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**By Bhunesh Sir**

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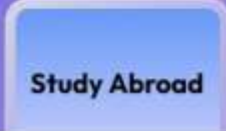
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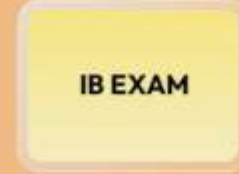


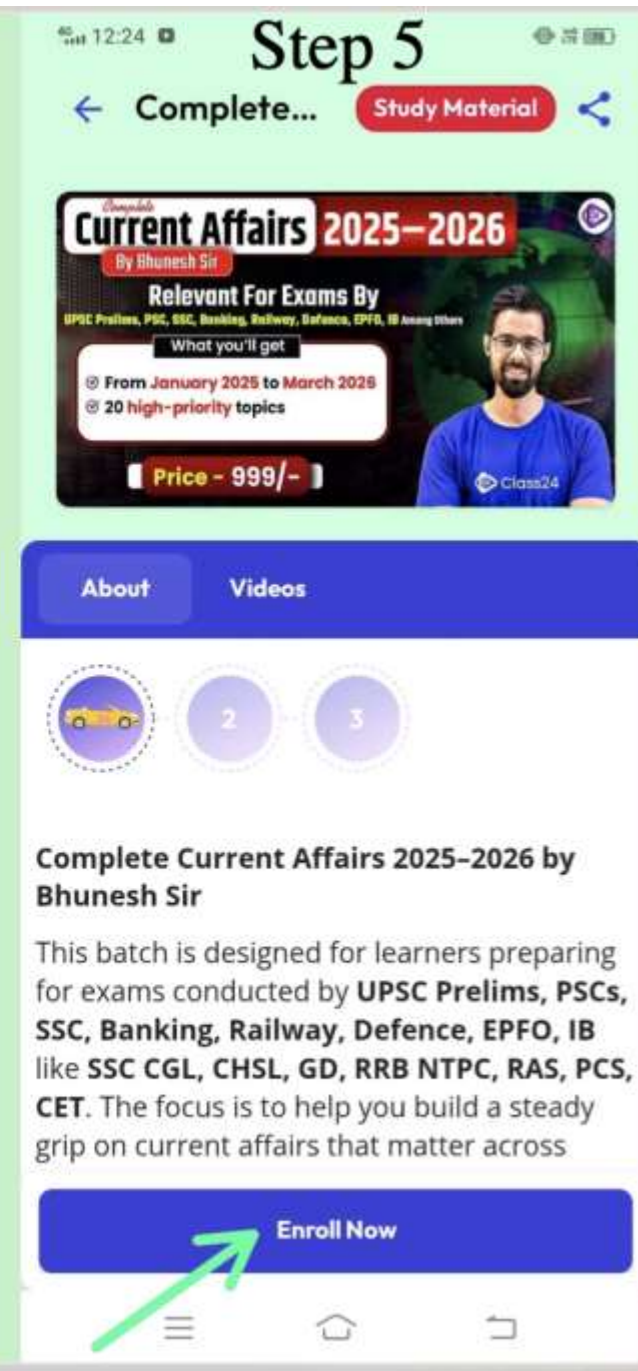
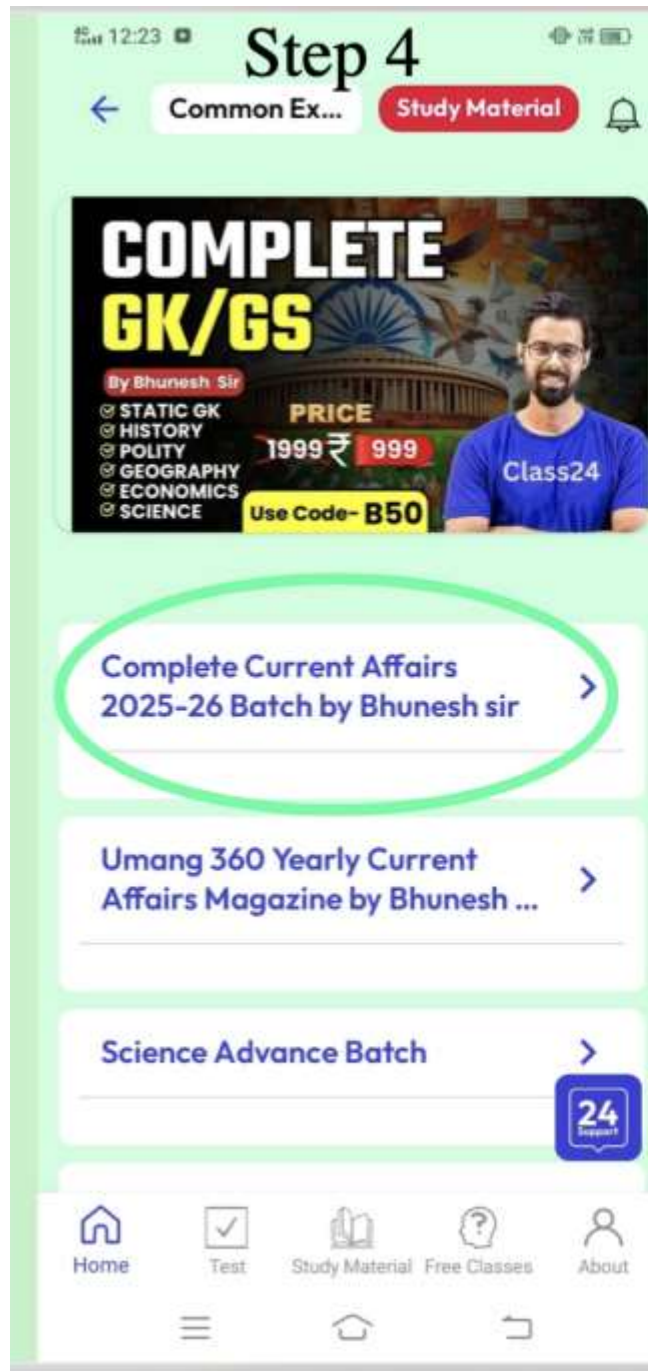
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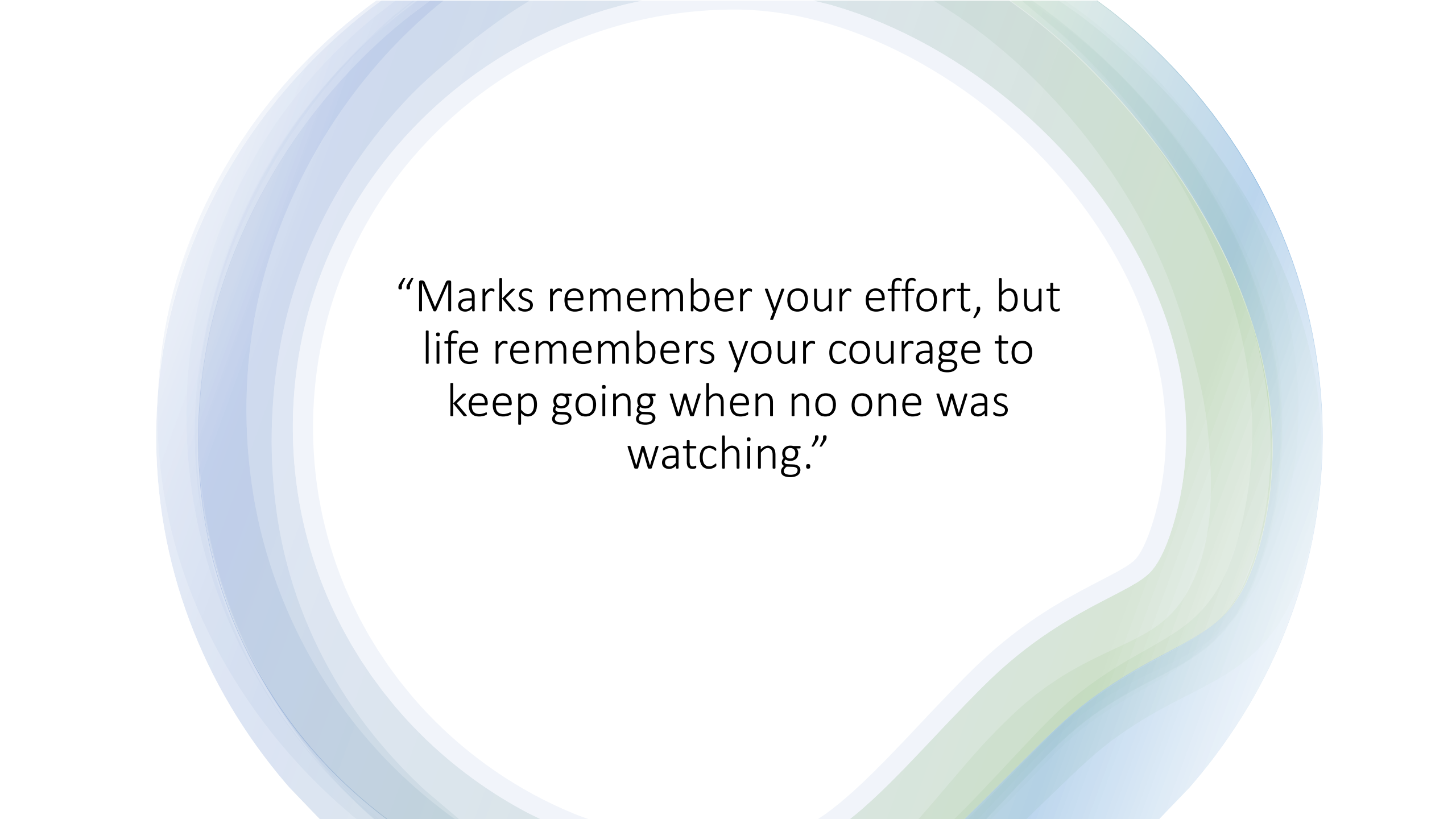
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GOVT. EXAMS







The background features a large, stylized circular graphic composed of multiple concentric rings. The rings on the left are in shades of blue, while the rings on the right transition into shades of green. The overall effect is a soft, abstract frame around the central text.

“Marks remember your effort, but  
life remembers your courage to  
keep going when no one was  
watching.”

"Is her 'fault' that she has the courage to raise her voice for justice? The fact that the perpetrator (former BJP MLA) has been granted bail is extremely disappointing and shameful – especially when the survivor is being repeatedly harassed, and is living under the shadow of fear. Bail for rapists, and treating survivors like criminals – what kind of justice is this? ...with such inhuman incidents, we are also turning into a dead society," Mr. Gauditi said.



# Dhaka braces for return of BNP's leader ahead of general elections

BNP acting chairman and son of former PM Khaleda Zia, Tarique Rahman, to arrive today after nearly 18 years in exile in the U.K.; Rahman is scheduled to address party members, visit ailing mother, who remains hospitalised in the capital

**Kallol Bhattacharjee**  
NEW DELHI

**A**fter nearly 18 years in exile in the United Kingdom, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) acting chairman Tarique Rahman will return to Dhaka on Thursday, formally marking the official launch of the party's campaign for the February 12 general election.

According to BNP sources, Mr. Rahman is scheduled to address supporters and visit his ailing mother, former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, who remains hospitalised in the capital.

Anticipating a large crowd, the interim government has announced the elevated expressway of Dhaka, a major arterial road, will remain toll free during the daytime on Thursday.

Party sources said the spurt in violence in Bangladesh over the past week did not affect Mr. Rahman's plans to return



Bangladesh's Interim leader Muhammad Yunus, right, with acting BNP chairman Tarique Rahman in London in June this year. AFP

home and that a large number of BNP supporters drawn from across the country are expected to greet him at the airport, where he is scheduled to arrive aboard a Biman Bangladesh aircraft around midday on Thursday. Mr. Rahman left Bangladesh during the interim rule of 2007-08, after he was imprisoned and later flown to the U.K. to seek medical treatment due to a deteriorating health condition. There were expectations of his return to Dhaka imme-

diately after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government on August 5, 2024. Yet, Mr. Rahman took around 15 months to return to Dhaka.

## 'Biggest political event'

The delay in the return of Mr. Rahman had created a buzz among the observers of Bangladesh's turbulent contemporary politics. However, ending speculation, he announced on December 16 at an event in London that he would return home on Christmas.

The BNP has furnished a

## Hindu groups protest at land ports in Bengal

KOLKATA

Protests over lynching of a Hindu man in Bangladesh continued in West Bengal with members of a pro Hindu organisations holding demonstrations at several land ports along the India-Bangladesh border on Wednesday. » **PAGE 4**

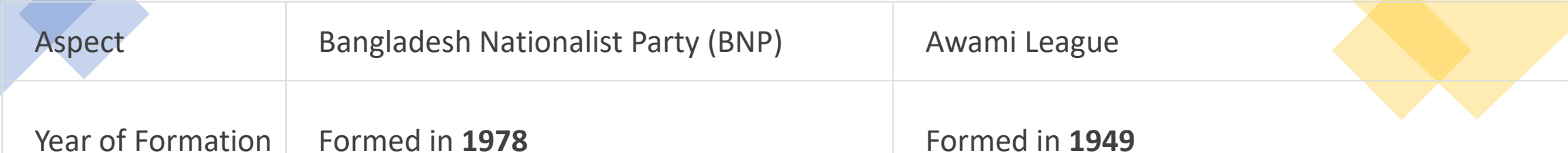
house in the capital and purchased additional bulletproof vehicles for Mr. Rahman to campaign in the coming weeks.

Mr. Rahman's return is being described by the BNP as the biggest political event in its calendar, especially when Khaleda Zia has been absent from political rallies that have been managed by other senior leaders like Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, Amir Khasru Mahmud Choudhury, Salauddin Ahmed, Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku and

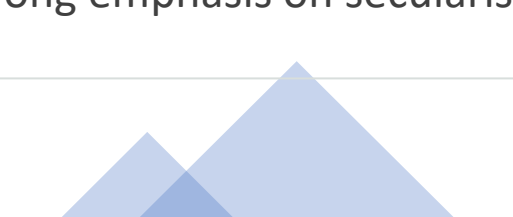
other members of the national standing committee of the party.

Mr. Rahman has not yet spoken to the press but has expressed his opinion about the current situation in Bangladesh on social media. In a post on 'X' on December 10, he portrayed the BNP as a party that suffered human rights abuses during the Sheikh Hasina era, but argued that the suffering had not led to "bitterness". He pitched for national unity and said, "What Bangladesh needs now is larger than politics. We envision a united country where human rights are guaranteed, where plurality of opinions is welcomed, where Opposition is a healthy part of democracy rather than a threat, and where no one is erased for their beliefs."

Mr. Rahman also grieved over the assassination of Sharif Osman Hadi who was shot on December 12 and passed away in a Singapore hospital on December 18.



Aspect	Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	Awami League
Year of Formation	Formed in <b>1978</b>	Formed in <b>1949</b>
Founder	<b>Ziaur Rahman</b> (former President & Army Chief)	<b>Sheikh Mujibur Rahman</b>
Historical Context	Emerged after military rule; aimed to counter Awami League dominance	Originated during Pakistan period; led language movement and independence
Role in 1971 Liberation War	Did <b>not exist</b> during the Liberation War	<b>Led the 1971 Liberation War</b> and independence of Bangladesh
Ideological Orientation	<b>Bangladeshi nationalism</b> , centre-right, conservative	<b>Bengali nationalism</b> , secularism, centre-left
View on Secularism	Emphasises Islamic values with nationalism	Strong emphasis on secularism and pluralism







Relationship  
with Military

Historically closer to military  
establishment

Key Leaders

Ziaur Rahman, Khaleda Zia,  
Tarique Rahman

Political Base

Urban middle class, conservative  
voters

Years in Power

**1979–1982, 1991–1996, 2001–  
2006**

Total Years in  
Power

**~15 years**

Foreign Policy  
Tilt

Traditionally closer to China,  
Pakistan

Current Status

In opposition; leadership issues  
and exile

Civilian-led mass movement party

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Sheikh  
Hasina

Rural masses, minorities, progressive  
groups

**1972–1975, 1996–2001, 2009–present**

**~20+ years**

Strong ties with India; balanced global  
diplomacy

Ruling party (as of mid-2020s)



- Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) acting chairman Tarique Rahman is returning to Dhaka after nearly 18 years in exile.
- बांग्लादेश नेशनलिस्ट पार्टी (बीएनपी) के कार्यकारी अध्यक्ष तारिक रहमान लगभग 18 वर्षों के निर्वासन के बाद ढाका लौट रहे हैं।
- His return marks the formal launch of BNP's campaign for the upcoming general elections.
- उनकी वापसी आगामी आम चुनावों के लिए बीएनपी के औपचारिक चुनाव अभियान की शुरुआत मानी जा रही है।
- Tarique Rahman is the son of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.
- तारिक रहमान पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री खालिदा जिया के पुत्र हैं।
- He had been living in the United Kingdom since 2007 after leaving Bangladesh during the interim government period.
- वे 2007 में अंतरिम सरकार के दौरान बांग्लादेश छोड़ने के बाद यूनाइटेड किंगडम में रह रहे थे।



## Political Background

- Bangladesh politics is dominated by two major parties, BNP and Awami League.
  - बांग्लादेश की राजनीति मुख्यतः दो दलों—बीएनपी और अवामी लीग—द्वारा नियंत्रित है।
  - BNP is led by Khaleda Zia, while Awami League is associated with Sheikh Hasina.
  - बीएनपी का नेतृत्व खालिदा जिया करती हैं जबकि अवामी लीग शेख हसीना से जुड़ी है।
  - Sheikh Hasina's government fell in August 2024 following political unrest.
  - अगस्त 2024 में राजनीतिक अशांति के बाद शेख हसीना सरकार का पतन हुआ।
  - An interim government is currently overseeing the political transition.
  - वर्तमान में एक अंतरिम सरकार राजनीतिक संक्रमण की निगरानी कर रही है।
- 

## Significance of Tarique Rahman's Return

- His return is being described as the biggest political event for BNP in recent years.
- उनकी वापसी को हाल के वर्षों में बीएनपी की सबसे बड़ी राजनीतिक घटना बताया जा रहा है।
- The move is expected to energise BNP cadres and supporters nationwide.
- इस कदम से देशभर में बीएनपी कार्यकर्ताओं और समर्थकों में उत्साह बढ़ने की उम्मीद है।
- Security arrangements have been strengthened in Dhaka ahead of his arrival.
- उनकी आगमन से पहले ढाका में सुरक्षा व्यवस्थाएँ कड़ी की गई हैं।
- Large public gatherings are expected during his address to party members.
- पार्टी कार्यकर्ताओं को संबोधित करते समय बड़े जनसमूह की उम्मीद की जा रही है।

## Related Developments

- Khaleda Zia remains hospitalised in Dhaka and is expected to be visited by her son.
  - खालिदा जिया अभी ढाका में अस्पताल में भर्ती हैं और उनके पुत्र द्वारा उनसे मुलाकात की संभावना है।
  - Political tensions continue in Bangladesh amid reports of violence and protests.
  - हिंसा और विरोध प्रदर्शनों की खबरों के बीच बांग्लादेश में राजनीतिक तनाव बना हुआ है।
  - Human rights concerns and political polarisation remain key election issues.
  - मानवाधिकार और राजनीतिक ध्रुवीकरण चुनाव के प्रमुख मुद्दे बने हुए हैं।
- 

## Exam-Relevant Facts

- Bangladesh follows a parliamentary form of government.
- बांग्लादेश में संसदीय शासन प्रणाली है।
- The President of Bangladesh is the ceremonial head, while the Prime Minister holds executive power.
- बांग्लादेश में राष्ट्रपति औपचारिक प्रमुख होते हैं जबकि वास्तविक कार्यकारी शक्ति प्रधानमंत्री के पास होती है।
- BNP was founded by Ziaur Rahman, father of Khaleda Zia.
- बीएनपी की स्थापना जियाउर रहमान ने की थी जो खालिदा जिया के पति थे।
- India–Bangladesh relations are sensitive to political changes in Dhaka.
- ढाका में राजनीतिक परिवर्तन भारत-बांग्लादेश संबंधों पर प्रभाव डालते हैं।

- **Q.** With reference to Bangladesh politics, consider the following statements:
- Tarique Rahman is associated with the Bangladesh Nationalist Party.
- He is the son of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.
- Bangladesh currently follows a presidential form of government.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3



# ISRO's LVM3 rocket launches largest commercial communications satellite

**Hemanth C.S.**  
BENGALURU

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) placed the BlueBird Block-2 satellite in a low earth orbit (LEO) on Wednesday.

The Launch Vehicle Mark 3 (LVM3) lifted off from the second launch pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota at 8.55 a.m., and 15 minutes later, placed the satellite in the intended orbit.

The ISRO accomplished two milestones with this mission as it was able to deploy the largest commercial communications satellite in a low earth orbit, and the BlueBird Block-2 satellite, weighing 6,100 kg, became the heaviest

payload to be launched by LVM3 from Indian soil.

"LVM3 Bahubali rocket M6 launch vehicle has successfully and precisely injected the BlueBird Block-2 communication satellite in the intended orbit. This is the first dedicated commercial launch for a customer from the U.S.," ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan said. The BlueBird Block-2 communication satellite, developed by AST Space-Mobile in the U.S., is part of a next generation of the communication satellites, designed to provide space-based cellular broadband connectivity directly to standard mobile smartphones.

"I am extremely happy to announce the performance of the orbit that we

have got is less than two kilometres. This is one of the best performances of any launch vehicle in the global arena," Dr. Narayanan said.

## Display of reliability

Wednesday's success demonstrated the reliability of India's space programme, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said. "Powered by India's youth, our space programme is getting more advanced and impactful. With LVM3 demonstrating reliable heavy-lift performance, we are strengthening the foundations for future missions such as Gaganyaan, expanding commercial launch services and deepening global partnerships. This increased capability and boost to

self-reliance are wonderful for the coming generations," Mr. Modi posted on X.

"BlueBird block-2 mission is part of a global LEO constellation to provide direct-to-mobile connectivity through satellite. This constellation will enable 4G and 5G voice and video calls, texts, streaming, and data for everyone, everywhere, at all times. It features a 223m<sup>2</sup> phased array, making it the largest commercial communications satellite ever deployed into low Earth orbit," the ISRO said.

Dr. Narayanan said that the LVM3-M6 mission was the 104<sup>th</sup> launch from Sriharikota and also the ninth successful mission of the LVM-3 launch vehicle.



**New horizons:** ISRO's LVM3 lifts off carrying the Bluebird Block-2 satellite from Sriharikota on Wednesday. AFP

Parameter	IN LVM3 (Gaganyaan)	US Space Launch System (SLS)	CN Long March 5	RU Energia
Country	India	USA	China	Russia (USSR)
Space Agency	ISRO	NASA	CNSA	Roscosmos (USSR era)
First Launch	2014	2022	2016	1987
Status	Operational	Operational	Operational	Retired
Category	Heavy-lift	Super heavy-lift	Heavy-lift	Super heavy-lift
Height	~43.5 m	~98 m	~57 m	~60 m
Lift-off Mass	~640 tonnes	~2,600 tonnes	~870 tonnes	~2,400 tonnes
Payload to LEO	~10 tonnes	~95 tonnes	~25 tonnes	~100 tonnes
Payload to GTO / Beyond	~4 tonnes (GTO)	~27 tonnes (TLI)	~14 tonnes (GTO)	~20+ tonnes (TLI)
Fuel Type	Solid + Liquid + Cryogenic	Liquid Hydrogen + Liquid Oxygen	Liquid Hydrogen + Liquid Oxygen	Liquid Hydrogen + Liquid Oxygen
Human Rated	Yes	Yes	Planned	Yes
Key Mission	Gaganyaan (Human Spaceflight)	Artemis (Moon & Mars)	Space station, Moon	Buran Space Shuttle
Reusability	No	No	No	No

- ISRO successfully launched the BlueBird Block-2 satellite using the LVM3 rocket from Sriharikota.
  - इसरो ने श्रीहरिकोटा से LVM3 रॉकेट के माध्यम से ब्लूबर्ड ब्लॉक-2 उपग्रह का सफल प्रक्षेपण किया।
  - The satellite was placed in Low Earth Orbit with high precision.
  - उपग्रह को उच्च सटीकता के साथ निम्न पृथ्वी कक्षा में स्थापित किया गया।
  - This is the largest commercial communications satellite ever deployed in Low Earth Orbit.
  - यह अब तक का सबसे बड़ा वाणिज्यिक संचार उपग्रह है जिसे निम्न पृथ्वी कक्षा में स्थापित किया गया है।
  - The satellite weighs about 6,100 kg, making it the heaviest commercial payload launched by ISRO.
  - उपग्रह का वजन लगभग 6,100 किलोग्राम है, जो इसे इसरो का सबसे भारी वाणिज्यिक पेलोड बनाता है।
- 

## Launch Vehicle and Mission Details

- The launch vehicle used was LVM3-M6, also known as Gaganyaan-class heavy lift rocket.
- प्रयुक्त प्रक्षेपण यान LVM3-M6 था, जिसे गगनयान श्रेणी का भारी प्रक्षेपण यान भी कहा जाता है।
- The launch took place from the second launch pad at Satish Dhawan Space Centre.
- प्रक्षेपण सतीश धवन अंतरिक्ष केंद्र के दूसरे लॉन्च पैड से हुआ।
- This was the first dedicated commercial launch by LVM3 for a foreign customer.
- यह LVM3 द्वारा किसी विदेशी ग्राहक के लिए पहला समर्पित वाणिज्यिक प्रक्षेपण था।



## About the Satellite

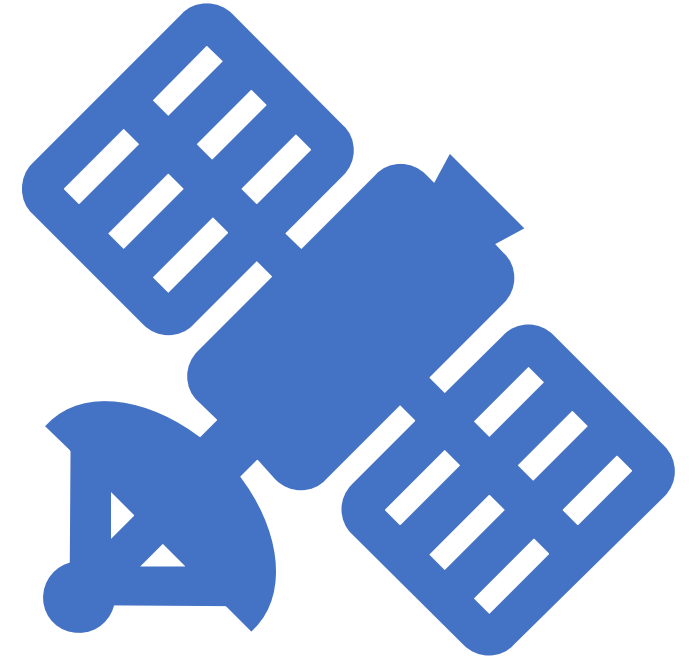
- BlueBird Block-2 has been developed by AST SpaceMobile of the United States.
  - ब्लूबर्ड ब्लॉक-2 उपग्रह का विकास अमेरिका की AST SpaceMobile कंपनी द्वारा किया गया है।
  - It is part of a global Low Earth Orbit constellation for space-based cellular connectivity.
  - यह अंतरिक्ष आधारित मोबाइल कनेक्टिविटी हेतु वैश्विक LEO तारामंडल का हिस्सा है।
  - The satellite enables direct-to-mobile broadband connectivity without ground towers.
  - यह बिना ज़मीनी टावरों के सीधे मोबाइल ब्रॉडबैंड कनेक्टिविटी प्रदान करता है।
  - It supports 4G and 5G voice calls, data, messaging and video streaming.
  - यह 4G और 5G वॉयस कॉल, डेटा, मैसेजिंग और वीडियो स्ट्रीमिंग को सक्षम बनाता है।
- 

## Significance of the Mission

- The mission demonstrates the reliability and heavy-lift capability of LVM3.
- यह मिशन LVM3 की विश्वसनीयता और भारी पेलोड क्षमता को प्रदर्शित करता है।
- It strengthens India's position in the global commercial launch services market.
- यह वैश्विक वाणिज्यिक प्रक्षेपण सेवाओं में भारत की स्थिति को सुदृढ़ करता है।
- The success supports future missions like Gaganyaan and deep-space launches.
- यह सफलता गगनयान और गहरे अंतरिक्ष अभियानों के लिए आधार मजबूत करती है।
- It aligns with India's vision of self-reliance in space technology.
- यह अंतरिक्ष प्रौद्योगिकी में आत्मनिर्भरता के भारत के दृष्टिकोण के अनुरूप है।

- LVM3 is ISRO's heaviest operational launch vehicle.
- LVM3 इसरो का सबसे भारी परिचालन प्रक्षेपण यान है।
- Low Earth Orbit lies roughly between 160 km and 2,000 km above Earth.
- निम्न पृथ्वी कक्षा पृथ्वी से लगभग 160 से 2,000 किमी ऊँचाई तक होती है।
- India's commercial space launches are facilitated through NewSpace India Limited.
- भारत के वाणिज्यिक अंतरिक्ष प्रक्षेपण न्यूस्पेस इंडिया लिमिटेड के माध्यम से किए जाते हैं।
- Satellite-based mobile connectivity is crucial for remote and underserved regions.
- उपग्रह आधारित मोबाइल कनेक्टिविटी दूरदराज़ और वंचित क्षेत्रों के लिए महत्वपूर्ण है।

- With reference to ISRO's LVM3 launch, consider the following statements:
- LVM3 is capable of launching heavy payloads to Low Earth Orbit.
- BlueBird Block-2 satellite is designed to provide direct-to-mobile connectivity.
- The satellite was launched into Geostationary Orbit.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3





## IN BRIEF



## Eminent author Vinod Kumar Shukla accorded state funeral

The mortal remains of Hindi poet and author Vinod Kumar Shukla were consigned to flames with full state honours in Raipur on Wednesday. The 2024 Jnanpith award recipient Shukla passed away at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Raipur, on Tuesday, after battling age-related illness. He is survived by his wife, a son, and a daughter. Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vidhan Dore, who visited Shukla's residence, said the demise of the author had caused an irreparable loss to Hindi literature. He also lent his shoulder to the bier carrying the mortal remains and joined the funeral procession, bidding an emotional farewell to the writer.

## Bombay HC quashes FIR against TV channel personnel

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday quashed an FIR registered against Shubhash Deshpande, then programming head of Marathi channel Star Pravah, and Star Entertainment Media Private Limited (SEMPLE) along with its executive producers, in connection with alleged casteist remarks in a 2012 episode of the serial *Lazmi* series. A Division Bench of Justices Manish Pitale and Manjusha Deshpande held that the basic ingredients of these offences were not made out against the petitioners. The FIR alleged that words referring to Mahar children, were used in a dialogue aired on August 22, 2012, in conjunction with references to ghosts.

## Police reinforce security at tourist spots in Kashmir

The J&K Police heightened security across the Kashmir Valley, especially tourist places, ahead of Christmas and New Year on Wednesday. Officials said the aim was "to maintain a high level of alertness". "All preparations should be completed in advance and officers should strengthen checkpoints, especially at night and maintain heightened vigilance at vulnerable locations across the Valley," V. K. Bhatt, Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir, said, while speaking at a security review meeting at the Police Control Room, Srinagar. The meeting was held "to assess preparedness for the peaceful celebration of upcoming events".

## Surat builder held for blocking traffic to set off fireworks

The Surat Police have arrested a 58-year-old real estate developer for allegedly obstructing traffic on a public road by setting off fireworks to celebrate his son's birthday, officials said on Wednesday. The incident took place on December 24 near Langar Circle in the Dumas area. A video of the celebration, which went viral on social media, showed the developer stopping vehicles and setting off fireworks on the busy stretch. The accused was identified as Deepak Jharia, a resident of Sultanabad. After the video came to the notice of the police, the Dumas police station registered a case and arrested Mr. Jharia. He was later released on bail.

## ISKCON sticks to flexible dates for Rath Yatra

The Hindu Bureau  
Bhubaneswar

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) on Wednesday asserted its position of holding Rath Yatra on flexible dates despite the initiation of abhorrent Jagannath Temple Administration (JETA) in Odisha that in a judgment that the "social strategy" to marry daughters to "higher status families" has come at a great cost to the rights of women.

In the present case, a 20-year-old girl died as her parents could not meet the demand for a colour television, a motorcycle, and ₹5,000. The judgment, observed by a bench of Justices Sanjay Karol and N.K. Jaisankar, "also was apparently only worth that much" for her in-laws.

"This practice of marrying 'higher up' traces its origin to caste and kinship along with, to use a colloquialism, the 'caste of the aana' (society) that comes with it. Since it ranges in traced through the patriarchal line, the desire to marry daughters into equal or higher status families ensured that their obsequies, which enhanced the family's standing. Hypergamy thus be-

## Dowry is a cross-cultural evil, says Supreme Court

The Hindu Bureau  
New Delhi

Termining dowry a "cross-cultural evil" cutting across religions, the Supreme Court has said in a judgment that the "social strategy" to marry daughters to "higher status families" has come at a great cost to the rights of women.

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came both a social strategy and a religiously sanctioned norm," Justice Karol, who authored the recent judgment, observed. Noting that although the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 sought to prohibit the practice, dowry has persisted in urban centres, the court said, has slipped through the statutory definition cloaked as "gifts" and "social expectations" of the bride.

"This practice is, at the most basic level, at odds with the values enshrined in the Constitution, i.e., Article 14, which guarantees equality before the law and equal protection of the laws, a principle directly undermined by a system that treats women as a source of financial extraction," Justice Karol said.

control of the husband or his family," Justice Karol wrote.

Directives to govt. The court directed the states and the Union government to constitute changes to educational curricula across levels, reinforcing the Constitutional position that parties to a marriage are equal to one another, and one was not subservient to the other as sought to be established by giving and taking of money and/or articles at the time of marriage.

The court ordered the prompt appointment of Dowry Prohibition Officers in states, and public access to their details. It said police officers and judicial officers dealing with dowry cases must undergo periodic training and sensitisation.

The court requested the High Courts to take stock, ascertain the number of police officers and judicial officers dealing with dowry cases must undergo periodic training and sensitisation.

## Jat panchayat bans smartphone use by married women

The Hindu Bureau  
Jaipur

When the world is racing on the highway of connectivity, smartphone use is prohibited for married women belonging to a sect of the Jat community in Rajasthan's Jalore district from Republic Day in 2020. The ban was issued at a caste panchayat held in Gharpur village on December 21.

The panchayat ordered that no daughter-in-law or young woman from 15 villages in the Bhatnagar-Khanpur area carry camera-studded mobile phones to weddings, public gatherings, and even while visiting neighbours, from January 26. They can use only basic keypad phones for emergency calls.

The Santhabani Patti panchayat of the Chaudhary clan took the decision "with consensus", citing

concerns of mobile addiction and the impact of screen time on children's eyesight. Ranchi Himate ram read out the proposal, which was passed by 15 individuals. A study has found, while indicating that reproductive health, hormonal exposure, central obesity, and family history also influence the occurrence of the disease.

The resolution stated that girls pursuing education should be allowed to use smartphones at home "strictly for academic purposes", but would be barred from carrying the devices to social events, weddings or neighbourhood visits.

A video footage of the proclamation being read out at the panchayat meeting was circulated online, drawing sharp criticism from social activists and women's rights groups.

## Physical activity linked to lower breast cancer risk: ICMR study

Hindu Space Perampalam  
New Delhi

Higher levels of physical activity have been shown to contribute to lowering the risk of breast cancer in individuals. A study has found, while indicating that reproductive health, hormonal exposure, central obesity, and family history also influence the occurrence of the disease.

The study of breast cancer were three times higher in women over 50 years compared with those under 35 years. When reporting more than two lifestyle factors had a higher risk compared with those with no abortions, while breast-feeding duration and use of oral contraceptive pills showed no significant association with breast cancer risk.

A recent research paper titled "Understanding female breast cancer risk in

Hindu Space Perampalam  
New Delhi

the Indian population: Evidence from systematic review and meta-analysis". The Indian population: Evidence from systematic review and meta-analysis".

slating into an estimated increase of 0.05 million new cases per year. The evidence shows breast cancer is one of the leading cancer sites, accounting for nearly a quarter (22.8%) of cancer among women.

The paper added that breast cancer incidence in India is expected to rise by about 8.8% annually, trans-

lating into an estimated increase of 0.05 million new cases per year.

The evidence shows breast cancer is one of the leading cancer sites, accounting for nearly a quarter (22.8%) of cancer among women.

The paper added that breast cancer incidence in India is expected to rise by about 8.8% annually, trans-

## High Court stays action by banks against Anil Ambani

The Hindu Bureau  
Mumbai

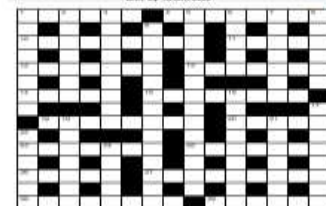
The Bombay High Court on Wednesday granted interim relief to Anil Ambani, restraining Bank of Baroda, IDBI Bank, and Indian Overseas Bank from acting on show-cause notices and fraud classification orders issued against him on the basis of a forensic audit report prepared by BDO LLP (BDO E&P One Limited Liability Partnership).

Justice Milind N. Jadhav held that the report, dated October 18, 2020, was "prima facie inconclusive and incomplete" and not signed by a qualified chartered accountant as mandated under law.

The dispute stems from a forensic audit ordered by a consortium of 20 banks led by State Bank of India into Reliance Communications and its group entities for the period 2013-2017. The lenders had an exposure of ₹3,500 crore to the companies. The forensic report alleged diversion of funds, including ₹2,000 crore to related parties and ₹1,000 crore to repay other bank loans. Mr. Ambani argued that the audit was flawed, delayed far beyond the six-month timeline prescribed under RBI norms.

The court requested the High Courts to take stock, ascertain the number of police officers and judicial officers dealing with dowry cases must undergo periodic training and sensitisation.

The court requested the High Courts to take stock, ascertain the number of police officers and judicial officers dealing with dowry cases must undergo periodic training and sensitisation.

THE CROSSWORD 14674  
Last by KRISHNAN

- Across
1. Allow champion to drink cold port (6)
  8. Prayer that is shrouded in drama's beginning and ending (reversity) (5,3)
  10. Road is laid, lover happily carries you at last (6)
  13. Point in both directions (5)
  15. Gentleman rejected fish (croquette) (7)

Solve this puzzle online and access more puzzles at <https://crossword.thehindu.com>

- Down
15. Drooping resistance and current certainly changes time between stimulus and response (7)
  16. Passage set off shortly read aloud (5)
  17. Close to-the-day, heat is a state (4)
  18. Said and Empress hiding together (2,6)
  19. Cycle catches one chugging slowly (5)
  20. Clout's oddity had "blasted rock" (2)
  21. Principal left student in tears early (7)
  22. Indian state leader leaves for time in prison (6)
  23. Orphan child drying clothes and hiding face (6)
  24. Not essentially engraved in "Shishu", missing in this time (6)
  25. Check using a couple of nudes after removing bulge (rechecked) (6)

- Across
1. Living in trees, how snakes choking raccoon's head - trust (6)
  8. After college, India had about one's pleasure time (7)
  10. Mobile phone with reduced list of options? - one wonders (6)
  13. Expression of surprise (5)
  15. Dark section without trace of light (5)
  17. Titled on occasion, some broke through Michaelangelo's unfinished masterpiece - he was a genius (2,5)
  18. Fish hitting positions (6)
  19. What a hot season-cleaver might do? Work energetically! (3,4,3)
  20. Cockeye most comfortable with nurse (4,5)
  21. Get down holding hands, shap' (1,3,1)
  22. Coppery spot's last capturing last last aquatic mammal (7)
  23. Unrepresented, amazing Tamil language solely shape of English (3,4)
  24. Some adore hymns about Biblical king (5)

## SUDOKU



## FAITH

## Message of Christmas 'arise'

Science has devised ways of measuring light, but darkness is defined as the absence of light. Spiritual darkness is defined as the absence of God. The message of Christmas is all those living in spiritual darkness is to 'arise'. We need to choose to arise from our circumstances, said W.J. Samuel.

John Newton was a ruthless slave trader in the 18th Century who was transformed after accepting Christ as his saviour. He gave up the slave trade and served Christ as his priest for 40 years. On his death bed, he said, "My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things: that I am a great sinner and that Christ is a great saviour." The coming of Christ saved him, as it has saved millions around the world. They went from spiritual death to spiritual life. A story is often told of Henry, who had gifted himself a beautiful luxury car for Christmas. He was driving the Mercedes slowly. As he cruised, he heard the loud noise of a car crashing into his car. Furious, he stepped into the car and rushed out to apprehend the perpetrator. Behind the parked car, he found a 10-year-old boy. Grabbing him by the shoulders, he angrily asked, "Why did you throw your car?" The boy, in tears, apologised and replied saying he had thrown the stone to get his attention. The paralytic brother had fallen off his wheelchair and the young lad was unable to lift him and put him back in the chair. "No one was stopping when I shouted and called for help. Hence I threw the stone to seek your help, I am sorry," he explained tearfully. Henry never repaired the dent in the car. It was a reminder to him, never be so self-centred that you forget those who are in need of help.



# Dowry is a cross-cultural evil, says Supreme Court

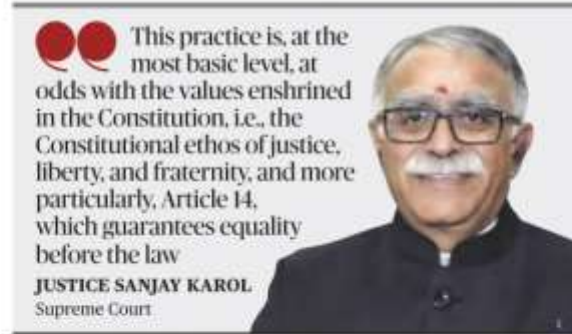
The court directed States and Union govt. to consider curriculum changes, reinforcing that parties to a marriage are equal; and ordered the prompt appointment of Dowry Prohibition Officers

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
NEW DELHI

**T**ermining dowry a “cross-cultural evil” cutting across religions, the Supreme Court has said in a judgment that the “social strategy” to marry daughters to “higher status families” has come at a great cost to the rights of women.

In the present case, a 20-year-old girl died as her parents could not meet the demand for a colour television, a motorcycle, and ₹15,000. The judgment by a Bench of Justices Sanjay Karol and N.K. Singh said “she was apparently only worth that much” for her in-laws.

“This practice of marrying ‘higher up’ traces its origins to caste and kinship along with, to use a colloquial term, the ‘baggage of the *samaj*’ (society) that comes with it. Since lineage is traced through the patriarchal line, the desire to marry daughters into equal or higher status families ensured that their offspring retained or enhanced the family’s standing. Hypergamy thus be-



came both a social strategy and a religiously sanctioned norm,” Justice Karol, who authored the recent judgment, observed.

Noting that although the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 sought to prohibit the practice, dowry has persisted in society. This social evil, the court said, has slipped through the statutory definition cloaked as “gifts” and “social expectations”.

“This practice is, at the most basic level, at odds with the values enshrined in the Constitution, i.e., the Constitutional ethos of justice, liberty, and fraternity, and more particularly, Article 14, which guarantees equality before the law and equal protection

of the laws, a principle directly undermined by a system that treats women as a source of financial extraction,” Justice Karol said.

The court also detailed how Muslim families, particularly in urban centres, have begun adopting dowry as a “status marker and as part of competitive marriage negotiations”.

Dowry has replaced or overshadowed *mehr*, with Muslim women losing an important bargaining tool to face greater economic vulnerability.

“This undermines the original Islamic intention of empowering women through property ownership, as the dowry frequently ends up under the

control of the husband or his family,” Justice Karol wrote.

## Directives to govt.

The court directed the States and the Union government to consider changes to educational curricula across levels, reinforcing the Constitutional position that parties to a marriage are equal to one another, and one was not subservient to the other as sought to be established by giving and taking of money and/or articles at the time of marriage.

The court ordered the prompt appointment of Dowry Prohibition Officers in States, and public access to their details. It said police officers and judicial officers dealing with dowry cases must undergo periodic training and sensitisation.

The court requested the High Courts to take stock, ascertain the number of pending dowry cases, and enable their expeditious disposal. The court ordered the copy of the judgment to be circulated among the High Courts.

Aspect	Details
Ancient practice	Voluntary gifts (Stridhan) given to bride for her security
Medieval period	Social prestige and alliance-building
Colonial period	Property rights imbalance increased dowry demands
Post-independence	Commercialisation → coercion and violence
Present nature	Systemic social evil linked to patriarchy & consumerism

Parameter	Details
Legal term	Dowry Death
IPC Section	Section 304B
Annual dowry deaths	~7,000–8,000 per year
Average per day	~20 women
Victim profile	Mostly married women within 7 years of marriage
Nature of death	Burning, hanging, poisoning, suspicious circumstances
States with high cases	Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan



Crime Type	IPC / Act Section	Description
Dowry Death	IPC 304B	Death within 7 years + cruelty for dowry
Cruelty by Husband	IPC 498A	Physical/mental cruelty
Dowry Demand	Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961	Giving or taking dowry
Abetment of Suicide	IPC 306	Linked to harassment
Domestic Violence	DV Act, 2005	Civil protection & relief

Law	Year	Key Provisions
Dowry Prohibition Act	1961	Criminalises giving, taking & demanding dowry
Indian Penal Code	1860	304B, 498A, 306
Evidence Act	1872	Section 113B presumption of dowry death
Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act	2005	Civil remedies, protection orders

Provision

Evidence Act 113B

Condition

Burden of proof

Nature

Presumption

Court presumes husband/relatives  
caused dowry death

Death within 7 years of marriage

Shifts to accused

Rebuttable presumption

Case Name	Year	Key Judgment
State of Punjab vs Iqbal Singh	1991	Defined essentials of dowry death
Kans Raj vs State of Punjab	2000	Caution against roping in all relatives
Arnesh Kumar vs State of Bihar	2014	Prevented automatic arrests under IPC 498A
Rajesh Sharma vs State of UP	2017	Addressed misuse of 498A
Social Action Forum vs Union of India	2018	Balanced protection vs misuse



- The Supreme Court termed dowry a “cross-cultural social evil” cutting across religions and communities.
  - सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने दहेज को धर्मों और समुदायों के पार फैली “अंतर-सांस्कृतिक सामाजिक बुराई” बताया।
  - The court held that dowry violates the constitutional values of equality, liberty and dignity.
  - न्यायालय ने कहा कि दहेज समानता, स्वतंत्रता और गरिमा जैसे संवैधानिक मूल्यों का उल्लंघन करता है।
  - The judgment was delivered by a Bench comprising Justice Sanjay Karol and Justice N.K. Singh.
  - यह निर्णय न्यायमूर्ति संजय करोल और न्यायमूर्ति एन.के. सिंह की पीठ द्वारा दिया गया।
- 

## Constitutional and Legal Observations

- Dowry is inconsistent with Article 14, which guarantees equality before law.
- दहेज संविधान के अनुच्छेद 14 के विरुद्ध है जो कानून के समक्ष समानता की गारंटी देता है।
- Treating women as a source of financial extraction undermines constitutional morality.
- महिलाओं को आर्थिक शोषण का साधन मानना संवैधानिक नैतिकता को कमजोर करता है।
- The court noted that dowry persists despite the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961.
- न्यायालय ने कहा कि दहेज निषेध अधिनियम, 1961 के बावजूद दहेज प्रथा जारी है।

- Dowry has been normalised as a “social strategy” to marry daughters into higher-status families.
  - दहेज को बेटियों के उच्च सामाजिक स्तर वाले परिवारों में विवाह का “सामाजिक उपाय” बना दिया गया है।
  - The practice has roots in patriarchy, caste hierarchies and hypergamy.
  - इस प्रथा की जड़ें पितृसत्ता, जाति व्यवस्था और हाइपरगैमी में हैं।
  - Dowry is often disguised as gifts or social expectations to evade the law.
  - कानून से बचने के लिए दहेज को उपहार या सामाजिक अपेक्षाओं के रूप में छुपाया जाता है।
- 

## **Observations on Religious and Community Context**

- The court observed that dowry has spread even in communities where it was historically absent.
- न्यायालय ने कहा कि दहेज उन समुदायों में भी फैल गया है जहाँ यह ऐतिहासिक रूप से नहीं था।
- In Muslim families, dowry has overshadowed the concept of mehr.
- मुस्लिम परिवारों में दहेज ने मेहर की अवधारणा को पीछे धकेल दिया है।
- This shift increases economic vulnerability of women.
- इससे महिलाओं की आर्थिक असुरक्षा बढ़ती है।

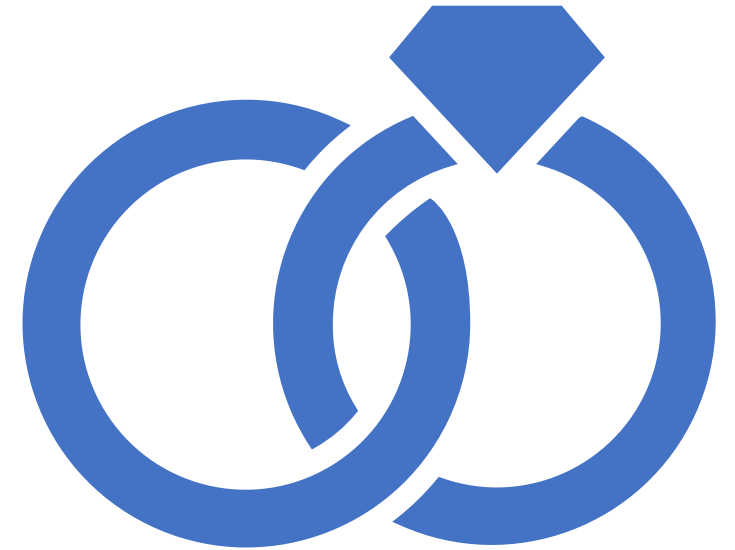
## Directions Issued by the Supreme Court

- States and the Union government were directed to consider curriculum changes promoting gender equality.
  - राज्यों और केंद्र सरकार को लैंगिक समानता को बढ़ावा देने हेतु पाठ्यक्रम में बदलाव पर विचार करने का निर्देश दिया गया।
  - The court ordered prompt appointment of Dowry Prohibition Officers in States.
  - न्यायालय ने राज्यों में दहेज निषेध अधिकारियों की शीघ्र नियुक्ति का आदेश दिया।
  - Police and judicial officers handling dowry cases must undergo periodic sensitisation.
  - दहेज मामलों से जुड़े पुलिस और न्यायिक अधिकारियों को नियमित संवेदनशीलता प्रशिक्षण देना होगा।
  - High Courts were asked to review pending dowry cases and ensure speedy disposal.
  - उच्च न्यायालयों से लंबित दहेज मामलों की समीक्षा कर त्वरित निपटान सुनिश्चित करने को कहा गया।
- 

## Exam-Relevant Facts

- Dowry Prohibition Act was enacted in 1961.
- दहेज निषेध अधिनियम वर्ष 1961 में लागू किया गया।
- Dowry death is covered under Section 304-B of the IPC.
- दहेज मृत्यु भारतीय दंड संहिता की धारा 304-बी के अंतर्गत आती है।
- Protection of women's dignity flows from Articles 14, 15 and 21.
- महिलाओं की गरिमा का संरक्षण अनुच्छेद 14, 15 और 21 से संबंधित है।
- Social reform through education is recognised as a constitutional obligation.
- शिक्षा के माध्यम से सामाजिक सुधार को संवैधानिक दायित्व माना गया है।

- With reference to the Supreme Court's observations on dowry, consider the following statements:
- The court described dowry as a cross-cultural social evil.
- Dowry was held to be inconsistent with Article 14 of the Constitution.
- The Dowry Prohibition Act was enacted in the year 1971.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3





# Text & context

THE HINDU

## NEWS IN NUMBERS

### Public grievances disposed during good governance week

**17** In lakh. Over 17 lakh public grievances have been disposed of across States/Union territories during the ongoing good governance week, the Personnel Ministry said on Wednesday. The week is celebrated every year from December 19 to 25 to further good governance in every part of the country. — *ANI*

### Israel's investment in developing an arms industry

**110** In \$ billion. Israel PM Benjamin Netanyahu said on Wednesday Israel would spend 350 billion shekels on developing an independent arms industry to reduce dependency. "I don't know if a country can be completely independent but we will strive," he said. — *AP*

### Names appearing more than once in Thane's electoral rolls

**85,000** Names. As 85,000 voters appear more than once in the electoral rolls in Thane, and the issue will be addressed soon, Municipal Commissioner Saurabh Rao said on Wednesday. — *ANI*

### Prevalence of mouth cancer in India linked to alcohol

**11.3** In per cent. A study has found that consumption as little as one gram of alcohol daily can be linked with a 50% higher chance of developing mouth cancer. Mouth cancer linked to alcohol was estimated at 11.3% in India, said in the *British Medical Journal* study. — *ANI*

### Number of wildlife rescues in Delhi during 2024-25

**1,370** According to the officials, rescue operations were conducted for one leopard, 130 nigel, 439 snakes, 488 monitors, 108 peacocks, 50 kites and 75 other birds, besides 13 turtles and 38 other animals, during 2024-25. — *ANI*

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## Why manufacturing has lagged in India

India's manufacturing sector underperforms compared to China and South Korea, partly due to public sector wages that raise costs and reduce competitiveness, despite growth in private industries like software and services. India sees limited technological upgrading, uneven wage growth, and increasing inequality.

### ECONOMIC NOTES

#### Rahul Menon

A reason why India has lagged behind certain non-Western economies — such as China and South Korea — despite starting from roughly equivalent positions early in the 20th century is the relative underperformance of its manufacturing sector. While China and South Korea have seen significant increases in manufacturing, the share of manufacturing in India's GDP has remained relatively constant over time and has recently lost ground to services. In a recent discussion of his book *A Sixth of Humanity*, economist Arvind Subramanian explained why India has been unable to industrialise to the extent of China or South Korea. In his view, high government salaries drew workers away from manufacturing, raising prices and making it difficult for the sector to remain competitive, thus hindering its expansion. Mr. Subramanian used a term from the framework known as the 'Dutch disease' to examine this outcome.

**What is the Dutch disease?** The Dutch disease refers to a phenomenon where an economic windfall can often translate into negative outcomes in other sectors, such as manufacturing. It was initially coined to explain how the discovery of the Groningen gas fields in 1959 affected Dutch manufacturing.

The theory goes as follows: imagine an economy where a substantial holding of some natural resource — such as oil or another important mineral — is discovered. This would lead to a rise in wages as the sector bids away labour from other sectors, raising the economy-wide wage rate. Moreover, exports of the resource would lead to an appreciation of the currency, increasing imports and decreasing other price-sensitive exports. These effects would hurt domestic



GETTY IMAGES

manufacturing, which would be counteracted by cheap imports from abroad and, at the same time, become relatively expensive in foreign markets. But how would the Dutch disease apply to non-tradeable goods, such as government services? Suppose an economy expands its government sector and sets high wages for its workers. Manufacturing would then find it hard to meet these wages at its given level of productivity. Increased demand from government employees — due to higher incomes — would raise prices of domestic goods. Under a regime of free trade, this would boost demand for cheaper imports, reducing demand for domestically manufactured goods even if the nominal exchange rate does not change. The real exchange rate would appreciate due to higher domestic prices.

The Dutch disease model can be used to outline such a process in which the expansion of one sector leads to reduced outcomes for other sectors through price movements. In this model, the Indian State's policy choices to raise salaries in the public sector negatively affected manufacturing and can be seen as one of the reasons why the process of structural transformation in India has stagnated.

**Question of technology** One problem is that the framework was initially used to analyse the effects of a small set of factors, not the effects of policy. The relatively higher salaries cannot easily be compared to the discovery of an oil field, because of a conscious political decision undertaken by a democratically elected government, while the other is a natural endowment.

One could argue that while the nature of the economies — one with a strong public sector and one with a natural resource endowment — is drastically different, the effects are the same and operate through the same channel of a real exchange rate appreciation. But turning the question around offers another way to view the problem. If high government salaries were initially a problem, why did technological growth not occur over the long run to make manufacturing more productive to sustain higher wages?

The theory of 'induced innovation' holds that labour scarcity and high wages can induce technological and capital-biased growth. The economist Sir John Habbakuk hypothesised that 19th-century Britain grew faster than the U.S. because of its relative scarcity of land

and labour. Economic historian Robert C. Allen states that Britain's high wages ensured the need for technological innovation, which led to the Industrial Revolution occurring there rather than on the continent. In more contemporary times, Nobel laureate Daron Acemoglu used this to explain why automation led to faster productivity and wage growth in countries like Germany, Japan and South Korea — with an ageing labour force — while automation restricts wages in countries like the U.S. with a large labour force.

**Limits of wages** An analysis of India's development story must focus on the nature of technological change and on why the private sector growth has not translated into rising wages. The question is stark in India's fast-growing services and software

industries. Entry-level salaries at major Indian software giants have shown little growth since the 2000s, despite the retreat of the State, the proliferation of markets and the rise of private sector billionaires.

A case can be made that India's modern software unknown — such as Swiggy, Zomato, Blinkit and Ola — rely on India's abundant labour reserves rather than reinvesting genuine technological upgradation.

The Indian private sector has undoubtedly shown significant levels of dynamism and growth. But this growth has been top-down, as the rapid increase in inequality has shown us. If public sector salaries kept wages higher earlier, it is legitimate to ask why manufacturing has not responded with an adequate level of technological change to ensure productivity growth. Had government intervention prevented the ability to adopt new technology or did manufacturing become addicted to the reserves of cheap labour and not invest in technological upgradation, leading to a relative stagnation over time?

*Rahul Menon is associate professor at O.P. Jindal Global University.*

### THE GIST

India has lagged behind China and South Korea because the share of manufacturing in India's GDP has remained relatively constant and has recently lost ground to services, limiting productivity and income growth.

High government salaries drew workers away from manufacturing, raised economy-wide wages and prices, and led to a real exchange rate appreciation, making manufacturing less competitive.

Despite private sector dynamism, manufacturing failed to respond with adequate technological upgradation, instead, growth relied on abundant labour reserves, leading to top-down growth, rising inequality, and stagnation in wages and productivity.

## What is the Bureau of Port Security and its role?

What challenges in coastal security does India face and how will BoPS address them?

#### Sanku Pandey

**The story so far:** The Centre has constituted the Bureau of Port Security (BoPS) as a statutory body under Section 13 of the new established Merchant Shipping Act 2025. Modelled on the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, it will function under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways and will be responsible for regulatory oversight functions relating to the security of ships and port facilities.

**Why was BoPS created?** Currently, coastal security responsibilities are shared among multiple agencies such as the Coast Guard, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), State Maritime Police, and the Navy. This leads to challenges in coordination and communication, and also leads to possible security gaps. The BoPS will be a single statutory body for regulatory oversight and coordination. The BoPS will also address security

concerns such as maritime terrorism, smuggling of arms, drug trafficking, human trafficking and other illicit trafficking, poaching, illegal navigation via waterways, piracy, and cybersecurity threats. It is expected to include a Section 13B to protect port IT infrastructure from digital threats, with a special focus on cybersecurity, and the collection and exchange of security-related information. The BoPS will monitor, counter, and deter such intrusions and coordinate with national cybersecurity agencies.

As a statutory body under the Merchant Shipping Act, the BoPS will have the legal authority to enforce compliance with international standards such as the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code. Under the BoPS, the CISF is designated as a recognised security Organisation to prepare standardised plans, conduct security assessments, and train private security forces across all major and minor ports. Security measures are to be implemented in a graded manner.

**What is India's maritime growth so far?** According to the Ministry of Shipping, Ports and Waterways, the last decade has been transformation in terms of Maritime surge. Cargo growth increased from 974 million MT in 2014 to 1,261 million MT in 2025. Port capacity has expanded by 57%, enhancing efficiency and volume. Ship turnaround time has reduced by half, to 48 hours, aligning with global standards. Coastal shipping volumes rose 18%, reflecting stronger domestic connectivity, while cargo movement through inland waterways surged sixfold from 18.1 million MT in 2014 to 145.5 million MT by 2025, unlocking new logistic corridors. Nine Indian ports featured in the World Bank's Container Port Performance Index, signalling rising international recognition.

In 2020, India launched its strategy for Maritime India Vision 2030 to ensure a safe, sustainable, and secure maritime future. At the top of the 2030 Maritime vision list is 'to develop best-in-class port infrastructure'. The BoPS has been

defined in line with this vision.

### How have port laws been modernised?

These developments called for a revival and strengthening of Port security infrastructure, defined security measures and conservation of the coastal environment with an impetus for ease of business. This led to the replacement of the century-old Indian Ports Act of 1908 with the Indian Ports Act of 2025, along with additional legislation like the Coastal Shipping Act of 2025, the Modernised Merchant Shipping Legislation 2025, and the Bureau of Port Security 2025. These laws aim to modernise the framework for coastal trade, encourage Indian shipping and cargo, streamline processes, and promote cost-efficient and eco-friendly transport.

**What criticisms exist?** The new legislation has granted the Union government more authority over non-major State-owned ports. Some coastal States have criticised it as a 'threat to maritime federalism'. The Indian Ports Act has also been criticised for granting port officers, conservators, and wealthy offshore shipping interests undue influence without clearly specifying judicial procedural safeguards. These criticisms are aimed at the legislation rather than BoPS itself.

*Sanku Pandey is a freelance writer with a focus on politics, current affairs, international relations, and geopolitics.*

### THE GIST

The Centre has set up the Bureau of Port Security under the Merchant Shipping Act 2025 to ensure regulatory oversight, coordination, and compliance with international security standards amid growing maritime and cybersecurity threats.

India's maritime sector has seen a sharp surge in cargo and port capacity, alongside new port laws that have also drawn criticism over increased union control of non-major ports.



# Why manufacturing has lagged in India

India's manufacturing sector underperforms compared to China and South Korea, partly due to public sector wages that raise costs and reduce competitiveness; despite growth in private industries like software and services, India sees limited technological upgrading, uneven wage growth, and increasing inequality

## ECONOMIC NOTES

Rahul Menon

A reason why India has lagged behind certain non-Western economies – such as China and South Korea – despite starting from roughly equivalent positions early in the 20th century is the relative underperformance of its manufacturing sector. While China and South Korea have seen significant increases in manufacturing, the share of manufacturing in India's GDP has remained relatively constant over time and has recently lost ground to services.

In a recent discussion of his book *A Sixth of Humanity*, economist Arvind Subramanian explained why India has been unable to industrialise to the extent of China or South Korea. In his view, high government salaries drew workers away from manufacturing, raising prices and making it difficult for the sector to remain competitive, thus hindering its expansion. Mr. Subramanian used a theoretical framework known as the 'Dutch disease' to examine this outcome.

### What is the Dutch disease?

The Dutch disease refers to a phenomenon where an economic windfall can often translate into negative outcomes in other sectors, such as manufacturing. It was initially coined to explain how the discovery of the Groningen gas fields in 1959 affected Dutch manufacturing.

The theory goes as follows: imagine an economy where a substantial holding of some natural resource – such as oil or another important mineral – is discovered. This would lead to a rise in wages as the sector bids away labour from other sectors, raising the economy-wide wage rate. Moreover, exports of the resource would lead to an appreciation of the currency, increasing imports and decreasing other price-sensitive exports. These effects would hurt domestic



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manufacturing, which would be outcompeted by cheap imports from abroad and, at the same time, become relatively expensive in foreign markets.

But how would the Dutch disease apply to non-tradeable goods, such as government services? Suppose an economy expands its government sector and sets high wages for its workers. Manufacturing would then find it hard to meet these wages at its given level of productivity. Increased demand from government employees – due to higher incomes – would raise prices of domestic goods. Under a regime of free trade, this would boost demand for cheaper imports, reducing demand for domestically manufactured goods even if the nominal exchange rate does not change. The real exchange rate would appreciate due to higher domestic prices.

The Dutch disease model can be used to outline such a process in which the expansion of one sector leads to reduced outcomes for other sectors through price movements. In this model, the Indian State's policy choices to raise salaries in the public sector negatively affected manufacturing and can be seen as one of the reasons why the process of structural transformation in India has stagnated.

### Question of technology

One problem is that the framework was initially used to analyse the effects of a windfall discovery, not the effects of policy. The relatively higher salaries cannot easily be compared to the discovery of an oil field, because one is a conscious political decision undertaken by a democratically elected government, while the other is a natural endowment.

One could argue that while the nature of the economies – one with a strong public sector and one with a natural resource endowment – is drastically different, the effects are the same and operate through the same channel of a real exchange rate appreciation. But turning the question around offers another way to view the problem. If high government salaries were initially a problem, why did technological growth not occur over the long run to make manufacturing more productive to sustain higher wages?

The theory of 'induced innovation' holds that labour scarcity and high wages can induce technological and capital-biased growth. The economist Sir John Habakkuk hypothesised that 19th-century Britain grew faster than the U.S. because of its relative scarcity of land

and labour. Economic historian Robert C. Allen states that Britain's high wages ensured the need for technological innovation, which led to the Industrial Revolution occurring there rather than on the continent. In more contemporary times, Nobel laureate Daron Acemoglu used this to explain why automation led to faster productivity and wage growth in economies like Germany, Japan and South Korea – with an ageing labour force – while automation restricts wages in countries like the U.S., with a larger labour force.

### Limits of wages

An analysis of India's development story must focus on the nature of technological change and on why the private sector growth has not translated into rising wages. The question is stark in India's fast-growing services and software industries. Entry-level salaries at major Indian software giants have shown little growth since the 2000s, despite the retreat of the State, the proliferation of markets and the rise of private sector billionaires.

A case can be made that India's modern software unicorns – such as Swiggy, Zomato, Blinkit and Ola – rely on India's abundant labour reserves rather than representing genuine technological upgradation.

The Indian private sector has undoubtedly shown significant levels of dynamism and growth. But this growth has been lop-sided, as the rapid increase in inequality has shown us. If public sector salaries kept wages higher earlier, it is legitimate to ask why manufacturing has not responded with an adequate level of technological change to ensure productivity growth. Did government intervention prevent the ability to adopt new technology? Or did manufacturing become addicted to the reserves of cheap labour and not invest in technological upgradation, leading to a relative stagnation over time?

Rahul Menon is associate professor at O.P. Jindal Global University

## THE GIST

India has lagged behind China and South Korea because the share of manufacturing in India's GDP has remained relatively constant and has recently lost ground to services, limiting productivity and income growth.

High government salaries drew workers away from manufacturing, raised economy-wide wages and prices, and led to a real exchange rate appreciation, making manufacturing less competitive.

Despite private sector dynamism, manufacturing failed to respond with adequate technological upgradation; instead, growth relied on abundant labour reserves, leading to lop-sided growth, rising inequality, and stagnation in wages and productivity.

- India's manufacturing sector has underperformed compared to China and South Korea despite similar starting points.
  - समान प्रारंभिक स्थिति के बावजूद भारत का विनिर्माण क्षेत्र चीन और दक्षिण कोरिया की तुलना में कमजोर रहा है।
  - The share of manufacturing in India's GDP has remained stagnant and recently declined.
  - भारत के सकल घरेलू उत्पाद में विनिर्माण की हिस्सेदारी स्थिर रही है और हाल में घट भी गई है।
- 

## **Role of Public Sector Wages**

- High government salaries raised economy-wide wages beyond manufacturing productivity levels.
- उच्च सरकारी वेतन ने उत्पादकता से अधिक अर्थव्यवस्था-स्तरीय मजदूरी बढ़ा दी।
- Higher wages increased production costs, reducing manufacturing competitiveness.
- अधिक मजदूरी से उत्पादन लागत बढ़ी और विनिर्माण प्रतिस्पर्धा कम हुई।
- Workers were drawn away from manufacturing towards secure public sector jobs.
- श्रमिक विनिर्माण से हटकर सुरक्षित सरकारी नौकरियों की ओर आकर्षित हुए।

## Dutch Disease–Like Effect

- Expansion of the public sector increased domestic demand and prices of non-tradable goods.
  - सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के विस्तार से गैर-व्यापार योग्य वस्तुओं की मांग और कीमतें बढ़ीं।
  - Rising domestic prices caused real exchange rate appreciation.
  - घरेलू कीमतों में वृद्धि से वास्तविक विनिमय दर में सराहना हुई।
  - Appreciated currency made manufactured exports less competitive globally.
  - मजबूत मुद्रा के कारण विनिर्मित निर्यात वैश्विक स्तर पर कम प्रतिस्पर्धी हो गए।
- 

## Technology and Innovation Constraints

- Manufacturing failed to adopt adequate technological upgrading over time.
- विनिर्माण क्षेत्र समय के साथ पर्याप्त तकनीकी उन्नयन नहीं कर सका।
- High wages did not translate into productivity-enhancing innovation.
- ऊँची मजदूरी से उत्पादकता बढ़ाने वाला नवाचार उत्पन्न नहीं हुआ।
- Growth relied on cheap labour rather than capital- and technology-intensive methods.
- विकास सस्ते श्रम पर आधारित रहा, न कि पूंजी और तकनीक पर।



## Contrast with East Asian Economies

- China and South Korea combined wage discipline with technology-driven industrial policy.
  - चीन और दक्षिण कोरिया ने मजदूरी अनुशासन को तकनीक-आधारित औद्योगिक नीति से जोड़ा।
  - Manufacturing expansion there led to productivity growth and rising incomes.
  - वहाँ विनिर्माण विस्तार से उत्पादकता और आय दोनों बढ़ीं।
  - India lacked similar coordinated industrial transformation.
  - भारत में ऐसा समन्वित औद्योगिक परिवर्तन नहीं हो पाया।
- 

## Service-Led Growth Limitation

- India's growth increasingly relied on software and services rather than manufacturing.
- भारत की वृद्धि सॉफ्टवेयर और सेवाओं पर अधिक निर्भर हो गई।
- Service sector growth created inequality due to limited employment absorption.
- सेवा क्षेत्र की वृद्धि से सीमित रोजगार के कारण असमानता बढ़ी।
- Manufacturing's job-creating potential remained underutilised.
- रोजगार सृजन की क्षमता वाला विनिर्माण क्षेत्र पूरी तरह उपयोग नहीं हो सका।

## Distributional and Social Impact

- Entry-level wages stagnated while high-skill incomes surged.
  - शुरुआती स्तर की मजदूरी स्थिर रही जबकि उच्च-कौशल आय तेजी से बढ़ी।
  - Rising inequality emerged as a structural outcome of growth pattern.
  - यह वृद्धि-पैटर्न संरचनात्मक असमानता का कारण बना।
  - Lack of manufacturing jobs limited broad-based income growth.
  - विनिर्माण नौकरियों की कमी से व्यापक आय वृद्धि बाधित हुई।
- 

## Exam-Relevant Facts

- Manufacturing is critical for structural transformation and demographic dividend.
- संरचनात्मक परिवर्तन और जनसांख्यिकीय लाभ के लिए विनिर्माण अत्यंत आवश्यक है।
- Manufacturing-led growth historically drove industrialisation in East Asia.
- पूर्वी एशिया में औद्योगिकीकरण का आधार विनिर्माण-आधारित वृद्धि रही है।
- Real exchange rate appreciation can hurt export competitiveness.
- वास्तविक विनिमय दर की सराहना निर्यात प्रतिस्पर्धा को नुकसान पहुँचाती है।
- Technology adoption is central to sustained productivity growth.
- दीर्घकालिक उत्पादकता वृद्धि के लिए तकनीकी अपनाना आवश्यक है।

Year	Agriculture (%)	Manufacturing (%)	Services (%)	Key Structural Insight
2000	~24%	~16%	~46%	Agrarian base, services emerging
2005	~19%	~17%	~52%	IT & telecom boost
2010	~18%	~16%	~55%	Services-led growth
2015	~16%	~15%	~58%	Manufacturing lag
2020	~15%	~14%	~61%	Pandemic impact
2025 (Now)	~15%	~17%	~58–59%	Manufacturing revival



Sector

~2000

~2025 (Now)

Trend

Agriculture

~24%

~15%

↓ Declining share

Manufacturing

~16%

~17%

↑ Slow recovery

Services

~46%

~59%

↑ Dominant sector







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Dimension

Observation

Structural shift

From agriculture → services (skipped manufacturing phase)

Employment paradox

Agriculture employs ~40% but contributes ~15% GDP

Manufacturing gap

Below East Asian benchmark (25–30%)

Services strength

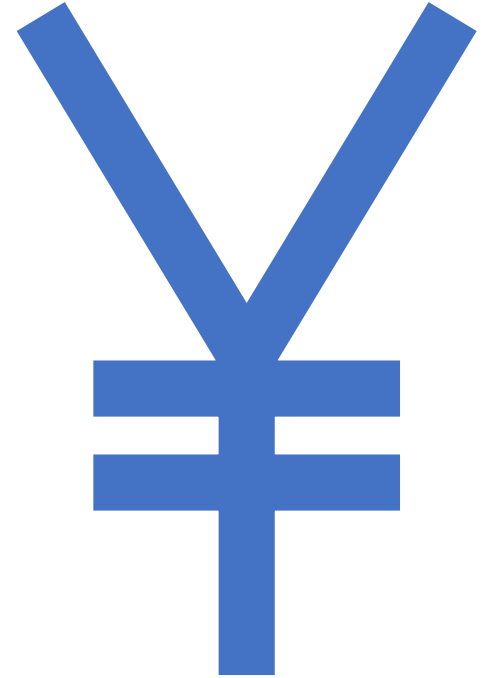
IT, finance, telecom, trade

Policy response

Make in India, PLI, Gati Shakti



- With reference to India's manufacturing performance, consider the following statements:
- High public sector wages raised economy-wide costs affecting manufacturing competitiveness.
- Real exchange rate appreciation can reduce the competitiveness of manufactured exports.
- India's growth has been predominantly manufacturing-led in recent decades.
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3



# Geopolitical shocks hurt crude the most and gold the least

## RELATIVE SENSITIVITY OF ASSETS



Source: RBI December bulletin

**GOLD HAS REAFFIRMED** its traditional role as a safe haven asset amid global geopolitical turmoil, shows an article in the RBI's December bulletin using a simulation-based sensitivity framework, reports **FE Bureau**. In contrast, crude oil is the most sensitive to geopolitical shocks, consistent with its exposure to supply

disruptions and regional conflicts. Silver is more volatile than gold due to its industrial demand, but far less sensitive than oil. Moreover, US treasury securities exhibit a steady rise in volatility with increasing geopolitical risks, reflecting their role as a flight-to-safety asset during global uncertainty.

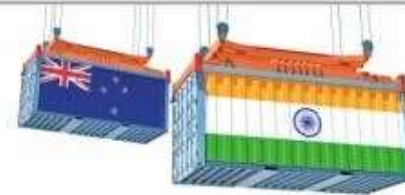
# Trade with the Kiwis

Bilateral merchandise trade (FY25): \$1.3 bn



**Key exports:** ATF, textiles, pharmaceuticals, machinery, petroleum products

**Key imports:** Wood, steel and aluminium scrap, coking coal, turbojets, and agri/animal products (shorn wool, milk albumin, apples, kiwifruit)



## Services trade (2024):



## What's in FTA

- NZ's average applied tariff (2.2% in 2025) to fall to zero after implementation
- India offers market access on 70.03% of tariff lines, covering 95% of NZ's exports by value; 29.97% tariff lines excluded
- **The big gainers in India:** Textiles and apparel, leather and headgear, ceramics, carpets, automobiles and auto components
- Apples, kiwifruit and manuka honey from NZ subject to TRQ, MIP and seasonal limits, balancing consumer choice with farmer protection
- Exclusions mainly include dairy, most animal products, select vegetables & pulses, sugar, artificial honey, fats & oils, arms & ammunition, gems & jewellery, and copper

“CONCLUDED IN JUST NINE MONTHS, THIS HISTORIC MILESTONE REFLECTS A STRONG POLITICAL WILL AND SHARED AMBITION TO DEEPEN ECONOMIC TIES BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES”



Narendra Modi,  
Prime Minister,  
India

“INDIA IS THE WORLD'S MOST POPULOUS COUNTRY AND FASTEST-GROWING ECONOMY, AND THAT CREATES OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOBS FOR KIWIS, EXPORTS, AND GROWTH”



Christopher Luxon,  
Prime Minister,  
New Zealand

## Mobility provisions

- Minimum 20 hours/ week work permitted for students in NZ
- Extended post-study work visas for STEM graduates
- 5,000 professional visas in IT, engineering, health care, AYUSH, yoga, music and Indian cuisine for up to 3 years
- 1,000 working holiday visas, granting multiple entries in 12 months

The FTA is expected to be signed in 2-3 months after legal scrubbing, and to come into force within six to seven months. New Zealand will need parliamentary approval.



# MAJOR TRADE AGREEMENTS OF INDIA

## Free Trade Agreement (FTA) With Neighbouring Countries

- ➞ India-Sri Lanka FTA
- ➞ India-Nepal Treaty of Trade
- ➞ India-Bhutan Agreement on Trade, Commerce, and Transit

*A free trade agreement is a comprehensive deal between countries, offering preferential trade terms and tariff concessions, with a negative list excluding specific products and services.*

## Regional FTA's of India

- ➞ **India ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (11):** 10 ASEAN countries + India
- ➞ **South Asia Free Trade Agreement (7):** India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and the Maldives
- ➞ **Global System of Trade Preferences** (41 countries + India)

## India's CECAs and CEPAs

CECA/CEPA is broader than FTAs, addressing regulatory, trade, and economic aspects comprehensively, with CEPA having the widest scope including services, investment, etc while CECA mainly focuses on tariff and TQR rates negotiation.

- ➞ CEPA with **UAE, South Korea, Japan**
- ➞ CECA with **Singapore, Malaysia**

## Others:

- India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA)
- India-Thailand Early Harvest Scheme (EHS)
- India-Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA)

An EHS precedes an FTA/CECA/CEPA, where negotiating countries select products for tariff liberalisation, paving way for broader trade agreements and fostering confidence.

## Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs)

Partners in a PTA grant preferential access to specific products by lowering duties on agreed tariff lines, maintaining a positive list of products eligible for reduced or zero tariffs.

- ➞ **Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA):** Bangladesh, China, India, S. Korea, Lao PDR, Sri Lanka, and Mongolia
- ➞ **SAARC Preferential Trading Agreement (SAPTA):** Same as SAFTA
- ➞ **India-MERCOSUR PTA:** Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and India
- ➞ India's PTA with **Chile, Afghanistan**

# National Consumer Day and Consumer Commissions in India



National Consumer Day, observed on 24th December, highlights the importance of consumer rights and protection in India.

It also draws attention to growing delays in consumer commissions, where rising case backlogs and structural gaps are undermining timely justice.

- **Types of Consumer Commissions in India:** The CPA, 2019 promulgates a three-tier quasi-judicial mechanism for redressal of consumer disputes namely **district commissions, state commissions and national commission**, each with **defined pecuniary jurisdiction**.
  - The District and State Consumer Commissions are set up by State Governments with Central approval, while the National Commission is established by the Central Government.
  - These bodies offer an alternative dispute-resolution mechanism and do not replace civil courts.

Consumer Commission		Pecuniary Jurisdiction	Composition	Appellate Authority
District Disputes Commission	Consumer Redressal Commission	Up to Rs 50 lakh.	President (District Judge or equivalent) and Members.	Appeals lie to the State Commission.
State Disputes Commission	Consumer Redressal Commission	Above Rs 50 lakh and up to Rs 2 crore.	President (Either a sitting Judge or a retired Judge of a High Court) and Members.	Appeals lie to the National Commission.
National Disputes Commission (NCDRC)	Consumer Redressal Commission	Above Rs 2 crore.	President (sitting or a retired Judge of the Supreme Court or a sitting or a retired Chief Justice of a High Court) and Members.	Appeals lie to the Supreme Court.



# Indian Consumer Rights and Digital Justice

## National Consumer Day

- Observed 24 December
- Occasion: 1986 Act Presidential Assent
- Global Counterpart: World Consumer Rights Day (15 March)

## Core Consumer Rights

- Right to Safety
- Right to Information
- Right to Choice
- Right to Redressal

## Consumer Prot Act Comparison

### 1986 Act (Traditional)

- Traditional Goods/Services focus
- Limited Pecuniary Jurisdiction
- Filing at Seller's location
- No Central Regulator

### 2019 Act (Modernized)

- E-commerce & Digital Markets coverage
- Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)
- Product Liability Provisions
- Filing at Consumer's residence
- Mediation for Dispute Resolution
- Higher Pecuniary Limits

## Digital Justice 2025 Theme

- Theme: Efficient and Speedy Disposal
- Online Complaints Filing
- Digital Tracking and Disposal
- Enhanced Trust in Digital Economy

## Adjudicatory Structure

- District Consumer Commissions
- State Consumer Commissions
- National Consumer Commission



# India's Consumer Rights: Upgraded for the Digital Age



## Consumer Protection Act, 1986



**Scope**  
Limited to traditional goods & services

**Regulator**  
No central regulatory authority

**Product Liability**  
No specific product liability provision

**Complaint Filing**  
Filing at where the seller is located

**Dispute Resolution**  
Traditional Iggyerd consumer courts

**Detail**  
Digital fiercreess blings

## A New Era of Consumer Protection

### The 2019 Act Modernises Consumer Rights

It specifically brings e-commerce and online marketplaces under the scope of consumer law.

### Focus on "Digital Justice"



The 2025 theme aims for efficient and speedy case disposal through online systems.

**World Consumer Rights Day**  
15 MARCH

## Consumer Protection Act, 2019



**Scope**  
Covers e-commerce & digital transactions

**Regulator**  
Establishes Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

**Product Liability**  
Makes manufacturer, seller & service provider liable

**Complaint Filing**  
Can be filed where the consumer resides

**Dispute Resolution**  
Introduces mediation speedier resolution

## National Consumer Day 24 DECEMBER





# CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT, 2019: A MODERN SHIELD FOR CONSUMERS

## BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVE: EVOLVING WITH THE DIGITAL MARKET



**1986  
ACT**

Addresses e-commerce & digital challenges.  
Focuses on timely protection & effective redressal.

**2019  
ACT**



### WHO IS A CONSUMER?



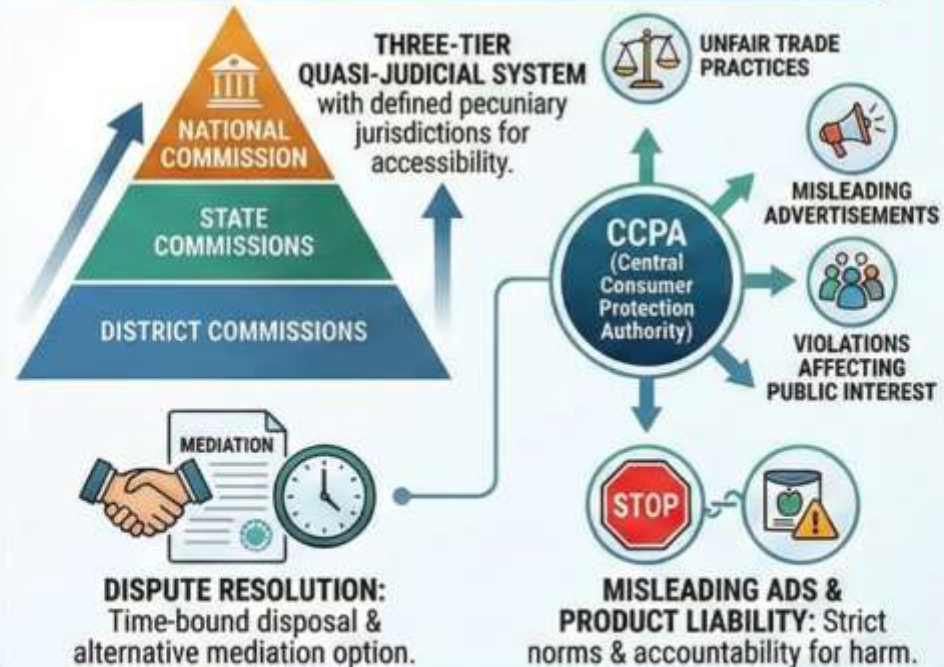
Buys goods/hires services for consideration (paid/promised).  
Covers **ALL** transaction types.

### KEY CONSUMER RIGHTS (THE SIX PILLARS)



Fundamental protections  
guaranteed by the Act.

### ENFORCEMENT & REDRESSAL MECHANISMS



### DIGITAL ACCESS & UNFAIR PRACTICES



E-DAAKHIL: Electronic filing  
for remote access to justice.



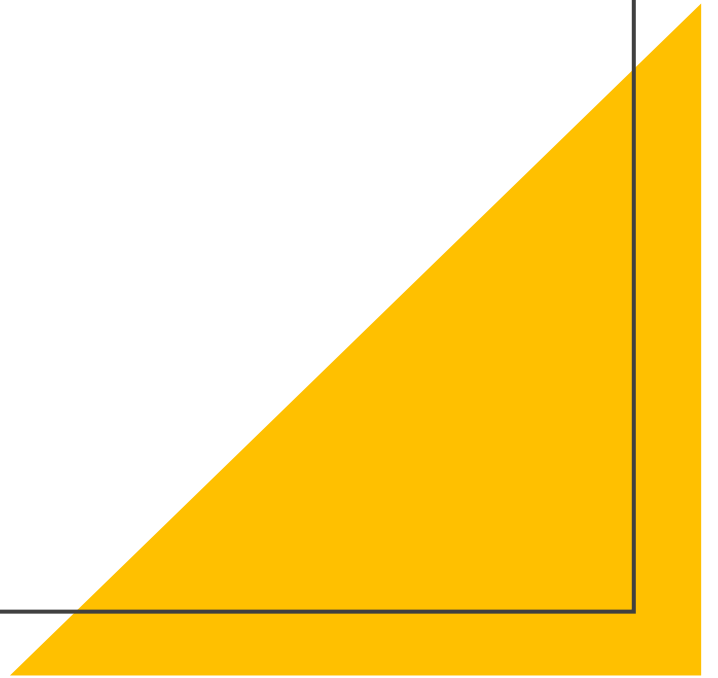
UNFAIR CONTRACTS:  
Expanded scope to curb  
disadvantageous terms.

**SIGNIFICANCE:** A robust, consumer-centric legal framework strengthening enforcement and adapting to digital realities.


▪ **Judicial Pronouncements:**

- **Indian Medical Association vs. V.P. Shantha (1995):** The Supreme Court held that the services that are being provided by medical practitioners will fall within the ambit of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.
- **Ambrish Kumar Shukla vs. Ferrous Infrastructure (2016):** Clarified pecuniary jurisdiction, considering the total claim value (product cost and compensation) for determining the court level.
- **Ganeshkumar Rajeshwarrao Selukar & Others vs. Mahendra Bhaskar Limaye & Others:** The Supreme Court (SC) of India urged the Centre to set up permanent adjudicatory bodies for consumer disputes, emphasizing that consumer rights are constitutionally protected and need a stable framework due to gaps in implementing the CPA, 1986.

# India's First PPP- Model Medical Colleges





- 
- India has announced its first-ever PPP-model medical colleges in the tribal districts of Dhar and Betul (Madhya Pradesh).

### What it is?

- India's first medical colleges under the Public–Private Partnership (PPP) model are being set up in tribal-dominated districts of Madhya Pradesh.
- Four such colleges are planned (Dhar, Betul, Katni, Panna), linked with existing district hospitals to strengthen both medical education and [public healthcare delivery](#).

### What is the [PPP model](#)?

- Public–Private Partnership (PPP) is an arrangement where the government and private sector jointly provide public infrastructure or services.
- The private partner invests in construction, management or operations, while risks and responsibilities are clearly shared, and payments are linked to performance standards.

### Types of PPP models:

1. BOT / DBFOT (Build–Operate–Transfer / Design–Build–Finance–Operate–Transfer): Private entity designs, builds, finances and operates the asset for a fixed period before transferring it to the government.
2. Operations & Maintenance (O&M): Private player manages and maintains public assets for a shorter contractual duration.
3. Lease–Develop–Operate–Maintain: Existing public assets are leased to private entities for development and operation during the concession period.

### Government incentives for PPP:

- Viability Gap Funding (VGF): Capital grant of up to 40% of project cost to improve financial viability.
- India Infrastructure Project Development Fund (IIPDF): Financial support for feasibility studies and project structuring.
- IIFCL financing: Long-term debt support for infrastructure projects with long gestation periods.
- FDI support: Up to 100% FDI permitted in most PPP sectors through the automatic route.

# *Complete* **Current Affairs 2025–2026**

**By Bhunesh Sir**

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

### **What you'll get**

- ✓ **From January 2025 to March 2026**
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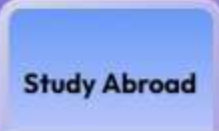
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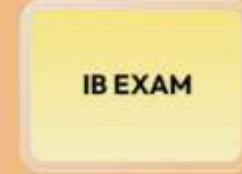


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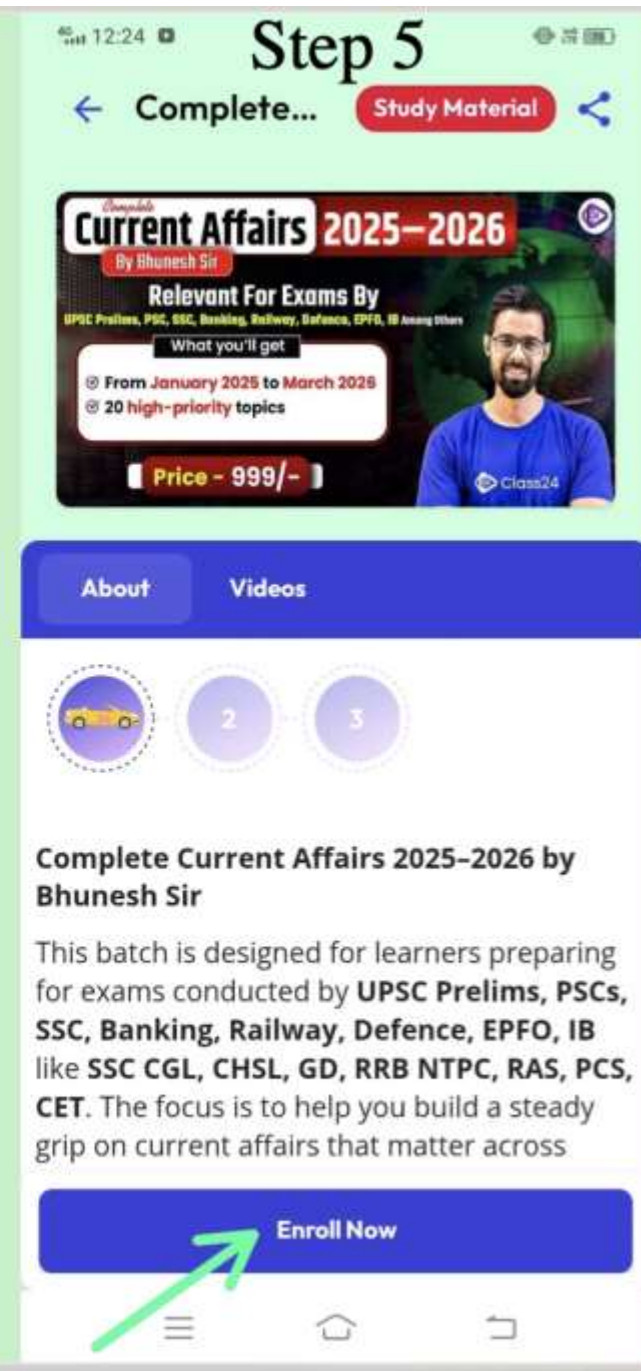
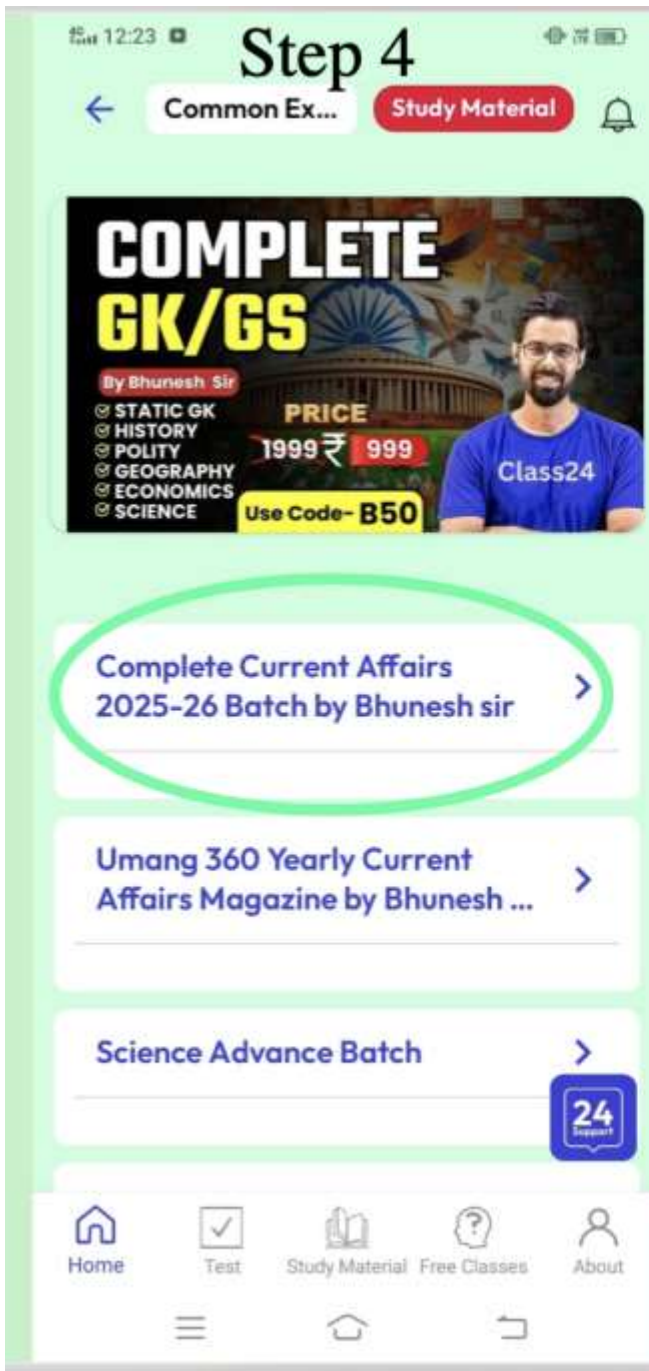


# Step 3

GOVT. EXAMS







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# Word of the day

## **Exigent:**

a need or demand that you must deal with immediately

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**Synonyms:** urgent, pressing, alarming

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**Usage:** *The situation was exigent and needed quick action.*

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

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**International Phonetic Alphabet:** /eksɪdʒənt/

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Thank you 😊

