

Daily Current Affairs





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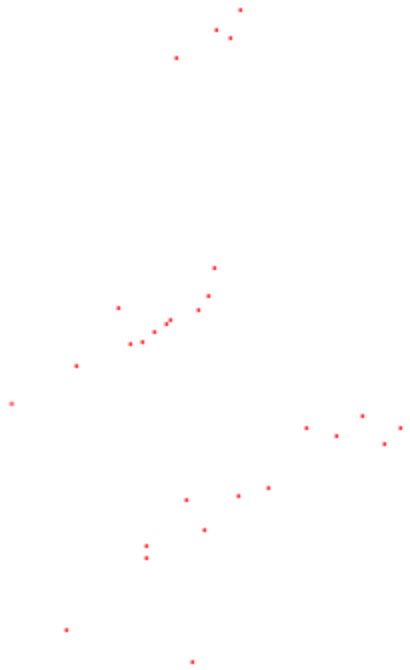


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10 MCQ QUIZ



“It’s only after you’ve stepped outside your comfort zone that you begin to change, grow, and transform.”

— Roy T. Bennett

SOCIAL AUDIT
'No safety gear in over 90% sewer death cases'
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Huge crowds line streets to bid VS farewell
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INSIDE



'21 children died in 3 days in Gaza from starvation'

GAZA CITY
The head of Al-Shifa hospital, Mohammed Abu Salmei, in Gaza City said on Tuesday that 21 children had died across the Palestinian territory in the past three days "due to starvation and malnutrition". UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned on Monday evening that "the last lifelines keeping people alive are collapsing" in Gaza. » PAGE 14

Trade, Khilistani presence on PM's agenda for U.K.

NEW DELHI
Bilateral trade is a major agenda item as Prime Minister Narendra Modi heads to the U.K. on Wednesday but the talks will also feature discussions on pro-Khalistan elements in the U.K. and India's policy on bringing U.K.-based fugitives to justice. The presence of Khalistani activists in the U.K. and elsewhere undermines "social cohesion", Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said. » PAGE 4

Students seek aid for victims after Dhaka jet crash

DHAKA
Hundreds of students protested near the site of the crash of a Bangladesh air force training jet into a school in the nation's capital, demanding accountability, compensation for victims' families and the halt of training flights. The toll from the crash rose to 31 in the deadliest plane crash in the Bangladesh capital in recent memory, including at least 25 students, a teacher and died from burn injuries. » PAGE 16

SC may hear appeal by Maharashtra in train blasts case tomorrow

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday indicated its intention to list on Thursday the Maharashtra government's appeal challenging the Bombay High Court judgment acquitting 10 convicts in the 2006 Mumbai train blasts case, which killed 187 people and left more than 800 injured. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the State, made an oral submission of the matter before Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai, requesting that the matter be listed at the earliest. Chief Justice Gavai responded by stating whether Thursday would

Dhankhar's resignation notified, but important questions remain

No official word on what prompted his resignation, sources link it to his acceptance of a notice from Opposition seeking removal of Justice Varma, which govt. intended to be bipartisan; Cong. leader says there are 'deeper reasons' for the exit

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry on Tuesday notified of Jagdeep Dhankhar's resignation as Vice-President, ostensibly on health grounds, less than 24 hours after he submitted it to President Droupadi Murmu, formally marking his abrupt exit from the post. Prime Minister Narendra Modi acknowledged the resignation in a brief post on X, without any elaboration. "Shri Jagdeep Dhankharji has got many opportunities to serve our country in various capacities, including as the Vice President of India. Wishing him good health," he said.

Though there is no official word on what prompted



Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha Harivansh Narayan Singh calls on President Droupadi Murmu in New Delhi on Tuesday.

ed the resignation, sources say it may have been linked to a bipartisan initiative originating in the Lok Sabha. "War of words" Sources said the matter led to a heated exchange of words between officials in

the Rajya Sabha Chairperson's office and government functionaries. While this may have acted as the immediate trigger, sources suggest there were other underlying differences between Mr. Dhankhar and the government. Sources say Mr. Dhankhar and the government have not been in sync for some time.

Mr. Dhankhar had also, on one occasion, publicly admonished Union Agriculture Minister Shwraj Singh Chouhan at a function, urging him to initiate a dialogue with protesting farmers.

On Tuesday, the Opposition raised questions over the circumstances of Mr. Dhankhar's departure. Congress chief whip Jairam Ramesh, in a post on X, described events on Mr.

Dhankhar's final day in office.

He pointed to the absence of Leader of the House in the Rajya Sabha J.P. Nadra and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju from a meeting of the Rajya Sabha's Business Advisory Committee (BAC), which Mr. Dhankhar reportedly took umbrage at.

Mr. Ramesh maintained that there were "deeper reasons" for the resignation.

Mr. Dhankhar resigned on Monday evening, citing medical reasons in his letter to President Droupadi Murmu. He said he was stepping down with immediate effect.

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IAF to retire MIG-21 jets in September

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

After protecting the skies for more than six decades, the MIG-21 fighter jets of the Indian Air Force are set to retire in September, confirming the development, a senior defence official said. The Air Force will hold a ceremonial send-off at the Chandigarh airbase in September.

The ceremony will be attended by veteran pilots who have flown the Russian-origin jets. According to sources, there are plans to replace the MIG-21 jets with the Tejas Mk1A fighter aircraft.

FULL REPORT
PAGE 4

SC notice to Centre, States on President, Governors' powers

The issue affects all the States. The Supreme Court is concerned with the entire country. The court will answer the questions raised by the President.

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

A Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai on Tuesday said the questions raised by President Droupadi Murmu in her Presidential Reference regarding the powers of the President and Governors in granting assent to State Bills concern the entire country.

The Chief Justice indicated that the matter may be listed for detailed hearing in mid-August.

The Bench, including Justices Surya Kant, Vikram Nath, P.S. Narasimha, and A.S. Chandurkar, issued notices to all States and the Union government, seeking their responses to the Presidential Reference. The notices are returnable within a week. The Bench is scheduled to reconvene on July 29.

Tamil Nadu, represented by senior advocate P. Wilson, said the issues raised had already been addressed in the SC's April 8 judgment in the case concerning the delay by the Governor in assenting to the Bills. Senior advocate K.K. Venugopal, appearing for Kerala, questioned the maintainability of the reference issued on May 13.

"Concerns entire nation" Chief Justice Gavai responded that the questions raised in the reference were not confined to Tamil Nadu or Kerala. "The issue affects all the States," he

The issue affects all the States. The Supreme Court is concerned with the entire country. The court will answer the questions raised by the President.

B.R. GAVAI
Chief Justice of India

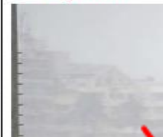
said. "We are keeping all the questions [in the Presidential Reference] open," Chief Justice Gavai told the assembled lawyers.

Attorney General R. Venkataramani agreed to assist the Bench, while Solicitor General Tushar Mehta appeared for the Centre. Senior advocates Kapil Sibal, M. Singhvi, Harish Dwivedi, and Gopal Subramaniam also appeared.

The Presidential Reference made under Article 143 of the Constitution, broadly seeks clarity on whether judicial powers extend to imposing time lines on the President and Governors under Articles 200 and 201. These Articles deal with the process by which Governors grant or withhold assent to Bills passed by State Legislatures, and refer them to the President. "In the absence of any constitutionally prescribed time limit or manner of exercise of powers by a Governor, can time limits be imposed and manner of exercise of powers be prescribed through judicial orders? Can judicial orders impose time lines and manner of exercise of powers by the President under Article 201?" the Reference asks.

The April 8 judgment, delivered by a Division Bench comprising Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan, dealt with the delay by the Tamil Nadu Governor in acting on 10 reserved Bills. The court had held the Governor's actions illegal.

Veil of mist



Braving the rain: Heavy rain hits the Marine Drive promenade in Mumbai on Tuesday, with the IMD issuing a yellow alert. The city recorded over 200 mm of rainfall in two days, life was disrupted in parts of the metropolis. (IMMANUEL TOBIN)

SC asks eateries along Kanwar route to display details

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said Kanwarlyas must be free to choose where they want to eat while mandating that restaurants on the Kanwar Yatra route must comply with a statutory mandate to display their licenses and registration certificates.

Quoting Karl Marx's "religion is the opium of the people", and remarking how food habits "alienate", a Bench of Justices M.M. Sundresh and N. K. Jaisankar said it was ultimately the pilgrims' choice to pick suitable places for food.

The court was hearing a plea challenging a requirement for food vendors along the Kanwar Yatra route to display QR code stickers along with the

owners' names prominently on banners outside their establishments. The petitioners include Apoorva and Jha, the Association for Protection of Civil Rights, and Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra. The States en route the yatra include Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Senior advocate Mikul Rana, for one of the States, said the regulations were based on a Central law.

Question of business
During the hearing, Justice Sundresh questioned whether there were restaurants which had been serving non-vegetarian food before the yatra but switched to pure vegetarian during the pilgrimage months for "better business". He said there were people who did not touch



Long haul: Kanwarlyas carrying water from the Ganga in Haridwar taking out a procession in New Delhi on Tuesday. It is a 300km

garlic or take onion.

"If a hotel was pure vegetarian all through the year, there would be no names, etc., will not arise. But if a hotel, where non-vegetarian food was served, is converted to pure vegetarian only for the Kanwarliya Yatra for

better business, the consumers should know," Justice Sundresh observed.

"We must give that flexibility to the consumer. It is the comfort zone of the consumer. The consumer is the king," the judge remarked.

The court said it wanted

to pass an equitable order without hurting any sentiments.

Senior advocate A.M. Singhvi said it was true India was one of the most diverse spots on the planet.

"My choice may annoy you or your choice may annoy me. But the exercise of choice must not mean blanket exclusion... The use of legal power by the State for an ulterior motive is an act of malice. The only issue here is identity politics... You [the States] are trying to ostracise the establishments owned by a minority community which comply with all your requirements," Mr. Singhvi said.

Senior advocate Huzefa Ahmad, also for petitioners, urged the court to not entangle the issue of choice of food with the States' mandate to display

the names of the owners and employees.

"Everyone has the right to know what is being served. During the yatra, there is a specific dictate that I respectfully accept. It is a reasonable restriction... The demand of the consumers is served by providing only vegetarian fare. But there is no need to disclose that the eatery had once served non-vegetarian food... The name or the identity of the owner or his employees have nothing to do with food," Mr. Ahmad said.

He urged the court to need for a balance of rights, saying the consumers' choice cannot stifle everything.

The court, however, said Tuesday was officially the last day of the yatra, and it did not want to go further into these issues.

SC asks eateries along Kanwar route to display details

Krishnadas Rajagopal

NEW DELHI

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owners' names prominently on banners outside their establishments. The petitioners include Apoorvanand Jha, the Association for Protection of Civil Rights, and Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra. The States *en route* the yatra include Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, for one of the States, said the regulations were based on a Central law.

Question of business

During the hearing, Justice Sundresh questioned whether there were restaurants which had been serving non-vegetarian food before the yatra but switched to pure vegetarian during the pilgrimage months for "better business". He said there were people who did not touch



Long haul: Kanwariyas carrying water from the Ganga in Haridwar taking out a procession in New Delhi on Tuesday. R. V. MOORTHY

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"My choice may annoy you or your choice may annoy me. But the exercise of choice must not mean blanket exclusion...The use of legal power by the State for an ulterior motive is an act of malice. The only issue here is identity politics... You [the States] are trying to ostracise the establishments owned by a minority community which comply with all your requirements," Mr. Singhvi submitted.

Senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi, also for petitioners, urged the court to not entangle the issue of choice of food with the States' mandate to display

the names of the owners and employees.

"Everyone has the right to know what is being served. During the yatra, there is a specific dictate that I respectfully accept. It is a reasonable restriction... The demand of the consumers is served by providing only vegetarian fare. But there is no need to disclose that the eatery had once served non-vegetarian food... The name or the identity of the owner or his employees have nothing to do with food," Mr. Ahmadi said.

He urged the court the need for a balance of rights, saying the consumers' choice cannot stump everything.

The court, however, said Tuesday was officially the last day of the yatra, and it did not want to go further into these issues.

- The **Supreme Court** was hearing a petition against the requirement for **eateries along the Kanwar Yatra route** to display:

- QR codes,
- Licences,
- Registration certificates,
- **Names of owners and employees.**

- **Petitioners:** Apoorvanand Jha, Association for Protection of Civil Rights, and MP Mahua Moitra.
 - **States involved:** **Uttar Pradesh** and **Uttarakhand**.
-

2. SC's Observations

- Cited Karl Marx: "Religion is the opium of the people."
- Justice M.M. Sundresh and N. Kotiswar Singh:
 - Emphasized freedom of choice for pilgrims to eat what and where they wish.
 - Rejected blanket exclusions or identity-based regulations.
 - Stressed: "The consumer is the king."

3. Core Issues Discussed

✓ a) Disclosure Requirement

- Some eateries had switched to pure vegetarian fare only during Kanwar Yatra for "**better business**".
- Justice Sundresh argued that consumers deserve transparency:

"If the hotel used to serve non-veg food before, and has changed just for the yatra, it should be disclosed."

✓ b) Consumer Rights vs Identity Politics

- Advocates argued:
 - **States were targeting minority-run establishments** under the garb of regulation.
 - Justice Singhvi: Choice should not be used to ostracize any community.
 - Justice Huzefa Ahmadi: Name/identity of owner/employee has **nothing to do with food**.

c) SC's Balance of Rights

- The SC sought a **balance**:
 - Protect pilgrims' food preferences.
 - Avoid infringing **minority rights** or using regulations for political or religious exclusion.

Dimension

Insights



Polity

Role of judiciary in ensuring religious and consumer rights under Article 19 & 21.

Governance

State powers to regulate public services vs overreach.

Ethics

Debate between transparency for consumers and non-discrimination for vendors.

Society

Identity politics in religious pilgrimages and communal food practices.

Economy

Impact of religious events on business models of small food vendors.

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the recent Supreme Court observations on food vendors during Kanwar Yatra:

- ~~1.~~ The Court mandated that eateries display the name and religion of the owners and staff.
2. The Court upheld that Kanwariyas must have the freedom to choose where and what they eat.
3. Justice Sundresh emphasized that changing to vegetarian fare solely for the Yatra must be disclosed.
4. The Court observed that the consumer's right to know does not justify targeting specific communities.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A) 1, 2 and 3 only
- ☒ B) 2, 3 and 4 only
- C) 1 and 4 only
- D) 2 and 4 only

IN BRIEF



Surprised at pace with which our body adapts: Shubhanhu

Indian astronaut Group Captain Shubhanhu Shukla, who is undergoing a rehabilitation programme in the U.S., said he was "surprised to observe the pace with which our body can adjust to new settings". In a post on Instagram, Group Captain Shukla, who returned to earth on July 15 after spending 18 days in the International Space Station, said, "Experiencing microgravity, our body goes through several changes like fluid shift, heart rate, balance readjustment, muscle loss. These are adaptations to the new environment. Once the body gets used to this and we return to gravity, these adjustments happen once again."

West Bengal bids farewell to Naxal leader Azizul Haque

Kolkata on Tuesday bid an emotional farewell to Naxal leader Azizul Haque, who passed away at a private hospital on Monday. He was 83. The veteran leader's passing marks the end of an era in radical Leftist politics of West Bengal. Haque is survived by his wife and daughter. Haque was one of the first leaders to be expelled from the CPIMD for following his mentor Chari Mazumdar's ideology. He co-founded the CPIMD's Second Central Committee with Nishith Bhattacharya. During their time, they tried to establish parallel revolutionary governments in West Bengal and Bihar. Born into a Zamindari family in 1942, he joined the Naxal movement at the age of 17 and gave up his share of the land as a show of his political ideology.

In over 90% of sewer deaths, workers had no safety gear

In an audit of 54 sewer deaths in 2022 and 2023, no equipment was given in 47 cases; only five of the deceased workers had gloves, one had gumboots; workers' consent was not taken in 27 cases

Abhinav Lakshman
NEW DELHI

Over 90% of workers who died while cleaning sewers did not have any safety gear or personalised protective equipment (PPE) kits, according to a recent social audit commissioned by the Union government to look into hazardous sewer and septic tank cleaning across the country. Even in the cases where they had some safety gear, it was limited to a pair of gloves and gumboots.

In September 2023, the Social Justice Ministry commissioned a study into hazardous cleaning deaths, which analysed the circumstances surrounding 54 such deaths in 17 districts across eight States and Union Territories that occurred in 2022 and 2023.

The social audit, whose findings were made public in Parliament on Tuesday, investigated hiring mechanisms, the use of safety equipment, inspection set-ups, availability of PPE kits, rapid response readiness and equipment, and



A sanitation worker cleaning a drain during the cleanliness drive in New Delhi on Friday. *See cover page*

awareness of the law banning manual scavenging.

In 49 out of the 54 deaths examined, the workers were not wearing any safety equipment. In five cases, they were wearing just gloves, and in one case, gloves and gumboots.

In 47 instances, "no mechanized equipment and safety gears for cleaning of sewers and septic tanks were made available to the workers", the audit report said. In fact, it was able to identify just two instances where their consent was taken from the workers, "they were not counselled on the risks involved in the work". The study found that in cases, the workers were

"contracted personally/individually". In five cases, the workers were employed by a government agency, and in three cases, they were employed by the public sector but were hired by private employers for hazardous work.

These findings became public when the Social Justice Ministry was replying to a question in the Lok Sabha by Congress MP Pratiksinh Shinde. In its response, the Ministry added that it has already launched the NAMASTE scheme for addressing the problem of hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tank workers and waste-pickers in July 2023.

This is in line with the government's declaration that manual scavenging has ended in the country, and that it is the problem of hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks that now needs attention.

So far, the NAMASTE scheme has identified 48,902 sewer and septic tank workers in 36 States and UTs across the country, of which a little over half have been provided with PPE kits and safety gear.

'Weight gain begins 8 weeks after stopping anti-obesity drugs'

Ramya Kannan
CHENNAI

A review of data from clinical trials of weight-loss drugs has concluded that weight regain begins about eight weeks after stopping these medications, and continues up to 20 weeks, before stabilising at about 10 weeks.

The paper "Trajectory of the body weight after drug discontinuation in the treatment of anti-obesity medications" published in *BMC Medicine*, an open access, transparent peer-reviewed general medical journal, also observed that at 52 weeks, the subjects of the trial still weighed less than they did before starting medication, but the weight loss was reduced compared with when they were actively taking the drugs.

This is in line with the government's declaration that manual scavenging has ended in the country, and that it is the problem of hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks that now needs attention.

The researchers Han Wu et al, from the Department of Endocrinology and Metabolism, Peking University People's Hospital, China, analysed data from 11 clinical trials with 1,573 people taking anti-obesity medication. These medications included GLP-1 receptor agonists (such as semaglutide, liraglutide), orlistat, naltrexone-bupropion, and phentermine-topiramate.

Those who started with a lower body mass index (BMI), meaning they were less overweight, showed more weight regain after stopping than those with higher BMI, they found.

"This is an interesting study with robust meta-analyses," he said. "The results have been a surprise in many other trials," says Dr. Nanditha Sundar, a diabetologist at Kanchi Kamachandran's Diabetes Hospital, Chennai. "Any intervention, either when you stop down, most discontinue, will result in weight gain, even if it is lifestyle modifications."

However, it is important to see the usefulness of these drugs in the context of the obesity epidemic. Earlier, we did not have many tools to treat it, now we have drugs providing hope to people who can lose weight without surgery. What is clear is that the regain will not take you back to the baseline weight, so while expensive, these drugs should be considered an investment, because the benefits go beyond weight loss," Dr. Nanditha said.

History of air crash probes shows investigators disagree on pilot complicity

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

In two out of four fatal air-crash probes studied by academic researchers, the investigators from the national agencies disagreed with the United States National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) on whether the pilots intentionally crashed their planes.

In three of the four cases, the length of investigations averaged nearly three years and in only one case the deceased pilot was proven to have a history of clinically diagnosed depression.

"Psychological autopsy" — a form of forensic investigation into the mental state of the deceased — was a key factor in determining pilot intentionality and even then "there could rarely be certainty about suicidal intent being the sole cause of an accident," Alpo Vuorio, psychologist and an academic researcher of aviation disasters, told *The Hindu* in an email.

Questions on the mental health of the pilot have surfaced around the ongoing investigation into the crash of the Air India flight AI-371 from Ahmedabad to Gatwick on June 12 in which 241 passengers, including crew, were killed and 19 were killed on the ground.

Since 1994, there have been only six confirmed commercial planes that investigating agencies attributed to actions by the pilot. Within these, only four have published reports and analyses in academic literature.

Based on flying accident reports in the United States from 1993 to 2021, 24 out of 7,244 — or 0.33% — fatal accident cases in general aviation were formally attributed to be "pilot-assisted suicides." The vast majority of these accidents involved pilots flying their own planes or those of very

small operators where planes usually did not carry FDR (Flight Data Recorder) and CVR (Cockpit Voice Recorder), said a 2023 study led by Dr. Vuorio in the journal *Aviation Space and Environmental Medicine*.

The first of these was Silk Air Flight 185 (Jakarta-Singapore) in December 1999, which killed 97 passengers and seven crew members. Boeing 737, it crashed into the Musi river, Sumatra after nose-diving from an altitude of nearly 35,000 feet.

Following a nearly three-year investigation, the National Transportation Safety Corporation (NTSC) — the Indonesian equivalent of India's Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau that is investigating the Ahmedabad crash — concluded that the "technical investigation has yielded no evidence to explain the cause of the accident." The U.S. agency NTSC commented, "There was no evidence of a me-



Air India's Ahmedabad-London flight crashed shortly after take-off in Gujarat on June 12. *VIJAY SONIA*

chanical failure of any of the flight control systems or related components that would have been causal or contributing to the accident and the accident can be explained by intentional pilot action," said the 140-page report. This report also placed on record that the captain, who had commanded the plane, was reportedly battling a financial crisis, though it was also stated that he displayed aberrant behaviour prior to the flight.

The second accident occurred on October 31, 1999, when Egypt Air Flight 990, a Boeing 767, crashed into the Atlantic Ocean, south of Massachusetts. About 28 minutes after take-off, the FDR showed that the First Officer disconnected the autopilot. He was alone in the cockpit, with the captain having left for a bathroom break.



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The NTSB determined that the "probable cause was... as a result of the First Officer's aberrant behaviour." The Egyptian Civil Aviation Authority (EGCAA), while first collaborating with the NTSB on the investigation, concluded that "the officer did not deliberately dive the plane into the ocean" and that mechanical failure was "a plausible and likely cause of the accident." The third accident, occurred on November 24, 2015, involved the Mozambique Airlines Flight 470 from Maputo, Mozambique to Luanda, Angola. The Embraer E175 winged crashed into the Bwalandi National Park, Namibia, killing all 27 passengers and six crew members. About an hour and 50 minutes into the flight, the First Officer disconnected the autopilot. He had to go to the toilet, leaving the captain alone in the cockpit, with the autopilot system leading to a "sustained descent and collision with the terrain," says the investigation report. While here the investigation agencies of the Mozambique and Namibia attributed the plane's "unnatural" descent to the pilot, the Mozambique Association of Air Operators disputed the finding.

The fourth analysed accident — the only one where there was rapid, unanimous consensus that a pilot, with a history of psychiatric problems, intentionally crashed the plane — occurred on March 24, 2015 with Germanwings Flight 4U9525 from Barcelona, Spain to Dusseldorf, Germany. There were 150 casualties following the crash of the Airbus A-320XLR.

According to the investigation report, in the cruise phase of the flight, the First Officer walked into the cockpit and the First Officer disconnected the autopilot. He had to go to the toilet, leaving the captain alone in the cockpit, with the autopilot system leading to a "sustained descent and collision with the terrain," says the investigation report. While here the investigation agencies of the Mozambique and Namibia attributed the plane's "unnatural" descent to the pilot, the Mozambique Association of Air Operators disputed the finding.

SUDOKU

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3	8	5	4		9		
8		9				3	
2	5			7			
		8	2	9	7		
		7	3	5			
		3	4		2		

Solution to previous puzzle

8	9	3	4	5	7	6	2
3	7	5	9	6	2	8	4
2	4	6	8	3	7	9	5
5	2	7	1	9	4	3	8
6	3	8	2	4	5	7	1
7	1	9	6	3	8	5	4
9	5	4	3	7	1	2	6
1	6	2	5	8	9	4	7

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

9	1	3	4	5	7	8	6
8	7	5	9	6	2	3	1
2	4	6	8	3	7	1	5
4	2	9	6	1	3	5	7
3	5	8	7	9	4	6	2
6	3	2	1	7	6	2	3
5	8	4	1	7	6	2	3
6	3	2	8	4	9	1	5
1	9	7	2	3	5	4	8

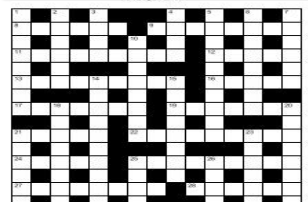
FAITH

Timely action

Time is precious like gold — this is an oft-repeated observation. But a scholar went further and said time is even more precious than gold. It is as priceless as life itself, he said. If we lose wealth, we can work hard, save a significant portion of our earnings and become wealthy again. But if we lose life, can we regain it? That is why this scholar compared time to life. Time can be divided into past, present and future. The past is like an expired cheque. The present is like cash in your hands. The future should be our focus, for our efforts can lead to a successful future, said R. Narayanan in a discourse.

Determination will help us accomplish many things. We should not miss the proper time to do something. Whatever is done when it should be done, will definitely yield the desired results. Is anything impossible, if done at the proper time, asks Thiruvalluvar. If you decide to do something and you are firm in your resolve to do it, then you will be successful, says another kural (verse).

Whatever we set about doing, must be done with careful planning. Planning helps us save time. The *Thirukkural* sounds a note of caution. Thiruvalluvar says that we must think before we act. It is foolish to be hasty in our actions and then ponder over them later on. It is not wrong to have great aspirations. You can even aspire to rule the world, and achieve this goal too, if you act at the right time. The stork waits near the river bank, while shoals of small fish swim by. The bird may be hungry, but it does not catch these fish. It waits until a big fish comes by. We should be like the stork, waiting patiently for the right moment, and then act, to reap the maximum benefit.

TH CROSSWORD 14544
(set by Saral)

- Across**
- Loots gains (8)
 - Kids cried hard, jumping, chewing piece of lollipop with honey essentially (8)
 - Diffidence of instrument resulting in (5)
 - One assembled with drug is furious (8)
 - Old wader returning inside retreat with small laptops (8)

- Down**
- Gas contained in volcano gradually coming back (5)
 - Grave words in record by Thai prevalent is altered (7)
 - Cheer eventually drops buds (7)
 - Notices cycles in fish (8)
 - Informed about her strangely quiet entry (8)
 - Nausea, disoriented European abandoned stone bath (5)
 - Size fixed, game unit designed finally (6)
 - Painter using simulator not ordinary (8)
 - Spread samosas, plates right away with lemon for starters (8)
 - Five entering Ripon building near church area (8)
 - Struggle of English force opening cattle (8)
 - Gambles with a Greek character (4)
 - Avoid bright star, hot chaps (4)
 - Large reptiles initially rolling, turning a log with tails (10)
 - Irregular bent cross shape figure (8)
 - Indian ushering new bird trainees (6)
 - Backlash of company controlled by wealthy, evading taxes from the beginning (8)
 - Leader of brigadier wants to include post for forces (10)
 - Many require engaging two fence to get a good view (8)
 - Rush from extremely heavy rain maybe engulfing ancient city (2,1,5)
 - Note shy slide moving abruptly (8)
 - Sailors pruned, picked up second plant (8)
 - Missing the first funny remark related to viewers (6)
 - Revealing contents of that same past (4)
 - Rogues banishing the Spanish in drives (4)

‘Weight gain begins 8 weeks after stopping anti-obesity drugs’

Ramya Kannan
CHENNAI

A review of data from clinical trials of weight-loss drugs has concluded that weight regain begins about eight weeks after stopping these medications, and continues up to 20 weeks, before stabilising at about 26 weeks.

The paper “Trajectory of the body weight after drug discontinuation in the treatment of anti-obesity medications” published in *BMC Medicine*, an open access, transparent peer-reviewed general medical journal, also observed that at 52 weeks, the subjects of the trial still weighed less than they did before starting medication, but the weight loss was reduced compared with when they were actively taking the drugs.

11 clinical trials

The researchers Han Wu et al, from the Department of Endocrinology and Metabolism, Peking University People’s Hospital, China, analysed data from 11 clinical trials with 1,573 people taking anti-obesity medication. These medications included GLP-1 receptor agonists (such as semaglutide, liraglutide), orlistat, naltrexone-bupropion, and phentermine-topiramate.

The researchers ob-

served that people who lost more weight during treatment were more likely to regain weight, even if they continued lifestyle interventions (including diet and exercise).

Those who started with a lower body mass index (BMI), meaning they were less overweight, showed more weight regain after stopping than those with higher BMI, they found.

“This is an interesting study with robust meta analyses, but similar results have been shown in many other trials too,” says Dr. Nanditha, consultant diabetologist, Dr. A. Ramachandran’s Diabetes Hospitals, Chennai. “Any intervention, either when you step down or discontinue, will result in weight gain, even if it is lifestyle modifications.”

However, it is important to see the usefulness of these drugs in the context of the obesity epidemic. “Earlier, we did not have many tools to treat it, now these drugs are providing hope to people who can lose weight without surgery. What is clear is that the regain will not take you back to the baseline weight, so while expensive, these drugs should be considered an investment, because the benefits go beyond weight loss,” Dr. Nanditha said.

1. Core Findings

- Weight regain begins approximately 8 weeks after stopping anti-obesity drugs.
 - Regain continues up to 20 weeks, stabilizing by 26 weeks.
 - Even at 52 weeks, subjects weighed less than at baseline, but had regained some weight compared to when actively on medication.
-

2. Research Study Details

- **Title:** *Trajectory of the body weight after drug discontinuation in the treatment of anti-obesity medications.*
 - **Journal:** *BMC Medicine* (open-access, peer-reviewed).
 - **Researchers:** Han Wu et al., Peking University People's Hospital, China.
 - **Sample size:** 1,573 participants across 11 clinical trials.
-

3. Medications Studied

- **GLP-1 receptor agonists:** Semaglutide, Liraglutide
 - **Other drugs:** Orlistat, Naltrexone-bupropion, Phentermine-topiramate
-

4. Key Observations

- People who lost more weight during treatment **regained more** after stopping.
 - Individuals with **lower BMI** (less overweight initially) showed **higher weight regain**.
 - **Weight gain occurred even with continued lifestyle interventions** (diet/exercise).
 - Discontinuation is likely to reverse weight loss unless **sustained by medication**.
-



Dimension

Relevance

Health (GS2)

Tackling obesity, which is a growing public health challenge in India.

Science & Tech (GS3)

Shows the role of **clinical trials** and pharmacological innovation in non-communicable disease management.

Ethics

Equity in access – expensive obesity drugs may not be accessible to all.

Policy

May lead to framing of **long-term obesity care policies** under Ayushman Bharat or NCD missions.

Essay

Themes like "Health is wealth", "Lifestyle diseases", "Pharma and society" etc.



Q. Consider the following statements regarding recent findings on anti-obesity medications:

- ☒ 1. Weight regain begins immediately after stopping the medication.
- ☒ 2. GLP-1 receptor agonists like semaglutide are among the drugs studied.
- ☒ 3. Individuals with lower baseline BMI tend to regain more weight than those with higher BMI.
- ☒ 4. Even after stopping the drug, participants' weight never returned to the pre-treatment baseline.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A) 1 and 2 only
- ☒ B) 2, 3 and 4 only
- C) 1, 3 and 4 only
- D) 1, 2, 3 and 4

'In over 90% of sewer deaths, workers had no safety gear'

In an audit of 54 sewer deaths in 2022 and 2023, no equipment was given in 47 cases; only five of the deceased workers had gloves, one had gumboots; workers' consent was not taken in 27 cases

Abhinav Lakshman
NEW DELHI

Over 90% of workers who died while cleaning sewers did not have any safety gear or personalised protective equipment (PPE) kits, according to a recent social audit commissioned by the Union government to look into hazardous sewer and septic tank cleaning across the country. Even in the cases where they had some safety gear, it was limited to a pair of gloves and gumboots.

In September 2023, the Social Justice Ministry commissioned a study into hazardous cleaning deaths, which analysed the circumstances surrounding 54 such deaths in 17 districts across eight States and Union Territories that occurred in 2022 and 2023.

Government data show 150 people across the country died due to hazardous cleaning in 2022 and 2023.

The social audit, whose findings were made public in Parliament on Tuesday, investigated hiring mechanisms, the use of safety equipment, institutional set-ups, availability of PPE kits, rapid response readiness and equipment, and



A sanitation worker cleaning a drain, during the cleanliness drive in New Delhi on Friday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

awareness of the law banning manual scavenging.

No safety equipment

In 49 out of the 54 deaths examined, the workers were not wearing any safety equipment. In five cases, they were wearing just gloves, and in one case, gloves and gumboots.

In 47 instances, "no mechanized equipment and safety gears for cleaning of sewers and septic tanks were made available to the workers", the audit report said. In fact, it was able to identify just two instances where this equipment was made available and only one where the requisite training was provided. The audit noted that in 45 of these deaths, "it was found

that there is still no equipment readiness on the part of the concerned Agency carrying out such work".

Awareness drives were conducted – only "partially" – in the wake of just seven of the deaths, in Chennai and Kancheepuram districts in Tamil Nadu, and in Satara district in Maharashtra.

No informed consent

No consent was taken from workers in 27 cases, according to the social audit, which further noted that even in the 18 cases where written consent was taken from the workers, "they were not counselled on the risks involved in the work".

The study found that in 38 cases, the workers were

"contracted personally/individually". In five cases, the workers were employed by a government agency, and in three cases, they were employed by the public sector but were hired by private employers for the particular work they were doing when they died.

These findings became public when the Social Justice Ministry was replying to a question in the Lok Sabha by Congress MP Praniti Sushilkumar Shinde. In its response, the Ministry added that it has already launched the NAMASTE scheme for addressing the problem of hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tank workers and waste-pickers in July 2023.

This is in line with the government's declaration that manual scavenging has ended in the country, and that it is the problem of hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks that now needs attention.

So far, the NAMASTE scheme has identified 84,902 sewer and septic tank workers in 36 States and UTs across the country, of which a little over half have been provided with PPE kits and safety gear.

- A social audit commissioned by the Union Government in September 2023 revealed that **over 90% of sewer deaths** in 2022–23 occurred **without safety equipment** or informed consent.
- Conducted by the **Social Justice Ministry**, the audit covered **54 sewer deaths** across **17 districts**.

2. Key Findings of the Audit

Category	Details
Deaths Studied	54 deaths across 2022–23
Workers without PPE	49 of 54 had no safety gear
PPE Provided	Only 2 instances had mechanised tools and PPE properly used
Minimal Gear	In 5 cases, workers had just gloves ; 1 had both gloves and gumboots
Informed Consent	Not taken in 27 cases ; in remaining, even if taken, counselling was missing
Employer Types	38 workers were hired individually , not institutionally



3. Legal and Social Concerns

- Violates Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013.
 - Raises concerns about:
 - Occupational safety
 - Violation of human dignity
 - Lack of implementation of mechanised cleaning policies
 - No training provided in most cases
-

4. Government Response

- **NAMASTE Scheme** launched in July 2023 to address sewer and septic tank worker safety.
- As per govt:
 - **84,902 workers** identified across 36 States/UTs.
 - Very few have been **provided with PPE kits** and proper equipment.

5. Institutional Issues Noted

- Lack of:
 - Equipment
 - Trained personnel
 - Emergency preparedness
 - Work often outsourced or conducted informally by **contractual workers**.
-

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the recent audit report on sewer deaths in India:

1. Over 90% of workers who died while cleaning sewers in 2022–23 had no personal protective equipment.
2. The NAMASTE scheme was launched in 2023 to improve sanitation worker safety.
3. In more than 50% of cases, workers had received formal training before entering the sewers.
4. Informed consent and risk counselling were missing in most cases of manual sewer cleaning deaths.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A) 1, 2 and 4 only
- B) 2 and 3 only
- C) 1, 3 and 4 only
- D) 1, 2, 3 and 4

BRUSSELS

EU top diplomat tells Israel to stop killing Gazans at aid points



EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas on Tuesday condemned Israel's military for killing civilians at Gaza aid distribution points, calling it "indefensible". She urged Israel to stop and emphasised the need for increased humanitarian aid access. The EU warned Israel that all options remain open if promises are unmet. AFP

BEIJING

China probes Tibet ex-leader over 'bribes, superstitious activities'



Chinese authorities removed former Tibet leader Gendun Chopel over alleged crimes including bribery, misuse of public funds, illegal banquets, collusion with businessmen, and long-term engagement in banned "superstitious activities". His family also exploited his position for personal gain amid strict CCP controls on religion. AFP

LONDON

Ozzy Osbourne, Black Sabbath's bat-biting frontman, dies aged 76



Ozzy Osbourne, the iconic frontman of 1970s heavy metal band Black Sabbath, gained fame for wild performances, including biting a bat's head off. Known as the "Prince of Darkness," he sold over 100 million records, later becoming a beloved reality TV star in "The Osbournes". He died on Tuesday aged 76, his family said. REUTERS

MOSCOW

Russian police search popular Telegram channel Baza's offices



Russian police on Tuesday searched investigative Telegram channel Baza's offices and editor-in-chief Gleb Trifonov's apartment, detaining him amid an investigation into police leaking classified information published on Telegram. Authorities launched a criminal case against law enforcement officials for abuse of power. AFP

21 children died from starvation in 72 hours in Gaza, says hospital

UN Secretary General warns that 'the last lifelines keeping people alive are collapsing' in the enclave, at least 20 people were killed in strikes as Israel pushed on with a new incursion in an area that had largely been spared during the war

Agence France-Presse
GAZA CITY

The head of Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza City said on Tuesday that 21 children had died across the Palestinian territory in the past three days "due to malnutrition and starvation". These deaths were recorded at hospitals in Gaza, including Al-Shifa in Gaza City, Al-Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, over the past 72 hours, Mohammed Abu Salmiya told reporters.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned on Monday evening that



Fragile lives: Palestinian children wait for a meal at a charity kitchen in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip on Tuesday. AFP

"the last lifelines keeping people alive are collapsing" in Gaza, and that there were growing reports of children and adults with malnutrition.

Mr. Abu Salmiya told reporters the new cases of malnutrition and starvation were arriving at Gaza's remaining functioning hospitals "every moment".

"We are heading towards alarming numbers of deaths due to the starvation inflicted on the people of Gaza," he added.

After talks to extend a six-week ceasefire broke down, Israel imposed a full blockade on Gaza on March 2 this year, allowing nothing in until trucks were again permitted at a trickle in late May.

But stocks accumulated during the ceasefire gradually depleted, leaving the territory's more than two million inhabitants experiencing the worst shortages since the start of the war in October 2023.

World Food Programme director Carl Skau, who vi-

sited Gaza City in early July, called the situation "the worst" that he had ever seen.

Last Sunday, Gaza's civil defence agency reported that at least three infants died from "severe hunger and malnutrition" in the past week.

Gaza's health authorities said at least 20 people were killed in Israeli strikes on Tuesday, as Israel pushed on with a new incursion in an area that had largely been spared heavy fighting during the 21-month war.

The Israeli military ordered evacuations from parts of the city earlier this week.

Bangladesh mourns 31 dead amid protests for accountability

Associated Press
DHAKA

Hundreds of students protested near the site of the crash of a Bangladesh air force training jet into a school in the country's capital, demanding accountability, compensation for victims' families and the halt of training flights.

The toll from the crash rose to 31 in the deadliest plane crash in the Bangladeshi capital in recent memory, including at least 25 students, a teacher who died from burn injuries she sustained while helping others get out of the burning building, and the pilot



A Bangladesh air force personnel inspects the crash site of a training jet crashed into a school in Dhaka on Tuesday. AFP

of the training aircraft.

The protesting students demanded "accurate" publication of identities of the dead and injured, compensation for their families, and an immediate halt to

the use of "outdated and unsafe" training aircraft by the air force.

They accused security officials of beating them and manhandling teachers.

Jump to safety



A man jumps as flames and smoke rise from a wildfire at a village in Dubrava, Kosovo, on Tuesday. Across the globe, 2024 was the warmest year on record, with temperatures exceeding 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial era for the first time. REUTERS

Iran FM says Tehran will not abandon nuclear enrichment

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

Iran has no plans to abandon its nuclear program, including uranium enrichment, despite "severe" damage to its facilities after U.S. strikes last month, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Monday.

For now, enrichment "is stopped because, yes, damages are serious and severe," Mr. Araghchi said. "But obviously we cannot give up enrichment because it is an achievement of our own scientists," he continued, calling it a source of "national pride". He stressed that any future nuclear deal would have to contain the right to enrichment.

When asked whether any enriched uranium has been saved from the strikes, Mr. Araghchi said he had "no detailed information," but that Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation is "trying to evaluate what has exactly happened to our nuclear material, to our enriched material".

For now, enrichment "is stopped because, yes, damages are serious and severe," Mr. Araghchi said. "But obviously we cannot give up enrichment because it is an achievement of our own scientists," he continued, calling it a source of "national pride". He stressed that any future nuclear deal would have to contain the right to enrichment.

Pakistan court sentences dozens from Imran Khan's party to 10 years

Agence France-Presse
ISLAMABAD

A Pakistani Opposition leader was among more than three dozen members and supporters of former Prime Minister Imran Khan's party sentenced to 10 years in prison on Tuesday, when Mr. Khan was first arrested.

The sentences were handed down by an anti-terrorism court in the eastern city of Sargodha after the group was found guilty of involvement in riots, mainly against the army in May 2023, when Mr. Khan was first arrested.



A car seen burning as Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party activists block a road during a protest in Karachi in May 2023. AFP

former parliamentary and 32 other supporters of Mr. Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party were also sentenced to 10 years each for attacking government buildings, Mr. Malik said.

Mr. Khan, in office from 2018 to 2022, was initially arrested in May 2023, sparking nationwide unrest, some of which targeted military facilities.

Tuesday sentences were handed down for the attack on a police station in Mr. Khan's home constituency of Mianwali city, while those accused of targeting military installations are facing separate trials in military courts in May 2023, sparking nationwide unrest.

Trump accuses Obama of 'treason', calls for prosecution

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

Donald Trump on Tuesday accused his predecessor Barack Obama of "treason" and called for his prosecution over a report alleging that officials in the Democrat's administration had manipulated information on Russia's interference in the 2016 election.

Director of National Intelligence (DNI) Paul Gaubard has sent criminal referrals to the Justice Department related to a report published on Friday that asserted the Obama officials had been part of a "treasonous conspiracy".

Mr. Gaubard claimed Mr. Obama and his team had manufactured intelligence regarding Russian election interference to

Zelenskyy renews offer to hold talks with Putin

Associated Press
KYIV

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Tuesday renewed his offer to meet with Russia's Vladimir Putin and negotiate an end to the war in Ukraine, but hopes of progress were low as delegations prepared to hold another round of talks.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said Tuesday that "a lot of work needs to be done before having a detailed discussion on a possibility of high-level meetings".



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Tuesday renewed his offer to meet with Russia's Vladimir Putin and negotiate an end to the war in Ukraine, but hopes of progress were low as delegations prepared to hold another round of talks.



"I lay the groundwork for what has essentially years-long coop against President Trump". Her report files in the face of evidence amassed that asserted the Obama officials had been part of a "treasonous conspiracy".

Mr. Gaubard claimed Mr. Obama and his team had manufactured intelligence regarding Russian election interference to

LONDON

Ozzy Osbourne, Black Sabbath's bat-biting frontman, dies aged 76

100



AP

▲ Ozzy Osbourne, the iconic frontman of 1970s heavy metal band Black Sabbath, gained fame for wild performances, including biting a bat's head off. Known as the "Prince of Darkness," he sold over 100 million records, later becoming a beloved reality TV star in 'The Osbournes'. He died on Tuesday aged 76, his family said. REUTERS

U.S. to pull out of UNESCO again, 2 years after rejoining

Associated Press

WASHINGTON

The United States announced on Tuesday it will again pull out of the UN's educational, scientific and cultural agency because it believes that its involvement is not in the country's national interest, and that the agency promotes anti-Israel speech. This decision comes only two years after the United States rejoined UNESCO after leaving in 2018, during U.S. President Donald Trump's first administration.

State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce said the withdrawal was linked to UNESCO's perceived agenda to "advance divisive social and cultural causes".

She added in a state-



Tammy Bruce

ment that UNESCO's decision "to admit the 'State of Palestine' as a Member State is highly problematic, contrary to U.S. policy, and contributed to the proliferation of anti-Israel rhetoric within the organisation".

The decision, first reported by the *New York Post*, will take effect at the end of December 2026.

This will be the third time that the United States has left UNESCO, which is

based in Paris, and the second time during a Trump administration. It last rejoined the agency in 2023, under the Biden administration.

UNESCO's Director General Audrey Azoulay said she "deeply" regrets the U.S. decision but insisted that it was expected, and that the agency "has prepared for it". She also denied accusations of anti-Israel bias.

"These claims ... contradict the reality of UNESCO's efforts, particularly in the field of Holocaust education and the fight against anti-Semitism," she said.

The U.S. withdrawal is likely to affect UNESCO because the U.S. provides a notable share of the agency's budget. But the organization should be able to cope.

- The **United States** announced it will **withdraw from UNESCO** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) by **end of December 2026**.
 - This marks the **third U.S. exit** from the agency.
 - **1st Exit**: 1984 (under Reagan, citing Soviet influence)
 - **2nd Exit**: 2018 (under Trump, citing anti-Israel bias)
 - **3rd Exit**: Announced 2026 (again under Trump administration)
-

2. Reason for Withdrawal

- Stated reasons by U.S. State Department:
 - UNESCO promotes a **divisive social and cultural agenda**
 - Opposition to UNESCO's decision to **admit "State of Palestine"** as a full member.
 - Perceived **anti-Israel rhetoric** within the organization.

3. Official U.S. Position

- Spokesperson **Tammy Bruce** emphasized:
 - UNESCO's direction is **contrary to U.S. national interest**.
 - The admission of Palestine contradicts U.S. foreign policy and encourages anti-Israel narratives.
-

4. UNESCO's Response

- Director-General **Audrey Azoulay**:
 - "Deeply regrets" the U.S. decision.
 - Denied accusations of **anti-Israel bias**.
 - Asserted UNESCO is committed to:
 - **Holocaust education**
 - **Fight against anti-Semitism**
 - Claimed that UNESCO has "prepared for it".

5. Potential Implications

5.1.

- ~~Financial~~ impact:
 - U.S. contributes significantly to UNESCO's budget.
- Diplomatic impact:
 - Weakens **multilateralism** and **U.S. soft power**.
 - May embolden **other states** to challenge UNESCO's credibility.
- Institutional impact:
 - UNESCO may face funding constraints but has indicated it can **cope**.

Q. Consider the following statements about the recent U.S. decision to withdraw from UNESCO:

- ~~1.~~ The U.S. decision was primarily based on budgetary concerns regarding UNESCO's spending.
- ~~2.~~ The decision is partly attributed to UNESCO's inclusion of the "State of Palestine" as a full member.
- ~~3.~~ This is the first time the U.S. has exited UNESCO since it became a founding member in 1945. ~~4.~~
4. UNESCO's Director-General rejected the accusation of anti-Israel bias and emphasized its Holocaust education efforts.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- ☒ A) 2 and 4 only
- B) 1 and ~~3~~ only
- C) 2, 3 and 4 only
- D) 1, 2, ~~3~~ and 4

Cash award for Olympic gold winners hiked to Rs 7 cr; medallists to get govt jobs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JULY 22

PROMISING GOVERNMENT jobs to athletes who bring laurels to the nation, the Delhi government on Tuesday announced a significant hike in cash awards for medal winners, with rewards for Olympic and Paralympic gold medallists being increased to Rs 7 crore from the current Rs 3 crore.

To bridge the disparity between Delhi and other states in supporting athletes, the Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, approved a revision of the cash incentives under the newly-launched Mukhyamantri Khel Protsahan Yojana, Education Minister Ashish Sood said.

While Olympic and Paralympic Games silver medallists will receive Rs 5 crore, bronze medallists will get Rs 3 crore. Similarly, Asian and Para Asian Games gold medallists will be given Rs 3 crore, while silver medallists will get Rs 2 crore and bronze medallists Rs 1 crore.

Similar rewards were also announced for Commonwealth and

Para Commonwealth Games medallists as well as National and Para National Games medallists. (See box)

Also, while athletes representing Delhi nationally or internationally will receive an annual financial support of Rs 20 lakh, a support of Rs 5 lakh each was announced for students of classes 6

to 12 who perform at the national or state levels.

Further, the Cabinet approved a government job reservation structure for medal winners. Under this, Group A jobs will be provided to for Olympic gold and silver medallists as well as Asian Games gold medallists.

Group B jobs will be provided

to Olympics bronze medallists, Paralympic medallists, Asian Games silver and bronze medallists, Para Asian gold medallists as well as Commonwealth Games gold and silver medallists. Group C jobs, on the other hand, will be provided to Para Asian Games silver and bronze medallists, Commonwealth Games bronze

HIKE IN CASH REWARDS FOR ATHLETES

EVENT	MEDAL	PREVIOUS	REVISED
Olympics/Paralympics	Gold	₹3 crore	₹7 crore
	Silver	₹2 crore	₹5 crore
	Bronze	₹1 crore	₹3 crore
Asian Games /Para Asian Games	Gold	₹1 crore	₹3 crore
	Silver	₹75 lakh	₹2 crore
	Bronze	₹50 lakh	₹1 crore
Commonwealth/Para-CWG	Gold	₹50 lakh	₹2 crore
	Silver	₹40 lakh	₹1.5 crore
	Broze	₹30 lakh	₹1 crore
National/Para National Championships	Gold	₹3 lakh	₹11 lakh
	Silver	₹2 lakh	₹5 lakh
	Bronze	₹1 lakh	₹3 lakh

medallists and Para Commonwealth Games medallists.

"These decisions mark a new era for Delhi's youth... Whether it's standing tall on the Olympic podium or excelling in the classroom, the government is committed to giving every child the resources and recognition they deserve," said Sood.

Targeting the education sector, the Cabinet cleared the Mukhyamantri Digital Education Scheme to award free laptops. "As many as 1,200 meritorious Class 10 students will be awarded free high-performance laptops with i7 configuration. The total budget outlay is Rs 8 crore," Sood said.

Further, the government approved the establishment of 175 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) labs in government schools, each with 40 computers. Underlining the need for ICT infrastructure in schools, Sood said, "Not a single functional ICT lab currently exists across Delhi's 1,074 government schools." The new labs will be built according to CBSE-approved standards and aim to bridge a long-standing infrastructure gap, he added.

1. Key Announcements

- The **Delhi Government** has significantly **hiked cash awards** for sportspersons under the **Mukhyamantri Khel Protsahan Yojana**.
 - **Olympic/Paralympic Gold medal reward** raised from ₹3 crore to ₹7 crore.
 - **Govt job reservations** approved for medal winners.
-

2. Revised Cash Rewards (in ₹)

Event	Medal	Previous	Revised
Olympics/Paralympics	Gold	₹3 cr	₹7 cr
	Silver	₹2 cr	₹5 cr
	Bronze	₹1 cr	₹3 cr
Asian Games/Para Asian	Gold	₹1 cr	₹3 cr
	Silver	₹75 lakh	₹2 cr
	Bronze	₹50 lakh	₹1 cr
Commonwealth/Para-CWG	Gold	₹50 lakh	₹2 cr
	Silver	₹40 lakh	₹1.5 cr
	Bronze	₹30 lakh	₹1 cr
National/Para National	Gold	₹3 lakh	₹11 lakh
	Silver	₹2 lakh	₹5 lakh
	Bronze	₹1 lakh	₹3 lakh

①



3. Additional Provisions

- **Group A Jobs:** For Olympic & Asian Games gold/silver medallists.
 - **Group B Jobs:** For Olympic bronze, Para athletes, and Commonwealth medallists.
 - **Annual financial aid:**
 - ₹20,000 – for those representing Delhi nationally/internationally.
 - ₹5,000 – for students in classes 6 to 12 excelling at state/national level.
-

4. Education Infrastructure Boost

- **Mukhyamantri Digital Education Scheme:** Free laptops for 1,200 Class 10 toppers.
- ₹8 crore budget allocation.
- **175 ICT labs** to be established in Delhi schools to bridge digital infrastructure gap.

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the revised Mukhyamantri Khel Protsahan Yojana in Delhi:

1. Olympic gold medallists will now receive ₹10 crore in cash rewards from the Delhi government.
2. Athletes winning medals at the National level will receive a cash reward of up to ₹11 lakh.
3. Group A jobs will be offered to all Commonwealth Games medallists.
4. The scheme includes free laptops for meritorious Class 10 students.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A) 1 and 3 only
- B) 2 and 4 only
- ☒ C) 1, 2 and 4 only
- D) 2, 3 and 4 only

As UP merges schools, longer walks and safety fears keep some away

ASAD REHMAN
& MANISH SAHU

RAMPUR & LUCKNOW, JULY 22

UNLIKE CLASS 3 student Manoj Yadav, 7, who is sitting at his assigned seat at the Patti Kalyanpur primary school in Uttar Pradesh's Rampur on a weekday afternoon, his sister Laxmi, 7, also a student of Class 3, hasn't been attending classes since July 1.

On July 1, the sole primary school in their village Abbas Nagar, 1 km away, was 'paired' with the bigger Kalyanpur school. While Manoj walks with a group of students from their village to the Kalyanpur school daily, his parents feel the path is unsafe for Laxmi.

In line with a recent directive by the Basic Education Department under the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, which emphasises greater collaboration, coordination and sharing of resources among institutions, since July 1, over 10,000 government primary schools across Uttar Pradesh have been 'paired' with nearby schools with better facilities.

While similar exercises

aimed at rationalising resources have been carried out in other states too, UP government officials insist the schools in the state are not being merged but 'paired'. "Unlike mergers, where schools cease to exist, paired schools can be shifted back to their original buildings in case of overcrowding at the new ones," said a district-level education officer.

However, the Opposition — from Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav to Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati — has opposed the move, saying it will "deprive" future generations, particularly those from the backward, Dalit and minority communities, of their right to accessible and affordable education.

The policy has also prompted protests from teachers' associations and parents, with petitions being filed against it in the Allahabad High Court.

Upholding the state's decision, the court had on July 7 said the move did not violate Article 21A (right to free and compulsory education for children aged six to 14). The court also said the move

aimed to provide children with quality education and equal opportunities since resources in small schools were scattered, depriving children access to adequate teaching staff, libraries, sports and digital learning facilities.

Kanchan Verma, Director-General, UP school education, says, "Of 1.32 lakh government schools in UP (with nearly 1.48 crore students), 10,784 primary schools are being paired."

Officials said these pairings were done keeping in mind multiple factors, including low enrolment and poor infrastructure.

Yet, since the recent pairings in UP, teachers say some of their students, especially the girls, haven't been attending classes.

While the Abbas Nagar school had 41 students, the Kalyanpur school had 115 students and five teachers, including two Shiksha Mitras, before the pairing. Only 14 of Abbas Nagar students were present at Kalyanpur during a recent visit by *The Indian Express*.

"Twenty-seven of my students — 16 girls and 11 boys — have not been attending school since the pairing. A few have



Since July 1, students of the primary school at Abbas Nagar have been attending the school at Kalyanpur. *Gajendra Yadav*

joined private schools, but most are sitting at home," says Shiv Kumar, the former head teacher at Abbas Nagar school who now reports to the Kalyanpur school.

Staff from old schools have been reporting to the new ones since July 1.

Sitting near a bundle of freshly cut fodder, Manoj and Laxmi's aunt Meera, 48, says, "Manoj went to school, but Laxmi does not want to go." "Beech mein jungle hai (there is forest on the way)," Laxmi

explains sheepishly.

Though the family is yet to take a call on Laxmi's education, Meera says her parents are farm labourers and can't afford to send her to a private school.

Like Laxmi, Meenaksi Yadav, a Class 4 student from Abbas Nagar village, has not been going to school since July 1. On a school day, she sits next to her mother Radha, 40, a farm labourer, who says, "Door pad gaya (the Kalyanpur school is far). She would walk

alone to the local school. What if someone does something to her in the woods on the way to Kalyanpur?"

A senior education department officer in Lucknow said efforts are on to encourage the students to attend the new schools and that all grievances of parents would be addressed. He adds, "No one is forcing parents to send their children to the new schools. They can send them to their old school."

However, when *The Indian Express* visited the Abbas Nagar school at noon on a weekday, its main gate was locked.

The government's move has triggered similar fears in Lucknow, where nearly 154 primary schools have been paired. At Paharpur in Mahabubnagar tehsil of rural Lucknow, the primary school has been paired with the school in Baka, nearly 3 km away.

With the Right to Education Act mandating that the primary school must be in a 1-km radius of the child's residence, Ram Praveesh, Basic Shiksha Adhikari, Lucknow, says, "We have asked Block Education Officers to carry out a ground-level feasibility check, including schools located

far from a neighbourhood."

Till last year, the Paharpur school had just 28 students. After its three teachers — two assistant teachers and one Shiksha Mitra — started encouraging families to send their children to school, the number rose to 54 this year. Though the Paharpur school was merged with one at Baka due to its 'poor infrastructure', none of its 54 students have been attending school. In Paharpur village, the families cited several reasons for keeping the children away from the Baka school — from increased distance to aggressive stray dogs near a gaushala en route.

Before the pairing, Mula Devi's grandchildren, Class 2 student Kunal, 7, and Class 3 student Payal, 8, walked barely 500 metres from home to school. "We took them to the new school one day, but a stray dog attacked us on the way. We decided the children can't walk to school. If the government doesn't reverse its decision, we will either send them to a private school or they will stay at home," says Devi, 62. Paharpur teachers say they are trying to encourage the students to attend the new school. "We started ferrying some students to

school on our motorcycles, but the arrangement wasn't sustainable," says Vijay Kumar Bajpai, the former teacher in charge of the Paharpur school.

Even the primary school in Bargadhi, which had 14 students, has been paired with the one at Baka, located around 1 km away. Rahisa Khatoon, an assistant teacher at Bargadhi, says all 14 have been attending classes in Baka.

In Mahabubnagar tehsil's Datali village, the primary school had just 39 students. Since it was paired with the school in Bhulsi, located around 2 km away, only 12 have been attending classes.

An education official said infrastructure from the merged schools will be used to set up Bal Vatikas (pre-primary schools) across the state.

Back at the Kalyanpur school, Manoj is among the first to line up outside the gate after the final 2 pm bell. As he waits for the others, he says, "I try to teach my sister Laxmi what I learn in school, but I forget quite a bit by the time I reach home. I liked going to school with her. I hope our old school reopens soon."

- From **July 1, 2024**, the **Uttar Pradesh government merged/pairing over 10,000 government primary schools** with nearby institutions with better infrastructure under the NEP 2020 framework.
 - Objective: **Rationalise resources**, improve student-teacher ratio, and provide access to better facilities like digital tools, libraries, and sports.
-

2. Problem Arising Post-Merger

- Students, especially **girls and younger children**, are **not attending** the new, farther schools.
- Key issues:
 - **Longer travel distances** (sometimes 2–3 km).
 - **Safety fears**, particularly among parents of girl students.
 - **Lack of transportation**, presence of stray dogs, or isolated routes.
 - **Emotional discomfort**: children miss their old school environment.

3. Examples Cited

- Abbas Nagar (Rampur): Out of 41 students, only 14 shifted after pairing with Kalyanpur school.
 - Manoj attends school; sister Laxmi does not due to parents' safety concerns.
- Malihabad (Lucknow): School with 14 students merged with one 3 km away – none attended.
- Datavli (Malihabad): Out of 39 students, only 12 began attending the new school after merger.
- Paharpur: Merger due to "poor infrastructure"; post-merger, **no student** has attended.

4. Official Justification

- **UP Education Dept**: Schools are being "paired", not merged—original schools can be reopened if overcrowding arises.
- **Director-General Kanchan Verma**: Out of 1.32 lakh schools, 10,784 are being merged.
- **High Court Verdict** (July 7): Policy is valid; it does not violate Article 21A (Right to Free & Compulsory Education).

Dimension	Insights
Governance	Rationalisation vs local access—NEP implementation challenges at the grassroots level.
Right to Education	RTE Act mandates primary schools be within 1–1.5 km of a child's residence.
Social Justice	Impact on girls, minorities, and rural poor , increasing barriers to education.
Policy vs Reality	Well-intended policies may fail due to lack of transport, safety, and local planning .
Education Infrastructure	Highlights need for pre-merger feasibility checks and community consultation.

Q. Consider the following statements about the school merger (pairing) policy in Uttar Pradesh:

1. The policy was implemented as part of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 to rationalise education infrastructure.
2. The Allahabad High Court ruled the policy unconstitutional and in violation of the Right to Education Act.
3. Many students, especially girls, dropped out or were irregular after the school mergers due to safety concerns.
4. The RTE Act mandates that primary schools must be within 1–1.5 km of a child's home.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A) 1, 2 and 3 only
- ☒ B) 1, 3 and 4 only
- C) 2 and 4 only
- D) 1, 2, 3 and 4

World Bank report: By 2030, Indian cities to create 70% of jobs but may lose \$5 bn to floods

AGGAM WALIA

NEW DELHI, JULY 22

INDIAN CITIES will need some autonomy to invest effectively in climate change adaptation and mitigation, according to Auguste Tano Kouame, the World Bank's Country Director for India. Cities with more decision-making power have performed better than average, he said on Tuesday at the launch of a report on building urban climate resilience.

The report, prepared by the World Bank in collaboration with the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, estimates Indian cities will require \$2.4 trillion by 2050 to build climate-resilient infrastructure and services.

"In order for cities to invest in resilience, adaptation, and mitigation, they need to have some kind of autonomy to make decisions and implement them. Some people think this can be achieved only by fully implementing the 74th Amendment, others disagree," Kouame said at a media briefing.

The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 gave constitutional status to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to

A report, prepared by the World Bank in collaboration with the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, estimates Indian cities will require \$2.4 trillion by 2050 to build climate-resilient infrastructure and services

strengthen local self-governance. However, official audits as recently as 2022 have found that several states have yet to fully implement its provisions. While the World Bank does not have an official view on this, Kouame said "some version" of the 74th Amendment could be considered.

"It doesn't have to be implemented in the same fashion across all states. It depends on local conditions and several other factors," he added.

"The truth is that when you look across India, cities that have been given autonomy by the states to make decisions and manage themselves have done well. They've done better than

average. They've been able to mobilise resources, monetise assets, and increase sources of revenue," Kouame said, adding that devolution of power also improves accountability.

The report titled Towards Resilient and Prosperous Cities in India projects that the country's urban population will nearly double to 951 million by 2050, and that by 2030, cities will account for 70 per cent of all new employment generated. In addition to the rapid pace of urbanisation, Indian cities will face two major shocks in a business-as-usual scenario — flooding and extreme heat — according to Asmita Tiwari, who co-authored the report with Natsuko Kikutake.

"We found that the flood risk is growing rapidly. Not only are cities growing into areas that are exposed to flooding, they are also building more concrete structures and pavings that restrict the amount of rainwater the ground can absorb," Tiwari said, referring to pluvial flooding.



According to the report, annual pluvial flood-related losses can amount to \$5 billion by 2030 and \$30 billion by 2070 if cities don't invest in adaptation. A conservative estimate for supporting 60 per cent of high-risk cities

with flood resilience measures over the next 15 years is \$150 billion, it added.

"We also looked into 10 large cities in India, from the period 1983-1990 to 2010-2016, and found that exposure to dangerous extreme heat stress has increased by 71 per cent. Along with that, there is the urban heat island impact — which makes cities warmer at night because they have concrete structures and roads that absorb heat and release it at night," Tiwari said.

Heat-related deaths can double to over 3 lakh each year by 2050 due to global warming and the urban heat island phenomenon, the report said. Measures like shifting working hours to early morning and late afternoon, urban greening, early warning systems, and cool roofs can save over 1.3 lakh lives, it added.

The report makes several recommendations for national- and state-level interventions, including boosting private sector engagement, creating a financing roadmap, and setting standards to build municipal capacities. For cities, it calls for risk evaluation and the mobilisation of capital — including private investment — to support mitigation and adaptation efforts.

- 
- The **World Bank**, in collaboration with the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs**, has released a report titled **"Towards Resilient and Prosperous Cities in India."**
 - The report warns that while Indian cities will generate **70% of employment by 2030**, they also face **\$5 billion annual flood-related losses**.
-
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a) Economic and Employment Trends

- Urban population to nearly double: from ~500 million to 915 million by 2050.
- Cities will generate 70% of all new jobs by 2030.
- Investment needed to make cities climate-resilient: \$2.4 trillion by 2050.

b) Climate Shocks

- Two major risks:
 - Flooding
 - Extreme heat (urban heat island effect)
- Heat wave exposure in top 10 cities increased by 71% from 1983 to 2016.
- Heat-related deaths may exceed 3 lakh/year by 2050.

c) Flood Risk

- Flood losses:
 - \$5 billion annually by 2030.
 - \$30 billion/year by 2050 if adaptation is not undertaken.
- Cities at risk are:
 - Building more concrete structures,
 - Blocking rainwater absorption, worsening runoff.



4. Recommendations

- Adopt business-unusual approach:
 - Shift working hours.
 - Urban greening.
 - Heat-sensitive zoning and infrastructure.
 - Early warning systems.
 - **National-level reforms:**
 - Boosting private sector engagement.
 - Climate financing roadmaps.
 - Institutional capacity building.
-

Q. Consider the following statements based on the World Bank's recent report on Indian cities:

1. Indian cities will account for 70% of new employment by 2050.
2. Annual flood-related losses may reach \$5 billion by 2030 if adaptation is not undertaken.
3. The 74th Constitutional Amendment gave constitutional status to Urban Local Bodies.
4. The urban heat island effect is caused by increased vegetation in cities that traps heat at night.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A) 1, 2 and 3 only
- B) 2 and 4 only
- C) 1 and 3 only
- D) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Himachal tribal woman marries 2 brothers: What the law says on polyandry

AMAAL SHEIKH
NEW DELHI, JULY 22

THE TRANS-GIRI region in Himachal Pradesh witnessed a centuries-old customary practice recently, when a woman, Sunita Chauhan, married two brothers, Pradeep and Kapil Negi. This polyandrous tradition is locally known as 'Jodidaran'. The Hatti tribe has seen five such marriages in the past six years.

Notably, the community was granted the status of Scheduled Tribes (STs) by the Centre in 2022.

Their practice of polyandry has roots in the desire to preserve undivided family land, particularly agricultural land. According to supporters of the tradition, it has also served as a means to reinforce familial bonds between brothers and provided more security to women.

Is polyandry legal in India?

Polyandry and polygamy are outlawed

by the Special Marriages Act, the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 and criminalised under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. While religious personal laws specifically govern marriage, the Constitution also recognises the relevance of prevailing customary laws among STs.

The Constitution, under Article 342, recognises STs and accords them a distinct legal status. The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, governs marriage applicable to Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs. Section 2(2) of the Act includes a carve-out stating that its provisions do not apply to STs "unless the Central Government, by notification in the Official Gazette, otherwise directs." In the absence of such a notification, the Hattis continue to be governed by laws laid down under their customs, which are undocumented and uncoded.

The Act defines "custom" under Section 3 as a rule that has been "observed for a long time, has obtained the force of law." But for a customary law to be valid, it must also



Sunita Chauhan with her husbands, Pradeep and Kapil Negi. File

hold the standard of certainty, reasonableness, and consistency with public policy. When challenged, these laws do not automatically gain legal recognition; courts have to be provided with proper evidence that such customary laws prevail.

Much debate surrounds the applicability of a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) to such sit-

uations. In 2024, the Uttarakhand government, by enacting UCC, provided a legal framework for inheritance, marriage, divorce, and adoption. The UCC mandates the registration of marriage, establishes equal rights of spouses across religions and communities and prohibits polygamy. However, it does not apply to STs, following a

Constitutional pattern of upholding their customary practices.

Section 2 of the Uniform Civil Code Rules, Uttarakhand, 2025 states that "these rules shall not be applicable to the members of any Scheduled Tribes within the meaning of clause (25) of Article 366 read with Article 342 of the Constitution of India and the persons and group of persons whose customary rights are protected under Part XXI of the Constitution of India."

What has the court said on the issue?

Increasingly, courts have read customary laws prevalent among STs with the rights to equality, dignity and life and liberty as enshrined under the Constitution. Any law that is in conflict with fundamental rights is struck down as unconstitutional.

For example, the Supreme Court declared the practice of triple talaq as customary and therefore unconstitutional under the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937. It was deemed arbitrary, unreasonable and violative of Article 14 and 21 of the Constitution, which guar-

antees the right to equality, dignity and the right to life.

Similarly, in 2018, the SC ruled that the customary practice of prohibiting women of menstruating age from entering the Sabrimala temple in Kerala was unconstitutional. The apex court held that this restriction violated the fundamental rights of women, including the right to equality and the freedom of religion under Articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Constitution.

On July 17, the SC in *Ram Charan & Ors. Versus Sukhram & Ors.*, a case related to succession rights for tribal women, reaffirmed this principle. It held that when a custom is silent on inheritance, there is no restriction in law that women should be prevented from inheriting ancestral property.

The apex court observed that "customs too, like the law, cannot remain stuck in time and others cannot be allowed to take refuge in customs or hide behind them to deprive others of their right." The ruling affirmed that excluding female heirs solely based on customary male preferences violates Article 14 of the Constitution.

- A **Hatti tribal woman** from Trans-Giri region, Himachal Pradesh (Sunita Chauhan) married two brothers — a practice of **polyandry**. ✓
 - Locally known as '**Jodidaaran**', this **customary practice** aims to preserve **undivided family land**, reinforce **familial bonds**, and offer **security to women**. ✓
 - The **Hatti community** was **granted Scheduled Tribe (ST) status** in 2022. ✓
-

2. Legal Status of Polyandry in India

- Polyandry and polygamy are outlawed under:
 - Hindu Marriage Act, 1955
 - Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita
 - Special Marriage Act
- But customary laws of Scheduled Tribes can override general marriage laws, if:
 - The custom is proven to be longstanding.
 - It is reasonable, certain, and not against public policy.

3. Custom vs Uniform Civil Code (UCC)

- **UCC 2024** (by Uttarakhand govt) covers marriage, inheritance, divorce, adoption, and **prohibits polygamy**.
 - However, **UCC is not applicable to Scheduled Tribes**.
 - **Section 2(2) of Hindu Marriage Act** also carves out exemption for STs **unless Central Government directs otherwise**.
-

4. Judicial Precedents

- **Ram Charan v. Sukhram (2024)**: SC ruled that **women from tribal communities cannot be denied inheritance** based on customs.
- **Sabrimala Case (2018)**: SC ruled that **customs violating equality** (e.g., restriction on menstruating women) are unconstitutional.
- **Triple Talaq (2017)**: SC struck down instant triple talaq as **arbitrary and against Article 14 & 21**.

5. Constitutional Provisions Involved

Article	Provision
Art 14	Right to Equality
Art 15	Prohibition of discrimination
Art 21	Right to Life and Dignity
Art 342	Recognition of STs
Art 366(25)	Defines Scheduled Tribes
Art 13	Laws inconsistent with Fundamental Rights are void

Q. With reference to customary laws and polyandry in India, consider the following statements:

1. Polyandry is explicitly permitted under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 for Scheduled Tribes.
2. Customary practices of Scheduled Tribes can be valid even if they contradict the Uniform Civil Code (UCC).
3. Any custom that violates fundamental rights can be struck down by the courts.
4. Article 342 of the Constitution empowers the Parliament to define Scheduled Tribes.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- A) 2 and 3 only
- B) 1, 2 and 3 only
- C) 1 and 4 only
- D) 2, 3 and 4 only

National Flag Day 2025



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- India observed National Flag Day (Tiranga Adoption Day), on 22nd July 2025, to mark the anniversary of the Indian National Flag's official adoption by the Constituent Assembly in 1947.

What are the Key Facts About the Indian National Flag?

Evolution of the Indian National Flag:

- **1904:** Designed by **Sister Nivedita**, it featured red and yellow with a Vajra (strength), a white lotus (purity), and "Bande Mataram" inscribed.
- **Sister Nivedita** was an **Irish social activist** and a disciple of **Swami Vivekananda**.
- **1906 (Swadeshi Movement Flag):** Considered the **first tricolour**, it was hoisted in Calcutta with **green, yellow, and red horizontal stripes**. It featured lotuses, a sun, a crescent moon, and the words "**Vande Mataram**".

1907 (Saptarishi Flag): Hoisted by **Madam Bhikaji Cama** in Germany. It had green, saffron, and red stripes with lotuses, "Vande Mataram", a sun, and a crescent moon.

1917 (Home Rule Movement Flag): Introduced by **Annie Besant and Tilak**. It had red and green stripes, the Union Jack, crescent and star, and stars in the Saptarishi pattern.

1921: Pingali Venkayya (an Indian freedom fighter, linguist, and polymath from Andhra Pradesh), proposed a **red, white, and green** flag with a **spinning wheel**, symbolising unity and self-reliance. The design of the present Indian flag is largely attributed to him.

In **1931** Saffron replaced red. The **flag had saffron, white, and green** with a **spinning wheel in the centre**. It was **adopted by the Indian National Congress**.

1947 (Present Flag): Adopted by the Constituent Assembly. The **spinning wheel was replaced with the Ashoka Chakra**.

Common name: Tiranga, meaning *Tricolour*.

Design: Three horizontal stripes: **saffron (kesari) (top), White (middle), Green (bottom)**, with a **navy blue Ashoka Chakra** in the centre.

Ashoka Chakra: The Ashoka Chakra, with **24 spokes**, is based on the wheel from the **Sarnath Lion Capital** made by the **3rd-century BC Mauryan Emperor Ashoka** and fits within the width of the white band.



- **Symbolism:**

- ✓ • **Saffron:** Strength and Courage of the Country.

- ✓ • **White:** Purity, Truth, and Peace.

- ✓ • **Green:** Fertility, growth, and prosperity, reflecting India's agricultural roots and environmental commitment.

- **Ashoka Chakra (known as the “wheel of law”):** Represents Law, justice, and the cycle of life. The chakra intends to show that there is life in movement and death in stagnation.

3.7



Regulation:



Governed by the Flag Code of India, 2002 which sets rules for display, handling, and respect for the flag.



Article 51A(a) of the Indian Constitution mandates that it is the fundamental duty of every citizen to respect the National Flag and National Anthem.



The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971, punishes offences related to disrespecting the national flag or anthem.

Evolution of the Indian National Flag



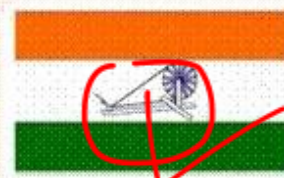
1906



1907



1921



1931

Tiranga 1947




The Do's: The flag may be hoisted in schools and other institutions to promote respect.

- Citizens, private groups, and institutions can display the flag on any day, with dignity.
- It grants all citizens the right to fly the flag on their premises.

The Don'ts: The flag cannot be used for communal gains, drapery, or clothes.

- The flag cannot be intentionally allowed to touch the ground or the floor or trail in water. It cannot be draped over the hood, top, and sides or back of vehicles, trains, boats or aircraft.
- No other flag, object, or decoration should be placed above or on the flag.



• **Who among the following is associated with 'Songs from Prison', a translation of ancient Indian religious lyrics in English? (2021)**

- (a) Bal Gangadhar Tilak
- (b) Jawaharlal Nehru
- (c) Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi
- (d) Sarojini Naidu

Bima Sakhi Scheme



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- **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)** paid ₹62.36 crore as stipend to women under 'Bima Sakhi Scheme' during FY 2024–25.
 - Currently, there are 2,05,896 Bima Sakhis across the country.



- **The ‘Bima Sakhi Scheme’**

- It is an initiative of **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)** designed to empower women **aged 18-70 years, who are Class X pass**.
- They will receive specialized training and a stipend for the first three years to promote financial literacy and insurance awareness.
 - The stipend scheme is in addition to their commission pay-outs and is subject to certain performance parameters.
 - The amount of the stipend ranges from Rs 7000/- per month in the first year to Rs 5000/- in the third year.
- After training, they **can serve as LIC agents** and the graduate Bima Sakhis would have the opportunity to qualify for being considered for **Development Officer roles in LIC**.

 “Meri Panchayat” App Wins WSIS
Champion Award



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- The mobile application “**Meri Panchayat**” has received the **World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Prizes 2025** Champion Award under the category Cultural Diversity and Identity, Linguistic Diversity and Local Content.

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- **The Meri Panchayat Web Application**

- It is an initiative of the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj** and **National Informatics Centre (NIC)** under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

- It is designed to **provide a unified digital governance platform** for rural areas, catering to residents, functionaries, and stakeholders of the Panchayati Raj Institution system.

- It integrates and consolidates diverse functions and information currently dispersed across multiple government portals into a single, seamless web-based interface.

Bharat NCX



- The National Cybersecurity Exercise – Bharat NCX 2025 was officially inaugurated.
- **About Bharat NCX**
- The exercise is being conducted by the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) in collaboration with Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU).
- The exercise offers an immersive learning environment focused on cyber defense and incident response, featuring live-fire simulations that mirror real-world attacks on both IT and Operational Technology (OT) systems.
-

Word of the day

Piquancy:

a tart spicy quality; the quality of being agreeably stimulating or mentally exciting

Synonyms: tang, zest, nip

Usage: *I liked the piquancy of the chilli in the sauce.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/piquancypro

International Phonetic

Alphabet: /'pi:kənt/, /'pi:kɑ:nt/



Thank you 😊

