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**The executive office without a limit**

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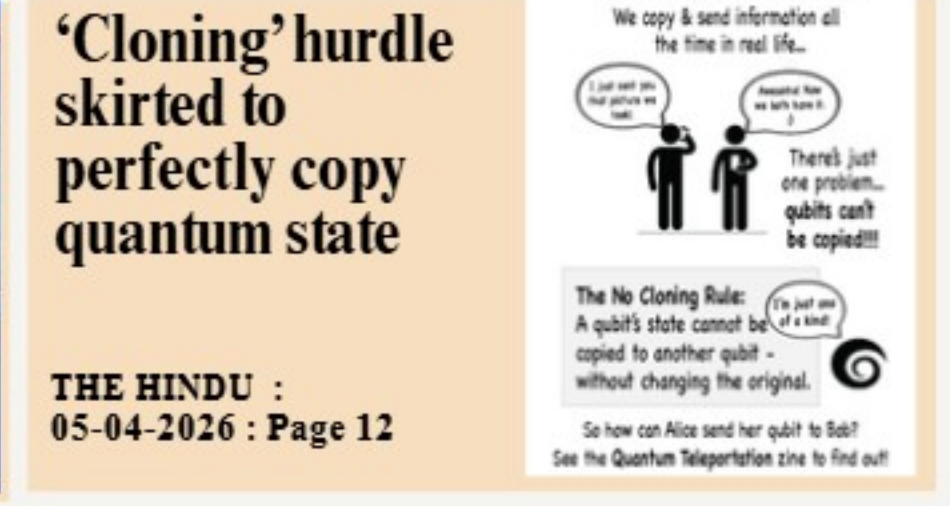
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## SWIM OR SINK: REPTILE 'PATROLS' LIKELY ON BANGLADESH BORDER



The Border Security Force has proposed exploring the use of reptiles such as snakes and crocodiles as a security measure in vulnerable riverine stretches along the India-Bangladesh border. This idea is being considered in response to the unique challenges posed by difficult terrain, including rivers, flood-prone areas, and regions where physical fencing is not feasible. The initiative forms part of broader efforts to prevent infiltration and illegal activities along the border. A large portion of the border has already been fenced, but several stretches remain uncovered due to geographical and logistical constraints, prompting the need for alternative and innovative border management strategies.

## The executive office without a limit

On March 22, 2026, Narendra Modi completed 8,931 days as head of an elected government (as Chief Minister and Prime Minister combined), surpassing Pawan Kumar Chamling, who served as Chief Minister of Sikkim for 8,930 days. This milestone brings focus to a constitutional question: India does not impose any formal term limits on executive leadership despite long tenures.

### Constitutional Design and Rationale

India follows a parliamentary system where the executive derives legitimacy from legislative confidence. B. R. Ambedkar argued that "daily accountability" through Parliament (questions, debates, no-confidence motions) would act as a continuous check, making term limits unnecessary. Periodic elections were seen as an additional safeguard.

### Impact of Anti-Defection Law

The Tenth Schedule of the Indian Constitution (introduced via the 52nd Amendment, 1985) altered this balance. By disqualifying legislators who defy party whips, it has weakened the effectiveness of no-confidence motions. As a result, legislative oversight over the executive is constrained when the ruling party holds a majority.



### Debate on Democratic Legitimacy

A key counter-argument is that repeated electoral victories reflect democratic choice. However, this assumes a level playing field and robust institutional checks. If parliamentary accountability is weakened, elections alone may bear excessive responsibility in regulating executive power.

## Reform Options and Way Forward

### Exempt Confidence Motions

- The Tenth Schedule should exempt no-confidence motions from anti-defection disqualifications to restore Parliament's oversight role.
- This reform would allow legislators to vote based on conscience during critical confidence votes, thereby reinvigorating legislative accountability over the executive.
- Such a change addresses the current constraint where party whips undermine the "daily accountability" envisioned by Ambedkar.

### Introduce Term Limits

- India could adopt constitutional term limits for Prime Ministers and Chief Ministers, perhaps limiting consecutive terms to two while allowing non-consecutive ones.
- This would prevent indefinite incumbency and mitigate risks of power concentration, drawing from models like the US 22nd Amendment.
- Flexibility for non-consecutive terms would balance democratic choice with institutional safeguards against prolonged leadership.

### Strengthen Intra-Party Democracy

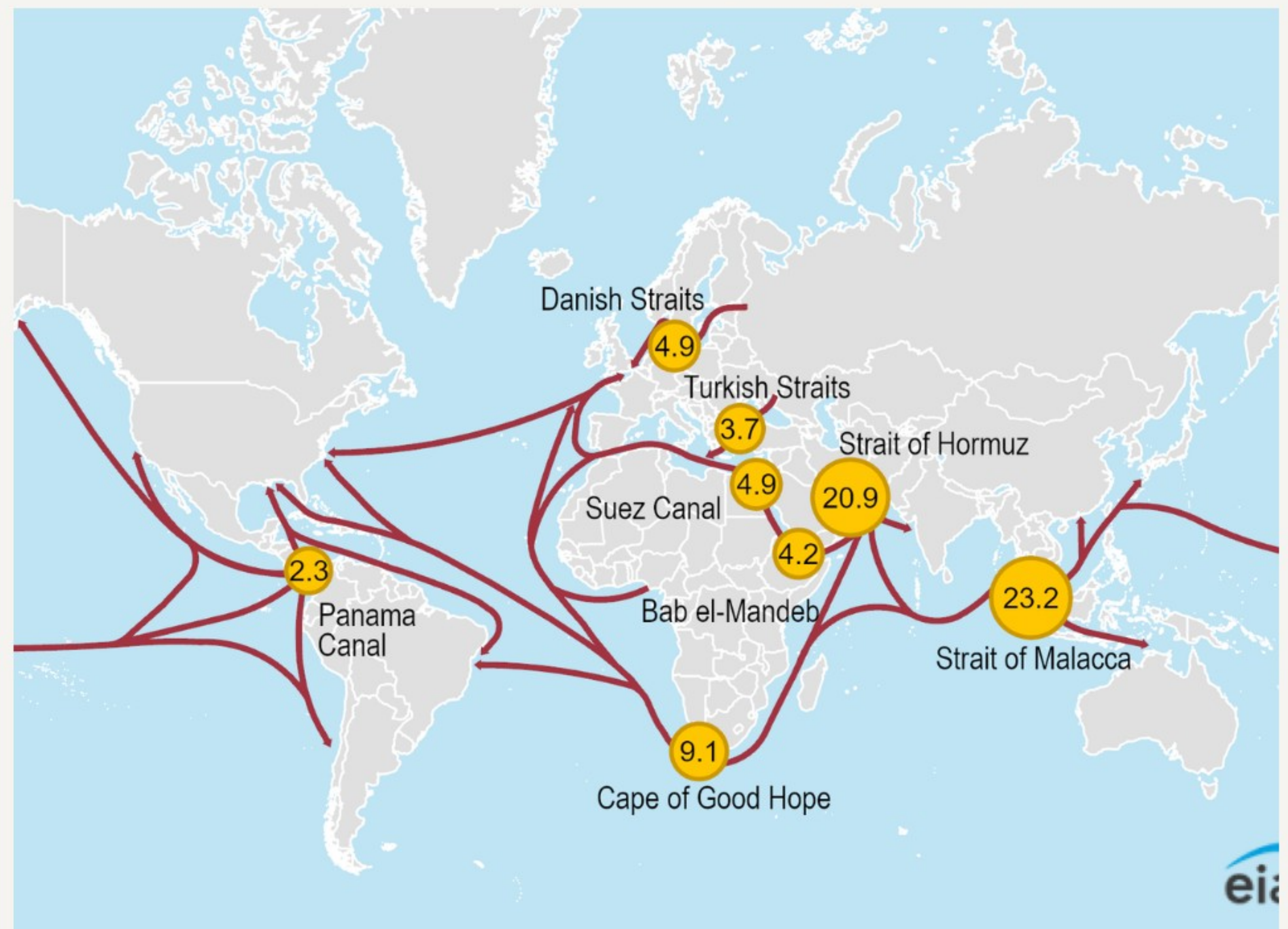
- Reforms must promote internal party elections and leadership rotations to reduce reliance on individual leaders.
- Strengthening intra-party democracy would foster competition and prevent the entrenchment of a single dominant figure.
- This approach enhances overall democratic health by ensuring parties remain responsive to diverse internal voices.

### Bolster Institutional Independence

- Key institutions like the judiciary, Election Commission, and CAG need greater autonomy through fixed tenures and transparent appointments.
- Enhanced independence would provide robust checks on executive overreach, complementing electoral and legislative mechanisms.
- These measures ensure that prolonged tenures do not erode the constitutional balance of power.

## Why did Iran war not affect China's energy security so far?

The ongoing West Asia conflict has disrupted global energy markets, leading to fuel shortages and panic in countries like India. However, despite being a larger economy and energy consumer, China has remained relatively insulated in the short term. This contrast highlights differences in long-term energy strategies and structural preparedness.



### Strategic Petroleum Reserves and Diversification

China addressed its energy vulnerabilities early by building substantial Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR), now covering nearly 120 days of demand. This allows it to buffer supply shocks and reduce immediate dependence on volatile routes such as the Strait of Hormuz. Additionally, diversified import sources further strengthen resilience.

### Overcoming the "Malacca Dilemma"

China reduced reliance on the Malacca Strait by developing alternative supply routes. Pipelines from Central Asia and Russia now account for nearly 20% of its crude imports, including around 900,000 barrels per day from Russia. Strong geopolitical engagement and investments in conflict-prone regions have further diversified supply chains.

### Energy Transition and Climate Strategy

China leveraged international climate cooperation, including frameworks under the UNFCCC and bilateral agreements, to build capacity in renewable energy. It has emerged as a leader in solar, wind, and energy-efficient technologies. Simultaneously, domestic policies targeting air pollution have accelerated its shift towards cleaner energy, even while remaining a major coal consumer.

### Role of Electric Vehicles (EVs)

Large-scale adoption of electric vehicles has significantly reduced China's oil dependence, particularly in the transport sector. Policy incentives such as tax benefits, mandates, and consumer support have driven EV penetration, lowering fuel demand and cushioning the impact of global oil shocks.

### Economic Slowdown and Energy Demand

China's ongoing economic slowdown has also moderated energy consumption. With a growth target of 4.5% for 2026 and reduced activity in sectors like construction and heavy industry, overall demand for energy-intensive inputs such as oil, cement, and steel has declined.

### Way Forward

China's relative resilience stems from a combination of strategic reserves, diversified supply routes, proactive energy transition, and moderated demand. The case underscores the importance of long-term planning, energy diversification, and technological adoption for insulating economies against global energy disruptions. India can learn from this model and strengthen resilience by accelerating strategic petroleum reserves, investing in alternative supply routes, and scaling up EV adoption and renewable energy.

## War crisis: Global cloud majors look to India as data centre hub

Recent developments indicate that India is emerging as a potential regional hub for data centres, particularly in the Asia and West Asia corridor. The ongoing conflict in West Asia has accelerated demand for data centre capacity in India, as global cloud providers and Gulf-based clients seek alternative, stable locations for their digital infrastructure. There has been a surge in demand in recent weeks, reflecting a significant shift in global infrastructure strategy.

### Understanding the Data Centre Ecosystem

A data centre is a physical facility that houses computing infrastructure required to store, process, and deliver data and digital services. It includes servers, storage systems, networking equipment, and software that enable applications to function. Traditionally, data centres were on-premises facilities owned and operated by individual companies. However, with the rise of cloud computing in the early 2000s, they have evolved into large, remote facilities operated by cloud service providers, offering scalable and shared infrastructure over the internet.



### Types of Data Centres

Data centres can broadly be classified into enterprise (on-premises), public cloud/hyperscale, and managed or colocation facilities. Hyperscale data centres, operated by major cloud providers, are massive facilities supporting millions of users. Colocation facilities allow companies to lease space for their own infrastructure, while managed data centres provide end-to-end operational support. Additionally, edge data centres are emerging as critical infrastructure, located closer to users to reduce latency for applications such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and real-time analytics.

### Drivers of Global Data Centre Demand

The growing demand for digital services, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and data-driven applications has significantly increased the need for data centre capacity worldwide. Hyperscalers continuously expand infrastructure to meet rising workloads, while geopolitical disruptions and operational risks are prompting companies to diversify infrastructure locations. Factors such as cost efficiency, scalability, energy availability, and network connectivity play a crucial role in determining where data centres are established.

### Competitive Advantages of India

India offers key advantages that make it an attractive destination. Cost efficiency is a major factor—building a 100 MW AI data facility in India costs roughly \$5–6 million, compared to \$12–14 million in regions like Singapore and other parts of Asia-Pacific. This allows companies to achieve greater capacity at lower cost. Additionally, India's growing digital ecosystem, improving infrastructure, and strategic geographic location enhance its appeal as a secondary hub for global cloud operations.

### Expanding Opportunities and Challenges

The rising demand extends beyond data centres to high-performance computing resources such as GPUs, driven by artificial intelligence workloads. Long-term contracts and large-scale investments signal sustained global interest. However, challenges such as infrastructure readiness, energy supply, and potential hardware shortages (e.g., GPUs) need to be addressed. If managed effectively, India's expanding role in the data centre ecosystem could strengthen its position in the global digital economy and enhance its strategic importance in technology infrastructure.

**The Indian EXPRESS**

## Mothers require better healthcare, not just access

India's maternal health programme has achieved significant progress, with maternal mortality in 2023 falling to nearly one-fifth of 1990 levels, driven by institutional deliveries, targeted interventions, and greater awareness. However, progress has slowed since 2015, and the country continues to account for a notable share of global maternal deaths. Persistent causes such as haemorrhage, infections, and hypertension, along with COVID-19 disruptions, highlight systemic vulnerabilities, while uneven implementation across states limits outcomes.

Regional disparities and structural gaps in healthcare delivery remain key challenges. Addressing maternal mortality requires not only strengthening infrastructure and service delivery but also tackling social determinants such as nutrition and women's agency.

**Editorial to Exam - Most probable question from this editorial**

*"Despite significant reductions in maternal mortality, India continues to face persistent challenges in achieving equitable maternal health outcomes."*

*Analyse the factors responsible for the slowdown in progress in maternal mortality reduction in India. Also examine the role of healthcare systems and social determinants in addressing these challenges.*



## Elastic rules

The evolution of India's Plastic Waste Management Rules reflects ongoing efforts to address the challenges of plastic waste through regulatory mechanisms such as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). Recent amendments introduce mandates for minimum recycled content and reuse in packaging. Such measures are intended to reduce environmental harm by promoting circular use of plastics, acknowledging the material's widespread utility and the difficulty of incentivising its collection and reuse. However, concerns arise regarding the effectiveness and implementation of these regulations. Without robust monitoring and stricter adherence to targets, the intended outcomes of reducing plastic waste and strengthening recycling systems may remain undermined.

**Editorial to Exam - Most probable question from this editorial**

*"The effectiveness of India's Plastic Waste Management Rules has been questioned in light of recent amendments to the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regime." Critically examine the challenges in plastic waste collection and recycling in India.*

thehindu **businessline.**

TUESDAY - MARCH 31, 2026

## Sweeping powers

The proposed amendments to the IT Rules indicate a shift towards a more centralised and executive-driven regulatory framework for online content. The absence of clear procedural requirements and compliance to safe harbour protections may incentivise intermediaries to adopt precautionary content moderation practices, raising concerns about overreach and indirect content suppression.

The need for regulation stems from the growing spread of misinformation and harmful content on digital platforms, which can impact public order and social cohesion. However, the lack of procedural safeguards may lead to selective enforcement and undermine accountability. With aspects of the existing framework already under judicial review, a more balanced approach may involve strengthening current mechanisms, improving enforcement capacity, and enhancing platform responsibility and digital literacy, rather than introducing expansive discretionary powers that could risk misuse.

**Editorial to Exam - Most probable question from this editorial**

*"Recent amendments to the IT Rules, 2021 indicate a shift towards greater executive control over digital content regulation."*

*Critically examine the implications of expanding government oversight over user-generated content on intermediary platforms.*

## 'Cloning' hurdle skirted to perfectly copy quantum state

Recent experiments by an international team, including researchers from IBM Quantum, have demonstrated a practical workaround to the long-standing No-Cloning Theorem. This marks a significant development in quantum information science, suggesting that quantum data can be duplicated under specific constraints.

### A quantum copier

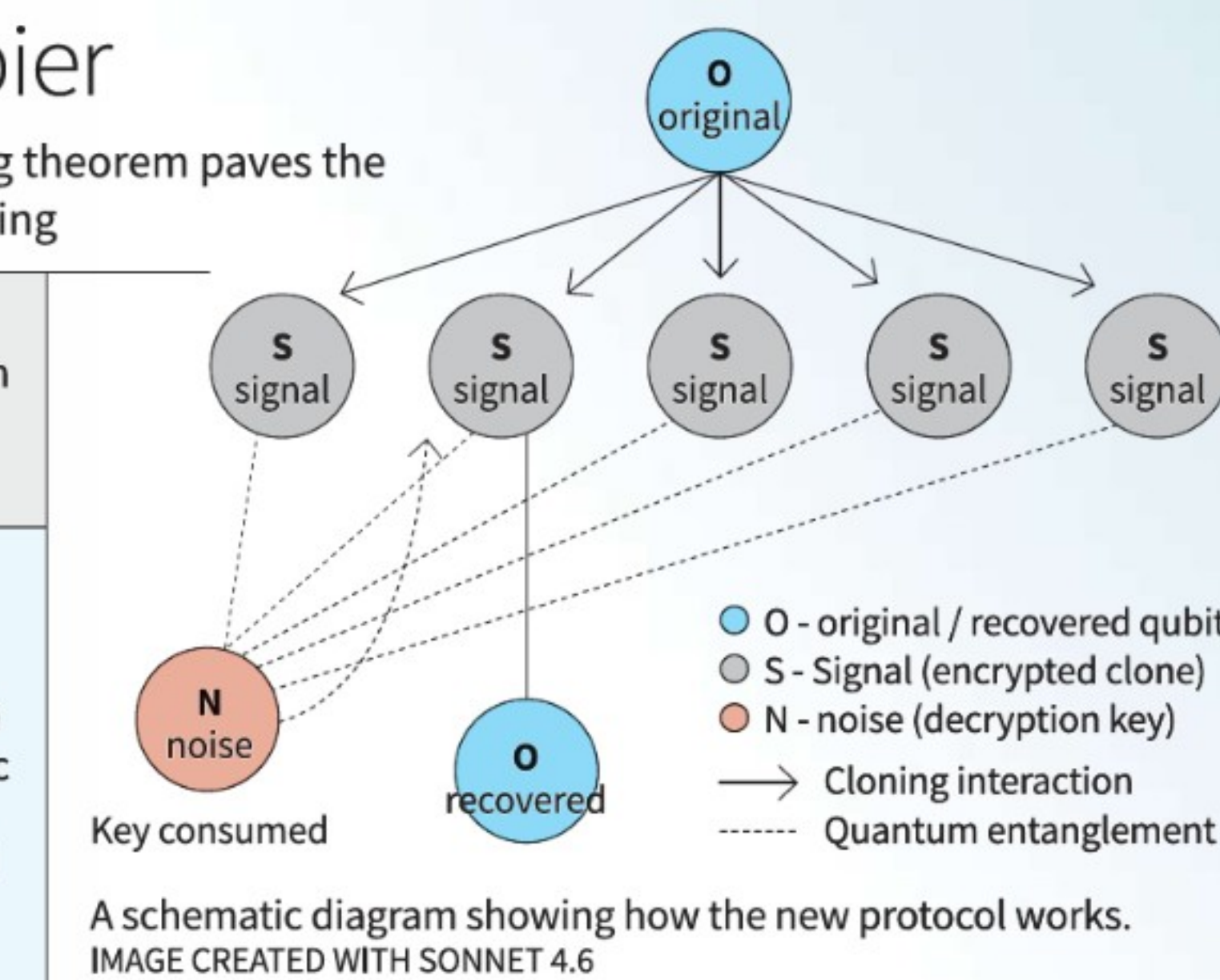
A way to sidestep the no-cloning theorem paves the way for quantum cloud computing

■ Researchers have shown a loophole in the no-cloning theorem by creating perfect copies using ideas from information theory

■ The no-cloning theorem is a quantum physics rule that prohibits a user from perfectly duplicating unknown quantum states

■ The clones appear as useless random noise until a specific decryption key is applied to restore them

■ Decrypting a single clone consumes the key, which prevents users from accessing multiple perfect copies simultaneously



■ Experiments on IBM superconducting processors successfully produced hundreds of encrypted clones while maintaining high reliability

■ The finding allows scientists to develop quantum cloud storage where data can be recovered even if servers fail

### Concept: The No-Cloning Theorem

The no-cloning theorem states that it is impossible to create an exact copy of an unknown quantum state. This principle underpins quantum cryptography and computing, ensuring data security but also limiting data replication and backup—unlike classical computing where copying is straightforward.

### The New Breakthrough: Encrypted Cloning

Researchers proposed and experimentally validated a loophole where perfect copies of quantum data can be created if they remain encrypted. Each clone appears as random noise (maximally mixed state) and is unusable unless decrypted using special “noise qubits,” which act as a key.

### Mechanism and Key Constraint

The original quantum state is distributed across multiple qubits (quantum register), creating encrypted clones. Decryption restores the original state perfectly, but the process consumes the key. Hence, only one clone can be meaningfully accessed, preserving the core restriction of the no-cloning theorem.

The study refines the understanding of quantum constraints by showing that duplication is feasible under controlled conditions. This opens pathways for scalable quantum infrastructure while maintaining fundamental security principles, marking a crucial step toward practical quantum technologies.

### Experimental Validation

Experiments were conducted on IBM's 156-qubit processors, using up to 154 qubits. Key findings include:

- Fidelity of recovery remained stable even with 2–15 clones
- Up to 729 clones were generated in layered experiments
- Protocol worked on complex entangled states (GHZ states)
- These results confirm scalability and robustness of the method.

### Implications and Applications

This breakthrough has major implications:

- Enables secure backup of quantum data by storing encrypted copies across multiple systems, allowing recovery even if some systems fail
- Improves reliability of quantum computing, which earlier struggled due to inability to copy and store data safely
- Supports development of quantum cloud computing, where users can store and process quantum data remotely
- Helps build robust quantum memory systems, a key requirement for large-scale quantum technologies
- Refines understanding of the No-Cloning Theorem by showing that copying is possible under strict access limitations

**PRELIMS CORNER :**

1) Supply of money remaining the same when there is an increase in demand for money, there will be: (2013)

- a) a fall in the level of prices
- b) an increase in the rate of interest
- c) a decrease in the rate of interest
- d) an increase in the level of income and employment

2) Economic growth in country X will necessarily have to occur if (2013)

- a) there is technical progress in the world economy
- b) there is population growth in X
- c) there is capital formation in X
- d) the volume of trade grows in the world economy

**HERITAGE**

**MAULANA HASRAT MOHANI**



Hasrat Mohani (1875–1951), born Syed Fazal-ul-Hasan in Mohan (Unnao, Uttar Pradesh), was a prominent freedom fighter, Urdu poet, and early nationalist thinker shaped by his education at Aligarh. From the outset, he displayed a strong anti-colonial stance, leading to repeated imprisonments by the British (notably in 1903, 1907, and 1925). His journal Urdu-e-Mualla became a key platform for articulating nationalist criticism of colonial policies, resulting in its ban and further incarceration, highlighting the role of print media in the freedom struggle.

A major contribution of Mohani was coining the slogan "Inquilab Zindabad" in 1921, which later became a central rallying cry of revolutionary nationalism, particularly associated with Bhagat Singh. The slogan reflects his ideological position that **freedom is an inherent right and a continuous struggle**, and its continued usage in modern protests underscores its enduring relevance.

In the literary domain, Mohani made significant contributions to Urdu poetry, especially the ghazal form. His famous composition **Chupke chupke raat din** exemplifies emotional depth, restraint, and universality, later popularised by Ghulam Ali. His work expanded the thematic scope of ghazals to include introspection and subtle emotional resistance.

His compilation **Kuliyat-e-Hasrat** integrates themes of love, politics, and society, reflecting the interconnectedness of personal emotion and public action. Mohani's life was marked by austerity, ideological commitment, and repeated sacrifices, without pursuit of political office or material gain.

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# Prelims Corner: Explanations

1) The correct answer is (b)

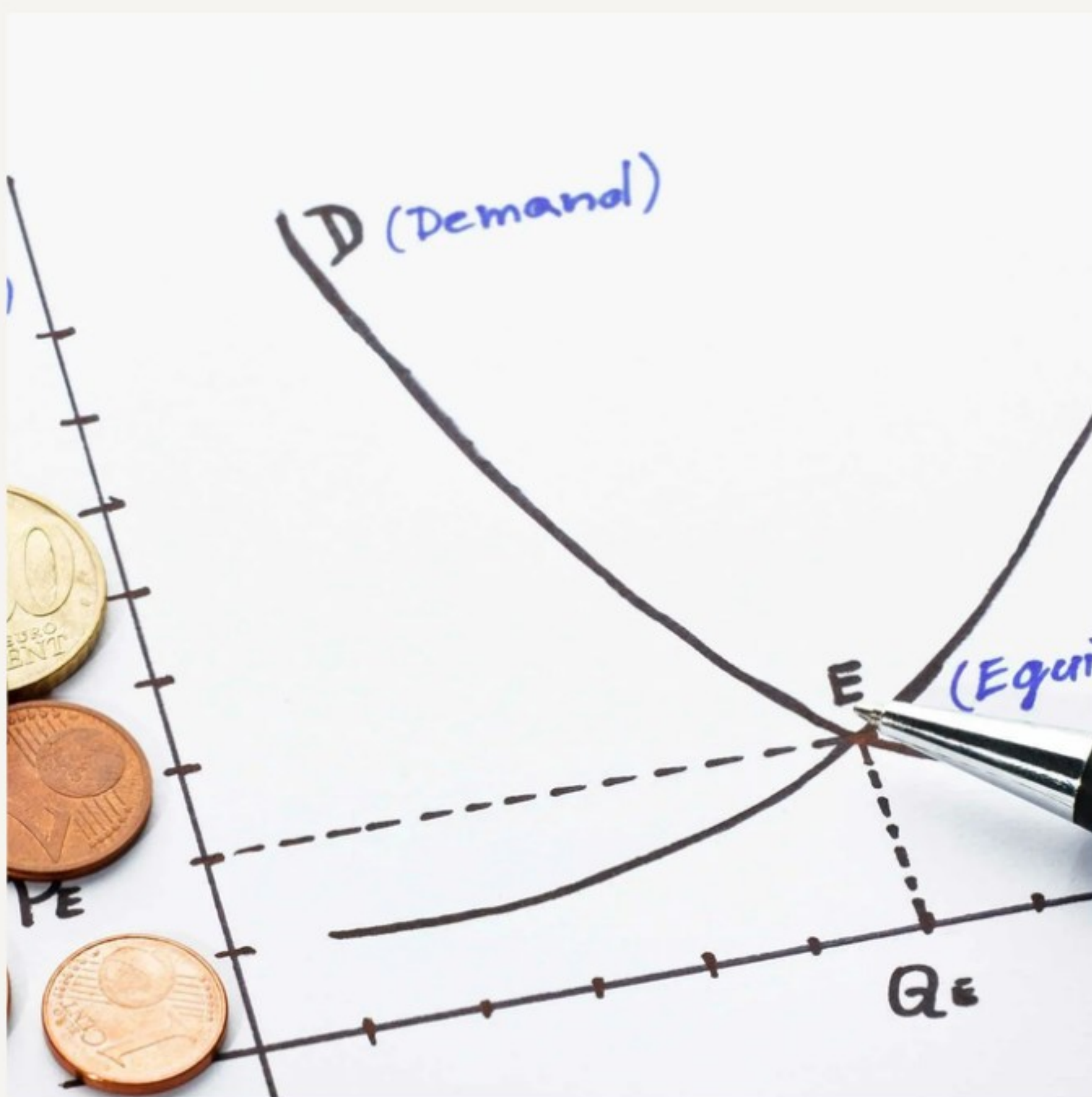
When the supply of money remains constant but the demand for money increases, more people want to hold or borrow money while the available amount stays the same. This creates a situation of relative scarcity.

In economics, the interest rate is the price of money, so when demand rises and supply does not, this price increases.

As interest rates rise, **borrowing becomes more expensive**. This discourages individuals and businesses from taking loans for consumption and investment. At the same time, higher interest rates encourage people to save more, as they get better returns on deposits.

These changes have wider economic effects. Reduced borrowing and spending can slow down economic activity and help control inflationary pressures. However, it may also lead to lower investment, reduced income generation, and even unemployment in the short run.

Thus, an increase in money demand with fixed supply primarily results in higher interest rates and tighter economic conditions.



2) The correct answer is (c)

Economic growth in a country requires a sustained increase in the production of goods and services, which depends on expanding the economy's productive capacity. This is most directly influenced by capital formation, i.e., the addition of physical assets such as machinery, infrastructure, and tools.

Option (a), technical progress in the world economy, can create opportunities for growth by making advanced technologies available. However, growth in country X is not guaranteed unless it adopts, adapts, and effectively uses these technologies within its own economy.

Option (b), population growth, increases the labour force but does not automatically lead to growth. If the additional population is not productively employed or lacks skills, it may put pressure on resources and even slow down economic progress.

Option (c), capital formation, is the most direct driver of growth. An increase in capital stock improves productivity, enables efficient production, and expands output capacity, thereby ensuring economic growth.

Option (d), growth in global trade, may provide external opportunities, but it does not ensure growth unless country X actively participates and remains competitive.

Thus, only capital formation necessarily leads to economic growth.

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