

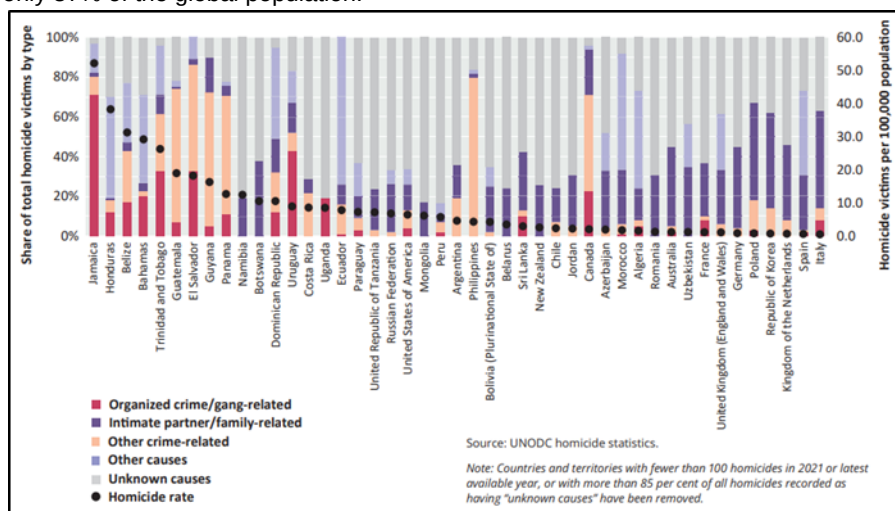


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Global Study on Homicide Report 2023

Context: UNODC has released a report on the causes of deaths as a part of homicide with a data from 2021 and 2022.

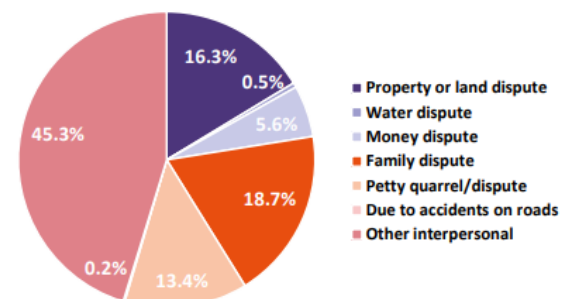
- In **2021**, there were **approximately 458,000 intentional homicides globally**, averaging **52 victims per hour**, marking an exceptionally lethal year.
- The **African continent recorded the highest intentional homicides in 2021**, with an estimated 176,000 victims, **followed by the Americas** with 154,000, **Asia** with 109,000, **Europe** with 17,000, and **Oceania** with 1,000.
- Homicide **rates per 100,000 population** indicate a **higher risk in the Americas** (15.0) compared to other regions, surpassing rates in **Africa** (12.7), **Oceania** (2.9), **Asia** (2.3), and **Europe** (2.2).
- In terms of global distribution, **Africa accounted for 38%, the Americas for 34%, Asia for 24%, Europe for 4%, and Oceania for less than 1%** of all homicide victims in 2021.
- Notably, **Brazil and Nigeria, constituting only 6% of the world population, contributed to 20% of the global homicide toll.**
- The **top 10 countries** with the highest absolute numbers of homicide victims collectively **represented 58% of global victims**, despite constituting only 37% of the global population.



- The **rise in homicide numbers in 2021** can be attributed to various factors, including the economic repercussions of COVID-19-related restrictions and an increase in gang-related and socio-political violence.
- Available **2022 data show a 5.4% decrease in homicides in Northern America**, contrasting with an increasing homicide rate over the past decade and recent surge in the United States.
- Several countries in the **Caribbean experienced a significant increase** in homicidal violence in 2021 and 2022, linked to **crime, trafficking, access to firearms, ammunition, and the expansion and fragmentation of gangs** seeking to control territory.
- Estimates indicate that **Africa had the highest absolute number of homicides in 2021**, and available data suggest that the **homicide rate is not falling, making Africa particularly vulnerable to homicide**, considering its young population and persisting inequality gaps.
- **India Specific Findings:**

- **Property and Land Disputes in India:** Disputes over property, land, or water access accounted for nearly 16.8% of murder cases in India between 2019 and 2021, according to the UNODC.
- **Water-Related Conflicts in Murder Cases:** Approximately 0.5% or 300 murders in India during 2019-21 were attributed to water-related conflicts, as revealed by the UNODC's Global Study on Homicide Report 2023.
- **Role of Water Access Disputes:** Disputes over water access played a significant role in interpersonal homicides outside of families, serving as a prominent driver, as highlighted in the report.

FIG. 13 Interpersonal murders by type in India, 2019-2021



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- **Factors Worsening Water-Related Violence:** The report indicates that disputes over water access, exacerbated by population growth, economic expansion, and climate change, have contributed to increased violence.
- **Impact of Natural Resource Scarcity:** The report notes that natural resource scarcity, including water, has an impact on international homicides, citing increased violence due to competition over resources.
- **Regional Incidents of Water-Related Violence:** Data from the Pacific Institute shows a significant increase in water-related violence incidents since 2015, particularly in Southern Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, and Central America.
- **Diverse Motives for Murders:** The report outlines various motives for murders in the interpersonal category, including honour killings, love affairs, illicit relationships, personal vendettas, dowry disputes, witchcraft, psychopathy, road rage, and rape.
- **Exceptional Lethality in 2021:** Despite the consistent stability in global homicide counts over the past two decades, the year 2021 stood out as exceptionally lethal, according to the UNODC report.
- **Water-Related Conflicts in Previous Years:** A report from the National Crime Records Bureau in 2020 revealed that at least 232 Indians lost their lives in water-related conflicts in 2017-19, with a doubling of such crimes in 2018 compared to 2017.

The National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second (Amendment) Bill, 2023

Context: Both the Houses of Parliament passed The National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second (Amendment) Bill, 2023, extending the protection, originally set to conclude this year, until December 31, 2026.

- **Protection for Specific Groups:** No punitive action, such as demolitions or sealing, can be taken against certain categories, including slum dwellers, hawkers, and unauthorized colonies in Delhi for the next three years.
- **Minister's Justification:** Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Puri emphasized the necessity to extend the provision to safeguard the 40 lakh residents of unauthorized colonies in Delhi from "inhumane" actions.
- **Background of the Law:**
 - The legislation originated in response to sealing drives initiated by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi in 2006 following orders from the Delhi High Court and Supreme Court against unauthorized constructions.
 - The original law, The Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Act, 2006, protected certain unauthorized constructions for one year.
 - Subsequent amendments extended the protection until 2014, and the NDA government has made three amendments, each extending the protection for three years at a time.
- **Amendment Details:** The recent amendment replaces the year 2023 with 2026, prolonging the protections for another three years, covering unauthorized constructions up to June 1, 2014.
- **Objectives of the Amendment:**
 - The amendment emphasizes the need for orderly arrangements for the relocation and rehabilitation of residents in various unauthorized constructions.
 - It notes the ongoing process of conferring ownership rights to residents of unauthorized colonies and the notification of development control norms for these colonies.
- **Future Considerations:**
 - While protections have been extended, questions remain about the future and the possibility of another extension in 2026.
 - Delays in conferring ownership rights, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, have impacted the process, with only 4 lakh registrations out of 40-50 lakh individuals living in unauthorized colonies.
 - The draft Master Plan Delhi-2041, in its final stages, is expected to provide details of development norms for unauthorized colonies, slums, etc.
- **Article 239AA:**
 - **Constitutional Background:**
 - Article 239AA was added to the Constitution through The Constitution (69th Amendment) Act, 1991, to grant Special Status to Delhi.
 - The amendment followed recommendations from the S Balakrishnan Committee, addressing demands for statehood for Delhi.
 - **Provisions of Article 239AA:**
 - Establishes an Administrator and a Legislative Assembly for the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi.
 - Grants legislative powers to the Legislative Assembly over matters in the State List or Concurrent List, applicable to Union territories, with exceptions for police, public order, and land.
 - **Limitations on Legislative Powers:**
 - Legislative Assembly's authority is subject to constitutional provisions.

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- Excludes powers related to police, public order, and land, which remain outside the Legislative Assembly's purview.
- **Role of the Lieutenant Governor (L-G):** Article 239AA outlines the L-G's role, stating that they must either act on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers or implement decisions taken by the President on reference.
- **Resolution of Differences:**
 - Empowers the L-G to refer any difference of opinion with the Council of Ministers on 'any matter' to the President for resolution.
 - This provision introduces a mechanism for conflict resolution in the governance structure.
- **Dual Control Dynamics:**
 - The existence of dual control between the L-G and the elected government creates a power tussle.
 - This dynamic often results in conflicts over decision-making authority and governance issues in the NCT of Delhi.

Lowest number of Audits by CAG in 2023

Context: In the year 2023, Parliament received and tabled only 18 audit reports on the accounts of the Union government, as prepared by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).

➤ Audit Reports on Union Government:

- A year-wise analysis reveals a decline in the number of audit reports on the Union Government's accounts tabled in Parliament.
- Between 2019 and 2023, an average of 22 reports were presented annually, in contrast to the 40 reports per year from 2014 to 2018.
- The peak was in 2015 with 53 reports, but in four of the last six years, 20 or fewer reports were tabled.

➤ Department-wise Trends:

- Similar declining trends were observed across departments, such as the Railways Department, with 14 reports in the last five years compared to 27 in the preceding period.
- The Civil Department published 34 audit reports in the last five years, down from 42 in the previous five-year period.
- The **Defence Department's latest available report dates back to 2017**, with concerns about accessibility, as stated by former CAG Rajiv Mehrishi in 2020.

➤ IA&AD Staff Strength:

- The IA&AD, headed by the CAG, witnessed a **decline in staff strength** from 48,253 in 2013-14 to 41,675 in 2021-22.
- The number of **IA&AS officers reduced from 789 in 2014-15 to 553 in 2021-22**.
- The **audit and accounting staff decreased** from over 26,000 in 2013-14 to 20,320 in 2021-22.
- The total employees as a share of sanctioned posts remained relatively stable, fluctuating between 66% and 75%.

➤ Budget Allocation to IA&AD:

- The budget allocated to the IA&AD, as a percentage of the Union Budget's total expenditure, **declined from 0.19% in FY17 to 0.13% in FY24**.
- In absolute terms, the **IA&AD budget increased from ₹3,780 crore in FY17 to ₹5,806 crore in FY24**, reflecting a 53% rise, significantly **lower than the 128% increase in the Union Budget's total expenditure** during the same period.

➤ CAG and its functions:

- The Constitution of India (Article 148) establishes the independent office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG).
- As the head of the Indian Audit and Accounts Department, CAG plays a vital role in upholding the democratic system of government in India.
- CAG serves as the guardian of the public purse and exercises control over the entire financial system of the country at both the central and state levels.
- The primary duty of CAG is to uphold the Constitution of India and parliamentary laws in the realm of financial administration.
- **Constitutional Provisions:**
 - Article 148 deals with CAG's appointment, oath, and conditions of service.
 - Article 149 outlines the duties and powers of the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India.
 - Article 150 empowers the President, on CAG's advice, to prescribe the form in which the accounts of the Union and States are kept.
 - Article 151 mandates that CAG's reports on Union accounts be submitted to the President, who, in turn, lays them before both Houses of Parliament.
 - Article 279 involves CAG in the calculation of "net proceeds," with his certificate being deemed final.

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- **Appointment, Term & Removal:**
 - CAG is appointed by the President through a warrant under his hand and seal.
 - CAG holds office for six years or until the age of 65, whichever is earlier, and can resign at any time.
 - Removal requires a resolution by both Houses of Parliament with a special majority, based on proven misbehavior or incapacity.
- **Independence:**
 - Provisions ensure CAG's security of tenure, making him not subject to removal at the pleasure of the President.
 - CAG is ineligible for further government office after leaving the position.
 - Parliament determines CAG's salary and service conditions, equating it to that of a Supreme Court judge.
 - Salary, leave, pension, and retirement rights cannot be altered to CAG's disadvantage post-appointment.
 - Administrative expenses of CAG's office are charged upon the Consolidated Fund of India, not subject to parliamentary vote.
 - No minister can represent or take responsibility for CAG's actions in Parliament.
- **Duties of CAG:**
 - Audits cover expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India, each state's Consolidated Fund, Contingency Fund, and Public Account.
 - Audits include trading, manufacturing, profit and loss accounts, and subsidiary accounts of Central and state governments.
 - CAG audits bodies substantially financed by Central or State revenues, government companies, and other relevant entities.
 - Certifies the net proceeds of taxes or duties, with the certificate being final.

NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

Valmiki Tiger Reserve



Recently, the authorities in Bihar's Valmiki Tiger Reserve have credited the rise in the protected area (PA)'s big cat numbers to a reduction in human activities, including restrictions on illegal mining in its eco-sensitive zone.

About Valmiki Tiger Reserve:

- Valmiki tiger reserve is located at the **India -Nepal border** in the **West Champaran** district of Bihar.
- It is bordered by **Nepal's Royal Chitwan National Park** in the north and the **Gandak River** in the west, it encompasses **Valmiki National Park** and **Valmiki Wildlife Sanctuary**.
- It includes rich flora like, **Sal**, rohini, sihor, **teak**, **bamboo**, semal, **Mandar**, **shisham**, Jamun, Gular, and various other species.
- This reserve hosts **tigers**, **leopards**, smaller cats, deer species, wild boar and unique birds like **Kaleej Pheasant**, hill myna, **paradise fly catcher**, and Himalayan bulbul.
- As per the Tiger Census of **2018**, the reserve is home to **32 tigers**.

Punaura Dham Temple



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar recently launched a Rs 72-crore development plan for Goddess Sita's birthplace at Punaura Dham in Sitamarhi.

About Punaura Dham Temple:

- Punaura Dham is a **Hindu pilgrimage temple** in the **Sitamarhi** district of Bihar.
- The temple is believed to be the birthplace of Mata Sita.
- The shrine compound includes a Ram Janki temple, a **pond called Sita Kund** and a hall.
- The recent research spanning nearly a decade found it was built **about 200 years ago by a sage** who claimed it based on a dream.
- The claim of Panaura (Punaura) being Sita's birthplace was made in **Sir William Wilson Hunter's A Statistical Account of Bengal**, Volume 13, dating back to **1877**.

Greenwashing



The UK recently banned ads by Air France, Lufthansa, and Etihad for 'greenwashing,' accusing them of misleading customers by exaggerating their environmental efforts.

About Greenwashing:

- Greenwashing refers to the **deceptive practice** where companies or **entities create a misleading impression** that their products, services, or actions are environmentally friendly or contribute to reducing emissions.
- It often involves **misleading advertising**, environmental imagery or highlighting sustainable aspects while concealing environmentally damaging activities.
- It involves implying **eco-friendly practices without evidence** and downplaying negative environmental impacts while highlighting positives.
- It **misguides eco-conscious consumers** and **diverts attention from real sustainability efforts**, hindering progress in reducing environmental harm and carbon footprints.

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Christmas Tree Galaxy Cluster



Recently, the NASA has unveiled an image of the Christmas Tree Galaxy Cluster, situated 4.3 billion light-years away, captured by the James Webb Space Telescope.

About Christmas Tree Galaxy Cluster:

- The Christmas Tree Galaxy Cluster is a **composite image** that combines visible light from **Hubble** and **infrared light** from James Webb Space Telescope.
- The image shows the **MACS0416 galaxy cluster**, which is about 4.3 billion light-years from Earth.
- It is also the name of the **New General Catalogue 2264**, a cluster of young stars in the Milky Way.
- The cluster is located within the nebulous gasses of NGC 2264 and the **stars formed from the surrounding molecular cloud**.
- This cluster, resembling a winking formation, displayed **14 flickering stars reminiscent of Christmas lights**, observed through gravitational lensing.

Place in News

Iceland

Recently, following weeks of intense earthquakes, a volcano erupted on Iceland's Reykjanes peninsula.

Iceland (Capital: Reykjavik)

Location: Iceland is a **Nordic island country** located at the inter section of the Arctic and North Atlantic Oceans.

Significance:

- It has been a **member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** since its establishment in **1949**.
- Its coastline meets the **Greenland Sea** (North), the **Norwegian Sea** (East), the **Atlantic Ocean** (South and West) and the **Denmark Strait** (northwest), which serves as the boundary separating it from Greenland.



Physical Features:

- This country is positioned on the **Mid-Atlantic Ridge**, visible through **rift valleys** like **Pingvellir National Park**.
- Iceland's highest geographical point is **Hvannadalshnúkur Peak**.
- The **Pjorsa River** stands as Iceland's longest river.

Personality in News

Dr. V Mohini Giri

Dr. V Mohini Giri (15th January 1938- 19th December 2023)

She was an Indian activist and community service worker.

Contributions:

- She founded the **Guild of Service in 1979**, which was dedicated to empowering women, underprivileged children and war widows.
- She started the **War Widows Association in 1972**, after the **Indo-Pak war of 1971**.
- She was the **founder trustee of Women's Initiative for Peace in South Asia**, trustee of various organisations such as Navdanya, Justice Sunanda Bhandare Foundation and FAEA.
- She also served as the **chairperson of both Central Social Welfare Board and National Commission for Women**.

Awards and Recognition:

- Dr. Giri was awarded the **Padma Bhushan** for her work in **2007** by then President of India Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.
- Commemorated through a documentary titled "**Still We Rise: The Passion and Compassion of Mohini Giri**," celebrating her contributions and the **Guild for Service's 50-year milestone**.
- **Ethical Values:** Empathy and Compassion, Integrity and Responsibility, Advocacy for Women's Rights, etc.



POINTS TO PONDER

- ❖ Who is newly appointed Speaker of the Madhya Pradesh Assembly? - **Ex-Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar**
- ❖ Which book has been recently selected Neelum Saran Gour the Sahitya Akademi award in the English language category? - **Requiem in Raga Janki**
- ❖ Which type of missiles does the SAMAR-1 system use for the surface-to-air role? - **Russian Vympel R-73E infrared-guided air-to-air missiles**
- ❖ Which country's border will the Gelephu Special Administrative Region which is currently in news connect with? - **Assam (India)**
- ❖ Under which ministry does the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) operate? - **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**

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