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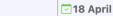












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Prima facie case made against Rahul, Sonia: ED NEWS IN PAGE 4





Development in line with urban biodiversity Make conservation a mass movement in cities



Gazans yet to get aid despite lifting of the blockade

JERUSALEM No aid has reached people of Gaza, a UN aid official said or day, two days after the lifted an 11-week-old blocks that has brought the Palestinian enclave to the brink of famine. 30 PAGE 14

'Waqf creation is not an essential religious practice'

NEW DELHI The Centre on Wednesday sought to dismantle petitioners' argument in the Supreme Court that creating a Waqf' is an essential religiou practice in Islam, saying charity s not an essential part of any religion, w PAGE 4

Top Maoist among 27 killed in Chhattisgarh

One DRG member also killed, and few others injured during the encounter in Bastar region

wenty-seven Maoists, including Nambala Keshav Rao, alias Basavaraju, gen-eral secretary of the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist), were of India (Maoist), were gunned down in an anti-Naxal operation in Na-rayanpur district of Chhar-tisgarh on Wednesday, Un-ion Home Minister Amit Shah said, reiterating the Centre's resolve to elimi-nate Naxalism by March 2026.

nate Naxalism by March A member of the Dis-trict Reserve Guard (DRG) of Bastar was also killed, while a few others sus-tained injuries, the police added. A senior police of-ficer said that Maoists opened fire on DRG teams during an operation in the Abhujmad area, a large unsurveyed jungle area spread across Narayanpur, Dantewada, and Bijapur districts of the Bastar reThe operation, the pol-ice added, was launched following intelligence in-

puts about the presence of "Central Committee and Politburo members as well as senior Maad Division cadres and PLGA cadres". Chhattisgarh Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma said a search had been going on in the region for 50 hours, during which the

encounter took piace.

"Big achlevement"
Describing Basavaraju as
the "backbone" of the Nacc
to the backbone of the Nacc
to the backbone of the Nacc
to a post on X, said the operation, which took place in
the border region of the
Danteevada districts of
Chhattisgarh's Bastar retion, was a landmark
to the backbone of the
State of the backbone
to raju, the general secretary of CPI-Maoist, and the backbone of the Naxal

Basavaraju, general secretary of CPI (Maoist), is the third member of the organisation's top body to be killed this year

movement," Mr. Shah said.
The Central Committee
(CC) is the main political
wing and the highest decision making body of the
CP! (Maoist), and Basavaraju was its third member to have been killed this year. In April, Prayag Manjhi alias Vivek was killed in Jharkhand, while Ramachandra Reddy Gari Pratap Reddy alias Chalapathi was killed in Chhattisgarh's Ga-

riaband district along the Odisha border in January. "This is the first time in three decades of Bharat's battle against Naxalism that a general secretary-ranked leader has been neutralised by our forces. I appland our brave security forces and agencies for this major breakthrough. Also glad to share that after completion of Operation Black Forest, 54 Naxalites

have been arrested and 84 Naxalites have surren-dered in Chhattisgarh, Te-langana, and Maharashtra. The Modi government is resolved to eliminate Nax-alism before the 3ist of March 2026;" he added. Drime Minister, Nazen-

Prime Minister Naren-dra Modi reposted Mr. Shah's post, with a mes-sage: "Proud of our forces for this remarkable suc-cess. Our Government is

the menace of Maoism and ensuring a life of peace and

Our government is committed to eliminating

the menace of Maoism, says Prime Minister

progress for our people." In a post on X, Chhattis-garh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said that, despite difficult geographical con-ditions and many challenges, this decisive operation against left wing extre-mism was being carried out with full commitment and determination by the DRG unit of Chhattisgarh Police in Narayanpur.

"Major blow to Maoists" According to police, Basav-araju had taken over the reins of the CPI (Maoist) in 2018. R.K. Vij, a retired Di-rector General-rank IPS of-ficer of the Chhattisgarh ficer of the Chhattisgarh cadre, said that Basavara-ju's killing was a major blow to the Maoist move-

ment. "The general secretary is the top rank in the Maoist hierarchy and they are guarded by armed cadres carrying sophisti-cated weapons. So, if he

those lower down the hie-rarchy will feel more vulnerable. Secondly, they will have to soon elect a new leader," said Mr. Vij, who has headed the Naxal Operations wing of the Chhattisgarh police in the

The latest operation comes close on the heels of another major one along

ly terrain.

A Chhattisgarh govern-ment official added that from December 1, 2023 to 20 May 2025, 401 Naxalites were killed in the State while 1355 surrendered.

Jumbo solution



SC grants interim bail to academic, orders formation of SIT on posts

Wednesday granted inte-rim bail to Ashoka Univer-sity Associate Professor Ali Khan Mahmudabad, but refused to stay the investi-gation against him for his social media posts on the Pahalgam terror attack, Operation Sindoor, and the sufferings caused by war. He was arrested by the Haryana Police on Sunday after it filed two first info

A Bench headed by his.

cial Investigation Team (SIT) within 24 hours.

"The learned professor had no dearth of words... It

ryana Director-General of deliberately to insult, hu-Police to constitute a Spe-miliate, or cause discom-

tice Kant observed orally.

The court said that prima facie, some of the
words used by the Professor held a "dual meaning",
and tasked the SIT with ex-

to the posts. Mr. Sibal said his client had no criminal intent opinion, but not at the cost of hurting others. The court also asked Ad-

refrain from writing or speaking anything related

in the posts.

The Bench directed Mr.

Mahmudabad to join the investigation and cooper-ate with it fully. The court also ordered the academic, represented by senior ad-vocates Kapil Sibal and Siddharth Luthra and ad-vocate Lzafeer Ahmad, to

ditional Solicitor-Genera SV. Raju, appearing for Ha-ryana, to instruct the State not to register any further FIRs on the two posts.

Heart Lamp burns bright, wins the Booker Prize for Banu and Deepa Screeces plea

The Hindu Bureau

Kannada writer, lawyer, and activist Banu Mushtaq, 77, began writing about her people, their joys, sorrows and anxieties, over five decades ago.

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On Tuesday, Heart
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writer comes three years after Geetanjali Shree won

the prestigious literary prize for Tomb of Sand, translated from Hindi by

summed up in one Kanna-da word - 'bandaya', which means "dissent, rebellion, protest, resistance to auth-ority, revolution and its adjacent ideas." The Bandaya Sahitya literary movement of the 1970s and 1980s, which urged marginalised communities including women and Dalits to tell their stories and fight for their rights, helped Ms. Mushtaq find her voice.

Faced backlashes

Faced backlashes
Narrating unheard stories
and speaking truth to power have had consequences.
Just 20-odd years ago, Ms.
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'A thousand fireflies' In her eloquent acceptance speech, Ms. Mushtaq said speech, Ms. Mushtaq said the prize is an "affirmation that we as individuals and as a global community can thrive when we embrace diversity, celebrate our dif-ferences and uplift one another." Together, she said, "we can create a world where every voice is heard, every story matters,

equality and oppression.

ground, the 77-year-old Ms. Mushtaq reflects on the myriad struggles of a wo-man's life, particularly her lack of choice about her and every person belongs.' In a world that often tries to divide people, Ms Mushtaq contended that literature remains one of rights. Their circumstanc-es may differ, but women all across the world have faced discrimination in the "last sacred spaces where we can live inside each other's minds if only some form, and are unfor-tunately familiar with in-

each other's minds if only for a few pages." Borrowing a phrase Bone her "own culture", Booker-winning moment to a thousand fireflies light-ing up a single sky - brief, the, Booth Ms. Mushraq and Ms. Bhasthi hope that the Booker honour will light the way for more transla-tions across barriers.

RGETTABLE DAY

seeking order for FIR against Justice Varma

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday declined a plea seeking a judicial order to register a criminal case against the High Court

dence half-burnt currency was found after a blaze in March.

The petitioner had said that no FIR had been regis-tered, and criminal law was not set in motion after the discovery of the cash.

9

Top Maoist among 27 killed in Chhattisgarh

One DRG member also killed, and few others injured during the encounter in Bastar region

Basavaraju, general secretary of CPI (Maoist), is the third member of the organisation's top body to be killed this year

Our government is committed to eliminating the menace of Maoism, says Prime Minister

Shubhomoy Sikdar RAIPUR

wenty-seven Maoists, including Nambala Keshav Rao, alias Basavaraju, general secretary of the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist), were gunned down in an anti-Naxal operation in Narayanpur district of Chhattisgarh on Wednesday, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said, reiterating the Centre's resolve to eliminate Naxalism by March 2026.

A member of the District Reserve Guard (DRG) of Bastar was also killed, while a few others sustained injuries, the police added. A senior police officer said that Maoists opened fire on DRG teams during an operation in the Abhujmad area, a large unsurveyed jungle area spread across Narayanpur, Dantewada, and Bijapur districts of the Bastar region in the State.

The operation, the police added, was launched following intelligence inputs about the presence of "Central Committee and Politburo members as well as senior Maad Division cadres and PLGA cadres".

Chhattisgarh Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma said a search had been going on in the region for 50 hours, during which the encounter took place.

'Big achievement'

Describing Basavaraju as the "backbone" of the Naxal movement, Mr. Shah, in a post on X, said the operation, which took place in the border region of the Narayanpur, Bijapur, and Dantewada districts of Chhattisgarh's Bastar region, was a landmark achievement. "Today our security forces have neutralised 27 dreaded Maoists, including Nambala Keshav Rao, alias Basavaraju, the general secretary of CPI-Maoist, and the backbone of the Naxal



Woods of conflict: Security personnel after an anti-Naxal operation in the Bastar region. FILE PHOTO

movement," Mr. Shah said.

The Central Committee (CC) is the main political wing and the highest decision making body of the CPI (Maoist), and Basavaraju was its third member to have been killed this year.

In April, Prayag Manjhi alias Vivek was killed in Jharkhand, while Ramachandra Reddy Gari Pratap Reddy alias Chalapathi was killed in Chhattisgarh's Gariaband district along the Odisha border in January.

"This is the first time in three decades of Bharat's battle against Naxalism that a general secretaryranked leader has been neutralised by our forces. I applaud our brave security forces and agencies for this major breakthrough. Also glad to share that after completion of Operation Black Forest, 54 Naxalites have been arrested and 84 Naxalites have surrendered in Chhattisgarh, Telangana, and Maharashtra. The Modi government is resolved to eliminate Naxalism before the 31st of March 2026," he added.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi reposted Mr. Shah's post, with a message: "Proud of our forces for this remarkable success. Our Government is committed to eliminating the menace of Maoism and ensuring a life of peace and progress for our people."

In a post on X, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said that, despite difficult geographical conditions and many challenges, this decisive operation against left wing extremism was being carried out with full commitment and determination by the DRG unit of Chhattisgarh Police in Narayanpur.

'Major blow to Maoists'

According to police, Basavaraju had taken over the reins of the CPI (Maoist) in 2018. R.K. Vij, a retired Director General-rank IPS officer of the Chhattisgarh cadre, said that Basavaraju's killing was a major blow to the Maoist movement.

"The general secretary is the top rank in the Maoist hierarchy and they are guarded by armed cadres carrying sophisticated weapons. So, if he has been gunned down, those lower down the hierarchy will feel more vulnerable. Secondly, they will have to soon elect a new leader," said Mr. Vij, who has headed the Naxal Operations wing of the Chhattisgarh police in the past.

The latest operation comes close on the heels of another major one along the Karegutta Hills in Bijapur, the one Mr. Shah referred to in his post on X, in which 31 Maoists were killed. That 21-day long operation concluded on May 11, and officers had claimed that it resulted in the top Maoist leaders becoming dislocated from their safe hideout in inaccessible hilly terrain.

A Chhattisgarh government official added that from December 1, 2023 to 20 May 2025, 401 Naxalites were killed in the State while 1355 surrendered.

RELATED REPORTS

» PAGE 4

- Encounter Date & Location: May 2025, in the Abhujmad jungle area spanning Narayanpur,
 Dantewada, and Bijapur districts in Chhattisgarh.
- Maoists Killed: 27 Maoists, including top leader Nambala Keshav Rao alias Basavaraju, general secretary of CPI (Maoist).
- Security Forces Involved: District Reserve Guard (DRG) of Chhattisgarh Police.
- Casualties:
 - One DRG personnel killed.
 - Several others injured.

or Importance of Basavaraju

Position: General Secretary of CPI (Maoist) — considered the "backbone" of the Maoist movement.

Previous Operations:

- Third top CPI (Maoist) leader killed in 2025.
- Earlier leaders killed include Prayag Manjhi in Jharkhand and Ramachandra Reddy alias
 Chalapathi in Odisha.

Operation Details

- Duration: 50-hour-long operation.
- Basis: Intelligence inputs about presence of central and PLGA (People's Liberation Guerrilla Army)
 members.
- Geographical Challenge: Dense forest terrain; coordination between multiple DRG units across districts.

Recent Anti-Naxal Statistics (Dec 2023 – May 20, 2025)

Metric	Figure
Total Maoists killed in Chhattisgarh	101
Total surrendered Maoists	135
General Secretary-ranked leaders killed	3

■ Difference Between Naxalism and Maoism

Aspect	Naxalism	Maoism 🗇
Origin	Originated in Naxalbari village , West Bengal in 1967.	Based on the ideology of Mao Zedong of China.
Ideology	Inspired by agrarian revolution and left-wing extremism.	Advocates protracted people's war based on Maoist ideology.
Focus Area	Initially focused on local peasant issues and land rights.	Broader goal of overthrowing the state through armed struggle.
Scope	More regional/localized .	More organized, pan-India movement with broader ideology.
Tactics	Includes strikes, protests, and occasional armed conflict.	Primarily guerrilla warfare and terror tactics.

Leadership	Led by different factions (CPI-ML, etc.).	Led by CPI (Maoist) — a unified central structure.
Approach	Can be reform-oriented in some factions.	Purely revolutionary and violent in nature.
State Response	Often countered with local police actions.	Requires central paramilitary operations (like Operation Green Hunt).
Objective	Redistribution of land, end of feudalism.	Establishment of a communist state through armed revolution.
Current Activity	Declined in many regions, exists in pockets.	Still active in Red Corridor areas (Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha).

Heart Lamp burns bright, wins the Booker Prize for Banu and Deepa

The Hindu Bureau

KOLKATA

Kannada writer, lawyer, and activist Banu Mushtaq, 77, began writing about her people, their joys, sorrows and anxieties, over five decades ago.

On Tuesday, *Heart Lamp*, a collection of 12 short stories selected from her work written between 1990 and 2023 and translated by Deepa Bhasthi, won the International Booker Prize for 2025 from a shortlist featuring books in French, Italian, Danish, and Japanese.

It's a first win for Kannada, and the first time in the history of the prize that a collection of short stories has been honoured.

The award for an Indian

writer comes three years after Geetanjali Shree won the prestigious literary prize for *Tomb of Sand*, translated from Hindi by Daisy Rockwell.

Ms. Mushtaq, who hails from Hassan in Karnataka, uses a language that "sings of resilience and nuance" to narrate the everyday lives of Muslim women, moved by their lived experiences of pain and suffering in a patriarchal society.

Equally compelling is Ms. Bhasthi's "radical translation", which moved the Booker Jury Chair Max Porter to remark that it "ruffles language to create new textures in a plurality of Englishes".

In her translator's note, Ms. Bhasthi says that Ms. Mushtaq's career can be summed up in one Kannada word - 'bandaya', which means "dissent, rebellion, protest, resistance to authority, revolution and its adjacent ideas." The Bandaya Sahitya literary movement of the 1970s and 1980s, which urged marginalised communities including women and Dalits to tell their stories and fight for their rights, helped Ms. Mushtaq find her voice.

Faced backlashes

Narrating unheard stories and speaking truth to power have had consequences. Just 20-odd years ago, Ms. Mushtaq faced a severe backlash for saying that women too have a right to offer prayers in mosques.

Ms. Mushtaq writes about girls like "sweet Asi-



Tales of nuance: Banu Mushtaq, right, and Deepa Bhasthi with the International Booker Prize, 2025 in London. GETTY IMAGES

fa" who has had to bid goodbye to her studies to look after her siblings and help her mother (*Stone Slabs for Shaista Mahal*); or overworked mothers like Arifa (*Fire Rain*) and Mehrun (*Heart Lamp*) who struggle to save their chil-

dren and themselves; and maulvis who would rather preach than practise (*Black Cobras*). In another story, the narrator, weary after giving birth, pleads to god: 'Be a Woman Once, Oh Lord!'

With her ear to the

ground, the 77-year-old Ms. Mushtaq reflects on the myriad struggles of a woman's life, particularly her lack of choice about her rights. Their circumstances may differ, but women all across the world have faced discrimination in some form, and are unfortunately familiar with inequality and oppression.

'A thousand fireflies'

In her eloquent acceptance speech, Ms. Mushtaq said the prize is an "affirmation that we as individuals and as a global community can thrive when we embrace diversity, celebrate our differences and uplift one another." Together, she said, "we can create a world where every voice is heard, every story matters,

and every person belongs." In a world that often tries to divide people, Ms. Mushtaq contended that literature remains one of the "last sacred spaces where we can live inside each other's minds if only for a few pages."

Borrowing a phrase from her "own culture", Ms. Mushtaq likened the Booker-winning moment to a thousand fireflies lighting up a single sky - brief, brilliant and utterly collective. Both Ms. Mushtaq and Ms. Bhasthi hope that the Booker honour will light the way for more translations across barriers.

EDITORIAL

» PAGE 8

'UNFORGETTABLE DAY'

» PAGE 6

CM

This is a second of the second

- Winning Book: Heart Lamp
 - A collection of 12 short stories written by Banu Mushtaq (between 1990–2023).
 - Translated from Kannada by Deepa Bhasthi.
- Historic Achievement:
 - First time a Kannada language work has won the International Booker Prize.
 - First time a **short story collection** has won the prize.

About Banu Mushtaq

- Age: 77
- Profession: Kannada writer, lawyer, and activist.
- Hometown: Hassan, Karnataka.
- Themes in Writing:
 - Muslim women's lived experiences.
 - Social injustice, gender inequality, pain and resilience in patriarchal settings.
- Language Style: Described as "singing with resilience and nuance".
- Literary Roots:
 - Deeply influenced by Bandaya Sahitya movement (1970s–80s) which encouraged:
 - Dalit and women writers.
 - Rebellion through literature ('Bandaya' = resistance).

Themes in *Heart Lamp*

- Focuses on:
 - Girls' struggle for education and independence.
 - Women's right to offer prayers in mosques.
 - Mothers forced to sacrifice dreams.
 - Societal hypocrisy and oppressive religious preaching.
- Characters:
 - Arifa in Fire Rain, Mehru in Heart Lamp, *Slabs for Shaista Mahal_ etc.
 - Stories are emotionally powerful, often drawn from real-life settings.

Topic	Detail
Booker Prize	International literary prize for translated works into English.
First Indian woman to win International Booker	Geetanjali Shree in 2022 (Tomb of Sand, Hindi).
Kannada Literature	One of India's classical languages; contributions by Kuvempu, U.R. Ananthamurthy.
Bandaya Movement	Literary rebellion promoting social justice through Kannada literature.
Importance of Translation	Promotes inclusivity, regional voices, and literary diplomacy.

International Booker Prize



Inaugural winner Ismail Kadare

Awarded for Best work of fiction translated

into English and published in

the UK or Ireland

Country United Kingdom

Presented by Booker Prize Foundation

Reward(s) £50,000

First award 2005; 20 years ago

Pak. official declared persona non grata

The Hindu Bureau

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Wednes-day declared an official at the Pakistan High Commisvolving a Pakistani diplo

It said, "The Govern-ment of India has declared a Pakistani official, working at the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi, persona non grata for in-dulging in activities not in eping with his official itus in India. The official status in India. The official has been asked to leave In-dia within 24 hours." It ad-ded, "Charge d'Affaires, Pa-kistan High Commission, was issued a demarche to this effect today. He was asked to strictly ensure that near of the Pakistani. diplomats or officials in India misuse their privileges

All parties should support PM on national security issues, says Sule

NCP(SP) leader's remarks come in the wake of questions raised by Congress and other parties about Centre's diplomatic outreach; Sule, who is heading a multi-party delegation, says all parties had earlier agreed not to politicise the matter

had been urging the Prime Minister to hold an all-par-

day said that when it came to national security, all pol-itical parties should support Prime Minister Naren-dra Modi's decisions

against terrorism. The all-party delega-

The all-party delega-tions to various countries will represent India, keep-ing aside the political diffe-rences, she said at a press conference.

Ms. Sule's wastement was in response to senior Congress leaders' remarks on the credibility of Opera-to send multi-party delega-tions to different countries. tions to different countries to explain India's stance on cross-border terrorism and Pakistan's role in it.



Congress chief Mallikar-jun Kharge had claimed that the party was not con-tropy of the control of the delegations. He then de-scribed India's action against Pakistan to end ter-rorism as nothing but a "lit-tle war".

Minister to hold an all-par-ty meeting. There were two such meetings, but Mr. Mod didn't attend any of them, "We even offered to hold discussions in Parlia-ment on the national se-curity and the pollitical re-lationships with Pakistan. It is woing to be a month. mesh said that from day one (when terrorists killed tourists in Pahalgam on Responding to the re- na (UBT) leader Sanjay April 22), the Opposition

'Work together' Ms. Sule said that during an all-party meeting, all the parties had collectively agreed not to politicise this matter. "We had decided to keep our political diffe-rences aside for now and rences aside for now and work together as this is a very sensitive matter, it is about our country's safety rism. Mr. Kharge is a very senior leader who too had agreed on the same." The all-party meetings also decided not to criticise also the hald.

It is going to be a month, the Pahalgam terrorists are not even caught yet." the Prime Mini point, she said. Later in the d Later in the day, Shiv Se-

Govt. sending multi-party delegations to divert

attention from tough questions, says Congress

the government sending

delegations to countries such as Liberia, Congo, and Sierra Leone that have

nothing to do with issue of

India and Pakistan? In-

stead, the delegations

should be sent to neigh-

Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Ne-pal, China, and even Türki-

bouring countries such as

World needs to be told the truth, savs DMK MP Kanimozhi

The Hindu Bureau

A day before an eight-member delegation led by Dravida Munnetra Kazha-gam Parliamentary Party leader K. Kanimozhi leaves for five countries, includ-ing Russia, as part of the University of the Raut yet again questioned the multi-party delegations and said, "The ruling go-vernment is all about showmanship and less about substance. Why is Union government's diplo-matic offensive in the wake of the recent conflict with Pakistan, Ms. Kanimozhi said the world needed to be told the truth and that "vested interests" were trying to create different

Speaking to pressper-sons at her residence here, pal, China, and even Türki-ye, which has supported Paktstin. The supported the Disk MP said, "We bott So lives to ten orism and supported the part of the supported the support supported the supported the supported the supported the support



which are trying to create different stories. The truth has to be told." She said that within In-

dia there were no differen stands on the issue and ne

together when it comes to the security and sovereign ty of this country. I think there is no difference of opinion on that," Ms. Kanimozhi said.

NHRC seeks report on arrest of Ashoka University professor

Commission (NHRC) on Wednesday of the arrest and remand in

Khan Mahmudabad.

It noted that the media reports, which contained a gist of allegations on the basis of which he had been arrested, disclosed that the human rights and liberty of the professor had been

sance of the reported inci-dent," the commission

said.
The NHRC issued a notice to the Director-General of Police, Harvana, calling for a detailed report within

Mr. Khan was arrested by the Haryana Police last week on charges, including successive the control of the control of the the control of the control of the control of the the control of the control of the control of the the control of the control of the control of the the control of the control of the control of the the control of the control of the control of the control of the the control of the control of the control of the control of the the control of the control of the control of the control of the the control of the the control of the con

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

day said Prime Minister Na-rendra Modi's image had been "shattered" globally, and that Mr. Modi was sending multi-party dele

sending multi-party dele-gations to avoid tough questions he was being called upon to answer. Congress's communica-tions chief Jairam Ramesh, while paying tribute to former Prime Minister Ra-jiv Gandhi on his death an-niversary, noted that since niversary, noted that since the 1950s, MPs from va-rious political parties had been sent on delegations to the UN in New York every October-November, but



Mr. Modi had stopped this tradition since 2014. "But now that he is des-perate and his image glo-bally has been shattered, he suddenly thought of such all party delegations. such all-party delegations of MPs to visit different

tion from the tough ques-tions he is being called to answer," Mr. Ramesh said in a post on social media Mr. Ramesh also shared

a video of the former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee talking about how Rajiv Gandhi had included the BJP leader in a cluded the BJP leader in a delegation to the UN, so that his [Vajpayee's] medi-cal treatment could be un-dertaken abroad and the expenses taken care of.

'Intelligence failure' At a separate press brief-ing, the party alleged that the Pahalgam terror attack ion Home Minister Amit Shah should take responsi-bility. It added the counhundred per cent success-ful but Mr. Modi "failed" as

a leader. "Operation Sindoor was a complete military suc a complete military suc-cess while Modi was a pol-itical failure," AICC ex-ser-vicemen department chairperson (ol. Rohit Chaudhry (retd.) said at a Joint press conference with Wing Commander Anuma Acharya (retd.) Ms. Acharya reterated Ms. Acharya reterated to the intelligence callure at Pahalizam and

failure at Pahalgam and why the terrorists had not been arrested so far. She

announced so suddenly and that too by a third party, referring to the ann cement made by U.S. President Donald Trump. She also demanded that

the May 25 meeting of the NDA Chief Ministers with the issue of national secur-ity include the non-NDA the issue of national secur-ity include the non-NDA Chief Ministers. "What is their [non-NDA CMs] crime for not being invited to the meeting?" she asked. Between May 24 and 31, the party announced 'Jai Hind' sabbas across 16 ci-

Hind' sabhas across 16 ci-ties to celebrate the brav-

Kharge's remarks insult to defence forces: BJP

day said the remarks of Congress president Malli-karjun Kharge, calling Operation Sindoor a "sporad-ic war", was not only an insult to the valour of the defence forces, but also a

defence forces, but also a "proof" of the Congress's tendency to take the national security lightly that the national security lightly that the Congress's leadership crists, ideological hollowness, and indifference towards national identity," Mr. Pradhan said on X.

SC seeks govt. response to plea on crisis of heatwave

The Hindu Bureau

The Supreme Court or Wednesday issued a notice to the Centre seeking its response on a petition that draws urgent attention to the escalating heat wave crisis linked to climate

crisis linked to climate change, which has resulted in a high number of deaths across the country. A Bench headed by Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai took cognisance of the petition filed by envi-ronmental activist Vikrant Tongad. represented by Tongad, represented by advocate Akash Vashish-tha, who sought judicial intervention to uphold citizens' fundamental rights under Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution by ensur ing living conditions free from the adverse impacts of heatwaves and climate of heatwaves and climate change. The petition point-ed out that despite the Na-sitonal Disaster Manage-ment Authority guidelines in 2019, many States and Union Territories have yet to implement the mandat-ed Heat Action Plans. It also referred to the

Centre's statutory respon sibilities under Section 35 ment Act, 2005, which re ake appropriate measures Centre two weeks to file its response. Statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. The Committee

NC passes resolution on restoring special status and full Statehood for J&K

The ruling National Confe-rence (NC) Working Comrence (NC) Working Com-mittee, in a meeting chaired by party president Dr. Farooq Abdullah on Wednesday, passed a se-ven-point resolution call-ing for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's spe-rial status and full State. Jammu and Kashmir's spe-cial status and full State-hood. The Committee also urged both India and Pa-kistan to pursue peaceful solutions to end the bloodshed in the region. "The party reaffirmed its unwavering commit-ment to the restoration of

ment to the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's spe-

Jammu and Kashmir's spe-cial status, describing it as essential to the region's consistency of the region's of its people," said NC lead-after the meeting. Besides other is enough the region of the region attended by the party Vice-President and Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Otmar Abdullah. This was Committee meeting since Committee meeting since its victory in the Assembly elections last October. Unanimously adopting the seven-point resolution. the NC leaders called on the Government of India to immediately restore full



earlier commitment made on the floor of Parliament and reaffirmed by the Supreme Court's Constitu-tion Bench.

The party welcomed the ceasefire and appealed to both neighbouring coun-tries to uphold peace and

tries to uphold peace and work towards lasting and peaceful solutions to the ongoing conflict.

The Committee strongly condenned the brutal at-tack in Baissaran, Pahal-gam, which claimed the lives of 26 innocent peo-ple, including a young Kashmiri, Syed Adii Hus-sain Shah, It also expressed sain Shah. It also expressed grief over the continuing cross-border shelling that has killed 23 civilians "The Committee appre-ciated the overwhelming

the Baisaran attack and acknowledged the compas-

sion shown by locals to-wards stranded tourists during difficult times," the resolution stated. It further urged the Government of India to recognise this powerful gesture and refrain from actions such as arbitrary arrests, harassment of youth, misuse of bull-dozers, and pressure on independent media, warning that such measures risk alienating peace-loving

alienating peace-loving citizens.

Reiterating its commit-ment to the promises made in its manifesto, the party resolved to continue a "peaceful, democratic, and constitutional struggle for justice, peace, and the rights of the people of Jam-mu and Kashmir." The NC also condemned

reports of harassment faced by Kashmiri stu-dents, traders, and residents in various parts of the country.

Pak. shelling to get govt. jobs, says L-G

The Hindu Bureau

(L-G) Manoi Sinha on Wed ment jobs to the closest kin of the victims of the Pakis ani shelling in J&K. Around 23 civilians died

in shelling and firing by Pa-kistan during the recent military confrontation.

military confrontation.
"The proper rehabilitation of affected families is
my top priority. The J&K
administration, under the
leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and
Home Minister Amit Shah, is committed to ensuring proper rehabilitation, en-hanced border infrastructure, and security for the residents," a Raj Bhawan statement quoted Mr. Sinha as saying. Mr. Sinha, who visited Poonch, said efforts were under way to construct individual and

community bunkers across J&K. He lauded the resi-dents, civil society mem-bers and all the communi-ties for their display of courage and social harmo-ny. Interacting with troops at Poonch and Nowshera, he praised the bravery and invincible power of brave soldiers and their indomitable courage, gallantry in

Operation Sindoor. He said Operation Sin-door was a living example of India's military and stra-tegic might.

Development of Brahmos missile with a longer range, NG variant on track

The development of a new sion of the BrahMos super sonic cruise missile, the BrahMos-NG (Next Genera-BrahMos-NG (Next Genera-tion), is at an advanced stage, while the range ex-tension of the original BrahMos, much heavier than the air launched one, to 800 km is progressing well, defence sources said. The BrahMos air launched version, a joint development between in-development between in-

ployed by the Indian Air Force to devastating effect in the recent confrontation with Pakistan to strike that

with Paldistan to strike that country's air bases. The range of BrahMos was originally capped at 290 km, in line with the limitations of the Missile Technology Control Re-gime. However, since India joined the grouping in June 2016, the range was ex-tended to 450 km, and work to extend it to 800 work to extend it to 800 km is under way. The mai-den trial has been conducted and more trials will be undertaken, two officials independently confirmed. "BrahMos-NG is a sleek-

er air launched missile than the current variant, and is in advanced stages



sion is lighter than the land and ship variants, and is currently mounted on the Sukhoi Su-30MKIs. Being much lighter, the BrahMos-

much lighter, the BrahMos-NG can be mounted on other fighters, including the indigenous LCATejas. In January 2020, the IAF inducted the 222 "Tiger Sharks' squadron consist-ing of modified Sukhoi Su-30MKI fighter jets in Thanjawur, Tamil Nadu, armed with air launched BrahMos missiles Of the BrahMos missiles Of the BrahMos missiles. Of the 272 Su-30MKI contracted by the IAF, 40 were initially launched BrahMos

with a range of more than 400 km and a maximum speed of 2.8 Mach.

During the strikes by the Indian forces on Pakistani military targets from May 7-10, the IAF fired the air launched BrahMos from Su-30MKI jets for precision hits on air bases, and they could not be intercepted by Pakistan's Chinese ori-gin air defence systems. Former Air Chief Mar-

coming BrahMos-No would be the IAF's "print ed on the northern box ders in 2020, they had real The IAF has

Development of Brahmos missile with a longer range, NG variant on track

Dinakar Peri NEW DELHI

The development of a new, compact air launched version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, the BrahMos-NG (Next Generation), is at an advanced stage, while the range extension of the original BrahMos, much heavier than the air launched one, to 800 km is progressing well, defence sources said.

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The range of BrahMos was originally capped at 290 km, in line with the limitations of the Missile Technology Control Regime. However, since India joined the grouping in June 2016, the range was extended to 450 km, and work to extend it to 800 km is under way. The maiden trial has been conducted and more trials will be undertaken, two officials independently confirmed.

"BrahMos-NG is a sleeker air launched missile than the current variant, and is in advanced stages of development. It should be ready for flight testing in



During the strikes on Pakistani military targets from May 7 to 10, the IAF fired the air launched BrahMos from Su-30MKI jets. FILE PHOTO

a year or so," a defence official said, adding it would be ready for production and induction in one to two years after that.

The air launched version is lighter than the land and ship variants, and is currently mounted on the Sukhoi Su-30MKIs. Being much lighter, the BrahMos NG can be mounted on other fighters, including the indigenous LCATejas.

In January 2020, the IAF inducted the 222 'Tiger Sharks' squadron consisting of modified Sukhoi Su-30MKI fighter jets in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, armed with air launched BrahMos missiles. Of the 272 Su-30MKI contracted by the IAF, 40 were initially modified to carry the air launched BrahMos.

According to the IAF, the air launched BrahMos is a 2.5 tonne supersonic air to surface cruise missile with a range of more than 400 km and a maximum speed of 2.8 Mach.

During the strikes by the Indian forces on Pakistani military targets from May 7-10, the IAF fired the air launched BrahMos from Su-30MKI jets for precision hits on air bases, and they could not be intercepted by Pakistan's Chinese origin air defence systems.

Former Air Chief Marshal (ACM) V.R. Chaudhari has stated that the forthcoming BrahMos-NG would be the IAF's "primary deterrent weapon". The ACM had said in 2023 that as the standoff unfolded on the northern borders in 2020, they had realised it could be used very effectively for land attacks. The IAF has since equipped more squadrons with Su-30MKI aircraft modified to launch Brah-Mos missiles.

BrahMos-NG (Next Generation):

- A new, compact, and lightweight air-launched variant of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile.
- Currently in an advanced stage of development.
- Expected to be ready for flight testing within a year.
- Production & induction timeline: 1–2 years after testing.

Extended Range BrahMos:

- Original range: 290 km (due to MTCR restrictions).
- Post-India's entry into the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in 2016:
 - Range was extended to 450 km.
 - Plans underway to increase range up to 800 km.

X Deployment & Tactical Use

- Indian Air Force (IAF) used BrahMos air-launched missiles during strikes on Pakistani military targets (May 7–10, 2025):
 - Fired from Su-30MKI aircraft.
 - Targeted air bases with precision, evading Chinese-origin air defence systems.
 - Proved high strike capability and stealth.
- Squadron Deployment:
 - 222 "Tiger Sharks" squadron in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu inducted in Jan 2020.
 - 40 of the 272 Su-30MKI contracted by IAF were modified for BrahMos.
 - More squadrons are now being equipped with BrahMos-compatible jets.

★ Technical Features

Feature	Specification
Туре	Supersonic cruise missile
Speed	2.5–2.8 Mach
Range (Initial/Extended)	290 km → 450 km → 800 km (in progress)
Platform	Land, Sea, Air (Su-30MKI, LCA-Tejas)
Weight & Size	NG variant is lighter and sleeker

Topic	Detail
BrahMos Aerospace	Indo-Russian JV between DRDO & NPOM of Russia
MTCR Membership	India joined in 2016 → enabled BrahMos range extension
Cruise vs Ballistic Missile	Cruise = guided, low-flying; Ballistic = high-arc trajectory
Su-30MKI	Multirole fighter modified to launch BrahMos
Indigenous Efforts	BrahMos-NG to be integrated with Indian LCA-Tejas
Strategic Locations	222 Squadron based in Thanjavur , capable of naval strike coverage



PM to inaugurate 103 Amrit Bharat railway stations today

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate 103 Amrit railway stations through video conference at an event in Bikaner, Rajasthan, on Thursday. These stations, located in 86 districts across 18 States and Union Territories, have beer across IS states and Union Territories, have been developed at a cost of over \$1,000 crore. "Over \$1,300 stations are being redeveloped with a cost of over \$1,000 stations are being redeveloped with a critice time and enhance passenger amenda architecture and enhance passenger amenda sunder the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS)." A Railway Ministry spokesperson stated, Mr. Modi will inaugurate the Deshnoke railway station in Bilanner, redeveloped under the ABSS and fing off Bikaner-Mumbai express train service (21903)

Commentator told to remove posts on X against journalists

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday came down heavily on commentator Abhijit tyer-Mitra for posting "defamatory" and "sexually abusive" content on social media, targeting nine women journalists from the media website Newstaundry. "Such a language and words are not permissible in a civilised society. First you remove the posts hen we will hear you," Justice Kaurav told Mr. yer-Mitra's counsel. When the counsel argued that Mr. Iver-Mitra's post only highlighted the media outlet's "questionable sources of income" the court observed that that is not under the court observed that that is not under challenge in the court and remarked, "Can someone who is taking financial assistance from questionable sources be called a brothel?" It posted the case for further hearing on May 26.

MGNREGS wages must rise to ₹400 a day: Jairam

The Hindu Bureau

MGNREGS wages cannot be set by the arbitrary whims of the government, the Congress said on Wed-nesday, reiterating its de-mand for the rural employment guarantee scheme's wages to be hiked to ₹400

per day.
Congress general secre-tary Jairam Ramesh was reacting to the latest report by LibTech India, which

by LibTech India, which pointed out that only 7% of households get the promised 100 days of work under the scheme.

Mr. Ramesh said the LibTech report documents several crucial gaps in MGNREGS implementation. tion, including a mismatch between the scheme's coverage and actual delivery.

"MGNREGA wages can-not be set by the arbitrary whims of the government. A Standing Committee must be established to evaluate the need for changes in the wage rate, the Congress leader said, noting that wages under the scheme have stagnated for a decade.

'An increase in MGNRE-GA wages - as envisioned in the Congress Nyay Patra for the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections - assumes re-

Families of Banu and Deepa celebrate 'unforgettable day'

Far away from the ceremony in London, kin of this year's International Booker Prize winners celebrate literary achievement with heartfelt messages, phone calls, and quiet moments of pride

elebrations broke out in Hassan and Madikeri in Karna-taka as the families of Kan-nada writer Banu Mushtaq nada writer Banu Mushtaq and translator Deepa Bhas-thi rejoiced over their In-ternational Booker Prize win on Wednesday. Heart Lamp (Hridaya Deepa) be-came the first Kannada tit-le to win the coveted prize. Mushtaq Mohlyudin was wide awake with his fin-gers crossed on Tuesday night, when the ceremony

was under way in London Finally, when the name of his wife, Banu Mushtag, was announced, he was ec static beyond words.

static beyond words.

"All our family members were in touch online throughout the night," Mr. Mohlyudin told The Hindu over telephone.

A Hassan-based businessman, Mr. Mohlyudin and their son could not travel to London the travel of London the travel of London the travel.

vel to London due to a de-lay in applying for visa. Ms. Mushtaq was accompanied by her three daughters ons-in-law, and grandchil-

dren.
"It is an unforgettable

have been living with lions are tolerant and those who



Was ecstatic about her achievement, SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

relatives and friends. We are all happy for her," Mr. Mohiyudin said. In recent interviews,

Ms. Mushtaq has spoken about the support she re-ceived from her husband in her career as a writer, advocate, journalist, and activist.

He stood by her during He stood by her during the most difficult times, particularly when she faced the wrath of funda-mentalists on the issue of Muslim women seeking en-try into mosques. On her flight to London,

Ms. Mushtaq lost her suit-case. The writer posted on her social media account that besides essential medicines, she had lost her silk sari and other dresses she had packed particularly for the award ceremony. Mr. Mohiyudin said while the luggage had been traced, it

author.
"Our daughters man-aged to get her a new sari and made some last-mi-

Quiet life in Madikeri
Ms. Bhasthi's husband,
Chettria Sujan Nanaiah, celebrated the moment attoo could not travel to London due to prior
commitments.
Speaking to The Hindu
over telephone, Mr. Na-

naiah, an artist-turned-farmer, said, "She's still in shock and joy. We spoke briefly in the morning. I couldn't be there with her due to other commit-ments, but I'm extremely

during the pandemic, have been living a quiet life on their farm surrounded by lush greenery. "It's a sim-ple life. We grow our own food, look after our pets, and enjoy being close to nature," he said. Mr. Nanaiah, who stu-

Mr. Nanaiah, who stu-died fine arts at Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath in Bengaluru, first met Ms. Bhasthi seven years ago at an art exhibition. What be-gan as a friendship evolved into marriage and a shared life in Kodagu. As calls poured in from

naiah was busy tending to farm duties and looking after their pets. "I didn't ex-pect her to win, but I'm thrilled for her and the recognition it brings to Kan-nada literature," he said, nada literature," he said, adding that he was the one who shared the good news with Ms. Bhasthi's parents on Wednesday morning, "They were emotional and proud. It's a big moment for our family," he added.

Born and raised in Ma-dikeri, Ms. Bhasthi studied at Kodagu Vidyalaya before moving to Mangaluru for a degree in mass communi-cation. She worked with print publications in Ben-

EPFO adds 7.54 lakh new subscribers in March

The Hindu Bureau

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) payroll data for March, re-leased here on Wednesday, has reported a net addition of 14.58 lakh members. The Union Labour Ministry said in a statement that th said in a statement that the net additions increased by 1.15% compared to March 2024. The data revealed that the EPFO enrolled around 7.54 lakh new subaround 7.54 lakh new sub-scribers in March 2025, which is 0.98% increase compared to March last year and 2.03% increase over February 2025. It showed growing employ-ment opportunities and successful out

About 4.45 lakh nev subscribers are in the 18-2: subscribers are in the 18-25 age group, constituting 58.94% of the total new subscribers added in March. The net payroll ad-dition in that age group is approximately 6.68 lakh, a growth of 6.49% from March 2024. Approximate-ly 13-23 lakh members, who had exited earlier, re-cipined the EPEO in March joined the EPFO in March male subscribers joined in March, Maharashtra, Tami Nadu, Karnataka, Haryana Gujarat, Delhi, Uttar Pra desh and Telangana indivi

Lion count grows by 32% in 5 years, expands beyond protected areas

Iacob Koshy

India's lion population, ex-clusively concentrated in Gujarat, has risen by 32% between 2020 and 2025, with 891 lions reported, according to a report from the Gujarat Forest Department released on Wednes day. The number of adult females - a proxy for future growth - rose by 27% to 330 individuals.

330 individuals.
Though the highest
number of lions - 394 have been observed in the
Gir National Park and Paniya Wildlife Sanctuary, considered the "source" population, the latest survey
underlines the continuing trend of lions expanding



side. This translates to in-creasing proximity to hu-man settlements and subsequent conflict. Y.V. Jhala, an expert on lion conservation and for-

merly with the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), said

Strong growth: The number of adult females rose by 27% to 330

that is due to the availabili ty of prey. This is evi-denced by the rising num-ber of cattle carcasses.

are tolerant and those who lose their animals are be-ing compensated, there is always a fine balance. For the future, new regions -within or outside Gujarat -are required," he told The Hindu. The Kinno National Park in Madinya Pradesh, catted the etabs, was orief-cated the etabs, was oriefcated cheetahs, was origi-nally intended to be a new habitat for lions. In March, Prime Minis-ter Narendra Modi ap proved Project Lion, a 22,900-crore project to im prove lion habitat and de velop new habitat within

Gujarat. From 2015 to 2020, the territorial range of the lions extended to 30,000 growth. By 2025, the area reached 35,000 sq. km, registering a 16.67% increase

Navy recreates stitched ship based on 5th century Ajanta paintings

The Hindu Bureau

The Indian Navy on Wed-nesday formally inducted and named a stitched sail ship, INSV Kaundinya, at a ceremonial event held at the Naval Base in Karwar. INSV Kaundinya is a recreation of a fifth-century vessel depicted in the paintings at the Ajanta

paintings at the Ajanta Caves.

The project was initiat-ed through a tripartite agreement signed in July 2023 between the Union Culture Ministry, the Navy, and Hodi Innovations, with funding from the Culture Ministry, and is meant to showcase India's rich ship-buildime heritage.

building heritage. "Following the keel lay-ing in September 2023, the ssel's construction was ndertaken using a tradi-

Terrino Hill Flaunting heritage: The stitched sail ship has been named INSV Kowndinyo after the legendary Indian mariner, SPECIAL ASSUNGEMENT

tional method of stitching by a team of skilled arti-sans from Kerala, led by master shipwright Babu Sankaran. Over several months, the team painstak-ingly stitched wooden planks on the ship's hull using coir rope, coconut fibre and natural resin," the Navy said in a state

Transoceanic trip next Named after Kaundinya, the legendary Indian ma-riner, the ship will now begin preparations for a tran-soceanic voyage along the ancient trade route from

tistic iconography.
The stitched ship is

or stitched ship is equipped with square salls and steering oars, which are entirely alien to modern day ships. The hull geometry, rigging, and sails had to be reimagined and tested from first principles.

duled for later this year, duled for later this year, the Navy said.

The Navy played a cen-tral role in the project, overseeing the design, technical validation, and

construction process. With no surviving blueprints or

physical remnants, the de sign had to be extrapolated

from a two-dimensional as

The Navy collaborated with the Department of Ocean Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology

THERES IN ORD + 14491 To solve this puzzle online, get across to our copage link; jip? To solve the puzzle online, get across

- Masseur wants a little extra charge, being licensed (6-7)
- **SM**



- 17 Training to use gun? No good being shaky (7)
- 19 Mite that is causing disease of sheep (7)
- 21 Scoundrel on ecstasy and speed (4) 22 Cunning siren acts artfully to ensnare fellow (10)
- 25 One providing guarantee is notorious, breaks pro-
- 26 Model grabbed by thug survived (3,2)
- 2 Open bar in fancy launch (7)
- Promoter's complaint about new performer (10) Former US soldier saves American actress (5)
- Absolute turn-on as hubby finally goes wild (9)
- Scrutinise youth's face bitten by insect in retreat completely (7) Short distance from other small towns perhaps (6,5) 10 Period of frivolous news lacking weight? I'll say so! (5,6)
- 13 Group enthralled by US trip, extraordinarily exciting (8.2) 18 One captivated by tenor performing on island in Brazilian city
- 20 Blue parcel contains guitarist's latest tools for plucking string

SUDOKU





How to subdue the mind?

Sri Ramanujamji said in a discourse that a man becomes happy when a desire is fulfilled. Until that desire is achieved, his heart palpitates. The palpitation stops when the desire is fulfilled, and that moment is called happi-ness. But the real problem is that when one desire is fulfilled, another crops up, and equally, the palpitation

filled, another crops up, and equally, the palpitation also goes up.

With a proper date and the proper date of the proper of th fore. I have thrown the bundles of sins through chanting," It is said that the Azhwar took the condensed essence of the Vishnu Dharma sastra from the scripture Hari Van

the Vishnu Dharma sastra from the scripture Harl Vam-sam and composed "Thirumalal".

It is more than the composed that is more control his mind. Controlling the tongue is within his reach and ea-sier, and if he starts chanting, God will take care of the rest. A person need not be afraid of being alone or who is there to care for him. Charting will establish a connection to the control of the

Lion count grows by 32% in 5 years, expands beyond protected areas

Jacob Koshy

NEW DELHI

India's lion population, exclusively concentrated in Gujarat, has risen by 32% between 2020 and 2025, with 891 lions reported, according to a report from the Gujarat Forest Department released on Wednesday. The number of adult females – a proxy for future growth – rose by 27% to 330 individuals.

Though the highest number of lions - 394 - have been observed in the Gir National Park and Paniya Wildlife Sanctuary, considered the "source" population, the latest survey underlines the continuing trend of lions expanding into more parts of Gujarat. More lions have now been reported outside the core protected zone than in-



Strong growth: The number of adult females rose by 27% to 330 individuals. VIJAY SONEJI

side. This translates to increasing proximity to human settlements and subsequent conflict.

Y.V. Jhala, an expert on lion conservation and formerly with the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), said that while Gujarat continued to be a good model for lion conservation, it was important to create new spaces where lions could live without human contact.

"In theory, Gujarat can host up to 2,000 lions, but that is due to the availability of prey. This is evidenced by the rising number of cattle carcasses. While communities who have been living with lions are tolerant and those who lose their animals are being compensated, there is always a fine balance. For the future, new regions - within or outside Gujarat - are required," he told *The Hindu*. The Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh, which is home to translocated cheetahs, was originally intended to be a new habitat for lions.

In March, Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved Project Lion, a ₹2,900-crore project to improve lion habitat and develop new habitat within Gujarat.

From 2015 to 2020, the territorial range of the lions extended to 30,000 sq. km, reflecting a 36.4% growth. By 2025, the area reached 35,000 sq. km, registering a 16.67% increase.

Population Increase:

- India's lion population rose by 32% from 2020 to 2025.
- Total count: 891 lions (2025).
- Adult female lions increased by 27% to 330 individuals a key indicator of future growth.

Geographic Spread:

- Largest populations in Gir National Park and Paniya Wildlife Sanctuary the core source population.
- Lions are now expanding beyond protected zones into more parts of Gujarat.

Parameter	2020	2025	% Change
Total lion count	~675	891	↑ 32%
Adult females	~260	330	↑ 27%
Lion range (sq. km)	30,000	35,000	↑ 16.67%

Challenges and Concerns

- Human-Wildlife Conflict:
 - More lions now roam outside protected zones, increasing chances of human-lion encounters.
 - Rising cattle carcasses indicate lions feeding near human settlements.
- Expert Opinion:
 - Dr. Y.V. Jhala (former WII scientist) warns:
 - Gujarat is nearing ecological carrying capacity (≈ 2,000 lions).
 - Need for new habitats to prevent human-lion conflict.

Value 1 Conservation Measures

- Project Lion (₹2,900 crore):
 - Approved in March 2024 by PM Modi.
 - Aims to:
 - Improve habitat within Gujarat.
 - Develop new lion habitats to reduce pressure.
- Kuno National Park (Madhya Pradesh):
 - Initially proposed as a lion relocation site.
 - Currently houses African cheetahs (as of 2023-24).

Topic	Details
Species	Asiatic Lion (Panthera leo persica) – IUCN Endangered
Current Range	Exclusively in Gujarat (Gir and surrounding districts)
Historic Range	Once spread from Greece to India, now confined to India
Key Project	Project Lion (2024), follows Project Tiger and Project Elephant
Challenge	No second free-ranging population outside Gujarat
Wildlife Institute of India	Nodal body for wildlife research & conservation

Status of Indian high-speed rail (HSR) project

INDIA HAS ONE HSR corridor under construction, which will link Mumbai and Ahmedabad, proposed to be 508km-long with a top speed of 320 kmph. Union railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Tuesday said that 300 km of viaducts for the project had been completed. According to the National High-Speed Rail Corporation Ltd, which is executing the project, 383 km of pierwork, 401 km of foundation, and 326 km of girder casting had also been completed. In March, Vaishnaw had highlighted delays caused by denial of permission under former Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray's tenure but assured that efforts were being made to compensate for the lost time. The progress thus far has cost ₹67,486 crore. The projected cost has escalated to ₹2 lakh crore, and completion, earlier estimated by 2022, has been pushed further and expected by 2028. A 50-km stretch in Guiarat is slated to host the first trial run in 2026. This is the only officially sanctioned HSR project as of now, with corridors like Delhi-Varanasi and Chennai-Mysuru being studied for viability and Mumbai-Hyderabad and Delhi-Ahmedabad awaiting approval.



Bullet train journey nearing destination

India's bullet train ambitions have been in the pipeline since 2015. However, after facing several hurdles including the Covid-19 pandemic, the project, initially slated to be complete in 2022, will now be partially operational next year and is eyeing the finish line in 2028, explains Anvitii Rai

47%

OFTHE MUMBAI-AHMEDABAD HSR CORRIDOR COMPLETED TILL DATE

₹2 LAKH CRORE IS THE ESTIMATED **COST OF THE INDIAN** PROJECT, LIKELY TO BE OPERATIONAL BY 2033

29

COUNTRIES HAVE HSR NETWORKS THATARE CURRENTLY **OPERATIONAL**

Hurdles faced by the project

AS MENTIONED BY Vaishnaw, one of the key factors that delayed the project was land acquisition in Maharashtra, which pushed the timeline back by two years. According to the minister, "The loss of two-and-a-half years due to permission delays is being addressed, and work is now progressing rapidly." Other aspects that caused delays were challenges including infrastructural (such as the midproject switch to build only on viaducts) and financial (high acquisition cost of rolling stock from the Japan International Cooperation Agency [JICA] or the high price of the signalling system for the trains). Meanwhile, Japanese PM Shinzo Abe, who too had laid the foundation stone for the project in 2017, was assassinated in 2022, a loss also felt in India. In an article for a newspaper, Sudhanshu Mani, the head of the Vande Bharat project, also suggested that the "never-ending" surveys along different routes tend to obstruct decisiveness, and at least a couple of shorter stretches must be sanctioned and completed in six-seven years to get the ball rolling.

How has India addressed them?

THE MOST EVIDENT solution adopted to offset the heavy financial load of the project is sanctioning Indian Railways' own Integral Coach Factory and staterun BEML to jointly design and manufacture two prototype train sets (of eight cars each) with a speed of 280 kmph. Additionally, aid is being provided by JICA, which will supply India with two Shinkansen trains (Japan's signature bullet trains) free of cost by 2026 for data collection and testing in Indian conditions. Additionally, alternatives to the signalling system are being considered, with Alstom-L&T and DRA-Siemens joint ventures bidding for tenders for this project. However, Mani cautions that these solutions come with their own setbacks - the indigenous trains would only reach speeds of 280 kmph as opposed to the 320 kmph capacity, the provision of two trains for data collection "adds confusion instead of offering any hope of resolution", and that concerns about negotiations should have been addressed previously.

• What is considered as HSR?

TO BE CONSIDERED high-speed, trains need an operating speed of over 250 kmph on tracks dedicated to them. On non-dedicated tracks (which are shared with conventional railway networks), speeds typically need to exceed 200 kmph. Tracks like these must be

smooth and straight with gentle curves and slopes to maintain high speeds. They usually require new, specially designed routes.

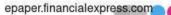
Some HSR systems do use existing tracks in parts of their network, but these must be upgraded to allow for

higher speeds (such as by straightening the tracks and improving signalling). Other than that, requirements include adherence to rigorous safety standards, ensuring sufficient power supply, having trained operating personnel, and maintenance.

Lessons from other nations

DEVELOPED NATIONS — including Japan (the pioneer of these trains), France, and Germany - have HSR networks, while China has the largest such network in the world. However, middle-income countries such as Indonesia and Uzbekistan also operate such networks. Vietnam is also in the process of building its own HSR network. If the cases of the latter three are considered, the common factors that emerge are clear plans for financing the projects and the utilisation of foreign

assistance from nations that already have HSR networks. Additionally, India can also take note of the criticism that these networks have faced - such as low benefit to taxpayers (as is the case in Uzbekistan, where reservations are hard to come by owing to low capacity and pre-booking by local resellers and foreign travel agencies), noise pollution (a issue highlighted in Japan), high maintenance costs (which could possibly push operators into losses, as is the case with China), and more.











Bullet Train Project: India's High-Speed Rail (HSR)

Status of the Project

Corridor: Mumbai-Ahmedabad HSR (only officially sanctioned HSR project in India)

Length: 508 km

Top Speed: 320 km/h

Completion so far:

300 km of viaducts completed

383 km of pier work, 401 km of foundation, 326 km of girder casting done

Trial Launch Target: 2026 (in Gujarat)

Full Operation Target: 2028 (revised from 2022)

Cost Estimate: ₹2 lakh crore

Cost till date: ₹67,486 crore

- Other Proposed Corridors:
 - Delhi–Varanasi
 - Mumbai–Nagpur
 - Mumbai–Hyderabad
 - Chennai–Ahmedabad (awaiting approval)

! Hurdles Faced

- Land acquisition issues in Maharashtra (caused 2.5-year delay)
- Mid-project switches in viaduct construction
- High cost of imported rolling stock from Japan (via JICA)
- Delay in Japanese PM Shinzo Abe's announcement due to assassination
- Signalling system costs
- Logistical delays in aligning routes with existing tracks

Lessons from Other Nations

- Japan, France, Germany: Mature HSR ecosystems with taxpayer support
- Vietnam, Indonesia: Facing financing & profitability challenges
- Key learning:
 - Importance of ridership volume
 - Long-term planning
 - Government subsidies
 - Pre-booking strategies to reduce losses

Trump unveils plans for an Israel-like 'Golden Dome' missile defence shield

Prez Says Project Will Cost \$175Bn. **Be Operational Before End Of Term**

Washington: President Donald Trump said on Tuesday he had selected a design for the \$175-billion Golden Dome missile defence shield and named a Space Force general to head the ambitious programme aimed at blocking threats from China and Russia. The programme, first ordered by Trump in Jan, aims to create a network of satellites, perhaps numbering in the hundreds, to detect, track and potentially intercept incoming missiles.

Trump told a White House press conference that US Space Force General Michael Guetlein would be the lead programme manager for an effort widely viewed as the keystone to Trump's military planning.

Golden Dome will "protect our homeland," Trump said, adding that Canada had said it wanted to be part of it. In a statement, the office of PM Carney said he and his ministers were discussing a new security and economic relationship with their US counterparts.

Trump said the defence shield, which would cost some \$175 billion, should be operational by the end of his term in Jan 2029, but industry experts were less certain of that timeframe and the cost. "Ronald Reagan wanted it many years ago, but



This month, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that Golden Dome could cost as much as \$831 billion over two decades

Plan is a sovereign matter of US: Kremlin

The Kremlin said Wednesday that Trump's plan for a "Golden Dome" missile shield required consultations with Russia but was otherwise a "sovereign matter" for the US, softening its tone after previously slamming the idea as destabilising. "If the US believes that there is a missile threat, then of course it will develop a missile defence system," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskoy said. "Of course, in the foreseeable future, the course of events will require the resumption of contacts to restore strategic stability," he added, referring to broader nuclear talks. AFP

gy," Trump said, referring to the space-based missile defence system, popularly called "Star Wars", that Reagan proposed.

The Golden Dome programme faces both political scrutiny and funding uncertainty. This month, the Congressional Budthey didn't have the technologet Office estimated that Gol-Palantir and Anduril to build much more extensive, incluna would also benefit. REUTERS

China: US move has offensive implications

hina is "seriously concerned" about the Golden Dome missile defence shield project and urged the US to abandon its development, a foreign ministry spokesperson said Wednesday, Mao Ning said it carries "strong offensive implications" and heightens the risks of the militarisation of outer space and an arms race. "The US is obsessed with seeking absolute security for itself. This violates the principle that the security of all countries should not be compromised and undermines global strategic balance and stability," she said. REUTERS

den Dome could cost as much as \$831 billion over two decades.

Democratic lawmakers have voiced concern about the procurement process and involvement of Trumpally Elon Musk's SpaceX, which has emerged as a frontrunner alongside

key components of the system.

The Golden Dome idea was inspired by Israel's land-based Iron Dome defence shield that protects it from missiles and rockets. The US is more than 400 times larger than Israel.

Trump's Golden Dome is

Trump with South African President Cyril Ramaphosa in the Oyal Office

Trump ambushes South African prez with 'genocide' accusation

Washington: President Tru- nocide. "They're white farmp ambushed South African mers, and they're fleeing South President Cyril Ramaphosa on Wednesday by playing him a video that he claimed proved genocide is being committed against white people, driving farmers to flee to the US.

The unexpected stunt turned the usually staid diplomatic setting of the Oval Office into a stage for Trump's contention that white South Africans are being persecuted.

With the media standing by and Ramaphosa at times unable to get a word in, Trump had staff put the video on a large screen, saving it showed black South Africans discussing ge-

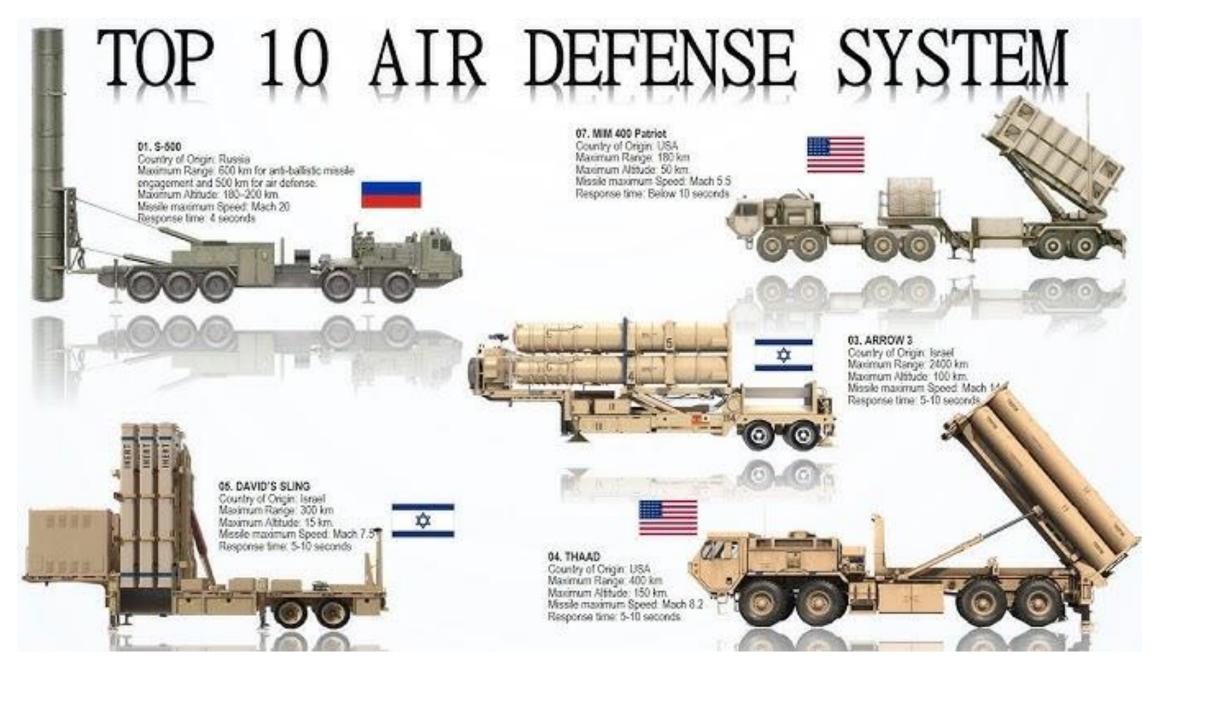
Africa... But I hope we can have an explanation of that, because I know you don't want that," Trump said. Ramaphosa repeatedly tried to speak but was drowned out. At one point, he pleaded that they "talk about it very calmly". "We were taught by Mandela that whenever there are problems, people need to sit down and talk about them. And this is precisely what we would also like to talk about."

The visit was billed as a chance to smoothen ties following unfounded genocide claims by Trump and Elon Musk, who was also in the Oval Office. AFP

ding a massive array of surveillance satellites and a separate fleet of attacking satellites that would shoot down offensive missiles soon after lift-off. Trump said Alaska would be a big part of the programme, while Florida, Georgia and India-

- Announced by: Former US President Donald Trump
- Estimated cost: \$175 billion initially; may go up to \$831 billion over 20 years
- Project type: Missile defence shield, similar to Israel's Iron Dome
- Project codename: Golden Dome
- Operational goal: To defend the US from Chinese and Russian missile threats

Feature	Details
Scope	Satellite-based global missile detection and interception network
Role of US Space Force	Lead development and management of the project
Operational Deadline	Trump pledged to make it operational before the end of his term
Scale	Hundreds of satellites in orbit for tracking & intercepting threats
Defence Comparison	Inspired by Israel's Iron Dome, but on a larger global scale



COMPLETE LIST OF INDIA'S AIR DEFENCE SYSTEMS

CAPABILITIES, RANGE & STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

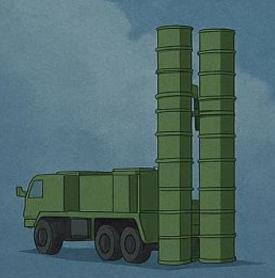


AKASH

CAPABILITES: Surface-to-air missile RANGE: 25 km



CAPABILITIES
Surface-to-air missile
RANGE: 100 km



MR-SAM

CAPABILITES: Surface-to-air missile RANGE: 70 km

SPYDER

CAPABILITIES
Surface-to-air missile
RANGE: 15 km





CHALLENGE TO LAW Waqf registration began in 1923, not 2025: SC





FY25 to \$353 million

Is establishing truth a problem during conflict? India-Pak. standoff lit an explosion of fake news



Marsh smashes a ton as LSG upstages GT

INSIDE



Starvation has claimed 29 lives in Gaza: Minister

GENEVA
Palestinian Health Minister
Majed Abu Ramadan said on
Thursday that 29 children and
elderly people had died from Gaza in recent days, » PAGE 14

Commando and Maoist killed in Sukma gun fight

PAPPUR

A Commando Battalion for Resolute Action commando Resolute Action commando and a Maoist were killed during an anti-Naxal operation in Sukma district of Chhattisgarh on Thursday, and that the gun fight continued till evening, the police said. » PAGE 4

+ Multi-party teams

NEW DELHI The multi-party delegations sent to various nations are par

'are on a mission against terror'

of a political mission that the rnment of India is carryin out to convey its concerns emanating from Pakistan, the Ministry of External Affairs said

Murmu awards medals to armed forces and police NEW DELIHI
President Broupadi Murmu on
Thursday conferred six Kirti
Chakras and 33 Shaurya
Chakras on personnel from the
armed forces, the Central

armed police forces, and the

State and UT police units at a

eremony held at the lashtrapati Bhavan. » PAGE 5

Soldier killed in anti-terror operation in Chenab Valley

The Hindu Bureau

One soldier was killed in a One soldier was killed in a major anti-terror operation by security forces against a group of terrorists hiding in the Chenab Valley's Kishtwar district on Thursday. An Army spokesman

said that security forces launched Operation Trashi on Thursday morning and established contact with terrorists during a joint op-eration with the J&K police at Kishtwar's Chhatru. Offiat Kishtwar's Chiatru. Om-cials said that security forc-es and hiding terrorists had exchanged a "heavy volley of bullets". The Army said that addi-tional troops were in-ducted and the operation

ducted and the operation was carried on all day "to neutralise the terrorists". "During the ongoing op-eration, a fierce gunfight is continuing. One of our bra-vehearts sustained grie-rous injuries in the ex-change of fire and has

Drying time



medical efforts," the Army said. forces and terrorists who were well trained in jungle warfare in 2024. According to the official data, five deaths were reported in Kishtwar in 2024. Two vil-Kishtwar in 2024. Two vil-lage defence guards (VGDs) and three security forces personnel were killed in heightened militant at-tacks in Kishtwar in 2024. In April this year, three terrorists were killed at Naidgam in Chattru.

succumbed despite best ters between the security

Terrorists in hiding Two to three terrorists are believed to be hiding in the

believed to be hiding in the rugged mountain area of Chattru, officials said. The anti-terror operation cov-ers a large forest area bet-ween Shari and Mandral Dhole areas. ween Shari and Dhok areas.
There was a sudden up-

ED crossed all limits with raid on T.N. govt. body: SC

CJI raps Central agency for 'violating the federal structure of the country', questions the legality of targeting State-run TASMAC; he asks why ED stepped in despite the TN, govt. filing multiple FIRs

he Supreme Court on Thursday orally torate of Enforcement for "crossing all limits" and stayed investigation con-ducted by the Central agency following raids on the Comparation (TAS-keting, Comparation, (TASketing Corporation (TAS-MAC) offices.

"How can a corporation commit an offence? The ED is crossing all limits," Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai said, addressing Ad-ditional Solicitor-General ditional Solicitor-General S.V. Raju, who appeared for the Gentral agency. "You are totally violat-ing the federal structure of the country," Justice Gavai remarked. The court was hearing a petition filed by the State



of Tamil Nadu and TAS-MAC against a Madras High Court order in April, reject-ing a plea to stay the ED in-vestigation and its raids on

'Phones cloned' Senior advocate Mukul Ro-hatgi, for TASMAC,

claimed that its employees phones have been cloned.
"There is something called privacy," he submitted. Mr. Sibal, for Tamil Nadu, said the State itself had registered 41 FIRs against liquor outlet operators ov-er corruption allegations.

scene in 2025 and proceed-ed to raid TASMAC head-quarters to confiscate the phones and devices found

phones and devices found there.

"How can a criminal of-fence be made out against the corporation? You may register FiRs against the in-dividuals, but against the corporation, in a criminal more Raju defended the FD saving that the investi-

ED, saying that the investi-gation involved fraud worth \$1,000 crore, ad-

ding that politicians were involved in the case. The court queried why the ED had to intervene the ED had to intervene despite the State having filed multiple FIRs, asking about the predicate of-fence which had prompted the ED to swoop in. Mr. Raju sought time to file a detailed response and was given a fortight.

Indian armed forces battered Pakistan into submission, says PM

In his first public address since the cessation of In-dia-Pakistanister Naren-fual Pakistanister Naren-fra Modi on Thursday said Operation Sindoor, launched by the Indian armed forces, had forced Pakistan and its terror op-Pakistan and its terror op-"We have fulfilled our re-solve to give them a pur-solve to give them a pur-solve to give them a pursolve to give them a pun-ishment beyond [their] imagination," Mr. Modi said at a rally in Bikaner

district of Rajasthan. Referring to the Pahalgam terror attack, Mr. Mo-di said those who had set lion) off the forehead of women had been "reduced

women had been to dust".

"Ma Bharti's servant

"woding here with "Ma Bharti's servant Modi is standing here with his chest held high, Modi's mind is cool, but Modi's is hot sindoor, not blood, which is flowing in my veins," the Prime Minister salt early the prime Minister salt early the prime dis-tinct and the armed forces were given full opera-tional freedom and they dismantled Pakistan's de-curyuh (trap). In response

ravyuh (trap). In response to the April 22 terror atof Pakistan's biggest terror

They little to cought reterits the continuity of the continuity of

PM inaugurates 103 Amrit Bharat railway stations

The Hindu Bureau

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday inaugurated 103 Amrit Bharat railway stations

stations, in 86 districts across 18 States and UTs, cost of over ₹1,100 crore. He also flagged off a train connecting Bikaner to Mumbai.

FULL REPORT

Taking a swipe at Pakis-tan, Mr. Modi said while the neighbouring country's attempt to target the Nal airbase in Bikaner had failed to cause any dam-age, the Rahim Yar Khan airbase situated across the border was extensively damaged in India's retalia-

bour. They included a b the nuclear threats, and no distinction between the and the so-called non-state perpetrators of terrorism. "The talks, if any, will only pied Kashmir," Mr. Modi

Rajasthan Governor Ha-ribhau Bagade, Chief Mi-nister Bhajan Lal Sharma, and Union Ministers Ash-wini Valshnaw and Arjun Ram Meghwal were among those who attended the event.

Two Israel embassy staffers shot dead in U.S.

Agence France-Presse

Two Israeli embassy staffers were shot dead late on Wednesday outside a Jewish maseum in Washington by a gumman who shouted "free Palestine", authorites said, with U.S., Israeli and other world leaders expressing outrage over expressing outrage over the killings. U.S. President Donald Trump condemned the at-

trump condemned the at-tack, saying: "These horri-ble D.C. killings, based ob-viously on antisemitism, must end, NOW!" "Harred and Radicalism have no place in the USA," he said on social media.

Victims were a couple Shots rang out on the side-walk outside the Capital Jewish Museum as the ve-nue held a social event for



young professionals and search assistant at the Is-diplomatic staff. search assistant at the Is-

diplomatic staff.
The victims were a young couple who planned to get married, the Israeli Ambassador said. Israel's Foreign Ministry identified the victims as Yaron Lischinsky and Sarah Lynn Milgrim.
Mr. Lischinsky was a re-

raeli embassy, while Ms.
Milgrim worked for its public diplomacy department, according to their
Linkedin profiles.
Police confirmed the
suspected shooter walked
into the museum after the
attack and had been
detained.

A video clip circulating on social media after the attack showed a bearded young man in a jacket and white shirt shouting "free, white shirt shouting "free, free Palestine" as he was led away by police. "The shooting was committed by a single suspect who is now in custody," Washington Police Chief

Pamela smith told reporters.

"Prior to the shooting, the prior to the shooting, the properties of the properties was observed pacing back and forth outside the museum. He approached a group of four gun and opened fire.

"After the shooting, the support then entered the support the support of the support of the prevent security".

She said the handcuffed man. whom ahe identified as Elias Roddyncar, 30, from Chicago - Joli them Smith told

"We are witnessing the terrible price of antisemi-tism and the wild incitement against the State of Is-rael," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement, announcing extra security arrangements at Israeli missions around the world. "Blood libels against Is-

where he had discarded

rael are paid in blood - and they must be fought relent-lessly," he said.

INBRIEF



Two held for trespassing on Salman Khan's residence

A man and a woman were arrested separately for trespassing on Salman Khan's Galaxy Apartments in Mumbai's Bandra area, the police said on Mumbai's Bandra area, the police said on Kumar Singh from Chhattigarh entered the premises by hiding behind a resident's car after being asked to leave earlier. He told the police he being asked to leave earlier. He told the police he 23-year-old lish a Chabaria reached Salman Khan's all and was also arrested. "She claimed she knew Salman Khan," a police official said. Separate PiRs were registered, and the Bandra (With inputs, from PTD). With inputs, from PTD. (With inputs from PTI)

CBI files chargesheet against Satya Pal Malik in graft case

The CBI field a chargesheet against former J&K Governor Satya Pal Malik and others over alleged irregularities in awarding a 22.200-crore contract case involves the Chenab Valley Power Projects Pvt Ld (GVPPL) Board reversing a decision to re-tender the project via e-tendering and project via e-tendering and 1919. Mr. Malik earved as Governor of Jammu & Kashmir from August 2018 to October 2019. CBI searches in Pebruary 2024 targeted over, 30 locations linked to Mr. Malik and associates, Mr. of hazasment complaints, accused uniborities of hazasment complaints, accused uniborities

Bengal slams move to shift IPL final to Ahmedabad

Shiv Sahay Singh KOLKATA

A political row has erupted over the decision to shift the venue of the final match of the Indian Premier League and the se-cond qualifier from Kolka-

cond qualifier from Kolka-ta to Ahmedebad. West Bengal Minister of Sports and Youth Welfare Aroop Biswas alleged on Thursday that politics was behind the cricketing

move.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) had announced that the second qualifier and the IPL final, scheduled to take place on June 1 and 3, respectively, will be held at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ah-medabad instead of Kolka-

"The IPL play-offs and final have been moved from Eden Gardens due to political reasons. You are doing politics against Ma-mata Banerjee," the State Minister said.

Minister said.

"It is the PL's rule that last year's champions' home ground will host the final," he pointed out, adding that the State government, and the state government of the state of the shift of the state of the shift was the state of the shift of the state of the shift of the shift.

PM inaugurates 103 Amrit **Bharat railway stations**

 $\underline{\text{Modi says these stations not only preserved thousands-of-years-old heritage}} \text{ but also served as}$ catalysts for tourism growth across States, creating new employment opportunities for youth

rime Minister Na-rendra Modi on Thursday inaugu-rated 103 Amrit Bharat railway stations through video conference from Bikaner, conference from Bikaner, Rajasthan. These stations, situated in 86 districts across 18 States and Union Territories, have been de-veloped at a cost of over ₹1,100 crore. Mr. Modi also flagged off

train connecting Bikaner o Mumbai. While inaugurating the

tations, Mr. Modi said moernisation of more than 1,300 railway stations un-der the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS) was being carried out to imexperience.

Mr. Modi said these mo-

Mr. Modi said these mo-dernised stations served as a showcase of local art and history. He cited examples, including Rajasthan's Man-dalgarh station, which re-flected the grandeur of Raj-put traditions, and Bihar's Thawe station, which dep-ired the sacred researce Triawe station, which dep-icted the sacred presence of Maa Thawewali along with Madhubani artwork. The Orchha railway station in Madhya Pradesh exuded



thousands-of-years-old

heritage but served as cata-

the divine essence of Lord Ram, while the design of the Srirangam station drew inspiration from the Ran-ganathaswamy temple.

The paid homage to Ranchho-drai #, the Tiruvannamalai station followed Dravidian architectural principles, and the Begumpet station embodied the architectur-cent of the Kakathya dynasty.

The second Lancet Com-mission on adolescent health and wellbeing has recorded that despite pro-gress in some areas, with-

out increasing invest-ments, by the end of 2030, at least half of the world's adolescents – around 1 bil-lion people – will live in multi-burden countries facing complex health

heritage but served as cata-lysts for tourism growth across States, creating new employment opportunities for youth. He urged the pe-ople to ensure the cleanil-ness and safety of the sta-tions.

Mr. Modi said the Union government was set to spend neading 10,000 properties to the State this war. dynasty.
The Prime Minister said
Amrit Bharat stations not
only preserved India's ment in the State this year. Emphasising India's ef-forts to modernise its rail-way network, the Prime

Minister underlined the introduction of Vande Bha rat, Amrit Bharat, and Na-mo Bharat trains. He said nearly 70 routes

rain connectivity to remote regions.

He pointed out the in-frastructure advancements over the past II years, in-cluding the construction of road overbridges and un-der bridges, as well as the laying of over 34,000 km of new railway tracks. of new railway tracks.

Govt. reserves 4% housing for persons with disabilities

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The Union Urban Affair Ministry has decided to make a reservation of 4% for persons with disabili-ties in the allotment of Central government

housing.
The Department of Estates (DoE) has issued an office memorandum to enoffice memorandum to en-sure fair access to Central government residential ac-commodations for persons with disabilities in align-ment with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs said in an official statement.

statement.
The Department of Es-tates is an attached office under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, responsible for managing and administering the government's estates, parti

Move towards equity
The statement said the 4%
reservation marked a substantial move towards
equity, dignity, and accessibility in public services.
"This initiative reflects
the government's dedica-

tion to the empowerment of every citizen and also strengthens the foundation of an inclusive and accessi-

Fresh round of survey on substance | Report on adolescent health records use will have a larger sample size

The Union government has started planning a fresh round of a nationwide sur-vey to establish the extent and pattern of substance use, officials told The Hin-du. This will expand on the 'National Survey on Extent and Pattern of Substance Use in India 2017-18', which was a first-of-its-kind study on estimating illicit drug use in the country. The Union Ministry of

The Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empo-werment is currently in the process of finalising the formalities for it and the design for the survey is be-ing readied, the official ad-

led. They said that the fresh



interventions, officials say.

round will try to gather patterns of substance use at the district-level.

at the district-level.

The 2017-18 survey on
substance use had two
components which were
put together for the entire
exercise. The first entailed
a household survey, under
which over 4.7 lakh people
in about 2 lakh households
across the country were across the country were sampled. This was fol-lowed by a respondent-dri-ven survey (RDS), which

dependence, to account for the possible under-re-porting of illicit drug use in the household survey. Atul Ambekar of the Na-

tional Drug Dependence Treatment Centre, which led the exercise, explained that this method involved that this method involved picking 20 people with drug dependence in each district. Each of the res-pondents is then asked to refer three other drug-dependent persons and the chain is continued till a sa-

chain is continued till a sa-tisfying sample size is achieved.

The 2017-18 survey, which was the first time undered poor with the RDS method, had concluded that alcohol was the most used substance, with over 15 crore people estimated to be using it, of which mated to be minors (bet-mated to be minors (bet-mated to be minors (bet-

ween 10-17 years of age). This was followed by can-nabis, optioids, sedatives, inhalants, cocaine, amphe-tamine type stimulants, and hallucinogens respec-tively, according to data from the survey presented in Parliament by the go-

It is "critical" to have da-ta on substance use that goes beyond State-level to the districts so that interventions can be designed accordingly, an official said. While the previous accordingly, and official said. While the previous ple similar substances under the same heading—such as cannable (medical said) and the same heading or opioids (including heroin, poppy, and pharmaceut the property have prevent as the property of the property of the property of the property of the prevent ventions can be designed

calls for more investments and laws

The global population of adolescents constitutes around 24% of the world's population.

targeted to the areas of ple, specific funding for adolescent health accountadolescent health accounted for only 2-4% of total development assistance for
health in 2016-21, despite
adolescents accounting for
52-2% of the world
polyment of the commission included 44
commission included 44
commissioners, with meaningful involvement of 10
youth commissioners and
in in youth Solution Labs.

facing complex health challenges, Further, it has projected that in 2030, 464 million adolescents globally will be overweight and 412 million years of healthy and the complex of the challenge and is not of the of the challenge and is not

World Health Organiza-tion (WHO) Director-Gen-eral Adhanom Ghebreysus Tedros, writing in *The Lan-*cet, said: "Over the past two decades, adolescent mortality has declined by 27%, owing to substantial reductions in substantial and communicable diseases, and expanded access to education - especially for girls. These changes will pave the way towards grea-ter gender equity and bet-ter life outcomes."

ter life outcomes."
The global population of roughly 2 billion adolescents constitutes around 24% of the world's population. "The current generation of adolescents is the largest in the history of humanity. Designing our manity...Projections sug-gest that by 2100 around 46% of the world's adoles-cents will live in Africa, and that 85% will live in Africa or Asia," the report states.

cents living in conflict-af-fected areas has more than doubled since the 1990s, now totalling 340 million. The report draws atten-tion to the possible impact of social media on the lives of releases.

the 'first global generation of digital natives'. Globally 79% of 15-24-year-olds use the Internet, and more than 95% of adolescents in high-income and upper middle-income countries are digitally connected. I calls for "enabling laws and calls for "enabling laws and policies provide the foun-dational environments for sustained improvements in adolescent health and wellbeing. These environ-ments should protect ado-lescent sexual and repro-ductive health and rights, reduce the impact of the reduce the impact of the commercial determinants of health, and promote the healthy use of social media The proportion of adoles- and online spaces."

round of the survey is likely to have a sample size sampled. This was followed by a respondent-drichat of the one conducted in 2017-18 and that this specifically surveyed over

TH GROSSWORD+14492
The Grant State of the Hyperial (set by Hyperia)

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16 Co-ordinate on the phone for founder (4)



18 13 Derisive of actors in Indian attire at inauguration of Cannes (9 9 15 Rank beginners in technical institutes earning recognition (4)

17 Skip exercise by students initially sorting types wrongly (9) 21 Monkey putting shelled nut in top portion of jaw (8) 22 Advise lacking love for one ailing (6)

24 Determined sibling cycling behind park before turning ten (10 25 House fly? (4)

26 Attempts dissertations (6) 27 Repeatedly consider delivering cotton fabric (6) 1 Curious girl's dad checking both gates (7)

6 Spooner secured spot for a pithy quote (9)

23 Old fellow promoted strange group (5)

2 Just undisciplined nationalists thwarting authority, basically! (5) 3 Hard gangster intercepts, attacks powerful tycoons (7) John joining work before May's final projection (6)

Murugappa interestingly, collected M.F. Hussain, say (7) 8 Entertainment box's live on-site (10,3) 16 Thai men's team has its regulars retiring (7)

19 Rallving cries exciting this romantic singer (7)

SUDOKU





FAITH

Message from Krishna leelas

Thirukkuulandhui Dr. Venkatesh said in a discourse that the various leeda enaceted by Lord Krishna are backed by different philosophies. His appearance before Devals and Vasudeva in prison, sporting four hands, indicates that He is ever ready to extend the four precious tenets of Dhar-ma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha needed for a pious life to

like grace on us.

When Krishna's father Vasudeva carried Him from prison to Gokulam, all the chains automatically disjoined. son to Gordanam, all the chains automatically disjoined. Likewise, He would detach us from the worldly tethers. Acharya Vedanta Desika says in "Yadavabhyudayam" that like how a juani or yogi crosses the sea of samsara, Vasudeva crossed the river Yamuna.

deva crossed the river Yamuna.

There is no antecedent of God's divine feet causing harm. They will only shower blessings and grant moksha. The Lord kicked Sakatasura, who came to kill, and ultimately granted him Moksha. "Sakatam" denotes a wheel rotating by going up and down. We are also rotating in this world up and down by repeated births and deaths. Clinging onto His feet through aurrender will stop the wheel of

and other inches and the properties of the prope

PM inaugurates 103 Amrit Bharat railway stations

Modi says these stations not only preserved thousands-of-years-old heritage but also served as catalysts for tourism growth across States, creating new employment opportunities for youth

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

rime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday inaugurated 103 Amrit Bharat railway stations through video conference from Bikaner, Rajasthan. These stations, situated in 86 districts across 18 States and Union Territories, have been developed at a cost of over \$\frac{1}{4},100 crore.

Mr. Modi also flagged off a train connecting Bikaner to Mumbai.

While inaugurating the stations, Mr. Modi said modernisation of more than 1,300 railway stations under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS) was being carried out to improve passenger experience.

Mr. Modi said these modernised stations served as a showcase of local art and history. He cited examples, including Rajasthan's Mandalgarh station, which reflected the grandeur of Rajput traditions, and Bihar's Thawe station, which depicted the sacred presence of Maa Thawewali along with Madhubani artwork. The Orchha railway station in Madhya Pradesh exuded



On track: Narendra Modi, along with Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, inaugurates 103 Amrit Stations from Deshnoke in Bikaner on Thursday. ANI

the divine essence of Lord Ram, while the design of the Srirangam station drew inspiration from the Ranganathaswamy temple. Gujarat's Dakor station paid homage to Ranchhodrai ji, the Tiruvannamalai station followed Dravidian architectural principles, and the Begumpet station embodied the architectural legacy of the Kakatiya dynasty.

The Prime Minister said Amrit Bharat stations not only preserved India's thousands-of-years-old heritage but served as catalysts for tourism growth across States, creating new employment opportunities for youth. He urged the people to ensure the cleanliness and safety of the stations.

Mr. Modi said the Union government was set to spend nearly ₹10,000 crore on railway development in the State this year.

Emphasising India's efforts to modernise its railway network, the Prime

Minister underlined the introduction of Vande Bharat, Amrit Bharat, and Namo Bharat trains.

He said nearly 70 routes now operate Vande Bharat trains, bringing modern rail connectivity to remote regions.

He pointed out the infrastructure advancements over the past 11 years, including the construction of road overbridges and under bridges, as well as the laying of over 34,000 km of new railway tracks.

m Event Overview

- Who: Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- What: Inaugurated 103 Amrit Bharat railway stations
- When: Via video conference from Bikaner, Rajasthan
- Where: Across 86 districts in 18 States and Union Territories
- Budget: ₹1,100 crore
- Additional event: Flagged off Bikaner–Mumbai train

Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS)

- Launched to modernise 1,300+ railway stations
- Objective: Enhance passenger experience
- Promotes:
 - Local art and heritage
 - Tourism
 - Employment opportunities
- Examples of stations with cultural themes:
 - Mandalgarh (Rajasthan): Rajput grandeur
 - Thawe (Bihar): Maa Thawewali, Madhubani art
 - Orchha (MP): Essence of Lord Ram
 - Srirangam: Dravidian architecture
 - Dakor (Gujarat): Ranchodrai ji
 - Begumpet (Telangana): Kakatiya dynasty heritage

Aspect	Details
Employment	Boost through tourism and station operations
Investment	₹10,000 crore planned for overall railway development
Network Expansion	34,000 km of new railway tracks laid in last 11 years
Other Infrastructure Projects	Construction of over/under bridges
Trains Introduced	Vande Bharat, Amrit Bharat, and Namo Bharat
Remote Access	Vande Bharat operates on 70 routes, expanding connectivity

Enrolment Drop in Government Schools and PM-POSHAN

Declining government school enrollment in 23 states



Inadequate scheme benefits reduce attractiveness.

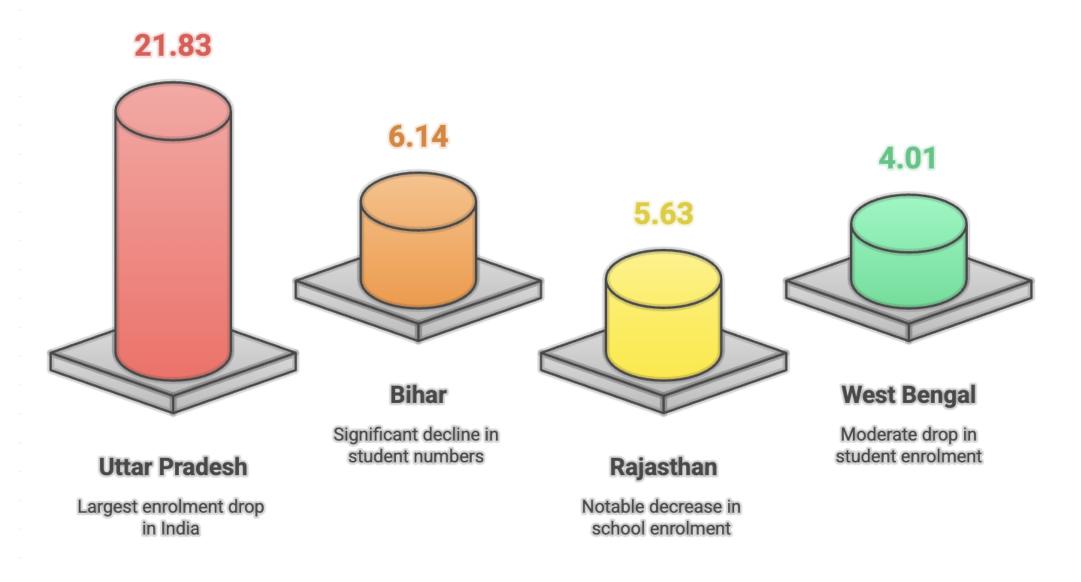
Planning → deficiencies

Poor planning leads to ineffective implementation.

Budget constraints

Insufficient funds limit scheme reach and quality.

Decline in School Enrolment by State (2024-25)



Understanding the shift in education systems and enrollment trends.

Private

Private Education

Enrollment shifts from government to private schools.

Hybrid Education

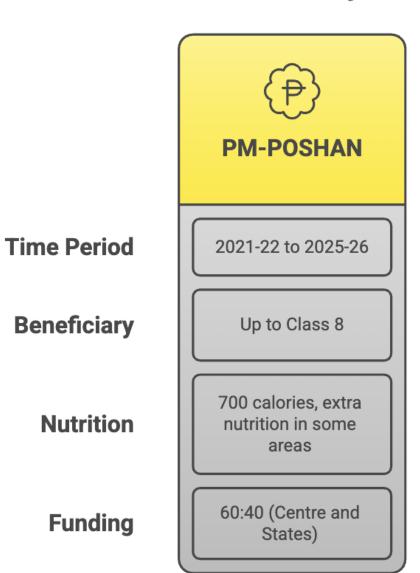
Eliminates outdated records and false entries.

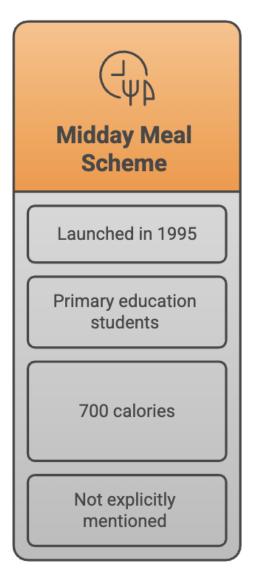
Public Education

Focuses on total student numbers.

Public

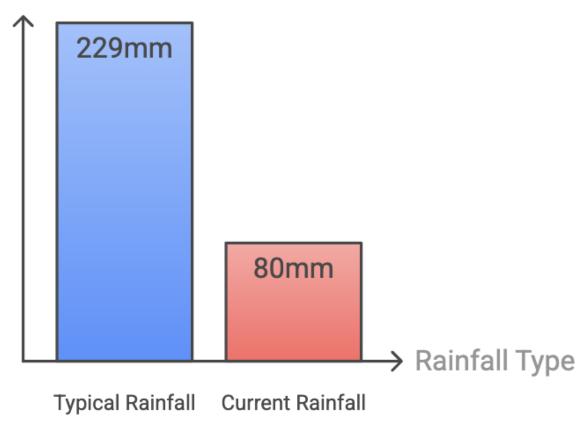
PM-POSHAN vs. Midday Meal Scheme





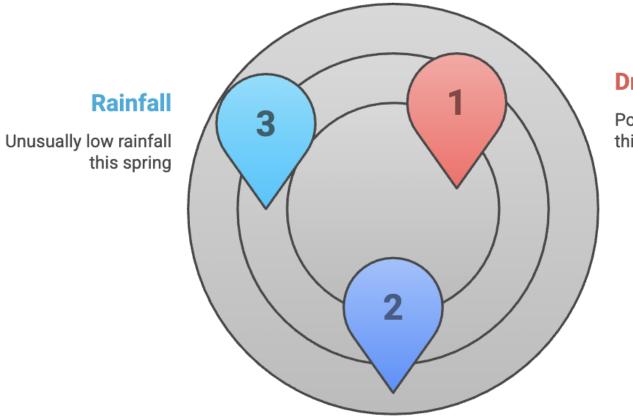
UK Experiences Driest Spring in a Century

Rainfall Amount



Rainfall Comparison in the UK

UK Drought Risk Assessment



Drought Risk

Potential for drought this summer

Reservoir Levels

Current healthy state but vulnerable

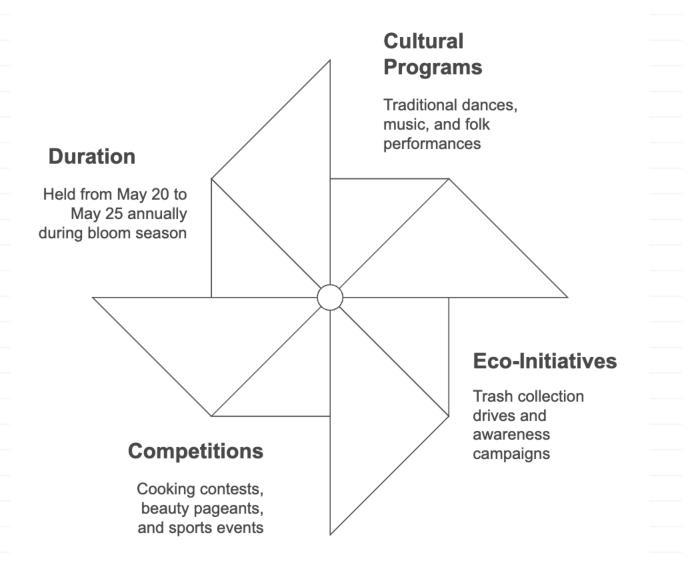
Operation Abhyaas

 Operation Abhyaas, a large-scale civil defence preparedness drill, was recently held in several places in India as directed by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to assess emergency response readiness amid heightened national security concerns.



• The Shirui Lily Festival resumed in Manipur after a two-year hiatus due to ethnic conflict, marking the first major movement of Meiteis through Kuki-Zo regions amid tight security.

Annual School Event Overview



Prostate Cancer

Former US President Joe Biden has been diagnosed with Stage 4
metastatic prostate cancer, drawing global attention to the disease,
its symptoms, and treatment options

• What is Prostate Cancer?

- Prostate cancer arises in the prostate gland, a small organ in men that produces seminal fluid.
- It is one of the most common cancers in men, particularly after age 50.

• Global and Indian Scenario:

- Globally: Prostate cancer is the 2nd most diagnosed cancer in men with over 1.4 million new cases and nearly 400,000 deaths in 2022 (GLOBOCAN).
- <u>India:</u> It ranks among the top 10 cancers in men, with 37,948 new cases and 18,386 deaths in 2022, and rising incidence in urban areas.

· Causes and Risk Factors:

- Age: Risk increases sharply after age 50.
- o Family History: A close relative with prostate cancer doubles one's risk.
- Genetics: BRCA1/2 mutations and Lynch syndrome increase vulnerability.
- Race: Men of African ancestry have higher risk and severity.
- o Diet & Lifestyle: High intake of red meat, fats, and sedentary habits contribute.

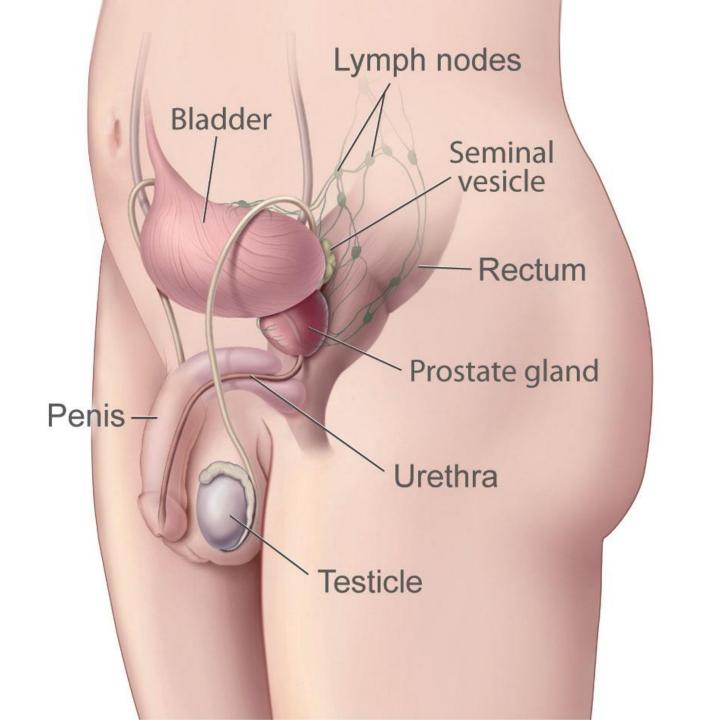
- Common Symptoms of Prostate Cancer:
 - Frequent or painful urination: Indicates urinary tract irritation due to prostate enlargement or tumor pressure.
 - Weak urine flow or dribbling: Caused by blockage in the urethra due to prostate gland swelling.
 - Erectile dysfunction: Tumor or treatment may impair nerves or blood vessels linked to erection.
 - Blood in urine or semen: A sign of inflammation, prostate damage, or tumor-related bleeding.
 - Bone pain (in advanced stages): Metastatic cancer often spreads to bones, causing persistent pain.

• <u>Diagnosis Methods:</u>

- PSA Blood Test: Detects elevated prostate-specific antigen, often a marker of cancer presence.
- <u>Digital Rectal Exam (DRE):</u> A doctor manually examines the prostate for lumps or hardness.
- Biopsy: Tissue samples from the prostate confirm cancer by microscopic analysis.
- <u>Imaging (MRI/Bone Scans)</u>: Helps determine how far the cancer has spread within the body.

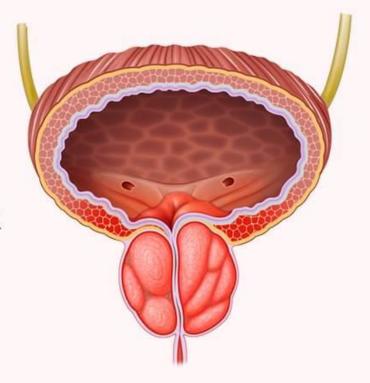
• <u>Treatment Options:</u>

- Active Surveillance: Regular monitoring without immediate treatment for low-risk cancers.
- <u>Surgery (Prostatectomy)</u>: Surgical removal of the prostate to eliminate localized cancer.
- Radiation Therapy: Targets and destroys cancer cells using focused radiation beams.
- Hormone Therapy: Lowers testosterone levels to slow or stop cancer cell growth.
- Chemotherapy & Immunotherapy: Used when cancer is advanced or unresponsive to other treatments.

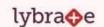


Functions of Prostate Gland

- Prostate gland's primary job is to supply the testes with prostatic fluid, which is then transformed into sperm. It contributes approximately 20 to 30 percent of the total volume of sperm.
- It contains an enzyme known as 5-alpha reductase, which is responsible for the conversion of testosterone into a form known as dihydrotestosterone, which is more biologically active (DHT).
- Because of the contraction that takes place in this gland during ejaculation, the prostate blocks the opening that leads from the urinary bladder to the urethra.









Global Recognition of Trachoma Elimination

Geneva

Hosts the 78th World Health Assembly where the award was presented.

India

Awarded Certificate of Elimination of Trachoma by WHO.

WHO

Recognizes India's trachoma elimination efforts.



India's Journey to Eliminate Trachoma



WHO Declaration

The WHO declares Trachoma eliminated in India.



India's Achievement

India becomes the third country in Southeast Asia to eliminate Trachoma.



Government Initiatives

The government implements the NPCBVI to combat Trachoma.

WHO INITIATIVES:

Adopted SAFE strategy in 1993.

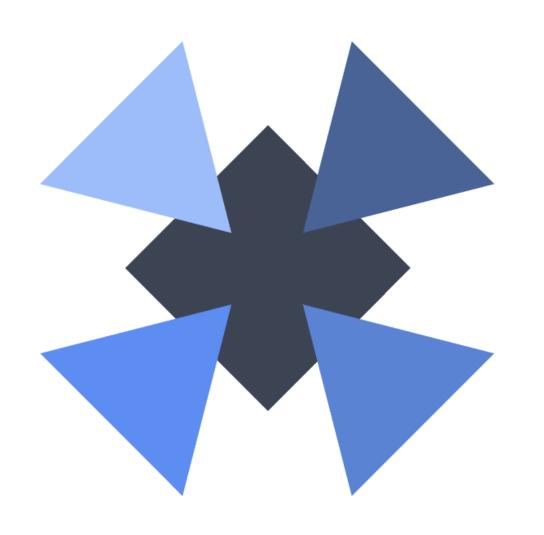
Prevention and Control The SAFE Strategy (WHO):

- S Surgery: For late-stage trichiasis to prevent blindness.
- A Antibiotics: Mass drug administration (e.g. azithromycin).
- F Facial cleanliness: Reduces transmission, especially in children.
- E Environmental improvement: Water, sanitation, and hygiene access.

Launched Global Elimination Alliance for Trachoma by 2020 (extended to 2030).

Resolution WHA51.11 (1998) set elimination targets. Roadmap 2021–2030 aims to end trachoma globally by 2030.

Factors Leading to Trachoma and Blindness



Bacterial Infection

The bacterium Chlamydia trachomatis causes trachoma.

Personal Contact

Transmission through hands, clothes, and surfaces.

Flies

Flies spread infection by carrying discharge.

Lack of Vaccine

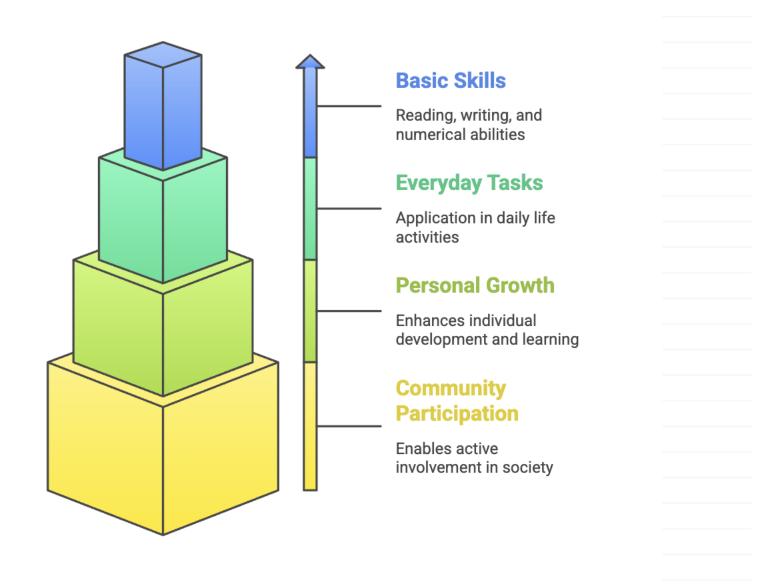
Absence of a vaccine contributes to spread.

Mizoram: India's First State to Attain Full Functional Literacy

- Mizoram has exceeded the 95% literacy rate benchmark, achieving 98.20% literacy as per the PLFS Survey 2023-24, meeting the Ministry of Education's criteria for full functional literacy under the ULLAS (Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society) programme.
- Prior to this, Ladakh was the first UT to be declared fully functionally literate.



Functional Literacy Pyramid



@mallikatiwari866 3 days ago

I've faced a dilemma while teaching a child through home tuition. Whenever I try to think out of the box and teach something creative beyond their syllabus, the child goes home and their parents complain that I'm not teaching them what's in their curriculum.

They expect me to only teach what's in their books and not explore new ideas or concepts. If I don't assign homework, they assume I'm not teaching the child properly.

When I try to impart practical knowledge, they complain again. It's as if they don't want to change their mindset or approach to learning. How can I make them understand the importance of creative learning and going beyond the syllabus?

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Word of the day

Specious:

plausible but false; based on pretense; deceptively pleasing

Synonyms: gilded, glossy, meretricious, spurious

Usage: It was a specious claim which I am glad I didn't believe.

Pronunciation: newsth.live/speciouspro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈspiːʃəs/

