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EDITORIAL 01

Sporting extravaganza: On the Olympic Games Paris 2024

The Olympics will keep the world occupied over the next two weeks

The **quadrennial** confluence of the world's finest athletes, the Olympics, is beginning in Paris from Friday. The latest edition does not have the constricting environment that preceded 'Tokyo 2020', held in 2021 in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, this arrives at a time of global **churn**. While Russia remains banned from the Games due to its war moves, Israel will be present despite some **dissenting** voices over the manner in which it has dealt with the Palestinian issue. Some individual Russians will compete under a neutral banner but the nation will miss team events. The Olympics, with its competitive spirit, will offer a level playing field featuring countries like the United States and China at one end and an island-country like Fiji at the other. Being part of the event **bequeaths** the title Olympian to athletes fortunate to qualify for this big bash, and winning a medal only further enhances that halo. Paris, and France at large, will be tested over the next fortnight as the Olympics, even



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if it **vests** the host with soft power, often affects the economy; indeed, there was some resistance **emanating** from the banks of the Seine.

The U.S., China, Japan, Great Britain, Australia, Germany and France are the **behemoths** chasing glory. However, the Games is also about the lone athlete dishing out magic and **garnering** attention, as Usain Bolt did in the past. Veteran Rafael Nadal and the latest tennis prince, Carlos Alcaraz, getting excited to represent Spain in tennis is another glimpse of the eternal **allure** of the Olympics. That the Games has even incorporated breakdancing is a pointer to the entertainment industry finding a larger imprint while lines between sport and art constantly blur. With 204 countries, including India, besides neutral athletes and a refugee team, **jostling** for a place on the victor's podium, the Olympics provides a space for smaller units to carve a niche and stun bigger opponents. Morocco defeating Argentina in a **tempestuous** football game has already added zest to the Games. Above all, the Olympics grants hope and redemption, and for a strife-ridden country like Afghanistan, the event also serves as a diversion. The 1972 Munich edition **marred** by a terror strike on the Israeli contingent remains a **harrowing** memory and in a world on the boil, security will be a concern for the organising

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committee. That some members of the Australian women's water polo squad tested positive for COVID-19 is also a reality check while all eyes are on Paris.

SUMMARY

The Olympic Games in Paris 2024 will continue for two weeks, featuring the world's finest athletes and a competitive spirit. Despite Russia's ban due to war moves, Israel will be present, despite dissenting voices over the Palestinian issue. The Games will feature countries like the US, China, Japan, Great Britain, Australia, Germany, and France, as well as lone athletes like Usain Bolt and Rafael Nadal. The Games have even incorporated breakdancing, highlighting the entertainment industry's growing influence. With 204 countries, including India, neutral athletes, and a refugee team, the Games provide a space for smaller units to carve a niche and stun bigger opponents. The Games also grant hope and redemption, and serve as a diversion for countries like Afghanistan. However, security concerns and the recent COVID-19 test in Australia's water polo squad add to the excitement.



Vocabulary

1. Quadrennial

Meaning: "Quadrennial" means occurring every four years or lasting for four years.

2. Churn

Synonyms: Agitate, stir, mix

Antonyms: Calm, settle, still

3. Dissenting

Synonyms: Disagreeing, opposing, nonconforming

Antonyms: Agreeing, conforming, supporting

4. Bequeaths

Synonyms: Bestows, leaves, wills

Antonyms: Retains, keeps, withholds

5. Vests

Synonyms: Endows, entrusts, invests

Antonyms: Divests, withdraws, strips

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6. Emanating

Synonyms: Originating, emerging, radiating

Antonyms: Terminating, ending, ceasing

7. Behemoths

Meaning: "Behemoths" refers to something that is enormous in size or power, often used to describe large and powerful entities, organizations, or objects.

8. Garnering

Synonyms: Collecting, gathering, amassing

Antonyms: Dispersing, scattering, dissipating

9. Allure

Synonyms: Charm, attraction, appeal

Antonyms: Repulsion, aversion, detachment

10. Jostling

Synonyms: Shoving, bumping, pushing

Antonyms: Standing still, avoiding, retreating

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11. Tempestuous

Synonyms: Turbulent, stormy, chaotic

Antonyms: Calm, peaceful, serene

12. Marred

Synonyms: Damaged, blemished, tarnished

Antonyms: Pristine, flawless, perfect

13. Harrowing

Synonyms: Distressing, agonizing, tormenting

Antonyms: Soothing, comforting, pleasant



EDITORIAL 02

More for more: On the Union Budget and allocations

Budget allocations have not helped States ruled by parties opposed to BJP

Budgets of the Union or the States, as much as they are revenue and expenditure statements for the upcoming fiscal year, are also an exercise in political economy, and the recently tabled Union Budget for 2024-25 is no different. Aside from the “nine priorities”, beginning with provisions for the farm sector and attempts to boost employment, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman **delved** at some length on the special provisions made for the States of Andhra Pradesh and Bihar. Both are headed by parties providing crucial support to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) after its **underwhelming** performance in the 2024 general election. The Janata Dal (United) headed by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, and the Telugu Desam Party headed by his Andhra Pradesh counterpart N. Chandrababu Naidu are parties associated with the **convenership** of the National Democratic Alliance in the past. These are also parties that severed long-standing ties with the BJP over issues that ranged from Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s alleged non-secular **credentials** to ignoring demands for increased central aid. Bihar has now received the largest chunk with outlays



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worth almost ₹59,000 crore. These include road infrastructure outlays for ₹26,000 crore, ₹21,400 crore for a 2,400 MW power plant, and ₹11,500 crore to address irrigation and flood mitigation. While Mr. Naidu had been more **vociferous** than Mr. Kumar with his demands for assistance worth ₹1 lakh crore, the cornerstone outlay in the Budget was a facilitation of ‘special financial support’ of ₹15,000 crore for the development of the State’s new capital, Amaravati. While Ms. Sitharaman promised to hasten the completion of the Polavaram irrigation project ‘to ensure food security of the nation’, Budget documents do not mention concrete outlays.

Both States have unsustainable public debts of about one-third, that is the debt to Gross State Domestic Product ratio, and both deserve the special attention they have received. But by making **piecemeal** allocations for projects in the rest of the country, as for the Mumbai Metro rail, and by ignoring other similar critical infrastructure spends in Opposition-ruled States (Chennai’s Metro rail in Tamil Nadu and Kerala’s Vizhinjam port project are examples), Ms. Sitharaman has failed to provide a fair and **equitable** distribution of the Union’s finances. While the debt-ridden and poorer regions of the country rightly deserve greater attention, ignoring States that generate the most revenue for the Union runs the risk of slowing down development that has acquired critical mass to enable these States to become global



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economic powerhouses. As they have begun attracting cutting-edge technology, corporates, talent and creating the required research and development base to house next-generation industries on energy transition, automobiles, artificial intelligence, mobile and semi-conductors, the industrially and socio-economically advanced States too need a helping hand.

SUMMARY

The Union Budget for 2024-25 has been criticized for not providing fair and equitable distribution of the Union's finances to States ruled by parties opposed to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The budget allocates funds for the farm sector, employment, and special provisions for Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, both of which are headed by parties providing crucial support to the BJP. Bihar has received the largest chunk of the budget, with outlays worth almost ₹59,000 crore. The budget also fails to address the unsustainable public debts of both states, which have about one-third of the country's debt to Gross State Domestic Product ratio. The budget also fails to address the need for industrially and socio-economically advanced States to become global economic powerhouses, as they have begun attracting cutting-edge technology, corporates, and talent.

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Vocabulary

1. Delved

Synonyms: Explored, investigated, probed

Antonyms: Skimmed, overlooked, ignored

2. Underwhelming

Synonyms: Unimpressive, mediocre, lackluster

Antonyms: Impressive, outstanding, remarkable

3. Convenership

Synonyms: Chairmanship, leadership, presidency

Antonyms: Subordination, followership, membership

4. Credentials

Synonyms: Qualifications, references, certifications

Antonyms: Disqualifications, unfitness, incompetence



5. Vociferous

Synonyms: Loud, boisterous, outspoken

Antonyms: Quiet, reserved, muted

6. Piecemeal

Synonyms: Gradual, fragmented, incremental

Antonyms: Comprehensive, whole, complete

7. Equitable

Synonyms: Fair, just, impartial

Antonyms: Unfair, biased, unequal

