

Daily Current Affairs





4
The Hindu



1
**PIB, PRS & Other
newspaper**



2
**The Indian
Express**



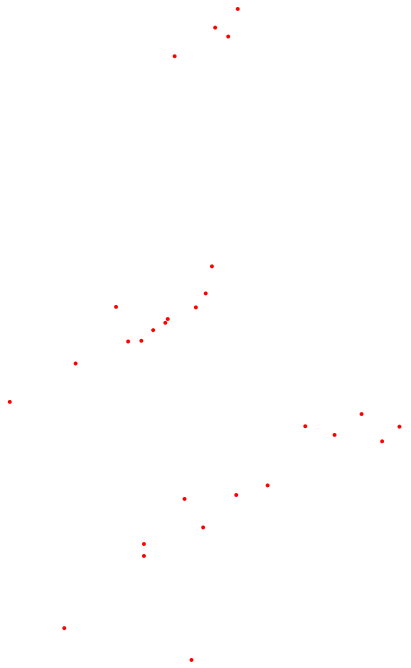
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2
**Financial
Express**



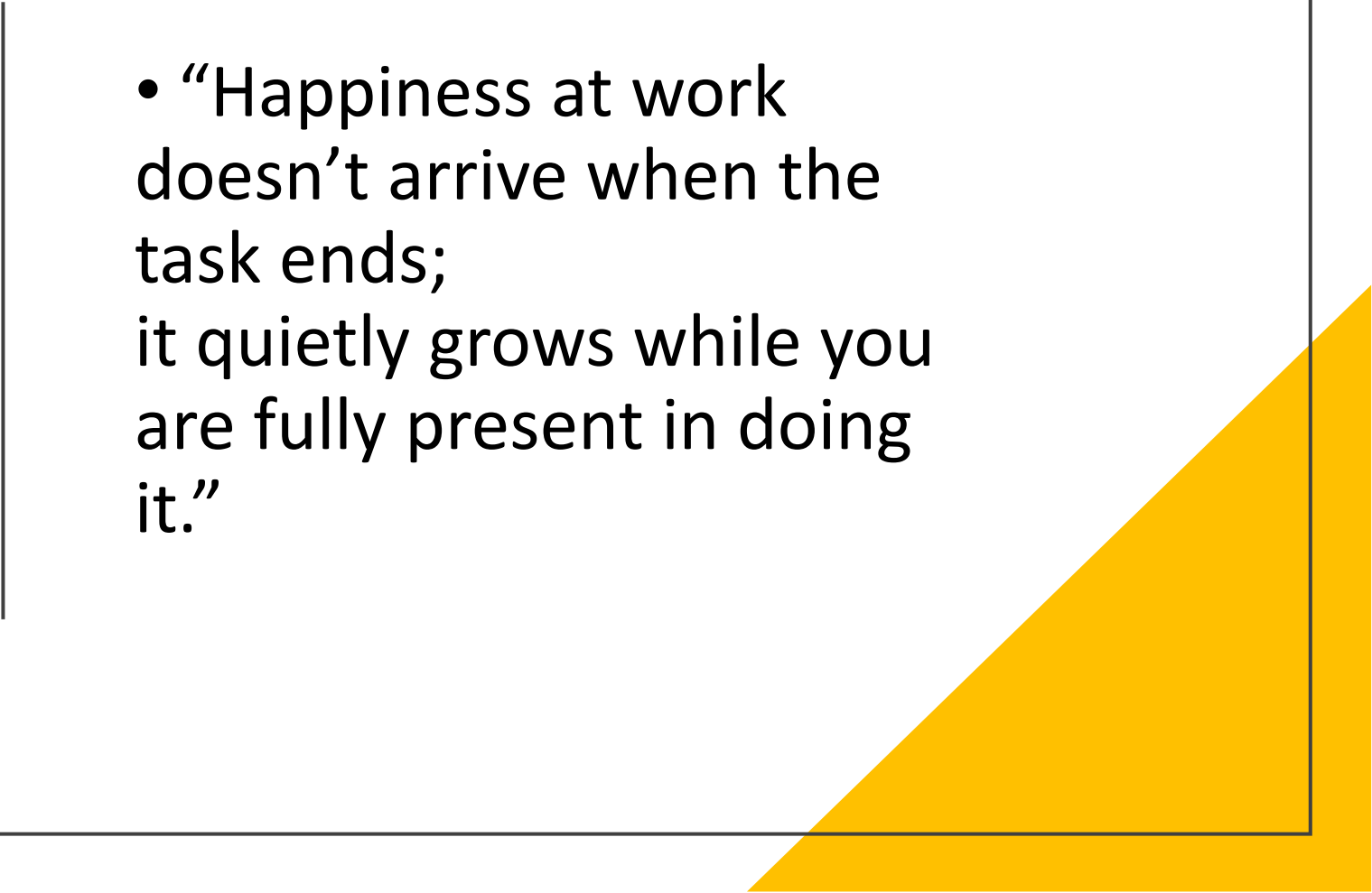
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10 MCQ QUIZ

- 
- “Happiness at work doesn’t arrive when the task ends; it quietly grows while you are fully present in doing it.”

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Swift executions of protesters likely: Iran

If we have something to do, we have to do it quickly, declares head of Iran's judiciary

2,571 people have been killed in crackdown on protesters by Tehran: U.S.-based rights group

Trump warns of consequences to executions by Iran; we will take very strong action, he says

Associated Press
DUBAI

The head of Iran's judiciary defied a warning from U.S. President Donald Trump and signalled on Wednesday that there would be swift trials and executions ahead for those detained in nationwide protests.

The comments from Iran's judiciary chief Gholamhossein Mohseni-Ejei come as activists had warned hangings of those detained could come soon. A bloody security force crackdown on one of the biggest anti-government protests Iran has seen in years has already killed at least 2,571 people, the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency reported.

"If we want to do a job, we should do it now. If we want to do something, we have to do it quickly," Mr. Mohseni-Ejei said in a vi-

deo shared by Iranian state television. "If it becomes late, two months, three months later, it doesn't have the same effect."

His comments stand as a direct challenge to Mr. Trump, who warned Iran about executions in an interview with CBS aired on Tuesday. "We will take very strong action," Mr. Trump said. "If they do such a thing, we will take very strong action." "We don't want to see what's happening in Iran happen. And you know, if they want to have protests, that's one thing, when they start killing thousands of people, and now you're telling me about hanging – we'll see how that works out for them. It's not going to work out good," he said.

Mr. Trump has repeatedly warned that the U.S. may take military action over the killing of peaceful protesters, just months after it bombed Iranian nu-



A funeral was held for security personnel killed during protests, in Tehran on Wednesday. REUTERS

clear sites during a 12-day war launched by Israel in June 2025.

The Islamic Republic on Wednesday held a mass funeral of some 100 security force members killed in the demonstrations after authorities earlier said it would be 300. Tens of thousands of mourners attended, holding Iranian flags and photos of Su-

preme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The caskets, covered in Iranian flags, stood stacked at least three high. Red and white roses and framed photographs of people who were killed covered them.

People elsewhere in Iran remained fearful in the streets. Plainclothes security forces still milled around some neighbour-

Jaishankar speaks to Iranian Foreign Minister

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Wednesday spoke to Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi and discussed the current unrest in Iran. The conversation took place hours after the

Ministry of External Affairs "advised" Indian citizens to avoid travelling to Iran. The Embassy of India in Tehran also urged Indian nationals to leave the country by any available means of transport.

FULL REPORT ON
» PAGE 4

hoods, though anti-riot police and members of the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard's all-volunteer Basij force appeared to have been sent back to their barracks.

One Arab Gulf diplomat said that governments in the region had been discouraging the Trump administration from launching a war now with Iran,

fearing "unprecedented consequences" for the region that could explode into a "full-blown war".

Meanwhile, activists said on Wednesday that Starlink was offering free service in Iran. The satellite internet service has been key in getting around an internet shutdown launched by the government on January 8. Iran be-

gan allowing people to call out internationally on Tuesday via their mobile phones, but calls from people outside the country into Iran remain blocked.

"We can confirm that the free subscription for Starlink terminals is fully functional," said Mehdi Yahyanejad, a Los Angeles-based activist who has helped get the units into Iran. "We tested it using a newly activated Starlink terminal inside Iran."

Security service personnel also apparently were searching for Starlink dishes, as people in northern Tehran reported authorities raiding buildings with satellite dishes. While satellite television dishes are illegal, many in the capital have them in homes, and officials broadly had given up on enforcing the law in recent years.

EDITORIAL
» PAGE 8

Exam (Year)	Exam date	Exact question	Answer
UPSC CSE Prelims GS Paper-I (2024)	16 June 2024	<p>Statement-I: There is instability and worsening security situation in the Sahel region. Statement-II: There have been military takeovers/coups d'état in several countries of the Sahel region in the recent past. Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements? (a) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II explains Statement-I (b) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct, but Statement-II does not explain Statement-I (c) Statement-I is correct, but Statement-II is incorrect (d) Statement-I is incorrect, but Statement-II is correct</p>	(a)
UPSC CSE Prelims GS Paper-I (2025)	25 May 2025	<p>India is one of the founding members of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), a multimodal transportation corridor, which will connect (a) India to Central Asia to Europe via Iran (b) India to Central Asia via China (c) India to South-East Asia through Bangladesh and Myanmar (d) India to Europe through Azerbaijan</p>	(a) (via Iran)

IPKF soldiers finally receiving their due recognition: Rajnath

Sanjib Ghosh
NEW DELHI

Nearly four decades after India's peacekeeping mission in Sri Lanka, soldiers of Operation Pawan are finally receiving their due recognition, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Wednesday, as he paid tribute to the courage and sacrifices of the Indian Peacekeeping Force on the occasion of the 10th Armed Forces Veterans Day.

Addressing veterans in New Delhi, Mr. Singh recalled the extraordinary courage displayed by the Indian forces deployed in the island nation as part of the IPKF, noting that many laid down their lives in the line of duty.

He said that their valour and sacrifice have earned them the respect they deserved at the time of the operation.

"Their valour, sacrifices and struggles did not receive the respect they deserved at that time. Today, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, our government is openly acknowledging the contributions of the peacekeeping soldiers of Operation Pawan at every level,"



Rajnath Singh

the Defence Minister said. The Minister recalled that the Prime Minister had paid tribute to the fallen soldiers at the IPKF Memorial during his visit to Sri Lanka in 2018, and added that the contributions of the force are now being duly recognised at the National War Memorial in New Delhi.

Mr. Singh attended the match between the National Capital Region, which saw the participation of around 2,500 veterans from Delhi and the National Capital Region.

Paying tribute to former servicemen, Mr. Singh described veterans as the living pillars of national consciousness, symbols of collective courage and an inspiration for future generations.

He said that their valour and sacrifice have earned them the respect they deserved at the time of the operation.

Jaishankar speaks to Iranian Foreign Minister amid unrest

India reiterates advisory against travel to Iran in near future: Embassy in Tehran urges Indians and persons of Indian origin to leave amid continuing protests or reach out to the mission for help

Kajal Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar spoke to Iranian Foreign Minister Keyumars Abolmohammadi and discussed the current unrest in Iran as well as the growing regional tensions in West Asia. The conversation took place hours after the Ministry of External Affairs "strongly advised" Indian citizens to avoid travelling to Iran "until further notice". The Embassy of India in Tehran also urged Indian nationals and persons of Indian origin to leave the country by any available means of transport. The ongoing commercial airlines, and asked their Indian-based family members to register them on the embassy helpline page.

Received a call from Iranian Foreign Minister Keyumars Abolmohammadi, Mr. Jaishankar was expected to travel to India this month as the two countries had been contemplating events in the coming months, with 2026 marking the 75th anniversary of the establishment of India's diplomatic ties.

Jaishankar's visit was confirmed for this week, though a final announcement from the Indian side did not take place as the internal situation escalated in Iran. India has been in talks to ensure the safe return of its citizens and the confrontation between the regime in Tehran and anti-government protesters.

The emergency contact list of its citizens and the Indian Embassy, shared through a public notice, included phone numbers of its Indian citizens and PIOs as well as the Indian Embassy in Tehran, the Ministry of External Affairs said.



People attend the funeral of the security personnel killed in the recent protests in Tehran.

President Donald Trump threatened Iran's government and announced a 25% tariff for any country that wishes to trade with the U.S. while maintaining trade ties with Iran, their strategic partners, India and Iran have important common interests and security interests, which have also come under pressure following Mr. Trump's latest tariff announcement.

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area or demonstrations, stay in contact with the Indian Embassy in Iran and monitor local media for any developments," the Embassy of India in Tehran said, urging all Indian nationals carrying passports and other identification documents to contact the embassy for assistance.

When in need Indian nationals were also advised to register with the Indian Embassy at indianembtehran@gmail.com or by phone at +98-91281 09115, +98-91281 09115, +98-91281 09115.

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Vulture Safe Zones will be created in Tamil Nadu, State govt. tells Madras HC

Mohamed Ibrahimullah S.
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu Forest Department has informed the Madras High Court on Wednesday that it has begun the process of establishing Vulture Safe Zones (VSZs) in the state in order to create a safe environment for the birds that is free from threats, especially the use of toxic veterinary non-steroidal and anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), the department said to treat cattle, which have been a major cause of vulture mortality.

In a status report placed before the first Division Bench of Chief Justice Madan Mohan Lalit and Justice G. Aravindhan, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Wildlife Warden Ramesh Kumar Dogra said, the first of the VSZs will be established around Moyar River Valley in the Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve, as per the 'Vision Document for Vulture Conservation in Tamil Nadu 2025-30'.

The status report was filed in response to a petition filed by the Tamil Nadu Forest Department.



The first of the Vulture Safe Zones will be established around Moyar River Valley in the Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve, Nilgiris.

Nilgiris, Gudalur, Coimbatore, and Erode, besides the department's headquarters in Vandavasi. "Instructions have been issued to the Nilgiris Divisional Forest Officer to take action and to create and maintain a map, duly marking the vulture nesting and habitat usage sites and for monitoring carcass hotspots, which meet our conditions for declaring an VSZ," Mr. Dogra said.

Mr. Dogra said strict vigil will be maintained to ensure the safety of the birds, and the use of the banned NSAIDs will be strictly monitored. He also said that the VSZs will be established around Moyar River Valley in the Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve, as per the 'Vision Document for Vulture Conservation in Tamil Nadu 2025-30'.

The status report was filed in response to a petition filed by the Tamil Nadu Forest Department.

Lokpal scraps complaint against BJP MP Dubey as 'frivolous'

Prasanna Kumar
NEW DELHI

Anti-corruption ombudsman Lokpal has dismissed a graft complaint against BJP MP Nishant Dubey and termed the allegations as "frivolous" and "vexatious".

In its 134-page order, the Lokpal pointed out that the complainant — former MP officer Anilash Thakur — had failed to make out any case to persuade it to proceed against Mr. Dubey regarding the allegation of acquisition of disproportionate assets that the known source of income.

"The allegations made against RPS (Reserve Public Servant) are frivolous and vexatious," the Lokpal said, adding that the complainant indulging in whataboutery, said the order issued by the Lokpal bench headed by its Chairperson Justice A.M. Khanwilkar. Lucknow-based Mr. Thakur, who also the national president of Asad Adhikari Sena party, had in May last year filed a complaint against Mr. Dubey alleging acquisition of disproportionate assets by him.

The Lokpal said that the complainant indulging in whataboutery, said the order issued by the Lokpal bench headed by its Chairperson Justice A.M. Khanwilkar. Lucknow-based Mr. Thakur, who also the national president of Asad Adhikari Sena party, had in May last year filed a complaint against Mr. Dubey alleging acquisition of disproportionate assets by him.

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29 Maoists give up arms in second mass surrender event in a week in Sukma

Shubhomoy Sikdar
RAIPUR

In the second mass surrender event in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district over the past week, 29 people, all active as frontal wings of the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist), surrendered to the police.

On January 7, 26 Maoists had surrendered in Sukma, one of the seven districts of the Bastar region.

The armed cadres of the area, including the Dandara Division, along with their support system, has now been destroyed, said Sukma Superintendent of Police Ratan Chauhan.

"The establishment of a security camp in Gogunda has changed the landscape of the area. After the mass surrender of 29 Maoists, the remaining area remains now in the final stages of becoming Naxal-free," he added.

The benefits of the government's welfare and development are also effectively reaching the area, he said, adding that the Maoists are now in the final stages of becoming Naxal-free.

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Govt. warns Meitei, Kuki-Zo groups against flouting pact

Vijaya Singh
NEW DELHI

After a two-day review of operations in Meitei and Kuki-Zo insurgent groups, officials from the Union Home Ministry (MHA) said the Manipur government has warned the outfits that they will face action if they violate ground rules, a senior government official told *The Hindu*.

The groups were asked to check extortion and confine their cadres in their designated camps.

On Tuesday, a peace monitoring committee chaired by Manipur Chief Secretary Purnim Kumar God reviewed the terms of the ceasefire agreement with the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), in Imphal. The UNLF is the official armed wing of the Meitei group.

The official said that UNLF-P representatives who attended the meeting were asked to return to their designated police weapons by the end of April.

On Wednesday, in Guwahati, in a public meeting, the Ministry's North Eastern Region (NER) officials said that they will face action if they violate ground rules, a senior government official told *The Hindu*.

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No demand for sharing source code of phones: industry body

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

MAT, an industry group representing smartphone manufacturers, has said that there was no demand for the Centre for Data Security (CDS) to share source code to be disclosed and government updates. MAT's 2023 security standard document — which was released last week — contained this requirement was amended in the middle of last year to remove the language.

The demand that the Centre's rebuttal of a news agency's reporting. The supposed demand, which was reported by the news agency Reuters over the weekend, cited a 2023 document by the Na-

tional Centre for Communication Security, under the Department of Telecommunications (DoT). MAT, which is a non-profit organisation, said that it was not requiring on-device logging, which the industry is reported to have opposed, and notifying authorities with phone security updates.

MAT pointed out in its 2023 security standard document that it was not requiring on-device logging, which the industry is reported to have opposed, and notifying authorities with phone security updates.

was working to understand which standards are practicable to implement, the official said.

In the meantime, smart phones were exempt from the certification scheme in question altogether.

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The amendment, of which the Reuters report seemed to misinterpret, changes a section that mentions smart phones to simply requiring an "Internal user report and security updates".

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"The memorandum provides clear guidance that referred to the unapproved version of the standards document, which was issued in April 2023. A phone maker shall ensure that its products are secure and safe."

MAT's internal documents are solely for internal deliberation and are not to be shared with the public, MAT said.

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Meghalaya group seeks PM's help in the Garo Hills

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

A Meghalaya-based organisation has sought Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention to bail the Garo Hills region of the state out of a "grave humanitarian and constitutional crisis" caused by suspected illegal migrants from Bangladesh.

The Garoland State Movement Committee (GSMC), which wants Meghalaya to be bifurcated, said the killing of a tribal youth named Tilang M. Sangma by a group

mostly comprising migrants from Bangladesh and adjoining areas of Assam highlighted the gravity of the problem caused by the indigenous people in the northeast.

In a letter to Mr. Modi on Tuesday, the organisation said Sangma's killing exposed the profound failures in governance, law enforcement and the enforcement of constitutional safeguards guaranteed under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. It also mentioned alleged cases of forced occupation of tribal lands.

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Government appoints new chiefs for BSF, ITBP and NIA

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) on Wednesday approved the proposal of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to appoint Shatrujeet Singh Kapoor, former Haryana Director General of Police (DGP), as the chief of the Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).

Mr. Kapur was sent on leave and then relieved of the State DGP charge last year amid the controversy surrounding the suicide of Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Y.S Puram Kumar.

The ACC also approved the appointment of 1993-batch IPS officer of West Bengal cadre, Praveen Kumar, who is at present working as Director General, ITBP, to the post of Director General, Border Security Force (BSF) from the date of assumption of charge of the post and up to September 30, 2030, the date of his superannuation or until further orders.

The ACC approved the posting of 1994-batch IPS officer Rakesh Aggarwal as Director General, National Investigation Agency.

Force (Short)	Full name	Formation year	Controlling Ministry	Head (designation)	HQ	Core work / mandate
BSF	Border Security Force	1965	Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)	Director General (DG)	New Delhi	Guarding international borders (mainly Pakistan & Bangladesh), anti-infiltration, border management, internal security support
CRPF	Central Reserve Police Force	1939 (as Crown Representative's Police); MHA renamed CRPF in 1949		Director General (DG)	New Delhi	Internal security: law & order support, counter-insurgency/anti-Naxal, election duties, riot control, J&K and LWE operations
CISF	Central Industrial Security Force	1969	MHA	Director General (DG)	New Delhi	Security of critical infrastructure/PSUs (airports, metro, ports, nuclear/space installations), VIP security (as assigned), disaster support
ITBP	Indo-Tibetan Border Police	1962	MHA	Director General (DG)	New Delhi	Guarding India–China (LAC) in high-altitude areas, border patrol, mountain rescue, disaster response
SSB	Sashastra Seema Bal	1963 (as Special Service Bureau); renamed SSB in 2001	MHA (administrative); Ministry of Defence (operational control)	Director General (DG)	New Delhi	Guarding Nepal & Bhutan borders , border population outreach, anti-smuggling, internal security support
Assam Rifles*	Assam Rifles	1835 (roots as Cachar Levy)		Director General (DG)	Shillong	Northeast security & counter-insurgency, border guarding (especially Indo–Myanmar), support to civil administration

1. New appointments approved / नई नियुक्तियाँ मंजूर

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) approved MHA's proposal to appoint new chiefs for **BSF, ITBP and NIA** / कैबिनेट की नियुक्ति समिति (ACC) ने MHA के प्रस्ताव पर **BSF, ITBP और NIA** के नए प्रमुखों की नियुक्ति मंजूर की।

2. ITBP chief / ITBP प्रमुख

- **Shatrujeet Singh Kapoor** (former Haryana DGP) appointed as chief of **Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)** / शत्रुजीत सिंह कपूर (पूर्व हरियाणा DGP) को **ITBP** का प्रमुख नियुक्त किया गया।
- He was earlier sent on leave and relieved of Haryana DGP charge amid controversy linked to IPS officer **Y.S. Puram Kumar's** suicide / IPS अधिकारी **वाई.एस. पुरम कुमार** की आत्महत्या से जुड़े विवाद के बीच उन्हें पहले छुट्टी पर भेजा गया और DGP पदभार से हटाया गया था।

3. BSF DG / BSF के DG

- **Praveen Kumar** (1993-batch IPS, West Bengal cadre; currently DG, ITBP) appointed **DG, BSF** / **प्रवीण कुमार** (1993 बैच IPS, पश्चिम बंगाल कैडर; वर्तमान DG, ITBP) को **DG, BSF** नियुक्त किया गया।
- Tenure: from date of assuming charge **up to 30 Sept 2030** (superannuation) or until further orders / कार्यकाल: पदभार ग्रहण की तिथि से **30 सितम्बर 2030** (सेवानिवृत्ति) या अगले आदेश तक।

4. NIA DG / NIA के DG

- **Rakesh Aggarwal** (1994-batch IPS) posted as **Director General, National Investigation Agency (NIA)** / **राकेश अग्रवाल** (1994 बैच IPS) को **NIA के महानिदेशक** के रूप में तैनात किया गया।

Exam	Exam date (last 2 years)	Question (memory-based / asked in recent shifts)	Answer
UPSC CAPF (ACs) Paper-I	04 Aug 2024	Which force primarily guards India’s borders with Pakistan and Bangladesh?	BSF
UPSC CDS (I) GK	21 Apr 2024	ITBP is primarily deployed along which international border?	India–China (LAC / Himalayan frontier)
UPSC CDS (I) GK	13 Apr 2025	“NIA” works under which Ministry of Government of India?	Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)
UPSC NDA (I) GAT	21 Apr 2024	Match the border guarding forces: (a) Nepal–Bhutan (b) Pakistan–Bangladesh (c) China	(a) SSB (b) BSF (c) ITBP
SSC CGL Tier-1	09–26 Sep 2024	BSF was raised in the wake of which war?	1965 India–Pakistan War
SSC GD Constable	20 Feb – 12 Mar 2024	Expand “ITBP” and state its core role in one line.	Indo-Tibetan Border Police; guards India–China border
Bank (IBPS PO Prelims)	19–20 Oct 2024	NIA was set up mainly to investigate which type of cases?	Terrorism-related / specified national security offences
Railway (RRB ALP CBT-1)	25–29 Nov 2024	Which is the correct match? Nepal–Bhutan border is guarded by: (A) BSF (B) SSB (C) ITBP (D) Assam Rifles	SSB
Defence (CDS II)	14 Sep 2025	“Assam Rifles” is most associated with guarding which border (in general GK context)?	India–Myanmar border (and NE internal security role)
State PSC (GS Prelims)	2024–2025 (varies by state)	The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) approves appointments of senior officers. Who chairs ACC?	Prime Minister

- Statements / ཉམ་ཆེད་

- Praveen Kumar has been appointed as Director General of BSF, and his tenure is up to 30 September 2030 (superannuation) or until further orders. / बजर प्रवेणकुडर BSF डुर DG अगुड शुरु गुर णगुरणुड घ ३० डुर डुरगुडुरच 30 अलदुघ 2030 (दुगुरअगुडु) गुर१ णं चहु लुटु लुडु णुड
- Shatrueet Singh Kapoor, former Haryana DGP, has been appointed as the chief of ITBP. / हनुषअगुडर DGP ट दुहलशुगुड हनुषइतु ITBP डुर बरुडु अगुड शुरु गुर णगुरणुड
- **Correct option / दुणहअगुड हु :**
- A) 1 only B) 2 only C) Both 1 and 2 D) Neither

IN BRIEF



Delhi HC slams NGO for PIL misuse on encroachments

Terming it a sheer misuse of PIL jurisdiction, the Delhi High Court on Wednesday came down heavily on an NGO for repeatedly filing PILs petitioning alleged encroachments by mosques in Delhi. A Division Bench of Chief Justice Dinesh Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia, while hearing two different petitions filed by the Save India Foundation, stated that the organisation was misusing the PIL jurisdiction of the court and only seeking 'selective' issues in society. The Bench pointed out that why the NGO was only concerned for the encroachment of one particular kind. It noted the NGO's frequent filing of similar petitions was "disturbing." The court set January 21 as the next date of hearing.

Editors Guild urges India, Pak, to restore access to news sites

The Editors Guild of India on Wednesday urged the governments of India and Pakistan to lift restrictions on news websites and restore access to cross-border journalism. In a statement, the Guild admitted that there had been instances of media in both the countries crossing borders of balanced and professional journalism and going overboard with misinformation. "However, while such aberrations are instances of unethical journalism need to be dealt with more cautiously, blocking all access is not the solution," the Guild said. It said a blanket ban did not expunge ground realities, but only served to build a climate of fear and mistrust. —

18,000 seats remain vacant, NEET-PG cut-off lowered after second round of counselling

Hindu Shivan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

More than 18,000 post-graduate medical seats remained vacant in government and private medical colleges across India despite the completion of the second round of counselling, prompting the National Board of Examinations (NBE) to revise the qualifying percentile for the postgraduate National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET-PG) 2025 admissions, a senior health ministry official told *The Hindu* on Wednesday. The NBE, earlier this week, said the qualifying percentile cut-off for the third round of the NEET-PG counselling had been reduced to zero from 40 for reserved categories. This means that all candidates who appeared for the exam, including those



Qualifying percentile cut-off for the third round of NEET-PG this year has been reduced to zero for reserved categories.

who scored in negative (those in negative marking for wrong answers) are now eligible to take part in counselling.

The cut-off for the general category has been reduced to seven percentile from 50.

The result of the NEET-PG 2025 was declared on August 19, 2025. In accordance with the directions of the Ministry of Health

and Family Welfare issued on January 9, "the minimum qualifying percentile cut-off for counselling of the third round of NEET-PG 2025-26 for various categories of candidates has been reduced". The NBE's decision in an official notice.

Explaining the revision of the qualifying percentile for reserved categories, the health ministry source said, "This is to ensure optimal utilisation of available seats, which are vital for expanding India's pool of trained medical specialists. Leaving such seats vacant undermines national efforts to improve healthcare delivery and results in the loss of valuable education at resources."

The source further said that all NEET-PG candidates were MBBS-qualified doctors who had completed their degrees and in-training.

"The previous percentile thresholds restricted the pool of eligible candidates despite the availability of seats," the source added. The health ministry has maintained that admissions "remain strictly merit-based, determined by NEET-PG rank and candidate preferences, although authorised counselling mechanisms; no direct or discretionary admissions are permitted and choice-based allocation will continue to guide seat distribution."

The Ministry added that there had been no dilution of academic standards at Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh, based on multiple news reports. The NGT's principal bench, comprising chairperson Justice Sanjay Kumar and expert member A. Bhaskar Reddy, has issued no orders on the matter, according to an official statement.

Affected cities "The news reports highlight alarming conditions where sewage water has contaminated drinking water supply due to corroded and decades-old infra-

structure. Cities in Rajasthan including Udaipur, Jaipur, and Bikaner have reportedly been affected. Photographs accompanying the reports show drinking water pipelines passing through open sewage drains, creating health hazards," the statement issued on Wednesday said.

The NGT said the news report revealed that in Greater Noida, several residents, including children, fell ill with symptoms such as vomiting and diarrhoea after drinking water got contaminated with sewage. "Authorities reportedly

repaired leaks and distributed medicine; however, residents expressed fear of an indeterminate contamination tragedy. The media circulation of 'serious health issues' of sewage contamination in drinking water reported in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh, based on multiple news reports.

The NGT's principal bench, comprising chairperson Justice Sanjay Kumar and expert member A. Bhaskar Reddy, has issued no orders on the matter, according to an official statement.

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The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has taken suo motu notice of "serious health issues" of sewage contamination in drinking water reported in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh, based on multiple news reports.

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Two Bengal nurses with Nipah critical; 2 contacts hospitalised

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

Two nurses affected by the Nipah virus continue to be in a critical state in West Bengal. One of them has slipped into a coma and the other is on ventilator support in a private hospital in Baranagar where they had been working.

A doctor and a nurse who came into contact with them have been hospitalised after they developed Nipah symptoms, while several others are being screened.

Samples of the two nurses were initially tested at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) on January 11.

Sources told *The Hindu* on Wednesday that the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, had confirmed their infection.

Contact tracing on the doctor and nurse who showed Nipah symptoms were admitted to the Infectious Diseases and Hepatology General Hospital in Kolkata on Wednesday. Their contacts are being sent for Nipah tests. The source of the outbreak is not yet known.

So far, over 120 people who came into contact with the two nurses have been advised to isolate



Over 120 people who came into contact with the nurses advised to isolate themselves.

themselves. These include hospital staff, family members, and ambulance drivers. Samples from some of the contacts have been sent for testing.

Three co-workers of the nurses have also been taken off duty for now.

Contact tracing is being done actively across the three districts of North 24 Parganas, Bardhaman, and Malda.

"She came home because of cold and fever. We had no idea what else it could have been," a relative of one of the nurses told mediapersons.

The West Bengal government has launched helpline numbers 03323330000, 9874700000, 9830400212 for public queries. The government has advised people not to panic but stay alert and maintain proper hygiene.

NGT issues notice to 3 States over contamination of water

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

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The Rajasthan U.P. MP govts. should file their affidavits on contamination of drinking water

The Hindu Bureau
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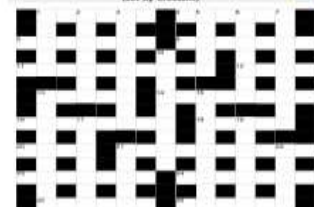
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TH CROSSWORD 14692



Across
1. Father cycling in rain - (It's not hard) (6)
4. University kept arrested by series, causing uproar (8)
8. Coffee maker is behind counter, try Americano to start with (7)
9. Generally American partner controls resources centrally (7)
11. Picked up writing material at the same place (10)

Solve this puzzle online and access more puzzles at <https://www.thehindu.com>

Down
2. Spread quickly, spread by influencers essentially (5)
3. Trial version put up covers one technical topic initially missed (7)
5. Vessel to serve bit of rice with Indian stew (8)
6. Retract comment supporting French article (5)
7. Boar's plastic container for coals (7)
10. Accountant from the East enters party with a very American hat (9)
12. Slowly move part of foot (4)
13. "It's dangerous", tip some up (5)
14. Play favourite track entertaining everybody right in the beginning (8,3)
16. Entertaining cricket from both sides, one over to go (8)
18. Decide, tea or coffee (8)
19. Fellow with topless model seeking excitement (4)
21. Captivated by scurries from unknown, pretty looking blonde left (4,9)
23. Is fit after suspicion of damaged handling (7)
24. Romantic, moving at Cold Valley finally (7)
25. Miss Hermine who eventually back Harry (8)
26. Associate member of embassy lacking etiquette from the beginning (6)

SUDOKU



Difficulty Rating: ★★☆☆☆
Solution to yesterday's puzzle:
3 5 9 1 2 4 7 6 8
1 2 4 6 8 3 5 9 7
8 6 2 5 7 9 3 4 1
4 7 3 8 6 2 1 5 9
9 4 1 7 3 6 8 2 5
6 3 2 9 4 1 5 7 8
5 8 7 4 2 3 6 8 1
2 1 6 5 9 7 4 3 8

FAITH
Harvesting eternal joy

The very image of the cooking of Pongal and chanting "Pongala Pongal" when the dish boils up and spills over the brim is self-explanatory. The ingredients showcase the bounteous nature of Mother Earth as well as the divine presence of Sun who has been worshipped as a God from the 2nd Century BC. Celebrated as a harvest festival by the faithful across the world, it is also the time of the year when the Sun changes direction and travels northwards from the south. The festival is also known as Makar Sankranti, as the Sun transits from Taurus to Makar rasi (zodiac).

Pongal, falling in Thai, following the month of Margashirsha, is a call to all devotees to find their spiritual moorings and realign themselves to the true riches of the world, which is attaining the best of Purusartha, said Dattatraya B. Makrishtana. One must focus oneself inwardly, get closer to the divine and overcome the temporal pleasures of this world. In the preceding month of Margashirsha, Andhra Pradesh, which renounces from every household and temple, gaudes devotees on the ways by which one can develop premat bhakti and seek the ultimate wealth of attaining the feet of the Lord. This is the time of the year when one should figuratively burn all the unwelcome, negative energies within oneself, symbolised by lighting or taking part, in the Bhogi bonfire.

The concept of togetherness, as recommended by Anant (Anant pradhana), is the best dharmic principle, is widely accepted and followed, in the days following Pongal, on Makar Pongal day, when one seeks the Bhogipati and guidance of elders.

UGC brings out new rules against caste discrimination

Higher education institutions may lose recognition if they violate the regulations; UGC brings OBCs within the ambit of new rules after their exclusion in the draft version evoked criticism

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has notified new regulations to address caste-based discrimination in higher education institutions across the country. The new rules mandate the setting up of equity committees on campuses and specify punishments, which can range from being debarred from offering degrees or programmes, for non-compliance.

The University Grants Commission (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2026, notified on Tuesday, are an update on the anti-discrimination regulations in place since 2012. A draft version of the updated rules was put out by the UGC for public suggestions in February last year, inviting widespread criticism for the way it kept the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) outside the ambit of caste-based discrimination and the lack of specificity in the way it defined discrimination.

Further, the draft version of the regulations proposed a provision to “dis-

Strong measures

The UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2026, were notified on Tuesday

■ Discrimination has been defined as “any unfair, differential, or biased treatment or any such act against any stakeholder, whether explicit or implicit, on the grounds only of religion, race, caste, gender, place of birth, disability, or any of them”

■ Caste-based discrimination means “discrimination only on the basis of caste or tribe against the members of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes”



■ The new rules specify punishments, which can range from being debarred from offering degrees or programmes, for non-compliance

courage” false complaints of discrimination, suggesting fines for such complaints.

In the final notified version of the rules, the UGC has included OBCs within the ambit of “caste-based discrimination” and dropped the provision on false complaints. Further, its definition of “discrimination” has been expanded slightly to include some of the language contained in the 2012 regulations.

In the new regulations, the UGC has said that “caste-based discrimination” means “discrimination only on the basis of caste or tribe against the members of the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled

Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes”. Further, it defines “discrimination” as “any unfair, differential, or biased treatment or any such act against any stakeholder, whether explicit or implicit, on the grounds only of religion, race, caste, gender, place of birth, disability, or any of them”.

In borrowing from the definition in the 2012 regulations, the UGC added that “discrimination” would include “any distinction, exclusion, limitation, or preference, which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education and, in particular, of imposing conditions

on any stakeholder or group of stakeholders that are incompatible with human dignity”.

Equity committees

In the new regulations, the UGC mandates the setting up of equal opportunity centres (EOC) in each institution, to promote “equity and equal opportunity to the community at large in the higher education institutions (HEIs) and to bring about social inclusion”. Under these, an equity committee is to be formed. These equity committees, chaired by the head of the institution, must have the representation of OBCs, persons with disabilities, SCs, STs, and women, the regulations said.

While the EOC will be expected to submit a bi-annual report of its functioning, the equity committees have been mandated to meet at least twice a year.

The UGC will put in place a monitoring mechanism to review the progress of the implementation of these regulations. It will set up a national-level monitoring committee with representatives of statutory professional councils and commissions, the regulations said.

1. New UGC regulations notified / UGC के नए नियम अधिसूचित

- UGC has notified “**UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2026**” to address caste-based discrimination in higher education institutions / उच्च शिक्षा संस्थानों में जाति-आधारित भेदभाव से निपटने हेतु **UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2026** अधिसूचित।
- Institutions may face action, including **loss of recognition** for violating regulations / नियमों के उल्लंघन पर मान्यता (recognition) जाने तक की कार्रवाई संभव।

2. What counts as discrimination / “भेदभाव” की परिभाषा

- Discrimination defined as **unfair/differential/biased treatment** (explicit or implicit) on grounds such as **religion, race, caste, gender, place of birth, disability, etc.** / भेदभाव: अनुचित/भिन्न/पक्षपाती व्यवहार (प्रत्यक्ष या अप्रत्यक्ष), आधार: धर्म, नस्ल, जाति, लिंग, जन्मस्थान, दिव्यांगता आदि।
- It also covers actions that impair equality of treatment and impose conditions incompatible with human dignity / समानता को प्रभावित करने वाले कृत्य और मानवीय गरिमा के विपरीत शर्तें भी शामिल।

3. Caste-based discrimination scope widened / दायरा बढ़ा

- Final rules include **OBCs** within “caste-based discrimination” after criticism over their exclusion in the draft / ड्राफ्ट में OBC को बाहर रखने की आलोचना के बाद अंतिम नियमों में **OBC** भी शामिल।
- Caste-based discrimination described as discrimination on the basis of caste/tribe against members of **SCs, STs and OBCs** / SC, ST और OBC के विरुद्ध जाति/जनजाति के आधार पर भेदभाव।

4. Campus mechanism: EOC & equity committees / कैंपस व्यवस्था: EOC और इक्विटी कमेटियां

- Mandates **Equal Opportunity Centres (EOC)** in each institution to promote equity, equal opportunity and social inclusion / हर संस्थान में **Equal Opportunity Centre (EOC)** अनिवार्य—समता, समान अवसर, सामाजिक समावेशन हेतु।
- An **equity committee** to be formed (chaired by head of institution) with representation of **OBCs, SCs, STs, women and persons with disabilities** / संस्थान प्रमुख की अध्यक्षता में इक्विटी कमेटी, जिसमें OBC, SC, ST, महिलाएं, दिव्यांग का प्रतिनिधित्व जरूरी।

5. Reporting & monitoring / रिपोर्टिंग और मॉनिटरिंग

- EOC to submit **bi-annual report**; equity committees must meet **at least twice a year** / EOC की छमाही रिपोर्ट; इक्विटी कमेटी की बैठक कम-से-कम साल में 2 बार।
- UGC to create monitoring mechanism including a **national-level monitoring committee** / UGC द्वारा राष्ट्रीय स्तर की मॉनिटरिंग व्यवस्था।

6. Punishments / दंड

- Punishments can range up to **debarment from offering degrees/programmes** for non-compliance / अनुपालन न होने पर डिग्री/प्रोग्राम चलाने से प्रतिबंध जैसे दंड तक।

- The 2026 UGC rules mandate setting up Equal Opportunity Centres (EOC) in every higher education institution and require periodic reporting. / 2026 ई. UGC आयोग का नियम है कि हर उच्च शिक्षण संस्थान में समान अवसर केन्द्र (EOC) का स्थापना करना आवश्यक है और यह केंद्र नियमित रूप से रिपोर्टिंग प्रस्तुत करेगा।
- The final notified rules include OBCs/ General within the scope of caste-based discrimination. / अंतिम सूचित नियम जाति-आधारित भेदभाव के दायरे में ओबीसी/सामान्य वर्ग को शामिल करते हैं।
- **Correct option / सही विकल्प है :**
A) 1 only B) 2 only C) Both 1 and 2 D) Neither

Exam	Exam date (2024–2025)	Question (memory-based / shift recall)	Answer
SSC CGL Tier-1	Sep 2024	UGC stands for what?	University Grants Commission
SSC CHSL Tier-1	Jul 2024	UGC is primarily related to which sector?	Higher Education regulation/standards
RRB NTPC / RRB exams (various CBT)	2024 (various shifts)	UGC works mainly to maintain standards in: (A) School education (B) Higher education (C) Health services (D) Agriculture	Higher education
IBPS PO Prelims	Oct 2024	UGC comes under which Union Ministry?	Ministry of Education
SBI PO Prelims	Mar 2025	Which body is responsible for coordination and determination of standards in universities in India?	UGC
CDS (I) GK	Apr 2024	“Equal opportunity” and “social inclusion” measures are generally targeted at which level in this context?	Institutional/campus level (Higher education institutions)
NDA (II) GAT	Sep 2024	The term “Regulation” issued by statutory bodies generally implies:	Binding rules/standards within mandate
State PSC (GS Pre)	2025 (varies)	Which of the following is a statutory body for higher education?	UGC

NGT issues notice to 3 States over contamination of water

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has taken *suo motu* cognisance of "serious health issues" of sewage contamination in drinking water reported in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh, based on multiple news reports.

The NGT's principal Bench, comprising chairperson Prakash Shrivastava and expert member A. Senthil Vel, has issued notices to all three State governments and other agencies to file their affidavits on the matter, according to an official statement.

Affected cities

"The news reports highlight alarming conditions where sewage water has mixed with drinking water pipelines due to corroded and decades-old infras-

The Rajasthan, U.P., M.P. govts. should file their affidavits on contamination of drinking water

tructure. Cities in Rajasthan including Udaipur, Jodhpur, Kota, Banswara, Jaipur, Ajmer and Bora have reportedly been affected. Photographs accompanying the reports show drinking water pipelines passing through open sewage drains, creating grave health risks," the statement issued on Wednesday said.

The NGT said the news report revealed that in Greater Noida, several residents, including children, fell ill with symptoms such as vomiting and diarrhoea after drinking water got contaminated with sewage.

"Authorities reportedly

repaired leaks and distributed medicines; however, residents expressed fear of an Indore-like water contamination tragedy. The same report also noted detection of E-coli bacteria in drinking water in parts of Bhopal, caused by sewage leakage into tube-wells," the statement said.

At least six people died due to vomiting and diarrhoea caused by drinking contaminated water supplied through pipelines in Indore recently.

The court observed that the issues raised involve "serious environmental and public health concerns" and *prima facie* indicate violations of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has also been directed to file a response.

Aspect	Details (English)	અગ્રધર્ (અગ્રધર્)
Name	National Green Tribunal (NGT)	ઘનશ્યામ પાઠક ૧૨૨ ડિઘર્ (NGT)
Established under	National Green Tribunal Act, 2010	ઘનશ્યામ પાઠક ૧૨૨ ડિઘર્ ૧૨૨અગ્રધર્ ગજડાજ
Nature	Specialised environmental court	અટ્ટડહકલ દ ગગ્રધર્ હગ્ર ગ્રિગ્રધર્
Objective	Speedy & effective disposal of environmental cases; protection of environment	દ ગગ્રધર્ રવગ્રધર્ દુપધર્ અદલ્લધર્ દ ગગ્રધર્ દુપધર્
Headquarters	New Delhi	દ હ અદલ્લ
Benches	Principal Bench (Delhi) + Zonal Benches (Pune, Bhopal, Chennai, Kolkata)	દશ્વર દલ્લ (અદલ્લ) + લદ્દહગ દલ્લ
Composition	Chairperson + Judicial Members + Expert Members	૧ે લ + ગ્રિગ્રધર્ દુપધર્ + અટ્ટડહકલ દુપધર્
Chairperso		

The **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** took suo motu cognisance of reports on **sewage contamination of drinking water** in **Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh**.

घनश्याम पाण्डे (१९९३ ई.पू. ज.न.ग.ट.) ने अपने दायरे में
राजस्थान, मध्य प्रदेश और उत्तर प्रदेश में
शुद्ध पेयजल की आपूर्ति में
असुविधाओं को दूर करने के लिए
संबंधित राज्यों से

The **Principal Bench** directed the **three State governments** to **file affidavits** explaining the contamination, causes, and remedial action.

राजस्थान, मध्य प्रदेश और उत्तर प्रदेश सरकारों से
दूषित पेयजल की आपूर्ति में
दुरुवस्थाओं की जांच और
सुधार के लिए
संबंधित राज्यों से

Why NGT intervened / हस्तक्षेप क्यों

- News reports indicated **serious public health impacts** like **vomiting and diarrhoea**, including **children falling ill**.

रिपोर्टों में उल्टी-दस्त जैसे गंभीर स्वास्थ्य प्रभाव बताए गए, बच्चे भी प्रभावित हुए।

- **Photographic evidence** showed **drinking water pipelines passing through open sewage drains**, creating grave risks.

फोटो साक्ष्य में पीने के पानी की पाइपलाइनें खुले नालों से गुजरती दिखीं।

Affected Areas / प्रभावित क्षेत्र

- **Rajasthan:** Udaipur, Jodhpur, Kota, Banswara, Jaipur, Ajmer, Bora
राजस्थान: उदयपुर, जोधपुर, कोटा, बांसवाड़ा, जयपुर, अजमेर, बोरा
- **Uttar Pradesh:** Greater Noida (illness after sewage-contaminated water)
उत्तर प्रदेश: ग्रेटर नोएडा (सीवेज-मिलावटी पानी के बाद बीमारी)
- **Madhya Pradesh:** Bhopal (E-coli detected), Indore (deaths reported earlier)
मध्य प्रदेश: भोपाल (E-coli की पुष्टि), इंदौर (पहले मौतें)



- Key Observations by NGT / NGT इह
श्री श्री गुरु

- Issues involve serious environmental and public health concerns.

रक्षकप्रचर फलहृष्ट गुरुधर हृष्ट अ द्रव्यश्रु इ
s वग श्रुतुं दृष्टमपेक्ष

- Prima facie violations of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.

द्वय «Hगुरुहगुरुधर द्रव्यलर १श्रुश्रु गुरु,
1986 लक्षनं च (द्वय श्रुतुं इश्रु गुरु)
१श्रुश्रु गुरु, 1974 इवै क्षे त्रु ष्टु

- Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) was directed to submit a response.

इश्रुग द्वय श्रु गुरु इश्रु(CPCB) इश्रुनं अश्रु
द्वय च इघंष्टु इश्रु लक्षे

Topic

Suo motu

E. coli in water

Water Act, 1974

Environment (Protection) Act, 1986

CPCB

Immediate mitigation

Key facts (English)

Court/tribunal takes cognisance on its own without a petition.

Indicates possible **fecal contamination**; risk of acute gastroenteritis.

Core law for prevention/control of water pollution; enables pollution control boards.

Umbrella environmental law; enables central standards/rules.

Apex body coordinating pollution control with States.

Leak repair, separation of lines, chlorination, sampling, health surveillance.

दफ्तर के दफ्तर लक्ष (Hindi)

आप गवर्नर डे स गवर्नर

१ ४ घ खचयनशरु बल्लर डे
दुर्लक्ष कयह-ब डे नुसखरु

न च बल्लर शगर् डे बरु डे
दुर्लक्ष अ व डे ४ शरु

वर्ह डे दगर् डे दुर्लक्ष
शगर्/रु डे ४ शरु

दुर्लक्ष दुर्लक्ष दुर्लक्ष डे
श डे

पद्वरु खरु ल चरु १ चण
प्रद्वरु डे दुर्लक्ष सवु
श डे

Exam	Held on	Question	Answer
SSC CHSL Tier-I (Official)	01 Jul 2024 (Shift 1)	As of March 2024, who among the following is the Chairperson of the National Green Tribunal?	Prakash Shrivastava
DSSSB Jail Warder (Official)	20 Jun 2024 (Shift 1)	National Green Tribunal has been established in which of the following year?	2010
OPSC OAS Prelims GS (Official)	15 Dec 2024	National Air Quality Index (AQI) is launched by the government. (2) There are six AQI categories... (3) The index considers eight pollutants... Which statements are correct?	(As per official options in paper)
RRB Technician Grade III (Official)	27 Dec 2024 (Shift 3)	On November 9, 2024, which city recorded the highest AQI among Punjab, Haryana, and Chandigarh?	Chandigarh
SSC GD Constable (Official)	05 Feb 2025 (Shift 3)	Which Union Ministry introduced the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Bill, 2024, in Parliament in Feb 2024?	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
RPF Constable (Official)	12 Mar 2025 (Shift 2)	The National Green Tribunals has been established for enforcement of environmental rights emanating from which Article of the Constitution?	Article 21
RRB NTPC Graduate Level CBT-I (Official)	13 Jun 2025 (Shift 2)	Which authority was strengthened in 2024 to enforce penalties and green clearances under environmental regulations?	Central Pollution Control Board
RPSC RAS Prelims (Official)	02 Feb 2025	According to CPCB, AQI category for IND-AQI range of 101–200 is	Moderate
IBPS PO Mains (Memory-based)	30 Nov 2024 (Shift 1)	Inferences: I. Vehicular pollutants can alter internal organs... II. Need to completely ban all vehicles...	Only inference I follows
RPF Constable (Official)	03 Mar 2025 (Shift 3)	India–Denmark collaborated to create a “smart laboratory on clean rivers” in which city?	Varanasi
DSSSB TGT (Natural Science) (Official)	06 Sept 2025 (Shift 1)	The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act came into force in which year?	1974

- **Statements / इ कथ**
- NGT issued notices to Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh over reported sewage contamination of drinking water and sought affidavits. / NGT राजस्थान, मध्य प्रदेश, उत्तर प्रदेश को सूचना दी, जहाँ पीने के पानी में सीवेज के दूषण की शिकायत थी।
- NGT noted prima facie violations of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, and also directed CPCB to respond. / NGT 1986 के वातावरण (रक्षण) अधिनियम और 1974 के जल (प्रदूषण रोकथाम और नियंत्रण) अधिनियम का उल्लंघन हुआ है, और सीपीसीबी को जवाब देने के लिए निर्देशित किया।
- A) 1 only B) 2 only C) Both 1 and 2 D) Neither



Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

The goods purchased by China from Japan in December

16.4 In \$ billion, China bought more from Japan in December than at any point in the last three years, customs data showed, even as Beijing's sharper rhetoric over comments out of Tokyo about Taiwan fueled fears that Beijing could restrict trade ties. Source: Reuters

India's cotton imports in the month of December

3.1 In million bales, India's cotton imports rose to a record 3.1 million bales in the December quarter after New Delhi allowed duty-free imports, boosting overseas purchases. Higher imports by the world's second-largest cotton producer are expected to support global prices. Source: Reuters

Number of attacks on doctors and medical staff from 2021-25

149 As many as 148 incidents of violence and assault against doctors and medical staff were reported in government and private hospitals across New Delhi from 2021 to 2023, according to data tabled in the Delhi Assembly, highlighting a rise in the number of such attacks. Source: Reuters

The trade deficit between India and China in 2023

116.12 In billion dollars, India's exports to China posted a \$5.5 billion increase compared to last year, but the declining trend even as the trade deficit hit a record 23.16 billion, as per the annual trade data released by Chinese customs. Source: Reuters

India's wholesale price inflation in December last year

0.83 In per cent, Wholesale price inflation increased for the second month in a row, rising 0.83% in December 2023, driven by an uptick in prices of food, and manufactured items on a month-on-month basis. Source: Reuters

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What is the Malayalam Language Bill, 2025?

What does the Bill entail? Has a similar Bill been tabled earlier in the Kerala legislature? Why has the Karnataka government opposed the Bill, describing it as 'unconstitutional'? Does the Bill make Malayalam the mandatory first language across all schools in Kerala?

EXPLAINER

Sarah Babu George
Shashith S. Sivasankar

The story so far
On October 6, 2025, the Kerala government tabled the Malayalam Language Bill, 2025 in the Kerala Legislative Assembly. Three days later, the Bill was passed following scrutiny by the Subject Committee. The Bill now awaits the assent of the Governor. However, the Karnataka Government has expressed concerns over the provisions of the Bill as it could hurt the Kannada linguistic minority in Kerala.

What does the Bill entail?
The Malayalam Language Bill, 2025 seeks to formally adopt Malayalam as the official language of Kerala, and mandates its use across government, education, judiciary, public communication, commerce, and the digital domain, subject to constitutional provisions. Presently, the state recognises both English and Malayalam as official languages. Malayalam will become the compulsory first language in all government and aided schools in Kerala (up to Class IX). Steps will also be adopted to translate all judgments and court proceedings in a phased manner. Besides, all Bills and Ordinances will be introduced in Malayalam.

The draft law also intends to rename the existing Personnel and Administrative Reforms (Official Language) department as the Malayalam Language Development department. The government will also constitute a Malayalam Language Development Directorate under the department. The Information Technology department will be entrusted with developing open source software and an ecosystem for the efficient use of Malayalam language in the field of IT.

What prompted its introduction?
Over a decade ago, the Kerala government had introduced the Malayalam Language



Language dispute: A delegation from the Karnataka Border Area Development Authority delegation meets Kerala Governor Rajendra Araker in Kasargod on January 7, 2025.

(Dissemination and Public Interest) Bill, 2008, which was also intended to adopt Malayalam as the official language and be used for all official purposes. Despite being passed by the Kerala Legislative Assembly, the Bill was referred to the President who withheld assent.

The Bill was re-referred to the President's consideration since it contained provisions that contravened the Official Languages Act, 1963. The Central government also raised objections regarding other provisions pertaining to the rights of linguistic minorities; the three language formula in accordance with the national educational curriculum; and provisions in the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. The new Bill has been introduced after removing such defects.

Why has Karnataka opposed the Bill?
The Karnataka government has opposed the Bill, describing it as "unconstitutional" and contrary to the interests of the Kannada-speaking linguistic minority in Kerala, particularly those residing in the border district of Kasargod. It has raised concerns over the provision that proposes making Malayalam the compulsory first language in all schools across Kerala.

A delegation from the Karnataka Border Area Development Authority submitted a memorandum to Kerala Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Araker on behalf of the Karnataka government, seeking his intervention to reject the Bill. The petitioners contended that linguistic minority students in Kasargod and other Kannada-speaking regions of Kerala

currently study Kannada as their first language in schools. The government fears that this set-up will be disrupted. The number of Kannada medium schools in Kasargod district has already come down from 197 to 142 in recent years. The Karnataka government has also expressed apprehension that implementing the Bill in Kasargod could have far-reaching consequences and adversely impact the Kannada language in general.

What has Kerala government said?
Law Minister P. Rajeev, while tabling the Bill, had emphasised that the Bill seeks to protect the rights of linguistic minorities, including citizens who consider Tami, Kannada, Tulu and Konkani as their mother tongues. It contains special provisions for linguistic minorities, who will be permitted to use their mother tongues for correspondence with the state government secretariat, Heads of Department and all local offices of the state government situated in those areas. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said that the Bill contains a clear and unambiguous non-obstante clause in Clause 7 that provides special provisions to other State linguistic minorities. He has said that Kerala's Language policy is fully aligned with the Official Languages Act, 1963, and Articles 344 and 347 (Articles which lay out details regarding the language to be used for official purposes).

What has been Karnataka's response?
Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has said that Karnataka will oppose the Bill by exercising every constitutional right available if the Bill in the current form is not withdrawn. Kannada and Culture Minister Shivraj Tangadagi has said that the Chief Minister was likely to meet with the President in this matter.

Meanwhile, the Karnataka Border Area Development Authority has said it awaits amendments to the provisions of the current Bill, the nature of which would explicitly exempt Kannada-speaking areas in Kasargod from the ambit of the Bill.

THE GIST

The Malayalam Language Bill, 2025 seeks to formally adopt Malayalam as the official language of Kerala, and mandates its use across government, education, judiciary, public communication, commerce, and the digital domain, subject to constitutional provisions.

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What is futuristic marine and space biotechnology?

How can India position itself as a leader in biomanufacturing?

Shambhavi Nair

The story so far
Futuristic marine and space biotechnology research focuses on using underexplored environments, such as the deep oceans and outer space, to develop new biological knowledge, materials and manufacturing processes. Marine biotechnology involves studying microorganisms, algae and other marine life to discover bioactive compounds, enzymes, biomaterials, food ingredients, and biostimulants. These organisms have evolved to survive high pressure, salinity, low light, and nutrient-poor conditions. Space biotechnology, meanwhile, studies how microbes, plants, and human biological systems behave under microgravity and radiation.

Why does India need them?
India's long coastline of over 11,000 km

and a vast Exclusive Economic Zone of over 2 million sq. km give it access to rich marine biodiversity and biomass. Yet its share of global marine output remains low, indicating significant untapped potential. Investing in marine biomanufacturing can unlock new sources of food, energy, chemicals, and materials, while reducing pressure on land, freshwater, and agricultural systems. Similarly, space biotechnology is critical for India's long-term ambition in space exploration, enabling safe food production, human health management, and biological manufacturing in extreme environments. Together, futuristic marine and space biotechnology can position India as a leader in biomanufacturing.

Where does India stand today?
India's domestic production of marine biomass such as seaweed remains modest, with an annual cultivated output of around 70,000 tonnes. As a result,

India continues to import seaweed-derived components such as agar, carrageenan, and alginates for use in food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and medical applications. Targeted initiatives under the Bioeconomy agenda, the Deep Ocean Mission, and, more recently, the BioEd are pushing the sector toward sustainable marine biomanufacturing, linking cultivation, extraction, and downstream applications. A small number of private players, such as Sansi Energy and ClimateNew, along with ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute and state-led initiatives such as the Vibrant Gujarat Regional Conference, are exploring pathways to scale marine biomass into high-value ingredients, and fish-based products. In space biotechnology, ISRO's microgravity biology programme is conducting experiments on microbes, algae, and biological systems to study food production, life-support regeneration,

and human health in space. However, private sector participation is limited as these technologies are still nascent.

What are other countries doing?
The European Union funds large-scale programmes on marine bioprospecting, algae-based biomaterials, and bioactive compounds, supported by shared research infrastructure such as the European Marine Biological Resource Centre. China has rapidly expanded seaweed aquaculture and marine bioprocessing. In space biotechnology, the U.S. leads through NASA and the International Space Station, where research on microbial behaviour, protein crystallisation, stem cells, and closed-loop life-support systems informs drug discovery, regenerative medicine, and long-duration human missions.

What next?
Marine and space biotechnology remain relatively unexplored frontiers, where early movers are likely to gain lasting strategic and technological advantages. The primary risk lies in slow and fragmented progress in research and development. A dedicated roadmap that defines timelines and outcomes for marine and space biotechnology would help channel resources more effectively. Shambhavi Nair is chairperson, Tuckashila Institution's Health & Life Sciences Policy.

THE GIST

Futuristic space and marine biotechnology research focuses on using underexplored environments, such as the deep oceans and outer space, to develop new biological knowledge, materials, and manufacturing processes.

In space biotechnology, ISRO's microgravity biology programme is conducting experiments on microbes, algae, and biological systems to study food production, life-support regeneration, and human health in space.

Marine and space biotechnology remain relatively unexplored frontiers, where early movers are likely to gain lasting strategic and technological advantages.

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EXPLAINER

Sarath Babu George
Sharath S. Srivatsa

The story so far:

In October 6, 2025, the Kerala government tabled the Malayalam Language Bill, 2025 in the Kerala Legislative Assembly. Three days later, the Bill was passed following scrutiny by the Subject Committee. The Bill now awaits the assent of the Governor. However, the Karnataka Government has expressed concerns over the provisions of the Bill as it could hurt the Kannada linguistic minority in Kerala.

What does the Bill entail?

The Malayalam Language Bill, 2025 seeks to formally adopt Malayalam as the official language of Kerala, and mandates its use across government, education, judiciary, public communication, commerce, and the digital domain, subject to constitutional provisions. Presently, the State recognises both English and Malayalam as official languages.

Malayalam will become the compulsory first language in all government and aided schools in Kerala up to Class 10. Steps will also be adopted to translate all judgments and court proceedings in a phased manner. Besides, all Bills and Ordinances will be introduced in Malayalam.

The draft law also intends to rename the existing Personnel and Administrative Reforms (Official Language) department as the Malayalam Language Development department. The government will also constitute a Malayalam Language Development Directorate under the department. The Information Technology department will be entrusted with developing open source software and accessories for the efficient use of Malayalam language in the field of IT.

What prompted its introduction?

Over a decade ago, the Kerala government had introduced the Malayalam Language



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(Dissemination and Enrichment) Bill, 2015, which was also intended to adopt Malayalam as the official language and be used for all official purposes. Despite being passed by the Kerala Legislative Assembly, the Bill was referred to the President who withheld assent.

The Bill was reserved for the President's consideration since it contained provisions that contravened the Official Languages Act, 1963. The Central government also raised objections regarding other provisions pertaining to the rights of linguistic minorities; the three language formula in accordance with the national educational curriculum; and provisions in the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. The new Bill has been introduced after removing such defects.

Why has Karnataka opposed the Bill?

The Karnataka government has opposed the Bill, describing it as "unconstitutional" and contrary to the interests of the Kannada-speaking linguistic minority in Kerala, particularly those residing in the border district of Kasargod. It has raised concerns over the provision that proposes making Malayalam the compulsory first language in all schools across Kerala.

A delegation from the Karnataka Border Area Development Authority submitted a memorandum to Kerala Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar on behalf of the Karnataka government, seeking his intervention to reject the Bill. The petitioners contended that linguistic minority students in Kasargod and other Kannada-speaking regions of Kerala

currently study Kannada as their first language in schools. The government fears that this set-up will be disrupted. The number of Kannada medium schools in Kasargod district has already come down from 197 to 192 in recent years. The Karnataka government has also expressed apprehension that implementing the Bill in Kasargod could have far-reaching consequences and adversely impact the Kannada language in general.

What has Kerala government said?

Law Minister P. Rajeeve, while tabling the Bill, had emphasised that the Bill seeks to protect the rights of linguistic minorities, including citizens who consider Tamil, Kannada, Tulu and Konkani as their mother tongues. It contains special provisions for linguistic minorities, who will be permitted to use their mother tongues for correspondence with the State government Secretariat, Heads of Department and all local offices of the State government situated in those areas. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said that the Bill contains a clear and unambiguous non-obstante clause in Clause 7 that provides special provisions to other State linguistic minorities. He has said that Kerala's Language policy is fully aligned with the Official Languages Act, 1963, and Articles 346 and 347 (Articles which lay out details regarding the language to be used for official purposes).

What has been Karnataka's response?

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has said that Karnataka will oppose the Bill by exercising every constitutional right available if the Bill in the current form is not withdrawn. Kannada and Culture Minister Shivraj Tangadagi has said that the Chief Minister was likely to meet with the President in this matter.

Meanwhile, the Karnataka Border Area Development Authority has said that it wants amendments to the provisions of the current Bill, the nature of which would explicitly exempt Kannada-speaking areas in Kasargod from the ambit of the Bill.

THE GIST

▼ The Malayalam Language Bill, 2025 seeks to formally adopt Malayalam as the official language of Kerala, and mandates its use across government, education, judiciary, public communication, commerce, and the digital domain, subject to constitutional provisions.

▼ Law Minister P. Rajeeve, while tabling the Bill, had emphasised that the Bill seeks to protect the rights of linguistic minorities, including citizens who consider Tamil, Kannada, Tulu and Konkani as their mother tongues.

▼ The Karnataka government has opposed the Bill, describing it as "unconstitutional" and contrary to the interests of the Kannada-speaking linguistic minority in Kerala, particularly those residing in the border district of Kasargod.

- The Malayalam Language Bill, 2025 was tabled in the Kerala Legislative Assembly to formally adopt Malayalam as the official language of Kerala.

मलयालम भाषा विधेयक, 2025 केरल विधानसभा में मलयालम को केरल की आधिकारिक भाषा घोषित करने के लिए पेश किया गया।

- The Bill mandates the use of Malayalam across government, education, judiciary, public communication, commerce and the digital domain, subject to constitutional provisions.

यह विधेयक सरकार, शिक्षा, न्यायपालिका, सार्वजनिक संचार, वाणिज्य और डिजिटल क्षेत्र में मलयालम के उपयोग को अनिवार्य बनाता है, संवैधानिक प्रावधानों के अधीन।

Key Provisions / प्रमुख प्रावधान

Official Language Status

- Malayalam to be the **official language of Kerala**.
मलयालम को केरल की आधिकारिक भाषा बनाया जाएगा।

Education

- Malayalam to become the **compulsory first language** in **government and aided schools up to Class 10**.
कक्षा 10 तक सरकारी व सहायता प्राप्त स्कूलों में मलयालम अनिवार्य प्रथम भाषा होगी।

Administration & Judiciary

- Judgments, court proceedings, Bills and Ordinances to be **gradually translated and used in Malayalam**.
न्यायालयों के निर्णय, कार्यवाही, विधेयक व अध्यादेश क्रमबद्ध रूप से मलयालम में होंगे।

Institutional Changes

- Renaming of departments related to language administration and creation of a **Malayalam Language Development Directorate**.
भाषा से जुड़े विभागों का पुनर्गठन और मलयालम भाषा विकास निदेशालय की स्थापना।

Digital & IT Domain

- Promotion of **open-source software and digital tools in Malayalam**.
आईटी व डिजिटल क्षेत्र में मलयालम आधारित ओपन-सोर्स ↓ सॉफ्टवेयर को बढ़ावा।

Minority Protection Clause / अल्पसंख्यक सुरक्षा

- Linguistic minorities (Tamil, Kannada, Tulu, Konkani speakers) are **allowed to use their mother tongue** for correspondence with government offices in designated areas.

भाषायी अल्पसंख्यकों (तमिल, कन्नड़, तुलु, कोंकणी) को कुछ क्षेत्रों में अपनी मातृभाषा में सरकारी पत्राचार की अनुमति।

- A **non-obstante clause (Clause 7)** provides special protection to linguistic minorities.

गैर-अपवर्जन धारा (क्लॉज 7) भाषायी अल्पसंख्यकों को विशेष सुरक्षा देती है।

Why Karnataka Opposed the Bill / कर्नाटक का विरोध क्यों

- The Government of Karnataka termed the Bill “**unconstitutional**” and against the interests of **Kannada-speaking minorities** in Kerala, especially in **Kasaragod**.

कर्नाटक सरकार ने इसे असंवैधानिक बताते हुए केरल में विशेषकर कासरगोड के कन्नड़ भाषी अल्पसंख्यकों के हितों के विरुद्ध माना।

- Fear that making Malayalam the compulsory first language could **disrupt existing Kannada-medium education**.

मलयालम को अनिवार्य प्रथम भाषा बनाने से कन्नड़ माध्यम शिक्षा प्रभावित होने की आशंका।

Kerala Government's Stand / ഇടുവ
ഇടുവ ഇവ ഇവ ഇവ

The Bill is aligned with the Official Languages Act, 1963 and Articles 346 & 347 of the Constitution.

गणेशाय नमः ॥ श्री १२ वें अध्याय ॥ क्रम १२९
 १२९१२९ गणेशाय नमः ॥ श्री १२ वें अध्याय ॥ क्रम १२९
 १२९१२९ गणेशाय नमः ॥ श्री १२ वें अध्याय ॥ क्रम १२९

Objective is **language protection**,
not exclusion, with explicit
safeguards for minorities.

क्षेत्रीय कवच द्वाघलर् प्प्राश्रय वघ
एणह्मन् घ १ ह् द्वाघ द्वाघ्मद्वाघ् j H
द्वाघलर् प्प्रा

Topic	Fact (English)	लघू (श्रमकह)
Earlier Attempt	A similar Malayalam language law was passed in 2015 but withheld Presidential assent	अजडड रकुडरकुरण इवणु हकुरल इण वुव हघ घरकुअल इह ठणरकुरल णणहअकुरह
Constitutional Base	Articles 346–347 deal with official language of states & inter-state communication	१ अरुडु ठठठ-ठठण घकुरह अशर इवणघड कुरवुव ठुळुअकुरण
Education Link	Must comply with RTE Act, 2009 and National Education norms	RTE १अ१अरु गरवु अजअथ अशु लुव रकुर इडुअठु ठुअल ण अ\$ इ
Federal Issue	Highlights inter-state linguistic federalism	शुलघघघु हग कुरवुवगह ठुअकुरवु इव रकुरवु

Exam

Date

Question (English)

प्रश्न (अंग्रेज़ी)

Answer

UPSC CSE Prelims

28-05-2023

Which Articles of the Constitution deal with official language of a State?

कौन से अनुच्छेदों के द्वारा राज्य की आधिकारिक भाषा के सम्बन्ध में व्यवस्था की गई है?

Articles 346–347

SSC CGL

17-07-2022

Official Languages Act, 1963 is related to which aspect?

आधिकारिक भाषा अधिनियम, 1963 किस पहलू से सम्बन्धित है?

Use of languages in administration

IBPS PO

23-10-2022

Which body can give assent to a State Bill reserved for consideration?

कौन सा निकाय राज्य के लिए रखा हुआ विधेयक को मंजूरी दे सकता है?

President of India

CDS

16-04-2023

Linguistic minorities are protected under which Part of the Constitution?

भाषाई अल्पसंख्यकों की रक्षा के लिए संविधान के किस भाग में प्रावधान है?

Fundamental Rights

RRB NTPC

12-01-2024

Kasaragod district is located in which state?

कासरगोड जिला किस राज्य में स्थित है?

Kerala

• With reference to the Malayalam Language Bill, 2025, consider the following statements:

• It makes Malayalam the compulsory first language in all government and aided schools up to Class 10.

• It completely prohibits linguistic minorities from using their mother tongue in official correspondence.

• Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A. 1 only

B. 2 only

C. Both 1 and 2

D. Neither 1 nor 2

Maharashtra tops NITI's export preparedness index

● Tamil Nadu and Gujarat grab 2nd and 3rd positions

FE BUREAU
New Delhi, January 14

MAHARASHTRA HAS EMERGED as the top-performing state in NITI Aayog's Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2024, reaffirming its position as India's leading export hub.

With a score of 68.01, the state ranked first among large states, ahead of Tamil Nadu (64.41) and Gujarat (64.02), which secured second and third positions respectively.

Other large states placed in the 'Leader' category include Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Punjab, and Telangana, reflecting their growing export potential. In contrast, states such as Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Kerala and West Bengal were classified as 'Challengers', while Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Bihar and Jharkhand featured among the 'Aspirers', indicating the need for stronger policy support and infrastructure upgrades.

Among smaller states and Union Territories, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir,



and Nagaland led the rankings, highlighting progress in building export ecosystems beyond the major industrial states.

NITI Aayog said the index is designed not merely as a ranking tool but as a diagnostic framework to help states identify gaps and adopt targeted reforms. By encouraging competitive federalism and data-driven policymaking, the EPI aims to strengthen India's export competitiveness and

support the national goal of expanding India's share in global trade.

The EPI 2024 evaluated the export readiness and performance of states and Union Territories across four key pillars—policy and governance, export infrastructure, industrial and innovation ecosystem, and export performance—using 70 parameters. The framework also incorporates new dimensions such as

human capital, MSME ecosystem, cost competitiveness, financial access, and macroeconomic environment, making the assessment more comprehensive than previous editions.

Maharashtra's strong showing is driven by its diversified industrial base, robust logistics and port connectivity, business-friendly policies, and effective export promotion mechanisms, which sustain high export performance.

Aligned with India's ambition of achieving \$1 trillion in merchandise exports by 2030 and the vision of "Viksit Bharat @2047," the EPI 2024 evaluates the readiness of States and UTs to contribute to the nation's global trade aspirations. The Index underscores the importance of policy coherence and collaboration between the centre and states in building a competitive, resilient, and inclusive trade environment.

"As India expands its network of Free Trade and Economic Partnership Agreements, the importance of strong domestic foundations only grows. For states, this means fostering ecosystems that can respond to new opportunities, align with global standards, and build competitiveness across districts," NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam said.

- Maharashtra emerged as the **top-performing state** in NITI Aayog Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2024, reaffirming its status as India's leading export hub.
महाराष्ट्र ने नीति आयोग के निर्यात तैयारी सूचकांक (EPI) 2024 में पहला स्थान प्राप्त किया, जिससे भारत के प्रमुख निर्यात केंद्र के रूप में इसकी स्थिति मजबूत हुई।

Top Rankings / शीर्ष रैंक

- **1st: Maharashtra (68.01 score)**
प्रथम: महाराष्ट्र (68.01)
- **2nd: Tamil Nadu (64.41)**
द्वितीय: तमिलनाडु (64.41)
- **3rd: Gujarat (64.02)**
तृतीय: गुजरात (64.02)

Leader Category States / 'लीडर' श्रेणी के राज्य

- **Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Punjab, Telangana**
उत्तर प्रदेश, आंध्र प्रदेश, कर्नाटक, पंजाब, तेलंगाना

Other Categories / अन्य श्रेणियाँ

- **Challengers: Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Kerala, West Bengal**
चैलेंजर्स: मध्य प्रदेश, हरियाणा, केरल, पश्चिम बंगाल
- **Aspirers: Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Jharkhand**
एस्पायर्स: ओडिशा, छत्तीसगढ़, राजस्थान, बिहार, झारखंड



Why Maharashtra Leads / महाराष्ट्र आगे क्यों

- Diversified industrial base, strong logistics & ports, business-friendly policies, effective export promotion.

विविध औद्योगिक आधार, मज़बूत लॉजिस्टिक्स व बंदरगाह, उद्योग-हितैषी नीतियाँ और प्रभावी निर्यात संवर्धन।

Purpose of EPI / EPI का उद्देश्य

- Not just ranking, but a **diagnostic tool** to identify gaps and guide reforms.

केवल रैंकिंग नहीं, बल्कि कमियों की पहचान व सुधार के लिए एक निदानात्मक उपकरण।

Methodology / कार्यप्रणाली

- Assesses States/UTs across **4 pillars** using **~70 parameters**.

लगभग 70 मानकों के साथ 4 स्तंभों पर मूल्यांकन।

Pillar

Explanation (English)

वृद्धि (विकास)

Policy & Governance

Trade policy clarity, ease of doing business

वृद्धि वृद्धि वृद्धि वृद्धि

Export Infrastructure

Ports, logistics, connectivity

वृद्धि वृद्धि वृद्धि वृद्धि

Industrial & Innovation Ecosystem

MSMEs, clusters, innovation

वृद्धि वृद्धि वृद्धि वृद्धि

Export Performance

Scale, diversification, growth

वृद्धि वृद्धि वृद्धि वृद्धि

Topic

Fact (English)

लक्ष्य (श्रृंगार)

Index Objective

Aligns with **\$1 trillion exports target by 2030**

अजटज लड इडश्रृंगारगण श्रृंगार
चट्टर ड्डडडडड र

Coverage

States & UTs evaluated

घट्टर ड्डडडडड ल ड्डडडडड
रश्रृंगार कड ड

New Dimensions

Human capital, MSME ecosystem, cost competitiveness

रश्रृंगार हल्लर ड्डडडड ड्डडडड चट्टर ल
श्रृंगार श्रृंगार

Federalism

Promotes competitive & cooperative federalism

ड्डडडडड श्रृंगार श्रृंगार ड्डडडड

Global Context

Supports India's FTAs & global trade integration

ड्ड ड्डडड अ अड्ड ड्डडडडड
ड्डडडड

NITI Aayog Index	Year (Latest)	Topper State / UT
SDG India Index	2024–25	Kerala
Health Index (Large States)	2023–24	Kerala
Health Index (Small States)	2023–24	Mizoram
Health Index (UTs)	2023–24	Chandigarh
State Energy & Climate Index (SECI)	2024–25	Gujarat
Export Preparedness Index	2023–24	Tamil Nadu
Innovation Index (Major States)	2023–24	Karnataka
Innovation Index (UTs / City States)	2023–24	Delhi
Fiscal Health Index	2024–25	Odisha
Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS)	2024–25	Gujarat
Composite Water Management Index	Latest Available	Gujarat
Multidimensional Poverty Index (Lowest Poverty)	2024–25	Kerala
Aspirational Districts Programme (Overall Best)	Latest	Chamba (Himachal Pradesh)
School Education Quality Index (Latest Used)	Latest Reference	Kerala
North Eastern Region SDG Index	2024–25	Mizoram
Women Entrepreneurship Ecosystem (WEP-linked assessment)	2025	Tamil Nadu
Urban SDG Index (Top City)	Latest	Shimla

Index (Published / Relevant Year)	Topper State / UT
Fiscal Health Index 2025	Odisha
Export Preparedness Index 2024 (Latest)	Maharashtra
India Electric Mobility Index (IEMI) 2024	Delhi
India Innovation Index (Latest available)	Karnataka
SDG India Index (Latest Official: 2023-24)	Kerala (Composite)


Exam	Date	Question (English)	प्रश्न (अंग्रेजी)	Answer
UPSC CSE Prelims	28-05-2023	Which body releases indices related to cooperative federalism and policy reforms in India?	कौन सा संस्था सहकारी संघवाद और नीति सुधारों से संबंधित सूचकांक जारी करता है?	NITI Aayog
SSC CGL	14-07-2022	NITI Aayog replaced which institution?	निति आयोग ने किस संस्थान को प्रतिस्थापित किया?	Planning Commission
IBPS PO	23-10-2022	Which index evaluates states on export readiness across multiple pillars?	कौन सा सूचकांक निर्यात तैयारी के अनेकों स्तंभों पर राज्यों का मूल्यांकन करता है?	Export Preparedness Index
CDS	16-04-2023	NITI Aayog acts as: Think tank / Regulator / Tribunal?	निति आयोग निम्नलिखित में से किस रूप में कार्य करता है?	Think Tank
RRB NTPC	12-01-2024	EPI is aimed at strengthening which aspect of the economy?	EPI का उद्देश्य है कि वह किसे मजबूत करेगा?	Exports competitiveness




Q. With reference to the Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2024, consider the following statements:

1. Maharashtra ranked first due to diversified industry and strong port-led logistics.
2. EPI evaluates states only on export performance outcomes and not on policy or infrastructure.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
 - B. 2 only
 - C. Both 1 and 2
 - D. Neither 1 nor 2
- 



Indian Passport in Henley Passport Index (2026)

Parameter	Details
Index Name	Henley Passport Index
Latest Edition	2026
India's Rank (2026)	80th
Rank Change	Climbed 5 places
India's Rank (2025)	85th
India's Rank (2024)	80th
Visa-free / Visa-on-arrival Access	55 destinations
Countries Sharing Same Rank	Niger, Algeria
Nature of Improvement	Incremental gains in international travel access
Overall Trend	Modest recovery in global mobility

Aspect	Details
Total Passports Ranked	199
Total Destinations Covered	227 countries & territories
Ranking Basis	Number of destinations accessible without prior visa
Data Source	Official global travel & visa databases
Ranking Type	Relative global mobility strength

Point	Fact
India's mobility trend	Improving but still mid-low tier
Best use in exam	Rank-based current affairs question
Common trap	Confusing visa-free count with rank
Key number to remember	**Rank 80

Rank	Country
1	Singapore
2	Japan
3	Germany
4	Italy
5	Spain
6	France
7	Netherlands
8	South Korea
9	Sweden
10	Finland

Country	Rank
Pakistan	106
Bangladesh	97
Nepal	103
Sri Lanka	95
Bhutan	90
Myanmar	88
China	64
Maldives	58
India	80

- **Consider the following statements:**

- In the 2026 Henley Passport Index, India ranked 80th.
- Indian passport holders can access 55 destinations visa-free or with visa-on-arrival.
- India improved its rank compared to both 2024 and 2025.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3



Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement – 2026

Parameter	Details
Award Name	Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement
Year	2026
Awardee	Toby Kiers
Nationality	American
Field	Evolutionary Biology
Awarded For	Revealing and transforming scientific understanding of underground fungal (mycorrhizal) networks
Core Contribution	Demonstrated the role of fungal networks in nutrient exchange and climate regulation
Significance	Recognised as one of the most prestigious global environmental awards

Aspect	Explanation
What are mycorrhizae	Symbiotic underground fungal networks connected to plant roots
Plant → Fungi exchange	Carbon-rich sugars and fats
Fungi → Plant exchange	Essential nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen
Nature of relationship	Mutualistic (both benefit)
Earlier perception	Passive helpers
New understanding	Active, strategic partners in ecosystems

Before

Fungi seen as secondary organisms

Limited ecological importance

Plant-centric ecosystem view

After

Fungi recognised as **vital life-support systems**

Central role in **global carbon cycle**

Network-based ecosystem understanding

Consider the following statements:

1. Toby Kiers was awarded the Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement in 2026.
2. Mycorrhizal fungi help plants by supplying phosphorus and nitrogen.
3. Underground fungal networks contribute to global carbon sequestration.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3



India's BRICS Presidency 2026

Parameter

Event

Date

Chair Country

BRICS Presidency Year

Announced By

Position of Announcer

Group

Years Since BRICS Formation

Details

Launch of BRICS Presidency 2026 Website and Logo

14 January 2026

India

2026

S. Jaishankar

External Affairs Minister of India

BRICS

20 years completed

Focus Area	Description
Core Vision	Harness collective strengths of BRICS nations
Development Approach	Humanity-first and people-centric
Cooperation Areas	Dialogue, practical cooperation, innovation
Global Context	Rising international uncertainties
Target Beneficiaries	Emerging markets & developing economies

Aspect	Details
Logo Text	BRICS India 2026
Guiding Motto	Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability
Symbolism	Unity, growth, inclusiveness, sustainability
Broader Message	Collective global welfare through cooperation

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Word of the day

Abstruse:

difficult to penetrate; incomprehensible to one of ordinary understanding or knowledge

Synonyms: deep, recondite

Usage: *Some of the classic novels are too abstruse for the younger generation.*

Pronunciation:

newsth.live/abstrusepron

International Phonetic Alphabet: /əb'stru:s/

Word of the day

Extempore:

without prior preparation; with little or no preparation or forethought

Synonyms: ad-lib, impromptu, off-the-cuff, offhand, unrehearsed

Usage: *It was an extempore skit.*

Pronunciation:

newsth.live/extemporepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ɛk'stɛmpəri/, /ɪk'stɛmpəri/



Thank you 😊

