



CROSS & CLIMB  
MAKING THE ELIGIBLE ENTITLED

# CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK

School of Research Based Learning & Competition



CROSS & CLIMB  
MAKING THE ELIGIBLE ENTITLED

## Current Affairs - 26 December 2024

---

### GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL (GCC)



India and Kuwait have strengthened their relationship into a strategic partnership during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's landmark visit, the second by an Indian Prime Minister since 1981.

This visit highlights a strong commitment to trade, defense, and cooperation.

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is a regional political and economic alliance, established in 1981. It was formed in response to escalating regional tensions, particularly the Iranian Revolution (1979) and the Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988).

- It comprises six Arab states: **Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia,** and the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**.

#### Key Features of the GCC:

- The GCC countries together hold **almost half of the world's oil reserves**, making them vital players in the global energy market.
- The GCC convenes yearly summits to discuss strategies for **cooperation and regional stability**.

#### Organizational Structure of the GCC:

- **Supreme council:**
  - **Highest authority:** Composed of the heads of state from all member countries.
  - **Decision-making:** Decisions are made through **unanimous approval**.
  - **Presidency rotation:** The presidency rotates **annually**, based on the alphabetical order of member states.
- **Ministerial council:**
  - Composed of **foreign ministers** or their representatives from member states.
  - **Role:** Proposes policies and implements decisions of the Supreme Council.
  - **Meetings:** Held every three months.
- **Secretariat general:**



CROSS & CLIMB  
MAKING THE ELIGIBLE ENTITLED

# CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK

School of Research Based Learning & Competition



CROSS & CLIMB  
MAKING THE ELIGIBLE ENTITLED

## Current Affairs - 26 December 2024

---

- Acts as the **administrative arm** of the GCC.
- **Functions:** Monitors policy implementation and arranges meetings.
- **Headquarters:** Located in **Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**.

### India and the GCC:

- **Largest regional trading partner:** The GCC is India's most significant **regional trading bloc**. **Bilateral trade (FY 2023-24):**
    - Total trade: **USD 161.59 billion**.
    - India's exports: **USD 56.3 billion**.
    - India's imports: **USD 105.3 billion**.
    - The **UAE** is India's **3rd largest trading partner** and **2nd largest export destination**.
  - **Workforce and Remittances:** Approximately **8.9 million Indian expatriates** reside in GCC countries, forming **66% of all non-resident Indians (NRIs)**.
    - Indian expatriates contribute significantly to **remittances**, a vital income source for India.
- 

### MAMMOTH



Researchers in Siberia are conducting tests on a juvenile mammoth whose remarkably well-preserved remains were discovered in thawing permafrost after more than 50,000 years.

- Mammoths are member of an extinct species belongs to **elephantid genus Mammuthus**.
- They lived from the **Pliocene epoch** (from around 5 million years ago) into the **Holocene** at about 4,000 years ago.
- They existed in **Africa, Europe, Asia, and North America**.
- **Features:**
  - The various species of mammoth were commonly equipped with **long, curved tusks**.



CROSS & CLIMB  
MAKING THE ELIGIBLE ENTITLED

# CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK

School of Research Based Learning & Competition



CROSS & CLIMB  
MAKING THE ELIGIBLE ENTITLED

## Current Affairs - 26 December 2024

- They evolved a suite of adaptations for arctic life, including morphological traits such as **small ears** and **tails to minimize heat loss**, a thick layer of subcutaneous fat, **long thick fur**, and numerous sebaceous glands for insulation.
- They also had large **brown-fat hump** like deposit behind the neck that may have functioned as a heat source and fat reservoir during winter.
- Mammoths are more closely related to living Asian elephants than African elephants.

- **IUCN Status:** Extinct

### Key facts about Permafrost:

- It is any ground—from soil to sediment to rock—that has **been frozen continuously for a minimum of two years** and as many as hundreds of thousands of years.
- It can extend down beneath the earth's surface from a few feet to more than a mile, covering entire regions, such as the **Arctic tundra**, or a **single, isolated spot**, such as a **mountaintop of alpine permafrost**.
- It can be found on land and below the ocean floor.

### VIKSIT PANCHAYAT KARMAYOGI INITIATIVE



- It is part of the broader **'Prashasan Gaon Ki Aur'** campaign.
- It aims to **enhance the capacity and competence of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)** by equipping elected representatives and officials with the tools and knowledge required for effective governance and participatory planning.
- It is currently piloted in **Odisha, Assam, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh**.
- The initiative leverages **e-learning platforms, AI-powered chatbots**, and mobile apps to bridge knowledge gaps and enhance service delivery.
- This program aligns with the government's broader mission to decentralize governance and foster participatory decision-making at the grassroots level.



CROSS & CLIMB  
MAKING THE ELIGIBLE ENTITLED

# CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK

School of Research Based Learning & Competition



CROSS & CLIMB  
MAKING THE ELIGIBLE ENTITLED

## Current Affairs - 26 December 2024

- The initiative is expected to **create scalable models of citizen-centric governance**, enabling PRIs to drive equitable and sustainable development across rural India.

### Other initiatives:

- **New dashboard on the iGOT Karmayogi platform:**
- It is designed to **empower ministries, departments**, and state administrators with advanced tools to monitor **user registrations, course completions**, and overall progress in capacity-building efforts.
- With customizable views and robust data filtration capabilities, the dashboard provides detailed insights to **improve decision-making and optimize training initiatives**.
- **CPGRAMS Annual Report 2024:**
- It provides a comprehensive review of the **Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System**.
- The report showcases key achievements, including the resolution of over 25 lakh grievances annually and the implementation of the Grievance Redressal Assessment and Index (GRAI).

### PM LAYS FOUNDATION STONE OF KEN-BETWA PROJECT



- It aims to transfer water from the **Ken River to the Betwa River**, both tributaries of the Yamuna.
- The project includes a 221-km canal with a 2-km tunnel.
- The project also includes a 73.8-meter-high dam on Ken at Daudhan in Madhya Pradesh's Chhattarpur district.
- **Project Phases**
  - **Phase-I:** Construction of the **Daudhan Dam complex**, Low Level Tunnel, High Level Tunnel, Ken-Betwa Link Canal, and powerhouses.
  - **Phase-II:** Construction of Lower Orr Dam, Bina Complex Project, and Kotha Barrage.

## Current Affairs - 26 December 2024

---

- **Completion of project**
  - According to the Jal Shakti Ministry, the KBLP project is proposed to be implemented in eight years.
- **Regions Benefiting from the project**
  - The project will benefit the Bundelkhand region, which spans 13 districts in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Key beneficiary districts include:
    - **Madhya Pradesh:** Panna, Tikamgarh, Chhatarpur, Sagar, Damoh, Datia, Vidisha, Shivpuri, and Raisen.
    - **Uttar Pradesh:** Banda, Mahoba, Jhansi, and Lalitpur.
  - The project aims to address water scarcity in this drought-prone region, fostering development and paving the way for future river interlinking initiatives.
- **Benefits of the Project**
  - **Irrigation:** Annual irrigation for 10.62 lakh hectares (8.11 lakh ha in Madhya Pradesh and 2.51 lakh ha in Uttar Pradesh).
  - **Drinking Water:** Supply for ~62 lakh people.
  - **Power Generation:** 103 MW of hydropower and 27 MW of solar power.

### Environmental and social concerns

- **Environmental Impacts**
  - **Deforestation in Panna National Park:** The project will result in large-scale deforestation, with around 98 sq km of the park submerged and 2–3 million trees felled.
- **Threat to Wildlife:**
  - **Tigers:** The Daudhan Dam, located inside the Panna National Park, could undermine the successful tiger reintroduction program that revived the population after local extinction in 2009.
  - **Gharials and Vultures:** Likely to affect the Gharial population in the Ken Gharial Sanctuary and disrupt vulture nesting sites downstream.
  - **Hydrological Concerns:**



## Current Affairs - 26 December 2024

---

- IIT-Bombay scientists warn the project could reduce September rainfall by up to 12% due to disruptions in land-atmosphere feedback.
- Experts demand transparency in Ken River's hydrological data for a thorough review.
- **Social Impacts**
  - **Displacement:** The dam will displace 5,228 families in Chhatarpur district and 1,400 families in Panna district due to submergence and land acquisition.
  - **Inadequate Compensation:** Protests have erupted over perceived inadequate compensation and minimal benefits for affected communities, particularly in Panna district.

### Controversies and Criticism Surrounding the Project

- **Wildlife and Environmental Clearance:** The Supreme Court's Central Empowered Committee (CEC) questioned the wildlife clearance and the project's economic viability.
  - **Violation of Precedents:** The Union Environment Ministry approved construction within the core of the Panna Tiger Reserve, despite no precedent for such heavy infrastructure in national parks or tiger reserves.
- 

### 20 YEARS AFTER INDIAN OCEAN TSUNAMI, INDIA IS BETTER PREPARED

- **On December 26, 2004, a catastrophic event forever changed the way the world perceived natural disasters and preparedness.**
- **A 9.1 magnitude earthquake beneath the seabed off Indonesia unleashed a massive tsunami, devastating countries bordering the Indian Ocean including India, particularly the Andaman and Nicobar (A&N) Islands and the southern coastline.**

### The Tragedy and its Immediate Aftermath

- **In 2004, the lack of a robust warning system and limited public understanding of tsunamis resulted in immense human and material losses.**



CROSS & CLIMB  
MAKING THE ELIGIBLE ENTITLED

# CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK

School of Research Based Learning & Competition



CROSS & CLIMB  
MAKING THE ELIGIBLE ENTITLED

## Current Affairs - 26 December 2024

---

- The tsunami struck the A&N Islands within 20 minutes of the earthquake, and its waves travelled to India's mainland and Sri Lanka within hours.
- With no early warning (EW) mechanism in place, people were caught off guard, exacerbating the scale of destruction.
- The tragedy starkly highlighted deficiencies in India's seismic monitoring network and reliance on international seismic data, which delayed critical warnings.

### Institutional and Technological Responses

- **Establishment of Institutional Frameworks**
  - One of the most critical institutional responses to the tsunami was the enactment of the Disaster Management Act of 2005, which created a legal framework for disaster preparedness, mitigation, and response.
  - This legislation led to the formation of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), tasked with coordinating, and implementing disaster management plans across the country.
- **Recognition of Collaboration between Civilian and Military Agencies**
  - The tragedy also led to the recognition of the importance of collaboration between civilian and military agencies.
  - The Indian Armed Forces have since become key players in disaster response operations, offering logistical support, rapid mobilisation, and expertise during crises.
- **Development of Early Warning Systems**
  - Technological advancements have been at the forefront of India's efforts to prevent a recurrence of the 2004 disaster.
  - The establishment of the Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC) at the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) in Hyderabad marked a significant leap forward.
- **Sea Level Monitoring, Communication and Dissemination**



CROSS & CLIMB  
MAKING THE ELIGIBLE ENTITLED

# CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK

School of Research Based Learning & Competition



CROSS & CLIMB  
MAKING THE ELIGIBLE ENTITLED

## Current Affairs - 26 December 2024

---

- Tide gauges and deep-ocean assessment and reporting of tsunamis (**DART**) buoys are deployed strategically across the Indian Ocean to monitor changes in sea level.
  - **Warnings are transmitted to government agencies, disaster management authorities, and even neighbouring countries** under the UNESCO-led Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission framework.
  - **India has assumed a leadership role in this regard, offering tsunami-related services to 26 Indian Ocean region countries.**
  - **Enhancing Preparedness Through Technology**
    - The introduction of the **Common Alerting Protocol (CAP)** has significantly improved the dissemination of warnings.
    - **Alerts are sent to millions of mobile phones within minutes**, using polygon-drawn geographies to target affected areas accurately.
    - Moreover, **plans to implement a modern cell broadcast system** promise even greater reliability.
  - **Broader Applications of Technology**
    - While these advancements focus on tsunamis, **the technologies are being extended to address other hazards, including cyclones, lightning strikes, and Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs).**
    - The government's emphasis on **multi-hazard risk mapping** underscores a **commitment to a comprehensive approach** to disaster management.
- 

### IMAGING ACTIVE HYDROTHERMAL VENTS



India's Deep Ocean Mission recently achieved a landmark by capturing high-resolution images of an active hydrothermal vent 4,500 meters below the Indian Ocean's surface.



## Current Affairs - 26 December 2024

---

- Hydrothermal vents are **underwater hot springs** near tectonic plate boundaries, expelling hot water and minerals from beneath the Earth's crust into the ocean.
- They were first identified in **1977** near the **Galapagos Islands**, Ecuador.

### Formation:

- Cold seawater (around  $2^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) seeps through fissures in the oceanic crust near tectonic activity,
- The water then contacts **hot magma**, heating to temperatures up to  $370^{\circ}\text{C}$  or higher,
- Superheated water then resurfaces as mineral-rich **hydrothermal fluids**, forming vents and plumes.
- **Types:**
  - **Black Smokers:** Emit particle-laden fluids, primarily containing **iron sulfides**, forming black chimney-like structures
  - **White Smokers:** Emit fluids rich in **barium, calcium, and silicon**, forming white chimneys

### Significance of the Discovery for India:

- **Mineral Exploration:** Enhances India's capacity to explore and utilize deep-sea **hydrothermal sulfide fields**, vital for securing mineral resources.
  - **Support for Samudrayaan Mission:** The findings strengthen India's ambitious **Samudrayaan Mission**, focusing on mineral extraction from the deep ocean.
  - **Microbial Research:** Offers insights into chemosynthetic organisms, broadening knowledge of deep-sea biology and potential biotechnological applications.
-