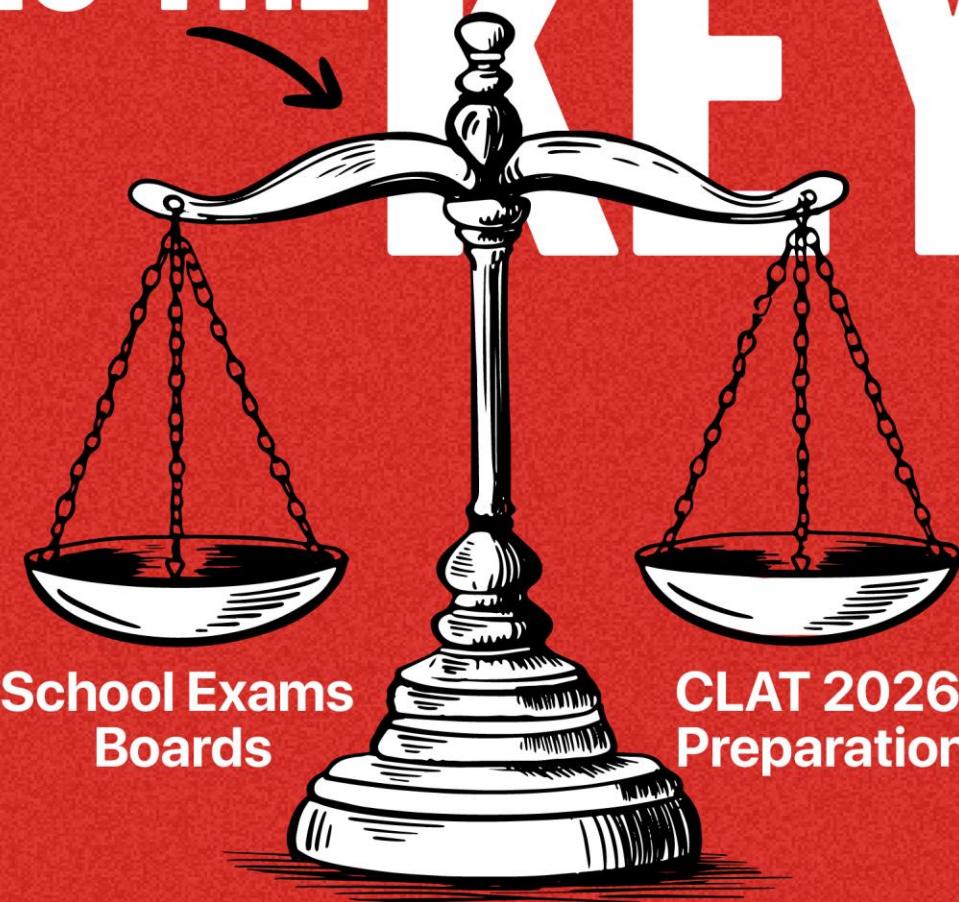


# THE CLAT POST<sup>+</sup>

FEBRUARY '25 EDITION

# BALANCE IS THE KEY



9 MONTHS TO GO

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# Polity & Governance

## Uttarakhand becomes First State to Implement UCC

### News Highlights:

**Uttarakhand** has become the first state in India to implement the **Uniform Civil Code (UCC)**. The law, effective from **January 27, 2025**, will standardize personal civil laws in the state, ensuring equal rights and responsibilities for all citizens, irrespective of religion. This significant move is aimed at promoting gender equality, social justice, and a unified legal framework for marriage, inheritance, and property rights.

### Key Features of Uttarakhand's Uniform Civil Code:

**Uniformity in Personal Laws:** The UCC will harmonize marriage, divorce, inheritance, and property rights laws across communities, except for **Scheduled Tribes**, who are exempt from the UCC.

**Gender Equality:** It ensures equal property and inheritance rights for both men and women, while also prohibiting **halala, iddat, talaq, and polygamy**.

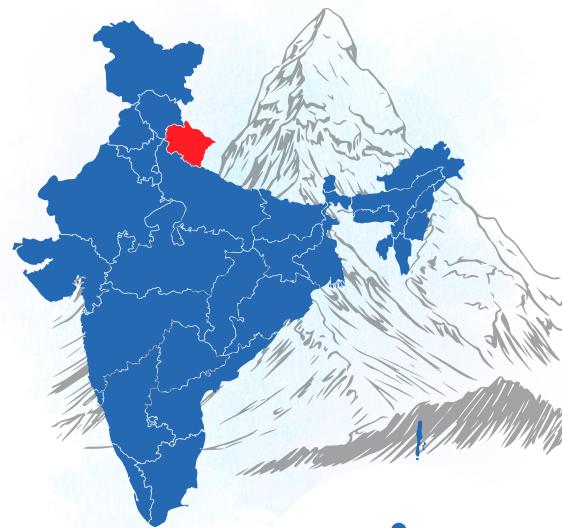
**Legal Marriage Age:** The legal age for marriage is set at **21 years for men** and **18 years for women**.

**Mandatory Registration:** All marriages, divorces, and live-in relationships must be registered on the official **UCC online portal** within prescribed deadlines (within **60 days** for new marriages).

**Live-In Relationships:** Registration for live-in couples is required. Couples must be aged **21 or above**, with **parental consent** required for those under 21. The law also grants **housing rights** to registered live-in couples.

**Inheritance Rights:** Equal inheritance rights are granted to both **sons** and **daughters**, including recognition of children from live-in relationships as legitimate.

**Aadhaar-Based Verification:** The UCC portal integrates Aadhaar-based verification and links with **13 government departments**, including **police** and **courts**.



### DID YOU KNOW?



- **Goa** has a similar law, the **Portuguese Civil Code**, which remains in place since **1961**, though no new law was passed post-liberation.
- Uttarakhand's adoption of the UCC places it at the forefront of a national debate on whether such a law should be implemented across India, with the state's experience being closely observed by other states and policymakers.



## Implementation Process and Key Dates:

- **Marriage Registration:** Marriages since **2010** must be registered within **six months**, and new marriages within **60 days** of the ceremony.
- **Live-In Registration:** Live-in relationships must be registered within **one month** of the UCC's implementation.
- **Emergency Processing:** The **Tatkal Facility** allows for **emergency registrations** for a nominal fee.
- **Will Registration:** The UCC portal enables registration of wills through online forms, uploads, or a **three-minute video**.

## Political Context and Reactions:

- The **UCC** was a major electoral promise made by the **BJP** in the **2022 Uttarakhand Assembly elections** and has now been fulfilled with this historic implementation.
- The law's passage is seen as a key victory for **women's empowerment** and **gender equality**, aligning with the state's commitment to **constitutional principles**.
- While supporters view the move as an advancement in **social justice**, critics express concerns about its potential impact on **cultural practices** and the **freedom of religion**.

## Legal Framework and International Perspective:

- **Rome Statute:** Internationally, a **Uniform Civil Code** concept exists in various forms. The **International Criminal Court (ICC)** has provisions for universal principles related to war crimes and crimes against humanity, though the UCC in personal law systems is more nation-specific.
- **Islamic Countries:** In countries like **Iran** and **Saudi Arabia**, personal laws are based on religious guidelines, whereas **secular countries** like **France** and **Turkey** have attempted to implement uniform civil codes in various forms.

## Uniform Civil Code

The **Uniform Civil Code** is a law that seeks to establish a common set of legal provisions for all citizens, regardless of their **religion** or **community**. It aims to standardize personal laws related to **marriage, divorce, inheritance, property rights**, and **adoption** for all citizens in a given country. The objective of the UCC is to promote **equality, justice**, and **gender equality**, ensuring that no individual is discriminated against based on religion, caste, or gender.

## Historical Context and Constitutional Provisions:

- The idea of a **Uniform Civil Code** was first discussed during the **Constituent Assembly of India** in the 1940s. It was envisaged as a way to unify personal laws across various religious communities in India, thus ensuring equal treatment for all citizens.
- The **Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 44)** of the **Indian Constitution** states that, "The State shall endeavor to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India." While this is a directive principle and not an enforceable law, it indicates the intent of the framers of the Constitution for a uniform legal system in personal matters.

## Important Cases and Committees Related to the Uniform Civil Code (UCC):

### Shah Bano Case (1985):

- While not a formal committee, the **Shah Bano case** became one of the most significant judicial events related to the UCC. The case revolved around a Muslim woman, **Shah Bano**, who sought maintenance from her husband after divorce. The **Supreme Court of India** ruled in her favor, directing her husband to provide maintenance under the **Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC)**, despite personal law provisions in Muslim law being in conflict with this decision.

**The Sabhajit Singh Committee (1986):**

- This was an important committee formed by the **Government of India** to assess the viability of implementing a **Uniform Civil Code**. The committee concluded that a UCC could not be implemented in a diverse country like India without **careful consideration** of cultural, religious, and regional variations.

**The Law Commission of India (2018):**

- In **2018**, the **21st Law Commission of India**, headed by **Dr. Justice B.S. Chauhan**, conducted a detailed **consultative process** and released a report examining the **Uniform Civil Code**. The report concluded that while a UCC was necessary for **national integration** and **gender equality**, it could not be immediately enforced across India due to the **complexities of religious diversity** and **public opinion**.
- The commission recommended that **awareness** and **education campaigns** be launched to garner public support for the UCC. It suggested that the **UCC should be framed with due consideration of cultural diversity** and introduced in a phased manner.

**The Ranjana Desai Committee (2022):**

- In **2022**, the **Uttarakhand government** formed a **committee** led by retired **Supreme Court Judge Ranjana Prakash Desai** to draft the **Uniform Civil Code** for the state. The committee held numerous meetings and consultations before preparing a comprehensive **UCC draft** for the state, which was later passed by the **Uttarakhand Assembly** in early 2024, making Uttarakhand the first state to implement the **UCC**.

**Triple Talaq Case (2017): *Shayara Bano v. Union of India***

- **Judgment:** The Supreme Court declared **triple talaq** (instant divorce) among Muslims as **unconstitutional** and **invalid**. The Court reasoned that the practice was **discriminatory** to Muslim women and violated their **fundamental rights** under the **Indian Constitution**.
- **Impact:** This judgment sparked widespread support for a **Uniform Civil Code**, particularly among proponents of **gender equality**, as it illustrated the **injustice faced by women** under personal laws. The **UCC** was advocated as a way to prevent such discriminatory practices across all religious communities.



## Uttarakhand's UCC Implementation

**First Indian state** to implement UCC (Effective Jan 27, 2025). Standardizes personal laws **across religions** (except Scheduled Tribes). **Focus Areas:** Marriage, divorce, inheritance, property rights. **Objective:** Gender equality & uniform legal framework

### Key Features

- Equal inheritance & property rights for men and women.
- Bans polygamy, talaq, halala, iddat.
- Marriage Age: **Men – 21, Women – 18.**
- Mandatory Registration: **Marriages, divorces, live-in relationships.**
- Live-in Relationships:
  - **Minimum age 21**, parental consent below 21.
  - **Housing rights granted.**
- **Aadhaar-Based Verification** integrated with government databases.

### Key Cases & Committees

- **Shah Bano Case (1985)**: SC upheld maintenance for Muslim women UCC debate intensified.
- **Sabhajit Singh Committee (1986)**: Found UCC implementation difficult due to diversity.
- **Law Commission (2018)**: Recommended gradual UCC introduction.
- **Ranjana Desai Committee (2022)**: Drafted Uttarakhand UCC, passed in 2024.
- **Shayara Bano Case (2017)**: SC banned triple talaq, strengthening UCC demand.

### Implementation & Deadlines

- Marriages since **2010** must be registered **within 6 months**.
- Live-in relationships must be registered **within 1 month**.
- **Tatkal Facility**: Emergency processing available.
- **Online Will Registration** enabled.

### Political & Public Reactions

- **BJP's 2022 Election Promise Now Implemented.**
- **Supporters**: Boosts gender equality & legal uniformity.
- **Critics**: Concerns over cultural impact & religious freedom.

### Legal & Global Perspectives

- **Article 44 (DPSP)**: UCC recommended, not enforceable.
- Global Examples:
  - **Iran, Saudi Arabia**: Religious personal laws.
  - **France, Turkey**: Secular uniform codes.
- **Goa's Portuguese Civil Code (1961)**: Existing UCC-like system.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which Indian state became the first to implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC)?
  - (a) Goa
  - (b) Madhya Pradesh
  - (c) Uttarakhand
  - (d) Rajasthan
  
2. What additional rights does the UCC in Uttarakhand grant to registered live-in couples?
  - (a) Housing rights
  - (b) Equal employment opportunities
  - (c) Tax exemptions
  - (d) Educational benefits
  
3. In the context of global legal systems, which countries have personal laws based on religious guidelines?
  - (a) France and Turkey
  - (b) Iran and Saudi Arabia
  - (c) The United States and Canada
  - (d) Sweden and Norway
  
4. Which existing law in Goa is similar to the Uniform Civil Code implemented in Uttarakhand?
  - (a) Indian Civil Code
  - (b) Portuguese Civil Code
  - (c) Goa Civil Rights Act
  - (d) Goa Family Law
  
5. Under which section of the Indian Constitution is the directive for the state to implement a Uniform Civil Code mentioned?
  - (a) Section 41
  - (b) Section 42
  - (c) Section 43
  - (d) Section 44
  
6. Which landmark case highlighted the conflict between personal law and the rights awarded under general law to a Muslim woman seeking maintenance?
  - (a) Shah Bano Case
  - (b) Shayara Bano Case
  - (c) Indra Sawhney Case
  - (d) M.C. Mehta Case
  
7. Who led the committee to draft the UCC for Uttarakhand that was implemented in 2024?
  - (a) Justice R.P. Desai
  - (b) Justice B.S. Chauhan
  - (c) Justice Sabhajit Singh
  - (d) Justice Shah Bano
  
8. What was ruled in the Triple Talaq Case (Shayara Bano v. Union of India) regarding triple talaq?
  - (a) It was constitutionally valid
  - (b) It required further review
  - (c) It was declared unconstitutional
  - (d) It was supported by all religions
  
9. What is the role of Article 44 in the context of the UCC?
  - (a) It mandates immediate implementation of the UCC
  - (b) It suggests the state should strive to implement the UCC
  - (c) It provides guidelines on religious practices
  - (d) It outlines punishments for not following the UCC
  
10. What role did the 21st Law Commission of India envision for public awareness campaigns in the context of the UCC?
  - (a) To educate the public about the disadvantages of a UCC
  - (b) To promote the benefits of existing personal laws
  - (c) To garner support and understanding for the UCC
  - (d) To survey public opinion for further amendments

## ANSWER KEY

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

## NITI Aayog launches first Fiscal Health Index 2025

### News Highlights:

On January 24, 2025, NITI Aayog launched the Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2025 in New Delhi. The report, inaugurated by Dr. Arvind Panagariya, Chairman of the 16th Finance Commission, provides a comprehensive assessment of the fiscal health of 18 major Indian states.

- The FHI 2025 offers data-driven insights to help formulate policy interventions aimed at enhancing fiscal governance and economic resilience.

### Purpose and Objectives of the Fiscal Health Index

**Evaluation of State Finances:** Analyzes 18 key states based on their contributions to GDP, public expenditure, revenue mobilization, and overall fiscal stability.

**Guidance for Policy Reforms:** Helps policymakers understand fiscal trends and implement targeted fiscal reforms for economic sustainability.

**Annual Report:** FHI 2025 is intended to be an annual publication, offering consistent monitoring of states' fiscal conditions.

**Source used:** The report uses data sourced from the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) to calculate the Fiscal Health Index.



Dr. Arvind Panagariya

### Key Evaluation Parameters

The Fiscal Health Index is based on five major sub-indices, which provide a structured approach to assessing state-level fiscal performance:

#### Quality of Expenditure

Analyzes efficiency in developmental spending and control over non-developmental expenses.

#### Revenue Mobilization

Evaluates a state's ability to generate tax and non-tax revenue independently.

#### Debt Sustainability

Assesses a state's ability to manage debt without financial stress.

#### Fiscal Prudence

Measures deficit management and adherence to fiscal discipline.

#### Debt Index

Examines the state's debt burden relative to its economic output.

## State-wise Composite FHI Score Heatmap

### Front-Runner States

**Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka**

Developmental expenditure (up to 73%)

Debt-to-GSDP ratio stands at 24%

### Performer States

**Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Rajasthan, Haryana**

### Aspirational States

**Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Kerala**

### Southern States' Performance

- Telangana emerged as the best performer among Southern states due to high revenue mobilization and fiscal prudence.
- Tamil Nadu struggles with high committed expenditure (52% of total revenue), limiting developmental spending.
- Kerala faces debt sustainability issues, while Andhra Pradesh grapples with a high fiscal deficit.

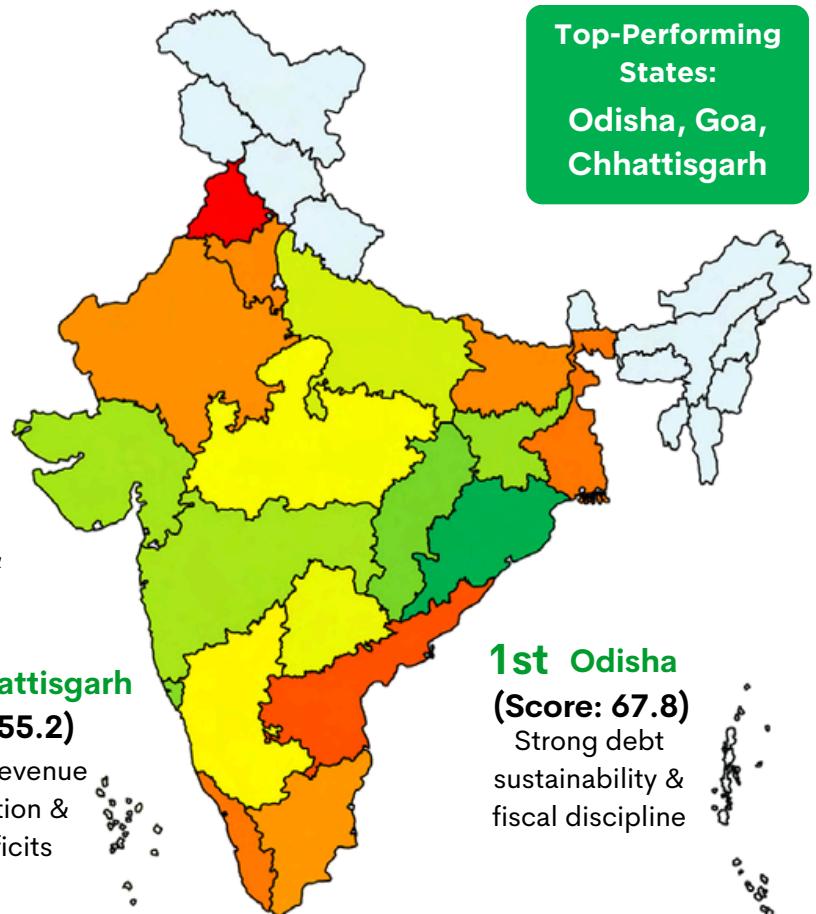
**3rd Goa**  
**(Score: 53.6)**

Strong fiscal management & capital outlay

**2nd Chhattisgarh**  
**(Score: 55.2)**

Effective revenue mobilization & low deficits

**Top-Performing States:**  
**Odisha, Goa, Chhattisgarh**



**1st Odisha**  
**(Score: 67.8)**

Strong debt sustainability & fiscal discipline

### Significance of the Fiscal Health Index

- **Promoting Fiscal Discipline:** Encourages sound financial planning to ensure sustainable economic growth.
- **Fostering Competitive Federalism:** Helps states benchmark performance against peers and implement corrective measures.
- **Cooperative Federalism:** Strengthens collaboration between the Central and State Governments for regional fiscal stability.

### Statements from Key Officials



**Dr. Arvind Panagariya**

- **Dr. Arvind Panagariya, Chairman, 16th Finance Commission:** Emphasized that states must maintain fiscal discipline for long-term economic sustainability.
- **Shri Suman Bery, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog:** Highlighted that the FHI is not just a ranking but a tool for fiscal improvement.



**Shri Suman Bery**

## National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog

- NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India)** was established on January 1, 2015, replacing the Planning Commission.
- It serves as the **policy think tank** of the **Government of India**, focusing on **cooperative federalism** and sustainable development.

### Key Functions and Objectives

1

**Policy Formulation:** Develops strategic and long-term policies for the government.

2

**Cooperative Federalism:** Engages state governments in policy-making.

3

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** Assesses policy implementation and provides feedback.

4

**Think Tank Role:** Acts as a knowledge hub for economic research and insights.

### Organizational Structure

**Chairman (Ex-officio):** Prime Minister of India

**Vice Chairperson:** Suman Bery

**CEO:** B. V. R. Subrahmanyam

**Full-Time Members:** V. K. Saraswat, Ramesh Chand, V. K. Paul, Arvind Virmani

**Ex-Officio Members:** Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nirmala Sitharaman, Shivraj Singh Chouhan

**Governing Council:** Chief Ministers of all States, Union Territories with Legislatures, and Lieutenant Governors of UTs.

**Special Invitees:** Nitin Gadkari, Piyush Goyal, Virendra Kumar, Ashwini Vaishnaw, Rao Inderjit Singh

### PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Who inaugurated the Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2025 launched by NITI Aayog on January 24, 2025, in New Delhi?
  - Amitabh Kant
  - Nirmala Sitharaman
  - Dr. Arvind Panagariya
  - Raghuram Rajan
- What are the five major sub-indices used in the Fiscal Health Index (FHI) to assess state-level fiscal performance?
  - Public Expenditure, Taxation Efficiency, Budget Surplus, Economic Growth, Social Spending
  - Quality of Expenditure, Revenue Mobilization, Fiscal Prudence, Debt Index, Debt Sustainability
  - Inflation Control, Revenue Collection, GDP Growth, Welfare Spending, Fiscal Stability
  - Investment Climate, Trade Balance, Tax Efficiency, Loan Repayment, Budget Allocation
- Which Indian state ranked first in the Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2025 with an overall score of 67.8, leading in debt sustainability (64.0) and the debt index (99.0)?
  - Odisha
  - Gujarat
  - Tamil Nadu
  - Maharashtra
- What is the debt-to-GSDP ratio of the front-runner states (Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, and Karnataka) as per the Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2025?
  - 20%
  - 22%
  - 26%
  - 24%

5. Which states fall into the "Performer" category in the Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2025, displaying moderate fiscal health but requiring improvements in debt management and revenue generation?
- Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka
  - Odisha, Gujarat, Punjab, West Bengal
  - Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Rajasthan, and Haryana
  - Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Assam
6. Who is the CEO of NITI Aayog who emphasized the importance of fiscal discipline for India's economic transformation, aligning with the "Viksit Bharat @2047" vision?
- Amitabh Kant
  - Rajiv Kumar
  - B.V.R. Subrahmanyam
  - Arvind Panagariya
7. Which organization was replaced by NITI Aayog when it was established on January 1, 2015?
- Finance Commission
  - Planning Commission
  - Election Commission
  - Economic Advisory Council
8. Who is the Chairperson of NITI Aayog?
- President of India
  - Finance Minister of India
  - Prime Minister of India
  - Governor of RBI
9. Which organization provides the data used to calculate the Fiscal Health Index in the report?
- Reserve Bank of India
  - Ministry of Finance
  - Comptroller and Auditor General
  - National Statistical Office
10. Which two states secured the second and third positions in the Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2025 due to their strong fiscal discipline, high capital outlay, low fiscal deficits, and effective revenue mobilization?
- Odisha and Jharkhand
  - Chhattisgarh and Goa
  - Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh
  - Punjab and Kerala
11. Which states have been identified as front-runners in the Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2025 due to their strong performance in developmental expenditure and own tax revenue growth?
- Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Jharkhand, and Gujarat
  - Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, and Karnataka
  - Punjab, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, and Kerala
  - Rajasthan, Bihar, Haryana, and Tamil Nadu
12. Which states have been identified as low performers in the Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2025 due to high fiscal deficits, low revenue mobilization, and rising debt burdens?
- Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Goa, and Jharkhand
  - Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, and Karnataka
  - Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, and Kerala
  - Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Tamil Nadu
13. Which initiatives under the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) are designed to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in India?
- Digital India and Make in India
  - Startup India and Standup India
  - Atal Tinkering Labs and Atal Incubation Centers
  - Skill India and Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana
14. Which program, launched in 2018, focuses on improving health, education, agriculture, financial inclusion, skill development, and infrastructure in India's most underdeveloped districts?
- Aspirational Districts Programme
  - Digital India Initiative
  - Smart Cities Mission
  - Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana

**ANSWER KEY**

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

## Ban on Begging

### News Highlights:

Following Indore's example, Bhopal has implemented a **complete ban on begging** in public places, calling it a **social menace**.

- The decision, issued by the **Bhopal District Collector**, is aimed at tackling the growing issue of begging at traffic signals, intersections, religious sites, and tourist attractions within the city.
- The ban also includes **prohibiting the giving of alms** and **purchasing goods** from beggars.

### Key Highlights of the Ban

## A LEGAL AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

### Objectives

- Objective:** To curb begging while providing alternative livelihood solutions for displaced beggars.
- Prohibited Activities:** Begging in public places is strictly forbidden, and individuals are also barred from giving alms or purchasing goods from beggars.
- Strict Enforcement:** Authorities can register FIRs against both beggars and those who offer them money or goods. Recently, an FIR was lodged in Indore against an unidentified individual for giving alms to a beggar.

### Panalty

- Penalties under **Section 223 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023:**
  - Standard Offense:** Up to six months imprisonment, a ₹2,500 fine, or both.
  - If Public Safety is Endangered:** Punishment increases to one-year imprisonment and a ₹5,000 fine.
- Duration of the Order:** Initially valid for **two months**, extendable up to **six months** by the state government.

### Judicial Precedents on Begging

- Delhi High Court (2018):** Struck down parts of the **Bombay Prevention of Begging Act**, ruling them **arbitrary and violative of Article 21 (Right to Life and Dignity)**.
- Supreme Court of India (2021):** Rejected a PIL seeking to remove beggars from public spaces, stating that begging is a socio-economic issue, not a criminal offense.

### Legal Framework for the Ban

- Enforcement Mechanism:** The ban is implemented under **Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023**, which grants **executive magistrates the power** to prohibit acts deemed as nuisances or potential dangers.
- Scope of Applicability:** It applies to residents, visitors, and the general public frequenting specific areas.

### Who is Considered a Beggar?

As per the **Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959**, a beggar is anyone who:

- Solicits alms in any form.
- Sells or performs items for alms.
- Appears destitute and lacks visible means of subsistence.

### Historical Legal Context

- Colonial-Era Laws:** The **Criminal Tribes Act of 1871** linked nomadic tribes with vagrancy and begging, criminalizing them.
- Constitutional Provision:** The **Concurrent List (Entry 15, List III)** empowers both the Union and State Governments to legislate on vagrancy and beggary.
- State-Level Legislation:** No central law exists on begging; states and **Union Territories follow the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959**.

## **Government Initiatives: SMILE Scheme**

- **Launched:** 2022 by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
  - **Objective:** Rehabilitation through medical care, education, and skill training and aims for a “beggar-free” India by 2026.

## Statistics on Begging in India (Census 2011)

- **Total beggars & vagrants:** 4,13,670
  - **Highest number of beggars:** West Bengal, followed by Uttar Pradesh & Bihar.

# **Implications of Begging on Society**

- **Social Discrimination & Exploitation:** Vulnerable groups, especially the disabled, face social exclusion and abuse by trafficking gangs.
  - **Public Health Concerns:** Begging hotspots lack sanitation, leading to disease outbreaks.
  - **Crime & Human Trafficking:** Organized rackets force children and disabled individuals into begging.
  - **Impact on Urban Spaces & Tourism:** Aggressive begging leads to safety concerns and discourages tourism.

# PRACTICE QUESTIONS

10. Which article of the Indian Constitution guarantees the right to life and personal liberty to every individual?



# ANSWER KEY

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

## Government Plans to Amend Nuclear Liability Law

### News Highlights:

The Indian government has announced plans to amend the **Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act (CLNDA)** and the **Atomic Energy Act**, marking a policy shift ahead of **Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to France (February 10-12, 2025)** and the **United States (February 12-13, 2025)**.

- The move is expected to revive stalled nuclear power projects with **France's Electricite de France (EDF)** and the **U.S.-based Westinghouse Electric Company (WEC)**, addressing legal concerns that have delayed foreign investments in India's nuclear sector.

### Background and Key Developments

- India's nuclear liability laws**, introduced in 2010, imposed **strict liability on nuclear suppliers**, deterring global firms from investing in India's nuclear energy sector.
- The **2015 government stance** had ruled out amending the Act, stating that India's law was aligned with international conventions. However, this failed to attract foreign nuclear investments.
- Despite setting up a **₹1,500 crore insurance pool in 2019** to mitigate supplier risks, no major contracts materialized.
- The proposed amendments aim to **align India's liability framework** with international norms, particularly the **Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage (CSC)**, ratified by India in 2016.
- This policy shift could facilitate long-pending projects:
  - Jaitapur Nuclear Project (Maharashtra)**: Six **EPR1650** reactors by **EDF** (originally signed in 2009 with Areva).
  - Kovvada Nuclear Project (Andhra Pradesh)**: Six **AP1000** reactors by **Westinghouse** (MoU signed in 2012).
- The government has allocated **₹20,000 crore for five Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)** to be operational **by 2033**, expanding India's nuclear energy capacity.

### Atomic Energy Legislation in India

#### The Atomic Energy Act, 1962

- Purpose**: Enacted to provide for the development, control, and use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes.
- Key Provisions**:
  - Centralized Control**: Vests the central government with exclusive rights over atomic energy.
  - Regulatory Framework**: Establishes guidelines for production and use of nuclear energy and radioactive substances.
  - Safety Measures**: Enables the government to prevent radiation hazards and manage radioactive waste.
- Regulatory Authority**: The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB), established in 1983, ensures nuclear safety and radiation protection.

#### Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010

- Purpose**: Establishes a framework for **compensation** in case of a **nuclear accident**.
- Key Provisions**:
  - Liability**: **Nuclear plant operators** are held liable for **any nuclear damage**.
  - Compensation**: Defines **compensation limits** and the **claims process**.
- Introduced after concerns over the **Bhopal Gas Tragedy (1984)** and the **Fukushima nuclear disaster (2011)**.

## **Reasons for India to Amend Its Nuclear Liability Law**

## **Addressing Concerns of Foreign Companies**

- **Supplier Liability Issues:** The Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act (CLNDA), 2010, imposes heavy liability on suppliers for nuclear accidents, discouraging investment from Western firms.
  - **International Comparison:** This contrasts with the Convention for Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage (CSC), which primarily holds operators accountable.
  - **Historical Context:** The strict liability provisions were introduced after parliamentary debates in 2012, influenced by the Bhopal Gas Tragedy (1984) and Fukushima Nuclear Disaster (2011).
  - **Investment Deterrence:** Due to these liability norms, U.S. and French nuclear companies have been reluctant to invest in India, fearing financial risks.

## **Expanding India's Nuclear Energy Capacity**

- **Current Capacity:** India operates **22 nuclear reactors**, generating **6,780 MW**, with Russia's Rosatom being the only foreign operator.
  - **Future Goals:**
    - **₹20,000 crore** allocation for nuclear energy in the 2025 Budget.
    - Target of **100 GW nuclear power capacity by 2047**.
    - Development of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), with five units expected to be operational by **2033**.

### **Strengthening Strategic Partnerships with the U.S. and France:**

- **Unfulfilled Civil Nuclear Agreement (2008):** The U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement was expected to promote nuclear cooperation but has seen little progress due to supplier liability concerns.
  - **France's Delays in Jaitapur Project:** The EDF project in **Jaitapur** has been stalled for years due to regulatory and liability challenges.
  - **Diplomatic Push:** With PM Modi's recent visits to **Washington** and **Paris**, India is working towards finalizing agreements and removing barriers to nuclear investments from **U.S. and French firms**.

## **India's Nuclear Program**

### **Historical Background**

- **1948:** Establishment of **Atomic Energy Commission (AEC)** under **Homi Bhabha**.
  - **1954:** Formation of **Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)** under **PM Nehru**.
  - **1974: Smiling Buddha** – India's first nuclear test at **Pokhran**.
  - **1998: Pokhran-II** – India conducts five nuclear tests under **Operation Shakti**, declaring itself a nuclear weapons state.

## **India's Civil Nuclear Agreements:**

- **U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Deal (2008):** Allowed India access to nuclear technology despite being a **non-signatory to NPT**.
  - **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safeguards:** India placed **14 reactors under IAEA safeguards** as part of its civilian nuclear program.
  - Major Partners: Russia (Kudankulam reactors), France (Jaitapur project), U.S., Japan, and Canada.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

- **Mandate and Functions:** Established in 1957, the IAEA serves as the world's center for cooperation in the nuclear field, promoting the **safe, secure, and peaceful use** of nuclear technologies.
  - **Safety Standards Committees:** The IAEA is advised by four safety standards committees focusing on **nuclear safety, radiation safety, safety of radioactive waste**, and the **safe transport** of radioactive materials. These committees play a pivotal role in developing and updating international safety standards.
  - **Safeguards and Verification:** The IAEA implements a system of safeguards involving inspection and verification to ensure that nuclear materials are not diverted to military purposes. This includes regular inspections and monitoring under agreements like the **Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)**.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following two countries are associated with the nuclear power projects expected to be revived due to the policy shift in India?
  - (a) Saudi Arabia and China
  - (b) France and the United States
  - (c) Germany and Japan
  - (d) Australia and Canada
  
2. What significant nuclear project in Maharashtra is associated with France's Electricite de France (EDF)?
  - (a) Kudankulam Nuclear Project
  - (b) Kakrapar Nuclear Project
  - (c) Tarapur Nuclear Project
  - (d) Jaitapur Nuclear Project
  
3. Which of the following regulatory authority in India is responsible for ensuring nuclear safety and radiation protection?
  - (a) Central Pollution Control Board
  - (b) Ministry of Environment and Forests
  - (c) Atomic Energy Regulatory Board
  - (d) Department of Science and Technology
  
4. Which U.S. Act restructured the nuclear regulatory system and established the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)?
  - (a) Energy Reorganization Act of 1974
  - (b) Atomic Energy Act of 1954
  - (c) Nuclear Waste Policy Act
  - (d) National Environmental Policy Act
  
5. What major international treaty is the IAEA responsible for implementing to prevent the diversion of nuclear materials to military uses?
  - (a) Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
  - (b) Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)
  - (c) Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
  - (d) Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
  
6. Which of the following objective of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 in the United States?
  - (a) To establish sole state control over atomic energy
  - (b) To encourage the peaceful use of nuclear energy & safety
  - (c) To completely ban the use of nuclear energy
  - (d) To export nuclear technology to allied nations
  
7. What is India's nuclear energy capacity goal for the year 2047?
  - (a) 50 GW
  - (b) 75 GW
  - (c) 100 GW
  - (d) 125 GW
  
8. In which of the following state was the USA's famous "Trinity Test" conducted?
  - (a) Arizona
  - (b) Nevada
  - (c) New Mexico
  - (d) Utah
  
9. What year did India conduct its first nuclear test, known as "Smiling Buddha"?
  - (a) 1965
  - (b) 1974
  - (c) 1984
  - (d) 1998
  
10. What was the following code name for the UK's first successful nuclear test?
  - (a) Operation Hurricane
  - (b) Operation Thunderstorm
  - (c) Operation Cyclone
  - (d) Operation Tornado

## ANSWER KEY

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

## Appointment of New Chief Election Commissioner

### News Highlights:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, and Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi met to appoint Gyanesh Kumar as the new Chief Election Commissioner.
- This marks the first CEC appointment under the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners Act, 2023.
- The decision coincides with ongoing Supreme Court challenges to the new appointment process introduced under the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service, and Term of Office) Act, 2023.



### Gyanesh Kumar

A 1988 batch Kerala cadre officer of the Indian Administrative Services, Gyanesh Kumar retired as Secretary in the Ministry of Cooperation on January 31, 2024.

- During his tenure in the Union Home Ministry, he headed the Jammu and Kashmir desk and played a key role in policy implementation after the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019 and the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir into the two Union territories of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir.

#### Previous Roles

- He was also given the responsibility to formulate the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill by the Narendra Modi government.
- During his five-year tenure in the Home Ministry, he was involved in the setting up of the 'Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust', which was another key focus area of the Modi government.

#### Future Prospect

- Mr. Kumar would also be one of the longest serving CECs with an uninterrupted tenure of nearly four years till January 2029.

### Process of Appointment for the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and other Election Commissioners (ECs)

**Original Appointment Process:** Initially, the President appointed the CEC and ECs based on the Prime Minister's recommendations, without a formalized selection committee.

**Supreme Court Intervention (March 2023):** In response to concerns about the independence of the Election Commission, the Supreme Court mandated that appointments be made by the President based on recommendations from a selection committee comprising:

- The Prime Minister
- The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha
- The Chief Justice of India

This interim arrangement was to remain until Parliament enacted a specific law governing these appointments.

#### Enactment of the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners Act, 2023:

**Establishment of a New Selection Committee:** The Act, passed in December 2023, redefined the appointment process by constituting a selection committee consisting of:

- The Prime Minister (Chairperson)
- The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha
- A Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister

- Role of the Search Committee:** A Search Committee, led by the Cabinet Secretary, is tasked with preparing a panel of five potential candidates for consideration by the Selection Committee.
- Eligibility Criteria:** Candidates must have held or currently hold a position equivalent to that of a Secretary to the Government of India.
- Terms of Service:** The Act stipulates that the salary, allowances, and other service conditions for the CEC and ECs are aligned with those of the Cabinet Secretary. Additionally, it sets the tenure at six years or until the age of 65, whichever comes first.

### Why the Change Was Introduced

- Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India (2023):** Supreme Court ruled that CEC & ECs should be appointed by a committee comprising the PM, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, and Chief Justice of India, instead of the executive alone.
- A Constitution Bench ruled that a transparent selection process was needed to prevent executive overreach.
- Directed the creation of a committee including the Chief Justice of India.

### Challenges in the Supreme Court

- Petitions filed by the Association for Democratic Reforms and other groups challenge the exclusion of the Chief Justice from the selection panel.
- The central question is whether Parliament can alter a constitutional judgment through legislation.
- The Court is yet to determine whether the new law undermines the transparency and independence of the process, raising concerns over checks and balances in the appointment of the Election Commission's leadership.



Established on **January 25, 1950**, under **Article 324** of the **Indian Constitution**.

- First Chief Election Commissioner (CEC):** Sukumar Sen, an Indian Civil Service (ICS) officer, served as the first CEC (1950-1958).

### Election commission of India

#### Mandate

Responsible for supervising, directing, and controlling elections to Parliament, state legislatures, and the offices of the President and Vice-President of India.

#### First General Elections (1951-52):

Conducted India's first-ever general elections.

- Involved 173 million voters, most of whom were illiterate.
- Ballot boxes were painted in different colors** for easy identification by voters.

### KNOW THE FACTS

#### Evolution and Structural Changes

- Initially a Single-Member Body:** From 1950 to 1989, the ECI consisted of only the Chief Election Commissioner.
- 1989 – Expansion to Multi-Member Commission:**
  - Two Election Commissioners were added for the first time in October 1989.
  - The change was reversed in 1990, restoring it as a single-member body.
- 1993 – Multi-Member System Restored:**
  - On October 1, 1993, the multi-member structure was reinstated with the CEC and two Election Commissioners (ECs).
  - Since then, the ECI has remained a three-member body.

### Key Milestones and Reforms

- **Model Code of Conduct (MCC) Introduced (1968):** Ensures **free and fair elections** by regulating political parties' behavior.
- **Voting Rights for 18+ (1988):** The **61st Constitutional Amendment Act, 1988**, reduced the **voting age from 21 to 18 years**.
- **Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) Introduced (1998):** First used in a **limited manner in 1982 (Kerala elections)** but **fully implemented in 1998**. Replaced paper ballots, improving **efficiency and transparency**.
- **Voter ID Cards Introduced (1993):** Mandatory for **electoral identification**.
- **NOTA (None of the Above) Option (2013):** Allowed voters to reject all candidates in an election.
- **Introduction of VVPAT (2013): Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT)** system introduced for **enhanced transparency** in elections.

### Commission/Committee with regards to the Election Commission

Commission/Court	Year	Theme
Tarkunde Committee	1975	Proposed that members of the <b>Election Commission</b> should be appointed by <b>the President</b> based on <b>the advice of a committee</b> comprising the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, and the Chief Justice of India.
Goswami Committee on Electoral Reforms	1990	Suggested that <b>the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)</b> be appointed by <b>the President in consultation with the Chief Justice of India and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha (or leader of the largest party in the Lok Sabha)</b> . For Election Commissioners (ECs), the committee recommended appointments by the President in consultation with the CEC, Chief Justice of India, and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha.
Indrajit Gupta Committee on State Funding of Elections	1998	Focused on the feasibility of state funding for elections to promote <b>a level playing field among political parties</b> . While not directly related to the appointment process of the Election Commission, <b>its recommendations aimed at reducing the influence of money in elections</b> , thereby indirectly strengthening the Commission's role.
Law Commission of India (170th Report)	1999	Recommended reforms in the electoral process, including <b>transparency in political party funding and internal democracy within parties</b> . While not directly addressing the appointment process of the Election Commission, these recommendations aimed to enhance the Commission's effectiveness in ensuring free and fair elections.
National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution	2002	Proposed a selection committee for appointing the CEC and ECs, comprising the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, and the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.

<b>Law Commission of India (255th Report)</b>	2015	Suggested the establishment of a <b>collegium system</b> for the <b>appointment of the CEC and ECs</b> , consisting of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha (or the leader of the largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha), and the Chief Justice of India.
<b>Supreme Court Judgment in Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India</b>	2023	Directed that, until Parliament enacts a law regarding the appointment of the CEC and ECs, such appointments should be made by the President based on the recommendations of a committee comprising the <b>Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha (or the leader of the largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha), and the Chief Justice of India</b> .
<b>Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act</b>	2023	Established a selection committee for appointing the CEC and ECs, consisting of the Prime Minister, a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha (or the leader of the largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha). <b>This act replaced the previous system and excluded the Chief Justice of India from the selection process.</b>

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Under the 2023 law, who are the three members of the selection committee responsible for appointing the CEC and Election Commissioners?
  - Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition, Chief Justice of India
  - President, Law Minister, Election Commission Secretary
  - Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition, A Cabinet Minister chosen by the PM
  - President, Lok Sabha Speaker, Rajya Sabha Chairman
- Before the 2023 law, how was the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) traditionally appointed?
  - Through a parliamentary committee vote
  - By a recommendation from the Supreme Court
  - Directly by the President on the Prime Minister's advice
  - By a public referendum
- Who was the first Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India?
 

(a) T.N. Seshan	(b) M.S. Gill
(c) N. Gopalaswami	(d) Sukumar Sen
- What is the significance of Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India (2023) in the context of the Election Commission's appointment process?
  - It upheld the executive's sole authority in appointing Election Commissioners
  - It mandated that the Chief Justice of India be included in the selection committee
  - It declared that the Election Commission should be abolished
  - It allowed state governments to appoint Election Commissioners
- Which electoral reform introduced in 2013 allows voters to officially reject all candidates in an election?
  - VVPAT
  - Proportional Representation System
  - Postal Ballot System
  - NOTA
- Which election in India first witnessed the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) on a limited scale?
  - 1982 Kerala Assembly Elections
  - 1977 General Elections
  - 1998 Lok Sabha Elections
  - 2004 Lok Sabha Elections

7. Which Constitutional Amendment lowered the voting age in India from 21 years to 18 years?  
(a) 42nd Amendment Act, 1976  
(b) 61st Amendment Act, 1988  
(c) 69th Amendment Act, 1991  
(d) 101st Amendment Act, 2016
8. Which amendment bill proposed a collegium-based selection for Election Commissioners, including the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)?  
(a) The Constitution (Fifty-Second Amendment) Bill  
(b) The Constitution (Seventieth Amendment) Bill  
(c) The Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill  
(d) The Election Reforms Bill, 2020
9. Which Law Commission Report first recommended the disqualification of candidates upon framing of charges in serious criminal cases under the Representation of the People Act, 1951?  
(a) 170th Report (1999)  
(b) 244th Report (2014)  
(c) 255th Report (2015)  
(d) 267th Report (2018)
10. In which case did the Supreme Court order the verification of VVPAT slips from 1 EVM per constituency to 5 per constituency?  
(a) N Chandrababu Naidu v. Union of India (2019)  
(b) People's Union for Civil Liberties v. Union of India (2013)  
(c) Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India (2023)  
(d) Representation of the People Act Case (2020)
11. Which committee first proposed restructuring the Election Commission into a multi-member body?  
(a) Dinesh Goswami Committee (1990)  
(b) National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (2002)  
(c) Law Commission of India (2015)  
(d) Election Commission's Own Proposals (2015)
12. Which of the following positions does the Election Commission of India NOT conduct elections for?  
(a) Lok Sabha & Rajya Sabha  
(b) State Legislative Assemblies & Councils  
(c) Municipal Corporations & Panchayats  
(d) President & Vice President of India
13. Which provision allows the Election Commission of India (ECI) to advise the President and Governors on the disqualification of MPs and MLAs?  
(a) Article 102 & Article 191  
(b) Article 324 & Article 326  
(c) Article 103 & Article 192  
(d) Article 243 & Article 280
14. Which Article of the Indian Constitution provides for the establishment and powers of the Election Commission of India (ECI)?  
(a) Article 320  
(b) Article 324  
(c) Article 326  
(d) Article 329
15. Which Article of the Indian Constitution provides for universal adult suffrage in elections?  
(a) Article 324  
(b) Article 325  
(c) Article 326  
(d) Article 329

**ANSWER KEY**

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

## Husband can't be charged for rape, unnatural sex with wife: Chhattisgarh HC

### News Highlights:

- The Chhattisgarh High Court in **Gorakhnath Sharma vs State of Chhattisgarh** has ruled that a husband cannot be charged with **rape** or **unnatural sex** with his wife if she is over 15, reaffirming the **marital rape exception** in Indian law.
- The ruling overturned a **trial court conviction**, citing the lack of legal recognition for **marital rape** and clarifying that forceful **sexual acts** by a husband do not qualify as offenses under **IPC Sections 376 and 377**.

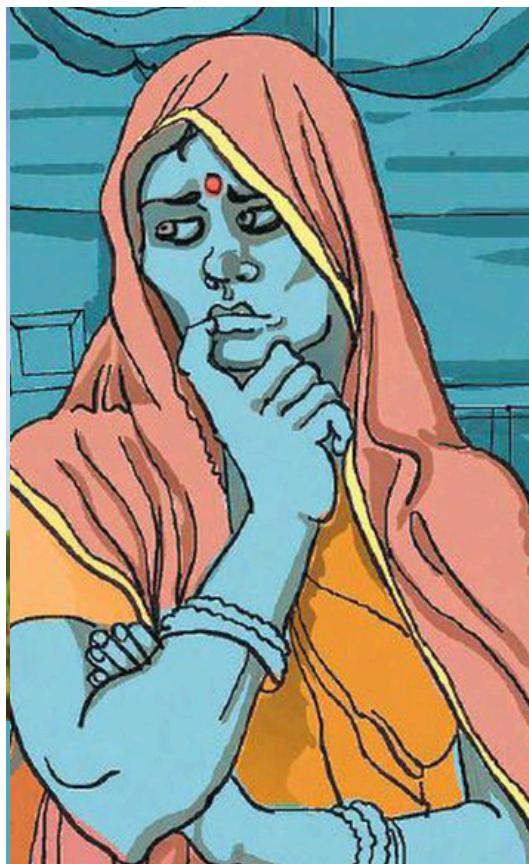
**Note:** The offence of Rape is provided under **Section 64 in the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023**, which replaced IPC since 1 July, 2024. Section 377 of the IPC does not have a parallel provision in the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita.

### Facts of the Case

- A woman accused her husband of **forceful sexual acts** in 2017, which led to serious **medical complications** and her eventual death.
- The **trial court** convicted the husband under **Sections 304, 375, and 377 of the IPC**, sentencing him to **10 years in prison**.
- On appeal, the **High Court** quashed the conviction, citing the **marital rape exception** and doubts over the prosecution's evidence.

### Supreme Court Rulings

- The judgment referenced the **Supreme Court's decision in Navtej Singh Johar vs Union of India (2018)**, which decriminalized **homosexuality** under **Section 377** but did not impact the **marital rape exception**.
- The court highlighted that **amendments** to the definition of **rape** in 2013 did not alter the **marital rape exception**, leaving the legal provision unchanged.



### Evolution of the Exception

- 1860:** The IPC was enacted, and **Section 375 defined rape, including Exception 2**, which stated that sexual intercourse by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under ten years of age, is not rape.
- 1891:** The age threshold in **Exception 2** was raised to twelve years following the **Phulmoni Dasi rape case**, where a ten-year-old girl died due to forced intercourse by her husband.
- 1940s-1980s:** The age of consent within marriage saw incremental increases, reaching fifteen years by 1983. Despite these changes, the core principle of the marital rape exemption remained intact.
- 2012:** The **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act** was enacted, setting the age of consent at eighteen. However, **Exception 2 of Section 375 IPC** continued to permit marital intercourse with wives aged fifteen and above.
- 2013:** The **Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013**, retained the marital rape exception, leading to criticism from various quarters advocating for its removal.
- 2017:** In the landmark case of **Independent Thought v. Union of India**, the Supreme Court **read down Exception 2**, declaring that sexual intercourse with a wife below **eighteen years of age**, even within marriage, constitutes rape.

Source: The Hindu



Illustration: Surajit

## HIDDEN TRAUMA

■ The police mostly file cases of marital rape under IPC section 377, when there is forced anal penetration, and in a few instances, under section 498A, if previous cases of cruelty have already been registered.

■ In most cases reported from emergency wards, the police delayed collection of medical evidence from these hospitals and also did not wish to record an FIR.

**13%**

of women also reported that their spouses withheld sex, which has to be understood as a form of sexual violence.

## Recent Judicial Rulings

- Kerala High Court (2021):** Held that **marital rape is a valid ground for divorce.**
- Karnataka High Court (2022):** Ruled that a **husband can be charged with rape if he forces himself upon his wife.**
- Delhi High Court (2022):** Gave a split verdict – One judge called marital rape **unconstitutional**, while the other ruled that **legal changes should be made by Parliament.**
- Gujarat High Court (Nimeshbhai Bharathbai Desai v. State of Gujarat, 2017):** Recognized **marital rape as destructive** but ruled that **existing laws do not criminalize it.**

## Commissions/Committees

- Law Commission of India (2000):** The Commission expressed reservations about criminalising marital rape, suggesting that such a move might lead to "excessive interference with the institution of marriage."
- Justice J.S. Verma Committee (2013):** The committee advocated for the **deletion of the marital rape exception from Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).** It emphasised that the exemption was rooted in outdated notions of a wife's irrevocable consent and her status as the husband's property.
- Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs (2013):** The committee **opposed the criminalisation of marital rape**, reasoning that it could destabilise the family structure and that existing legal provisions, such as **Section 498A of the IPC** and **the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005**, were adequate to address spousal abuse.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Under which section of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) is rape defined?
  - Section 375
  - Section 376
  - Section 304
  - Section 498
- Which international convention calls for the criminalization of marital rape and the elimination of discrimination against women?
  - UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
  - International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
  - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
  - Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Which of the following Supreme Court cases decriminalized homosexuality in India by partially striking down Section 377 of the IPC?
  - Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan (1997)
  - Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India (2018)
  - Joseph Shine v. Union of India (2018)
  - Independent Thought v. Union of India (2017)
- Which of the following Supreme Court case ruled that sex with a minor wife (below 18 years) is considered rape?
  - Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan (1997)
- Which Indian High Court ruled in 2021 that marital rape is a valid ground for divorce?
  - Delhi High Court
  - Kerala High Court
  - Gujarat High Court
  - Karnataka High Court
- Under which of the following colonial-era doctrine did a woman lose her legal identity after marriage, influencing the marital rape exemption?
  - Doctrine of Coverture
  - Doctrine of Separation
  - Doctrine of Partnership
  - Doctrine of Necessity
- Which of the following Supreme Court committee recommended removing the marital rape exception from Section 375 IPC, stating that forced sex in marriage violates women's dignity?
  - Justice Malimath Committee
  - J.S. Verma Committee
  - 172nd Law Commission Report
  - Second Administrative Reforms Commission

8. Which of the following countries was the first to criminalize marital rape?
- (a) USA (b) UK  
(c) Nepal (d) Bangladesh
9. Which neighboring country of India criminalized marital rape in 2006?
- (a) Pakistan (b) Bangladesh  
(c) Nepal (d) Sri Lanka
10. Which of the following Indian High Court delivered a split verdict in 2022 on criminalizing marital rape, leading to a pending Supreme Court case?
- (a) Gujarat High Court  
(b) Delhi High Court  
(c) Madras High Court  
(d) Karnataka High Court

**ANSWER KEY**

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

## Aero India 2025

### News Highlights:

Aero India 2025, the 15th edition of Asia's largest air show and aviation exhibition, held from **10th to 14th February 2025** at Yelahanka Air Force Station, Bengaluru, Karnataka.

- Organized by the Defence Exhibition Organisation, Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence, this biennial event aims to showcase India's aerospace and defence capabilities while fostering international collaborations and strategic discussions.
- The broad theme for Aero India 2025 is '**The Runway to a Billion Opportunities**', reflecting India's vision for expanding aerospace and defence innovation.

### Key Features of Aero India 2025

#### 1. Defence Ministers' Conclave – 'BRIDGE'

##### Theme

- The conclave, themed "**Building Resilience through International Defence and Global Engagement (BRIDGE)**", will focus on:
- Strengthening global defence partnerships.**
- Exploring cooperative defence projects and joint manufacturing opportunities.**
- Discussions on geopolitical challenges and security collaborations.**
- Attended by **defence ministers from friendly nations**, with **bilateral and multilateral meetings** planned on the sidelines.

#### 2. CEOs' Round-Table

- A global platform for CEOs of leading aerospace and defence companies**, including **Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs)** and domestic industry leaders.
- Discussions on:
- Investments and joint ventures** in India's defence sector.
- Expansion of global aerospace supply chains.**
- Future roadmaps for technological innovations and defence manufacturing.**

#### 3. iDEX Start-up Event

- Exclusive platform for **Indian defence start-ups and innovators** under the **Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) initiative**.
- Focus areas include:
- AI-driven defence solutions.**
- Autonomous systems and UAV technologies.**
- Cybersecurity innovations for aerospace.**
- The event will feature **live demonstrations, MoU signings, and investment opportunities**.

#### 4. India Pavilion – Showcasing 'Make-in-India' Aerospace Capabilities

- A dedicated pavilion showcasing:
- Indigenous fighter jets like LCA Tejas.**
- Helicopters including Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) and Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH).**
- Aerospace and defence electronics developed by Indian firms.**
- A section dedicated to **emerging technologies in defence space, UAVs, and AI-driven warfare systems**.

#### 5. Bilateral Meetings & Strategic Partnerships

High-level meetings between:

- Raksha Mantri (Defence Minister)** and global counterparts.
- Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)** and foreign military leaders.
- Indian defence industry leaders and foreign investors.
- Focus on new **MoUs, technology transfer agreements, and strategic defence collaborations**.

## Spectacular Air Shows & Live Demonstrations

### Aerial displays featuring:

- Fighter jets, helicopters, UAVs, and commercial aircraft from leading global manufacturers.
- Aerobatic performances by Indian Air Force (IAF) teams like **Surya Kiran** and **Sarang**.
  - Live demonstrations of next-generation combat aircraft and advanced avionics.

### Fighter Jets and Aerial Displays

- Aero India 2025 in Bangalore will showcase some of the world's most advanced fighter aircraft.
- **Russia's Su-57:** The fifth-generation **Sukhoi Su-57** fighter will make its debut at Aero India, ahead of Russian President **Vladimir Putin's** expected visit to India.
- **Lockheed Martin F-35:** The F-35, which made its Indian debut in **Aero India 2023**, is expected to return with its cutting-edge stealth capabilities.
- **Boeing's KC-135 Stratotanker:** Aerial refuelling aircraft that enhances the operational range of fighter jets.
- **Embraer C-390 Millennium:** Brazil's high-performance military transport aircraft.

### Debut of Advanced Indigenous Platforms

- **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** unveiled the full-scale engineering model of the **Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)**, India's indigenous fifth-generation fighter jet.
- HAL also showcased the prototype of the **Combat Air Teaming System (CATS) Warrior**, an unmanned combat aerial vehicle designed to operate alongside manned fighter aircraft.

### Significant U.S. Participation

- The **United States** emerged as one of the largest international exhibitors, featuring leading American aerospace and defense firms.
- The **U.S. Pavilion** showcased next-generation aircraft, advanced avionics, unmanned systems, space technologies, and innovative defense capabilities.

### Unprecedented Scale and Participation

- The exhibition spanned **42,438 square meters**, marking it as the largest edition to date.
- Participation included **30 defense ministers**, **43 military chiefs**, and representatives from **90 countries**.
- Over **150 foreign companies** and numerous Indian firms showcased their products and technologies.

### Strategic and Economic Significance

- **Strengthening Global Ties:** Bilateral meetings between **Raksha Mantri**, **Chief of Defence Staff**, and **Defence Secretaries** with global counterparts to boost aerospace and defence collaborations.
- **Boost to Defence Manufacturing:** Opportunities for joint ventures, R&D, co-development, and production with international defence firms.
- **Promotion of Indigenous Defence Products:** Showcasing India's aerospace innovations such as **Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas**, **Light Utility Helicopter (LUH)**, and **Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH)**.

### Historical Significance of Aero India

- **Inception:** Aero India was first held in **1996** at Yelahanka Air Force Station, Bengaluru.
- **Objective:** To showcase India's aerospace and defence capabilities and provide a platform for international collaboration.
- **Evolution:** Over the years, Aero India has grown into Asia's largest air show, attracting global defence manufacturers, industry leaders, and policymakers.
- **Major Milestones:**
  - **2003:** First participation of global aerospace giants like **Boeing**, **Airbus**, and **Lockheed Martin**.
  - **2013:** Introduction of aero-space technology start-ups and futuristic defence innovations.
  - **2021 & 2023:** Focus on **Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-reliant India)** in Defence with increased indigenous participation.

### Aero India 2025 Logo

- The Aero India 2025 logo symbolizes India's commitment to aerospace excellence and self-reliance.
- Key Elements of the Logo:
  - Tri-color Wings: Represent India's national colors and its growing aerospace dominance.
  - Aircraft Silhouette: Signifies technological advancements and aerial supremacy.
- 'The Runway to a Billion Opportunities' Theme: Highlights India's expanding opportunities in defence and aerospace.
- The logo is designed to reflect India's ambition to be a global aerospace hub and promote international partnerships.



### PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Where is Aero India 2025 being held?
  - (a) Bengaluru
  - (b) Mumbai
  - (c) New Delhi
  - (d) Hyderabad
2. What is the overarching theme for Aero India 2025?
  - (a) The Sky's the Limit
  - (b) The Future of Aviation
  - (c) Fly High with Innovation
  - (d) The Runway to a Billion Opportunities
3. Which organization is responsible for organizing Aero India 2025?
  - (a) Indian Space Research Organisation
  - (b) Ministry of Civil Aviation
  - (c) Defence Exhibition Organisation
  - (d) Indian Air Force
4. What type of aircraft is the Su-57, featured at Aero India 2025?
  - (a) Fighter aircraft
  - (b) Transport aircraft
  - (c) Commercial airliner
  - (d) Helicopter
5. In which year did Aero India first take place?
  - (a) 1986
  - (b) 1996
  - (c) 2006
  - (d) 2016
6. Which Indian indigenous fighter jet was showcased at Aero India 2025?
  - (a) HAL Tejas
  - (b) HAL Rudra
  - (c) HAL Dhruv
  - (d) HAL AMCA
7. What does the Combat Air Teaming System (CATS) Warrior represent in terms of aerial combat technology?
  - (a) A manned fighter jet
  - (b) An unmanned combat aerial vehicle
  - (c) A missile system
  - (d) A surveillance drone
8. What is the Lockheed Martin F-35 known for?
  - (a) Its transport capabilities
  - (b) Its bombing capabilities
  - (c) Its stealth capabilities
  - (d) Its surveillance capabilities
- 9.. What significant milestone occurred during Aero India 2003?
  - (a) The introduction of unmanned aerial vehicles
  - (b) The first participation of global aerospace giants
  - (c) The launch of India's first satellite
  - (d) The introduction of commercial airliners
10. Which edition of Aero India was held in 2025?
  - (a) 10th
  - (b) 12th
  - (c) 15th
  - (d) 20th

### ANSWER KEY

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

## Obscenity Laws in India: Recent YouTube Controversy

### News Highlights:

- YouTuber **Ranveer Allahbadia**, founder of **Beer Biceps**, is under legal scrutiny for allegedly making **obscene remarks** during his appearance on the YouTube show '**India's Got Latent**'.
- The **Assam Police** has lodged a complaint under **Section 296 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023**, while the **Mumbai Police** has initiated an investigation but has not yet filed an FIR.
- The controversy has sparked debates on **what defines obscenity under Indian law** and whether **India needs stricter online content regulations**.

### Obscenity Under Indian Law

- **Section 294 of the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023** criminalises the **sale, import, export, advertisement, or profit generation from obscene material**.
- **Obscene content** is defined as that which is "**lascivious, appeals to the prurient interest, or tends to deprave and corrupt**" individuals exposed to it.
- **Punishment** for first-time offenders includes **up to two years in prison and a fine of ₹5,000**.
- The **Information Technology Act, 2000 (Section 67)** applies to **online obscenity**, with penalties including **up to three years of imprisonment and a fine of ₹5 lakh**.

### Evolution of Obscenity Laws in India

- **Indian Penal Code (IPC) of 1860:** Drafted during British colonial rule, the IPC introduced **Sections 292 to 294, criminalising the sale, distribution, and public exhibition of obscene materials**. However, the IPC did not provide a clear definition of 'obscenity,' leading to reliance on British legal standards.
- **Hicklin Test (1868):** Derived from the English case **Regina v. Hicklin**, this test defined **material as obscene if it tended to "deprave and corrupt" those susceptible to immoral influences**. Indian courts adopted this stringent standard, leading to broad censorship.

#### **Ranjit D. Udeshi v. State of Maharashtra (1964):**

- **Background:** A bookseller was prosecuted for selling an unexpurgated copy of **D.H. Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover**.
- **Supreme Court Ruling:** The Court upheld the conviction, reinforcing **the application of the Hicklin Test from English law**, which considered material obscene if it tended to "deprave and corrupt" those susceptible to immoral influences. This judgment emphasized community standards and moral considerations in determining obscenity.

#### **Bobby Art International v. Om Pal Singh Hoon (1996):**

- **Background:** The film **Bandit Queen**, depicting the life of **Phoolan Devi**, faced obscenity charges due to explicit scenes of sexual violence and nudity.
- **Supreme Court Ruling:** The Court ruled that the depiction of such scenes was essential to portray the harsh realities faced by the protagonist and did not constitute obscenity when viewed in context.

#### **Aveek Sarkar v. State of West Bengal (2014):**

- **Background:** A case was filed against a magazine for publishing a nude photograph of Boris Becker and his fiancée, alleging it was obscene.
- **Supreme Court Ruling:** The Court moved away from the Hicklin Test, adopting the '**community standards**' test. It ruled that obscenity must be assessed based on contemporary societal norms and the material's overall context, marking a significant shift in judicial approach.

### Supreme Court Ruling on 'College Romance' (March 2024):

- Charges under **Section 292 of IPC & Section 67 of IT Act** were quashed.
- The court clarified that **foul language alone does not constitute obscenity** unless it **arouses lustful thoughts**.
- The ruling reinforced **context-based assessments of online content** rather than blanket censorship.

## Tests related to Obscenity in India

### Hicklin Test

- Origin:** Established in the English case *Regina v. Hicklin* (1868), this test defined material as obscene if it tended to "deprave and corrupt" those whose minds are open to such immoral influences.
- Adoption in India:** The Hicklin Test was first applied by the Indian judiciary in *Ranjit D. Udeshi v. State of Maharashtra* (1964). In this case, the Supreme Court upheld the conviction for the sale of D.H. Lawrence's novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, ruling that obscenity must be judged by its potential to corrupt susceptible minds.

### Community Standards Test

- Introduction in India:** The Supreme Court of India shifted from the **Hicklin Test to the Community Standards Test** in *Aveek Sarkar v. State of West Bengal* (2014). The case involved the publication of a nude photograph of Boris Becker and his fiancée, intended to protest racial discrimination.
- The Court ruled that the determination of obscenity should be based on contemporary community standards and the context in which the material appears, rather than its potential impact on particularly susceptible individuals.

### Contemporary Community Standards Test

- While similar to the Community Standards Test, this approach emphasizes the need to consider the current societal context more explicitly. In *Apoorva Arora & Anr. v. State (Govt. of NCT of Delhi) & Anr.* (2024), concerning the web series "College Romance," the Delhi High Court highlighted that the use of vulgar language or profanity alone doesn't constitute obscenity.
- The content must be evaluated as a whole, considering contemporary community standards, to determine if it appeals to prurient interests.

### Miller Test

Although not formally adopted in India, the Miller Test from the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Miller v. California* (1973) has influenced discussions on obscenity. This test considers whether the average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find that the work, taken as a whole:

- Appeals to the prurient interest;
- Depicts or describes sexual conduct in a patently offensive way;
- Lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.

### Other Relevant Acts

- Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986:** Restricts **indecent portrayal of women in media**.
- Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995:** Regulates TV content for public decency.
- Cinematograph Act, 1952:** Controls film certification to prevent obscene depictions.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following 2014 Supreme Court case in India adopted the "community standards" test for obscenity?  
 (a) Lady Chatterley's Lover Case  
 (b) Aveek Sarkar v. State of West Bengal  
 (c) Regina v. Hicklin  
 (d) K.A. Abbas v. Union of India
2. Which Supreme Court case upheld a conviction for possessing "Lady Chatterley's Lover," reinforcing the Hicklin Test in India?  
 (a) Aveek Sarkar v. State of West Bengal  
 (b) Ranjit D. Udeshi v. State of Maharashtra  
 (c) College Romance  
 (d) Regina v. Hicklin
3. Which test defined material as obscene if it tended to "deprave and corrupt" those susceptible to immoral influences, and was derived from an English case?  
 (a) Community standards test  
 (b) Hicklin Test  
 (c) Miller Test  
 (d) Roth Test
4. What act regulates TV content for public decency in India?  
 (a) Cable Television Networks Act  
 (b) Broadcasting Content Complaints Council  
 (c) Telecommunication Act  
 (d) Media and Entertainment Regulations
5. What is the purpose of the Young Persons (Harmful Publication) Act, 1956?  
 (a) To regulate employment of young persons  
 (b) To protect minors from inappropriate material  
 (c) To ensure education for all young persons  
 (d) To prohibit the sale of harmful substances to minors
6. Which act restricts indecent portrayal of women in media?  
 (a) Gender Equality Act, 2011  
 (b) Indecent Representation of Women Act, 1986  
 (c) Women's Rights Act, 1971  
 (d) Feminine Image Protection Act, 1990
7. Which U.K. act targets extreme pornography rather than artistic content?  
 (a) Obscene Publications Act, 1857  
 (b) Criminal Justice and Immigration Act, 2008  
 (c) Digital Economy Act, 2017  
 (d) Communications Act, 2003
8. Which of the following case did the Indian Supreme Court uphold that free speech cannot be restricted solely due to public outrage?  
 (a) S. Rangarajan v. P. Jagjivan Ram  
 (b) Bobby Art International v. Om Pal Singh Hoon  
 (c) Shreya Singhal v. Union of India  
 (d) Aveek Sarkar v. State of West Bengal
9. Which of the following film's explicit content was allowed due to its serious social message by the Indian Supreme Court?  
 (a) Bandit Queen  
 (b) Queen Gambit  
 (c) Water  
 (d) Earth Correct
10. What significant ruling involved striking down Section 66A of the IT Act?  
 (a) Bobby Art International v. Om Pal Singh Hoon  
 (b) Shreya Singhal v. Union of India  
 (c) S. Rangarajan v. P. Jagjivan Ram  
 (d) Ranjit D. Udeshi v. State of Maharashtra

## ANSWER KEY

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

## Delhi Election and Evolution of Delhi administration - LG Issue

### News Highlights:

BJP MLA Rekha Gupta was sworn in as the **ninth Chief Minister of Delhi** on **February 20, 2025**, at Ramlila Maidan, New Delhi.

- A **six-member Council of Ministers** was sworn in alongside Ms. Gupta in the presence of **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** and senior BJP leaders.
- The new government announced its priorities, including **implementing Ayushman Bharat in Delhi** and **cleaning the Yamuna River**.

### 2025 Delhi Legislative Assembly Election

In **February 2025**, Delhi conducted its **Legislative Assembly elections** to elect representatives for all **70 seats**. This election marked a pivotal shift in the city's political landscape.

- **Outcome:** The **Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)** secured a majority by winning **48 seats**, thereby **ending the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP)** decade-long governance in the capital. The AAP managed to **secure 22 seats**, while **the Indian National Congress (INC) did not win any seats**.
- **Vote Share:** The BJP's victory was attributed to a **significant increase in its vote share, which rose to 52.4%**. In contrast, AAP's **vote share declined to 43.57%**. The INC experienced a marginal increase in its vote share by 2%, but this did not translate into any seats.



**Rekha Gupta**

### Cabinet Ministers and Portfolios

- **Rekha Gupta (CM): Finance, Revenue, Women and Child Development, Services, Vigilance, and other unallocated departments.**
- **Parvesh Sahib Singh (Deputy CM): Public Welfare, Water.**
- **Ashish Sood: Home, Power, Education, Urban Development.**
- **Manjinder Singh Sirsa: Food & Supplies, Forest & Environment, Industries.**
- **Ravinder Indraj: Social Welfare, SC/ST Welfare, Cooperatives, Elections.**
- **Kapil Mishra: Law & Justice, Labour, Employment, Tourism.**
- **Pankaj Singh: Health & Family Welfare, Transport, Information Technology.**

### Key Cabinet Decisions

- **Tabling of 14 Pending CAG Reports:** The government will present pending Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) reports in the first session of the new Assembly.
- **Implementation of Ayushman Bharat:** Delhi will join the Centre's flagship health insurance scheme, providing medical benefits to eligible citizens.
- **Cleaning the Yamuna River:** A priority initiative, with BJP leaders holding prayers at Yamuna Ghat post-swearing-in.

### Political Significance of BJP's Victory in Delhi

- **First BJP Government in Delhi in 26 Years:** The last BJP-led government in Delhi was in **1998** under **Sushma Swaraj**.
- **End of AAP's Decade-Long Rule:** The BJP's victory marks the end of the **Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP government**, which was in power since **2015**.
- **Major Election Promises:** BJP has committed to developing Delhi as a "Viksit Delhi" and improving infrastructure, governance, and public welfare schemes.

## Political History of Delhi

### Early Political History of Delhi

- **1911:** Delhi became the capital of **British India**, placed under direct rule of the **Viceroy** through a **Chief Commissioner**.
- **1919:** Delhi was separated from **Punjab Province** and remained under direct central administration.
- **1950:** Under the **Constitution of India**, Delhi was classified as a **centrally administered Part-C state** along with **six others** (Bhopal, Ajmer, Coorg, Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh, Vindhya Pradesh).
- **1951:** The **Government of Part C States Act, 1951** established a **Legislative Assembly and a Council of Ministers for Delhi**. However, this arrangement was short-lived; the **States Reorganisation Act, 1956** led to the dissolution of the Assembly, and Delhi was designated as a Union Territory under the direct administration of the **President through the LG**.
- **1952:** The first **Delhi Assembly elections** were held with **42 constituencies and 48 seats**.
  - **Congress** secured **39 seats**, **Bharatiya Jana Sangh** (predecessor of **BJP**) won **5 seats**, and the **Socialist Party** won **2 seats**.
  - **Brahm Prakash** became the **first Chief Minister of Delhi** on **March 17, 1952**, appointed by **Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru**.

### Abolition of Delhi Assembly (1956-1993)

- **1955:** Brahm Prakash resigned following conflicts with the **Chief Commissioner**.
- **1956:** Delhi's Assembly was **abolished**, and it was made a **Union Territory**, directly administered by the **President of India**.
- **1957:** The **Delhi Municipal Corporation Act** was enacted, creating a single **municipal body** for the entire city.
- **1966:** The **Delhi Administration Act** established a **Metropolitan Council** with **56 elected members** and **5 nominated members**.

- **Constitution (Sixty-ninth Amendment) Act, 1991:** This pivotal amendment granted Delhi special status as the **National Capital Territory**, introducing a Legislative Assembly and a Council of Ministers. The **amendment added Article 239AA to the Constitution**, delineating the powers and functions of the **Delhi government and the LG**.
- While the elected government was empowered to legislate on matters in the State and **Concurrent Lists (excluding public order, police, and land)**, the **LG retained discretionary powers**, especially in cases of disagreement with the Council of Ministers.
- **1993 Elections:** BJP won **49 seats**, and **Madan Lal Khurana** became **Delhi's third CM** on **December 2, 1993**.
- **1995:** Khurana resigned due to his involvement in the **Hawala Scandal**.
- **Sahib Singh Verma** took over as CM on **February 27, 1996**.
- **1998:** Ahead of elections, BJP appointed **Sushma Swaraj** as CM, but the party lost the polls.

## Power Dynamics between LG and the Chief Minister of Delhi

- **2015-2016 Power Struggles:** The relationship between the **Delhi government** and the **LG** became contentious, with disputes over administrative control and decision-making authority. The **Delhi High Court**, in **2016**, ruled that the **LG held supremacy in administrative matters of the NCT, emphasizing the LG's discretionary powers.**
- **Supreme Court's Balancing Act (2018):** In **Government of NCT of Delhi v. Union of India (2018)**, a **Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court** clarified the distribution of powers. The Court ruled that while the **LG must act on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers for matters within the legislative competence of the Delhi Assembly, the LG retained the right to refer any matter to the President in case of disagreement.** The judgment underscored that the LG should not act as an "obstructionist" and that both entities must work harmoniously.

### Legislative Amendments and Recent Developments:

- **Government of NCT of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2021:** This amendment redefined the **term "government" in the context of Delhi to mean the LG**, effectively enhancing the **LG's authority over the elected government**. It mandated that the Delhi government must seek the **LG's opinion before executing any executive decisions**, leading to criticisms about undermining the autonomy of the elected government.
- **Supreme Court's Affirmation (May 2023):** Revisiting the power tussle, the **Supreme Court ruled that the Delhi government possesses legislative and executive control over services, excluding matters related to public order, police, and land.** This judgment aimed to reinforce the authority of the elected government in administrative affairs.
- **Central Government's Ordinance (May 2023):** In response to the Supreme Court's decision, the **Central Government promulgated an ordinance establishing the National Capital Civil Services Authority**. This body, comprising the **Chief Minister, Chief Secretary, and Principal Home Secretary**, was tasked with decisions regarding transfers and postings of **Group 'A' officers**. Notably, the ordinance granted the LG the final say in these matters, effectively circumventing the Supreme Court's ruling.
- **Government of NCT of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2023:** Replacing the ordinance, this **Act further solidified the LG's control over administrative services in Delhi**. It has been a focal point of debate, with arguments centered around the balance between the autonomy of the elected government and the supervisory role of the LG.



## MIND MAP

### 2025 Delhi Legislative Assembly Election



48 Seats

Vote Share  
52.4%

22 Seats

Vote Share  
43.57%

0 Seats

Vote Share  
2%

#### Rekha Gupta's Swearing-In

- Date & Venue: Feb 20, 2025, Ramlila Maidan, Delhi.
- First BJP CM in 26 Years (last in 1998 – Sushma Swaraj).
- End of AAP's 10-Year Rule (since 2015).
- Council of Ministers (6 Members) sworn in alongside CM Gupta.

Cabinet Ministers	Portfolios
Rekha Gupta (CM):	Finance, Revenue, Women & Child Development, Services, Vigilance.
Parvesh Sahib Singh (Dy. CM):	Public Welfare, Water.
Ashish Sood:	Home, Power, Education, Urban Development.
Manjinder Singh Sirsa:	Food & Supplies, Forest & Environment, Industries.
Ravinder Indraj:	Social Welfare, SC/ST Welfare, Cooperatives, Elections.
Kapil Mishra:	Law & Justice, Labour, Employment, Tourism.
Pankaj Singh:	Health & Family Welfare, Transport, IT.

#### Power Struggles: Delhi Government vs LG

- 2015-2016: Delhi HC ruled LG holds supreme authority in administrative matters.
- 2018 SC Ruling (NCT v. Union of India):
  - LG must act on the aid & advice of elected government except in disputes.
  - LG should not act as an "obstructionist".
- 2021 NCT Amendment Act: Re-defined "Government" as LG, increasing LG's control.
- 2023 Supreme Court Ruling: Delhi Government controls services, except public order, police, land.
- 2023 Ordinance & NCT Amendment Act:
  - Established National Capital Civil Services Authority (CM, CS, Home Sec).
  - LG retained final authority over administrative services.

#### Political History of Delhi

- 1911: Delhi becomes British India's Capital.
- 1950: Declared Part-C state under central control.
- 1952: First Delhi Assembly Elections      Congress wins 39/48 seats, Brahm Prakash becomes first CM.
- 1956: Delhi Assembly abolished, made Union Territory.
- 1966: Metropolitan Council created (elected).
- 1991: 69th Amendment grants Delhi special status, creates Legislative Assembly (239AA).
- 1993: First Assembly Elections post-69th Amendment      BJP wins 49 seats, Madan Lal Khurana CM.
- 1998: BJP loses elections, Sushma Swaraj last BJP CM before 2025.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Who was sworn in as the ninth Chief Minister of Delhi on February 20, 2025?  
 (a) Manjinder Singh Sirsa    (b) Rekha Gupta  
 (c) Pankaj Singh                (d) Ashish Sood
2. From which province was Delhi separated in 1919?  
 (a) Bengal                      (b) Madras  
 (c) Bombay                     (d) Punjab
3. Who was the first Chief Minister of Delhi, appointed in 1952?  
 (a) Sushma Swaraj            (b) Brahm Prakash  
 (c) Arvind Kejriwal          (d) Madan Lal Khurana
4. In what year was the Delhi Assembly abolished and the city designated as a Union Territory?  
 (a) 1955                        (b) 1956  
 (c) 1966                        (d) 1977
5. What legislative act in 1957 led to the creation of a single municipal body for the entire city of Delhi?  
 (a) The Delhi Municipal Corporation Act  
 (b) The Delhi Administration Act  
 (c) The Union Territory Act  
 (d) The Metropolitan Council Act
6. What are key areas over which Delhi's government does not have control, even after gaining partial statehood?  
 (a) Land, Law & Order  
 (b) Education and healthcare  
 (c) Transportation and utilities  
 (d) Tourism and culture
7. In what year did the P.V. Narasimha Rao government restore partial statehood to Delhi, leading to the creation of a 70-member Assembly?  
 (a) 1989                        (b) 1991  
 (c) 1993                        (d) 1995
8. What was Delhi's status immediately after Independence, before it was designated as a Union Territory?  
 (a) A full-fledged state      (b) Part of Punjab  
 (c) A Chief Commissioner's Province  
 (d) A city under municipal governance
9. How did the Supreme Court describe the role of the LG in its 2018 judgment?  
 (a) As an administrator  
 (b) As a coordinator  
 (c) As an independent executive  
 (d) As an obstructionist
10. What did the Supreme Court's 2018 ruling in Government of NCT of Delhi v. Union of India clarify?  
 (a) The President has ultimate authority over Delhi.  
 (b) The LG must act on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers.  
 (c) The Delhi Assembly can legislate on land and police.  
 (d) The LG can make decisions without consulting the Council of Ministers.
11. Which body comprises the Chief Minister, Chief Secretary, and Principal Home Secretary as per the ordinance of May 2023?  
 (a) Delhi Development Authority  
 (b) National Capital Civil Services Authority  
 (c) Delhi Metropolitan Police Board  
 (d) National Capital Development Council
12. What did the Government of NCT of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2021, redefine "government" as in the context of Delhi?  
 (a) The Lieutenant Governor  
 (b) The Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers  
 (c) The Delhi Assembly  
 (d) The Municipal Corporation of Delhi

## ANSWER KEY

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

## Evolution of Lokpal and Lokayukta and Recent SC Stay

### News Highlights:

The Supreme Court stayed a Lokpal order that classified High Court judges as 'public servants' under the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013, allowing the anti-corruption body to investigate them.

- A Special Bench of Justices B.R. Gavai, Surya Kant, and A.S. Oka took **suo motu cognisance** of the January 27 Lokpal order, calling its interpretation "very disturbing" and affecting judicial independence.

### Key Supreme Court Observations

- The Supreme Court issued notices to the Union Government, the Registrar of Lokpal, and the complainant, seeking legal clarity on Lokpal's jurisdiction over High Court judges.
- Solicitor General Tushar Mehta argued that High Court judges do not fall under Lokpal's jurisdiction, while senior advocate Kapil Sibal emphasised the need for a legal ruling on the matter.
- The case will be heard on March 18, 2025, with a directive for confidentiality regarding the complainant and the judge involved.
- The Court also restrained the complainant from disclosing the name of the High Court judge involved and directed that the complaint remain confidential.
- The Supreme Court's intervention brings into focus the landmark judgment in **K. Veeraswami v. Union of India (1991)**, where a Constitution bench held that a judge of the Supreme Court or a High Court is a "public servant" under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988. However, the ruling stipulated that no investigation against a judge can proceed without prior sanction from the Chief Justice of India (CJI).



Justice B.R. Gavai

### Division Bench



Justice A.M. Khanwilkar  
Current Lokpal



Justice P. Chandra Ghosh  
First Lokpal of India

### Rationale for Lokpal's Decision

- The Lokpal, led by its Chairperson, former Supreme Court Justice A.M. Khanwilkar, had entertained two complaints alleging misconduct by a sitting High Court judge.
- The complaints accused the judge of influencing an additional district judge and another High Court judge in a pending case, purportedly to favor a private company that had been the judge's client during his tenure as an advocate.
- In its January 27 order, the Lokpal concluded that High Court judges fall within the definition of "public servant" under Section 14(1)(f) of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013, thereby asserting its jurisdiction over them.
- The Lokpal reasoned that since many High Courts were established under British rule and later recognized under the Indian Constitution, they should be considered institutions established by an Act of Parliament.
- In an earlier ruling (January 3, 2025), Lokpal had excluded Supreme Court judges from its jurisdiction, stating:
- The Supreme Court was created solely by the Constitution (Article 124). It is not a body established by an Act of Parliament or funded/controlled by the Central Government.
- However, Supreme Court judges still qualify as 'public servants' under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, but remain outside Lokpal's jurisdiction

## Lokpal in India

The **Lokpal** and **Lokayuktas** are statutory anti-corruption ombudsman institutions in India, established to investigate and address complaints of corruption against public officials at both **the Central and State levels**. The **Lokpal** operates at the National level, while **Lokayuktas** function at the state level.

### Historical Background

- **1960s:** The concept of an ombudsman was first proposed in the early 1960s by then Law Minister **Ashok Kumar Sen**. In 1963, **Dr. L.M. Singhvi coined the terms "Lokpal" and "Lokayukta"** during a parliamentary debate.
- **1966:** The First Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC), led by Morarji Desai, recommended the establishment of these institutions to address grievances related to public administration.
- **1968-2011:** Multiple attempts were made to pass the Lokpal Bill in Parliament, with bills introduced in 1968, 1971, 1977, 1985, 1989, 1996, 1998, 2001, and twice in 2011. However, none were enacted during this period.
- **2011:** A significant anti-corruption movement, led by activist Anna Hazare, intensified public demand for a robust anti-corruption framework, culminating in the passage of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Bill.
- The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 was enacted to establish the Lokpal at the central level and mandate the creation of Lokayuktas in states.

### Appointment Process

Members of the Lokpal are appointed by the President based on recommendations from a **Selection Committee** comprising:

- The Prime Minister
- The Speaker of the Lok Sabha
- The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha
- The Chief Justice of India or a Supreme Court judge nominated by the Chief Justice
- An eminent jurist nominated by the President based on the recommendations of the first four members

### Structure of Lokpal

- **Composition:** The Lokpal is a multi-member body comprising a **Chairperson** and up to **eight Members**.
- **Chairperson:** The Chairperson can be a current or former Chief Justice of India, a former Supreme Court judge, or an eminent individual with at least 25 years of expertise in anti-corruption, public administration, vigilance, finance, law, or management.
- **Members:** The body can consist of 8 members, 50% must be judicial members (current or former judges of the Supreme Court or Chief Justices of High Courts). Additionally, 50% of the members should represent Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC), minorities, or women.

### Jurisdiction and Powers

- **Scope:** The Lokpal has jurisdiction over the Prime Minister (with specific safeguards), Union Ministers, Members of Parliament, Group A, B, C, and D officers, and officials of the Central Government.
- **Investigation Authority:** The Lokpal can direct the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to conduct inquiries and has the authority to supervise such investigations.
- **Prosecution Powers:** Upon concluding an investigation, the Lokpal can initiate prosecution through its Prosecution Wing or direct relevant agencies to take appropriate action against the accused.

### Challenges and Implementation

- **Delayed Appointments:** Despite the Act's passage in 2013, the appointment of the first Lokpal was delayed until 2019, when Pinaki Chandra Ghose was appointed to the coveted post. Current Lokpal of India is retired SC Justice Ajay Manikrao Khanwilkar.

## Lokayukta in India

The **Lokayukta** is a statutory **anti-corruption ombudsman** established at the state level in India, designed to investigate and address complaints of corruption and maladministration against public servants, including politicians, bureaucrats, and other government officials. The institution aims to promote transparency and accountability within state administrations.

### Historical Background

- **1966:** The concept of the Lokayukta was first recommended by the **Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) led by Morarji Desai**. The ARC's interim report emphasized the need for an independent authority at the state level to address grievances against public administration.
- **1968:** Based on the ARC's recommendations, the Government of India introduced a **bill proposing the establishment of the Lokpal at the central level and Lokayuktas in the states**. Although the bill did not pass at that time, it laid the foundation for states to enact their own legislation.
- **1971: Maharashtra became the first state to establish the Lokayukta** institution by enacting **The Maharashtra Lokayukta and Upa-Lokayuktas Act**, which came into effect on **October 25, 1972**.
- **Subsequent Developments:** Following Maharashtra's lead, several other states enacted their own Lokayukta Acts, including Odisha (1971), Rajasthan (1973), Bihar (1974), Uttar Pradesh (1975), and Karnataka (1984). Each state's legislation varies, leading to differences in the powers and functions of the Lokayukta across states.

### Statutory Status under the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013

- The **Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013** is a significant legislative measure aimed at combating corruption in India. While the Act primarily focuses on establishing the Lokpal at the central level, it also mandates that each state shall establish a Lokayukta **within one year** of the Act's commencement.

### Appointment and Composition

- **Appointment Authority:** The Lokayukta is appointed by the Governor of the respective state. The selection process typically involves consultation with key state officials to ensure the appointee's impartiality and integrity.
- **Eligibility Criteria:** Qualifications for the Lokayukta vary by state. For instance, in Karnataka, the appointee must have served as a Judge of the Supreme Court, a Chief Justice of a High Court, or as a High Court Judge for a minimum of ten years.
- **Tenure and Removal:** The tenure of the Lokayukta is defined by State legislation, which commonly is five years. Once appointed, the Lokayukta cannot be dismissed or transferred by the government. Removal from office typically requires a formal impeachment process by the state legislature, ensuring the institution's independence.

### Powers and Functions

- **Jurisdiction:** The Lokayukta's jurisdiction encompasses a wide range of public servants, including:
  - State Chief Ministers and Ministers
  - Members of the State Legislature
  - State Government employees
  - Employees of local authorities, public enterprises, and other instrumentalities within the state
- **Investigative Authority:** The Lokayukta has the power to investigate allegations of corruption, abuse of power, maladministration, and favoritism. Upon receiving a complaint, the Lokayukta can:
  - Initiate a preliminary inquiry
  - Conduct detailed investigations
  - Recommend actions such as prosecution or departmental proceedings against the accused.



## MIND MAP

### Supreme Court Stay on Lokpal Order (2025)

- SC halted Lokpal's classification of **High Court judges as 'public servants'**.
- **Concerns:** Threat to judicial independence.
- **Key SC Bench:** Justices B.R. Gavai, Surya Kant, A.S. Oka.
- **Hearing Date:** March 18, 2025 (**confidentiality directive issued**).
- **Legal Reference:**
  - **K. Veeraswami Case (1991):** Judges = public servants under Prevention of **Corruption Act, 1988**.
  - Sanction required from **CJI** before investigation..

### Lokpal in India

- **Establishment:** Lokpal & Lokayuktas Act, 2013 (National-Level Ombudsman).
- **Appointment Process:** Selection by **PM, Lok Sabha Speaker, LoP, CJI/SC Judge, Eminent Jurist**.
- **Structure:** **Chairperson + 8 Members** (50% judicial members, 50% from SC/ST/OBC/Minorities/Women).
- **Jurisdiction:** PM (with safeguards), Ministers, MPs, Bureaucrats (Group A-D).
- **Powers:** Investigates corruption (CBI-directed inquiries, prosecution authority).
- **Challenges:** Delayed appointments First Lokpal in 2019 (**Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose**).

### Evolution of Lokpal & Lokayukta

- **1963:** Concept introduced (Ashok Kumar Sen).
- **1966:** 1st Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) Recommended Lokpal & Lokayukta.
- **1968-2011:** Multiple failed bills (1968, 1971, 1977, 1985, 1996, 2011).
- **2011:** Anna Hazare-led Anti-Corruption Movement Lokpal enacted in 2013.

### Evolution of Lokpal & Lokayukta

- **1963:** Concept introduced (Ashok Kumar Sen).
- **1966:** 1st Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) Recommended Lokpal & Lokayukta.
- **1968-2011:** Multiple failed bills (1968, 1971, 1977, 1985, 1996, 2011).
- **2011:** Anna Hazare-led Anti-Corruption Movement Lokpal enacted in 2013.

### Lokpal's Rationale (2025 Order)

- **Chairperson:** Justice A.M. Khanwilkar (Retd.).
- **Case:** Misconduct allegations against a sitting High Court judge.
- **Lokpal's Justification:**
  - **Section 14(1)(f), Lokpal & Lokayuktas Act, 2013**  
**Judges fall under 'public servants'**.
  - **High Courts established pre-Independence** Considered institutions under Parliament.
  - **SC Judges excluded (Article 124)** but remain under Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.

### Lokayuktas in India (State-Level Ombudsman)

- **First State:** Maharashtra (1971).
- **Other Early States:** Odisha (1971), Rajasthan (1973), Bihar (1974), UP (1975), Karnataka (1984).
- **2013 Lokpal & Lokayuktas Act:** Mandated all states establish Lokayuktas.
- **Powers:** Investigates CM, Ministers, MLAs, Bureaucrats, Govt. Employees. And, Recommends prosecution or disciplinary actions.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What did the Lokpal order of January 27 classify High Court judges as?  
 (a) Private citizens      (b) Independent contractors  
 (c) Public servants      (d) Executive members
2. What principle did the Supreme Court emphasize in challenging the Lokpal order?  
 (a) Judicial restraint      (b) Judicial independence  
 (c) Judicial activism      (d) Judicial review
3. Which article in the Constitution governs the appointment of High Court judges?  
 (a) Article 124      (b) Article 214  
 (c) Article 217      (d) Article 226
4. When was the term "Lokpal" first coined and by whom during a parliamentary debate?  
 (a) 1956 by Jawaharlal Nehru  
 (b) 1963 by Dr. L.M. Singhvi  
 (c) 1972 by Indira Gandhi  
 (d) 1984 by Rajiv Gandhi
5. What year did the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, which established the Lokpal at the central level, get enacted?  
 (a) 2005      (b) 2010  
 (c) 2013      (d) 2015
6. What percentage of the Lokpal members must be judicial members?  
 (a) 25%      (b) 33%  
 (c) 50%      (d) 75%
7. Which body is the Lokpal authorized to direct for conducting inquiries?  
 (a) Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)  
 (b) Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)  
 (c) National Investigation Agency (NIA)  
 (d) Enforcement Directorate (ED)
8. When was the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act enacted, and when was the first Lokpal appointed?  
 (a) Enacted in 2013, first Lokpal appointed in 2014  
 (b) Enacted in 2010, first Lokpal appointed in 2011  
 (c) Enacted in 2013, first Lokpal appointed in 2019  
 (d) Enacted in 2005, first Lokpal appointed in 2009
9. Who was the first Lokpal of India?  
 (a) Justice Ranjan Gogoi  
 (b) Justice Dipak Misra  
 (c) Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose  
 (d) Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde
10. What significant public movement in 2011 contributed to the passing of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act?  
 (a) Bharat Parivartan Movement  
 (b) India Against Corruption Movement  
 (c) Right to Information Expansion Movement  
 (d) Jan Lokpal Bill Movement

## ANSWER KEY

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

## President's Rule in Manipur

### News Highlights:

President's Rule was imposed in Manipur on February 15, 2025, following the **resignation of Chief Minister N Biren Singh** on February 9, 2025.

- This marks the **11th instance of President's Rule in Manipur**, making it one of the states where it has been used most frequently.
- The imposition of **Article 356** raises concerns about its misuse and the constitutional checks placed on its implementation.

## President's Rule

### Constitutional Provisions

- Article 356:** Empowers the President to impose direct Central rule in a state if it's determined that the state's governance cannot proceed per constitutional provisions.
- This action is typically based **on a report from the state's Governor** or other credible inputs.
- Article 365:** Specifies that if a state fails to comply with or implement directions from the Union, it is deemed that the state's constitutional machinery has failed, potentially triggering President's Rule.

### Grounds for Imposition

President's Rule can be invoked under various scenarios, including:

- Political Instability:** No viable government formation due to fractured election mandates.
- Loss of Majority:** A ruling party or coalition loses its legislative majority, and no alternative government emerges.
- Constitutional Non-compliance:** A state government deliberately disregards constitutional directives or norms.

### Procedure and Duration

**Parliamentary Approval:** The proclamation must be **ratified by both Houses of Parliament** within **two months**.

**Duration:** Once approved, President's Rule remains **effective for six months** and can be **extended**, with parliamentary consent, **up to a maximum of three years**. Extensions beyond one year require:

- A national emergency in effect in the entire country or the specific state.
- Verification** from the **Election Commission** that holding elections in the state is unfeasible.

### Implications

- Executive Authority:** Upon the imposition of President's Rule, the **State's executive powers are vested in the President of India**. The President delegates these powers to the centrally appointed Governor of the state. The Governor may appoint advisors or administrators, often nonpartisan retired civil servants, to assist in governance.
- Legislative Functions:** During President's Rule, the **State legislative assembly (Vidhan Sabha)** may be either **dissolved or placed in suspended animation**. If dissolved, fresh elections are typically scheduled to reconstitute the assembly. If suspended, the assembly remains intact but is temporarily inactive.
- Judiciary:** The **judiciary in the State remains unaffected by the imposition of President's Rule**. Courts continue to function independently, upholding the rule of law and safeguarding citizens' rights. The separation of powers enshrined in the Constitution ensures that judicial proceedings and functions are insulated from executive interventions, even under central rule.

## Important Judgements Related to the Imposition of the President's Rule

- Context:** This case arose when the central government, led by the **Janata Party**, sought to dissolve nine state legislative assemblies where the Indian National Congress held power, following its defeat in the **1977 general elections**.
- Supreme Court's Ruling:** The Court held that the President's satisfaction under **Article 356** is subject to judicial review. However, it also emphasized that the **scope of such review is limited**, primarily to examine whether the power was exercised based on relevant material and not arbitrarily.

**State of Rajasthan v. Union of India (1977)**

- Context:** Following the **2005 Bihar Legislative Assembly elections**, no party secured a clear majority. Before any coalition could stake a claim, **the Governor recommended the dissolution of the assembly, leading to the imposition of President's Rule**.
- Supreme Court's Ruling:** The Court declared **the dissolution unconstitutional**, stating that the **Governor's report was based on conjecture**. It reaffirmed that the **President's decision under Article 356** should be based on **relevant and factual material**.

**Rameshwar Prasad v. Union of India (2006)**

**S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994)**

- Context:** This landmark case addressed the **arbitrary dismissal of State governments** and the subsequent imposition of President's Rule in several states, including Karnataka, Meghalaya, and Nagaland.
- Supreme Court's Ruling:** The Court laid down significant guidelines to **prevent the misuse of Article 356**:
  - Floor Test Mandate:** The **majority of a government** must be **tested on the floor** of the legislative assembly, not **determined by the Governor or the President**.
  - Judicial Review:** The imposition of **President's Rule is subject to judicial review**, and the courts can reinstate a wrongfully dismissed State government.
  - Secularism as a Criterion:** State governments acting against the principles of secularism **can be dismissed under Article 356**.
  - Dissolution of Assembly:** The legislative assembly **should not be dissolved** before **both Houses of Parliament approve the imposition of President's Rule**.

### Significant Committees

#### Sarkaria Commission (1983)

The Sarkaria Commission was constituted to analyse Centre-State relations and suggest improvements. Regarding President's Rule, the Commission made the following key recommendations:

- Restrained Use of Article 356:** The Commission emphasised that **Article 356 should be invoked sparingly and only in extreme cases** where all other alternatives have been exhausted. It cautioned against its misuse for political purposes.

- Issuance of Prior Warning:** Before resorting to President's Rule, the Centre should issue a clear warning to the concerned state government, allowing it an opportunity to rectify the situation.
- Parliamentary Approval for Dissolution:** The Commission recommended that the President should not dissolve a state legislative assembly without obtaining prior approval from Parliament.

### National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC) (2000)

The NCRWC was established to suggest possible amendments to the Constitution. In the context of President's Rule, it recommended:

- Sparing Use of Article 356:** The Commission advised that Article 356 should not be deleted but used sparingly and only as a remedy of the last resort.
- Continuation Without Emergency:** It suggested that President's Rule may continue even without an emergency if elections cannot be held, and Article 356 should be amended accordingly.

### Punchhi Commission (2007)

The Punchhi Commission was tasked with examining the dynamics of Centre-State relations. Its pertinent recommendations include:

- Localised Emergency Provisions:** The Commission proposed amending Articles 355 and 356 to allow for localised imposition of President's Rule, targeting specific areas within a state rather than the entire state. Such localised emergencies should not exceed three months.
- Detailed Governor's Report:** It emphasised that any recommendation for President's Rule should be based on a detailed, objective, and politically neutral report from the state's Governor.



## MIND MAP

- President's Rule in Manipur (Feb 15, 2025):** Imposed after CM N Biren Singh resigned on Feb 9, 2025.
- 11th Instance in Manipur:** Among the most frequent uses of Article 356 in any state.

### Committees

- NCRWC (2000) Recommendations:**
- Sparing Use of Article 356:** Should be used only as a last resort.
  - Continuation Without Emergency:** President's Rule can continue if elections are unfeasible.

### Punchhi Commission (2007) Recommendations:

- Localised Emergency Provisions:** Amend Articles 355 & 356 for localised President's Rule (max three months).
- Detailed Governor's Report:** Imposition must be based on a politically neutral Governor's report.

### President's Rule

- Article 356:** Allows President to impose Central rule if state governance fails constitutionally.
- Governor's Report Basis:** Typically imposed based on Governor's report or credible inputs.
- Grounds for Imposition:** Political instability, loss of majority, or constitutional non-compliance.
- Article 365:** Non-compliance with Union directives can trigger President's Rule.
- Parliamentary Approval:** Proclamation must be ratified within two months.
- Duration & Extension:** Initially six months, extendable up to three years with conditions.
- Extension Beyond One Year:** Requires a national emergency or Election Commission confirmation of election infeasibility.

### Impact on State

- **Executive Authority:** State's executive powers shift to the President, delegated to the Governor.
- **Governor's Role:** Governor appoints advisors or administrators, often retired civil servants.
- **Legislative Functions:** State assembly may be dissolved or suspended during President's Rule.
- **Judiciary Unaffected:** Courts continue to function independently, ensuring constitutional safeguards.

### Judicial Precedents

- **State of Rajasthan v. Union of India (1977):** Judicial review of President's Rule is allowed but limited to examining relevant material.
- **Rameshwari Prasad v. Union of India (2006):** Bihar assembly dissolution ruled unconstitutional due to lack of factual basis.
- **S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994):**
  - Floor Test Mandate: Legislative majority must be tested in the assembly.
  - Judicial Review: Courts can review and reinstate a wrongfully dismissed government.
  - Secularism as a Criterion: Anti-sectarian state governments can be dismissed.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Who was the Chief Minister of Manipur prior to the imposition of President's Rule in 2025?
 

(a) N Biren Singh	(b) O Ibobi Singh
(c) Y Joykumar Singh	(d) P Sharatchandra Singh
2. Under which Article of the Indian Constitution is President's Rule imposed?
 

(a) Article 340	(b) Article 352
(c) Article 356	(d) Article 360
3. What happens to the state legislature under President's Rule?
 

(a) It is dissolved or suspended	(b) Its powers are increased
(c) It is replaced by the Union Cabinet	(d) It remains unaffected
4. Who administers the state during President's Rule?
 

(a) The Prime Minister	(b) The Chief Minister
(c) The Governor	(d) The President
5. How many times has President's Rule been imposed in Manipur up to 2025?
 

(a) 8	(b) 9
(c) 10	(d) 11
6. For how long can the President's Rule initially stay in effect without parliamentary approval?
 

(a) 30 days	(b) 60 days
-------------	-------------
7. Which Indian state has experienced President's Rule the most times since 1950?
 

(a) Manipur	(b) Uttar Pradesh
(c) Punjab	(d) Jammu & Kashmir
8. Which state has had the longest total duration under President's Rule?
 

(a) Punjab	(b) Jammu & Kashmir
(c) Puducherry	(d) Manipur
9. What landmark Supreme Court case in 1994 limited the misuse of Article 356 of the Indian Constitution?
 

(a) Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala	(b) Golaknath v. State of Punjab
(c) S R Bommai v. Union of India	(d) Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India
10. According to the 1994 Supreme Court ruling in S R Bommai v. Union of India, what condition is required before the state legislative assembly can be dissolved under President's Rule?
 

(a) Approval by the state governor	(b) Approval by the state high court
(c) Approval by Parliament	(d) Approval by the President

11. According to the Sarkaria Commission, which of the following should be the primary method to determine the legitimacy of a state government before imposing President's Rule?
- (a) Public referendum
  - (b) Presidential decree
  - (c) Floor test in the Assembly
  - (d) Governor's discretion
12. Who chaired the Punchhi Commission, which was established in 2007 to review Centre-State relations?
- (a) Justice R.S. Sarkaria
  - (b) Justice Madan Mohan Punchhi
  - (c) Justice P.V. Rajamannar
  - (d) Morarji Desai
13. Which committee was established by the Tamil Nadu government in 1969 to review Centre-State relations?
- (a) Sarkaria Commission
  - (b) Punchhi Commission
  - (c) Rajamannar Committee
  - (d) Administrative Reforms Commission
14. Who chaired the Administrative Reforms Commission established in 1966?
- (a) Justice R.S. Sarkaria
  - (b) Justice Madan Mohan Punchhi
  - (c) Justice P.V. Rajamannar
  - (d) Morarji Desai

**ANSWER KEY**

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

# FamILE *Feb Roundup*

# BASICS OF BUDGET SESSION AT LE LUCKNOW



# Economy & Governance

## Economic Survey FY 24-25

### News Highlights:

- The Economic Survey 2024-25 was tabled in Parliament on **January 31, 2025**, by Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman. The survey provides a comprehensive analysis of India's economic performance over the past year and offers projections for the upcoming fiscal year.

### Economic Survey

The Economic Survey is **an annual document released by the Ministry of Finance, Government of India**, providing a detailed analysis of the **Indian economy's performance over the past year**.

## ECONOMIC SURVEY

It serves as a **policy guide**, offering insights into key economic trends, challenges, and recommendations for the upcoming financial year.

The survey is **not legally binding** but acts as a **preliminary document before the Union Budget**, helping policymakers, businesses, and analysts assess economic conditions.

The first Economic Survey of India was presented in **1950-51** as part of the Union Budget. After 1964 it was separated from the Budget and presented each year during the Budget Session before the presentation of the budget.

### Who Prepares the Economic Survey?

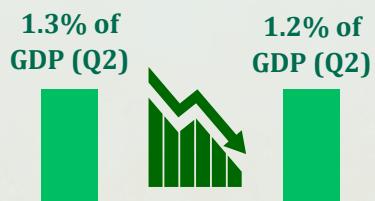
- The **Economic Division of the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA)**, Ministry of Finance prepares the **Economic Survey**.
- The document is primarily **authored by the Chief Economic Adviser (CEA)** to the Government of India. Currently, the post of the CEA is held by **V Anantha Nageswaran**.
- It is approved and presented by the **Finance Minister before the Parliament**, usually a day before the Union Budget.
- Each year's survey centers around a thematic concept related to economic trends or reforms. Recent themes include: **2024-25**: Emphasised the need for deregulation to accelerate and sustain economic growth, highlighting the importance of reducing bureaucratic hurdles to foster investment and innovation.

### Structure of the Economic Survey

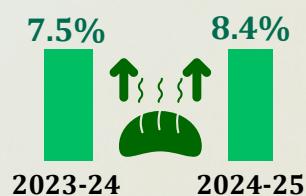
- Traditionally released in two volumes:
  - Volume 1**: Analytical and policy-driven (thematic chapters).
  - Volume 2**: Data-oriented, covering sectoral performance.
- Key focus areas**: Agriculture, industry, services, inflation, trade, fiscal management, social development, and climate change.

**Real GDP Growth**

## Key Economic Indicators

**Retail Inflation****Current Account Deficit (CAD)****Capital Expenditure (Capex)  
Share in Total Expenditure**

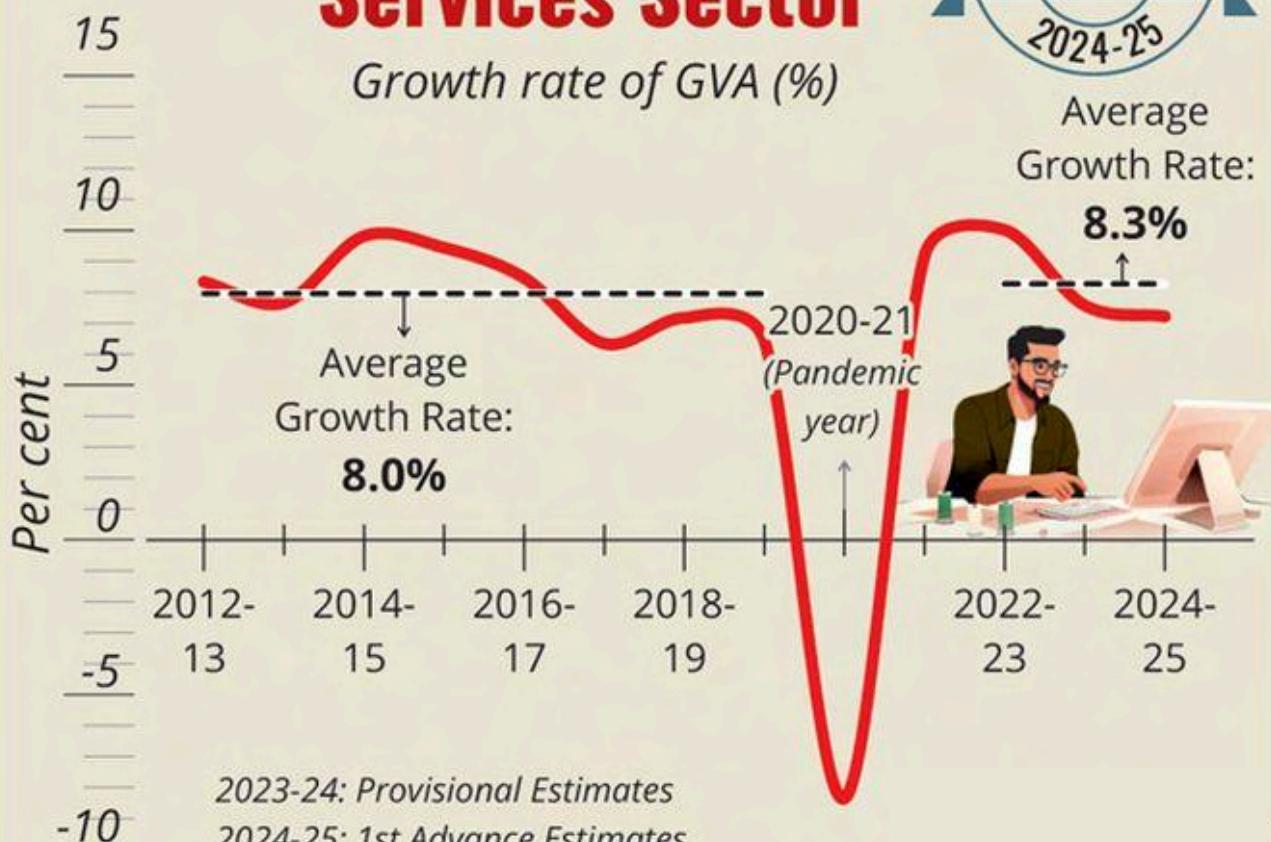
**21%**  
2024-25

**Food Inflation**

## Services Sector



Growth rate of GVA (%)





### Major Themes & Trends:

Each year's survey centers around a **thematic concept** related to economic trends or reforms. Recent themes include:

- 2024-25:** Emphasized the need for **deregulation to accelerate and sustain economic growth**, highlighting the importance of reducing bureaucratic hurdles to foster investment and innovation.
- 2023-24:** Focused on **inclusive growth**, addressing disparities between urban and rural areas, and promoting equitable development.
- The **2024-25 Economic Survey** advocated for a **continued step-up of infrastructure investment over the next two decades** to sustain high growth.
- The **2023-24 Survey** introduced the concept of "**Green Growth**," emphasizing sustainable development and environmental conservation. The **2022-23 Survey** analyzed the impact of **remote work** on productivity and urbanization trends.

## Sectoral Performance

### Agriculture:

- The sector is projected to grow by **3.8% in FY25**.
- Kharif foodgrain production for 2024 is estimated at **1,647.05 lakh metric tonnes (LMT)**, marking an increase of **89.37 LMT** over the previous year.
- Key drivers include **horticulture, livestock, and fisheries**.

### Industry:

 **6.2%**

- The industrial sector is estimated to expand by **6.2% in FY25**.
- Capital expenditure (Capex)** grew by **8.2%** between July and November 2024 and is expected to accelerate further.

### Services:

 **3.8%**

- The services sector continues to perform robustly, with a growth rate of **7.2% in FY25**.
- Services exports surged by **12.8%** during April-November FY25, up from **5.7% in FY24**.

## Trade and Investment

### Exports:



Overall exports grew by **6.0%** year-on-year during April-December 2024.

### Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):

- Gross FDI inflows increased from USD 47.2 billion in the first eight months of FY24 to USD 55.6 billion in the same period of FY25, reflecting a year-on-year growth of 17.9%.

### Foreign Exchange Reserves:

- Forex reserves stood at USD 640.3 billion as of the end of December 2024, sufficient to cover 10.9 months of imports and approximately 90% of external debt.

## Social and Environmental Developments

### Social Services Expenditure:



Registered an annual growth rate of **15%** between **FY21 and FY25**.

### Health Expenditure:

  **48.0%**

- Government health expenditure increased from 29.0% to 48.0% between FY15 and FY22.
- The share of out-of-pocket expenditure in total health expenditure declined from 62.6% to 39.4% during the same period.

### Employment:

 **3.2%**

- The unemployment rate declined to **3.2%** in 2023-24 (July-June) from **6.0%** in 2017-18 (July-June).

### Renewable Energy:



- Capacity addition in **solar and wind power** increased by **15.8%** year-on-year as of **December 2024**.

## Policy Recommendations

- Deregulation:** The survey advocates for **systematic deregulation** to accelerate and sustain economic growth.
- Infrastructure Investment:** Emphasizes the need for a continued increase in infrastructure investment over the next two decades to maintain high growth rates.
- Support for MSMEs:** A **₹50,000 crore Self-Reliant India Fund** has been launched to provide equity funding to **Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)**.

## Global Economic Context

The global economy grew by **3.3% in 2023**. The International Monetary Fund projects global growth to **average around 3.2%** over the next five years, which is modest by historical standards.



Economic Survey  
2024-25

## Foodgrains Production

In million tonnes

2020-21	310.7
2021-22	315.6
2022-23	329.7
2023-24*	332.3

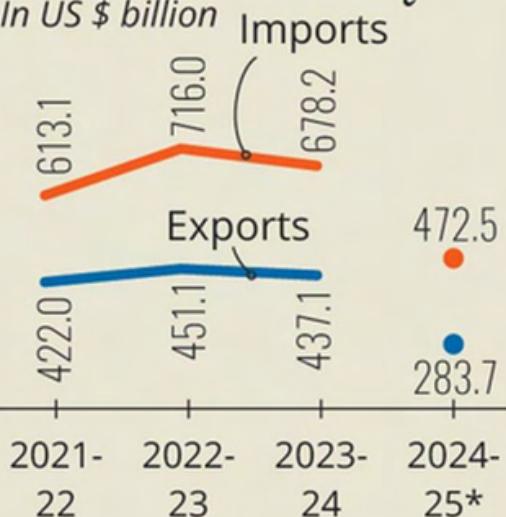
\*Final Estimates for Agricultural Crops and 3rd Advance Estimates Horticultural Crops

Economic Survey  
2024-25



## Foreign Trade

In US \$ billion



\* Apr-Nov 2024

Economic Survey  
2024-25

## Capital Expenditure



As percentage of GDP

2020-21	2.1
2021-22	2.5
2022-23	2.7
2023-24*	3.2

\*Provisional Actuals

Economic Survey  
2024-25

## Per Capita Net National Income

In ₹,  
at current prices

2021-22	1,50,906
2022-23*	1,69,496
2023-24**	1,84,205
2024-25#	2,00,162

\* 1st Revised Estimates

\*\* Provisional Estimates

# 1st Advance Estimates



## MIND MAP

### Trade & Investment

- Exports:** 6.0% YoY growth (Apr-Dec 2024).
- FDI Inflows:** \$55.6B (+17.9% YoY).

### Global Economic Context

- Global GDP Growth:** 3.3% (2023).
- IMF Projection:** 3.2% avg. growth over next 5 years.

### History & Legal Aspects of Economic Survey

- First Survey:** 1950-51.
- Separate from Union Budget since: **1964**.
- No statutory or constitutional obligation.
- Chief Economic Adviser (CEA): Leads preparation.

### Policy Recommendations

- Deregulation:** Reduce bureaucratic hurdles for faster growth.
- Infrastructure Investment:** Increase for sustained high growth.
- MSME Support:** ₹50,000 Cr Self-Reliant India Fund.

### Economic Survey FY 2024-25

- Presented on: **Jan 31, 2025** by FM Nirmala Sitharaman.
- Purpose:** Reviews India's economic performance & provides policy recommendations.
- Prepared by:** Economic Division, Ministry of Finance.
- Structure:**
  - Volume I: **Analytical aspects, policy reforms.**
  - Volume II: **Sectoral performance, data analysis.**

### Key Economic Indicators

#### Real GDP Growth:

**6.4%** (FY25), **6.3%-6.8%** (FY26 projected).

#### Retail Inflation:

**4.9%** (Apr-Dec 2024), aligning to **4%** target by FY26.

#### GVA Growth:

**6.4%** (FY25).

#### Food Inflation:

**8.4%** (Apr-Dec 2024)

#### Current Account Deficit:

**1.2%** of GDP (Q2 FY25).

#### Forex Reserves:

**\$640.3B** (Dec 2024), covers **10.9 months** of imports.

### Sectoral Performance

#### Agriculture:

**3.8% growth (FY25).**

- Kharif production: 1,647.05 LMT (+89.37 LMT YoY).
- Key Drivers: Horticulture, livestock, fisheries.

#### Industry:

**6.2% growth (FY25).**

- Capex growth: 8.2% (Jul-Nov 2024).

#### Services:

**Services: 7.2% growth (FY25).**

- Exports grew: 12.8% (Apr-Nov FY25) vs. 5.7% (FY24).

### Social & Environmental Developments

- Social Services Expenditure:** +15% annual growth (FY21-FY25).
- Health:**
  - Govt. health spending increased (29% - 48%).
  - Out-of-pocket expenses dropped (62.6% - 39.4%).
- Employment:** Unemployment rate down to 3.2% (from 6.0% in 2017-18).
- Renewable Energy:** Solar & wind capacity +15.8% YoY.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What is the projected growth rate of India's Real GDP for FY25?
 

(a) 5.4%	(b) 6.4%
(c) 7.4%	(d) 8.4%
2. What percentage increase in services exports was reported from April to November FY25?
 

(a) 5.7%	(b) 7.2%
(c) 12.8%	(d) 15.3%
3. What is the purpose of the ₹50,000 crore Self-Reliant India Fund launched by the government?
 

(a) To provide loans to large corporations	(b) To provide equity funding to MSMEs
(c) To invest in foreign technology companies	(d) To support agricultural initiatives
4. What does the Economic Survey recommend to sustain high economic growth rates over the next two decades?
 

(a) Reduction in infrastructure investment	(b) Increased taxation on corporations
(c) Continued increase in infrastructure investment	(d) Decrease in public health spending
5. Who is responsible for leading the preparation of the Economic Survey?
 

(a) The Prime Minister	(b) The Finance Minister
(c) The Chief Economic Adviser	(d) The Governor of the Reserve Bank of India
6. Which Chief Economic Adviser introduced the concept of the "JAM Trinity" to promote financial inclusion?
 

(a) Dr. V. Anantha Nageswaran	(b) Dr. Krishnamurthy Subramanian
(c) Dr. Arvind Subramanian	(d) Dr. Raghuram Rajan
7. Since which year has the Economic Survey been presented separately from the Union Budget?
 

(a) 1954	(b) 1964
(c) 1974	(d) 1984
8. In what year was the first Economic Survey of India presented?
 

(a) 1947-48	(b) 1950-51
(c) 1960-61	(d) 1970-71
9. What was the theme of the Economic Survey for the year 2024-25?
 

(a) The need for deregulation to accelerate economic growth	(b) The impact of global warming on India's economy
(c) The promotion of digital transactions	(d) Strengthening India's defense economy
10. Which division within the Ministry of Finance prepares the Economic Survey?
 

(a) The Fiscal Division of the Department of Economic Affairs	(b) The Planning Division of the Department of Economic Affairs
(c) The Budget Division of the Department of Economic Affairs	(d) The Economic Division of the Department of Economic Affairs

## ANSWER KEY

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

## Union Budget FY 25-26

### News Highlights:

- On February 1, 2025, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the **Union Budget 2025-26**, introducing significant income tax reforms aimed at boosting middle-class savings and consumption.
- The budget also emphasises four key development areas: **Agriculture, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), Investment, and Exports**.
- The Union Budget 2025-26, centered around **the theme "Sabka Vikas" (Inclusive Growth)**, is designed to foster equitable development across all regions.
- The budget outlines targeted initiatives to **uplift the underprivileged (Garib), empower the youth (Yuva), support farmers (Annadata), and promote women's welfare (Nari)**, ensuring inclusive and sustainable growth.

### Four Key Development Areas in Budget 2025-26

#### Agriculture

1

- National Mission on High Yielding Seeds:** This mission is focused on **the targeted development and propagation of seeds with high yield**, pest resistance, and climate resilience. It aims to enhance the productivity of various crops across India, ensuring better returns for farmers.
- Makhana Board in Bihar:** A **Makhana Board will be established in Bihar** to improve the production, processing, value addition, and marketing of **Makhana (Fox nut)**, a popular regional product. This initiative also includes **the organization of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) to streamline operations**.
- Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana - Developing Agri Districts Programme:** This programme is designed to cover **100 districts**, benefiting **approximately 1.7 crore farmers**. It focuses on holistic agricultural development through various supports and services.
- Mission for Cotton Productivity:** A **5-year mission** to improve the productivity and sustainability of cotton farming, which is a significant sector in India's agricultural landscape.
- Enhanced Credit through Kisan Credit Card (KCC):** The initiative facilitates **short-term loans for 7.7 crore farmers**, fishermen, and dairy farmers, with an enhanced loan limit of **₹5 lakh** to support their operational needs.
- Aatmanirbharta in Pulses:** A **6-year mission** aiming to develop and make commercially available climate-resilient seeds, enhance protein content in pulses like **Tur, Urad, and Masoor**, **increase productivity**, and **improve post-harvest storage and management**. It also aims to assure remunerative prices for farmers.

#### Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

2

- Customised Credit Cards for Micro Enterprises:** The government plans to issue **10 lakh customised credit cards with a ₹5 lakh limit to micro enterprises** registered on **the Udyam portal**. This initiative is set to facilitate better credit availability to micro enterprises, enhancing their financial accessibility and operational capabilities.
- Scheme for First-Time Entrepreneurs:** A new scheme is to be launched to **provide term loans up to ₹2 crore to 5 lakh first-time entrepreneurs**, including special focus on women, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes. This scheme aims to empower new entrants in the business sector and foster innovation and growth.

## Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

2

- Revision in Classification Criteria for MSMEs:** The criteria for categorizing enterprises into micro, small, and medium categories have been revised to accommodate more businesses under each segment.

ENTERPRISE CATEGORY	CURRENT INVESTMENT LIMIT	REVISED INVESTMENT LIMIT	CURRENT TURNOVER LIMIT	REVISED TURNOVER LIMIT
MICRO ENTERPRISE	₹1 crore	₹2.5 crore	₹5 crore	₹10 crore
SMALL ENTERPRISE	₹10 crore	₹25 crore	₹50 crore	₹100 crore
MEDIUM ENTERPRISE	₹50 crore	₹125 crore	₹250 crore	₹500 crore

- Support for Food Processing:** Establishing a **National Institute of Food Technology** in Bihar is part of the measures to **enhance income for farmers and provide skilling, entrepreneurship, and employment opportunities for the youth**. This move is expected to boost the food processing sector by providing technical and professional support.
- Support Measures for Exporter MSMEs:** The provision of **special term loans up to ₹20 crore** for exporter MSMEs with significant enhancement of credit availability and guarantee cover aims to support MSMEs in penetrating international markets.
- Focus Product Scheme for Footwear and Leather Sectors:** This scheme is expected to **generate employment for 22 lakh persons and achieve a turnover of ₹4 lakh crore and exports of over ₹1.1 lakh crore**. It focuses on developing these labor-intensive sectors, promoting domestic manufacturing and export capabilities.

## Investing in People, Economy, and Innovation

3

- Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0:** This initiative aims to strengthen **Anganwadi centers and improve the nutritional outcomes for children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers** across India, supporting the broader goal of reducing child malnutrition and enhancing early childhood development.
- Atal Tinkering Labs:** The government plans to **set up 50,000 Atal Tinkering Labs** in **government schools over the next five years**. These labs are designed to foster creativity and innovation in young minds, particularly in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).
- Day Care Cancer Centres:** New day care cancer centers will be established in all district hospitals to provide accessible and timely cancer treatment across the country.
- National Centres of Excellence for Skilling:** The government will establish **5 National Centres of Excellence** for skilling, with global expertise and partnerships. These centers will focus on equipping the Indian workforce with advanced skills needed in the global economy.

## Investing in People, Economy, and Innovation


**3**

- PM SVANidhi Revamp:** The PM SVANidhi scheme will be revamped to provide enhanced loans from banks, UPI-linked credit cards, and capacity-building support to street vendors, improving their economic stability and business capabilities.
- Support to States for Infrastructure:** An outlay of **₹1.5 lakh crore** is provided **for 50-year interest-free loans** to states for capital expenditure and incentives for reforms, facilitating large-scale infrastructural development across various regions.
- Jal Jeevan Mission:** This mission is focused on achieving **100% coverage of safe and adequate drinking water** across India by extending **the mission until 2028** with an enhanced budget, ensuring water availability to every household.
- Asset Monetization Plan 2025-30:** Launched to plough back capital of **₹10 lakh crore** into new projects, this plan aims to leverage public assets to **fund new infrastructure initiatives**.
- Urban Challenge Fund:** With **₹1 lakh crore allocated**, this fund aims to implement proposals for '**Cities as Growth Hubs**', '**Creative Redevelopment of Cities**' and '**Water & Sanitation**', promoting urban growth and sustainability.
- Maritime Development Fund:** A corpus of **₹25,000 crore** for long-term financing with up to **49% contribution** by the government to boost the maritime sector and enhance the country's maritime capabilities.
- Nuclear Energy Mission for Viksit Bharat:** Amendments to the **Atomic Energy Act and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act** are planned, aiming for active partnership with the private sector to boost nuclear energy production.
- UDAN:** This regional connectivity scheme aims to connect **120 new destinations and transport 4 crore passengers** over the **next 10 years**, enhancing the accessibility and economic development of remote areas.
- SWAMIH Fund-2:** ₹15,000 crore allocated for the expeditious completion of one lakh dwelling units through blended finance, addressing housing needs efficiently.
- Future Needs of Bihar:** Financial support is earmarked for **the Western Koshi Canal ERM Projects** and **greenfield airports**, focusing on **Bihar's infrastructural and economic development**.

### More Investment Projects

#### Gene Bank for Crops

**Germplasm:** The 2nd Gene Bank with 10 lakh germplasm lines to be set up for future food and nutritional security.

#### Research, Development &

**Innovation:** Allocating ₹ 20,000 crore to implement private sector driven Research, Development and Innovation initiative

#### Gyan Bharatam Mission:

Documentation and conservation of our manuscript heritage to cover more than 1 crore manuscripts. National Digital Repository of Indian knowledge systems for knowledge sharing to be set up.

#### National Geospatial

**Mission:** To develop foundational geospatial infrastructure and data. Using PM Gati Shakti, facilitation of modernization of land records, urban planning, and design of infrastructure projects.

## Promoting Exports

4

- Export Promotion Mission:** The mission is **designed with sectoral and ministerial targets** to facilitate **easy access to export credit**, cross-border factoring support, and support to MSMEs to tackle non-tariff measures in overseas markets. This comprehensive approach aims to streamline the export processes and make Indian products more competitive globally.
- BharatTradeNet:** A new digital public infrastructure, **BharatTradeNet**, will be **established as a unified platform for trade documentation and financing solutions**. This platform is intended to support integration with global supply chains, enhancing the ease of doing business for exporters and reducing logistical bottlenecks.
- National Framework for Global Capability Centres (GCC):** This framework will provide guidance to states for promoting **Global Capability Centres in emerging tier 2 cities**. By focusing on **tier 2 cities**, the initiative aims to decentralise growth and promote regional development while leveraging local talents and resources for global business services.
- Warehousing Facility for Air Cargo:** To facilitate the **upgrade of infrastructure and warehousing** for air cargo, particularly high-value perishable horticulture produce, this initiative will help improve the logistics associated with the export of perishables, enhancing the quality and competitiveness of Indian agricultural exports on the global stage.

## Major Financial Reforms in Budget 2025-26

5

### Financial Sector Reform

- Increase in FDI Limit for Insurance Sector:** The **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** limit for the insurance sector will be raised from **74% to 100%**, allowing for **greater foreign capital inflow** and potentially enhancing the competitiveness and capitalisation of the insurance industry in India.
- NaBFID's Partial Credit Enhancement Facility:** The **National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID)** will set up a '**Partial Credit Enhancement Facility**' for corporate bonds issued for infrastructure projects. This facility is intended to improve the credit rating of these bonds, making them more attractive to investors and facilitating increased investment in infrastructure.
- Grameen Credit Score Framework:** A new '**Grameen Credit Score**' framework will be introduced to serve the **credit needs of Self-Help Group (SHG) members and individuals** in rural areas. This framework aims to enhance financial inclusion by providing a mechanism for these groups to access formal credit based on their credit behavior.
- Revamped Central KYC Registry:** The **Central Know Your Customer (KYC) Registry** will be revamped and rolled out in **2025 to streamline the KYC process**, reducing the burden on customers and financial institutions alike. This reform is aimed at enhancing the ease of accessing financial services across the country.
- High-Level Committee for Regulatory Reforms:** A High-Level Committee for Regulatory Reforms will be established to evaluate and propose necessary changes to enhance the efficiency and responsiveness of financial regulation in India.
- Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0:** This legislative proposal aims to decriminalise more than **100 provisions in various financial laws**, promoting a more business-friendly environment and reducing the risk of penal consequences for minor non-compliances.

## Indirect Tax Reforms

6

- Rationalisation of Customs Tariff Structure for Industrial Goods:** The budget proposes the removal of **7 tariff rates** to simplify **the customs tariff structure**. This reform aims to reduce the complexity of the tariff system, making it easier for businesses to comply and plan their operations.
- Application of Cess and Surcharges:** The government plans to **apply not more than one cess or surcharge on any item**, thereby simplifying the **tax structure and reducing the tax burden** on businesses and consumers. This approach ensures that the effective duty incidence on most items remains consistent while lowering cess on certain items to promote specific industries.

### Sector-Specific Exemptions and Incentives:

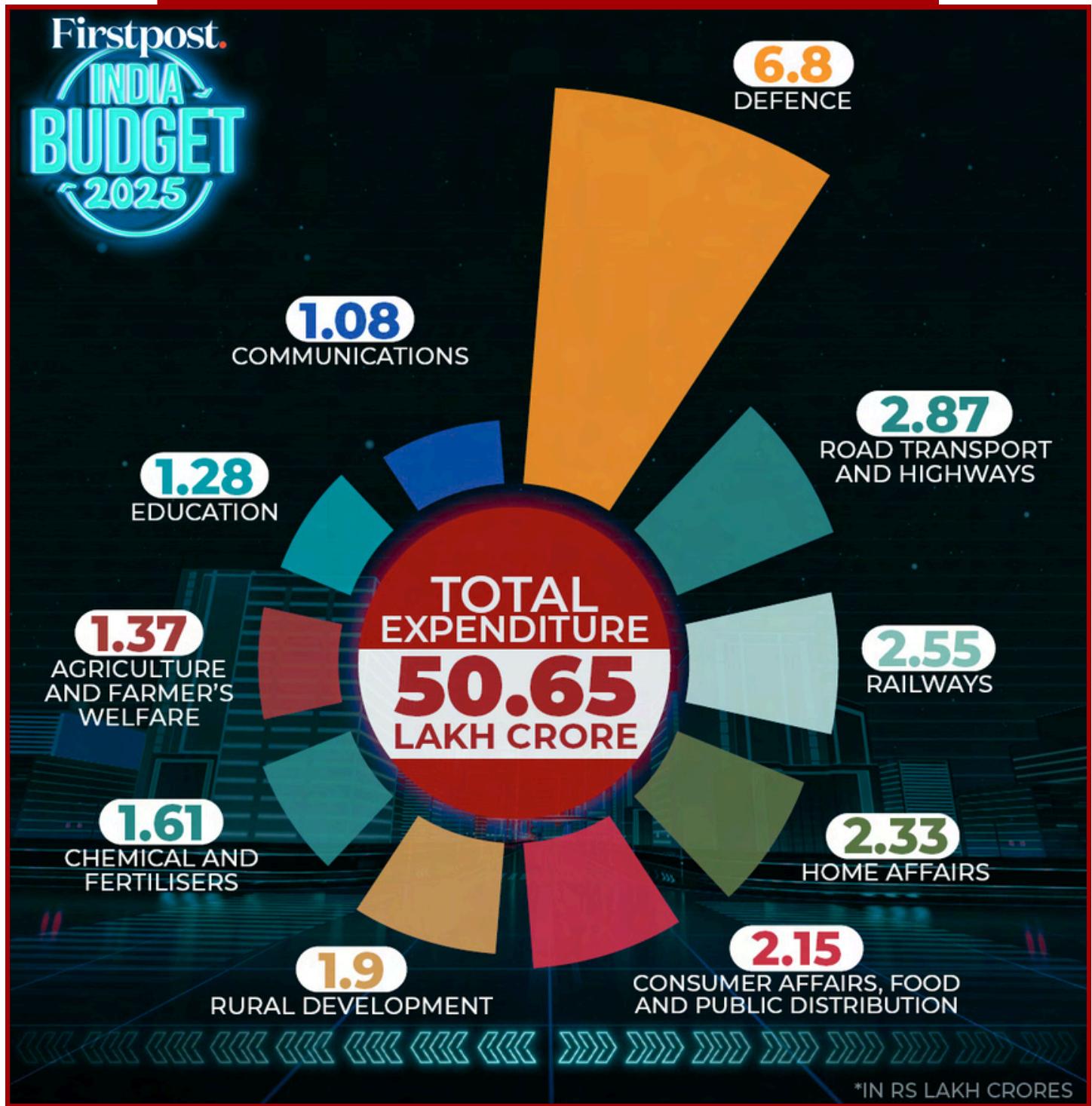
- Promotion of MRO (Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul):** Exemption for **10 years on goods for shipbuilding and ships** for breaking, along with an extension of time limits for the **export of railway goods imported for repairs**.
- Export Promotion:** Duty-free inputs for the handicraft and leather sectors to boost their competitiveness in international markets.
- Make in India:** Exemptions for key components like open cells for **LED/LCD TVs**, looms for textiles, and capital goods for the manufacturing of lithium-ion batteries for mobile phones and electric vehicles to support domestic manufacturing capabilities.
- Improved Access to Lifesaving Medicines:** The budget introduces significant exemptions and reductions in duties for a range of lifesaving drugs:
  - Addition of 36 lifesaving drugs/medicines to the exempted list.
  - Addition of 6 medicines to the 5% duty list.
  - Inclusion of 37 medicines and 13 new patient assistance programs in the exempt list, particularly focusing on medicines for rare diseases, cancer, and severe chronic diseases, making them more accessible and affordable.

## Direct Tax Reforms

7

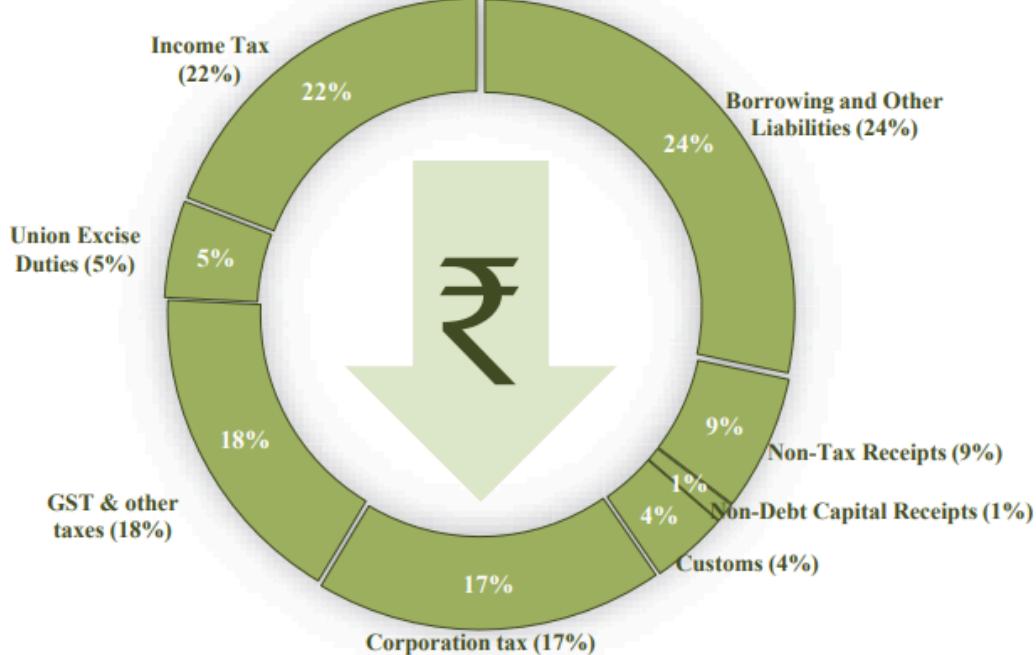
- Income Tax Relief:** No income tax for individuals with an annual income up to **₹12 lakh** under the new tax regime.
- Salaried individuals earning up to **₹12.75 lakh** per annum will pay **zero tax**, considering a standard deduction of **₹75,000**.
- Personal Income Tax Reforms:** The budget has proposed several changes aimed specifically at benefiting the middle class:
  - Taxpayers can now claim the **annual value of two self-occupied properties** instead of one, **without any conditions previously attached**.
  - The time limit to file updated returns has been extended from **two to four years**, providing more flexibility for taxpayers to update their filings.
  - The **tax deduction limit for senior citizens** has been **doubled from ₹50,000 to ₹1 lakh**.
  - The annual limit for TDS on rent has been increased from **₹2.4 lakh to ₹6 lakh**, reducing the tax burden on rental income.
- Rationalisation of TDS/TCS:** The rationalisation measures are designed to ease difficulties for taxpayers, including adjustments to rates and thresholds that reduce the immediate tax burden and administrative overhead for both individuals and businesses.

## Sector Wise Allocation in Budget FY 25-26

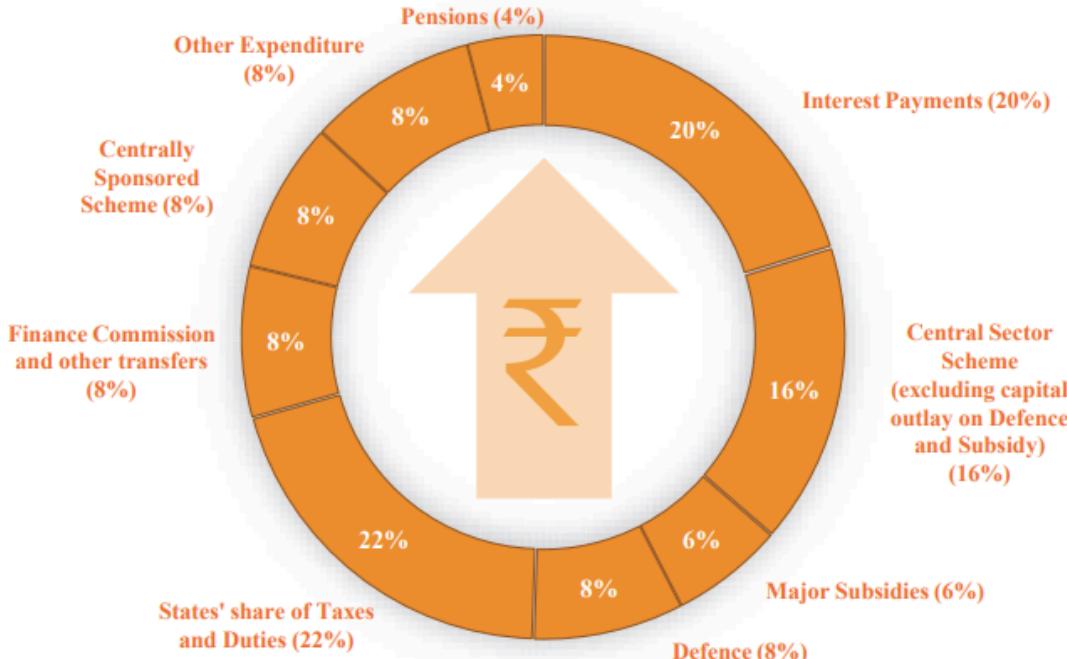


## Government Receipts

### Rupee Comes From



### Rupee Goes To

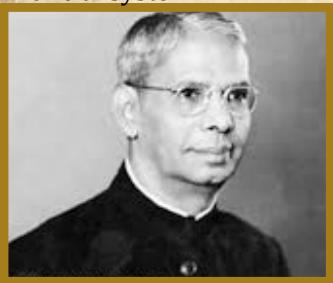


## The Union Budget of India

- The **Union Budget of India** is the annual financial statement of the Government of India, presented in **Parliament**.
- It details the estimated receipts (revenues) and expenditures of the government for the **upcoming financial year**, as required under **Article 112 of the Indian Constitution**. It serves as a blueprint for the country's economic planning.
- Traditionally presented on the last working day of February, since 2017, it has been advanced to **February 1st** to allow ample time for legislative approval before the new fiscal year commences on April 1st.
- **Presentation and Approval:** On the designated day, the **Finance Minister presents the budget in the Lok Sabha, accompanied by a budget speech** that outlines **key proposals and fiscal policies**.
- Subsequently, the budget undergoes discussions in both houses of Parliament. Post-debate, the Finance Bill and Appropriation Bill are passed, granting the government the authority to implement its fiscal measures.
- **Budget Preparation Process:** The formulation of the Union Budget is a meticulous exercise involving multiple stages:
  - **Estimation of Revenue and Expenditure:** Various ministries and departments submit their estimates, which are scrutinized and consolidated by the Ministry of Finance.
  - **Consultations:** The Finance Ministry engages with stakeholders, including industry leaders, economists, and civil society, to gather inputs and suggestions.
  - **Economic Survey:** Presented a day before the budget, it provides an overview of the economy's performance over the past year and sets the context for the budget.
  - **Cabinet Approval:** The finalized budget is presented to the Union Cabinet for approval before being tabled in Parliament.

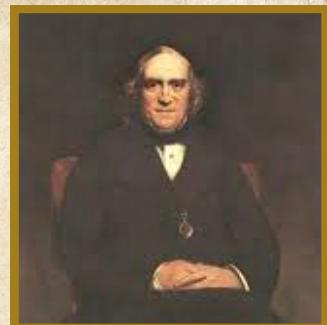
## History of Budget

**James Wilson**, the finance member of the Indian council and founder of the newspaper The Economist, presented India's first Union Budget on April 7, 1860. The Budget was presented following the Revolt of 1857 to reform the country's financial system.



**R.K. Shanmukham Chetty**

- After Independence, **the first Union Budget of independent India was presented on November 26, 1947**, by **R.K. Shanmukham Chetty**, India's first **Finance Minister**. It was an interim budget.
- **The next two budgets of the Republic of India (1950)** were presented by **John Mathai**, the then **Finance Minister**, who also introduced the concept of the **Planning Commission**.
- In **2000**, **Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha** switched the budget presentation time from **5:00 PM to 11:00 AM**.
- In **2017**, **Finance Minister Arun Jaitley merged the Railway Budget with the General Budget**, ending a 92-year-old tradition of presenting them separately.



**James Wilson**



**John Mathai**

### Statutory and Constitutional Basis

- Article 112** of the **Indian Constitution** mandates that the **President of India** must lay an annual financial statement before both houses of Parliament.
- Article 110** defines a **Money Bill**, which includes provisions related to taxation, government borrowing, and expenditure.
- Article 265** states that **no tax shall be levied or collected except by authority of law**.
- Article 266 and Article 267** deal with the **Consolidated Fund** of India and the **Contingency Fund**, respectively.
- The **Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003**, was enacted to maintain **fiscal discipline and transparency in budgeting**.

### Presenting Authority:

- The **Finance Minister of India** presents the **Union Budget in Parliament**.
- The Budget is first presented in the **Lok Sabha** and later discussed in both houses.
- The Prime Minister and President of India** review and approve the budget before its presentation.

#### • Revenue Budget:

- Includes **revenue receipts** (tax and non-tax revenue).
- Revenue expenditure** (day-to-day expenses like salaries, subsidies, interest payments).
- If expenditure exceeds revenue, the government incurs a **Revenue Deficit**.

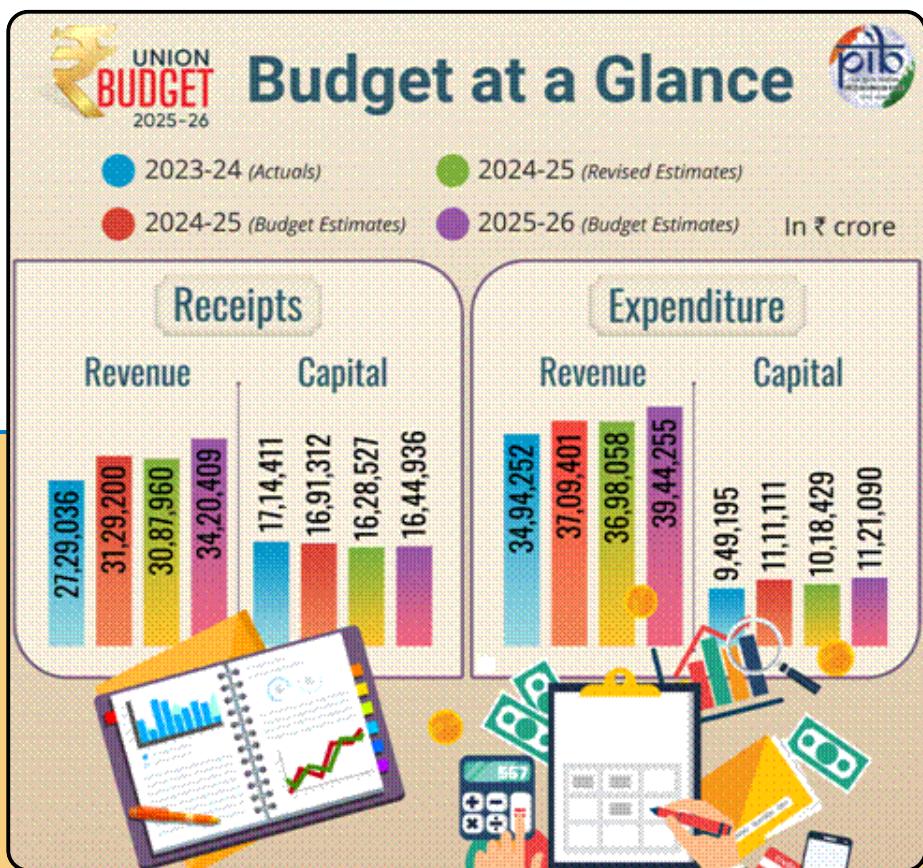


#### • Capital Budget:

- Includes **capital receipts** (loans, borrowings, disinvestments).
- Capital expenditure** (infrastructure, asset creation).
- If total expenditure exceeds revenue, the government incurs a **Fiscal Deficit**.

## Types of Budgets

- Annual Budget:** The regular **Union Budget** presented every year.
- Interim Budget:** Presented when an election year prevents the government from presenting a full-fledged budget. It includes **vote-on-account provisions** to cover government expenses until the new government is formed.
- Mini-Budget:** Sometimes presented as an **economic relief package outside the annual budget cycle**. (Example: Economic stimulus packages).



## Economic Divisions Involved:

- The Budget is primarily prepared by the Budget Division of the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance.
- Other agencies like NITI Aayog, Reserve Bank of India (RBI), and Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) also provide input.

## Most Memorable Budgets:



**1991 Budget (Manmohan Singh): Liberalization of Indian economy, LPG reforms.**



**2000 Budget (Yashwant Sinha): IT sector incentives, modernized tax system.**



## Budget Presentation Trends:

- Until 1999, the Budget was presented at 5:00 PM, a tradition from the British era.
- Since 2000, the Budget has been presented at 11:00 AM.
- Since 2017, the Budget is presented on February 1st instead of the last working day of February.

### Budget Document Components:

- Annual Financial Statement (Main Budget Document).
- Finance Bill (Taxation Provisions).
- Expenditure Budget (Ministry-Wise Spending).
- Receipts Budget (Expected Revenues).
- Appropriation Bill (Expenditure Authorizations).

## Key Contributors

Some of India's notable **Finance Ministers** who have presented multiple Union Budgets:

- Morarji Desai: 10 budgets** (highest ever).
- P. Chidambaram: 9 budgets.**
- Pranab Mukherjee: 7 budgets.**
- Manmohan Singh (1991-92):** Introduced liberalization and LPG reforms (Liberalization, Privatization, Globalization).
- Arun Jaitley (2014-2019):** Merged Railway Budget with the Union Budget and introduced GST.

**2017 Budget (Arun Jaitley): Rail Budget merger and 5% tax rate for individuals earning between ₹2.5-5 lakh.**

### Language & Accessibility:

- The Budget is presented in **both Hindi and English**.
- It is available online via the **Ministry of Finance** website and is **accessible as an app from 2021**.

## Comparison with Other Countries:

**United States:** The President submits a Budget Proposal to Congress, but decisions rest with the legislature.

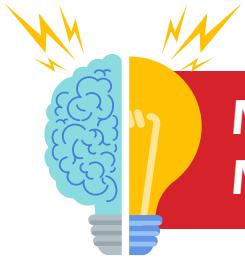
**United Kingdom:** The Chancellor of the Exchequer presents the Budget before Parliament.

**Germany:** The Federal Finance Minister presents the Budget before the Bundestag.



## Interesting Facts

- Morarji Desai** holds the record for presenting the most budgets (10 times).
- Indira Gandhi (1970-71)** is the **only woman to have presented the Union Budget** while she was also the **Prime Minister and Finance Minister**.
- Nirmala Sitharaman (2019-present)** has presented **8 budgets (7 Budgets and 1 Interim Budget)**, making her the longest-serving Finance Minister to present continuous budgets.
- Longest Budget Speech:** Nirmala Sitharaman's **2020 Budget Speech lasted 2 hours 42 minutes**.
- First Paperless Budget:** The **2021-22 Union Budget** was completely **digital due to COVID-19**.
- Smallest Budget Speech:** **800 words**, by Jawaharlal Nehru in **1958**.



## MIND MAP

### Tax Reforms

- Income Tax Relief:** No tax for individuals with **income up to ₹12 lakh** under the **new tax regime**.
- Salaried individuals earning up to **₹12.75 lakh** will pay zero tax with a **₹75,000** standard deduction.
- TDS on interest income for senior citizens raised from **₹50,000 to ₹1 lakh**.
- TDS on rental income threshold raised from **₹2.4 lakh to ₹6 lakh**.

**Definition:** Annual financial statement of the Government of India under Article 112 of the Constitution.

- Lays out revenue and expenditure estimates for the upcoming financial year.
- First budget (1860)** presented by James Wilson (British India).
- First Union Budget (1947)** presented by R.K. Shanmukham Chetty.
- Railway Budget merged with **General Budget** in 2017 by Arun Jaitley.
- Budget 2025-26** presented by **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** on February 1, 2025. Focuses on **income tax reforms, agriculture, MSMEs, investment, and exports**.

### Agriculture Reforms

- PM Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana:** Focuses on 100 low-productivity districts to boost crop yield.
- Mission for Aatmanirbharta in Pulses:** A six-year program to increase production of Tur, Urad, and Masoor to reduce imports.
- Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Expansion:** Loan limits under KCC increased from ₹3 lakh to ₹5 lakh for farmers, fishermen, and dairy farmers.

### Education and Technology

- Atal Tinkering Labs:** 50,000 new labs in government schools over 5 years to foster innovation & STEM education.
- Centre of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence:** ₹500 crore allocated to integrate AI into education.

### Support for MSMEs

- Credit Guarantee Scheme:** Credit guarantee cover increased from ₹5 crore to ₹10 crore for better capital access.
- National Manufacturing Mission:** Promotes Make in India with support for small, medium, and large-scale industries.

### Social Welfare Measures

- Support for Gig Workers:** Introduction of identity cards, e-Shram registration, and healthcare benefits under PM Jan Arogya Yojana.
- PM SVANidhi Scheme Enhancements:** Loan limits increased & UPI-linked credit cards with ₹30,000 limit introduced for street vendors.

### Urban Development Initiatives

**Urban Challenge Fund:** ₹1 lakh crore fund to develop cities as economic hubs, focusing on infrastructure & sanitation.

### Energy and Infrastructure

- Nuclear Energy Mission:** ₹20,000 crore allocated for **Small Modular Reactor (SMR)** research & development.
- Modified UDAN Scheme:** Expands regional air connectivity to 120 new destinations.

**Fiscal Discipline**

- **Fiscal Deficit:** Estimated at **4.8% of GDP** in FY-25, with a target of **4.4% for FY-26.**

**Economic Growth and Investments**

- **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** FDI limit in insurance sector increased from 74% to 100%.
- **SWAMIH Fund:** ₹15,000 crore allocated for completing 1 lakh stressed housing units.

**Legal and****Regulatory Reforms**

- **Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0:** Decriminalizes **100+ business laws** to improve the ease of doing business.
- **Income Tax Return (ITR) Update:** Time limit extended from **2 to 4 years** for filing updated returns to encourage voluntary compliance.

**Environmental Health Initiatives**

- **Customs Duty Exemptions:** Basic Customs Duty (BCD) exempted on 36 life-saving drugs for cancer, rare diseases, and chronic illnesses.
- **Electric Vehicle (EV) Support:** Exemptions on capital goods for EV and mobile battery production to boost manufacturing.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What is the new income tax exemption limit for individuals under the revised tax regime?  
 (a) ₹10 lakh                         (b) ₹12 lakh  
 (c) ₹15 lakh                           (d) ₹20 lakh
2. What is the name of the new agricultural scheme aimed at enhancing crop yield in 100 districts?  
 (a) Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana  
 (b) Bharat Krishi Yojana  
 (c) Green India Mission  
 (d) Sustainable Agriculture Project
3. By how much has the loan limit under the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) been increased?  
 (a) From ₹2 lakh to ₹4 lakh  
 (b) From ₹3 lakh to ₹5 lakh  
 (c) From ₹4 lakh to ₹6 lakh  
 (d) From ₹5 lakh to ₹7 lakh
4. What is the new TDS threshold on interest income for senior citizens?  
 (a) ₹25,000                           (b) ₹50,000  
 (c) ₹75,000                           (d) ₹1 lakh
5. Which of the following new measure has been introduced under the PM SVANidhi Scheme?  
 (a) Decreased loan limits  
 (b) Increased loan limits  
 (c) Elimination of the scheme  
 (d) Replacement with a direct cash transfer program
6. What is the fiscal deficit target for FY-26?  
 (a) 3.8% of GDP                       (b) 4.0% of GDP  
 (c) 4.4% of GDP                       (d) 4.8% of GDP
7. Who presented the first-ever budget of India in 1860?  
 (a) Lord Dalhousie                     (b) James Wilson  
 (c) William Ewart Gladstone        (d) Lord Curzon
8. Which Finance Minister merged the Railway Budget with the General Budget in 2017?  
 (a) P. Chidambaram                     (b) Nirmala Sitharaman  
 (c) Arun Jaitley                       (d) Nirmala Sitharaman
9. Under which Article of the Indian Constitution is the Union Budget presented as an annual financial statement?  
 (a) Article 110                        (b) Article 112  
 (c) Article 265                       (d) Article 266
10. After Independence, who presented the first Union Budget of independent India?  
 (a) R.K. Shanmukham Chetty        (b) John Mathai  
 (c) C.D. Deshmukh                   (d) Morarji Desai
11. What major economic reform was introduced in the 1991 Budget by Finance Minister Manmohan Singh?  
 (a) Merging of the Railway Budget with the Union Budget  
 (b) Introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST)  
 (c) Liberalization, Privatization, and Globalization  
 (d) Implementation of demonetization
12. What is the primary purpose of presenting an Interim Budget in India?  
 (a) To introduce new tax laws  
 (b) To provide economic relief packages  
 (c) To cover government expenses until new govt takes office  
 (d) To merge existing budgets
13. Who holds the record for presenting the most Union Budgets in India?  
 (a) Jawaharlal Nehru                   (b) Nirmala Sitharaman  
 (c) P. Chidambaram                     (d) Morarji Desai
14. In the United Kingdom, who is responsible for presenting the Budget?  
 (a) The Prime Minister  
 (b) The Queen  
 (c) The Chancellor of the Exchequer  
 (d) The Speaker of the House of Commons

## ANSWER KEY

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

## RBI Cuts Repo rate and its implication on Economy

### News Highlights:

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cut the **repo rate by 25 basis points (bps)** to **6.25%** for the first time in nearly five years, after holding it steady at **6.50%** for two years. The decision was taken unanimously by the **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** to **stimulate economic growth** by making borrowing cheaper for businesses and consumers.

- The repo rate cut is expected to **lower lending rates, reduce EMIs, and increase liquidity**, encouraging **investment and consumption**.
- The RBI has revised its **GDP growth projection to 6.7% for FY 2025-26**, with retail inflation estimated at **4.2%**.

### Key Decisions and Monetary Stance

#### Economic Growth Stimulation:

- The **repo rate cut** is primarily designed to make borrowing cheaper for individuals and businesses, encouraging increased spending, investment, and **consumption**, thus boosting overall **economic activity**.
- By reducing borrowing costs, the RBI aims to revive **demand**, which had been sluggish due to **high borrowing costs** from previous rate hikes.
- **Global Context:** Central banks in other economies have also adopted **accommodative monetary policies** in response to weak global growth. This aligns India's policy with global trends, facilitating trade and investment flows.

#### Inflation Management:

- The rate cut comes at a time when **retail inflation** has moderated. The RBI has been able to manage inflation within its target range of **4% (+/-2%)**. Inflation in **December 2024** was reported at **5.2%**, with expectations for a further reduction to **4.5-4.7%** in early 2025.
- **Target Inflation for 2025-26: 4.2%**. As inflation is stabilizing, the RBI has room to implement monetary policies that focus more on **growth stimulation**.

### Impact on Borrowing and EMIs

#### Easier Access to Credit:

- A **25-bps cut** in the **repo rate** will likely lower **lending rates** across the banking system, particularly on loans linked to **repo rates** and **MCLR** (Marginal Cost of Funds-based Lending Rate).
- **EMIs on Home Loans:** As the repo rate falls, banks are expected to reduce **EMIs** on home loans, vehicle loans, and personal loans. This provides immediate relief to borrowers, especially those with high EMIs.
- **Consumer Spending:** Lower borrowing costs can stimulate **consumer demand**, especially in sectors like **real estate, automobiles, and consumer goods**, where financing plays a crucial role. For example, if **home loan EMIs** are reduced by 0.25%, the potential saving for borrowers on a ₹50 lakh loan could be **₹1,500 to ₹2,000 per month**.

#### Corporate Investment:

- The cost of borrowing for businesses is expected to decline, potentially leading to increased **capital expenditure** and expansion. **SMEs** (small and medium-sized enterprises), which often face higher borrowing costs, could particularly benefit.
- **Foreign Investment:** Cheaper borrowing costs could also enhance India's attractiveness as a destination for **foreign direct investment (FDI)**, with a growing emphasis on sectors such as **infrastructure, manufacturing, and technology**.

### Monetary Policy Committee

- The **MPC was formed in 2016** following a **Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of India and the RBI**, establishing an inflation-targeting framework for monetary policy.
- The **RBI Act of 1934** was amended by **the Finance Act of 2016** to introduce a statutory and institutionalised framework for the MPC.

- **Section 45ZB** of the amended **RBI Act, 1934**, grants the central government the authority to form a six-member MPC to oversee monetary policy.
- The MPC is responsible for setting the benchmark policy rate, known as the repo rate, to keep inflation within the target range specified by the government.
- It replaced the previous **Technical Advisory Committee** that advised on monetary policy.

#### **Composition and Structure:**

- The committee consists of **six members**: the Governor of the RBI (Chairperson), the Deputy Governor in charge of monetary policy, one RBI Board-nominated official, and three external members appointed by the Government of India.
- External members serve a term of **four years**.
- Meetings require **a quorum of four members**, including either **the Governor or, in their absence, the Deputy Governor** as an RBI representative.

#### **Decision-Making Process:**

- Decisions are made by majority vote, with the Governor having a casting vote in the event of a tie.
- The MPC's decisions are binding on the RBI, ensuring a clear mandate in monetary policy.

## **Instruments of Monetary Policy**

### **Repo-Rate**

- This is the interest rate at which the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) offers overnight funds to banks, accepting government and other approved securities as collateral under the Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF).



### **Reverse Repo Rate**

- The rate at which the RBI takes in overnight funds from banks, offering eligible government securities as collateral through the LAF.



### **Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF)**

- The LAF consists of both **overnight and term repo auctions**. Term repo is intended to aid in developing the interbank term money market, which can help establish market-driven benchmarks for loan and deposit pricing, thereby enhancing the transmission of monetary policy. The RBI also conducts variable rate reverse repo auctions as needed by market conditions.



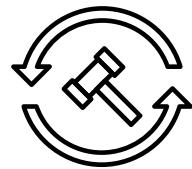
### **Bank Rate**

- The bank rate is the rate at which the RBI is willing to purchase or rediscount bills of exchange and other commercial papers. This rate is specified under Section 49 of the RBI Act, 1934. The bank rate is linked to the MSF rate and thus changes automatically in line with adjustments in the MSF and policy repo rates.



### Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR)

- CRR represents the average daily balance a bank must maintain with the RBI, expressed as a percentage of its Net Demand and Time Liabilities (NDTL), as notified by the RBI in the Gazette of India.



### Open Market Operations (OMOs)

- OMOs involve the outright purchase and sale of government securities by the RBI, aimed at injecting or absorbing long-term liquidity into or out of the banking system.



**RBI**

## Reserve Bank of India

### Interesting Facts

- **Logo Inspiration:** The RBI's emblem, featuring a tiger and a palm tree, draws inspiration from the East India Company's double mohur, symbolizing strength and stability.
- **First Indian Governor:** Sir Chintaman Dwarakanath Deshmukh was the first Indian to serve as the Governor of the RBI, holding office from 1943 to 1949.
- **Demonetization Authority:** India has experienced demonetization three times:
  - **1946:** The Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 10,000 notes were removed from circulation.
  - **1978:** The Janata party coalition demonetized the Rs. 1,000, Rs. 5,000, and Rs. 10,000 notes to combat black money.
  - **2016:** The Rs. 500 and Rs. 1,000 notes were demonetized, and new Rs. 500 and Rs. 2,000 notes were issued in exchange. The main goal of this demonetization was to curb black money.
- **Currency Design:** While the RBI is responsible for issuing currency, the design and denominations of banknotes are decided by the Government of India in consultation with the RBI.

- **Established:** April 1, 1935
- **Established under:** Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934
- Serves as the **central banking institution of India**, entrusted with regulating the nation's monetary policy and ensuring financial stability.
- Initially headquartered in **Kolkata**, the RBI permanently moved its central office to **Mumbai** in 1937.
- Originally privately owned, the bank was **nationalized in 1949**, becoming fully owned by the **Government of India**.
- **Structure and Governance**
  - **Central Board of Directors:** The RBI's affairs are governed by the **Central Board of Directors**, appointed by the Government of India, comprising the **Governor, Deputy Governors**, and other directors representing various sectors of the economy.
  - **Regional Offices:** To effectively manage its operations across the country, the RBI has **four zonal offices** located in **Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi, and Chennai**, along with several regional offices.



## MIND MAP

### Impact on Borrowing & Economy

- **Easier Credit Access:** Lending rates decline Lower EMIs.
- **Consumer Spending Boost:**
  - Housing, auto, and consumer goods demand rise.
  - Example: ₹50L loan EMI savings of ₹1,500-2,000/month.
- **Corporate Investment:**
  - Lower borrowing costs Increased Capex & business expansion.
  - SMEs benefit most (lower financing costs).
- **Foreign Investment:**
  - FDI inflows expected to rise in infrastructure, tech, manufacturing.

### Repo Rate Cut (2025)

- RBI cut repo rate by 25 bps to **6.25%** (**first cut in 5 years**).
- **MPC decision:** Unanimous To stimulate economic growth.
- **Impact:** Lower lending rates, reduced EMIs, increased liquidity.
- **GDP Growth Projection:** 6.7% (FY26).
- **Retail Inflation Target:** 4.2% (FY26).

### Reasons for Rate Cut

#### Economic Growth:

- Cheaper borrowing Higher investment & consumption.
- Demand recovery after high borrowing costs.

#### Inflation Management:

- Inflation moderating 5.2% (Dec 2024), expected 4.5-4.7% (2025).
- Controlled within RBI's 4% (+/-2%) target range.

**Global Trends:** Other central banks adopting accommodative policies.

### GDP & Inflation Outlook (FY26)

- **GDP Growth:** 6.7% (FY26), supported by services, infra, FDI.
- **Retail Inflation:** 4.2% (FY26), risks from food & energy prices.

### Potential Risks

#### Inflationary Pressures:

- Higher demand pull inflation risk.
- Rupee depreciation (₹87/USD) Costlier imports (oil, raw materials).

**Impact on Savings:** Lower FD & savings account rates (less incentive to save).

**MCLR Reduction:** Repo cut Lower bank lending rates (MCLR-linked loans).

#### Deposit Rates Decline:

- FD rates may drop (6.50%-7.25% to 6.25%-6.75%).
- Lower savings rates More spending, less saving.

### RBI & Monetary Policy

#### Key Functions:

- Monetary Policy Implementation (repo, reverse repo, CRR).
- Currency Issuance & forex management.
- Banking Regulation & Supervision.
- Government's Banker (manages public debt).

**Governor:** Sanjay Malhotra.

### Historical Repo Rate Trends

- **Pre-COVID:** 6.00%-6.25%.
- **COVID-19 Cuts:** Aggressive rate reductions for recovery.
- **May 2022 - Feb 2023:** 250 bps hikes to control inflation.
- **2025:** First rate cut post-hike cycle.

### Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)

**Established:** 2016

Inflation targeting framework.

#### Composition:

- RBI Governor
- Deputy Governor (Monetary Policy).
- 3 external experts (Govt-nominated, 4-year term).
- Economic Affairs Secretary (ex-officio).

#### Functions:

- Sets repo rate (decides borrowing costs).
- Targets inflation at 4% (+/-2%).
- Meets every 2 months.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. By how many basis points did the Reserve Bank of India cut the repo rate recently?  
 (a) 25 basis points      (b) 15 basis points  
 (c) 25 basis points      (d) 10 basis points
2. What is the target inflation rate for India for the fiscal year 2025-26, as set by the RBI?  
 (a) 3.5%      (b) 4.0%  
 (c) 4.2%      (d) 4.5%
3. Which sector is expected to benefit directly from lower borrowing costs as a result of the repo rate cut?  
 (a) Agriculture      (b) Real estate  
 (c) Government services      (d) Defense
4. How might a repo rate cut affect the value of the Indian rupee against the US dollar?  
 (a) Strengthen the rupee      (b) Weaken the rupee  
 (c) Stabilize the rupee      (d) Have no effect on the rupee
5. What impact might lower interest rates have on individual savings behavior?  
 (a) Increase the returns on savings  
 (b) Decrease the returns on savings  
 (c) No impact on the returns on savings  
 (d) Increase savings rates
6. Which of the following is the exclusive authority the RBI holds in terms of currency?  
 (a) Regulating foreign exchange  
 (b) Issuing Indian Rupees  
 (c) Setting interest rates for loans  
 (d) Controlling stock market prices
7. How many Deputy Governors does the RBI have to assist in its daily operations?  
 (a) Two      (b) Three  
 (c) Four      (d) Five
8. In what year was the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) introduced to enhance the transparency and accountability of the RBI's monetary policy framework?  
 (a) 2010      (b) 2012  
 (c) 2014      (d) 2016
9. How many members are there in the Monetary Policy Committee?  
 (a) Three      (b) Four  
 (c) Five      (d) Six
10. Who has the casting vote in the MPC in case of a tie?  
 (a) The Finance Minister  
 (b) The Governor of the RBI  
 (c) The Deputy Governor of the RBI  
 (d) An external member
11. Who is the current Governor of the Reserve Bank of India as of 2025?  
 (a) Shaktikanta Das  
 (b) Raghuram Rajan  
 (c) Urjit Patel  
 (d) Sanjay Malhotra

## ANSWER KEY

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

## Income Tax Bill, 2025

### News Highlights:

The Income-tax Bill, 2025 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on February 14, 2025, aiming to simplify and replace the Income-tax Act, 1961. The new bill is shorter, clearer, and more structured, removing obsolete provisions and simplifying tax-related regulations.

- New concept of "Tax Year" replaces the **Assessment Year (AY)** system for better clarity in tax filing.
- Virtual digital assets (cryptocurrencies) are now classified as "**property**", making them taxable under **capital gains**.
- Streamlined dispute resolution mechanisms for faster case resolution and better clarity on legal procedures.
- The bill will now be reviewed by a **Parliamentary Committee**, after which amendments may be considered before implementation from **April 1, 2026**.

### Key Features of the New Income Tax Bill, 2025

**1**

#### Simpler and More Structured Tax Law

- The **new bill is 622 pages long, 24% shorter** than the existing **823-page Income-tax Act, 1961**.
- **Number of sections reduced to 536 from 819**, eliminating redundant provisions.
- **Tables and formulae introduced** to make tax provisions **more understandable**.
- Removal of **complicated provisos (1,200)** and **explanations (900)**, cutting the **word count to 2.60 lakh** from **5.12 lakh**.

**2**

#### Introduction of "Tax Year" Instead of "Assessment Year"

- The **Tax Year** will now be the **12-month period beginning April 1**.
- This replaces the older concept where **income from the "previous year" was assessed in the "assessment year"**.

For **new businesses or professions**, the tax year will start from the **date of establishment** and **end with the financial year**.

**3**

#### Crypto and Virtual Digital Assets as Taxable Property

- **Cryptocurrencies, NFTs, and digital assets** are now **recognized as property**.
- Gains from selling **virtual digital assets (VDAs)** will be taxed **similar to other capital assets**.

**4**

#### Capital Gains Exemptions Revised

- **Section 54E**, which gave **exemptions on capital gains for transfers before April 1992**, has been **removed**.
- **Deductions streamlined**, making capital gains tax laws **more uniform and relevant to present-day transactions**.

**5**

#### Improved Dispute Resolution Mechanism

- The **Dispute Resolution Panel (DRP)** section now clarifies key aspects such as **points of determination, decision-making, and reasoning**.
- This provides **more transparency** in **dispute settlement**.

6

**Clarity on Income Sources and Deductions**

- **Deductions for salary components** (e.g., **standard deduction, gratuity, leave encashment**) are now **detailed in tabular form**.
- **Exemptions and deductions for rent paid, life and health insurance premiums, provident fund contributions, and home loans** are now more structured.
- The bill does **not specify tax rates for the old tax regime**, but **new tax regime slabs are included in tabular format**.

7

**Digital and Social Media Access for Tax Authorities**

- The bill defines "**virtual digital space**" to include:
  - **Email servers**
  - **Social media accounts**
  - **Online investment, trading, and banking accounts**
  - **Remote or cloud storage platforms**
  - **Digital application platforms**
- **Income Tax authorities can access digital records** during **surveys, searches, and seizures** to check tax compliance.

**Direct Taxes Code (DTC) (2009-2014)****Proposed by the UPA Government**

- The **Direct Taxes Code (DTC)** was **first introduced in 2009** to replace the **Income-tax Act, 1961**, aiming to **simplify tax laws and enhance compliance**.
- The **draft DTC Bill, 2010**, was introduced in Parliament, but **it was never passed** due to political and industry concerns.

**Key Features of the DTC**

- Proposed **new income tax slabs** for individuals.
- Defined **residential status** for taxation purposes.
- Introduced **General Anti-Avoidance Rules (GAAR)** to curb tax evasion.
- Recommended **rationalization of capital gains tax** to remove inconsistencies.
- Included **Controlled Foreign Corporation (CFC) rules** to tax foreign income of Indian companies.

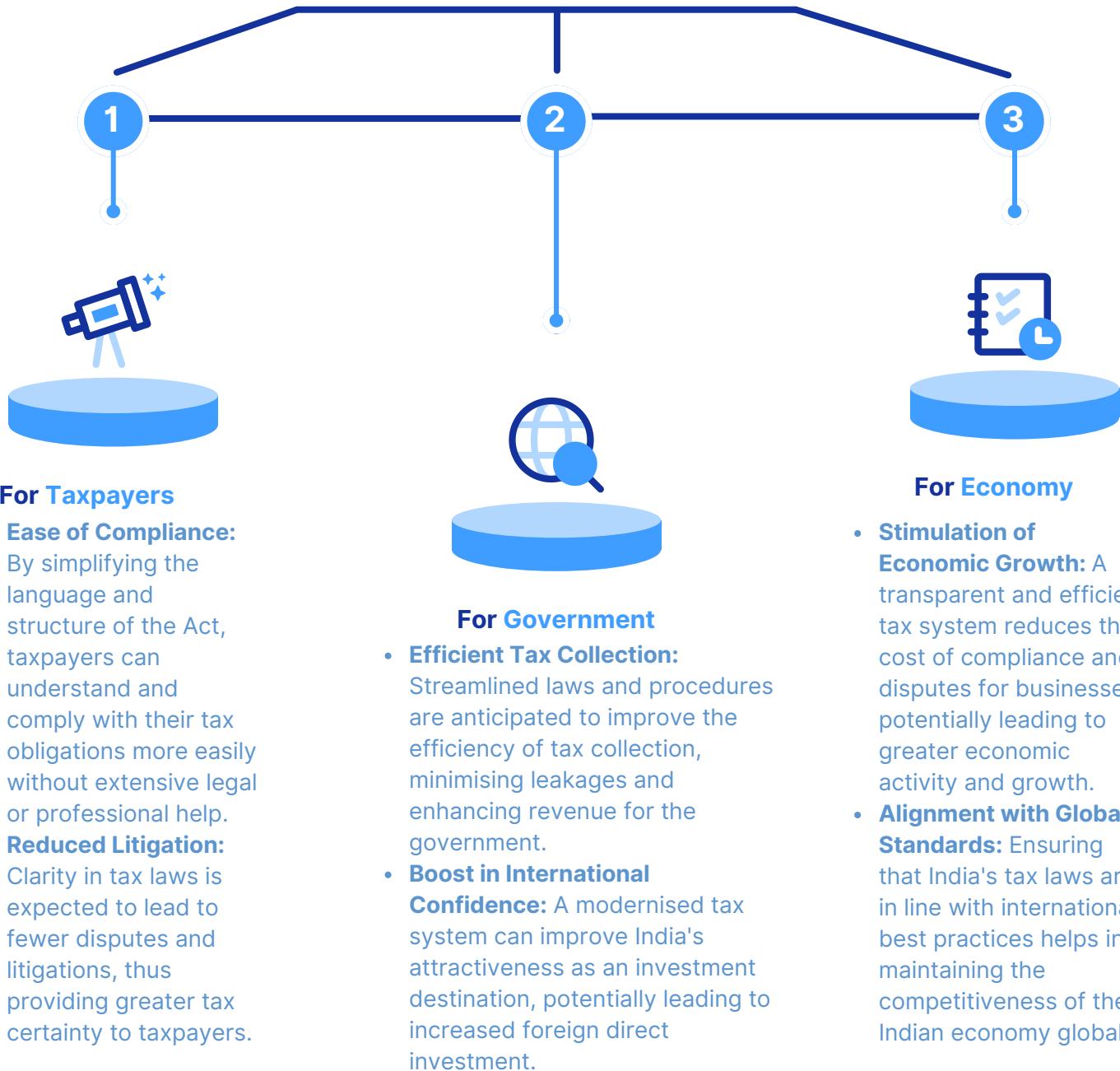
**Why Was the DTC Not Implemented?**

- **Opposition from businesses:** The corporate sector raised concerns over **higher tax rates and removal of exemptions**.
- **Frequent revisions:** The **2010 draft Bill** was revised **twice** (2012, 2014), leading to delays.
- **Change in government:** The DTC proposal **lapsed with the dissolution of the 15th Lok Sabha in 2014** after the BJP-led NDA government came to power.

**2018 Task Force on Direct Tax Law****Initiated by the NDA Government**

- In 2017, the government recognized the **need for a fresh review** of direct tax laws and constituted a **Task Force in 2018**.
- The **Task Force, led by Akhilesh Ranjan (CBDT Member)**, submitted its **report in 2019** recommending a **new Direct Tax Code (DTC)**.
- The recommendations aimed to **align Indian tax laws with global standards and simplify compliance**.

## Expected Benefits from the Overhaul of the Income Tax Act, 1961



### Impact of Tax Reforms on Revenue and Economic Growth:

#### Direct Tax to GDP Ratio:

Despite lower tax rates, the direct tax to GDP ratio has increased, indicating stronger compliance and revenue collection.

#### Corporate Tax Revenue:

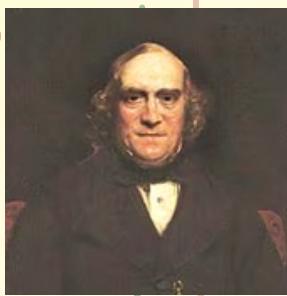
Effective corporate tax rates have reduced, leading to more competitive tax regimes and increased revenue from lower rates.

#### Personal Income Tax Growth:

Simplified slabs and better compliance have increased the taxpayer base and revenue.

## Interesting Facts on Income Tax and the Income Tax Act

1



**First Income Tax in India:**  
The first income tax was introduced in India in **1860 by James Wilson**, a British economist and politician, to recover from the financial losses after the 1857 Revolt.

2



**Income Tax Act, 1922:**  
The Income Tax Act of 1922 was the **first law that governed income tax in independent India**. It served as the backbone for taxation until the Income Tax Act of 1961 replaced it.

8

### First Income Tax Slab:

In the Income Tax Act of 1961, the first tax slab for individuals was **10%** for incomes above **₹15,001** and up to **₹30,000**.

3



**Income Tax Act, 1961:**  
The Income Tax Act of 1961 is the primary legislation that governs the taxation of incomes in India. **It was introduced with 298 sections and 23 chapters**, detailing various rules, exemptions, and procedures related to income tax collection.

### Corporate Tax Rates:

India has been reducing corporate tax rates over time. The effective tax rate for domestic companies dropped from 29.49% in 2017-18 to 25% in 2024-25 to encourage business growth and investment.

9



**Income Tax Exemptions:**  
Under the EEE (Exempt-Exempt-Exempt) regime, certain investments such as the **Public Provident Fund (PPF)** and **Employees' Provident Fund (EPF)** are exempt at all three stages: contribution, accumulation, and withdrawal.

11

### Section 80C of the Income Tax Act:

Section 80C is the most commonly used section by taxpayers to claim deductions on various investments, such as Life Insurance Premiums, Public Provident Fund, and National Savings Certificates, with an upper limit of ₹1.5 lakh/year.



**Largest Taxpayer:**  
**Reliance Industries** is often regarded as one of India's largest corporate taxpayers, contributing significant amounts to the exchequer annually.

12



6

**World's First Income Tax:**  
The first known income tax was levied in **1799** by **William Pitt the Younger** in Britain to fund the war against Napoleon.

4



**Highest Income Tax Rate:**  
Prime Minister and Congress leader Indira Gandhi saw taxation as "a major instrument to achieve greater equality of incomes and wealth". Her government in 1973-74 raised income tax rates to 97.5%, but soon had to withdraw the policy..

7



### Income Tax Day:

Income Tax Day is celebrated in India on **July 24th** every year to commemorate the establishment of the income tax system in India in 1860.



### Number of Taxpayers:

As of 2023, India has **93.7 million** income taxpayers, a significant increase from **89.8 million** in 2019-2020 due to tax reforms and simplified tax regimes.

### 13 Tax Evasion and Prosecution:

The longest sentence for tax evasion under Indian law is seven years of imprisonment, as per the Income Tax Act, 1961.



15

### Direct Tax to GDP Ratio:

India's Direct Tax to GDP ratio has been consistently increasing, showing a healthy compliance level, despite reduced tax rates. It is a critical indicator of the country's economic strength.



### Black Money and Income Disclosure: India's Income Declaration Scheme (IDS) of 2016

of 2016 allowed individuals to disclose undeclared income (black money) by paying tax on it, which resulted in the declaration of ₹65,250 crores worth of undisclosed wealth.

14



### E-Filing of Income Tax:

India introduced the e-filing of income tax returns in 2006, revolutionizing the way taxpayers interacted with the Income Tax Department.

16



### Filing Income Tax Returns:

Filing of Income Tax Returns (ITR) became compulsory for individuals earning more than ₹2.5 lakh annually in India.

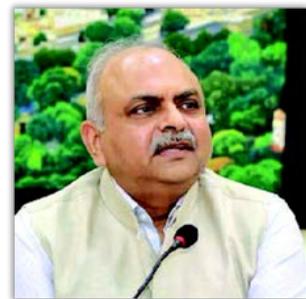
17



सत्यमेव जयते

## Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)

- The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) is a government body responsible for administering India's direct tax laws.
- Established in 1963, CBDT has played a key role in reforming the Indian taxation system.
- Notable reforms include:
  - Introduction of the presumptive income scheme.
  - Rationalization of tax rates under the Income Tax Act.
  - Recent involvement in the implementation of the GST regime.
- CBDT oversees the collection and management of taxes on capital gains and dividends.



**Ravi Agrawal**  
CBDT Chairman

- Organisational Structure Authority:** As a part of the Department of Revenue under the Ministry of Finance, CBDT is the highest tax administrative body in India responsible for the formulation and administration of direct tax laws.
- Leadership:** Headed by **Chairman Ravi Agrawal**, with a team of members responsible for specific areas like legislation, administration, revenue, audit, and IT. **Key Responsibilities Policy Formulation:** CBDT formulates policies for the administration of direct taxes in India, aiming to increase tax compliance and optimise revenue collections.
  - Administrative Functions:** Overseeing the Income Tax Department, which conducts assessments, collections, and enforcement of direct tax laws.
  - International Taxation:** Handling bilateral tax treaties and matters related to international taxation to prevent tax evasion and double taxation.



### Key Features of the Bill

- **Tax Year Concept:**
  - Fixed 12-month period (Apr 1 - Mar 31) No "Assessment Year" confusion.
  - **New businesses:** Tax year starts from date of establishment.
- **Crypto & Digital Assets Taxation:**
  - Gains from Virtual Digital Assets (VDAs) taxed as capital assets.
- **Capital Gains Exemptions:**
  - Section 54E (pre-April 1992 exemptions) removed.
- **Dispute Resolution Improvements:**
  - Clarity on legal procedures, faster settlements.
- **Structured Deductions & Income Sources:**
  - Salary deductions, rent, insurance, PF, loans in tabular format.
- **Digital & Social Media Tax Compliance:**
  - Tax authorities can access digital records (emails, banking, social media, cloud storage, etc.).

### Income Tax Bill, 2025

- **Introduced:** Feb 14, 2025 (Lok Sabha).
- **Replaces:** Income-tax Act, 1961 (effective from April 1, 2026).

#### Objectives:

- **Simplification:** Shorter, clearer, structured law.
- **Obsolete Provisions Removed:** Sections reduced (819 → 536).
- **New Tax Filing System:** "Tax Year" replaces "Assessment Year".
- **Digital Asset Taxation:** Crypto & NFTs classified as "property".
- **Faster Dispute Resolution:** More transparent legal process.

### Impact & Advantages

- **For Taxpayers:**
  - Easier compliance due to simpler language.
  - Less litigation (elimination of ambiguous provisions).
  - More transparency in deductions & exemptions.
- **For Businesses:**
  - Uniform tax period Easier record-keeping.
  - Clear capital gains tax rules for startups & digital asset holders.
- **For Government:**
  - Faster dispute resolution Reduces backlog.
  - Better tax evasion tracking through digital access.

Reform Attempt	Year	Proposed By	Key Features
Direct Taxes Code (DTC)	2010-2014	UPA Govt.	GAAR, new capital gains tax, simplified structure
Task Force on Direct Tax Law	2018-2019	NDA Govt.	Lower tax rates, dispute resolution reforms
Direct Taxes Code (DTC)	2010-2014	UPA Govt.	GAAR, new capital gains tax, simplified structure
Interim Budget Review of IT Act	2024	NDA Govt.	Six-month review of IT Act, 1961
Income-tax Bill, 2025	2025	NDA Govt.	Shorter law, new tax year, digital assets taxation, improved dispute resolution

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What new concept replaces the older "Assessment Year" (AY) system in the Income-tax Bill, 2025?
  - (a) Fiscal Year
  - (b) Calendar Year
  - (c) Tax Year
  - (d) Financial Year
  
2. When was the Direct Taxes Code (DTC) first introduced to replace the Income-tax Act, 1961?
  - (a) 2005
  - (b) 2009
  - (c) 2012
  - (d) 2014
  
3. Which anti-tax evasion rule was proposed under the Direct Taxes Code (DTC)?
  - (a) Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT)
  - (b) General Anti-Avoidance Rules (GAAR)
  - (c) Tax Deduction at Source (TDS)
  - (d) Capital Gains Exemption Rule
  
4. Which of the following key tax feature was included in the Direct Taxes Code (DTC) for foreign income of Indian companies?
  - (a) Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA)
  - (b) Controlled Foreign Corporation (CFC)
  - (c) Goods and Services Tax (GST)
  - (d) Dividend Distribution Tax (DDT)
  
5. Who led the 2018 Task Force on Direct Tax Law that recommended a new Direct Tax Code (DTC)?
  - (a) Raghuram Rajan
  - (b) Arvind Subramanian
  - (c) Akhilesh Ranjan
  - (d) Shaktikanta Das
  
6. Who proposed the Direct Taxes Code (DTC) (2010-2014)?
  - (a) NDA Government
  - (b) UPA Government
  - (c) Reserve Bank of India
  - (d) Central Board of Direct Taxes
  
7. What is Direct Tax Law?
  - (a) A law governing indirect taxes like GST and customs duty
  - (b) A law that regulates taxes levied directly on individuals and businesses
  - (c) A law that only applies to multinational corporations
  - (d) A taxation system applicable only to exports and imports
  
8. What is the Income-tax Bill, 2025?
  - (a) A new bill aimed at simplifying and replacing the Income-tax Act
  - (b) A proposal to increase tax rates for all income groups
  - (c) A law to introduce a new wealth tax on high-net-worth individuals
  - (d) A temporary measure to provide tax relief for one year

## ANSWER KEY

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

# FELICITATION CEREMONY AT LE NAGPUR



# International Affairs

## Paris AI Summit 2025

### News Highlights:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited France for a three-day visit, where he was a **co-chair** of the **AI Action Summit** alongside French President Emmanuel Macron.

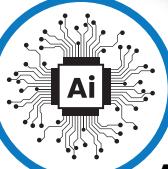
- The Paris AI Action Summit, held on February 10-11, 2025, at the Grand Palais in Paris, convened a diverse group of stakeholders, including heads of state, industry leaders, academics, and civil society representatives.
- The summit aimed to establish a collaborative framework for the development and governance of artificial intelligence (AI) that is inclusive, ethical, and sustainable.

### Key Outcomes: Paris AI Summit, 2025



#### Bilateral Talks with President Macron:

- Following the summit, PM Modi will engage in high-level discussions with **President Macron** on several fronts, including the **2047 Horizon Roadmap**, which aims to strengthen the **India-France strategic partnership** by **2047**.
- The two leaders also reviewed **economic cooperation**, focusing on collaborations in the **technology sector** and **nuclear research**.
- A highlight of the visit was the **inauguration of India's new consulate in Marseille**, strengthening diplomatic ties between the two nations.



#### AI Action Summit:

- The AI Action Summit in Paris is part of a global series of initiatives on AI, following meetings in the **UK (2023)** and **South Korea (2024)**. India, as a representative of the Global South, will voice the concerns and priorities of developing nations regarding AI.
- The summit will address AI safety, its public interest, and its governance, with a focus on equitable access and sustainable development.



**International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) Visit:** PM Modi is scheduled to inaugurate the **new Indian consulate in Marseille** and visit the **International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER)**, a significant project focused on **nuclear fusion research** and energy generation.



**Tribute to Indian Soldiers:** As part of his visit, PM Modi will pay homage to **Indian soldiers** who sacrificed their lives during **World War I and II** at the **Mazargues War Cemetery**, in **Marseille** which honors the contributions of Indian soldiers in both world wars.

## Key Outcomes Expected from the Summit:

- **Joint Declaration on Inclusive AI:** The summit concluded with a "Statement on Inclusive and Sustainable Artificial Intelligence for People and the Planet," endorsed by **61 nations**, including China.
- However, the absence of support from key players like **the U.S. and the U.K.** highlighted challenges in achieving a unified global approach to AI governance.
- **Public Interest AI Platform:** Launch of a platform that bridges **public-private efforts** to promote a **trustworthy AI ecosystem**, fostering **transparency, capacity building, and financing**.
- **Human-Centric AI:** Emphasis on creating **AI that respects human rights**, ensuring its **ethical and safe deployment**, particularly in tackling AI-driven inequalities.
- **AI for Global Challenges:** Promotion of **AI for multilingual models** and **federated computing**, aimed at addressing global challenges like climate change and economic disparities.

## Major Announcements and Initiatives

- **Current AI Foundation:** France announced a **\$400 million endowment for the Current AI foundation**, aimed at supporting the creation of AI public goods, including high-quality datasets and open-source tools. This initiative is backed by nine countries and various private sector partners.
- **Coalition for Sustainable AI:** A collaborative effort led by **France, the UN Environment Programme, and the International Telecommunication Union**, focusing on aligning AI development with environmental sustainability goals.

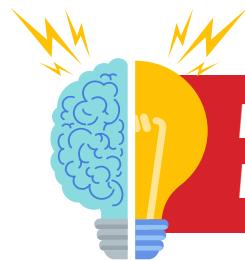
## Challenges in AI Development

- **High Energy Consumption:** AI's energy consumption, especially in **data centers**, is projected to rise significantly, potentially reaching **21%** of global energy use by 2030, with AI models like **ChatGPT** consuming **10 times** more energy than typical searches.
- **People-Centric AI vs. AI-Centric Development:** A delicate balance must be struck between **people-centric AI** (ethical, inclusive) and the push for **automation-driven AI**, which can lead to job losses, data privacy concerns, and a growing digital divide.
- **Security and Misinformation Risks:** Insecure and low-cost AI models pose risks such as **data breaches, misinformation, and deepfakes**, stressing the need for robust **AI governance** to prevent exploitation and security threats.

### PARIS

- Paris is located in the northern-central part of France, along the Seine River. The city is divided into 20 arrondissements (districts), which are arranged in a spiral shape starting from the Louvre Museum.
- **Ancient Origins:** Paris was originally known as Lutetia during Roman times and was founded around the **3rd century BC** by a Celtic tribe known as the **Parisii**.
- **Capital of France:** Paris became the capital of France after the **Franks** settled there in the 5th century.
- **French Revolution:** Paris played a central role during the **French Revolution** (1789-1799), especially with events like the **Storming of the Bastille** on **July 14, 1789**, which is celebrated annually as **Bastille Day**.
- **19th Century:** During the **Haussmannian renovation** (1853-1870), the city's layout and infrastructure were redesigned under **Baron Haussmann**, leading to Paris' modern boulevards and public spaces.





## MIND MAP

### Paris AI Summit

- **Date & Venue:** Feb 11-12, 2025, Paris, France.
- **Co-Chairs:** PM Narendra Modi & President Emmanuel Macron.
- **Focus Areas:** AI innovation, governance, future of work.
- **India's Role:** Voice of Global South, advocating for equitable AI access.
- **Bilateral Talks:** Strengthening India-France relations (tech, nuclear research, economy).

### Key Highlights

- **Paris AI Action Summit:**
  - 3rd global AI summit (UK - 2023, South Korea - 2024).
  - Topics: AI safety, public interest, governance, sustainable development.
- **Bilateral Talks with Macron:**
  - 2047 Horizon Roadmap Long-term India-France strategic plan.
  - Tech & Nuclear Research Collaboration.
  - New Indian Consulate in Marseille inaugurated.
- **ITER Visit (Nuclear Research):**
  - PM Modi to visit ITER project, focused on nuclear fusion energy.
- **Tribute to Indian Soldiers:**
  - Mazargues War Cemetery visit Honors Indian soldiers in WWI & WWII.
- **Élysée Palace Dinner (Feb 11):**
  - Hosted by Macron, attended by leaders, CEOs, tech executives.

### Expected Outcomes from AI Summit

- **Joint Declaration on Inclusive AI:**
  - 58 countries (India, China included, US & UK excluded).
  - Promotes ethical & sustainable AI.
- **Public Interest AI Platform:**
  - Bridges public-private AI efforts, enhances transparency & funding.
- **Human-Centric AI:**
  - Focus on AI ethics, human rights, reducing AI-driven inequalities.
- **AI for Global Challenges:**
  - AI applications for climate change, multilingual AI, economic disparity reduction.

### AI Challenges Discussed

- **High Energy Consumption:**
  - AI projected to consume 21% of global energy by 2030.
  - AI models like ChatGPT use 10x more energy than typical searches.
- **People-Centric AI vs. Automation:**
  - Balancing ethics & automation to prevent job losses, privacy risks.
- **Security & Misinformation Risks:**
  - AI misuse in data breaches, deepfakes, misinformation.

### 2nd India-France AI Policy Roundtable

- **AI Governance & Ethics:**
  - Techno-legal frameworks for responsible AI use.
- **Cross-Border AI Collaboration:**
  - Data sovereignty & interoperable AI infrastructure.
- **Sustainable AI:**
  - Energy-efficient AI models to reduce environmental impact.

### PM Modi's Bilateral Engagements

- Post-Summit Visit to the US Bilateral talks with President Donald Trump.
- **Focus Areas:** Strengthening India-USA relations (trade, defense, tech).

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. In which French city will PM Modi inaugurate India's new consulate?  
 (a) Marseille                         (b) Lyon  
 (c) Bordeaux                         (d) Toulouse
2. Where will PM Modi pay tribute to Indian soldiers who fought in World War I and II?  
 (a) Normandy Beach                 (b) Bastille Square  
 (c) Arc de Triomphe                 (d) Mazargues Cemetery
3. Which two countries hosted the first two AI summits before the 2025 Paris AI Action Summit?  
 (a) Germany and Japan             (b) UK and South Korea  
 (c) China and Canada              (d) US and France
4. Which two countries are notably absent from the Joint Declaration on Inclusive AI?  
 (a) India and China                 (b) US and UK  
 (c) Japan and Germany             (d) Canada and Brazil
5. What major AI initiative was launched at the summit to promote a trustworthy AI ecosystem?  
 (a) Public Interest AI Platform  
 (b) AI Blockchain Initiative  
 (c) AI Investment Fund  
 (d) Global AI Certification Authority
6. What was the original name of Paris during Roman times?  
 (a) Lutetia                             (b) Parisius  
 (c) Gallia                             (d) Gaul
7. What is the purpose of the 2047 Horizon Roadmap discussed between PM Modi and President Macron?  
 (a) To reduce carbon emissions in both countries by 2047  
 (b) To strengthen the India-France strategic partnership by 2047
8. (c) To double trade between India and France by 2047  
 (d) To end all military cooperation by 2047
9. Which war's Indian soldiers were honored by PM Modi during his visit to the Mazargues War Cemetery?  
 (a) World War I  
 (b) World War II  
 (c) Both World War I and II  
 (d) The Franco-Prussian War
10. What significant project did PM Modi visit that is focused on nuclear fusion research and energy generation?  
 (a) CERN Large Hadron Collider  
 (b) European Space Agency  
 (c) International Energy Agency  
 (d) International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER)
11. What river flows through Paris?  
 (a) Rhone                             (b) Loire  
 (c) Seine                             (d) Thames
12. Who were the original founders of Paris?  
 (a) The Romans  
 (b) The Normans  
 (c) The Parisii, a Celtic tribe  
 (d) The Franks
13. When did Paris become the capital of France?  
 (a) After the fall of the Roman Empire  
 (b) After the Franks settled there in the 5th century  
 (c) During the Renaissance period  
 (d) In the 17th century during the reign of Louis XIV

## ANSWER KEY

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

## Trump Imposes Sanctions on ICC Over Israel Investigations

### News Highlights:

Former U.S. President **Donald Trump** has imposed sanctions on the **International Criminal Court (ICC)**, targeting the court over its investigation into Israel.

- The sanctions come after the ICC issued an arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu** concerning his military actions in Gaza in response to the **Hamas attacks** in October 2023. Trump criticizes the ICC's actions, calling them a "**dangerous precedent**" and "**illegitimate**".

### International Criminal Court

- Established in 2002**, the ICC is a **permanent international court** with a mandate to prosecute individuals for **genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity**. ICC President is **Judge Tomoko Akane**.
- The **Rome Statute**, which established the ICC, came into force in 2002 after being ratified by **60 countries**. However, **the U.S.** is not a party to the statute, limiting its relationship with the court.
- Jurisdiction**: The ICC has jurisdiction over crimes committed after **July 1, 2002**, but only when the crimes occur within the territory of a **State Party** or involve its nationals. Additionally, the court only acts when **national courts** are unwilling or unable to prosecute the crimes, based on the **complementarity principle**.
- The **ICC** is located in **The Hague**, Netherlands, and is funded by both contributions from **State Parties** and voluntary donations.



#### Principles and Governance:

- Complementarity**: The ICC exercises jurisdiction over crimes only when national legal systems are unable or unwilling to prosecute the accused. This ensures that national courts have priority, and the ICC only intervenes when necessary.
- Security Council Role**: The **UN Security Council** can refer cases to the ICC if it suspects crimes against humanity, war crimes, or genocide, particularly in situations where states are unable or unwilling to handle the cases.

#### ICC's Investigations and Impact:

- The **ICC** has conducted various investigations into crimes committed in conflict zones worldwide, including **Afghanistan, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo**. However, the court has faced consistent opposition from countries like the **U.S.** and **Israel**, which do not recognize its authority.
- Trump's executive order** targets ICC officials involved in the investigation into Israeli war crimes, which includes the investigation into **Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** and **former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant** for alleged war crimes during military operations in Gaza following the **Hamas attacks** of October 2023.

## ICC Orders against Netanyahu

- The **International Criminal Court (ICC)** issued arrest warrants for **Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant in November 2024, following an investigation initiated by ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan in May 2024.
- This investigation was in response to alleged war **crimes and crimes** against humanity committed during military operations in Gaza.
- The **ICC's Pre-Trial Chamber I** found **reasonable grounds** to believe that **Netanyahu and Gallant** were responsible for acts including the **war crime of starvation as a method of warfare**, and crimes against humanity such as murder, persecution, and other inhumane acts.
- Separately, South Africa filed a case against **Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in December 2023**, alleging violations of the **Genocide Convention** concerning Israel's actions in Gaza.
- The ICJ, distinct from the ICC, addresses **disputes between states rather than prosecuting individuals**.
- In **January 2024**, the ICJ issued provisional measures requiring **Israel to prevent acts of genocide** against **Palestinians in Gaza** and to ensure the provision of humanitarian assistance.

## U.S. and ICC Relations

- The **U.S.** has historically opposed the ICC. Although it participated in the negotiations leading to the creation of the court, it did not sign the **Rome Statute** that established the ICC in **1998**.
- The **U.S.** was one of only seven countries to vote against the statute, and President **Bill Clinton** signed the treaty in 2000 but never submitted it for **Senate ratification**. In **2002**, President **George W. Bush** withdrew the U.S. from the treaty by sending a note to the **United Nations**.
- The **U.S.** has regularly accused the ICC of **abusing its power** by issuing **arrest warrants** against **Israeli officials** and others connected to U.S. military actions.
- The **U.S.** has long opposed ICC investigations into American and allied actions, accusing the court of being politically biased. The American Service-Members' Protection Act (ASPA) of 2002 allows the Pentagon to take action to free any American or U.S. ally detained by the ICC.
- **Israel**, like the U.S., does not recognize the ICC's authority and has consistently opposed the tribunal's actions against its officials.
- **Trump's administration** has previously imposed sanctions on **ICC officials**, notably in 2020, over the court's probe into alleged war crimes by **U.S. troops in Afghanistan**.
- The **U.S.** has regularly accused the ICC of **abusing its power** by issuing **arrest warrants** against **Israeli officials** and others connected to U.S. military actions.



## MIND MAP

### Overview & Key Events

- Date: **2025**
- Action: Trump imposes sanctions on ICC for **investigating Israel**.
- Reason: ICC issued arrest **warrant for Israeli PM Netanyahu** over military actions in **Gaza (2023 Hamas attacks response)**.
- **Sanctions:**
  - Bans ICC officials from entering the U.S.
  - Freezes financial assets of those involved in the investigation.

### Key Highlights

#### Background & U.S.-ICC Relations

- **ICC Established: 2002 (Rome Statute)**  
Prosecutes war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide.
- **U.S. & ICC:**
  - Not a member (never ratified Rome Statute).
  - **2002: George W. Bush** withdrew from the **ICC treaty**.
  - **2020:** Trump previously sanctioned ICC officials over Afghanistan war crimes probe.
- **U.S. Legal Stance:**
  - American Service-Members' Protection Act (2002) Allows military action to free any U.S. citizen or ally detained by ICC.

#### ICC's Response & Global Reaction

- **ICC's Stance:**
  - Condemns sanctions as threats to independent judicial work.
  - ICC President Tomoko Akane warns of severe impact on investigations.
- **Criticism & Support:**
  - **Critics:**
    - Undermines global accountability for war crimes.
    - Limits ICC's ability to hold perpetrators responsible.
  - **Supporters (U.S., Israel):**
    - Argue ICC is politically biased.
    - Maintain ICC lacks jurisdiction over non-member states (U.S., Israel).

#### ICC's Jurisdiction & Functioning

- **Jurisdiction:**
  - Crimes after July 1, 2002.
  - Acts when national courts fail to prosecute war crimes (Complementarity Principle).
- **Governance & Role:**
  - Funded by State Parties & voluntary contributions.
  - UN Security Council can refer cases.

#### U.S.-Israel Relations & ICC Tensions

- **Israel & ICC:**
  - Not a member Rejects ICC jurisdiction over its military actions.
  - Consistently opposed ICC probes against its officials.
- **U.S. & Israel:**
  - U.S. historically protects Israel from ICC scrutiny.
  - Trump's move aligns with past opposition to ICC cases involving allies.

#### ICC Investigations & Impact

- **Past ICC Cases:**
  - Afghanistan, Sudan, DR Congo, Ukraine, Israel-Palestine conflict.
- **Current Case:**
  - Israel-Gaza War (2023): Netanyahu & Yoav Gallant facing war crime allegations.
  - Trump's sanctions target ICC officials handling the case.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which international treaty established the International Criminal Court (ICC)?
  - (a) Geneva Conventions
  - (b) Rome Statute
  - (c) Treaty of Versailles
  - (d) Helsinki Accords
  
2. Who is the current President of the International Criminal Court (ICC)?
  - (a) Karim Khan
  - (b) Antonio Guterres
  - (c) Tomoko Akane
  - (d) Fatou Bensouda
  
3. Which country, like the U.S., does not recognize the ICC's authority and opposes its investigations?
  - (a) Canada
  - (b) Germany
  - (c) Israel
  - (d) France
  
4. Which U.S. President signed the Rome Statute in 2000 but never submitted it for Senate ratification?
  - (a) Bill Clinton
  - (b) George W. Bush
  - (c) Barack Obama
  - (d) Donald Trump
  
5. Which U.S. President officially withdrew the U.S. from the ICC treaty in 2002?
  - (a) Bill Clinton
  - (b) Barack Obama
  - (c) George W. Bush
  - (d) Donald Trump
  
6. Where is the headquarters of the International Criminal Court (ICC) located?
  - (a) Geneva, Switzerland
  - (b) New York, USA
  - (c) The Hague, Netherlands
  - (d) Paris, France
  
7. What year was the Rome Statute, which established the International Criminal Court (ICC), created?
  - (a) 1995
  - (b) 1998
  - (c) 2000
  - (d) 2002
  
8. What act allows the Pentagon to take action to free any American or U.S. ally detained by the ICC?
  - (a) American Service-Members' Protection Act
  - (b) American Freedom Act
  - (c) Patriot Act
  - (d) Defense Authorization Act
  
9. What were Israeli officials Netanyahu and Gallant accused of by the ICC in 2024?
  - (a) Acts of terrorism
  - (b) Economic crimes
  - (c) War crimes and crimes against humanity
  - (d) Espionage
  
10. Which court addresses disputes between states, as demonstrated by South Africa's case against Israel?
  - (a) International Criminal Court (ICC)
  - (b) United Nations Security Council
  - (c) European Court of Human Rights
  - (d) International Court of Justice (ICJ)
  
11. What provisional measures did the ICJ issue against Israel in January 2024?
  - (a) To prevent acts of genocide against Palestinians
  - (b) To cease all diplomatic relations with Palestine
  - (c) To increase military presence in Gaza
  - (d) To compensate victims of conflicts financially

## ANSWER KEY

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

## 4 Years of Myanmar Military Coup

### News Highlights:

Four years after the February 1, 2021, military coup in Myanmar, the country remains engulfed in a protracted civil war, political instability, and economic collapse.

- The military junta faces widespread armed resistance from ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) and the People's Defence Forces (PDFs), coordinated by the unrecognized National Unity Government (NUG).
- ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus (5PC) has failed to make progress, and Myanmar's neighbors, including China, India, and Thailand, are struggling to formulate a unified response.
- China's influence has grown significantly, filling the power vacuum left by the West's waning interest in Myanmar.

### History of Coups in Myanmar

### Military Coup

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**1948–1962**

After gaining independence on January 4, 1948, Myanmar adopted a parliamentary democracy. The initial years were marked by internal conflicts, including ethnic insurgencies and political divisions. Despite these challenges, the country maintained a democratic framework until 1962.

**1962–1988**

On March 2, 1962, General Ne Win led a military coup, overthrowing the civilian government. The military justified the coup by citing the need to prevent the country's disintegration amid political and ethnic unrest. Ne Win established the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) and instituted a one-party socialist state.

**1988–2010**

Widespread dissatisfaction with military rule culminated in the 8888 Uprising, a series of pro-democracy protests in August 1988. The military brutally suppressed the movement, resulting in thousands of deaths. In the aftermath, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) assumed power, later rebranding as the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).

**2015**

**Transition Towards Democracy (2011–2020)**

In 2011, the military initiated a series of political reforms, leading to the establishment of a quasi-civilian government. Thein Sein, a former general, was appointed as president, and the government enacted measures such as releasing political prisoners, relaxing censorship, and engaging in peace talks with ethnic armed groups.

These reforms culminated in the 2015 general elections, where the NLD secured a decisive victory, and Aung San Suu Kyi assumed a de facto leadership role.

However, the military retained significant power, controlling key ministries and holding 25% of parliamentary seats, as mandated by the 2008 constitution.

During this time, Aung San Suu Kyi emerged as a prominent pro-democracy leader, founding the National League for Democracy (NLD) in 1988. Despite winning a landslide victory in the 1990 elections, the military refused to relinquish power, and Suu Kyi was placed under house arrest for much of the next two decades.

## The 2021 Military Coup

2021

- On **February 1, 2021**, the **Tatmadaw (Myanmar's military)** orchestrated a **coup d'état**, detaining **Aung San Suu Kyi**, **President Win Myint**, and other senior NLD officials.
- The military declared a state of emergency, transferring all legislative, executive, and judicial powers to **Commander-in-Chief Min Aung Hlaing**.
- The coup was justified by allegations of widespread **electoral fraud in the November 2020 elections**, where the **NLD had achieved another landslide victory**.
- These claims were widely disputed by international observers and **the Union Election Commission**, which found no evidence of significant irregularities.



## Myanmar's Political and Security Landscape

### The Military Regime and the Resistance

- The coup was initiated after **Myanmar's military (Tatmadaw) rejected the results of the November 2020 elections**, which had given **Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) a landslide victory**.
- Since then, Myanmar has been divided into **three primary zones**:
  - Central Myanmar:** Under junta control, but facing periodic resistance.
  - Peripheral Regions:** Strongholds of the resistance, where the **military struggles to assert control**.
  - Conflict Zones:** Regions where **daily battles and airstrikes** occur, leading to civilian casualties.
- The resistance is led by:
  - Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs)** – Well-established groups representing ethnic minorities.
  - People's Defence Forces (PDFs)** – Militias formed after the coup, fighting under the banner of the NUG.

**Humanitarian and Human Rights Crisis:** As of **January 29, 2025**, the **Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) reported**:

- 28,405 people arrested** by the junta, **21,683 still detained**, **6,224 people killed** by military forces, **Over 3.3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs)**.

**Reports of war crimes and human rights violations**, including:

- Indiscriminate bombings and airstrikes** on civilian areas.
- Extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and torture**.
- Junta soldiers facing desertions, injuries, and low morale**.
- According to international observers, **Myanmar is undergoing a slow but steady fragmentation**, with regions slipping out of the junta's control.

### Myanmar's Political Future: Junta's Election Plan

- The junta has proposed **new elections as a pathway to legitimacy**.
- However, over half of Myanmar's territory is outside military control**, making it nearly impossible to conduct free and fair elections.
- UN Special Rapporteur Tom Andrews** criticized the idea, stating: "You cannot hold an election after deposing a democratic government in an unconstitutional coup and continuing to execute opposition leaders."
- Despite this, the junta **attempted elections in 2024 but failed**, raising questions on whether another attempt in 2025 will succeed.

## Chronology of India-Myanmar Relations

- **1826:** The **Treaty of Yandabo** is signed, concluding the **First Anglo-Burmese War**. As a result, territories including **Assam, Manipur, Rakhine (Arakan), and the Taninthayi coast** are ceded to **British India**, delineating parts of the modern India-Myanmar boundary.
- **1937:** Burma is **separated from British India**, becoming a distinct colony administered **directly from London**.
- **January 4, 1948:** Myanmar gains **independence from British rule**; India promptly recognises the new nation, establishing formal diplomatic relations.
- **1951:** India and Myanmar sign a **Treaty of Friendship**, reinforcing their commitment to mutual cooperation and peace.
- **1962:** A **military coup in Myanmar leads to strained relations**; India expresses concern over the suppression of democracy.
- **1987:** Indian Prime Minister **Rajiv Gandhi visits Myanmar**, aiming to strengthen bilateral ties and discuss areas of mutual interest.
- **1993:** India initiates a policy shift, engaging with Myanmar's military regime to address shared concerns, including border security and economic cooperation.
- **February 1, 2021:** Another **military coup occurs in Myanmar**; India expresses deep concern and calls for the restoration of democracy.
- **June 2021:** A **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** is signed between **India and Myanmar** for cooperation in the area of pulses, aiming to enhance agricultural trade.
- **September 2024:** India extends an unprecedented invitation to **Myanmar's anti-junta forces** to attend a seminar in New Delhi, signaling a potential shift in diplomatic engagement.
- **2024:** India continues investments in **Myanmar's infrastructure**, including the **Sittwe Port and Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project**.
- **2025:** India balances relations with both **Myanmar's military junta and pro-democracy groups**, prioritising border security, trade, and connectivity while advocating for a peaceful resolution to Myanmar's crisis.

## Myanmar

- **Location:** Myanmar, officially the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, is the northwestern most country in mainland Southeast Asia.
- It shares borders with China to the north and northeast, Laos to the east, Thailand to the southeast, the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal to the south and southwest, Bangladesh to the west, and India to the northwest.
- **Area:** Covering approximately 676,578 square kilometers, Myanmar is the largest country in mainland Southeast Asia.
- **Population:** As of recent estimates, Myanmar has a population of approximately 55 million people.
- **Ethnic Diversity:** The nation is home to over 100 ethnic groups. The Bamar (68%) are the largest ethnic group, with significant populations of Shan, Karen, Rakhine, and Mon communities.
- **Languages:** Burmese serves as the official language, but numerous indigenous languages are spoken across the country.
- **Religion:** The majority of the population practices Theravada Buddhism, which plays a central role in Myanmar's cultural and spiritual life.





## MIND MAP

### Overview & Current Status

- Coup Date:** Feb 1, 2021      **Ongoing civil war, economic collapse, political instability.**
- Key Players:** Military Junta (Tatmadaw) vs. Resistance (EAOs, PDFs, NUG).
- ASEAN's Mediation (5PC) Failed**      No ceasefire, no dialogue.
- China's Influence Grows as Western focus shifts elsewhere.

### Political & Security Crisis

- Regions of Control:**
  - Central:** Junta holds power, faces resistance.
  - Peripheral:** Resistance strongholds.
  - Conflict Zones:** Daily battles, airstrikes.
- Casualties & Humanitarian Impact:**
  - 28,405 arrested, 6,224 killed, 3.3M displaced.
  - Reports of war crimes, bombings, extrajudicial killings.

### Junta's Election Plan

- Attempted elections (2024) failed**      No control over half of Myanmar.
- Criticism:** UN calls it "delusional."

### Crisis Timeline

**Feb 1, 2021** - Military coup, Aung San Suu Kyi arrested  
**2022** - Armed resistance escalates  
**2024** - PDF drone attacks junta HQ  
**Feb 2025** - US halts aid, affecting exiled Myanmar journalists

### Regional & Global Response

- ASEAN (5PC)** **Ineffective:** Junta ignores ceasefire calls.
- India:** Balances border security, refugee crisis, China's influence.
- China:** Expands control via economic projects & ceasefire mediation.
- Thailand:** Limited influence due to internal issues.
- UN & West:** Sanctions ineffective, focus shifted to Ukraine & Gaza.

### India-Myanmar Relations Timeline

#### Key Historical Events

- 1826:** Treaty of Yandabo      British annex parts of Myanmar.
- 1948:** Myanmar's independence      India recognizes new govt.
- 1951:** India-Myanmar Friendship Treaty.
- 1993:** India starts engaging with Myanmar's military regime.

#### Modern Diplomatic & Economic Ties

- 2019:** Direct flights (Kolkata-Yangon).
- 2021:** India condemns military coup.
- 2024:**
  - India invites anti-junta forces to New Delhi.
  - Continued investment in Sittwe Port, Kaladan Project.
- 2025:** Balancing relations with junta & democracy groups.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following significant event occurred in Myanmar on February 1, 2021?
  - (a) A military coup
  - (b) A general election
  - (c) The signing of a peace treaty
  - (d) An economic reform
  
2. Who are the main groups forming the resistance against the military regime in Myanmar?
  - (a) National League for Democracy and National Unity Party
  - (b) Ethnic Armed Organizations and People's Defence Forces
  - (c) National Unity Government and Myanmar Police Force
  - (d) ASEAN and United Nations
  
3. Which of the following are the main areas of Myanmar currently controlled by the junta?
  - (a) Urban centers and northern regions
  - (b) Eastern territories and border regions
  - (c) Entire coastal areas
  - (d) Central Myanmar and peripheral regions
  
4. Which project is a key focus of China's involvement in Myanmar?
  - (a) Belt and Road Initiative
  - (b) China-Myanmar Economic Corridor
  - (c) Trans-Asian Railway
  - (d) Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank
  
5. Which of the following was the main issue that complicates India's regional diplomacy in light of the Myanmar crisis?
  - (a) Cross-border insurgencies
  - (b) Its economic policies
  - (c) Its nuclear policy
  - (d) Its stance on climate change
  
6. Which of the following natural disasters struck Myanmar on May 14, 2023?
  - (a) Earthquake
  - (b) Cyclone
  - (c) Flood
  - (d) Wildfire
  
7. What was the outcome of Myanmar's military junta's election attempt in 2024?
  - (a) Successful transition of power.
  - (b) It failed, raising questions about future attempts.
  - (c) Increased international recognition.
  - (d) Stabilization of the economy.
  
8. What type of climate does Myanmar have?
  - (a) Tropical monsoon
  - (b) Temperate
  - (c) Desert
  - (d) Continental
  
9. What is the official language of Myanmar?
  - (a) English
  - (b) Thai
  - (c) Burmese
  - (d) Bengali
  
10. Who are the largest ethnic group in Myanmar?
  - (a) Shan
  - (b) Karen
  - (c) Bamar
  - (d) Mon
  
11. Which religion is predominantly practiced in Myanmar?
  - (a) Islam
  - (b) Christianity
  - (c) Hinduism
  - (d) Buddhism
  
12. When did Myanmar gain independence from British rule?
  - (a) 1948
  - (b) 1952
  - (c) 1962
  - (d) 1975
  
13. Which international organization is Myanmar a member of, focusing on regional cooperation in Southeast Asia?
  - (a) European Union
  - (b) United Nations
  - (c) ASEAN
  - (d) NATO
  
14. What ancient civilizations flourished in Myanmar before the establishment of the Pagan Kingdom?
  - (a) Pyu and Mon
  - (b) Khmer and Thai
  - (c) Maurya and Gupta
  - (d) Sumerian and Akkadian
  
15. Which of the following significant infrastructure project was inaugurated between India and Myanmar in 2001?
  - (a) The India-Myanmar railway link
  - (b) The Mekong-Ganga Cooperation project
  - (c) The Indo-Myanmar energy pipeline
  - (d) The Tamu-Kalewa-Kalemyo Friendship Road

## ANSWER KEY

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

## Illegal immigrants from USA to India

### News Highlights:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his visit to the US, announced that India will take back all its nationals who are staying illegally in the United States, reaffirming India's policy on undocumented immigrants.

- This statement follows increased deportations by the Trump administration and ongoing discussions on immigration policy between the two countries.
- While the US estimates around 18,000 undocumented Indian immigrants, the Indian government stated that it does not maintain official data on illegal migrants in the US.
- The deportation process has already begun, with 200 Indian nationals flown back on a US military aircraft, marking a significant shift in immigration enforcement.

### Conflicting Estimates on Undocumented Indians in the US

- The number of undocumented Indian immigrants in the US is highly debated, with research organizations providing different estimates:
  - Pew Research Center (2022): 725,000 undocumented Indians, making India the third-largest source of illegal immigrants after Mexico and El Salvador.
  - Migration Policy Institute (MPI): 375,000 undocumented Indians, ranking India fifth among countries of origin.
- Despite these reports, the Indian government stated in Parliament that it does not maintain official data, as these individuals legally exited India before overstaying their visas or entering the US illegally.

### US Immigration Crackdown and Rising Deportations

- The Trump administration has intensified efforts to deport undocumented migrants, including those from India.
- Key developments in deportations:
- A US military aircraft recently deported 200 Indian nationals after their nationality was confirmed by Indian authorities.
- Since June 2024, the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has deported over 160,000 individuals, with India being one of the recipient countries.
- Nearly 43,000 Indian nationals were apprehended at the US border in 2023, a massive increase from 1,000 in 2020.

### Surge in Illegal Crossings and Asylum Applications

- Border apprehensions of Indian nationals rose from 1,000 in 2020 to 43,000 in 2023.
- Asylum applications from Indian nationals skyrocketed from 5,000 in 2021 to 51,000 in 2023.
- Shifting entry points:
  - Earlier, most Indian migrants entered through Mexico, but increasingly, they are crossing via Canada's northern border.

### US Immigration Policy Tightening:

- President Trump has vowed to take strict action on illegal immigration, making it a major issue in his re-election campaign.
- US Secretary of State Marco Rubio reiterated that America will "no longer be taken advantage of" and that it is the responsibility of each nation to take back its illegal immigrants.

### India's Official Position on Illegal Immigration

- India has consistently maintained that it will take back its nationals who are illegally staying abroad, provided their Indian citizenship is verified.
- Indian External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated:
  - If they are indeed Indian nationals and they are overstaying or are undocumented, we will take them back once proper verification is conducted."

### Prime Minister Modi's Assurance to Trump:

- Modi confirmed that **India is committed to repatriating all verified undocumented Indians** and emphasized that both countries must **cooperate in dismantling human trafficking networks**.
- "**The bigger fight is against the entire system that misleads ordinary families into illegal migration,**" he added.

## 01 IMMIGRATION AND FOREIGNERS BILL, 2025:

This comprehensive legislation seeks to replace four outdated acts:

- Foreigners Act, 1946
- Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920
- Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939
- Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act, 2000

#### Objectives:

- Streamline and modernize immigration processes.
- Define roles and responsibilities of immigration officers and the Bureau of Immigration.
- Enhance national security through stricter visa and registration regulations.

#### Key Provisions:

- Entry and Stay Regulations:** Foreign nationals entering India without valid documents may face imprisonment up to five years and fines up to ₹5 lakh.
- Forgery Penalties:** Use of forged travel documents can lead to imprisonment ranging from two to seven years and fines between ₹1 lakh to ₹10 lakh.
- Institutional Responsibilities:** Educational and medical institutions admitting foreign nationals must share details with designated registration officers.
- Overstay Penalties:** Foreign nationals overstaying their visas may face imprisonment up to three years, fines up to ₹3 lakh, or both.
- Carrier Liabilities:** Transport operators bringing in foreigners without valid documents can be fined up to ₹5 lakh, with potential seizure of the transport vehicle upon non-payment.



## 02 CITIZENSHIP (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2019 (CAA)

This act amended the Citizenship Act, 1955, providing an accelerated pathway to Indian citizenship for persecuted religious minorities—Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians—from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan who entered India on or before December 31, 2014.

#### Key Features:

- Excludes Muslims from the specified countries from the accelerated citizenship pathway.
- Does not grant eligibility to refugees from other neighboring countries, such as Sri Lankan Tamils.
- Marks the first instance where religion has been used as a criterion for citizenship under Indian law.

## 03 EMIGRATION ACT, 1983:

This act regulates the emigration of Indian citizens for overseas employment, particularly to Gulf countries.

### Key Provisions:

- **Emigration Clearance:** Mandatory for workers traveling to 18 Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries.
- **Recruiting Agents Regulation:** Prevents fraudulent practices by recruitment agencies.
- **Penalties:** Unauthorized recruitment can lead to imprisonment up to one year, fines, or both.



## 04 OVERSEAS MOBILITY (FACILITATION AND WELFARE) BILL, 2024

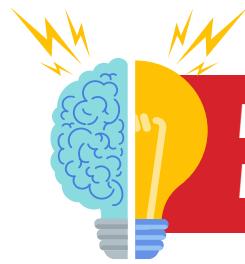
The Indian government is actively considering the enactment of the **Overseas Mobility (Facilitation and Welfare) Bill, 2024**, aiming to modernize and streamline the country's emigration framework. This proposed legislation seeks to replace the outdated **Emigration Act of 1983**, addressing contemporary global migration dynamics and ensuring the welfare of Indian citizens seeking employment abroad.

### Background and Rationale

- The existing Emigration Act of 1983 has been deemed insufficient in addressing the complexities of current international migration trends. Challenges such as illegal migration, exploitation of workers, and the need for a structured migration process have underscored the necessity for legislative overhaul. Recent incidents, including the deportation of over 100 illegal Indian immigrants from the United States, have further highlighted the urgency for a robust legal framework to safeguard the interests of Indian emigrants.

### Key Objectives of the Bill

- **Promotion of Safe and Orderly Migration:** Establishing a structured system that facilitates legal and transparent overseas employment opportunities for Indian workers.
- **Welfare and Protection of Emigrants:** Implementing measures to prevent exploitation, ensure legal assistance, and provide repatriation support for migrants in distress.
- **Regulation of Recruitment Processes:** Strengthening oversight of recruitment agencies to curb fraudulent practices and ensure ethical recruitment standards.



## MIND MAP

### Modi's US Visit & Immigration Policy

- **Modi assured Trump:** India will repatriate all verified undocumented Indians.
- **US Crackdown:** 200 Indians deported on US military aircraft.
- **Conflicting Estimates:**
  - **Pew (2022):** 725,000 undocumented Indians.
  - **MPI:** 375,000 undocumented Indians.
  - **Indian Govt:** No official data, as migrants left legally but overstayed visas.

### US Immigration Crackdown & Rising Deportations

- **Trump's strict policies:** Deportations surged.
- **Border apprehensions (Indian nationals):**
  - 2020: 1,000    2023: 43,000.
- **Asylum applications:**
  - 2021: 5,000    2023: 51,000.
- **New Trends:**
  - Shift from Mexico to Canada's border for illegal entry.

### India's Stance on Illegal Immigration

- **Policy:** India will take back its nationals after verification.
- **Modi's focus:** Cracking down on human trafficking networks.

### Indian Immigration Laws & Reforms

#### Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025 (Replaces 4 old laws)

- **Objectives:**
  - Stricter visa & registration rules.
  - Modernized immigration process.
- **Key Provisions:**
  - Illegal entry/stay: Up to 5 years in prison, ₹5 lakh fine.
  - Forgery penalties: 2-7 years jail, ₹1-10 lakh fine.
  - Overstay penalties: Up to 3 years jail, ₹3 lakh fine.
  - Carrier liabilities: Transport operators fined ₹5 lakh.

### Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA)

- Fast-track citizenship for Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan.
- Excludes: Muslims, Sri Lankan Tamils.

### Emigration Act, 1983 (Regulates overseas employment)

- ECR (Emigration Check Required) for 18 countries.
- Regulates recruiting agents to prevent fraud.

### Overseas Mobility (Facilitation & Welfare) Bill, 2024 (Replacing Emigration Act, 1983)

- **Key Goals:**
  - Promotes safe, legal overseas migration.
  - Stronger migrant protection & legal aid.
  - Stricter recruitment regulations.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which is the following is the purpose of the Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025?
  - To amend existing immigration laws
  - To reinforce the current laws without changes
  - To replace four outdated immigration-related acts
  - To introduce new immigration categories
  
2. Which of the following countries are specifically mentioned in the CAA where persecuted minorities can come from?
  - Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar
  - Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan
  - Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Bangladesh
  - Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Myanmar
  
3. What group is notably not granted eligibility under the CAA?
 

(a) Sri Lankan Tamils	(b) Pakistani Buddhists
(c) Afghanistan Hindus	(d) Bangladeshi Christians
  
4. Until what date must the persecuted minorities have entered India to be eligible under the CAA?
 

(a) December 31, 2012	(b) December 31, 2014
(c) January 1, 2015	(d) December 31, 2010
  
5. Which of the following communities is NOT included in the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 for an accelerated pathway to Indian citizenship?
 

(a) Hindus	(b) Sikhs
(c) Muslims	(d) Parsis
  
6. What does the Overseas Mobility (Facilitation and Welfare) Bill, 2024 aim to replace?
 

(a) The Citizenship Act, 1955	(b) The Passport Act, 1967
(c) The Emigration Act, 1983	(d) The Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999
  
7. Which of the following is the overarching goal of the proposed changes in the Overseas Mobility (Facilitation and Welfare) Bill, 2024 regarding Indian emigrants?
  - To discourage all overseas employment
  - To maximize government revenue from emigration fees
  - To ensure the safety, welfare, and legal protection of Indian emigrants
  - To increase the number of temporary workers abroad
  
8. Which of the following is one of the key objectives of the proposed Overseas Mobility (Facilitation and Welfare) Bill, 2024?
  - To increase the taxation on remittances
  - To deregulate the recruitment processes
  - To promote safe and orderly migration
  - To decrease the number of Indians working abroad
  
9. What is the maximum imprisonment penalty for foreign nationals entering India without valid documents under the new law?
 

(a) Two years	(b) Three years
(c) Four years	(d) Five years
  
10. Which act was amended to provide an accelerated pathway to Indian citizenship for certain persecuted religious minorities?
 

(a) Citizenship Act, 1955	(b) Naturalization Act, 1965
(c) Immigration Act, 1971	(d) Refugee Act, 1980
  
11. What significant first does the amended Citizenship Act introduce in Indian law?
 

(a) Religion as a criterion for citizenship	(b) Language as a criterion for citizenship
(c) Economic status as a criterion for citizenship	(d) Educational qualification as a criterion for citizenship

## ANSWER KEY

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

## USA-China Trade War and Its Impact on India

### News Highlights:

The renewed US-China trade war under President Donald Trump has intensified economic tensions, presenting both opportunities and challenges for India.

- **Trump has imposed a 10% tariff on Chinese imports**, leading to **retaliatory tariffs from China** on US coal, LNG, crude oil, and electric trucks.
- **India stands to benefit from trade diversions and increased exports**, as American companies seek alternative suppliers.
- However, **Trump has labeled India as the "biggest tariff abuser"**, making it imperative for India to negotiate favorable trade terms during **Modi's anticipated visit to the US**.

### Tariffs Imposed by the USA on China in Previous and Current Trump Admin

The United States has implemented several rounds of tariffs on Chinese imports, primarily under **Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974**, targeting China's trade practices.

#### Initial Tariffs (2018):

- **July 6, 2018: 25% tariff on \$34 billion worth of Chinese goods**, focusing on industrial machinery, electronics, and transportation equipment.
- **August 23, 2018: 25% tariff on an additional \$16 billion of imports**, including semiconductors, chemicals, and railway equipment.
- **September 24, 2018: 10% tariff on \$200 billion worth of Chinese products**, later increased to **25% in May 2019**, covering consumer goods like furniture, electronics, and textiles.



#### Recent Development:

- President **Donald Trump** announces a **10% tariff on all Chinese imports**, effective **February 4, 2025**. This action is justified by concerns over China's alleged role in the fentanyl crisis, with claims that fentanyl is being trafficked into the U.S. via Mexico and Canada.
- **February 4, 2025**: The imposed tariffs take effect, leading China to retaliate with tariffs of **15% on U.S. coal and liquefied natural gas and 10% on oil and agricultural machinery**, effective **February 10, 2025**.
- **February 10, 2025**: China's retaliatory tariffs become effective, escalating trade tensions between the two nations.
- **February 21, 2025**: China's Vice Premier **He Lifeng** expresses concerns over U.S. tariffs during a video call with U.S. Treasury Secretary **Scott Bessent**.
- Both parties discuss significant issues in China-U.S. economic relations and agree to maintain communication on mutual concerns.
- **February 24, 2025**: A bipartisan group of U.S. lawmakers introduces legislation aimed at strengthening trade enforcement laws against perceived unfair Chinese trade practices.
- The proposed bill seeks to empower the **U.S. Commerce Department with tools to counteract China's economic strategies**, including addressing issues like the dumping of underpriced goods and cross-border subsidization.
- **February 25, 2025**: Chinese manufacturers accelerate efforts to relocate production to countries such as **Malaysia, India, Vietnam, and Cambodia** in response to the renewed tariffs.
- This strategy aims to mitigate the impact of U.S. tariffs and maintain access to the American market.

### Impact of the USA-China Trade War on India

- **Export Diversification:** The imposition of tariffs on Chinese goods by the U.S. has led American importers to seek alternative suppliers. India has the potential to increase its exports to the U.S. in **sectors such as electrical machinery, auto components, and pharmaceuticals.** This shift could enhance India's trade balance and open new markets for its products. Notably, **between FY2020 and FY2024, India's merchandise exports to the U.S. rose by 46%, from \$53.1 billion to \$77.5 billion.**
- **Attracting Foreign Investment:** Multinational companies aiming to reduce their dependence on China are exploring alternative manufacturing hubs. India, with its **large labor force and growing market**, is positioning itself as a viable destination for these investments. The value of announced **U.S. and European greenfield investments** into India surged by **approximately \$65 billion, or 400%, between 2021 and 2022.**
- **Strengthening Pharmaceutical Exports:** The U.S. remains a significant market for India's pharmaceutical exports, amounting to **about \$9 billion in the last fiscal year.** Despite potential U.S. tariffs on pharmaceutical imports, Indian drugmakers are expected to remain competitive in the generics market. Industry leaders believe that shifting all manufacturing to the U.S. is impractical due to capacity and cost issues, suggesting that Indian companies will maintain their competitiveness even with tariffs.
- **Technological and Resource Dependencies:** The tariffs have highlighted vulnerabilities in global technological supply chains. The U.S. technology sector, heavily reliant on critical materials like rare earth elements—of which China refines over 90%—faces potential resource scarcity. **This scenario presents an opportunity for India to develop and supply alternative sources of these essential materials, thereby reducing global dependence on China.**

## India's Trade with USA and China

### Trade with the United States:

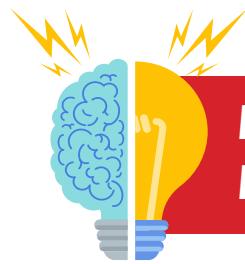
- **Total Bilateral Trade:** Approximately \$120 billion.
- **Trade Surplus:** India enjoys a surplus of \$35.3 billion with the U.S., primarily due to diversified exports.

### Trade with China:

- **Total Bilateral Trade:** Approximately \$118 billion.
- **Trade Deficit:** India faces a significant deficit of \$85.1 billion with China, largely due to heavy reliance on Chinese imports

### Impact of the USA-China Trade War on India

- **Infrastructural and Regulatory Hurdles:** Despite the potential benefits, India's ability to attract businesses relocating from China is hindered by infrastructural deficits and complex regulatory frameworks. Competing nations like Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaysia have often been more agile in attracting these businesses.
- **Trade Relations with the U.S.:** While there are opportunities to enhance trade with the U.S., India's trade relationship with America has faced challenges, including concerns over trade deficits and market access. Negotiations to reduce tariffs on specific American products are ongoing to ease trade tensions.
- **Economic and Market Volatility:** The trade war has introduced uncertainty into global markets, affecting economic growth and stability. India, being integrated into the global economy, has had to navigate these uncertainties, balancing its trade policies to safeguard national interests.



## MIND MAP

### India's Gains from the Trade War

- **Trade Diversion Benefits:** India is an alternative supplier for US businesses.
  - **Growth in exports:**
    - Electronics & IT hardware (smartphones, semiconductors).
    - Auto components & EV parts.
    - Pharmaceuticals & chemicals.
    - Textiles & garments.
- **Foreign Investment Boost:**
  - US companies shifting supply chains to India.
  - **PLI (Production-Linked Incentive)** schemes attracting investments.
- **Stronger US-India Trade Relations:**
  - **Bilateral trade:** \$120 billion in FY 2023-24.
  - India's **trade surplus** with US: \$35.3 billion.

### Trump imposes 10% tariff on Chinese imports (Feb 4, 2025)

China retaliates with 10-15% tariffs on US coal, LNG, oil, and machinery (Feb 10, 2025).

#### Escalation:

- **Feb 21, 2025:** China expresses concerns; US, China agree to maintain communication.
- **Feb 24, 2025:** US lawmakers propose tougher trade enforcement laws.
- **Feb 25, 2025:** Chinese manufacturers relocate to India, Vietnam, Malaysia to bypass tariffs.

### Challenges for India

- **US Retaliation Risks:**
  - Trump calls India "biggest tariff abuser" Possible tariffs on **Indian IT services, textiles**.
  - **H-1B visa** restrictions could hurt Indian professionals.
- **China's Countermeasures:**
  - Tariffs on US EVs may disrupt Tesla, affecting India's EV exports.
  - China's export restrictions on **tungsten & rare metals** Impact on **India's electronics & defense sectors**.

### India's Diplomatic Strategy

- **Key Trade Negotiation Points (Modi-Trump Meeting):**
  - Tariff exemptions for Indian exports.
  - Better market access for Indian goods.
  - Strengthening defense & technology ties to counter China.
- **Balancing US-China Relations:**
  - Avoiding dependence on US while maintaining trade ties with China.
  - Positioning as a neutral alternative for global supply chains.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following sectors in India are likely to see growth due to trade diversions from the US-China trade war?
  - Agriculture and food products
  - Electronics and auto components
  - Renewable energy and biotechnology
  - Real estate and construction
  
2. What was the trade value between India and the US in FY 2023-24?
 

(a) \$50 billion	(b) \$120 billion
(c) \$200 billion	(d) \$300 billion
  
3. Which of the following Indian exports are at risk of facing US tariffs due to trade tensions?
  - IT services and textiles
  - Spices and handicrafts
  - Machinery and automotive parts
  - Pharmaceuticals and biotech products
  
4. What has China imposed export controls on that is critical for India's sectors?
  - Textiles and garments
  - Tungsten and rare metals
  - Agricultural products
  - Pharmaceuticals
  
5. What was the primary reason President Donald Trump cited for imposing a 10% tariff on all Chinese imports in 2025?
  - Intellectual property theft
  - Human rights violations
  - Trade imbalance
  - China's alleged role in the fentanyl crisis
  
6. What action did China take in response to the U.S.'s new tariffs in 2025?
  - Imposed retaliatory tariffs on U.S. coal, LNG, and crude oil
  - Severed all diplomatic relations with the U.S.
  - Filed a complaint with the World Trade Organization
  - Decreased its exports to the U.S. by half
  
7. What is the nature of India's trade balance with China?
 

(a) Trade surplus	(b) Balanced trade
(c) Trade deficit	(d) No significant trade
  
8. What strategy are Chinese manufacturers adopting in response to the renewed tariffs imposed by the U.S. in 2025?
  - Ceasing all exports to the U.S.
  - Relocating production to other countries
  - Negotiating bilateral trade agreements with the U.S.
  - Increasing prices of exported goods to the U.S.
  
9. What percentage of rare earth elements, critical for the technology sector, does China refine?
 

(a) Over 50%	(b) Over 70%
(c) Over 80%	(d) Over 90%
  
10. By how much did the value of announced U.S. and European greenfield investments into India increase between 2021 and 2022?
 

(a) 300%	(b) 400%
(c) 500%	(d) 600%

## ANSWER KEY

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

## India-France Relations

### News Highlights:

In February 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to France marked a significant enhancement in bilateral relations.

- Key outcomes included a joint declaration on Artificial Intelligence, the launch of the **India-France Year of Innovation 2026**, and agreements to **bolster cooperation in nuclear energy** and defense sectors.
- Additionally, both nations committed to collaborative projects in the **Indo-Pacific region** and inaugurated a new **Indian consulate in Marseille**, reflecting deepened strategic and cultural ties.

### Key Highlights of the Meeting

1

#### Artificial Intelligence (AI) Collaboration:

Both nations committed to deepening cooperation in AI research and applications, emphasizing ethical and responsible AI development.

2

**Innovation Initiative:** The launch of the "**India-France Year of Innovation 2026**" was symbolized by the **unveiling of an official logo**, reflecting a shared dedication to fostering innovation and scientific collaboration.

3

**Digital Sciences Center:** A **Letter of Intent** was signed between **India's Department of Science and Technology (DST)** and **France's National Institute for Research in Computer Science and Automation (INRIA)** to establish an **Indo-French Center for Digital Sciences**, promoting research and development in the digital domain.

4

**Startup Support:** An agreement was inked to host **10 Indian startups at France's premier startup incubator, Station F**, providing a platform for entrepreneurial growth and cross-border collaboration.

5

**Nuclear Energy Cooperation:** The renewal of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India's Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and France's Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) reinforced the partnership in nuclear energy. Additionally, a Declaration of Intent was signed to collaborate on advanced modular and small modular reactor technologies.

6

**Environmental Partnership:** A Declaration of Intent was signed between **India's Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and France's Ministry for the Ecological Transition** to enhance cooperation on biodiversity conservation, climate action, and sustainable development.

7

**Triangular Development Cooperation:**

Both countries issued a **joint declaration to collaborate on sustainable development projects** in the **Indo-Pacific region**, reflecting a commitment to regional stability and prosperity.

8

**Diplomatic Expansion**

The **inauguration of India's Consulate in Marseille** aimed to strengthen diplomatic ties and facilitate greater people-to-people interactions.

## Key Areas of Cooperation between India and France

### Defense Collaboration

- **Military Engagements:** France is a pivotal defense partner for India, being **its second-largest arms supplier**, accounting for **33% of India's arms imports**. Notable collaborations include the acquisition of Rafale fighter jets and **the Scorpene-class submarines under the P-75 project**.
- In 2016, India signed a deal worth **approximately €7.87 billion for 36 Rafale jets**. Additionally, both nations conduct regular joint military exercises, such as **the 'Varuna' naval exercise**, enhancing interoperability and strategic coordination.
- **Industrial Cooperation:** In 2024, India and France unveiled a "**defense industrial roadmap**" aimed at co-designing, co-developing, and co-producing defense equipment. This initiative seeks to meet India's defense requirements and promote exports to friendly nations, fostering self-reliance in defense manufacturing.

### Space Collaboration

- **Joint Missions:** The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** and the **French Space Agency (CNES)** have a longstanding partnership, collaborating on missions like **Megha-Tropiques** and **SARAL-AltiKa**. In **2018**, both countries adopted a "**Joint Vision for Space Cooperation**," focusing on climate monitoring, space situational awareness, and interplanetary exploration.
- **Human Spaceflight Support:** France has extended support for India's Gaganyaan mission, offering expertise in astronaut training and life-support systems, thereby strengthening India's human spaceflight capabilities.

### Civil Nuclear Cooperation

- **Energy Projects:** France has been instrumental in advancing India's civil nuclear energy sector. A landmark **agreement in 2008 facilitated cooperation in nuclear energy**, leading to projects like **the proposed Jaitapur Nuclear Power Plant**, which **aims to generate 9,900 MW**, potentially becoming the world's largest nuclear power facility upon completion.

### Economic and Trade Relations

- **Bilateral Trade:** The economic ties between India and France have been on an upward trajectory. In **2018**, **bilateral trade reached €11.5 billion**, with both nations aiming to elevate this **figure to €15 billion by 2022**. France stands as **India's 9th largest foreign investor**, with significant investments across sectors like defense, IT, and energy.
- **Corporate Presence:** A substantial number of French enterprises, including **39 out of the 40 companies** listed on the French stock exchange, have established operations in India, contributing to economic growth and technological advancement.

### Cultural and Educational Exchanges

- **Academic Collaborations:** Educational ties have been fortified through initiatives promoting student and faculty exchanges. The number of **Indian students pursuing higher education in France has been increasing**, supported by scholarships and bilateral agreements.

- Cultural Initiatives:** Cultural diplomacy is a cornerstone of India-France relations, with regular festivals, exhibitions, and events showcasing each other's heritage, thereby fostering people-to-people connections.

### India-France Relations Over the Years

Year	Event
1674	The French East India Company establishes a trading center in Pondicherry, which becomes the principal French settlement in India.
1741-1763	The Carnatic Wars witness <b>France and Britain vying for dominance in India</b> , with <b>French General Joseph François Dupleix</b> forming alliances with local rulers.
1816-1839	<b>Jean-François Allard</b> , a French military officer, <b>serves under Maharaja Ranjit Singh</b> , helping modernize the Sikh army.
1947	Diplomatic relations between India and France are formally established after India gains independence.
1954	The <b>Treaty of Cession</b> is signed, leading to the <b>transfer of French territories</b> (Pondicherry, Karaikal, Mahé, and Yanam) to India.
1962	The <b>French Parliament ratifies the treaty</b> and on <b>August 16, France officially cedes full sovereignty</b> of its Indian territories to India.
1998	India and France elevate their relationship to a Strategic Partnership, focusing on defense, space, and civil nuclear cooperation.
2008	<b>France becomes the first country to sign a civil nuclear agreement with India</b> after the <b>Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)</b> lifts restrictions on nuclear trade with India.
2015	Prime Minister Narendra Modi visits France; <b>both nations launch the International Solar Alliance (ISA)</b> to promote solar energy and climate action.
2016	French <b>President François Hollande</b> is the chief guest at India's Republic Day Parade; agreements are signed to deepen defense and space collaboration.
2018	French <b>President Emmanuel Macron</b> visits India; agreements are signed on defense, nuclear energy, counter-terrorism, and space cooperation.
2023	<b>India and France mark 25 years of their Strategic Partnership</b> , adopting the ' <b>Horizon 2047</b> ' roadmap to enhance bilateral ties in trade, defense, and technology.
2024	India and France sign agreements on <b>defense technology transfer</b> , including <b>joint production of military equipment</b> in India under the ' <b>Make in India</b> ' initiative.



## PM Modi's Visit (Feb 10-12, 2025)

- AI Collaboration:** Ethical AI development & research partnerships.
- Innovation Initiative:** Launch of "India-France Year of Innovation 2026".
- Digital Sciences Center:** Indo-French R&D center for digital technology.
- Startup Support:** 10 Indian startups to be incubated at Station F.
- Nuclear Energy:** Renewed MoU on modular reactor technology.
- Environmental Partnership:** Biodiversity & climate cooperation.
- Indo-Pacific Collaboration:** Sustainable development projects.
- Diplomatic Expansion:** India opens new consulate in Marseille.

## Key Areas of Cooperation

### Defense & Military Ties

- France = India's **2nd largest arms supplier** (33% of imports).
- Key Deals:**
  - 36 Rafale jets (€7.87B deal, 2016).
  - Scorpene-class submarines (P-75 Project).
- Defense Industrial Roadmap (2024):** Co-development & production.
- Joint Exercises: **Varuna (Naval), Garuda (Air), Shakti (Army).**

### Space Collaboration

- ISRO-CNES Joint Missions:** Megha-Tropiques, SARAL-Altika.
- Gaganyaan Mission:** France supports astronaut training & life-support systems.

### Civil Nuclear Cooperation

- Jaitapur Nuclear Plant:** Potentially **world's largest** (9,900 MW).
- 2008:** France = **1st country to sign a civil nuclear deal with India.**

### Trade & Economic Relations

- Bilateral trade (2018):** €11.5B Target: €15B by 2022.
- France = India's **9th largest foreign investor.**
- 39 of France's top 40** companies operate in India.

### Cultural & Educational Ties

- Growing Indian student enrollment in France.
- Regular cultural festivals & academic exchanges.

## India-France Relations Timeline

1674	French East India Company sets up in Pondicherry.
1954	French territories (Pondicherry, Karaikal, Mahé, Yanam) ceded to India.
1998	Strategic Partnership established (defense, space, nuclear).
2008	France signs 1st civil nuclear deal with India.
2015	International Solar Alliance launched (Modi-Macron).
2023	'Horizon 2047' roadmap to enhance trade, defense, tech ties.
2025	Expanded military drills (Varuna, Garuda, Shakti).

# PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which of the following was a key focus of the collaboration between India and France during Modi's visit in 2025?  
(a) Military hardware development  
(b) Artificial Intelligence  
(c) Textile trade agreements  
(d) Space exploration
  - Which of the following events was launched to symbolize the shared dedication to fostering innovation between India and France?  
(a) India-France Year of Culture 2026  
(b) India-France Technology Exchange Program 2025  
(c) India-France Economic Summit 2025  
(d) India-France Year of Innovation 2026
  - Which facility will host 10 Indian startups as per the agreement signed during Modi's visit to France?  
(a) The Louvre Incubator  
(b) Station F  
(c) Paris Tech Hub  
(d) The French Silicon Valley
  - What is the purpose of the 'Varuna' naval exercise conducted between India and France?  
(a) To enhance interoperability and strategic coordination  
(b) To enhance trade security through waters  
(c) To compete in naval strategies  
(d) To promote tourism through cultural exchanges
  - What percentage of India's arms imports does France account for?  
(a) 10%  
(b) 23%  
(c) 33%  
(d) 40%
  - What was the deal value for the Rafale jets purchased by India in 2016?  
(a) €7.87 billion  
(b) €5.87 billion  
(c) €9.87 billion  
(d) €11.87 billion
  - What significant agreement facilitated cooperation in nuclear energy between India and France?  
(a) The Paris Accord  
(b) The Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement  
(c) The Indo-French Energy Agreement  
(d) The Jaitapur Agreement
  - When did the French East India Company establish a trading center in Pondicherry?  
(a) 1664  
(b) 1694  
(c) 1684  
(d) 1674
  - What were the Carnatic Wars primarily about?  
(a) Control over spice trade routes  
(b) Religious dominance in Southern India  
(c) Dominance between France and Britain in India  
(d) Access to cotton and textile markets
  - What role did Jean-François Allard play in the history of the Sikh Empire?  
(a) He was a diplomat  
(b) He served as a military advisor  
(c) He was a trade envoy  
(d) He was an architect
  - What did the Treaty of Cession, signed in 1954, lead to?  
(a) The transfer of French territories in India to the Indian union  
(b) The start of the French Revolution  
(c) The establishment of the European Union  
(d) The creation of the Indo-French Chamber of Commerce

## **ANSWER KEY**

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

## Neutral Expert appointed by World Bank and the Indus Water Treaty

### News Highlights:

The World Bank-appointed Neutral Expert (NE), Michel Lino, ruled on January 7, 2025, that he is competent to adjudicate the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) dispute between India and Pakistan concerning the design of Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric projects.

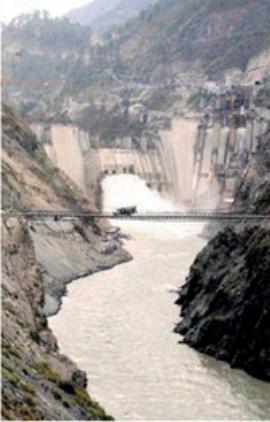
- The ruling does not address India's demand to renegotiate the IWT, which has been pending since January 2023.
- The decision keeps alive differences between the two countries over the dispute resolution mechanism under IWT.
- Pakistan has yet to respond to the ruling, while India has welcomed the decision and asserted that it upholds India's position on IWT interpretation.

### The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)

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

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



Baglihar dam on Chenab

**Eastern rivers**  
**Sutlej, Beas, Ravi**

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



**Indus Waters Commission a success story**

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

MAP NOT TO SCALE

### Background on the Indus Water Treaty

- The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) was signed on September 19, 1960, between India and Pakistan, with the World Bank as a signatory and mediator.
- The treaty allocates control over six rivers:
  - Eastern rivers (Ravi, Beas, Sutlej) – Controlled by India.
  - Western rivers (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab) – Allocated to Pakistan.

- While Pakistan has **exclusive use of the western rivers**, India is permitted to use them for limited irrigation, domestic needs, and hydroelectric projects under specific guidelines.
- The **Permanent Indus Commission (PIC)** was established to **oversee treaty implementation** and resolve disputes.

### India-Pakistan Dispute Resolution Mechanism Under IWT

Article IX of the IWT outlines a **three-tier mechanism** for resolving disputes:

- Permanent Indus Commission (PIC):** First step, involving technical discussions between both countries.
- Neutral Expert (NE):** If PIC discussions fail, a World Bank-appointed NE decides on **technical disputes**.
- Court of Arbitration (CoA):** If the Neutral Expert's decision is disputed, the matter escalates to a CoA.
- India's interpretation:**
  - Disputes must be **exhausted step-by-step** before escalating.
  - The **Court of Arbitration should only be used if the Neutral Expert process fails.**
- Pakistan's interpretation:**
  - Moved directly to request a **CoA in 2016**, bypassing India's agreement.
  - The World Bank in **2022 facilitated both a Neutral Expert and a CoA in parallel.**
  - India **rejects CoA proceedings**, calling it an **illegally constituted tribunal**.

## Dispute Over Kishenganga and Ratle Hydroelectric Projects

### Kishenganga Hydroelectric Project (330 MW) – Jhelum River

- Kishenganga Hydroelectric Project (330 MW) – Jhelum River**
- Pakistan first objected in 2006**, arguing that the project violated the treaty's terms regarding water flow.
  - The matter went to the **Court of Arbitration (CoA) in 2013**, which ruled that **India could continue the project but had to maintain minimum water flow for Pakistan**.
  - The project was **commissioned in 2018**, but Pakistan **continued to raise objections** over its operational design.

### Ratle Hydroelectric Project (850 MW) – Chenab River

- Pakistan objected in 2016**, citing that the **design violated treaty regulations** related to permissible storage and spillway control.
- India maintains that the project **adheres to the IWT provisions**, as it does not divert water away from Pakistan's usage.

### Key Rulings by the Neutral Expert (NE)

- On January 7, 2025, Michel Lino ruled that all **seven technical differences raised by Pakistan** fall under his jurisdiction.
- The NE confirmed that he can decide on the Kishenganga and Ratle projects' technical issues.
- The ruling **does not invalidate the CoA** but confirms that overlapping technical issues fall within his authority.
- Historically, NE's decisions have been accepted by both countries, making this ruling significant for India.
- The next step is for the NE to hear arguments from both sides and deliver a final ruling on project design compliance.

### Historical Precedents of IWT Disputes

#### Baglihar Hydroelectric Project (2005-2007):

- India built a **450 MW hydroelectric plant on the Chenab River**.
- Pakistan raised objections; the dispute went to a **Neutral Expert**, who ruled in favor of India with minor modifications. Pakistan accepted the ruling.

### Kishenganga Dispute (2013):

- Pakistan challenged India's **Kishenganga project** at the **Court of Arbitration**, which ruled that India **could build the project but must release minimum water flow**. This ruling partially favored **both sides**.

### Tulbul Navigation Project (1987 - Present):

- India proposed a **barrage on Jhelum's Wular Lake** for navigation.
- Pakistan raised objections, and **India halted construction** but has kept the project on hold.

## World Bank

### Structure of the World Bank Group

The World Bank operates under the umbrella of the World Bank Group (WBG), which comprises five distinct institutions:



**International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD):** Provides loans and financial services to middle-income and creditworthy low-income countries.

**International Development Association (IDA):** Offers concessional loans and grants to the world's poorest countries.

**Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA):** Provides political risk insurance and credit enhancement to encourage foreign investment in developing countries.

**International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID):** Facilitates the arbitration and conciliation of investment disputes between governments and foreign investors.

### Origin:

- Founded in **1944 during the Bretton Woods Conference**, the World Bank's initial mission was to **aid in the reconstruction of war-torn Europe and Japan**.
- Its first loan was extended to **France in 1947**.
- Over time, the institution shifted its focus towards the **economic development of developing nations**, emphasising poverty reduction and sustainable development.



### Membership and Governance

- The World Bank comprises **189 member countries**, each represented by a governor, typically the country's finance minister.
- The institution is headquartered in **Washington, D.C.**, and operates in over **100 countries worldwide**. The President of the World Bank, traditionally a U.S. citizen, is nominated by the **President of the United States** and serves a **renewable five-year term**.
- As of **December 2024**, **Ajay Banga** serves as the **14th President of the World Bank**.



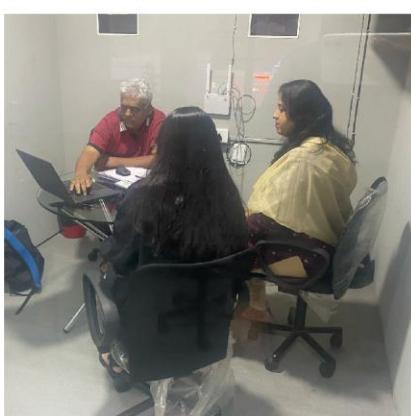
## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Who was appointed as the Neutral Expert (NE) by the World Bank to adjudicate the Indus Water Treaty dispute in 2025?
  - (a) David Malpass
  - (b) Michel Lino
  - (c) António Guterres
  - (d) Christine Lagarde
- Which two Indian hydroelectric projects are at the center of the Indus Water Treaty dispute between India and Pakistan?
  - (a) Tehri and Bhakra Nangal
  - (b) Kishenganga and Ratle
  - (c) Sardar Sarovar and Hirakud
  - (d) Koyna and Almatti
- When was the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) signed between India and Pakistan?
  - (a) 1947
  - (b) 1955
  - (c) 1960
  - (d) 1972
- Under the Indus Water Treaty, which three rivers are allocated to Pakistan for exclusive use?
  - (a) Ganga, Yamuna, Brahmaputra
  - (b) Ravi, Beas, Sutlej
  - (c) Indus, Jhelum, Chenab
  - (d) Krishna, Godavari, Kaveri

## ANSWER KEY

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

# PARENTS TEACHERS MEET & MENTORSHIP SESSION AT LE KOLKATA



# Environment & Biodiversity

## 4 New Ramsar Sites and World Wetland Day

### News Highlights:

Ahead of **World Wetlands Day (February 2, 2025)**, India has designated **four additional wetlands** as **Ramsar sites**, increasing the national tally to **89 Ramsar sites**.

- India now holds the **highest number of Ramsar sites in Asia** and ranks **third globally** after the **United Kingdom (176 sites)** and **Mexico (144 sites)**.

### Ramsar Sites in India

- Current Tally:** With these new additions, India now has **89 Ramsar sites** covering an area of 1,38 million hectares.
- Recent Growth:** From 2014 to 2025, India has added **63 new wetlands** to its list of Ramsar sites, demonstrating a robust environmental policy under the current government.
- States Leading in Numbers:** Tamil Nadu has the highest number of Ramsar Sites (20), followed by Uttar Pradesh (10).
- Largest Ramsar Site:** Sundarbans in West Bengal is the largest Ramsar site in India, covering a vast area of mangrove forests.
- Smallest Ramsar Site:** Renuka Wetland in Himachal Pradesh is the smallest, with an area of just 20 hectares.



### New Ramsar Sites Detailed Overview

#### Sakkarakottai Bird Sanctuary, Tamil Nadu

- Location and Area:** Located in the **Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu**, Sakkarakottai Bird Sanctuary spans approximately 230.5 hectares.
- Year of Declaration:** Established as a bird sanctuary in 2012, it plays a pivotal role in maintaining the region's hydrological balance by preventing soil erosion, replenishing groundwater, and acting as a buffer during floods and heavy rainfall.
- The sanctuary supports over **120 bird species**, including the **near-threatened spot-billed pelican (*Pelecanus philippensis*)**.
- The presence of babul (*Acacia nilotica*) trees provides ideal nesting habitats for eight bird species. Additionally, the nutrient-rich waters, enhanced by avian droppings, benefit local agriculture, fostering a harmonious relationship between the sanctuary and surrounding communities.



*Pelecanus philippensis*

## Therthalangal Bird Sanctuary, Tamil Nadu

- **Location:** Also situated in **Ramanathapuram district**, the Therthalangal Bird Sanctuary covers an area of 29.295 hectares.
- **Designation Year:** Designated as a **bird sanctuary in 2010**, this marshy lake is fed by two rivers during the rainy season.
- **Ecological Features:** It is home to **96 bird species**, notably the **endangered Egyptian vulture (Neophron percnopterus)** and the **vulnerable Indian spotted eagle (Clanga hastata)**.
- The sanctuary's ecosystem also supports **133 plant species, 57 butterfly species, 11 reptile species**, seven mammal species, and six amphibian species.
- The **babul trees planted by the forest department offer nesting sites for migratory birds.** Beyond its ecological importance, the wetland serves as a source of irrigation for adjacent agricultural lands and is a site for recreation and tourism.



## Khecheopalri Wetland, Sikkim

- Nestled near **Khecheopalri village in West Sikkim** at an altitude of 1,700 meters, **Khecheopalri Lake** is revered as **a sacred site by both Buddhists and Hindus**, often referred to as the "**wish-fulfilling lake**."
- The lake is part of a **Himalayan peatland ecosystem**, surrounded by **broad-leaved mixed temperate forests**.
- It supports a rich variety of macrophytes, phytoplankton, and zooplankton, and serves as a habitat for several fish species, including the common carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) and giant danio (*Danio aequipinnatus*).
- The wetland also acts as a resting site for **migratory birds from the Trans-Himalayan region**, enhancing its ecological significance.
- This designation marks **Sikkim's first Ramsar Site**, highlighting the importance of preserving high-altitude wetlands.



Khecheopalri Wetland, Sikkim

## Udhwa Lake Bird Sanctuary, Jharkhand

- **Location:** Located in the **Sahibganj district of Jharkhand**, Udhwa Lake Bird Sanctuary comprises two interconnected lakes: **Pataura (155 hectares) and Berhale (410 hectares)**, linked by a water channel.
- **Designation Year:** The Udhwa Lake Bird Sanctuary in Jharkhand was declared a wildlife sanctuary in **1991 by the Bihar state government**.
- **Ecological Features:** The sanctuary hosts **83 bird species**, including the **near-threatened black-necked stork (*Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*)**, and supports **22 commercially valuable fish species**, contributing to local fisheries and the regional economy.
- The inclusion of Udhwa Lake as a Ramsar Site is a significant milestone for Jharkhand, **as it becomes the state's first wetland to receive this international recognition**.



### About Ramsar Convention

- **Full Name:** The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat.
- **Establishment:** Adopted on **February 2, 1971, in Ramsar, Iran**; came into force in **1975**.
- **Purpose:** The convention aims to conserve and sustainably use wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world.
- There are over 2,400 Ramsar Sites on the territories of **172 Convention Contracting Parties** across the world, covering more than **2.5 million square kilometres**.
- The network of Ramsar Sites is truly global, and includes coastal and inland wetlands of all types in all six Convention on Wetlands regions.
- **India became a party** to the Ramsar Convention on **February 1, 1982**.
- The first Ramsar site in India is the **Chilika Lake in Odisha**, which was designated as a **Ramsar site in 1981**, even before India formally joined the convention.
- **Chilika Lake** is the largest coastal lagoon in India and the second largest lagoon in the world.
- It is an important habitat for a wide variety of birds, both resident and migratory, and plays a crucial role in the biodiversity of the region.
- **World Wetlands Day:** Every year, **February 2nd** is celebrated as **World Wetlands Day** to mark the date of the Ramsar Convention's adoption. This day is dedicated to raising public awareness about the value of wetlands and the need for their conservation.

## **Key Bodies and Governance**

- **Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP):** The COP is the main decision-making body of the Ramsar Convention, consisting of representatives from all member countries. It meets every three years to review progress, set priorities, and adopt new strategies for wetland conservation.
  - **Standing Committee:** This committee acts on behalf of the COP between its triennial meetings, ensuring that decisions are implemented and guiding the work of the Secretariat.
  - **Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP):** The STRP provides expert scientific and technical advice to the COP and the Standing Committee, helping to inform policy decisions and implementation strategies.
  - **Ramsar Secretariat:** The Secretariat, based at the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) headquarters in Gland, Switzerland**, coordinates the day-to-day activities of the Convention, supporting the work of the COP, Standing Committee, and STRP.

## **Indore, Udaipur Join Global Wetland Cities Network**

- **Indore (Madhya Pradesh) and Udaipur (Rajasthan)** became the **first Indian cities** to be **accredited as Wetland Cities under the Ramsar Convention**. The accreditation recognizes cities that prioritize wetland conservation and sustainable urban development.
  - An independent Advisory Committee accredited 31 new cities globally, bringing the total to 74, with China leading with 22 accredited cities, followed by France (9).
  - Bhopal was also nominated but missed out due to concerns over the impact of a proposed road project on the Bhoj wetland's ecological character.
  - Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav called the recognition a reflection of India's commitment to holistic urban development alongside ecological conservation.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

# ANSWER KEY

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

# Science & Technology

## India's first astronaut on a private space mission and Axiom Mission 4

### News Highlights:

Group Captain **Shubhanshu Shukla** of the Indian Air Force (IAF) is set to become the first Indian astronaut to participate in a private mission to the International Space Station (ISS).

- He will serve as the pilot for **Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4)**, scheduled for launch no earlier than spring 2025.

#### Captain Shubhanshu Shukla

- Born: October 10, 1985, in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.
- Military Career:
  - Commissioned into the Indian Air Force Fighter Wing in June 2006.
  - Promoted to Group Captain in March 2024.
  - A highly experienced test pilot and combat leader with over 2,000 flight hours on various aircraft, including:
    - Su-30 MKI, MiG-21, MiG-29, Jaguar, Hawk, Dornier, and An-32.
- Astronaut Training:
  - Selected for ISRO's 'Gaganyaan' human spaceflight program in 2019.
  - Trained at Russia's Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center in Star City, Moscow, undergoing intensive spaceflight preparation.



### Mission Overview

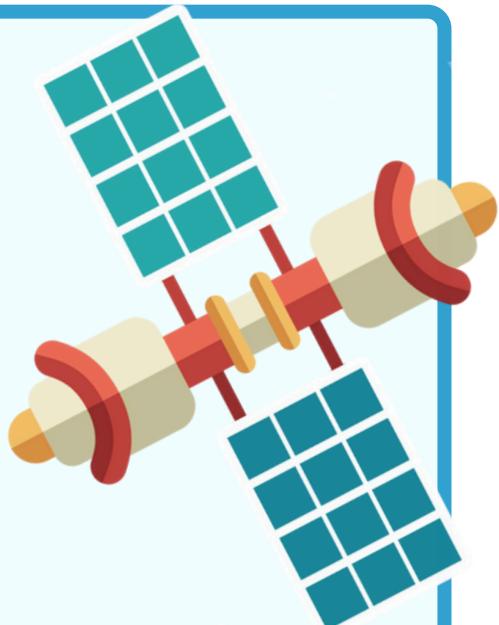
**Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4)** is a forthcoming private spaceflight to the **International Space Station (ISS)**, orchestrated by **Axiom Space**, a **U.S.-based** space infrastructure development company.

- The mission is scheduled to launch no earlier than April 2025, utilizing a SpaceX Crew Dragon spacecraft propelled by a **Falcon 9 Block 5 rocket**.
- Ax-4 represents the **fourth collaborative** flight with the **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)**, following the successful Axiom Missions 1, 2, and 3.

#### Crew Composition

The Ax-4 mission features a diverse international crew, marking a significant return to human spaceflight for several nations:

- **Mission Commander:** Peggy Whitson, a veteran astronaut with extensive experience, will lead the mission.
- **Mission Pilot:** Shubhanshu Shukla from India, representing the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- **Mission Specialist:** Sławosz Uznański from Poland, affiliated with the European Space Agency (ESA).
- **Mission Specialist:** Tibor Kapu from Hungary.
- This mission signifies the **first government-sponsored human spaceflight for India, Poland, and Hungary** in over four decades.



## Mission Objectives

- **Commercial Space Initiatives:** Ax-4 aims to facilitate commercial activities in **Low Earth Orbit (LEO)**, including **space tourism**, thereby demonstrating the viability of private space stations as platforms for business and research endeavors.
- **International Collaboration:** The mission underscores the importance of global cooperation in space exploration, strengthening international partnerships in advancing space science.
- **Research and Development:** The crew will conduct scientific experiments in the **microgravity environment of the ISS**, focusing on areas such as **materials science, biology, and Earth observation**, potentially leading to significant technological advancements.

## Significance of Shubhanshu Shukla's Spaceflight for India

- **First Indian in a Private Space Mission:** Marks a **historic moment for India**, showcasing the **country's growing role in space exploration**.
- **Strengthening ISRO's Human Spaceflight Capabilities:** His participation provides **valuable insights for the upcoming Gaganyaan mission**, India's first indigenous crewed spaceflight.
- **First time astronauts from India, Poland, and Hungary will cooperate** on a mission.
- Expands India's **global space partnerships** through **joint research and training**.
- **Cultural Representation:** Shukla intends to carry items symbolizing India's heritage and aims to perform **yoga poses in space**, emphasizing India's cultural identity.
- The **Gaganyaan mission** is scheduled for **2025**, aiming to **send Indian astronauts (Gagannauts) into low Earth orbit**. Learnings from Ax-4 will help **refine ISRO's astronaut training** and future space station initiatives.

## History of Human Spaceflights

### 1950s-1960s: The Dawn of Human Space Exploration

- **1957 (October 4) – Sputnik 1 (USSR):** The Soviet Union launched **Sputnik 1**, the **first artificial satellite**, marking the beginning of the **Space Age**. The satellite weighed **83.6 kg**, transmitted radio signals, and orbited Earth every **96 minutes**. Its launch intensified the **Cold War space race** between the USA and USSR.
- **1961 (April 12) – Yuri Gagarin (USSR) Aboard Vostok 1:** **Yuri Gagarin** became the **first human in space**, completing **one orbit around Earth in 108 minutes** at a speed of **27,400 km/h**. His famous words before takeoff were "Poyekhali!" ("Let's go!"). He landed safely in **Saratov Oblast, USSR**.
- **1961 (May 5) – Alan Shepard (USA) Aboard Freedom 7:** **Alan Shepard** became the **first American in space**, completing a **15-minute suborbital flight** aboard **Mercury-Redstone 3 (Freedom 7)**. His flight reached an altitude of **187 km**, but he did not orbit Earth.
- **1962 (February 20) – John Glenn (USA) Aboard Friendship 7:** **John Glenn** became the **first American to orbit Earth**, completing **three orbits in 4 hours and 55 minutes**. His **Mercury-Atlas 6** mission proved that humans could survive extended spaceflight.
- **1963 (June 16) – Valentina Tereshkova (USSR) Aboard Vostok 6:** She became the **first woman in space**, orbiting Earth **48 times in three days**. She remains the **only woman to have flown a solo space mission**.
- **1965 (March 18) – Aleksei Leonov (USSR) Conducts First Spacewalk:** During the **Voskhod 2** mission, he performed a **12-minute spacewalk (EVA)**, making history despite his **spacesuit inflating dangerously**, almost preventing his return to the capsule.
- **1969 (July 20) – Apollo 11 (USA) Lands on the Moon:** **Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin** became the **first humans to walk on the Moon**, while **Michael Collins** piloted the command module. The Apollo 11 mission brought back **21.5 kg of lunar soil and rocks**. Armstrong's first words on the Moon were: "**That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.**"

## History of Human Spaceflights

### 1970s-1980s: Space Stations & International Participation

- **1971 (April 19) – Salyut 1 (USSR) Becomes First Space Station:** The first space station was launched by the USSR but was short-lived, as the Soyuz 11 crew tragically died during re-entry due to cabin depressurization.
- **1973 (May 14) – Skylab (USA) Launched:** NASA launched Skylab, the first American space station, which hosted astronauts for long-duration space missions and conducted solar and microgravity research until 1979, when it re-entered Earth's atmosphere.
- **1975 (July 17) – Apollo-Soyuz Test Project:** The first international space mission between the USA and USSR involved docking an Apollo spacecraft with a Soyuz capsule, symbolizing Cold War détente.
- **1981 (April 12) – Space Shuttle Columbia (STS-1) Launches:** NASA's first reusable spacecraft, the Space Shuttle Columbia, was launched, marking the beginning of the Space Shuttle Program, which lasted until 2011.
- **1984 (April 3) – Rakesh Sharma (India) Aboard Soyuz T-11:** Rakesh Sharma became the first Indian astronaut, spending 7 days aboard Salyut 7. He conducted scientific experiments and observed India from space, famously telling Prime Minister Indira Gandhi that India looked "Saare Jahan Se Achha" (Better than the entire world).
- **1984 (October 11) – First American Woman to Perform Spacewalk:** Kathryn Sullivan became the first American woman to conduct a spacewalk during STS-41-G (Challenger mission).
- **1986 (January 28) – Challenger Disaster:** The Space Shuttle Challenger exploded 73 seconds after liftoff, killing all 7 crew members, including Christa McAuliffe, the first civilian teacher astronaut.
- **1986 (February 20) – Mir Space Station (USSR) Launched:** The Mir Space Station, the first modular space station, operated for 15 years, hosting long-duration missions and forming the basis for modern space station design.

### 1990s-2000s: Long-Duration Missions & New Space Programs

- **1992 (September 12) – Mae Jemison Becomes First African American Woman in Space:** Aboard Endeavour (STS-47), she became the first African American woman to fly in space.
- **1995 (March 14) – First American Aboard Russian Soyuz:** Norman Thagard became the first American to fly on a Russian Soyuz spacecraft to Mir, marking post-Cold War cooperation.
- **1998 (November 20) – International Space Station (ISS) Construction Begins:** The first ISS module, Zarya, was launched, marking global collaboration between NASA, Roscosmos, ESA, JAXA, and CSA.
- **2001 (April 28) – First Space Tourist:** Dennis Tito became the first space tourist, paying \$20 million for a trip to the ISS aboard Soyuz TM-32.
- **2003 (February 1) – Columbia Disaster:** The Space Shuttle Columbia disintegrated during re-entry, killing all 7 astronauts, including Kalpana Chawla, the first Indian-born woman in space.
- **2003 (October 15) – China's First Human Spaceflight (Shenzhou 5):** Yang Liwei became the first Chinese astronaut (taikonaut), making China the third country to send humans to space independently.

### 2010s-20s: Private Spaceflight & India's Achievements

- **2011 (July 8) – NASA Retires Space Shuttle Program:** The final Space Shuttle mission (STS-135, Atlantis) marked the end of the shuttle era.
- **2019:** NASA astronauts Christina Koch and Jessica Meir completed the first all-female spacewalk.
- **2020 (May 30) – First Private Manned Spaceflight:** SpaceX Crew Dragon (Demo-2) launched, making SpaceX the first private company to send astronauts to space.
- **2026 (Planned) – India's First Human Spaceflight (Gaganyaan):** ISRO's Gaganyaan mission aims to send Indian astronauts (Gagannauts) into space aboard an indigenous spacecraft, making India the fourth country to do so independently.



## MIND MAP

### 1950s–60s: Early Space Age

- **Sputnik 1 (1957, USSR)** – First artificial satellite.
- **Yuri Gagarin (1961, USSR)** – First human in space (**Vostok 1**).
- Alan Shepard (1961, USA) – First American astronaut.
- John Glenn (1962, USA) – First American to orbit Earth.
- Valentina Tereshkova (1963, USSR) – First woman in space.
- Aleksei Leonov (1965, USSR) – First spacewalk.
- Apollo 11 (1969, USA) – First Moon landing (Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin).

- **Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla (IAF)** – First Indian astronaut on a private mission.
- **Mission:** Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4) to ISS, launching in April 2025.
- **Role:** Mission Pilot for SpaceX Crew Dragon (Falcon 9).
- **Training:** Part of ISRO's Gaganyaan program (trained in Russia).
- **Organizer:** Axiom Space (USA).
- **Collaboration:** NASA's 4th private ISS mission.
  - **Commander:** Peggy Whitson (USA), Pilot: Shubhanshu Shukla (India), Specialists: Sławosz Uznański (Poland), Tibor Kapu (Hungary).



### 2010s–2020s: Private Spaceflight & India's Expansion

- **SpaceX Crew Dragon (2020, USA)** – First private manned spaceflight.
- **First All-Female Spacewalk (2019, NASA)** – Christina Koch & Jessica Meir.
- **India's Gaganyaan (2026)** – First Indian crewed mission.

### 1970s–80s: Space Stations & International Missions

- **Salyut 1 (1971, USSR)** – First space station.
- **Skylab (1973, USA)** – First U.S. space station.
- **Apollo-Soyuz (1975)** – First USA-USSR joint mission.
- **STS-1 Columbia (1981, USA)** – First Space Shuttle launch.
- **Rakesh Sharma (1984, India)** – First Indian in space (**Soyuz T-11**).
- **Challenger Disaster (1986, USA)** – Shuttle explosion.
- **Mir Space Station (1986, USSR)** – First modular space station.

### 1990s–2000s: Long-Duration Spaceflight & Private Missions

- **ISS (1998-Present)** – International Space Station launched.
- **First Space Tourist (2001)** – Dennis Tito (\$20M trip to ISS).
- **Columbia Disaster (2003, USA)** – Loss of 7 astronauts, incl. Kalpana Chawla (India).
- **China's First Human Spaceflight (2003)** – Yang Liwei (**Shenzhou 5**).

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Who is set to become the first Indian astronaut to participate in a private mission to the International Space Station (ISS)?
 

(a) Rakesh Sharma      (b) Shubhanshu Shukla  
  (c) Shubhrashu Chakraborty (d) Rajesh Pillai
2. What is the expected mission duration of Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4) aboard the International Space Station (ISS)?
 

(a) 7 days      (b) 10 days  
  (c) 21 days      (d) 14 days
3. Along with India and Poland, which other country's astronaut will participate in Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4)?
 

(a) France      (b) Germany  
  (c) Hungary      (d) Japan
4. Which intergovernmental organization, established in 1975, is dedicated to the exploration of space and advancing space science, technology, and applications for Europe and beyond?
 

(a) NASA      (b) ESA  
  (c) Roscosmos      (d) ISRO
5. Which launch vehicle has been chosen to carry the Gaganyaan spacecraft into orbit?
 

(a) PSLV      (b) GSLV Mk III  
  (c) Falcon 9      (d) Ariane 5
6. What milestone will the Gaganyaan-4 mission achieve for India in 2026?
 

(a) First human spaceflight  
  (b) First lunar landing  
  (c) First Mars mission  
  (d) First space station deployment
7. Where did Shubhanshu shukla undergo astronaut training for ISRO's 'gaganyaan' human spaceflight program?
 

(a) NASA's Johnson space center  
  (b) European astronaut center
8. Which organizations are collaborating with axiom space for the axiom mission 4 (ax-4) to the ISS?
 

(a) NASA, ISRO, ESA  
  (b) SpaceX, Blue Origin, Roscosmos  
  (c) JAXA, CNES, UK space agency  
  (d) DRDO, Boeing, Virgin Galactic
9. Which launch vehicle is being used for axiom mission 4 (ax-4) to carry the crew dragon spacecraft?
 

(a) Ariane 5 rocket      (b) SpaceX falcon 9 rocket  
  (c) Soyuz rocket      (d) Atlas v rocket
10. Who is the commander of axiom mission 4 (ax-4)?
 

(a) Michael Lopez      (b) Chris Hadfield  
  (c) Scott Kelly      (d) Peggy Whitson
11. What is the designation of Sławosz Uznanski-Wiśniewski in Axiom mission 4 (ax-4)?
 

(a) Commercial space tourist  
  (b) Private astronaut  
  (c) ESA project astronaut.  
  (d) NASA research scientist
12. What unique activity does Shubhanshu Shukla plan to do in space to emphasize India's cultural identity?
 

(a) conduct a traditional Indian dance  
  (b) to perform yoga poses in space  
  (c) recite ancient Indian scriptures  
  (d) showcase Indian cuisine preparation
13. How many member states does the European Space Agency (ESA) have?
 

(a) 20      (b) 21  
  (c) 23      (d) 25

## ANSWER KEY

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

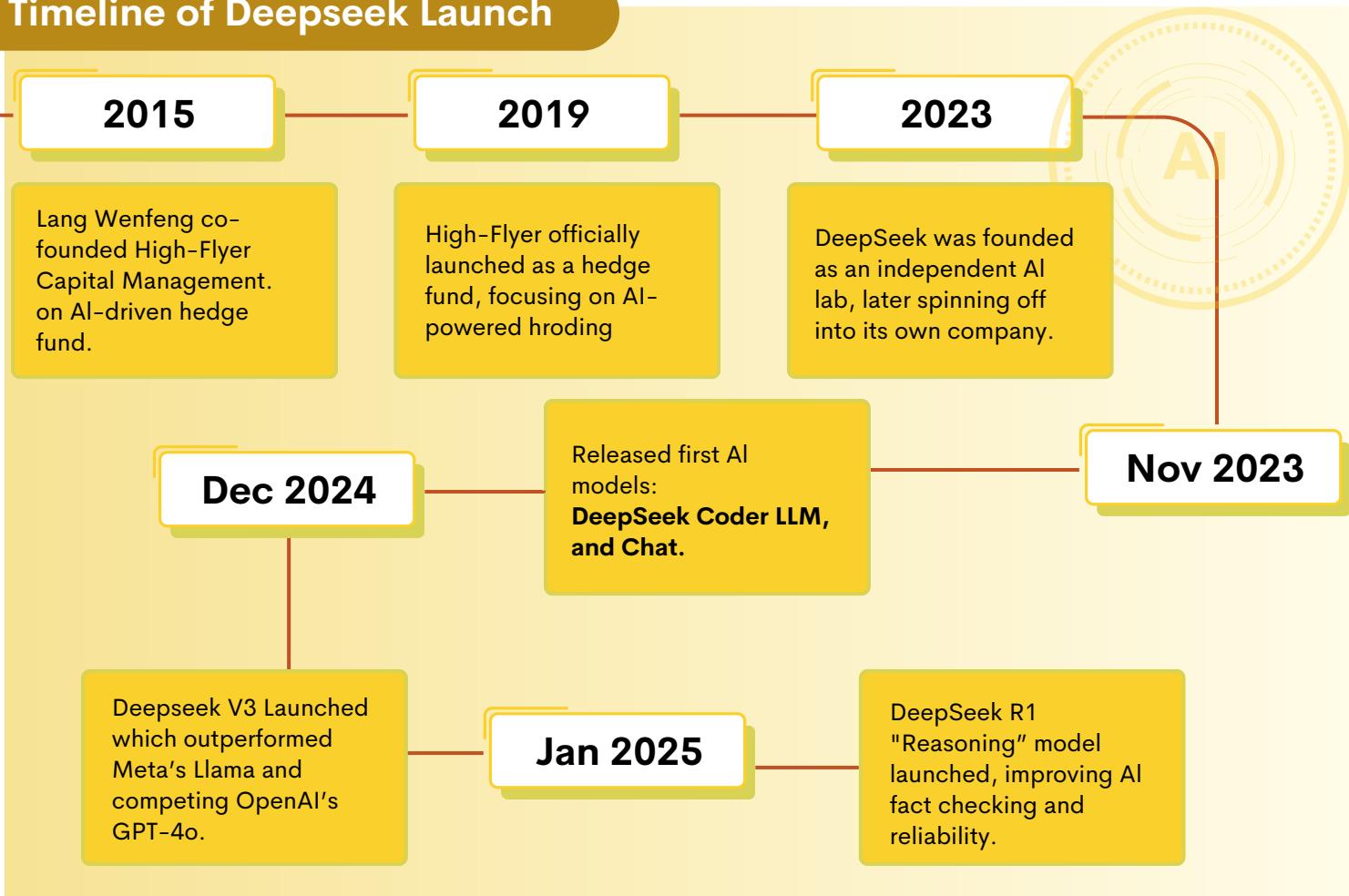
## Deepseek AI and India's position in AI Race

### News Highlights:

The launch of DeepSeek-R1, a **low-cost** yet **highly advanced AI large language model (LLM)** from China, has challenged global AI cost assumptions and disrupted AI investments worldwide.

- DeepSeek-R1's **high performance despite a modest \$6 million budget** has renewed discussions on India's potential to develop its own foundational AI model.
- The Indian government, under the **IndiaAI Mission**, has accelerated plans for a **homegrown AI model**, with a commitment to develop a domestic LLM within 10 months and a **national GPU initiative**.

### Timeline of Deepseek Launch



### Background on Foundational AI Models

- Foundational AI models are **large-scale machine learning models** trained on **massive datasets**, enabling them to **perform multiple AI-driven tasks**, including **natural language processing, reasoning, and decision-making**.
- The most common foundational models use **Generative Pre-Trained Transformers (GPTs)**, such as **OpenAI's ChatGPT** and Google's Gemini.
- The **barriers to entry** in foundational AI development have traditionally included **high costs, access to advanced GPUs, and the need for large-scale training datasets**.

### DeepSeek's Disruptive Impact

- DeepSeek-R1, developed by a Chinese AI startup, has **challenged industry norms** by competing with OpenAI's ChatGPT despite a **significantly lower development cost**.

- Unlike most proprietary AI models, DeepSeek-R1 has been built on an open-source basis, allowing countries like India to adopt and modify it for their own use.
- The success of DeepSeek has reopened discussions on the feasibility of an Indian foundational AI model, with industry experts reconsidering previous skepticism.
- Italy has already banned DeepSeek over data privacy concerns, highlighting the regulatory challenges AI models face globally.

## India's AI Strategy and Policy Developments

**IndiaAI Mission** (₹10,370 crore) aims to:

- Develop India's first domestic foundational AI model within 10 months.
- Provide 18,693 GPUs to Indian startups, academia, and researchers to accelerate AI innovation.
- Launch a common compute facility, allowing access to high-end GPUs at \$1 per hour (global market rate: \$2.5-\$3 per hour).
- Select six companies to develop India's own LLM with government-backed funding.

## India's GPU Development Initiative

- Union IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced plans to develop India's first indigenous GPU within 3-5 years.
- Strategy involves leveraging open-source chipsets and partnering with private-sector companies to reduce dependence on global GPU suppliers like Nvidia.

## Government Initiatives for AI Skill Development

- New Centre of Excellence for AI in Education (₹500 crore) to integrate AI into academic curricula.
- Establishing five National Centres of Excellence for Skilling to equip youth with AI and industry-relevant expertise.
- The Union Budget 2025 introduced a 40% government subsidy for startups using AI compute resources

## MAJOR BREAKTHROUGHS AND MILESTONES IN AI DEVELOPMENT

Year	Event
1950	Alan Turing, the father of modern computing, publishes "Computing Machinery and Intelligence", proposing the famous Turing Test to determine if a machine can exhibit human-like intelligence.
1951	Christopher Strachey creates the first AI program that plays checkers (draughts) on the Ferranti Mark I computer.
1956	The term "Artificial Intelligence" (AI) is coined at the Dartmouth Conference, organized by John McCarthy, where the field of AI is formally recognized.
1959	Arthur Samuel develops a self-learning checkers-playing program, pioneering machine learning.
1966	ELIZA, the first AI chatbot, is developed by Joseph Weizenbaum, simulating a conversation like a psychotherapist.
1997	IBM's Deep Blue defeats chess champion Garry Kasparov, marking the first time AI beats a world chess champion.

2011	<b>IBM Watson</b> defeats <b>Jeopardy!</b> champions <b>Ken Jennings and Brad Rutter</b> , showcasing AI's ability to understand and process natural language.
2014	<b>Eugene Goostman</b> , a <b>chatbot</b> , allegedly passes the Turing Test, convincing 33% of human judges that it is a real person.
2016	Google <b>DeepMind's AlphaGo</b> defeats <b>world Go champion Lee Sedol</b> , despite Go being far more complex than chess.
2018	AI-generated painting " <b>Portrait of Edmond de Belamy</b> " sells for \$432,500 at auction, proving AI's potential in creative arts.
2020	<b>OpenAI releases GPT-3</b> , a breakthrough in natural language processing (NLP) capable of generating human-like text.
2022	AI-powered image generators like <b>DALL·E 2</b> and <b>MidJourney</b> can create photorealistic images from text prompts.
2023	<b>OpenAI launches GPT-4</b> , significantly improving context understanding and response accuracy.
2024	The <b>European Union passes the AI Act</b> , the <b>world's first legal framework to regulate AI</b> , classifying systems based on risk levels.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which country developed and launched the DeepSeek-R1 AI large language model (LLM)?
  - (a) United States
  - (b) China
  - (c) Japan
  - (d) Germany
  
2. What does GPTs stand for in the context of foundational AI models?
  - (a) Generative Pre-Trained Transformers
  - (b) Generalized Pre-Trained Transformers
  - (c) Generative Processing Technology
  - (d) General Purpose Transformers
  
3. Which of the following statements is correct regarding DeepSeek-R1?
  - (a) DeepSeek-R1 was developed with a high budget similar to OpenAI's ChatGPT and is not open-source.
  - (b) DeepSeek-R1 is an open-source AI model, enabling countries like India to modify it for their own use.
  
- (c) DeepSeek-R1 has not faced any regulatory challenges and has been widely adopted in Italy without restrictions.
- (d) DeepSeek-R1's development cost was significantly higher than OpenAI's ChatGPT, making it inaccessible for global AI research.
  
4. According to India's AI strategy, which of the following statements about the IndiaAI Mission is CORRECT?
  - (a) IndiaAI Mission aims to develop India's first domestic foundational AI model within five years, along with a national AI policy framework.
  - (b) The mission plans to provide 18,693 GPUs exclusively to private tech companies for AI development.
  - (c) The IndiaAI Mission will establish a compute facility where high-end GPUs will be available at \$1 per hour, significantly lower than the global market rate of \$2.5-\$3 per hour.

- (d) The initiative focuses only on AI research in academia and does not include government-backed funding for companies developing large language models (LLMs).
5. Who among the following is an Union IT Minister who announced India's plan to develop its first indigenous GPU within 3-5 years?  
(a) Rajeev Chandrasekhar (b) Ashwini Vaishnaw  
(c) Nirmala Sitharaman (d) S. Jaishankar
6. Nandan Nilekani, who recently advocated focusing on AI infrastructure rather than building foundational models, is the Co-founder of which company?  
(a) HCL (b) Wipro  
(c) TCS (d) Infosys
7. According to Stanford's AI Index 2025, what is India's ranking among the leading AI nations?  
(a) 2nd (b) 3rd  
(c) 4th (d) 5th
8. As per the Union Budget 2025, what percentage of government subsidy has been introduced for startups using AI compute resources?  
(a) 25% (b) 30%  
(c) 40% (d) 50%
9. What is the name of the latest AI model developed by Elon Musk's company xAI to compete with OpenAI's ChatGPT and China's DeepSeek?  
(a) Gemini-2 (b) Grok-3  
(c) Claude-4 (d) LOTUS-o1
10. Where has Elon Musk established a mega-data center equipped with 12,448 Nvidia H100 GPUs to enhance AI processing and model training?  
(a) Atlanta (b) Austin  
(c) San Francisco (d) Seattle
11. Who, known as the father of modern computing, proposed the Test in the paper "Computing Machinery and Intelligence" to determine if a machine can exhibit human-like intelligence?  
(a) John von Neumann (b) Claude Shannon  
(c) Alan Turing (d) Marvin Minsky
12. At which event was the term "Artificial Intelligence" (AI) coined, leading to the formal recognition of the field?  
(a) Turing Symposium  
(b) Harvard Computational Summit  
(c) MIT AI Workshop  
(d) Dartmouth Conference
13. Which of the following is the first AI chatbot, developed by Joseph Weizenbaum, was designed to simulate a conversation like a psychotherapist?  
(a) PARRY (b) Siri  
(c) TAY (d) ELIZA
14. Which chess champion was defeated by IBM's Deep Blue, marking the first time AI triumphed over a world chess champion?  
(a) Garry Kasparov (b) Bobby Fischer  
(c) Magnus Carlsen (d) Vladimir Kramnik
15. Which of the following passed the AI Act, the world's first legal framework to regulate AI by classifying systems based on risk levels?  
(a) United Nations  
(b) United States  
(c) European Union  
(d) World Economic Forum

**ANSWER KEY**

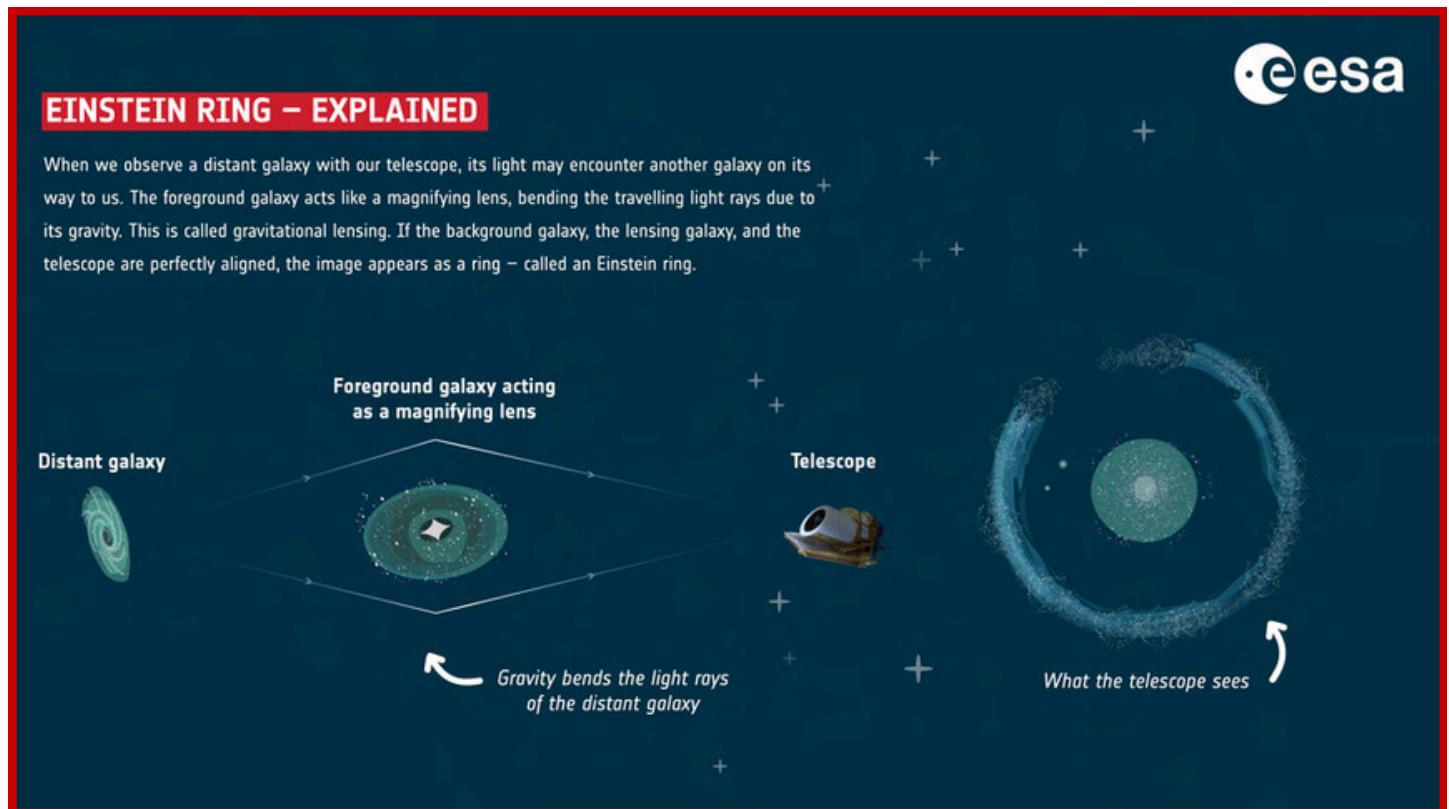
1. (b) 2. (a) 3. (b) 4. (c) 5. (b) 6. (d) 7. (c) 8. (c) 9. (b)  
10. (a) 11. (c) 12. (d) 13. (d) 14. (a) 15. (c)

## Scientists discover 'Einstein ring'

### News Highlights:

The European Space Agency's (ESA) Euclid space telescope has discovered a **rare Einstein ring** around the galaxy NGC 6505, located 590 million light-years from Earth.

- The discovery, made in **September 2023** and confirmed in **February 2025**, highlights Euclid's potential in studying **gravitational lensing and dark matter**.
- Named **Altieri's Ring**, after **Bruno Altieri**, the astronomer who first noticed it, the discovery provides new insights into **Einstein's general theory of relativity** and the **expansion of the universe**.



### Understanding Einstein Rings

- Einstein rings** are a rare phenomenon that occur due to **gravitational lensing**, a concept predicted by **Albert Einstein** in his **General Theory of Relativity** (1915).
- When a **massive celestial object** (e.g., a **galaxy or black hole**) bends light from a **distant background source**, it can create **distorted arc-like images** or a **perfect ring**, depending on the alignment of the three objects—the observer, the foreground object (gravitational lens), and the background light source.
- First discovered in 1987**, Einstein rings are **extremely rare**, with **less than 1%** of galaxies exhibiting this phenomenon.

### Altieri's Ring: A Unique Discovery

- Euclid discovered Altieri's Ring around NGC 6505, a galaxy known since the **19th century**, making this **one of only six gravitational lenses found at such a close distance**.
- The lensing effect is caused by NGC 6505 bending the light of a **distant galaxy located 4.5 billion light-years away**.
- The discovery confirms that even well-known astronomical objects can **reveal new scientific data when observed with advanced space telescopes**.

- Euclid's data was further validated using the **Keck Cosmic Web Imager (KCWI)**, the Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope, and the Dark Energy Spectroscopic Instrument.

### Scientific Significance of Einstein Rings

- **Probing Dark Matter:** Einstein rings are key to studying **dark matter**, which makes up **85% of the universe's total mass** but remains undetectable through direct observation. Since **dark matter interacts only gravitationally**, the way it bends light allows scientists to infer its presence and distribution in space.
- **Understanding the Expansion of the Universe:** Einstein rings help measure **cosmic distances** and study how the **universe is expanding over time**. By analyzing the bending of light, scientists can refine models of the **cosmic scale factor and redshift**.
- **Validating Einstein's General Relativity:** The discovery of Altieri's Ring reinforces **Einstein's theory**, demonstrating that **massive objects warp spacetime**, influencing the movement of both **light and matter**.
- **Observing Distant Galaxies:** Strong gravitational lensing allows astronomers to observe galaxies that would **otherwise be too faint or distant**, providing insights into **early galaxy formation**.

### Euclid's Role and Future Discoveries

- The **ESA Euclid Mission**, launched in **July 2023**, is designed to **map the 'dark universe'**, specifically studying **dark matter and dark energy**.
- Euclid formally began scanning the sky on **February 14, 2024**, and is expected to **identify 100,000 new gravitational lenses** in the coming years.
- However, finding Einstein rings **as close as NGC 6505** is rare since most gravitational lenses are located at **greater cosmic distances**.
- Despite this, Euclid's ability to uncover **Altieri's Ring within months of operation** showcases its immense potential for **advancing astrophysical research**.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What is the name of the rare Einstein ring discovered by the Euclid space telescope around the galaxy NGC 6505?
  - (a) Hubble's Loop
  - (b) Altieri's Ring
  - (c) Chandrasekhar's Arc
  - (d) Newton's Circle
2. Which astronomical phenomenon is responsible for the formation of Einstein rings, like the one discovered around NGC 6505?
  - (a) Gravitational Lensing
  - (b) Quantum Entanglement
  - (c) Cosmic Background Radiation
  - (d) Dark Energy Expansion
3. How far is the galaxy NGC 6505, around which the Euclid telescope discovered an Einstein ring, located from Earth?
  - (a) 1.2 billion light-years
  - (b) 590 million light-years
  - (c) 100 million light-years
  - (d) 3.5 billion light-years
4. The discovery of Altieri's Ring by the Euclid space telescope provides new insights into which fundamental scientific theory?
  - (a) Newton's Law of Universal Gravitation
  - (b) Quantum Field Theory
  - (c) Einstein's General Theory of Relativity
  - (d) String Theory
5. Which space agency operates the Euclid space telescope, which recently discovered a rare Einstein ring around NGC 6505?
  - (a) NASA
  - (b) European Space Agency
  - (c) Indian Space Research Organisation
  - (d) Roscosmos
6. What causes the lensing effect in the newly discovered Altieri's Ring around NGC 6505?
  - (a) The motion of stars within the galaxy
  - (b) The rotation of the galaxy affecting its light emissions
  - (c) The expansion of the universe stretching the galaxy's light

- (d) The gravitational pull of NGC 6505 bending light from a distant galaxy
7. Which of the following advanced observational instruments helped validate Euclid's data on Altieri's Ring?  
(a) Keck Cosmic Web Imager  
(b) Hubble Space Telescope  
(c) Fermi Gamma-ray Space Telescope  
(d) Chandra X-ray Observatory
8. What determines whether an Einstein ring forms as a complete ring or as distorted arc-like images?  
(a) The size of the background light source  
(b) The mass of the gravitational lensing object  
(c) The alignment of the observer, the gravitational lens, and the background light source  
(d) The speed of light traveling through the gravitational field
9. In which of the following years was the first Einstein ring discovered?  
(a) 1915  
(b) 1965  
(c) 1987  
(d) 2001
10. How many gravitational lenses have been found at a similarly close distance as Altieri's Ring around NGC 6505?  
(a) Four  
(b) Five  
(c) Six  
(d) Eight

**ANSWER KEY**

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



# Static Scoop

## Latest ASI Excavation and the History of Buddhism

### News Highlights:

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has resumed excavations at the **Ratnagiri** site in Odisha's Jajpur district after more than six decades. This renewed interest follows the discovery of three massive **Buddha heads**, a giant palm, an ancient wall, and inscriptions, underscoring Ratnagiri's significance as a prominent **Buddhist heritage site**.

### Background

- Location and Significance:** Ratnagiri, meaning "Hill of Jewels," is situated between the **Brahmani** and **Birupa** rivers in Odisha. It forms part of the **Diamond Triangle** of Odisha, along with **Udayagiri** and **Lalitgiri**, renowned for their rich **Buddhist heritage**.
- Historical Context:** The site dates back to the **5th century CE**, with significant developments during the **8th to 10th centuries CE** under the **Bhauama-Kara dynasty**. Ratnagiri was a major center for the **Vajrayana (Tantrayana)** school of **Buddhism**, housing a flourishing monastery where monks practiced and propagated Buddhist teachings.



### Key Discoveries

- Colossal Buddha Heads and Giant Palm:** The recent excavations unearthed three massive **Buddha heads**, each measuring between 3 to 4 feet, and a giant **palm** approximately 5 feet in size. These findings highlight the site's historical significance and the advanced artistic skills of the period.
- Ancient Structures and Inscriptions:** The ASI team discovered remnants of an ancient wall and inscriptions, providing insights into the architectural styles and linguistic practices of the era. These findings are expected to shed light on the cultural and religious activities that once thrived at Ratnagiri.

### Historical Excavations



#### Initial Discoveries (1958-1961):

The first major excavations at Ratnagiri were conducted between 1958 and 1961 by archaeologist **Debala Mitra**, who later became the ASI's first female Director General. These efforts revealed a sprawling complex containing two monasteries, numerous votive and commemorative stupas, a temple, and various other structures.

### Cultural and Religious Impact

#### Vajrayana Buddhism:

- Ratnagiri is believed to have been an important early center of the **Vajrayana (Tantrayana)** school of **Buddhism**, which involves mystical practices and concepts. This form of Buddhism eventually spread across the Himalayan region and beyond, influencing various cultures and religious practices.

## Government Initiatives and Future Prospects

- **Renewed Excavation Efforts:**

- The ASI's decision to resume excavations aims to fully unearth the partially visible structures and gain a better understanding of the site's historical context. The findings are expected to enhance our knowledge of **Buddhist art**, architecture, and cultural exchanges in ancient India.



- **Preservation and Tourism:**

- The discoveries at Ratnagiri have the potential to boost **heritage tourism** in Odisha. The state is home to over 200 Buddhist heritage sites, including notable locations like **Lalitgiri**, **Udayagiri**, and the **Shanti Stupa**. Efforts to preserve and promote these sites can contribute to a deeper appreciation of India's rich Buddhist legacy.

### Ratnagiri: The 'Hill of Jewels' in the Diamond Triangle

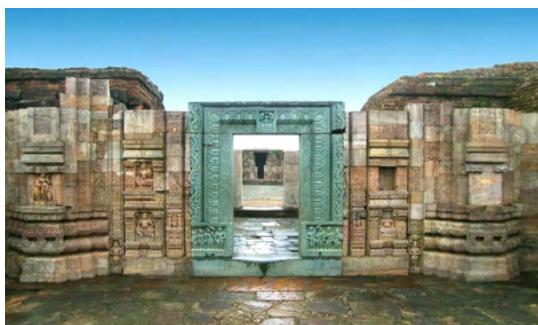
- Ratnagiri, meaning '**Hill of Jewels**', is situated between the **Brahmani River** and its tributary **Birupa**, flowing towards the **Bay of Bengal** near the **Bhitarkanika mangrove wetlands**.
- It is one of the most extensively excavated Buddhist sites in Odisha and is part of the **Diamond Triangle**, along with **Udaygiri** and **Lalitgiri**, all located in **Jajpur and Cuttack districts**.
- Historical records suggest that the site **flourished between the 5th and 13th centuries CE**, particularly under the **Bhauma-Kara dynasty** (8th–10th century CE).
- **Vajrayana Buddhism**, a mystical sect known for its **Tantric practices**, had a strong presence at Ratnagiri, influencing Buddhist traditions across the **Himalayan belt and Southeast Asia**.



*Carvings scattered around in Ratnagiri*

### Significance of Ratnagiri's Buddhist Monastery

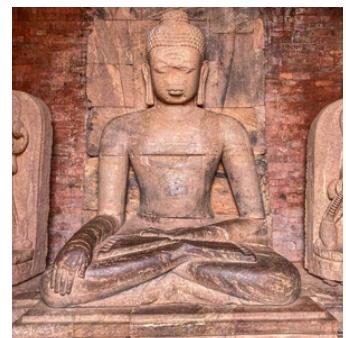
- Ratnagiri is home to **India's only Buddhist monastery with a curvilinear roof**, showcasing its architectural uniqueness.
- Historical records suggest that **around 500 monks** lived at Ratnagiri during its peak, practicing **Tantrayana Buddhism**.
- The monastery, with its **monastic complexes, stupas, and inscriptions**, indicates Ratnagiri's **status as a major Buddhist learning center**.
- Scholars believe that **Ratnagiri was on par with Nalanda**, serving as a hub for **Buddhist studies and cultural exchanges**.



*Ratnagiri in Jajpur district of Odisha*

### Previous Excavations and Discoveries

- The **first systematic excavation** at Ratnagiri was conducted between **1958 and 1961** by **Debala Mitra**, the **first woman Director General of ASI (1981-83)**.
- These excavations unearthed:
  - **Two monasteries** with intricate carvings and structural remains.
  - **Hundreds of votive and commemorative stupas**.
  - **A temple complex** and various Buddhist sculptures.
  - **A significant inscription** confirming the site's **Buddhist affiliation**.
- However, after 1961, further excavations were halted, and ASI shifted its focus to other Buddhist sites like Lalitgiri, where **Odisha's oldest known monastery** was discovered.



*Ratnagiri Odisha*

## Current ASI Excavation and New Findings

- The new ASI excavation, led by D.B. Garnayak, aims to fully uncover partially visible structures and understand the cultural significance of the latest discoveries.
- New findings at the site include:
  - Three colossal Buddha heads, measuring 3-4 feet tall.
  - A massive Buddha palm, estimated to be 5 feet in size.
  - An ancient wall and inscribed Buddhist relics.
  - Frags of votive stupas and monastic structures.
- The excavation also focuses on analyzing ceramic assemblage, which can provide insights into ancient trade, religious practices, and material culture.



Buddha head

## Odisha's Maritime Links and Southeast Asian Influence

- Ancient Kalinga (modern Odisha) had strong maritime and trade connections with Southeast Asian regions, including Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Myanmar (Burma), and Sri Lanka.
- Historical records indicate that Buddhism spread from Ratnagiri and other Kalinga sites across the Bay of Bengal.
- The Bali Jatra festival, celebrated annually in Cuttack, commemorates these ancient trade and cultural links between Kalinga and Bali, Java, and Sumatra.
- The ASI team is specifically looking for material culture evidence at Ratnagiri that could confirm its role in linking Buddhist traditions across South and Southeast Asia.

## Other Major Buddhist Sites in Odisha

- Dhauli: Famous for Ashokan rock edicts, signifying the spread of Buddhism post-Kalinga War.
- Lalitgiri: Home to Odisha's oldest Buddhist monastery, dating back to the 2nd century CE.
- Udaygiri: Known for Buddhist caves, stupas, and monastic remains.
- Langudi, Kayama, and Tarapur: Important sites with Buddhist inscriptions and sculptures.

### Ratnagiri's Decline and Abandonment

Buddhist activity at Ratnagiri declined after the 13th century, likely due to:

- The invasion of Muslim rulers in eastern India.
- The decline of Vajrayana Buddhism, which gradually lost its influence.
- The rise of Hinduism in Odisha, leading to the absorption of Buddhist deities into the local religious framework.

## History of Buddhism

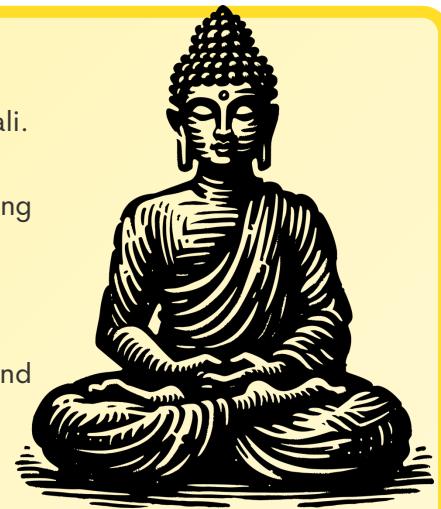
### Origins of Buddhism

- Founder:** Gautama Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama) (c. 563 BCE – 483 BCE).
- Birthplace:** Lumbini (present-day Nepal), in the Shakya clan.
- Early Life:** Born as a prince, lived in luxury, but renounced worldly pleasures after witnessing old age, disease, and death.
- Enlightenment:** Attained enlightenment at Bodh Gaya under the Bodhi tree after deep meditation.
- First Sermon:** Delivered at Sarnath (Dharma Chakra Pravartana), marking the beginning of the Buddhist Sangha.
- Death (Mahaparinirvana):** Passed away at Kushinagar, achieving Nirvana.
- The Four Noble Truths: Dukkha (Suffering): Life is full of suffering, Samudaya (Cause of Suffering): Desire (Tanha) is the root cause of suffering., Nirodha (Cessation of Suffering): Suffering can be ended by eliminating desire., Magga (Path to End Suffering): The Eightfold Path leads to liberation.



## Spread of Buddhism

- **During Buddha's Lifetime:** Spread across Magadha, Kosala, and Vaishali.
- **Mauryan Period (3rd Century BCE):**
- Emperor Ashoka (r. 268–232 BCE) played a key role in promoting Buddhism.
- Sent Buddhist missions to Sri Lanka, Southeast Asia, and Central Asia.
- Constructed stupas, viharas, and pillars (e.g., Sanchi Stupa).
- **Post-Mauryan Period:** Spread to China, Japan, Korea, Tibet, and Mongolia through Silk Route.
- **Decline in India:**
- Resurgence of Hinduism (Bhakti Movement).
- Islamic invasions led to the destruction of monasteries (e.g., Nalanda and Vikramshila).



### Major Buddhist Councils:

- **First Council (483 BCE, Rajgir)** – Compiled Buddha's teachings (Vinaya Pitaka & Sutta Pitaka).
- **Second Council (383 BCE, Vaishali)** – Debate over monastic discipline led to sectarian divisions.
- **Third Council (250 BCE, Pataliputra)** – Ashoka's patronage; spread to foreign lands.
- **Fourth Council (72 CE, Kashmir)** – Under Kanishka, led to the rise of Mahayana Buddhism.

### Schools of Buddhism

- **Hinayana (Theravada):**
  - Oldest school; follows **original teachings** of Buddha.
  - Predominant in **Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia**.
- **Mahayana:**
  - Believes in **Bodhisattvas** (compassionate beings who delay Nirvana).
  - Spread to **China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Tibet**.
- **Vajrayana (Tantric Buddhism):**
  - Developed in **Tibet and Mongolia**.
  - Stresses rituals, mantras, and meditation.

### Influence of Buddhism on Indian Culture

- **Art and Architecture:**
  - **Stupas** (Sanchi, Amaravati).
  - **Cave Monasteries** (Ajanta, Ellora).
  - **Buddha Statues** (Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan).
- **Philosophy:** Inspired **Vedanta** and **Bhakti Movements**.
- **Language:** Promoted **Pali** and **Prakrit** over Sanskrit.
- **Social Impact:** Opposed caste-based discrimination.



## MIND MAP

### History of Buddhism

- **Founder:** Gautama Buddha (563 BCE – 483 BCE), born in Lumbini, attained enlightenment at Bodh Gaya, first sermon at Sarnath.
- **Core Teachings:** Four Noble Truths (Dukkha, Samudaya, Nirodha, Magga) and the Eightfold Path.
- **Major Concepts:** Nirvana (liberation), Anatta (no-self), Anicca (impermanence).
- **Buddhist Councils:** First (483 BCE, Rajgir), Second (383 BCE, Vaishali), Third (250 BCE, Pataliputra), Fourth (72 CE, Kashmir).
- **Schools:** Hinayana (Theravada), Mahayana, Vajrayana (Tantric Buddhism)

- **ASI Excavation at Ratnagiri (2025):** Renewed after six decades; unearthed Buddha heads, giant palm, ancient wall, and inscriptions.
- **Location & Significance:** Part of Odisha's Diamond Triangle (with Udayagiri & Lalitgiri); a key Vajrayana Buddhist center.
- **Historical Context:** Flourished from the 5th to 13th century CE; peak under the Bhauma-Kara dynasty (8th–10th century CE).
- **Key Discoveries:** Three colossal Buddha heads (3-4 ft), a giant Buddha palm (5 ft), ancient inscriptions, and structural remains.
- **Initial Excavations (1958-1961):** Led by Debala Mitra; revealed monasteries, stupas, a temple, and sculptures.
- **Vajrayana Buddhism:** Major center for Tantric Buddhist practices, influencing Himalayan and Southeast Asian traditions.

- **Meaning of Ratnagiri:** 'Hill of Jewels', located between the Brahmani and Birupa rivers near Bhitarkanika wetlands.
- **Part of Diamond Triangle:** One of Odisha's most excavated Buddhist sites, along with Udaygiri and Lalitgiri.
- **Flourished (5th–13th Century CE):** Reached its peak under the Bhauma-Kara dynasty (8th–10th century CE).
- **Vajrayana Buddhism Hub:** A major center for Tantric Buddhism, influencing the Himalayan and Southeast Asian regions.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What is Ratnagiri part of, known as the Diamond Triangle of Odisha?
  - (a) Udayagiri and Sanchi
  - (b) Lalitgiri and Udayagiri
  - (c) Konark and Puri
  - (d) Mahabalipuram and Hampi
2. Who conducted the first major excavations at Ratnagiri, and what was later achieved by this archaeologist?
  - (a) K.M. Srivastava, who later became the ASI's Director of Excavations
  - (b) Debala Mitra, who later became the ASI's first female Director General
  - (c) B.B. Lal, who later became the President of India
  - (d) H.D. Sankalia, who later won the Jnanpith Award
3. Who among the following became the first female Director General of the ASI?
  - (a) B.B. Lal
  - (b) Amalananda Ghosh
  - (c) R.S. Sharma
  - (d) Debala Mitra
4. Which are some of the notable Buddhist heritage sites in Odisha, apart from Ratnagiri, that highlight the state's rich Buddhist legacy?
  - (a) Lalitgiri, Udayagiri, and the Shanti Stupa
  - (b) Sanchi, Bodh Gaya, and Nalanda
  - (c) Ajanta, Ellora, and Karle Caves
  - (d) Rajgir, Vaishali, and Kapilavastu

5. Under which dynasty did the Ratnagiri Buddhist site flourish between the 8th and 10th centuries CE?  
 (a) Gupta dynasty      (b) Maurya dynasty  
 (c) BhaumaKara dynasty (d) Pala dynasty
6. Which Buddhist heritage site in India is home to the only Buddhist monastery with a curvilinear roof and was once inhabited by around 500 monks practicing Tantrayana Buddhism?  
 (a) Nalanda      (b) Sanchi  
 (c) Ajanta      (d) Ratnagiri
7. What unique architectural feature is found in Ratnagiri's Buddhist monastery?  
 (a) A golden dome      (b) A curvilinear roof  
 (c) Gothic arches      (d) Mughal minarets
8. Which festival, celebrated annually in Cuttack, commemorates the ancient trade and cultural links between Kalinga and Bali, Java, and Sumatra?  
 (a) Kalinga Mahotsav      (b) The Bali Jatra festival  
 (c) Rath Yatra      (d) Konark Dance Festival
9. Which sites in Odisha contain rock edicts that provide evidence of Ashoka's Buddhist policies?  
 (a) Sanchi and Bodh Gaya      (b) Ratnagiri and Lalitgiri  
 (c) Dhauli and Jaugada      (d) Ellora and Ajanta
10. Who is leading the new ASI excavation at Ratnagiri?  
 (a) K.M. Srivastava      (b) Debala Mitra  
 (c) D.B. Garnayak      (d) H.D. Sankalia
11. Which site, meaning "Hill of Jewels," is located between the Brahmani and Birupa rivers in Odisha and is part of the state's Diamond Triangle known for its rich Buddhist heritage?
- (a) Lalitgiri      (b) Udayagiri  
 (c) Ratnagiri      (d) Dhauli
12. Which river, along with its tributary Birupa, flows near the Ratnagiri archaeological site in Odisha?  
 (a) Mahanadi River      (b) Brahmani River  
 (c) Godavari River      (d) Krishna River
13. Which ancient Indian region, now known as Odisha, had strong maritime and trade connections with Southeast Asian regions, including Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Myanmar (Burma), and Sri Lanka?  
 (a) Magadha      (b) Kalinga  
 (c) Dravida      (d) Gandhara
14. Which ancient Indian region did Emperor Ashoka conquer in 261 BCE, leading him to embrace Buddhism and advocate for non-violence and dharma?  
 (a) Magadha      (b) Avanti  
 (c) Kosala      (d) Kalinga
15. What type of Buddhism had a strong presence at Ratnagiri?  
 (a) Theravada Buddhism      (b) Mahayana Buddhism  
 (c) Vajrayana Buddhism      (d) Zen Buddhism
16. Which ancient Buddhist site in Odisha, dating back to the 2nd century BCE, is considered the oldest monastery in the region?  
 (a) Lalitgiri      (b) Udayagiri  
 (c) Ratnagiri      (d) Dhauli
17. Which sites in Odisha are renowned for their significant Buddhist inscriptions and sculptures?  
 (a) Konark, Puri, and Bhubaneswar  
 (b) Langudi, Kayama, and Tarapur  
 (c) Cuttack, Sambalpur, and Rourkela  
 (d) Balasore, Baripada, and Jajpur

## ANSWER KEY

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

# PARENTS TEACHERS MEET AT LE GWALIOR



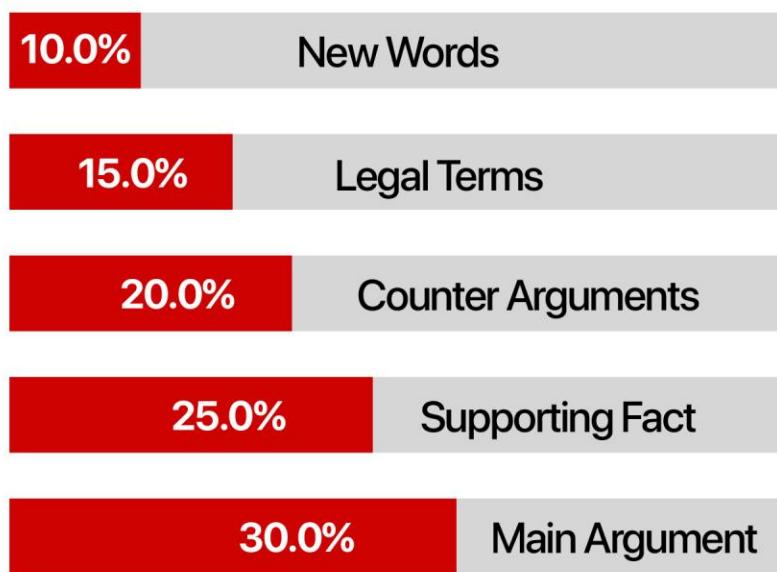
# EDITORIALS & CLAT PREPARATION

The Secret Weapon for Aceing Reading, Reasoning & Current Affairs

**Do you read newspaper editorials?**

- They improve your reading, critical reasoning and reading comprehension.
- But wait! Don't just skim them—use them smartly. Here's how!

## KEY ASPECTS OF A NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL FOR CLAT PREPARATION



# Why Should You Read Editorials?

- ❖ Boosts Study Habits - Reading daily builds focus and patience.
- ❖ Improves Reading Skills – Helps in understanding long passages easily.
- ❖ Sharpens Analytical Thinking – Helps in developing strong reasoning skills.
- ❖ Enhances Current Affairs Knowledge – Keeps you updated on legal and social issues.
- ❖ Builds Critical Reasoning – Editorials teach you how to analyze arguments.
- ❖ Improves Vocabulary – Learn new words and their meanings.

## How to Read Editorials the Right Way?

### Pick the Right Newspaper

- ❖ Read from The Hindu or The Indian Express.
- ❖ Focus on the editorial and opinion sections.

### Scan Before You Read

- ❖ Read the headline and the first few lines.
- ❖ Guess the topic before reading fully.

### Find the Key Points

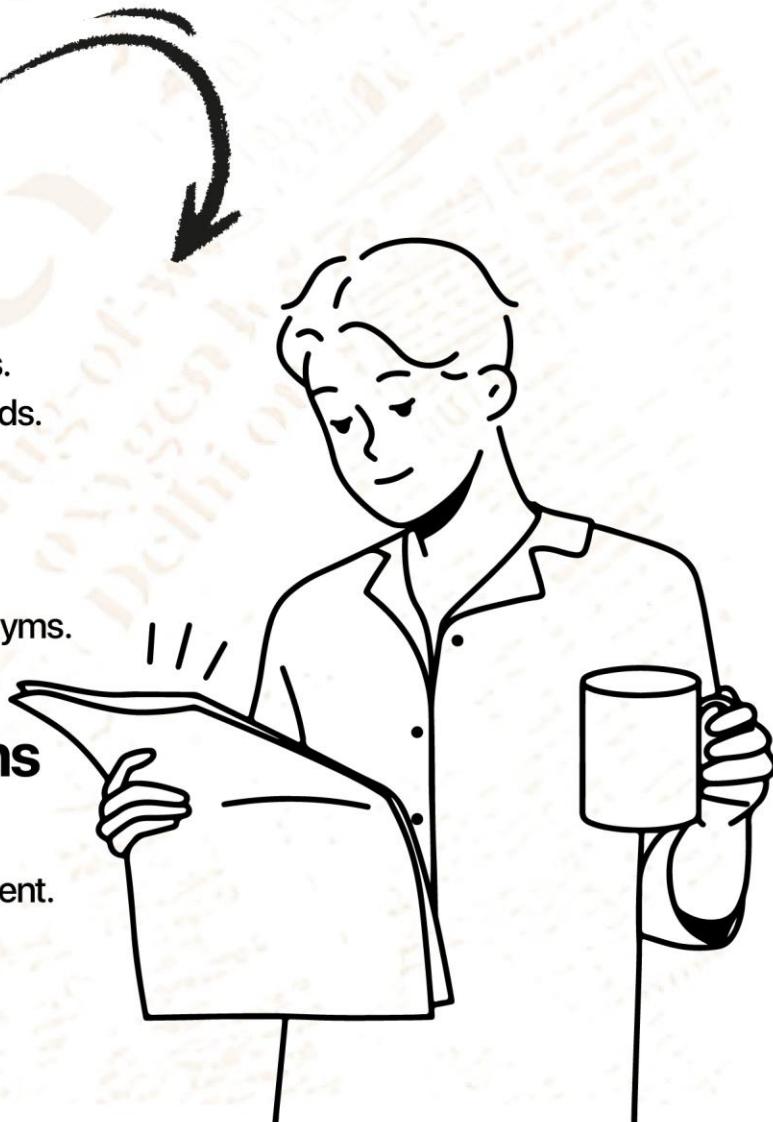
- ❖ Underline important facts and legal terms.
- ❖ Note down major arguments in a few words.

### Boost Your Vocabulary

- ❖ Write down difficult words.
- ❖ Find their meaning, synonyms, and antonyms.
- ❖ Try using them in conversations!

### Analyze Different Opinions

- ❖ Editorials present multiple viewpoints.
- ❖ Try to understand both sides of an argument.
- ❖ Form your own opinion and justify it.



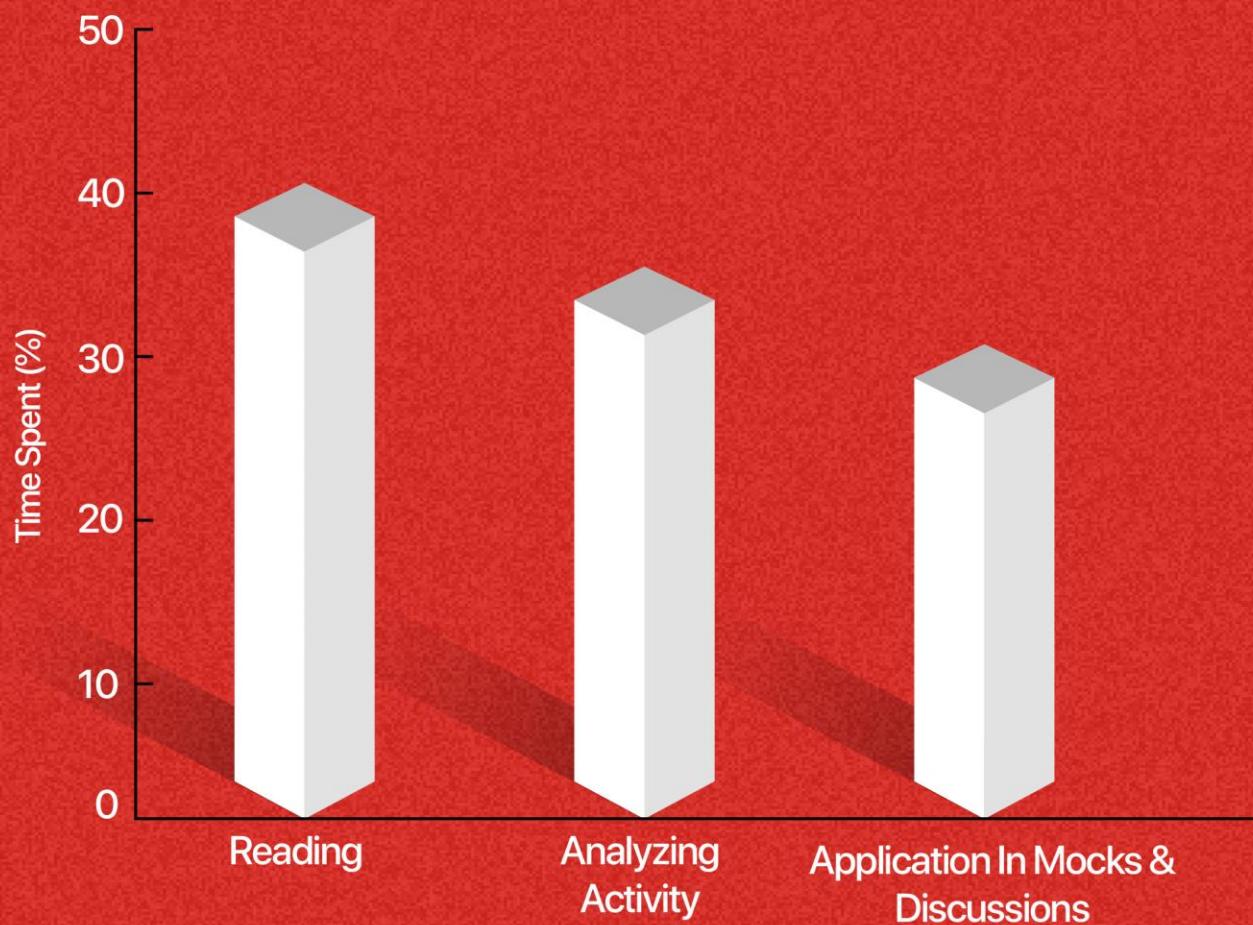
## Read Twice for Better Understanding

- ❖ First read: Get a basic idea of the topic.
- ❖ Second read: Understand deeper meanings and logic.

## Read Under a Timer

- ❖ Set a timer for 10-15 minutes.
- ❖ Try to summarize the editorial quickly.
- ❖ Improves reading speed and comprehension.

# TIME MANAGEMENT - READING VS UNDERSTANDING VS APPLICATION

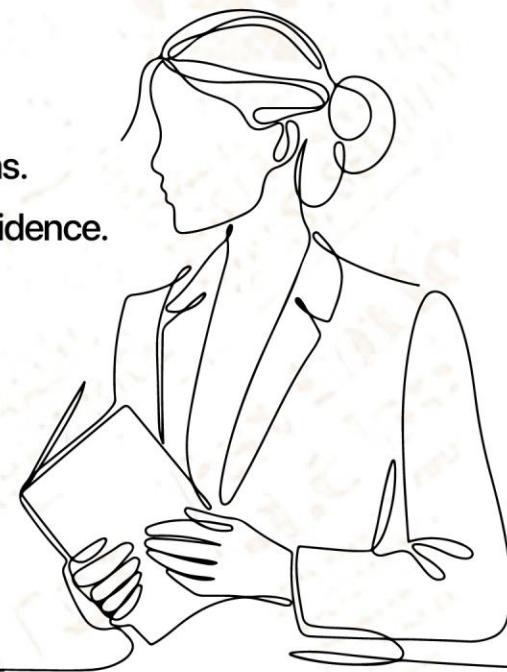


## Take It to the Next Level!

- ❖ Watch editorial analysis videos for deeper insights.
- ❖ Maintain a journal to summarise editorials and note key terms.
- ❖ Discuss in study groups to understand better and gain confidence.

## Challenge: Start Today

- ❖ Pick an editorial.
- ❖ Read it in 10-15 minutes.
- ❖ Write a 3-line summary.
- ❖ Share it with a friend or discuss it in a group.



DO THIS DAILY AND WATCH YOUR

# CLAT PREPARATION SKYROCKET!

So, are you ready  
to start reading?

*Let's Go!*

# PARENTS TEACHERS MEET AT LE KANPUR



## IMPORTANT ONE LINERS

### NATIONAL

#### **Cabinet Approves Rs 16,300 Crore National Critical Mineral Mission**

- The Union Cabinet approved the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) on January 29, 2025, with a total outlay of ₹34,300 crore over seven years, including ₹16,300 crore from the government and ₹18,000 crore from PSUs.
- 24 critical minerals, including copper, lithium, nickel, cobalt, and rare earth elements, have been identified for strategic focus.
- It will encourage acquiring overseas mineral assets, stockpiling resources, and promoting trade with resource-rich countries. The government plans to establish mineral processing parks, research centers, and fast-track regulatory approvals.
- The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, was amended in 2023, enabling the auction of 24 strategic mineral blocks.
- The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has undertaken 368 exploration projects over the past three years, with 195 ongoing in 2024-25 and 227 planned for 2025-26.
- Customs duties on critical minerals have been removed in FY25 to encourage domestic processing.

#### **Article 224A: Appointing Retired Judges as Ad Hoc Judges in High Courts**

- On January 31, 2025, the Supreme Court relaxed its 2021 order on appointing ad hoc judges in High Courts to address pending criminal cases. High Courts can appoint retired judges under Article 224A even if vacancies are below 20% of the sanctioned strength.
- A bench led by Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna, along with Justices B R Gavai and Surya Kant, ruled that ad hoc judges will now sit on benches presided over by sitting judges.
- Article 224A of the Constitution allows the Chief Justice of a High Court, with Presidential consent, to appoint retired High Court judges to act as judges.
- The April 2021 order initially required over 20% vacancies before appointing ad hoc judges, but this condition has now been put in abeyance.
- High Courts may now appoint 2 to 5 ad hoc judges, not exceeding 10% of their sanctioned strength. The previous allowance for Division Benches comprising only ad hoc judges has been revoked, and such judges must now sit with a sitting judge to decide pending appeals.

#### **World Employment and Social Outlook (WESO): Trends 2025 report: ILO**

- The International Labour Organisation's (ILO's) "World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2025" reported that global unemployment remained at 5% in 2024, the lowest on record, continuing from 2023.
- Economic growth slowed to 3.2% in 2024, down from 3.3% in 2023 and 3.6% in 2022, with further deceleration expected.
- Youth unemployment remained high at 12.6%, with NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) rates rising in low-income countries, affecting 15.8 million young men (20.4%) and 28.2 million young women (37.0%).
- Global jobs gap reached 402 million in 2024, including 186 million unemployed, 137 million discouraged workers, and 79 million unable to work due to obligations.

#### **GBS and BBE Outbreak in Pune**

- 67 cases of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) have been reported in the Sinhagad Road area of Pune, prompting health authorities to investigate.
- GBS is a rare but treatable neurological disorder with an incidence of 0.1–2 per 1 lakh people per year, causing limb weakness, tingling, difficulty in walking, swallowing, or breathing in severe cases.
- Many patients reported diarrhoea or respiratory symptoms before developing GBS, indicating a possible link to bacterial or viral infections.
- Health authorities suspect a connection to 'Campylobacter Jejuni' infection, often transmitted through contaminated food or water.

- The Neurological Society of Pune has urged caution but reassured that GBS is treatable, though severe cases may require ICU admission and ventilatory support.

#### **NBFC's not under Writ Jurisdiction: SC**

- The Supreme Court ruled that private companies, including NBFCs and scheduled banks, are not subject to writ jurisdiction as they do not perform public functions or duties.
- NBFCs are not classified as "State" under Article 12, and their regulatory oversight does not automatically make them liable to writ jurisdiction.
- The "Function Test" determines whether an entity is subject to writ jurisdiction based on its public duties or statutory obligations.
- NBFCs' responsibilities are limited to their account holders and borrowers, not the general public, making them ineligible for writ enforcement. A writ can only be issued against private entities if they deny rights concerning a public duty imposed by law.
- Writs are legal orders issued under Articles 32 (Supreme Court) and 226 (High Courts) to enforce Fundamental Rights. The Supreme Court can issue writs only for Fundamental Rights violations, while High Courts can issue writs for both Fundamental and legal rights.

#### **AnSI Proposed inclusion of 179 Communities into SC, ST and OBC**

- A three-year ethnographic study by the Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI) and Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) has categorized 268 denotified, semi-nomadic, and nomadic tribes for the first time.
- The study, commissioned by a NITI Aayog panel, recommends 179 communities for inclusion in Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC) lists across 26 states and union territories.
- The study recommends 46 communities for inclusion in the Other Backward Classes (OBC) list, 29 communities for the Scheduled Castes (SC) list, and 10 communities for the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list.
- Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of fresh additions, with 19 communities recommended for inclusion, followed by Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan, each with eight communities.
- 63 communities (over 20%) were found "not traceable", likely due to assimilation, migration, or name changes.
- The study was completed in August 2022, but the Social Justice Ministry is awaiting final scrutiny by NITI Aayog before proceeding further.

#### **One Nation, One Time**

- The Indian government has introduced the 'One Nation, One Time' initiative to mandate the use of Indian Standard Time (IST) across all sectors for uniform and precise timekeeping.
- The Legal Metrology (Indian Standard Time) Rules, 2025, drafted by the Department of Consumer Affairs in collaboration with NPL and ISRO, aim to synchronize communication networks, public services, and critical infrastructure.
- India will replace reliance on foreign GPS satellites with its indigenous NavIC system for time synchronization, enhancing self-reliance and cybersecurity.
- Five Legal Metrology laboratories will be established across India to maintain accuracy through atomic clocks located at NPL (Delhi), Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, and Guwahati.

#### **Declining Global TFR; Including Data on Indian Population Trends: GBD 2021**

- India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) declined from 6.18 in the 1950s to 1.9 in 2021, falling below the replacement level of 2.1, as per the Global Burden of Diseases (GBD) 2021 study.
- The study projects that India's TFR could further drop to 1.04 by 2100, raising concerns over demographic and socio-economic impacts.
- Southern states, where fertility rates dropped below replacement levels earlier, are experiencing an ageing population, shrinking workforce, and growing social security demands.
- Kerala, which achieved replacement-level fertility in 1988, is witnessing youth migration and an increasing elderly population, leading to greater reliance on migrant labour, projected to reach 60 lakh by 2030.
- Attempts to reverse fertility decline have largely failed globally, as seen in South Korea, where pro-natal policies have not prevented the TFR from dropping to 0.73 in 2023.

**Sahitya Akademi Award 2024**

- The Sahitya Akademi Awards 2024 announced 22 winners, with Bengali and Urdu awards pending, bringing the total to 24.
- The awards recognize outstanding literary works in novels, poetry, essays, and plays and are the second-highest literary honor in India after the Jnanpith Award.
- Established in 1954, the Sahitya Akademi functions as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Culture. Eligibility criteria include works in 22 languages of the Eighth Schedule, along with English and Rajasthani, totaling 24 languages, as well as translations of Indian literary works. The author must be an Indian citizen to qualify for the award.
- Other Sahitya Akademi awards include the Bal Sahitya Puraskar for children's literature and the Yuva Puraskar for authors under 35.
- The Akademi also runs initiatives like Gramalok to support remote writers and Dalit Chetna to encourage Dalit literature.

**National Mission on Cultural Mapping**

- The Ministry of Culture has launched the National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM) to preserve and promote India's cultural heritage. Implemented by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), the mission aims to document cultural heritage and support rural economic development.
- As part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, NMCM launched the 'Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar' (MGMD) portal in June 2023 to document the cultural heritage of 6.5 lakh villages.
- Currently, 4.5 lakh villages have been uploaded on the MGMD portal (<https://mgmd.gov.in/>) with their cultural portfolios.
- The MGMD portal records diverse cultural elements, including oral traditions, customs, historical significance, art forms, traditional food, fairs, festivals, and local landmarks.
- The mission aims to complete the database of all 6.5 lakh villages and upload their details onto the MGMD portal.
- Other components include Sanskriti Pratibha Khoj (Cultural Talent Search), National Cultural Workplace, and outreach initiatives like newsletters, magazines, and publicity campaigns.

**Dr. Jitendra Singh to Preside Over 12th All India Pension Adalat**

- The 12th All India Pension Adalat will be held on February 13, 2025, under the chairmanship of Dr. Jitendra Singh, Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions, in New Delhi.
- The event will focus on resolving long-pending pension cases (over 120 days) in 16 Ministries/Departments, including the Ministry of Home Affairs, Defence, Railways, and CBDT.
- Pension Adalats serve as a single platform where concerned stakeholders, including Ministries, CPAO, and Banks, collaborate for on-the-spot grievance redressal.
- Since the initiative began in September 2017, 11 Pension Adalats have been conducted, resolving 18,005 cases with a 71% success rate as of December 2024.
- The 12th Pension Adalat will address 180 cases related to different Ministries and ensure timely resolution of pension grievances, reducing litigation.

**President Droupadi Murmu Inaugurates National Tribal Festival 'Aadi Mahotsav' in New Delhi**

- The National Tribal Festival 2025 (Aadi Mahotsav 2025) is being held from February 16 to 24, 2025, at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, New Delhi, organized by TRIFED under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- Hon'ble President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, inaugurated the event, which features 600+ tribal artisans, 500+ performing artists, and 25+ tribal food stalls.
- International participation includes delegations from Sri Lanka and Indonesia, exploring trade opportunities.
- 25+ MoUs signed with design institutes, corporate houses, and PSUs. MoU with IFCA for tribal cuisine promotion and HPMC for value addition to minor forest products like Mahua.
- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs won the Best Tableau Award 2025 for its Republic Day 2025 Tableau, highlighting tribal heritage, the Jal-Jungle-Jameen theme, and Bhagwan Birsa Munda's 150th birth anniversary celebrations.
- Aadi Mahotsav 2025 serves as a major platform for tribal artisans, promoting their handicrafts, textiles, pottery, jewellery, and organic products at national and international levels.

### India's First Open-Air Art Wall Museum Marks IMD's 150-Year Journey

- Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated India's first "Open-Air Art Wall Museum" at Mausam Bhawan, New Delhi, celebrating 150 years of the India Meteorological Department (IMD).
- Developed in collaboration with Delhi Street Art, the initiative transforms IMD's headquarters walls into a visual narrative of India's meteorological history and advancements.
- The art showcase features 38 murals, illustrating IMD's impact on agriculture, disaster management, and daily life, along with scientific advancements in weather forecasting, satellites, and radars.
- The murals integrate India's cultural heritage, depicting references to Kalidasa's Meghaduta and Tansen's musical influence on weather.
- Dr. Jitendra Singh highlighted IMD's contributions to disaster risk reduction and economic sectors like agriculture, aviation, and marine industries through accurate weather forecasts.
- Dr. M. Ravichandran, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, emphasized that art enhances public engagement by making meteorology more accessible.
- Mayuri Saini, Director of Delhi Street Art, dedicated the project to her late founder, Yogesh Saini, acknowledging his vision for transforming urban spaces.

### Centre Releases 15th Finance Commission Grants for Rural Local Bodies

- The Union Government has released Fifteenth Finance Commission (XV FC) Grants for Rural Local Bodies (RLBs) in Bihar, Haryana, and Sikkim for the financial year 2024–25.
- Bihar received ₹821.8021 crores as the second installment of Untied Grants, along with ₹47.9339 crores of the withheld portion of the first installment, covering 38 District Panchayats, 530 Block Panchayats, and 8,052 Gram Panchayats.
- Haryana received ₹202.4663 crores as the second installment of Untied Grants, along with ₹7.5993 crores of the withheld portion of the first installment, covering 18 District Panchayats, 142 Block Panchayats, and 6,195 Gram Panchayats.
- Sikkim received ₹6.2613 crores as the second installment of Untied Grants, covering 4 District Panchayats and 186 Gram Panchayats.
- Untied Grants will be used by Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) for location-specific needs under the 29 subjects listed in the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution, excluding salaries and establishment costs.
- Tied Grants are designated for sanitation, Open Defecation Free (ODF) status maintenance, waste management, fecal sludge management, drinking water supply, rainwater harvesting, and water recycling.

### GI Tag for Virgin Coconut Oil of Andaman

- Virgin Coconut Oil (VCO) from Nicobar district received a Geographical Indication (GI) tag, enhancing its global recognition and marketability.
- The initiative aims to economically empower tribal women, enabling them to participate actively in local and global markets.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted this achievement in the 118th episode of "Mann Ki Baat" on January 19, 2025, emphasizing the role of SHGs in positioning Andaman and Nicobar as a global contributor.
- VCO is made using traditional, chemical-free methods, maintaining high quality and purity. The GI tag will boost the region's economy, fostering sustainable livelihoods and increasing demand for indigenous products.

### Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2024

The **Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2024**, conducted by the **NGO Pratham Foundation**, provides a comprehensive overview of the **current state of education in rural India**. The survey reached 649,491 children across 17,997 villages in 605 rural districts, assessing various aspects of enrollment, foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN), digital literacy, and school facilities.

## THIS TABLE SUMMARISES THE ASER REPORT 2024

Category	Sub-category	Details
<b>Pre-primary Education (Ages 3-5)</b>	Enrollment Trends	Enrollment among 3-year-olds rose from 68.1% in 2018 to 77.4% in 2024. Gujarat, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Telangana achieved near-universal enrollment.
	Types of Institutions	Anganwadi centers remain predominant. 37.5% of 5-year-olds attended private schools in 2024, up from 30.8% in 2022.
	Age of Entry to Standard I	Proportion of 'underage' children entering Standard I decreased from 25.6% in 2018 to 16.7% in 2024.
<b>Elementary Education (Ages 6-14)</b>	Overall Enrollment	Enrollment rate remained high at 98.1% in 2024, slightly down from 98.4% in 2022.
	Government vs. Private Schools	Government school enrollment increased from 65.5% in 2018 to 66.8% in 2024.
	Reading Skills	23.4% of Standard III children could read Standard II level text in 2024 (up from 20.9% in 2018). Standard V reading levels improved from 38.5% in 2022 to 44.8% in 2024.
	Arithmetic Skills	Numerical subtraction ability in Standard III increased from 28.2% in 2018 to 33.7% in 2024. Standard V division skills rose from 27.9% in 2018 to 30.7% in 2024.
<b>Older Children (Ages 15-16)</b>	Enrollment	Proportion of 15-16-year-olds not enrolled in school decreased from 13.1% in 2018 to 7.9% in 2024.
	Digital Literacy	90% of 14-16-year-olds have a smartphone at home. 80% know how to use it, and 57% use it for education.
<b>School Facilities and Infrastructure</b>	Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) Initiatives	Over 80% of schools received directives to implement FLN activities, and a similar proportion had at least one trained teacher.
	Attendance	Student attendance in government primary schools increased from 72.4% in 2018 to 75.9% in 2024. Teacher attendance improved from 85.1% to 87.5%.
	School Facilities	Usable girls' toilets increased from 66.4% in 2018 to 72% in 2024. Drinking water access rose from 74.8% to 77.7%.

## INTERNATIONAL

**China Unveils World's Longest Tunnel, Enhances BRI Connectivity**

- China has completed the Tianshan Shengli Tunnel, the world's longest expressway tunnel, measuring 22.13 kilometers in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.
- The tunnel is a crucial part of the Urumqi-Yuli Expressway, connecting Urumqi in northern Xinjiang to Yuli County in the south.
- Once operational, it will reduce travel time across the Tianshan Mountains from three hours to 20 minutes.
- The project began in April 2020, facing challenges like high-altitude conditions (over 3,000 meters), complex geological formations, and proximity to the Tianshan No. 1 Glacier and water sources.
- The project enhances north-south connectivity within Xinjiang, facilitating economic growth and regional integration. It aligns with China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), strengthening trade routes and economic ties with neighboring regions.

**Nigeria Joins BRICS as Partner, Aims for Global Collaboration**

- Nigeria has been admitted as the ninth BRICS partner country, joining Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Thailand, Uganda, and Uzbekistan.
- BRICS was established in 2009 by Brazil, Russia, India, and China, with South Africa joining in 2010 as a counterbalance to the G7 industrialized nations.

- In 2023, the bloc expanded by adding Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the UAE, with Saudi Arabia invited to join.
- Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Malaysia have formally applied for full membership, while other countries have expressed interest.
- Nigeria, Africa's largest country by population and a major economy, aligns with BRICS in South-South cooperation and global governance reforms.

### **Federal Judge Halts Trump's Birthright Citizenship Order**

- The 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco upheld a lower court ruling blocking President Donald Trump's executive order that sought to end birthright citizenship in the United States.
- Trump's order, signed on January 20, 2025, after his return as the 74th US President, directed government agencies to deny automatic citizenship to children born in the US if neither parent was a US citizen or a lawful permanent resident.
- The order faced immediate lawsuits from Democratic-led states and immigrant rights advocates, citing violations of the 14th Amendment of the US Constitution.
- Judge John Coughenour, a federal judge in Seattle, was the first to rule against Trump's order, calling it "blatantly unconstitutional" and issuing a temporary restraining order on January 23, later converting it into a permanent preliminary injunction.
- The 9th Circuit's ruling maintains a nationwide block on the policy, rejecting the Trump administration's argument that the ruling should be limited to specific states.
- Federal judges in Maryland, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire have also blocked the executive order.
- The US Justice Department is appealing the decisions in Maryland and Massachusetts, increasing the likelihood that the case may reach the US Supreme Court.
- As of now, the White House and the Justice Department have not issued official statements regarding the 9th Circuit's decision.

### **WEF 2025: Crystal Awards Honor Beckham, Furstenberg, and Yamamoto**

- The 55th World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting commenced in Davos, Switzerland, under the theme "Collaboration for the Intelligent Age".
- David Beckham (football legend), Diane von Furstenberg (fashion designer), and Riken Yamamoto (architect) received the Crystal Awards for contributions to social, environmental, and creative progress.
- WEF President and CEO Borge Brende emphasized the forum's role in addressing geopolitical, geo-economic, and technological shifts through global collaboration.
- Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav highlighted global interest in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's economic policies, with discussions on India's digital transformation and new digital architecture.
- Former Union Minister Smriti Irani, as Founder and Chairperson of the Alliance for Global Good, is leading discussions on equity, inclusion, and sustainable development at the We-Lead Lounge.
- Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis and Andhra Pradesh CM N. Chandrababu Naidu are showcasing investment opportunities to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from global business leaders.

### **UK Becomes First Country to Criminalize AI-Generated Child Abuse Content**

- Britain will be the first country to introduce laws against AI-generated child sexual abuse material, as announced by the UK government on February 1, 2025.
- The new law will criminalize the possession, creation, or distribution of AI tools used to generate child sexual abuse images, punishable by up to five years in prison.
- UK Interior Minister Yvette Cooper described the rise of AI-driven child abuse tools as a "disturbing phenomenon", exacerbating online child exploitation and grooming.
- The UK government will ban AI models specifically designed for child abuse, urging other countries to follow suit.
- The measures will be introduced in the Crime and Policing Bill during its parliamentary session.
- The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) reported detecting 3,512 AI-generated child abuse images on a single dark web site in just 30 days in 2024.
- The number of the most severe category of child abuse images rose by 10% in a year, indicating a growing trend in AI-assisted exploitation.
- A recent inquiry found that around 500,000 children in the UK experience some form of abuse annually, with online abuse increasing significantly.

**First Black Mrs World: Mrs South Africa Makes History**

- Tshego Gaelae, a 34-year-old attorney from Soweto, South Africa, has made history as the first Black woman to win the Mrs World 2025 title.
- She was crowned at the grand finale in Las Vegas, following in the footsteps of Candice Abrahams (2016), the only other South African to win the title.
- Gaelae's victory marks a milestone in the pageant's 40-year history, symbolizing inclusivity and representation in global pageantry.
- Grand Finale in Las Vegas: She captivated the judges with poise, intelligence, and advocacy work, wearing an elegant white gown by South African designer Claris by Gerrit Pienaar.

**Argentina Cuts Ties with WHO**

- Argentina has announced its withdrawal from the World Health Organization (WHO), following a similar move by the United States under President Donald Trump in January 2025.
- President Javier Milei, a libertarian and vocal Trump supporter, cited "deep differences" with the WHO's management of global health issues, particularly its handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Foreign Minister Gerardo Werthein has been instructed to oversee Argentina's exit from the organization.
- The move aligns with Trump's past criticism of WHO for mishandling global health crises and imposing "unfairly onerous" financial obligations on member nations.
- Professor Juan Gabriel Tokatlian of Universidad Torcuato Di Tella stated that Argentina's relationship with WHO is governed by law, and a formal withdrawal would require new legislation.
- US withdrawal significantly impacts WHO's financial stability, as the US was WHO's largest donor, contributing \$950 million in 2024, nearly 15% of WHO's total budget.
- Argentina's annual contribution of \$8 million is relatively small, but its exit raises concerns that other politically aligned nations may follow.

**India and Nicaragua Forge Partnership for Quick Impact Projects**

- India and Nicaragua signed an umbrella agreement to implement Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) in Managua, the capital of Nicaragua, on February 6, 2025.
- The agreement was signed by Indian Ambassador to Panama, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica, Sumit Seth, and Nicaragua's Foreign Minister, Valdrack Jaentschke.
- The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) focuses on key development areas, including physical infrastructure such as roads and community centers, and social infrastructure, including education, healthcare, and sanitation.
- The Indian Embassy in Panama emphasized the agreement's significance in enhancing bilateral ties and fostering global development through targeted partnerships.
- India has maintained warm and cooperative relations with Nicaragua since diplomatic ties were established in March 1983.
- While India's Embassy in Panama is concurrently accredited to Nicaragua, Nicaragua's Embassy in Tokyo is concurrently accredited to India.

**India to Ratify Cape Town Convention**

- The Union Cabinet has approved a bill to ratify the Cape Town Convention, which will strengthen aircraft leasing activities in India. The bill, once passed by Parliament, will provide legal backing for the Cape Town Convention, ensuring enforceability in India's aviation sector.
- Civil Aviation Secretary Vumlunmang Vualnam confirmed the approval, stating that ratification will support aircraft leasing, acquisition, and manufacturing in India.
- The Protection and Enforcement of Interests in Aircraft Objects Bill, cleared by the Union Cabinet, aims to implement provisions of the Cape Town Convention and Cape Town Protocol.
- Under the Cape Town Convention, lessors can reclaim aircraft leased to airlines in case of default, preventing legal hurdles.
- India signed the Cape Town Convention but has yet to ratify it, leading to past leasing issues, such as during Go First's insolvency resolution, when lessors were initially unable to reclaim their aircraft.
- The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has now ordered Go First's liquidation, further highlighting the need for a robust leasing framework.

- The Bharatiya Vayyan Adhiniyam, 2024, which replaced the 90-year-old Aircraft Act, came into effect on January 1, 2025, facilitating aircraft design, manufacturing, and ease of doing business in India's aviation sector.

### **India-Qatar to Double Trade to \$28B by 2030**

- India and Qatar upgraded ties to a strategic partnership, aiming to double bilateral trade from \$14.08 billion to \$28 billion in five years.
- Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) has invested \$1.5 billion in retail, IT, education, healthcare, with plans to expand in infrastructure, ports, AI, renewable energy, and startups.
- Key agreements signed, including a revised Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) and MoUs on economic partnership, archives, youth affairs, and sports.
- India is exploring an FTA with Qatar alongside ongoing GCC trade negotiations.
- 600 Indians jailed in Qatar, including eight ex-Navy personnel, with seven returning home. A prisoner transfer agreement awaits ratification.

### **Bangladesh Launches 'Operation Devil Hunt'**

- Bangladesh's interim government, led by Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus, launched "Operation Devil Hunt", deploying army troops to curb unrest in Gazipur.
- The move follows student protests after an attack on ex-minister AKM Mozammel Haque's residence, with 70 attacks reported across 35 districts.
- Sheikh Hasina's Dhanmondi-32 residence was set on fire, escalating tensions six months after her ouster.
- Protesters demand the trial of Hasina, confiscation of Awami League assets, and cancellation of the party's registration.
- The BNP warned of a political conspiracy, while Yunus called for law and order restoration and an end to attacks on Hasina's family.

### **Amending CLNDA: India's Gateway to Nuclear Expansion**

- India plans to amend the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damages Act (CLNDA) to unlock stalled nuclear projects with France's EDF and US-based Westinghouse.
- The move marks a policy shift from 2015, addressing supplier liability concerns that have stalled deals for six EPR1650 reactors in Maharashtra and six AP1000 reactors in Andhra Pradesh.
- ₹20,000 crore allocated for five Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) as part of India's 100 GW nuclear energy target by 2047.
- Western firms oppose CLNDA's liability clause, which contradicts international norms (CSC); India's ₹1,500 crore nuclear insurance pool (2019) failed to reassure them.
- Modi's Feb 10-13 visits to France and the US could finalize long-pending nuclear agreements signed two decades ago.

### **Who is Tulsi Gabbard, First Hindu to Lead US Intelligence**

- Tulsi Gabbard was confirmed as Director of National Intelligence (DNI) in the US, overseeing 17 intelligence agencies, after being nominated by President Donald Trump in November 2024.
- A former Democratic congresswoman, Gabbard left the party in 2022 and has been vocal on national security issues, criticizing Biden's support for Ukraine and pro-Palestine protests.
- She made history as the first Hindu member of the US House of Representatives, taking her oath on the Bhagavad Gita and later gifting the same copy to PM Modi in 2019.
- She has openly criticized Pakistan for harboring terrorists, condemned the 2019 Pulwama attack, and opposed the US visa ban on Modi following the 2002 Gujarat riots.
- In 2014, she made a 15-day visit to India at Modi's invitation, supporting initiatives like International Yoga Day and maintaining a longstanding bond with the Indian leader.

### **China to Build First Deepwater 'Space Station' in South China Sea**

- China plans to establish a deep-sea research station 2,000 meters below the South China Sea, a region rich in methane hydrates and rare minerals, by 2030.
- The facility, designed for long-term habitation, will host six scientists for month-long missions and feature a life support system and an integrated surveillance network.
- Research will focus on methane emissions, biodiversity, tectonic activity, and methane hydrates as a future energy source, with applications in climate research, medicine, and disaster prediction.

- Unmanned submersibles, surface ships, and seabed observatories will assist in data collection, while a fiber-optic network will strengthen China's marine infrastructure.
- China's deep-sea push positions it ahead of the US and Russia, with implications for energy security, marine science, and strategic dominance.

### **Philippines Set to Acquire \$200 Million Akash Missile System from India**

- India expects to finalize a \$200 million deal to supply Akash short-range missiles to the Philippines this year, following Manila's military modernization push amid tensions with China.
- This would be India's second major defense export to the Philippines, after the \$375 million BrahMos missile sale in 2022.
- The Akash missile system (25 km range), developed by India's DRDO and manufactured by Bharat Dynamics Ltd, was previously exported to Armenia in a \$230 million deal.
- India is ramping up defense exports, which have grown 150% since 2020, surpassing \$2.4 billion in 2024, though still below China, Australia, and South Korea.
- The Philippines seeks more BrahMos missiles and submarines as it strengthens its military amid rising South China Sea disputes.

### **"Imagine a world with more women in science" Campaign Launched By UNESCO**

- UNESCO launched the campaign on February 15, 2025, marking the 10th anniversary of International Day of Women and Girls in Science (February 11).
- The initiative, using #EveryVoiceInScience, aims to highlight the impact of diverse perspectives and promote gender equality in STEMM fields.
- Global Gender Gap in Science: Women comprise only one-third of the global scientific community, and hold just 1 in 10 STEM leadership roles.
- India's STEMM Representation: Women account for 43% of STEMM enrolment, but only 18.6% of scientists and 25% of R&D projects are led by women.
- Key Challenges: Social norms, lack of female role models, workplace bias, and gender stereotypes hinder women's participation in science.

### **BRICS Summit in Rio Amid U.S. Tariff Threats**

- Brazil will host the 17th BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro on July 6-7, 2025, with leaders discussing global governance reforms and economic cooperation.
- BRICS has expanded to include Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, UAE, and Saudi Arabia, with Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Malaysia seeking membership.
- U.S. President Donald Trump has warned BRICS nations of 100% tariffs if they establish an alternative currency or payment system challenging the U.S. dollar.
- BRICS, founded in 2009, has grown beyond economic collaboration, focusing on financial sovereignty and reducing Western dominance in global trade. The summit could reshape global trade and finance, as BRICS nations seek greater independence from the dollar amid growing geopolitical tensions.

### **Oxfam Report on Global Inequality**

The Oxfam Report on Global Inequality 2024, titled "Takers Not Makers," offers a comprehensive analysis of the escalating economic disparities worldwide. Released in January 2025 to coincide with the World Economic Forum in Davos, the report highlights the widening chasm between the ultra-wealthy and the rest of the global population.

#### **Key Findings:**

1. Surge in Billionaire Wealth: In 2024, billionaire wealth increased by \$2 trillion, marking a growth rate three times faster than in 2023. This surge translates to an approximate daily increase of \$5.7 billion. The total number of billionaires rose to 2,769, with their combined wealth reaching \$15 trillion.
2. Emergence of Trillionaires: Oxfam projects that, based on current trends, the world is on track to witness the emergence of at least five trillionaires within the next decade.
3. Stagnation in Poverty Reduction: Despite the burgeoning wealth of billionaires, the number of people living in poverty has remained virtually unchanged since 1990. Approximately 3.5 billion individuals continue to live in poverty, underscoring the deepening economic divide.

4. Concentration of Wealth: The report reveals that the world's five richest individuals have seen their wealth more than double since 2020, while 60% of humanity has become poorer during the same period.
5. Factors Driving Inequality:
  - Inheritance and Monopolies: A significant portion of billionaire wealth is attributed to inheritance, monopolistic practices, and cronyism. Monopolistic corporations dominate markets, set prices, and suppress competition, further enriching their owners.
  - Cronyism and Corruption: The ultra-rich often leverage their wealth to influence government policies in their favor, perpetuating a cycle of inequality.
6. Global Wealth Distribution: The report indicates that the richest 1% of the global population possesses more wealth than the remaining 95%, highlighting the extreme concentration of wealth.

### **India and Qatar Elevate Trade Ties**

India and Qatar have recently elevated their bilateral relations to a strategic partnership, marking a significant enhancement in their economic and diplomatic engagements. This development was formalized during the state visit of Qatar's Emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, to New Delhi on February 17-18, 2025.

#### **Key Outcomes of the Strategic Partnership:**

1. Bilateral Trade Enhancement:
  - Trade Target: Both nations have set an ambitious goal to double their bilateral trade from the current \$14 billion to \$28 billion within the next five years.
  - Free Trade Agreement (FTA): Discussions are underway to explore the feasibility of a bilateral Free Trade Agreement, aiming to further facilitate trade and investment flows.
2. Investment Initiatives:
  - Qatar's Investment Commitment: Qatar has pledged to invest \$10 billion in India, focusing on sectors such as infrastructure, technology, manufacturing, food security, logistics, and hospitality.
  - Qatar Investment Authority (QIA): As part of this commitment, the QIA plans to establish an office in India, facilitating smoother investment operations and collaborations.
3. Financial and Digital Collaboration: QNB's Presence in India: QNB aims to expand its footprint in India by establishing an office in the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City), promoting financial sector collaboration.
4. Energy Sector Collaboration: LNG Supply Agreements: QatarEnergy has entered into a long-term agreement with India's Petronet LNG to supply 7.5 million metric tons of liquefied natural gas annually from 2028 to 2048, reinforcing energy ties.
5. Trade Relations:
  - Qatar's Ranking for India: In the fiscal year 2023-2024, Qatar was India's 17th largest trading partner, with bilateral trade totaling \$14.08 billion.
  - India's Ranking for Qatar: In 2024, India emerged as Qatar's third-largest trading partner, accounting for 11.57% of Qatar's total exports, valued at approximately \$15.148 billion.

### **World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting 2025**

The World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting 2025 took place in Davos, Switzerland, from January 15 to 19, under the theme "Collaboration for the Intelligent Age." This 55<sup>th</sup> gathering convened nearly 3,000 leaders from over 130 countries, including more than 350 heads of state and government, business executives, policymakers, and representatives from international organizations.

#### **Key Themes and Discussions:**

- Leaders addressed the challenges of fostering sustainable economic growth amid geopolitical tensions and technological advancements. The global public debt, surpassing \$100 trillion, was highlighted as a significant concern impacting future economic strategies.
- The rapid evolution of AI was a central topic, with discussions focusing on its potential benefits and associated risks. The concept of a "5-year AI shelf life" underscored the swift pace of technological change and the need for adaptive strategies.
- Environmental risks were emphasized as long-term concerns, with extreme weather events and biodiversity loss projected to intensify over the next decade. The necessity for global collaboration to implement sustainable solutions was a recurring theme.

**Notable Initiatives and Announcements:**

- Global Plastic Action Partnership (GPAP): GPAP achieved its goal of establishing 25 national partnerships by 2025, becoming the largest initiative combating plastic pollution.
- AI Governance: The forum facilitated discussions on establishing frameworks for responsible AI development, addressing ethical considerations, and mitigating potential risks associated with rapid technological advancements.
- Climate Commitments: Despite varying national policies, business leaders reaffirmed their dedication to climate initiatives, emphasizing the integration of sustainability into core business strategies.

**International Big Cat Alliance become a treaty-based intergovernmental organization**

The International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) has officially become a treaty-based intergovernmental organization as of January 23, 2025.

- Launched by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in April 2023 during the 50th anniversary of Project Tiger, the IBCA aims to conserve seven major big cat species globally: tigers, lions, leopards, snow leopards, cheetahs, jaguars, and pumas.
- Membership: To date, 27 countries have consented to join the IBCA, with five nations—India, Nicaragua, Eswatini, Somalia, and Liberia—formally depositing their instruments of ratification, acceptance, or approval, thereby becoming founding members.
- Headquarters: The IBCA is headquartered in New Delhi, India, serving as the central hub for global big cat conservation efforts.
- Objectives: The alliance seeks to facilitate collaboration among member countries, share conservation practices, provide technical expertise, and strengthen existing conservation platforms to protect big cat species.

## APPOINTMENTS

**Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya Takes Oath as Chief Justice of Delhi High Court + Justice Alok Adarsh Appointed as Chief Justice of Bombay High Court**

- Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya took oath as the Chief Justice of Delhi High Court on January 21, 2025, administered by Lieutenant Governor V.K. Saxena at Raj Niwas.
- Previously served as Chief Justice of Bombay High Court, appointed in July 2023, and as a judge in Allahabad High Court since 2011.
- Justice Alok Adarsh succeeded Justice Upadhyaya as the 48th Chief Justice of Bombay High Court on January 22, 2025.
- Justice Adarsh previously served as Chief Justice of Telangana High Court and held judicial positions in Madhya Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, and Karnataka High Courts.
- Justice Adarsh has handled key cases, including the 66-year-old Nizam-era property dispute and Telangana political cases, and played a role in modernizing court operations through live-streaming and hybrid court modes.
- The Bombay High Court currently has 67 judges, with 52 permanent and 15 additional judges, against a sanctioned strength of 94.

**Jitender Pal Singh Appointed as India's New Ambassador to Israel**

- Jitender Pal Singh has been appointed as India's next ambassador to Israel, succeeding the current envoy at a critical time amid ongoing Middle East tensions.
- A 2002-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, Singh is currently serving as Joint Secretary, overseeing India's relations with Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran.
- He has been India's key point person for engaging with the Taliban since their takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021, traveling to Afghanistan multiple times for diplomatic talks.
- His role included meetings with senior Taliban leaders such as Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi and Defence Minister Mullah Yaqoob, laying the groundwork for India-Taliban engagements.
- He previously served as Deputy High Commissioner in Islamabad, Consul General in Istanbul, and was stationed in Afghanistan after the 2008 terror attack on India's embassy in Kabul.

## SPORTS

### Gujarat to host 1st Olympic Research Conference

- Gujarat will host the first-ever International Olympic Research Conference from January 27-30, 2025, at Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU), Gandhinagar.
- The conference will focus on economic models for financing the Olympics in India, discussing sustainable sports infrastructure to avoid financial burdens.
- Organized in collaboration with the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, the event aims to support India's bid for the 2036 Olympics.
- Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President PT Usha and VP Gagan Narang will participate along with experts in Olympic studies and sports infrastructure.
- The event will discuss building sustainable sporting venues to avoid financial strain and long-term maintenance costs post-Olympics.
- The conference will help position India as a strong contender to host the 2036 Olympics, ensuring financial sustainability and efficient infrastructure planning.

### **Khelo India Winter Games 2025: A Celebration of Sports and Culture in Ladakh and J&K + Ladakh Tops Khelo India Winter Games 2025; Army Retains Ice Hockey Title**

- Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) 2025 commenced on January 23, 2025, at NDS Stadium, Leh, Ladakh, with the snow games scheduled from February 22-25, 2025, in Jammu & Kashmir.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi lauded Ladakh and J&K for hosting the national-level winter sports event, emphasizing its role in boosting tourism and sports culture in India.
- Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya declared the games open despite adverse weather preventing his arrival at Leh.
- The event featured ice hockey, skating, and other winter sports, with 594 participants (428 athletes) from various states, Union Territories, and institutional teams like the Army and ITBP.
- Ladakh emerged as the top performer, securing 7 medals, including 4 golds, while the Indian Army retained its ice hockey title by defeating ITBP 2-1 in the final.
- Tamil Nadu showcased strong skating performances, winning three gold medals, while Maharashtra secured the most medals (10) but finished third overall with two golds.
- Ladakh's women's ice hockey team claimed the title by defeating ITBP 4-0, avenging last year's loss.
- The second phase of KIWG 2025 will take place in Gulmarg, Jammu & Kashmir, from February 22 to 25.

### **PM Modi Kicks Off 38th National Games in Dehradun**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 38th National Games in Dehradun, Uttarakhand, reaffirming India's commitment to hosting the 2036 Olympics.
- The Games will run until February 14, 2025, featuring 10,000 athletes competing across 32 disciplines.
- Events are being held in seven cities of Uttarakhand, with Dehradun as the main venue. 450 gold, silver, and bronze medals are at stake in the competition. Uttarakhand shuttler Lakshya Sen handed over the Games torch to PM Modi, who placed it in its designated position.
- Indian Olympic Association President P.T. Usha and Commonwealth Games Federation chief Chris Jenkins attended the ceremony. 25,000 spectators packed the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium, braving the chilly weather.
- The PM arrived in a decorated golf cart with Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami before declaring the Games open. Modi had also inaugurated the last two editions of the National Games in Gujarat (2022) and Goa (2023).

### **Bumrah Crowned ICC Men's Test Cricketer of the Year**

- Jasprit Bumrah won the ICC Men's Test Cricketer of the Year 2024, finishing as the highest wicket-taker in Test cricket for the year. He took 71 wickets in 26 innings with a bowling average of 14.92 and a strike rate of 30.10.
- Bumrah's performance ranked him among the top 10 pacers with the most Test wickets in a calendar year. He was far ahead of his closest bowling rival, England's Gus Atkinson, who took 52 wickets in 21 innings.
- Other top wicket-takers in 2024 included Shoaib Bashir (49), Matt Henry (48), and Ravindra Jadeja (48). Bumrah was nominated alongside Joe Root, Harry Brook, and Travis Head for the award.

- He joins the ranks of legendary bowlers like Dennis Lillee (85 wickets in 1981), Alan Donald (80 in 1988), and Joel Garner (79 in 1984) in terms of dominant performances in a year.

### Australia Clinches ICC Women's Championship Trophy

- Australia won the ICC Women's Championship Trophy for the third consecutive time. The team secured 39 points from 24 matches, finishing at the top of the standings.
- Alyssa Healy, Australia's captain, received the trophy in Melbourne from Cricket Australia Chair & ICC Director Mike Baird.
- The championship, first introduced in 2014, ensures regular bilateral series and structured qualification for the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025.
- The 2022-25 cycle featured 10 teams, with India, England, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and New Zealand also qualifying directly for the Women's Cricket World Cup 2025.
- Bangladesh, West Indies, Pakistan, and Ireland failed to qualify directly and will compete in the Qualifier tournament along with Scotland and Thailand. Jay Shah (ICC Chair) praised Australia's dominance, while Alyssa Healy credited strategic planning and teamwork for their success.

### ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup Final, India Lift The World Cup

- India U19 women's cricket team won the ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup 2025, defeating South Africa by 9 wickets in the final at Bayuemas Oval, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- This marks India's second consecutive title in the tournament. Gongadi Trisha was the Player of the Tournament, finishing as the top run-scorer (309 runs in 7 innings) and taking 9 wickets.
- South Africa batted first but struggled, getting bowled out for 82 in 20 overs. India chased the target comfortably, scoring 84/1 in 11.2 overs, with *Trisha (44)* and *Sanika Chalke (28)\*\** guiding the team to victory.
- Final Scorecard: South Africa: 82/10 in 20 overs (Mieke van Voorst 23, Trisha 3/15) India: 84/1 in 11.2 overs (*Trisha 44, Chalke 28*, Kayla Reyneke 1/14\*\*) Result: India won by 9 wickets.

### Meghalaya to Host 2027 National Games

- Meghalaya will host the 39th National Games in February/March 2027 as confirmed by Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President PT Usha.
- The IOA flag will be handed over to Meghalaya during the closing ceremony of the 38th National Games in Haldwani, Uttarakhand, on Friday.
- Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma called it a "huge honour" and will attend the closing ceremony to accept the IOA flag.
- The 38th National Games in Uttarakhand (January 28 - February 14, 2025) featured 10,000 athletes and officials from 38 teams, across seven cities, with Dehradun as the main venue.
- The National Games have seen a revival, with four editions being staged in five years, following delays in previous years. Previous National Games were held in Kerala (2015), Gujarat (2022), and Goa (2023).

### Shikhar Dhawan Named ICC Champions Trophy 2025 Ambassador

- Shikhar Dhawan has been named Ambassador for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, scheduled from February 19 to March 9, 2025, in Pakistan and Dubai.
- Dhawan is India's highest run-scorer in Champions Trophy history (701 runs) and the only player to win the Golden Bat twice (2013, 2017).
- Other official ambassadors include Sarfaraz Ahmed (Pakistan's 2017-winning captain), Shane Watson (Australia), and Tim Southee (New Zealand).
- The ICC Champions Trophy, introduced in 1998, serves as a key ODI tournament in international cricket. Dhawan's legacy in the tournament highlights his consistency, ability to perform under pressure, and crucial role in India's success.

### Kevin Durant Reaches 30,000 Points – 8th Player in NBA History

- Kevin Durant became the eighth player in NBA history to surpass 30,000 career points. He achieved the milestone with a free throw in the Phoenix Suns' 119-112 loss to the Memphis Grizzlies.
- Durant reached the landmark in 1,101 career games, making him the joint-third fastest alongside Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

- Only Wilt Chamberlain (941 games) and Michael Jordan (960 games) reached 30,000 points in fewer games.
- Durant has averaged 27.2 points per game, ranking fourth all-time among players with at least 500 NBA games, behind Jordan (30.1), Chamberlain (30.1), and Elgin Baylor (27.4).
- Durant has won two NBA championships with the Golden State Warriors, is a four-time scoring champion, and has averaged at least 20 points per game in each of his 17 seasons.
- Ja Morant presented Durant with the game ball, calling him "one of the greats". Durant has also won four Olympic gold medals with Team USA.

### **Cristiano Ronaldo Tops 2025's Highest-Paid Athletes List**

- Cristiano Ronaldo has been ranked as the highest-paid athlete of 2025, earning \$285 million. His earnings include \$200 million from Saudi club Al Nassr and \$65 million from endorsements and business ventures.
- Jon Rahm (\$218M), Lionel Messi (\$135M), and LeBron James (\$128.7M) are among the top earners.
- The rankings include football, basketball, golf, and American football players. No female athlete made the top 100 list, with the highest-paid woman, Coco Gauff (\$30.4M), failing to meet the \$37.5M threshold required for inclusion.
- The total earnings of the top 100 athletes reached \$6.2 billion, reflecting a 14% increase from 2024.
- Golf and American football players have made significant inroads into the top earnings bracket.

### **Saudi Arabia to Host Inaugural Olympic Esports Games 2027**

- The International Olympic Committee (IOC) officially launched the Olympic Esports Games in July 2023 to integrate esports with traditional sports. Saudi Arabia has been selected as the host for the first-ever Olympic Esports Games in 2027.
- The Saudi Olympic and Paralympic Committee (SOPC) is partnering with the IOC to organize the event. The Esports World Cup Foundation (EWCF) has been named the Founding Partner of the Games.
- A joint committee between IOC and SOPC has been formed, co-chaired by IOC Member Ser Miang Ng and HRH Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Faisal. The roadmap to the 2027 Olympic Esports Games begins in 2025, with planning and game selection underway.

### **Manu Bhaker Wins BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year 2024**

- Manu Bhaker was named the BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year 2025 for her performance at the Paris Olympics. She won two bronze medals, becoming the first Indian athlete since Independence to win multiple medals at a single Olympic Games.
- Her medals came in the 10m air pistol individual event and the 10m air pistol mixed team event. The award nominees included Aditi Ashok (golf), Avani Lekhara (para shooting), Smriti Mandhana (cricket), and Vinesh Phogat (wrestling).
- The nominees were shortlisted by a jury of sports journalists and writers. The ISWOTY Award, now in its fifth edition, honors women athletes in India for their achievements.
- Manu Bhaker, 22, previously won BBC's Emerging Player of the Year award in 2021 and is a recipient of the Arjuna Award.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### **India's First AI University to Open in Maharashtra**

- Maharashtra will establish India's first Artificial Intelligence (AI) university, focusing on AI research, skill development, and technological innovation.
- A task force, chaired by the state IT department's principal secretary, includes experts from IIT Mumbai, IIM Mumbai, Google India, Mahindra Group, L&T, and government officials.
- Experts from the Rajiv Gandhi Science and Technology Commission and the Data Security Council of India are part of the project.
- Maharashtra aims to become a global AI hub, contributing to India's technological advancement and digital transformation.

### **ISRO Set To Launch Its 100th Satellite On Jan 29 + GSLV-F15 launched successfully from Sriharikota**

- ISRO successfully conducted its 100th launch on January 29, 2025, from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) in Sriharikota, with the GSLV-F15 rocket carrying the NVS-02 satellite.

- The NVS-02 satellite, part of the Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC) system, was placed in a Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit and will replace IRNSS-1E.
- This was the 17th flight of the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) and the 11th with an Indigenous Cryogenic stage, showcasing India's advancements in space technology.
- ISRO Chairman Dr. V. Narayanan called it a significant milestone, crediting past visionaries like Vikram Sarabhai, Satish Dhawan, and APJ Abdul Kalam for India's space progress.
- Union Minister Jitendra Singh congratulated ISRO, calling the achievement a reflection of India's commitment to space exploration and technological excellence.
- The first ISRO launch was on August 10, 1979, with the experimental SLV-3 E10 carrying the Rohini Technology Payload; since then, ISRO has executed six generations of launch vehicles.

### **India to Launch First Human Submersible Under Deep Ocean Mission**

- India will operate its first human underwater submersible at a depth of 500 meters in 2025 as part of the Deep Ocean Mission, announced Earth Sciences Minister Jitendra Singh.
- The submersible is indigenously developed and will later aim to reach a depth of 6,000 meters, aligning with India's other scientific milestones like the Gaganyaan space mission.
- The mission aims to explore deep-sea resources, including critical minerals, rare metals, and marine biodiversity, contributing to economic growth and environmental sustainability.
- The Deep Ocean Mission is a major step in India's "Blue Economy" strategy, ensuring long-term benefits for scientific research, environmental resilience, and resource management.

### **BIMTECH Launches BIMCOIN: India's First Campus Blockchain Currency**

- Birla Institute of Management Technology (BIMTECH) launched 'BIMCOIN', a blockchain-based digital currency, designed exclusively for its institutional ecosystem.
- BIMCOIN enables secure, transparent, and instant transactions among students, vendors, and administrators, ensuring decentralization and fraud protection.
- The currency operates on blockchain technology with features like smart contracts, streamlining payments, enhancing security, and promoting ethical financial practices.
- Beyond payments, BIMCOIN serves as an educational tool, providing students with hands-on experience in blockchain, digital currencies, and real-world financial systems.
- BIMTECH Director Prabina Rajib emphasized BIMCOIN's role in fostering financial literacy and technological innovation among students.

### **Sunita Williams Sets New Spacewalk Record**

- Sunita Williams set a new record for the longest spacewalking time by a woman, clocking 62 hours and 6 minutes at the International Space Station (ISS) during a mission with fellow astronaut Butch Wilmore.
- She surpassed former astronaut Peggy Whitson's record of 60 hours and 21 minutes, becoming fourth on NASA's all-time list for spacewalking time.
- Williams and Wilmore conducted a spacewalk on January 30, lasting 5 hours and 26 minutes, where they removed degraded radio communications hardware and collected samples to study microorganisms on the ISS exterior.
- The two astronauts have been stranded at the ISS since June 2024 due to technical issues with Boeing's Starliner spacecraft, which was originally meant to return them to Earth after a week-long mission.
- NASA plans to bring them back to Earth in late March 2025 aboard a SpaceX spacecraft, as Boeing's Starliner remains grounded.

### **ISRO Unveils FEAST 2025 Software at IIT Hyderabad**

- ISRO unveiled the latest version of Finite Element Analysis of Structures (FEAST) software at the 8th National Finite Element Developers' Meeting at IIT-Hyderabad on February 2, 2025.
- The meeting, attended by over 250 industry leaders, academicians, and researchers, aimed to promote indigenous finite element-based structural analysis software.
- ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan emphasized FEAST's capabilities and its role in upcoming projects, including the Human Mission, Bharatiya Antariksh Station, and Next Generation Launch Vehicle.

- Developed by Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), FEAST software is used for structural analysis across aerospace, automobile, civil, mechanical, and marine engineering. It enables engineers to test designs virtually before physical construction.
- VSSC Director S. Unnikrishnan Nair highlighted India's push for self-reliance in numerical simulation software, mentioning the upcoming launch of Pravaha, an indigenous computational fluid dynamics software.
- The event featured design competitions, quiz contests, and an exhibition showcasing FEAST's journey and applications. IIT-H Director B.S. Murty was also present at the event.

### **Government Report on National Health Mission between 2021-2024**

- NHM engaged over 12 lakh additional healthcare workers between FY 2021-24, strengthening human resources across the healthcare sector. 220 crore COVID-19 vaccine doses were administered under NHM, ensuring widespread immunization coverage.
- Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) declined by 83% since 1990, surpassing the global decline of 45%. Under-5 Mortality Rate (U5MR) reduced by 75% since 1990, compared to a global reduction of 60%.
- Tuberculosis incidence decreased from 237 per 1,00,000 in 2015 to 195 in 2023, while TB mortality declined from 28 to 22 in the same period. 1.56 lakh Ni-kshay Mitra volunteers support 9.4 lakh TB patients under the Pradhan Mantri TB Mukt Bharat Abhiyan.
- 1.72 lakh Ayushman Arogya Mandir centers operational by FY 2023-24, expanding access to healthcare services. National Sickle Cell Anemia Elimination Mission screened over 2.61 crore individuals, aiming for disease eradication by 2047.
- The U-WIN pilot was launched to track vaccination events, ensuring real-time immunization coverage. Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Programme benefited 4.53 lakh dialysis patients in FY 2023-24, expanding access to life-saving treatment.
- 7,998 public health facilities were certified under National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS), ensuring improved healthcare delivery. 24x7 Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and First Referral Units (FRUs) expanded, with 12,348 PHCs and 3,133 FRUs operational nationwide.

### **Elon Musk Unveils Grok 3 AI: The Smartest AI on Earth**

- Elon Musk's xAI unveiled Grok 3, an advanced AI model surpassing its predecessor and competing AI in science, coding, and math. Musk described Grok 3 as 'scary smart', emphasizing its deep understanding and relentless pursuit of truth.
- Grok 3 outperformed major AI models like Google's Gemini 2 Pro, DeepSeek V3, and OpenAI's GPT-4o in key benchmarks. The AI chatbot was developed in just eight months and is expected to run on xAI's Colossus supercomputer, utilizing over 100,000 Nvidia GPU hours.
- A new subscription model, "Super Grok," was introduced, offering advanced capabilities and early access to new features via the Grok app and website ([grok.com](http://grok.com)). Musk explained the meaning of 'Grok', referencing Robert Heinlein's novel *Stranger in a Strange Land*, where it means deep understanding and empathy.

### **Indore, Udaipur Join Global Wetland Cities Network**

- Indore (Madhya Pradesh) and Udaipur (Rajasthan) became the first Indian cities to be accredited as Wetland Cities under the Ramsar Convention. The accreditation recognizes cities that prioritize wetland conservation and sustainable urban development.
- An independent Advisory Committee accredited 31 new cities globally, bringing the total to 74, with China leading with 22 accredited cities, followed by France (9).
- Bhopal was also nominated but missed out due to concerns over the impact of a proposed road project on the Bhoj wetland's ecological character.
- Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav called the recognition a reflection of India's commitment to holistic urban development alongside ecological conservation.

## BOOKS AND AUTHORS

### **How India Led the G20 – Amitabh Kant's Inside Story**

- Amitabh Kant, India's G20 Sherpa, released his book "*How India Scaled Mt G20: The Inside Story of the G20 Presidency*" (Rupa Publications), revealing behind-the-scenes details of India's G20 Presidency.
- The book highlights the challenges, negotiations, and triumphs of the G20 Summit hosted in New Delhi in September 2023.
- The New Delhi Leaders' Declaration (NDLD) was finalized after 300 hours of negotiations and over 250 bilateral meetings.
- PM Narendra Modi actively monitored the process, receiving updates every two hours and emphasizing the importance of consensus. Russia insisted on including the term 'sanctions' in the declaration but withdrew after India's firm stance, warning of a 19-1 vote against Russia.
- Unlike the 2022 Bali Summit, India achieved consensus on the declaration on the first day, avoiding prolonged negotiations.

### **Soumitra Chatterjee – The Legacy of Apu and Beyond**

- Soumitra Chatterjee and His World by Sanghamitra Chakraborty explores the life and contributions of Soumitra Chatterjee, the legendary Bengali actor, poet, artist, and theatre personality.
- The book highlights his collaboration with Satyajit Ray, starring in 14 films, including *The World of Apu*, *The Golden Fortress*, *The Elephant God*, *The Goddess*, *The Lonely Wife*, and *The Home and the World*. His mentors included Rabindranath Tagore, Shishir Bhaduri, and Satyajit Ray, who shaped his career in theatre and cinema.
- He was known for his wit, empathy, and love for 'adda' (Bengali social gatherings), maintaining a simple and relatable personality despite his fame.

### **'I Am a Soldier's Wife': A Tribute to Brigadier LS Lidder**

- 'I Am a Soldier's Wife' by Geetika Lidder is a heartfelt memoir honoring Brigadier LS Lidder, a distinguished Indian Army officer, capturing his bravery, leadership, and personal journey.
- The book was launched in the presence of Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi, who praised Brigadier Lidder's humanity and professionalism. The memoir highlights his role as a military strategist, his ability to connect with soldiers at all levels, and his contributions as a defense attaché in Kazakhstan, strengthening India's military diplomacy.
- It also recounts the tragic 2021 helicopter crash, which claimed his life along with General Bipin Rawat, India's first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), and other senior officers. Geetika Lidder shares her resilience and emotional strength, ensuring that Brigadier Lidder's legacy of duty, kindness, and sacrifice continues to inspire future generations.
- The book serves as a tribute to soldiers and their families, reflecting on the price of freedom and national service.

### **Vice President of India Launches Gopichand P. Hinduja's Book "I Am?"**

- Vice President of India, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar, launched the book "I Am?", compiled by Gopichand P. Hinduja, Chairman of the Hinduja Group, at Vice President Enclave. The event was attended by political leaders, business magnates, and diplomats, marking it as a significant occasion.
- In his address, Vice President Dhankhar highlighted the book's alignment with Sanatan Dharma and Bharatiyata, emphasizing its global significance, with recognition from King Charles III and Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan. Ashok P. Hinduja, Chairman of Hinduja Group (India), shared how their multicultural business philosophy is rooted in Sanatan Traditions.
- Swami Chidanand Saraswati, President of Parmarth Niketan Trust, underscored the book's message of inclusivity and collective well-being, linking it to the philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.
- The event was attended by dignitaries, including National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, Rajya Sabha MP Dr. Abhishek Manu Singhvi, British High Commissioner Lindy Cameron, HDFC Capital CEO Vipul Rungta, and Jindal Steel Chairman Navin Jindal.

### **Arun Shourie's "The New Icon: Savarkar and the Facts"**

- Arun Shourie, one of India's most respected public intellectuals, has authored "The New Icon: Savarkar and the Facts", a book critically examining the legacy of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar.

- Released on January 31, 2024, the book presents a scathing critique of Savarkar's ideological influence on modern Indian politics. It follows Shourie's 1997 work "Worshipping False Gods", which challenged historical narratives, but unlike B.R. Ambedkar, Savarkar lacks a socio-political protective shield, making this analysis more impactful.
- The book delves into Savarkar's alleged role in Mahatma Gandhi's assassination, linking his ideology to Nathuram Godse. Initially scheduled for release on January 30, it was postponed due to backlash from Savarkar's supporters.
- Shourie scrutinizes Savarkar's courtroom statements, arguing they were fabricated, with "not a syllable surviving scrutiny." The book positions Savarkar at the center of a deeply controversial national debate.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

### **Subhas Chandra Bose Jayanti 2025: Parakram Diwas**

- Subhas Chandra Bose Jayanti 2025 will be celebrated on 23rd January, marking his 128th birth anniversary. The Government of India declared January 23rd as Parakram Diwas in 2021 to honor his bravery and leadership in India's freedom struggle.
- Born on January 23, 1897, in Cuttack, Odisha, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was a freedom fighter, INA leader, and nationalist icon. He resigned from the Indian Civil Service (ICS) to join the Indian National Congress (INC), later founding the Forward Bloc (1939) and leading the Indian National Army (INA) with the slogan "Delhi Chalo". In 1943, he established the Provisional Government of Free India.
- Celebrations include educational talks, parades, and cultural programs nationwide. The Subhas Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar, awarded annually on January 23rd, recognizes excellence in disaster management. For 2024, it was awarded to 60 Parachute Field Hospital, Uttar Pradesh.

### **International Day of Education 2025**

- International Day of Education 2025 is observed on January 24, marking the seventh annual celebration. Established by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2018, the day highlights the importance of inclusive, equitable, and quality education in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4).
- The 2025 theme, 'AI and Education: Preserving Human Agency in a World of Automation', emphasizes the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education, ensuring human oversight and creativity remain central despite automation.
- Education Day aligns with India's National Education Day (November 11), honoring Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

### **National Voters' Day 2025**

- India marks its 15th National Voters' Day (NVD) on January 25, 2025, celebrating the power of voting in strengthening democracy. Established in 2011, the day coincides with the foundation of the Election Commission of India (ECI) on January 25, 1950 and emphasizes voter awareness, participation, and inclusivity.
- The 2025 theme, "Nothing Like Voting, I Vote for Sure," promotes participatory democracy, encouraging citizens to take pride in voting. Following the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections, India's electorate has reached 99.1 crore, with 21.7 crore young voters (18-29 years) and an increase in the Electoral Gender Ratio from 948 (2024) to 954 (2025).
- President Droupadi Murmu presided over the national function in New Delhi, where the Best Electoral Practices Awards were presented. Events included a conference on election management, the launch of the ECI Coffee Table Book: India Votes 2024, and the screening of My Vote My Duty, a voter awareness film by Raj Kumar Hirani.

### **Republic Day 2025**

- Republic Day 2025 will be celebrated on January 26, marking the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Indian Constitution in 1950. This day commemorates India's transition into a sovereign democratic republic, replacing British rule with a constitutional framework led by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar as the chief architect.
- The 2025 theme, "Swarnim Bharat: Virasat aur Vikas" (Golden India: Heritage and Development), highlights India's commitment to preserving cultural heritage while embracing modern development.
- The Republic Day Parade in New Delhi, held at Kartavya Path, will showcase India's military strength, cultural diversity, and technological advancements. Highlights include military parades by the Army, Navy, and Air Force, state tableaux, cultural performances, and an Air Force flypast featuring the tricolor formation.

### **International Day of Clean Energy 2025**

- The International Day of Clean Energy 2025 was observed on January 26, following its declaration by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) under resolution A/77/327.

- The day aims to raise awareness and mobilize action for a just and inclusive clean energy transition, addressing both energy poverty and climate change.
- Despite technological advancements, 685 million people worldwide still lack electricity, with 80% residing in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7), this day emphasizes the need for universal energy access by 2030, requiring investment in renewable infrastructure, policy innovation, and global cooperation.
- The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), established on January 26, 2009, supports this transition by providing research, policy recommendations, and international collaboration platforms.

### **Lala Lajpat Rai's 160th Birth Anniversary: Legacy of the 'Punjab Kesari'**

- India commemorated the 160th birth anniversary of Lala Lajpat Rai on January 28, 2025, honoring his contributions as a freedom fighter, social reformer, journalist, and nationalist leader.
- Known as the 'Punjab Kesari' (Lion of Punjab), he played a key role in India's independence movement and was a part of the 'Lal-Bal-Pal' trio alongside Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal.
- Born on January 28, 1865, in Dhudike, Punjab, he was an active member of the Indian National Congress (INC) and founded the Servants of the People Society (1921) to promote social reform, education, and self-reliance. He opposed British policies, led anti-colonial agitations, and was deported to Mandalay in 1907.
- He led protests against the Simon Commission in 1928, where he was fatally injured during a brutal lathi charge. His famous words, "Every blow on my body will prove a nail in the coffin of the British Empire", became a rallying cry for revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh and Chandrashekhar Azad.

### **Indian Newspaper Day 2025**

- Indian Newspaper Day 2025 was observed on January 29, marking the 245th anniversary of India's first newspaper, Hicky's Bengal Gazette, introduced by James Augustus Hicky in 1780.
- Also known as National Newspaper Day, it highlights the impact of newspapers in shaping India's socio-political landscape and promoting freedom of expression and democracy.
- The Vernacular Press Act of 1878, imposed by the British, attempted to curb press freedom, but newspapers played a key role in India's independence movement. Post-independence, the Press Enquiry Committee (1947) and Justice Rajadhyaksha Press Commission (1954) laid the foundation for press reforms, leading to the establishment of the Press Council of India (PCI) in 1966 to uphold journalistic ethics and press freedom.

### **Martyrs' Day 2025: Remembering Mahatma Gandhi on His Death Anniversary**

- Martyrs' Day (Shaheed Diwas) 2025 was observed on January 30, marking the 77th death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, who was assassinated on January 30, 1948, by Nathuram Godse at Birla Bhawan, Delhi. This day honors Gandhi's sacrifice and all martyrs who fought for India's independence.
- Prayer meetings and tributes were held at Raj Ghat, Delhi, attended by leaders, officials, and citizens to commemorate his contributions. Educational institutions across India organized cultural programs, speeches, and essay competitions to instill patriotism among students.
- Martyrs' Day serves as a reminder of the struggles for India's freedom, reinforcing the values of nonviolence, unity, and patriotism that Gandhi stood for.

### **World Wetlands Day 2025**

- World Wetlands Day 2025 was observed on February 2, raising global awareness about the importance of wetlands in biodiversity, climate resilience, and sustainable livelihoods.
- The 2025 theme, 'Protecting Wetlands for Our Common Future', emphasizes the need for conservation efforts to safeguard these ecosystems for future generations.
- The Ramsar Convention, supported by UNESCO, plays a crucial role in protecting and sustainably managing wetlands worldwide. The 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP15) will be held in July 2025 at Mosi-oa-Tunya/Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, focusing on global wetland conservation goals.
- India expanded its Ramsar Sites list to 89 in February 2025, with new designations in Sikkim and Jharkhand, including Khecheopalri Wetland and Udhwa Lake.

**World Cancer Day 2025: Date, Theme, History, and Awareness**

- World Cancer Day 2025 was observed on February 4, emphasizing global efforts to raise awareness, promote prevention, and improve cancer care. Established in 2000 at the World Cancer Summit in Paris, it is led by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) under the Paris Charter Against Cancer to advocate for early detection, research, and equitable healthcare access.
- The 2025 theme, "United by Unique", launches a three-year campaign (2025-2027) focusing on personalized patient journeys, inclusive cancer care, and advocacy for tailored treatments.
- Cancer remains a leading global health challenge, causing 10 million deaths in 2022 (WHO). Common symptoms include unexplained weight loss, persistent fatigue, abnormal lumps, chronic pain, and changes in skin or bowel habits.
- Treatment options range from surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and immunotherapy to emerging innovations like AI-driven diagnosis, liquid biopsies, targeted therapy, and mRNA vaccines.

**World Radio Day 2025**

- World Radio Day 2025 was observed on February 13, celebrating radio's role as a powerful medium for communication, information dissemination, and cultural diversity.
- Established by UNESCO in 2011 and later adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2013, the day highlights radio's impact, particularly in remote and underserved communities.
- The evolution of radio began with Guglielmo Marconi's first successful radio transmission in 1895, although Jagadish Chandra Bose demonstrated radio wave transmission earlier in November 1895.
- All India Radio (AIR), established in 1956, remains one of the largest radio networks, while FM radio was introduced in 1977, with private stations emerging in 2001.
- Radio operates using electromagnetic waves, with AM (Amplitude Modulation) providing broader coverage and FM (Frequency Modulation) offering better sound quality.

**National Women's Day 2025: Date, History, and Significance**

- National Women's Day 2025 was observed on February 13, marking the birth anniversary of Sarojini Naidu, a freedom fighter, poet, and social reformer. Known as the 'Nightingale of India', she was a pioneering leader in India's independence movement and a strong advocate for women's empowerment.
- The Government of India designated February 13 as National Women's Day to honor her contributions. She was the first woman President of the Indian National Congress (1925) and India's first female Governor (1947, United Provinces). She actively participated in the Civil Disobedience and Quit India Movements, facing multiple imprisonments.
- Apart from politics, she was a renowned poet, with notable works like The Golden Threshold (1905), The Bird of Time (1912), and The Broken Wing (1917). She also played a key role in inter-caste marriage reform and international advocacy for Indian rights.

**Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti 2025: Date, History, Significance, and Celebrations**

- Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti 2025 was observed on February 19, marking the 395th birth anniversary of Shivaji Maharaj, the founder of the Maratha Empire. The day is also celebrated as per the Hindu calendar on the 3rd day of Phalgun month.
- Born in 1630 at Shivneri Fort, Maharashtra, Shivaji Maharaj was raised by his mother, Jijabai, who instilled in him values of courage, justice, and devotion to Hindu traditions. He is remembered for his guerilla warfare tactics, military skills, and governance. In 1674, he was crowned "Chhatrapati" at Raigad Fort.
- Shivaji Maharaj was known for promoting Marathi and Sanskrit in administration, ensuring religious harmony, and advocating self-governance.

## OBITUARIES

### **Wing Commander (Retd) Dr. K. Ramchand Passes Away at 82**

- Wing Commander (Retd) Dr. K. Ramchand, a renowned aerospace engineer and former Director of the Centre for Airborne Systems (CABS) under DRDO, passed away on January 17, 2025, at the age of 82. His contributions to India's aerospace sector played a crucial role in national security.
- A graduate of the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, Dr. Ramchand earned both his Master's degree and Ph.D. in Aerospace Engineering, later receiving the 'Distinguished Alumni Award' from IISc. Serving over two decades in the Indian Air Force (IAF), he was part of the Communications Squadron, handling missions for senior military officials.
- As Director of CABS (2002), he led the indigenous development of the Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) aircraft, which was inducted into the IAF in 2017 and played a key role in the 2019 Balakot airstrike. He authored 'The Incredible Journey of the Indian AWACS', launched at Aero India 2019.

### **Renowned Sculptor Latika Katt Passes Away at 76**

- Latika Katt, one of India's most celebrated sculptors, passed away at 76. Known for her monumental sculptures and detailed busts, she worked with bronze, terracotta, stone, and papier-mâché, earning national and international recognition.
- Her journey began at Banaras Hindu University (BHU) before completing her master's at MS University, Baroda and further training at the Slade School of Art, London.
- Her iconic works include the 20-foot bronze sculpture of Jawaharlal Nehru at Jawahar Bhawan, Delhi, and Rodin-esque busts of figures like Ramkinkar Baij, Mulk Raj Anand, and Mahatma Gandhi. Her sculpture 'Makarsankranti Nahan at Dashaswamedh Ghat' won the Beijing Art Biennale Award in 2010.

### **Horst Köhler, Former German President and IMF Chief, Passes Away at 81**

- Horst Köhler, former President of Germany (2004–2010) and Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (2000–2004), passed away at 81 after a brief illness. Born in 1943 in German-occupied Poland, he spent his early years in refugee camps before settling in Ludwigsburg, Germany.
- As Deputy Finance Minister under Chancellor Helmut Kohl, he played a crucial role in introducing the West German mark to East Germany in 1990 after the fall of communism. His leadership at the IMF focused on global financial stability before he was nominated as President of Germany in 2004.
- During his presidency, he dissolved parliament in 2005 to call new elections and publicly challenged government policies on globalization and economic interests. His resignation in 2010 followed criticism of his remarks linking foreign military actions to Germany's economy.

### **Veteran Actor Brian Murphy Passes Away at 92**

- Brian Murphy, the veteran British actor best known for playing George Roper in *Man About the House* (1973–1976) and its spin-off *George and Mildred* (1976–1979), passed away at 92.
- Born on September 25, 1932, on the Isle of Wight, Murphy served in the RAF at Northwood before transitioning to theatre with Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop.
- He later became a household name in British television, with guest roles in *The Avengers*, *Callan*, *Z-Cars*, and *Dixon of Dock Green*. His character in *Man About the House* later inspired the American sitcom *Three's Company*.

### **Sam Nujoma, Namibia's First President, Passes Away at 95**

- Sam Nujoma, Namibia's first president and a key figure in its independence movement, passed away on February 10, 2025, at the age of 95. Revered as the "Father of the Namibian Nation", he led Namibia's liberation from apartheid South Africa in 1990 and served as president for 15 years (1990–2005).
- He co-founded SWAPO (South West African People's Organization) in 1960, leading its armed struggle against South African rule. Under international pressure, South Africa withdrew in 1990, and SWAPO won the country's first democratic elections, making Nujoma Namibia's first president.

- During his presidency, he established Namibia's democratic Constitution, promoted reconciliation, and advocated for women's empowerment. He strengthened ties with China, Russia, Cuba, and North Korea, while also becoming the first African leader hosted by US President Bill Clinton in 1993.
- Nujoma remained a symbol of African independence, alongside Nelson Mandela, Julius Nyerere, Robert Mugabe, and Kenneth Kaunda.

### **Shyam Benegal, The Maestro of Indian Parallel Cinema, Passes Away at 90**

- Shyam Benegal, a pioneer of Indian parallel cinema, passed away on December 23, 2024, at the age of 90.
- Born in Hyderabad, with roots in Karnataka, remained actively involved in cinema until 2023, with his final project being *Mujib: The Making of a Nation*, a biopic on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
- His iconic films include *Ankur* (1974), *Nishant* (1975), *Manthan* (1976), *Bhumika* (1977), *Kalyug* (1981), and *Kondura* (1978), each addressing critical social themes. Veteran actor Anant Nag, who worked with Benegal in six films, described him as a mentor and an enigmatic force in cinema.
- Benegal was also deeply involved in documentaries, producing works like *Bharat Ek Khoj* and *Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: The Forgotten Hero*. His collaborations with Shama Zaidi, Girish Karnad, and Govind Nihalani enriched Indian cinema, leaving behind a timeless legacy of storytelling and cinematic excellence.

### **Padma Shri Awardee Sukri Bommagowda Passes Away at 88**

- Sukri Bommagowda, a renowned folk singer and Padma Shri awardee, passed away on February 13, 2025, at the age of 88. A revered figure in Karnataka's Halakki Vokkaliga community, she played a pivotal role in preserving traditional folk music.
- Known as a "walking encyclopedia" of Halakki folk traditions, she memorized nearly 5,000 folk songs, covering themes of marriage, festivals, and life events. In the 1980s, All India Radio recorded hundreds of her songs, ensuring their preservation for future generations.
- Awarded the Padma Shri in 2017, she also received the Rajyotsava Award and Nadoja Award for her cultural contributions. Her life and work are now included in Karnataka's school textbooks, inspiring young students.
- Her home became a cultural hub, attracting schoolchildren eager to learn about folk traditions. Leaders across Karnataka mourned her passing, recognizing her immeasurable contribution to folk music and social activism.

### **Milind Rege: Mumbai Cricket's Encyclopedia Passes Away at 76**

- Milind Rege, former Mumbai cricket captain and a stalwart of Indian domestic cricket, passed away on February 19, 2025, at the age of 76 due to cardiac arrest. Known for his deep cricketing knowledge, Rege made significant contributions both as a player and an administrator, shaping Mumbai's cricketing legacy.
- As an off-spinning all-rounder, he played 52 First-Class matches for Mumbai, being part of five consecutive Ranji Trophy-winning teams. After retiring, he became a selector and mentor, helping discover talents like Sachin Tendulkar and Yashasvi Jaiswal. He also served as an advisor to the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) for four years.
- Beyond cricket, he was head of Tata Sports Club and played a key role in corporate cricket development.

## RANKINGS

### **India Slips to Third Place in Edelman Trust Barometer 2025 Rankings**

- The Edelman Trust Barometer 2025, released ahead of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, ranked India third globally in overall trust in institutions, dropping from second place despite maintaining a stable trust score. China and Indonesia secured the top two positions.
- The survey highlighted economic disparities in trust levels, with India ranking fourth among high-income groups (80%) and third among low-income groups (65%), reflecting a 15% trust gap. Developing nations, including China (77%), Indonesia (76%), and India (75%), reported higher trust levels than developed countries such as Japan (37%), Germany (41%), and the US (47%).
- Concerns over wealth inequality, misinformation, and discrimination have risen, with 67% believing the wealthy avoid fair taxation and 63% struggling to differentiate credible news from misinformation. Hostile activism has increased, with 53% of young respondents supporting extreme protest methods.

- Despite declining trust in government and media, employers remain the most trusted institution globally, with 75% trust among employees.

### Tata Tops India, Apple Leads Globally in 2025 Brand Rankings

- The Brand Finance Global 500 report for 2025 has ranked Tata Group as India's most valuable brand, with a record \$31.6 billion valuation, marking a 10% growth. This makes Tata the first Indian brand to surpass \$30 billion in value and places it 60th globally among the top 100 brands.
- Globally, Apple remains the most valuable brand with a brand value of \$574.5 billion, followed by Microsoft at \$461.1 billion and Google at \$413 billion. The report highlights the dominance of technology brands, with Apple seeing an 11% growth, Microsoft recording 35% growth, and Google rising by 24%.
- Several Indian brands have made significant gains, with Infosys growing by 15% to \$16.3 billion, LIC surging 36% to \$13.3 billion, and Reliance Group increasing 17% to \$9.8 billion. The Indian banking sector also gained prominence, with HDFC (\$14.2 billion), SBI (\$9.6 billion), and ICICI (\$6.4 billion) entering global rankings.

### India Ranks 4th in Global Firepower Index 2025

- India has secured the 4th position in the Global Firepower Index 2025, maintaining its strong global military stature behind the United States, Russia, and China. With a Power Index score of 0.1184,
- The Global Firepower Index ranks 145 countries based on over 60 parameters, including manpower, resources, financial strength, and geography, but does not account for nuclear capabilities. The United States (0.0744), Russia (0.0788), and China (0.0788) remain the top three, while South Korea (5th), the UK (6th), and France (7th) follow India.
- India's high ranking is attributed to its large manpower, vast natural resources, and strategic geographical position. However, challenges such as oil dependency, external debt, and lower mine warfare capabilities persist.
- Meanwhile, Pakistan has dropped from 9th to 12th place, reflecting a decline in its relative military strength. India's consistent ranking underscores its growing defense capabilities and strategic military advancements.

### India Tops Global Domestic Flight Load Rankings

- India has emerged as the global leader in passenger load factor (PLF) for domestic flights, recording an 86.4% load factor in 2024, surpassing the US (84.1%) and China (83.2%), according to the latest International Air Transport Association (IATA) report.
- The report also highlighted strong global air travel trends, with total air traffic increasing by 10.4% in 2024, and international traffic rising by 13.6%. The overall global load factor reached a record 83.5%, demonstrating efficient capacity utilization.
- IATA Director General Willie Walsh noted that record travel demand in 2024 underscored aviation's critical role in economic growth, job creation, and trade. The 2025 outlook projects an 8.0% growth in travel demand, aligning with historical trends.

### Zepto Becomes World's Second Most Downloaded Food & Drink App

- Zepto, India's quick commerce startup, has become the second most downloaded food and drink app globally in 2024, surpassing KFC and Domino's, according to Sensor Tower.
- McDonald's secured the top position, while other Indian apps like Zomato (#5) and Swiggy (#9) also ranked among the top 10. Blinkit secured the 10th position, further highlighting the rapid growth of India's quick commerce sector.
- Zepto recorded a 300% surge in downloads in late 2024, driven by innovations like the "Buy Now, Pay Later" feature, which enhanced customer engagement. For the first time, Zepto's monthly active users surpassed Blinkit in Q4 2024.
- The company raised \$350 million in November 2024, following a \$340 million funding round in August, bringing its total funding to \$1.95 billion. Zepto is expanding services with instant returns and exchanges and a women-only dark store in Chennai. It also plans to increase its IPO size to \$800M-\$1B and target \$5.5 billion in sales by FY26.

### India Ranks 3rd in Global LEED Green Buildings 2024

- India has retained its third position in the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) LEED certification rankings for 2024, with 370 projects covering 8.50 million gross square meters (GSM) of green-certified space. China ranked first with over 25 million GSM, followed by Canada with 10 million GSM.

- India's consistent performance in LEED certifications highlights its commitment to sustainable construction and eco-friendly urban development. The country has seen steady growth in LEED-certified space, improving from 7.23 million GSM in 2023 and 10.47 million GSM in 2022.
- Despite the United States not being included in the rankings, it remains the largest LEED market globally with over 56 million GSM of certified space.

### **India's Logistics Performance Sees Major Leap in Global Rankings**

- India has made significant progress in the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index (LPI) 2023, securing the 22nd position in the International Shipments category and 38th place overall among 139 countries.
- The PM GatiShakti National Master Plan (2021) and the National Logistics Policy (2022) have streamlined cargo movement and enhanced last-mile delivery efficiency. India's port turnaround time has been reduced to 0.9 days, outperforming major economies like the USA (1.5 days) and Germany (1.3 days).
- Technology has played a crucial role, with initiatives like the Logistics Data Bank Project, using RFID tracking for real-time cargo monitoring, and increased automation in ports and warehouses improving efficiency.
- India aims to position itself as a global logistics hub under the Maritime Amrit Kal Vision 2047, focusing on port expansion, sustainability measures, and boosting shipbuilding capacity.
- India's steady rise from 54th in 2014 to 38th in 2023 reflects its policy-driven transformation, with further advancements in infrastructure, digitalization, and green logistics set to strengthen its global trade position.

### **India's Rank in Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2024**

- India has ranked 96th out of 180 countries in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2024, released by Transparency International, with a score of 38.
- This marks a decline from 39 in 2023 and 40 in 2022, indicating a slight increase in perceived public sector corruption. The CPI evaluates nations on a scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).
- Globally, Denmark (1st), Finland (2nd), and Singapore (3rd) remain the least corrupt nations, while South Sudan (8 points), Somalia (9 points), Venezuela (10 points), and Syria (12 points) are ranked among the most corrupt. Among India's neighbors, China ranks 76th, Sri Lanka 121st, Pakistan 135th, and Bangladesh 149th.
- The report highlights rising corruption threats to climate action, democratic stability, and economic governance. Global corruption trends show stagnation, with 148 countries either worsening or showing no improvement since 2012, and the global average CPI score remaining at 43.
- Developed nations like the US (ranked 28th, score 65) and France (25th, score 67) have also experienced declines, while Russia and Ukraine continue to struggle due to political instability.

### **Mukesh Ambani Tops Asia's Wealthiest Families List**

- Mukesh Ambani and the Ambani family have retained the top spot in Bloomberg's 2025 rankings of Asia's richest families, reaffirming their dominance in business and wealth creation.
- India features prominently in the rankings, with six Indian families securing spots in the top 20. The Shapoorji Pallonji Group (Mistry family), O.P. Jindal Group (Jindal family), Aditya Birla Group (Birla family), Bajaj Group (Bajaj family), and Hinduja Group (Hinduja family) are among the wealthiest, reflecting India's strong industrial and economic influence.
- The Mistry family, a major stakeholder in Tata Sons, holds the 4th position, while the Jindals rank 7th, recognized for their steel and energy businesses. The Birla family (9th), Bajaj family (13th), and Hindujas (18th) further highlight India's legacy in business and industrial expansion.
- On the global stage, Thailand's Charavanont family (2nd) and Indonesia's Hartono family (3rd) follow the Ambanis, while Hong Kong's Kwok family (5th) and South Korea's Lee family (10th, Samsung Group) remain significant players.

### **Forbes India 30 Under 30 2025 Recognizes 42 Young Achievers Across 19 Categories**

- The Forbes India 30 Under 30 list for 2025 highlights 42 young achievers under 30, spanning 19 diverse categories, including the newly introduced Artificial Intelligence (AI) sector.

- Notable honorees include Devika Gholap, recognized for advancing digital pathology in cancer diagnostics, and National Award-winning actress Aparna Balamurali for her contributions to Indian cinema. Devan Chandrasekharan, the youngest honoree at 18, leads Fuselage Innovations, showcasing early entrepreneurial success.
- This year's edition includes 11 women achievers, with 12 professionals recognized alongside entrepreneurs for their significant contributions. A standout achievement is a financial deal worth \$500 million, demonstrating the economic impact of young leaders.

### **BJP Emerges as India's Richest Political Party in 2023-24 with ₹4,340.47 Crore Income**

- The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has been ranked as India's richest political party for the financial year 2023-24, with a total income of ₹4,340.47 crore, according to the latest Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) report. The Indian National Congress (INC) ranked second, with an income of ₹1,225.11 crore, while other national parties, including CPI(M), AAP, BSP, and NPEP, reported significantly lower earnings.
- The combined income of all six national parties stood at ₹5,820.91 crore, with BJP alone contributing 74.56% of the total. BJP's income grew by 83.85% from ₹2,360.84 crore in 2022-23, while INC witnessed a 170.82% increase, rising from ₹452.37 crore to ₹1,225.11 crore. CPI(M) also saw an 18.34% growth in income.
- The primary sources of income for political parties were donations, contributions, and fundraising through coupons. BJP received ₹3,967.14 crore from donations, followed by INC (₹1,129.66 crore) and CPI(M) (₹74.86 crore).

### **Reliance Beats Apple, Ranks 2nd in FutureBrand 2024**

- Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) has secured the second spot globally in the FutureBrand Index 2024, surpassing Apple, Nike, Disney, and Netflix. This marks the first time an Indian company has entered the top three of this prestigious ranking, which evaluates brand perception rather than financial performance. Samsung claimed the top position, while Reliance outperformed major US and global brands.
- Reliance's rapid ascent from 13th place in 2023 to 2nd in 2024 is attributed to its strong consumer trust, strategic expansion, and diversified presence across energy, telecommunications, digital services, and retail.
- The FutureBrand Index 2024 reflects a shift in global brand dominance, with Asia-Pacific and Middle Eastern brands gaining influence. While the finance sector saw the strongest growth, technology and energy sectors experienced volatility, with Alphabet (Google) falling from No. 1 in 2014 to No. 57 in 2024 and Meta (Facebook) dropping from No. 11 to No. 52.

## **SUMMIT'S AND MOU'S**

### **Viksit Bharat@2047: Path to Progress NITI Aayog Conclave**

- NITI Aayog hosted a conclave on 'Towards Viksit Bharat @ 2047' on February 6, 2025, in New Delhi, focusing on strengthening the economy, national security, global partnerships, and legal frameworks.
- Key participants included NITI Aayog's Vice Chairman, Members, CEO, Chief Economic Advisor, and the Defence Secretary.
- The panel on Economic Growth and Global Competitiveness by 2047 highlighted regulatory reforms, infrastructure expansion, global supply chain integration, sovereign credit ratings, and energy security as crucial factors for India's long-term economic resilience.
- A session on Strategic Partnerships for Development emphasized India's leadership in renewable energy, trade liberalization, technological collaboration, and digital public infrastructure in global partnerships.
- Discussions on Supply Chain Resilience and National Defence focused on securing supply chains, balancing civilian and military logistics, improving procurement procedures, and cybersecurity in defence operations.

### **PM-AASHA Scheme Extended to Support Farmers Until 2025-26**

- The government has approved the continuation of the Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA) Scheme till 2025-26 under the 15th Finance Commission cycle to ensure remunerative prices for farmers and stabilize market prices of essential commodities.
- Under the Price Support Scheme (PSS), procurement of Tur, Urad, and Masur will be undertaken up to 100% of the production of each state for 2024-25, aiming to boost domestic pulse production and reduce import dependency.

- The Budget 2025 announced that 100% procurement of Tur, Urad, and Masur will continue for the next four years through Central Nodal Agencies (NAFED and NCCF) to ensure self-sufficiency in pulses.
- Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan approved Tur procurement in nine states—Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh—for a total quantity of 13.22 LMT under the Price Support Scheme for Kharif 2024-25.
- Procurement has already started in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Telangana, with 0.15 LMT Tur procured, benefiting 12,006 farmers as of February 15, 2025.
- The government reaffirmed its commitment to purchasing 100% of Tur production through NAFED and NCCF, ensuring price stability and farmer welfare.

### **Bhupender Yadav Opens 'Waste Recycling and Climate Change 2025' Conclave**

- Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav emphasized that India must maximize resource efficiency and adopt a circular economy to achieve its goal of becoming a developed country by 2047.
- Speaking at the "Waste Recycling and Climate Change" conclave, he called for industries to integrate circularity in product design and adopt advanced recycling technologies.
- Recycling critical minerals can reduce India's dependence on imports and support sustainability efforts.
- India's circular economy could be worth \$2 trillion by 2050, potentially creating 10 million jobs.
- India generates vast amounts of waste, including 1.6 million tonnes of e-waste, 1.15 million tonnes of battery waste, and 4.1 million tonnes of plastic waste annually. However, only 33% of e-waste, 2% of construction waste, and 14% of metal scrap are currently recycled.
- Additional Secretary Amandeep Garg highlighted that India aims to generate 50% of its power from non-fossil fuel sources, requiring significant critical minerals, 55% of which are concentrated in just 15 countries.
- India imported \$5.47 billion worth of critical minerals in 2022-23, underscoring the need for domestic recycling to secure supply chains and reduce dependency.

### **India to Host Inaugural WAVES Summit in Mumbai from May 1-4, 2025**

- India to host first World Audio Visual Entertainment Summit (WAVES) in Mumbai from May 1-4, 2025.
- Aims to be a global platform for the entertainment sector, similar to Davos for the economy.
- Announced by Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw after PM Narendra Modi chaired a meeting of Advisory Board.
- Features top media CEOs, entertainment icons, creative professionals discussing animation, gaming, entertainment technology, cinema.
- Eminent participants: Amitabh Bachchan, Shah Rukh Khan, Chiranjeevi, Rajnikanth, Deepika Padukone, Satya Nadella, Sundar Pichai, Mukesh Ambani, Anand Mahindra.
- Aims to boost India's creative economy, foster collaborations, strengthen global entertainment presence.

### **What is India Energy Week 2025?**

- India Energy Week 2025 was held from February 11 to 14, 2025 at Yashobhoomi Convention Centre, New Delhi. The event was organized by the Federation of Indian Petroleum Industry (FICI) under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- Recognized as the world's second-largest energy conference, attracting key industry leaders and international stakeholders. Focused on energy transition, green hydrogen, biofuels, LNG partnerships, and oil and gas exploration.
- India is progressing towards producing 5 million metric tons of green hydrogen annually by 2030. The Open Acreage Licensing Program (OALP) Round X was launched, covering 200,000 sq. km to boost oil and gas exploration.
- Strengthening LNG supply partnerships with the US, aiming to increase natural gas share in India's energy mix from 6% to 15%. India is expanding global energy investments in Brazil, Venezuela, Russia, and Mozambique.
- Avinya'25 – Energy Startup Challenge awarded startups for innovations in CO<sub>2</sub> capture, ESG solutions, and renewable energy. Vasudha – Oil and Gas Startup Challenge recognized AI-driven solutions in upstream oil and gas.
- India Energy Week 2025 introduced nine thematic zones, covering hydrogen, biofuels, renewables, LNG, Make in India, city gas distribution, petrochemicals, innovation, and digitalization. India, the world's third-largest energy consumer, is focusing on secure, sustainable, and affordable energy solutions.

**India Hosts First-Ever International Conference on Governance**

- Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated the 4-day International Conference on Governance in New Delhi, hosted by India for the first time with 55 countries participating. The event, organized by IIAS and the Department of Administrative Reforms, focused on "Next Generation Administrative Reforms – Reaching the Last Mile."
- Dr. Singh released the book "Viksit Bharat @ 2047 – Governance Transformed" and highlighted India's governance transformation since 2014, including its economic rise from the 'Fragile Five' to the 'First Five' and improvement in the Global Innovation Index (81st to 39th place).
- Key achievements include 80% broadband coverage, Swamitva Mission for land mapping, and 46% of global digital transactions occurring in India (16.8 billion in October 2024 alone).
- Reforms in public services include CPGRAMS grievance redressal, RTI 2.0 for one-click information access, and Mission Karmayogi for civil servants.

**BHARAT TEX 2025: A Premier Global Textiles Event Showcasing India's Textile Industry**

- Bharat Tex 2025, India's largest global textile event, was held from February 14-17, 2025, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, covering 2.2 million sq. ft. with over 5,000 exhibitors and 1,20,000 visitors from 120+ countries.
- The event aligned with India's "Farm to Fibre, Fabric, Fashion, and Foreign Markets" vision, targeting ₹9 lakh crore textile exports by 2030 from the current ₹3 lakh crore.
- India ranks as the 6th largest global textile exporter, contributing 8.21% to national exports, with 45 million direct and 100 million indirect employment opportunities.
- The GREAT Scheme approved ₹50 lakh funding per startup for innovations in medical, industrial, and protective textiles, while IIT Indore & NIT Patna received ₹6.5 crore for specialized courses in Geotextiles, Geosynthetics, and Sports Textiles.
- Focused Zones showcased Intelligent Manufacturing, Technical Textiles, Home Textiles, Apparel, Handlooms, and Handicrafts, emphasizing sustainability and digital integration.
- "Indie Haat", from Feb 12-18, 2025, at National Crafts Museum, New Delhi, featured 85 artisans and 80+ handloom & handicraft products, promoting rural artisans.
- "Breathing Threads" Fashion Show celebrated Indian handloom traditions in sustainable fashion, attracting global buyers and industry leaders.
- Bharat Tex 2024, the previous edition, set a strong foundation with 3,500+ exhibitors, 3,000+ overseas buyers, and 1,00,000 visitors, covering 2 lakh sq. meters with 50+ knowledge sessions.

**Ajmer Hosts First-Ever All India Transgender Conference**

- Ajmer is hosting the first-ever All India Kinnar Mahasammelan, a 10-day transgender conference at a private school in Vaishali Nagar, starting February 17, 2025.
- The event is organized by Gaddipati Saloni Nayak in memory of her mentor, Anita Bai, to address transgender rights, traditions, and spirituality.
- Over 2,000 transgender members from across India are attending, with strict security measures allowing only invited members to participate.
- A grand ritualistic pavilion (pandal) has been set up 20 meters from the temple, with live LED streaming of ceremonies for attendees.
- Special stalls for medical services, banking, perfumes, and travel are part of the event.
- The Kinnar Akhara Parishad acknowledges leaders like PM Narendra Modi and UP CM Yogi Adityanath for their contributions to the community.
- Community leaders describe the event as the "Maha Kumbh of the Kinnar Community", emphasizing religious harmony, unity, and cultural traditions.

## ECONOMY

### Global Investment Trends Monitor for 2024: (UNCTAD)

- Global FDI increased by 11% to \$1.4 trillion in 2024, but excluding European conduit economies, it declined by 8%. Developed economies saw a 43% FDI surge, mainly due to multinational transactions, but flows dropped 15% without conduit economies.
- Greenfield investments fell 8% in number and 7% in value, despite growth in semiconductors and AI investments. International project finance deals dropped 26% in number and nearly 31% in value, while cross-border M&A deals fell 13% but rose 2% in total value.
- FDI in Europe declined 45% (excluding conduit economies), with Germany (-60%), Italy (-35%), and Spain (-13%) seeing major declines. North America's FDI rose 13%, led by a 10% increase in the US, where M&A values surged 80%.
- Greenfield project announcements fell 10% globally, but North America saw a 20% rise, with the US recording a 93% increase in project values. Developing Asia's FDI fell 7%, with China's inflows dropping 29% for the second consecutive year, now 40% below 2022 levels.
- India's FDI rose 13%, with growth in greenfield project announcements, while ASEAN's FDI increased 2% to a record \$235 billion. Africa's FDI inflows surged 84% to \$94 billion, driven by a megaproject in Egypt, but without it, FDI rose 23% to \$50 billion.
- Latin America and the Caribbean's FDI fell 9%, with Brazil's FDI declining 5%, though greenfield projects showed future growth potential. Mexico's FDI grew 11%, despite weaker regional project announcements in Central America.

### India's Retail Inflation Drops to 4.31% in January 2025

- India's retail inflation fell to 4.31% in January 2025, the lowest in five months, down from 5.22% in December 2024, mainly due to moderating food prices.
- Food inflation declined to 6.02% (from 8.39% in December), with vegetable price inflation dropping to 11.35% from 26.6%, driven by fresh winter supplies.
- The RBI cut the repo rate by 25 basis points to 6.25%, the first reduction in nearly five years, aiming to support economic growth amid moderating inflation.
- In October 2024, inflation peaked at 6.2% (14-month high), with food inflation at 10.9%, but recent trends indicate supply-side improvements.
- The RBI, led by Governor Sanjay Malhotra, will monitor inflation trends and potential further rate cuts, depending on economic conditions.

### Wholesale Price Index (WPI) for January 2025: Inflation Rate and Key Highlights

- India's Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation stood at 2.31% in January 2025, slightly down from 2.37% in December 2024, driven by higher prices of manufactured food products, textiles, and non-food articles.
- Primary Articles inflation fell to 4.69%, with food articles dropping 3.62% month-over-month, while non-food articles and crude petroleum prices increased.
- Fuel & Power inflation remained negative at -2.78%, though mineral oil and electricity prices increased. Manufactured Products inflation rose to 2.51%, with 15 out of 22 industries witnessing price increases.
- The WPI Food Index inflation fell to 7.47% from 8.89% in December, as vegetable prices dropped sharply by 22.72% due to improved supply.
- Month-over-month WPI declined by 0.45%, marking the second consecutive monthly fall, with Primary Articles (-2.01%) and the Food Index (-2.30%) showing the biggest drops.
- Fuel & Power Index increased by 0.47%, with mineral oil and electricity prices rising, while coal prices remained stable. The final WPI inflation for November 2024 was confirmed at 2.16%, with a weighted response rate of 95.5%, and the next WPI release is scheduled for March 17, 2025.

# SARASWATI POOJA AT LE RANCHI



# LEGALEDGE TEST SERIES

## MOCK COMMON LAW ADMISSION TEST 2025-26

### CLAT MOCK

**TR ID.**

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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.6):** So how did Monet come to see himself as an instrument of perception? Like us, he lived in a period of rapid industrialization, where advances in optics and color theory began reshaping artistic practice. The first synthetic pigments were introduced in the early 19th century, and by the 1860s, the collapsible paint tube allowed artists to venture outside their studios, immersing themselves in shifting natural light. As John Gage argues in *Color and Culture* (1993), this revolution in materials altered not only artistic technique but also the very experience of seeing. Light, once a stable medium, now seemed fluid, ephemeral, caught only in momentary glimpses. Monet, then, painted in one era of vision and matured in another, fortuitously recording the precise moment of that transition, when perception itself became the subject of art.

He later recounted the sensation of painting *Impression, Sunrise* (1872), the work that inadvertently named a movement: The harbor lay before me, but I could not see it whole. The water, the mist, the shifting hues—they did not form objects but rather vibrations of color, fleeting, dissolving even as I captured them. Each moment was complete, yet no moment could be grasped. I painted quickly, instinctively, as though trying to keep up with what was disappearing before my eyes. The experience of painting the transient play of light—where form and content blurred, where solid structures seemed to dematerialize—fed into Monet's lifelong fascination with perception as an act of receiving rather than constructing. It gave him a secular, distinctly modern parallel to the philosophical concept of *phenomenology*, the idea that the world is not fixed but constituted through experience. When Monet later embarked on his *Water Lilies* series, he was not painting objects in a pond but rather the process of seeing itself—colors mingling, reflections shifting, vision ever in flux.

This idea that perception might be an act of surrender rather than control is echoed in a visual meditation Monet recorded in his letters. Late in life, when cataracts blurred his vision, he described seeing the world in ‘pulsing oranges and reds,’ his perception altered, unstable. At times, he found this frustrating, but at others, it revealed something profound:

We think we see with clarity, but what is clarity? A sharp outline is merely a convention. The truth of vision is movement, fluctuation, change. I am not painting things; I am painting the way they exist to the eye in time.

This insight—that sight itself is fluid—aligned Monet with the larger modernist movement, where the rigid certainties of the past gave way to shifting perspectives and subjective truths. His artistic process, much like Rilke’s poetic *in-seeing*, was not about recording what was there but about dissolving into perception itself, becoming, in his own way, a receiver of light.

1. According to the passage, what advancement allowed artists like Monet to paint outdoors more easily?
  - (a) The discovery of color theory.
  - (b) The introduction of synthetic pigments.
  - (c) The invention of the collapsible paint tube.
  - (d) The development of the modern easel.
2. What can be inferred about Monet’s view of perception, based on the passage?
  - (a) Perception is about capturing fixed, stable realities.
  - (b) Perception is a passive process of observation.
  - (c) Perception is fluid, ever-changing, and shaped by experience.
  - (d) Perception is best achieved through artificial enhancements like optical tools.
3. In the context of the passage, the word “**phenomenology**” most nearly means:
  - (a) The philosophy that reality is constructed through experience.
  - (b) The study of mechanical and optical tools for artists.
  - (c) A scientific approach to color theory.
4. Which of the following statements would Monet most likely agree with, based on the passage?
  - (a) A painting should depict the world in clear, definite outlines.
  - (b) Vision is inherently unstable and shaped by movement and change.
  - (c) Art should focus only on external appearances, not subjective experiences.
  - (d) The purpose of art is to document historical events accurately.
5. What is the central theme of the passage?
  - (a) Monet’s biography and his early influences.
  - (b) The technical development of synthetic pigments and paint tubes.
  - (c) The influence of light, perception, and modernist philosophy on Monet’s artistic process.
  - (d) A comparison of Monet’s work with traditional academic painting.

6. According to the passage, how did Monet describe his vision in later years when cataracts affected his sight?  
 (a) He saw with greater clarity and precision.  
 (b) He saw the world in blurred, pulsing colors like oranges and reds.
- (c) His vision remained unchanged despite his age.  
 (d) He lost interest in painting due to his deteriorating eyesight.

**Passage (Q.7-Q.12):** Declaring that “a situation has arisen in which the government of that state cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of India,” the Government of India has assumed direct control over the administration of Jammu and Kashmir. The decision has drawn mixed reactions—while some deem it an overdue move to ensure governance and stability, others see it as a politically motivated step that undermines democratic principles. These opinions, though widely shared, fail to address the deeper implications of this action and the Union government’s contested role in shaping the crisis in Kashmir.

The imposition of central rule in Jammu and Kashmir is not merely a response to a complete breakdown of governance, as some officials have claimed. It is pertinent to note that the Prime Minister—who has made time for numerous global summits and diplomatic engagements—has not visited the region since its special status was revoked in August 2019. Despite repeated assertions in Parliament that “normalcy has been restored,” that “businesses are operating as usual,” and that “schools and institutions continue functioning,” reports of unrest and heavy-handed crackdowns contradict these claims.

The removal of the former Chief Minister was not solely due to an inability to manage security challenges but was a calculated move by the central leadership in Delhi. The leader had, in many ways, been an instrumental figure in executing the Union government’s broader agenda—ensuring a transition that facilitated greater control over the region’s political dynamics. Public statements by senior ministers have confirmed that the former administration’s actions were closely aligned with directives from the central leadership, raising concerns about whether the state’s governance had already been reduced to a mere extension of central authority.

Sidestepping constitutional norms, the Union government has steadily encroached upon the autonomous decision-making powers of the state, which Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had described as “indispensable for federal balance.” From appointments of senior bureaucrats and law enforcement heads to direct interventions in regional policy decisions, the central administration has maintained an authoritative grip over the region since the abrogation of Article 370.

Even state officials have tacitly acknowledged this encroachment. The former Chief Minister had previously lamented that major administrative decisions were being taken without consulting the elected leadership. Reports of security agencies bypassing local authorities and instances of discord between state and central forces further highlight the extent to which the region’s governance has been restructured.

7. In the context of the passage, what is the primary reason given for the removal of the former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir?  
 (a) His failure to curb lawlessness and maintain order in the state.  
 (b) His alleged mismanagement of state finances and corruption.  
 (c) His alignment with the central government’s broader agenda.  
 (d) Pressure from opposition parties and civil unrest.
8. Which of the following best describes the tone of the passage?  
 (a) Neutral and informative  
 (b) Critical and analytical  
 (c) Optimistic and supportive  
 (d) Indifferent and detached
9. According to the passage, what contradiction exists in the Union government’s stance on Kashmir?
10. What does the passage suggest about the role of security agencies in Kashmir?  
 (a) They operate independently and maintain law and order effectively.  
 (b) They have been undermined by local political interference.  
 (c) They follow directives from the central government, often bypassing local authorities.  
 (d) They have been withdrawn from the region due to peaceful conditions.

- 11.** In the passage, the word “encroached” most closely means:
- Legally authorized
  - Gradually taken over or trespassed
  - Enhanced or strengthened
  - Publicly justified
- 12.** What is the central theme of the passage?
- (a)** The necessity of central government intervention in politically unstable states.  
**(b)** The constitutional and political implications of Union government control over Kashmir.  
**(c)** The role of security forces in maintaining law and order in conflict regions.  
**(d)** The need for international intervention in Kashmir's governance.

**Passage (Q.13-Q.18):** Thucydides was unique among classical historians in explicitly stating the intended utility of his work. He hoped that *The History of the Peloponnesian War* would serve as a tool for readers to scrutinize past events and anticipate similar occurrences in the future. However, he left ambiguous how this knowledge would be practically useful, leading to scholarly debates regarding the nature of his intended guidance.

Many scholars adopt an ‘optimistic’ reading of Thucydides, seeing his work as an instrument for political foresight and control. In this view, *The History* functions as a guidebook for statesmen, enabling them to recognize patterns in political history and use these insights to shape outcomes. If historical regularities can be identified, the argument goes, then political actors may acquire predictive power, allowing them to master the complexities of governance. Josiah Ober notably suggested that Thucydides’ work aimed to train expert political technicians, equipping them with the analytical tools necessary to navigate political crises effectively.

Others take a more ‘pessimistic’ stance, arguing that while Thucydides offers lessons in political patterns, these do not guarantee mastery over historical events. Political life is too unpredictable, subject to unforeseen disruptions such as natural disasters or mass ignorance. The example of the Athenian plague illustrates this point: even with careful planning, leaders cannot always control outcomes. In democratic settings, this problem is exacerbated, as the public may misinterpret historical lessons and apply them in distorted ways, potentially worsening political instability. In this reading, Thucydides does not provide a manual for political mastery but rather a sobering reminder of human limitations. His work tempers overconfidence, urging statesmen to exercise caution rather than assume they can impose rational order on an inherently chaotic political world.

At the heart of these debates is the question of whether recognizing historical patterns translates into effective political action. Thucydides was not practicing social science in the modern sense; rather, he used specific historical events as paradigms for understanding broader political truths. The Peloponnesian War was not a typical case study but an *exemplary* one—its significance lay not in strict repetition but in the ways it revealed underlying political dynamics. Thucydides teaches that drawing historical parallels is a complex, often misleading endeavor. His narrative weaves intricate connections, sometimes reinforcing expectations, at other times confounding them. The challenge for readers is to discern useful analogies without being misled by superficial similarities.

- 13.** According to the passage, which of the following best describes the scholarly debate regarding Thucydides’ work?
- Whether Thucydides was a historian or a political philosopher.
  - Whether his work provides a framework for political control or highlights the unpredictability of political life.
  - Whether the Peloponnesian War was a unique event or part of a recurring historical pattern.
  - Whether his work serves as a guide for military strategy or is purely a historical account.
- 14.** Which of the following best captures the ‘pessimistic’ interpretation of Thucydides’ work as described in the passage?
- 15.** What does the passage imply about Thucydides’ approach to history?
- He saw history as cyclical, with past events repeating themselves in an identical manner.
  - He was practicing social science in a modern sense, formulating universal laws of political behavior.

- (c) He believed history provided paradigms for understanding political behavior rather than strict predictions.
- (d) He sought to create a chronological account of historical events without drawing any broader conclusions.
- 16.** Based on the passage, what is a potential danger of applying historical lessons to modern political scenarios?
- (a) Political actors may fail to recognize patterns in history.
- (b) Historical parallels can be misleading if they focus on superficial similarities rather than deeper political truths.
- (c) The complexity of modern governance makes historical lessons irrelevant.
- (d) Leaders should prioritize contemporary economic trends over historical insights.
- 17.** What does the passage suggest about Thucydides' perspective on political foresight?

(a) Political foresight is achievable if leaders are trained in historical analysis.

(b) Political decision-making should be based purely on present conditions, disregarding historical parallels.

(c) Only military leaders can benefit from studying history.

(d) Recognizing historical patterns does not necessarily translate into effective political action.

- 18.** Based on the passage, which of the following statements would Thucydides most likely agree with?

(a) Understanding historical events helps in recognizing patterns, but those patterns do not guarantee mastery over political outcomes.

(b) Political leaders who carefully study history can accurately predict and control future events.

(c) The unpredictability of political life renders historical analysis completely useless.

(d) The Peloponnesian War should be viewed as a unique event that has no broader relevance for future governance.

**Passage (Q.19-Q.24):** In the immediate aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, policymakers, economists, and journalists scrambled to make sense of the unfolding disaster. The sheer scale of the collapse, the speed with which financial institutions fell, and the global ripple effects all contributed to an overwhelming sense of uncertainty. Faced with a crisis of unprecedented proportions, many instinctively reached for historical analogies to provide clarity and guidance. The Great Depression of the 1930s became the most frequently invoked comparison, shaping public discourse and influencing government responses. Just as Franklin D. Roosevelt had launched the New Deal to stabilize the American economy, many urged contemporary leaders to enact bold interventions to prevent another prolonged downturn.

Yet, as with all historical analogies, the comparison was imperfect. While the Great Depression had been triggered by structural economic weaknesses and exacerbated by poor monetary policy, the 2008 crisis stemmed from the implosion of complex financial instruments and the unchecked risk-taking of major banks. Those who leaned too heavily on 1930s parallels risked misdiagnosing the crisis and prescribing inappropriate solutions. Other comparisons soon emerged—some saw echoes of Japan's 'lost decade' of economic stagnation in the 1990s, while others likened the crisis to the bursting of the dot-com bubble in the early 2000s. Each analogy framed the crisis differently, influencing public perception and the range of possible policy responses.

This reliance on historical parallels is not unique to economic crises. From geopolitical conflicts to technological revolutions, societies continually use the past to interpret the present. The Cold War has become a default reference point for tensions between the United States and China, while AI is alternately described as an Industrial Revolution-scale transformation or an existential threat akin to nuclear weapons. Whether illuminating or misleading, historical analogies remain an inescapable part of modern political and economic discourse.

- 19.** According to the passage, what was the primary reason people turned to historical analogies during the 2008 financial crisis?

- (a) To justify their political ideologies through past events.
- (b) To dismiss concerns by showing that history always repeats itself.
- (c) To prove that financial collapses follow identical patterns.

(d) To provide a framework for understanding and responding to the crisis.

- 20.** What is the main limitation of using the Great Depression as a model for understanding the 2008 financial crisis?

(a) The Great Depression was primarily a financial crisis, while the 2008 crisis was caused by political instability.



**SECTION -B : CURRENT AFFAIRS, INCLUDING GENERAL KNOWLEDGE****Passage (Q.25-Q.30): RBI Cuts Repo rate and its implication on Economy**

The monetary stance remains neutral, with a focus on inflation and growth. Sectors like banking, auto, and real estate are expected to benefit, despite market volatility. Indian equity markets witnessed volatility. The BSE Sensex dropped 328 points, or 0.4 per cent, to touch an intraday low of 77,730.37, while the Nifty 50 declined by 110 points, or 0.4 per cent, to 23,493.60. Broader market indices underperformed, with midcap stocks falling by 0.6 per cent and smallcap stocks declining by 1 per cent. While rate-sensitive sectors may benefit in the medium term, market sentiment remains cautious due to external uncertainties, including global trade tensions and inflationary risks. Credit-sensitive sectors like auto and real estate will see higher demand. Analysts believe that with the government cutting taxes for the middle class and now RBI bringing down the cost of borrowing, it augurs well for strong consumption-led growth. discretionary spending and premiumisation themes are expected to outperform.

Sectors like automotive, real estate, and discretionary segments such as jewellery, durables and white goods might do relatively better. Travel and tourism, quick service restaurants could also see the demand remaining buoyant. The credit growth momentum in banks has slowed due to asset quality concerns, particularly in unsecured lending. The decline in interest rates is expected to push yields lower, making long-duration bonds and debt mutual funds more attractive. Lower borrowing costs could also aid capital expenditure in sectors like infrastructure and manufacturing, supporting overall economic activity. As traditional means like fixed deposits become less attractive, investors are more likely to turn to diversified options.

Extracted with edits and revisions from <https://www.livemint.com>

- 25.** Which exclusive internet domain has been launched by the RBI to enhance trust in digital transactions for Indian banks?  
(a) bank.in    (b) bank.org  
(c) indianbank.com                                (d) rbi.bank
- 26.** Under which legislation was the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) established ?  
(a) The Banking Regulation Act, 1949  
(b) The Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934  
(c) The Indian Financial Act, 1930  
(d) The Monetary Policy Act, 1932
- 27.** What is the full form of IDRBT, the institution associated with banking technology and digital security in India?  
(a) Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology  
(b) Indian Development and Research in Banking Technology  
(c) International Department for Research in Banking and Technology  
(d) Indian Digital Research in Banking and Transactions
- 28.** Which commission's recommendations led to the establishment of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)?  
(a) Keynes Commission  
(b) Simon Commission  
(c) Narasimham Committee  
(d) Hilton Young Commission
- 29.** Consider the following statements regarding the recent repo rate cut by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI):  
I. The RBI has reduced the repo rate from 6.5% to 6.25%.  
II. This is the first repo rate cut since May 2020, when it was reduced to 4% during the COVID-19 crisis.  
III. The reduction in the repo rate is expected to increase inflation to 5% in the upcoming quarter.  
Which of the above statements is/are correct?  
(a) Only I and II  
(b) Only II and III  
(c) Only I and III  
(d) All I, II, and III
- 30.** According to the structure and functioning of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), which of the following statements is CORRECT?  
(a) The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) was established in 2016 to enhance the transparency and accountability of India's fiscal policy framework.  
(b) The MPC consists of six members, including three external experts appointed by the Government of India, who serve a four-year term.  
(c) The RBI Governor is an ex-officio member of the MPC but does not hold any special voting rights in decision-making.  
(d) The external members of the MPC are appointed by the RBI and serve for a tenure of six years, with no possibility of extension.

### **Passage (Q.31-Q.36): Four New Ramsar Sites and World Wetland Day**

February 2 is annually marked as World Wetlands Day to spread awareness about conserving one of the most critical ecosystems on the planet. This year, the theme was Protecting Wetlands for Our Common Future. Ahead of the day, India announced four new Ramsar sites under the global agreement Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Wetlands are regions covered by water either perennially or seasonally, such as marshes and lakes. They are vital reservoirs of biodiversity, aid water conservation and provide habitat for numerous migratory birds, aquatic species, and plant life. They also help recharge groundwater, control floods and support fisheries and local communities. From the point of view of climate change mitigation, wetlands are important carbon sinks, meaning they absorb more carbon from the atmosphere than they release. Wetlands are areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres. The designation of a wetland is based on various criteria under the convention. For example, a wetland should be considered internationally important if it supports plant and/or animal species at a critical stage in their life cycles, or provides refuge during adverse conditions. It also looks at the sites' capacity to support fishes and waterbirds. The Kanjli wetlands in Kapurthala district are along the Kali Bein river, with various fish species, turtles and migratory birds found here.

Extracted with edits and revisions from <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/everyday-explainers/world-wetlands-day-threats-punjab-conservation-9813737/>



### **Passage (Q.37-Q.41): Role of women in Indian Freedom Struggle**

Young students were recruited by classmates and alumni, drawn by the cause of the freedom of the nation from British rule. Student associations in educational institutions served as semi-revolutionary groups and collectively trained women in weapons, combat and associated activities. They also served as secure spaces where women could gather to openly discuss issues related to women's rights, liberation and freedom from British rule. The history of women's movements in

the Indian subcontinent has an interesting trajectory and scholars have differing views on precisely when they started. There is some consensus, however, among scholars of the subject that the origins of these movements can be traced to the early 19th century where the focus was on social reform and the liberation of women from socio-cultural bondages in the subcontinent. Hence, although collectively women's movements in India are close to two centuries old, they have consistently changed and altered in form, structure and agendas over the years, to address developing challenges and requirements. Western liberal values that impacted male social reformers in the Indian subcontinent during the 19th century, percolated to the women living in their social peripheries. Social movements during the British occupation of the subcontinent that led to the outlawing of sati, widow burning, female infanticide, segregation of women, etc. paved the way for some of the earliest social reforms that occurred in the interest of women—for instance, widow remarriages. These reforms in turn inspired women to participate in conversations, especially about socio-economic and socio-cultural issues that impacted their everyday lives.

Extracted with edits and revisions from <https://indianexpress.com>

- 37.** Which leader founded the 'Bal Charkha Sangh' in childhood and later organized the 'Vanar Sena' of children to support the Congress party during the Non-Cooperation Movement?
- (a) Sarojini Naidu
  - (b) Indira Gandhi
  - (c) Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit
  - (d) Aruna Asaf Ali
- 38.** Which of the following organizations did Ramadevi Chaudhary significantly contribute to establishing, while also playing a prominent role in mobilizing women during the Salt Satyagraha movement in Odisha?
- (a) Harijan Sewa Sangha
  - (b) All India Women's Conference
  - (c) Indian National Congress
  - (d) Sevagram Ashram
- 39.** Who is popularly known as the 'Grand Old Lady' of the Independence Movement and is remembered for hoisting the Indian National flag at Gowalia Tank maidan during the Quit India Movement in 1942?
- (a) Sarojini Naidu
  - (b) Kasturba Gandhi
  - (c) Aruna Asaf Ali
- 40.** Which of the following leaders was a member of the Azad Hind Fauz (Indian National Army), held responsibilities for Women's Affairs and the Rani of Jhansi Regiment, recruited 1,500 women soldiers, and stood for the Red Fort Trials in Delhi?
- (a) Kalpana Dutt
  - (b) Bina Das
  - (c) Lakshmi Sahgal
  - (d) Kanaklata Baru
- 41.** Consider the following statements about the contributions of prominent Indian women to the independence movement and women's empowerment:
- I. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit became the first woman president of the UN General Assembly in 1953, was imprisoned for her activism during India's struggle for independence, became the first woman to hold a cabinet position in pre-independence India in 1937.
  - II. Pandita Ramabai established one of the country's first women's shelters and schools, founded the Hindu Ladies Social and Literary Club in Bombay, and traveled across India giving lectures on women's emancipation.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) Only I
  - (b) Only II
  - (c) Both I and II
  - (d) Neither I nor II

#### Passage (Q.42-Q.47): The Government Of India Act 1935

The Government of India Act of 1935 marked the second milestone towards a completely responsible government in India. It ended the Diarchy and provided for the establishment of the All India Federation. This act served some useful purposes by the experiment of provincial autonomy, thus we can say that the Government of India Act 1935 marks a point of no return in the history of constitutional development in India. On August 1935, the Government of India passed longest act i.e. Government of India Act 1935 under the British Act of Parliament. This act also included the Government of Burma Act 1935. According to this act, India would become a federation if 50% of Indian states decided to join it. They would then have a large number of representatives in the two houses of the central legislature. However, the provisions with regards to the federation were not implemented. The act made no reference even to granting dominion status, much less independence, to India. With regard to the provinces, the act of 1935 was an improvement on the existing position. It introduced what is known as provincial autonomy. The ministers of the provincial governments, according to it, were to be responsible to the legislature. The powers of the legislature were increased. However, in certain matters like the Police,

the government had the authority. The right to vote also remained limited. The main objectivity of the act of 1935 was that the government of India was under the British Crown.

Extracted with edits and revisions from <https://www.jagranjosh.com>

- 42.** Which of the following foundational document of independent India was significantly influenced by the Government of India Act 1935, incorporating many of its principles and structures?
- (a) Indian Penal Code 1860
  - (b) The Constitution of India
  - (c) Emperor of India Act 1950
  - (d) Indian Independence Act 1947
- 43.** Who was the Indian leader that signed a pact with Lord Irwin and participated in the Second Round Table Conference?
- (a) Jawaharlal Nehru
  - (b) Subhas Chandra Bose
  - (c) Mahatma Gandhi
  - (d) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
- 44.** Which Indian leader described the Government of India Act, 1935, as a "charter of slavery" and compared it to "a machine with strong brakes but no engine"?
- (a) Mahatma Gandhi
  - (b) Subhas Chandra Bose
  - (c) Jawaharlal Nehru
  - (d) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
- 45.** Until which year did the Federal Court of India function before being replaced by the Supreme Court of India?
- (a) 1947
  - (b) 1949
  - (c) 1950
  - (d) 1951
- 46.** Which of the following is another name for the Montagu Declaration of 1917?
- (a) The Lucknow Pact
  - (b) The August Declaration
  - (c) The Rowlatt Act
  - (d) The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms
- 47.** According to historical records, which of the following statements about the Government of India Act, 1919, is CORRECT?
- (a) The Act introduced a unicameral legislature at the central level.
  - (b) The Indian legislature had full control over the Governor-General and his Executive Council.
  - (c) The Act empowered the Indian legislature to amend laws passed by the British Parliament concerning India
  - (d) The Act introduced a bicameral legislature at the central level, with limited legislative powers over the Governor-General and his Executive Council.

#### Passage (Q.48-Q.52): Scientists discover 'Einstein ring'

An Einstein ring as perfect as this is extremely rare. We get to see a background galaxy through the warped space and time of a very nearby foreground galaxy. Einstein rings are a powerful tool for astronomers because they reveal objects that would otherwise be obscured from view and indicate the mass of the intermediate galaxy – including any hidden mass in the form of dark matter. In this case, astronomers estimate that the foreground galaxy comprises roughly 11% dark matter. This is a relatively small fraction given that dark matter is believed to dominate the overall mass content of the universe. Ultimately the telescope, which can detect galaxies out to 10bn light years, is aiming to create the largest cosmic 3D map ever made. This will allow astronomers to infer the large-scale distribution of dark matter and reveal the influence of dark energy, a mysterious force that is accelerating the expansion of the universe. The telescope will capture images of objects up to 10bn light years away, but the latest image shows its unmatched ability for razor-sharp observations revealing new structures in the nearby universe, too. The galaxy has been known to astronomers for a very long time. And yet this ring was never observed before. This demonstrates how powerful Euclid is, finding new things even in places we thought we knew well.

Extracted with edits and revisions from <https://www.theguardian.com>

- 48.** The first Einstein ring discovered, named MG 1131+0456, was observed in 1987 by Hewitt et al. Which of the following observatories was used to make this discovery?
- (a) Arecibo Observatory
  - (b) Hubble Space Telescope
  - (c) Very Large Array
  - (d) Keck Observatory
- 49.** Which space mission, launched in July 2023, is designed to map the "dark universe" by studying dark matter and dark energy?
- (a) Hubble Space Telescope
  - (b) ESA Euclid Mission
  - (c) James Webb Space Telescope
  - (d) Chandra X-ray Observatory

- 50.** Which of the following space telescopes is the most recent and powerful, serving as the successor to NASA's Hubble Space Telescope for studying galaxies?
- (a) Chandra X-ray Observatory
  - (b) Spitzer Space Telescope
  - (c) Webb Space Telescope
  - (d) Kepler Space Telescope
- 51.** Consider the following statements about the Einstein ring and a light-year:
- I. The galaxy hosting the Einstein ring is approximately 5.5 billion light-years away from Earth.
  - II. A light-year is the distance light travels in one year, equivalent to 9.46 trillion kilometers.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) Only I
  - (b) Only II
  - (c) Both I and II
  - (d) Neither I nor II
- 52.** According to recent discoveries, which of the following statements about Altieri's Ring and its gravitational lensing effect is CORRECT?
- (a) Euclid discovered Altieri's Ring around NGC 6505, a newly identified galaxy that had not been observed before the 21st century.
  - (b) The lensing effect of Altieri's Ring is caused by a distant galaxy 4.5 billion light-years away bending the light of NGC 6505.
  - (c) Euclid's discovery of Altieri's Ring around NGC 6505 confirms that well-known astronomical objects can still provide new scientific insights when observed with advanced telescopes.
  - (d) The data on Altieri's Ring was validated solely by the Keck Cosmic Web Imager (KCWI), without contributions from other observatories.

### SECTION - C: LEGAL REASONING

**Passage (Q.53-Q.58):** In a case that could significantly impact corruption cases lodged before 2018, the Supreme Court is set to decide whether offering a bribe is punishable under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA), even if the public official refuses the offer. Though a 2018 amendment to the PCA clearly made it a crime to offer a bribe, separate High Courts have offered different perspectives in cases before 2018.

Abetment under the PCA before 2018

Section 12 of the PCA which — before 2018 — punished anyone who ‘abets’ anyone committing an offence under Sections 7 or 11 of the PCA. Section 7 punishes a public official who accepts a bribe or attempts to obtain any form of ‘gratification’ aside from ‘legal remuneration’ (such as her salary) in exchange for exercising her official functions.

Section 11 punishes officials who accept a ‘valuable thing’ from someone she is or might be in business with, or from someone who might be involved with her (or her superior’s) official functions without adequate ‘consideration’, i.e. without giving anything adequate in exchange.

Is an unsuccessful bribe ‘abetment’ under the PCA?

Section 12 of the PCA (both pre- and post-2018) states, “whoever abets any offence punishable under this Act, whether or not that offence is committed in consequence of that abetment, shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall be not less than three years, but which may extend to seven years and shall also be liable to fine”.

The Bombay HC in the case of *Kishor Khachand Wadhwani v. The State Of Maharashtra* (2019) held that “Prior to the amendment of 2018, the mere offer of bribe was not constituting an offence” as it was only in the 2018 amendment that the provision titled “Offence relating to bribing a public servant” was included to punish bribe-givers as well. Further, the court held that the police officer did not ‘demand’ the bribe, which is necessary for an offence under Section 7 of the PCA.

The Madras HC however, adopted a different line of reasoning in 2020. The Madras HC held that the “offer of bribe to a public servant even without anything more does constitute a substantive offence under section 7”. According to the Madras High Court’s interpretation, the mere act of *offering* a bribe, even if the public servant does not demand or accept it, constitutes an offense. And public officer will be held liable in such cases.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions from “Is it a crime to offer a bribe even if it is refused? The question before Supreme Court” by Ajoy Sinha Karpuram, The Indian Express | Law Explained].

- 53.** Priya, a senior officer in the Municipal Licensing Department, is approached by Ramesh, a local businessman. Ramesh wants a license to open a new restaurant in the city. When Priya reviews his application, she finds that some documents are incomplete. He calls Ramesh and says "Your application is missing a few things... but if you can manage ₹50,000, I can make this problem disappear and get your license approved by next week." Ramesh understood Priya's words as a clear indication that if he didn't pay, his application would be delayed or denied and filed a complaint against her under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA). However, Priya claimed that "I did not demand or insist on any payment". Decide whether Priya can be held liable under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA).
- (a) Priya can be held liable under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA) because Priya's conduct satisfies the requirements for liability under the provision.
- (b) Priya can be held liable under Section 11 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA) because her comment directly suggests an offer to overlook incomplete documentation in exchange for money.
- (c) Priya can be held liable under Section 12 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA) because it punishes anyone who ‘abets’ anyone committing an offence under Sections 7 or 11 of the PCA.
- (d) Priya cannot be held liable under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA) because she did not demand or insist on any payment.
- 54.** Decide in which of the following circumstances Section 11 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA) would not be applicable?
- (a) Anjali, a senior officer in the Urban Development Department, is in charge of approving construction permits. One day, she receives a luxurious watch from Rajesh, the owner of a construction company that frequently applies for permits. Rajesh claims

it's a "gift of appreciation" for her excellent work in processing permits and Anjali accepts it.

55. (b) Neha, a senior officer in the Ministry of Finance, is reviewing several business proposals for government funding. She receives an expensive leather briefcase as a gift from Vikram, the owner of a company that has a pending funding application. Vikram has been trying to get his project approved for several months. Neha accepts the gift, assuming it is a token of appreciation.
- (c) Aarti, an officer in the State Revenue Department, handles the tax filings. One day, she receives a gold pen from Sudhir, the CEO of a company that is under audit by her department. Sudhir insists that it is just a gesture of goodwill, but Aarti is aware that her superior will soon review her department's audit findings on Sudhir's company. She accepts but does not think it will influence her decision-making.
- (d) Ravi, a senior official in the Ministry of Agriculture, helps his colleague Priya by recommending her for a government grant to attend an international agricultural conference. Priya, not being directly involved in Ravi's work, later thanks him by sending an expensive bottle of wine as a token of appreciation for his support in securing the grant.
55. Vikram, a businessman, approaches Meera, a senior officer in the Transport Department, seeking her help to expedite the approval of his company's new trucking permits for the year 2025. Meera agrees and tells Vikram, "If you want the permits processed faster, you should speak with my assistant, Rina, who can arrange everything in return for some monetary favors." Vikram then meets Rina who asks for money to fast-track the permits, but for some reason, he was unable to provide the money at that moment, and the transaction does not go through. Decide which of the following is correct.

- i Meera can be held liable under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA).
  - ii Vikram can be held liable under Section 11 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA).
  - iii Rina can be held liable under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA).
  - iv Rina can be held liable under Section 12 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA).
- (a) (i) and (iv)  
 (b) (i), (iii) and (iv)  
 (c) (i), (ii), (iv)  
 (d) (i), (ii), (iii)

56. Rajesh, a journalist working undercover, poses as a contractor seeking approval for a lucrative government construction project. He learns that Anil, a senior engineer in the Public Works Department, is responsible for awarding the contract. Rajesh pretends to offer Anil an expensive watch as a gift, hinting that he hopes for "smooth processing" of his project. Rajesh involves Anil's acquaintance, Suresh, asking him to deliver the gift to Anil, saying, "Please give this to Anil on my behalf as a thank you. It's just a token of appreciation for his cooperation." Suresh, fully aware of that the gift is meant to influence Anil, agrees to deliver the watch. However, before the gift reaches Anil, the situation is exposed when Rajesh publicly releases footage of the operation, revealing that it was a sting operation designed to expose corrupt practices within the department. Apart from Anil, Suresh was also booked under Section 12 of the PCA. Decide whether Suresh can be held liable under Section 12 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA) or not.

- (a) Suresh can be held liable under Section 12 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA) because his liability is based on his state of mind and actions at the time, not the underlying intent of the journalist.
- (b) Suresh cannot be held liable under Section 12 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA) because Rajesh was pretending to offer Anil an expensive watch as a gift, not actually bribing Anil.
- (c) Suresh can be held liable under Section 12 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA) because he, fully aware of that the gift is meant to influence Anil, agrees to deliver the watch.
- (d) Suresh cannot be held liable under Section 12 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA) because before the gift reaches Anil, the situation is exposed when Rajesh publicly releases footage of the operation.

57. Amit, a businessman, wants to expedite the approval of his company's land clearance from the Municipal Department. He approaches Nitin, a senior officer, and says, "I can pay ₹1 lakh if you clear the paperwork by next week." Nitin refuses the offer and tells Amit that he will process the application based on its merits. Amit, believing Nitin was hesitant, insists several times, but Nitin never hints at wanting a bribe. Later, Amit is arrested during a police sting operation when attempting to hand back the money. Amit argues that he was entrapped, and the police charge Nitin under Section 7 of the PCA for allegedly accepting the bribe. Decide whether Nitin can be held liable under Section

7 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA) or not, in accordance to the Bombay HC judgment.

- (a) Nitin can be held liable under Section 7 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA) because Nitin is a public official accepting a bribe.
- (b) Nitin cannot be held liable under Section 7 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA) because Nitin never hints at wanting a bribe.
- (c) Nitin can be held liable under Section 7 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA) because Nitin's conduct satisfies the requirements for liability under the provision.
- (d) Nitin cannot be held liable under Section 7 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA) because bribery never actually took place, rather it was a police sting operation.

**58.** In the above instance, decide if the answer changes if it has to be decided in accordance to the Madras HC Ruling.

- (a) Yes, Nitin can be held liable under Section 7 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA) because amit's conduct satisfies the requirements for liability under the provision.
- (b) No, Nitin can be held liable under Section 7 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA) because Nitin is a public official accepting a bribe.
- (c) Yes, Nitin cannot be held liable under Section 7 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA) because bribery never actually took place, rather it was a police sting operation.
- (d) No, Nitin cannot be held liable under Section 7 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA) because Nitin never hints at wanting a bribe.

**Passage (Q.59-Q.64):** Before beginning with the introduction of a Will, it is necessary to understand the general applicability of the Succession Act, 1925 (hereinafter “the Succession Act” — the law which governs testamentary succession in India) and the persons to whom it applies. All cases of testamentary succession (i.e. when the deceased has left behind a Will) in India are governed by Part 6 of the Succession Act except:

- (a) where the testamentary succession concerns the property of any Muhammadan; in other words, this part shall not apply to Muslims; and
- (b) where the testamentary succession concerns the property of any Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh or Jaina except: if the deceased is a Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh or Jaina and has either signed his Will in Bombay, Madras or Bengal or (may not have signed his Will in such territories but) has immovable property located within such territories.

For it to constitute a valid and legally binding Will, the only legal requirements under the Act are that: (a) the testator is of sound mind (i.e. he knows what he is doing by such disposition of his property); (b) there was no fraud, coercion or any form of importunity that took away from the testator his free agency in making of his Will; (c) he has himself signed the Will or someone else has signed his Will in his presence and under his direction; (d) that the Will is attested by two (or more) witnesses — each of whom has seen the testator sign and each of whom has signed the Will in the presence of the testator. Apart from these legal requirements, there is no other legal requirement to be satisfied while executing a Will. However, there are exceptions to this — so far as Muslims are concerned, Mohammedan law does not demand that a Will made by a Mohammedan take a written form. It does not demand a particular form at all. It can be made either verbally or in writing. What is necessary is to ascertain the intention of the testator. Additionally, Mohammedan law does not require attestation of the Will either.

[Extracted, with edits and revisions from “Where there is a Will, there is Inheritance Law”, by Spenta Havewala Kapadia, SCC Online | Law Made Easy].

- 59.** Mr. Rajesh Kumar, a 62-year-old retired teacher from Delhi, passed away unexpectedly, leaving behind his wife, Mrs. Meena Kumar, and two adult children, Anil and Priya. Rajesh had not prepared a Will, resulting in uncertainty about how his assets would be distributed. His estate included a house in Delhi, bank savings of ₹15 lakhs, a fixed deposit worth ₹10 lakhs, and a small plot of land in Haryana. Anil wanted to sell the family house to distribute the proceeds, while Priya wished to retain it as a cherished family memory. One day, Anil made a deal to sell the family house to distribute the proceeds without telling his sister and mother about it. Priya filed a case under the Succession Act, 1925 to

decide the outcome of the validity of the sale. Decide whether the issue of late Rajesh Kumar's property can be dealt under Part 6 of the Succession Act, 1925 or not.

- (a) The issue of late Rajesh Kumar's property can be dealt under the Succession Act, 1925 because he passed away unexpectedly, leaving behind his wife, Mrs. Meena Kumar, and two adult children.
- (b) The issue of late Rajesh Kumar's property cannot be dealt under Part 6 of the Succession Act, 1925 because Rajesh had not prepared a Will, resulting in uncertainty about how his assets would be distributed.

- (c) The issue of late Rajesh Kumar's property can be dealt under the Succession Act, 1925 because it constitute a valid and legally binding Will, the only legal requirements under the Act is fulfilled.
- (d) The issue of late Rajesh Kumar's property cannot be dealt under the Succession Act, 1925 because Anil wanted to sell the family house while Priya wished to retain it as a cherished family memory.
- 60.** Decide which of the following situations can be governed by Part 6 of the Succession Act?
- (a) Mr. Ramesh Sharma, a wealthy Hindu businessman, drafted a Will distributing his estate. He left his family home to his wife, Suman, and divided his other assets, including ₹50 lakhs in savings and agricultural land, equally among his two sons and daughter. He also set aside ₹10 lakhs for charity, specifying it should go to a local orphanage.
- (b) Mr. Ahmed Khan, a retired Muslim professor, prepared a Will. He allocated one-third of his property for charitable causes, including donations to a mosque and funding for education of underprivileged children. The remaining two-thirds of his estate, including a house and savings of ₹20 lakhs, was distributed among his legal heirs (wife, two sons, and one daughter).
- (c) Ms. Mary D'Souza, a Christian widow, created a Will detailing the distribution of her assets. She bequeathed her ancestral home to her elder daughter, Rachel, and divided her jewelry equally between Rachel and her younger daughter, Clara. Mary allocated ₹10 lakhs in savings for her grandchildren's education and left ₹2 lakhs to her church for maintenance.
- (d) Mrs. Manjeet Kaur, a retired Sikh school principal, drafted a Will distributing her property among her heirs. She left her residential house to her elder son, Harjeet, and her agricultural land to her younger son, Jasmeet. She also allocated ₹15 lakhs to her daughter, Preet, and donated ₹5 lakhs to a Gurdwara for community service.
- 61.** Mr. Ramesh Iyer, a Hindu businessman, drafted a Will leaving his family home in Tilak Nagar to his wife, Kavita, and ₹25 lakhs to his son, Arjun, for starting a business. He also specified that his ancestral farmland in Tamil Nadu should remain with his daughter, Priya. Mr. Iyer signed his Will in Chennai (Madras) and soon passed away. Upon his death, Arjun challenged that the Will was not governed by Part 6 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925, arguing that the testamentary succession in Part 6 does not concern the property of a Hindu. Decide whether Arjun's challenge that the Will was not governed by Part 6 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 is valid or not.
- (a) Arjun's challenge that the Will was not governed by Part 6 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 is valid because it was ancestral property and required consent from all heirs.
- (b) Arjun's challenge that the Will was not governed by Part 6 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 is not valid because all cases of testamentary succession in India are governed by the part.
- (c) Arjun's challenge that the Will was not governed by Part 6 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 is valid because the testamentary succession in the part does not concern the property of a Hindu.
- (d) Arjun's challenge that the Will was not governed by Part 6 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 is not valid because Mr. Ramesh Iyer signed his Will in Chennai.
- 62.** Suppose, in the above instance, Mr. Ramesh Iyer, drafted a Will in which he bequeathed his immovable property located in T. Nagar situated in Bombay to his daughter, Priya. However, when he signed the will, he was admitted in a hospital in Delhi. Upon his death, Arjun challenged that the Will was not governed by Part 6 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925, arguing that the testamentary succession in Part 6 does not concern the property of a Hindu. Decide whether your answer changes.
- (a) Yes, Arjun's challenge that the Will was not governed by Part 6 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 is not valid because Mr. Ramesh Iyer's immovable property located in T. Nagar situated in Bombay.
- (b) No, Arjun's challenge that the Will was not governed by Part 6 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 is valid because the testamentary succession in the part does not concern the property of a Hindu.
- (c) Yes, Arjun's challenge that the Will was not governed by Part 6 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 is valid because the testamentary succession in the part does not concern the property of a Hindu.
- (d) No, Arjun's challenge that the Will was not governed by Part 6 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 is not valid because Mr. Ramesh Iyer's immovable property located in T. Nagar is situated in Bombay.

- 63.** Decide which of the following can be considered a valid and legally binding will?
- (a) Mr. Vishal Kumar, a 55-year-old businessman, drafted a Will leaving his entire estate to his wife, Neha. However, at the time of drafting the Will, Mr. Kumar had recently suffered a stroke and had temporary cognitive impairments, which affected his ability to understand the implications of his actions. Despite the stroke, he was able to sign the Will in the presence of two witnesses.
  - (b) Mr. Arvind Joshi, a 58-year-old engineer, decided to draft a Will while he was of sound mind, bequeathing his property in Mumbai to his wife, Aarti, and his savings to his children. He signed the Will in front of his friends, Kunal and Subrotosh who reluctantly under coercion by Arvind signed the will in his presence after understanding the contents of the will.
  - (c) Ms. Nandini Sharma, a 70-year-old widow, made a Will where she bequeathed her property to her daughter, Priya, and her savings to her son, Rajeev. While Rajeev didn't directly threaten or coerce her, he emotionally manipulated her into giving him more of the estate. However, Nandini signed the Will in the presence of two witnesses and was of sound mind at the time.
- 64.** Which of the following is not a correct difference between a will under the Succession Act, 1925 and under Mohammedan Law?
- (a) Under the Succession Act, a Will requires attestation by at least two witnesses, but under Mohammedan Law, there is no requirement for testator.
  - (b) Under the Succession Act, the testator must be of sound mind, while under Mohammedan Law, the testator must be of sound mind, but formal execution is not required.
  - (c) Under the Succession Act, the testator's intention must be clearly established through a written Will and formalities, but under Mohammedan Law, the key element is ascertaining the testator's intention.
  - (d) Under the Indian Succession Act, a Will must be written, but under Mohammedan Law, it can be oral or written.

**Passage (Q.65-Q.69):** Fundamental rights are the cornerstone of democracy, ensuring that every individual is entitled to essential freedoms and protections such as the right to life, liberty, personal security, freedom of expression, equality before the law, and a fair trial. These rights, often enshrined in national constitutions or international human rights agreements, safeguard individuals from oppression, discrimination, and abuse of power. However, their mere existence in legal documents is insufficient; the judiciary plays a crucial role in ensuring these rights are effectively upheld. As the guardian of the Constitution, the judiciary interprets constitutional provisions, reviews laws, and remedies violations of fundamental rights.

Judicial review is one of the judiciary's most significant tools in protecting fundamental rights. This process allows courts to examine the constitutionality of laws, regulations, and government actions. If any law or act violates an individual's fundamental rights or contradicts the Constitution, courts can strike it down. For instance, the Supreme Court of India, in the landmark *K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India* (2017) case, recognized the right to privacy as a fundamental right. Judicial review also ensures that laws are applied fairly, addressing discriminatory or disproportionate impacts on marginalized groups.

Judicial activism further strengthens fundamental rights, as courts take a proactive role in interpreting and expanding rights to fill legislative gaps or when laws are inadequate. The Indian Supreme Court's decision in *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India* (2018) decriminalized a section of law by striking down Section 377 of the IPC, demonstrating judicial activism in promoting inclusivity and human dignity.

Additionally, courts enforce fundamental rights through redress mechanisms. Article 32 of the Indian Constitution empowers individuals to approach the Supreme Court, while Article 226 allows access to High Courts. By issuing writs such as Habeas Corpus (meaning a writ requiring a person under arrest to be brought before a judge or into court, especially to secure the person's release unless lawful grounds are shown for their detention), Mandamus, and Certiorari, courts ensure timely protection and enforcement of fundamental rights, cementing their role as a pillar of justice and accountability.

[Extracted with edits and revisions from, <https://www.freelaw.in/legalarticles/The-Role-of-the-Judiciary-in-Protecting-Fundamental-Rights>]

- 65.** Which Article of the Indian Constitution guarantees the right to equality before the law and equal protection of the laws within the territory of India?
- (a) Article 14
  - (b) Article 19
  - (c) Article 21
  - (d) Article 25
- 66.** Amara, a prominent human rights activist, has been detained by local authorities without any formal charges or legal proceedings. She was arrested while leading a peaceful protest demanding government accountability. Her family has not been able to see her or communicate with her since the arrest. Concerned about her welfare and the legality of the detention, her legal team decides to approach the court for her immediate release. What should be the legal course of action for the court based on the principles of ensuring timely protection and enforcement of fundamental rights?
- (a) The court should issue a writ of Habeas Corpus, demanding Amara's immediate presentation in court to determine the legality of her detention.
  - (b) The court should wait for a formal charge to be filed by local authorities before taking any action, as the arrest might have legal grounds that are not yet disclosed.
  - (c) The court should deny any immediate legal relief until Amara's legal team provides more evidence of her being in danger or harmed while detained.
  - (d) The court should advise Amara's legal team to file a complaint with the local police station instead of directly approaching the court.
- 67.** **Assertion (A):** The Indian Supreme Court's decision in *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India* (2018) decriminalized a section of law by striking down Section 377 of the IPC, demonstrating judicial activism in promoting inclusivity and human dignity.  
**Reasoning (R):** Judicial review allows courts to examine the constitutionality of laws, regulations, and
- government actions to ensure that they do not violate an individual's fundamental rights or contradict the Constitution.
- Is the assertion correct, and does the reasoning logically explain the assertion?
- (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.
- 68.** A new federal law mandates that all telecommunications companies must share user data with the government, without requiring a court order, to enhance national security. A group of concerned citizens argues that this violates their right to privacy. They seek judicial review to assess the law's constitutionality.
- What is the likely judicial procedure to follow based on the principle described?
- (a) The court will assess the national security benefits before deciding on the constitutionality of the law.
  - (b) The court will examine whether the law aligns with constitutional provisions regarding privacy and, if found in violation, may strike it down.
  - (c) The court will defer to the legislative intent of enhancing national security and uphold the law.
  - (d) The court will request amendments to the law to require court orders for data sharing.
- 69.** The passage states that "Article 32 of the Indian Constitution empowers individuals to approach the Supreme Court." Article 32 of the Constitution provides for:
- (a) The right to freedom of speech and expression
  - (b) The right to constitutional remedies
  - (c) The right to equality before the law
  - (d) The right to education
- Passage (Q.70-Q.74):** In an important judgment, the Supreme Court has held that a Judicial Magistrate has the duty to order police investigation under Section 156(3) of the Code of Criminal Procedure when the complaint prima facie shows the commission of cognizable offence and the facts indicate the need for a police investigation. Section 156 of Cr.P.C. states that "Police officer's power to investigate cognizable case (Definition: S.2. (c) (Cr.P.C.) Cognizable offence means an offence for which, and cognizable case means, a case in which, a police officer may, in accordance with the First Schedule or under any other law for the time being in force, arrest without warrant. Cognizable offences are Murder, Rape, Kidnapping, Dowry Death, Theft, Culpable Homicide, Waging War.).
- (1) Any officer in charge of a police station may, without the order of a Magistrate, investigate any cognizable case which a Court having jurisdiction over the local area within the limits of such station would have the power to inquire into or try under the provisions.
- (2) No proceeding of a police officer in any such case shall at any stage be called in question on the ground that the case was one which such officer was not empowered under this section to investigate.

(3) Any Magistrate empowered under Section 190(Cognizance of offences by Magistrates. (1) Subject to the provisions of this Chapter, any Magistrate of the first class, and any Magistrate of the second class specially empowered on this behalf under sub-section (2), may take cognizance of any offence- (a) upon receiving a complaint of facts which constitute such offence; (b) upon a police report of such facts; (c) upon information received from any person other than a police officer, or upon his own knowledge, that such offence has been committed. (2) The Chief Judicial Magistrate may empower any Magistrate of the second class to take cognizance under sub- section (1) of such offences as are within his competence to inquire into or try may order such an investigation as above- mentioned.)

Though Section 156(3) CrPC uses the word "may", giving discretion to the Magistrate to order police investigation, the Court held that such discretion must be exercised in a judicious manner. "It is true that the use of the word "may" implies that the Magistrate has discretion in directing the police to investigate or proceeding with the case as a complaint case. But this discretion cannot be exercised arbitrarily and must be guided by judicial reasoning", the Court held "Therefore, in such cases, where not only does the Magistrate find the commission of a cognizable offence alleged on a *prima facie* reading of the complaint but also such facts are brought to the Magistrate's notice which clearly indicates the need for police investigation, the discretion granted in Section 156(3) can only be read as it being the Magistrate's duty to order the police to investigate", the Court further stated.

A bench comprising Justices DY Chandrachud and JB Pardiwala further held that in sexual offences, the Courts should press upon police investigation. "Especially in cases alleging sexual harassment, sexual assault or any similar criminal allegation wherein the victim has possibly already been traumatized, the Courts should not further burden the complainant and should press upon the police to investigate. Due regard must be had to the fact that it is not possible for the complainant to retrieve important evidence regarding her complaint. It may not be possible to arrive at the truth of the matter in the absence of such evidence. The complainant would then be required to prove her case without being able to bring relevant evidence (which is potentially of great probative value) on record, which would be unjust".

**Source:** <https://www.livelaw.in/top-stories/s-1563-crpc-magistrate-should-order-police-investigation-when-cognizable-offence-sexual-offences-supreme-court-2022-livelaw-sc-673-206443>

**70.** Which of the following statement can be inferred from the passage?

- (a) The court is free to use its discretion regarding order of police investigation when complaint is filed for the commission of a cognizable offence.
- (b) The cognizable offences where there is possibility of victim of already having unsettling experiences, police investigation becomes important.
- (c) The judicial magistrate can order a police investigation if there is a commission of a crime which is serious as per his pre-liminary assessment.
- (d) Section 156 also contains provision where a magistrate has the power to investigate along with the police.

**71.** Ramesh filed a police complaint against Sameer on 27/06/2022 for murder of his wife which was committed on 24/06/2022. Sameer has borrowed money from Ramesh and there were several instances when there were altercations between them. The judicial magistrate ordered a police investigation in the case on the basis of Ramesh's condition. Sameer was in the city on the date on which Murder was committed and murder weapon was found 3 km from Sameer's house. Decide:

- (a) The order is not justified as onus must be on Ramesh to prove his case with relevant evidence,

the judicial magistrate was not based on correct judicial reasoning

- (b) The order is justified as Ramesh's condition was not favorable to burden him with the responsibility of proving his case with evidence.
- (c) The order is not justified as murder weapon was found 5 km away from Sameer's house.
- (d) The order is justified as Ramesh and Suresh were already having dispute before the commission of murder.

**72.** Mukesh was a pharmacist in a government hospital. As per some sources, he was always involved in corruption and selling medicines illegally which were provided by the government for free distribution. Gabbar Singh an activist, filed a police complaint against Mukesh and the police officer started an investigation under section 156 without the magistrate's order and started interrogating Mukesh. Mukesh challenged the actions of police officer in court. Which of the following will be correct?

- (a) The police officer's actions are justified as selling hospital medicines and corruption is an offence which is serious in nature.
- (b) The police officer's actions are permissible as per Section 156(2) pf Cr.Pc, as police officer's action cannot be questioned.

- (c) The police officer's action are not permissible as per Section 156 as it talks about cognizable offence.
- (d) The police officer's actions are justified as Mukesh was corrupt public servant, and public money must be saved.
- 73.** Reena and Amitabh were married in 2015. In 2020, Amitabh lost his job due to Covid-19. As a result, his family started facing difficulties. He asked Reena to ask her parents for some money, but Reena refused to do so. Later on, Amitabh started beating Reena for not being able to arrange money from her parents. One day, Reena was found dead in her bedroom. Shamshera, the first-class judicial magistrate of that area who used to reside in the same housing society ordered a police investigation into the case. Amitabh challenged the magistrate's order. Decide:
- (a) Amitabh's challenge will stand in court as the order was not based on a police complaint.
- (b) Amitabh's challenge will not stand in court as the order of the judicial magistrate is permissible if we look at Section 156.
- (c) Amitabh's challenge will stand in court as it is a case of 'Dowry death' and it is a cognizable offence.
- 74.** Vishal was a bank employee at NDFL Bank and lived a lavish lifestyle. However, his finances were continuously depleting. One day, a theft occurred at the bank, and some employees' mobile phones went missing. On that day, the bank's CCTV cameras were not working. Following an investigation, the police filed a complaint and summoned Vishal for interrogation without obtaining a judicial magistrate's order. Vishal refused to cooperate, arguing that the investigation had been initiated without the magistrate's authorization. Decide:
- (a) Vishal's contention was correct as a judicial magistrate's order is required as per Section 156(2).
- (b) Vishal's contention was correct as there were no facts in the case which directly indicated him.
- (c) Vishal's contention was correct as an only a judicial magistrate can order a police investigation under Section 156.
- (d) Vishal's contention was not correct as per Section 156 of the Cr.Pc.

**Passage (Q.75-Q.79):** In a landmark decision on the rights of prisoners, the Supreme Court on Tuesday directed states with remission policies to consider the premature release of prisoners even if they don't apply for remission beforehand. With exceptions for certain kinds of convicts, states are empowered to release prisoners before the completion of their sentence under the Bharatiya Nyaya Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS) and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (CrPC). A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan delivered this judgment in the case of "In Re: Policy Strategy for Grant of Bail". This is a suo motu case that the court itself instituted in 2021 to tackle issues related to overcrowding in prisons.

The power of remission refers to the power to reduce the period of a sentence for a person who has been found guilty of a crime. Section 473 of the BNSS (and Section 432 of the CrPC) grants state governments the power to remit sentences "at any time". States can also choose whether to impose conditions that the convict must meet for her sentence to be remitted, such as agreeing to report to a police officer at regular intervals. If any of these conditions are not fulfilled, the provision states that the states may cancel the remission granted and arrest the convict again without a warrant. This is separate from the power of the President and the Governor to remit sentences under Articles 72 and 161 of the Constitution respectively.

One of the restraints placed on the state government's power of remission can be found under Section 475 of the BNSS (and Section 433A of the CrPC). For convicts serving a life sentence and have been found guilty of an offence punishable by death, the state cannot release them from prison until at least 14 years imprisonment have been served.

The BNSS and the CrPC mention that the remission process starts "Whenever an application is made to the appropriate Government". However, the SC has now ruled that this application is not strictly necessary now that most states have remission policies which prescribe eligibility conditions.

- 75.** Raj, a convict serving a 10-year sentence for a non-violent offence, has not applied for remission. However, his state government has a remission policy that considers the premature release of prisoners based on good behavior and time served. The state decides to remit his sentence without him filing an application.

**Which of the following is the most legally sound conclusion based on the Supreme Court's recent ruling?**

- (a) The remission is valid because the Supreme Court has ruled that an application is not mandatory.

- (b) The remission is invalid because the CrPC and BNSS require an application to be filed first.
- (c) The remission is invalid unless Raj explicitly consents to it.
- (d) The remission is valid only if approved by the President or Governor under Articles 72 and 161 of the Constitution.
- 76.** Aarav, a convict granted remission under a state government policy, is required to report to the police every month as a condition of his release. After six months, he stops reporting. The state government now seeks to revoke his remission. **Which of the following actions can the state legally take?**
- (a) The state must first get approval from the High Court before revoking remission.
- (b) The state may cancel remission and re-arrest Aarav without a warrant.
- (c) The state must issue a fresh order of conviction before re-arresting Aarav.
- (d) The state can impose additional conditions but cannot revoke the remission once granted.
- 77.** The state of Maharashtra has several overcrowded prisons and is looking to decongest them. It identifies a large number of convicts who have served substantial portions of their sentences and are eligible for remission under state policy but have not applied. The state now seeks to release these prisoners proactively. **Based on the Supreme Court ruling, what should the state do?**
- (a) The state must still wait for individual applications before considering remission.
- 78.** The passage mentions that the Supreme Court took up the case on its own initiative as a **suo motu** case. What does the term **suo motu** mean in legal parlance?
- (a) A case initiated by a government authority
- (b) A case taken up by a court on its own without any petition
- (c) A case filed by an individual against the state
- (d) A case transferred from a lower court to a higher court
- 79.** Which of the following statements is **NOT** correct as per the passage?
- (a) The Supreme Court ruled that prisoners must apply for remission before being considered for premature release.
- (b) The power of remission allows state governments to reduce a convict's sentence under BNSS and CrPC.
- (c) If conditions imposed on a convict after remission are not met, the state may cancel the remission and re-arrest the convict without a warrant.
- (d) Convicts serving a life sentence for an offence punishable by death cannot be released before completing at least 14 years of imprisonment.

**Passage (Q.80-Q.84):** The doctrine of "Volenti Non Fit Inuria" plays a critical role. This Latin maxim, translating to "no injury is done to one who consents," essentially states that individuals who knowingly and willingly consent to activities bearing inherent risks are precluded from seeking damages for any resulting injury. This principle rests on the idea that consenting adults are aware of the risks involved and, thus, cannot hold others liable if harm occurs during such activities. The doctrine applies primarily to cases involving clear and informed consent, where the individual understands the nature of the risk and voluntarily agrees to accept it. Common scenarios include sports, medical procedures, and certain contractual agreements. In each instance, the person engaged has acknowledged and accepted the potential for harm, negating their ability to claim compensation later.

However, the application of "Volenti Non Fit Inuria" is not absolute. Legal exceptions occur when consent is obtained through deceptive means such as fraud, coercion, or misrepresentation, rendering the consent invalid. Moreover, the principle does not apply if the defendant's actions were illegal or if they acted with gross negligence exceeding what was consented to.

In sports, for example, players assume the normal risks associated with the game but do not consent to conduct that is outside the rules and could cause unexpected harm. Similarly, patients undergoing surgery give informed consent only for the risks disclosed to them prior to the operation, not for medical negligence or errors beyond those risks.

Furthermore, this legal doctrine is carefully evaluated in situations involving rescuers. When the plaintiff suffers an injury as a result of him doing an act which he knows is likely to cause harm to him but it is an act to rescue someone, then this defence will not apply and the defendant will be held liable. Therefore, they can seek redress for injuries sustained during the rescue. Rescuers act under public policy leading to encouraging rescue efforts.

"Volenti Non Fit Injuria" also intersects with public policy, which sometimes limits its application to ensure that individuals are not unduly pressured into accepting risks that are unreasonable or inherently dangerous.

- 80.** Which of the following best describes the core principle of "Volenti Non Fit Injuria"?
- (a) A person who voluntarily consents to an activity assumes all risks, including those caused by gross negligence.
  - (b) A person who knowingly and willingly accepts the risks inherent in an activity cannot claim damages for injuries arising from those risks.
  - (c) A person who consents to an activity can still sue if they suffer an injury, regardless of their knowledge of the risks.
  - (d) A person's consent to an activity is always valid, regardless of how it was obtained.
- 81.** In which of the following situations would the defence of "Volenti Non Fit Injuria" likely be rejected?
- (a) A boxer gets injured during a match due to a legal punch.
  - (b) A football player consents to playing and gets hurt due to a legal tackle.
  - (c) A rock climber, aware of the risks, falls due to faulty safety equipment provided by the organizer.
  - (d) A patient undergoing a routine surgery suffers an expected complication that was disclosed beforehand.
- 82.** Which of the following scenarios correctly applies the doctrine of *Volenti Non Fit Injuria*?
- (a) A boxer sustains a broken nose during a match after his opponent follows the rules of the sport.
- 83.** Which of the following best explains why *Volenti Non Fit Injuria* does not apply to rescuers?
- (a) Rescuers act under public policy, and forcing them to assume risks would discourage rescue efforts.
  - (b) Rescuers willingly take on risks, making them ineligible for compensation.
  - (c) Rescuers should anticipate dangers when intervening in emergencies.
  - (d) Rescuers are covered under the doctrine only if they have formal training.
- 84.** Which of the following statements best reflects an exception to the doctrine of *Volenti Non Fit Injuria*?
- (a) The plaintiff was deceived about the nature of the risk they were accepting.
  - (b) The plaintiff knowingly engaged in a dangerous activity and suffered an injury.
  - (c) The plaintiff assumed risk while participating in a regulated sport.
  - (d) The plaintiff was aware of workplace hazards but continued working under risky conditions.

### SECTION D: LOGICAL REASONING

**Directions (Q.85-Q.108):** Read the passages carefully and answer the questions.

**Passage (Q.85-Q.90):** Four years after the abrogation of Article 370, India's decision to host a G20 tourism meeting in Srinagar earlier this week was aimed at pushing the Narendra Modi government's narrative that all is normal in Jammu and Kashmir. That assertion itself is not new; but in this case, it was meant for a global audience. Yet it is a claim that is betrayed by facts on the ground. Prioritising political messaging over the actual G20 work is a risky endeavour with several downsides for India's ongoing presidency of the group of 20 major economies. In much of the world, Kashmir is viewed as a restive region. Hosting a G20 meeting there helps bolster India's position and sends the signal that most governments recognise and accept New Delhi's stance on the region. If such an event can help bring international tourism back to Kashmir after three decades of militancy and spur domestic and global investments in the region, that would be welcome. But all of this will only work out if the government's messaging holds up. Unfortunately, a large part of the narrative around Kashmir's supposed normalcy diverges from the reality.

In a democracy, the surest sign of normalcy is the ability to hold free and fair elections on schedule. Jammu and Kashmir has not had an elected legislative assembly since 2018. A more recent delimitation exercise has awarded a disproportionate number of seats in the next legislature to the Jammu region where Mr Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party is dominant, given Jammu's significantly lower population than that of Muslim-majority Kashmir. Investments in Jammu and Kashmir are yet to pick up. Even mainstream Kashmiri political parties face curbs. Journalists are routinely arrested and held under draconian laws. A beefed-up security presence ahead of the G20 meeting underscored the anxieties that New Delhi seeks to mask. Meanwhile, the choice of Kashmir as a G20 venue has created headlines that India would not have wished for, with officials from China, Turkey and Saudi Arabia skipping the Srinagar meeting along with peers from Egypt, a special invitee. But the impact could extend beyond this arc. India has pitched its G20 leadership as an opportunity to serve as a bridge in a fractured world, on issues ranging from the Ukraine war to climate change. That stance loses credibility when New Delhi itself plays divisive politics on a global stage.

- 85.** Based on the information provided, which of the following inferences about the objectives behind hosting the G20 meeting in Srinagar is most directly supported by the passage?
- (a) To diminish the global perception of Kashmir as a tumultuous region.
  - (b) To assert dominance over the Jammu region by the Bharatiya Janata Party.
  - (c) To foster a dialogue about the ongoing issues in Ukraine and climate change.
  - (d) To showcase the achievements in infrastructure and investment in Kashmir.
- 86.** Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the author's arguments?
- (a) An increase in domestic tourism in Kashmir was observed following the G20 meeting.
  - (b) Official reports from international human rights organizations have raised concerns about the curbing of political freedom and press in Jammu and Kashmir.
  - (c) The Narendra Modi government received praise from other G20 members for hosting the meeting in Srinagar.
- 87.** Which of the following, if true, would most weaken the author's arguments?
- (a) International investments in Jammu and Kashmir have significantly increased post the G20 meeting in Srinagar.
  - (b) The delimitation exercise in Jammu and Kashmir is widely considered unfair and biased towards the Jammu region by local and international observers.
  - (c) The Narendra Modi government has been applauded by various national and international human rights bodies for upholding democratic values in Jammu and Kashmir.
  - (d) Some national political parties in Jammu and Kashmir have voiced their agreement with the delimitation exercise conducted by the government.
- 88.** The passage mentions that certain countries skipped the G20 Srinagar meeting. Which of the following, if revealed, would most challenge the implication that the choice of the venue was the primary reason for their absence?

- (a) China, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia were involved in a separate diplomatic summit at the same time at the same venue.
- (b) Numerous countries expressed concerns over challenges posed by the venue.
- (c) Several countries frequently abstain from attending G20 tourism meetings irrespective of the location.
- (d) China, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia recently revised their international event participation policies.
- 89.** Which of the following inferences is most supported by the information presented in the passage?
- (a) The international community unanimously agrees with India's stance on Jammu and Kashmir, as evidenced by their participation in the G20 meeting.
- (b) The Narendra Modi government's efforts to normalize the situation in Jammu and Kashmir have been largely successful, which is indicated by their hosting of the G20 meeting.
- 90.** Which of the following is the author most likely to disagree with?
- (a) Hosting the G20 meeting in Srinagar was a valuable opportunity for India to showcase normalcy and attract investments to Jammu and Kashmir.
- (b) Human rights and freedom of press in Jammu and Kashmir need to be scrutinized and evaluated more objectively by international bodies.
- (c) The abrogation of Article 370 has led to significant improvement in the socio-political climate of Jammu and Kashmir.
- (d) The situation in Jammu and Kashmir is perceived differently by the international community, which views it as a restive region

**Passage (Q.91-Q.96):** The U.S. is close to breaching its \$31.4 trillion debt ceiling, the government-imposed limit on the total funds it can borrow to pay for existing legal obligations including interest on national debt, military salaries tax refunds and Medicare and Social Security. A breach, should it happen by the June 1 deadline, risks an economic debacle that could lead to a credit rating downgrade, with the knock-on effect of soaring interest rates and tanking stock markets. This in turn would have a deleterious impact on retirement and savings accounts, the pace of business activity, and therefore on employment. With the global economy limping out of the COVID-19 recession scenario, a U.S. federal government debt default would represent a shock to the financial system and a still-fragile recovery across many economies may be compromised. Matters could worsen if the U.S. federal government goes into its 22nd shutdown and government employees are laid-off. In an attempt to coax lawmakers into cooperation and hammer out an agreement to raise or suspend the debt ceiling, the White House put out its calculations of the damage that would result: 8.3 million jobs lost, 6.1% drop in annualised growth of real GDP, and unemployment at 5%.

At the heart of this fiscal quagmire is a lack of bipartisan consensus on how to avoid repeating cycles of national economic stress stemming from the debt ceiling itself. Some analysts observe that the ceiling is a useful device for the U.S. government to tie its own hands and submit to a credible commitment to limit public spending, especially as it requires legislative consent, and with it, some congressional oversight authority. Others argue that the ceiling is an "antiquated mechanism" that places unwarranted restrictions on robust fiscal policy, including on the need to meet previously legislated fiscal obligations. Either way, the deeper reason to worry about the debt ceiling bringing the economy to the "point of default every few years" is that the ceiling readily serves as a political tool for the opposition party to gain leverage over the fiscal priorities of the administration and hobble its plan to deliver on campaign promises. A major debt payment is due on June 15. The government could make do with the ever-shrinking fiscal wiggle room until then. However, House of Representatives Speaker Kevin McCarthy, a Republican, would be wise to realise that putting partisan goals and personal popularity ahead of the greater good will not be something that the American middle class will forgive easily in the 2024 presidential election, especially if this brinkmanship ends up causing a painfully intractable economic crisis.

- 91.** The statement "Some analysts observe that the ceiling is a useful device for the U.S. government to tie its own hands and submit to a credible commitment to limit public spending, especially as it requires legislative consent, and with it, some congressional oversight authority" assumes that
- (a) In absence of debt ceiling, the administration will make spending decisions on the expected lines.
- (b) The current public spending by the administration hasn't been on the expected lines.

- (c) In absence of debt ceiling, the public-spending decisions by the administration may become questionable.  
(d) The opposition authority over the administration is for the benefit of the administration.
- 92.** Which of the following situations is most similar to the political dynamics described between the opposition party and its use of the debt ceiling as a leveraging tool?  
(a) A board of directors using company profits to dictate company policies.  
(b) A junior sports team coach using team selection to influence club decisions.  
(c) Opposition in a parliament using a budget proposal to negotiate policies.  
(d) A department head withholding project approval until their conditions are met.
- 93.** Which of the following is assumed by the author while suggesting “House of Representatives Speaker Kevin McCarthy, a Republican, would be wise to realise that putting partisan goals and personal popularity ahead of the greater good will not be something that the American middle class will forgive easily in the 2024 presidential election, especially if this brinkmanship ends up causing a painfully intractable economic crisis”  
(a) The middle class values fiscal responsibility over partisan politics.  
(b) Election outcomes are primarily determined by the middle class's sentiment.  
(c) Economic downturns have a significant impact on the middle class's livelihood.  
(d) The middle class closely follows political decisions regarding the debt ceiling.
- 94.** Which of the following can be concluded from the information present in the passage?
- (a) The debt ceiling is an ineffective mechanism as it has no impact on fiscal policy or congressional oversight authority.  
(b) The U.S. debt ceiling, irrespective of its criticisms, acts as a political tool leveraged by the party not in control of the White House.  
(c) The potential breach of the U.S. debt ceiling poses no major threat to the global economy or financial system.  
(d) The majority of analysts unequivocally support the existence of the debt ceiling due to its role in limiting public spending.
- 95.** Based on the information in the passage, which of the following inferences can be reasonably made?  
(a) The author believes that the debt ceiling is an ineffective tool for fiscal responsibility.  
(b) Kevin McCarthy, the House Speaker, is not intentionally pushing the country toward an economic crisis for political gains.  
(c) The author assumes that a rise or suspension of the debt ceiling would eliminate all risks of economic crises.  
(d) The author infers that using the debt ceiling as a political tool has potential to harm the economy.
- 96.** Which of the following statements is the author most likely to disagree with?  
(a) The debt ceiling serves as a useful tool for limiting public spending and maintaining fiscal responsibility.  
(b) The lack of bipartisan consensus contributes to repeating cycles of national economic stress stemming from the debt ceiling.  
(c) If the U.S. federal government goes into a shutdown, it could exacerbate the economic consequences of a debt ceiling breach.  
(d) Using the debt ceiling as a political tool poses no significant risk to the U.S. economy.

**Passage (Q.97-Q.102):** In the West, the sceptre has been a part of royal regalia right from the time of the Greek and Mesopotamian civilisations. In countries like Norway, Sweden and the UK, the royal sceptre is still in vogue. It was seen as recently as in September 2022 when it was placed on the coffin of Queen Elizabeth II, and again earlier this month in the hands of King Charles at the time of his coronation. In the Indian civilisational tradition, monarchs and kings were never considered as the supreme authority. Irrespective of whatever regalia were used, like crowns or sceptres or orbs, the royals were always reminded by the court priests at the time of the coronation that Dharma, the ethical-spiritual order, is the only supreme authority.

As per the Indian coronation rituals, the king, after formally ascending the throne, would proclaim three times: “Adandyosmi”, nobody can punish me. The priest would then come forward with his sacred sceptre, Dharma Danda, gently pat on the king's crown and proclaim three times that “Dharma Dandyosi” — meaning “Dharma will punish you”. The Sengol represented that tradition of the Dharma Danda. In 1947, it did not merely symbolise the transfer of power from the British to Nehru. Power was first taken over from Lord Mountbatten through a ritual by Srila Sri Kumaraswamy

Thambiran, the second in command of the Thiruvaduthurai Adheenam in Mayiladuthurai in Tamil Nadu who brought the specially designed Sengol with him for that purpose.

The Sengol is back in the news thanks to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decision to install it in the new Parliament building next to the Speaker's podium. The 1947-vintage silver Sengol coated with gold, lying in Ananda Bhavan Museum in Prayagraj, is being brought back for the purpose.

- 97.** Which of the following, if true, would most strengthen the author's argument that Sengol to be installed in New Parliament Building is part of part of a significant ritual during the transfer of power from the British to Nehru?
- (a) The design of the Sengol was inspired by British royal sceptres.
  - (b) The Sengol meant for the transfer of power has no engravings suggesting it.
  - (c) Srila Sri Kumaraswamy Thambiran had a documented history of participating in ceremonial transfers of power.
  - (d) The Sengol was initially intended to be a decorative artifact for Nehru's residence.
- 98.** Each of the following weakens the author's argument except that
- (a) The Sengol was crafted after the transfer of power from the British to Nehru.
  - (b) Nehru explicitly mentioned in his memoirs that the Sengol was a decorative item.
  - (c) The Thiruvaduthurai Adheenam has no record of Srila Sri Kumaraswamy Thambiran's participation in any transfer of power ceremony.
  - (d) The Sengol was previously on display in a museum dedicated to British-Indian history.
- 99.** Given the usage and symbolism of the Sengol as described in the passage, which of the following actions, if taken, would be most consistent with the traditions surrounding the Sengol?
- (a) A newly-elected president in a country with a strong democratic tradition places the Sengol on a table during their inauguration ceremony.
  - (b) A leader of a revolutionary movement in a country carries the Sengol during peace negotiations as a symbol of the power they are seeking to transfer.
  - (c) A king in a country with a monarchical tradition holds the Sengol during their coronation ceremony, asserting their supreme authority.
  - (d) A court priest in India presents the Sengol to a king at a coronation ceremony, reminding the king that Dharma will punish him.
- 100.** What is the particular significance and procedure surrounding the use of the Sengol during the transfer of power from the British to Nehru in 1947?
- (a) Srila Sri Kumaraswamy Thambiran, the first in command of the Thiruvaduthurai Adheenam in Mayiladuthurai, Tamil Nadu, used the Sengol to symbolically receive power from Lord Mountbatten.
  - (b) The Sengol was used in a special coronation-like ceremony wherein Nehru proclaimed "Adandyosmi" three times, symbolizing his immunity from punishment.
  - (c) Srila Sri Kumaraswamy Thambiran, the second in command of the Thiruvaduthurai Adheenam in Mayiladuthurai, Tamil Nadu, brought the Sengol to receive power from Lord Mountbatten in a ritual.
  - (d) The Sengol was used by Lord Mountbatten to tap Nehru's crown thrice, signifying the transfer of power under the proclamation of "Dharma Dandyosi."
- 101.** Based on the passage, what can be inferred about the purpose of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decision to install the Sengol in the new Parliament building?
- (a) The decision aims to undermine the historical significance of the Sengol and assert a new symbol of power.
  - (b) The intention is to symbolize a departure from the Indian tradition of acknowledging Dharma as the supreme authority.
  - (c) The move seeks to elevate the status of the Speaker by positioning the Sengol next to the Speaker's podium.
  - (d) This is intended as a symbolic gesture to remember and honor India's rich historical and cultural past, particularly the tradition of Dharma as the supreme authority.
- 102.** If the sceptre in western traditions is to the coronation of a new king or queen, then the Sengol in Indian traditions is to \_\_\_\_\_.
- (a) The abolition of monarchy in India.
  - (b) The birth of a new heir to the throne.
  - (c) The ceremonial transfer of power in the political realm.
  - (d) The installation of a new court priest.

**Passage (Q.103-Q.108):** U.S. officials are whispering to the press that the Ukrainians aren't performing up to snuff in Europe's bloodiest fighting in decades. What an unseemly exercise: The Biden crowd withholds the heavy firepower the Ukrainians need to defeat a Russian invasion, and then laments that Kyiv isn't retaking enough territory fast enough.

The Ukrainians are struggling to break through heavily fortified Russian defenses. There are lots of complex minefields, dragon's teeth, barbed wire, trenches. Ukrainian equipment is getting chewed up by Russian mines.

The offensive is still in early days, and Ukraine hasn't committed most of its troops trained by the West. But U.S. officials are telling press outlets without attribution that the Ukrainians aren't excelling at combined arms.

But no Western military would execute this offensive without controlling the skies. Ukrainian troops are vulnerable to Russian attack, and they lack the air power to support ground troops and go on offense against Russian positions without risking awful losses.

F-16 fighters would be a big improvement. Russian surface-to-air missile sites "can be lucrative targets" for F-16 pilots, as retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Bruce Wright wrote in February. Long-range precision weapons could help "destroy Russian air defense systems near the borders, and kill Russian tanks, artillery, and dug-in positions in the Eastern part of Ukraine."

Western allies are supposed to start training Ukrainian pilots to fly the F-16 next month. But the truth is Ukraine could have had such pilots up and flying by now. The U.S. has known from the start that Ukraine's Soviet-era jet fleet isn't equipped to compete with Russia's larger and more advanced force. The Ukrainians have nonetheless used U.S. anti-radiation missiles in ingenious ways, eluding Russian air defenses to achieve pockets of air superiority.

These pages suggested putting Ukrainian pilots in U.S. flight training programs in April 2022. Yet the Biden Administration hesitated about transferring even some rickety Polish MiG-29s. In February of this year, President Biden said Ukraine "doesn't need" F-16s, only to decide three months later that the U.S. would support an allied effort to train Ukrainian pilots.

Alas, don't assume the U.S. has the will to follow through on the jets. Gen. Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, reminded reporters on Tuesday that the jets are expensive. He said a large fleet would take years—"years to train the pilots, years to do the maintenance and sustainment, years to generate that financial degree of support to do that. You're talking way more billions of dollars than has already been generated."

Yet offering F-16s is far less expensive than a Ukrainian defeat that draws the U.S. deeper into Europe's problems. The F-16 is in service in militaries across the world, with a broad base of contractors that can help set up maintenance support. The bill for this indecision is coming due, and the tragedy is more Ukrainian casualties and a more fraught counteroffensive. The dithering also erodes political support at home, as more Americans start to wonder what the U.S. is accomplishing. Mr. Biden can still decide that a long, ugly quagmire isn't what the U.S. wants in Ukraine.

**103.** Which of the following presents the paradox presented in the passage?

- (a) Denying Ukraine's demands of necessary equipment because of cost it would take for the US
- (b) Hesitation of the US in providing necessary equipment to Ukraine despite criticizing them for underperformance.
- (c) The belief that Ukraine is going to give a tough fight to Russia despite old equipment it has.
- (d) Though Ukraine needs necessary equipment to sustain offensive against Russia, it doesn't have ability for the same.

**104.** Which of the following options best describes a potential bias of the author in the passage?

- (a) The author is biased against the Ukrainian military's strategic capabilities.
- (b) The author has a bias favoring the allocation of more U.S. resources to Ukraine.

(c) The author is biased against Russia, portraying them as the sole aggressor.

(d) The author is biased in favor of U.S. intervention in European conflicts.

**105.** Which of the following options could best serve as a counterargument to the author's assertion that the U.S. should provide more substantial military support to Ukraine?

- (a) The risk of escalating tensions with Russia is too high.
- (b) Ukraine's military is not capable of putting a tough fight against Russia.
- (c) The U.S. has already provided sufficient support to Ukraine.
- (d) If Ukraine is defeated by Russia, it would be because of its own follies.

- 106.** Which of the following statements best strengthens the author's argument in the passage?
- (a) The U.S. has previously supplied F-16 fighters to other countries.
  - (b) Ukrainian forces have proven adaptable with other U.S. supplied military equipment.
  - (c) Supplying F-16s would require substantial changes in U.S. foreign policy.
  - (d) Other Western allies are also hesitant to provide military aid to Ukraine.
- 107.** Which of the following assertions, if true, would most weaken the author's argument in the passage?
- (a) Ukrainian troops already have sophisticated weaponry.
  - (b) The U.S. has consistently supplied Ukraine with ample financial support for warfare.
- 108.** Which of the following is a necessary assumption made by the author in the passage for his arguments to hold?
- (a) The Biden administration is intentionally undermining Ukrainian efforts.
  - (b) The F-16s and superior air power can turn the tide of the conflict.
  - (c) The Ukrainians have no other potential sources of advanced aircraft.
  - (d) The U.S. is solely responsible for the outcome of the Ukrainian conflict.

**SECTION - E : QUANTITATIVE TECHNIQUES**

**Directions (Q.109-Q.114):** Mr. Rohan is a software engineer working at a reputed IT firm. He efficiently manages his finances while supporting his wife and a daughter. His total monthly income consists of a basic salary of Rs. 22,500/- along with a 10% house rent allowance. Being financially savvy, he maintains a strict budget to track expenses. Out of his total monthly income, he spends 18% on groceries, 12% on house rent, 15% on transportation, 28% on his daughter's education, 8% on medical expenses, and he saves the remaining amount diligently.

Based on the above information, answer the following questions:

- 109.** If the expenditure on groceries and transportation rises by 20% due to inflation, what will be the new percentage of savings in the same monthly salary?  
 (a) 14%                         (b) 12.4%  
 (c) 16.8%                         (d) 13.6%
- 110.** How much total money does Mr. Rohan spend on groceries and transportation?  
 (a) Rs. 7425                         (b) Rs. 8075.5  
 (c) Rs. 5400                             (d) Rs. 8167.5
- 111.** How much does Mr. Rohan pay as house rent?  
 (a) Rs. 2700                             (b) Rs. 2500  
 (c) Rs. 2970                             (d) Rs. 2250
- 112.** What is the difference between his monthly expenditure on medical expenses and his daughter's education?  
 (a) Rs. 4500                             (b) Rs. 5000  
 (c) Rs. 5200                             (d) Rs. 4950
- 113.** Which of the following is true regarding Mr. Rohan's financial management?  
 (a) The total amount spent on education, transportation, and medical expenses is less than the total amount spent on groceries, house rent, and savings.  
 (b) The total amount spent on groceries, medical expenses, and education equals the total amount spent on house rent, transportation, and savings.  
 (c) The total amount spent on savings, medical expenses, and transportation is less than the total amount spent on house rent, groceries, and education.  
 (d) None of the above
- 114.** How much money remains for other expenses after house rent and savings?  
 (a) Rs. 17077.5                         (b) Rs. 16650  
 (c) Rs. 16272.5                         (d) Rs. 17750

**Directions (Q.115-Q.120):** In the city of Varanasi, a report on gender pay disparity highlights significant income gaps in various industries. According to the latest data, men earn around 78% of total labor wages, while women contribute only 22%. A female worker in the handloom sector earns Rs. 85 less per day than her male counterpart. On average, a male artisan earns Rs. 475 per day, while a female artisan earns Rs. 390 per day. The wage gap varies across states. In Gujarat, a male worker earns Rs. 800 daily, while a female worker earns Rs. 600, leading to a wage gap of Rs. 200. In Madhya Pradesh, the wage gap is 45% (i.e., a male worker earns 45% more than a female worker), whereas in Odisha, the gap is only 12%. Despite efforts to bridge the gap, gender-based income disparity remains a pressing issue, particularly among self-employed individuals, where men earn 3.2 times as compared to women as of 2024.

Based on the above information, answer the following questions:

- 115.** If the earnings gap for self-employed individuals was 2.7 times in 2023 and increased to 3.2 times in 2024, what is the percentage increase in the earnings gap?  
 (a) 18.5%                                 (b) 16.2%  
 (c) 19%                                     (d) 20%
- 116.** Which of the following statements is incorrect?  
 (a) The wage gap in Madhya Pradesh is less than in Gujarat.  
 (b) The wage gap in Madhya Pradesh is greater than in Odisha.  
 (c) Both (A) and (B).  
 (d) None of the above.
- 117.** If men working in the handloom industry in Madhya Pradesh earn Rs. 520 on average, how much do women earn in the region?  
 (a) Rs. 358 approx.  
 (b) Rs. 310 approx.  
 (c) Rs. 350 approx.  
 (d) None of these.
- 118.** Which region offers the least wages to women in any industry?  
 (a) Odisha  
 (b) Madhya Pradesh  
 (c) Gujarat  
 (d) Cannot be determined.

- 119.** If the daily income of a female self-employed worker in 2024 is Rs. 320, what is the daily income of a male self-employed worker on average in 2024?
- (a) Rs. 1024                    (b) Rs. 960  
(c) Rs. 1100                    (d) Rs. 640.
- 120.** If a female casual worker earns Rs. 190 per hour, what is the hourly wage of a male casual worker, given that male casual workers earn 45% more?
- (a) Rs. 384.5                    (b) Rs. 275.5  
(c) Rs. 230                      (d) Cannot be determined.

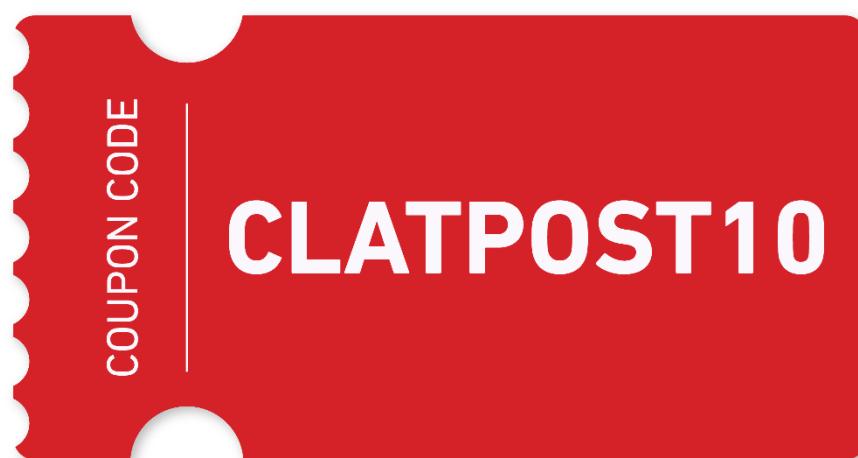
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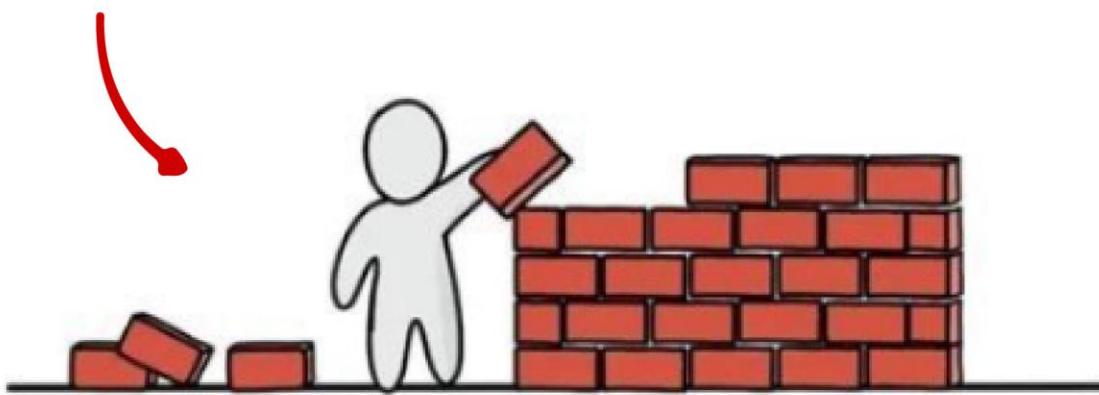


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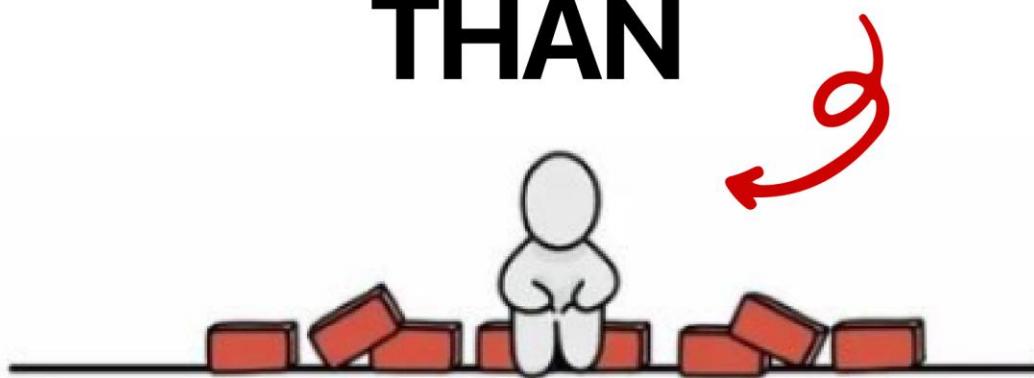


# CONTINOUS IMPROVEMENT



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