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Polity & Governance

Justice Verma (Controversy, Judicial In-House Enquiry, and Transfers and Rules)

News Highlights:

The **Chief Justice of India** has ordered an in-house inquiry into **Delhi High Court Judge Justice Yashwant Varma** following the alleged discovery of **large sums of unaccounted cash** at his official residence after a fire broke out on **March 14, 2025**. This unprecedented move has triggered a formal internal judicial investigation, separate from the constitutional process of impeachment.

Background of the Controversy



On **March 14, 2025**, a **fire** broke out at the official residence of **Delhi High Court judge Justice Yashwant Varma** in New Delhi.



During the firefighting operation, **sacks of unaccounted currency notes** were discovered in a storeroom of the residence, some of which were reportedly **partially burnt**.



Justice Varma **denied knowledge** of the cash and disassociated himself and his staff from any awareness of the money.



The incident led to **Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna** calling for an **extraordinary meeting** of the Supreme Court Collegium.



A **three-member committee** was formed, consisting of:

- **Justice Sheel Nagu**, Chief Justice of Punjab & Haryana High Court
- **Justice G.S. Sandhawalia**, Chief Justice of Himachal Pradesh High Court
- **Justice Anu Sivaraman**, Judge of Karnataka High Court

The Supreme Court also sought **security records** for the past six months related to personnel posted at the judge's residence. The transfer of Justice Varma to his parent **High Court in Allahabad** was proposed as an administrative response.

Origin and Evolution of In-House Enquiry Mechanism

Landmark Case – 1995

- The concept of **in-house enquiry** in the Indian judicial system was formally recognised and developed in the year 1995, following the controversial case of **C. Ravichandran Iyer v. Justice A.M. Bhattacharjee**, which dealt with serious allegations of **financial impropriety** against the then Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court.
- In this case, the **Supreme Court of India identified a fundamental and procedural gap** in the framework for judicial accountability, recognizing that the **constitutional remedy of impeachment** was far too severe and cumbersome to address cases involving lesser forms of misconduct or unethical behaviour by judges.

- The Court noted that there existed a "**hiatus between bad behaviour and impeachable misbehaviour**", meaning that many acts that were inappropriate for a judge did not necessarily rise to the level of "proved misbehaviour" required for removal under Article 124(4) of the Constitution.
- To address this gap, the **Supreme Court recommended the creation of an internal mechanism** that could handle judicial conduct that, while not impeachable, was nevertheless inconsistent with the ethical standards expected of the judiciary and the dignity of the office held by judges.
- A **five-member committee** was subsequently constituted to formulate this mechanism, comprising **Justices S.C. Agarwal, A.S. Anand, and S.P. Bharucha from the Supreme Court**, along with **Justices P.S. Mishra and D.P. Mohapatra**, who were the senior-most Chief Justices of High Courts at the time.
- The mandate of the committee was to **devise a procedure to take appropriate remedial action against judges whose acts of omission or commission did not conform to accepted judicial values**, and to ensure that such conduct could be addressed within the bounds of the judiciary itself.
- The committee submitted its recommendations in the form of a detailed report in **October 1997**, which was subsequently **adopted by the Supreme Court with certain amendments during a full court meeting held in December 1999**, thereby establishing the **in-house enquiry procedure as an institutional mechanism** within the Indian judiciary.

Revised Procedure Post-2014

Case: Additional District Judge 'X' v. Registrar General, MP HC (2014)

- A significant transformation in the structure and procedural clarity of the in-house enquiry mechanism occurred in the year **2014**, when a **woman Additional District and Sessions Judge from Madhya Pradesh filed a complaint of sexual harassment** against a sitting High Court judge.
- In response to the gravity of the complaint, **Justices J.S. Khehar and Arun Mishra** of the Supreme Court undertook a detailed review of the existing in-house procedure, and **restructured it into a systematic and transparent seven-step framework**, thereby bringing greater procedural clarity and consistency to judicial accountability mechanisms.

Steps in the In-House Process

1. A complaint may be submitted either to the **Chief Justice of a High Court**, the **Chief Justice of India**, or the **President of India**, and the same is then expected to be **forwarded to the CJI for further consideration**, forming the initial stage of the process.
2. The **CJI holds the discretion to assess whether the complaint merits further action**, and may choose to drop the complaint if it lacks seriousness or substance, or alternatively may request a **preliminary report from the concerned High Court Chief Justice** to evaluate the veracity of the allegations.
3. If the **preliminary inquiry report submitted by the High Court Chief Justice** indicates that the complaint is credible and that a **deeper investigation is warranted**, the CJI may then proceed to constitute a **three-member inquiry committee** comprising **two Chief Justices of High Courts and one High Court judge**.
4. This three-member inquiry committee is vested with the **authority to determine its own procedures**, provided that such procedures adhere to the principles of **natural justice**, including the essential requirement of **granting the accused judge an opportunity to present his or her defence**.
5. Upon the conclusion of its investigation, the committee is required to **submit a comprehensive report to the CJI**, which must explicitly state whether the **allegations against the concerned judge are substantiated**, and if so, whether such misconduct is **serious enough to justify the initiation of removal proceedings**.
6. If the committee's report concludes that the misconduct, although proven, **does not reach the threshold necessary for removal**, then the **CJI may issue an advisory to the concerned judge**, and may also **direct that the committee's findings be recorded for institutional purposes**.
7. In cases where the misconduct is deemed **sufficiently serious to warrant removal**, the CJI is expected to advise the judge to either **resign voluntarily or seek retirement**, and if the judge refuses to comply, the **CJI will direct that no further judicial work be assigned** to the judge. Subsequently, the **CJI informs the President and the Prime Minister** regarding the committee's findings and recommends the initiation of formal removal proceedings.

Appointment and Removal of Judges

Procedure for Judicial Appointments

- Appointment of Chief Justice of India:** Under Article 124(2), the President appoints the CJI, based on the recommendation of the outgoing CJI, traditionally by seniority, a convention followed since the 1973 supersession controversy.
- Appointment of Supreme Court Judges:** Initiated by the CJI, who consults Collegium members and the senior-most judge from the High Court concerned. Written opinions are recorded and forwarded through the Law Minister and Prime Minister to the President, who issues the formal appointment warrant.
- Appointment of Chief Justice of High Court:** Based on the inter-State transfer policy, the SC Collegium selects a judge from outside the State, usually the senior-most puisne judge, and the proposal is routed through the Union Law Ministry.
- Appointment of High Court Judges:** Initiated by the outgoing Chief Justice of the High Court in consultation with two senior-most judges. The recommendation goes to the Chief Minister, who advises the Governor, and the file is sent to the Union Government, followed by Collegium approval.

Constitutional Provisions on Judicial Impeachment

Relevant Articles

- The removal of a judge of the Supreme Court of India is governed by Article 124(4) of the Constitution, which prescribes a highly rigorous and constitutionally safeguarded process, while Article 218 ensures that the same provisions are equally applicable to High Court judges.
- In addition, Articles 124(5), 217, and 218 provide a comprehensive constitutional framework that governs the appointment, tenure, conduct, and removal of judges, ensuring a balance between judicial accountability and independence.

Procedure for Impeachment

- The process is laid down in the Articles 124(4), (5), 217, and 218 of the Constitution of India, along with the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968.
- An impeachment motion can be introduced in either the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha, and must be admitted by the Presiding Officer (i.e., the Speaker or Chairman) of the respective House.
- Upon admission, a three-member inquiry committee is constituted, comprising a Supreme Court judge, a Chief Justice of a High Court, and an eminent jurist, who are tasked with conducting a quasi-judicial investigation into the allegations.
- Following the investigation, if the findings support the allegations, the motion must be passed by both Houses of Parliament with:
 - A two-thirds majority of members present and voting, and
 - More than 50% of the total membership of each House.
- If the impeachment motion is passed by both Houses in the same parliamentary session, the President of India issues an order for removal of the judge, thereby concluding the impeachment process.

Grounds for Removal

- According to constitutional provisions, there are only two recognized grounds on which a judge may be impeached, namely:
 - "Proved misbehaviour", which includes acts such as gross ethical misconduct, corruption, or other behaviour that fundamentally undermines the credibility of the judiciary.
 - "Incapacity", which refers to a judge's inability to perform judicial functions due to serious physical or mental

health conditions or cognitive impairments.

- These terms are **deliberately worded in broad language** so as to provide the Parliament with the flexibility to interpret the scope of judicial misconduct or inability on a case-by-case basis.

Removal Proceedings Against Indian Judges

1. Justice V. Ramaswami – Supreme Court Judge

- **Year of Proceeding:** 1993
- **Nature of Allegation:** Serious charges of **financial irregularities and judicial misconduct** during his tenure as Chief Justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court.
- **Process Outcome:** An **impeachment motion was tabled in the Lok Sabha**, but although the majority of members present voted in favour, the motion **failed to secure the constitutionally required two-thirds majority**, and hence, it was not passed.
- **Significance:** Justice Ramaswami became the **first judge in Indian constitutional history against whom formal impeachment proceedings were initiated**, although he was **not removed from office**.

2. Justice Soumitra Sen – Calcutta High Court Judge

- **Year of Proceeding:** 2011
- **Nature of Allegation:** Found guilty of **misappropriation of public funds and misconduct prior to his appointment as judge**, relating to his conduct as a court-appointed receiver in a company matter.
- **Process Outcome:** The **Rajya Sabha passed the impeachment motion**, making Justice Sen the **first judge in India to be impeached by the Upper House** for misconduct. However, **he resigned before the motion could be taken up in the Lok Sabha**, thereby pre-empting his removal under Article 124(4).
- **Significance:** His resignation **ended the impeachment process midway**, although the parliamentary censure remained on record.

3. Justice J.B. Pardiwala – Gujarat High Court Judge

- **Year of Proceeding:** 2015
- **Nature of Allegation:** Made **controversial remarks regarding the constitutional provisions on reservation**, which were perceived by some Members of Parliament as **violative of judicial conduct and constitutional values**.
- **Process Outcome:** An **impeachment notice was signed by 58 Rajya Sabha MPs**, but the motion was eventually **not carried forward**, and Justice Pardiwala later **expunged the remarks** from the court record.
- **Significance:** Although the process did not proceed to the inquiry or voting stage, this was among the few cases where **parliamentarians formally initiated the impeachment process** based on a judicial statement.

4. Justice S.K. Gangele – Madhya Pradesh High Court Judge

- **Year of Proceeding:** 2015
- **Nature of Allegation:** Accused of **sexual harassment** by a former District and Sessions Judge in Gwalior.
- **Process Outcome:** More than **50 Rajya Sabha members signed the impeachment motion**, and a **Judicial Inquiry Committee was constituted** under the **Judges Inquiry Act, 1968**. However, the committee **did not find sufficient material evidence** to support the allegations, and the motion was subsequently **dropped**.
- **Significance:** Justice Gangele's case became one of the few where a **full inquiry process was undertaken**, and it highlighted the judiciary's **sensitivity to workplace misconduct**, although the charges were not proved.

5. Justice C.V. Nagarjuna Reddy – High Court of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana

- **Year of Proceeding:** 2017
- **Nature of Allegation:** Alleged to have **abused his position** by using judicial influence to intimidate and threaten a Dalit junior civil judge.
- **Process Outcome:** A group of **Rajya Sabha MPs submitted an impeachment notice**, but the motion did not progress to the inquiry or voting stage. The case was politically debated but **did not result in a formal proceeding**.

- Significance:** The case illustrates the continued use of Article 124-based motions to address allegations of judicial overreach and caste-based abuse, although it remained inconclusive.



Collegium System in the Indian Supreme Court

Definition and Legal Status

The **Collegium System** refers to the **judicially evolved mechanism** through which appointments and transfers of judges to the **Supreme Court and High Courts** are made. It has **no statutory backing** nor is it explicitly provided for in the **Constitution of India**. Instead, the system emerged from the **interpretation of Article 124 and Article 217** by the Supreme Court in a series of landmark judgments.

Evolution of the Collegium System

1

First Judges Case (1981) – *S.P. Gupta v. Union of India*

- The Court held that the term "**consultation**" in judicial appointments does not mean concurrence, thereby giving **primacy to the Executive** over the Judiciary in the matter of judicial appointments.

2

Second Judges Case (1993) – *SC Advocates-on-Record Assn. v. Union of India*

- Overruled the First Judges Case by holding that "**consultation**" means "**concurrence**", thus giving the **Judiciary primacy**. It stated that the CJI's opinion must be formed **institutionally** in consultation with the **two senior-most judges** of the Supreme Court.

3

Third Judges Case (1998) – Presidential Reference under Article 143

- Expanded the Collegium to include the **Chief Justice of India and four senior-most Supreme Court judges**, thereby formalising the **five-member Collegium** for appointments to the Supreme Court.

Composition of the Collegium

- Supreme Court Collegium:** Headed by the **Chief Justice of India (CJI)** and includes the **four senior-most judges** of the Supreme Court.
- High Court Collegium:** Headed by the **Chief Justice of the High Court**, and includes the **two senior-most judges** of that High Court.

Role of the Executive

The Executive, through the **Law Ministry**, processes recommendations and may seek **one-time reconsideration**. However, if the **Collegium reiterates its recommendation**, the **Executive is bound to accept it**.

99th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2014

Objective

The primary aim of the 99th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2014, was to replace the existing collegium system with the **National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC)**. This body was intended to bring transparency and accountability to the process of appointing judges to the higher judiciary in India.

Legislative Journey

- **Introduction and Passage:** The amendment was introduced and passed by the **Lok Sabha on August 13, 2014**, and by the **Rajya Sabha on August 14, 2014**.
- **Presidential Assent:** It received the **President's assent on December 31, 2014**.
- **Enforcement:** The amendment came into force on **April 13, 2015**.
- **State Ratification:** It was ratified by **16 out of 29 state legislatures**, fulfilling the constitutional requirement for amendments affecting the judiciary.

Constitutional Provisions Introduced

- **Article 124A:** Established the **composition of the NJAC**, which included:
 - The **Chief Justice of India (CJI)** as the Chairperson.
 - Two senior-most judges of the Supreme Court.
 - The **Union Minister of Law and Justice**.
 - Two **eminent persons** nominated by a committee comprising the Prime Minister, the CJI, and the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha.
- **Article 124B:** Outlined the **functions of the NJAC**, which encompassed:
 - Recommending appointments of the CJI, Supreme Court judges, Chief Justices, and other High Court judges.
 - Recommending transfers of Chief Justices and other High Court judges.
 - Ensuring that recommended individuals are of ability and integrity.
- **Article 124C:** Empowered **Parliament to regulate** the NJAC's procedures and functions through legislation.

National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, 2014

Alongside the constitutional amendment, the **NJAC Act, 2014** was enacted to detail the procedures for judicial appointments and transfers. Key features included:

- **Procedure for Appointments:** For the **Chief Justice of India**, the NJAC would recommend the senior-most Supreme Court judge, provided they are deemed fit.
 - For other judges, recommendations would be based on ability, merit, and other criteria specified in regulations.
- **Veto Power:** Any two members of the NJAC could veto a recommendation, preventing the appointment.
- **Consultation Process:** The NJAC was required to consult with the Chief Justice and senior judges of the relevant High Court, as well as the state's Governor and Chief Minister, before making recommendations.

Striking Down the NJAC- Fourth Judges Case (2015): SC Advocates-on-Record Association v. Union of India

Background and Context

- The **Fourth Judges Case** emerged as a pivotal moment in India's judicial history, wherein the Supreme Court evaluated the constitutionality of the **99th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2014**, and the accompanying **National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act, 2014**.
- These legislative measures aimed to **replace the existing Collegium System**—a mechanism wherein senior judges appoint judges—with a new framework involving representatives from the judiciary, executive, and civil society.
- The NJAC was envisioned as a **six-member body** comprising:
 - The **Chief Justice of India (CJI)** (Chairperson, ex officio)
 - Two senior-most judges of the Supreme Court (ex officio)
 - The **Union Minister of Law and Justice** (ex officio)
 - Two **eminent persons** nominated by a committee consisting of the CJI, Prime Minister, and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha.

- The NJAC Act stipulated that **any two members** could exercise a **veto power**, thereby preventing a recommendation from being finalized.

Legal Challenge

- The **Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association (SCAORA)**, along with other petitioners, challenged the constitutional validity of the NJAC framework, contending that it **undermined the independence of the judiciary**, a core component of the Constitution's **Basic Structure Doctrine**.
- The petitioners argued that the inclusion of executive members and eminent persons in the appointment process diluted the judiciary's primacy and could lead to potential external influences on judicial appointments.

Supreme Court Verdict

- On **16 October 2015**, a **five-judge Constitution Bench** of the Supreme Court delivered its verdict with a **4:1 majority**, declaring both the **99th Constitutional Amendment** and the **NJAC Act** as **unconstitutional and void**.
- The majority opinion, delivered by **Justices J.S. Khehar, Madan B. Lokur, Kurian Joseph, and Adarsh Kumar Goel**, held that:
 - The NJAC compromised the **independence of the judiciary**, violating the **Basic Structure** of the Constitution.
 - The provision allowing any two members to veto a recommendation could potentially enable non-judicial members to override the collective decision of the judiciary.
 - The presence of the **Union Law Minister** and **eminent persons** in the NJAC introduced the risk of **political influence** in judicial appointments.
- Justice Jasti Chelameswar delivered the **dissenting opinion**, asserting that:
 - The existing **Collegium System** lacked transparency and accountability.
 - The NJAC provided a more balanced approach by including members from diverse backgrounds, potentially enhancing the credibility of the appointment process.



MIND MAP

Justice Yashwant Varma Controversy (March 2025)

- Fire at residence → discovery of unaccounted cash.
- Justice Varma denied knowledge.
- CJI Sanjiv Khanna ordered in-house inquiry.
- Transfer to Allahabad HC proposed.
- Inquiry Committee formed:
 - Justice Sheel Nagu
 - Justice G.S. Sandhawalia
 - Justice Anu Sivaraman

In-House Enquiry Mechanism

- **Origin:** C. Ravichandran Iyer v. Justice A.M. Bhattacharjee (1995).
- **Gap identified:** "Hiatus" between bad behaviour and impeachable misbehaviour.
- **1997 Report:** 5-member committee created procedure.
- **Adopted:** December 1999 by SC Full Court.

Revised Procedure (2014)

- **Case:** Additional District Judge 'X' v. Registrar General, MP HC.
- **7-step process:**
 - Complaint to CJI → Preliminary Inquiry → 3-Member Committee → Natural Justice → Report → Advisory/Resignation/Removal Recommendation.

Collegium System

- **Definition:** Judge-led appointment system, evolved by judgments.
- **Evolution:**
 - First Judges Case (1981): Executive primacy.
 - Second Judges Case (1993): Judicial primacy.
 - Third Judges Case (1998): 5-member SC Collegium formalized.
- **Composition:**
 - SC: CJI + 4 senior-most judges.
 - HC: Chief Justice + 2 senior-most judges.
- **Role of Executive:** Can seek reconsideration once, must accept Collegium reiteration.
- Striking Down of NJAC (Fourth Judges Case, 2015)

Judicial Appointments

- Appointment of CJI: By President, based on seniority.
- Appointment of SC Judges: By CJI + four senior-most judges Collegium consultation.
- Appointment of HC Judges: By Chief Justice of HC + two senior-most judges Collegium + Government.

Judicial Impeachment

- Articles: 124(4), (5), 217, 218.
- Procedure:
 - Motion in Parliament → Inquiry Committee → Two-thirds majority → President's order.
- Grounds: Proved misbehaviour or incapacity.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. In the case involving Justice Yashwant Varma, which of the following Chief Justices of India (CJIs) led the matter and took the step of convening an extraordinary Collegium meeting to ensure transparency in the matter?

(a) D.Y. Chandrachud (b) N.V. Ramana
 (c) Sanjiv Khanna (d) U.U. Lalit
2. Who among the following is not a member of the three-member committee constituted in connection with the inquiry into the matter involving Justice Yashwant Varma ?

(a) Justice A. Dharmadhikari (b) Justice S. Nagu
 (c) Justice G.S. Sandhawalia (d) Justice A. Sivaraman
3. After the setting up of the enquiry committee, Justice Yashwant Varma was transferred to which of the following High Courts as an administrative response ?

(a) Patna High Court (b) Allahabad High Court
 (c) Delhi High Court (d) Rajasthan High Court
4. The concept of in-house enquiry in the Indian judicial system, was formally recognized and developed in which of the following years?

(a) 1987 (b) 1990
 (c) 1992 (d) 1995
5. Which of the following cases involved serious allegations of financial impropriety against the then Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court ?

(a) K. Veeraswami v. Union of India
 (b) C. Ravichandran Iyer v. Justice A.M. Bhattacharjee
 (c) Subramanian Swamy v. Union of India
 (d) Shanti Bhushan v. Supreme Court of Indi
6. The removal of a judge of the Supreme Court of India is governed by which of the following provisions of the Constitution ?

(a) Article 124(4) (b) Article 226(3)
 (c) Article 32 (1) (d) Article 368 (2)
7. A complaint against a judge cannot be submitted to which of the following authorities?

(a) Judge of the Supreme Court
 (b) Chief Justice of a High Court
 (c) Chief Justice of India
8. In the in-house enquiry process, who holds the discretion to either dismiss a complaint against a judge or to seek a preliminary report from the concerned High Court Chief Justice?

(a) Union Law Minister (b) President of India
 (c) Attorney General of India (d) Chief Justice of India
9. According to constitutional provisions, how many grounds are officially recognized for the impeachment of a judge in India ?

(a) Two (b) Three (c) Four (d) One
10. Under the constitutional provisions for the removal of a judge, which of the following refers to acts such as gross ethical misconduct, corruption, or behaviour that seriously damages the integrity of the judiciary ?

(a) Judicial incapacity (b) Dereliction of duty
 (c) Moral turpitude (d) Proved misbehaviour
11. Which of the following terms refers to a judge's inability to discharge judicial duties due to severe physical or mental health issues or cognitive decline, as recognized under the constitutional grounds for removal ?

(a) Misconduct (b) Incapacity
 (c) Dereliction (d) Disability
12. Under the procedure for judicial impeachment in India, a motion for removal of a judge must first be admitted by whom before any further action is taken in the concerned House of Parliament ?

(a) Presiding Officer (b) Law Minister
 (c) Leader of the Opposition (d) Attorney General
13. Once an impeachment motion is admitted, a three-member committee is formed to examine the allegations against a judge. What type of process does this committee undertake ?

(a) Legislative review
 (b) Criminal prosecution
 (c) Quasi-judicial investigation
 (d) Administrative audit

14. After the investigation committee submits a report upholding the allegations, what is one of the constitutional requirements for the impeachment motion to be passed in each House of Parliament ?
(a) Unanimous consent of present members
(b) More than 50% of the total membership
(c) Simple majority of present and voting
(d) Approval by the President
15. Once an impeachment motion is passed by both Houses of Parliament in the same session, who is constitutionally empowered to issue the final order for the removal of a judge?
(a) Prime Minister (b) Chief Justice of India
(c) Speaker of Lok Sabha (d) President
16. Which of the following landmark cases first recognised the need for an internal judicial mechanism to address misconduct that does not meet the constitutional standard for removal ?
(a) K. Veeraswami v. Union of India
(b) S.P. Gupta v. Union of India
17. Article 217 of the Indian Constitution deals with the appointment and conditions of service of which category of judicial officers ?
(a) District Judges (b) Supreme Court Judges
(c) Magistrates (d) High Court Judges
18. The 99th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2014, primarily aimed to replace the collegium system with which of the following bodies to enhance transparency and accountability in judicial appointments ?
(a) National Judicial Appointments Commission
(b) Judicial Appointments Oversight Panel
(c) Indian Judicial Selection Authority
(d) High Court Appointments Committee

ANSWER KEY

- | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. (c) | 2. (a) | 3. (b) | 4. (d) | 5. (b) | 6. (a) | 7. (a) | 8. (d) |
| 9. (a) | 10. (d) | 11. (b) | 12. (a) | 13. (c) | 14. (b) | 15. (d) | 16. (c) |
| 17. (d) | 18. (a) | | | | | | |

Parliament Hikes MPs Salary and 8th Pay Commission

News Highlights:

On March 25, 2025, the Central Government notified a 24% hike in the salaries and pensions of **Members of Parliament (MPs)**, effective April 1, 2023. This increase is based on the **Cost Inflation Index**, which has been used to calculate the adjustments in MPs' salary, daily allowances, and pension benefits. The new changes include a rise in the monthly salary for MPs, as well as increases in their daily allowances and pension for former MPs.

Key Details of the Hike

- Salary Increase:** Monthly salary of an MP has been raised from ₹1 lakh to ₹1.24 lakh.
 - The salary adjustment is based on the **Cost Inflation Index**, which is used to determine the inflation-adjusted compensation.
- Daily Allowance:** The **daily allowance** for MPs attending parliamentary sessions or committee meetings has increased from ₹2,000 to ₹2,500.
- Pension for Former MPs:** The **monthly pension** for former MPs has been increased from ₹25,000 to ₹31,000.
 - Additional pension** for every year of service beyond five years has been raised from ₹2,000 to ₹2,500 per month.

Constitutional and Legal Basis

- The **salary, allowances, and pension** of Members of Parliament (MPs) are governed by the **Salary, Allowances and Pension of Members of Parliament Act, 1954**. Article 106 of the Constitution empowers **Parliament to determine, by law**, the salaries and allowances of MPs.

MP's Paycheck: More Than Just a Salary



Basic Salary

₹1.24 lakh

Allowances

Daily allowance (during Parliamentary sessions)	₹2.5K
Constituency allowance (per month)	₹70K
Office allowance (per month)	₹60K

Perks

Free domestic flights (includes family)

34 each year

Free electricity

50,000 units per year

Free water

4,000 kilolitres per year

Rent-free housing in Delhi*

For the entire 5-year term

First-class train travel

No limit

Mileage allowance for road travel

As per bills

*Hostel room, apartment, or bungalow assigned based on seniority.
MPs who don't utilise official accommodation are eligible to receive a housing allowance of Rs 2 lakh per month

Source: Media Reports | Graphic: Ankita Tiwari & Muskan Arora



- Any increase in MP salaries must comply with the provisions of this Act or be facilitated by a parliamentary amendment to the Act or by delegated mechanisms permitted by it.

Traditional Legislative Procedure (Until 2018)

- Historically, any salary hike for MPs required **introduction of a bill** in either House of Parliament (usually the Lok Sabha), typically titled the **Salary, Allowances and Pension of Members of Parliament (Amendment) Bill**.
- The bill was debated and passed in both Houses by a **simple majority** and required **Presidential assent** to become law.
- Examples:
 - 2001:** NDA government passed an amendment raising MP salaries from ₹4,000 to ₹12,000.
 - 2010:** Salaries raised from ₹16,000 to ₹50,000 through a legislative amendment.

MPs' Pay Hikes: Tracking the Steady Climb

MPs' salaries hiked by 24% from April 2023, based on the Cost Inflation Index. See how it compares to India's inflation



Source: World Bank & PRS | Graphic: Namrata Dadwal, Sarfaraz



Reform Through Finance Act, 2018

- The **Finance Act, 2018** brought a significant procedural change by **amending the 1954 Act** to enable an **automatic revision mechanism**.
- Under the amended law:
 - MP salaries are **linked to the Cost Inflation Index (CII)** published by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT).
 - Salaries, allowances, and pensions are **automatically revised every five years** to reflect inflationary changes, **without needing fresh legislation**.
 - This mechanism provides for **non-discretionary, formula-based adjustments**, reducing dependence on politically sensitive salary-hike debates.
 - Following the 2018 amendment, **automatic adjustments** are made to MPs' salaries and pensions **based on inflation**, eliminating the need for recurring legislative intervention.
 - However, **Parliament retains the power to override the automatic formula** by **passing a new amendment** to the 1954 Act, should it wish to introduce structural changes or reset the base salary.
 - The **Union Budget** may reflect salary revisions indirectly by allocating enhanced funds to the **Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs** for MP remuneration.

Role of the President of India

- Since MPs are legislators and not government servants, **salary bills passed by Parliament** are sent to the **President for assent**, after which they become law.
- The **President does not play a direct role in approving hikes**, but his/her assent is mandatory for statutory enactments.

Pay Commission



- Pay Commissions (PCs)** are expert bodies constituted by the **Government of India** to review and recommend revisions in the **salary structure, allowances, and pensions** of central government employees, including armed forces and civilian staff.
- These commissions are generally set up once every **10 years** under the authority of the **Department of Expenditure**, which functions under the **Ministry of Finance**.
- The recommendations of Pay Commissions are **not binding**, but are generally accepted, in full or part, by the Union Cabinet and form the basis of revised compensation structures.

- Their recommendations are often **adopted by Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs)** and serve as **benchmarks for state governments**, especially regarding salary grades and pension formulas.
- Pay Commissions are established through **executive resolutions**, not through statutory acts.
- The **Chairperson** is usually a **retired Supreme Court judge**, accompanied by other members, including **experts in public administration, economics, and finance**.
- The Commission submits a **detailed report** within a stipulated time, typically **18 to 24 months** from its formation.

8th Pay Commission

- The **Union Government has approved** the formation of the **8th Pay Commission**, expected to benefit approximately **4.5 million central government employees** and around **6.8 million pensioners**, including those from the **defence services**.
- One of its primary objectives is to propose revisions to **Dearness Allowance (DA)** and **Dearness Relief (DR)**, using data from the **Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW)** published monthly by the **Labour Bureau**.
- The commission will seek to align **government pay scales with inflation** and maintain **wage parity** with prevailing economic conditions.
- The report of the 8th PC will be **critical in shaping fiscal policy**, as it will influence **public expenditure, employee welfare, and domestic consumption patterns**.
- Though the **chairperson** has not yet been officially announced, following precedent, the role is likely to be assigned to a **retired judge of the Supreme Court**.

What the 7th commission had suggested

January 1, 2016

Recommended date of implementation

₹18,000

Minimum monthly pay

₹225,000

Maximum monthly pay for apex scale

3% Annual increment



"The Cabinet's decision on the 8th Pay Commission will improve quality of life and give a boost to consumption."

— NARENDRA MODI,
Prime Minister

THE HOUSE RENT ALLOWANCE NORMS



- HRA be paid at the rate of 24%, 16% and 8% of the new basic pay for Class X, Y and Z cities respectively
- HRA will be revised to 27%, 18% and 9% respectively when DA crosses 50%
- Revised to 30%, 20% and 10% when DA crosses 100%

HOW THE PANEL ARRIVES AT ITS FINDINGS

- Central Pay Commissions have been periodically constituted since 1947 to go into various issues of emolument structure, retirement benefits and other service conditions of central government employees and to make recommendations on the required changes.
- Several states and their agencies often follow recommendations of the commission.
- The panels take inflation, burden to the exchequer and economic conditions into account.
- The panel will give recommendations after extensive consultations with all stakeholders.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. By what percentage did the Central Government hike the salaries and pensions of Members of Parliament as per the notification issued in March 2025?
(a) 15% (b) 10% (c) 30% (d) 24%
2. As per recent notification, which economic indicator formed the basis for adjusting MPs' salaries and pensions to account for inflation trends?
(a) Cost Inflation Index (b) Consumer Price Index
(c) Wholesale Price Index (d) Fiscal Deficit Index
3. As per the latest revision, what is the new monthly pension amount for former Members of Parliament (MPs)?
(a) ₹25,000 (b) ₹30,000
(c) ₹31,000 (d) ₹35,000
4. Which of the following components of MPs' compensation was increased from ₹2,000 to ₹2,500 for attending parliamentary sessions or committee meetings?
(a) Constituency allowance (b) Daily allowance
(c) Office expenses allowance (d) Travel allowance
5. Which of the following refers to expert body constituted by the Government of India to review and recommend revisions in the salary structure, allowances, and pensions of central government employees?
(a) Pay Commissions
(b) Finance Commissions
(c) Planning Committees
(d) Budget Advisory Boards

ANSWER KEY

1. (d) 2. (a) 3. (c) 4. (b) 5. (a) 6. (d) 7. (d) 8. (a)
9. (b) 10. (c) 11. (d) 12. (b) 13. (d)

X Files a case against Union Government and Sahyog Portal

News Highlights:

X (formerly Twitter) has sued the **Union Government** in the **Karnataka High Court** over the **SAHYOG portal**, claiming it is a "censorship portal" that allows government agencies and police to issue arbitrary **content takedown orders**.

- X argues that the portal bypasses the established legal safeguards under **Section 69A of the Information Technology (IT) Act** and violates free expression rights.
- The case centers on whether **Section 79(3)(b)** of the IT Act can be used to issue **information-blocking orders**, which X argues is not authorized by law.

X's legal challenge

Here are the contentions of Elon Musk's company in the Karnataka High Court:



■ Why issue blocking orders under Section 79(3)(b) of the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000, and not under Section 69A

■ Section 79(3)(b) outlines the conditions under which an intermediary loses its 'safe harbour' protection

■ Section 69A empowers the government to block access to online content, under specific circumstances

■ Union Home Ministry's SahaYog portal is a 'censorship portal'

SahaYog Portal

Launched in **October 2024** by the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**, the **SahaYog Portal** is a centralised **digital platform developed under the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)**. Its primary objective is to streamline and automate the process of reporting and removing unlawful online content, facilitating real-time collaboration between authorized government agencies and online intermediaries.

Legal Framework

- **Section 69A of the IT Act, 2000:** Empowers the central government to block public access to online content in the interest of sovereignty, security, and public order.
- **Section 79 of the IT Act, 2000:** Provides "safe harbour" protection to online intermediaries, shielding them from liability for **third-party content**, provided they act upon receiving knowledge of unlawful content.
- **Section 79(3)(b):** Specifies that intermediaries lose this immunity if they fail to act expeditiously upon receiving actual knowledge of illegal content.

Functionality

- It allows over **7,400 authorized government officials**, including police officers and district magistrates, to **directly flag and request takedown** of allegedly unlawful content. The system bypasses judicial scrutiny and does not involve a formal adjudicatory process, raising concerns of executive overreach.
- Issuance of Notices:** Authorized agencies, such as central ministries or state police departments, can issue takedown notices through the portal.
- Platform Response:** Upon receiving a notice, intermediaries are expected to act promptly to remove or disable access to the specified content. They can also seek additional information or contest the notice.
- Escalation Mechanism:** If an intermediary fails to comply, the issuing agency can escalate the matter, potentially leading to the loss of the intermediary's safe harbor protection under Section 79.
- As per internal analysis disclosed by X, approximately **30% of the takedown requests pertain to posts criticizing Union Ministers**, bureaucratic decisions, or highlighting government failures, suggesting **political targeting and suppression of dissent**.

Current Adoption

- Intermediaries Onboarded:** As of early 2025, **38 IT intermediaries** have joined the Sahyog Portal, including major platforms like Google, Meta (Facebook and Instagram), WhatsApp, YouTube, Telegram, Apple, and Microsoft.
- Government Participation:** Law enforcement agencies from **28 States and 5 Union Territories**, along with **6 Central ministries and departments**, have designated nodal officers and are actively utilizing the portal.

X's Concerns

X argues that only Section 69A, read with the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking for Access of Information by Public) Rules, 2009, permits content blocking.

This view is supported by the **Supreme Court's judgment in Shreya Singhal v. Union of India (2015)**, which mandates procedural safeguards including a **hearing opportunity for content originators**, judicial review, and transparency.

X claims that the **SAHYOG portal creates a backdoor mechanism** allowing censorship through executive fiat, without invoking Section 69A or adhering to judicial scrutiny. It argues that the process lacks any **appeal mechanism or accountability**, potentially violating **Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution**, which guarantees freedom of speech.

Lack of Transparency: There is no **public record or publication of takedown orders** issued through SAHYOG. Civil society groups like **Internet Freedom Foundation** and **SFLC.in** have criticized the platform for bypassing democratic safeguards and promoting **non-transparent censorship**.

The Government's Stance

Government's Defence: The Union Government maintains that Section 79(3)(b) is **merely a compliance mechanism**, and the SAHYOG portal is a **notification tool** designed to **inform intermediaries** of their legal obligations, not to enforce blocking or takedown orders independently.

Wider Participation: Major intermediaries including **Meta (Facebook, Instagram), Google (YouTube, Search), and ShareChat** are already enrolled in the portal. The government claims this broad adoption reflects its **legitimacy and necessity for content moderation** in the digital age, especially in response to **hate speech, misinformation, and unlawful content**.

Relief Sought by X

- A declaration that **Section 79(3)(b)** does **not empower the government to issue takedown or blocking orders**.
- An order to **invalidate all content takedown notices** issued via SAHYOG under Section 79(3)(b).
- A **temporary stay on enforcement** of takedown requests through SAHYOG until judicial scrutiny is completed.
- Judicial affirmation that **Section 69A** remains the **sole legal provision** authorizing content blocking, subject to due process as held in *Shreya Singhal*.

Safe Harbour Protection in India

- **Safe harbour protection** for **e-commerce platforms** refers to the **legal immunity** granted to **intermediaries** (such as e-commerce platforms) from **liability** for content hosted by **third parties** on their websites, provided certain conditions are met.
- This protection is crucial for e-commerce platforms, enabling them to operate without being held liable for the **unlawful actions** of their users, as long as they comply with specific regulations set out under the **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021**, and **Section 79** of the **IT Act, 2000**.

What Is Safe Harbour?



Understanding Section 79 of the IT Act, 2000:

- **Section 79(1)** of the **Information Technology Act, 2000**, shields intermediaries from **liability** for third-party content hosted or transmitted on their platforms.
- The section states that an intermediary shall not be held liable for any third-party information, data, or communication link available or hosted by it, as long as it satisfies the conditions prescribed under **Sections 79(2) and 79(3)**.
- However, the protection under Section 79 is **not absolute**. Intermediaries must comply with **specific criteria** to qualify for this safe harbour, including a lack of **active participation** in the content on their platform and a commitment to exercising **due diligence** in handling user-generated content.

The Role of 'Active' and 'Passive' Intermediaries:

- The key distinction in determining whether e-commerce platforms can claim safe harbour protection is whether they act as **'active'** or **'passive'** **intermediaries**.
- An **active intermediary** is one that plays an active role in the content or transaction process, such as **selecting or modifying the content, advertising products, or providing quality assurance**.
- In contrast, **passive intermediaries** simply provide a platform for third-party content without taking part in its creation or curation.

Compliance with Section 79(2) and Section 79(3): For e-commerce platforms to avail safe harbour protection, they must comply with the following provisions of **Section 79**:

- **Section 79(2)(a):** The platform must limit its role to providing **access to the communication system** for transmitting or storing third-party information, without actively participating in the **creation or modification of content**.
- **Section 79(2)(b):** If the platform provides **additional services**, such as **warehousing, packaging, or delivery**, it must ensure that it does not **initiate transmission, select the receiver of transmission, or alter the information** transmitted.
- **Section 79(2)(c):** The platform must exercise **due diligence** and comply with government-prescribed guidelines, including the **Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code Rules, 2021**. This includes publishing **rules, regulations, policies, and user agreements** that set out the terms of access and usage of the platform.
- **Section 79(3):** The platform must not **aid, abet, or induce** unlawful acts on its platform. It must also comply with **take-down requirements** when illegal content is flagged.



MIND MAP

Legal Framework Involved

Section 69A, IT Act:

- Blocking in interest of sovereignty, security, public order.
- Mandates due process (review committee, record keeping).

Section 79, IT Act:

- Safe harbour protection for intermediaries.
- Section 79(3)(b): Loss of immunity if no action on lawful takedown order.

X's View:

- Section 79(3)(b) ≠ independent power to censor.
 - Only Section 69A + 2009 Rules allow content blocking.

X v. Union Government & Sahyog Portal (Karnataka HC)

- **Filed:** April 2025.
- **Claim:** Sahyog = Censorship portal, bypassing Section 69A safeguards.
- **Argument:** Section 79(3)(b) does not authorize blocking orders.
- **Relief sought:**
 - Invalidate Sahyog takedown notices.
 - Reinforce Section 69A as only blocking mechanism.
 - Temporary stay on Sahyog enforcement.

SAHYOG Portal (Launched October 2024)

- **Ministry:** Home Affairs (I4C initiative).
- **Objective:** Real-time content takedown coordination between LEAs, ISPs, platforms.
- **Functionality:**
 - 7,400+ officials authorized to issue notices.
 - Bypasses formal judicial process.
- **Criticism:**
 - No transparency/public record.
 - Risk of executive overreach.

Safe Harbour for E-Commerce Platforms: Section 79 shields intermediaries if:

- Passive hosting of third-party content.
- Due diligence maintained (IT Rules 2021).

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. X (formerly Twitter) has filed a lawsuit in the Karnataka High Court against which of the following entities over the SAHYOG portal?

 - (a) Union Government
 - (b) Ministry of Electronics and IT
 - (c) Supreme Court of India
 - (d) National Human Rights Commission

2. The SAHYOG portal bypasses which of the following provisions of the IT Act that lays down legal safeguards for content takedown?

 - (a) Section 69A
 - (b) Section 66F
 - (c) Section 72A
 - (d) Section 43A

3. The case involving X (formerly Twitter) raises the question of whether Section 79(3)(b) of the IT Act can legally be used to issue which of the following types of orders?

 - (a) Surveillance
 - (b) Arrest
 - (c) Information-blocking
 - (d) Data retention

4. The Sahyog Portal, launched in October 2024, is an initiative of which of the following government ministries?

 - (a) Ministry of Electronics and IT
 - (b) Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
 - (c) Ministry of Law and Justice
 - (d) Ministry of Home Affairs

5. Which of the following terms best defines the Sahyog Portal?

 - (a) Centralized complaint filing portal for citizens
 - (b) Centralized digital platform under I4C initiative
 - (c) Centralized legal aid platform for cyber victims
 - (d) Centralized content reporting portal for media

6. As of early 2025, how many IT intermediaries have been onboarded to the Sahyog Portal?

 - (a) 25
 - (b) 30
 - (c) 35
 - (d) 38

7. As per recent data, how many Central ministries and departments have designated nodal officers and are actively using the Sahyog Portal?

 - (a) 6 Central ministries and departments
 - (b) 4 Central ministries and departments
 - (c) 8 Central ministries and departments
 - (d) 10 Central ministries and departments

8. Along with SFLC.in, which of the following civil society groups has criticized the Sahyog Portal for promoting non-transparent censorship and bypassing democratic safeguards?

 - (a) Digital Rights Forum
 - (b) Internet Freedom Foundation
 - (c) Cyber Liberty India
 - (d) National Web Governance Council

9. Which of the following landmark Supreme Court judgments upheld the procedural safeguards for content blocking under Section 69A of the IT Act?

 - (a) Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India (2020)
 - (b) Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017)
 - (c) Shreya Singhal v. Union of India (2015)
 - (d) Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India (2018)

10. Under which of the following constitutional provisions was the petition challenging the legality of the SAHYOG portal filed?

 - (a) Article 226
 - (b) Article 326
 - (c) Article 245
 - (d) Article 216

11. Which of the following terms refers to an entity that plays an active role in the content or transaction process, such as selecting or modifying content, advertising products, or providing quality assurance?

 - (a) Passive service provider
 - (b) Content host platform
 - (c) Active intermediary
 - (d) Data aggregator

12. In the case of Christian Louboutin SAS v. Nakul Bajaj and Ors. (2018), which court drew a distinction between active and passive intermediaries, stating that platforms with significant involvement may lose safe harbour protection?

 - (a) Supreme Court of India
 - (b) Karnataka High Court
 - (c) Bombay High Court
 - (d) Delhi High Court

13. In the Christian Louboutin SAS v. Nakul Bajaj and Ors. case, which e-commerce platform was denied safe harbour protection due to its active involvement in the sale of counterfeit goods?

 - (a) Snapdeal.com
 - (b) Darveys.com
 - (c) Flipkart.com
 - (d) Amazon.in

14. In Shreya Singhal v. Union of India (2015), which of the following fundamental rights was invoked to challenge the constitutionality of Section 66A of the IT Act?
- (a) Right to equality
 - (b) Right to education
 - (c) Right to constitutional remedies
 - (d) Right against exploitation
15. Which of the following provisions of the IT Act, introduced via the 2008 amendment and later struck down by the Supreme Court, criminalized sending offensive messages through communication services?
- (a) Section 69A
 - (b) Section 72A
 - (c) Section 43A
 - (d) Section 66A
16. In which of the following landmark cases did the Supreme Court affirm that freedom of the press is a vital part of the right to freedom of speech and expression?
- (a) Bennett Coleman v. Union of India
 - (b) Romesh Thappar v. State of Madras
 - (c) Indian Express Newspapers v. Union of India
 - (d) Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India
17. Which of the following Articles of the Indian Constitution guarantees the right to life and personal liberty?
- (a) Article 19
 - (b) Article 21
 - (c) Article 32
 - (d) Article 14

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

- | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. (a) | 2. (a) | 3. (c) | 4. (d) | 5. (b) | 6. (d) | 7. (a) | 8. (b) |
| 9. (c) | 10. (a) | 11. (c) | 12. (d) | 13. (b) | 14. (a) | 15. (d) | 16. (c) |
| 17. (b) | | | | | | | |

Rising Concerns over Section 44(3) of new data protection law weakening RTI Act in India

News Highlights:

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh along with several other activists raised concerns about **Section 44(3)** of the **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023** in a letter to the **Minister for Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**, Ashwini Vaishnaw, urging its repeal.

- This section, which amends **Section 8(1)(j)** of the **Right to Information Act (RTI Act)**, has triggered alarm among activists, journalists, and legal experts, who argue that it would drastically limit the public's access to information, particularly about **public servants**.

Section 44(3) of the DPDP Act: Key Concerns

Amendment to RTI Act:
Section 44(3) of the DPDP Act alters Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act by broadening the exemption for personal information that can be withheld from the public.

Section 8(1)(j) of RTI Act: This provision previously allowed withholding **personal information** unless its release was in the **public interest** or if it did not cause an **unwarranted invasion of privacy**. The RTI Act balances **public transparency** with **privacy rights** by allowing an **exception** if the **larger public interest** justifies the disclosure.

DPDP Act's Amendment: The amendment under Section 44(3) simplifies the exemption, stating that **personal information** can now be **automatically withheld**. This is seen as a **broadening of the scope for denying public access** to crucial information about government officials, potentially including personal data like salaries, assets, and political affiliations.

Activists' Concerns: The change is viewed as a **dangerous precedent** for **transparency** in governance, potentially allowing government agencies to block the release of information that could be crucial for **public accountability**.

Concerns Raised:

The RTI amendment via a data protection law is being seen as legally and politically inappropriate, as the Supreme Court's K.S. Puttaswamy judgment (2017) never recommended amending the RTI Act.

Blanket Exemption: By eliminating the public interest clause, the amendment removes checks on the misuse of "privacy" as a shield to hide public information.

Bureaucratic Non-Transparency: Cases like fake caste certificates or unaccounted wealth of bureaucrats would be harder to investigate using RTI due to the inability to access "personal" records.

Government's Defense of Section 44(3)

- **Government's Justification:** Ashwini Vaishnav, the Union Minister for MeitY, defended the amendment, arguing that it was designed to harmonise privacy with the right to information, and prevent the misuse of personal data under the RTI Act.
 - He claimed that information like the salaries of public officials would remain accessible and that the amendment was necessary to ensure the right to privacy was protected.
- **Concerns Over "Personal Information":** The definition of "personal information" remains vague under the DPDP Act, which could result in broad exemptions and undermine transparency in governance.

Right to Information Act

- **Right to Information (RTI)** is not explicitly mentioned in the Constitution of India, but it has been derived from the fundamental rights guaranteed under **Article 19(1)(a)** (freedom of speech and expression) and **Article 21** (right to life and personal liberty).
- The **Supreme Court** interpreted the right to **freedom of speech** and **expression** to include the right to **acquire and disseminate information**, as it is a critical tool for the exercise of rights in a democratic society.
- **State of Uttar Pradesh v. Raj Narain (1975):** The Supreme Court held that the people have a right to know every public act, as it is essential for a democratic government.
- **S.P. Gupta v. Union of India (1982):** Reinforced that the Right to Information is inherent in Article 19(1)(a), emphasising transparency in governance.
- **Grassroots Movements: 1990s** – Movements for RTI gained traction in **India**, with significant contributions from social movements.
- **Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS)** led the charge in Rajasthan, organizing **Jan Sunwais** (public hearings), where villagers raised their voices against **corruption** and demanded **transparency** in the implementation of government schemes.
- **Tamil Nadu (1997):** First state to pass an RTI law.
- **Goa (1997), Rajasthan (2000), Karnataka (2000), Delhi (2001), Maharashtra (2002):** Followed suit with their respective RTI legislations
- **Freedom of Information Act, 2002:** Enacted by the central government but was never notified and thus did not come into force.
- **RTI Act, 2005:** Introduced to replace the 2002 Act, it was passed by Parliament in **May 2005**, received Presidential assent on **15 June 2005**, and came into force on **12 October 2005**.

International Roots of the RTI

- **1766** – Sweden passed the **world's first Freedom of Information Act**, setting a precedent for press freedom and government transparency
- **1946** – The **United Nations General Assembly** declared freedom of information as a fundamental right, essential for **peace and progress** globally.
- **1948** – The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (UDHR) emphasised the right to seek, receive, and impart information, recognising it as an essential element of human freedom.
- **1966** – The **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)** in the **United States** became a federal law, granting the public the right to access information from federal agencies, which was later expanded with amendments.

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act

The B.N. Srikrishna Committee

Formation of the Expert Committee (2017): The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** established an **Expert Committee** under the chairmanship of **Justice B.N. Srikrishna**.

- The committee's mandate was to draft a comprehensive data protection law for India.

Recommendations and Report (2018): The Srikrishna Committee's report in 2018 led to the formulation of the Personal Data Protection Bill (PDPB).

- The report emphasized consent-based data processing, the creation of a **Data Protection Authority**, and the enforcement of **data principal rights**.

Introduction of the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019

- **Introduction of the Bill:** The **Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019** was introduced in the **Lok Sabha** based on the Srikrishna Committee's report. It aimed to regulate the processing of personal data, mandate data fiduciaries to uphold privacy, and empower individuals with greater control over their personal data.
 - **Key Provisions of the 2019 Bill:** The Bill introduced the concept of **data fiduciaries**, entities that collect, store, and process personal data. It also established the **Data Protection Authority (DPA)** to enforce compliance and adjudicate on privacy-related issues.
 - **Criticism and Withdrawal:** The **PDPB 2019** faced criticism for granting excessive powers to the government, particularly its ability to access personal data in the name of national security.
 - **August 2022:** The Bill was withdrawn to allow further revisions and consultations.

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023

After the withdrawal of the 2019 Bill, the **Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023** was introduced, marking the culmination of India's journey toward a comprehensive **data protection law**.

- The Bill was passed by the **Lok Sabha** on **August 7, 2023**, and by the **Rajya Sabha** on **August 9, 2023**, receiving Presidential assent on **August 11, 2023**.
 - **Objective:** To regulate the **processing of personal digital data** and ensure data protection, while enabling lawful processing for legitimate uses.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

1. (c) 2. (a) 3. (b) 4. (d) 5. (c) 6. (d) 7. (a) 8. (b)
9. (b) 10. (d) 11. (c) 12. (a) 13. (b) 14. (c) 15. (d) 16. (b)
17.(a) 18. (c) 19. (d)

Supreme Court Order on Tamil Nadu Governor Issue

News Highlights:

On April 8, 2025, the Supreme Court of India delivered a landmark judgment declaring Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi's prolonged refusal to assent to 10 state bills as illegal and unconstitutional.

- The court not only provided **time-bound guidelines** for Governors under Article 200 of the Constitution but also recalled a historical power tussle between **India's first President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad**, and the Nehru government over the **Hindu Code Bill** to highlight the constitutional boundaries of executive authority.

THE VERDICT

The Tamil Nadu Case

- Between **November 2020 and April 2023**, the Tamil Nadu Assembly passed **13 Bills**, out of which **10 were returned, withheld, or reserved by the Governor** without communication.
- When re-passed without changes, Governor Ravi still **refused to grant assent**, violating the **mandatory language of Article 200** which states that the Governor "shall not withhold assent" after reconsideration.
- The Supreme Court ruled that the Governor's conduct lacked **good faith**, was **deliberately obstructive**, and violated **constitutional principles**.
- The Court invoked **Article 142** to **deem the 10 Bills as having received assent**, citing the **long delays** and **scant respect shown by the Governor** for constitutional norms.



Governor RN Ravi

Article 200 of the **Indian Constitution** provides that when a bill is passed by a state legislature, it must be presented to the Governor, who has four options:

- Grant assent** to the bill.
- Withhold assent** to the bill.
- Return the bill** (for reconsideration) if it is not a money bill.
- Reserve the bill** for the President's consideration.

- The **first provision** to Article 200 mandates that after a Bill is returned and re-passed by the Assembly, the Governor **must grant assent**.
- However, **Article 200** does not specify any **timeframe** for the Governor's action, leading to ambiguities and delays in assenting to bills.
- Article 163**: Provides that the Governor shall act **on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers**, except in matters requiring discretion.
- Role of the President and Article 201**: The Court also clarified the role of the **President** under **Article 201**, which governs the assent of bills reserved by Governors. It ruled that the President, too, could not delay decisions **indefinitely**, and such inaction would be subject to judicial scrutiny.
- The Court stated that if a bill is reserved for the President's consideration on grounds of **unconstitutionality**, the President should refer the matter to the **Supreme Court** under Article 143.

TIME-BOUND GUIDELINES FOR GOVERNORS

Governor's Action	Time frame
Assent or reservation (on advice)	Within 1 month
Return of Bill (against advice)	Within 3 months
Reservation (against advice)	Within 3 months
Assent after reconsideration	Within 1 months

- The Court emphasised this interpretation does **not amend Article 200**, but **ensures its effective implementation**.
- The ruling **avoids deemed assent** but allows **judicial review** if delays appear **unreasonable**.
- The Supreme Court ruled that the **Governor's actions** in withholding assent were **deliberate and unconstitutional**, as they failed to respect both the **Constitution** and the **authority of the legislature**.
- The Court held that the Governor **lacked good faith** (bonafide) in his actions, which hindered the **legislative process**.
- The ruling emphasized that the **Governor's role** was to act as a **constitutional figurehead** and not as a political agent.
- It was clarified that **the Governor must assent** to the bills that have been **re-passed** by the legislature without changes and **cannot reserve the bills for Presidential consideration** unless there are substantial reasons.
- The SC clarified that its direction is not an **amendment** of the Constitution but a **constitutionally grounded interpretation** to prevent indefinite gubernatorial inaction.
- It draws from the **2016 Nabam Rebia case** (Arunachal Pradesh) and the **2023 Punjab ruling**, reiterating the principle that **Governor's discretion cannot override constitutional mandates**.

Powers of the Governor

Executive Powers

- Article 154** states that the executive power of the state is vested in the Governor. The Governor acts on the advice of the Council of Ministers.
- Appointment of Ministers:** The Governor appoints the **Chief Minister** and other ministers, who form the Council of Ministers in the state (Article 164).
- Dissolution of the Legislative Assembly:** The Governor has the power to dissolve the state **Legislative Assembly** (Article 174).

Legislative Powers

- Summoning, Proroguing, and Dissolving the State Legislature:** The Governor can summon and prorogue the state legislature and can dissolve the **Legislative Assembly** (Article 174).
- Assent to Bills:** The Governor is required to give assent to Bills passed by the state legislature. However, the Governor can:
 - Withhold assent to a Bill (Article 200).
 - Return a Bill, except for money Bills, for reconsideration (Article 200).
 - Reserve a Bill for the President's consideration (Article 200).

Judicial Powers

- **Granting Pardons:** The Governor has the power to grant pardons, reprieves, respites, and remissions of punishment, or to suspend, remit, or commute the sentence of any person convicted under state laws (Article 161).
- **Power of Clemency:** This is similar to the President's powers under Article 72, though exercised at the state level.

Discretionary Powers

- **Article 163:** The Governor generally acts on the advice of the Council of Ministers, but **discretionary powers** are given to the Governor in certain situations:
 - When no party has a clear majority in the state legislature, the Governor may have to exercise discretion in inviting a particular party to form the government.
 - In situations where the **Council of Ministers** advises actions contrary to the Constitution, the Governor can act on their discretion.
- **Article 356:** The Governor can recommend the **imposition of President's Rule** in the state if the government cannot function according to the Constitution.

Constitutional Provisions and Powers of the Governor

- **Article 153: Office of the Governor:** The Constitution mandates that there shall be a **Governor** for each state. The **Governor** holds office at the **pleasure of the President**.
- **Article 154: Executive Power of the State:** The **executive power** of the state is vested in the **Governor**. However, it is exercised **on the advice** of the Council of Ministers, except in cases where the Governor acts in their discretion (i.e., **discretionary powers**).
- **Article 155: Appointment of the Governor:** The **President** appoints the **Governor** of a state. The Governor holds office for a **term of five years** but can be removed earlier by the President.
- **Article 156: Term of Office and Removal:** The Governor serves for a **five-year term** but can be dismissed by the **President** at any time.
- **Article 157: Qualifications for Appointment:** A Governor must be a **citizen of India** and must have **completed 35 years of age**. The person must not be a **member of either house of Parliament or any legislature of the state**.
- **Article 158: Conditions of Office:** The Governor must **not hold any other office of profit** under the Government of India or any state.

Exceptions to the Governor's Powers

- **Article 163(2):** The Governor **cannot** act independently when the matter concerns the exercise of powers under **Article 356** (imposition of President's Rule) or any other provisions where the **President's discretion** is involved.
- **President's Rule:** Under **Article 356**, when the **Governor recommends** the imposition of President's Rule, the **President** takes over the executive powers of the state.



MIND MAP

Supreme Court Order on Tamil Nadu Governor Issue (April 8, 2025)

- CJI-led SC bench ruled R.N. Ravi's refusal to assent 10 bills unconstitutional.
- Cited violation of Article 200 and lack of good faith.
- Used Article 142 to deem 10 bills as assented.
- Highlighted federal principles and Governor's limited role.

Key Case Facts

- 13 Bills passed (Nov 2020–April 2023); 10 withheld/reserved without reason.
- Re-passed Bills must be assented (Article 200 mandate).
- Governor cannot delay or reserve arbitrarily.

Constitutional Provisions Involved

- **Article 200:** Governor must act – Assent, Withhold, Return, Reserve.
- **Article 163:** Must act on aid and advice of Council of Ministers.
- **Article 201:** Reserved Bills – President must act promptly.
- **Article 143:** President can seek SC opinion if constitutional doubt arises.

Historical Parallel: Hindu Code Bill (1951)

- Dr. Rajendra Prasad wanted to withhold assent.
- AG M.C. Setalvad advised: President/Governor must act on government advice.
- Reaffirmed limited figurehead role.

SC Guidelines on Timelines

Action

- Assent/Reservation (with advice)
Return of Bill (against advice)
Reservation (against advice)
Assent after reconsideration

Timeline

- Within 1 month
Within 3 months
Within 3 months
Within 1 month

Powers of Governor

1. Executive Powers

- Appoint CM, Ministers (Article 164).
- Dissolve Assembly (Article 174).

2. Legislative Powers

- Summon, prorogue, dissolve legislature (Article 174).
- Assent, withhold, return, or reserve Bills (Article 200).

3. Judicial Powers

- Clemency powers under Article 161 (pardon, remission).

4. Discretionary Powers

- Hung Assembly scenarios.
- Recommendation of President's Rule (Article 356).

Constitutional Provisions on Governor

- **Article 153:** Governor for each state.
- **Article 154:** Executive power vests in Governor (advice-based).
- **Article 155–156:** Appointment and pleasure of President.
- **Article 157–158:** Eligibility and conditions of office.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. The Supreme Court of India recently declared the prolonged inaction of which Tamil Nadu Governor regarding 10 state bills as unconstitutional?
 (a) Banwarilal Purohit (b) R.N. Ravi
 (c) Bhagat Singh Koshyari (d) Phagu Chauhan
2. Which Article of the Indian Constitution states that when a bill is passed by a state legislature, it shall be presented to the Governor for assent, withholding of assent, or reservation for the President?
 (a) Article 200 (b) Article 201
 (c) Article 154 (d) Article 213
3. According to Article 163 of the Indian Constitution, the Governor is required to act on the aid and advice of which body, except in matters where discretion is permitted?
 (a) State Legislature (b) Chief Secretary
 (c) Speaker of the Assembly (d) Council of Ministers
4. Under Article 143 of the Indian Constitution, if the President receives a bill reserved on grounds of unconstitutionality, the matter should be referred to which authority?
 (a) Law Commission (b) Attorney General
 (c) Supreme Court (d) Council of Ministers
5. What is the maximum time the Governor can take to return a bill when withholding assent against ministerial advice?
 (a) 1 month (b) 2 months
 (c) 3 months (d) 6 months
6. Which bill became a subject of constitutional debate in 1951 when the President of India considered asserting his discretion to withhold assent?
 (a) The Hindu Marriage Bill
 (b) The Hindu Code Bill
 (c) The Muslim Women's Protection Bill
 (d) The Indian Succession Bill
7. Who was appointed as the first Attorney General of India after the adoption of the Constitution in 1950?
 (a) Nani Palkhivala (b) H.M. Seervai
 (c) Fali S. Nariman (d) M.C. Setalvad
8. Which Article of the Indian Constitution provides that there shall be a Governor for each state who holds office at the pleasure of the President?
 (a) Article 153 (b) Article 154
 (c) Article 163 (d) Article 200
9. What is the term of office prescribed for a Governor under the Indian Constitution, although they can be removed earlier by the President?
 (a) Three years (b) Six years
 (c) Five years (d) Seven years
10. According to Article 155 of the Indian Constitution, who appoints the Governor of a state?
 (a) President (b) Prime Minister
 (c) Chief Justice of India (d) Chief Minister of the state
11. Which of the following is a disqualification for being appointed as a Governor under the Indian Constitution?
 (a) Being a sitting MP or MLA
 (b) Being over 35 years of age
 (c) Being a citizen of India
 (d) Having legal background
12. Which of the following is conferred upon the Governor under Article 154 of the Indian Constitution?
 (a) Legislative Control (b) Financial Autonomy
 (c) Judicial Review (d) Executive Power
13. Under Article 174 of the Indian Constitution, the Governor has the authority to summon, prorogue, and dissolve which body?
 (a) State Council of Members
 (b) State Legislative Assembly
 (c) Rajya Sabha of Parliament
 (d) Lok Sabha of Parliament
14. Which power, mentioned under Article 161, allows a Governor to reduce or cancel the punishment of a person convicted under state law?
 (a) Enact legislation (b) Approve budget
 (c) Grant pardons (d) Conduct elections
15. The Governor's power of clemency under Article 161 is similar to which of the following?

- (a) Prime Minister's discretion
(b) President's powers
(c) Chief Justice's directions
(d) Chief Minister's approval
16. When no political party secures a clear majority in the state legislature, what power allows the Governor to decide whom to invite to form the government?
(a) Executive privilege
(b) Legislative authority
(c) Judicial review
(d) Discretionary powers
17. If a state fails to operate according to constitutional norms, the Governor may recommend which constitutional remedy under Article 356?
(a) President's Rule
(b) National Emergency
(c) Removal of Governor
(d) Judicial Inquiry

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

1. (b) 2. (a) 3. (d) 4. (c) 5. (c) 6. (b) 7. (d) 8. (a)
9. (c) 10. (a) 11. (a) 12. (d) 13. (b) 14. (c) 15. (b) 16. (d)
17.(a)



26/11 conspirator Tahawwur Rana extradited.

News Highlights:

On April 10, 2025, Tahawwur Hussain Rana, a key conspirator in the **2008 Mumbai terror attacks (26/11)**, was extradited from the **United States** to **India** after years of legal proceedings. His extradition marks a significant breakthrough for Indian investigative agencies seeking justice for the attacks that claimed **166 lives** and injured **over 238**.

Who is Tahawwur Rana and What Are the Charges?

Tahawwur Rana, a former **Pakistani military doctor**, migrated to **Canada** in the 1990s and eventually became a citizen before moving to the **United States**, where he set up a business — **First World Immigration Services** — headquartered in Chicago with a branch in Mumbai.

While in his testimony to US prosecutors, Headley claimed that Rana knew about the LeT mission from the outset, in his **2016 deposition to the Bombay Sessions Court**, Headley said that **Rana was informed only months before the attack**.

In **2020**, after being granted **early release on health grounds** due to COVID-19, **Rana was re-arrested** in Los Angeles following India's renewed request for his extradition.

- **Rana's legal defense** claimed that **extraditing him would violate the principle of "double jeopardy"**, arguing that he had already been acquitted of charges related to the Mumbai attack in a US court.
- However, US courts, including the **Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals**, ruled that the charges brought against him in India were distinct from those in the US case, thereby meeting the "**dual criminality**" requirement for extradition.

David Headley, the main planner of the 26/11 attacks, stated that Rana **aided his reconnaissance missions in India**, helped him obtain a **business visa**, and provided **logistical and financial support** through his Mumbai office.

Rana was arrested in **2009** in the **US** for his role in aiding the **Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)**, the terrorist group responsible for the 26/11 attacks. In 2011, he was convicted of providing **material support to LeT** and was sentenced to **14 years in prison**, though he was acquitted of charges related to the Mumbai attacks. Hafiz Muhammad Saeed is the founder of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

In **February 2025**, President Donald Trump announced that the **US administration** had approved Rana's extradition, referring to him as one of the "**plotters**" of the **horrible Mumbai attack**.

The **US Supreme Court** upheld the lower court's decision in January 2025, rejecting **Rana's appeal** against his extradition.

This paved the way for the **final rejection** of his second **stay petition** in March 2025 by **Justice Elena Kagan**, effectively clearing the path for his extradition to India.

Legal Framework Governing Tahawwur Rana's Extradition

India–United States Extradition Treaty (1997)

The legal basis for Tahawwur Rana's extradition lies in the **India–US Extradition Treaty**, which was signed on **June 25, 1997**, and came into force on **July 21, 1999**. This treaty provides a structured mechanism for both countries to seek and grant extradition of individuals accused or convicted of serious criminal offences.

Key Provisions of the Treaty:

- **Article 2 – Extraditable Offenses:** Offenses that are punishable under the laws of both India and the United States by **imprisonment exceeding one year** qualify as extraditable. The requirement of **dual criminality** ensures that the act must be a crime in both countries, although the charges need not be identical.
- **Article 4 – Political Offenses:** Extradition cannot be granted for **purely political offenses**, such as acts committed solely to challenge state authority. However, **exceptions exist**—offenses such as **terrorism, hijacking, hostage-taking, and attacks against heads of state** are **excluded** from being considered political under the treaty, thereby permitting extradition in such cases.
- **Article 6 – Prior Conviction or Acquittal:** This provision bars extradition if the individual sought has already been **convicted or acquitted in the requested state** (in this case, the United States) for the same offense for which extradition is sought. Rana's legal team relied heavily on this clause, claiming **double jeopardy**, but US courts interpreted the Indian charges as **legally distinct** from those adjudicated in the US.
- **Article 9 – Provisional Arrest:** The treaty permits provisional arrest of the fugitive **prior to the formal submission of extradition documents**, enabling swift action in cases where immediate detention is required to prevent flight.
- **Article 12 – Rule of Specialty:** Once extradited, the accused can only be tried for those offenses that were **specifically approved during extradition proceedings**, unless the extraditing country consents to expand the scope. This protects the rights of the accused from facing unexpected or unrelated charges post-extradition.

US Domestic Law on Extradition

Tahawwur Rana's extradition proceedings in the United States were governed by **Title 18, United States Code, Section 3184**, which outlines the legal process for extradition in accordance with a valid international treaty.

Key Legal Procedures:

- A **Magistrate Judge** is responsible for assessing whether the applicable extradition treaty is in force, whether the alleged crime qualifies as extraditable under the treaty, and whether **probable cause** exists to believe that the accused committed the offense in question.
- In Rana's case, **Judge Jacqueline Chooljian** of the **US District Court for the Central District of California** ruled in **May 2023** that there was **sufficient probable cause**, and that the Indian charges—while based on the same events—contained **distinct legal elements** from those in the US indictment, thus not barred by the double jeopardy clause.
- Rana appealed to the **Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals**, which upheld the ruling on **August 15, 2024**, affirming that India met the required evidentiary threshold.
- Following this, Rana sought relief from the **US Supreme Court**, which declined to hear the case on **January 21, 2025**, and subsequently denied an **emergency stay request** filed with **Justice Elena Kagan** on **March 6, 2025**.

Indian Domestic Legal Framework

India's **Extradition Act, 1962** provides the legal foundation for seeking and processing extradition requests with other countries, including those with which India has bilateral treaties.

- **Section 3** declares that the Act applies to all countries with which India has an **extradition treaty**, which includes the United States.
- **Section 4** allows extradition for both **accused and convicted persons** involved in criminal cases in India.

Indian Domestic Legal Framework

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- **Section 3** declares that the Act applies to all countries with which India has an **extradition treaty**, which includes the United States.
- **Section 4** allows extradition for both **accused and convicted persons** involved in criminal cases in India.
- **Section 21 bars extradition if the offence** is deemed political in nature, although this exception **does not apply to terrorist acts** under treaty obligations.
- Section 31 allows for conditional extradition, ensuring the accused is prosecuted only for those offences permitted under the treaty (**Rule of Specialty**).



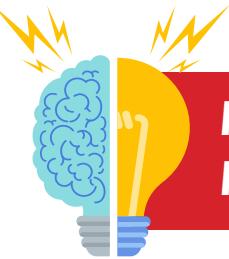
Why Did It Take So Long?

- **Legal Complexity:** The **India-US Extradition Treaty** signed in **1997** allows for extradition of individuals charged with serious offenses, provided the crime is punishable by imprisonment in both countries. However, there are certain **exceptions** to the treaty, such as crimes related to political offenses, which were a key aspect of earlier challenges. The US legal system requires extensive **judicial review** for each extradition request, and the **double jeopardy claim** by Rana delayed the process.
- **The Role of US Courts:** Initially, **US courts** refused to allow extradition, claiming that **Rana** had already been acquitted of charges related to the Mumbai attacks. However, the **Ninth Circuit Court** and later the **US Supreme Court** found that the Indian charges involved different elements and **met the criteria** for extradition under the treaty.
- **Health Concerns and Early Release:** **Rana's release on health grounds** in 2020 further complicated the situation, as it took several months for the legal processes to align for his **re-arrest** and extradition.

What Awaits Rana in India?

- **Charges Against Rana:** In India, Rana faces multiple charges under the **Indian Penal Code (IPC)**, including **murder, conspiracy to wage war against India, and terrorism-related offenses** under the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)**. The **National Investigation Agency (NIA)** filed a chargesheet in 2011, accusing him of aiding and abetting the **Mumbai attacks** by providing logistical support and surveillance for the terrorists, along with his involvement in other conspiracies.
- **Trial Proceedings:** Rana's trial will commence in India. His **charges** carry severe penalties, including **life imprisonment** or even the **death penalty** in some cases. The **NIA Special Court** in Delhi has already issued **arrest warrants** for Rana, and the proceedings are expected to move forward promptly upon his arrival.
- **Legal Defenses and Appeals:** During the trial, Rana may argue in his defense, as he has done in the US, claiming his involvement was minimal and that he was unaware of the full extent of the **Mumbai attack** plans. As per the Indian legal process, if convicted, either **Rana** or the **NIA** may appeal the decision in the **High Court and Supreme Court**.





MIND MAP

Legal Framework

- **India-US Extradition Treaty (1997):**
 - Dual criminality needed (Article 2).
 - No bar for terrorist acts (Article 4).
 - Rule of Specialty applies (Article 12).
- **US Law:**
 - Title 18, Section 3184 – Judge decides probable cause.
 - Judge Chooljian (2023) ruled in favor of extradition.
- **Indian Law:**
 - **Extradition Act, 1962:**
 - **Section 3:** Applies with US.
 - **Section 4:** Covers both accused and convicted persons.
 - **Section 21:** Exemption for political offences (terrorism not exempted).
 - **Section 31:** Rule of Specialty observed.

Who is Tahawwur Rana?

- Pakistani-origin, Canadian citizen, businessman (Chicago & Mumbai offices).
- Convicted (2011, US) for aiding Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Danish newspaper plot.
- Acquitted of direct 26/11 charges in US.
- David Headley: Rana aided reconnaissance missions for 26/11.

Extradition Timeline

- Arrested in 2009 in US → Sentenced to 14 years.
- 2020: Early release (COVID health grounds) → Re-arrested after India's request.
- Defense: Claimed double jeopardy.
- 2024: Ninth Circuit Court allowed extradition.
- 2025: US Supreme Court upheld extradition; final rejection by Justice Elena Kagan.

What Awaits Rana in India?

- Charges: Murder, Waging war, UAPA violations.
- Trial by NIA Special Court in Delhi.
- Possible punishments: Life imprisonment or death penalty.
- Legal defense: May claim ignorance or minimal involvement.
- Appeals possible to High Court/Supreme Court.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

1. (c) 2. (a) 3. (b) 4. (c) 5. (a) 6. (d) 7. (c) 8. (b)

Parliament Passes Waqf Amendment Bill

News Highlights:

On April 4, 2025, the **Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025** was passed in the **Rajya Sabha** after a 14-hour debate, with **128 votes in favour and 95 against**.

- The **Waqf Amendment Act 2025** (also known as the **UMEED Act**), brings significant reforms aimed at modernising the management and governance of Waqf properties in India.
- This Act amends the previous **Waqf Act, 1995**, and seeks to create a more inclusive and streamlined administrative framework.
- In contrast, the opposition views it as an effort to marginalize Muslims and reduce them to "second-class citizens," especially with provisions that allow non-Muslims to be part of the Waqf Boards.

Waqf: History and Evolution

A **Waqf** is a type of charitable trust established in Islamic tradition where a property is dedicated to religious, charitable, or public purposes. It involves the donation of property, the ownership of which is transferred to God, while the benefits derived from it are used for the specified charitable or religious purposes.



The Waqf system in India can be traced back to the **Delhi Sultanate** period. Sultan **Muizuddin Sam Ghauri**, during the early 13th century, established a Waqf by dedicating two villages to the **Jama Masjid in Multan**, and he appointed the **Shaikhul Islam** as its administrator.

Various rulers used Waqf properties to fund religious institutions, educational establishments, charitable causes, and even infrastructure like mosques, madrasas, and tombs. For instance, **Sher Shah Suri** (16th century) and **Emperor Akbar** promoted Waqf to build mosques, roads, and other public works.

Post-Independence Era

In **1954**, the **Waqf Act** was introduced to oversee the administration of Waqf properties across the country. This Act aimed to streamline the management of these properties and reduce the potential for misuse or mismanagement. The **Central Waqf Council** was established in **1964** as a statutory body under this Act, responsible for coordinating the work of **State Waqf Boards**.

- During this time, the **Mussalman Waqf Act of 1923**, which was a colonial-era law, became outdated. Its provisions conflicted with modern governance, and it was eventually repealed to make way for a unified and more coherent legal framework under the **Waqf Act, 1954**.



Establishment of Waqf:

A Waqf can be established through a written deed, legal instrument, or even orally.

Permanence and Irrevocability: Once a property is designated as a Waqf, it cannot be reclaimed or altered by the donor..

British Colonial Period:

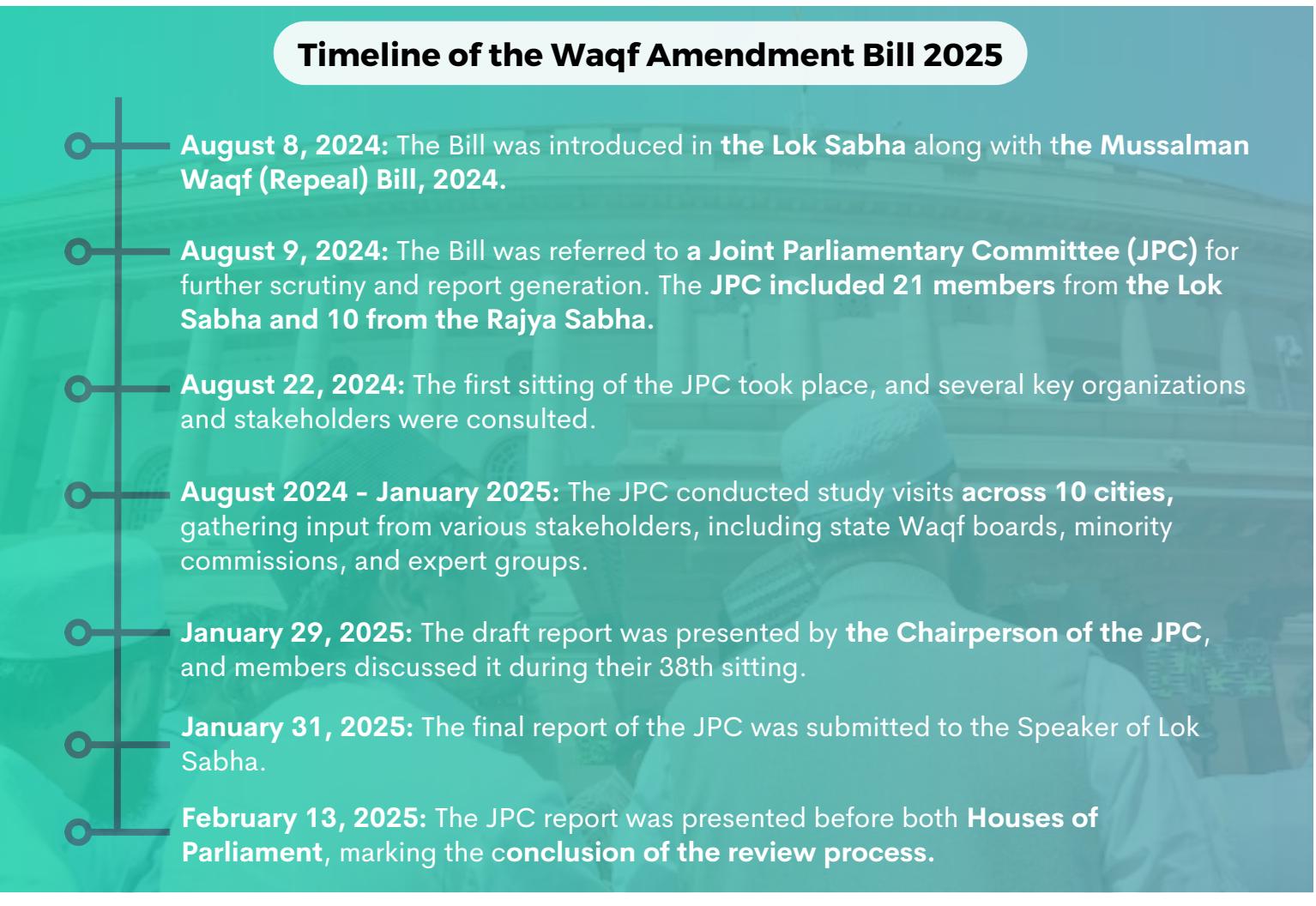
During British rule, the Waqf system was criticized by the Privy Council as a "perpetuity of the worst kind," arguing that permanently dedicating property to religious or charitable use hindered economic growth and private ownership. Despite this, the **Mussalman Waqf Validating Act of 1913** upheld the legitimacy of Waqf properties, though legal conflicts over land use and inheritance remained unresolved.

Structure of the Waqf Act, 1995

The **Waqf Act of 1995** governs the management of Waqf properties in India, establishing **state Waqf boards** and the **Central Waqf Council** to oversee administration. The key provisions include:

- **Role of Waqf Bodies:** The Act defines the roles of the Central Waqf Council, state Waqf boards, and the Mutawallis (custodians of Waqf properties).
- **Waqf Tribunals:** The Act also establishes Waqf Tribunals that function similarly to civil courts, with binding powers over disputes related to Waqf properties.
- **Civil Court Powers:** Waqf tribunals have the same powers as civil courts, and their decisions are final and binding, excluding the jurisdiction of civil courts.

Timeline of the Waqf Amendment Bill 2025

- 
- **August 8, 2024:** The Bill was introduced in **the Lok Sabha** along with **the Mussalman Waqf (Repeal) Bill, 2024**.
 - **August 9, 2024:** The Bill was referred to a **Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC)** for further scrutiny and report generation. The **JPC included 21 members from the Lok Sabha and 10 from the Rajya Sabha**.
 - **August 22, 2024:** The first sitting of the JPC took place, and several key organizations and stakeholders were consulted.
 - **August 2024 - January 2025:** The JPC conducted study visits **across 10 cities**, gathering input from various stakeholders, including state Waqf boards, minority commissions, and expert groups.
 - **January 29, 2025:** The draft report was presented by **the Chairperson of the JPC**, and members discussed it during their 38th sitting.
 - **January 31, 2025:** The final report of the JPC was submitted to the Speaker of Lok Sabha.
 - **February 13, 2025:** The JPC report was presented before both **Houses of Parliament**, marking the **conclusion of the review process**.

Stakeholder Engagement and Public Consultations

The JPC conducted **36 meetings** and received **97,27,772 memoranda** from the public, experts, and stakeholders through physical and digital submissions. Stakeholders consulted during the Bill's development included:

- **Religious Organizations:** All India Sunni Jamiyatul Ulama, Indian Muslims of Civil Rights, Anjuman E Shiteali Dawoodi Bohra Community, Muslim Rashtriya Manch, etc.
- **Educational and Legal Bodies:** Chanakya National Law University, All India Muslim Personal Law Board, Darul Uloom Deoband.
- **Civil Society Groups:** All India Pasmanda Muslim Mahaaz, Muslim Women Intellectual Group, etc.

Key Provisions of the Waqf Amendment Act 2025

The **Waqf Amendment Act 2025**, now referred to as the **UMEED Act**, introduces several changes designed to address inefficiencies and modernise the governance of Waqf properties:

- **Renaming and New Purpose:** The Act is renamed **UMEED** (Unified Management, Empowerment, Efficiency, and Development) to reflect its focus on improving Waqf management.
- **Inclusion of Non-Muslim Members:** To promote inclusivity, non-Muslim members will be included in **Waqf boards** at both the central and state levels. This provision aims to ensure greater representation and balance in decision-making processes.
- **Elimination of 'Waqf by User':** The '**Waqf by user**' provision, which allowed properties to be declared Waqf based on their historical use, **is removed**. However, properties already registered under this provision will retain their Waqf status unless disputed by the government.
- **Revised Eligibility for Waqf Dedication:** The Act reinstates the earlier requirement that only **practicing Muslims** who have been Muslims for at least five years can dedicate property to Waqf. This change aims to ensure that Waqf properties are dedicated by individuals with a deeper commitment to the faith.
- **Removal of Section 40:** Section 40, which granted Waqf Boards sweeping powers to designate any property as Waqf land, has been abolished due to concerns over its misuse.
- **Protection of Inheritance Rights:** The Act ensures that inheritance rights for women and children are protected before any property is declared as Waqf, safeguarding the rights of widows, divorced women, and orphans.
- **Safeguards for Tribal Lands:** The Act prohibits the establishment of Waqf on lands under **Schedules V and VI** of the Indian Constitution, which are designated to protect tribal communities.
- **Enhanced Transparency:** All Waqf properties must be registered on a centralized digital portal within six months. This move is aimed at improving record-keeping and reducing bureaucratic delays.

Key Changes in Waqf Management

- **Dispute Resolution:** A **senior government official** will have the final authority to resolve disputes over **Waqf properties**, replacing the existing system where **Waqf Tribunals had this authority**. This move is intended to simplify the process and reduce bureaucratic hurdles.
- **Appeal to High Court:** For the first time, the Act allows appeals against Waqf Tribunal decisions to be made to the **High Court**, thus addressing concerns over limited revisional powers.
- **Financial Reforms:** The mandatory contribution of Waqf institutions to Waqf boards has been reduced from **7% to 5%**. Additionally, Waqf institutions generating over ₹1 lakh annually will be subject to government audits to ensure greater financial transparency.

Supreme Court Review of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025

Key Provisions Under Judicial Scrutiny

- **Inclusion of Non-Muslim Members in Waqf Boards:** The amended Act permits the **appointment of non-Muslim members to the Central Waqf Council and State Waqf Boards**. Critics argue this infringes upon **Article 26(b) of the Constitution**, which guarantees religious denominations the right to manage their own affairs in matters of religion.
- **Restrictions on Waqf Creation:** The Act stipulates that only individuals who have demonstrably practiced **Islam for at least five years can create a Waqf**. Opponents contend this violates the right to freedom of religion under Article 25.
- **Exclusion of 'Waqf by User':** The amendment removes the recognition of '**Waqf by user**', a traditional concept where long-term use of property for religious purposes could establish it as Waqf. This change raises concerns about the protection of historical religious sites lacking formal documentation.



MIND MAP

Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 (UMEED Act)

- Passed in Rajya Sabha on April 4, 2025 (128-95 votes).
- Reforms management and governance of Waqf properties.
- Opposition concerns: Inclusion of non-Muslims seen as marginalizing Muslims.

Timeline of Waqf Amendment Bill 2025

- **August 8, 2024:** Bill introduced in Lok Sabha.
- **August 9, 2024:** Referred to Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC).
- **August 2024–Jan 2025:** Consultations and study visits.
- **January 31, 2025:** Final report submitted.
- **February 13, 2025:** Report presented in Parliament.

What is Waqf?

- Islamic charitable trust; ownership belongs to God; benefits used for religious/charitable purposes.
- Features: Permanence, Irrevocability, Legal Protection under Waqf Act, 1995.

Origin and Evolution

- **Delhi Sultanate:** First Waqf creation in India (Multan mosque).
- **Mughal era:** Expanded Waqf use for mosques, education, public welfare.
- **British Period:** Criticized as economic hindrance; Mussalman Waqf Validating Act, 1913 passed.
- **Post-Independence:**
 - Waqf Act, 1954 established Central Waqf Council.
 - Waqf Act, 1995: Introduced tribunals, formalized structure.

Stakeholder Engagement

- 36 JPC meetings, 97 lakh+ memoranda received.
- Consultations: Religious groups (Sunni Jamiatul Ulama, AIMPLB), Legal bodies, Civil society.
- Study visits to 10 cities; interacted with 284 stakeholders.

Key Changes in Waqf Management

- Dispute Resolution: Senior government officer decides disputes.
- Appeal to High Court: New provision introduced.
- Financial Reforms:
 - Waqf contribution to Boards reduced to 5%.
 - Mandatory audits for properties earning ₹1 lakh+ annually.

Key Provisions of UMEED Act

- 44 Clauses total; 19 amended.
- **Renaming:** UMEED (Unified Management, Empowerment, Efficiency, Development).
- Inclusion of Non-Muslims: In Waqf boards.
- No New 'Waqf by User': Historic registered ones retained.
- Eligibility for Dedication: Only practicing Muslims for at least 5 years.
- Removal of Section 40: No sweeping power to declare properties Waqf.
- Protection of Inheritance: Women's and children's rights protected.
- Safeguards for Tribal Lands: No Waqf on Schedules V/VI lands.
- Centralized Digital Registration: Mandatory within 6 months.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. The Waqf Amendment Act, 2025—focused on digitizing and managing Waqf assets—is popularly known as:
 - Heritage Trusts Modernization Bill
 - UMEED Act for Waqf Reforms, 2025
 - Public Religious Endowment Law
 - Muslim Endowment Reform Policy

2. Which of the following best describes a Waqf under Islamic charitable law?
 - A property loan granted for social housing use
 - A financial grant given by a private business
 - A property given permanently for religious use
 - A lease agreement for religious event space

3. Which historical era first introduced the Waqf system as a formal religious endowment practice in India?
 - Delhi Sultanate during medieval rule
 - Mughal Empire under Akbar's reign
 - British Raj in colonial governance
 - Mauryan Empire in ancient times

4. Who among the following rulers is credited with establishing an early Waqf by dedicating villages to the Jama Masjid in Multan?

(a) Qutbuddin Aibak	(b) Iltutmish
(c) Alauddin Khilji	(d) Muizuddin Sam Ghauri

5. Which ruler of the 16th century promoted the use of Waqf for building mosques, roads, and public infrastructure?
 - Babur of the Mughal Empire
 - Ibrahim Lodhi of Delhi Sultanate
 - Sher Shah Suri of the Sur Empire
 - Humayun the Mughal Emperor

6. During whose reign were Waqf properties formally recognized as legal entities with structured administration?
 - Humayun's reign in North India
 - Akbar's reign in Mughal Empire
 - Aurangzeb's reign in Deccan region
 - Babur's reign in early Mughal rule

7. Which judicial body during British rule referred to the Waqf system as perpetuity of the worst kind?
 - The Privy Council of British Empire

- (b) The High Court of Calcutta Presidency
- (c) The Crown Court of British Authority
- (d) The Judicial Board of Colonial India

8. Which statutory body was established under the Waqf Act of 1954 to oversee and advise on the management of Waqf properties?
 - National Religious Trust Board
 - Central Waqf Council of India
 - State Mosque Property Tribunal
 - Indian Charitable Land Office

9. The Central Waqf Council, responsible for overseeing Waqf property management in India, was created in:
 - 1950
 - 1954
 - 1960
 - 1964

10. Under the Waqf Act of 1954, which entities are primarily responsible for managing and regulating Waqf properties at the state level in India?
 - National Religious Trust
 - Central Charitable Councils
 - State Waqf Boards of India
 - Regional Endowment Council

11. Which of the following terms is used in the Waqf Act to refer to the custodians or managers of Waqf properties?
 - Trustees of Islamic Charitable Land
 - Mutawallis of Waqf Institutions
 - Officers of Religious Asset Control
 - Directors of Faith-Based Trusts

12. Under the Waqf Act, which authority has exclusive jurisdiction to decide matters relating to Waqf property disputes?
 - Religious Trust Property Board
 - Islamic Endowment Claims Panel
 - Muslim Charitable Asset Commission
 - Waqf Tribunals under statutory law

13. Waqf Tribunals have powers similar to civil courts, with their decisions being final and binding by law. These powers operate by ___ the jurisdiction of regular civil courts.

(a) extending	(b) regulating
(c) overriding	(d) excluding

14. In which legislative body was the Waqf Reform Bill introduced along with the Mussalman Waqf (Repeal) Bill?

 - (a) Lok Sabha of Indian Parliament
 - (b) Rajya Sabha of Indian Parliament
 - (c) State Assembly of Uttar Pradesh
 - (d) Joint Committee on Waqf Affairs

15. Which parliamentary body conducted its first sitting in August, to consult stakeholders on the Waqf Bill?

 - (a) Standing Committee on Legal Affairs
 - (b) Select Committee on Public Property
 - (c) Joint Parliamentary Committee on Waqf
 - (d) Expert Panel on Charitable Endowments

16. During its review process, how many cities did the Joint Parliamentary Committee visit to consult stakeholders on the Waqf Bill?

 - (a) 14 cities
 - (b) 10 cities
 - (c) 12 cities
 - (d) 15 cities

17. To whom did the Joint Parliamentary Committee submit its final report after completing its review of the Waqf Bill?

 - (a) Chairman of Rajya Sabha
 - (b) Minister of Minority Affairs
 - (c) Leader of the Opposition
 - (d) Speaker of Lok Sabha

18. To enhance accountability, the Bill empowers authorities to ____ any Waqf board member engaged in unlawful practices.

 - (a) disqualify
 - (b) reprimand
 - (c) transfer
 - (d) promote

19. The new provision in the Waqf Bill promotes inclusivity by allowing the appointment of which group to Waqf boards?

 - (a) Retired Government Officers
 - (b) Non-Muslim Members of society
 - (c) Former Religious Trust Leaders
 - (d) Minority Affairs Consultants

20. Which historical provision, now removed in the amended Waqf law, allowed properties to be declared Waqf based on long-standing public use?

 - (a) Religious Tenure Provision
 - (b) Customary Land Recognition
 - (c) Waqf by User Declaration
 - (d) Inherited Endowment Clause

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

1. (b) 2. (c) 3. (a) 4. (d) 5. (c) 6. (b) 7. (a) 8. (b)
9. (d) 10. (c) 11. (b) 12. (d) 13. (d) 14. (a) 15. (c) 16. (b)
17. (d) 18. (a) 19. (b) 20. (c)

Telangana becomes first State to notify categorisation of Scheduled Castes after Supreme Court verdict

News Highlights:

On April 14, 2025, Telangana became the first Indian state to implement the **sub-categorisation of Scheduled Castes (SCs)** through the enactment of the **Telangana Scheduled Castes (Rationalisation of Reservations) Act, 2025**.

- The state issued a **gazette notification** that formally divided SCs into **three sub-groups** for the purpose of **reservations in employment and educational institutions**.
- This policy action follows the landmark **Supreme Court judgment in State of Punjab v. Davinder Singh (2024)**, where a **Constitution Bench** upheld the constitutional validity of further **sub-classification within SC and Scheduled Tribe (ST) categories**.
- Telangana is the first state to act on the Supreme Court's **August 1, 2024 judgment**, which upheld the constitutionality of SC and ST sub-categorisation for the purpose of granting quotas to the most disadvantaged groups within these communities.

Key Findings of the Study:

1

To restructure SC reservations in Telangana through **empirical sub-categorisation** using indicators such as **education, employment, financial aid, political representation, and population share**. The **Shamim Akhtar Commission** examined over **8,600 representations** from SC communities and recommended a three-tier classification.

2

SC Sub-Categorisation Implementation: Telangana has operationalised the **Telangana Scheduled Castes (Rationalisation of Reservations) Act 2025** by categorising SCs into **three groups**:

- **Group I (1% reservation):** 15 sub-castes considered **most backward**.
- **Group II (9% reservation):** 18 sub-castes with **marginal benefits**.
- **Group III (5% reservation):** 26 sub-castes with **relatively better opportunities**.

3

Governor's Assent and Gazette Notification: The Act received the **Governor's assent on April 8, 2025**, and the gazette was officially published on **April 14, 2025**. From this day, the categorisation will be implemented in **public employment and education**. **Shri Jishnu Dev Varma** also called Jishnu Deb Barman (Debbarma) and Jishnu Karta, is **politician from Tripura** and currently serving as Hon'ble Governor of Telangana.

Government Policies and Impact

- **Implementation of Sub-Categorisation:** The categorisation is based on the **socio-economic, educational, political, and employment status** of SC communities. This move aims to ensure better representation and targeted benefits for the most backward groups among SCs.
- **Employment and Education:** Recruitment to **government jobs** will now be **based** on the categorisation, with **1%, 9%, and 5%** reservations allocated to Group I, II, and III, respectively. **Youth from these communities** are urged to avail these opportunities.
- **Future Enhancements:** The **Census 2026** will provide updated data, which may lead to **further enhancement of reservations** based on population dynamics.

Relevant Constitutional Provisions

- **Article 14:** Permits **reasonable classification** to achieve **substantive equality**, subject to **intelligible differentia** and a **rational nexus** to the goal.
- **Article 15(4) and 15(5):** Allow the state to make **special provisions for educational advancement of backward classes**, including SCs and STs.

- Article 16(4): Allows for **reservation in public employment** for **underrepresented backward classes**.
- Article 341(1): SCs are notified by the **President**, in consultation with the **Governor** of the respective state.
- Article 341(2): Parliament has the **exclusive power** to **add or remove** castes from the SC list.

Judicial Interpretations

- **E.V. Chinnaiah v. State of Andhra Pradesh (2004)**: Held that SCs form a **homogeneous class**, and **sub-classification is unconstitutional** unless the Presidential list under Article 341 is amended by Parliament.
- **State of Punjab v. Davinder Singh (2024)**: The case arose as a result of conflicting opinions between earlier Supreme Court rulings, particularly the 2004 decision in *E.V. Chinnaiah v. State of Andhra Pradesh*, which held that **Scheduled Castes (SCs) form a homogeneous group and cannot be sub-classified** by states.
- Multiple states, including **Punjab**, sought to provide **sub-classification among SCs**, arguing that **reservation benefits were being cornered by dominant SC sub-castes**, leaving more deprived groups behind.
- The matter was referred to a **seven-judge Constitution Bench** to reconsider the correctness of **Chinnaiah's ratio**.



Legal Issues Framed

- 1.Whether states have the constitutional authority to **sub-classify Scheduled Castes** for the purpose of **equitable distribution of reservation benefits**?
- 2.Whether such sub-categorisation **violates Article 341** which deals with the **identification of Scheduled Castes**?
- 3.Whether the decision in **E.V. Chinnaiah (2004)** should be **overruled**?

Judgment and Ratio Decidendi

- The Court **overruled the E.V. Chinnaiah judgment (2004)**, stating that it was **incorrect in treating SCs as a homogenous class** for the purpose of Article 341.
- Held that **sub-categorisation among SCs is constitutionally valid**, provided it is based on **empirical data, socio-economic studies, and rational criteria**.
- Affirmed that **Article 341 restricts inclusion/exclusion of castes** from the SC list but **does not bar sub-classification** within those already included.
- Sub-categorisation is permissible as an instrument of **affirmative action** under **Articles 15(4), 15(5), and 16(4)** to ensure **equitable distribution of benefits** among **most disadvantaged** sub-groups.
- Emphasised that such classifications are **subject to judicial review**, and cannot be used for **arbitrary or political purposes**.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which Indian state became the first to implement the sub-categorisation of Scheduled Castes (SCs) through legislation in 2025?

(a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Telangana
 (c) Karnataka (d) Tamil Nadu
2. As per the 2025 gazette notification by the Telangana government, into how many sub-groups were the Scheduled Castes (SCs) formally divided for reservation purposes?

(a) Two sub-groups (b) Four sub-groups
 (c) Five sub-groups (d) Three sub-groups
3. Which Supreme Court case upheld the constitutional validity of sub-classification within Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in 2024, paving the way for state-level actions like in Telangana?

(a) Indra Sawhney v. Union of India (1992)
 (b) E.V. Chinnaiyah v. State of Andhra Pradesh (2004)
 (c) State of Punjab v. Davinder Singh (2024)
 (d) M. Nagaraj v. Union of India (2006)
4. Which commission reviewed thousands of submissions from Scheduled Caste communities and recommended a three-tier sub-categorisation in Telangana?

(a) Shamim Akhtar Commission
 (b) Justice Ramachandran Committee
 (c) Telangana Social Equity Panel
 (d) Madiga Welfare Advisory Board
5. What percentage of reservation was allocated to Group III, which includes 26 sub-castes?

(a) 3% reservation: (b) 6% reservation:
 (c) 4% reservation: (d) 5% reservation:
6. Under which category were the 15 sub-castes in Group I classified based on their socio-economic status in Telangana's 2025 SC reservation reform?

(a) Socially forward (b) Most backward
 (c) Economically average (d) Moderately progressive
7. How many sub-castes were included in Group II, which received 9% reservation due to marginal access to benefits?

(a) 15 sub-castes (b) 18 sub-castes
 (c) 26 sub-castes (d) 12 sub-castes
8. In which group were the sub-castes with relatively better opportunities placed under Telangana's Scheduled Castes sub-categorisation?

(a) Group II (b) Group III
9. As per the Telangana SC sub-categorisation law, in which sectors will the new classification be implemented starting from April 14, 2025?

(a) Public employment and education
 (b) Political representation and judiciary
 (c) Private sector and healthcare
 (d) Infrastructure and transport services
10. Shri Jishnu Dev Varma, also known as Jishnu Deb Barman, currently holds which constitutional position in the state of Telangana?

(a) Chief Minister (b) Speaker
 (c) Governor (d) Advocate General
11. Which upcoming national-level data initiative may impact future reservation policies by reflecting updated population dynamics?

(a) Rural Welfare Population Survey
 (b) National Health Status Report
 (c) Backward Class Study Report
 (d) Census 2026 Population Count
12. Which constitutional provision allows reasonable classification for achieving substantive equality, subject to intelligible differentia and rational nexus?

(a) Article 16 (b) Article 21
 (c) Article 14 (d) Article 19
13. Under Article 341(2) of the Constitution, what authority does Parliament hold in relation to the Scheduled Castes list?

(a) Shared authority (b) Exclusive power
 (c) Advisory capacity (d) Limited discretion
14. What objective is specifically permitted under Article 15(4) and 15(5) to justify special provisions for SCs, STs, and other backward classes?

(a) Educational advancement
 (b) Political participation
 (c) Economic development
 (d) Religious freedom
15. Which constitutional provision allows the State to provide reservations in public employment for backward classes not adequately represented?

(a) Article 16(4) (b) Article 15(1)
 (c) Article 19(6) (d) Article 21(A)

16. Under Article 341(1), who has the authority to notify the list of Scheduled Castes for each state, after consulting the Governor?
(a) Prime Minister (b) Chief Minister
(c) Parliament (d) President
17. Which Supreme Court case held that Scheduled Castes form a homogeneous group and sub-classification within them is unconstitutional without amending the Presidential list?
(a) M. Nagaraj v. Union of India
(b) E.V. Chinnaiah v. State of Andhra Pradesh
(c) Indra Sawhney v. Union of India
(d) State of Punjab v. Davinder Singh
18. In State of Punjab v. Davinder Singh (2024), who was assigned to reconsider the correctness of the Chinnaiah judgment on SC sub-classification?
(a) a five-judge Special Bench
(b) a seven-judge Constitution Bench
(c) a three-judge Review Panel
(d) a nine-judge Advisory Bench
19. Which constitutional provision governs the inclusion or exclusion of castes in the Scheduled Castes list but does not prohibit sub-classification within the notified castes?
(a) Article 340 (b) Article 346
(c) Article 340 (d) Article 341

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

- | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (d) | 3. (c) | 4. (a) | 5. (d) | 6. (b) | 7. (b) | 8. (b) |
| 9. (a) | 10. (c) | 11. (d) | 12. (c) | 13. (b) | 14. (a) | 15. (a) | 16. (d) |
| 17. (b) | 18. (b) | 19. (d) | | | | | |

Tamil Nadu Forms Committee to Review Centre- State Relation under Justice Kurian Joseph

News Highlights:

On April 15, 2025, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin announced the formation of a **high-level committee** aimed at **strengthening state autonomy** and **improving Centre-State relations**.

- The committee will be headed by **Justice Kurian Joseph**, former Supreme Court judge, and is tasked with reviewing constitutional provisions, laws, and policies related to Centre-State relations.
- The committee will recommend measures to ensure greater autonomy for states without compromising national unity. The committee is expected to submit an **interim report** by **January 2026** and a **final report** within two years.

Key Highlights



Justice Kurian Joseph

- Committee Composition:** The three-member committee is headed by **Justice Kurian Joseph**, and includes **Ashok Vardhan Shetty** (former IAS officer) and **M. Naganathan** (former vice-chairman of Tamil Nadu's Planning Commission).
- Mandate:** The committee will review:
 - Constitutional provisions** related to Centre-State relations.
 - Recommendations for **restoring subjects** moved from the **State List** to the **Concurrent List**.
 - Proposals for administrative reforms to enhance State autonomy.
 - Ways to strengthen **cooperative federalism**.
- Interim and Final Reports:** The committee is tasked with submitting an **interim report** by **January 2026** and a **final report** within **two years**.



Dr. P.V. Rajamannar

- Historical Context:** In **1969**, then Chief Minister **C.N. Annadurai** established the **Centre-State Relations Inquiry Committee** under **Dr. P.V. Rajamannar** to study and recommend steps for State autonomy.
- The **Rajamannar Committee** highlighted the growing centralization and recommended the repeal of **Article 356**, which allows the Centre to impose President's Rule in a state.
- The current committee's formation coincides with the golden jubilee of the **State Autonomy Resolution** passed by the **Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly** in **1974**.

Tamil Nadu's Grievances and Policy Conflicts with Center

1. NEET (National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test): Imposed by the Centre, overriding **Tamil Nadu's education policies** designed to ensure opportunities for students from marginalized and economically weaker sections. Tamil Nadu has long opposed the **NEET exam**, arguing that it undermines the state's educational policies that benefit students from marginalized and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The refusal to release **₹2,500 crore** under the **Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan** is also a point of contention. Tamil Nadu passed legislation to exempt itself from NEET, but assent was denied.

2. Financial Autonomy: Tamil Nadu receives only 29 paise for every rupee it contributes to the Union, despite being India's second-largest economy. The implementation of **GST** has caused significant revenue loss to manufacturing hubs like Tamil Nadu and reduced the state's fiscal autonomy.

3. Delimitation Concerns (2026): Tamil Nadu's successful population control measures may lead to a reduction in parliamentary representation, which is viewed as a penalty for its achievements.

4. Financial Autonomy and Devolution: Tamil Nadu's concerns about the **Goods and Services Tax (GST)** were reiterated. Despite being a major contributor to the nation's revenue, Tamil Nadu **receives a disproportionately low share of tax devolution, with only 29 paise per rupee contributed**. This has impacted the state's fiscal autonomy, especially in the manufacturing sector.

Committees and Commissions on Centre-State Relations in India

1. First Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) - 1966

The **First Administrative Reforms Commission** was established by the **Government of India on 5th January 1966** under the **chairmanship of Morarji Desai**. Its mandate was to examine and recommend measures to improve the efficiency and integrity of public administration, including aspects of **Centre-State relations**.

Key Recommendations:

- Establishment of an Inter-State Council:** The ARC recommended the creation of an Inter-State Council under Article 263 of the Constitution to facilitate better coordination and cooperation between the Centre and the States.
- Delegation of Powers:** It suggested maximum delegation of powers to the States to enhance administrative efficiency and responsiveness.
- Appointment of Governors:** The Commission emphasised that Governors should be individuals with long experience in public life and administration and should possess a non-partisan attitude.
- Financial Relations:** It advocated for the transfer of more financial resources to the States to reduce their dependency on the Centre.

2. Rajamannar Committee - 1969

In **1969**, the **Government of Tamil Nadu** appointed a **three-member committee under the chairmanship of Justice P.V. Rajamannar** to examine Centre-State relations and suggest measures to strengthen State autonomy.

Key Recommendations:

- Abolition of Article 356:** The Committee recommended the complete repeal of Article 356, which allows the Centre to impose President's Rule in a State, arguing that it was often misused to dismiss State governments.
- Establishment of a Permanent Inter-State Council:** It proposed the creation of a permanent Inter-State Council to facilitate regular consultation and coordination between the Centre and the States.
- Transfer of More Subjects to the State List:** The Committee suggested transferring several subjects from the Concurrent List to the State List to enhance State autonomy.
- Abolition of the Planning Commission:** It recommended the abolition of the Planning Commission, asserting that it encroached upon the autonomy of States in planning and development.
- Financial Autonomy:** The Committee emphasised the need for greater financial autonomy for States, advocating for a more equitable distribution of financial resources.

3. Sarkaria Commission - 1983

The **Sarkaria Commission** was established by the **Government of India in 1983** under the chairmanship of Justice **R.S. Sarkaria** to examine and review the working of existing arrangements between the Union and the States.

Key Recommendations:

- **Use of Article 356:** The Commission recommended that **Article 356 should be used sparingly and only as a last resort**. Before invoking it, all possible alternatives to resolve the crisis should be explored.
- **Appointment of Governors:** It suggested that Governors should be eminent individuals from outside the State, with no active political affiliations, and their appointment should be made in consultation with the Chief Minister of the concerned State.
- **Inter-State Council:** The Commission advocated for the establishment of a **permanent Inter-State Council under Article 263** to facilitate regular consultation and coordination between the Centre and the States.
- **Legislative Relations:** It emphasised that the Centre should consult States before legislating on matters in the Concurrent List to maintain the federal balance.

4. Punchhi Commission - 2007

The **Punchhi Commission** was constituted by the **Government of India in 2007** under the **chairmanship of Justice Madan Mohan Punchhi** to examine and review the existing arrangements of **Centre-State relations**, considering the changes that had taken place since **the Sarkaria Commission's report**.

Key Recommendations:

- **Article 356:** The Commission recommended that Article 356 should be used only after exhausting all other options and that the duration of President's Rule should be limited to three months, extendable only with the approval of both Houses of Parliament.
- **Appointment and Role of Governors:** It suggested that Governors should have a fixed tenure of five years and should not be removed at the will of the Centre. The Commission also recommended that the discretionary powers of Governors should be limited and clearly defined.
- **Concurrent List:** The Commission proposed a clear demarcation of responsibilities between the Centre and the States in the Concurrent List to avoid overlaps and conflicts.
- **Inter-State Council:** It recommended that the Inter-State Council should be made a permanent body with a regular secretariat and should meet at least thrice a year.
- **Financial Relations:** The Commission advocated for the setting up of a permanent Finance Commission to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of financial resources between the Centre and the States.



MIND MAP

Historical Context

- Rajamannar Committee (1969): Recommended repeal of Article 356.
- Coincides with 50 years of 1974 State Autonomy Resolution.

Grievances & Conflicts with Centre

1. NEET Imposition:

- Overridden Tamil Nadu's education policy.
- State NEET exemption law denied assent.

2. NEP 2020:

- 3-language policy seen as Hindi imposition.
- ₹2,500 crore education funds withheld.

3. Financial Autonomy:

- TN gets only 29 paise per ₹1 contributed.
- GST caused revenue losses.

4. Delimitation (2026) Concerns:

- Population control success may reduce TN's seats.

Tamil Nadu Forms Committee on Centre-State Relations (April 15, 2025)

- Announced by CM M.K. Stalin.
- Headed by Justice Kurian Joseph; members: Ashok Vardhan Shetty, M. Naganathan.
- Interim report: by January 2026; Final report: within 2 years.

Mandate of Committee

- Review constitutional provisions on Centre-State relations.
- Restore State List subjects moved to Concurrent List.
- Recommend administrative reforms to strengthen State autonomy.
- Enhance cooperative federalism.

Earlier Commissions on Centre-State Relations

- **Sarkaria Commission (1983):**
 - Cautioned against misuse of Article 356.
 - Recommended consultative Governor appointments, stronger Inter-State Council.
- **Punchhi Commission (2007):**
 - Advocated fixed 5-year Governor term, neutrality.
 - Urged re-examination of Union-State list entries and stronger fiscal autonomy.

SC Judgment on Governor's Role (April 8, 2025)

- **Case:** State of Tamil Nadu v. Governor of Tamil Nadu.
- **Key Findings:**
 - No absolute/pocket veto; Governor must act promptly (within 1–3 months).
 - Re-passed bills must be assented, not reserved again.
 - Judicial review allowed on Governor's/President's actions under Articles 200, 201.
 - Invoked Article 142 to deem pending bills as assented.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Who announced the formation of a high-level committee in Tamil Nadu in April 2025, to enhance state autonomy and improve Centre-State relations?
 - (a) Home Minister
 - (b) Finance Minister
 - (c) Governor
 - (d) Chief Minister

2. Who was appointed to head the Tamil Nadu committee formed to review Centre-State relations and suggest reforms for enhanced state autonomy?
 - (a) Justice Madan Lokur
 - (b) Justice Kurian Joseph
 - (c) Justice A.K. Sikri
 - (d) Justice R.F. Nariman

3. What was the composition of the panel formed by the Tamil Nadu government to review Centre-State relations and recommend autonomy reforms?
 - (a) Three-member committee
 - (b) Five-member commission
 - (c) Two-member panel group
 - (d) Four-member review board

4. In which constitutional list does the Tamil Nadu committee propose to restore certain subjects that were previously moved to the Concurrent List?
 - (a) Union List
 - (b) Central List
 - (c) State List
 - (d) Priority List

5. Within what maximum timeframe has the Tamil Nadu committee been asked to submit its final report on Centre-State relations reforms?
 - (a) Two years.
 - (b) Eighteen months.
 - (c) Three years.
 - (d) Twenty months.

6. Who was the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu that established the Centre-State Relations Inquiry Committee in 1969?
 - (a) M. Karunanidhi
 - (b) K. Kamaraj Rao
 - (c) V.R. Nedunchezhiyan
 - (d) C.N. Annadurai

7. Which constitutional provision was recommended for repeal by the Rajamannar Committee due to concerns over excessive centralization and misuse of emergency powers?
 - (a) Article 249
 - (b) Article 263
 - (c) Article 356
 - (d) Article 312

8. The formation of the current Tamil Nadu committee aligns with the golden jubilee of which year's State Autonomy Resolution?
 - (a) 1971
 - (b) 1974
 - (c) 1976
 - (d) 1978

9. Which centrally sponsored scheme aimed at improving school education faced controversy over the withholding of ₹2,500 crore in funds?
 - (a) National Literacy Drive
 - (b) Integrated Learning Scheme
 - (c) Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan
 - (d) Universal Education Mission

10. Tamil Nadu passed legislation seeking exemption from which national-level entrance test, but the Governor denied assent?
 - (a) JEE
 - (b) CUET
 - (c) CLAT
 - (d) NEET

11. Under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which language's inclusion in the three-language formula is viewed as an imposition by Tamil Nadu?
 - (a) Hindi
 - (b) Telugu
 - (c) Sanskrit
 - (d) Kannada

12. How much does Tamil Nadu reportedly receive back from the Union for every rupee it contributes, raising concerns over financial autonomy?
 - (a) 21 paise
 - (b) 29 paise
 - (c) 33 paise
 - (d) 25 paise

13. Which past commissions on Centre-State relations are being referenced as the foundation for the current Tamil Nadu committee's review?
 - (a) Rajamannar Panel (1969) and NITI Forum (2016),
 - (b) Anand Panel (1995) and Vohra Committee (1993),
 - (c) Sarkaria Commission (1983) and Punchhi Commission (2007),
 - (d) Baswan Committee (2000) and Malimath Committee (2003),

14. Which constitutional provision allows imposition of President's Rule in a state and has been recommended to be used only as a last resort?
 - (a) Article 249
 - (b) Article 263
 - (c) Article 312
 - (d) Article 356

15. Which institutional mechanism was proposed as a permanent body under Article 263 to enhance Union-State coordination?
 - (a) National Policy Forum
 - (b) Federal Affairs Board
 - (c) Inter-State Council
 - (d) Constitutional Review Desk

16. What specific tenure recommendation did the Punchhi Commission (2007) make regarding the appointment of Governors?
(a) Five-year term (b) Ten-year period
(c) Three-year span (d) Seven-year limit
17. In which 2025 Supreme Court case was it ruled that a Governor cannot use an absolute or pocket veto against duly passed state legislation?
(a) Tamil Nadu v. Union of India
(b) State of Tamil Nadu v. Governor of Tamil Nadu
(c) Tamil Nadu Assembly v. Central Cabinet
(d) State Council v. Office of the President
18. Which constitutional provisions govern the powers of the Governor and President regarding assent to state legislation and were recently subject to judicial review?
- (a) Articles 72 and 123
(b) Articles 245 and 246
(c) Articles 163 and 164
(d) Articles 200 and 201
19. How many bills did the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly pass and forward to the Governor for assent between January 2020 and April 2023?
(a) 10 bills (b) 12 bills
(c) 14 bills (d) 16 bills
20. Which Governor withheld assent to 10 bills passed by the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly without giving reasons or returning them for reconsideration?
(a) B.D. Mishra (b) Arif Mohammad
(c) R.N. Ravi (d) Anusuiya Uikey

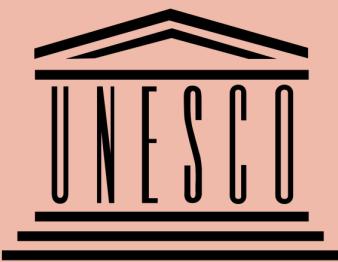
ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

1. (d) 2. (b) 3. (a) 4. (c) 5. (a) 6. (d) 7. (c) 8. (b)
9. (c) 10. (d) 11. (a) 12. (b) 13. (c) 14. (d) 15. (c) 16. (a)
17. (b) 18. (d) 19. (b) 20. (c)

Bhagavad Gita and Natyashastra added to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register

News Highlights:

On April 17, 2025, UNESCO inscribed **manuscripts of the Bhagavad Gita and Bharata's Natyashastra** on its **Memory of the World Register**, recognising them as part of humanity's **documentary heritage of outstanding universal value**. This inclusion marks a major international recognition of India's **civilisational wisdom** and **artistic tradition**. Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed this as a "**proud moment for every Indian**", underscoring the global relevance of these ancient Indian texts.



- The **UNESCO Memory of the World Programme** was launched in **1992** to preserve the **documentary heritage of humanity**, including manuscripts, audio-visual materials, and archival records.
- The **Register** includes manuscripts, audio-visual materials, and other significant archival collections that hold **outstanding universal value**. The goal is to **safeguard significant documents from loss**, ensure **universal access**, and prevent what UNESCO terms "**collective amnesia**".
- The **Register** is updated biennially (with exceptions), accepting up to two submissions per country.
- With the latest additions, **India now has 14 inscriptions** on the Register, including earlier entries such as the **Rig Veda (2005)**, **Abhinavagupta's collected works (2023)**, and the **Non-Aligned Movement Summit archives (2023)**. As of **April 2025**, the **Register** comprises **570 entries** from across the globe, including documents on global history, culture, science, and human achievements.

Key Additions in 2025

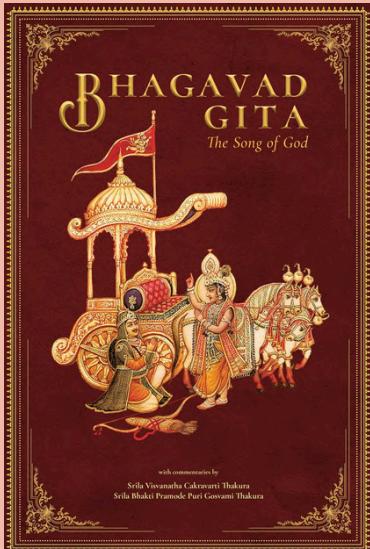
- This year, **74 new collections** were added, encompassing significant documents from **72 countries** and **4 international organizations**.
- Among the new additions are the **Bhagavad Gita** and **Natyashastra**, both pivotal to India's **cultural, philosophical, and artistic** heritage.

Natyashastra



- **Authorship and Date:** Traditionally attributed to **Bharata Muni**, the **Natyashastra** is believed to have been codified around the **2nd century BCE**, with estimates ranging from **500 BCE to 500 CE**.
- **Textual Significance:** A **Sanskrit treatise on performing arts**, the **Natyashastra** is foundational to the traditions of **drama, dance, music, and aesthetics** in Indian cultural philosophy.
- **Structure:** Comprising approximately **36,000 verses**, the text defines key concepts such as **natya (drama)**, **abhinaya (performance)**, **rasa (aesthetic essence)**, and **bhava (emotion)**.
- **Concept of Rasa:** The **Natyashastra** is best known for its exposition of '**rasa**', which refers to the **emotive essence** of a performance. It proposes that **no meaning can emerge without rasa**, highlighting the emotional and philosophical depth of artistic expression.
- **Preservation:** The manuscript added to the **Register** is preserved at the **Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune**.

Bhagavad Gita



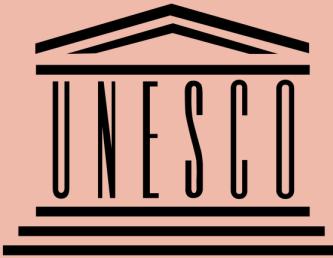
- **Authorship and Date:** Traditionally attributed to **Vyasa**, the **Bhagavad Gita** is part of the **sixth book (Bhishma Parva)** of the **Mahabharata**. Its composition is generally dated to the **1st or 2nd century BCE**, though it may have been written down by the **2nd–3rd century CE**.
- **Textual Nature:** Comprising **700 verses in 18 chapters**, the **Gita** is a **philosophical dialogue** between **Arjuna and Krishna**, exploring moral dilemmas and paths to righteousness (dharma), it discusses key themes of duty, righteousness, and spiritual wisdom.
- The dialogue between **Arjuna** and **Lord Krishna** takes place on the battlefield of **Kurukshetra**, where Arjuna is conflicted about engaging in war. Krishna's teachings provide a **philosophical and ethical framework** for life, addressing concepts like **dharma** (duty), **yoga** (spiritual discipline), and **bhakti** (devotion).
- **Philosophical Integration:** The text synthesises diverse philosophical schools including **Vedic, Buddhist, Jain, and Charvaka** thought, representing the **pluralistic traditions** of Indian philosophy.
- **Global Influence:** Due to its **philosophical universality**, the **Bhagavad Gita** has been translated into numerous languages and continues to influence thinkers, spiritual leaders, and scholars globally.
- **Preservation:** The manuscript inscribed is also housed at the **Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune**.

India now has **14 inscriptions** in the Memory of the World Register, including significant entries like:

Entry Name	Year	Description
Tamil Medical Manuscript Collection	1997	A collection of ancient Tamil medical manuscripts, providing insights into traditional medical practices in South India.
Archives of the Dutch East India Company	2003	Joint nomination with the Netherlands, Indonesia, South Africa, and Sri Lanka. These archives provide a comprehensive record of the Dutch East India Company's operations in Asia and its interactions with local societies.
Saiva Manuscripts of Pondicherry	2005	A collection of manuscripts related to Saiva Siddhanta philosophy, reflecting the rich religious and cultural heritage of Tamil Nadu.
Rigveda Manuscripts	2007	Ancient collection of Vedic Sanskrit hymns, considered the oldest religious texts in the world. Preserved at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune.
Gilgit Manuscripts	2007	Among the oldest surviving manuscripts from the Indian subcontinent, these texts are significant for the study of Buddhism and the history of the region.
Tarikh-e-Firoz Shahi	2010	A historical chronicle written by Ziauddin Barani in the 14th century, detailing the history of the Delhi Sultanate.
Shahnama Manuscripts	2011	Persian epic poems that have been influential in the cultural and literary traditions of the Indian subcontinent.
Saiva Manuscripts of Nepal	2011	A collection of manuscripts related to Saiva traditions, reflecting the religious and cultural exchanges between India and Nepal.
Abhinavagupta's Manuscripts	2023	Works of the Kashmiri philosopher and aesthetician Abhinavagupta, significant for the study of Indian philosophy and art.
First NAM Summit Archives	2023	Joint nomination with Algeria, Egypt, Indonesia, and Serbia. Archives from the first Non-Aligned Movement Summit held in Belgrade in 1961, highlighting India's role in the movement.

Ramcharitmanas	2024	An epic poem in Awadhi language by Tulsidas, recounting the life of Lord Rama. Recognized in the Asia-Pacific Regional Register.
Panchatantra and Sahrdyāloka-Locana	2024	Ancient Indian literary works; the Panchatantra is a collection of animal fables, while Sahrdyāloka-Locana is a treatise on Sanskrit poetics. Recognized in the Asia-Pacific Regional Register.
Bhagavad Gita Manuscripts	2024	Ancient manuscripts of the Bhagavad Gita, a foundational text of Hindu philosophy, preserved at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune.
Natyashastra Manuscripts	2024	Manuscripts of the Natyashastra, an ancient treatise on performing arts attributed to Bharata Muni, also preserved at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)



- **Predecessor Organisations:** The concept of international cooperation in education, science, and culture can be traced back to the League of Nations' **International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (ICIC), established in 1922**. The ICIC aimed to promote intellectual exchange among nations.
- **World War II and the Need for a New Organisation:** The devastation of World War II underscored the necessity for an organisation dedicated to fostering peace through intellectual and cultural collaboration. In **1942, the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME) convened in London** to discuss the reconstruction of education systems.
- **Formation of UNESCO:** On **16 November 1945**, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) was established in **London**. The Constitution of UNESCO came into force on **4 November 1946**, after ratification by **20 countries**. The organisation's headquarters were later established in **Paris, France**.
- **Member States:** As of 2025, UNESCO has **194 member states and 12 associate members**. Notably, three **UNESCO member states are not members of the United Nations: Cook Islands, Niue, and Palestine**. Conversely, **three UN member states—Israel, Liechtenstein, and the United States—are not members of UNESCO**.

India's Engagement with UNESCO

- **Membership:** India has been a member of **UNESCO** since its **inception in 1946**.
- **World Heritage Sites:** India has **43 UNESCO World Heritage Sites** as of December 2024, including **35 cultural, 7 natural, and 1 mixed site**. Recent additions include **Shantiniketan and the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas**.
- **Biosphere Reserves:** Out of **18 biosphere reserves in India, 12 have been recognised internationally under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme**.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which international organization inscribed the manuscripts of the Bhagavad Gita and Bharata's Natyashastra on April 1, 2025?
- (a) SAARC
 - (b) ICCROM
 - (c) UNESCO
 - (d) ICOMOS
2. Under what initiative were the manuscripts of the Bhagavad Gita and Natyashastra inscribed in 2025?
- (a) Global Culture Archives Program
 - (b) Memory of the World Register
 - (c) Universal Literary Heritage Index
 - (d) Ancient Texts Recognition Scheme
3. How does UNESCO define the term "Collective amnesia" in the context of the Memory of the World Programme?
- (a) Cultural misunderstanding
 - (b) Loss of shared memory
 - (c) Decline in oral traditions
 - (d) Destruction of monuments
4. In which year was the Memory of the World Programme launched to protect humanity's documentary heritage?
- (a) 1987
 - (b) 1992
 - (c) 1996
 - (d) 2001
5. With the inclusion of the Bhagavad Gita and Natyashastra manuscripts, how many total entries does India now have?
- (a) 12 inscriptions
 - (b) 13 inscriptions
 - (c) 11 inscriptions
 - (d) 14 inscriptions
6. Which documentary heritage from India, inscribed in 2023, relates to international diplomacy and features in UNESCO?
- (a) Non-Aligned Movement Summit archives
 - (b) Ashokan Edicts Preservation Files
 - (c) Buddhist Councils Proceedings Records
 - (d) Indian Ocean Maritime Trade Logs
7. Along with 72 countries, contributions from how many international organisations were included in the 74 new entries to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register this year?
- (a) 2 international organisations
 - (b) 3 international organisations
 - (c) 5 international organisations
8. Which ancient Indian treatise on performing arts was recently inscribed into UNESCO alongside the Bhagavad Gita?
- (a) Arthashastra
 - (b) Manusmriti
 - (c) Natyashastra
 - (d) Ramcharitmanas
9. Who is traditionally credited with composing the ancient Indian treatise on performing arts known as the Natyashastra?
- (a) Valmiki Rishi
 - (b) Bharata Muni
 - (c) Panini Acharya
 - (d) Patanjali Guru
10. In the Natyashastra, alongside natya (drama), rasa (aesthetic essence), and bhava (emotion), which term refers to the expressive art of performance?
- (a) Sangeeta
 - (b) Mudra kala
 - (c) Abhinaya
 - (d) Nritya shastra
11. Which concept from the Natyashastra refers to the emotive essence of a performance and is central to understanding artistic expression?
- (a) Rasa
 - (b) Bhava
 - (c) Natya
 - (d) Nritya
- Where is the manuscript of the Natyashastra, recently added to UNESCO's Register, currently preserved?
- 12.
- (a) Asiatic Society Library Kolkata
 - (b) Sarasvati Mahal Library Thanjavur
 - (c) National Archives of India Delhi
 - (d) Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute
13. In which section of the Mahabharata does the Bhagavad Gita appear, offering philosophical dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna?
- (a) fifth book
 - (b) sixth book
 - (c) seventh book
 - (d) ninth book
14. Who is traditionally regarded as the author of the Bhagavad Gita, which appears in the Bhishma Parva of the Mahabharata?
- (a) Vyasa
 - (b) Valmiki
 - (c) Patanjali
 - (d) Kalidasa

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

1. (c) 2. (b) 3. (b) 4. (b) 5. (d) 6. (a) 7. (d) 8. (c)
9. (b) 10. (c) 11. (a) 12. (d) 13. (b) 14. (a) 15. (d) 16. (b)
17.(c) 18. (a) 19. (d) 20. (b)

Mehul Choksi Arrested in Belgium: India Seeks Extradition

News Highlights:

On April 12, 2025, fugitive diamond merchant **Mehul Choksi** was detained by Belgian authorities in Antwerp following an **extradition request from India** over his alleged role in the ₹13,000 crore Punjab National Bank (PNB) loan fraud case.

- India formally requested his extradition through its investigative agencies, the CBI and ED, marking a major development in one of India's largest banking frauds.



Mehul Choksi

- Mehul Choksi**, an Indian diamantaire and former promoter of Gitanjali Gems, is a prime accused in the ₹13,000 crore Punjab National Bank (PNB) loan fraud case, unearthed in 2018.
- The fraud involved the illegal issuance of Letters of Undertaking (LoUs) and Foreign Letters of Credit (FLCs) by officials of PNB's Brady House branch in Mumbai, benefiting firms owned by Choksi and Nirav Modi.
- The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) sought Choksi's extradition for his role in fraudulent activities involving PNB. His arrest was made in Antwerp, Belgium, marking a significant development in the case that has drawn global attention.
- Choksi, aged 65, had been residing in Antigua and Barbuda after fleeing India in 2018. His location in Belgium came to light in November 2023, when he arrived there for medical treatment.

Background of the PNB Fraud Case

- Nature of Fraud:** Mehul Choksi, his nephew Nirav Modi, and their associates were accused of fraudulently obtaining Letters of Undertaking (LoUs) and Foreign Letters of Credit (FLCs) from PNB's Brady House branch in Mumbai.
- Allegations:** Investigations reveal that 165 LoUs and 58 FLCs were fraudulently issued between March and April 2017. These LoUs were not backed by any sanctioned limit or cash margin, and were not entered into PNB's core banking system, thereby avoiding regulatory scrutiny.
- Based on these LoUs, loans were granted by international branches of banks such as SBI (Mauritius and Frankfurt), Bank of India (Antwerp), Axis Bank (Hong Kong), and others.
- Loss to PNB:** PNB had to pay ₹6,344.97 crore, including interest, to foreign banks that provided credit based on these fake LoUs/FLCs.
- The ED has attached assets worth ₹2,565.90 crore belonging to Choksi and his companies, and Indian courts have allowed the restitution of some of these properties.

What is LoUs and FLCs

Letters of Undertaking (LoUs)

- A Letter of Undertaking (LoU) is a bank guarantee issued by one bank on behalf of its customer to a foreign branch of another bank, assuring repayment of a loan or credit.
- In essence, it allows the customer to avail short-term credit (buyer's credit) from overseas banks for importing goods or services.
- If the customer fails to repay, the issuing bank bears the liability and must make the payment to the foreign lender.
- In the PNB fraud case, LoUs were allegedly issued without proper approval, collateral, or entry into the bank's core system, enabling the accused firms to borrow money fraudulently.

Foreign Letters of Credit (FLCs)

- A **Foreign Letter of Credit (FLC)** is a **guarantee issued by a bank to a foreign supplier or bank**, promising payment for goods or services supplied to the buyer, provided the terms of the credit are met.
- FLCs are commonly used in **international trade transactions**, where trust and risk mitigation are critical.
- In the fraud case, FLCs were reportedly **enhanced without following due procedure**, and used to **secure funds beyond permitted limits**, again without adequate documentation or security.

Legal Proceedings in Belgium

- In **Belgium**, he was detained by the **Belgian authorities** on April 12, 2025, in Antwerp, in anticipation of further legal proceedings, with confirmation that the **extradition request** was received. **Indian officials** are working closely with Belgian authorities to complete the required **legal procedures**.
- **Arrest Basis:** Arrest warrant executed by the **Antwerp Public Prosecutor's Office** based on an **extradition request** and **open-ended arrest warrants** from 2018 and 2021.
- **Legal Confirmation:** Belgium's **Federal Public Service of Justice** confirmed Choksi's detention and India's extradition request.
- **Current Status:** He is **detained pending judicial proceedings**, with **access to legal counsel ensured**.
- **Bail Plea:** On **April 23, 2025**, a **Belgian court rejected** Choksi's plea for release citing health grounds; further legal steps are awaited.
- **Choksi's Defence:** Citing **cancer treatment** and poor prison conditions in India, his legal team claimed the case was **politically motivated**.
- Choksi had previously been **under investigation** by Indian agencies for the **fraudulent issuance of Letters of Undertaking (LoUs) and Foreign Letters of Credit (FLCs)**, resulting in a massive loss to **PNB**.
- He faces charges of **cheating** and causing a **wrongful loss** to the bank through his company **Gitanjali Gems**, in collaboration with certain **PNB officials**. The **CBI and ED** filed multiple chargesheets against Choksi and his associates.
- Initially, an **Interpol Red Notice** was issued for **Choksi's arrest**, but it was **revoked** after he successfully challenged it. As a result, Indian agencies have relied exclusively on **formal extradition mechanisms** rather than relying on international police alerts.
- **India and Belgium** have a **long-standing extradition treaty**, which facilitated the recent arrest of **Choksi** in Antwerp.

India-Belgium Extradition Treaty

- **Original Treaty (1901):** The initial extradition treaty between Great Britain and Belgium was signed on 29 October 1901.
- **Applicability to India (1954):** Post-independence, India and Belgium confirmed the continued applicability of the 1901 treaty through an exchange of notes in 1954.
- **Need for Revision:** The 1901 treaty had become outdated, covering a limited number of offences and lacking provisions pertinent to contemporary legal challenges such as cybercrime and terrorism.
- **New Extradition Treaty (2020):** In March 2020, the Union Cabinet of India approved and ratified a new extradition treaty with Belgium, replacing the 1901 treaty.
- **Entry into Force:** The new treaty came into effect upon the exchange of instruments of ratification between the two countries.
- The **1901 treaty followed a "list system,"** specifying particular offences eligible for extradition.
- The 2020 treaty adopts the **"dual criminality"** approach, allowing for extradition of offences punishable in both countries, thus accommodating newer crimes like cybercrime without the need for renegotiation.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. In which country was Mehul Choksi detained on April 12, 2025, following India's extradition request?
 (a) Antigua and Barbuda (b) Belgium
 (c) United Kingdom (d) United Arab Emirates
2. What is the approximate amount involved in the Punjab National Bank (PNB) loan fraud case linked to Mehul Choksi and Nirav Modi?
 (a) ₹6,300 crore (b) ₹13,000 crore
 (c) ₹2,500 crore (d) ₹10,000 crore
3. Which branch of Punjab National Bank was involved in the issuance of fraudulent LoUs and FLCs in the PNB fraud case?
 (a) Brady House Branch, Mumbai
 (b) Connaught Place Branch, New Delhi
 (c) Fort Branch, Mumbai
 (d) Chandigarh Sector 17 Branch
4. What is a Letter of Undertaking (LoU) in banking terms?
 (a) A contract for asset leasing
 (b) A direct cash loan from one bank to another
 (c) A guarantee issued by a bank assuring repayment of overseas credit
 (d) A letter authorizing the transfer of government bonds
5. Which Indian investigative agencies have sought Mehul Choksi's extradition from Belgium?
 (a) CBI and NIA (b) ED and NIA
 (c) SEBI and ED (d) CBI and ED
6. Where had Mehul Choksi been residing before his detention in Belgium in 2025?
 (a) Antigua and Barbuda (b) United Kingdom
 (c) United States (d) Singapore
7. Approximately how many fraudulent Letters of Undertaking (LoUs) were allegedly issued in the PNB fraud case?
 (a) 100 (b) 165 (c) 200 (d) 250
8. Which banks provided loans based on the fake LoUs issued by PNB's Brady House branch?
 (a) RBI and SBI (India Branches)
 (b) Only Indian Private Banks
 (c) International branches of SBI, Bank of India, Axis Bank, among others
 (d) European Investment Bank
9. What is a Foreign Letter of Credit (FLC) primarily used for?
 (a) Assuring payment for goods or services in international trade
 (b) Guaranteeing loans for domestic housing projects
 (c) Providing insurance for travel abroad
 (d) Facilitating student loans for overseas education
10. Why did a Belgian court reject Mehul Choksi's plea for release on April 23, 2025?
 (a) Lack of proper documentation
 (b) His defense was considered politically motivated
 (c) The court cited his health grounds were not sufficient for bail
 (d) Absence of extradition treaty
11. Which legal mechanism is currently being used by India for Mehul Choksi's extradition after the revocation of his Interpol Red Notice?
 (a) Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT)
 (b) Extradition request through formal bilateral treaty
 (c) Direct deportation request
 (d) Interpol Special Operations
12. When was the **new** extradition treaty between India and Belgium approved to replace the outdated 1901 treaty?
 (a) 2020 (b) 2001 (c) 1954 (d) 2024
13. Under the 2020 India-Belgium Extradition Treaty, what legal principle allows extradition of newer crimes such as cybercrimes?
 (a) List system
 (b) Dual criminality approach
 (c) Open-ended warrant system
 (d) Diplomatic immunity

14. What argument did Mehul Choksi's legal team present in Belgium to oppose his extradition?

- (a) Lack of sufficient evidence
- (b) Wrongful identity
- (c) Invalid extradition treaty
- (d) Political motivation and poor prison conditions in India

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

1. (b)
9. (a)

2. (b)
10. (c)

3. (a)
11. (b)

4. (c)
12. (a)

5. (d)
13. (b)

6. (a)
14. (d)

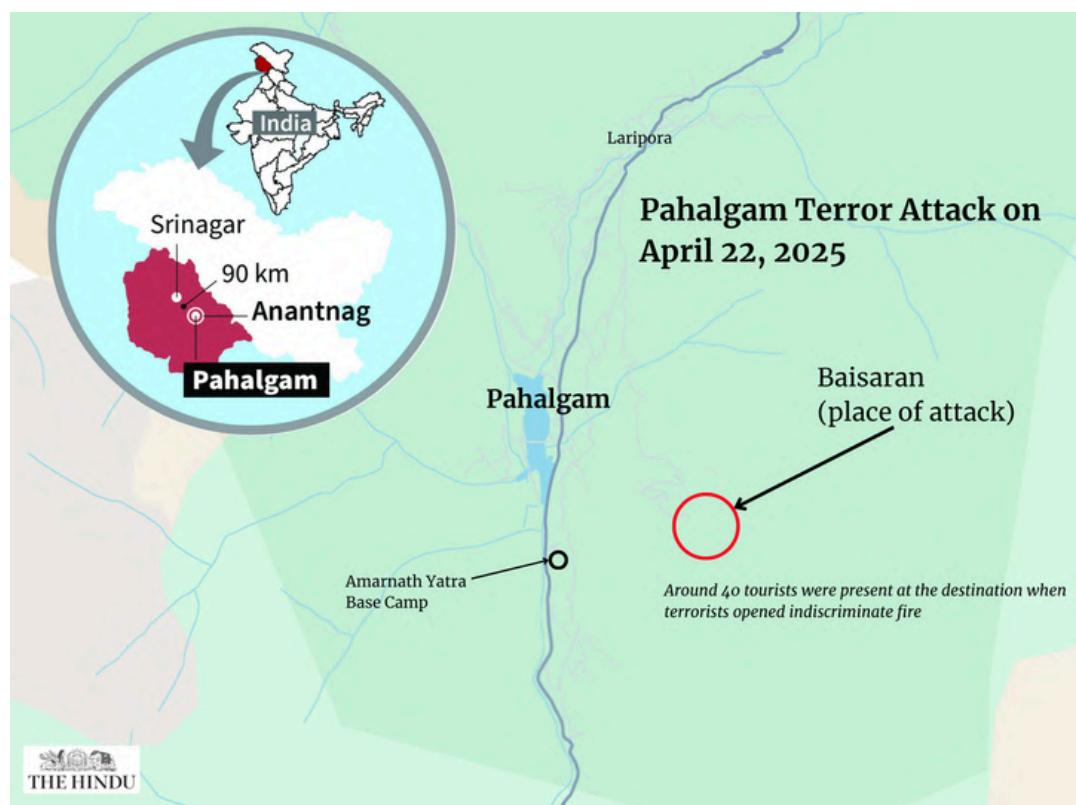
7. (b)

8. (c)

Pahalgam Terror Attack

News Highlights:

- On April 22, 2025, a terrorist attack occurred in **Baisaran Valley, near Pahalgam** in the Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir, India.
- Five militants, armed with **AK-47s and M4 carbines**, opened fire on a group of tourists, resulting in the **deaths of 26 individuals and injuring over 20 others**.
- The attack is considered one of the **deadliest targeting civilians in the region in recent years** and has significantly escalated tensions between India and Pakistan.
- Baisaran Valley**, often referred to as "**Mini Switzerland**," is a popular tourist destination located approximately **5 kilometers from Pahalgam town**.
- The area is **accessible only by foot or horseback** and was not heavily protected at the time of the attack.
- The attack resulted in 26 fatalities, including **25 Indian nationals** from various states and **one Nepalese tourist**.
- Among the deceased were recently married officers from the **Indian Air Force and Indian Navy, and an Intelligence Bureau official**.
- A local Muslim resident was also killed while attempting to protect the tourists.



Perpetrators and Motive

- The Resistance Front (TRF), an offshoot of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), initially claimed responsibility, citing opposition to Indian government policies allowing **non-locals to settle in Kashmir**.
- Four days later, TRF retracted its claim, alleging a communications breach and accusing Indian intelligence of involvement.
- Indian intelligence identified **Saifullah Kasuri (alias Khalid)**, a top LeT commander, as the mastermind.
- Three militants identified by Jammu and Kashmir Police: Asif Fauji (Moosa), Suleman Shah (Yunus), and Abu Talha (Asif), all linked to previous militancy-related incidents.

Government and Political Reactions

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi immediately cut short his visit to Saudi Arabia and convened a meeting of the **Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)**.
- PM Modi termed the attack a "**cowardly assault**" and assured that "**the perpetrators will be hunted down and punished.**"
- Union Home Minister Amit Shah visited the attack site, met survivors and families of victims, and announced financial assistance for affected families.
- Opposition leaders expressed condolences but criticized lapses in security arrangements, calling for improved intelligence mechanisms.

Actions taken by Cabinet Committee on Security

The CCS, comprising key ministers and national security officials, undertook several decisive actions aimed at addressing the immediate security concerns and signaling India's stance on cross-border terrorism.

- On April 23, 2025, following the Pahalgam attack, India's Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) announced the suspension of the IWT, citing national security concerns and Pakistan's alleged support for cross-border terrorism. This is the first time India has suspended the treaty since its inception.
- The Indus Waters Treaty, signed in 1960 and brokered by the World Bank, is a water-sharing agreement between India and Pakistan. Under the treaty:
- Eastern Rivers:** India has control over the Beas, Ravi, and Sutlej rivers.
- Western Rivers:** Pakistan has control over the Indus, Chenab, and Jhelum rivers.
- The Integrated Check Post at Attari has been closed, effectively halting all bilateral movement across the land border. However, individuals who had previously crossed over and possess valid endorsements are permitted to return to India before May 1.

THE KASHMIR RESISTANCE FRONT (TRF)

2019

The Kashmir Resistance Front (KRF) was formed in late 2019

2020

KRF carried out 13 attacks, kills 33 persons, including civilians

2021

KRF carried out 9 attacks, kills 13 persons, including civilians

2023

KRF carried out 1 attacks, casualties is unknown

2024

KRF carried out 1 attacks, casualties is unknown

2025

April 22 – Pahalgam attack: 26 killed, including 2 foreigners.



Leadership Chain:

Founders: Muhammad Abbas Sheikh, Sheikh Sajjad Gul

Recent leaders Basit Dar (killed May 2024) and Ahmed Khalid (spokesperson).

Broader Impact:

TRF adds to the complex insurgency in Kashmir, affecting India-Pakistan relations, raising concerns over regional stability.

Why is TRF a problem between Pakistan and India?

Considered by many to be an offshoot of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the group is allegedly supported by Pakistan's ISI.

- India has withdrawn the **SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES)** benefits for Pakistani nationals. **All existing SVES visas issued to Pakistani citizens have been cancelled**, and Pakistani nationals currently in India under the SVES were directed to leave the country within **48 hours**.
- The Indian Government has declared the **Defence, Naval, and Air Advisors** posted in the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi as **persona non grata**, requiring them to leave India within **one week**. Simultaneously, India announced the withdrawal of its corresponding defence advisors from its High Commission in Islamabad.
- A **downsizing of diplomatic staff** has been announced, with both India and Pakistan agreeing to reduce the strength of their respective High Commissions from **55 officials to 30 officials** by **May 1** as a reciprocal measure.
- India has suspended **all visa services for Pakistani nationals** with immediate effect. Furthermore, all Pakistani citizens residing in India have been directed to leave by **April 27**, except those holding **medical visas**, who have been permitted to stay until **April 29**.
- The **Border Security Force (BSF)** has scaled down the **ceremonial Retreat displays** conducted at **Attari, Hussainiwala, and Sadki** in Punjab. The traditional symbolic handshake between the guards has been suspended, and during the ceremony, the border gates will remain closed. The BSF stated that this adjustment reflects India's serious concerns regarding **cross-border hostility** and reiterates the principle that peace and provocation cannot coexist.

Cabinet Committee on Security

- The **Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)** is one of the most important decision-making bodies in the Indian Government, responsible for matters related to the country's **security, defence, and foreign affairs**.
- It deals with all high-level issues concerning **national security, strategic policies, defence procurement, and internal security**.
- The CCS is chaired by the **Prime Minister of India**. Other permanent members of the committee include the **Minister of Defence, the Minister of Home Affairs, the Minister of External Affairs, and the Minister of Finance**. Occasionally, other ministers or officials may be invited to attend the meetings depending on the agenda.
- The primary functions of the Cabinet Committee on Security include **reviewing and formulating policies regarding national defence and security, overseeing matters concerning internal security challenges**, deciding on significant defence acquisitions and projects, and addressing issues related to India's strategic interests abroad. It also plays a vital role in coordinating between various ministries and agencies to ensure a unified and coherent security policy.
- In addition to security and defence, the CCS has the **authority to approve proposals relating to nuclear energy and matters of critical national importance**. Its decisions are crucial for setting the country's strategic direction, especially in times of conflict, external aggression, terrorism threats, or internal security challenges.

Retaliatory Measures from Pakistan

- **Suspension of the Simla Agreement:** On April 24, 2025, Pakistan suspended the **1972 Simla Agreement**, which had been a cornerstone of **India-Pakistan bilateral relations, particularly concerning the Line of Control in Kashmir**.
- **Expulsion of Indian Diplomats:** Pakistan expelled Indian diplomats and military advisers from its territory, mandating their **departure by April 30, 2025**.
- **Closure of Airspace:** Pakistan closed its airspace to Indian aircraft, affecting both commercial and military flights.
- **Suspension of Trade:** All trade activities between India and Pakistan were halted, further straining economic ties that had already been limited.
- **Visa Restrictions:** Pakistan suspended the issuance of visas to Indian nationals, effectively ceasing people-to-people exchanges.
- **Border Skirmishes:** Reports indicate that Pakistani forces engaged in cross-border firing along the Line of Control (LoC), leading to heightened tensions and military readiness on both sides.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Where did the terrorist attack on April 22, 2025, targeting tourists take place?
 (a) Gulmarg Valley (b) Baisaran Valley
 (c) Sonmarg Valley (d) Dal Lake, Srinagar
2. Which militant group initially claimed responsibility for the Baisaran Valley attack before later retracting it?
 (a) Hizbul Mujahideen (b) Jaish-e-Mohammed
 (c) The Resistance Front (d) Al-Badr
3. Who was identified by Indian intelligence as the mastermind behind the Baisaran Valley terrorist attack?
 (a) Saifullah Kasuri (b) Riyaz Naikoo
 (c) Abu Dujana (d) Zakir Musa
4. What immediate action did Prime Minister Narendra Modi take following news of the Baisaran Valley terror attack?
 (a) Ordered airstrikes across the border
 (b) Declared a national emergency
 (c) Imposed curfew across Jammu and Kashmir
 (d) Cut short his Saudi Arabia visit and convened a CCS meeting
5. How many people were killed in the Baisaran Valley attack, and who were among the deceased?
 (a) 20 (b) 26 (c) 30 (d) 15
6. Which visa scheme's benefits have been withdrawn by India for Pakistani nationals following recent diplomatic tensions?
 (a) SAARC Tourism Visa Scheme
 (b) SAARC Business Visa Scheme
 (c) SAARC Medical Visa Program
 (d) SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme
7. What status was given to the Defence, Naval, and Air Advisors of the Pakistani High Commission by India?
 (a) Refugee status (b) Diplomatic immunity
8. By what date have India and Pakistan agreed to reduce the staff strength of their respective High Commissions?
 (a) April 27, 2025 (b) May 1, 2025
 (c) May 15, 2025 (d) June 1, 2025
9. Who chairs the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) in India?
 (a) Defence Minister (b) Home Minister
 (c) Prime Minister (d) External Affairs Minister
10. Which of the following is **not** a permanent member of the Cabinet Committee on Security?
 (a) Law and Justice Minister
 (b) External Affairs Minister
 (c) Finance Minister
 (d) Defence Minister
11. On April 24, 2025, which key agreement did Pakistan suspend, worsening tensions with India?
 (a) Lahore Declaration
 (b) Simla Agreement
 (c) Tashkent Agreement
 (d) Indus Waters Treaty
12. Which of the following was **not** among Pakistan's retaliatory measures against India in April 2025?
 (a) Closure of airspace to Indian aircraft
 (b) Expulsion of Indian diplomats
 (c) Signing of a new peace treaty
 (d) Suspension of trade with India
13. Which immediate security challenge was reported at the India-Pakistan border following Pakistan's retaliatory actions?
 (a) Joint peacekeeping exercises
 (b) Construction of a new border fence
 (c) Opening of new trade corridors
 (d) Cross-border firing along the Line of Control

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

- | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (c) | 3. (a) | 4. (d) | 5. (b) | 6. (d) | 7. (c) | 8. (b) |
| 9. (c) | 10. (a) | 11. (b) | 12. (c) | 13. (d) | | | |

7 Hours GK Marathon in LE KOLKATA



International Affairs

Tension over geo-politics in Arctic; Interests of all the major players explained

News Highlights:

Tensions have escalated in the Arctic due to the **strategic, military, and economic implications** of melting sea ice, which has opened access to **untapped resources** and new **maritime trade routes**. Recent developments include increased **military posturing**, overlapping territorial claims, and geopolitical conflicts among Arctic and non-Arctic states.

Geopolitical Significance of the Arctic

- ◆ The Arctic region is located in the Northern Hemisphere and is governed by eight states: **United States, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Russia, Greenland/Denmark, Finland, and Canada**. These countries form the **Arctic Council**.
- ◆ **Climate and Environmental Changes:** The Arctic is warming at a pace nearly **four times higher** than the rest of the world, resulting in the **melting of the polar ice cap** and opening new economic prospects such as **shipping routes** and **natural resource exploration**.
- ◆ **Strategic Security Concerns:** As Arctic ice melts, new **transit routes** such as the **Northern Sea Route (NSR)** are becoming viable, cutting shipping time by 40%. However, **militarisation by Russia** and increased interest from **China** and **NATO** heighten the region's geopolitical importance.
- ◆ **Arctic Council's Shift in Focus:** The Arctic Council, once focused on **environmental cooperation**, has been disrupted by Russia's aggression in Ukraine, limiting its ability to address **comprehensive pan-Arctic issues**. The **geopolitical tensions** between Russia and Western countries further complicate regional cooperation.



- ◆ **Military Build-up by Russia:** Russia has heavily militarised its Arctic territories, establishing **ballistic missile submarines** and **nuclear warhead storage facilities** in the Kola Peninsula, which raises concerns for **NATO**. This has transformed the Arctic into a potential **strategic battleground**.
- ◆ **Melting sea ice** due to climate change is unlocking access to **13% of the world's undiscovered oil** and **30% of untapped natural gas**, as per a **2009 U.S. Geological Survey report**.

New Security Developments and Infrastructure

Pituffik Space Base in Greenland - Enhanced Early Warning Capabilities

- Upgraded Early Warning Radar (UEWR):** The United States has modernized the UEWR at Pituffik Space Base (formerly Thule Air Base) to provide **240° coverage**, operating **24/7** to detect **ballistic missile threats** and monitor **space debris**
- Infrastructure Expansion:** A \$323 million contract has been awarded to Serco Inc. to upgrade **power systems** and support **missile defense** and **space surveillance** missions at the base.
- Strategic Significance:** Located approximately 1,500 km north of the Arctic Circle, Pituffik is a critical component of the U.S. **Golden Dome missile defense program**.



The **GIUK gap** (Greenland-Iceland-U.K.) is a **naval choke point critical to NATO**, with heightened emphasis from the **U.K.** on blocking potential Russian submarine access to the **Atlantic Ocean**.

Faroe Islands (Denmark) - New Air Surveillance Radar

- Radar Installation:** Denmark and the **Faroe Islands** have agreed to establish a **new air surveillance radar** on Sornfelli Peak to monitor **airspace between Iceland, Norway, and the United Kingdom**.
- Coverage Area:** The radar will have a range of **300–400 km**, enhancing **surveillance capabilities** in the **North Atlantic region**.
- Strategic Importance:** This initiative aims to **close surveillance gaps** and **strengthen defense cooperation** within the **Kingdom of Denmark**.

Naval Air Station Keflavik in Iceland - Deployment of P-8A Poseidon Aircraft

- Aircraft Deployment:** The **U.S. Navy** has stationed **P-8A Poseidon aircraft** at **Keflavik Air Base** for **Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW)** operations.
- Operational Role:** These aircraft conduct **maritime patrols** and **joint exercises** with **NATO allies**, enhancing regional maritime security.

NATO's Joint Expeditionary Force - Activation of "Nordic Warden"

- Mission Focus:** "Nordic Warden" is a **UK-led initiative** within the **Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF)** aimed at protecting critical undersea infrastructure and monitoring maritime threats in **Northern Europe**.
- Operational Scope:** The operation involves **multinational maritime and air units**, including **Denmark, Iceland, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania**.
- Technological Integration:** The system utilizes **artificial intelligence** to analyze data from multiple sources, including the **Automatic Identification System (AIS)**, to detect and respond to potential threats in real-time.

Key Flashpoints in the Arctic

1. Northwest Passage Dispute

The **Northwest Passage (NWP)** is a sea route traversing Canada's Arctic Archipelago, connecting the **Atlantic and Pacific Oceans**. Its legal status is contested, raising implications for **sovereignty, international law, and emerging Arctic navigation** due to **climate change**.

Canada's Position



- Internal Waters Claim: Canada asserts that the NWP



constitutes its **internal waters**, granting it **full sovereignty** over the route. This claim is based on **historical usage** and the drawing of **straight baselines** around its Arctic Archipelago in **1985**.

- Regulatory Authority:** Under this claim, Canada maintains the right to **regulate navigation, enforce environmental laws**, and require **foreign vessels** to seek permission before transit. The **Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act (1970)** exemplifies Canada's efforts to assert control over these waters.

USA's Position



- International Strait Assertion:** The U.S. contends that the NWP is an **international strait**, allowing for the **right of transit passage** without the need for prior consent from Canada. This perspective emphasizes the importance of **unimpeded navigation** for global maritime operations.
- Freedom of Navigation:** The U.S. maintains that accepting Canada's claim could set a precedent affecting **international navigation rights** elsewhere. Consequently, it has historically refrained from recognizing Canada's **sovereignty** over the passage.

1985 Polar Sea Incident and Subsequent Agreement

- Polar Sea Voyage:** In 1985, the U.S. Coast Guard **icebreaker Polar Sea** navigated the NWP without seeking Canada's permission, leading to a **diplomatic dispute**. Canada responded by reinforcing its **sovereignty claims** over the passage.
- 1988 Arctic Cooperation Agreement:** To manage future incidents, Canada and the U.S. signed an agreement stipulating that **U.S. icebreakers** would seek Canada's **consent** before transiting the NWP. Importantly, this agreement allowed both nations to **maintain their respective legal positions** on the passage's status.

Current Status and Ongoing Discussions

- Legal Dispute Unresolved:** Despite practical arrangements like the **1988 agreement**, the fundamental **legal disagreement** between **Canada** and the **U.S.** over the NWP's status remains **unresolved**.
- Potential for International Arbitration:** Both countries reserve the right to seek resolution through **international legal bodies**, though neither has pursued this route to date.
- Strategic Importance:** As **Arctic navigation** becomes more feasible, the **strategic and economic significance** of the NWP is likely to increase, potentially prompting renewed **negotiations or legal challenges** regarding its status.

1. Russia's Military Presence

- Russia's Arctic Strategy:** Russia's **2035 Arctic Strategy** aims to exploit the **region's resources** and enhance its military presence along the **Northern Sea Route (NSR)**. NATO's strategic response must address these challenges while ensuring **regional stability** and preventing further militarisation.
- Northern Sea Route Development:** President Vladimir Putin has prioritized the expansion of the **Northern Sea Route (NSR)**, aiming to boost trade with Asia and beyond. This includes enhancing port capacities, constructing new terminals, and developing a merchant fleet with international partners.

2. Russia's Military Presence

- **Russia's Arctic Strategy:** Russia's **2035 Arctic Strategy** aims to exploit the **region's resources** and enhance its military presence along the **Northern Sea Route (NSR)**. NATO's strategic response must address these challenges while ensuring **regional stability** and preventing further militarisation.
- **Northern Sea Route Development:** President Vladimir Putin has prioritized the expansion of the **Northern Sea Route (NSR)**, aiming to boost trade with Asia and beyond. This includes enhancing port capacities, constructing new terminals, and developing a merchant fleet with international partners.
- **Military Expansion:** Russia has reestablished 14 Cold War-era Arctic military bases and launched icebreaking warships. It has conducted naval exercises, including missile tests from submarines, to assert its presence in the region.
 - Russia maintains the **largest fleet of Arctic icebreakers**, including nuclear-powered vessels. MIR-1 submarine mission (2007) symbolically planted the Russian flag beneath the North Pole.
 - Moscow operates Soviet-era Arctic military bases and has conducted joint naval drills with China. The **Kola Peninsula** houses Russia's strategic submarine bases, vital for Northern Fleet operations.



3. China's Arctic Aspirations



- **Research and Expeditions:** **China's Arctic Policy** was first released in **2018**, outlining China's stance as a "**Near-Arctic State**". This policy advocates for participation in **governance** and **resource management**. **Arctic Yellow River Station** in **Svalbard**, established in 2004, is one of China's key research facilities in the region, focusing on **marine biology** and **glaciology**.
- **Icebreaker Fleet:** **Xue Long (Snow Dragon)**: Acquired in **1994**, China's first icebreaker has been pivotal in **polar expeditions**, enabling China to undertake **41 Antarctic** and **13 Arctic** expeditions.
 - **Xue Long 2**, delivered in **2019**, is China's second icebreaker with higher icebreaking capacity, allowing access to the Arctic and enhancing China's Arctic capabilities.
- **Infrastructure Investments:** China has made significant investments in Arctic infrastructure, including **harbor construction** and **research facilities** in **Russia's Arctic region**, specifically at key locations such as **Murmansk**, **Sabetta**, and **Arkhangelsk**.
 - Plans to develop **nuclear-powered icebreakers** to access polar shipping lanes.
- **Polar Silk Road:** China's strategic partnership with **Russia** has been cemented through the development of the **Polar Silk Road**, connecting the Arctic with China's **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**. This initiative aims to open new trade routes and access critical resources while strengthening ties between China and Russia in the Arctic.
- **Energy Partnerships:** China has heavily invested in **Russia's Arctic energy projects**, including **Yamal LNG** and **Arctic LNG 2**. China's investment has been crucial in these projects, providing both funding and technological expertise for extracting **liquefied natural gas (LNG)**.
- **Increased Arctic Shipping:** China's growing role in Arctic shipping is exemplified by its investments in **LNG tankers** and **ice-class vessels**. In **2023**, **97 transits** were recorded on the **Northern Sea Route (NSR)**, with **95%** of traffic being between **Russia** and **China**. China is also planning to use the **NSR** for more direct shipping between Europe and China, bypassing traditional routes.

Arctic

Council



About the Council

- The **Arctic Council** is the **leading intergovernmental forum** for promoting **cooperation, coordination, and interaction** among **Arctic States, Indigenous Peoples**, and other Arctic inhabitants.
- It primarily focuses on **sustainable development** and **environmental protection** in the Arctic.
- Established:** 19 September 1996 via the **Ottawa Declaration**.
- Decision-making:** Operates on **consensus** among the **eight Arctic States**.

Members of the Council

Permanent Member Nations



Canada
The Kingdom of Denmark
Finland
Iceland
Norway
The Russian Federation
Sweden
The United States



■ Permanent Members
■ Observer Nations

- Chairmanship:** Rotates every two years among the Arctic States. Past chairs include **Canada, USA, Finland, Iceland, Russia, Norway, Denmark, and Sweden**. The current chair of the Arctic Council is **Norway**, holding the position for the period 2023–2025.
- Senior Arctic Officials (SAOs):** Each member state appoints a SAO to represent its interests and implement **Ministerial Declarations**.
- Meetings:**
 - SAOs and Permanent Participants:** Meet at least twice a year.

Structure and Operations



- Ministerial Meetings:** Held biennially in the current **Chair State**.
- Working Groups and Task Forces:** Meet periodically at various locations.
- Arctic Council Secretariat (ACS):** Administrative unit based in **Tromsø, Norway**, which supports the Council's operations and documentation.

India's Strategic and Economic Interests in the Arctic

Strategic Interests in the Arctic

- Historical Engagement:** India's engagement with the Arctic began in **1920** with the signing of the **Svalbard Treaty**. Over the years, India has developed its research capacity in the Arctic through institutions like the **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)** and established **Himadri**, its first research station in **Svalbard, Norway**.
- India's Arctic Policy:**
 - In 2022, India formalized its Arctic Policy, focusing on six key pillars:
 - Scientific commitment to research on climate change and environmental protection.

- **Economic development** through resource exploration, including oil, gas, and minerals.
- **Enhancing transportation and connectivity**, especially through **shipping routes**.
- **Improving governance** and fostering **international cooperation**.
- **Strategic and Economic Drivers:** India's interests in the Arctic are driven by its energy needs and **climate vulnerability**. The region holds **hydrocarbon reserves**, including **oil and natural gas**, that are vital for India's **energy security**. The melting Arctic ice also affects the **Indian monsoon system**, which is crucial for its **agriculture and food security**.
- **India's Counter Strategy:** India's partnership with **Russia** on Arctic energy projects, combined with its **neutral stance** and **strategic autonomy**, can counterbalance China's growing influence. India must also protect its **energy supply lines** from the potential monopolisation of Arctic shipping routes by China.

Economic Opportunities in the Arctic

- **Resource Potential:** The **Arctic region** is believed to contain **90 billion barrels of oil** and **1,669 trillion cubic feet of natural gas**, according to the **2008 US Geological Survey**. However, **high extraction costs** and **remote locations** complicate its economic feasibility.
- **New Shipping Routes:** Melting ice has led to **shorter shipping routes** between **Europe** and **Asia**, making the **Northern Sea Route (NSR)** a potential commercial corridor. Although **China**, **South Korea**, and **Japan** benefit more from the route, **India** can still use it as an alternative **trade route**, especially in collaboration with **Russia** and the **International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**.
- **India-Russia Arctic Cooperation:** India has been involved in **Russian Arctic projects**, investing **US\$15 billion** in **oil and gas** ventures. The **Chennai-Vladivostok Eastern Maritime Corridor** is another initiative aimed at improving **shipping links** between **India** and the **Arctic**.



MIND MAP

Rising Tensions

- Russia: Militarized Arctic (Kola Peninsula, submarines, missile bases).
- NATO: GIUK Gap protection; Nordic Warden mission.
- Arctic Council weakened (Ukraine War impact).

New Security Infrastructure

- Pituffik Base, Greenland: US missile defense upgrades (UEWR radar).
- Faroe Islands: New Danish radar (Sornfelli Peak).
- Iceland Keflavik Base: US P-8A Poseidon aircraft for anti-submarine ops.
- Nordic Warden: NATO-JEF surveillance to secure undersea cables.

India's Interests in the Arctic

- Historical Ties: Svalbard Treaty (1920).
- Himadri Station: Research facility in Svalbard.
- Arctic Policy (2022): 6 Pillars (Research, Resources, Connectivity, Governance, Cooperation, Human welfare).
- Strategic Goals:
 - Energy security (oil, gas from Arctic projects).
 - Protect monsoon patterns (climate link).
 - Counter China's growing influence.
 - Explore shipping through NSR (via Russia collaboration).

7. India's Arctic Economic Opportunities

- Huge hydrocarbon reserves but costly extraction.
- Potential use of Northern Sea Route + INSTC (via Russia).
- Chennai–Vladivostok Maritime Corridor development.

Key Flashpoints

- Northwest Passage Dispute:
 - Canada: Internal waters claim.
 - US: International strait view.
 - 1988 Agreement: Practical cooperation but legal dispute unresolved.
- Russia's Arctic Expansion:
 - Northern Sea Route (NSR) development.
 - Largest Arctic icebreaker fleet.
 - Revived Soviet-era military bases.
- China's Arctic Ambitions:
 - "Near-Arctic State" policy (2018).
 - Research stations (Yellow River Station in Svalbard).
 - Icebreaker fleet (Xue Long 1 & 2).
 - Polar Silk Road with Russia.
 - Heavy investment in Yamal LNG, Arctic LNG 2.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following countries is not a member of the Arctic Council?
 - (a) India
 - (b) Canada
 - (c) Norway
 - (d) Russia

2. According to a 2009 U.S. Geological Survey report, the melting Arctic is believed to contain significant reserves of which valuable natural resources?
 - (a) Renewable energy and marine biodiversity
 - (b) Rare earth minerals and freshwater lakes
 - (c) Deep-sea fish stocks and methane reserves
 - (d) Untapped natural gas and undiscovered oil

3. Which of the following geographic zones forms a key naval choke point, vital to NATO's Atlantic defense strategy?
 - (a) Norway-Denmark-France
 - (b) Sweden-Finland-Scotland
 - (c) Greenland-Iceland-U.K.
 - (d) Canada-Spain-Germany

4. Which Arctic shipping route, increasingly navigable due to melting ice, is disputed between Canada and the U.S. over sovereignty and navigation rights?
 - (a) Northern Sea Route
 - (b) Northwest Passage
 - (c) Bering Strait Lane
 - (d) Arctic Circle Corridor

5. In 2025, which country reignited international debate by expressing interest in purchasing Greenland, raising sovereignty concerns?
 - (a) Russia
 - (b) China
 - (c) U.S.A
 - (d) Canada

6. Greenland, a strategically significant Arctic territory, has been under which country's control for over 300 years?
 - (a) British
 - (b) Danish
 - (c) Swedish
 - (d) Norwegian

7. Which U.S. military installation is located in Greenland, a strategic Arctic territory under Danish control?
 - (a) Pituffik Space Base
 - (b) Bering Naval Station
 - (c) Arctic Command Post
 - (d) North Atlantic Radar Base

8. Which country maintains the world's largest fleet of Arctic icebreakers, including several nuclear-powered vessels?
 - (a) Canada
 - (b) Norway
 - (c) United States
 - (d) Russia

9. In 2007, the MIR-1 submersible mission planted a Russian flag beneath which geopolitically significant Arctic location?
 - (a) Barents Sea
 - (b) Arctic Circle
 - (c) North Pole
 - (d) Bering Strait

10. Russia has conducted joint naval drills in the Arctic with which of the following countries, reflecting increasing geopolitical cooperation?
 - (a) China
 - (b) Canada
 - (c) Norway
 - (d) Sweden

11. Which location serves as the base for Russia's strategic submarines and is crucial to its Northern Fleet operations?
 - (a) Bering Strait Region
 - (b) Novaya Zemlya Base
 - (c) Siberian Arctic Coast
 - (d) Kola Peninsula Region

12. A new early-warning radar system is planned to be installed in which of the following Danish-administered North Atlantic territory?
 - (a) Faroe Islands
 - (b) Bornholm Island
 - (c) Jutland Peninsula
 - (d) Zealand Region

13. The U.S. Naval Air Station in Keflavik, Iceland, currently supports operations of which advanced maritime patrol aircraft?
 - (a) F-16 Fighting Falcon jets
 - (b) C-130 Hercules transport planes
 - (c) P-8A Poseidon aircraft
 - (d) MQ-9 Reaper surveillance drones

14. What is the name of NATO's Joint Expeditionary Force operation focused on enhancing Arctic and Nordic defence readiness?

- (a) Nordic Warden
(b) Arctic Resolve
(c) Polar Sentinel
(d) Northern Shield
- (a) Sweden
(b) Estonia
(c) Poland
(d) Lithuania
15. Who among the following is also a core member of "Nordic Warden," NATO's Joint Expeditionary Force, along with Denmark, Iceland, the U.K., and Norway?
(a) Germany
(b) Netherlands
(c) Finland
(d) France
16. Which of the following is not included among the expanded members of NATO's "Nordic Warden" Joint Expeditionary Force?
17. Under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), what is the standard maritime boundary within which a coastal state has exclusive rights over natural resources?
(a) 100-nautical-mile EEZ
(b) High Seas Continental Zone
(c) Polar Sovereignty Radius
(d) 200-nautical-mile EEZ

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

- | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. (a) | 2. (d) | 3. (c) | 4. (b) | 5. (c) | 6. (b) | 7. (a) | 8. (d) |
| 9. (c) | 10. (a) | 11. (d) | 12. (a) | 13. (c) | 14. (a) | 15. (b) | 16. (c) |
| 17. (d) | | | | | | | |

USA Liberation Day Tariffs

News Highlights:

On April 2, 2025, President Donald Trump declared a **national emergency** citing persistent **trade deficits** and **alleged unfair trade practices by other countries**. Utilising the **International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA)** of 1977, he introduced a new tariff regime termed the "Liberation Day" tariffs. This initiative was presented as a "Declaration of Economic Independence," aiming to rectify what the administration perceived as decades of detrimental trade relationships for the United States.

Invocation of IEEPA

The **IEEPA grants the U.S. President authority to regulate international commerce** during a national emergency. President Trump invoked this act to implement the new tariff structure, marking a significant expansion of its traditional use, which had primarily been for sanctions and asset freezes.

Tariff Structure:

- **Universal Tariff:** A 10% tariff was imposed on all imports into the United States, **effective April 5, 2025**.
- **Country-Specific "Reciprocal" Tariffs:** Additional tariffs, ranging from **11% to 50%**, were levied on imports from 57 countries based on the magnitude of their trade surpluses with the U.S. These tariffs were scheduled to take effect on **April 9, 2025**, but were suspended for 90 days for all countries except China.
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China-USA Trade War

China recently increased tariffs on **American goods from 84% to 125%** in direct retaliation to US President Donald Trump's decision to raise tariffs on Chinese imports to 145%. At the height of the tensions between the two countries, US slapped up to a 245% tariff on imports of Chinese goods.

Factors Leading to the Intensification of Tariffs

Trade Deficit Concerns: The United States recorded a **USD 295 billion trade deficit** with China in 2024, which served as a major trigger behind its decision to hike tariffs. The US perceives such trade deficits as evidence of losing competitiveness in global trade, viewing China's surplus as both **unfair** and **strategically risky**.

Allegations of Unfair Practices: The United States accuses China of engaging in **intellectual property theft** and **forced technology transfers**, which undermine **fair competition**. Tariff hikes have thus been framed as necessary to **protect domestic industries**.

Chinese Response: China's move to raise tariffs was a direct response to the US's tariff hikes, continuing the broader, ongoing **trade conflict** between the two economies.

Supply Chain Security: Both nations are attempting to **reduce mutual dependency**, especially in critical sectors like **semiconductors, rare earth metals**, and **electric vehicle components**. The US has enacted measures like the **CHIPS Act** and pursued partnerships with countries like India (under the **India-US COMPACT Initiative**) and Vietnam to **diversify supply chains**.

Geopolitical Rivalry: Beyond trade, US-China tensions are rooted in **strategic conflicts** concerning Taiwan, the **South China Sea**, and **technological dominance** in fields such as **artificial intelligence** and **quantum computing**.

Tariff Evasion through Third Countries: Chinese firms have increasingly rerouted exports through nations like Vietnam and Malaysia to bypass US tariffs, leading the US to expand its scrutiny to third-country trade.

Risk of Global Recession: Together, the US and China account for about **43% of global GDP** (as per **IMF 2024 estimates**). A simultaneous economic slowdown in both countries could severely impact global growth, with the **WTO warning that a full-blown trade war could slash global GDP by up to 7%**.

Disruption of Global Supply Chains: Countries heavily reliant on **Chinese manufacturing** (e.g., ASEAN, EU) or on **US technology** (e.g., software, chips) would face significant economic shocks. Efforts to reshore or near-shore production would be expensive and time-consuming.

Tariffs on India

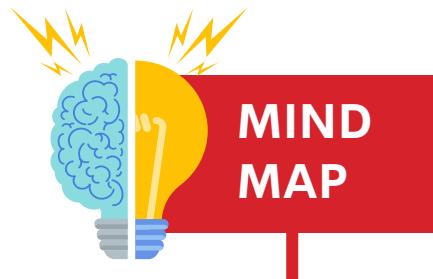
- U.S. President Donald Trump announced a new tariff regime, imposing a **10% baseline tariff on all imports**, with **higher "reciprocal"** tariffs for countries with significant trade surpluses with the U.S. **India was assigned a 26% tariff rate**, reflecting concerns over its trade practices and market access barriers.
- Economic Impact on India:** Analysts estimate that the tariffs could affect up to 87% of India's exports to the U.S., valued at approximately \$66 billion. Sectors like pharmaceuticals and automotive exports, worth around \$11 billion, are expected to be most impacted.
- Exemptions:** Certain sectors, such as **pharmaceuticals**, have been exempted from the new tariffs, providing some relief to Indian exporters in these industries.

India-U.S. Trade Relations

- India's Largest Trading Partner:** The **United States** is India's largest trading partner, with a **trade surplus of US\$ 36.8 billion** in FY24. Major exports include **engineering goods, electronic goods, gems and jewellery, pharmaceutical products, light crude oil, and petroleum**.
- Total Bilateral Trade:** The trade between **India and the US** reached **US\$ 118.2 billion** in FY24, down slightly from **US\$ 128.78 billion** in FY22.
- Trade Surplus:** India had a **trade surplus of US\$ 36.8 billion** in FY24 with the US.
- Indian Exports to the US:** Total exports from India to the US amounted to **US\$ 77.5 billion**.
- American Exports to India:** US exports to India stood at **US\$ 40.7 billion**.
- US as a Key Investor:** The **United States** is the **third-largest investor** in India, with cumulative **FDI inflows of US\$ 67.76 billion** between April 2000 and September 2024.
- Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA):** The **India-US trade talks** are progressing with a goal of finalizing a **BTA**. These discussions aim to **increase market access, reduce tariffs, and ensure reciprocal trade benefits**.
- 2024 Trade Deficit:** The US had a **\$45.7 billion goods trade deficit** with India in 2024, a **5.1% increase** from the previous year.
- Significant Progress in Talks:** Both sides are working on agreements concerning **tariffs, rules of origin, customs facilitation, and addressing technical barriers to trade**.
- India's Tariff Reductions:** India has committed to **further reducing tariffs on US products** as part of the BTA.

Implications of the US-China Trade War on India

- **Supply Chain Disruptions:** Sectors like electronics, automobiles, and pharmaceuticals in India are heavily dependent on Chinese components. Rising costs or shipment delays could make goods more expensive and harder to procure.
- **Risks to the Pharmaceutical Sector:** Approximately **70% of India's Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs)** are imported from China. Any disruptions could drive up drug prices and affect India's pharma exports and healthcare sector.
- **Impact on GDP and Inflation:** A slowdown in global demand could weigh on India's economic growth. For instance, during the 2018 phase of the US-China trade war, India's GDP growth slowed from 8.3% (2017–18) to 4.2% (2019–20).
- Inflation could also rise due to costlier imports, impacting household budgets and business operations.
- **Potential Export Opportunities:** The imposition of steep US tariffs on Chinese goods creates opportunities for Indian sectors like textiles and leather to expand their share in the US market by offering competitive alternatives.



MIND MAP

India-U.S. Trade and Strategic Partnership – Mind Map

1. Bilateral Trade Overview

- **FY24:** Total trade \$118.2 billion.
- **India's Surplus:** \$36.8 billion.
- **Top Indian exports:** Engineering goods, electronic goods, pharma.
- **U.S. 3rd largest FDI source:** \$67.76 billion (till Sep 2024).

2. Recent Trade Talks

- BTA (Bilateral Trade Agreement) negotiations underway.
- India to lower tariffs on U.S. products (e.g., bourbon, ICT goods).
- **Target:** \$300 billion trade by 2026–27.

3. Strategic Cooperation

- **Defense:**
 - New 10-year Defense Framework.
 - Major arms procurements (P-8I, Apache helicopters, Javelins).
 - RDP Agreement negotiations.
- **COMPACT Initiative:** Military, Commerce, Technology acceleration.
- **TRUST Initiative:** Cooperation in AI, Semiconductors, Space, Biotechnology.

Liberation Day Tariffs (April 2, 2025)

- 10% Baseline Tariff on countries with high duties on U.S. goods.
- 25% Tariff on Automobiles, Steel, Aluminum.
- 245% Tariff on Chinese imports.
- Country-specific Tariffs: China 54%, India 26%, Vietnam 46%, EU 20%, South Korea 25%, Japan 24%
- Immediate global market crash: Sensex down 1,390 points.

U.S.–China Trade Tensions

- 2024: U.S. exports to China: \$195 billion; Deficit: \$295 billion.
- 2018 onwards: U.S.–China trade war (tariffs, tech restrictions).
- Biden: Maintained and expanded tariffs.
- Export controls: Semiconductors, AI, military tech restrictions.
- Chinese retaliation: WTO case (2025), third-country rerouting (Vietnam, Mexico).

4. Multilateral Engagement

- Quad Partnership.
- Indo-Pacific focus: Free, Open, Prosperous region.

5. Energy and Nuclear Cooperation

- U.S.–India Energy Security Partnership.
- Realization of 123 Civil Nuclear Agreement.
- Collaboration on oil, gas, nuclear energy.

6. Greenfield Investments & Students

- Indian companies invested \$40+ billion, created 425,000 U.S. jobs.
- 320,260 Indian students in U.S. universities (2023), \$7.7 billion economic impact.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

1. (d) 2. (a) 3. (c) 4. (b) 5. (d) 6. (c) 7. (c) 8. (b)
9. (d) 10. (c) 11. (c) 12. (b) 13. (c) 14. (a)

WHO Concludes Negotiations on Pandemic Agreement

News Highlights:

On April 16, 2025, the World Health Organization's Intergovernmental Negotiating Body finalized the **draft WHO Pandemic Agreement** after over **three years** of discussions and 13 rounds of negotiations.

- The draft treaty, hailed as a "generational accord," aims to improve **pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response** globally. It will be presented for adoption at the upcoming **World Health Assembly** in May 2025.

Background and Need for the Treaty

- The treaty negotiations began in **December 2021** in the wake of the **COVID-19 pandemic**, which exposed massive inequities in the **global health system**, especially in the **distribution of vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics**.
 - Reports, including one from the **Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (2021)** and studies published in **Nature (2022)**, showed that **millions of lives could have been saved** if resources had been distributed equitably.
 - The pandemic's mismanagement, vaccine hoarding by rich nations, and lack of transparency in pathogen data sharing highlighted the need for a **binding international agreement**.

Key Features of the WHO Pandemic Agreement

Pathogen Access and Benefit Sharing (PABS)

- Landmark Provision:** Countries sharing **pathogen samples and genomic data** will be guaranteed access to the **diagnostics, treatments, and vaccines** developed from that data.
- Aimed at correcting historic imbalances where **developing nations** supplied samples but received **no access** to resulting medical innovations.
- Negotiations on the **governance and logistics** of the PABS system are expected to continue even after the treaty's adoption.

Pharmaceutical Commitments

- 10% of global production** of pandemic-related vaccines, drugs, and tests will be **donated to WHO**.
- An **additional 10%** will be made available at **affordable prices**.
- Technology transfers** will occur on "**mutually agreed terms**", shifting away from **voluntary sharing** previously favored by pharmaceutical companies.

National Policies and R&D Funding Conditions

- Countries must develop national policies that require **conditions on public research funding**, ensuring **equitable access** to resulting medical products during a pandemic.
- Encourages **public intervention** when necessary to ensure that taxpayer-funded innovations benefit citizens and vulnerable populations globally.

Technology Sharing: Countries are urged to "**promote, facilitate, or incentivise**" technology and know-how transfer to manufacturers in developing countries to boost **self-reliance** and **regional vaccine production**.

Legal Status and Limitations

- **Binding Yet Limited Powers:** The treaty is **legally binding**, making it only the **second such accord** in WHO's history (after the **2003 Framework Convention on Tobacco Control**). However, **Clause 24(3)** explicitly states that **WHO cannot override national laws**, and has **no authority to mandate lockdowns, vaccine mandates, or travel bans**.
- **Enforcement Challenges:** **WHO cannot enforce compliance**, especially in situations like **vaccine hoarding** during COVID-19. Pharmaceutical companies may remain hesitant without **guarantees of intellectual property (IP) protections** and **regulatory clarity**.

Geopolitical and Industry Reactions

- **Absence of the United States:** The **United States withdrew** from negotiations after **Donald Trump's return to the presidency in January 2025** and his move to **exit WHO** again. Experts warn this creates a "**gaping hole**" in the agreement due to the US's **dominance in the biotech and pharmaceutical industries**.
- **Industry Concerns:** The **International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA)** emphasised the need for **IP protections** and **legal certainty** to sustain innovation and investment during health crises.

World Health Organisation

- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** is a **specialized agency of the United Nations (UN)** responsible for international public health coordination and cooperation.
- WHO was **established on 7 April 1948** as part of the post-World War II global institutional restructuring. This day is annually commemorated as **World Health Day**.
- Its **headquarters is located in Geneva, Switzerland**, symbolising the global and neutral character of the institution.
- WHO emerged by consolidating earlier global health efforts such as:
 - The **Health Organization of the League of Nations** (1923–1946), which was the first international body focusing on public health.
- The **International Office of Public Health (OIHP)**, established in **1907 in Paris**, which focused on epidemic notifications and quarantine regulations.
- The **WHO Constitution** was adopted by the International Health Conference on **22 July 1946** and came into force on **7 April 1948** after ratification by 26 member states.
- As of 2025, **194 countries are members** of WHO, representing nearly universal global participation.
- **WHO and India**
- India has been a member since **January 12, 1948**.
- The regional office for **South East Asia is located in New Delhi**.
- Significant health campaigns in India include **the eradication of smallpox by 1977** and the removal of India from the list of **polio-endemic countries in 2014**.



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

1. (d) 2. (a) 3. (b) 4. (c) 5. (b) 6. (d) 7. (a) 8. (c)
9. (d) 10. (c) 11. (a) 12. (b) 13. (c) 14. (d) 15. (d) 16. (c)
17.(d) 18. (b)

6th BIMSTEC Summit

News Highlights:

On April 3, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the **6th BIMSTEC Summit** hosted by Thailand. The theme of the summit, "**BIMSTEC: Prosperous, Resilient, and Open**," highlighted the importance of regional cooperation to address global challenges and foster sustainable growth.

- During the summit, Prime Minister Modi emphasized **India's leadership** in advancing **climate action, sustainable development, and capacity-building** within the BIMSTEC region, while advocating for initiatives that promote a **just transition** for all nations.

Key Highlights of the 6th BIMSTEC Summit

Summit Declarations and Documents

- Summit Declaration** focused on collective efforts to ensure shared growth and sustainability, emphasizing **climate action, disaster resilience, and energy security**.
- Bangkok Vision 2030** adopted as a long-term roadmap for collective prosperity, technological advancement, and sustainable infrastructure.

India's Announcements and Proposals

- BIMSTEC Centres of Excellence** to be established in India:
 - Focus areas include **Disaster Management, Sustainable Maritime Transport, Traditional Medicine, and Agricultural Research and Training**.
- Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)**: Pilot study proposed by India to assess regional digital governance needs.
- BIMSTEC Energy Centre** to be operationalized in Bengaluru.
- BODHI Program**: India introduced the **BODHI Program** (BIMSTEC for Organized Development of Human Resource Infrastructure), aimed at providing **training, scholarships, and capacity-building** for professionals, researchers, and diplomats across BIMSTEC nations.
- Cancer Care Capacity Building**: India proposed a **capacity-building program** for cancer care in the BIMSTEC region, addressing critical healthcare challenges.

BIMSTEC Maritime Transport Agreement signed, ensuring:

- National Treatment** for vessels, cargo, and crew.
- Mutual recognition** of documents and certificates.
- Creation of a **Joint Shipping Coordination Committee** and a **dispute resolution mechanism**.
- Report of the BIMSTEC Eminent Persons Group** presented to outline the future direction of the organization.
- BIMSTEC Chamber of Commerce**: India suggested establishing the **BIMSTEC Chamber of Commerce** and hosting the **BIMSTEC Business Summit** annually in India to promote regional **economic integration**.
- People-to-People Linkages**: **BIMSTEC Athletics Meet** (2025) and the **First BIMSTEC Games** (2027) were announced to promote **cultural exchange** and engagement among the region's youth.
- India proposed the **BIMSTEC Traditional Music Festival** and a **Young Leaders' Summit**, alongside a **Hackathon** and **Young Professional Visitors Program** to foster greater collaboration and solidarity.

India-Thailand Strategic Partnership Announcement

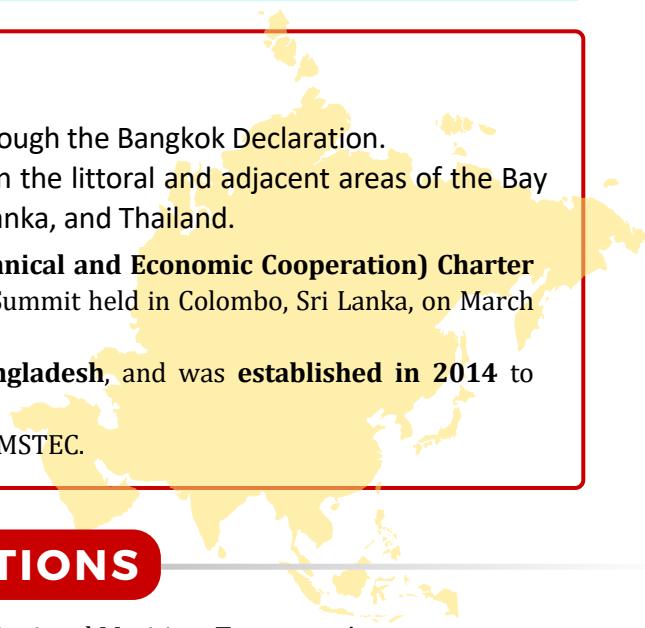
Key Areas of Collaboration

- Maritime Cooperation**: Strengthened ties through **ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific (AOIP)** and **India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)**. Enhanced regional connectivity via the **India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway**.
- Defence and Security**: Strengthened defence dialogues, including **joint military exercises** like **Exercise Maitree**, and collaboration in **counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, and intelligence sharing**.

- **Trade and Economy:** India and Thailand focused on boosting **bilateral trade**, enhancing **supply chain resilience**, and exploring the **upgradation of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**.
 - **Cultural and Educational Exchange:** Emphasis on **educational exchanges**, promoting **Buddhist cultural linkages**, and fostering deeper **tourism** and **engagement** with the Indian diaspora in Thailand.
 - **Science, Technology and Innovation:** Collaboration in **space technology**, **renewable energy**, **biotech**, and **digital infrastructure**.
 - **Regional and Multilateral Cooperation:** Enhanced coordination in platforms like **ASEAN**, **IORA**, **BIMSTEC**, and the **UN** to uphold a **rules-based global order**.

BIMSTEC

- **Establishment:** BIMSTEC was established on June 6, 1997, through the Bangkok Declaration.
 - **Member Countries:** Includes seven member countries lying in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal – Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.
 - The **BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) Charter** was formally adopted by the member states at the 5th BIMSTEC Summit held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on March 30, 2022.
 - **Secretariat:** The BIMSTEC Secretariat is located in **Dhaka, Bangladesh**, and was **established in 2014** to coordinate and facilitate the activities of BIMSTEC.
 - General **Indra Mani Pandey** serving as the Secretary-General of BIMSTEC.



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

1. (c) 2. (a) 3. (d) 4. (b) 5. (d) 6. (c) 7. (a) 8. (b)
9. (d) 10. (c) 11. (a) 12. (b) 13. (c) 14. (a) 15. (d) 16. (b)
17. (c) 18. (b)

Pope Francis Passes Away

News Highlights:

Pope Francis passed away on **Easter Monday, April 21, 2025**, at the **age of 88**, at his residence in the Vatican's Domus Sanctae Marthae.

- The cause of **death was a stroke followed by irreversible cardiocirculatory collapse**. His death was officially announced by **Cardinal Kevin Farrell, the Camerlengo of the Holy Roman Church**, at 9:45 AM CEST on the same day.

1936 

Name: Jorge Mario Bergoglio

D.O.B: Born on 17 December 1936 in Argentina.

Hometown: Buenos Aires, Argentina

- Suffered a severe bout of pneumonia that led to the removal of part of his right lung at 21

1958

Joined the Jesuits in 1958.



1969

Ordained as a Jesuit in 1969

- Before he was a priest, Pope Francis worked as a bouncer at a club.

Other jobs he held:

Janitor at a hosiery company where his father worked, worked as a Chemist and technician in a food science laboratory



1992

He became a bishop in 1992

1998

Became Archbishop of Buenos Aires in 1998.

266TH

He was the 266th Pope. He was the first citizen from the Americas, first non-European and first Jesuit priest to be elected to the esteemed position.

2013

He was elected Pope of the Roman Catholic Church on March 13, 2013, aged 76

- He chose the name Francis because of his concern of the well-being of the poor. It is the first time that a pope has been named Francis.

- Pope Francis took over from Pope Benedict XVI on March 13, 2013, after Pope Benedict XVI resigned



- He declined most luxuries offered to a Pope and instead preferred a simple life.

- As Pope, he shunned the limousines, for a simple Renault. When he visited Kenya in 2015, he was driven around in a Honda car as opposed to a Mercedes Benz



Transition and Conclave

Following **Pope Francis's death**, the Catholic Church entered a period of mourning known as the "**novendiali**," consisting of **nine days of prayers and masses**. The College of Cardinals is expected to convene a conclave between May 5 and May 10, 2025, to elect the next pope. A **two-thirds majority** is required to **elect a new pontiff**.

Sede Vacante: The Interregnum Period

- Upon the **Pope's death**, the **Camerlengo**—currently **Cardinal Kevin Farrell**—officially verifies the death and oversees the administration of **the Holy See during the vacancy**. The papal apartments are sealed, and **the Pope's Fisherman's Ring and seal are destroyed to prevent forgery**.
- The College of Cardinals assumes limited governance of the Church, handling routine matters but refraining from decisions reserved for the Pope. The Roman Curia's heads cease their functions, except for the Camerlengo and the Major Penitentiary.
- Novemdiales:** The Church observes **nine days of mourning, known as novemdiales**, featuring daily Masses and prayers for the deceased Pope. This period allows the faithful to pay their respects and prepares the Church for the forthcoming conclave.

The Papal Conclave: Electing a New Pope

- Eligibility and Preparation:** Only cardinals under the age of 80 at the time of the Pope's death are eligible to vote in the conclave. As of 2025, there are 135 eligible cardinal electors, with 108 appointed by Pope Francis.
- The conclave is scheduled to begin between 15 to 20 days after the Pope's death, allowing time for mourning and for cardinals to arrive in Rome.
- Secrecy and Isolation:** The conclave takes place **in the Sistine Chapel**. Cardinals swear **an oath of secrecy** and are secluded from the outside world, with no access to communication devices.
- Voting Process:** Voting is conducted in secret, requiring **a two-thirds majority to elect a new Pope**. Up to **four ballots** may be held each day—two in the morning and two in the afternoon.
- After each voting session, ballots are burned. Black smoke indicates an inconclusive vote, while **white smoke signals that a new Pope has been elected**.
- Acceptance and Announcement:** Once a cardinal receives **the required majority**, he is asked if he accepts the papacy and chooses a papal name. The senior cardinal deacon then announces "**Habemus Papam**" ("We have a Pope") to the public, and the new Pope appears on the balcony of **St. Peter's Basilica to impart his first blessing**.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- On which day did Pope Francis pass away?
 - Good Friday
 - Palm Sunday
 - Easter Monday
 - Holy Saturday
- Who officially announced the death of Pope Francis?
 - Archbishop of Canterbury
 - Cardinal Kevin Farrell
 - Cardinal Pietro Parolin
 - Bishop of Rome
- In which year was Pope Francis (Jorge Mario Bergoglio) born?
 - 1940
 - 1936
 - 1958
 - 1969
- At what age did Jorge Mario Bergoglio join the Society of Jesus (Jesuits)?
 - 20
 - 18
 - 23
 - 25
- When was Jorge Mario Bergoglio ordained as a priest?
 - 1969
 - 1992
 - 1998
 - 2013
- Which year did Pope Francis become Archbishop of Buenos Aires?
 - 1969
 - 1992
 - 1998
 - 2013
- Pope Francis was the ____ Pope of the Roman Catholic Church.
 - 265th
 - 266th
 - 267th
 - 264th
- In which year did Jorge Mario Bergoglio become a bishop?
 - 1969
 - 1992
 - 1998
 - 2013

9. Which Pope did Pope Francis succeed when he became the head of the Roman Catholic Church in 2013?
(a) Pope John Paul II (b) Pope Benedict XV
(c) Pope Benedict XVI (d) Pope John XXIII
10. Which unique distinctions does Pope Francis hold among Popes?
(a) First African Pope and first Jesuit Pope
(b) First Latin American Pope and first Jesuit Pope
(c) First Asian Pope and first scientist Pope
(d) First European Pope from Germany
11. Who is responsible for officially verifying the Pope's death and administering the Holy See during the interregnum?
(a) Dean of the College of Cardinals
(b) Camerlengo
(c) Major Penitentiary
(d) Apostolic Nuncio
12. What is the term for the nine-day mourning period observed after the Pope's death?
(a) Novena (b) Sede Vacante
(c) Novemdiales (d) Papal Vigil
13. How many eligible cardinal electors were there as of 2025 for the conclave following Pope Francis's death?
(a) 120 (b) 100 (c) 135 (d) 150
14. Who is responsible for officially verifying the Pope's death and administering the Holy See during the interregnum?
(a) Dean of the College of Cardinals
(b) Camerlengo
(c) Major Penitentiary
(d) Apostolic Nuncio

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

1. (c) 2. (b) 3. (b) 4. (c) 5. (a) 6. (c) 7. (b) 8. (b)
9. (c) 10. (b) 11. (b) 12. (c) 13. (c) 14. (b)



No Bag Day at LE JODHPUR



Environmental News

India's Improving Performance in the SDG Rankings

News Highlights:

India has made notable progress in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Index 2024, achieving a rank of **109 out of 166 countries**, as per the latest global assessment. This improvement reflects India's growing commitment to achieving the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.

India's Performance on SDGs: Key Highlights

- Overall Progress:** India's **SDG Index score** improved from **57 in 2018** to **71 in 2023-24**. This improvement is indicative of better national policies and increased implementation of **sustainable practices** across sectors.
- State-Level Performance:** States like **Kerala** and **Uttarakhand** lead the nation with more than **8 goals** scoring above **80**. These states serve as examples of **successful policy implementation**.
- However, **9 states** reported a decline in performance on key goals, particularly:

Goal 1

No Poverty

Goal 5

Gender Equality

Goal 10

Reduced Inequality

Goal 16

Strong Institutions

Indian states have also shown an average rise of **five units** in their SDG composite index over the last three years.

Target-Specific Progress



SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being: India has made notable progress in reducing its **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)** from **130** (2014-16) to **97** (2018-20) per **1,00,000 live births**.

SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy: India's **renewable energy capacity** has seen rapid growth, increasing from **180.80 GW in December 2023** to **209.44 GW by December 2024**, marking its significant role in **global clean energy transition**.

SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation: Over **95% of rural India** and **97.2% of urban India** now have access to **improved sources of drinking water** (2020-2021), showcasing significant strides in **water management** and sanitation efforts.

SDG 4: Quality Education: India's **Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)** in higher education has increased from **23.7%** in **2014-15** to **28.4%** in **2021-22**, reflecting the country's efforts to expand access to education.

Budgetary Allocations for SDGs

- States like **Haryana, Odisha, and Meghalaya** have introduced **SDG-specific budgeting frameworks**, aligning financial allocations with development priorities.
- India's **14th National Electricity Plan** integrates SDG targets, even though the 500 GW target for non-fossil fuel capacity is not formally included in the updated NDCs.
- As per Ember's February 2025 report, **India needs a 20% annual increase in clean energy funding** to meet its renewable goals by 2030.

National Targets

- Non-fossil fuel capacity target: 500 GW by 2030** (guiding reference though not officially in NDCs).
- Electric capacity from non-fossil sources: 50% by 2030**, as pledged in India's **Updated NDCs (2022)**.
- Renewable Energy Transition**: According to **Ember**, India must increase renewable investment by **20% annually** to meet 2030 targets.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** are a universal set of **17 interconnected goals** adopted by all **193 United Nations Member States** in **September 2015**, as part of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. These goals provide a shared blueprint for peace, prosperity, and sustainability for people and the planet.

Origin and Background

The **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** are a universal set of **17 interconnected goals** adopted by all **193 United Nations Member States** in **September 2015**, as part of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. These goals provide a shared blueprint for peace, prosperity, and sustainability for people and the planet.

The 2030 Agenda was adopted at the **UN Sustainable Development Summit** held in New York from **25 to 27 September 2015**.

It is grounded in international agreements like the **Rio+20 Conference (2012)**, which emphasized the need for a new set of global development goals.



Background: From MDGs to SDGs

- Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** were the predecessor to the SDGs, consisting of **8 goals** agreed upon in 2000 for achievement by 2015. **MDG Focus Areas** included poverty, hunger, education, gender equality, child mortality, maternal health, HIV/AIDS, and global partnerships.
- India's MDG Achievements:**
 - Poverty** reduced from 45% (1994) to 21.9% (2011–12).
 - Gender parity in primary education** was nearly achieved.
 - Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)** reduced from 556 (1990) to 130 (2016).
 - However, goals related to child nutrition, sanitation, and environmental sustainability lagged behind.

With lessons from the MDGs, the SDGs were designed to be **universal, integrated, and inclusive**, applying to all nations and extending the focus beyond basic human development to include **climate action, peace, and strong institutions**.

Key Objectives of SDGs

- Eradicate poverty and hunger
- Promote quality education, health, and gender equality.
- Ensure access to clean water, sanitation, and clean energy.
- Build resilient infrastructure and inclusive, sustainable economies.
- Combat climate change and protect ecosystems.
- Promote peace, justice, and strong institutions.
- Strengthen global partnerships.



Each goal is supported by specific targets (169 in total) and indicators (over 230) to measure progress across countries.

Foundational Principles of SDGs

Universality: The SDGs apply to **all countries**, regardless of income level or development status.

- Unlike the MDGs, which focused mainly on developing nations, the SDGs require every country—developed and developing—to take action domestically and globally.

Integration: Recognizes the **interconnectedness of goals**—progress in one area (e.g., education) directly impacts other areas (e.g., health, employment).

Encourages **policy coherence** and systemic approaches to development.

Leave No One Behind: This principle emphasizes **equity and inclusion**, ensuring that the most marginalized groups—such as women, children, indigenous communities, persons with disabilities, and the poor—are prioritized.

Focus is on **reducing inequalities** both within and between countries.

Multi-Stakeholder Approach: The SDGs are to be achieved not just by governments, but through **collaboration with the private sector, civil society, academia, and international organizations**.

- Encourages partnerships at local, national, regional, and global levels.

NITI Aayog's Rankings States

NITI Aayog releases the **SDG India Index** for 2023-24, showing significant progress towards the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** across Indian states and union territories (UTs).

- India's overall SDG score improved to **71** in 2023-24, up from **66** in 2020-21 and **57** in 2018 (baseline).

Key Highlights of the SDG India Index 2023-24

1. Overall Progress: India's composite SDG score: 71 in 2023-24, showing a steady improvement from 66 in 2020-21.
◦ Improvement across all states with scores ranging from **57 to 79** (up from 42 to 69 in 2018).

2. Top Performers: Kerala and Uttarakhand scored **79**, becoming the best-performing states.

◦ Bihar had the lowest score of **57**, followed by Jharkhand at **62**.

3. Front-Runner States: 32 states/UTs are in the **Front-Runner** category, with **10 new entrants** including Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, and Uttar Pradesh.



MIND MAP

Budgetary Initiatives

- Haryana, Odisha, Meghalaya: SDG-based budgets.
- 14th National Electricity Plan integrated SDG goals.
- Need: 20% annual increase in renewable energy funding (Ember report).

Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs) (Themes): No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Clean Water, Clean Energy, Decent Work, Infrastructure, Reduced Inequalities, Sustainable Cities, Responsible Consumption, Climate Action, Life Below Water, Life on Land, Peace & Justice, Global Partnerships.

Global Ranking (2024)

- India ranks 109/166 countries.
- SDG Index Score improved:
 - 2018: 57
 - 2020-21: 66
 - 2023-24: 71

State-Level Performance

- **Top Performers:** Kerala & Uttarakhand (Score 79).
- **Lowest:** Bihar (57), Jharkhand (62).
- 32 states/UTs are Front-Runners (Score 65-79).
- 9 states declined in Goal 1, 5, 10, 16.

Target-Specific Progress

- **SDG 3:** Maternal Mortality Ratio reduced to 97 (2018-20).
- **SDG 4:** Higher Education GER rose to 28.4% (2021-22).
- **SDG 6:** 95% rural & 97.2% urban access to improved water.
- **SDG 7:** Renewable energy capacity grew from 180.8 GW (2023) to 209.44 GW (2024).

National Targets

- 500 GW non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030 (guiding reference).
 - 50% electric capacity from non-fossil sources (Updated NDCs, 2022).
6. Background of SDGs
- Adopted in 2015, succeeding MDGs (2000-2015).
 - 17 Goals + 169 Targets + 230+ Indicators.

Foundational Principles

- **Universality:** Applies to all countries.
- **Integration:** Goals interconnected.
- **Leave No One Behind:** Prioritise marginalised.
- **Multi-Stakeholder Approach:** Governments + Private sector + Civil society.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What is India's rank in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Index 2024 out of 166 participating countries?
 (a) 113 (b) 109 (c) 117 (d) 104
2. India's score improved from 57 in 2018 to 71 in 2023–24 as measured by which global development ranking system?
 (a) SDG Index (b) SPI Report
 (c) GHI Scale (d) HDI Chart
3. Which Indian states have led SDG performance by scoring above 80 in more than 8 goals in the latest index?
 (a) Punjab and Gujarat (b) Bihar and Jharkhand
 (c) Kerala and Uttarakhand (d) Assam and Rajasthan
4. How many Indian states reported a decline in SDG performance, especially in areas like poverty, gender equality, and strong institutions?
 (a) 5 (b) 7 (c) 6 (d) 9
5. Indian states have shown an average increase of five units in which SDG-related tracking tool over the last three years?
 (a) SDG development score (b) SDG composite index
 (c) SDG performance chart (d) SDG progress rating
6. What is India's most recently recorded Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) per 1,00,000 live births as per 2018–20 data?
 (a) 112 (b) 104
 (c) 100 (d) 97
7. What indicator is used to measure India's increasing access to higher education, which rose to 28.4% in 2021–22?
 (a) Gross Enrolment Ratio
 (b) Student Advancement Index
 (c) National Learning Outcome Score
 (d) Institutional Access Rating
8. Which part of India reported 97.2% access to improved drinking water sources during 2020–2021?
 (a) tribal India (b) rural India
 (c) urban India (d) coastal India
9. What was India's total renewable energy capacity by December 2024, reflecting its leadership in clean energy growth?
 (a) 198.30 GW (b) 209.44 GW
 (c) 203.75 GW (d) 195.60 GW
10. Alongside Haryana and Odisha, which state has implemented SDG-linked budgeting to align spending with development priorities?
 (a) Meghalaya (b) Karnataka
 (c) Telangana (d) Tripura
11. Which 14th policy document incorporates SDG targets though the 500 GW non-fossil goal is not part of updated NDCs?
 (a) 14th Energy Transition Framework
 (b) 14th Clean Power Roadmap
 (c) 14th National Electricity Plan
 (d) 14th Renewable Energy Policy
12. According to Ember's February 2025 report, India must boost clean energy investment to meet targets by which year?
 (a) 2025 (b) 2027 (c) 2029 (d) 2030
13. What is India's non-fossil fuel capacity target by 2030, serving as a guiding reference though not part of its formal NDCs?
 (a) 500 GW (b) 420 GW (c) 460 GW (d) 480 GW
14. What percentage of electric capacity from non-fossil sources has India pledged to achieve by 2030 under its Updated NDCs?
 (a) 45% (b) 50% (c) 55% (d) 60%
15. Which area of India's energy strategy requires a 20% annual investment rise, according to Ember's 2025 report?
 (a) Sustainable Power Planning
 (b) Clean Energy Development
 (c) Renewable Energy Transition
 (d) Low Carbon Electricity Shift
16. How many United Nations Member States adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015?
 (a) 189 (b) 190 (c) 192 (d) 193

ANSWER KEY

- | | | | | | | | |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. (b) | 2. (a) | 3. (c) | 4. (d) | 5. (b) | 6. (d) | 7. (a) | 8. (c) |
| 9. (b) | 10. (a) | 11. (c) | 12. (d) | 13. (a) | 14. (b) | 15. (c) | 16. (d) |

SC takes Suo Moto Cognizance of Kancha Gachibowli Issue

News Highlights:

On April 17, 2025, the Supreme Court of India directed the **Telangana Wildlife Warden** to immediately protect the forest and wildlife in the **Kancha Gachibowli area** of Hyderabad after the State government carried out large-scale tree felling in 100 acres of forested land.

- The court warned that **Chief Secretary and officials may face severe action**, including **temporary imprisonment**, if restoration plans are not submitted.

What Happened in Kancha Gachibowli?

- The Telangana government began clearing **400 acres of land** in the **Kancha Gachibowli** area near **Hyderabad**, planning to auction it for **Rs 10,000-15,000 crore**.
- However, **environmental groups** and **students from the University of Hyderabad** raised concerns, alleging that the area was a **protected forest** and home to diverse wildlife, including rare species and flora.
- Despite the **Supreme Court's March 4, 2025, order** barring any deforestation activity across the country, the bulldozers continued clearing the forest for **three days** without proper permissions.



Supreme Court's Intervention

- A **Bench of Justices B.R. Gavai and A.G. Masih** strongly rebuked the **Telangana Government** for deploying **dozens of bulldozers** over a **3-day period** to clear forest land.
- The court emphasized that **urban development** cannot occur "**in the company of deer**", citing reports of **herbivores fleeing and being attacked by stray dogs**.
- The **destruction** was carried out **despite a March 4 Supreme Court order** barring depletion of forest cover without due process under **Van (Sanrakshan Evar Samvardhan) Rules, 2023**.
- Warned that officials may be **jailed in the very area they destroyed** if the State tries to justify its actions
- Directed the State to:
 - Halt all further tree felling** immediately.
 - Submit a restoration plan** within **four weeks**.
 - Ensure **wildlife protection measures** are in place and report back on **May 15**.
- Noted that **self-certification by the State** to bypass forest protections is **invalid** and violates the **1996 Godavarman judgment**.
- Cited prior instances like the **Char Dham project** and **Mumbai Metro** to highlight that even national infrastructure had to comply with environmental norms.
- The Court questioned the **urgency** of the deforestation, pointing out that the state could have followed proper **procedures** and **obtained the necessary permissions** before clearing the land.
- The Court will hear the case again on **May 15, 2025**, giving the Telangana government four weeks to present a **detailed restoration plan**.

Legal and Environmental Concerns

- The land abuts the **University of Hyderabad** and is considered ecologically rich with:
 - Flora, fauna, birds, mammals, and rare mushroom rock formations** aged **two billion years**.
 - Important **catchment area** for **Hyderabad's drinking water supply**.

- Petitioners, including **students and conservationists**, claimed it qualifies as a 'deemed forest' under the **Forest Conservation Act** and the **1996 Supreme Court judgment**, which mandates using the **dictionary meaning of forest** for legal classification.
- The **Central Empowered Committee (CEC)** report raised red flags, revealing the land was **mortgaged to private parties** for **₹10,000–15,000 crore**, which was not disclosed in the State's affidavit.

Environmental Clearance – The Process

Environmental Clearance is governed under **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006**, issued under the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986** by the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**.

- Environmental clearance** is mandatory for **39 categories** of projects to assess and mitigate environmental and social impacts before implementation.
- The process includes **screening, scoping, impact evaluation, public hearing, and approval** from designated authorities
- Projects are assessed based on **siting guidelines**. If a site is non-compliant, **alternative sites** must be identified.
- If the project is listed in the **EIA Notification Schedule**, an **EIA study** is required:
 - a. **Category A** projects are appraised by the **MoEFCC**.
 - b. **Category B** projects are assessed by the **SEIAA**, with **B1** needing EIA and **B2 projects exempted** from it.
- The **State Pollution Control Board (SPCB)** evaluates the **pollution control plan** and grants **Consent to Establish (NOC)** for 15 years if satisfied.
- A **public hearing** is mandatory for select projects and is conducted by a committee led by the **District Collector**, comprising officials and civil society representatives.
- The **application for clearance** must include the **EIA report, Environmental Management Plan (EMP), public hearing minutes, and NOC**.
- The **environmental appraisal** is conducted in two stages:
 - a. Preliminary review by **MoEFCC staff**.
 - b. Expert assessment by **sector-specific EACs**.
- Additional public hearings** may be conducted for contentious or high-impact projects, with notices issued **30 days in advance**.
- Projects involving **forest land** also need clearance under the **Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980**, with separate letters for each approval.
- The decision on clearance must be made within **90 days**, and conveyed within **30 days**. **Clearance is valid for 5 years**.

T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad v. Union of India (1996)

Background and Origin: The landmark judgment was delivered by the Supreme Court of India on **December 12, 1996**, in the case of **T.N. Godavarman Thirumulpad v. Union of India, W.P. (C) No. 202/1995**.

- The case was initiated through a public interest litigation to address **unregulated deforestation and degradation of forests across India**.
- The judgment fundamentally **expanded the scope of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980**, by giving it a broad and purposive interpretation.
- Key Legal Principles Laid Down:** The term 'forest' must be interpreted as per its dictionary meaning, irrespective of whether the land is **officially notified, recorded, or classified as forest** under the **Indian Forest Act, 1927** or other statutory frameworks.
- The Court held that **any area meeting the dictionary definition of forest**, including **deemed forests** and **community forest lands**, is entitled to protection under the **FCA, 1980**. The judgment directed that the FCA shall apply uniformly across all such lands to regulate diversion for non-forest purposes.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. In which forested area of Hyderabad did the Supreme Court of India intervene to stop large-scale tree felling and direct immediate wildlife protection?
 - (a) Keesara Reserve Block
 - (b) Chilkur Forest Range
 - (c) Kancha Gachibowli Area
 - (d) Moinabad Plantation Zone

2. Which Supreme Court judges sharply criticized the Telangana Government for clearing forest land using bulldozers over a 3-day period?
 - (a) B.R. Gavai and A.G. Masih
 - (b) Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta
 - (c) S.K. Kaul and Bela M. Trivedi
 - (d) Hima Kohli and J.B. Pardiwala

3. Despite a Supreme Court order, forest clearing was carried out in violation of which of the following legal frameworks governing forest protection?
 - (a) Forest Conservation Guidelines, 2022
 - (b) Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Rules, 2023
 - (c) Indian Environmental Safety Act, 2021
 - (d) National Green Tribunal Procedures, 2020

4. The Supreme Court ruled that a State cannot bypass forest protections through self-certification, as it violates which landmark judgment?
 - (a) M.C. Mehta pollution verdict
 - (b) Narmada Bachao ruling
 - (c) TN Godavari Wetlands case
 - (d) Godavarman judgment

5. Petitioners argued that the cleared area qualifies as a 'deemed forest' under which legal framework is used for classifying forest land?
 - (a) Environment Protection Rules
 - (b) Forest Conservation Act
 - (c) Wildlife Protection Statute
 - (d) National Biodiversity Code

6. Which body submitted a report to the Supreme Court revealing that forest land was mortgaged to private entities without disclosure in the State's affidavit?
 - (a) Central Empowered Committee
 - (b) National Green Tribunal Panel
 - (c) Ministry of Environment Taskforce
 - (d) Forest Rights Appraisal Board

7. Under the EIA Notification Schedule, which category of projects is appraised directly by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)?

(a) Category B	(b) Category D
(c) Category C	(d) Category A

8. Who typically chairs the committee responsible for conducting public hearings under the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process?
 - (a) Regional Commissioner
 - (b) District Collector
 - (c) Project Supervisor
 - (d) Zonal Director

9. Along with the EIA report, public hearing minutes, and NOC, which of the following must be submitted for environmental clearance?
 - (a) Project Monitoring Strategy
 - (b) Site Impact Assessment Plan
 - (c) Environmental Management Plan
 - (d) Resource Utilization Framework

10. Under standard provisions, what is the maximum validity period of a granted environmental clearance?
 - (a) 1 year
 - (b) 2 years
 - (c) 3 years
 - (d) 5 years

ANSWER KEY

- | | | | |
|--------|---------|--------|--------|
| 1. (c) | 2. (a) | 3. (b) | 4. (d) |
| 9. (c) | 10. (d) | 5. (b) | 6. (a) |
| 7. (d) | 8. (b) | | |

11th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting

News Highlights:

At the **11th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting** held in **Brasilia, Brazil** on **April 3, 2025**, India urged **collective leadership** to advance the **2030 Climate Agenda**, highlighting the need to mobilize **USD 1.3 trillion** through the "**Baku to Belem Roadmap**" to support the **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** of BRICS nations.

- This call reinforced **BRICS' pivotal role** in global climate action and sustainable development. In the same spirit of environmental cooperation, the **BRICS nations**—including the **newly joined members**—also launched the "**BRICS Land Restoration Partnership**" at the **15th BRICS Agriculture Ministers' Meeting** in **Brasilia**, aimed at addressing **land degradation, desertification**, and the loss of soil fertility.
- Notably, this marked the **first agriculture ministerial meeting** of the **expanded BRICS**, now comprising **11 countries**.

Session I: Advancing Environmental Cooperation Among BRICS

- **India's Global Role:** BRICS countries collectively represent **47% of the world's population** and contribute **36% of global GDP (PPP)**, highlighting their responsibility in addressing climate challenges.
- **Baku to Belem Roadmap:** India stressed the need to secure **USD 1.3 trillion in climate finance** through this roadmap to effectively meet the NDC targets of developing nations.
- **Sustainable Development and Just Transition:** India called for **equitable carbon budget utilization**, urging BRICS countries to prioritize **sustainable growth** while supporting a **just transition** for developing economies.
- **Energy Security and Green Grids Initiative:** India emphasized **energy diversification** through a mix of **fossil fuels, hydrogen, nuclear, and renewable energy**, highlighting the **One Sun, One World, One Grid** initiative under the **International Solar Alliance**.
- **Circular Economy:** India promoted the Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy Industry Coalition (G20), focusing on sustainable resource management as a model for corporate collaboration.
- **Climate Finance Mechanisms:** India urged BRICS nations to strengthen climate finance mechanisms, with a focus on **meeting global sustainability commitments**.
- **Focus on Agriculture:** The meeting highlighted the need for fair agricultural trade, addressing **global price volatility**, and securing **remunerative prices** for small-scale farmers. India emphasized the importance of **public food stockholding systems, minimum support prices (MSP)**, and developing **value chains** that directly link smallholders to consumers.

Session II: Collective Leadership for the 2030 Climate Agenda

- **BRICS Expansion:** India acknowledged the **expansion of BRICS to 11 members**, enhancing its leadership in global climate governance and efforts to combat **desertification, pollution, and biodiversity loss**.

- **Principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR-RC):** India reiterated the importance of **CBDR-RC** in guiding climate negotiations, ensuring a **fair and equitable** transition for all nations.
- **Flagship Initiatives:** India highlighted **BRICS-led initiatives** such as:
 - **Partnership for Urban Environmental Sustainability**
 - **Clean Rivers Programme**
 - **Sustainable Urban Management**
- **Global Climate Finance:** India pointed out the **shortfall in the proposed USD 300 billion/year** climate finance under the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) and emphasized the need for **USD 1.3 trillion** to meet global sustainability targets.
- **COP30 (Brazil):** India stressed that **COP30** would be a **critical milestone** for advancing global adaptation and resilience efforts, with Brazil playing a central role in hosting the event.

BRICS Land Restoration Partnership

- **Launch:** April 2025, during the 15th BRICS Agriculture Ministers' Meeting in Brasilia, Brazil.
- **Members:** Expanded BRICS group comprising 11 nations: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, UAE, Iran, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia.
- **Objective:** Address land degradation, desertification, and soil fertility loss to promote sustainable agriculture and food security.

Key Objectives

- **Land Restoration:** Rehabilitate degraded lands to enhance agricultural productivity and biodiversity.
- **Desertification Control:** Implement strategies to prevent the expansion of arid zones.
- **Soil Health Enhancement:** Promote practices that improve soil nutrients and prevent erosion.
- **Farmer Empowerment:** Support smallholder farmers, especially women and youth, through tools, training, and market access.
- **Climate Adaptation:** Develop resilient agricultural systems to withstand climate challenges.
- **Digital Agriculture:** Advance digital tools and certification systems to modernize farming practices.



2001 Term “**BRIC**” coined by economist **Jim O’Neill** to denote emerging economies.

2006 First informal meeting during the **G8 Outreach Summit** in Russia.

2009 First BRIC Summit held in **Yekaterinburg, Russia**.

2010 South Africa joined, rebranding the group as **BRICS**.

2014 Launch of the **New Development Bank**.

2024 Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates join at the **16th BRICS Summit**.

2025 Indonesia joined the BRICS

- **Strategic Importance:**
 - A counterbalance to Western-dominated groups like the G7.
 - Platform for South-South Cooperation and reduced dependency on Western powers.
- **New Development Bank (NDB):**
 - Established in 2014, with an initial capital of \$100 billion.
 - Funded infrastructure projects worth \$30 billion across member nations.
- **Economic Cooperation:**
 - Enhanced trade and investment among members.
 - Promoted local currency trade, with 92% of Russia-China trade conducted in national currencies.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

1. (d) 2. (c) 3. (a) 4. (b) 5. (c) 6. (c) 7. (a) 8. (d)
9. (b) 10. (c) 11. (d) 12. (a)

India becomes 3rd Largest Producer of Wind and Solar Energy

News Highlights:

India has overtaken Germany to become the **third-largest producer** of electricity from wind and solar energy in 2024, as per a report by the global energy think tank **Ember**. The country now accounts for **10%** of the global wind and solar electricity generation, marking a significant milestone in its transition to renewable energy.

Key Findings from the Ember Report

Tax Adjustments



Global Renewable Energy Growth: Wind and solar together generated **15%** of global electricity in 2024, with India's share standing at **10%**.

- **Low-carbon sources** (renewables + nuclear) provided **40.9%** of the world's electricity in 2024, the highest since the 1940s.

- **Solar** was the largest source of new electricity for the **third consecutive year**, contributing **474 TWh** globally in 2024, the fastest-growing energy source for the **20th year in a row**.
- **India's Renewable Energy Milestones:** Solar power now contributes **7%** to India's total electricity generation, doubling since 2021.
 - **24 GW** of solar capacity was added in 2024, more than **double** the addition in 2023, making India the **third-largest solar market** after China and the U.S..
 - India also saw the **fourth-largest global increase** in solar generation, adding **20 TWh**.
 - **Total Clean Energy Contribution in India** through **Hydropower** is **8%**, **Wind & Solar** is **10%** and **Total clean sources** is **22%** (India's electricity mix).

India's Energy Vision and Global Impact

- **Solar Power as the Engine of Transition:** According to Phil MacDonald, Managing Director of Ember, **solar power** is rapidly becoming the **engine of the global energy transition**, especially when paired with **battery storage**.
 - India's **rapid solar expansion** is pivotal in meeting the world's growing electricity demand, and it has the potential to drive **economic growth** through clean energy adoption.
- **Future Goals and Commitments:** As part of its **climate commitments**, India aims to achieve **50%** of its installed electricity capacity from **non-fossil fuel sources** by **2030**.
- India also set a target of **500 GW** of **non-fossil fuel capacity** by 2030, which remains a crucial goal despite not being part of the officially updated **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)**.

- While India has made significant progress, **Ember's report** emphasizes that the country may struggle to meet its **500 GW target** unless **funding for renewable energy** increases by **20% annually** from current levels.

Global Trends in Renewable Energy (2024)

- **Total growth in renewables:** A record **858 TWh** was added globally — **49%** more than the previous record set in 2022.
- **Solar Power:** Added **474 TWh**, continuing as the **largest source of new electricity**.
- Fastest-growing power source globally for the **20th consecutive year**.
- Global solar share in the electricity mix rose to **6.9%**, doubling in just three years.
- **UN Climate Change Chief's Remarks:** Simon Stiell, the UN climate change chief, praised India as a "**solar superpower**" and emphasized that India's **embrace of the clean energy boom** could significantly **accelerate its economic rise**.

Overview of India's Power Sector

- **Total Installed Capacity:** Approximately 483.26 GW as of March 31, 2025.
- **Electricity Generation Target for 2024–25:** Set at 1,900 Billion Units (BU), marking a 9.3% increase over the previous year's generation of 1,738.83 BU.
- **Annual Electricity Demand Growth:** Projected at 6.3%, surpassing the 5% average from 2015–2024.

India's Power Generation at a Glance

Thermal Power (Fossil Fuels)

- **Installed Capacity:** Approximately 247.59 GW, accounting for 52.63% of the total capacity.
- **Coal Dependency:** Coal remains the dominant source, with ongoing construction of 30 GW of new coal-fired capacity.
- **Major Players:** Coal India, NTPC, Tata Power, Adani Power, JSW Energy, and NLC India Limited.

Renewable Energy (RE)

- **Total Non-Fossil Capacity:** Approximately 222.86 GW, representing 47.37% of the total capacity.
- **Solar Power:** Installed capacity of 105.65 GW, with significant contributions from ground-mounted, rooftop, hybrid, and off-grid systems.
- **Wind Power:** Installed capacity of 48.59 GW.
- **Hydro Power:** Large hydro contributes 52.07 GW, while small hydro adds 5.10 GW.
- **Biomass and Waste-to-Energy:** Combined capacity of approximately 11.45 GW.

Nuclear Power

- **Installed Capacity:** 8.88 GW, with plans to expand to 100 GW by 2047.
- **Policy Reforms:** India is considering allowing up to 49% foreign investment in nuclear power plants to boost capacity.

Ongoing and Upcoming Projects

- **Renewable Energy:** India added 25 GW of renewable capacity in FY 2024–25, the **highest annual increase** to date.
- **Coal-Based Projects:** Coal India is developing multiple thermal power projects, including a **1,600 MW plant in Jharkhand**.
- **Nuclear Projects:** The **Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project** in **Maharashtra** is planned to be the world's largest nuclear power generating station, with a capacity of 10,380 MW.

State-Wise Installed Capacity

- **Gujarat:** Leads with 58 GW of installed capacity.
- **Maharashtra:** Follows with 51 GW.
- **Rajasthan:** Holds 46 GW, with significant contributions from solar energy.

Government Targets and Initiatives

- **2030 Goal:** Achieve 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity.
- **Hydrogen Mission:** Focuses on developing green hydrogen as a clean energy source.
- **Energy Storage:** India is seeking 6,000 MW of renewable energy with storage solutions to meet peak-hour demands.



MIND MAP

- India becomes **3rd-largest wind and solar electricity generator (2024)**.

• India now generates **10% of global wind and solar electricity**.

Key Findings (Ember Report)

- **Global:** Wind + Solar = 15% of world's electricity.
- **Low-carbon sources (renewables + nuclear)** = 40.9% globally.
- **Solar:** Fastest-growing energy source for 20th consecutive year (474 TWh added).

India's Renewable Milestones

- Solar = 7% of India's total electricity (doubled since 2021).
- 24 GW solar capacity added in 2024 (doubled from 2023).
- Clean Energy Mix:
 - Hydropower: 8%
 - Wind & Solar: 10%
 - Total Clean Energy: 22%

India's Energy Vision

- Goal: 50% installed capacity from non-fossil fuels by 2030.
- 500 GW non-fossil fuel target (ambitious, not formally in updated NDCs).
- 20% annual funding increase needed to meet 500 GW clean energy target

Global Renewable Trends (2024)

- Record 858 TWh added globally (49% growth).
- Solar's global electricity share: 6.9% (doubled in 3 years).

Global Praise: UN Climate Chief Simon Stiell: India a rising "solar superpower".



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

15. As per 2024 data, how much renewable energy was added globally — marking a 49% rise from the previous highest addition in 2022?

(a) 735 TWh (b) 795 TWh
(c) 812 TWh (d) 858 TWh

16. Simon Stiell currently serves in which official international climate role?

(a) UN energy mission chief
(b) UN climate change chief
(c) UN global carbon envoy
(d) UN fossil policy leader

17. Which collaboration focuses on joint maritime patrols and humanitarian relief to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific?

(a) Japan-Australia alliance
(b) U.S.-Australia partnership
(c) India-Japan cooperation
(d) India-U.S. collaboration

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

1. (b) 2. (a) 3. (d) 4. (b) 5. (c) 6. (d) 7. (a) 8. (b)
9. (d) 10. (c) 11. (d) 12. (b) 13. (a) 14. (c) 15. (d) 16. (b)
17. (d)

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Science and Tech

First Part of Genome India Project Completed

News Highlights:

India has completed the **first phase** of its landmark **Genome India Project (GIP)**, a nationwide genetic sequencing initiative that has successfully mapped the **genomes of 10,000 individuals** from **83 diverse population groups**.

- This milestone was announced in April 2025, and its initial findings have been published in *Nature Genetics*. The GIP promises to revolutionize **healthcare**, deepen insights into **genetic diversity**, and trace the **evolutionary history** of India's populations.

Genome India Project

- The **Genome India Project (GIP)** was initiated on **January 3, 2020**, under the auspices of the **Department of Biotechnology (DBT)**. It is spearheaded by the **Centre for Brain Research at the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru**, and involves a collaborative effort among **20 institutions nationwide**.

- The primary goal of **GIP** is to conduct **whole-genome sequencing of 10,000 individuals** representing the diverse population of India. This endeavor seeks to map the genetic diversity inherent in India's population, which is characterized by over **4,600 distinct population groups**, many of which practice endogamy.
- This genetic mapping is aimed at understanding the genetic underpinnings of various diseases prevalent in the Indian demographic and developing predictive diagnostic markers for these conditions.

Significance of the Genome India Project

- Creation of an India-Specific Genetic Database:** The establishment of a genetic database tailored to the Indian population is of paramount importance.

Road to Future

Aim of Genome Mapping Project

Developing therapies for diseases such as cancer and other rare ones

Predictive diagnosis and precision medicine

22

Partner organisations to be roped in

Dept of Biotechnology has initiated the project

10,000

Number of Indians whose genomic data will be catalogued in phase 1

- This database is crucial for identifying mutations, such as the **MYBPC3 gene mutation**, which are more prevalent in the Indian population compared to the global average. The **MYBPC3 mutation, associated with early cardiac arrest, affects approximately 4.5% of the Indian population**.
- Impact on India's Biology Sector:** The Genome India Project underscores India's burgeoning role in the global biology sector.
- The sector has witnessed exponential growth, escalating from a valuation of **USD 10 billion in 2014 to over USD 130 billion in 2024**.

GENE MAPPING HISTORY



1869

Swiss chemist Friedrich Miescher identifies "nuclein" (later defined as DNA) inside the nuclei of human white blood cells



1953

Following the work of Russian scientist Phoebus Levene and the Austrian Erwin Chargaff on Miescher's discovery, American scientist James Watson and English physicist Francis Crick propose the three-dimensional, double-helix structure for DNA.

2003

The sequencing of the first whole human genome was a monumental international effort that concluded in 2003, taking 13 years and \$3 billion to complete.

- The sequencing of the **first whole human genome** was a **monumental international effort that concluded in 2003, taking 13 years and \$3 billion to complete**.
- **India announced its first complete human genome in 2009**.
- The advancements in sequencing technology have dramatically reduced the time and cost associated with genome sequencing, with the **entire process now taking approximately 5 days**.
- **Genome India Project Data Storage:** The project has generated a **vast dataset of 8 petabytes**, which will be stored at the **Indian Biological Data Centre (IBDC)** in Faridabad. The **IBDC, inaugurated in 2022**, stands as **India's first national repository for life science data**, playing a critical role in managing and safeguarding the extensive genomic data produced by the GIP.

Methodology and Data Collection

- **Sample Source:** Blood samples collected for the extraction of **germline DNA**—the heritable DNA from white blood cells.
- **Germline sequencing** helps maintain the integrity of original genetic material, minimizing mutations due to cell division.
- The **genome** consists of approximately **three billion nucleotides**—the sequences of **adenine (A), thymine (T), cytosine (C), and guanine (G)**. While **99.9%** of the sequence is the same across all humans, the **0.1% variation** is critical in determining **physical traits, behavior, and health vulnerabilities**.

Medical and Scientific Impact

- **A. Personalised Medicine:** Enables **customised treatment protocols** based on individual genetic makeup. Helps identify **drug resistance, response variations, and treatment inefficiencies** in specific patients.
- **B. Early Detection and Diagnostics:** Detects **genetic predispositions** to diseases such as **diabetes, cardiovascular disorders, cancer, and rare genetic conditions**. Offers insights into **why certain diseases are more prevalent** in specific Indian communities.
- **C. Population-specific Drugs:** Patterns found in groups may guide the development of **ethnically tailored drugs** and **diagnostic kits** for improved healthcare outcomes.
- The **Genome India Project** is seen as India's counterpart to the **Human Genome Project (HGP)**, which mapped the global human genome, but lacked sufficient representation from **Indian populations**. Given the **vast diversity** of India's **ethnic, linguistic, and geographical groups**, the GIP fills a crucial gap in genetic data.
- While the **Human Genome Project** primarily focused on **global genetic diversity**, the **GIP** specifically targets India's **complex genetic landscape**, ensuring that the country's **genetic variations** are adequately represented.



MIND MAP

Gene Mapping History

- 1869: Friedrich Miescher discovered DNA ("nuclein").
- 1953: Watson & Crick proposed DNA double-helix model.
- 2003: Completion of the first human genome project (13 years, \$3 billion).
- 2009: India sequenced its first complete human genome.
- Now: Genome sequencing reduced to about 5 days.

First Phase Completion

- Completed in April 2025.
- 10,000 genomes sequenced from 83 diverse groups.
- Findings published in Nature Genetics.

Genome India Project (GIP)

- Launched: January 3, 2020.
- Initiated by: Department of Biotechnology (DBT).
- Lead Institution: Centre for Brain Research, IISc Bengaluru.
- Collaboration: 20 institutions across India.
- Goal: Whole-genome sequencing of 10,000 individuals.
- Focus: Mapping India's vast genetic diversity (4600+ population groups).

Sample Source

- Blood samples used for germline DNA extraction (from white blood cells).
- Germline sequencing preserves original genetic integrity.

Genome Details

- Human genome = ~3 billion nucleotides (A, T, C, G).
- 99.9% sequence identical; 0.1% variation affects traits, behavior, health.

Comparison with Human Genome Project (HGP)

- HGP: Focused on global genetic diversity; lacked Indian representation.
- GIP: Focuses on India's unique ethnic, linguistic, and geographical diversity.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Under the first phase of the Genome India Project, genetic data was collected from how many diverse population groups?
(a) 75 (b) 68 (c) 83 (d) 92
- Where were the initial findings of India's Genome India Project, announced in April 2025, published?
(a) Nature Genetics.
(b) Cell Reports Review.
(c) Genomic Health Weekly.
(d) International Gene Bulletin.
- Which government body launched the Genome India Project in 2020 to advance genomic research through nationwide collaboration?
(a) Indian Medical Council
(b) Ministry of Health Services
(c) National Science Foundation
(d) Department of Biotechnology
- Where is the 8-petabyte genetic database generated under the Genome India Project being hosted?

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

1. (c)
9. (a)

2. (a)
10. (b)

3. (d)
11. (c)

4. (b)
12. (d)

5. (a)
13. (b)

6. (b)

7. (d)

8. (c)

PTM at LE RANCHI



Static Scoop

Aurangzeb & Maratha Empire Controversy

News Highlights:

- Violent protests erupted in **Nagpur**, Maharashtra, following renewed demands by **right-wing groups** for the **removal of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb's tomb** in Khuldabad.
- The agitation was sparked by the massive public response to the historical film "**Chhaava**", which depicts the **torture and execution of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj** by Aurangzeb.
- On **March 17, 2025**, violent clashes erupted in **Nagpur**, leading to at least 50 detentions after protests by a right-wing group. The agitation was fueled by rumors and demands for the removal of the tomb, which is viewed by Hindu groups as a symbol of **Aurangzeb's cruelty**.

AURANGZEB (1618-1707)

- Abul Muzaffar Muhi-ud-Din Muhammad Aurangzeb Alamgir**, commonly known as **Aurangzeb**, was born on **3 November 1618 in Dahod, Gujarat**, within the Mughal Empire.
- He was the **third son of Emperor Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal**, for whom the Taj Mahal was built.
- His ascent to the throne was **marked by a bloody war of succession** between **Shah Jahan's four sons** – Dara Shikoh, Shah Shuja, Murad Baksh, and Aurangzeb.
- The struggle culminated in **Aurangzeb defeating and executing his eldest brother Dara Shikoh in 1659**.
- He imprisoned his father **Shah Jahan in the Agra Fort** and declared **himself the emperor in 1658**, adopting the regnal title **Alamgir ("Conqueror of the World")**.
- He reigned until his death on **3 March 1707 in Ahmednagar**, marking nearly five decades of rule. His reign is noted for the expansion of the Mughal Empire to its **greatest territorial extent**, as well as for his strict adherence to Islamic principles.
- He was buried in **Khuldabad**, near Aurangabad in Maharashtra.
- In accordance with his austere religious views, **his tomb is extremely simple**, unadorned, and built at his own expense.
- The tomb lies within the **dargah complex of Sheikh Zainuddin**, a revered Sufi saint of the Chishti order.
- The tomb is **open to the sky**, without a canopy or mausoleum structure, and has become a symbolic site reflecting his simplicity



Deccan Campaigns

- Aurangzeb spent the last 26 years of his life in the Deccan, engaged in a prolonged and costly war
- He **annexed the Deccan Sultanates of Bijapur (1686) and Golkonda (1687)**, ending the Adil Shahi and Qutb Shahi dynasties
- He fought against the **Marathas**, led initially by **Shivaji** and later by **Sambhaji**, whom he captured and executed in 1689.
- Despite initial victories, Aurangzeb failed to subdue the Marathas, who began guerrilla warfare that continued to bleed the empire.

Notable Events:

- Aurangzeb maintained strict military oversight in these regions to suppress rebellions and ensure the implementation of his policies.
- **First Rebellion (1669–1670):** Led by **Gokula**, a Jat zamindar from Tilpat, in response to oppressive taxation and religious persecution. The rebellion was suppressed, and **Gokula was executed in 1670**.
- **Second Rebellion (1685–1688):** Led by **Raja Ram**, **Gokula's son**, who intensified the resistance by plundering Akbar's tomb and desecrating it. Aurangzeb dispatched his grandson, Muhammad **Bidar Bakht**, to quell the uprising. Raja Ram was **captured and executed in 1688**.
- **Satnami Revolt (1672):** The Satnamis, a sect comprising peasants and artisans, initiated a rebellion in Narnaul (present-day Haryana) due to religious discrimination and heavy taxation. They managed to defeat a Mughal force and marched towards Delhi. Aurangzeb personally led a 10,000-strong army to suppress the revolt. The Satnamis were defeated, and approximately 2,000 were killed.
- **Re-imposition of Jizya (1679):** Aurangzeb reinstated **the jizya, a tax on non-Muslims**, which had been abolished by Akbar. The tax was seen as **discriminatory and led to widespread resentment among Hindus**.
- **Destruction of Temples:** Aurangzeb ordered the demolition of several Hindu temples, viewing them as centers of political dissent:
 - Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi.
 - Keshava Rai Temple in Mathura.
- These actions intensified opposition from various Hindu communities and regional powers.
- **Promotion of Islamic Orthodoxy:** Aurangzeb enforced Sharia law in administration, emphasising Islamic principles in governance. He banned practices considered un-Islamic, such as music and certain festivals, and dismissed Hindu officials from key positions.

Mughal Empire in India at a Glance**1**

- **Babur's Background:** **Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babur**, born in **1483 in Fergana (present-day Uzbekistan)**, was a descendant of Timur on his father's side and Genghis Khan on his mother's side.
- **Initial Conquests:** After losing his ancestral throne in Central Asia, **Babur captured Kabul in 1504**, establishing a base for further expansions.
- **First Battle of Panipat (1526):** Babur defeated **Ibrahim Lodi, the Sultan of Delhi**, marking the establishment of the Mughal Empire in India.

2

- **Babur (1526–1530):** He defeated **Ibrahim Lodi, Rana Sanga (Battle of Khanwa, 1527), and Medini Rai (Battle of Chanderi, 1528)**. Finally died in 1530, succeeded by his son **Humayun**.
- **Humayun (1530–1556):** He lost the empire to **Sher Shah Suri** at the **Battle of Chausa (1539)** and **Battle of Kanauj (1540)**. Later, regained the throne in 1555 with **Persian assistance**, but died in 1556.

3

Akbar (1556–1605): He ascended the throne at age 13; ruled through regent **Bairam Khan** initially. Consolidated Mughal power through diplomacy and conquest. Also known for **religious tolerance, Din-i Ilahi, Mansabdari system, and centralised administration**. Notable conquests: Gujarat, Bengal, Rajasthan, Deccan (partial).

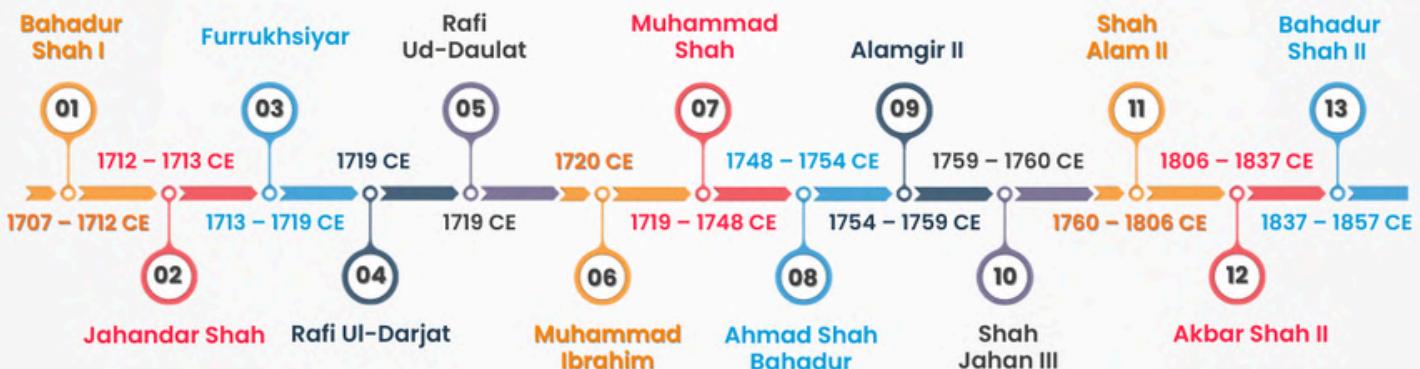
4

- Jahangir (1605–1627):** He is known for **justice (Chain of Justice)** and patronage of arts. He faced rebellion from son **Khusrau**, supported by Sikh Guru **Arjan Dev** (who was executed). Marriage to **Nur Jahan** gave her significant political influence.
- Shah Jahan (1628–1658):** He is known for architectural achievements (e.g., **Taj Mahal, Red Fort, Jama Masjid**). He faced rebellions in Deccan and Central Asia. Finally, deposed and imprisoned by his son **Aurangzeb**.

5

Aurangzeb (1658–1707): He was the last major Mughal ruler. He expanded the empire to its greatest extent. Adopted **orthodox Islamic policies**, imposed **Jizya**, and destroyed temples. Spent last 26 years in Deccan fighting Marathas. His policies alienated many, leading to **decentralization**.

LATER MUGHAL EMPEROR TIME PERIOD



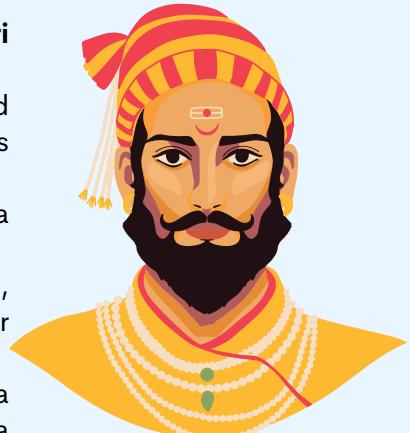
Downfall of Mughal Empire

- The **Battle of Plassey in 1757** marked a decisive British victory where Siraj-ud-Daulah, the Nawab of Bengal, was defeated, allowing the British East India Company to establish control over Bengal.
- The **Battle of Buxar in 1764** further consolidated British power when the forces of the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II and his allies, including the Nawab of Awadh and the Nawab of Bengal, were defeated by the British.
- Following the Battle of Buxar, the **Treaty of Allahabad was signed in 1765**, under which the East India Company was granted **Diwani rights**, i.e., the right to collect revenue from Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa.
- After the Treaty of Allahabad, the **Mughal rulers were reduced to the status of mere pensioners**, living under the protection and financial support of the British East India Company.
- By the **early 19th century**, the British had begun to refer to the Mughal emperor simply as the **King of Delhi**, signaling the erosion of his authority and stature.
- The **Revolt of 1857** was a major and widespread uprising against British rule in India, during which the Mughal Emperor **Bahadur Shah Zafar** was symbolically declared the leader of the rebellion.
- Despite initial successes in some regions, the **British suppressed the revolt by 1858**, reasserting their dominance over the Indian subcontinent.
- In response to the revolt, the **Government of India Act, 1858**, was passed by the British Parliament, which **transferred control of India from the East India Company to the British Crown**.
- Following this transfer of power, the **Mughal dynasty was formally abolished**, bringing an end to centuries of Mughal influence in India.
- Delhi was declared under direct British sovereignty**, and India became a formal colony of the British Crown, marking the beginning of the British Raj.

Maratha Empire: History and Evolution

- The **Maratha Empire** (also known as **Maratha Confederacy**) was a **dominant Indian power** that rose in the **17th century** and played a major role in ending Mughal supremacy in India.
- It began with the rise of **Shivaji Bhosale**, who established an independent kingdom in the **Western Deccan** by the mid-1600s.
- The **formal foundation** of the Maratha Empire is marked by **Shivaji's coronation in 1674** as **Chhatrapati at Raigad Fort**.
- After Shivaji's death (1680), his son **Sambhaji** and later **Rajaram** and **Tarabai** continued resistance against the Mughals.
- The **early 18th century** saw the **Peshwas (prime ministers)** become the real power behind the Maratha throne, beginning with **Balaji Vishwanath**.
- Under the **Peshwas**, especially **Baji Rao I**, the Maratha Empire expanded across **much of the Indian subcontinent**, reaching as far as **Attock in the northwest** and **Cuttack in the east**.
- The Empire eventually evolved into a **confederacy**, with **semi-autonomous Maratha chiefs** ruling different regions, such as: **Gaekwads** in Baroda, **Holkars** in Indore, **Scindias** in Gwalior &**Bhonsles** in Nagpur

- Birth:** Shivaji Maharaj was born on **February 19, 1630**, at **the Shivneri Fort** in present-day **Maharashtra, India**.
- Parents:** His father, **Shahaji Bhosale**, was a Maratha general who served the Deccan Sultanates, and **his mother, Jijabai**, was a deeply religious and influential figure in his upbringing.
- Education:** Shivaji received military and administrative training from a young age, along with lessons in Hindu epics and scriptures.
- Initial Conquests:** Shivaji began his military career at the age of 16, capturing the **Torna Fort in 1645**. He continued to capture several other forts, including Rajgad, Kondana (Sinhagad), and Purandar.
- Establishment of Swarajya:** He is credited with founding the Maratha Empire and establishing '**Swarajya**' (**self-rule**) by consolidating Maratha territories and challenging the Mughal Empire.



Shivaji Maharaj

Major Battles and Strategies:

- Battle of Pratapgarh (1659):** Shivaji's strategic use of guerrilla warfare led to the defeat and killing of Afzal Khan, a general of the Bijapur Sultanate.
- Battle of Kolhapur (1659):** Shivaji's forces defeated the combined armies of Bijapur and the Mughals.
- Siege of Panhala (1660):** Shivaji fought a protracted siege against Bijapur forces, showcasing his resilience and tactical prowess.
- Coronation:** Shivaji was formally crowned **Chhatrapati (Emperor) of the Maratha Kingdom** on **June 6, 1674**, at **Raigad Fort**.
- Capital:** Shivaji established Raigad as the capital of his kingdom.
- Ashta Pradhan (Council of Eight):** He set up an efficient administration with a **council of eight ministers**, each overseeing different aspects of governance, such as finance, defense, foreign affairs, and justice. Shivaji introduced a revenue system based on the **ryotwari method**, where peasants paid taxes directly to the state, reducing corruption and exploitation.
- Death:** Shivaji Maharaj passed away on **April 3, 1680**, at **Raigad Fort**.

Anglo-Maratha Conflicts

The **Anglo-Maratha Wars** were a series of **three major conflicts** fought between the **British East India Company** and the **Maratha Confederacy**:

1

First Anglo-Maratha War (1775–1782)

- **Cause:** British interference in the **succession dispute** between **Raghunath Rao (Raghoba)** and **Narayanrao's infant son Sawai Madhavrao**.
- British supported Raghoba under the **Treaty of Surat (1775)**, opposed by the Maratha chiefs.
- **Outcome:** The war ended with the **Treaty of Salbai (1782)**, which recognized **Madhavrao II** as Peshwa and restored peace for 20 years.
- It was a **rare British defeat**, showing Maratha military strength.

2

Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803–1805)

- **Cause:** Internal rivalries among Maratha chiefs (especially Holkar vs. Scindia) and British expansionist ambitions under **Lord Wellesley**.
- The British defeated the Scindias and Bhonsles in key battles such as **Assaye, Argaon, and Delhi**.
- **Outcome:** Resulted in the **Treaty of Bassein (1802)** and **treaties of Deogaon and Surji-Anjangaon**, reducing Maratha sovereignty and turning them into **subsidiary allies** of the British.

3

Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817–1818)

- **Cause:** The Marathas attempted to regain lost power; Peshwa Baji Rao II led the resistance.
- British forces under **Mountstuart Elphinstone** and others crushed the Marathas at **Koregaon, Khadki, and Satara**.
- **Outcome:**
 - This led to an end of the Maratha Empire.
 - Peshwa Baji Rao II was deposed and pensioned off to Bithoor.
 - The Maratha territories were annexed into British India, with some princely states (e.g., Gwalior, Indore) allowed to continue under British suzerainty.

Conflicts Between Aurangzeb and the Marathas (1657–1707)

Early Conflicts with Shivaji (1657–1680)

- **1657:** Shivaji began his military expansion in the **Konkan and Western Ghats**, attacking Mughal outposts in **Ahmednagar and Junnar**
- **1659:** Shivaji killed the Bijapuri general **Afzal Khan** in a famous ambush at **Pratapgad**, gaining widespread acclaim.
- **1660:** Aurangzeb, then a prince and governor of the Deccan, ordered **Shaista Khan** to contain Shivaji. Shaista Khan was stationed in Pune but was attacked in **1663** by Shivaji, who **personally led a night raid** and **cut off three fingers** of the Mughal general.
- **1664:** Shivaji raided the rich Mughal port of **Surat**, looting vast wealth, humiliating the empire.
- **1665:** Aurangzeb sent **Mirza Raja Jai Singh** who defeated Shivaji and forced him to sign the **Treaty of Purandar**, ceding **23 of 35 forts** and agreeing to serve the Mughal Empire.
- **1666:** Shivaji visited the Mughal court in Agra, but feeling insulted, he **escaped from house arrest** in a dramatic episode disguised in fruit baskets.
- **1670s:** Shivaji resumed full-scale resistance and **recaptured most lost forts**. He was **crowned Chhatrapati** in **1674** and declared an independent Maratha kingdom.
- **1680:** Shivaji died, succeeded by his son **Sambhaji**.

Aurangzeb's Deccan Campaigns and War with Sambhaji (1681–1689)

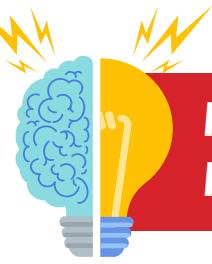
- **1681:** Aurangzeb personally led the **Deccan campaign**, shifting the Mughal court to **Aurangabad**, indicating the strategic importance of defeating the Marathas.
- **1681–1686:** Faced a three-way war – against **Marathas, Bijapur, and Golkonda**.
- **1686–87:** Mughal Empire annexed **Bijapur and Golkonda**, ending the two Shia Sultanates, to prevent their alliance with the Marathas.
- **1689:** Sambhaji was **betrayed, captured, tortured, and executed** in Tulapur. His execution caused outrage and **galvanized Maratha resistance**.

Guerrilla Warfare and Continued Maratha Resistance (1690–1707)

- After Sambhaji's death, his half-brother **Rajaram** continued resistance, relocating the Maratha capital to **Gingee Fort (in Tamil Nadu)**.
- Aurangzeb laid siege to Gingee for **eight years (1690–1698)**, but Rajaram escaped in 1698 and resumed guerrilla attacks.
- **1700:** Rajaram died; his widow **Tarabai** took charge in the name of her infant son **Shivaji II**, continuing the resistance effectively.
- **Marathas adopted guerrilla warfare**, known as **Ganimi Kava**, striking at Mughal supply lines and forts, while avoiding direct confrontation.
- Aurangzeb captured forts but **failed to retain control**, as Marathas **repeatedly recaptured lost territory**.
- Mughal commanders like **Zulfikar Khan** and **Ghaziuddin Khan** struggled to maintain stable control over Deccan.
- Aurangzeb reportedly remarked: "*I came to Deccan to plant the tree of Islam, but all I see is the blood of my soldiers.*"

Final Years and Aftermath

- **1707:** Aurangzeb died at **Ahmednagar** after 26 years in the Deccan. At the time of his death, **Mughals controlled very few Deccan forts**.
- His death marked the **end of Mughal military dominance** in the Deccan.
- Marathas regrouped under **Shahu (son of Sambhaji)** and **Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath**, and by 1713, began **recovering lost territories**, eventually becoming the dominant power in India.



MIND MAP

Aurangzeb's Profile (1618–1707)

- Son of Shah Jahan; seized throne after defeating Dara Shikoh.
- Policies:
 - Re-imposed Jizya tax (1679).
 - Destroyed temples (e.g., Kashi Vishwanath).
 - Strict Islamic orthodoxy.
- Deccan Campaigns:
 - Annexed Bijapur, Golkonda.
 - Fought Marathas; executed Sambhaji (1689).
- Death: 1707; buried simply at Khuldabad.

Aurangzeb–Maratha Conflicts (1657–1707)

- Early: Shivaji's raids, Treaty of Purandar (1665), escape from Agra (1666).
- Late:
 - Aurangzeb's Deccan campaigns (1681 onward).
 - Execution of Sambhaji (1689).
 - Guerrilla warfare under Rajaram and Tarabai.
- Aurangzeb failed to crush Marathas, drained Mughal resources.

British Takeover

- Battle of Plassey (1757): British East India Company control of Bengal.
- Battle of Buxar (1764): British defeated Mughal alliance.
- Mughal emperors reduced to British pensioners.
- Revolt of 1857: Last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar exiled.
- British Crown Rule (1858): End of Mughal dynasty.

Aurangzeb Tomb Controversy (Nagpur Protests 2025)

- Triggered by film "Chhaava" (depicts torture of Sambhaji Maharaj by Aurangzeb).
- Violence in Nagpur (March 17, 2025); political divide: BJP, Shiv Sena support removal; Congress, NCP oppose.
- Rise of Hindu nationalism and Maratha pride sentiments.

Mughal Successions

1. Babur (1526–1530): Founder of Mughal Empire (First Battle of Panipat, 1526).
2. Humayun (1530–1540, 1555–1556): Lost to Sher Shah Suri (Battle of Chausa and Kanauj).
 - Exiled; later regained throne with Persian help. Died in 1556 (fall from staircase).
3. Akbar (1556–1605): Fought Second Battle of Panipat against Hemu (1556).
 - Consolidated empire, introduced Mansabdari system.
4. Jahangir (1605–1627): Known for "Chain of Justice". Rebellion by son Khusrav (later supported by Sikh Guru Arjan Dev).
5. Shah Jahan (1628–1658): Golden age of Mughal architecture (Taj Mahal, Red Fort). Shah Jahan imprisoned by Aurangzeb in Agra Fort.
6. Aurangzeb (1658–1707): Orthodox Islamic ruler; largest territorial expansion.
7. Bahadur Shah I (1707–1712)
8. Jahandar Shah (1712–1713)
9. Farrukhsiyar (1713–1719)
10. Muhammad Shah (1719–1748)
11. Later Emperors (1748–1857)
 - Ahmad Shah Bahadur (1748–1754): Weak ruler, deposed.
 - Shah Alam II (1759–1806):
 - Defeated in Battle of Buxar (1764); Treaty of Allahabad (1765). Became British pensioner.
 - Akbar Shah II (1806–1837): Nominal figurehead under British.
 - Bahadur Shah Zafar II (1837–1857):
 - Last Mughal emperor.
 - Symbol of 1857 Revolt.
 - Exiled to Rangoon after British suppression

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

17. In 1674, where did Shivaji Bhosale hold his coronation ceremony, formally establishing the Maratha Empire?
(a) Pratapgad Fort
(b) Raigad Fort
(c) Sinhagad Fort
(d) Rajgad Fort
18. Beginning with Balaji Vishwanath, which group of officials emerged as the real authority behind the Maratha throne in the early 18th century?
(a) Peshwas
(b) Sardars
(c) Subedars
(d) Senapatis
19. Under whose leadership did the Maratha Empire see rapid military expansion, extending from Attock in the northwest to Cuttack in the east?
(a) Balaji Baji Rao
(b) Madhavrao I
(c) Baji Rao I
(d) Nana Fadnavis
20. Which prominent Maratha clan ruled from Indore during the confederacy phase of the Maratha Empire?
(a) Shirkes
(b) Pawars
(c) Angres
(d) Holkars

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

- | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. (d) | 2. (a) | 3. (b) | 4. (c) | 5. (c) | 6. (d) | 7. (b) | 8. (a) |
| 9. (c) | 10. (b) | 11. (d) | 12. (b) | 13. (b) | 14. (d) | 15. (c) | 16. (a) |
| 17. (b) | 18. (a) | 19. (c) | 20. (d) | | | | |



New Chola inscription discovered near Madurai's Melavalavu

News Highlights:

A new Chola inscription has been discovered on Somagiri Hills at Melavalavu, near Melur in Madurai district, shedding light on the reign of Rajaraja Chola in the Pandya region.

- Dating back to around **1000 CE**, the inscription offers valuable insights into the Chola dynasty's military conquests and cultural legacy in the region.
- This discovery is being hailed as significant by historians for its rare reference to **Rajaraja Chola** in the **Pandya country**.

Key Findings from the Inscription

- Honorific Title:** The inscription begins with the unique title "**Raja Raja Mummudichola**", which is a distinctive salutation used in the **Pandya country**, highlighting the **Chola-Pandya relationship** during Rajaraja Chola's rule.
- Military Conquest:** The inscription details the capture of the **Pandya region** by **Viranarana Pallavarayan**, a military commander under Rajaraja Chola. It provides evidence of the Chola dynasty's influence over the region and its efforts to assert dominance in the southern parts of India.
- Temple Construction and Cultural Heritage:** The inscription also mentions **Malaiyappa Sambu**, who is said to have **hewed the steps on the rock** leading to a temple that was constructed on a ledge.
 - Murugan idol:** The inscription refers to a **bronze idol of Lord Muruga** that was originally housed in the temple but later moved to a new temple in the nearby village where it continues to be worshipped.

- Historical Context:** This discovery offers rare historical documentation of **Rajaraja Chola's reign** in the **Pandya region**, an area where such inscriptions were not commonly found, making it a **valuable addition** to the historical record of the Chola empire.
- Cultural Insights:** The inscription's mention of the **Murugan idol** and temple construction provides insights into the **religious practices** of the time and the **Chola patronage** of temples, which were integral to their political and cultural influence.

Significance of the Discovery

The Discovery Process

- Field Study:** The inscription was found during a field study conducted by **Thamizhthaasan**, a **cultural ecologist** with the **Madurai Nature Cultural Foundation**, and **Professor P. Devi Arivu Selvam**, a **temple architect and sculpture researcher**.
- Deciphering the Inscription:** The inscription was copied by **R. Udhaya Kumar** and **T. Muthupandi**, research assistants at the **Pandya Nadu Centre for Historical Research**, Madurai. **C. Santhalingam**, the Secretary of the research centre, played a key role in deciphering the inscription.

Chola Dynasty

Origin and Early History

- The Cholas were among the **three major Tamil dynasties**, along with the **Cheras** and **Pandyas**, mentioned in **Ashokan inscriptions (3rd century BCE)** as ruling the Tamil region.
- Early Cholas** were initially minor chieftains in the **Cauvery delta**. **Karikala Chola** (c. 2nd century CE) is the earliest known ruler credited with building the **Kallanai Dam** (Grand Anicut).
- After a period of obscurity, they **re-emerged in the 9th century CE** under the **Vijayalaya Chola**, founding the **Imperial Chola Dynasty**.

Emergence of the Imperial Cholas

- Vijayalaya Chola** (c. 850 CE) captured **Thanjavur** from the **Mutharaiyars** and established Chola dominance in the **Cauvery basin**.
- He was succeeded by **Aditya I** and **Parantaka I**, who expanded the kingdom by defeating the **Pandyas** and **Pallavas**.

Great Chola Emperors and Expansion

- Rajaraja Chola I (985-1014 CE)**: Considered the real architect of the **Chola Empire**. Conquered **Sri Lanka**, **Malabar Coast**, parts of **Karnataka**, and **northern Ceylon**. He also constructed the **Brihadehwara Temple** (UNESCO site) in **Thanjavur** and strengthened the naval power.
- Rajendra Chola I (1014-1044 CE)**: Extended the empire to **Ganges (Gangetic expedition)** and conquered **Andaman-Nicobar**, **Burma**, **Sumatra**, **Malaya**, and **Java**. Established a new capital **Gangaikonda Cholapuram**. Created a strong **navy**, the first of its kind in South Asia.
- Kulottunga I (1070-1120 CE)**: Unified the **Chalukya-Chola** line and stabilised administration. Withdrawn from Sri Lanka due to internal resistance and practical difficulties. Focused on economic consolidation and temple building.

Region Ruled by the Cholas

- The **Chola dynasty** emerged in **northern Tamil Nadu** and eventually expanded to become a **pan-South Indian empire**.
- Core Region:** The **Cauvery Delta** region, known as **Cholamandalam**, was their heartland. **Uraiyur** (early capital) and **Thanjavur** (medieval capital).
- Other Important Regions Under Their Control:** **Kanchipuram**, **Tiruchirapalli**, and **Nagapattinam**. Extended over **northern Tamil Nadu**, parts of **southern Andhra Pradesh**, and **Karnataka**.
- Imperial Expansion (c. 10th-12th centuries):** Under **Rajaraja I** and **Rajendra I**, the Cholas extended their rule
 - North to the Tungabhadra River**.
 - South into Sri Lanka**, fully annexing the island for a period.
 - Westward into Kerala**, defeating the Cheras.
 - Eastward across the seas**—launched successful **naval expeditions to Srivijaya (modern Indonesia & Malaysia)** and captured parts of **Myanmar**, **Thailand**, and the **Maldives**.
- Key Ports:** **Nagapattinam**, **Puhar (Kaveripattinam)** – vital for international trade.

Administration and Governance

- Highly centralized monarchy**, yet efficient provincial administration with local self-government.
- Village administration** through **sabhas** (assemblies) in Brahmadeya villages and **ur** in non-Brahman villages.
- Revenue system** based on land assessment; detailed surveys and classification of land.
- Strong bureaucracy, naval forces**, and **standing army**.

Art, Architecture, and Culture

- The Cholas ushered in a golden age of **Tamil architecture, sculpture, and bronze casting**.
- Temples like **Brihadehwara (Thanjavur)** and **Airavatesvara (Darasuram)** exhibit **Dravidian style** and are UNESCO World Heritage Sites.
- Produced iconic **bronze idols**, including the famous **Nataraja** sculpture.
- Tamil literature flourished; **Thevaram hymns** and **Nalayira Divya Prabandham** gained popularity.

Foreign Relations and Naval Expeditions

- Maintained strong diplomatic and trade relations with **China, Srivijaya, Khmer Empire**, and the **Abbasid Caliphate**.
- Rajendra I's naval expedition was a **unique example** of maritime assertiveness in early medieval India.
- The Cholas supported Hindu and Buddhist institutions across Southeast Asia.

Decline of the Chola Empire

- Decline began in the 12th century due to: Overextension of empire and rise of **Pandya dynasty** in the south. Further the **invasions by the Hoysalas and Delhi Sultanate led to downfall**. Another reason also included **weak successors** and internal succession disputes.
- By **1279 CE**, the last Chola king **Rajendra III** was defeated by **Maravarman Kulasekara Pandya I**, ending Chola rule.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- A newly discovered Chola-period inscription was recently found at which site near Melavalavu in Tamil Nadu?
 - Somagiri Hills
 - Samanar Hills
 - Vedagiri Hills
 - Kumaragiri Hills
- In which Tamil Nadu district is Melavalavu, the site of the newly unearthed Chola inscription, located?
 - Erode
 - Thanjavur
 - Madurai
 - Tiruchirappalli
- The newly discovered inscription provides historical insights into the reign of which Chola emperor?
 - Rajendra Chola
 - Rajaraja Chola
 - Kulottunga Chola
 - Aditya Chola
- What unique title, found in the newly discovered inscription, was used to refer to Rajaraja Chola in the Pandya region?
 - Rajakesari Varman Chola
 - Parakesari Varman Chola
 - Chola Chakravarti Varma
 - Raja Raja Mummudichola
- Which ruler's reign is highlighted by the inscription for shedding light on the Chola-Pandya relationship?
 - Parantaka Chola's legacy
 - Kulottunga Chola's era
 - Rajaraja Chola's reign
 - Rajadhiraja Chola's rule
- Who is credited in the newly discovered inscription with leading the Chola conquest of the Pandya region under Rajaraja Chola's reign?
 - Thirumudi Chola Brahmarayar
 - Kandaraditya Rajakesari
 - Arikulakesari Parakesari
 - Viranarana Pallavarayan
- Who is credited in the inscription with carving steps into the rock leading to the temple built on a ledge?
 - Rajaraja Ilangovelan
 - Malaiyappa Sambu
 - Arulmozhi Kandarajan
 - Pallavarayan Marayan
- According to the inscription, what sacred object associated with Lord Muruga was relocated to a nearby village temple?
 - Bronze idol of Muruga
 - Stone relief of Vishnu
 - Sandstone image of Shiva
 - Terracotta form of Ganesha
- Who is credited with the discovery of the Somagiri Hills inscription during a recent exploration in Madurai district?
 - Aravindhan Perumalraj
 - Selvakumar Ilamurugan
 - Thamizhthaasan, Ecologist
 - Maruthanayagam Arulselvan
- Which organization was involved in the field study that led to the discovery of the inscription?
 - Tamil Heritage Exploration Trust
 - Madurai Nature Cultural Foundation
 - Southern Epigraphic Research Forum
 - Chola Art and Culture Institute
- Who played a key role in deciphering the Somagiri Hills inscription after it was copied by research assistants?
 - Dr. Arivu Selvam
 - R. Udhaya Kumar
 - T. Muthupandi
 - C. Santhalingam

12. Alongside the Cholas, which other Tamil dynasties were mentioned in Ashokan inscriptions as rulers of the Tamil region?
- (a) Pallavas and Chalukyas
 - (b) Cheras and Pandyas
 - (c) Rashtrakutas and Hoysalas
 - (d) Kalabhras and Satavahanas
13. Which ancient structure, attributed to Karikala Chola, showcases early engineering in the Cauvery delta region?
- (a) Veeranam Dam (b) Kallanai Dam
 - (c) Chidambaram Dam (d) Uyyakondan Dam
14. Which region did Vijayalaya Chola gain control over after capturing Thanjavur from the Mutharaiyars around 850 CE?
- (a) Pallava frontier (b) Kongu territory
 - (c) Pandya lowlands (d) Cauvery basin
15. Which architectural marvel built by Rajaraja Chola I in Thanjavur is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site?
- (a) Airavatesvara Temple
 - (b) Gangaikonda Temple
 - (c) Brihadeshwara Temple
 - (d) Kampaheswarar Temple
16. Which city was established by Rajendra Chola I as a symbol of his victorious expedition to the Ganges?
- (a) Gangaikonda Cholapuram
 - (b) Rajarajapuram City-State
 - (c) Chola Naval Headquarters
 - (d) Tanjavur Royal Township
17. Which of the following statements best describes the core territorial and political foundation of the Chola dynasty during its rise and expansion in South India?
- (a) The Chola dynasty emerged in the Deccan plateau and ruled from Madurai and Kanchipuram
 - (b) The Chola dynasty originated in the Cauvery Delta, with Cholamandalam as its heartland and capitals at Uraiyur and Thanjavur
 - (c) The Cholas established their power from the Western Ghats, expanding towards Kerala and coastal Karnataka
 - (d) The Chola empire began in the Krishna-Godavari region and extended its rule over the Bay of Bengal islands
18. What architectural style is exemplified by temples like the Airavatesvara Temple at Darasuram?
- (a) Dravidian style (b) Nagara style
 - (c) Vesara style (d) Bhumija style
19. Which ancient coastal town, known for pearl fishing, served as the early capital of the Pandya dynasty?
- (a) Kanchi (b) Uraiyur
 - (c) Korkai (d) Thanjavur
20. Which city served as the political and cultural capital of the Pandya dynasty during its peak?
- (a) Kanchipuram (b) Uraiyur City
 - (c) Korkai Town (d) Madurai City

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

- | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. (a) | 2. (c) | 3. (b) | 4. (d) | 5. (c) | 6. (d) | 7. (b) | 8. (a) |
| 9. (c) | 10. (b) | 11. (d) | 12. (b) | 13. (b) | 14. (d) | 15. (c) | 16. (a) |
| 17. (b) | 18. (a) | 19. (c) | 20. (d) | | | | |

Mitathal and Tighrana Harappan Sites

News Highlights:

The Haryana government has officially declared two Harappan civilization sites—Mitathal and Tighrana in Bhiwani district—as protected archaeological monuments. This move aims to safeguard these ancient settlements, which are over 4,400 years old, from encroachment and damage.

- The decision follows a notification issued on March 13, 2025, by the Haryana Heritage and Tourism Department under the Haryana Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1964.

Mitathal (Harappan Civilization)

- **Discovery and Excavations:** First discovered in 1913, with a hoard of Samudra Gupta coins (Gupta Dynasty), a significant find that ties the region to the post-Harappan era.
 - Excavations in 1968 revealed that the site belonged to the Copper-Bronze Age culture of the Indo-Gangetic divide (3rd–2nd millennia BCE).
- **Archaeological Findings:** The site reflects the Harappan tradition in town planning, architecture, and arts and crafts.
 - **Pottery:** Well-burnt red ware painted in black with pipal leaf, fish scale, and geometric designs.
 - **Artifacts:** Includes beads, bangles, and items made from terracotta, stone, shell, copper, ivory, and bone.
- **Cultural Impact:** This site plays a key role in understanding the early urbanization and trade practices of the Harappan civilization.

Tighrana (Post-Harappan/Chalcolithic Culture)

- **Historical Context:** Tighrana dates back to around 2,400 BCE, inhabited by Chalcolithic agricultural communities, known as Sothians.
 - This settlement represents the transition from the Harappan to the Post-Harappan period.
- **Settlement Features:** Mud-brick houses with thatched roofs, some possibly fortified. Settlements likely contained 50-100 houses, indicating an organized and structured community.
- **Agriculture and Tools:** The inhabitants practiced agriculture, cultivating crops and domesticated animals like cows, bulls, and goats.
 - The use of wheel-made ceramics, painted in black-and-white designs, suggests a developed pottery industry.
 - The discovery of copper, bronze, and stone tools highlights the technological advancements of the time.

Craft Industry: The site revealed the presence of beads and green carnelian bangles, indicating a thriving bead-making and jewelry production industry.

Archaeological and Cultural Importance

Tighrana and Mitathal are now considered critical sites for understanding the evolution of early human settlements in the region.

- The findings at **Mitathal** offer insight into **urban planning**, while **Tighrana** sheds light on the **continuity of human habitation** and the development of agricultural communities after the decline of the Harappan civilisation.
- The sites provide a **unique chronological sequence** from **Pre-Siswal**, **Pre-Harappan**, to **Post-Harappan** periods, offering a valuable window into the socio-economic and cultural dynamics of ancient India.

Overview of Indus Valley Civilisation

The **Harappan Civilization, also known as the Indus Valley Civilization (IVC)**, was announced to the world by **Sir John Marshall** on 20th September 1924, marking the 100 years of the recognition of one of the largest ancient urban civilizations.

- The civilization covered over **1.5 million square kilometers** and included more than **2,000 archaeological sites** distributed across what is now India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, highlighting its vast influence and extensive trade networks.
- Daya Ram Sahni:** Led the initial excavations at **Harappa in 1921-22**, uncovering critical artifacts like seals and pottery which hinted at a previously unknown civilization.
- Rakhral Das Banerji:** Undertook the first excavations at **Mohenjo-daro in 1922**, discovering artifacts that mirrored those found at Harappa.
- Sir John Marshall** noticed the similarity between the objects found at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro, despite the sites being 640 km apart.



Sir John Hubert Marshall

Director of ASI: 1902-1928

- Sir John Hubert Marshall**, born on **March 19, 1876**, in **Chester, England**, was a pivotal figure in the field of archaeology, particularly known for his work in India as the **Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India from 1902 to 1928**.
- Marshall's career began after his education at King's College, Cambridge, where he was noted for his scholarly aptitude.

Key Contributions:

- He played a crucial role in the discovery and excavation of the Indus Valley Civilisation sites, including **Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro**.
- Marshall was instrumental in implementing the **Ancient Monuments Preservation Act in 1904**.
- He also worked extensively in places like **Taxila, Sanchi**, and other significant locations.

- Early Phase (3200 BCE to 2600 BCE):** Associated with the **Hakra Phase**, discovered primarily in the Ghaggar-Hakra River Valley. Notable for the emergence of the **earliest known Indus script**, dating back to around **3000 BCE**.
- Mature Period (2600 BCE to 1900 BCE):** This era marks the peak of the civilisation with well-established cities like Harappa, Mohenjodaro, and Lothal. These cities developed into significant urban centers, showcasing advanced urban planning and societal structures.
- Late Phase (1900 BCE to 1500 BCE):** This period is characterised by the decline and eventual collapse of the civilisation, reflecting changes in social and environmental conditions.
- The Indus Valley Civilization (IVC) stood as the most expansive among the **four great ancient urban cultures**, which also included Egypt, Mesopotamia, and China.
- Recognized as a civilization from the Bronze Age, the IVC was distinguished by the widespread use of artifacts crafted from copper-based alloys.

Key Indus Valley Sites

- **Harappa:** Excavated by **Daya Ram Sahni in 1921**, located on the bank of the **Ravi River in Punjab, Pakistan**, notable for sandstone statues of human anatomy, granaries, and bullock carts.
- **Mohenjo-Daro:** Unearthed by **R.D. Banerjee in 1922** along the **Indus River in Larkana, Punjab, Pakistan**; significant finds include the Great Bath, granaries, a bronze dancing girl, the Seal of Pashupati, a steatite statue of a bearded man, and a piece of woven cotton.
- **Sutkagendor:** Major Edward Mockler discovered **Sutkagendor in 1875** with a small-scale excavation. Excavated by Aurel Stein in 1929 in southwestern **Balochistan, Pakistan on the Dast River**, identified as a trade point between Harappa and Babylon.
- **Chanhudaro:** Discovered by **N.G. Majumdar in 1931** in Sindh on the **Indus River**, with findings including a bead maker's shop and a footprint of a dog chasing a cat.
- **Amri:** Also excavated by **N.G. Majumdar in 1935** on the bank of the Indus River, noted for evidence of antelopes.
- **Kalibangan:** Excavated by Ghose in 1953 in Rajasthan on the bank of the Ghaggar River, where artifacts include a fire altar, camel bones, and a wooden plough.
- **Lothal:** Excavated by **R. Rao in 1953 in Gujarat** on the **Bhogva River near the Gulf of Cambay**, known for India's first manmade port, a dockyard, rice husk, fire altars, and evidence of chess-playing.
- **Surkotada:** Unearthed by **J.P. Joshi in 1964 in Gujarat**, notable for the discovery of horse bones and beads.
- **Banawali:** Excavated by **R.S. Bisht in 1974** in **Hisar district of Haryana**, with finds including beads, barley, and evidence of both **pre-Harappan and Harappan culture**.
- **Dholavira:** The site was discovered in **1968** by archaeologist Jagat Pati Joshi, **Gujarat in the Rann of Kachchh**. Excavations of the site between **1990 and 2005 under the supervision of archaeologist R S Bisht** revealed the ancient city, which was a commercial and manufacturing centre for about 1,500 years before its collapse and eventual **ruin in 1500 BC**.



MIND MAP

Haryana Declares Protected Sites (March 13, 2025)

- **Sites:** Mitathal and Tighrana, Bhiwani district.
- Declared protected under **Haryana Act, 1964**.
- Aim: Safeguard 4,400-year-old Harappan settlements.

Discovery & Excavations

- First discovered: 1913 (Samudra Gupta coins).
- Excavations (1968): Linked to Copper-Bronze Age culture.
- Reflects Harappan town planning and arts.

Mitathal (Harappan Civilization)

- Era: 3rd–2nd millennium BCE.
- Urbanization, structured community (50–100 houses).
- Agriculture: Crops, domesticated animals.
- Tools: Copper, bronze, stone tools.
- Bead-making and jewelry industry.

Tighrana (Post-Harappan/Chalcolithic)

- Dates to ~2400 BCE (Sothians).
- Mud-brick houses, organized settlements.
- Developed wheel-made black-and-white pottery.
- Agriculture and advanced tools.

Indus Valley Civilization (IVC) Overview

- Announced: September 20, 1924 by Sir John Marshall.
 - Coverage: 1.5 million sq km, 2,000+ sites (India, Pakistan, Afghanistan).
 - One of four major ancient civilizations (along with Egypt, Mesopotamia, China).
 - Bronze Age civilization.

Key Personalities

- Daya Ram Sahni: Excavated Harappa (1921–22).
 - R.D. Banerjee: Excavated Mohenjo-daro (1922).
 - Sir John Marshall: Connected Harappa and Mohenjo-daro; DG of ASI (1902–1928).

Phases of IVC

- Early Phase (3200–2600 BCE): Hakra phase, earliest script.
 - Mature Phase (2600–1900 BCE): Peak urban development (Harappa, Mohenjodaro, Lothal).
 - Late Phase (1900–1500 BCE): Decline and collapse.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

9. Which archaeological finding at Tigrana indicates the presence of a developed pottery industry among its inhabitants?
(a) Terracotta figurines
(b) Handmade storage pots
(c) Wheel-made ceramics
(d) Polished stone vessels

10. What does the archaeological evidence from Tigrana reveal about the post-Harappan cultural development?
(a) Growth of trading settlements
(b) Emergence of stone fortresses
(c) Continuity of human habitation
(d) Foundation of ritual complexes

11. Which among the following is not part of the cultural sequence identified at the archaeological sites like Mitathal and Tigrana?
(a) Mauryan settlement period
(b) Pre-Siswal cultural phase
(c) Pre-Harappan cultural phase
(d) Post-Harappan cultural phase

12. Which of the following is another name for the ancient Harappan Civilization?
(a) Mesopotamian Civilization
(b) Yellow River Civilization
(c) Nile Valley Civilization
(d) Indus Valley Civilization

13. Which among the following regions, along with Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Maharashtra, formed the core area of the Indus Valley Civilization?
(a) Bihar, Jharkhand
(b) Punjab, Sindh
(c) Assam, Meghalaya
(d) Kerala, Telangana

14. Which Indus Valley Civilization city, located in present-day Gujarat, is known for having one of the world's earliest dockyards?
(a) Harappa
(b) Rakhigarhi
(c) Kalibangan
(d) Lothal

15. Which city layout feature of the Indus Valley Civilization reflects its advanced sense of urban planning?
(a) Circular roads
(b) Grid pattern
(c) Zigzag alleys
(d) Radial layout

16. What construction material was commonly used for building houses in the Indus Valley Civilization cities?
(a) Mud and timber
(b) Stone blocks
(c) Baked bricks
(d) Clay plaster

17. Which iconic structure at Mohenjo-Daro is believed to have been used for ritual or ceremonial bathing?
(a) Great Bath
(b) Central Granary
(c) Pillared Hall
(d) Citadel Shrine

18. What food items were stored in the granaries of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, highlighting the agricultural basis of their economy?
(a) Rice, millet, and maize
(b) Dates, figs, and melons
(c) Spices, herbs, and oils
(d) Wheat, barley, and pulses

19. Approximately how many distinct symbols are found in the undeciphered script of the Indus Valley Civilization?
(a) 200 symbols
(b) 400 symbols
(c) 600 symbols
(d) 800 symbols

20. Which elevated structures in Indus Valley cities were likely used for elite residences or administrative activities?
(a) Citadels
(b) Granaries
(c) Bathhouses
(d) Warehouses

ANSWER KEYS & EXPLANATIONS

1. (c) 2. (d) 3. (a) 4. (b) 5. (d) 6. (a) 7. (d) 8. (b)
9. (c) 10. (c) 11. (a) 12. (d) 13. (b) 14. (d) 15. (b) 16. (c)
17. (a) 18. (d) 19. (b) 20. (a)

Doubt Clearing Session at **LE BHOPAL**



IMPORTANT ONE LINERS

NATIONAL

The Rajasthan Coaching Centres (Control and Regulation) Bill, 2025

- The Rajasthan Coaching Centres (Control and Regulation) Bill, 2025 was introduced in the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly on March 19, 2025 to regulate the coaching industry and ensure the well-being of students. All coaching centres with **more than 50 students are required to register** with the Higher Education Department, with a compliance deadline of three months from the date of enactment. **Each branch of a coaching centre is treated as a separate entity** and must be individually registered.
- Coaching centres are restricted to **a maximum of five teaching hours per day** to reduce student burnout and must provide one weekly holiday for students and tutors to promote mental health. False advertising, misleading guarantees of success, and other deceptive promotional tactics are banned under the Bill.
- Coaching centres are **prohibited from segregating students into batches** based on performance to foster an inclusive learning environment. Penalties for violations include a fine of ₹2 lakh for the first offense, ₹5 lakh for the second offense, and revocation of registration for subsequent offenses.

State of the Global Climate Report 2024

- The **World Meteorological Organization (WMO)** released the State of the Global Climate Report 2024, revealing alarming trends in global climate change and its widespread impacts.
- The **global average temperature in 2024** was **1.55°C** above the 1850–1900 pre-industrial baseline, making it the **warmest year in the 175-year observational record**, surpassing the previous high of **1.45°C in 2023**. Each year from **2015 to 2024** now ranks among the **ten warmest years ever recorded**, reflecting an intensifying trend of global warming.

Hindi Writer Vinod Kumar Shukla Becomes First from Chhattisgarh to Win Jnanpith Award'

- **Vinod Kumar Shukla**, a prominent Hindi writer, has been selected for the **59th Jnanpith Award**, becoming the **first author from Chhattisgarh** to receive this prestigious **national literary honor**.
- The Jnanpith Award is **India's highest literary accolade**, presented annually by the **Bharatiya Jnanpith** to recognize authors for their outstanding contributions to Indian literature. The award includes a cash prize of ₹11 lakh, a bronze statue of Saraswati, and a formal citation.
- Vinod Kumar Shukla was born on January 1, 1937, in Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh, and is celebrated for his poetry, short stories, and novels that reflect a unique and introspective literary voice.
- His notable literary works include "Naukar Ki Kameez" (The Servant's Shirt) and "Deewar Mein Ek Khirkee Rahati Thi" (A Window Lived in a Wall), the latter of which earned him the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1999.

BPCL Inaugurates Floating Solar Power Plant at Kochi Refinery

- Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) inaugurated a **floating solar power plant** at its **Kochi Refinery** on March 21, 2025, marking a major step towards enhancing sustainable energy practices.
- The floating solar power plant has an installed capacity of **3.2 MW AC** and is situated on the rainwater harvesting ponds within the Kochi Refinery premises.
- The solar panels span 8 acres of the total 19-acre waterbody designated for rainwater harvesting at the refinery.
- The installation is projected to reduce annual carbon dioxide emissions by nearly 5,672 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent, contributing to climate change mitigation.

Maharashtra Government's Initiative to Construct Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Memorial in Agra

- On March 21, 2025, the **Maharashtra government** announced its decision to construct a **grand memorial in Agra, Uttar Pradesh**, to honour **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj** at the historical site where he was held under house arrest by Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.
- An expert committee has been constituted under the chairmanship of Maharashtra Minister of Tourism Shambhuraj Desai, comprising historians and subject matter experts to supervise the planning and execution of the memorial.
- The Maharashtra Tourism Department has been appointed as the nodal agency responsible for land acquisition, fund allocation, and coordination of all related activities, while the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) will function as the implementing body.
- The proposed memorial will feature a museum, audio-visual programs, and documentaries with modern facilities, aimed at educating visitors about the life, leadership, and legacy of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

From Delhi to Oslo: Story of M.F. Husain's Painting Sold for a Record ₹118 Crore

- On March 20, 2025, **Maqbool Fida (M.F.) Husain's iconic painting "Voices" (1958)** was sold for ₹118.08 crore at **Pundole's auction house in Mumbai**, setting a new record for modern Indian art.
- The painting, created in 1958, is known for its abstract figures and bold symbolism, and is regarded as a turning point in Husain's career, marking his shift from narrative themes to abstraction.
- The painting was **first exhibited in 1971** at **Art Today gallery** in Delhi, and was later acquired by **Oslo-based gallerist Hilde Holtegaard**, becoming part of her private collection. The artwork was sold for ₹118.08 crore (approximately \$14.2 million), making it the most expensive Indian artwork ever sold at auction, surpassing the previous record held by S.H. Raza's "Gestation", which fetched ₹51.75 crore.

Exercise Sea Dragon 2025

- The Indian Navy is participating in the **multilateral Exercise Sea Dragon 2025**, an advanced maritime anti-submarine warfare (ASW) drill hosted by the **United States Navy in Guam** in March 2025.
- The exercise includes naval forces from India, United States, Japan, Canada, South Korea, and Australia, showcasing strong Indo-Pacific defence cooperation.
- India has deployed its **P-8I maritime patrol aircraft**, renowned for its state-of-the-art surveillance and anti-submarine warfare capabilities, to take part in the drill.

Gujarat Achieves 95% of NITI Aayog's TB-Free Target

- Gujarat** has emerged as one of India's top-performing states by **achieving 95% of the tuberculosis (TB) elimination target** set under NITI Aayog's TB Mukt Bharat Abhiyan for the year 2023–24.
- The state achieved this milestone through a combination of door-to-door screenings, free diagnostic services, nutritional support, and early treatment interventions aimed at curbing TB transmission.
- Gujarat's implementation of the Nikshay Poshan Yojana**, which provides nutritional support to TB patients, along with effective public-private partnership models, has significantly contributed to positive treatment outcomes.
- The **National Strategic Plan for TB Elimination (2017–25)** aims to eliminate tuberculosis in India by 2025, which is five years ahead of the global TB elimination target set by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- World TB Day is observed annually on March 24 to raise awareness about the global TB epidemic, commemorating the day in 1882 when Dr. Robert Koch discovered the tuberculosis-causing bacterium.

6th Edition of Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain – 2025 Launched

- On March 22, 2025, coinciding with **World Water Day**, the **Union Ministry of Jal Shakti**, in collaboration with the **Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change** and the **Government of Haryana**, launched the **6th edition of Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain – 2025 in Panchkula, Haryana**.
- The theme for 2025 is “जल संचय जन भागीदारी: जन जागरूकता की ओर” (People's Action for Water Conservation – Towards Intensified Community Connect).
- The campaign focuses on 148 water-stressed districts across India, aiming to improve water conservation through community involvement and scientific interventions.
- Major initiatives launched include 'Jal-Jangal-Jan: Ek Prakritik Bandhan Abhiyan', which emphasizes restoring ecological linkages between forests, rivers, and springs, highlighting the intrinsic relationship among water, forests, and communities.
- The World Water Day 2025 global theme was "Glacier Preservation", emphasizing the urgent need to protect glacial ecosystems as essential freshwater reserves.

Kerala Becomes the First State in India to Establish a Senior Citizens Commission

- Kerala** has become the **first state in India** to set up a **Senior Citizens Commission**, aimed at ensuring the rights, protection, and welfare of elderly citizens.
- The composition of the commission includes **one Chairperson and up to three members**, of whom at least one must be a woman and one must belong to **the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes**.
- An Additional Secretary will serve as **the Secretary of the commission**, while a Joint Secretary from the law department will function as the Registrar.
- The members of the commission will hold office for a fixed tenure of three years.
- As per 2021 data, 16.5% of Kerala's population comprised individuals aged 60 and above, the highest proportion in India. This figure is expected to increase to 22.8% by 2036, underlining the urgency for elderly-focused governance mechanisms.
- The Kerala government currently provides a monthly pension of ₹1,600 under the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme for individuals aged 60 and above whose annual income is ₹1,00,000 or less.

Bihar's Kosi-Mechi Intra-State Link Project

- On March 28, 2025, the **Union Cabinet** approved the inclusion of the **Kosi-Mechi Intra-State Link Project** under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana—Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (PMKSY-AIBP).
- The project aims to divert surplus water from the **Kosi River to the Mahananda basin** by remodelling the **Eastern Kosi Main Canal (EKMC)** up to 41.30 km and extending it to 117.50 km to connect with the Mech River.
- The Kosi River originates from the Sun Kosi, Arun Kosi, and Tamur Kosi streams and enters India near Hanuman Nagar, merging with the Ganga at Kursela, Bihar.
- The Mech River, originating in the Mahabharat Range (Nepal), forms part of the India–Nepal border and joins the Mahananda River in Kishanganj, Bihar.

AFSPA Extended in Parts of Manipur, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh

- On March 30, 2025, the **Ministry of Home Affairs** extended the **Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA)** for **six months** in specified areas of **Manipur, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh**.
- In Manipur, AFSPA remains in force across the state, excluding 13 police station areas in Imphal West, Imphal East, Thoubal, Bishnupur, and Kakching districts. The extension follows continued ethnic violence between Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities, with over 260 fatalities since May 2023.
- In Nagaland, the Act applies to eight districts—Dimapur, Niuland, Chumoukedima, Mon, Kiphire, Noklak, Phek, and Peren, and select police stations in Kohima, Mokokchung, Longleng, Wokha, and Zunheboto.
- In Arunachal Pradesh, it has been extended to Tirap, Changlang, and Longding districts, and Namsai, Mahadevpur, Chowkham police stations in Namsai district.

Operation Brahma

- Operation Brahma** was launched by India on March 28, 2025, in response to the **7.7-magnitude earthquake in Myanmar**, which resulted in over 1,600 deaths and widespread destruction.
- The operation is led by the **Indian Army** and coordinated by the **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** in collaboration with all branches of the Indian Armed Forces.
- NDRF teams are conducting rescue operations, notably at U Hla Thein monastery, where 170 monks were stranded, using specialized search and rescue equipment.
- INS Satpura and INS Savitri of the Indian Navy delivered 40 tonnes of relief materials to Yangon, while an Indian Air Force C-130J aircraft delivered an additional 15 tonnes of aid.
- The operation reflects India's regional humanitarian leadership, similar to **Operation Maitri during the 2015 Nepal earthquake**, reaffirming its role as a first responder in South Asia.

Bodh Gaya Temple Controversy

- The Bodh Gaya temple controversy escalated in 2025 as Buddhist monks and followers across India launched protests demanding complete control of the **Mahabodhi Temple** by the Buddhist community.
- The **Mahabodhi Temple**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, marks the place where Buddha attained enlightenment and is currently governed under the **Bodh Gaya Temple Act, 1949**.
- The Act establishes the Bodhgaya Temple Management Committee (BTMC) with four Buddhists and four Hindus, chaired by the **District Magistrate (DM)** as an **ex-officio member**.
- Protests began in February 2025, with hunger strikes and demonstrations, demanding repeal of the 1949 Act and voicing opposition to Hindu rituals at the site, which they argue contradict Buddhist teachings.
- Protesters claim that the presence of Brahminical practices and Hindu dominance in administration undermines Buddhist identity and attempts to "Brahminize" the site.
- The temple was originally built by Emperor Ashoka in 260 BCE and has undergone phases of neglect and Hindu reclamation, further complicating its religious control.
- A 2013 amendment allowed a non-Hindu DM to serve as chairperson, but Buddhists maintain that the core issue of representation remains unresolved.

T.N. Assembly Unanimously Adopts Resolution on Retrieval of Katchatheevu from Sri Lanka

- On April 2, 2025, the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution urging the Central Government to retrieve **Katchatheevu Island from Sri Lanka**, moved by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin.
- Katchatheevu is a 285-acre uninhabited **island in the Palk Strait**, ceded to Sri Lanka in 1974 through a bilateral agreement, historically used by Tamil Nadu fishermen.

- All political parties, including the AIADMK and BJP, supported the resolution despite questioning its timing, marking the fourth such resolution after previous ones in 1991, 2013, and 2014.
- The Assembly called on the Union Government to review the **1974 Indo-Sri Lankan agreement** and urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to address the issue during his April 4–6, 2025 visit to Sri Lanka, including efforts for the release of imprisoned fishermen and boats.

Pamban Rail Bridge

- The **original Pamban Rail Bridge**, inaugurated on **February 24, 1914**, was India's first sea bridge, connecting Rameswaram to the Indian mainland and serving for over a century.
- It featured 143 spans over a total length of 2,065 meters and included a manually operated double-leaf bascule section that allowed ships to pass, taking about 45 minutes per lift.
- The bridge endured several natural challenges, including major damage during the 1964 cyclone, after which it was successfully repaired.
- Due to corrosion and structural concerns, train services were suspended in December 2022, leading to the decommissioning of the original bridge.
- A new **Pamban Rail Bridge**, built at a cost of ₹535 crore, was inaugurated on April 6, 2025 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- The new structure features a vertical lift span capable of rising 17 meters, allowing smooth maritime navigation, and incorporates modern engineering innovations.

GI Tag to Warangal Chapata Chilli

- On March 28, 2025, the **Warangal Chapata Chilli**, also known as '**Tomato Chilli**', received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag, becoming the 18th product from Telangana to gain this recognition.
- The chilli is cultivated across 6,700 acres in Warangal, Hanumakonda, Mulugu, and Jayashankar Bhupalpally districts, supporting around 20,000 farmers.
- It is distinguished by its bright red color, blocky tomato-like shape, mild pungency, and availability in Single Patti, Double Patti, and Odalu variants.
- Before the GI tag, the chilli sold at ₹300/kg; post-recognition, prices are expected to rise to ₹450–₹500/kg, improving farmer income.
- The chilli's natural red pigment has made it popular in export markets like the USA, China, UK, Germany, and other European countries, especially for use in the food and beverage industry.

Kannadippaya, a Traditional Tribal Handicraft from Kerala, Awarded GI Tag

- **Kannadippaya**, meaning "mirror mat", is crafted from the inner layers of **reed bamboo (Teinostachyum wightii)** and provides natural insulation by offering warmth in winter and a cooling effect in summer.
- The craft is maintained by tribal communities such as the Oorali, Mannan, Muthuva, Malayan, Kadar, Ulladan, Malayarayan, and Hill Pulaya, mainly in Idukki, Thrissur, Ernakulam, and Palakkad districts.
- In India, GI registrations are governed by the **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999**, under the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.
- The first product in India to receive a GI tag was Darjeeling Tea in 2004-05.

Panchayat Advancement Index Ranks Rural Local Bodies

- The Ministry of Panchayati Raj released the **inaugural Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) Baseline Report for 2022–23**, evaluating over 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats across India.
- Panchayats are categorized into five tiers: Achiever (90+ points, none qualified), Front Runner (75–89 points, 699 Panchayats, 0.3%), Performer (60–74 points, 77,298 Panchayats, 35.8%), Aspirant (40–59 points, 1,32,392 Panchayats, 61.2%), and Beginner (below 40 points, 5,896 Panchayats, 2.7%).
- **Gujarat led with 346 Front Runner Panchayats**, followed by Telangana (270), while Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh recorded high numbers of Performer Panchayats.
- Bihar, Chhattisgarh, and Andhra Pradesh had a significant share of Aspirant Panchayats, highlighting areas needing targeted developmental interventions.

India's First-Ever Climate Change Station

- On April 8, 2025, Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated **India's first High-Altitude Atmospheric and Climate Research Station at Mandlote village, Chenani**, in Udhampur district, Jammu and Kashmir.

- Located at an altitude of approximately 2,250 meters, the station was established by the Ministry of Earth Sciences to monitor environmental changes in the Himalayas.
- The facility will study rainfall patterns, cloudburst predictions, and atmospheric phenomena critical to the north-western Himalayan region.
- The inauguration also launched **the Indo-Swiss Joint Research Project – ICE-Crunch**, in collaboration with ETH Zurich, focusing on ice-nucleating particles and cloud condensation nuclei properties.

Naval Exercise INDRA-2025

- The 14th edition of the bilateral naval exercise **INDRA-2025 between India and Russia** was conducted from March 28 to April 2, 2025, off the coast of Chennai in the Bay of Bengal.
- The exercise comprised two phases: the **Harbour Phase** in Chennai (March 28–30) featuring professional exchanges, ship visits, and sports activities, and **the Sea Phase** (March 31–April 2) involving tactical manoeuvres, live weapon firings, anti-air operations, and helicopter cross-deck landings.
- Exercise INDRA, initiated in **2003**, remains a cornerstone of India-Russia defense relations, reflecting their long-term strategic partnership.

India Revokes Transshipment Facility for Bangladesh Exports

- On April 8, 2025, the Government of India revoked the **transshipment facility** that allowed Bangladeshi export cargo to pass through Indian land customs stations to reach third countries, as announced by the **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)**.
- The facility, established in **June 2020**, had facilitated Bangladesh's ready-made garment (RMG) exports by providing access to Indian ports and airports, notably the **Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi**.
- Indian authorities cited airport congestion and logistical delays, particularly in **Delhi**, as primary reasons for the revocation, with concerns raised by the **Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC)** of India.
- Political factors also played a role, following controversial remarks by **Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus**, who referred to India's northeastern states as "landlocked" and proposed Bangladesh as a gateway for Chinese goods, straining diplomatic ties.

Maharashtra-ROSATOM Partnership for Thorium Reactor

- On April 11, 2025, the **Maharashtra government** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Russia's state-owned ROSATOM** to jointly develop a **Small Modular Reactor (SMR)** powered by thorium fuel.
- This is the first instance of an Indian state government venturing into nuclear energy development, traditionally overseen by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE).
- Key stakeholders include Maharashtra State Power Generation Co. Ltd (MAHAGENCO), ROSATOM, Maharashtra Institution for Transformation (MITRA), and the Global Technology Alliance.

Relocation of Cheetahs from Kuno to Gandhi Sagar Approved

- The **Cheetah Project Steering Committee** under the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** has approved the relocation of some cheetahs from **Kuno National Park to Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh**. Project Cheetah was initiated in **2022** with the translocation of 8 cheetahs from Namibia and 12 from South Africa to Kuno National Park.
- As of April 2025, Kuno National Park houses 26 cheetahs, including 17 in the wild and 9 in enclosures.
- The project has faced challenges with the deaths of 8 adult cheetahs and 5 cubs since its inception. Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary, located in northwestern Madhya Pradesh bordering Rajasthan, covers an area of 368 sq km and offers a habitat similar to the Maasai Mara in Kenya.

India Votes in Favour of First Global Carbon Tax on Shipping

- India joined 62 other nations in supporting the **world's first global carbon tax** on the shipping industry, adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in April 2025.
- The carbon tax is scheduled to **be formally adopted in October 2025** and will come into force in 2028. Ships exceeding emission thresholds will pay charges ranging from \$100 to \$380 per tonne of CO₂, depending on their emission levels.
- The tax is expected to generate up to \$40 billion by 2030, with all revenues allocated exclusively for decarbonizing the maritime sector.
- Countries supporting the measure include India, China, Brazil, the European Union, Japan, South Africa, and Singapore.
- Nations opposing the tax include Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Russia, and Venezuela, while the United States abstained from the negotiations and vote.

Union Minister of Cooperation Announces Sahkar Taxi

- On the floor of Parliament, **Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah** announced the launch of '**Sahkar Taxi**', a cooperative-based ride-hailing service aligned with the vision of '**Sahkar se Samriddhi**'. The platform will support two-wheeler taxis, auto-rickshaws, and four-wheeler cabs across India.
- The initiative ensures **100% earnings go directly to drivers**, bypassing private aggregators and enhancing driver financial security.

PM Modi Announces "Yoga for One Earth, One Health" as 2025 Yoga Day Theme

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi **announced "Yoga for One Earth, One Health"** as the **theme for the 2025 International Day of Yoga (IDY)**, focusing on yoga's role in global health and environmental sustainability.
- With less than 100 days until June 21, PM Modi urged citizens to adopt daily yoga practices for improved physical and mental health. International Day of Yoga has been observed annually **since 2015**, following India's proposal to the United Nations, gaining widespread global recognition.

India Justice Report 2025

- The **India Justice Report (IJR) 2025**, led by **Tata Trusts**, assesses India's justice delivery across four pillars: Police, Judiciary, Prisons, and Legal Aid.
- Published by **Tata Trusts** in collaboration with **Centre for Social Justice, Common Cause**, and others. The 2025 edition marks the **fourth instalment** since its inception in **2019**.
- In 2024-25, eleven states allocated ₹1.97 lakh crore to the justice system, marking a 25% increase from 2022-23. The average per capita spending is ₹2,056, with Telangana leading at ₹3,047.
- Police received ₹1.56 lakh crore, making up 80% of the justice budget, but less than 2% was spent on training.
- Allocations for **judiciary** and **legal aid** amounted to **₹32,996 crore**, representing 17% of the total justice budget.
- Karnataka** leads in overall justice delivery, followed by **Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu**.
- Uttar Pradesh** ranks at the bottom in justice delivery, highlighting the need for reform.

Karnataka's Caste Survey Report Accepted by State Cabinet

- On April 11, 2025, the Karnataka Cabinet formally accepted the **Socio-Economic and Educational Survey report**, also known as the caste survey. The survey, commissioned in **2015 under Chief Minister Siddaramaiah**, aimed to collect comprehensive socio-economic data from various caste groups in the state.
- The report, submitted by the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes under **Chairman K. Jayaprakash Hegde**, was tabled in the Cabinet meeting and will be discussed in a special session on April 17, 2025.
- The survey involved over 1.6 lakh personnel and covered 94.17% of the state's population, surveying 5.98 crore individuals across 1.38 crore families.
- 54 parameters were assessed, focusing on social, educational, and economic status, with data validation done by the Indian Institute of Management-Bangalore.
- The demographic distribution showed OBCs at 69.6%, Scheduled Castes (SCs) at 19.5%, and Scheduled Tribes (STs) at 7%. Muslims represent 16% of the population, while Lingayats and Vokkaligas are at 14% and 11%, respectively.**
- The survey recommends increasing OBC reservation from 32% to 51%, adjusting for the creamy layer, and raising the Muslim quota from 4% to 8% under Category IIB.
- The IIA category (including Kurubas) is recommended to rise from 15% to 22%, benefiting communities like the Kurubas to which CM Siddaramaiah belongs.

India Signs Agreement to Host International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) Headquarters

- On **April 17, 2025**, India signed an agreement to host the **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)** headquarters, emphasizing India's leadership in global wildlife conservation efforts, especially for big cat species.
- The IBCA was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 9, 2023, during the 50th anniversary celebrations of **Project Tiger** in **Mysuru**, with the aim to conserve seven major big cat species: **Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar, and Puma**.
- The Government of India has committed **₹150 crore** (approximately **USD 18 million**) over five years (2023–29) to support the IBCA's operations, including building infrastructure and covering recurring expenditures.
- As of January 23, 2025, the IBCA became a legal entity with **India, Nicaragua, Eswatini, Somalia, and Liberia** ratifying the framework agreement. The alliance now includes 95 countries committed to big cat conservation.

INTERNATIONAL

Günter Blöschl Wins Stockholm Water Prize 2025

- **Professor Günter Blöschl**, a renowned hydrologist, has been awarded **the Stockholm Water Prize 2025** for his pioneering contributions to flood risk reduction and water resource management. The Stockholm Water Prize is regarded as the world's most prestigious water award, presented annually by the **Stockholm Water Foundation** in collaboration with the **Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences**.
- He is recognized as the founder of regional process hydrology, which examines hydrological processes at regional scales for improved water hazard predictions.
- As a co-founder of sociohydrology, Professor Blöschl has advanced the study of human–water system interactions, enabling better incorporation of social factors into hydrological models.
- He created a 500-year flood database, offering critical insights into long-term flood trends and supporting climate adaptation strategies.

Journalist Jeffrey Goldberg Inadvertently Added to U.S. Government Group Chat Discussing Yemen Strikes

- **Jeffrey Goldberg, Editor-in-Chief of The Atlantic**, reported that he was mistakenly added to a **Signal group chat** where senior U.S. government officials were discussing classified military plans targeting Houthi positions in Yemen.
- On March 11, 2025, **National Security Advisor Michael Waltz** accidentally included Goldberg in the chat group titled "**Houthi PC small group**", which was meant exclusively for high-level military discussions.
- The chat involved top officials of the Trump administration, including Vice President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth, and other senior personnel.
- The messages contained specific operational details, including proposed targets, weapon systems, and the timing of planned strikes against the Houthi group in Yemen.

Abel Prize 2025

- The **Abel Prize 2025** has been awarded to **Masaki Kashiwara**, a renowned Japanese mathematician, for his fundamental contributions to **algebraic analysis** and **representation theory**, particularly the **theory of D-modules** and **crystal bases**.
- Established in **2002 by the Norwegian government**, the **Abel Prize** is awarded annually by the **Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters** and is regarded as the "Nobel Prize of Mathematics".
- Masaki Kashiwara was born on January 30, 1947, in Yūki, Ibaraki, Japan, completed his master's at the University of Tokyo (1971), and obtained his Ph.D. from Kyoto University (1974) under Mikio Sato.
- He has served as a professor at Kyoto University's RIMS and is currently at the Kyoto University Institute for Advanced Study (KUIAS).

Earthquake in Myanmar

- On March 28, 2025, a **7.7-magnitude earthquake** struck near Mandalay, the second-largest city in Myanmar, causing widespread devastation.
- Myanmar reported over 600 deaths and more than 1,600 injuries, with the toll expected to rise as rescue operations continue.
- In Thailand, approximately 10 people died and dozens were injured in Bangkok, following the collapse of a 30-story under-construction building.
- A 6.4-magnitude aftershock struck 11 minutes after the main quake, followed by multiple smaller tremors.
- The **Myanmar military junta declared a state of emergency** and issued an appeal for international aid to support ongoing relief and recovery efforts.

Israel's Netanyahu to Visit Hungary, Defying ICC Arrest Warrant

- Israeli Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu** is scheduled to visit **Hungary** from April 2 to April 6, 2025, despite an ICC arrest warrant issued in November 2024.
- The International Criminal Court (ICC) issued warrants for Netanyahu and former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza, marking the first such action against leaders of a Western-aligned democracy.
- Hungarian **Prime Minister Viktor Orbán invited Netanyahu** and confirmed that Hungary would not enforce the ICC warrant, despite being a signatory to the Rome Statute.
- The visit reflects Hungary's defiance of EU norms, Orbán's support for Netanyahu, and strained relations with the European Union.
- The international response remains divided, with countries like the United States rejecting ICC jurisdiction, while others back the court's independent legal authority.

World's Largest 'Exporter' of Adopted Children: Revelations from South Korea's Fact-Finding Commission

- **South Korea** has sent approximately 200,000 children abroad for adoption since the **end of the Korean War**, becoming the **world's largest source of international adoptees**.
- A recent investigation by the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Korea** revealed systemic fraud and human rights violations in the country's foreign adoption program.
- Unwed mothers were systematically coerced by hospitals and agencies into giving up children, revealing a pattern of forced adoptions.
- The commission has called for an official apology from the government and recommended restoring the true identities of adoptees to aid family reunification.

Senator Cory Booker Delivers Historic 25-Hour and 5-Minute Senate Speech

- On March 31, 2025, Senator **Cory Booker** of New Jersey delivered a **25-hour and 5-minute speech** on the U.S. Senate floor, setting the **longest speech record** in Senate history.
- The speech surpassed the **1957 record of 24 hours and 18 minutes** held by Senator **Strom Thurmond**.
- Booker protested against the policies of President Donald Trump's administration, citing harm to democracy and marginalized communities.
- The act served as a symbolic reversal of Thurmond's filibuster against civil rights legislation, reinforcing Booker's civil rights advocacy.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Awarded Sri Lanka Mitra Vibhushana

- On April 5, 2025, during an official visit to Sri Lanka, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred with the **Sri Lanka Mitra Vibhushana**, the country's highest honor for foreign leaders, by **President Anura Kumara Dissanayake** at the Presidential Secretariat in Colombo.
- The Sri Lanka Mitra Vibhushana, instituted in **2008** by then-President **Mahinda Rajapaksa**, is awarded to foreign Heads of State or Government for exceptional friendship and solidarity with Sri Lanka.
- The award includes a **citation, and a silver medal** adorned with nine types of Sri Lankan gems (Navaratna), symbolizing a priceless friendship.
- The medal features symbolic elements: a Dharma Chakra representing shared Buddhist heritage, a Purna Kalasha symbolizing prosperity, and Sun and Moon denoting a timeless bond.

Bangladesh Assumes BIMSTEC Chairmanship for 2025-2027

- During the **6th BIMSTEC Summit held in Bangkok, Thailand**, **Bangladesh** officially assumed the chairmanship of BIMSTEC for a two-year term.
- The chairmanship was handed over from Thailand's Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra to Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus.
- BIMSTEC comprises Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, with the chairmanship rotating alphabetically every two years.
- The summit adopted the BIMSTEC Bangkok Vision 2030, aiming for sustainable development and deeper economic integration among member states.
- This is Bangladesh's third chairmanship, following earlier terms in **1997-1999 and 2005-2006**.

NATO Members Announce Intent to Withdraw from Ottawa Convention

- **Poland, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania** declared their intention to **withdraw from the 1997 Ottawa Convention**, which bans the use, stockpiling, production, and transfer of anti-personnel landmines.
- The withdrawals are driven by security concerns over escalating military threats from Russia, aiming to enhance border defences through landmine deployment.
- These countries seek military parity with non-signatories like Russia, the United States, China, India, and Israel.
- **Finnish Prime Minister Petteri Orpo** cited the **changing security environment** post-Ukraine conflict as necessitating more versatile defence strategies.

Breakthrough Prize 2025

- The **11th annual Breakthrough Prize ceremony** was held on **April 5, 2025**, at the **Barker Hangar in Santa Monica, California**, celebrating major scientific advancements.
- In **Life Sciences**, the awardees were Daniel J. Drucker, Joel Habener, Jens Juul Holst, Lotte Bjerre Knudsen, and Svetlana Mojsov for their discovery of the GLP-1 hormone, crucial for drugs like Ozempic and Wegovy.
- Stephen L. Hauser and Alberto Ascherio were honoured for research on multiple sclerosis, **identifying B cells as key contributors** and linking Epstein-Barr virus to MS risk.
- David R. Liu received recognition for pioneering base editing and prime editing technologies in gene editing.
- In **Fundamental Physics**, over 13,000 researchers from ATLAS, CMS, ALICE, and LHCb experiments at **CERN** were awarded for contributions to understanding fundamental particles and forces.

- In **Mathematics**, Dennis Gaitsgory was awarded for his work on the geometric Langlands program, connecting number theory and geometry. Each Breakthrough Prize carries a monetary award of \$3 million, making it one of the most prestigious and financially significant awards in the scientific community.

US Clears Firm to Build and Design Nuclear Reactors in India

- The **United States Department of Energy (DoE)** granted **Holtec International** regulatory approval to **transfer small modular reactor (SMR) technology** to India, advancing **India-US civil nuclear cooperation**.
- Holtec is authorized to share **SMR technology** with **Holtec Asia, Larsen & Toubro Ltd (L&T), and Tata Consulting Engineers Ltd (TCE)**.
- Conditions include prohibiting technology transfer to other entities or countries without US government consent, ensuring usage under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, and requiring quarterly reporting to the DoE.
- The approval currently excludes collaboration with state-owned entities like NPCIL, NTPC, and AERB, pending non-proliferation assurances from the Indian government.
- The development revitalizes **the 2007 India-US Civil Nuclear Agreement**, delayed for years due to regulatory hurdles.

Bangladesh Joins Artemis Accords

- On **April 8, 2025**, **Bangladesh** became the **54th nation** to sign the **Artemis Accords** at a ceremony in **Dhaka**, represented by **Secretary of Defense Ashraf Uddin**, with participation from **U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Tracey Jacobson** and a message from **NASA Acting Administrator Janet Petro**.
- The Artemis Accords, established in **October 2020** by **NASA** and the **U.S. Department of State**, outline non-binding principles for peaceful, transparent, and sustainable civil space exploration.
- With Bangladesh's inclusion, the Artemis Accords now have **54 signatories**, forming a broad international framework for cooperation on missions to the Moon, Mars, and beyond.

Panama Deal Allows U.S. Troop Deployment Near Canal

- **Panama** and the **United States** have signed a **security agreement** permitting U.S. military personnel to deploy near the Panama Canal for training and joint exercises.
- The agreement grants access to **three facilities—two naval air bases and one airport**—previously operated by the U.S. during its control of the **Canal Zone**.
- It explicitly **prohibits the establishment of permanent military bases** but allows toll-free, priority passage for U.S. warships through the Panama Canal.
- The deal has sparked domestic controversy in Panama, with critics claiming it undermines sovereignty and violates the **1977 Torrijos-Carter Treaties** that guaranteed the canal's **neutrality** and **Panamanian control**.
- The **Panama Canal**, completed in **1914**, remained under **U.S. control** until its transfer to Panama was completed in **1999** under the **Torrijos-Carter Treaties**.

WMO Retires Hurricane Names

- The **World Meteorological Organization (WMO)** retired four hurricane names—**Beryl, Helene, Milton, and John**—due to the significant death tolls and widespread destruction caused during the 2024 hurricane season.
- **Hurricane Beryl** (Atlantic Basin) became the earliest Category 5 hurricane on July 2, 2024, reaching 165 mph, causing 68 fatalities and 65 tornadoes after making landfall in Southeast Texas.
- **Hurricane Helene** (Atlantic Basin) made landfall in Florida's Big Bend region on September 27, 2024 as a Category 4 storm, resulting in over 200 deaths and \$75 billion in damages.
- **Hurricane Milton** (Atlantic Basin) crossed central Florida in October 2024, leading to over 40 fatalities and causing damages worth at least \$34 billion.
- **Hurricane John** (Eastern Pacific Basin) caused severe flooding in the Mexican state of Guerrero, leading to its retirement.
- The WMO announced **replacement names** effective from the **2030 hurricane season**:
 - Beryl → **Brianna**
 - Helene → **Holly**
 - Milton → **Miguel**
 - John → **Jake**
- The WMO maintains six rotating lists of hurricane names, and retirement occurs when a storm's impact makes future reuse insensitive or confusing, honoring the memory of the affected victims.

US-Iran Negotiators Hold 'Constructive' Nuclear Talks in First Round

- On **April 12, 2025**, the **United States** and **Iran** conducted a nuclear negotiation round in Muscat, Oman, marking their first direct engagement since the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018.
- The U.S. delegation was led by **Special Envoy Steve Witkoff**, while Iran's team was headed by **Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi**, with mediation by Omani Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi.

- Talks occurred amid renewed U.S. "maximum pressure" campaigns and Iran's economic and political challenges, with a looming July UN sanctions renewal deadline adding urgency.
- Despite deep differences, both sides described the discussions as "constructive", and agreed to **reconvene on April 19, 2025**, in **Oman**, offering cautious optimism for future progress.

Mauritius Becomes First African Country to Sign ISA's Country Partnership Framework

- **Mauritius** became the **first African country** and the **fourth globally** after **Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Cuba** to sign the **Country Partnership Framework (CPF)** with the International Solar Alliance (ISA).
- The CPF was signed in **Port Louis** by **Barakat Ahmed**, ISA's Regional Programmes Head for Africa, and **Zeenat Guness-Goolbar**, Permanent Secretary of Mauritius's Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities.
- The **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**, launched in **2015** by **India and France**, aims to mobilize USD 1 trillion in solar investments by 2030 to improve energy access and combat climate change.

Katy Perry and All-Female Crew Go to Space: A Historic Blue Origin Flight

- **Katy Perry** joined an **all-female crew** on a suborbital spaceflight organized by **Blue Origin**, marking a historic milestone in private space exploration.
- The mission launched from **Blue Origin's Corn Ranch** facility in West Texas aboard the New Shepard (NS-31) rocket and lasted approximately 11 minutes, crossing the Kármán line.
- Crew Members included Katy Perry, Lauren Sánchez, Gayle King, Aisha Bowe, Amanda Nguyen, and Kerianne Flynn, making it the first all-female spaceflight since Valentina Tereshkova in 1963.
- During the microgravity experience, Katy Perry sang "What a Wonderful World", creating a symbolic fusion of music and space exploration.

UK Supreme Court Defines 'Woman' Based on Biological Sex

- On April 16, 2025, the **UK Supreme Court** ruled in **For Women Scotland Ltd v The Scottish Ministers**, determining that the terms "**woman**" and "**sex**" in the **Equality Act 2010** refer exclusively to biological sex, excluding transgender women with Gender Recognition Certificates (GRCs) from the legal definition of "woman".
- The case was brought by **For Women Scotland**, challenging the Scottish Government's inclusion of transgender women with GRCs in the definition of "woman" for public board appointments.

Global Trade Outlook and Statistics 2025

- The **World Trade Organization (WTO)** forecasts a **0.2% decline** in global **merchandise trade** for **2025**, down from the previously expected **3.0% growth**.
- **Services Trade:** Despite challenges in goods trade, services trade is projected to grow by 4.0%, a slowdown from 6.8% in 2024.
- The WTO predicts global GDP growth will slow to 2.2% in 2025 due to trade disruptions.
- U.S. tariffs, including a blanket 10% on imports and up to 145% on Chinese products, have intensified trade tensions and disrupted global supply chains.
- Bilateral trade between U.S. and China is expected to fall by 81%, potentially reaching 91% without exemptions for certain products like smartphones, risking global economic fragmentation.

Portrait of Palestinian Boy Wins 2025 World Press Photo of the Year

- The **World Press Photo Foundation** awarded the **2025 World Press Photo of the Year** to a portrait of **Mahmoud Ajjour**, a nine-year-old Palestinian boy who lost both arms in an Israeli airstrike in Gaza.
- The photograph, taken by **Samar Abu Elouf**, a **Palestinian photojournalist**, was published by **The New York Times** and showcases Mahmoud's quiet resilience amidst the trauma of conflict. Mahmoud was injured in March 2024 while fleeing with his family during an Israeli attack on Gaza City. An explosion severed one of his arms and mutilated the other as he turned back to urge his family to move faster.
- The photograph was selected from over 59,000 entries submitted by nearly 3,800 photographers across 141 countries and will be featured in the **World Press Photo Exhibition 2025**.

APPOINTMENTS

Ex-ED Chief Sanjay Mishra Appointed to EAC-PM, Rajiv Gauba as NITI Aayog Member

- The Government of India has appointed **Sanjay Kumar Mishra**, former Enforcement Directorate (ED) Director, as a full-time member of the **Economic Advisory Council** to the **Prime Minister (EAC-PM)**, and **Rajiv Gauba, former Cabinet Secretary, as a full-time member of NITI Aayog**.
- Sanjay Kumar Mishra is a 1984-batch IRS officer (Income Tax cadre) and served as ED Director until September 15, 2023, when his extended tenure was curtailed by the Supreme Court.
- The **EAC-PM is an independent advisory body to the Prime Minister**, currently chaired by Dr. Suman Bery, who also serves as Vice Chairperson of NITI Aayog.
- Rajiv Gauba is a 1982-batch IAS officer (Jharkhand cadre) who served as Cabinet Secretary from 2019 to August 2024, and held key posts including Union Home Secretary and Chief Secretary of Jharkhand.

Poonam Gupta Appointed as RBI Deputy Governor Ahead of MPC Meeting

- **Dr. Poonam Gupta** was appointed as **Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** for a **three-year term**, succeeding Michael Patra, who retired in January 2025.
- Dr. Gupta is the **first woman** to hold the position in over a decade and assumes office ahead of the **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting** scheduled for April 7–9, 2025.
- She previously served as **Director General of NCAER** and has nearly two decades of experience with the World Bank and IMF in macroeconomic policy.
- Dr. Gupta has held academic roles at the Delhi School of Economics and ICRIER. She is a member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister and Convener of the Advisory Council to the 16th Finance Commission.

Justice B.R. Gavai Appointed as 52nd Chief Justice of India

- **Justice Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai** is appointed as the **52nd Chief Justice of India (CJI)**, succeeding Justice Sanjiv Khanna after his retirement on May 13, 2025.
- Justice Gavai's tenure as CJI will begin on May 14, 2025, and end upon his retirement on November 23, 2025, adhering to the seniority convention in the Supreme Court.
- Born on November 24, 1960, in Amravati, Maharashtra, Justice Gavai's family was influenced by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's ideals. His father, R.S. Gavai, was a prominent Dalit leader and former Governor of Bihar and Kerala.
- Justice Gavai was elevated to the Supreme Court on May 24, 2019, where he has authored 696 judgments and participated in 422 benches. His judgments mainly focus on criminal law, service matters, and constitutional issues.
- He will be the second Dalit to serve as CJI, following Justice K.G. Balakrishnan (2007–2010).
- His tenure as CJI will span approximately six months, and upon his retirement, Justice Surya Kant is expected to succeed him as the 53rd Chief Justice of India.

SPORTS

Hitesh Gulia First Indian Boxer to Win Gold at the World Boxing Cup

- **Hitesh Gulia** became the **first Indian boxer to win a gold medal at the World Boxing Cup**, triumphing in the men's 70kg category at the inaugural tournament held in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, in April 2025.
- Gulia secured the gold after England's Odel Kamara withdrew from the final due to injury, resulting in a walkover victory.
- In the semi-finals, Gulia defeated French Olympian Makan Traore, demonstrating his high-level competitive readiness.
- Team India's medal tally included: Gold – Hitesh Gulia (70kg), Silver – Abhinash Jamwal (65kg), and Bronze – Jadumani Singh Mandengbam (50kg), Manish Rathore (55kg), Sachin (60kg), and Vishal (90kg).

Sir James Anderson Awarded Knighthood for Services to Cricket

- On April 11, 2025, **James Anderson** was awarded a **knighthood** in former Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's resignation honours list for his exceptional contributions to cricket.
- Anderson made his Test debut for England on May 22, 2003, against Zimbabwe at Lord's.
- He retired from international cricket in July 2024 after playing 188 Test matches, the **second-highest in Test history** after Sachin Tendulkar's 200.
- He claimed 704 Test wickets, making him the highest wicket-taking fast bowler in Test history and third overall after Muttiah Muralitharan (800) and Shane Warne (708).
- Previously, he was appointed an **Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE)** in the 2015 Queen's Birthday Honours.

- Anderson now joins cricket legends **Sir Alastair Cook** and **Sir Andrew Strauss**, knighted in 2019, reflecting his place among England's most celebrated cricketers.

Number of Teams Confirmed for Cricket's Olympic Return

- On April 9, 2025, the **International Olympic Committee (IOC)** confirmed that cricket will feature in the **2028 Los Angeles Olympics**, with **six teams each for the men's and women's tournaments**.
- Both tournaments will use the Twenty20 (T20) format, known for its fast-paced and engaging style. Each team will consist of a 15-player squad, totaling 90 athletes per gender.
- The United States, as the host nation, is expected to receive an automatic berth in both events.
- The International Cricket Council (ICC) is considering using T20 World Cup results or team rankings to determine the remaining five qualification spots per tournament.

Khelo India Youth Games 2025: Logo, Mascot, and Torch Relay

- On April 14, 2025, Bihar unveiled the logo and mascot for **Khelo India Youth Games 2025**. This is the first time the state will host the event, which will take place from **May 4 to May 15, 2025** across **Patna, Gaya, Nalanda, Bhagalpur, and Begusarai**.
- The mascot **Gajasimha**, combining the strength of an elephant and the courage of a lion, is inspired by **Pala period carvings** from Nalanda and Bodh Gaya.
- The logo uses orange and green to symbolize energy and nature, featuring **Mahabodhi Temple, Nalanda University, Peepal tree, Sparrow, and the Gangetic Dolphin**.
- The **Gaurav Yatra** torch relay, from April 15 to May 2, 2025, will cover 38 districts of Bihar, aiming to generate excitement and ensure **grassroots participation**.
- The official song "**Khel ke Rang, Bihar ke Sang**" celebrates the vibrant youth spirit of Bihar.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

DRDO Tests Vertically-Launched Short-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (VL-SRSAM)

- DRDO, in collaboration with the Indian Navy, conducted a successful flight test of the **indigenously developed VL-SRSAM** at the **Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, Odisha**.
- The test validated the missile's ability to intercept high-speed aerial targets at low altitude and close range using a land-based vertical launcher. The system operated in full combat configuration, including an indigenous RF Seeker, Multi-Function Radar, and Weapon Control System.
- VL-SRSAM is designed for area and point defence roles, targeting aircraft, helicopters, drones, and missiles at short ranges.
- The missile is based on **the Astra Mark 1** and features cruciform wings, thrust vector control, and a smokeless exhaust. It has an operational range of up to **40 km, extendable to 80 km**.

European Space Agency (ESA) Shuts Down Gaia Space Telescope

- On March 27, 2025, the European Space Agency (ESA) officially ended operations of the **Gaia space telescope** and moved it into a **heliocentric retirement orbit**.
- Gaia was launched on December 19, 2013, with the aim of creating a **3D map of the Milky Way** by surveying nearly one billion stars.
- It measured positions, distances, motions, and characteristics of about 1.8 billion stars, aiding discoveries in stellar evolution, dark matter distribution, and exoplanet detection.
- The mission ended due to fuel depletion, with Gaia consuming approximately 12 grams of cold gas daily to maintain its spin.
- Despite its retirement, two final data releases are planned: one around 2026, and another by the end of the decade, offering further insights into the structure of the Milky Way.

Indian Astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla to Fly to International Space Station in May 2025

- Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla** of the **Indian Air Force (IAF)** has been selected as **Mission Pilot for Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4)** to the **International Space Station (ISS)**, scheduled for launch no earlier than May 2025.
- He has over 2,000 hours of flight experience on aircraft including Su-30 MKI, MiG-21, MiG-29, Jaguar, Hawk, Dornier 228, and An-32.
- Ax-4** will launch aboard a **SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket** from **NASA's Kennedy Space Center**, carrying the **Crew Dragon spacecraft** to the ISS for a **14-day mission** involving **scientific experiments and activities**.

- The Ax-4 crew includes Commander Peggy Whitson (USA), Mission Specialist Sławosz Uznański-Wiśniewski (Poland), and Mission Specialist Tibor Kapu (Hungary).
- Shukla's selection makes him the second Indian national to fly to space after Rakesh Sharma's 1984 mission.
- He is also among the astronaut-designates for ISRO's Gaganyaan mission, targeted for 2026, marking India's push toward independent human spaceflight capability.

Chandrayaan's ChaSTE Scores a First After Taking Moon's Temperature

- **Chandrayaan-3's Chandra's Surface Thermophysical Experiment (ChaSTE)** conducted the **first-ever in-situ measurements** of the Moon's surface and subsurface temperatures near the lunar south pole.
- ChaSTE is designed to measure thermal properties such as temperature profiles and thermal conductivity using a probe with ten platinum resistance temperature detectors (RTDs) spaced **1 cm apart**, capable of penetrating up to **10 cm into the lunar regolith**.
- The surface temperature recorded was approximately 355 K (82°C), higher than earlier estimates of around 330 K (57°C), due to measurement on a sunward-facing slope with a 6° inclination.
- Subsurface temperature readings revealed significant spatial variability in thermal properties at high lunar latitudes, unlike the more uniform conditions observed at the equator.

De-Extinction of Dire Wolf

- In April 2025, **Colossal Biosciences**, a U.S.-based biotechnology company, announced the **birth of three genetically engineered wolf pups—Romulus, Remus, and Khaleesi**—marking the first claimed "de-extinction" of the dire wolf (*Aenocyon dirus*), extinct for about 10,000 years.
- Scientists analyzed ancient **DNA from a 13,000-year-old tooth from Ohio** and a **72,000-year-old ear bone from Idaho**, identifying 20 key genetic differences between dire wolves and modern gray wolves.
- Using CRISPR technology, researchers edited 14 specific genes in gray wolf endothelial progenitor cells to express larger body size, wider heads, and white fur characteristic of dire wolves.
- The edited nuclei were implanted into enucleated ova, developed into embryos, and implanted into domestic dog surrogates, resulting in the birth of the pups.
- The pups show physical traits like increased size and white coats, and are housed in a 2,000-acre ecological preserve in the United States for monitoring.

Biomass Mission

- The European Space Agency (ESA) will launch the **Biomass mission on April 29, 2025**, to improve understanding of Earth's forests and their role in the global carbon cycle.
- The mission aims to assess **global forest biomass and height**, providing estimates of carbon stored in forests and tracking deforestation and degradation over time.
- Biomass will contribute to refining climate change models by improving estimates of carbon fluxes between forests and the atmosphere.
- The satellite is equipped with the **first spaceborne P-band Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)**, capable of penetrating dense forest canopies to measure tree structures and biomass.
- It features a **12-meter diameter deployable** antenna designed for high-resolution data collection across diverse forested regions.
- Biomass will operate in a sun-synchronous orbit at an altitude of approximately 666 km, ensuring consistent lighting conditions for observations.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

The Great Conciliator: A Book on Lal Bahadur Shastri

- **The Great Conciliator** by Sanjeev Chopra highlights Lal Bahadur Shastri's leadership, focusing on his consensus-building and pragmatic approach.
- **Legacy:** Shastri, often overshadowed in history, played a key role in stabilizing India and strengthening its administrative framework.
- **Upbringing:** Born in Mughalsarai, Shastri's values of education, discipline, and service influenced his leadership.
- **Leadership:** Known for listening and accommodating differing views, Shastri resolved the South India language dispute and prioritized stability over confrontation.

- **Key Contributions:**
 - **BSF Formation:** Created to unify border security forces after the Rann of Kutch incident.
 - **Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan:** A slogan that highlighted the importance of farmers and soldiers, uniting the nation.
- **Underrated:** Shastri's preference for consensus over assertiveness led to his underappreciation.
- **Relevance:** His integrity, problem-solving skills, and pragmatic approach remain crucial for effective governance today.

CARELESS PEOPLE: A Cautionary Tale of Power, Greed, and Lost Idealism by Sarah Wynn Williams

- Sarah Wynn-Williams, former Facebook policy director and ex-New Zealand diplomat.
- The memoir exposes Facebook's internal dysfunction, toxic leadership, ethical failures, and unchecked corporate power.
- **Key Figures Criticized:**
 - **Mark Zuckerberg:** Centralized power, focused on public adoration, admired controversial figures, and operated as a "one-man autocracy."
 - **Sheryl Sandberg:** Initially admired for her feminism but later seen as manipulative, with eccentric and inappropriate behavior.
 - **Joel Kaplan:** Former manager with allegations of misconduct, who pressured Wynn-Williams during maternity leave
- Facebook's involvement in the 2016 U.S. election campaign helped Trump with micro-targeting and spreading disinformation.
- Facebook's inadequate moderation allowed hate speech against the Rohingya, contributing to violence.
- Project "Aldrin" aimed to enter China through censorship, with Zuckerberg misleading Congress.
- Wynn-Williams faced humiliation, health neglect, sexualized behavior, and pressure during maternity leave.

IMPORTANT DAYS

- **Shaheed Diwas** is observed on **March 23** every year to honour the sacrifices of **Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru, and Sukhdev Thapar**, who were executed by the British on this day in **1931**. They were sentenced to death for the assassination of **J.P. Saunders**, a British officer, in retaliation for the death of Lala Lajpat Rai.
- The three revolutionaries were hanged in Lahore Central Jail a day earlier than the scheduled execution, sparking mass protests and intensifying the Indian freedom struggle.

National Maritime Day 2025

- National Maritime Day is celebrated annually on **April 5** to honour India's maritime heritage and the significant role the maritime sector plays in trade and national security. The day commemorates the **maiden voyage** of the **Scindia Steam Navigation Company Ltd** from India to the **UK** in **1919**, marking a crucial step in ending British dominance over Indian sea routes.
- First observed in **1964**, National Maritime Day highlights the importance of the shipping industry in economic development, transportation, and defence.

World Health Day 2025:

- **World Health Day** is observed annually on **April 7** to commemorate the **founding of the World Health Organization (WHO)** in **1948**.
- The **2025 theme** is "**Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures**", focusing on improving **maternal and newborn health**.
- This year marks the beginning of a WHO year-long campaign aimed at reducing preventable maternal and newborn deaths, improving health outcomes for mothers and infants, and promoting high-quality healthcare for pregnant women and newborns, particularly in developing regions
- Statistics show approximately 300,000 women die annually from pregnancy or childbirth complications, while 2 million babies die within the first month of life and another 2 million are stillborn.

BR Ambedkar Remembrance Day

- **Ambedkar Jayanti** is celebrated on **April 14** each year to honour **Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar**, a prominent social reformer, jurist, and the chief architect of the **Indian Constitution**. The first celebration of Ambedkar Jayanti took place in Pune on April 14, **1928**, initiated by social reformer **Janardan Sadashiv Ranapisay**, a follower of Dr. Ambedkar.
- In **1990**, Dr. Ambedkar was posthumously awarded the **Bharat Ratna**, India's highest civilian honour, recognizing his monumental contributions to the nation.
- The date, **April 14**, marks Dr. Ambedkar's **birth anniversary** in **1891** in **Mhow**, Madhya Pradesh, and serves as a day to reflect on his lifelong commitment to **justice, education, and equality**.

World Heritage Day 2025: Date, Theme, Significance, and Sites

- **World Heritage Day**, also known as the **International Day for Monuments and Sites**, is observed on **April 18** each year to raise awareness about the importance of preserving cultural and natural heritage globally.
- The day, organized by the **International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)**, was first proposed in **1982** and recognized by **UNESCO** in **1983**.
- 2025 Theme: "**Heritage under Threat from Disasters and Conflicts: Preparedness and Learning from 60 Years of ICOMOS Actions**" focuses on the need to protect heritage sites from the growing threats of disasters and conflicts.

OBITUARIES

George Foreman, The Legendary Boxer and Business Icon Passes Away at 76

- **George Foreman**, the **American boxing legend**, passed away on **March 21, 2025**, at the age of **76**.
- Born on January 10, 1949, in Marshall, Texas, Foreman had a challenging early life, marked by poverty and crime, before finding his path through the Job Corps and training in boxing.
- He won the **heavyweight gold medal** at the **1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City** at the age of 19, marking the start of his remarkable boxing career.
- In **1973**, Foreman won the **heavyweight title** by defeating **Joe Frazier** via technical knockout, and he later faced **Muhammad Ali** in the iconic "**Rumble in the Jungle**" in **1974**, where he lost by knockout.

Veteran Actor Manoj Kumar Passes Away at 87

- **Manoj Kumar**, legendary Bollywood actor, passed away at the age of 87 at Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital in Mumbai on April 4, 2025, following complications from heart-related issues and decompensated liver cirrhosis. **Born Harikrishan Giri Goswami in Pakistan before the Partition**, his family migrated to Delhi, where he developed an interest in cinema and began his acting career in the late 1950s.
- He gained recognition in Bollywood with early hits such as Hariyali Aur Raasta (1962), Woh Kaun Thi? (1964), Himalaya Ki God Mein (1965), and Do Badan (1966). Known for his patriotic roles, he earned the title 'Bharat Kumar' with iconic films like Shaheed (1965), Upkar (1967), Purab Aur Paschim (1970), and Kranti (1981), portraying self-sacrificing, nationalist characters.
- He received several prestigious awards including the **Padma Shri in 1992**, the **Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2015**, and multiple Filmfare Awards.

Mario Vargas Llosa, Nobel Award Winner, Passes Away

- **Mario Vargas Llosa**, the renowned **Peruvian writer**, passed away on April 14, 2025, at the age of 89. He was awarded the **Nobel Prize in Literature in 2010** for his profound exploration of the structures of power and the individual's struggle against it.
- Vargas Llosa authored over 30 novels and numerous essays, with works like The Time of the Hero (1963), The Green House (1965), The War of the End of the World (1981), The Feast of the Goat (2000), and Harsh Times (2019) contributing to his status as a towering figure in Latin American literature.
- Initially a Marxist, Vargas Llosa later evolved to support liberal democracy. He ran for the presidency of Peru in 1990 but was unsuccessful.

RANKINGS

Women Billionaires Global List 2025: Forbes Billionaire Rankings Unveiled

- According to the **Forbes Billionaire List 2024**, **women now make up 13.3%** of the global billionaire population. The top 10 richest women in the world have collectively amassed over **\$500 billion in net worth**, reflecting their growing influence across various sectors.

World Happiness Report 2025

- The World Happiness Report 2025 was published by the **Wellbeing Research Centre at the University of Oxford**, in collaboration with **Gallup** and the **UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network**, providing a global analysis of **subjective well-being** and the impact of **caring and sharing behaviors** on happiness. **India** improved its global position, ranking **118th out of 147 countries**, up from **126th** in the previous year.

- Finland retained its position as the world's happiest country for the eighth consecutive year, followed by Denmark, Iceland, and Sweden.
- The United States dropped to its lowest-ever position, ranking 24th, with the decline attributed to rising social isolation, including more instances of solo dining and a reduction in social support.
- Among neighbouring countries, Pakistan was ranked 109th, a drop from 108th, while Nepal ranked 92nd,

ECONOMY

India's Q3 FY25 GDP Growth Set at 6.4%- ICRA

- India's **GDP** is projected to grow at **6.4%** in **Q3 FY25**, an increase from **5.4%** in the previous quarter. This growth is driven by **higher government spending** and a **rebound in exports**. **Gross Value Added (GVA)** is expected to rise by **6.6%**, with **industry** growing at **6.2%**, **services** at **7.7%**, and **agriculture** at **4.0%**. A notable highlight is the **record \$36.9 billion** in

Centre to Own Nearly 49% of Vodafone Idea

- The **Indian government** will increase its stake in **Vodafone Idea (Vi)** to **48.99%** by converting **₹36,950 crore** of the telco's **spectrum auction dues** into equity.
- The **Ministry of Communications** has directed Vi to issue 3,695 crore equity shares at a face value of ₹10, raising the government's stake from 22.6% to 48.99%.
- Vi's net debt is expected to reduce by 18%, providing cash flow relief over the next three years, although it still faces annual AGR dues of ₹16,500 crore.
- Operational control will remain with Vodafone Group and Aditya Birla Group, whose stakes will reduce to 16.1% and 9.4%, respectively.

Remittances to India from Advanced Economies Surpass Gulf Inflows: RBI

- According to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data, for the first time, remittances from **advanced economies** such as the U.S., UK, Singapore, Canada, and Australia **surpassed inflows** from **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in 2023-24**.
- India's remittances grew from \$55.6 billion in 2010-11 to \$118.7 billion in 2023-24.
- The U.S. emerged as the largest contributor with a 27.7% share in 2023-24, up from 23.4% in 2020-21; the UK's share increased from 6.8% to 10.8%.
- The GCC countries' contribution declined to 38% of India's total remittances in 2023-24.
- Skilled migration to advanced economies, employment in high-paying sectors, and educational pursuits have driven the shift in remittance patterns.
- **Maharashtra** received the largest share at 20.5%, followed by **Kerala** (19.7%), **Tamil Nadu** (10.4%), Telangana (8.1%), and Karnataka (7.7%).
- Policies like the **Migration and Mobility Partnership** between India and the UK, signed in May 2021, have facilitated increased migration and higher remittance flows.

Cabinet Committee on Security Approves \$7 Billion Deal to Procure 26 Rafale Marine Jets from France

- In April 2025, the **Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)**, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the procurement of **26 Rafale Marine (Rafale-M) fighter jets from France**, valued at approximately ₹63,000 crore (over \$7 billion).
- The procurement includes **22 single-seat Rafale-M jets** and **4 twin-seat trainer variants**, intended for deployment on the INS Vikrant, India's indigenous aircraft carrier.
- Deliveries are expected to begin three years after contract signing, with all aircraft to be delivered by 2031.
- The acquisition will enhance Indian Navy's capabilities in the Indian Ocean Region and address regional security concerns.
- The Rafale-M jets are an interim solution until the indigenous Twin Engine Deck Based Fighter (TEDBF) becomes operational.
- The deal includes a comprehensive weapons package featuring long-range air-to-air missiles and precision strike weapons.
- Provisions for maintenance support, crew training, and logistical assistance are also part of the agreement to ensure sustained operational readiness.

RBI MPC Changes Stance: Implications of an 'Accommodative' Policy for the Indian Economy

- On April 9, 2025, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) shifted its monetary policy stance from '**neutral**' to '**accommodative**' after reducing the **repo rate by 25 basis points to 6.00%**.

- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is now inclined toward **either maintaining the current rates or reducing them further**, effectively ruling out immediate rate hikes.
- The accommodative stance aims to stimulate economic growth by making borrowing more affordable and encouraging consumption and investment.
- The shift comes amid global economic uncertainties, particularly new U.S. tariffs that could impact India's export sectors.
- Domestic indicators like subdued inflation, forecasted at 4% for FY2026, and a revised GDP growth projection of 6.5%, allowed the RBI to adopt a growth-oriented policy without an immediate inflation risk.

March 2025 Retail Inflation Falls to Lowest Since August 2019

- India's retail inflation rate fell to **3.34% in March** 2025, marking the **lowest level since August 2019**.
- **Consumer Price Index (CPI)** inflation dropped from 3.61% in February 2025 to 3.34% in March 2025, falling below the RBI's target of 4%.
- **Food inflation** eased to 2.69% in March from 3.75% in February, driven by a 7.04% year-on-year decline in vegetable prices and reductions in eggs and pulses prices.
- **Core inflation**, which excludes food and energy prices, edged slightly higher to 4.1% in March 2025, reflecting moderate underlying price pressures.
- In response to falling inflation, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reduced the key policy repo rate by 25 basis points to 6.00% in April 2025, adopting an accommodative monetary policy stance.
- The RBI has revised the **GDP growth forecast for the fiscal year to 6.5%**, down from the previous estimate **of 6.7%**, citing global uncertainties and domestic factors.

Tamil Nadu's Economic Growth in 2024–25

- **Tamil Nadu achieved a real economic growth rate of 9.69% in 2024–25**, the **highest among Indian states** and the state's best performance in a decade.
- The Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) increased from ₹15.71 lakh crore in 2023–24 to ₹17.23 lakh crore in 2024–25. The nominal growth rate for the same period was 14.02
- The tertiary (services) sector grew by 12.7%, driven by real estate and professional services (13.6%), communication and broadcasting (13%), and trade, hotels, and restaurants (11.7)
- The secondary sector grew by 9%, led by construction (10.6%) and manufacturing (8%).
- The primary sector showed minimal growth at 0.15%, with crop production declining by 5.93% and livestock growing by 3.84%.
- Tamil Nadu's previous highest growth was 8.59% in 2017–18, and it maintained positive growth of 0.07% during 2020–21 amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Economists project that with a 0.5 percentage point improvement in all sectors, Tamil Nadu's growth could reach 10.7% in 2025–26 and support the goal of becoming a \$1 trillion economy by 2032–33.

GK Marathon at LE JAIPUR



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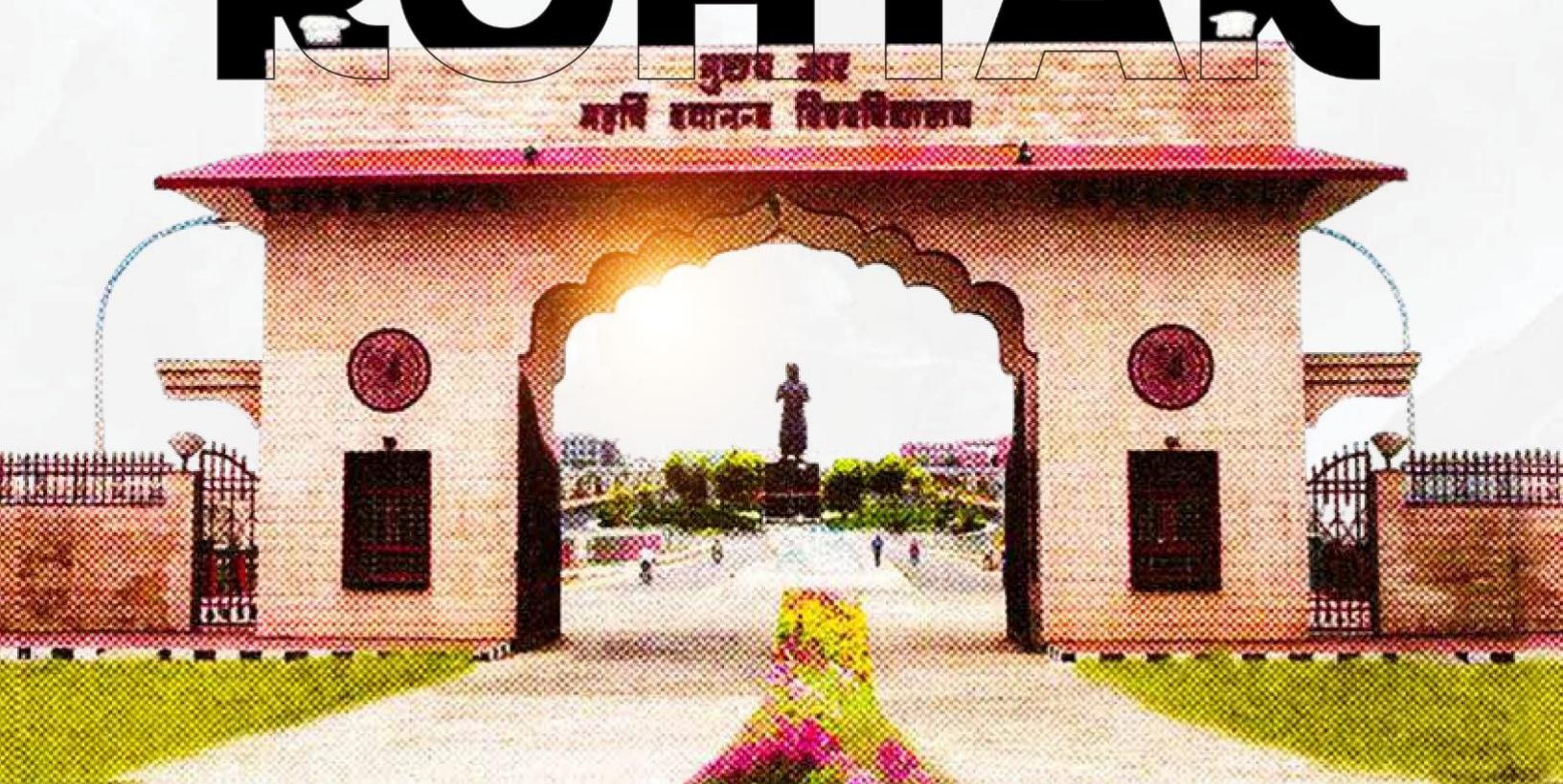
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(In Figures)

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Duration of Test : 2 Hours (120 Minutes)

1. Separate carbonised Optical Mark Reader (OMR) Response Sheet is supplied along with this Questions Booklet and the carbon copy has to be detached and taken by the candidates.
2. In case of any discrepancy in the question booklet (QB), please request the invigilator for replacement of a fresh packet of QB with OMR. Do not use the previous OMR response Sheet for a fresh booklet so obtained.
3. Candidates will not be given a second blank OMR response Sheet under any circumstance. Hence, OMR response Sheet shall be handled carefully.
4. Answer all questions. No clarification can be sought on the Questions Paper
5. Possession of electronic devices in any form is strictly prohibited in the examination Hall.
6. The use of any unfair means by any candidate shall result in the cancellation of his/her examination.
7. Impersonation is an offense and the candidate, apart from disqualification, will be liable to be prosecuted.
8. The test Paper for Five Year integrated Law Programme is for 120 marks containing 120 multiple Choice Questions.
9. There will be Negative marking for multiple choice objective type questions. 0.25 marks will be deducted for every wrong answer or where candidates have marked more than one response.

Maximum Marks : 120

10. Use **BLACK/BLUE BALL POINT PEN** only for writing the roll No. and other details on OMR response Sheet.
11. Use **BLACK/BLUE BALL POINT PEN** for shading the circles. Indicate only the most appropriate answer by shading from the options provided. The answer circle should be shaded completely without leaving any space.
12. As the responses cannot be modified/corrected on the OMR Response Sheet, candidates have to take necessary precautions before marking the appropriate circle.
13. The candidate should retain the Admit Card duly Signed by the invigilator, as the same has to be produced at the time of Admission.
14. Handle the OMR response Sheet with care. Do not fold.
15. Ensure that invigilator puts his/her signature in the space provided on the OMR response Sheet. Candidate should sign in the space provided on the OMR response Sheet.
16. The candidate should write Question Paper booklet No., and OMR response Sheet No., and sign in the space/column provided in the attendance sheet.
17. Return the Original Page of OMR response Sheet to the invigilator after the examination.
18. The candidate shall not write anything on the OMR response Sheet other than the details required and in the spaces provided for.

SECTION-A : ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Passage (Q.1 – Q.5): They were not afraid; they were simply astounded at their own daring. The priest laughed and shouted. He had already abandoned the safety of the handrail and was running back and forth across the deck of the machine in order to catch a glimpse of the land below, north, south, east, and west, the earth looked so vast, now that they were so far away from it, Baltasar and Blimunda finally scrambled to their feet, nervously holding on to the cords, then to the handrail, dazed by the light and the wind, suddenly no longer frightened, Ah, and Baltasar shouted, We've done it, he embraced Blimunda and burst into tears, he was like a lost child, this soldier who had been to war, who had killed a man in Pegões with his spike, and was now weeping for joy as he clung to Blimunda, who kissed his dirty face. The priest came up to them and joined in their embrace, suddenly perturbed by the analogy the Italian had drawn when he had suggested that the priest himself was God, Baltasar his son, and Blimunda the holy ghost, and now all three of them were up there in the skies together, There is only one God, he shouted, but the wind snatched the words from his mouth. Then Blimunda said, unless we open the sail, we shall go on climbing, and we might even collide with the sun.

We never ask ourselves whether there might not be some wisdom in madness, even while recognising that we are all a little mad. These are ways of keeping firmly on this side of madness, and just imagine, what would happen if madmen demanded to be treated as if they were equals with the sane, who are only a little mad, on the pretext that they themselves still possess a little wisdom, so as to safeguard, for example, their own existence like Padre Bartolomeu Lourenço, If we were to open the sail abruptly, we should fall to the ground like a stone, and it is he who is manoeuvring the rope and adjusting the slack so that the sail opens gradually, casting its shadow on the balls of amber and causing the machine to slow down, who would ever have thought that it would be so easy to fly, now we can go in search of new Indies.

The machine has stopped climbing and hovers in the sky, its wings extended, its beak pointing northward, and it has every appearance of being motionless. The priest opens the sail a little more, three-quarters of the amber balls are already covered in shadow, and the machine starts to descend gently, it is like sailing across a tranquil lake in a small boat, a tiny adjustment to the rudder, a stroke with one oar, those little touches that only mankind is capable of inventing.

- 1.** Which of the following best reflects the title of the passage?
 (a) The adventures of three men aboard a boat on the Sea.
 (b) Three brave men and a flying boat.
 (c) A boat with three sacred beings.
 (d) Three scared adventurers on the Boat.
- 2.** Which of the following is not supported by the passage?
 (a) The abrupt opening of the sails would have made the boat plummet from the sky.
 (b) Blimunda said that there is a chance of their boat colliding with the sun if they did not open the sails.
 (c) There was a trained aviator present among the group who was guiding their flight path through the skies.
 (d) The men found the sailing of the machine frightful till they tried it.
- 3.** What is the passage about?
 (a) The three men and their adventure of finding a new land in their first flight on board.
 (b) The boat and its course through the problematic and raging sea with winds and excessive danger.
 (c) The adventures of three men flying a machine and finding in the pursuit a new found courage.
 (d) The boat rendered motionless in sky by way of magic through divine intervention and the efforts by the persons on it to ascend it to the heavens.
- 4.** In the context of the above passage, which of the following would be the most appropriate meaning of the word "perturbed"?
 (a) Discomfited.
 (b) Insouciant.
 (c) Unruffled.
 (d) Incensed.

5. Why does the author suggest that the inventions were only capable of being done by mankind?
- Because of the inadequacies of the machine that can be invented by those who are fallible themselves.
 - Because of the presence of three men on the boat which demanded extraordinary maneuvering.
 - Because of the presence of some supernatural intervention in the flight of the boat which was navigated by the three men.
 - Because of the little touches by men like adjustment of sails and rudder which made the descent of the boat capable.
6. Who among the three characters suggested that they might collide with the sun if they did not open the sail?
- Baltasar
 - The Priest
 - Blimunda
 - The Italian

Passage (Q.7 – Q.12): Nine years ago, he first stepped into the spotlight and hasn't left it since. As a defender, drag-flicker, and leader, from junior ranks to senior, Indian hockey captain Harmanpreet Singh has walked into every role assigned to him with quiet confidence and made it his own.

Still just 27, Harmanpreet has been an integral part of the Indian team since he announced his arrival as the top-scorer at the Under-21 Sultan of Johor Cup in 2014. His elevation to senior-team captaincy in early 2022 was merely the logical culmination of a process set in motion almost a decade ago.

As a player, he is both a talisman and match-winner — the drag-flicker has been a reliable goal machine, the disappointing blip during the 2023 World Cup notwithstanding. As the vital last line of defense, he understands his role. Adept at stealing the ball cleanly thanks to his keen awareness of position and opposition, he hardly ever pushes or plays rough, rarely getting involved in physical tussles despite his immense strength.

His one standout quality as a player and person is his calmness. He defies almost every stereotype associated with players from Punjab — he isn't a flashy forward or overtly aggressive, he is soft-spoken to the point of being barely audible, and he is fantastically disciplined. "Harmanpreet brings a lot of experience and composure; he's not a guy who needs to shout if things are not going well; he's, in fact, just the opposite. He's quite quiet in the eye of the storm, which is good, and we need that — in his leadership and position. He also plays many minutes and is important for us," India coach Craig Fulton says.

It's a recurring motif. As an 18-year-old kid from Amritsar, his international breakout performance came at Johor. He had cut the national camp as the second-highest goal-scorer at the Junior National Championships. Even back then, his discipline stood out then attracted a single warning in that tournament. " I have always been told that a calm mind wins more matches than a fiery temper. Aggression must ensure victory, not a penalty," he had told this correspondent at that time, displaying maturity beyond his years. Strong and stocky with broad shoulders and robust wrists toughened by years of driving a tractor back home as a youngster, Harmanpreet has always been confident of his abilities. He decided very early to be a drag-flicker to pose a goal threat in penalty corners, and his powerful build helped.

[Reference: Defender, Drag-flicker, Leader: Harmanpreet, 17/06/2023, Saturday]

7. What could be the reason for the Indian Hockey Team's Coach to appoint Harmanpreet as a captain?
Answer with reference to the passage.
- He was mouldable because of his entry into Hockey at a tender age.
 - He was a mature multifaceted person with composure, adapting to almost any role he was appointed on the field.
 - He was a player who kept his head with his aggressiveness, circulating just at the edge. He kept his cool on all most all occasions, displaying aggressiveness only on the ground.
 - He was from Punjab, a place known to nurture many sports players in hockey and wrestling.
8. 'Nine years ago, he first stepped into the spotlight and hasn't left it ever since.' We can infer from the statement that:
- The author is dazed by the ability of Harmanpreet Singh to somehow always take the spotlight.

- (b) As the player has been under the spotlight for nine years, he will soon lose it.
 (c) The player's consistent sublime performance has not dimmed from the time he entered the sport.
 (d) The player has left his colleagues behind to step into the spotlight, and has retained the position by hook or crook.
- 9.** Choose the lines that lucidly succeed the concluding lines of the given extract.
 (a) He has never sat out a single match in any FIH tournament, junior or senior; he has played! It is a part of what made him an Olympian.
 (b) Everyone loves to score goals. It was at Jalandhar that he first tried his hand at drag-flick when he was encouraged by his coach to practice both – defending and achieving goals.
 (c) Harmanpreet has always been a keen learner from training sessions, and the opposition during the game — a former trait coaches were particularly impressed with.
 (d) For someone hesitant to speak without being nudged, Harmanpreet has grown into one of the most thoughtful and articulate players on the side.
- 10.** 'His elevation to senior-team captaincy in early 2022 was merely the logical culmination of a process set in motion almost a decade ago.' Which of the following words will substitute the underlined word as a synonym to make the sentence coherent?
 (a) compilation. (b) conjugation.
 (c) cumulation. (d) conclusion.
- 11.** 'As a player, he is both a talisman and match-winner — the drag-flicker has been a reliable goal machine, the disappointing blip during the 2023 World Cup notwithstanding.' Identify the tense of the given sentence.
 (a) Present Perfect.
 (b) Past Perfect.
 (c) Past Simple.
 (d) Present Perfect Continuous.
- 12.** What does the passage primarily highlight about Harmanpreet Singh's personality?
 (a) He is loud and aggressive like most hockey players from Punjab.
 (b) He is unpredictable on the field but consistent off it.
 (c) He is calm, composed, and disciplined, even in pressure situations.
 (d) He is driven mainly by personal fame and glory.

Passage (Q.13-Q.18): Days after the Supreme Court of India's voluble judgment on the August 2019 presidential orders, there has been considerable, and excellent, dissection of its validation of the removal of Jammu and Kashmir's autonomy, and its cursory handling of Parliament's demotion and division of the State to two Union Territories.

Much of the commentary has dealt with the judgment's implications for the rest of the country, which are far-reaching. It undermines the rights of States vis-à-vis the Union even on critical issues such as statehood and division, grants the President far larger powers over States than earlier envisaged, and allows long-term political and territorial decisions to be made under limited-term emergency conditions such as President's rule.

There are three other key elements which have, however, been less discussed: what the verdict means on the ground for Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh, what it tells us about how the Court sees peace and security, and what it implies for the fundament of democracy in India. Back in 1953-55, the States Reorganization Commission held widespread public consultations during which villages expressed their preference for which unit to belong. This judgment negates even the right to consultation of the State's elected representatives.

On the ground, the judgment has been met largely with silence that is ambiguous in Jammu, disappointed in Kargil, welcoming in Ladakh (with reservations), and ominous in the Valley. Jammu's ambiguity centres on its experience of economic dispossession post-2019, when the Lieutenant-Governor's administration awarded trade, retail and mining rights to national rather than local industry. In Ladakh, Kargil's disappointment stems from the fact that its majority Shia wishes to retain ties to the Valley. Leh's welcome of separation from the Valley is tempered by the desire for an elected administration instead of a Lieutenant-Governor.

The most severe impact is undoubtedly in the Valley, where the verdict has reinforced a widespread belief that Kashmiris are resented by the rest of India and their voice is repeatedly silenced. The circumstances in which the

President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, passed his August 5 orders were draconian, to say the least. Additional troops were sent in at July end, over 5,500 Kashmiri politicians and activists, including three former Chief Ministers, were put in detention on the day before, Section 144 was applied forbidding gatherings of four or more persons, and a total communications blackout was imposed.

Notably, neither the main nor the concurring judgments mention these events in their summaries of incidents prefiguring the presidential orders. Instead of acknowledging the enormity of the administration's actions, which imposed war-like conditions on the people, the judges accepted the alleged security threat, in August 2019, to the Amarnath Yatra — of which nothing has been heard since, either on what it comprised or how it was averted — as background to the presidential orders and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019. Security has also been accepted as a reason for the delay in restoring statehood, despite the administration's claim that the situation is much improved.

- 13.** Based on the passage, how does the Supreme Court's judgment address the issue of public consultation in Jammu and Kashmir?
- (a) The judgment mandates extensive public consultation for future decisions.
 - (b) It acknowledges the lack of public consultation but deems it unnecessary.
 - (c) The judgment negates even the right to consultation of the State's elected representatives.
 - (d) The passage suggests that public consultation was thoroughly conducted before the judgment.
- 14.** According to the passage, how does the Supreme Court's judgment impact the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir?
- (a) The judgment reinforces the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir by upholding its special status.
 - (b) It has no significant impact on the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir.
 - (c) The judgment only affects the economic aspects of Jammu and Kashmir's autonomy.
 - (d) The judgment removes Jammu and Kashmir's autonomy and divides the state into two Union Territories.
- 15.** What does the passage imply about the Supreme Court's consideration of state rights in its judgment?
- (a) The judgment respects and upholds the traditional rights of states.
 - (b) It suggests that the judgment grants the President limited powers over states.
 - (c) The judgment is seen as undermining the rights of states vis-à-vis the Union.
 - (d) The Supreme Court's judgment is neutral on the issue of state rights.
- 16.** Based on the passage, how does the Supreme Court's judgment affect the political landscape in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh?
- (a) The judgment has been met with overwhelming support in all regions.
 - (b) It has led to a uniform sense of disappointment across Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.
 - (c) The judgment has elicited mixed reactions, with varying sentiments across different regions.
 - (d) The judgment has had no discernible impact on the political landscape of the regions.
- 17.** According to the passage, how is the Supreme Court's judgment perceived in terms of its handling of democratic principles in India?
- (a) The judgment is viewed as undermining the fundament of democracy in India.
 - (b) It is perceived as having no significant impact on democratic principles.
 - (c) The judgment is seen as a strong affirmation of democratic principles.
 - (d) The passage suggests that the judgment exclusively enhances the democratic process in Jammu and Kashmir.
- 18.** What does the passage suggest about the Supreme Court's approach to security concerns in its judgment?
- (a) The judgment dismisses all security concerns as irrelevant.
 - (b) The judgment accepts alleged security concerns without thorough investigation.
 - (c) It acknowledges security concerns but prioritizes democratic consultation.
 - (d) The passage indicates that security concerns were the sole focus of the judgment.

Passage (Q.19-Q.24): The decline in crime that began in the early 1990s was accompanied by a blistering national economy and a significant drop in unemployment. It might seem to follow that the economy was a hammer that helped beat down crime. But a closer look at the data destroys this theory. It is true that a stronger job market may make certain crimes relatively less attractive. But that is only the case for crimes with a direct financial motivation—burglary, robbery, and auto theft—as opposed to violent crimes like homicide, assault, and rape. Moreover, studies have shown that an unemployment decline of 1 percentage point accounts for a 1 percent drop in nonviolent crime. During the 1990s, the unemployment rate fell by 2 percentage points; nonviolent crime, meanwhile, fell by roughly 40 percent. But an even bigger flaw in the strong-economy theory concerns violent crime. Homicide fell at a greater rate during the 1990s than any other sort of crime, and a number of reliable studies have shown virtually no link between the economy and violent crime. This weak link is made even weaker by glancing back to a recent decade, the 1960s, when the economy went on a wild growth spurt—as did violent crime. So, while a strong 1990s economy might have seemed, on the surface, a likely explanation for the drop in crime, it almost certainly didn't affect criminal behavior in any significant way. Unless, that is, "the economy" is construed in a broader sense—as a means to build and maintain hundreds of prisons. Let's now consider another crime-drop explanation: increased reliance on prisons. It might help to start by flipping the crime question around. Instead of wondering what made crime fall, think about this: why had it risen so dramatically in the first place?

- 19.** What does the passage suggest about the common perception of the economy's role in crime reduction during the 1990s?
- (a) It was widely accepted that the economy played a major role in reducing both violent and nonviolent crime.
 - (b) The perception that the economy significantly reduced crime is challenged by the data presented.
 - (c) The economy's role in reducing crime was universally acknowledged and supported by all studies.
 - (d) There was no common perception about the economy's impact on crime during the 1990s.
- 20.** Based on the passage, how did the decline in violent crime in the 1990s compare to the decline in nonviolent crime?
- (a) Violent crime declined at a slower rate than nonviolent crime.
 - (b) The rates of decline for violent and nonviolent crime were approximately the same.
 - (c) Homicide declined at a greater rate than any other type of crime.
 - (d) There was no significant decline in violent crime during the 1990s.
- 21.** What alternative explanation for the drop in crime does the passage introduce towards the end?
- (a) Improved law enforcement strategies.
 - (b) Increased reliance on prisons.
 - (c) Enhanced community engagement programs.
 - (d) Better economic opportunities for at-risk populations.
- 22.** In the passage, the phrase "blistering national economy" is used. What does this phrase most likely mean in this context?
- (a) A national economy that is causing harm and discomfort.
 - (b) A rapidly growing and robust national economy.
 - (c) An economy that is unstable and likely to collapse.
 - (d) A national economy that is stagnant and not showing any growth.
- 23.** What does the passage imply about the link between the economy and nonviolent crime in the 1990s?
- (a) The economy barely affected nonviolent crime rates.
 - (b) Better economy meant less nonviolent crime, equally.
 - (c) Nonviolent crime dropped much more than the economy improved.
 - (d) Nonviolent crime went up even as the economy got better.
- 24.** What does the passage imply about the common theories regarding the decline in violent crime during the 1990s?
- (a) The decline in violent crime was primarily due to economic growth.
 - (b) There is a strong, direct correlation between economic factors and the decrease in violent crime.
 - (c) The decline in violent crime cannot be attributed primarily to economic factors.
 - (d) Violent crime decreased solely because of increased incarceration rates.

SECTION -B : CURRENT AFFAIRS, INCLUDING GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Passage (Q.25-Q.30): BIMSTEC

Last week's Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) summit — the sixth — which brought the leaders of seven neighbouring countries to Bangkok at a time of global turbulence, was an opportunity to reignite the regional grouping after years of stasis. Originally cast as a "bridging" mechanism between South Asia's SAARC and South East Asia's ASEAN countries, the grouping has languished due to a lack of purpose or due to political underpinnings. After the collapse of India-Pakistan ties, post-2014, SAARC has made little movement, whereas the micro-grouping of Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal ran aground after the Bhutanese Parliament rejected the Motor Vehicles Agreement between them, as a result of which New Delhi has invested in BIMSTEC. While the objective of having a summit every two years was derailed by the COVID-19 pandemic, what is important is that the summit was held in spite of a possible derailment after the earthquake in Myanmar and Thailand. But the summit proved useful, given the number of agreements and areas of cooperation. These include a BIMSTEC chamber of commerce and work on the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway that will connect India's North-East region, billed a BIMSTEC "hub", all the way to the Pacific ocean. The BIMSTEC region is prone to natural disasters and building a joint mechanism for disaster management is critical. Negotiating a free trade agreement (FTA) and Customs agreements are among other plans outlined in a 'Vision 2030' document that was adopted.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com>

Passage (Q.31-Q.36): Suspension of Indus water treaty

India on Thursday officially informed Pakistan about its decision to keep the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance with immediate effect, saying that Islamabad has breached the conditions of the treaty. The decision was detailed in a letter from Debashree Mukherjee, India's Secretary of Water Resources, to her Pakistani counterpart, Syed Ali Murtaza, reported PTI. The letter said that sustained cross-border terrorism by Pakistan targeting Jammu and Kashmir impedes India's rights under the Indus Waters Treaty. India on Wednesday had announced the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan, a day after 26 people, including tourists, were gunned down in a terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam.

The move is among the five big punitive actions taken by New Delhi against Islamabad in the wake of the terror attack. Brokered by the World Bank, which is also a signatory, the Indus Waters Treaty sets out a mechanism for water sharing and information exchange between the two nuclear-armed neighbours for the use of the Indus River water and its five tributaries Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, Jhelum, and Chenab.

The treaty was signed after negotiations for over nine years which followed the first war over Kashmir. Former US President Dwight Eisenhower described it as “one bright spot ... in a very depressing world picture that we see so often.” It allocates waters from the Western rivers (Chenab, Jhelum and Indus) to Pakistan and the Eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas and Sutlej) to India for unrestricted use. India is allowed to extract water from the western rivers for certain non-consumptive, agricultural, domestic use and hydroelectric power generation.

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com>

- 31.** What major action did India take regarding the Indus Waters Treaty after the Pahalgam attack in 2025?
- (a) Amended the treaty unilaterally
 - (b) Suspended its obligations under the treaty
 - (c) Terminated the treaty with UN approval
 - (d) Signed a new water-sharing agreement with Pakistan
- 32.** Under the Indus Waters Treaty, which rivers are allocated to Pakistan for unrestricted use?
- (a) Ravi, Beas, Sutlej
 - (b) Indus, Jhelum, Chenab
 - (c) Ganga, Yamuna, Sutlej
 - (d) Chenab, Beas, Ravi
- 33.** Who mediated the signing of the Indus Waters Treaty between India and Pakistan in 1960?
- (a) United Nations
 - (b) United States
 - (c) World Bank
 - (d) International Monetary Fund
- 34.** What is the first level of dispute resolution under the Indus Waters Treaty?
- 35.** What limitation does Pakistan face regarding the Indus Waters Treaty if India suspends it?
- (a) It can appeal to the United Nations Security Council
 - (b) It can file a case in the International Court of Justice (ICJ)
 - (c) It can renegotiate the treaty through the World Bank
 - (d) It has no peaceful or legal recourse to enforce the treaty
- 36.** According to the Indus Waters Treaty, which rivers are allocated to India for unrestricted use?
- (a) Sutlej, Beas, Ravi
 - (b) Indus, Sutlej, Chenab
 - (c) Jhelum, Ravi, Beas
 - (d) Ganga, Yamuna, Sutlej

Passage (Q.37-Q.40): Draft Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Rules, 2025

Under the current data protection framework, the DPDP Rules elaborate on the registration, accountability, and obligations of the Consent Manager. Rule 4, read with the First Schedule, provides for consent management, the obligations of Consent Managers, and their registration with the Data Protection Board (Board).

Consent Managers need to ensure that Data Principals can easily give, review, and withdraw their consent whenever they choose. They also maintain accurate records of all consent-related activities and enforce strong security practices to protect this information. These obligations simplify consent management, increase trust, and provide individuals with more control over their data.

The following are a few areas of concern around Rule 4 and the first schedule:

Under Part A of Schedule 1, several conditions for the registration of Consent Managers have been provided. However, many terms used leave room for discretion by the Board. These include the determination of “sufficient capacity to fulfil its obligations as a Consent Manager”, “general character of management”, adequate “earning prospects of the applicant”, and whether the key managerial personnel and senior management of the applicant company are “individuals with a general reputation and record of fairness and integrity.” The Board has been entrusted with wide discretionary powers, and no guidelines for exercising this discretion have been provided.

Source: <https://www.orfonline.org>

- 37.** Which of the following entities is designated to oversee complaints and enforcement under the Draft Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Rules, 2025?
- National Cyber Security Centre
 - Data Protection Board of India (DPBI)
 - Cyber Appellate Tribunal
 - Digital Grievance Redressal Authority
- 38.** Under the Draft DPDP Rules, 2025, a Consent Manager must have a minimum net worth of how much?
- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| (a) ₹5 crore | (b) ₹1 crore |
| (c) ₹50 lakh | (d) ₹2 crore |
- 39.** Which landmark Supreme Court case recognized privacy as a fundamental right in India, influencing the development of the DPDP framework?
- Shreya Singhal vs Union of India
 - Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd) vs Union of India
 - Navtej Singh Johar vs Union of India
 - Indian Medical Association vs Union of India
- 40.** As per the DPDP Rules, 2025, how long can a Data Fiduciary retain the personal data of a Data Principal after their last interaction?
- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| (a) 3 years | (b) 2 years |
| (c) 1 year | (d) 5 years |

Passage (Q.41-Q.46): Aurangzeb and Marathas

A Right to Information (RTI) request has revealed a sharp increase in government spending on the tomb of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb over the past two decades. A Pune-based activist, Prafful Sarda, filed the RTI, prompting the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to disclose that over Rs 12 lakh has been spent on its upkeep in the last ten years. Official records show a dramatic rise in annual expenses for maintenance, security, renovation, and restoration of the site. The lowest recorded expenditure was Rs 1,395 in 2005-06, while the highest, Rs 5,35,988, was spent in the financial year 2024-25. Between 2004 and 2014, ASI allocated Rs 2,54,128 to the tomb, but from 2014 to 2025, this amount surged nearly sixfold to Rs 12,24,104. Activist Prafful Sarda questioned the justification for increasing funds towards the site. "This data raises serious questions about resource allocation and the changing priorities in preserving India's monuments," he said. Sarda further emphasised the need to prioritise heritage related to Maratha leaders. "Instead of allocating increasing funds to preserve the legacy of a cruel Mughal emperor, both the state and central governments should prioritise the conservation of forts and historical monuments built by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and other revered Maratha leaders," he added.

Source: <https://www.indiatoday.in>

- 41.** Consider the following statements regarding the reign of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj:
- Sambhaji Maharaj successfully launched a raid on the Mughal stronghold of Burhanpur.
 - He was betrayed by his commander, Kavi Kalash, which led to his capture by the Mughals.
 - Sambhaji continued the struggle against Aurangzeb and effectively employed guerrilla warfare tactics.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| (a) 1 and 2 only | (b) 2 and 3 only |
| (c) 1 and 3 only | (d) 1, 2, and 3 |
- 42.** Who betrayed Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, leading to his capture by the Mughals?
- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| (a) Yesubai | (b) Ganoji Shirke |
| (c) Kavi Kalash | (d) Shahu Maharaj |
- 43.** Which administrative system did Shivaji introduce in place of the Jagirdari system?
- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| (a) Mahalwari system | (b) Zamindari system |
| (c) Ryotwari system | (d) Dahsala system |
- 44.** Under whose leadership was the first Indian naval force established to protect maritime trade?
- Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj
 - Rajaram
 - Balaji Vishwanath
 - Shahu Maharaj
- 45.** Which document compiled Islamic laws under Aurangzeb's rule for administrative and judicial matters?
- Ain-i-Akbari
 - Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri
 - Aurangnama
 - Fatawa-e-Alamgiri
- 46.** Which revenue sources were unique to Shivaji's Maratha administration?
- Khilji and Iqtas
 - Chauth and Sardeshmukhi
 - Jagirdari and Zamindari
 - Land Revenue and Kharaj

Passage (Q.47-Q.52): Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India (AKFI) suspended

The court-appointed administrator has handed over the charge to the AKFI office bearers who were elected in December 2023. The AKFI office bearers have started functioning from AKFI office at JLN Stadium," Tiwari said in an interview. "So, the ban on AKFI will be lifted. We will have our executive board meeting (of the IKF) next month and the ban will be officially lifted." In a February 6 order, the Supreme Court had asked Justice (Retd.) S P Garg, the AKFI administrator, to hand over control of the federation to the office bearers elected in December 2023. The SC division bench had, however, clarified that it hadn't recognised the elected body of the federation yet, but was passing the order to allow participation of Indian players in the senior Asian Kabaddi Championship-2025 scheduled in Iran from February 20 to 25. The top court passed the order after two national Kabaddi players -- Priyanka and Pooja -- sought direction to AKFI for sending them to Asian Kabaddi Championship in Iran. Tiwari said the IKF had already allowed the Indian players' participation in the Asian Championships. Earlier in 2019, the Delhi High Court made Justice (Retd.) Garg as the AKFI administrator after quashing appointment of former federation chief Janardan Singh Gahlot as 'Life President' and election of his wife as president. In the December 2023 elections held under the charge of Garg, Vibhor Vineet Jain was elected AKFI president and Jitendra Thakur as general secretary. But the outcome of the election was kept subject to a petition before the High Court. That meant that Garg continued to be in charge of the AKFI affairs, leading to the ban imposed on the national federation by the IKF.

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com>

- 47.** Why was the Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India (AKFI) suspended by the International Kabaddi Federation (IKF)?
- (a) Financial mismanagement
 - (b) Lack of an elected governing body
 - (c) Match-fixing allegations
 - (d) Decline in player performance
- 48.** Where is the headquarters of the Amateur Kabaddi Federation of India (AKFI) located?
- (a) New Delhi
 - (b) Chandigarh
 - (c) Mumbai
 - (d) Jaipur
- 49.** Who was appointed by the Delhi High Court to oversee the affairs of the AKFI amid management concerns?
- (a) Justice (Retd.) Deepak Mishra
 - (b) Justice (Retd.) S.P. Garg
 - (c) Justice (Retd.) H.L. Dattu
 - (d) Justice (Retd.) R.M. Lodha
- 50.** What specific direction did the Supreme Court give regarding India's participation in the Asian Kabaddi Championship 2025?
- 51.** Which of the following issues did the Supreme Court highlight regarding sports administration in India?
- (a) Lack of international exposure
 - (b) Politicization and dominance by non-sportspersons
 - (c) Lack of adequate sports infrastructure
 - (d) Low player salaries
- 52.** Under which code are national sports federations in India expected to operate, ensuring transparency and good governance?
- (a) National Sports Development Act, 2015
 - (b) Sports Code of Conduct, 2016
 - (c) National Sports Code of India, 2011
 - (d) Indian Sports Administration Act, 2012

SECTION - C: LEGAL REASONING

Passage (Q.53-Q.57): Indian Trademarks Act 1999 does not define passing off however, Section 27 acknowledges a trademark owner's common law rights, allowing the owner to file a lawsuit against anyone found to be passing off goods or services as belonging to another person or as services rendered by another person.

When a trademark or trade name is illegally used in a way that leads the public to believe that goods or services provided by one party are those of another, this is known as passing off. The reputation and goodwill of the trademark's rightful owner may suffer because of this deception.

There are two different ideas: trademark infringement and passing off. Passing off is a common law remedy, whereas infringement is a statutory remedy. Using various legal strategies, both seek to safeguard the integrity of trademarks and the interests of business owners.

The violation of a party's exclusive rights pertaining to a registered trademark is known as trademark infringement. Registration is the only requirement before filing a claim of infringement, as it grants the trademark owner the sole right to use the mark in connection with the products and services for which it is registered. When someone markets similar goods and services under a trademark that is identical to or confusingly similar to the registered proprietor's, it is considered a trademark infringement.

On the other hand, the idea of passing off gives the owner of a trademark the authority to file a lawsuit to stop illegal use of their unregistered property.

(Source: <https://intellectvidhya.com/trademark-infringement-meaning-types-and-remedies/>)

- 53.** Rishabh owns a bakery named "Sweet Sensations," which is well-known in his town despite not having a registered trademark. A new bakery called "Sweet Sensationz" opens in the same area with similar branding and packaging. Customers start confusing the two. Which legal remedy can Rishabh pursue?
- (a) File a case for trademark infringement
 - (b) File a passing off action under common law
 - (c) Register his bakery name and then file a case
 - (d) None, as he did not register his trademark
- 54.** Sneha, who owns the registered trademark "EcoDrive" for electric bikes, notices another company selling similar bikes under the name "EcoDriv." Can she take legal action?
- (a) Yes, for passing off, as it involves unregistered trademarks
 - (b) No, because both are selling similar products
 - (c) No, because the other name is slightly different
 - (d) Yes, for trademark infringement, as her mark is registered
- 55.** A company called "TasteHeaven" has been selling chocolates with this name for years without registration. Another startup registers "TasteHeaven" and begins using the brand. What can the original company do?
- (a) Nothing, since the second company registered the trademark
- 56.** Based on the passage, which of the following best distinguishes between *trademark infringement* and *passing off*?
- (a) Infringement protects the public, while passing off protects businesses.
 - (b) Infringement applies only to unregistered marks, while passing off applies to registered marks.
 - (c) Infringement is a statutory remedy requiring registration; passing off is a common law remedy requiring goodwill.
 - (d) Both offer the same legal remedy and are used interchangeably.
- 57.** A prominent online retail platform, "Kartoo," has gained substantial reputation across India over the last decade. Although it did not register its trademark initially, it had a well-established market and goodwill. In 2022, a tech startup registered the trademark "Carto," which provides logistics services but began expanding into online retail in 2024. It launched its services under the registered "Carto" brand, using a similar logo and color scheme. Kartoo's customer base began confusing the two entities, and a notable dip in sales was observed.

Kartoo filed a lawsuit alleging unauthorized use and deceptive similarity, seeking to restrain Carto from using the mark. Carto argued that it had a valid registration under the Trademarks Act and thus had exclusive rights to use the mark. Based on the legal principles discussed in the passage, what can Kartoo do?

- (a) Kartoo cannot sue Carto since it failed to register its trademark before Carto and has no statutory rights.

Passage (Q.58-Q.63): Article 355 mandates the Union to protect every state against external aggression and internal disturbances. This article is part of the emergency provisions outlined in Part XVIII of the Constitution, which spans Articles 352 to 360. Recently, the Supreme Court of India addressed a petition seeking the invocation of Article 355 in West Bengal. This was in response to violence during protests against the Waqf Amendment Act. The primary purpose of Article 355 is to ensure that the government of each state operates in accordance with the Constitution. It empowers the Union government to intervene when a state's governance is compromised. This provision is vital for maintaining the integrity of the state and the Union.

Article 355 is intrinsically linked to Article 356. The latter allows the President to assume control of a state's government when there is a failure of constitutional machinery. If a viable alternate government was available and willing to form a majority, the constitutional machinery had not truly failed. This process is commonly referred to as 'President's Rule'. The invocation of Article 356 can occur under specific circumstances, as outlined in Article 355. President's Rule can be proclaimed under two main grounds. First, if the President believes that a state government cannot function according to the Constitution. Second, if a state fails to comply with directives from the Union government as per Article 365. These grounds ensure that the Union can act swiftly in times of crisis.

A proclamation of President's Rule must receive approval from both houses of Parliament within two months. Or it cannot be continued. If approved, it can remain in effect for six months. However, it can be extended with parliamentary approval. This requirement ensures that the imposition of President's Rule is subject to legislative oversight.

When President's Rule is imposed, the President gains extraordinary powers. He or she can assume the functions of the state government. The President can also legislate for the state and suspend constitutional provisions related to state authorities. This centralised control is intended to restore order and governance.

- 58.** The state of Praditya recently witnessed an upsurge in communal violence following a controversial land acquisition law. The Governor sent multiple reports to the Union alleging that the state government had failed to maintain law and order. Simultaneously, intelligence agencies reported foreign actors instigating violence through social media. Despite these developments, the Chief Minister refused to act upon advisories issued by the Union Home Ministry. After deliberations, the Union Cabinet advised the President to impose President's Rule. A petition was filed before the Supreme Court challenging the constitutional validity of this move under Article 356. Decide the validity of the proclamation.

- (b) Since Carto holds a registered trademark, any challenge by Kartoo would automatically fail under the Trademarks Act.
- (c) Kartoo can sue for passing off, relying on its prior use and goodwill, despite Carto's registration.
- (d) The court will uphold Carto's right to use the mark nationwide, as registration provides absolute protection under law.

- 59.** In the state of Navdhara, a breakdown in constitutional machinery occurred due to the Chief Minister's decision to defy a Supreme Court order regarding environmental regulation. The Union issued directives under Article 356, but the state
- (a) The imposition of President's Rule is valid under Article 355 as there was a threat of external aggression and internal disturbance.
 - (b) The imposition of President's Rule is invalid because a state must explicitly reject all Union advisories for Article 356 to apply.
 - (c) The imposition is valid under Articles 355 and 356 because both internal disturbances and failure to follow Union directives were present.
 - (d) The proclamation is invalid as Article 355 cannot be used to justify President's Rule unless a war-like situation is declared.

- 59.** In the state of Navdhara, a breakdown in constitutional machinery occurred due to the Chief Minister's decision to defy a Supreme Court order regarding environmental regulation. The Union issued directives under Article 356, but the state

refused to comply. Six weeks later, the President imposed President's Rule. However, Parliament was not in session, and the proclamation was not ratified within two months. A resident challenged the continued imposition after the two-month period. Decide.

- (a) The President's Rule automatically lapses if not approved within two months by both Houses of Parliament.
 - (b) The President may extend the Rule beyond two months even without parliamentary approval in urgent circumstances.
 - (c) Since the President acted on Supreme Court defiance, the Rule stands valid irrespective of time limits.
 - (d) The Rule can continue for six months regardless of parliamentary ratification as per Article 356.
- 60.** A political crisis emerged in the state of Karnika after the majority party's MLAs resigned, leaving no viable government. The Governor sent a report recommending President's Rule. However, before the proclamation could be approved by Parliament, an alliance of opposition parties staked claim to form a government. The President, acting under Article 356, refused the claim and proceeded with President's Rule. The alliance approached the Court. Decide.
- (a) The President is bound to impose President's Rule once the Governor reports failure of machinery.
 - (b) The President may refuse to impose President's Rule if an alternate government is possible.
 - (c) President's Rule is invalid if imposed when there is a real possibility of forming an alternate government.
 - (d) Once President's Rule is proclaimed, Courts have no authority to interfere.
- 61.** The Union government, citing a rise in Naxalite insurgency in Chattisgarh, sought to invoke Article

355. However, the state alleged political vendetta, arguing that law and order still remained under control and Union's intervention was unnecessary. The Centre issued a proclamation stating that the state had failed to function in accordance with the Constitution. The state approached the judiciary seeking to quash the proclamation. Can they do so?

- (a) Judicial review of the President's satisfaction under Article 356 is barred under the Constitution.
- (b) The judiciary can examine whether there was any material before the President for issuing such proclamation.
- (c) If the Governor supports the Centre's decision, the judiciary cannot interfere.
- (d) None of the above.

62. Which of the following can be inferred regarding the relationship between Articles 355 and 356?

- (a) Article 356 is always triggered as a consequence of Article 355.
- (b) Article 355 serves as a guiding principle and basis for action under Article 356.
- (c) Article 355 and 356 operate independently and are not legally connected.
- (d) Article 356 cannot be invoked unless there is actual external aggression.

63. What can be inferred about the safeguards built into the Constitution regarding President's Rule?

- (a) The President has absolute discretion in imposing and extending President's Rule.
- (b) Parliament has no role in supervising the President's emergency powers.
- (c) There is a system of legislative oversight to ensure checks and balances on emergency powers.
- (d) Once imposed, President's Rule continues indefinitely unless challenged.

Passage (Q.64-Q.69): The J&K Enemy Agents Ordinance, enacted in 1917, remains a significant security law, criminalizing acts aiding the enemy, obstructing military operations, or endangering lives. Application of the Ordinance extends to the transmission of any information sensitive to military operations or national security. This ordinance prescribes penalties of death, life imprisonment, or rigorous imprisonment up to 10 years, along with fines for the said acts. After India's independence, the ordinance was retained within Jammu and Kashmir's legal framework, later reaffirmed under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, while many local laws were replaced or repealed.

Trials under this ordinance are presided over by a Special Judge appointed by the government in consultation with the High Court. The ordinance restricts the accused's right to a defense attorney, allowing legal representation only if expressly permitted by the Special Judge. This limitation underscores the law's intent to control defense arrangements in cases deemed as threats to national security. This provision overrides the general principle of the right to defense representation. Further, there is no right of appeal against the Special Judge's verdict; the judgment can only be reviewed by a High Court judge selected by the government, whose decision is final. This restriction is part of the law's design for cases under the ordinance. Despite general principles of justice, the ordinance lawfully limits the right to appeal due to national security concerns. The decision by the High Court judge is final with no provisions for appeal from High Court.

The ordinance strictly prohibits unauthorized disclosure or publication of sensitive information about national security, punishable by up to two years' imprisonment, fines, or both. This non-disclosure mandate parallels restrictions in other security laws, such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), where Section 44 criminalizes the unauthorized publication of sensitive details, underscoring the importance of secrecy in national security cases.

In cases involving espionage or aiding the enemy, procedural restrictions in the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) also support stringent measures. For instance, the CrPC allows for in-camera trials and limited bail provisions to preserve state interests. Moreover, the National Security Act (NSA) and UAPA enforce similar restrictive provisions, reflecting the ordinance's purpose to safeguard state security through controlled legal mechanisms, limited appeals, and strict confidentiality mandates.

(Source: Extract (with edits and revisions) from an article titled Extracted with edits from; What is Enemy Agents Ordinance, tough law applicable in Jammu and Kashmir?, The Indian Express.)

- 64.** Shahid, an investigative journalist, acquired and published a series of internal government communications regarding military logistics in Jammu and Kashmir without obtaining prior authorization. He argued that his intent was to inform the public about inefficiencies in defense management and not to endanger national security. Subsequently, the government initiated proceedings against him under the J&K Enemy Agents Ordinance. Can Shahid be held liable under the Ordinance?

- (a) Yes, because the unauthorized publication of sensitive military information is punishable within the ordinance's scope, regardless of Shahid's intentions.
- (b) No, because Shahid's intention was public welfare, not aiding the enemy or obstructing military operations.
- (c) Yes, because even an indirect threat to national security through disclosure falls within the ordinance's scope.
- (d) No, because as a journalist, Shahid is protected under the freedom of press and cannot be penalized for acting in public interest.

- 65.** Aditi, an employee in the postal department, knowingly delayed delivery of military communications during a period of active border tension. Although no physical harm resulted, the

delay affected the timely movement of troops. Can Aditi be convicted under the J&K Enemy Agents Ordinance?

- (a) Yes, because obstructing military operations, even without causing direct harm, falls under punishable acts under the ordinance.
- (b) No, because mere delay without direct endangerment to lives is insufficient for conviction.
- (c) Yes, because the ordinance covers acts that obstruct military operations, regardless of the eventual consequences.
- (d) No, because the ordinance requires actual damage to life or property for conviction.

- 66.** Naru was charged under the J&K Enemy Agents Ordinance. During trial, he insisted on being represented by a senior criminal lawyer of his choice, citing his right to fair trial under general criminal law principles. The Special Judge, however, denied permission for legal representation. Is the denial lawful under the Ordinance?

- (a) Yes, because international security concerns permit the limitation of an accused's right to a defense attorney.
- (b) No, because the CrPC guarantees every accused person the right to legal representation.

- (c) Yes, because under the Ordinance, the accused can have a defense attorney only if expressly permitted by the Special Judge.
- (d) No, because the denial of legal representation violates fundamental rights and therefore overrides the Ordinance's procedural rules.
- 67.** Aman, convicted under the J&K Enemy Agents Ordinance, appealed his conviction before a Division Bench of the High Court, arguing that the Special Judge's verdict was unconstitutional and arbitrary. The Division Bench agreed to hear his appeal. Was the Division Bench correct in doing so?
- (a) Yes, because arbitrary actions of special courts must be subject to ordinary appellate review under general principles of justice.
- (b) Yes, because fundamental rights guarantee the right to appeal against any criminal conviction.
- (c) No, because the Ordinance allows only review and not a full appellate procedure, and the decision of the selected High Court judge is appealable.
- (d) No, because the Ordinance provides no right of appeal against the Special Judge's verdict except for review by a High Court judge.
- 68.** Which of the following best reflects the rationale behind the procedural restrictions in the J&K Enemy Agents Ordinance regarding limited defense representation and restricted appeal rights?
- 69.** Considering the structure of the Ordinance, what can be inferred about the government's approach towards cases involving national security threats in Jammu and Kashmir?
- (a) The government prioritizes rehabilitative justice and reintegration of accused persons back into society.
- (b) The government emphasizes expedited, confidential, and highly controlled legal processes over conventional criminal justice safeguards.
- (c) The government ensures greater transparency and public participation in trials involving national security.
- (d) The government focuses on upholding universal rights of the accused above all national concerns.

Passage (Q.70-Q.77): The implementation of a policy to eliminate child labour has a long way to go before achieving its ultimate goal by 2025.

The Child and adolescent labour (prohibition and regulation) Act, 1986 was enacted to prohibit the engagement of children in all occupations and to prohibit the engagement of adolescents in hazardous occupations and processes. The Act defines adolescent as a person who has completed his fourteenth year of age but has not completed his eighteenth year whereas child is defined as person who has not completed his fourteenth year of age.

Section 3(1) of the Act prohibits employment of children in any occupation and process. However, Section 3(2) of the Act states that prohibition under Section 3(1) shall not apply where the child- (a) helps his family or family enterprise, which is other than any hazardous occupations or processes set forth in the Schedule, after his school hours or during vacations; (b) works as an artist in an audio-visual entertainment industry, including advertisement, films, television serials or any such other entertainment or sports activities except the circus, subject to such conditions and safety measures as may be prescribed by rules for the appropriate government: Provided that no such work under this clause shall effect the school education of the child. Section 3A deals with adolescents and states that no adolescent shall be employed or permitted to work in any of the hazardous occupations or processes. Section 7 provides the hours and period of work for adolescents. As per the Section, the period of work on each day shall be so fixed that no period shall exceed three hours and that no adolescent shall work for more than three hours before he has had an interval for rest for at least one hour. The period of work of an adolescent shall be so arranged that inclusive of his interval for rest, under sub-section (2), it shall not be spread over more than six hours, including the time spent in waiting for work on any day. No adolescent shall be permitted or required to work between 7 p.m.

and 8 a.m. No adolescent shall be required or permitted to work overtime. No adolescent shall be required or permitted to work in any establishment on any day on which he has already been working in another establishment. Section 14 provides penalties for violation of Section 3 & 3A. As per the provision, whoever employs any child/adolescent or permits any child/adolescent to work in contravention of the provisions of section 3 or 3A shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than six months but which may extend to two years, or with fine which shall not be less than twenty thousand rupees but which may extend to fifty thousand rupees, or with both: Provided that the parents or guardians of such children/adolescent shall not be punished unless they permit such child to work in contravention of the provision of section 3 or section 3A as the case may be.

(Source: "Elimination of child labour a distant goal, country needs uniform definition of 'child' first: Parliamentary panel", the Indian Express)

- 70.** Ramesh, a 13-year-old boy, assists his family after school hours in managing a roadside snack stall owned by his parents near a crowded market area. The stall only sells pre-packaged items like chips, biscuits, soft drinks, and water bottles. The stall does not engage in preparing or cooking any food on-site, nor does it involve any mechanical or industrial activity. Ramesh usually helps in stocking the shelves, handling money transactions occasionally, and cleaning the stall premises. Sometimes, due to high footfall during holiday festivals, Ramesh is required to stay at the stall late till 9 p.m. Additionally, on weekends, he helps throughout the day, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., including during his school holidays. Considering the provisions of the Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, determine whether Ramesh's involvement is legally permissible.

- (a) Ramesh's involvement is permitted because assisting a family enterprise engaged in selling non-hazardous packaged goods after school hours is allowed under the Act.
- (b) Ramesh's involvement is prohibited because although selling packaged snacks is not hazardous, his working late till 9 p.m. and for extended hours on weekends violates the conditions under the Act.
- (c) Ramesh's involvement is prohibited because working in a busy public market area is deemed hazardous, irrespective of the nature of goods sold.
- (d) Ramesh's involvement is prohibited because under no circumstances can a child engage in any form of work, even if it is assisting a family enterprise.

- 71.** Anaya, a 15-year-old adolescent, works in a cotton mill where she operates machinery for eight

continuous hours a day without any rest breaks. The mill is listed under hazardous occupations. Anaya's parents consented to her employment, arguing financial necessity. Which of the following is correct under the Act?

- (a) Employment of Anaya is lawful since she is an adolescent and her parents have consented.
- (b) Employment of Anaya is prohibited because adolescents cannot work in hazardous occupations and her work hours exceed the permitted limit.
- (c) Employment of Anaya is lawful since she is only assisting with light machinery and no injury has occurred.
- (d) Employment of Anaya is lawful because her work does not involve hazardous substances directly, only operating machines.

- 72.** Vikram, a 16-year-old boy, works for 5 hours in the morning at a garage and, after a 3-hour break, also works 3 hours in a restaurant in the evening. Both occupations are non-hazardous. Which of the following correctly states the legality of Vikram's working arrangement?

- (a) Vikram's work arrangement is lawful since he works in non-hazardous sectors with sufficient break time.
- (b) Vikram's work arrangement is prohibited because he is working in two establishments on the same day.
- (c) Vikram's work arrangement is lawful because neither of the two employers requires him to work beyond six hours.
- (d) Cannot be determined.

- 73.** 12-year-old Siya acts in a popular TV serial, shooting for about five hours daily during her school vacations, but missing some school reopening days for shooting. The production house claims that her

- education is "not substantially affected." Under the Act, determine the legality.
- (a) Siya's employment is legal as working in audio-visual entertainment is allowed.
- (b) Siya's employment is illegal because working five hours violates permissible engagement rules.
- (c) Siya's employment is legal because vacations allow full-time work temporarily.
- (d) Siya's employment is illegal because it affects her school education, violating conditions under Section 3(2)(b).
- 74.** A factory owner, Mr. A, employs 10 adolescents aged 15–17 years to operate machines in his textile factory during the day shift (8 a.m. to 6 p.m.). Each adolescent works in stretches of 3 hours with a 1-hour break. The textile factory is not a hazardous industry. Which of the following is correct?
- (a) Mr. A is acting in violation of the law because adolescents cannot work in textile factories.
- (b) Mr. A is not violating the Act because proper break times are provided and the factory is non-hazardous.
- (c) Mr. A is acting in violation because work period spread is more than six hours including breaks.
- (d) Mr. A is not violating the Act because adolescents are allowed to work full 8-hour shifts if given breaks.
- 75.** From the provisions of the Child and Adolescent Labour Act, it can be inferred that:
- 76.** Which of the following is a correct inference regarding the penalties under the Act?
- (a) Only employers can be penalized, while parents are penalized only under specific circumstances.
- (b) Both parents and employers are equally penalized whenever a child is found working illegally.
- (c) Parents are always punished whenever their child is found working.
- (d) Adolescents are also directly penalized under the Act.
- 77.** Which of the following can be correctly inferred from the law's provision regarding working hours?
- (a) Adolescents have no restrictions regarding nighttime work.
- (b) Adolescents may work multiple jobs in a single day if the total work hours are within limits.
- (c) Adolescents must have sufficient rest breaks and cannot work at night.
- (d) Adolescents may work beyond six hours if parental consent is obtained.

Passage (Q.78-Q.84): Under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), offences related to causing damage to public property now carry a graded fine, which means the fine corresponding to the amount of damage caused.

Promise to marry: The BNS introduces Clause 69 that seems to ostensibly tackle the "love jihad" narrative by criminalising "deceitful" promise to marry. The phrase "sexual intercourse not amounting to the offence of rape" essentially criminalises consensual sexual activity too. "Whoever, by deceitful means or by making promise to marry to a woman without any intention of fulfilling the same, has sexual intercourse with her, such sexual intercourse not amounting to the offence of rape, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years and shall also be liable to fine," the provision reads adding that "deceitful means" shall include the false promise of employment or promotion, inducement, or marrying after suppressing identity.

Mob lynching: The BNS provisions codify offences linked to mob lynching and hate-crime murders, for cases when a mob of five or more individuals commits murder based on factors such as race, caste, community, or personal belief. The provision has punishment that extends from life imprisonment to death.

Organised crime: For the first time, tackling organised crime is brought under the realm of ordinary criminal law. There are several special state legislations for prevention and control of criminal activity by organised crime syndicates or gangs, the most popular being the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act, 1999. Interestingly, in the new legislation, the punishment for attempt to commit organised crime and for committing organised crime is the same, but a distinction is drawn based on whether a death is caused or not by the alleged offence.

A separate category of "petty organised crime" has also been brought in, which criminalises "theft, snatching, cheating, unauthorised selling of tickets, unauthorised betting or gambling, selling of public examination question papers."

Terrorism: Importing large parts of the language in defining "terror activities" from the stringent Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, the BNS brings terrorism under the ambit of ordinary criminal law. The definition of "terrorist" borrows from the Philippines Anti-Terrorism Act, 2020. Crucially, the offence involving terror financing is broader in the BNS than in UAPA. It is unclear how both the UAPA and the BNS will operate concurrently, especially when procedurally the UAPA is more stringent and the cases are heard in special courts.

Attempt to suicide: The BNS introduces a new provision that criminalises "whoever attempts to commit suicide with the intent to compel or restrain any public servant from discharging his official duty," and prescribes a jail term which may extend to one year with community service. This provision could be invoked to prevent self-immolations and hunger strikes during protests.

78. Sneha, a protestor, tried to set herself on fire in front of the Collector's office during a protest against land acquisition. She did not suffer serious injuries as she was immediately stopped. She later claimed that her act was merely symbolic and was intended to draw attention to the protest, not to actually harm herself. Authorities have decided to prosecute her under the new provision of BNS regarding attempt to suicide. Decide.

- (a) Sneha can be prosecuted because she attempted suicide with the intent to restrain a public servant from discharging official duty.
- (b) Sneha cannot be prosecuted because her act was symbolic and not a genuine attempt to commit suicide.
- (c) Sneha can be prosecuted because under Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita, even symbolic attempts at suicide to pressure public authorities are punishable.
- (d) Sneha cannot be prosecuted because her injuries were not serious and no official duty was actually restrained.

79. Amaan runs an online betting platform that operates secretly through Telegram groups. He also sells leaked question papers of government exams through the same network. He is now being prosecuted under the new "petty organised crime" category introduced in the BNS. He argues that online operations should not be considered "public" acts and thus cannot attract petty organised crime charges. Decide.

- (a) Amaan can be prosecuted because selling public exam papers and unauthorised betting fall squarely under petty organised crimes, whether offline or online.

(b) Amaan cannot be prosecuted because the petty organised crime provision only applies to physical markets or street activities, not online networks.

- (c) Amaan can be prosecuted because the definition of petty organised crime is wide enough to include unauthorised online activity related to public examination papers.
- (d) Amaan cannot be prosecuted because the existing laws on cybercrime would apply first, not the BNS.

80. Harsh was accused of making a promise to marry Jaya and had consensual sexual relations with her. Later, it emerged that Harsh had never intended to marry Jaya and had concealed his real religious identity. Jaya now files a complaint under Clause 69 of the BNS. Harsh argues that since there was mutual consent, no offence is made out. Decide.

- (a) Harsh cannot be prosecuted because the sexual act was consensual and did not amount to rape.
- (b) Harsh can be prosecuted because under Clause 69, deceitful promise to marry and suppression of identity both constitute offences even if the act is consensual.
- (c) Harsh cannot be prosecuted because suppression of identity alone is not sufficient without evidence of fraud causing consent.
- (d) Harsh can be prosecuted only if Jaya can prove that she would not have consented but for the deceit.

81. In a city riot, six individuals of the same community attacked and killed a shopkeeper from a different community based on religious hatred. The prosecution now seeks to charge them under the new mob lynching provision of BNS. Some argue that

- since the attackers belonged to only one community, it cannot be considered a "mob". Decide.
- (a) They cannot be charged because the death was caused during a chaotic situation, not deliberate mob action.
- (b) They cannot be charged because a mob should consist of individuals from different communities.
- (c) They can be charged because the key is the communal basis of the attack, not the composition of the mob.
- (d) They can be charged because a mob of five or more individuals acting on communal hatred is sufficient under BNS, regardless of whether they are from the same community.
- 82.** Vikram is being prosecuted for "organised crime" for running a smuggling syndicate. During the investigation, it is found that although Vikram did not personally kill anyone, one of his associates caused a death during a smuggling operation. Vikram now argues that since he neither ordered nor committed the killing himself, he should not face the maximum punishment. Decide.
- (a) Vikram cannot be held liable because only the person who directly causes the death should face the higher punishment.
- (b) Vikram can be held liable if it is shown that he had prior knowledge or approved the killing.
- (c) Vikram cannot be held liable because the death was incidental and not part of the original plan.
- (d) None of the above
- 83.** **Assertion (A):** The BNS provision on deceitful promise to marry criminalises consensual sexual activity under certain circumstances.
- Reason (R):** Consent obtained through suppression of identity or false promise is treated as vitiated consent under the BNS.
- (a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.
- (b) Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A.
- (c) A is true, but R is false.
- (d) A is false, but R is true.
- 84.** It can be inferred from the passage that the new BNS attempt to suicide provision is primarily targeted at:
- (a) All suicide attempts, regardless of motive.
- (b) Suicide attempts intended to seek personal revenge.
- (c) Suicide attempts aimed at influencing public servants or obstructing governmental functioning.
- (d) Suicide attempts conducted in private without any social or political motive.

SECTION D: LOGICAL REASONING

Passage (Q.85-Q.90): The gulf between legality and political legitimacy can be quite substantial. The Supreme Court verdict upholding the constitution of a Delimitation Commission for Jammu and Kashmir and the subsequent delimitation exercise is indeed in line with the law, especially the constitutional provisions that empower Parliament to form new States, alter existing ones, and change their status and boundaries, as well as the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019. However, it will be wrong to see it as granting judicial imprimatur to the political import of the redrawing of constituencies in the Union Territory. Most political parties in J&K, which was downgraded to Union Territory status in August 2019, have opposed the Commission's report that added six seats in Jammu division and one in Kashmir division to take the total number of seats to 90. The parties see in the exercise an attempt to weaken the Muslim majority region's political and electoral significance and boost the prospects of parties with a base in Jammu. They consider this as an extension of the project to strip J&K of its status and privileges and repurpose its politics to the advantage of the ruling party. This question of legitimacy can be answered by the outcome of an election, if and when one is held, to the territorial legislature. However, the readjustment of boundaries may by itself cast a shadow on that process too.

The petition that challenged the formation of the Delimitation Commission was a belated one, as it was filed after the panel published its draft order. The Court brushed aside its key contention that the delimitation has been frozen throughout the country until after the first Census held after 2026, noting that Article 170, which deals with this, applies only to States, and not Union Territories. It has also noted that J&K will be governed by its own reorganisation law, which allows the 2011 Census to be the basis for its delimitation, unlike the rest of the country, where the 2001 census was the basis for the last redrawing of constituency boundaries. It also rejected arguments rooted in the idea that some provisions of the Reorganisation Act were not consistent with the Constitution, noting that these provisions had not been specifically challenged. While the Court may be right in upholding the formation of the delimitation panel, the extensions given to it, and its decision based on laws currently assumed to be valid, the impression is inescapable that the people of J&K are being presented with a fait accompli on matters concerning their political destiny, as long as the core question — the validity of the withdrawal of its statehood and special status in 2019 — remains undecided.

- 85.** Which among the following best represents the central message of the author in penning this passage?
- (a) The Supreme Court's verdict on the Delimitation Commission in J&K is a landmark judgement for the political future of the region.
 - (b) The people of J&K are likely to face a challenging political situation due to the delimitation exercise and the redrawing of constituencies in the Union Territory.
 - (c) The formation of the Delimitation Commission for J&K has been met with strong opposition from most political parties in the region.
 - (d) The legal and political legitimacy of the Delimitation Commission's exercise in J&K is subject to debate.
- 86.** What can be inferred from the given passage about the political parties in Jammu and Kashmir?
- 87.** Which of the following could weaken the arguments presented in the given passage?
- (a) A survey indicating that the majority of people in Jammu and Kashmir support the Delimitation Commission's report.
 - (b) A court ruling invalidating the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019.

- (c) A statement from the ruling party indicating that the delimitation exercise was carried out with the intention of empowering the Muslim majority region.
- (d) The Supreme Court ruling that the delimitation exercise in line with the constitutional provisions that empower Parliament to form new States, alter existing ones, and change their status and boundaries.
- 88.** Which of the following is the author most likely to disagree with?
- (a) The Supreme Court's verdict upholding the formation of the Delimitation Commission for Jammu and Kashmir is necessary to maintain law and order in the Union Territory.
- (b) Most political parties in J&K are wrong to see the delimitation exercise as an attempt to weaken the Muslim majority region's political and electoral significance.
- (c) The outcome of an election can provide a definitive answer to the question of legitimacy arising from the readjustment of boundaries.
- (d) The people of J&K are being presented with a fait accompli on matters concerning their political destiny.
- 89.** In the context of the passage, what role does public opinion play in determining the political legitimacy of the redrawing of constituencies in J&K?
- 90.** Which among the following best represents a flaw in the author's arguments?
- (a) The author fails to consider the impact of social media on political discourse in J&K.
- (b) The author's arguments are too focused on legal technicalities, and fail to take into account the human impact of the redrawing of constituencies in J&K.
- (c) The author's arguments rely too heavily on anecdotal evidence, and fail to provide sufficient statistical data to support their claims.
- (d) The passage does not contain any flaws in the author's arguments.

Passage (Q.91-Q.96): On Tuesday, a World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) report occupied center stage at the UN Security Council's first-ever debate on the impact of sea-level rise on global peace. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres cited the document to warn of "a mass exodus of population on a biblical scale". The report — whose release coincided with the landmark UNSC session — adds to the growing corpus of studies that underline the climate vulnerabilities of people living in low-lying areas. But it projects a crisis that's frightful, even by the dire standards of climate reports. More than one in 10 people in the world, including those in megacities like Mumbai, New York, London, Dhaka, Shanghai and Buenos Aires, could face severe turmoil even if global warming is miraculously limited to 1.5 degrees — the Paris climate pact's goal.

The task for policymakers then is to prepare for massive social and economic dislocation. This will require building resilience at several levels. For instance, investing in R&D, infrastructure and warning systems to mitigate the loss of lives and property. Protecting coasts could require engineering, technological and ecological interventions — creating physical barriers, permeable pavements, sopping waters or reviving mangroves. The jury is out on several innovations. Engineering solutions are often criticized because even the most robust protective structures deflect the energy of the waves to other areas. Armored shorelines can also upset the delicate ecological balance of coastal habitats. In recent times, innovations to overcome such deficiencies by combining engineering and ecological approaches have been tried. But a lot of the state-of-the-art green know-how remains out of reach for a majority of the worst affected countries. Technology and fund transfer commitments at UN summits have rarely been in proportion to the gravity of the challenge at hand — in any case, follow-up on even the most sincere commitment has been far from being adequate.

As the WMO has warned, the rising seas are a “threat-multiplier”. The rushing salty waters can aggravate disparities by playing havoc with agrarian systems and ruining the livelihoods of fishing communities. International law may well have to engage with the requirements of people dislocated by the sea, many of them rendered stateless. At the same time, dealing with emergencies, mitigating hardship and preparing people to deal with the vagaries of climate will require political will and action at the level of local governments. In India, this could test the resolve of urban municipalities and civic bodies that have struggled to do justice to their mandate, even in normal times.

- 91.** Which of the following best represents the main idea of the given passage?
- (a) The first-ever debate on the impact of sea-level rise on global peace can't be ignored as policymakers have a task at hand.
 - (b) Policymakers would do well to prepare themselves for massive socio-economic relocation.
 - (c) The WMO's warning on the rising sea-levels should not go unnoticed as the policymakers are left to fend for themselves.
 - (d) More needs to be done in order to protect the world against the declining sea-levels.
- 92.** Which of the following has been assumed by the author in order for his arguments to hold?
- (a) The WMO's warning will be warned by the policymakers or the world would be saved.
 - (b) The document regarding sea-levels cited in the passage is not fabricated by its researchers.
 - (c) There is no way to save the people of the world's megacities from relocating themselves.
 - (d) Engineering solutions cannot play a role in saving the world from the impending sea-level rise.
- 93.** The information in the passage allows which of the following to be inferred, if the information in the passage is correct?
- (a) The urban municipalities and civic bodies are expected to deliver in times of crisis.
 - (b) A mass exodus of population is on the horizon even if efforts are made to counter sea-level rise.
 - (c) The policymakers would have to deliver on several fronts in order to be prepared for the crisis on the horizon.
 - (d) Innovations at present and in future would serve well to prepare for the sea-level rise.
- 94.** Which of the following could strengthen the author's arguments on preparing for the impact of sea-level rise on global peace?
- (a) The construction of physical barriers is sufficient to protect coastal habitats.
 - (b) People living in low-lying areas are not vulnerable to the threat of rising sea levels.
 - (c) UN commitments to transfer technology and funds have been largely effective in proportion to the gravity of the challenge.
 - (d) Political will and action at the level of local governments are not sufficient to deal with emergencies and mitigate hardship.
- 95.** Which one of the given choices reflects the role played by the given statement?
“At the same time, dealing with emergencies, mitigating hardship and preparing people to deal with the vagaries of climate will require political will and action at the level of local governments.”
- (a) The given statement is a fact.
 - (b) The given statement is a judgement.
 - (c) The given statement is an inference.
 - (d) The given statement is a contradictory statement of the author's conclusion.
- 96.** Which of the following is the author most likely to disagree with?
- (a) Policymakers should invest in R&D and infrastructure to mitigate the loss of lives and property.
 - (b) Combining engineering and ecological approaches is the best way to protect coasts.
 - (c) International law may need to address the requirements of people dislocated by the sea.
 - (d) Climate change is a myth and does not pose a threat to humanity.

Passage (Q.97-Q.102): Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin does not want the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (Amul) to procure milk from the state. He has even asked the Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah to "direct" Amul to desist from "infringing" on the Tamil Nadu Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation's (Aavin) milk-shed area. The demand is uncalled for on at least two counts. First, Amul and Aavin are supposedly farmer-owned and professionally-managed dairy cooperatives. It isn't desirable for any minister or bureaucrat to intervene in the business operations of such organisations. The urge to control and reduce cooperatives to departmental undertakings has unfortunately only increased in recent times, both in the states and at the Centre. It goes wholly against the spirit of liberalisation: Ease of doing business shouldn't be only for large corporations.

The state's dairy farmers will benefit when there are more buyers for their milk. Entry of Amul is going to add to the overall situation in the state. In this case, Amul brings both size and credibility. For consumers, too, the more the brands, the merrier it would be. The only loser might be Aavin, the state-controlled cooperative that would like a situation of both monopsony (single buyer) and monopoly (single seller). As chief minister, Stalin should actually welcome Amul setting up processing plants and chilling centres, besides farmer producer organisations and self-help groups for milk procurement, in Tamil Nadu. Far from leading to "unhealthy competition between cooperatives", it will force Aavin to become more efficient, pay farmers better and work towards retaining consumers. The state government should enable that, rather than blocking competition and the creation of a single national market.

The pushback against Amul in Tamil Nadu comes just over a month after the political brouhaha over the Gujarat cooperative's announced entry into the Bengaluru market. That move was seen as threatening the local Karnataka Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation (Nandini). In both instances, what should be normal and desirable economic competition in the marketplace is being thwarted by misplaced subnationalism. The truth is that Nandini and Aavin are strong brands in their own right. Consumers in the two states are unlikely to switch to a new entrant's product in a hurry. Amul itself has been around in Telangana and north Karnataka for nearly a decade, but hardly made a dent in these markets against homegrown cooperative and private dairy brands. That should, however, not be a reason to deny competitors a chance to serve consumers and producers better.

97. Which of the following is primary argument of the author?

- (a) The pushback against Amul in Tamil Nadu comes just over a month after the political uproar over Amul's entry into Bengaluru
- (b) Stalin's demand from Union Home Minister Amit Shah to direct Amul to refrain procuring milk from the state is not justified.
- (c) Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, MK Stalin, asks Amit Shah to direct Amul to stop procuring milk in Tamil Nadu.
- (d) Amul's entry into Tamil Nadu market could harm local cooperative Aavin, resulting into decline in the local dairy production in the state.

98. Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the author's argument?

- (a) Aavin's overall market share in Tamil Nadu has increased since Amul's entry into the state.
- (b) Consumer surveys show a strong preference for local brands like Aavin and Nandini over Amul.
- (c) Studies by central agencies on dairy farmers' incomes show positive correlation between the

incomes of these farmers and the number of milk cooperatives.

- (d) Recent data shows that Amul's entrance into new markets has resulted in a decline in local dairy production.

99. Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the author's argument?

- (a) Entry of Amul in Tamil Nadu will result in decline in revenues of Tamil Nadu Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation.
- (b) Aavin's revenue has remained stable despite the entry of Amul into the Tamil Nadu market.
- (c) Procuring milk from Tamil Nadu will help Amul restore smooth supplies of milk in states where it is already present.
- (d) So far, the milk cooperatives have been working without infringing on each other's milk-shed area.

100. Based on the passage, what can be inferred about the author's view on the role of government in cooperative organisations?

- (a) The author believes that the government should have an active role in managing cooperatives to ensure they operate efficiently.
- (b) The author believes that government interference in cooperatives is essential for protecting local brands from external competition.
- (c) The author believes that the government should limit its involvement in the business operations of cooperatives to foster healthy competition.
- (d) The author believes that the government should completely disengage from cooperative operations and let the market forces decide their fate.

101. The author's argument about Amul's entry into Tamil Nadu's market increasing competition and driving efficiencies can be compared to which of the following scenarios?

- (a) A single athlete always winning in a competition until another skilled athlete joins and pushes the former to enhance their skills.

Directions (Q.103-Q104): Eleven people P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y and Z are working in three different offices i.e. Office 1, office 2 and Office 3. At least three and not more than four people are working in the same office. Neither P nor Q works in Office 3. R is neither working in Office 1 nor Office 2. Q and T are working in the same office, but not in office 2. Either P or V works in office 3. X and V work in the same office. P, S and U are working in the same office. W and Z are working in the same office. Y neither works in office 1 nor office 3.

103. The number of people working in office 1 is the same as the number of people working in _____. What will come in place of _____?

- (a) Office 3
- (b) Office 2
- (c) Both Office 2 and Office 3
- (d) Can't be determined

104. Who among the following is working in same office as Q works?

- | | |
|-------|----------------------|
| (a) T | (b) W |
| (c) Z | (d) All of the above |

- (b) A forest with only one type of tree is exposed to another type of tree is introduced, leading to an imbalance in the ecosystem.
- (c) A student studying alone for an exam and another student joining them, leading to distractions and a decrease in productivity.
- (d) A company hiring more employees than needed, leading to redundancy and a decrease in overall efficiency.

102. The author's statement "Far from leading to "unhealthy competition between cooperatives", it will force Aavin to become more efficient, pay farmers better and work towards retaining consumers" is based on the assumption that

- (a) Unhealthy competition leads to inefficient performance of companies.
- (b) Performance of companies is not immune to competition from competitors.
- (c) Competition is not impacted by the performance of the competing companies.
- (d) Competition does not impact the performance of competing companies.

105. Who among the following is working in office 3?

- | | |
|-------|----------------------|
| (a) R | (b) V |
| (c) X | (d) All of the above |

106. Find the odd one out pair.

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| (a) Q - P | (b) T - V |
| (c) W - X | (d) Q - R |

107. In which office do S and U works?

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| (a) Office 1 | (b) Office 2 |
| (c) Office 3 | (d) Can't be determined |

108. Who among the following is working in office 2?

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| (a) T | (b) W |
| (c) V | (d) U |

SECTION - E : QUANTITATIVE TECHNIQUES

Directions (Q.109-Q.114): Study the data carefully and answer the following questions:

A study was carried out to understand how respiratory issues impact various professions. Each year, the International Health Organization (IHO) surveys 1000 individuals. Between 2015 and 2019, the percentages of people experiencing respiratory problems were 18%, 22%, 16%, 28%, and 20%, respectively. Among the affected individuals every year, 45% were musicians, 30% were dancers, and 25% were engineers. The overall number of musicians, dancers, and engineers in the sample remained in the ratio 9:6:5 each year.

Directions (Q.115-Q.120): Study the data carefully and answer the following questions:

Below data is given regarding the number of candidates who participated in three sports (Cricket, Baseball, and Football) from three cities Delhi, Bengaluru, and Chennai:

Delhi: The number of candidates who participated in Baseball is 60% more than the number of candidates who participated in cricket and number of candidates who participated in Football is 40 less than the number of candidates who participated in Baseball. Total number of candidates who participated in all three sports together is 1220.

Bengaluru: The number of candidates who participated in cricket from Delhi is 25% less than that from Bengaluru and the number of candidates who participated in Baseball from Delhi is $33\frac{1}{3}\%$ more than that from Bengaluru. The number of candidates who participated in Football is 100 more than that from Chennai.

Chennai: The respective ratio of number of candidates who participated in Cricket, Baseball and Football is 10: 12: 9. The number of candidates who participated in Baseball is half of the number of candidates who participated in Baseball from Delhi.

Note: Each candidate participated in exactly one sport.

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