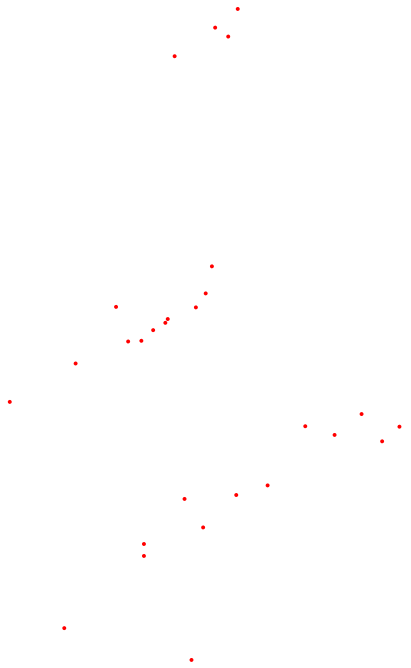


Daily Current Affairs





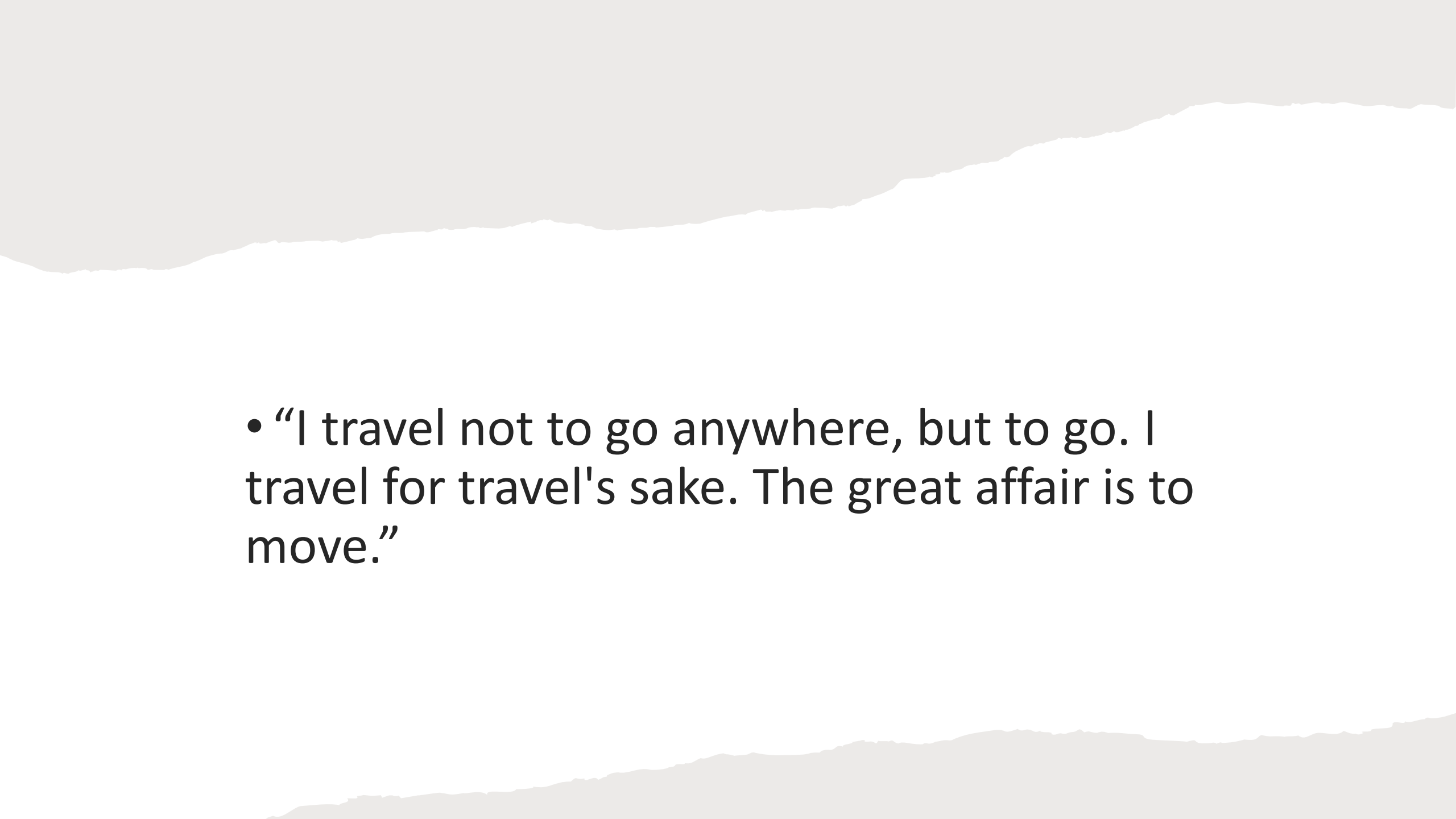
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PDF



10 MCQ QUIZ

- 
- “I travel not to go anywhere, but to go. I travel for travel's sake. The great affair is to move.”

Gyan Bharatam Mission to ink pact with institutes

It is a flagship initiative of Culture Ministry for identifying, digitising, preserving, and promoting India's manuscripts; the institutes will be categorised as cluster centres and independent centres

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

The Gyan Bharatam Mission on manuscripts, under the Union Culture Ministry, will on Saturday sign Memorandums of Understanding with around 20 institutes across the country for conservation, upkeep, and digitisation of manuscripts.

While the 20 institutes will sign the MoUs on Saturday, 30 more will do so over the next few days, a senior official of the Union Culture Ministry told *The Hindu*. Some of these institutes are Asiatic Society Kolkata, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Prayagraj, and Government Oriental Manuscript Library, Chennai.

Gyan Bharatam is a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Culture for identifying, documenting, conserving, digitising, preserving, and promoting India's vast manuscript heritage.

It was announced during the Union Budget this year.

The mission's mandate



Preserving history: The mission is an initiative to identify, document and digitise India's vast manuscript heritage. FILE PHOTO

is to preserve and establish a dedicated digital platform – known as the National Digital Repository (NDR) – to share India's manuscript heritage worldwide.

The institutions set to sign MoUs have been categorised into cluster centres and independent centres.

In the case of a cluster centre, the institution shall be responsible for executing all manuscript-related activities of its own centre, as well as those of its designated cluster partner centres, which shall not exceed 20. In the case of the independent centres, the institution shall be respon-

sible for executing all manuscript-related activities pertaining solely to its own collection.

Gyan Bharatam shall provide the overarching framework, guidance, monitoring, and support for the execution of activities under this partnership. In addition, it shall also provide funding, necessary equipment, and budgetary allocations to the designated Centres, subject to approval of work plans, milestones, and quality verification.

The various activities to be provided by the institutes with GB's support have been categorised into

survey and cataloguing, conservation and capacity building, technology and digitisation, linguistics and translation, research, publication, and outreach.

The centres have also been asked to constitute a dedicated Gyan Bharatam Cell experienced in each vertical, in the spirit of voluntary service, to represent the Centre with sincerity, while also serving as a vital channel of communication to foster collaboration and ensure smooth coordination.

Funds in instalments

As far as finances are concerned, funds shall be released in phased instalments in accordance with the implementation schedule and milestones outlined in the approved work plan.

The first instalment (70%) shall be disbursed upon the annual budget, the second (30%) instalment shall be released only upon submission of progress reports, detailed financial report, submission of utilisation certificates (UCs) and other important documents.

What is a Manuscript?

- A Hand written book or document is called manuscript.
- This means that never has been printed.
- The term manuscript is derived from Latin *manus* 'hand' and *scribo* 'I write', which means 'some thing written with the hand.'
- Each nook and corner of the world has manuscripts where people put their thoughts and experiences in a written form.
- A written document, dated back at least to seventy five years, achieves the status of a rare manuscript.

- The **Union Ministry of Culture** is launching **Gyan Bharatam Mission** — a flagship initiative for **identifying, digitising, preserving, and promoting India's manuscript heritage**.
 - Around **20 institutes** across India will sign **MoUs (Memoranda of Understanding)** with the Ministry to act as **cluster and independent centres** under this mission.
-

2 Objective of the Mission

- ✓ To **preserve, conserve, and digitise India's ancient manuscripts**.
 - ✓ To **document and promote** traditional knowledge preserved in written heritage.
 - ✓ To build a **National Digital Repository (NDR)** — a centralised platform to share India's manuscript heritage worldwide.
-

3 Institutional Framework

Type of Centre	Description & Role
Cluster Centres	- Each cluster centre executes manuscript-related activities for itself and its partner institutes (up to 20). - Responsible for coordination, training, digitisation, and reporting.
Independent Centres	- Function autonomously. - Handle conservation, digitisation, and cataloguing of their own manuscript collections.

Examples of Partner Institutes:

- Asiatic Society, Kolkata
- University of Kashmir, Srinagar
- Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Prayagraj
- Government Oriental Manuscript Library, Chennai



Aspect

Details

Funding Model

Released in **two instalments** — 70% upfront and 30% after progress verification.

Implementation Support

Gyan Bharatam provides **guidance, framework, and budgetary allocation.**

Conditions for 2nd Instalment

Submission of progress reports, utilisation certificates (UCs), and financial audit documents.



Monitoring

Periodic reports, milestones, and quality verification required.

Aspect	Details
Initiative By	Union Ministry of Culture, Government of India
Mission Name	Gyan Bharatam Mission on Manuscripts
Objective	To identify, document, conserve, digitise, preserve, and promote India's vast manuscript heritage.
Launch Context	Announced during the Union Budget 2024–25 .
Implementation Mechanism	20 institutes to sign MoUs for conservation, upkeep, and digitisation of manuscripts. Additional 30 institutes to join soon.
Institutions Involved	Asiatic Society (Kolkata), University of Kashmir, Hindi Sahitya Sammelan (Prayagraj), Government Oriental Manuscript Library (Chennai), etc.
Structure / Categorisation	- Cluster Centres : Execute manuscript-related activities and coordinate with up to 20 partner centres. - Independent Centres : Execute tasks related only to their own collection.
Digital Platform	National Digital Repository (NDR) — to share India's manuscript heritage worldwide.
Core Activities	Survey & cataloguing, conservation, capacity building, technology & digitisation, linguistics & translation, research, publication, and outreach.
Institutional Mechanism	Each centre to form a dedicated Gyan Bharatam Cell for coordination and communication.
Funding Pattern	- Released in phased instalments . - First instalment (70%) : upon annual budget approval. - Second instalment (30%) : after submission of progress reports, UCs, and financial verification.
Monitoring & Support	Mission to provide framework, guidance, and budgetary allocations with periodic review of plans, milestones, and quality checks.
Overall Vision	To create a national network of manuscript centres and a digital repository to preserve and promote India's cultural heritage globally.

Respect the health rights of India's children

The deaths of 25 children linked to contaminated cough syrup has shocked the conscience of the nation. In a news cycle that often highlights 'man bites dog' sensationalism, the general public is largely aware of two things: that 25 children died, and that a paediatrician in Madhya Pradesh who defiantly prescribed the syrup to the children is said to have received a paltry commission of ₹2.54 a bottle; thus the cost of each of those young lives was ₹2.54.

That all this happened despite the Union Health Ministry having banned certain cough syrup formulations for children under the age of four years – as recently as April 2025 – citing the risk of contamination, is shocking. There has also been much discussion on responsibility – which agency failed in its duty to monitor and prevent the distribution of the syrup. The regulatory agencies in India responsible include the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation under the Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India which handles large manufacturers of drugs and export approvals, and State drug control officers who handle the regulation, care, manufacture, sale and distribution of drugs by small- and medium-scale manufacturers.

Where the focus needs to be

Rather than apportion blame, it would be wise to allow the law to take its course. The focus must be on the regulatory framework behind the distribution of paediatric medicines in India, and the challenges India faces in ensuring the protection it has guaranteed to its children in Article 39(f) of the Constitution, which is also listed as an important Directive Principle of State Policy.

Children (the age group under 18 years) make up 39% of India's population. There are a catena of laws and policies in India – approximately 13 – that are specifically designed to protect children, from the seminal National Policy for Children 1974 to the India Newborn Action Plan 2014. There are also about 10 pieces of legislation with special provisions for children such as the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act to The Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act.

Significantly, while these are critical interventions, they focus heavily on protecting children in the workforce (labour laws), and preventing and punishing the sexual exploitation of children. There are important initiatives for children in health and education, but the specific



Jayanthi Natarajan

is a former Union Minister, an advocate and a columnist

There needs to be a holistic framework to monitor medicine use for children

area of pharmacovigilance in the dissemination of paediatric drugs requires far more oversight and also the development of robust infrastructure.

In a similar context, Dr. Harry Shirkey called children "therapeutic orphans". Children are not small adults. The pharmacodynamic responses of children and adults are vastly different due to a spectrum of different physiologies. Further, clinical trials of drugs are usually conducted on adults and for ethical and other reasons almost never on children, resulting in an alarming lack of paediatric guidelines of dosage and administration. All too often, the dosage and administration of drugs for children are extrapolated from guidelines for adults, leaving children in much danger of overdosage and more serious consequences. Special development strategies of drugs for children are a cornerstone of their health-care needs, particularly public health care.

Overseas, the regulatory framework for children-related pharmaceuticals is an eye-opener. In the European Union, it is under the Paediatric Use Marketing Authorisation and in the United States, under the Best Pharmaceuticals for Children Act (BCPA). *Inter alia*, such legislation also provides incentives for research into paediatric drugs. India does not have a specific policy or legislation and operates on general guidelines. Since children are totally dependent on their parents or guardians for their health needs, it is necessary that the government frames clear guidelines.

Health-care-related financial burdens often cause many impoverished families to fall into deeper poverty, making it even more vital that the pharmaceutical needs of children are made affordable.

The essential medicine concept

Therefore, the introduction of the essential medicine concept in the health-care sector contributes significantly to the greater availability and affordability of life-saving medicines. Essential medicines are those which satisfy the priority health-care needs of the population, are intended to be available in all health-care systems and are of quality and affordable. Several years ago, the World Health Organization (WHO) introduced an essential Medicine list for children (EMLc). This is used by policy makers to update the EMLc lists in their own countries. Although EML for adults are periodically revised, the EMLc for children is not addressed regularly. This requires immediate attention of policymakers.

Other basic safe practices in the distribution of children's pharmaceuticals include constant

education for care-givers and pharmacists, and making it mandatory to read the label, dispense the correct dosage and watch for side-effects particularly when buying over-the-counter medication.

Regulation of over-the-counter medication for children especially for cough, cold and fever is an important dimension of public health care. The use of OTC medication varies in rural and urban areas, but is more common in an urban setting.

Public health-care outlets are another area of focus where clear guidelines need to be enforced in dispensing pharmaceuticals to children. A zero tolerance policy must be adopted against substitute or substandard medication. In the case of teenagers, attention must be paid to prevent the misuse of drugs.

Over the last three years, WHO has issued several warnings on contaminated cough syrup. Some of these are related to cough syrup made in various places in India. Children have also died in the Gambia, Uzbekistan, Indonesia and Cameroon as a result of these contaminated syrups. India has emerged as the pharmacy to the Global South with huge exports of cough syrups, but this carries with it a responsibility to ensure the absolute safety of the medicines exported.

Need for India data

India's health policy with regard to paediatric medicines cannot be framed only on the basis of data on children available from other countries. Our genetics are unique to us and our research needs to be based on wholly Indian data. Nor should data on paediatric medicines be extrapolated from data that is related to adults.

We owe a fiduciary duty to our children to take care in framing a health policy for them. We expect responsible policymakers to take into account diverse factors including awareness of environmental pitfalls such as how toxicity of a cough syrup may be exacerbated by malnutrition in children.

Thus, adult medicines modified during administration to children can only be considered as off label and unlicensed. They should not be used at all since they are contraindicated in terms of formulation, age and indicators.

Clearly, monitoring safe medicine use in children is of utmost importance. The use of medicines not proven to be safe for children is a violation of the rights of voiceless children. India urgently needs a robust and holistic infrastructure to monitor and promote awareness of safety protocols with regard to medicines given to children.

- The article discusses the **recent deaths of 25 children in Madhya Pradesh** after consuming **contaminated cough syrup**.
 - It highlights India's **regulatory failures, policy gaps** in child health governance, and the **urgent need for a child-specific pharmaceutical framework**.
-

2 The Core Issue

- The Health Ministry banned several cough syrups for children **below four years of age** (April 2025) after contamination risks were detected.
- Despite these bans, **adulterated medicines** continue to circulate — revealing lapses in **regulation, manufacturing oversight, and quality monitoring**.
- The tragedy underlines the absence of a **robust pharmacovigilance system** for paediatric drugs.



Agency / Institution

Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)

Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS)

State Drug Control Offices



Responsibility

Approves new drugs; oversees manufacturing & marketing authorisation.

Implements drug safety policies.

Enforce quality standards and inspect small/medium manufacturers.

4 Legal & Policy Framework

- **Article 39(f)** of the Constitution — Directs the State to ensure children grow in conditions of freedom and dignity, protected from exploitation.
- **National Policy for Children (1974) & National Plan of Action for Children (2014)** — Guarantee children's right to health.
- **POSH Act, PCPNDT Act, Juvenile Justice Act**, etc., provide sector-specific protection but lack pharmaceutical focus.

 *The need is for a "Children's Medicines Protection Act"— defining accountability from manufacture to retail.*

5 Gaps in Paediatric Drug Regulation

1. **Most clinical trials** are conducted on adults; children's physiology differs, making dose extrapolation dangerous.
2. **Few incentives** for pharma firms to develop or test paediatric formulations.
3. **Over-the-counter (OTC)** sales of cough syrups and antibiotics without prescription remain rampant.
4. **Pharmacovigilance** (post-market safety monitoring) for children is almost absent.
5. **Awareness deficit** among parents, pharmacists, and rural health workers on proper dosage and side effects.



Region / Law

EU (Paediatric Use Marketing Authorisation)

US (Best Pharmaceuticals for Children Act)

WHO “Essential Medicines for Children” List (EMLc)

Feature

Mandatory child-specific testing before approval.

Tax & patent incentives for paediatric trials.

Promotes affordability & safety of child-tested drugs.



7 Health Rights & Policy Implications

- **Child health = Public health priority:** Children < 18 years make up $\approx 39\%$ of India's population.
 - Government must treat safe paediatric medication as a **right**, not a welfare service.
 - **Essential Medicine Concept:** Drugs vital for survival should be continuously available, affordable, and quality-assured for children.
-

8 Need for India-specific Action Plan

1. **Develop Paediatric Drug Standards:** Include dosing, formulation, and toxicity guidelines.
2. **Regulate OTC Cough Syrups:** Ban untested formulations; monitor exports (past incidents in Gambia, Uzbekistan).
3. **National Database for Paediatric Adverse Events:** Ensure early detection.
4. **Mandatory Labeling:** Indicate age-appropriate dosage and clinical validation.
5. **Funding & Incentives:** Encourage domestic R&D for child-safe formulations.
6. **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Train caregivers and pharmacists.
7. **Holistic Monitoring Mechanism:** Integrate with Ayushman Bharat and National Health Mission frameworks.



The new award will be open to fiction from any country
attained at children aged 8 to 12. *STAFF PHOTOS*

Children's fiction to get its first Booker Prize debut in 2027

Associated Press
LONDON

The Booker Prize Foundation announced Friday that it is setting up the Children's Booker Prize alongside its existing awards for English language and translated fiction.

Like its sister prizes, the children's award comes with a 10,000-pound (\$17,000) purse. The prize will open for submissions early next year, and the inaugural award will be handed out in 2027, with the winner picked by a jury of children and adults led by writer Frank Cottrell Boyce, Britain's current children's laureate. Mr. Cottrell-Boyce, whose books include the Carnegie Medal-winning "Adrift," said he was "thrilled" about the prospect.

"It's going to be — as they say — absolute genius in there. Let the yelling commence," he said. Funded by the arts, environment, and education charity Oxfam Foundation, the new award will be open to fiction from any country aimed at children aged 8 to 12, either written in English or translated, and published in the U.K. or Ireland.

Booker Prize Identification Chief Executive Gaby Wood said the prize aimed to inspire more young people to read and be "a seed from which we hope future generations of reading readers will grow." The original Booker Prize was founded in 1950 and has established a reputation for transforming writers' careers. Its winners have included Salman Rushdie, Margaret Atwood, Ian McEwan, Arundhati Roy, and Hilary Mantel.

The International Booker Prize was established in 2019 as a lifetime achievement award. In 2020, it has gone to a single work of translated fiction, with the prize money split between author and translator. Past winners include Nobel literature laureates Olga Tokarczuk of Poland and Han Kang of South Korea.

Bracing the storm



White and chase. A person looks on as a storm hits the Westwind Bridge in Storm Benjamin batters Europe with hurricane-force winds, heavy rain, power outages in France, and travel disruptions across multiple countries. *AP IMAGES*

U.S. border policies leave Afghan family dispersed across multiple countries

Associated Press

As they walked up to the metal pillars of the border wall dividing Tijuana and San Diego, the Huseini siblings carried nothing from their lives in Afghanistan than a hard fantasy of what awaited them on the other side.

Amir, 21, and his sisters, Suraya, 36, and Bara, 27, arrived in northern Mexico with an appointment for January 24, four days after U.S. President Donald Trump took office.

That was the day they were supposed to enter the U.S. and make their case, marking what they thought would be an end to the re-

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Huseini siblings. The door to asylum slammed shut along the U.S.-Mexico border after Donald Trump took office. *AP IMAGES*

twined with American military and foreign policy, the expulsion carried an added sting because Huseini believed they would find safe harbor in the U.S.

In Afghanistan, whose tumultuous history is in-

Half a year later, the fa-

Mamdani's rise signals a shift in New York's pro-Israel political landscape

Zohran Mamdani's campaign has exposed a growing divide within the Democratic Party as public opinion shifts on Israel's actions in Gaza, while rivals like Andrew Cuomo cast the race as a referendum on Israel. Mamdani's consistency and focus on affordability have struck a chord with voters

Associated Press
NEW YORK



Shifting grounds: Former New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, left, greets Zohran Mamdani during a mayoral debate, on October 18. *AP*

claims that his criticism of Israel amounts to antisemitism, prompting to boycott closely with those with whom he disagrees. If elected, Mamdani, who has framed the race as a referendum on Israel's political obduracy against war crimes charges brought by the International Criminal Court, has cast antisemitism as the "most important issue facing the city and himself as a 'tyrannical aggressive' supporter of Israel."

Mr. Mamdani's own views, he said, presented an "existential" threat to New Yorkers. Other candidates quickly rushed to furnish their own pro-Israel credentials, including Mayor Eric Adams, who announced he would run an "anti-antisemitism" ballot line. As they competed for

support among Brooklyn's prominent rabbis and other Jewish voters, each equated protests for Palestinian rights with support for terrorism and backed a consistent stance with their own, compared to 26% for Mr. Cuomo.

A Fox News poll conducted in mid-October found that 50% of registered voters in New York said they identified more with the Palestinians in the West Asia conflict, compared to 44% who identified more with the Israelis. Those numbers have alarmed some Jewish lead-

ers, who have laid at least some of the blame at Mr. Mamdani's feet. In an op-ed letter circulated this week, he said: "We've seen that candidacy has contributed to 'rising anti-Semitism and its political counterpart' in public opinion that has been brewing for some

time," Ms. Cass added. "They didn't realize that the ground beneath them had shifted."

Still, with less than two weeks to go before the election, Mr. Cuomo has only leaned into the issue, claiming, at Wednesday's debate that Mr. Mamdani had "stoked the flames of hatred against the Jewish people."

The broadsides have won support from the Anti-Defamation League and pro-Israel donors. But there is little indication that the strategy is working among ordinary New Yorkers.

Views and votes

A quantitative university poll conducted in early October, 45% of likely voters in New York City said Mr. Mamdani's views on Israel were "extremely bad," compared to 26% for Mr. Cuomo.

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U.S. military sends supersonic B-1 bombers near Venezuela's coastline

Associated Press
WASHINGTON

The U.S. military flew a pair of supersonic, heavy bombers up to the coast of Venezuela on Thursday, a little over a week after another group of American bombers made a similar journey as part of a training exercise to simulate an attack.

The U.S. military has been upping its ante in the Caribbean Sea and the waters off Venezuela, raising speculation that President Donald Trump could try to oust Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro. Mr. Maduro faces charges of narcotics trafficking and human rights abuses.

According to flight tracking data, a pair of B-1 Lancer bombers took off from Tybee Air Force Base in Georgia on Thursday and flew through the Caribbean and up to the coast of Venezuela.

A U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive military operations, confirmed that a training flight of B-1s took place in the Caribbean.

The B-1 bomber can carry more bombs than any other plane in the U.S. inventory.

A similar flight of slower



The B-1 bomber can carry more bombs than any other plane in the U.S. inventory. *AP IMAGES*

B-52 Stratofortress bombers was conducted in the region last week. The bombers were joined by Marine Corps F-35B stealth fighter jets — a squadron is currently based in Puerto Rico.

For what the Pentagon called a "bomber attack demo" in photos online.

When Mr. Trump was asked about Thursday's B-1 flight and if it was meant to ramp up military presence on Venezuela, he said, "It's false, but we're not happy with Venezuela for a lot of reasons. Drugs being one of them."

The U.S. force in the Caribbean includes eight warships, F-8 maritime patrol aircraft, MQ-4C Reaper drones, and an F-35 fighter squadron. A submarine has also been confirmed to be operating in the waters off South America.

A similar flight of slower

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Children's fiction to get its first Booker Prize debut in 2027

Associated Press

LONDON

The Booker Prize Foundation announced Friday that it is setting up the Children's Booker Prize alongside its existing awards for English-language and translated fiction.

Like its sister prizes, the children's award comes with a 50,000-pound (\$67,000) purse.

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Mr. Cottrell-Boyce, whose books include the Carnegie Medal-winning "*Millions*," said he was "buzzing" about the prospect.

"It's going to be – as they say – absolute scenes in there. Let the yelling commence," he said.

Funded by the arts, environment, and education charity AKO Foundation, the new award will be open to fiction from any country aimed at children aged 8 to 12, either written in English or translated, and published in the U.K. or Ireland.

Booker Prize Foundation Chief Executive Gaby Wood said the prize aimed to inspire more young people to read and be "a seed from which we hope future generations of lifelong readers will grow." The original Booker Prize was founded in 1969 and has established a reputation for transforming writers' careers. Its winners have included Salman Rushdie, Margaret Atwood, Ian McEwan, Arundhati Roy, and Hilary Mantel.

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Feature

Details

Name

Children's Booker Prize

Debut Year

2027

Prize Money

£50,000 (≈ ₹67 lakh)

Funded By

AKO Foundation – an arts, environment & education charity

Languages Eligible

English or Translated Fiction

Publication Region

Must be published in the **U.K. or Ireland**

Target Age Group

Children aged **8 to 12 years**

Jury Composition

Combination of **children and adults**, chaired by **Frank Cottrell-Boyce** (current U.K. Children's Laureate)



Award	Established	Focus / Eligibility
Booker Prize	1969	English-language fiction; has launched careers of writers like Salman Rushdie , Margaret Atwood , Arundhati Roy , Hilary Mantel , Ian McEwan , etc.
International Booker Prize	2005	Initially for lifetime achievement; since 2016 — awarded for a single work of translated fiction , with prize shared between author and translator .
Children's Booker Prize	2027 (announced 2025)	First time recognising fiction for children aged 8–12.

Cyclone Montha Set
to Intensify Over Bay
of Bengal, IMD
Issues Orange Alert
for Tamil Nadu

A new cyclonic system forming over the southeast Bay of Bengal is expected to develop into Cyclone Montha early next week, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) confirmed on Friday.

With the system gaining strength, the IMD has issued an Orange Alert for several Tamil Nadu districts, warning of very heavy to extremely heavy rainfall beginning October 27.

Cyclone	Dates (IMD)	Basin / Affected area (short)	Name given by
Shakhti	1–7 Oct 2025	Arabian Sea ; offshore impacts near western India and Oman	Sri Lanka (from the WMO/ESCAP list) (Wikipedia)
Remal	24–28 May 2024	Bay of Bengal ; Sundarbans (WB, India) & Bangladesh	Oman (“Remal” = sand) (Wikipedia)
Michaung	1–6 Dec 2023	Bay of Bengal ; Tamil Nadu–Andhra Pradesh coasts (India) , Bangladesh	Myanmar (pronounced <i>Migjaum</i>) (Wikipedia)
Midhili	15–18 Nov 2023	Bay of Bengal ; Bangladesh & NE India	Maldives (Wikipedia)
Hamoon	21–25 Oct 2023	Bay of Bengal ; Bangladesh, Myanmar, NE India	Iran (Persian word for desert lakes) (Wikipedia)

Cyclone Name	Naming Country	Area Affected	Dates
Fengal	Saudi Arabia	Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Sri Lanka	Nov 25-27, 2024
Expected Severe	India	Odisha, West Bengal	Oct 24-25, 2024
Madhya Pradesh Storm	Bangladesh	Madhya Pradesh	Aug 25-Sep 3, 2024
Biparjoy	Bangladesh	Gujarat, Rajasthan, Pakistan	Jun 6-19, 2023
Mocha	Yemen	Myanmar, Bangladesh, Andaman Sea	May 6-15, 2023

What Are Carbide Guns? The Diwali Toy Behind Over 300 Eye Injuries in Madhya Pradesh

Deadly 'Carbide' Crackers

Blind 14 Children In MP





A dangerous new Diwali trend in Madhya Pradesh has left more than 300 children injured, with several losing their eyesight, after playing with devices known as “carbide guns.”

These makeshift “toys,” resembling harmless firecrackers, are in fact hazardous chemical explosives now banned across the state.

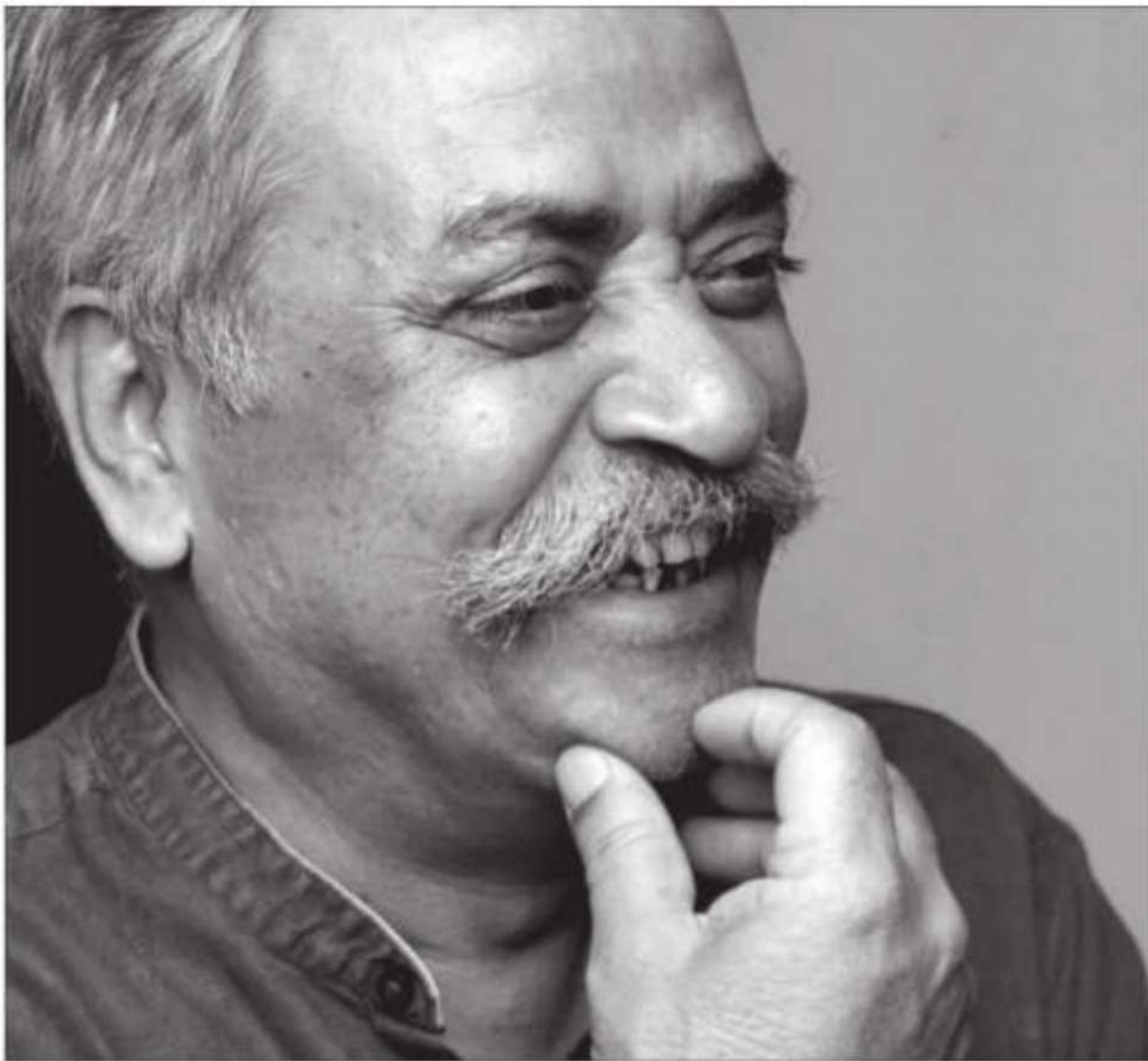


How Carbide Guns Work

A carbide gun is typically constructed from a PVC or metal pipe fitted with a small chamber for calcium carbide. When water is added, it reacts to release acetylene gas, which, upon ignition, explodes with significant force.

The resulting blast mimics the sound of a firecracker but also propels shrapnel-like fragments of plastic or metal that can cause devastating injuries to nearby users. Despite their crude design, these devices are extremely dangerous due to the uncontrolled chemical reaction they create.

Advertising Legend
Piyush Pandey,
Creator of “Abki Baar
Modi Sarkar”, Fevicol
and Cadbury Ads,
Passes Away at 70



HE SCRIPTED OUR SMILES

*Abki Baar
Modi Sarkar*

*Kuch Khaas Hai
Zindagi Mein*

*Fevicol Ka Jod Hai
Tootega Nahi*

Hamara Bajaj

*Har Ghar Kuch
Kehta Hai*

Chal Meri Luna

*Do Boond
Zindagi Ke*



- Piyush Pandey, one of India's most celebrated advertising minds and a transformative figure in the creative industry, passed away on Thursday at the age of 70. Known for his deep understanding of Indian culture and his ability to connect emotion with commerce, Pandey's work reshaped the country's advertising narrative over four decades.

- **The Creative Force Behind India's Most Memorable Ads**

- As the driving force at Ogilvy India, Pandey was responsible for crafting some of the most beloved campaigns in Indian advertising history. His creations, such as Cadbury's "Kuch Khaas Hai" and Fevicol's humorous, memorable ads, transcended marketing—they became cultural symbols. His relatable storytelling and focus on everyday Indian life brought authenticity to brands, replacing elitist tones with heartwarming narratives rooted in the vernacular.

2 Million Deaths in India Linked to Air Pollution in 2023: State of Global Air (SoGA) 2025 Report

India recorded a shocking two million deaths due to air pollution-related diseases in 2023, according to the State of Global Air (SoGA) 2025 report jointly published by the Health Effects Institute (HEI) and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), USA.



The figure marks a 43 per cent increase from 1.4 million deaths in 2000, underlining a worsening national crisis.



The report reveals that nearly nine in ten of these deaths were caused by non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease, lung cancer, diabetes, and dementia — highlighting air pollution's silent but deadly grip on India's health landscape.

- **Rising Disease Burden and Mortality**

- The SoGA 2025 report finds India's air pollution death rate to be over ten times higher than that of high-income nations, standing at 186 deaths per 100,000 people compared to just 17 in wealthier countries.

- States such as Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Bihar, and West Bengal recorded over 100,000 deaths each.

- Approximately 89 per cent of air pollution-related deaths were linked to NCDs, indicating a shift in the country's disease profile from infectious to chronic conditions.

- **Air Pollution and Non-Communicable Diseases**

- The report attributes seven in ten chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) deaths, one in three lung cancer deaths, one in four heart disease deaths, and one in five diabetes deaths in India to air pollution.
- Overall, two-thirds of COPD deaths are caused by exposure to polluted air. Among adults over 60 years, 95 per cent of air pollution-related deaths globally stem from NCDs, underscoring the grave risk for India's ageing population.
- While deaths from household air pollution have declined, fatalities linked to ambient PM2.5 and ozone have risen sharply.

The graphic features a teal background on the left and a light grey background on the right. The teal section contains abstract shapes: a dotted pattern in the top-left, a solid shape in the middle-left, and a dotted pattern in the bottom-left. The text "United Nations Day 2025" is written in white on the teal background. The grey section contains a large, faint dotted pattern in the top-right.

United Nations Day 2025

- The world marks United Nations (UN) Day on 24th October 2025, celebrating 80 years since the UN was established in 1945. The day commemorates the entry into force of the UN Charter, officially bringing the United Nations into being.

- The **UN Charter** was signed 26 June 1945, in San Francisco, at the conclusion of the **United Nations Conference on International Organization**, and came into force on 24 October 1945, a date now celebrated annually as **United Nations Day**.
- The UN Charter was ratified by **51** nations, including the five permanent Security Council members (US, UK, USSR/Russia, China, France).
- **Evolution:** Membership has grown from **51 countries(1945) to 193 countries (2025)**. **India is a founding member of the United Nations**. Its headquarters is located in New York City, US
 - Expanded focus to include **health, environment, gender equality, human rights, and sustainable development**.
 - Responded to global crises like pandemics, refugee movements, and climate change.
- **Core Goals:** Maintain **international peace and security**.
 - Develop **friendly relations among nations**.
 - Achieve **international cooperation** in solving global problems.
 - Act as a **center for harmonizing actions of nations** to reach common objectives.

Organs of the United Nations



UN Security Council (UNSC)

The UN Charter vests the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security to the UNSC

About

One of the **6 principal organs** of UN;
established in **1945** by
UN Charter

Headquarters

New York City

First Session

17 January 1946 at
Church House,
Westminster, **London**

Membership

- 15 members - 5 Permanent Members (**P5**), **10 Non-Permanent Members** elected for **two-year terms** (5 elected each year)
- P5 - the **US**, the **UK**, **Russia**, **France** and **China**

Presidency

- **Rotates every month** among the 15 members
- **India's** Presidency for year **2022 - December**

Voting Powers

- 1 member = 1 vote
- P5 have **veto power**
- Members of UN sans membership of UNSC **participate without vote**

UNSC Committees/Resolutions

Terrorism

- **Resolution 1373** (Counter Terrorism Committee)
- **Resolution 1267** (Da'esh and Al Qaeda Committee)

Non-Proliferation Committee

- **Resolution 1540** (against nuclear, chemical and biological weapons)

India and UNSC

- Served **7 times** as non-permanent member; elected for the **8th time** for 2021-22; **advocates for a permanent seat**
- Arguments for a permanent seat:
 - **43 peacekeeping missions**
 - Active participation in **formulating Human Rights Declaration (UDHR)**
 - India's **population, territorial size, GDP, economic potential, cultural diversity, political system** etc.



G4

Group of 4 countries (Brazil, Germany, India and Japan) which advocate each other's bids for permanent seats in the UNSC

Uniting for Consensus (UfC) Movement

- Informally known as the **Coffee Club**
- Countries **oppose the expansion Permanent Seats** of UNSC
- **Prime movers of the club** - Italy, Spain, Australia, Canada, South Korea, Argentina and Pakistan
- Italy and Spain are opposed to Germany's bid; Pakistan - India's bid; Argentina - Brazil's bid and Australia - Japan's bid

Major Challenges in UNSC

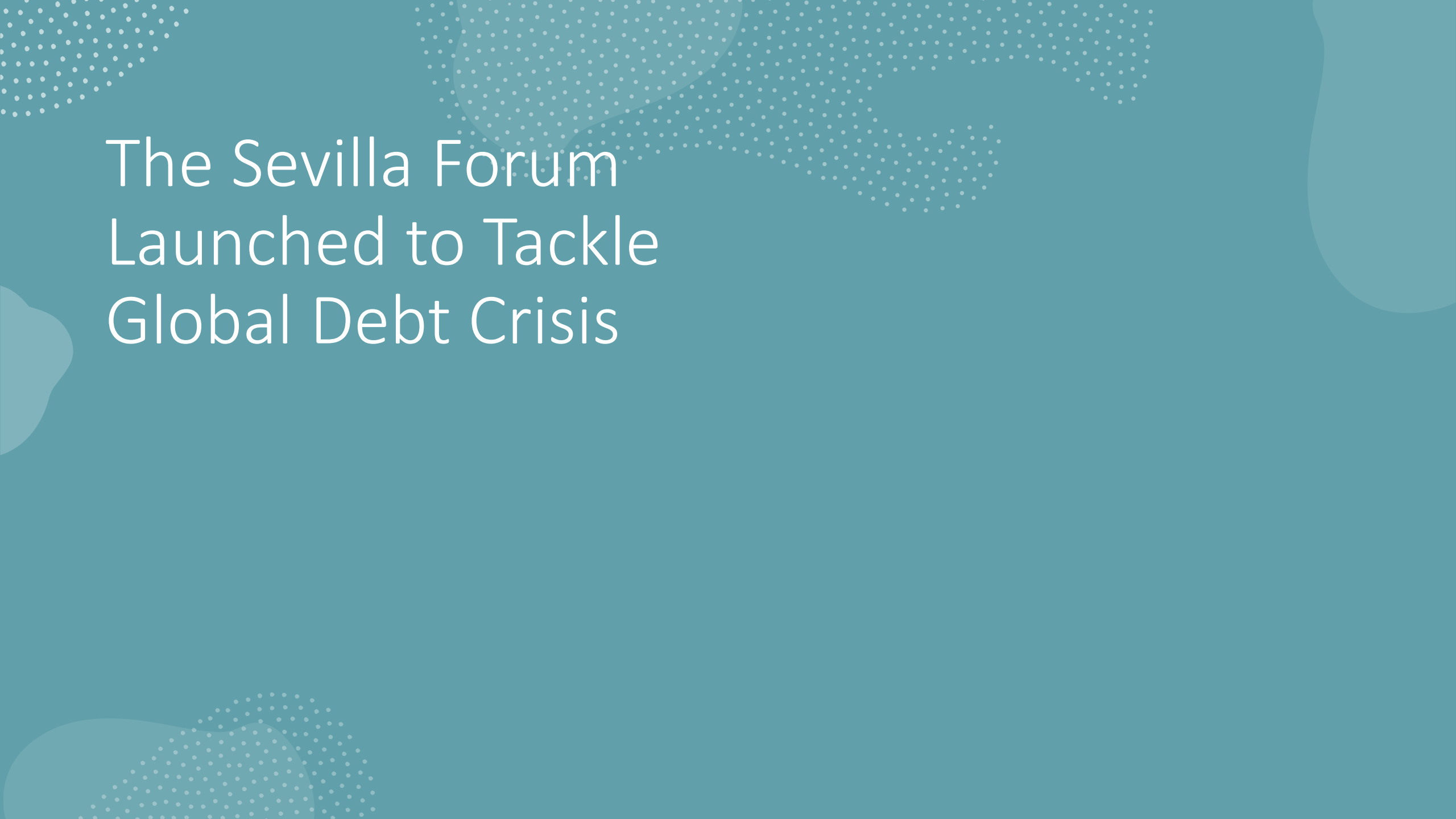
- Usual UN rules don't apply to UNSC deliberations; **no records of meetings kept**
- Powerplay in UNSC; **anachronistic veto powers** of P5
- **Deep polarisation** among P5; frequent divisions end up blocking key decisions
- **Inadequate representation** of many regions among of the world

Q. With reference to the “United Nations Credentials Committee”, consider the following statements:
(2022)

1. It is a committee set up by the UN Security Council and works under its supervision.
2. It traditionally meets in March, June and September every year
3. It assesses the credentials of all UN members before submitting a report to the General Assembly for approval.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct? (2022)

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



The Sevilla Forum Launched to Tackle Global Debt Crisis



At the 16th United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD16) held in Geneva, a new global initiative, the **Sevilla Forum on Debt**, was launched.



About the Sevilla Forum

The Forum, **led by Spain** and supported by **UNCTAD** and the **United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)**, aims to create a permanent, inclusive platform for dialogue and coordinated action on sovereign debt challenges.



- It marks one of the first tangible outcomes of the **Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4)** and is part of the broader **Sevilla Platform for Action**, which operationalizes the Sevilla Commitment.
 - **The Sevilla Commitment** lays down a roadmap for strengthening development financing and ensuring debt sustainability in developing economies.

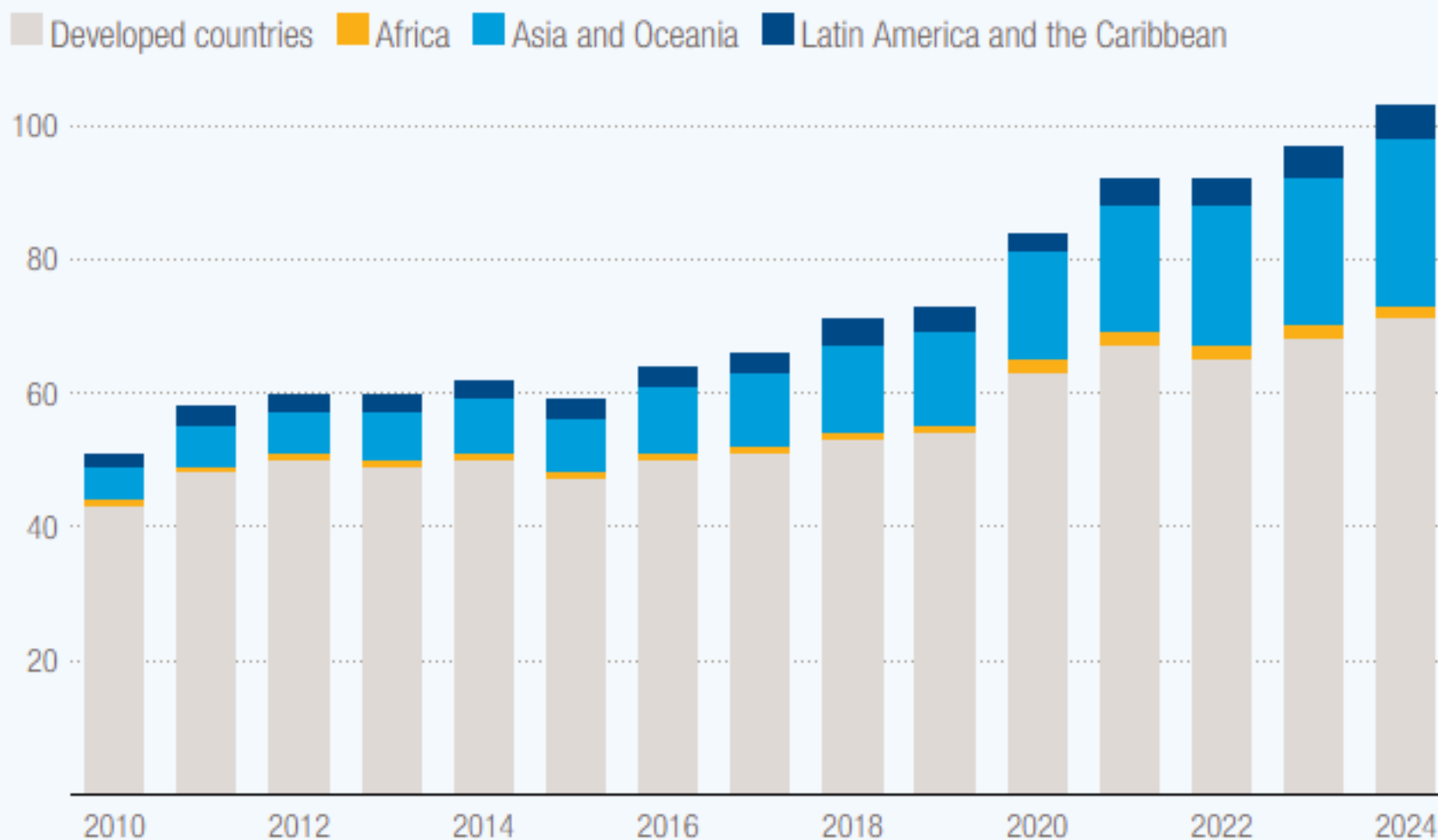
Rising Global Debt Levels

- According to UNCTAD, **global public debt** reached a record **\$102 trillion in 2024**.
 - Developing countries accounted for **\$31 trillion** of this debt.
 - These countries collectively paid **\$921 billion in interest payments**, a burden exceeding spending on health and education in many cases.
- As per the **World Bank 2024 Report**, Developing countries spent a record **\$1.4 trillion** to service their foreign debt as their interest costs climbed to a 20-year high in **2023**.
 - Currently, more than half of developing countries allocate at least **8%** of government revenues to interest payments, a figure that has doubled over the past decade.
- This unsustainable debt trajectory threatens progress toward the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and has amplified calls for comprehensive sovereign debt reform.



Global public debt hit a record \$102 trillion in 2024

Global public debt in trillions of dollars, by region, 2010–2024



Public debt of India

India's public debt-to-GDP ratio has barely increased from 81% in 2005-06 to **84% in 2021-22**, and is back to **81% in 2022-23**.

As per the **Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act 2003**, the general government debt was supposed to be brought down to **60% of GDP by 2024-25**.

The IMF states that India's general government debt, including the Centre and States, could be **100% of GDP** under adverse circumstances by fiscal 2028.

It has projected the ratio at **82.4% for 2024-25**.



The UN's Early Warnings for All (EW4All) Initiative

- The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) at its Extraordinary Congress in Geneva, rallied its 193 Member States to commit to universal early warning coverage by **2027 under the UN's Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative.**

- An Early Warning System (EWS) is an **integrated approach** that combines hazard monitoring, forecasting, disaster risk assessment, communication, and preparedness to enable timely action for saving lives, livelihoods, and assets at risk.

UN's Early Warnings for All (EW4All) Initiative

- The UN-backed EW4All initiative was **launched in 2022** by Secretary-General António Guterres, co-led by WMO, the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).
- Its goal is to ensure that every person — regardless of where they live — is protected by life-saving alerts for hazards such as cyclones, floods, heat waves or droughts.
- The EW4All initiative aims to address the growing threat of weather, water, and climate-related hazards—from cyclones and floods to heatwaves and droughts.
- The initiative focuses on strengthening the entire early warning “value chain”
 - Monitoring and forecasting hazards
 - Assessing risks
 - Disseminating alerts
 - Ensuring communities can act on them

International **Snow Leopard** Day

23rd October



#23for23: 23 Minutes for Snow Leopards

A global digital campaign that invites individuals, institutions, and communities worldwide to dedicate **23 minutes of physical activity** — such as walking, running, cycling, yoga, or stretching — to honour the snow leopard, the ultimate mountain athlete.



Thank you 😊

