

“NPLC - Gurukul for CLAT & AILET”

**NOW AVAILABLE
BIMONTHLY**



**NISHANT PRAKASH
LAW CLASSES**

*“Gurukul for CLAT &
AILET”*

CLAT Tathya

APRIL 2026 - 1

NPLC's TOP 10 GLORY 2025&26

A salute to our five toppers who turned pressure into purpose – their journey fuels the ambition of every student aiming for the top.



Arshnoor Singh



Chaitanya Ghosh



Daiwik Agarwala



**Aditya Gautam
Ankhad**



Siddhant Rohit



REAL MENTORSHIP. REAL RESULTS.



NPLC's TOP PERFORMERS 2026



AIR 04, CLAT



Arshnoor Singh



AIR 04, AILET



Siddhant Rohit



AIR 22, AILET



Aryan Gupta



AIR 30, CLAT



Aarav Sachdeva



AIR 43, AILET



Nandini Gupta



AIR 43, AILET



Yamya Alag



AIR 74, AILET



Samarth Kumar



AIR 77, AILET



Sabhyata Singh



AIR 86, AILET



Medhini Srinath

YE POSTER NAHI, PROOF HAI!



NPLC's TOP PERFORMERS 2025

AIR 02, AILET



Chaitanya Ghosh

AIR 02, CLAT



Daiwik Agarwala

AIR 04, CLAT



Aditya Ankhad

AIR 6, AILET



Dhruv Kamath

AIR 10, AILET



Vidisha Singh

AIR 24, AILET



Samyuktha Kovilakath

AIR 30, AILET



Goohika Joshi

AIR 51, AILET



Aditya Mehta

AIR 78, AILET



Yutika Kumar

YE POSTER NAHI, PROOF HAI!



NISHANT PRAKASH LAW CLASSES

"Gurukul for CLAT & AILET"

Founded in 2011, Nishant Prakash Law Classes (NPLC) has earned the reputation of being the 'Gurukul for CLAT'—a space where commitment, discipline, and mentorship come together to build India's finest legal minds. Often referred to as the 'Super 30 of CLAT', NPLC is not just a coaching institute—it's a movement for serious law aspirants.

What makes NPLC truly unique is its strictly limited intake—only 90 students offline and 30 online each year. With batch sizes of just 25, every student is thoughtfully selected to ensure they are not just coached, but personally mentored. This one-of-its-kind model helps create a tightly-knit academic environment where no student is left behind, and every performance is tracked, sharpened, and elevated.

Since its inception, NPLC has consistently delivered extraordinary results, with a CLAT success rate of over 90% every year, and most recently, rank 4 in both CLAT & AILET 2026. In 2025, 5 of the top 10 ranks in CLAT & AILET were from NPLC. We do not offer test series, correspondence courses, or shortcut-based programs—only full-time classroom learning, because we believe greatness is built with time, discipline, and relentless hard work.

At NPLC, students are not identified by roll numbers but by their potential—and we make it our mission to ensure they live up to it.

What sets us apart?



91% Success Rate



Online & Offline Classes



Personalized Mentorship



Detailed Study Materials
& Tests



1:15 Mentor - Student
Ratio



Only 90 intakes per year
Offline + 30 Students Online

NAVIGATE.
PREPARE.
LEAD.
CONQUER.

Nishant Prakash



Nishant Prakash, founder and chief mentor at NPLC, is a nationally recognized legal educator and policy advisor. An alumnus of one of India's premier National Law Schools, Nishant left a thriving corporate law career to dedicate himself fully to teaching and mentoring the next generation of legal leaders. For over 13 years, he has built an unparalleled reputation as a transformational teacher, guiding students with precision, compassion, and personal accountability.

He has been associated with some of the country's top-tier law firms, including Luthra & Luthra, and holds expertise in Intellectual Property, Insurance, and Trade Law, with over 30 national and international publications to his credit.

A firm believer in long-term academic mentorship, Nishant combines academic rigour with real-world legal insights to prepare students for top law schools and successful careers. His work consistently bridges the gap between textbook learning and practical application, equipping students with a clear understanding of how law operates in the real world.

Know your Mentor |



What sets Nishant apart is not just his knowledge, but his unwavering dedication to each student's growth. Every batch under his guidance is not just taught, but molded. He pushes students beyond their limits—while offering the support, discipline, and insight they need to thrive in competitive legal exams and beyond.

For parents looking for a mentor who truly takes ownership, and for students seeking more than just lectures—Nishant Prakash is the mentor who stays with you, every step of the way.

Their Next Chapter



NLSIU - Bengaluru

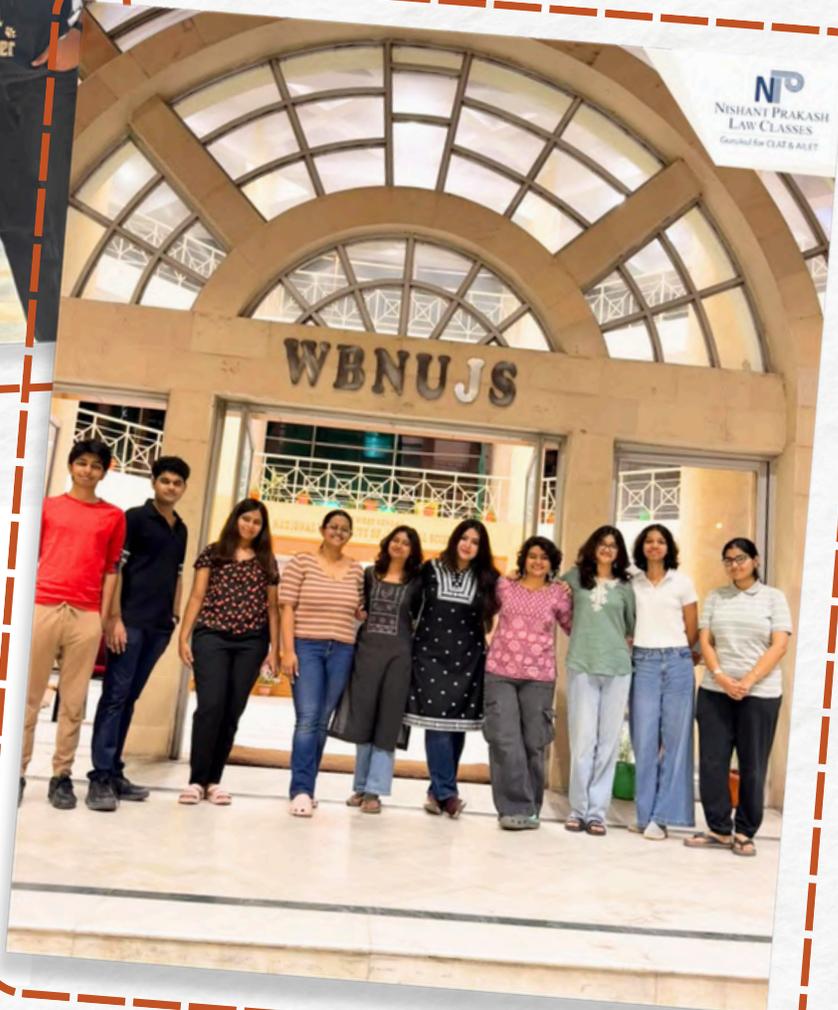
(Left to Right)

**Dainik Agarwala
Daksh Balakrishnan
Dhruv Kamath
Aditya Ankhad**

WBNUJS - Kolkata

(Left to Right)

**Reyhaan Aryan, Shashwat
Singh, Aanya Arora,
Shivakshi Dixit, Dhara
Mittal, Vaishali Bhatra,
Labonyo Banerjee, Yutika
Kumar, Janani Murugan,
Megha Malhotra**



Their Next Chapter



NP
NISHANT PRAKASH
LAW CLASSES
Gurukul for CLAT & AILET



NLU - Delhi

(Left to Right)
**Ananya Prakash,
Amoolya Kapani, Vidisha
Singh, Goohika Joshi,
Masirah Hussain, Krish
Walia, Chaitanya Ghosh,
Aditya Mehta**

NLU - Jodhpur

(Left to Right)

**Vivaan Mehta
Khushi Gaur
Maahi Yadav
Shefali Talwar
Kaushtubh Anand**



INDEX

IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

Pg.

1. The Constitutional Office of the Governor.....01
2. Raisina Dialogue 202607
3. US-Israel Strikes on Iran13
4. India Wins the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 202623
5. India Submits 7th National Report to the CBD28
6. India's GDP Base Year Revised to 2022-2334
7. World Obesity Atlas 202641
8. Centre invokes the Essential Commodities Act, 195546
9. LIGO-India's 1st Gravitational Wave Observatory52
10. Durand Line Dispute57

AT A GLANCE

Pg.

1. Botswana Cheetah Translocation to India64
2. NITI Aayog-JICA Cooperation on SDGs65
3. International Women's Day 202666
4. Report on Income Mobility in India 2014-202568
5. Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh Plan Social Media Ban for Minors69
6. NHAI Releases 1st National Highways Green Cover Index 2025-2670
7. Cabinet Extends Jal Jeevan Mission Till 202871
8. SC Clarifies OBC Creamy Layer Criteria72
9. V.O. Chidambaranar Port: India's First Digital Twin Port73
10. US Launches Section 301 Probe into India74

One Liners

75-78

Crossword

79-80



**NISHANT PRAKASH
LAW CLASSES**

1 The Constitutional Office of the Governor

IN FOCUS

- On March 5, 2026, the President of India carried out a significant reshuffle of Governors and Lieutenant Governors (LGs) across multiple states and Union Territories (UTs), days ahead of Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.
- Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi was transferred and appointed as the Governor of West Bengal, while Kerala Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar was given additional charge of Tamil Nadu pending a full appointment.
- West Bengal Governor C.V. Ananda Bose and Ladakh Lieutenant Governor Kavinder Gupta resigned on the same day; Gupta was subsequently appointed Governor of Himachal Pradesh.
- West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee publicly stated that Union Home Minister Amit Shah informed her of R.N. Ravi's appointment without consulting her, in contravention of the established constitutional convention requiring prior consultation with the Chief Minister.
- The reshuffle has renewed debate on the constitutional framework governing the appointment and removal of Governors, the application of the "pleasure of the President" doctrine, and the role of Governors in states where Centre–state relations are politically contentious.

Complete List of Appointments

Name	Previous Position	New Position
Shiv Pratap Shukla	Governor of Himachal Pradesh	Governor of Telangana
Jishnu Dev Varma	Governor of Telangana	Governor of Maharashtra
Nand Kishore Yadav	—	Governor of Nagaland
Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Syed Ata Hasnain	—	Governor of Bihar
R. N. Ravi	Governor of Tamil Nadu	Governor of West Bengal
Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar	Governor of Kerala	Given additional charge of Tamil Nadu
Kavinder Gupta	Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh	Governor of Himachal Pradesh
Vinai Kumar Saxena	Lieutenant Governor of Delhi	Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh

Vinai Kumar
Saxena

Lieutenant Governor of Delhi

Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh

Controversy Surrounding R.N. Ravi in Tamil Nadu

Relations between R.N. Ravi and the M.K. Stalin-led Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) government in Tamil Nadu were persistently contentious, with the ruling party accusing the Governor of positioning himself as a political rival to an elected government.

Ravi withheld assent to several Bills passed by the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly; in April 2025, the Supreme Court of India invoked its powers to declare 10 such Bills "effectively approved," setting a significant constitutional precedent regarding gubernatorial delay in assenting to legislation.

Ravi repeatedly declined to deliver the customary address to the state legislature or deviated from the government's prepared text, and on one occasion publicly declared that he would never approve the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) exemption Bill.

On Ravi's suggestion, the Tamil Nadu Raj Bhavan was renamed Lok Bhavan a few months prior to his transfer; Ravi is a former Indian Police Service (IPS) officer who retired from the Intelligence Bureau and previously served as the government's interlocutor for Naga peace talks from 2014 to 2021.



Background: C.V. Ananda Bose's Resignation

- C.V. Ananda Bose, who had served as West Bengal Governor for approximately three-and-a-half years, submitted his resignation to President Droupadi Murmu in New Delhi on March 5, 2026.
- West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee expressed being "shocked and deeply concerned" by the sudden resignation, and suggested without direct attribution that the Governor may have faced pressure from the Union Home Minister to serve certain political interests on the eve of the forthcoming state Assembly elections.
- Banerjee characterized the manner of the reshuffle as an action that "undermines the spirit of the Constitution" and "strikes at the very foundation of our federal structure," citing the failure to consult her as required by established convention.
- Kavinder Gupta's tenure as LG of Ladakh (from July 2025) was marked by unprecedented violence on September 24, 2025, in Leh city, in which four persons including a Kargil war veteran were killed in police firing during a protest demanding constitutional safeguards for the region.

Constitutional Framework: Appointment of Governors

Constitutional Provisions

- **Article 153** mandates that every state shall have a Governor; the Seventh Constitutional Amendment Act of 1956 additionally permitted a single person to serve as Governor of two or more states simultaneously.
- Under Article 154, the executive power of the state is formally vested in the Governor, while Article 155 provides that the Governor is appointed directly by the President of India through a warrant under the hand and seal of the President, establishing the Governor as a nominee of the Union Government.
- Article 156 stipulates that the Governor holds office during the pleasure of the President; the Constitution specifies no grounds for removal, enabling the President to remove or transfer a Governor at any time, though the standard term is five years from the date of assuming charge, with the incumbent continuing until a successor assumes office.
- Under Article 157, a Governor must be a citizen of India and must have completed 35 years of age; Article 158 further disqualifies any sitting member of Parliament or a State Legislature, who is deemed to have vacated their seat upon assuming the governorship, and prohibits the holding of any other office of profit.

Appointment of Lieutenant Governors

- Unlike Governors, who are governed under Part VI of the Constitution, the administration of Union Territories is dealt with under **Part VIII (Articles 239 to 241)**; Article 239 provides that every UT shall be administered by the President acting through an Administrator appointed by the President with such designation as the President may specify.
- In five UTs the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi, Puducherry, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, and Andaman and Nicobar Islands the administrator is designated as Lieutenant Governor; in Chandigarh, Lakshadweep, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, they are designated simply as "Administrators."
- **Article 239AA** specifically provides that the administrator of the NCT of Delhi shall be designated as the Lieutenant Governor.
- The LG is appointed by the President through a warrant under the hand and seal of the President; since the President exercises powers on the aid and advice of the Union Council of Ministers under Article 74, the LG is effectively chosen and recommended by the Central Government.
- Like a state Governor, the LG holds office during the pleasure of the President, with no constitutional specification of grounds for removal; the Central Government may advise the President to transfer, remove, or demand the resignation of an LG at any time.

Governors are Appointed or Elected?

- During the drafting of the Constitution, the Constituent Assembly adopted the Canadian model of an appointed Governor rather than the American model of an elected one, primarily to prevent the creation of a parallel power centre that could clash with the elected Chief Minister and cause constitutional deadlocks.
- Since the state follows a parliamentary system in which the Chief Minister is the real executive, spending public resources on a statewide election for a constitutionally nominal head was considered unnecessary and inefficient.
- An appointed Governor serves as a vital link between the Centre and the state, contributing to national unity and integration, whereas an elected Governor would necessarily

- Article 158 also provides that the Governor is entitled to an official residence without payment of rent, along with emoluments and allowances that cannot be reduced during the term of office; where one person serves multiple states, the emoluments are shared among those states in a proportion determined by the President.
- Article 159 requires the Governor to take an oath to faithfully execute the office, to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and the law, and to devote themselves to the service and well-being of the people of the state; the oath is administered by the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court or, in their absence, the senior-most judge of that court.

- rely on a political party platform, compromising the office's ability to act as a neutral arbiter particularly during hung assemblies or the imposition of President's Rule.

Key Recommendations on the Governor's Office

- **Sarkaria Commission (1983):** Recommended that the appointee be an eminent person from outside the state who has not been in active politics in the recent past; further recommended that consultation with the Chief Minister, the Vice-President of India, and the Speaker of the Lok Sabha be made constitutionally mandatory before appointment; and advised that Governors should not be removed before completing five years except in rare and compelling circumstances.
- **Venkatachaliah Commission (2002):** Recommended that Governors should normally complete their five-year term, and that if removed earlier, the Central Government should consult the concerned Chief Minister.
- **Punchhi Commission (2007):** Recommended deleting the "pleasure of the President" doctrine entirely and proposed that a Governor should be removable only through a resolution passed by the state legislature, analogous to the impeachment process of the President.

- Article 158 also provides that the Governor is entitled to an official residence without payment of rent, along with emoluments and allowances that cannot be reduced during the term of office; where one person serves multiple states, the emoluments are shared among those states in a proportion determined by the President.
- Article 159 requires the Governor to take an oath to faithfully execute the office, to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and the law, and to devote themselves to the service and well-being of the people of the state; the oath is administered by the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court or, in their absence, the senior-most judge of that court.
- Two established conventions govern appointments in practice: the "outsider rule" (the Governor should typically be appointed from outside the state to ensure neutrality) and the consultation convention (the President is expected to consult the state's Chief Minister before appointment, though this is frequently not observed).
- Under Article 161, the Governor holds pardoning powers; Article 164 empowers the Governor to appoint the Chief Minister and other ministers; Article 176 provides for a special address by the Governor; Article 200 grants the Governor power to withhold assent or reserve a Bill; and Article 213 empowers the Governor to promulgate Ordinances.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which of the following states was assigned a new Governor when R.N. Ravi was shifted from his previous constitutional post during the March 2026 gubernatorial reshuffle?
(a) West Bengal (b) Tamil Nadu
(c) Karnataka (d) Maharashtra
- Which of the following individuals was entrusted with temporary responsibility for administering the Governor's office in Tamil Nadu during the 2026 gubernatorial reshuffle?
(a) Arif Mohammad Khan Sahib
(b) Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar
(c) C. P. Radhakrishnan Nair
(d) R. N. Ravi Former Governor
- Which of the following states received Jishnu Dev Varma as its Governor following the March 2026 gubernatorial reshuffle?
(a) Karnataka (b) Telangana
(c) Maharashtra (d) Rajasthan
- Which of the following individuals was appointed as the Governor of Nagaland during the March 2026 gubernatorial reshuffle?
(a) Nand Kishore Yadav
(b) Jagdeep Dhankhar Singh
(c) Rajendra Vishwanath Rao
(d) Arif Mohammad Khan
- Which of the following individuals was appointed as the Lieutenant Governor of the National Capital Territory of Delhi during the March 2026 administrative appointments?
(a) Vinai Kumar Saxena (b) Taranjit Singh Sandhu
(c) Anil Bajjal Former LG (d) Arvind Kejriwal Leader
- Lt. General (Retired) Syed Ata Hasnain is the Governor of?
(a) Assam (b) Bihar
(c) Odisha (d) Punjab
- Which of the following individuals served as the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh when a major protest-related incident occurred in Leh during September 2025?
(a) Manoj Sinha (b) Girish Chandra
(c) R. K. Mathur (d) Kavinder Gupta
- What is the usual tenure of a Governor of a state under the constitutional provisions of India?
(a) six years (b) five years
(c) four years (d) three years
- What is the minimum age required for a person to be eligible for appointment as a Governor of a state under the Constitution of India?
(a) 30 years (b) 35 years
(c) 40 years (d) 25 years
- What constitutional provision deals with the official residence, salary, and allowances of a Governor in India?
(a) Article 155 (b) Article 157
(c) Article 158 (d) Article 159
- What is the designation of the authority who normally administers the oath of office to a Governor in India?
(a) Speaker of the State Assembly
(b) Chief Justice of High Court
(c) Chairman of Legislative Council
(d) Chief Secretary of the State
- What power is granted to the Governor under Article 200 of the Constitution regarding a Bill passed by the state legislature?
(a) summon or prorogue legislature house
(b) appoint chief minister and ministers
(c) withhold assent or reserve a Bill
(d) promulgate ordinances during recess
- What part of the Constitution of India deals with the office and functions of Governors of states?
(a) Part VI (b) Part V
(c) Part VII (d) Part IV
- Which of the following commissions examined Centre-State relations and suggested guidelines regarding the appointment and functioning of state Governors in India?
(a) Punchhi Committee
(b) Mandal Commission
(c) Sarkaria Commission
(d) Balwant Rai Committee

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

15. Which of the following commissions recommended reforms suggesting that a Governor should be removed only through a legislative resolution similar to the impeachment procedure of the President?

- (a) Punchhi Commission
- (b) Sarkaria Commission
- (c) Mandal Commission
- (d) Balwant Rai Committee

SOLUTIONS

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

2 Raisina Dialogue 2026

IN FOCUS

- The 11th edition of the Raisina Dialogue was held from March 5–7, 2026, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurating the event on March 5, 2026.
- Alexander Stubb, President of the Republic of Finland, attended as Chief Guest and delivered the keynote address at the inaugural session.
- The edition marked the launch of the **Raisina Science Diplomacy Initiative (SDI)**, a new framework to integrate science and technology into global foreign policy, jointly launched by the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India and the **Observer Research Foundation (ORF)**.
- Approximately 2,700 participants from 110 countries attended in person, including ministers, former heads of state and government, military commanders, industry leaders, technology experts, parliamentarians, academics, journalists, and strategic affairs scholars, with proceedings reaching millions globally through digital platforms.

ORF OBSERVER RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Ministry of External Affairs
Government of India

RAISINA
DIALOGUE 2026

SAMSKARA
ASSERTION • ACCOMMODATION • ADVANCEMENT

5-7 MARCH, 2026
NEW DELHI, INDIA

- The Raisina Dialogue was launched in 2016 by the **Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** and is organized annually in collaboration with the ORF; it derives its name from Raisina Hill in New Delhi, the seat of India's executive government.
- It is India's premier annual conference on geopolitics and geo-economics, bringing together global

- leaders, policymakers, academics, industry experts, and journalists to deliberate on critical international issues.
- The Dialogue is frequently compared to the Munich Security Conference in Germany and Singapore's Shangri-La Dialogue in terms of its global significance and format.
- Each edition features multi-format discussions on shifting geopolitical alliances, climate change, technology governance, economic security, and evolving multilateral frameworks.

Theme and Conceptual Framework 2026 Edition

- The theme of the 2026 edition was "**Samiskāra Assertion, Accommodation, Advancement**," drawing on the Sanskrit concept of inherited civilisational identity that enables societies to assert their truths, accommodate contradictions, and advance through refinement.
- The theme reflects the contemporary moment in which nations are simultaneously asserting sovereignty over borders, bandwidth, industrial ambitions, and digital destinies, while new interest-driven and plurilateral coalitions are emerging to replace stalled multilateral consensus.



- Four defining conversations were identified as shaping the current global order: between the US and the world (seeking to re-establish dominance); between China and the world (addressing economic asymmetry); between the US and China (searching for a new symmetry); and among the remaining powers of the world described as the most consequential conversation, focused on renewal, structural balance, and restoration of global equilibrium.

Six Thematic Pillars of Raisina Dialogue 2026

- **Contested Frontiers: Power, Polarity, and Periphery** Examined the diffusion of global power, the shifting of polarities, and the emergence of previously peripheral regions as central actors; addressed new forms of conflict, contested global commons (oceans, orbits, supply chains, and cyberspace), and the need to recalibrate the security order against mutating threats.
- **Repairing the Commons: New Groups, New Guardians, New Avenues** Focused on the fraying of postwar multilateral institutions such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the rise of agile, interest-driven South-South solidarities and plurilateral coalitions; highlighted India's strategic recalibration through BRICS, the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), and the India-France-UAE (UFI) Trilateral as examples of India's role as a builder of new partnerships.

- **White Whale: The Pursuit of Agenda 2030** Assessed the deepening crisis facing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), set in 2015, including stalled progress, funding fatigue, and planetary limits; interrogated what a post-SDG compact grounded in realism, reciprocity, and responsibility might require.
- **The Eleventh Hour: Climate, Conflict, and the Cost of Delay** Examined the movement from climate pledges to institutional action, the inadequate pace of green finance flows across borders, and the imperative for emerging economies on the frontlines of the climate transition to assume leadership in designing resilience and adaptation frameworks.
- **Tomorrowland: Towards a Tech-topia** Explored the architecture of digital governance, the clash of regulatory regimes, the ethics of autonomy, and the challenge of crafting oversight that is simultaneously agile, inclusive, and secure as artificial intelligence (AI) redefines truth, work, and identity.
- **Trade in the Time of Tariffs: Recovery, Resilience, Reinvention** Studied the retreat from deep globalisation commitments in favour of industrial policy, economic self-reliance, and diversified partnerships, framing the resulting fragmentation also as a source of innovation and creative reinvention in global commerce.

Major Takeaways from the 2026 Edition

- The Dialogue acknowledged the consolidation of a multipolar global order, with the Global South transitioning from a passive constituency to an active coalition functioning as a force multiplier for a fairer international system.
- Strong calls were made for reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to reflect current geopolitical realities, with growing international support for India's permanent membership.
- Emphasis was placed on securing global supply chains, undersea communication cables, and maritime routes amid escalating tensions in the Indian Ocean, Red Sea, and Indo-Pacific.
- The launch of the Raisina SDI was identified as the landmark institutional development of the 2026 edition, signalling the formal integration of science and technology into India's foreign policy architecture.

First Roundtable: Science Diplomacy in the Era of Strategic Autonomy

- The first roundtable was chaired by Dr. Parvinder Maini, Scientific Secretary, Office of the PSA, with scene-setting remarks by Prof. Peter Gluckman.
- Discussions stressed the need to balance national strategic priorities with the inherently collaborative character of scientific inquiry, and highlighted that scientific cooperation and institutional trust in scientific systems serve as vital bridges even amid geopolitical fragmentation.
- Deliberations emphasised the need to strengthen trusted networks, transparent research ecosystems, and resilient multilateral frameworks, as well as to enhance risk-assessment mechanisms, build science advice capacities, and ensure equitable participation in global standard-setting processes.

Second Roundtable: Governing Disruptive Technologies through Science Diplomacy

- The second roundtable was chaired by Prof. Marilyn Andersen, with scene-setting remarks by Dr. Vijay

- Chauthaiwale.
- Deliberations focused on the development of equitable and effective governance models for frontier technologies, encompassing anticipatory policy processes, inclusive norm-setting, and the alignment of technological innovation with contextual ethical and societal considerations.
- Participants stressed that proactive, globally coordinated approaches are essential to managing the risks posed by disruptive technologies while harnessing their transformative potential.
- The discussion also highlighted the importance of leveraging scientific cooperation to reduce global inequalities, reinforcing multilateral engagement, promoting collaboration in pre-competitive research areas, and addressing technology governance challenges through practical, use-case-driven approaches.

Observer Research Foundation

- Observer Research Foundation (ORF) is a public policy think tank based in India that focuses on research and dialogue on international relations, security, economy, governance, technology, and sustainable development.
- The foundation was established in 1990 in New Delhi with the objective of contributing to informed policy-making through research, analysis, and public debate.
- ORF was founded by R.K. Mishra, a former journalist and policy analyst, with support from the Reliance Group.
- The organisation aims to bring together policymakers, academics, business leaders, and civil society to discuss issues affecting India and the global order.
- ORF conducts independent research, policy analysis, and publications on topics such as geopolitics, national security, climate change, technology governance, and economic policy.
- It operates through several research programmes, including Strategic Studies, Economy and Growth, Energy and Resources, Technology and Society, and Governance and Politics.
- The think tank publishes policy reports, research papers, commentaries, and special studies, which are widely referenced in discussions on Indian foreign policy and global affairs.
- The Raisina Dialogue, launched in 2016, has emerged as India's flagship conference on international strategic affairs, bringing together leaders, diplomats, scholars, and policymakers from across the world.
- ORF has offices in New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata, supporting research and policy engagement across different regions of India.



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which of the following organisations jointly collaborates with India's external affairs ministry in organising the Raisina Dialogue every year?
 - National Strategy Foundation
 - Observer Research Foundation
 - International Policy Institute
 - Institute Strategic Studies
- Who attended the 2026 Raisina Dialogue as the chief guest representing a Nordic country?
 - Olaf Demir Scholz
 - Emmanuel Macron
 - Sanna Kin Marin
 - Alexander Stubb
- Which of the following Indian cities hosted the 2026 edition of the Raisina Dialogue?
 - Mumbai
 - New Delhi
 - Bengaluru
 - Hyderabad
- What was the theme guiding discussions during the 2026 Raisina Dialogue?
 - Samiskāra Assertion, Accommodation, Advancement
 - Globalism Cooperation, Competition, Connectivity
 - Diplomacy Security, Stability, Sustainability
 - Strategy Development, Dialogue, Determination
- Which of the following initiatives launched during the 2026 Raisina Dialogue focuses on integrating scientific cooperation with international diplomacy?
 - Global Innovation Partnership
 - Strategic Technology Dialogue
 - Raisina Science Diplomacy Initiative
 - International Research Alliance
- Which of the following emerging geopolitical concepts discussed during the conference describes a system with several influential global centres?
 - Bipolar international order
 - Multipolar world order
 - Unipolar security system
 - Dual alliance structure
- Which of the following international organisation's leaders served as co-chair of the Raisina Science Diplomacy Initiative deliberations?
 - World Health Organization Council
 - International Atomic Energy Agency
 - World Economic Cooperation Forum
 - International Science Council Forum
- Which of the following development goal frameworks discussed during the conference faces challenges due to limited progress and financing gaps?
 - Millennium Development Goals
 - Human Development Index
 - Sustainable Development Goals
 - Paris Climate Sustainable Index
- Which of the following Indian strategic corridor projects was cited as an example of emerging partnership frameworks?
 - Trans Eastern Himalayan Corridor
 - India Middle East Europe Corridor
 - North South Global Trade Route
 - Bay of Bengal Trade Initiative
- Which of the following infrastructure elements was highlighted as requiring greater protection amid rising maritime and technological competition?
 - Satellite navigation networks
 - International airport hubs
 - Undersea communication cables
 - Land border surveillance systems
- Which of the following organisation's chief scientists presented insights on technological foresight related to global security systems?
 - European Space Agency
 - World Economic Forum
 - United Nations Organization
 - North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- Which of the following official institutions of the Government of India co-launched the Raisina Science Diplomacy Initiative?
 - National Science Advisory Council
 - Office of Principal Scientific Adviser
 - National Security Council Secretariat
 - Department of Biotechnology Affairs
- Which of the following emerging coalition groups involving Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa was mentioned in discussions on strategic cooperation?

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- (a) ASEAN
(c) BRICS

- (b) QUAD
(d) SCO

14. Which of the following academic institution's directors discussed the evolution of science diplomacy during a special address?

- (a) Indian Institute of Science
(b) Science Gallery Bengaluru
(c) Tata Institute of Research
(d) National Institute of Science

15. Which of the following Indian city areas gave its name to the Raisina Dialogue, referring to the location of important government buildings?

- (a) Raisina Hill
(b) Parliament Street
(c) Rajpath Avenue
(d) South Block Road

SOLUTIONS

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

3 US-Israel Strikes on Iran

IN FOCUS

- The United States (US) and Israel launched coordinated military strikes on Iran in a joint offensive designated **Operation Epic Fury** by the US and **Operation Lion's Roar by Israel**, targeting key strategic facilities and reportedly killing Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, while calling for regime change.
- Iran retaliated through **Operation True Promise 4**, launching missile attacks against Israel and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states hosting American military installations, marking a significant escalation in West Asian tensions.
- The escalation occurred despite recent progress in US-Iran nuclear negotiations, raising fears of a wider regional conflict with substantial implications for global energy security, trade routes, and geopolitical stability.
- A US submarine torpedoed and sank the Iranian frigate IRIS Dena approximately 40 nautical miles off Sri Lanka's southern coast near Galle, in what was described as the first US torpedo sinking of an enemy vessel since World War II, bringing the conflict closer to the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- The IRIS Dena was returning from the International Fleet Review (IFR) 2026 held in Visakhapatnam, placing India in a diplomatically sensitive position given its ties with both the US and Iran.

Evolution of Iran-Israel Relations Since the creation of Israel

- After the creation of Israel in 1948, relations with Pahlavi Iran gradually developed into a close but mostly informal strategic relationship, especially from the 1960s to the 1970s, because both states saw value in cooperating as non-Arab powers in a hostile regional environment.
- The Shah of Iran viewed Israel as a useful strategic partner, while Israel saw Iran as a natural regional ally. During this period, military and intelligence cooperation became important pillars of the relationship.
- The 1979 Islamic Revolution completely changed the relationship. Revolutionary Iran ended official ties with Israel, adopted a strongly pro-Palestinian posture, and turned hostility to Israel into a central part of its post-revolution political identity.
- Even after 1979, some limited covert pragmatism survived during the Iran-Iraq War, because Iran still needed access to weapons and spare parts, but this did not restore real strategic trust between the two sides.
- The deeper strategic break came after the end of the Cold War and the 1991 Gulf War. Once their earlier common threats weakened, Iran and Israel increasingly began to see each other as rival regional centers of power.



- In the 1990s, Iran started turning anti-Israel ideology into more active policy by strengthening links with Hezbollah and Palestinian rejectionist groups, partly to resist a U.S.-Israeli regional order from which Tehran felt excluded.
- Hezbollah became the most important military expression of this rivalry. Iran's Revolutionary Guards founded Hezbollah in 1982 after Israel's invasion of Lebanon, and the group became Tehran's principal anti-Israel proxy in the Levant.
- In the 2000s and 2010s, the Iranian nuclear issue moved to the center of the relationship. Israel increasingly treated Iran's nuclear and missile capabilities as an existential threat, and the rivalry expanded into a long shadow war involving sabotage, cyber operations, assassinations, and covert attacks.



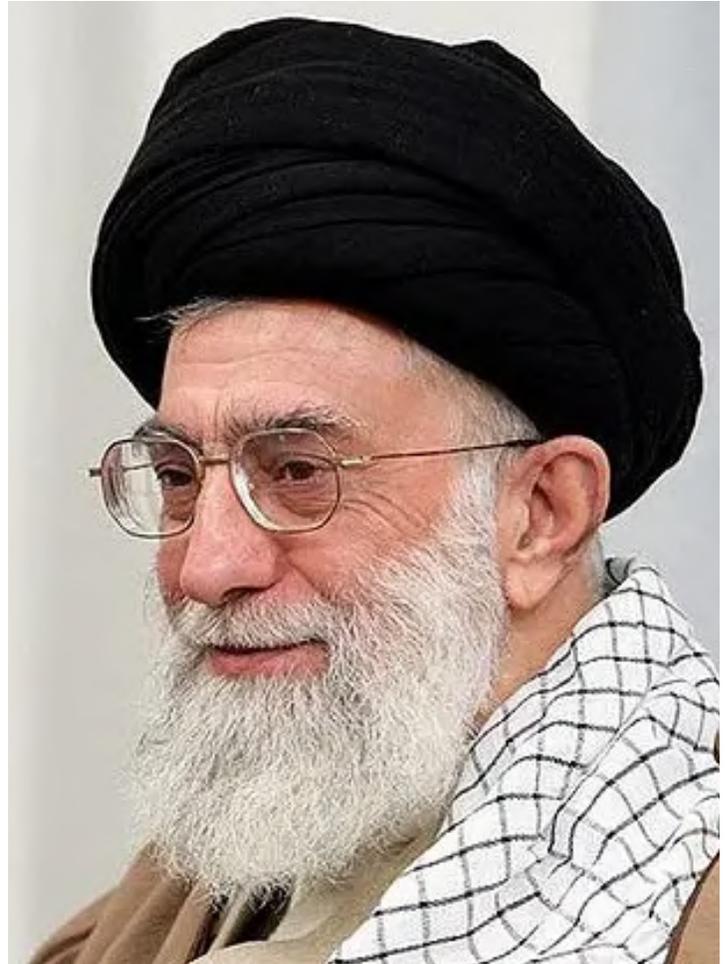
- Between 2010 and 2024, USIP records dozens of alleged Israeli operations against Iranian targets, including attacks on nuclear scientists and facilities. In 2018, Israel also publicized the seizure of Iran's nuclear archive to argue that Tehran had hidden past weapons-related work.
- The rivalry became more openly military in Syria as well. In May 2018, after rockets were fired from Syria toward the Golan Heights, Israel said it attacked nearly all of Iran's military infrastructure in Syria.
- After the Gaza war began in October 2023, Iran-backed groups such as Hezbollah, the Houthis, and allied armed factions in Iraq and Syria intensified attacks, pushing the long-running proxy conflict much closer to direct confrontation.
- A major turning point came in April 2024. A suspected Israeli strike on Iran's consular building in Damascus killed senior Iranian officers; Iran replied with more than 300 drones and missiles, marking its first direct attack on Israel, and Israel then struck Iranian soil on 19 April 2024.
- The confrontation escalated further in October 2024, when Iran fired 180 ballistic missiles at Israel after Israeli killings of Hamas and Hezbollah leaders. Israel then carried out its largest direct attack on Iran, targeting air defenses and missile production facilities.
- In June 2025, the relationship crossed fully into open war. After heightened nuclear tensions and an IAEA-related escalation, Israel struck Iranian nuclear sites, missile facilities, senior commanders, and scientists on 13 June 2025; Iran retaliated with missile and drone barrages, and the United States joined on 21 June 2025 by striking Fordow, Isfahan, and Natan.
- A ceasefire took effect on 24 June 2025 after 12 days of war, but the strikes had set back Iran's nuclear program by only months, not destroyed it completely.
- By February–March 2026, the conflict had reignited on an even wider scale. A new U.S.-Israeli campaign began on 28 February 2026, and any ceasefire efforts had stalled, Iran was retaliating regionally, and the war was affecting Lebanon and the Strait of Hormuz.
- Thus, the overall evolution of Israel–Iran relations has been: informal strategic cooperation under the Shah, ideological rupture after 1979, proxy warfare through Hezbollah and allied groups, shadow war over the nuclear program, direct missile exchanges in 2024, and open interstate war by 2025–26.

February 2026 Strike

- On **28 February 2026**, the United States and Israel launched a large-scale coordinated military campaign against Iran after weeks of military buildup and failed nuclear diplomacy. The opening strikes targeted Iran's **top leadership, missile infrastructure, and nuclear-related assets**, and the U.S. named the operation **Operation Epic Fury**.
- The first wave of strikes marked an extraordinary escalation because it directly targeted the Iranian leadership. **Ali Khamenei** was killed in the opening assault, and **Mojtaba Khamenei** later emerged as Iran's new Supreme Leader, turning the conflict into not only a military confrontation but also a major succession crisis inside Iran.
- Iran responded immediately with **missile and drone attacks** on Israel and on U.S.-linked targets in the region, showing that the conflict would not remain confined to Iranian territory. Inside Iran, the strikes triggered panic, evacuations from major cities, long queues for fuel and supplies, and the closure of schools and universities in several places.
- By early March 2026, the conflict had widened into a broader regional war. **Hezbollah entered the war on 2 March**, presenting its intervention as retaliation for the killing of Iran's supreme leader, and Israel then opened a fresh offensive in Lebanon. By mid-March, the fighting in Lebanon had killed **hundreds of people** and displaced **hundreds of thousands**.
- The war also spread into **Iraq**, where Iran-aligned armed groups attacked U.S. diplomatic and military-linked locations and also targeted energy infrastructure, including oilfields. This showed that Iran's wider regional network remained capable of applying pressure even after major blows to Tehran and Hezbollah.
- A major feature of the February 2026 strikes and their aftermath has been the transformation of the conflict into an **energy and shipping crisis**. Iran moved to keep the **Strait of Hormuz** shut, maritime traffic was heavily disrupted, and the war triggered an exceptionally severe shock to oil supplies and global energy markets.
- The escalation deepened further when U.S. strikes hit **Kharg Island**, Iran's principal oil export hub. By **14-15 March 2026**, Washington was openly threatening additional attacks on Iran's energy infrastructure, while Tehran signaled that any assault on its oil facilities would invite further retaliation.
- The conflict has also begun directly affecting Gulf energy hubs outside Iran. A **drone attack and fire at Fujairah** in the United Arab Emirates disrupted some oil-loading operations, though loading later resumed. This highlighted how the war was no longer only about Israel and Iran, but also about the vulnerability of the wider Gulf energy system.
- Diplomatically, the war remains in a hardened phase. Attempts by **Oman** and **Egypt** to open ceasefire channels did not produce negotiations. Iran's position has been that strikes must stop before any ceasefire process can begin, while Washington has continued to prioritize military pressure rather than immediate talks.
- As of **15 March 2026**, the war has entered its **third week** with no clear settlement in sight. Missile and drone exchanges are continuing, Israel has kept up a heavy strike tempo inside Iran, Lebanon remains an active front, and the conflict is now simultaneously a **leadership crisis, regional proxy war, and global energy-security crisis**.

Ali Hosseini Khamenei

- **Ali Hosseini Khamenei** was an Iranian **Shia cleric and politician** who served as the **second Supreme Leader of Iran from 1989 to 2026**. Before that, he served as **President of Iran from 1981 to 1989**.
- He was born in **Mashhad, Iran, in 1939**. There is a published date difference in major sources: **Britannica lists 19 April 1939**, while his **official website lists 17 July 1939**. His father, **Sayyid Jawad Husaini Khamenei**, was a religious scholar, and Khamenei studied in **Mashhad and Qom**, where he was taught by **Ruhollah Khomeini** and other clerics.
- Khamenei became politically active in opposition to the **Pahlavi monarchy**. During the Shah's rule, he was **arrested multiple times** and was also **exiled**, which helped build his credentials inside the revolutionary movement.
- After the **1979 Iranian Revolution**, he quickly entered the new power structure. He served on the **Revolutionary Council**, became **deputy minister of defense**, acted as **Khomeini's representative on the Supreme Defense Council**, and for a brief period also commanded the **Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)**.
- In **June 1981**, he survived an **assassination attempt** in which a bomb hidden in a tape recorder exploded beside him. The attack **paralyzed his right arm**, a lasting physical mark that became one of the best-known features of his public life.
- He became **President of Iran in 1981** after the assassination of President **Mohammad-Ali Rajai**, and he served two terms during the **Iran-Iraq War**. This period helped deepen his ties with the security establishment, especially the **IRGC**.
- After **Ruhollah Khomeini's death in 1989**, Khamenei was chosen by the **Assembly of Experts** as Supreme Leader, even though he did not initially possess the traditional senior clerical standing normally associated with the office. His elevation marked a major constitutional and political turning point in the Islamic Republic.



Key Actors in the Conflict

- **United States and Israel:** The two nations sought to decisively dismantle Iran's nuclear capabilities and its proxy network, with the stated goal of restructuring the regional balance of power and, as expressed by the US, encouraging the Iranian people to topple the ruling regime.

- **Iran:** Fighting for regime survival, Iran deployed its regional network to project power, deter further strikes, and raise the cost of war for the US and its allies by spreading the conflict across multiple theatres, aiming to generate international pressure on Washington to cease military operations.
- **GCC Nations:** The UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Oman, which share the Persian Gulf with Iran and host major US military installations including Al Udeid Air Base (Qatar), Naval Support Activity Bahrain (headquarters of the US Fifth Fleet), Al Dhafra Air Base (UAE), and Duqm Port facilities (Oman), found themselves targets of Iranian strikes on economic and civilian infrastructure.
- **Hezbollah (Lebanon):** Firmly aligned with Iran, Hezbollah engaged Israel in a two-front conflict, fighting both on the Iran front and on Israel's northern border simultaneously.
- **Houthis (Yemen):** Aligned with the Axis of Resistance, the Houthis exploited their geographical position to attack commercial shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, disrupting global trade and exerting economic pressure on the US and Israel.
- **Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) Iraq:** Launched solidarity strikes against US bases and Israeli interests from Iraqi and Syrian territories.
- **Kurdish Militias:** Certain Kurdish groups, historically supported by the US and Israel due to their military effectiveness, were positioned as potential allies against the Iranian regime; the Kurdish people constitute the world's largest stateless ethnic group, estimated at 25–35 million and distributed across Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Iran, and parts of Armenia.

Strategic Locations and Places in News

- **Strait of Hormuz:** A narrow chokepoint measuring 55–95 km in width, situated between Iran to the north and Oman and the UAE to the south, the strait is the sole sea passage linking the oil-rich Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea and handles approximately one-fifth of global liquid petroleum consumption and a significant share of global LNG trade.
- **Persian Gulf:** A marginal sea of the Indian Ocean located between the Arabian Peninsula to the southwest and Iran to the northeast, bordered by Iran, Oman, the UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Iraq; the region holds some of the world's largest crude oil reserves, including the Al-Safaniya Oil Field, the world's largest offshore oil field.
- The **Red Sea** and its critical maritime connections the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, the Gulf of Aden, and the Suez Canal emerged as additional flashpoints, with Houthi forces targeting commercial vessels transiting this corridor to Europe and Asia.
- Key Iranian nuclear and military sites targeted in the strikes included Natanz and Isfahan in central Iran (housing enrichment facilities and missile production units), the Fordow underground enrichment complex, and the Shahroud Space Center in Semnan Province, a facility central to ballistic missile production and testing.
- Iran also targeted Bandar Imam Khomeini and Abadan in the oil-rich Khuzestan Province, cities hosting critical petrochemical complexes and refineries driving Iran's export economy, along with Tehran, Karaj, and IRGC command centers.
- Israeli cities, including Haifa (a major deep-water port and naval base), Tel Aviv (the technological and financial capital), and Ashkelon (in proximity to the Gaza Strip), faced targeting threats; Iran also threatened to strike the Dimona nuclear facility if regime change was pursued.
- The Golan Heights, a strategic rocky basaltic plateau in southwestern Syria captured by Israel during the Six-Day War (1967) and formally annexed in 1981 though internationally unrecognized remained a contested flashpoint, with the UN-monitored demilitarized zone continuing to separate Israeli and Syrian forces.

- Jordan, geographically positioned between Israel and Iran/Iraq, intercepted Iranian ballistic missiles and drones traversing its airspace while seeking to preserve its territorial integrity; Cyprus also sustained strikes believed to originate from Iranian or Hezbollah forces.

Missile Defence Systems Deployed

- **Strait of Hormuz:** A narrow chokepoint measuring 55–95 km in width, situated between Iran to the north and Oman and the UAE to the south, the strait is the sole sea passage linking the oil-rich Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea and handles approximately one-fifth of global liquid petroleum consumption and a significant share of global LNG trade.
- **Persian Gulf:** A marginal sea of the Indian Ocean located between the Arabian Peninsula to the southwest and Iran to the northeast, bordered by Iran, Oman, the UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Iraq; the region holds some of the world's largest crude oil reserves, including the Al-Safaniya Oil Field, the world's largest offshore oil field.
- The **Red Sea** and its critical maritime connections the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, the Gulf of Aden, and the Suez Canal emerged as additional flashpoints, with Houthi forces targeting commercial vessels transiting this corridor to Europe and Asia.
- Key Iranian nuclear and military sites targeted in the strikes included Natanz and Isfahan in central Iran (housing enrichment facilities and missile production units), the Fordow underground enrichment complex, and the Shahroud Space Center in Semnan Province, a facility central to ballistic missile production and testing.
- Iran also targeted Bandar Imam Khomeini and Abadan in the oil-rich Khuzestan Province, cities hosting critical petrochemical complexes and refineries driving Iran's export economy, along with Tehran, Karaj, and IRGC command centers.
- Israeli cities, including Haifa (a major deep-water port and naval base), Tel Aviv (the technological and financial capital), and Ashkelon (in proximity to the Gaza Strip), faced targeting threats; Iran also threatened to strike the Dimona nuclear facility if regime change was pursued.
- The Golan Heights, a strategic rocky basaltic plateau in southwestern Syria captured by Israel during the Six-Day War (1967) and formally annexed in 1981 though internationally unrecognized remained a contested flashpoint, with the UN-monitored demilitarized zone continuing to separate Israeli and Syrian forces.



A US submarine torpedoed and sank the Iranian frigate IRIS Dena approximately 40 nautical miles off Sri Lanka's southern coast near Galle in the Indian Ocean, representing the first instance of the US sinking an enemy ship by torpedo since World War II.

- The IRIS Dena had been participating in the IFR 2026 hosted by the Indian Navy in Visakhapatnam a multilateral naval event intended to build trust, interoperability, and diplomatic goodwill among global navies and was attacked while returning from the event, placing India in a difficult diplomatic position.
- A torpedo is a self-propelled underwater weapon designed to destroy ships or submarines; unlike naval mines, torpedoes actively travel through water, track targets, and typically detonate beneath a ship's hull for maximum destructive effect.
- The modern self-propelled torpedo was invented in 1866 by engineer Robert Whitehead; powered by compressed air and equipped with automatic depth control, it was capable of traveling underwater independently a development that transformed naval warfare.
- Early torpedo variants included spar torpedoes, where explosives were mounted on a pole and rammed into enemy vessels, and experimental underwater explosive devices pioneered by inventor Robert Fulton during the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815), drawing conceptual inspiration from the electric ray fish.
- Modern interceptors destroy threats using one of two methods: a proximity fuse that detonates a warhead near the target, destroying it with shrapnel (used in older systems), or hit-to-kill technology, in which the interceptor steers directly into the target and shatters it through kinetic energy (used in current-generation systems).

International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue

- Following the IRIS Dena sinking, Sri Lanka deployed naval vessels to rescue Iranian sailors in accordance with its obligations under the **International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR Convention)**, an international agreement adopted in 1979 under the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to ensure prompt rescue assistance to persons in distress at sea.
- The SAR Convention divides the world's oceans into Search and Rescue (SAR) regions, with each coastal state responsible for coordinating rescue operations in its designated area, and mandates that all ships and coastal states assist persons in distress regardless of their nationality or status.
- The convention establishes Rescue Coordination Centres (RCCs) to organize and manage search and rescue operations, and encourages international cooperation among neighbouring countries for swift rescue and evacuation.
- India is a signatory to the SAR Convention, having ratified it in 2001; the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) coordinates rescue operations within the Indian Search and Rescue Region (ISRR), with the Director General ICG serving as the National Maritime Search and Rescue Coordinating Authority (NMSARCA).
- The ICG operates INDSAR, a voluntary ship reporting system that enables tracking of vessels and facilitates rapid response to maritime distress situations within India's SAR region.
- The SAR Convention forms a key pillar of global maritime law alongside the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974, and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982.

Global Implications of the War

- The conflict poses a direct threat to the **Strait of Hormuz**, through which approximately 20 million barrels of crude oil daily roughly 20% of global consumption and 20–30% of global Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) shipments transit; even with Gulf state bypass pipelines operating at full capacity, nine million barrels per day representing 9% of global demand would remain structurally at risk in the event of a full closure.
- The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) transmitted messages to vessels in late February 2026 stating that the strait had been closed, though no official declaration was issued by Tehran; in response, hundreds of tankers dropped anchor in open Gulf waters as trading houses, insurers, and shipping companies suspended transits.

- Benchmark Brent crude prices surpassed USD 72 per barrel by the end of the week of the escalation, and analysts warned that a prolonged regional conflict with sustained Hormuz disruption could push oil prices above USD 100 per barrel.
- The conflict risks deepening geopolitical polarization, with Russia and China potentially strengthening strategic alignment with Iran while the US consolidates its Western and Arab allies, further fragmenting the global order.
- The militarization of West Asian skies and maritime corridors has disrupted crucial trade routes connecting Asia to Europe, increasing freight and insurance costs globally; gold prices surged as investors sought safe-haven assets, and stock markets in Dubai and Abu Dhabi suspended trading.

Implications of War on India

- India, the world's third-largest crude oil consumer with an import dependency of over 88%, faces acute energy security concerns: approximately 2.5–2.7 million barrels per day sourced from Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Kuwait transits the Strait of Hormuz, alongside 80–85% of India's LPG imports and approximately 60% of its LNG imports.
- India's immediate crude oil needs are partially buffered by strategic petroleum reserves and crude inventories of over 10 days held by Indian refiners; diversification options include accelerated spot procurement from Russia, the US, West Africa, and Latin America, with Russian cargoes already present in floating storage in the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea.
- LPG represents India's most acute vulnerability: the country imports 80–85% of its LPG requirements, with supplies sourced overwhelmingly from Gulf producers and almost entirely transiting the strait, while India maintains no strategic LPG reserves of comparable scale to its crude oil reserves, resulting in structurally thinner buffers.
- Similarly, LNG spot cargo availability is thin in global markets, meaning that a protracted Hormuz closure could create significant supply challenges for both LPG and LNG, fueling domestic inflation and widening the current account deficit.
- West Asia hosts approximately 9 million Indian expatriates who contribute significantly to inward remittances; their safety is a primary governmental concern, and any deterioration in conditions could necessitate large-scale evacuation operations comparable to Operation Rahat or Operation Ajay.
- India shares a deep strategic partnership with the US and Israel while maintaining historical, energy, and connectivity ties with Iran, requiring careful diplomatic navigation that advocates for peace and condemns civilian casualties without alienating any strategic partner.
- The conflict directly threatens two of India's flagship connectivity initiatives: the **Chabahar Port** operations in Iran are jeopardized, and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) faces existential viability questions due to the destruction of Arabian Peninsula port infrastructure.
- India's Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways enhanced monitoring protocols to protect Indian ships and seafarers operating in the Persian Gulf amid rising tensions, reflecting the government's effort to safeguard national maritime interests.
- The attack on IRIS Dena in the Indian Ocean shortly after the IFR 2026 hosted by the Indian Navy compounds India's diplomatic challenge, requiring New Delhi to balance its strategic partnership with the US against its civilizational and energy ties with Iran while preserving its principle of strategic autonomy.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which of the following designations was assigned by the United States to its coordinated military campaign conducted jointly with Israel against Iran?
 - Operation Thunder
 - Operation Crimson
 - Operation Epic Fury
 - Operation Iron Storm
- Which of the following titles was given to the retaliatory military action undertaken by Iran following the coordinated strikes carried out by the United States and Israel?
 - Operation Silent Tempest 1
 - Operation True Promise 4
 - Operation Crimson Rise 2
 - Operation Iron Vengeance 3
- Which of the following naval vessels was sunk by a United States submarine in the Indian Ocean region after returning from a multinational maritime event hosted in India?
 - INS Chakra
 - IRIS Dena
 - USS Hopper
 - INS Vikram
- Which of the following terms refers to the strategic network of allied armed organisations supported by Iran across parts of West Asia?
 - Alliance of Guardians
 - Coalition of Faithful
 - Axis of Resistance
 - Front of Sovereignty
- Which of the following agreements concluded in 2015 placed internationally monitored restrictions on Iran's nuclear activities in exchange for economic relief?
 - Global Nuclear Cooperation Pact
 - Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
 - International Atomic Restraint Treaty
 - Multilateral Uranium Regulation Accord
- Which of the following locations were targeted during the initial Israeli strikes on Iranian nuclear-related facilities in June 2025?
 - Qom and Arak Base
 - Natanz and Isfahan
 - Bushehr and Tehran
 - Shiraz and Kashan
- Which of the following organisations represents the powerful military institution expected to weaken if Iran's supreme leadership structure were disrupted?
 - Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps
 - Iranian National Security Council
 - Supreme Council of Armed Forces
 - Iranian Strategic Defence Command
- Which of the following countries jointly undertook military action aimed at weakening Iran's strategic capabilities and altering the geopolitical balance in West Asia?
 - Russia and China
 - France and Germany
 - United States and Israel
 - Turkey and United States
- Which of the following countries is not a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)?
 - Saudi Arabia
 - UAE
 - Kuwait
 - Jordan
- Which of the following Iran-aligned organisations from Lebanon engaged in military confrontation with Israel during the escalation of regional hostilities?
 - Hamas (Gaza Strip)
 - Hezbollah (Lebanon)
 - Houthis (Yemen)
 - Islamic Jihad (Gaza)
- Which of the following armed groups based in Yemen carried out attacks on maritime routes in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden during the regional confrontation?
 - Hezbollah (Lebanon)
 - Hamas (Gaza Strip)
 - Houthis (Yemen)
 - Kataib (Hezbollah)
- Which of the following Iraqi paramilitary organisations carried out coordinated attacks on American military facilities and Israeli-linked targets

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

from territories in Iraq and Syria?

- (a) Popular Mobilization Forces
- (b) Kurdish Regional Security Units
- (c) National Defence Guard
- (d) Iraqi Strategic Defence Corps

13. Which of the following groups, belonging to a large stateless ethnic community spread across several countries in West Asia, has occasionally been viewed as a strategic partner by some external powers due to its military capability?

- (a) Druze Militias
- (b) Yazidi Militias
- (c) Assyrian Militias
- (d) Kurdish Militias

14. Which of the following maritime passages is the

crucial route through which a major share of the world's petroleum shipments moves from the Persian Gulf toward international markets?

- (a) Bab el Mandeb
- (b) Strait of Hormuz
- (c) Strait of Malacca
- (d) Suez Canal Route

15. Which of the following missile defence systems is designed to intercept ballistic missiles at high altitude during their final stage of flight?

- (a) Terminal High Altitude Area Defense
- (b) Advanced Tactical Ballistic Interceptor
- (c) Strategic High Altitude Missile System
- (d) Integrated Regional Missile Shield

SOLUTIONS

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

4 India Wins the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026

IN FOCUS

- **India defeated New Zealand by 96 runs** in the final of the **ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026** on March 8, 2026, at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, **claiming their third T20 World Cup title** and their largest-ever victory margin in T20 World Cup history.
- The tournament was jointly hosted by India and Sri Lanka from February 7 to March 8, 2026, with 20 teams competing across four groups, a Super 8 stage, and knockout rounds.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated the Indian cricket team, describing the triumph as a reflection of exceptional skills, determination, and teamwork, and stated that the victory had filled every Indian heart with pride and joy.

Final Match Summary

- India posted 255/5 in 20 overs, the highest total ever recorded in a T20 World Cup final and the highest in any Twenty20 International (T20I) knockout or playoff match.
- New Zealand were bowled out for 159 in 19 overs, with India winning by 96 runs.
- The Indian team was captained by Suryakumar Yadav; the New Zealand team was led by Mitchell Santner.
- Jasprit Bumrah was awarded Player of the Match for his bowling spell of 4 wickets for 15 runs (4/15).
- Sanju Samson was named **Player of the Tournament**, having scored 321 runs across the tournament at an average of 80.25; he also registered the highest individual score in a T20 World Cup final, making 89 against New Zealand.

Historic Milestones Achieved by India

- India became the first team in history to win three ICC Men's T20 World Cup titles, having previously won in 2007 and 2024.
- India became the first team to successfully defend the T20 World Cup title, winning back-to-back editions.
- India became the first team to win

ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP 2026

India defeated New Zealand in the Final to win the ICC T20 World Cup for the **third time**.

10th ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP - 2026

- Host Nations:** India & Sri Lanka
- Final Match:** India vs. New Zealand, Ahmedabad, India
- Champions:** India, Captain: Suryakumar Yadav
- Runner-up:** New Zealand, Captain: Mitchell Santner

OTHER IMPORTANT FACTS

- 1st ICC T20 World Cup - 2007**
Winner: India, Captain: Mahendra Singh Dhoni
- 9th ICC T20 World Cup - 2024**
Winner: India, Captain: Rohit Sharma
- Most Successful Teams (Titles)**
India - 3 Titles, England - 2 Titles

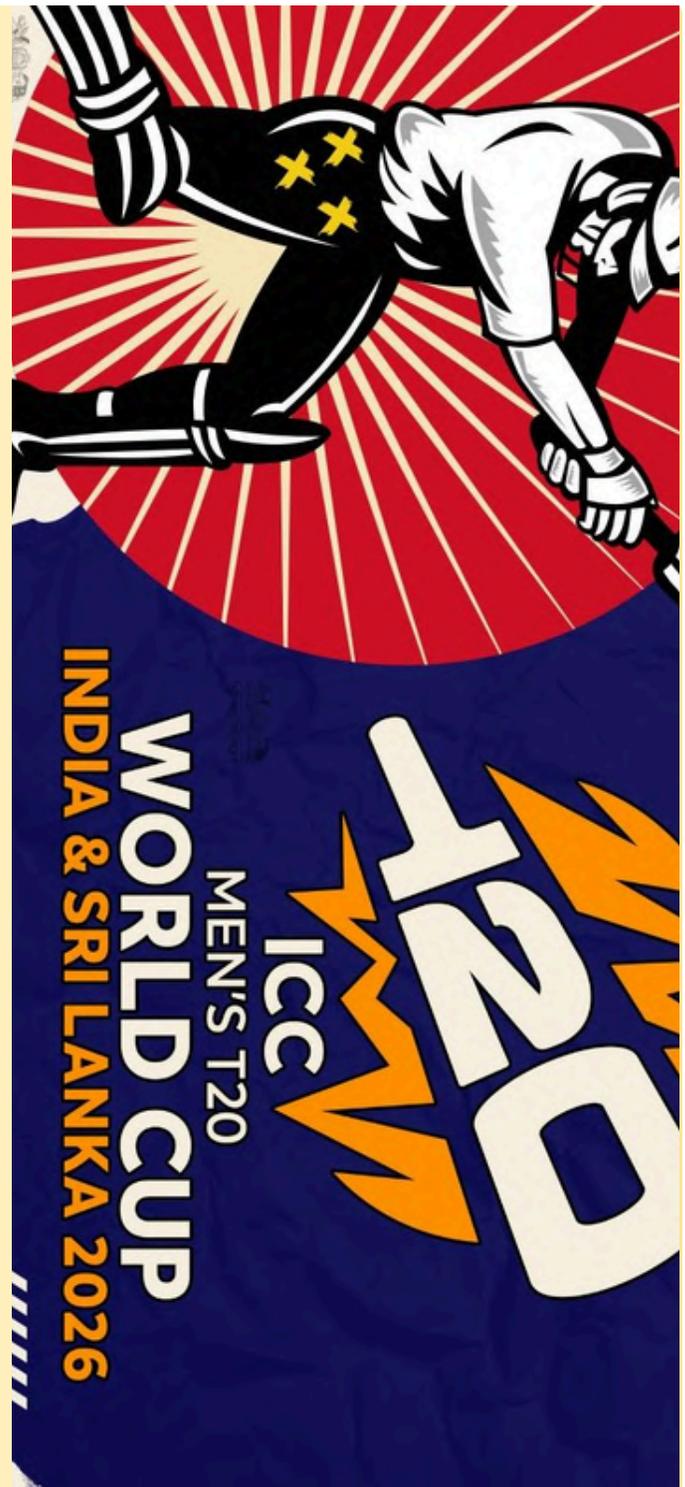
CHAMPIONS

ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD

- the Men's T20 World Cup on home soil.
- India hit a total of 106 sixes across the tournament, becoming the first team ever to cross the 100-six mark in a single T20I event.
- India recorded three totals exceeding 250 during the tournament: 256/4 against Zimbabwe (the highest team total of the tournament), 253/7 against England in the semi-final, and 255/5 against New Zealand in the final making them the first team to post two consecutive 250-plus scores.

Key Statistics and Awards

- **Most Runs:** Sahibzada Farhan (Pakistan) scored 383 runs, surpassing the previous record of 319 set by Virat Kohli in the 2014 edition; Tim Seifert (326) and Sanju Samson (321) also surpassed Kohli's tally during the same tournament.
- **Most Wickets:** Jasprit Bumrah and Varun Chakravarthy (both India) jointly held the record for most wickets in the tournament with 14 wickets each.
- **Highest Individual Score in a Final:** Sanju Samson, 89 runs against New Zealand.
- **Fastest Half-Century in a Knockout Match:** Abhishek Sharma reached his fifty in 18 balls in the final against New Zealand, the fastest in any T20 World Cup knockout game.
- **Most Sixes in a Single Edition:** Sanju Samson hit 24 sixes through the tournament.
- **Highest Average at a T20 World Cup:** Zimbabwe's Brian Bennett scored 292 runs at an average of 146.00, remaining not out in four of his six innings.
- **Highest Partnership for Any Wicket in T20Is:** Sahibzada Farhan and Fakhar Zaman put on a 176-run opening stand during Pakistan's Super Eight match against Sri Lanka.
- **Fastest Century in Men's T20 World Cup History:** New Zealand's Finn Allen scored an unbeaten century off just 33 balls, surpassing the previous record of a 47-ball century by Chris Gayle against England in 2016.
- **Highest Match Aggregate at a T20 World Cup:** India and England combined for 499 runs in the semi-final (India 253/7, England 246/7), also the second-highest match aggregate in all T20I history; the two teams also hit a combined 34 sixes in that match.
- **Joint-Highest Powerplay Score in a T20 World Cup:** India's 92/0 in the first six overs of the final equalled West Indies' 92/1 against Afghanistan in the 2024 edition.



International Cricket Council (ICC)

- The ICC is the global governing body for cricket, representing 108 member countries and headquartered in Dubai, United Arab Emirates; it is responsible for regulating, governing, and administering international cricket and growing the sport globally.
- The ICC originated as the Imperial Cricket Conference in 1909, initially comprising England, Australia, and South Africa; it has since expanded to its current membership of 108 nations.
- The West Indies and New Zealand joined as Test nations in 1928 and 1930 respectively, India in 1932, and Pakistan in 1952.
- Jay Shah is the current Chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC).
- ICC Team Rankings rate men's teams across Test, One-Day International (ODI), and T20I formats, and women's teams in ODI and T20I cricket, using a rating system developed by David Kendix; ratings are calculated by dividing total points by matches or series played, and are updated annually around May 1.
- As of March 2026, the Indian Men's Cricket Team holds the No. 1 ranking in both T20Is and ODIs, and is ranked No. 4 in Test cricket. The Indian Women's Cricket Team is ranked No. 3 globally in both the T20I and ODI formats.

About Cricket: A Brief Overview

- Cricket is a bat-and-ball sport contested between two teams of 11 players each, played on an oval field with a rectangular pitch of 22 yards (20.12 metres) in length at its centre; each team takes turns batting and bowling in innings, with the objective of scoring the most runs.
- The batting side defends two sets of three wooden stumps (wickets) topped by horizontal bails at each end of the pitch; a bowler delivers six balls per over from one end, with different bowlers alternating ends.
- A ball hit to the boundary scores four runs if it reaches the boundary along the ground, and six runs if it clears the boundary without touching the ground (a six); a batsman can be dismissed in several ways, including being bowled, caught, run out, or leg before wicket (LBW).
- Cricket is believed to have originated as early as the 13th century in England, possibly as a game in which country boys bowled at a tree stump or a hurdle gate; the first recorded 11-a-side match dates from 1697, and the earliest known code of laws is dated 1744.
- The **Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC)**, formed from a club that played at White Conduit Fields and relocated to Lord's Cricket Ground in St. John's Wood in 1814, became the historic headquarters of world cricket and published the first revised code of laws in 1788.
- Modern formats of cricket range from five-day Test matches to 50-over ODIs and the shortest format, T20Is, in which each side faces a maximum of 20 overs.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following teams won the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026?
 - (a) England
 - (b) Australia
 - (c) New Zealand
 - (d) India
2. Where was the final match of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 played?
 - (a) Narendra Modi Stadium
 - (b) Wankhede Stadium
 - (c) Eden Gardens
 - (d) Arun Jaitley Stadium
3. Who captained the Indian team during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 final?
 - (a) Rohit Sharma
 - (b) Hardik Pandya
 - (c) Suryakumar Yadav
 - (d) Virat Kohli
4. Who led the New Zealand team in the final of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026?
 - (a) Kane Williamson
 - (b) Mitchell Santner
 - (c) Tim Southee
 - (d) Finn Allen
5. Who was awarded Player of the Match in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 final?
 - (a) Sanju Samson
 - (b) Varun Chakravarthi
 - (c) Suryakumar Yadav
 - (d) Jasprit Bumrah
6. Which of the following Indian cricketers was named Player of the Tournament in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026?
 - (a) Abhishek Sharma
 - (b) Sanju Samson
 - (c) Hardik Pandya
 - (d) KL Rahul
7. Which of the following Pakistani players scored the highest number of runs in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026?
 - (a) Babar Azam
 - (b) Fakhar Zaman
 - (c) Sahibzada Farhan
 - (d) Mohammad Rizwan
8. Which of the following is one of the two Indian bowlers who jointly took the highest number of wickets in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026?
 - (a) Mohammed Siraj
 - (b) Jasprit Bumrah
 - (c) Kuldeep Yadav
 - (d) Arshdeep Singh
9. Which of the following batsmen recorded the highest individual score in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 final?
 - (a) Finn Allen
 - (b) Sanju Samson
 - (c) Abhishek Sharma
 - (d) Tim Seifert
10. Which of the following players scored the fastest century in the history of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup?
 - (a) Chris Gayle
 - (b) Tim Seifert
 - (c) Adam Gilchrist
 - (d) Finn Allen
11. Which of the following organisations is the global governing body responsible for administering international cricket?
 - (a) BCCI
 - (b) MCC
 - (c) ECB
 - (d) ICC
12. Where is the headquarters of the International Cricket Council located?
 - (a) London
 - (b) Mumbai
 - (c) Dubai
 - (d) Melbourne
13. Which of the following organisations functions as the national governing body for cricket in India?
 - (a) BCCI
 - (b) ICC
 - (c) MCC
 - (d) ACC

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

14. Which of the following countries will co-host the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2028 alongside Australia?

- (a) England
- (b) India
- (c) New Zealand
- (d) South Africa

15. Which of the following institutions historically became the headquarters of world cricket and published the early laws of the game?

- (a) International Cricket Council
- (b) England and Wales Cricket Board
- (c) Board of Control Cricket India
- (d) Marylebone Cricket Club London

SOLUTIONS

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

5 India Submits 7th National Report to the CBD

IN FOCUS

- India submitted its 7th National Report to the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**, providing a comprehensive assessment of the country's progress toward 23 national biodiversity targets (NBTs) and 142 indicators aligned with the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF)**.
- The report is India's first full progress assessment since the adoption of the KMGBF in December 2022, serving as a critical review of the nation's commitment to halting biodiversity loss by 2030.
- Of the 23 national biodiversity targets, only two NBT1 (biodiversity-inclusive land and sea-use planning) and NBT2 (ecosystem restoration) are clearly identified as being on track; for the remaining 21, the report outlines ongoing policies and programmes but lacks clear quantitative projections for achieving them by 2030.

The Convention on Biological Diversity

- The CBD is a landmark international treaty that originated from the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and provides the primary global framework for conserving and sustainably using biological resources; it entered into force in 1993 as a legally binding treaty.
- The CBD is founded on three core, interconnected objectives: conservation of biological diversity; sustainable use of its components; and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources.
- The Convention covers biodiversity at all levels genetic diversity within species, diversity between species, and diversity of ecosystems and applies to terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems.
- All parties to the CBD are required to submit periodic national reports detailing actions taken, progress achieved, and challenges encountered in fulfilling their biodiversity commitments.



- Two key supplementary protocols strengthen the CBD's implementation:
 - The **Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (2000)** focuses on the safe handling, transport, and use of Living Modified Organisms (LMOs) resulting from modern biotechnology.
 - The **Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing (2010)** provides a legal framework for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the utilization of genetic resources, directly operationalizing the CBD's third objective.

IMPORTANT CONFERENCES OF THE PARTIES (COPS) TO THE CBD

- **COP 1 (1994) Nassau, Bahamas:** The first Conference of the Parties to the CBD was held; an Extraordinary Meeting of the COP (EXCOP 1) subsequently adopted the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in 2000.
- **COP 5 (2000) Nairobi, Kenya:** The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted May 22 as the International Day for Biological Diversity.
- **COP 6 (2002) The Hague, Netherlands:** Adopted the Global Taxonomy Initiative and the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation.
- **COP 8 (2006) Curitiba, Brazil:** Released the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO) Report 2; GBO 1 had been published in 2001.
- **COP 10 (2010) Nagoya, Japan:** Adopted the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing and released the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 along with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and GBO 3.
- **COP 11 (2012) Hyderabad, India.**
- **COP 14 (2018) Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt.**
- **COP 15 (2021–22) Phase I: Kunming, China; Phase II: Montreal, Canada:** Proposed the Kunming Biodiversity Fund; adopted the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (the KMGBF); and established the 30x30 Target to restore 30% of ecosystems, lands, oceans, and coasts by 2030.
- **COP 16 (2024) Cali, Colombia:** Key outcomes included:
 - Establishment of the **Cali Fund** for sharing benefits from Digital Genetic Information.
 - Resource mobilization commitment to secure USD 200 billion annually for biodiversity by 2030.
 - Proposed guidelines for the management of Invasive Alien Species.
 - A Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health to curb zoonotic diseases, prevent non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and advance the One Health approach.
 - Evolution of processes for identifying and conserving Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas.
 - Proposed establishment of a permanent subsidiary body for preserving the knowledge of indigenous peoples.
 - Promotion of research innovations and knowledge-sharing on Synthetic Biology.
 - Submission of National Biodiversity Targets by 119 countries, including India.

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

- The KMGBF is a landmark international agreement adopted at COP15 to the CBD in December 2022; its overarching goal is to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and achieve a state of living in harmony with nature by 2050; it replaces the earlier Aichi Biodiversity Targets (2011–2020).
- The framework is structured around four long-term goals for 2050 (a shared vision for living in harmony with nature) and 23 action-oriented global targets for 2030, covering ecosystem conservation, sustainable use, and benefit-sharing from genetic resources.
- **Target 3 the "30x30" Goal:** Aims to ensure that at least 30% of the world's terrestrial, inland water, coastal, and marine areas are effectively conserved and managed through protected areas and Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) by 2030, a significant increase from the current global coverage of approximately 16%.

- All parties to the CBD, including India, are required to align their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) with the KMGBF, set corresponding national targets, and establish robust monitoring systems to track progress.

Preparation and Scope of India's 7th National Report

- The report was prepared by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), which coordinated inputs from 33 central ministries and government departments; technical coordination was supported by the **National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)** with assistance from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) under the Global Environment Facility's GEF-8 Umbrella Programme; the Wildlife Institute of India was also involved in tracking progress on selected targets.
- A digital NR7 data portal was developed to compile information across 142 national indicators used for target assessment; stakeholder consultations were conducted throughout 2025, followed by expert reviews and validation workshops continuing into early 2026.
- India is one of the world's megadiverse countries, with ecosystems ranging from Himalayan mountains to coastal mangroves and tropical forests, making its biodiversity performance significantly consequential for global outcomes.
- India updated its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan to fully align with the KMGBF, incorporating 23 national biodiversity targets and 142 indicators into a national biodiversity monitoring system.
- The consultative process included indigenous communities, women's groups, youth representatives, local governments, non-governmental organisations, and private sector actors.

Target-wise Assessment: Targets On Track

- **NBT1 Biodiversity-Inclusive Land and Sea-Use Planning:** India's forest and tree cover stands at 827,357 square kilometres (sq km), representing 25.17% of the country's geographical area; between 2021 and 2023, forest and tree cover increased by 1,445.81 sq km; wetland inventories have been completed nationwide, Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plans are being implemented in coastal states, eco-sensitive zones have been notified around most protected areas, and environmental approvals have been streamlined through the digital clearance platform PARIVESH 2.0.
- **NBT2 Ecosystem Restoration:** India has pledged to restore 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030 under the **Bonn Challenge**; the report states that 24.1 million hectares have already been restored or placed under restoration; India's forest carbon stock has increased to 7,285.5 million tonnes, representing a rise of approximately 81.5 million tonnes over the previous assessment; mangrove cover has grown modestly and the area under bamboo has expanded by 1,540 sq km; marine protected areas have also increased, and the government is now identifying OECMs beyond the formal protected area network.

Target-wise Assessment: Areas of Concern

- **NBT3 Conservation Coverage (30x30 Goal):** Only slightly over 5% of India's geographical area is currently designated as formal protected areas, far short of the 30% global target; the report does not provide a clear projection as to whether India will reach the 30% conservation coverage threshold by 2030, indicating that a significant expansion of protected or conserved areas may still be required.
- **NBT4 Species Recovery:** Conservation successes are documented for flagship species India's tiger population stands at 3,167, Asiatic lion numbers have increased, one-horned rhinoceros populations are stable or growing, the country has conducted its first national snow leopard assessment, and conservation breeding programmes for vultures are ongoing however, the report provides limited data on lesser-known species and other taxa, making it difficult to assess broader biodiversity trends.
- **Agriculture and Production Landscapes:** Trees outside forests (TOF) constitute a significant share of India's total tree cover; agroforestry occupies approximately 8.65% of the country's geographical area, reflecting growing integration of biodiversity into agricultural systems; however, the report provides

- limited quantitative analysis on pesticide reduction, nutrient runoff, and invasive species control all of which are major drivers of biodiversity loss in agricultural ecosystems.

Structural Challenges and Limitations

- **Land Degradation:** Despite restoration activities, approximately 29.77% of India's geographical area roughly 97 million hectares continues to undergo degradation, suggesting that new degradation may be occurring simultaneously with restoration efforts; differing methodologies for measuring degraded land further complicate assessment of the true scale of progress.
- **Data Gaps and Monitoring Inconsistencies:** Biodiversity data remains scattered across multiple government departments with no uniform measurement protocols for several newer indicators; data is collected at different time intervals by different ministries, and rapid improvements in satellite technology can make cross-year comparisons difficult, affecting the consistency and long-term comparability of datasets.
- **Financial and Technical Capacity:** The report identifies limited financial resources and technical capacity as structural obstacles to achieving biodiversity commitments; the growing impacts of climate change including increasing floods, droughts, and forest fires are placing additional pressure on ecosystems across the country.
- **Invasive Species and Pollution:** The report highlights ongoing efforts in invasive species control and pollution reduction but offers limited quantitative evidence that these targets are currently on track for 2030 achievement.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following international agreements serves as the principal global legal framework for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use?
 - (a) Convention on Biological Diversity
 - (b) Convention on Global Biological Diversity
 - (c) Convention on International Biodiversity
 - (d) Convention on Worldwide Biodiversity

2. Which of the following protocols under the biodiversity convention provides a legal structure for equitable sharing of gains arising from the use of genetic material?
 - (a) Cartagena Protocol
 - (b) Kyoto Protocol
 - (c) Nagoya Protocol
 - (d) Montreal Protocol

3. What was the total number of national biodiversity targets assessed in India's seventh submission under the global biodiversity process?
 - (a) 20
 - (b) 23
 - (c) 30
 - (d) 142

4. Which of the following targets was identified as being clearly on course in India's biodiversity progress assessment?
 - (a) Species recovery
 - (b) Pollution reduction
 - (c) Conservation expansion
 - (d) Ecosystem restoration

5. Which of the following conferences of the parties adopted the access-and-benefit framework associated with genetic resources?
 - (a) COP 6
 - (b) COP 10
 - (c) COP 14
 - (d) COP 16

6. Which of the following meetings adopted the post-2020 global biodiversity framework that guides present international action?
 - (a) COP 11
 - (b) COP 14
 - (c) COP 15
 - (d) COP 16

7. In which of the following year the new global biodiversity framework seeks to halt and reverse biodiversity loss?
 - (a) 2025
 - (b) 2030
 - (c) 2040
 - (d) 2050

8. Which of the following ministries prepared India's seventh national biodiversity progress report?
 - (a) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate
 - (b) Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare
 - (c) Ministry of Earth Sciences and Climate Change
 - (d) Ministry of Rural Development and Farmers Welfare

9. Which of the following digital platforms was highlighted for streamlining environmental approval processes in India?
 - (a) e-Samiksha
 - (b) Bharat Maps
 - (c) Green India Portal
 - (d) PARIVESH 2.0

10. Which of the following organisations provided technical assistance in the preparation of India's biodiversity progress report under the GEF-8 Umbrella Programme?
 - (a) United Nations Environment Programme
 - (b) United Nations Development Programme
 - (c) United Nations Human Rights Programme
 - (d) United Nations Population Fund Programme

11. Which of the following priority areas was highlighted as a concern due to the limited proportion of India's land under officially protected ecological spaces?
 - (a) Restoration of degraded ecosystems
 - (b) Survey of all the existing wetlands
 - (c) Conservation coverage expansion
 - (d) Planning sustainable land systems

12. Which international initiative is associated with India's commitment to restore 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030?
 - (a) Global Wetland Alliance Plan
 - (b) Global Forest Recovery Pact
 - (c) International Land Renewal Pact

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

(d) Bonn Challenge restoration plan

13. Which of the following landscape categories was identified as having limited quantitative evaluation related to pesticide reduction and runoff impacts?

- (a) Marine and coastal fishing zones
- (b) National parks and forest reserves
- (c) Agriculture and production landscapes
- (d) Fragile mountain ecological regions

14. Which of the following core objectives of the biodiversity convention concerns justice in sharing gains from biological resources?

- (a) Fair and equitable sharing of benefits
- (b) Equal and reasonable sharing of benefits
- (c) Just and equitable sharing of benefits
- (d) Balanced and equitable sharing benefits

SOLUTIONS

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

6 India's GDP Base Year Revised to 2022–23

IN FOCUS

- The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation** (MoSPI) released a new series of Annual and Quarterly National Accounts Estimates on February 27, 2026, replacing the earlier series that had used the financial year 2011–12 as its base year.
- The new series adopts 2022–23 as the **base year** selected as a stable, post-COVID reference year and encompasses revised estimates for financial years 2022–23, 2023–24, and 2024–25, along with a Second Advance Estimate for 2025–26.
- Real **Gross Domestic Product** (GDP) for financial year 2025–26 is projected at ₹322.58 lakh crore, with a growth rate of 7.6%, while Nominal GDP is estimated at ₹345.47 lakh crore, registering a growth rate of 8.6%.
- The revision incorporates structural upgrades including double deflation methodology, integration of the Supply Use Table (SUT) framework, new high-frequency data sources such as Goods and Services Tax (GST) data and Public Financial Management System (PFMS) records, and annual survey-based estimation for the household sector.

Revising India's National Accounts Base Year



What's Changing?

GDP
New Base Year
2022–23

CPI
New Base Year
2024

IIP
New Base Year
2022–23

Why Rebasing?



Economic Change
New sectors &
consumption patterns



Global Standards
Align with UN
Best Practices



Better Data
GST, PFMS, e-Vahan,
HCES

Source: Ministry of Statistics & Planning Implementation (MoSPI), Government of India

Rationale for Revision

- Base year revision in national accounts is undertaken periodically in accordance with international best practices and differs fundamentally from regular annual revisions, which only update data without altering the conceptual framework or introducing new data sources.
- Since India's first national income estimates were published in 1956 with FY 1948–49 as the base year, the country has revised its base year seven times, with the most recent prior revision shifting the reference from FY 2004–05 to FY 2011–12.
- Base year revisions are undertaken to capture structural changes in the economy, incorporate the latest data sources, improve estimation methodologies, and enhance coverage and accuracy of national accounts.
- The United Nations **System of National Accounts** (SNA) guidelines recommend that countries revise their base year every five to ten years to keep national accounts aligned with the latest available data and current economic realities.
- India compiles its GDP in line with SNA 2008 and plans to align with SNA 2025 in the subsequent base year revision; as a subscriber to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS), India's revised series remains internationally consistent.
- The **Advisory Committee on National Accounts Statistics** (ACNAS), a permanent standing committee under MoSPI currently headed by Prof. Biswanath Goldar, recommended the revision of the base year from 2011–12 to 2022–23.

Selection of 2022–23 as the Reference Year

- Financial year 2022–23 was selected as the new base year because it represents the most recent normal year following the economic disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic, and benefits from the availability of robust and comprehensive data across all sectors of the economy.
- The years 2019–20 and 2020–21 were heavily distorted by lockdowns, supply-chain disruptions, and abnormal patterns of consumption and production, making them unsuitable as reference benchmarks.
- Over the decade since 2011–12, India's economy underwent significant structural shifts including rapid expansion of renewable energy, growth of digital and platform-based services, a larger gig economy, and evolving consumption and investment patterns which the old base year could no longer accurately reflect.
- The base year serves as the reference point not only for GDP but also for related macro-economic indicators such as the Consumer Price Index (CPI), Wholesale Price Index (WPI)/Producer Price Index (PPI), and Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

India's New Economic Benchmark: GDP Rebase 2022-23

OLD BASE YEAR 2011-12 | NEW BASE YEAR 2022-23 (POST-COVID BENCHMARK)

MORE ACCURATE, HIGH-FIDELITY PICTURE OF INDIA'S CURRENT ECONOMIC TRAJECTORY

- REAL GDP GROWTH PROJECTED AT 7.6%**
In FY 2025-26 Real GDP estimated to reach ₹322.58 lakh crore.
- INTEGRATION OF REAL-TIME DIGITAL DATA**
New series incorporates GST, MCA, and E-vahan data for enhanced precision.
- ADOPTION OF DOUBLE DEFLATION METHODOLOGY**
Applied to the manufacturing sector to better capture value added and improve accuracy.
- NEW BASE YEAR 2022-23 ADOPTED**
Replaces the outdated 2011-12 series to provide a "normal" post-COVID benchmark.

[/MIB_India](#)
[/MIB_Hindi](#)
[/inbministry](#)
[/inbministry](#)
[/mib_india](#)
[/mib_india](#)
[/MIB_India](#)

Institutional and Advisory Framework

- MoSPI associates technical experts and representatives of central ministries and State/Union Territory Directorates of Economics and Statistics (DES) in compiling National Accounts Statistics (NAS) through the ACNAS. Five sub-committees with two-year terms were constituted under ACNAS to deliberate on specific aspects of the base year revision simultaneously.
- The Sub-committee for Incorporation of New Data Sources, Rates and Ratios; the Sub-committee for Methodological Improvement; and the Sub-committee for Constant Price Estimates have completed their work, with reports available on the MoSPI website. The Sub-committee on Regional Accounts and the Sub-committee for SNA 2025 Update are yet to release their reports.
- MoSPI released three discussion papers covering the Production Approach, the Expenditure Approach, and Quarterly GDP and Sub-national Accounts, documenting the methodological improvements in the new series.

Key Methodological Improvements in the New Series

- The new series discontinues single deflation entirely and adopts **double deflation** separately adjusting output and input prices for the manufacturing and agriculture sectors, while applying single extrapolation for all other sectors, with deflators applied at a more granular level using over 260 item-level CPI indices.
- The **Supply Use Table (SUT)** framework has been integrated with the National Accounts Framework following SNA 2008 guidelines; by ensuring that total supply matches total demand for each product, this integration minimises the statistical discrepancy between GDP estimates derived through the production and expenditure approaches.
- The Benchmark-Indicator methodology is used for compiling Second Advance Estimates of Annual GDP and Quarterly GDP estimates, following the IMF's Quarterly National Accounts Manual 2017 with annual GDP estimates serving as benchmarks and high-frequency quarterly indicators used for extrapolation.
- The Proportional Denton methodology replaces the earlier Pro-Rata method for benchmarking in both the production-side quarterly estimates and the expenditure-side components, including Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE).
- For the household sector, level estimates are now compiled through regular annual surveys the **Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE)** and the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) replacing the earlier approach based on proxy indicators and inter-survey growth rates.
- The estimation of PFCE is strengthened through a mixed approach combining the Household Consumer Expenditure Survey (HCES), direct production-based estimation, and the commodity flow method, while adopting the updated Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose (COICOP) 2018 standard.
- Multi-activity private corporations now have their total value added distributed across different activities using corporate filings that report activity-wise share in turnover, replacing the earlier practice of allocating all value added to the primary activity.
- The Gross Domestic Product State (GSDP) estimation framework is also strengthened under the new series, with states shifting toward greater direct estimation, reduced reliance on fixed ratios and proxies, and better use of state-level administrative data.

Incorporation of New Data Sources

- **GST data** is used extensively across manufacturing and services sectors, including state-level allocation and quarterly estimates, replacing or augmenting earlier indicator-based approaches.
- PFMS data is used to compile and distribute central government accounts across states, enabling the use of actual expenditure figures at the First Revised Estimates stage instead of Revised Estimates.
- Vehicle registration data from the e-Vahan portal and Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is used to estimate PFCE on road transport services.

- Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) data, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) records, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) datasets, and State/UT DES data have been incorporated for more comprehensive and granular estimates.
- Updated sector-specific studies and surveys including revised rates and ratios from the National Sample Survey on Construction and updated state-wise input rates for forestry have been used to replace earlier proxy-based estimates.
- Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) final results for 2023–24, and ASUSE and PLFS annual results, are used in lieu of provisional estimates based on limited or indicator-driven data for manufacturing, electricity, trade, transport, real estate, and other services sectors.

Quantitative Estimates Under the New Series

Annual GDP Estimates (FY 2025–26 – Second Advance Estimates)

- Real GDP for FY 2025–26 is estimated at ₹322.58 lakh crore, against the First Revised Estimate of ₹299.89 lakh crore for FY 2024–25, reflecting a growth rate of 7.6% compared to 7.1% in FY 2024–25.
- Nominal GDP for FY 2025–26 is estimated at ₹345.47 lakh crore against ₹318.07 lakh crore in FY 2024–25, showing a growth rate of 8.6%.
- Real **Gross Value Added (GVA)** for FY 2025–26 is estimated at ₹294.40 lakh crore against ₹273.36 lakh crore in FY 2024–25, with a growth rate of 7.7% compared to 7.3% in FY 2024–25.
- Nominal GVA for FY 2025–26 is estimated at ₹313.61 lakh crore against ₹288.54 lakh crore in FY 2024–25, registering a growth rate of 8.7%.

Quarterly GDP Estimates (Q3 FY 2025–26: October–December)

- Real GDP in Q3 of FY 2025–26 is estimated at ₹84.54 lakh crore against ₹78.41 lakh crore in Q3 of FY 2024–25, showing a year-on-year growth rate of 7.8%.
- Nominal GDP in Q3 of FY 2025–26 is estimated at ₹90.91 lakh crore against ₹83.46 lakh crore in Q3 of FY 2024–25, registering a growth rate of 8.9%.
- Real GVA in Q3 of FY 2025–26 is estimated at ₹77.38 lakh crore against ₹71.77 lakh crore in Q3 of FY 2024–25, showing a growth rate of 7.8%, while Nominal GVA stood at ₹82.58 lakh crore against ₹76.35 lakh crore, registering a growth of 8.2%.

Revised Annual Estimates (FY 2022–23 to 2024–25)

- GDP for the base year 2022–23 is estimated at ₹261.18 lakh crore; Real GDP for FY 2023–24 and FY 2024–25 stands at ₹280.01 lakh crore and ₹299.89 lakh crore, reflecting growth rates of 7.2% and 7.1% respectively.
- Nominal GDP for FY 2023–24 and FY 2024–25 stands at ₹289.84 lakh crore and ₹318.07 lakh crore, registering growth rates of 11.0% and 9.7% respectively.
- The growth rates of the Primary sector (Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, and Mining & Quarrying), Secondary sector (Manufacturing, Electricity, Gas, Water Supply & Other Utility Services, and Construction), and Tertiary sector (Services) in FY 2024–25 are estimated at 4.9%, 8.0%, and 7.9% respectively, compared to 2.6%, 11.6%, and 7.3% respectively in FY 2023–24.

Income, Saving, and Consumption Aggregates (FY 2024–25)

- Net National Income (NNI) at current prices for FY 2024–25 stands at ₹271.44 lakh crore against ₹246.25 lakh crore in FY 2023–24, showing a growth of 10.2% compared to 11.6% in FY 2023–24.
- Gross National Disposable Income (GNDI) at current prices is estimated at ₹324.52 lakh crore for FY 2024–25 against ₹294.55 lakh crore in FY 2023–24, reflecting a growth of 10.2%.
- Gross Saving during FY 2024–25 is estimated at ₹111.13 lakh crore against ₹95.17 lakh crore in FY 2023–24; the **household sector accounts for 62.1% of total gross saving**, while non-financial corporations account for 28.9%.

- **Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF)** constitutes the largest component of GCF and also encompasses Change in Stocks (Inventories) and Net Acquisition of Valuables; GFCF has grown at a compounded annual growth rate of 10% from FY 2014–15 to FY 2023–24, though growth moderated to 9% in FY 2023–24 from 20% in FY 2022–23.
- PFCE at current prices for FY 2024–25 is estimated at ₹179.71 lakh crore against ₹163.77 lakh crore in FY 2023–24; the PFCE-to-GDP ratio at current prices is 56.5% for both years.
- Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GFCE) at current prices is estimated at ₹33.95 lakh crore for FY 2024–25 against ₹30.74 lakh crore in FY 2023–24.
- Per Capita Net National Income at current prices for FY 2022–23, FY 2023–24, and FY 2024–25 is estimated at ₹1,59,557, ₹1,76,465, and ₹1,92,774 respectively; Per Capita PFCE at current prices for the same years stands at ₹1,07,910, ₹1,17,356, and ₹1,27,627 respectively.

Key Economic Concepts in National Accounting

- GDP is defined as the total monetary value of all final goods and services produced within a country's physical borders in a given accounting period, calculated through three approaches: the production (or output) approach, the expenditure approach, and the income approach.
- Nominal GDP, or GDP at current prices, reflects the value of output using prevailing market prices and is used for comparing output across different quarters within the same year; Real GDP, or GDP at constant prices, is inflation-adjusted and provides a more accurate measure of actual economic growth across years.
- The GDP Price Deflator is derived as Nominal GDP divided by Real GDP, multiplied by 100; it measures the level of prices of all goods and services included in GDP and is used to convert nominal values to real values.
- Gross National Income (GNI) equals GDP plus net primary income from the rest of the world comprising compensation of employees and property and entrepreneurial income and measures the overall income earned by a country's residents both domestically and abroad.
- Net Domestic Product (NDP) and Net National Product (NNP) are derived by subtracting the depreciation (Consumption of Fixed Capital) from GDP and GNP respectively; Net National Income (NNI) is equivalent to NNP at factor cost.
- GVA at basic prices using the production approach equals output at basic price minus intermediate consumption; using the income approach, it equals the sum of Compensation of Employees (CE), Operating Surplus/Mixed Income (OS/MI), Consumption of Fixed Capital (CFC), and production taxes less production subsidies.
- GDP equals the sum of GVA at basic prices across all sectors plus product taxes less product subsidies; India measures GDP at market price (MP), which equals GVA at MP, while GDP at factor cost (FC) equals GDP at MP plus subsidies minus indirect taxes.
- The base year in national accounting is the reference year whose prices are used to calculate real GDP growth over time, and serves as the benchmark against which economic performance in other years is measured.
- Rebasing is the process of updating the base year to reflect the current structure of the economy using improved data, with the new base year becoming the reference point for estimating GDP and related indicators such as CPI, WPI/PPI, and IIP.
- GSDP is the value of all goods and services produced within the boundaries of a state or union territory during a year; the National Statistical Office (NSO) under MoSPI issues guidelines and provides technical support for GSDP estimation, while State and UT Directorates of Economics and Statistics compile GSDP using state-level data.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which of the following years has been adopted as the new reference year for India's revised national income estimation series released in 2026?
 - Financial year 2015–16
 - Financial year 2017–18
 - Financial year 2020–21
 - Financial year 2022–23
- Which of the following institutions released the revised national accounts estimates and the updated macroeconomic statistical series in February 2026?
 - Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation
 - National Statistical Commission of India
 - Reserve Bank of India statistical division
 - Department of Economic Affairs division
- The GDP Price Deflator is calculated by:
 - Real GDP : Nominal GDP \times 100
 - Nominal GDP : Real GDP \times 100
 - GVA : GDP \times 100
 - GDP : Population \times 100
- Which of the following individuals currently heads the advisory committee that recommended revising the reference year for India's national income estimation?
 - Prof. Raghuram Rajan
 - Prof. Biswanath Goldar
 - Prof. Abhijit Banerjee
 - Prof. Kaushik Basu
- Which of the following international statistical frameworks provides the global guideline used by India for compiling national income statistics?
 - System of National Accounts
 - Balance of Payments Manual
 - International Financial Reporting
 - Basel Banking Supervision Manual
- Which of the following statistical techniques replaces the earlier benchmarking procedure for compiling quarterly economic estimates?
 - Chain linking distribution method
 - Proportional Denton benchmarking method
 - Ratio extrapolation adjustment method
 - Paasche index linking procedure
- Which of the following economic sectors newly applies separate adjustment of input and output prices under the revised estimation framework?
 - Financial services and trade sectors
 - Construction and infrastructure sectors
 - Tourism and hospitality sectors
 - Agriculture and manufacturing sectors
- Which of the following analytical frameworks was integrated with the national accounting system to balance supply and demand across products?
 - Industrial classification balance matrix
 - National income multiplier framework
 - Supply Use Table analytical framework
 - Fiscal expenditure distribution system
- Which of the following administrative datasets has been incorporated extensively to improve sector-wise measurement of economic activity?
 - National health survey database
 - Agricultural census dataset
 - Labour employment registry data
 - Goods and Services Tax records
- Which of the following digital financial platforms provides government expenditure data used in the revised statistical estimation framework?
 - Government e-Marketplace procurement system
 - Public Financial Management System
 - Digital India service delivery portal
 - National e-Governance infrastructure system
- Which of the following surveys is now used to compile regular estimates of economic activity among unincorporated enterprises?
 - Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises
 - National Family Health Survey database
 - Agricultural Input Survey programme
 - Livestock Census statistical exercise
- Which of the following global institutions recommends periodic updating of benchmark years for national income estimation?
 - World Bank development institution
 - International Labour Organization agency
 - United Nations System of National Accounts
 - World Trade Organization body

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

13. Which of the following macroeconomic indicators represents the total value of goods and services produced within a country's borders?

- (a) Gross national disposable income
- (b) Balance of payments indicator
- (c) Net national savings measure
- (d) Gross domestic product

14. Which of the following indicators measures inflation-adjusted economic output used for comparing growth across different years?

- (a) Real gross domestic product
- (b) Nominal national income index

- (c) Wholesale price indicator
- (d) Producer cost benchmark

15. Which of the following sectors accounts for the largest share of total national savings according to the recent macroeconomic estimates?

- (a) Household saving sector
- (b) Non-financial corporate sector
- (c) Government saving sector
- (d) External financial sector

SOLUTIONS

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

7 World Obesity Atlas 2026

IN FOCUS

- The **World Obesity Federation** released the World Obesity Atlas 2026 on World Obesity Day (March 4, 2026), presenting comprehensive global, regional, and national estimates of children living with overweight and obesity, along with projections extending to 2040.
- India ranked second only to China in the number of children with high Body Mass Index (BMI) recording 41 million children with high BMI and 14 million with obesity making it one of three countries alongside China and the United States with over 10 million children living with obesity.
- Nearly 15 million children aged five to nine years and over 26 million children aged 10 to 19 years in India were overweight or obese in 2025, with disease indicators linked to high BMI projected to rise substantially through 2040.
- The Federation warned that the world is set to miss the 2025 global target to halve the rise in **childhood obesity**, with the deadline now extended to 2030, and most countries including India remaining off track.



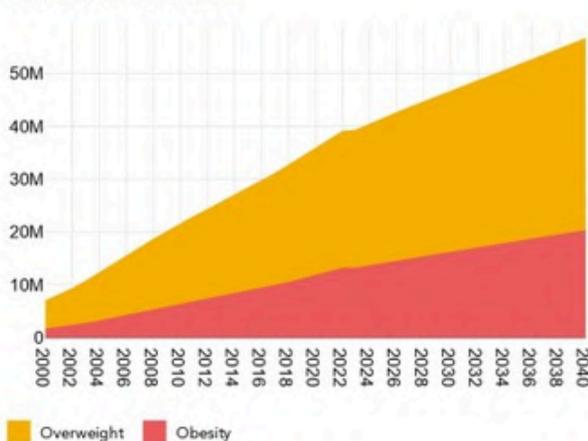
India

14.921m

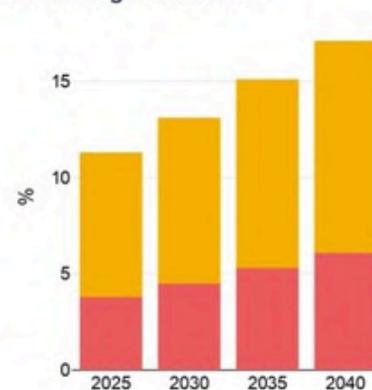
Children 5-9 years with overweight or obesity in 2025

Children 5-19 years with overweight or obesity

Numbers of children



Percentage of children



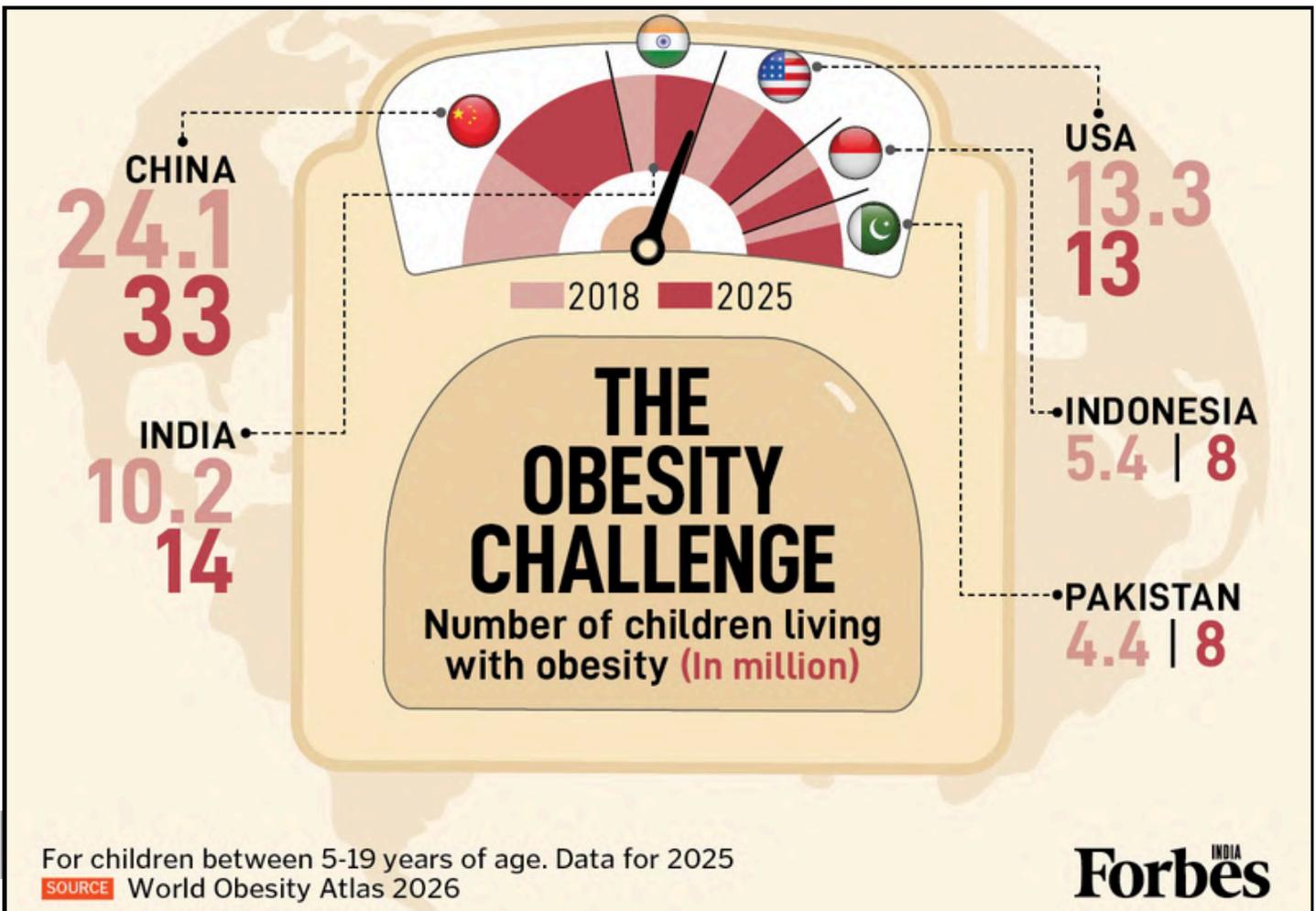
26.402m

Children 10-19 years with overweight or obesity in 2025

World Obesity Atlas 2026

- The World Obesity Atlas 2026 is **published by the World Obesity Federation**, a global organisation focused on obesity, and presents new global, regional, and national estimates of children living with overweight and obesity along with projections to 2040.

- For the first time in recorded history, more children globally are living with obesity than with underweight a milestone reflecting a fundamental shift in the global burden of malnutrition.
- The prevalence of obesity among school-age children increased from 4% in 1975 to nearly 20% in 2022, with the fastest increases recorded in low- and middle-income countries where the majority of the world's children reside.
- The Atlas includes updated figures on the number of children already exhibiting early signs of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and liver disease as a result of excess weight, along with national scorecards for 196 countries to inform local advocacy and action.
- The Atlas assesses national performance across seven indicators measuring children's exposure to obesity risk factors and evaluates country performance on seven key policies designed to protect children from obesity.



Global Scale and Distribution of Childhood Obesity

- More than one in five children specifically 20.7% of those aged five to 19 worldwide are living with overweight or obesity in 2025, an increase from 14.6% in 2010; the Federation projects this will rise to 507 million affected children by 2040.
- Over 200 million school-age children aged five to 19 living with overweight and obesity are concentrated in just 10 countries across the world; by the end of 2025, eight countries were projected to have more than 10 million children with high BMI.
- China leads globally with 62 million children with high BMI and 33 million with obesity; India follows with

- 41 million high BMI and 14 million with obesity; the United States recorded 27 million children with high BMI and 13 million with obesity.
- By 2040, it is estimated that more than 57 million children globally will show early signs of cardiovascular disease through high triglycerides, while over 43 million will show signs of hypertension as a direct consequence of excess weight.

India-Specific Findings

- Nearly 15 million children aged five to nine years and more than 26 million children aged 10 to 19 years in India were overweight or obese in 2025, positioning India second globally in the number of children with high BMI at 41 million. Among women aged 15 to 49 in India, 13.4% have high BMI and 4.2% live with Type 2 diabetes, indicating that excess weight is a concern across age groups and not limited to children.
- A total of 74% of adolescents aged 11 to 17 in India failed to meet recommended physical activity levels, representing one of the most significant preventable risk factors for childhood obesity in the country.
- Only 35.5% of school-age children at the primary and secondary level receive school meals, while 32.6% of infants aged one to five months experience sub-optimal breastfeeding both of which are identified as contributing risk factors. Children aged six to 10 years in India consumed sugary drinks averaging up to 50 ml per day, adding to the dietary risk factors driving excess weight gain in this age group.

Understanding BMI and Its Classifications

- The World Health Organization (WHO) defines obesity as abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that poses health risks; BMI is a screening tool that estimates body fat based on height and weight using the formula: weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in metres ($BMI = \text{weight (kg)} : [\text{height (m)}]^2$).
- Under WHO's adult BMI classifications (applicable to those aged 20 years and above), a BMI below 18.5 indicates underweight, 18.5–24.9 indicates healthy or normal weight, 25.0–29.9 indicates overweight, and 30.0 or above indicates obesity further subdivided into Class I (30.0–34.9), Class II (35.0–39.9), and Class III (≥ 40.0 , indicating very high risk). For children and adolescents under 20 years, **BMI classifications** are interpreted using age- and sex-specific percentiles rather than fixed cut-offs: below the 5th percentile indicates underweight, the 5th to below the 85th percentile indicates healthy weight, the 85th to below the 95th percentile indicates overweight, at or above the 95th percentile indicates obesity, and at or above 120% of the 95th percentile or a BMI of 35 or above indicates severe obesity.
- Higher BMI correlates with increased risk for cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and other metabolic disorders; however, health professionals recommend using waist circumference, body composition analysis, and other clinical assessments alongside BMI for comprehensive health evaluation.

World Health Organisation

- The **World Health Organization** (WHO) is the United Nations' specialised agency for health, founded on April 7, 1948 a date commemorated annually as World Health Day and headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- WHO has 194 member states, 150 country offices, and six regional offices, and operates as an inter-governmental organisation working in collaboration with member states primarily through their Ministries of Health.
- WHO provides leadership on global health matters by shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries, and monitoring and assessing health trends.
- The World Health Assembly (WHA) is WHO's supreme decision-making body, attended annually by delegations from all member states in Geneva; it determines the policies of the organisation, supervises financial policies, and reviews and approves the budget.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following organisations published the 2026 global report assessing excess weight among children across countries?
 - (a) World Health Organization
 - (b) World Obesity Federation
 - (c) United Nations Children's Fund
 - (d) International Diabetes Federation

2. Which of the following positions did India occupy globally in the number of children with unhealthy body weight in the 2026 assessment?
 - (a) First
 - (b) Third
 - (c) Second
 - (d) Fourth

3. Which of the following dates is observed globally each year as World Obesity Day, drawing attention to unhealthy body weight issues and coinciding with the release of the World Obesity Atlas 2026 report?
 - (a) 7th April
 - (b) 10th May
 - (c) 14th June
 - (d) 4th March

4. Which of the following countries had the highest number of children with elevated body weight levels in the 2026 assessment?
 - (a) China
 - (b) India
 - (c) Japan
 - (d) Brazil

5. Which of the following age groups in India accounted for the larger share of children affected by excess weight in 2025?
 - (a) Children below five years
 - (b) Children aged five to nine years
 - (c) Adolescents aged ten to nineteen years
 - (d) Adults aged twenty to twenty nine years

6. Which of the following health conditions among Indian children is projected to affect the largest number by 2040 due to excess body weight?
 - (a) Hyperglycaemia metabolic disorder
 - (b) Hypertension metabolic disorder
 - (c) Raised triglycerides metabolic issue
 - (d) Liver-related metabolic disease

7. Which of the following conditions in Indian children is projected to rise from 1.39 million cases in 2025 to 1.91 million cases by 2040 due to BMI-related trends?
 - (a) hyperglycaemia
 - (b) hypertension risk
 - (c) cardiovascular strain
 - (d) obesity disorders

8. Which of the following countries was mentioned along with China and India as one of the three having more than ten million children living with obesity?
 - (a) United Kingdom
 - (b) United States
 - (c) Indonesia
 - (d) South Korea

9. Where is the headquarters of the United Nations' specialised health agency located?
 - (a) New York
 - (b) Paris
 - (c) Vienna
 - (d) Geneva

10. Which of the following policy steps was specifically recommended as a price-based measure to discourage unhealthy consumption among young people?
 - (a) Tax reduction on dairy items
 - (b) Subsidy on packaged snack foods
 - (c) Levy on sugar-sweetened drinks
 - (d) Ban on fast food chain outlets

11. Which of the following international agencies serves as the United Nations' specialised body for health matters?
 - (a) World Health Organization
 - (b) World Bank Group
 - (c) UNICEF
 - (d) International Labour Organization

12. What was the broad global nutrition shift highlighted as historically unprecedented in the 2026 assessment?
 - (a) More children had severe wasting than stunting
 - (b) More children had obesity than underweight
 - (c) More adults had diabetes than hypertension
 - (d) More infants had allergies than infections

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

13. Which of the following indicators was used as a simple screening method to estimate body fat based on height and weight?

- (a) Waist-to-hip ratio (b) Skinfold thickness
(c) Body Mass Index (d) Basal metabolic rate

14. Which of the following Indian child age groups was reported to consume sugary drinks averaging up to fifty millilitres per day?

- (a) Five to seven years (b) Eight to nine years
(c) Six to ten years (d) Below five years

15. Which of the following bodies functions as the highest decision-making assembly of the United Nations health agency?

- (a) Executive Board
(b) World Health Assembly
(c) Regional Committee Forum
(d) Secretariat Council

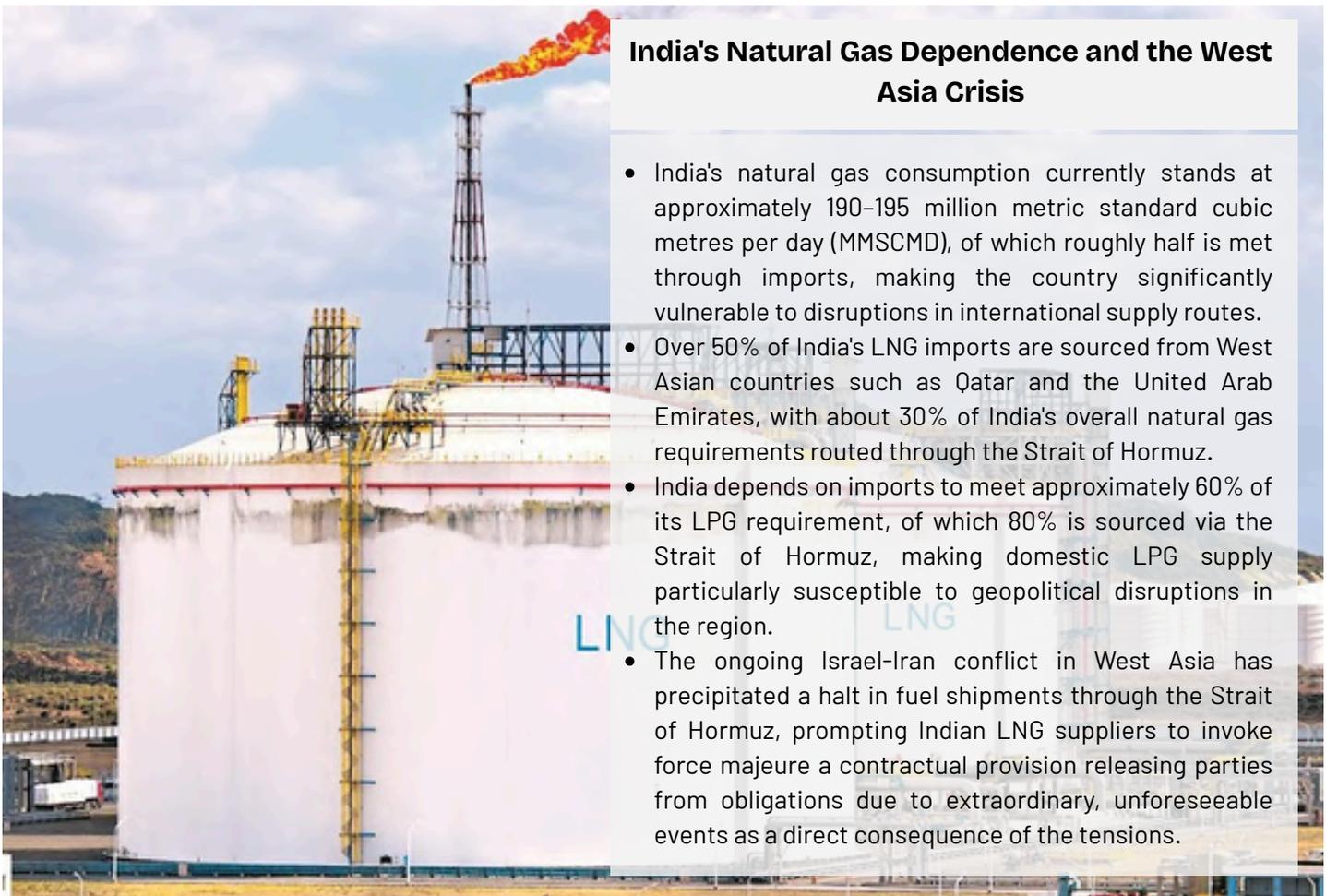
SOLUTIONS

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

8 Centre invokes the Essential Commodities Act, 1955

IN FOCUS

- The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) issued the **Natural Gas (Supply Regulation) Order, 2026** on March 9, 2026, invoking the Essential Commodities Act (ECA), 1955, to divert natural gas to priority sectors amid disruption of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) shipments routed through the Strait of Hormuz.
- Approximately 30% of India's overall natural gas requirements are routed through the Strait of Hormuz; with fuel shipments via this route halted due to the ongoing conflict in West Asia, Indian suppliers have been obligated to invoke force majeure clauses.
- The order introduces a tiered allocation structure, assigning Domestic Piped Natural Gas (PNG), Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) for vehicular fuel, and LPG production the highest priority at 100% of six-month average consumption, while fertiliser plants receive 70% and industrial consumers receive 80%.
- Separately, the government had earlier in the same week invoked the ECA for prioritising **LPG supply** to domestic consumers, with oil refineries directed to maximise LPG production and a 25-day inter-booking period introduced to prevent hoarding.



India's Natural Gas Dependence and the West Asia Crisis

- India's natural gas consumption currently stands at approximately 190–195 million metric standard cubic metres per day (MMSCMD), of which roughly half is met through imports, making the country significantly vulnerable to disruptions in international supply routes.
- Over 50% of India's LNG imports are sourced from West Asian countries such as Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, with about 30% of India's overall natural gas requirements routed through the Strait of Hormuz.
- India depends on imports to meet approximately 60% of its LPG requirement, of which 80% is sourced via the Strait of Hormuz, making domestic LPG supply particularly susceptible to geopolitical disruptions in the region.
- The ongoing Israel-Iran conflict in West Asia has precipitated a halt in fuel shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, prompting Indian LNG suppliers to invoke force majeure a contractual provision releasing parties from obligations due to extraordinary, unforeseeable events as a direct consequence of the tensions.

The Natural Gas Supply Regulation Order, 2026

- The order issued by MoPNG identifies four categories of priority for the receipt of natural gas, determined on the basis of each sector's average gas consumption over the preceding six months, subject to overall availability.
- The first and highest priority category accorded "**priority allocation**" at 100% of six-month average consumption encompasses domestic PNG supply for households, CNG for the transport sector, natural gas used for LPG production, and gas consumed for essential pipeline operations; supplies to this category are to be maintained uninterrupted subject to operational availability.
- The second priority category covers fertiliser manufacturing units, which are to receive 70% of their six-month average gas consumption; these units are prohibited from deploying the allotted gas for any purpose other than fertiliser production and must furnish a compliance certificate to **the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC)** through **the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers**.
- The third priority category comprises tea industries, manufacturing units, and other industrial consumers supplied through the national gas grid, all of which are to receive 80% of their six-month average consumption; City Gas Distribution (CGD) companies have been directed to ensure that their commercial and industrial consumers forming the fourth category also receive 80% of their average requirements.
- The gazette notification provides that the redistribution of gas supply will be facilitated through "full or partial curtailment" of supplies to entities including ONGC Petro Additions Limited, GAIL Pata Petrochemical, and Reliance O2C; oil refining companies have been directed to reduce gas allocation to refineries to approximately 65% of the past six months' average consumption, subject to operational feasibility.

LPG-Specific Measures Under the Order

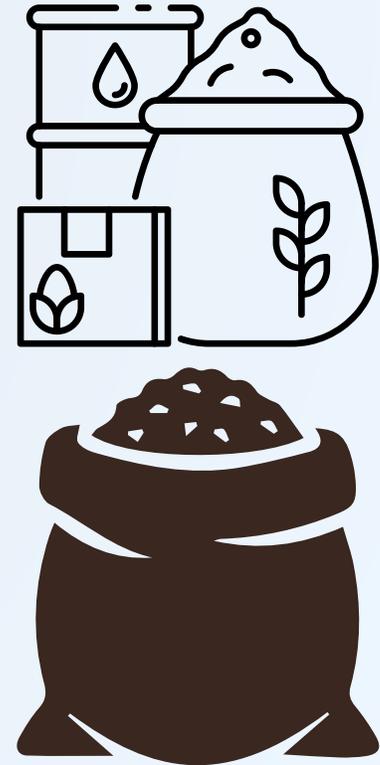
- MoPNG has directed oil refineries to maximise LPG production for domestic use in light of geopolitical disruptions to fuel supply and constraints on LPG availability, and has prohibited the diversion of propane and butane streams to petrochemical production so that these inputs are channelled primarily towards domestic LPG supply.
- A **25-day inter-booking period** has been introduced for LPG to prevent hoarding and ensure equitable distribution among consumers.
- Of the imported LPG supplies that remain available, distribution is being prioritised toward essential non-domestic sectors including hospitals and educational institutions.
- MoPNG has constituted a committee of three executive directors from oil marketing companies to review representations for LPG supply to restaurants, hotels, and other industries on a case-by-case basis.

The Essential Commodities Act, 1955

The **Essential Commodities Act, 1955** was enacted to provide, in the interests of the general public, for the control of the production, supply, and distribution of, and trade and commerce in, certain commodities; it was originally legislated during a period of persistent food scarcity when India was heavily dependent on imports such as wheat from the United States under the PL-480 programme.



- The Act does not provide a specific definition of "essential commodity"; Section 2(A) states that an essential commodity means a commodity specified in the Schedule of the Act, and the Central Government retains the power to add or remove commodities from this Schedule through notified orders, in consultation with state governments.
- Under Section 3, the Central Government may control the production, supply, and distribution of essential goods, impose stock limits, regulate trade, fix prices, and restrict hoarding; under Section 5, these powers may be delegated to State Governments or authorised officers for swift ground-level enforcement.
- Essential commodities as defined under the Act include cattle fodder, coal and its derivatives, automobile components, cotton and wool textiles, drugs as defined under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940, foodstuffs, iron and steel and products thereof, raw cotton, raw jute, and any other commodity notified by the Centre; petroleum products including LPG are classified as essential commodities under the Act.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Centre briefly included face masks and hand sanitisers in the list of essential commodities in March 2020, removing them in July 2020, illustrating the Act's flexibility in responding to extraordinary circumstances.



The 2020 Amendment to the Essential Commodities Act

- Parliament amended the Essential Commodities Act in June 2020 to delist certain agricultural commodities including cereals, pulses, potatoes, onions, edible oilseeds, and oils from routine regulation, confining the government's power to regulate their supply and prices strictly to extraordinary circumstances such as war, famine, extraordinary price rise, or a natural calamity of grave nature.
- Under the amended provisions, stock limits on the delisted agricultural commodities can be imposed only if there is a 100% increase in the retail prices of horticultural produce or a 50% increase in the retail prices of non-perishable agricultural food items; these restrictions do not apply to food stocks held for domestic public distribution.
- The original Act empowered the government to fix the minimum support price of any packaged product held as an essential commodity, a provision that predates the 2020 amendment.

India's LPG Landscape: Dependence, Pricing, and Affordability

- India relies on imports for more than 60% of its LPG needs, with prices significantly influenced by the average Saudi Contract Price (CP) for propane and butane the international benchmark for LPG trade set by Saudi Aramco which rose from USD 454 per tonne in FY 2019–20 to USD 710 per tonne in FY 2022–23, driven in part by strong Asian demand for propane as a petrochemical feedstock.
- Using purchasing power parity (PPP) dollars, the price of petrol in India ranks third highest globally after Sudan and Laos, while **LPG prices in India** are the highest in the world and diesel prices rank eighth highest globally underscoring the disproportionate burden on Indian consumers relative to their purchasing power.
- Data from the 2014–15 ACCESS survey conducted by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) identified LPG cost as the foremost barrier to adoption and continued use among rural poor

- households, with approximately 750 million Indians primarily relying on solid cooking fuels including wood, dung, agricultural residues, coal, and charcoal on a daily basis.
- At current refill prices, an average Indian household would need to spend around 10% of its monthly expenditure on LPG to meet all its cooking energy needs approximately double the actual reported share of expenses on cooking energy as of March 2020 and nearly half of all Indian households would need to at least double their cooking energy expenditure to switch completely to LPG.
- Around 30% of Indian households continue to rely on biomass as their primary cooking fuel, mainly due to high LPG prices, while another 24% stack LPG with biomass; this practice is concentrated in rural areas of Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and West Bengal, as well as urban slums.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which of the following maritime routes became the central factor behind India's emergency gas allocation policy in 2026?
 - Bab Mandeb Strait
 - Strait of Malacca
 - Strait of Hormuz
 - Bosphorus Strait
- What statute enabled the government to temporarily regulate the supply and distribution of key fuels during the crisis?
 - Industries Development Act
 - Essential Commodities Act
 - Petroleum Regulation Act
 - Energy Security Ordinance
- Which of the following sectors was granted the highest allocation priority in the emergency natural gas distribution system?
 - Household PNG supply
 - Petrochemical industries
 - Steel manufacturing
 - Power generation
- Which of the following percentage of past average consumption was earmarked for fertiliser manufacturing units?
 - 100%
 - 90%
 - 80%
 - 70%
- Which of the following ministries was primarily responsible for implementing the emergency natural gas supply regulation order?
 - Ministry of Power and Renewable Energy
 - Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas
 - Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers
 - Ministry of Finance and Corporate Affairs
- Which of the following types of fuel import accounts for nearly half of India's natural gas consumption needs?
 - Liquefied natural gas imports
 - Pipeline natural gas imports
 - Coal gasification output supply
 - Synthetic methane fuel supply
- Which of the following economic sectors received fuel primarily to support agricultural productivity during the supply disruption?
 - Textile manufacturing
 - Steel processing
 - Fertiliser production
 - Automobile assembly
- Which of the following category of consumers also received around eighty percent of their historical gas requirements?
 - Domestic cooking consumers
 - Transport sector vehicles
 - Fertiliser manufacturers
 - Industrial gas consumers
- Which of the following petroleum products used in cooking was specifically prioritised for domestic consumers?
 - Liquefied petroleum gas
 - Aviation turbine fuel
 - Furnace heating oil
 - Industrial heating gas
- What contractual provision allows parties to suspend obligations during extraordinary circumstances?
 - Arbitration clause
 - Escalation clause
 - Force majeure clause
 - Non-compete clause
- Which of the following countries is considered the global benchmark setter for LPG pricing used in international trade?
 - Bahrain
 - Saudi Arabia
 - Qatar
 - Kuwait
- Which of the following percentage increases triggers stock limit powers on certain agricultural commodities under the amended law?
 - 25%
 - 40%
 - 75%
 - 100%

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

13. Which of the following surveys reported that cooking fuel affordability remains the biggest barrier to adoption among poorer households?

- (a) ACCESS energy survey
- (b) ACCESS household survey
- (c) ACCESS rural energy survey
- (d) ACCESS energy study

14. Which of the following cooking fuel remains the primary energy source for many households despite widespread modern fuel access?

- (a) Biomass fuels
- (b) Electricity
- (c) Kerosene
- (d) Solar heat

15. Which of the following government schemes significantly expanded access to clean cooking energy among poor households?

- (a) National Rural Cooking Mission
- (b) Pradhan Mantri Gramin Urja Yojana
- (c) Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana
- (d) Bharat Fuel Access Scheme

SOLUTIONS

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

9 LIGO-India's 1st Gravitational Wave Observatory

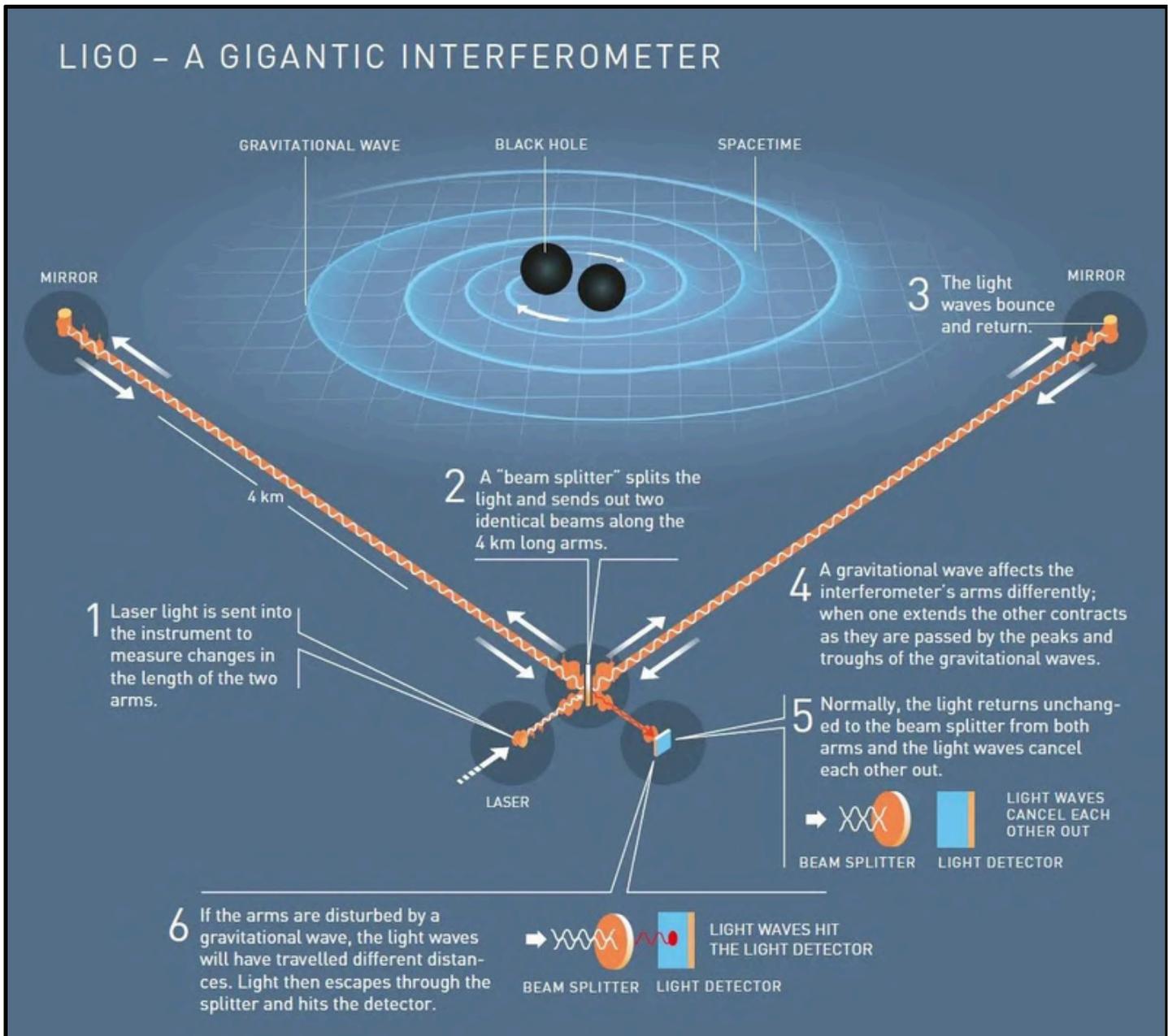
IN FOCUS

- Construction of the **Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO)-India** in **Hingoli district, Maharashtra** one of India's largest science projects with a total approved outlay of ₹2,300 crore remains stalled nearly a year after the ₹1,600-crore Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) tender was floated in April 2025.
- Records accessed under the Right to Information (RTI) Act reveal that the financial bid for the tender was opened on January 23, 2026, but the work order has not yet been awarded, with only the site office constructed so far at the project location.
- The Directorate of Construction Services and Estate Management under the **Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)** stated in its RTI reply dated February 10, 2026, that the project remains on track for its original completion deadline of 2030, and that the tender is expected to be awarded in 2026.
- LIGO-India is designed to function in synchrony with two existing LIGO facilities in the United States at Hanford and Livingston the same facilities that, in 2015, achieved the first-ever detection of gravitational waves, exactly 100 years after their prediction in Albert Einstein's General Theory of Relativity.

Project Background and Financial Approval

- The Central Government accorded financial approval of ₹2,300 crore for LIGO-India in April 2023, with the DAE and the Department of Science and Technology (DST) designated as the primary funding agencies for the project.
- The EPC tender worth ₹1,600 crore was floated in April 2025 two years after financial approval with construction originally expected to commence in the second half of 2025, as stated by the then Scientific Secretary of DAE, Sunil Ganju.
- The tender has undergone multiple deadline extensions since its issuance, as recorded on the Government eMarketplace (GeM), the central public procurement portal, and the work order remains unawarded as of early 2026.
- A senior official involved with LIGO-India described the tender process as "progressing at the right pace," noting that a work order against a ₹1,600-crore tender for a first-of-its-kind mega-science project in India naturally requires careful evaluation before award.
- The official further indicated that the LIGO-India facility, once operational, will be technologically more advanced than the existing US facilities, which are now several years old.





Institutional Framework and Collaborating Agencies

- Four Indian organisations are jointly responsible for executing the project: the Directorate of Construction Services and Estate Management under DAE; the Institute for Plasma Research (IPR); the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA), Pune; and the Raja Ramanna Centre for Advanced Technology (RRCAT).
- The US LIGO Laboratory, funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), will supply the hardware for a fully functional LIGO interferometer along with technical data covering design, installation, and commissioning, training and installation assistance, and the specifications and designs for the required infrastructure including the vacuum system.
- Indian institutions will participate in the broader LIGO Scientific Collaboration (LSC) through a dedicated body called the **LIGO-India Scientific Collaboration (LISC)**, enabling Indian researchers to contribute to and benefit from the global gravitational-wave research network.

LIGO-India as Part of the Global Gravitational-Wave Network

- LIGO-India will be the sixth gravitational-wave observatory globally, joining the two US LIGO facilities at Hanford and Livingston, the European Virgo Collaboration in Italy, the Japanese KAGRA, and GEO600 in Germany.
- A fundamental characteristic of gravitational-wave observatories is that a single detector cannot reliably make a discovery on its own; at least four comparable detectors operating simultaneously around the globe are needed for robust detection and source localisation, making LIGO-India's addition to the network scientifically critical.
- LIGO-India will be the southernmost **gravitational-wave detector** in the world; its distinct geographic location will significantly improve the ability of the global network to trace the origins of cosmic events in the sky, particularly those occurring in the southern hemisphere.
- Unlike conventional astronomical observatories, LIGO and its counterparts are blind to electromagnetic waves, do not need to point at a specific region of the sky, and do not require concentration of starlight making geographic location a secondary concern for the detector itself but a primary one for network triangulation and source localisation.
- There is also a prospective collaboration between LIGO-India and the Laser Interferometer Space Antenna (LISA) a joint mission of the European Space Agency (ESA) and NASA to jointly measure black hole events, alongside a gravitational-wave probe being developed at the US Vanderbilt Laboratory intended for lunar deployment within the next decade.

About the LIGO-India Project

- LIGO-India is India's first major gravitational-wave observatory and represents the country's formal contribution to the global network for detecting gravitational waves, making it one of the most ambitious science infrastructure projects ever undertaken in India.
- The observatory will feature an advanced LIGO-style interferometer and will become the sixth node in the global gravitational-wave detection network alongside the US facilities at Hanford and Livingston, Virgo in Italy, KAGRA in Japan, and GEO600 in Germany.
- The project is jointly led by DAE and DST in collaboration with the US LIGO Laboratory and premier Indian institutions including IUCAA, Pune; IPR; and RRCAT.
- As a mega-science project, LIGO-India aims to enhance sky coverage for the global network, improve source localisation particularly for events in the southern hemisphere and boost the overall detection sensitivity of the international gravitational-wave detection effort.
- Beyond pure science, the project is expected to advance India's capabilities in quantum sensing and metrology, develop cutting-edge technologies, and strengthen the country's standing in international astronomy and astrophysics.

Structure and Working Mechanism of LIGO

- LIGO is a massive L-shaped instrument with two arms, each 4 kilometres in length, set at right angles to each other; each arm houses a steel vacuum tube functioning as an **interferometer**, with highly reflective mirrors positioned at the ends of both arms.
- A laser beam is introduced into the instrument to measure changes in the length of the two arms; a beam splitter divides the laser light and sends two identical beams along the two 4-km arms simultaneously.
- Under normal conditions, the two beams travel equal distances, return to the beam splitter at the same time, and cancel each other out at the light detector a phenomenon known as destructive interference producing no signal.
- When a gravitational wave passes through the detector, it stretches spacetime in one direction and simultaneously contracts it in the perpendicular direction; this causes one arm of the interferometer to become longer while the other becomes shorter, and then vice versa, back and forth a motion technically referred to as "differential arm" motion or differential displacement.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which of the following districts in Maharashtra has been selected as the location for the LIGO-India observatory project?
 - Nashik
 - Gondia
 - Nagpur
 - Hingoli
- Which of the following portals recorded the multiple deadline extensions for the LIGO-India EPC tender?
 - Bharat Procurement Portal
 - Government eMarketplace
 - National Procurement Gateway
 - Central Contract Registry
- Which of the following years saw the Nobel Prize in Physics awarded following the first direct detection of gravitational waves?
 - 2015
 - 2017
 - 2019
 - 2021
- Which of the following organisations will supply the primary funding support for the LIGO-India project along with the Department of Atomic Energy?
 - Indian Council of Scientific Research
 - Ministry of Earth Sciences Technology
 - National Space Research Authority
 - Department of Science and Technology
- Which of the following Indian research institutions is located in Pune and is part of the agencies responsible for executing the LIGO-India project?
 - Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics
 - National Centre for Radio Astrophysics and Astronomy
 - Tata Institute of Fundamental Research and Analysis
 - Indian Institute of Astrophysics and Astronomy
- Which of the following collaborations in Italy is part of the global gravitational-wave observatory network along with LIGO?
 - Galileo Observatory
 - European Alliance
 - Italia Observatory
 - Virgo Collaboration
- Which of the following cosmic phenomena is used as an analogy for the background formed by stochastic gravitational waves?
 - Solar Magnetic Radiation Field
 - Cosmic Microwave Background
 - Interstellar Molecular Dust Cloud
 - Galactic Infrared Emission Belt
- Which of the following projects represents a planned space-based gravitational-wave observatory led by the European Space Agency?
 - Athena Observatory Mission
 - Gaia Observatory Space Antenna
 - Laser Interferometer Space Antenna
 - Cosmic Vision Space Antenna
- Which of the following scientists predicted gravitational waves through the General Theory of Relativity?
 - Niels M Bohr
 - Albert Einstein
 - Max HS Planck
 - Werner Heisenberg
- Which of the following departments operates the Directorate of Construction Services and Estate Management responsible for the LIGO-India infrastructure work?
 - Department of Atomic Space
 - Department of Atomic Energy
 - Department of Biotechnology
 - Department of Earth Sciences
- Which of the following countries hosts the gravitational-wave observatory known as KAGRA?
 - Iran
 - Italy
 - Japan
 - China
- Which of the following missions tested technology necessary for future space-based gravitational-wave detection systems?
 - James Webb Pathfinder
 - Cosmic Vision Probe

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- (c) LISA Pathfinder
- (d) Orion Science Test

13. Which of the following observatories in Germany contributes to the global gravitational-wave detector network?

- (a) MaxWave Observatory
- (b) GEO600 Observatory
- (c) Berlin Interferometer
- (d) Einstein Telescope

14. Which of the following types of gravitational waves are produced by orbiting pairs of dense astrophysical objects such as binary black holes?

- (a) Spiral waves
- (b) Binary waves
- (c) Static waves
- (d) Burst waves

15. Which of the following phenomena occurs when two light beams returning in an interferometer cancel each other out at the detector?

- (a) Constructive interference
- (b) Destructive interference
- (c) Resonant amplification
- (d) Optical reflection

SOLUTIONS

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

10 Durand Line Dispute

IN FOCUS

- Pakistan and Afghanistan have engaged in two intense rounds of military clashes within six months first in October 2025 and again in late February 2026 marking a significant escalation beyond the periodic border skirmishes that characterised the two decades of US presence in Afghanistan.
- Pakistan deployed air and missile strikes deep inside Afghan territory, including in Kabul and Kandahar, while the **Afghan Taliban** targeted multiple Pakistani military posts across the Durand Line, resulting in substantial military and civilian casualties on both sides.
- The latest round of hostilities occurred despite a ceasefire brokered by Turkiye and Qatar following the October 2025 clashes, with Pakistan's Defence Minister subsequently declaring what he termed an "open war" against Afghanistan.
- The escalation signals a rupture across three simultaneous dimensions political ties between Islamabad and Kabul, the relationship between Pakistan's military establishment and the Taliban leadership, and long-standing societal bonds between the peoples of the two countries.

The Durand Line: Origin and Historical Evolution

- The **Durand Line** is a 2,640-kilometre porous boundary separating Afghanistan and Pakistan, stretching from the border with China in the northeast to Afghanistan's border with Iran in the southwest, passing through strategically vital features including the Khyber Pass and the Spin Ghar mountains.
- The line was established in 1893 through a seven-clause agreement between Sir Henry Mortimer Durand, Foreign Secretary of British India, and Amir Abdur Rahman Khan, the ruler of Afghanistan, to demarcate their respective spheres of influence during the Great Game the nineteenth-



- century geopolitical rivalry between the British and Russian Empires for dominance in Central Asia.
- British strategic interest in the region was shaped by two major military interventions: the First Anglo-Afghan War (1839), which ended in a British reversal, and the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878–80), which culminated in the Treaty of Gandamak (1879), under which Afghanistan ceded control of its external affairs to the British Crown.
- The 1893 agreement demarcated a frontier of approximately 2,600–2,670 km; it placed the strategic Khyber Pass on the British side, cut through Pashtun tribal areas dividing villages, families, and traditional migratory routes, and established the Wakhan Corridor as a buffer zone between the Russian and British spheres.
- A joint Anglo-Afghan survey conducted between 1894 and 1896 physically demarcated the line on the ground following the 1893 agreement.
- The Third Anglo-Afghan War (1919) concluded with the Treaty of Rawalpindi, which restored Afghanistan's autonomy over its foreign affairs; while the treaty did not explicitly renegotiate the boundary, it implicitly upheld the Durand Line as the basis for bilateral relations.
- Following the partition of India in 1947, Pakistan inherited the Durand Line under the principle of state succession to the treaties and borders of British India; Afghanistan, however, rejected both the legitimacy and the finality of this inheritance, arguing that the 1893 agreement was concluded under coercive colonial circumstances and that any obligations arising from it expired when Afghanistan regained full sovereign control over its foreign affairs in 1919.
- Afghanistan became the only state to vote against Pakistan's admission to the United Nations in 1947, reflecting the depth of its opposition to the inherited frontier, and has maintained this non-recognition position under successive regimes, including the current Taliban government.

Why Afghanistan Rejects the Durand Line

Afghanistan maintains that the 1893 Durand Agreement lacked legitimacy from the outset, having been concluded under unequal colonial circumstances, and that a sovereign Afghan state cannot be bound by an accord imposed through British imperial pressure; Kabul further asserts that any residual obligations expired after 1919 when Afghanistan recovered full control over its foreign policy.

- The Durand Line divided the historically contiguous Pashtun heartland, separating tribal, kinship, and economic networks that long predate modern territorial boundaries; Kabul views Pakistan's administration of these areas as an artificial colonial construct that disrupts traditional patterns of mobility, identity, and communal cohesion.
- Afghanistan's rejection also stems from persistent symbolic and strategic claims over Pashtun-majority regions and parts of Balochistan, with successive Afghan regimes invoking these claims both for domestic political legitimacy and to counter what they perceive as Pakistan's strategic advantage along the frontier.
- Kabul has historically advocated for a unified "Pashtunistan," reflecting irredentist territorial aspirations that Pakistan regards as an existential threat, given that any secession of Pashtun-majority areas could trigger a domino effect within Pakistan's own territorial integrity.

Pakistan's Strategic Depth Doctrine and the Taliban's Rise

- The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 fundamentally restructured Afghanistan–Pakistan relations, laying the foundation for an expanded Pakistani role in Afghanistan's internal affairs under the military government of General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq.
- Under the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)-funded Operation Cyclone, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) organised large numbers of Mujahideen militant groups recruited primarily from Pashtun tribes on Pakistan's side of the Durand Line, favouring jihadist groups aligned with the state's programme of aggressive Islamisation.

- The fall of the Najibullah government in April 1992 and the subsequent four years of chaos under Mujahideen rule created the conditions for the rise of the Taliban in 1996, giving the ISI an unprecedented opportunity to exert control over Afghanistan through a client regime an opportunity Pakistan pursued for over two decades.
- According to a United States Institute of Peace (USIP) report co-authored by Barnett Rubin and Abu-Bakr Siddique, Pakistan sought to establish a client regime in Afghanistan that would be hostile to India, thereby giving the Pakistani military a secure western border and **strategic depth** against its eastern adversary.
- Pakistan created and sustained the Taliban from the mid-1990s onward; successive military and ISI chiefs provided political, military, and financial support to the Taliban, and Pakistan continued this support even under intense American pressure until the Taliban's return to power in August 2021.

Origins of the Current Pakistan-Taliban Rupture

- When the United States withdrew from Afghanistan in August 2021 and the Taliban rapidly seized Kabul, Pakistan's ISI chief was among the first foreign officials to visit Kabul in September 2021; Rawalpindi anticipated that the Taliban's return would translate into improved bilateral relations and, critically, that Kabul would act decisively to neutralise the **Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan** (TTP) and compel its leadership to surrender.
- Contrary to these expectations, militant attacks in Pakistan's tribal regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa increased substantially during 2022–25; a UN Monitoring Report recorded a 40% rise in TTP attacks inside Pakistan during 2023–24, fundamentally undermining Pakistan's strategic calculus.
- Under former Prime Minister Imran Khan, Pakistan pursued a combined carrot-and-stick approach toward the TTP; after his removal, the current military leadership shifted to a more direct military approach, deepening the confrontation with both the TTP and the Taliban in Kabul.
- The estrangement predates 2021: tensions between Pakistan's establishment and the Taliban leadership began when US Admiral Mike Mullen publicly described the Haqqani network as a "veritable arm of the ISI," prompting ISI to hand over some second-rung Taliban and al-Qaeda leaders to the US while protecting the top leadership a move the Taliban interpreted as a betrayal, generating enduring mistrust.
- The Afghan Taliban's reluctance to act against the TTP has a structural explanation rooted in Pashtun tribal solidarity: just as Pakistan once provided refuge to the Taliban when it was in hiding before 2021, the Afghan Taliban today feels bound by the same tribal code to protect TTP members who sheltered them during the years of US-led military operations an obligation Pakistan is unwilling or unable to appreciate.
- A further complicating factor is the expanding presence of the Islamic State in Khorasan (IS-K); for the Afghan Taliban, IS-K represents a greater ideological and territorial threat than the TTP, making antagonising the TTP which acts as a counterweight to IS-K strategically undesirable from Kabul's perspective.
- Pakistan has also been accused by Kabul of externalising its internal security failures; given the deep terrorist infrastructure and ideological support base cultivated within Pakistan since the 1980s, blaming Afghanistan and India serves as a convenient strategy to deflect from domestic failures.

The Three-Dimensional Rupture

- At the political level, the breakdown of relations between Islamabad and Kabul despite multiple rounds of dialogue since 2021 has culminated in Pakistan's Defence Minister publicly declaring "open war" against Afghanistan, a statement that would not have been made without the approval of military headquarters in Rawalpindi.
- At the institutional level, the relationship between Pakistan's military establishment and the Taliban leadership built over three decades from the mid-1990s onward lies effectively severed under the current military and ISI leadership in Pakistan, reversing the foundational dynamic that enabled the Taliban's political and military rise.
- At the societal level, Pakistan's active campaign to deport Afghan refugees who had settled in the country

- across different phases of conflict has generated intense resistance from both the Taliban and the Afghan population, and the deepening societal divide is expected to persist for generations given the centuries-old cross-border bonds forged between the two peoples.

The Asymmetric Nature of the Conflict

- There is a fundamental asymmetry between Pakistan and Afghanistan across military, economic, and political dimensions: the Taliban possesses no air force or navy and therefore cannot sustain an "open war" with Pakistan in any conventional sense, while Pakistan's air power and missile capabilities allow it to strike deep inside Afghan territory.
- Economically, Afghanistan as a landlocked country is heavily dependent on the Karachi port for the bulk of its imports; Pakistan can effectively strangle Afghanistan's economy by closing border crossings, and Afghanistan has no comparable leverage over Pakistan through trade.
- Pakistan holds a stronger position in terms of regional diplomatic clout, particularly in West Asia, and the current Pakistani military leadership's relationship with US President Donald Trump provides Rawalpindi with greater strategic latitude to adopt a harder posture in the region than previous military leaderships enjoyed.
- Although drone warfare has been identified as a potential equaliser for the Taliban, its effective geographic reach is limited to areas east of the Durand Line, constraining its strategic utility as a deterrent against Pakistan's deeper military capabilities.
- Given these structural asymmetries, the Taliban's response to Pakistan's pressure is likely to remain below the threshold of open conventional warfare, with its capacity to act on TTP being constrained not only by political unwillingness but also by strategic calculations about IS-K and tribal obligations.

Implications for India

- The sharpening Pakistan-Taliban rift marginally expands India's diplomatic space to reassert its developmental presence in Afghanistan, where New Delhi has already invested over USD 3 billion in major projects including the Salma Dam, the Zaranj-Delaram Highway, and the Afghan Parliament building.
- However, persistent instability along the Durand Line disrupts regional connectivity corridors and continues to delay progress on initiatives such as Chabahar Port and its linkage to the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), limiting India's ability to achieve seamless overland access to Central Asia.
- The continued volatility along the frontier strengthens extremist safe havens and increases the likelihood of militant flows toward Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, and Central Asian republics, given the historically documented pattern of spikes in infiltration during periods of Afghan turmoil.
- China has moved to capitalise on frontier instability by deepening strategic cooperation with Pakistan, exploring extensions of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) into Afghanistan, and consolidating its foothold through the Wakhan Corridor with reports of joint China-Taliban patrols since 2022 underscoring Beijing's effort to secure direct Central Asian passage.
- Pakistan's defence spending rose by 15.5% in 2024-25, diverting resources from an already fragile economy marked by 38% inflation in 2023 and repeated International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailouts; this economic stress feeds domestic radicalisation and political volatility, creating a western neighbourhood for India that is simultaneously insecure, unpredictable, and prone to externalising internal crises.

Reasons for the Dispute Around the Durand Line

- The Durand Line arbitrarily divides ethnic Pashtun and Baloch tribes, separating families, ancestral lands, and traditional migratory routes; Afghanistan has historically harboured irredentist claims, frequently advocating for a unified Pashtunistan that would incorporate territories currently within Pakistan.
- Pakistan initiated a large-scale border fencing project along the Durand Line in 2017 to curb cross-border militancy, smuggling, and unregulated movement; the Afghan Taliban views this fencing as a hostile act that physically formalises an illegitimate colonial boundary and divides the Pashtun community, leading

- Afghan forces to repeatedly uproot sections of the fence, resulting in deadly skirmishes.
- Pakistan accuses the Afghan Taliban of providing safe havens to the TTP, an umbrella militant organisation responsible for deadly attacks inside Pakistan since 2007; the ideological affinity between the Afghan Taliban and the TTP means Kabul has been consistently reluctant to take decisive military action against the group, a source of sustained frustration for Islamabad.
- Pakistan periodically closes key border crossings including Torkham and Chaman-Spin Boldak as a coercive economic pressure tactic; since Afghanistan is a landlocked country reliant on Pakistani ports for international trade, these closures cause severe economic disruption and further deteriorate bilateral relations.
- The long history of each state offering sanctuary to the other's opponents as documented in the USIP report by Rubin and Siddique has accumulated a deep reservoir of bitterness and mutual mistrust that continues to poison every dimension of the bilateral relationship.

Other Contested Colonial Boundary Lines

- The **McMahon Line**, named after British official Sir Arthur Henry McMahon, was proposed at the 1914 Shimla Convention as the boundary between British India and Tibet, running along the Himalayan crest from eastern Bhutan to the point where the Brahmaputra River descends into the Assam Valley; India recognises this as its lawful border, but China disputes its validity on the grounds that Tibet lacked the sovereignty to conclude such agreements, and the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in India's eastern sector follows the McMahon Line alignment.
- The **Radcliffe Line**, drawn in 1947 under Sir Cyril Radcliffe as chairman of the Boundary Commissions, partitioned British India into India and Pakistan; its western segment continues to serve as the India-Pakistan border, while its eastern segment evolved into the India-Bangladesh boundary after the creation of Bangladesh in 1971.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which of the following boundary lines separates Afghanistan and Pakistan and remains the central issue in their long-running frontier dispute?
 - McMahon Line
 - Radcliffe Line
 - Line of Control
 - Durand Line
- Which of the following countries became the only state to oppose Pakistan's admission to the United Nations in 1947?
 - Tajikistan
 - Afghanistan
 - Uzbekistan
 - Soviet Union
- Which of the following agreements in 1893 established the frontier between British India and Afghanistan?
 - Treaty of Gandamak
 - Durand Agreement
 - Treaty of Rawalpindi
 - Shimla Convention
- Which of the following strategic mountain passes was placed on the British side by the frontier arrangement of 1893?
 - Bolan Pass
 - Lowari Pass
 - Khunjerab Pass
 - Khyber Pass
- Who was the ruler of Afghanistan that concluded the 1893 boundary arrangement with Sir Henry Mortimer Durand?
 - Amir Abdur Rahman Khan
 - Amanullah Barkat Khan
 - Zahir Rahman Ali Shah
 - Mohammad Daoud Khan
- Which of the following treaties restored Afghanistan's autonomy over foreign affairs after the Third Anglo-Afghan War?
 - Treaty of Gandamak
 - Durand Agreement
 - Anglo-Russian Convention
 - Treaty of Rawalpindi
- Which of the following ideas has historically been promoted from Kabul as a unified homeland for Pashtun populations?
 - Balochistan
 - Pashtunistan
 - Baluchestan
 - Gilgit-Baltistan
- What was the name of the CIA-funded operation through which Pakistan's intelligence establishment organised anti-Soviet militant groups after 1979?
 - Operation Freedom
 - Operation Storm
 - Operation Cyclone
 - Operation Reach
- Which of the following militant organisations has been accused by Pakistan of carrying out repeated attacks inside its territory from bases linked to Afghanistan?
 - Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
 - Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan
 - Lashkar-e-Taiba Pakistan
 - East Turkestan Islamic Movement
- Which of the following leaders pursued a combined conciliatory and coercive approach toward the TTP before later military leadership adopted a harder line?
 - Imran Khan
 - Shehbaz Sharif
 - Nawaz Sharif
 - Pervez Musharraf
- Which of the following reports recorded a significant increase in TTP attacks inside Pakistan during 2023–24?
 - World Bank Assessment
 - NATO Frontier Paper
 - UN Monitoring Report
 - IMF Regional Survey
- Which of the following admirals publicly described the Haqqani network as closely linked to Pakistan's intelligence establishment?
 - Mike Mullen
 - William Fallon

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

(c) John Richardson

(d) Harry Harris

13. Which of the following jihadist groups is regarded by the Afghan Taliban as a greater ideological and territorial threat than the TTP?

- (a) Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent
- (b) Islamic State in Khorasan
- (c) Lashkar-e-Jhangvi
- (d) Jaish-e-Mohammed

14. Which of the following ports gives Pakistan economic leverage over Afghanistan because of

Afghanistan's dependence on it for imports?

- (a) Gwadar Port (b) Port Qasim
- (c) Abbas Port (d) Karachi Port

15. Which of the following projects has been developed by India in Afghanistan and reflects New Delhi's developmental role there?

- (a) Gwadar Zone
- (b) Salma Dam
- (c) Ring Expressway
- (d) Kabul Metro Link

SOLUTIONS

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

NPLC's LNAT Achievers

University
of Oxford



LNAT (2021 - 2022)



Surbhi Sachdeva

LNAT (2022 - 2023)



Kartikay Kataria

LNAT (2023 - 2024)



Adi Singh

LNAT (2024 - 2025)



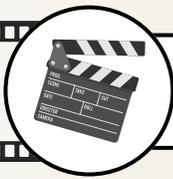
Samyuktha Kovilakath

LNAT (2025 - 2026)



Karthik Ranganadhan

The only Indian Institute to place **five students** in a row in the undergrad law programme at Oxford University!



MEDIA COVERAGE

India's Top Revolutionary Educationist: Talks About His Journey From Working In Premier Law Firm To Become The Most Sought After Educationist In Country Imparting Legal Education



Super 30 of law entrance bags 5 out of top 10 in AILET and CLAT

ABHI SINGHAH ■ NEW DELHI

When your students bag three out of top 10 slots in elite law entrance test - All India Legal Entrance Test or AILET - it speaks volumes about your passion, diligence and grit. Yet Nishant Prakash, the managing corporate lawyer turned teacher, will simply grin on extraordinary humility.

The AILET results on Thursday saw a burst of messages and Prakash had another round of celebrations with a strike rate of over 90% by his students in the Common Law Admission Test (CLAT), for admissions to over 20 law universities across India. Out of 60 students that he provided training to 54 ended up with a seat either in CLAT or AILET. Two of his students featured in top 10 in CLAT as well. Manjivraj in Bihar, Nishant growing up with him, 7 ended University at Raipur, and membership of legal luminaries like Kam Jethmalani and KK Venugopal. After this, I was fortunate to work with Lulla & Lulla Law Offices at New Delhi with specialising in Intellectual Property Rights, Insurance and Trade Law," says Prakash.

However, despite a thriving law of teaching took him to rather an unconventional path - of teaching.

"Hailing from Bihar, such dramatic shift to my career was frowned upon for it meant checks and wading into uncertain territories. With a mild churning passion should take place. In 2014, he set up Nishant Prakash Law Classes and in just 10 years, he has established a reputation covered by law aspirants nationwide, transcending the industry to become a leader in education reform, with significant impact on legal education, success of his students, and his out-of-the-box passion: to educate. Chaitanya Ghosh ranked at no. 6, Vidhya Singh at no. 10, in CLAT. Aditya Guntam Akshay ranked no. 4, Divak Agarwal no. 7.

His noteworthy achievements, extended beyond coaching as Nishant Prakash Law Classes and in just 10 years, he has established a reputation covered by law aspirants nationwide, transcending the industry to become a leader in education reform, with significant impact on legal education, success of his students, and his out-of-the-box passion: to educate. Chaitanya Ghosh ranked at no. 6, Vidhya Singh at no. 10, in CLAT. Aditya Guntam Akshay ranked no. 4, Divak Agarwal no. 7.

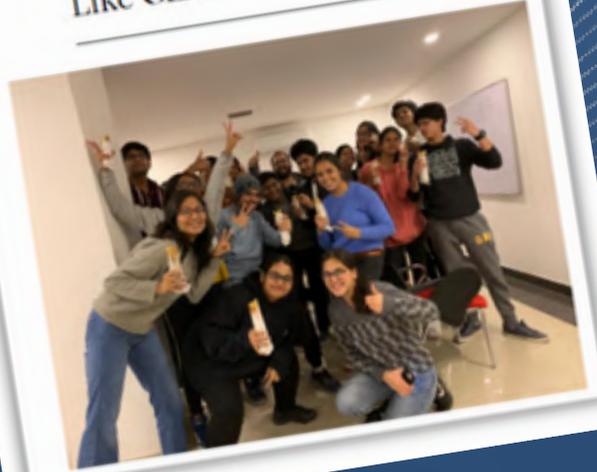
Among appointed him to advise on the pivotal initiative of "Transforming Legal Education in India," positioning him as a key contributor to national legal education reform. Further solidifying his role in education reform, he is part of a high-level National Education Policy 2020, committee implementing the national education framework in the state of Assam reflecting his broader impact on the Also, recognized as the "Super Nishant's commitment to education underscores his effectiveness in guiding students to secure admissions in top law schools."

Renowned Educationist Nishant Prakash in Committee for Implementation of New Education Policy in Assam

Indian sprinter Hima Das, General Secretary of Assam Cricket Association Devajit Lon Saikia, and scientist Uddhab Bharali are also in the committee.



An Interview With India's leading Educationist; How Important Is To Join Coaching Institute To Crack An Aptitude Based Exam Like CLAT



THE HINDU CLAT candidates aggrieved over 'errors'; consortium denies laxity

Krishnasdas Rameshrai NEW DELHI

A petition challenging the correctness of the provisional answer key of the postgraduate Common Law Admission Test (CLAT) had on December 1 for admission to 24 national law universities has sparked a debate.

The Supreme Court on December 9 disposed of the petition on the ground of maintainability, orally remarking that litigation in exams tended to delay the results. A Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Sarieb Khan gave the petitioners liberty to approach the jurisdictional High Court.

The petition, filed by Anam Khan and Ajayish Agrawal, alleged that the provisional answer key released on December 2 contained significant errors,



The petition alleged that the provisional answer key had significant errors, including incorrect answers to 12 questions.

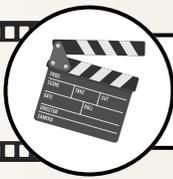
Persons associated with the legal representation of the Consortium of National Law Universities (CNLU), which conducts the test, said the final answer key case came up on December 9. The consortium announced the release of the final answer key and results to December 7 from December 10. "The provision

al answer key had mistakes which were not resolved even in the final answer key," Manasi Shivan, advocate who appeared for the petitioners in the court, said. "There are precedents when the Supreme Court has promptly adjudicated and granted interim relief in petitions challenging interim and final answer keys. In my opinion, it is better to stay from the apex all across India, seeking remedy to avoid difficulty in terms of conflicting judgments and operation of stay only for that state's jurisdiction."

A corporate lawyer-turned CLAT mentor, Nishant Prakash, alleged that the CLAT (undergraduate) was also conducted in an equally unprofessional manner. "Four questions

of the logical reasoning section were absolutely wrong which were later retracted by the consortium in the final answer key. Three more answers in the provisional answer keys were changed later upon the grievances raised by the students. I strongly believe that the consortium withdrawing these questions and the majority of students could not complete the paper," he said.

S. Shambhukumar, Director of the Gujarat National Law University and vice-president, CNLU Governance, said "extreme care is always taken to avoid mistakes". "In law, the questions and the answer options in the paper are interpreted differently by different people," he said.



MEDIA COVERAGE

BUREAUCRATS INDIA
Date: December 18, 2025

With a 90% strike rate, Delhi-based Nishant Prakash's students secure top ranks in CLAT and AILET



New Delhi: With both CLAT and AILET Rank 4 going to his students, corporate professional-turned-mentor Nishant Prakash on Thursday announced that 70 of his 78 students had qualified in India's two toughest law entrance examinations, with nine securing positions in the top 100.

The declaration of CLAT 2026 and AILET 2026 results has set off the next phase of admissions to India's premier law universities, once again underscoring the intense national competition among aspirants.

Against this backdrop, students trained at Nishant Prakash Law Classes (NPLC) posted a strong, widely distributed set of national and international ranks across both examinations, reinforcing the institute's consistent presence at the top. Of the 78 candidates from NPLC, 70 qualified in CLAT or AILET.

Hindustan Times 100
Date: December 31, 2025

CLAT and AILET 2026: How two AIR 4 rankers prepared, handled pressure and adapted when the paper changed



SIDDHANT (AILET AIR 4)
ARSHNOOR SINGH (CLAT (AIR 4))

Arshnoor Singh, who secured All India Rank 4 in CLAT 2026 and AIR 202 in AILET, and Siddhant Rohit, who secured ...

Arshnoor Singh and Siddhant Rohit successfully navigated CLAT and AILET by prioritising adaptability and mock testing in preparation.

For law aspirants, entrance exams such as CLAT and AILET are as much a test of temperament as of preparation. That lesson comes through clearly in the journey of Arshnoor Singh, who secured All India Rank 4 in CLAT 2026 and AIR 202 in AILET, and Siddhant Rohit, who secured All India Rank 4 in AILET 2026 and AIR 202 in CLAT 2026.

Both students began preparing... that ultimately... imposed...

India's Top Revolutionary Educationist: Talks About His Journey From Working In Premier Law Firm To Become The Most Sought After Educationist In Country Imparting Legal Education




दिल्ली को कानून सिखाने वाला बिहारी



Nishant Prakash Law Classes

CLAT Consortium has recently changed the pattern for CLAT. How do you see this?

Nishant Prakash students secure top ranks in CLAT, AILET

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi



With both CLAT and AILET Rank 4 going to his students, corporate-professional-turned-mentor Nishant Prakash on Thursday announced that 70 of his 78 students had qualified in India's two toughest law entrance examinations, with nine securing positions in the top 100.



The declaration of CLAT 2026 and AILET 2026 results has set off the next phase of admissions to India's premier law universities, once again underscoring the intense national competition among aspirants.

Against this backdrop, students trained at Nishant Prakash Law Classes (NPLC) posted a strong, widely distributed set of national and international ranks across both examinations, reinforcing the institute's consistent presence at the top. Of the 78 candidates from NPLC, 70 qualified in CLAT or AILET.

Arshnoor
Siddhant Rohit AILET (AIR 4)

1 Botswana Cheetah Translocation to India

IN FOCUS

India's cheetah reintroduction effort reached a new milestone as eight cheetahs six females and two males were airlifted from Botswana to Gwalior aboard an Indian Air Force aircraft and then transported by helicopter to Kuno National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh. This brings India's total cheetah population to 46. Botswana is the third African nation to contribute to Project Cheetah, following Namibia (September 2022) and South Africa (February 2023). The transfer is part of a government-to-government agreement formalised during President Droupadi Murmu's visit to Botswana in November 2024. The cheetahs, which had been under quarantine at Botswana's Mokolodi Nature Reserve, will undergo a 30-day monitored quarantine at KNP before being gradually prepared for life in the wild. Since the programme's launch, 39 cubs have been born at Kuno, of which 27 have survived.

Project Cheetah: Structure and Status

- Launched in 2022, Project Cheetah aims to restore a free-ranging, genetically diverse cheetah population in India a species declared extinct in the country in 1952.
- It is the world's first intercontinental wild carnivore translocation project.
- The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) serves as the implementing agency, supported by the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department and the Wildlife Institute of India (WII). A dedicated Steering Committee was constituted in 2023 to guide implementation.
- Kuno National Park and Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary are the current primary habitats, with Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary earmarked for future expansion.
- Over 350 'Cheetah Mitras' work at the grassroots level to raise awareness and manage human-wildlife conflict. The project's stated target is to push the total cheetah population beyond 50 across multiple sites.

Translocation Protocol and Population Progress

- The eight cheetahs from Botswana were placed in specially prepared quarantine enclosures at KNP upon arrival, where wildlife veterinarians are monitoring their feeding patterns, movement, climate adaptation, and disease indicators.
- GPS satellite collars will be fitted for real-time tracking before the animals are moved to open forest areas.
- Since the programme began, 21 cheetahs nine translocated adults and 12 India-born cubs have died at Kuno due to various causes.
- Currently, 35 cheetahs reside at KNP, while three adults have been relocated to Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary to reduce disease risk and habitat pressure.
- Eight cubs were born in two litters between February 7–18, 2026, contributing to a total of 39 cubs born since the programme's launch, of which 27 have survived.
- Notable cheetahs such as Namibia-born Jwala and Aasha, South Africa-born Gamini and Veera, and India-born Mukhi have all produced litters, reflecting growing reproductive success.

2 NITI Aayog-JICA Cooperation on SDGs

IN FOCUS

NITI Aayog and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) signed the Record of Discussions (RoD) for Phase II of the "Project for Promotion of Japan-India Cooperative Actions Towards Sustainable Development Goals." The signing took place in the presence of Shri Rohit Kumar, Additional Secretary and Mission Director of the Aspirational Districts and Blocks Programme (NITI Aayog), and Takeuchi Takuro, Chief Representative, JICA India. The project builds on Phase I and aims to accelerate inclusive development in underserved regions by strengthening policy frameworks, institutional capacity, and SDG localisation across Aspirational Districts (ADs) and Aspirational Blocks (ABs). It operates across six themes: Global Partnership, Health & Nutrition, Education, Agriculture & Water Resources, Financial Inclusion & Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure and reflects the broader, deepening bilateral development partnership between India and Japan ahead of the 2030 SDG deadline.

Project Scope and Key Activities

- The project strengthens policy frameworks and implementation systems across six themes: Global Partnership, Health & Nutrition, Education, Agriculture & Water Resources, Financial Inclusion & Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure.
- Core focus areas include institutional capacity building, improved monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and effective localisation of SDGs at the district and block level.
- Key activities include people-to-people exchanges, capacity-building programmes, Japan-India knowledge forums, and identification and dissemination of best practices.
- India's district and block-level monitoring systems have been recognised by JICA as globally outstanding, forming a strong foundation for this collaborative effort.

India-Japan Development Partnership: Broader Context

- Japan has been India's largest bilateral donor since 1958, with cumulative Official Development Assistance (ODA) exceeding ₹4.4 lakh crore, supporting over 84 ongoing projects in transportation, energy, and water sectors.
- The India-Japan Joint Vision for the Next Decade (August 2025) outlines eight strategic directions, including enhanced economic ties, technology partnerships, and clean energy initiatives.
- Both countries have set a new target of USD 68 billion in private investment from Japan to India over the next decade.
- In March 2025, six ODA loan agreements totalling ₹11,181 crore were signed to fund infrastructure and sustainable development projects.
- To bolster economic resilience, the Bilateral Swap Arrangement was renewed at USD 75 billion, effective February 2026.

3 International Women's Day 2026

IN FOCUS

India observed International Women's Day on 8th March 2026 under the United Nations theme "Rights. Justice. Action. For ALL Women and Girls," with a complementary global campaign theme of "Give to Gain." The occasion marked India's conscious shift from "development for women" to "women-led development," positioning women as active drivers of socio-economic progress toward Viksit Bharat 2047. Celebrations in New Delhi included the Shakti Walk along Kartavya Path and a national event at Manekshaw Centre Auditorium graced by the President of India. Across sectors education, health, defence, governance, enterprise, and sports India showcased measurable gains backed by constitutional safeguards, targeted schemes, and landmark legal reforms. The day also served as a reminder that persistent challenges such as the digital divide, unpaid care burden, and gender-based violence must be addressed to fully realise inclusive national development.

Historical Evolution of Women's Day

- The roots of International Women's Day lie in early 20th-century labour and suffrage movements in North America and Europe, where women organised to demand better working conditions, equal pay, and political rights.
- The first National Women's Day was observed in the United States on 28th February 1909, declared by the Socialist Party of America.
- In 1910, German activist Clara Zetkin proposed an annual International Women's Day at the International Conference of Working Women in Copenhagen, which was unanimously adopted by delegates from 17 countries.
- The specific date of 8th March is linked to 1917, when women workers in Petrograd, Russia, launched a massive strike demanding "bread and peace" an event that contributed to the Russian Revolution and eventually led to women gaining voting rights in Russia. The strike fell on 23rd February in the Julian calendar, corresponding to 8th March in the Gregorian calendar.
- The United Nations first officially observed the day on 8th March 1975 during International Women's Year, and formally recognised it through a General Assembly resolution in 1977, cementing gender equality as a fundamental human right on the global agenda.
- Since then, each year carries a distinct theme evolving from early focus on suffrage and labour rights to broader concerns of education, health, political representation, climate justice, and systemic gender equality.

India's Constitutional and Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment

- India granted universal adult franchise at Independence ensuring equal voting rights for women from the very first day of the Republic, ahead of many nations still debating women's suffrage at the time.
- Key constitutional provisions include Article 15 (prohibition of sex-based discrimination), Article 16 (equal opportunity in public employment), Article 39 (equal livelihood rights), and Article 42 (maternity relief and humane working conditions).
- The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts (1992) mandated one-third reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies, resulting in nearly 50% women's representation in many states today.
- The landmark 106th Constitutional Amendment Act Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023 guarantees one-third reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.
- The abolition of instant Triple Talaq through the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019,

- following the Supreme Court's ruling in Shayara Bano v. Union of India (2017), marked a major step toward gender justice.
- Mission Shakti strengthens safety mechanisms through One Stop Centres, the Women Helpline, and the SHe-Box portal for workplace harassment redressal under the POSH Act, 2013.

4 Report on Income Mobility in India 2014-2025

IN FOCUS

India's income mobility data from 2014 to 2025, drawn from the Consumer Pyramids Household Survey by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), reveals a troubling economic reality. The share of households experiencing downward mobility nearly doubled from 14% in 2015 to 26.8% in 2025 meaning more than one in four Indian households ended up worse off than their 2014 position. While upward mobility did rise from 14.1% to 23.5%, it consistently lagged behind the rate of decline. Rural households bore the steepest burden, with nearly 29% slipping down the income ladder by 2025. The trends cut across caste and religious lines, with OBC, SC, Hindu, and Muslim households facing pronounced downward shifts. The analysis challenges official narratives of inclusive growth and underscores that headline GDP figures fail to capture the lived reality of growing economic vulnerability and hardening inequality across Indian society.

Key Mobility Trends: National, Rural, and Urban

- The share of households in downward mobility nearly doubled from 14% in 2015 to 26.8% in 2025; by 2025, more than 1 in 4 Indian households were worse off than their 2014 position.
- Upward mobility increased from 14.1% to 23.5% but consistently trailed the rate of downward movement throughout the decade. The proportion of households remaining in the same income tier fell sharply from over 70% to below 50%.
- In rural areas, nearly 29% of households slid down the income ladder by 2025 compared to their 2014 standing; upward movement was consistently outpaced by downward slips, with the sharpest deterioration recorded in the first sub-period (2014–19).
- Urban India recorded a slower rise in downward mobility and a faster pace of upward mobility compared to rural areas, though downward mobility rose in urban centres as well.
- Higher income dispersion at the district level is statistically associated with greater downward mobility; households in more unequal districts are more likely to slip down the income ladder.

Mobility Trends Across Caste and Religious Groups

- Downward mobility rose across all caste groups, with particularly sharp increases among OBC and SC households; by 2025, roughly a quarter or more of households in each of these groups were worse off than in 2014.
- For SC households, upward mobility remained muted and uneven across the entire 2014–2025 period; the steepest rise in downward mobility for SC households occurred in the first sub-period (2014–19).
- Scheduled Tribes recorded comparatively lower downward mobility and some episodes of stronger upward movement across the decade.
- Upward mobility improved for Unreserved and OBC households, though gains remained uneven.
- Downward mobility increased for all religious groups, with the rise most pronounced among Hindu and Muslim households.
- Sikh and Christian households recorded stronger upward mobility in the earlier years of the decade, though this momentum weakened in the latter half.
- Among Hindu and Muslim households, downward mobility spiked around election years, while upward mobility rose more modestly; the rise in upward mobility for Muslim households remained weaker than for Hindu households across the period.

5 Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh Plan Social Media Ban for Minors

IN FOCUS

Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh announced bans on social media use for children under 16 and under 13 respectively in March 2026. However, these state-level announcements face a fundamental constitutional barrier regulating the internet is the exclusive domain of the Union Government under the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution. India's digital framework is governed primarily by the Information Technology Act, 2000, enacted at the Central level. The Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has separately indicated it is deliberating on age-based restrictions but has not announced any implementation timeline. A senior government official stated the Centre will observe how a state-level ban functions before responding. The Internet Freedom Foundation opposed blanket bans, while Meta stated it would comply where enforced. Globally, Australia became the first country to enact a nationwide social media ban for children in December 2025, followed by Indonesia announcing a similar ban for users under 16 in March 2026.

Constitutional and Jurisdictional Framework

- Under the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution, internet and telecommunications regulation fall under the Union List (Entry 31 Posts, telegraphs, telephones, wireless, broadcasting, and other like forms of communication), making it the exclusive domain of the Central Government.
- India's digital and intermediary framework is governed by Central legislation primarily the IT Act, 2000 and measures directly operating on digital intermediaries require Union-level action.
- A state-specific internet ban is practically difficult to enforce without cooperation from the Union Government, which controls internet gateways and Internet Service Providers (ISPs).
- States may invoke subjects under the State or Concurrent Lists such as Public Order, Public Health, or Child Welfare to attempt justification, but such measures face questions of constitutional validity and legislative overlap with Central law.
- Digital rights advocates argue that blanket bans could conflict with children's Freedom of Speech and Expression under Article 19(1)(a); any restriction must qualify as a proportionate and reasonable restriction under Article 19(2).

State Announcements, Global Precedents, and Stakeholder Positions

- Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced a ban on social media for children under 16; Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu announced a ban for children under 13, with regulations to be introduced within 90 days.
- Union Minister for Electronics and IT Ashwini Vaishnaw confirmed the Central Government is deliberating on age-based social media restrictions but did not indicate an implementation timeline.
- Australia became the first country in the world to enact a nationwide social media ban for children in December 2025.
- Indonesia's Digital Minister Meutya Hafid announced a social media ban for users under 16 in March 2026, following a compliance inspection at Meta's Jakarta offices over disinformation concerns.
- Meta stated it would comply with social media bans where enforced, but noted that similar protections should apply to all apps children access, not social media platforms alone.
- The Internet Freedom Foundation described blanket social media bans as a disproportionate response, citing failure to address platform design choices, inadequate data protection frameworks, and poor digital literacy infrastructure.

6 NHAH Releases 1st National Highways Green Cover Index 2025–26

IN FOCUS

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAH) released its first-ever Annual Report on the National Highways Green Cover Index (NH-GCI) 2025–26, prepared in coordination with the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). The report provides a scientific and quantitative assessment of green cover within the Right of Way (RoW) along the National Highways network using advanced space-based technologies. The initiative is based on a three-year Memorandum of Understanding signed between NHAH and NRSC in January 2024. In this first assessment cycle, approximately 30,000 km of National Highways across 24 states were covered for the period July–December 2024. The NH-GCI is reported as a percentage value representing the proportion of land covered by green canopy within each 1 km segment of the RoW. Subsequent annual cycles will track year-on-year changes to monitor progressive improvements in green cover.

About the Green Cover Index: Technology and Methodology

- The NH-GCI represents the percentage of land within each 1 km segment covered by green canopy, measured on both the left and right sides of the highways.
- Vegetation is assessed objectively by measuring chlorophyll content through high-resolution satellite sensors.
- The index utilises 5-metre resolution multispectral data from ISRO's Resourcesat-2/2A (LISS-IV) satellite, cross-verified with finer-resolution Cartosat-2S imagery for enhanced accuracy.
- Results are published on NRSC's open-source Bhuvan web GIS portal, providing interactive maps and standardised reports accessible to the public.
- The initiative is a direct implementation of India's Green Highways Policy, 2015, which mandates NHAH to both plant trees and ensure their survival.

Coverage, Scope, and Future Enhancements

- The current assessment covers approximately 30,000 km of National Highways across 24 states, specifically those under the Operation and Maintenance (O&M) phase.
- The first assessment cycle covers the period July–December 2024; subsequent annual cycles will track year-on-year changes for progressive monitoring.
- The findings enable comparison, ranking, and targeted interventions for improved plantation management across highway stretches.
- Planned future upgrades include the use of machine learning for auto-classification of vegetation, change-detection alerts for vegetation loss, and integration with carbon sequestration models.
- The initiative provides a cost-effective and time-efficient mechanism for macro-level estimation of green cover along National Highways.

7 Cabinet Extends Jal Jeevan Mission Till 2028

IN FOCUS

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the restructuring and extension of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) up to December 2028 under JJM 2.0, with an enhanced total outlay of ₹8.69 lakh crore, including total central assistance of ₹3.59 lakh crore up from ₹2.08 lakh crore approved in 2019–20, representing an additional central share of ₹1.51 lakh crore. Originally launched on 15th August 2019, JJM aimed to provide 55 litres of water per person per day to every rural household through Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC). From a baseline of 3.23 crore (17%) rural households with tap water connections in 2019, over 12.56 crore additional connections have been provided, bringing the current coverage to 15.80 crore households (81.61%) out of 19.36 crore identified rural households. JJM 2.0 shifts focus from infrastructure creation to citizen-centric, utility-based service delivery through structural reforms, targeting tap water connections for all 19.36 crore rural households by December 2028.

JJM: Structure, Funding, and Key Features

- JJM is implemented under the Ministry of Jal Shakti as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
- Funding pattern: 90:10 (Centre:State) for Himalayan and North-Eastern States; 50:50 for other states; 100% Central funding for Union Territories.
- Paani Samitis are responsible for building, operating, managing, and maintaining village water supplies, with 10–15 members including at least 50% women.
- Goa is the first 'Har Ghar Jal' certified State; Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu (D&NH and D&D) is the first certified Union Territory.
- Major components include bottom-up planning, women empowerment, skill development and employment generation, greywater management, and source sustainability.
- JJM 2.0 introduces the **Sujalam Bharat** digital framework, assigning every village a unique Sujal Gaon/Service Area ID to digitally map the complete drinking water supply system from source to tap.
- The **Jal Arpan** mechanism mandates involvement of Gram Panchayats (GPs) and Village Water Sanitation Committees (VWSCs) in the commissioning and formal handover of schemes.
- A GP can certify itself as 'Har Ghar Jal' only upon confirmation that adequate in-village operation and maintenance mechanisms have been established by the State Government.
- **Jal Utsav** is introduced as an annual, community-led maintenance and review event under JJM 2.0.
- JJM 2.0 operates under a Whole of Government approach, with separate MoUs with States/UTs to ensure adherence to timelines and scheme sustainability.

Socio-Economic Impact of JJM

- SBI Research reported that JJM has freed 9 crore women from the task of fetching water, enabling greater participation in economic activities.
- WHO estimated a reduction in women's drudgery through savings of 5.5 crore hours daily, prevention of 4,00,000 diarrhoeal deaths, and savings of 14 million Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs).
- Nobel Laureate Prof. Michael Kremer estimated a potential 30% reduction in under-five mortality, saving 1,36,000 lives annually.
- IIM Bangalore and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimated generation of 59.9 lakh direct and 2.2 crore indirect person-years of potential employment through JJM.

8 SC Clarifies OBC Creamy Layer Criteria

IN FOCUS

The Supreme Court of India has ruled that parental income alone cannot be the basis for deciding the creamy layer status of OBC candidates in civil services examinations. The judgment clears the long-standing confusion created by the 1993 DoPT Office Memorandum and the 2004 clarificatory letter, especially in relation to the treatment of children of PSU, PSB, and private sector employees.

What the Supreme Court Held

- The Court set aside the 2004 clarificatory letter, which had required the salary income of parents working in PSUs and the private sector to be included while applying the creamy layer test. It reaffirmed that the 1993 DoPT OM had excluded salary income and agricultural income from the income/wealth test for creamy layer determination.
- The Court held that creamy layer identification is primarily status-based, not merely income-based, and should depend on the nature of the parent's post, service category, and social advancement, rather than only on annual earnings.
- It found that denying reservation to children of PSU/private sector employees solely because parental salary exceeded Rs 8 lakh, while allowing similarly placed children of lower-tier government employees to retain reservation benefits, amounted to unequal treatment and hostile discrimination, violating Articles 14, 15, and 16 of the Constitution.
- The Court also directed the government to create supernumerary posts, if required, to accommodate candidates who were wrongly excluded earlier.

Background and Existing Creamy Layer Rules

- The concept of the creamy layer was introduced by the Supreme Court in *Indra Sawhney v. Union of India* (1992) to exclude the more socially advanced sections among OBCs from reservation benefits. Under the existing framework, children of Group A officers and those of officers promoted to Group A before the age of 40 are treated as falling within the creamy layer.
- Similarly, children of two Group B officers are also excluded from the OBC quota. In non-government occupations, the creamy layer is determined through the income criterion, and the present ceiling has remained Rs 8 lakh per annum since 2017.
- The latest judgment makes it clear that this income rule cannot be applied mechanically in a way that creates discrimination between similarly placed families

9 V.O. Chidambaranar Port: India's First Digital Twin Port

IN FOCUS

- On 12 March 2026, V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority (VOC Port) announced that it had become the first Indian major port to implement a Digital Twin for port management. The platform had earlier been inaugurated on 23 February 2026 by Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal.
- It is significant because V.O. Chidambaranar Port is the first Indian major port to deploy a Digital Twin platform for port management, creating a real-time virtual replica of the port's physical infrastructure, assets, and operations.
- The initiative is substantive because it enables live monitoring of berth occupancy, vessel movement, cargo-handling equipment, and yard operations through integrated digital mapping of port activity.

What is a Digital Twin Port

- A Digital Twin Port is a real-time virtual replica of a port's physical infrastructure, operational assets, and maritime ecosystem. It continuously reflects actual ground conditions through live data integration.
- In the case of VOC Port, the Digital Twin integrates technologies such as IoT sensors, GPS tracking, LiDAR mapping, drone imaging, and CCTV networks to create a continuously updated digital model of port operations.
- Such a system helps in real-time operational visibility, predictive analytics, predictive maintenance, and data-driven decision-making, thereby improving port efficiency, safety, and reliability.

What are the Key Pointers of the Initiative

- The Digital Twin platform enables live visualisation of berth occupancy, vessel movements, crane utilisation, and yard capacity across the port.
- It supports AI-based predictive maintenance of cargo-handling equipment, which helps reduce downtime and improve operational reliability.
- The platform is intended to improve vessel turnaround time, strengthen inter-departmental coordination, and support more efficient use of port infrastructure.
- VOC Port has presented this initiative as part of its broader transformation into a green and technologically advanced maritime hub on India's eastern seaboard.
- Along with the Digital Twin deployment, the port has also installed an anti-drone system to strengthen the security of critical infrastructure.
- The port had also hosted a high-level pre-event on AI in Ports and Maritime Operations on 9 February 2026, showing that the Digital Twin initiative is linked with a wider push toward AI-led maritime modernisation.
- Overall, the initiative is aimed at aligning VOC Port with global smart-port standards and improving efficiency, transparency, safety, sustainability, and competitiveness in maritime operations.

10 US Launches Section 301 Probe into India

IN FOCUS

- On 11 March 2026, the United States launched a Section 301 investigation covering India and 15 other economies over alleged structural excess capacity and production in manufacturing sectors.
- On 12 March 2026, the United States also launched a second set of Section 301 investigations covering India and 59 other economies over the alleged failure to impose and effectively enforce bans on the import of goods produced with forced labor.
- Therefore, the current development is important because India has been named in two separate new U.S. Section 301 investigations, one linked to manufacturing overcapacity and the other linked to forced-labor-related import controls.

Details of the Incident and Rescue Operations

- Section 301 is part of the U.S. Trade Act of 1974 and is used to examine foreign government acts, policies, or practices that the United States considers unjustifiable, unreasonable, or discriminatory, and that burden or restrict U.S. commerce.
- It allows the U.S. Trade Representative to self-initiate investigations and then seek consultations with the concerned foreign governments.
- After investigation, the United States may decide whether action is needed, which can include trade measures such as tariffs or other restrictions.

What are the Key Pointers of the Probe

- In the manufacturing-related probe, India is one of 16 economies being examined for alleged structural excess capacity and overproduction in manufacturing.
- The U.S. fact sheet says the investigation is concerned with sectors such as aluminum, automobiles, batteries, cement, chemicals, electronics, machinery, semiconductors, ships, solar modules, steel, and transportation equipment.
- The U.S. position is that such excess capacity may arise from factors such as subsidies, non-commercial conduct of state-owned enterprises, market access barriers, subsidized lending, weak labor or environmental protection, and other policy distortions.
- In the forced-labor-related probe, India is one of 60 economies being examined on the question of whether it has taken sufficient steps to ban and effectively enforce restrictions on imports of goods produced wholly or partly with forced labor.
- In both investigations, the United States has said it will seek consultations with the concerned governments, including India.
- For both probes, the U.S. opened the process for public comments, with written comments and hearing requests due by 15 April 2026, and hearings scheduled to begin on 5 May 2026.
- At this stage, these are investigations, not final penalties. The immediate significance is that India has been formally brought into a U.S. trade-law process that could later lead to trade action depending on the findings.

VOICES VICTORIES



AIR 4, AILET 2026

SIDDHANT ROHIT

“I joined Nishant Prakash Law Classes in Class 11, and from that day, every stage of my preparation was guided by Nishant sir. I didn’t just learn how to study—I learned how to stay disciplined, how to believe, and how to keep pushing even when it got overwhelming. I followed exactly what sir told us, gave 150+ mocks, trusted the process, and that belief took me to AIR 4 in AILET. I genuinely don’t think I could have reached here without Nishant sir and NPLC.”



(AIR 4, CLAT 2026

ARSHNOOR SINGH

I started my CLAT journey without any law background in my family, and everything I know about this exam, I learned under the guidance of Nishant Sir at NPLC. What made the biggest difference for me was the personal attention—Sir knew every student, our strengths, our weaknesses, and our exact mistakes after each mock.

After every test, he would look at my OMR and guide me on how to change my strategy instead of following a one-size-fits-all approach. When the CLAT paper surprised everyone, Sir’s constant advice of staying calm and confident helped me push through without panicking. That mindset, combined with consistent practice and guidance, is what helped me secure AIR 4 in CLAT 2026.



AIR 2, CLAT 2025

DAIWIK AGARWALA

I don’t think I’ve ever given so many tests in my life as I did at NPLC in just one year. They made me take so many mocks that I became almost mechanical before the actual exam. The course structure here is such that hard work is non-negotiable. And last, but not least, Nishant Sir would connect with your parents and keep them informed about your every day scores, which added a bit of pressure and made all of us work harder. There were times when my scores didn’t meet my expectations, and I felt low, but Sir was always there to motivate me.

“NPLC doesn’t shout excellence; it proves it every result season.”

VOICES VICTORIES



AIR 2, AILET 2025

CHAITANYA GHOSH

This place is not your regular coaching institute that you see around. They don't just make you work hard—they make you smart. NPLC has been my best choice for both CLAT and AILET preparation. These exams cover general topics that seemed easy to me initially, but it wasn't until I started attending classes at NPLC that I realized the major challenges I would have faced if I solely depended on self-study. The competitive environment and Sir's dedicated guidance have been key in helping me clear every law entrance exam I took. I cleared every law entrance exam I wrote.



AIR 4, CLAT 2025

ADITYA GAUTAM ANKHAD

It's all about AILET and CLAT here. Students eat, drink, and sleep law entrance preparation! I used to go to another institute in XIth, but somehow, I was just an enrollment number there. Initially, when I joined, the competition and pressure from Sir felt overwhelming, but thanks to him, everything became much easier. Here, no one calls you by batch number or enrollment ID. All of us studying together were very good friends, but we competed intensely. Since they have a limited intake, we received a lot of personalized attention. I recall most of my batchmates at NPLC making it to the top NLU's. This place is even better than you can imagine!



AIR 6, AILET 2025

DHRUV KAMATH

I had never experienced such intense competition in any classroom before I did my first class at NPLC. It was a bit horrifying initially however it got better with time. If you can't work hard, I do not feel this is the place for you. Nishant sir is simply amazing. I never liked him till I was at the center as there was too much pressure from his side unlike my school, However, I can tell you, that I could make it to NLU Delhi, and only because of him. I recall almost everyone with me in the class who got through either of the top 5 NLU's.

"At NPLC, branding isn't on T-shirts — it's in the AIRs."

VOICES VICTORIES



AIR 10, AILET 2025

VIDISHA SINGH

Nishant Sir's classes are the complete package. While there's a great deal of hard work expected, he creates an environment where you can ease your way into cracking the exam. Unlike the rigid and monotonous teaching methods of many other coaching institutions, his classes are a perfect blend of learning and fun. His approach is practical, reliable, and tailored to real exam scenarios, which is reflected in his incredible track record of sending most of his students to the top 5 NLUs. Even after completing his classes, you'll find yourself wanting to go back for more (I still do).



**AIR 24 AILET 2025
& OXFORD**

SAMYUKTHA KOVILAKATH

People often ask me how I managed to prepare for Indian law entrances and the Oxford Law entrance at the same time. My answer is simple: NPLC gave me the discipline, perspective, and clarity to handle both. Nishant Sir's classroom isn't just a place where laws are taught - it's where ambition is refined and sharpened. What stood out to me most was how the training here doesn't chase trends - it builds fundamentals. I never felt like I was preparing for just one exam - I was preparing to think like a lawyer.

This journey hasn't just taken me to AILET AIR 24—it's also taken me across continents. And for that, I credit the environment, the mentorship, and the unwavering standards at NPLC.

"Mentorship isn't a model here — it's a method."

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched National Monetisation Pipeline 2.0 (NMP 2.0), prepared by NITI Aayog, with a ₹16.72 lakh crore asset monetisation target for FY 2026–30, more than 2.6 times the target of NMP 1.0.
- India will host the Bharat Steel 2026 Summit at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, on 16–17 April 2026, under the Ministry of Steel, to shape policy and industry dialogue on the future of the steel sector.
- Mangaluru International Airport won the ACI World 2025 ASQ "Best Airport at Arrivals – Globally" award for the second consecutive year, with the formal presentation scheduled in Istanbul on 2 September 2026.
- A hazardous oleum gas leak at Bhageria Industries Ltd in Palghar's Tarapur MIDC led to the evacuation of over 2,600 people, deployment of NDRF and BARC teams, and suo motu cognisance by the NHRC on 5 March 2026.
- Tamil Nadu, governed by TRANSTAN, led India in deceased organ donation with 57 donors in the first two months of 2026 and has won the Government of India's Best State Award in organ donation for six consecutive years.
- The Tamil Nadu government launched the state's first Dark Sky Park at Ariyur Shola Reserve Forest, Kolli Hills, Namakkal district, at a cost of ₹44 lakh, equipped with three telescopes to promote astro-tourism and scientific literacy.
- Adani Group became the first Indian organisation to be named an official partner for UNESCO's World Engineering Day 2026, linked to its 30 GW Khavda renewable energy project in Kutch, Gujarat — the world's largest planned renewable energy site.
- The 11th Raisina Dialogue (5–7 March 2026) was inaugurated in New Delhi by PM Modi with Finland's President Alexander Stubb as Chief Guest, under the theme "Saṃskāra - Assertion, Accommodation, Advancement," drawing participation from 110 countries.
- Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar filed his Rajya Sabha nomination on 5 March 2026, paving the way for a new Chief Minister in Bihar as biennial elections for 37 Rajya Sabha seats were scheduled for 16 March 2026.
- IBM launched its first Infrastructure Innovation Centre globally — the Sangam Infrastructure Innovation Center — in Bengaluru on 5 March 2026, within its India Systems Development Lab campus, to co-create enterprise-scale AI solutions.
- Union Home Minister Amit Shah unveiled mascots 'Pragati' and 'Vikas' and soft-launched four digital tools for Census 2027, which will be India's first fully digital census, its 16th overall, conducted in two phases at a cost of ₹11,718 crore.
- The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting directed BARC on 7 March 2026 to suspend TRP ratings for all news TV channels for four weeks, citing sensationalism and speculative coverage of the ongoing US–Israel–Iran conflict.
- The Indian Navy's Operation Sankalp came back into focus amid the 2026 West Asia conflict, with two warships placed on HADR standby and INS Surat stationed in Bahrain, as PM Modi chaired a Cabinet Committee on Security meeting on 1 March 2026.
- Dipali Das, a 60-year-old woman from Cachar district, became the first person in Assam to receive Indian citizenship under the CAA on 6 March 2026, after spending nearly two years in a detention camp following her declaration as a foreigner in 2019.
- NCRB's 2023 Crime in India report revealed that Uttar Pradesh accounted for over 96% (173 of 180) of cases of SC persons being denied access to public spaces, reflecting entrenched caste-based segregation in the state.
- The NCB dismantled 'Team Kalki,' a pan-India darknet drug trafficking network operating since January 2025, arresting two former Tihar Jail inmates who had dispatched over 1,000 drug consignments using cryptocurrency payments via Monero and USDT.
- The 11th Raisina Dialogue 2026 concluded on 7 March 2026 with the launch of the Raisina Science Diplomacy Initiative, aimed at integrating science and technology — particularly AI governance and semiconductor supply chains — into India's foreign policy framework.
- Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan debuted on the Hurun Global Rich List 2026 with an estimated net worth of \$1.3 billion, becoming one of the first Indian entertainment personalities to achieve billionaire status on the global list.

- SIPRI's latest report ranked India as the world's second-largest arms importer despite a 4% decline in imports, with Russia's share falling from ~70% to ~40%, while France (24%) and Israel (15%) emerged as major alternative suppliers.

ECONOMY AND GOVERNANCE

- India and Canada announced a Strategic Energy Partnership and revived CEPA negotiations on 2 March 2026, targeting bilateral trade of USD 50 billion by 2030, with cooperation planned in clean energy, critical minerals, and uranium supply for India's nuclear energy needs.

INTERNATIONAL

- Iranian state media confirmed the death of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, aged 86, following joint US-Israel military strikes beginning 28 February 2026, with Iran declaring a 40-day mourning period and launching a counterassault.
- Iran appointed a three-member interim Leadership Council — comprising President Masoud Pezeshkian, Chief Justice Mohseni Ejei, and Ayatollah Alireza Arafati — to temporarily fulfil the duties of Supreme Leader pending the Assembly of Experts electing a permanent successor.
- Micron inaugurated its semiconductor assembly and test facility in Sanand, Gujarat, with Phase 1 set to include over 500,000 sq ft of cleanroom space and a combined investment of approximately \$2.75 billion by the company and government partners.
- Human Rights Watch accused the Israeli military of unlawfully using white phosphorus artillery shells in residential areas of Yohmor village in southern Lebanon on 3 March 2026, calling on Israel to immediately halt its use and urging arms-supplying nations to suspend military aid.
- A UN report submitted to the 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) revealed that women globally hold only 64% of men's legal rights, with 54% of countries lacking consent-based rape laws and 72% permitting child marriage.
- The World Obesity Atlas 2026 ranked India second globally — after China — in childhood obesity, with approximately 14 million children aged 5–19 years living with obesity and projections warning the figure could reach 20 million by 2040.
- WHO and PAHO officially verified Chile on 4 March 2026 as the first country in the Americas and second globally — after Jordan — to eliminate leprosy, having reported no locally acquired case since 1993.
- Yellowstone National Park's Echinus Geyser — the world's largest acidic geyser — resumed eruptive activity in February 2026 after nearly six years of dormancy, with eruptions occurring every 2–5 hours from 16 February 2026.
- Scotland became the first part of the United Kingdom to legalise water cremation (alkaline hydrolysis) through The Hydrolysis (Scotland) (No. 1) Regulations 2026, which came into force on 2 March 2026, marking the most significant reform to Scottish funeral law since 1902.
- A US submarine sank the Iranian frigate IRIS Dena in the Indian Ocean off Galle, Sri Lanka, on 4 March 2026 using a Mark 48 torpedo — reportedly the first such submarine torpedo sinking by the US since World War II — with 87 bodies recovered and 32 survivors rescued.
- Scientists flagged Cassava Brown Streak Disease (CBSD) as a rapidly expanding food security threat in sub-Saharan Africa, with a January 2026 study estimating approximately 7% of Africa's land area currently at risk and projecting further spread under mid-century climate scenarios.
- The International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness was observed on 5 March 2026, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 2022, led by UNODA with hybrid events and youth-focused engagements held from 2–6 March 2026.
- The US and Israel launched coordinated strikes against approximately 4,000 targets in Iran beginning 1 March 2026, triggering Iranian retaliatory strikes on GCC states, US bases, and Israeli cities, with Iranian state media reporting at least 1,332 people killed across Iran.
- The US Treasury issued a temporary 30-day waiver in March 2026 allowing Indian refiners to purchase Russian crude stranded at sea, amid the effective blockage of the Strait of Hormuz due to the US-Israel-Iran war threatening India's oil supply.
- The Hurun Global Rich List 2026, released on 5 March 2026, ranked India third globally with 308 billionaires — behind China (1,110) and the US (1,000) — with Mukesh Ambani leading at \$109 billion and Cyrus Poonawalla recording India's

- largest absolute wealth gain at 43%.
- Nepal's Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), led by 35-year-old rapper-turned-politician Balendra 'Balen' Shah, emerged as the dominant force in Nepal's 2026 parliamentary elections, with Shah defeating sitting PM K P Sharma Oli in his own constituency and set to become Nepal's new Prime Minister.
- International Women's Day was observed on 8 March 2026 under the theme 'Give To Gain,' emphasising mutual support and collective progress to advance gender equality, with the hashtag #GiveToGain promoted globally.
- Iran's 88-member Assembly of Experts named Mojtaba Khamenei — second son of the late Supreme Leader — as Iran's new Supreme Leader on 8 March 2026, a decision that drew celebrations from pro-establishment supporters but sparked protests across Iran.

APPOINTMENTS

- The President of India approved a major gubernatorial reshuffle on 5 March 2026, appointing R. N. Ravi as Governor of West Bengal, Vinai Kumar Saxena as LG of Ladakh, Taranjit Singh Sandhu as LG of Delhi, and several others to new gubernatorial positions.
- RM Nachammai was appointed Chief Superintendent of Kaiga Generating Station Units 3 and 4 in Karnataka from 15 March 2026, becoming the first woman to head operations of a functional nuclear power plant in India.

SPORTS

- The BCCI announced on 3 March 2026 that the India Women's Cricket Team — credited with winning their maiden ICC Women's Cricket World Cup in 2025 — has been shortlisted for the Laureus World Team of the Year Award 2026, with winners to be announced on 20 April in Madrid.
- India defeated England by 7 runs in a high-scoring ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 Semi-Final at Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai, on 5 March 2026, with the combined 499 runs setting a record for the most runs in a men's T20 World Cup match.
- New Zealand reached the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 final with a nine-wicket win over South Africa, with Finn Allen scoring an unbeaten century off just

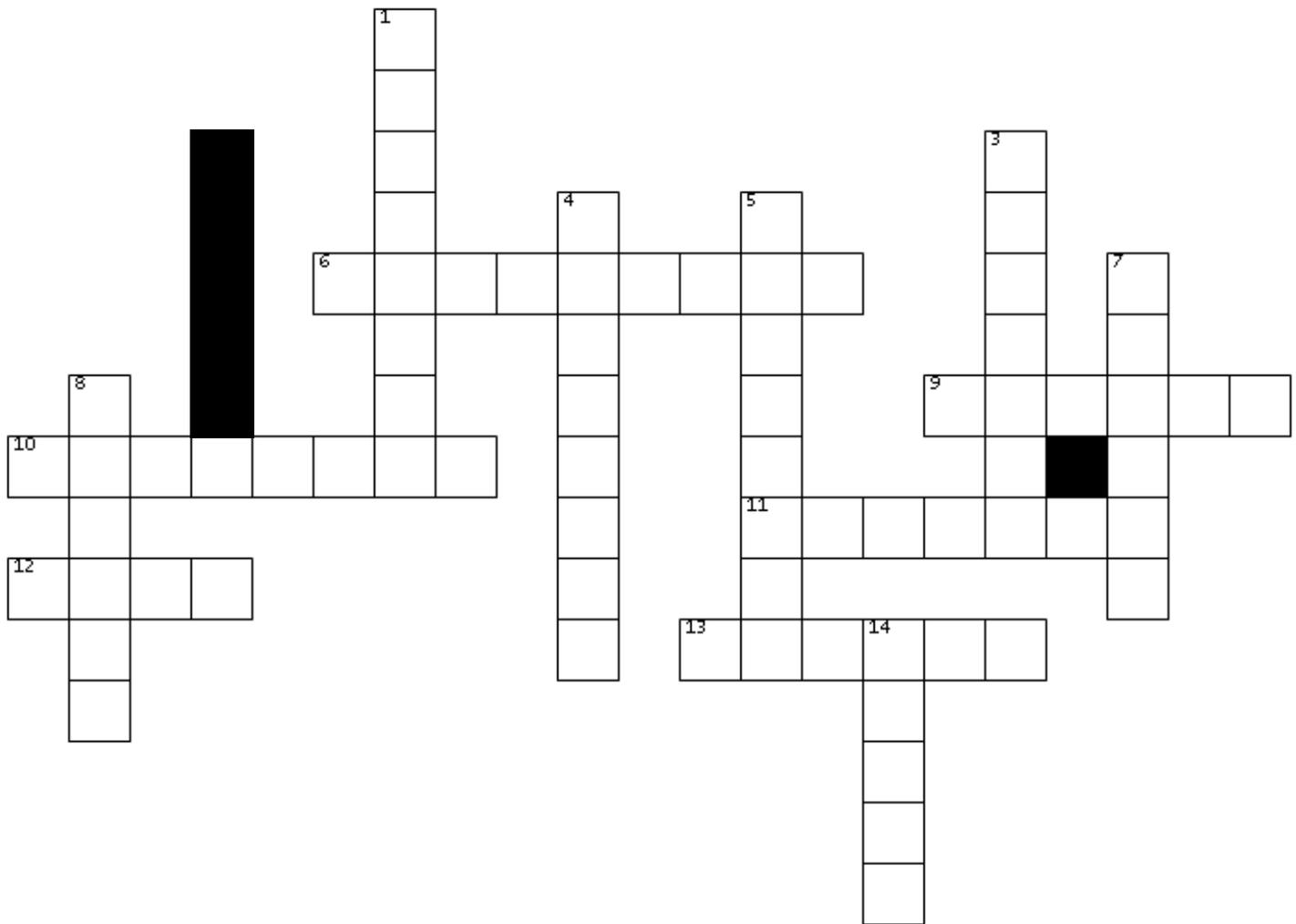
- 33 balls — the fastest in Men's T20 World Cup history.
- India defeated New Zealand by 96 runs in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 Final at Narendra Modi Stadium, Ahmedabad, on 8 March 2026, becoming the first team to win three T20 World Cup titles, the first to defend the title, and the first to win it on home soil, with Jasprit Bumrah named Player of the Match and Sanju Samson named Player of the Tournament.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

- ESA's CHEOPS satellite identified an unusual four-planet system around red dwarf star LHS 1903, located 116.3 light-years away, featuring a rocky outermost planet explained by the inside-out planet formation model, with findings published in the journal Science.
- MeitY launched VoicERA — an open-source Voice AI stack developed by the Digital India BHASHINI Division — on the BHASHINI National Language Infrastructure at the India AI Impact Summit 2026, expanding BHASHINI into real-time speech recognition and multilingual voice-enabled citizen services.
- Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace is preparing to launch Vikram-1 — India's first privately developed orbital rocket with a 300 kg payload capacity — from Sriharikota, built on three solid-propellant stages and a 3D-printed liquid upper module.
- Escalating US-Iran tensions triggered widespread GPS spoofing across the Persian Gulf and UAE airspace from 1 March 2026, with Iran's Cobra V8 electronic warfare system disrupting navigation for over 1,000 maritime vessels and hundreds of commercial flights.
- Three air defence systems — Israel's Iron Dome (short-range, ~70 km), the US THAAD (high-altitude, ~200 km), and Iran's Bavar-373 (medium-to-long-range, ~200 km) — came under global focus amid escalating Middle East conflict, each designed for distinct interception layers and threat types.

IMPORTANT DAYS

- National Science Day 2026 was observed on 28 February, commemorating C. V. Raman's 1928 discovery of the Raman Effect, under the theme "Women in Science: Catalysing Viksit Bharat."
- World Wildlife Day 2026 was observed on 3 March under the theme "Medicinal and Aromatic Plants: Conserving Health, Heritage and Livelihoods," marking the 53rd anniversary of the signing of CITES on 3 March 1973.



Fill the crossword grid using the ACROSS and DOWN clues given below. Each clue provides a hint to a word or term. Write the correct answer in CAPITAL letters in the grid. Do not use spaces, hyphens, or punctuation while filling the answers. Each entry should fit exactly into the boxes provided. Some Answers can be in abbreviations.

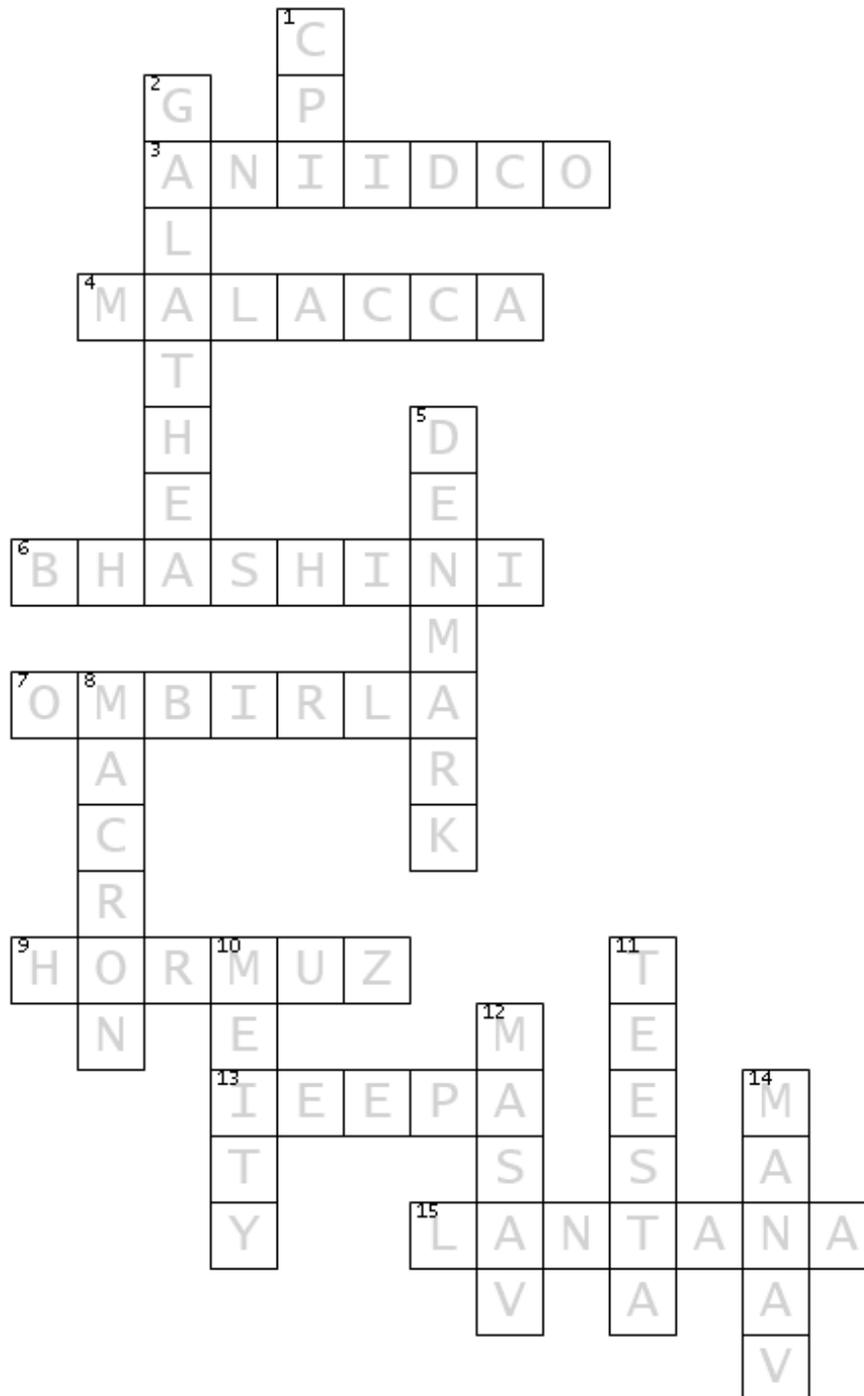
ACROSS

6. Iran-backed group described as Tehran's principal anti-Israel proxy in Lebanon
9. strategic strait between Iran and Oman/UAE that became central to the energy crisis
10. scientist whose General Theory of Relativity predicted gravitational waves
11. India's premier annual conference on geopolitics and geo-economics held in New Delhi
12. Governor whose standoff with the Tamil Nadu government included refusal on the NEET exemption Bill
13. Player of the Tournament who made 89 in the T20 World Cup final

DOWN

1. Iranian Supreme Leader reportedly killed in the opening assault of the 2026 conflict
3. Maharashtra district where LIGO-India is being constructed
4. record under the Ramsar Convention for wetlands needing priority conservation
5. Commission that recommended an eminent outsider for appointment as Governor
7. Indian bowler named Player of the Match in the 2026 T20 World Cup final
8. headquarters city of the Gulf Cooperation Council Secretariat General
14. President of Finland who attended the 2026 Raisina Dialogue as Chief Guest

The completed crossword for the **CLAT TATHYA MARCH 2026 PART II** is provided below. All answers are written in CAPITAL letters exactly as they should appear in the grid. No spaces, hyphens, or punctuation have been used. The answers are listed separately for ACROSS and DOWN according to their clue numbers.



The Completed Crossword the CLAT Tathya April Part I will provided in the next Edition that is **APRIL 2026 Part II**.



Faces That Inspire

Our Torchbearers: ALUMNIS IN NLS BANGALORE & NLU DELHI



Ananya Prakash



Masirah Ahmad



Arush Sarma



Nikhil Dabbas



Samporno Mukherjee



Vaishnavi K. Prasad



Ananya Kapani



Ananya Tripathi



Tejaswini Singh



Nandil B. Sarma



Anushree Prasad



Eshan Nakra



Varun Pathak



Romit Kohli



Hardik Choubey



Karina Chawla

...a few among the many achievers.



NISHANT PRAKASH
LAW CLASSES



A1/5, Lower Ground Floor,
Safdarjung Enclave,
New Delhi, Delhi 110029



(011) 42420442
(+91) 8800802630



www.nplc.in



info@nplc.in



[@nishantprakashlawclass](https://www.facebook.com/nishantprakashlawclass)