

# Daily Current Affairs



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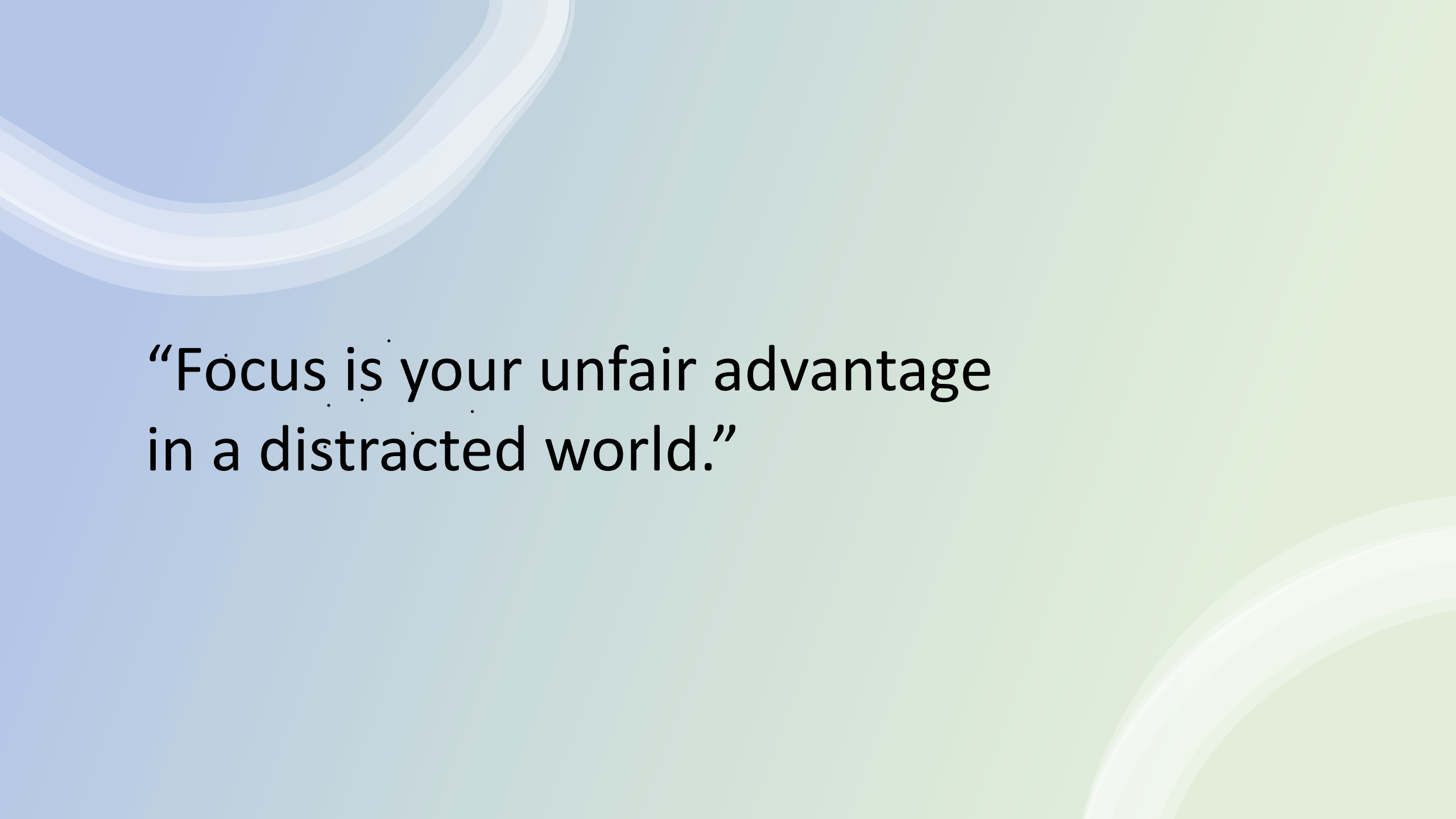


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“Focus is your unfair advantage  
in a distracted world.”

# तैयारी सब karte hai पर **Select** कुछ ही होते है !

What is the Right Strategy ?

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**INTERIOR EXPLOSION**  
Five killed, 15 injured in blast at house in A.P.  
STATES > PAGE 3

**IDENTITY CRISIS**  
'UCC will erase tribal traditions, autonomy'  
ASSEMBLY POLLS > PAGE 8

**CENSUS 2011**  
Enumeration to begin in 8 States, U.T.s today  
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**FLAWED PROPOSALS**  
'On delimitation and women's reservation'  
The proposed Bills have significant impact  
EDITORIAL & OPINION > PAGES 6 & 7

**WORLD CROWN BECOMES**  
Vaishali wins women's Candidates title  
SPORT > PAGE 14

INSIDE



Sir Dorabji Tata Trust 'needs an administrator'

**CHENNAI** Muthi Histry, who stepped down from the Tata Trusts as a trustee in November last year after being denied reappointment, has alleged gross irregularities in the administration of Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and prayed for assigning an administrator to run the trust. > PAGE 12

Teenager kills nine in Turkish school shooting

**ISTANBUL** A 14-year-old opened fire at a Turkish school on Wednesday, killing nine persons, wounding 18 and sparking scenes of mayhem. The attack in the southern province of Karaman was the deadliest in Turkey's recent history in as many days. > PAGE 14

Bageshwar Dham cleared to receive foreign funding

**NEW DELHI** The Union Home Ministry has granted registration under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act to Babu Bageshwar Dham, a religious body led by Divyendra Krishna Shastri, a Madhya Pradesh-based godman who seeks to establish 'Hindu Bahinior' in exile. >

DMK-Cong. 'will secure two-thirds majority in TN'

**CHENNAI** Deputy Chief Minister of Karnataka and Congress leader D.K. Shivakumar, on Wednesday, stressed the need for unity among media members, and reiterated that the DMK-Cong alliance would secure a two-thirds majority in Tamil Nadu. > PAGE 5

Girls outshine boys in CBSE class 10 exam

**THE HINDU BUREAU NEW DELHI** Continuing a long-standing trend, girls outperformed boys in the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Class 10 examination results declared on Wednesday. The pass percentage for girls stood at 84.28 per cent, 1.3 percentage points higher than the 82.98 per cent recorded by boys. South India continued to dominate the regional rankings, with Thiruvananthapuram and Vijayawada regions sharing the top spot with a 99.79 per cent pass rate, followed closely by Chennai (99.58 per cent) and Bengaluru (98.98 per cent). Delhi West

Iran says blockade a threat to ceasefire; warns it will shut down Red Sea traffic

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE TEL AVIV

Iran's military threatened on Wednesday to shut down Red Sea trade unless the U.S. lifted its naval blockade on Tehran's ports, saying the ceasefire was at risk. The head of Iran's military central command centre said a U.S. failure to lift the blockade would constitute "a prelude" to violating the two-week ceasefire. Unless the U.S. reverts, Iran's armed forces "will not allow any exports or imports to continue in the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman, and the Red Sea," Iranian General Ali Abdollahi said. The warning came after U.S. President Donald Trump indicated peace negotiations could resume this week, while Iran continued the talks had kept talking with Pakistan after a first round of negotiations fell flat. Iran on Wednesday welcomed a Pakistani delegation led by its Army chief Aamir Munir.

Islamabad "has held discussions with the Americans and has also heard our stance. During this visit to be discussed in detail," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahman Ghahseli said. Washington has sought to turn the screws on Tehran with the blockade, with U.S. Central Command saying that American forces "have completely halted economic trade going into and out of Iran by sea". The picture based on recent maritime tracking data in the Strait of Hormuz was less clear-cut, and Iran's Tasnim news agency reported on Wednesday that shipping had continued from southern Iran.



Pakistan's Army chief Aamir Munir receives a warm welcome from Iranian Foreign Minister Ahmad Avchar in Tehran on Wednesday. AP

Speaking to the New York Post on Tuesday, Mr. Trump said a new round of talks with Iran could take place in Pakistan "over the next two days", while being less than enthusiastic about the war was "very close to being over". Reports said the U.S. had sought a 30-year suspension of Iran's uranium enrichment programme during the talks. And that Iran, in turn, proposed suspending its nuclear activity for five years after an offer U.S. officials rejected.

LEADERS FLOCK TO CHINA > PAGE 14

States' seats will rise 50% after delimitation: Centre

No State will lose current proportional strength in Parliament, says govt. functionary while not mentioned in the draft Bills. Home Minister has assured party representatives of rise, official adds

NARGHES K. GEORGE NEW DELHI

All States will increase their number of Lok Sabha seats by half after delimitation, and no State will lose its current proportional strength in Parliament, a senior government functionary told The Hindu on Wednesday.

He said Union Home Minister Ashwini Shukla would clarify this in Parliament during the debate on the Constitution (115th Amendment) Bill and the Delimitation Bill. The debate begins on Thursday. "If there is any requirement for change in the language of the draft Bill, that too will be addressed," the government functionary said. "The drafts of the Bills have raised concerns that the States which have smaller population are set to lose their relative position in the composition of the Lok Sabha is reapportioned between States as per the latest Census figures. Mr. Shukla had assured party representatives, who met him in recent weeks, that the strength of the Lok Sabha would not be distributed across States in their existing proportions - that is, a 100 per cent increase in the number of seats from each individual State.



Union Home Minister Ashwini Shukla after a meeting to discuss the proposed Bills on delimitation in New Delhi on Wednesday. (Photo: ANS/VISVA)



Officials in New Delhi after a meeting to discuss the proposed Bills on delimitation in New Delhi on Wednesday. (Photo: ANS/VISVA)

However, this is not mentioned in the drafts of the Bills circulated by the government. In fact, the Bills propose an inter-State re-distribution of Lok Sabha seats, which could make it impossible for current proportions to be maintained. The senior functionary said this was a misreading of the drafts. "Those who are reading bits and pieces and interpreting them as reducing the relative strength of the South are missing the big picture," the functionary said. Asked how this position squares with the proposed amendments to the Constitution and the provisions of the Delimitation Bill, the

INDIA bloc will vote against delimitation

NEW DELHI

The INDIA bloc parties have decided to vote against the delimitation provisions in the proposed Bills. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said on Tuesday while underlining that the bloc's opposition is not against women's reservation. > PAGE 4

functionary said everything would be explained during the parliamentary debate. "There is no change in the assurance given by the government that all States will have their number of seats in the Lok Sabha increased by 50%. If Tamil Nadu has 30, it will have 38, Kerala has 20 and it will have 30," the functionary said, asking to wait for the mechanics of it to be explained in the Parliament.

HOUS REPORTS > PAGE 2 & 3



Devastating inferno

A firefighting operation under way after a massive blaze razed a slum near the Yeddi Palya locality in Lucknow on Wednesday. AP

Samrat sworn in as Bihar's first BJP Chief Minister as Nitish leaves his post

ASHWATH TEWARY PATNA

The newly elected leader of the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA), Samrat Choudhary, was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Bihar on Wednesday, marking the end of Nitish Kumar's record tenure in the post.

Two senior leaders from the JDU, Bijendra Prasad Yadav and Vijay Kumar Choudhary, took oath as Ministers. Both are likely to be Deputy Chief Ministers in the new BJP-led NDA government in the State. Before being sworn in, Mr. Samrat Choudhary visited a famous Hanuman temple in the State capital Patna, to offer prayer and seek blessings. Senior BJP leaders, including party chief Nitish Kumar, Union Ministers J.P. Nadda, and national general secretary (organisation) B. Santosh, along with Mr. Kumar, were present. After taking oath, Mr. Samrat Choudhary went to the party headquarters to meet party workers and leaders. "With the blessings of Nitish Kumar and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, I will take forward the mission of development and growth in the State," he told prospective.



Leadership change: Bihar Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary with former Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, in Patna on Wednesday. ANI

officials to implement a policy of "zero tolerance" against corruption with absolute firmness. He told officials to ensure that the public received proper facilities and that their issues are resolved promptly at the block, circle, and police station levels. He asserted that corruption would not be tolerated at any level. There should be no bureaucratic complacency regarding the resolution of land-related disputes, instead, streamline procedures to ensure their speedy disposal," he said. Earlier, there was talk and speculation that Samrat Kumar, son of Mr. Kumar, was the most likely to be sworn in as Chief Minister of Bihar. Mr. Choudhary directed State

Chief Ministers but it was said that he was reluctant to don the post before having a decade of political experience.

**Long-serving aides** Both Mr. Yadav, 79, and Mr. Vijay Kumar Choudhary, 69, are considered close to Mr. Kumar and were Ministers in his previous Cabinets.

Mr. Yadav has been Minister in Bihar since 2008 but his falling health has been a cause of concern. In last Cabinet, Mr. Yadav was the Minister for Finance, Planning and Development. He has been winning Assembly elections from Supaul constituency since 1990.

Mr. Vijay Kumar Choudhary has been in JDU since 2008 winning Assembly elections from Sarawan constituency. In the previous government of Mr. Kumar, he was the Minister for Water Resources and Parliamentary Affairs.



Celebration mood: Students cheer after the release of CBSE Class 10th results in Prayagraj on Wednesday. AP

stated on X, "Those who have succeeded deserve commendation for their hard work, discipline and perseverance in reaching this milestone. At the same time, it is important to recognise that a single examination does not define one's potential." According to official data released by the CBSE, 88,308 students scored above 95 per cent and 2,21,574 above 90 per cent. This year's announcement is particularly significant as it marks the roll-out of the new two-exam system. The 2026 examination cycle was a massive logistical undertaking involving 27,339 schools and 8,074

exam centres. To facilitate the early release of results - nearly a month ahead of the earlier mid-May schedule - the CBSE said it deployed seven lakh evaluators, 40,000 head examiners, and 2,08,991 investigators for evaluation of approximately 1.6 crore answer books. For students placed in the "outstanding" category (approximately 1.47 lakh candidates), those looking to improve their scores, the second Board exam is scheduled to begin in mid-May. Students should notify their interest between April 16 and 20.

Administrative issues In his meeting with Chief Minister of Bihar, Mr. Choudhary directed State >>>

## 50% MORE, 33% WOMEN AND 0% CHANGE IN STATE REPRESENTATION

Every state's Lok Sabha MPs rise 50%, one-third of this bigger number to be reserved for women

**FULL TABLE: P 11**

State/UT	Current Seats	Proposed Seats*	Gain
Uttar Pradesh	80	120	40
Maharashtra	48	72	24
West Bengal	42	63	21
Bihar	40	60	20
Tamil Nadu	39	59	20
Madhya Pradesh	29	44	15
Karnataka	28	42	14
Gujarat	26	39	13
Andhra Pradesh	25	38	13
Rajasthan	25	38	13
Odisha	21	32	11
Kerala	20	30	10

➤ States' share in Lok Sabha representation remains unchanged

➤ If 2011 population is used, southern states could lose about 4% points representation to Hindi belt

➤ 850 is maximum strength provided for, just as 550 is current ceiling while actual House strength is 543

\*Estimate

## IN BRIEF



## SC stays HC order protecting Pawan Kherra from arrest

The Supreme Court on Wednesday stayed an order of the Telangana High Court granting interim protection from arrest to Congress leader and spokesperson Pawan Kherra in connection with an FIR filed by kinship Bhuvan Sharma, wife of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, over his allegations made a press conference on April 4 that he had multiple passports. A bench of Justices L.J. Mathew and A.S. Chandrababu Naidu said it was "surprised" by the High Court's April 10 order granting Mr. Kherra one-week interim relief, and issued notice to him on a petition filed by the Assam Police challenging the grant of such protection.

## HC permits IVF procedure for soldier in vegetative state

The Delhi High Court has permitted the procedure for an in vitro fertilisation (IVF) for a soldier in a vegetative state who is in a permanent vegetative state with no scope of neurological recovery in the near future. In the order passed on April 15, 2026, the court said the soldier's earlier consent, which was given when he stated the IVF procedure, was sufficient even now, and the wife's consent would be treated as valid on his behalf for the purposes of the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Act. The wife of the soldier had approached the court seeking directions for extraction of her husband's genetic material for IVF.

## Unemployment rate shows a slight increase in March

The unemployment rate (UR) for persons aged 15 and above stood at 5.7% in March, up by 0.2 percentage points from February, largely due to urban joblessness, according to the Periodic Labour Force Survey prepared by the National Statistics Office on Wednesday. The report said UR in rural areas was 4.7%, while in urban areas it was 6.8%. Among working aged 15 and above, the UR was 4.1% in rural areas and 9% in urban areas. The female Labour Force Participation Rate declined to 34.4% in March from 35.3% in February. The Working Population Ratio for persons aged 15 and above was 52.6% in March.

## Justice Shekhar Yadav retires amid pending impeachment

The Allahabad High Court judge Justice Shekhar Yadav retired on Wednesday, amid a pending motion seeking his removal in Parliament, in relation to a controversial speech made in 2024. With his retirement, all pending motions against him will be nullified as such motions are only applicable in the case of sitting judges. Addressing an event organized by the legal cell of the Shivana Hindu Parishad on December 8, 2024, Justice Yadav made several veiled attacks against the Muslim community while speaking about a Union in Civil Code. He was accused of engaging in "hate speech" and "incitement to communal disharmony" in violation of the Constitution.

## Bageshwar Dham gets govt. nod to receive foreign funds

Dhirendra Krishna Shastri, leader of the religious body, advocates establishment of a Hindu Rashtra; FCRA registration mandatory for NGOs or associations to receive foreign donations

Vishala Singh  
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry has granted registration under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) to Hindu Rashtra, a religious body led by Dhirendra Krishna Shastri, a Madhya Pradesh-based godman who seeks to establish "Hindu Rashtra". Mr. Shastri, 79, is often courted by politicians and is known for his provocative statements on religious matters. His website has a separate section to collect donations from within India.

Despite repeated attempts, the religious body could not be reached for comment.

**Mandatory registration**  
Registration under the FCRA is mandatory if a non-government organisation (NGO) or an association wants to receive foreign donations. NGOs can receive foreign contributions for social, educational, religious,



Bageshwar Dham Sarkar Acharya Dhirendra Krishna Shastri at a religious event at the Bhadrak Paradi Ground in Kolkata. **AP**

**Six of 38 NGOs given FCRA registration till Wednesday are in the Religious (Hindu) category**

economic and cultural programmes and can be registered for at least one or multiple categories. The Hindu Bageshwar Jan seva Samiti (JSS) at Chhatarpur in Madhya Pradesh has been registered under the 'Religious (Hindu)' pro-

gramme, other than cultural, in the list of NGOs granted FCRA registration. It is a trust, other than Bageshwar Dham, those registered under the category are Kanakshila Missions at Rajpur in West Bengal and Prarthna in Bihar. They have been registered under the 'Religious (Hindu)' programme, other than cultural, in the list of NGOs granted FCRA registration. It is a trust, other than Bageshwar Dham, those registered under the category are Kanakshila Missions at Rajpur in West Bengal and Prarthna in Bihar. They have been registered under the 'Religious (Hindu)' pro-

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## ED attaches ₹159.51-crore assets in West Bengal illegal coal mining case

Devesh Kumar Pandey  
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached assets estimated at ₹159.51 crore under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act in connection with a probe into large-scale illegal coal mining and pilferage in the West Bengal area of Eastern Coalfields Ltd (ECL) in West Bengal. With this, the total value of properties attached in the case has reached ₹482.22 crore.

According to the agency, the probe has revealed multiple layers of complex financial transactions designed to conceal the origin and ownership of illicit funds.

The ED said illegal mining was carried out by a syndicate led allegedly by Anup Majhi, also known as "Lala". It alleged that the syndicate was engaged in illegal excavation and wi-



despread coal pilferage, distributing the coal to multiple factories in West Bengal with the help of local administration.

"Certain" beneficiary companies in West Bengal were found to have knowingly purchased illegally excavated coal in cash, the ED said.

The attached assets include investments in movable financial instruments such as corporate bonds

and alternative investment funds held in the names of beneficiary entities, including Shyam Jet and Power Group and Shyam Ferro Alloys Limited, which are part of the Shyam Group managed and controlled by Sanjay Agarwal and Raj Shrivastava, said the agency.

A key member of the syndicate, a transport chaffari system called "Lala" which functioned as a fake tax invoice issued in the name of non-existent entities.

The ED also uncovered a "Laxwala" network used to transfer proceeds of crime in cash, bypassing formally purchased channels.

The Central Bureau of Investigation has also registered a case in connection with the illegal mining and transport of coal from Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh to West Bengal. Among those named as accused is Anup Majhi.

## Career conversations to enable students make better choices

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI

SRM Institute of Science and Technology and The Hindu will organise "The Future Career Conversations" series to help students make better choices.

The discussion session in the series, titled "Future of Multidisciplinary Learning", will be held on April 16 at 11.30 a.m. and will explore how the convergence of humanities and sciences is shaping the future of education.

The discussion will highlight how learners can leverage this approach to remain relevant. The panel will include Dr. Anup Kumar, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Science & Humanities, SRMIST, and Dr. Duraisamy, Dean, Faculty

of Science and Humanities, SRMIST, Poornima Puthalala, Technical Professor, IIT Madras and Viswanath R. Kani, Mentor, Investor & Advisor, Global Commodity Trading and Investment Advisor. The session will be moderated by journalist Soma Basu. To register please visit <https://www.futurecareerconversations.com>.

## Door-to-door visits for Census start in 8 States, U.T.s today

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

From Thursday, enumerators will begin door-to-door visits in eight States and Union Territories seeking responses to a set of 33 questions for the first phase of Population Census 2026 — the House Listing and Housing Operations (HLO).

The field operations will begin in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Goa, Karnataka, Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Odisha, and Sikkim, along with the New Delhi Municipal Corporation area and Delhi Cantonment Board in the National Capital Territory, following the conclusion of the three-day self-enumeration period, a statement by the Union Home Ministry said.

The exercise will be carried out over a 30-day period till May 5. The self-enumeration facilities introduced this time saw the participation of nearly 13 lakh households through the official portal ([ce-census.gov.in](http://ce-census.gov.in)).

The facility was made available prior to the field enumeration period to en-

able residents to submit their details online, the Ministry said.

Residents who have completed self-enumeration are requested to keep their generated self-enumeration ID (SE-ID) ready and share the same with the enumerator during the field visit to complete the HLO process," it added.

During the HLO phase, enumerators will collect information relating to housing conditions, household details, amenities available and assets possessed by the households.

**Next phase**  
In the next phase, the self-enumeration facility will start in Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Chandigarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh on Thursday, and will be available till April 30. The house-to-house householding in these States/Union Territories will be conducted from May 1 to 30. In Bihar, the 15-day self-enumeration period will commence on April 17 and continue till May 1, followed by field operations from May 2 to 31.

The field operations will begin in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Goa, Karnataka, Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Odisha, and Sikkim, along with the New Delhi Municipal Corporation area and Delhi Cantonment Board in the National Capital Territory, following the conclusion of the three-day self-enumeration period, a statement by the Union Home Ministry said.

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## Women in Kinnara to get monthly aid of ₹1,500

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvirinder Singh Sukha on Wednesday announced that all eligible women in the tribal district of Kinnara will be provided ₹1,500 per month under the Indira Gandhi Paryatna Sukha Samman Yojana scheme.

He was speaking at Rocking Poo in Kinnara district at a State-level event on the occasion of the 79th Himachal Day.

Addressing the gathering, he said that due to the efforts of the State government, border trade with China via Shikha La Pass is set to resume from June 1 this year, which he described as a significant achievement.

"The matter of commencing the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra through Nepal has also been strongly taken up with the Union government and positive developments are emerging," he said.

**THE CROSSWORD 14769**  
(set by AnandB)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
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Solve this puzzle online and score more points at <https://thehindu.com/crosswords>

12. Gang, in essence, was regularly entering his sport (10)  
13. Writer got charged (quintet) (10)  
14. Coward, see, right away (4)  
15. Colours together get better (rearrange) (10)  
16. Old bird kind (single out) or kind of delivery service (10, 4)  
17. Set not quite around five (holding chef's first dish) (5, 3)  
18. "Onions of tonight's meal" (rearrange) (6)  
19. Made his Indian crick (clash) start, gotted up with daughter (10)  
20. Welcome husband's distress (4)  
21. Incomplete gift and not after twining nose (11)  
22. Spooner's young boy, better with poor judgement (10, 5)  
Down  
1. Sails a tort! Wonderfully holds a small party (13, 3)  
2. Fold coat, hidden to middle (11)  
3. Essentially, isn't it (logically use this apparatus to connect, say, I to her) (7)  
4. Low none built, becoming attractive (11)  
5. Overhaul nuclear threat (7)  
6. Made improvements in newspaper column about model (11, 5), with editing (11)  
7. No fall at facilities run on (11, 5)  
8. Inhabitant over private court case (11)  
9. All things, all language includes old pronunciation of R as (11, 10)  
10. One studying mountains is ordinary for university doctor (11)  
11. Worst case for a accommodate coming (rearrange) (10)  
12. Looking advanced auxiliary supports, remarkable but collapsed (11)  
13. Main article chases CEO's replacement (5)  
14. Oh, sound meaning in a (rearrange's) (11)  
15. Saw up for boat (11)

**SUDOKU**

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

Difficulty Rating: ★★☆☆☆

**Difficulty to progress puzzle**

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

**FAITH**  
Decoding the Ramayana

The question arises why did Lord Ramayana choose to incarnate as Rama along with His brother's rather than appearing alone? Sri Devika Sri Yashovanta Tattvaacharya Swamiji, while explaining the subtle meanings embedded in the Ramayana, revealed that each brother had a distinct divine purpose. Rama incarnated to demonstrate unwavering adherence to His father's word; Lakshmana to exemplify how a devotee should worship and serve the Lord; Hanu to highlight the supreme importance of reverence towards the Acharya (through the worship of the divine sandals which symbolise Acharya) and Shatrughna to illustrate the ideal of serving the Lord's devotees.

When Rama sought to cross the ocean, He performed arambhanti (surrender) to Samudra Raja and lay on a bed of grass for three days, humbly pleading for a way. Yet, Samudra Raja did not respond immediately. The deeper reason, as explained by our Acharyas, lies in the true nature of surrender. A person who performs genuine surrender must possess two essential qualities: the realisation that "I have nothing" (*aham bhavami na*) and "I have no other refuge or means" (*ananyaparigraha*). However, Rama is the Supreme Being, the very source of all strength and power. Therefore, Samudra Raja did not initially accept His sitta, through her conduct in the Ramayana, demonstrated how a truly surrendered soul should remain steadfast, patient, and complete dependence on the Lord. Hanuman is portrayed as the Acharya, serving as the guiding force who facilitates and exemplifies the discipline of arambhanti (surrender), leading the soul towards the Lord.

# Door-to-door visits for Census start in 8 States, U.T.s today

**The Hindu Bureau**

NEW DELHI

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The facility was made available prior to the field enumeration period to en-

able residents to submit their details online, the Ministry said.

“Residents who have completed self-enumeration are requested to keep their generated self-enumeration ID (SE ID) ready and share the same with the enumerator during the field visit to complete the HLO process,” it added.

During the HLO phase, enumerators will collect information relating to housing conditions, household details, amenities available and assets possessed by the households.

## Next phase

In the next phase, the self-enumeration facility will start in Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Chandigarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh on Thursday, and will be available till April 30. The house-to-house houselisting in these States/Union Territories will be conducted from May 1 to 30. In Bihar, the 15-day self-enumeration period will commence on April 17 and continue till May 1, followed by field operations from May 2 to 31.

<b>Phase 1</b>	House Listing & Housing Operations (HLO)
<b>Start Date</b>	Begins from <b>Thursday (April 2026)</b>
<b>States/UTs Covered (Phase 1)</b>	Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Goa, Karnataka, Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Odisha, Sikkim + <b>Delhi (NDMC &amp; Cantonment area)</b>
<b>Duration of HLO</b>	<b>30 days (till May 15)</b>
<b>Questions Asked</b>	Around <b>33 questions</b>
<b>Data Collected (HLO)</b>	Housing condition, household assets, amenities, facilities, number of rooms, water, sanitation, etc.
<b>Self-Enumeration Feature</b>	Introduced for the <b>first time</b>
<b>Participation in Self-Enumeration</b>	<b>~ 12 lakh households</b>
<b>Official Portal</b>	<a href="https://se.census.gov.in">se.census.gov.in</a>
<b>Enumerator Role</b>	Verify self-enumeration ID (SE ID) & collect additional details during field visit
<b>Next Phase (Phase 2)</b>	Population Enumeration
<b>States in Next Phase</b>	Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Chandigarh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh
<b>Self-Enumeration Period (Phase 2)</b>	<b>April 17 – May 1</b>
<b>Field Enumeration (Phase 2)</b>	<b>May 2 – May 31</b>

Topic	Key Points
Legal Basis	Conducted under <b>Census Act, 1948</b>
Frequency	Every <b>10 years (Decennial Census)</b>
Last Census	<b>2011 Census</b> (15th Census of India)
2021 Census	Postponed due to <b>COVID-19 pandemic</b>
First Census in India	<b>1872 (non-synchronous)</b> ; first complete census: <b>1881 (Lord Ripon)</b>
Nodal Ministry	Ministry of Home Affairs
Registrar General of India (RGI)	Responsible authority for Census & Civil Registration
Difference: HLO vs Population Enumeration	HLO → Housing & assets data; Population Enumeration → demographic details (age, sex, occupation, etc.)
Digital Census 2027	First <b>fully digital census</b> with mobile apps & online self-enumeration
Importance	Basis for <b>policy planning, delimitation, welfare schemes, resource allocation</b>
Delimitation Link	Census data used for <b>Lok Sabha &amp; Assembly seat redistribution</b>
Sensitive Data	Confidential under <b>Census Act</b> ; cannot be used as legal evidence



# Implications of increasing the size of the Lok Sabha

The government has circulated a set of three Bills related to delimitation and women's reservation. These Bills are expected to be taken up in the extended Budget session from April 16-18, and could affect the working of Parliament in several ways. The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill proposes the following. The limit on the size of the Lok Sabha will be increased from 550 to 850. The number of seats for each State in the Lok Sabha will be based on its proportion in the population of all States. This population will be based on such Census (not necessarily the latest) that is specified by Parliament by passing a law. The Bill also clarifies that the reservation of one-third of seats for women will be effective after a delimitation, and will be valid for 15 years. The Delimitation Bill sets up a Delimitation Commission, and its provisions are similar to the last one set up in 2002. Importantly, it requires the latest published Census to be used. Therefore, the next delimitation is proposed to be based on the 2011 Census. The third Bill extends these provisions to the three Union Territories with legislatures: Delhi, J&K, and Puducherry.

## Huge impact

There are several implications of these proposals. First, the freezing of seats until the first Census after 2026 has been removed. Instead, seats will be decided based on the 2011 Census. An immediate implication is that the relative share of seats in the Lok Sabha for each State will change. The biggest losers are Kerala and Tamil Nadu, while the main gainers are Rajasthan, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. While the proposal will equalise the value of the vote of every citizen regardless of their State of residence, it will lead to MPs from U.P. and Bihar (25% of total seats, up from 22%) having significant power to shape national policy.

Second, the Constitution Amendment Bill provides Parliament the flexibility to determine the periodicity of delimitation and the Census



**M.R. Madhavan**

Co-founder and  
President of PRS  
Legislative Research

These Bills will have significant impact on the composition of Parliament and its functioning, and are being introduced with no public discussion

that will be used for the purpose. Currently, the Constitution requires delimitation after every Census, and to be based on that Census (currently, there is a freeze on this until 2026). The Amendment requires just a simple majority to determine whether to do delimitation, and which Census to use. The government of the day, as it would command the majority in the Lok Sabha, can effectively make this decision. They would need to pass it in the Rajya Sabha too, but that House will be weakened by the same Bill, which brings us to the third implication. While the size of the Lok Sabha is being increased, there is no proposal to change the size of the Rajya Sabha. This affects the relative importance of the two Houses. For example, if the two Houses disagree on a Bill, the President may summon a joint sitting. In such a scenario, each member of Parliament has one vote, so the Lok Sabha with 543 seats has 2.2 times the votes of the Rajya Sabha with 245 seats. If we assume that the Lok Sabha will now have 815 seats (an increase of 50%), it will have 3.3 times the strength of the Rajya Sabha. The effect can be seen with an example. Say, the government has 53% seats in the Lok Sabha (433 out of 815) and just 40% in the Rajya Sabha (98 out of 245 seats). The government will still be able to get its Bills through a joint session as it has a majority of total seats. This imbalance will also play out in elections to the offices of the President and the Vice-President, where each MP across both Houses has an equal vote.

A fourth implication is that the limit on the size of the Council of Ministers will increase. The Constitution was amended in 2003 to limit the Council's size to 15% of the Lok Sabha. If Lok Sabha is expanded to have 815 MPs, the limit on the size of the Central cabinet also increases from 81 to 122. Fifth, the increased size of the Lok Sabha reduces the opportunity for an MP to

participate in the deliberations of the House. MPs ask questions to Ministers to hold them to account, and raise important issues in the zero hour. Questions and zero hour interventions are chosen by lottery, and an increased size of the Lok Sabha reduces the probability of getting balloted. The issue is exacerbated by the fact that Parliament sits for less than 70 days a year.

## Global precedents

Other countries also have large legislatures. For example, the U.K. House of Commons has 650 members. It has evolved processes to provide opportunities to MPs to participate in discussions. It averages over 150 sittings a year, and also has a robust committee system. Parliamentary committees can supplement deliberations. However, the Indian Parliament is found lacking in this respect. For example, every Bill in the U.K. Parliament has to be examined by committees of both Houses. In India, less than a fifth of the Bills are referred to Committees.

Sixth, there could be a similar impact on State legislatures. Though these Bills do not have any provisions regarding the size of State legislatures, that decision will be taken by the Delimitation Commission. If they decide to follow the same rationale and increase the size by 50%, some States could have oversized legislatures. U.P. could end up having over 600 seats while West Bengal and Maharashtra could reach about 450.

These Bills will have significant impact on the composition of Parliament and its functioning, and are being introduced with no public discussion. It is imperative that such Bills go through intensive deliberation, both outside and inside Parliament. At the very least, they should be referred to a parliamentary committee, which can engage with experts and the wider public before giving its recommendations.



- **Six major implications** identified by PRS Legislative Research: changed seat share, parliamentary control of census timing, Rajya Sabha weakening, Cabinet size increase, reduced MP participation, impact on State Assemblies.

- The government wants to: (1) increase Lok Sabha from 550 to 850 seats; (2) do delimitation based on 2011 Census (not wait for next Census); (3) give Parliament the flexibility to choose which census to use for future delimitation.
- सरकार चाहती है: (1) लोकसभा 550 से 850 सीटों तक बढ़ाना; (2) 2011 जनगणना पर परिसीमन; (3) संसद को भविष्य की जनगणना चुनने की लचीलेपन।
- This article analyses six important side-effects/implications that are rarely discussed — beyond just the north-south divide.
- यह लेख छह महत्वपूर्ण दुष्प्रभावों/निहितार्थों का विश्लेषण करता है जिन पर शायद ही चर्चा होती है।
- Key concern: A government with simple majority in Lok Sabha can decide WHICH census to use — meaning it can choose a census that favours its own states/voters, without needing opposition support.
- मुख्य चिंता: लोकसभा में साधारण बहुमत वाली सरकार तय कर सकती है कि कौन सी जनगणना उपयोग करें — यानी यह वह जनगणना चुन सकती है जो उसके अपने राज्यों/मतदाताओं के पक्ष में हो, विपक्ष समर्थन के बिना।

## D1. The Three Bills / तीन विधेयक

### 1. Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill:

- Increases Lok Sabha limit from **550 to 850 seats**
- Seats for each State based on **proportion in population of all States** (from specified Census)
- Women's reservation: **one-third** effective after delimitation; valid for **15 years**
- Parliament given **flexibility to determine periodicity of delimitation and which Census** to use
- Freeze until first Census after 2026 removed — instead, 2011 Census to be used now

### 2. Delimitation Bill:

- Sets up **Delimitation Commission** — similar to 2002 commission
- Requires use of **latest published Census** — so next delimitation based on **2011 Census**
- Provides for actual drawing of constituency boundaries

### 3. Third Bill:

- Extends provisions to **three Union Territories with legislatures**: Delhi, J&K, and Puducherry

## D2. Six Major Implications / छह प्रमुख निहितार्थ

### Implication 1: Changed Seat Share / बदली सीट हिस्सेदारी

- Relative share of each State's Lok Sabha seats will change
- **Biggest losers:** Kerala and Tamil Nadu
- **Main gainers:** Rajasthan, Bihar, and **Uttar Pradesh**
- **UP and Bihar together:** Currently 22% of seats → will rise to **25% of total seats**
- UP+Bihar MPs will have **significant power to shape national policy**
- This "equalises the value of every citizen's vote regardless of State of residence"
- लेकिन: UP और Bihar से MPs को राष्ट्रीय नीति आकार देने की महत्वपूर्ण शक्ति मिलेगी
- **सबसे बड़े घाटे:** केरल और तमिलनाडु | **मुख्य लाभार्थी:** राजस्थान, Bihar, UP

### Implication 2: Parliament Controls Census Timing / संसद जनगणना समय नियंत्रित करती है

- **Constitution Amendment Bill** clarifies that Parliament may determine **which Census** to use and **periodicity of delimitation**
- This requires only a **simple majority** — governing party alone can make this decision
- Currently, Constitution requires delimitation after EVERY Census
- Under new framework, government of the day commands Lok Sabha majority → **unilaterally** decides when to delimit and which census data to use
- Rajya Sabha will also need to pass it — but same bill **weakens Rajya Sabha**  
(Implication 3)
- **खतरा:** सत्तारूढ़ दल अपने लिए अनुकूल जनगणना डेटा चुन सकता है

### Implication 3: Rajya Sabha Weakened / राज्यसभा कमजोर होगी

- **No proposal to increase Rajya Sabha size** (stays at 245)
- If two Houses disagree → Joint Sitting → **each MP has one vote**
- Currently: Lok Sabha (543) has **2.2× votes of Rajya Sabha (245)** in joint sitting
- After expansion: **Lok Sabha (815) will have 3.3× votes of Rajya Sabha (245)** in joint sitting
- **Example:** If government has 53% in Lok Sabha (433/815) and only 40% in Rajya Sabha (98/245):
  - Currently in joint sitting:  $433 + 98 = 531$  votes out of 788 total = **less than majority** (needs  $>394$ ) — wait, as stated, with majority of total they can push bills
  - Government can still pass Bills in joint session as it has majority of total seats
- **Federal impact:** Rajya Sabha represents states; weakening it = weakening states' voice in Parliament
- **राज्यसभा का कमजोर होना:** राज्यों की आवाज कमजोर; संघवाद पर प्रभाव

### Implication 4: Council of Ministers Size Increases / मंत्रिपरिषद का आकार बढ़ेगा

- **91st Constitutional Amendment (2003):** Council of Ministers capped at **15% of Lok Sabha strength**
- Currently: 15% of 543 = **~81 ministers** maximum in Central Cabinet
- After expansion to 815: 15% of 815 = **~122 ministers** maximum
- This is a significant increase in **executive size** — more ministers, more expenditure, possible dilution of ministerial accountability
- **91वां संविधान संशोधन (2003):** मंत्रिपरिषद अधिकतम लोकसभा का **15%**; 543 से 81 → 815 से **122**

### **Implication 5: Reduced MP Participation / MP की भागीदारी कम**

- India's Parliament sits for **fewer than 70 days a year**
- MPs ask questions, raise issues in zero hour — **chosen by lottery**
- Increased Lok Sabha size → **reduced probability of being chosen** in lottery for questions/zero hour
- Reduced opportunity for MPs to hold Ministers accountable
- Example: UK House of Commons (650 members) sits **over 150 days a year** with robust committee system; every Bill examined by committees
- India: **Less than 1/5 of Bills referred to Committees** — far below UK's 100%
- **भारत:** 70 दिन से कम सत्र; 1/5 से कम विधेयक समिति को; आकार बढ़ने से MP की भागीदारी और कम

### **Implication 6: Impact on State Assemblies / राज्य विधानसभाओं पर प्रभाव**

- Bills have **no provisions regarding State Assembly size** — Delimitation Commission will decide
- If states follow the same 50% increase rationale:
  - **UP could end up with over 600 seats** (current 403)
  - **West Bengal and Maharashtra could reach ~450 seats**
- These would be "**oversized legislatures**" — creating similar problems at state level

- **Parliamentary Committee System — Reform Need:**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Bills to Committee</b>	<b>Annual Sitting Days</b>
UK	100%	150+
USA (Congress)	~80%	100+
India	<20%	<70
Germany	90%+	100+

#	Exam	Year	Question	Options	✔ Answer
1	UPSC CSE Prelims	2021	Under which Article does Parliament provide for readjustment of seats in Lok Sabha after each Census?	(a) Article 81 (b) <b>Article 82</b> (c) Article 83 (d) Article 170	<b>(b) Article 82</b>
2	UPSC CSE Prelims	2022	Article 75(1A) of the Constitution, inserted by the 91st Constitutional Amendment, relates to:	(a) Election of PM (b) <b>Limit on size of Council of Ministers to 15% of Lok Sabha</b> (c) Removal of President (d) Emergency provisions	<b>(b) 15% limit on Council of Ministers</b>
3	UPSC CSE Prelims	2019	Under Article 108 of the Constitution, a joint sitting of Parliament can be convened for which of the following?	(a) Constitutional Amendment Bills (b) <b>Bills that are deadlocked between the two Houses</b> (c) Money Bills (d) Finance Bills	<b>(b) Deadlocked ordinary bills — NOT for Money Bills, Constitutional Amendments, or Finance Bills</b>
4	UPSC CSE Prelims	2023	Who presides over a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament under Article 108?	(a) President of India (b) Vice-President (c) <b>Speaker of Lok Sabha</b> (d) Senior-most member	<b>(c) Speaker of Lok Sabha</b>
5	UPSC CSE Prelims	2022	How many times has a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament been convened in India?	(a) Once (b) Twice (c) <b>Thrice</b> (d) Four times	<b>(c) Thrice — 1961 (Dowry), 1978 (Banking), 2002 (POTA)</b>

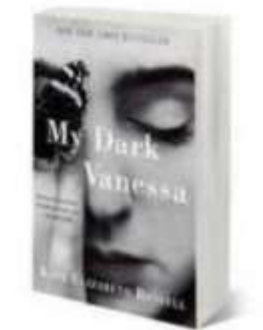
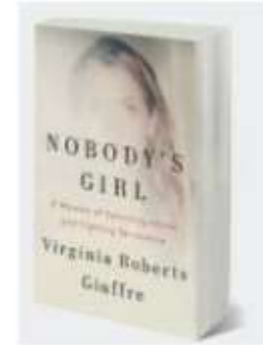
6	UPSC CSE Prelims	2024	How many Delimitation Commissions have been constituted in India till December 2023?	(a) Two (b) <b>Four</b> (c) Five (d) Three	(b) <b>Four</b> — 1952, 1963, 1973, 2002
7	UPSC CSE Prelims	2024	The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam (2023) which of the following is correct? Statements about women's reservation and its commencement.	(c) <b>2 &amp; 3 only</b>	Requires Census + delimitation; 15 years; SC/ST sub-quota
8	UPSC CSE Mains GS-2	2021	"The role of the Rajya Sabha as a revising chamber is being undermined by the current legislative practices." Critically examine.	(Mains descriptive)	Key: Article 108 asymmetry, joint sitting, Money Bill misuse, passage without RS assent
9	SSC CGL	2024	Under which Constitutional Amendment was the limit of 15% placed on the size of the Council of Ministers?	(a) 73rd (b) 84th (c) <b>91st</b> (d) 95th	(c) <b>91st Amendment (2003)</b>
10	UPSC CSE Prelims	2020	Which of the following statements about Parliamentary Standing Committees in India is correct?	(a) All Bills must be referred to committees (b) Committees have no constitutional basis (c) <b>Less than one-fifth of Bills in</b> ↓ <b>dia are referred to committees</b> (d)	(c) <b>Less than 1/5 Bills referred to committees in India</b>



## BIBLIOGRAPHY



**Speaking out:** An activist installs an unofficial sign renaming the Buckingham Palace memorial garden in honour of Virginia Giuffre. REUTERS



# Beyond consent: how power, legal ambiguities, and attitudes enable abuse

Several books underline how the line between agency and coercion blurs in age- and power-imbalanced relationships, exposing younger, less powerful individuals to enduring harm

Preeti Zachariah

**A** little under a year ago, Virginia Giuffre, one of the most vocal and prominent survivors of Jeffrey Epstein's and Ghislaine Maxwell's decades-long sex trafficking ring, died by suicide. According to a statement released by her family, the 41-year-old "lost her life to suicide, after being a lifelong victim of sexual abuse and sex trafficking... In the end, the toll of abuse is so heavy that it became unbearable for Virginia to handle its weight."

Giuffre's *Nobody's Girl: A Memoir of Surviving Abuse and Fighting for Justice*, which came out in October last year, six months after her death, is a chilling testimony to that statement. Co-written with Amy Wallace, the book traces Giuffre's tragic life, marked by sexual abuse, neglect, mental and physical health challenges, financial strife, and, as Wallace mentions in the foreword, even domestic abuse.

*Nobody's Girl*, which became a bestseller almost immediately, and has been described by reviewers as "important", "courageous", "sad", and "devastating", is a harrowing and often triggering read.

"I know many monsters. As a child, I suffered nearly every kind of abuse: incest, parental neglect, severe corporal punishment, molestation, and rape. As a teen, I had been sexually trafficked by another paedophile even before I met Jeffrey Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell, but these two doubled down on my suffering," writes Giuffre. She constantly reminds the reader that Epstein was not an outlier, but a product of a society that enables men like him through indifference and selective blindness. "Epstein is dead, but the attitude that

allowed him to do what he did? It's alive and well."

## Under the microscope

The plethora of novels and memoirs depicting complex, often predatory liaisons between adolescents and older men suggests that Giuffre is onto something. Art, after all, is often inherently mimetic, whether it be cult classics such as Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* and Marguerite Duras' *The Lover*, or Kate Elizabeth Russell's *My Dark Vanessa*, JM Coetzee's *Disgrace*, Jenny Erpenbeck's *Kairos*, as well as two memoirs, one by Vanessa Springora and another by Jill Ciment, both called *Consent*. All these books place age- and power-imbalanced sexual relationships under the microscope in different ways, dissecting ideas of agency, dysfunctionality, abuse, power imbalance, sexuality, the opacity of desire, and moral greyness in romantic love. One of the key themes that emerges out of a close reading of any of these texts is how the conversation around ephebophilia (a sexual preference for adolescents), while morally reprehensible, can often be legally ambiguous. Epstein "took a certain glee in what he saw as a loophole in society's moral code...the fact that different nations and states define the age of consent differently," Giuffre writes in one part of her memoir, adding that he often argued that "these laws were arbitrary and meaningless; no one could convince him that sex with minors was wrong, because no one could agree on what a minor was!"

## Deviations from morality

Cultural churns in society, too, can provide cover for sexual relationships with minors. Springora, whose memoir chronicles a relationship she had at 13 with the 50-something French writer

Gabriel Matzneff (whom she refers to only as G), talks about how the libertine sexual culture of the 1970s, which continued to cast its shadow on the decade after, enabled this liaison. "In 1977, an open letter in support of the decriminalisation of sexual relations between minors and adults, entitled "Regarding a Trial," was published in the newspaper *Le Monde*, signed by several eminent intellectuals, psychoanalysts, well-known philosophers, and writers at the peak of their careers," she writes, listing them: Roland Barthes, Giles Deleuze, Simone de Beauvoir, André Glucksmann and Louis Aragon. (Incidentally, Duras refused to sign this letter.) This meant, writes Springora, that "deviations from conventional morality were viewed with a certain level of tolerance, even admiration."

A loaded question that emerges from these texts, even when there is "consent", is this: how does agency play out in situations where one party, almost always the older person, clearly holds more power, yet the less powerful person has "chosen" to participate? Springora, for instance, writes about struggling to see herself as a victim under the circumstances. "How is it possible to acknowledge having been abused when it's impossible to deny having consented, having felt desire, for the very adult who was so eager to take advantage of you," she asks.

Vanessa Wye, the protagonist of *My Dark Vanessa*, who was seduced by her 42-year-old teacher, Jacob Strane, at the age of 15, also simply refuses to see herself as a victim. The novel is a braided narrative that switches between the past and the present, in which Wye, now an adult, continues to see the relationship through a rose-coloured lens.

Even when Strane is outed by another

student, Wye continues to defend him and stay in touch with him, recalling their relationship as an intense, special love affair, in which she sees herself as an equal partner. "I'm not a victim because I never wanted to be, and if I didn't want to be, then I'm not. That's how it works. The difference between rape and sex is a state of mind. You can't rape the willing, right?" she writes. It is only much later that she manages to come to terms with her past and rewrites her own narrative, finally conceding, "I was an obvious target. He chose me not because I was special, but because he was hungry and I was easy..."

## Long-lasting damage

Victimhood is clearly a complex, often malleable mindset, and allowing space for that complexity is important to enable a nuanced conversation about such relationships. What does seem categorical, however, is the long-term damage it causes to a young person, as all these texts suggest. "Trauma is such a cunning enemy," writes Giuffre in *Nobody's Girl*, pointing out that while one often appears to heal from the physical and mental impacts of it, "recovering victims like me know too well how trauma lurks in the shadows, always there. No matter how many years go by, or how many therapists you see, it can rise, unbidden, seemingly out of nowhere." Her own later struggles, ending in her untimely death, appear to have been a testament to this.

In a final handwritten note released by her family days after her passing, she writes, "Mothers, Fathers, Sisters, and Brothers need to show the battle lines are drawn, and stand together to fight for the future of victims. Is protesting the answer? I don't know. But we've got to start somewhere."

- This article reviews books about sexual abuse — particularly when the abuser is older and has power over the victim (teacher-student, employer-employee, famous person-young admirer).
- यह लेख यौन शोषण पर पुस्तकों की समीक्षा करता है — विशेष रूप से जब शोषक बड़ा होता है और पीड़ित पर शक्ति रखता है।
- The key problem: When a powerful person "grooms" a young/less powerful person, the victim may not realise they are being abused — they may even feel they "consented." But true consent requires equal power — which doesn't exist in these relationships.
- मुख्य समस्या: जब एक शक्तिशाली व्यक्ति किसी युवा/कम शक्तिशाली को "ग्रूम" करता है, तो पीड़ित को एहसास नहीं होता कि वे शोषित हो रहे हैं — वे सोच सकते हैं कि उन्होंने "सहमति" दी। लेकिन सच्ची सहमति के लिए समान शक्ति चाहिए।
- The Jeffrey Epstein case shows this on a global scale — a billionaire with connections to powerful people used money, status, and manipulation to traffic young girls, while many people looked the other way.
- जेफरी एपस्टीन मामला इसे वैश्विक स्तर पर दर्शाता है — एक अरबपति ने युवा लड़कियों की तस्करी के लिए धन, स्थिति और हेरफेर का उपयोग किया।
- For India: This connects to laws on age of consent (POCSO Act), marital rape debates, child marriage, MeToo movement, and protection of children from sexual exploitation.
- भारत के लिए: यह सहमति की आयु (POCSO अधिनियम), वैवाहिक बलात्कार बहस, बाल विवाह, MeToo आंदोलन से जुड़ा है।

- **POCSO Act 2012:** Protection of Children from Sexual Offences; enacted under Ministry of Women and Child Development; special courts; mandatory reporting.
- **POCSO अधिनियम 2012:** यौन अपराधों से बच्चों की सुरक्षा; महिला एवं बाल विकास मंत्रालय।
- **NCPCR (National Commission for Protection of Child Rights):** Statutory body; established 2007 under Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005; monitors child rights implementation.
- **NCPCR:** 2007 में स्थापित; बाल अधिकार संरक्षण आयोग अधिनियम 2005 के तहत।
- **MeToo India (2018):** Began with Tanushree Dutta's allegations against Nana Patekar; spread to journalism (M.J. Akbar resign as MoS), comedy, academia.
- **MeToo India (2018):** तनुश्री दत्ता; पत्रकारिता (MJ अकबर), कॉमेडी, शिक्षाविद।
- **Vishakha Guidelines (1997):** Supreme Court guidelines on sexual harassment at workplace — basis for Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH Act).
- **विशाखा दिशानिर्देश (1997):** कार्यस्थल पर यौन उत्पीड़न — POSH अधिनियम 2013 का आधार।

## F1. Past Background / भूतकाल

- **1929:** Sarda Act (Child Marriage Restraint Act) — India's first law against child marriage.
- **1929:** सारदा अधिनियम — बाल विवाह के विरुद्ध भारत का पहला कानून।
- **1947-1980s:** Indian Penal Code (1860) governed sexual offences — outdated provisions.
- **1947-1980:** IPC (1860) यौन अपराधों को नियंत्रित करता था।
- **1997:** Vishakha Guidelines by Supreme Court — sexual harassment at workplace.
- **1997:** विशाखा दिशानिर्देश।
- **2012:** POCSO Act enacted; IPC amended to define rape more broadly (after Nirbhaya 2012).
- **2012:** POCSO अधिनियम; IPC बलात्कार परिभाषा व्यापक।
- **2013:** POSH Act (Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace).
- **2013:** POSH अधिनियम।
- **2017-18:** MeToo movement global and India.
- **2017-18:** MeToo आंदोलन।
- **2018:** Criminal Law (Amendment) Act — enhanced punishment for rape; death penalty for rape of girl below 12.
- **2018:** मृत्युदंड 12 साल से कम की लड़की से बलात्कार के लिए।
- **2019:** POCSO Amendment — addressed online abuse, enhanced penalties, death penalty for aggravated offences.
- **2019:** POCSO संशोधन।

#	Exam	Year	Question	Options	✔ Answer
1	UPSC CSE Prelims	2021	The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act was enacted in which year?	(a) 2010 (b) 2011 (c) <b>2012</b> (d) 2013	<b>(c) 2012</b>
2	UPSC CSE Prelims	2020	Under the POCSO Act, 2012, which of the following is correct?	(a) Only girls are protected (b) Child is defined as person below 16 (c) <b>Mandatory reporting is required and failure is punishable</b> (d) Special courts are not required	<b>(c) Mandatory reporting + punishable failure</b>
3	UPSC CSE Prelims	2022	The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) was established under which Act?	(a) Juvenile Justice Act 2015 (b) <b>Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005</b> (c) POCSO Act 2012 (d) Right to Education Act 2009	<b>(b) CPCR Act, 2005</b>
4	UPSC CSE Prelims	2019	In which year did India ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)?	(a) 1989 (b) 1990 (c) <b>1992</b> (d) 1995	<b>(c) 1992</b>

5	UPSC CSE Prelims	2023	The "Vishakha Guidelines" issued by the Supreme Court in 1997 related to:	(a) Child labour (b) Domestic violence (c) <b>Sexual harassment at workplace</b> (d) Acid attacks	(c) <b>Sexual harassment at workplace</b>
6	UPSC CSE Mains GS-1	2021	"India's #MeToo movement has brought to the fore the challenges women face in professional environments." Critically evaluate its impact and limitations.	<i>(Mains descriptive)</i>	Key: POSH Act, workplace power dynamics, silence of victims, accountability of powerful men, Tanushree Dutta, M.J. Akbar
7	UPSC CSE Prelims	2020	Under the POSH Act 2013, every organisation with how many or more employees must have an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)?	(a) 5 (b) <b>10</b> (c) 20 (d) 50	(b) <b>10 employees</b>
8	UPSC CSE Prelims	2022	The "Palermo Protocol" (2000) is associated with:	(a) Climate change (b) Nuclear weapons (c) <b>Trafficking in persons</b> (d) Maritime law	(c) <b>Trafficking in persons</b> — supplementing UN Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime
9	SSC CGL	2024	In India, under POCSO Act 2012, a "child" is defined as a person below the age of:	(a) 14 years (b) 16 years (c) <b>18 years</b> (d) 21 years	(c) <b>18 years</b>

# China becomes India's largest trading partner, surpasses US

FE BUREAU  
New Delhi, April 15

**CHINA HAS OVERTAKEN** the United States (US) to emerge as India's largest trading partner in 2025-26, with bilateral trade reaching \$151.1 billion as against \$140.2 billion for the US.

The country's trade deficit with Beijing widened to \$112.16 billion during the period while the surplus with the US contracted to \$34.4 billion from ₹40.89 billion, government data showed.

The US was India's largest trading partner for four consecutive years till 2024-25. India's exports to China rose 36.66% to \$19.47 billion during the last fiscal year, while imports increased 16% to \$131.63 billion.

India's exports to the US grew marginally 0.92 % to \$87.3 billion during the previous fiscal year, while imports increased 15.95% to \$52.9 billion.

According to commerce ministry data, China was India's top trading partner from 2013-14 till 2017-18 and also in 2020-21. Before China, the UAE was the country's largest trading partner. The US has been the largest partner since 2021-22.

- **China has overtaken the USA** to emerge as India's **largest trading partner in 2025-26** with bilateral trade of **\$151.1 billion** (vs USA's \$140.2 billion).
- चीन ने अमेरिका को पछाड़कर 2025-26 में **\$151.1 बिलियन** द्विपक्षीय व्यापार के साथ भारत का **सबसे बड़ा व्यापारिक साझेदार** बना (USA का \$140.2 बिलियन)।
- India's **trade deficit with China widened to \$112.16 billion** — among the largest bilateral trade deficits in the world.
- भारत का चीन के साथ व्यापार घाटा **\$112.16 बिलियन** तक बढ़ा — विश्व में सबसे बड़े द्विपक्षीय व्यापार घाटों में से एक।
- India's **exports to China rose 36.66%** to **\$19.47 billion** while imports increased **16%** to **\$131.63 billion** — massive imbalance.
- भारत का चीन को निर्यात **36.66%** बढ़कर **\$19.47 बिलियन** जबकि आयात **16%** बढ़कर **\$131.63 बिलियन** — भारी असंतुलन।
- US was India's largest trading partner for **four consecutive years (2021-22 to 2024-25)**; **UAE** was the largest partner before that.
- अमेरिका **चार लगातार वर्षों (2021-22 से 2024-25)** के लिए भारत का सबसे बड़ा व्यापारिक साझेदार था; उससे पहले **UAE**।
- This comes amid the **US-China trade war** and India navigating between both powers — significant strategic implications for India's foreign and economic policy.
- यह **अमेरिका-चीन व्यापार युद्ध** के बीच — भारत की विदेश और आर्थिक नीति के लिए महत्वपूर्ण रणनीतिक निहितार्थ।

## D1. Key Trade Data (2025-26) / मुख्य व्यापार डेटा

Parameter / पैरामीटर	China / चीन	USA / अमेरिका
Total bilateral trade	\$151.1 billion	\$140.2 billion
India's exports	\$19.47 billion (+36.66%)	\$87.3 billion (+0.92%)
India's imports	\$131.63 billion (+16%)	\$52.9 billion (+15.95%)
Trade deficit/surplus	Deficit: \$112.16 billion	Surplus: \$34.4 billion

## D2. Historical Context / ऐतिहासिक संदर्भ

- **China was India's top trading partner:** 2013-14 to 2017-18; also in 2020-21
- **UAE** was largest partner before China's current stint
- **USA** was India's largest partner for **four consecutive years:** 2021-22 to 2024-25
- Now China regains top position in **2025-26**
- **चीन:** 2013-14 से 2017-18; 2020-21 | **UAE:** बीच में | **USA:** 2021-22 से 2024-25 | **चीन:** 2025-26 में वापस

### D3. Analysis — Why This Happened / विश्लेषण — यह क्यों हुआ

- **India's imports from China (+16%):** India still heavily dependent on Chinese electronics, API (Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients), solar cells/panels, telecom components, chemicals, textiles
- **India's exports to China (+36.66%):** Sharp rise — but from a low base; likely includes iron ore, cotton, copper, seafood, engineering goods
- **India's exports to USA (+0.92%):** Nearly stagnant — likely due to:
  - US tariffs under Trump's trade policy
  - Slower US economic activity
  - Competition from other emerging markets

### D4. India's Trade Deficit Concern / भारत का व्यापार घाटा चिंता

- **\$112.16 billion deficit with China** — one of world's largest bilateral trade deficits
- This means India is **net transferring wealth** to China annually at an enormous scale
- It also creates **strategic vulnerability**: China could weaponise trade by restricting APIs → India's pharma industry collapses; restrict electronics → India's tech manufacturing stops
- भारत चीन को **\$112 बिलियन शुद्ध धन हस्तांतरित** कर रहा है; चीन API, इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स प्रतिबंधित कर रणनीतिक भेद्यता का फायदा उठा सकता है

- **Key Indian imports from China:**
  1. Electronics and components (~\$30+ billion)
  2. Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) — ~70% of India's API needs from China
  3. Solar cells and modules — critical for India's renewable energy targets
  4. Telecom equipment (Huawei, ZTE concerns)
  5. Chemicals and fertilisers
  6. Machinery and mechanical equipment
    - भारत के चीन से आयात: इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स, API (~70%), सौर सेल, दूरसंचार उपकरण, रसायन
- **Key Indian exports to China:**
  1. Iron ore
  2. Cotton and cotton yarn
  3. Copper and products
  4. Seafood
  5. Engineering goods
  6. Organic chemicals
    - चीन को भारत के निर्यात: लौह अयस्क, कपास, तांबा, समुद्री उत्पाद
- **PLI (Production Linked Incentive) Schemes:** 14 sectors; ~₹1.97 lakh crore outlay; aimed at reducing import dependence, especially from China; sectors include electronics, pharmaceuticals, solar modules, textiles.

- **India's top trading partners (2025-26):**
  1. China: \$151.1 billion
  2. USA: \$140.2 billion
  3. UAE: (approximate 3rd)
    - भारत के शीर्ष व्यापारिक साझेदार: चीन, USA, UAE
- **India's largest export destination:** USA (\$87.3 billion)
- **India's largest import source:** China (\$131.63 billion)
- **India's largest trade deficit:** China (\$112.16 billion)
- **India's largest trade surplus:** USA (\$34.4 billion)
- **WTO:** World Trade Organisation; HQ Geneva; DG Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala; India is member; disputes settled through Dispute Settlement Body (DSB).
- **WTO:** HQ जिनेवा; DG Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala।
- **DGFT:** Directorate General of Foreign Trade; under Ministry of Commerce and Industry; administers Foreign Trade Policy.
- **DGFT:** वाणिज्य और उद्योग मंत्रालय के तहत; विदेश व्यापार नीति।

#	Exam	Year	Question	Options	✔ Answer
1	UPSC CSE Prelims	2023	India withdrew from which trade agreement in 2019, citing concerns about trade deficit with China?	(a) CPTPP (b) ASEAN FTA (c) <b>RCEP</b> (d) SAFTA	(c) <b>RCEP</b> — Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership
2	UPSC CSE Prelims	2022	The "Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme" of India covers how many key sectors?	(a) 10 (b) 12 (c) <b>14</b> (d) 16	(c) <b>14 sectors</b>
3	UPSC CSE Prelims	2021	India's largest trading partner in 2020-21 was:	(a) USA (b) UAE (c) <b>China</b> (d) Russia	(c) <b>China</b> — China was top partner in 2020-21 also
4	UPSC CSE Prelims	2022	With reference to India-China trade, which of the following is most accurate?	(a) India has a trade surplus with China (b) China is India's largest export destination (c) <b>India runs a large trade deficit with China</b> (d) Trade between the two is balanced	(c) <b>India runs large trade deficit with China</b>

6	<b>UPSC CSE Prelims</b>	<b>2020</b>	The "Press Note 3 (2020)" issued by the Government of India restricts:	(a) Import of Chinese goods	(b) <b>FDI from countries sharing land border with India</b> (c) Tourism from neighbouring countries (d) Chinese tech companies from Indian stock market
7	<b>SSC CGL</b>	<b>2024</b>	The World Trade Organization (WTO) is headquartered in:	(a) New York (b) Vienna (c) Brussels (d) <b>Geneva</b>	<b>(d) Geneva</b>
8	<b>UPSC CSE Prelims</b>	<b>2023</b>	India signed its first Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in the Gulf region with:	(a) Saudi Arabia (b) Qatar (c) <b>UAE</b> (d) Bahrain	<b>(c) UAE</b> — India-UAE CEPA signed February 2022
9	<b>IBPS PO</b>	<b>2025</b>	In 2025-26, which country became India's largest trading partner, surpassing the USA?	(a) UAE (b) Russia (c) <b>China</b> (d) Germany	<b>(c) China</b> — bilateral trade \$151.1 billion
10	<b>UPSC CSE Prelims</b>	<b>2021</b>	India's largest export destination in recent years has been:	(a) China (b) UAE (c) <b>USA</b> (d) European Union	<b>(c) USA</b> — India's exports to USA highest consistently



# Black Hole Awakens After 100 Million Years



Topic

Discovery

Black Hole Activity

Cause of Activation

Energy Release

Cosmic Volcano Concept

Active Galactic Nuclei (AGN)

Location

Impact on Galaxies

Jet Effects

Galaxy Evolution

Scientific Insight

Research Importance

Key Points (For Exam)

A **supermassive black hole** became active after being dormant for **~100 million years**

Black holes are not always active; they switch between **dormant and active phases**

Activation occurs when **gas, dust, or stars enter gravitational influence**

Sudden burst of **high-energy radiation and particle jets** released

Compared to a **volcanic eruption** due to sudden energy release (no lava, only radiation & jets)

When active, black holes form **AGN**, emitting enormous energy

Supermassive black holes are found at the **centre of most galaxies**

Influences **star formation**, redistributes gas and energy

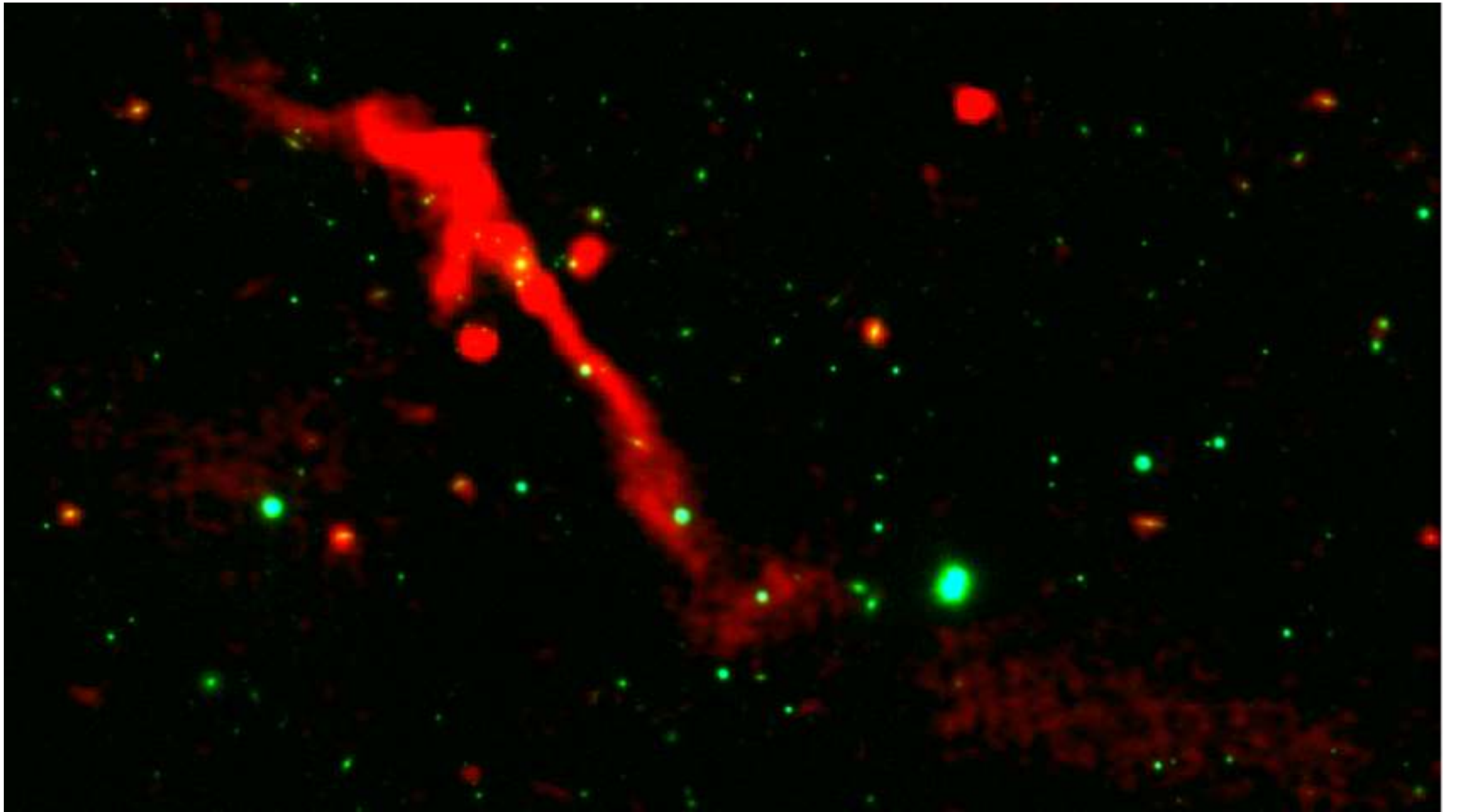
High-energy jets can **suppress or trigger star formation**

Helps explain **long-term evolution of galaxies over millions of years**

Shows **cyclical nature** and unpredictable behaviour of black holes

Provides data to refine **astrophysics models and cosmic evolution theories**

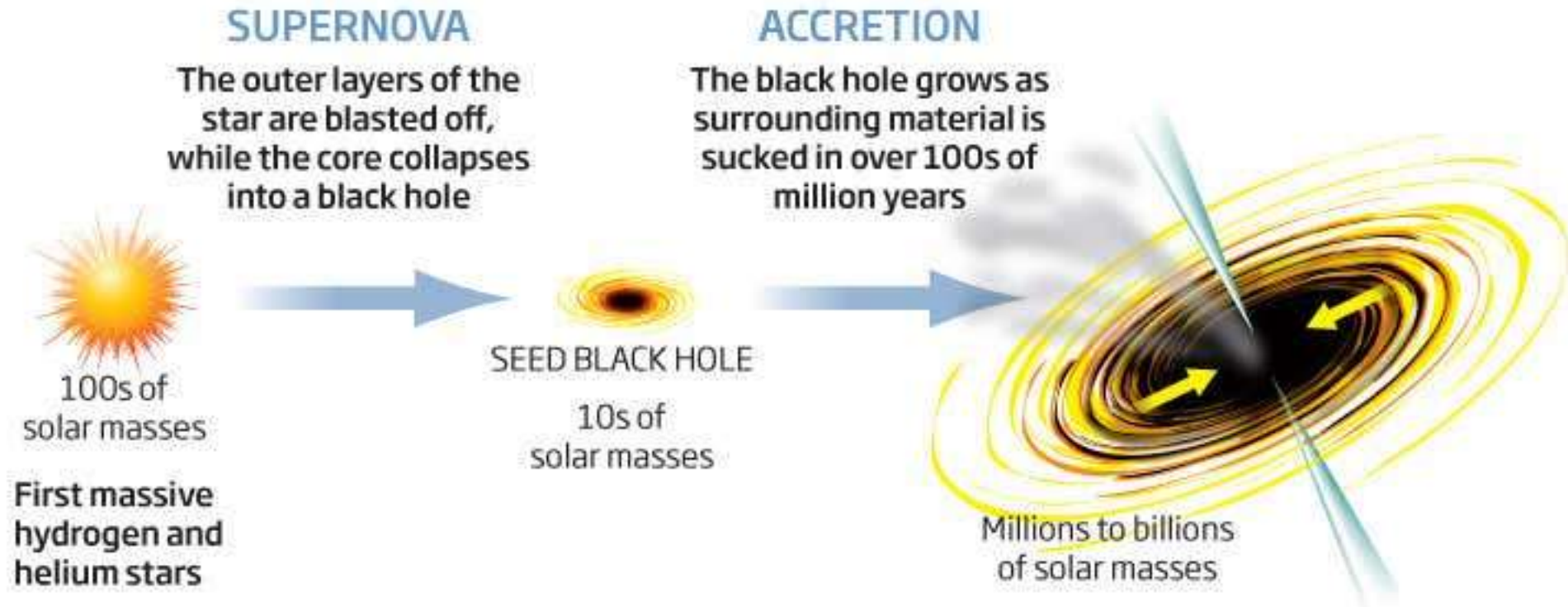




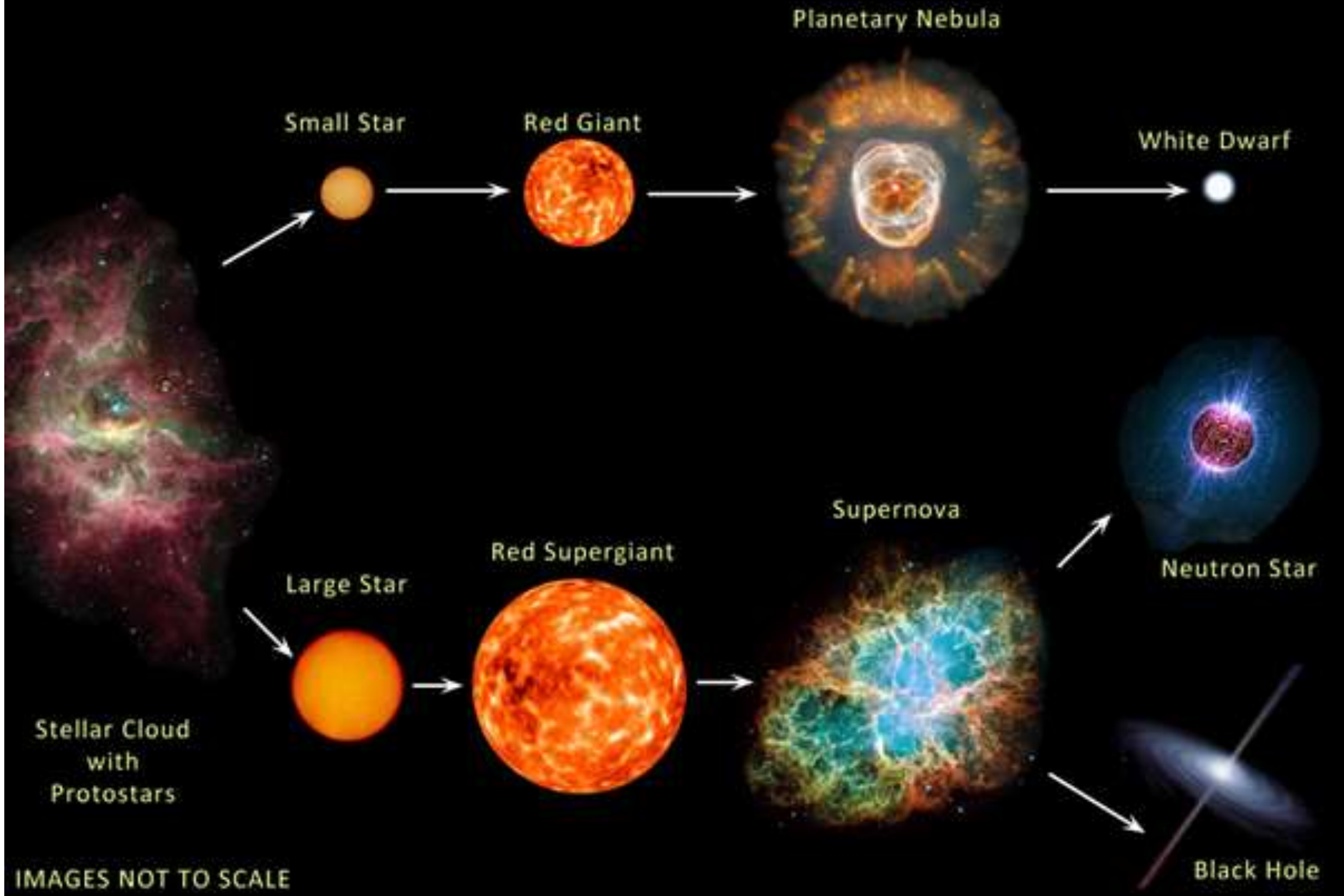
# Making a big one

©NewScientist

The old picture of supermassive black hole formation has the cosmic giants feeding constantly on surrounding gas over hundreds of millions of years



# EVOLUTION OF STARS



IMAGES NOT TO SCALE



India Targets Cocoa  
Self-Sufficiency by  
2040

Topic	Key Points (For Exam)
<b>Goal</b>	India aims to achieve <b>cocoa self-sufficiency by 2040</b>
<b>Reason</b>	High imports (~ <b>\$866 million annually</b> ) and rising domestic demand
<b>Policy Vision</b>	Aligned with <b>Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliance)</b>
<b>Current Status</b>	India produces <b>&lt;20% of its cocoa demand domestically</b>
<b>Phase 1 (2026–2028)</b>	Launch of <b>National Mission on Cocoa</b> ; establishment of <b>Centre of Excellence (CoE)</b> ; development of <b>~250 hectares seed gardens</b>
<b>Objective (Phase 1)</b>	Improve <b>productivity + quality planting material</b>
<b>Phase 2 (2028–2030)</b>	Focus on <b>farmer training (≈1 lakh farmers)</b> and capacity building
<b>Support Measures</b>	Distribution of <b>~25 million seedlings</b> ; creation of <b>digital farmer registry</b>

<b>Traceability System</b>	Ensures <b>farm-to-market tracking</b> , transparency, efficiency
<b>Phase 3 (2030–2035)</b>	Expansion to <b>1 lakh hectares cultivation</b> ; improvement in yields
<b>Processing Focus</b>	Development of <b>cocoa processing infrastructure</b>
<b>Intermediate Target</b>	Meet <b>50% domestic demand</b> through local production
<b>Final Phase (2035–2040)</b>	Achieve <b>full self-sufficiency + become global processing hub</b>
<b>Export Potential</b>	India aims to become a <b>net exporter of cocoa products</b>
<b>Demand Growth</b>	Cocoa demand projected to grow at <b>~5.5% annually</b>
<b>Economic Impact</b>	Increased <b>farmer income, agri-value chain development</b>

# Cocoa: The Global Trade of "Brown Gold"

World's main cocoa bean producing and importing countries in 2024/2025 (in 1,000 tonnes)\*



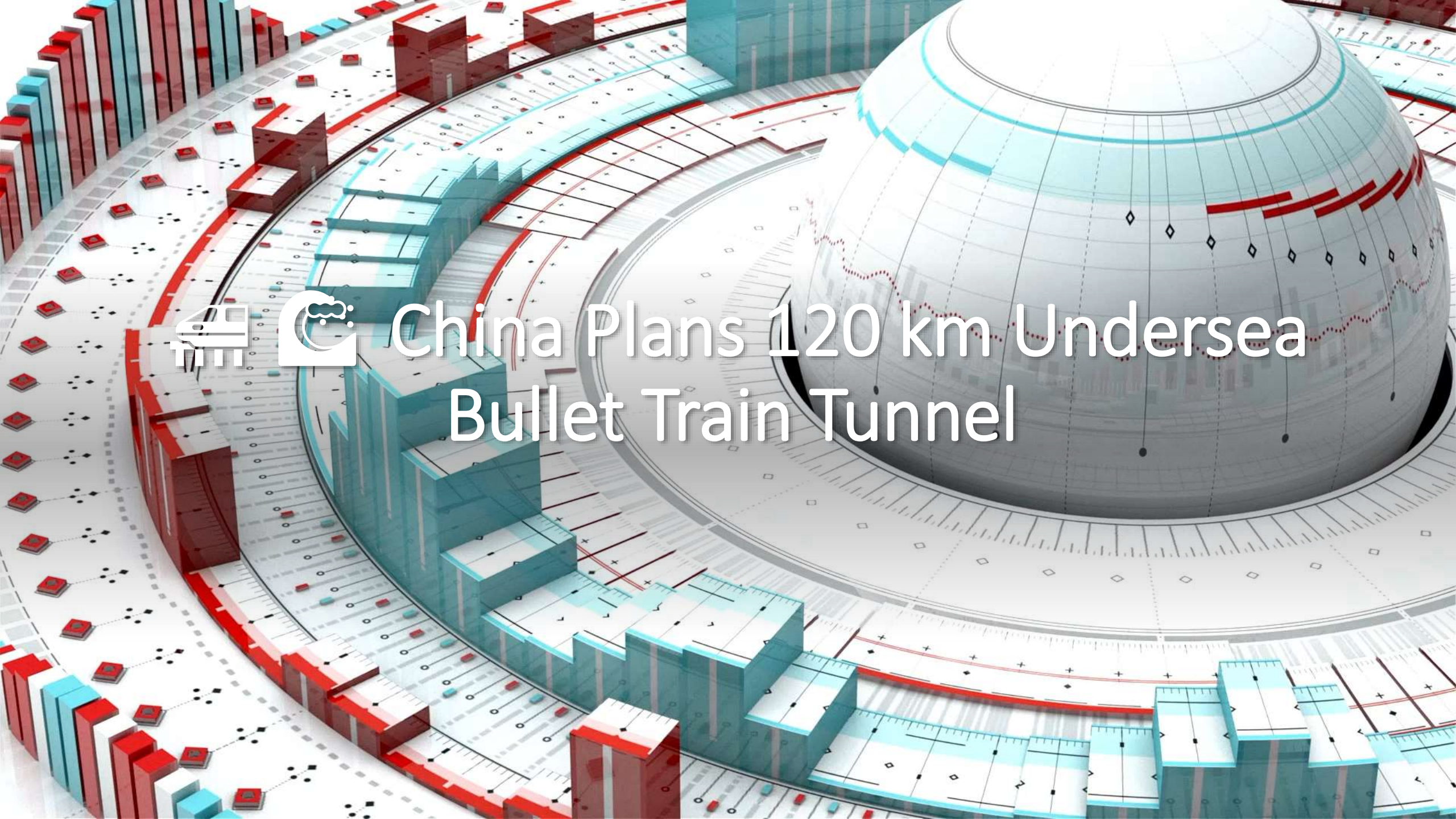
\* Production: 2024/2025 season, estimate as of February 2025; Imports: 2024 data

Sources: International Cocoa Organization (ICCO), UN Comtrade





# China Plans 120 km Undersea Bullet Train Tunnel



Topic

**Project Name**

**Country**

**Length**

**Location**

**Cities Connected**

**Travel Time**

**Speed**

**Purpose**

**Strategic Importance**

**Engineering Features**

**Challenges**

**Comparison**

**Project Status**

**Investment**

**Global Significance**

Key Points (For Exam)

**Bohai Strait Cross-Sea Channel**

China

Approx. **120 km undersea tunnel**

**Bohai Strait** (between Liaoning & Shandong provinces)

**Dalian – Yantai**

Reduced to **~40 minutes** (currently several hours via ferry/road)

High-speed trains **>250 km/h**

Improve **connectivity, freight & passenger movement**

Strengthens **regional economic integration** and northern China transport network

Includes **artificial islands, vertical shafts**, advanced safety systems

Complex **undersea construction, ventilation, emergency access, maritime traffic, ice conditions**

Similar to **Channel Tunnel (UK–France)** (one of the longest subsea tunnels)

Currently in **feasibility and evaluation stage**

Expected to cost **hundreds of billions of yuan**

Could become one of the **longest undersea rail tunnels in the world**





# Türkiye – ‘COP of the Future’ Vision for COP31

Topic	Key Points (For Exam)
Event	<b>COP31 (31st Conference of Parties to UNFCCC)</b>
Host Country	Türkiye
Location	<b>Antalya (2026)</b>
Theme	Shift from <b>negotiation</b> → <b>implementation-oriented climate action</b>
Key Focus Areas	<b>Inclusivity, multilateral cooperation, measurable outcomes</b>
New Model	<b>Türkiye–Australia partnership model</b> (shared responsibilities)
Australia Role	Leads <b>negotiations (Action Agenda)</b>
Leadership	<b>Chris Bowen</b> appointed President of Negotiations

## Core Principles

### Concept

### Action Agenda Sectors

### Climate Approach

### Energy Transition

### UNFCCC Rule

### Paris Agreement Link

### Importance for Developing Countries

### Global Significance

## Dialogue, Consensus, Action

“COP of the Future” → focus on **practical, result-oriented outcomes**

Clean energy, circular economy, sustainable agriculture, climate-resilient infrastructure, ocean protection

Integration of **mitigation + biodiversity conservation + land restoration**

Clean energy transition **irreversible but needs acceleration**

COP presidency rotates among **regional groups**

Emphasises **consensus + national circumstances**

Focus on **climate finance, technology transfer, implementation support**

Expected to shape **next phase of international climate governance**





















































# A quiz on International Day of Human Space Flight, obse

## V.V. Ramanan

### QUESTION #1

On that date, 65 years ago, Yuri Gagarin became the first human in space. What was the name of his spacecraft and what Russian word meaning 'Let's go!' or 'We're off!' did he utter that has become a tradition among Russian spacepersons.

### QUESTION #2

What space first was achieved by cosmonaut Alexei Leonov on March 18, 1965?

### QUESTION #3

Name the cosmonaut who holds the record for the longest single,

uninterrupted human spaceflight at 437 days and 18 hours.

### QUESTION #4

What is the 'Karman Line' (named after Hungarian-American engineer and physicist Theodore von Karman) in the context of space exploration?

### QUESTION #5

Going to space once is a big achievement. Jerry Ross and Franklin Chang-Diaz hold the record for most spaceflights. How many?

### QUESTION #6

Name the Chinese-built space station that is the only live space station apart from the ISS.



**Visual question:** Name the Indian Air Force officer seen with Rakesh Sharma who served as the backup cosmonaut in 1984? FILE PHOTO

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# Word of the day

**Askance:** with suspicion or disapproval

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**Synonyms:** warily, skeptically,  
doubtfully

---

**Usage:** *The teacher looked askance at his excuse.*

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**Pronunciation:** [newsth.live/askance](http://newsth.live/askance)

---

**International Phonetic  
Alphabet:** /əskɑːns/

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# तैयारी सब karte hai पर **Select** कुछ ही होते है !

What is the Right Strategy ?

**RAS UNLOCKED**  
**FREE SEMINAR**

19<sup>th</sup> April  
11:00 AM

Specially for *English*  
*Medium Aspirants*



RASonly Near Riddhi-Siddhi, Jaipur



9057143412



Thank you 😊