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No plan to introduce Bill on Chandigarh, says Union govt.



The Union Home Ministry said on Sunday that the Centre has no intention of introducing a Constitution Amendment Bill to bring Chandigarh under Article 240 of the Constitution in the upcoming session of Parliament. The claim over Chandigarh has been a sensitive political issue ever since the Punjab Reorganisation Act of 1966. Currently, the Governor of Punjab is concurrently the Administrator of Chandigarh, and if the Bill is passed, the Union Territory will be governed by a Lieutenant-Governor.

The clarification came following outrage in Punjab with parties, including the Congress, Shiromani Akali Dal and Aam Aadmi Party, opposing the move which would pave the way for the appointment of an independent administrator in Chandigarh, bringing the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana under the direct control of the Ministry, similar to other Union Territories. The November 21 Lok Sabha Bulletin had listed the Constitution (131 Amendment) Bill 2025 among 10 Bills proposed to be passed during the Winter Session of Parliament from December 1. The description said the Bill is proposed for discussion and passage to align Chandigarh with other Union Territories without legislatures – such as the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, and Puducherry – when its Legislative Assembly is dissolved or suspended. Following protests in Punjab where parties saw the Bill as clearing the way for the appointment of an independent Administrator or Lt Governor – since 1984, the Governor of Punjab has been the Administrator of Chandigarh – and weakening the state's claim to the city which is the capital of both Punjab and Haryana, there was clearly a rethink in New Delhi.

New Chief Justice of India



Justice Surya Kant took oath as 53rd Chief Justice of India at the Rashtrapati Bhawan. Justice Kant took the oath of office in Hindi. Chief Justice Kant has a tenure as the top Judge of a little over a year



The Indo-Tibetan Border Police force, which guards the 3,488-km-long India China LAC, is establishing 10 all-woman border posts along this arduous and icy frontier, the Director-General of the paramilitary said. The force, as part of its ambitious "forwardisation" plan, initiated post the 2020 military clash in Ladakh, has also moved its 215 border posts forward along the front on India's north and eastern flank so far.

Restoration of India's only French-medium girls high school nearing completion

- The Pensionnat De Jeunes Filles is India's only French-medium girls' high school and is operated by the Puducherry government.
- It stands as a symbol of Puducherry's unique French colonial heritage and educational legacy, particularly for girls' education in French.

Restoration Journey and Delays

- The restoration of the school, located on Beach Road, faced significant delays.
- The foundation for the reconstruction was laid in February 2023, with a targeted completion in March 2024, but project delays ensued.
- The Puducherry Smart City Development Limited (PSCDL) terminated the initial contractor and assigned the remaining work to NBCC (India) Ltd., aiming for completion by August 2024.
- There is now a revised completion target set for December 2025.

Heritage Conservation Approach

- The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) serves as the architectural consultant, while Puducherry Technological University is the structural consultant for the project.
- A key goal is to retain the building's heritage value by using original materials and techniques, including the iconic Madras tile roofing and lime mortar.
- 85% of the restoration work is reportedly completed, with efforts to restore the colonnaded portico, teak staircase, and other original features.
- The project cost is estimated at ₹7.5 crore.

Architectural and Educational Value

- The building exemplifies two-storey French architecture, and upon restoration, will provisionally house students until their final transfer.
- It is to be used along with two other government schools as a temporary arrangement.

Historical Threats and Previous Efforts

- During the 1980s, after the school building was closed, students were shifted to another site. There was even a proposal to demolish the structure to make way for a government building.
- This demolition was averted due to advocacy from the building's principal and others, resulting in the structure being saved in 1984.

Broader Context: Puducherry's Heritage

- Puducherry's heritage buildings have faced threats in recent years, including the collapse of the 144-year-old Mairie (Town Hall) on the Beach Promenade in 2014.
- The restoration of the Pensionnat De Jeunes Filles thus takes on additional importance as a part of conserving Puducherry's built and cultural legacy.

T.N. finds itself in a tight spot over Code on Social Security

- The Tamil Nadu (T.N.) government is facing challenges with implementing the Centre's new Code on Social Security (CSS), unlike the other three Labour Codes, for which it has already drafted rules.
- The main concern is that enforcing CSS might disrupt the existing welfare framework for unorganised workers in the state.

Status of Implementation

- Of the four Labour Codes enacted by the Centre, T.N. has framed draft rules for three (Wages, Industrial Relations, Occupational Safety), but not for the CSS.
- Stakeholder consultations for CSS have occurred, but no consensus or rules have been finalized yet.

Existing Welfare Structure in Tamil Nadu

- Tamil Nadu has been a pioneer in labour welfare for the unorganised sector, with 18 unorganised workers' welfare boards (13 for manual, 5 for construction categories), created under the T.N. Manual Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Work) Act, 1982.
- These boards run multiple welfare schemes: education, marriage, maternity, accidental death, disability, pension, and more, often considered more beneficial than existing national schemes.

Main Reservation and Concern

- The CSS centralizes several welfare functions, making the Union government responsible for most schemes for unorganised workers, such as life/disability cover, health, maternity benefits, old age, and education.
- States can only provide schemes for a limited set of functions (accident fund, employment injury benefit, housing, funeral assistance, etc.).
- Tamil Nadu fears that its more comprehensive and possibly superior board-based welfare model might be curtailed or replaced by a less beneficial central scheme.

Overlapping & Redundant Functions

- The CSS has provisions for overlapping functions, which could cause confusion and redundancy between central and state schemes.
- The centralization may diminish the state's autonomy in welfare delivery and undercut robust existing mechanisms.

Stakeholder Concerns

- Activists and trade unions are concerned that centralization could lead to the weakening or dismantling of effective state schemes.
- There is a demand for protecting state-level innovations and ensuring that welfare coverage is not compromised in the process of integrating with the CSS.

Broader Implications

- The situation in T.N. highlights tensions between central and state roles in welfare policy: local innovations and robust systems risk being overridden by uniform national codes.
- The outcome may affect millions of unorganised workers, making the quality, coverage, and adequacy of social security a major subject of debate.

SC's Presidential Reference opinion does not overrule a judgment: ex-CJI

- Outgoing Chief Justice B.R. Gavai clarified that a Supreme Court opinion delivered in a Presidential Reference cannot overrule a prior judicial judgment.
- Such opinions are advisory in nature and only serve to clarify the law, not to replace or overturn the substantive outcome of earlier judgments.

Judicial Limits and Parliamentary Role

- If the Constitution does not explicitly set a timeline for Governors to act on bills, the judiciary cannot invent one; that responsibility lies with Parliament.
- Presidential Reference opinions can express legal principles or clarify laws, but when they differ from prior judgments, the original judgment remains binding.

Context: Tamil Nadu Governor Case

- The immediate context is the SC's recent engagement with the Tamil Nadu Governor's delay in assenting to bills.
- The issue arose after a judgment on April 8 that criticized the delay, stating that bills must be declared assented or returned by Governors and President within "reasonable time" or else be deemed "withheld".

Advisory Opinion Details

- On November 20, a five-judge Bench led by CJI Gavai ruled that while Governors and the President must act within a "reasonable period," it deliberately avoided specifying an exact duration.
- The opinion contrasted with the April 8 judgment, which set more concrete expectations for timelines, but the former CJI explains that the advisory opinion "cannot overrule" the earlier binding judgment.

Judicial Review and Timelines

- The opinion relaxed the strictness of the timeline but allowed for judicial review of delays by Governors on a case-by-case basis.
- There cannot be a uniform timeline for every bill; the court balanced against mandating Governors to act or "sit on a Bill endlessly".
- In routine bills, one month is generally considered sufficient for gubernatorial action. However, in bills involving internal or external security, the delay could stretch to three or four months.

Other Legal and Institutional Observations

- The dissent by Justice B.V. Nagarathna on a Supreme Court proposal to elevate Justice Vipul M. Pancholi as a judge is also briefly referenced, noting that the decision would have passed if the Chief Justice had agreed with the collegium.

Implications and Broader Points

- This underscores the difference between advisory and binding judicial decisions in the constitutional structure, reinforcing that clarity and respect for precedent are essential for legal certainty.
- The delicate balance between the powers of the judiciary, Parliament, and office of the Governor is a recurrent theme, especially concerning legislative process delays and federal functioning.

UNSC reforms no longer an option but a necessity: Modi at IBSA meet

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted that reforming the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is now a necessity rather than a mere option.
- He emphasized that the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) troika should send a strong and clear message pushing for institutional changes in global governance.

IBSA Summit Context

- Modi's remarks came at the IBSA leaders' summit in Johannesburg, amidst growing global fragmentation and challenges.
- The IBSA grouping (India, Brazil, South Africa) was highlighted as not just a forum of three nations, but a platform for democratic middle powers with shared aspirations and a major global economic and political role.
- Modi called for closer coordination among IBSA nations in the fight against terrorism, stressing no tolerance for double standards on such security issues.

Enhanced Cooperation Proposals

- Modi proposed institutionalising the IBSA National Security Advisors (NSA) level meeting for stronger security cooperation.
- He advocated the creation of an IBSA Digital Inclusion Alliance to facilitate cooperation in areas such as instant payments (Unified Payments Interface-like systems), health platforms, cybersecurity, and women-led technology initiatives.

Focus on Public Welfare and Technology

- He underscored technology's importance in improving public services and proposed pooling IBSA expertise in public health, digital frameworks, and more.
- Modi praised the IBSA Fund for Climate Resilient Agriculture, which supports projects in over 40 countries, as a model of South-South cooperation.

Timeliness and Leadership

- Modi stressed the timeliness of the IBSA meeting as it coincided with the first G20 Summit held in Africa and followed India, Brazil, and South Africa's successive G20 presidencies.
- This back-to-back leadership has enabled the IBSA group to influence global agendas and promote multilateral reform and human-centric growth.

Broader Cooperation Agenda

- This notes the promotion of cooperation in areas like climate resilience, disaster response, green energy, and health security.
- Modi encouraged IBSA nations to become an example for sustainable growth and innovation in the Global South.

Statements by Other Leaders

- Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and counterparts from Brazil and South Africa reiterated their support for reforms, collaboration, and amplifying Global South voices at the UN.
- IBSA is presented as a "bond that has persisted," carrying vital values, shared vision, and representing a collective human-centric agenda.

Strategic Importance and Future Outlook

- The summit marks a critical juncture for IBSA, as the three nations build on shared G20 leadership and aim to shape global governance, with UNSC reform as a top priority.
- This underlines IBSA's commitment to justice, inclusivity, and global reform to reflect contemporary realities and developmental needs of the Global South.

PM calls for global compact on AI to prevent misuse

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, speaking at the G-20 Summit in Johannesburg, advocated for a global agreement or “compact” to prevent the misuse of artificial intelligence (AI).
- Emphasized that AI governance must be human-centric rather than finance-centric, i.e., prioritizing societal well-being over financial profit.

Core Principles Proposed

- Modi highlighted the need for the global compact to be anchored in:
 1. Effective human oversight of AI systems.
 2. Safety-by-design principles.
 3. Transparency in AI processes.
 4. Open-source approaches instead of exclusive models.
 5. Strict restrictions on AI deployments in areas such as deepfakes, crime, and terrorism.

Vision for International Collaboration

- Modi argued AI should serve global good, not be confined to national or closed systems.
- Urged that the pact be based on universally accepted principles for responsible and ethical AI development and use.

Accountability and Human Oversight

- Demanded that public trust in AI be built through responsibility and auditability.
- Asserted AI must always augment, not replace, human capabilities, keeping decision-making and responsibility with humans.

India's AI Progress

- Under the “India-AI Mission,” Modi stated that India’s AI ecosystem now matches global standards and is a world leader in UPI, digital payments, and satellite applications.
- Cited India's experience integrating technology for inclusive growth and welfare.

Social Impact and Employment

- Highlighted that the age of AI requires jobs of today to be rapidly shifted towards “capabilities of tomorrow,” emphasizing “unlocking talent mobility” as essential for fostering innovation.
- India plans to make substantial progress in setting a global AI framework by the Delhi G20 and expects a global agreement on talent mobility in the coming years.

Ensuring Inclusive and Safe AI

- Stressed that all AI systems with significant public impact must be fully auditable and should strengthen, not undermine, human dignity and welfare.
- Pointed to the need for shared international standards, especially with the risks of deepfakes and AI-driven crime.

Broader G20 Agenda and Outlook

- Modi asserted that under India’s G20 presidency, the work on AI is tied closely to its broader vision of global prosperity, human happiness, and trusted development.
- India will host the first AI Impact Summit in February 2026, aiming to lead global dialogue on safe and inclusive AI.

Mind your ‘administrative’ language, says Supreme Court report

- The Supreme Court’s Centre for Research and Planning has recommended that the judiciary stop using archaic administrative job titles like “halalkhor,” “cycle sawar,” “dhobi,” “coolie,” “scavenger,” “masalchi,” “malan,” “basta bardhar,” “chowkidar,” and “bundle lifter” in official court language.

Problematic Nature of Archaic Terms

- These terms are seen as perpetuating a “grammar of inequality” entrenched in the judiciary’s nomenclature, reflecting feudal, colonial, and casteist social structures.
- The continued use of such language normalizes outdated hierarchies and undermines dignity, respect, and modern principles of work culture.

Theoretical Background

- The report, titled “Reforming administrative nomenclature in the Indian judiciary embedding dignity and equity in service rules,” explains that these terms create and maintain unwritten, hierarchical distinctions within court systems.
- Former Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai, in his foreword, noted that these terms have the “unintended effect of normalising outdated hierarchies and undermining the respectful work culture the judiciary must uphold”.

Call for Change and Legal Basis

- The report calls for aligning judicial administrative language with constitutional mandates prohibiting caste-based discrimination.
- It singles out “halalkhor” and “scavenger,” stating they violate constitutional prohibitions and represent “powerful tools of dominance” that reduce people to their functions and reinforce social stratification.

Justice and Symbolism

- Changing the nomenclature is seen as a step toward affirming the worth and dignity of every worker, regardless of their rank or role.
- The shift would close the gap between what the judiciary proclaims (justice, equality) and what it practices through language and symbolism.

Specific Recommendations

- The judiciary is advised to use modern, dignified alternatives: sanitation assistant (for halalkhor), laundry operator (dhobi), freight/logistics assistant (cycle sawar), horticulture attendant (malan), document handler (basta bardar), kitchen assistant (masalchi), and sanitation assistant/scavenger (bundle lifter).
- The aim is symbolic justice, embedding dignity and respect into institutional language.

Broader Implication

- The report urges all courts to update administrative nomenclature and ensure their language reflects contemporary values and constitutional commitments to ending discrimination and fostering respect.



COP30 stresses 'adaptation' as path to fossil fuel-free world

- The COP30 climate deliberations, held in Brazil, placed a greater focus on adaptation to climate change rather than establishing roadmaps for fossil fuel phase-out.
- There was broad agreement on the urgent need for countries to transition away from fossil fuels, but the political emphasis was on ensuring adaptation and resilience for developing nations.

Key Agreements and Calls

- Countries called for at least a tripling of adaptation finance by 2035, with developed nations urged to scale up climate funding and technology transfer for resilience-building in the Global South.
- A "two-year work programme" on climate finance was established to clarify implementation frameworks and explore innovative finance mechanisms.

Systematic Dialogue on Trade and Growth

- The consensus urged regular and systematic dialogue to make sure that climate measures, especially those addressing fossil fuels, do not impede trade or economic growth in developing countries.
- Ensuring "climate actions" are trade-neutral and development-friendly was a significant point for large developing economies.

COP Mechanisms and Adaptation Investment

- COP30 reaffirmed the aim of the annual UN climate talks (COPs) to deliver climate finance flow from developed to developing countries, including for renewable energy, adaptation, and mitigation.
- Adaptation finance, historically less prioritized than mitigation, was pushed to the forefront, reflecting developing country priorities.

Just Transition and Labour Considerations

- Initiatives like a Just Transition Mechanism (JTM) were highlighted, focusing on restructuring labour and economic systems so workers can shift from fossil-fuel sectors to greener jobs without socio-economic disruption.

Financing Commitment and the NQG

- New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG) negotiations will now push developed countries to mobilize \$300 billion annually by 2035, and work towards \$1.3 trillion annually, from all sources.

Ideological Differences

- This notes an ongoing split: developed countries (especially the EU) focus on clear fossil fuel phase-out targets, while many developing countries resist such fixed "roadmaps" unless adaptation and equity are assured.

Outcomes and Reception

- Developing nations expressed satisfaction with COP30 outcomes, especially progress on funding mechanisms for adaptation and trade-neutral climate actions.
- The event was seen as an initial step to "reverse the trend" of climate adaptation being marginalized in global policy, though specifics and targets remain under negotiation.

State Forest Departments across India have no record of African grey parrot trade, reveal RTI responses

- The African grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*), listed as 'Endangered', is one of the most commonly seen exotic animals in Indian pet markets, yet no breeder or pet shop is officially registered to sell them in India according to multiple State Forest Departments.

RTI Findings and Administrative Responses

- An RTI (Right to Information) inquiry by The Hindu to 19 States and Union Territories revealed that only the Kerala Forest Department reported receiving any breeder registration applications (17 for breeders' licences).
- Most states either stated they had no relevant records or the bird was absent in their jurisdictions; Tamil Nadu explicitly recorded no breeders, traders, or commercial dealers of African grey parrots.

Legal Requirements and CITES

- The African grey parrot falls under Appendix I of CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species), which mandates detailed legal paperwork for trade/breeding: CITES registration, import permits, and wildlife department certifications.
- A valid breeding licence requires CITES clearance, an import permit, a Foreign Trade import licence number, and a no-objection certificate from the state's Chief Wildlife Warden.

Inspection Gaps and Compliance Issues

- Some forest departments said they were compiling inspection reports and audits of facilities but had no current data specifically on African grey parrots. Most responses were generic, pointing to lack of information or non-registration.
- Wildlife Justice Commission experts highlighted the mandatory requirement for record-keeping before species import, as well as for pet shop and breeder approvals.

Illegal Trade and Enforcement Challenges

- Despite regulations, the bird is openly available in markets—a disconnect attributed to illegal breeding and sales, insufficient enforcement, and unregistered trade activity.
- Wildlife Trust of India identified Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka as hubs for exotic species trade, but stopped short of blaming forest departments, citing the impracticality of exhaustive searches for illicitly kept or bred animals.

Risks of Exotic Species Trade

- Experts warn that inadequate monitoring increases risks of zoonotic disease spread and ecological invasion, underlining the need to maintain robust species trade registries.

Structural and Administrative Issues

- This notes the lack of systematized data, routine audits, and comprehensive enforcement, contributing to ongoing gaps between legal frameworks and ground realities in exotic pet trade management in India.



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

How can State PSCs be reformed?

- The issue has gained importance following a national conference on State Public Service Commissions (PSCs) and various controversies flagged by state PSCs in the context of recruitment process delays, exam malpractices, and lack of modernisation.

History of PSCs

- The idea of the PSC dates back to the Montagu-Chelmsford report (early 20th century), aiming to professionalize government recruitment.
- Under the 1935 Government of India Act, provincial PSCs were established for each province—this continued post-independence into the modern structure of central (UPSC) and state PSCs.

Structure and Working of State PSCs

- In theory, like UPSC, state PSCs are meant to ensure merit-based, independent recruitment for state public services.
- However, PSCs face several structural challenges: composition often lacks adequate academics, the examination processes and syllabi may not reflect current administrative requirements, and there are persistent complaints about lack of transparency and delays in results.

Weaknesses in Current System

- State PSCs broadly lack autonomy and regular syllabus updates, and are often influenced by political or bureaucratic pressures.
- They do not run their own independent secretariats for all tasks and can struggle to keep pace with technological and societal changes affecting recruitment needs.

Issues in Examination Process

- There are reports of outdated syllabus, infrequent review of examination requirements, insufficient alignment with contemporary administrative needs, and lack of focus on IT, data analysis, and other modern government demands.
- Logistical and technological capability gaps often lead to delays and recurring litigation over the fairness of exams.

Recommendations for Reform

- Management planning should be separated from statutory PSC responsibilities, with a distinct professional management structure for process efficiency.
- Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions should periodically review and clarify the PSCs' roles to match evolving administrative realities.
- There should be clear guidelines on syllabus review, with regular consultation to update content in line with national priorities and emerging skills needs.

Constitutional and Legal Observations

- This suggests that the minimum age bar for candidates and the number of attempts be aligned across states, ensuring uniformity and fairness.
- The selection of PSC members themselves must be depoliticised and based on merit, not influenced by government of the day.

The Gist

- State PSCs need urgent reforms in exam pattern reviews, administrative independence, robust management of the recruitment process, and periodic modernisation of the syllabus to be more relevant.
- India's administrative recruitment and governance quality depend deeply on whether these reforms are implemented.

Curtain falls on a chaotic COP30 summit in Brazil

- The world struck a new climate deal at the COP30 summit in Brazil Saturday, which calls for a tripling of funding to help countries adapt to increasingly severe climate impacts.
- But countries failed to agree to a roadmap away from fossil fuels, after entrenched divisions threatened to collapse the talks.
- The agreement came after more than two weeks of increasingly fraught negotiations between representatives of more than 190 countries in the port city of Belém, known as the gateway to the Amazon.
- Disagreements reached such fever pitch there were fears the summit would collapse with no deal.
- Talks stretched overtime as dozens of nations pushed back against an outcome that didn't explicitly mention a transition away from oil, coal and gas — the drivers of the climate crisis.
- The final text contained no mention of fossil fuels, signaling a retreat from consensus agreements only two years old.
- It included only a general agreement on deforestation, rather than more explicit commitments, which had been another key issue in the negotiations.
- More than 80 countries, including Colombia, the UK and France, supported the concept of a "roadmap" to transition away from fossil fuels, building on a commitment made at COP28 in Dubai in 2023.
- However, intense opposition from petrostates — including Saudi Arabia and Russia — and other heavy fossil fuels users prevented consensus.
- Wealthier countries agreed to work toward tripling the money available to help climate-vulnerable countries adapt to the ravages of global warming — a potential goal of \$120 billion a year by 2035, to come out of the \$300 billion pot of funding they agreed to at last year's COP.
- An analysis of these plans by the UN found that collectively they would only achieve around a 12% reduction in planet-heating pollution, far below the 60% needed for any chance of keeping alive the internationally agreed target to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.
- This summit was in many ways seen as a test of multilateralism, especially as the US was absent from the process, with the Trump administration declining to send a delegation.

U.S., Ukraine and European officials discuss Trump's proposal to end war

- U.S., Ukrainian, and European officials met in Geneva to discuss a draft U.S. peace plan to end the war in Ukraine.
- The talks were led by U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, with Ukraine's delegation and high-level European diplomats present.

Details of the U.S. Draft Proposal

- The draft reportedly calls for Ukraine to make significant concessions: ceding territory, accepting limits on its military, and renouncing ambitions to join NATO.
- Trump set a Thursday deadline for Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to accept the plan.

Mixed Reactions and Criticism

- Kyiv and its allies voiced strong alarm, viewing the terms as favoring major concessions to Russia.
- Trump stated the current draft was not his final offer, and discussions were ongoing to address Ukraine and European concerns.

Diplomatic Engagements

- The U.S. described the atmosphere as positive, saying the Sunday talks were the best since Trump returned to power, despite underlying tensions.
- U.S. and Ukrainian officials confirmed the need for further changes to ensure any agreement is acceptable to both sides.

Statements and Responses

- U.S. officials, including Rubio, emphasized that any deal would need to be signed off by both U.S. and Ukrainian Presidents.
- Special Envoy Steve Witkoff stressed substantial progress in the discussions.
- Ukraine's head of delegation, Andriy Yermak, publicly thanked Trump for his efforts but also insisted on the necessity for security and sovereignty guarantees.

European Reactions and Demands

- Europeans have sought modifications that push back on demands for immediate military limits or territorial concessions from Kyiv.
- There is concern among allies that they were not sufficiently consulted when the plan was being drafted, prompting them to submit revisions.

'Allies not consulted' Controversy

- The rollout of the plan led to confusion among European officials who said they were not involved in its conception, broadening debate on Western unity over Ukraine policy.

Conclusion and Ongoing Negotiations

- Talks are continuing as the Thursday deadline nears, with the outcome uncertain.
- The incident highlights divisions within the Western alliance and the complexities of brokering a peace deal that balances diplomatic, security, and political realities on the ground in Ukraine.

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.

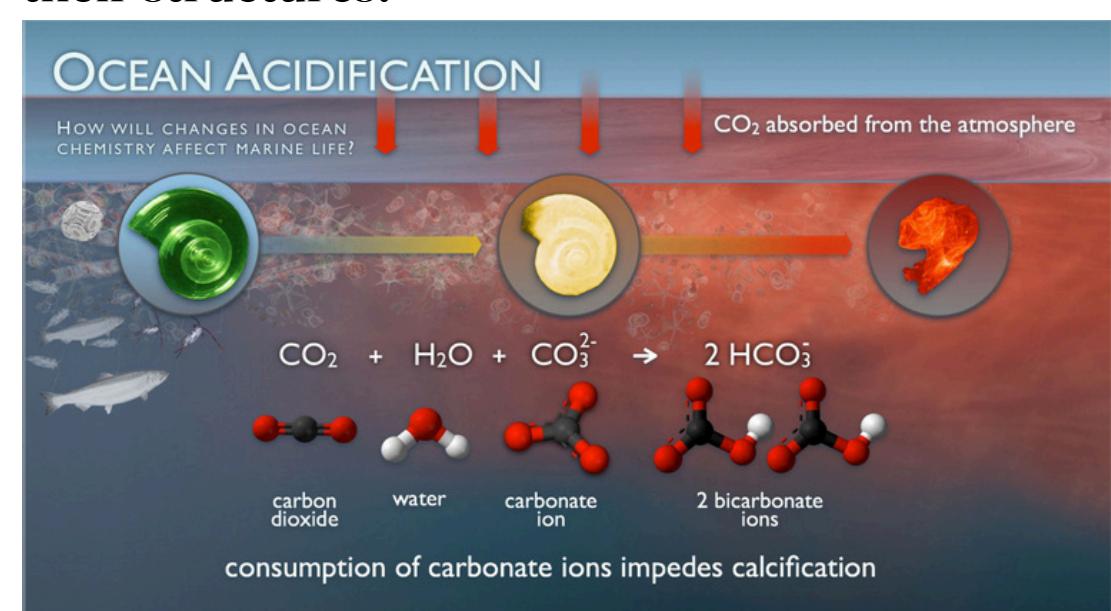


Q2. Ans c

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.

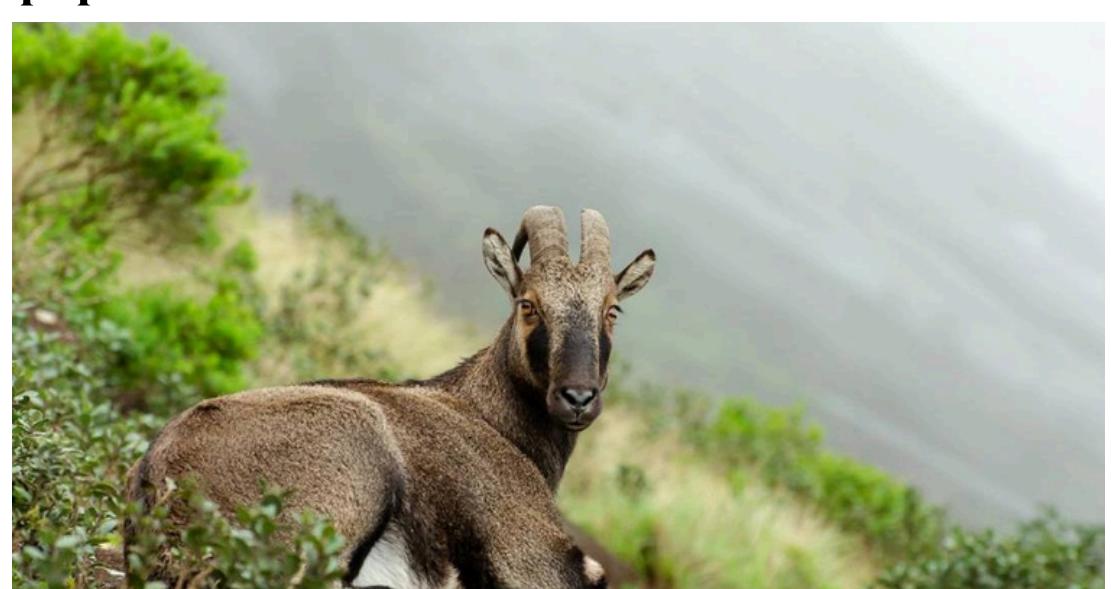
Q3. Ans c

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:



India emerges champion in T20 Blind Women's WC

In Colombo, a group of women who play cricket by listening rewrote what the game can stand for. Their unbeaten run is filled with small acts of bravery and belief that invite you to see this victory from the inside. The moment the final ball rolled across the turf in Colombo on 23 November 2025, a cheer rose that seemed to shake the stadium. The Indian women's blind cricket team gathered in a tight circle, hands searching for each other, shoulders touching, hearts racing. They had arrived as underdogs to an unfamiliar field. They walked out as world champions. For the first time ever, the Women's T20 World Cup for the Blind had a winner, and it was India. The story behind this moment carries resilience, skill and a pride that travelled far beyond the boundary rope. Mentored by the Cricket Association for the Blind in India (CABI), these players stepped into a global arena to show that disability does not define one's potential. The inaugural Women's T20 World Cup for the Blind featured teams from around the world, including Australia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the United States, and Nepal. India remained undefeated throughout the tournament. This victory moves beyond sport. India's win signals the possibilities that unfold when accessible infrastructure and patient guidance meet raw talent.



Johannesburg this weekend will host the first G20 meeting on African soil. Protesters are using the moment to draw attention to domestic problems. South Africa experiences some of the world's highest levels of gender-based violence (GBV), with the rate at which women are killed five times higher than the global average, according to UN Women. Thus South Africa has classified violence against women a national disaster following an online campaign culminating in countrywide protests



Researchers have discovered more than 111,000 spiders thriving in what appears to be the world's biggest spiderweb, deep inside a pitch-black cave on the Albanian-Greek border. The spider megacity is located in Sulfur Cave, a cavern that was hollowed out by sulfuric acid formed from the oxidation of hydrogen sulfide in groundwater. The "arachnid megacity" is home to two species that are typically solitary: the domestic house spider (*Tegenaria domestica*) and the dwarf weaver spider (*Prinerigone vagans*). This is the first documented case of colonial web formation in these species, a behavior likely driven by the cave's unique, food-rich, and dark environment.

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— Abraham Lincoln

