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PYQs + MCQs + Myth Buster

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1 GST Council reforms | GST परिषद सुधार

2 Literature Nobel: Anne Carson | साहित्य नोबेल



57th GST Council

57वीं GST परिषद

GST refunds made easier; arrest powers cut

Rates remain unchanged; decisions on rates only once a year; penalty cut from ₹25,000 to ₹10,000

The council has eased the litigation-related rules of the system, providing relief to small taxpayers

Goods can be inspected or seized only by the officer of supplier or destination State, it said

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council on Thursday took a slew of decisions in its 57th meeting here to enhance simplification, improve certainty in tax treatment, remove hold-ups in the processing of input tax credits, and ease the compliance burden on businesses, especially smaller ones.

The council also recommended removing arrest powers of GST officers and increasing the prosecution threshold from ₹1 crore to ₹5 crore. The general penalty will also be reduced from ₹25,000 to ₹10,000.

"I can say that 99% of issues in GST relating to rates and processes have now been addressed," Nirmala Sitharaman, Union Finance Minister and Chairperson of the GST Council, said following the

meeting. "The door is not closed to further reforms, and those will be taken up as needed, but the bulk of them are now done," she added.

Apart from easing processes related to GST registration and availing of refunds and input tax credits, the council has also eased the litigation-related rules of the tax system, providing relief to small taxpayers.

Ms. Sitharaman said all the changes are expected to come into effect from April 1, 2027, and added that no GST rates were changed during this meeting. The rate decisions will now come up before the Council only once a year and will be implemented from the start of the subsequent financial year, the Finance Minister said.

She noted that, beyond the GST Council, the Union government has decided to introduce a faceless assess-

Good and simple

The 57th meeting of the GST council decided to enhance simplification, improve certainty in tax treatment, and ease the compliance burden on small businesses

KEY DECISIONS

- Tax officers' power to arrest scrapped
- Prosecution limit increased to ₹5 crore turnover
- Export of services brought into input tax credit system
- Automated registrations, reduced paperwork, and eased input tax credit processes
- No notices for amounts below ₹10,000, pending notices to be cancelled

The committee has also decided to examine proposal to allow small taxpayers to file returns once a year

New measures likely to come into force from April 1, 2027

ment system for the Central GST system, similar to the one currently in place for income tax. A framework for this will be issued for public consultation before Budget 2027, and the system will be implemented during 2027-28.

"The process reforms have been driven by the principle of trust," Ms. Sitharaman said. "The businesses and taxpayers

have to be trusted... and we shouldn't be too intrusive."

Thursday's meet in New Delhi came over a year after its previous meeting in September 2025, during which it had rationalised the rates on most goods and services, and reduced the total number of tax slabs under the GST. The GST Council has approved a system that will provide

I can say that 99% of issues in GST relating to rates and processes have now been addressed... The door is not closed to further reforms, and those will be taken up as needed, but the bulk of them are now done

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN
Union Finance Minister



greater certainty about the documents required during registration. According to the government, 61% of taxpayers are granted automatic registration within three working days.

The upgraded system approved by the Council is expected to streamline the process for the remaining low-risk taxpayers by avoiding queries and rejections. The new system will

also incorporate a simplified registration mechanism for small taxpayers who provide supplies through e-commerce platforms, and it has also eased the process for amendments to and cancellations of registrations.

This will now allow small e-commerce sellers to register in a single State rather than in each State where they sell goods.

The Centre has also shared a concept note with the GST Council and has received its in-principle approval for an optional scheme for businesses with a turnover of up to ₹5 crore that supply to consumers, allowing them to file returns once a year instead of quarterly.

The final decision on this will come up for approval in the next GST Council meeting.

Refunds are proposed to be acknowledged within 10 days, down from the cur-

rent 15 days. Based on a risk assessment, the government estimates that 90% of the claims will be released within three working days of acknowledgement.

Reducing disputes

The Council has also said that goods moving between States can be inspected, detained or seized only by the officer of the supplier or destination State and not by any officer in between.

Further, goods can now be intercepted only on the basis of "specific intelligence" and only with authorisation of a Joint Commissioner-level officer.

"This prevents arbitrary checks by GST enforcement wings that affect the movement of goods from one State to another," Ms. Sitharaman said.

"This would significantly improve the ease of movement of goods."

57th GST Council

57वीं GST परिषद

EXPANDING TAX BASE

Rate cuts lower average to 10.8%

● Monthly taxable supply rises to ₹51 lakh crore

SHUBHAM RANA
New Delhi, October 8

INPUT TAX CREDIT utilisation under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) has risen since the GST Council lowered the number of tax slabs to two from four in September last year, Revenue Secretary Arvind Shrivastava said on Thursday.

Meanwhile, the average GST rate has declined to 10.84% after last year's tax cuts from 11.76% previously, and is sharply lower than the revenue-neutral rate of around 15% estimated when the GST regime was introduced in 2017, gov-

CREDIT MOMENTUM

■ Credit uptick: ITC utilisation improved after GST slabs were cut to two from four



■ Credit balance: Unutilised ITC eased to 21.16% of taxable supplies from 21.56%

■ Unutilised ITC, as a proportion of monthly taxable supplies, fell to 21.16% as on August 31

■ Faster growth in taxable supplies points to broader formalisation of business

gests an improvement in credit utilisation as the tax base has expanded. "So ITC utilisation has actually started picking up, which means actual outputs have gone up," Shrivastava said.

Taxable supply has risen from ₹40.19 lakh crore a month to ₹50.58 lakh crore, a 25.8% increase. Taxable supply grew by

activity. While the absolute ITC balance increased by around 23.5%, taxable supplies grew at a faster pace of 25.8%," said Rahul Shekhar, partner-indirect tax, Nangia Global. "The trend suggests that input tax credit is growing at a slower pace than the underlying taxable-supply base, signalling overall growth

actually blocked, since unutilised credit can include credits available for future utilisation and need not represent stranded working capital, said Manoj Mishra, partner and tax controversy management leader, Grant Thornton Bharat.

"The data therefore points to improving credit utilisation, but a separate assessment would be required to determine the portion of ITC that remains genuinely blocked or non-refundable, particularly for exporters and businesses facing inverted duty structures," Mishra said.

The GST Council on Thursday recommended broader refund eligibility and accelerated refund process. This is significant, as it can help unlock the portion of eligible credit that is genuinely stranded, experts said. Tax experts had estimated

57th GST Council: Refunds Easier, Arrest Powers Taken Away



From 1 April 2027
1 अप्रैल 2027 से

57वीं GST परिषद: रिफ़ंड आसान, GST अधिकारियों की गिरफ़्तारी शक्ति समाप्त; दरें नहीं बदलीं – दर निर्णय अब साल में एक बार

1 Big decisions | बड़े फैसले

- ▶ Arrest powers of GST officers removed
गिरफ़्तारी शक्ति समाप्त
- ▶ Prosecution threshold ₹1 cr → ₹5 cr
अभियोजन सीमा ₹5 करोड़
- ▶ General penalty ₹25,000 → ₹10,000
जुर्माना ₹10,000
- ▶ No rate change; rate decisions once a year
दर निर्णय साल में एक बार

2 Faster refunds तेज़ रिफ़ंड

10 days Refund acknowledged (was 15) पावती	90% Claims paid in 3 days 3 दिन में
10.84% Avg GST rate (was 11.76%) औसत दर	₹50.58 L cr Monthly taxable supply मासिक आपूर्ति

3 Ease for businesses व्यापार में आसानी

- ▶ Goods stopped only on **specific intelligence**
केवल विशिष्ट सूचना पर
- ▶ Only **supplier/destination State** officer can seize
केवल दो राज्यों के अधिकारी
- ▶ E-commerce sellers: register in **one State**
एक राज्य में पंजीकरण

57th GST Council — in depth (1/2)

57वीं GST परिषद — विस्तार से (1/2)

4 More reforms | और सुधार



- **Faceless assessment** for CGST – rollout **2027-28**

फ़ेसलेस आकलन

- Optional **annual return** for turnover up to **₹5 cr** (in-principle)

वार्षिक रिटर्न

- FM: “**99%** of rate & process issues addressed”

99% मुद्दे हल

5 Rate tweaks (FE) | दर बदलाव



- Seaweed **biostimulants**: 18% → 5%

बायोस्टिमुलेंट 5%

- **Retreaded tractor tyres** → 5%

ट्रैक्टर टायर 5%

- **EV passenger transport** can opt for 5%

EV परिवहन 5%

6 GST Council basics परिषद की मूल बातें



- **Article 279A – 101st Amendment (2016)**

अनुच्छेद 279A

- Chair: **Union Finance Minister**

अध्यक्ष: केंद्रीय वित्त मंत्री

- Vote: Centre **1/3**, States **2/3**; pass with **3/4**

केंद्र 1/3, राज्य 2/3

- GST launched **1 July 2017**

1 जुलाई 2017

57th GST Council — in depth (2/2)

57वीं GST परिषद — विस्तार से (2/2)

7 From “taxman” to “trust” | “अविश्वास” से “विश्वास” तक



Arrests removed
गिरफ्तारी नहीं

Less fear
कम डर



Fewer cases
कम मुकदमे

₹5 cr threshold
₹5 करोड़



Free movement
मुक्त आवाजाही

Fewer checks
कम जाँच



Trust-based tax
विश्वास आधारित

Ease of business
व्यापार सुगमता

8 Did you know? क्या आप जानते हैं?



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5% व 18%

► Revenue-neutral rate (2017) was ~**15%**

RNR ~15%

Literature Nobel: Anne Carson

साहित्य नोबेल

Canadian poet Anne Carson wins Nobel Prize in Literature

Associated Press
STOCKHOLM

Canadian poet, essayist and translator Anne Carson won the Nobel Prize in literature on Thursday for playful, genre-blending works that fuse the classical and the modern.

Toronto-born Ms. Carson, 76, draws on themes and stories from ancient Greek and Roman literature for writing that often blends elements of poetry, essay and fiction.

The permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy Ingrid Carlberg said the author was in Iceland "listening to the wind" when the academy reached her to notify her of the win.



Anne Carson

reading habits. Asked how the prize would change her sales, she said: "I'll get a sticker on the front of my book. Stickers help."

Works by Carson

Ms. Carson's books include *Eros the Bittersweet*, *Auto-*

Literature Nobel: Anne Carson

साहित्य नोबेल

She was very taken by surprise," she said.

Asked how she felt about the award, Ms. Carson told the Icelandic public broadcaster RUV: "I think they're all crazy." She described the conversation with the academy as "rather halting".

"They have the usual questions, and I have no answers." She said poetry is "probably more useful than prose right now because it's faster, and everybody is in a hurry. So basically I think it's good because it's brief. Except Homer. Homer's not brief."

Ms. Carson is among the more high-profile recent winners of the literature Nobel, which often honours authors little known outside of the literary world and is sometimes criticised for valuing literary experimentation over the ability to connect with a broad readership.

However, the prize can also introduce readers to writers and works beyond their own languages or

biography of *Kea*, as well as *Men in the Off Hours*, and *Norma Jeane Baker of Troy*.

She also has translated works of classical Greek literature that, the academy said, "may be regarded as independent works in their own right."

They include *If Not, Winter*, based on poem fragments by Sappho, Sophocles' tragic plays *Electra* and *Antigone* and Euripides' *Bakkhai*.

"Almost all her literary production has centred upon the intersection between the philologist's obsession with words and the poet's desire for new meaning," said Anders Olson, chair of the Nobel Literature Committee.

Ms. Carson blends genres and styles, offering "different voices that play off against each other," he added.

The prize money this year is 12 million Swedish kronor (about \$1.2 million) per prize. The prize was announced in Stockholm.

A B-X

Literature Nobel: Anne Carson

साहित्य नोबेल

• NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE

Anne Carson: A provocateur who blurs boundaries between genres

Paromita Chakrabarti

New Delhi, October 8

IN A 2004 interview with *The Paris Review*, Anne Carson offered a simple explanation for why she writes: "I write to find out what I think about something."

Poet, classicist, essayist and translator for more than four decades, the 76-year-old has used the past to clarify her thoughts about the contemporary. She has drawn on the literature of ancient Greece while refusing to be confined by forms, by the boundaries between poetry, fiction, criticism and memoir. This year's Nobel Prize in Literature acknowledges her "for her bold and inventive oeuvre that, in playful dialogue with the classical tradition, has created new forms for contemporary literature".

Greek on the menu

Born in Toronto in June 1950, the second child of a banker father and homemaker mother, Carson's childhood was spent between small towns, including

Stoney Creek, Port Hope and Timmins. The itinerant childhood meant changing schools repeatedly, but it also brought the Canadian writer to the teacher who would alter the course of her life.

In a 2011 interview to the literary magazine *Brick*, Carson spoke of how she owed her "career and happiness" to her Latin teacher Alice Cowan in Port Hope High School. It was the time she fancied herself as a "reborn" Oscar Wilde: "...I thought, If I learn Greek I could be all the more like Oscar Wilde. It seemed the natural next step." And so, over Greek lessons during lunch hour, a lifelong bond with the ancient classics was formed. Carson went on to study Classics at the University of Toronto. Her doctoral dissertation, completed in 1981, was on Sappho, the ancient Greek poet.

Her first book, *Eros the Bittersweet*, published in 1986, grew out of her academic work, an examination of desire through the classical lens. It established an idea that would remain central to her writing: that desire is created by distance, shaped by

• 'For her bold and inventive oeuvre that... has created new forms for contemporary literature'



"Carson with a light touch explores the possibilities of writing... by which the literary sketch has become of particular value to her."

ON FRIDAY:
NOBEL PRIZE IN PEACE



ANNE CARSON, 76
Canada

SOME NOTABLE WORKS:

- *Eros the Bittersweet* (1986)
- *Autobiography of Red: A Novel in Verse* (1998)
- *Nox* (2010)
- *Float* (2016)
- *Wrong Norma* (2024)

longing and imagination. "The words we read and words we write never say exactly what we mean. The people we love are never just as we desire them. The two symbols never perfectly match. Eros is in between," she wrote.

Books that changed the rules

If *Eros the Bittersweet* introduced Carson as a provocateur, *Autobiography of Red*

(1998), a novel in verse, established her as an unmistakably original literary voice. Carson transformed the ancient Greek myth of Geryon, the red-winged monster killed by Herakles, into the story of a sensitive adolescent who falls in love with Herakles. Myth, adolescence, sexuality and heartbreak come together into a moving coming-of-age tale.

Then came *The Beauty of the Husband*

(2001), "a fictional essay in 29 tangos", which made her the first woman to win the TS Elliot Prize; *Red Doc* (2013), which returned to the characters of *Autobiography of Red*; and *Nox* (2010), perhaps her most formally startling book.

Nox was created after the death of Carson's estranged brother Michael and combines photographs, letters, translation, fragments and handwritten material in an accordion-fold format. Its emotional subject is grief, but it also examines the intellectual difficulty of holding on to another person through language.

Carson has also translated Sappho, Euripides and other classical writers, most notably in *If Not, Winter: Fragments of Sappho* and *An Orestea*. *Wrong Norma* (2024), a collection of 25 poetic-prose pieces, won the National Book Critics Circle Award for Poetry in 2025.

What makes her stand out

Carson's distinction lies in her easy ability to transcend genres. She's always been

reluctant to call herself a poet, even though, as she told *The Paris Review* in the 2004 interview, she had been writing "some heretic form of poetry" for much of her life.

She is impatient with formal categories, with the distinction between the intellectual and the emotional. A poem can suddenly become an essay; an essay morphs into a translation; a translation can become autobiography; an ancient myth turns into a modern love story.

Through it all Carson maintains an emotional detachment, writing about desire, abandonment or bereavement without the confessional warmth usually associated with such themes.

Instead, they show up through a fragment of Sappho, in the form of a mythological figure, a photograph, or an abrupt change of form, demonstrating that the classics remain radically contemporary, that there is no one way to arrive at or dwell in poetry. Or, as she put it in *Autobiography of Red*: "Reality is a sound, you have to tune in to it not just keen yelling."

Literature Nobel 2026:

Anne Carson (Canada)

साहित्य का नोबेल 2026: कनाडाई कवयित्री, निबंधकार व अनुवादक ऐनी कार्सन – प्राचीन यूनानी साहित्य और आधुनिक लेखन का मेल



Poet & classicist, 76
कवयित्री, 76

1 The winner | विजेता



- ▶ **Anne Carson, 76** – born **Toronto, 1950**
टोरंटो में जन्म
- ▶ Poet, essayist, translator, **classicist**
कवयित्री, अनुवादक
- ▶ Was in **Iceland** “listening to the wind” when told
आइसलैंड में थीं

2 Citation | प्रशस्ति



- ▶ “For her **bold and inventive oeuvre** that, in playful dialogue with the **classical tradition**, has created **new forms** for contemporary literature”
शास्त्रीय परंपरा से संवाद कर नए रूप

3 Key works | प्रमुख कृतियाँ

Work कृति	Year वर्ष
Eros the Bittersweet	1986
Autobiography of Red (novel in verse)	1998
Nox	2010
Wrong Norma	2024

Literature Nobel: Anne Carson — in depth (1/2)

साहित्य नोबेल — विस्तार से (1/2)

4 Her style | उनकी शैली



- ▶ **Blurs genres** – poem
→ essay → translation
विधाओं का मेल
- ▶ Ancient **Greek myths**
retold for today
यूनानी मिथक आज के
संदर्भ में
- ▶ PhD on **Sappho** (Greek
poet)
सैफ़ो पर शोध

5 Translations | अनुवाद



- ▶ **If Not, Winter** –
fragments of **Sappho**
सैफ़ो
- ▶ Sophocles: **Electra**,
Antigone
सोफ़ोक्लीज़
- ▶ Euripides: **Bakkhai**
यूरिपिडीज़

6 Honours | सम्मान



- ▶ First woman to win **T.S. Eliot Prize** (2001)
टी.एस. एलियट पुरस्कार
- ▶ Prize money: **12 million Swedish kronor**
(~\$1.2 mn)
1.2 करोड़ क्रोना
- ▶ Chosen by **Swedish Academy**, Stockholm
स्वीडिश अकादमी

Literature Nobel: Anne Carson — in depth (2/2)

साहित्य नोबेल — विस्तार से (2/2)

7 Recent Literature Nobels | हालिया साहित्य नोबेल



2023

Jon Fosse
(Norway)
नॉर्वे



2024

Han Kang (S.
Korea)
द. कोरिया



2025

Krasznahorkai
(Hungary)
हंगरी



2026

Anne Carson
(Canada)
कनाडा

8 Did you know? क्या आप जानते हैं?



► Earlier Canadian
winner: **Alice Munro**
(2013)

एलिस मुनरो

► First Indian: **Tagore,**
1913 (Gitanjali)

टैगोर, 1913

पृष्ठ 9 . विचार

Articles covered from this page | इस पृष्ठ से लिए गए लेख

1 Law vs untouchability | क़ानून व अस्पृश्यता

The Internet is a place where you can find anything you want to know. But it's also a place where you can find a lot of bad information. So how do you know what's real and what's not?

One way is to look for the source of the information. If it's from a reputable source, like a news organization or a government agency, it's more likely to be accurate. If it's from an unknown source, it's more likely to be false.

Another way is to look for evidence. If there are other sources that say the same thing, it's more likely to be true. If there's only one source, it's more likely to be false.

Finally, you should always be skeptical. Don't believe everything you read. Think for yourself and make your own decisions.

The Internet is a great tool, but it's also a double-edged sword. Use it wisely, and you'll get the most out of it.

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October 2020 The Hindu | Indian Express | I

Law vs untouchability

क़ानून व अस्पृश्यता

Are legal guarantees insufficient in abolishing untouchability?



Valerian Rodrigues

Former Professor at Mangalore University and Jawahar Institute of Management, Mangalore



Disha Wadekar

Supreme Court Registrar with over 20 years of experience in constitutional, criminal and civil law. A Fulbright scholar and LL.M. graduate of Columbia Law School

PARLEY

In August this year, the performance of a "purification" ritual by certain Hindu groups in Uttarakhand, at the location where Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, who belongs to a Dalit community, addressed a public rally, led to a national conversation on the practice of untouchability. This discourse was shaped as Opposition Congress leaders accused the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) dispensation of practising caste discrimination. The Uttarakhand BJP chief defended the ritual saying that it was meant to "cleanse" the area of the ideas that Mr. Kharge was espousing at the rally. After a sustained campaign from Opposition leaders and civil society actors, an FIR was registered in the matter. So, are legal guarantees sufficient in abolishing untouchability? Valerian Rodrigues and Disha Wadekar discuss the question in a conversation moderated by Abhinav Lakshman. Edited excerpts:

Is the law sufficient to address caste-crimes such as untouchability or practices that uphold the purity-pollution paradigm?

Valerian Rodrigues: I feel that legal guarantees are necessary, but not adequate. Two dimensions to untouchability have emerged over time – one is that of Baba Saheb Ambedkar's, that it is necessary to abolish untouchable practices; and the other is the one argued by Mahatma Gandhi, that social conscience needs to change. After independence, the legal regime has come but the social conscience in India remains frozen.

Disha Wadekar: Approaching this a little differently, the answer lies in understanding the nature of law itself – what it can and cannot do. Starting with whether the law is sufficient assumes that formal law is some embodiment of perfection meant to rectify an imperfect society. But that is not the case. Social laws have been in place for thousands of years. We should start by asking ourselves about the law of caste and how it has been in operation for thousands of years. There is this concept of legal consciousness, which is shaped by the everyday experience of the law. Law is also very contextual, and so is its experience. It can be individualistic; it can be social. I think we need to first bring the law down from that pedestal that we have given it, and see its social interaction with the structures of caste, patriarchy, and Brahminism. It is important to note that this does not mean that modern law is not important. The only break to the law of caste has been that of the formal rule of law. When the British brought that to us, from an anti-caste perspective, for Dalits, this rule of law regime was emancipatory. It is extremely important. But is it sufficient to annihilate caste? That is probably the question that we should be asking ourselves.



Uttarakhand Pradesh Congress leaders organise a sit-in protest at the CM's residence, demanding action against those responsible for the "purification" ritual conducted at Renuka Madan, in Dehradun on September 7, 2022

Clearly, India has, from its inception, tried to wield the Constitution and the law to deal with these social behaviours. What have these laws achieved thus far?

VR: We need to extend the regime of law beyond what is formally stated in the legislation and in the Constitution. But I would still make that distinction between social practices to which I would not ascribe the legal norms as strongly as to the formal legal regime. The legal regime in India against untouchability has done two things. One, it has checked, to a great extent, much wider and obvious practices of untouchability. Secondly, it has provided instruments to conscious sections of Dalits and non-Dalits to fight against practices of untouchability, even though the resources are extremely limited and the odds they confront are huge. The legal regime in India stands by the rights of Dalit communities as compared to, let's say 100 years ago, from the time of the Poona Pact. You will find that certain obvious practices of untouchability such as preventing people from taking the same use of wells in public places, access to public places, access to public institutions, and the kind of violence that was let loose on Dalit workers in the countryside – that has declined a lot. We do not know what would have taken place if this was not the case.

Even though this progress is visible, how does one look at the ways in which discrimination itself has evolved since the legal regime came into being?

DW: Over the years, the evolution of



Practices of untouchability in India are not merely social practices; they are embedded strongly in our social norms. Dr. Ambedkar somewhere calls it "notions in the mind". This is a notion that is instilled in the mind of both Dalits and non-Dalits.

VALERIAN RODRIGUES

discriminatory practices can be categorised into two sections. One is the more traditional forms of atrocities which Mr. Rodrigues was referring to earlier. The other, in my opinion, would be a reactionary form of atrocity. And that is where social mobility has to be considered. The Dalit's social mobility has increased after the Constitution came into force, and that mobility has led to discontent amongst oppressor communities. One instance of that can be seen in the reservation Jhatka Andolan that has come up. And then there are newer forms of atrocities that are happening which come from a sentiment of "how dare you sit next to me?" or "how dare you share the same privilege as me?" or "how dare you socially mobilise?"

So then, how does one analyse this interplay between the law being emancipatory but also its use becoming the trigger for such reactionary atrocities?

VR: Practices of untouchability in India are not merely social practices; they are embedded strongly in our social norms. Dr. Ambedkar somewhere calls it "notions in the mind". This is a notion that is instilled in the mind both in Dalits and non-Dalits. How do you get out of it? I feel that we have not embraced practices which I think were tried out from 1939 to 1949, to some extent, of reopening Indian society and making this an internal value. Now, how do you convert these values into social practices? In a country like India, it is an extremely complex question. We should have adopted institutions and practices which do not allow such notions to take root in children at all. There is very little, even in urban spaces, mixture and intermingling across castes. Practices such as inter-dining and inter-marriages have disappeared from public spaces in India. We need to intervene with very different instrumentalities, and this is a task the state needs to encourage, but it is also beyond the state. Non-state actors need to be made alive to this particular problem. And the setting in India today is not conducive to that kind of social reopening.

DW: There is an argument to be made that the answer is outside of the urban carceral point-of-view of the law. But before we even go there, I believe there also needs to be a reimagining of what we can do within the law. There is a lot of scholarly material that shows

that using criminal law for stricter punishments, whether in cases of gender crimes, caste crimes, or other social crimes, does not have the result that one would presume. The reason is that the people adjudicating these cases are not just judicial actors but also social actors. The criminal law regime, which was superimposed, does not change the mindset of the judges. So, it has actually become counterproductive. And we are going to have to deal with these real questions. Not to say that all of this needs to be changed. But increasingly we are seeing across the world that marginalised communities are not relying on carceral regimes. The argument here is that there is an inherent requirement in criminal law, that if something needs to be punished, it must be proved beyond a reasonable doubt. This is needed, of course; we shouldn't try to undo that. And even though such criminal law provisions have a huge deterrence value as we have seen, is it 100% going to eliminate atrocities? It's not. Is it going to eliminate some form of atrocities? In some instances, probably yes. But beyond criminal law, can we look at civil law and civil remedies?

There is this entire arena of civil law, civil regime and civil punishments that we have not explored, where the burden is not that high to prove a form of discrimination whether it's caste-based discrimination or gender-based discrimination. The PCRA Act has done it. And we need to look at really localised forms of dispute resolution mechanisms, examples of which can be seen in certain types of Sharia advisors (courts), which Muslim women have felt empowered to approach when they felt they couldn't go to court, or in the ways in which Gram Sabhas have become centres for dispute resolution at the local level.

How do we move towards making Indian society more conducive for the kind of social reopening that you spoke of?

VR: In the way India has dealt with this, we think that there is something called the "common" that we need to reinforce. There are institutions that can do this but we have not explored those. For instance, our textbooks, can be changed a great deal, our teacher training at the lowest level can be changed, and this concept of the "common" can be established in urban planning as well, where we tend to see that often Dalits are made to congregate into certain spaces.

This normalcy of Dalits should have their own Anganwadis, or their own water taps, etc., has to be broken. If we are ever going to make an assault on untouchable practices.



To listen to the full interview, scan the code or go to the link: www.thehindu.com

Are Laws Enough to End Untouchability?



Article 17
अनुच्छेद 17

क्या क़ानूनी गारंटी अस्पृश्यता ख़त्म करने के लिए पर्याप्त है? – क़ानून ज़रूरी, पर सामाजिक चेतना बदलनी होगी

1 The trigger | संदर्भ



- ▶ Aug 2026: “purification” ritual in Uttarakhand
“शुद्धिकरण” अनुष्ठान
- ▶ At the site of a rally by Mallikarjun Kharge (Dalit leader)
खड़गे की रैली स्थल
- ▶ FIR filed after public campaign
अभियान के बाद FIR

2 Two views | दो दृष्टिकोण



- ▶ Valerian Rodrigues: law is necessary, not adequate
ज़रूरी, पर्याप्त नहीं
- ▶ Disha Wadekar: study “legal consciousness” – how people live the law
क़ानूनी चेतना
- ▶ Social conscience has stayed “frozen”
चेतना “जमी” हुई

3 Legal shield | क़ानूनी कवच



Law क़ानून	What क्या
Article 17 अनु. 17	Abolishes untouchability उन्मूलन
PCR Act 1955 PCR	Punishes practice दंड
SC/ST PoA Act 1989 अत्याचार निवारण	Stops atrocities अत्याचार रोक

Law vs untouchability — in depth (1/2)

क़ानून व अस्पृश्यता — विस्तार से (1/2)

4

What law achieved
क़ानून की उपलब्धि



- ▶ Open bans on **wells, temples, public places** declined
खुले भेदभाव में कमी
- ▶ Gave Dalits **tools to fight** discrimination
लड़ने के साधन
- ▶ Rights far stronger than at **Poona Pact (1932)**
पूना पैक्ट से आगे

5

New forms | नए रूप



- ▶ **Reactionary atrocities** – backlash to Dalit mobility
प्रतिक्रियात्मक अत्याचार
- ▶ “How dare you **sit next to me?**”
“मेरे बराबर क्यों?”
- ▶ Little **inter-dining, inter-marriage** even in cities
अंतर्जातीय मेल कम

6

Way forward | आगे की राह



- ▶ Teach equality in **schools & textbooks** early
स्कूल से शुरुआत
- ▶ Shared spaces – **Anganwadis, water taps** for all
साझा स्थान
- ▶ Local **dispute-resolution** bodies
स्थानीय समाधान

Law vs untouchability — in depth (2/2)

क़ानून व अस्पृश्यता — विस्तार से (2/2)

7 Journey against untouchability | अस्पृश्यता विरोधी यात्रा



1932

Poona Pact
पूना पैक्ट



1950

Article 17
अनुच्छेद 17



1955 / 1976

UO Act → PCR
Act
PCR अधिनियम



1989

SC/ST PoA Act
अत्याचार निवारण

8 Did you know? क्या आप जानते हैं?



► Ambedkar called caste
“a notion, a state of the
mind”

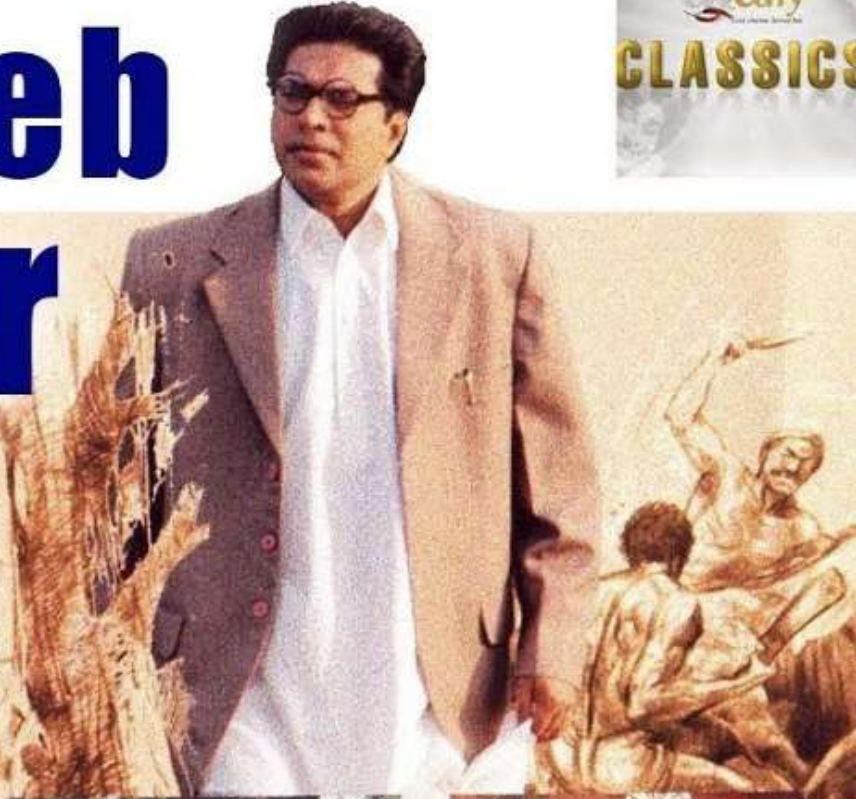
“मन की धारणा”

► Art 17 is enforceable
against **private persons**
too

निजी व्यक्तियों पर भी

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

Curry
CLASSICS



THE HINDU • 9 OCT 2026

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पृष्ठ 4 • समाचार

Articles covered from this page | इस पृष्ठ से लिए गए लेख

1 DGP appointment laws | DGP नियुक्ति क़ानून

Women account for 43% of workforce in Ayush sector: report

Health Minister Parag Mehta

Women account for 43% of the workforce in Ayush sector, with their representation increasing from 30% in 2019 to 43% in 2022, according to a report released by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Thursday. The report, prepared by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, states that the Ayush sector, which includes yoga, naturopathy, and other traditional practices, has seen a significant increase in female participation over the years. The report also highlights the need for more women to be trained in these fields to meet the growing demand for Ayush services.

The findings, which are based on a survey of 10,000 Ayush practitioners across the country, show that women are increasingly taking up these professions. The report also mentions that the Ayush sector has a high potential for growth, especially in the field of yoga and naturopathy. It calls for the government to take steps to promote the participation of women in this sector and to provide them with the necessary training and support.

Global cooperation is needed now to tackle cybercrime: PM

The Hindu Bureau

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday called for global cooperation to tackle cybercrime and financial fraud. He said that the world is facing a common threat from cybercriminals and that it is essential for countries to work together to combat this threat. The PM emphasized that cybercrime is a global issue that requires a global response. He called for the establishment of a global cybercrime convention to strengthen international cooperation in this field. He also mentioned that India is actively participating in various international efforts to combat cybercrime and financial fraud.

Govt. notifies CAPF Act amid challenge pending before SC

Vishal Singh

The Ministry of Home Affairs on Thursday notified the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) Act, 2026, despite a challenge pending before the Supreme Court. The notification was issued under the provisions of the CAPF Act, 1950, which allows the government to make regulations for the CAPF. The notification states that the CAPF Act, 2026, is being notified to give effect to the provisions of the Act. It also mentions that the government is confident that the Supreme Court will uphold the validity of the Act. The notification is a significant move as it shows the government's determination to implement the CAPF Act, 2026, despite the ongoing legal challenge.

SC seeks tighter measures for safety after Delhi rape cases

Justice orders enhanced patrolling around educational institutions, stringent verification of drivers operating public transport and cash services, and setting up of emergency response

Arushi Bhatnagar

The Supreme Court on Thursday sought tighter measures for the safety of women in Delhi following a series of rape cases. The court directed the government to enhance patrolling around educational institutions and to implement stringent verification of drivers operating public transport and cash services. It also directed the setting up of an emergency response system for women in Delhi. The court emphasized that the government has a duty to protect the safety of its citizens and that it must take effective steps to prevent such incidents from recurring.

The court also directed the government to take steps to improve the safety of women in public places. It called for the installation of more CCTV cameras in public areas and for the implementation of a women's safety app. The court also directed the government to provide training to police officers on how to handle sexual assault cases. The court's orders are a significant step towards ensuring the safety of women in Delhi and towards holding the government accountable for its duty to protect its citizens.

India showcased its 'destructive' air power to the world during Operation Sindoor: IAF chief

The Hindu Bureau

The Indian Air Force (IAF) chief on Thursday showcased the 'destructive' air power of the IAF during Operation Sindoor. He said that the IAF has demonstrated its capability to conduct precision strikes on enemy targets and that it is a formidable force. The IAF chief mentioned that the IAF has been equipped with the latest technology and that it is ready to defend the country's airspace. He also mentioned that the IAF has been successful in conducting various operations and that it is confident about its future. The IAF chief's statement is a strong message to the world about the IAF's capabilities and its commitment to the defense of India.

1 to expand scrutiny of DGP appointment laws across country

Arushi Bhatnagar

The Supreme Court on Thursday expanded its scrutiny of the Delhi Police Act, 2026, to other states. The court directed the government to implement the provisions of the Act in all states and to ensure that the rights of citizens are protected. The court also directed the government to take steps to improve the transparency and accountability of the police. The court's orders are a significant step towards ensuring the rule of law and towards protecting the rights of citizens. The court emphasized that the government must adhere to the law and that it must not discriminate against any citizen.

Campaign against ECI 'destabilising', say former judges

The Hindu Bureau

Former judges of the Election Commission of India (ECI) on Thursday criticized the government's campaign against the ECI. They said that the campaign is 'destabilising' and that it is an attempt to undermine the credibility of the ECI. The former judges mentioned that the ECI is an independent body and that it must be allowed to perform its duties without any interference. They called for the government to respect the autonomy of the ECI and to stop its campaign. The former judges' statement is a strong message to the government about the importance of the ECI and about the need to protect its independence.

The former judges also mentioned that the ECI has been successful in conducting various elections and that it is a trusted institution. They called for the government to take steps to improve the transparency and accountability of the ECI. The former judges' statement is a significant contribution to the ongoing debate about the ECI and its role in the Indian democracy. It highlights the need for the government to respect the independence of the ECI and to ensure that it can perform its duties effectively.

The Hindu Bureau

The Hindu Bureau on Thursday reported that the government has decided to implement the provisions of the Delhi Police Act, 2026, in all states. The government said that it is confident that the Act will improve the transparency and accountability of the police and that it will protect the rights of citizens. The government also mentioned that it is taking steps to ensure that the Act is implemented smoothly. The government's decision is a significant move as it shows its commitment to the rule of law and to the protection of citizens' rights.

The government also mentioned that it is taking steps to improve the transparency and accountability of the police. It called for the implementation of a police reform bill and for the establishment of a police commission. The government's statement is a strong message to the public about its commitment to the rule of law and to the protection of citizens' rights. It also highlights the need for the government to take effective steps to reform the police and to ensure that it is accountable to the public.

Airlines cancel, divert Riyadh-bound flights after missile threat

Arushi Bhatnagar

Airlines on Thursday canceled and diverted flights bound for Riyadh after a missile threat was issued against the city. The threat was issued by a group claiming to be the Houthis, a militant group based in Yemen. The airlines mentioned that they were forced to take this decision to ensure the safety of their passengers. They also mentioned that they are keeping a close watch on the situation in Riyadh and that they will take further action if necessary. The missile threat is a significant development as it highlights the ongoing conflict in Yemen and its impact on international relations.

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DGP appointment laws

DGP नियुक्ति

SC set to expand scrutiny of DGP appointment laws across country

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Jharkhand's Hemant Soren government locked horns with the Centre in the Supreme Court on Thursday over the appointment of Directors General of Police (DGPs), calling out the Union government's "special affection" for the State when others like Bihar had "worse" appointment laws. The confrontation erupted after the Union government moved the court against Jharkhand's 2025 law governing the appointment of DGPs.

Appearing before a three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, for the Centre, sought a judicial declaration that the 'Selection and Appointment of Director General and Inspector General of Police, Jharkhand (Head of Pol-



ice), Regulation of 2025' breached the apex court's judgment in *Prakash Singh versus Union of India*.

SC judgment

The 2006 judgment had mandated insulation of the police force from political influence. It laid down a transparent DGP appointment process followed by a minimum tenure of two years in office. Only senior police officers with a residual tenure of six months before normal retirement

could be considered for the top post. The Centre contended that the appointment of Jharkhand's first woman DGP and incumbent Tadasha Mishra under the 2025 Regulation violated the *Prakash Singh* verdict.

At this juncture, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, for Jharkhand, turned the tables on the Centre by asking why it had no similar complaints about other States. He highlighted that West Bengal's DGP was appointed by the Election Commission of India in March 2026 even though the officer was due to retire the next month. Mr. Sibal accused the Centre of double standards, saying the Union government had extended his tenure by six months. "The Solicitor General may file a petition against that appointment [West Bengal] as well," Mr. Sibal challenged. Mr. Meh-

ta clarified that he was holding the brief for the Centre, not himself.

'No dilution'

Justice Joymalya Bagchi, on the Bench, said the court was not bothered about who was in power in a particular State. "Our sole focus is that the law declared in *Prakash Singh* should not be diluted," Justice Bagchi said.

Mr. Mehta even suggested that the court must issue notice to all States to see if their laws were in line with *Prakash Singh* judgment. Consequently, the court requested its *amicus curiae*, senior advocate Raju Ramachandran, to take the help of the Union Public Service Commission and scrutinise police laws and DGP appointments nationwide.

The court asked Jharkhand, in the meanwhile, to revisit its 2025 Regulation.

SC to Check DGP Appointment Laws Across All States

सुप्रीम कोर्ट सभी राज्यों के DGP नियुक्ति क़ानूनों की जाँच करेगा – प्रकाश सिंह फ़ैसले (2006) के पालन पर ज़ोर



Prakash Singh (2006)
प्रकाश सिंह

1 The case | मामला



- ▶ Centre vs Jharkhand's 2025 DGP Regulation
झारखंड नियम 2025
- ▶ Says it violates Prakash Singh verdict
प्रकाश सिंह का उल्लंघन
- ▶ Jharkhand: why not question Bihar, West Bengal?
दोहरा मापदंड?

2 Court's step कोर्ट का क़दम



- ▶ Bench led by CJI Surya Kant
CJI सूर्यकांत
- ▶ "Law in Prakash Singh should not be diluted"
"कमज़ोर न हो"
- ▶ Amicus + UPSC to scrutinise all States' laws
सभी राज्यों की जाँच

3 DGP rules (Prakash Singh) DGP नियम



- ▶ Pick from 3 senior-most officers empanelled by UPSC
UPSC पैनल से
- ▶ Minimum tenure 2 years
न्यूनतम 2 वर्ष
- ▶ At least 6 months service left
6 माह शेष सेवा

DGP appointment laws — in depth (1/2)

DGP नियुक्ति — विस्तार से (1/2)

4

7 directives of 2006
2006 के 7 निर्देश



- ▶ **State Security Commission**
राज्य सुरक्षा आयोग
- ▶ Fixed tenure for **DGP, IG, SP, SHO**
निश्चित कार्यकाल
- ▶ Separate **investigation & law-and-order**
जाँच व क़ानून-व्यवस्था अलग
- ▶ **Police Establishment Board, Complaints Authority, National Security Commission**

बोर्ड प्राधिकरण

5

Why it matters | महत्व



- ▶ Shield police from **political pressure**
राजनीतिक दबाव से बचाव
- ▶ Stop “**acting DGP**” culture
“कार्यवाहक DGP” रोकें
- ▶ Many States passed laws that **dilute** the rules
कई राज्यों ने कमज़ोर किया

6

Constitution link
संवैधानिक संबंध



- ▶ **Police & public order**
= **State List** (Entries 1, 2)
राज्य सूची
- ▶ SC acts under **Art 142**
to fill gaps
अनुच्छेद 142
- ▶ Petitioner **Prakash Singh** – ex-DGP of **UP & BSF**
पूर्व DGP

DGP appointment laws — in depth (2/2)

DGP नियुक्ति — विस्तार से (2/2)

7 How a DGP should be chosen | DGP चयन प्रक्रिया



State sends
names
राज्य नाम भेजे

Before vacancy
पहले से



UPSC panel
UPSC पैनल

Top 3 officers
शीर्ष 3



State picks
one
एक चुने

From panel
पैनल से



2-year tenure
2 वर्ष

Stability
स्थिरता

8 Did you know? क्या आप जानते हैं?



► Jharkhand's DGP
Tadasha Mishra – State's
first woman DGP

पहली महिला DGP

► Model Police Act drafted
by **Soli Sorabjee** panel
(2006)

सोली सोराबजी

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पृष्ठ 6 • समाचार

Articles covered from this page | इस पृष्ठ से लिए गए लेख

1 Cancer drug margins capped | कैंसर दवा मार्जिन

2 72 lakh teachers trained | 72 लाख शिक्षक



Cancer drug margins capped

कैंसर दवाएँ सस्ती

Govt. to cap trade margins at 30% of MRP for cancer drugs

In a bid to make cancer treatment more affordable and reduce patients' out-of-pocket expenditure, the Union government has decided to cap trade margins at 30% of the maximum retail price (MRP) for all non-scheduled anti-cancer drugs. The measure will cover branded and generic drugs, domestically manufactured and imported medicines, and patented and non-patented products. An expert committee under the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) will finalise the list of medicines to be brought under the measure. The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), found that the average trade mark-up on non-scheduled anti-cancer medicines was around 170%, with mark-ups reaching up to 700% in some cases.

Trade Margins on Cancer Drugs Capped at 30% of MRP

सभी गैर-अनुसूचित कैंसर-रोधी दवाओं पर व्यापार मार्जिन MRP के 30% तक सीमित – मरीजों का खर्च घटेगा



~110 drugs cheaper
~110 दवाएँ सस्ती

1 The decision | फैसला



- ▶ Trade margin capped at **30% of MRP**
मार्जिन **30%** तक
- ▶ For **non-scheduled anti-cancer drugs**
गैर-अनुसूचित दवाएँ
- ▶ Covers **branded & generic, Indian & imported, patented**
सभी प्रकार

2 Why needed | क्यों जरूरी



~170%

Avg trade mark-up
औसत मार्जिन

700%

Highest mark-up
अधिकतम

30%

New cap
नई सीमा

~110

Drugs (IE)
दवाएँ

3 Who does what | कौन क्या करेगा



- ▶ **DGHS** expert committee finalises list
DGHS सूची बनाएगा
- ▶ **NPPA** studied the mark-ups
NPPA ने अध्ययन किया
- ▶ Aim: cut **out-of-pocket** spending
जेब खर्च घटे

Cancer drug margins capped — in depth (1/2)

कैंसर दवाएँ सस्ती — विस्तार से (1/2)

4

Scheduled vs non-scheduled

अनुसूचित बनाम गैर-अनुसूचित



Type प्रकार	Price rule नियम
Scheduled (NLEM) अनुसूचित	Ceiling price fixed अधिकतम मूल्य
Non-scheduled गैर-अनुसूचित	Max 10% hike a year 10% वृद्धि

5

NPPA basics | NPPA
परिचय



- ▶ Set up **1997**
स्थापना **1997**
- ▶ Under **Dept of Pharmaceuticals,**
Ministry of **Chemicals & Fertilizers**
रसायन व उर्वरक मंत्रालय
- ▶ Enforces **DPCO 2013**
DPCO 2013

6

Trade margin explained
ट्रेड मार्जिन क्या



- ▶ Gap between **price to stockist** and **MRP**
स्टॉकिस्ट मूल्य व **MRP** का अंतर
- ▶ Shared by **distributors & retailers**
वितरक व विक्रेता
- ▶ 2019: margins on **42** cancer drugs capped
2019 में **42** दवाएँ

Cancer drug margins capped — in depth (2/2)

कैंसर दवाएँ सस्ती — विस्तार से (2/2)

7 How the cap lowers prices | सीमा से दाम कैसे घटते



Maker's price
निर्माता मूल्य

To stockist
स्टॉकिस्ट को



Margin $\leq 30\%$
मार्जिन $\leq 30\%$

Cap applied
सीमा लागू



Lower MRP
कम MRP

Revised label
नया लेबल



Patient saves
मरीज़ की बचत

Less OOPE
कम खर्च

8 Did you know? क्या आप जानते हैं?



► **National Cancer Awareness Day: 7 Nov**
7 नवंबर

► Indian pharma =
“**Pharmacy of the world**”
विश्व की फ़ार्मैसी

72 lakh teachers trained

72 लाख शिक्षक प्रशिक्षित

72 lakh teachers get training to identify disability in students

Maitri Porecha

NEW DELHI

In a nationwide outreach covering up to 60,000 schools and 72 lakh teachers, the Education Ministry has trained teachers to identify children with probable disability conditions using PRASHAST, a school-based screening tool.

“Department of School Education has been conducting continuous sensitisation of general teachers on inclusive education through PRASHAST for the past three months,” a senior Ministry official said.

PRASHAST is a digital tool to help identify chil-

dren with 21 disability conditions listed under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016.

“Many of these conditions are not easily identifiable, especially those without visible symptoms, as schools often lack systematic tools to identify such needs early,” the official added.

Checklists for teachers

The tool’s two-part checklist enables teachers to screen students based on observable indicators, while special educators validate cases and facilitate referrals for medical assessment, wherever required.

72 Lakh Teachers Trained to Spot Disability in Students

72 लाख शिक्षकों को PRASHAST ऐप से छात्रों में दिव्यांगता की शुरुआती पहचान का प्रशिक्षण



PRASHAST tool
प्रशस्त

1 The outreach | अभियान

72 lakh

Teachers
trained
शिक्षक

60,000

Schools
स्कूल

21

Disabilities
covered
दिव्यांगताएँ

3 months

Drive so far
अवधि

2 What is PRASHAST? प्रशस्त क्या?

► Digital screening app
for schools

डिजिटल स्क्रीनिंग ऐप

► By Dept of School
Education, Education
Ministry

शिक्षा मंत्रालय

► Covers **21 disabilities** of
RPwD Act

21 दिव्यांगताएँ

3 How it works कैसे काम करता

► **Part 1:** teacher checks
observable signs

शिक्षक जाँच

► **Part 2:** special educator
confirms

विशेष शिक्षक पुष्टि

► Then **referral** for medical
check

फिर रेफरल

72 lakh teachers trained — in depth (1/2)

72 लाख शिक्षक प्रशिक्षित — विस्तार से (1/2)

4

RPwD Act 2016
RPwD अधिनियम 2016



- ▶ Disabilities: **7 → 21**
(replaced 1995 Act)
7 से 21
- ▶ **Benchmark disability = 40% or more**
40% या अधिक
- ▶ Reservation: **4%** govt jobs, **5%** higher education
4% नौकरी, 5% उच्च शिक्षा
- ▶ Free education **6–18 yrs**
6–18 वर्ष मुफ्त शिक्षा

5

Why early detection
जल्दी पहचान क्यों



- ▶ Many conditions are **invisible** (learning disability, autism)
अदृश्य स्थितियाँ
- ▶ Early support = better **learning outcomes**
बेहतर परिणाम
- ▶ Cuts **drop-outs**
ड्रॉप-आउट घटें

6

Policy links | नीति संबंध 

- ▶ **NEP 2020** – inclusive education
NEP 2020
- ▶ **Samagra Shiksha** – CwSN support
समग्र शिक्षा
- ▶ **Article 41** – help to disabled (DPSP)
अनुच्छेद 41

72 lakh teachers trained — in depth (2/2)

72 लाख शिक्षक प्रशिक्षित — विस्तार से (2/2)

7 From classroom to support | कक्षा से सहायता तक



Teacher
screens
शिक्षक जाँच

Checklist
चेकलिस्ट



Special
educator
विशेष शिक्षक

Validates
पुष्टि



Medical check
चिकित्सा जाँच

Certificate
प्रमाणपत्र



Support plan
सहायता

Aids, scholarship
सहायता

8 Did you know? क्या आप जानते हैं?



► Intl Day of Persons
with Disabilities: 3 Dec
3 दिसंबर

► India ratified UNCRPD
in 2007

UNCRPD 2007

Childhood eye care

बाल नेत्र देखभाल

Closing the gaps in early childhood eye care

India already has an extensive network of frontline health workers, immunisation services, school health programmes and primary and tertiary healthcare facilities; the challenge is to connect these pieces, the goal should be to build a system in which every interaction a child has with a health worker becomes an opportunity to protect vision

Yashika Karmakar

The World Health Organisation (WHO) reports that there are approximately 28 million visually impaired children in the world, and 1.4 million are blind. In India, about 2 lakh children are said to be blind. Yet, nearly half of these cases are entirely preventable or treatable if caught in time.

While access to care continues to remain a major barrier in India, as a clinician, I am forced to witness a palpable, uncomfortable reality wherein a child's vision can not always be due to lack of access to healthcare; they are sometimes due to a missed opportunity to identify visual problems within healthcare systems that the child has already accessed.

What happens in the system? Consider a recent encounter in my clinic. A couple walked in with their 4-year-old daughter. I will call her Anu. I could immediately see that she was visually impaired. On examination, I found that Anu had dense bilateral cataracts with no spontaneous movement of the eyes. The presence of congenital cataracts that the visual impairment had been present since infancy. When I asked why they had waited this long to seek help, they explained that they were simply overwhelmed as they were raising Anu, and assumed it was best to wait until she was older so she could 'cope' during an eye examination.

Childhood eye disease that cause profound visual impairment need to be detected and treated early. A child is born with an immature visual system, and the development of vision happens through the interaction between the eye and the developing brain. When clear images do not reach the brain during this critical period, amblyopia, or lazy eye, can develop. Once this period of visual development has passed, treatment cannot fully restore the lost visual potential. Anu had lost the chance of getting back her vision fully, even if she was operated upon now.

What doesn't get seen? Anu had not been comprehensively screened by the healthcare system, her vision wasn't up-to-date, and she had documented irreversible loss of healthy peripheral vision. Almost every four years, she had a check-up. Yet, across all these visits her profound visual impairment went entirely unnoticed. Why did this happen?

One of the reasons is the poor integration of vision screening with the vaccination schedule and general paediatric screening.

India has an extensive network of frontline health workers and child health programmes. The Kailashya and Swasthya Kalyan (SKS) for every screening was designed to identify and manage health conditions in children from birth to 10 years. Screening programmes have demonstrated that large numbers of school-aged children with vision problems can be screened. The walls placed in the hands of multiple health workers to detect developmental delays are proven to be highly capable at the



Close monitoring. Anu was found blind (left). The question she should get is not why from the eye itself, but why from the eye itself. It's also how many children are already without any health-system access are falling to zero (right).

community level. What then is going wrong?

Let's take the example of Karnataka.

According to the Health & Family Welfare Department's Annual Report 2023-24, the State screened 62.45 lakh children (6 to 10 years) to government and

government-aided schools. But only 1.2 lakh children received spectacles, a

detection rate of just 1.9%. This is a

sharp contrast to national

screening rates of 45% in Karnataka's

southern districts, which place the actual

prevalence of paediatric refractive errors

as high as 8%. This pronounced gap could

be due to operational challenges such as

drop-outs in the multi-step referral system

and supply chain delays. A study

assessing the coverage gap in child

health screening under NHM found that

only 41% of children detected to have

health problems received further care,

leaving a significant treatment gap.

Even if the system successfully flags a

child, the path from detection to actual

vision care is often riddled with

problems. Independent field evaluations

in Tamil Nadu highlight that the system has

problems when dealing with younger

children and follow-up care. This

coverage gap poses a significant

challenge, including

parental non-compliance with follow-up,

logistical barriers, and potential

misinformation. In one

experience, when talking to ASHA

workers in Tamil Nadu, they said they

did not have the training needed to

detect eye diseases in children. If the

system can categorise specifically

complicated cases like cataracts, the

ASHA workers referred them to the

paediatrician who visited the sub-

hospital once a week. This system is

Preventing blindness in a child is not merely about saving sight. It is about protecting education, independence and the opportunity to reach their full potential

significant gap in training frontline workers. There is no need for an entirely new system. We need to make better use of the system that already exists.

A simple red reflex examination using the direct ophthalmoscope in one example. The test takes less than 30 seconds, does not require a child to cooperate verbally, and can identify major, sight and life-threatening abnormalities such as cataract, retinoblastoma (eye cancer) and high refractive errors. While multiple health issues, as they 'build' on the system, and multiple referrals must be initiated to perform this test. This simple check must become a routine at screening a child's vision and must get incorporated into the immunisation schedule, as it is so very critical.

We need to train ASHA workers in simple ways of assessing visual behaviour in infants and young children, such as using a chart or response to light, to detect visual impairment. Can the system be used to not merely detect vision impairment? Is there an opportunity to prevent vision loss, even at a routine check-up? These are not hypothetical questions. They are observations that, with appropriate training and referral protocols, can help identify children who need an eye examination.

A child identified with a possible eye

problem must reach the appropriate facility where treatment is available. Referral pathways need to be clear, practical and monitored. Where possible, digital systems could link frontline screening with specialist centres at district or tertiary eye-care facilities. Tele-ophthalmology could also help connect peripheral health workers with specialists and reduce some of the logistical barriers that cause families to drop out of care.

Looking ahead India already has an extensive network of frontline health workers, immunisation services, RKV centres, school health programmes, and primary and tertiary healthcare facilities. The challenge now is to connect these pieces. The goal, therefore, should not be to merely increase the number of children screened. It should be to build a system in which every contact with a child is an opportunity to prevent vision loss, every abnormal finding triggers a clear referral, and every referral is followed through to care.

As we reach World Sight Day, the question we should ask is not only how do we reach more children. It is also how many children are already within our health system where we are failing to see for children. The aim, preventing blindness, is not merely about saving sight. It is about protecting education, independence and the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Dr. Yashika Karmakar is a paediatric ophthalmologist and a public eye health specialist at Bangalore Fellowship, Digital Yagat, Bangalore.

THE GIST

• The WHO reports that there are approximately 28 million visually impaired children in the world, and 1.4 million are blind. In India, about 2 lakh children are said to be blind. Nearly half of these cases are entirely preventable or treatable if caught in time.

• A child is born with an immature visual system, and the development of vision happens through the interaction between the eye and the developing brain. When clear images do not reach the brain during this critical period, amblyopia, or lazy eye, can develop. Once this period of visual development has passed, treatment cannot fully restore the lost visual potential.

• There is a need for an entirely new system, where we need to make better use of the system that already exists. Screening programmes have demonstrated that large numbers of school-aged children with vision problems can be checked.

Closing the Gaps in Early Childhood Eye Care

बच्चों में अंधता रोकने के लिए मौजूदा स्वास्थ्य तंत्र को जोड़ना होगा – हर संपर्क आँख जाँच का मौका बने



World Sight Day
विश्व दृष्टि दिवस

1

The scale | समस्या का आकार



19 mn

Visually impaired kids (world)
विश्व

1.4 mn

Blind kids (world)
अंधे बच्चे

3 lakh

Blind kids (India)
भारत

~50%

Preventable/treatable
रोके जा सकते

2

The missed chance
छूटा मौका



► Girl “Anu”: **7 health visits** in 5 yrs, cataract **never noticed**
7 बार मिली, बीमारी नहीं पकड़ी

► Eye check **not linked** to vaccination visits
टीकाकरण से **नहीं जुड़ा**

► **ASHAs** lack eye training
आशा को प्रशिक्षण नहीं

3

Gaps in data
आँकड़ों में अंतर



► Karnataka: 62 lakh screened, only **1.9%** got glasses

केवल **1.9%** को चश्मा

► Real need: up to **8%**
ज़रूरत **8%** तक

► RBSK: only **47.4%** got further care
47.4% को आगे इलाज

Childhood eye care — in depth (1/2)

बाल नेत्र देखभाल — विस्तार से (1/2)

4 Key terms | प्रमुख शब्द

Term शब्द	Meaning अर्थ
Amblyopia एम्ब्लियोपिया	"Lazy eye" "आलसी आँख"
Nystagmus निस्टैगमस	Shaking eyes आँखों का हिलना
Retinoblastoma रेटिनोब्लास्टोमा	Eye cancer आँख का कैंसर

5 Simple fixes | आसान उपाय

- ▶ Red reflex test – under 30 seconds
रेड रिफ्लेक्स – 30 सेकंड
- ▶ Add eye check to immunisation schedule
टीकाकरण के साथ
- ▶ Train ASHAs; use tele-ophthalmology
आशा प्रशिक्षण

6 RBSK basics | RBSK परिचय

- ▶ Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (2013, NHM)
राष्ट्रीय बाल स्वास्थ्य कार्यक्रम
- ▶ Children 0–18 years
0–18 वर्ष
- ▶ Screens "4 Ds": Defects, Diseases, Deficiencies, Development delays
"4 D"

Childhood eye care — in depth (2/2)

बाल नेत्र देखभाल — विस्तार से (2/2)

7 Every contact = an eye check | हर संपर्क = आँख जाँच



Vaccination
visit
टीकाकरण

Red reflex test
जाँच



Problem
flagged
समस्या पहचानी

Clear referral
रेफ़रल



Eye hospital
नेत्र अस्पताल

Treatment
इलाज



Sight saved
दृष्टि बची

Follow-up
फ़ॉलो-अप

8 Did you know?
क्या आप जानते हैं?



► World Sight Day: 2nd
Thursday of October
अक्टूबर का दूसरा गुरुवार

► NPCB (1976) – India's
blindness control
programme
NPCB

1st of El Niño yet to come, peak likely in December, says UN body

By Reuters
The United Nations World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) said on Tuesday that the first of the El Niño weather pattern is likely to arrive in December, with a peak in January. The WMO said the pattern is likely to be moderate to strong, but not as severe as the 2015-16 event. The WMO said the pattern is likely to be moderate to strong, but not as severe as the 2015-16 event. The WMO said the pattern is likely to be moderate to strong, but not as severe as the 2015-16 event.

Set up committee to regulate marketing practices of pharma firms, SC tells Centre

By Reuters
The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed the government to set up a committee to regulate the marketing practices of pharmaceutical firms. The court said the government should ensure that the marketing practices of pharmaceutical firms are fair and transparent. The court said the government should ensure that the marketing practices of pharmaceutical firms are fair and transparent.

'I don't know whether I will be here tomorrow': Nana Patekar's words in Goa days before death

By Reuters
Nana Patekar, the legendary Marathi actor, died on Tuesday in Goa. He was 85 years old. He had been suffering from a long illness. He was a very popular actor in Marathi cinema. He was a very popular actor in Marathi cinema. He was a very popular actor in Marathi cinema.



NANA PATEKAR
10 performances that showcased the actor's extraordinary range

Targeting illegals, BJP MP Nishikant Dubey starts Jharkhand tribal student rights campaign

By Reuters
BJP MP Nishikant Dubey has launched a campaign to protect the rights of tribal students in Jharkhand. He said the government should take steps to ensure that tribal students are not discriminated against. He said the government should take steps to ensure that tribal students are not discriminated against.

HC pauses deportation of 'Bangladeshi', questions basis of detention

By Reuters
The High Court on Tuesday stayed the deportation of a Bangladeshi national. The court said the government should provide more information about the basis of the detention. The court said the government should provide more information about the basis of the detention.

HC pauses deportation of 'Bangladeshi', questions basis of detention

By Reuters
The High Court on Tuesday stayed the deportation of a Bangladeshi national. The court said the government should provide more information about the basis of the detention. The court said the government should provide more information about the basis of the detention.

Creemated with full state honours

By Reuters
A prominent leader was cremated with full state honours on Tuesday. The ceremony was held in a grand manner. The ceremony was held in a grand manner. The ceremony was held in a grand manner.

HC pauses deportation of 'Bangladeshi', questions basis of detention

By Reuters
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No laboratory, absent staff: In Balaghat, children deaths uncover lapses

By Reuters
The deaths of several children in Balaghat have uncovered serious lapses in the health system. The government should take steps to improve the health system. The government should take steps to improve the health system. The government should take steps to improve the health system.



The government in Balaghat has failed to ensure that children have access to a laboratory.

Page 6 • Nation

पृष्ठ 6 • राष्ट्र

Articles covered from this page | इस पृष्ठ से लिए गए लेख

1 El Niño to peak in Dec | अल नीनो

El Niño to peak in December

अल नीनो

Worst of El Niño yet to come, peak likely in December, says UN body

Express News Service
Bengaluru, October 8

THE ONGOING El Niño is set to peak in December and lead to above-average temperatures across large parts of the world in the coming months, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has warned.

The UN body further said that there is an increased risk of droughts and floods given that the normal rainfall patterns would see a shift under the influence of the intensifying El Niño conditions. The October-December months will see El Niño reach its peak and the event will extend well into the

2027 spring of the northern hemisphere.

El Niño is a climate pattern marked by unusually warm Pacific waters that disrupts global weather. "El Niño is firmly established and strengthening rapidly. WMO forecasts indicate a near-100 per cent likelihood that it will persist through February 2027, potentially being one of the strongest since at least 1950," said Celeste Saulo, WMO Secretary-General, in a statement issued on Thursday.

Dry monsoon, hottest summer

This year, India's southwest monsoon season ended in a 13

The World Meteorological Organization has said that there is a near-100% likelihood' that El Niño will persist through February 2027

per cent rainfall deficit. The 2026 monsoon was the fourth driest since 2001. El Niño impacted the country's rainfall during the second half of the season. Many states, including

Maharashtra and Karnataka, have declared drought, with Maharashtra imposing a 10 per cent water cut in many of its districts.

Likewise, Europe experienced one of its hottest summers this year with record-breaking temperatures sweeping France, Spain, and the UK. The arid summer left major rivers, including Danube, Rhine, and Thames, dry. A naturally occurring ocean-atmospheric phenomenon recurring once between two to seven years, the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) has three phases: warm (El Niño), neutral and cool (La Niña).

The sea temperatures along

the equatorial Pacific Ocean, the WMO said, have dramatically risen in recent months thus reflecting the intensifying El Niño event. In August, the temperature in the Niño 3.4 region (which determines the ENSO phase) was 2.5 degree Celsius above normal, officials noted.

El Niño is known to suppress rainfall over India and many places, globally, resulting in droughts. It also pushes temperatures to rise significantly above average. El Niño is declared when the sea temperatures recorded along the equatorial and central Pacific Ocean exceeds 0.5 degrees Celsius from normal.

Worst of El Niño Yet to Come, Peak Likely in December: WMO

WMO: अल नीनो दिसंबर में चरम पर, फरवरी 2027 तक रहेगा – 1950 के बाद सबसे शक्तिशाली में से एक हो सकता है



~100% likely till Feb 2027
फरवरी 2027 तक

1

WMO warning | WMO
चेतावनी



► El Niño to peak Oct–Dec 2026

अक्टूबर–दिसंबर चरम

► Near-100% chance it lasts till Feb 2027

फरवरी 2027 तक

► May be among the strongest since 1950
1950 के बाद सबसे तीव्र

2

Impact on India
भारत पर असर



–13%

Monsoon rainfall deficit
वर्षा कमी

4th

Driest since 2001
सबसे सूखा

+2.5°C

Niño 3.4 in August
समुद्री तापमान

10%

Maharashtra water cut
जल कटौती

3

Global effects
वैश्विक असर



► Higher droughts & floods risk

सूखा व बाढ़

► Europe's hottest summer – Danube, Rhine, Thames ran dry

नदियाँ सूखीं

► Above-average temperatures worldwide
तापमान वृद्धि

El Niño to peak in December — in depth (1/2)

अल नीनो — विस्तार से (1/2)

4 ENSO phases | ENSO चरण

Phase चरण	Pacific प्रशांत	India भारत
El Niño अल नीनो	Warm गर्म	Weak monsoon कमज़ोर
La Niña ला नीना	Cool ठंडा	Good monsoon अच्छा
Neutral तटस्थ	Normal सामान्य	Normal सामान्य

5 How it is declared कब घोषित

- ▶ Sea temp in Niño 3.4 region $> +0.5^{\circ}\text{C}$
 $+0.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ से अधिक
- ▶ Recurs every 2–7 years
हर 2–7 वर्ष
- ▶ Name: Spanish for “little boy”
“छोटा लड़का”

6 What can offset it क्या संतुलित करे

- ▶ **Positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)** helps rain
धनात्मक IOD
- ▶ Good **northeast monsoon** for south India
उत्तर-पूर्वी मानसून
- ▶ Prepare: **crop contingency, water storage**
तैयारी

El Niño to peak in December — in depth (2/2)

अल नीनो — विस्तार से (2/2)

7 How El Niño weakens our monsoon | अल नीनो मानसून कैसे कमजोर करता



Trade winds weaken
व्यापारिक पवनें कमजोर
Pacific प्रशांत



East Pacific warms
पूर्वी प्रशांत गर्म
Rising air shifts
हवा खिसकी



Sinking air over India
भारत पर नीचे हवा
Fewer clouds
कम बादल



Weak monsoon
कमजोर मानसून
Drought risk
सूखा

8 Did you know? क्या आप जानते हैं?



- ▶ WMO HQ: **Geneva**;
Sec-Gen **Celeste Saulo**
जिनेवा
- ▶ WMO = UN agency,
founded **1950** (World Met
Day **23 Mar**)
23 मार्च

• NORDI PRIZE IN LITERATURE

Anne Carson: A provocateur who blurs boundaries between genres

Nordic Prize for Literature

THE 2023 NORDI PRIZE FOR LITERATURE has been awarded to Anne Carson, a Canadian poet, novelist, and translator. Carson is a prolific writer who has blurred the boundaries between genres, creating a unique voice in contemporary literature. Her work is characterized by its experimental nature and its exploration of themes such as identity, love, and death. Carson's latest novel, *Conboy*, is a historical fiction set in the Canadian West, which further solidifies her reputation as a versatile and innovative writer.

Carson is the first Canadian to win the Nordi Prize for Literature, which is a significant achievement. The prize is awarded annually to a writer from one of the Nordic countries, and Carson's win is a testament to her global influence and the quality of her work.

Carson's work is often described as "postmodern" and "avant-garde". She is known for her use of language and her ability to create a sense of mystery and ambiguity in her writing. Her novels are often characterized by their complex plots and their exploration of themes that are often considered taboo. Carson's work has been praised for its originality and its ability to challenge readers' perceptions of literature.

Carson's win of the Nordi Prize for Literature is a recognition of her contributions to the world of literature. It is a testament to her talent and her ability to create a unique voice in a crowded field. Carson's work is a testament to the power of language and the ability of a writer to explore the depths of the human experience.

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Spain's elections could test the Left

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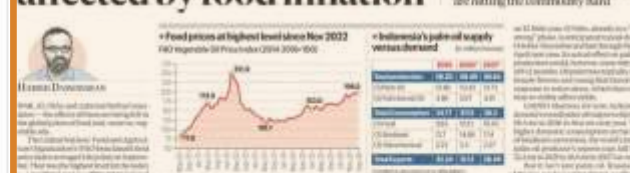
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Spain's elections could test the Left

1. Why edible oils are worst affected by food inflation



Edible oil inflation

खाद्य तेल महँगाई

• ECONOMY

Why edible oils are worst affected by food inflation



HARISH DAMODARAN

WAR, El Niño and national biofuel mandates — the effects of these are being felt in the global prices of food and, more so, vegetable oils.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) benchmark food price index averaged 126 points in September. That was the highest level for the index — a weighted average of the international prices of a basket of food commodities over a base period value taken at 100 for 2014-16 — since November 2022.

Even higher, within food, was FAO's index for vegetable oils, at 196.6 points, up 18.3% over September 2022 and the highest after the 2014 points of June 2022. This index, as the accompanying chart shows, scaled an all-time high of 231.8 points in March 2022 immediately after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. From there, it fell to 115.8 points by June 2023, as the supply shock from the war ebbed. The last year and more have witnessed a renewed price flare-up.

Blending mandates

Vegetable oils — whether palm, soybean or rapeseed — can be converted into Fatty Acid Methyl Esters (FAME) through a chemical process called transesterification. It involves reacting triglycerides (which make up 95-98% of the fat content in vegetable oils) with methanol (methyl alcohol) in the presence of a catalyst.

FAME is basically vegetable oil-based biodiesel, which can substitute or be blended with regular diesel derived from crude petroleum oil. That is similar to ethanol — produced from sugarcane molasses and rice or rice, maize and other starch-containing cereal grains — that can be blended with petrol.

According to one estimate made at the Solvent Extractors' Association of India's 'Global India 2026' conference in Mumbai last week, about 28% of the world's produc-

• Food prices at highest level since Nov 2022
FAO Vegetable Oil Price Index (2014-2016=100)



SOURCE: FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

tion of soybean oil, 28% of palm oil and 29% of rapeseed oil goes as feedstock for making biodiesel, that is, FAME.

That is reinforced by national biofuel mandates enforced by governments. These require oil marketing companies to blend a specified minimum percentage or volume of biofuels into fossil transportation products such as petrol, diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF). Just as all petrol sold in India has to contain at least 20% ethanol, Indonesia and Malaysia have mandates for the blending of palm oil-based FAME in diesel.

Indonesia introduced B20 diesel, with 20% FAME content, on a limited scale in 2009. The B20 blend was made mandatory nationwide in September 2018 and further upgraded to B30 in January 2020. B35 in August 2023 and B40 from January 2025. In July 2023, the Indonesian government raised the blend mandate to B50, with a three-month transition period.

Malaysia has a less ambitious biofuel blend programme, with B10 diesel being made compulsory nationwide from September 2009 and a phased rollout of B15 beginning in June 2026. The US is expected to produce 14.94 million tonnes (mt) of soybean oil in 2026-27 (October-September), out of which 8.07 mt or 54% would be directed towards biofuels. The European Union will, likewise, see 6.1 mt or 57.2% out of its total 10.67 mt rapeseed oil output being diverted for biodiesel and bio-ATF.

Biodiesel blending

Just as all petrol sold in India has to contain at least 20% ethanol, Indonesia and Malaysia have mandates for the blending of FAME in diesel.

• FAME (Fatty Acid Methyl Esters) is basically vegetable oil-based biodiesel.

• Indonesia's palm oil supply versus demand (in million tonnes)

	2025	2026*	2027*
Total production	56.95	58.48	58.84
(1) Palm Oil	51.66	53.42	51.73
(2) Palm kernel Oil	4.88	5.07	4.98
Total Consumption	24.71	27.12	30.2
(1) Food	9.83	10.13	10.43
(2) Biodiesel	12.7	14.69	17.4
(3) Oleochemical	2.23	2.3	2.37
Total Exports	32.34	31.12	28.48

*FAO'S, ASSOCIATION OF SOYBEAN PROCESSORS
SOURCE: UNITED NATIONS FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION

The impact

Bidy Martono, chairman of Indonesian Palm Oil Association (better known as GAPKI), projects the consumption of his country's palm oil for the production of biodiesel at 14.7 mt in 2026 and 17.4 mt in 2027. That's up from 12.7 mt in 2025.

Moving from B40 to B50 alone will, thus, absorb an additional 4.7 mt of Indonesian palm oil locally, leaving that much less for exports. This could potentially hurt countries like India, which is likely to import roughly 8 mt of palm oil in 2025-26 (November-October), largely from Indonesia and Malaysia.

"For Indonesia, biodiesel not only creates extra domestic demand for palm oil, reducing reliance on the export market, but also helps bring down its energy import bill," an industry source pointed out.

The incentive to divert palm or any other vegetable oil for biodiesel is all the more in today's environment of elevated global petroleum prices. The longer forest crude stays above \$100 per barrel, thanks to the intensifying West Asia conflict and tightening restrictions on Russian energy flows, the more the likelihood of such "food-to-fuel" diversion.

War and weather

Indonesia's aggressive biofuel mandate — making it the world's first country to implement 50% blending in diesel — comes in

The Russia-Ukraine war and El Niño, coupled with biofuel mandates by major producers such as Indonesia, are hitting the commodity hard

an El Niño year. El Niño, already in a "very strong" phase, is anticipated to peak during October-December and last through March-April next year. Its actual effect on palm oil production would, however, come with a lag of 8-12 months. Oil palm trees typically abort female flowers and young fruit bunches in response to water stress, which then takes time to visibly affect yields.

GAPKI's Martono, for now, reckons Indonesia's overall palm oil output today from 58.5 mt in 2026 to 56.6 mt next year. With higher domestic consumption on the back of biodiesel conversion, the world's largest palm oil producer's exports may fall from 32.3 mt in 2025 to 28.5 mt in 2027 (see table).

But it isn't just palm oil. Russia and Ukraine are harvesting bigger sunflowerseed crops in 2026-27 (21 mt and 13 mt respectively) than the previous year's levels (17.5 mt and 10.7 mt). Their respective oil production is also slated to go up from 6.9 mt to 7.9 mt and 4.5 mt to 5.4 mt.

For the world's two leading sunflower producers, though, the constraint is logistical — arising from the two belligerents striking at each other's port infrastructure and storage terminals. Navigation through the Sea of Azov has stopped since July 10, while operations at Black Sea ports are suspended. Alternative routes, through ports on the Baltic, Caspian and Far East seas or overland rail links, are costly and overloaded.

"We have a strange situation where the producers are eager to sell their ample supplies and importers want to buy, but both are helpless in the face of war," the earlier-quoted industry source noted.

For India, El Niño could bring down domestic edible oil production. "Our current estimate for 2026-27 is 9.2 mt, as against 9.7 mt in 2025-26. Imports will correspondingly rise from 36.8 mt to a new record of 37.2 mt. The latter would mainly comprise 8.2 mt of palm, 5 mt of soyabean, 3.5 mt of sunflower oil," said Nirav Desai, managing partner at GGN International, an Indian and Rajkot-based vegetable oil trading house-cum-research firm.

Landed prices of imported crude palm, soyabean and sunflower oil are now at \$1,245, \$1,312 and \$1,460 per tonne, as against their corresponding October 2022 average of \$1,264, \$1,182 and \$1,293, respectively.

• HEALTH

Why Edible Oils Are Worst Hit by Food Inflation

खाद्य तेल सबसे महँगे क्यों? – युद्ध, अल नीनो और इंडोनेशिया-मलेशिया के बायोडीज़ल मिश्रण आदेश



FAO veg-oil index
198.6
FAO सूचकांक

1

Price data (FAO)
मूल्य आँकड़े



136

Food Price
Index, Sept
खाद्य सूचकांक

198.6

Veg-oil index
तेल सूचकांक

+18.3%

Veg oil, year-
on-year
वार्षिक

251.8

All-time high
(Mar 2022)
सर्वोच्च

2

Three causes | तीन
कारण



► West Asia / Ukraine
wars

युद्ध

► El Niño hits palm &
oilseed output

अल नीनो

► Biofuel mandates
divert oil to fuel

बायोडीज़ल में खपत

3

Oil going into fuel
ईंधन में जा रहा तेल



25%

Soybean
oil
सोयाबीन

28%

Palm oil
पाम

29%

Rapeseed oil
सरसों

Edible oil inflation — in depth (1/2)

खाद्य तेल महँगाई — विस्तार से (1/2)

4

Indonesia's blending push
इंडोनेशिया का मिश्रण



Year वर्ष	Blend मिश्रण
2016	B20
2020	B30
2025	B40
July 2026	B50

5

What is FAME? | FAME
क्या?



- ▶ **Fatty Acid Methyl Esters = biodiesel**
बायोडीज़ल
- ▶ Made by **transesterification** of veg oil + **methanol**
ट्रांसएस्टरीकरण
- ▶ Blended with diesel, like **ethanol** in petrol
जैसे पेट्रोल में एथेनॉल

6

India's exposure
भारत पर असर



- ▶ **World's largest edible oil importer**
सबसे बड़ा आयातक
- ▶ ~8 mt palm oil import (2025-26) – **Indonesia, Malaysia**
80 लाख टन
- ▶ Answer: **NMEO – Oil Palm (2021) & NMEO-Oilseeds (2024)**
राष्ट्रीय तिलहन मिशन

Edible oil inflation — in depth (2/2)

खाद्य तेल महँगाई — विस्तार से (2/2)

7 From biofuel rule to your kitchen | बायोफ़्यूल नियम से रसोई तक



B50 mandate
B50 आदेश

Indonesia
इंडोनेशिया



More palm oil →
fuel
अधिक पाम ईंधन में

+4.7 mt used
+47 लाख टन



Fewer exports
कम निर्यात

Global supply
tight
आपूर्ति कम



Costlier
cooking oil
महँगा तेल

India pays more
भारत पर बोझ

8 Did you know? क्या आप जानते हैं?



► FAO index base: **2014–16 = 100**

आधार **2014–16**

► FAO HQ: **Rome**;
founded **16 Oct 1945**
(World Food Day)
रोम

Nana Patekar

(1951-2026)

The versatile actor was seen as a disruptive force who could transcend the class-mass divide

■ DEBUT MOVIE

Gaman (1978)

OTHER FILMS

■ *Salaam Bombay!* (1988)

■ *Parinda* (1989)

■ *Prahaar: The Final Attack* (1991)

■ *Krantiveer* (1994)

■ *Agni Sakshi* (1996)

■ *Khamoshi: The Musical* (1996)

Welcome (2007)

NATIONAL AWARDS

■ Vidhu Vinod Chopra cast him as the menacing villain Anna in *Parinda*,

earning him his first National Award

■ He won his second National Award for *Krantiveer*, playing a wayward son of a freedom fighter who transforms and fights for the poor

■ *Agni Sakshi* earned him his third award, in which he portrayed an abusive husband and stalker



Asked in Exams — guess the answer! | पहले स्वयं उत्तर सोचें

BPSC 70th CCE Prelims (Re-exam)

Exam date: 4 Jan 2025 • Topic: GST Council

Who is the Chairperson of GST Council?

- (a) RBI Governor
- (b) Union Minister of Corporate Affairs
- (c) Chairman of Finance Commission
- (d) Union Finance Minister

RRB NTPC 2025 (Graduate CBT-2)

Exam date: 10 Jul 2026 (Shift 1) • Topic: Literature Nobel

The winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature for 2025, author László Krasznahorkai, belongs to which country?

- (a) Serbia
- (b) Slovakia
- (c) Romania
- (d) Hungary

Answers & Explanation | उत्तर व व्याख्या

BPSC 70th CCE Prelims (Re-exam)

Exam date: 4 Jan 2025 • Topic: GST Council

Who is the Chairperson of GST Council?

- (a) RBI Governor
- (b) Union Minister of Corporate Affairs
- (c) Chairman of Finance Commission
- (d) Union Finance Minister**

Answer: (d) Article 279A – Union Finance Minister chairs the Council.
केंद्रीय वित्त मंत्री।

RRB NTPC 2025 (Graduate CBT-2)

Exam date: 10 Jul 2026 (Shift 1) • Topic: Literature Nobel

The winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature for 2025, author László Krasznahorkai, belongs to which country?

- (a) Serbia
- (b) Slovakia
- (c) Romania
- (d) Hungary**

Answer: (d) Hungary. 2026 winner: Anne Carson (Canada).
हंगरी; 2026 – ऐनी कार्सन (कनाडा)।

Asked in Exams — guess the answer! | पहले स्वयं उत्तर सोचें

RRB NTPC 2025 (Graduate CBT-2)

Exam date: 10 Jul 2026 (Shift 1) • Topic: Untouchability

What was the Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1955, renamed as in 1976?

- (a) Civil Rights Enforcement Act
- (b) Social Justice Act
- (c) Fundamental Rights Protection Act
- (d) Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955

UPSC CSE Prelims 2026 (GS Paper I)

Exam date: 24 May 2026 • Topic: Disability rights

Which of the following statements with regard to the persons with disabilities in India is/are correct? 1. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, an Act passed by the Parliament of India in 2018, mandates reservation in education and employment, places a legal duty on Governments to ensure accessibility and non-discrimination. 2. The Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan focuses on achieving universal accessibility for Persons with Disabilities across three key domains: infrastructure, transport systems and information and communication technology. 3. The National Divyangjan Finance and Development Corporation (NDFDC) is a public sector organisation set up by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs as a not-for-profit company to promote entrepreneurship among Persons with Disabilities (PwDs).

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

Answers & Explanation | उत्तर व व्याख्या

RRB NTPC 2025 (Graduate CBT-2)

Exam date: 10 Jul 2026 (Shift 1) • Topic: Untouchability

What was the Untouchability (Offences) Act, 1955, renamed as in 1976?

- (a) Civil Rights Enforcement Act
- (b) Social Justice Act
- (c) Fundamental Rights Protection Act
- (d) Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955**

Answer: (d) Renamed PCR Act in 1976 with stricter penalties.
नागरिक अधिकार संरक्षण अधिनियम।

UPSC CSE Prelims 2026 (GS Paper I)

Exam date: 24 May 2026 • Topic: Disability rights

Which of the following statements with regard to the persons with disabilities in India is/are correct? 1. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, an Act passed by the Parliament of India in 2018, mandates reservation in education and employment, places a legal duty on Governments to ensure accessibility and non-discrimination. 2. The Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan focuses on achieving universal accessibility for Persons with Disabilities across three key domains: infrastructure, transport systems and information and communication technology. 3. The National Divyangjan Finance and Development Corporation (NDFDC) is a public sector organisation set up by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs as a not-for-profit company to promote entrepreneurship among Persons with Disabilities (PwDs).

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

Answer: (b) RPwD Act is of 2016; NDFDC is under Ministry of Social Justice.
केवल 2 सही।

Test Yourself — Q1–4 | स्वयं को परखें

Q1

Consider: 1. The GST Council is chaired by the Union Finance Minister. 2. The Centre's vote has one-third weightage. 3. Decisions need a two-thirds majority. Correct?

1. GST परिषद अध्यक्ष केंद्रीय वित्त मंत्री। 2. केंद्र का मत 1/3 भार। 3. निर्णय हेतु 2/3 बहुमत। सही?

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

Q2

The 2026 Nobel Prize in Literature went to Anne Carson of:

2026 साहित्य नोबेल विजेता ऐनी कार्सन किस देश से?

- (a) USA (b) UK
(c) Canada (d) Ireland

Q3

Which Article of the Constitution abolishes untouchability and forbids its practice in any form?

कौन-सा अनुच्छेद अस्पृश्यता का उन्मूलन करता है?

- (a) Article 14 (b) Article 15
(c) Article 17 (d) Article 21

Q4

The Poona Pact (1932) was signed between:

पूना पैक्ट (1932) किनके बीच हुआ?

- (a) Gandhi and Jinnah (b) Gandhi and Ambedkar
(c) Nehru and Ambedkar (d) Gandhi and Irwin

Test Yourself — Q5–8 | स्वयं को परखें

Q5 Under the Prakash Singh judgment (2006), a DGP is to have a minimum tenure of:
प्रकाश सिंह फैसले के अनुसार DGP का न्यूनतम कार्यकाल:

- (a) 1 year
- (b) 2 years
- (c) 3 years
- (d) 5 years

Q6 The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) works under:
NPPA किस मंत्रालय के अधीन है?

- (a) Ministry of Health
- (b) Ministry of Commerce
- (c) Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers
- (d) NITI Aayog

Q7 How many types of disabilities are recognised under the RPwD Act, 2016?
RPwD अधिनियम 2016 में कितनी दिव्यांगताएँ?

- (a) 7
- (b) 14
- (c) 21
- (d) 25

Q8 “Amblyopia”, a major cause of childhood vision loss, is commonly called:
“एम्ब्लियोपिया” को आम तौर पर क्या कहते हैं?

- (a) Night blindness
- (b) Lazy eye
- (c) Colour blindness
- (d) Pink eye

Test Yourself — Q9–10 | स्वयं को परखें

Q9

Consider: 1. El Niño is unusual warming of the central-eastern equatorial Pacific. 2. It usually weakens the Indian monsoon. 3. A positive Indian Ocean Dipole can offset its effect. Correct?

1. अल नीनो = मध्य-पूर्वी प्रशांत का गर्म होना। 2. यह भारतीय मानसून कमजोर करता है। 3. धनात्मक IOD इसका असर घटा सकता है। सही?

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

Q10

FAME, blended with diesel, is basically:

डीज़ल में मिलाया जाने वाला FAME क्या है?

- (a) Ethanol (b) Biodiesel from vegetable oil
- (c) Compressed biogas (d) Green hydrogen

Answer Key — Q1–5 | उत्तर व व्याख्या

1-b **1 and 2 only** — Decisions need a three-fourths weighted majority.
3/4 बहुमत चाहिए।

2-c **Canada** — Canadian poet-classicist, born Toronto.
कनाडा।

3-c **Article 17** — Article 17 – also binds private persons.
अनुच्छेद 17।

4-b **Gandhi and Ambedkar** — Reserved seats for Depressed Classes in joint electorate.
गांधी व आंबेडकर।

5-b **2 years** — 2 years; picked from UPSC-empanelled top 3.
2 वर्ष।

Answer Key — Q6–10 | उत्तर व व्याख्या

6-c **Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers** — Dept of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers.
रसायन व उर्वरक मंत्रालय।

7-c **21** — 21 (up from 7 in the 1995 Act).
21।

8-b **Lazy eye** — Lazy eye – must be treated in early childhood.
आलसी आँख।

9-d **1, 2 and 3** — All three are correct.
तीनों सही।

10-b **Biodiesel from vegetable oil** — Fatty Acid Methyl Esters = veg-oil biodiesel.
बायोडीज़ल।

Myth Buster of the Day — Health & Body | आज का मिथक



MYTH | मिथक

“A child’s eye check can wait until the child is old enough to read the letter chart.”

बच्चे की आँख की जाँच तब तक टाली जा सकती है जब तक वह अक्षर पढ़ना न सीख ले।



FACT | तथ्य

False. Vision develops in the first few years as the eye and brain learn to work together. If clear images don’t reach the brain in this window, “lazy eye” (amblyopia) sets in and can never be fully reversed. A red reflex test with a light takes under 30 seconds – even for a newborn.

ग़लत। दृष्टि शुरुआती वर्षों में विकसित होती है जब आँख और मस्तिष्क साथ काम करना सीखते हैं। इस समय साफ़ छवि न पहुँचे तो “आलसी आँख” बन जाती है जो बाद में पूरी तरह ठीक नहीं होती। रेड रिफ़्लेक्स जाँच 30 सेकंड से कम में होती है – नवजात की भी।



Early is not too early – the best time to act is before the problem shows. जल्दी कभी बहुत जल्दी नहीं – समस्या दिखने से पहले ही कदम उठाएँ।

Joan Sony Cherian



QUESTION 1

In 2018, no Nobel Prize in Literature was announced. It was postponed and awarded along with the 2019 Nobel. Why? Who won the 2018 Nobel Prize in Literature?



QUESTION 2

Which singer-songwriter won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2016?



QUESTION 3

This Nobel laureate's work includes *Sula*,

Beloved, *The Bluest Eye*, *Jazz*, etc. She was the first Black woman to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. Name her.



QUESTION 4

An upcoming dystopian science fiction film directed by Taika Waititi is based on a book by a Nobel laureate. Name the book and the author.



QUESTION 5

This philosopher, political activist, and writer was the only awardee to decline the Nobel Prize in Literature. Name him.



Visual Question:

The image above shows this poet and novelist receiving the news that he won the Nobel Prize in Literature. However, he later rejected the award under pressure from his country.

Name the author. THE HINDU ARCHIVES

Word of the day

Pellucid:

transparently clear; easily understandable

Synonyms: lucid, comprehensible, coherent

Usage: *He has a pellucid way of explaining difficult ideas.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/pellucid

International Phonetic Alphabet: /pɪluːsɪd/



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