

Headlines

Caste Census - Page No.1 , GS 1

Digital access - Page No.1 , GS 2

Secret threats - Page No.6 , GS 2


Committed scientists - Page No.6 , GS 3

Trap of bonded labour - Page No.6 , GS 2

Water treaty - Page No.7 , GS 2

Fair and remunerative price (FRP) - Page No.12 , GS 2,3

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

A motivational quote by Walt Disney is overlaid on a scenic background. The background features a person standing on a rugged, rocky mountain ridge during a sunset or sunrise. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over the landscape. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and light blue. The foreground at the bottom of the image shows a wooden plank floor, suggesting the viewer is looking out from a balcony or deck. The quote is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters, split into two lines. The attribution is in a smaller, white, cursive script, flanked by dashes.

**“IF YOU CAN DREAM IT,
YOU CAN DO IT!”**

- Walt Disney -

Cabinet decides to include caste count in next Census

Page No. 1, GS 2

Census to enumerate caste for the first time in Independent India; dates for the delayed Census yet to be notified; the count will promote inclusion and pave new paths of progress, says Shah

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet has decided to include caste enumeration as part of the next Census exercise, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced on Wednesday.

Though the decision comes months ahead of the Bihar Assembly election, the dates for the next decennial Census exercise, last held in 2011, are yet to be notified by the government. The 2021 Census has been postponed indefinitely, initially due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The last time that India's entire population was counted by caste was in pre-Independent India, in 1931. Since then, only Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have been



Finer details: Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw briefing the media on the Cabinet decision on Wednesday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

counted in the Census exercises.

However, reservation measures for education and employment have expanded to include Other Backward Classes (OBCs), all based on projection and estimates from the British-era head count.

Unlike the 2011 Socio-

Economic Caste Census (SECC), which was done outside the purview of the Census exercise and did not mandate caste disclosure, this time, caste will be enumerated in the second and final phase of the Census, giving the count a statutory backing.

A senior government of-

ficial told *The Hindu* that as the next Census would be conducted in digital mode for the first time, an "other" column with a drop down code directory containing the names of the castes will likely be added in the Census mobile application. The official added that the software for this is currently undergoing tests.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on X that "the Congress and its allies opposed the caste census for decades while in power and played politics over it while in the Opposition". He said that the decision "will promote inclusion and pave new paths for the progress of the deprived".

CONTINUED ON

» **PAGE 10**

STRATEGIC MOVE

» **PAGE 11**

Content.

- **The Union Cabinet has decided to include caste enumeration as part of the next Census exercise, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced on Wednesday.**
- **Though the decision comes months ahead of the Bihar Assembly election, the dates for the next decennial Census exercise, last held in 2011, are yet to be notified by the government. The 2021 Census has been postponed indefinitely, initially due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**
- **The last time that India's entire population was counted by caste was in pre-Independent India, in 1931. Since then, only Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have been counted in the Census exercises.**
- **However, reservation measures for education and employment have expanded to include Other Backward Classes (OBCs), all based on projection and estimates from the British-era head count.**

Fact

- Unlike the 2011 Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC), which was done outside the purview of the Census exercise and did not mandate caste disclosure, this time, caste will be enumerated in the second and final phase of the Census, giving the count a statutory backing.
- A senior government official told The Hindu that as the next Census would be conducted in digital mode for the first time, an “other” column with a drop down code directory containing the names of the castes will likely be added in the Census mobile application. The official added that the software for this is currently undergoing tests.
- The origin of the Census in India dates back to the colonial exercise of 1881.
- Census is used by the government, policymakers, academics, and others to capture the Indian population, access resources, map social change, and conduct delimitation exercises.

Need for a Caste Census:

- **Addressing Inequities:** Helps identify intra-caste disparities and ensures equitable allocation of resources.
- **Empirical Evidence for Policies:** Provides a data-driven basis for affirmative action.
- **Monitoring Effectiveness:** Enables assessment of existing reservation policies.
- **Governance:** Guides resource allocation and better implementation of welfare schemes.

Challenges to Caste census:

- **Complexity in Classification:** Similar-sounding castes or regional variations lead to misclassification.
- **Upward/Downward Mobility Claims:** Self-reporting influenced by perceived benefits.
- **Administrative Feasibility:** Inadequate training of enumerators and lack of infrastructure.
- **Data Integrity:** Risks of data manipulation due to political and social pressures.
- **Societal Divisions:** Potential hardening of caste identities.

Fact

- **The first synchronous census was taken in 1881, by W.C. Plowden, Census Commissioner of India. Since then, censuses have been undertaken uninterruptedly once every ten years.**
- **The Census of India Act of 1948 provides the legal framework for carrying out the Census however, it does not mention its timing or periodicity.**
- **Hence, a Census is Constitutionally mandated in India but there is no Constitutional or legal requirement that it needs to be conducted decennially.**
- **The 10-year frequency is followed in many countries (Ex. the US and the UK) but some countries like Australia, Canada, Japan conduct it every five years.**

Fact

- **The decennial Census is conducted by the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs.**
- **Until 1951, the Census Organisation was set up on an ad-hoc basis for each Census.**



UPSC IAS

PRELIMS TO INTERVIEW (P2I)

FOUNDATION

MAY EVENING BATCH

Price
₹33,999

Use Code
PRTLIVE



Prelims and
Mains Residential
Program



Full Refund
on Clearing
Prelims



₹11,000 reward
to monthly top
performer



Interview
Guidance
Program

Batch Starting on 07th May 2025 | 6:00 PM

Join Me:

Instagram:- tiwariprashant26

Twitter:- Prashantt26

Telegram:- UPSCwithPrashant
(Prashant Tiwari)



Prashant Tiwari

93,436 subscribers



t.me/UPSCwithPrashant

Link

1. The Hindu Playlist -

[https://youtube.com/playlist?](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpuxPG4TUOR4VHsceopVQtj73aJ0idtpl)

[list=PLpuxPG4TUOR4VHsceopVQtj73aJ0idtpl](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpuxPG4TUOR4VHsceopVQtj73aJ0idtpl)

2. NCERT Playlist:-

[https://youtube.com/playlist?](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpuxPG4TUOR5Q3pN6ivhc77yZ6HY9v7Ad)

[list=PLpuxPG4TUOR5Q3pN6ivhc77yZ6HY9v7Ad](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpuxPG4TUOR5Q3pN6ivhc77yZ6HY9v7Ad)

3. PIB Weekly:- [https://youtube.com/playlist?](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpuxPG4TUOR59OtRNhFu)

[list=PLpuxPG4TUOR59OtRNhFu](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpuxPG4TUOR59OtRNhFu)

Description

tiwariprashant26

Edit profile

View archive

Ad tools



310 posts

30.1K followers

357 following

Prashant tiwari

Education

Educator at StudyIQ IAS

न कृष्ण की तरह सारथी हूँ

न अर्जुन की तरह महारथी हूँ

मात्र मैं हूँ

इस ज्ञेय-अज्ञेय के मध्य स्थित

youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpuxPG4TUOR4VHsceopVQtj73aJ0idtpl

46.8K accounts reached in the last 30 days. [View insights](#)



Newspaper



Burning Issues



Practice



Motivation



Guidance



Reviews



PYQ

Digital access a part of fundamental right to life and liberty: SC

Page No. 1, GS 2

Krishnadas Rajagopal

NEW DELHI

Inclusive and meaningful digital access to e-governance and welfare delivery systems is a part of the fundamental right to life and liberty, the Supreme Court held in a judgment on Wednesday.

A Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan, hearing a petition on how people with disability find it nearly impossible to complete the digital Know Your Customer (KYC) process, said that the state has an obligation to provide an inclusive digital ecosystem to the marginalised, underprivileged, vulnerable, disabled, and historically excluded sections of society. Amidst the “wave of digital progress” in India a crucial

Top court says access to digital welfare systems should be inclusive to all sections of society

aspect often overlooked is whether this technology is truly inclusive, the court said.

“The right to digital access emerges as an instinctive component of the right to life and liberty, necessitating the state to proactively design and implement inclusive digital ecosystems to serve not only the privileged, but also the marginalised,” said Justice Mahadevan, who authored the judgment.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

Content.

- **Inclusive and meaningful digital access to e-governance and welfare delivery systems is a part of the fundamental right to life and liberty, the Supreme Court held in a judgment on Wednesday.**
- **A Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan, hearing a petition on how people with disability find it nearly impossible to complete the digital Know Your Customer (KYC) process, said that the state has an obligation to provide an inclusive digital ecosystem to the marginalised, underprivileged, vulnerable, disabled, and historically excluded sections of society. Amidst the “wave of digital progress” in India a crucial aspect often overlooked is whether this technology is truly inclusive, the court said.**
- **“The right to digital access emerges as an instinctive component of the right to life and liberty, necessitating the state to proactively design and implement inclusive digital ecosystems to serve not only the privileged, but also the marginalised,” said Justice Mahadevan, who authored the judgment.**

Fair, remunerative price for sugar cane increased

Page No. 12, GS 2,3

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Wednesday, has approved fair and remunerative price (FRP) of sugar cane for the sugar season of 2025-26 (October-September) at ₹355 a quintal. In the previous season, the amount was ₹340.

The price will be applicable for a basic sugar recovery rate of 10.25%. A decision to provide a premium of ₹3.46 a quintal for each 0.1% increase in recovery over and above 10.25% and a reduction by ₹3.46 a quintal for every 0.1% decrease in recovery was also taken in the meeting.

“However, the government with a view to protect interest of sugar cane farmers has also decided that there shall not be any de-



Alleviating hardship: There shall be no deduction in mills where recovery is below 9.5%.

duction in case of sugar mills where recovery is below 9.5%. Such farmers will get ₹329.05 a quintal in the ensuing sugar season 2025-26,” Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vainshnaw said.

The cost of production of sugar cane for the sugar season in 2025-26 is calculated at ₹173 a quintal.

About five crore farmers and around five lakh work-

ers employed in sugar mills are dependent on sugar cane farming and processing, apart from those employed in various ancillary activities including farm labour and transportation. “The FRP has been determined on the basis of recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) and after consultation with State governments and other stakeholders,” Mr. Vaishnaw added.

The Centre said in a release that in 2023-24, out of the dues payable of ₹1,11,782 crore, about ₹1,11,703 crore have been paid to farmers, as on April 28.

As much as 99.92% of the dues has been cleared, and in the current season, out of ₹97,270 crore payable, about ₹85,094 crore have been paid as on April 28, where 87% dues have been cleared.

Content.

- **The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Wednesday, has approved fair and remunerative price (FRP) of sugar cane for the sugar season of 2025-26 (October-September) at ₹355 a quintal.**
- **In the previous season, the amount was ₹340.**
- **About five crore farmers and around five lakh workers employed in sugar mills are dependent on sugar cane farming and processing, apart from those employed in various ancillary activities including farm labour and transportation.**
- **“The FRP has been determined on the basis of recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) and after consultation with State governments and other stakeholders**

Fact

- **FRP is the price declared by the government, which mills are legally bound to pay to farmers for the cane procured from them.**
- **The payment of FRP across the country is governed by the Sugarcane Control order, 1966 issued under the Essential Commodities Act (ECA), 1955 which mandates payment within 14 days of the date of delivery of the cane.**
- **It has been determined on the recommendation of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) and announced by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA).**
- **CACP is an attached office of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. It is an advisory body whose recommendations are not binding on the Government.**
- **CCEA is chaired by the Prime Minister of India.**
- **The FRP is based on the Rangarajan Committee report on reorganizing the sugarcane industry.**

Fact

Which Factors are considered for announcing FRP?

- **Cost of production of sugarcane**
- **Return to the growers from alternative crops and the general trend of prices of agricultural commodities**
- **Availability of sugar to consumers at a fair price**
- **Price at which sugar produced from sugarcane is sold by sugar producers**
- **Recovery of sugar from sugarcane**
- **The realization made from the sale of by-products viz. molasses, bagasse and press mud or their imputed value**
- **Reasonable margins for the growers of sugarcane on account of risk and profits**

Fact

What is Sugarcane?

- **Temperature:** Between 21-27°C with hot and humid climate.
- **Rainfall:** Around 75-100 cm.
- **Soil Type:** Deep rich loamy soil.
- **Top Sugarcane Producing States:** Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Bihar.
- **India is the second largest producer of sugarcane after Brazil.**
- **It can be grown on all varieties of soils ranging from sandy loam to clay loam given these soils should be well drained.**
- **It needs manual labour from sowing to harvesting.**
- **It is the main source of sugar, gur (jaggery), khandsari and molasses.**

Secret threats

The state must not stifle democratic dissent in the name of national security

State surveillance must be subject to systemic checks and supervision and not mirror the nefarious activities of the dark underworld. As a Supreme Court of India Bench pointed out, the question is not whether the state can use spyware, but who could be its legitimate targets. The Bench, during a hearing on the alleged surveillance of politicians, judges, religious leaders, civil servants and journalists by some state entity, was evidently seeking to curtail arbitrary use of the powers and tools of surveillance. The government has neither confirmed nor denied that it uses Pegasus, an Israel-made military grade spyware that is sold only to state agencies, which was used to target a wide range of people. The matter reached the Court after global revelations about the existence and the use of this tool, and it appointed a technical committee whose investigation was constrained by a lack of cooperation from alleged targets and the government. Several high-profile users of the iPhone, the primary target of Pegasus, continued to get security alerts from the manufacturer that they were targets of suspected state surveillance, even as the matter was before the judiciary. States the world over have used extra-legal measures to snoop on targets that tried to firewall their communication using rapidly evolving technologies. Terrorists and other non-state actors, and criminals are using encryption and other advanced technologies to evade detection as they plot to harm the wider society. Without adequate legal and technological wherewithal, the state would be ineffective in dealing with emerging national security threats. In this context, and particularly against the backdrop of the terrorist attack in Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir, the Court has framed a relevant question.

The tendency of the government to arbitrarily invoke national security in defence of a brazen denial of due process and transparency in law enforcement has been called out by the Court in the past. There is also the disturbing trend of government actors routinely labelling political opponents as anti-nationals. If the state is to claim more surveillance powers, corresponding and robust guardrails must also be engineered. National security cannot be an excuse for executive arbitrariness and a violation of individual rights and dignity. Protocols that ensure that clearly defined standards and steps are followed in surveillance must be established. Once the security concerns are overcome, and within appropriate timelines, these processes should be subject to oversight by other branches of government and the public at large. At any rate, no state agency can have the authority to interfere in the democratic politics of the country, or stifle dissenting voices and activism. While trying to tackle an uncertain security environment, the compass of India's constitutional democracy must stay firm.

Page No. 6, GS 2

- **State surveillance must be subject to systemic checks and supervision and not mirror the nefarious activities of the dark underworld.**
- **As a Supreme Court of India Bench pointed out, the question is not whether the state can use spyware, but who could be its legitimate targets.**
- **The Bench, during a hearing on the alleged surveillance of politicians, judges, religious leaders, civil servants and journalists by some state entity, was evidently seeking to curtail arbitrary use of the powers and tools of surveillance.**
- **The government has neither confirmed nor denied that it uses Pegasus, an Israel-made military grade spyware that is sold only to state agencies, which was used to target a wide range of people.**
- **The matter reached the Court after global revelations about the existence and the use of this tool, and it appointed a technical committee whose investigation was constrained by a lack of cooperation from alleged targets and the government.**

- **States the world over have used extra-legal measures to snoop on targets that tried to firewall their communication using rapidly evolving technologies.**
- **Terrorists and other non-state actors, and criminals are using encryption and other advanced technologies to evade detection as they plot to harm the wider society. Without adequate legal and technological wherewithal, the state would be ineffective in dealing with emerging national security threats.**
- **The tendency of the government to arbitrarily invoke national security in defence of a brazen denial of due process and transparency in law enforcement has been called out by the Court in the past.**
- **There is also the disturbing trend of government actors routinely labelling political opponents as anti-nationals. If the state is to claim more surveillance powers, corresponding and robust guardrails must also be engineered.**
- **National security cannot be an excuse for executive arbitrariness and a violation of individual rights and dignity. Protocols that ensure that clearly defined standards and steps are followed in surveillance must be established.**

Fact

- **Pegasus spyware is a highly invasive mobile surveillance tool that can secretly infiltrate and monitor smartphones, collecting data and information from various apps and sources.**
- **It was developed by the Israeli cyber-intelligence firm NSO Group, which claims to sell it only to government agencies for fighting crime and terrorism.**
- **NSO emphasizes mechanisms in place to avoid targeting journalists, lawyers, and human rights defenders not involved in terror or serious crimes.**

Leaky pipeline

India must ensure it retains the services of committed scientists

A recent report analysing public funded research and development institutions in India had some pointers that should raise an alarm. In several of the 244 institutions studied, there was a decrease in the number of permanent, scientific staff in 2022-23 compared to the previous year. There were also fewer organisations in 2022-23 compared to the previous year that reported hiring permanent staff. The institutes together had 19,625 contractual staff and 12,042 permanent staff in 2022-23. Not surprisingly, the slowdown in hiring was made up by hiring scientific research personnel on short-term contracts. These contractual staff were a 14% rise over 2021-22. The very fact that contractual workers exceed permanent staff in scientific institutions is a matter of concern. This data emerges from a study commissioned by the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser and the institutions studied, do not include the 'strategic sectors', such as defence, atomic energy and space which consume the lion's share of India's research and development expenditure. As a report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science, Technology and Environment tabled in Parliament last month observed, nearly three in five of the posts sanctioned for scientific personnel at one of India's top institutes for basic science research, the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), are unfilled. The TIFR is primarily funded by the Department of Atomic Energy. Further, the parliamentary report found that, on average, one in four of sanctioned posts at the key atomic energy research institutions and nuclear power plants was vacant. Clearly the rot runs deep.

On the one hand, the government has announced missions to develop quantum computers and develop foundational artificial intelligence models. It has also declared its intent to align research and development towards industry-specific research. However none of this will bear fruit without scientists, particularly young researchers who are engaged full-time, having long careers at institutions doing cutting-edge research. The government had once set up institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISER) and introduced four-year undergraduate programmes in basic science, precisely because the incentives then were not strong enough to retain potential scientists. India needs to ensure that the conditions for research, such as respectable salaries, funds and equipment to do good research, are made available more widely.

Page No. 6, GS 3

Content.

- A recent report analysing public funded research and development institutions in India had some pointers that should raise an alarm.
- In several of the 244 institutions studied, there was a decrease in the number of permanent, scientific staff in 2022-23 compared to the previous year.
- There were also fewer organisations in 2022-23 compared to the previous year that reported hiring permanent staff.
- Not surprisingly, the slowdown in hiring was made up by hiring scientific research personnel on short-term contracts.
- These contractual staff were a 14% rise over 2021-22. The very fact that contractual workers exceed permanent staff in scientific institutions is a matter of concern.

- **As a report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science, Technology and Environment tabled in Parliament last month observed, nearly three in five of the posts sanctioned for scientific personnel at one of India's top institutes for basic science research, the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), are unfilled.**
- **The TIFR is primarily funded by the Department of Atomic Energy. Further, the parliamentary report found that, on average, one in four of sanctioned posts at the key atomic energy research institutions and nuclear power plants was vacant. Clearly the rot runs deep.**
- **On the one hand, the government has announced missions to develop quantum computers and develop foundational artificial intelligence models. It has also declared its intent to align research and development towards industry-specific research.**
- **However none of this will bear fruit without scientists, particularly young researchers who are engaged full-time, having long careers at institutions doing cutting-edge research.**

India's shame — the trap of bonded labour

Page No. 6, GS 2

On May 1, as the world commemorates International Labour Day to honour the dignity of work and workers' rights, the stories of millions in India trapped in bonded labour cast a dark shadow.

In a quiet corner of Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh, Mukesh Adivasi, 35, lies on a weathered charpoy, his once-robust frame now frail, his spirit scarred by a traumatic past. In 2023, enticed by promises of work in Indore, Mukesh and his family were trafficked 1,400 kilometres to Karnataka, trapped as bonded labourers. Brutal violence on a sugarcane farm left him with a painful limp and profound exhaustion. "I blame my greed," Mukesh mourns, recalling the ₹500 advance that he got and which ignited hope. Crammed into trucks, they endured a gruelling journey, only to face relentless toil – between 14 hours to 16 hours of work every day.

When Mukesh demanded payment, armed guards savagely beat him, which shattered his right leg. A failed escape attempt brought further cruelty. After weeks of torment, the police rescued Mukesh and others, but his physical and emotional scars remain.

In Puttur, Andhra Pradesh, K. Thenmozhi's childhood dreams of a bright future collapsed at the age of 13. Financial hardship drove her family to a brick kiln in Bengaluru, where an advance of ₹2,000 bound them in servitude. Excruciating work that stretched over 12 to 14 hours under the scorching sun replaced school. The kiln owner's brutality – beatings, verbal abuse and confinement – shattered their spirit. "I knew we were trapped," Thenmozhi recalls. A social worker's visit provoked the owner's fury, but his subsequent flight offered them escape. Fleeing barefoot, Thenmozhi's family left on a train, and reached their village.

The long wait for justice and freedom

The harrowing experiences of survivors such as Mukesh Adivasi and K. Thenmozhi, are among the lakhs of Indians ensnared in bonded labour, exposing the brutality of exploitation and underscoring the urgent need for systemic



Rejimon Kuttappan

is a forced labour investigator and the author of 'Undocumented' (2021)

India's economy thrives on its most vulnerable, as bonded and forced labour

reforms to secure justice and freedom for all workers.

Bonded labour emerges from a web of interconnected factors. Immediate triggers, such as medical emergencies, religious ceremonies, dowries, food shortages, or the sudden loss of a job or a breadwinner, may force an impoverished worker to seek a loan or advance from an employer or labour agent. However, deeper systemic issues amplify this vulnerability: discrimination and social exclusion based on religion, ethnicity, or caste; widespread illiteracy and a lack of access to information; employer monopolies over local financial and labour markets; and the dominance of social elites. These elements transform a simple economic transaction between lender and borrower into a mechanism of social control and exploitation.

Policy and plan

India had abolished bonded labour in 1975. In 2016, the then Union Labour Minister, Bandaru Dattatreya, informed Parliament about the government's plan to release and rehabilitate 1.84 crore bonded labourers across the country as part of a 15-year vision extending until 2030.

Interestingly, in December 2021, when parliamentarian Mohammed Jawed inquired about this target in Parliament, the government stated that 12,760 bonded labourers had been rescued and rehabilitated between 2016 and 2021.

The Minister of State for Labour and Employment revealed a harsh truth: of India's estimated 1.84 crore bonded labourers, only 12,760 have been rescued and rehabilitated, leaving approximately 1.71 crore still trapped. To meet the 2030 target of eradicating bonded labour, around 11 lakh individuals would need to have been rescued annually since 2021. Given that only 12,000 bonded labourers were rescued between 2016 and 2021, expecting lakhs to be freed annually is overly optimistic.

In addition to bonded labour, crores of unorganised Indian workers, particularly migrants, endure forced labour in India, which

closely resembles bonded labour. According to a National Sample Survey Organization of India report, the country's total employment across the organised and unorganised sectors was approximately 47 crore. Of this, only 8 crore workers were in the organised sector, while the remaining 39 crore were in the unorganised sector.

The International Labour Organisation's India Employment Report 2024 also states that low-quality jobs in the informal sector and informal employment are the dominant forms of work in India.

The ground reality

Unfortunately, unorganised workers, predominantly migrants in India's informal sector, lack unionisation, depriving them of collective bargaining power. Without unionisation, unorganised workers face exploitative conditions, lack formal contracts, and risk arbitrary dismissal. In the 1940s, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar championed labour rights, mandating trade union recognition and collective bargaining, including the right to strike. However, the Labour Codes of 2019-20 have undermined Ambedkar's legacy, eroding workers' rights and prioritising profit over people, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation.

Since early 2022, investigations by this writer into forced labour across Indian industries have exposed a shameful reality: Indian industries thrive on the exploitation of forced labour, a blatant betrayal of India's workers. Interviews with hundreds of workers – mostly migrants forced from their villages by climate change, crippling poverty, and a lack of job opportunities – lay bare a system rigged against them. These workers lack stable wages, facing meagre pay, precarious conditions, and the constant threat of dismissal. This exploitation, a deliberate assault on their dignity, is perpetuated by a system prioritising profit over people, ignoring modern-day slavery. India's economy shamefully thrives on bonded and forced labour, profiting from its most vulnerable.

Content.

- **On May 1, as the world commemorates International Labour Day to honour the dignity of work and workers' rights, the stories of millions in India trapped in bonded labour cast a dark shadow.**
- **Bonded labour emerges from a web of interconnected factors. Immediate triggers, such as medical emergencies, religious ceremonies, dowries, food shortages, or the sudden loss of a job or a breadwinner, may force an impoverished worker to seek a loan or advance from an employer or labour agent.**
- **However, deeper systemic issues amplify this vulnerability: discrimination and social exclusion based on religion, ethnicity, or caste; widespread illiteracy and a lack of access to information; employer monopolies over local financial and labour markets; and the dominance of social elites.**
- **These elements transform a simple economic transaction between lender and borrower into a mechanism of social control and exploitation.**

Fact

- **India had abolished bonded labour in 1975. In 2016, the then Union Labour Minister, Bandaru Dattatreya, informed Parliament about the government's plan to release and rehabilitate 1.84 crore bonded labourers across the country as part of a 15-year vision extending until 2030.**
- **The Minister of State for Labour and Employment revealed a harsh truth: of India's estimated 1.84 crore bonded labourers, only 12,760 have been rescued and rehabilitated, leaving approximately 1.71 crore still trapped.**
- **In addition to bonded labour, crores of unorganised Indian workers, particularly migrants, endure forced labour in India, which closely resembles bonded labour.**
- **Unfortunately, unorganised workers, predominantly migrants in India's informal sector, lack unionisation, depriving them of collective bargaining power.**

The impact of suspending a water treaty

In a strong measure against Pakistan, after terrorists from The Resistance Front killed 26 tourists in Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir, India's Cabinet Committee on Security decided that "the Indus Waters Treaty [IWT] of 1960 will be held in abeyance with immediate effect, until Pakistan credibly and irrevocably abjures its support for cross-border terrorism". This implicitly means an end to the water treaty, signed in 1960. There is no exit clause and provision in the IWT for unilateral abrogation. Article XII (4) of the IWT states that the treaty "shall continue in force until terminated by a duly ratified treaty concluded for that purpose between the two governments".

Many Indian analysts often argue that the provisions under Articles 60 and 62 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (VCLT) can be used to revoke the treaty. India is not a party to the VCLT; Pakistan has signed but not ratified it. Invoking provisions under Article 62 of the VCLT on the IWT is convenient, but tough to argue. Suspending the IWT may also internationalise the water matter between the two hostile countries. Aqeel Malik, the Minister of State for Law and Justice in Pakistan, told Reuters that there are three different legal options, including raising the issue at the World Bank, taking action at the Permanent Court of Arbitration or at the International Court of Justice in the Hague alleging that India has violated the 1969 VCLT, or raising the issue at the UN Security Council.

Stopping the flow of water

India can now stop sharing water flow data with Pakistan, flush reservoirs, and there will be no hydro project design or operation-related restrictions on India. It can also hold water during the dry period and release it during the high monsoon, causing drought and floods in Pakistan. The western rivers – Indus, Jhelum and Chenab – are



Amit Ranjan

Research Fellow,
Institute of South
Asian Studies,
National University of
Singapore



Nabeela Siddiqui

Assistant
Professor, Vinayaka
Mission's Law
School, Vinayaka
Missions Research
Foundation-Deemed
University, Chennai

India may justify its position on suspending the Indus Water Treaty. But this could impact Delhi's relations with neighbouring countries

considered the backbone of Pakistan's agriculture, domestic consumption, and hydroelectricity production.

An impact on the flow of water to Pakistan may further intensify inter-provincial water disputes in the country. Punjab and Sindh have a long history of water fights. Currently, they are arguing over a plan to construct six canals, particularly the Cholistan Canal, to irrigate the deserted Cholistan region in Punjab. Amid protests in Sindh, the federal government of Pakistan decided to halt the contentious canal projects.

To materialise its political decision on the IWT, India requires major infrastructure projects. Under the IWT, India is permitted to store up to 3.60 million acre-feet (MAF) of water, develop 1.34 million acres of irrigation land in J&K and Ladakh, and construct run-of-the-river dams on the western rivers. However, India has a storage capacity of only around 1 MAF and has developed irrigation for about 0.642 million acres. On the eastern rivers – Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi – India utilises more than 90% of its 33 MAF allocated waters, supported by major projects such as the Bhakra, Pong, and Ranjit Sagar dam.

India's hydroelectric projects on the western rivers, such as the Kishanganga Hydroelectric Project, Ratle Dam, Salal Dam, Nimoo Bazgo, and Baglihar Dam, aim to harness the water resources of the Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab rivers to generate electricity, utilising India's allocated share of water under the IWT. These projects have varying storage capacities, with Kishanganga at 18.35 million cubic meters, Ratle Dam at 78.71 million cubic meters, Salal Dam at 285 million cubic meters, and Baglihar Dam at 475 million cubic meters. Upcoming and planned projects such as the Ratle Dam, Kiru Dam, and Pakal Dul Dam will further tap into the Chenab River and its tributaries. However, India's ability to capture and utilise the

water flowing into Pakistan is limited by the capacity of these projects. India lacks massive storage infrastructure to hold back large volumes of water during high-flow periods.

While India has launched short, medium-term, and long-term plans to maximise its water share and reduce flows into Pakistan, most western river projects remain run-of-the-river with minimal storage. Given the challenging Himalayan terrain and bureaucratic delays, building the required infrastructure to harness the treaty entitlements could take a decade or longer.

Conclusion

India may justify its position on suspending the IWT. However, if its steps on the IWT do not politically and diplomatically satisfy other neighbouring countries, the suspension may impact New Delhi's relations with them. For instance, the upper riparian to many Indian rivers, China, may cite the suspension of the IWT in its favour to not renew Memorandum of Understanding on water data sharing or sharing information of hydrostructures on the rivers flowing into India from Tibet. India's MoU on data sharing with China on the Sutlej and Brahmaputra rivers have expired and, as India's Ministry of Water Resources website says, is under the process of renewal. Notably, during the Doklam crisis in 2017, China did not share hydro data with India, but shared it with Bangladesh. Second, as India and Bangladesh have agreed to renew the Ganga Water Treaty, set to expire in 2026, India's decision on the IWT may cast a shadow over it. Currently, India and Bangladesh do not share very close relations. India's water decisions may even prompt a section of the Nepali population to caution the government on water related and other agreements with New Delhi. A few commentators from Sri Lanka too are talking about "treading" carefully while signing agreements with India.

Content.

- **In a strong measure against Pakistan, after terrorists from The Resistance Front killed 26 tourists in Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir, India's Cabinet Committee on Security decided that "the Indus Waters Treaty [IWT] of 1960 will be held in abeyance with immediate effect, until Pakistan credibly and irrevocably abjures its support for cross-border terrorism". This implicitly means an end to the water treaty, signed in 1960.**
- **There is no exit clause and provision in the IWT for unilateral abrogation. Article XII (4) of the IWT states that the treaty "shall continue in force until terminated by a duly ratified treaty concluded for that purpose between the two governments".**
- **Many Indian analysts often argue that the provisions under Articles 60 and 62 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (VCLT) can be used to revoke the treaty. India is not a party to the VCLT; Pakistan has signed but not ratified it.**

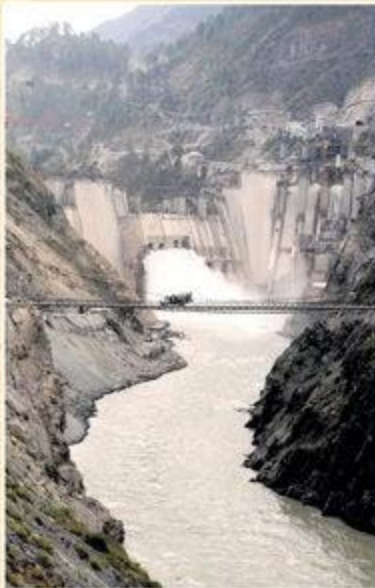
The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)

- The distribution of waters of the Indus and its tributaries between India and Pakistan is governed by the Indus Water Treaty (IWT).
- Was signed on Sept 19, 1960, between India, Pakistan and a representative of World Bank after eight years of negotiations.
- Partition of India cut across the Indus river basin, which has the Indus river, plus five of its main tributaries.

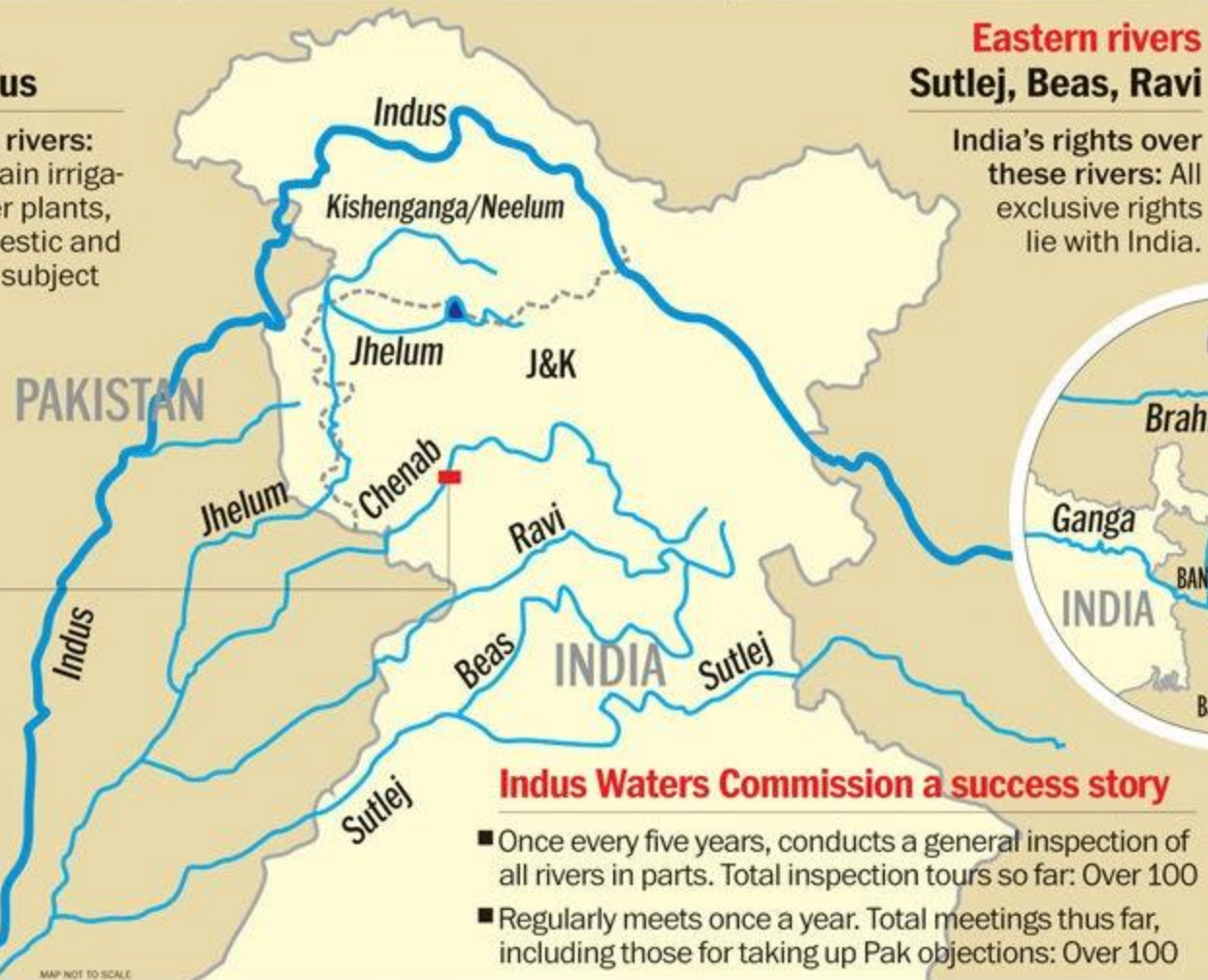
Western rivers

Chenab, Jhelum, Indus

India's rights over these rivers: Limited — can set up certain irrigation, run-of-the-river power plants, very limited storage, domestic and non-consumptive use, all subject to conditions



Baglihar dam on Chenab



Eastern rivers

Sutlej, Beas, Ravi

India's rights over these rivers: All exclusive rights lie with India.

Indus Waters Commission a success story

- Once every five years, conducts a general inspection of all rivers in parts. Total inspection tours so far: Over 100
- Regularly meets once a year. Total meetings thus far, including those for taking up Pak objections: Over 100





UPSC IAS

PRELIMS TO INTERVIEW (P2I)

FOUNDATION

MAY EVENING BATCH

Price
₹33,999

Use Code
PRTLIVE



Prelims and
Mains Residential
Program



Full Refund
on Clearing
Prelims



₹11,000 reward
to monthly top
performer



Interview
Guidance
Program

Batch Starting on 07th May 2025 | 6:00 PM

Join Me:

Instagram:- tiwariprashant26

Twitter:- Prashantt26

Telegram:- UPSCwithPrashant
(Prashant Tiwari)



Prashant Tiwari

93,436 subscribers



t.me/UPSCwithPrashant

Link

1. The Hindu Playlist -

[https://youtube.com/playlist?](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpuxPG4TUOR4VHsceopVQtj73aJ0idtpl)

[list=PLpuxPG4TUOR4VHsceopVQtj73aJ0idtpl](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpuxPG4TUOR4VHsceopVQtj73aJ0idtpl)

2. NCERT Playlist:-

[https://youtube.com/playlist?](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpuxPG4TUOR5Q3pN6ivhc77yZ6HY9v7Ad)

[list=PLpuxPG4TUOR5Q3pN6ivhc77yZ6HY9v7Ad](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpuxPG4TUOR5Q3pN6ivhc77yZ6HY9v7Ad)

3. PIB Weekly:- [https://youtube.com/playlist?](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpuxPG4TUOR59OtRNhFu)

[list=PLpuxPG4TUOR59OtRNhFu](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpuxPG4TUOR59OtRNhFu)

Description

tiwariprashant26

Edit profile

View archive

Ad tools



310 posts

30.1K followers

357 following

Prashant tiwari

Education

Educator at StudyIQ IAS

न कृष्ण की तरह सारथी हूँ

न अर्जुन की तरह महारथी हूँ

मात्र मैं हूँ

इस ज्ञेय-अज्ञेय के मध्य स्थित

youtube.com/playlist?list=PLpuxPG4TUOR4VHsceopVQtj73aJ0idtpl

46.8K accounts reached in the last 30 days. [View insights](#)



Newspaper



Burning Issues



Practice



Motivation



Guidance



Reviews



PYQ



Thank You!