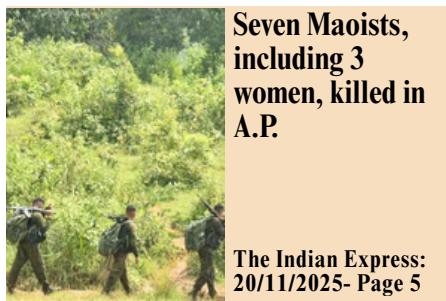




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Seven Maoists, including 3 women, killed in A.P.

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Kerala HC pulls up Devaswom Board for poor Sabarimala crowd control

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Climate talks veer away from implementation

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Former Chile President gets Indira Gandhi Peace Prize

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India's Russian oil cuts predate U.S. tariffs: data



India is implementing a larger strategy to reduce its dependence on oil imports from Russia, with the higher tariffs imposed by the U.S. coming at a time when India was already cutting its Russian oil imports, according to an analysis of official data. This has been confirmed by government officials. The Russian oil-related 25% additional tariff by the U.S. on Indian imports came into effect on August 27. February, May, June, July, and September — the cuts exceeded 20% each.

Since the 50% tariffs were imposed, U.S. President Donald Trump has been repeatedly claiming that India will be cutting its imports of Russian oil, something the Indian government has neither confirmed nor denied. Separately, formal trade talks between India and the U.S. have resumed after a brief hiatus, with statements again being made about tranche one of a Bilateral Trade Agreement expected to be concluded "soon". Several Indian Ministers, including External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, have asserted that India will make its energy import decisions as per its needs and best interests, and not under duress. The reduction of Russian oil is not just in absolute terms, but also in terms of its share in India's total oil imports. Russia's war in Ukraine, the resultant sanctions on it by the U.S. and Europe, and the discounts it provided India resulted in a significant shift in India's oil import basket for a few years after the war started, with an increasing dependence on Russia. Some of that is now reversing itself as India has started shifting away from Russian oil. In the first six months of 2025-26, the U.S. share has once again increased to 8% and that of the UAE to 11.7%, even as Russia's share has fallen to 32.3%.



Mist generators being used to fight air pollution in New Delhi on Wednesday. The Supreme Court on Wednesday gave the Commission for Air Quality Management a free hand to take 'any proactive measure' to curb air pollution.



Janata Dal-(United) President Nitish Kumar on Thursday (November 20, 2025) will take oath as the Chief Minister of Bihar for a record 10th time in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Amit Shah, J.P. Nadda, and several other NDA leaders. Bihar Governor Arif Mohammad Khan will administer him the oath. The oath-taking ceremony will be held at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday at Gandhi Maidan in Patna.

Kerala HC pulls up Devaswom Board for poor Sabarimala crowd control

Kerala High Court's Criticism

- The Kerala High Court strongly criticized the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) for its poor handling of crowd management at Sabarimala, particularly during the Mandalam-Makaravilakku pilgrimage season.
- The court attributed the problems to slack coordination among board officials, indicating systemic management failures.

Concerns Over Pilgrim Safety

- This highlights the HC's worry about thousands of pilgrims getting stranded due to overcrowding and insufficient arrangements.
- The court questioned why preparations for the heavy inflow of devotees were not made at least six months in advance, given the predictable surge in visitors.

Critique of Current Practices

- The court observed that merely frisking and pushing pilgrims forward without considering the temple's capacity was a "wrong approach".
- It directed the TDB to provide information about the maximum number of pilgrims that could be accommodated at any given time, and asked for detailed capacity figures for each sector of the temple premises.

Call for Sector-wise Regulation

- The HC suggested that pilgrims should be divided by sectors to regulate crowd control, which would allow authorities to manage the crowd more efficiently based on specific area capacities.
- Demand for Protocols and Controlled Entry
- Given space and safety limitations, the court stated that only a controlled number of pilgrims should be allowed entry, proportionate to available space and adherence to safety protocols.
- The court requested clarification for why prior crowd-control instructions were not followed and directed the TDB to swiftly implement scientific crowd management measures.

Overall Implications

- This underscores the importance of proactive planning, scientific crowd management principles, and accountability for temple authorities to prevent dangerous congestion and ensure the safety and dignity of pilgrims.

Seven Maoists, including 3 women, killed in A.P.

- Seven Maoists were killed in an encounter with the police in the Mareduilli forests of Alluri Sitarama Raju district, Andhra Pradesh, early on Wednesday.
- This was the second major encounter within 24 hours in the forests near G.M. Valasa of the same district, indicating an intensified security operation against Maoist groups in the region.
- Among those killed was Metturi Joga Rao, alias Tech Shankar, a CPI (Maoist) central committee member in charge of the Andhra-Odisha border, and a specialist in technical operations.
- Maoist commander Madvi Hidma and his wife, Kamalatha Raje, were killed in an earlier encounter on Tuesday in the same area, marking the loss of two top leadership figures in quick succession.
- Police and intelligence officials held a press conference displaying weapons and materials seized from the Maoists, signifying the seriousness and scale of the security operation.
- Maoist activity is concentrated in the "Red Corridor" that covers parts of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal, and Kerala, predominantly tribal and mineral-rich regions.
- At its peak, Maoist insurgency impacted over 200 districts in around 20 states, but concerted government action has reduced its reach in recent years.
- Maoism has thrived amid poverty, underdevelopment, and alienation in tribal and rural communities, often exploiting local grievances such as land rights, displacement due to mining, and lack of governance.
- The movement has disrupted social and infrastructure development, attacking and destroying roads, schools, health centers, and other public assets to deny state influence and maintain territorial control.
- The movement is in decline due to sustained security operations, improved infrastructure, social development, and weakening of ideological appeal and leadership.
- Maoism has inadvertently acted as a catalyst for progressive reforms, forcing governments to address long-ignored demands of rural and tribal communities in some cases.
- It remains a reminder for India to balance security operations with inclusive development, human rights protection, and accountable governance.

Taliban Industry Minister begins India visit to boost ties, cut reliance on Pakistan

- The visit takes place against the backdrop of ongoing tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan, highlighting Afghanistan's efforts to reduce dependency on Pakistani ports for trade and commerce.
- By choosing India as an alternative commercial partner and connectivity hub, Afghanistan aims to bypass Pakistan, thus enhancing bilateral trade relations and direct access to Indian markets.

Diplomatic Significance

- The visit by Alhaj Nooruddin Azizi is portrayed as a major outreach by the Taliban administration, coming just a month after India's External Affairs Minister hosted Taliban's Acting Foreign Minister in Delhi.
- These diplomatic engagements signal a visible strengthening of air and trade corridors between India and Afghanistan post-2021, when the Taliban returned to power in Kabul.

Economic and Trade Dimensions

- Azizi's delegation attended the India International Trade Fair (IITF) 2025 to explore opportunities to enhance bilateral investment and trade.
- Indian representatives and officials from the India Trade Promotion Organisation discussed the potential for Afghan participation in future Indian trade events, showcasing products like pharmaceuticals, textiles, machinery, and agricultural goods.
- Afghanistan is keen on importing Indian agricultural products and minerals, which have strong market prospects in India.

Reducing Pakistani Reliance

- Official sources detail Afghanistan's intention to minimize dependence on Pakistani routes and ports, notably Karachi, for its commercial needs.
- Afghanistan has started utilizing alternative corridors such as Chabahar Port in Iran, in collaboration with India, to enhance trade connectivity and diversify supply chains away from Pakistani infrastructure.

Long-Term Implications

- The visit could offer India the opportunity to expand its influence in Afghanistan's markets, especially in sectors like hydroelectric projects and infrastructure.
- Both sides see this engagement as mutually beneficial: India gains a foothold in Afghanistan's future economic landscape, and Afghanistan acquires a more secure and diversified trade route for international commerce.

Former Chile President gets Indira Gandhi Peace Prize

- The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2024 was awarded to Michelle Bachelet by Sonia Gandhi, highlighting her global contributions to human rights and development.
- Bachelet is recognized as the first and only woman President of Chile and former chief of UN Human Rights, which underscores her international stature and impact.

Achievements and Contributions

- During her terms as President of Chile (2006-2010, 2014-2018), Bachelet established institutions like the National Institute for Human Rights and the Museum of Memory and Human Rights.
- She was instrumental in the creation of the Ministry of Women and Gender Equality and promoted LGBT rights and women's political participation.
- Her tenure was marked by significant reforms aimed at social inclusion and equality.

Advocacy and Critique

- As UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Bachelet was critical of the Indian government, urging protection of NGOs and expressing concern about misuse of regulatory mechanisms like the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA).
- She also voiced criticism of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and handling of human rights issues, specifically mentioning constraints and punitive actions against activists and NGOs.
- Bachelet spoke out regarding the use of UAPA and its potential for abuse in India, advocating for the safeguarding of basic freedoms.

International Impact

- This highlights Bachelet's legacy in Latin America, her advocacy for human rights across borders, and her efforts in extending legal protections during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Her leadership at the UN is described as a model for advancing causes of disarmament, peace, and sustainable development globally.

Ceremony and Historical Connections

- Award presentation by Sonia Gandhi also drew historical parallels between the struggles and leadership of Indira Gandhi and Michelle Bachelet, both facing political challenges but championing social welfare and diversity.
- This notes Bachelet's personal history of suffering under dictatorship, which informs her ongoing commitment to rights and justice.
- The ceremony at which the award was presented was marked by praise of Bachelet's "remarkable coincidence" of personal and professional resilience and her ability to inspire societies through inclusive leadership.
- Sonia Gandhi described Bachelet as one of the "most outstanding women leaders of our time," reflecting the significance of this international recognition.

Jaishankar inaugurates two new consulates in Russia, hails Delhi-Moscow ties

Expansion of Diplomatic Footprint

- India inaugurated two new Consulates General in Yekaterinburg and Kazan, expanding its diplomatic presence in Russia beyond Moscow and St. Petersburg.
- This move is described as a significant day in India's diplomatic history with Russia, boosting opportunities for deeper cultural and strategic ties.

Strategic and Economic Significance

- Yekaterinburg, called the "third capital of Russia," is highlighted for its industrial importance, including heavy engineering, metallurgy, machinery, chemicals, and medical equipment.
- Kazan is a major Russian city, famed for oil production, refining, automotives, pharmaceuticals, engineering, and as a host of the 2024 BRICS summit attended by Prime Minister Modi.
- The new consulates are intended to give impetus for strengthening technological, scientific, economic, and trade collaborations between India and Russia, and facilitate tourism, education, and cultural exchanges.

Diplomatic Support and Cooperation

- The event saw attendance from Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko and India's Ambassador to Russia Vinay Kumar, emphasizing mutual support from both governments.
- Jaishankar acknowledged consistent Russian support for India's expanding diplomatic presence in the country.

Importance for Bilateral Relations

- Jaishankar expressed confidence that these consulates will further strengthen the India-Russia relationship, marking an "expansion of our presence in Russia" which will reflect positively on multiple areas of cooperation.
- The development is positioned as part of a wider effort to deepen India-Russia ties in various sectors.

Broader Implications

- The establishment of these consulates reflects India's approach to multi-city diplomatic engagement, enabling more robust regional economic, academic, scientific, and technological ties in addition to government-to-government contacts.

Climate talks veer away from 'implementation'

- COP30 climate talks in Belém, Brazil, are marked by disputes over financing and action pathways, hampering progress toward concrete climate implementation.
- Activists in the venue highlight frustration with the talks, criticizing a lack of decisive movement away from fossil fuels and the continued division among countries, particularly between wealthy nations and the 'Like Minded Developing Countries' (LMDC) bloc, which includes Saudi Arabia and major Asian economies.

Finance and Commitments

- Previous climate pledges, such as the \$300 billion annual finance commitment by rich countries (from Baku), have been criticized by developing nations like India as insufficient — especially when funds are offered only as loans or grants tied to commercial transactions instead of robust public finance.
- India emphasizes that meaningful climate finance must come as grants or concessions to lower investment costs and make sustainability feasible for poorer countries.

European Position and Limitations

- European delegations contend that they have reached the "maximum" deliverable level in climate finance, with public finance already stretched to its limits according to seasoned negotiators like Jen Mattias Clausen.
- The perception is that further increases in finance from these nations are unlikely, setting a ceiling for discussions about support to developing countries.

Process and Leadership at COP30

- The negotiation format is seen as causing a fundamental logjam, with Brazil's Andre Lago (COP President) favoring consensus-based approaches among nearly 19 negotiating blocs.
- This consensus model may prevent ambitious, binding decisions, instead pushing for incremental agreements — critics worry it dilutes the urgency for true implementation and climate action.

Outstanding Issues and Pathways

- The summit's leadership asked countries to find consensus on four unresolved issues: climate finance, trade, transparency, and emission reduction plans.
- Many countries' existing climate plans (nationally determined contributions — NDCs) remain insufficient to limit temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius as required by global targets.

Grassroots Critique

- This spotlights activism that demands greater accountability, especially regarding fossil fuel phase-outs and addressing the root structural issues that frustrate climate action year after year.
- Civil society groups express skepticism about official pledges translating into real-world change.

PRELIMS CORNER :

1.The Matabari Tourism Circuit which aims to boost cultural, spiritual, and eco-tourism is to be set up in which state?

- (a) Nagaland**
- (b) Tripura**
- (c) Assam**
- (d) Sikkim**

2.Ramman is a festival celebrated annually in April during Baisakhi in which of the following states?

- (a) Bihar**
- (b) Uttar Pradesh**
- (c) Uttarakhand**
- (d) Assam**

3.Which one of the following gases is the primary cause of Ocean acidification?

- (a) Methane**
- (b) Carbon monoxide**
- (c) Carbon dioxide**
- (d) Sulphur dioxide**

4.Which is the only national park that protects endangered Nilgiri tahr?

- (a) Periyar National Park**
- (b) Eravikulam National Park**
- (c) Kaziranga National Park**
- (d) Gir National Park**

DETAILED ANSWER KEY IN THE CIVIL SERVICE CHRONICLE PAGE

What Fed cut? U.S. repo rates still high as liquidity tightens into year-end

Elevated Repo Rates and Market Tension

- U.S. overnight funding costs in the repo market have remained stubbornly high and show little sign of easing, even after recent Federal Reserve rate cuts, suggesting underlying fragility in financial markets.
- The cost for borrowing short-term cash—using Treasuries and other securities as collateral—has increased, with repo rates consistently above the Fed's target range, creating stresses across the financial ecosystem.

Bank Funding and Reserve Challenges

- As of last week, bank reserves had dropped to \$2.8 trillion, close to the Fed's minimum “ample” reserve requirement of \$2.7 trillion, heightening market sensitivity to further liquidity constraints.
- Major U.S. banks are increasingly cautious about lending cash for repos, holding funds for end-of-year obligations like Treasury payments and regulatory requirements.

Fed's Backstop: Standing Repo Facility

- The Federal Reserve offers a Standing Repo Facility as a safeguard for temporary liquidity shortfalls, which provides reassurance to market participants but does not eliminate broader concerns about funding costs.
- Traders and asset managers resort to repo transactions and government cash management strategies to meet funding demands, especially during periods of reduced reserves and increased Treasury issuance.

Year-End Effects: Treasury Issuance and Cash Drain

- The article details how U.S. Treasury activities, such as heavy issuance of new bonds, drain cash from private sector reserves and move them into the government's account (TGA), further tightening market liquidity.
- The 43-day U.S. government shutdown and subsequent reopening caused abrupt changes to cash flows and exacerbated stresses in the repo market.

Long Position Effects and Swelling Hedge Funds

- Hedge funds have amplified these trends by building large “long” Treasury positions, which require cash financing and push up repo rates. Recent months saw record growth in user positions, exceeding \$400 billion and driving up repo borrowing.
- The simultaneous need to hedge and hold Treasuries creates added competition for short-term funding, putting added pressure on liquidity.

Analytical Insights and Policy Response

- Analysts argue that the current high repo rates reflect deep uncertainty, as the Federal Reserve's policy has not restored normal liquidity.
- Some participants are wary that the unwinding of leveraged trades and risk-aversion will continue to cause volatility, especially around regulatory reporting periods and major government settlements.
- The Fed's standing backstop and other liquidity facilities offer some stability, but market participants seek further reassurance and feedback from policymakers to mitigate future disruptions.

3 states, 25 years : Story so far, road ahead



Jharkhand: Adivasi Homeland Fight and Continuing Struggles

- Jharkhand was formed in 2000 after decades-long demands led by tribal leaders seeking autonomy, identity, and preservation of local culture.
- The fight for statehood was driven by persistent grievances over exploitation of natural resources and poor representation of tribal communities in policy decisions.
- The brief history section notes how regional organizations like the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) played a pivotal role in consolidating the movement.
- Despite the success in attaining statehood, the article emphasizes ongoing struggles: social justice, education, declining share in resource-based GDP, and development challenges remain prominent for Adivasis.

Uttarakhand: Home in Hills, Mixed Outcomes

- Uttarakhand's formation was rooted in the need for representation and development of hilly regions that lagged behind the plains-focused Uttar Pradesh administration.
- The demand centered around resources, representation, and tailored governance suited to mountain economies and their distinctive challenges.
- While the new state has improved some indicators like literacy and infrastructure, analysis shows that it has often lagged behind the parent state in key metrics—economic growth, health, child-welfare, and per capita income, among others.
- Uttarakhand's pursuit of statehood succeeded in achieving identity and resources but also exposed governance and delivery gaps that have left the population short of full development benefits.

Chhattisgarh: Quiet, Firm Strides

- Chhattisgarh emerged from a background of being seen as a “punishment posting” for bureaucrats due to limited development and law-and-order issues prior to statehood.
- This details how the state has made “quiet, firm strides” post-formation, focusing on inclusive policy, resource management, and leveraging its mineral wealth.
- Reforms in public service sectors, improved agricultural output, and a more assertive approach to tribal rights are identified as major successes.
- Challenges persist, including Naxal violence and social indicators, but Chhattisgarh's transformation from overlooked region to a functional state machinery is presented as a noteworthy case of gradual progress.

Comparative Metrics and Key Data

- The central infographic and data tables compare new states' growth rates, per capita income, infant mortality, literacy, and other key metrics against their parent states.
- Metrics reveal mixed outcomes: some states outperformed parent regions in selected indicators (like literacy or per capita income), while others lagged or struggled with persistent gaps.
- Overall Insights and Regional Diversities
- This synthesizes 25 years of experience, concluding that while statehood brought autonomy and some successes, major challenges in governance, inclusion, and development persist for all three states.
- Each case reveals the complexities of regional identity politics in India—a blend of historic victories with unfinished battles over equality, representation, and economic opportunity.

Dissanayake vows to begin Constitution talks in 2026

- President Anura Kumara Dissanayake announced that his government would initiate dialogues for a new Sri Lankan Constitution in January 2026, addressing longstanding demands from Tamil parties for political settlement.
- He also reiterated commitments to hold elections for Provincial Councils without further delay but did not provide a specific timeline, raising concerns among Tamil MPs.

Tamil Political Engagement

- The statement came during a meeting with the Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi (ITAK) and other parliamentarians, marking the first meeting of its kind since Dissanayake's election.
- ITAK, a prominent Tamil party with significant representation, emphasized the importance of constitutional reform to resolve Sri Lanka's ethnic question and secure rights for Tamils.

Delays and Challenges

- Although Dissanayake's administration allocated funds to hold Provincial Council elections, persistent delays remain, attributed to political and legal hurdles.
- This points out that deep differences persist among political parties about the possibility of electoral system reform and constitutional approaches.

Broader Political Context

- The government's plans to address the country's ethnic issues were highlighted, including promises to fix land issues in Tamil areas and tackle lingering problems such as militarization and alleged demographic changes.
- Reference was made to continued debates in Parliament over the placement of disputed Buddhist statues and broader concerns of inclusivity and representation for minorities.
- ITAK's Response and Confidence-Building Measures
- ITAK representatives urged President Dissanayake to move beyond past promises and begin technical preparations for constitutional reform, emphasizing the need for trust-building in the Tamil community.
- Batticaloa MP R. Sambanthan and other Tamil leaders stressed the importance of starting a process with clear timelines, confidence-building, and constructive engagement to address issues that have persisted for 16 years since the end of the civil conflict.

Summary of Key Themes

- This showcases both the cautious optimism around a new constitutional initiative and the skepticism rooted in historic delays, unfinished reconciliation, and the ethnic complexities of Sri Lankan politics.

West scrambles to fill heavy rare earth gap

- The U.S. and its allies are trying to build alternative supply chains for heavy rare earth elements, vital to defense technology, electric vehicles, wind, and electronics, reducing reliance on China.
- Major U.S. backing supports MP Materials, which aspires to expand its magnet production and processing capacity, aiming to cover security-critical domains.

Current Successes and Persistent Shortages

- MP Materials increased output of lighter rare earths by 51% last quarter and promotes its successes; however, the shortage of heavy rare earths (like dysprosium and terbium) remains acute due to their scarcity and geopolitical risk.
- Western supply chains lack adequate sources for these elements, pushing them to seek partnerships with South American and African states to fill gaps.

Global Supply Chain Efforts

- The article highlights multiple global efforts: U.S. companies entering deals in Canada and Brazil; Malaysia's Lynas increasing separation capacity in Asia and new heavy rare earth mines in Australia.
- Despite these attempts, there are no clear timelines for when Western supply capacity will match demand, largely because non-Chinese mines produce much smaller heavy rare earth content compared to lighter elements.

Industrial and Policy Response

- Western producers are actively negotiating supply deals and planning new processing plants to scale up output, but they face hurdles including regulatory delays, technical challenges, and long-term investment risks.
- Consultancy and industry leaders anticipate an ongoing deficit outside China, with demand for dysprosium expected to far outstrip secured supply in the U.S., Europe, and allied markets.

Environmental and Economic Considerations

- There is a focus on greener extraction methods and higher environmental standards in Western mines, contrasting with Chinese operations that dominate due to lower costs and scale.
- New deposits with less than 1.8% medium and heavy rare earths (as in MP's mine) underscore the technical challenges of scaling up production for the more valuable heavy elements.

Market Dynamics and Outlook

- Mining analysts expect shortages to persist well into the decade, potentially threatening strategic sectors dependent on rare earth magnets.
- The overall message is that, while Western nations have made notable progress diversifying supply, closing the gap on heavy rare earths will require more investment, innovation, and international cooperation, as China's dominance remains firm.

Prelims Corner: Explanations

Q1. Ans b

To transform Tripura into a vibrant hub of cultural, spiritual and eco-tourism by connecting key heritage and nature sites across the state. The project forms part of the Prime Minister Modi's vision of transforming Northeast India into a vibrant global tourism hub. It is a 4-night, 5-day itinerary designed to showcase Tripura's rich cultural heritage, scenic landscapes, and spiritual landmarks. It includes: Agartala – the state capital and gateway to Tripura; Neer Mahal – a stunning lake palace blending Hindu and Mughal architecture; Sepahijala – known for its wildlife sanctuary and botanical gardens; Udaipur – home to the revered Tripura Sundari Temple (Matabari); Chabimura – famous for its rock carvings on steep hill faces; Dumboor Lake – a picturesque spot with islands and boating options.

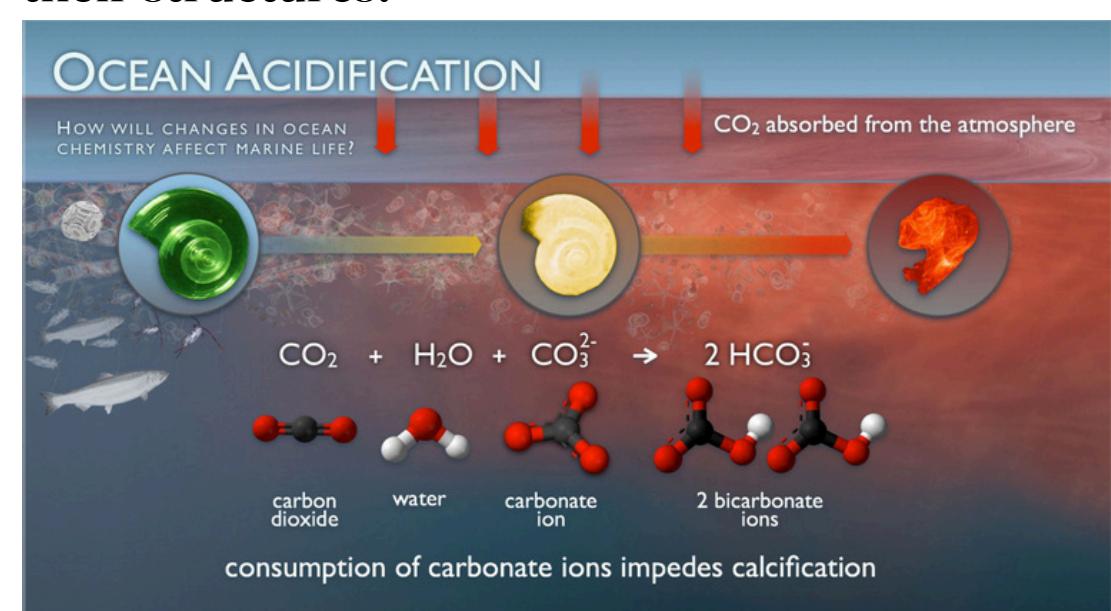


Q2. Ans c

Ramman is a festival celebrated annually in April during Baisakhi at the twin villages of Saloor-Dungra in Uttarakhand's Chamoli. It is a unique blend of ritual, theatre, music, and dance, deeply rooted in the local traditions of the Garhwal Himalayas. Community - It is dedicated to the custodial god, Bhumiyal Devta, a local divinity whose temple houses most of the festivities. The festival involves theatrical performances of the Ramayana and local legends, in which people sing songs and wear masks while dancing. There are 18 different types of masks made of Bhojpatra, Himalayan birch, that performers wear during the event, represent different deities and mythological figures.

Q3. Ans c

The primary cause of ocean acidification is carbon dioxide (CO₂). When increased amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere dissolve in seawater, it reacts with water to form carbonic acid, which lowers the ocean's pH, making it more acidic. Most of the increased CO₂ in the atmosphere is due to burning fossil fuels for energy production and transportation. Ocean acidification can negatively affect many marine organisms, particularly those with calcium carbonate shells or skeletons, as it can make it difficult for them to build and maintain their structures.



Q4. Ans b

Eravikulam National Park is the only national park that primarily protects the endangered Nilgiri tahr. It is home to the largest population of Nilgiri tahrs in the world. The park was established to protect the indigenous population of the Nilgiri tahr, which is an endangered mountain goat species. It is located in the Western Ghats of Kerala and is a critical stronghold for the species' conservation. The park was declared a sanctuary in 1975 and upgraded to a National Park in 1978, specifically with the objective of protecting the Nilgiri tahr population.



Case Study:



A UN-led assessment says Afghanistan requires \$128.8 million to restore housing, schools and key services in its quake-hit eastern provinces, warning that reconstruction faces "significant short falls" as donor support for the country falls sharply. The Joint Rapid Recovery Needs Assessment (JRRNA), conducted with the World Bank, EU and ADB, outlines a three-year plan to rebuild homes, health facilities, water systems and farmland in the eastern provinces of Kunar, Nangarhar and Laghman. It comes as aid to Afghanistan shrinks, with the UN estimating a \$3.2 billion need this year and a similar requirement in 2026, less than half of which has been funded. "The earthquakes-hit communities are already strained by drought, mass returns and a sharp economic contraction," UN Resident Representative Stephen Rodriguez told Reuters. The JRRNA says the quakes caused \$86.6 million in damage across 10 districts, affecting 56,000 families, with more than 6,200 homes collapsed, 2,000 severely damaged, and 22 health facilities and 80 schools hit. The full recovery bill is higher at \$128.8 million. Housing is the biggest challenge, costing \$54.9 million to rebuild thousands of homes. Education needs \$14.9 million, with more funding needed for water, irrigation, farmland and rural roads.

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– P.V. Sindhu