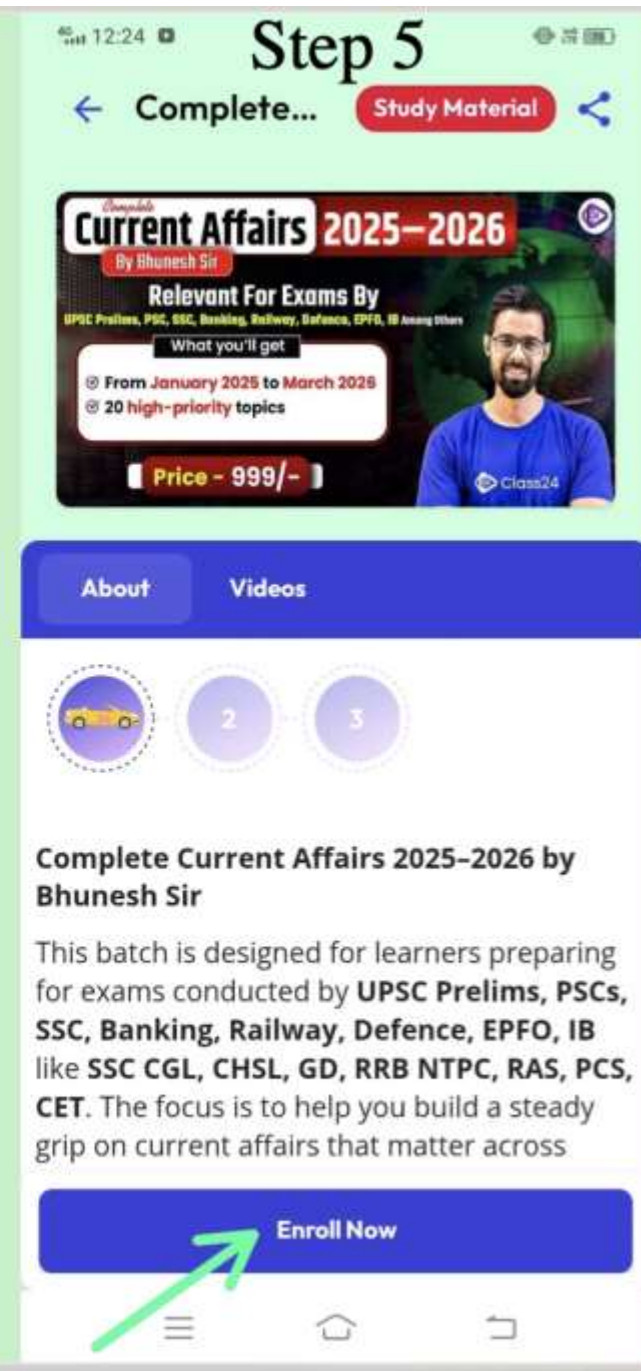
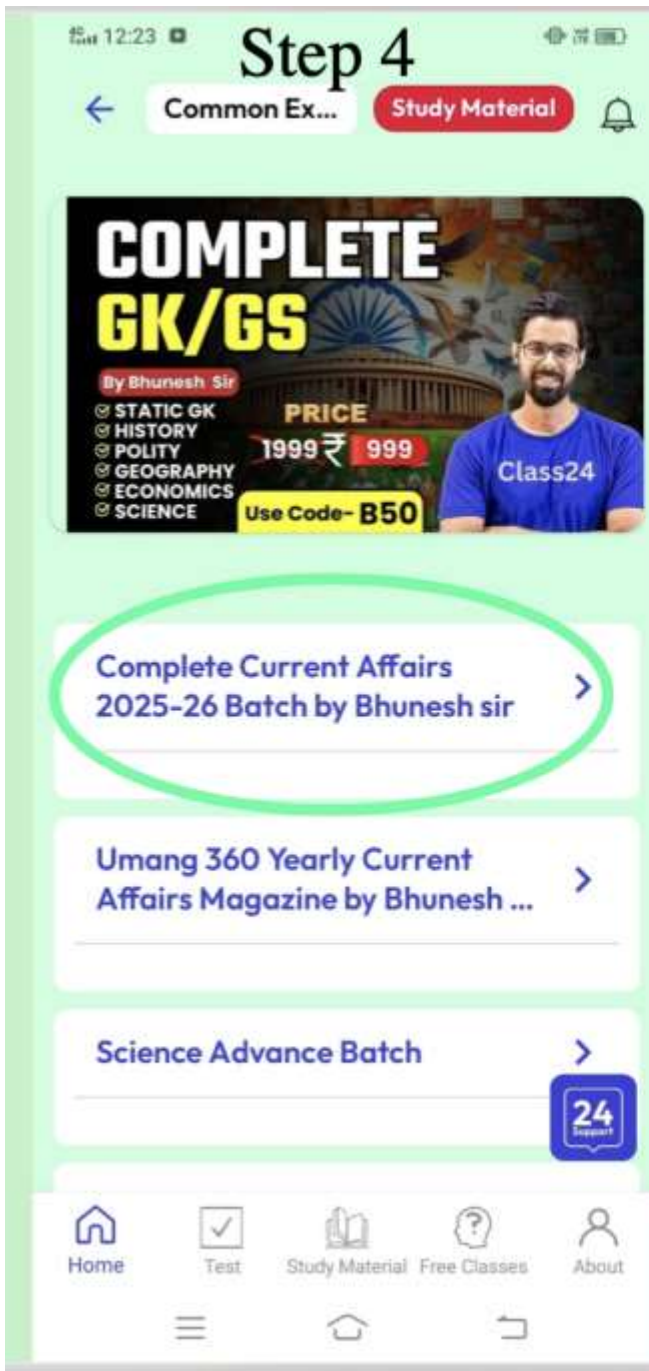
Categories



Step 3

← GOVT. EXAMS







ACTOR RAPE CASE
Convicts get 20-year rigorous jail term
NEWS • PAGE 3



CONGRESS VETERAN
Former Minister Shivraj Patil passes away
NEWS • PAGE 2



PUBLICATION OF ARTICLES
Never write on anything sub judice, CJJ advises
NEWS • PAGE 2



SHRIMANTULAM FINE
Party that took a tragic turn
The incident brings back concerns over unregulated tourism
GROUND ZERO • PAGE 7



ALL SET
Messi's GOAT Tour of India from today
SPORT • PAGE 14

NEARBY



9 dead, 10 injured as bus falls into gorge in A.P.

CHENNAI
Nine tourists died on the spot while ten survived with severe injuries, when a private travel bus with 37 people on board fell into a gorge in the forest of Papiyandu National Park near Alwar, Tamil Nadu, on Friday. A rescue operation is under way.

IndGo faces 4 flight operations inspectors ousted

NEW DELHI
The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has sacked four flight operations inspectors responsible for overseeing IndGo's operations and preparations to implement the new rules for pilot rest and duty limits, a **PAGE 8**

Ex-servicemen to fill 5,000 railway pointsmen posts

CHENNAI
Facing an acute manpower crunch, the Indian Railways has decided to recruit ex-servicemen as pointsmen across its network. The Railway Board has approved the engagement of 5,000 ex-servicemen on a contractual basis, a **PAGE 8**

'Fresh Epstein estate photos feature Trump'

WASHINGTON
Democrats on a congressional oversight panel released 19 new images from the estate of the late convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein on Friday, including photos of new U.S. President Donald Trump. Mr. Trump is featured in five of 19 photos shared, a **PAGE 12**

Retail inflation moves up marginally to 0.7% in Nov.

Inflation has slowed in seven of the first eight months of the financial year; decline in food prices offsets marginal acceleration in fuel inflation; prices in housing segment stay virtually unchanged

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Retail inflation in India quickened marginally to 0.7% in November 2025, up from the historic low of 0.25% in October 2025, with a continued contraction in food prices offsetting a marginal acceleration in fuel inflation. November's inflation rate is the second lowest ever recorded in the current series of the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Inflation as measured by the CPI, for which the latest data was released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation on Friday, has slowed in seven of the first eight months of this financial year.

The food and beverages

Marginal rise

Retail inflation in India picked up in November 2025, rising from October's record low of 0.25%



category saw prices contract by 0.1% in November 2025, as compared to a high base of 8.2% in the month of last year, and a contraction of 3.7% in October 2025.

"The factors driving inflation downwards have been the same: base effect

tempered sharp increases through the lagged number was down to 7.9%. Mustard and coconut oil were the main drivers of inflation here."

The contraction in food prices offset the impact of a quickening in fuel inflation to 2.3% in November 2025, compared to 2% in October, and a contraction of 1.8% in November of last year. Inflation in the non-food, alcoholic, and tobacco category quickened marginally in November 2025 to 2% from 2.5% in October.

The clothing and footwear category saw inflation ease marginally to 1.8% from 1.7%.

Inflation in the housing category remained virtually unchanged at 2.95% in November 2025 as compared to 2.95% in October.

Game on



Right news: Grandmaster R. Pragasam plays with schoolchildren during a chess championship organised at the District Sports Club in Dhulevi, Mumbai. (Saswari, Vojas)

Former BJP MLA Guttedar, son named prime accused in Aland voter fraud case

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj
BENGALURU

Former BJP MLA Subhash Guttedar and his son Harishandha Guttedar have been named as the prime accused in the chargesheet filed by the Karnataka police special investigation team (SIT) that is probing voter fraud in the Aland constituency ahead of the 2025 Assembly election in the State.

The alleged fraud involved forging forms to delete the names of voters whom they suspected would vote for Mr. Guttedar's opponent, the chargesheet said, adding that they had marked such voters on the electoral rolls. When the SIT raided multiple premises linked to the Guttedars, they had burnt and destroyed evidence in Aland, the SIT alleged in the chargesheet.

Mr. Pasha was paid ₹80 for every forged Form 7 application his firm made to delete a voter from the list without their knowledge, the chargesheet alleged. The 25,000-plus pages of the chargesheet include several technical pieces of evidence, including the money trail between the Guttedars and Mr. Pasha's firm, sources said.

On September 7, 2025, the SIT reported that the probe into the case had hit a roadblock as the Election Commission (EC) was not sharing key technical data with investigators. Following this, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi held a press conference in the State government formed an SIT to probe the matter, led by Additional Director General of Police B.K. Singh.

"More to follow" sources in the SIT said this was only the first chargesheet and more would follow as and when the EC provided the requested data. The SIT is likely to approach the court, seeking directions to the EC for the same.

Mr. Guttedar, a four-time MLA from Aland, was contesting against B.K. Padi of the Congress, then a constituency MP, from the constituency. Mr. Guttedar won the seat in 2018 by a narrow margin of 607 votes.

The Guttedars hired Akram Pasha, who ran a call



Former BJP MLA Subhash Guttedar and his son Harishandha Guttedar both have secured anticipatory bail, his reports

centre-like firm in Kalaburagi, to target and delete the names of voters whom they suspected would vote for Mr. Guttedar's opponent, the chargesheet said, adding that they had marked such voters on the electoral rolls. When the SIT raided multiple premises linked to the Guttedars, they had burnt and destroyed evidence in Aland, the SIT alleged in the chargesheet.

Mr. Pasha was paid ₹80 for every forged Form 7 application his firm made to delete a voter from the list without their knowledge, the chargesheet alleged. The 25,000-plus pages of the chargesheet include several technical pieces of evidence, including the money trail between the Guttedars and Mr. Pasha's firm, sources said.

On September 7, 2025, the SIT reported that the probe into the case had hit a roadblock as the Election Commission (EC) was not sharing key technical data with investigators. Following this, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi held a press conference in the State government formed an SIT to probe the matter, led by Additional Director General of Police B.K. Singh.

"More to follow" sources in the SIT said this was only the first chargesheet and more would follow as and when the EC provided the requested data. The SIT is likely to approach the court, seeking directions to the EC for the same.

Mr. Guttedar, a four-time MLA from Aland, was contesting against B.K. Padi of the Congress, then a constituency MP, from the constituency. Mr. Guttedar won the seat in 2018 by a narrow margin of 607 votes.

The Guttedars hired Akram Pasha, who ran a call



Former BJP MLA Subhash Guttedar and his son Harishandha Guttedar both have secured anticipatory bail, his reports

centre-like firm in Kalaburagi, to target and delete the names of voters whom they suspected would vote for Mr. Guttedar's opponent, the chargesheet said, adding that they had marked such voters on the electoral rolls. When the SIT raided multiple premises linked to the Guttedars, they had burnt and destroyed evidence in Aland, the SIT alleged in the chargesheet.

Mr. Pasha was paid ₹80 for every forged Form 7 application his firm made to delete a voter from the list without their knowledge, the chargesheet alleged. The 25,000-plus pages of the chargesheet include several technical pieces of evidence, including the money trail between the Guttedars and Mr. Pasha's firm, sources said.

On September 7, 2025, the SIT reported that the probe into the case had hit a roadblock as the Election Commission (EC) was not sharing key technical data with investigators. Following this, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi held a press conference in the State government formed an SIT to probe the matter, led by Additional Director General of Police B.K. Singh.

"More to follow" sources in the SIT said this was only the first chargesheet and more would follow as and when the EC provided the requested data. The SIT is likely to approach the court, seeking directions to the EC for the same.

Mr. Guttedar, a four-time MLA from Aland, was contesting against B.K. Padi of the Congress, then a constituency MP, from the constituency. Mr. Guttedar won the seat in 2018 by a narrow margin of 607 votes.

The Guttedars hired Akram Pasha, who ran a call

centre-like firm in Kalaburagi, to target and delete the names of voters whom they suspected would vote for Mr. Guttedar's opponent, the chargesheet said, adding that they had marked such voters on the electoral rolls. When the SIT raided multiple premises linked to the Guttedars, they had burnt and destroyed evidence in Aland, the SIT alleged in the chargesheet.

Mr. Pasha was paid ₹80 for every forged Form 7 application his firm made to delete a voter from the list without their knowledge, the chargesheet alleged. The 25,000-plus pages of the chargesheet include several technical pieces of evidence, including the money trail between the Guttedars and Mr. Pasha's firm, sources said.

On September 7, 2025, the SIT reported that the probe into the case had hit a roadblock as the Election Commission (EC) was not sharing key technical data with investigators. Following this, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi held a press conference in the State government formed an SIT to probe the matter, led by Additional Director General of Police B.K. Singh.

"More to follow" sources in the SIT said this was only the first chargesheet and more would follow as and when the EC provided the requested data. The SIT is likely to approach the court, seeking directions to the EC for the same.

Mr. Guttedar, a four-time MLA from Aland, was contesting against B.K. Padi of the Congress, then a constituency MP, from the constituency. Mr. Guttedar won the seat in 2018 by a narrow margin of 607 votes.

The Guttedars hired Akram Pasha, who ran a call

centre-like firm in Kalaburagi, to target and delete the names of voters whom they suspected would vote for Mr. Guttedar's opponent, the chargesheet said, adding that they had marked such voters on the electoral rolls. When the SIT raided multiple premises linked to the Guttedars, they had burnt and destroyed evidence in Aland, the SIT alleged in the chargesheet.

Mr. Pasha was paid ₹80 for every forged Form 7 application his firm made to delete a voter from the list without their knowledge, the chargesheet alleged. The 25,000-plus pages of the chargesheet include several technical pieces of evidence, including the money trail between the Guttedars and Mr. Pasha's firm, sources said.

On September 7, 2025, the SIT reported that the probe into the case had hit a roadblock as the Election Commission (EC) was not sharing key technical data with investigators. Following this, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi held a press conference in the State government formed an SIT to probe the matter, led by Additional Director General of Police B.K. Singh.

"More to follow" sources in the SIT said this was only the first chargesheet and more would follow as and when the EC provided the requested data. The SIT is likely to approach the court, seeking directions to the EC for the same.

Mr. Guttedar, a four-time MLA from Aland, was contesting against B.K. Padi of the Congress, then a constituency MP, from the constituency. Mr. Guttedar won the seat in 2018 by a narrow margin of 607 votes.

The Guttedars hired Akram Pasha, who ran a call

centre-like firm in Kalaburagi, to target and delete the names of voters whom they suspected would vote for Mr. Guttedar's opponent, the chargesheet said, adding that they had marked such voters on the electoral rolls. When the SIT raided multiple premises linked to the Guttedars, they had burnt and destroyed evidence in Aland, the SIT alleged in the chargesheet.

Mr. Pasha was paid ₹80 for every forged Form 7 application his firm made to delete a voter from the list without their knowledge, the chargesheet alleged. The 25,000-plus pages of the chargesheet include several technical pieces of evidence, including the money trail between the Guttedars and Mr. Pasha's firm, sources said.

Buzz on new Manipur govt. as BJP calls MLAs to Delhi

The Hindu Bureau
BANGALURU

The central leadership of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has summoned the party's Manipur MLAs to New Delhi for a meeting on December 14. The development coincided with President Droupadi Murmu's two-day visit to the State that concluded on Friday. "We have been called to review the situation and support. We are not aware of the agenda, but a discussion on forming a government is a possibility," former Chief Minister N. Biren Singh said at a function marking the observation of

The BJP, which has 32 seats, continues to command a majority in the 60-member State Assembly

the 86th Nupur Lal Day. Manipur has been under President's Rule since February 13, four days after Mr. Singh resigned as the Chief Minister.

The State has been scarred by ethnic clashes between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo people that broke out in May 2023, claiming more than 1,000 lives. State BJP president A. Sharda said the MLAs, in-

cluding seven belonging to the Kuki-Zo community, have been asked to attend the meeting.

The seven are among 10 Kuki-Zo MLAs who insist on "corporative administration" for the community before supporting any bid to form the government.

After the death of N. Keisho of the National People's Party, the 60-member Manipur Assembly has an effective strength of 58.

The BJP, which has 32 seats, continues to command a majority in the House.

Cabinet clears allotment of ₹11,718 cr. for Census 2027

Vinita Singh
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Friday approved the proposal for conducting Census 2027 at a cost of ₹11,718.24 crore, a government statement said. Unlike 2019, the statement does not mention a separate budgetary allocation for updating the National Population Register (NPR), which is the first step for the creation of a nationwide National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Full report on Census 2027

Centre likely to rebrand MGNREGS as 'Pujya Bapu Gramin Rozgar Yojana'

Subhash K. Nair
NEW DELHI

The government is likely to rebrand the long-running MGNREGS as 'Pujya Bapu Gramin Rozgar Yojana' (MGNREGS) during the winter session of Parliament, a government source said. The source said the government is likely to rebrand the long-running MGNREGS as 'Pujya Bapu Gramin Rozgar Yojana' (MGNREGS) during the winter session of Parliament, a government source said.



Flagship scheme: The average number of days of employment per household during the last five years is 50-55 days, source claims

The flagship scheme guarantees up to 100 days of employment to every rural household in every financial year to every household, where adults members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.



Flagship scheme: The average number of days of employment per household during the last five years is 50-55 days, source claims

The source also indicated that the government plans to increase this to 120 days as per a written answer by the Minister of State for Rural Development Kamlesh Pawar on Friday in

Rajya Sabha, the average number of days of employment per household during the last five years comes to 50-55 days.

In 2022, the government had appointed a panel headed by former Union Rural Development Secretary Anant Singh to review the scheme, especially the inter-state variations. The panel is likely to take into account the panel's recommendation, introducing exclusionary clauses based on economic indicators of a State.

The government is also likely to tweak the scheme's funding pattern.

Centre likely to rebrand MGNREGS as 'Pujya Bapu Gramin Rozgar Yojana'

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

The government is likely to introduce a Bill in the ongoing Winter Session of Parliament amending the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), changing the name of the flagship rural employment scheme to "Pujya Bapu Gramin Rozgar Yojana".

According to senior government functionaries, the amended Bill was cleared by the Union Cabinet in its meeting held on Friday. The original Bill passed by Parliament on August 25, 2005.



Flagship scheme: The average number of days of employment per household during the last five years is 50.35 days. ARUN KULKARNI

The flagship scheme guarantees up to 100 days of wage employment in every financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

The sources also indicated that the government plans to increase this to 125 days.

As per a written answer by the Minister of State for Rural Development Kamlesh Paswan on Friday in

Rajya Sabha, the average number of days of employment per household during the last five years comes to 50.35 days.

In 2022, the government had appointed a panel headed by former Union Rural Development Secretary Amarjeet Sinha to review the scheme, especially the inter-State variations. The amended Bill is likely to take into account the panel's recommendation, introducing exclusionary clauses based on economic indices of a State.

The government is also likely to tweak the scheme's funding pattern.

Topic	Details
Full Name	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005
Launched	2006 (Implemented in phases across districts)
Type of Act	Rights-based social security legislation guaranteeing wage employment
Objective	Provide 100 days of guaranteed wage employment to rural households willing to do unskilled manual work
Coverage	All rural districts in India
Eligibility	Any adult member of a rural household willing to do unskilled manual labour
Guarantee	100 days of wage employment per rural household per year
Proposed change (2024–25)	Increase to 125 days (as per govt. sources — from the news you provided)

Key Features	Demand-driven, Time-bound wage payments, Unemployment allowance if work not provided in 15 days
Work Types Allowed	Water conservation, drought proofing, irrigation canals, rural connectivity, land development, afforestation, flood control
Funding Pattern	Centre–State Shared Scheme • Central Govt: 100% wages for unskilled labour, 75% material cost • State Govt: Unemployment allowance, 25% material cost
Technology Used	• Geo-tagging • Aadhaar-enabled payments • National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS) App
UN Recognition	Considered one of the largest social security programmes globally

Wage Payment System	Aadhaar-based payments via DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer)
Gender Mandate	At least one-third workers must be women
Social Audit	Mandatory social audit by Gram Sabha
Important Institutions	Ministry of Rural Development, State Employment Guarantee Councils, Gram Panchayats implement the works
Recent Name Proposal	“Pujya Bapu Gramin Rozgar Yojana” (as per new Bill discussed in Parliament, 2025 news)
Average Days of Employment	50.35 days (average of last 5 years — from news article)
Major Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in rural poverty • Increased female labour participation • Important counter-cyclical tool during droughts & economic shocks • Creation of durable rural assets

Major Issues / Criticisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delay in wage payments • Corruption/leakages • Underfunding from Centre • Asset quality concerns • Aadhaar-payment failures • Caste-based exclusion in some states
Supreme Court Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely payment is a legal right • MGNREGA is a “lifeline for rural poor”
Important Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amarjeet Sinha Panel (2022) — Recommended exclusion based on state-specific economic indices • CAG audits on mismanagement
Convergence	Works converge with Swachh Bharat, PMAY-G, IWMP, NRLM, Jal Shakti Abhiyan
MGNREGA vs. MNREGA (UPSC Trick Point)	MGNREGA → After 2009, prefixed “Mahatma Gandhi”; both refer to same scheme
Latest Reforms Proposed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New regulatory law (VBSA type for education but similar approach for MGNREGA being considered) • Revised wage rates • Geo-tagging of assets via Bhuvan portal (ISRO) • NMMS app for attendance

1. What is happening?

EN: The government plans to amend the MGNREGA Act and rename the scheme as **“Pujya Bapu Gramin Rozgar Yojana”** during the Winter Session.

HI: सरकार एमजीएनरेगा अधिनियम में संशोधन कर योजना का नाम **“पूज्य बापू ग्रामीण रोज़गार योजना”** करने की योजना बना रही है।

2. Increase in guaranteed work days

EN: The proposed amendment aims to increase guaranteed employment from **100 days to 125 days** per rural household per year.

HI: प्रस्तावित संशोधन के अनुसार प्रति ग्रामीण परिवार को **100 दिनों से बढ़ाकर 125 दिनों** तक रोजगार गारंटी दी जाएगी।

3. Present performance of the scheme

EN: Despite the 100-day guarantee, the average employment provided in the last five years is only **50.35 days per household**.

HI: 100 दिन की गारंटी के बावजूद पिछले पाँच वर्षों में प्रति परिवार औसतन **50.35 दिन** ही रोजगार मिला है।

4. Amarjeet Sinha Committee (2022)

EN: A panel led by former Rural Development Secretary Amarjeet Sinha reviewed the scheme and suggested reforms, especially addressing inter-state disparities.

HI: पूर्व ग्रामीण विकास सचिव अमरजीत सिन्हा की अध्यक्षता में 2022 में गठित समिति ने योजना की समीक्षा की और राज्यों के बीच असमानताओं पर ध्यान देते हुए सुधार सुझाए।

5. Expected changes in the amended Bill

EN: The new Bill may introduce **exclusionary clauses linked to states' economic indices** and modify the implementation framework.

HI: नए विधेयक में राज्यों के आर्थिक सूचकांकों के आधार पर अपवर्जन प्रावधान और क्रियान्वयन ढांचे में बदलाव शामिल हो सकते हैं।

6. Funding pattern tweaks

EN: The government may revise the funding pattern between Centre and States for better targeting and efficiency.

HI: सरकार केंद्र और राज्यों के बीच फंडिंग पैटर्न में बदलाव ला सकती है ताकि लक्षित क्षेत्रों में बेहतर क्रियान्वयन हो सके।



Exam

Theme of Question

Verified Link



UPSC Prelims
2011

Eligibility under
MGNREGA

Already verified
earlier

CDS 2020


Objective NOT part of
MGNREGA

Already verified
earlier

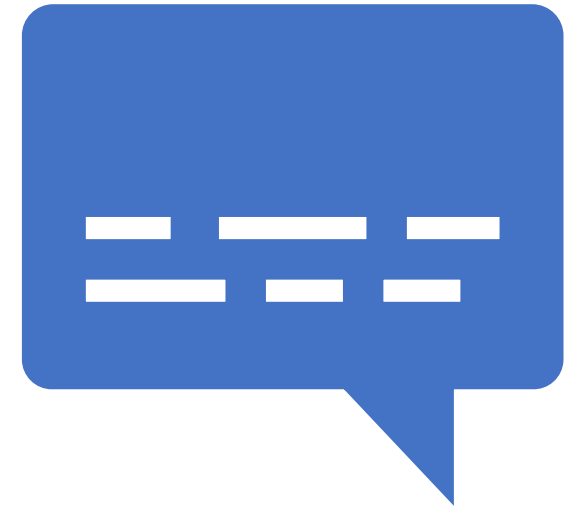
UP Board 2024

Question on
MGNREGA (full
form/features)

Already verified
earlier



- . With reference to the proposed “Pujya Bapu Gramin Rozgar Yojana”, consider the following statements:
- It renames the existing MGNREGA scheme.
- It proposes to increase guaranteed employment from 100 to 125 days.
- It converts MGNREGA from a demand-driven scheme to a fully Central Sector scheme.
- **Which of the above is/are correct?**
 - (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 2 and 3 only
 - (c) 1 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3



'Omission' of Kuki-Zo areas in President's Manipur visit gets flak

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Kuki-Zo organisations have resented the "omission" of Charachandpur and Kangpokpi districts from the itinerary of President Droupadi Murmu's two-day visit to Manipur, which concluded on Friday.

The Committee on Tribal Unity and other Manipuri groups said the President's visit "completely overlooked the suffering, trauma, and unresolved plight" of the internally displaced Kuki-Zo people.

The Zomi Council, the apex body of eight Manipuri tribes, said the tribal people in Charachandpur had looked forward to Ms. Murmu's visit, which could have contributed to healing the sufferings of the people of the state.

The Kuki Organisation for Human Rights Trust said the President's itinerary "celebrating Meitei historical resistance and triumph and inaugurating projects in Naga areas", was akin to

an institutionalised erasure of Kuki-Zo people.

The President began the second day of her Manipur visit by paying homage to the State's women warriors of the British colonial forces, during a ceremony marking the green flag of India.

Nagaj Lal refers to two women from Laitumkhrang and Imphal who were killed in the 1980s and 1990s in which Manipuri women resisted British colonial policies and asserted their rights and dignity.

Development projects
Later in the day, she attended a function at Senapati, the headquarters of the people in Charachandpur where she also inaugurated and laid foundation stones for developmental projects.

The hills and the Imphal valley have always complemented each other, like two sides of the same beautiful land," she said, adding that the President's visit was a continuous supporting the efforts for peace.

Former Home Minister Shriyraj Patil passes away at 90, tributes pour in

Starting his political career in the municipal council of Latur in Maharashtra, the Congress leader went on to occupy high constitutional offices, including that of Lok Sabha Speaker, Union Minister, Punjab Governor and Chandigarh Administrator

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Former Union Home Minister and Congress leader Shriyraj Patil, passed away at his home in Latur in Maharashtra on Friday morning following a brief period of illness.

He is survived by his son Shashank Patil, daughter-in-law Archana, a BJP leader, and two granddaughters.

President Droupadi Murmu condoled the loss of a prominent public figure who held several public offices.

Minister Narendra Modi took to social media platforms X to offer his condolences to the departed leader's family.

"Sacred by the passing of Shri Shriyraj Patil ji, he was an experienced leader, a statesman, an MLA, MP, Union Minister, Speaker of the Maharashtra



SHIRYRAJ PATIL (1932 - 2022)

Assembly as well as the Lok Sabha during his long years in public life," Mr. Modi said, adding, "He was a dedicated leader, committed to the welfare of society. I have had many interactions with him over the years, the most recent one being when he came to my residence a few months ago."

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge advised his close association with the former Home Minister Shriyraj Patil as a man of great integrity.

He was an honoured senior colleague with whom I shared a close bond, and many memories. A statesman of great dignity, Shri Patil

served the nation with distinction, holding key Constitutional offices and various responsibilities and contributing significantly to the nation's democratic institutions," Mr. Kharge said.

A pioneer found lost for the Congress party and for all who admired his integrity, his leadership and commitment to public service," he added.

Senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, in a post on X, said, "His dedication to public service and his contribution to the nation will always be remembered."

Home Minister Amit Shah also expressed his condolences and described Mr. Patil as "a man of vast knowledge and integrity."

Starting his political career as the head of the municipal council of Latur, Mr. Patil went on to occupy several high offices, including that of Lok Sabha Speaker. He served as the

10th Speaker of the Lok Sabha between 1991 and 1995. Before coming to the Lok Sabha, he had served as a legislator of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly in the early 1970s.

Controversy strikes
He served as the Union Home Minister from 2004 to 2008, a tenure that ended in a major controversy soon after the 26/11 terror attacks in Mumbai. Mr. Patil came under severe attack from the BJP-led opposition then for multiple changes of attire on a single day while inspecting the aftermath of the attacks in Mumbai. The Congress-led UPA government had to rescind him as the Home Minister as damage control.

Later, he was made Governor of Punjab and served as the Administrator of the Union Territory of Chandigarh between 2010 and 2015.

Prominent leaders from Assam join Congress

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prominent leaders from Assam joined the Congress on Friday in the presence of general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal.

Those who joined the party on Friday included former Minister Bhaskar Dasgupta, Ashok Kumar Roy Pradhan and Longkoi Toidi. Further, four other senior leaders - Birang Bora, Sanjay Kumar Sarma, Shakti Nagesh and Kuldeep Rajgopal - had joined the party.

Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi said that Assam had been facing serious problems of unemployment during the last ten years of the BJP rule as industries had shut down. "The only industry currently running in Assam is the industry of hate being operated by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma," he said.

2017 actor rape case: six convicts get 20-year rigorous imprisonment

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

The six convicts in the 2017 actor rape case were on Friday awarded imprisonment for 20 years each on two counts for gang rape (IPC 376 D) and criminal conspiracy (IPC 302 (b)) among other punishments.

However, all the punishments of the convicts will run concurrently and they will have to serve a jail term of 20 years. The number of days they were imprisoned during the pendency of the trial will be deducted from the 20-year jail term, the court announced.

Ernakulam Principal Sessions Judge Honey K. Varghese awarded the punishments for the convicts on Friday.

The convicts N.S. Sunil, alias 'Pudhu' Sunil, Marthi Manikandan, Vijesh, Rajin, and Pradeep were awarded the punishment after hearing them and

Vijesh Singh
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Friday approved the proposal for conducting Census of India 2027 at a cost of ₹11,718 crore, a government statement said.

Under 2020, the statement does not mention a separate budgetary allocation for updating the National Population Register (NPR), which is the first step for the creation of a countrywide National Register of Citizens (NRC).

In 2019, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved ₹1,941.25 crore for updating the NPR and ₹8,754.23 crore for conducting the Census of India 2021, which could not be conducted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

NPR, which was first collected in 2010 and updated in 2015 and already has a database of 10 crore residents, was to be updated with the first phase of Cen-



Officials conducting a pre-test exercise for Census 2027 in a suburban district of Uttar Pradesh.

sus in 2020. On July 29, the government informed the Lok Sabha that no decision has been taken to update the NPR during the forthcoming Census exercise.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah posted on X, "The outcome of the census 2027 will serve as the new compass for development, ensuring India's latest population data with more accuracy. The precision in data will accelerate Modi Ji's vision of delivering the benefits of good gov-

ernance and development to citizens of every demographic denomination, making the slogan of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' a grand reality of New India in the Amrit Kaal."

The government's statement on Friday said that the "largest administrative and statistical exercise in the world" will ensure that data are provided to Ministers in a "clean, machine-readable and actionable format" as part of the "Citizen-as-a-Service

(CaaS)' initiative.

It will be the first digital Census and the first to enumerate caste in independent India. "The current endeavour would be to make available the coming Census data at the shortest possible time across the country. It will ensure so be made to disseminate Census results with more customised specificity and drive tools," the statement said.

The government said that a nearly 10,000-strong technical workforce will be engaged for about 550 days at the local level.

The enumeration, generally government teachers and appointed by the state governments, will be doing the field work of Census in addition to their regular duties.

Data will be collected using mobile applications and a dedicated portal, namely Census Management and Monitoring system, has been developed for monitoring the Census process in real time.

Never write on anything sub judice, says CJI Kant

Rishinadas Rameshwar
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Friday advised against the publication of articles on *sub judice* cases which may create an "impression" outside, while at the same time adding that judges are immune to narratives aimed to generate publicity and drive opinion.

"Never write on anything *sub judice*. Why should one create an impression? You can be assured that we do not accept 'pleadings' from outside the courtroom," Chief Justice Kant addressed Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta orally.

Mr. Mehta was indignant about the "concurrent narrative" building that certain "taboos" engage in about *sub judice* cases. These articles, the law officer said, inevitably appear proximate to the day of the court hearing.

The verbal exchange came against the backdrop of a newspaper article on Friday about a pregnant woman, Sumati Khattun, and her eight-year-old son, who were pulled into a bus by the court's judge. The court's judge saw the Centre arrange the return of the mother and son to India on "humanitarian grounds".

Senior advocate Kapil



Justice Surya Kant

Sibal, appearing for the state, was heard which is currently taking care of the mother and son, tried to persuade the court that commentary on judicial orders and proceedings were part of the public discourse globally.

But, half-baked, truth and distorted facts given to ill-informed people through their writing and commenting affect public perception," Chief Justice Kant observed.

Justice Jayaprakash Narayan, on the bench, said the judges were "completely immune to publicity" as long as these narratives did not affect the lives of individuals.

Chief Justice Kant remarked that writers ought to watch the propriety of judgment by the court, and then engage in constructive criticism. This way, the court could also make improvements in justice administration.

Mr. Mehta found nothing wrong in clear, level-headed reporting. "Reporting a matter, nothing wrong with that, because you are bringing to the public domain that matter," he explained.

But Mr. Sibal said commentary was part of free speech so long as they did not impugn motives.

Nine killed, 10 injured as bus falls into gorge in A.P.

T. Anand Naidu
CHITTOOR

Nine tourists died on the spot while ten survived with severe injuries, when a private travel bus carrying 37 people on board fell into a gorge in the forest of Papadonda National Park of Aluri Satharana Raju district, Andhra Pradesh, on Friday.

The accident occurred reportedly due to poor visibility at around 4 a.m. The bus was returning from Araku Valley to Bhadrachalam. "Nine tourists died on the spot, four survived and the driver's lack of knowledge of the route caused the accident," the district official said.

The accident occurred reportedly due to poor visibility at around 4 a.m. The bus was returning from Araku Valley to Bhadrachalam. "Nine tourists died on the spot, four survived and the driver's lack of knowledge of the route caused the accident," the district official said.

Of the nine deceased, five are women. The bodies have been sent to the Government Area Hospital in Chittoor for autopsy. The Morthugudem police station is investigating the case.



Passengers being rescued from the bus after it fell into a gorge in Papadonda National Park on Friday. (OFFICIAL ARRANGEMENT)

have registered a case and an investigation is on.

Ex gratia of ₹5 lakh
The government has announced an ex gratia of ₹5 lakh to the families of the deceased. The district official said, "A decision has been taken to restrict vehicular movements along the ghats roads in ASR district between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. during the winter months. The bus was carrying 37 people, including 10 children, 10 adults, and 10 children."

ASH District Collector A.S. Prasad Kumar is monitoring the healthcare services being extended to the survivors.

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu expressed shock and asked the officials to ensure the best healthcare services to the survivors. He conveyed his deep condolences to the bereaved families.

Describing the incident as a deeply distressing, Deputy Chief Minister E. Pavan Kalyan also offered condolences to the victims' families. CPM State Secretary V. Rishinadas Rameshwar is monitoring the healthcare services being extended to the survivors.

Four charged with murder in Zubeen death case

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Assam's Special Investigation Team (SIT) on Friday charged four people with the murder of singer Zubeen Garg.

The charged were filed at a local court in Guwahati after three months of investigation into Garg's death while visiting an island in Singapore on September 19. The SIT had a Special Public Prosecutor General of Police (SPPG), Mouna Prasad, to conduct the investigation.

The four accused - NRP organizer Rishinadas Rameshwar, Garg's brother-in-law, Sathish Sharma, bandmate Shubhendra Gogoi, and co-singer Anirudh Mahanta have been charged under 302B (common murder), 302 (common intention), 302A (common conspiracy), among other sections.

The four accused - NRP organizer Rishinadas Rameshwar, Garg's brother-in-law, Sathish Sharma, bandmate Shubhendra Gogoi, and co-singer Anirudh Mahanta have been charged under 302B (common murder), 302 (common intention), 302A (common conspiracy), among other sections.

Census 2027 to cost ₹11,718 crore, no separate budget earmarked for NPR

Vijaita Singh

NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Friday approved the proposal for conducting Census of India 2027 at a cost of ₹11,718.24 crore, a government statement said.

Unlike 2019, the statement does not mention a separate budgetary allocation for updating the National Population Register (NPR), which is the first step for the creation of a countrywide National Register of Citizens (NRC).

In 2019, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved ₹3,941.35 crore for updating the NPR and ₹8,754.23 crore for conducting the Census of India 2021, which could not be conducted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

NPR, which was first collected in 2010 and updated in 2015 and already has a database of 119 crore residents, was to be updated with the first phase of Cen-



Officials conducting a pre-test exercise for Census 2027 in Bulandshahr district of Uttar Pradesh. R.V. MOORTHY

sus in 2020. On July 29, the government informed the Lok Sabha that no decision has been taken to update the NPR during the forthcoming Census exercise.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah posted on X, "The outcome of the Census 2027 will serve as the new compass for development, mirroring India's latest population data with more accuracy. The precision in data will accelerate Modi Ji's vision of delivering the benefits of good go-

vernance and development to citizens of every demographic denomination, making the slogan of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' a grand reality of New India in the Amrit Kaal."

The government's statement on Friday said that the "largest administrative and statistical exercise in the world" will ensure that data are provided to Ministries in a "clean, machine-readable and actionable format" as part of the "Census-as-a-Service

(CaaS)" initiative.

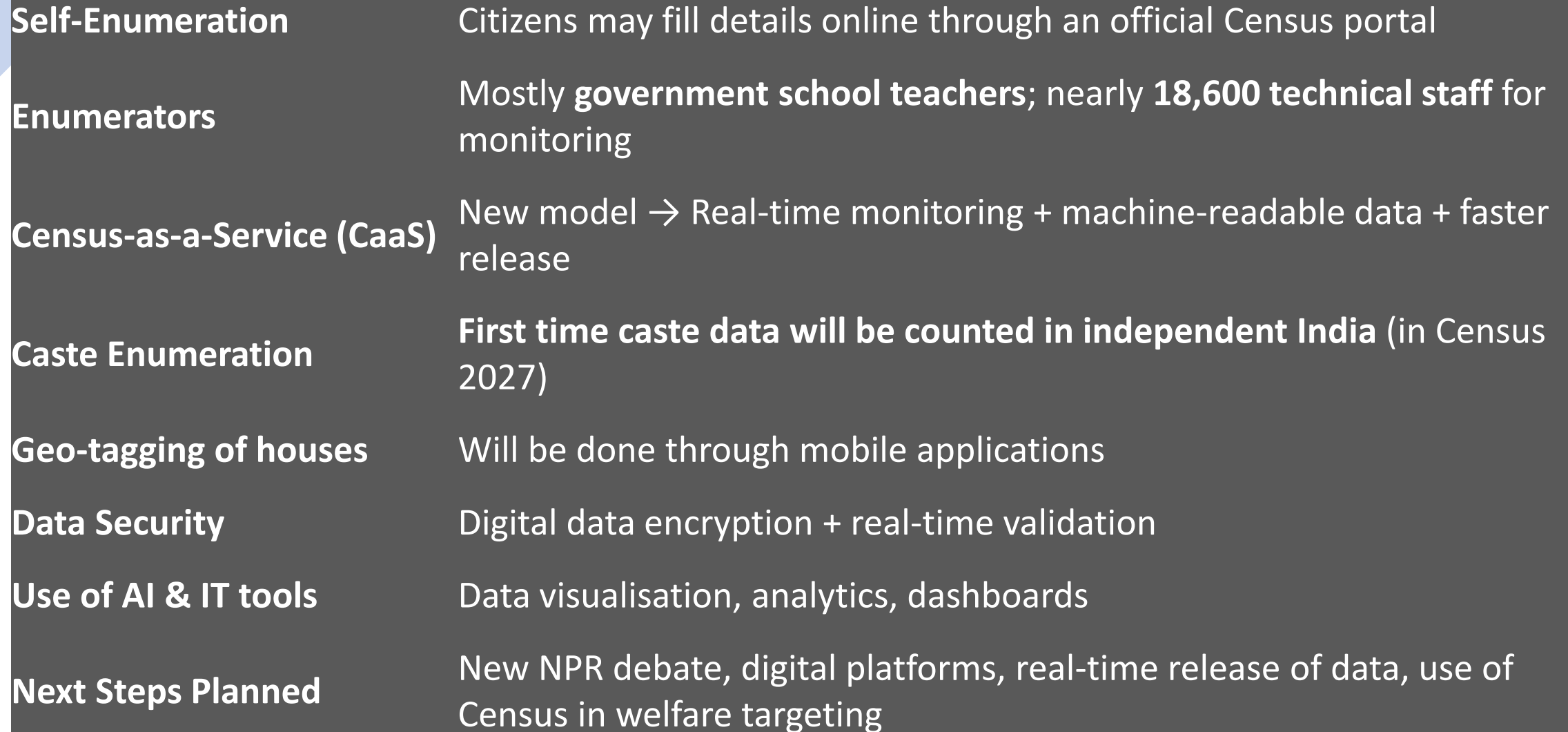
This will be the first digital Census and the first to enumerate caste in independent India. "The current endeavour would be to make available the coming Census data at the shortest possible time across the country. Efforts will also be made to disseminate Census results with more customised visualisation tools," the statement said.

The government said that a nearly 18,600-strong technical workforce will be engaged for about 550 days at the local level.

"The enumerators, generally government teachers and appointed by the State governments, will be doing the field work of Census in addition to their regular duties," it said.

Data will be collected using mobile applications and a dedicated portal, namely Census Management and Monitoring System, has been developed for monitoring the Census process in real time.

Topic	Details
First Census in India	1872 (non-synchronous), first synchronous Census in 1881
Constitutional / Legal Basis	Conducted under Census Act, 1948 (NOT a constitutional mandate)
Frequency	Every 10 years
Last Completed Census	2011 Census
Census 2021 Status	Postponed due to COVID-19 → now Census 2027
Latest Approved Census	Census 2027 , cost: ₹11,718 crore
Conducting Authority	Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, under Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)
Nature of Census	Statutory , comprehensive demographic enumeration
Purpose	Population data, planning, welfare schemes, delimitation (but political delimitation currently frozen till 2026), policy making
Census Type	De facto (where they are present) + De jure (usual residence)
Data Collected	Population, age, sex, literacy, migration, disability, language, religion, occupation, housing, assets, drinking water, sanitation etc.
Two Main Schedules	1) House-listing & Housing Census 2) Population Enumeration
2027 Census Key Feature	India's first fully digital Census (mobile app + portal)
Total Cost of Census 2011	Around ₹2,200 crore
Total Cost of Census 2027	₹11,718 crore approved in 2024
UN Involvement	India follows UN Principles of Census (completeness, accuracy, confidentiality)



Self-Enumeration	Citizens may fill details online through an official Census portal
Enumerators	Mostly government school teachers ; nearly 18,600 technical staff for monitoring
Census-as-a-Service (CaaS)	New model → Real-time monitoring + machine-readable data + faster release
Caste Enumeration	First time caste data will be counted in independent India (in Census 2027)
Geo-tagging of houses	Will be done through mobile applications
Data Security	Digital data encryption + real-time validation
Use of AI & IT tools	Data visualisation, analytics, dashboards
Next Steps Planned	New NPR debate, digital platforms, real-time release of data, use of Census in welfare targeting

Delimitation Use	Census data used for delimitation, but political delimitation frozen till 2026 by 84th Constitutional Amendment
Citizenship Link	No direct link between Census and citizenship
Census vs Sample Survey	Census → Complete enumeration Sample Survey → Partial sample-based
India's Census Rank Globally	Largest administrative & statistical exercise in the world
Issues in Past Census	Delay in data release, political controversy, outdated questions, religious polarization concerns, migration under-reporting
Why 2021 Census delayed?	COVID-19 pandemic + administrative issues + digital transition

1. Cabinet approves Census 2027 budget

EN: The Union Cabinet approved the proposal to conduct **Census of India 2027** at a total cost of **₹11,718.24 crore**.

HI: केंद्र सरकार ने भारत की जनगणना 2027 करने के प्रस्ताव को ₹11,718.24 करोड़ की लागत के साथ मंजूरी दे दी।

2. No separate allocation for NPR update

EN: Unlike 2019, this time the government statement **does not mention a separate budget** for updating the **National Population Register (NPR)**.

HI: 2019 के विपरीत, इस बार सरकार के बयान में राष्ट्रीय जनसंख्या रजिस्टर (NPR) के अद्यतन के लिए अलग बजट का उल्लेख नहीं है।

3. NPR background and earlier allocations

EN: In 2019, the Cabinet had approved **₹3,941 crore** for updating NPR and **₹8,754 crore** for Census 2021, but it was postponed due to COVID-19.

HI: 2019 में NPR अद्यतन के लिए ₹3,941 करोड़ और जनगणना 2021 के लिए ₹8,754 करोड़ की मंजूरी दी गई थी, लेकिन COVID-19 के कारण इसे टाल दिया गया।

4. NPR was last updated in 2015

EN: NPR (first created in 2010, updated in 2015) contains data of **119 crore residents** and was scheduled for update along with Census 2020.

HI: NPR (पहली बार 2010 में बना, 2015 में अपडेट) में **119 करोड़ निवासियों** का डेटा है और इसे जनगणना 2020 के साथ अपडेट होना था।

5. Government clarified no NPR decision in 2023

EN: In July 2023, the government informed Parliament that **no decision** had been taken to update NPR during the upcoming Census.

HI: जुलाई 2023 में सरकार ने संसद को बताया कि आगामी जनगणना के साथ **NPR को अपडेट करने का कोई निर्णय नहीं** लिया गया है।

6. First digital Census in India

EN: Census 2027 will be **India's first digital Census**, collecting data through **mobile applications** and a dedicated portal (Census Management and Monitoring System).

HI: जनगणना 2027 भारत की पहली डिजिटल जनगणना होगी, जिसमें डेटा **मोबाइल एप्लिकेशन** और एक विशेष पोर्टल के माध्यम से एकत्र किया जाएगा।

7. First Census to enumerate caste in independent India

EN: This will also be the first Census in independent India to enumerate caste.

HI: यह स्वतंत्र भारत में पहली बार जाति की गणना करने वाली जनगणना होगी।

8. Census-as-a-Service (CaaS)

EN: The government aims to make Census data available **quickly and in machine-readable formats** through a "Census-as-a-Service" model.

HI: सरकार "**Census-as-a-Service**" मॉडल के माध्यम से जनगणना डेटा को **शीघ्र और मशीन-पठनीय स्वरूप** में उपलब्ध कराने का लक्ष्य रखती है।

9. Workforce for Census 2027

EN: Nearly **18,600 technical staff** will be deployed for about **550 days**, and enumerators (mostly government teachers) will conduct fieldwork.

HI: लगभग **18,600 तकनीकी कर्मचारी** लगभग **550 दिनों** तक तैनात रहेंगे, और गणनाकर्ता (मुख्यतः सरकारी शिक्षक) मैदानी कार्य करेंगे।

Feature	Census	NPR	NRC
Purpose	Population data	Identity database of usual residents	Citizenship verification
Legal basis	Census Act	Citizenship Rules, 2003	Citizenship Act
Mandatory?	Yes	Yes	Not compulsory unless govt initiates

Q. With reference to the Census of India 2027, consider the following statements:

- 1.** It will be India's first fully digital Census.
- 2.** A separate budget has been earmarked specifically for updating the National Population Register (NPR).
- 3.** It will enumerate caste for the first time in independent India.
- 4.** Census operations will be supported through a "Census-as-a-Service" digital platform.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

BERLIN

Germany blames Russia's GRU for cyberattack on air safety election



Germany on Friday accused Russia of cyberattacks targeting its air traffic control and February's general election, and said it had summoned the Russian ambassador to protest. A Foreign Ministry spokesperson said German security services had proof that hacker groups run by Russia's GRU were responsible for the attacks. AFP

SEOUL

North Korea's Kim vows to root out 'evil', tells officials to 'have courage'



North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has vowed to root out "evil" and scolded top officials while praising his troops fighting with Russia in Ukraine, state media said on Friday, capping a major meeting of Pyongyang's top brass. He called on officials to have "greater confidence in and courage for the future of our cause". AFP

WASHINGTON

Trump signs executive order to block states from making AI rules



U.S. President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Thursday aimed at blocking states from crafting their own regulations for artificial intelligence, saying the burgeoning industry is at risk of being stifled by a patchwork of onerous rules while in a battle with Chinese competitors for supremacy. AP

PARIS

Iran arrests Nobel-prize winning activist Narges Mohammadi



Iranian security forces on Friday "violently" arrested the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize winner Narges Mohammadi at a memorial ceremony for a lawyer who died earlier this month, her supporters said. Mr. Mohammadi, who was last arrested in November 2021, was granted temporary leave from prison in December 2022. AFP

EU set to lock up Russia's frozen assets despite Hungary's protest

A total of €210 billion in Russian assets are frozen in Europe; the bloc is expected to decide how to use the money to offer a huge loan to Ukraine to meet its financial and military needs for two years; Hungary and Slovakia say they oppose the move

Associated Press
Agence France-Presse
REUTERS/MEDIA

The European Union is expected on Friday to lock up Russia's assets held in Europe until it gives up its war in Ukraine and compensates its neighbour for the heavy damage that it has inflicted for almost four years.

The move is an important step that would allow EU leaders to work out at a summit next week how to use the tens of billions of euros in Russian Central Bank assets to underwrite a huge loan to help Ukraine meet its financial and military needs over the next two years.



These deal: Ursula von der Leyen signs an agreement to transfer to Ukraine a tranche of proceeds from frozen Russian assets, in July in May.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban accused the European Commission, which prepared the decision, "of systematically raping European law". A total of €210 billion

in the war in Ukraine, a war that clearly isn't winnable," he wrote. In a letter to European Council President Antonio Guterres, Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico said that he would refuse to back any move that "would include covering Ukraine's military expenses for the coming years".

Mr. Orban said on social media that it means that "the rule of law in the European Union comes to an end, and Europe's leaders are placing themselves above the rules".

The European Commission is systematically raping European law. It is doing this in order to con-

tinue the war in Ukraine, a war that clearly isn't winnable," he wrote. In a letter to European Council President Antonio Guterres, Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico said that he would refuse to back any move that "would include covering Ukraine's military expenses for the coming years".

Mr. Orban said on social media that it means that "the rule of law in the European Union comes to an end, and Europe's leaders are placing themselves above the rules".

The European Commission is systematically raping European law. It is doing this in order to con-

tinue the war in Ukraine, a war that clearly isn't winnable," he wrote. In a letter to European Council President Antonio Guterres, Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico said that he would refuse to back any move that "would include covering Ukraine's military expenses for the coming years".

U.S. sanctions relatives of Maduro, six shipping firms

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

The United States imposed sanctions on Thursday against relatives of Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro and six companies shipping the South American country's oil.

The move came as the White House said it will bring an oil tanker seized by American forces off the Venezuelan coast to a port in the United States, adding to growing fears of open conflict between the two countries.

President Donald Trump's administration has been piling pressure on Venezuela for months, with a major naval buildup in the region that has been accompanied by deadly strikes on alleged drug-trafficking boats, killing nearly 90 people.



REUTERS

In a dramatic raid this week that Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said was aimed at Mr. Maduro's "regime," Washington took control of the tanker, with U.S. forces roping down from a helicopter onto the vessel.

Caracas condemned the raid as "an act of international piracy".

Maduro, but with Moscow's forces tied down in a grinding war in Ukraine, its capacity to provide aid is limited.

The U.S. Treasury announced sanctions against three nephews of Mr. Maduro's wife Cilia Flores, labeling two of them "narco-traffickers" operating in Venezuela.

Nicolas Maduro and his criminal associates in Venezuela are flooding the United States with drugs that are poisoning the American people," Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said in a statement.

His companies shipping Venezuelan oil were also slapped with sanctions.

Venezuela's Foreign Ministry said it "strongly denounces and condemns what constitutes blatant theft and an act of international piracy".

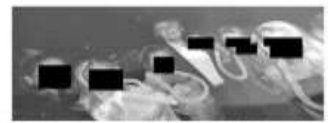
New Epstein estate photos feature Trump, says panel

Reuters
WASHINGTON

Democrats on a congressional oversight panel released more than a dozen new images from the estate of the late convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein on Friday, including photos of now-U.S. President Donald Trump.

Mr. Trump is featured in three of the 19 photos shared by House Oversight Committee Democrats, who said they are reviewing more than 18,000 images produced by the estate.

In one black-and-white photo, Mr. Trump is seen smiling with several women — whose faces are redacted — on each side of him. A second image shows Mr. Trump standing beside Epstein, and a third, less-clear image shows him seated alone.



Donald Trump poses with unidentified women in this image from Epstein estate, released by House Oversight Committee, on Friday.

side another woman, whose face is also redacted, with his red tie loosened. It was unclear when or where the photos were taken. Former President Bill Clinton, former Trump aide Steve Bannon, Bill Gates and former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers also appear in the batch of images, as well as sex toys and a \$4.50 "Trump condom".

Former Iraqi President Salih is new UNHCR chief

Agence France-Presse
GENEVA

Former Iraqi President Nuri al-Maliki is set to become the next United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, according to a document on Friday, taking over an agency tackling swamping budget cuts.

Mr. Salih, 65, was President of Iraq from 2014 to 2022. He will replace Filippo Grandi, who is leaving at the end of December after 10 years as the UN refugee chief.

A moderate and veteran Kurdish politician, Mr. Salih's long career has included several senior positions in the government and in the country's autonomous Kurdistan region after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion that toppled long-time ruler Saddam Hussein.

Honouring heritage



Honduras' President Xiomara Castro, Vice Minister of the National Defence Secretariat Orlando Garner, and Chief of Armed Forces General Resources Hernandez review the troops during the celebration of the 200th anniversary of Honduran Army in Tegucigalpa on Thursday. AP

Thailand, Cambodia have agreed to renew ceasefire, says Trump

Associated Press
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Friday that Thailand and Cambodia have agreed to renew a truce after days of deadly clashes that threatened to undo a ceasefire the U.S. administration had helped broker earlier this year.

Mr. Trump announced the agreement on X platform, the coasts in a social media posting followed by calls with Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul and

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet.

"They have agreed to CEASE all shooting effective this evening, and go back to the original Peace Accord made with me, and then, with the help of the Great Prime Minister of Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim," Mr. Trump said in his Truth social posting.

Mr. Trump added that Mr. Brachins played an important role in helping him push Thailand and Cambodia to once again agree to cease fighting.

India frees up business visas for Chinese professionals in major step to boost ties

Reuters
NEW DELHI

India has cut red tape to speed business visas for Chinese professionals, two officials said, a major step to boost ties between the Asian giants and end chronic delays that cost output worth billions of dollars because of scarce technicians.

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi cautiously rekindles ties with Beijing in the face of punishing U.S. tariffs, the officials said New Delhi dropped a layer of bureaucratic scrutiny



India had blocked virtually all Chinese visits after the neighbours clashed on their Himalayan frontier in mid-2020, sources say.

beyond the home and foreign ministries.

Following the news, China's Foreign Ministry said it had received "positive action" from India to facilitate people to people exchanges in the common interest. "China is willing to maintain communication and consultation with India in continuously enhancing the level of facilitation of exchanges," Ministry spokesman Guo Bajun added.

The removal of red tape comes after Mr. Modi led India this year for the first time in seven years.

Pakistan ex-spy chief to appeal his 14-year hard labour sentence

Agence France-Presse
ISLAMABAD

The former head of Pakistan's powerful spy agency will appeal a 14-year hard labour sentence on charges including abuse of power, his lawyer said on Friday, decrying a "stam" military trial.

Fala Hameed, who ran Inter-Services Intelligence during the tenure of jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan, was detained in 2024 following claims he searched the businesses of

a real estate developer in a shakedown attempt, according to supreme Court documents.

The army said on Thursday that a military court had sentenced him to 14 years of "rigorous imprisonment".

My client categorically rejects the charges from the beginning of such sham trial proceedings," Mr. Hameed's lawyer said. The lawyer added that the charge of political activity against his client "is totally baseless".

Former Iraqi President Salih is new UNHCR chief

Agence France-Presse

GENEVA

Former Iraqi president Barham Salih is set to become the next United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, according to a document on Friday, taking over an agency tackling swingeing budget cuts.

Mr. Salih, 65, was President of Iraq from 2018 to 2022. He will replace Filippo Grandi, who is leaving at the end of December after 10 years as the UN refugees chief.

A moderate and veteran Kurdish politician, Mr. Salih's long career has included several senior positions in the government and in the country's autonomous Kurdistan region after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion that toppled long-time ruler Saddam Hussein.

1. Former Iraqi President becomes new UNHCR head

EN: Former Iraqi President **Barham Salih** has been appointed as the next **UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**.

HI: इराक के पूर्व राष्ट्रपति **बरहम सालेह** को संयुक्त राष्ट्र शरणार्थी उच्चायुक्त (**UNHCR**) का नया प्रमुख नियुक्त किया गया है।

2. Appointment announced amid budget crisis

EN: Salih takes over at a time when UNHCR is facing **major budget cuts** globally.

HI: सालेह ऐसे समय में पदभार संभालेंगे जब UNHCR **कठिन बजट कटौतियों** का सामना कर रहा है।

3. Tenure of predecessor Filippo Grandi ends

EN: He will replace **Filippo Grandi**, who is stepping down after **10 years** as UNHCR chief in December 2024.

HI: वे **फिलिपो ग्रांडी** का स्थान लेंगे, जिनका **10 वर्षों** का कार्यकाल दिसंबर 2024 में समाप्त हो रहा है।

4. Salih's political background

EN: Barham Salih, aged 65, served as **President of Iraq from 2018 to 2022**.

HI: 65 वर्षीय सालेह **2018 से 2022 तक** इराक के राष्ट्रपति रहे।

5. Veteran Kurdish leader

EN: He is a **moderate Kurdish politician** with a long political career in both the Iraqi federal government and the autonomous Kurdistan region.

HI: वे एक मध्यमार्गी कुर्द नेता हैं, जिनका लंबा राजनीतिक अनुभव इराक की संघीय सरकार और स्वायत्त कुर्दिस्तान क्षेत्र दोनों में रहा है।

6. Political journey shaped after 2003 Iraq war

EN: His prominence grew after the **2003 U.S.-led invasion** that toppled Saddam Hussein.

HI: 2003 के अमेरिका-नेतृत्व वाले आक्रमण के बाद, जिसने सद्दाम हुसैन को सत्ता से हटाया, सालेह की राजनीतिक भूमिका और मजबूत हुई।

1. What is UNHCR?

- Full form: **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**
- Established: **1950**
- Headquarters: **Geneva, Switzerland**
- Mandate:
 - Protect refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons
 - Assist in repatriation, resettlement, integration

2. UNHCR Chief Appointment

- Appointed by: **UN Secretary-General + approval of UN General Assembly**
- Term: Generally **5 years**, renewable

3. Refugee Situation Globally

- Over **110 million displaced persons** worldwide (UNHCR 2024 estimate)

Q. With reference to recent global appointments, consider the following statements:

1. Barham Salih, former President of Iraq, has been appointed as the new UN High Commissioner for Refugees.
2. UNHCR is headquartered in Vienna and works primarily under the UN Security Council.
3. Filippo Grandi served as UNHCR chief for ten years before being succeeded by Salih.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Novo Nordisk launches medicine at starting price of ₹2,200 a week

Ozempic adds to India's growing appetite for anti-obesity drugs

FE BUREAU

New Delhi, December 12

ELI LILLY'S MOUNJARO, which has taken an early lead since its March launch in India, now faces serious competition. Novo Nordisk on Friday introduced Ozempic, pricing the 0.25 mg starter dose at ₹2,200 per week. For a four-week course, the entry dose works out to ₹8,800, placing the drug firmly in the premium segment of India's fast-growing obesity and metabolic-health market. By comparison, Mounjaro is priced at ₹14,000 a month for the 2.5 mg initiating dose and rises to ₹27,500 for the 15 mg strength.

The Ozempic launch comes just weeks after the rollout of Wegovy, Novo Nordisk's dedicated weight-loss injection, in the Indian market in June. After a 37% price cut, Wegovy now

MARKET BOOMING

■ Ozempic is available in 0.25 mg, 0.5 mg and 1 mg doses in India, priced between

₹8,800 and **₹11,175** for a month

■ Mounjaro of Eli Lilly is available in vials and multi-dose KwikPens — monthly cost ranges from

₹14,000 (2.5mg) to **₹27,500** (15mg)

starts at ₹10,850 a month and goes up to ₹16,400. For Ozempic, the 0.5 mg step-up dose costs ₹10,170 for a four-week pack, while the 1 mg maintenance dose is priced at ₹11,175.

"It was a very tough decision to bring Ozempic at this price," Novo Nordisk India Managing Director Vikrant Shrotriya said



■ Analysts expect the global weight-loss and metabolic drugs segment to reach **\$150 bn** annually by end of the decade

■ Wegovy — Novo Nordisk's dedicated weight-loss injection — now starts at **₹10,850** a month and goes up to **₹16,400**

at the launch, adding that the company wants more patients to access the medicine at "an affordable rate."

India, home to the world's second-largest population of type-2 diabetes patients and a rapidly rising obesity baseline, has become a crucial battleground for weight-loss and

metabolic drugs. Analysts expect the global segment to reach \$150 billion annually by the end of the decade. Ozempic, approved in the US in 2017 for type-2 diabetes, has since become a global bestseller and is widely used off-label for weight loss.

Continued on Page 7

Price starting at ₹1.69 CT ONWARDS



Learn with Bhunesh Sir

@LearnWithBhuneshSir • 40.7K subscribers



Hey folks, here I will discuss my life experiences, failures,

Latest from Learn with Bhunesh Sir



STOP Taking OZEMPIC Without Watching This First! 🧊 Bhunesh Sir

1K views • 15 hours ago 69 VPH 1.1x



Learn with Bhunesh Sir 40.7K Subscribers

STOP Taking OZEMPIC Without Watching This First! Thinking about using Ozempic for weight loss? Before you start, you ...

New

1. India's anti-obesity drug market expanding fast

EN: India's demand for anti-obesity and metabolic-health drugs is rising rapidly.

HI: भारत में एंटी-ओबेसिटी और मेटाबोलिक-हेल्थ दवाओं की मांग तेजी से बढ़ रही है।

2. Novo Nordisk launches Ozempic in India

EN: Novo Nordisk has launched **Ozempic** in India at a starting price of **₹2,200 per week**.

HI: नोवो नॉर्डिस्क ने ओजेम्पिक को भारत में **₹2,200 प्रति सप्ताह** की शुरुआती कीमत पर लॉन्च किया है।

3. Cost & dosage details

EN: Ozempic is available in **0.25 mg, 0.5 mg, and 1 mg** doses, costing **₹8,800 to ₹11,175** for a month.

HI: ओजेम्पिक **0.25 mg, 0.5 mg और 1 mg** डोज़ में उपलब्ध है, जिसकी मासिक लागत **₹8,800 से ₹11,175 तक** है।

4. Competition from Eli Lilly's Mounjaro

EN: Eli Lilly's **Mounjaro**, launched earlier in March, costs **₹14,000 to ₹27,500 per month**, depending on dosage.

HI: मार्च में लॉन्च हुई एलि लिली की मौंजारो दवा की मासिक कीमत डोज़ के आधार पर **₹14,000 से ₹27,500 तक** है।

5. Wegovy also recently entered India

EN: Novo Nordisk's dedicated weight-loss injection **Wegovy** is priced between **₹10,850 and ₹16,400 per month**.

HI: नोवो नॉर्डिस्क का वेट-लॉस इंजेक्शन वेगोवी, जिसकी कीमत **₹10,850 से ₹16,400 प्रति माह** है, हाल ही में भारत में आया है।

6. Global market outlook

EN: Analysts estimate the global metabolic and weight-loss drug market will reach **\$150 billion by 2030**.

HI: विश्लेषकों का अनुमान है कि वैश्विक मेटाबोलिक और वज़न-घटाने वाली दवाओं का बाजार **2030 तक \$150 बिलियन तक** पहुँच सकता है।

7. India is a strategic market for such drugs

EN: India has the **world's second-largest population of type-2 diabetics**, making it a key market for such drugs.

HI: भारत में टाइप-2 डायबिटीज़ के मरीजों की संख्या विश्व में दूसरी सबसे अधिक है, जिससे यह दवाओं के लिए एक महत्वपूर्ण बाज़ार बन जाता है।

8. Ozempic's global usage & regulatory history

EN: Ozempic, approved in the US in 2017 for type-2 diabetes, is widely used **off-label for weight loss**.

HI: ओजेम्पिक, जिसे 2017 में अमेरिका में टाइप-2 डायबिटीज़ के लिए स्वीकृति मिली थी, का **ऑफ-लेबल वेट-लॉस** के लिए व्यापक उपयोग होता है।

9. Companies aim to lower per-patient entry barrier

EN: Novo Nordisk says it wants more patients to access Ozempic at "an affordable rate".

HI: नोवो नॉर्डिस्क का कहना है कि वह चाहती है कि अधिक मरीज ओजेम्पिक को "सुलभ कीमत" पर खरीद सकें।

1. Ozempic & Semaglutide

- EN: Ozempic contains *Semaglutide*, a GLP-1 receptor agonist used for diabetes & weight-loss.
- HI: ओजेम्पिक में *सेमाग्लूटाइड* होता है, जो GLP-1 रिसेप्टर एगोनिस्ट है और डायबिटीज़ व वजन घटाने में उपयोगी है।

2. GLP-1 drugs

- EN: GLP-1 drugs reduce appetite, delay gastric emptying & help weight reduction.
- HI: GLP-1 दवाएँ भूख कम करती हैं, गैस्ट्रिक एम्प्टींग को धीमा करती हैं और वजन घटाने में मदद करती हैं।

3. Market trend

- EN: India's anti-obesity drug market is among the fastest growing in Asia.
- HI: भारत का एंटी-ओबेसिटी दवा बाजार एशिया में सबसे तेजी से बढ़ने वालों में है।

4. US FDA approvals


- EN: Ozempic (2017) for diabetes; Wegovy (2021) for obesity.
 - HI: ओजेम्पिक (2017) डायबिटीज़ के लिए; वेगोवी (2021) मोटापे के लिए अमेरिका में स्वीकृत है।
-



Q. With reference to anti-obesity drugs recently in news, consider the following statements:

1. Ozempic and Wegovy belong to the class of GLP-1 receptor agonists.
2. Ozempic was initially approved for type-2 diabetes but is now widely used off-label for weight loss.
3. India is the world's largest market for GLP-1 drugs due to the highest diabetic population.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 2 and 3 only
 - (c) 1 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
- 

India left out of US-led supply chain coalition

RAVI DUTTA MISHRA
New Delhi, December 12

A NEW US-LED strategic initiative, Pax Silica, which aims to build a secure supply chain ranging from critical minerals and energy inputs to advanced manufacturing and semiconductors, does not include India.

This comes at a time when an India-US trade deal remains elusive despite several high-level talks and rounds of technical negotiations.

Delhi has been vying for opportunities during the ongoing global supply chain realignment as US and European companies are looking to diversify away from China. The West's diversification push has gathered pace, especially after China imposed restrictions on rare earth magnets, disrupting global supply chains.

A US Department of State statement said the inaugural Pax Silica Summit convenes counterparts from Japan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Australia. "Together, these countries are home to the most important companies and investors powering the global AI supply chain," the statement said.

Pax Silica is a US-led strategic initiative to build a "secure, prosperous, and innovation-driven silicon supply chain"—from critical minerals and energy inputs to advanced manufacturing, semiconductors, AI infrastructure, and logistics.

"Rooted in deep cooperation with trusted allies, Pax Silica aims to reduce coercive dependencies, protect the materials and capabilities foundational to artificial intelligence, and ensure aligned nations can develop and deploy transformative technologies at scale. Countries will

OVERLOOKED

■ Pax Silica is a US-led initiative to build a "secure, prosperous, and innovation-driven silicon supply chain"

■ Measures include pursuing new joint ventures and strategic co-investment opportunities

■ Exclusion comes at a time when an India-US trade deal remains elusive despite several high-level talks



INCLUDED NATIONS:

- Japan
- South Korea
- Singapore
- Netherlands
- UK
- Israel
- UAE
- Australia

partner on securing strategic stacks of the global technology supply chain, including, but not limited to, software applications and platforms," the State Department said.

"Countries affirmed a shared commitment to pursue projects to jointly address AI supply chain opportunities and vulnerabilities in priority critical minerals, semiconductor design, fabrication, and packaging, logistics and transportation, compute, and energy grids and power generation," it said.

Measures under Pax Silica include pursuing new joint ventures and strategic co-investment opportunities, protecting sensitive technologies and critical infrastructure from undue access or control by countries of concern and building trusted technology ecosystems, including ICT sys-

tems, fibre-optic cables, data centres, foundational models and applications.

"The initiative responds to growing demand from partners to deepen economic and technology cooperation with the United States and understanding that AI represents a transformative force for our long-term prosperity. Recognition that trustworthy systems are essential for safeguarding our mutual security and prosperity," the US State Department said.

In an interview in October, US Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent had framed China's new export controls on critical minerals as "China versus the rest of the world", stating that the US is pushing back firmly and expects strong support from "Europe, India and other Asian democracies".

1. What is Pax Silica?

EN: Pax Silica is a new US-led initiative to build a **secure, prosperous, innovation-driven silicon and AI supply chain** across critical minerals, semiconductors, energy inputs, logistics, and advanced manufacturing.

HI: पैक्स सिलिका एक नया अमेरिका-नेतृत्व वाला पहल है, जिसका उद्देश्य सुरक्षित, समृद्ध और नवाचार-आधारित सिलिकॉन एवं AI सप्लाई चेन बनाना है, जिसमें क्रिटिकल मिनरल्स, सेमीकंडक्टर, ऊर्जा इनपुट, लॉजिस्टिक्स और उन्नत विनिर्माण शामिल हैं।

2. India has NOT been included

EN: India has been **left out** of the initiative despite ongoing India–US dialogues on trade, technology and supply chain security.

HI: भारत को इस पहल से बाहर रखा गया है, जबकि भारत-अमेरिका के बीच व्यापार, तकनीक और सप्लाई चेन सुरक्षा पर लगातार बातचीत चल रही है।

3. Countries included in Pax Silica

EN: The coalition includes **Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Netherlands, UK, Israel, UAE, and Australia.**

HI: इस गठबंधन में जापान, दक्षिण कोरिया, सिंगापुर, नीदरलैंड, ब्रिटेन, इज़राइल, यूएई और ऑस्ट्रेलिया शामिल हैं।

5. Why Pax Silica matters?

EN: The initiative aims to reduce dependence on China, especially after China imposed restrictions on exports of **rare earth magnets** and critical minerals impacting global supply chains.

HI: इस पहल का मुख्य उद्देश्य चीन पर निर्भरता कम करना है, खासकर तब जब चीन ने रेयर-अर्थ मैग्नेट्स और अन्य क्रिटिकल मिनरल्स पर निर्यात प्रतिबंध लगाए जिससे वैश्विक सप्लाई चेन प्रभावित हुई।

6. Purpose & Scope of Pax Silica

EN: It aims to build trusted, resilient systems in:

- Critical minerals
- Semiconductor design & fabrication
- Packaging, logistics & transportation
- Compute & energy grids
- AI infrastructure
- ICT systems and fibre-optic cables

HI: इसका उद्देश्य निम्न क्षेत्रों में भरोसेमंद और मजबूत प्रणालियाँ बनाना है:

- क्रिटिकल मिनरल्स
- सेमीकंडक्टर डिजाइन व निर्माण
- पैकेजिंग, लॉजिस्टिक्स व परिवहन
- कंप्यूट व ऊर्जा ग्रिड
- AI इन्फ्रास्ट्रक्चर
- ICT सिस्टम और फाइबर-ऑप्टिक तकनीक

7. Measures identified under Pax Silica

EN: The coalition will pursue:

- New joint ventures
- Strategic co-investment opportunities
- Protection of sensitive technologies
- Shielding critical infrastructure from countries of concern

HI: यह गठबंधन निम्न कदम उठाएगा:

- नए संयुक्त उपक्रम
 - रणनीतिक सह-निवेश अवसर
 - संवेदनशील तकनीकों की सुरक्षा
 - महत्वपूर्ण अवसंरचना को "चिंता वाले देशों" के प्रभाव से बचाना
-

8. Why India's exclusion is notable

EN: India is seen as a major partner in global tech realignment, yet it has not been included even though the US Treasury acknowledged India's importance in countering China.

HI: वैश्विक तकनीकी पुनर्संरचना में भारत को एक प्रमुख भागीदार माना जाता है, फिर भी इसे शामिल नहीं किया गया, जबकि अमेरिकी ट्रेज़री ने चीन के प्रभाव का मुकाबला करने में भारत की भूमिका को स्वीकार किया है।

Sl. No.	Critical Mineral	Percentage (2020)	Major Import Sources (2020)
1.	Lithium	100%	Chile, Russia, China, Ireland, Belgium
2.	Cobalt	100%	China, Belgium, Netherlands, US, Japan
3.	Nickel	100%	Sweden, China, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines
4.	Vanadium	100%	Kuwait, Germany, South Africa, Brazil, Thailand
5.	Niobium	100%	Brazil, Australia, Canada, South Africa, Indonesia
6.	Germanium	100%	China, South Africa, Australia, France, US
7.	Rhenium	100%	Russia, UK, Netherlands, South Africa, China
8.	Beryllium	100%	Russia, UK, Netherlands, South Africa, China
9.	Tantalum	100%	Australia, Indonesia, South Africa, Malaysia, US
10.	Strontium	100%	China, US, Russia, Estonia, Slovenia
11.	Zirconium(zircon)	80%	Australia, Indonesia, South Africa, Malaysia, US
12.	Graphite(natural)	60%	China, Madagascar, Mozambique, Vietnam, Tanzania
13.	Manganese	50%	South Africa, Gabon, Australia, Brazil, China
14.	Chromium	2.5%	South Africa, Mozambique, Oman, Switzerland, Turkey
15.	Silicon	<1%	China, Malaysia, Norway, Bhutan, Netherlands

Table.1 The net import reliance for critical minerals of India (2020) (Source: A report on 'Unlocking Australia-India Critical Minerals Partnership Potential' by Australian Trade and Investment Commission, July 2021)

India's Need to Reform Critical Mineral Royalty

- **High Import Dependence:** India is **entirely reliant on imports** for lithium, cobalt, nickel, REEs, and imports 60% of its graphite requirements.
- **Low Auction Success:** Only **34 out of 81 blocks** (42%) auctioned since 2023 attracted bidders due to high royalties and lack of pricing clarity.
- **Rising Green-Tech Demand:** Demand for EV batteries alone is expected to rise **five to six times by 2030**, requiring large quantities of graphite, zirconium, and REEs.
- **Unviable Mining at Old Rates:** A fixed per-tonne royalty made **low-grade graphite extraction** commercially unviable during price declines.
- **China Risk:** They process **approximately 90% of the world's** REEs, and their export controls disrupted international supply chains.

Bottlenecks in India's Critical Mineral Ecosystem

- **Weak Exploration Capacity**: India accounts for **<0.9% of global mineral exploration** spending, compared to **Australia's ~13%** and **Canada's ~15%** (CSEP).
- **Poor Processing Capability**: India contributes **only 3%** of global refined copper output and processes **less than 2%** of global REEs, remaining dependent on imports.
- **High Capital & Technology Gaps**: Private exploration accounts for **less than 10%** of India's total mineral exploration expenditure, whereas in mature mining economies, **it exceeds 60%**.
- **Limited Skilled Workforce**: India has fewer than **20 geologists per million population**, significantly below **Australia's 140+ per million**, which hinders deep-mining capabilities.
- **Fragmented Policy Ecosystem**: Critical mineral auctions have only a **42% success rate**, with 34 of 81 blocks securing bidders due to regulatory delays and unclear procedures for pricing.

Q. With reference to the newly launched US-led initiative "Pax Silica", consider the following statements:

- 1.** It aims to build a secure and innovation-driven silicon supply chain covering critical minerals and semiconductors.
- 2.** India is one of the founding members of Pax Silica.
- 3.** The initiative seeks to reduce global dependence on China for sensitive technology infrastructure.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Assam's Demow Model to be studied in ICMR project for attaining 'zero snakebite deaths'

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

The Demow Model from eastern Assam's Sivasagar has been chosen as one of the successful systems of snakebite prevention and management to be scientifically studied and potentially scaled up across the country, under a project sanctioned by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

The ICMR sanctioned the four-year research project worth ₹13.5 crore to "tackle the devastating public health challenge of snakebite envenoming" in India. The project, called the Zero Snakebite Death Initiative: Community Empowerment and Engage-

ment for Mitigation of Snakebite Envenoming, aims to develop a unified, replicable, and highly effective national model for prevention and management.

The research, spearheaded by Jaideep Menon of Kerala's Amrita Institute, will span seven States – Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharashtra, Odisha, and West Bengal.

Regional strategies

The project will analyse and integrate proven regional strategies, topped by the Demow Model, which focuses on robust community engagement and referral networks, and involves community awareness, volunteers,



The approach will take into account snakebite awareness, response, and action.

and participation.

For Assam, the study will focus on the Demow and Gelekey blocks of Sivasagar district. Surajit Giri from the Demow Hospital

has been appointed as the investigator for the State on this project.

The other models are for protective equipment distribution (Maharashtra), anti-snake venom injection during transport (Himachal Pradesh), and using digital tools for better coordination and real-time surveillance (Kerala).

Integrated approach

"The research will be conducted under the banner of SARPAA (Snakebite Awareness, Response, Prevention, and Action). This integrated approach seeks to bridge the critical gap between affected communities and formal health systems, ensuring victims receive life-saving treat-

ment within the crucial golden hour," an ICMR spokesperson said.

The research and community study are scheduled to begin in January 2026. ICMR has already allocated resources, including a research scientist and four technical staff members for each participating State, to ensure rigorous implementation and data collection.

This collaborative effort seeks to produce high-quality implementation evidence to significantly reduce snakebite mortality and morbidity, addressing India's disproportionately high burden of snakebite envenoming, estimated at approximately 58,000 deaths annually.

1. What is the Demow Model?

EN: The Demow Model from Sivasagar district of Assam is a proven community-based system for snakebite prevention, early response, and referral management.

HI: असम के शिवसागर जिले का डेमोव मॉडल एक सफल सामुदायिक प्रणाली है, जो साँप के काटने की रोकथाम, त्वरित प्रतिक्रिया और रेफरल प्रबंधन पर आधारित है।

2. Why is ICMR studying this model?

EN: ICMR has chosen Demow as one of the successful regional models to be scientifically studied and scaled nationwide under a 4-year project.

HI: आईसीएमआर ने डेमोव को सफल क्षेत्रीय मॉडलों में से एक के रूप में चुना है जिसे 4-वर्षीय परियोजना के तहत वैज्ञानिक रूप से अध्ययन कर पूरे देश में विस्तारित किया जाएगा।

3. Project name and goal

EN: The project is called **Zero Snakebite Death Initiative: Community Empowerment and Engagement for Mitigation of Snakebite Envenoming**, aimed at achieving “zero snakebite deaths” in India.

HI: परियोजना का नाम है ज़ीरो स्नेकबाइट डेथ इनिशिएटिव: कम्युनिटी एम्पावरमेंट एंड एंगेजमेंट फॉर मिटिगेशन ऑफ स्नेकबाइट एनवेनॉमिंग, जिसका लक्ष्य भारत में “साँप के काटने से शून्य मृत्यु” प्राप्त करना है।

4. Duration and Funding

EN: ICMR sanctioned a **4-year research project worth ₹13.5 crore.**

HI: आईसीएमआर ने ₹13.5 करोड़ की लागत वाली चार-वर्षीय अनुसंधान परियोजना को मंजूरी दी है।

5. States covered in the study

EN: The research spans **seven states:** Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharashtra, Odisha, and West Bengal.

HI: यह शोध सात राज्यों में किया जाएगा: असम, हिमाचल प्रदेश, झारखंड, केरल, महाराष्ट्र, ओडिशा और पश्चिम बंगाल।

6. What will the project analyse?

EN: It will study proven regional strategies like Demow, focusing on:

- Community engagement
- Referral networks
- Awareness & volunteers
- Local action and preparedness

HI: यह परियोजना डेमोव जैसे क्षेत्रीय मॉडलों का अध्ययन करेगी, जिनका फोकस है:

- सामुदायिक भागीदारी
- रेफरल नेटवर्क
- जागरूकता एवं स्वयंसेवक
- स्थानीय कार्रवाई और तैयारी

8. Other models included

EN: The project also evaluates other regional best practices such as:

- Protective equipment distribution (Maharashtra)
- Anti-snake venom injection during transport (Himachal Pradesh)
- Digital surveillance and coordination tools (Kerala)

HI: परियोजना में अन्य राज्यों की सर्वश्रेष्ठ रणनीतियों का भी अध्ययन होगा, जैसे:

- सुरक्षात्मक उपकरण वितरण (महाराष्ट्र)
 - परिवहन के दौरान एंटी-स्नेक वेनम इंजेक्शन (हिमाचल प्रदेश)
 - डिजिटल निगरानी एवं समन्वय उपकरण (केरल)
-

9. Integrated Approach under SARPA

EN: The research will be conducted under **SARPA** (Snakebite Awareness, Response, Prevention, and Action), focusing on bridging the gap between communities and formal health systems.

HI: यह शोध **SARPA** (स्नेकबाइट अवेयरनेस, रिस्पॉन्स, प्रिवेंशन एंड एक्शन) के तहत होगा, जिसका उद्देश्य समुदायों और औपचारिक स्वास्थ्य प्रणालियों के बीच की खाई को पाटना है।

10. Core goal: Ensuring timely treatment

EN: The integrated system aims to ensure that victims receive life-saving treatment within the **golden hour**.

HI: इस एकीकृत प्रणाली का लक्ष्य है कि पीड़ितों को **गोल्डन ऑवर** के भीतर जीवन-रक्षक उपचार मिल सके।

1. Snakebite as a Public Health Issue

EN: WHO categorizes snakebite as a **"high priority neglected tropical disease (NTD)"**.

HI: डब्ल्यूएचओ साँप के काटने को **"उच्च प्राथमिकता वाला उपेक्षित उष्णकटिबंधीय रोग (NTD)"** मानता है।

2. India's Burden

EN: India accounts for **nearly 50%** of global snakebite deaths.

HI: वैश्विक साँप काटने से होने वाली मौतों में **लगभग 50% भारत में होती हैं।**

3. Treatment Protocol

EN: Anti-snake venom (ASV) is the only scientifically proven treatment.

HI: एंटी-स्नेक वेनम (ASV) ही वैज्ञानिक रूप से सिद्ध उपचार है।

4. Assam's Health Innovations

EN: Assam has been recognized for community-driven health models, like the **Demow Model**.

HI: असम को सामुदायिक आधारित स्वास्थ्य मॉडलों, जैसे **डेमोव मॉडल**, के लिए मान्यता मिली है।

Q. With reference to the "Zero Snakebite Death Initiative" recently in news, consider the following statements:

1. It is a four-year research initiative sanctioned by ICMR.
2. The initiative includes the Demow Model of Assam as a key component for national replication.
3. The research under this initiative will be conducted only in northeastern states of India.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Gulmarg gets Asia's longest ski drag lift and hall in big boost to Kashmir's winter tourism

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

Kashmir's winter tourism received a shot in the arm on Saturday, with the inauguration of Asia's longest ski drag lift and rotating conference hall at an altitude of 4,390 metres, to match with world-class facilities for skiers in Gulmarg.

"The newly inaugurated ski drag lift and training facilities would give a major boost to winter sports and professional skiing. The revolving conference hall at Apharwat would significantly enhance visitor experience. Our vision is to



Asia's longest ski drag lift launched by Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah at Kongdori, Gulmarg on Saturday. PTI

make Gulmarg a global hub for winter sports while ensuring conservation of its fragile ecology and natural beauty," Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said.

Asia's longest ski drag lift, measuring 726 metres, is located at Kongdoori and has come up at a cost of ₹3.65 crore. At Apharwat, the rotating conference hall cost ₹86 lakh. Mr. Ab-

dullah inaugurated tourism infrastructure projects estimated at over ₹17 crore at Gulmarg and its adjoining areas, "to push J&K's position as a premier global winter tourism destination".

Sustained investment

The Gulmarg meadow, surrounded by mountains on three sides, was a major tourist attraction in 2024. It hosted over 7.68 lakh visitors last year and was the main venue for the fourth edition of the Khelo India Winter Games.

Mr. Abdullah laid the foundation stone for fencing of the Gulmarg golf

course, a project estimated at ₹4.77 crore, "aimed at protecting and enhancing one of the region's iconic tourism assets".

"Gulmarg remains the crown jewel of J&K's tourism landscape and that sustained investment in modern, high-quality infrastructure is essential to unlocking its full potential. These initiatives are not just infrastructure additions but strategic investments that will create year-round tourism opportunities, generate employment for local youth, and elevate Gulmarg to international standards," Mr. Abdullah said.









1. Major tourism boost for Kashmir

EN: Kashmir's winter tourism got a major boost with the inauguration of Asia's longest ski drag lift and a rotating conference hall in Gulmarg.

HI: एशिया के सबसे लंबे स्की ड्रैग लिफ्ट और घूमने वाले कॉन्फ्रेंस हॉल के उद्घाटन के साथ कश्मीर के शीतकालीन पर्यटन को बड़ा प्रोत्साहन मिला।

2. Altitude & world-class facilities

EN: These facilities are built at an altitude of **4,390 metres**, matching global skiing standards.

HI: ये सुविधाएँ **4,390 मीटर** की ऊँचाई पर बनाई गई हैं, जो अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्कीइंग मानकों के अनुरूप हैं।

3. Ski drag lift specifications

EN: The ski drag lift measures **726 metres** and is located at Kongdoori, built at a cost of **₹3.65 crore**.

HI: स्की ड्रैग लिफ्ट की लंबाई **726 मीटर** है और यह कोंगडोरी में स्थित है, जिसकी लागत **₹3.65 करोड़** है।

4. Rotating conference hall

EN: A revolving conference hall at Apharwat has been built for **₹86 lakh** to enhance the visitor experience.

HI: अफरवाट में **₹86 लाख** की लागत से एक घूमने वाला कॉन्फ्रेंस हॉल बनाया गया है, जो पर्यटकों के अनुभव को बेहतर करेगा।

5. Vision for Gulmarg

EN: The initiative aims to make Gulmarg a **global hub for winter sports** while protecting its fragile ecology and natural beauty.

HI: इस पहल का लक्ष्य गुलमर्ग को शीतकालीन खेलों का वैश्विक केंद्र बनाना है, साथ ही इसकी नाज़ुक पारिस्थितिकी और प्राकृतिक सौंदर्य का संरक्षण भी करना है।

6. Large-scale infrastructure investment

EN: J&K government launched tourism projects worth over **₹17 crore** to strengthen Gulmarg and adjoining areas as a premier winter destination.

HI: जम्मू-कश्मीर सरकार ने गुलमर्ग और आसपास के क्षेत्रों को प्रमुख शीतकालीन पर्यटन स्थल बनाने हेतु **₹17 करोड़** से अधिक के पर्यटन प्रोजेक्ट लॉन्च किए हैं।

7. Sustained tourism growth

EN: Gulmarg saw **7.68 lakh visitors in 2024** and hosted the **Khelo India Winter Games** for the fourth time.

HI: गुलमर्ग में **2024 में 7.68 लाख पर्यटक** आए और यहाँ **खेलो इंडिया विंटर गेम्स** का चौथा संस्करण आयोजित हुआ।

Q. With reference to the recently inaugurated Asia's longest ski drag lift at Gulmarg, consider the following statements:

- 1.** The ski drag lift is located at Kongdoori in Jammu & Kashmir.
- 2.** It is more than 700 metres in length.
- 3.** The rotating conference hall associated with the project is located at Gulmarg's main market area.
- 4.** The initiative aims to promote winter tourism while ensuring ecological conservation.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

in youth wing, the BYMCA, and in politics and his appointment as the co-in-charge of the Assembly politics in Chhattisgarh. He was pulled off a decisive victory against the Congress in the 1996 elections. "Even a couple of days ago, he was holding meetings with the Chhattisgarh Congress leaders," said the intensive Revisionist (SR) exercise," the source said.

"He was also the in-charge of the Biju Ghatana Samiti attended by Prime Minister Modi during the 1996 Assembly polls in Bham. He is a member of the belongs to the Kayasthi community. Mr. Nabhinath, the late Nabhinath Kishore, was a prominent MLA and is considered one of the veteran leaders instrumental in the party's

Gunmen kill 11 at Jewish event in Sydney

One suspect killed, another critically injured; 29 more including two police officers are wounded

Australian PM condemns 'targeted attack'; says, the evil unleashed was 'beyond comprehension'

Israel PM accuses Australia government of fuelling anti-Semitism in period leading up to the shooting

Reuters
Associated Press
SYDNEY

At least 11 people were killed and 29 wounded when gunmen fired on a Jewish holiday event at Sydney's Bondi Beach on Sunday in what Australian police and officials described as a terrorist attack.

One suspected gunman was killed and another was in a critical condition, New South Wales Police Commissioner Mal Lanyon told a press conference. At least 29 people injured, including two police officers, were taken to hospital, he said.

The police were investigating whether a third gunman was involved in the shooting, and a bomb disposal unit was working on several suspected improvised explosive devices, Mr. Lanyon said. Mike Burgess, a top Australian intelligence official, said one of the suspected attackers was known to authorities but had not been deemed

an immediate threat.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese convened a meeting of the country's National Security Council and condemned the attack, saying the evil that was unleashed was "beyond comprehension".

"This is a targeted attack on Jewish Australians on the first day of Hanukkah, which should be a day of joy, a celebration of faith," he said. "At this dark moment for our nation, our police and security agencies are working to determine anyone associated with this outrage."

Witnesses said the shooting lasted about 10 minutes. The police said around 1,000 people had attended the Hanukkah event alone.

Ghastly attack: Modi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi took to X to condemn the 'ghastly terrorist attack'. "On behalf of the people of India, I extend my sincere condolences to the families who lost their loved ones. We



Rescue on: Emergency workers evacuate an injured person after the shooting on Bondi Beach. AP

stand in solidarity with the people of Australia in this hour of grief. India has zero tolerance towards terrorism and supports the fight against all forms and manifestations of terrorism."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused Australia's government of having fuelled anti-Semitism in the period

leading up to the shooting.

"Three months ago I wrote to the Australian Prime Minister that your policy is pouring oil on the fire of anti-Semitism," he said, referring to a letter to Mr. Albanese in August following Canberra's announcement that it would recognise Palestinian statehood.

"Anti-Semitism is a can-

cer that spreads when leaders are silent and do not act," Mr. Netanyahu added during a televised public address at an event in southern Israel.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog said Jewish people who had gone to light the first candle of the Hanukkah holiday had been attacked by "vile terrorists".

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said he was appalled by the shooting and that Australia's government must "come to its senses" after countless warnings. "These are the results of the anti-Semitic rampage in the streets of Australia over the past two years, with the anti-Semitic and inciting calls of 'Globalise the Intifada' that were realised today."

Video footage filmed by onlookers appeared to show two gunmen with long guns firing from a footbridge leading to the beach. One dramatic clip broadcast on Australian television showed a man appearing to tackle and disarm one of the gunmen, before pointing the man's weapon at him, then setting the gun on the ground.

One of the world's most famous beaches, Bondi is typically crowded with local residents and tourists.

Sunday's shootings were the most serious of a string of anti-Semitic attacks on synagogues, buildings and cars in Australia since the

beginning of Israel's war in Gaza in October 2023. Mass shootings are rare in Australia, one of the world's safest countries. Sunday's attack was the worst such incident in the country since 1996, when a gunman killed 35 people at a tourist site in the southern state of Tasmania.

Sickening: Starmer

World leaders expressed condolences. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said that the attack on Jewish gathering "sickening" and that "the United Kingdom will always stand with Australia and the Jewish community." The police in London said they would step up security at Jewish sites.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in a post on X that "The United States strongly condemns the terrorist attack in Australia targeting a Jewish celebration. Antisemitism has no place in this world."

Australia, a country of 28 million people, is home to about 1,17,000 Jews, according to official figures.

Our scriptures would say the youngest is the best son of them all, since he opted to serve his father personally. When the father apologised for troubling him thus, the son replied, "It is no trouble at all for me. You earned me and I am your son. I am here to serve you." Scriptures say such a son need not go in search of Brahman, for God is within him.



Nauradehi tiger reserve to be third cheetah habitat in M.P.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has said that Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve will become the new home for cheetahs in the State before the monsoon next year, following the successful translocation of the big cats from Africa to Kuno National Park (KNP). The State Cabinet has given in-principle approval to develop the Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve, located at Nauradehi in Sagar district, as the third habitat in the State for the cheetahs. "We have only released three cheetahs in the Gandhi Sagar Tiger Reserve. There could be 50," Mr. Yadav said. He said his government is also working to translocate other wildlife species to the State.

1. New cheetah habitat approved in M.P.

EN: Madhya Pradesh CM Mohan Yadav announced that the Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve (VDTR) will become the **third habitat for cheetahs** in the State.

HI: मध्य प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री मोहन यादव ने घोषणा की कि वीरांगना दुर्गावती टाइगर रिज़र्व (VDTR) राज्य में चीतों का तीसरा आवास स्थल बनेगा।

2. Location – Naudadehi, Sagar district

EN: VDTR is located at **Naudadehi in Sagar district**, and has received in-principle approval from the State Cabinet.

HI: VDTR सागर जिले के नौरा देही में स्थित है और इसे राज्य मंत्रिमंडल से सिद्धांततः मंजूरी मिल गई है।

3. Comes after success at Kuno National Park

EN: This decision follows the successful **translocation of cheetahs from Africa to Kuno National Park (KNP)** last year.

HI: यह निर्णय पिछले वर्ष अफ्रीका से कूनो राष्ट्रीय उद्यान (KNP) में चीतों के सफल स्थानांतरण के बाद लिया गया है।

4. Other cheetah sites in M.P.

EN: The State currently holds cheetahs at:

1. **Kuno National Park (KNP)** – primary introduction site
2. **Gandhi Sagar Tiger Reserve** – three cheetahs released so far
VDTR will now be the **third** site.

HI: वर्तमान में चीतों के आवास:

3. **कूनो राष्ट्रीय उद्यान (KNP)** – मुख्य स्थल
4. **गांधी सागर टाइगर रिज़र्व** – अब तक 3 चीते छोड़े गए
VDTR अब तीसरा स्थल होगा।

5. Capacity for large cheetah population

EN: CM Yadav said Gandhi Sagar Tiger Reserve could host up to **50 cheetahs** eventually.

HI: मुख्यमंत्री यादव के अनुसार गांधी सागर टाइगर रिज़र्व में भविष्य में **50 तक चीते** रखे जा सकते हैं।

6. Timeline for shifting

EN: Cheetahs are expected to be shifted to VDTR **before next monsoon**.

HI: VDTR में चीतों का स्थानांतरण **अगले मानसून से पहले** होने की उम्मीद है।

1. Cheetah Reintroduction in India

- **EN:** India reintroduced cheetahs in 2022 under *Project Cheetah* after their extinction in 1952.
- **HI:** भारत ने 2022 में *प्रोजेक्ट चीता* के तहत 1952 में विलुप्त हुए चीतों का पुनर्वास किया।

2. Why Madhya Pradesh?

- **EN:** MP hosts suitable grassland ecosystems for cheetahs → Kuno, Gandhi Sagar, Naudadehi.
- **HI:** मध्य प्रदेश घासभूमि पारिस्थितिक तंत्र वाला राज्य है → कूनो, गांधी सागर, नौरा देही।

3. About Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve (VDTR)

- **EN:** A recently notified tiger reserve formed by combining **Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary + Durgavati Wildlife Sanctuary**.
- **HI:** VDTR हाल ही में घोषित टाइगर रिज़र्व है, जो **नौरा देही अभयारण्य + दुर्गावती अभयारण्य** को मिलाकर बनाया गया है।

4. Why multiple cheetah sites?


- **EN:** To avoid over-dependence on Kuno and reduce mortality risks.
- **HI:** कूनो पर अधिक निर्भरता कम करने और मृत्यु दर घटाने के लिए।



Q. With reference to the new cheetah conservation developments in India, consider the following statements:

1. Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve is located in the Sagar district of Madhya Pradesh.
2. It has been approved as the third cheetah habitat in the State after Kuno National Park and Gandhi Sagar Tiger Reserve.
3. Cheetahs were reintroduced into India from South Africa and Namibia under Project Cheetah.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 2 and 3 only
 - (c) 1 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
- 

Bill for overhaul of higher education regulatory framework likely soon

Abhinay Lakshman

NEW DELHI

In its new Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025, set to be introduced in Parliament this Winter Session, the Union government has proposed an “overhaul of the regulatory framework” of higher education in India by establishing a 12-member Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan (VBSA) umbrella commission, under which separate regulatory (*viniyaman*), accreditation (*gunvatta*), and standards (*manak*) councils will operate.

This Bill, listed in the Lok Sabha bulletin for the Winter Session, seeks to subsume the functions of the University Grants Commission (UGC), the All India Council for Technical Education, and the National Council for Teachers’ Education.



The VBSA will subsume the powers of UGC and other regulatory bodies.

It further proposes that the UGC’s grants-disbursal function be performed “through mechanisms devised by the Ministry of Education”.

Citing its pursuit of the National Education Policy, 2020, the government, in the Statement of Objects and Reasons, said the Bill would “enable and empower universities and other higher educational

institutions to achieve excellence in teaching, learning, research and innovation, as an outcome of better co-ordination and determination of standards in institutions for higher education or research and scientific and technical institutions”.

In this Bill, the government has provided for the creation of the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan (VBSA), which will consist of 12 members. The Viksit Bharat Viniyaman Parishad (regulatory), the Viksit Bharat Gunvatta Parishad (accreditation), and the Viksit Bharat Manak Parishad (standards) will operate under this, with up to 14 members each.

The law is proposed to be applicable to all Central and State universities, colleges, and higher education institutions, including those for technical educa-

tion, teacher education, architects’ education, institutions of national importance, and institutes of eminence. It has exempted professional programmes in disciplines such as medicine, dentistry, law, pharmacology, nursing, and veterinary sciences.

Foreign universities

While the Bill gives the Accreditation Council a mandate to develop an “outcome-based institutional accreditation framework”, it has mandated the Regulatory Council to set standards for Centre-approved foreign universities to operate in India, “facilitate high-performing universities” to set up campuses abroad, and develop a “coherent policy to prevent commercialisation of higher education”, among others.

1. Government to introduce major reform Bill

EN: The Union government will introduce the **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan (VBSA) Bill, 2025** in the Winter Session to overhaul India's higher education regulatory framework.

HI: केंद्र सरकार शीतकालीन सत्र में विकसित भारत शिक्षा अधिष्ठान (VBSA) विधेयक, 2025 लाने जा रही है, ताकि भारत के उच्च शिक्षा नियामक ढांचे में व्यापक सुधार किया जा सके।

2. VBSA: A new umbrella commission

EN: The Bill proposes establishing a **12-member VBSA Commission** which will act as an umbrella body for all higher education regulation.

HI: विधेयक एक **12-सदस्यीय VBSA आयोग** बनाने का प्रस्ताव रखता है, जो उच्च शिक्षा के सभी नियमन के लिए छत्र संस्था होगी।

3. UGC, AICTE, NCTE to be subsumed

EN: VBSA will **subsume the functions of UGC, AICTE, and NCTE**, ending their independent regulatory roles.

HI: VBSA **UGC, AICTE और NCTE** के कार्यों को अपने अंतर्गत लेकर उनकी स्वतंत्र नियामक भूमिका खत्म कर देगा।

4. Three regulatory bodies under VBSA

VBSA will include three councils:

- 1 Viksit Bharat Viniyaman Parishad (Regulatory Council)
- 2 Viksit Bharat Gunwatta Parishad (Accreditation Council)
- 3 Viksit Bharat Manak Parishad (Standards Council)

EN: These bodies will regulate institutions, accredit universities, and set academic & research standards.

HI: ये परिषदें संस्थानों का नियमन, विश्वविद्यालयों का प्रत्यायन और शिक्षण-अनुसंधान मानक निर्धारित करेंगी।

5. Funding powers shift away from UGC

EN: The Bill proposes that the **UGC's grants-disbursal function** will be handled through mechanisms devised by the Education Ministry — effectively reducing UGC's financial authority.

HI: विधेयक में प्रस्ताव है कि **UGC की अनुदान वितरण शक्ति** शिक्षा मंत्रालय द्वारा तय तंत्रों के माध्यम से होगी — जिससे UGC की वित्तीय भूमिका सीमित हो जाएगी।

6. Alignment with National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

EN: The government says the Bill follows NEP 2020's vision to create **"light but tight" regulation** and empower institutions to improve teaching, learning, and research.

HI: सरकार का कहना है कि यह विधेयक NEP 2020 के **"लाइट बट टाइट"** नियमन दृष्टिकोण के अनुरूप है और शिक्षण-अनुसंधान उत्कृष्टता को बढ़ावा देगा।

7. Applicability of the new law

EN: The law will apply to all **Central and State universities, colleges, research institutions**, including teacher education and architecture institutions.

HI: यह कानून सभी केंद्रीय एवं राज्य विश्वविद्यालयों, महाविद्यालयों, शोध संस्थानों, शिक्षक शिक्षा और आर्किटेक्चर संस्थानों पर लागू होगा।

8. Exempted categories

EN: Professional disciplines such as **medicine, dentistry, law, pharmacology, nursing, and veterinary sciences** are exempted from VBSA purview.

HI: चिकित्सा, दंतचिकित्सा, विधि, फार्माकोलॉजी, नर्सिंग और पशु चिकित्सा जैसे पेशेवर कार्यक्रमों को VBSA के दायरे से बाहर रखा गया है।

9. Foreign universities provisions

EN: The Accreditation Council will develop an **outcome-based accreditation framework** for foreign universities operating in India.

HI: प्रत्यायन परिषद भारत में कार्यरत विदेशी विश्वविद्यालयों के लिए परिणाम-आधारित प्रत्यायन ढांचा विकसित करेगी।

EN: High-performing foreign universities may set up **campuses abroad**, and the law aims to prevent **commercialisation of higher education**.

HI: उच्च-प्रदर्शन वाले विदेशी विश्वविद्यालय विदेश में भी परिसर स्थापित कर सकेंगे, और कानून का उद्देश्य उच्च शिक्षा के अव्यावसायीकरण को रोकना है।






Q. With reference to the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan (VBSA) Bill, 2025, consider the following statements:

1. It seeks to subsume UGC, AICTE, and NCTE under a single umbrella regulatory framework.
2. The Bill proposes three councils under VBSA: regulatory, accreditation, and standards.
3. Professional disciplines such as medicine and law fall under the regulatory purview of VBSA.
4. The Bill aligns with the recommendations of the National Education Policy 2020.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) 1, 2 and 4 only
 - (b) 1 and 3 only
 - (c) 2 and 4 only
 - (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4
- 

India ranks 3rd in Stanford Global AI Vibrancy tool

INDIA HAS BEEN ranked third in Stanford University's 2025 Global AI Vibrancy tool, which shows progress made across seven pillars comprising research and development, talent, infrastructure, in a year.

The country has climbed four steps, leaving behind the United Kingdom and leading Asian economies — South Korea, Singapore, and Japan — on AI progress, according to the report released in November.

India ranks third in the 2024 Global Vibrancy Index (score of 21.59), followed by



South Korea (17.24) and the United Kingdom (16.64). India made a notable leap from seventh place in 2023 to third, while the United Kingdom rose

one spot from sixth to fifth.

Both countries have recently renewed major initiatives to strengthen their positions in the global AI ecosystem, the report said.

The 2025 release of the Global AI Index report of Stanford University released in November has presented countries' ranking based on 2024 Global AI Vibrancy Ranking.

India now trails only behind the US and China in AI progress despite multi-billion funds put in place by leading nations.

—PTI

1. India achieves major global AI milestone

EN: India has been ranked **3rd** in Stanford University's **2025 Global AI Vibrancy tool**, reflecting strong progress in AI development.

HI: स्टैनफोर्ड विश्वविद्यालय के **2025 ग्लोबल एआई वाइब्रेंसी टूल** में भारत को तीसरा स्थान मिला है, जो देश की एआई प्रगति को दर्शाता है।

2. Ranking based on seven AI pillars

EN: The tool measures nations on seven pillars — **research, development, talent, infrastructure, and innovation.**

HI: यह रैंकिंग सात स्तंभों पर आधारित है — अनुसंधान, विकास, प्रतिभा, अवसंरचना और नवाचार।

3. India climbs four spots

EN: India moved up **four places** from 7th in 2023 to 3rd in 2024 AI Vibrancy ranking.

HI: भारत ने 2023 में 7वें स्थान से बढ़कर 2024 की रैंकिंग में तीसरा स्थान प्राप्त किया।

4. India leads Asia in AI progress

EN: India now ranks above major Asian economies such as **South Korea, Singapore, and Japan**.

HI: भारत अब दक्षिण कोरिया, सिंगापुर और जापान जैसे प्रमुख एशियाई देशों से आगे है।

5. India's 2024 score and comparative rankings

EN: India scored **21.59**, ahead of South Korea (**17.24**) and the United Kingdom (**16.64**).

HI: भारत का स्कोर **21.59** रहा, जो दक्षिण कोरिया (**17.24**) और यूनाइटेड किंगडम (**16.64**) से अधिक है।

6. U.K. rises one position; India rises four

EN: The UK climbed from 6th to 5th, whereas India made the **largest leap** among major economies.

HI: ब्रिटेन छठे से पाँचवें स्थान पर आया, जबकि भारत ने प्रमुख अर्थव्यवस्थाओं में **सबसे बड़ी छलांग** लगाई।

7. AI ecosystem strengthening across countries

EN: The rise in rankings reflects renewed initiatives by several nations to strengthen their AI ecosystems.

HI: कई देशों द्वारा अपने एआई इकोसिस्टम को मजबूत करने के प्रयासों के कारण रैंकिंग में सुधार देखा गया है।

8. The ranking is based on 2024 data

EN: The Global AI Index 2025 report uses **2024 Global AI Vibrancy data** to rank countries.

HI: 2025 की इस रिपोर्ट में देशों की रैंकिंग **2024 के एआई वाइब्रेंसी डेटा** के आधार पर की गई है।

1. What is the Global AI Vibrancy Tool?

- Developed by **Stanford University (Human-Centered AI – HAI)**
- Measures country-wise AI capability using multi-dimensional indicators.

2. Key indicators used:

- AI research output
- AI talent and workforce
- Startups & innovation
- Computing infrastructure
- AI investment

3. India's AI positioning globally:


- India is among the top 3 globally
- India has one of the world's largest AI-skilled workforces
- India is among the top publishers of AI research globally



Q. With reference to the Global AI Vibrancy tool developed by Stanford University, consider the following statements:

1. It measures countries' AI progress across seven key pillars including research, talent, and infrastructure.
2. India ranks third in the latest AI Vibrancy ranking, behind the U.S. and China.
3. India slipped one rank from the previous year due to reduced AI research output.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
 - (b) 2 and 3 only
 - (c) 1 and 3 only
 - (d) 1, 2 and 3
- 

Complete **Current Affairs 2025–2026**

By Bhunesh Sir

Relevant For Exams By

UPSC Prelims, PSC, SSC, Banking, Railway, Defence, EPFO, IB Among Others

What you'll get

- ✓ **From January 2025 to March 2026**
- ✓ **20 high-priority topics**

Price – 999/-



Class24

Step 1

Welcome to



Mobile No.

Login

Need Help?



Step 2



Hi, Abhijeet Kumar Singh

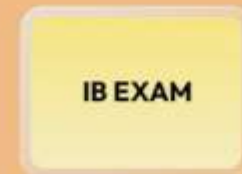


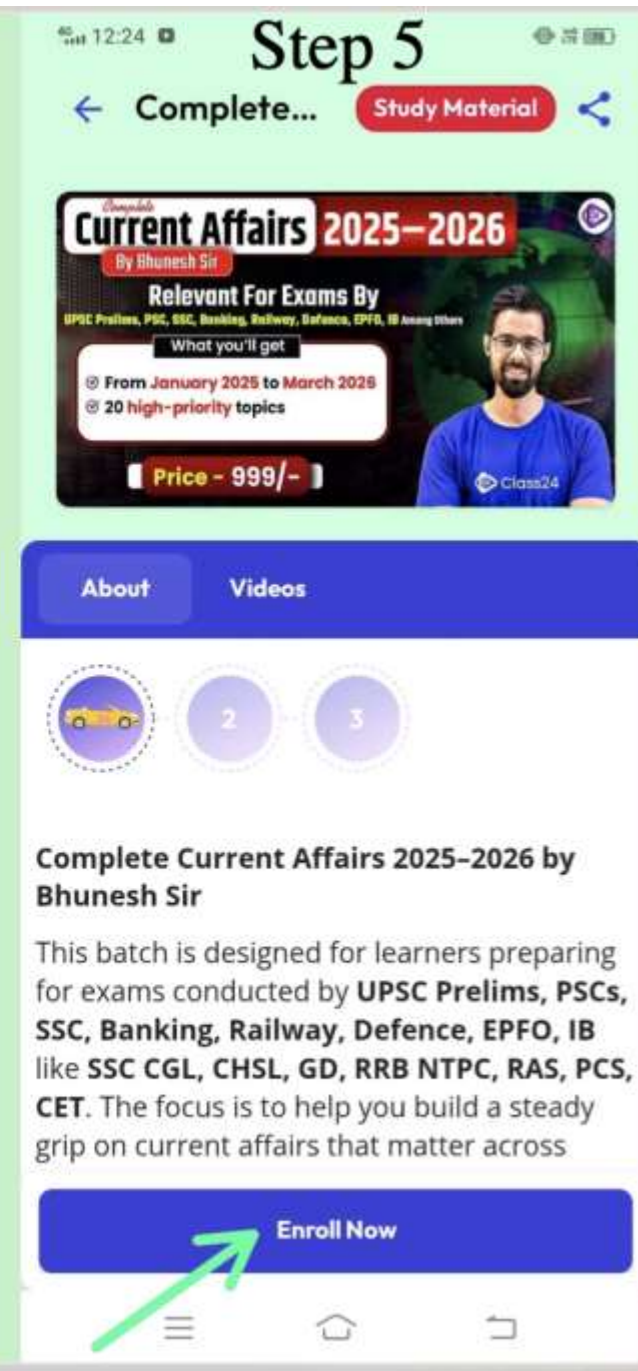
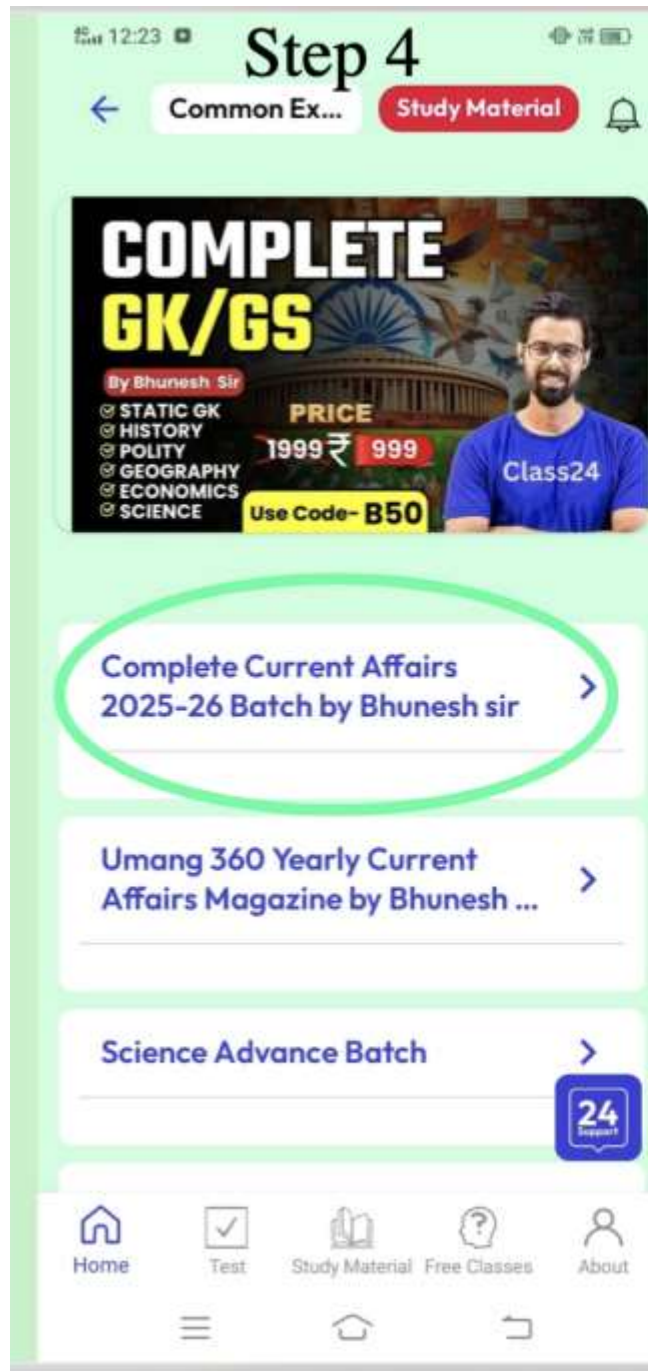
Categories



Step 3

GOVT. EXAMS





Word of the day

Beatific:

experiencing or bestowing celestial joy; marked by utter benignity; resembling or befitting an angel or saint

Synonyms: angelic, saintly

Usage: *He smiled one of his beatific smiles and left.*

Pronunciation: [newsth.live/beatificpro](https://www.newsth.live/beatificpro)

International Phonetic Alphabet: /biə'tɪfɪk/



Thank you 😊

