

**Issue Includes:  
The Transgender  
Persons  
Amendment Bill  
2026**



**NISHANT PRAKASH  
LAW CLASSES**

*"Gurukul for CLAT & AILET"*

**CLAT**  
**Tathya**

APRIL 2026 - II

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# 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.

AIR

4

CLAT 2026



Arshnoor Singh

AIR

2

AILET 2025



Chaitanya Ghosh

AIR

2

CLAT 2025



Daiwik Agarwala

AIR

4

CLAT 2025



Aditya Gautam Ankhad

AIR

4

AILET 2026



Siddhant Rohit



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# 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.

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Only 90 intakes per year  
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**N**AVIGATE.  
**P**REPARE.  
**L**EAD.  
**C**ONQUER.

# 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.

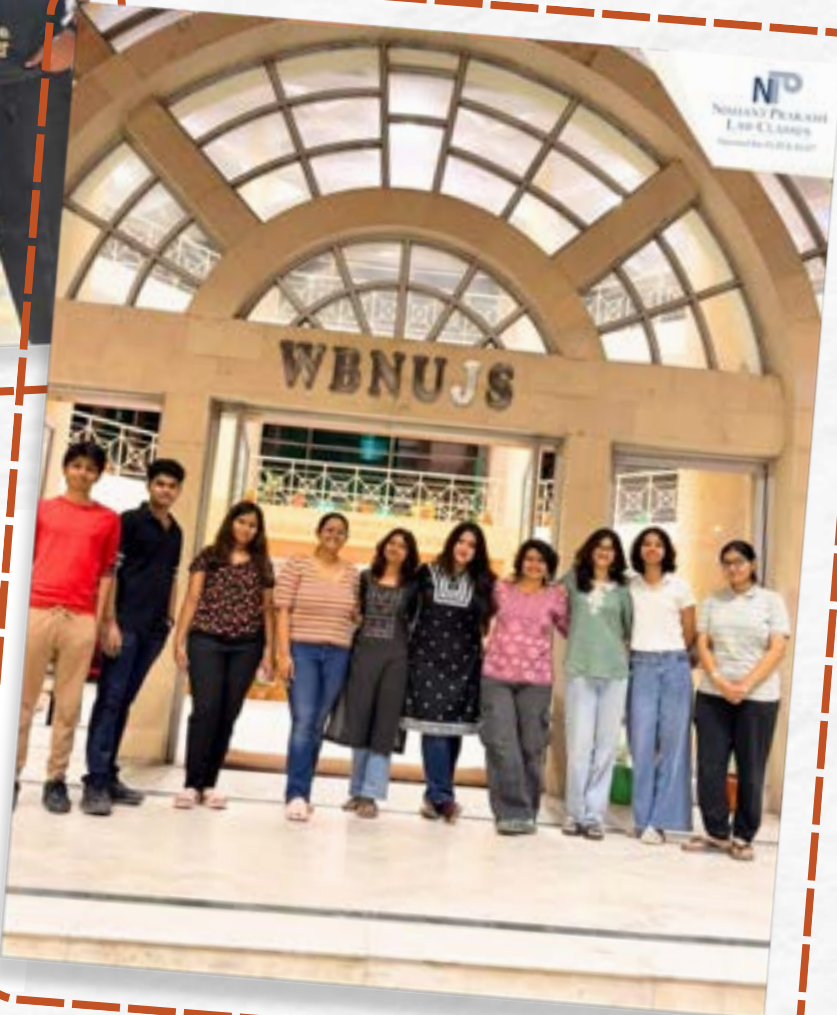
# Their Next Chapter



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*(Left to Right)*

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Daksh Balakrishnan  
Dhruv Kamath  
Aditya Ankhad**



## WBNUJS - Kolkata

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

# Their Next Chapter



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



## NLU - Jodhpur

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*(Left to Right)*

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

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**NISHANT PRAKASH  
LAW CLASSES**

# 1 SC Allows 1st Passive Euthanasia in Harish Rana Case

## IN FOCUS

- In **Harish Rana v. Union of India**, a Bench of the Supreme Court on **11 March 2026** permitted withdrawal of **clinically assisted nutrition and hydration (CANH)** for Harish Rana, a man who had remained in an irreversible, severely incapacitated condition for years after a traumatic brain injury.
- The ruling is being described as India's **first fully implemented court-approved passive euthanasia case**, because earlier cases had recognized the legal principle, but Harish Rana became the first case in which the Supreme Court actually allowed the process to be carried through for a specific patient after the full medical and legal procedure was completed.
- The case returned to public focus after Harish Rana's death later in March 2026.

- **Euthanasia** refers to ending, or allowing the ending of, the life of a person who is suffering from a terminal or irreversible medical condition, usually to relieve unbearable suffering or preserve dignity at the end of life. In law, the most important distinction is between **active euthanasia** and **passive euthanasia**.
- The Supreme Court reiterated in Harish Rana that **active euthanasia** involves a **positive act** intended to cause death, while **passive euthanasia** involves **withholding or withdrawing medical treatment** and allowing the person to die naturally from the underlying condition.
- The Court also emphasized that in passive euthanasia, the omission to continue treatment is not treated as the legal cause of death in the same way as a lethal injection would be. Instead, death is understood to result from the patient's underlying medical condition once artificial life-sustaining measures are withdrawn.
- This distinction is central to Indian law, because **active euthanasia remains illegal in India**, while **passive euthanasia is permitted under strict safeguards**.
- A related but separate concept is **physician-assisted suicide**, where a doctor provides the means for death but the final act is performed by the patient.
- The Indian cases on passive euthanasia have not legalized physician-assisted suicide. India's jurisprudence has developed specifically around **withdrawal or withholding of futile medical treatment**, not around direct medical assistance to end life.

### WHAT IS PASSIVE EUTHANASIA

TOI

Allowing a patient to die naturally by **withholding** or **withdrawing** medical treatment that sustains life

#### Legal status

- The issue was first raised by the Law Commission of India in its 196th Report (2006), which recommended allowing withdrawal of life support for terminally ill patients
- On March 7, 2011, SC legalised passive euthanasia in the Shanbaug case, holding that withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment for patients in a permanent vegetative state could be permitted under strict, court-monitored safeguards
- Law Commission revisits issue in its 241st Report (2012), again recommending legalisation of passive euthanasia for terminally ill patients and proposing guidelines for its implementation
- In 2018, a five-judge SC constitution bench lays down guidelines allowing passive euthanasia and recognising the concept of a "living will", with oversight involving DMs, judicial officers and medical specialists
- In 2023, another constitution bench of the SC modify these guidelines to simplify the procedure

### WHAT IS ACTIVE EUTHANASIA

Direct action taken to end a patient's life



Still illegal and considered an offence in India.



Legalised in the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Canada, Spain, Colombia, New Zealand, and all six states of Australia

### Background of the Harish Rana Case

- Harish Rana suffered a catastrophic brain injury on **20 August 2013** after falling from the fourth floor of his accommodation while he was a student. He sustained **diffuse axonal injury**, underwent treatment at PGI Chandigarh, and over time remained in a profoundly disabled, non-responsive state requiring long-term institutional care.
- Medical records before the Court showed that he was bedridden, quadriplegic, entirely dependent on others, receiving nutrition through tube feeding, and had no meaningful prospect of neurological recovery.
- His parents approached the Delhi High Court seeking permission for withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment. The High Court declined relief in July 2024, reasoning in substance that he was not being maintained on a conventional mechanical ventilator or similar machine-based support in the manner often imagined in end-of-life cases.
- When the matter reached the Supreme Court, the Court initially also noted that the earlier passive-euthanasia framework had usually been applied in cases involving more obvious forms of artificial life support, but it did not stop there.
- Instead, it began examining whether Harish Rana's continued **artificial feeding and clinical maintenance** themselves constituted life-sustaining medical treatment.
- During the pendency of the proceedings, the Supreme Court sought expert medical evaluation under the framework laid down in **Common Cause**. On **11 December 2025**, it directed constitution of the **Primary Medical Board**. The subsequent medical material placed before the Court recorded that there was **negligible to no chance of meaningful recovery**, that his condition was permanent and irreversible, and that continuation of CANH and associated interventions did not offer curative benefit.
- A **Secondary Medical Board** also concurred. The family was heard, AIIMS was involved, and the Court finally proceeded to decide whether continued treatment was in Harish Rana's **best interests**.

### HARISH RANA: 13 YEARS IN COMA



**2013** | Civil engineering student **Harish Rana** falls from the fourth floor of his PG accommodation in Chandigarh and suffers severe head injuries. He is admitted to the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research trauma centre.



**2013–2014** | After emergency treatment for traumatic brain injury, doctors declare Rana 100% quadriplegic.

**2024** | Family approaches Delhi High Court seeking permission to withdraw life support. The court declines the request. They move Supreme Court, which directs UP govt to bear treatment costs.

**2014–2023** | Rana remains bedridden with no neurological recovery. His parents care for him at home using feeding tubes, physiotherapy and round-the-clock medical support.

**2025** | SC orders formation of a primary medical board to assess Rana's condition.

**March 2026** | SC allows withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment for Rana.



Our son was a brilliant student of civil engineering. He was a topper at Panjab University. The incident happened on Aug 20, 2013, which was a Tuesday, and also Raksha Bandhan. He sent messages that day. Later, we received a call saying that he had fallen (from the fourth floor of his PG). We reached PGI Trauma Centre in Chandigarh at 3am, and were told he had injuries on his head, there were marks, and his feet turned blue.



— ASHOK RANA, Father of Harish Rana

## Judgment of the Supreme Court

### The Court's central legal question

The most important question before the Supreme Court was not whether Indian law recognizes passive euthanasia in the abstract. That had already been settled by **Common Cause (2018)**. The real question was whether **clinically assisted nutrition and hydration**, given through tubes to a person in an irreversible vegetative or near-vegetative state, counts as **medical treatment** that can lawfully be withdrawn when it no longer serves the patient's best interests. The Court answered this in the affirmative.

The Court held that **CANH is a form of medical treatment**, not merely ordinary care. That finding mattered because if CANH were treated as basic care that must always continue regardless of circumstances, passive euthanasia could never realistically apply in many long-term disorders of consciousness. By classifying CANH as life-sustaining medical treatment, the Court brought such cases squarely within the passive-euthanasia framework.

### The "best interests" test

The judgment treated the **best interests of the patient** as the governing standard. The Court examined several factors: the medical prognosis, reversibility of the condition, level of awareness, bodily suffering, indignity, futility of continued intervention, the invasiveness of the treatment, and the patient's overall welfare viewed holistically. It made clear that no single factor is conclusive; the decision must come from a cumulative assessment. Applying that standard, the Court found that continuation of CANH and related support served **no therapeutic purpose**, offered **no real prospect of recovery**, and only prolonged a state of profound incapacity. It accepted the medical evidence that Harish Rana's condition was irreversible and that the treatment being continued was medically futile in the sense that it sustained biological existence without restoring consciousness or meaningful bodily autonomy.

### Difference between causing death and allowing natural death

The judgment carefully reaffirmed the distinction between **causing death** and **allowing death to occur naturally**. Active euthanasia, in the Court's reasoning, means a direct, positive act to end life. Passive euthanasia means stopping treatment that merely prolongs biological existence when the underlying disease process is irreversible and when continuation of treatment is no longer justified by the patient's welfare, dignity, or autonomy. This distinction was used to show why passive euthanasia can be constitutionally and ethically accepted without opening the door to legalized killing. Once treatment is withdrawn, the patient dies because the body can no longer survive the underlying condition without artificial medical intervention. The law therefore sees withdrawal of treatment as fundamentally different from administering a lethal substance.

### Article 21 and the right to die with dignity

The Court placed Harish Rana within the constitutional line running from **Gian Kaur** to **Common Cause**. In **Gian Kaur v. State of Punjab (1996)**, the Supreme Court rejected the idea that Article 21 includes a general "right to die." At the same time, it recognized that the right to live with dignity may include a **dignified process of natural death** when life is ebbing out and treatment merely prolongs suffering or indignity. Later, in **Common Cause (2018)**, the Court expressly held that **the right to die with dignity is part of Article 21** and that passive euthanasia and advance medical directives are constitutionally valid.

### The operative directions

The Court therefore permitted **withdrawal and withholding of CANH and other life-prolonging medical measures**. It also waived the otherwise contemplated waiting period in this specific case because the medical evidence and family position were unanimous. At the same time, it stressed that passive euthanasia does not mean abandonment. It directed that Harish Rana be placed under **palliative and end-of-life care**, with AIIMS involved so that pain relief, comfort, dignity, and humane management would continue after withdrawal of artificial nutrition and hydration.

### Why the ruling is historically significant

- The historical importance of the case lies in the fact that **Aruna Shanbaug** and **Common Cause** had already made passive euthanasia legally permissible, but Harish Rana became the first prominent case where the Supreme Court allowed the doctrine to be fully implemented in respect of a particular patient after the modern procedural safeguards were actually followed. In that sense, the judgment marks the transition from **theory to application** in India's end-of-life jurisprudence.
- Harish Rana did not create a new constitutional right. Rather, it **operationalized** the right already recognized in Common Cause. The Court's contribution lay in applying that principle to a difficult real-world case and clarifying that even artificial feeding and hydration may be withdrawn where the medical and legal standards are satisfied.

## Evolution of Laws Relating to Euthanasia in India

### Early criminal-law background

- For many years, Indian criminal law was seen through the lens of **Section 309 of the Indian Penal Code**, which criminalized attempt to commit suicide. That provision shaped the early debate because courts had to consider whether Indian constitutional law recognized any form of "right to die." Although that debate began in the context of suicide, it later influenced the law on euthanasia and end-of-life treatment.
- In **P. Rathinam (1994)**, the Supreme Court had briefly taken the view that the right to life could include a right not to live. But this was overruled in **Gian Kaur (1996)**, which held that Article 21 does **not** include a general right to die. Yet Gian Kaur also introduced an important nuance: a dignified process of dying, where death is imminent and treatment merely prolongs the dying process, stands on a different footing. That distinction later became foundational for passive euthanasia.
- A later legislative shift came through the **Mental Healthcare Act, 2017**, whose Section 115 presumes that a person attempting suicide is under **severe stress** and ordinarily should not be punished. This did not legalize euthanasia, but it reflected a broader movement away from criminalization and toward a medical and rights-based understanding of self-harm and end-of-life issues.

### Law Commission interventions

- Before the Supreme Court fully constitutionalized passive euthanasia, the **Law Commission of India** had already studied the issue. Its **196th Report** and later **241st Report (2012)** distinguished between active killing and withdrawal of futile treatment. The Commission generally supported a legal framework under which doctors could withhold or withdraw treatment in carefully regulated circumstances, especially for incompetent patients, while continuing to oppose active euthanasia.

- The **241st Report**, prepared after **Aruna Shanbaug**, noted that the judgment had recognized passive euthanasia and had required High Court approval for such decisions. The Commission argued that the area needed legislation so that doctors, families, and hospitals would have certainty and protection, rather than depending only on ad hoc judicial intervention.

#### **Aruna Shanbaug v. Union of India (2011)**

- The first great turning point in Indian euthanasia law was **Aruna Shanbaug (2011)**. Aruna Shanbaug had remained in a persistent vegetative condition for decades after a brutal assault. In that case, the Supreme Court **recognized passive euthanasia in principle** for incompetent patients. It held that withdrawal of life support could be permissible, but only with **High Court approval**, after obtaining a report from a committee of doctors and hearing the relevant parties.
- However, the Court did not permit withdrawal in Aruna's own case because the hospital staff caring for her opposed it and because the factual record did not persuade the Court that such withdrawal should be ordered there. Thus, Aruna Shanbaug was doctrinally groundbreaking but not an example of implementation.

#### **Common Cause v. Union of India (2018)**

- The second major turning point was **Common Cause (2018)**. In this Constitution Bench judgment, the Supreme Court held that the **right to die with dignity** is part of **Article 21**. It formally recognized two things: first, that **passive euthanasia is lawful**; and second, that a competent adult may execute an **Advance Medical Directive (AMD)** or **living will**, indicating refusal of life-prolonging treatment if later reduced to an irreversible terminal condition.
- At the same time, the Court laid down a very elaborate procedural framework. Execution of the living will, multiple layers of certification, constitution of medical boards, and judicial oversight by a Magistrate made the process legally secure but administratively heavy. In practice, many hospitals and families found the procedure too complex to use smoothly.

#### **Common Cause modification order (2023)**

- Recognizing these difficulties, the Supreme Court in **2023** simplified the 2018 framework. It allowed an **Advance Medical Directive** to be attested by a **notary or gazetted officer**, instead of requiring the earlier more cumbersome format. It also reduced the required experience of doctors on the boards from **20 years to 5 years**, reduced the minimum size of boards, required quick processing, and clarified the role of the Magistrate. Importantly, the hospital now only needs to **inform** the JMFC after the medical boards concur, rather than waiting for prior judicial authorization in the old style.
- These changes made passive euthanasia more usable in practice while preserving safeguards against abuse. They signaled the Court's attempt to move from symbolic recognition to workable implementation.

### **International Jurisprudence on Euthanasia**

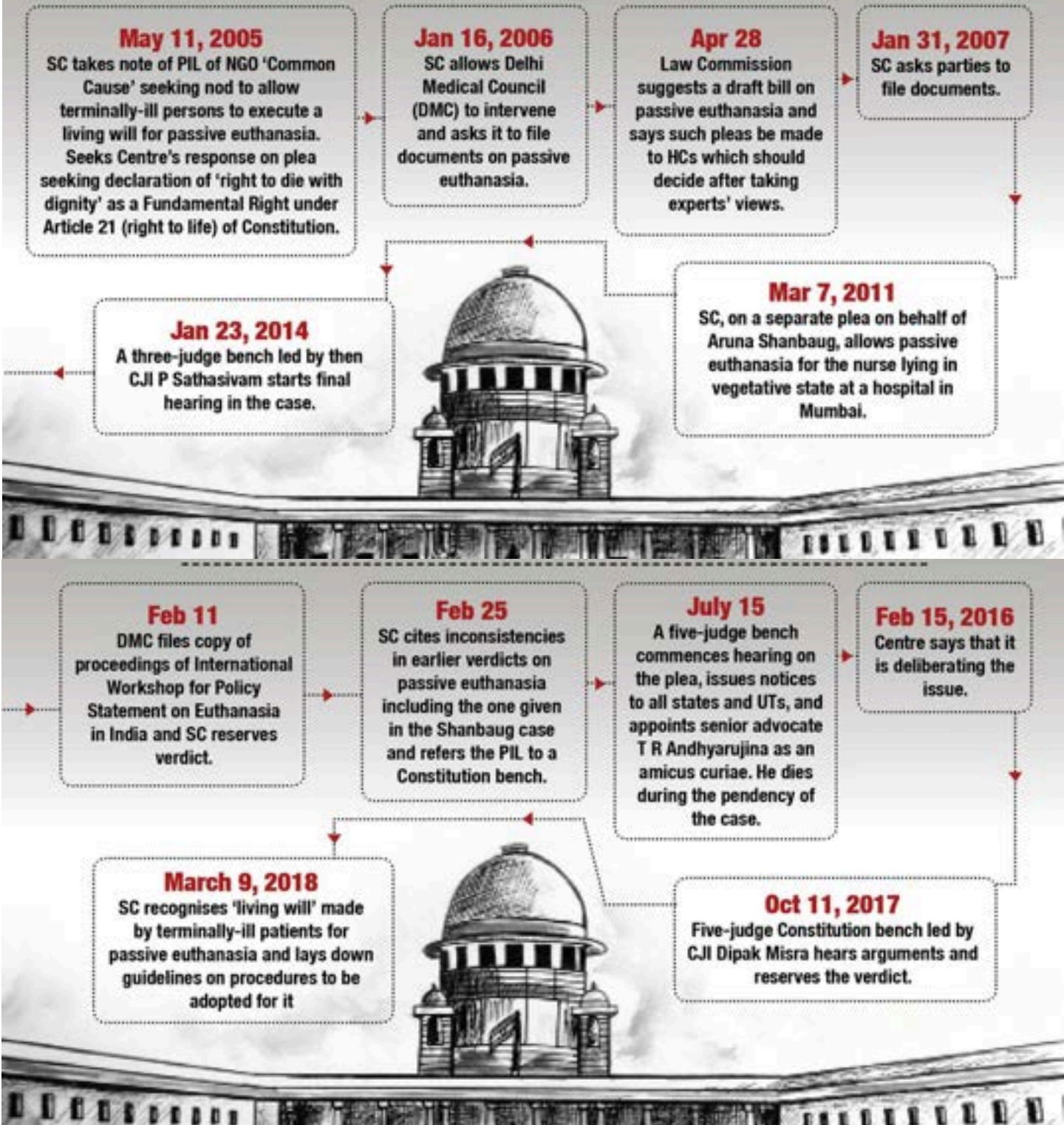
#### **Broad comparative models**

Internationally, countries have not followed one uniform model. Some jurisdictions permit only **withdrawal of futile treatment**, which is closer to India's current position. Others permit **physician-assisted dying** under statute. A smaller group permit both **euthanasia and assisted suicide** under tightly regulated conditions.

As an analytical inference, India today sits much closer to the **UK-France type end-of-life model**—where withdrawal of treatment and dignity at the end of life are central—than to the **Netherlands-Belgium-Canada model**, where law permits more affirmative medical assistance in dying. That follows from India's continued refusal to legalize active euthanasia and its focus on passive euthanasia only.

# INDIA'S JOURNEY TO "LIVING WILL"

## TIMELINE THAT LED TO PASSIVE EUTHANASIA RULING TODAY



- **Switzerland** is often treated as the earliest distinctive jurisdiction in the modern debate because its criminal law has long tolerated **assisted suicide** where there is no selfish motive; however, **active euthanasia remains illegal there**. So Switzerland is important as an early model of assisted suicide, not as the first country to legalize euthanasia itself.
- The **Netherlands** was the **first country in the world to legalize euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide by statute**. Its **Termination of Life on Request and Assisted Suicide Act** was adopted in **2001** and entered into force in **2002**, while still treating the conduct as criminal unless doctors comply with strict due-care criteria.
- **Belgium** followed in **2002**, legalizing euthanasia under statutory safeguards. **Luxembourg** followed later, with its law allowing euthanasia and assisted suicide under defined conditions. **Spain** became another major European jurisdiction with **Organic Law 3/2021**, which regulates euthanasia as part of the national health system. The European Parliament's 2025 comparative note identifies **the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Spain** as EU states with euthanasia legislation in force.
- In the Americas, **Colombia** was a landmark case because its **Constitutional Court in 1997** decriminalized euthanasia in certain circumstances, making it the first country in Latin America to move in that direction. Later, official protocols were developed to regulate practice.
- **Canada** took a different route. In **Carter v. Canada (2015)**, the Supreme Court of Canada held that the blanket criminal prohibition on physician-assisted dying was unconstitutional in certain circumstances. Parliament then enacted the **MAID** regime in **2016**, allowing medical assistance in dying under federal law.
- In **New Zealand**, the **End of Life Choice Act 2019** came into force after a referendum-backed process, and assisted dying services later became operational. In **Australia, Victoria** was the first state to enact voluntary assisted dying legislation in **2017**; by late **2025**, voluntary assisted dying had become available across all Australian states and the Australian Capital Territory, though not uniformly across every territory from the outset.

### Judicial milestones outside India

- A major common-law landmark was the UK case **Airedale NHS Trust v. Bland (1993)**, which strongly influenced later end-of-life jurisprudence by permitting withdrawal of artificial nutrition and hydration from a patient in a persistent vegetative state. India's passive-euthanasia cases draw from the same ethical and legal distinction between active killing and withdrawal of futile treatment.
- At the European human-rights level, **Pretty v. United Kingdom (2002)** held that the European Convention does not create a freestanding right to assisted suicide. Later, **Lambert v. France (2015)** accepted that withdrawal of artificial nutrition and hydration could be compatible with human-rights law where domestic procedures and safeguards were followed. These cases show that even where active euthanasia is not legalized, courts increasingly recognize the legitimacy of **withdrawing disproportionate or futile treatment**.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which of the following medical interventions was permitted by the Supreme Court to be withdrawn in the Harish Rana case?
  - clinically assisted ventilation and hydration
  - clinically assisted nutrition and hydration
  - clinically assisted medication and hydration
  - clinically assisted respiration and hydration
- Which of the following best defines Euthanasia?
  - providing prolonged treatment to sustain life in severe medical conditions
  - administering care to reduce pain without ending life in terminal cases
  - ending or allowing life to end to relieve suffering in irreversible conditions
  - ensuring life support systems continue despite absence of recovery in conditions
- Which of the following terms refers to a positive act intended to cause death as clarified by the Supreme Court in the Harish Rana case?
  - passive euthanasia
  - indirect euthanasia
  - active euthanasia
  - assisted euthanasia
- Which of the following refers to a situation where a doctor provides the means for death but the final act is performed by the patient?
  - withholding futile medical care
  - physician-assisted suicide
  - direct administration causing death
  - withdrawal of medical treatment
- Which of the following medical conditions did Harish Rana sustain following his fall in August 2013?
  - diffuse axonal injury
  - severe traumatic injury
  - chronic brain damage
  - prolonged impairment
- Which of the following constitutional provisions was interpreted by the Supreme Court in Gian Kaur v. State of Punjab (1996) as not including a general "right to die"?
  - Article 21
  - Article 19
  - Article 14
  - Article 32
- Which of the following forms of care was directed by the Court to continue after withdrawal of life-prolonging treatment in the Harish Rana case?
  - intensive and long-term care
  - palliative and end-of-life care
  - emergency and curative care
  - rehabilitative and supportive care
- Which of the following cases had already made passive euthanasia legally permissible before its full implementation in the Harish Rana case?
  - Gian Kaur Singh and Puttaswamy cases
  - Maneka Gandhi and Puttaswamy cases
  - Aruna Shanbaug and Gian Kaur cases
  - Aruna Shanbaug and Common Cause
- Which of the following provisions of Indian criminal law historically criminalized attempt to commit suicide and shaped early debates on the "right to die"?
  - Section 309
  - Section 302
  - Section 306
  - Section 304
- Which of the following cases briefly held that the right to life could include a right not to live before being overruled later?
  - Maneka Gandhi (1978)
  - Aruna Shanbaug (2011)
  - Puttaswamy (2017)
  - P. Rathinam (1994)
- Which of the following legislations reflects a shift away from criminalizing suicide attempts by presuming severe stress and promoting a rights-based approach?
  - Indian Penal Code, 1860 Act
  - Code of Criminal Procedure Act
  - Mental Healthcare Act, 2017
  - Protection of Human Rights Act
- Which of the following Law Commission reports first examined the distinction between active killing and withdrawal of futile medical treatment in India?
  - 241st Report
  - 196th Report
  - 262nd Report
  - 277th Report
- Which of the following cases was noted by the Law Commission's 241st Report as having recognized passive euthanasia and required High Court approval?
  - Maneka Gandhi (1978)
  - Aruna Shanbaug (2011)
  - Puttaswamy (2017)
  - P. Rathinam (1994)

### PRACTICE QUESTIONS

(a) P. Raghunath  
(c) Deepa M. Shah

(b) A. S.Narendra  
(d) Aruna Shanbaug

14. Which of the following years did the Supreme Court simplify the procedural framework for passive euthanasia to make it more workable in practice?

(a) 2023    (b) 2020    (c) 2021    (d) 2022

15. Which of the following countries is known for permitting assisted suicide without selfish motive while still prohibiting active euthanasia?

(a) Netherlands  
(b) Belgium  
(c) Switzerland  
(d) Luxembourg

### SOLUTIONS

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

## 2 NavIC satellite loses its atomic clock

### IN FOCUS

India's regional navigation system **NavIC** has come under renewed attention because **IRNSS-1F**, one of its first-generation satellites, lost its on-board **atomic clock** on **13 March 2026**. The satellite had been launched in **March 2016** and completed its **design mission life of 10 years** on **10 March 2026**. After the clock failure, the satellite remained usable only for **one-way broadcast messaging services** and could no longer support normal positioning functions.

## Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System

IRNSS (NavIC) is designed to provide accurate real-time positioning and timing services to users in India as well as region extending up to 1,500 km from its boundary

**NAVIGATION CONSTELLATION CONSISTS OF SEVEN SATELLITES**

**3** in geostationary earth orbit (GEO) and **4** in geosynchronous orbit (GSO) inclined at 29 degrees to equator

Each sat has three rubidium atomic clocks, which provide accurate locational data

### IT WILL PROVIDE TWO TYPES OF SERVICES

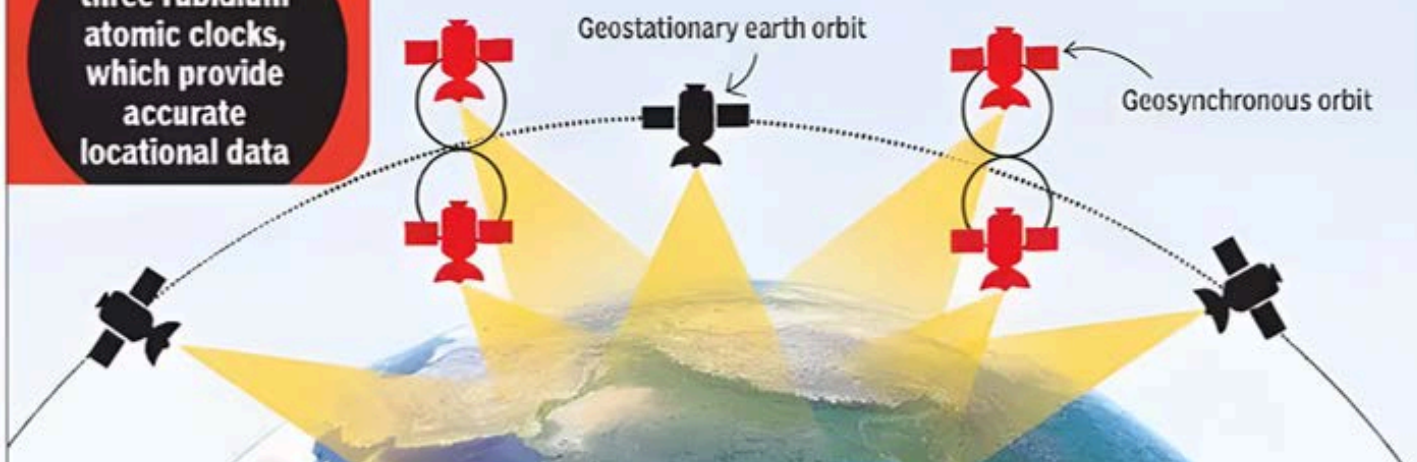
**1 Standard positioning service** | Meant for all users

**2 Restricted service** | Encrypted service provided only to authorised users (military and security agencies)

### Applications of IRNSS are:

Terrestrial, aerial and marine navigation; disaster management; vehicle tracking and fleet management; precise timing mapping and geodetic data capture; terrestrial navigation aid for hikers and travellers; visual and voice navigation for drivers

While **American GPS** has **24 satellites** in orbit, the number of sats visible to ground receiver is limited. In **IRNSS**, **four satellites** are always in geosynchronous orbits, hence always visible to a receiver in a region **1,500 km** around India



## What is NavIC?

- **NavIC**, or **Navigation with Indian Constellation**, is India's independent regional satellite navigation system. It was earlier known as the **Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS)**, and the name NavIC came into use after completion of the original constellation in **April 2016**. The system was developed to provide **Position, Velocity and Timing (PVT)** services over **India** and up to about **1,500 km beyond the Indian landmass** as its primary service area, while also covering a larger extended area around the region.
- NavIC was originally designed as a **7-satellite constellation**. Its architecture is different from most global systems because it combines **three satellites in Geostationary Orbit (GEO)** and **four satellites in Inclined Geosynchronous Orbit (IGSO)**, rather than depending mainly on Medium Earth Orbit satellites. The GEO satellites are positioned around **32.5°E, 83°E and 129.5°E**, while the IGSO satellites are arranged in two orbital planes with equatorial crossings near **55°E** and **111.75°E**. This design gives stronger and more persistent visibility over India and the surrounding region. NavIC provides two services: the **Standard Positioning Service (SPS)** for civilian users and the **Restricted Service (RS)** for authorized and strategic users. Its signals were originally provided in **L5-band** and **S-band**, and the newer generation has added **L1-band** to improve mass-market compatibility. The system has applications in road and marine navigation, disaster management, tracking, mapping, surveying, alert services, and timing synchronization.



## Timeline and Development of NavIC

- The NavIC programme was approved in **May 2006**. Its first-generation satellites were launched in sequence over three years: **IRNSS-1A** in **July 2013**, **IRNSS-1B** in **April 2014**, **IRNSS-1C** in **October 2014**, **IRNSS-1D** in **March 2015**, **IRNSS-1E** in **January 2016**, **IRNSS-1F** in **March 2016**, and **IRNSS-1G** in **April 2016**. With the launch of **IRNSS-1G**, the original seven-satellite constellation was completed.
- A replacement attempt through **IRNSS-1H** in **August 2017** failed, after which **IRNSS-1I** was successfully launched in **April 2018**. The second-generation phase began with **NVS-01** in **May 2023**, which introduced **L1-band capability** and an **indigenous atomic clock**. It was followed by **NVS-02** in **January 2025**, intended to strengthen and sustain the constellation further.

### What has happened?

- The immediate problem is the failure of the **atomic clock** on **IRNSS-1F**. In a navigation satellite, the atomic clock is the most critical component because the system works by transmitting extremely precise time signals to receivers on Earth. A receiver calculates its own position by measuring how long the signal takes to travel from multiple satellites. If the time signal becomes unreliable, the ranging calculation becomes unreliable, and the satellite can no longer contribute accurate navigation data. The failure therefore does not merely reduce the health of one satellite; it directly affects the satellite's ability to function as part of the positioning network.
- This problem has become more serious because it has arisen in an already stressed constellation. The second-generation replenishment plan has also faced difficulty, since **NVS-02** could be successfully injected into transfer orbit in **January 2025**, but its orbit-raising sequence could not be completed later because the **drive signal did not reach the pyro valve of the oxidizer line**, preventing transfer to the intended circular operational orbit. As a result, the NavIC constellation has had to depend more heavily on ageing first-generation satellites at the same time that those satellites are reaching or crossing the end of their design life.

### What it means and implications

- The failure of IRNSS-1F's clock means a loss of redundancy in India's regional navigation architecture. NavIC is not a very large global constellation with deep spare capacity; it is a compact regional system designed around a limited number of satellites. In such a system, the loss of even one functional navigation satellite can have a more noticeable effect on service robustness, geometry, and long-term continuity. This is especially important for a sovereign navigation system whose purpose is to reduce dependence on foreign systems in strategic and critical sectors.
- The event also underlines the importance of **timing infrastructure** in satellite navigation. Navigation systems are not only used for maps and route guidance; they are also important for timing in communications, transport, emergency services, and many technical applications. A weakening of the constellation does not mean that Indian users immediately lose access to location services, because many modern receivers use multiple global and regional systems together. However, it does reduce the strength of India's own independent layer and increases the urgency of replenishing the constellation through the **NVS series**, especially with more reliable next-generation satellites carrying improved clocks and L1-band capability.

### Comparison with similar systems of other nations

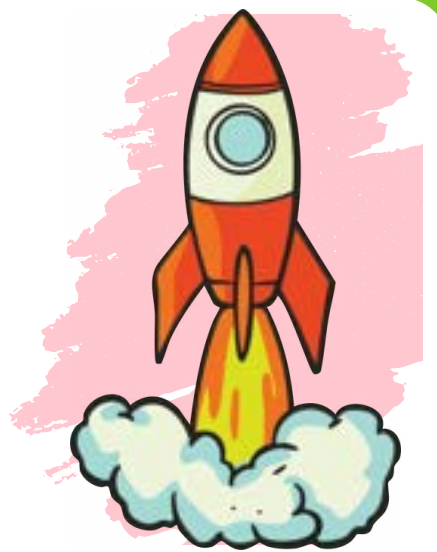
- NavIC belongs to the category of **regional navigation systems**, not global ones. The major **global** systems are **GPS** of the United States, **GLONASS** of Russia, **Galileo** of the European Union, and **BeiDou** of China. The other major **regional** system is **QZSS** of Japan.
- This distinction is important because NavIC was never designed to provide worldwide coverage in the way GPS or Galileo do. It was designed to provide reliable regional coverage centered on India and its surrounding strategic neighbourhood.
- The **United States' GPS** is a global positioning, navigation and timing utility built around a **nominal constellation of 24 operating satellites**. **Galileo** is Europe's civilian global navigation system and is structured around **30 satellites**. **GLONASS** was formally declared operational in **1993** and reached a full **24-satellite constellation** in **1995**.
- **BeiDou** evolved into a **30-satellite global system** with a hybrid architecture using different orbital regimes. **QZSS** is Japan's regional system, designed mainly to improve positioning over Japan and the Asia-

- Oceania region through satellites in **quasi-zenith orbits**, and it complements GPS rather than replacing it. In contrast, NavIC is a smaller sovereign regional system that uses **GEO and IGSO satellites** to maintain persistent coverage over India. This makes NavIC strategically significant even though it is much smaller than the global constellations.

## Indian Space Research Organisation

### Origin of ISRO

- The origin of India's organised space programme goes back to 1962, when the Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR) was set up by the Government of India under the Department of Atomic Energy. This early effort was guided by **Dr. Vikram Sarabhai**, who is regarded as the founding father of the Indian space programme. In the same year, work also began on the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (TERLS) near Thiruvananthapuram.
- The creation of INCOSPAR showed that India wanted to use space science not merely for prestige, but for practical developmental purposes. From the beginning, the Indian programme was linked with communication, education, meteorology, resource mapping, and other public uses.



### Formation of ISRO

- ISRO was formed on 15 August 1969. It replaced INCOSPAR and was given a wider and more organised role in developing and using space technology for national development.
- In 1972, the Government of India set up the Space Commission and the Department of Space, and ISRO was brought under the Department of Space in the same year.

ISRO works under the Department of Space, which functions directly under the Prime Minister of India.

### Early Development and Growth

- One of ISRO's earliest landmarks was Aryabhata, India's first satellite, which was completely designed and fabricated in India and launched on 19 April 1975. This mission marked India's formal entry into the space age.
- Another major milestone came in 1980, when SLV-3 successfully placed the Rohini RS-1 satellite into orbit.

- This made India one of the few countries capable of launching its own satellites using an indigenous launch vehicle.
- ISRO later built strong operational programmes in both communications and remote sensing. The INSAT system, established in 1983 with the commissioning of INSAT-1B, transformed India's telecommunications, television broadcasting, and meteorological services. Similarly, with IRS-1A in 1988, India began building one of the world's major remote sensing satellite systems.

### Main Missions

- ISRO's satellite missions have focused on areas such as communication, broadcasting, weather forecasting, disaster warning, search and rescue, earth observation, navigation, and scientific study. These missions have supported agriculture, water resource management, urban planning, fisheries, education, and weather services in India.
- The INSAT/GSAT series became central to India's communication infrastructure, while the IRS/EOS series strengthened earth observation and remote sensing capabilities.
- ISRO gradually developed indigenous launch vehicles beginning with SLV-3, followed by more advanced systems. The PSLV became India's reliable workhorse launch vehicle after its first successful launch in October 1994 and has carried many major Indian and foreign satellites.
- The GSLV was developed to launch heavier communication satellites into geosynchronous transfer orbit, while LVM3 became ISRO's heavy-lift launch vehicle for major missions such as Chandrayaan and future human spaceflight missions.
- Chandrayaan-1, launched on 22 October 2008, was India's first mission to the Moon. It orbited the Moon and carried 11 scientific instruments for chemical, mineralogical, and photo-geologic mapping.
- Chandrayaan-2, launched in 2019, was a major lunar mission that aimed at orbital study, landing, and rover operations. It also demonstrated India's growing capability in deep-space exploration.
- Chandrayaan-3, launched on 14 July 2023, was a follow-on mission designed to demonstrate safe landing and rover movement on the lunar surface. It successfully achieved a soft landing on the Moon, which became one of the most important milestones in India's space history.
- The Mars Orbiter Mission (Mangalyaan) was launched on 5 November 2013. It was India's first interplanetary mission and made ISRO the fourth space agency to successfully place a spacecraft in Mars orbit. Although it was designed for six months, it operated for many years and produced important scientific results.
- AstroSat, launched on 28 September 2015, was India's first dedicated space astronomy observatory. It was designed to study celestial objects across multiple wavelengths, including ultraviolet and X-ray bands.
- Aditya-L1, launched in 2023, is India's first space-based mission to study the Sun. It is intended to observe solar activity from a halo orbit around the L1 Lagrange point, about 1.5 million km from Earth, allowing continuous observation of the Sun without eclipse interruptions.
- ISRO developed NavIC as India's independent regional navigation system. It was earlier known as IRNSS, and it is designed to provide accurate position information over India and the surrounding region. The system was designed with a constellation of 7 satellites, including both geostationary and inclined geosynchronous satellites.
- Gaganyaan is ISRO's human spaceflight programme. It aims to demonstrate India's capability to send a crew of three members into a 400 km orbit for about three days and bring them back safely by landing in Indian sea waters. This mission marks ISRO's transition from robotic and satellite-based operations to human spaceflight capability.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following NavIC satellites lost its on-board atomic clock on 13 March 2026 after completing its design mission life?  
(a) IRNSS-1F                      (b) IRNSS-1A  
(c) IRNSS-1G                      (d) IRNSS-1B
2. What was the earlier name of NavIC, India's regional satellite navigation system?  
(a) Global Positioning Satellite Network System  
(b) International Regional Navigation Satellite  
(c) Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System  
(d) Integrated Radio Navigation Satellite Structure
3. Which of the following services is provided by NavIC over India and its surrounding region?  
(a) Velocity and Timing and Length services  
(b) Position, Velocity and Timing services  
(c) Monitoring, Position and Velocity services  
(d) Position, Timing and Management services
4. Which of the following best describes the original design of NavIC's satellite configuration?  
(a) 4-satellite constellation  
(b) 6-satellite constellation  
(c) 5-satellite constellation  
(d) 7-satellite constellation
5. Which of the following correctly states the number of satellites placed in Geostationary Orbit (GEO) in NavIC, given that it also includes four satellites in Inclined Geosynchronous Orbit (IGSO)?  
(a) two satellites                      (b) three satellites  
(c) five satellites                      (d) seven satellites
6. Which of the following services provided by NavIC is meant for civilian users?  
(a) Restricted Navigation Service  
(b) Authorized Positioning Service  
(c) Standard Positioning Service  
(d) Secured Navigation Service
7. Which of the following frequency bands was added in the newer generation of NavIC to improve mass-market compatibility?  
(a) L2-band                      (b) L1-band  
(c) S2-band                      (d) C1-band
8. Which of the following indicates the time when the NavIC programme was approved by the Government of India?  
(a) May 2006                      (b) June 2008  
(c) April 2010                      (d) March 2012
9. Which of the following satellites marked the completion of the NavIC constellation upon its launch?  
(a) IRNSS-1F                      (b) IRNSS-1G  
(c) IRNSS-1E                      (d) IRNSS-1D
10. Which of the following NavIC satellites faced issues in completing its orbit-raising sequence due to failure of the oxidizer line pyro valve?  
(a) NVS-01                      (b) NVS-03  
(c) NVS-04                      (d) NVS-02
11. Which of the following categories does NavIC belong to in terms of navigation systems?  
(a) global positioning systems  
(b) international navigation systems  
(c) regional navigation systems  
(d) continental navigation systems
12. Which of the following is another major regional navigation system mentioned alongside NavIC?  
(a) IRNSS                      (b) QZSS  
(c) GPSA                      (d) GAGAN
13. Which of the following is a major global navigation system developed by Russia?  
(a) GLONASS                      (b) GALILEO  
(c) NAVSTAR                      (d) BEIDOU
14. Which of the following best describes the nominal constellation size of the United States' GPS system?  
(a) 30 operational satellites  
(b) 24 operating satellites  
(c) 28 functional satellites  
(d) 22 active satellites
15. Which of the following global navigation systems is Europe's civilian satellite navigation system structured around 30 satellites?  
(a) GLONASS                      (b) BEIDOU  
(c) NAVSTAR                      (d) GALILEO

## SOLUTIONS

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

### 3 Transgender Persons Amendment Bill 2026

#### IN FOCUS

The **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026** was introduced in the **Lok Sabha on 13 March 2026**, passed by the **Lok Sabha on 24 March 2026**, and passed by the **Rajya Sabha on 25 March 2026**. The Bill has become a major legal and constitutional issue because it substantially reworks the framework created by the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019**, especially on the questions of **who is legally recognized as a transgender person**, **whether self-identification remains protected**, and **whether gender recognition should depend on a medicalized certification process**.



## What is the Transgender Persons Amendment Bill, 2026?

The Bill is a legislative proposal to amend the 2019 Act, which was enacted to protect the rights of transgender persons, prohibit discrimination, and provide welfare measures in areas such as education, employment, residence, social security, and healthcare.

The 2026 Bill does not replace the entire Act; instead, it alters some of its most important parts, including the **definition of “transgender person”**, the **recognition of identity provisions under Sections 4, 6, and 7**, the composition of the **National Council for Transgender Persons**, and the entire penal framework under **Section 18**.

In substance, the Bill narrows the scope of legal recognition, removes the 2019 Act’s express recognition of a **right to self-perceived gender identity**, introduces a **medical-board-based recommendation process** before a District Magistrate can issue a certificate of identity, makes the post-surgery gender-change certificate effectively mandatory for those who undergo surgery, and adds several new criminal offences linked to coercion, bodily harm, abduction, and forced presentation as transgender for exploitation.

### Background: NALSA Judgment, 2014 and the 2019 Act

- The constitutional starting point is **National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India (2014)**. In that judgment, the Supreme Court held that **self-identified gender can be male, female, or third gender**, upheld the **right of transgender persons to decide their self-identified gender**, and directed governments to grant legal recognition accordingly.
- The Court also held that **self-determination of gender** is part of **personal autonomy** and **personal liberty** under **Article 21**, that **Articles 14, 15, 16, 19 and 21** protect transgender persons, and that **insistence on sex reassignment surgery for declaring one's gender is immoral and illegal**.
- The **2019 Act** reflected part of that constitutional framework. It defined a transgender person as a person whose gender does not match the gender assigned at birth, and expressly included **trans-man, trans-woman, person with intersex variations, genderqueer**, and socio-cultural identities such as **kinner, hijra, aravani, and jogta**. It also stated in Section 4(2) that a person recognized as transgender has a **right to self-perceived gender identity**. The Act prohibited discrimination in education, employment, healthcare, public services, movement, residence, property, and access to establishments, and it created a certificate-based recognition system through the District Magistrate.
- The **2020 Rules** then gave operational shape to the Act. For a certificate under **Section 6**, the Rules used an **affidavit-based model of self-declaration**: the applicant affirmed that they perceived themselves as a transgender person whose gender did not match the gender assigned at birth and declared themselves transgender. For a change of gender certificate under **Section 7**, the Rules separately required a medical certificate from the Medical Superintendent or Chief Medical Officer of the institution where the person had undergone medical intervention. This distinction is important because the 2026 Bill moves the ordinary Section 6 certificate away from affidavit-based recognition and toward a medical-board-linked process.



### Need for Amendment: Government's Stated Rationale

The Bill's **Statement of Objects and Reasons** gives a very clear rationale. It says the legislative policy is to recognize a **specific class of transgender persons** who face severe social exclusion and to create a regime for their protection. It states that the existing definition has created implementation difficulties because it is too broad and vague, and that the law was intended to protect only those who are in actual need of such protection. The statement goes further and says that the purpose of the Act was **not** to protect "each and every class of persons with various gender identities, self-perceived sex/gender identities or gender fluidities."

The Government's position, as expressed in the Bill itself, is that the 2019 definition makes identification of beneficiaries uncertain, complicates the operation of penal, civil, and personal laws, and risks extending rights and statutory protections on the basis of **acquirable characteristics, personal choice, or claimed self-perceived identity**. The Bill therefore seeks what it describes as a more **precise definition**, a more formal certification process involving a designated authority, and a stronger penal framework for serious harms such as abduction, mutilation, coercion, and exploitation connected with forced transgender presentation or identity.

## Key Provisions of the Amendment Bill, 2026

- The Bill makes five major structural changes. First, it **replaces the definition** of “transgender person” in Section 2. Second, it **omits Section 4(2)** of the 2019 Act, which had expressly guaranteed a **right to self-perceived gender identity**. Third, it changes **Section 6** so that the District Magistrate issues a certificate only after examining the recommendation of a designated **medical board**, with the option of taking assistance from other medical experts. Fourth, it changes **Section 7** so that persons who undergo surgery to change gender must obtain a change-of-gender certificate and so that the medical institution must furnish details to the District Magistrate and the authority. Fifth, it substitutes **Section 18** with a more elaborate structure of offences and graded punishments.
- The Bill also changes **Section 16** on the National Council for Transgender Persons by requiring rotating State and Union Territory representatives not below the rank of **Director** in the concerned ministry or department. That change is administratively smaller than the changes to identity and certification, but it shows that the Bill is not limited only to definition and penalties; it also restructures part of the institutional framework under the 2019 Act.

## How the 2026 Bill Changes the 2019 Law

- The 2019 Act started from a broad umbrella definition centered on **mismatch between assigned sex at birth and gender identity**, and then added illustrative categories. The 2026 Bill abandons that umbrella definition and instead uses a more closed list-based formulation. The earlier law also expressly recognized **self-perceived gender identity** in Section 4(2); the 2026 Bill removes that subsection altogether. In implementation, the earlier framework under the 2020 Rules allowed a Section 6 certificate through **self-declaration by affidavit**; the 2026 Bill inserts a formal **medical-board recommendation stage** into that process.
- The Bill also changes the logic of Section 7. Under the 2019 Act, a transgender person who underwent surgery to change gender **may** apply for a revised certificate, and the Act expressly protected the person’s existing rights and entitlements by saying that such change in gender and revised certificate would **not affect** them. The 2026 Bill changes “may” to “shall,” requires the medical institution to furnish details to the District Magistrate and the authority, and removes the old subsection and proviso that had preserved rights and entitlements after the revised certificate. PRS has specifically noted this as a change under which such a person will **no longer retain** the rights and entitlements under the Act in the same expressly protected way.

## Definition of “Transgender Person”:

### Old Position vs New Position

- Under the **2019 Act**, the definition was broad and identity-based. It covered a person whose gender did not match the gender assigned at birth and expressly included **trans-man, trans-woman**, whether or not the person had undergone sex reassignment surgery or hormone therapy, **person with intersex variations, genderqueer**, and socio-cultural identities such as **kinner, hijra, aravani, and jogta**.
- Under the **2026 Bill**, that definition is replaced with two main clusters. The first cluster covers persons with specified **socio-cultural identities**, namely **kinner, hijra, aravani, jogta, and eunuch**, and persons with specified **intersex variations** or congenital variations in primary sexual characteristics, external genitalia, chromosomal patterns, gonadal development, endogenous hormone production or response, or similar medical conditions.
- The second cluster covers any person or child who has been compelled, by force or other coercive means,

- to assume or outwardly present a transgender identity by mutilation, emasculation, castration, amputation, or surgical, chemical, or hormonal procedure. The Bill simultaneously removes the earlier express inclusion of **trans-man**, **trans-woman**, and **genderqueer**, and adds a proviso stating that the definition shall not include, and shall never have included, persons with **different sexual orientations** and **self-perceived sexual identities**.
- This shift is legally significant because it changes the center of gravity from a broad **gender-identity framework** to a narrower combination of **socio-cultural categories**, **birth-based bodily characteristics**, and **forced-assumption situations**.
- That is the single biggest reason the Bill has triggered debate: the law no longer treats “transgender person” primarily as a question of self-identified gender mismatch with assigned sex at birth, but as a more restricted and externally verifiable category

#### Certificate of Identity and the New Medical Board Mechanism

- The Bill inserts a new definition of “**authority**” as a **medical board**, headed by a **Chief Medical Officer or Deputy Chief Medical Officer**, to be appointed by the Central Government, State Government, or Union Territory Administration. It then amends **Section 6** so that the District Magistrate issues a certificate of identity only **after examining the recommendation of the authority**, and, if considered necessary or desirable, after taking assistance from other medical experts.
- This is a substantial procedural change from the current rule-based framework. Under the **2020 Rules**, the Section 6 route was based on an affidavit in which the applicant declared that they perceived themselves as transgender and declared themselves as such. The 2026 Bill does not simply add one more document; it changes the philosophy of recognition by placing a **medicalized screening layer** between the applicant and the certificate. That is why the debate around the Bill is not merely about paperwork but about the underlying theory of legal identity.

#### Changes in Gender Recognition Procedure

- The Bill distinguishes between recognition as a transgender person under **Section 6** and recognition of a change in gender under **Section 7**, but it tightens both processes. For Section 7, it changes the language from “**may**” to “**shall**,” making the revised certificate route effectively mandatory for a person who has undergone surgery to change gender either as male or female. It also adds a requirement that the medical institution furnish the relevant details to the concerned District Magistrate and the authority in the prescribed form and manner.
- Another important change is that the Bill omits the old Section 7(3) and its proviso. Under the 2019 Act, the person holding a certificate under Section 6 or a revised certificate under Section 7 could change the first name in the birth certificate and other official documents, and the proviso made clear that such change would **not affect the person’s rights and entitlements under the Act**. The Bill removes that express statutory protection from Section 7 while separately adding, in Section 6, that a person declared as a transgender person under the Act can change the first name in the birth certificate and official documents. This creates an important redistribution of rights language between Section 6 and Section 7.

#### Offences and Penalties under the Amendment Bill

- The **2019 Act** already punished four broad categories of offences against transgender persons: compelling or enticing them into forced or bonded labour, denying access to public places, forcing them to leave household or village, and harming or abusing their life, safety, health, or well-being. These offences were punishable with imprisonment from **six months to two years** and fine. The 2026 Bill retains these basic offences and penalties, but adds several new and much more serious offences with graded punishment.
- The new offences include kidnapping or abducting an **adult** and causing grievous hurt or severe bodily injury in order to compel that person to assume or outwardly present a transgender identity; this is

- punishable with **rigorous imprisonment from ten years to life** and a minimum fine of **two lakh rupees**. The same conduct against a **child** is punishable with **rigorous imprisonment for life** and a minimum fine of **five lakh rupees**. The Bill also criminalizes forcing a person to present as transgender and then using that person for **begging, solicitation, servitude, or forced or bonded labour**; for an adult, the punishment is **five to ten years** with a minimum fine of **one lakh rupees**, and for a child it is **ten to fourteen years** with a minimum fine of **three lakh rupees**

## Major Constitutional and Legal Concerns

- The first and most serious constitutional concern is the apparent tension with **NALSA**. The Supreme Court held that **self-determination of gender** is part of dignity, autonomy, and Article 21, that the right to decide one's self-identified gender must be recognized, and that legal recognition cannot be made dependent on surgery or similar medical procedures. The 2026 Bill moves in the opposite direction by deleting the 2019 Act's express guarantee of **self-perceived gender identity** and by introducing a **medical-board-based recommendation mechanism** for identity certification. That is why one likely line of constitutional challenge would be that the Bill departs from the rights framework laid down in NALSA.
- A second concern is one of **over-inclusion and under-inclusion at the same time**. The new definition removes **trans-man, trans-woman, and genderqueer** from the express list, while including certain socio-cultural identities, certain intersex variations, and persons forced into transgender presentation. This creates a narrower and differently structured class than the 2019 Act. PRS has noted that while the Bill aims at precision, it may in doing so deny some persons the right to their self-perceived gender identities. PRS also raises the question whether a medical board can meaningfully and unambiguously identify persons belonging to socio-cultural identities such as **hijra, kinner, aravani, or jogta**.
- A third concern is procedural fairness. The 2019 Act did not provide a robust appeal process for persons denied a certificate, and PRS notes that the 2026 Bill also does not address this gap. Once the Bill inserts a medical board into the certification process, the absence of a clear appellate or review mechanism becomes more significant because the decision is no longer confined to a declaration-based administrative process; it becomes a medico-bureaucratic decision with direct consequences for legal identity and access to statutory rights.
- A fourth concern arises from the Bill's wording itself. The proviso to the new definition says the Act shall not include persons with different sexual orientations and **self-perceived sexual identities**. In **NALSA**, however, the Supreme Court expressly stated that **gender identity and sexual orientation are different concepts**. This means the Bill's phrasing may generate interpretive difficulty, because the exclusion uses language that sits uneasily with the Court's own distinction between sexual orientation and gender identity. That drafting choice may itself become a point of future legal dispute.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following best describes the nature of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026?
  - (a) replacing entire transgender protection law framework completely
  - (b) amending key provisions of existing transgender protection law
  - (c) introducing new unrelated welfare schemes for Indian citizens
  - (d) abolishing all previous transgender rights legislation provisions
2. Which of the following provisions was removed by the 2026 Amendment Bill regarding gender identity?
  - (a) prohibition of discrimination in public employment
  - (b) guarantee of welfare measures for transgender
  - (c) right to self-perceived gender identity recognition
  - (d) establishment of National Council for transgender
3. Which of the following landmark judgments laid the constitutional foundation for transgender rights in India?
  - (a) Maneka Gandhi v Union of India judgment
  - (b) Puttaswamy v Union of India judgment
  - (c) Common Cause v Union of India judgment
  - (d) National Legal Services Authority v Union of India
4. Which of the following institutions is responsible for issuing the certificate of identity under the amended framework?
  - (a) Chief Medical Officer
  - (b) Council for transgender
  - (c) State Government
  - (d) District Magistrate
5. Which of the following best explains the Government's rationale for narrowing the definition of transgender person?
  - (a) to restrict benefits to clearly identifiable affected individuals
  - (b) to eliminate all protections granted under the earlier law
  - (c) to expand definition to include all law identity variations
  - (d) to simplify judicial interpretation without administrative change
6. Which of the following processes replaced the earlier affidavit-based recognition under Section 6?
  - (a) judicial declaration by High Court
  - (b) parliamentary certification process
  - (c) medical board recommendation
  - (d) direct approval by central ministry
7. Which of the following changes was made regarding gender change certificates under Section 7?
  - (a) optional certification retained without procedural change
  - (b) removal of requirement for any official certification process
  - (c) complete prohibition on legally gender change recognition
  - (d) mandatory certification after surgery replacing optional provision
8. Which of the following categories is newly included in the definition of transgender person under the 2026 Bill?
  - (a) all persons with self-perceived gender identity claims
  - (b) persons identifying solely based on personal choice
  - (c) individuals with the diverse fluid gender expressions
  - (d) persons forced to assume transgender identity through coercion
9. Which of the following categories were removed from the express definition of transgender person under the 2026 Amendment Bill?
  - (a) kinner, hijra, aravani, and jogta groups
  - (b) intersex variations and congenital conditions
  - (c) trans-man, trans-woman, and genderqueer
  - (d) forced identity cases and coercion situations
10. Which of the following best describes the penal changes introduced in the Amendment Bill?
  - (a) removal of all penalties for offences against transgender persons
  - (b) introduction of minor fines without imprisonment provisions
  - (c) reliance solely on general criminal law punishments provisions
  - (d) addition of graded punishments for serious exploitation offences

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

11. Which of the following constitutional principles is central to the NALSA judgment?
  - (a) federal distribution of legislative states powers
  - (b) separation of judiciary from executive authority
  - (c) autonomy and dignity under Article 21 protection
  - (d) economic equality under directive principles of state
12. Which of the following procedural concerns remains unaddressed in the Amendment Bill?
  - (a) absence of appeal mechanism for certificate rejection
  - (b) lack of criminal penalties for exploitation related cases
  - (c) omission of welfare schemes for transgender persons
  - (d) absence of definition for medical board authority
13. Which of the following shifts best describes the change introduced by the 2026 Bill?
  - (a) from criminal law approach to welfare-based recognition
  - (b) from broad identity recognition to restricted classification
  - (c) from administrative control to complete self-declaration
  - (d) from judicial supervision to legislative independence
14. Which of the following best explains the debate around medicalization in the Bill?
  - (a) it strengthens autonomy by reducing state interference
  - (b) it removes all medical involvement in identity recognition
  - (c) it shifts recognition entirely to judicial determination
  - (d) it introduces external verification over self-identification
15. Which of the following best captures the central jurisprudential conflict in the Amendment Bill?
  - (a) equality versus federalism in constitutional governance
  - (b) welfare versus criminal law legal enforcement priorities
  - (c) autonomy-based identity versus status-based verification
  - (d) legislative supremacy versus judicial review doctrine

## SOLUTIONS

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

## 4 Gujarat Becomes Second State to pass Uniform Civil Code

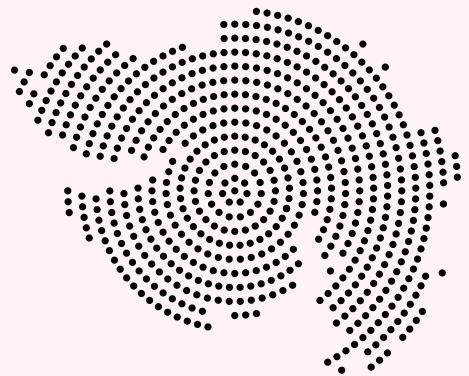
### IN FOCUS

- The **Gujarat Uniform Civil Code Bill, 2026** was introduced in the Gujarat Assembly on **24 March 2026** and passed after a debate lasting more than seven hours, making Gujarat the **second Indian state after Uttarakhand** to pass a state-level UCC measure. The Bill creates a common civil framework for **marriage, divorce, succession, adoption, maintenance, and live-in relationships**, while exempting **Scheduled Tribes** and certain constitutionally protected customary groups.
- The development is significant because it comes after the **Ranjana Prakash Desai Committee** submitted its report to the Gujarat government on **17 March 2026** following district visits, consultations, and collection of public views. The Bill is therefore not being presented merely as a political resolution; it has been framed as the legislative outcome of a state-appointed committee process.

### What is the Gujarat Uniform Civil Code Bill, 2026?

The Bill is formally titled the **Gujarat Uniform Civil Code, 2026**. It seeks to establish a uniform legal framework for civil matters across communities in Gujarat, and it applies not only to the whole state but also to **residents of Gujarat living outside the state**. It covers the core personal-law fields of **marriage, divorce, succession, adoption, children, maintenance, and live-in relationships**.

At the structural level, the Bill is designed to override inconsistent customs and usages once it comes into force. It also expressly keeps **Scheduled Tribes**, as defined under **Article 342**, outside its scope, along with persons or groups whose customary rights are protected under the Constitution. This means the Bill is “uniform” in aspiration, but not literally universal in application.



### Background: Article 44 and the UCC Debate

- The constitutional basis for the UCC debate lies in **Article 44** of the Constitution, which states that “**The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India.**” Article 44 is part of the **Directive Principles of State Policy**, which means it is a constitutional goal and not, by itself, a directly enforceable fundamental right.
- The debate around a UCC has existed since the framing of the Constitution. In later decades, the Supreme Court repeatedly referred to Article 44 while dealing with family-law disputes. In **Jose Paulo Coutinho v. Maria Luiza Valentina Pereira (2019)**, the Court noted that although the framers had hoped for a Uniform Civil Code, no general all-India action had yet been taken, and it described **Goa** as a “shining example” of

- an Indian state with a uniform civil code applicable across religions, subject to limited exceptions.
- The debate has also been shaped by earlier judgments such as Shah Bano and Sarla Mudgal, both of which were later referenced in Jose Paulo Coutinho as instances where the Court had already urged attention to Article 44. The constitutional discussion has therefore never been only about religion; it has also been about gender justice, legal certainty, national integration, and the balance between equality and pluralism.

### Why Gujarat's Move Matters

Gujarat's step matters first because it turns the UCC from an abstract national debate into a live **state-level legislative model**.

Uttarakhand became the first state in independent India to operationalise its UCC through the **UCC Rules, Uttarakhand, 2025** and the state portal launched on **27 January 2025**. Gujarat is now the second state to move in the same direction, which gives the UCC debate a more concrete institutional form.

It matters secondly because Gujarat's Bill extends beyond marriage and divorce into **succession, inheritance, adoption, and live-in relationships**. That makes it a broader restructuring of civil status law, not merely a matrimonial reform statute. It also matters because it has been presented by the state government as a law linked to **Article 14** and **Article 44**, with a stated emphasis on equal justice, women's rights, and removal of discrimination based on religion or caste.

It matters thirdly because Gujarat is a large and politically influential state. Once a second state passes such a bill, the issue is no longer confined to one experimental jurisdiction.

**UNIFORM CIVIL CODE**

All sections of the society irrespective of their religion shall be treated equally according to a National Civil Code - the Uniform Civil Code.

**THEY COVER AREAS LIKE**

- Marriage
- Divorce
- Maintenance
- Inheritance
- Adoption
- Succession of Property

It is based on the premise that there is necessarily no connection between religion and personal law in a civilized society.

"UCC refers to a common set of laws governing civil rights of every citizen."  
Article 44 of Directive Principles sets duty of state for implementing UCC.

**TIMELINE**

- 1954: Passage of Special Marriage Act provides permission of civil marriage above any religious personal law.
- 1956: Hindu code bill passed dividing personal laws in:
  - Common Indian Citizen.
  - Muslim Community.
- 1986: Rajiv Gandhi government's law in Shah Bano case widens the difference in civil rights.
- 2003: Then President Dr. Abdul Kalam supported UCC.
- 2015: Supreme court asserted the need of UCC.

The dialogue for UCC was started by the Law Commission in the year 2016

Recent reporting has already linked Gujarat's move to renewed discussion in other states, including Madhya Pradesh, showing the possibility of a wider domino effect in state-level UCC politics.

## Key Provisions of the Bill

- The Bill requires **monogamy** as a condition of a valid marriage and fixes the minimum marriage age at **21 years for men** and **18 years for women**. It recognises different ceremonial forms, including **Nikah, Saptapadi, Anand Karaj**, and other religious forms, but subjects them to one common legal structure. It also prohibits marriages within specified degrees of relationship, subject to limited customary exceptions.
- The Bill makes **registration of marriages compulsory**. Marriages solemnised after commencement must be registered within **60 days**, and earlier marriages must be registered within **one year** of commencement. Failure to register within time can attract a fine up to **₹10,000**, while failure to respond to a notice to register can attract a higher fine up to **₹25,000**. At the same time, non-registration does not by itself invalidate the marriage.
- The Bill creates **uniform grounds of divorce** for all citizens. These include **adultery, cruelty, desertion for at least two years, conversion of religion, incurable mental illness, certain serious diseases, renunciation of the world, and presumption of death after seven years of absence**. It also permits **divorce by mutual consent** where the spouses have lived separately for one year and agree to dissolve the marriage.
- The Bill also standardises rules relating to **children, maintenance, custody, and property rights**. A "child" includes biological, adopted, and children born through **surrogacy or Assisted Reproductive Technology**. Children of void or voidable marriages are treated as legitimate. In custody matters, the child's welfare is paramount, and children below five years are generally to remain with the mother. The Bill also protects a woman's **stridhan**, including gifts and dowry articles, as her exclusive property.

## Highlights

### Marriage, Divorce, Succession, and Live-in Relationships under the Bill

- In marriage law, the Bill abolishes legal pluralism and replaces religion-specific consequences with one statewide civil standard. It prohibits **bigamy and polygamy**, and recent reporting on the Assembly debate states that the Bill prescribes imprisonment of up to **seven years** for marriages brought about by **force, coercion, or fraud**, and also for bigamy or polygamy. It further provides that a divorced couple may remarry each other without any intermediate condition, a formulation widely read as effectively disallowing the practice commonly described as **halala**.
- In divorce law, the Bill attempts full uniformity. It removes the legal force of different religious divorce frameworks and substitutes one common menu of civil grounds. It also penalises attempts to dissolve a marriage outside the Code's framework, and it punishes imposition of conditions before remarriage with imprisonment up to **three years** and a fine of **₹1 lakh**.
- In succession law, the Bill gives priority to **Class I heirs**, namely the **spouse, children, and both parents**, and distributes property equally among them without distinction between **sons and daughters**. It includes **ancestral and joint family property** within its property definition, disqualifies a murderer or abettor

- from inheriting, protects the inheritance rights of a child in the womb if born alive, and uses a survivorship rule where the order of deaths is uncertain in a common disaster. Recent reporting also states that the Bill sets out a three-tier hierarchy of heirs in intestate succession.
- In live-in relationships, the Bill is especially interventionist. It requires partners to submit a **Statement of Relationship** to the Registrar, punishes failure to register within **one month** with up to **three months' imprisonment**, bars registration where a partner is a minor, already married, or within prohibited degrees, and requires the Registrar to forward a copy to the local police station for record purposes. If either partner is below **21 years**, the Registrar must inform parents or guardians. A deserted woman partner can claim maintenance, and children of registered live-in relationships are treated as legitimate with inheritance rights. Partners must also file a **Statement of Termination** when the relationship ends.

### How Gujarat's Bill Compares with Uttarakhand's UCC

- Gujarat's Bill is closely aligned with the **Uttarakhand model** in design. Uttarakhand's UCC is already in force through the **UCC Rules, Uttarakhand, 2025**, and its official portal states that it creates a common legal framework for **marriage, divorce, inheritance, adoption, and succession** for all citizens of Uttarakhand, irrespective of religion or community. Like Gujarat, Uttarakhand also excludes **Scheduled Tribes** and groups whose customary rights are protected under the Constitution.
- Both systems also take a similar approach to **live-in relationships**. Uttarakhand's rules and implementation materials show that live-in relationships must be registered, information may be shared with the police for record purposes, and failure to submit the required statement after living together for more than a month is punishable under **Section 387** of the Uttarakhand Code. Gujarat's Bill mirrors this architecture almost point for point by making live-in registration compulsory, imposing a one-month timeline, linking the process to the Registrar, and attaching penal consequences to non-registration.
- The main difference is that **Uttarakhand already has an operational implementation framework**, including a digital portal, detailed rules, appeal processes, registrar hierarchy, and administrative formats. Gujarat, by contrast, is presently at the stage of an **Assembly-passed bill** with substantive provisions publicly described, but without the same published implementation infrastructure yet visible in the materials I reviewed. In other words, Uttarakhand is already in the **execution phase**, while Gujarat is still at the **legislative adoption phase**.

### Constitutional and Legal Issues

- The first legal issue is one of **legislative competence**. Family law subjects such as **marriage, divorce, adoption, wills, intestacy, and succession** fall under **Entry 5 of the Concurrent List** in the Seventh Schedule. That means a state legislature does have competence to legislate in this field. However, it also means such legislation operates in a domain where Parliament can legislate too.
- The second issue is **repugnancy under Article 254**. Article 254 provides that where a state law on a Concurrent List subject conflicts with a parliamentary law or existing law, the parliamentary law prevails unless the state law has been reserved for consideration and receives the required assent under Article 254(2). Because personal-law fields are already occupied in different ways by central statutes and pre-existing legal regimes, Gujarat's UCC may invite scrutiny on the question of how far it can depart from those frameworks and what assent architecture is required for conflicting provisions to survive.
- The third issue is the tension between **Article 14** and **Article 25**. Supporters of the Bill invoke **Article 14**, which guarantees equality before the law, and Article 44, which encourages a UCC. Critics invoke **Article 25**, which protects freedom of conscience and the right to profess and practise religion, though Article 25 also allows the State to regulate secular activities associated with religious practice and to enact laws for social welfare and reform. The core constitutional question is therefore whether personal-law reform is being framed as a permissible **secular civil reform**, or whether it unduly interferes with protected

- religious autonomy.
- The fourth issue is the Bill's own internal claim of uniformity. Both Gujarat's Bill and Uttarakhand's UCC exclude Scheduled Tribes and certain protected customary groups. That creates an obvious argumentative challenge: if an entire class of communities remains outside the Code, the law is uniform only within a defined field, not across all persons in the state. Legally, this may still be defensible as a classification tied to constitutional protection of tribal and customary rights, but politically and conceptually it weakens the absolutist language of "uniformity."
- The fifth issue concerns **privacy and personal liberty under Article 21**, especially in relation to compulsory registration of live-in relationships, parental notification where a partner is under 21, and police intimation. Because Article 21 protects personal liberty, these provisions are likely to be tested on the ground that consensual adult relationships form part of the private sphere. The state's defense, on the other hand, is likely to rest on protection of women, evidentiary certainty, and prevention of exploitation.

### Political Debate and Criticism

- The state government presented the Bill as a measure of **equal justice, women's dignity**, and the constitutional aspiration of Article 44. Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel said the law would eliminate discrimination, apply one framework to all citizens, and protect women's rights. Government supporters also stressed that the Bill does not interfere with religious rituals as such, but only creates one civil legal framework for their consequences.
- The opposition response was sharply critical. Congress and AAP opposed the Bill in the Assembly and sought that it be referred to a **select committee**. Congress leaders argued that the Bill was being rushed, was politically timed before the **2027 Gujarat Assembly election**, and could not honestly be called "uniform" while excluding Scheduled Tribes and constitutionally protected customary groups. Opposition speakers also argued that the Bill infringes constitutional guarantees and is politically targeted in effect.
- Outside the Assembly too, criticism has focused on two areas. The first is the claim that the Bill disproportionately restructures minority personal law in the name of uniformity. The second is the inclusion of highly intrusive **live-in relationship regulations**, which critics view as state overreach into private adult relationships. These concerns are not peripheral; they are central to the litigation and constitutional debate likely to follow.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which of the following committees submitted its report before the Gujarat Uniform Civil Code Bill, 2026 was introduced in the Assembly?
  - Justice R.M. Lodha Reform Committee
  - B.N. Srikrishna Law Review Committee
  - Ranjana Prakash Desai Committee
  - M. Fathima Beevi Advisory Committee
- What was Gujarat's position among Indian states after passing the Uniform Civil Code Bill, 2026?
  - first state to adopt a state-level UCC
  - second state to pass a state-level UCC
  - third state to notify a civil code
  - fourth state to begin a UCC process
- Which of the following best states the formal title of the new Gujarat law?
  - Gujarat Common Family Law Code, 2026
  - Gujarat Civil Status Regulation Act, 2026
  - Gujarat Uniform Civil Code, 2026
  - Gujarat Personal Law Harmonisation Act, 2026
- What constitutional provision is the central basis of the Uniform Civil Code debate in India?
  - Article 21
  - Article 44
  - Article 32
  - Article 36
- Which of the following states was the first in independent India to operationalise a Uniform Civil Code?
  - Uttarakhand
  - Andhra Pradesh
  - Madhya Pradesh
  - Maharashtra
- What did the Supreme Court describe Goa as in Jose Paulo Coutinho v. Maria Luiza Valentina Pereira (2019)?
  - a symbolic example of federalism
  - a shining example of a uniform civil code
  - a model for criminal law reform
  - a pioneer of tribal autonomy protection
- Which of the following groups is expressly kept outside the scope of the Gujarat Uniform Civil Code Bill, 2026?
  - all religious minorities in the state
  - all citizens living outside Gujarat
  - Scheduled Tribes under Article 342
  - all persons below twenty-one years
- What is the minimum marriage age for men under the Gujarat Uniform Civil Code Bill, 2026?
  - 18 years
  - 21 years
  - 23 years
  - 25 years
- Which of the following is the minimum marriage age for women under the Gujarat Uniform Civil Code Bill, 2026?
  - 18 years
  - 19 years
  - 20 years
  - 21 years
- Which of the following actions must be completed within 60 days for marriages solemnised after commencement of the Bill?
  - filing of succession declaration
  - submission of marriage form
  - declaration of marital status
  - registration of marriage
- Which of the following cases described Goa as a "shining example" of a uniform civil code applicable across religions?
  - Sarla Mudgal v. Maria Luiza Valentina Pereira (1995)
  - Shah Bano Begum v. Maria Luiza Valentina Pereira (1985)
  - José Paulo Coutinho v. Maria Luiza Valentina Pereira (2019)
  - Daniel Kef Latifi v. Maria Luiza Valentina Pereira (2001)
- What is the minimum period of desertion mentioned as a ground for divorce under the Bill?
  - one year
  - two years
  - five years
  - seven years
- Which of the following principles is stated to be paramount in custody matters under the Bill?
  - status of the father
  - parents background
  - welfare of the child
  - family preferences
- Which of the following property categories is expressly protected as a woman's exclusive property under the Bill?
  - ancestral agricultural holdings
  - family trust administration rights
  - marital residence occupancy interest
  - stridhan including gifts and dowry articles

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

15. What is the maximum imprisonment for marriages brought about by force, coercion, or fraud under recent reporting on the Bill?

- (a) three years
- (b) seven years
- (c) eight years
- (d) life imprisonment

## SOLUTIONS

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

## 5 Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026

### IN FOCUS

- The **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026** was introduced in the **Lok Sabha on 25 March 2026**. It seeks to amend the **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010** and is presented by the government as a measure to close operational and legal gaps in the handling of foreign contribution and assets created from such contribution, especially when an organisation's registration is cancelled, surrendered, or otherwise ceases.

### What is the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026?

The Bill is an amending law for the FCRA, 2010, which regulates the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contribution and foreign hospitality. The 2026 Bill does not replace the FCRA framework; instead, it significantly restructures the law on asset vesting, management, supervision, disposal, cessation of registration, treatment of partly foreign-funded assets, suspension-stage restrictions, and prior-permission timelines. It also introduces a Designated Authority and an Administrator into the statutory framework.



#### Background: What is the FCRA, 2010?

The **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010** is the principal law governing foreign contributions in India. According to India Code, it was enacted in **2010**, came into force on **1 May 2011**, and its purpose is to regulate the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contribution and foreign hospitality and to prohibit such receipt or use for activities detrimental to the national interest. The Act covers registration, prior permission, accounts, audit, inspection, adjudication, appeal, offences, and disposal of assets.

Under the existing framework, certain persons must obtain **registration** or **prior permission** before receiving foreign contribution. The Act also prohibits specified categories from accepting foreign contribution, provides for **suspension, cancellation, and surrender** of registration, and contains a pre-existing mechanism under **Section 15** for vesting foreign contribution and assets created from it in a prescribed authority when registration is cancelled or surrendered.

#### Why was the Amendment Bill brought?

- The **Statement of Objects and Reasons** says the government identified several operational and legal gaps in the present law.
- These include the absence of a comprehensive statutory framework for the **supervision, management, and disposal of assets** after vesting, lack of an explicit provision for **cessation of registration**, ambiguity regarding **assets during suspension**, lack of **timelines for utilisation** under prior permission, and what the Bill describes as **administrative uncertainty and scope for misuse**. The statement also notes that about **16,000 associations** are registered under the Act and receive around **₹22,000 crore annually**.

## Key Provisions of the FCRA Amendment Bill, 2026

The Bill makes a number of structural changes. It inserts the definitions of “**Administrator**” and “**Designated authority**”, omits the old **Section 15**, and inserts a new **Chapter IIIA** containing an elaborate vesting-and-management regime. It amends **Section 12** to provide that prior permission remains valid for a specific purpose or amount and that the foreign contribution must be received and utilised within a period to be prescribed by rules. It amends **Section 13** to restrict dealings with assets during suspension, inserts a new **Section 14B** on cessation of certificate, creates appellate and exemption provisions, and adds a requirement of **prior approval of the Central Government** before any investigation for an offence under the Act is initiated.

The Bill also amends **Section 3**, which lists persons prohibited from accepting foreign contribution, and it changes the language in parts of the Act from “**directors or office bearers**” to “**key functionaries**”, thereby broadening the statutory focus on the responsible persons inside an organisation.

### Designated Authority and Asset Control Mechanism

A central feature of the Bill is the creation of a statutory **Designated Authority**, to be notified by the Central Government. Under the new regime, when specified triggering events occur, foreign contribution and assets created from foreign contribution vest in this authority. The authority may itself, or through an **Administrator**, take possession of the assets and is made responsible for their **supervision, management, safeguarding, preservation, and maintenance**. If considered necessary in the public interest, it may also undertake the management of the activities of the concerned organisation for a prescribed period and may use foreign contribution for managing those assets and activities.

The Designated Authority is also given record-keeping and reporting responsibilities. It must maintain proper records, registers, inventories, and accounts, report violations or fraud to the Central Government, and submit prescribed reports. It must act in accordance with directions issued by the Central Government, and other public authorities, banks, and institutions are required to assist it.

### What happens when FCRA registration is cancelled, surrendered, or ceases?

The Bill expands the trigger events that activate vesting. Under the existing Act, the law expressly dealt with **cancellation** and **surrender**. The Bill adds a third category: **cessation** of certificate. It provides that a certificate is deemed to have ceased if **no application for renewal has been made**, if **renewal has been refused**, or if the **certificate is not renewed before expiry**. Once a certificate is cancelled, surrendered, or deemed to have ceased, the foreign contribution and assets created from it vest provisionally in the Designated Authority. The Bill also states that a person whose certificate has ceased cannot receive or utilise foreign contribution unless the certificate is renewed.

### Permanent and Provisional Vesting of Foreign Contribution and Assets

The Bill creates a **two-stage vesting system**. In the first stage, foreign contribution and the assets created out of it vest **provisionally** in the Designated Authority when the certificate is cancelled, surrendered, or ceases. If, within the prescribed period, the organisation obtains a **fresh certificate**, gets its certificate **renewed**, or gets it **restored by revision**, the Designated Authority must return the unutilised foreign contribution and the assets vested provisionally in it, subject to conditions and procedure.

In the second stage, if the person fails to obtain fresh registration, renewal, or restoration within the prescribed period, the foreign contribution and assets then stand **permanently vested** in the Designated Authority. The Bill separately provides that if a person who had been permitted to accept foreign contribution **ceases to exist**, or becomes **inoperative or defunct**, the foreign contribution and assets stand permanently vested as well.

### Use, Transfer, Sale, and Disposal of Assets under the Bill

- Once assets are **permanently vested**, the Designated Authority must apply them for **public purposes**. It may transfer such assets to any **Ministry, Department, authority, or agency** of the Central Government, State Government, or any local authority. It may also dispose of such assets through **sale or other appropriate process**, and the **sale proceeds**, together with any **unutilised foreign contribution**, are to be credited to the **Consolidated Fund of India**. The Bill also bars the concerned organisation, its key functionaries, or anyone acting for their benefit from directly or indirectly acquiring any interest in such assets.
- For immovable property sold or transferred by the Designated Authority, the Bill provides for a **certificate of sale or certificate of transfer**. Such a certificate is made conclusive proof of ownership and is valid for registration even if the original title deeds are not delivered. The Bill further states that property vested in the Designated Authority cannot be transferred by attachment, seizure, or court-ordered sale except in accordance with the Act.
- A special safeguard is included for a **place of worship**. Where any permanently vested asset, or a part of it, is a place of worship, the Designated Authority may entrust its management or operation to a suitable person on prescribed terms, while ensuring that its **religious character is maintained**.
- **Treatment of Assets Created Partly from Foreign Contribution:** The Bill explicitly covers assets created or acquired **partly from foreign contribution and partly from other sources**. Such an asset will, as a rule, vest **wholly** in the Designated Authority. However, the affected person may apply for return of any **distinct or ascertainable portion** of the asset that was created or acquired from non-foreign sources. If satisfied, the Designated Authority may return that portion in the prescribed manner. This is a significant expansion because it brings mixed-source assets squarely within the vesting regime.
- **Rules regarding NGOs that become defunct, inoperative, or cease to exist:** The Bill creates a new rule for organisations that become **defunct, inoperative, or cease to exist**. In such cases, the **last key functionaries** must inform the Central Government in the prescribed form, manner, and time. Thereafter, the foreign contribution received by such a person and the assets created out of foreign contribution stand **permanently vested** in the Designated Authority. This creates a direct statutory consequence even where the organisation is not actively functioning but is no longer legally or practically alive.
- **Prior Permission: New Timelines for Receipt and Utilisation:** The Bill amends **Section 12** to state that prior permission remains valid for a **specific purpose or specific amount** of foreign contribution, and that such contribution must be **received and utilised within such period as may be prescribed**. The Bill itself does **not specify the exact timeline in the text**; instead, it leaves the period to be fixed later through rules framed under the Act. This is important because the amendment moves the law away from an open-ended prior-permission framework toward a time-bound one.
- **Restrictions during Suspension of Registration:** The Bill tightens the law relating to **suspension** of registration under **Section 13**. It adds a new restriction stating that, during suspension, the organisation may not **alienate, encumber, or otherwise deal with any asset created out of foreign contribution**, except with the **prior approval of the Central Government**. This addition is narrower than full vesting, but it significantly limits the ability of a suspended entity to deal with foreign-funded assets while its status remains unresolved.
- **Appeal Mechanism against Orders of the Designated Authority:** The Bill creates a specific appellate system against orders passed by the Designated Authority under the new Chapter IIIA. An aggrieved person may first seek **revision** before the Designated Authority itself within **90 days**. In addition, an appeal may be filed within **90 days** to the **Court of the District Judge** within the relevant local jurisdiction, or, subject to prescribed limits, to a judicial officer not below the rank of **Civil Judge of Senior Division** as notified by the Central Government.

- **Central Government's Power to Exempt in Public Interest:** The Bill inserts a specific exemption provision allowing the **Central Government**, if it considers it necessary or expedient in the **public interest**, to exempt any person or class of persons from the provisions of the new vesting chapter. The exemption may be granted in the prescribed manner, to the prescribed extent, and subject to prescribed conditions. This gives the government a safety-valve power even while the Bill otherwise centralises control over foreign-funded assets.
- **Changes in Prohibition on Accepting Foreign Contribution:** The Bill amends **Section 3**, which lists persons prohibited from accepting foreign contribution. Under the PRS summary, the present law already bars categories such as **election candidates, political parties, judges, legislators, and news publishers**, and extends the prohibition to associations or companies engaged in production or broadcast of news or current affairs programmes. The Bill broadens this part of the prohibition by extending it to any **"person"** engaged in such activities, instead of limiting it to an **association or company** in the same way as before.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 25 March 2026?
  - (a) Foreign Aid Compliance Bill
  - (b) Foreign Assets Control Bill
  - (c) Foreign Donations Revision Bill
  - (d) FCRA Amendment Bill 2026
2. Which of the following principal laws is proposed to be amended by the 2026 Bill?
  - (a) Foreign Contribution Regulation Act
  - (b) Prevention of Corruption Act
  - (c) Companies Compliance Act
  - (d) Societies Registration Act
3. Which of the following dates marks the commencement of the FCRA, 2010?
  - (a) 15 April 2010
  - (b) 26 January 2011
  - (c) 1 May 2011
  - (d) 8 August 2010
4. Which of the following old statutory provisions is omitted by the 2026 Bill?
  - (a) Section 12
  - (b) Section 15
  - (c) Section 13
  - (d) Section 14B
5. Which of the following new institutional authorities is created as a central feature of the Bill?
  - (a) Revenue Transfer Board
  - (b) Foreign Grants Tribunal
  - (c) National Vesting Commission
  - (d) Designated Authority
6. Which of the following new categories is added to cancellation and surrender as a trigger for vesting?
  - (a) Merger of institution
  - (b) Cessation of certificate
  - (c) Change of office
  - (d) Reduction of funding
7. Which of the following outcomes occurs first when registration is cancelled, surrendered, or ceases?
  - (a) Immediate sale of assets
  - (b) Credit to state treasury
  - (c) Provisional vesting begins
  - (d) Automatic judicial review
8. Which of the following funds receives sale proceeds from permanently vested assets?
  - (a) Contingency Fund of India
  - (b) Consolidated Fund of India
  - (c) National Relief Fund of India
  - (d) Public Account of India
9. Which of the following restrictions applies during (suspension of registration)?
  - (a) No annual report filing
  - (b) No dealing with assets
  - (c) No renewal application filing
  - (d) No staff appointment orders
10. Which of the following best describes the validity of prior permission under the amended Section 12?
  - (a) Valid for all activities
  - (b) Valid for five years
  - (c) Valid for specific purpose
  - (d) Valid till cancellation only
11. Which of the following persons may first hear a revision challenge against an order under the new chapter?
  - (a) Central Vigilance Commissioner
  - (b) District Magistrate concerned
  - (c) Civil Judge Junior Division
  - (d) Designated Authority itself
12. Which of the following time limits is provided for filing an appeal under the new appellate mechanism?
  - (a) 30 days only
  - (b) 60 days only
  - (c) 90 days only
  - (d) 120 days only
13. Which of the following assets may be returned in part if created from both foreign and non-foreign sources?
  - (a) Mixed-source property asset
  - (b) Fully donated temple land
  - (c) Expired registration records
  - (d) Purely foreign cash grants
14. Which of the following expressions replaces “directors or office bearers” in parts of the amended law?
  - (a) Senior administrative persons
  - (b) principal operating members
  - (c) key functionaries
  - (d) registered managing officers
15. Which of the following broad changes best captures one major effect of the 2026 Bill on the existing framework?
  - (a) It removes all appeals
  - (b) It legalises open funding
  - (c) It abolishes prior permission
  - (d) It strengthens executive control

## SOLUTIONS

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

## 6 Global Terrorism Index 2026

### IN FOCUS

The **Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2026** was released in **March 2026** as the **13th edition** of the annual index. The report recorded a substantial global decline in terrorism in 2025: **deaths from terrorism fell by 28% to 5,582**, and the **number of attacks fell by nearly 22% to 2,944**. At the same time, the report showed that terrorism remains highly concentrated, with the burden shifting sharply toward **South Asia** and the **Sahel region of sub-Saharan Africa**.

# The Impact of Terrorism Around the World

Impact of terrorism according to the Global Guardian Terror Index 2026\*



\* Based on terror incidents, casualties, fatalities, hostages by groups, insurgents, individual perpetrators

## What is the Global Terrorism Index (GTI)?

- The **Global Terrorism Index** is an annual index that measures the **impact of terrorism across 163 countries**. It is designed to track long-term trends and compare countries on a common scale by examining the human and social impact of terrorist violence over time. The GTI does not merely count attacks; it evaluates the broader intensity of terrorism in each country using a multi-indicator scoring model and a weighted time lag to reflect the continuing social and psychological impact of terrorism.
- The 2026 report covers terrorism trends up to **2025** and presents not only rankings and country scores, but also thematic analysis on issues such as **terrorist organisations, regional shifts, borderlands, youth radicalisation**, and the changing structure of attacks in different parts of the world.

## Who Publishes the GTI and How is it Prepared?

- The GTI is published by the **Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP)**, an independent, non-partisan, non-profit think tank headquartered in **Sydney**, with offices in **New York, The Hague, Abuja, Nairobi, and Manila**. The report states that IEP develops metrics for measuring peace and works with international partners and intergovernmental organisations on peace and security analysis.
- The report is prepared using **Dragonfly's TerrorismTracker database**, which contains structured event records of terrorist incidents reported in open sources since **January 2007**. The GTI describes TerrorismTracker as a comprehensive and methodologically robust open-source terrorism incidents database used in professional applications across law enforcement, government, military, academia, and the private sector.



## Methodology of the Global Terrorism Index

- The GTI ranks **163 countries** on the basis of **four indicators** that are **weighted over five years**. These four indicators are the total number of terrorist incidents, total number of fatalities, total number of injuries, and total number of hostages caused by terrorist acts in a given year. Among these, fatalities receive the highest weighting. The methodology page shows the weights as 1 for incidents, 3 for fatalities, and 0.5 each for injuries and hostages.
- The GTI then applies a five-year weighted average to account for the lingering effects of terrorism. The weighting pattern is 52% for the current year, 26% for the previous year, 13% for two years ago, 6% for three years ago, and 3% for four years ago. This means that large terrorist attacks can continue to influence a country's score even after the immediate year of the attack has passed.

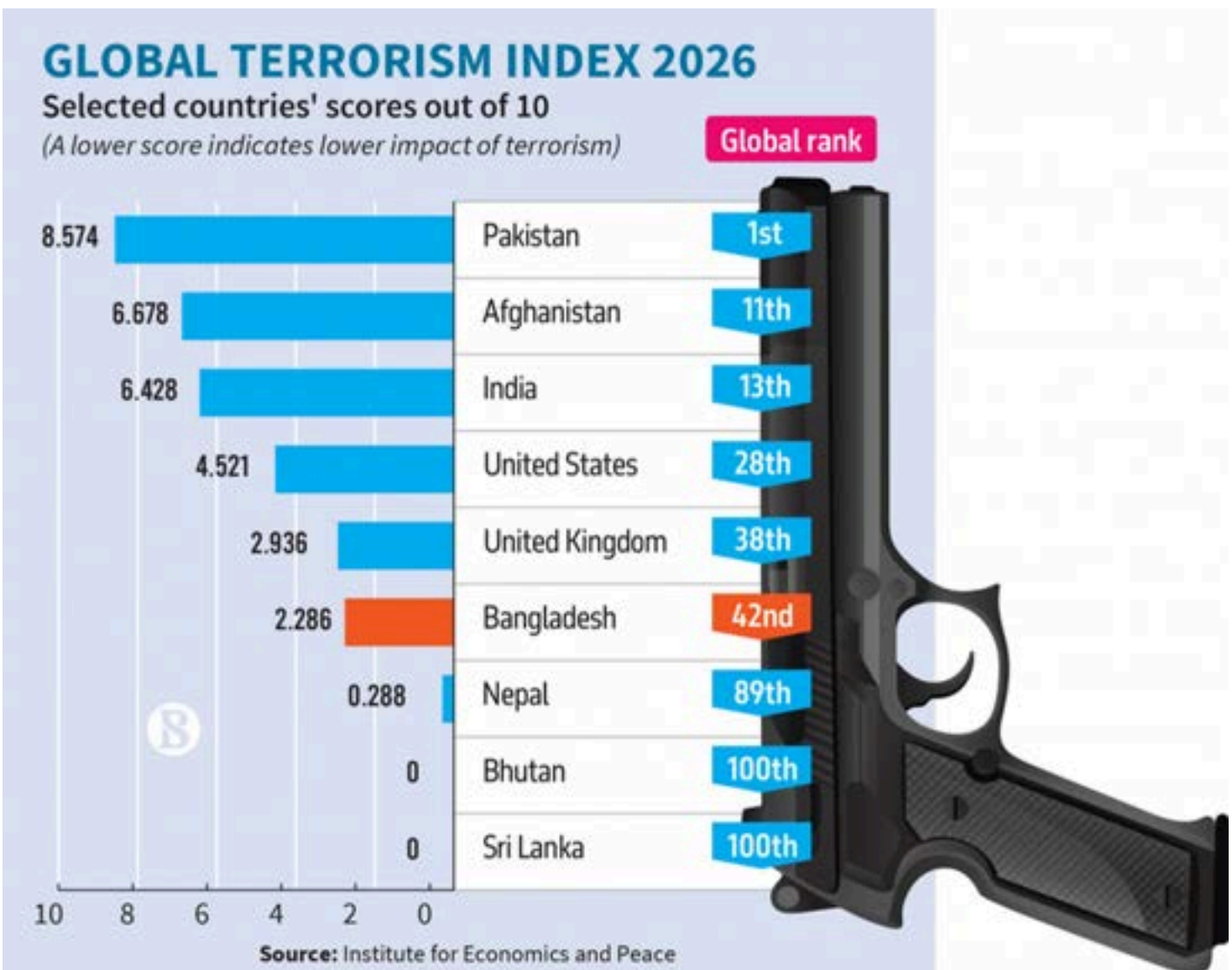
## Key Global Findings of GTI 2026

- The GTI 2026 found that terrorism declined significantly worldwide in 2025. **Deaths fell to 5,582, attacks fell to 2,944, 81 countries improved their scores**, and only **19 countries deteriorated**, which was the lowest number of deteriorating countries on record. The report also noted that 70% of global terrorism deaths occurred in just five countries: Pakistan, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Niger, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- The report also found that terrorism has become more geographically concentrated. In **2025, only 36 countries recorded at least one death from terrorism**, the first time since **2008** that fewer than 40 countries crossed that threshold. At the same time, the epicentre of terrorism has shifted from the **Middle East and North Africa** toward the **Sahel region**, which alone accounted for **more than half of all terrorism deaths in 2025**.

- Another major finding was that **conflict remains the principal driver of terrorism**. The report states that only 1% of deaths from terrorism in 2025 occurred outside conflict-affected countries, and that 98% of terrorism deaths since 2007 have taken place in countries experiencing conflict.

### Most Terrorism-Affected Countries in GTI 2026

- The ten most terrorism-affected countries in **GTI 2026** were ranked as follows: **Pakistan** at Rank 1 with a score of **8.574**, **Burkina Faso** at Rank 2 with **8.324**, **Niger** at Rank 3 with **7.816**, **Nigeria** at Rank 4 with **7.792**, **Mali** at Rank 5 with **7.586**, **Syria** at Rank 6 with **7.545**, **Somalia** at Rank 7 with **7.391**, **Democratic Republic of the Congo** at Rank 8 with **7.171**, **Colombia** at Rank 9 with **7.116**, and **Israel** at Rank 10 with **6.79**.
- A notable change in the 2026 rankings was that **Pakistan displaced Burkina Faso** to become the country most impacted by terrorism in 2025. The report notes that Pakistan had ranked **2nd in 2024** and moved to **1st in 2025**, while Burkina Faso fell from **1st to 2nd**.



## India's Position in the Global Terrorism Index 2026

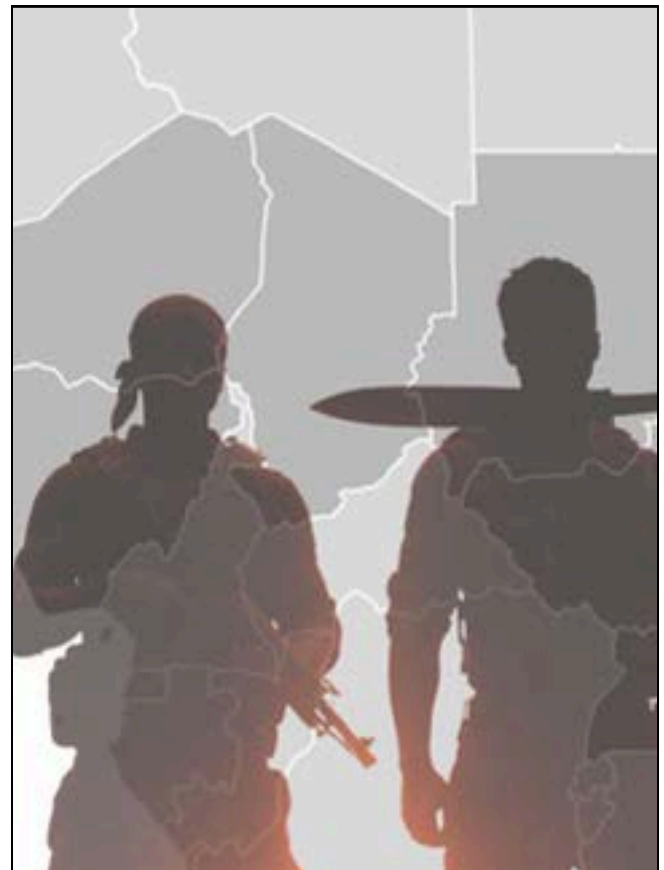
- India was ranked **13th** in the **Global Terrorism Index 2026** with a score of **6.428**, moving **up by two places** from the previous ranking position shown in the results table. In the South Asia regional table, India's score is shown as having improved by **0.136 points** from 2024 to 2025, and by **0.415 points** over the 2015–2025 period.
- The report also indicates that India was among the countries where the **number of deaths from terrorism declined in 2025**, alongside Somalia, Syria, and the central Sahel states. At the same time, India remained among the more terrorism-affected countries globally, which explains why it still appeared in the upper tier of the index despite some improvement.

## Regional Trends in Terrorism in 2025

- The GTI 2026 states that **South Asia remained the most impacted region by terrorism in 2025**, with an average regional score of **3.465**. It was followed by **Middle East and North Africa (2.463)** and **sub-Saharan Africa (2.054)**. Although the impact of terrorism fell in **seven of the eight GTI regions**, **North and Central America** was the only region to record an increase.
- The most substantial annual improvement was seen in the **Middle East and North Africa**, where the impact of terrorism fell by **15% from 2024 to 2025**, reaching its lowest level since the index began. At the same time, the long-term regional story remains the rise of **sub-Saharan Africa**, especially the **Sahel**, as the new centre of global terrorism. Since 2007, the report notes that the **MENA region** recorded almost **60,000 terrorism deaths**, **sub-Saharan Africa** nearly **50,000**, and **South Asia** over **42,500**, together accounting for **95% of all terrorism-related fatalities** and **79% of all attacks** worldwide since 2007.

## Deadliest Terrorist Organisations in GTI 2026

- The four deadliest terrorist organisations in 2025 were Islamic State (IS), Jamaat Nusrat Al-Islam wal Muslimeen (JNIM), Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and al-Shabaab. Together, these four groups were responsible for 3,869 deaths, accounting for 70% of all terrorism deaths in 2025. Among them, TTP was the only one that recorded an increase in deaths over the year.
- Islamic State (IS) remained the world's deadliest terrorist group in 2025. It carried out 488 attacks, down from 577 in 2024, and was active in 15 countries, down from 22 the year before. Even with this decline, IS still accounted for nearly one in every six attacks worldwide.
- JNIM was the second deadliest group, with 147 incidents and 1,274 deaths across four countries. TTP was the third deadliest, recording 595 attacks and 637 deaths, all in Pakistan, with especially strong activity in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa near the Afghanistan border. Al-Shabaab was the fourth deadliest, carrying out 93 attacks and causing 286 deaths, mainly in Somalia, with some cross-border attacks in Kenya and one in Uganda.



## Changing Nature of Terrorism: Trends and Patterns

- The GTI 2026 shows that terrorism is becoming more concentrated, more border-linked, and more unevenly distributed across regions. The report states that 41% of attacks occurred within 50 kilometres of an international border, and 64% occurred within 100 kilometres. This underlines the growing importance of borderlands as spaces where weak state control, difficult terrain, cross-border smuggling, and poor inter-state coordination create opportunities for terrorist groups to recruit, train, and operate.
- The report also shows a growing divergence between conflict zones and the West. Globally, terrorism is still overwhelmingly tied to conflict environments, but in the West the pattern is increasingly shaped by lone-wolf violence and rapid online radicalisation.
- Over the last five years, lone-wolf actors carried out 93% of fatal terrorist attacks in the West and were three times more likely to successfully execute an attack than groups of two or more plotters. In 2025, deaths in the West rose sharply, with 57 deaths, including 15 deaths in the Bondi Beach attack in Australia, the worst terrorist attack in that country's history.
- A further shift identified in the report is youth radicalisation. In 2025, children and adolescents accounted for 42% of all terror-related investigations in Europe and North America, which the report describes as a threefold increase since 2021.
- The report also notes that the radicalisation timeline has shortened dramatically and that today radicalisation can occur within weeks rather than over many months. This indicates that terrorism in some regions is moving away from large, structured, hierarchical groups and toward faster, more decentralised, digitally mediated pathways to violence.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following best describes the primary purpose of the Global Terrorism Index?
  - (a) measuring economic growth across nations
  - (b) tracking military strength of countries
  - (c) assessing impact of terrorism globally
  - (d) analysing migration trends worldwide
2. Which of the following organisations publishes the Global Terrorism Index annually?
  - (a) United Nations Development Programme
  - (b) Institute for Economics and Peace
  - (c) World Economic Forum Group
  - (d) International Monetary Fund
3. Which of the following data sources is used for compiling terrorism incidents in the Index?
  - (a) United Nations security archive
  - (b) NATO intelligence Tracker database
  - (c) World Bank incident Tracker database
  - (d) Dragonfly TerrorismTracker database
4. Which of the following indicators receives the highest weight in the Index methodology?
  - (a) number of terrorist incidents
  - (b) number of fatalities recorded
  - (c) number of injured victims
  - (d) number of hostages taken
5. Which of the following time-weighting patterns is applied to account for long-term impact?
  - (a) declining weights over five years
  - (b) equal weighting across five years
  - (c) increasing weights over five years
  - (d) random weights across years
6. Which of the following trends was observed globally in terrorism during 2025?
  - (a) sharp increase in attacks worldwide
  - (b) notable decline in terrorism activity
  - (c) stable pattern with no change
  - (d) complete disappearance of attacks
7. Which of the following countries ranked highest in terrorism impact in the Index?
  - (a) Pakistan
  - (b) Burkina Faso
  - (c) Afghanistan
  - (d) Indonesia
8. Which of the following regions accounted for the largest share of terrorism impact globally?
  - (a) Europe and Central Asia
  - (b) North and Central America
  - (c) South Asia region overall
  - (d) East Asia and Pacific
9. Which of the following best describes the geographical pattern of terrorism deaths?
  - (a) evenly spread across all countries
  - (b) concentrated in a few countries
  - (c) limited only to developed nations
  - (d) restricted to isolated regions
10. Which of the following best explains the link between terrorism and conflict?
  - (a) terrorism occurs mainly outside conflict areas
  - (b) conflict has little relation to terrorism
  - (c) terrorism unrelated to political instability
  - (d) terrorism largely tied to conflict zones
11. Which of the following groups remained the deadliest terrorist organisation globally?
  - (a) Al-Shabaab group
  - (b) Islamic State group
  - (c) Tehrik Taliban Pakistan
  - (d) Boko Haram group
12. Which of the following weighting applies to the most recent year in the Index?
  - (a) highest proportion in calculation
  - (b) lowest proportion in calculation
  - (c) equal share with older years
  - (d) no weight assigned to it
13. Which of the following best describes the shift in global terrorism epicentre?
  - (a) towards Europe and Americas
  - (b) towards Sahel and South Asia
  - (c) towards East and South Asia
  - (d) towards polar regions only
14. Which of the following best describes recent trends in radicalisation in developed regions?
  - (a) slow and long-term processes
  - (b) rapid and digitally driven processes
  - (c) completely absent phenomenon
  - (d) confined to rural populations

## SOLUTIONS

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

## 7 Punjab-Rajasthan Water Dispute

### IN FOCUS

The **Punjab–Rajasthan water dispute** has resurfaced because Punjab Chief Minister **Bhagwant Mann** announced that Punjab would seek **₹1.44 lakh crore** from Rajasthan for drawing about **18,000 cusecs** of water since around **1960** without payment. Punjab's formal position is that a pre-Independence arrangement required payment for this supply and that the historical basis of Rajasthan's continued drawal must now be revisited in light of Punjab's worsening water stress.

### What is the Punjab–Rajasthan Water Dispute?

- At its core, the dispute is about whether Rajasthan's long-standing use of water drawn through canal systems originating in Punjab should be treated as a **historically paid supply arrangement** or as part of a later **inter-State water allocation regime** within India. Punjab is trying to revive the first understanding, rooted in the princely-era Bikaner arrangement, while Rajasthan's legal position is likely to rest on the second, namely the post-Independence and post-Indus-Waters-Treaty allocation framework that regularised Rajasthan's entitlement to Ravi–Beas-linked waters.
- The present row is therefore not just a technical argument over canal operations. It is a layered conflict involving colonial-era contracts, riparian rights, post-1960 national reallocation of eastern rivers, later political agreements, and present-day groundwater scarcity in Punjab.

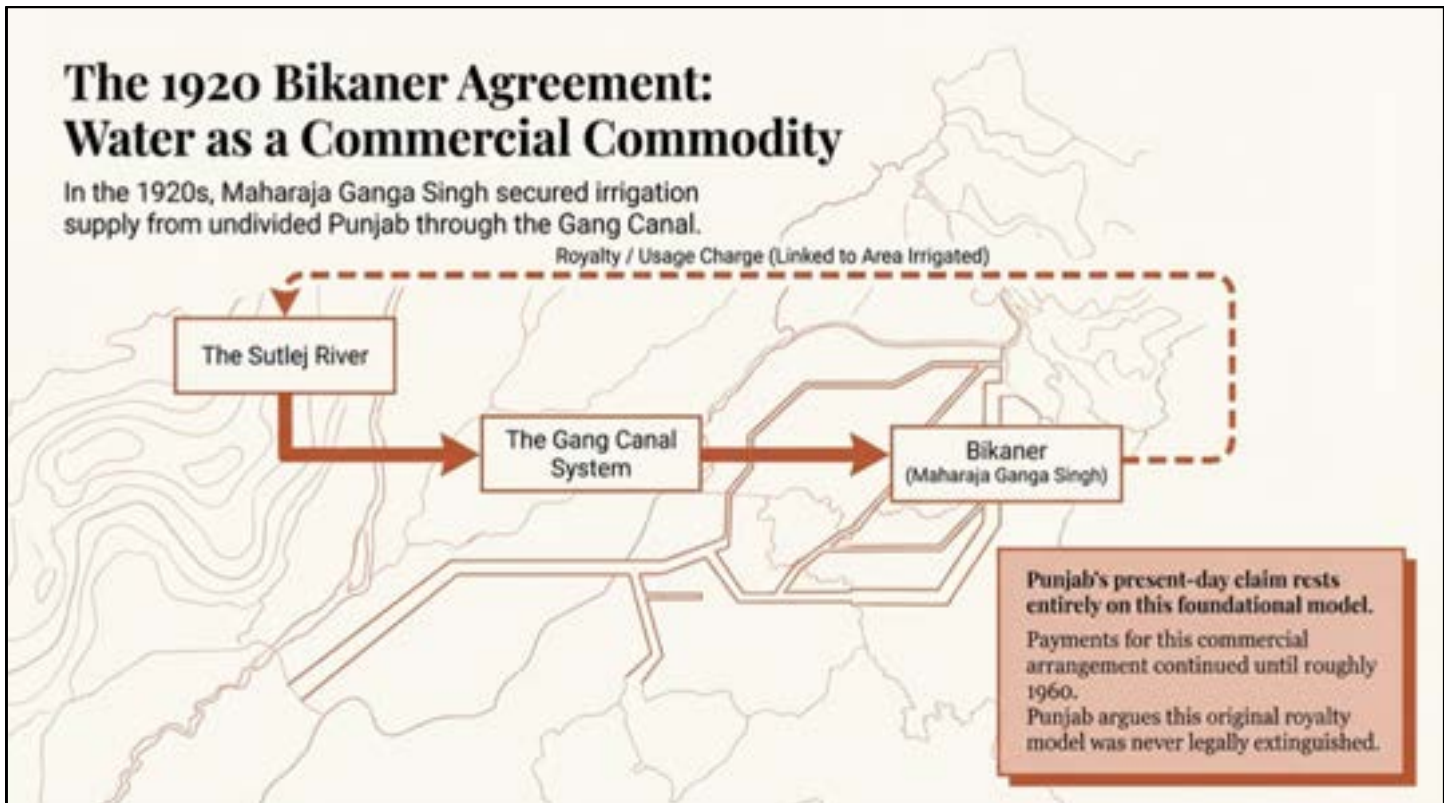
#### Geographical Background: Ravi, Beas, Sutlej and the Canal System

- The dispute is tied to the **Ravi, Beas and Sutlej**, the three **eastern rivers** of the Indus basin. Under the **Indus Waters Treaty**, the waters of these three eastern rivers were reserved for the **exclusive use of India**, while the three western rivers were allocated to Pakistan. That treaty changed the strategic and legal importance of these rivers inside India because it enabled internal redistribution of eastern-river waters to Indian states and canal systems.
- The older canal link central to the present dispute is the **Gang Canal**, also called the **Bikaner Canal**. It has operated since **1927** and originally drew supplies from the **Hussainiwala/Ferozpur headworks** on the **Sutlej**. After **1947**, the canal system began receiving supplies through the **Ferozpur Feeder**, while continuing to carry water into Rajasthan. This made Punjab the physical transit and control point for water reaching parts of north-western Rajasthan.
- Over time, the canal geography widened. After the structural changes brought by the Indus Waters Treaty, larger post-Independence projects such as the **Harike Barrage** and the **Rajasthan Canal**, later known as the **Indira Gandhi Canal**, strengthened Rajasthan's access to eastern-river waters and deepened the long-term irrigation relationship between Punjab's river system and Rajasthan's arid districts.

#### Historical Background of the Dispute

- The roots of the dispute go back to the **1920s**, when the princely state of **Bikaner** sought irrigation water from undivided Punjab. Maharaja **Ganga Singh** secured supply from the Sutlej through what became the Gang Canal. Under that arrangement, Bikaner paid Punjab a **royalty or usage charge**, typically linked to the area irrigated. Punjab's present claim is built on the argument that this royalty model was never properly

- extinguished in principle, even though it fell out of use after Independence and especially after 1960.
- The later legal history moved in a different direction. Official material of the Jal Shakti Ministry records that **pre-partition utilisation of 3.13 MAF** already existed for **Rajasthan, the then Punjab, and J&K**, and that the **surplus Ravi-Beas waters** were subsequently dealt with through a sequence of arrangements: first in **1955**, then through the **24 March 1976** Union notification after Punjab's reorganisation, and later through the **31 December 1981** agreement among Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan.
- The issue was then reopened again under the **Rajiv-Longowal Accord of 1985**, after which the **Ravi and Beas Waters Tribunal** was constituted.



### The 1920 Bikaner Agreement and Its Relevance

- The arrangement now described as the **1920 Bikaner agreement** was essentially a **commercial irrigation arrangement** between the princely state of Bikaner and the colonial Punjab administration. Water was supplied from Punjab's side through the Gang Canal system, and Bikaner paid a royalty or water-use charge. According to current reporting and Punjab's own present argument, payments continued until roughly **1960**.
- Its relevance today lies in the fact that Punjab is treating this arrangement as the historical foundation for a present-day financial claim. In Punjab's telling, Rajasthan cannot rely only on later allocations while ignoring the original paid nature of the supply relationship. In contrast, the counter-view is that the 1920s arrangement belonged to a princely-colonial order and was overtaken by the later regime of national ownership and inter-State allocation after the Indus Waters Treaty and subsequent political agreements.

### Post-Independence Developments and Rajasthan's Water Share

- After Independence, the dispute gradually moved from a royalty-based question to an allocation-based one. Official government material records that the surplus Ravi-Beas waters were addressed through successive decisions in **1955**, **1976**, and **1981**. The 1976 notification specifically dealt with the sharing of

- Ravi–Beas waters after the **reorganisation of Punjab in 1966**, when Haryana was carved out.
- A particularly important milestone was the **1981 tripartite agreement** among **Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan**. According to contemporary reporting and parliamentary material, this agreement worked with an estimated availability of **17.17 MAF** and allocated **8.6 MAF** to Rajasthan, the largest share. That allocation formalised Rajasthan’s entitlement within the later political-legal framework and also supported the expansion of the **Indira Gandhi Canal** system into the Thar region.
- From Rajasthan’s perspective, therefore, its water use is not an informal carryover from a princely bargain but a usage stream repeatedly recognised in post-Independence arrangements. That is why the present Punjab claim challenges not just a historical practice but a long-settled allocation narrative.



### Role of the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty

- The Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 is central to the dispute because it fundamentally changed the legal character of the eastern rivers. Under the treaty, the Ravi, Beas and Sutlej became available for the exclusive use of India, and official Indian material notes that these waters became available for unrestricted use by India after 31 March 1970. That made it possible for India to reorganise the use of eastern-river waters internally for irrigation, storage, and canal transfers.
- This treaty is also important because Punjab argues that the old royalty arrangement should still matter, while the opposite view is that once the eastern rivers became subject to internal Indian allocation under a sovereign legal framework, the older commercial logic ceased to govern. In practical terms, the treaty marks the point at which Rajasthan’s access came to be treated less as a paid service and more as part of India’s internal water-distribution policy.

### Punjab’s Claim of ₹1.44 Lakh Crore Against Rajasthan

- Punjab’s present demand is that Rajasthan should pay **₹1.44 lakh crore** toward what Punjab describes as unpaid dues for water drawn over decades. Current reporting says Punjab linked the claim to Rajasthan’s continuous drawal of about **18,000 cusecs** and framed the issue as one of unpaid royalty or usage charges

- under the historical arrangement. Punjab also signalled that Rajasthan should either clear the dues or face a challenge to the continuation of the arrangement.

### Punjab's Arguments in the Dispute

- Punjab's principal argument rests on the **riparian principle**. Punjab contends that primary claims over river waters should belong to the states through which the rivers actually flow. Since **Rajasthan does not lie in the basin of the Ravi, Beas or Sutlej**, Punjab argues that Rajasthan is a **non-riparian state**, and that continuing to allocate it such a large share is inequitable, especially when Punjab itself faces serious water scarcity.
- Punjab also links the dispute to the state's worsening groundwater crisis. Reporting on the current dispute cites the **Central Ground Water Board's 2024–25 assessment**, according to which Punjab had the highest groundwater extraction rate in India at **156.36%** of annual extractable resources, compared with a national average of **60.63%**. This allows Punjab to argue that old assumptions about "surplus" Ravi–Beas waters no longer reflect present hydrological reality.
- A third Punjab argument is economic. The state is increasingly presenting the diversion of water to Rajasthan not simply as a constitutional wrong but as a measurable historical cost. That is why the present controversy combines the language of **riparian rights, water stress, and royalty recovery**.

### Rajasthan's Likely Position and Counter-Arguments

- Rajasthan's likely response would rest on the later legal history rather than the older princely agreement. It can point to the fact that post-Independence arrangements repeatedly dealt with Ravi–Beas waters through **1955, 1976, and 1981**, and that the **1981 agreement** explicitly allocated **8.6 MAF** to Rajasthan. It can therefore argue that its present use is grounded in recognised inter-State allocation and not in an outdated commercial contract.
- Rajasthan can also rely on the fact that even Punjab's own **Punjab Termination of Agreements Act, 2004** protected "**existing and actual utilizations**" through existing systems. Official Jal Shakti material specifically notes that the 2004 Act purported to terminate agreements but preserved ongoing utilisation. That point is important because Rajasthan's long-standing canal use falls squarely within the category of settled existing use.
- A further counter-argument is that after the **Indus Waters Treaty**, the old royalty model was effectively replaced by an internal allocation regime within India. On that view, the 1920s arrangement may be relevant historically, but not decisive legally. This is an inference from the structure of later allocations and treaty-driven internal reallocation, and it is the strongest basis on which Rajasthan can resist Punjab's demand for retrospective payment.

### How the Dispute Differs from the SYL Canal Issue

- The present Punjab–Rajasthan dispute is often confused with the **SYL Canal** controversy, but they are not the same. The **SYL issue** is principally a **Punjab–Haryana** dispute over how **Haryana** is to receive its allocated share of Ravi–Beas waters through the unfinished **Sutlej–Yamuna Link Canal**. Official and parliamentary material connects SYL directly with the 1976 and 1981 Ravi–Beas arrangements and with Haryana's need for a conveyance channel to draw its share.
- The current Punjab–Rajasthan row is different in both form and objective. It is **not mainly about constructing a new canal** or enabling a future transfer. It is about **Rajasthan's long-standing drawal through existing canal systems** and Punjab's present attempt to characterise that history as either underpaid or wrongfully continued. Even the 2004 Punjab law, which was widely associated with the SYL controversy, left "existing utilisation" untouched, meaning that established Rajasthan drawals were not directly shut down by that move.

## River Disputes in the Constitution of India

- The constitutional framework for river-water disputes in India is built around **Article 262, Entry 17 of the State List**, and **Entry 56 of the Union List**. Entry 17 places **water, irrigation, canals, drainage, embankments, water storage and water power** in the State List, but expressly makes that power subject to **Entry 56 of List I**. Entry 56 empowers Parliament to legislate on the **regulation and development of inter-State rivers and river valleys** where Union control is declared expedient in the public interest.
- Article 262 specifically deals with adjudication of inter-State water disputes. It allows Parliament to provide by law for adjudication of disputes concerning the **use, distribution or control** of waters of inter-State rivers or river valleys, and it also allows Parliament to bar the jurisdiction of the **Supreme Court and other courts** in such matters. Parliament used this power to enact the **Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956**.
- Alongside this, Parliament enacted the **River Boards Act, 1956**, which provides for the establishment of **River Boards** for regulation and development of inter-State rivers and river valleys. However, the River Boards mechanism is essentially advisory rather than adjudicatory, whereas the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act is the main statute used for formal dispute resolution through tribunals. Under the dispute-settlement framework, tribunal decisions are to be published, are treated as **final and binding**, and the Central Government may frame a scheme for implementation.

### Past River-Water Disputes in India

- India has had a long history of inter-State river disputes. According to the **Central Water Commission, nine inter-State river water disputes tribunals** have been constituted under the 1956 Act. The Commission states that, at present, the decisions of **Krishna-I, Godavari, Narmada, Cauvery, and Mahadayi** tribunals are effective and binding; the decisions of **Ravi-Beas, Krishna-II and Vansadhara** have not yet been notified and are therefore not yet effective; and the **Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal** remains under adjudication.
- Some of the most prominent examples illustrate the variety of Indian water conflicts. The **Cauvery dispute** involved **Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry**. The **Mahadayi dispute** has involved **Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra**. The **Mahanadi dispute** concerns **Odisha and Chhattisgarh**. The **Vansadhara dispute** concerns **Odisha and Andhra Pradesh**. The **Ravi-Beas dispute** has involved **Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan**, with the present Punjab-Rajasthan controversy being one branch of that wider history.
- These past disputes show a common pattern. Water conflicts in India rarely remain only technical. They usually combine **history, federalism, irrigation dependence, regional identity, and changing hydrology**. The Punjab-Rajasthan dispute fits that pattern exactly: a historical arrangement has re-emerged as a constitutional, political and resource-stress question.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following states is seeking a financial claim against Rajasthan in the present water row?  
(a) Haryana (b) Punjab  
(c) Gujarat (d) Himachal
2. Which of the following princely entities originally obtained irrigation supply through the early canal arrangement?  
(a) Bikaner (b) Patiala  
(c) Jind (d) Alwar
3. Which of the following canal systems is the older link central to the present controversy?  
(a) Gang Canal (b) Bhakra Canal  
(c) Upper Bari Canal (d) Narwana Canal
4. Which of the following river groups lies at the heart of the present Punjab–Rajasthan water dispute?  
(a) Ganga Yamuna rivers (b) Narmada Tapi rivers  
(c) Godavari Krishna rivers (d) Ravi Beas Sutlej
5. Which of the following treaties made the eastern rivers available for India’s exclusive use?  
(a) Shimla Agreement (b) Tashkent Accord  
(c) Delhi Pact (d) Indus Waters Treaty
6. Which of the following years is associated with the important tripartite arrangement mentioned in the source?  
(a) 1955 (b) 1976  
(c) 1981 (d) 2004
7. Which of the following quantities is linked with Rajasthan’s share under the 1981 arrangement?  
(a) 3.13 MAF (b) 8.6 MAF  
(c) 17.17 MAF (d) 18,000 cusecs
8. Which of the following monetary amounts has Punjab presently demanded from Rajasthan?  
(a) ₹1.44 lakh crore (b) ₹1.14 lakh crore  
(c) ₹1.24 lakh crore (d) ₹1.34 lakh crore
9. Which of the following principles is central to Punjab’s argument regarding priority over river waters?  
(a) Estoppel doctrine (b) Riparian principle  
(c) Basic structure doctrine (d) Pleasure doctrine
10. Which of the following bodies provided the groundwater assessment cited in the source?  
(a) Central Water Commission  
(b) NITI Aayog  
(c) Jal Shakti Ministry  
(d) Central Ground Water Board
11. Which of the following constitutional provisions specifically deals with adjudication of inter-state water disputes?  
(a) Article 136 (b) Article 226  
(c) Article 356 (d) Article 262
12. Which of the following statutes was enacted by Parliament for formal tribunal-based resolution of such disputes?  
(a) Inter-State River Water Disputes Act  
(b) Water Conservation Management Act  
(c) National Canal Regulation Act  
(d) Interstate Irrigation Boards Act
13. Which of the following disputes is described as different from the present Punjab–Rajasthan row?  
(a) Mahanadi dispute  
(b) Cauvery dispute  
(c) SYL Canal issue  
(d) Mahadayi dispute
14. Which of the following lists correctly identifies the principal parties in the wider Ravi–Beas dispute history noted in the source?  
(a) Punjab, Gujarat and Rajasthan  
(b) Punjab, Delhi and Haryana  
(c) Haryana, Delhi and Rajasthan  
(d) Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan
15. Which of the following years is associated with the treaty that transformed the internal significance of the eastern rivers?  
(a) 1947 (b) 1960 (c) 1970 (d) 1985

## SOLUTIONS

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

## 8 India's Opposition to WTO's IFD Agreement

### IN FOCUS

India's opposition to the **WTO's Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) Agreement** became sharper at the **14th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC14)** held in **Yaoundé, Cameroon**, which concluded on **30 March 2026**. India formally refused to agree to the incorporation of the IFD Agreement into the WTO framework as an **Annex 4 plurilateral agreement**, arguing that such incorporation could erode the WTO's foundational principles and functional limits. At the same conference, the participating IFD members issued a joint ministerial declaration pressing for incorporation, and WTO reporting indicated that **165 of 166 members** supported continued work around the agreement, leaving India isolated on the formal outcome.



### What is the WTO's Investment Facilitation for Development (IFD) Agreement?

- The **IFD Agreement** is a plurilateral WTO initiative aimed at making investment procedures more transparent, predictable, and administratively efficient, especially for **foreign direct investment (FDI)**. Its stated objective is to make it easier for investors to establish, operate, and expand investments by improving the investment climate and strengthening cooperation among governments, particularly in developing and least-developed countries.
- The Agreement does **not** deal with traditional investment-rule subjects such as **market access**, **investment protection**, or **investor-State dispute settlement (ISDS)**. It also excludes **government procurement** and certain **subsidies** from its scope. Instead, it focuses on procedural and administrative reforms such as publication of rules, simpler authorization processes, online submission systems, focal points for investors, domestic regulatory coherence, cross-border cooperation, and provisions encouraging responsible business conduct and anti-corruption measures.

# Deep Dive

**40 WTO** members raise issues over investment facilitation pact at WTO

**India, Türkiye, Sri Lanka, Nepal**, others oppose China-led deal

**IFD** a key deliverable at WTO MC14 this week

**Developed** members cherry pick own interests

**Investment** not a trade issue, says India

**Türkiye** cites lack of clarity on sectoral exemptions, ecomm inclusion in IFD

**India, South Africa** had blocked IFD proposal in MC13

**Pre, post-establishment** clauses nor clear



## Background: How the IFD Initiative Emerged at the WTO

- The present IFD initiative grew out of a longer and more contentious history of investment-related discussions at the WTO. At the **1996 Singapore Ministerial Conference**, WTO members created a **Working Group on the Relationship between Trade and Investment**. That body was meant to examine the relationship between trade and investment, but it did **not** launch negotiations for binding investment rules. The WTO’s own trade-and-investment materials make clear that the original Singapore working group was exploratory rather than a negotiation mandate for a full investment agreement.
- The contemporary IFD track began in **April 2017**, when the “Friends of Investment Facilitation for Development” proposed an informal dialogue on investment facilitation. At **MC11 in Buenos Aires in December 2017**, **70 WTO members** issued a joint ministerial statement calling for structured discussions. The coalition then widened to **98 members in November 2019**, launched formal negotiations in **September 2020**, circulated a draft agreement in **December 2022**, concluded negotiations in **July 2023**, and finalized the agreement publicly at **MC13 in Abu Dhabi in February 2024**, along with a request to incorporate it into **Annex 4** of the Marrakesh Agreement.

### What Does the IFD Agreement Seek to Do?

- The Agreement seeks to improve the **transparency of investment measures**, streamline **investment-related authorization procedures**, create **single information portals**, encourage **online filing and processing**, and establish designated **focal points** to assist investors. It also promotes **domestic regulatory coherence**, **cross-border cooperation**, and technical support for developing countries. In broad terms, the Agreement tries to do for investment procedures what the **Trade Facilitation**

- **Agreement** did for border and customs procedures.
- A major design feature of the Agreement is that it is linked to **special and differential treatment (S&DT)**. Developing and least-developed members are allowed to sequence implementation according to capacity, classify obligations into implementation categories, seek technical assistance, and use flexibilities similar to those found in the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement. This development-oriented design is one reason many participating countries describe the IFD as an agreement "for development" rather than a classical investment treaty.

### Plurilateral Agreements at the WTO: Meaning and Legal Position

- Under **Article II:3** of the **Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the WTO**, agreements included in **Annex 4** are **plurilateral trade agreements**. They are part of the WTO framework only for those members that have accepted them, and they do **not create obligations or rights** for members that have not accepted them. This is the legal basis on which IFD supporters argue that the agreement can sit inside the WTO without binding non-participants.
- However, the legal route for adding a new agreement to Annex 4 is demanding. **Article X:9** of the Marrakesh Agreement states that the **Ministerial Conference may decide exclusively by consensus** to add a trade agreement to Annex 4. This clause is central to India's objection. India's argument is not only about the policy content of IFD; it is also about the institutional rule that a new Annex 4 agreement cannot be inserted without consensus of the WTO membership.

### Why India Opposes the IFD Agreement

- India's opposition rests on both **institutional** and **substantive** grounds. Institutionally, India argues that incorporating IFD into the WTO framework without proper systemic safeguards would weaken the **multilateral, member-driven, consensus-based** character of the organization. India's official MC14 statement said that incorporation of the IFD Agreement risks eroding the WTO's foundational principles and functional limits, and that guardrails for plurilateral agreements should be discussed first as part of the broader WTO reform agenda.
- Substantively, India is wary of allowing investment-related disciplines to enter the WTO framework through what it sees as a procedural back door. India's fear is that once a new plurilateral investment pact is formally placed under the WTO umbrella, it may gradually expand the WTO's negotiating terrain and dilute the priority of long-pending issues that India considers more central, such as **public stockholding for food security, special safeguard mechanisms**, and other development-oriented mandates.

### India's Objection to Incorporating IFD as an Annex 4 Agreement

- India's specific objection is that IFD cannot be inserted into **Annex 4** simply because a large number of members support it. The legal standard under **Article X:9** is not majority support but **exclusive consensus** in the Ministerial Conference. India has therefore argued that non-participants cannot be bypassed in the formal incorporation process, even if the agreement itself would bind only participating members.
- This objection gained more visibility at **MC14** because Türkiye withdrew its resistance, leaving India as the principal holdout against formal incorporation. Reuters reported that this development intensified pressure on India, but India still refused to agree, maintaining that plurilateral outcomes should not be imposed on members that do not accept them.

### India's Argument on Consensus and the Marrakesh Agreement

- India's consensus argument has a strong textual basis in WTO law. **Article IX:1** of the Marrakesh Agreement states that the WTO shall continue the practice of **decision-making by consensus** followed under GATT 1947. That article makes consensus the default constitutional method of decision-making in

- the WTO, even though voting is possible in some specified situations.
- India combines **Article IX:1** with **Article X:9** to make a broader constitutional argument: the WTO is not merely a club of flexible coalitions but a rules-based multilateral body whose institutional framework cannot be reconfigured through ad hoc plurilateral insertion without consensus. This is why India has framed the issue as one of **WTO legitimacy**, not just investment policy.

#### Why India Calls Investment a 'Non-Trade Issue' at the WTO

- India treats investment facilitation as a **non-core WTO issue** because the WTO's historical mandate is centered on **trade**, and investment has had a contentious and limited status inside the organization. The WTO's own materials show that the 1996 Singapore decision only created a **working group** on the relationship between trade and investment, and that there was **no negotiation of new rules or commitments** at that stage. Later WTO briefing material for **MC11** explicitly noted that some members opposed investment-facilitation discussions because the subject was **not part of the current negotiating mandate**.
- India's "non-trade issue" characterization therefore reflects a mandate argument rather than a claim that investment and trade are unrelated in practice. India's position is that the WTO's constitutional and negotiating architecture was not designed to absorb new investment disciplines unless all members agree multilaterally to expand the mandate. In that sense, India is challenging not the importance of investment, but the propriety of negotiating it inside the WTO in the present institutional form.

#### Which Countries Back the IFD Agreement?

- Support for the IFD Agreement is broad and geographically diverse. The WTO's IFD portal states that the initiative now has **129 participating members**, representing about **three-quarters of the WTO membership**, including **92 developing economies** and **28 least-developed countries**. The initiative is co-coordinated by **Chile** and the **Republic of Korea**, and the WTO describes the content of the Agreement as having been shaped largely by developing economies.
- At **MC14**, support widened further. WTO reporting noted that the 129 parties issued a joint ministerial declaration, while the European Commission stated that **Bangladesh joined during MC14** and that **only India** rejected the formal incorporation outcome. Reuters also reported public support from countries and blocs such as the **European Union** and the **United Kingdom**, and noted Türkiye's decision to withdraw its objection.

#### How India's Position Differs From That of Other Developing Countries

- India's position is notable because it does **not** align with the overall direction taken by most developing-country participants. The WTO itself records that the IFD coalition includes a large majority of **developing economies** and a substantial number of **LDCs**. This means India is not opposing a pact backed only by advanced economies; it is opposing an initiative that many developing countries believe may help them improve their investment climate, administrative capacity, and attractiveness for FDI.
- The difference is therefore conceptual. Many developing countries view IFD as a **capacity-building and governance-reform agreement** with flexible implementation. India views the same instrument as a potentially risky precedent that could dilute **multilateralism**, expand the WTO's mandate by stealth, and weaken negotiating leverage on older development issues. That is why India's stance is increasingly isolated procedurally even though it still resonates with broader concerns about institutional balance inside the WTO.

## World Trade Organization

The **World Trade Organization (WTO)** is the principal international institution governing the rules of world trade. It was **established on 1 January 1995** as the successor to the **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)**, and it was created through the **Uruguay Round negotiations (1986–94)**. The WTO is headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland**, and currently has **166 members**, accounting for about **98% of world trade**. India has been a WTO member since **1 January 1995** and was a GATT contracting party from **8 July 1948**.

The WTO provides the **common institutional framework** for the conduct of trade relations among its members. Its core legal foundation is the **Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the WTO**, signed in **Marrakesh on 15 April 1994**. The organization's preamble and institutional structure reflect a broad goal: raising living standards, expanding trade in goods and services, ensuring sustainable development, and helping developing countries secure a fairer share in the growth of international trade.

The WTO performs **five principal functions**. It administers the WTO agreements, provides the forum for trade negotiations, administers the dispute settlement system, administers the trade policy review mechanism, and cooperates with the **IMF** and the **World Bank** to support coherence in global economic policymaking. These functions are set out in **Article III** of the Marrakesh Agreement.

The WTO's legal architecture is built through annexes. **Annex 1** contains the **multilateral trade agreements** covering **goods (GATT 1994 and related agreements)**, **services (GATS)**, and **intellectual property (TRIPS)**. **Annex 2** contains the **Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU)**. **Annex 3** contains the **Trade Policy Review Mechanism (TPRM)**. **Annex 4** contains the **plurilateral trade agreements**, which bind only the members that accept them. This structure is essential for understanding the present IFD controversy, because the disagreement is precisely about whether a new plurilateral agreement should be added to Annex 4.

Institutionally, the top decision-making body is the **Ministerial Conference**, composed of representatives of all members and meeting at least once every two years. In the intervals between ministerial meetings, the General Council carries out the WTO's functions. The General Council also meets separately as the Dispute Settlement Body and the Trade Policy Review Body. Below that level are the Council for Trade in Goods, Council for Trade in Services, and Council for TRIPS, along with their subsidiary bodies and committees.

**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

The World Trade Organization (WTO) was established on which date?

- (a) 1 January 1995                      (b) 15 April 1994  
(c) 8 July 1948                         (d) 30 March 2026

The WTO was created through which round of negotiations?

- (a) Doha Round                         (b) Uruguay Round  
(c) Tokyo Round                        (d) Kennedy Round

The 14th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC14) mentioned in the notes was held in which place?

- (a) Geneva, Switzerland  
(b) Abu Dhabi, UAE  
(c) Yaoundé, Cameroon  
(d) Buenos Aires, Argentina

At which WTO ministerial did 70 members issue a joint ministerial statement calling for structured discussions on investment facilitation?

- (a) MC11            (b) MC12    (c) MC13    (d) MC14

In which year was the Working Group on the Relationship between Trade and Investment created at the Singapore Ministerial Conference?

- (a) 1994            (b) 1995    (c) 1996    (d) 1998

Which provision is central to India's objection that a new agreement cannot be added to Annex 4 without exclusive consensus?

- (a) Article II:3                         (b) Article III  
(c) Article IX:1                        (d) Article X:9

Under the WTO framework, plurilateral trade agreements are placed in which annex?

- (a) Annex 1                              (b) Annex 2  
(c) Annex 3                              (d) Annex 4

Which of the following is not covered by the IFD Agreement according to the notes?

- (a) Transparency                      (b) Online filing  
(c) Focal points                        (d) ISDS

Which country withdrew its resistance at MC14, leaving India as the principal holdout against formal incorporation of the IFD Agreement?

- (a) Nepal                                 (b) Türkiye  
(c) Bangladesh                        (d) Sri Lanka

The IFD initiative is coordinated by which two members?

- (a) Chile and Republic of Korea  
(b) India and South Africa  
(c) China and Japan  
(d) Brazil and Indonesia

According to the notes, the IFD initiative has how many participating members?

- (a) 70            (b) 98            (c) 129            (d) 166

Which provision states that the WTO shall continue the practice of decision-making by consensus followed under GATT 1947?

- (a) Article IX:1                         (b) Article X:9  
(c) Article II:3                         (d) Article III

Which long-pending issue is specifically mentioned in the notes as one whose priority India fears may be diluted by the IFD Agreement?

- (a) Fisheries subsidies  
(b) Public stockholding for food security  
(c) Carbon border tax  
(d) Services waiver

In which month and year were the IFD negotiations concluded?

- (a) December 2022                      (b) February 2024  
(c) September 2020                      (d) July 2023

The WTO cooperates with which pair of institutions to support coherence in global economic policymaking?

- (a) WHO and UNESCO                      (b) IMF and World Bank  
(c) ILO and FAO                              (d) UNDP and UNCTAD

**SOLUTIONS**

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

## 9 Fiscal Health Index 2026

### IN FOCUS

The **Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2026** was released in **March 2026** as the **second edition** of NITI Aayog's annual assessment of state finances. This edition evaluates fiscal performance for **FY 2023-24** and expands the coverage of the index beyond the earlier set of major states by separately assessing **10 North-Eastern and Himalayan states** as well. The release is important because it places state finances at the centre of India's macroeconomic stability, especially at a time when states account for a substantial share of general government debt and fiscal pressures vary sharply across regions.

States	FHI Score	Rank 2023-24	Quality of Expenditure	Revenue Mobilisation	Fiscal Prudence	Debt Index	Debt Sustainability
Odisha	73.1	1	71.2	80.3	58.7	95.8	59.5
Goa	54.7	2	49.5	80.4	45.0	56.8	41.9
Jharkhand	50.5	3	66.3	37.6	54.4	67.9	26.3
Gujarat	49.9	4	48.7	44.8	51.5	74.2	30.2
Maharashtra	45.0	5	36.9	52.7	35.2	76.0	24.3
Chhattisgarh	44.3	6	60.8	48.4	8.4	72.5	31.5
Telangana	44.3	7	57.1	60.8	30.0	53.5	20.0
Uttar Pradesh	41.9	8	50.9	28.1	38.8	60.2	31.7
Karnataka	41.7	9	46.8	43.2	33.1	61.4	24.1
Madhya Pradesh	37.8	10	60.8	32.0	35.1	58.9	2.2
Haryana	34.5	11	35.8	48.0	27.3	32.8	28.7
Bihar	30.9	12	58.3	2.9	27.4	48.0	17.8
Tamil Nadu	29.8	13	30.5	39.8	21.5	39.1	18.2
Rajasthan	27.6	14	43.7	29.4	11.3	32.1	21.5
Kerala	24.8	15	4.1	47.8	24.0	23.3	24.8
West Bengal	23.8	16	37.4	12.9	22.7	20.1	25.6
Andhra Pradesh	23.1	17	43.1	21.7	9.9	36.6	4.2
Punjab	12.4	18	8.1	29.8	5.9	2.1	15.9

## What is the Fiscal Health Index (FHI)?

The **Fiscal Health Index** is a composite framework designed to assess and compare the fiscal performance of Indian states. It does not measure only deficits or debt in isolation. Instead, it evaluates fiscal soundness through a broader structure that captures **quality of expenditure, revenue mobilisation, fiscal prudence, debt position, and debt sustainability**. The idea behind the index is that a state's fiscal health depends not only on how much it earns or borrows, but also on how productively it spends, how disciplined its budgeting is, and whether its debt remains manageable over time.

Achiever	Front Runner	Performer	Aspirational
Odisha (1)	Gujarat (4)	Madhya Pradesh (10)	Kerala (15)
Goa (2)	Maharashtra (5)	Haryana (11)	West Bengal (16)
Jharkhand (3)	Chhattisgarh (6)	Bihar (12)	Andhra Pradesh (17)
	Telangana (7)	Tamil Nadu (13)	Punjab (18)
	Uttar Pradesh (8)	Rajasthan (14)	
	Karnataka (9)		

### Who Publishes the Fiscal Health Index?

The index is published by **NITI Aayog, Government of India**. The 2026 report is titled “**Fiscal Health Index for the Financial Year 2023–24**” and was published in **March 2026**. It is presented as an annual report and is intended to provide a structured and transparent basis for benchmarking state-level fiscal performance and encouraging evidence-based fiscal reform.

### Objective of the Fiscal Health Index 2026

The objective of **FHI 2026** is to provide a systematic, comparable, and policy-relevant assessment of state finances across India. It seeks to identify fiscal strengths and weaknesses, encourage better public financial management, support state-level reforms, and enable a more evidence-based conversation on fiscal sustainability. This edition also aims to make the exercise more representative by extending the framework to the **North-Eastern and Himalayan states**, whose fiscal structures differ significantly from those of the larger general-category states because of geography, demography, service-delivery costs, and dependence on Union transfers.

### Coverage of FHI 2026: Major States and NE/Himalayan States

The 2026 edition covers **18 major states** and, for the first time, also covers **10 North-Eastern and Himalayan states**, which are **ranked separately** rather than in one common table. The separate ranking is important because these states differ sharply from the major states in own-revenue capacity, committed expenditure, transfer dependence, and debt patterns. The 10 North-Eastern and Himalayan states covered are **Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, and Uttarakhand**. **Jammu and Kashmir** is not included because of its present status as a **Union Territory**.

### Methodology of the Fiscal Health Index

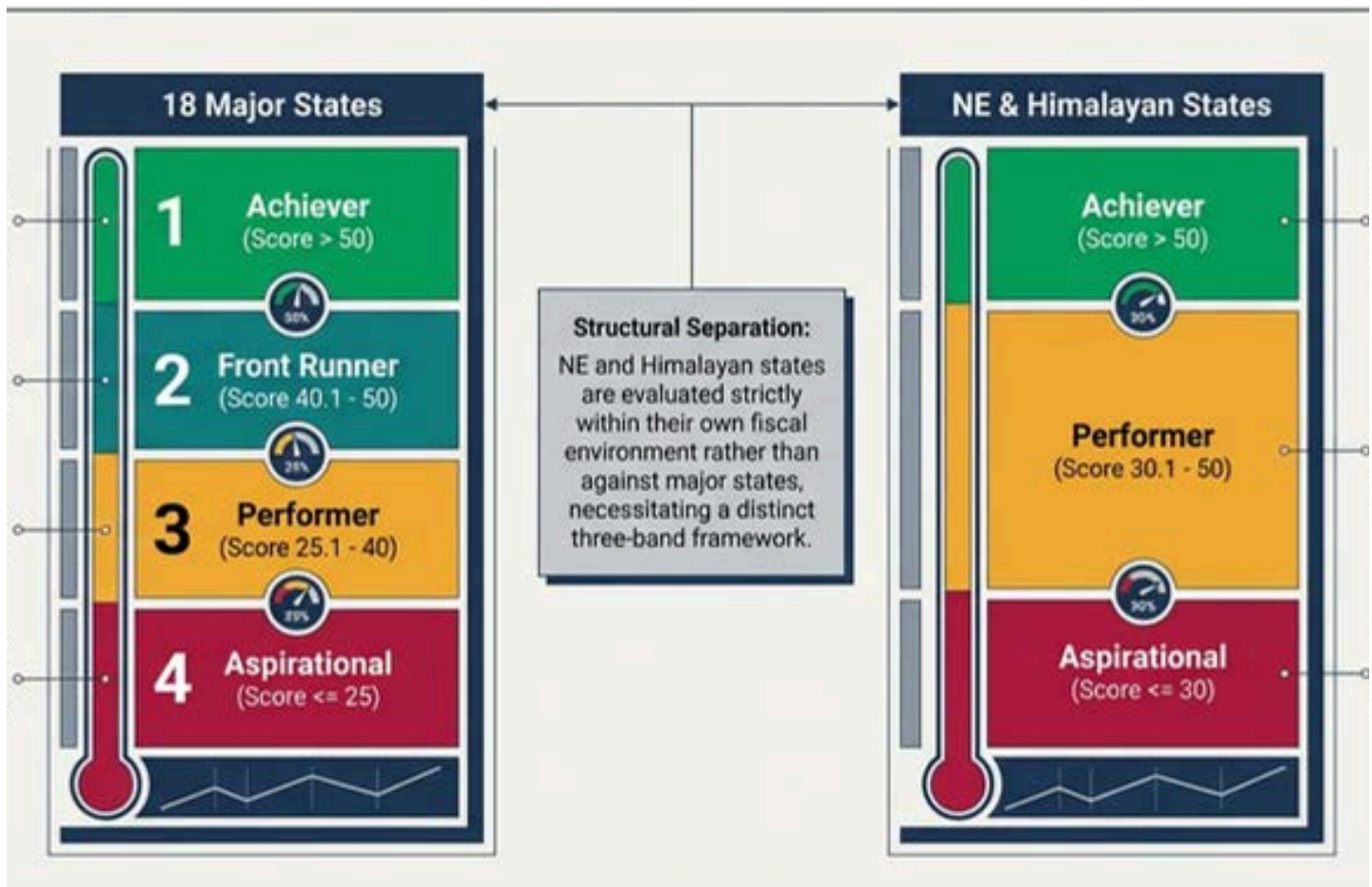
The FHI is built through a composite methodology using **five major sub-indices** and multiple **minor sub-indices** under each of them. The methodology distinguishes between **improvement indices**, where a higher value is better, and **deprivation indices**, where a lower value is better. For each minor indicator, the state's

score is benchmarked against target values observed over the past ten years. The major sub-indices are then computed as the **arithmetic mean of the minor sub-indices**, and the final FHI score is computed as the **arithmetic mean of the five major sub-indices**. This keeps the framework transparent and comparable across states.

The framework is the same as the previous edition for the **18 major states**, but it is slightly refined for the **North-Eastern and Himalayan states** to reflect their distinct fiscal structure. These states are assessed through some additional indicators because they typically have lower own-revenue capacity, greater transfer dependence, higher committed expenditure, and different debt patterns shaped by difficult terrain and sparse population.

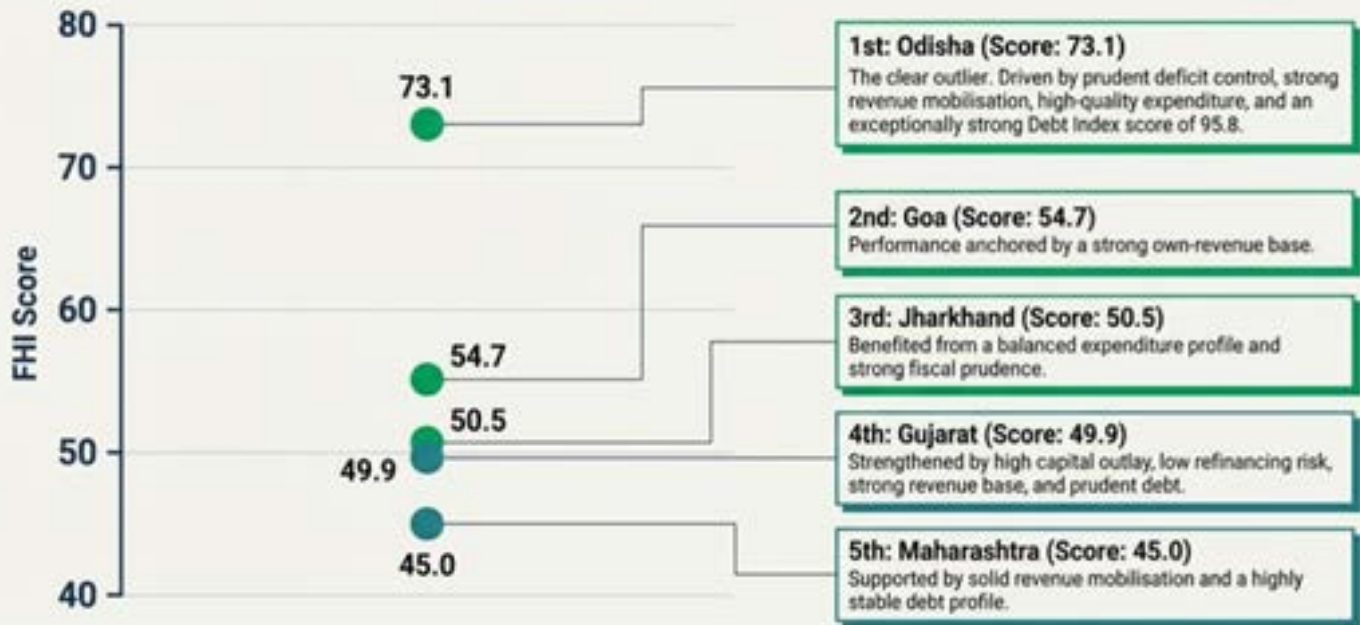
**Five Pillars of Fiscal Health**

- The first pillar is **Quality of Expenditure**, which examines how effectively a state uses its resources. For the major states, it includes **Total Developmental Expenditure / Total Expenditure** and **Total Capital Outlay / GSDP**. For the North-Eastern and Himalayan states, it also includes **Committed Expenditure / Total Expenditure**, because rigid salary, pension, and interest burdens play a much larger role in shaping fiscal flexibility there.
- The second pillar is **Revenue Mobilisation**. For major states, it uses **State Own Revenue / GSDP** and **State Own Revenue / Total Expenditure**. For the North-Eastern and Himalayan states, it additionally includes **(Devolution + Grants) / Revenue Receipts**, because fiscal autonomy and dependence on Union transfers are especially important for understanding their finances.
- The third pillar is **Fiscal Prudence**, which captures the discipline with which a state manages deficits and adheres to fiscal norms. It includes **Gross Fiscal Deficit / GSDP** and **Revenue Deficit / GSDP**. The fourth



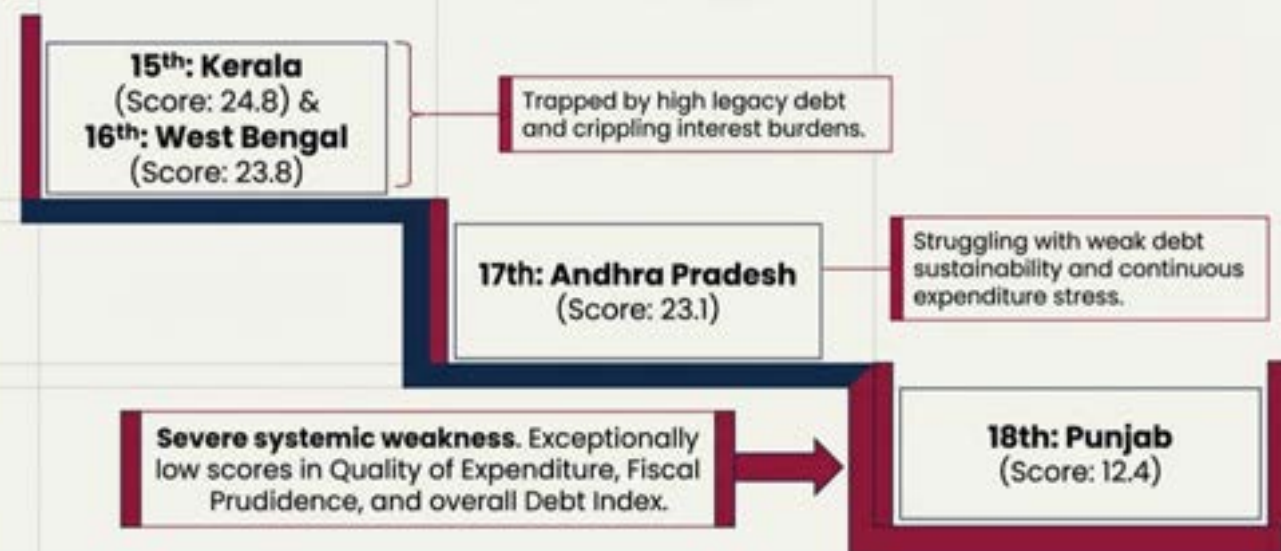
- pillar is the **Debt Index**, which measures the burden of debt through **Interest Payments / Revenue Receipts** and **Outstanding Liabilities / GSDP** for all states, with **Interest Payments / State Own Revenue** added for the North-Eastern and Himalayan states. The fifth pillar is **Debt Sustainability**, measured by **Growth Rate of GSDP minus Growth Rate of Interest Payments**, which indicates whether economic growth is outpacing debt-service pressures.

## Major States: The Leaderboard



## Major States: The Aspirational Profile

**Shared Constraints:** All bottom-tier states exhibit a combination of persistent deficits, high debt burdens, rising interest obligations, and limited revenue flexibility.



## NE & Himalayan States: Specialized Track Performance

### The Achievers (Score > 50)

#### 1st: Arunachal Pradesh

(Score: 59.3)

Driven by very strong Quality of Expenditure and Fiscal Prudence.

#### 2nd: Uttarakhand

(Score: 52.4)

Combined strong revenue mobilisation with a highly resilient Debt Index.

### The Performers (Score 30.1 - 50)

#### 3rd: Tripura

(Score: 43.9)

Standout performance in debt sustainability.

#### 4th: Meghalaya

(Score: 41.2) & 5th:

Assam (Score: 38.8)

Upper-middle positions characterized by mixed but actively improving indicator performance.

### The Aspirational Bottom Tier

**Nagaland**  
**Himachal Pradesh**  
**Manipur**

Requiring significant fiscal rehabilitation.

**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

1. Which of the following institutions published the Fiscal Health Index 2026?  
(a) Finance Ministry  
(b) NITI Aayog  
(c) Reserve Bank of India  
(d) Comptroller and Auditor General
2. Which of the following financial years forms the main basis of the Fiscal Health Index 2026?  
(a) FY 2023-24  
(b) FY 2022-23  
(c) FY 2021-22  
(d) FY 2024-25
3. Which of the following bodies supplied the data used for the Fiscal Health Index 2026?  
(a) NITI Aayog budget division  
(b) Reserve Bank of India  
(c) Comptroller and Auditor General of India  
(d) Finance Commission Secretariat
4. Which of the following methods is used to calculate the final Fiscal Health Index score?  
(a) Geometric mean of debt indicators  
(b) Arithmetic mean of the five major sub-indices  
(c) Weighted average of revenue deficits  
(d) Median of state-level rankings
5. Which of the following is one of the five pillars of the Fiscal Health Index?  
(a) External Trade Openness  
(b) Industrial Diversification  
(c) Population Management  
(d) Revenue Mobilisation
6. Which of the following additional indicators is included for North-Eastern and Himalayan states under the expenditure pillar?  
(a) Committed Expenditure / Total Expenditure  
(b) State Own Revenue / Total Expenditure  
(c) Revenue Deficit / GSDP  
(d) Outstanding Liabilities / GSDP
7. Which of the following states ranked first among the 18 major states in Fiscal Health Index 2026?  
(a) Odisha  
(b) Goa  
(c) Gujarat  
(d) Jharkhand
8. Which of the following states ranked third among the major states in Fiscal Health Index 2026?  
(a) Maharashtra  
(b) Goa  
(c) Jharkhand  
(d) Kerala
9. Which of the following states stood last among the 18 major states in Fiscal Health Index 2026?  
(a) Andhra Pradesh  
(b) Punjab  
(c) Kerala  
(d) West Bengal
10. Which of the following states ranked second among the North-Eastern and Himalayan states?  
(a) Tripura  
(b) Uttarakhand  
(c) Assam  
(d) Meghalaya
11. Which of the following categories is not used for the North-Eastern and Himalayan states?  
(a) Achiever  
(b) Performer  
(c) Aspirational  
(d) Front Runner
12. Which of the following score ranges places a major state in the Achiever category?  
(a) Above 50  
(b) Up to 40  
(c) Up to 30  
(d) Up to 25
13. Which of the following states ranked fourth among the major states in Fiscal Health Index 2026?  
(a) Goa  
(b) Maharashtra  
(c) Gujarat  
(d) Odisha
14. Which of the following states ranked fifteenth among the major states covered in the report?  
(a) West Bengal  
(b) Andhra Pradesh  
(c) Punjab  
(d) Kerala
15. Which of the following states topped the North-Eastern and Himalayan category in Fiscal Health Index 2026?  
(a) Uttarakhand  
(b) Tripura  
(c) Arunachal Pradesh  
(d) Assam

**SOLUTIONS**

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

## 10 60th Jnanpith Award 2025

### IN FOCUS

- The **60th Jnanpith Award for the year 2025** has been awarded to **R. Vairamuthu** for **Tamil**. The announcement was made in **March 2026**, and the award is significant because Vairamuthu has become the **third Tamil writer** to receive the honour and the **first Tamil writer to be recognised primarily for poetry** rather than prose.

### What is the Jnanpith Award?

The **Jnanpith Award** is India's most prestigious literary award, presented annually for an author's **outstanding contribution to Indian literature**. It is meant for creative writing and is not confined to one language alone; it covers Indian literary traditions across the country under a single national honour. The award is open to works in the languages of the **Eighth Schedule of the Constitution** as well as **English**.

## India's Premier Literary Honour

### The Origins

Instituted in 1961 by the Bharatiya Jnanpith (proposed by the Sahu Shanti Prasad Jain family).

First awarded in 1965 to G. Sankara Kurup (Malayalam).



The Vagdevi (Saraswati) Statue -  
The Goddess of Knowledge.

### The Prize

Features a cash prize of ₹11 lakh and a formal citation.

Dedicated exclusively to creative writing and outstanding contribution to Indian literature.

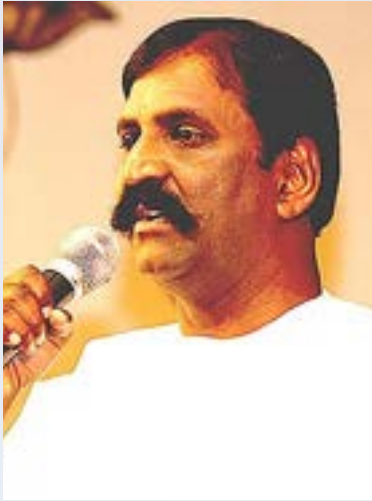
### Who Gives the Jnanpith Award?

The award is given by **Bharatiya Jnanpith**, a literary and cultural institution. The idea of the award took shape in **1961**, when the family of **Sahu Shanti Prasad Jain** proposed a national literary scheme of international standard, and the plan was discussed with leading Indian litterateurs before being formally shaped. The award has since been administered through the institutional structure of Bharatiya Jnanpith.

### 60th Jnanpith Award 2025: Awardee, Language, and Significance

The 60th Jnanpith Award has gone to **R. Vairamuthu** for **Tamil**. This is important not only because Tamil has returned to the Jnanpith roll after a long gap, but also because the award recognises a writer whose stature rests heavily on **poetry, literary prose, and lyrical expression**. With this, Tamil has now produced **three Jnanpith laureates: P.V. Akilandam (Akilan) in 1975, D. Jayakanthan in 2002, and R. Vairamuthu in 2025.**

#### R. Vairamuthu



R. Vairamuthu was born in **1953** in **Mettur village** in what is now **Theni district, Tamil Nadu**. He completed his higher studies in Tamil, won distinction at **Pachaiyappa's College**, and later worked in the **Tamil Nadu Official Language Commission** before entering the film world as a lyricist in **1980** through Bharathiraja's film **Nizhalgal**. His literary and lyrical career has therefore spanned poetry, fiction, essays, translation, cultural criticism, and film songs.

#### Major Literary Contributions of R. Vairamuthu

Vairamuthu's literary profile is much wider than his film lyricism. His official profile states that he has written **37 books**, including poetry, fiction, biography, autobiography, research, travel writing, essays, and translations. Among his best-known works are **Vaigarai Megangal, Thiruthi Ezhuthiya Theerpugal, Thanneer Desam, Kallikkattu Ithikasam, Karuvachi Kaviyam, and Moondraam Ulagap Por**. His novel **Kallikkattu Ithikasam** received the **Sahitya Akademi Award in 2003**, and his official profile also notes that he has written about **7,500 songs** and won the **National Film Award for Best Lyrics seven times**, besides receiving the **Padma Shri** and **Padma Bhushan**.

#### Why the 60th Jnanpith Award is Significant

The 60th award is significant for three reasons. First, it marks a major recognition for **Tamil literature** at the national level. Second, it broadens the recent Jnanpith pattern by honouring a writer known not only for novels and prose but also for **poetic achievement**. Third, it reinforces the continuing place of Indian-language literature in national cultural life at a time when literary honours are often discussed in relation to translation, linguistic identity, and public memory. Vairamuthu's selection is also being read as an affirmation of Tamil's deep literary continuity from classical to modern forms.

#### Eligibility and Selection Process for the Jnanpith Award

The Jnanpith Award is open only to **living Indian citizens** and is **not given posthumously**. **Self-nominations are not entertained**. The process begins with proposals sent by litterateurs, critics, readers, universities, literary bodies, and similar institutions. For each language there is a **Language Advisory Committee of three eminent scholars or critics**, and these committees scrutinise proposals and may also consider other eligible writers. Their recommendations then go to the **Jnanpith Award Selection Board**, which has between **seven**

and eleven members and makes the final comparative evaluation. The award may also be withheld in a year if no name is considered up to the required standard. Another important feature of the rules is that **once a language receives the award, it is not considered for the next two years**. The rules also state that a writer who has already received the award is not considered again. Since the **18th award**, the emphasis has been on the **entire contribution of the author to Indian literature**, whereas in the earlier phase the award was linked to the **most outstanding work**. From the **49th Jnanpith Award, English** was added to the eligible language pool along with the other Indian languages.

### Prize Components of the Jnanpith Award

The Jnanpith Award carries a **cash prize of ₹11 lakh**, a **citation**, and a **bronze replica/statue of Vagdevi or Saraswati**, the goddess associated with knowledge and learning. These prize components have become part of the award's institutional identity and symbolic prestige.

### Languages Covered Under the Jnanpith Award

The award covers the languages included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India and English. The 22 scheduled languages are Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Maithili, Nepali, Odia, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santhali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu. English was added later to the eligible pool from the 49th award onward.

### History and Evolution of the Jnanpith Award

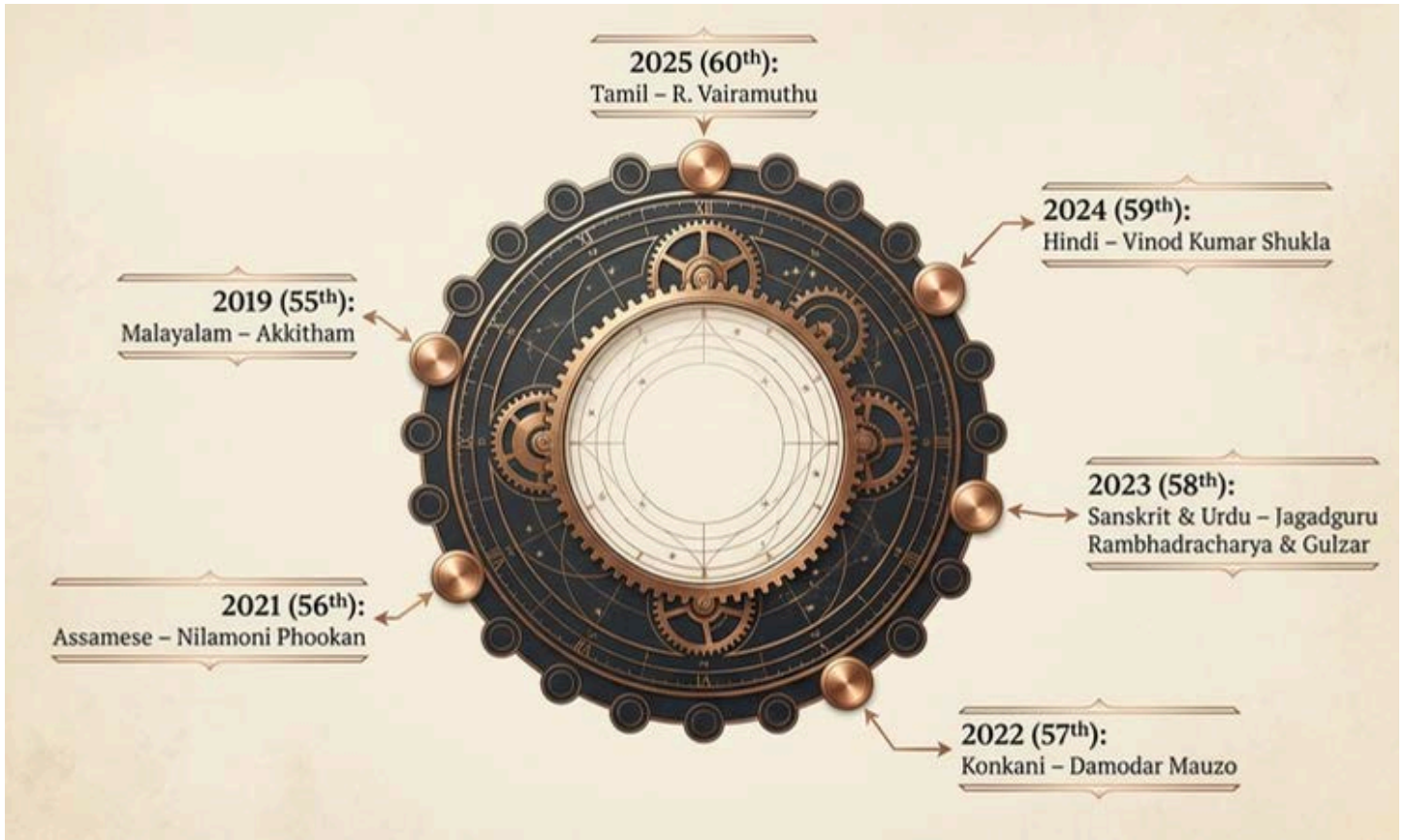
- The award was **instituted in 1961**, but the **first Jnanpith Award was given in 1965** to **G. Sankara Kurup** for **Malayalam**. The official history records that the idea emerged through wide consultations with writers and literary organisations across India and was shaped consciously as a national literary honour of high standard. In its initial phase, the award was given for a specific outstanding work; later, the rules were revised so that the award came to honour the **author's total contribution** to literature. This shift made the Jnanpith not merely a prize for one book, but a recognition of lifetime literary achievement at the national level.
- Over time, the Jnanpith Award has come to symbolise the idea of **Indian literature as a collective civilisational space across many languages**. The official Jnanpith material explicitly describes it as a symbol of the **comprehensive vision of Indian literature and national integrity**. Its expansion to include English, while retaining the core Indian-language framework, reflects both continuity and adaptation in the award's philosophy.

### Recent Jnanpith Awardees

- The most recent Jnanpith awardees are **R. Vairamuthu** for **Tamil** for the **60th award (2025)**, **Vinod Kumar Shukla** for **Hindi** for the **59th award (2024)**, and **Jagadguru Rambhadracharya** for **Sanskrit** and **Gulzar** for **Urdu** for the **58th award (2023)**. Before them, **Damodar Mauzo** received the **57th award (2022)** for **Konkani**, **Nilamoni Phookan** received the **56th award (2021)** for **Assamese**, and **Akkitham** received the award for **Malayalam** for 2019.

### Tamil Literature and the Jnanpith Tradition

- Tamil's relationship with the Jnanpith Award is historically important. The first Tamil recipient was **P.V. Akilandam (Akilan)** in **1975**, followed by **D. Jayakanthan** in **2002**, and now **R. Vairamuthu** in **2025**. This means Tamil has produced laureates across different literary generations and genres, from the modern novel to socially engaged prose and now to poetry-centred recognition. Vairamuthu's selection is therefore being seen not as an isolated honour, but as part of Tamil's long-standing national literary presence.



## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following institutions confer the Jnanpith Award?  
(a) Sahitya Akademi (b) Bharatiya Jnanpith  
(c) National Book Trust (d) Lalit Kala Akademi
2. Which of the following languages is associated with R. Vairamuthu's 60th Jnanpith Award?  
(a) Kannada (b) Malayalam  
(c) Tamil (d) Telugu
3. Which of the following years is associated with the 60th Jnanpith Award given to R. Vairamuthu?  
(a) 2023 year (b) 2024 year  
(c) 2026 year (d) 2025 year
4. Which of the following writers became the first Tamil writer recognised mainly for poetry through this award?  
(a) D. Jayakanthan (b) Akilan author  
(c) Vinod Kumar Shukla (d) R. Vairamuthu
5. Which of the following towns is identified as Vairamuthu's birthplace in the source?  
(a) Madurai town (b) Salem town  
(c) Mettur village (d) Thanjavur town
6. Which of the following films marked Vairamuthu's entry into the film world as a lyricist?  
(a) Nayakan (b) Nizhalgal  
(c) Roja (d) Bombay
7. Which of the following awards was received by Kallikkattu Ithikasam in 2003?  
(a) Sahitya Akademi (b) Saraswati Samman  
(c) Jnanpith Puraskar (d) Moortidevi Puraskar
8. Which of the following prize amounts is attached to the Jnanpith Award?  
(a) ₹15 lakh prize (b) ₹10 lakh prize  
(c) ₹11 lakh prize (d) ₹12 lakh prize
9. Which of the following conditions applies to eligibility for the Jnanpith Award?  
(a) Open to foreigners (b) Posthumous awards  
(c) Self-entry allowed (d) Living Indians only
10. Which of the following bodies makes the final comparative evaluation for the award?  
(a) Jury Review Council  
(b) Jnanpith Award Selection Board  
(c) National Literary Panel  
(d) Authors Advisory Group
11. Which of the following language groups became eligible from the 49th Jnanpith Award onward?  
(a) English (b) French  
(c) German (d) Persian
12. Which of the following writers received the first Jnanpith Award in 1965?  
(a) Vinod Kumar Shukla  
(b) Akkitham poet  
(c) G. Sankara Kurup  
(d) Jagadguru Rambhadracharya
13. Which of the following recent awardees is associated with Hindi in the source?  
(a) Gulzar poet (b) Damodar Mauzo  
(c) Akkitham writer (d) Vinod Kumar Shukla
14. Which of the following was the first Tamil recipient of the Jnanpith Award?  
(a) Akilan writer (b) Jayakanthan author  
(c) Vairamuthu poet (d) Gulzar writer
15. Which of the following best describes the basis of the award since the 18th Jnanpith?  
(a) Single recent poem (b) Best debut novel  
(c) Entire contribution (d) Annual readership votes

## SOLUTIONS

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

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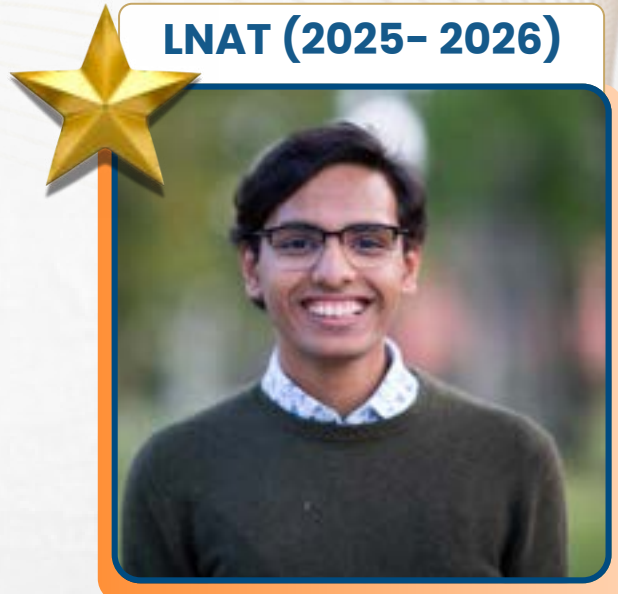
**Adi Singh**

LNAT (2024 - 2025)



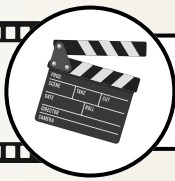
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# MEDIA COVERAGE

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

When most students bag 5 out of 10 marks in the entrance exam, the Super 30 of law entrance bags 5 out of top 10 in AILET and CLAT. The Super 30 of law entrance bags 5 out of top 10 in AILET and CLAT. The Super 30 of law entrance bags 5 out of top 10 in AILET and CLAT.



## 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

A petition challenging the process of the exam... The Consortium of Law Entrance Examinations (CLEE) has denied the charges... The Consortium of Law Entrance Examinations (CLEE) has denied the charges...



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

### IN FOCUS

On 12 March 2026, V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority was officially announced as the **first Indian major port** to implement a **Digital Twin** for port management. The platform creates a **real-time virtual replica** of the port's infrastructure, operational assets, and maritime ecosystem. It integrates **IoT sensors, GPS tracking, LiDAR mapping, drone imaging, and CCTV networks** so that port conditions can be mirrored continuously in digital form. The system provides live visibility of berth occupancy, vessel movements, crane utilisation, and yard capacity across the port. It also enables AI-based predictive maintenance, intelligent berth and traffic optimisation, energy and emissions tracking, and scenario simulation for peak-demand or disruption situations. The initiative is designed to reduce **vessel turnaround time by up to 25%**, improve equipment reliability, enhance safety through predictive alerts, and make port operations more resilient and sustainable. This move fits into the broader push under **Maritime India Vision 2030** and **Amrit Kaal Vision 2047** to make Indian ports more efficient, transparent, technology-driven, and globally competitive.

### What is a Digital Twin Port?

A **Digital Twin Port** is a port that uses a dynamic digital model to mirror its real physical systems and operations in real time. In the case of V.O. Chidambaranar Port, the digital model covers infrastructure, operational assets, vessel traffic, yard space, and the wider maritime ecosystem. The concept goes beyond simple digitisation. It creates a **living operational replica** that is continuously updated by field data coming from sensors, tracking systems, cameras, and mapping tools. In operational terms, a digital twin allows the port to monitor cargo flow, vessel movement, berth use, crane deployment, and equipment health on one integrated platform. Its practical value lies in four areas: real-time visibility, predictive maintenance, operational optimisation, and scenario simulation. This means the port can detect issues early, schedule resources better, reduce delays, and prepare for congestion or disruption before it happens. A digital twin also supports **sustainability management** because it can track energy use and emissions in real time and help optimise operations with lower resource waste.

### Profile of V.O. Chidambaranar Port

V.O. Chidambaranar Port is located at **Thoothukudi (Tuticorin), Tamil Nadu**, on the **south-eastern coast of India**, close to the **East-West international sea routes**. Its official location is given at approximately **8°45' N latitude and 78°13' E longitude**. The port is situated in the **Gulf of Mannar** and functions as an **all-weather artificial deep-sea harbour**. It was declared a **major port in 1974** and was later renamed as **V.O. Chidambaranar Port Trust on 19 February 2011** in honour of freedom fighter **V.O. Chidambaranar**. The port is now described in official material as one of India's **13 major ports** and as a premier maritime gateway for the southern region.

The port is an **artificial deep-sea harbour** formed by **rubble-mound parallel breakwaters** projecting into the sea for about **4 km**. Its location near the East-West shipping corridor gives it high strategic value for handling international trade moving to and from southern India. Official material describes the port as **well protected from cyclonic winds** and capable of **round-the-clock operations**. The port's **current cargo handling capacity is 82 MTPA**, and it is simultaneously being positioned as a leader in both digital and green maritime transformation.

## 2 US Launches Section 301 Probe into India

### IN FOCUS

On 11 March 2026, the United States Trade Representative (USTR) initiated a Section 301 investigation into India and 15 other economies over alleged structural excess capacity and production in manufacturing sectors. The investigation was launched under Section 301(b) of the Trade Act of 1974, which allows the USTR to examine whether foreign acts, policies, or practices are unreasonable or discriminatory and burden or restrict U.S. commerce. India is part of a group of 16 investigated economies, which also includes China, the European Union, Japan, Mexico, Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia, Singapore, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Switzerland, and Norway. The USTR has already requested consultations with the governments concerned, including the Government of India.

### What is Section 301?

Section 301 is part of the U.S. Trade Act of 1974 and is used by the United States to act against foreign trade practices that it considers unfair to U.S. commerce. It empowers the USTR to self-initiate an investigation after consultation with advisory committees and the inter-agency Section 301 Committee. A Section 301 investigation examines whether a foreign country's acts, policies, or practices are unreasonable, discriminatory, or otherwise burden or restrict U.S. commerce. If the USTR reaches an affirmative determination, it must then decide whether action is appropriate and, if so, what action should be taken. The official notice expressly mentions the possibility of tariff and non-tariff actions. The process normally includes consultations, written submissions, public hearings, and then a decision on whether the foreign practice is actionable under U.S. law.

### Why has India been included in the probe?

The USTR investigation notice says that India shows evidence of **structural excess capacity and production** in certain manufacturing sectors. The notice records that India had a **\$58 billion bilateral trade surplus** with the United States in **2025**. It identifies **textiles, health, construction goods, and automotive goods** as India's global goods trade surplus sectors for the purpose of this investigation. It specifically points to the **solar module sector**, stating that India's current module manufacturing is **nearly triple annual domestic demand**. It also alleges significant excess capacity in **petrochemicals, steel**, and other industries. The U.S. position is that such excess capacity may distort trade and create a burden on U.S. commerce, which is the legal threshold the USTR is testing under Section 301.

### Immediate implications for India

The investigation creates a risk of additional U.S. trade measures against Indian goods if the USTR concludes that India's practices are actionable under Section 301. The official investigation framework already contemplates both tariff measures and non-tariff measures as possible outcomes. The timing is important because the probe has come while India and the United States are discussing a broader trade arrangement. The new investigation has complicated the momentum of those talks and has introduced uncertainty over the tariff treatment India may face in the U.S. market in the coming months. India has continued bilateral engagement, but the probe has clearly become a new pressure point in the trade relationship.

### 3 India's 1st Manuscript Mapping Drive

#### IN FOCUS

On 16 March 2026, the Ministry of Culture launched the Gyan Bharatam National Manuscript Survey, a nationwide initiative to identify and document manuscripts located across India. The survey is designed to create the country's first comprehensive national map of manuscript repositories, covering collections spread across districts and States. The exercise is part of the broader Gyan Bharatam Mission, a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Culture announced in Union Budget 2025–26. The mission has received ₹491.66 crore in sanctioned funding for the period 2025–2031.

#### What is the Manuscript Mapping Drive?

The manuscript mapping drive is officially called the Gyan Bharatam National Manuscript Survey. It is a pan-India survey meant to locate and record the presence of manuscripts and manuscript repositories across the country. Its central objective is to build a geo-tagged national inventory of manuscript holdings and create a national "Manuscript Presence Map." The survey is not limited to government institutions. It also covers private collections, family holdings, religious institutions, scholars' collections, museums, libraries, and academic repositories. The mapping exercise is the first step in a longer heritage-management chain that includes verification, metadata creation, conservation support, and high-quality digitisation.

#### Four-stage framework of the survey

- **Stage 1:** Identification of manuscripts and their locations through submissions on the digital platform, leading to the creation of the national manuscript presence map.
- **Stage 2:** Physical verification by experts and State authorities.
- **Stage 3:** Detailed cataloguing and metadata creation, including identification of language, script, and subject.
- **Stage 4:** Conservation support and high-quality digitisation for long-term preservation and research access.

#### Gyan Bharatam Mission: broader profile

Gyan Bharatam Mission is a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Culture for manuscript-related work across India. Its scope includes survey and registration, documentation, preservation, conservation, digitisation, publication, technology infrastructure, partnerships, capacity building, and research. The mission aims to cover manuscript wealth across all regions, languages, and scripts. The government has onboarded more than 40 Cluster Centres and Independent Centres for implementation, and 28 States/UTs have been onboarded as nodal coordinating authorities. Technical partners have been onboarded for metadata creation, National Digital Repository integration, equipment deployment, AI-integrated digital platform support, and long-term data storage.

#### Manuscript heritage in India

India possesses one of the world's richest manuscript traditions across fields such as philosophy, science, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, literature, arts, and governance. The National Mission for Manuscripts, established in February 2003, states that India has an estimated ten million manuscripts, probably the largest manuscript collection in the world. The same manuscript tradition spans a wide range of themes, scripts, languages, calligraphies, illuminations, and illustrations. More than 8 lakh digitised manuscripts in formats such as DVD, HDD, and microfilm are already available across the country under current manuscript-related efforts. Of these, 1.29 lakh manuscripts are accessible to the public in view mode on the Gyan Bharatam Portal.

## 4 National Vaccination Day and Universal Immunisation Programme

### IN FOCUS

National Vaccination Day was observed in India on 16 March 2026. The day commemorates the administration of the first dose of Oral Polio Vaccine in 1995 under the Pulse Polio Programme. The observance in 2026 came at a time when India's vaccination system had recorded major coverage gains, with full immunisation coverage rising from 62% in 2015 to 98.4% in January 2026. India's share of zero-dose children in the total population declined from 0.11% in 2023 to 0.06% in 2024, showing further strengthening of routine immunisation coverage. The Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP) continues to function as one of the world's largest immunisation programmes, reaching about 2.9 crore pregnant women and 2.54 crore newborns every year with free vaccination services. In early 2026, India expanded its vaccination efforts further by launching a nationwide HPV vaccination campaign on 28 February 2026 for 14-year-old girls to protect against cervical cancer. Around 1.15 crore girls are expected to receive the vaccine free of cost at government health facilities. India also launched an indigenously manufactured Tetanus-Diphtheria (Td) vaccine on 21 February 2026. About 55 lakh doses are to be supplied to the UIP by April 2026. The digital side of immunisation has also expanded. As on 8 February 2026, the U-WIN portal had registered 11.12 crore children and 3.78 crore pregnant women. In 2025, it registered 8.01 crore beneficiaries and generated QR-code-based vaccination certificates for them.

### National Vaccination Day

National Vaccination Day is observed every year on 16 March in India. It marks the administration of the first Oral Polio Vaccine dose to citizens in 1995 under the Pulse Polio Programme. The day is closely linked to India's anti-polio public health history. The last polio case in India was reported on 13 January 2011 in Howrah, West Bengal. National Vaccination Day serves as a reminder that vaccination is a core public health tool for reducing disease burden, lowering child mortality, and preventing outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases. The day has acquired wider significance because India's vaccination effort now extends beyond polio and routine childhood immunisation to include newer campaigns such as HPV vaccination and the strengthening of digital beneficiary tracking through U-WIN.

### Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP)

The Universal Immunisation Programme was launched in 1985 and is implemented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. It provides free vaccines to children and pregnant women. The programme is 100% funded by the Central Government and is available through government, PSU, local body, and autonomous body health facilities. The UIP is one of the key public health interventions for protecting children from life-threatening conditions through vaccination. Its beneficiaries are all children and pregnant women. The programme reaches about 2.9 crore pregnant women and 2.54 crore newborns every year. The main objectives of the UIP are to increase immunisation coverage, improve the quality of services, establish a reliable cold-chain system up to the health-facility level, monitor performance, and achieve self-sufficiency in vaccine production. The UIP provides vaccines for protection against 12 diseases. These include Tuberculosis, Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Polio, Measles, Rubella, Hepatitis B, Hib-related meningitis and pneumonia, Rotavirus diarrhoea, Pneumococcal pneumonia, and Japanese Encephalitis. The Japanese Encephalitis vaccine is provided only in endemic districts, while the other vaccines are provided nationally. Over time, the UIP has expanded with the addition of newer vaccines such as Inactivated Polio Vaccine (2015), Rotavirus Vaccine (2016), Measles-Rubella vaccine (2017), and Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (2017). Two important milestones of the UIP have been the elimination of polio in 2014 and the elimination of maternal and neonatal tetanus in 2015.

### Vaccination Delivery System under UIP

UIP vaccines are provided free of cost at Primary Health Centres, Community Health Centres, Government hospitals, sub-centres, and outreach sessions held at Anganwadi centres and other identified village locations. Since 2005, UIP has functioned under the National Rural Health Mission, and its implementation also extends to urban slums. ASHAs, Anganwadi Workers, and link workers play a central role in mobilising beneficiaries, bringing them to session sites, and ensuring that no child or pregnant woman is missed. India's vaccine delivery system depends heavily on the cold chain, because vaccines must remain within prescribed temperature ranges throughout storage and transport in order to retain potency. India's vaccine cold-chain network spans nearly 30,000 cold-chain points and is supported by more than 1.06 lakh ice-lined refrigerators and deep freezers and 432 walk-in coolers and walk-in freezers for bulk storage. The immunisation system conducts over 1.3 crore immunisation sessions annually across this network. The Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network (eVIN) is used to track vaccine stock levels and storage temperatures in real time across States and Union Territories.

### Mission Indradhanush and U-WIN

Mission Indradhanush was launched in 2015 to vaccinate left-out and dropped-out children and pregnant women in areas of low immunisation coverage. It is a special catch-up vaccination campaign under the UIP. The programme was followed by Intensified Mission Indradhanush, which gave greater focus to urban areas and hard-to-reach populations and aimed to push full immunisation coverage above 90%. Twelve phases of Mission Indradhanush had been conducted up to 2023, covering 765 districts and vaccinating 5.46 crore infants and 1.32 crore pregnant women. The U-WIN portal has become the major digital platform for routine immunisation beneficiary management. As on 8 February 2026, it had registered 11.12 crore children and 3.78 crore pregnant women. After every vaccination event, beneficiaries can download a QR-code-based vaccination certificate from U-WIN. In 2025, the portal sent 29.42 crore SMS messages, including reminder messages, to beneficiaries across the country. U-WIN is integrated with the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission, POSHAN Tracker, and SAFEVAC, which strengthens follow-up, digital mapping, and continuity of immunisation services.

## 5 World Happiness Report 2026

### IN FOCUS

The World Happiness Report 2026 was released on 19 March 2026, one day before the UN's International Day of Happiness. This is the 14th edition of the report. It is published by the Wellbeing Research Centre at the University of Oxford, in partnership with Gallup, the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, and an independent editorial board. Finland ranked as the world's happiest country for the ninth consecutive year, with an average life-evaluation score of 7.764 out of 10. The other countries in the top ten were Iceland, Denmark, Costa Rica, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Israel, Luxembourg, and Switzerland. India was ranked 116th with an average life-evaluation score of 4.536. In the previous edition, India was ranked 118th with a score of 4.389. The 2026 edition covered 147 countries, with Afghanistan ranked last at 147<sup>th</sup>. A major 2026 finding was that heavy social media use is associated with lower wellbeing among young people, especially in English-speaking countries and Western Europe. The report noted that life evaluations among under-25s in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand have fallen by almost one point on a 0–10 scale over the past decade.

### What is the World Happiness Report?

The World Happiness Report is an annual global publication on wellbeing and life satisfaction. It compares countries on the basis of how people themselves evaluate the quality of their lives. The rankings are based on a three-year average of people's responses on life evaluation, and the 2026 rankings use the period 2023–2025. The report explains cross-country variation with six major factors: GDP per capita, healthy life expectancy, social support, freedom to make life choices, generosity, and perceptions of corruption. The ranking itself is based on people's self-assessment of life, while the six factors are used only to help explain differences across countries.

### Major Findings of World Happiness Report 2026

Nordic countries again dominated the top ranks, with Finland remaining in first place and Iceland and Denmark immediately behind it. Costa Rica rose to 4th place, which is the highest-ever ranking for a Latin American country in the report. Switzerland returned to the top ten after a one-year absence. For the second year in a row, none of the major English-speaking countries appeared in the top ten. New Zealand was ranked 11th, Ireland 13th, Australia 15th, United States 23rd, Canada 25th, and the United Kingdom 29th. The report found a strong association between social connection and belonging and higher life satisfaction, while heavy social media exposure was linked with lower wellbeing in many contexts. It also found that platforms designed to promote algorithmically curated content tend to show a negative association with wellbeing, while platforms that support social connection show a positive association.

### India's Position in World Happiness Report 2026

India ranked **116th out of 147 countries** with a score of **4.536**. India's position improved by **two places** from **118th in 2025**. Even with this improvement, India remained in the lower segment of the global rankings. The report's methodology makes clear that small differences in average life evaluation can produce large differences in rank, especially in the middle and lower parts of the table.

## 6 World Tuberculosis Day 2026

### IN FOCUS

World Tuberculosis Day 2026 was observed on 24 March 2026. The 2026 theme was “Yes! We can End TB!” with the campaign line “Led by countries. Powered by people.” The day commemorates 24 March 1882, the date on which Dr. Robert Koch announced the discovery of the bacterium that causes TB. The World Health Organization highlighted that 10.7 million people fell ill with TB in 2024, 1.23 million people died of TB in 2024, and 83 million lives have been saved since 2000 through global TB efforts. On the same day, WHO also highlighted new action on TB diagnostics and linked the 2026 observance to faster adoption of innovations and stronger country leadership. In India, the national World TB Day 2026 event was held at Gautam Buddha University, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, under the chairmanship of Union Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda. India used the occasion to launch the intensified 100-day TB Mukht Bharat campaign, the TB Mukht Bharat App, and the TB-Free Urban Ward Initiative. India also presented updated programme data, including 92% treatment coverage, screening of over 20 crore people, and detection of 32.65 lakh TB cases, including 10.9 lakh asymptomatic patients.

### What is World Tuberculosis Day?

World Tuberculosis Day is observed every year on 24 March to raise awareness about the health, social, and economic impact of tuberculosis and to accelerate efforts to end the global TB epidemic. The date marks the 1882 discovery of the TB-causing bacterium by Dr. Robert Koch, which laid the foundation for TB diagnosis and treatment. The day functions as a global public-health observance led principally by the World Health Organization and supported by governments, health systems, civil society, and international partners.

### Theme of World Tuberculosis Day 2026

The official WHO theme for 2026 was “Yes! We can End TB!” The accompanying campaign line was “Led by countries. Powered by people.” The theme emphasized that ending TB is achievable through country leadership, greater investment, wider use of new WHO recommendations and innovations, faster action, and multisectoral collaboration. WHO’s 2026 messaging also emphasized investment, innovation, protection of past gains, whole-of-government action, and people-centred TB care.

### India and World Tuberculosis Day 2026

India held its national event on 24 March 2026 at Greater Noida. The event launched the next phase of the 100-day intensified TB Mukht Bharat campaign, which is set to cover 1.58 lakh villages and urban wards through micro-planned interventions. The TB Mukht Bharat App was launched with “Khushi”, an AI-enabled multilingual chatbot intended to guide users on symptoms, entitlements, and nearest diagnostic facilities. The TB-Free Urban Ward Initiative was launched to extend community-led TB elimination efforts into urban settings. India stated that treatment coverage had reached 92% and that undetected TB cases had declined from over 10 lakh to less than one lakh through intensified case-finding. Since the start of the TB Mukht Bharat campaign in December 2024, India had screened over 20 crore vulnerable individuals and detected 32.65 lakh TB patients, including 10.9 lakh asymptomatic patients. India also stated that Government funding for TB elimination had increased from ₹640 crore in 2015–16 to ₹6,356 crore in 2025–26. The BPaLM regimen for drug-resistant TB was highlighted as a major treatment advance, reducing treatment duration from 20 months to 6 months.

## 7 World Water Day 2026

### IN FOCUS

World Water Day 2026 was observed on 22 March 2026 under the theme “Water and Gender.” The 2026 campaign was framed around the message “Where water flows, equality grows.” World Water Day is an annual United Nations observance held every year since 1993 to focus attention on the importance of freshwater and on the global water crisis. The 2026 observance was accompanied by the release of the United Nations World Water Development Report 2026, titled “Water for all people: Equal rights and opportunities.” The 2026 focus placed water inequality and gender inequality in the same frame, emphasizing that lack of access to water, sanitation, and hygiene affects women and girls disproportionately. The official 2026 material highlighted that 2.1 billion people still lack safely managed drinking water globally. It also highlighted that women and girls spend an estimated 250 million hours every day collecting water. The 2026 report noted that around 10 million adolescent girls across 41 countries missed school, work, or social activities between 2016 and 2022 because of water-related inequalities.

### What is World Water Day?

World Water Day is observed every year on 22 March as a United Nations observance on freshwater. Its purpose is to celebrate water, raise awareness about people living without safe water, and support action toward water and sanitation for all. A core focus of the observance is support for Sustainable Development Goal 6, which aims at water and sanitation for all by 2030. UN-Water, the UN coordination mechanism on water and sanitation, sets the annual theme for World Water Day.

### Theme of World Water Day 2026

The official theme of World Water Day 2026 was “Water and Gender.” The campaign slogan used for the 2026 observance was “Where water flows, equality grows.” The central idea of the 2026 theme was that the global water crisis affects everyone, but not equally, and that women and girls often bear the heaviest burden when access to safe drinking water and sanitation is weak. The 2026 campaign also stressed that women and girls are often underrepresented in decision-making, leadership, funding, and representation in water governance.

### United Nations World Water Development Report 2026

The UN World Water Development Report 2026 is titled “Water for all people: Equal rights and opportunities.” It was published by UNESCO on behalf of UN-Water, and its production was coordinated by the UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme. The report examines the links between water and gender equality and presents data and practical solutions for more inclusive water governance. The report states that where access to drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene is inadequate, women and girls disproportionately bear the responsibility for water collection and household water provision. The report records that women and girls globally spend 250 million hours per day collecting water. It also notes that fewer than 1 in 5 women work in water utilities in low- and middle-income countries, and that women accounted for 17.7% of water utility employees worldwide in 2018–2019.

## 8 The Central Armed Police Forces Bill 2026

### IN FOCUS

The Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026 was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 25 March 2026. The Rajya Sabha passed the Bill on 1 April 2026 by voice vote. The Lok Sabha passed the Bill on 2 April 2026, after which Parliament had passed the Bill. The Bill seeks to create an umbrella legal framework for recruitment, deputation, promotion, and conditions of service of certain officers in the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs). At present, such service matters are governed under the respective Acts and rules of individual forces; the Bill aims to bring legislative clarity, preserve operational distinctiveness, and harmonise judicial directions with administrative and federal requirements. The Bill expressly provides for fixed deputation shares for IPS officers in senior CAPF ranks, including 50% of Inspector General posts, at least 67% of Additional Director General posts, and all Special Director General and Director General posts. The Bill applies to five CAPFs listed in its First Schedule: CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP, and SSB.

### What does the Bill seek to do?

The Bill seeks to regulate the general rules governing the recruitment and conditions of service of Group A General Duty Officers and other officers in the CAPFs. It defines a Group A General Duty Officer as a Group A general duty or executive officer of the rank of Assistant Commandant and above in a CAPF. The Bill states that officers for its purposes include: Group A General Duty Officers, IPS officers on deputation, Indian Army officers on deputation or re-employment, and other officers recruited under rules listed in the Second Schedule. It empowers the Central Government to make rules on recruitment, promotion, deputation, and service conditions for officers in the covered CAPFs.

### Forces covered under the Bill

The First Schedule of the Bill covers the following five forces: Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Border Security Force (BSF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB). The Bill also allows the Central Government, by notification, to add any other armed force of the Union to the First Schedule in the public interest.

### Key provisions of the Bill

The Bill provides that the Central Government may frame rules notwithstanding anything contained in any other law, any judgment, decree, or order of any court, or any government order. Existing recruitment rules listed in the Second Schedule will continue until they are modified, amended, rescinded, or superseded. For appointment of officers from the Indian Police Service in ranks of Inspector General and above, the rules must provide that 50% of Inspector General posts are filled by deputation, and a minimum of 67% of Additional Director General posts are filled by deputation. The Bill further provides that the posts of Special Director General and Director General shall be filled by deputation only. In case of inconsistency between rules made under this law and any other rule or order, the rules made under this Act shall prevail. Any financial benefits granted to Group A General Duty Officers under earlier orders will continue until new orders are issued. Rules and notifications made under the Bill are to be laid before each House of Parliament, which provides for legislative oversight. The Bill contains a removal of difficulties clause under which the Central Government may issue orders for implementation, but no such order can be made after three years from commencement of the Act.

## 9 Only Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs can claim Scheduled Caste status: SC

### IN FOCUS

On 24 March 2026, the Supreme Court delivered a reportable judgment in *Chinthada Anand v. State of Andhra Pradesh*, holding that a person who professes a religion other than Hinduism, Sikhism, or Buddhism cannot be treated as a Scheduled Caste under the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950. The Court said the bar in Clause 3 of the 1950 Order is “categorical and absolute” and that conversion to a religion not named there causes immediate and complete loss of Scheduled Caste status. The ruling arose from a criminal case in Andhra Pradesh in which the appellant, originally from the Madiga community, alleged caste-based abuse and assault and sought protection under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. The appellant was also found to have been functioning as a Christian Pastor for over a decade and conducting regular Sunday prayer meetings. The Supreme Court upheld the Andhra Pradesh High Court’s view that, because he continued to profess Christianity, he could not invoke the protections meant for Scheduled Castes under the SC/ST Act. The Court further held that a State Government order or a caste certificate cannot override the Presidential Order issued under Article 341. The judgment also clarified the law on reconversion, stating that restoration of Scheduled Caste status is not automatic and must be proved through strict conditions. The appeal was ultimately dismissed, making the judgment an important 2026 clarification on the constitutional basis of Scheduled Caste status.

### What exactly did the Supreme Court hold?

The Supreme Court held that no person who professes a religion other than Hinduism, Sikhism, or Buddhism shall be deemed to be a member of a Scheduled Caste. It treated this as a direct consequence of Clause 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950. The Court stated that birth alone is not enough once a person has converted to a religion outside the three permitted religions under Clause 3. In law, the Scheduled Caste status stands lost from the moment of such conversion. The Court also held that a person cannot simultaneously profess and practice another religion and at the same time claim Scheduled Caste membership for statutory benefits. It further clarified that once Scheduled Caste status is lost, the person also loses all connected statutory benefits, protections, reservations, preferences, and entitlements based on that status.

### Constitutional and legal basis

The legal basis lies in Article 341 of the Constitution, under which the President specifies which castes are treated as Scheduled Castes for different States and Union Territories. The operative restriction is found in Clause 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950, which says that no person professing a religion different from the Hindu, Sikh, or Buddhist religion shall be deemed to be a member of a Scheduled Caste. Historically, the Scheduled Caste framework was originally confined to Hindus. It was later extended to Sikhs in 1956 and to Buddhists in 1990. The Court reaffirmed that this religious limitation flows from the Presidential Order and cannot be enlarged by an executive order of a State Government.

### What did the Court say about reconversion?

The Court said that a person claiming restoration of Scheduled Caste status after reconversion must prove **three cumulative conditions**. First, the person must prove that they **originally belonged** to a caste notified under the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950. Second, there must be **credible and unimpeachable evidence** of bona fide reconversion to Hinduism, Sikhism, or Buddhism, along with complete renunciation of the other religion and actual observance of the original caste’s customs and practices. Third, there must be satisfactory evidence of **acceptance by the original caste community**. Mere self-declaration is insufficient. The Court placed the **entire burden of proof** on the claimant and held that failure to prove even one of these conditions makes the claim unsustainable.

## 10 Big IPL Deals: RR and RCB Sold

### IN FOCUS

In the run-up to IPL 2026, two of the league's best-known franchises saw major ownership transactions: Rajasthan Royals (RR) and Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB). On 24 March 2026, United Spirits announced the sale of its 100% stake in Royal Challengers Sports Pvt Ltd, the company that owns and operates the RCB IPL and WPL franchises, for ₹166.6 billion. The RCB buyer consortium comprises the Aditya Birla Group, The Times of India Group, Bolt Ventures, and Blackstone's BXPE strategy. Around the same time, Rajasthan Royals was acquired by a Kal Somani-led consortium in a deal valued at about \$1.63 billion. The Rajasthan Royals consortium was reported to include backing from Rob Walton of the Walmart family and Sheila Ford Hamp of the Ford-linked Hamp family. The RR takeover is expected to take effect after the IPL 2026 season, while the RCB transaction is subject to customary legal and regulatory approvals, including from the BCCI and the Competition Commission of India.

### Rajasthan Royals deal

Rajasthan Royals changed hands in March 2026 in a deal valued at about \$1.63 billion. The acquiring group was led by Kal Somani, an Indian-origin, U.S.-based entrepreneur. The consortium was reported to have backing from Rob Walton and the Hamp family, bringing major U.S. family-office and sports-owner capital into IPL ownership. Multiple reports said the deal covered 100% of the franchise and would formally close after IPL 2026. At that valuation, Rajasthan Royals became the first IPL franchise sale to cross the \$1 billion mark and one of the biggest ownership transfers in franchise-cricket history.

### RCB deal

United Spirits Limited, a Diageo subsidiary, announced on 24 March 2026 that it had entered into definitive agreements to sell its 100% equity stake in Royal Challengers Sports Private Limited for ₹166.6 billion, or roughly \$1.78 billion. The buyer consortium comprises Aditya Birla Group, The Times of India Group, Bolt Ventures, and Blackstone's BXPE strategy. The company being sold, RCSPL, owns and operates both the Royal Challengers Bengaluru IPL franchise and the RCB Women's Premier League franchise. The transaction followed the strategic review initiated by USL on 5 November 2025, when it said the franchise business was non-core to its main beverage-alcohol business. The transaction is subject to customary closing conditions and approvals, including from the BCCI and the CCI. This RCB deal set the higher valuation benchmark between the two transactions, placing RCB at about \$1.78 billion.

# VOICES VICTORIES



SIDDHANT ROHIT

AIR 4, AILET 2026

“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.”



ARSHNOOR SINGH

(AIR 4, CLAT 2026

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.



DAIWIK AGARWALA

AIR 2, CLAT 2025

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 NLUs. 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 NLUs.

*"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

- The government launched NMP 2.0 with a ₹16.72 lakh crore asset monetisation target for FY 2026–30, more than 2.6 times the scale of its predecessor, led by highways, power, ports, railways, and coal sectors.
- India will host a two-day steel industry and policy summit at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, on 16–17 April 2026, covering raw material security, trade, technology, and sustainable production.
- Mangaluru International Airport won the ACI World 2025 ASQ Best Airport at Arrivals award globally for the second consecutive year, based on real-time passenger feedback.
- A hazardous oleum gas leak at Bhageria Industries Ltd in Palghar's Tarapur MIDC area triggered the evacuation of over 2,600 people, including students and workers, with NDRF and BARC teams deployed for containment.
- Tamil Nadu, a six-time national award winner in organ donation, recorded 57 deceased donors in the first two months of 2026 through its TRANSTAN-led ecosystem of government transplant and retrieval centres.
- Tamil Nadu launched its first Dark Sky Park at Ariyur Shola Reserve Forest, Kolli Hills, at a cost of ₹44 lakh, equipped with three telescopes to promote astronomy education and astro-tourism.
- Adani Group became the first Indian organisation to partner for UNESCO's World Engineering Day 2026, linked to its 30 GW Khavda renewable energy project in Gujarat.
- The 11th Raisina Dialogue opened in New Delhi on 5 March 2026 with Finland's President Alexander Stubb as chief guest, bringing together 2,700 participants from 110 countries under the theme "Saṃskāra – Assertion, Accommodation, Advancement."
- Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar filed his Rajya Sabha nomination on 5 March 2026, paving the way for a new Chief Minister in Bihar ahead of the 16 March biennial elections to 37 Rajya Sabha seats.
- IBM launched its first Infrastructure Innovation Centre globally — the Sangam Centre — in Bengaluru to co-create enterprise AI solutions with clients across hybrid cloud, data, and automation domains.
- Union Home Minister Amit Shah unveiled mascots 'Pragati' and 'Vikas' and four digital tools for India's first fully digital Census 2027, a ₹11,718 crore exercise involving over 3 million enumerators across two phases.
- The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting directed BARC to suspend TRP ratings for all news TV channels for four weeks over concerns of sensationalism and panic-inducing coverage of the US–Israel–Iran conflict.
- The Indian Navy placed two warships under Operation Sankalp on HADR standby amid the 2026 West Asia conflict, as the Cabinet Committee on Security met to assess risks to India's energy security and diaspora safety.
- Dipali Das, a 60-year-old Bangladeshi-origin woman from Assam's Cachar district who had been detained as a foreigner, became the first person in Assam to receive Indian citizenship under the CAA on 6 March 2026.
- NCRB's 2023 report revealed that Uttar Pradesh accounted for over 96% of all reported cases of denial of public space access to Scheduled Caste communities across India, continuing a pattern of dominance in this category since 2018.
- The NCB dismantled 'Team Kalki,' a darknet-based drug trafficking network run by two ex-Tihar inmates, seizing LSD, MDMA, and charas sourced from European vendors and distributed across India via over 1,000 parcels.
- The 11th Raisina Dialogue concluded with the launch of the Raisina Science Diplomacy Initiative to embed AI governance, semiconductors, and India's DPI into foreign policy, while affirming India's strategic role in a multipolar world.
- Shah Rukh Khan debuted on the Hurun Global Rich List 2026 with a net worth of \$1.3 billion, becoming one of the first Indian entertainment personalities to achieve billionaire status on the global ranking.
- India remained the world's second-largest arms importer in 2021–25 despite a 4% decline in imports, with Russia's supply share falling sharply to 40% while France and Israel gained ground, according to SIPRI.
- The Trinamool Congress-led Opposition began drafting an impeachment motion against Chief

- Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over alleged bias in deploying micro-observers exclusively in West Bengal during electoral roll revision.
- Veteran actor-director Amol Palekar will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 21st META 2026 festival in New Delhi (March 19–25), which received a record 422 submissions across 60+ languages.
- The Supreme Court passed India's first-ever order permitting passive euthanasia, allowing withdrawal of life support for 32-year-old Harish Rana, who has been in an irreversible Persistent Vegetative State for 13 years.
- The Chhattisgarh Cabinet approved the Freedom of Religion Bill, 2026, aimed at preventing conversions carried out through force, fraud, inducement, or misrepresentation, to be introduced in the ongoing Budget Session.
- The Goa government introduced the Advocate Protection Bill, 2026, prescribing penalties of up to 7 years imprisonment for violence, intimidation, or harassment of advocates in the course of their professional duties.
- The Supreme Court struck down a 2004 DoPT clarification and ruled that OBC creamy layer status must be determined by a parent's service category rather than salary alone, directing creation of supernumerary posts for wrongly excluded candidates.
- The Centre revoked activist Sonam Wangchuk's NSA detention after nearly six months, renewing national focus on Ladakh's demand for Sixth Schedule protections and autonomous governance following its 2019 conversion into a Union Territory.
- Rashtrapati Bhavan hosted Purple Fest on March 13, 2026, welcoming over 8,000 Divyangjan to the Amrit Udyan for activities and welfare stalls, with President Murmu affirming their equal role in India's Viksit Bharat journey.
- In Harish Rana v. Union of India, the Supreme Court operationalised India's first court-approved passive euthanasia, directing AIIMS to provide palliative care and mandating a nationwide framework for medical boards and Judicial Magistrates to handle such cases.
- The Supreme Court directed that states must seek its permission before submitting delayed DGP empanelment proposals to the UPSC, reaffirming that acting DGP appointments have no legal validity under the Prakash Singh police reform framework.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh released a long-term roadmap envisioning an integrated, multi-domain Indian military by 2047, proposing a Drone Force, Cognitive Warfare Action Force, and dedicated Space and Cyber Commands alongside Aatmanirbhar defence production.
- The Union Government withdrew the Jan Vishwas (Amendment) Bill, 2025 from the Lok Sabha to incorporate Select Committee recommendations before reintroduction, as part of its broader push to decriminalise minor offences and ease the compliance burden.
- The Supreme Court ruled in Hamsaanandini Nanduri v. Union of India that adoptive mothers are entitled to 12 weeks of maternity benefit regardless of the child's age at adoption, striking down the three-month age restriction as unconstitutional.
- Maharashtra's legislature passed the Freedom of Religion Bill, 2026, defining unlawful conversion broadly to include allurement and misrepresentation, with penalties of up to 7 years imprisonment and a mandatory 60-day prior notice requirement.
- The Gujarat Government received the three-volume UCC draft report from Justice Ranjana Desai's committee covering marriage, divorce, inheritance, and adoption, with the state expected to become the second after Uttarakhand to enact a Uniform Civil Code.
- India's operational metro network has reached approximately 1,095 km across 26 cities, making it the world's third-largest, up from 248 km in 5 cities in 2014, backed by a budget that grew from ₹5,798 crore to ₹29,550 crore.
- The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026, introduced in the Lok Sabha, narrows the definition of transgender persons, introduces mandatory Medical Board certification, and removes the right to self-perceived gender identity, drawing criticism for contradicting the Supreme Court's NALSA judgment.
- The Election Commission enforced the Model Code of Conduct upon announcing 2026 assembly elections in Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Puducherry, prohibiting government largesse, communal propaganda, and misuse of state machinery during the election period.

- The Union Cabinet approved the CAPF (General Administration) Bill, 2026, statutorily reserving senior CAPF leadership posts for IPS officers, a move critics argue directly contradicts a final Supreme Court order directing progressive reduction of IPS deputation in CAPFs.
- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has sought parliamentary recognition as the "Central Government" for all renewable energy matters under the Electricity Act, 2003, aiming to consolidate fragmented regulatory oversight as India pursues its 500 GW non-fossil target by 2030.
- Thousands gathered at Mahad, Raigad, to begin the centenary year of Dr. Ambedkar's 1927 Chavdar Tale Satyagraha, with Maharashtra declaring 2026–27 the Year of Social Harmony and Equality and launching a beautification project at the historic site.
- INS Taragiri, the fourth Project 17A stealth frigate built by MDL with over 75% indigenous content and armed with BrahMos missiles and MRSAM systems, is set to be commissioned at Visakhapatnam on April 3, 2026.

## ECONOMY & GOVERNANCE

- The Indian government invoked the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and introduced the Natural Gas (Supply Regulation) Order, 2026 to secure household LPG supply after the US-Israel-Iran conflict disrupted vessel movements through the Strait of Hormuz, through which nearly 90% of India's LPG imports pass.
- NITI Aayog released the second edition of the Fiscal Health Index 2026, evaluating 18 major states and 10 northeastern and Himalayan states across five fiscal pillars, with Odisha topping the general category for the second consecutive year and Arunachal Pradesh leading the northeastern category.
- The USTR launched two Section 301 investigations targeting India — one over excess manufacturing capacity in sectors including solar, steel, and textiles, and another over forced labour concerns in global supply chains — both of which could result in fresh tariffs on India after May 2026.
- The Government of India notified the Income Tax Rules, 2026, effective April 1, 2026, implementing the new Income-tax Act, 2025 with strengthened digital taxation through Significant Economic

Presence norms, enhanced cross-border taxation powers, and stricter audit and reporting requirements for stock exchanges and companies.

## ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

- Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh recorded the first authenticated sighting of the Endangered Forest Owlet, a species long thought extinct after 1884 and rediscovered in India only in 1997.
- India received nine cheetahs from Botswana — six females and three males — which have been placed in quarantine at Kuno National Park under Project Cheetah, bringing the total cheetah population under the programme to 48.
- India submitted its 7th National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity, revealing that only 2 of 23 National Biodiversity Targets are clearly on track toward the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework's 2030 goals.
- India's cheetah population reached 53 after Namibian cheetah Jwala gave birth to five cubs at Kuno National Park — her third successful litter — marking the 10th successful litter born on Indian soil since Project Cheetah's launch.
- The PPVFRA registered Nagauri Paan Methi as a Community Farmers' Variety under the PPV&FR Act, 2001, granting legal protection to Nagaur farmers against biopiracy and misidentification of the traditional fenugreek variety as Kasuri Methi.
- Israeli strikes on Tehran's oil facilities on the night of March 7–8, 2026 triggered massive fires whose toxic smoke mixed with rainfall to produce black rain across Tehran, prompting WHO warnings of serious respiratory and long-term health risks to the population.
- The Gujarat government launched the ₹10 crore 'Lake and Air Watch' initiative to install real-time AQI monitoring stations across 169 urban areas and use satellite technology to track urban lake health across all its municipal corporations and areas.
- Maharashtra recorded 41 tiger deaths in 2025 — the highest among all Indian states — while its Cabinet's proposal to downgrade leopards from Schedule I to Schedule II of the Wildlife Protection Act has drawn significant conservation concern.
- The Supreme Court delivered a landmark judgment expanding Great Indian Bustard priority

- conservation areas in Rajasthan and Gujarat, mandating dedicated powerline corridors to reroute transmission lines from wind and solar projects away from critical GIB habitat.
- India submitted its First National Report on the Nagoya Protocol to the CBD, accounting for over 60% of all Internationally Recognised Certificates of Compliance published globally, reflecting India's leadership in access and benefit-sharing transparency.
- The Geological Survey of India designated the Kalinjar hill area in Banda district, Uttar Pradesh as the state's first National Geo-Heritage Site, recognising the rare Eparchaean Unconformity where 2.5-billion-year-old granite meets 1.2-billion-year-old sandstone.
- The International Day of Forests 2026 was observed on March 21 under the theme "Forests and Economies", highlighting that forests sustain over 1.6 billion people and provide 13 million formal jobs while offering nature-based alternatives for a sustainable bioeconomy.
- The Supreme Court dismissed an appeal against the Bombay High Court's order permitting removal of 45,675 mangrove trees for Mumbai's ₹18,263-crore Versova-Bhayandar coastal road, directing the BMC to submit annual reports on compensatory afforestation and mangrove restoration.
- World Water Day 2026 was observed on March 22 under the theme "Water and Gender", highlighting women's exclusion from water policy despite being primary collectors, while India separately marked achieving 1 billion tonnes of coal production for the second consecutive year with an 88-day national coal stock.
- sectors.
- Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace is preparing to launch Vikram-1 — India's first privately developed orbital rocket with three solid-propellant stages and a 300 kg payload capacity — from Sriharikota's Satish Dhawan Space Centre.
- Escalating US–Iran military tensions triggered widespread GPS spoofing across the Persian Gulf and UAE airspace since March 1, 2026, with Iran's Cobra V8 electronic warfare system causing over 1,000 vessels and hundreds of commercial flights to receive false navigation data.
- Amid the Middle East conflict, three major air defence systems came into global focus — Israel's short-range Iron Dome, the US high-altitude THAAD, and Iran's indigenously developed long-range Bavar-373 — each operating at distinct interception layers and altitudes.
- The International Malaria Conference 2026 was held in New Delhi from March 7–9 under ICMR–NIMR, focusing on advances in parasite biology, diagnostics, vaccine research, and community-based delivery strategies to drive India's malaria elimination goals.
- Scientists published India's first comprehensive checklist of fireflies, documenting 92 species across 27 genera — over 60% endemic — with the Western Ghats as the richest habitat, while highlighting a critical conservation gap as no Indian species is protected or IUCN-assessed.
- ISRO successfully tested its CE20 cryogenic engine at 22 tonnes of thrust for 165 seconds at Mahendragiri, advancing both LVM3's heavy-lift capability and the Gaganyaan crewed spaceflight mission for which the human-rated engine is the designated upper stage.
- A BARC study published in Current Science concluded that HALEU-Thorium fuel is unsuitable for India's PHWRs and incompatible with the country's three-stage nuclear programme, sparking debate over the NTPC–CCTE agreement and India's nuclear energy strategy under the SHANTI Act 2025.
- The last functioning atomic clock on IRNSS-1F failed on March 13, 2026, reducing India's fully operational NavIC satellites to just three — below the minimum four needed for reliable navigation

## SCIENCE

- ESA's CHEOPS satellite identified an unusual four-planet system around red dwarf star LHS 1903, featuring a rocky outermost planet that challenges standard planetary formation models and is best explained by the inside-out planet formation theory.
- MeitY launched VoicERA, an open-source Voice AI stack on the BHASHINI platform, enabling real-time speech recognition, conversational AI, and multilingual voice-enabled citizen services across agriculture, education, and grievance redressal

- highlighting recurring atomic clock failures and the urgent need for indigenous clock technology.
- Ahmedabad-based startup Omspace successfully launched Gujarat's first sounding rocket from near Dholera on March 15, 2026, reaching 3 km altitude and validating propulsion, avionics, and autonomous recovery systems under IN-SPACE authorisation.

## APPOINTMENTS

- The President of India carried out 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 other governors across Telangana, Maharashtra, Nagaland, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu.
- RM Nachammai became the first woman to head operations of a functional nuclear power plant in India upon her appointment as Chief Superintendent of Kaiga Generating Station Units 3 and 4 in Karnataka under NPCIL, effective 15 March 2026.

## SCHEMES AND POLICIES

- The WHO Foundation and Novo Nordisk announced a collaboration to strengthen childhood obesity prevention in India through school-based health programmes integrating screening, lifestyle education, and mental health support, aligned with the Ayushman Bharat School Health and Wellness Programme.
- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare approved major FSSAI reforms effective April 1, 2026, granting lifetime validity to all food business licences, revising turnover thresholds for registration categories, and providing automatic FSSAI registration to street vendors.
- The Ministry of Commerce approved the ₹497 crore RELIEF Scheme under ECGC Ltd. to support Indian exporters facing freight escalation and war-risk insurance costs from West Asia maritime disruptions, offering up to 100% risk coverage for qualifying consignments.
- The Agriculture Insurance Company of India launched the Krishi Sakhi Initiative in 2026 to

- improve crop insurance awareness, financial inclusion, and risk management among women farmers, aligned with the UN-FAO's declaration of 2026 as the International Year of the Woman Farmer.

## SPORTS CA

- The India Women's Cricket Team was nominated for the Laureus World Team of the Year Award 2026 following their maiden ICC Women's Cricket World Cup triumph in 2025, alongside nominees including McLaren F1, PSG, and the England Women's Football Team.
- India defeated England by 7 runs in a record-breaking T20 World Cup 2026 semi-final at Wankhede Stadium, where the combined 499 runs across both innings was the most ever in a men's T20 World Cup match.
- New Zealand reached the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 final with a nine-wicket demolition of South Africa, with Finn Allen scoring an unbeaten 100 off just 33 balls — the fastest century 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, 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.
- Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya and New Zealand's sports delegation launched the India–New Zealand Centenary Sports Cooperation Programme 2026, marking 100 years of bilateral sporting ties with joint initiatives in Rugby, Rowing, Sailing, Athletics, and Cycling.
- Smriti Mandhana retained the ICC Women's ODI No. 1 batting ranking while New Zealand's Amelia Kerr became only the seventh player in women's ODI history to take seven or more wickets in a single match, against Zimbabwe in Dunedin.
- Iran officially withdrew from FIFA World Cup 2026 — hosted by the USA, Canada, and Mexico — citing escalating geopolitical tensions with the United States and Israel, marking what is set to be the first withdrawal of its kind in modern football history.
- The ICC and Cricket West Indies jointly provisionally suspended West Indian fast bowler Javon Searles, Titans owner Chitranjan Rathod, and

- official Trevon Griffith over match-fixing and anti-corruption violations during the Bim10 Tournament 2023/24 in Barbados.
- IPL 2026, scheduled from March to May across 12 cities, will be the largest edition in the tournament's history with 84 matches, with defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru opening against Sunrisers Hyderabad on March 28.
- WADA deferred its decision on a rule barring government officials of dues-defaulting nations from major sporting events to September 2026, effectively saving the FIFA World Cup from disruption amid the US's withholding of \$7.3 million in dues since 2023.

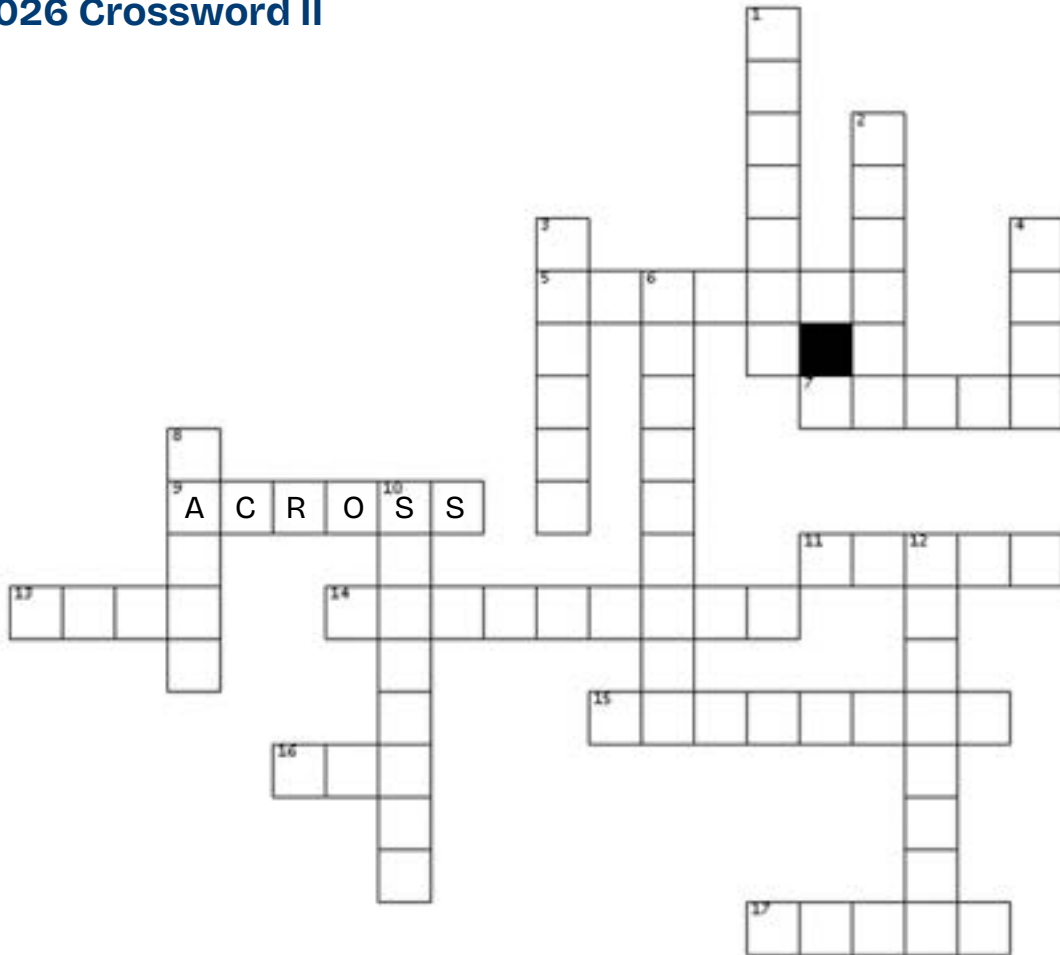
## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

- Iranian state media confirmed that Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, aged 86, was killed in joint US-Israeli strikes on February 28, 2026, with Iran declaring a 40-day mourning period and launching a counterassault while warning of continued retaliation.
- Iran constituted a three-member interim Leadership Council comprising President Pezeshkian, Chief Justice Ejei, and Ayatollah Alireza Arafai to temporarily fulfil the Supreme Leader's duties until the Assembly of Experts elects a permanent successor.
- Micron inaugurated its semiconductor assembly and test facility in Sanand, Gujarat — involving a combined investment of approximately \$2.75 billion — marking the start of commercial production of made-in-India memory modules for the domestic laptop market.
- India and Canada announced a Strategic Energy Partnership on 2 March 2026 and revived CEPA negotiations, with both sides committing to cooperation in clean energy, critical minerals, and uranium supply while targeting bilateral trade of USD 50 billion by 2030.
- A UN report submitted to the 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women found that women globally hold only 64% of the legal rights available to men, with major gaps persisting in rape law definitions, child marriage provisions, equal pay legislation, and access to justice.
- The World Obesity Atlas 2026 ranked India second globally — behind only China — with approximately 14 million children living with obesity, projecting that figure could rise to 20 million by 2040 amid low physical activity levels and sub-optimal breastfeeding rates.
- The WHO and PAHO officially verified Chile as having eliminated leprosy on 4 March 2026, making it the first country in the Americas and the second globally after Jordan to achieve this status, having reported no locally acquired case since 1993.
- Yellowstone's Echinus Geyser — the world's largest acidic geyser — resumed eruptive activity in February 2026 after nearly six years of dormancy, initially erupting every few days before settling into a pattern of eruptions every 2 to 5 hours.
- Scotland became the first part of the United Kingdom to legalise water cremation through alkaline hydrolysis, with The Hydrolysis (Scotland) (No. 1) Regulations 2026 coming into force on 2 March 2026 — the most significant reform to Scottish funeral law since traditional cremation was introduced in 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, killing approximately 87 crew members — reportedly the first such sinking by a US submarine since World War II.
- Scientists flagged Cassava Brown Streak Disease as a rapidly expanding food security threat in sub-Saharan Africa, with approximately 33.7% of Africa's land area currently at risk, spread driven by infectious whiteflies and infected planting material, and projected to worsen under mid-century climate scenarios.
- The International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness was observed on 5 March 2026, led by UNODA with hybrid events and youth-focused engagements aimed at promoting public understanding of disarmament issues as proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 2022.
- The United States and Israel launched coordinated strikes hitting approximately 4,000 targets across Iran in the first four days from 1 March 2026, triggering Iranian retaliatory strikes against GCC states, US military bases, and Israeli cities, with at

- least 1,332 Iranians, 6 US service members, and 11 Israelis reported killed.
- The US Treasury issued a temporary 30-day waiver in March 2026 allowing Indian refiners to purchase stranded Russian crude amid the effective blockage of the Strait of Hormuz, as India's Gulf oil supplies accounting for over 40% of imports faced severe disruption from the US-Israel-Iran conflict.
- The Hurun Global Rich List 2026 ranked India third globally with 308 billionaires — a net gain of 24 — with Mukesh Ambani retaining the top position at US\$109 billion and Cyrus Poonawalla recording India's largest absolute wealth gain at 43%, rising to US\$33 billion.
- Nepal's 2026 parliamentary elections produced a historic political shift as the Rastriya Swatantra Party led by 35-year-old rapper-turned-politician Balendra 'Balen' Shah swept over 100 constituencies, defeating sitting Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli in his own seat by a massive margin.
- International Women's Day 2026 was observed on 8 March under the theme 'Give To Gain', emphasising mutual support and collective progress as tools to advance gender equality, with roots tracing back to the first Women's Day held in New York on 28 February 1909.
- Iran's Assembly of Experts named Mojtaba Khamenei — second son of the slain Supreme Leader — as Iran's new Supreme Leader on 8 March 2026, a succession that divided Iranians between pro-establishment celebrations and protests, while drawing sharp condemnation from US President Trump and Israel.
- Human Rights Watch accused Israel of unlawfully using white phosphorus artillery shells in residential areas of Yohmor in southern Lebanon on 3 March 2026, raising serious concerns about violations of international humanitarian law amid Israeli strikes that killed 394 people in Lebanon the preceding week.
- Kharg Island, which handles nearly 90% of Iran's crude oil exports and can load up to 7 million barrels per day, remained untouched throughout the Israel-Iran conflict, widely regarded as a strategic red line whose breach could trigger catastrophic consequences for global energy markets.
- US President Donald Trump announced a \$300 billion partnership with Reliance Industries to build America's first new major oil refinery in 50 years at the Port of Brownsville, Texas, though RIL neither confirmed its involvement nor informed stock exchanges following the announcement.
- The Iran war triggered the largest supply disruption in the history of the global oil market, with the IEA flagging the Strait of Hormuz blockade and surging spot LNG prices above \$15/MMBtu as a more critical and underappreciated threat than the oil supply disruption itself.
- India co-sponsored UNSC Resolution 2817 — adopted 13-0 with China and Russia abstaining — condemning Iran's attacks on Gulf nations and threats to the Strait of Hormuz, marking a rare convergence of Indian and Pakistani diplomatic positions.
- Russia emerged as a major strategic and economic beneficiary of the US-Israel-Iran conflict, earning up to \$150 million per day in additional oil revenues as Brent crude neared \$100, with Russian Urals crude trading at a premium to Brent for the first time in history.
- India's official Oscar submission Homebound, directed by Neeraj Ghaywan, became the only Indian film shortlisted among 15 titles for the Best International Feature Film category at the 98th Academy Awards, but did not advance to the final five nominees.
- The US and Israel struck Iran's Kharg Island on February 28, 2026, prompting IRGC retaliatory drone attacks on oil facilities at Fujairah, UAE on March 14 and 16, pushing Brent crude above \$106 per barrel and nearly halting shipping through the Strait of Hormuz.
- Indian animated short film CHYIMI, directed by IPS officer Dr. Partha Sarathi Mahanta, won the Best Director Award at the New York Short Animation Festival 2026, while the Sahitya Akademi Awards 2025 were announced across 24 languages with notable winners including Mamta Kalia and Navtej Sarna.
- Iranian missile strikes on Qatar's Ras Laffan LNG hub and the South Pars gas field marked a critical escalation from maritime disruption to direct attacks on energy production infrastructure,

- sharply deepening India's energy security concerns as Qatar is India's largest LNG source.
- Historian William Dalrymple won the 2026 Mark Lynton History Prize for *The Golden Road: How Ancient India Transformed the World*, a book arguing that India was the dominant exporter of art, religion, mathematics, and ideas across Asia for approximately 1,500 years.
- Finland topped the World Happiness Report 2026 for the ninth consecutive year, with Costa Rica entering the top 10 for the first time as the highest-ranked Latin American country, while India improved marginally to 116th, and the report identified heavy social media use as a major driver of declining youth well-being.
- Bhumika Shrestha became Nepal's first transgender woman Member of Parliament as a proportional-representation MP for the Rastriya Swatantra Party, the first LGBTQ community member to serve in Nepal's legislature in nearly 18 years.
- India and Vietnam held a high-level ministerial meeting in New Delhi on March 18, 2026, marking the tenth anniversary of their Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, with both sides reviewing a draft Memorandum of Cooperation on tribal and ethnic welfare under India's Act East Policy framework.
- Cuba's entire electricity grid collapsed after the US blockade cut off fuel supplies, leaving approximately 10 million people without power, with Venezuela and Mexico both halting oil shipments and Russia dispatching a tanker carrying an estimated 730,000 barrels of crude in defiance of the blockade.
- Israel launched a ground offensive in Lebanon on March 16, 2026, killing at least 1,000 people and displacing approximately one million, as Hezbollah fired over 1,000 rockets and drones at Israel in retaliation for the killing of Ayatollah Khamenei despite being significantly weakened since 2024.
- The United States temporarily removed sanctions on Iranian oil already at sea for 30 days under Operation Epic Fury, unlocking approximately 140 million barrels for global markets to ease the West Asia energy crisis, with India — historically a major Iranian crude buyer — identified as a potential key beneficiary.

## April 2026 Crossword II



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.

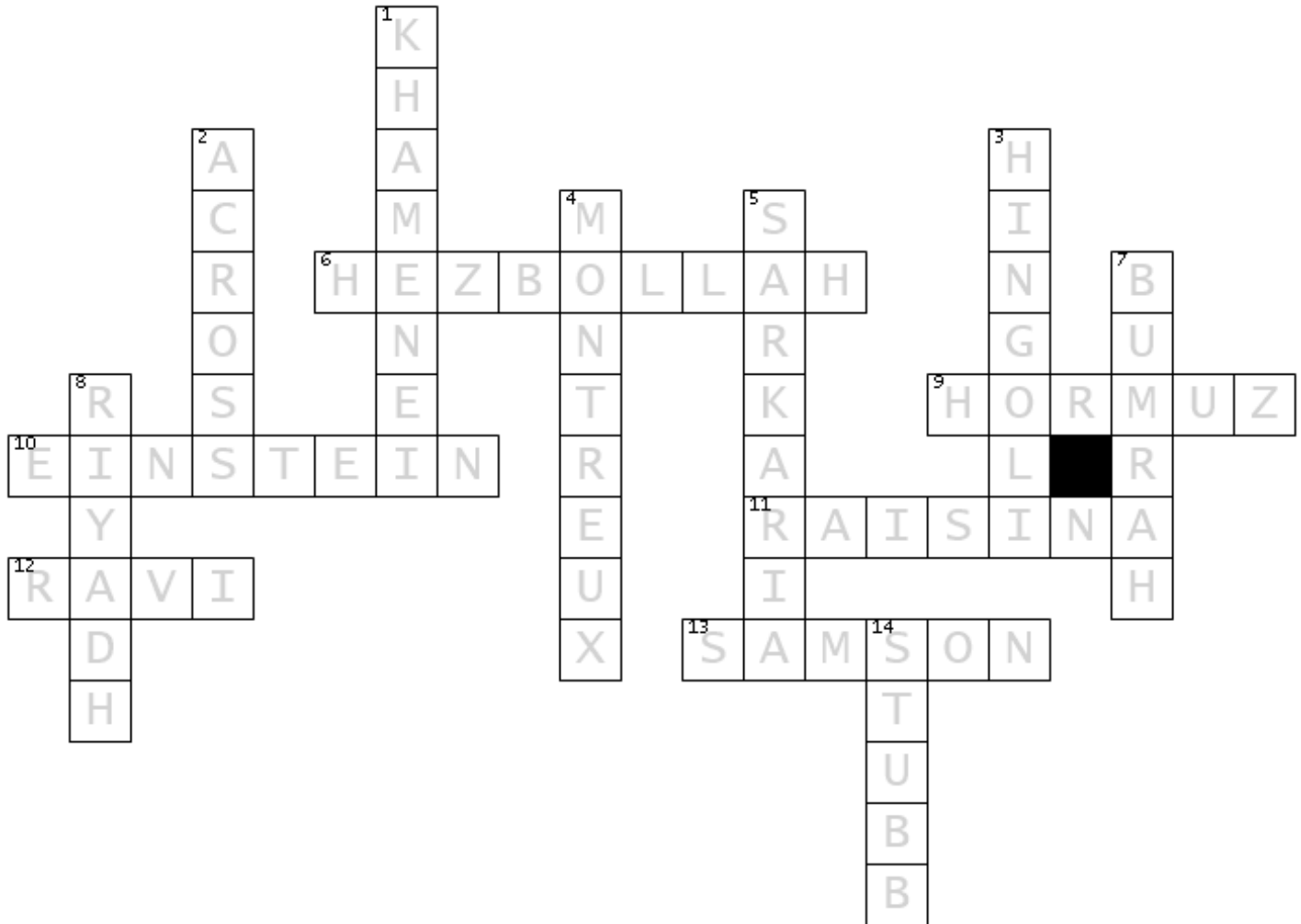
### ACROSS

5. One of the socio-cultural identities expressly mentioned in the 2019 transgender law framework
7. One ceremonial form specifically recognized under the Gujarat UCC Bill's common legal structure
11. Surname of the committee chair whose report preceded Gujarat's UCC Bill
13. Japan's regional navigation system mentioned alongside NavIC
14. ISRO's human spaceflight programme
15. Case that briefly held the right to life could include a right not to live
16. State described by the Supreme Court as a "shining example" of a uniform civil code
17. India's independent regional satellite navigation system

### DOWN

1. State that became the second in independent India to pass a state-level UCC measure
2. Satellite placed into orbit by SLV-3 in 1980
3. Patient in India's first fully implemented court-approved passive euthanasia case
4. Abbreviation for the nutrition-and-hydration support withdrawn in the Harish Rana case
6. India's first satellite, launched in 1975
8. Supreme Court judgment that laid the constitutional foundation for transgender rights in India
10. Landmark passive-euthanasia case that was doctrinally groundbreaking but not implemented for that patient
12. Founding father of the Indian space programme

The completed crossword for the **CLAT TATHYA APRIL 2026 PART 1** 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 II will provided in the next Edition i.e., May 2026 Part I.



# Faces That Inspire

Our Torchbearers: ALUMNIS IN NLS BANGALORE & NLU DELHI



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**Masirah Ahmad**



**Arush Sarma**



**Nikhil Dabbas**



**Sampoorno 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.**



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