

DAILY NEWS SNIPPETS (DNS)

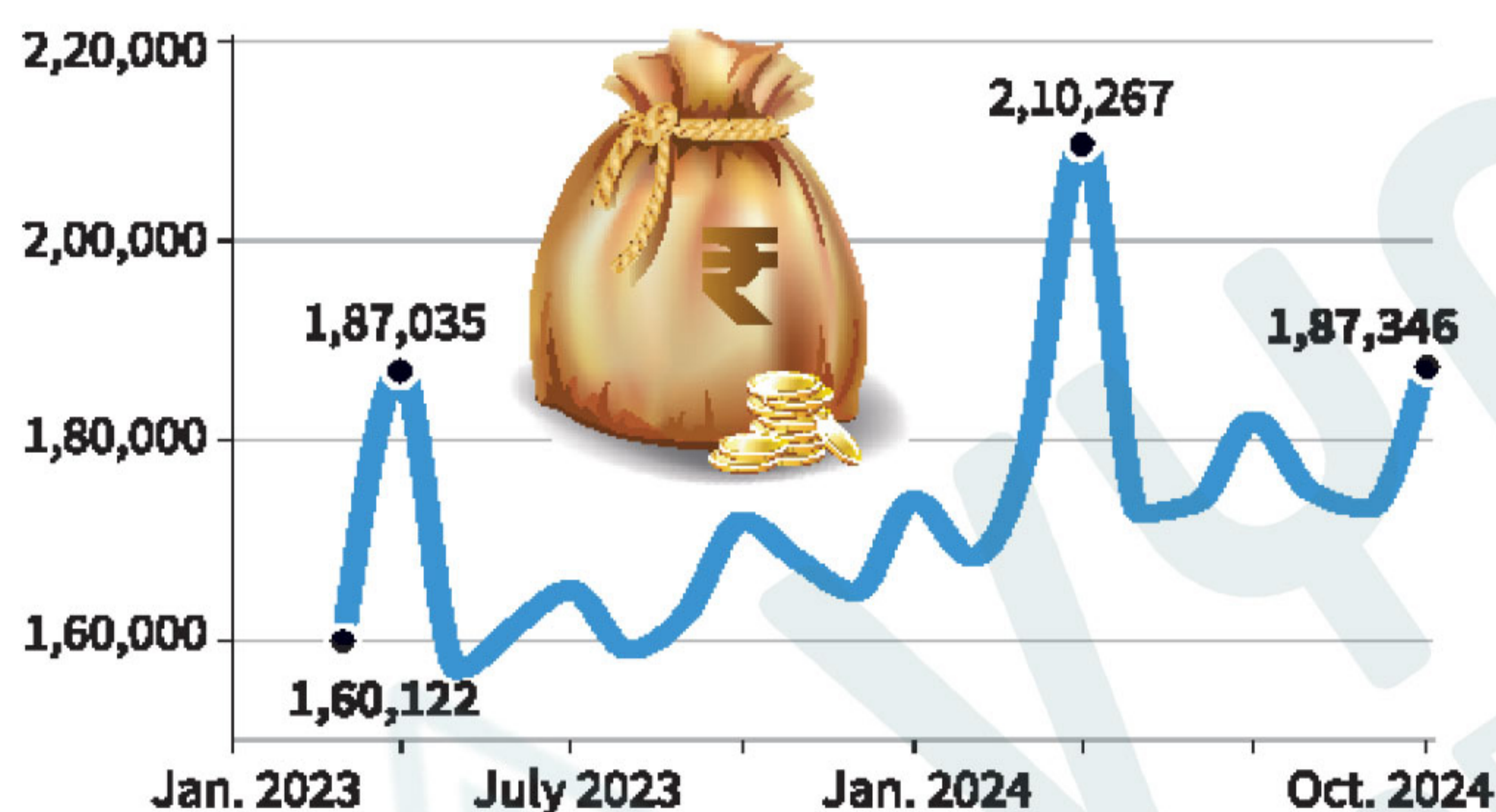
Date: 2nd November, 2024

1. GST receipts' growth picks up again, but still off target

#GS 3 – Economic Development

Revenue resurgence

The chart shows India's Gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections from March 2023 to October 2024 (in ₹ cr)



- India's Gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections surpassed ₹1.87 lakh crore in October, marking the second highest monthly collections on record, with growth rebounding to 8.9% in October from September's 40-month low uptick of 6.5%.
- Net revenues, after factoring in refunds, grew at a slower pace of 7.9% to a tad over ₹1.68 lakh crore in October. However, this also marked a recovery from September's growth rate of 3.9% which was the slowest so far in 2024-25.
- Last month's GST revenues were only eclipsed by the April 2024 collection of

₹2.1 lakh crore. Despite the improved growth figure, GST revenues so far continue to undershoot the Budget 2024-25 math, which factored in a rise of about 11% in net revenues.

- In October, growth in gross revenues from domestic transactions improved to 10.6% from about 6% a month earlier, while import revenues grew at a much milder pace of 3.9% in October, halving from September's 8% uptick. Net domestic receipts in October, from transactions in September, were up 8.7%, almost double the 4.5% recorded in the preceding month.
- Overall revenues from GST, prior to refunds, in the first seven months of this year, now stand at ₹12.74 lakh crore, 9.4% over the corresponding period of 2023-24. Net revenues, after refunds, are also up 9% at over ₹11.27 lakh crore, show official numbers.
- Amid the headline improvement in domestic transactions, variations among States deepened significantly relative to the previous month, with a dozen States

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growing faster than the 10.6% national average growth in domestic revenues, a dozen underperforming that pace, and five States recording a contraction in gross GST receipts from a year ago.

- On a year-on-year basis, revenues were flat in Uttarakhand, while they shrank a sharp 33% in Arunachal Pradesh, 8% in Nagaland, and 5% in Manipur, which was a moderate improvement from the 33% shrinkage in the strife-torn State's GST revenues during September. Himachal Pradesh and Chhattisgarh clocked a contraction of 2% and 1%, respectively, in October.
- Kerala, by contrast, recorded the highest growth at 20%, followed by Gujarat, whose revenues grew 17% after staying flat in September. Four States' revenues

rose 15%, including Haryana and West Bengal, while Maharashtra and Bihar reported a 14% growth in GST receipts.

- Among the States that witnessed weaker revenue growth, the poorest performance came from the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir as well as Sikkim, with just 2% growth, followed by a 3% rise in Jharkhand, and just 4% in Tamil Nadu.
- Refunds to domestic taxpayers jumped 42.8% in October, from about 24% in September, improving for the third straight month. However, export-related refunds of GST collections contracted 2% in October, compared to a 39.2% spike in the preceding month.

2. Air quality turns 'poor' in 99 cities across India

#GS 3 – Environment

Peak Pollution

Ambala in Haryana registered the highest AQI value of 367 on November 1 (24 hours till 4 p.m.)



Here is a list of cities that registered a "very poor" air quality, according to the Central Pollution Control Board

City	AQI value	Prominent pollutant	City	AQI value	Prominent pollutant
Ambala, Haryana	367	PM2.5	Gurugram, Haryana	309	PM2.5
Amritsar, Punjab	350	PM2.5	Ghaziabad, U.P.	306	PM2.5
Delhi	339	PM2.5	Kurukshetra, Haryana	306	PM10
Hajipur, Bihar	332	PM2.5	Lucknow, U.P.	306	PM2.5, PM10
Khurja, U.P.	320	PM10	Chandigarh	302	PM2.5
Moradabad, U.P.	320	PM2.5			
Bikaner, Rajasthan	312	PM2.5			

Source: Central Pollution Control Board

- Ninety-nine of the 265 cities for which Air Quality Index (AQI) data were available on the Central Pollution Control Board website reported "poor" air quality on Friday (data for 24 hours prior to 4 p.m. on this day). An AQI value of 200 or above corresponded to "poor" quality.
- Thirteen cities, including Delhi, Gurugram, and Ghaziabad in the National Capital Territory Region, recorded "very poor" air quality – AQI of 300 or above.
- Ambala in Haryana recorded the highest AQI of 367 followed by Amritsar in Punjab (350), while Delhi's average AQI was 339.
- These 24 hours corresponded to the period when Deepavali revellers took to

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burning crackers, defying a ban on it in places such as Delhi. People burnt crackers before 4 p.m. on Thursday as well.

- the number of cities that had “very poor” and “poor” air quality was relatively fewer – six, including Delhi (second highest AQI of 328), and 43, respectively. On Wednesday, a day prior to Deepavali celebrations, only Delhi registered “very poor” air quality with an AQI of 307. The number of cities with “poor” AQI was even fewer – 24, almost all of them in North India.
- Large cities such as Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad registered a “moderate” AQI on Friday, but even among them, the AQI values had jumped from those registered on October 30. Data from 2023 corresponding to Deepavali celebrations show that Delhi’s

AQI was high at 358 on November 12, corresponding to a “very poor” air quality, jumping from 218 (“poor”).

- Similar to this year, 53 and 85 cities had “very poor” and “poor” AQI respectively on November 12-13 as compared with eight and 42 cities.
- In cities such as Delhi and others in northern India, pollution levels peak during the winter season due to emissions from vehicles, industries, garbage burning, and construction work, besides stubble burning after the paddy season in neighbouring States, with particles being trapped in the cold air.
- Unfavourable winds in the early winter months that don’t flush the pollutants out also lead to a faster build-up. Firecracker burning has also contributed to exacerbating air quality during this period.

3. India silent after U.S. imposes sanctions on 19 Indian entities

#GS 2 -International Relations



- India has not responded directly to the U.S. decision to put 19 Indian entities under sanctions for providing “dual-use” technologies to Russia.
- Calling them “Third-Country Sanctions Evaders”, the U.S. Treasury Department on Wednesday imposed sanctions on

nearly 400 companies and individuals from 17 countries. However, India’s Ministry of External Affairs declined to comment, despite several requests for a reaction to the sanctions imposed on a number of Indian companies by the U.S. in a single action against Russia.

- A readout from the U.S. White House said the two Advisers had discussed “regional security developments, underscoring the need for further efforts to ensure stability in the Indo-Pacific region and globally”, but made no mention of the U.S. action over Russia-linked companies in India.
- “They also discussed further opportunities for closer collaboration in key domains, including clean energy

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supply chains and defence cooperation,” the readout added, highlighting “progress in the bilateral partnership”, through the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET) launched by them in 2023.

- The Modi government has thus far not responded to U.S. Treasury sanctions against a number of Indian entities for links to Russia and Iran since 2022, holding only that India “does not recognise unilateral sanctions”. According to the U.S. Treasury Department, the U.S. will now freeze all property of the sanctioned companies and owners in the United States and ban all transactions by U.S. citizens with them.
- “The United States and our allies will continue to take decisive action across

the globe to stop the flow of critical tools and technologies that Russia needs to wage its illegal and immoral war against Ukraine,” Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Wally Adeyemo, said, announcing the sanctions.

- The call between the two NSAs, which followed the announcement, came days after India and China announced they had disengaged in the last two pending friction points on the Line of Actual Control, indicating a thaw in ties after four years of a military stand-off. The NSAs spoke amid escalating tensions between India and Canada over the Nijjar killing case, and recent accusations that Home Minister Amit Shah had directed the killing of the Canadian Khalistani activist last year.

4. India spells out finance needs for biodiversity, conservation

#GS 3 – Environment



- India expects to spend around ₹81,664 crore on biodiversity and conservation from the financial year 2025 to 2030. From 2018 to 2022, India spent ₹32,207 crore, and to meet the higher financing requirements would require funds from sources beyond routine government expenditure, the country stated in its updated submission at the ongoing 16th edition of Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Colombia (COP-16).
- The expenditure from 2018 to 2022 was purely that expended by the Centre as allocations to various Ministries or

statutory bodies for the conservation and biodiversity-linked programmes.

- Indian officials at the conference said international finance would be necessary to meet these goals. “I would like to mention that it is necessary to provide means of implementation, including financial resources, as laid down in target 19 of the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) as well as from Digital Sequence Information (DSI), for implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP),” Kirti Vardhan Singh, Minister of State (Environment), said at the convention. “Lot of ground needs to be covered in providing easily accessible means of implementation, i.e. financial resources, technology and capacity building needs with the requisite speed, scope and scale.”

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- The KMGBF refers to biodiversity goals previously agreed upon by countries to reverse and stop biodiversity loss by 2030.
- The DSI is one of the agreements currently being debated upon by

countries in Colombia and deals with equitably sharing the benefits from uploading genetic data of organisms in global databases.

5. **Sickness, infirmity are grounds for bail in PMLA case, says SC**

#GS 2 -Governance



- The Supreme Court has highlighted that sickness and infirmity of an accused are grounds for bail even under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).
- A three-judge Bench in a recent order, highlighted the leeway given to an ailing accused under the anti-money laundering law while allowing interim bail to Amar Sadhuram Mulchandani, former Chairperson of Seva Vikas Co-operative Bank.
- The proviso to Section 45(1) of the PMLA specifically contemplates that a person

who “is sick or infirm” may be released on bail if the Special Court so directs.

- Section 45 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 or PMLA covers bail. Clause (1) of Section 45 is stringent – the accused would get bail only if the court was satisfied there were reasonable grounds for believing they were not guilty. Further, the court should be satisfied that the accused would not commit any offence while out on bail. These twin conditions make getting bail in the PMLA cases an almost impossible task.
- However, the proviso to clause (1) of Section 45 allows courts the discretion to exempt persons below 16 years of age, women, the sick or the infirm from these dual conditions for bail, providing humane relief.
- In the current case, the court noted that Mr. Mulchandani was 67 years old and had already spent nearly a year and three months in custody.

6. **Naga group urges Centre to finalise peace deal this year**

#GS 2 -Governance

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- The Naga National Political Groups (NNPG) said that the Union government should finalise the Naga peace pact according to the terms of the agreement signed with the group in 2019, the provisions of which include a separate page in the Indian passport for the Nagas and a bicameral legislature in Nagaland.
- The NNPG said the political solution reached with the Union government fully recognised the Naga identity, with a separate page in the Indian passport, a separate contingent of Nagas in all international events, and an enhanced

representation in both Houses of Parliament.

- The NNPG, which is the second group after the influential Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM) to engage in peace talks with the Union government, signed an “Agreed Position” on October 31, 2019, with the then Naga interlocutor, currently Tamil Nadu’s Governor.
- “The NNPG hopes that the Government of India will complete the signing of the agreement in 2024 itself,” a statement by the NNPG, which comprises seven groups, said.
- It said the ‘Agreed Position’ had the status of an “intergovernmental agreement” as the NNPG working committee had signed it with Mr. Ravi, who was holding a Cabinet rank in the government.

7. **Patrolling resumes at Demchok, to begin in Depsang on weekend**

#GS 2 -International Relations



- The Indian and Chinese Armies started coordinated patrolling along the Line of Actual Control in Demchok, while patrolling in Depsang is expected to commence in a day or so, sources confirmed.

- This comes after disengagement was completed on Wednesday in both these areas located in eastern Ladakh, the final friction points from the 2020 stand-off between the two countries. The resumption of patrolling is a significant step in returning to the status quo of pre-April 2020.
- Officials from both sides verified the completion of disengagement on the ground in both the areas, Army sources said. Ground commanders, at the rank of Brigadier and below, held meetings on Wednesday to work out the modalities for patrolling. In order to avoid face-offs

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between patrols and prevent clashes, the timing and frequency of patrols will be coordinated. However, given that there has been a stand-off going on at Demchok since 2017 and that the latest agreement is only to restore the ground situation to the pre-April 2020 situation, it is not clear upto what point the Indian Army will get to patrol in the Demchok area.

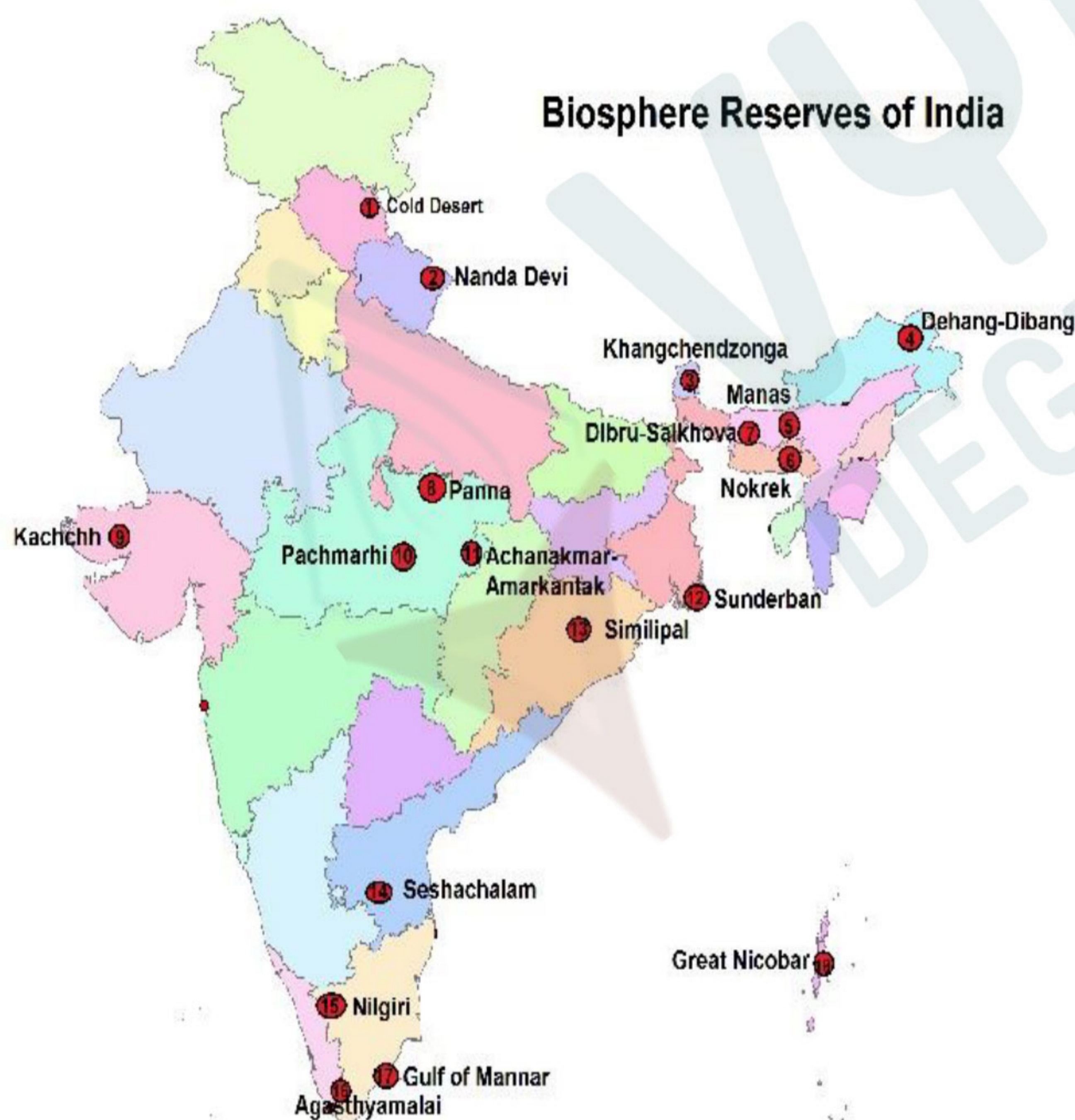
- At Depsang, where the situation is much more complex, patrolling is expected to resume over the weekend. At least technically, this means that the Indian

Army should be able to resume patrols upto the Patrolling Points 10, 11, 11A, 12, and 13 in the area, which it last managed to access in January 2020.

- With disengagement now completed at all the friction points of the stand-off that began in May 2020, the next step is to work out new patrolling norms and resume patrolling at other friction points as well, such as Galwan, Patrolling Point 15 and 17A in the Gogra Hotsprings area, and the north and south banks of the Pangong Tso.

8. Biosphere Reserve (BR)

#GS 3 -Environment



- Biosphere Reserve (BR) is an international designation by UNESCO for representative parts of natural and cultural landscapes extending over large area of terrestrial or coastal/marine ecosystems or a combination thereof. BRs are designated to deal with one of the most important questions of

reconciling the conservation of biodiversity, the quest for economic and social development and maintenance of associated cultural values.

- BRs are thus special environments for both people and the nature and are living examples of how human beings and nature can co-exist while respecting each other's' needs.

Criteria for designation of BR:

- A site that must contain an effectively protected and minimally disturbed core area of value of nature conservation.
- The core area should be typical of a biogeographical unit and large enough to sustain viable populations representing all trophic levels in the ecosystem.
- The management authority to ensure the involvement/cooperation of local communities to bring variety of knowledge and experiences to link biodiversity conservation and socio-

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economic development while managing and containing the conflicts.

- Areas potential for preservation of traditional tribal or rural modes of living for harmonious use of environment.

