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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



REAL MENTORSHIP. REAL RESULTS.



NPLC's TOP PERFORMERS 2026



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Arshnoor Singh



AIR 04, AILET



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Aryan Gupta



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Aarav Sachdeva



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Nandini Gupta



AIR 43, AILET



Yamya Alag



AIR 74, AILET



Samarth Kumar



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Sabhyata Singh



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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

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Yutika Kumar

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NISHANT PRAKASH LAW CLASSES

"Gurukul for CLAT & AILET"

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

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

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

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91% Success Rate



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& Tests



1:15 Mentor - Student
Ratio



Only 90 intakes per year
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NAVIGATE.
PREPARE.
LEAD.
CONQUER.

Nishant Prakash



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

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

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

Know your Mentor |



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

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

Their Next Chapter



NLSIU - Bengaluru

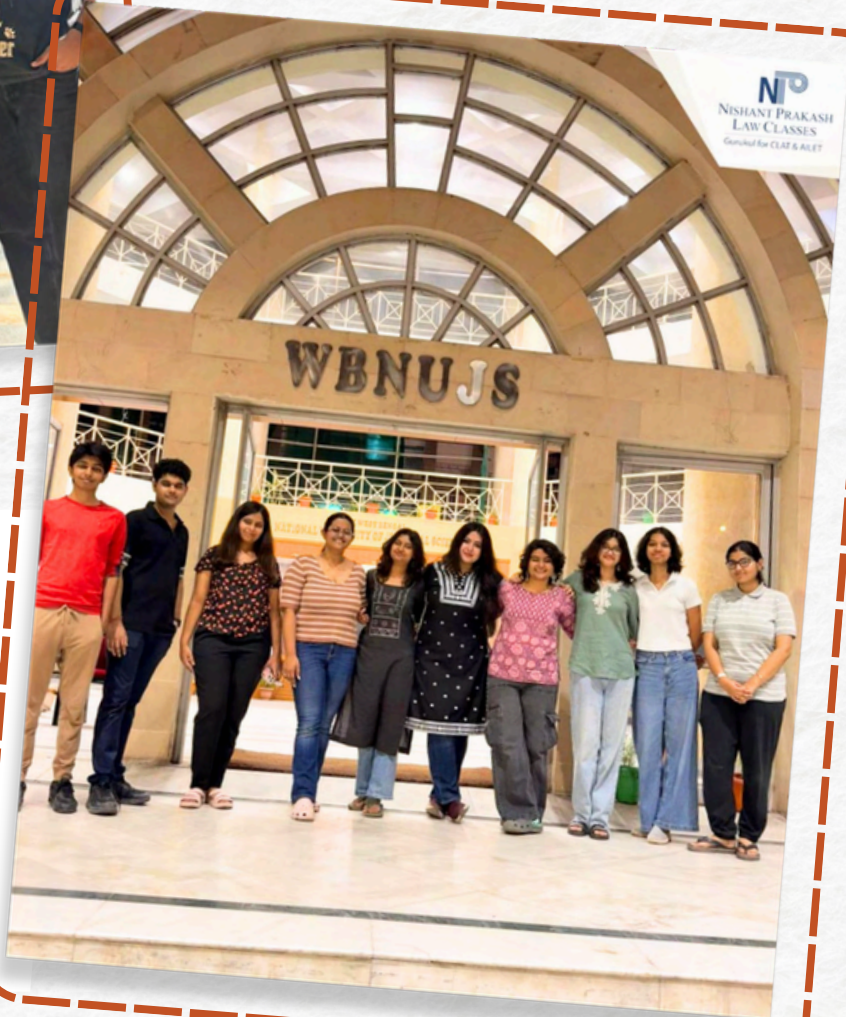
(Left to Right)

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

WBNUJS - Kolkata

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



Their Next Chapter



NP
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NLU - Delhi

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

NLU - Jodhpur

(Left to Right)

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



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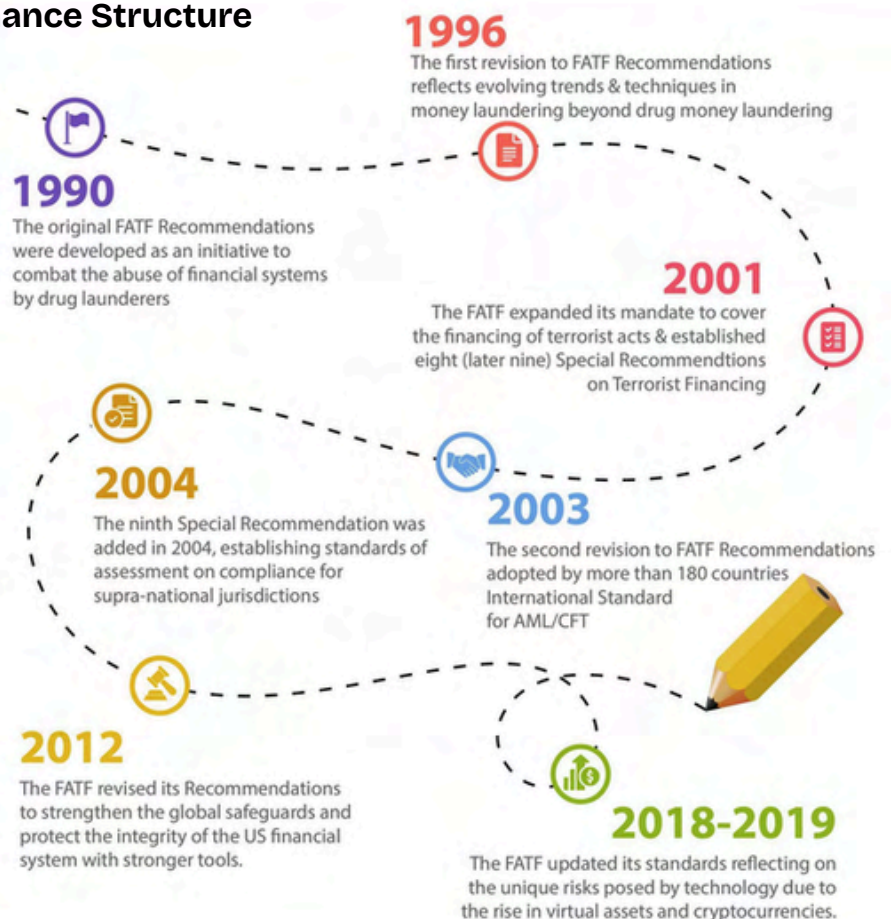
1 FATF Highlights India's Actions Against Offshore VASPs

IN FOCUS

- The **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** published a report titled '*Understanding and Mitigating the Risks of Offshore Virtual Asset Service Providers*' on 11 March 2026 in Paris, examining how regulatory gaps in the oversight of offshore virtual asset service providers are being exploited globally to facilitate large-scale fraud, money laundering, and terrorism financing.
- The report features India as a key case study, documenting the country's regulatory actions, enforcement measures, and ongoing detection initiatives deployed against unregistered offshore platforms operating within the domestic market.
- FATF President Elisa de Anda Madrazo stated that the report exposes how offshore VASPs create blind spots that criminals exploit to defraud vulnerable people or fund terrorism, and urged all countries and the private sector to act on the good practices identified.
- The report finds that only 46% of jurisdictions globally have adopted an activity-based approach to regulating and supervising virtual asset service providers, creating cross-border regulatory gaps that criminal actors actively exploit.

FATF: Origin, Mandate, and Governance Structure

- The FATF is the global watchdog for money laundering and terrorist financing, established in July 1989 following a G-7 Summit in Paris, with an original mandate focused on examining and developing measures to combat money laundering.
- Following the September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, FATF expanded its mandate in 2001 to incorporate the combating of terrorist financing; in April 2012, the mandate was further extended to counter the financing of the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).
- In April 1990—less than one year after its formation—FATF issued the Forty Recommendations providing a comprehensive plan of action against money laundering; in 2004, a Ninth Special Recommendations was published, together constituting the 40+9 Recommendations that form the agreed international standard for combating money laundering and terrorist financing.



- In 2012, FATF revised and expanded its recommendations to address new threats, including those related to WMD proliferation financing.
- FATF currently operates as a 39-member body comprising 37 member jurisdictions and two regional organisations—the European Commission and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC); Indonesia is the sole observer country.
- Key international organisations holding observer status with FATF include the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Interpol, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the International Organisation of Securities Commissions (IOSCO), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (UNCTED), the World Bank, and the World Customs Organisation (WCO).
- Over 200 jurisdictions globally have committed to FATF Recommendations through a network of nine FATF-Style Regional Bodies (FSRBs).
- The FATF Plenary is the organisation's principal decision-making body, meeting three times per year—in February, June, and October—to review Mutual Evaluation Reports (MERs) of member countries and take binding decisions.
- The FATF Secretariat, which supports the substantive work of the membership and the global network and is funded through annual member contributions, is located at the OECD headquarters in Paris.
- The FATF President is a senior official appointed by the Plenary from among its members for a two-year term beginning on 1 July; Elisa de Anda Madrazo currently serves as the FATF President as of the March 2026 report, having previously been held by T. Raja Kumar of Singapore who assumed office in July 2022.

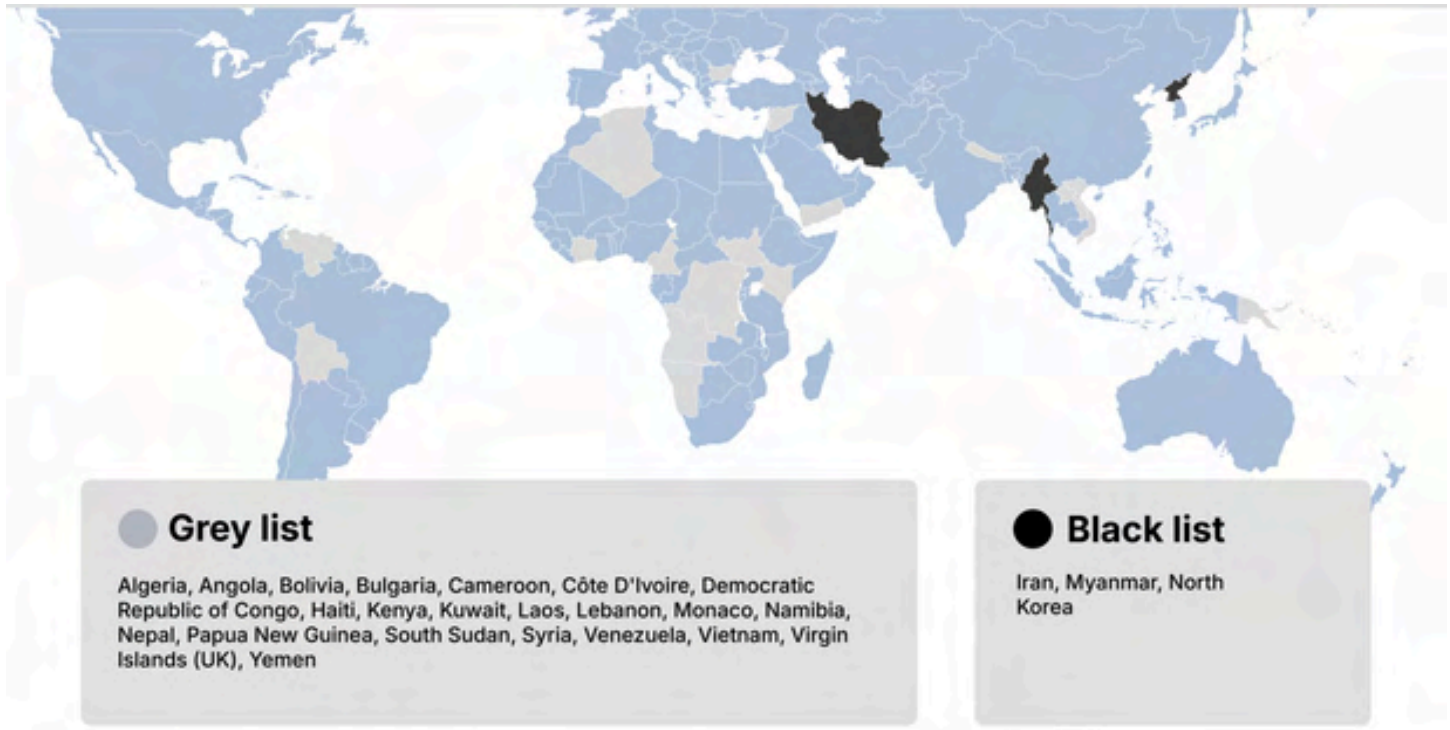
India and FATF

- India joined FATF with observer status in 2006 and was admitted as the 34th full member in 2010.
- India is also a member of two of FATF's regional partners—the Asia Pacific Group (APG) and the Eurasian Group (EAG).

Grey and Black Lists

- Countries with significant weaknesses in their Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism frameworks are placed on the FATF grey list, officially termed jurisdictions under increased monitoring. This listing does not imply immediate sanctions but signals that the country has committed to resolving identified deficiencies within agreed timelines. It acts as an early warning to global financial systems, increasing scrutiny from international lenders, investors, and regulatory bodies.
- Greylisted countries are required to implement an action plan designed by the Financial Action Task Force, which typically includes strengthening legal frameworks, improving financial intelligence mechanisms, enhancing monitoring of suspicious transactions, and ensuring effective prosecution of money laundering and terror financing cases. Regular progress reviews are conducted to assess compliance.
- If a country fails to make sufficient progress or shows lack of political commitment, it may be moved to the FATF black list, formally known as high-risk jurisdictions subject to a call for action. These countries are considered to pose a serious threat to the international financial system. The black list currently includes Iran, North Korea, and Myanmar, with Myanmar being added after developments following the 2021 military coup.
- Blacklisting has severe economic and financial consequences. It can lead to restrictions or enhanced due diligence by global financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and Asian

Black & Grey List 2026



Development Bank. Countries may face difficulty in accessing international credit, reduced foreign investment inflows, higher transaction costs, and reputational damage that affects trade and economic growth.

- Removal from the grey list requires a country to demonstrate sustained and verifiable progress in addressing all action plan items. Pakistan, for instance, was removed from the grey list after four years of monitoring after submitting evidence of actions taken against designated terrorist entities and improving its regulatory framework. The decision was supported by member countries including India, reflecting a consensus-based evaluation process within FATF.
- Overall, the FATF listing mechanism serves as a global compliance tool to maintain the integrity of the international financial system by encouraging countries to align with standardized norms against illicit financial flows.

Virtual Assets: Classification and India's Fiscal Framework

- A **Virtual Digital Asset (VDA)**, referred to globally as a Virtual Asset (VA) under FATF's framework, is a digital representation of value that can be digitally traded, transferred, or used for payment or investment purposes, relying on cryptography and distributed ledger technology (blockchain); fiat currency digital representations, such as a digital Indian Rupee or US Dollar held in a banking application, are explicitly excluded from this definition.
- The broad categories of virtual assets include the following:
 - Cryptocurrencies, such as Bitcoin and Ethereum, which function as digital mediums of exchange.
 - Stablecoins, such as USDT and USDC, which are pegged to the value of an underlying asset like the US Dollar or gold to reduce price volatility.
 - Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs), which are unique digital assets representing ownership of specific items such as digital art or music.

- Governance Tokens, which grant holders the right to vote on the future direction of a specific blockchain project or protocol.
- In India, the term Virtual Digital Asset is defined under the Finance Act, 2022, carrying the following fiscal and compliance implications:
 - A flat 30% tax is imposed on income derived from the transfer of any VDA.
 - A 1% Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) is applicable on payments made for VDA transfers to enable systematic tracking of transaction trails.
 - As of 2023, VDA transactions are covered under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, requiring crypto exchanges to comply with Know Your Customer (KYC) norms and report suspicious activities to the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU).

6 Types of Digital Assets Compared

	Crypto currencies	NFTs	Stablecoins	CBDCs	Digital Bonds	Tokens
Main Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Decentralised ✓ Anonymous ✓ Volatile ✓ Secure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Unique ✓ Irreplaceable ✓ Extensible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Stable ✓ Transparent ✓ Decentralised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Low Cost ✓ Efficient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Efficient ✓ Reliable ✓ Verifiable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Permissionless ✓ Transparent ✓ Trustless
Use Cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investments Payments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proving identity Tokenising supply chain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Payments Foreign exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Payments Cross-border Payments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trading Investments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tokenised stocks Tokenised real-world assets
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bitcoin Ethereum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cryptopunks "The First 5000 Days" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tether USD coin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Digital Yuan (China) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World bank's blockchain bond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utility and DAO tokens

Offshore Virtual Asset Service Providers: Profile, Risks, and Regulatory Obligations

- **Offshore Virtual Asset Service Providers (oVASPs)** are entities providing services related to virtual digital assets—including cryptocurrencies, stablecoins, and NFTs—from a jurisdiction outside the country where their users are located; under Indian law, oVASPs without a local office but serving domestic users are required to register in India regardless of their physical location.
- The core functions performed by oVASPs include exchange services (facilitating trade between virtual assets, or between fiat currency and virtual assets such as INR to USDT), transfer services (moving virtual assets between addresses or accounts), safekeeping and administration (providing digital wallet services for storing and managing private keys), and financial services linked to the issuance or sale of virtual assets.
- The primary regulatory concern surrounding oVASPs is regulatory arbitrage: platforms structured in jurisdictions with lenient AML or Counter-Financing of Terrorism (CFT) laws can bypass local KYC obligations, travel rule requirements, tax regulations, and reporting mandates.
- oVASPs commonly onboard Indian customers with little or no KYC verification, accept deposits through



domestic payment channels such as Unified Payments Interface (UPI) or card networks, and enable withdrawals to Indian bank accounts by routing payouts through locally-registered VASPs or compliant intermediaries, thereby providing active services within India while circumventing its regulatory perimeter.

- Methods used by oVASPs to obscure the movement of illicit proceeds include dispersing victim funds across multiple addresses, routing transactions through layered intermediary wallets, and using multiple blockchains or cross-chain bridges to increase obfuscation.
- Nested relationship misuse is another documented vulnerability, wherein unlicensed offshore VASPs access services from a licensed VASP by posing as private individual customers, thereby gaining access to regulated financial infrastructure without regulatory scrutiny.
- Under the PMLA, 2002, and **FIU-India** mandates, oVASPs serving Indian users are legally required to register as reporting entities, conduct KYC checks, submit Suspicious Transaction Reports (STRs) to the FIU, and appoint a Principal Officer based in India; entities that do not comply are directed to cease operations or face supervisory action, including notices issued under the relevant money laundering regulations.
- A documented Indian case involved a Caribbean-based online gambling platform that exploited AML blind spots to move value across borders; access to the platform was subsequently blocked in India.

Global Regulatory Findings: Gaps and Illicit Finance Risks

- The March 2026 FATF report identifies that fewer than half—specifically 46%—of jurisdictions globally have adopted an **activity-based approach** to regulating and supervising VASPs, whereby licensing or registration requirements are extended to providers based on the activities they perform within a jurisdiction, regardless of where they are incorporated or located; this approach is the mechanism by which offshore providers can be brought under counter-illicit finance supervision.
- Differences in national regulatory approaches to oVASPs create exploitable gaps that significantly complicate both effective domestic supervision and international enforcement cooperation.

- The report identifies that oVASPs have been used to convert illicit proceeds from large-scale investment fraud, provide financial support to terrorist groups, and exploit nested VASP relationships to evade regulatory detection.
- Recommended measures for jurisdictions to address these risks include: detecting, licensing, and registering oVASPs through an activity-based regulatory approach; enforcing sanctions for non-compliance with AML/CFT/CPF (Counter-Financing of Proliferation) obligations; building shared understanding through inter-agency task forces and public-private partnerships; and maximising supervisor-to-supervisor and FIU-to-FIU cooperation channels to accelerate information access and coordinate enforcement.
- The report additionally recommends that financial institutions and VASPs assess their exposure to unlicensed or unregistered oVASPs, apply consistent AML/CFT/CPF rules across all group entities, ensure that no group entity operates as an oVASP outside regulatory oversight, and refrain from maintaining business relationships with unlicensed or unregistered providers.

CRACKING DOWN ON OFFSHORE CRYPTO CRIME

International collaboration is the primary weapon against offshore crypto-facilitated crime.

TRACKING \$600M IN FRAUDULENT ASSETS

Nigerian authorities used international data sharing to identify opaque wallet owners and stop massive cross-border fraud.

1,000+ SCAM WEBSITES SHUT DOWN

The UK's FCA enforced strict rules to disrupt non-compliant offshore providers and remove fraudulent platforms.

DISRUPTING TERRORIST FINANCE NETWORKS

Indonesia identified oVASPs used to rapidly move funds to terrorist groups in Syria.

CROSS-BORDER PENALTIES AND SANCTIONS

Collaboration between Cayman and Abu Dhabi led to cancelled registrations and heavy financial penalties for governance failures.

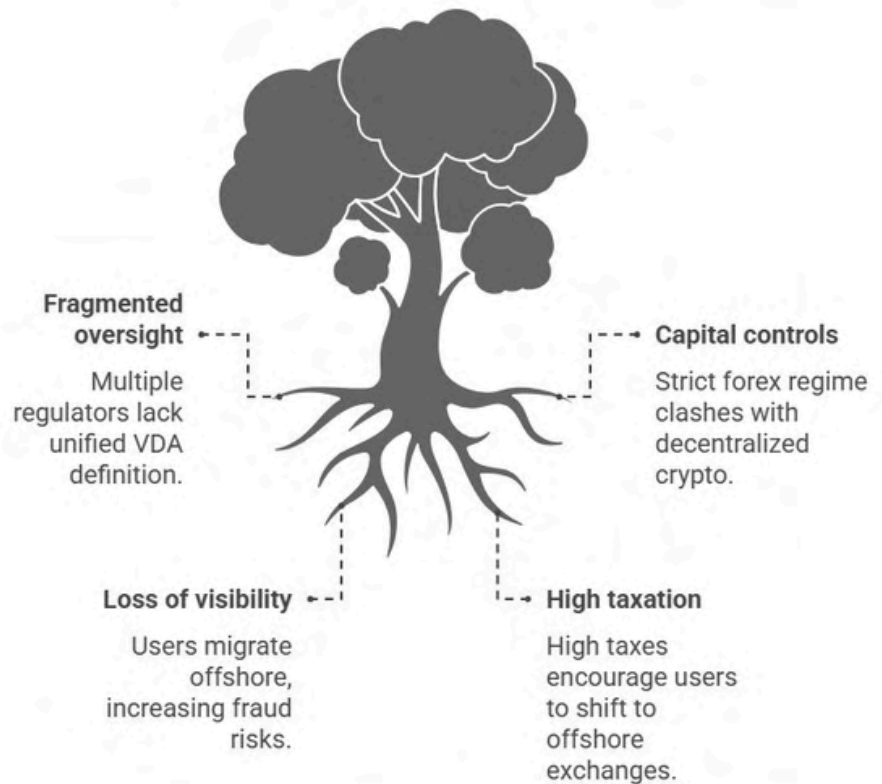
Regulatory Trigger: How the 2022 Virtual Asset Tax Regime Reshaped the Landscape

- India introduced a virtual asset tax regime in 2022, imposing a 30% income tax on VDA transfers and a 1% TDS on transactions; following this, a significant proportion of virtual asset trading traffic migrated from Indian onshore VASPs to various offshore unregistered VASPs.
- A substantial number of Indian clients transitioned from regulated entities to offshore platforms that do not comply with Indian money laundering regulations, counter-terror financing laws, KYC obligations, travel rule requirements, or tax laws, with many encouraged to use VPNs or shell companies to circumvent

domestic regulatory requirements.

- The FATF report notes that while India's regulatory framework is active, its current effectiveness depends heavily on domestic financial institutions, payment institutions, and local VASPs for detection and reporting, given that the most non-compliant oVASPs remain physically outside Indian jurisdiction.
- Registered Indian VASPs that detected unusual deposit patterns from offshore wallets and filed STRs provided FIU-India with the data through which analysis revealed that oVASPs were being used to convert illicit proceeds into virtual assets before routing them through registered Indian VASPs into domestic accounts.

Ineffective VDA regulation hinders India's crypto potential.



India's Institutional and Enforcement Response Against Unregistered Offshore Platforms

- India is developing the **Virtual Asset Lab**, a dedicated facility to enable continuous detection of unregistered and high-risk oVASPs using analytics, open-source intelligence, and automated web surveillance tools, with efforts actively underway as documented in the March 2026 FATF report.
- FIU-India has mandated that **Principal Officers** (POs) of VASPs be physically based in India, serving as the designated liaison with regulatory bodies and carrying full legal responsibility for transaction monitoring, STR submissions, and PMLA compliance; POs must have unrestricted access to customer information, company systems, and staff; must be senior enough to make independent decisions; must work full-time exclusively in an AML/CFT/CPF role; and must be a person distinct from the designated director.
- FIU-India interviews both POs and designated directors before permitting VASPs to register, to verify that these requirements have been met in practice.
- Leveraging the **Sahyog Portal**—a dedicated platform launched by the Union Home Ministry to automate and streamline sending of takedown notices to social media intermediaries, web hosts, and internet service providers for unlawful or illegal content—FIU-India has directed the removal of 85 URLs pertaining to unregistered and non-compliant oVASPs.
- FIU-India has established a dedicated working group comprising local VASPs and stakeholders including banks, payment aggregators, and gateways to formulate **Red Flag Indicators** (RFIs) and develop strategies to detect and address the operations of oVASPs serving Indian users.
- The National Investigation Agency (NIA), Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), and Enforcement Directorate (ED) are actively probing **scam compounds** along the Myanmar-Thailand border, in Cambodia, and in Laos, where illegally trafficked Indian citizens were forced to commit cybercrimes; STR filings from registered Indian VASPs revealing unusual deposit patterns from offshore wallets enabled FIU-India's

- analysis, which confirmed that oVASPs were being used to convert illicit proceeds into virtual assets before routing them through registered Indian VASPs into domestic financial accounts.
- FIU-India is currently designated as the money laundering regulator for Virtual Digital Asset Service Providers in India; when a VASP raises multiple red flags, FIU-India initiates supervisory actions and directs the entity to comply or cease operations, issuing notices under the relevant money laundering regulations.
- The Department of Revenue under the Finance Ministry established the Virtual Assets Contact Sub-Group in July 2023 as a multi-agency platform comprising law enforcement agencies, intelligence agencies, and regulators; this body meets regularly to identify emerging risks, formulate strategies, and facilitate inter-agency sharing of trends, typologies, and case studies, and promotes synergies across agencies.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following correctly identifies the city where the FATF Secretariat is located?
 - (a) Paris
 - (b) London
 - (c) Geneva
 - (d) Vienna
2. Which of the following correctly identifies FATF's principal decision-making body?
 - (a) FATF Secretariat
 - (b) FATF Plenary
 - (c) Egmont Group
 - (d) Asia Pacific Group
3. Which of the following correctly states the total membership strength of FATF?
 - (a) 37 members
 - (b) 34 members
 - (c) 39 members
 - (d) 46 members
4. Which of the following correctly identifies the sole observer country in FATF?
 - (a) Indonesia
 - (b) India
 - (c) Myanmar
 - (d) Singapore
5. Which of the following correctly identifies the formal term used for FATF's grey list?
 - (a) Non-cooperative territories under review
 - (b) Jurisdictions under increased monitoring
 - (c) High-risk jurisdictions needing action
 - (d) Observer jurisdictions in participation
6. Which of the following correctly identifies the formal term used for FATF's black list?
 - (a) Jurisdictions under review
 - (b) High-risk jurisdictions
 - (c) Low-risk jurisdictions
 - (d) Jurisdictions with compliance
7. Which of the following correctly identifies the law under which VDA transactions in India are brought into anti-money laundering compliance reporting?
 - (a) Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002
 - (b) Reserve Bank of India Act provisions, 1934
 - (c) Foreign Exchange Management framework Act, 1999
 - (d) Banking Regulation and supervision framework Act, 1949
8. Which of the following correctly describes a Virtual Digital Asset in India's fiscal framework?
 - (a) A digital form of sovereign currency held in a banking application
 - (b) A paper instrument issued by a scheduled commercial bank
 - (c) A digital representation of government-guaranteed deposit certificate
 - (d) A digital representation of value used for payment or investment purposes
9. Which of the following correctly identifies the TDS applicable on VDA transfers in India?
 - (a) 5%
 - (b) 1%
 - (c) 10%
 - (d) 30%
10. Which of the following correctly identifies the tax rate imposed on income from transfer of any VDA in India?
 - (a) 1%
 - (b) 30%
 - (c) 18%
 - (d) 12%
11. Which of the following correctly identifies a stablecoin mentioned in the content?
 - (a) Bitcoin
 - (b) Ethereum
 - (c) USDT
 - (d) Solana
12. Which of the following correctly identifies the main regulatory concern associated with offshore VASPs?
 - (a) Excessive domestic staffing norms
 - (b) Regulatory arbitrage
 - (c) Lack of blockchain mining
 - (d) Absence of digital wallets
13. Which of the following correctly identifies the body designated as the money laundering regulator

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

for Virtual Digital Asset Service Providers in India?

- (a) ED Office
- (b) RBI Board
- (c) FIU-India
- (d) SEBI Board

14. Which of the following correctly identifies the portal used to streamline takedown notices against unlawful online content linked to unregistered oVASPs?

- (a) Sahyog Portal
- (b) Parivahan Portal

- (c) DigiLocker
- (d) GeM Portal

15. Which of the following correctly identifies the multi-agency platform established by the Department of Revenue to address emerging virtual asset risks?

- (a) Virtual Asset Lab
- (b) Red Flag Indicators Group
- (c) Virtual Assets Contact Sub-Group
- (d) Offshore Compliance Cell

SOLUTIONS

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

2 1st Inter-State Initiative for Great Indian Bustard (GIB)

IN FOCUS

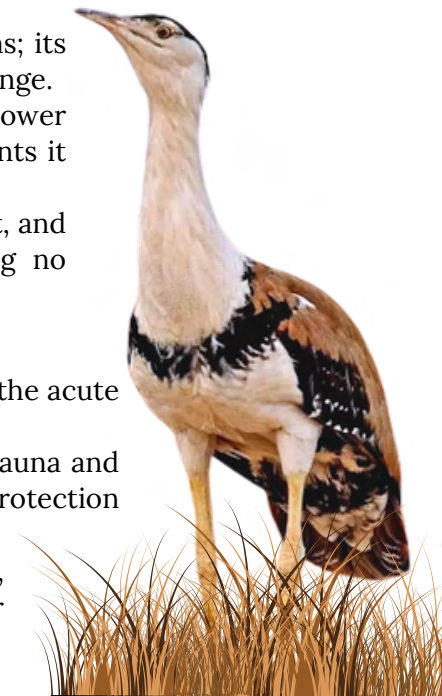
- A **Great Indian Bustard** (GIB) chick was successfully hatched in Kutch, Gujarat, on 26 March 2026—the first birth in the region in a decade—through the jumpstart approach, a novel conservation method involving the transfer of a fertile, incubated egg from a captive breeding programme to the nest of a wild female GIB.
- Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav announced the milestone on 28 March 2026, describing it as a significant achievement in the recovery of the critically endangered species.
- The initiative is the first inter-State jumpstart effort for the GIB in India, coordinated by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), the State Forest Departments of Rajasthan and Gujarat, and the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), and was planned a full year in advance.
- The development forms part of ongoing efforts under Project GIB, formally launched in 2016, and represents a significant step toward India's long-term goal of rewilding GIBs in their natural habitats.

The Great Indian Bustard: Species Profile and Ecological Significance

- The GIB is the state bird of Rajasthan and is widely regarded as India's most critically endangered bird; it stands approximately 100 cm (1 metre) in height and weighs between 15–18 kg, placing it among the heaviest flying birds in the world.
- The species occurs primarily in Rajasthan's Thar Desert, with small populations surviving in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh; as a flagship grassland species, the GIB represents the overall health of native grassland ecology.
- The GIB is one of four bustard species found in India, the others being the Lesser Florican, the Bengal Florican, and Macqueen's Bustard.
- As an **indicator species**, the GIB reflects the condition of grassland ecosystems; its decline signals the broader degradation of native grassland habitats across its range.
- The GIB is omnivorous and is particularly vulnerable to collisions with power transmission lines due to its lack of frontal vision, a biological trait that prevents it from detecting overhead cables in time to avoid them.
- Only three female GIBs are known to survive in the grasslands of Kutch, Gujarat, and the local population in that region had lost all its males long ago, leaving no possibility of a fertile egg occurring naturally in the wild there.

Protection Status

- The GIB is listed as Critically Endangered (CR) on the **IUCN Red List**, reflecting the acute risk of extinction faced by the species.
- Under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the GIB is listed in Appendix I, affording it the highest level of protection against international commercial trade.
- The GIB is listed in Appendix I of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), under which Parties are obligated to strictly protect the animal and conserve or restore its habitats.
- Under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, the GIB is placed under Schedule I,



providing it the highest level of legal protection under Indian domestic law.

Key Threats Driving the Species Toward Extinction

- Collision with and electrocution from power transmission lines constitute the leading cause of adult GIB mortality, a threat compounded by the bird's biological inability to detect overhead cables due to its lack of frontal vision.
- Habitat loss and alteration resulting from widespread agricultural expansion, mining activities, and infrastructure development have substantially reduced and fragmented the native grasslands on which the GIB depends for nesting, feeding, and survival.
- Hunting poses a continuing threat; it remains prevalent in Pakistan, where GIB populations across the shared landscape also face pressure.
- The Supreme Court of India constituted a seven-member committee to find a balance between conservation measures for the GIB and efforts to generate renewable energy in the same grassland regions, acknowledging the tension between habitat protection and energy infrastructure development.

Conservation Initiatives and the Protective Framework

- The GIB is covered under the Species Recovery Programme within the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats scheme of the MoEFCC, which provides a targeted institutional framework for conservation interventions.
- National Bustard Recovery Plans are currently being implemented by conservation agencies as part of the broader national strategy to arrest the species' decline.
- The MoEFCC, the Government of Rajasthan, and the **Wildlife Institute of India (WII)** jointly established a Conservation Breeding Facility at **Desert National Park** in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, in June 2019; the objective of this programme is to build up a captive GIB population and subsequently release chicks into the wild to increase the overall population.
- **Project GIB**, envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2011 and formally launched in 2016, aims to construct breeding enclosures for the species and develop infrastructure to reduce human pressure on GIB habitats; the project has been making steady progress in strengthening conservation and recovery efforts.
- The number of birds in **conservation breeding** centres at Sam and Ramdevra in Rajasthan has reached 73, with five new chicks added during the current breeding season.
- A Task Force has been constituted to recommend eco-friendly measures to mitigate the impact of power transmission lines and other power infrastructure on wildlife, including the GIB.
- India is actively moving toward the **rewilding** of GIBs in the near future as part of its long-term conservation planning, with the Gujarat hatching event representing a critical milestone in this roadmap.

Conservation Initiatives and the Protective Framework

- The **jumpstart approach** is a novel conservation technique involving the transfer of a fertile, incubated egg from a captive breeding programme to the nest of a wild female bird, enabling successful hatching in the natural habitat under the care of a foster mother, without removing the female from the wild or disrupting her natural breeding behaviour.
- The first inter-State implementation of the jumpstart approach for the GIB in India was necessitated by the absence of fertile eggs in Gujarat: with only three female GIBs surviving in the Kutch grasslands and no

OPERATION JUMPSTART: SAVING GUJARAT'S GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD

High-stakes egg transfer revives population from extinction threat.

LOCAL EXTINCTION THREAT:



With only three females and no males remaining in Gujarat, natural reproduction had become impossible.

THE "JUMPSTART" WILD NEST EGG SWAP

A fertile egg was transported by road for 19 hours from Rajasthan to Gujarat through a halt-free corridor.

770KM HIGH-SPEED PORTABLE INCUBATION JOURNEY



A fertile egg was transported by road for 19 hours from Rajasthan to Gujarat through a halt-free corridor.

THE 'JUMPSTART' WILD NEST EGG SWAP



Experts replaced an infertile egg in a wild female's nest with the fertile captive-bred egg on March 22, 2026.



SUCCESSFUL HATCHING IN THE NATURAL HABITAT

On March 26, 2026, the chick hatched and is now being reared by its wild foster mother.

surviving males in the local population, natural reproduction was not possible.

- A captive-bred GIB egg from the conservation breeding programme in Rajasthan was transported by road for over 19 hours, covering approximately 770 kilometres from Sam in Rajasthan to Naliya in Gujarat, in a handheld portable incubator, through a specially created halt-free corridor to maintain controlled incubation conditions throughout the arduous journey.
- The egg was successfully replaced on 22 March 2026 in the nest of a female GIB in Kutch that had been tagged in August 2025; this female had earlier laid an infertile egg, as the local Kutch population had no surviving males.
- The tagged female completed the incubation of the fertile egg, and the chick successfully hatched on 26 March 2026; the field monitoring team is observing the young chick being reared by its foster mother in its natural habitat.

Institutional Coordination and the Rewilding Roadmap

- The MoEFCC served as the nodal coordinating authority for the Gujarat jumpstart initiative, working in direct coordination with the State Forest Departments of Rajasthan and Gujarat and the WII; the initiative was planned a full year before execution.
- The conservation breeding centres at Sam and Ramdevra in Rajasthan together hold 73 birds, constituting the primary captive population base from which future rewilding and jumpstart efforts will draw.
- Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav congratulated all scientists, field officers, and wildlife enthusiasts involved and stated that the government remains committed to making the conservation endeavour successful; he expressed hope for the survival of the chick and described the Gujarat event as one of several steps being taken to revive GIB populations.
- India is moving toward the rewilding of GIBs in the near future as part of its long-term conservation planning, with the Gujarat hatching event affirming the practical viability of inter-State captive-to-wild

egg transfer as a recovery tool.

The Bonn Convention: International Framework for Migratory Species Protection

- The **Bonn Convention**, formally known as the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), has been in force since 1983 under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), providing a global platform for the conservation and sustainable use of migratory animals and their habitats.
- The CMS brings together the Range States—the States through which migratory animals pass—and lays the legal foundation for internationally coordinated conservation measures across the full migratory range of species.
- Migratory species threatened with extinction are listed in Appendix I of the CMS, under which Parties are obligated to strictly protect these animals, conserve or restore their habitats, mitigate obstacles to migration, and control other factors that endanger them; the GIB is listed in Appendix I of the CMS.
- Migratory species that need conservation and management, or that would significantly benefit from international cooperation, are listed in Appendix II of the Convention.
- India has signed non-legally-binding Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with the CMS for the conservation and management of Siberian Cranes (1998), Marine Turtles (2007), Dugongs (2008), and Raptors (2016).
- Important migratory animals and birds that temporarily inhabit India include Amur Falcons, Bar-headed Geese, Black-necked Cranes, Marine Turtles, Dugongs, and Humpback Whales.

CITES: Regulating International Wildlife Trade

- The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is an international agreement to which States and regional economic integration organisations adhere voluntarily, with the central aim of ensuring that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.
- CITES was drafted following a resolution adopted in 1963 at a meeting of members of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations; CITES entered into force in July 1975 and currently has 184 Parties comprising countries and regional economic integration organisations.
- The CITES Secretariat is administered by UNEP and is located in Geneva, Switzerland, where it performs a coordinating, advisory, and servicing role in the functioning of the Convention.
- The Conference of the Parties (CoP) to CITES is the supreme decision-making body of the Convention and comprises all Parties; the 17th CoP was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2016, and India hosted the 3rd CoP in 1981.
- Although CITES is legally binding on its Parties, it does not replace national laws; rather, it provides a framework that each Party must give effect to through its own domestic legislation at the national level.
- World Wildlife Day is observed annually on 3 March—a date chosen to coincide with the signing of CITES in 1973; since 2013, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has designated the CITES Secretariat as the facilitator for the global observance of this day on the UN calendar.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following correctly identifies the year in which Project GIB was formally launched?
(a) 2016 (b) 2017
(c) 2018 (d) 2019
2. Which of the following correctly identifies the type of committee constituted by the Supreme Court of India to address the GIB conservation and renewable energy issue?
(a) five-member committee body
(b) seven-member committee
(c) nine-member committee body
(d) eleven-member committee body
3. Where was the Great Indian Bustard chick successfully hatched through the jumpstart approach?
(a) Sam, Rajasthan (b) Ramdevra, Rajasthan
(c) Kutch, Gujarat (d) Jaisalmer, Rajasthan
4. Which of the following conservation techniques was used to hatch the GIB chick in Kutch?
(a) Jumpstart approach
(b) Soft-release approach
(c) Satellite-tagging approach
(d) Nest-fencing approach
5. Which of the following institutions served as the nodal coordinating authority for the Gujarat jumpstart initiative?
(a) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Wildlife
(b) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
(c) Ministry of Environment, Forest of Gujarat alone
(d) Supreme Court committee on Forest and Wildlife
6. Which of the following Indian state has the Great Indian Bustard as its state bird?
(a) Gujarat (b) Rajasthan
(c) Maharashtra (d) Karnataka
7. Which of the following is another bustard species found in India?
(a) Sarus Crane (b) Indian Skimmer
(c) Greater Flamingo (d) Macqueen's Bustard
8. Which of the following factor is identified as the leading cause of adult Great Indian Bustard mortality?
(a) Hunting in India
(b) Power transmission lines
(c) Drought in grasslands
(d) Predation by wild animals
9. What biological trait makes the Great Indian Bustard especially vulnerable to overhead cables?
(a) Weak flight muscles
(b) Lack of frontal vision
(c) Poor balance in air
(d) Narrow wingspan
10. What is the IUCN Red List status of the Great Indian Bustard?
(a) Endangered (b) Vulnerable
(c) Critically Endangered (d) Near Threatened
11. Under CITES, in which Appendix is the Great Indian Bustard listed?
(a) Appendix II (b) Appendix I
(c) Appendix III (d) Appendix IV
12. Under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, under which Schedule is the Great Indian Bustard placed?
(a) Schedule II (b) Schedule IV
(c) Schedule I (d) Schedule V
13. Where was the Conservation Breeding Facility for the Great Indian Bustard established in June 2019?
(a) Desert National Park, Jaisalmer
(b) Kutch Grasslands, Gujarat
(c) Naliya National Park, Gujarat
(d) Ramdevra Sanctuary, Rajasthan
14. In which of the following year was Project GIB formally launched?
(a) 2011 (b) 2019
(c) 2016 (d) 2026
15. How many birds are currently held in the conservation breeding centres at Sam and Ramdevra in Rajasthan?
(a) 73 (b) 68
(c) 75 (d) 70

SOLUTIONS

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

3 Artemis II Mission

IN FOCUS

- **Artemis II**, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) first crewed mission under the Artemis program, was launched on 1 April 2026, marking the return of human presence beyond low-Earth orbit for the first time in over five decades.
- The Orion spacecraft, launched atop the **Space Launch System (SLS)**, completed a 10-day lunar flyby mission in which the crew flew to the dark side of the Moon and successfully re-entered Earth's atmosphere at approximately 40,000 km per hour.
- The mission established American precedence in the renewed global lunar competition, with significant implications for geopolitics, military leverage, and economic dominance in the rapidly expanding space economy.
- The global space economy is already valued at over USD 600 billion, with Morgan Stanley projecting it will reach USD 1 trillion by the 2040s, with approximately 80% expected to derive from navigation, broadcasting, internet services, climate observation, agriculture monitoring, and surveillance.

The Artemis Program: Origins, Architecture, and Strategic Purpose

- The Artemis program is NASA's multi-mission initiative designed to send humans back to the Moon, demonstrate new technologies and capabilities required for future Mars exploration, and establish a strategic American presence on the lunar surface.
- The program's name stands for Acceleration, Reconnection, Turbulence, and Electrodynamics of the Moon's Interaction with the Sun; it was publicly outlined with an initial target of landing the next man and first woman on the lunar surface by 2024.
- The program is built around several integrated systems: the Exploration Ground Systems (ground infrastructure supporting launch operations), the SLS rocket and Orion spacecraft (the primary crew vehicle), the Gateway (a planned lunar-orbiting outpost), modern human landing systems (lunar landers developed by SpaceX and Blue Origin), and newly designed spacesuits called the Exploration Extravehicular Mobility Unit (xEMU), which feature advanced mobility, communications systems, and interchangeable parts configurable for both microgravity and surface operations.
- The program is structured in sequential missions:
 - Artemis I involved an uncrewed flight to test the SLS and Orion spacecraft.
 - Artemis II, launched on 1 April 2026, constitutes the first crewed flight test, with a 10-day lunar flyby.
 - Artemis III is planned to land astronauts at the Moon's South Pole.



- Artemis IV, expected in 2028, aims to be the first crewed lunar surface landing of the Artemis era, transporting astronauts to begin building a permanent base camp for long-term exploration.
- Moon base construction is expected to follow in the 2030s, concurrent with preparations for Mars missions.
- NASA's partnership with SpaceX—the largest private space company, headed by Elon Musk—was central to the execution of the Artemis II mission.
- NASA estimates that at least 10 launches will be required per lunar mission to achieve orbital refuelling, one of the most technically complex challenges the program faces; this requires multiple starships to launch, transfer fuel between vehicles, and send a fully fuelled spacecraft to the Moon.

Artemis II: Mission Profile, Crew, and Technical Achievements

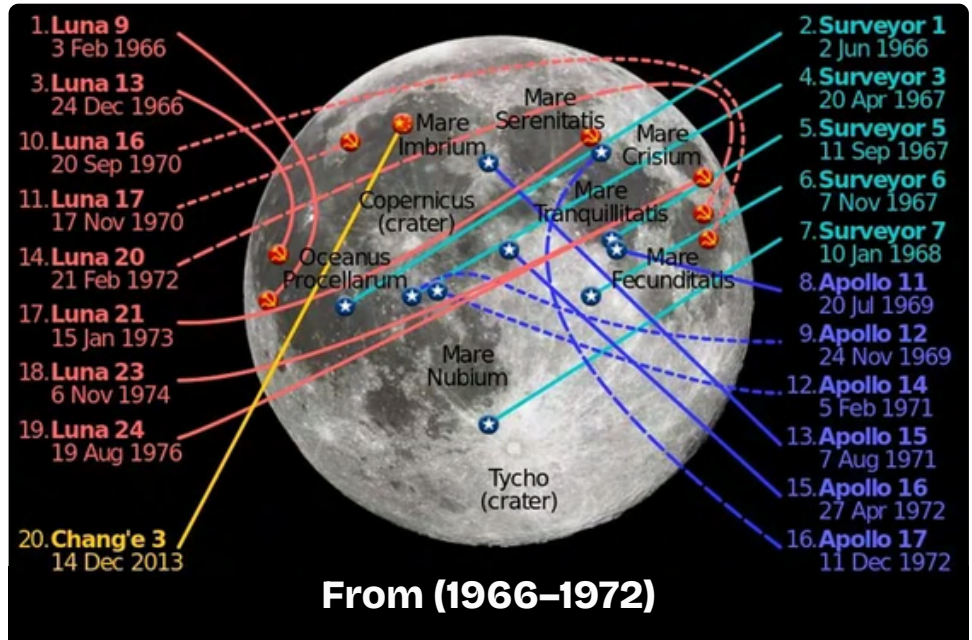
- Artemis II is NASA's first crewed mission of the Artemis program and the first time humans have travelled to the vicinity of the Moon since the Apollo 17 mission in 1972; the 10-day mission carried four astronauts aboard the Orion spacecraft to validate deep-space life support systems and other critical capabilities.
- The four-member crew includes several historic firsts in deep-space human spaceflight:
 - Reid Wiseman (Commander): A NASA veteran and former Chief of the Astronaut Office.
 - Victor Glover (Pilot): The first person of colour to travel beyond low-Earth orbit.
 - Christina Koch (Mission Specialist): The first woman to travel to the Moon's vicinity.
 - Jeremy Hansen (Mission Specialist): A Canadian Space Agency (CSA) astronaut, he is the first non-American to leave Earth's orbit.
- The crew did not land on the Moon; instead, they executed a **free-return trajectory** lunar flyby, flying approximately 7,400 km beyond the far side of the Moon before using lunar gravity to execute a gravity assist—formally termed a **gravity assist** or "slingshot"—to return to Earth without engaging the spacecraft's main engines to reverse direction.
- The SLS, described as the most powerful rocket ever built, generated 8.8 million pounds of thrust, approximately 15% more than the Apollo-era Saturn V rocket.
- For the first time, NASA tested Laser Communications (O2O) using infrared lasers to transmit data at 260 Mbps, enabling 4K video streaming from lunar distances.



- The AVATAR (A Virtual Astronaut Tissue Analog Response) experiment used organ-on-a-chip technology with crew members' own cells to study the real-time biological effects of deep-space radiation and microgravity.
- The mission also deployed CubeSats from Germany, Argentina, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia, designated for research on radiation shielding, space weather monitoring, and lunar rover components.

Historical Soft Landings on the Moon (1966–1976)

- Luna 9 (1966), an uncrewed Soviet mission, became the first spacecraft to achieve a survivable soft landing on the Moon, establishing that the lunar surface was solid enough to support a vehicle rather than consisting of a thick layer of dust.
- Surveyor 1 (1966) was the United States' first successful robotic lunar landing; it collected over 11,000 photographs and gathered vital data on lunar soil temperature and radar reflectivity to prepare for future crewed visits.



- Apollo 11 (1969) achieved the first crewed lunar landing, with Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walking on the surface, collecting samples, and returning safely to Earth, fulfilling a decade-long national goal; a total of 12 American astronauts walked on the lunar surface between July 1969 and December 1972.
- Luna 16 (1970) marked the first time an automated Soviet spacecraft landed on the Moon, drilled into the surface, and launched a return capsule to bring lunar soil back to Earth.
- Apollo 17 (1972) was the final mission of the Apollo era, featuring the longest moonwalks and most extensive geological sampling of any Apollo mission, including the discovery of unique orange soil near the landing site.
- Luna 24 (1976) was the last Soviet lunar mission, successfully drilling two metres into the surface to return a soil sample that provided early evidence of water on the Moon, though this finding was largely overlooked at the time.

Modern Era Soft Landings (2013–Present) and Upcoming Missions

Completed Missions

- Chang'e 3 (2013) was China's first lunar landing, deploying the Yutu rover and conducting the first-ever astronomical observations from the surface of another celestial body.
- Chang'e 4 (2019) achieved the world's first soft landing on the Moon's far side, using a relay satellite to maintain communication with Earth from the permanently Earth-facing-away hemisphere.
- **Chandrayaan-3** (2023) made India the first nation to successfully land near the lunar south pole and the fourth country overall to achieve a soft landing on the lunar surface, after the United States, Russia, and China; it deployed the Pragyan rover, which confirmed the presence of sulphur and studied lunar soil

properties.

- SLIM (2024), Japan's "Moon Sniper" mission, demonstrated high-precision landing technology by touching down within 100 metres of its designated target despite an engine issue during the final descent phase.
- IM-1 Odysseus (2024) was the first successful lunar landing by a commercial company and the first American return to the lunar surface in 50 years, though the lander tipped over slightly upon touchdown.
- Chang'e 6 (2024) completed a world-first mission landing on the far side's South Pole-Aitken Basin to collect and return unique soil samples, providing new insights into the Moon's early geological history.

Upcoming Missions

- Blue Moon MK1 (expected 2026), a Blue Origin commercial cargo demonstration mission, is designed to test large-scale landing technologies and power systems to support sustainable human lunar infrastructure and heavy logistics.
- Griffin-1 (expected 2026), operated by Astrobotic, aims to deliver NASA's VIPER rover to the South Pole to scout for water ice, which is considered essential for producing fuel and oxygen for future lunar colonies.
- Chang'e 7 (expected 2026) will deploy a multi-component system including a lander, rover, and a flying detector to explore permanently shadowed craters at the South Pole and search for water ice evidence.
- Artemis IV (expected 2028) is designed to be the first crewed Artemis lunar surface landing, transporting astronauts to begin constructing a permanent lunar base camp for long-term exploration.

India's Lunar Exploration Journey: Chandrayaan Missions

India's Lunar Exploration Journey



**Chandrayaan 1
(2008)**

First Indian lunar orbiter

Discovered water molecules on the Moon



**Chandrayaan 2
(2019)**

Orbiter mission successful

Vikram lander crashed during landing attempt



**Chandrayaan 3
(2023)**

First successful soft landing near lunar south pole

Made India the fourth country to land on the Moon



**Chandrayaan 4
(2025-26 est.)**

Planned future mission

Expected to further lunar exploration efforts

- The Chandrayaan programme represents India's principal lunar exploration initiative, developed and executed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- Chandrayaan-1 (2008), launched aboard a Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)-C11, aimed to create a three-dimensional atlas of the Moon and perform mineralogical mapping; the mission confirmed the detection of water and hydroxyl on the lunar surface, one of the most significant findings in lunar science.

- Chandrayaan-2 (2019), launched aboard a Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) MkIII-M1 and designed to explore the **lunar south pole**, comprised a fully indigenous Orbiter, Lander (Vikram), and Rover (Pragyan); although the lander and rover crashed during the descent, the Orbiter successfully continued to collect scientific data.
- Chandrayaan-3 (2023), launched aboard the Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM3)-M4, was India's third lunar mission and represented a successful effort at achieving a soft landing at the lunar south pole; the mission was built on a "failure-based design"—unlike the "success-based design" of Chandrayaan-2—incorporating provisions for multiple landing attempts, an expanded landing area, and additional fuel for longer-distance travel to rule out the scenario of a crash landing.
 - Components: Chandrayaan-3 comprised the Vikram lander and the Pragyan rover (same configuration as Chandrayaan-2), both designed to last one lunar day (approximately 14 Earth days) with no requirement to return to Earth.
 - The mission also carried the Spectro-Polarimetry of Habitable Planet Earth (SHAPE) experimental payload in the propulsion module, designed to study the spectro-polarimetric signatures of Earth in the near-infrared wavelength range.
 - Aspects studied included lunar quakes, thermal properties of the lunar surface, changes in plasma near the surface, and precise measurement of the distance between Earth and the Moon.
 - The lunar south pole was targeted due to its challenging terrain, potential repositories of information about the early Solar System, and likely concentration of water ice—a resource critical for future deep-space exploration.
- India became the first country to successfully land on the lunar south pole and the fourth nation to achieve a soft landing on the lunar surface.

India's Space Ambitions: Current Position and Near-Term Goals

- India is one of only four nations to have sent a vehicle to the Moon but remains significantly behind the other three—the United States, Russia, and China—in terms of resources, programme scale, and mission frequency.
- ISRO has developed a cost-efficient space programme and has secured a portion of the global space economy, though with substantially fewer resources than the leading space nations.
- **Gaganyaan**, India's human spaceflight mission, is scheduled for launch in 2026 or 2027, with a planned mission duration of a few days; its success is considered a prerequisite for India's broader deep-space ambitions.
- India's target for a lunar landing is 2040, with growing acknowledgement that China may establish a lunar base ahead of India, complicating the bilateral and strategic outlook.
- India requires the development of a more powerful heavy-lift rocket than those currently operated by ISRO to support future crewed and cargo lunar missions.
- India plans to collaborate with Japan's Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) on the **Lunar Polar Exploration** (LUPLEX) mission, tentatively planned for 2027, which will search for water ice at the lunar south pole using a larger rover than the one deployed in Chandrayaan-3.
- Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla visited the International Space Station (ISS) aboard a SpaceX vehicle to conduct experiments; the seat cost approximately ₹550 crore.
- Chandrayaan-4, India's planned lunar sample-return mission, is scheduled for launch in 2028; India currently has no announced plans to explore the far side of the Moon.
- The **Bharatiya Antariksh Station**, India's planned national space station, is a two-module facility scheduled to be fully operational by 2035.

The Geopolitical Dimensions of the Renewed Space Race

- Space has evolved into an operational arena where economic control, military leverage, and geopolitical competition converge; the United States and China are currently setting the agenda and pace of this competition.
- Russia's space programme which sent the first human being and, before that, the first animal (the dog Laika) into orbit has fallen behind in the lunar race; while the United States focuses on the Moon and Mars, Russia is reviving interest in Venus and is reported to be exploring the placement of nuclear weapons in space to target enemy satellites and missiles.
- China's programme is conducted through the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation, is entirely State-sponsored, and is oriented toward developing permanent space infrastructure; China placed its Tiangong space station a three-module facility in orbit in 2022; Tiangong is larger than India's planned Bharatiya Antariksh Station, though smaller than the 15-nation ISS.
- China plans to land crews on the Moon by 2030; robots will construct the International Lunar Research Station (ILRS) from 2028 to 2035 in collaboration with Russia, which will provide a nuclear power station for the facility.
- China developed its own satellite navigation system, the **BeiDou**, which was reported to have been used by Iran during a conflict to deliver strategic military outcomes; unlike the United States, where space exploration is market-driven by companies such as SpaceX and Blue Origin, China's space programme is entirely State-funded and information-restricted.
- Unlike the United States, where space exploration is partially driven by private companies such as SpaceX and Blue Origin, China's programme is entirely State-sponsored.
- As of April 2026, it is widely assessed that even if NASA reaches the Moon first in the current race, China is likely to establish the first permanent Moon base, given its 20-year programmatic planning and dedicated State investment.
- Space dominance is increasingly regarded as the successor paradigm to naval dominance as a determinant of global power, making it a central consideration for national security planning.
- The **Artemis Accords**, which India has signed, establish a framework for international collaboration in lunar exploration; India's participation is expected to shape its involvement in future multi-lateral lunar missions.

The Far Side of the Moon: Characteristics and Exploration

- The Moon is tidally locked to Earth, completing one rotation in the same 27.3 days it takes to orbit Earth; this synchronous rotation causes the same hemisphere the near side to always face Earth, while the far side remains permanently directed away from Earth and is commonly, though imprecisely, referred to as the "dark side."
- The far side has substantially different terrain and geological characteristics compared to the near side and the lunar equatorial region; it remains harder to access for communications because no direct line-of-sight with Earth exists, requiring the use of relay satellites.
- China achieved the first-ever soft landing on the far side of the Moon in 2019 with Chang'e 4, using a relay satellite to maintain communication; Chang'e 6 (2024) subsequently collected and returned soil samples from the far side's South Pole-Aitken Basin.
- India's Chandrayaan-4 mission, planned for 2028, is a lunar sample-return mission; India does not currently have plans to explore the far side of the Moon but, as a signatory of the Artemis Accords, is expected to collaborate on future multilateral lunar exploration missions that may encompass the far side.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which of the following was Artemis II?
 - NASA's first robotic Moon mission
 - NASA's first crewed Artemis mission
 - India's first human lunar mission
 - China's first lunar flyby mission
- Which trajectory was used by Artemis II for its return to Earth?
 - Polar orbit trajectory
 - Docking-return trajectory
 - Powered reversal trajectory
 - Free-return trajectory
- Who became the first person of colour to travel beyond low-Earth orbit on Artemis II?
 - Reid Wiseman
 - Victor Glover
 - Jeremy Hansen
 - Christina Koch
- Which mission first achieved a soft landing on the Moon's far side?
 - Chang'e 4
 - Luna 16
 - Chandrayaan-3
 - IM-1 Odysseus
- What did the AVATAR experiment study on Artemis II?
 - Lunar drilling patterns and microgravity on human cells
 - Space weather observation and mapping
 - Effects of radiation and microgravity on human cells
 - South-pole mineral deposits and extraction
- Who became the first non-American to leave Earth's orbit on Artemis II?
 - Victor Glover
 - Christina Koch
 - Reid Wiseman
 - Jeremy Hansen
- Which mission made India the first country to land near the lunar south pole?
 - Chandrayaan-1
 - Chandrayaan-2
 - Chandrayaan-3
 - LUPEX
- What was the function of the SHAPE payload on Chandrayaan-3?
 - To drill lunar rock layers
 - To test rover wheel movement
 - To study Earth's spectro-polarimetric signatures
 - To measure human radiation exposure
- Which mission was the first successful lunar landing by a commercial company?
 - Surveyor 1
 - SLIM MS1
 - Blue Moon MK1
 - IM-1 Odysseus
- Which major scientific result is associated with Chandrayaan-1?
 - First soft landing near the Moon's south pole
 - First far-side landing near the Moon's south pole
 - Detection of water and hydroxyl on the Moon
 - Return of lunar soil samples
- Which country is widely expected to establish the first permanent Moon base?
 - Russia
 - China
 - India
 - Japan
- What do the Artemis Accords provide?
 - A framework for international lunar cooperation
 - A ban on private space companies
 - A replacement for national space laws
 - A permanent ISS membership rule
- Which mission first achieved a survivable soft landing on the Moon?
 - Apollo 11
 - Surveyor 1
 - Luna 16
 - Luna 9
- Who became the first woman to travel to the Moon's vicinity on Artemis II?
 - Reid Wiseman

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- (b) Victor Glover
- (c) Christina Koch
- (d) Jeremy Hansen

15. Which of the following best describes China's

- space programme?
- (a) It is mainly private-sector driven
 - (b) It is entirely State-sponsored
 - (c) It has no human-spaceflight capability
 - (d) It focuses only on Venus missions

SOLUTIONS

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

4 Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026

IN FOCUS

- The **Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026** was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 27 March 2026, passed by the Lok Sabha on 1 April 2026, and passed by the Rajya Sabha on 2 April 2026, receiving approval from both Houses of Parliament under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- The Bill marks a significant expansion of India's decriminalisation exercise, amending 784 provisions across 79 Central Acts administered by 23 Ministries, and seeking to rationalise more than 1,000 offences by removing minor violations from the criminal justice framework.
- The legislation builds upon the earlier **Jan Vishwas Act, 2023**, which had amended 183 provisions across 42 Central Acts, and reflects the Government's stated commitment to advancing Ease of Doing Business and Ease of Living through a trust-based governance framework.

Historical Context and the Need for Regulatory Rationalisation

India's pre-reform regulatory landscape was characterised by extensive overcriminalisation: a total of 7,305 criminal offences existed across 370 Central laws, of which approximately 5,333 carried provisions for imprisonment.

More than 74% of these laws were regulatory in nature rather than core criminal statutes, meaning that the machinery of criminal prosecution including the threat of imprisonment was applied disproportionately to procedural and technical defaults by individuals and businesses.

This regulatory environment created a high compliance burden, instilled fear of criminal prosecution for minor lapses, and generated significant inefficiencies within the criminal justice system, including court congestion and delays in adjudication.

The Jan Vishwas Act, 2023 the predecessor legislation amended 183 provisions across 42 Central Acts administered by 19 Ministries and Departments, covering domains including environment, agriculture, media, industry, trade, information technology, copyright, motor vehicles, cinematography, and food safety; its central objective was to decriminalise minor offences that did not involve harm to public interest or national security, replacing them with civil penalties or administrative actions.

The 2023 Act introduced the principle of compounding of offences in several provisions, allowing offenders to settle cases by paying a specified amount without undergoing a court trial, and provided for periodic revision of fines and penalties every three years with an increase of 10% of the minimum amount.

The 2023 Act also removed all offences and penalties under the Indian Post Office Act, 1898, which had been identified as obsolete and irrelevant in the present context.

Concerns raised about the 2023 Act included that replacing imprisonment with fines or penalties did not constitute full decriminalisation, with experts characterising it as a "quasi-decriminalisation"; additionally, concerns were raised about the technical competence of adjudicating officers appointed under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, to conduct legal proceedings.

Legislative Architecture and Scope of the 2026 Bill

- The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, amends 784 provisions across 79 Central Acts administered by 23 Ministries; of these, 717 provisions have been **decriminalised** to promote Ease of Doing Business, and 67 provisions have been amended to facilitate Ease of Living.
- The Bill rationalises a total of 1,018 offences, with the specific breakdown comprising 805 offences that are decriminalised outright, 125 obsolete or redundant offences that are omitted entirely, 35 offences that are made compoundable (allowing settlement through payment and thereby reducing litigation), and 53 offences where penalties are reduced or revised, including removal of disproportionate punishments such as life imprisonment.
- The legislation was shaped through a consultative process involving High-Level Committee meetings under NITI Aayog and a Select Committee process comprising 49 sittings with industry leaders and subject-matter experts.
- The sectors covered by the Bill span a wide range, including industry and business laws such as the Tea Act, the Coir Industry Act, and the Legal Metrology Act; municipal governance laws including the Delhi Development Act and the Cantonments Act; infrastructure and transport laws including the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, and the Coastal Shipping Act; and several colonial-era statutes including the Cattle Trespass Act, the Livestock Importation Act, and the Indian Succession Act.
- Additional laws targeted by the Bill include the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and statutes governing real estate, coal, mining, shipping, petroleum, power, railways, copyright, and patents.
- Key laws covered in the Jan Vishwas Act, 2023 included: the Indian Forest Act, 1927; the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981; the Information Technology Act, 2000; the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; the Copyright Act, 1957; the Patents Act, 1970; the Railways Act, 1989; and the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

Core Features and Structural Changes Introduced by the 2026 Bill

A central conceptual shift introduced by the 2026 Bill is the formal distinction between fines and penalties: fines are imposed by courts through criminal proceedings, while penalties are civil in nature and imposed by **adjudicating officers** appointed under the respective Ministries or Departments; this distinction removes minor offences from the criminal justice system entirely.



The Bill introduces a graded enforcement mechanism, replacing immediate criminal sanctions with a progressive framework comprising warnings for first-time violations, improvement notices to allow corrective action, and escalation to civil penalties or sanctions only for repeated or wilful non-compliance; some laws now follow a structured sequence of notice, suspension, and cancellation for continued non-compliance.



The mandate to appoint adjudicating officers and establish **Appellate Authorities** under the Bill is intended to streamline dispute resolution, reduce the burden on courts, and enable faster resolution of minor compliance issues without requiring court intervention.



The shift from criminal penalties particularly imprisonment to graded monetary penalties and civil enforcement is presented as a move toward a more facilitative regulatory framework, with strict criminal action reserved for serious violations affecting public health, safety, or national security.



The categories of offences addressed by the Bill include: outdated and minor offences such as trivial public nuisances and obsolete provisions from colonial-era laws; general contraventions under omnibus criminal provisions; procedural defaults such as filing delays (for example, failure to furnish returns under the Tea Act now attracts civil penalties); and vaguely defined obstruction-related offences that are rationalised or removed.



Under the Motor Vehicles Act, first violations may now attract warnings instead of criminal action, illustrating the operationalisation of the warning-first principle.

Amendments Across Health Sector Legislation

- The 2026 Bill amends provisions across several key health-related statutes, including the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940; the Pharmacy Act, 1948; the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006; the Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010; and the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions Act, 2021.
- Under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, an **adjudication mechanism** has been introduced for violations under Section 27A(ii) and Section 28A; this ensures that minor violations involving cosmetics other than spurious or adulterated products will not require court intervention and can instead be resolved through a civil penalty framework.
- For the first time under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, the legislation provides for the appointment of adjudicating authorities by both the Central Government and State Governments, along with a defined process comprising issuance of show cause notices, provision for personal hearing, and an appellate

mechanism.

- Violations such as non-maintenance of statutory documents or non-submission of information previously punishable through court-imposed fines or imprisonment can now be adjudicated through the civil penalty mechanism, directly benefiting the cosmetics industry by allowing structured and predictable handling of procedural lapses.
- Amendments to the Pharmacy Act, 1948 modernise penalty provisions and enhance accountability through increased financial penalties for non-compliance, and align the Act with updated legal frameworks.
- Under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, provisions have been streamlined to strengthen enforcement while ensuring penalties are proportionate to the nature of the offence.
- The Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010 has been updated to emphasise monetary penalties for non-compliance in cases where deficiencies do not pose immediate risks to patient safety, encouraging corrective action without criminal proceedings.
- The National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions Act, 2021 has been strengthened to ensure compliance with professional standards, with penalties designed to deter violations while maintaining proportionality.

The Trust-Based Regulatory Approach: Principles and Framework

- A **trust-based regulatory** approach is a governance model under which the government assumes that individuals and businesses will act in good faith and comply with law, rather than treating them as potential offenders by default; it focuses on reducing unnecessary legal burdens and promoting voluntary compliance while retaining strict penalties for serious violations.
- This model represents a conceptual shift from a policing mindset which imposes strict penalties for minor violations to a partnership model that encourages voluntary compliance with reasonable and proportionate consequences for lapses.
- The key features of a trust-based regulatory approach include: decriminalisation of minor offences by replacing imprisonment with fines for procedural or technical violations; risk-based enforcement that reserves strict action for serious violations such as fraud or safety hazards; simplified compliance requirements that reduce bureaucratic red tape; self-declaration and transparency mechanisms that trust businesses and citizens to comply, with audits reserved for high-risk cases; and reduced government interference to minimise harassment and rent-seeking by officials.
- The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026 operationalises this model at scale by standardising the shift from criminal to civil enforcement across 79 Central Acts, ensuring consistency, predictability, and proportionality across different regulatory domains.
- The involvement of 23 Ministries in implementing the reforms reflects a whole-of-government approach toward improving the regulatory ecosystem, ensuring that decriminalisation is comprehensive, coordinated, and impactful rather than sector-specific.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following Ministries is associated with the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026?
 - (a) Ministry of Commerce and Industry
 - (b) Ministry of Home Affairs
 - (c) Ministry of Finance
 - (d) Ministry of Law and Justice
2. Which of the following correctly states the number of provisions amended by the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026?
 - (a) 183 provisions
 - (b) 717 provisions
 - (c) 784 provisions
 - (d) 1,018 provisions
3. Which of the following correctly states how many Central Acts are amended by the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026?
 - (a) 42 Central Acts
 - (b) 79 Central Acts
 - (c) 23 Central Acts
 - (d) 370 Central Acts
4. Which of the following correctly states the total number of offences rationalised by the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026?
 - (a) 784
 - (b) 717
 - (c) 805
 - (d) 1,018
5. What number of offences under the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026 are omitted as obsolete or redundant?
 - (a) 53
 - (b) 125
 - (c) 35
 - (d) 805
6. Which of the following correctly states the number of offences made compoundable under the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026?
 - (a) 53
 - (b) 67
 - (c) 35
 - (d) 125
7. Which of the following correctly identifies the number of provisions decriminalised to promote Ease of Doing Business under the 2026 Bill?
 - (a) 805
 - (b) 717
 - (c) 784
 - (d) 67
8. Which of the following correctly identifies what fines are under the framework introduced by the 2026 Bill?
 - (a) Civil sanctions imposed by departments
 - (b) Amounts imposed by courts through criminal proceedings
 - (c) Warnings issued for first violations
 - (d) Settlements made without any authority
9. Which of the following correctly describes the first step in the graded enforcement mechanism for many first-time violations under the 2026 Bill?
 - (a) Immediate imprisonment
 - (b) Direct licence cancellation
 - (c) Mandatory court trial
 - (d) Warning for first-time violation
10. Which of the following Acts had all offences and penalties removed under the Jan Vishwas Act, 2023?
 - (a) Indian Forest Act, 1927
 - (b) Railways Act, 1989
 - (c) Copyright Act, 1957
 - (d) Indian Post Office Act, 1898
11. Which of the following Acts is specifically mentioned as amended in the health sector under the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026?
 - (a) Mental Healthcare Act, 2017
 - (b) Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971
 - (c) Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010
 - (d) Transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994
12. Which of the following sections of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 are specifically mentioned as brought under the adjudication mechanism?
 - (a) Section 27A(ii) and Section 28A
 - (b) Section 10A and Section 11B

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- (c) Section 3 and Section 4
(d) Section 18 and Section 19

13. Which of the following bodies is mentioned as involved in shaping the 2026 Bill through High-Level

- Committee meetings?
(a) Finance Commission
(b) Law Commission of India
(c) NITI Aayog
(d) Election Commission of India

SOLUTIONS

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

5 Custodial deaths in India - Sattankulam case developments

IN FOCUS

- The First Additional District and Sessions Court in Madurai convicted all nine police personnel accused in the Sattankulam custodial death case on 23 March 2026, finding them guilty of murder and other offences under the Indian Penal Code (IPC); on 6 April 2026, Judge G. Muthukumaran awarded the **death penalty** to all nine convicted officers, invoking the "rarest of rare" doctrine.
- The convicts were directed to pay ₹1.40 crore as compensation to the family of the victims, trader P. Jayaraj (58) and his son J. Benicks (31), who died following custodial torture at the Sattankulam Police Station in Thoothukudi district, Tamil Nadu, in June 2020.
- The judgment, delivered in a 450-page ruling, has reignited public debate on custodial violence accountability in India and renewed scrutiny of sentencing jurisprudence, particularly the structural limitation created by the Supreme Court's ruling in *Union of India v. V. Sriharan* (2015) commonly referred to as the "Sriharan vacuum."
- The case will now be reviewed by the Madras High Court, which must confirm the death sentence under mandatory criminal procedure, irrespective of whether the convicts choose to appeal.

The Incident: What Transpired in June 2020

- On 18 June 2020 at night, workers near a shop in Sattankulam were waiting to receive their wages; the police verbally abused them and directed them to leave; Jayaraj, upon hearing of the verbal abuse from the workers, asked them to remain a few more minutes, and this information was subsequently relayed to other police personnel by a head constable.
- On 19 June 2020 at approximately 7:30 p.m., Jayaraj was picked up from his son Benicks's mobile phone sales and service showroom near the Kamaraj statue, purportedly for violating COVID-19 lockdown rules; the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) investigation subsequently determined that the traders had not, in fact, violated any lockdown norms.
- On seeing his father being taken away, Benicks rushed to the Sattankulam Police Station to appeal for his father's release and objected to his father being beaten; following an altercation, both men were wrongfully confined at the station, and both were subjected to brutal torture throughout the night of 19-20 June 2020 by the police personnel.
- The CBI found that the father and son were made to wipe the blood from their own wounds, and the next morning, a sanitation worker of the station was made to clean blood from the floor to destroy evidence; a false case was registered against the two by the policemen.
- On 20 June 2020, the traders were taken to Sattankulam Government Hospital for a medical examination, their blood-soaked clothes were changed, and a "fit for remand" certificate was obtained despite their severe injuries; blood-stained clothes were dumped in the hospital's dustbin, and the traders were subsequently produced before the Sattankulam Judicial Magistrate and remanded in judicial custody, lodged in Kovilpatti



Sub-Jail.

- On 22 June 2020, Benicks suffered an uncontrollable haemorrhage, lost consciousness, and died at Kovilpatti Government Hospital; post-mortem findings revealed 13 external injuries, including serious contusions and lacerations.
- On 23 June 2020, Jayaraj complained of chest pain and also died at the hospital; post-mortem findings revealed 17 injuries reflecting marks of repeated assault; medical findings confirmed that both men died from shock due to multiple injuries, not from natural causes as initially suggested by police.
- A mobile phone video that circulated widely showing Jayaraj pleading for water in a weakened voice amplified nationwide outrage.

Judicial Scrutiny and High Court Directions

- On 24 June 2020, a Division Bench of Justices P.N. Prakash and B. Pugalendhi of the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court initiated suo motu proceedings, ordered a judicial inquiry, directed the CB-CID to take over the investigation until the CBI formally assumed charge, and urged the public to remain calm.
- The Kovilpatti Judicial Magistrate's inquiry report revealed that the Sattankulam police failed to cooperate, created an intimidating atmosphere, delayed submission of documents, and had calibrated the CCTV system to overwrite daily records; there was no footage of the day of the incident despite adequate storage capacity.
- A woman head constable testified that the traders were tortured throughout the night, and the High Court ensured she was provided adequate protection; the court took into account her statement, the medical report, and the Magistrate's report to find prima facie material to book the accused for murder.
- The High Court initiated contempt proceedings against Additional Superintendent of Police D. Kumar, Deputy Superintendent of Police C. Prathapan, and constable Maharajan for non-cooperation with the Kovilpatti Judicial Magistrate; the proceedings were subsequently closed after the officers tendered unconditional apologies.
- The High Court directed the Thoothukudi Collector to depute revenue officials to take control of the police station and secure relevant materials, and also directed the forensic team to collect and protect evidence for handover to the CBI.
- The then-AIADMK government transferred the probe to the CBI; in March 2021, the High Court directed the trial court to complete the trial within six months, while observing that "justice delayed is justice denied" and "justice hurried is justice buried."
- The High Court also directed the State government to allocate funds for police well-being programmes, recommending the possible replication of the 'Magizhchi' programme launched by Chennai City Police across other districts of Tamil Nadu.



CBI Investigation and the Chargesheet

- The CBI submitted a chargesheet on 25 September 2020 and a supplementary chargesheet on 12 August 2022 before the Chief Judicial Magistrate in Madurai, charging nine police personnel; the tenth accused, Special Sub-Inspector Pauldurai, died during the trial after contracting COVID-19.

- The nine accused named in the chargesheet were: Inspector S. Sridhar (prime accused and Station House Officer of Sattankulam Police Station); Sub-Inspectors P. Raghu Ganesh and K. Balakrishnan; Head Constables S. Murugan and A. Saamidurai; and Constables M. Muthuraj, S. Chelladurai, X. Thomas Francis, and S. Veilumuthu.
- The CBI chargesheet stated that Jayaraj and Benicks were subjected to brutal torture by the policemen, who knew that such torture was sufficient to cause death; the investigation revealed the torture was executed pursuant to a criminal conspiracy.
- A prime accused, Sridhar, also filed an application before the trial court seeking to turn approver; both the CBI and Jayaraj's wife Selvarani opposed the plea, with the CBI stating he was the main conspirator; the plea was dismissed.
- Key evidence adduced during the trial included: the testimony of the woman head constable who witnessed the night-long torture; CCTV footage from nearby establishments inconsistent with police logs claiming natural deaths; forensic DNA evidence linking bloodstains inside the police station to the victims; and medical findings confirming both men died from shock caused by multiple injuries.
- The CBI examined 105 witnesses over the course of the trial; the Judicial Magistrate was cross-examined over 26 hearings from 16 October 2023 to 2 February 2024, and the Investigating Officer was cross-examined over 21 hearings from 27 March 2024 to 26 September 2024 a pattern the High Court was informed constituted deliberate delay.
- Multiple bail petitions filed by the accused were dismissed by the High Court; all convicts are lodged in Madurai Central Prison.

JUSTICE DELIVERED: The Madurai Custodial Murder Verdict



9 POLICE OFFICERS SENTENCED TO DEATH

Convicted of murder, criminal conspiracy, and destruction of evidence.



A "RAREST OF RARE" CASE

The court applied the *Bachan Singh* threshold, ruling the crime shook the collective conscience of society.



"WHEN PROTECTORS BECOME PREDATORS"

Judge G. Muthukumaran stated the state has a duty to punish such betrayals with the fullest force of law.

₹1.40 CRORE COMPENSATION ORDERED

The court directed the convicts to pay this sum as reparations to the victims' family.



Death Penalty Jurisprudence and the Sriharan Vacuum

- The death penalty in India is constitutionally valid under Article 21, with the Supreme Court holding in *Bachan Singh v. State of Punjab* (1980) that capital punishment is to be awarded only in the "rarest of rare" cases those involving extreme brutality where life imprisonment is considered wholly inadequate.

- Courts are required to consider mitigating factors including background, mental health, and the circumstances of the accused before imposing capital punishment, a principle reaffirmed in *Manoj v. State of Madhya Pradesh* (2022), which empirical studies indicate trial courts frequently fail to adequately apply.
- In *Swamy Shraddananda v. State of Karnataka* (2008), the Supreme Court introduced the concept of fixed-term life imprisonment without remission as an intermediate sentencing option, bridging the gap between ordinary life imprisonment and the death penalty.
- In *Union of India v. V. Sriharan* (2015), a Constitution Bench held that only High Courts and the Supreme Court constitutional courts can impose such special sentences involving life imprisonment beyond statutory remission limits; **trial courts** (Sessions Courts) cannot award life imprisonment beyond those limits.
- This ruling created the structural limitation described by legal experts as the "Sriharan vacuum": trial courts face a binary choice between an effective 14-year life sentence (owing to remission under Section 433A CrPC) and the death penalty, with no ability to impose a proportionate intermediate sentence such as 20 or 30 years without remission.
- The Judge in the *Sattankulam* case explicitly acknowledged this constraint, noting the inadequacy of 14 years but the inability to impose a longer fixed-term; he consequently opted for the death penalty.
- The Supreme Court itself acknowledged this sentencing gap in *Kiran v. State of Karnataka* (2025), noting that trial courts cannot bridge it.
- Higher courts routinely exercise the intermediate sentencing option; all commutations by the Supreme Court in 2025 resulted in life imprisonment without remission.
- Following conviction, the Madras High Court will suo motu seek confirmation of the death sentence as mandated by criminal procedure; the convicts also have the right to challenge the sentence before the High Court within 90 days, with the possibility of a Special Leave Petition before the Supreme Court thereafter, potentially extending the appellate process by two to three years.
- Should the death penalty be upheld by the Supreme Court, the convicts retain the right to file mercy petitions before the Governor of Tamil Nadu and the President of India.

Custodial Violence in India: Definition, History, and Scale

- **Custodial violence** is not defined in any Indian statute; the term combines custody meaning lawful detention or safekeeping with violence, encompassing physical or psychological harm including torture, assault, harassment, humiliation, rape, and death inflicted upon a person held in police or judicial custody.
- Under the *Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita* (BNSS), 2023, custody is classified into police custody (detention for up to 15 days for interrogation) and judicial custody (detention in prison until bail or completion of sentence).
- In ancient India, Kautilya's *Arthashastra* described severe state punishments including mutilation, burning, and attacks by animals as part of the formal system of law enforcement and punishment.
- During the Medieval period, Shariat-guided corporal punishments and harsh physical enforcement remained routine features of law enforcement under Mughal rule.
- During the British colonial period, the Police Act, 1861 created a force designed primarily for repression; political prisoners and ordinary detainees were routinely beaten, starved, or subjected to severe physical punishment, and the Prisons Act, 1894, which granted wide powers to jail authorities, continues to influence prison administration.
- Following Independence, India largely retained its colonial-era policing and prison systems with minimal reform; the old mindset of control and coercion persisted due to outdated laws, weak accountability, and poor institutional modernisation.
- The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) received 2,346 new intimations concerning deaths in judicial custody and 160 intimations of deaths in police custody during 2023-2024, illustrating the continuing scale of the problem; convictions remain rare, often in the single digits, despite thousands of custodial deaths recorded over recent decades.

Constitutional, Legal, and International Safeguards Against Custodial Violence

Constitutional Provisions

- Article 21 of the Constitution guarantees the right to life and personal liberty, which the Supreme Court has interpreted to include freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.
- Article 20(1) prohibits conviction for an act that was not an offence under law at the time it was committed, thereby prohibiting excessive or retrospective punishment.
- Article 20(3) protects an accused from being compelled to self-incriminate, safeguarding against coerced or forced confessions obtained through torture or pressure.

Statutory Framework

- The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023 penalises those who intentionally cause hurt or grievous hurt to extract confessions or information through violence or coercion.
- The **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita** (BNSS), 2023 mandates that arrests and detentions follow valid reasons and documented procedures.
- The Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA), 2023 invalidates confessions made under inducement, threat, coercion, or promise, rendering such evidence inadmissible.

International Safeguards

- The United Nations Charter, 1945 mandates that prisoners be treated with dignity; India ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 1979, affirming that fundamental rights and freedoms remain protected during detention.
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), 1948 protects individuals from torture, cruel treatment, and enforced disappearances, and ensures the right to dignity and personal security.

Judicial and Institutional Directives

- In *D.K. Basu v. State of West Bengal* (1997), the Supreme Court laid down comprehensive guidelines for arrest and detention, barred third-degree interrogation methods, and held the State accountable for custodial violence by public servants a landmark ruling that established the baseline accountability framework for custodial conduct.
- In *Nambi Narayanan v. Siby Mathews and Others* (2018), the Supreme Court awarded compensation for immense humiliation caused by wrongful arrest and harassment, underscoring the severe psychological harm of custodial abuse and false prosecution.
- The Law Commission of India, in its 273rd Report (2017), urged India to ratify the United Nations Convention Against Torture (UNCAT) and enact a dedicated statute criminalising torture as a distinct offence under domestic law.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following courts must mandatorily confirm the death sentence awarded in the Sattankulam custodial death case?
 - (a) Supreme Court of India
 - (b) First Additional District and Sessions Court, Madurai
 - (c) Judicial Magistrate Court, Kovilpatti
 - (d) Madras High Court
2. Which of the following legal doctrines did the trial court invoke while awarding the death penalty to the nine convicted police personnel?
 - (a) Doctrine of proportionality
 - (b) Rarest of rare doctrine
 - (c) Basic structure doctrine
 - (d) Plea bargaining doctrine
3. Who among the following was identified as the prime accused and Station House Officer of Sattankulam Police Station?
 - (a) P. Raghu Ganesh
 - (b) S. Sridhar
 - (c) A. Saamidurai
 - (d) X. Thomas Francis
4. Which of the following prison facilities lodged the convicted police personnel after their convictions?
 - (a) Kovilpatti Sub-Jail
 - (b) Thoothukudi District Jail
 - (c) Puzhal Central Prison
 - (d) Madurai Central Prison
5. Which of the following courts delivered the conviction in the Sattankulam custodial death case?
 - (a) First Additional District and Sessions Court, Madurai
 - (b) First Additional District and Sessions Court Madras
 - (c) First Chief Judicial Magistrate Court, Madurai
 - (d) First Additional District and Sessions Court, Mumbai
6. Which of the following was the profession of P. Jayaraj and J. Benicks as identified in the case record?
 - (a) Farmers
 - (b) Teachers
 - (c) Lawyers
 - (d) Traders
7. Which of the following agencies took over the investigation after the Madras High Court's initial intervention and the State government's transfer order?
 - (a) CB-CID
 - (b) CBI
 - (c) NHRC
 - (d) SVC
8. Which of the following evidence types linked bloodstains inside the police station directly to the victims?
 - (a) Call detail records
 - (b) Revenue inspection records
 - (c) Forensic DNA evidence
 - (d) Traffic surveillance logs
9. Which of the following judicial officers conducted the inquiry whose report exposed police non-cooperation and CCTV irregularities?
 - (a) Chief Judicial Magistrate, Madurai
 - (b) Kovilpatti Judicial Magistrate
 - (c) Sessions Judge, Madurai
 - (d) Revenue Divisional Officer, Thoothukudi
10. Which of the following programme did the Madras High Court suggest could be replicated across other districts for police well-being?
 - (a) Magizhchi
 - (b) Anandam
 - (c) Suraksha
 - (d) Nambikkai
11. Which of the following offences was specifically included in the conviction of the nine accused police personnel?
 - (a) Extortion activities
 - (b) Kidnapping charges
 - (c) Criminal conspiracy
 - (d) Sedition proceedings
12. Which of the following Supreme Court cases introduced fixed-term life imprisonment without remission as an intermediate sentencing option?
 - (a) Swamy Shraddananda v. State of Karnataka
 - (b) Union of India v. V. Sriharan
 - (c) Manoj v. State of Madhya Pradesh
 - (d) Kiran v. State of Karnataka
13. Who among the following witnessed the night-

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

long torture and later gave crucial testimony supporting the prosecution case?

- (a) A sanitation worker
- (b) A woman head constable
- (c) The revenue inspector
- (d) The prison doctor

14. Which of the following court acknowledged that trial courts cannot bridge the sentencing gap created by the Sriharan ruling?

- (a) Madras High Court

(b) Delhi High Court

(c) Sessions Court, Madurai

(d) Supreme Court

15. Which of the following statutory provisions did the trial judge identify as creating the possibility of release in about 14 years through remission?

(a) Section 302 IPC

(b) Section 433A CrPC

(c) Article 21 of the Constitution

(d) Section 164 CrPC

SOLUTIONS

1. (d),

2. (b),

3. (b),

4. (d),

5. (a),

6. (d),

7. (b),

8. (c),

9. (b),

10. (a),

11. (c),

12. (a),

13. (b),

14. (d),

15. (b)

6 India's 1,000-km Quantum Communication Breakthrough

IN FOCUS

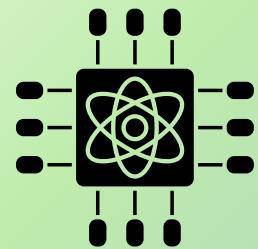
- Under the **National Quantum Mission (NQM)**, a 1,000-kilometre quantum communication network among the longest such deployments in the world was successfully demonstrated within less than two years of the mission's launch in October 2024, marking rapid progress against the mission's eight-year target of achieving 2,000 km.
- The breakthrough was achieved using indigenous technology developed by QNu Labs, a startup supported under the mission focused on quantum-safe cybersecurity solutions, and was described by Department of Science and Technology (DST) Secretary Dr. Abhay Karandikar as "a landmark advancement in secure quantum communication," noting that it reflects progress ahead of envisaged timelines.
- Union Minister for Science and Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh was briefed on the development during a review of DST on 8 April 2026, during which he underscored the need for transparency, structured evaluation, and wider outreach to improve awareness and participation in government-backed research and development funding.
- The mission has also expanded its startup support to 17 deep-tech ventures by adding nine new companies, and the Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) funding framework has seen significant uptake, with the Technology Development Board (TDB) receiving over 100 proposals and the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) receiving nearly 200 applications.

1,000-km Quantum Communication Network

- The network represents one of the longest **Quantum Key Distribution (QKD)** deployments globally since the mission's launch, using principles of quantum mechanics to generate and share encryption keys that are virtually impossible to intercept or breach even by quantum computers.
- The development is expected to strengthen secure communication capabilities across highly sensitive sectors, including defence, financial systems, and critical national infrastructure, while advancing India's broader push toward a secure digital ecosystem.
- The deployed technology is designed to operate across challenging terrains, making it viable for complex underwater and underground networks and significantly expanding its potential civilian and strategic applications.

Quantum Technology: Principles and Domains

- Quantum technology is a field of science and engineering that applies the principles of quantum mechanics the branch of physics governing the behaviour of matter and energy at the atomic and subatomic level to develop new computing, communication, sensing, and materials capabilities.



- Two foundational quantum phenomena underpin the field:
 - **Quantum superposition:** The ability of a quantum system to exist in multiple states simultaneously; while classical computers store data as bits (ones and zeros), quantum computers use qubits that can exist as one, zero, or both simultaneously, creating a practically infinite range of possibilities for fast, simultaneous, and parallel calculations.
 - **Quantum entanglement:** The condition in which two members of a pair of qubits exist in a single shared quantum state, such that changing the properties of one instantaneously affects the other; this property is used to create secure encryption keys in quantum cryptography, and any eavesdropper attempting to intercept a transmission disturbs the entangled state, making the intrusion immediately detectable.

Advantages of Quantum Technology

- Quantum computers are substantially faster than classical computers and have the capability to solve complex problems currently beyond the reach of conventional systems.
- Quantum encryption techniques grounded in the laws of physics rather than computational difficulty are significantly more secure than traditional encryption methods and are inherently resistant to future quantum computers.
- Quantum communication networks can transmit information faster and more securely than traditional networks, with the potential for completely interception-proof communication.
- Quantum machine learning algorithms can enable more efficient and accurate training of Artificial Intelligence (AI) models.
- Quantum sensors can detect extremely small changes in the environment, making them valuable for medical diagnostics, environmental monitoring, and geological exploration.

Quantum Key Distribution: Mechanism and Strategic Value

- QKD is a secure communication technology that uses the principles of quantum mechanics to generate and share encryption keys between two parties, ensuring that data exchanged cannot be intercepted or hacked even by quantum computers; its foundational promise is the detection of any third party attempting to eavesdrop on the key exchange.
- The security of QKD rests on two key quantum principles:
 - The No-Cloning Theorem: An unknown quantum state cannot be copied, so an eavesdropper cannot duplicate photons without altering them and triggering detection.
 - The Observer Effect: Measuring quantum particles disturbs them, meaning any attempt to monitor the key creates detectable changes that immediately alert the communicating parties.
- QKD uses qubits encoded on photons and transmitted through optical fibres via total internal reflection to securely exchange encryption keys; unlike classical bits, qubits are highly sensitive to interference, and any eavesdropping disrupts them, making the network tamper-evident.
- QKD enables distant users to create a shared secret key authenticated through classical cryptography; the resulting encryption is grounded in quantum laws rather than computational difficulty, making it future-proof against advances in computing power.
- QKD provides provable, information-theoretic security by detecting any intrusion and allowing compromised keys to be discarded before they can be exploited; this addresses the "harvest now, decrypt later" threat, under which adversaries intercept and store encrypted data with the intent of decrypting it once sufficiently powerful computers become available.
- Indigenous development of QKD enhances digital sovereignty, builds trust in national digital ecosystems, and creates economic opportunities in critical emerging technologies.

National Quantum Mission: Origin, Structure, and Targets

- The NQM was approved by the Union Cabinet in April 2023 and formally launched in October 2024; it is implemented by the DST under the Ministry of Science and Technology with a total budget outlay of ₹6,003 crore for the eight-year period from 2023-24 to 2030-31.
- The mission aims to seed, nurture, and scale up scientific and industrial R&D and create a vibrant, innovative ecosystem in quantum technology; it is one of nine key initiatives under the Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council.

- With the launch of this mission, India became the seventh country to have a dedicated national quantum mission, joining the United States, Austria, Finland, France, Canada, and China; currently, R&D in quantum technologies is being pursued by all six of these countries alongside India.
- The mission's key targets across its four focus domains are:
 - Quantum Computing: Developing intermediate-scale quantum computers with 50-100 physical qubits within 5 years and 50-1,000 physical qubits within 8 years, using platforms such as superconducting and photonic technology; led by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru.
 - Quantum Communication: Establishing satellite-based secure quantum communications between ground stations over 2,000 km within India and with other countries; developing inter-city QKD networks over 2,000 km; and building multi-node quantum networks with quantum memories; led by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras in collaboration with the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), New Delhi.
 - Quantum Sensing and Metrology: Developing highly sensitive magnetometers and atomic clocks for precision timing, communications, and navigation with applications in GPS, defence, and aviation; led by IIT Bombay.
 - Quantum Materials and Devices: Supporting the design and synthesis of advanced quantum materials, including superconductors, novel semiconductors, and topological materials, for the fabrication of quantum devices; coordinated by IIT Delhi.

- To build research infrastructure for these objectives, the mission has established four dedicated **Thematic Hubs** (T-Hubs) at top academic and national R&D institutions, operating on a Hub-Spoke-Spike model to ensure systematic collaboration between academia, industry, and research organisations.



Startup Support, Funding Mechanisms, and the Deep-Tech Ecosystem



- The NQM actively funds and incubates deep-tech startups; the mission initially supported 8 ventures and has since expanded support to 9 new startups, bringing the total to 17 supported deep-tech ventures as of April 2026.
- The nine newly supported startups include Sense-XT, ORVISSEMI, QuBeats, Quantum AI Global, bloq, GDQ Labs, Quantum Biosciences, Bumble Bee Instruments Pvt. Ltd., and SAS Qute Electronics Pvt. Ltd., working across areas including quantum biosensors for disease detection, photon sensing technologies, quantum positioning systems, atomic memory, and precision electronic systems.
- QNu Labs, an earlier supported startup focused on quantum-safe cybersecurity solutions, was the entity whose indigenous technology enabled the 1,000-km QKD demonstration.
- The government is utilising new financial instruments including Optionally Convertible Debt (OCD), which supports startups with capital without requiring immediate equity dilution, and is designed to attract private investment alongside public funding.
- The RDI funding framework has TDB and BIRAC functioning as second-level fund managers; TDB received over 100 proposals within two months of issuing a call, with six companies recommended by the investment committee being taken forward; BIRAC received nearly 200 applications under recent calls covering projects in cancer research, gene therapy, and bio-manufacturing.

Strategic Significance and Broader Policy Context

- The NQM is positioned as a key enabler of national priorities including Digital India, Make in India, Skill India, Stand-up India, Start-up India, and Self-reliant India (Aatmanirbhar Bharat), as well as India's commitments under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Wide-scale applications of quantum technologies are expected across healthcare and diagnostics, defence, energy, and **data security**, contributing to India's digital sovereignty and strategic autonomy.
- The mission supports the indigenous development of quantum-based computers that are designed to be significantly more powerful than classical systems and capable of solving highly complex problems in a secure manner, reducing reliance on imported technologies and foreign patents.
- The government seeks to ensure both innovation and scalability in emerging sectors including 6G communications, advanced manufacturing, space technologies, and biotechnology, with quantum technologies identified as a key strategic frontier alongside these domains.
- Officials highlighted the need for coordinated communication strategies to amplify key scientific achievements, including the quantum milestone, and to more prominently position India's emerging technology ecosystem on the global stage.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following correctly identifies the technology used to achieve the 1,000-km secure communication network?
 - (a) Quantum Sensors
 - (b) Quantum Computing
 - (c) Quantum Key Distribution
 - (d) Quantum Annealing
2. Which of the following correctly identifies the startup responsible for developing the indigenous quantum communication technology?
 - (a) Quantum AI Global
 - (b) QNu Labs
 - (c) ORVISSEMI
 - (d) GDQ Labs
3. Which of the following correctly identifies the principle that allows a quantum system to exist in multiple states simultaneously?
 - (a) Quantum superposition
 - (b) Quantum tunnelling
 - (c) Quantum coherence
 - (d) Quantum collapse
4. Which of the following correctly identifies the phenomenon where two qubits share a single quantum state?
 - (a) Quantum interference
 - (b) Quantum coherence
 - (c) Quantum tunnelling
 - (d) Quantum entanglement
5. Which of the following correctly identifies the principle stating that an unknown quantum state cannot be copied?
 - (a) No-Cloning Theorem
 - (b) Observer Effect
 - (c) Heisenberg Principle
 - (d) Superposition Principle
6. Which of the following correctly describes the effect of measuring a quantum system during transmission?
 - (a) It strengthens the signal
 - (b) It disturbs the system
 - (c) It duplicates the data
 - (d) It accelerates computation
7. Which of the following correctly identifies the type of particles used in QKD transmission?
 - (a) Electrons
 - (b) Photons
 - (c) Neutrons
 - (d) Protons
8. Which of the following correctly identifies a key application of quantum sensors?
 - (a) Currency printing
 - (b) Satellite launching
 - (c) Environmental monitoring
 - (d) Data storage
9. Which of the following correctly identifies the organisation implementing the National Quantum Mission?
 - (a) National Institution for Transforming India body
 - (b) Department of Science and Technology
 - (c) Indian Space Research Organisation agency body
 - (d) Defence Research and Development Organisation body
10. Which of the following correctly identifies the institution leading the quantum computing domain under the mission?
 - (a) IISc Bengaluru
 - (b) IIT Bombay
 - (c) IIT Delhi
 - (d) IIT Madras
11. Which of the following correctly identifies the institution leading quantum communication under the mission?
 - (a) IIT Bombay
 - (b) IIT Delhi
 - (c) IISc Bengaluru
 - (d) IIT Madras
12. Which of the following correctly identifies the institution leading quantum sensing and metrology?
 - (a) IIT Madras
 - (b) IISc Bengaluru
 - (c) IIT Bombay
 - (d) IIT Delhi
13. Which of the following correctly identifies the institution coordinating quantum materials and devices?
 - (a) IIT Bombay
 - (b) IIT Madras
 - (c) IISc Bengaluru
 - (d) IIT Delhi
14. Which of the following correctly identifies the core structure used to organise research collaboration under the mission?
 - (a) Cluster Model
 - (b) Hub-Spoke-Spike Model
 - (c) Linear Model
 - (d) Centralised Model

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

15. Which of the following correctly identifies the total number of startups supported under the mission after expansion?

- (a) 8
- (b) 17
- (c) 9
- (d) 100

SOLUTIONS

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

7 Jallianwala Bagh Massacre 1919

IN FOCUS

- The nation observed the 107th martyrdom anniversary of the **Jallianwala Bagh** massacre on 13 April 2026, with the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Trust holding a commemoration in memory of those killed by British troops on 13 April 1919 in Amritsar, Punjab.
- President Droupadi Murmu paid tributes in a social media post, stating that the incident instilled a new consciousness and firm resolve for freedom among the Indian people, and expressed confidence that the spirit of patriotism of those martyred would continue to inspire future generations in the cause of national service.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah paid tributes to the martyrs of the massacre; Shah described the event as a historic turning point that ignited the flame of freedom in the hearts of revolutionaries including Bhagat Singh and Udham Singh, and added that the incident exposed the inhuman face of British colonial rule.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh described the sacrifice of those killed as a defining moment in India's freedom struggle that awakened the nation's collective conscience, stating that their courage continues to inspire generations to stand for justice, dignity, and self-respect.

- During World War I (1914-18), the British Government of India enacted a series of emergency powers to combat what it termed subversive activities; at the war's end, widespread expectation among Indians that these measures would be eased and that India would be granted greater political autonomy went largely unmet.
- The **Montagu-Chelmsford Report**, presented to the British Parliament in 1918, did recommend limited local self-government; however, in early 1919 the Government of India passed the legislation that came to be known as the Rowlatt Acts, which effectively extended rather than eased the repressive wartime emergency powers.
- The **Rowlatt Act**, formally known as the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act, 1919, was passed on the basis of the Sedition Committee's recommendations; it authorised the British colonial government to imprison suspected political subversives without trial for up to two years, stripping them of basic legal protections.
- In response to the Rowlatt Act, Mahatma Gandhi organised a nationwide hartal on 6 April 1919 the first all-India mass protest strongly opposing the Act as a "Black Law," a day that consequently came to be known as Black Day.
- Tensions were particularly acute in Punjab; on 9 April 1919, two prominent local nationalist leaders, Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal, were secretly arrested and deported without trial for organising peaceful protests against the Rowlatt Act.



- The arrests sparked violent protests in Amritsar on 10 April 1919, during which soldiers fired upon civilians, buildings were looted and burned, mobs killed several foreign nationals, and a Christian missionary was severely beaten; the British administration subsequently handed control of the city to Brigadier General Reginald Edward Harry Dyer, who effectively imposed martial law and issued a ban on all public gatherings.

Tragedy at Jallianwala Bagh: 13 April 1919



Official Inquiry, British Reaction, and the Hunter Commission

- The Government of India ordered a formal investigation into the incident through the Hunter Commission (officially the Disorders Inquiry Committee), appointed in 1919 to examine the events surrounding the massacre.
- The **Hunter Commission** censured Dyer for his actions and required him to resign from the military; however, it recommended no penal or legal action against him, a conclusion widely condemned by Indian nationalist opinion.
- The Indian National Congress boycotted the Hunter Commission on the grounds that its composition and mandate were inadequate, and constituted its own non-official inquiry committee comprising Mahatma Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, and Abbas Tyabji; the Congress committee condemned the massacre as "a calculated piece of inhumanity."
- Reaction in Britain was sharply divided: many condemned Dyer's actions including Winston Churchill, then Secretary of War, in a speech to the House of Commons in 1920 while the House of Lords praised Dyer, presented him with a sword inscribed with the motto "Saviour of the Punjab," and a large public fund was raised by his sympathisers and presented to him.

High-Profile Renunciations and Protests

- In profound protest against the massacre and its endorsement by British authorities, Bengali poet and Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore renounced the British Knighthood he had received in 1915; Mahatma Gandhi returned his Kaiser-i-Hind medal in a corresponding act of repudiation.
- Sir Chettur Sankaran Nair a prominent Indian nationalist, jurist, and social reformer who had served on the Viceroy's Executive Council and contributed to the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms (1919) resigned from the Viceroy's Council in protest following the massacre; in his 1922 book *Gandhi and Anarchy*, he held Michael O'Dwyer, the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab who had officially endorsed Dyer's actions, responsible for the atrocity.
- Sankaran Nair's position led to a defamation case brought against him in London; although the verdict went against him, his public stand exposed the colonial bias of British judicial and political institutions and strengthened nationalist sentiment across India.

Long-Term Consequences for the Freedom Movement

- Indian outrage over the Punjab massacre, combined with the simultaneously building **Khilafat** issue, provided the immediate political capital for Gandhi to formally launch the Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-1922) his first large-scale and sustained nonviolent protest campaign which thrust him to the forefront of the Indian nationalist struggle and marked a decisive shift in the mass character of the independence movement.
- The trauma of the massacre deeply influenced a younger generation of Indians in northern India; Bhagat Singh, who was a child at the time of the massacre, was profoundly radicalised by the event, which accelerated the development of militant anti-imperialism through organisations such as the **Hindustan Socialist Republican Association** (HSRA).
- In 1940, Udham Singh a survivor of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre assassinated Michael O'Dwyer in London; O'Dwyer was the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab in 1919 who had officially endorsed Dyer's actions, and the assassination was widely viewed as an act of historical retribution.
- The massacre left a permanent scar on Indo-British relations and is widely regarded as a turning point in India's independence struggle, marking the point at which Gandhi committed fully to the cause of Indian nationalism and from which the spirit of the freedom movement gained irreversible momentum.

The Jallianwala Bagh Memorial: Preservation and Remembrance

- The site of the massacre has been converted into a national memorial, considered a monument of national importance, and is administered by the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Trust.
- The memorial houses museum galleries and presents a daily light and sound show narrating the events of the massacre for visitors.
- A wall bearing bullet marks from the shooting of 13 April 1919 has been preserved within the memorial; the Martyrs' Well into which many people are believed to have jumped during the firing in an attempt to escape is also maintained as a site of remembrance.

Brigadier General Reginald Edward Harry Dyer

Identity and Military Position

- Brigadier General Reginald Edward Harry Dyer was a senior officer of the British Indian Army who commanded a detachment comprising Gurkha and Baloch troops in Punjab during the period of unrest that followed the passage of the Rowlatt Act in 1919.
- Following the violent protests that erupted in Amritsar on 10 April 1919, the British administration handed over effective control of the city to Dyer, who imposed martial law and issued a sweeping ban on all public gatherings.



Role in the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

- On the afternoon of 13 April 1919, Dyer arrived at the Jallianwala Bagh an enclosed public garden in Amritsar with only one narrow exit where a crowd of no fewer than 10,000 men, women, and children had gathered, many of them villagers who had come to celebrate the Baisakhi festival and were unaware of his ban on public assemblies.
- Dyer deliberately sealed off the main entrance with his forces and armoured vehicles, thereby leaving the dense, unarmed crowd with no means of escape from the enclosed garden.
- Without issuing any warning or order to disperse, he commanded his troops to open fire on the gathering, and the soldiers reportedly fired approximately 1,650 rounds until their ammunition was exhausted.
- After the firing ceased, Dyer withdrew his troops immediately from the site, leaving the dead and wounded behind without rendering any medical assistance or aid.
- According to one official British report, the massacre resulted in approximately 379 killed and approximately 1,200 wounded, though nationalist estimates placed the death toll significantly higher, with some accounts exceeding 1,000 dead.

Official Inquiry and Censure

- The Government of India ordered a formal investigation into the massacre through the Hunter Commission, officially known as the Disorders Inquiry Committee, which was appointed in 1919 to examine the circumstances surrounding the incident.
- The Hunter Commission censured Dyer for his actions at Jallianwala Bagh and required him to resign from the military; however, it stopped short of recommending any penal or legal action against him, a conclusion that was widely condemned by Indian nationalist opinion.

Reaction in Britain

- Reaction to Dyer's conduct within Britain was sharply divided, with many prominent figures condemning his actions including Winston Churchill, then Secretary of War, who denounced the massacre in a speech to the House of Commons in 1920.
- In contrast, the House of Lords praised Dyer for his actions at Amritsar and presented him with a sword inscribed with the motto "Saviour of the Punjab," while a large public fund was raised by his sympathisers and formally presented to him

Shaheed Udham Singh

Identity and Early Association with the Massacre

- Udham Singh was a survivor of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 13 April 1919, having been present at the site on the day Brigadier General Dyer's troops opened fire on the unarmed crowd gathered to celebrate Baisakhi.
- The trauma of the massacre, along with its formal endorsement by senior British colonial officials, left a profound and lasting impact on Udham Singh and shaped the course of his subsequent political and revolutionary life.

Assassination of Michael O'Dwyer

- In 1940, more than two decades after the massacre, Udham Singh travelled to London and assassinated Michael O'Dwyer, who had served as the Lieutenant



Sardar Udham Singh

Governor of Punjab in 1919 and had officially endorsed Dyer's actions at Jallianwala Bagh.

- The assassination was widely viewed across India as an act of historical retribution for the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, targeting the senior civilian authority who had publicly defended and legitimised the killings.

Place in the Freedom Struggle

- Home Minister Amit Shah, in his tribute on the 107th martyrdom anniversary of the massacre, described the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy as a historic turning point that ignited the flame of freedom in the hearts of revolutionaries including Bhagat Singh and Udham Singh.
- Udham Singh is remembered as a symbol of the militant strand of India's anti-colonial resistance, whose act of retribution exposed the enduring Indian memory of colonial atrocities and reinforced the moral case against British rule in India.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which of the following was the formal name of the Rowlatt Act?
 - Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act, 1919
 - Defence of India Preservation Act, 1917
 - Imperial Security Regulation Act, 1981
 - Sedition Control Act, 1920
- Which of the following leaders were secretly arrested and deported from Amritsar before the massacre?
 - Motilal Nehru and C.R. Das
 - Gandhi and Abbas Tyabji
 - Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal
 - Udham Singh and Bhagat Singh
- Who commanded the troops that opened fire at Jallianwala Bagh?
 - Brigadier General Michael O'Dwyer
 - Brigadier General Winston Churchill
 - Brigadier General Reginald Craddock
 - Brigadier General Reginald Edward Harry Dyer
- Which of the following festivals had drawn many villagers to Amritsar on the day of the massacre?
 - Baisakhi
 - Lohri
 - Diwali
 - Onam
- Which of the following bodies was appointed by the Government of India to investigate the massacre?
 - Sedition Committee
 - Public Safety Committee
 - Hunter Commission
 - Simon Commission
- Who renounced the British Knighthood in protest against the massacre?
 - Mahatma Gandhi
 - Motilal Nehru
 - Chettur Sankaran Nair
 - Rabindranath Tagore
- Which of the following medals was returned by Mahatma Gandhi as an act of protest?
 - Kaiser-i-Hind medal
 - Victoria Cross
 - Indian Service Medal
 - Order of the Star of India
- Which of the following officials was assassinated by Udham Singh in London as retribution for the massacre?
 - Reginald Dyer
 - Lord Chelmsford
 - Michael O'Dwyer
 - Winston Churchill
- Which of the following organisations is specifically linked with the growth of militant anti-imperialism influenced by the massacre?
 - Indian National Congress mobilisation group
 - All India Muslim League mobilisation group
 - Naujawan Bharat Sabha revolutionary group
 - Hindustan Socialist Republican Association
- Which of the following members served on the Indian National Congress's non-official inquiry committee?
 - Michael O'Dwyer
 - Reginald Dyer
 - Mahatma Gandhi
 - Winston Churchill
- Which of the following bodies administers the Jallianwala Bagh memorial today?
 - Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Trust
 - Archaeological Survey of India
 - Punjab Tourism Board
 - National Monuments Authority
- Which of the following preserved features at the memorial is associated with people jumping into it to escape the firing?
 - Memory Gate
 - Shaheed Pillar
 - Remembrance Court
 - Martyrs' Well
- In which of the following books did Sankaran Nair hold Michael O'Dwyer responsible for the atrocity?
 - Hind Swaraj
 - Money and Poverty
 - Gandhi and Anarchy
 - India Divided
- Which of the following British institutions praised Dyer and presented him with a sword inscribed "Saviour of the Punjab"?
 - House of Commons
 - British War Office
 - Privy Council

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

(d) House of Lords

15. Which of the following movements was launched by Gandhi with political momentum strengthened by outrage over Punjab and the Khilafat issue?

- (a) Non-Cooperation Movement
- (b) Civil Disobedience Movement
- (c) Quit India Movement
- (d) Home Rule Movement

SOLUTIONS

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

8 INS Aridaman and India's Naval Warships

IN FOCUS

- India's third nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN), INS Aridaman (also referred to as INS Aridhaman, hull designation S4), was formally commissioned on 3 April 2026 at Visakhapatnam, at a low-profile ceremony presided over by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.
- The commissioning was not made public; however, Singh acknowledged the event through a social media post describing the submarine as: "It's not words but power, 'Aridhaman'!" sufficient to confirm the induction.
- The commissioning marks the first time India has three operational ballistic missile submarines at sea simultaneously, significantly strengthening the sea-based leg of the country's nuclear triad and consolidating its second-strike deterrence capability.
- Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh Tripathi had stated in December 2025 that INS Aridaman was in the final stages of trials and would be commissioned shortly; the vessel had already completed extensive sea trials prior to the commissioning ceremony.

India's SSBN Programme: Origins and Institutional Framework

- The SSBN programme was initiated more than three decades ago under the **Advanced Technology Vessel** (ATV) project and is being executed by the Ship Building Centre (SBC) in Visakhapatnam; the project has involved both private firms and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), with technical assistance from Russia.
- The programme was launched under conditions of strict secrecy; the first boat was launched in July 2009 and commissioned quietly in 2016; the second SSBN was commissioned in August 2024.
- As a component of the strategic weapons programme, all SSBNs fall under the domain of the Strategic Forces Command as part of India's nuclear triad architecture.
- The S4* (the fourth SSBN, tentatively expected to be named Arisudan) is currently undergoing sea trials and, like Aridaman, will be a larger 7,000-tonne vessel with significantly greater firepower than its predecessors.



INS Aridaman: Technical Profile and Comparative Specifications

- INS Aridaman is the third vessel in the Arihant-class of SSBNs; it displaces approximately 7,000 tonnes, making it larger than its predecessors INS Arihant and INS Arighaat, which both displace approximately 6,000 tonnes.

- The vessel is believed to feature eight vertical launching system (VLS) tubes, approximately double the number carried by its predecessors, enabling it to carry a substantially larger missile payload.
- INS Aridaman can carry up to 24 **K-15 Sagarika** submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), which have a range of over 700 km, or up to eight K-4 SLBMs with a range of approximately 3,500 km, or K-5 missiles; all are nuclear-capable.
- By comparison, INS Arihant and INS Arighaat can carry approximately twelve K-15 Sagarika missiles or four K-4 missiles.
- INS Aridaman is powered by advanced reactors understood to be an upgrade over the 83 MW pressurised light-water nuclear reactors that power INS Arihant and INS Arighaat, enabling it to remain submerged for longer durations potentially months without surfacing, thereby enhancing stealth and operational endurance.

INS Aridhaman **DEFENCEHQ**
— THE TIMES OF INDIA

Bigger, quieter and deadlier



INS Aridhaman is India's third indigenously developed nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine

It features an upgraded design compared to INS Arihant and INS Arighaat



The submarine is built with a larger hull, enhancing endurance and stealth

It can carry a greater number of long-range nuclear-capable K-4 missiles, along with 24 K-15 Sagarika missiles and K-5 missiles



K-15



K-5



K-4

INS Arihant

- Commissioned in 2016, the 6,000-tonne INS Arihant was India's first nuclear-powered submarine and established the country's maritime nuclear strike capability for the first time; it is armed with K-15 Sagarika missiles with a range of over 700 km and features four vertical launch tubes.
- INS Arihant completed India's first deterrence patrol in 2018, formally establishing the sea-based leg of India's nuclear triad; in October 2022, the Ministry of Defence announced the successful test launch of an SLBM in the Bay of Bengal by Arihant with "very high accuracy."

INS Arighaat

- INS Arighaat, India's second SSBN, was commissioned in August 2024, further stabilising India's continuous at-sea nuclear deterrence presence; the Ministry of Defence described it as significantly more technologically advanced than INS Arihant.
- INS Arighaat is also powered by an 83 MW pressurised light-water nuclear reactor and is believed to support K-4 missiles with a 3,500 km range in addition to K-15 missiles; its construction involved advanced design and manufacturing technology, utilisation of special materials, and complex engineering.

Nuclear Triad and India's No-First-Use Doctrine

- A nuclear triad refers to the ability to launch nuclear weapons from three platforms land, air, and sea

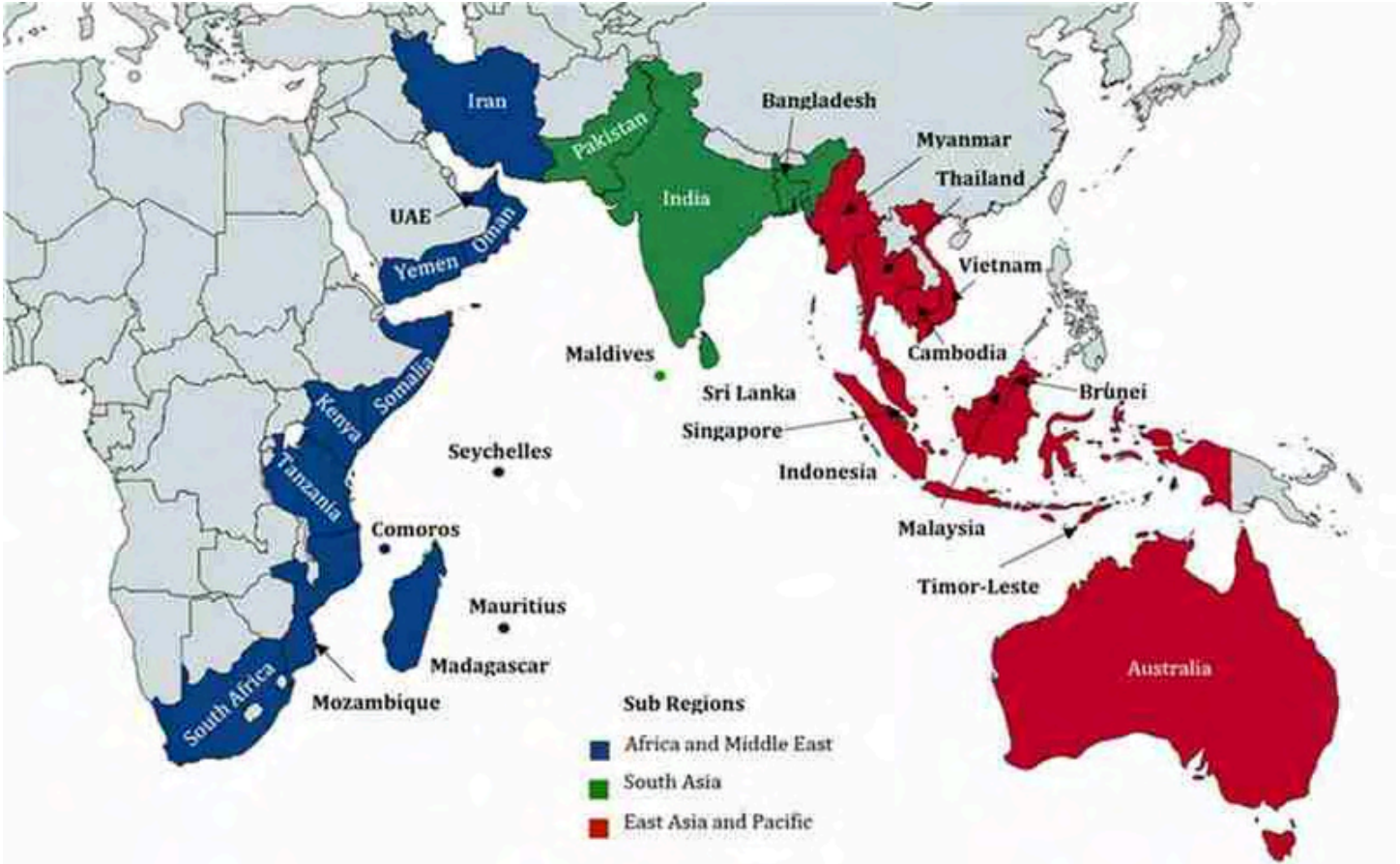
providing a survivable and diversified deterrence posture; India is one of only a select group of countries possessing this capability, alongside the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom.

- In India's triad, the land-based leg consists of the Agni series of ballistic missiles; the airborne leg comprises nuclear-capable delivery platforms including Rafale, Su-30MKI, and Mirage 2000 aircraft; and the sea-based leg is constituted by the Arihant-class SSBNs.
- India's nuclear doctrine stipulates a **"No First Use"** (NFU) policy India is committed to using nuclear weapons solely for deterrence and retaliation, not as an instrument of aggression; this doctrine makes a survivable sea-based second-strike capability strategically essential.
- SSBNs guarantee India's second-strike capability: even if an adversary delivers a first nuclear strike destroying India's land and air-based assets, an SSBN operating covertly at depth can survive and deliver a credible retaliatory nuclear response, thereby ensuring that any first strike would result in unacceptable consequences for the aggressor.
- A nuclear triad refers to the ability to launch nuclear weapons from three platforms land, air, and sea providing a survivable and diversified deterrence posture; India is one of only a select group of countries possessing this capability, alongside the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom.
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India's Submarine Fleet and Future Development Roadmap

- Aside from the three SSBNs, the Indian Navy operates 16 conventional submarines; the authorised strength is 18 submarines, but approximately 30% of the fleet is under refit at any given time, reducing the operational strength.
- The conventional submarine fleet includes six Kalvari-class attack submarines built at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL) in partnership with France's Naval Group; four Shishumar-class submarines; and seven Kilo (Sindhughosh)-class submarines.
- India is pursuing a nuclear-powered attack submarine (SSN) programme distinct from SSBNs in that SSNs carry conventional weapons with plans to indigenously build two SSNs and acquire one on lease from Russia, expected to arrive by 2027-28; at least two indigenously constructed SSNs are expected to be commissioned by 2036-39.
- Under Project-75I, India and Germany are finalising a deal under which ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems will partner with MDL to construct six advanced conventional submarines equipped with Air-Independent Propulsion (AIP) technology, enhancing underwater endurance without requiring nuclear power.
- By comparison, the United States operates 14 Ohio-class SSBNs and 53 fast-attack submarines; China operates 12 nuclear submarines, of which six are nuclear-powered attack submarines.

India's Strategic Stakes in the Indian Ocean Region



- The **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)** is India's primary trade artery, carrying nearly 80% of India's external trade and 90% of its energy imports; ensuring free and secure sea lanes is vital for sustaining economic growth and energy security.
- India's key ports handled 720.29 million tonnes of cargo traffic in FY22; India's merchandise exports in FY23 stood at USD 451 billion; the government's Sagarmala Project focuses on port-led development to boost exports and reduce logistics costs, with a planned USD 82 billion investment in port infrastructure by 2035.
- India seeks to counterbalance China's growing naval presence and infrastructure investments in the IOR, which are widely assessed as threatening regional stability; through the SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) initiative and the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), India is reinforcing its regional leadership.
- The Indian Ocean is a hotspot for piracy, smuggling, and sea-based terrorism; India has strengthened naval capabilities through fleet modernisation, increased patrols, and intelligence-sharing agreements; the Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) at Gurugram tracks maritime threats and enhances regional security cooperation, while Mission-Based Deployments (MBDs) are maintained across key choke points including the Strait of Malacca.
- India's blue economy contributes approximately 4% to GDP; the Deep Ocean Mission (Matsya 6000) aims to explore polymetallic nodules in the Central Indian Ocean Basin; offshore energy exploration, deep-sea

mining, marine biotechnology, offshore wind farms, and hydrogen fuel production represent emerging growth opportunities.

- India is investing in critical regional infrastructure, with projects including Chabahar Port in Iran and Sittwe Port in Myanmar enhancing trade and connectivity; collaboration with Japan and ASEAN for island development and smart ports bolsters India's maritime logistics footprint.
- India leads climate resilience efforts in the IOR through initiatives including the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and the International Solar Alliance (ISA); in June 2024, CDRI committed USD 8 million through its IRIS Programme to strengthen disaster-resilient infrastructure in Small Island Developing States (SIDS); twelve Indian beaches have received Blue Flag certification, promoting eco-friendly coastal tourism.
- India's historical maritime ties with Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, rooted in ancient trade networks and the spread of Buddhism, strengthen its soft power in the IOR; initiatives including Project Mausam and naval goodwill missions deepen regional engagement, and the India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) advances cooperation with African nations on capacity building.

India's Role in Key Multilateral Maritime Groupings

- **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA):** A regional grouping promoting cooperation in maritime security, trade, the blue economy, and disaster resilience; India is a founding member and actively leads initiatives across security, trade, and climate action.
- **Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS):** A platform to strengthen maritime cooperation among the navies of IOR states; initiated by the Indian Navy in 2008, India is a key actor in joint exercises and information-sharing.
- **Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC):** A grouping of Bay of Bengal littoral states for regional cooperation in security, trade, connectivity, and disaster management; India serves as the lead country for the security, transport connectivity, and energy cooperation pillars.
- **Colombo Security Conclave (CSC):** A regional security cooperation platform focusing on counterterrorism, cyber threats, and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR); India is a founding member alongside Sri Lanka and the Maldives.
- **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI):** Launched by India in 2019 to promote a free, open, and rules-based maritime order in the Indo-Pacific; India leads efforts on maritime security and connectivity.
- **Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC) and Jeddah Amendment:** A mechanism to counter piracy, illegal fishing, and maritime crimes in the western Indian Ocean; India participates as an observer state, supporting regional maritime security.
- **QUAD (India-US-Japan-Australia):** A quadrilateral grouping ensuring maritime security, freedom of navigation, and a counterweight to China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific; India is active in joint naval exercises including the Malabar exercises and in regional infrastructure development.
- **ASEAN-India Maritime Cooperation:** A framework to promote maritime transport cooperation between ASEAN and India and to encourage private sector participation in the development of seaports across the Indo-Pacific region.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which of the following correctly states that INS Aridaman is also referred to as which alternative name in India's nuclear submarine programme?
 - INS Arihant
 - INS Arighaat
 - INS Chakra-II
 - INS Aridhaman
- Which of the following correctly identifies the body under whose domain India's SSBNs operate as part of the nuclear triad architecture?
 - Integrated Defence Staff
 - Strategic Forces Command
 - National Security Council
 - Information Fusion Centre
- Which of the following missiles is associated with a range of approximately 3,500 km in India's submarine-based deterrent capability?
 - K-4
 - K-15
 - Agni-P
 - BrahMos
- Which of the following best explains why INS Aridaman is considered more heavily armed than INS Arihant and INS Arighaat?
 - It carries fewer missiles
 - It fields only torpedoes
 - It has eight SLS tubes
 - It has eight VLS tubes
- Which of the following correctly identifies the project under which India's SSBN programme was initiated?
 - Advanced Technology Vessel project
 - Strategic Submarine Development project
 - Nuclear Submarine Expansion Programme
 - Indigenous Naval Systems Development project
- Which of the following correctly identifies the location of the Ship Building Centre executing India's SSBN programme?
 - Bengaluru
 - Hyderabad
 - Chennai
 - Visakhapatnam
- Which of the following classes forms the conventional attack submarine component built in partnership with France's Naval Group?
 - Arihant-class
 - Kalvari-class
 - Ohio-class
 - Shishumar-class
- Which of the following groupings includes India among countries possessing a nuclear triad?
 - India, Japan, Germany, Brazil, Canada, South Africa
 - India, Italy, Spain, Canada, Australia, United Kingdom
 - India, United States, Russia, China, France, United Kingdom
 - India, Israel, Iran, Pakistan, North Korea, United Kingdom
- Which of the following platforms represents the land-based leg of India's nuclear triad?
 - Rafale airborne delivery platforms
 - Agni series ballistic missiles
 - Arihant-class nuclear submarines
 - Vaayu series ballistic missiles
- Which of the following correctly states the full form of SAGAR in India's maritime outlook?
 - Security and Growth for All in the Region
 - Strategy and Governance for Regional Affairs
 - Stability and Guidance for Regional Action
 - Security and Geopolitics for Regional Area
- Which of the following best identifies the platform initiated by the Indian Navy to strengthen cooperation among navies of Indian Ocean Region states?
 - Indian Ocean Rim Association
 - Colombo Security Conclave
 - Indian Ocean Naval Symposium
 - Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative
- Which of the following ports is associated with India's effort to enhance trade and connectivity as part of its regional infrastructure strategy?
 - Gwadar Port and Hambantota Port
 - Duqm Port and Aden Port
 - Chabahar Port and Sittwe Port
 - Mombasa Port and Durban Port
- Which of the following best describes the role of the Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region?
 - It manufactures submarine reactor systems for strategic naval assets

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- (b) It tracks maritime threats and supports regional security cooperation
- (c) It negotiates export tariffs for Indian Ocean shipping corridors
- (d) It trains combat pilots for airborne strategic delivery missions

14. Which of the following correctly identifies the project under which India is constructing six advanced conventional submarines with AIP technology?

- (a) Project-75A

- (b) Project-75I
- (c) Project-76A
- (d) Project-77B

15. Which of the following correctly identifies the programme under which Matsya 6000 is being developed for deep-sea exploration in India?

- (a) National Ocean Mission
- (b) Marine Resource Mission
- (c) Blue Economy Mission
- (d) Deep Ocean Mission

SOLUTIONS

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

9 BR Ambedkar Jayanti and 1927 Mahad Satyagrah

IN FOCUS

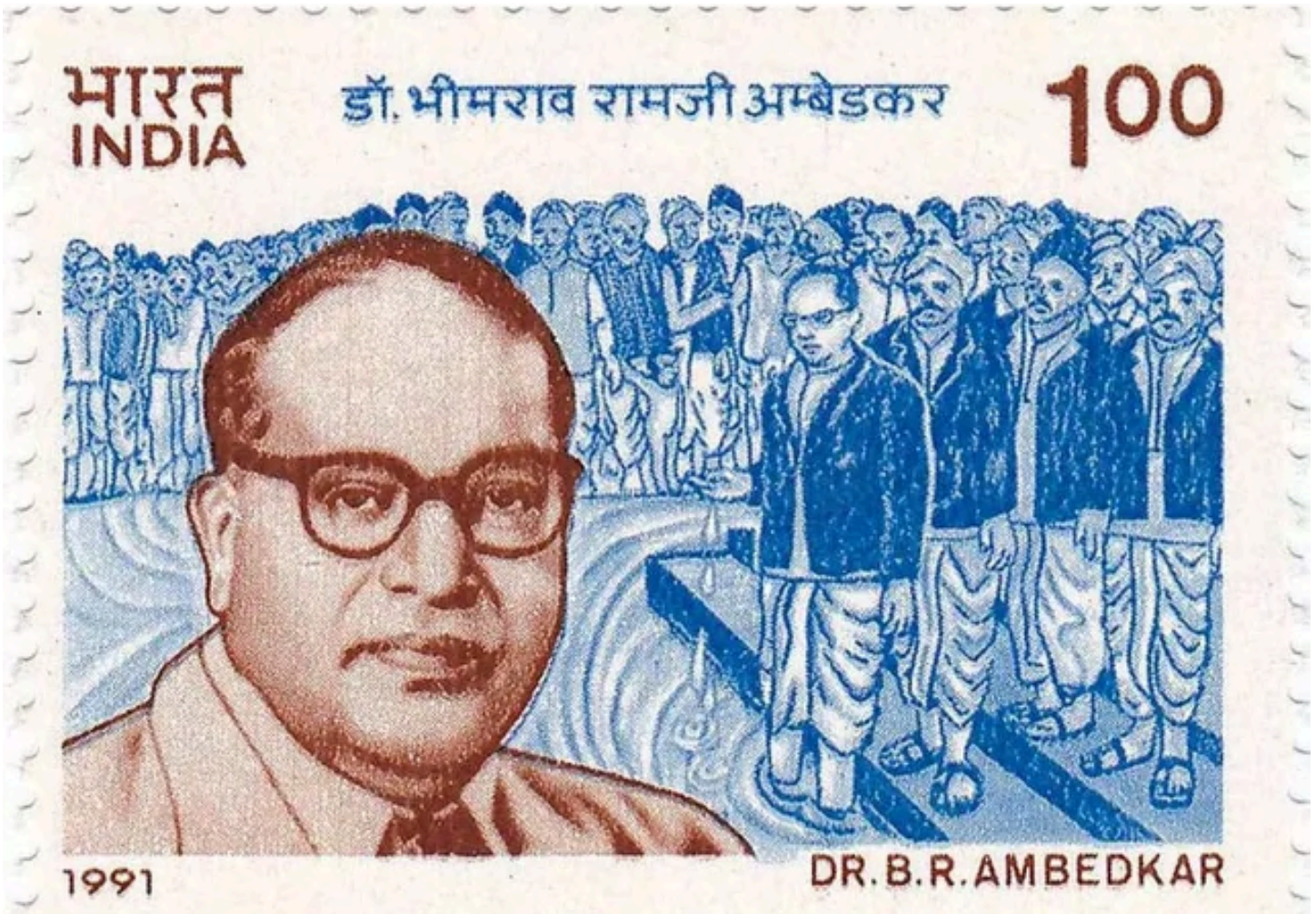
- The 136th birth anniversary of Babasaheb **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar** was observed on 14 April 2026 at Prerna Sthal, Parliament House Premises, New Delhi, organised by the Dr. Ambedkar Foundation (DAF) under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- The commemoration began with floral tributes offered at the life-size statue of Babasaheb by the Vice-President of India C.P. Radhakrishnan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, and several Union Ministers, Parliamentarians, and dignitaries; the event was open to the public and thousands of citizens paid their respects throughout the day.
- The ceremony was enriched by Buddhist chants performed by monks and cultural presentations by artists of the Song and Drama Division celebrating Ambedkar's vision and legacy.
- Dr. Ambedkar Jayanti is observed annually by the DAF to honour the life and contributions of Dr. Ambedkar as a visionary social reformer, jurist, economist, and the principal architect of the Indian Constitution.



Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: Life, Education, and Identity

- Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was born on 14 April 1891 in Mhow, Central Provinces (now Madhya Pradesh), into the Mahar caste, and faced severe socio-economic discrimination from a young age due to the caste system.
- A scholar of exceptional academic achievement, he earned doctorates in economics from Columbia University in the United States and from the London School of Economics in the United Kingdom, making him one of the most formally educated Indian leaders of his era.

- He served as the First Law Minister of independent India and held the position of Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly, the body responsible for drafting the Indian Constitution; he is widely regarded as the Father of the Indian Constitution.
- He served as a Labour member of the Executive Council of the Viceroy in 1942, using the position to advocate for workers' rights and introduce labour reforms.
- He was posthumously awarded India's highest civilian honour, the **Bharat Ratna**, in 1990, in recognition of his immense contributions to the nation.
- Differences over the Hindu Code Bill led to his resignation from the Cabinet in 1951; he subsequently converted to Buddhism, and his death on 6 December 1956 is observed annually as Mahaparinirvan Diwas.



The Panchteerth: Five Sites of Ambedkar's Legacy

The Government of India has developed five key sites associated with Dr. Ambedkar as the 'Panchteerth' to preserve and promote his memory:

- Janma Bhoomi: Mhow, Madhya Pradesh (birthplace).
- Shiksha Bhoomi: London, United Kingdom (where he studied).
- Deeksha Bhoomi: Nagpur, Maharashtra (where he embraced Buddhism in 1956).
- Mahaparinirvan Bhoomi: Delhi (where he passed away on 6 December 1956).
- Chaitya Bhoomi: Mumbai, Maharashtra (place of cremation).

Key Contributions of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Social Reform and the Crusade Against Caste

- **Mahad Satyagraha** (1927): Ambedkar led the landmark Mahad Satyagraha to assert the right of the Depressed Classes to draw water from the Chavdar Tank a public water body in Mahad, Maharashtra challenging centuries of caste-enforced exclusion.
- **Temple Entry Movements**: He actively led campaigns advocating for the right of marginalized castes to enter Hindu temples, including the Kalaram Temple entry movement of 1930.
- **Poona Pact** (1932): Following Mahatma Gandhi's fast unto death against the Communal Award which had granted separate electorates for the Depressed Classes Ambedkar signed the Poona Pact, securing reserved seats for the Depressed Classes within the general Hindu electorate; the reserved seats for depressed classes were increased from 71 to 147 in provincial legislatures and to 18% in the Central Legislature.
- He participated in all three Round Table Conferences convened by the British government, representing the interests of the Depressed Classes at the highest levels of constitutional negotiation.

Constitutional and Democratic Contributions

- As Chairman of the Drafting Committee, Ambedkar ensured the Indian Constitution incorporated robust safeguards for minorities, marginalized sections, and women; he believed India's foundation should rest on liberty, equality, and fraternity values he drew from the principles of the French Revolution (1789-1799).
- He referred to Article 32 (Right to Constitutional Remedies) as the "heart and soul" of the Indian Constitution, recognising it as the provision that makes all other fundamental rights enforceable.
- He opposed the special status of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 and actively supported the enactment of a Uniform Civil Code.

Economic and Labour Reforms

- The conceptual framework for the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was derived from guidelines he presented to the Hilton Young Commission, based on his work *The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and Its Solution*.
- As Labour Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, he introduced significant labour reforms including the reduction of factory working hours from 14 to 8 hours, the principle of equal pay for equal work irrespective of gender, and maternity benefits.

Women's Empowerment

- Ambedkar introduced the Hindu Code Bill in Parliament to grant women equal rights in inheritance, marriage, and divorce; when the Bill was stalled due to orthodox opposition, he resigned from his post as Law Minister in 1951.
- At the Mahad Satyagraha, he specifically addressed Dalit women, urging them to abandon the sartorial markers of untouchability and dress as equals to dominant-caste women; the women immediately complied, making Mahad an early site of intersectional feminist assertion.

Religion: Navayana Buddhism

- Ambedkar founded Navayana (New Vehicle) Buddhism in 1956 a reinterpretation of Buddhism emphasising social equality and class struggle over traditional spiritual doctrines; it rejects core Buddhist doctrines such as the Four Noble Truths, karma, rebirth, nirvana, and monasticism, considering them incompatible with social justice.
- Dhammachakra Pravartan Din is observed annually on 14 October to commemorate the historic mass conversion of Ambedkar and his followers to Buddhism at Deekshabhoomi, Nagpur, in 1956.

Organisations, Journals, and Literary Works

- Ambedkar founded the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha in 1923 for the socio-economic upliftment of the Depressed Classes, the Independent Labour Party in 1936 for workers' rights, and the Scheduled Castes Federation in 1942 to advocate for Dalit political rights.

- He used print media to spread social awareness through four journals: Mooknayak (1920), Bahishkrit Bharat (1927), Samatha (1929), and Janata (1930).
- His major works include *Annihilation of Caste* (1936), *The Untouchables: Who are They and Why They Have Become Untouchables* (1948), *Buddha or Karl Marx* (1956), *The Buddha and His Dhamma* (1957), and *The Rise and Fall of Hindu Women*.

The Mahad Satyagraha

Background and Legal Foundations

- Historically, members of the Depressed Classes referred to as Dalits were denied access to public water bodies, roads, temples, and schools designated for upper castes, entrenching social, political, and economic marginalisation over centuries.
- On 4 August 1923, social reformer S.K. Bole moved a resolution in the Bombay Legislative Council recommending that the Depressed Classes be allowed to use all public watering places, dharamshalas, schools, courts, offices, and dispensaries built and maintained out of public funds; on 11 September 1923, the Bombay Government directed all departmental heads to give effect to the resolution in relation to government-maintained public places.
- In January 1924, the Mahad Municipal Council passed a corresponding resolution to open the **Chavdar Tank** to the Depressed Classes; however, strong resistance from Savarna Hindus prevented practical enforcement, and the Depressed Classes continued to be denied access.

Events of March 1927

- To overcome the denial of rights, the Kolaba District Depressed Classes, in coordination with Dr. Ambedkar and the Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha, decided to hold a conference in Mahad on 19-20 March 1927.
- On 20 March 1927, Dr. Ambedkar led a peaceful procession of approximately 2,500 Dalits through Mahad to the Chavdar Tank; Ambedkar drew water from the tank and drank it an act of profound symbolic significance asserting the equal humanity and equal rights of the Depressed Classes; this broke a centuries-old caste taboo and sent shockwaves through conservative society.
- Upper-caste groups responded with violence against protestors; the tank was subjected to a symbolic "purification" ritual with cow dung and urine by oppressor castes who claimed it had been defiled; under pressure, the Mahad Municipality on 4 August 1927 revoked its 1924 resolution opening the tank to the Depressed Classes.

Events of December 1927

Dr. Ambedkar announced a second Satyagraha in December 1927; however, on 12 December 1927, upper-caste groups filed a legal action in the Mahad Civil Court seeking a temporary injunction. On 14 December 1927, the court granted a temporary injunction prohibiting Dr. Ambedkar, his colleagues, and members of the Depressed Classes from accessing the Chavdar Tank pending resolution of the civil suit. Despite the injunction, on 25 December 1927, Dr. Ambedkar addressed a large gathering, stating: "We are not going to the Chavdar Lake merely to drink its water. We are going to the Lake to assert that we too are human beings like others. It must be clear that this meeting has been called to set up the norm of equality." At this gathering, Dr. Ambedkar and his supporters also burned a copy of the **Manusmriti**, symbolically rejecting the ideological foundations of the caste system; the gathering passed resolutions on equality, non-discrimination, and equal access to resources.

Legal Proceedings and Final Verdict

- In the civil suit, the defendants including Dr. Ambedkar argued that the Chavdar Tank belonged to the Mahad Municipality and should be open to all without restriction. The trial court ruled against the plaintiffs in 1937, holding that they had failed to prove any longstanding legally recognised custom of excluding untouchables from the tank; the appeal to the Assistant Judge, Thana, was also dismissed on the same grounds. The plaintiffs appealed to the Bombay High Court, which also dismissed the appeal in 1937; after nearly a decade of legal struggle, Dr. Ambedkar secured the legal vindication that the exclusion of untouchables from the Chavdar Tank had no basis in law. 20 March the day of the Satyagraha is now observed as Social Empowerment Day in India in recognition of the movement's enduring significance.

Significance and Constitutional Legacy

- The Mahad Satyagraha marked a paradigm shift in Dalit politics, transitioning from petitions and memorials to the British government toward direct, mass-mobilised civic action a model that would influence all subsequent movements for Dalit rights.
- The ideological battles fought at the Chavdar Tank laid the direct moral groundwork for the drafting of the Indian Constitution, specifically Article 15 (prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth) and Article 17 (abolition of untouchability).
- Ambedkar's 1936 work *Annihilation of Caste* articulated the core thesis underlying Mahad: "That political reform cannot with impunity take precedence over social reform in the sense of the reconstruction of society" asserting that social equality must be a prerequisite for meaningful political freedom.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- Which of the following best describes Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's most celebrated constitutional role?
 - Founder of the Scheduled Castes Federation
 - Labour Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council
 - Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly
 - Founder of the Independent Labour Party
- Which of the following provisions did Dr. B.R. Ambedkar described it as the "heart and soul" of the Constitution?
 - Article 32
 - Article 14
 - Article 19
 - Article 21
- Which of the following correctly identifies the meaning of 'Panchteerth' in relation to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar?
 - Five key sites associated with his life and legacy
 - Five political parties founded by Ambedkar
 - Five journals published by Ambedkar
 - Five constitutional committees led by Ambedkar
- Which of the following texts was symbolically burned during the Mahad movement?
 - Rupee text
 - Manusmriti
 - Buddha text
 - Caste essay
- Which of the following sites in the Panchteerth is associated with Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's cremation?
 - Chaitya Bhoomi
 - Deeksha Bhoomi
 - Shiksha Bhoomi
 - Janma Bhoomi
- Which of the following journals was used by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to spread social awareness?
 - Kesari
 - Harijan
 - Mooknayak
 - Young India
- Which of the following organisations was founded for the socio-economic upliftment of the Depressed Classes?
 - Scheduled Castes Federation
 - Independent Labour Party
 - Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha
 - Song and Drama Division
- Which of the following was the main constitutional outcome of the Poona Pact?
 - Creation of new provincial constitutional electoral provisions for Dalits
 - Reserved seats within the general Hindu electorate for the Depressed Classes
 - Complete abolition of caste-based electoral representation provisions
 - Establishment of separate judicial administrative councils for Dalits
- Which of the following made the Chavdar Tank historically important in Dalit history?
 - symbolic centre of the Mahad Satyagraha
 - headquarters of the Independent Labour Party
 - Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's cremation site
 - first Buddhist vihara established by Ambedkar
- Which of the following correctly identifies the birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar observed in 2026?
 - 134th
 - 135th
 - 137th
 - 136th
- Which of the following correctly identifies the highest civilian honour awarded posthumously to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar?
 - Padma Vibhushan Award
 - Bharat Ratna honour
 - Padma Bhushan Award
 - National Civilian Award
- Which of the following areas saw major reform under Dr. B.R. Ambedkar during his tenure connected with labour administration?
 - Working hours, equal pay, and maternity benefits
 - Civil aviation, customs, and tariffs
 - Municipal drainage, rail fares, and excise
 - Banking mergers, securities law, and insurance
- Which of the following correctly states the number of Round Table Conferences in which Dr. B.R. Ambedkar participated?
 - two
 - three
 - four
 - five
- Which of the following political organisations was founded by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar for workers' rights?
 - Bahishkrit Bharat Sabha
 - Janata Collective
 - Dr. Ambedkar Foundation
 - Independent Labour Party

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

15. Which of the following texts was symbolically burned during the Mahad movement?

- (a) Vedic code
- (b) Manusmriti
- (c) Dharma code
- (d) Caste rules

SOLUTIONS

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

10

The Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill 2026

IN FOCUS

- The **Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026**, under the Ministry of Home Affairs, was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 25 March 2026, passed by the Rajya Sabha on 1 April 2026, and passed by the Lok Sabha on 2 April 2026; President Droupadi Murmu subsequently gave her assent, and the government notified the Act on 10 April 2026.
- The legislation constitutes an **umbrella law** governing recruitment, deputation, promotion, seniority, and other service conditions of Group A General Duty Officers across five Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Border Security Force (BSF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).
- Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai, replying to the debate, stated that the Bill aims to strengthen India's internal security framework, bring greater clarity and consistency to CAPF service conditions, remove inconsistencies in existing arrangements, and ensure continuity of financial benefits; he also rejected opposition charges that the legislation undermines India's federal structure or violates the spirit of the Constitution.

Background

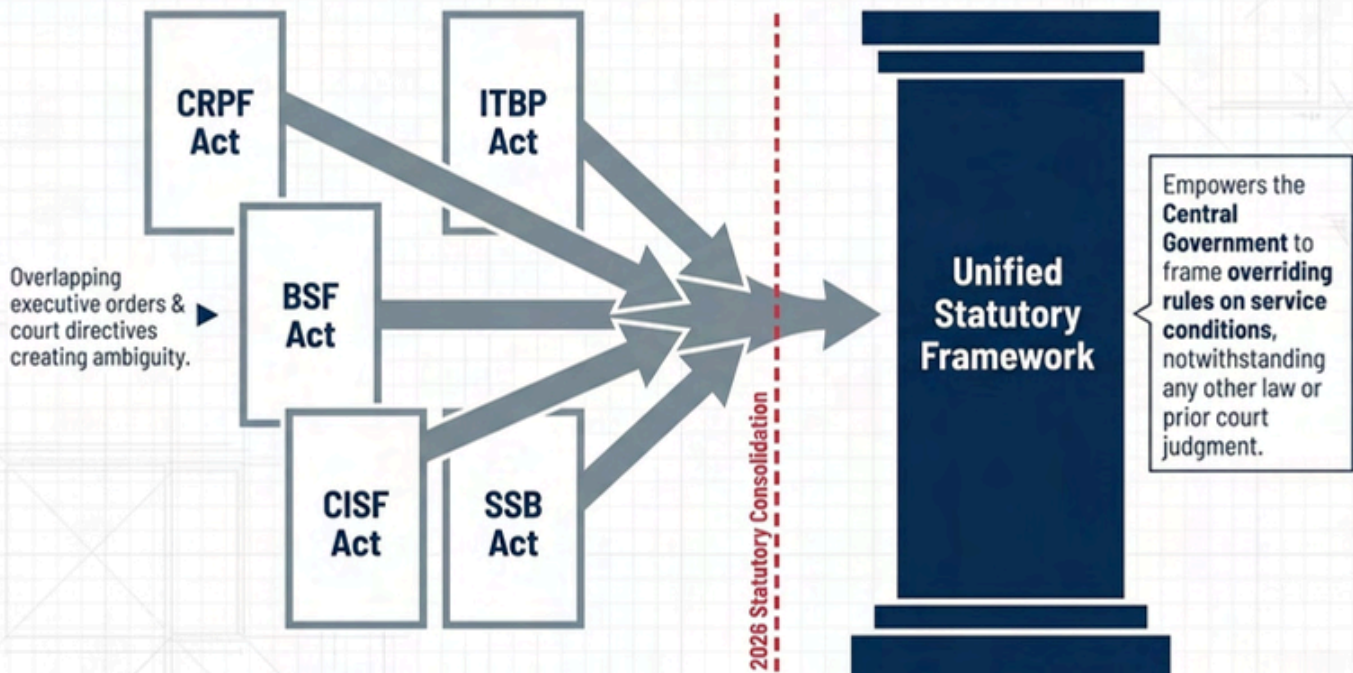
- Prior to the enactment of this legislation, all five covered CAPFs CRPF, CISF, BSF, ITBP, and SSB were governed by their respective individual Acts, resulting in fragmented service condition frameworks, inconsistencies in administrative procedures, and the absence of a unified standard for recruitment, deputation, and promotion at senior levels.
- India's regulatory landscape for CAPF officers was characterised by multiple overlapping instruments including force-specific Acts, executive orders, and court directives, creating ambiguities that this legislation seeks to resolve through a single overriding statutory framework.
- A key precipitating judicial development was a 2025 Supreme Court directive asking the Centre to progressively reduce Indian Police Service (IPS) officer deputation up to the Inspector General (IG) rank within two years; the Bill, by legally cementing deputation quotas, has been interpreted by CAPF cadre associations as overriding this court direction.
- Approximately 13,000 Group A CAPF officers face severe promotion delays, often waiting 15-18 years to advance due to limited senior vacancies, a grievance that has intensified concerns about the legislation's impact on force morale.

Key Provisions of the CAPF (General Administration) Act, 2026

- The Act empowers the central government to frame rules on all matters related to officers of the five specified CAPFs, including recruitment, deputation, promotion, and conditions of service; the central government may amend the Schedule by notification to extend the Act's applicability to other CAPFs.
- The officers covered under the Act include: Group A (general duty or executive) officers of the rank of Assistant Commandant and above in CAPFs; officers on deputation from the **Indian Police Service (IPS)**; and officers of the Indian Army on deputation or re-employment.

- The Act provides that the central government may frame rules notwithstanding any other law, any judgement or order of any Court, or any existing government order; specified rules under the respective individual force Acts will continue to apply until amended or replaced; any existing orders on financial benefits will also continue until new orders are issued.
- The overriding effect clause stipulates that in case of any inconsistency between this Act and any other law, the provisions of this Act will prevail a provision that has attracted opposition scrutiny given the 2025 Supreme Court directive on IPS deputation quotas.

National Security Blueprint



IPS Deputation Quotas at Senior Ranks

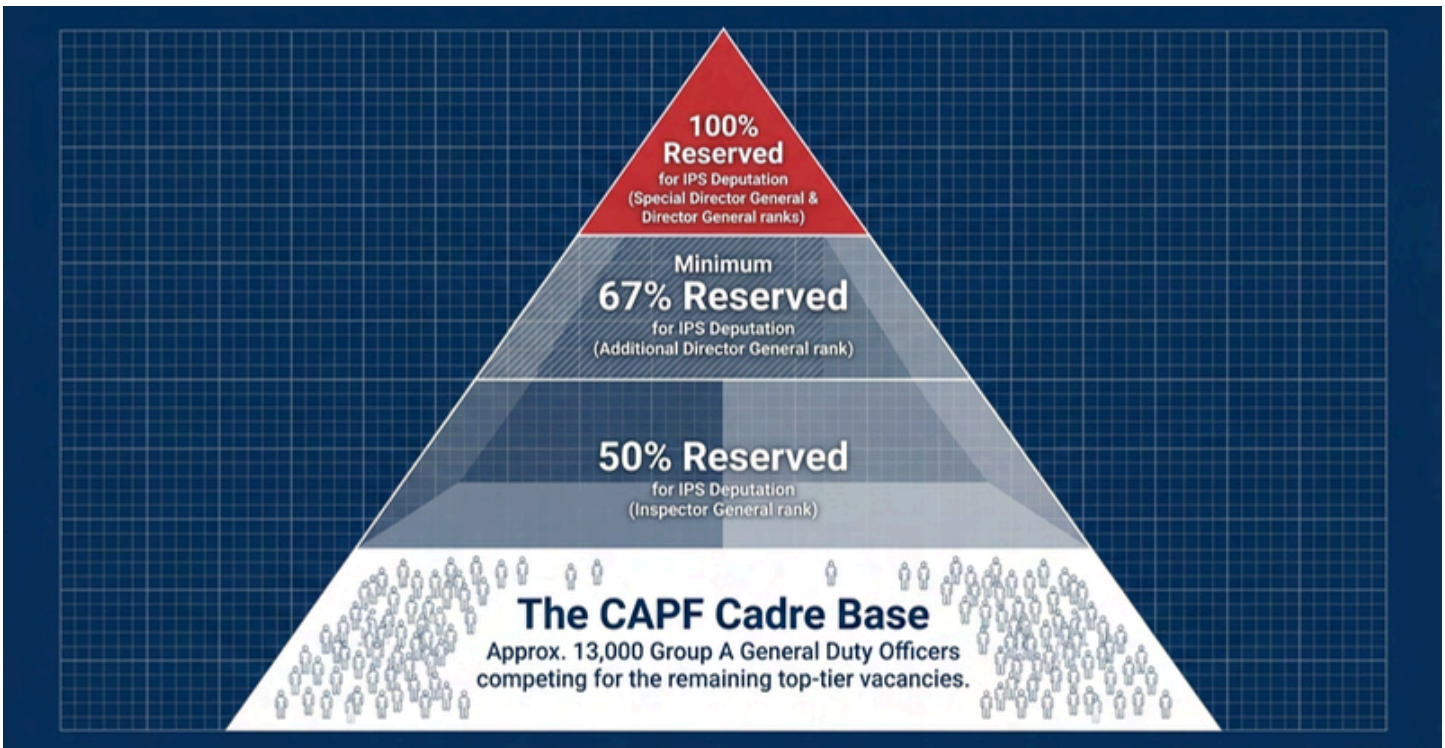
The Act legally mandates the following minimum reservation of senior positions in the five CAPFs for IPS officers on deputation:

- 50% of posts at the rank of Inspector General (IG).
- A minimum of 67% of posts at the rank of Additional Director General (ADG).
- 100% of all posts at the ranks of Special Director General (Special DG) and Director General (DG).

Institutional Concerns and the Operational Rationale

- The government's stated rationale for the IPS deputation structure is that CAPFs must frequently coordinate with state police forces and civil administrations which are led by IPS and Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers making IPS-led senior command necessary for operational synergy and effective inter-agency coordination.
- CAPF cadre associations and critics contend that the Act undermines the 2025 Supreme Court directive to progressively reduce IPS deputation up to the IG rank, and that officers who perform frontline combat duties face disproportionate career stagnation compared to IPS deputation officers who occupy senior roles.
- The government maintains that the legislation strengthens cooperative federalism by improving coordination between the CAPFs, state police forces, and state administrations, and that the overriding

- effect clause is necessary to provide legislative clarity and preserve the operational distinctiveness of each force.
- The TMC's Mahua Moitra raised the welfare dimension, noting 438 suicides among CAPF personnel over three years, averaging approximately 150 per year, with a 50% increase among officers recorded in 2025 linking this trend, at least in part, to promotion stagnation and structural constraints.



The Seven CAPFs: Mandate, History, and Present Leadership

The seven CAPFs function under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and are categorised into three groups: Border Guarding Forces (Assam Rifles, BSF, ITBP, SSB), Forces for Internal Security (CISF, CRPF), and Special Task Force (National Security Guard). Each force is headed by an IPS officer of the rank of Director General.

Assam Rifles (AR)

- Established in 1835 as a militia called the Cachar Levy to protect British tea estates and settlements from tribal raids, the Assam Rifles is the oldest CAPF and is known both as the "Friends of the Hill People" and as the "Right Arm of the Civil and Left Arm of the Military."
- It has a dual-control structure: administrative control rests with the MHA while operational control is with the Ministry of Defence; it is the only CAPF headed by an Indian Army officer of the rank of Lieutenant General.
- Post-Independence roles have ranged from conventional combat during the Sino-India War of 1962 to participating in the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka in 1987 (Operation Pawan) and ongoing peacekeeping duties in India's northeastern region; it guards the 1,643-km Indo-Myanmar border since 2002. Director General (DG), Assam Rifles: Vikas Lakhera.

Border Security Force (BSF)

- Established on 1 December 1965, the BSF is mandated to guard India's land borders with Pakistan and Bangladesh and has been designated India's "First Line of Defence"; it currently stands as the world's largest border guarding force, with a sanctioned strength of approximately 2,70,000 personnel.

- The BSF has an air wing, a marine wing, an artillery regiment, and commando units; it has also been tasked with assisting the CRPF and Indian Army in counter-insurgency operations.
- Director General (DG), BSF: Praveen Kumar (Additional Charge).

Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)

- Established in 1969 with three battalions to provide security to Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), the CISF has evolved into a multi-skilled security agency providing protection to nuclear installations, space establishments, airports, seaports, power plants, sensitive government buildings, heritage monuments, the Delhi Metro, and Special Economic Zones (SEZs); it is the only CAPF with a dedicated fire wing.
- The CISF also provides VIP security, engages in disaster management, and established a Formed Police Unit (FPU) for the United Nations in Haiti.
- Director General (DG), CISF: Praveer Ranjan.

Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)

- The CRPF came into existence as the Crown Representative's Police on 27 July 1939 and was renamed following the enactment of the CRPF Act on 28 December 1949; with 246 battalions and a strength of over 300,000, it is India's largest paramilitary force.
- Its duties span crowd and riot control, counter-militancy and counter-insurgency operations, dealing with Left Wing Extremism (LWE), overall coordination of election security in disturbed areas, and participation in UN peacekeeping missions and natural disaster relief operations.
- Director General (DG), CRPF: Gyanendra Pratap Singh.

Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)

- Raised on 24 October 1962 in response to the Sino-India War, the ITBP guards the 3,488 km Indo-China border from Karakoram Pass in Ladakh to Jachep La in Arunachal Pradesh, manning border outposts at altitudes ranging from 9,000 to 18,700 feet; it replaced the Assam Rifles in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh in 2004.
- It is a specialised mountain force, with officers and personnel professionally trained as mountaineers and skiers; it serves as a first responder in natural disasters and has participated in UN peacekeeping missions in Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Haiti, Western Sahara, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Sudan.
- Director General (DG), ITBP: Shatrujeet Singh Kapoor.

National Security Guard (NSG)

- Raised in 1984 following Operation Blue Star and the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the NSG was formally constituted in 1986 by an Act of Parliament as a federal contingency force for combating terrorist activities and protecting states against internal disturbances; it functions as India's primary counter-terrorism unit.
- The NSG operates through two complementary elements: the Special Action Group (SAG), comprising Indian Army personnel, and the Special Ranger Groups (SRG), drawn from CAPF and state police forces; its operational philosophy is swift strike and immediate withdrawal from the theatre of action.
- Director General (DG), NSG: B. Srinivasan.

Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)

- Conceived in November 1962 and established in March 1963 as the Special Service Bureau, the SSB was originally created for "total security preparedness" in remote border areas for a "stay-behind" role in the event of war; it was renamed Sashastra Seema Bal and now guards India's borders with Nepal and Bhutan.
- The SSB's mandate includes safeguarding assigned border areas, preventing trans-border crimes and

- smuggling, preventing unauthorised entry into or exit from Indian territory, conducting civic action programmes, and performing law and order, counter-insurgency, and election duty assignments as directed by the Central Government; it is deployed across Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Sikkim, Assam, and Arunachal Pradesh.
- Director General (DG), SSB: Sanjay Singhal.

CAPF Diagnostic Table (Part 1: Border Guarding Forces)

Force	Established	Operational Scope	Leadership
Assam Rifles	1835 (Oldest)	Indo-Myanmar border (1,643 km); Dual-control (MHA admin/MoD ops); IPKF in Sri Lanka.	Lt Gen Vikas Lakhera
BSF	1965	India's 'First Line of Defence' on Pak/Bang borders; Largest border force globally (2,70,000 strength); features air/marine/artillery wings.	DG Praveen Kumar (Addl Charge)
ITBP	1962	Indo-China border (3,488 km); Extreme altitude (9k-18.7k ft); Specialised mountaineer force.	DG Shatrुjeet Singh Kapoor
SSB	1963	Origin as 'Special Service Bureau' for stay-behind roles; now guards Nepal/Bhutan borders and runs civic action programs.	DG Sanjay Singhal

CAPF Diagnostic Table (Part 2: Internal Security & Special Forces)

Force	Established	Operational Scope	Leadership
CRPF	1939	India's largest paramilitary force (300,000+ strength, 246 battalions); Primary responder for riot control, Left Wing Extremism (LWE), and election security.	DG Gyanendra Pratap Singh
CISF	1969	Multi-skilled protection for PSUs, nuclear/space sites, Delhi Metro, and airports; Only CAPF with a dedicated fire wing; deployed FPU in Haiti.	DG Praveer Ranjan
NSG	1984/1986	Primary counter-terrorism unit; Operates via Special Action Group (Army) and Special Ranger Groups (CAPF/Police); 'Swift strike' philosophy.	DG B. Srinivasan

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following Central Armed Police Forces is included under the CAPF (General Administration) Act, 2026?
 - (a) National Security Guard
 - (b) Assam Rifles
 - (c) Railway Protection Force
 - (d) Central Reserve Police Force
2. Which of the following best describes the main purpose of the CAPF (General Administration) Act, 2026?
 - (a) To unify Group A CAPF service conditions
 - (b) To merge CAPFs into one border force
 - (c) To shift CAPFs under Defence Ministry
 - (d) To end IPS deputation in CAPFs
3. Which of the following officers are covered under the CAPF (General Administration) Act, 2026?
 - (a) Constables and head constables in CAPFs
 - (b) Group A officers from Assistant Commandant
 - (c) Only Army officers on re-employment posts
 - (d) Only IPS officers on deputation posts
4. Which of the following rank-wise IPS deputation quotas is correctly stated under the Act?
 - (a) 50% at DG, 67% at IG, 50% at ADG and 100% at at Special DG and DG
 - (b) 50% at IG, minimum 67% at ADG, and 100% at Special DG and DG
 - (c) 25% at IG, 50% at ADG, 75% at DG and 100% at Special DG and DG
 - (d) 100% at IG, 50% at ADG, 67% at DG and 100% at Special DG and DG
5. Which of the following institutions was identified as having issued a directive to progressively reduce IPS deputation up to the IG rank?
 - (a) Election Commission of India
 - (b) Union Public Service Commission
 - (c) National Human Rights Commission
 - (d) Supreme Court of India
6. Which of the following categories correctly places the CISF among the seven CAPFs?
 - (a) Border Guarding Force
 - (b) Force for Internal Security
 - (c) Special Task Force
 - (d) Intelligence Coordination Force
7. Which of the following forces is known as India's "First Line of Defence"?
 - (a) CRPF
 - (b) ITBP
 - (c) BSF
 - (d) SSB
8. Which of the following CAPFs is the only one headed by an Indian Army officer of the rank of Lieutenant General?
 - (a) National Security Guard
 - (b) Assam Rifles
 - (c) Border Security Force
 - (d) Central Reserve Police Force
9. Which of the following CAPFs has a dedicated fire wing?
 - (a) BSF
 - (b) CISF
 - (c) ITBP
 - (d) SSB
10. Which of the following CAPFs is India's primary counter-terrorism unit?
 - (a) BSF
 - (b) CRPF
 - (c) CISF
 - (d) NSG
11. Which of the following forces guards India's borders with Nepal and Bhutan?
 - (a) ITBP
 - (b) BSF
 - (c) CRPF
 - (d) SSB
12. Which of the following forces guards the Indo-China border and is trained as a specialised mountain force?
 - (a) CISF
 - (b) BSF
 - (c) ITBP
 - (d) NSG
13. Which of the following forces is the largest paramilitary force in India?
 - (a) CRPF
 - (b) CISF

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

- (c) BSF
- (d) ITBP

14. Which of the following forces was originally created for "total security preparedness" in remote border areas for a "stay-behind" role in the event of war?

- (a) SSB
- (b) NSG

- (c) CISF
- (d) ITBP

15. Which of the following forces replaced Assam Rifles in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh?

- (a) CRPF
- (b) BSF
- (c) ITBP
- (d) CISF

SOLUTIONS

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

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Kartikay Kataria

LNAT (2023 - 2024)



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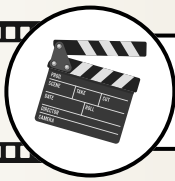
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LNAT (2025 - 2026)



Karthik Ranganadhan

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



MEDIA COVERAGE

BUREAUCRATS INDIA
Date: December 18, 2025

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



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

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

Against this backdrop, students trained at Nishant Prakash Law Classes (NPLC) posted a strong, widely distributed set of national 4 ranks across both examinations, reinforcing the institute's consistent presence at the top. Of the 78 candidates from NPLC, 70 qualified in CLAT or AILET.

Hindustan Times 100
Date: December 31, 2025

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



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

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

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

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

Both students began preparing for these exams at Nishant Prakash Law Classes (NPLC) in Delhi. At ultimate ... imposed ...

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




दिल्ली को काजून सिखानी वास्तव बिहारी

Nishant Prakash Law Classes



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

Nishant Prakash students secure top ranks in CLAT, AILET

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

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Arshnoor
Siddhant Rohit AILET (AIR 4)

1 Earth Hour 2026

IN FOCUS

Earth Hour 2026, observed on 28th March between 8:30 pm and 9:30 pm, saw widespread participation across India as major landmarks dimmed their lights in solidarity with the global climate awareness initiative. Organised by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Earth Hour this year marked two decades since the campaign first began in Sydney, Australia, in 2007 as a simple symbolic gesture of switching off non-essential lights for one hour. Since then, it has grown into one of the largest grassroots environmental movements, now spanning over 190 countries and territories. This year's theme, "Give An Hour For Earth," broadens the call to action beyond the symbolic switch-off, urging people to spend 60 minutes engaging with nature, through restoration, learning, or inspiring others. In India, the movement has been active since 2009 under WWF-India, with participation from 58 cities and a growing range of activities including clean-up drives, cyclothons, and citizen science programmes.

India's Participation

- Several iconic monuments and heritage sites across India switched off their lights as part of Earth Hour 2026, reflecting widespread institutional solidarity with the campaign.
- In Delhi, prominent landmarks such as India Gate, Qutub Minar, Red Fort, Humayun's Tomb, Akshardham, Jantar Mantar, and Safdarjung Tomb participated in the hour-long lights-off event.
- Mumbai's landmark structures, including the Gateway of India, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, and the BMC headquarters, also joined the initiative.
- The Archaeological Survey of India confirmed that all ASI-protected monuments across the country took part in the event.
- Power distribution companies in Delhi, BSES, BRPL, and BYPL urged consumers to switch off lights during the designated hour in support of the initiative.
- In India, Earth Hour has expanded considerably since 2009, with WWF-India coordinating participation from 58 cities and encouraging activities such as nature walks, clean-up drives, and educational events to promote long-term environmental commitment.

About the World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

- WWF is the world's foremost conservation organisation, operating across more than 100 countries with a mission centred on protecting nature and reducing threats to Earth's biodiversity.
- It was founded in 1961 and is headquartered in Gland, Switzerland.
- The organisation works collaboratively with communities, governments, and institutions at every level to develop and implement solutions that safeguard wildlife, ecosystems, and the people who depend on them.
- WWF is the organiser of Earth Hour, which has grown from a local lights-off event in Sydney into a globally recognised annual movement engaging millions of participants across more than 190 countries.

2 Iran-US war Ceasefire

IN FOCUS

A ceasefire between the United States and Iran was announced 39 days into the 2026 West Asia conflict, tentatively referred to as the "Islamabad Accord," marking a significant pause in one of the most dangerous escalations in recent geopolitical history. The deal, brokered largely through Pakistan's diplomatic efforts, involved the US pausing its military strikes in exchange for Iran agreeing to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a critical global energy chokepoint through which nearly one-fifth of the world's oil and gas supplies pass. The two-week ceasefire provided immediate relief to global markets and energy-dependent economies, particularly India, which sources approximately 60% of its energy from the Gulf. The conflict had already claimed over 3,000 lives, disrupted regional stability across Gulf nations, and threatened the safety of nearly one crore Indians living in the region. While the ceasefire creates space for further negotiations, Iran's comprehensive 10-point set of demands, including sanctions relief, non-aggression guarantees, and acceptance of uranium enrichment, signals that a lasting peace agreement will require sustained and complex diplomatic effort.

Key Dimensions of the Ceasefire

- The ceasefire was announced by US President Donald Trump shortly before his stated deadline, with Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi agreeing soon after, following a public appeal for de-escalation by Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.
- Iran's control over the Strait of Hormuz served as its most powerful strategic lever, allowing it to extend the conflict into the energy and economic domains, driving up global oil prices despite the US not being directly dependent on the route.
- During the conflict, Iran reportedly permitted selective passage of vessels through the Strait, charging approximately \$2 million per ship, a system that came to be informally known as the "Ayatoll booth."
- Pakistan played a pivotal role in brokering the agreement, with its military leadership reportedly engaging key figures on both sides behind the scenes; Islamabad is now seeking to institutionalise this role by hosting further talks branded as the "Islamabad Talks."
- Iran has put forward a sweeping 10-point peace plan demanding non-aggression commitments, control over the Strait of Hormuz, recognition of its uranium enrichment rights, full sanctions removal, termination of UN resolutions, compensation, and withdrawal of US troops.
- The 39-day conflict caused devastating regional damage, with the death toll surpassing 3,000 and retaliatory Iranian strikes disrupting stability in Gulf nations including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Oman.

Mediation in International Relations: Key Facts and Frameworks

- Mediation is a peaceful conflict-resolution method involving a neutral or influential third party that facilitates dialogue between conflicting sides to help them arrive at a mutually acceptable agreement; its documented history spans nearly 4,000 years.
- The **Contingency Model**, developed by scholar Jacob Bercovitch, holds that successful mediation depends on three factors: the nature of the conflicting parties, the characteristics of the dispute, and the mediator's credibility and patience.
- The **Theory of Ripeness**, introduced by I. William Zartman, argues that mediation succeeds only when both parties reach a "Mutually Hurting Stalemate" a point where the cost of continuing the conflict outweighs the cost of ending it; the 1979 Lancaster House Agreement for Zimbabwe's independence is cited as a classic example.

- The **Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907** were the foundational international treaties that formally legitimised third-party involvement in disputes and led to the establishment of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA).
- The **UN Charter, Chapter VI, Article 33** explicitly requires conflicting parties to first seek resolution through peaceful means, including negotiation, conciliation, and mediation; this is further reinforced by UN General Assembly Resolution 65/283 (2011) and the 2012 UN Guidance for Effective Mediation.
- Notable historical examples of successful mediation include: the Oslo Accords (facilitated by Norway), the Camp David Accords of 1978 (brokered by the US between Egypt and Israel), the Dayton Agreement of 1995 (ending the Bosnian War), the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 (Northern Ireland, facilitated by George Mitchell), and the Colombian Peace Process of 2016.
- India established an early mediation precedent during the Korean War by advocating for a ceasefire at the UN, chairing the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC), and deploying the Custodian Force of India (CFI).
- India's own approach to mediation is governed by the principle of **strategic autonomy**: it supports UN-led or multilateral mediation in global conflicts but firmly rejects third-party mediation in bilateral disputes, particularly on Kashmir, as established under the Shimla Agreement (1972) and the Lahore Declaration (1999).

3 Khelo India Tribal Games (KITG) 2026

IN FOCUS

India's first-ever national multi-sport event exclusively dedicated to tribal athletes, the Khelo India Tribal Games (KITG), is being held from 25th March to 3rd April 2026 across three cities in Chhattisgarh Raipur, Jagdalpur, and Surguja. The event is organised jointly by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, the Sports Authority of India, the Indian Olympic Association, National Sports Federations, and the Chhattisgarh state government, with technical standards benchmarked against international competitions. Over 60,000 participants from 30 states and Union Territories are competing for 338 medals across seven sports disciplines, with athletics accounting for the highest share of medals. The Games feature both mainstream competitive sports and indigenous disciplines such as kabaddi and mallakhamb as demonstration events, celebrating India's rich physical and cultural heritage. The official mascot, Morveer derived from the Chhattisgarhi words for "our own" and "bravery", embodies the pride and spirit of India's tribal communities. The event is being telecast live on Doordarshan, bringing tribal sporting talent to national audiences for the first time on such a scale.

Structure, Significance and Chhattisgarh's Role

- The Khelo India Tribal Games form a new vertical under the broader Khelo India programme, which also encompasses Youth Games, University Games, Beach Games, and Winter Games, collectively aimed at building an inclusive national sporting ecosystem.
- Athlete selection follows a two-phase process: states and UTs first conduct internal trials to identify eligible tribal athletes, who then participate in national-level trials organised by the respective National Sports Federations, ensuring a transparent and merit-based pathway.
- A dedicated Talent Identification and Development Committee is deployed at the Games to scout promising athletes and channel them into structured training programmes under the Khelo India framework.
- It is particularly significant that Chhattisgarh, a state long affected by Left-Wing Extremism is hosting the Games, reflecting both the resilience of its people and the government's intent to bring organised sport to tribal-majority regions such as Bastar, Surguja, and the Dandakaranya belt.
- The state had previously organised the Bastar Olympics and Surguja Olympics at the community level, demonstrating how local sporting engagement can surface grassroots talent; KITG builds on this foundation at a national scale.
- The Games are being broadcast live on Doordarshan, ensuring that tribal athletes receive national visibility and their stories of effort and aspiration reach audiences across the country.

About Indigenous Sports Featured: Kabaddi and Mallakhamb

- Kabaddi is an ancient Indian sport based on strength, strategy, and endurance; rules were standardised in the early 20th century, leading to organised competitions.
- It gained early global exposure as a demonstration sport at the 1936 Berlin Olympics.
- Mallakhamb is a traditional Indian discipline combining gymnastics, yoga, and strength training, performed on a pole, rope, or hanging apparatus.
- The name derives from words meaning "wrestler" and "pole," reflecting its origins as wrestler training.
- It has evolved into structured forms: pole, rope, and hanging mallakhamb, requiring balance and agility.
- Like kabaddi, mallakhamb was also showcased at the 1936 Berlin Olympics.

4 Plastic Waste Management Rules 2026

IN FOCUS

India amended its Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 on 31st March 2026, introducing revised compliance norms for producers, importers, and brand owners (PIBOs) under the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) framework. The EPR regime, first operationalised in 2022, had required companies to collect and process plastic waste equivalent to 35% of what they introduced into the market in 2021-22, scaling up to 100% by 2024-25. The 2026 amendment retains phased recycled content targets for plastic packaging but significantly eases enforcement by allowing companies that miss their 2025-26 targets to carry the shortfall forward for up to three subsequent years, provided they clear at least one-third of the deficit annually. New reuse obligations for rigid plastic packaging have also been introduced. However, critics point out that actual collection compliance currently hovers between 50-60% by the government's own admission, and no fresh collection targets have been set beyond 2024-25, raising concerns that the policy focus has shifted away from reducing plastic waste at the source towards encouraging the use of recycled content regardless of how it is sourced.

Key Provisions and Targets

- Companies that fail to meet their recycling targets for 2025-26 will not face immediate penalties; instead, the unfulfilled obligation can be carried forward for up to three years, with the condition that at least one-third of the deficit is addressed each year.
- For rigid plastic packaging (Category I - such as HDPE and PET containers), a minimum of 30% recycled content is mandated for 2025-26, rising to 60% by 2028-29; flexible plastics (Category II - carry bags and wrappers) must meet a 10% requirement rising to 20%, while multi-layered plastics (Category III - such as Tetra Pak cartons) must meet 5%, rising to 10%.
- Reuse targets have been introduced for rigid packaging, including 10% for small containers (0.9 to 4.9 litres), 70% for large water packaging, and 10% for large non-water packaging, with gradual increases mandated over time.
- A tradable certificate system has been formalised, allowing companies to meet recycling obligations by purchasing credits from firms that have exceeded their own targets, offering flexibility but enabling companies to bypass direct recycling responsibility.
- The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) discovered over 6 lakh fraudulent certificates in 2023, highlighting a significant integrity concern within the tradable certificate mechanism.
- Compliance is tracked through a centralised EPR portal overseen by the CPCB, though the system relies largely on self-reporting with no comprehensive independent verification in place.
- Exemptions are provided where other regulations restrict the use of recycled plastic - for instance, FSSAI norms may exclude significant portions of the food and beverage packaging sector from these requirements.

Key Terms Defined Under the 2026 Amendment

- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR):** A policy framework that makes producers, importers, and brand owners legally responsible for collecting and processing the plastic waste generated from products they introduce into the market.
- **Recycling:** Defined under the 2026 amendment as the transformation of plastic waste into new products or the generation of energy - an expanded definition compared to the earlier version, which did not include energy generation.

- **End-of-Life Disposal:** Refers to the use of plastic waste for energy recovery through processes such as co-processing in cement and steel industries, waste-to-energy conversion, waste-to-oil conversion, and road construction; converting plastic into new plastic or chemicals is classified separately as recycling.
- **Plastic Waste Processors:** This term now covers both recyclers and entities involved in end-of-life disposal such as waste-to-energy operators and co-processors, broadening the earlier definition which was limited to recyclers alone.
- **Seller:** A newly introduced term that brings raw material suppliers - entities selling plastic resins, pellets, or intermediate packaging inputs - under the regulatory framework for the first time, expanding accountability across the supply chain.
- **Registered Environment Auditor:** Auditors defined under the Environment Audit Rules, 2025, authorised to verify EPR compliance and recycled content usage as an alternative to designated government agencies.
- **Reuse:** Defined as using a material again for the same or a different purpose without altering its physical structure, particularly relevant to reuse obligations applicable to Category I rigid plastic packaging.

5 FCRA Amendment Bill, 2026

IN FOCUS

The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 was introduced in Lok Sabha on 25th March 2026 by Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai, proposing significant changes to the FCRA, 2010. The Act governs the acceptance, utilisation, and accounting of foreign contributions received by individuals, associations, and NGOs in India, with around 16,000 organisations currently registered under it, collectively receiving approximately Rs 22,000 crore annually. The Bill's most significant provision is the creation of a "Designated Authority" - a new statutory body empowered to provisionally or permanently take control of foreign contributions and assets of organisations whose FCRA registration has been cancelled, surrendered, or lapsed. It also reduces maximum imprisonment for FCRA offences from five years to one year, mandates prior Central Government approval before any investigation can be initiated, and expands the category of persons prohibited from accepting foreign contributions. While the government argues the amendments target misuse of foreign funds for anti-national activities, critics raise concerns about excessive centralisation and potential constraints on civil society.

Key Provisions of the 2026 Amendment

- A "Designated Authority," notified by the Central Government, will have powers to provisionally or permanently control foreign contributions and assets - including those created partly from foreign funds - when an organisation's registration is cancelled, surrendered, or lapses.
- An FCRA certificate shall be deemed to have ceased in three situations: no renewal application was submitted, renewal was denied, or renewal was not obtained before the certificate's expiry.
- Upon lapsing of registration, assets vest provisionally in the Designated Authority; if the organisation subsequently obtains fresh registration within the prescribed period, unutilised funds and assets must be returned to it.
- Assets vest permanently in the Designated Authority if the organisation fails to renew registration or ceases to exist; permanently vested assets must be used for public purposes, with proceeds credited to the Consolidated Fund of India.
- The definition of "key functionary" is expanded to include directors, partners, trustees, karta of HUF, and office-bearers of societies and trade unions, making them personally liable for offences unless they demonstrate due diligence.
- Prior Central Government approval is mandatory before any law enforcement agency or State Government can initiate an FCRA investigation; maximum imprisonment is reduced from five years to one year.
- The prohibition on accepting foreign contributions, earlier restricted to associations involved in news broadcasting, is expanded to cover any "person" engaged in such activities.
- Appeals against orders of the Designated Authority may be filed before the District Judge within 90 days.

Background and Governance Concerns

- The original FCRA, 1976 was enacted during the Emergency to prevent foreign interference in domestic politics; it was replaced by the FCRA, 2010, which came into force on 1st May 2011 and is administered by the Ministry of Home Affairs; subsequent amendments in 2016, 2018, and 2020 progressively tightened compliance norms.
- The 2026 amendment addresses a key structural gap: Section 15 of the existing Act allowed vesting of assets upon cancellation but lacked a mechanism for their supervision, management, or disposal - a gap the Designated Authority now fills.

- The Bill raises potential conflict with Article 19(1)(c) of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to form associations; critics argue asset vesting powers and mandatory investigation approval could constrain civil society operations.
- The centralised Designated Authority has also raised federal concerns, with critics arguing it may encroach upon State jurisdiction over local charitable organisations.
- NGOs play a significant role in health, education, and social welfare delivery; stricter compliance requirements risk reducing foreign funding inflows and affecting service reach, particularly in underserved regions.

6

India Withdraws COP33 UNFCCC Host Bid

IN FOCUS

India has withdrawn its candidacy to host the 33rd Conference of Parties (COP33) to the UNFCCC in 2028, as confirmed through an April 2, 2026 letter by Rajat Agrawal, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC), to the UNFCCC Secretariat, citing a "review of its commitments for 2028." Prime Minister Narendra Modi had originally announced India's interest in hosting COP33 at COP28 in Dubai in 2023, and in July 2025, the MoEFCC had set up a dedicated cell for its logistical requirements. The 17th BRICS Summit had also welcomed India's candidacy. Analysts suggest the withdrawal may be linked to logistical pressures from other major events planned for 2028, or reluctance to commit to higher climate ambitions that typically accompany host-country status. With India's exit, South Korea remains the only contender for COP33. The withdrawal is seen by experts as a potential setback to India's leadership role among Global South nations in securing climate finance. India has hosted a COP only once before - COP8 in New Delhi in 2002.

About UNFCCC and the COP Mechanism

- The UNFCCC is the primary international treaty aimed at stabilising greenhouse gas concentrations and preventing dangerous human interference with the climate system; it was adopted at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 and entered into force in 1994.
- A central principle of the UNFCCC is Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC), which acknowledges that while all nations must act on climate change, developed countries bear greater historical responsibility and must take the lead.
- The Conference of Parties (COP) is the supreme decision-making body of the UNFCCC, meeting annually to review progress; the first COP was held in Berlin, Germany in 1995. The UNFCCC Secretariat is based in Bonn, Germany.
- COP hosting rotates among the UN's five regional groups - African States, Asia-Pacific States, Eastern European States, Latin American and Caribbean States, and Western European and Other States; India belongs to the Asia-Pacific group.
- Confirmed upcoming COP hosts: COP31 (2026) - Turkey and Australia; COP32 (2027) - Ethiopia; COP33 (2028) - vacant, with South Korea as the only contender following India's withdrawal.
- The UNFCCC manages several dedicated climate funds: the Green Climate Fund (GCF) - the world's largest climate fund with USD 20 billion in total financing; the Global Environment Facility (GEF); the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD); and the Adaptation Fund.
- The UNFCCC operates on a five-year "ambition cycle" through the Global Stocktake (GST) - a periodic assessment of collective climate progress; the 1st GST was concluded in 2023 and the 2nd GST is scheduled for 2028.

Key COP Milestones and India's Climate Commitments

- COP3 (1997, Kyoto): Adopted the Kyoto Protocol, legally binding developed nations to emission reduction targets.
- COP15 (2009, Copenhagen): Developed countries pledged up to USD 30 billion in fast-start climate finance for 2010-12.
- COP16 (2010, Cancun): Adopted the Cancun Agreements to assist developing nations; Green Climate Fund established.

- COP21 (2015, Paris): Adopted the landmark Paris Agreement, targeting global temperature rise well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, with efforts towards 1.5 degrees Celsius; rich countries pledged USD 100 billion annually in climate finance.
- COP26 (2021, Glasgow): India announced its Net Zero target of 2070 and called for a "phase-down" of coal-based power; Glasgow Breakthrough Agenda signed by 41 countries including India.
- COP28 (2023, Dubai): Pledged phase-out of fossil fuels to achieve net zero by 2050; India launched the Green Credit Initiative, LeadIT 2.0, Global River Cities Alliance (GRCA), and Quad Climate Working Group (QCWG).
- In March 2026, India announced its updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), committing by 2035 to source 60% of installed electricity capacity from non-fossil sources, reduce emissions intensity of GDP by 47%, and increase its carbon sink by 3.5 to 4 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent.

7 PFBR at Kalpakkam attains Criticality

IN FOCUS

India's indigenously designed 500 MWe Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu achieved first criticality on 6th April 2026 at 8:25 PM, formally marking India's entry into the second stage of its three-stage nuclear power programme. First criticality refers to the initiation of a self-sustaining, controlled nuclear fission chain reaction. The milestone was cleared by the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) after a rigorous safety assessment, and was witnessed by senior officials of the DAE, IGCAR, and BHAVINI. The PFBR uses fast neutrons, Uranium-Plutonium Mixed Oxide (MOX) fuel, and liquid sodium as coolant. Once fully commissioned, India will become only the second country after Russia to operate a commercial Fast Breeder Reactor. The achievement directly advances India's goal of harnessing its vast thorium reserves through a closed nuclear fuel cycle, supporting the Nuclear Energy Mission target of 100 GW nuclear capacity by 2047 and India's net zero commitment by 2070.

India's Three-Stage Nuclear Power Programme

- The programme was conceived by Dr. Homi Jehangir Bhabha to suit India's resource profile - limited uranium but among the world's largest thorium reserves; each stage generates the fissile material required by the next, progressively building a self-sustaining nuclear fuel base.
- **Stage 1 - Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs):** Use natural uranium as fuel and heavy water as coolant and moderator; generate plutonium as a by-product in spent fuel, which serves as starter fuel for Stage 2. PHWRs currently account for 8,180 MWe of India's installed nuclear capacity.
- **Stage 2 - Fast Breeder Reactors (FBRs):** Use plutonium from Stage 1 spent fuel and can produce more fuel than they consume; capable of extracting energy from uranium at approximately 60 times the rate of conventional reactors. The PFBR's first criticality marks India's formal entry into this stage.
- **Stage 3 - Thorium-Based Reactors:** Will use Uranium-233 bred in Stage 2 as starter fuel; Thorium-232 continuously transmutes into Uranium-233 inside the reactor, sustaining the fuel cycle. The proposed Advanced Heavy Water Reactor (AHWR) and Molten Salt Reactors (MSRs) are envisaged for this stage, projected to deliver around 500 GWe over 350 years.

Key Facts: Institutions, Milestones, and Nuclear Targets

- PFBR's technology was developed by the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research (IGCAR); its construction and commissioning were handled by BHAVINI, a DAE public sector undertaking incorporated in 2003.
- India began its fast reactor programme with the 13.5 MWe Fast Breeder Test Reactor (FBTR) at Kalpakkam in 1985; core loading of the PFBR was completed in March 2024, preceding the April 2026 criticality milestone.
- All nuclear activities in India are governed by the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, with AERB as the statutory regulator; in 2024-25, nuclear power contributed 3.1% of India's total electricity generation.
- The Nuclear Energy Mission, announced in Union Budget 2025-26, targets 100 GW of nuclear capacity by 2047, allocates Rs 20,000 crore for Small Modular Reactor (SMR) development, and aims for at least five indigenously designed SMRs by 2033.
- The SHANTI Act, 2025 modernises India's nuclear legal framework and enables limited private sector participation under regulatory oversight.
- Beyond the PFBR, six additional FBRs of 600 MWe each are planned - two at Kalpakkam and four at a separate site to be identified.
- India has signed civil nuclear cooperation agreements with 18 countries; the India-US Civil Nuclear Deal enabled uranium imports for domestic PHWRs, accelerating plutonium generation for Stage 2.

8

Workers' Unrest and Labour Reforms (Noida)

IN FOCUS

In April 2026, Noida and nearby industrial areas saw serious worker unrest over low wages, delayed payments, overtime issues, and poor working conditions. After the protests, the Gautam Buddha Nagar administration moved against a large number of labour contractors and outsourcing agencies, ordered recovery of worker dues, and implemented an interim 21% wage hike for workers in 74 scheduled employments in Gautam Buddha Nagar and Ghaziabad, effective from 1 April 2026.

Causes Behind the Unrest

- The Noida unrest reflected a wider labour problem in India: wages have not kept pace with inflation. The minimum wage framework usually has a **base wage** and a **variable dearness allowance**, but while inflation-linked adjustments may happen, revision of the base wage is often delayed. Drishti notes that the **Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW)** rose by nearly **25% between 2021 and 2026**, which reduced the real purchasing power of workers.
- Another trigger was the **regional wage gap**. A **35% minimum wage hike in Haryana in April 2026** raised expectations among workers in neighbouring industrial belts like Noida, where many felt wages were no longer comparable despite similar work and living-cost pressures.
- The unrest also highlighted deeper structural issues such as heavy dependence on **contract labour**, withholding of overtime, bonuses, and statutory dues, and weak enforcement by contractors and principal employers. That is why the post-protest response focused not only on wages, but also on compliance failures by manpower agencies.

Labour Reforms and Their Importance

- The Noida episode is important because it tests the ground-level meaning of India's broader labour reform process. India has consolidated **29 central labour laws into four Labour Codes**: the **Code on Wages, 2019**, the **Industrial Relations Code, 2020**, the **Code on Social Security, 2020**, and the **Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020**. These reforms aim to simplify labour regulation while balancing worker welfare with ease of doing business.
- The **Code on Wages, 2019** is especially relevant because it extends the statutory right to minimum wages to all employees across organized and unorganized sectors, unlike the earlier framework that covered only scheduled employments under the **Minimum Wages Act, 1948**. However, the Noida unrest shows that legal reform alone is not enough; **implementation, inspection, enforcement, and timely wage revision** remain the real challenges.
- The incident also revived debate over the **right to strike**, collective bargaining, and worker protection in a changing economy where contract workers and gig workers face increasing insecurity. In India, the right to protest is constitutionally protected, but the right to strike is mainly a **legal right subject to statutory restrictions**, not an absolute fundamental right.

9 State of India's Bats Report

IN FOCUS

The State of India's Bats (2024–25) report came into the news in April 2026 because it is being described as India's first-ever national assessment of bats. The report drew attention to the fact that bats in India face serious neglect, large research gaps, and multiple ecological threats, despite their major role in natural ecosystems.

Major Findings of the Report

- The report states that India is home to about **135 bat species**. Out of these, **16 species are endemic** to India, meaning they are found only in India, while **7 species are listed as threatened**. At the same time, **35 species are either unassessed or data deficient**, showing that India still lacks complete scientific knowledge about a large section of its bat diversity.
- The report also brings out large regional variation in bat diversity. **West Bengal** records **68 species**, **Meghalaya 66**, and **Uttarakhand 52**, while even a heavily urbanised city like **Delhi** records **15 species**. On the other hand, **Punjab and Haryana** have only **five recorded species** each, reflecting differences in habitat, forest cover, and research intensity.
- A major concern highlighted by the report is that some biodiversity hotspots remain **understudied**, especially the **Himalayas, Northeast India, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Eastern Ghats, and Terai lowlands**. This means the current picture of bat diversity may itself be incomplete.

Ecological Importance and Conservation Concerns

- The report emphasizes that bats are not merely obscure wildlife species; they perform essential ecosystem functions. They help in **pollination, seed dispersal, pest control**, and even contribute to **soil nutrition** through their droppings. Because of this, bat decline can affect agriculture, forests, and broader ecological balance.
- The major threats identified include **urbanisation, deforestation, land-use change, climate impacts**, and in some areas, direct persecution. The report also notes that the stigma around bats worsened during and after the Covid-19 period, even though their ecological value remains very high.
- Another serious issue is the shortage of expertise. Bat Conservation International notes that India has **fewer than 50 dedicated bat researchers**, which is extremely low for a country of India's size and habitat diversity. The report therefore underlines the need for more research, better habitat protection, pathogen surveillance in sensitive regions such as the **Northeast and Western Ghats**, and greater public awareness.

10 First Semiconductor Fab in India

IN FOCUS

On **16 April 2026**, the Government officially notified a **Special Economic Zone at Dholera, Gujarat** for **Tata Semiconductor Manufacturing Private Limited**, and described it as **India's first chip fabrication plant**. This is a major milestone because India had earlier approved semiconductor projects mainly in assembly, testing, and packaging, but this project marks movement into full-scale **fabrication**.

Main Features of the Dholera Fab

- The Dholera semiconductor project will be spread over **66.166 hectares** and is expected to generate employment for about **21,000 persons**. The notified SEZ is meant to support electronic hardware, software, and IT-enabled services, along with enabling infrastructure and a dedicated approval mechanism.
- The Tata fab project involves an investment of about **₹91,000 crore**. Government releases have also stated that the project will have a production capacity of around **50,000 wafer starts per month (WSPM)**. It was approved as part of India's push to build domestic semiconductor manufacturing capacity.
- The fab is being developed in partnership with **PSMC of Taiwan**, which is significant because semiconductor fabrication requires advanced technological know-how, process control, and long-term ecosystem support.

Why This Fab Is Strategically Important

- A semiconductor **fab** is more significant than an assembly or packaging unit because fabrication is the core process in which circuits are built on silicon wafers. This is the technologically complex, capital-intensive front-end stage of chip manufacturing. India's entry into fabrication therefore marks a major industrial and strategic shift.
- The Dholera fab must also be seen within the broader **India Semiconductor Mission**. Official government material says the mission is backed by an incentive framework of **₹76,000 crore**, offering fiscal support of up to **50%** for eligible semiconductor projects. By **December 2025, 10 projects** with a total investment of about **₹1.60 lakh crore** had been approved across multiple states.
- The Government has also eased the **SEZ Rules, 2006** for this sector by reducing the minimum land requirement from **50 hectares to 10 hectares**, allowing more flexibility for semiconductor and electronics projects. This shows that the fab is not just an isolated factory, but part of a wider policy effort to reduce import dependence, build domestic value chains, and position India as an emerging semiconductor hub.

VOICES VICTORIES



AIR 4, AILET 2026

SIDDHANT ROHIT

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



(AIR 4, CLAT 2026

ARSHNOOR SINGH

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

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



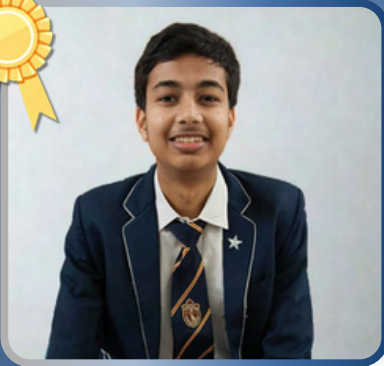
AIR 2, CLAT 2025

DAIWIK AGARWALA

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

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

VOICES VICTORIES



AIR 2, AILET 2025

CHAITANYA GHOSH

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



AIR 4, CLAT 2025

ADITYA GAUTAM ANKHAD

It's all about AILET and CLAT here. Students eat, drink, and sleep law entrance preparation! I used to go to another institute in XIth, but somehow, I was just an enrollment number there. Initially, when I joined, the competition and pressure from Sir felt overwhelming, but thanks to him, everything became much easier. Here, no one calls you by batch number or enrollment ID. All of us studying together were very good friends, but we competed intensely. Since they have a limited intake, we received a lot of personalized attention. I recall most of my batchmates at NPLC making it to the top 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 Indian Navy inducted INS Dunagiri, the fifth Nilgiri-class stealth frigate built by GRSE Kolkata under Project 17A, featuring advanced weaponry including BrahMos missiles and MRSAM systems, approximately 75% indigenous content, and constructed in 80 months with contributions from over 200 MSMEs.
- The Delhi Government launched the Lakhpati Bitiya Yojana on April 1, 2026, replacing the older Ladli Scheme to provide eligible girl children phased financial assistance of ₹61,000 from birth through graduation, maturing to over ₹1.20 lakh with interest, disbursed digitally via Aadhaar-linked accounts.
- Parliament passed the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2026, granting statutory recognition to Amaravati as the sole and permanent capital of Andhra Pradesh, ending over a decade of uncertainty since the state's bifurcation from Telangana in 2014.
- The Ministry of Education declared NCERT a Deemed University under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956, covering six constituent units and requiring it to participate in NIRF rankings and seek NAAC and NBA accreditation, in alignment with the goals of NEP 2020.
- A Madras High Court full bench ruled that the Governor is constitutionally bound by the Council of Ministers' advice under Article 161 on matters of remission and premature release of convicts, and cannot exercise independent discretion contrary to the cabinet's recommendation.
- The National Biodiversity Authority, a statutory body under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, launched a new short-term internship programme of up to three months for undergraduate and postgraduate students in biodiversity conservation and natural resources management.
- The Border Roads Organisation's Project Chetak, established on April 4, 1980, celebrated its 47th Raising Day, maintaining over 4,000 kilometres of road network and 214 kilometres of Ditch-cum-Bund infrastructure across Rajasthan, Punjab, and northern Gujarat.
- In a first-ever such instance in Indian history, the Rajya Sabha Chairman and Lok Sabha Speaker rejected Opposition-backed impeachment motions against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, invoking powers under Section 3 of the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968.
- Senior advocate Menaka Guruswamy, a lead lawyer in the landmark 2018 Navtej Singh Johar case that decriminalised consensual same-sex relationships, was sworn in as a Rajya Sabha MP from West Bengal on a TMC ticket, becoming India's first openly queer Member of Parliament.
- The Election Commission of India's unilateral transfer of West Bengal's Chief Secretary and DGP ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections, without state government consultation, triggered a constitutional debate over the scope of Article 324 powers versus state authority over All India Services officers under the Seventh Schedule.
- The Supreme Court ruled that the offices of Sajjadanashin and Mutawalli are legally and functionally distinct under the Waqf framework, with the former being a spiritual hereditary role and the latter a statutory administrative position under the Waqf Act, 1995, subject to Waqf Board oversight.
- The Indian Army's Trishakti Corps successfully concluded Operation HimSetu in North Sikkim, evacuating over 1,400 stranded tourists and residents within 48 hours following massive landslides, heavy snowfall, and the collapse of a recently inaugurated bridge in the Lachen region.
- The Central Armed Police Forces Act, 2026, notified after Presidential assent, establishes a uniform administrative and service framework across five major paramilitary forces CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP, and SSB while mandating specific IPS deputation quotas at senior ranks.
- Mundra Port, operated by APSEZ, set a national record by shipping 6,008 cars in a single vessel through its RoRo terminal, reflecting India's growing alignment between automobile manufacturing capabilities and logistics infrastructure.
- Justice Yashwant Varma resigned on April 10, 2026, before the completion of parliamentary removal

proceedings, following a three-member in-house committee's finding of misconduct over the discovery of burnt cash at his Delhi residence in March 2025.

- The 7th edition of Exercise DUSTLIK, the annual India-Uzbekistan joint military exercise, commenced on April 12, 2026, in Namangan, Uzbekistan, with 60 Indian personnel focusing on joint operational capabilities in semi-mountainous terrain against unlawful armed groups.
- The Supreme Court held that the right to vote and the right to contest elections are purely statutory rights and not fundamental rights under Part III of the Constitution, reaffirming a position traced back to the 1952 N.P. Ponnuswami judgment.
- The Supreme Court invoked Article 142 to dissolve a marriage where the wife withdrew consent from a mediated settlement after receiving substantial assets, rejecting her unsubstantiated claims of excluded jewellery worth ₹120 crore and directing the husband to pay the remaining ₹70 lakh as final settlement.
- Nitish Kumar resigned as Bihar's Chief Minister on April 14, 2026, ending a two-decade tenure, with Deputy CM Samrat Choudhary set to be sworn in as Bihar's first-ever BJP Chief Minister under a continuing NDA coalition government.
- The Union government introduced three landmark Bills proposing to expand Lok Sabha seats from 543 to 850, implement 33% women's reservation based on the 2011 Census from the 2029 General Elections, and establish a Delimitation Commission by June 2026 to redraw constituency boundaries.
- Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's Punyatithi was observed on April 3, 2026, commemorating the founder of the Maratha Empire who pioneered Guerrilla Warfare tactics, championed Hindavi Swarajya against Mughal rule, and is celebrated as the Father of the Indian Navy for building a coastal naval fleet.
- The Government of India launched a two-year nationwide commemoration of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule's 200th Birth Anniversary from April 11, 2026 to April 11, 2028, with a 126-member High-Level Committee under the Prime Minister's chairmanship, honouring Phule's legacy of founding India's first girls' school in 1848 and the Satyashodhak Samaj in 1873.
- India observed the 107th Martyrdom Day of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre on April 13, 2026, commemorating the April 13, 1919 tragedy in which General Reginald Dyer ordered troops to fire on unarmed civilians gathered at Amritsar, an act that drew widespread condemnation, led to Rabindranath Tagore renouncing his knighthood, and was later avenged by Udham Singh's assassination of Michael O'Dwyer in London in 1940.
- India celebrated the 136th birth anniversary of Dr B.R. Ambedkar on April 14, 2026, honouring the architect of the Indian Constitution, the country's first Law Minister, and a towering social reformer whose major works include Annihilation of Caste and The Problem of the Rupee.
- Colonel Sonam Wangchuk (Retd), recipient of the Maha Vir Chakra and celebrated as the 'Lion of Ladakh' for leading Ladakh Scouts to one of the earliest Indian victories at Chorbat La during the Kargil War, passed away following a heart attack at his Leh residence on April 10, 2026, at the age of 61.
- Iconic playback singer Asha Bhosle, a Guinness World Record holder for the most studio recordings by any artist and recipient of the Dadasaheb Phalke Award and Padma Vibhushan, passed away at the age of 92 in Mumbai due to multiple organ failure after a career spanning over eight decades.
- The Financial Intelligence Unit-India and the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre signed an MoU to enable coordinated intelligence sharing, joint development of red flag indicators, and a "Whole of Government" approach to combat cyber-enabled financial crimes and protect India's digital payment ecosystem.
- The Indian Navy held its biannual Commanders' Conference in New Delhi from April 14-16, 2026, reviewing operational readiness, blue-water capabilities, AI and uncrewed systems integration, and strategic priorities aligned with India's MAHASAGAR initiative and its vision as the preferred security partner in the Indo-Pacific.

ECONOMY & GOVERNANCE

- The OECD lowered India's GDP growth projection from 7.6% in FY 2025-26 to 6.1% in FY 2026-27, citing rising energy prices from the West Asia crisis, gas rationing, and fading fiscal support, while projecting inflation to surge sharply to 5.1% in the

same period.

- Amul, marketed by GCMMF, crossed ₹1 lakh crore in total brand turnover in 2025-26 with 11% growth, cementing its position as India's largest FMCG organisation, the world's top-ranked cooperative, and expanding internationally with fresh milk launches in Europe and the United States.
- The World Bank disbursed \$340 million for the Amaravati Capital Phase-I project, part of a joint \$1.6 billion commitment with the ADB, with core infrastructure works including roads, housing, and water supply systems over 35% complete across six locations.

ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

- India secured the 3rd position globally in renewable energy capacity as per IRENA's 2026 report, with installed capacity reaching 250.5 GW in 2025, driven by a record 37 GW solar addition and 6.3 GW wind energy addition, the highest-ever annual figure for India.
- The Union Ministry of Environment notified the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026, effective April 1, 2026, superseding the 2016 rules, mandating four-stream waste segregation, on-site processing obligations for bulk waste generators, Refuse Derived Fuel substitution for industrial units, and environmental compensation under the Polluter Pays Principle for non-compliance.
- Vantara, the wildlife conservation organisation led by Anant Ambani, announced the launch of the world's first integrated university dedicated to wildlife conservation and veterinary sciences in Jamnagar, Gujarat, offering programmes across wildlife medicine, genetics, conservation policy, and related fields under the One Health framework.
- NHAI launched the 'Arogya Van' initiative to plant approximately 67,462 medicinal trees across 62.8 hectares of vacant land along national highways in 11 states during the first phase, with 36 identified species including Neem, Amla, and Jamun, and an additional 188 hectares earmarked for the monsoon season.

SCIENCE

- ISRO launched Mission MITRA in Leh, Ladakh, from

April 2-9, 2026, a joint behavioural and physiological study by ISRO's Human Space Flight Centre and the IAF-Institute of Aerospace Medicine, monitoring four Gaganyatri candidates at 3,500 m altitude under space-analog conditions to support India's Gaganyaan human spaceflight programme.

- Glowing vertical beams and luminous pillars observed over the Aegean Sea near Turkey and Greece coinciding with minor earthquakes were confirmed by experts as earthquake lights, a rare scientifically documented phenomenon caused by tectonic stress generating electric charges in quartz-rich rocks that travel through fault lines and ionise air molecules to produce visible plasma.
- India inducted INS Aridhaman, its third Arihant-class nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, enabling operational deployment of three SSBNs simultaneously and solidifying India's nuclear triad with credible second-strike capability under its No First Use doctrine, placing India alongside the US, Russia, UK, France, and China in this select group.
- The UAE launched the world's first commercial upper 6GHz internet network at the SAMENA Council Leaders' Summit 2026, offering download speeds up to 10 Gbps with low latency using the "golden spectrum" band in partnership with Huawei, Nokia, and UAE telecom operators du and e&, supporting AI, cloud computing, and virtual reality applications.

APPOINTMENTS

- Egypt's former Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy was unanimously appointed as the next Secretary-General of the Arab League for a five-year term beginning July 1, 2026, succeeding Ahmed Aboul Gheit, with the appointment decided at the 165th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers and pending formal endorsement at the upcoming Arab Summit in Saudi Arabia.
- Indian-origin scientist Deep Jariwala has been appointed UT-ORNL Governor's Chair for Quantum Devices, a joint position between the University of Tennessee and Oak Ridge National Laboratory effective January 2027, where he will lead research in quantum materials and energy-efficient AI microchips while also co-founding Agni Semiconductor.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs appointed Padma Shri

awardee sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik as Brand Ambassador for Census 2027, India's first-ever digital census and the 16th National Census, which will use smartphone-based enumeration tools, a self-enumeration portal in 16 languages, and official mascots "Pragati" and "Vikas."

SPORTS CA

- India topped the Athletics Integrity Unit's list of suspended track and field athletes with 148 ineligible persons as of April 1, 2026, surpassing Kenya's 146, while WADA's December 2024 report had already ranked India first globally with 260 positive tests and a positivity ratio of 3.6%.
- The inaugural Khelo India Tribal Games 2026 concluded in Chhattisgarh with Karnataka crowned overall champion with 23 Gold medals, as 3,800 athletes from 30 states and Union Territories competed across seven disciplines including Archery, Athletics, Hockey, and Wrestling.
- Australian pacer Mitchell Starc and Indian all-rounder Deepti Sharma were named Wisden's Leading Cricketers in the World for 2025, with Shubman Gill winning the Wisden Trophy and being named among the Five Cricketers of the Year, and Abhishek Sharma recognised as Leading T20 Player for scoring over 1,000 T20 runs at a strike rate exceeding 200.

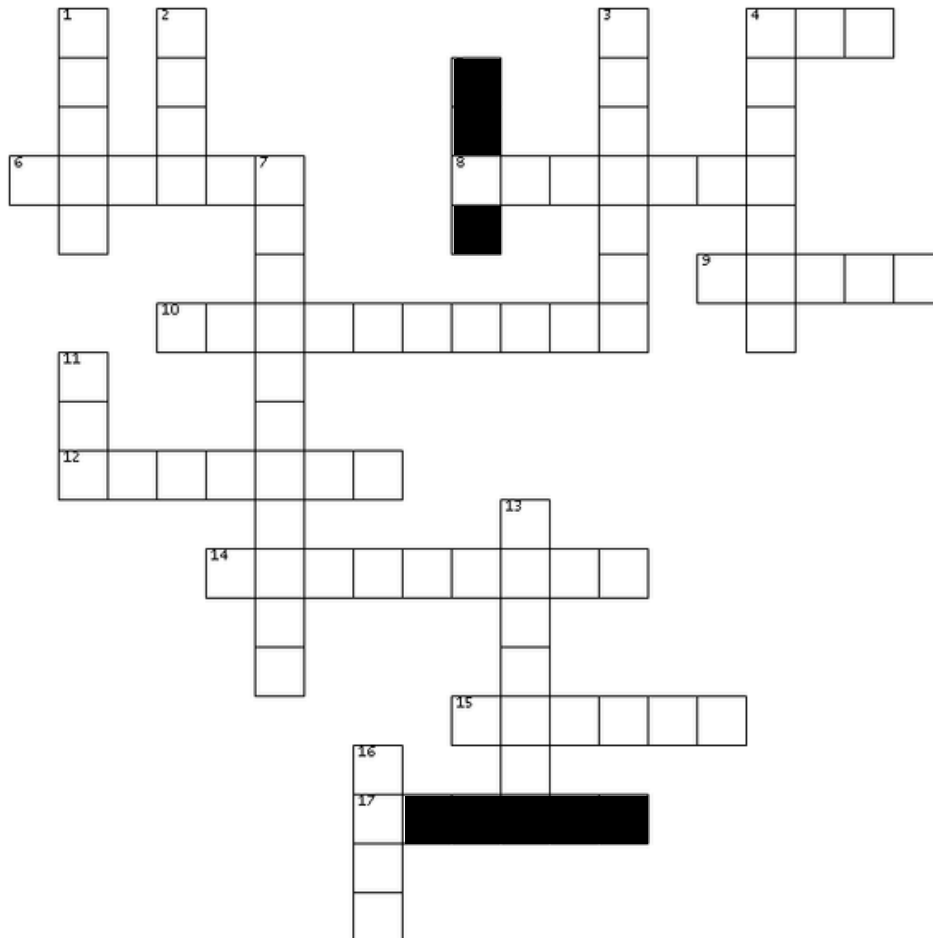
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

- The 14th WTO Ministerial Conference concluded in Yaoundé, Cameroon, with India, led by Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, championing consensus-based decision-making, food security, and Public Stockholding while opposing the Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement, as several key issues including WTO Reform and E-Commerce remain unresolved.
- India organised the first BRICS Youth Coordination Meeting in virtual format under its 2026 BRICS Chairship, presenting a Youth Track roadmap covering education, entrepreneurship, science, health, and sustainability across all upcoming youth engagements during the year.
- Myanmar's coup leader Min Aung Hlaing was elected president by the pro-military parliament with 429 out of 584 votes, following army-backed elections widely condemned as fraudulent, as ousted former leader Aung San Suu Kyi remains detained since the February 2021 coup.
- Newcastle Disease caused by Avian Paramyxovirus Type 1 spread rapidly across Europe in 2026, with Poland as the worst-affected country, prompting mass culling of over half a million birds while Spain, Germany, Czechia, Lithuania, and Slovakia also reported fresh cases to WOA.
- U.S.-Israeli strikes near Iran's Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant on April 4, 2026, killed a security guard and drew warnings from Iranian FM Abbas Araghchi of potential radioactive fallout affecting GCC capitals, while IAEA Director-General Rafael Grossi confirmed no radiation increase but condemned attacks on nuclear sites as prohibited under the Geneva Conventions.
- The FAO Food Price Index rose 2.4% in March 2026 to 128.5 points, driven by a 4.3% surge in wheat prices due to drought in the USA, a 5.1% rise in vegetable oil prices from crude oil spillovers, and a 7.2% jump in sugar prices from Brazil's ethanol diversion, partially offset by a 3.0% decline in rice prices.
- Russia and China vetoed a UNSC resolution to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran blockaded following the US-Israel war launched on February 28, 2026, despite 11 votes in favour, as the blockade continues to disrupt one-fifth of the world's oil and gas shipments and drive global fuel prices higher.
- US President Trump announced a two-week ceasefire on April 8, 2026, suspending US attacks on Iran after 38 days of conflict, with the US demanding dismantlement of nuclear facilities and reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, while Iran sought non-aggression commitments and sanctions removal, and Israel's continued attacks on Lebanon remained a key obstacle to a broader resolution.
- India withdrew its bid to host COP33 in 2028, citing a review of commitments, leaving South Korea as the only remaining interested host, after PM Modi had originally announced the bid during COP28 in Dubai in 2023.
- The fourth edition of the India-Egypt Joint Special Forces Exercise Cyclone-IV commenced at Anshas, Egypt, from April 9-17, 2026, with 25 Indian Special

Forces personnel training alongside Egyptian counterparts in desert warfare tactics to enhance interoperability and strengthen bilateral strategic ties.

- India secured all four contested positions in ECOSOC body elections unopposed, including former diplomat Preeti Saran's re-election to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, alongside representation in the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, Committee on NGOs, and Committee for Programme and Coordination.
- Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu appointed Major General Roman Gofman, his military secretary, as the next Director of Mossad for a five-year term effective July 2, 2026, citing his strategic resourcefulness during the ongoing war.
- Historic US-Iran peace talks in Islamabad, the first direct high-level engagement since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, collapsed after 21 hours without agreement, with core disagreements over Iran's nuclear programme, control of the Strait of Hormuz, and mutual distrust proving insurmountable despite Pakistan's brokerage of the negotiations.
- WHO observed World Health Day 2026 on April 7 under the theme "Together for Health. Stand with Science," anchored by the International One Health Summit in France and the Global Forum of WHO Collaborating Centres, convening over 800 centres from 80+ countries in the largest scientific network ever assembled under a UN agency.
- France hosted the International One Health Summit in Lyon on World Health Day under its G7 Presidency, with WHO announcing key initiatives including a Global Network of One Health Institutions, elimination of dog-mediated rabies deaths by 2030, and a new Avian Influenza Strategic Framework, recognising that approximately 75% of emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic in origin.

May I 2026 Crossword



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.

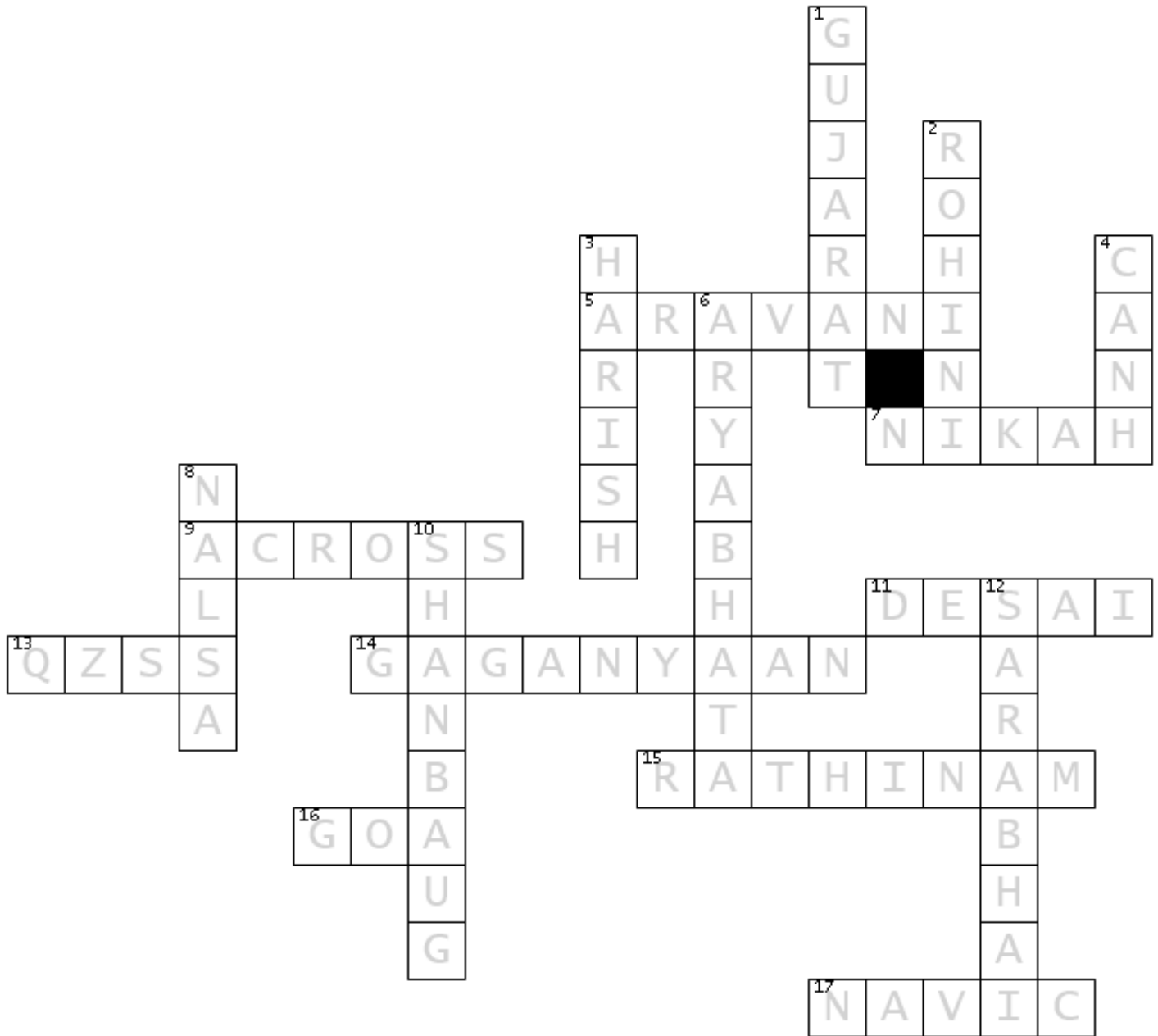
ACROSS

4. Secure key-sharing technology used in India's 1,000-km quantum communication breakthrough
6. Ministry that coordinated the inter-State Great Indian Bustard initiative
8. Artemis II Commander Reid ___
9. Gujarat region where the Great Indian Bustard chick hatched in March 2026
10. Name of the 2026 bill aimed at large-scale decriminalisation of minor offences
12. Critically endangered bird at the centre of the inter-State jumpstart initiative
14. India's human spaceflight mission
15. Indian portal used to send takedown notices against unlawful online content linked to unregistered offshore platforms

DOWN

1. Spacecraft used in NASA's first crewed Artemis mission
2. Global watchdog on money laundering and terrorist financing
3. NASA programme designed to return humans to the Moon
4. Field of technology behind the 1,000-km secure communication breakthrough
7. India's lunar exploration programme run by ISRO
11. Short form of the Great Indian Bustard
13. Surname of the FATF President Elisa de Anda ___
16. Abbreviation for a virtual asset service provider

The completed crossword for the **CLAT TATHYA APRIL 2026 PART 2** 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 for the CLAT Tathya May Issue 1 will provided in the next Edition i.e., May 2026 Part II.



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