

Daily Current Affairs





4
The Hindu



1
**PIB, PRS & Other
newspaper**



1
**The Indian
Express**



0
Jansatta



1
**Financial
Express**

Download class24



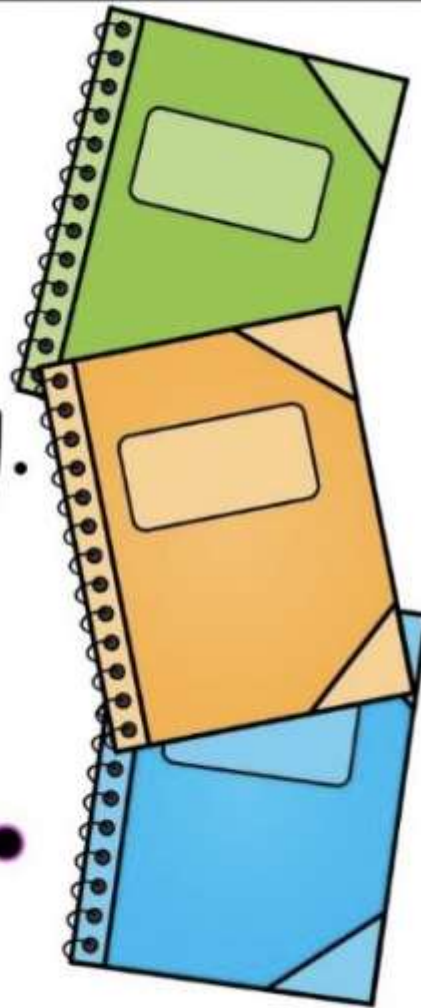
PDF



10 MCQ QUIZ

Don't let
failure
be your ending.
Make it your
beginning.

- unknown



Morning Meeting Messages #135
©The Mountain Teacher

SC asks Union govt. to draw up rules on social media conduct

The apex court was hearing a case against comedians for insensitive jokes about people with disabilities; the Centre was asked to work on rules in a bid to balance free speech with the right of varied communities to live in society with dignity

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday said social media influencers commercialise free speech, and their comments had the capacity to hurt sentiments in a diverse society, which includes persons with disabilities, women, children, senior citizens, and minorities.

A Bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi asked the Union government to work on guidelines to regulate conduct on social media, including online shows such as podcasts, in consultation with the National Broadcasters and Digital Association, represented by advocate Nisha Bhambhani, in a bid to balance free speech with the equally important right of varied communities to live in society with dignity.

The court was hearing a case against comedians, including Samay Raina, for



“abusing freedom of speech and expression” by making insensitive jokes about persons with disabilities.

“When you are commercialising free speech, you should also bear in mind not to hurt the sentiments of certain sections of society,” Justice Bagchi observed.

Justice Kant said that by making insensitive jokes about persons with disabilities, the constitutional objective of bringing them in-

to the mainstream was “completely smashed”.

‘Varied communities’

Justice Bagchi acknowledged that humour was an irreplaceable part of life, but levity must not breach sensibilities. “We are a country of varied communities,” he said.

Justice Kant said guidelines must be framed in a way that violation would inevitably lead to specific consequences. “Unless effective consequences are

framed, people can zig-zag their way out of liability. Consequences must be proportionate to the harm done. They cannot be an empty formality,” he said.

He clarified that the court was not for a moment trying to curtail free speech, but was expecting the proposed guidelines to draw a line between free speech and hurtful speech.

Primary aim

Attorney-General R. Venkataramani, appearing for the Centre, responded that the primary objective of the proposed guidelines would be sensitisation of social media users.

“But if somebody violates, they will have to take responsibility... Many of these media blogs are like feeding your own ego,” Mr. Venkataramani submitted.

Justice Bagchi pointed out that the top court had divided speech into free speech, commercial speech, and prohibited speech. “What we see here is an overlap of commer-

cial and prohibited speech,” the judge remarked.

“Today, we have an unfortunate incident of disabled persons, tomorrow it can be about women, children and senior citizens. Anybody can start making fun... where is all this going to end?” Justice Kant asked.

Senior advocate Aparajita Singh, who represents M/s SMA Cure Foundation, which had moved against the comedians’ remarks about persons with disabilities, submitted that “what influencers say matters. It influences an entire generation”.

Ms. Singh said they could act as ambassadors to spread awareness and sensitivity on social media. “That will be the best apology they could make,” Ms. Singh suggested.

The court directed the comedians to communicate their unconditional apology through their shows. It listed the case in November.

1. Context of Case

- The Supreme Court was hearing a case against comedians accused of making *insensitive jokes about persons with disabilities*.
- Bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi asked the Union Government to draft **rules on social media conduct**.

2. Concerns Highlighted by SC

- Social media influencers often **commercialise free speech**, which may hurt sentiments of communities.
- Jokes about disabled persons today can extend tomorrow to **women, children, and senior citizens**.
- The Court emphasised the need to **balance free speech with dignity of communities**.

3. Court's Directions

- Union Govt. to work on guidelines in consultation with stakeholders (National Broadcasters & Digital Association, etc.).
- Guidelines should:
 - Define boundaries between **free speech, commercial speech, and prohibited speech**.
 - Ensure *proportional liability* for violations.
 - Avoid being a mere formality.

4. Primary Arguments

- **Attorney General R. Venkataramani:** The main goal of guidelines is to sensitise influencers.
- Many influencers violate rules by making insensitive jokes/blogs, exploiting "ego" for popularity.

5. Civil Society View

- Advocate Aparajita Singh (for SMA Cure Foundation) argued: "What influencers say matters; it impacts entire generations."
- SC ordered comedians to make *unconditional apology*, next hearing listed for November.

Historical & Background Context

1. **Article 19(1)(a):** Guarantees **Freedom of Speech & Expression** in India.
2. **Article 19(2):** Allows **reasonable restrictions** in the interests of sovereignty, public order, decency, morality, etc.
3. **Key Cases:**
 - **Shreya Singhal vs. Union of India (2015):** Struck down **Section 66A of IT Act**, protecting online free speech but also emphasising reasonable restrictions.
 - **K.S. Puttaswamy Case (2017):** Recognised **Right to Privacy** as part of Article 21 – relevant for regulating online speech.
 - **Subramanian Swamy vs. Union of India (2016):** Upheld criminal defamation as a reasonable restriction under Art. 19(2).
4. **Global Comparisons**
 - EU: *Digital Services Act (2022)* regulates online platforms, curbs hate speech, fake news.
 - USA: Free speech under **First Amendment** enjoys stronger protection; regulation focuses more on *harmful conduct* than content.

01

India has **over 820 million internet users** (2025 est.), making regulation of online speech crucial.

02

Over 50% of social media content-related complaints in India are linked to **hate speech or misinformation** (source: CERT-In).

03

The **Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code, 2021** already regulate online platforms, but the SC wants clearer rules for **individual influencers and comedians**.

Q. Consider the following statements regarding freedom of speech and regulation in India:

1. Article 19(1)(a) guarantees freedom of speech and expression, subject to reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2).
2. In *Shreya Singhal vs. Union of India (2015)*, the Supreme Court upheld Section 66A of the IT Act as a valid restriction.
3. The Supreme Court in *K.S. Puttaswamy Case (2017)* recognised the Right to Privacy as a fundamental right under Article 21.
4. Criminal defamation in India has been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

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) 1, 3 and 4 only

BRIEF



10 killed as truck hits vehicle carrying pilgrims in UP

Ten people were killed and 41 injured when a truck carrying a tractor-trailer carrying pilgrims in Bulandshahr district of Uttar Pradesh in the early hours of Monday, the police said. Two of the deceased were minors, while 12 of those injured and hospitalized are below the age of 18. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath condemned the deaths, and directed officials to ensure the best treatment for those injured. He also announced an ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh to the kin of those dead and ₹50,000 each for the injured. The accident took place on the Bulandshahr Aligarh boundary near the Arnia bypass around 2.30 a.m. ■

NCERT accused of teaching students 'polarising history'

The Indian History Congress has attacked the NCERT's new Partition Horrors Remembrance Day modules, alleging that they spread "falsehoods with a clear communal intent" by depicting the Congress as complicit in Partition while absolving the British. The IHC warned that "toxic misdeeds" were being fed "distorted and polarising history". The special modules released by the NCERT to mark Partition Horrors Remembrance Day have held Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the Congress and the then Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, responsible for Partition. The IHC said "it is ironic that Hindu communalists are not included in this list". ■

General Dwivedi holds defence talks in Algeria

The Chief of the Army Staff, General Upendra Dwivedi, held talks with Algeria's senior military leadership, focusing on training exchanges for senior officers, joint capability development, and defence industrial cooperation. General Dwivedi is on an official visit to Algeria—his first overseas engagement since the successful conclusion of Operation Sindoor. The visit underscores India's intent to deepen defence ties with the Maghreb-Sahel region of Africa. According to sources, with Algeria exporting largely on similar military equipment, New Delhi is considered well placed to support its modernisation, training, and maintenance needs.

Farmers fear removing cotton import duty will harm prices

The Ranyubi Ekan Morcha (REM) said in New Delhi on Monday that the decision to scrap import duty on cotton would further push prices of domestic cotton downwards. Talking to presspersons, REM leaders said cotton producers in India could not compete with large, industrial scale cotton farmers of the United States who had historically received massive government subsidies. "It has been estimated that, in the U.S., government subsidies are as high as 12% of the total value of production of cotton, while in India, government support is 2.37%. This massive disparity is at the core of the advantage U.S. cotton farmers have over cotton producers in developing countries," they said.

Stealth frigates **Udaygiri**, **Himgiri** to join Navy today

The vessels are follow-on variants of Shivalik-class frigates; they have advanced weaponry, modern sensor systems designed to execute full spectrum of maritime operations in blue-water conditions

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

The Indian Navy is set to commission the state-of-the-art Project 17A stealth frigates **Udaygiri** and **Himgiri** at the Naval Base in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will preside over the event, which will mark the first-ever simultaneous commissioning of two **Roadline** class frigates built at different shipyards.

Enhanced capability

Mr. Singh said that both vessels were follow-on variants of the Shivalik-class frigates. They featured enhanced stealth capabilities, advanced weaponry, modern sensor systems designed to execute the full spectrum of maritime operations in blue-water conditions. **Udaygiri**, built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd. in Mumbai, and **Himgiri**, constructed by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers



Ready to serve: INS Udaygiri during its launch at Mazagon Dock Limited in Mumbai in May 2023. ■

GRSID in Kolkata, showcased India's growing shipbuilding expertise and industry collaboration. Notably, **Udaygiri** was the fastest of her class to be delivered after launch, owing to the adoption of modular construction techniques.

Designed in-house by the Navy's Warship Design Bureau (WDB), **Udaygiri** is

the 100th vessel to be designed, marking a milestone in the Navy's indigenous warship design. Both frigates are fitted with the combined diesel or gas (CODAG) propulsion, an integrated platform management system, and advanced Indian-made weapons and sensors. With nearly 75% indigenous con-

tent—supported by several **MILKs** (the shipbuilders' design expertise)—the Navy's warship design, the Ministry added.

Reviving the heritage of earlier warships that bore the name of the new frigates will now join the Eastern Fleet, substantially enhancing the Navy's reach in the Indian Ocean.

Centre allows one-time switch from UPS to NPS

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry on Monday introduced a one-time, one-way switch facility from the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) to the National Pension System (NPS).

From April 1, the government has introduced the UPS as an option under the NPS for Central government employees. UPS will provide assured payments to the employees.

Around 30,553 Central government employees have opted for UPS till July 20, and the last date to enroll is September 30.

In an office memorandum, the Ministry said the facility will be available to employees who have opted for UPS. "This switch facility may be exercised by UPS officers any time not later than one year prior to the date of superannuation or three months prior to the date of retirement in case of voluntary retirement, as applicable," it added.

Air-drop test success a big step in Gaganyaan mission: ISRO scientist

The Hindu
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The first Integrated Air Drop Test (IADT-01) conducted successfully at Sriharikota on Sunday marks an important step for Gaganyaan, India's heavily watched space mission to send humans to space.

A. Rajarajan, senior scientist with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Director, Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), said on Monday.

The IADT-01 will follow up IADT-01 with the second Test Vehicle Mission (TV-02) and the uncrewed Gaganyaan-1 (G1) flight—two of the critical trials lined up before the actual mission carrying astronauts—soon, Mr. Rajarajan told **The Hindu**.

He described the upcoming TV-02 as a "complex mission" that will put to test the crew escape system (CES) under critical conditions. The IADT-01 had successfully accomplished the Gaganyaan TV-01 mission in October 2023. Such tests are vital as safety is of paramount importance in manned missions, he said.

For the uncrewed G1 mission, the spacecraft will be launched aboard a human-rated LV-03 rocket. The mission will also have a human-rated robot developed by the ISRO.

"VSSC plays major role" in the success of IADT-01, Mr. Rajarajan said. VSSC Director, he was happy that the test went as expected. The VSSC had a major role in IADT-01, being responsible for "90% of the activities alongside the Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC) and ISRO-SAR and other agencies, including the Indian Air Force, he said.

He described the upcoming TV-02 as a "complex mission" that will put to test the crew escape system (CES) under critical conditions. The IADT-01 had successfully accomplished the Gaganyaan TV-01 mission in October 2023. Such tests are vital as safety is of paramount importance in manned missions, he said.

Technical, operational issues being resolved: SSC

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Aimed a row over alleged irregularities in the conduct of computer-based recruitment examination for government jobs, Staff Selection Commission (SSC) Chairman S. Gopalakrishnan on Monday said that all technical and operational issues raised against Vantara were being resolved.

He said the new system implemented by the Commission was aimed to ensure transparency in the recruitment process, and from the upcoming Combined Graduate Level (CGL) examination, such issues were expected to be resolved.

The assertion comes amidst ongoing protests in the country by government job aspirants and coaching institutes who claimed to have encountered various issues, including technical and operational glitches and location of exam centres far from the residence of the candidates.

Rajnath Singh lauds role of citizens in Operation Sindoor

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

People in border areas provided full support to the armed forces during Operation Sindoor, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said in Jaipur on Monday.

Mr. Singh inaugurated the Jaipur Defence and Sports Academy in Jaipur, where he highlighted the vital role of citizens in safeguarding the nation. Recalling the recent Operation Sindoor, he said the unwavering support of people in border areas was proof that national security was the responsibility of every citizen, not just the government or the armed forces.

He praised the youth for their zeal and determination during the operation, in which the Indian armed forces delivered a decisive response to the terror attack in Pakistan and achieved their objectives with precision. He asserted that while terrorists killed unarmed people based on their *dharma*, India's forces destroyed those who sheltered them "based on their *dharma*", describing the operation as symbolic of "New India's resolve".

India sends flood alert to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD

India alerted Pakistan to a potential flood but stressed that the warning was communicated through diplomatic channels rather than the India Water Commission. It is the first known official contact between the two countries since a four-day conflict between them in May. "On August 24, 2025, India communicated flood warnings through diplomatic channels, rather than through the India Water Commission," Foreign Office official said. ■

Noting the significance of combining defence, education and sports, the Minister said the academy would build discipline, perseverance and determination among youth, qualities equally vital for soldiers and sportsmen. He urged students emerging from this confluence to make India proud on national and global stages.

SC forms panel to examine complaints against Vantara

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) chaired by a former top court judge, Justice J. Chelameswar, to conduct an "independent, impartial appraisal" of complaints and allegations of violations raised against Vantara.

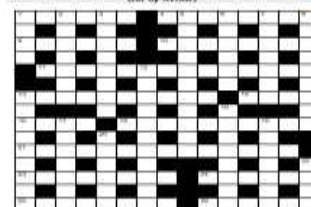
The SIT, headed by Justice J. Chelameswar, will also include Justice J. Chelameswar, former Chief Justice of Uttarakhand and Telangana High Courts, Hemant Nagarkar, IPS (former Mumbai Police Commissioner), and Anshu Gupta, IAS, Additional Commissioner, Customs.

The report must be submitted by September 12. The court listed the case on September 15.



Justice J. Chelameswar, former Chief Justice of Uttarakhand and Telangana High Courts, Hemant Nagarkar, IPS (former Mumbai Police Commissioner), and Anshu Gupta, IAS, Additional Commissioner, Customs.

THE CROSSWORD 14573



Across

- 1 Not able to speak about India virtually for a short time (6)
- 2 Instant concern taking up commercial hunting India's leading scholar (4)
- 3 Constitutional rule to stop introduction of service tax (6)
- 4 Capetian king in crust of tomato based with a bit of mastic (8)
- 5 Misrepresentation by school - parents mostly pleased with ultimate in confidence (8)

To solve this puzzle online, go to <https://www.thehindu.com/crossword> or <https://www.thehindu.com/crossword>



- 13 Victims of one-eight stands? (10)
- 14 Cheapskate constructed again going around (4)
- 15 Supply not starting for long (4)
- 16 Introduction left a mortuary's entrance and travelled round the bend (10)
- 17 Lost in the rush, heading for grand, magical heavenly spectacle (8)
- 18 Preval more our shortened limit crew cycling across Wales (8)
- 19 In which you will find best movie about a man's life (8)
- 20 Cashless consumer introducing it a court following arrest (8)
- 21 Cool tennis ace after losing a game at the end (8)
- 22 Down
- 1 Downward letter I have dispatched (4)
- 2 Typical standards of Vikings having left for Norway (1)
- 3 Boer's mental wearing brown amulet (8)
- 4 What creature has no conflict enemy? (4)
- 5 Caliber runs into pickupstick (8)
- 6 Chain armour regularly lined with tin after mousing (7)
- 7 Army seeing vessel smuggling gold - has lights in many parts (8)
- 8 Power leads to apparatus having tentacles to secure shelter and gear gets IP certificate (8)
- 9 Power's spectacular meeting the now refurbished place where he is to take lessons (8)
- 10 Say, Kashmiri monkey being lost before maturity (8)
- 11 Translucent baroque glass close to pavane (1)
- 12 Model film with two pieces of yellow gasoline (4)
- 13 Danger which infants enjoy (8)
- 14 Arrived before packed up (4)

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING ★★★★★									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

FAITH

Power of divine knowledge

In a world filled with distractions and chaos, finding inner peace and spiritual growth can seem like an insurmountable task. However, the Bhagavad Gita offers a profound solution—divine knowledge, said Swami Mitranandini.

The Gita states in Chapter IV, verse 38, "There is nothing as purifying as divine knowledge." This knowledge is not just a means to acquire information, but a powerful tool for spiritual transformation.

Through prolonged practice of yoga, one can attain purity of mind, allowing one to receive divine knowledge within one's heart. This knowledge is an antidote to the impurities of the mind, purifying anyone who seeks it with sincerity. The transformative power of divine knowledge is evident from the lives of esteemed individuals like Rishabh, Arjuna, and Arjuna, who, despite their troubled pasts, attained spiritual enlightenment through their dedication to Brahma Vidya.

Our Lord Bharat is revered as the custodian of Brahma Vidya and the spiritual capital of the world. The country's rich spiritual heritage, rooted in ancient traditions, has been a beacon of light for seekers of truth. By embracing and practicing these timeless teachings, individuals can unlock their full potential and attain spiritual growth, in today's fast-paced world, the relevance of Brahma Vidya cannot be overstated. As a living tradition, it continues to inspire and guide individuals on their spiritual journey. By exploring the profound teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, and embracing the practice of yoga, one can experience the transformative power of divine knowledge and unlock a deeper understanding of themselves and the world.

Stealth frigates *Udaygiri*, *Himgiri* to join Navy today

The vessels are follow-on variants of Shivalik-class frigates; they have advanced weaponry, modern sensor systems designed to execute full spectrum of maritime operations in blue-water conditions

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

The Indian Navy is set to commission the state-of-the-art Project 17A stealth frigates *Udaygiri* and *Himgiri* at the Naval Base in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will preside over the event, which will mark the first-ever simultaneous commissioning of two frontline warships built at different shipyards.

Enhanced capability

Mr. Singh said that both vessels were follow-on variants of the Shivalik-class frigates. They featured enhanced stealth capabilities, advanced weaponry, and modern sensor systems designed to execute the full spectrum of maritime operations in blue-water conditions. *Udaygiri*, built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd. in Mumbai, and *Himgiri*, constructed by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers



Ready to serve: *INS Udaygiri* during its launch at Mazgaon Docks Limited in Mumbai in May 2022. PTI

(GRSE) in Kolkata, showcase India's growing shipbuilding expertise and inter-yard collaboration. Notably, *Udaygiri* was the fastest of her class to be delivered after launch, owing to the adoption of modular construction techniques.

Designed in-house by the Navy's Warship Design Bureau (WDB), *Udaygiri* is

the 100th vessel to be designed, marking a milestone in five decades of indigenous warship design. Both frigates are fitted with combined diesel or gas (CODOG) propulsion, an integrated platform management system, and advanced Indian-made weapons and sensors. With nearly 75% indigenous con-

tent – supported by several MSMEs – the ships embody the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat, the Ministry added.

Reviving the heritage of earlier warships that bore these names, the new frigates will now join the Eastern Fleet, substantially enhancing the Navy's reach in the Indian Ocean.

. About INS Udaygiri & INS Himgiri

- **Follow-on variants of Shivalik-class frigates** (Project 17).
- Equipped with:
 - Advanced stealth features.
 - Modern weaponry & sensor systems.
 - Capability to conduct full-spectrum maritime operations in **blue-water conditions**.
- **INS Udaygiri:**
 - Built at **Mazagon Dock Ltd. (Mumbai)**.
 - Fastest of her class to be delivered after launch.
 - Designed by **Navy's Warship Design Bureau (WDB)**.
- **INS Himgiri:**
 - Built at **Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata**.

2. Enhanced Capabilities

- Powered by **Combined Diesel or Gas (CODOG)** propulsion.
 - Nearly **75% indigenous content** (supporting *Atmanirbhar Bharat*).
 - Advanced **Indian-made weapons, modular construction, and integrated platform management system.**
-

3. Significance

- Strengthens the **Eastern Naval Command's maritime power** in the Indian Ocean.
- Showcases India's **indigenous warship-building capability** (5 decades of progress).
- Increases India's ability to counter maritime threats & safeguard strategic interests.
- Boosts **MSME participation** in defence sector supply chains.

Background & Historical Context

- **Project 17 Frigates (Shivalik-class):**
 - First stealth warships built in India (commissioned 2010 onwards).
 - **Project 17A:**
 - Approved in 2015.
 - **Seven frigates planned**, built by Mazagon Dock (4) & GRSE (3).
 - Earlier names:
 - INS *Udaygiri* (Leander-class frigate, decommissioned 2007).
 - INS *Himgiri* (Nilgiri-class frigate, decommissioned 2005).
 - Reviving these names honors the **legacy of earlier Indian warships**.
-

India is among the **few countries with indigenous stealth shipbuilding capability.**

Major naval shipbuilding yards in India:

Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd. (Mumbai).

Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (Kolkata).

Goa Shipyard Ltd. (Goa).

Hindustan Shipyard Ltd. (Visakhapatnam).

Q. With reference to India's naval shipbuilding program, consider the following statements:

1. INS Udaygiri and INS Himgiri are part of Project 17A, which is an upgraded version of the Shivalik-class stealth frigates.
2. Both frigates are completely built with foreign technology and have no indigenous components.
3. The propulsion system of these frigates is based on the Combined Diesel or Gas (CODOG) system.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Centre allows one-time switch from UPS to NPS

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry on Monday introduced a one-time, one-way switch facility from the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) to the National Pension System (NPS).

From April 1, the government has introduced the UPS as an option under the NPS for Central government employees. UPS will provide assured payouts to the employees.

Around 31,555 Central government employees have opted for UPS till July 20, and the last date to enroll is September 30.

In an office memorandum, the Ministry said the facility will be available to employees who have opted for UPS. "This switch facility may be exercised by UPS optees any time not later than one year prior to the date of superannuation or three months prior to the date of retirement in case of voluntary retirement, as applicable," it added.

- The Finance Ministry has allowed a **one-time, one-way switch** from **Unified Pension Scheme (UPS)** to the **National Pension System (NPS)**.
- This facility is available for employees who opted for UPS earlier this year (April 1 onwards).
- As of **July 20**, around **31,555 Central government employees** have chosen UPS; the last date to enroll is **September 30, 2025**.
- The switch facility must be exercised either:
 - Within **1 year before superannuation**, or
 - Within **3 months before voluntary retirement**.



Background: Pension Reforms in India

- **Old Pension Scheme (OPS):**
 - Assured defined benefit pension (usually 50% of last drawn salary).
 - Financially unsustainable due to rising pension bills.
- **National Pension System (NPS):**
 - Introduced in 2004 for new entrants into central government service (except armed forces).
 - Defined contribution scheme: both employee and employer contribute, returns depend on market.
 - Portable, with partial withdrawals and annuity on retirement.
- **Unified Pension Scheme (UPS):**
 - Announced in **Budget 2024-25** to balance both worlds (assured payout + employee contribution).
 - Assured minimum pension linked to salary, but partially funded.

🔍 **Key Differences: NPS vs UPS**

Feature	NPS (National Pension System)	UPS (Unified Pension Scheme)
Type	Defined Contribution	Hybrid (part defined benefit, part contribution-based)
Introduced	2004 (for central govt. employees)	2024 (as NPS alternative)
Contributions	Employee + Employer both contribute (usually 10% of salary by employee, 14% by govt.)	Employee contribution + Govt. support (formula based)
Returns	Market-linked (via pension fund managers)	Guaranteed assured payouts (formula ensures minimum pension)
Payout	Lump sum + annuity on retirement (not fixed, depends on market returns)	Fixed pension post-retirement (more predictable than NPS, but less fiscally sustainable than OPS)
Flexibility	Portable across jobs/sectors	Limited portability
Fiscal Impact	Lower burden on govt., sustainable long term	Higher burden (closer to OPS), but moderated compared to old scheme

Q. Consider the following statements regarding pension reforms in India:

1. The National Pension System (NPS), introduced in 2004, is a defined benefit scheme for all central government employees.
2. The Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) was introduced in 2024 to provide assured payouts along with employee contributions.
3. Under NPS, pension payouts are market-linked and not fully guaranteed.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Number of journalists killed in Israeli strikes on Gaza hospital

4 The journalists were among at least 15 people killed on Monday when Israeli strikes hit Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis, according to Gaza's civil defence agency. According to media watchdogs, around 200 journalists have been killed in nearly two years of war between Israel and Hamas. —

Government's new minimum export price on natural honey

1,400 in \$ per tonne. The government has cut the Minimum Export Price (MEP) on natural honey from \$2,000 per tonne to \$1,400 per tonne till the end of this year, according to a notification. Exports below this MEP are not permitted. —

Number of people whose free ration will stop: Punjab CM

55 in lakh. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Monday charged the Union government with "hush-hiding a conspiracy" to stop free ration to people. This is the second time within a week that Mr. Mann has accused the Centre of stopping the ration of people under the National Food Security Act. —

Tribal groups which are resisting Ministry interference

150 The groups claimed that interventions by the Tribal Affairs Ministry were "undermining the democratic framework of governance, management and conservation of community forest resources as recognised and established under the Forest Rights Act, 2006". —

Value of Dream11's cancelled sponsorship of Indian cricket

43.6 in \$ million. Dream11, the biggest online gaming platform in the country, is the last sponsor of the men's and women's national cricket teams. Last week, Parliament passed a Bill criminalising such games. —

(COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM)

Follow us @ facebook.com/thehindu X.com/thehindu Instagram.com/thehindu

What does the new online gaming Act outline?

What has the World Health Organization said about Real Money Games? How are e-sports and social gaming segments different from online money games? What are the penalties laid out in the Act with respect to engaging with online money games? Has the Supreme Court intervened?

EXPLAINER

Vinay Gupta

The story so far: On August 20, the Lok Sabha passed the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, 2023 after seven minutes of discussion. The Rajya Sabha passed it the next day and the Bill became law after receiving Presidential Assent on August 22. Government data suggests that Indians are losing ₹15,000 crore every year due to "Real Money Games" (RMGs). The World Health Organization (WHO) has linked RMGs to compulsive behaviour, psychological distress, financial hardship, and an overall disruption of family life. Reflecting these dangers, 32 cases of suicide attributed to online gaming addiction have been reported in Karnataka in the past 31 months. The RMG industry says this ban may threaten more than two lakh jobs across 400+ companies.

What are the three segments of online games?

The Act has proposed three categories for online games — e-sports, social gaming and RMGs. While the Act aims to promote e-sports and social gaming segments, it seeks to ban all forms of RMGs and its advertisements.

The Act defines an online money game as an online game played regardless of whether it is based on skill, chance or both, and is played after a fee-payment or with an expectation of winning money or other stakes (can include credits, coins, tokens, virtual money, etc., which can be converted to money). Under such a definition, variants of popular games like Poker, Rummy, Fantasy Cricket, and Ludo would be classified as RMGs, several such platforms are represented by celebrities including Ranbir Kapoor and Anushka Khan (Dream11), M.S. Dhoni (Winzo), Hrithik Roshan (RummyCircle) and Sonarav (Angry Birds).

With respect to e-sports, the Act defines them as games which are recognised under the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 and are registered with the proposed regulatory authority. It may include the payment of a registration or participation fee alongside performance-based prize money. Examples include games like Grand Theft Auto and Call of Duty.

While there is no legal definition of social gaming, it is included in the broader category of online games defined as games played on an electronic or digital device and operated as a software through the internet. Under Section 4 of this Bill, the government can facilitate the development and availability of online social games for recreational and educational purposes.

What does it say about regulation?

Offering online money games or engaging in transaction or authorisation of funds for the same will be punishable with imprisonment of up to three years, a fine of up to ₹1 crore, or both. Unlawful advertisement will be punishable with imprisonment of up to two years, a fine of up to ₹50 lakh, or both. Under the Bharatya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, offences shall be cognisable and non-bailable. The central government stated that the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-IN) will be tasked with blocking or disabling apps that continue to provide banned money gaming services in India, and if needed, it may rise in Interpol to bring in offshore



GETTY IMAGES

operators of money gaming platforms. IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw clarified in a statement that no penal action for players has been codified.

The Act empowers the Central government to notify and constitute a regulatory authority to recognise, categorise, and regulate online games. In 2023, the IT Ministry amended the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2021, treating online gaming firms like intermediaries. The amended rules envisaged a system of self-regulated bodies with government oversight. Online gaming firms were required to comply with KYC norms, and uphold measures to safeguard children through measures for parental access control alongside age rating mechanisms based on the nature and type of content.

The new Act makes no provisions to constraint minors from playing online social games or e-sports. It also provides for a budget allocation from the Consolidated Fund of India to promote online social gaming in the country.

Why has the government brought in the Act? Mr. Vaishnaw said the Act was a response to complaints from users who had lost thousands of crores on online money games, and that it was not a knee-jerk reaction. He said that there is irrefutable proof that the algorithms of online gaming firms do not allow for any user to emerge as a net winner in the long run.

A Parliamentary Panel Report (2023) stated that gaming portals have become agents for funding terror activities. A 2022 Financial Intelligence Report reported that online gaming firms had evaded tax of ₹2,000 crore. Further, the Defence

Ministry's think tank found that the Chinese App, PTEWIN, has defrauded Indian users of ₹400 crore, with an RBI investigation finding evidence of use of male accounts and cryptocurrency wallets. In yet another report, the government said that gaming companies were involved in GST tax evasion of ₹30,000 crore.

The current Act says that the unchecked expansion of RMGs is linked to financial fraud, money laundering, tax evasion and many other unlawful activities. It also states that gaming firms rely on opaque algorithms designed to manipulate user engagement, and that games can also be operated by bots or undisclosed agents undermining fairness and transparency. Additionally, the Act says that gaming firms operate from offshore jurisdictions bypassing domestic laws, undermining state level regulations and presenting significant enforcement challenges in terms of extra-territorial jurisdiction and interstate inconsistencies. However, while the Act proposes to establish a robust legal framework, the same is not reflected in the contents of the Act. Gaming companies may still bypass restrictions through VPNs, information cash play, or other mechanisms.

What have courts said?

Entries 34 and 62 of the State List in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution places the regulation and taxation of betting and gambling within the jurisdiction of State governments. And various State governments have taken regulatory actions before. In 2017, Telangana became the first state to ban all forms of online gaming including skill-based games. In 2020, Andhra

Pradesh banned online gambling, and in 2023, Tamil Nadu banned games such as Rummy and Poker.

In 2023, the Indian government reclassified GST brackets for online gaming along with casinos and horse racing, putting them in the same bracket as lotteries and betting. In October 2023, it imposed a uniform 28% GST on the entire entry fee/deposit, instead of platform commission. Gaming firms opposed this move, claiming that their platforms were skill based, and termed retrospective taxes as unfair and damaging. The Supreme Court (SC) this year granted a stay on notices issued to online gaming companies. The top court's decisions on whether fantasy sports, poker and rummy should be treated as games of skills or gambling, and on retrospective tax for RMG firms, are awaited. The Central government has requested the SC for one more week to file submissions to the GST dispute on online gaming, with industry players arguing that games of skill cannot be equated with gambling.

The SC had earlier said that games like Rummy and Fantasy Sports involved a substantial degree of skill and cannot be equated with gambling. This Act does not distinguish between games of skills and games of chance, leading critics of the Act to say that it was the intelligible difference and is violative of Article 19 (g) of the Constitution, giving a guaranteed right to Trade and Occupation. If the matter is challenged, then the SC can step in to shield the gaming industry with interim relief or issue a notice to the government to explain the rationale behind such a law.

Vinay Gupta is an advocate at the Supreme Court.

THE GIST

The Act has proposed three categories for online games — e-sports, social gaming and Real Money Games (RMGs). While the Act aims to promote e-sports and social gaming segments, it seeks to ban all forms of RMGs and its advertisements.

Offering online money games or engaging in transaction or authorisation of funds for the same will be punishable with imprisonment of up to three years, a fine of up to ₹1 crore, or both.

Entries 34 and 62 of the State List in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution places the regulation and taxation of betting and gambling within the jurisdiction of State governments.

What does the new online gaming Act outline?

What has the World Health Organization said about Real Money Games? How are e-sports and social gaming segments different from online money games? What are the penalties laid out in the Act with respect to engaging with online money games? Has the Supreme Court intervened?

EXPLAINER

Vinay Gupta

The story so far

In August 20, the Lok Sabha passed the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, 2023 after seven minutes of discussion. The Rajya Sabha passed it the next day and the Bill became law after receiving Presidential Assent on August 22. Government data suggests that Indians are losing ~\$5,000 crore every year due to "Real Money Games" (RMGs). The World Health Organization (WHO) has linked RMGs to compulsive behaviour, psychological distress, financial hardship, and an overall disruption of family life. Reflecting these dangers, 32 cases of suicide attributed to online gaming addiction have been reported in Karnataka in the past 31 months. The RMG industry says this ban may threaten more than two lakh jobs across 400+ companies.

What are the three segments of online games?

The Act has proposed three categories for online games – e-sports, social gaming and RMGs. While the Act aims to promote e-sports and social gaming segments, it seeks to ban all forms of RMGs and its advertisements.

The Act defines an online money game as an online game played regardless of whether it is based on skill, chance or both, and is played after a fee payment or with an expectation of winning money or other stakes (can include credits, coins, tokens, virtual money, etc. which can be converted to money). Under such a definition, variants of popular games like Poker, Rummy, Fantasy Cricket, and Ludo would be classified as RMGs. Several such platforms are represented by celebrities including Ranbir Kapoor and Aamir Khan (Dream11), M.S. Dhoni (WinZO), Hrithik Roshan (RummyCircle) and Sourav Ganguly (MyCircle).

With respect to e-sports, the Act defines them as games which are recognised under the National Sports Governance Act, 2023 and are registered with the proposed regulatory authority. It may include the payment of a registration or participation fee alongside performance-based prize money. Examples include games like Grand Theft Auto and Call of Duty.

While there is no legal definition of social gaming, it is included in the broader category of online games defined as games played on an electronic or digital device and operated as a software through the Internet. Under Section 4 of this Bill, the government can facilitate the development and availability of online social games for recreational and educational purposes.

What does it say about regulation?

Offering online money games or engaging in transaction or authorisation of funds for the same will be punishable with imprisonment of up to three years, a fine of up to ₹1 crore, or both. Unlawful advertisement will be punishable with imprisonment of up to two years, a fine of up to ₹50 lakh, or both. Under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, offences shall be cognisable and non-bailable. The central government stated that the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-IN) will be asked with blocking or disabling apps that continue to provide banned money gaming services in India, and if needed, it may rope in Interpol to bring in offshore



GETTY IMAGES

operators of money gaming platforms. IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw clarified in a statement that no penal action for players has been codified.

The Act empowers the Central government to notify and constitute a regulatory authority to recognise, categorise, and register online games. In 2021, the IT Ministry amended the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2021, treating online gaming firms like intermediaries. The amended rules envisaged a system of self-regulated bodies with government oversight. Online gaming firms were required to comply with KYC norms, and uphold measures to safeguard children through measures for parental access control alongside age rating mechanisms based on the nature and type of content.

The new Act makes no provisions to constrain reasons for playing online social games or e-sports. It also provides for a budget allocation from the Consolidated Fund of India to promote online social gaming in the country.

Why has the government brought in the Act?

Mr. Vaishnaw said the Act was a response to complaints from users who had lost thousands of crores on online money games, and that it was not a knee-jerk reaction. He said that there is irrefutable proof that the algorithms of online gaming firms do not allow for any user to emerge as a net winner in the long run.

A Parliamentary Panel Report (2023) stated that gaming portals have become agents for funding terror activities. A 2021 Financial Intelligence Report reported that online gaming firms had evaded tax of ₹2,000 crore. Further, the Defence

Ministry's think tank found that the Chinese App, FIREWIN, has defrauded Indian users of ₹400 crore, with an ED investigation finding evidence of use of fake accounts and cryptocurrency wallets. In yet another report, the government said that gaming companies were involved in GST tax evasion of ₹30,000 crore.

The current Act says that the unchecked expansion of RMGs is linked to financial fraud, money laundering, tax evasion and many other sinister activities. It also states that gaming firms rely on opaque algorithms designed to manipulate user engagement, and that games can also be operated by bots or undisclosed agents undermining fairness and transparency. Additionally, the Act says that gaming firms operate from offshore jurisdictions bypassing domestic laws, undermining state level regulation and presenting significant enforcement challenges in terms of extra-territorial jurisdiction and interstate inconsistencies. However, while the Act proposes to establish a robust legal framework, the same is not reflected in the contents of the Act. Gaming companies may still bypass restrictions through VPNs, information cash play, or other mechanisms.

What have courts said?

Entries 34 and 62 of the State List in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution places the regulation and taxation of betting and gambling within the jurisdiction of State governments. And various State governments have taken regulatory actions before. In 2017, Telangana became the first State to ban all forms of online gaming including skill-based games. In 2020, Andhra

Pradesh banned online gambling, and in 2022, Tamil Nadu banned games such as Rummy and Poker.

In 2023, the Indian government reclassified GST brackets for online gaming along with casinos and horse racing, putting them in the same bracket as lotteries and betting. In October 2023, it imposed a uniform 28% GST on the entire entry fee/deposit, instead of platform commission. Gaming firms opposed this move, claiming that their platforms were skill based, and termed retrospective taxes as unfair and damaging. The Supreme Court (SC) this year granted a stay on notices issued to online gaming companies. The top court's decisions on whether fantasy sports, poker and rummy should be treated as games of skills or gambling, and on retrospective tax for RMG firms, are awaited. The Central government has requested the SC for one more week to file submissions in the GST dispute on online gaming, with industry players arguing that games of skill cannot be equated with gambling.

The SC had earlier said that games like Rummy and Fantasy Sports involved a substantial degree of skill and cannot be equated with gambling. This Act does not distinguish between games of skills and games of chance, leading critics of the Act to say that it erases the intelligible difference and is violative of Article 19 (1) (g) of the Constitution, giving a guaranteed Right to Trade and Occupation. If the matter is challenged, then the SC can step in to shield the gaming industry with interim relief or issue a notice to the government to explain the rationale behind such a law.

Vinay Gupta is an advocate at the Supreme Court.

THE GIST

▼

The Act has proposed three categories for online games – e-sports, social gaming and Real Money Games (RMGs). While the Act aims to promote e-sports and social gaming segments, it seeks to ban all forms of RMGs and its advertisements.

▼

Offering online money games or engaging in transaction or authorisation of funds for the same will be punishable with imprisonment of up to three years, a fine of up to ₹1 crore, or both.

▼

Entries 34 and 62 of the State List in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution places the regulation and taxation of betting and gambling within the jurisdiction of State governments.

1. Recent Development

- The Lok Sabha passed the **Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, 2025**.
 - Aim: To regulate online gaming, curb gambling-like activities, and protect vulnerable players.
 - Bill covers **three segments**:
 - **E-sports**
 - **Social Gaming**
 - **Real Money Games (RMGs)**
-

2. Key Features of the Act

- **Ban on RMGs and their advertisements.**
- **Licensing & registration** required for platforms operating in India.
- Offering/betting on RMGs without authorisation: **Up to 10 years imprisonment or ₹1 crore fine or both.**
- Recognises e-sports and social gaming as legitimate.
- State governments retain jurisdiction under **Entries 34 & 62 of the State List** (betting & gambling).

3. Why Regulation was Needed

- **Economic Impact:** Indians spend ~₹55,000 crore annually on RMGs.
 - **Social Harm:**
 - WHO links RMGs to addictive behaviour & psychological disorders.
 - Several suicides reported in Karnataka & Tamil Nadu due to online gaming debts.
 - **Revenue Aspect:** Govt wants to regulate for taxation (online gaming companies already under 28%).
-

4. Concerns Raised

- Industry claims ban on RMGs could affect **2 lakh jobs**.
 - **State vs Centre issue:** Gambling is a **State List subject**; Centre regulating may create conflict.
 - Global experience: UK & US regulate through **licensing + taxation**, not outright bans.
-

Background & Historical Context

1. **Public Gambling Act, 1867** – Colonial law that prohibits running or being in charge of a public gambling house. Still forms the basis of gambling regulation in India.
 2. **Sikkim & Nagaland** – First states to regulate online games under a licensing regime.
 3. **Supreme Court Judgments:**
 - **K.R. Lakshmanan (1996)** – Declared horse racing a game of skill, not chance.
 - **Rummy & Fantasy Sports cases** – Courts held games of skill are distinct from gambling.
 4. **Global Practices:**
 - UK's **Gambling Commission** regulates through licensing.
 - US allows state-wise regulation, e.g., Nevada for casinos, New Jersey for online gambling.
-

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the Online Gaming Act, 2025:

1. The Act classifies online gaming into three categories – e-sports, social gaming, and real money games.
2. Offering unauthorised real money games is punishable with imprisonment of up to 10 years.
3. The power to regulate gambling and betting lies only with the Union Government under the Concurrent List.
4. Online gaming companies in India are subject to GST at 28%.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Fiji PM Rabuka's changing relationship with his country's Indian diaspora

ALIND CHAUHAN

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 25

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi met his Fijian counterpart Sitiveni Ligamamada Rabuka in New Delhi on Monday. Rabuka is on his first visit to India since becoming PM in December 2022.

Of Fiji's large Indian diaspora, Rabuka said: "They (Fijian-Indians) have contributed to what Fiji is today... They continue to contribute to Fiji's growth, to Fiji's economy, to Fiji's stability."

Rabuka's own rise in Fijian politics had been on the back of a coup in 1987, which removed a Prime Minister backed by ethnic Indians from office. Rabuka has since apologised for his actions at the time.

The Fijian coup of 1987

On the morning of May 14, 1987, Rabuka, then a lieutenant colonel in the army, and 10 masked soldiers stormed Fiji's

parliament and arrested then PM Timoci Bavadra. At a news conference subsequently, Rabuka announced the suspension of the constitution and said he would form a caretaker government until fresh elections are held to "restore civilian rule and go back to democracy". *The Indian Express* had reported at the time.

The coup took place a little over a month after an alliance of the National Federation Party and Labour Party won elections that led to the formation of a cabinet dominated by ethnic Indians for the first time since Fiji's independence from Britain in 1970. Bavadra had been elected with the support of a large section of Fijian-Indians.

A day after his takeover, Rabuka announced he was drafting a new constitution that would guarantee Fiji would never again have an Indian-dominated government ('No Power for Indians: Rabuka', *The Indian Express*, May 16, 1987). He denied discriminating against Indians, and claimed that he was only "looking after the Fijians' interest".

On May 19, anti-Indian riots broke out in the country. "[A] crowd of ethnic Fijians ran through the streets of Suva in an hour-long rampage, attacking Indians and Indian-owned shops" despite Rabuka's appeals for calm, *The Indian Express* reported on May 20. At least 50 Indians were reported injured in violence provoked by a rally that Indians took out in support of the ousted PM.

Rabuka's second coup

Widespread racial violence followed the military takeover, academic Amba Pande wrote in an article published in the journal *Strategic Analysis* ('Race and Power Struggle in Fiji'). Pande wrote that an attempt by the governor-general to form an advisory council with both Bavadra and Rabuka failed after the ousted PM refused to participate "on the grounds that the composition of the council was unconstitutional and biased".

Following weeks of negotiations, in July

1987, plans to reform the constitution were approved, and it was decided that Bavadra and Kamisese Mara — a former PM popular with indigenous Fijians — would form an interim government.

In response, Rabuka orchestrated a second coup on September 25 of that year. He declared Fiji a republic, and proclaimed himself head of state, replacing the Queen. Countries around the world condemned these actions and refused to recognise his regime. India imposed trade sanctions on Fiji.

Under pressure, Rabuka resigned as head of state on December 6, 1987, and Penaia Ganilau became the first President of the Fijian Republic. A new constitution was promulgated in 1990, and elections were held two years later.

Background of crisis

The 1987 election result was only a trigger for Rabuka's coup. Since independence,

the South Pacific Ocean archipelago had seen a widening political divide between ethnic Indians and indigenous Fijians.

Indians were brought to Fiji from 1879 onward as *girmityas* or indentured labour transported to work in the sugar plantations on the islands. The majority of these Indians stayed back after the indenture system ended and, over time, gained prosperity. The Indian community eventually became the backbone of Fiji's economic system, and they had, by the 1940s, outnumbered ethnic Fijians in the population of the islands.

Another reason for the ethnic Fijians' resentment was the nature of landholdings. Indigenous Fijians owned more than 83% of the land on the islands, but Indian tenant farmers held most of it on 99-year leases, Pande noted. "Despite the fact that the land was legally made inalienable by the constitution of 1970, the fear of losing it had always been there in the minds of the Fijians," Pande wrote.

These insecurities came to a boil after the general elections of 1987. A section of indigenous Fijians sought to thwart Indo-Fijians from consolidating political power.

Multiple apologies

Over the years, Rabuka has apologised multiple times for the 1987 coup.

He had apologised publicly on the 21st anniversary of the takeover in 2008. "It was a mistake and I admit I was wrong," he said on that occasion, according to a *Reuters* report.

In 2023, months after being elected Prime Minister for the second time, Rabuka apologised again.

"We confess our wrongdoings, and we confess that we have hurt so many of our people in Fiji, particularly those of the Indo-Fijian community of the time and among them sons, daughters, grandsons and granddaughters of those who were indentured as labourers from India between 1879 and 1916," he said in the country's capital, Suva.

EXPLAINED
HISTORY



Ethnic groups (2016) ^[6]	56.8% Indigenous Fijians 37.5% Indo-Fijians 1.2% Rotumans 4.5% others
Religion	64.4% Christianity <ul style="list-style-type: none">34.6% Methodism29.8% other Christian 27.9% Hinduism 6.3% Islam 1.4% others / none ^[7]
Demonym(s)	Fijian
Government	Unitary parliamentary republic <ul style="list-style-type: none">• President Naiqama Lalabalavu• Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka• Chief Justice Salesi Temo• Deputy Prime Ministers Viliame Gavoka Biman Prasad Manoa Kamikamica• Parliament Speaker Filimone Jitoko
Legislature	Parliament
Independence from the United Kingdom <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Independence• Republic• Current constitution	10 October 1970 6 October 1987 6 September 2013
Area <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Total• Water (%)	18,274 km ² (7,056 sq mi) (151st) negligible
Population <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2018 estimate• 2017 census• Density	926,276 ^[8] (161st) 884,887 ^[9] 46.4/km ² (120.2/sq mi) (148th)
GDP (PPP) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Total	2023 estimate ▲ \$15.152 billion ^[10] (158th)

- PM Narendra Modi met Fijian PM Sitiveni Ligamamada Rabuka in New Delhi (Aug 25, 2025).
- Rabuka acknowledged the contribution of the Indian diaspora to Fiji's growth, economy, and stability.

2. Historical Background:

- **First Coup (May 14, 1987):** Rabuka, then an army colonel, led a coup removing PM Timoci Bavadra (supported by ethnic Indians).
- He suspended the Constitution, promised elections, but soon ethnic tensions triggered **anti-Indian riots** (May 19, 1987).
- The coup was seen as a move to suppress Indo-Fijians' political participation.
- **Second Coup (Sept 25, 1987):**
 - Rabuka staged another coup, declared Fiji a Republic, and himself Head of State.
 - Global condemnation followed; India imposed **trade sanctions**.
 - Rabuka resigned as head of state in Dec 1987 under pressure.

- **Aftermath:**

- A new Constitution (1990) institutionalized discrimination against Indo-Fijians.
- By 1940s, Indo-Fijians had become **larger in number than ethnic Fijians**, but landholding patterns and ethnic insecurities persisted.

3. Rabuka's Later Apologies:

- In 2008, on the 21st anniversary of the coup, Rabuka admitted: *"It was a mistake, I was wrong."*
- In 2023, after re-election as PM, he again apologized to Indo-Fijians, especially descendants of indentured laborers brought between 1879–1916.

4. Current Scenario:

- Rabuka now seeks stronger ties with India.
- The Indian diaspora remains central to Fiji's economy, politics, and India's soft power in the Pacific.

- **Indenture System (Girmitiya History):**
 - Between 1879–1916, over **60,000 Indians** were taken to Fiji as indentured laborers under the British colonial system to work on sugarcane plantations.
 - Known as *Girmitiyas*, their descendants now form nearly **40% of Fiji's population**.
- **India's Role in Fiji:**
 - India has historically supported Indo-Fijians after coups, providing scholarships, medical aid, and diplomatic pressure for equality.
 - India–Fiji relations are part of its **"Act East Policy"** and **Pacific outreach**.
- **Geopolitical Angle:**
 - Fiji lies in the **South Pacific Ocean**, a region of increasing contest between **China, USA, and India**.
 - India's engagement with Fiji strengthens its role in the **Indian Ocean-Pacific strategic framework**.

Word of the day

Apathy:

an absence of emotion or enthusiasm; the trait of lacking enthusiasm for or interest in things generally

Synonyms: indifference, numbness, spiritlessness

Usage: *People need to be more aware of the widespread apathy in our generation.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/apathypro

International Phonetic

Alphabet: /'æ.pə.θi/



Thank you 😊

