



Headlines

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Scheme-based workers - Page No.8 , GS 2,3

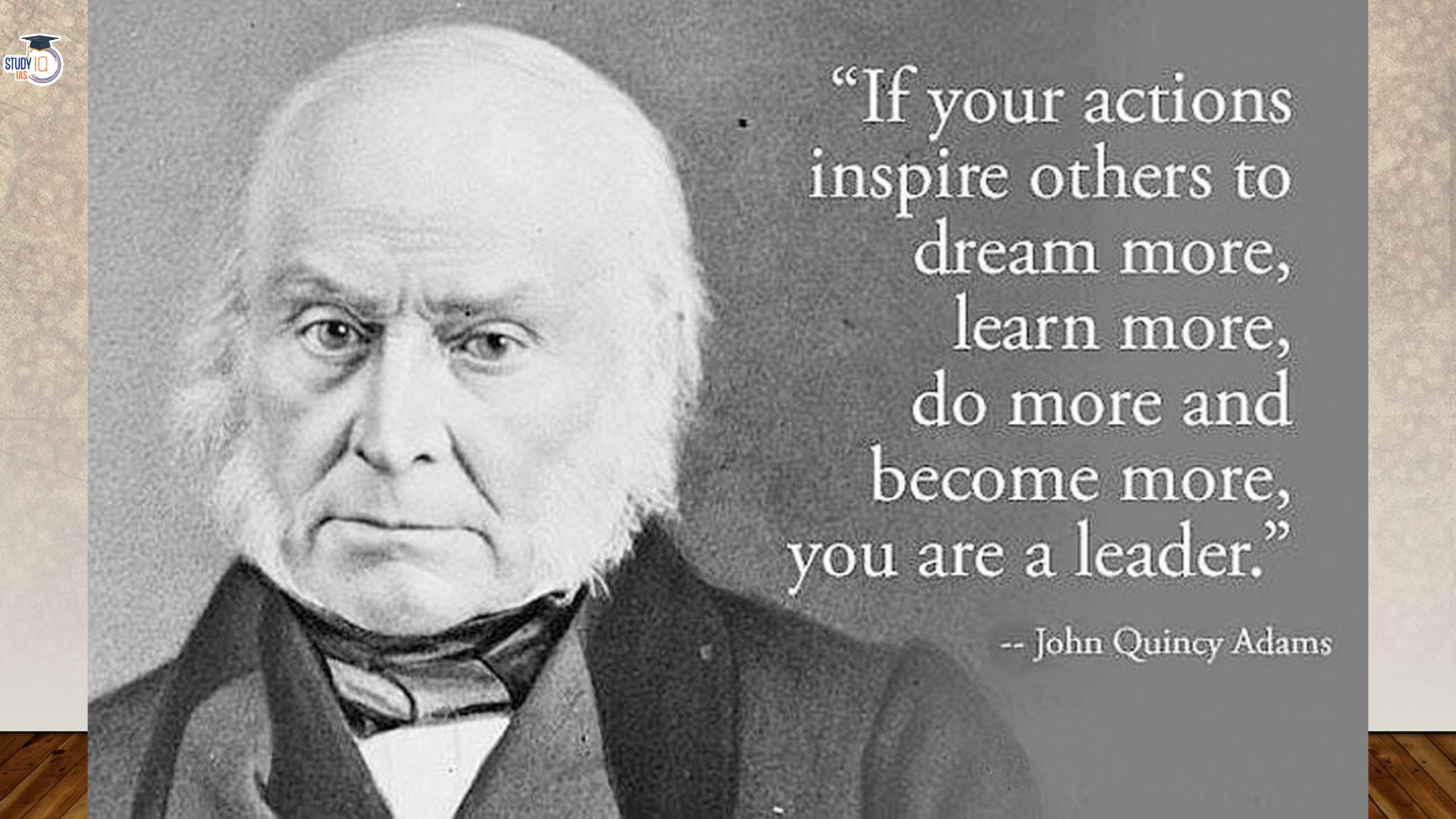
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**Join me on Telegram :- Prashant Tiwari
Username:- UPSCwithPrashant**

A black and white portrait of John Quincy Adams, the sixth President of the United States. He is shown from the chest up, wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a patterned bow tie. His right hand is resting against his chin, and he is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a thoughtful expression.

“If your actions
inspire others to
dream more,
learn more,
do more and
become more,
you are a leader.”

-- John Quincy Adams

Petitioners question the ‘presumption of constitutionality’ of Waqf Act in SC

Page No. 1, GS 2

Krishnadas Rajagopal

NEW DELHI

Countering the Supreme Court’s observation that a parliamentary statute like the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 enjoys a presumption of constitutionality, petitioners on Tuesday termed the new law a “creeping acquisition” of Waqf properties owned by the Muslim community, the largest religious minority group in India.

A Bench of Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai and Justice Augustine George Masihi heard petitioners for a full day on their plea for an interim order to stay the implementation of the 2025 Act, which came into

Q&Q You have to make a strong case for interim relief. The presumption in favour of a parliamentary law is that of constitutionality

B.R. GAVAI
Chief Justice
of India



Q&Q The 2025 amendments... directly encroach on a minority community's rights under Article 25 [freedom of religion]

KAPIL SIBAL
Advocate
for
petitioners



force on April 8. “Today, you [petitioners] are only arguing for interim relief. You have to make a strong case for interim relief. The presumption in favour of a parliamentary law is that of constitutionality,” Chief Justice Gavai said, address-

ing senior advocate Kapil Sibal, the lead counsel for the petitioners.

Mr. Sibal said a presumption of constitutionality could be rebutted if a *prima facie* breach was shown. The court could intervene and stay the law in

public interest if its execution caused irreparable injury, he said.

‘Ruse for acquisition’

“The 2025 amendments are a ruse to capture Waqfs. Property can be acquired by the government through a legislative diktat, that too without payment of compensation, which is usual in cases of acquisition. These amendments directly encroach on a minority community’s rights under Article 25 [freedom of religion],” Mr. Sibal submitted.

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KERALA MOVES SC

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Fact

- Countering the Supreme Court's observation that a parliamentary statute like the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 enjoys a presumption of constitutionality, petitioners on Tuesday termed the new law a “creeping acquisition” of Waqf properties owned by the Muslim community, the largest religious minority group in India.
- A Bench of Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai and Justice Augustine George Masih heard petitioners for a full day on their plea for an interim order to stay the implementation of the 2025 Act, which came into force on April 8. “Today, you [petitioners] are only arguing for interim relief. You have to make a strong case for interim relief. The presumption in favour of a parliamentary law is that of constitutionality,” Chief Justice Gavai said, addressing senior advocate Kapil Sibal, the lead counsel for the petitioners.

Content.

- The term ‘presumption of constitutionality’ is a legal principle that is used by courts during statutory interpretation — the process by which courts interpret and apply a law passed by the legislature, such as Parliament.
- In the 1992 Supreme Court case ‘ML Kamra v New India Assurance’, Justice K Ramaswamy said: “The court ought not to interpret the statutory provisions, unless compelled by their language, in such a manner as would involve its unconstitutionality.
- The legislature or the rule making authority is presumed to enact a law which does not contravene or violate the constitutional provisions.
- Therefore, there is a presumption in favour of constitutionality of a legislation or statutory rule unless ex facie it violates the fundamental rights guaranteed under Part III of the Constitution.



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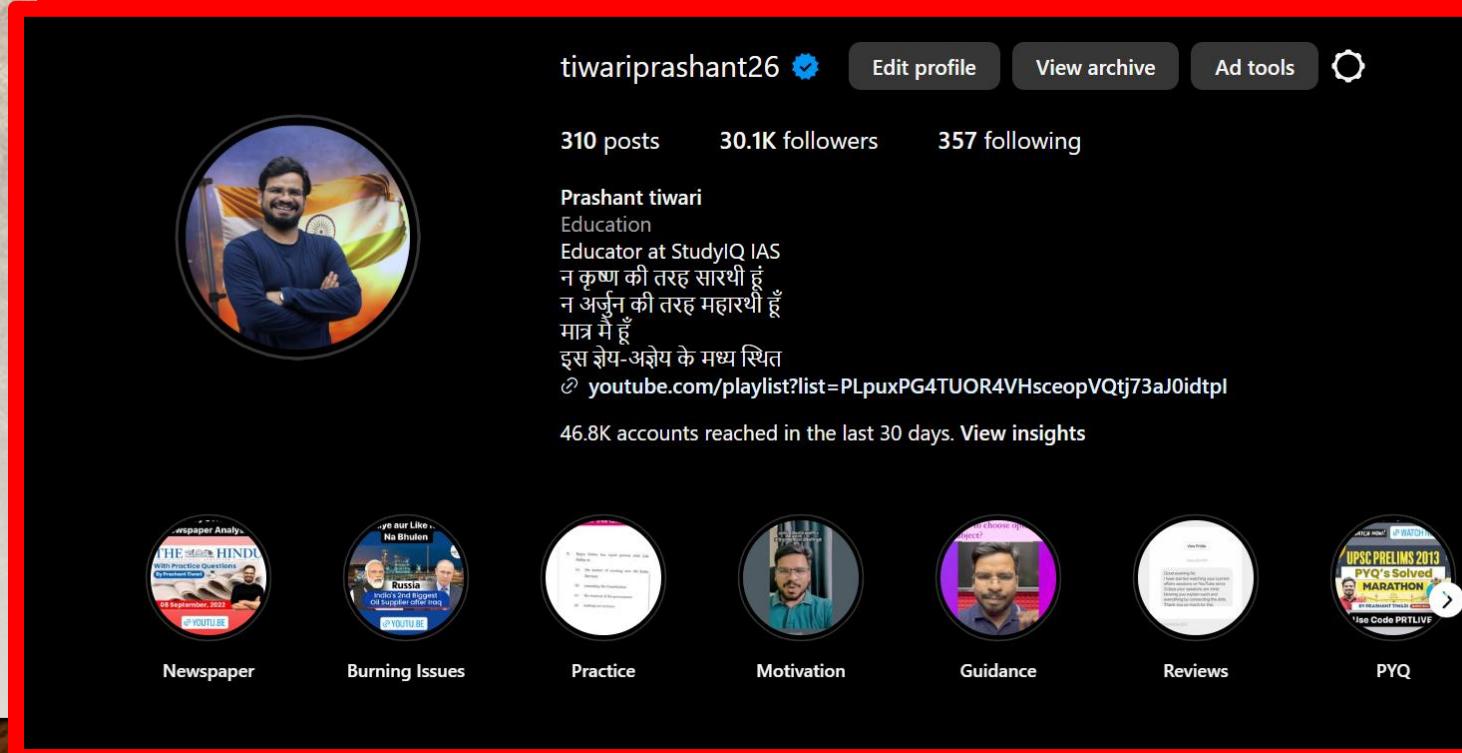
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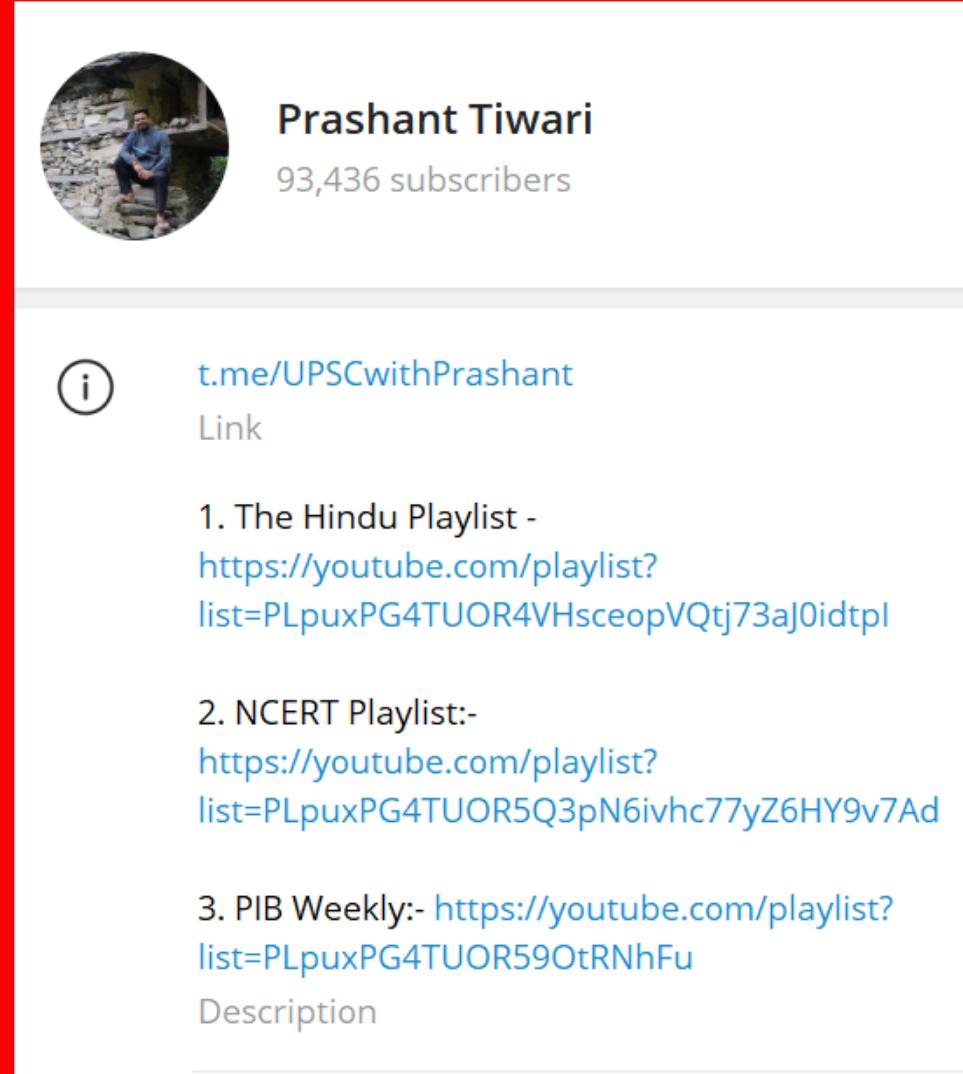
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Prashant tiwari
Educator at StudyIQ IAS
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3. PIB Weekly:- [https://youtube.com/playlist?
list=PLpxPG4TUOR59OtRNhFu](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpxPG4TUOR59OtRNhFu)
Description

After a gap of two years, Shirui Lily Festival begins on thorny note in Manipur

The Hindu Bureau

GUWAHATI

A five-day festival named after an endemic seasonal flower has begun on a thorny note in conflict-scarred Manipur.

Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla on Tuesday inaugurated the Shirui Lily Festival, held in the Naga-dominated Ukhrul district after a two-year gap due to the ethnic clashes between the Kuki-Zo and Meitei people. An argument, however, arose at Gwaltabi, a security checkpoint in the Imphal East district, about 65 km southwest of the venue near Shirui village.

A team of 20 journalists and officials, heading to cover the festival, was al-

Security personnel allegedly demanded journalists to conceal 'Manipur State Transport' on the bus

legedly told by the security personnel at this checkpoint to conceal the words "Manipur State Transport" displayed on the government bus in which they were travelling. Incensed, the mediapersons returned to the State's capital, Imphal.

The festival, which was to have been a barometer of enforced peace in Manipur, was in the news after the State police registered a case against a Kuki student leader for allegedly

asking the Meiteis to not cross the "buffer zone" to attend the festival.

The Imphal Valley-based Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI) condemned the Gwaltabi incident. It said the act of the security personnel appeared to be a deliberate attempt to legitimise the authority and very existence of Manipur within its territory.

The All Manipur Working Journalists' Union and the Editors' Guild Manipur petitioned the Governor, demanding a probe into the incident and action against the guilty.

The media bodies demanded clarity from the authorities on the rationale behind the instruction.

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EXPRESS
explained.
CULTURE

Content.

- A five-day festival named after an endemic seasonal flower has begun on a thorny note in conflict-scarred Manipur.
- Shirui Lily Festival is an annual five-day State festival celebrated in Ukhrul district, Manipur.
- The festival seeks to spread awareness about the endangered Shirui Lily and promote the district of Ukhrul as a tourist destination in Manipur.
- It also demonstrates age-old traditions and culture of the inhabitants of district of Ukhrul.
- Shirui Lily or *Lilium mackliniae* is the State Flower of Manipur.
- It is found only in the upper ranges of Shirui Hills in Ukhrul district of Manipur.
- The Shirui Lily has also been awarded at Royal Horticultural Society's Flower Show in London in 1948.

Fact

- First held in 2017, it is one of two major tourism festivals organised by the state government. While it is named after the Shirui Lily, or the *Lilium mackliniae*, recognised as the state flower of Manipur, the other major festival is named after the Sangai, or the Manipur brow-antlered deer, recognised as its state animal.
- The Shirui Lily festival coincides with the blooming season of this rare flower. Held in Manipur's Ukhru district, which is home to the Tangkhul Naga community
- While locals had long been familiar with the plant — calling it the 'Kashsong Timrawon' after Timrawon, the daughter of mythical goddess Philava who resides and protects the hills of Shirui — in 1946, botanist Frank Kingdon-Ward identified it and gave it its scientific name. The name, *Lilium mackliniae*, draws from his wife Jean Macklin's name.

WHO adopts Pandemic Agreement to strengthen global health preparedness

Press Trust of India

GENEVA

In a move to bolster global collaboration and ensure a stronger and more equitable response to future pandemics, the World Health Organization (WHO) member states on Tuesday unanimously adopted the world's first Pandemic Agreement, marking the culmination of over three years of negotiations initiated in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Governments adopted the WHO Pandemic Agreement in a plenary session of the World Health Assembly, the global health organisation's peak decision-making body.

'World is safer today'

The adoption followed Monday's approval of the Agreement by vote (124 in favour, 0 objections, 11 abstentions) in Committee by member state delegations, the WHO said in a press re-



Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

lease. "The world is safer today thanks to the leadership, collaboration and commitment of our Member States to adopt the historic WHO Pandemic Agreement," said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General.

"The Agreement is a victory for public health, science and multilateral action. It will ensure we, collectively, can better protect the world from future pandemic threats. It is also a recognition by the international community that our

citizens, societies and economies must not be left vulnerable to again suffer losses like those endured during COVID-19," he said.

The landmark decision by the 78th World Health Assembly is the culmination of more than three years of intensive negotiations launched by governments in response to the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and driven by the goal of making the world safer from – and more equitable in response to – future pandemics, the release said.

The agreement sets out the principles, approaches and tools for better international coordination across a range of areas, in order to strengthen the global health architecture for pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response. This includes through the equitable and timely access to vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics.

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Content.

- In a move to bolster global collaboration and ensure a stronger and more equitable response to future pandemics, the World Health Organization (WHO) member states on Tuesday unanimously adopted the world's first Pandemic Agreement, marking the culmination of over three years of negotiations initiated in response to the COVID-19 crisis.
- The landmark decision by the 78th World Health Assembly is the culmination of more than three years of intensive negotiations launched by governments in response to the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and driven by the goal of making the world safer from — and more equitable in response to — future pandemics, the release said.
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- **Protection of Health-care Workers:** Countries committed to better protection measures.
- **Pathogen and Benefit Sharing System:** Developing countries will receive access to diagnostics, vaccines, or treatments developed from their shared pathogen samples.

Pharmaceutical Commitments

- Pharma companies have agreed to donate 10% of production to WHO and sell up to another 10% at affordable prices.
- The COVID-19 pandemic exposed inequities in vaccine distribution, with developed countries stockpiling vaccines while developing countries, especially in Africa, faced shortages.
- Technology transfer agreements will occur on "mutually agreed terms" instead of being "voluntary".
- The treaty emphasizes "equitable access to health products" and encourages technology exchange.

World Health Organization (WHO):

- Established in: 1948, as a specialized agency of the United Nations focusing on international public health.
- Headquarters: Based in Geneva, Switzerland.

Core Objectives:

- Promote universal health coverage.
- Combat disease outbreaks, ensure health security, and advance public well-being.
- Support countries in policy development, emergency preparedness, and health system strengthening
- World Health Assembly (WHA): Highest decision-making body; meets annually.

Funding Mechanism:

- Assessed contributions: Mandatory membership dues.
- Voluntary contributions: Additional funding from countries, UN bodies, private sector, and philanthropies

The role of the Internet in spreading misinformation

A study shows that a substantial share of users on social media platforms reported very little or no trust at all in the news and information they encounter

DATA POINT

Sanjay Kumar & Krishangi Sinha

During the recent India-Pakistan crisis, misinformation spread like wildfire across social media platforms. Unverified videos claiming to show missile strikes, manipulated images of military action, and false reports of casualties were circulated widely, stoking fear on both sides. Some news channels amplified these claims without verification.

This phenomenon is not new. The data from a survey conducted a couple of years ago by Lokniti-CSDS on 'Media in India: Access, Practices, Concerns and Effects' indicated that misinformation on social media platforms significantly affects public perception, trust, and behaviour. The data revealed widespread concern about the spread of fake news and inaccurate information online.

Table 1 shows the share of respondents who were active Internet users with varying levels of experience of being misled by fake news, while **Table 2** shows the experience of social media users in being misled by fake news. Nearly half of all active Internet and social media users said they had encountered false information online at some point.

Most respondents reported that this has occurred either a few times or once or twice. Further, around two-fifths of active Internet users and social media users admitted to having shared/forwarded misinformation at some point of time and realising later that it was inaccurate or fake (**Table 3** for active users, **Table 4** for social media users).

Table 5 shows the varying levels of concern about receiving fake news or information on the Internet or on social media or on WhatsApp among active Internet users, while **Table 6** shows the same for social media users. **Table 7** displays overall trends.

There was widespread concern about the spread of fake news and inaccurate information online. According to the data, 21% of active Internet users and 20% of social media users were 'highly concerned' about encountering fake news, while 31% of active Internet users and 32% of social media users were 'somewhat concerned'.

The study further sought to understand people's experiences with fake news. Citizens who were misled by fake news, or shared it unknowingly more often than others, were more likely to be concerned about receiving it on the Internet or on social media. For instance, 88% of social media users who had unknowingly shared fake news expressed high or moderate concern about receiving it.

There was also concern, though to a lesser degree, among those who had never shared (44%) or been misled by fake news (39%). This means that there is growing general consciousness about the threat of misinformation, even among those who may not feel directly affected by it.

A substantial share of users on social media platforms reported very little or no trust at all in the news and information they encounter. Specifically, 21% of X users expressed very little trust, while 12% indicated complete distrust (**Table 8**).

The Reuters Institute's 2024 Digital News Report reveals a significant shift in how Indians access news, with over 70% of respondents preferring online media and nearly half relying on social media platforms such as YouTube (54%) and WhatsApp (48%). This trend underscores the pivotal role that social media platforms play, and the urgent need to promote media literacy, critical thinking, and accountability to help people identify reliable information.

This analysis is based on data collected during a study jointly undertaken by Lokniti-CSDS with financial support from the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, India Office

Cause for concern

This analysis is based on data collected during a comprehensive study jointly undertaken by Lokniti-CSDS with financial support from the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, India Office.



Table 1: The experience of active Internet users of having been misled by fake news on the Internet or social media (in %)

Type of user	Very often	Few times	Once or twice	Never
Active Internet Users	7	18	21	54

Table 3: The experience of active Internet users of sharing fake news/information unknowingly and realising later that it was false (in %)

Type of user	Very often	Few times	Once or twice	Never
Active internet users	5	13	18	64

Table 5: Level of concern by all Internet users about receiving fake news or information on the Internet or social media or WhatsApp (in %)

Type of user	Highly concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not very concerned	Not at all concerned
Active Internet users	21	31	20	28

Table 7: Level of concern about fake news by all Internet users on internet or social media or WhatsApp (in %)

Type of user	Highly concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not very concerned	Not at all concerned
All Internet users	16	25	17	42

Sanjay Kumar is a Professor at Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS). Krishangi Sinha is a researcher with Lokniti, a research Program of CSDS.

Page No. 9, GS 2

Content.

- During the recent India-Pakistan crisis, misinformation spread like wildfire across social media platforms. Unverified videos claiming to show missile strikes, manipulated images of military action, and false reports of casualties were circulated widely, stoking fear on both sides. Some news channels amplified these claims without verification.
- This phenomenon is not new. The data from a survey conducted a couple of years ago by Lokniti-CSDS on ‘Media in India: Access, Practices, Concerns and Effects’ indicated that misinformation on social media platforms significantly affects public perception, trust, and behaviour. The data revealed widespread concern about the spread of fake news and inaccurate information online.
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- There was also concern, though to a lesser degree, among those who had never shared (44%) or been misled by fake news (39%). This means that there is growing general consciousness about the threat of misinformation, even among those who may not feel directly affected by it.
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Progress should not just be fast but future-proof

India's climate future is not written in the stars – it is written in the rising temperatures, erratic monsoons, and intensifying disasters. The question is: what are we doing about it? The World Bank states that more than 80% of India's population lives in districts at risk of climate-induced disasters. From unrelenting monsoon floods in the north-east to heat-induced crop failures in central India, these events are no longer isolated incidents – they are systemic threats to economic stability, public health, and national security. Yet, despite mounting evidence, India remains vulnerable due to gaps in risk assessment and preparedness. The lack of a comprehensive framework to evaluate and predict climate physical risks (CPRs) means that adaptation strategies are reactive rather than proactive.

Growing climate physical risks
As climate change accelerates, extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and severe. CPRs extend beyond natural disasters, encompassing acute shocks, such as floods and heatwaves, and chronic stresses, such as shifting monsoon patterns and prolonged droughts. While disaster early warning systems and weather forecasts help mitigate immediate losses, CPRs require a long-term approach. Unlike short-term weather forecasts, climate projections analyse long-term trends, enabling policymakers to prepare for evolving climate hazards.

Global climate action is caught between prevention and cure – mitigation, which reduces emissions, and adaptation, which prepares for its inevitable impacts. While adaptation has long been considered a priority for the Global South, wildfires, heatwaves, and cyclones now also test the resilience of the Global North, making it clear that adaptation is a universal necessity. Yet, funding remains skewed towards mitigation, with most



Dr. Sanjena N.D.

Consultant at NITI Aayog's Green Transition, Energy, and Climate Change vertical. Views are personal and do not reflect the official position of NITI Aayog

resources directed towards renewable energy and decarbonisation over adaptation measures like resilient infrastructure. However, investing in adaptation is not just about survival but also economically prudent. The UN Environment Programme estimates that every \$1 invested in adaptation yields a \$4 return through reduced economic losses and lower disaster recovery costs.

CPRs are not just about extreme weather events but also about how exposed and vulnerable communities, businesses, and infrastructure are to them. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change provides a clear framework: the expected value of CPR is a function of hazard, exposure, and vulnerability. Hazards include floods, cyclones, and heatwaves. Exposure determines who and what is at risk. Vulnerability reflects a system's ability to withstand and recover. Together, these define the true scale of climate risk.

To safeguard financial stability, regulatory bodies worldwide are shifting from voluntary climate risk disclosures to mandatory reporting. In India, the Reserve Bank of India is integrating climate risks into its regulatory framework, while the IFRS ISSB S2 sets global standards for disclosing CPRs underscoring that assessing these risks is now central to business continuity, not just environmental responsibility.

Despite the urgency, India's approach to CPR assessments remains fragmented. While countries such as the U.S., U.K., and New Zealand have national frameworks that directly inform policy and finance, India's efforts are dispersed across government agencies, research institutions, and private platforms, each using different methodologies and hazards of focus. Although India has studies such as flood maps from IIT Gandhinagar, vulnerability atlases from the India Meteorological Department, and disaster frameworks from the

National Institute of Disaster Management, there is no unified system to consolidate these insights. Reliable CPR projections are further hindered by the limitations of global climate models such as Representative Concentration Pathways and Shared Socioeconomic Pathways, which fail to capture India's hyper-local climate realities. Without a central repository for standardised climate risk data, businesses and government agencies struggle to make informed decisions.

Steps taken to fill the gaps

Recognising these gaps, India has initiated steps towards factoring in climate hazards in its National Adaptation Plan (NAP) in line with Article 7 of the Paris Agreement, which mandates all nations to establish NAPs by 2025 and show progress by 2030. To facilitate this, India formulated an Adaptation Communication and submitted its first report in 2023. A more comprehensive NAP report is underway, covering nine thematic sectors with district-level granularity.

While this is a great start, India must go further by building a CPR assessment tool that supports both public and private decision-making. This will enable the public sector to design climate-resilient policies, guide infrastructure planning, and allocate resources effectively. It will also play a crucial role for the private sector in assessing risks across value chains, supporting operational and expansion planning, and meeting growing investor expectations. Therefore, a India-specific tool that combines localised climate modelling, granular risk assessment, a centralised climate risk data hub, and transparent, science-based methods with iterative feedback mechanisms is imperative. As India charts its path towards Viksit Bharat, robust climate risk assessments will ensure that progress isn't just fast, but future-proof.

Page No. 9, GS 3

Content.

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- Yet, despite mounting evidence, India remains vulnerable due to gaps in risk assessment and preparedness.
- The lack of a comprehensive framework to evaluate and predict climate physical risks (CPRs) means that adaptation strategies are reactive rather than proactive.

- As climate change accelerates, extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and severe.
- Global climate action is caught between prevention and cure — mitigation, which reduces emissions, and adaptation, which prepares for its inevitable impacts. While adaptation has long been considered a priority for the Global South, wildfires, heatwaves, and cyclones now also test the resilience of the Global North, making it clear that adaptation is a universal necessity.
- Yet, funding remains skewed towards mitigation, with most resources directed towards renewable energy and decarbonisation over adaptation measures like resilient infrastructure.
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Stitch in time

Making illegal units pay heavy fines
might have limited deterrent effect

Last week, the Supreme Court of India finally struck down as “illegal” two notifications by the Union Environment Ministry that allowed industrial units to set up, expand operations or change their manufacturing practices without following the due process of taking government permission beforehand. Taking ‘prior’ approval is a sacrosanct principle at the heart of the Environment Impact Assessment (Notification) of 2006. On the surface it appeared that the Centre, or the Union Environment Ministry, had instituted a system that made a mockery of this principle, but there was a rationale, even if it was flawed to some extent. In March 2017, the body issued a notification providing a “one-time” six-month window for industries that did not have the right environmental clearances, to apply for one. In 2021, it instituted a ‘standard operating procedure’ that in effect allowed projects in violation of the laws, but which could not avail of the six-month window, to apply – albeit at the cost of heavy fines – for regularisation. Moreover, all these significant changes were being issued through executive orders, rather than any attempt at amending the underlying Environment Protection Act (EPA), 2006, through Parliament.

The Centre’s reasoning was three-fold. First, the process for regularising projects had already been initiated by the United Progressive Alliance government in 2012 and 2013. These were, however, struck down by the Jharkhand High Court and the National Green Tribunal on procedural grounds, and not that these projects were irredeemably violative. Second, demolishing functioning plants that were contributing to the economy and employment could exacerbate pollution and be disruptive. The Centre cited examples of various disputes involving copper mines to pharmaceutical companies where the courts had agreed that a “balanced” approach was necessary in cases involving violations. Finally, it argued that it had put in place a system whereby the industrial units seeking to be regularised would have to pay fines for the period that they had functioned in violation. The Court in its final verdict has rightly, as previous courts have, emphasised the principle of “prior” clearance, though its action may be a little late as it has clarified that companies that had regularised themselves under the 2017 and 2021 orders would be “unaffected” by the judgment. That thriving industrial units in violation of the laws mushroomed is a testament to the collective failure of regional environmental boards to enforce laws. So it stands to reason that making these illegal units pay, under the purported new procedure, would have been a fruitless exercise. The judgment should ideally nip any “crafty” attempts by future governments to condone violations in the name of the economy though it must also trigger on-ground enforcement.

Page No. 8, GS 2,3

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- In March 2017, the body issued a notification providing a “one-time” six-month window for industries that did not have the right environmental clearances, to apply for one.

- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in India started in 1976-77 when the Planning Commission asked the then Department of Science and Technology to examine river-valley projects from an environmental perspective.
- Later, on 23rd May 1986, the Government of India enacted the Environment (Protection) Act, after which the decision was made to make EIA statutory.
- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has published Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification 2020, which replaces the existing EIA Notification, 2006, under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- The advantages of Environment Impact Assessment are as follows:
 - Potentially screens out environmentally unsound projects.
 - Proposes modified designs to reduce environmental impacts.
 - Identifies feasible alternatives.
 - Predicts significant adverse impacts.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

EIA is a study conducted in the early stages of development project planning to predict and address potential environmental impacts



- ⦿ **Statutory Status:** Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986 (Made EIA mandatory)
- ⦿ **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)
- ⦿ **Project Categorisation:** EIA Notification of 2006 categorised the developmental projects in:
 - ⦿ **Category A Project:** Needed prior Environmental Clearance (EC) from MoEF&CC
 - ⦿ **Category B Project:** Needed prior EC from State/UT Govt.
 - ⦿ **Category B1 projects** (Mandatorily requires EIA)
 - ⦿ **Category B2 projects** (Do not require EIA)

There are 39 categories of projects that require an EC process and are subject to EIA

EIA Process as per EIA Notification, 2006

Step	Objective	Carried Out By
■ Screening	■ Need of EIA	■ State Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC) (Category B)
■ Scoping	■ Identifies important issues for EIA	■ Standard Term of Reference (ToR) prepared by MoEF&CC with EAC/SEAC for Category B Projects"
■ Public Consultation	■ Addresses concerns of affected people	■ State Pollution Control Board (SPCB)/ UT Pollution Control Board (UTPCB)
■ Project Appraisal	■ Scrutiny of Final EIA Report/ Environmental Management Plan (EMP)	■ EAC for category A Projects and SEAC for category B1 Projects
■ Decision Making	■ Granting EC	■ Category A: MoEf&CC ■ Category B: State EIA Authority (SEIAA)
■ Monitoring (Post EC)	■ Compliance of general and specific conditions	■ SPCB / UTPCB and Regional Offices

Environmental Impact Assessment



Screening and Scoping

Is an Environmental Impact Assessment required and to what scale?



Assessment of Environmental Risk

What data will be collected to determine environmental risk?



Mitigation

What measures will be followed to minimize assessed environmental impacts?



Decision Making

Regulatory agency will make the final decision on the permit issuance



Monitoring

How will environmental parameters be regularly monitored for possible impacts?



Trade diplomacy

Trade restrictions against Bangladesh
will not have much coercive value

In an escalation of bilateral trade-related tensions, India recently announced restrictions on readymade garments and other specified commodities from Bangladesh. The Directorate General of Foreign Trade's announcement targeting Bangladesh's vital apparel sector sent an unmistakable signal that deteriorating political relations have now spilled over into economic ties. By specifically denying Bangladeshi goods access to India's northeast market, New Delhi has delivered a pointed message to Mohammed Yunus, Bangladesh's interim leader, who during his visit to China in March 2025 had invited Chinese access to India's northeast through Bangladesh, describing the northeast as landlocked. While India's discomfiture about Bangladesh-China discussions regarding India's northeast is understandable, this trade restriction may hurt Bangladeshi businesses, largely dependent on garment export, but will do little to aid New Delhi's strategic interests. Bangladesh's recent political turmoil stems from protests against its former elected government, and the interim leadership – struggling with resistant bureaucracy and ongoing instability – has blamed New Delhi due to its perceived close ties with the previous administration led by Sheikh Hasina. The Yunus-led administration's warming up to Pakistan, and its ban on the Awami League – actions that go against its promises to the international community – have worsened relations. The imperative for New Delhi must be to come up with a deft outreach to other political parties in Bangladesh as they prepare for elections. While Mr. Yunus had announced that elections will be held later this year, there is still no clarity on the date.

New Delhi must, in consonance with the rest of the international community, advise the regime to conduct elections quickly. A political gesture of this nature while engaging with multiple stakeholders in Bangladesh's polity is more appropriate than using restrictive moves related to trade, as this would only heighten the anti-India sentiment being fanned by some elements in Bangladesh after the Awami League government's exit. Such radical elements, many of whom have little investment in the restoration of democratic processes, could also create fresh law and order problems that could lead to security issues in the northeast. India should carefully lay out its response keeping in mind that while it has to communicate its displeasure to the Yunus government, it also has to maintain working relations with this administration till a popularly elected government takes charge in Dhaka.

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Content.

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- The Yunus-led administration's warming up to Pakistan, and its ban on the Awami League — actions that go against its promises to the international community — have worsened relations.
- New Delhi must, in consonance with the rest of the international community, advise the regime to conduct elections quickly.

Mains Question

India's recent trade restrictions on Bangladesh mark a significant shift in bilateral relations, intertwining geopolitical and economic dimensions. Critically examine the implications of such trade measures on regional stability and India's strategic interests. (250 words)

Scheme-based workers, the struggle for an identity

Page No. 8, GS 2

The central government employs millions of regular and contract workers who are recognised as government employees and are in the pay spectrum of the government. The government also employs several types of workers such as Anganwadi workers or AWWs (13,51,104 workers) and Anganwadi helpers or AWHs (9,22,522), Accredited Social Health Activists or ASHAs (10,52,322 workers), and Mid-Day-Meals workers or MDMWs (25,16,688) under The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme since 1975, the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) and the mid-day meals day scheme. Put together, around 60 million workers work in government schemes.

These schemes are those which carry out social and economic functions by taking care of children and lactating mothers and nutrition aspects. They are also a bridge between the community and the public health system, improving school enrolment and the nutritional health system.

The reality of their existence

Though there has been much recognition of their work (by the Prime Minister and even the World Health Organization), these workers face hardship – they have been denied basic labour market rights such as workers' status, minimum wages and social security. Three basic issues among others have affected scheme-based workers (SBW) – an identity as "workers" just like any government employee, minimum wages and social security. They have adopted three strategies to highlight their plight – strikes, legal action and social dialogue.

Major central trade unions (AITUC, BMS, CITU) have organised the SBWs extensively. Since there are no prescribed wage negotiation timelines, trade unions have gone on frequent strikes over the issue of wage revision at random. State governments are more generous depending more



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The demand of SBWs, of a labour market identity, is a legitimate one

on the strength of unions, their proximity with the party in power, and political factors such as elections. In March 2025, Anganwadis in Kerala called off their 13-day indefinite strike. The frequent and large-sized struggles of and by SBWs is a feat of labour mobilisation in modern times as State governments have not always been kind to striking workers. In fact, the Maharashtra government imposed the Maharashtra Essential Services Maintenance Act in 2017 to curb the right of Anganwadis in the State to go on strike. In a sense, the government has recognised the "essential" nature of work done by Anganwadis.

The judiciary's approach

At the same time, Anganwadis have been knocking on the doors of the judiciary, with some success after initial setbacks. In *State Of Karnataka & Ors vs Ameerbi & Ors* (2006), the Supreme Court held that as Anganwadis do not carry out any function of the state, and do not hold a post under a statute, it did not consider them as workers. This was a judgment that was a blow against the struggles of these workers. But there was judicial relief.

The Court, in 2022, granted that Anganwadis are eligible for gratuity as they are covered under workers/employees under the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972 (*Maniben Maganbhai Bhariya vs District Development Officer*, 2022). In 2024, the Gujarat High Court (*Adarsh Gujarat Anganwadi Union & Ors. vs State of Gujarat*) observed that Anganwadis perform onerous duties and responsibilities apart from performing important services under the Right to Education Act (RTE) and the National Food Security Act (NFS). It directed the central and State governments to jointly frame a policy under which the AWWs and AWHs could be regularised as Class III and Class IV grade State employees. Until then, they would be paid minimum wages (Class III and Class IV, respectively).

The central trade unions have been raising the issues concerning the SBWs at the tripartite forum, the Indian Labour Conference (ILC), which is a social dialogue forum created during colonial rule. It is notable that in the 45th ILC, its tripartite Conference Committee made unanimous recommendations to the central government to treat the SBWs as "workers" and not as volunteers or honorary workers, and pay them minimum wages, pension, health insurance and provident fund, among others.

The usual stand

The government is concerned with the huge cost implications as the employment of SBWs as government employees is set to grow as the population grows. On the other hand, the Labour Minister, in 2016, said in the Rajya Sabha, that the recommendations require long-time policy formulation and that there can be no fixed time-line for their implementation. Policy delay and avoidance at best – and outright denial policy at worst – has been the clever policy of the central government, irrespective of the party in power. The government has been dodging these important issues. On the other hand, there are attempts to privatise the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS). SBW organisations have been waging relentless struggles at all levels to oppose the privatisation of the ICDS and strengthen the labour rights of SBWs. Their struggle, which involves multiple issues, will go on.

It is not "applause" that they seek but "worker" status. It is an existential struggle. It is interesting to note that in both the traditional and modern (gig) sectors, workers are battling for their labour market "identities" as "workers" and earn "wages and not "honorarium". It is not charity that they seek but a legitimate demand for "workers" status by dint of hard work over long hours.

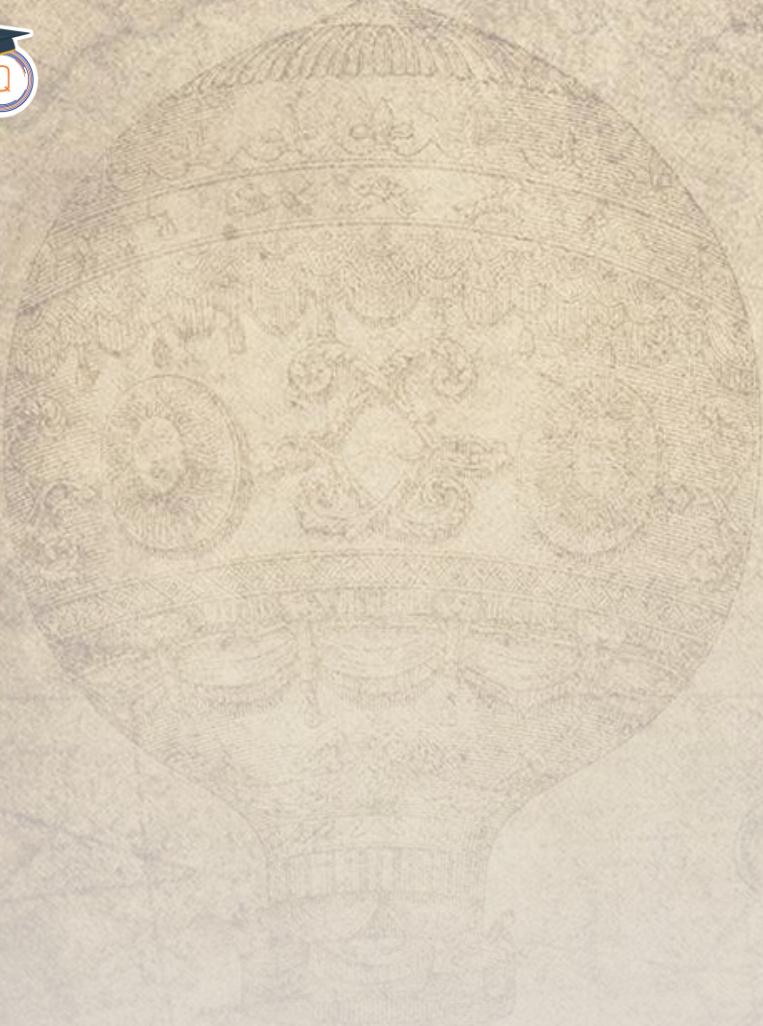
- The central government employs millions of regular and contract workers who are recognised as government employees and are in the pay spectrum of the government.
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Fact

- Though there has been much recognition of their work (by the Prime Minister and even the World Health Organization), these workers face hardship — they have been denied basic labour market rights such as workers' status, minimum wages and social security.
- Three basic issues among others have affected scheme-based workers (SBW) — an identity as “workers” just like any government employee, minimum wages and social security.
- They have adopted three strategies to highlight their plight — strikes, legal action and social dialogue.
- Anganwadis have been knocking on the doors of the judiciary, with some success after initial setbacks. In *State Of Karnataka & Ors vs Ameerbi & Ors* (2006), the Supreme Court held that as Anganwadis do not carry out any function of the state, and do not hold a post under a statute, it did not consider them as workers.

Fact

- The government is concerned with the huge cost implications as the employment of SBWs as government employees is set to grow as the population grows.
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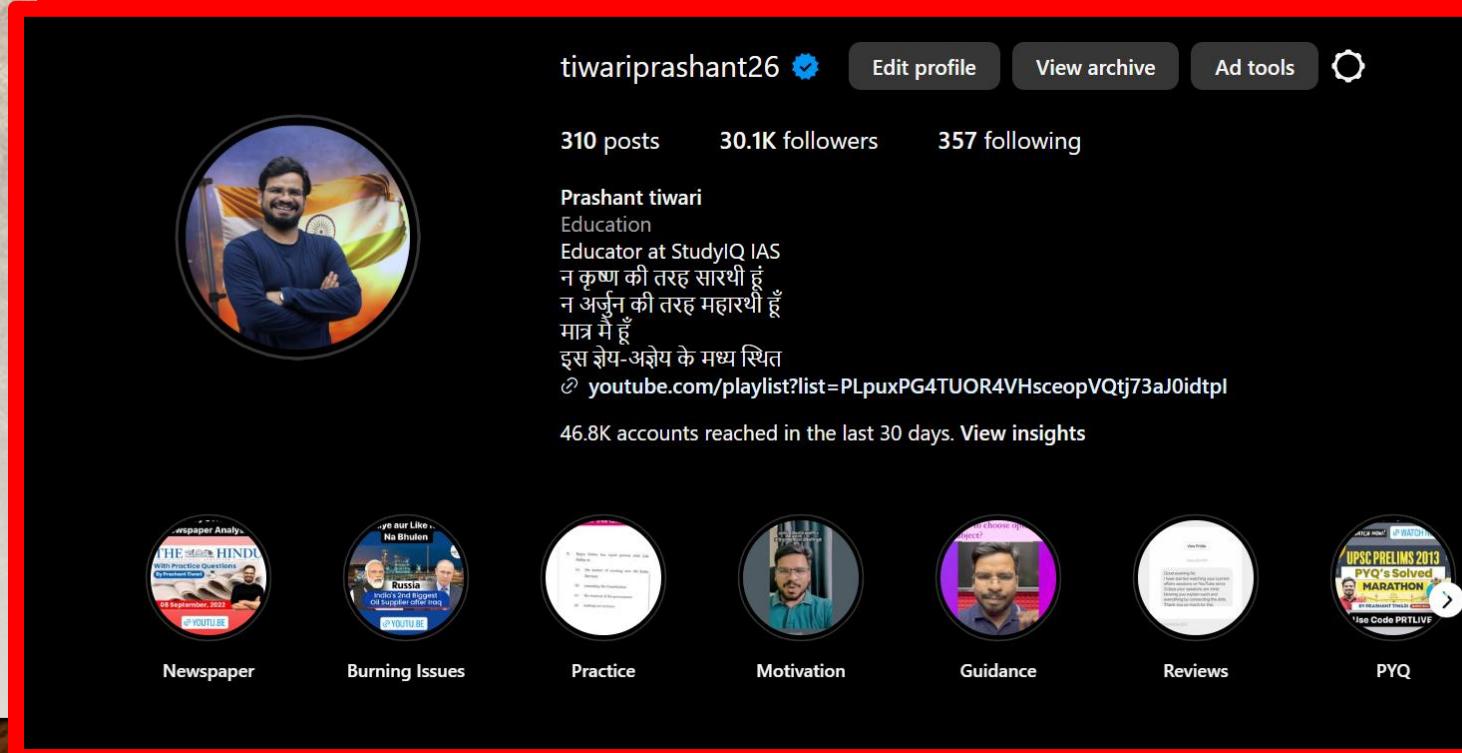
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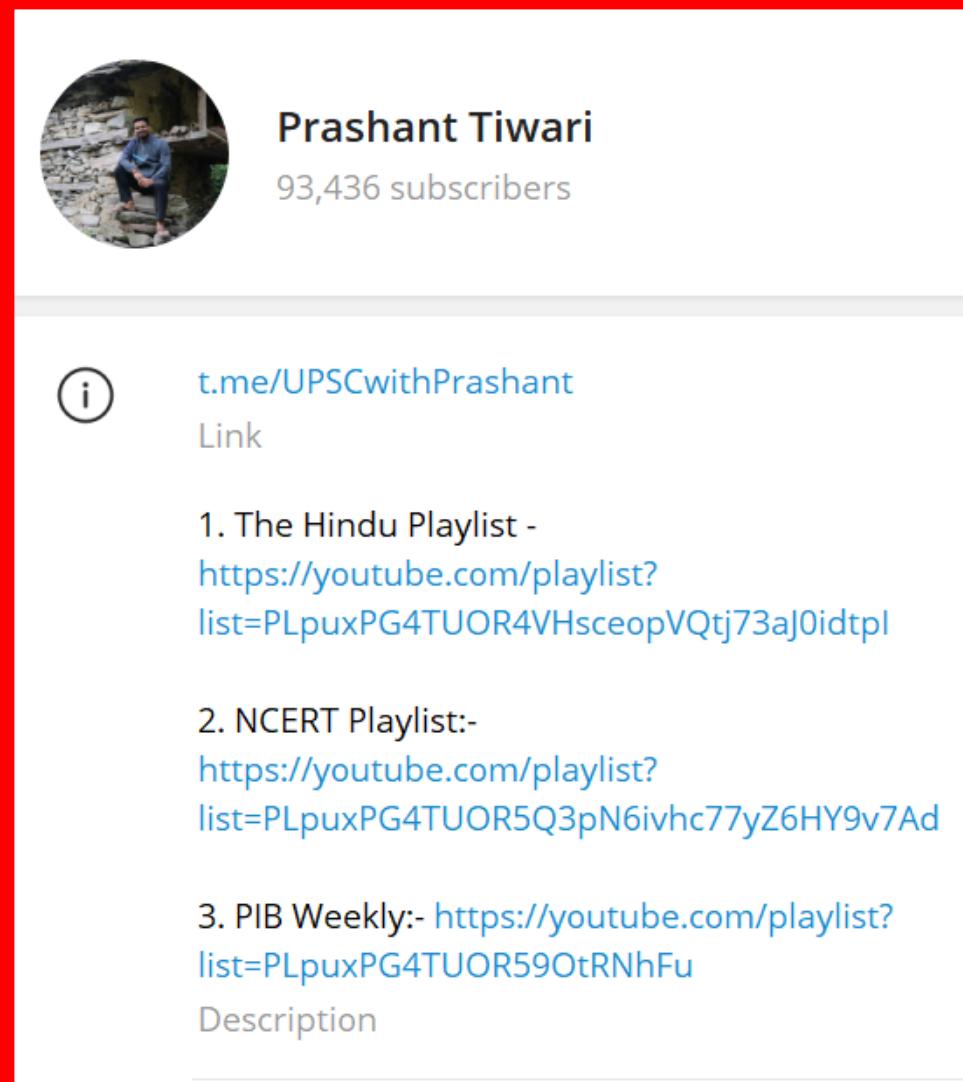
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