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Four Kuki militants killed in Manipur
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INSIDE



SC examining the ban on surrogacy for second child
NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Tuesday decided to examine whether a law banning married couples facing secondary infertility from using surrogacy to have a second child amounts to a restriction on the reproductive choices of citizens. » PAGE 4

Dick Cheney, former V-P of the U.S., no more
WASHINGTON
Dick Cheney, who became one of the most powerful Vice Presidents in United States history as George W. Bush's number two during 9/11 and catastrophic wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, died on Monday. He was 84. » PAGE 14

SC flags POCSOs misuse in cases on adolescents
NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Tuesday expressed concern over the growing misuse of the POCSO Act to criminalise consensual adolescent relationships, and said it was considering issuing directions to speed legal processes on the subject. » PAGE 4

'Pause the issue of permits for animal import'
NEW DELHI
A panel of CITES, the globe's most influential agreement on wildlife conservation has recommended that India pause the issue of permits that allow endangered animals to be imported by zoos and wildlife centres. » PAGE 8

India-Israel ties defined by trust, says Jaishankar

Katell Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI
Against the backdrop of growing concerns over the fragile ceasefire in Gaza Strip, Israel's Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar held talks with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval here on Tuesday.
Starting the conversation at Hyderabad House, Mr. Jaishankar said the India-Israel ties were marked by a "high degree of trust" and "reliability". He said India-Israel cooperation was "essential" after meeting Mr. Doval. Mr. Sa'ar said the two sides discussed plans to "strengthen" the "mutual threat of terror".
"India and Israel have a

strategic partnership and particularly in our case, these have evolved into a strategic partnership and cooperation with a high degree of trust and reliability," said Mr. Jaishankar.
He said the two sides

ministry of External Affairs and the Foreign Ministry of Israel for training of diplomats. After meeting Mr. Jaishankar at the Hyderabad House, the Israeli Foreign Minister called on Mr. Doval.
"Common challenges"
"We discussed ways to cooperate and confront our common challenges, especially the mutual threat of terrorism. We are building a long-term strategic partnership through regular dialogue between Israel and India," said Mr. Sa'ar.
Mr. Jaishankar expressed support for business-level cooperation between the two sides, including the signing of an agreement between the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service of the Mi-

8 killed as passenger, goods trains collide near Bilaspur in Chhattisgarh

The Hindu Bureau
RAIPUR
At least eight people were killed and around 20 injured after a passenger train rammed a stationary goods train near the Bilaspur railway station in Chhattisgarh on Tuesday, officials said.
The Railway Ministry has ordered an inquiry. Rescue operations were under way till late evening and train services remained affected on the Mumbai Howrah route.
The incident occurred around 4 p.m., when the MEMU passenger train was heading to Bilaspur from Durg in neighbouring Odisha in neighbouring Bilaspur railway station, officials said.
The Railways said a consequence of 110 lakh each will be provided to



The passenger train and the stationary goods train that collided in Chhattisgarh on Tuesday. (PTI)

the next of kin of the deceased, 25 lakh each to those seriously injured, and 10 lakh each to those with minor injuries. A passenger who was aboard the train and derailed for Bilaspur said that he felt a jerk and the train came to a halt. "When I stepped out, I saw that the engine and the first coach had climbed up the last wagon of the goods train and many were trapped. I and some other passengers got out and started the rescue," he said.
Diplomatic sources had told *The Hindu* that Israel will undergo a major reconstruction and infrastructure boom in near future for which it would require globally available expertise including from the relevant sectors in India.
Mr. Jaishankar reiterated India's support for the peace formula to end the conflict in Gaza that was proposed by U.S. President Donald Trump on October 11 in key's Sharm el-Sheikh and conveyed "hope that the Peace Plan paves the way for a durable and lasting solution."

EC kicks off SIR 2.0 in 9 States and 3 UTs

The exercise will cover 51 crore voters; West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee has alleged 'silent, invisible rigging'; ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu moves SC, terming exercise 'arbitrary, unreasonable, and prone to disenfranchising voters'; officers are going door-to-door handing out partially filled enumeration forms; every elector will receive a unique form

Prerajna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI/KOLKATA
The Election Commission (EC) on Tuesday launched the second phase of the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in nine States and three Union Territories, covering around 51 crore voters, with booth-level officers distributing enumeration forms to electors.
The exercise, however, drew sharp opposition from several parties. West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress leader Mamata Banerjee led a rally in Kolkata, alleging "silent, invisible rigging", while the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu challenged the exercise in the Supreme Court, calling it "arbitrary, unreasonable, and prone to disenfranchising voters".
The BJP has welcomed the clean up exercise as a step towards ensuring greater transparency on the electoral rolls.
The Election Commission said booth-level officers (BLOs) have started going door-to-door handing out partially filled enumeration forms. Every elector will receive a unique form, it said. During the enumeration phase, which will continue till December 4, more than 5.3 lakh BLOs



Screening times: A booth level officer hands over enumeration forms to voters in Kolkata on Tuesday as part of the special intensive revision of electoral rolls that got under way in West Bengal. (PTI)

will visit houses at least three for the distribution and collection of forms.
Apart from the BLOs, 7,641 lakh booth-level officers and assistant BLOs, and 321 DEOs have been posted into action to conduct the SIR exercise in a smooth, orderly, and voter-friendly manner, a senior official said.
The 12 States and Union Territories where the SIR is being conducted are the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Jharkhand, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.
The first phase of the SIR exercise was carried out in Bihar earlier this year, following which over 60 lakh names were deleted from the electoral rolls. Addressing an anti-SIR rally in Kolkata, Mr. Banerjee said she would ensure the fall of the BJP-led government at the Centre if a single eligible voter was omitted from the electoral rolls.
She accused the BJP and the Election Commission of using the SIR as a ploy to intimidate voters, adding that the BJP wanted to come to power by removing legitimate voters from the list. "These people think they will remove two crore names and deposit people to struggle for power," she said.
The DMK in Tamil Nadu, led by Jayaram Jayalalitha, also moved the court, saying the exercise was "arbitrary, unreasonable, and prone to disenfranchising voters".

Poll-bound States
Among those: Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Karnataka, Puducherry will go to the polls in 2026.
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Leaders hold many rallies in Bihar as campaigning ends for first phase of polls

Anil Bhadani
BHOJIPAL
As campaigning ended on Tuesday for the first phase of the Bihar Assembly election, leaders of both the ruling NDA and the Opposition INDIA bloc went all out in their final appeal to voters in the 12 constituencies which will go to the polls on November 6.
Bihar Union Home Minister Anil Shah and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi held three rallies each on a hectic first day, while the NDA bloc's chief ministerial candidate Tejendra Yadav used a chopper to squeeze in visits to 17 constituencies on the first day of campaigning.
The NDA touted out the big guns with a slew of Union Ministers and BJP Chief Ministers harping on a theme of corruption and jungle raj of the Opposition Bahubhai Jaiswal. Dal returns to power in the State.



Setting ready: Polling officials leaving for their respective booths after collection of election material in Patna on Tuesday. (PTI)

"Lah ji did the fudher scam, land-for-job scam, hotel selling scam, bitness scam, blood related scam. Lahji-Rabji did so many scam and Congress has done scam worth 12 lakh crore. Can these people do any good for Bihar? Modi ji has ruled for 11 years and Bitih Bihar has ruled for 20 years. There is not even a 4 paisa allegation of corruption against Mr. Nitish Babu and Modi ji," he said, referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. Mr. Shah also accused the INDIA bloc of conducting a Voter Adhikar Yatra to protect "junk voters".
"Development train"
BJP president J.P. Nadda pushed a development narrative during his rally in Bhadrapur, Bihar, followed by a road show in Gaya. "It took 20 years for Bihar's development train to get back on track, and now this train is moving forward rapidly. Therefore, this election is one that will bring stability to Bihar and connect it with development. We have taken Bihar from darkness to light," he said.
"The NDA talks about 'development', and these people [the Opposition]

The march came on a day election officials said 16 lakh enumeration forms had been distributed in the State. Raising questions about the necessity of a hurriedly drawn out SIR, the Trinamool Congress chief asked, "Today, after all these years of independence, do we still have to prove that we are Indians?"
In Uttar Pradesh, the exercise was launched under the theme *Shuddh Nirvaah-Namaste Mahatma Loktantra* (Clean Electoral Roll - Strong Democracy).
In Kerala, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has called for an all-party meeting on line on Wednesday to seek consensus on the implementation of the SIR. Most parties in the State - barring the BJP - have raised concerns over its impact.
RELATED REPORTS ON
» PAGES 1, 2 & 4

Jobs or reels? Congress leader Rahul Gandhi addresses three public meetings in the Aurangabad, Kutch, and West Bengal constituencies

'Jobs or reels?'
Congress leader Rahul Gandhi addressed three public meetings in the Aurangabad, Kutch, and West Bengal constituencies on the last day of the campaign, appealing to Bihar's youth to vote for regime change, asking whether they want jobs or social media reels.
Even after being in power for twenty years, Mr. Kumar has not done anything other than turning Bihar's talented youth into labourers, forcing them to do menial work across the country, he said. Instead of talking about reels, the Prime Minister should have spent more time on development, job creation, and better healthcare to people, Mr. Gandhi said.
He claimed that Mr. Kumar is just the man to lead the government, being manipulated by Mr. Modi and Mr. Shah. "His primary concern is in their hands, and they make him act as their will, just like changing channels with a TV remote," he said.

EC kicks off SIR 2.0 in 9 States and 3 U.T.s

The exercise will cover 51 crore voters; West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee has alleged 'silent, invisible rigging'; ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu moves SC, terming exercise 'arbitrary, unreasonable, and prone to disenfranchising voters'; officers are going door-to-door handing out partially filled enumeration forms; every elector will receive a unique form

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
Shiv Sahay Singh
NEW DELHI/KOLKATA

The Election Commission on Tuesday launched the second phase of the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in nine States and three Union Territories, covering around 51 crore voters, with booth-level officers distributing enumeration forms to electors.

The exercise, however, drew sharp opposition from several parties. West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress leader Mamata Banerjee led a rally in Kolkata, alleging "silent, invisible rigging", while the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu challenged the exercise in the Supreme Court, calling it "arbitrary, unreasonable,



Screening time: A booth-level officer hands over enumeration forms to voters in Kolkata on Tuesday as part of the special intensive revision of electoral rolls that got under way in West Bengal. PTI

and prone to disenfranchising voters".

The BJP has welcomed the clean-up exercise as a step towards ensuring greater transparency on

the electoral rolls.

The Election Commission said booth-level officers (BLO) have started going door-to-door to hand out partially filled enumer-

ation forms. Every elector will receive a unique form, it said. During the enumeration phase, which will continue till December 4, more than 5.3 lakh BLOs

will visit houses at least thrice for the distribution and collection of forms.

Apart from the BLOs, 7.64 lakh booth-level agents (BLAs) appointed by political parties, 10,448 electoral registration officers and assistant EROs, and 321 DEOs have been pressed into action to conduct the SIR exercise in a smooth, orderly, and voter friendly manner, a senior official said.

The 12 States and Union Territories where the SIR is being conducted are the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

Poll-bound States

Among these, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, and Puducherry will go to the

polls in 2026.

The first phase of the SIR exercise was carried out in Bihar earlier this year, following which over 68 lakh names were deleted from the electoral rolls.

Addressing an anti-SIR rally in Kolkata, Ms. Banerjee said she would ensure the fall of the BJP-led government at the Centre if a single eligible voter was omitted from the electoral rolls.

She accused the BJP and the Election Commission of using the SIR as a political tool to intimidate voters, adding that the BJP wanted to come to power by removing legitimate voters from the list. "These people think they will remove two crore names and deport two people to Bangladesh, or move them to detention camps and throw them out of the country to capture power," she said.

The march came on a day election officials said 16 lakh enumeration forms had been distributed in the State. Raising questions about the necessity of a hurriedly drawn out SIR, the Trinamool Congress chief asked, "Today, after all these years of independence, do we still have to prove that we are Indians?"

In Uttar Pradesh, the exercise was launched under the theme *Shuddh Nirva-chak Namavali - Majboot Loktantra* (Clean Electoral Roll - Strong Democracy).

In Kerala, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has called for an all-party meeting online on Wednesday to seek consensus on the implementation of the SIR. Most parties in the State - barring the BJP - have raised concerns over its timing.

RELATED REPORTS ON

» PAGES 2, 3 & 4

- The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** launched the **second phase of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls** in **9 States and 3 Union Territories**, covering about **51 crore voters**.
- The move is aimed at **updating and cleaning the electoral rolls** before the **2026 general elections**.
- However, it has drawn **strong opposition from political parties** — notably **TMC (West Bengal)** and **DMK (Tamil Nadu)** — alleging that the exercise is **arbitrary, opaque, and disenfranchises legitimate voters**.

2 What is the SIR (Special Intensive Revision)?

Aspect	Details
Purpose	To verify and update the accuracy of voter rolls — deleting ineligible names and enrolling missing voters.
Conducted By	Booth-Level Officers (BLOs) under supervision of District Election Officers (DEOs) and Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) .
Method	Door-to-door verification and distribution of partially filled enumeration forms to all voters.
Coverage (2025 phase)	9 States + 3 UTs; ~51 crore voters; includes West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Goa, Gujarat, Puducherry, and Uttar Pradesh.
Duration	From November 3 to December 4, 2025.

Key Features of SIR 2.0

BLOs will visit houses at **least thrice** to distribute and collect voter forms.

Each **elector** receives a **unique form** with pre-filled details for verification.

Around **5.3 lakh BLOs** and **7.6 lakh booth-level agents (BLAs)** of political parties are deployed.

Goal: To ensure “**clean, accurate, and inclusive**” electoral rolls ahead of 2026 polls.

DMK's Legal Arguments in Supreme Court

Grounds

Details

Constitutional Violation

The exercise undermines **free and fair elections**, a basic feature of democracy under **Article 326**.

Arbitrariness

The procedure lacks transparency and fixed timelines for corrections.

Disenfranchisement Risk

Voters failing to provide documents or being absent risk deletion from rolls.

Procedural Flaws

BLOs collect enumeration forms but voters are not directed to provide official documents; this may cause wrongful exclusion.

Overlap Issue

Period for claims and objections (Dec 9, 2025 – Jan 8, 2026) coincides with monsoon and festival season, limiting appeals.

Statutory Ambiguity

No fixed timeframe for publication or appeal disposal under **Section 24(a)/(b)** of the **Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1950**.

Stage**Period**

House-to-house verification

Nov 3 – Dec 4, 2025

Publication of draft rolls

Dec 8, 2025

Filing of claims & objections

Dec 9, 2025 – Jan 8, 2026

Final roll publication

Feb 7, 2026

Appeals (if any)

By Jan 31, 2026

Provision	Relevance
Article 326	Universal adult suffrage — voting rights for all citizens above 18 years.
Representation of People Act, 1950	Empowers ECI to prepare and revise electoral rolls.
Article 324	EC's constitutional mandate to conduct free and fair elections.
Judicial Oversight	SC may review whether EC's procedure violates equality or due process.

Universities of China, Singapore & Hong Kong move up the ladder

India's top institutions slip in QS Asia rankings

MANU KAUSHIK
New Delhi, November 4

INDIA'S TOP-RANKED universities have taken a back seat in the latest QS Asia University Rankings 2026, with premier institutes like IIT Delhi, IIT Bombay and Indian Institute of Science (IISc) seeing a drop in their positions.

Within the top seven Indian universities that featured on the top 100 list, all institutes have taken a tumble this year, including IIT Delhi which slipped 15 positions to rank at #59.

All seven IITs — Delhi, Bombay, Madras, Kharagpur, Kanpur, Roorkee and Guwahati — that feature in the top 150 list have slipped in comparison to the previous year. In contrast, the newer IITs like IIT BHU

Varanasi (#237), IIT Hyderabad (#270) and IIT Gandhinagar (#300) have improved their rankings.

India has, however, added 137 universities to the list, taking the tally of ranked institutions to 294. Six universities dropped out of the rankings, including Jaypee University of Information Technology, GB Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, University of Agricultural Sciences (Bangalore) and Mangalore University.

On the other hand, institutes from Singapore, China and Hong Kong have moved up in the league tables. China, for example, has 24 universities ranked in top 100 this time, up from 22 last year.

China has also seen the addition of 261 universities in

PROGRESS REPORT

Top 5 universities in Asia

	2026	2025
The University of Hong Kong	1	2
Peking University	2	1
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore	3	4
National University of Singapore (NUS)	3	3
Fudan University	5	5



Top 5 universities in India

	2026	2025
Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IITD)	59	44
Indian Institute of Science	64	62
Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IITM)	70	56
Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB)	71	48
Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK)	77	67

the rankings — the highest for any of the 26 countries in the list — and the country now has 395 ranked universities.

In the current edition, QS has featured 1,529 universities, significantly higher than

last year when just 984 universities were ranked. A QS spokesperson told FE that the decision to expand the list is in recognition of the growing influence of Asia on the global higher education scene.

Despite a sharp fall in rankings, the data show that India has become Asia's research powerhouse, leading the region in productivity and faculty strength. In papers per faculty metric, Maulana Abul

Kalam Azad University of Technology (West Bengal) has ranked #1 in Asia. Also, five Indian universities have featured in Asia's top 10 for research productivity, and 28 in the top 50, which is more

than double of China's count.

Jessica Turner, CEO, QS, said: "India's higher education transformation is now visible in the data — a system that's globally relevant and locally empowering".

Meanwhile, the University of Hong Kong has moved up to the top slot within Asia, whereas Peking University in China slipped to the #2 spot. As per the rankings, Hong Kong has five universities within the top 10 list followed by China (3 universities) and Singapore (2).

The QS ranked the institutions on nine parameters, including academic reputation, citations per faculty, employer reputation, faculty-student ratio, international faculty ratio, international student diversity, sustainability and others.

- The **QS Asia University Rankings 2026** were released recently.
- India's premier institutions such as **IIT Delhi, IIT Bombay, IIT Madras**, and the **Indian Institute of Science (IISc)** have **slipped in rankings** compared to last year.
- Meanwhile, universities in **China, Singapore, and Hong Kong** have shown notable improvements.

2 Key Highlights (Asia Rankings 2026)

Rank (Asia)	University	Country	Change (vs 2025)
1	University of Hong Kong	Hong Kong	↑ from 2
2	Peking University	China	↓ from 1
3	Nanyang Technological University (NTU)	Singapore	↑ from 4
4	National University of Singapore (NUS)	Singapore	same
5	Fudan University	China	same

TOP 5 UNIVERSITIES IN INDIA (2026)	ASIA RANK 2026	ASIA RANK 2025	TREND
IIT Delhi (IITD)	59	44	↓
Indian Institute of Science (IISc)	64	62	↓
IIT Madras (IITM)	70	56	↓
IIT Bombay (IITB)	71	48	↓
IIT Kanpur (IITK)	77	67	↓

4 Overall Indian Scenario

- All **seven IITs** — Delhi, Bombay, Madras, Kharagpur, Kanpur, Roorkee, and Guwahati — within the top 150 **have fallen** in rank.
- However, newer IITs (BHU, Hyderabad, Gandhinagar) have **improved** slightly.
- India has added **137 universities** to the ranking list, bringing the total to **294 ranked institutions**.
- Six Indian universities **dropped out** of the rankings altogether, including:
 - Jaypee University of Information Technology
 - GB Pant University of Agriculture and Technology
 - University of Agricultural Sciences (Bangalore)
 - Mangalore University, etc.

5 Comparative Regional Trends

Country	Universities Ranked in Top 100	Total Ranked in Asia 2026	Trend
China	24	395	↑ (from 261 last year)
India	7	294	↑ (added 137 new)
Hong Kong	5	—	Strong improvement
Singapore	2	—	Maintained top-5 positions

Parameter

Academic reputation

Citations per faculty

Employer reputation

Faculty/student ratio

International faculty ratio

International student ratio

Inbound & outbound exchange

Sustainability index

Papers per faculty

Focus Area

Global peer review of teaching/research quality

Research impact

Graduate employability

Teaching environment

Global engagement

Global diversity

Student mobility

Environment & governance performance

Research output

Analysis: Why India Slipped

Possible Factors

Low global visibility

Weak faculty-student ratio

Limited internationalization

Data expansion effect

Infrastructure gaps

Explanation

Limited international collaborations & publications in global journals.

Shortage of qualified academic staff in public institutions.

Fewer foreign students/faculty compared to Asian peers.

Inclusion of more universities (137 new) increases competition.

Funding & administrative delays impact performance indicators.

OpenAI launches IndQA to test AI on Indian languages

ANEES HUSSAIN
Bengaluru, November 4

OPENAI ON TUESDAY unveiled IndQA, a new benchmark designed to evaluate how well artificial intelligence (AI) models understand and reason about questions rooted in Indian languages and cultural contexts.

IndQA marks the company's first region-specific benchmarking effort, signaling a broader move by OpenAI to create similar evaluation tools for other linguistic and cultural regions in the future.

Srinivas Narayan, CTO of B2B Applications at OpenAI, said India was chosen "as an obvious starting point given its market size, linguistic diversity with approximately one billion people who don't use English as their primary language, and cultural richness".

India currently represents OpenAI's second-largest market for ChatGPT, among its roughly 8 million weekly active users worldwide.

IndQA uses a rubric-based grading approach, where each AI-generated response is scored against a set of expert-defined criteria specific to the question. These criteria describe what an ideal answer should include or avoid, with each item weighted according to importance. A

AI major explores data centre infra in India

ANEES HUSSAIN
Bengaluru, November 4

OPENAI IS ACTIVELY considering the establishment of data centre infrastructure in India as the artificial intelligence (AI) giant deepens its commitment to what has become its second-largest and fastest-growing consumer market, Narayan said.

"Infrastructure build-out is a very big thing for us. We are absolutely excited about partnering with players in India to create infrastructure within the country both for the local usage and also for hosting applications here that can be used worldwide,"

Narayan said in an interaction with media on the sidelines of 'OpenAI DevDay (Exchange)'.

However, he declined to share specific timelines or details on the progress of these plans so far.

The development comes as the San Francisco-based company expands its footprint in India, following the establishment of its first office in Delhi earlier this year.

When asked about potential plans to introduce India-specific pricing for developers, Narayan remained noncommittal but open to the idea.

model-based grader then checks whether each criterion is satisfied, and the final score is computed as the sum of points earned out of the total possible.

The benchmark includes 2,278 questions across 11 Indian languages — Hindi, Hinglish, Gujarati, Punjabi, Kannada, Odia, Marathi, Malayalam, Tamil, Bengali, and Telugu — and 10 cultural domains:

Law and ethics, Architecture and design, Food and cuisine, Everyday life, Religion and spirituality, Sports and recreation, Literature and linguistics, Media and entertainment, Arts and culture, and History.

It was developed in collaboration with 261 domain experts, including journalists, linguists, scholars, artists, and industry practitioners.

- **OpenAI**, the San Francisco–based artificial intelligence firm, has launched **IndQA**, a **new benchmark** to test how well AI models understand and reason in **Indian languages** and cultural contexts.
 - Simultaneously, OpenAI is **exploring data centre infrastructure** in India to support the growing local AI ecosystem.
-

2 What is IndQA?

Feature	Details
Full Form	Indian Question Answering Benchmark
Purpose	To evaluate AI models' performance in understanding, reasoning, and responding accurately in Indian languages and contexts.
Significance	OpenAI's first region-specific benchmark , reflecting a move to develop localized AI evaluation tools globally.

3 Why India?

- **India = 2nd-largest market** for ChatGPT (\approx 8 million weekly users).
- **\sim 1 billion people** do not use English as their primary language.
- **Linguistic diversity + cultural richness** make India an ideal testbed for AI training.
- CTO **Srinivas Narayan** stated:

"India's market size, diversity, and cultural complexity make it a natural choice to develop multilingual AI."

4 IndQA Benchmark – Structure & Design

Parameter	Details
Languages Covered (11)	Hindi, Hinglish, Gujarati, Punjabi, Kannada, Odia, Marathi, Malayalam, Tamil, Bengali, Telugu
Cultural Domains (10)	Law & Ethics, Architecture & Design, Food & Cuisine, Everyday Life, Religion & Spirituality, Sports & Recreation, Literature & Linguistics, Media & Entertainment, Arts & Culture, History
Question Count	2,278 total questions
Evaluation Method	Rubric-based model grading: AI responses are scored based on expert-defined criteria for relevance, clarity, and accuracy.
Collaborators	261 domain experts — linguists, journalists, scholars, artists, and practitioners.

Aspect

Impact

AI Localization

Boosts AI model accuracy for Indian languages and dialects.

Cultural Sensitivity

Helps AI understand India's social, ethical, and religious contexts.

Research Use

Enables training of regionally optimized LLMs (Large Language Models).

Digital Inclusion

Strengthens Digital India's multilingual access goals.



For OpenAI

Expands its footprint in a top AI growth market.

Tests cultural adaptability of LLMs.

Builds trust with policymakers amid global data laws.




For India

Strengthens AI research & linguistic data generation.

Encourages local talent and startups in AI localization.

Supports **Digital India, AI Mission 2047**, and **Bhashini** (National Language AI Mission).



Gopichand Hinduja, architect of a global empire, passes away

GEORGE MATHEW
New Delhi, November 4

HINDUJA GROUP CHAIRMAN

Gopichand P Hinduja, the second of the four Hinduja brothers who built one of India's largest business empires, passed away at the age of 85 at a London hospital on Tuesday.

Fondly known as 'GP' in business circles, he took over as the Chairman of the Hinduja Group and Hinduja Automotive, UK after the demise of elder brother Srichand Hinduja in May 2023.

Born in 1940, GP Hinduja joined the family business in Mumbai in 1959. He was one of the architects of the transformation of the group from an Indo-Middle East trading operation into a multi-billion-dollar transnational conglomerate. His younger brother Prakash Hinduja is Chairman of Hinduja Group (Europe) and the youngest brother Ashok Hinduja is the Chairman of Hinduja Group of companies in India.

According to the *Sunday Times* Rich List, Gopichand Hinduja 'and family' is the richest person in the UK with a net worth of £35.3 billion.

GP Hinduja's business philosophy could be summed up in two words — common sense. One of his defining moves came with the group's acquisition of Gulf Oil



GOPICHAND P HINDUJA

1940-2025

in 1984, followed by the bold purchase of a then-struggling Ashok Leyland in 1987 — marking one of the earliest and most significant NRI investments in India. That acquisition went on to become one of the most remarkable turnaround stories in Indian corporate history.

He was also the driving force behind the group's expansion into the power and infrastructure sectors, leading its vision to build multi-gigawatt energy capacity across India. Under his leadership, the group strengthened its financial footprint through IndusInd Bank and more recently, the acquisition of Reliance General Insurance

Company. He graduated from Bombay's Jai Hind College in 1959. He held an Honorary Doctorate of Law from the University of Westminster and Honorary Doctorate of Economics from Richmond College, London.

The Hinduja Group has become one of the largest diversified groups in the world, spanning all the continents. The group employs over 250,000 people and has offices in many key cities of the world and all the major cities in India. Andhra Pradesh had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Hinduja Group for a cumulative investment of ₹20,000 crore on Monday.

Hinduja brothers also courted controversies as the Hinduja name allegedly cropped up in the Bofors scandal. In 1987, Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*, quoting highly placed company sources in an original report, alleged that the Hinduja brothers were recipients of the "commission" paid by Bofors in connection with winning the Bofors-India Howitzer contract in 1986. However, the Hinduja brothers persistently denied their involvement in the Bofors scandal, with one of the brothers claiming in an interview that "there is a clear-cut conspiracy to malign the name of the family."

The once-closely knit Hinduja family also witnessed a rift in the recent past. The cause for the rift happened in 2014, when the four brothers signed a letter that assets held by one brother belonged to all. The three younger brothers allegedly tried to use the 2014 letter to take control of Hinduja Bank in Switzerland, which was in SP's sole name, resulting in the legal battle between SP's daughters and the three brothers.

The cracks in the family widened as the children of the four brothers started moving up the ladder and holding key positions in family businesses. GP Hinduja's son Sanjay Hinduja is the Chairman of Gulf Oil.

- **Gopichand P. Hinduja (GP Hinduja)**, Chairman of the **Hinduja Group**, passed away in London at the age of **85**.
- He was the **second of four Hinduja brothers** who built one of India's largest transnational business empires.
- GP Hinduja succeeded his elder brother **Srichand Hinduja** as Chairman in **May 2023**.

2 Early Life & Career

Year / Phase	Details
Born	1940, Mumbai (then Bombay)
Education	Graduated from Jai Hind College, Mumbai; Honorary Doctorate of Law (University of Westminster, UK); Doctorate of Economics (Richmond College, London)
Joined Family Business	1959 – Began with Indo-Middle East trading operations
Transformation	Shifted focus from trading to diversified industrial conglomerate with interests in automotive, finance, infrastructure, energy, and media

Milestone

Details

Diversification Drive

Expanded from Indo-Middle East trade to global multi-sector business

Key Acquisitions

- **Ashok Leyland (1987)** — turning it into a leading Indian automotive manufacturer - **IndusInd Bank** — spearheaded its creation and growth - **Reliance General Insurance** (stake acquisition)

Global Footprint

Operations in 38+ countries, with over **250,000 employees**

Leadership Vision

Focused on “common sense capitalism” — long-term, value-driven, and diversified expansion

- According to *The Sunday Times Rich List (2025)* — GP Hinduja was the **richest person in the UK**, with an estimated **net worth of £35.3 billion (~₹3.7 lakh crore)**.
- Under his leadership, the Hinduja Group became a **multi-gigawatt energy conglomerate**, with significant investments in power, auto, finance, and media.

5 Philosophy & Management Style

Principle	Explanation
Common Sense Capitalism	Pragmatic decision-making, balancing profit with ethics.
“Family and Faith” Model	Rooted in trust, cultural values, and unity among brothers.
Strategic Globalization	Used London as base, but kept deep ties with India and emerging markets.
Long-term Vision	Avoided speculative risks; focused on real economy sectors.

Controversies & Challenges

Bofors Scandal (1987):

- *Dagens Nyheter* (Sweden) alleged that the Hinduja brothers received commissions in the Bofors-Howitzer deal.
- The Hindujas **denied involvement**, terming it a conspiracy to malign the family.

Family Rift:

- After 2014, a legal dispute emerged among the brothers over **control of assets and family trusts**.
- The disagreement centered around whether “assets owned by one brother belong to all.”
- The case was later settled, with **S.P. Hinduja’s branch** retaining control of Swiss holdings.

Israel calls for long-term strategic ties with India

SHUBHAJIT ROY
New Delhi, November 4

AS DELHI REAFFIRMED its support for the Gaza peace plan while underlining that "our two nations face a particular challenge from terrorism", visiting Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar held talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar Tuesday and said Israel and India are "building a long-term strategic partnership".

Jaishankar responded saying, "India and Israel have a strategic partnership and, particularly in our case, that term has a real meaning."

Besides counter-terrorism and security cooperation, the two ministers discussed enhanced cooperation in cybersecurity and semiconductors, participation of Indian companies in rail, road and port infrastructure in Israel, renewable energy and health, Israeli innovation in agriculture in India, and more Indian skilled workers in Israel.

Sa'ar, who recalled that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the first world leader to call Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu after the October 7, 2023 attack by Hamas, said the "eradication of the Hamas terror state is at the heart of (US) President (Donald) Trump's Plan" and "we won't compromise on it".

Jaishankar said, "We have stood together in testing times... Our two nations face a particular challenge from terrorism. It is essential that we work towards ensuring a global approach of zero-tolerance towards terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations."

"We have naturally been following developments in your region with very close attention. We welcome the return of the hostages and the remains of those who unfortunately lost their lives. India supports the Gaza Peace Plan and hopes that



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar (right) with his Israeli counterpart Gideon Sa'ar during a meeting in New Delhi on Tuesday

it paves the way for a durable and lasting solution," he said.

Recalling the Hamas attack in which 1,200 people were killed and around 250 taken hostage two years ago, Sa'ar said, "We appreciate Prime Minister Modi's strong solidarity. We remember that he was the first world leader to call Prime Minister Netanyahu after Hamas' October 7th massacre. We won't forget it."

"Radical terror is a mutual threat to Israel and India. We strongly condemn the horrific terror attack in Pahalgam," he said, making common cause on the shared concern.

"In the Middle East, Israel faces a unique phenomenon: 'terror states'. The radical terror states of Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen have established themselves over the past decades. Uprooting them is necessary for the security and stability of our region," he said.

"The eradication of the Hamas terror state is at the heart of President Trump's Plan.

Hamas must be disarmed. Gaza must be demilitarised. We won't compromise on it," Sa'ar said.

He met National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and, in a post on X, said, "Honoured to meet the National Security Advisor of India, Ajit Doval, in New Delhi. We discussed ways to cooperate and confront our common challenges, especially the mutual threat of terror. We're building a long-term strategic partnership between Israel and India!"

In his talks with Jaishankar, he said, "I believe that India is the future. I told you that. India is the world's largest democracy and fastest growing economy. India is a global superpower. And Israel is a regional powerhouse. Our nations already share a warm friendship. Our goal is to build a long-term strategic partnership between Israel and India."

Jaishankar said, "India and Israel have a strategic partnership and particularly in our case, that term has a real meaning. We have stood together in testing times. And we have created a

relationship with a high degree of trust and of reliability."

In recent times, he said, "India has developed many new capabilities, especially in rail, road and port infrastructure, in renewable energy and in health. Our businesses are very keen to explore opportunities in Israel and we would certainly like to give that more attention."

"We also have a very strong record of working together in agriculture and in innovation. Taking that forward is very much in our mutual interest," he said.

"There is a history of cooperation in semiconductors and in cyber. That has become more relevant now. We are hosting the AI Impact Summit next year in February in India and look forward very much to Israel's presence," he said.

Indian workers, Jaishankar said, are also present in Israel in growing numbers as a result of mobility understandings. "They have some issues which need attention and I hope we can take that dimension of our ties forward," he said.

- **Economic & Technological Cooperation**

- India and Israel aim to **expand collaboration** in:

- **Cybersecurity & Semiconductors**

- **Renewable Energy & Health Innovation**

- **Infrastructure Development** (rail, roads, ports)

- **Agricultural Technology**

- Israeli companies are **interested in participating** in Indian infrastructure and industrial projects.

-

- **◇ C. People-to-People & Workforce Links**

- Discussions included **Indian skilled workers in Israel**, especially in construction and care services.

- Both sides emphasized developing a system ensuring worker welfare and legal security.

Year	Milestone
1950	India recognized the State of Israel.
1992	Full diplomatic relations established.
2017	PM Narendra Modi became first Indian PM to visit Israel.
2023	India expressed solidarity after Hamas's attack on Israel.
2025	Both nations reaffirmed strategic cooperation amid Middle East tensions.



Sector

Opportunity / Focus Area

Semiconductors

Israel's chip-making expertise aligns with India's "Make in India" semiconductor push.

Cybersecurity

Joint R&D in critical infrastructure protection.

Agriculture


Expansion of "Centers of Excellence" in drip irrigation, precision farming.

Renewables

Solar and water recycling projects in Rajasthan, Gujarat.

Health & Biotech

Israel's MedTech startups to partner with Indian healthcare ecosystem.



UN: Global emissions at new peak, India logs steepest rise

Vishwa.Mohan
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New Delhi: The global greenhouse gas (GHG) emission increased by 2.3% in 2024, compared to the previous year, to reach a record high of 57.7 gigatons of CO₂ equivalent, with India reporting the highest absolute increase in emissions followed by China, Russia, Indonesia and the US, showed a UN report released on Tuesday. It warned the world is “heading for a serious escalation of climate risks and damages”. The global average temperature is projected to rise 2.3-2.5 degrees Celsius by the end of the century above pre-industrial levels (1850-1900) even if climate actions are fully implemented under the new mitigation goals of countries amid rising carbon emissions. It means the new climate pledges are completely off target and fall short on the warming limit goal.

The absolute increase in emissions excludes the emission caused by change in land use and forest cover due to uncertainties in estimates of net emission from such factors. It primarily calculates emissions of fossil CO₂, methane, nitrous oxide and fluorinated



Getty Images

The report noted that among the big emitters, the European Union was the only one to decrease emissions in 2024

gases. Currently, the six largest emitters in terms of total GHG emissions are China, the US, India, EU, Russia and Indonesia. The report noted that among the big emitters, the European Union was the only one to decrease emissions in 2024.

“The 2.3% increase in total GHG emissions (globally in 2024) from 2023 levels is high compared with the 2022-2023 increase of 1.6%. It is more than four times higher than the annual average growth rate in the 2010s (0.6% per year), and comparable to the emissions

growth in the 2000s (on average 2.2% per year),” said the report.

In terms of growth rate, Indonesia showed the highest increase (4.6%) followed by India (3.6%). Emissions growth in China (0.5% in 2024) was lower than the previous year.

The report underlined that the contributions by current, per capita and historic emissions differ across the high emitters and world regions. Per capita GHG emissions are above the world average of 6.4 tons of CO₂ equivalent (tCO₂e) in the US, Russia, China and the EU, and remain significantly below in Indonesia and India. Flagging how the growing emission and the countries’ low mitigation targets put the Paris Agreement threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming at risk in the short-term (within the next decade), the report — UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2025 — noted that the rise will go up to 2.8 degrees Celsius in the business-as-usual scenario under the ongoing policies.

Though the current projected rise of 2.3-2.5 degrees Celsius is an improvement over the previous year’s projection of 2.6-2.8 degrees Celsius rise, the report noted that

the updated pledges are not adequate to get the desired result of keeping the global warming either within 1.5 degrees Celsius or 2 degrees Celsius. Since the adoption of the Paris Agreement 10 years ago, temperature rise predictions have, however, fallen from 3-3.5 degrees Celsius — a clear sign that the world can keep it further down with more ambitious emission reduction targets.

The report said reductions to annual emissions of 35% and 55%, compared with 2019 levels, are needed by 2035 to align with the Paris Agreement 2 degrees Celsius and 1.5 degrees Celsius pathways, respectively. “While national climate plans have delivered some progress, it is nowhere near fast enough, which is why we still need unprecedented emissions cuts in an increasingly tight window, with an increasingly challenging geopolitical backdrop,” said UNEP executive director Inger Andersen. The report comes as a warning signal to govts ahead of the United Nations climate conference (COP30), scheduled to be held in Belem, Brazil, from Nov 10-21.

- A **UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme)** report released on **November 5, 2025**, revealed that **global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions** reached a record **57.7 gigatonnes (Gt) of CO₂ equivalent** in 2024, up **2.3%** from 2023.
- The report warns the world is **“heading for a serious escalation of climate risks and damages”**, with the planet on track for **2.3–2.5°C warming** by 2100.

2 Key Findings

Indicator	2024 Data / Trend
Total Global Emissions	57.7 Gt CO ₂ e (up 2.3%)
Highest Emitters	China, India, US, Russia, Indonesia, EU
Biggest Increase	India 🇮🇳 (+6.8%) and Indonesia 🇮🇩 (+4.6%)
China's Growth	Slowed to +0.5% (lowest since pandemic)
EU's Trend	Only major emitter to reduce emissions
Global Warming Projection	2.3°C–2.5°C by 2100
Paris Agreement Target	Below 2°C; ideally 1.5°C

3 India's Emission Profile

- **India** recorded the **highest absolute rise** in emissions among major economies in 2024.
 - Growth driven by:
 - Industrial production rebound
 - Expanding power and manufacturing sectors
 - Fossil fuel-based electricity generation (especially coal)
 - Despite growth, **India's per capita emissions** remain **below global average (6.4 tonnes CO₂e)**.
-

4 Global Context

- The **top 6 emitters** — **China, India, US, Russia, Indonesia, EU** — account for **over 70% of global emissions**.
 - **EU** was the **only region** to record a **decline** in 2024 emissions.
 - The **UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2025** indicates that if current policies persist, **global temperature could rise up to 2.8°C**.
 - The **Paris Agreement's 1.5°C goal** remains **unattainable** without drastic new cuts before 2030.
-

Parameter

Global Per Capita Emissions

India's Per Capita

Major Sectors Driving Growth

GHG Composition

Detail

6.4 tonnes CO₂e

~2 tonnes CO₂e

Power generation, industry, agriculture, and transport

CO₂ (fossil fuel), CH₄ (methane from agriculture, energy), N₂O, F-gases



- **Progress & Shortfall**

- Global emissions have increased **four times faster** than the 2010s average.
- Post-pandemic recovery boosted energy demand, offsetting renewable gains.
- Updated national climate pledges (**NDCs**) still **fall short** of the Paris pathway.
- **Temperature rise projections:**
 - 2015 (Paris baseline): 3.5°C
 - 2025: 2.8°C (current path)
 - Target: ≤1.5°C

Rank	Country	Change (%)	Remarks
1	CN China	+0.5	Slowed growth; plateauing emissions
2	IN India	+6.8	Steepest rise globally
3	US USA	+2.8	Industrial rebound
4	RU Russia	+2.3	Post-war industrial stabilization
5	ID Indonesia	+4.6	Rapid industrial expansion
6	EU European Union	-1.2	Only major bloc to cut emissions

NPCI Expands UPI Payments to Malaysia through Razorpay Partnership

- In a major step toward globalising India's digital payments ecosystem, "NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL)" has partnered with "Razorpay Curlec" to enable "UPI transactions in Malaysia".
- The integration allows Indian travellers to make instant, secure payments to Malaysian merchants using their preferred UPI-enabled apps.
- Seamless Cross-Border Digital Payments Announced during the "Global Fintech Fest 2025", the partnership connects Malaysia's payment infrastructure with India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI).
- It will allow local merchants on Razorpay Curlec's network to accept payments from visiting Indians directly in Malaysian ringgit. The move provides travellers with a frictionless payment experience while ensuring local settlement and compliance for businesses.

Saudi Arabia Launches Second Global Harmony Initiative with 'India Week'




Saudi Arabia has inaugurated the second edition of its “Global Harmony initiative”, beginning with “India Week” as part of the ongoing Riyadh Season.

Spearheaded by the Ministry of Media, the programme celebrates the contributions and cultural heritage of the Kingdom’s diverse expatriate communities, reinforcing values of inclusivity and cross-cultural understanding under Saudi Vision 2030.

India's Maiden Private Rocket Launch



- 
- India's first-ever private commercial satellite launch will be conducted by Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace in January 2026.
 - This launch will make Skyroot the only Indian entity besides Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to successfully launch a rocket carrying satellites into space.
 - Skyroot Aerospace became India's first private company to launch a rocket with the Vikram-S suborbital mission in November 2022, marking a turning point in India's space privatisation efforts.

-
- India's private space sector has **200+ startups** and is projected to reach **\$44 billion by 2033**.
 - Skyroot's positioning to meet global small satellite launch demand marks a **significant step toward affordable access** and a new phase in India's commercial space sector.

Patriot Air Defense System

- **Ukraine has received additional Patriot air defence systems from Western allies, particularly Germany, to counter intensifying Russian missile and drone attacks.**
- **Patriot Air Defense System About:**
- **PATRIOT stands for Phased Array Tracking Radar for Intercept on Target, developed by Raytheon Technologies.**
- **The Patriot system, manufactured in the U.S., is among the most advanced anti-missile platforms globally, with Germany as its largest supplier to Ukraine. It's a mobile surface-to-air missile system in service since the 1980s and used for intercepting aircraft, ballistic missiles, and cruise missiles.**


Technical Capabilities: It can detect targets over **150 km away** and reach heights of **20 km**, offering **defense coverage of 15–20 km** against incoming missiles.

Global Operators: It is used by **16 nations**, including **Germany, Japan, Israel, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Poland**.

The Patriot system

Patriot is a backronym for
Phased Array Tracking Radar to Intercept of Target

Offers protection against

-  Aircraft
-  Cruise missile
-  Larger drone
-  Short-range ballistic missiles

Does not offer protection
against low-flying or
small drones which fly
closer to the ground



In numbers

- 3** The Patriot Advanced Capability launches the PAC-3 and older PAC-2 interceptor missile and variants
- 15-22** Range in kilometers of the PAC-3 missile
- 50** The system's detection radar tracks over 50 potential targets simultaneously over a 100km range
- 4** Number of Patriot systems which the US pulled out of Bahrain, Kuwait and Jordan in 2018



Air Defence Systems Around the World

Country	Air Defence Systems
India	Akash System , Prithvi Air Defence (PAD), QRSAM (Quick Reaction SAM) .
USA	Golden Dome Missile Defense System (proposed) , Patriot , THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) , NASAMS (National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System), Avenger System .
Russia	S-400 "Triumf" , S-500 "Prometey", Buk and Tor Systems.
China	HQ-9, HQ-16, HQ-22, HQ-19
Israel	Iron Dome , David's Sling, Arrow 2 and Arrow 3.

International Day for Biosphere Reserves



-
- The **International Day for Biosphere Reserves** was observed on 3rd November.
 - **Biosphere Reserves**
 - **Biosphere reserves** are areas identified by national governments for conserving biodiversity and promoting sustainable development.
 - It includes terrestrial, marine and coastal ecosystems.
 - They are nominated by **national governments and remain under the sovereign jurisdiction** of the states where they are located.

Functions of Biosphere Reserves



1

Core areas (3)

They comprise a strictly protected zone that contributes to the conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, species and genetic variation

2

Buffer zones (2)

They surround or adjoin the core area(s), and are used for activities compatible with sound ecological practices that can reinforce scientific research, monitoring, training and education.

3

Transition area (1)

The transition area is where communities foster socio-culturally and ecologically sustainable economic and human activities.

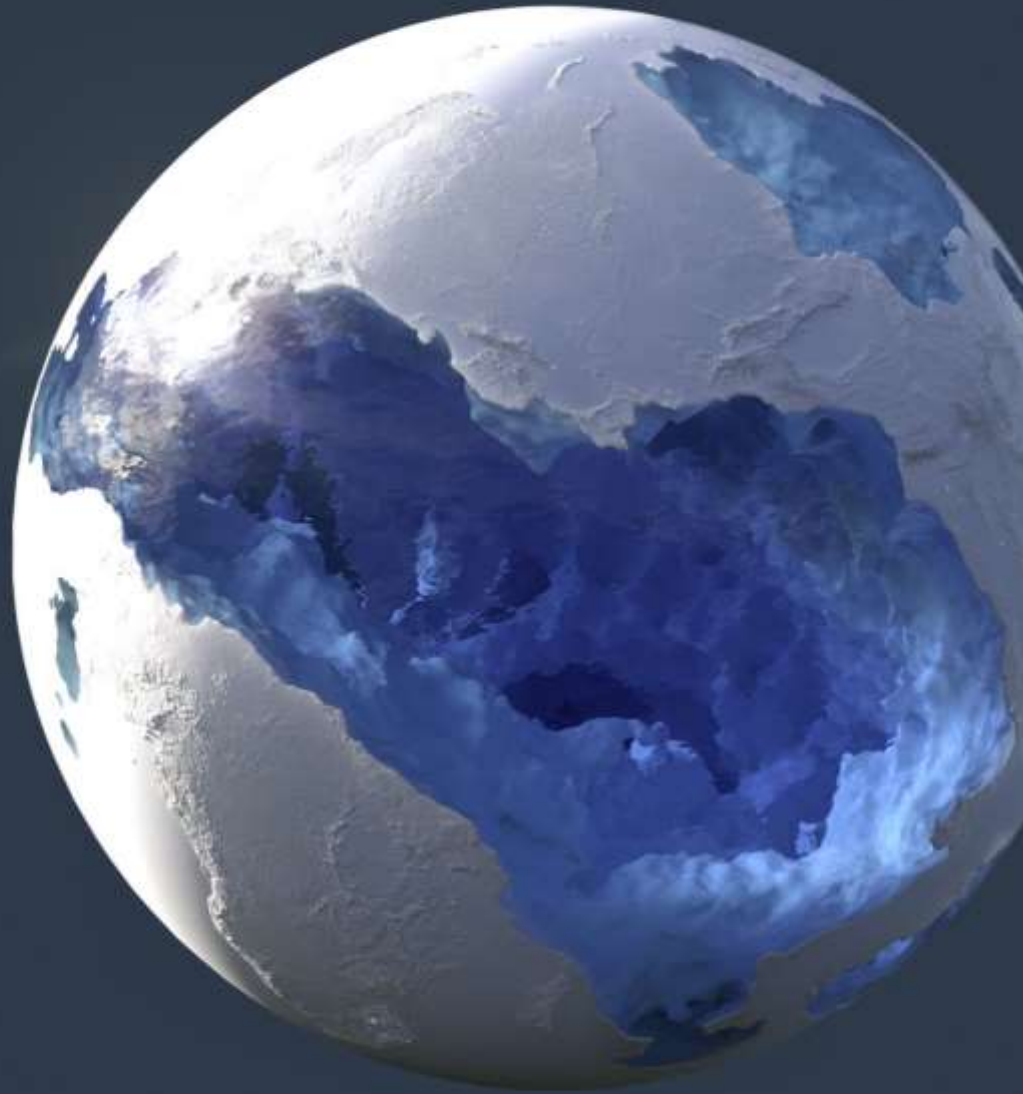
Source: UNESCO

BIOSPHERE RESERVES IN INDIA



*Included in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (UNESCO)

Source: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change



- **World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR)**
- The UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) was formed in **1971**.
- It covers internationally designated protected areas, known as biosphere reserves, which are meant to demonstrate a balanced relationship between people and nature.
- They are created under the **Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB)**

Word of the day

Augur:

indicate, as with a sign or an omen; predict from an omen

Synonyms: bode, forecast, foreshadow, foretell, portend, predict, prefigure

Usage: *The end of the war seemed to augur well.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/augurpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /'ɔ:.gə/



Thank you 😊