

Weekly Bulletin

(FOR INTERNAL & FREE CIRCULATION ONLY)

SUNDAY SUMMIT

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS UPDATE

UPSC CSE 2024 EXAM
POSTPONED TO 26 JUNE

WBCS 2024 NOTIFICATION
EXPECTED SOON



WBCS MADE EASY

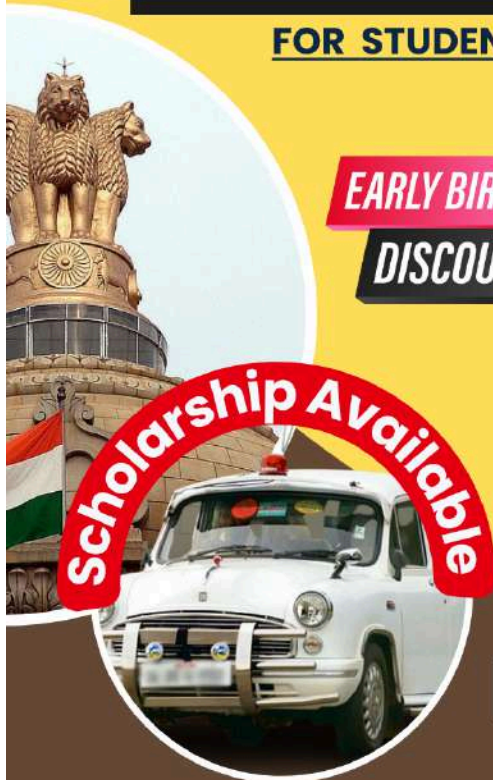
ADMISSION NOTICE

WBCS 2025 & 26

COLLEGE STREET, SILIGURI, MEDINIPUR CLASSROOM & ONLINE, LIMITED SEATS

EXPECTED DESCRIPTIVE PATTERN INCLUDED

FOR STUDENTS, WORKING PEOPLE & OTHERS



EARLY BIRD

DISCOUNT

650+ HOURS COURSE (2 YEARS) ||
WEEKLY CHAPTERWISE MOCK TEST ||
35 NOS 200 MARKS PRELIMS MOCK TEST ||
30, 200 MARKS MAIN MOCK TEST ||
24X7 DOUBT CLEARING TOOL ||
MONTHLY ONE TO ONE REVIEW CLASS ||
OPTIONAL SUBJECTS ||
DESCRIPTIVE PATTERN ||
ART & CULTURE, DISASTER MANAGEMENT, ESSAY* ||
INTERVIEW GUIDANCE ||
PERSONALITY GROOMING ||
SUPER 30 BATCH FOR TOPPERS ||
CURRENT AFFAIRS CLUB, MATHS CLUB FREE ENTRY ||
EXTEMPORE, ESSAY COMPETITION, QUIZ CONTEST ||
CSAT * ||

Special Feature:
Recorded Version of Saturday's
Physical Class will be available

ONLY ON SATURDAYS AND
SUNDAYS & GUIDED BY IAS
(RETD.), IPS & WBCS GR A
OFFICERS

PRE & MAIN MOCK TEST &
OPTIONALS SEPARATELY
AVAILABLE



CALL:

WBCS: H.O. 8274048710
COLLEGE STREET. 8585843673
SILIGURI 9051265991
MEDINIPUR 8274972589
ONLINE 8274048710
বাংলায় IAS: 7439954855

MORE CONTACT INFO:

mailus@wbcsmadeeasy.in
www.wbcsmadeeasy.in
www.jawaharias.in

CLASS STARTS JUNE 9

ORIENTATION CLASS MAY 18, LAST DATE 12 MAY WITH DISC.

WBCS MADE EASY, 9674493673, 8274048710

*IF INTRODUCED

INDEX

India.....	8
Organ Donation in India Struggles Due to Poor Identification of Brain Death Cases.....	8
Manipur Groups Mark One Year of Conflict.....	8
National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) Struggles with Absent Socio-economic Data.....	9
Centre Lifts Onion Export Ban, Conditions Apply.....	9
Centre Lifts Onion Export Ban in India.....	9
Terror Attack on IAF Convoy in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch.....	9
India's Government Claims Stringent Pesticide Residue Limits.....	10
Study on PMJAY's Impact on Chhattisgarh Health Expenses.....	10
NCBC Chief Applies to OBCs for Voting.....	11
Delhi L-G Recommends NIA Probe Against CM Arvind Kejriwal.....	11
E-Pass Mandatory for Nilgiris, Kodaikanal Entry.....	12
Tripura's Goods Train Services Snapping.....	12
Haryana BJP Government Crisis.....	12
Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in India focuses on teaching children in their mother tongue from early stages.....	13
Congress Leader Rahul Gandhi Promises to Implement Sarna Code for Tribals.....	13
TB Vaccine MTBVAC Approved for Phase 2 Trials.....	13
Investigation of Manipur Violence Receives 11,000 Affidavits.....	13
Manipur's Chief Minister Identifies 5,457 Illegal Migrants in Kamjong.....	14
Over 4 lakh Undertrials in India Barred from Voting.....	14
Air India Express Cabin Crew Strike and Reinstatement.....	14
Firework Unit Explosion in Sivakasi Kills Ten Workers and Injuries 13.....	14
India's Press Freedom Score Drops in World Index.....	15
Court Cases.....	15
Supreme Court hears plea on candidates with top politicians' names.....	15
Court Defers Bail Plea for Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.....	16
Supreme Court Halts Fresh Mining Leases in Aravallis.....	16
Bombay High Court Upholds Renaming of Aurangabad and Osmanabad Cities.....	16
Supreme Court Rejects Rain Gods and Cloud-Seeding as Solutions to Forest Fires.....	17
Supreme Court Rejects Centre's Claims of Control over CBI.....	17
People & Places.....	17
Sam Pitroda Resigns as Congress Chief After Racial Analogy Triggers Political Controversy.....	17
International Master Varugese Koshy Passes Away.....	18
Sadiq Khan Wins Record Third Term as Mayor of London.....	18
Putin Launches Fifth Term and Promises Russian Victory.....	18
China Appoints Xu Feihong as New Ambassador to India.....	19
Padma Awards Confirmed by President Droupadi Murmu.....	19

<u>International.....</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>Nepal's Internet Outages Due to Payments Issues.....</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>French Police Remove Students from Paris Institute of Political Studies.....</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>Sydney University Protests Over Gaza War.....</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>Russia Faces Consequences for Cyber Attack.....</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin Deploys Russian Troops to Niger Air Base.....</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>Tesla Sues Indian Battery Maker for Trademark Infringement.....</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>India-Indonesia Joint Defence Cooperation Committee Meeting.....</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>Iranian Foreign Ministry Releases Indian Sailors on MSC Aries.....</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>ED Seizes Bitcoins Worth ₹130 Cr.....</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>South Brazil Prepares for Floods and Landslips.....</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>Trinity College Students Protest Over Israel's Gaza War.....</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>India Waits for Details on Canada Arrests.....</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>U.K. Leverages Logistics Agreement to Expand Maritime Domain with India.....</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>Japan Seeks Sri Lanka's Economic Recovery for Regional Stability.....</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>Spain Denounces Argentina's Claims of PM Sanchez's Damage.....</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>Progress Report on Gaza ceasefire talks.....</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>Panama City Votes in Presidential Election.....</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>German Government's Stake in TKMS for Indian Navy's Mega Submarine Deal.....</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>Israel Orders Al Jazeera to Stop Work in Israel.....</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>Southern Africa's Drought Driven mainly by El Nino Weather Pattern.....</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>China's Xi Jinping Visits France for Diplomatic Talks.....</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau Highlights 'Rule of Law'.....</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>Myanmar Ethnic Armed Group Captures Junta Troops.....</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>Macron Urges Xi Jinping to Halt Russia's Ukraine War.....</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>Germany Temporarily Recalls Russian Ambassador Over Cyberattack.....</u>	<u>26</u>
<u>Israel Orders Evacuation of Rafah ahead of Anticipated Assault.....</u>	<u>26</u>
<u>Putin Orders Nuclear Drills Near Ukraine.....</u>	<u>26</u>
<u>Philippines Refrains from Using Water Cannon on Chinese Ships.....</u>	<u>27</u>
<u>Sri Lanka's New Visa System Faces Backlash.....</u>	<u>27</u>
<u>Sri Lanka's Cabinet Clears 20-Year Power Purchase Deal with Adani Green Energy.....</u>	<u>27</u>
<u>Israeli Forces Seize Rafah Border Crossing.....</u>	<u>28</u>
<u>Foreign Secretary to Visit Bangladesh, Talks May Include China.....</u>	<u>28</u>
<u>Scottish Parliament Approves John Swinney as New Leader.....</u>	<u>28</u>
<u>China and EU candidate Serbia Sign Agreement for 'Shared Future'.....</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>Israel Bombs Overcrowded Gaza City.....</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>U.S. and Philippine Forces Sink Ship During South China Sea Drills.....</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>Russia Targets Ukraine on Second World War Victory Day.....</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>US Halts Bomb Shipment to Israel Over Rafah Concerns.....</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>Taliban Attempts to Install Appointees in India.....</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>US President Joe Biden Refrains from Supplying Weapons to Israel.....</u>	<u>30</u>

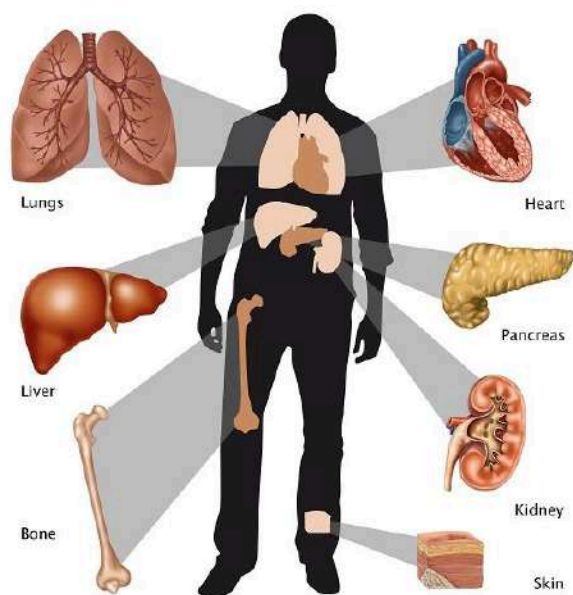
China's Third Aircraft Carrier, Fujian, Completes 8-Day Sea Trial.....	30
China's Xi Jinping Visits Hungary for 'New Journey'.....	31
Putin's Nuclear Forces on Alert on Victory Day.....	31
Economy.....	31
April Services PMI Hints Slowing Expansion Pace.....	31
India Surpasses Japan as World's Third-Largest Solar Power Producer.....	32
India's Ghost Shopping Infrastructure Losses \$798M in 2023.....	32
RBI Reappoints Atanu Chakraborty as HDFC Bank Chairman.....	32
India's Mining Output Growth Slows to 1.2% in March.....	32
Life Insurance Premium Surge in India.....	33
India's Sugar Producers Demand Export Expansion.....	33
India's MRF Profit Drops Due to Rubber Price Surge.....	33
Sensex Falls 1% amid Broad-Based Sell-off.....	34
Central Banks Increase Gold Buying amid Global Uncertainty.....	34
Central Removes Import Duty on Chana.....	34
RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das Advocates for E-Rupee Anonymity.....	34
GST's Pro-poor Approach Benefits People.....	34
India's Economy Expected to Surge Without Inflation.....	35
Vegetable Meal Costs in India Rise by 8% in April.....	35
Marketing Strategy Overview.....	35
Equity Mutual Fund Inflows Decline 16% in April.....	36
India Stock Market Plunges Amid Uncertainty.....	36
Science.....	36
Catatumbo Lightning: A Natural Phenomenon.....	36
China Launches Lunar Probe for Moon Samples.....	36
Study Reveals Leprosy Spread Between Red Squirrels and People.....	37
Rapid Evolution of Frog Adaptation.....	37
UK Girl's Hearing Restoration.....	37
Environment & Ecology.....	38
National Green Tribunal (NGT) seeks Assam's Chief Secretary's response on construction activities in wildlife sanctuary and reserve forest.....	38
Health & Wellbeing.....	38
AstraZeneca Withdraws COVID-19 Vaccine.....	38
Sports.....	38
Manchester City's Phil Foden and Khadija Shaw Win FWA Awards.....	38
Bengal Pro T20 League Unveiled.....	38
India's World Championship Final: Nitten Kirrtane's Achievement.....	39
Indian Representatives for T20 World Cup.....	39
ISL Final: Mohun Bagan Overcomes MCFC.....	39
Bayer Leverkusen's Europa League Final Win.....	40
USA Names 15-Member T20 World Cup Squad.....	40

Mitchell Starc's Impact Player Rule Impacts T20 WC.....	40
Mumbai City FC Reclaims Indian Super League Crown.....	40
Max Verstappen Wins Miami GP Sprint Race.....	41
Indian Junior Hockey Team Captained by Rohit.....	41
China Wins Thomas and Uber Cup Finals.....	41
India and Australia in Women's T20 World Cup Group A.....	42
Indian Boxing Championships Results.....	42
Indian 4x400m Relay Teams Qualify for Paris Olympics.....	42
India's Dominance Over Bangladesh Continues.....	42
Lando Norris Wins Miami Grand Prix.....	43
Champions League Final: Dortmund Stuns PSG for 11th Time.....	43
Neeraj Chopra's Olympic Defense at Doha Diamond League.....	43
Neeraj Chopra to Participate in National Federation Athletics Meet.....	44
United World Wrestling Suspends Bajrang Punia.....	44
India's 24-Member Squad for Europe Leg of Hockey Pro League.....	44
India's 5-0 Series Sweep Over Bangladesh.....	44
Neeraj Chopra's Preparedness for Olympic Challenges.....	45
Olympic Torch Arrival in France.....	45
OMEGA Recruits Neeraj Chopra as Sporting Ambassador.....	45
Discussion.....	46
Policy Mismatch in the Israel-Hamas War.....	46
Sexual Crimes and Videos in Karnataka.....	46
Rise and Fall of Prajwal Revanna: An Overview.....	46
Opposition in Kashmir and Ladakh for Change.....	47
Understanding the 'Us versus Them' Bias in the Brain.....	48
Unveiling the Veil: Expenditure Disparities in India's Electoral System.....	48
China's Badminton Successes and India's Challenges.....	49
Tamil Nadu's Dam Safety Issues and Legal Recourse.....	49
Orangutan Self-Treats Wound with Plant.....	50
India's Press Freedom Index 2024.....	50
The Secularism of Indian Science.....	51
Plastic Solution: Treaties and Alternatives.....	51
Indian Legal Industry's Globalization and BCI Rules.....	51
Language Tolerance in Gujarat.....	52
Regional Voting Patterns in 2024 General Election.....	52
Predicting Heat Waves: Misconceptions and Solutions.....	53
UK Deports Migrants to Rwanda.....	53
South Asian Nations' External Debt to China: Record Levels.....	54
Israel's Irrational War on Gaza.....	55
Socio-Ecological Effects of LPG Price Hikes in India.....	55
NASA's Celestial Time Standardization Policy.....	56

Revocation of Onion Export Ban in India.....	56
Bayern Munich's Uncertain Future Post Champions League Elimination.....	56
Interpol Issues Blue Corner Notice Against Prajwal Revanna.....	57
Kenjige Nosthush's Journey to Play for USA in ICC Men's World Cup.....	57
Haryana's Political Turmoil and Test.....	58
The Population Foundation of India (PFI) criticizes media reports misrepresenting data from the Economic Advisory Council's (EAC-PM) working paper on the share of religious minorities in 167 countries, including India.....	58
2024: A Year to Reset SDG Goals.....	58
The Paradox of India's Global Rise and Regional Decline.....	59
Boeing's Crewed Space Test: A Significant Project.....	60
H5N1 Outbreak: Uncertain Transmission Route.....	60
New Organelle Discovered in Plants for Nitrogen Fixation.....	61
India's R&AW's Overseas Operations and Their Impact on International Relations.....	61
Indian Defence University: A Need for Operationalization.....	62
Mumbai City FC's ISL Championship Triumph.....	63
Prime Minister's Speeches and the Model Code of Conduct.....	64
Praveen Chakravarty's Perspective on Reducing India's Rich-Poverty Gap.....	65
Sudan's Civil War Overview.....	65
Carbon Farming: A Comprehensive Overview.....	66
Study on Fusobacterium Nucleatum's Role in Colorectal Cancer.....	67
Antonio Habas: Mohun Bagan's Shield-Winning Coach.....	68
Understanding the Science Behind Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI).....	69
India's Online Gaming Sector: Potential and Challenges.....	69
Pulicat Lake's Eco-Sensitive Zone Threatened by Industrial Expansion.....	70
Climate Change Jurisdiction in India's M.K. Ranjitsinh and Ors. vs Union of India and Ors. 71	71
The Importance of Inheritance Tax in Reducing Inequality.....	72
Kotak Mahindra Bank's Regulated Actions.....	72
Dignified Peaceful Passing: A Need for Dignified Care in India.....	73
The Politics of Performance: The Role of Competency in India's Democracy.....	74
"Giving Primacy to Human Development" by M. Suresh Babu.....	74
Nagaland's Delay in Civic Body Polls.....	75
Paul Auster's Reflections on Loss and Death.....	75
Typhoid in India: The Widal Test and Its Impact.....	76
Women's Cricket's Growth and T20 World Cup Qualifiers.....	77
Cybersecurity Concerns in the AI-Influencing World.....	78
The Constitution and Affirmative Action in India.....	78
Protesting Students at US Campuses.....	79
Independent Journalists on YouTube vs TV Journalists in India.....	80
Breaking Boundaries: Cultural Shifts in Cinematic Depictions of Love and Desire.....	80

Inside India

India



Organ Donation in India Struggles Due to Poor Identification of Brain Death Cases

- The Union Health Ministry reports low organ donation rates in India due to poor identification and certification of brain stem death cases.
- Health authorities are asked to identify potential brain death cases in ICUs and inquire if potential donors have pledged for organ donation.
- A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) under the Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act, 1994 is issued for this purpose.
- Hospitals are asked to monitor the certification of brain death cases to ensure compliance with

the THOTA Act and Rules.

- In 2022, a total of 16,041 organs, mostly kidneys, were donated, with Delhi leading the country with 3,818 donations.

Manipur Groups Mark One Year of Conflict

- Kuki-Zo and Meitei groups held events in New Delhi to commemorate one year since the start of the ongoing ethnic conflict in Manipur.
- Kuki-Zo and Meitei organizations called for peace and made their case before the Centre.
- Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) in Churachandpur held a prayer service to honor those killed in the violence.
- Civil society organizations in Imphal Valley, such as the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI), passed a resolution calling for a plan for permanent peace in the State.
- A candlelight vigil was held in both the hill districts of Kangpokpi for the people they had lost in the conflict so far.



- The conflict began on May 3 between the valley-based majority Meitei people and the hills-based Scheduled Tribe Kuki-Zo people.
- Over 221 people and at least a dozen security personnel have lost their lives, thousands have been injured, and over 50,000 people have been internally displaced.
- The Kuki Students' Organisation-Delhi NCR and Meitei civil society organizations held a protest at Jantar Mantar, calling for a return to peace, accountability, and justice.

National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) Struggles with Absent Socio-economic Data

- The National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC), led by former Union Minister Hansraj Gangaram Ahir, is aiming to review State OBC lists to assess progress.
- The NCBC has been questioned about the "abundance" of Muslim communities in OBC lists in states like Karnataka and West Bengal.
- The commission has also stalled requests to include around 80 castes/communities in the Central OBC list, questioning the validity of the reports relied upon by the State government.
- The NCBC plans similar State reviews in Kerala, Odisha, Bihar, Maharashtra, and other states.
- The NCBC is also planning to ensure that the maximum available OBC reservation within the 50% limit is granted.
- The NCBC is pressuring states like West Bengal and Karnataka to produce data on the current socio-economic conditions of OBCs.
- The NCBC is citing the 2015 judgment in Ram Singh Vs Union of India, which mandated OBC communities to be identified based on their "contemporaneous" conditions.
- The NCBC is also questioning the basis on

which Muslims in the State are considered backward under Category II-B.

Centre Lifts Onion Export Ban, Conditions Apply

- The Centre lifted the six-month ban on onion exports, but restrictions apply.
- The minimum export price is \$550 per tonne and a 40% export duty is imposed.
- The change comes ahead of the Lok Sabha election in the onion-growing belts of Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- Opposition leaders criticized the decision, claiming Maharashtra farmers were disadvantaged.
- Global onion prices have surged due to restrictions by major suppliers, including India, Pakistan, and Egypt.

Centre Lifts Onion Export Ban in India

- The Indian government lifted the onion export ban after reviewing the situation in key onion market hubs.
- The ban was reviewed after visits to key onion market hubs.
- The mandi prices of onion in Lasalgaon Mandi have remained stable at around ₹15 per kg since April.
- A 40% duty was levied on top of the minimum export price of \$550 per tonne, making Indian onion exports feasible if global buyers pay at least \$770 a tonne.
- The new conditional exports regime will apply until further orders.

Terror Attack on IAF Convoy in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch

- A soldier was killed and four were injured in a

terror attack on an IAF convoy in Poonch district, Jammu and Kashmir.

- Five soldiers were injured and evacuated to the hospital, with one of the two critically injured personnel succumbing to injuries.
- Poonch, part of the Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha constituency, is set to polls in the sixth phase on May 25.
- The attack is suspected to be the same group responsible for the previous ambush on troops in Buzliar last year.
- The terrorists, armed with AK assault rifles, are believed to have fled into nearby forests.
- Police and paramilitary forces conducted searches in Poonch town, but no one was arrested during the operation.

India's Government Claims Stringent Pesticide Residue Limits

- The Indian government asserts that it has one of the most stringent pesticide residue limits in



food items.

- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) rejects reports suggesting high pesticide residue levels in spices and herbs.
- The clarification comes amid a ban on certain spice mixes of leading Indian brands by Hong

Kong and Singapore food regulators.

- FSSAI collects samples of branded spices sold in domestic markets to ensure compliance with its quality norms.
- The Union Health Ministry clarifies that maximum residue limits vary based on risk assessment.

Study on PMJAY's Impact on Chhattisgarh Health Expenses

- The Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) in Chhattisgarh has not significantly reduced patients' out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE).
- The study reveals that hospitals claim money from insurance providers but charge patients illegally for the same service.
- The study analyzed enrolments in three Public Funded Health Insurance (PFHI) schemes: Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY), PMJAY, and MukhyaMantri Swasthya Bima Yojana (MSBY).
- PMJAY provided cover for about 46% of individuals in the State by 2019, while MSBY covered less than half of that.
- The share of the population who accessed hospitals increased between 2014 and 2019, but the increase was similar among those enrolled in PFHI schemes and those not enrolled.
- The share of hospitalisations in private hospitals increased from around 33% to 45% among those enrolled in PFHI schemes, while among those not enrolled, this share reduced from about 54% to 29%.
- There was no significant difference in the mean OOPE among those enrolled in PMJAY and those not, with both spending around ₹20,000 per hospitalisation episode in private hospitals.
- The share of hospitalisations resulting in catastrophic health expenditure remained similar among those enrolled in PMJAY and those not.

NCBC Chief Applies to OBCs for Voting

- National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) Chairperson, Hansraj Gangaram Ahir, appeals to all Other Backward Class (OBC) voters to vote in the Lok Sabha election.
- Ahir argues that the 102nd Constitution Amendment in 2018 gave the NCBC its constitutional status, allowing it to protect and promote constitutional rights of the backward classes.
- Ahir urges voters from all backward classes to participate in the election for the future, national interest, and strengthening democracy.
- The NCBC's appeal was issued on a letterhead asserting its status as a "Constitutional Body under Article 338B of the Constitution of India."
- NCBC officials deny invoking powers as a civil court and claim the letterhead has been used only in proceedings.
- The NCBC has been in the spotlight since Prime Minister Narendra Modi accused the Opposition Congress of giving away OBC quota to Muslims.

Delhi L-G Recommends NIA Probe Against CM Arvind Kejriwal

- Delhi Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena recommends a National Investigation Agency (NIA) probe against CM Arvind Kejriwal.
- The recommendation is based on a complaint by the World Hindu Federation India (WHFI) alleging that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) received political funding from the banned organisation 'Sikhs for Justice' (SFJ).
- The request comes a day before Kejriwal's bail hearing in the Supreme Court, which will consider whether to grant interim bail due to the ongoing Lok Sabha election.

- AAP leader Saurabh Bhardwaj criticizes the recommendation, stating it is another conspiracy against Kejriwal at the behest of the BJP.
- The complaint alleges that Kejriwal received \$16 million from extremist groups for espousing “pro-Khalistan” sentiments.
- Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva welcomes the recommendation.

WBCS MADE EASY

ADMISSION NOTICE ONLINE LIVE BATCH

EXPECTED DESCRIPTIVE PATTERN INCLUDED

WBCS 2025-26

ONLINE BATCH
(LIVE SESSIONS)

EARLY BIRD

DISCOUNT

IMPORTANT DATES

1st Orientation

18 may 2024

2nd Orientation

8th June 2024

Class starts

9th June 2024

Last date: 12 MAY 2024


With Early Bird Offer

Contact Us

8274048710 / 8585843673/
9674493673 / 9051265991
8274972589 / 8777076749

www.wbcsmadeeasy.in

LIMITED SEATS



WBCS MADE EASY

WBCS GR. A & B EXAM 2021 SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES


INCL 1ST, 2ND, 5TH, DSP 5TH ETC.

• MANY MORE, DO YOU WANT TO FIND YOUR NAME HERE?

JOIN US TO CRACK WBCS (EXE.) ETC. EXAM 2024 /2025

CALL 8274048710, 8585843673, 18005729282

LAST BATCH FOR WBCS 2024 IN OLD PATTERN TO BE STARTED IN FEBRUARY



E-Pass Mandatory for Nilgiris, Kodaikanal Entry

- Tourists entering Nilgiris and Kodaikanal must obtain an e-pass from Tuesday to June 30.
- Registrations opened on the website <https://epass.tnega.org/>.
- Visitors' details, including names, vehicle type, duration, and place of stay, must be shared on the website before travel.
- No limit to the number of visitors to Nilgiris, and the e-pass will be auto-generated.
- Residents and conservationists welcome the system, citing data collection during peak tourism season as a step towards a sustainable tourism model.
- Some residents suggest the system needs to be extended for a year for more accurate data collection.
- Senior officials from the Nilgiris administration have been monitoring the website, with no reported issues.

Tripura's Goods Train Services Snapping

- Tripura government concerned about snapping goods train services due to a derailment in Assam's Dima Hasao district.
- North East Frontier Railway (NFR) seeks "few more days" for restoration.
- Goods train services to Tripura have been cut off since April 26, following a goods train derailment in Assam's Jatinga.
- To address the state's shortage of goods, the government has imposed fuel sale restrictions.
- NFR CPRO Sabyasachi Dey stated that over 300 workers have been engaged in restoration work at Jatinga.
- Tripura Additional Secretary for Food and Civil Supplies, Nirmal Adhikari, requested merchants

to continue procuring essential items by road until the



train services are restored.

Haryana BJP Government Crisis

- Three Independent MLAs withdrew support from the Haryana BJP government, citing a "minority" situation.
- The BJP government, supported by two other Independents and Haryana Lokhit Party MLA Gopal Kanda, is two short of the majority mark in the 90-member Assembly.
- The Opposition Congress has 30 MLAs, the Jannayak Janta Party (10 seats), and the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) one.
- The Independent MLAs, Sombir Sangwan (Dadri), Randhir Singh Gollen (Pundri), and Dharampal Gonder (Nilokheri), announced their support to the Congress.
- The BJP emerged as the single-largest party in 2019, but fell short of six seats to form the

government on its own.

Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in India focuses on teaching children in their mother tongue from early stages.

- The CBSE has instructed schools to use educational material focusing on learning in one's mother tongue and encouraging multilingual education.
- The CBSE circular aligns with the National Education Policy, 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework, 2022, which emphasize teaching and learning in the child's mother tongue or regional and local language.
- The National Council for Educational Research and Training and the Indian Institute of Languages have collaborated to produce 52 entry-level primers tailored to various mother tongues and local languages spoken across India.
- These primers form a basal reader for the local language and introduce numerals to children of balvatikas and anganwadis, and for adult literacy programmes.
- Schools are encouraged to promote the use of these primers among teachers and students to develop strong language skills in their native language.

Congress Leader Rahul Gandhi Promises to Implement Sarna Code for Tribals

- Congress leader Rahul Gandhi promises to introduce a separate Sarna religious code for tribals and amend GST.
- He accuses PM Modi of insulting President Murmu, a tribal, by not inviting her to the new Parliament building inauguration and Ram

Temple consecration.

- Gandhi criticizes the BJP-led Centre for "betraying" tribals and accuses the BJP of trampled their identity, culture, history.
- He appeals to people to vote for INDIA bloc candidates Sukhdeo Bhagat from Lohardaga and Kalicharan Munda from Khunti.
- He promises to scrap the Agniveer scheme, brought by PM Modi, and to amend GST schemes to reduce the tax burden on the poor.
- Gandhi also criticizes the press for its alleged partisan role and claims that most media houses are run by industrialists.
- He also promises to scrap the contractual job system in PSUs and increases reservation to above 50%.

TB Vaccine MTBVAC Approved for Phase 2 Trials

- Central Drug Standard Control Organisation's Subject Expert Committee approves Bharat Biotech International's proposal for Phase 2 clinical trials of Mycobacterium tuberculosis (MTBVAC).
- MTBVAC is the first human-derived TB vaccine to begin clinical trials in India.
- Developed in collaboration with Brigitte Gicquel of the Pasteur Institute in Paris.

Investigation of Manipur Violence Receives 11,000 Affidavits

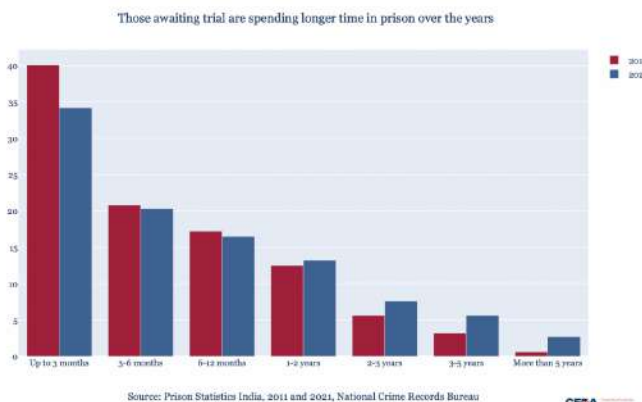
- The three-member Commission of Inquiry (CoI) investigating ethnic violence in Manipur has received approximately 11,000 affidavits.
- The commission was notified by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in November 2023 and has received a majority of the affidavits from individuals affected by the violence.
- The commission has set up help desks at relief camps to encourage filing of affidavits.

- The MHA appointed the commission on June 4, 2023, headed by Ajai Lamba, former Chief Justice of the Gauhati High Court, and Himanshu Shekhar Das, retired IAS officer, and Aloka Prabhakar, retired IPS officer.
- The commission is expected to examine witnesses before finalizing the report and will cover the expenses of witnesses.
- The commission is headquartered in Delhi and has a camp office in Imphal.

Manipur's Chief Minister Identifies 5,457 Illegal Migrants in Kamjong

- 5,457 illegal immigrants detected in Kamjong district as of May 7.
- Biometric data collected for 5,173.
- Deportation process underway.
- Government handling the situation with utmost sensitivity.
- Humanitarian aid provided to all detected immigrants.
- Kamjong shares eastern border with Myanmar.

Over 4 lakh Undertrials in India Barred from Voting



- Over four lakh undertrials in India are barred from voting due to a law-enforced blanket ban.
- The ban applies to all prisons across India,

including Dibrugarh Jail and Tihar Jail.

- Despite this, 'Waris Punjab De' chief Amritpal Singh and Awami Ittehad Party leader Abdul Rashid Sheikh are set to run for election.
- Legal experts argue that undertrials in jails should have the right to vote, as per Section 62(5) of The Representation of the People Act.
- In 2022, there were 4,34,302 undertrials across jails in India, making up 76% of the total jail population.
- The ban is questioned by constitutional law expert Sanjay Hegde, who argues it lacks reasonable classification based on the nature of the crime or duration of the sentence.

Air India Express Cabin Crew Strike and Reinstatement

- Air India Express has agreed to reinstate 25 cabin crew whose services were terminated due to a large number reporting "sick" since May 6.
- The airline management representatives stated that all issues raised by the cabin crew pertaining to alleged discrimination from the merger with AirAsia India and the removal of allowances will be resolved.
- The airline also stated that the crew's act of reporting sick for work constitutes a concerted action with a common understanding to not operate the flight and disrupt company services.
- The cabin crew are unhappy over "preferential treatment" for employees of the erstwhile AirAsia India, unfair contractual terms, and the removal of certain allowances.
- Air India and its low-cost international airline Air India Express were privatised in 2022 and handed over to Tata Sons.

Firework Unit Explosion in Sivakasi Kills Ten Workers and Injuries 13

- Ten workers, including six women, were killed

in an explosion at a fireworks unit in Sivakasi.

- The workers were manufacturing fireworks at Sudarshan Fireworks unit in Sengamala Patti.
- The blast razed seven work sheds and damaged six others.
- Three fire tenders were pressed into service to douse the flames, taking over 30 minutes.
- The unit is owned by S. Saravanan of Sivakasi, and one worker is suspected to have taken the unit on lease.
- Chief Minister M.K. Stalin condoled the deaths and directed the Collector to provide life-saving treatment.

India's Press Freedom Score Drops in World Index

- India's World Press Freedom Index score fell from 36.62 to 31.28 in 2024, according to Reporters Without Borders (RSF).
- India's ranking improved from 161 in 2023 to 159 in 2024, but this was due to other countries' rankings slipping.
- The government has previously dismissed international rankings of freedoms in India as misinformed and propaganda-driven.
- Norway and Denmark topped the RSF table, while Eritrea and Syria were at the bottom.
- The press freedom questionnaire covers five categories: political context, legal framework, economic context, sociocultural context, and security.
- India's media has been in an 'unofficial state of emergency' since Narendra Modi came to power in 2014, with the BJP dominating the media.
- Indian journalists critical of the government are subjected to harassment campaigns by BJP-backed trolls.
- The U.S. also saw a fall in press freedom, with its score falling from 71.22 to 66.59 and its rank deteriorating from 45 to 55.

Court Cases

Supreme Court hears plea on candidates with top politicians' names

- Supreme Court hears public interest petition alleging rival political parties are using similar names to deceive voters.
- Petitioner, Sabu Stephen, questions how the court can prevent candidates with similar names from participating in elections.
- Advocate V.K. Biju, representing petitioner, withdraws the petition after a brief hearing.

Supreme Court Directs Advertisers to Submit Self-Declarations Before Promoting Products

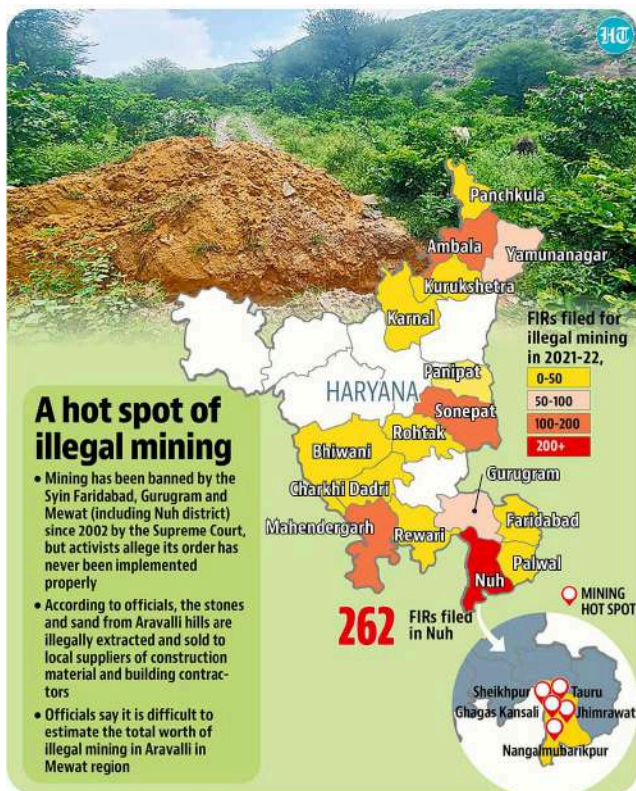
- The Supreme Court has directed advertisers to submit self-declarations stating they are not misrepresenting or making false claims about products before promoting them in media.
- The order came in response to misleading advertisements run by Patanjali Ayurved, co-founded by yoga guru Baba Ramdev.
- Advertisers intending to run advertisements in TV channels should upload their self-declarations on the Information and Broadcasting Ministry's 'Broadcast Seva' portal.
- The court also directed the Ministry to open a similar portal for print advertisers in four weeks.
- The court emphasized the responsibility of social media influencers, celebrities, and public figures promoting products and advised them to act responsibly and not be part of "deceptive advertising."
- The court also directed the Centre to set a procedure for consumers to file complaints against misleading advertisements and

misbranding.

- The Union government withdrew an AYUSH Ministry letter of August 29, 2023 "omitting" Rule 170 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945.

Court Defers Bail Plea for Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal

- Supreme Court defers order on interim bail for Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.
- Directorate of Enforcement objected, stating bail for "criminal" politicians isn't a fundamental right.
- Hearing ended without an interim bail order.
- Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta may tentatively list the case on May 9.



Supreme Court Halts Fresh Mining Leases in Aravallis

- The Supreme Court has halted the grant of

fresh mining leases and renewals in the Aravalli ranges and hills, as defined by a Forest Survey of India (FSI) report.

- The FSI report includes the hills and a 100-metre-wide buffer zone around the hills.
- Until further orders, all states where the Aravalli ranges are located can consider and process mining leases and renewals.
- The court clarified that the order does not ban legal mining activities with valid permits and licenses.

Bombay High Court Upholds Renaming of Aurangabad and Osmanabad Cities



- The Bombay High Court upheld the renaming of Aurangabad and Osmanabad to Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar and Dharashiv respectively by the Maharashtra government.
- The decision was deemed not in violation of the Constitution and did not involve any illegality or vice.
- A Division Bench of Chief Justice Devendra Upadhyay and Justice Arif S. Doctor dismissed a batch of pleas challenging the renaming.
- The pleas argued that the renaming had

"disregarded public sentiments" and violated Constitutional provisions.

- The Maharashtra government argued that the decision did not compromise secular values and that the majority of the city's residents celebrated the name changes.
- Chief Minister Eknath Shinde welcomed the ruling, stating that those opposed were linked to the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi.

Supreme Court Rejects Rain Gods and Cloud-Seeding as Solutions to Forest Fires

- The Supreme Court has ruled that rain gods or cloud-seeding are not effective in controlling forest fires that have caused five deaths in Uttarakhand.
- Justice Sandeep Mehta, part of the two-judge Bench, emphasized the need for preventive measures.
- The State government downplayed the fire, stating that the emergency is over.
- The court has listed the case for a detailed hearing.
- The State government argues that forest fires are not unique to Uttarakhand and maintains high vigilance.

Supreme Court Rejects Centre's Claims of Control over CBI

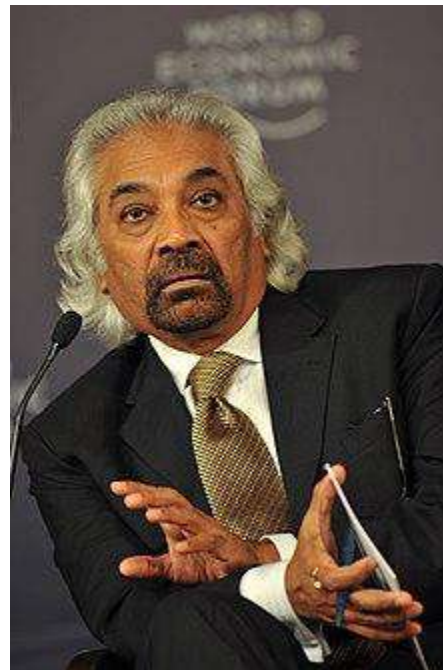
- The Supreme Court rejected the Centre's claim that it has no control over the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).
- Justice Sandeep Mehta, a member of the two-judge Bench, asked who else can send the CBI to States for investigations.
- The Central government was the only response.
- The court was hearing an original suit filed by

West Bengal, accusing the Union government of "interfering" in cases within the State's jurisdiction.

- West Bengal argues the Centre continues to employ the CBI despite withdrawn consent from the State in November 2018.
- Mehta argues the suit is not maintainable and the Union is wrongly referred to as the "police force of the Union."

People & Places

Sam Pitroda Resigns as Congress Chief After Racial Analogy Triggers Political Controversy



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi of the BJP attacked Congress for a controversial statement about India's diversity.
- Pitroda, a close aide of Rahul Gandhi, accused the Congress of having a racist mindset and dividing the nation based on skin color.
- The Congress distanced itself from Pitroda's

comments, calling them "unfortunate and unacceptable."

- Allies of the Congress, including D. Raja of the CPI and Sanjay Singh of the Aam Aadmi Party, targeted Pitroda, stating he "gave a handle to the right wing forces to attack."

- The BJP linked the Congress's opposition to Droupadi Murmu's presidential bid to this mindset, viewing her as an "African" because of her dark skin.

- Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh condemned Pitroda's analogies and accepted his resignation.

International Master Varugeese Koshy Passes Away

- International Master Varugeese Koshy, 66, passed away in Chennai.

- Survived by wife and two sons.

- Known for grooming players like P. Harikrishna, S.L. Narayanan, and N.R. Visakh.

- Worked with Central Reserve Police Force, Tata Iron and Steel Company, and ONGC.

- Retired in 2018.

- Represented India in numerous international tournaments.

- President of Chess Players Forum India.

Sadiq Khan Wins Record Third Term as Mayor of London



- Sadiq Khan, the Labour Party's Mayor of London, secures a record third term at City Hall.

- Khan won nearly 44% of the vote, more than 11 percentage points ahead of his main challenger, Susan Hall.

- He performed well in inner London but struggled in several outer boroughs.

- Khan's lead shows a swing from Conservative to Labour compared to the previous mayoral election in 2021.

- Critics argue Khan has overridden a crime surge, been anti-car, and allowed pro-Palestinian marches to become a regular feature.

- Labour Mayors in Liverpool, Greater Manchester, and West Yorkshire were reelected.

- Labour seized control of councils across England that it has not held for decades.

Putin Launches Fifth Term and Promises Russian Victory



- President Vladimir Putin promises victory to Russians at his lavish inauguration.

- Putin acknowledges Russia is going through a "difficult" period due to unprecedented sanctions imposed by the West for military hostilities in Ukraine.

- Putin has ruled Russia since the turn of the

century, winning a fresh six-year mandate in March after winning presidential elections without opposition.

- The inauguration ceremony included a military procession and Orthodox prayer service, broadcast live on major Russian television channels.

- European countries like Poland, Germany, and the Czech Republic declined to send representatives due to tensions over the conflict in Ukraine.

- Putin promises his forces will be victorious in Ukraine, stating the country will emerge "with dignity and become even stronger"

China Appoints Xu Feihong as New Ambassador to India



- Chinese President Xi Jinping has appointed Xu Feihong as the new Ambassador to India after 18 months of frozen relations due to the eastern Ladakh military stand-off.

- Xu, former Ambassador to Afghanistan and Romania, will succeed veteran Chinese diplomat Sun Weidong, who completed his tenure in India in October 2022.

- The appointment coincides with the ongoing Lok Sabha elections and comes amid protracted military and diplomatic negotiations between

Beijing and New Delhi.

- The stand-off has frozen relations except for trade since May 5, 2020, following a violent clash in the Pangong Tso area.

- India is pressuring the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to disengage from the Depsang and Demchok areas.

Padma Awards Confirmed by President Droupadi Murmu

- Actors Vyjayanthimala Bali and Konidela Chiranjeevi, M. Fathima Beevi, and Mumbai Samachar owner Hormusji N. Cama received Padma Vibhushan.

- Other recipients include Ladakh's spiritual leader Togdan Rinpoche, Tamil actor late 'Captain' Vijayakant, BJP leader O. Rajagopal, and Kundan Vyas, Gujarati newspaper Janmabhoomi's group editor and CEO.

- The Padma Vibhushan was given to Bali and Chiranjeevi, while the Padma Bhushan was given to Cama, Rajagopal, Vyas, Vijayakant, Rinpoche, and Beevi.

International

Nepal's Internet Outages Due to Payments Issues

- Nepal's internet providers are facing widespread outages due to unpaid payments to Indian companies.

- Upstream partners in India cut connections citing nonpayment, forcing customers offline.

- 18 Nepali internet providers' bandwidth was severely curtailed or cut during the five-hour outage.

- Broadband providers owe about three billion Nepali rupees (\$22.5 million) to Indian vendors but cannot transfer the money due to lack of

government approval.

French Police Remove Students from Paris Institute of Political Studies

- French police removed dozens of students from Sciences Po, a building supporting Palestinians.
- Students waved Palestinian flags and chanted slogans in support of Gaza residents.
- The university administration closed main buildings and moved classes online.
- Pro-Palestinian students planned a protest in front of the Pantheon monument.
- Similar protests occurred in other universities across the country.

Sydney University Protests Over Gaza War

- Hundreds of Israel and Gaza supporters clashed at Sydney university.
- Protests echoed U.S. college protests and West Asia tensions.
- Despite heated exchanges, protests proceeded peacefully.

Russia Faces Consequences for Cyber Attack

- German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock warns Russia of consequences.
- Allegations of cyberattack by military intelligence service.
- NATO and EU member countries demand immediate response to Russia's cyberbullying.

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin Deploys Russian Troops to Niger Air Base

- Russian troops deployed to Niger air base housing US troops.
- Expelled US forces following military decision.
- Austin clarified deployment doesn't pose significant force protection issues.

Tesla Sues Indian Battery Maker for Trademark Infringement

- Tesla, a US carmaker, has sued Indian battery maker, Tesla Power India Pvt. Ltd., for trademark infringement.
- Tesla claims the Indian company continued to use the 'Tesla Power' brand despite a cease-and-desist notice sent in April 2022.
- Tesla Power India argues its main business is to make "lead acid batteries" and it has no intention of making electric vehicles.
- The court allowed the Indian firm three weeks to submit written responses after it handed over documents supporting its defense.
- Tesla Power USA LLC, headquartered in Delaware, is also accused of using the trade names 'Tesla Power' and 'Tesla Power USA'.
- Tesla Power has stated it has been present in India before Tesla and has all government approvals.

India-Indonesia Joint Defence Cooperation Committee Meeting



- India and Indonesia agreed to enhance collaboration in defence industry, maritime security, and multilateral cooperation.
- The meeting was chaired by Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane and Secretary-General of Indonesia's Ministry of Defence Air Marshal Donny Ermawan Taufanto.
- Both sides expressed satisfaction at the expanding scope of defence cooperation.
- Air Marshal Taufanto visited Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) headquarters, TATA Advanced Systems, and Larsen & Toubro defence facilities.
- Taufanto also held deliberations with Indian defence industry partners and discussed ways to enhance defence industrial capabilities.
- Taufanto also called on CDS General Anil Chauhan.

Iranian Foreign Ministry Releases Indian Sailors on MSC Aries

- Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian announced the release of all Indian sailors on the Portuguese-flagged vessel MSC Aries.
- The release follows a conversation between Iran's Foreign Minister and Estonian counterpart Margus Tsahkna.

WBCS MADE EASY

TOPPERS

WBCS 2021 GROUP A & B

3RD

Arnab Das (WBCS Exe)

1ST

Dhrubashish Samanta (WBCS Exe.)

4TH

Atia Rahman (WBPS)

#CONGRATULATIONS

College Street | Garia | Siliguri | Medinipur
85858 43673 | 82740 48710 | 90512 65991 | 82749 72589

www.wbcsmadeeasy.in JOIN US NOW 8274048710, 1800 572 9282

ADDRESS - ROOM 213, 2ND FLOOR, 90/6A M G ROAD, KOLKATA 700 001

WBCS EXAMINATION 2021 GROUP A & B FINAL RESULT

ADMISSION OPEN

WBCS EXAM ONLY; FOR 2024/2025

WBCS (IAS) EXAM 2024
OPTIONALS

WBCS (EXE) EXAM 2022
MOCK TEST FOR OPTIONAL

WBCS (IKL) EXAM 2022
MOCK TEST

WBCS (EXE) EXAM 2022
MOCK TEST

WBCS (EXE) EXAM 2022
MOCK TEST

WBCS (EXE) EXAM 2022
MOCK TEST

- The ship, which turned off radar in Iran's territorial waters, endangered navigation security.
- Iran has already released all crew members on humanitarian grounds, and if the ship's captain accompanies them, the crew, including Estonians, can return to their country.
- MSC Aries, owned by Gortal Shipping Inc., was captured by Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps on April 13 amid tensions with the West over Israeli

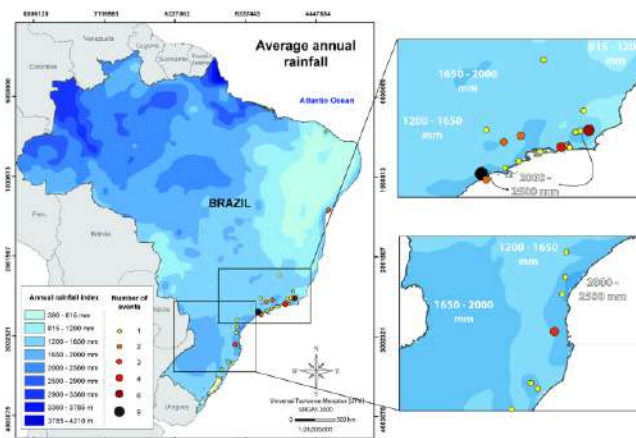
actions in the Gaza Strip.

ED Seizes Bitcoins Worth ₹130 Cr

- Enforcement Directorate seizes Bitcoins worth ₹130.48 crore following Parvinder Singh's arrest.
- Arrested in connection with international criminal syndicate "Singh DTO".
- Brothers Banmeet and Parvinder Singh operated "Singh DTO" using dark web, free ads, and controlled-substance distributors.

South Brazil Prepares for Floods and Landslips

- Death toll from floods and mudslides in southern Brazil has risen to 39, with rescuers searching for missing people among collapsed homes, bridges, and roads.
- Rising water levels in Rio Grande do Sul are straining dams and threatening Porto Alegre with "unprecedented" flooding.
- At least 265 municipalities have suffered storm damage, injuring 74 people and displacing over 24,000.
- At least 68 people are missing, and over 3,50,000 have experienced property damage.
- An "emergency situation" presents a risk of collapse at four dams in the state.
- The level of the State's main Guiba river is estimated to have risen 4.2-4.6m, but gauges have washed away.
- Many communities have been cut off from the world, with many without access to drinking water, telephone, or internet services.
- President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva blames the disaster on climate change and the El Nino phenomenon.



Trinity College Students Protest Over Israel's Gaza War

- Students at Trinity College Dublin protest against Israel's actions in Gaza.
- Protest described as a "solidarity encampment with Palestine".
- Tendered tents on main square and piled benches in front of library.
- Student union president, Laszlo Molnarfi, demands university sever all relationships with Israel.
- Union fined €214,000 by university for loss of tourist revenue due to disruptive protests.

India Waits for Details on Canada Arrests

- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar reports that India is awaiting details about three Indians arrested in connection with the murder of a Sikh separatist leader in Canada.
- Jaishankar argues that India has always sought

more evidence to support Ottawa's accusations of the murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

- He emphasizes that Canada has not provided any information linking the Government of India to the murder.
- Jaishankar also expresses concern about the Khalistani issue with Canada, stating that they have many extradition requests pending.
- He also criticizes Pakistan for having a high number of terrorists and criminals, stating that there is no shortage of such individuals.
- Jaishankar emphasizes that the government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed to helping Indians in foreign matters.
- He also clarifies that any threat of cross-border terrorism from Pakistan will be responded to.
- Jaishankar also reassures that China's attempts to exert pressure on India have been countered.

U.K. Leverages Logistics Agreement to Expand Maritime Domain with India

- The U.K. is expanding military-to-military engagements, particularly in the maritime domain, with India.
- The logistics-sharing agreement allows for provision of logistic support, supplies, and services between the U.K. and Indian armed forces.
- The agreement supports joint training, joint exercises, authorised port visits, and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations.
- The Royal Navy Littoral Response Group-South (LRG-S) has significantly expanded logistics support for the Indian military, particularly the

Indian Navy.

- The LRG-S consists of ships RFA Argus and RFA Lyme Bay, with embarked forces centred on a Royal Marines strike force.
- The U.K. task group conducted maritime exercises with INS Trishul in the Arabian Sea and conducted a maritime exercise in the Bay of Bengal.
- INS Sahyadri joined the U.K. Task Group, conducting maritime manoeuvres, aviation, and replenishment serials.

Japan Seeks Sri Lanka's Economic Recovery for Regional Stability

- Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa emphasizes Sri Lanka's economic recovery's importance for regional stability.
- Kamikawa calls on President Wickremesinghe to discuss island's reforms to overcome its economic crisis.

Spain Denounces Argentina's Claims of PM Sanchez's Damage

- Spain denounces Argentina's presidency's claim of PM Sanchez causing "poverty and death."
- Argentinian President Javier Milei's office accuses Sanchez of damaging Spain's economy and stability.

Progress Report on Gaza ceasefire talks

- Officials from Qatar, Egypt, and the U.S. met with a Hamas delegation to discuss a proposal to halt fighting for 40 days and exchange hostages for Palestinian prisoners.
- Israel has yet to send a delegation to Cairo, awaiting "positive movement" on the proposed framework.

- Previous negotiations stalled due to Hamas's demand for a lasting ceasefire and Israel's pledge to crush the group's remaining fighters in Rafah.
- The war broke out after Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel, resulting in over 1,170 deaths, mostly civilians.
- Egyptian state media reports significant progress in negotiations and an agreed-upon formula on most points of contention.

Panama City Votes in Presidential Election

- Panamanians start voting in presidential elections.
- Eight candidates, led by former corruption-convicted head of state protege.
- Votes to select new President, congress, and local governments.

German Government's Stake in TKMS for Indian Navy's Mega Submarine Deal

- The German government is expected to acquire a stake in TKMS, a submarine manufacturer, in line with the company's interest and to strengthen its shareholders' confidence.
- The Indian Navy's mega submarine deal under Project-75I, estimated to cost upwards of ₹43,000 crore, has moved to the evaluation stage with compliance checks of the two bids received, one of which is from TKMS.
- The move is in line with the company's desire to convince stakeholders of the viability of the submarine business, which would automatically bring in the government-to-government part.
- The design offered by TKMS for P-75I is based on its successful Class 214 submarine and Class

212CD, with the submarine featuring angular design for minimized radar cross-section.

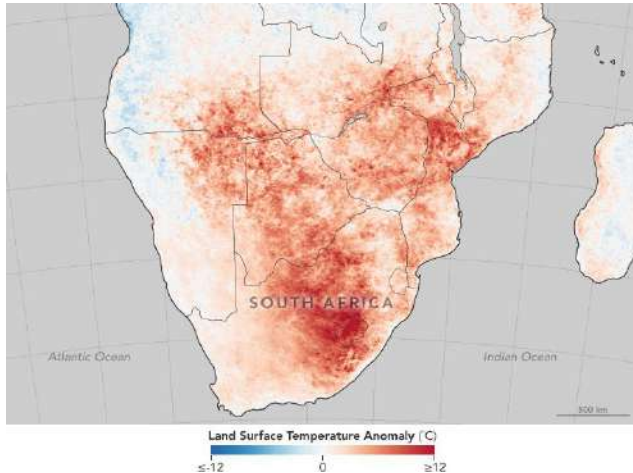
- The final design will be done jointly by the TKMS and the Indian partner, Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL).
- The deal is being progressed under the Strategic Partnership model of the defence acquisition procedure.
- The key determinant to qualify for P-75I is the Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) system.

- The deal was discussed at the highest level during the visit of German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius in June 2023.

Israel Orders Al Jazeera to Stop Work in Israel

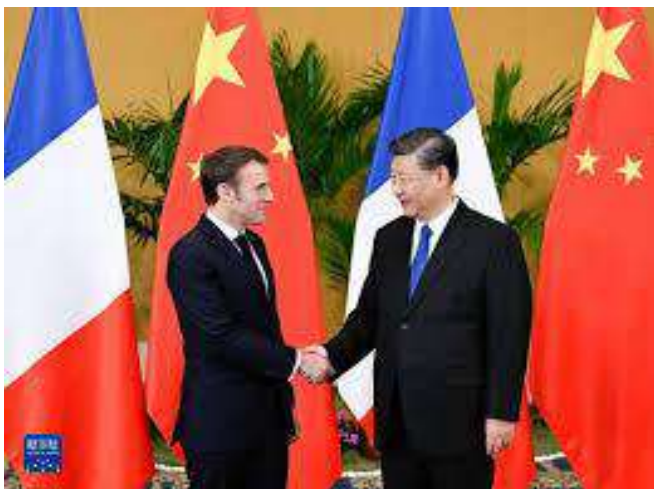
- Israel orders Al Jazeera's local offices to close, escalating a feud between the broadcaster and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government.
- The order includes confiscating broadcast equipment, preventing the broadcast of reports, and blocking its websites.
- Al Jazeera has reported the Israeli-Hamas war nonstop since the initial cross-border attack on October 7.
- The order allows Israel to block the channel from operating in the country for 45 days.
- Al Jazeera went off Israel's main cable provider in the hours after the order, but its website and streaming links still operated.
- The ban does not affect Al Jazeera's operations in the occupied West Bank or Gaza Strip.
- The decision threatens to heighten tensions with Qatar, a key player in mediation efforts to halt the war in Gaza.

Southern Africa's Drought Driven mainly by El Nino Weather Pattern



- Scientists attribute drought to El Nino weather pattern.
- Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Malawi declared national disasters due to severe dry spell.
- Devastating agricultural sector, causing crop and pasture destruction.

China's Xi Jinping Visits France for Diplomatic Talks



- Chinese President Xi Jinping arrives in France

for a state visit hosted by Emmanuel Macron.

- The visit marks 60 years of diplomatic relations between Paris and Beijing.
- Xi's visit includes discussions on issues ranging from Ukraine to trade.
- The visit signifies the warmth in Sino-French relations since Macron's state visit to China in April 2023.
- Xi and his wife, Peng Liyuan, were welcomed by Prime Minister Gabriel Attal.
- Xi will hold talks in Paris on Monday, including EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau Highlights 'Rule of Law'

- Trudeau acknowledges fear in Canada's Sikh community but emphasizes the 'rule of law'.
- Three men arrested in connection with the murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Vancouver.
- The arrests triggered a diplomatic rift between Canada and India.
- Trudeau urged faith in the justice system and emphasized Canada's commitment to democratic principles.
- The arrests are seen as important as Canada is a rule of law country with a strong justice system.

Myanmar Ethnic Armed Group Captures Junta Troops

- Group captures military command and junta personnel in western Rakhine state.
- Clashes have erupted since Arakan Army attack in November, ending ceasefire.

Macron Urges Xi Jinping to Halt Russia's Ukraine War

- French President Emmanuel Macron and EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen urge Xi Jinping to use Beijing's influence to halt the

Russian war against Ukraine.

- Macron emphasizes the importance of coordination with Beijing on major crises, including the Ukraine war.
- Von der Leyen argues that both Europe and China share a shared interest in peace and security.
- Xi calls for strategic coordination between China and the EU to contribute to world peace and development.

Germany Temporarily Recalls Russian Ambassador Over Cyberattack

- Germany temporarily recalls its Russian Ambassador following a cyberattack on Chancellor Olaf Scholz's party.
- The attack was attributed to APT28, a group controlled by Russia's military intelligence.
- Russia denies the allegations as "unsubstantiated and groundless."
- APT28, also known as Fancy Bear, has been accused of numerous global cyberattacks.

Israel Orders Evacuation of Rafah ahead of Anticipated Assault

- The Israeli Army has ordered 1,00,000 Palestinians to evacuate from Rafah, signaling an imminent ground invasion.
- The operation, where over 1 million Palestinians are sheltering, has raised global alarm and sparked warnings from Israel's closest allies.
- The United Nations agency serving Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, has refused to comply with the evacuation order.
- Rafah is Israel's last significant Hamas stronghold after seven months of war.
- Israel has described Rafah as the last

significant Hamas stronghold and has repeatedly stated the invasion is necessary to defeat the Islamic militant group.

- The operation is a "limited scope operation" and Israel has never formally announced its ground invasion in Gaza.
- Tensions escalated on Sunday when Hamas fired rockets at Israeli troops near Israel's main crossing for humanitarian aid, killing four soldiers.
- Israeli airstrikes on Rafah killed 22 people, including children and two infants.

Putin Orders Nuclear Drills Near Ukraine

- Russian President Vladimir Putin orders nuclear weapons drills near Ukraine in response to Western officials' threats to deploy NATO troops.
- The drills are a response to statements by French President Emmanuel Macron and British officials.
- Russian forces captured two villages in Donetsk and Kharkiv in eastern Ukraine, where outgunned and outmanned Ukrainian troops struggle to hold the line.
- Ukrainian attack drones have killed six people and wounded over 30, including several children.
- The drills are seen as a response to statements by French President Emmanuel Macron and U.K. Foreign Secretary David Cameron.

Philippines Refrains from Using Water Cannon on Chinese Ships



- President Ferdinand Marcos rules out "offensive" response to China's water cannon deployment.
- Manila asserts sovereignty in disputed South China Sea.
- China Coast Guard damaged Manila's vessels.

Sri Lanka's New Visa System Faces Backlash

- Sri Lanka's Department of Immigration and Emigration has introduced a new visa portal, run by VFS Global, for online visa application.
- The new system, which was a result of a Cabinet decision last year, has led to a nearly doubled visa fee.
- The new system also introduced a \$18.5 service fee and \$5 convenience fee.
- The move has sparked controversy due to the lack of a single-entry, 30-day tourist visa option.
- The Indian High Commission in Colombo clarified that the companies involved are not India-based or Indian and are headquartered elsewhere.
- Industry representatives argue that the steep hike in visa fees contradicts the government's stated aim of boosting tourist arrivals.
- Leader of Opposition Sajith Premadasa

questioned the reasons behind choosing VFS over state-owned telecom's SLT Mobitel.

- Public Security Minister Tiran Alles defended the move, stating that the new visa costs were lower than what some other countries charged.
- Indian tourists, who have consistently topped Sri Lanka's arrival charts, have encountered difficulties navigating the new system.

Sri Lanka's Cabinet Clears 20-Year Power Purchase Deal with Adani Green Energy

- Sri Lanka has agreed to purchase power at \$0.0826 per kWh from Adani Green Energy's wind power project in Mannar and Pooneryn.
- The 20-year power purchase agreement aims to develop wind power stations to produce 484 MW of power.
- The cost of energy will be ₹24.78 per kWh, based on the current exchange rate of 1 \$ = [Sri Lankan] ₹300.
- Payment will be made in Sri Lankan Rupees, with details of possible rate revisions awaited.
- Sri Lanka generates about 4,200 MW of power a year, and plans to add another 2,800 MW to the national grid through renewable energy sources over the next three years.
- The \$442-million wind power plant is Adani Group's second major investment in Sri Lanka.

Israeli Forces Seize Rafah Border Crossing



- Israeli tanks seized control of Gaza's Rafah border crossing, bypassing warnings from close allies.
- UN warned of potential collapse of aid flow from Rafah and Kerem Shalom, a main crossing into Gaza.
- The move came after Israel accepted an Egyptian-Qatari mediated ceasefire proposal, but Israel insisted it did not meet its core demands.
- The incursion appears to be short of the full-fledged offensive into Rafah that Israel has planned, and it is not immediately known if it will be expanded.
- The operation threatens to widen a rift between Israel and its main backer, the United States, which is concerned over the fate of around 1.3 million Palestinians crammed into the city.
- The Israeli 401st Brigade entered the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing early Tuesday, taking "operational control."

- The military claimed it had intelligence the crossing was being used for terrorist purposes, though it did not immediately provide evidence.

Foreign Secretary to Visit Bangladesh, Talks May Include China

- Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra is expected to visit Bangladesh, likely to review bilateral relations.
- India is monitoring China's multi-million dollar dredging and development project in Bangladesh, aiming to turn the Teesta into a zone of economic activity.
- The project aims to help Bangladesh overcome difficulties about Teesta's water flow, attracting economic benefits.
- India has noted a joint counter-terror exercise between Chinese and Bangladesh forces in May.
- Discussions between the two sides are significant due to PM Sheikh Hasina's potential visit to India.

Scottish Parliament Approves John Swinney as New Leader

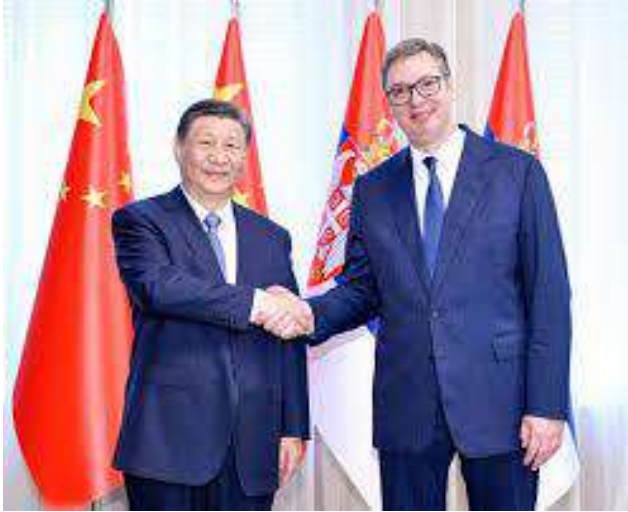


- Swinney, 60, appointed as new leader of the

ruling pro-independence Scottish National Party.

- He succeeds Humza Yousaf, who resigned following his resignation announcement.

China and EU candidate Serbia Sign Agreement for 'Shared Future'



- China and EU candidate Serbia sign an agreement to build a "shared future," making the Balkan country the first in Europe to do so.
- The agreement aims to deepen and elevate the strategic partnership between China and Serbia, and to create a new era of a shared future.
- The term "community for shared future" was launched over 10 years ago, with experts interpreting it as another term for an alliance.
- Serbia is the first European country to build a community of destiny with China.

Israel Bombs Overcrowded Gaza City

- Israel launches ground invasion into overcrowded Gaza city of Rafah.
- Talks resume in Cairo to agree terms of truce in seven-month war.
- Israel seized a key aid crossing into Egypt,

despite international objections.

- Israeli military reopens Kerem Shalom and Erez crossings.
- UNRWA reports Kerem Shalom crossing remains closed.

U.S. and Philippine Forces Sink Ship During South China Sea Drills

- U.S. and Philippine forces, backed by an Australian air force, conducted large-scale war drills in and near the disputed South China Sea.
- The drills included high-precision rockets, artillery fire, and airstrikes, and a mock enemy ship sinking.
- The drills, which began on April 22 and ended on Friday, included a scenario of a foreign invasion of the Philippine archipelago.
- The move is part of the U.S. and Philippines' defense treaty alliance, which began in the 1950s due to China's aggressive actions in disputed territories.

Russia Targets Ukraine on Second World War Victory Day

- Russian forces launched a nighttime attack on Ukraine's power grid, marking the country's Second World War defeat.
- The attack targeted seven Ukrainian regions, including Kyiv, causing damage to homes and the country's rail network.
- Three people, including an 8-year-old girl, were injured.
- Russia's attacks have damaged nearly half of Ukraine's power infrastructure since the start of the Kremlin's invasion in February 2022.
- The damage is estimated at \$12.5 billion, with \$1 billion lost in the past two weeks.
- The attacks drain Ukrainian air defenses of ammunition as Kyiv awaits delivery of promised

Western military support.

US Halts Bomb Shipment to Israel Over Rafah Concerns

- The US halted a shipment of 907 kg and 226 kg bombs to Israel last week due to fears of a major ground operation in Rafah.
- This marks the first time President Joe Biden has strained military aid to the key U.S. ally.
- The decision was made when it appeared Israel was on the verge of a major ground operation into Rafah, which Washington strongly opposes.
- The U.S. State Department is still reviewing other weapons transfers, including the use of precision bomb kits known as JDAMs.

Taliban Attempts to Install Appointees in India

- Diplomats loyal to the Taliban warn of another attempt to install a nominee in India, urging India and other countries not to normalize ties with the Taliban.
- The warnings come amid turmoil within Afghanistan's Delhi Embassy and Consulates in Mumbai and Hyderabad, and a scandal involving a top diplomat accused of smuggling gold.
- Afghanistan's Acting Permanent Representative to the UN, Naseer Ahmad Faiq, emphasized that normalisation and recognition should not occur until actions align with the demands of the Afghan people and the international community.
- The United Nations has refused to grant accreditation to new diplomats at the UN mission due to the Taliban's promises on inclusive government, human rights, and education and employment rights to women and girls.
- The Afghanistan Embassy in Delhi has received documents appointing an India-based Afghan academic for the post of Acting

Consul-General in Mumbai.

- Faiq acknowledged the reports on the new consul's appointment attempt in India, stating that the Taliban are "inserting people" into missions worldwide to "gain recognition".

US President Joe Biden Refrains from Supplying Weapons to Israel

- President Joe Biden has announced he will not supply offensive weapons to Israel if it launches an attack on Rafah.
- The decision comes in response to the well-being of over 1 million civilians in Rafah.
- Biden stated that the US remains committed to Israel's defense and will supply Iron Dome rocket interceptors and other defensive arms.
- The US has historically provided significant military aid to Israel, which has increased following Hamas's October 7 attack.
- Biden stated that Israel's actions around Rafah have not crossed his red lines, but emphasized the need for Israel to protect the lives of civilians in Gaza.
- The shipment was intended to consist of 1,800 900-kg bombs and 1,700 225-kg bombs.
- Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin confirmed the weapons delay, stating that the US is reviewing nearterm security assistance shipments in the context of unfolding events in Rafah.

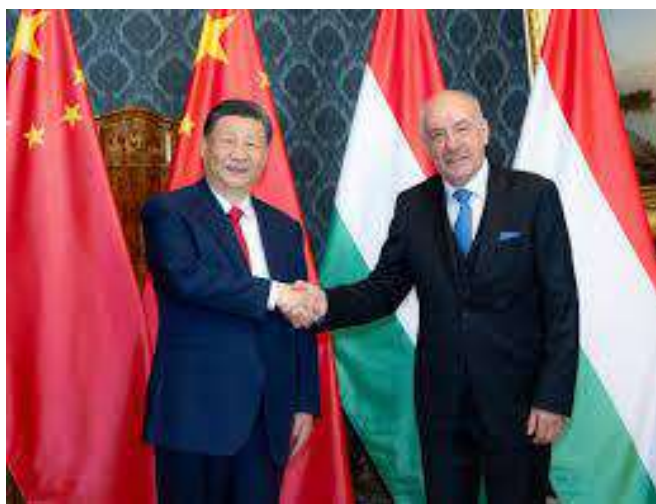
China's Third Aircraft Carrier, Fujian, Completes 8-Day Sea Trial

- China's third aircraft carrier, Fujian, has successfully completed its eight-day sea trials.
- Fujian is an 80,000-tonne supercarrier with electromagnetic catapults for launching aircraft.
- The carrier tested its propulsion, electrical systems, and other equipment.
- The People's Liberation Army Navy Ship (PLANS) Fujian will conduct follow-up tests

according to established plans.

- The developments are closely watched by India and other countries planning to build aircraft carriers.
- China announced its fourth aircraft carrier, likely a nuclear-powered supercarrier, to be unveiled soon.
- The Indian Navy currently operates two aircraft carriers - refurbished Russian carrier INS Vikramaditya and indigenously designed and built INS Vikrant.
- The Indian Navy has moved the case for a second Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC-II), a repeat of a Vikrant-like carrier.

China's Xi Jinping Visits Hungary for 'New Journey'



- Chinese President Jinping visits Hungary to celebrate "new journey" with EU ally.
- Expected to sign at least 16 agreements promoting cooperation.

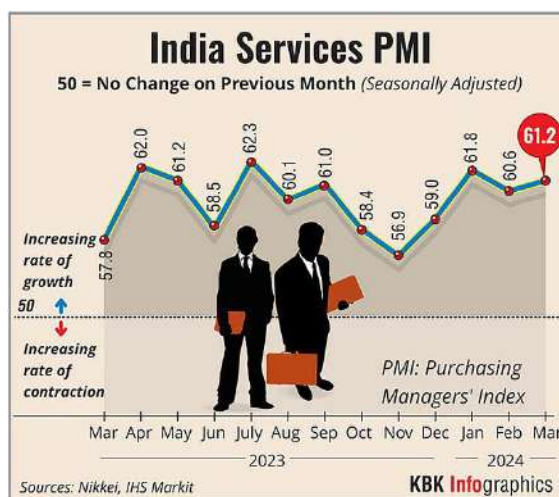
Putin's Nuclear Forces on Alert on Victory Day

- President Vladimir Putin warns his nuclear forces are always on alert during an address on

Victory Day parade.

- He praises his Army fighting in Ukraine and accuses Western elites of fomenting global conflicts.
- Putin assures Russia will prevent global clashes but will not tolerate threats.
- He emphasizes the crucial period for Russia's future, stating that the fate of the country depends on each of us.
- Putin has grown increasingly belligerent since last year, pulling out of a nuclear test ban treaty and a key arms reduction agreement with the US.
- He has ordered nuclear drills involving the Navy and troops near Ukraine, raising fears of using powerful weapons on the battlefield.
- Putin vowed to modernize his Army's weaponry and used foreign parts for weaponry.

Economy



April Services PMI Hints Slowing Expansion Pace

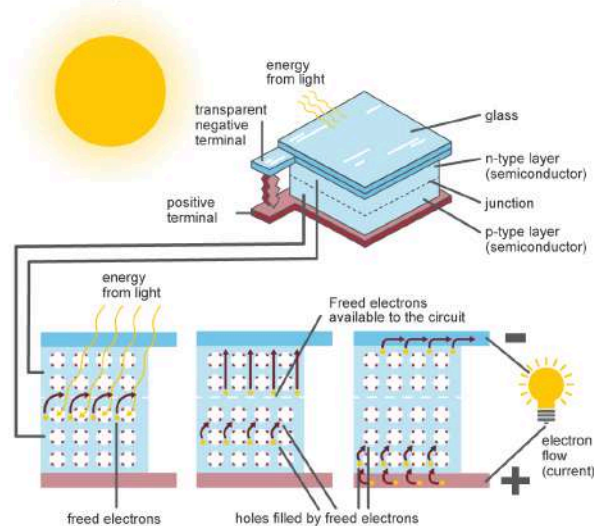
- HSBC India Services Business Activity Index fell to 60.8 from March's 61.2, indicating a slowdown in services sector activity.
- Despite strong new order inflows, new business

orders and output growth remained robust, among the fastest in 14 years.

- S&P Global attributed April's output increase to favorable economic conditions, demand strength, and rising new work intakes.
- Confidence levels about the year-ahead outlook improved to a three-month high.
- New jobs created at a marginal pace, lower than March.
- Consumer services segment saw sharpest increase in input costs, causing squeezed margins.

India Surpasses Japan as World's Third-Largest Solar Power Producer

Inside a photovoltaic cell



- India, in 2023, outpaced Japan as the world's third-largest solar power producer, according to Ember's report.
- India generated 113 billion units of solar power in 2023, ranking fifth globally in installed power capacity.
- The gap between installed capacity and actual power produced is significant, with solar power making up only 6.66% of India's total installed

electricity.

- Japan's power demand decreased by 2% in 2023, allowing India to overtake Japan.
- China is the leading global producer of solar power, producing 584 billion units in 2024.
- Renewable energy sources made up 30% of global electricity production in 2023, with China being the main contributor.
- Ember predicts fossil fuel generation to drop in 2024, with 2023 potentially being the year when fossil fuel production may peak globally.

India's Ghost Shopping Infrastructure Losses \$798M in 2023

- Knight Frank India reports 13.3 million square feet of "ghost shopping infrastructure" across 29 cities in India.
- The number of ghost shopping centres rose by 59% YoY since 2022 in "prime markets."
- 16 shopping centres were permanently shuttered in these cities in 2023, reducing their total to 263.
- National Capital Region (NCR) had the highest Ghost Shopping Centre stock of 5.3 mn sq. ft (up 58% YoY).
- Hyderabad recorded a 19% YoY decline in Ghost Shopping Centre stock to 0.9 mn sq. ft.
- Kolkata recorded the sharpest rise in Ghost Shopping Centres at 237%.

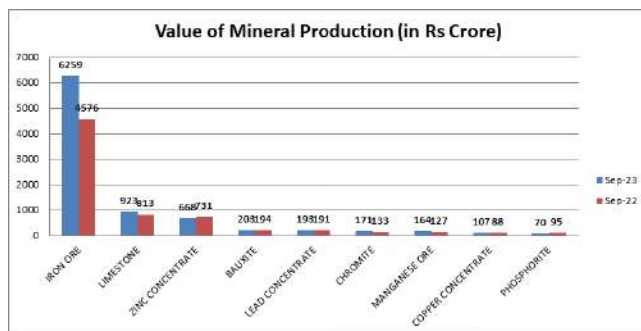
RBI Reappoints Atanu Chakraborty as HDFC Bank Chairman

- RBI approves Chakraborty's reappointment as Part-Time Chairman.
- Effective from May 5, HDFC Bank announced.

India's Mining Output Growth Slows to 1.2% in March

- Mining accounts for 14.3% of the Index of

Industrial Production (IIP).



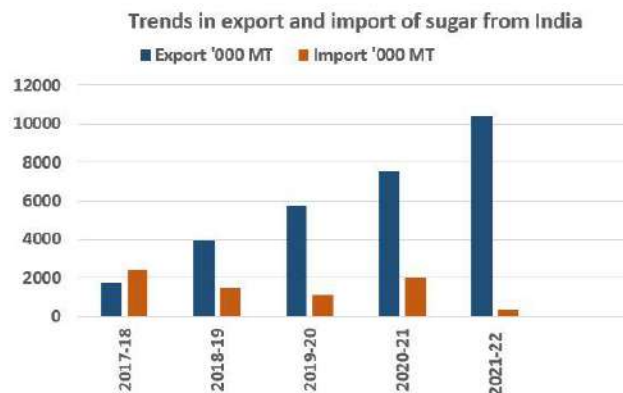
- Mining growth reached a four-month high of 5.7% in February, with 88% growth and 7.5% growth in electricity.
- Manufacturing, which makes up 77.6% of the IIP, grew 5% in February.
- The eight core sectors' growth slows to 5.2% in March, indicating a possible slowdown in industrial output growth.
- The index of mineral production for March was 156.1, 1.2% higher than March 2023.
- In FY24, mining output rose 7.5%, faster than 5.8% in 2022-23.
- Iron ore, limestone, and aluminum production reached new records.

Life Insurance Premium Surge in India

- Life insurance companies in India reported a 61.23% YoY increase in new business premium for April to ₹20,258.86 crore.
- This is a significant increase from the muted April 2023 opening when the new business premium (NBP) underwritten by life insurers fell as much as 30% to ₹12,565.31 crore.
- Demand for enhanced insurance protection, particularly from corporate consumers, fueled the April 2024 collections.
- Group single-premium collections rose by 126.33%, while policies and schemes for the same category were 60.42% higher.

- The group single-premium collections were behind the 113.14% surge in NBP to ₹12,383.64 crore by LIC.

India's Sugar Producers Demand Export Expansion



- Sugar producers demand 20 lakh tonnes of exports due to expected output exceeding demand.
- Indian Sugar and Bio-Energy Manufacturers Association (ISMA) reports 314 lakh tonnes output in seven months.
- 516 factories stopped crushing operations, leading to additional miller costs due to idle inventory.

India's MRF Profit Drops Due to Rubber Price Surge

- MRF, an Indian tyre maker, reported a surprise drop in its fourth-quarter profit due to a 7% increase in rubber prices.
- The company's expenses climbed 9.5% to ₹57.99 billion due to the surge in raw material costs.
- The increase in rubber prices is a response to higher crude oil prices, which are a key raw material for tyre makers.
- MRF's standalone profit from continuing

operations fell 7.6% YoY to ₹3.80 billion (\$45.6 million) in the three months ended March 31.

- Analysts expected profit to climb to ₹5.05 billion.

Sensex Falls 1% amid Broad-Based Sell-off

- The S&P BSE Sensex fell 0.98% to 73,878.15 on Friday due to profit booking, valuation concerns, and data showing FIIs paring exposures to the Indian market.

- Blue chips L&T, Maruti, Bharti Airtel, Nestle, and Reliance Industries led the fall.

- Only six out of 30 Sensex stocks saw marginal gains.

- The Nifty-50 index fell 0.76% to 22,475.85.

- Profit-taking in heavyweight stocks wiped out early gains and pushed the index into negative territory.

- Major sectors like auto, IT, and realty were among the primary losers.

- The sharp drop in the index nullified gains made over the past four sessions.

Central Banks Increase Gold Buying amid Global Uncertainty

- Central banks globally increased gold buying by 290 tonnes in March, despite record high prices impacting consumer demand.

- Central banks accounted for 23% of overall gold demand at 1,238 tonnes.

- Indian jewellery consumption rose by 4% YoY to 92 tonnes.

- Banks hedge risk by raising gold component of forex reserves amidst record-high prices.

Central Removes Import Duty on Chana

- The Centre has removed import duty on Bengal

gram chana due to high pulse prices.

- The duty-free import of chana will come into effect from Saturday.

- The import window for yellow peas has also been extended until October 31.

- The move follows the government's extension of duty-free import of yellow peas by two months to June 30.

- Chana prices have been higher than the minimum support price (MSP) of ₹5,440 per quintal by 10-15% across key Central Indian regions.

- The bullish trend in chana prices has made it harder for government agencies to procure pulses at MSP.

- India Pulses and Grains Association's Bimal Kothari criticised duty-free imports as benefiting pulse growers in other countries.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das Advocates for E-Rupee Anonymity

- RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das suggests permanent transaction deletion can enhance e-rupee (CBDC) anonymity.

- He emphasized India's efforts to make CBDC transferable offline and introduce programmability feature for financial inclusion.

- Das addressed privacy concerns over CBDC's electronic nature, stating that it can offer the same degree of anonymity as cash.

- He emphasized the need for legislation and technology to address anonymity.

GST's Pro-poor Approach Benefits People

- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman argues that the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime has benefited people through a pro-poor approach.

- She attributes the recent landmark gross GST

revenue of over ₹2 lakh crore to 'heightened economic activity'.

- GST has consistently fallen the effective weighted average GST rate since 2017, lowering taxes on many essential items compared to pre-GST rates.
- Essential items like hair oil and soaps saw tax cuts from 28% to 18%.
- The National Anti-profiteering Authority ensured that companies passed the benefits to consumers.
- GST has exemplified many essential items and services, such as unbranded food items, certain life-saving drugs, healthcare, education, public transport, sanitary napkins, hearing aid parts, agricultural services.

India's Economy Expected to Surge Without Inflation

- Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) V. Anantha Nageswaran predicts India's inflation to slow to 4% due to a favorable monsoon.
- Nageswaran suggests that inflation is within the Reserve Bank of India's reference range of 2% to 6%.
- He suggests that geopolitical scenarios could cause inflation to exceed expectations.
- The CEA believes India's economy is well-positioned to pursue growth without inflation, thanks to supply-side investments in physical and digital infrastructure.
- Poonam Gupta, NCAER's Director General, notes that India's growth has become more resilient, with less adverse impact from past shocks.

Vegetable Meal Costs in India Rise by 8% in April

- Home-cooked vegetarian meal costs increased by 8% YoY in April, compared to 7% in February

and March.

- Non-vegetarian meal expenditure hit a four-month high of ₹56.3, according to Crisil's monthly tracker of thali costs.
- Price gains in onions, tomatoes, and potatoes increased to 41%, 40%, and 38% respectively.
- Rice and pulses inflation remained firm at 14% and 20% compared to March's YoY trends.
- Lower crop arrivals for rice and pulses and onions contributed to the price increases.
- Decline in prices of cumin, chilli, and vegetable oil helped temper the pace of price gains in vegetable thali costs.
- Non-vegetarian thali cost dropped 4% YoY in April, but broiler prices fell by about 12% from last year's high base.

Marketing Strategy Overview

- Developing clear, measurable goals for each customer's journey.
 - Planning, implementing, and measuring marketing campaigns.
- Seven steps:
 - Pick a marketing objective for each customer segment.
 - Plan a media mix strategy for each customer segment.
 - Determine the most appropriate measurement tools.
 - Develop a target change that the measurement tools will reveal.
 - Record the results of your measurement findings.
 - Compare the change in metrics for each media channel against previous measurements or industry benchmarks.
 - Determine an action to take for each result.
- Example: Customer Journey, Objective, Tools, Media mix, Target, Results.
- Actions: Build awareness, build brand awareness, build brand lift, use more video, test

creative, influence consideration, brand favorability, and more.

Equity Mutual Fund Inflows Decline 16% in April

- Inflows into equity mutual funds decreased by 16% in April, according to data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI).
- Small-cap funds saw a return with net inflows of ₹2,209 crore, a 16% decrease from the previous month.
- Sectoral/thematic funds accounted for 27% of total flows, with multi-cap, large and mid-cap funds, and flexi-cap funds seeing flows of over ₹2,000 crore each.
- Large-cap funds' flows declined 83% to ₹357 crore.
- Despite KYC issues, flows via systematic investment plans (SIPs) reached a new high of ₹20,371 crore.

India Stock Market Plunges Amid Uncertainty

- Uncertainty over the General Elections' outcome led to panic selling in India's stock markets.
- Key benchmark indices fell about 1.5%, with the S&P BSE Sensex falling 1,062 points (1.45%) and the NSE Nifty-50 index dropping 345 points (1.55%).
- Market sentiment was influenced by lower than expected poll turnout, potentially making it difficult for the Modi government to return.
- Major sectors, including energy, metals, and realty, faced selling pressure.
- Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were mainly selling due to fears of no clear majority for any political party.

Science

Catatumbo Lightning: A Natural Phenomenon

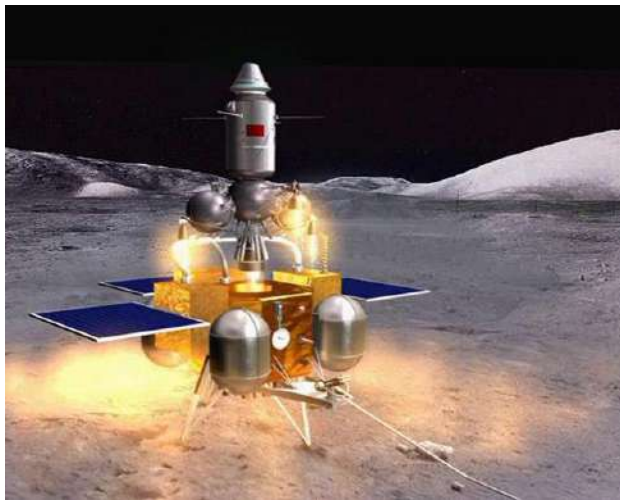


- Catatumbo lightning is a natural phenomenon in Venezuela, primarily occurring over the Catatumbo River.
- The event occurs at the mouth of the Catatumbo River, where it meets Lake Maracaibo.
- The unique conditions for Catatumbo lightning include warm, moist air from the Caribbean Sea colliding with cooler air from the Andes mountains, forming towering cumulonimbus clouds.
- Strong winds and temperature differentials generate electrical charges within these clouds, which discharge in the form of lightning when the potential becomes too great.
- The lightning strikes occur for up to 160 nights a year, with an average of 28 lightning strikes per minute at its peak.

China Launches Lunar Probe for Moon Samples

- China launches a lunar probe to land on the far side of the moon.
- The probe aims to provide insights into the differences between the less-explored region and

the better-known near side.



- This is the latest advance in China's sophisticated space exploration program, competing with the U.S.'s lead in space.
- China plans to send astronauts on the moon by 2030 and has three lunar probe missions planned over the next four years.
- The Chang'e-6 lunar probe rocket lifted off from the Wenchang launch centre on Friday.

Study Reveals Leprosy Spread Between Red Squirrels and People

- Archaeological evidence from Winchester, England, suggests that English red squirrels were once a significant host for *Mycobacterium leprae* strains, causing leprosy in humans.
- Leprosy, one of the oldest recorded diseases in human history, is still prevalent in Asia, Africa, and South America.
- The study analyzed 25 human and 12 squirrel samples from two archaeological sites in Winchester, known for its leprosarium and connections to the fur trade.
- Four genomes representing medieval strains of

Mycobacterium leprae were sequenced and reconstructed, all belonging to a single branch on the *Mycobacterium leprae* family tree.

- The study found a close relationship between the squirrel strain and a newly constructed one isolated from the remains of a medieval person.
- The findings suggest that leprosy may have spread between humans and wildlife, highlighting the need for vigilance against the spread of *Mycobacterium leprae*.

Rapid Evolution of Frog Adaptation

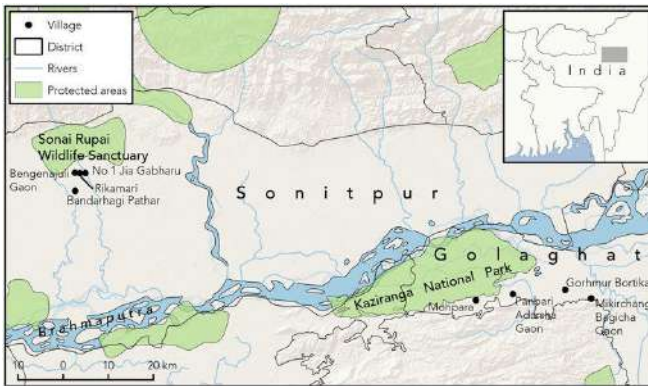
- A recent study found a frog species evolved within 25 years, spurred by salt.
- Researchers collected wood frog eggs from nine populations and studied salt tolerance.
- Tadpoles from saltiest wetland showed longer death time when exposed to salt, suggesting evolved tolerance.
- Frog populations from low and intermediate salt concentrations showed similar tolerance curves over 96-hour exposure.
- Results suggest some freshwater organisms can evolve tolerance to increasing salinisation, but only under relatively high concentrations.

UK Girl's Hearing Restoration

- 18-month-old British girl, Opal, is the youngest to have her hearing restored after gene therapy developed by Regeneron.
- Ear surgeon Manohar Bance attributes results to near-normal hearing restoration.

Environment & Ecology

National Green Tribunal (NGT) seeks Assam's Chief Secretary's response on construction activities in wildlife sanctuary and reserve forest.



- The NGT has requested details of officers allowing construction activities in these areas, which are gross violations of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.
- The State government claims to have built schools, a tea garden, a 5-km road, and wells in the Sonai Rupai Wildlife Sanctuary and the adjoining Charduar Reserve forest.
- The NGT seeks an explanation for the inaction of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF) in allowing such illegal activities since 2017.
- The order was passed on May 2 by the NGT's judicial member, Justice B. Amit Sthalekar, and expert member Arun Kumar Verma.

Health & Wellbeing

AstraZeneca Withdraws COVID-19 Vaccine

- AstraZeneca, a UK pharmaceutical company, has initiated a global withdrawal of its COVID-19 vaccine, 'Covishield', due to rare side-effects.
- The company's partner, Serum Institute of India, stopped manufacturing and supplying additional Covishield doses since December 2021.
- The company had partnered with Oxford University to develop the vaccine, which was sold in India as Covishield and as Vaxzevria in Europe.
- AstraZeneca plans to work with regulators on a clear path forward.
- In India, over 220 crore doses of Covishield have been administered.

Sports

Manchester City's Phil Foden and Khadija Shaw Win FWA Awards

- Manchester City midfielder Phil Foden named Football Writers' Association's men's player of the year.
- City forward Khadija 'Bunny' Shaw won the women's award.
- Foden, 23, scored 24 goals in all competitions this season, won 42% of the vote.
- Awards ceremony to be held on May 16.

Bengal Pro T20 League Unveiled

- The inaugural Bengal Pro T20 League (BPTL) will be held from June 11 to 28 at Eden Gardens and Jadavpur University.

- The league will feature eight franchises with both men's and women's teams.
- The league was unveiled with the presence of former India captains Sourav Ganguly and Jhulan Goswami.
- The franchises and their marquee players include Murshidabad Kings, Kolkata Royal Tigers, Howrah Warriors, Malda Smashers, Siliguri Strikers, Rahr Tigers, Medinipur Wizards, and Murshidabad Kings.

India's World Championship Final: Nitten Kirrtane's Achievement

- Nitten Kirrtane won both singles and doubles matches to help India defeat Britain 2-1 in the Fred Perry Cup over-50 event in the ITF Tennis Masters World Championship in Mexico.
- The Indian team maintained an unbeaten record in the league phase, beating Canada, France, and Turkey to qualify for the semifinals.
- Nitten won all the doubles matches in partnership with Ajit Sail.
- India was scheduled to play Italy in the final, which had defeated the Netherlands in the semifinals.
- India won the league with Turkey 3-0.
- India also won the sports bronze medals with France and Canada.

Indian Representatives for T20 World Cup


- Indian representatives to be Srinath.
- ICC announces 26 match officials for the first round of the T20 World Cup in USA and West Indies.
- 20 umpires to officiate in 55 matches across nine venues.
- Sam Nogajski, Allahudien Paleker, Rashid Riaz, and Asif Yaqoob to debut in senior men's competition.

WBCS MADE EASY

TOPPERS


WBCS 2020 GROUP A

2ND




Monajit Chowdhury

1ST



Aniruddha Mandal

3RD



Haimantika Das


#CONGRATULATIONS

College Street | Garia | Siliguri | Medinipur
85858 43673 | 82740 48710 | 90512 65991 | 82749 72589

www.wbcsmadeeasy.in JOIN US NOW 8274048710, 1800 572 9282

WBCS EXAM ONLY

WBCS 2020 RESULT: GROUP - A = 7 IN TOP 10 & GROUP - B = 3 IN TOP 10



ADMISSION OPEN AT SILIGURI BRANCH

LIBRARY AVAILABLE
CALL 9051 265 991, 1800 572 9282

- Six referees to be renowned: Ranjan Madugalle, Jeff Crowe, and Andrew Pycroft.

ISL Final: Mohun Bagan Overcomes MCFC

- Mohun Bagan Super Giant, defending champion, faces Mumbai City FC in the final title clash of the domestic football season.

- The Salt Lake Stadium will host the intense battle on Saturday as Bagan seeks to repeat the successful result against the same opponent that won the League winner's Shield 18 days ago.
- MCFC, which had to concede the Shield given to the league champion as Bagan upstaged it with a 2-1 win, is keen to avenge the defeat and redeem its stature by winning the playoff trophy.
- Bagan head coach Antonio Lopez Habas aims to "complete the circle" by lifting the playoff title and matching MCFC's record of clinching an ISL double.
- With fast-selling tickets, Bagan can expect over 60,000 fans to support it.

Bayer Leverkusen's Europa League Final Win

- Bayer Leverkusen extends unbeaten run to 47 matches with 2-0 win over Roma.
- Goals from Florian Wirtz and Robert Andrich secure victory.
- The Bundesliga champion has a chance of reaching the final in Dublin.
- Leverkusen will face either Atalanta or Marseille in Ireland if they hold out in Germany.
- Leverkusen's performance in Rome is expected to secure its first European trophy since the old UEFA Cup in 1988.

Marseille's Semifinal Tie against Atalanta

- Marseille's semifinal tie against Atalanta is poised after a 1-1 draw in France.
- Gianluca Scamacca gave Atalanta an early lead, but Chancel Mbemba leveled the match.

USA Names 15-Member T20 World Cup Squad

- USA hosts ICC men's T20 World Cup with Corey Anderson joining select list.
- Anderson, who played in 2014 and 2016 for

New Zealand, now plays for USA.

- Squad includes Monank Patel (capt.), Aaron Jones (vice-capt.), Andries Gous, Ali Khan, Harmeet Singh, Jessy Singh, Milind Kumar, Nisarg Patel, Nitish Kumar, Noshtush Kenjige, Saurabh Nethralvakar, Shadley Van Schalkwyk, Steven Taylor, Shayan Jahangir.

Mitchell Starc's Impact Player Rule Impacts T20 WC

- Mitchell Starc, a left-arm pacer for the Kolkata Knight Riders, has faced criticism for his bid of ₹24.75 crore and his subdued first half of the IPL season.
- However, Starc's performance at Wankhede Stadium marked his return to the IPL since 2015.
- Starc emphasized the impact of the Impact Player rule, allowing batters to bat deeper and having a batting and bowling XI.
- Starc noted that the rule has made batters and batting all-rounders come in at 8 or 9, creating a long batting line-up.
- He also noted that the lack of the Impact Player rule in the World Cup is yet to be seen.
- Starc clarified that he didn't set his price tag, so it's what it is.

Mumbai City FC Reclaims Indian Super League Crown

- Jason Cummings scores for Mumbai City FC, equating with Pereyra Diaz for the visitors.
- Substitutes Bipin Singh and Jakub Vojtus seal the win for Mumbai City.
- Mohun Bagan leads in the first half with Jason Cummings' goal.
- Mumbai City FC equalizes in the 81st minute with Pereyra Diaz's goal.
- Substitutes Bipin Singh and Jakub Vojtus complete the victory.
- Mumbai City FC has a commanding 66%

possession and had three clear chances in the first 40 minutes.

- The match resulted in a 3-1 loss for Mohun Bagan SG.
- Individual awards: Golden boot for Dimitrios Diamantakos, Golden Ball for Pereyra Diaz, Best Goalkeeper for Phurba Lachenpa, and Best Elite Youth Development Program for FC Goa.

Max Verstappen Wins Miami GP Sprint Race



- Red Bull's triple world champion, Max Verstappen, wins the first two sprint races of the Formula One season at the Miami Grand Prix.
- Verstappen started from pole and was never challenged, beating Ferrari's Charles Leclerc by 3.371 seconds.
- The victory extends Verstappen's championship lead over teammate Sergio Perez.
- Daniel Ricciardo of Red Bull finishes fourth, ahead of Carlos Sainz's Ferrari.
- McLaren's Oscar Piastri finishes sixth, Haas' Nico Hulkenberg seventh, and Red Bull's Yuki Tsunoda lasts points.

Indian Junior Hockey Team Captained by Rohit

- Rohit named captain of Indian junior men's hockey team.
- Shardanand Tiwari as deputy.
- 20-member squad to tour Europe from May 20 to 29.
- Five matches across Belgium, Germany, and Netherlands.
- First match on May 20 against Belgium in Antwerp.
- Next match against Bredase Hockey Vereniging Push in Breda, Netherlands.
- Final match against Germany in Breda.
- Squad includes goalkeepers, defenders, midfielders, and forwards.

China Wins Thomas and Uber Cup Finals



- China's men's team won the Thomas Cup 3-1, marking their 11th triumph since beating Japan in 2018.
- Indonesia lost its second consecutive final after falling to India two years ago.
- China also won the Uber Cup for a record-extending 16th time in the women's event, a 3-0 victory.
- Japan is the next most successful women's nation, having won six times.

- The results are as follows: China won the Thomas Cup 3-1, and China won the Uber Cup 3-0.

India and Australia in Women's T20 World Cup Group A

- India placed in Group A alongside Australia, New Zealand, and Pakistan.
- Group matches to be played at Sylhet.
- India's next match against New Zealand on October 4 and Pakistan on October 6.
- India's next match against an unknown Qualifier 1 team on October 9.
- Australia's clash against six-time world champion on October 13.
- Host Bangladesh placed in Group B with South Africa, England, West Indies, and Qualifier 2.

Indian Boxing Championships Results

- Five Indian boxers won five gold medals in the youth category at the ASBC Asian Under-22 & Youth boxing championships in Astana.
- Brijesh Tamta (48kg) and Aryan Hooda (51kg) won 5-0 against Tajikistan's Muminov Muinkhodzha and Kyrgyzstan's Kamilov Zafarbek.
- Yashwardhan Singh (63.5kg) won 4-1 against Gafurov Ruslan of Tajikistan.
- Nisha, the reigning junior World champion, won gold in the 52kg category.
- Laxmi (50kg) dominated the second round against Enkh Nomundari of Mongolia.
- Other second-placed Indian boxers included Sagar Jakhar (60kg), Priyanshu (71kg), Rahul Kundu (75kg), Aryan (92kg), Tamanna (54kg), Nikita Chand (60kg), Shrushti Sathe (63kg), Rudrika (75kg), and Khushi Pooniya (81kg).

Indian 4x400m Relay Teams Qualify for Paris Olympics

- Indian men's and women's 4x400m relay teams qualified for Paris Olympics after finishing second in their respective second-round heats at the World Athletics Relays.
- Women's team Rupal Chaudhary, M.R. Poovamma, Jyothika Sri Dandi, and Subha Venkatesan finished second in heat number one, while men's team Muhammed Anas Yahiya, Muhammed Ajmal, Arokia Rajiv, and Amoj Jacob finished second in their heat.
- Top two teams in each heat qualified for the Olympics from July 26 to August 11.
- India withdrew from the mixed 4x400m relay second round heat races due to muscle cramps.
- The Indian women's 4x400m relay team will return to the Olympics after missing out in Tokyo Games.
- This will be India's eighth participation in the Olympics, following the 1984 Games.

India's Dominance Over Bangladesh Continues



- India's dominance over Bangladesh continues with a 56-run win via the Duckworth-Lewis method in the rain-shortened fourth women's T20.
- The match was reduced to 14-overs-a-side due to a late start and an hourlong delay due to

persistent rain and hail.

- Harmanpreet Kaur (39) and Richa Ghosh (24) shared a 44-run stand to help India post 122 for six.
- The hosts had to chase 125 in 14 overs under the DLS method to secure the first win of the series.
- Bangladesh's batters, barring opener Dilara Akter (21), Rubya Haider (13) and Shorifa Khatun (11 not out), failed to reach double digits.
- Asha Sobhana, India's maiden debut, returned with figures of two for 18 in three overs.
- India now leads the five match series 4-0.
- Harmanpreet and Richa's partnership helped boost India's total.

Lando Norris Wins Miami Grand Prix

- Lando Norris wins his first career victory in F1 at Miami Grand Prix.
- Norris stayed out until Lap 30 after a collision between Landon Sargeant and Kevin Magnussen.
- He pulled away from Verstappen by 1.5 seconds two laps into the restart and grew the lead to over five seconds with 10 circuits remaining.
- His win broke Verstappen's six-race winning streak in the U.S.
- The standings are as follows: Drivers: Verstappen 136 points, Perez 101, Leclerc 98, Sainz Jr. 85, Norris 83.
- Constructors: Red Bull 237 points, Ferrari 189, McLaren 124, Mercedes 64, and Aston Martin 42.

Champions League Final: Dortmund Stuns PSG for 11th Time

- Borussia Dortmund defeated Paris Saint-Germain in their Champions League semifinal second leg, 1-0.

- The hosts were denied by the post four times, with Mbappe failing to impose himself.
- The match was the first final for Dortmund since 2013, when they lost to Bayern.
- PSG, fifth in the German Bundesliga, was underdogs in the final, despite being the first team to win the trophy since 2013.
- The match also highlighted PSG's failure in another crunch knockout tie in the competition.
- PSG's coach, Luis Enrique, dropped Bradley Barcola and brought in Portuguese striker Goncalo Ramos, moving Mbappe out of a central position.
- The hosts struggled to get Mbappe into the game, with the France captain often appearing isolated on the wing.
- The result was a 2-0 win for Dortmund on aggregate.

Neeraj Chopra's Olympic Defense at Doha Diamond League



- Neeraj Chopra, a 26-year-old athlete, will start his 2024 season at the Suhaim Bin Hamad Stadium for the Doha Diamond League.
- He will be accompanied by Kishore Kumar Jena, who will make his Diamond League debut.
- Jena, who trained in Australia, is hoping to continue his impressive growth since winning silver at the Asian Games and qualifying for Paris.

- The competition will feature defending Diamond League champion Czech Jakub Vadlejch, former World Champion Anderson Peters, Kenyan Julius Yego, Finland's Oliver Helander, and German Julian Weber.
- The two big-set Germans, Max Dehning and Johannes Vetter, will not be participating.

Neeraj Chopra to Participate in National Federation Athletics Meet

- World, Olympic, and Asian Games champion, Neeraj Chopra, will be the main attraction at the 27th National Federation athletics meet in Bhubaneswar.
- The meet will feature Neeraj and Asian Games silver medallist Kishore Jena in the men's javelin field.
- This marks the first time Neeraj will participate in a domestic event after nearly three years.
- The meet will be Neeraj's second event after the Doha Diamond League on May 10.
- Neeraj is scheduled to compete in the Paavo Nurmi Games in Turku, Finland, on June 18.
- He is expected to train in Europe in the run-up to the Paris Games, where he will defend his Olympic gold medal.

United World Wrestling Suspends Bajrang Punia

- Bajrang Punia, a World and Olympic medal-winning wrestler, has been suspended by United World Wrestling (UWW) until December 31, 2024.
- The suspension was triggered by NADA's provisional suspension for refusing to give his urine sample during Olympic qualifiers selection trials.



- UWW records indicate Bajrang has been suspended until December 31 for alleged anti-doping rule violation.
- Bajrang's counsel, Vidushpat Singhania, has yet to respond to the NADA notice.
- The suspension is valid for all competitions and activities until the charge is resolved.

India's 24-Member Squad for Europe Leg of Hockey Pro League

- Harmanpreet Singh leads a 24-member Indian squad for the Europe leg of the FIH Hockey Pro League.
- The squad will play eight matches against Argentina, Belgium, Germany, and Great Britain.
- The first leg will be held in Antwerp, Belgium from May 22-30, and the second in London from June 1-12.
- The squad will serve as India's dress rehearsal for the Olympics starting July 26.

India's 5-0 Series Sweep Over Bangladesh

- India's Radha Yadav scored a 21-run win in the fifth T20I, setting up a 5-0 series sweep.



- Bangladesh, aiming for a 157-run target, struggled against Radha Yadav.
- Ritu Moni and Shorifa Khatun led the fightback, but India prevailed.
- The stand between Moni and Shorifa was Bangladesh's highest for the sixth wicket in Women's T20Is.
- Richa played a cameo to take India to 156 for five, providing a boost after the visitors' flurry of wickets.
- India's 156 for five was the highest total of the series from either team.
- Radha finished as the highest wicket-taker in the series with 10 dismissals in five games.
- Smriti Mandhana set the tone early on, hitting four fours and one six.

Neeraj Chopra's Preparedness for Olympic Challenges

- Neeraj Chopra, a world athletics champion, is preparing for the Doha Diamond League, aiming to defend his Olympic title.
- Despite the presence of world-renowned athletes, Chopra admits that the Olympic or World Championships arena is crucial.
- He emphasizes the importance of managing his body, mind, and performance to achieve success.
- Chopra acknowledges the pressure of setting records in the Olympics, comparing it to the struggles of legendary athletes like Jan Zelezny and Thomas Rohler.

- He aims to break the 90m barrier, focusing on staying healthy and being consistent.
- Chopra emphasizes the importance of clear mental targets during training and the responsibility of handling the responsibility of being the current World and Olympic champion.

Olympic Torch Arrival in France

- French Olympic swimmer Florent Manaudou holds the first Olympic torch in France.
- The torch arrived in Marseille's Old Port on a Greek three-mast ship for the ceremony.
- The ship docked on a pontoon resembling an athletics track, and Manaudou carried it to mainland France.
- The torch was handed to French Paralympic sprinter Nantenin Keïta and rapper Jul, who lit a cauldron.
- President Emmanuel Macron expressed pride at the ceremony, stating that the games are coming to France and are entering the lives of the French people.
- Marseille's Mayor Benoit Payan reported over 230,000 people attended the ceremony.

OMEGA Recruits Neeraj Chopra as Sporting Ambassador

- Olympic gold medal-winning javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra appointed as OMEGA's sporting ambassador.
- OMEGA is also the Official Timekeeper for the Paris Olympics.
- Chopra visited OMEGA boutique in Doha before Diamond League participation.

Discussion

Policy Mismatch in the Israel-Hamas War

- President Joe Biden's policy aimed to prevent the Israel-Hamas war from escalating into a regional conflict.
- Biden offered unconditional support for Israel's war on Gaza and diplomatic efforts to maintain peace between Tel Aviv and its neighbors.
- However, the war's prolonged duration and significant civilian casualties in Gaza have weakened the Biden policy.
- The conflict has led to protests by university students in the U.S., urging Biden to reconsider his policy towards Israel.
- Biden's efforts to achieve a ceasefire and hostage deal between Israel and Hamas have been commendable.
- However, Biden's approach towards the crisis is flawed, as it contradicts America's values about wars and human rights.
- The U.S. continued to supply weapons to Israel despite allegations of indiscriminate bombing and destruction.
- Biden's inability to pressure Israel weakens America's West Asian standing and his presidential candidacy.
- Biden should address the flaws in his policy towards Israel and Palestine, calling for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza and suspending arms sales to Israel.

Sexual Crimes and Videos in Karnataka

- Karnataka police and state administration must investigate rape and sexual harassment allegations against Prajwal Revanna, a suspended Janata Dal party leader and sitting

Member of Parliament.

- The State government has sought to cancel Revanna's diplomatic passport, while the Special Investigation Team (SIT) must remove videos of Revanna's alleged forced sexual acts.
- Allegations of sexual misconduct by high office holders have been a recent issue, highlighting unequal power dynamics and political influence.
- Survivors of sexual abuse often file complaints when their trauma is unbearable, with familial support, or when they feel confident in justice.
- Police struggle to get many women in the videos to register a complaint.
- Revanna and his father, H.D. Revanna, have been summoned by the SIT for rape charges and kidnapping an alleged victim-turned-complainant.
- Given the grave charges, it would be in the best interest of both leaders to resign from public office until the investigation is complete.

Rise and Fall of Prajwal Revanna: An Overview



- Prajwal Revanna, the grandson of former Prime Minister Deve Gowda, is accused of sexual assault on several women and faces arrest upon his return to India.
- Despite being the sole MP from Janata Dal (Secular) in the Lok Sabha in 2019, Revanna was suspended by the party in 2024 and is now under

investigation by a Special Investigation Team (SIT).

- The SIT has issued a lookout circular at all entry points to the country, and Revanna is charged with rape.
- Prajwal's 2024 election campaign was marred by the infamous 'pen drives', which have 2,976 files, a majority of which are screenshots of chats, video calls with several women, and nearly 100 videos.
- Despite being seen as arrogant and feudal, his public actions were aimed at cementing his political position and challenging the power of his uncle and former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy within the party.
- The Revanna family, who have been part of the party affairs in Hassan, has been divided over giving a ticket to Prajwal due to allegations of sexual misconduct.
- The issue has given ammunition to the Congress to attack the BJP, with PM Narendra Modi questioned for sharing dais with a rape accused and allowing him to escape from the country.

Opposition in Kashmir and Ladakh for Change

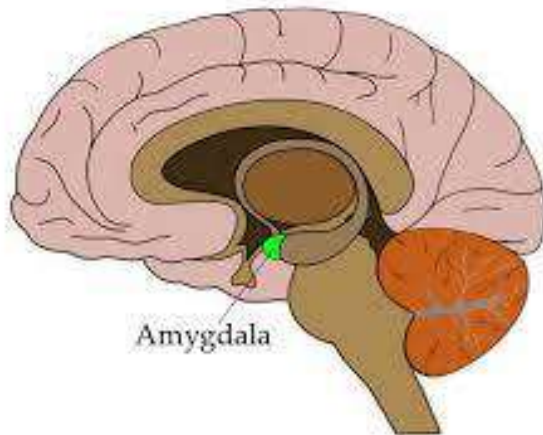


their aims, but not electorally.

- Polling in these States/UTs is taking place across multiple phases, with Jammu and Ladakh having already voted in the first and second phases.
- Turnout in Udhampur and Jammu was encouraging, but voter turnout in Kashmir Valley was low due to disillusionment over the dissolution of the State's Assembly.
- The abrogation of special status for the erstwhile State and the continuation of J&K as a UT have not helped reverse the alienation.
- Polls could provide a platform for the disenfranchised electorate to voice their grievances in the form of a decisive mandate.
- Traditional parties in Kashmir have opposed the postponement of polls in the Anantnag-Rajouri seat due to weather conditions.
- Mainstream Kashmiri polity, including the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (NC), could not unite and contest as one in the Lok Sabha elections.
- The Bharatiya Janata Party's talk of "unifying" the country by abrogating J&K's special status sounds hollow.
- The Congress and NC could not come up with a consensus candidate for the Ladakh constituency that includes the Leh and Kargil areas, leading to a candidate from Leh.

- Opposition in Kashmir and Ladakh is united in

Understanding the 'Us versus Them' Bias in the Brain



The Origin of Bias

- Modern genetics has established that all humans are equal, but history shows people from one cultural or social group treating others as less than human.
- This deep-seated tendency is the focus of research in psychology and neuroscience.

The Brain's Shifting Criteria

- The criteria our brains use to categorize others as 'us' or 'them' shift constantly.
- Bias doesn't exist at birth but is a learned response built on cultural associations and the brain's biology.
- Factors that lead to hostility include associating an out-group with a threat and uncertain circumstances can heighten mistrust towards the outgroup.

The Biology Behind 'Facts of Life'

- Neuroimaging studies have highlighted the role of the amygdala, a specific brain region, in detecting threats and fear-based learning.
- The amygdala activates to a greater degree

when the source of threat is from an out-group member.

- Understanding neural processing and its generalizability is needed to improve reconciliation.

The Importance of Awareness

- Being aware of our own biology can make us more informed, especially when faced with narratives that arouse rather than inform.

Unveiling the Veil: Expenditure Disparities in India's Electoral System

- The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress collectively spent over ₹20 billion in the 2019 general elections.
- The absence of spending caps on political parties and third-party spenders/campaigners has led to a skewed electoral landscape.
- The study analyzed expenditure reports submitted by various political parties during the Karnataka and Tripura State Assembly elections.
- The absence of spending caps has led to a lopsided expenditure landscape, with national parties outspending state parties by over 500% and regional parties by over 200%.
- Both national and State-level parties allocated a significant portion of their "general party propaganda" budget to media advertisements, surpassing expenses for rallies and other activities.
- Digital platforms like Google and Meta (formerly Facebook) are being used by big spenders, primarily national parties, to allocate disproportionately higher budgets to ads.
- The lack of regulation of third-party expenditure during elections could lead to a rise of quid pro quo arrangements and an influx of unaccounted

money into the electoral process.

- The study found several third-party campaigners on Google and Meta platforms spending substantial sums of money to influence voters for or against a political party.
- Reassessing India's political funding framework is imperative to ensure the integrity and transparency of elections. Introducing expenditure ceilings for political parties is a crucial step towards upholding these fundamental principles.

China's Badminton Successes and India's Challenges

China's Twin Towers

- China won both the Thomas and Uber Cup titles in badminton, marking its dominance in the sport.
- The Asian powerhouse repeated its 2012 victory, winning both the men's and women's crowns in the same year.
- Indonesia, the finalist, lost 1-3 in the men's division and 0-3 in the women's division.
- With less than three months left for the Paris Olympics, China is the clear favourite.
- Men's victory was more significant as it marked the 11th time in history that China won the top prize.
- Women's victory was about overcoming a blip of losing to South Korea in the 2022 summit clash.

India's Challenges

- India's campaign ended in the last-eight with a 1-3 defeat to China.
- Despite losses, H.S. Prannoy and Lakshya Sen performed well, defeating Anthony Ginting and Li Shi Feng.
- The young Indian women's side emerged with credit despite losing to China and Japan.

Tamil Nadu's Dam Safety Issues and Legal Recourse



- Tamil Nadu's application in the Supreme Court of India on the Mullaperiyar dam row shows unresolved issues with Kerala.
- Despite the Supreme Court's decision, several issues remain unresolved.
- Tamil Nadu accuses Kerala of obstructing work essential for the dam's maintenance.
- Despite the constitution of three panels, no solution is found to the pending issues.
- Tamil Nadu's grievance is that the reconstituted Supervisory Committee failed to permit and facilitate dam strengthening and related works.
- The state has been pressing for a comprehensive dam safety evaluation within five years, by December 30, 2026.
- Judicial intervention has led to the adoption of rule curve for smooth operation of dam shutters

and gate operation schedule.

- The proposal of a mega car parking project by Kerala is also a matter of litigation.
- Both states should resume bilateral negotiations to find a solution while retaining their liberty to adopt legal recourse.
- The political leadership in both states should be proactive in thrashing out differences and promoting mutual understanding.

Orangutan Self-Treats Wound with Plant

- A male Sumatran orangutan named Rakus was observed treating a wound with a medicinal plant, marking the first instance of an animal using natural remedies.
- Rakus plucks and chews up leaves of a plant used by Southeast Asians to treat pain and inflammation.
- He then applies the plant juices to an injury on his cheek, covering the wound with the plant.
- This behavior is the first recorded instance of a wild animal applying a potent medicinal plant directly to a wound.
- The orangutan's wound closed within a month without any problems.
- The orangutan's treatment is believed to be self-medication, with the plant applied only to the wound and no other body part.
- The technique could have been learned from other orangutans living outside the park and away from daily scrutiny.
- Previous recorded examples include orangutans rubbed themselves with juices from a medicinal plant, chimpanzees chewing on bitter-tasting plants, and gorillas, chimpanzees, and bonobos swallowing rough leaves whole to get rid of stomach parasites.

India's Press Freedom Index 2024



- India ranks 159 out of 180 nations in the 2024 edition of the Reporters Without Borders press freedom index.
- The index shows India's press freedom is comparable to that of the occupied Palestinian territories, the UAE, Turkey, and Russia.
- Scandinavian countries - Norway, Denmark, and Sweden - were the best performers, while Eritrea, Syria, and Afghanistan were the worst.
- Brazil and South Africa enjoy greater press freedom than India, while China and Russia are ranked lower.
- Other countries, including Bhutan, Hong Kong, Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Timor-Leste, and Montenegro, have shown record increases in press freedom rankings.
- Countries with dropped press freedom rankings include Argentina, Italy, Greece, and the Wall Street Journal.
- Critics argue that the closure of public press agency Telam, the acquisition of news agency AGI by a government member, and the move of

Al Jazeera to Singapore have impacted press freedom.

The Secularism of Indian Science

Historical Role of Science and Religion in India

- Science in India has historically accommodated the country's diverse religiosity.
- The Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) played a crucial role in the 'surya tilak' project in the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.
- The IIA's calculations account for the differing dates of Ram Navami every year, as the date is determined by the lunisolar calendar.

Primary Objections

- Some scientists were perturbed by the IIA's involvement in a religious ceremony, arguing that a college-level student could have designed the system.
- The involvement of the IIA in a religious ceremony impugned on the Constitution's commitment to 'scientific temper.'

An accommodative version of science

- Astronomy, astrophysics, and space shuttles are linked to the European origin story of the 'scientific revolution'.
- The Indian context has historically been accommodative of India's diverse religiosity.
- The Calendar Reform Committee, led by Jawaharlal Nehru, attempted to put India's 30-odd local calendars (panchangas) on a more scientific footing.
- The Indian National Calendar, a product of the Committee's report in 1956, corrected anomalies by adding leap years, ensuring months had only 30 or 31 days, and defining Indian Standard Time.

Funding for Research

- The DST has funded research in commonly

understood scientific disciplines, such as SATYAM (Science and Technology of Yoga and Meditation) and the Scientific Validation and Research on Panchgavya.

Plastic Solution: Treaties and Alternatives

- The Global Plastics Treaty, involving 175 UN member nations, is aiming to finalize a legal document by 2024.
- Economic hurdles include countries like Saudi Arabia, the US, Russia, India, and Iran reluctance to set hard deadlines for plastic production elimination.
- A coalition of African countries and several European nations supports a year's timeline for plastic reduction, around 2040.
- Disagreements exist on whether contentious elements should be decided by vote or consensus.
- India advocates for a legally binding instrument that addresses availability, accessibility, affordability of alternatives, and specifying arrangements for capacity building, technical assistance, technology transfer, and financial assistance.
- India implemented the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules (2021) in 2022, banning 19 categories of "single-use" plastics.
- The global distribution of plastic pollution is unequal, with Brazil, China, India, and the U.S. responsible for 60% of plastic waste.
- Greater investment in alternative products and affordability is needed before realistic targets are set.

Indian Legal Industry's Globalization and BCI Rules

- India's legal industry has been insulated from global practices since 1991, with the Bar Council

of India embracing this reality.

- The BCI Rules allow foreign lawyers to set up offices in India for limited purposes, acknowledging the globalisation of the Indian legal industry.

- The rules permit registered foreign firms and lawyers to practice on transactional or corporate work, such as joint ventures, mergers and acquisitions, and intellectual property matters.

- Foreign lawyers are now allowed to advise and appear in international arbitration cases conducted in India, irrespective of whether foreign law may or may not be involved.

- The BCI Rules envisage a greater role for foreign lawyers, albeit in an intimately regulated framework.

- The long-term benefits of the BCI Rules include increased access to the legal profession in foreign jurisdictions, increased competition, job opportunities, and a better work culture and remuneration.

- However, the risks of an unregulated market include differences in regulation in home jurisdictions, potential confusion in ethical rules, and the potential for multi-jurisdictional law firms with greater monetary capabilities.

- The Bar Council of India is conscious of the pros and cons of its decision, with stringent registration requirements on foreign entrants and their continued exclusion from any litigious work.

Language Tolerance in Gujarat

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has consistently spoken in Hindi since 2014 to connect with the Gujarati people in his home State, Gujarat.

- His speeches and events are telecast live by news channels, reaching a national audience.

- During the Lok Sabha elections campaign, Modi addressed six rallies in the north and central

provinces and the Saurashtra region.

- During the runup to the 2022 Assembly polls, he mainly used Hindi while addressing over a dozen rallies across the State.

- Despite the preference for Hindi, Modi's use of Gujarati during his speeches is not often discussed due to its widespread understanding in the State.

- The use of Hindi in Gujarat does not lead to much chatter or discussion due to the prevalence of Bollywood movies and Hindi television serials.

- Gujarat, a hub for migrants from across the country, has a linguistic diversity, with public schools running in Odia, Telugu, Urdu, Marathi, and Hindi besides Gujarati.

- Even in the Assembly, the Governor's speech is delivered in Hindi, with a Gujarati translation shared with the members of the House and the press.

- Gujarat presents a remarkable example of language tolerance, where non-Gujarati migrant workers can freely speak their own language or dialect.

Regional Voting Patterns in 2024 General Election

- Voters' aspirations and opinions in southern states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana vary significantly compared to the north.

- Surveys show that only 16% of the south are satisfied with the Central government, while 28% believe the construction of the Ram Mandir won't significantly impact Hindus.

- 38% of the south intend to vote for the BJP and its allies in 2024, compared to 50% in the north

and west and 47% in the east and north-east.

- The NDA was strongest in the Hindi heartland and the west in both 2014 and 2019.

- The NDA's vote share reduced only in the south, by 0.2% points, while it increased everywhere else.

- The INDIA alliance's only increase in vote share between 2014 and 2019 came in the south, largely due to a surge in support in Tamil Nadu.

- The NDA's performance in the south depends on factors such as the snapping of ties between the AIADMK and the BJP, the performance of the new alliance of the BJP, TDP, and the Jana Sena Party in Andhra Pradesh, and the ramifications of the Prajwal Revanna videotapes scandal on the BJP-JD(S) alliance in Karnataka.

Predicting Heat Waves: Misconceptions and Solutions

The Importance of Anomalies in Heatwave Prediction

- Heatwaves are excess temperatures over expected seasonal values, not absolute values.
- Total temperature maps can be misleading as they hide details of what is needed from forecasts to guide disaster management.
- Anomalies in the same temperatures are often used to describe heatwaves, which are not useful for real-world disaster management.

The Role of Location-Specific Processes

- Location-specific processes that generate heatwaves are crucial for predicting them at scales relevant to disaster management.
- The sharper the spatial hazard and risk information, the more effective and efficient disaster management is.
- This is especially important considering limited

resources, especially in economically developing countries facing worse heatwaves.

The Case for Anomaly Maps

- Forecasting systems function at the scale of the forecast's model grid.
- Anomaly maps can be used to raise awareness but could undermine credibility if a heatwave does not materialize in a particular local area or if forecasts don't pan out.
- Reliable early warning systems can be improved continuously by downscaling the model forecasts to neighborhood scales using artificial intelligence and machine-learning techniques.

UK Deports Migrants to Rwanda



- The UK deports an asylum seeker to Rwanda under a voluntary returns scheme.
- The UK has started detaining other migrants in the UK in preparation for deportations to Rwanda by July.
- The UK struck a deal with Rwanda in April 2022 to address issues related to undocumented

migration.

- The relocation policy was declared unlawful by the U.K. Supreme Court.
- The Conservative government finalised a new agreement with Rwanda to ensure additional safeguards.
- The new legislation allows authorities to remove asylum seekers who have made "unauthorised journeys" since January 1, 2022, to Rwanda for processing of asylum claims.
- The Voluntary Returns Scheme (VRS) was introduced by the Home Office in 1999 and co-funded by the European Refugee Fund.
- The UK offers financial assistance to migrants and failed asylum seekers who opt to depart to a "safe third country" or a country they are "admissible to."
- The UK will give development funding to Rwanda and promises to meet processing and integration costs for each relocated person.
- Despite criticism, Rwanda's President Paul Kagame maintains that its decision to be part of the U.K.'s asylum plan is not economically driven or about "trading people," but to offer them a better chance at life.

South Asian Nations' External Debt to China: Record Levels

- Pakistan's total external debt to China rose from \$7.6 billion in 2016 to \$26.5 billion in 2022.
- South Asian, African, and South American countries' debt to China increased significantly post the 2010s due to China's 'Going Global Strategy'.
- By the end of 2022, low-and-middle-income countries owed China a total of \$180 billion.
- China has given a significant portion of its new

WBCS MADE EASY

35 SETS

WBCS (EXE) PRELIMS EXAM 2024 MOCK TEST

COLLEGE STREET, SILIGURI, MEDINIPUR
ONLINE

3499 +GST

Subject wise + Full Every Sunday

Current Affairs pdf With Explanation

CALL 8274048710 / 8585843673 / TOLL FREE 18005729282 WWW.WBCSMADEEASY.IN

WBCS MADE EASY

30 SETS

WBCS (EXE) MAINS EXAM 2023 MOCK TEST

Bengali, Nepali, Hindi as First Language
COLLEGE STREET, SILIGURI, MEDINIPUR

3499 +GST

5 Series, 2 halves Every Sunday

Current Affairs pdf With Explanation

CALL 8274048710 / 8585843673 / TOLL FREE 18005729282 WWW.WBCSMADEEASY.IN

loans to neighboring countries, while its loans to African and South American economies have fallen.

- Sri Lanka's total debt owed to China almost doubled from \$4.6 billion to \$8.8 billion.
- Bangladesh's increase from \$0.97 billion to \$6

billion.

- Maldives' increase from \$0.3 billion to \$1.2 billion.
- Nepal's increase from \$0.07 billion to \$0.26 billion.
- Most of the debts owed to China are in the form of loans for infrastructure projects.
- China has cut back its overall lending due to its weak economic position and defaulting countries.
- Pakistan owes over 72% of its external bilateral debt to China.
- Countries other than South Asia also owe a majority of their bilateral debt to China, with Japan, Germany, and France being distant second.

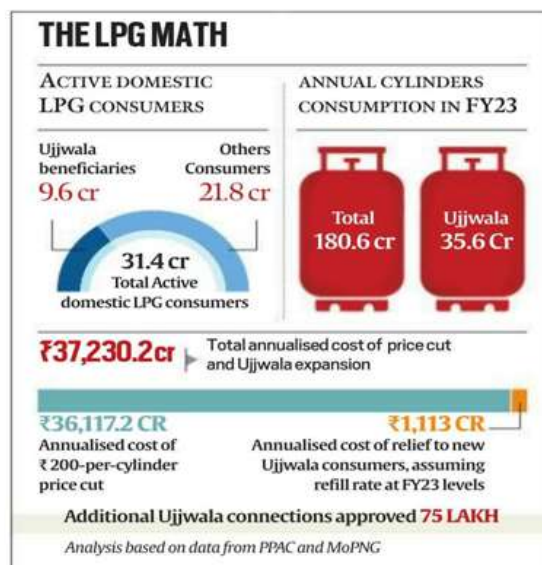
Israel's Irrational War on Gaza

- Hamas' acceptance of a ceasefire proposal by Qatar and Egypt sparked a surge in protests in Rafah, Gaza, hoping for a feared Israeli invasion.
- Israel responded by claiming the proposal did not meet its core demands, leading to the evacuation of over 1,000 people from Rafah.
- The Benjamin Netanyahu government has since seized the Gaza side of the strip's border crossing with Egypt, controlling all entry points to Gaza.
- The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) have killed over 34,000 Palestinians since October 7, with 77,000 wounded.
- Nearly the entire Gaza has been displaced, with northern and central parts already uninhabitable.
- A UN-declared "full blown famine in northern" Gaza and a hunger crisis have spread across the enclave.
- Hundreds of thousands of people forced out of

their homes are now living in temporary shelters in Rafah.

- Israel's military performance has not been as disproportionate as it was known for decades ago, with Israel not defeating Hamas nor getting the hostages released.
- If Netanyahu invades Rafah, he would face challenges to his political career and a genocide case at the UN's top court.
- A quick negotiated ceasefire would see the release of all hostages and an IDF withdrawal.

Socio-Ecological Effects of LPG Price Hikes in India



- The cost of LPG is a major barrier to its adoption and continued use in rural poor households.
- The Indian government has pushed LPG use, with schemes like the Rajiv Gandhi Gramin LPG Vitruk scheme and the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) aiming to increase LPG distribution in remote areas.
- The PMUY scheme installed LPG connections in 80 million below-poverty-line households by 2020, providing a subsidy of ₹200 for every

14.2-kg cylinder, which increased to ₹300 in October 2023.

- A study in 2023 showed that local communities in the Jalpaiguri district in West Bengal depend on forests for fuelwood, a practice that degrades the forest and risks encounters with wild animals.

- The PMUY scheme led to a quick switch to LPG from fuelwood, but the price hike made these benefits short-lived.

- Future governments should focus on making LPG affordable and introducing smokeless cooking stoves that consume less fuelwood to secure forests, wildlife, and locals' livelihoods.

- Future governments should also aim to make LPG affordable and free solid cooking fuels from socio-ecological endangerment.

NASA's Celestial Time Standardization Policy

- The White House's Celestial Time Standardisation policy aims to assign a time standard to each celestial body and its surrounding space environment.

- NASA's Artemis crew is set to fly around the moon in September 2025, preparing for a mission to land on the moon.

- The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) has directed NASA to establish a Coordinated Lunar Time (LTC) to standardize time-telling on the moon.

- The LTC will measure cislunar operations with the earth's UTC Coordinated Universal Time (UTC).

- The project falls under the current administration's National Cislunar Science and Technology Strategy.

- The policy outlines four features for a time standard: traceability to the UTC, scalability beyond the earth-Moon system, accuracy for precision navigation and science, and resilience to loss of contact with the earth.

- The moon will have only one time zone, making daylight saving unnecessary.

- Space agencies worldwide are planning to establish a permanent human presence on the moon, with a system like the LTC potentially helping coordinate activities and lay the foundation for a dedicated lunar satellite navigation system by 2030.

Revocation of Onion Export Ban in India

- The Centre reinstated onion exports in India six months after a ban due to high prices and supply concerns.

- The policy change includes a minimum export price of \$550 a tonne and a 40% levy.

- The move sparked outrage from neighboring farmers, who criticized the preferential treatment given to white onions.

- The move came just before Maharashtra's onion farming hubs vote on May 20.

- The move was justified by mandi prices stabilizing at ₹15 a kilo since April, indicating adequate supplies and the vegetable's perishability.

- The new norms will effectively affect onion farmers for almost a year, starting from last August when a 40% export duty was levied.

- The current policy does not signal a positive sowing signal for farmers, hindering India's aspirations to be the world's food supplier.

Bayern Munich's Uncertain Future Post Champions League Elimination

- Bayern Munich's Champions League elimination by Real Madrid on Wednesday has sparked a summer of uncertainty, with the club facing a possible coaching change.

- The club, which was crowned German champions for the first time in 11 years, has been

in a difficult position since Thomas Tuchel left in February.

- Despite Tuchel's rise in popularity, several candidates have declined the chance to replace him as coach, including Alonso, Julian Nagelsmann, and Ralf Rangnick.

- The elimination, characterized by referee frustrations and an error by Manuel Neuer, has resulted in a first trophyless season since 2012.

- Bayern CEO Jan-Christian Dreesen acknowledged the "very painful defeat" but emphasized the 2025 Champions League "home final" as the club's big goal.

- The club's sporting director, Max Eberl, faces several challenges, including Leverkusen's potential threat next season, and the underperformance of several of its biggest stars.

- The club's better performers are also on the wrong side of 30, with Neuer turning 38 and Thomas Mueller turning 35 this year.

Interpol Issues Blue Corner Notice Against Prajwal Revanna

- Interpol, an international law enforcement organization, issued a blue corner notice against Prajwal Revanna, a sitting Hassan MP and grandson of former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, amid a political storm in Karnataka.

- The MP has been on the run since late last month following the leak of thousands of explicit video clips allegedly showing him sexually abusing multiple women.

- Interpol alerts countries about transnational crimes by sharing information about crimes and wanted criminals globally and providing technical, operational, and investigative support to locate fugitives.



- The agency uses a 'colour-coded' system to alert and share requests for crime-related information among member countries and global organisations.

- The blue corner notice is issued when the case is related to missing persons, also known as an "enquiry notice," to gather additional information from member states about a person.

- The Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed by the Karnataka government sought the help of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for further inquiry.

- The SIT officials intend to arrest the accused to expedite the investigation as soon as they receive information about his whereabouts.

Kenjige Nosthush's Journey to Play for USA in ICC Men's World Cup

- Kenjige Nosthush, a left-arm spinner from India, is set to play for the USA in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup.

- Despite having strong roots in India, Nosthush now considers his adopted nation, the USA, as home.

- Nosthush's parents are coffee growers in Chikkamagaluru, and he attended The Lawrence School, Lovedale, in Udhagamandalam.

- After completing his 10th standard, Nosthush

moved to Bengaluru and took to cricket seriously.

- In 2015, Nosthush moved to the USA with a Masters degree from Dayananda Sagar Institutions, where he made his international debut against Uganda in 2017.

- The USA gained One Day International status in 2019, allowing them to gain automatic entry to the T20 World Cup.

- Nosthush is confident that he can draw on his experience of playing for MI New York and MI Emirates.

- Despite being the underdogs in the World Cup, Nosthush believes in enjoying the entire experience of playing a World Cup.

Haryana's Political Turmoil and Test

- Three independent MLAs withdrew support from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its former coalition partner, the Jannayak Janta Party (JJP), to form an alternative government.

- BJP, led by Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, appears in a minority with 43 MLAs in the 90-member State Assembly.

- BJP leaders claim their government is under 'no threat' and will support other MLAs if needed.

- Both parties have asked Governor Bandaru Dattareya to intervene.

- Both parties are trying to consolidate their base in the midst of the general election and the Assembly election.

- At least two of the 10 JJP MLAs have declared their support to BJP candidates in the Lok Sabha polls.

- The JJP, which draws support mainly from the agrarian class, has upped the ante against its former partner.

- The Congress is channeling its energy to form the next government for a full term of five years, instead of focusing on short-term gains.

- The Governor should take measures to clear doubts regarding the Saini government's

legislative majority.

The Population Foundation of India (PFI) criticizes media reports misrepresenting data from the Economic Advisory Council's (EAC-PM) working paper on the share of religious minorities in 167 countries, including India.

- The PFI, an independent think tank, argues that media outlets are misrepresenting the data set to spread alarm about the growth of the Muslim population.

- The paper, titled "Share of religious minorities: a cross-country analysis (19195-2015)," examines the shares of majority and minority religious communities in total populations of 167 countries, including India.

- The paper claims that while the share of Muslims in India increased by 43.15%, Hindus' share decreased by 7.82%.

- The PFI also points out that successful family planning programs in Muslim-majority countries like Bangladesh and Indonesia have resulted in lower birth rates compared to India.

- The PFI argues that the media's selective portrayal of data to highlight the increase in the Muslim population is an example of misrepresentation that ignores broader demographic trends.

- The PFI also notes that the decadal growth rate of Muslims has been on the decline for three decades, with this decline more pronounced in Muslims than in Hindus.

2024: A Year to Reset SDG Goals

- Srikumar Chattopadhyay, a retired scientist and

former National Fellow of the Gulati Institute for Finance and Taxation, highlights the slow progress towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- The UN Summit on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in New York assessed progress towards achieving the SDGs, with the Agenda-2030 identifying 17 SDGs with 169 specific targets to be achieved by 2030.

- The current practice of pursuing SDGs defies the integrated and indivisible nature of SDGs, leading to accelerated environmental degradation and the defeating of the purpose of transiting towards sustainability.

- The UN SDG Report, 2023 identified five key areas for urgent action: government commitment to seven years of accelerated, sustained and transformative actions, concrete, integrated and targeted government policies and actions to eradicate poverty, reduce inequality, and end the war on nature, strengthening national and subnational capacity, accountability, and public institutions, and the international community's commitment to deliver and mobilise resources to assist developing nations.

- World leaders reaffirmed their commitments and agreed to step-up efforts to deliver SDGs by 2030, but the effectiveness of these global pronouncements at the ground level remains a question.

- A team of 64 scholars analyzed 3,000 studies to examine the political impact of the SDGs within national and global governance to address poverty eradication, social justice, and environmental protection.

- The report suggests a systemic approach that helps identify, manage trade-offs while maximising co-benefits, and suggests adopting locally best suited entry points following regional and national priorities.

- The year 2024 is an important year for newly elected governments to ponder over the sustainability issue and align their national policies accordingly.

The Paradox of India's Global Rise and Regional Decline

- India's global rise is a result of growth in absolute power, peer accommodation, and a 'chaotic' international situation.

- Despite this, India's regional influence is declining due to diminishing relative power, loss of primacy in South Asia, and changes in South Asian geopolitics.

- India's global rise is aided by growing international attention on the Indo-Pacific, a crucial theatre for global strategic stability.

- Despite this global rise, India's influence in South Asia is declining, compared to its influence during the Cold War or today.

- The decline of Indian influence in the region is also due to factors like the American withdrawal from the region and China filling the power vacuum.

- The rise of China explains India's regional decline more than anything else.

- India is more powerful than it has been in nearly two centuries, but weakest in history vis-à-vis China.

- The arrival of China in South Asia, the withdrawal of the U.S. from the region, and India's tilt to the Indo-Pacific have shifted the regional balance of power in Beijing's favor.

- South Asia's smaller powers are engaged in strategies of balancing, bargaining, hedging, and bandwagoning against India.

- The growing obsolescence of South Asia as a geopolitical construct adds to India's diminishing hold on the region.

India's Approach to South Asia and China's Challenge

- New Delhi needs to modernize its South Asian primacy and address the China challenge.

- Recognizing the fundamental changes in the region, its neighbours, and geopolitics over the past decade is crucial.
- India should focus on its strengths rather than trying to match China's might.
- Reclaiming the Buddhist heritage is a key example of a new engagement with the region.
- India's continental strategy faces challenges, but its maritime space offers opportunities for trade enhancement, minilaterals, and new coalitions.
- India should include its smaller South Asian neighbours in Indo-Pacific strategic conversations.
- New Delhi's openness to non-India centric lens and desire to engage with external partners in the Indian Ocean and South Asia can help address the region's common challenges.
- New Delhi should use its soft power to retain its influence in the region, encouraging informal contacts between political and civil society actors.
- The dichotomy between India's global rise and regional decline has implications for its global aspirations.

Boeing's Crewed Space Test: A Significant Project

- The Boeing CST-100 Starliner spacecraft is set to launch on May 7, with two veteran astronauts, Barry Wilmore and Sunita Williams, on the capsule's third test flight.
- The mission will take astronauts to the International Space Station (ISS) in low-earth orbit.
- The spacecraft consists of a crew capsule and a service module, which can house up to seven astronauts.
- NASA awarded contracts to SpaceX and Boeing in 2014 to fly astronauts to the ISS.
- Despite the successful launch, the mission was delayed by seven years and Boeing overshot its

budget by \$1.4 billion.

- Since being awarded the NASA contracts, SpaceX has flown 13 missions to the ISS onboard its Dragon crew capsule.
- If the Starliner crewed test flight is successful, SpaceX and Boeing will take turns launching astronauts to the ISS.
- Boeing's 737 Max 8 airline, which competed with European rival Airbus's A320neo, has faced issues with its MCAS, leading to legal disputes, compensatory payments, and order cancellations.
- Boeing consolidated its development with other divisions in 2015, creating a company called BDS Development to lower Starliner's development costs.
- The May 7 test will be piloted by two veteran astronauts, Mr. Wilmore and Ms. Williams, and will carry them to the ISS for eight days.
- The test is expected to provide confidence for both Boeing and NASA, but failure could add to the company's many woes.

H5N1 Outbreak: Uncertain Transmission Route

- The H5N1 virus, first identified in a cattle herd in Texas in March, has rapidly spread to 36 herds across nine U.S. states.
- The virus has affected and decimated several avian species, with over a hundred mammalian species affected.
- The outbreak has also affected farm cats, with seven cats infected in cattle farms.
- A survey found traces of the virus in nearly 20% of grocery milk samples, suggesting the outbreak might be more widespread than reported cases.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provided genomic data, suggesting a single point of introduction in late 2023 and potential undetected spread among cattle.
- The virus's route of mammalian transmission among cattle herds is unclear, with speculations

including contaminated feed, milking equipment, or airborne transmission.

- The question of how the virus evaded detection among cattle populations remains open.
- The potential of reverse spillover events from cattle to poultry necessitates further research to assess the risk of transmission to humans and develop mitigation strategies.
- India has seen avian influenza outbreaks in poultry this year, but genome sequences from these outbreaks are not yet available in the public domain.
- The transcontinental spread of avian Influenza emphasizes the need for active surveillance and collaboration among countries and organizations for understanding the virus and its transmission dynamics.

New Organelle Discovered in Plants for Nitrogen Fixation

- The endosymbiotic theory suggests that organelles like mitochondria and chloroplasts were once free-living bacteria that were later ingested by recipient cells.
- This theory was challenged by evolutionary biologist Lynn Margulis, who proposed symbiogenesis, which posits that these organelles were once free-living bacteria.
- Two recent papers have sparked renewed interest in the endosymbiotic theory, particularly in nitrogen fixation.
- Nitrogen is a key component in proteins and DNA of all living organisms, and plants and animals lack a system to utilize atmospheric nitrogen.
- Bacteria and archaea convert atmospheric nitrogen gas to ammonia through nitrogen fixation, making nitrogen usable for plants.
- The discovery extends earlier reports of a nitrogen-fixing cyanobacterium in marine algae, establishing it as a new organelle.

• Nitroplast, a new organelle, co-evolved with its host cell and met several criteria for being integrated into the host cell's function and architecture.

- Nitroplast's genome becomes frugal during transformation, encoding fewer proteins and utilizing the host cell's proteins for essential functions.
- The discovery has revolutionary implications, especially in agriculture, as it could help eliminate the harmful side effects of industrial ammonia production.
- Novel biotechnological applications may use the discovery of nitroplasts as independent nitrogen-fixing organelles, engineering host cells and their nitroplasts with minimal genomes sufficient to grow efficiently and fix nitrogen.

India's R&AW's Overseas Operations and Their Impact on International Relations

- India's R&AW, an external intelligence agency, has been accused of targeting and killing Khalistani separatist operatives globally.
- The allegations are yet to be proven in court and pertain to multiple investigations in different countries.
- The Washington Post reported that American officials believe R&AW's previous chief, Samant Goel, approved an assassination operation against Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, a Khalistani activist lawyer on India's most wanted UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act) terror list.
- The Royal Canadian Mounted Police arrested and charged three Indian nationals for conspiring in the Nijjar killing.
- The Royal Canadian Mounted Police are investigating links to Indian government officials.
- Australia's ABC reported that R&AW operatives had been expelled in 2020 after Australian

Security Intelligence Organisation concluded that they ran a "nest of spies" that carried out espionage activities and surveillance of Khalistani separatists in the country.

- Pakistan's Foreign Ministry has consistently accused R&AW agents of orchestrating a number of extra-judicial killings on its soil.
- The Ministry of External Affairs has consistently held that extra-judicial killings are not "government policy".
- The variance in the government's responses on U.S., Canada, Australia, and Pakistan: silence on Australia, angry denials and punitive measures against Canada, the setting up of a "high level inquiry" into the U.S.'s indictment, and an unabashed acceptance by top leaders that the government has killed terrorists inside Pakistan.
- Indian officials have questioned why the U.S., Canada, the U.K. and Australia don't take action against vocal Khalistani activists like Pannun and Nijjar themselves, who are accused of inciting attacks on diplomatic missions and threatening Indian diplomats in those countries.
- India's ties with the countries where such operations have allegedly been carried out remain strong, with the exception of Pakistan, and now Canada.
- The U.S., the U.K., and Australia are keen to keep ties on an even keel while they complete investigations and urge India to do the same.
- The U.S. has conveyed the U.S.'s 3-step demand: that New Delhi thoroughly investigate the Pannun case and accept any wrongdoing publicly, that it resolve not to repeat such operations, and that it must ensure "legal accountability" in Indian courts for those responsible.

Indian Defence University: A Need for Operationalization

- Admiral Karambir Singh, former chairman of the

National Maritime Foundation, New Delhi, emphasizes the need for a robust military education system.

- War's changing nature necessitates a well-structured Professional Military Education (PME) continuum to equip officers with the necessary skills to handle complex security challenges.
- The evolution of PME in the U.S., such as the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act, 1986, has parallels with Indian theaterisation aims.
- The Indian armed forces need a broad-based education system based on academic rigor, similar to the US's reforms in military education.
- The Indian Defence University (IDU) was proposed in 1967, but progress has been slow.
- The IDU would provide a central institution of higher military learning, uniting theory with practice.
- The university's curriculum would vary among various colleges and other institutions, but it would need to offer a variety of subjects relevant to national security and defence.
- The realisation of the IDU is long overdue, with delays in its commissioning costing defence preparedness, strategic culture, and inter-service integration.
- The need is to operationalise the IDU as soon as possible to establish the first building blocks of joint warfighting through a well-calibrated and futuristic military education curriculum.

Mumbai City FC's ISL Championship Triumph



- Mumbai City FC (MCFC) became the ISL Champion after defeating Mohun Bagan Super Giant (MBSG) 3-1.
- The club's season started with three wins and two draws from the first five league games.
- The club underwent a major change in management in November, with its longest-serving head coach Des Buckingham leaving to join Oxford United.
- Petr Kratky, a 42-year-old tactician, was found as a replacement for Des Buckingham.
- MCFC finished second in the standings with 47 points, just one shy of the shield.
- The Islanders were impressive during the final stretch of the league, picking 25 points from the last ten games.
- The ISL playoffs could have ended differently for MCFC, but the stoppage-time heroics of Lallianzuala Chhangte and Vikram Partap Singh in the first leg of the semifinal against FC Goa turned things around dramatically.
- In the final, MCFC dominated possession and controlled the tempo, but held their nerve to lift the coveted trophy.

Kratky's Influence on MCFC

Kratky's Approach

- MCFC adopted Buckingham's 4-3-3 formation, adopting a possession-based approach.
- Attacked in large numbers, predominantly attacking through the wings.
- MCFC had the best defensive record, conceding only 19 goals in the regular league stage.
- MCFC appeared vulnerable in the first half with its defending, conceding 11 out of 23 goals in the first 45 minutes.

Challenges and Challenges

- MCFC struggled in other competitions, including the Durand Cup and the Super Cup.
- MCFC also had a disappointing showing in Asia, losing all its six games in the AFC Champions League this season.

Adapting to Changes

- MCFC underwent major changes in management and playing staff.
- Key players like Mourtada Fall and Ahmed Jahouh left for Odisha FC.
- Left-back Akash Mishra and midfielder Yoell Van Nieff were brought in last summer.
- A new centre-back pairing of Thaer Krouma and Tiri was signed.
- Local player Jayesh Rane from Bengaluru FC was loaned in.

Key Players Under Kratky

- Vikram Partap became a crucial attacker under Kratky, scoring eight goals and providing four assists.
- Young players like Gurkirat Singh, Ayush Chikkara, Vinit Rai, and Hmingthanmawia Ralte also prospered under Kratky.
- Chhangte had the highest goal contributions for MCFC, also the most by an Indian player.

- Lalengmawia Ralte was instrumental in the midfield, creating 17 scoring chances throughout the season.

Kratky's charismatic nature and individual attention in training have brought positivity to the side.

Prime Minister's Speeches and the Model Code of Conduct

- Dushyant Dave, Senior Advocate and former president of the Supreme Court Bar Association, criticizes the Prime Minister's recent statement that the Congress wants to take away properties, including gold and mangosutra, from the people and distribute it among minority communities.

- The Prime Minister and his advisors are expected to know the facts of the Prime Minister's statement.

- The Congress's manifesto, 'Nyay Patra', lists various issues facing the country and outlines its aims and objectives in dealing with them.

- The manifesto focuses on wealth, welfare, equity, and the socio-economic conditions of the SC, ST, and OBC communities.

- The manifesto does not suggest wealth will be taken from the people and redistributed to others.

- The manifesto echoes the Preamble of the Constitution, which resolves to constitute India into a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic and to secure to all its citizens: justice, social, economic and political; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; and equality of status and opportunity.

- The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is pushing the agenda for a uniform civil code, which is also a Directive Principle, under Article 44.

- The BJP's manifesto, 'Sankalp Patra', begins with '10 years of good governance and Vikas' and declares that 80+ crore citizens are receiving free

rations since 2020 through PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana.

- The Prime Minister and the BJP should not have reservations or objections to the Congress manifesto.

The Absence of a Law to govern Election Manifestos

- The Supreme Court in *S. Subramaniam Balaji v. Government of Tamil Nadu & Ors.* (2013) criticized the lack of a law to govern election manifestos.

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) was directed to frame guidelines in consultation with all recognized political parties.

- The ECI issued 'Instructions to political parties on manifestos' in 2015, outlining guidelines on election manifestos.

- The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) issued by the ECI in March 2024 prohibits activities that may aggravate existing differences or create mutual hatred or tension between different castes and communities.

- The Supreme Court declared speeches of religious nature to influence voters as corrupt practices in 1996.

- In 2017, the Supreme Court interpreted Section 123 of the Representation of People Act, 1951, stating that an appeal in the name of religion, race, caste, community, or language is impermissible under the Act.

- The Prime Minister's tirade against the Opposition and minority community falls foul of the MCC and amounts to corrupt practice as declared by the Supreme Court.

- The malaise continues due to the weak rule of law, with the ECI failing to hold free and fair elections.

Praveen Chakravarty's Perspective on Reducing India's Rich-Poverty Gap

- Praveen Chakravarty, Chairman of All India Professionals' Congress and a key member of the Congress manifesto committee, suggests a pragmatic approach to reducing India's rich-poor gap:

- The Congress party's election manifesto promises to 'redistribute' wealth by taking away people's gold, mangalsutras, imposing new taxes, and giving it to poor minorities.

- The manifesto does not mention 'redistribution', 'mangalsutras', or 'wealth tax', leading to a public debate on the issue.

- Chakravarty argues that the economic disparity between the rich and the poor has widened alarmingly over the last two decades, not just in India but globally.

- He suggests that the real argument is over how to bridge this gap and aspire for a more equal and just society.

- Chakravarty criticizes the 'Pareto Optimum', where it is impossible to make one person better off without making another worse off.

- He suggests that a 'fix the system' approach, such as wealth tax, is not the solution to bridging inequality.

- Chakravarty argues that economic growth is necessary for increasing the size of the overall economic pie and that a confrontational 'make the rich poorer' policy attitude can hinder investments and trigger the flight of capital.

- He also highlights the lopsided economic growth and taxation in India, with headline GDP growth not translating into jobs, incomes, and prosperity for a large majority.

- Chakravarty proposes rebalancing the capital-labour skew through labour market

focused policy incentives, such as the right to apprenticeship for youth and employment linked incentive schemes for corporates.

- He also highlights the imbalance in taxation, where the common person pays more than the corporates in the share of taxes.

- Chakravarty advocates for a social security net through welfare programs for the poor until they can reap gains of economic growth.

Sudan's Civil War Overview



Historical Crisis and Ethnic Diversity

- Sudan's long-standing identity crisis has led to numerous rebellions.
- The inability of successive governments to articulate a shared vision has resulted in an unfair distribution of wealth and resources.

Ethnic Groups and Conflict

- Sudan comprises 19 major ethnic groups and about 597 ethnic sub-groups.
- Sudanese Arabs make up the largest single ethnic group at about 70% of the population.
- Political and economic power and resources are concentrated in the country's center.

Potential Solutions for Peace

- Focus on the concerns of marginalized

populations in conflict zones and deprived regions.

- Address root causes of armed violence, including issues of marginalization, the relationship between religion and state, governance, resource sharing, land, social justice, and equality at the national level.

Independence and the National Islamic Front

- In 1989, a new government seized control of the state under the rule of the National Islamic Front.

- The regime established an internal security apparatus, arrested and tortured dissenters, and introduced a new penal code to impose an Islamisation agenda.

Developments and War Conditions

- In 2003, the al-Bashir regime enlisted Janjaweed militias to quell an insurgency in Darfur.

- In 2017, Sudan's parliament ratified the Rapid Support Forces Law, incorporating the militias into the government's military apparatus.

Sudan's Military Intervention and Civil War

- Protests in 2018 led to the military intervention in Sudan in April 2019, removing al-Bashir from power and declaring a state of emergency.

- Despite a transitional military government, civilian leadership demanded, leading to a failed coup attempt in September 2021.

- The military-civilian transitional administration was established in August 2019, but challenges persisted, including a failed coup attempt in September 2021 and another coup led by Abdel Fattah al-Burhan in April 2023.

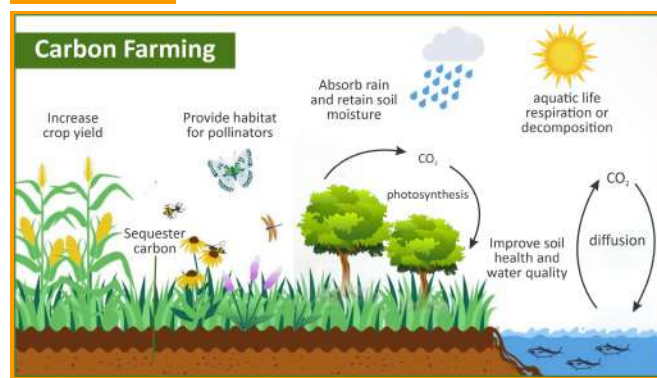
- The Rapid Support Forces emerged as a counterbalance to the armed forces, deployed to major cities, border regions, and economic hubs.

- Three conditions led to the emergence of a militia-dominated state: civil strife in Darfur in 2003, support from the Sudanese government, and the portrayal of the Rapid Support Forces as representing marginalized Arabs.

- The October 2021 military coup halted Sudan's democratic progress, and the Rapid Support Forces expanded its influence through business ventures and engagements.

- The international community needs to aid reconstruction, establish a transparent, civilian-led government, and take urgent action to reconstruct Sudan's post-colonial state.

Carbon Farming: A Comprehensive Overview



Understanding Carbon Farming

- Carbon farming is a regenerative agricultural practice that restores ecosystem health, improves agricultural productivity, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

- It combines the principles of farming, which involves cultivating land, raising crops, and managing livestock for food, fibre, fuel, or other resources.

Challenges in Implementing Carbon Farming

- The effectiveness of carbon farming varies depending on factors such as geographical location, soil type, crop selection, water availability, and farm size and scale.

- The practice of carbon trading in the agriculture sector has become important globally, especially in the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, and Canada.
- Regions with long growing seasons, sufficient rainfall, and substantial irrigation are best suited to practice carbon farming.
- However, carbon farming can be challenging in hot and dry areas where water availability is limited, and the selection of plants to grow is crucial.

Global Initiatives for Carbon Farming

- Initiatives like the Chicago Climate Exchange and the Carbon Farming Initiative in Australia demonstrate efforts to incentivise carbon mitigation activities in agriculture.
- Initiatives like Kenya's Agricultural Carbon Project highlight the potential for carbon farming to address climate mitigation and adaptation and food security challenges in economically developing countries.

Opportunities in India

- As climate change intensifies, climate-resilient and emission-reducing agricultural practices can benefit from adaptation strategies.
- Grassroots initiatives and pioneering agrarian research in India are demonstrating the viability of organic farming to sequester carbon.
- Carbon credit systems can incentivise farmers by providing additional income through environmental services.
- Agricultural soils can absorb 3-8 billion tonnes of CO₂-equivalent every year over 20-30 years, bridging the gap between feasible emissions reductions and the indispensable stabilization of the climate.

Study on Fusobacterium Nucleatum's Role in Colorectal Cancer

- Researchers from the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center in the U.S. have identified a distinct subtype of *Fusobacterium nucleatum* bacteria found in greater quantities in colorectal cancer (CRC) tumours.
- The bacteria live in the human mouth and are rarely found elsewhere.
- In cases of colon or rectum cancer, the bacteria help cancer cells escape the immune system and spread to other parts of the body.
- The study found that *Fusobacterium nucleatum animalis* (Fna) was significantly associated with CRC tumours.
- Fna has the smallest core genome, indicating there could be different subtypes of Fna.
- The researchers traced the evolutionary history of the bacteria, identifying two different clades of Fna: Fna C1 and Fna C2.
- Fna C2 bacteria are significantly associated with CRC tumours and have extra genetic factors to help them in this regard.

Fna C2 Bacteria's Role in Colonising Cancer Tumors

Physical and Genetic Differences

- Fna C2 bacteria have longer and thinner bodies than Fna C1 bacteria, affecting their ability to live in host tissue and evade the immune system.
- Fna C2 bacteria have genes required to munch two energy-rich compounds in the human gut: ethanolamine and 1,2-propanediol, which are missing in Fna C1.
- These genes were found to be more enriched in stool samples from CRC patients than in samples from healthy individuals.

Mouth to Gut

- Fna C2 bacteria can grow in more acidic conditions than Fna C1 bacteria and have specific genes that can resist the effects of acids.
- Fna C2 bacteria were found to induce the development of tumors in the gut in mice, demonstrating their ability to metabolically affect the intestinal milieu towards conditions conducive to CRC.

Long Road to Clinical Trials

- The study presents promising prospects for the advancements of microbial cellular therapies, which involve the use of modified bacterial strains to directly administer treatments into tumours.
- Future research should track the gut and oral microbiome of high-risk individuals and their tumour microbiome after a CRC diagnosis to understand how certain strains of bacteria can cause cancer.
- The "colonisation timeline" of Fna C2 bacteria could facilitate early CRC diagnosis.
- Developing a drug that could selectively target Fna C2 bacteria without affecting Fna C1 or other gut bacteria presents a significant challenge.

Antonio Habas: Mohun Bagan's Shield-Winning Coach

- Antonio Lopez Habas, a former player, has been a key figure in Mohun Bagan's coaching career.
- Habas started his coaching career with Atletico Madrid in 1990 and later aided Xabier Azkargorta at the Bolivian national team.
- In his two spells with La Verde, he guided the team to the quarterfinals and finals in 1995 and 1997.
- Habas' preference for a three-man defense has been evident in Mohun Bagan's recent performance, scoring 26 goals in the first half, including Jason Cummings' strike in the final.

- Despite the team's struggles, Habas has managed to secure the best performances of players like Anirudh Thapa and Liston Colaco.
- Habas' coaching experience began with the inaugural season of the ISL, where he managed Atletico de Kolkata to win the trophy.
- In a decade of coaching, Habas has won almost half of all matches he has managed, with a record of winning three trophies, two ISL trophies, and one Shield.

Mohun Bagan's Coaching Style and Performance

- Mohun Bagan's coach, Habas, has adopted a three-man defense, maximizing wing-play and utilizing a 3-1-4-2 shape.
- The team's approach is pragmatism, with an early lead and two blocks of defence used to defend the lead.
- Anirudh Thapa, a midfielder, has excelled in his role, playing as a No. 10 instead of a mix of No. 6 and No. 8 under Ferrando.
- Habas has been in two ISL finals as Mohun Bagan coach, in 2020-21 and 2023-24.
- Despite the team's struggles, Habas aims to complete the circle of success, despite the Islanders' 3-1 victory over Mohun Bagan.
- The team missed the services of Albanian striker Armando Sadiku, who was given a disciplinary suspension.
- Habas is negotiating with the club to continue his coaching chapter next season, despite his initial desire to retire as a coach in India.
- Despite Mohun Bagan's struggling form, the club has a Shield and a silver medal from the ISL Trophy final in its trophy cabinet.

Understanding the Science Behind Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

- MRI is a non-invasive diagnostic procedure used to image soft tissues within the body.
- It is widely used to image the brain, cardiovascular system, spinal cord and joints, muscles, liver, arteries, etc.
- MRI is particularly important in the observation and treatment of certain cancers, including prostate and rectal cancer, and to track neurological conditions like Alzheimer's, dementia, epilepsy, and stroke.
- MRI scans of changes in blood flow are used to infer the activity of neurons in the brain, a technique called functional MRI.

MRI Work

- MRI reveals an image of a body part using the hydrogen atoms in that part.
- The machine has four essential components: a superconducting magnet, a device emitting a radiofrequency pulse, a detector, and a computer.
- The atoms in the part to be scanned are matched so that half of the atoms are pointing one way and the other half are pointing the other way.
- The Larmor frequency is the frequency of pulse the 'excess' atoms have to absorb the radiation.

Pros and Cons of MRI

Pros:

- MRI uses three magnets to produce weaker, gradient magnetic fields that highlight specific portions of the body.
- The machine can scan portions as small as a few millimetres wide and can scan different parts of the body without requiring movement.
- The 'excess' atoms emit energy to return to

their lower energy states over a duration called the T1 relaxation time.

- The machine can show different tissues in different shades of grey by injecting a contrast agent that lowers the T1 time in some tissues.
- MRI scans do not pose any threats; once removed, the atoms in the scanned part do not remain affected.

Cons:

- MRI machines are expensive, costing from a few tens of lakh rupees to a few crores depending on the specifications and imaging quality.
- The discomfort of using the machine is compounded by the need for the individual to lie still for tens of minutes until the scan is complete.
- The process of creating a strong magnetic field is energy-intensive and expensive.
- The machine produces loud noises when operating, which can be an additional source of discomfort for the individual.

India's Online Gaming Sector: Potential and Challenges

- Amar Patnaik, a former member of Parliament and CAG bureaucrat, discusses the potential of India's online gaming sector.
- The Prime Minister's vision to establish India as a global gaming hub has gained renewed attention.
- The online gaming industry is a critical part of the Digital India initiative and forms a significant part of the sector.
- The industry has seen a rapid expansion of 28% CAGR between FY20 and FY23, with projections for further growth to ₹33,243 crore by FY28.
- The sector attracts significant foreign and domestic investments and generates substantial employment.
- The online gaming segment in India constitutes

1.1% of the global online gaming revenue, offering enormous growth potential.

- The sector has seen positive developments, including the establishment of the Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comic and Extended Reality taskforce by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

- Unresolved issues require government attention to enhance regulatory clarity.

- Despite self-regulatory bodies within the IT Rules of 2021, effective implementation of these rules is pending.

- Recent revisions in taxation have placed the industry, particularly startups, in a precarious position.

- Remedying these deficiencies can lead to India emerging as a prominent global gaming hub.

- There is an increasing number of games inspired by Indian mythology, offering a unique opportunity to cater to domestic and international audiences.

- There is an effort to encourage the participation of women in the gaming industry, fostering diversity and inclusivity.

Pulicat Lake's Eco-Sensitive Zone Threatened by Industrial Expansion

- The Pulicat Lake, the second largest brackish water lagoon in India, is under threat from industrial expansion in Tamil Nadu.

- The government is denotifying parts of the Pulicat bird sanctuary, including 13 revenue villages, to reduce its eco-sensitive zone.

- The sanctuary, which supports rich biodiversity, is threatened by a port expansion plan and an industrial park within the current default eco-sensitive zone.

- Environmentalists fear that the move will facilitate industrial expansion, exacerbating the harm to the wetland ecosystem.

- Proposals for the development of an industrial

park and a new factory for chemical compound production within the sanctuary's default eco-sensitive zone have been made.

- The ESZ rules do not mandate displacement and evacuation of locals living in the villages, but regulate activities such as commercial mining, stone quarrying, hydroelectric generation, handling of hazardous substances, discharge of untreated effluents, and setting up of brick kilns and polluting industries.

- Environmentalists have written to the State authorities, including Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, urging them not to denotify parts of the sanctuary.

Ennore-Pulicat Wetland's Aquatic Life and Industrial Development



- The Ennore-Pulicat wetland in Tiruvallur district is facing a decline in aquatic life due to industrial effluents.

- The proliferation of invasive charru mussels has affected the growth of various species of prawns, including white prawns, tiger prawns, black prawns, sand prawns, green crab, mullets, and more.

- The announcement of a reduction in the ESZ has come as a shock to locals, but officials maintain that the notification will help conserve the lake.

- The Collector stated that if 13 villages were included in the sanctuary, the government would have to acquire all the land, meaning locals could not own any stretch of land.

- Residents of Annamalaicheri and Avurivakkam (Keelkuppam) have submitted their only request - there must be no impediment to their livelihood and authorities must allow them to access fishing grounds in the lake.
- The claim settlement exercise will define the rights and entitlements of the locals, but concerns have been raised about the damage to the ecology and livelihood of the locals due to industrial development.
- A complex ecosystem is being threatened by any major commercial construction, which could damage the lake and may contaminate the groundwater.
- Expert member Sukumar Raman proposed a site visit before deciding on the approval for the expansion of the steel plants and the construction of the industrial park.
- A conservation plan for a wetland needs to consider the entire watershed of the area, especially if it is a wetland system.
- The Forest Department official said an expert agency would be roped in for advice on the demarcation of the ESZ.
- The renewed call for claiming rights within the notified boundary has to be seen in light of the State's interests in fostering port- and expressway-led industrial and logistics development in Ponneri.

Climate Change Jurisdiction in India's M.K. Ranjitsinh and Ors. vs Union of India and Ors.

- The Supreme Court of India's judgment extends constitutional rights to life and equality to the right to be free from climate change ill-effects.
- The judgment could be used to help governments adapt to the ill-impacts of the climate crisis.
- The judgment's observations on the

disproportionate share of impacts felt by marginalized sections of society can be the basis for corrective action.

- The judgment contains flaws that could undermine its potential.
- The court's orders on the conservation of the Great Indian Bustard, a threat to whose habitat by mega-energy in western India was the core matter of the petition, are not discussed.
- The court has not interrogated several problematic aspects of India's proposed energy transition.
- The government includes large hydropower and nuclear plants in 'non-fossil-fuel' and 'renewable' energy, which have caused destabilization, biodiversity loss, and displacement of communities.
- Mega-solar and wind projects have huge adverse impacts, such as taking away grazing and agricultural land and destroying wildlife.
- Despite significant investment in renewable energy, the government is not reducing investments in coal.

Court's Acceptance of Energy Transition in India

- The Court's acceptance of mega-projects undermines its assertion of a clean and healthy environment as a fundamental human right.
- Alternatives to mega-projects, such as rooftop and decentralized renewable energy sources, could yield over 600 GW.
- The Court should have considered the potential of power redistribution, from luxury consumption to poorer sections, to avoid the need for new power production.
- The Court has ignored climate-related judgments and international agreements, ignoring the growing jurisprudence and United Nations' declarations on rights of nature.
- Compliance with global treaties on human rights and indigenous people's rights would

require critical appraisal of mega-renewable energy projects.

- The Court could expand the positive potential of the judgment by adding aspects to the mandate of the expert committee, including alternative, less damaging ways of generating or obtaining power from mega-projects.

The Indian Model of Development

- India's model of development, heavily focused on mega-industrial, infrastructural, and extractive projects, is fundamentally violative of constitutional rights.

- The government's proposal to deforest 130 square kilometers of pristine rainforest and take up lands reserved for Scheduled Tribes in Great Nicobar violates this line of the Court's judgment.

- If the Court were to declare climate as a fundamental right, it should direct the government to re-examine such projects.

The Importance of Inheritance Tax in Reducing Inequality

- High inequality harms growth by hampering firm productivity, reducing labor income, and diverting resources away from rights like education.

- The place of birth holds inordinate power in directing lifetime outcomes in unequal countries.

- High inequality is associated with political polarisation and increased conflict.

- Inequality is likely to have a negative multiplier effect on the economy, reducing aggregate demand, limits production and investments, and leading to lower growth rates in the future.

Implications of Inheritance Tax

- When implemented well, inheritance tax reduces the concentration of wealth and encourages shifting investments from non-productive to productive activities.

- Property of the elite being bequeathed to

descendants implies that the descendants do no work to acquire it.

- Some argue that inheritance tax will disincentivize innovations, but this disregards the need for innovation to be competitive today.

- Revenue generated from inheritance tax can be used to fund a diversified set of innovations.

Application of Land Value Tax (LVT)

- LVT taxes the rental value of land, without considering the property built on it.

- Land is a natural resource and is unresponsive to changes in taxes, making it an efficient source of revenue.

- Land value tax (LVT) can be a useful redistributive mechanism due to its role in perpetuating feudal caste relations in rural India and the pervasive politician-builder nexus in urban India.

Response to Tax Evasion

- Research shows that sufficient investment in improving tax compliance can yield revenue up to 10 times the investment.

- Auditing the top 1% and 0.1% generated three to six times the return on investment.

- A 2% wealth tax and a 33.3% inheritance tax only on the top 1% in India can raise an additional public expenditure of 10% of the GDP.

Kotak Mahindra Bank's Regulated Actions

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has barred Kotak Mahindra Bank (KMB) from onboarding new customers and issuing fresh credit cards due to "serious deficiencies and non-compliances" in the bank's IT systems and controls.

- The bank's CEO, Ashok Vaswani, stated that the RBI's actions were necessary due to

deficiencies observed in the bank's IT systems and controls.

- The RBI's actions were based on a two-year examination of the bank's systems in 2022 and 2023.
- KMB was found to have failed to address concerns comprehensively and timely.
- The bank was also deemed non-compliant with RBI's recommendations or 'Corrective Action Plans' (CAPs), which are part of an intervention scheme to ensure the robustness of regulated entities.
- The bank's IT infrastructure and risk management systems have led to frequent and significant outages in its online and digital banking channels.
- The bank's technical servers are experiencing "intermittent slowness" and the current measures will be reviewed in an external audit with RBI's approval.
- The RBI has been wary of how digital banking and the overall financial landscape functions, with previous restrictions on HDFC launching new digital products and sourcing new credit card consumers in December 2020.
- S&P Global Ratings suggests that the regulatory action may set back the bank's credit growth and profitability.
- The bank's net profit in the fourth quarter rose 18% to ₹4,133 crore from ₹3,496 crore in the year-ago period.
- The bank had plans to continue investing in their card franchise, but the plan may now be put on hold.
- Brokerage services provider Motilal Oswal noted that the ban would affect the growth trajectory of the bank's retail products and adversely impact their margins and profitability.

Dignified Peaceful Passing: A Need for Dignified Care in India

- Dr. M.R. Rajagopal, founder-chairman of Pallium India, highlights the lack of preparedness in Indian families for the inevitable death of an incurable disease.
- Ronald Reagan and Atal Bihari Vajpayee, former Prime Minister of India, both died on artificial life support systems, contrasting the situation in India.
- In Europe, terminally-ill people are allowed to die a natural death by taking them off life support systems if the likelihood of a return to a reasonable quality of life is low.
- In India, approximately 70% of patients with incurable critical illness die on life support systems alone in the ICU, leaving families dealing with hefty hospital bills and no time to grieve.
- The remaining 30% of these deaths are mediated through the Left Against Medical Advice/Discharged Against Medical Advice (LAMA/DAMA) practice, which is ethically unjustifiable and results in unplanned treatment limitations without a formal shift to palliative care.
- The practice of routinisation of intensive care deaths is a result of the nuclearisation of families, making death less familiar to the average person.
- The lack of legal clarity in India is another contributing factor, with no law covering end-of-life care. In its absence, a Supreme Court of India verdict of 2023 remains valid, allowing any advance medical directive left by a mentally competent person to be valid and binding on health-care professionals.
- The use of the phrase "passive euthanasia" adds to the confusion, as it involves killing even if the intentions are good, not passive.
- The World Health Organization defines health as "physical, social and mental well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

- The right to health includes the right to palliative care, and a rational system in place is needed to allow everyone to live with some dignity during the last few days and to go in peace.

The Politics of Performance: The Role of Competency in India's Democracy

The Role of Eligible Representatives

- Eligible representatives embody the people's mandate in India's democracy.
- They formulate policies and ensure their implementation at the central and State government levels.
- They raise issues of the people in Parliament, Assembly, and Councils, and work on issues of importance as part of committees.

The Need for Competency in Eligible Representatives

- Behavioral skills are at the heart of political competency, enabling politicians to engage effectively with various stakeholders.
- Representatives must excel in communication, verbal and written, and public engagement.
- Effective leadership and negotiation skills are vital in uniting diverse teams and managing different stakeholders.

Functional Competencies

- Representatives must understand the rules and processes underpinning legislation and policy implementation.
- They must be competent in translating citizen grievances and communicating policy gaps to decision-makers.
- Legislative advocacy can influence policy changes.

Domain-based Competencies

- Domain-based competencies are crucial for elected officials, tailored to meet the specific needs of their constituencies and manage their unique portfolios effectively.
- Examples include understanding public health management, health-care laws, insurance systems, and global health trends.
- Awareness of the latest technological advancements and their implications on public services and economic growth are essential.

Institutionalizing the Vision

- To institutionalize the vision, it is crucial to align these competencies with their specific roles.
- The success of competency-based politics also relies on a shift in public perception.
- The measure of a politician's success is not just in the victories they achieve but in the vision they embody, the integrity they uphold, and the impact they have on society.

"Giving Primacy to Human Development" by M. Suresh Babu

India's Human Development and Inequality

- India's Human Development Report 2023-24 and World Inequality Lab's 2024 report highlight India's low human development and high inequality.
- India ranked 134 out of 193 countries in the UN Human Development Index (HDI) in 2022, an improvement from 135 out of 192 countries in 2021.
- Despite this, India still falls behind Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and China, and the medium human development category includes Myanmar, Ghana, Kenya, Congo, and Angola.

Gender Inequality and Human Development

- India has one of the largest gender gaps in its labour force participation rate, with a 47.8% difference between women (28.3%) and men (76.1%).
- Inequality between countries at the upper and lower ends of the HDI started to increase each year since 2020.
- The share of people reporting having very high control over their lives is low and relatively equal for the bottom 50% of the population, but rises with income for deciles 6 and above.

Widening Inequality

- The World Inequality Lab study shows that the bottom 50% received only 15% of India's national income in 2022-23.
- The top 1% earn on average 5.3 million, 23 times the average Indian (INR 0.23 million).
- The real growth rate of incomes at each percentile of the income distribution shows that those at the very top benefited much more than the rest of the population.

Household Debt and Economic Polarization

- Household debt levels reached a record high of 40% of GDP by December 2023, with annual borrowings of households surged to 5.8% of GDP in 2022-23.
- The narrative of development needs to be recast to accord primacy to human development.

Nagaland's Delay in Civic Body Polls

- Nagaland's urban local body elections have been stalled for 20 years due to opposition to the reservation of 33% of wards reserved for women.
- The first civic body election in Nagaland was held in 2004 without any reservation of seats for women.

- The State government amended the 2001 Municipal Act in 2006 to include 33% reservation for women in line with the 74th Amendment.

- Efforts to hold the elections in March 2012 met with strong protests and the State Assembly passed a resolution to exempt Nagaland from Article 243T of the Constitution related to the reservation for women.

- The government declared the process to conduct election null and void in February 2017. In November 2023, the Assembly unanimously passed an amended Municipal Bill that retained the 33% quota to pave the way for the ULB polls.

- The Nagaland Municipal Act of 2023 did away with the reservation for the chairperson's post and taxation on women.

- The reservation of seats was worked out according to the April 30 notification, with the filing of nominations held from June 7-11, scrutiny of nominations held on June 13, and the last date of withdrawal of candidature will be June 20.

- The Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO) has affirmed its decision not to participate in the ULB polls, in continuation of its resolution not to participate in any Central or State election in protest against New Delhi's failure to create the autonomous Frontier Nagaland Territory.

Paul Auster's Reflections on Loss and Death

- Paul Auster, a renowned American writer, passed away on April 30, 2024, at the age of 77.
- His works, including 18 novels, explore universal themes such as love, life, death, chance, and memory.
- His works, particularly his novels, chronicled New York, particularly Brooklyn, in a unique way.
- Despite his illness, Auster's writings helped readers understand and cope with life's uncertainty.

Metaphor of Loss

- Auster's memoir, *The Invention of Solitude*, explores his difficult relationship with his father, who suddenly passed away.
- His works, including *The New York Trilogy*, *City of Glass*, *Ghosts*, and *The Locked Room*, are filled with coincidences, literary references, and wordplay.

Frailty, Strength, and the Art of Motion

- Auster's novels often depict people grappling with devastating loss, highlighting the importance of motion and the act of putting one foot in front of the other.
- His stories also map contemporary America with its follies and desperate dreams.

Auster's Relationship with J.M. Coetzee

- Auster and Coetzee began a correspondence, discussing various topics, including writing, sports, films, and the Israel-Palestine conflict.
- Auster's writing style was characterized by longhand writing and typed manuscripts on an Olympia typewriter.

Auster's Legacy

- His work leaves a rich legacy, with his last novel, *Baumgartner*, a contemplative exploration of life's ultimate fate.

Typhoid in India: The Widal Test and Its Impact

Typhoid in India: A Complex Problem

- Typhoid, caused by *Salmonella typhi* and other

bacteria, is a common disease in India, with 90 lakh people diagnosed worldwide and 1.1 lakh dying of it.

- The Widal test, a rapid blood test, is often used to diagnose typhoid, a disease that can be life-threatening if left untreated.

Diagnosis of Typhoid

- The gold standard for diagnosing typhoid is to isolate bacteria from a patient's blood or bone marrow and grow them in the lab.
- Culture tests in smaller clinical settings are time-consuming and resource-intensive, and prior antibiotic treatment can affect the results of cultures.
- The Widal test, developed in the late 1800s by a French physician, is no longer used in many countries due to its flaws.

Improper Use of Widal Test

- A single positive Widal test report doesn't necessarily mean a typhoid infection is present, and a negative report doesn't confirm the disease's absence.
- To diagnose an active infection, clinicians must test at least two serum samples taken at least 7-14 days apart.
- In areas with high and continuous typhoid burden, certain levels of antibodies against the bacteria may already be present in the blood.
- The reagents used in the Widal test can cross-react with antibodies produced against other bacteria, viruses or parasites, leading to false positives.

Consequences of the Widal Test

- The actual burden of typhoid in India remains obfuscated due to the Widal test's propensity for erroneous results.
- The irrational use of antibiotics is a major cause of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), which can be

transmitted between strains and species.

- The threat of AMR in one country represents the threat of AMR everywhere.

Alternative Solutions

- The need for better point-of-care tests that can replace the Widal test, and the use of best-practice heuristics that provide a rational diagnosis and treatment options based on the regional data of effective antibiotics available against the bacteria.
- Improved access to better diagnostic tests and better surveillance to stay on top of the AMR caused by the overuse of the Widal test.
- Constant environmental vigilance and data-sharing are imperative as typhoid also has symptom-free carriers.

Women's Cricket's Growth and T20 World Cup Qualifiers

- Women's cricket has seen exponential growth globally, with professional contracts, franchise leagues, and full-time players.
- The recent T20 World Cup Qualifiers highlighted the surge in the women's game and the need for a wider playing platform.
- Sri Lanka and Scotland, led by veteran allrounder Chamari Athapaththu, and the Bryce sisters Kathryn and Sarah, completed the deck for the upcoming women's T20 showpiece in Bangladesh.
- Sri Lanka, led by veteran allrounder Chamari Athapaththu, and Scotland, led by the Bryce sisters Kathryn and Sarah, are in the group of death in the tournament alongside Australia, India, Pakistan, and New Zealand.
- The journey to the World Cup was challenging, with Sri Lanka winning all its group games and a win against Scotland.
- The final in Abu Dhabi was a final between the two sides, with Athapaththu scoring the first T20I

century by a Sri Lankan woman.

- The final aimed to determine which groups they would complete in the World Cup draw, with Sri Lanka's reward being a place in the cut-throat group A.
- Scotland's competition is no easier with neighbouring England and South Africa improving their T20 pedigree, while West Indies will bank on a Hayley (Matthews) storm as it looks to play to its potential in the World event.

Cricket in Vanuatu: A Case Study

- Vanuatu, an amateur cricket team, has partnered with I Comply Labour and Agricultural Compliance to provide training facilities and nets.
- The ICC sends the nation around \$500,000 to manage its running, including playing for contracted players, programs, and maintaining grounds and equipment.
- Vanuatu made it to the World Cup qualifiers after winning the East Asia and Pacific regional qualifiers, becoming the first outfit to make the Qualifiers of the World event.
- Despite financial struggles, Vanuatu's campaign on social media received significant support, with Hannah Darlington and other wellwishers supporting the cause.
- Vanuatu's first competitive encounter against a Full-Member nation was a historic victory, but they were placed last in the group table.
- Ireland's loss in the semifinals against Sri Lanka was a setback, but the nation's resources to support programmes for men's and women's cricket were not compromised.
- Bangladesh's captain, Athapaththu, has a big goal post to play towards, with a flourishing side that will not allow teams to pass over it.
- The 2024 World Cup will see two variants, with the men's variant in USA and West Indies and the women's event in Scotland.

- The World Cup is seen as a developmental vehicle for teams to compete with higher-ranked opponents and achieve Full Member status.

Cybersecurity Concerns in the AI-Influencing World

- The misuse of generative AI has led to a rise in cyber threats, with a 1,265% increase in phishing incidents and a 967% increase in credential phishing since Q4 2022.
- Generative AI has transformed sectors like education, banking, healthcare, and manufacturing, but also transformed the paradigm of cyber-risks and safety.
- A study by Deep Instinct found that 75% of professionals witnessed an increase in cyberattacks in the past year, with 85% attributed to the increased risk to generative AI.
- Newer, more complex threats have emerged, including cognitive behavioral manipulation, voice-activation toys, and remote and real-time biometric identification systems.
- The increasing manipulation via generative AI has resulted in the vulnerability of organizations to attacks, with undetectable phishing attacks, an increase in the volume of attacks, and growing privacy concerns as the biggest challenges.
- The Bletchley Declaration, signed by countries like China, the European Union, France, Germany, India, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States, emphasizes the need to safeguard consumers against the challenges posed by advanced technologies.
- Corporate level efforts are needed to enhance digital awareness via occupational media and digital literacy training sessions.
- Non-governmental organizations and outreach organizations play a crucial role in fostering a digitally savvy citizenry and building a robust defense against evolving threats in an AI-driven

digital landscape.

The Constitution and Affirmative Action in India

Constitution and Affirmative Action

- Articles 15 and 16 of the Indian Constitution guarantee equality and special provisions for the advancement of OBC, SC, and ST communities.
- The Supreme Court has upheld reservations for these communities, setting a cap of 50% unless under exceptional circumstances.
- The reservation percentages vary from State to State.
- The Indra Sawhney case (1992) upheld the 27% reservation for OBC, stating caste is a determinant of class in the Indian context.
- The Janhit Abhiyan case (2022) upheld the constitutional validity of the EWS reservation, stating economic criteria could be a basis for reservation.

Affirmative Action in Other Countries

- There is a debate over the inclusion of Muslims in the OBC quota in Karnataka.
- Some argue it aligns with the Constitution's aim of social justice, while others oppose it due to historical opposition to reservation solely based on religion.
- Suggestions include sub-categorisation within reserved categories, addressing the concentration of reservation benefits, extending reservation to Dalit Christians and Muslims, and deliberating on increasing the reservation limit beyond 50%.

Current Debate

- The Constituent assembly that framed the Constitution was against reservation solely based on religion.
- The inclusion of all Muslim communities within the OBC quota in Karnataka forms the basis for

the BJP's campaign at present.

- Sub-categorisation for Muslims within the OBC quota has been present in Karnataka since 1995.
- The Congress has promised to work towards removing the 50% cap placed on reservations.

The Way Forward

- Reservation is an affirmative action meant to balance the historical discrimination faced by OBC, SC and ST communities.
- The Rohini Commission was set up to provide recommendations on sub-categorisation amongst OBC castes.
- The government has constituted a commission to study the question of extending SC reservation to Dalits who have converted to religions other than Sikhism and Buddhism.

Protesting Students at US Campuses

- Students across US campuses are protesting against the genocide in Gaza, driven by dread and urgency.
- In the late-1980s, university administrators were embarrassed about aligning with the apartheid state of South Africa.
- Today, with Islamophobia and anti-Palestinian racism normalized in the U.S., university administrators are proudly aligning with this genocide.
- Students are demanding disclosure and divestment in corporations complicit in weapons manufacturing and the Israeli occupation of Palestine.
- The call for "cops off campus" is a reflection of the abolitionist critiques of the police as a racist institution.
- The protection of pro-Palestine speech and activism is a reflection of university administrators' complicity in the "Palestine exception" to academic freedom.

• In New York University, students are educating each other on the history of the Levant, colonialism, racial violence, and the complexities of historic Palestine.

• They are studying apartheid as a technology of governance, anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism, and the history of Palestinian resistance.

• The teach-ins and 'people's universities' are about students taking back their right to education, speech, and dissent from a history of repression of Palestine solidarity in the U.S.

University Clampdowns and Pro-Palestine Protests

University Discipline and Pro-Palestine Activism

- University administrators began disciplinary procedures against pro-Palestine solidarity and activism.
- Local chapters of national organizations like Jewish Voice for Peace and Students for Justice in Palestine were banned.
- As the war escalated, student protests proliferated, leading to increased university surveillance and crackdowns.
- The Joe Biden administration supported Israel's war effort, and right-wing politicians interrogated university presidents on campus political culture.

De-Occupation Encampments

- Students channeled their protest into peaceful encampments in their universities, spreading to campuses across the country.
- These protests are rooted in the history of American military occupation, referencing the American Indian Wars, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and wars of Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq.
- The movement is not just a New York moment, but also across the country, shaped by Black Lives Matter and the Standing Rock movement.

Radical Futures

- The NYU administration's call for NYU students' arrests is seen as a violent invocation of the law.
 - Students risk suspensions and arrests in solidarity with the people of Gaza, using their privilege to expose and disrupt the ideological and economic ties bind American universities to the forces of genocide.
 - Inspired by struggles in historic Palestine and the Palestinian diaspora, students join Audre Lorde's vision for a future in a free Palestine.

Independent Journalists on YouTube vs TV Journalists in India

- A 2022 survey by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS)-Lokniti and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung revealed that TV channels dominate as the news source in India, despite low trust levels.
- In 2023, a Global Fact 10 research report revealed that more Indians are placing their trust in YouTube and WhatsApp for news.
- Ravish Kumar and Kunal Purohit discussed the question, arguing that independent journalists on YouTube are slowly replacing TV journalists in India.
- Kumar cited the decline in content in TV news, with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi not contesting from Amethi and the BJP not contesting any of the three Lok Sabha seats in Jammu and Kashmir.
- Purohit emphasized the challenges of YouTube, including speculation, overstep in analysis, and different language.
- Purohit argued that YouTube is in a nascent stage and will take time to evolve, but it is a marginal platform that people support.
- Purohit also highlighted the de-legitimization of media, leading people to look for sources of information they could trust, leading to a shift towards YouTube.
- Purohit emphasized the importance of knowledge sharing and the need for more skilled, ethical

journalists to join the platform.

- Purohit noted that more Indians now turn to YouTube than even Google search, and that the idea of "setting narratives" online is becoming increasingly popular.

YouTube's Impact on Disinformation and Government Narratives

- YouTube journalists amplify reports from good newspapers to reach a wider audience.
 - The government's Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill, 2023, seeks to regulate OTT and digital news platforms.
 - The Bill aims to curb disinformation, with some channels like NMF News being targeted for propaganda.
 - Independent journalists on YouTube express confusion about why their views have suddenly dropped.
 - YouTube has removed some channels without explaining why, leading to lack of transparency and arbitrariness.
 - The Prime Minister has reportedly addressed about 5,000 content creators.
 - Right-wing support for YouTubers, such as Manish Kashyap, who spread fake news and joined the BJP.
 - The Prime Minister's interaction with YouTubers and awards them indicates the establishment's belief in YouTube as a medium for setting narratives.
 - The success of fake narratives in the election is uncertain, with many challenging the BJP's narratives.

Breaking Boundaries: Cultural Shifts in Cinematic Depictions of Love and Desire

Cultural Shifts in English Cinema

- From the liberated '70s to the conservative '90s, sex and sexuality in English cinema have evolved.

- Classic and camp films like China Town, The Godfather Part II, and The Towering Inferno were released in 1974.
- The late '80s saw a resurgence of openness in sex, with films like Fatal Attraction, Basic Instinct, and Disclosure.

Love and Vengeance

- Paul Verhoeven's Basic Instinct was heteronormative with a vengeance, while Ang Lee's Brokeback Mountain won Oscars for its portrayal of a love that can't be named.
- Todd Haynes' Carol, based on Patricia Highsmith's semi-autobiographical novel, The Price of Salt, was a decade later.
- Despite the heteronormative slant, the lovers and their furtive love mostly didn't have happy endings.

Sex on Screen as 21st Century

- As the millennium turned 21, sex was back on screen, with the presence of intimacy coordinators on set.
- The second season of The Deuce, Bridgerton, and Euphoria have followed suit, with Michaela Coel dedicating her BAFTA for the hard hitting I May Destroy You to her intimacy coordinator.

'All kinds of fun'

- Films and shows have shown sex as all kinds of fun, from Sex Education to Minx set in adult magazines.
- Shows like Sex/Life and Obsession follow the '90s erotic thriller template with sweat, grunts, groans, and impossible contortions.
- Challengers explores the life, love, and sexualities of three tennis players, Tashi, Patrick, and Art.

Realisation and Normalisation

- The Sandman spin-off series, Dead Boy

Detectives, features Edwin's realisation of his sexuality and a not-so-nice dating experience for Jenny.

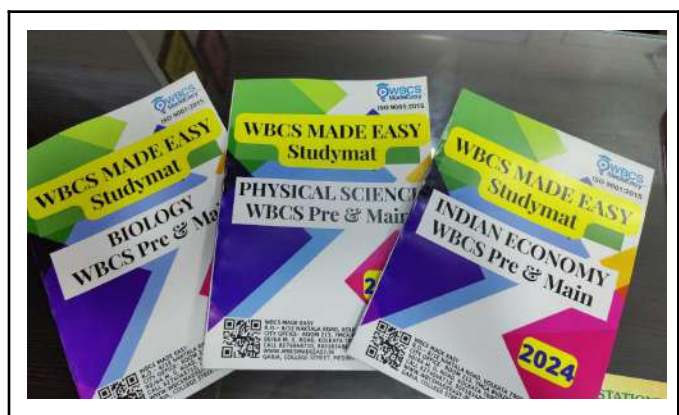
- Highsmith's Happy Ending to The Price of Salt is a step forward in normalizing sex.

FREE WORKSHOP
WBCS (EXE.) ETC. EXAM

- Syllabus
- Booklist
- Qualification
- Age limit
- Strategy
- How to become a Topper

REGISTER NOW

9674493673
2ND JUNE 12 PM - 2 PM
ADMISSION LIMITED
AT COLLEGE STREET CAMPUS
<https://bit.ly/WBCS-MADE-EASY-SEMINARS>





WBCS MADE EASY MOCK INTERVIEW & INTERVIEW GROOMING

JOIN NOW

Limited Seats

GROOMING STARTS
SOON
(COLLEGE STREET)

Rs 2499/-
+GST



BOARD WITH IAS (RETD), IPS & WBCS (EXE) / GR A OFFICERS
WBCS Group A & B 2022 EXAM

CALL 8274048710, 8585843673, 1800 572 9282



SUNDAY SUMMIT

Weekly Current Affairs
-বাংলায়, pdf সহ-

EPOSIODE # 6
Sundays @ 8-9 pm

