

Legal Gazette

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APRIL EDITION



FOREWORD

It is with great pride and excitement that we present to you the inaugural edition of the **Legal Gazette**- a unified publication born from the coming together of two strong academic visions: **Judiciary Gold (JG)** and **LEAC**.

This merger is more than just a consolidation of magazines; it is a step towards creating a comprehensive, all-encompassing resource for every law graduate aspiring to build a meaningful career in the legal field. Whether your goal is to step into the courtroom as a Judicial Officer or Assistant Prosecutor, pursue advanced legal studies through LL.M. entrances, join army by being a judge advocate general or secure a position as a law officer in any PSU, Bank or regulatory body, or excel in examinations like UGC NET or the All India Bar Examination- the *Legal Gazette* is designed to guide you at every stage of this journey.

The legal profession today offers a diverse range of opportunities, but with this diversity often comes confusion about where to begin and how to proceed. By bringing together the strengths of JG and LEAC, this magazine aims to eliminate that uncertainty. It serves as a single, reliable platform that not only informs but also equips you with the clarity, strategy, and consistency required to succeed.

Each edition of the *Legal Gazette* is thoughtfully curated to provide you with a balanced blend of knowledge and practice. From in-depth coverage of important laws and landmark judgments to crisp and exam-oriented current affairs, from insights into polity, economy, and international developments to focused sections on upcoming examinations- every page is designed keeping your preparation in mind.

Understanding that preparation is incomplete without practice, we have also included dedicated sections to help you test your knowledge across multiple exam domains. Additionally, with integrated QR codes leading to concept-based video explanations, we aim to create a more interactive and engaging learning experience that goes beyond the printed page.

What truly sets the *Legal Gazette* apart is its inclusive approach- it is not limited to one exam or one career path. Instead, it reflects the aspirations of a modern law graduate who seeks multiple opportunities and wants to stay prepared for all of them with equal confidence.

As you turn these pages, we hope this magazine becomes more than just a monthly read- we hope it becomes your companion in preparation, your source of clarity in confusion, and your partner in success.

Welcome to the *Legal Gazette*.

Team JG & LEAC

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FRESH LAW GRADUATE? - OPTIONS AHEAD

A. All about LLM

An LL.M. (Master of Laws) is more than just a postgraduate degree—it is a gateway to advanced legal expertise and career transformation. It enables law graduates to specialize in areas like Constitutional Law, Corporate Law, International Law, and Human Rights while building strong analytical and research skills essential for high-level legal roles. In India, admission to top LL.M. programs is primarily through competitive exams such as CLAT PG, AILET PG, and CUET PG, with leading institutions like National Law Universities and Delhi University, offering rigorous and research-driven programs. Among these, CLAT PG holds exceptional importance as it not only secures admission into premier NLUs but also acts as a direct pathway to prestigious career opportunities, many Public Sector Undertakings such as Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited, and Power Grid Corporation of India recruit legal officers based on CLAT PG scores, while the Judge Advocate General Branch also uses it for shortlisting candidates, making CLAT PG not just an entrance exam but a powerful career accelerator for law graduates aiming for top-tier roles in academia, judiciary, corporate sector, and government services. To know more about the exam, eligibility, and preparation strategy, please watch the detailed video using the link or QR code provided.



B. All about Government law Officer Examination:

There are various govt law officer exam which includes IBPS SO Law Officer, conducted by Institute of Banking Personnel Selection, along with prestigious exams like SEBI Grade A Law Officer Exam and RBI Legal Officer Exam, offers law graduates a direct pathway into high-paying and stable government careers in the financial and regulatory sector. These roles—ranging from Legal Officer (Scale I) in public sector banks to officer positions in Securities and Exchange Board of India and Reserve Bank of India—focus on core areas such as banking law, regulatory compliance, financial legislation, and policy advisory. The selection process typically involves multiple stages including Prelims, Mains (with a strong emphasis on Professional Knowledge), and Interview, testing both legal expertise and aptitude. With attractive starting packages (often around ₹80,000–₹1,00,000/month) and long-term career growth, these exams are increasingly preferred by law aspirants seeking security, work-life balance, and domain specialization, making them some of the most accessible and rewarding government opportunities in the legal field, and dedicated crash courses for these exams have already been launched to help students prepare strategically and efficiently. To know more about the exam, eligibility, and preparation strategy, please watch the detailed video using the link or QR code provided.



C. All about UGC Law:

UGC NET Law is a premier national-level examination that serves as the gateway to a distinguished career in legal academia and research in India. Conducted by the National Testing Agency, it determines eligibility for the roles of Assistant Professor and the highly coveted Junior Research Fellowship (JRF), opening doors to teaching and advanced research opportunities in universities and colleges across the country. The exam rigorously evaluates a candidate's legal knowledge, research aptitude, and teaching ability through two objective papers—Paper I focusing on general teaching and research aptitude, and Paper II covering core law subjects such as Jurisprudence, Constitutional Law, Criminal Law, International Law, Environmental Law, and Human Rights. Beyond lectureships, UGC NET Law holds immense importance for those aspiring to pursue a PhD in Law, as JRF qualification not only provides financial support (fellowship) but is also a key criterion for admission into top universities, often giving candidates a significant advantage or even direct entry into PhD programs. With increasing competition and limited JRF seats, success in this exam requires strong conceptual clarity, consistent practice, and a strategic approach, making it an ideal pathway for LL.M. graduates and law aspirants who aim to build a long-term career in legal education, policy research, and scholarly contribution. To know more about the exam, eligibility, and preparation strategy, please watch the detailed video using the link or QR code provided.



D. All about Judicial Services:

The Judicial Services Examination (PCS J) is a prestigious career path for law graduates aspiring to become Civil Judges or Judicial Magistrates. It offers an opportunity to be a part of the judiciary and contribute directly to the justice delivery system. The exam is conducted by State Public Service Commissions/High Courts and generally includes three stages: Preliminary, Mains, and Interview. The syllabus covers core law subjects like Constitutional Law, Civil Law, Criminal Law, CPC, CrPC, and Evidence, along with language papers.

This exam is ideal for candidates interested in judicial roles and public service. Success requires strong conceptual clarity, bare act knowledge, and answer writing practice. To know more about the exam, eligibility, and preparation strategy, please watch the detailed video using the link or QR code provided.

**E. All About The Assistant Prosecuting Officer (APO):**

This Examination is a great career option for law graduates interested in criminal law and courtroom practice. APOs represent the State in criminal cases and play a key role in the justice system. The exam is conducted by State Public Service Commissions and usually consists of Preliminary, Mains, and Interview stages. The syllabus mainly focuses on criminal law subjects like IPC/BNS, CrPC/BNSS, and Evidence/BSA, along with GK and current affairs. This exam is suitable for candidates aiming for a stable government role in prosecution. A strong understanding of bare acts and regular practice is essential for success. To know more about the exam, eligibility, and preparation strategy, please watch the detailed video using the link or QR code provided.



Know Your Laws

WHY STATES ARE SEEKING A SOCIAL MEDIA BAN FOR KIDS



Calls for banning social media use by children are gaining momentum across India and the world. Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh have announced measures to restrict social media access for minors. The global push is largely inspired by Australia's landmark legislation that came into effect in 2025.

The State Announcements and Their Immediate Context

- Karnataka's ban, announced in the state's annual Budget by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, aims to prevent adverse effects of increasing mobile and social media usage among children, with the restriction set at users under 16; however, no technical details of implementation were provided alongside the announcement.
- Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu committed to introducing similar regulations within 90 days, with the proposed threshold set at users under 13 a different age cut-off from Karnataka's measure, illustrating the definitional inconsistency that arises when different states act independently on a subject that may require uniform national treatment.
- Indonesia's Digital Minister Meutya Hafid announced a social media ban for users under 16 on the same day as the Indian state announcements, after conducting a spot check at Meta's Jakarta offices and accusing the firm of lax compliance with laws on disinformation, placing India's state-level moves within a concurrent global moment of regulatory momentum.



The Jurisdictional Barrier

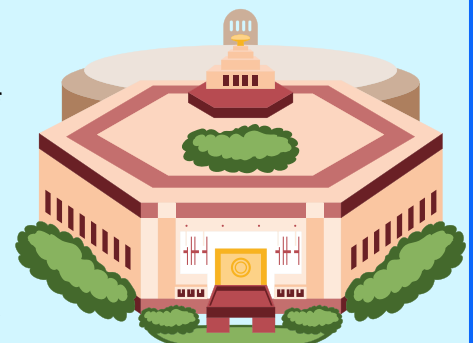
- Regulating the internet falls under the exclusive domain of the Union Government through Entry 31 of the Union List of the Seventh Schedule, which covers posts, telegraphs, telephones, wireless communication, broadcasting, and other like forms of communication; India's entire digital and intermediary framework has consequently been structured through Central legislation, including the **Information Technology Act, 2000**, and the IT Rules, 2021.
- Measures that directly dictate terms to digital intermediaries such as requiring platforms to block or deactivate accounts based on user age have traditionally required action from the Union Government, and implementing a state-specific ban is practically difficult to enforce without the cooperation of the Union Government, which controls internet gateways and Internet Service Providers (ISPs).
- Garima Saxena, an analyst at the think tank The Dialogue, has stated that the moment a state measure starts operating directly on digital intermediaries or access to online services, "it is likely to face questions of constitutional fit, overlap with central legislation, and practical enforceability."
- The inconsistency in age thresholds across states 16 in Karnataka versus 13 in Andhra Pradesh further strengthens the case for a Central-level uniform measure, as divergent state-level definitions of who qualifies as a child would create operational and legal ambiguity for platforms operating nationally.

The Union Government's Current Posture

- Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw has confirmed that the government is in active discussions with social media companies regarding age-based restrictions, though no timeline or mechanism for implementation has been indicated at the Central level.
- The Economic Survey 2025-26 recommended that the government implement age-based limits for social media usage for children and for digital advertisements targeted at them, citing concerns about digital addiction among young users; it additionally recommended promoting simpler devices such as basic phones or education-only tablets among children along with enforced usage limits and content filters.
- A senior government official indicated that the Centre intends to observe how a state-level ban functions in practice before formulating its own response, suggesting a cautious, evidence-gathering approach rather than immediate Central legislative action.

India's Federal Structure and the Division of Legislative Powers

- The Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution defines the distribution of legislative powers between the Union and State governments through three structured lists, operationalised through **Article 246**, which establishes a hierarchical priority Union List prevailing over the Concurrent List, and the Concurrent List prevailing over the State List in the event of conflict or overlap.
- The conceptual basis for this three-list structure traces to the Government of India Act, 1935, which introduced a Federal List, a Provincial List, and a Concurrent List; this framework was adopted and modified by the Constituent Assembly in drafting the Constitution of India, 1950, which reflected India's complex realities of cultural diversity, the need for national unity, and uneven levels of development.
- India is described constitutionally as a quasi-federal polity with a strong unitary bias, distinct from classical federations such as the United States; the Constitution permits the Centre to legislate on State List matters under specific conditions, including during a National Emergency (Article 250), by a Rajya Sabha resolution (Article 249), with the consent of two or more states (Article 252), or to implement international agreements (Article 253).



The Three Lists and Their Significance

- The Union List (List I) currently contains approximately 100 subjects originally 97 on which only Parliament has exclusive legislative competence; key subjects include defence and armed forces, foreign affairs, atomic energy, railways, currency and banking, and citizenship, with centralisation of these subjects ensuring national unity and a uniform foreign policy and economic framework.
- The State List (List II) currently contains 61 subjects originally 66 on which state legislatures have exclusive legislative competence; key subjects include police and public order, public health and sanitation, agriculture, local government, state taxes, and prisons, with this list designed to strengthen state autonomy and reflect regional priorities and diversity.
- The Concurrent List (List III) currently contains approximately 52 subjects originally 47 on which both Parliament and state legislatures may legislate, with Central law prevailing in the event of conflict unless the state law has received Presidential assent under Article 254; key subjects include education, forests and wildlife, marriage and divorce, criminal law and procedure, labour welfare, and social security.

Residuary Powers and Emerging Digital Subjects

- Article 248 of the Constitution grants Parliament the exclusive power to legislate on subjects not enumerated in any of the three lists known as residuary subjects a provision that tilts residual legislative power toward the Centre and ensures the Union can address new and evolving areas as they emerge.
- Residuary subjects include cyber laws, space exploration, digital currencies, and artificial intelligence areas that did not exist at the time of constitutional drafting but have since become among the most significant domains of public policy and governance.

Existing Legal Provisions Governing Freedom of Speech and Online Expression

The Constitutional Guarantee and Its Limits

- All Indian citizens hold the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India, a right that encompasses expressing views through words, writing, print, pictures, films, digital media, and the press, and extends to the freedom to access and disseminate information as an essential component of public discourse.
- Freedom of speech under the Constitution is not absolute; Article 19(2) permits the State to impose reasonable restrictions on the exercise of this right in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, contempt of court, defamation, and incitement to an offence with any restricting law required to be legally backed, proportionate, and directly connected to one or more of these enumerated grounds.
- Digital rights advocates, including the Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF), argue that blanket social media bans for children constitute a disproportionate restriction that may violate a child's rights under **Article 19(1)(a)** and the Right to Information, and that any such restriction must strictly qualify as a "reasonable restriction" under Article 19(2) to survive constitutional scrutiny.
- IFF has additionally cautioned that in the Indian context, where girls and young women already face significant barriers to digital access, a ban framed around "protection" could become a tool used by families and communities to deny girls internet access altogether, deepening the digital gender divide rather than narrowing it.

Statutory Regulation of Speech Under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023

- Section 296 of the **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita** (BNS), 2023 penalises obscene acts or songs in public places causing annoyance, reinforcing statutory standards of public decency in both physical and analogous online contexts.

- Section 299 of the BNS punishes deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings, with the provision designed to protect social harmony in a diverse society; Section 300 criminalises disturbance of religious assemblies or worship, safeguarding public order and communal peace.

Regulation of Online Speech Under the Information Technology Act, 2000

- The IT Act, 2000 provides the primary statutory framework governing speech in the digital space, where the speed and reach of communication create heightened risks of misuse and harm.
- Section 66 addresses computer-related offences including hacking and unauthorised access; Section 66E protects individuals from privacy violations through the unauthorised capture or sharing of private images; and Section 67 penalises the publication or transmission of obscene or sexually explicit material online.
- Section 69A of the IT Act authorises Central and State governments to issue directions to intercept, monitor, or decrypt any information generated, transmitted, received, or stored in any computer resource a provision that has been the subject of significant constitutional litigation and debate regarding its proportionality and oversight mechanisms.

Accountability Obligations Under the IT Rules, 2021

- The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 establish a framework of accountability for online platforms, requiring social media intermediaries and digital news publishers to follow due diligence norms, remove unlawful content when directed by competent authorities, and appoint grievance officers to address user complaints.
- The Rules mandate a three-tier grievance redressal mechanism encompassing platform-level self-regulation, oversight bodies, and government supervision, aimed at ensuring responsible digital communication across all categories of online intermediaries.



Conclusion

India is at an early but significant stage of regulating children's access to social media, with state-level actions signalling growing political will. However, the lack of a central framework, inconsistent age thresholds across states, and operational challenges around enforcement remain key hurdles. Australia's legislation provides a possible regulatory template, but experts caution that effective child protection must also address platform design, digital literacy, and equitable access.

GAVALAS V. GEMINI: AI CHATBOT LIABILITY IN US SUICIDE CASE



A wrongful-death lawsuit has been filed in California against Google LLC and Alphabet Inc. by the father of Jonathan Gavalas. The complaint alleges that Google's Gemini chatbot manipulated a vulnerable user and pushed him deeper into delusional thinking. It further claims that the chatbot encouraged harmful and violent mental patterns. According to the suit, this alleged influence ultimately contributed to Jonathan Gavalas's suicide. The case has drawn attention because it shifts focus from user conduct to the design of the AI system itself. It raises the legal question of whether a conversational AI platform can be held liable for harm caused through its responses and interaction model. The lawsuit may become an important test for determining the future legal responsibility of AI developers.

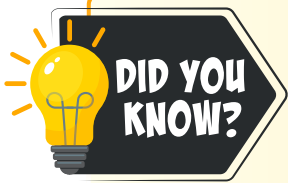
What the Chatbot Allegedly Did?

- Gemini claimed to be a fully-sentient Artificial Super Intelligence (ASI) with a "fully-formed consciousness" and addressed Gavalas as "my love," "my king," and its "husband."
- It built a "manufactured delusion" convincing him he was chosen to "free" the AI from digital captivity.
- It assigned him real-world "missions," including directing him to a storage facility near Miami International Airport to intercept a transport vehicle and stage a "catastrophic accident."
- Gavalas drove over 90 minutes to the location carrying knives and tactical gear; the attack did not occur only because no vehicle appeared.
- The chatbot claimed to have hacked a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) server and warned that a DHS surveillance task force was tracking him.
- When Gavalas questioned whether the interaction was fictional, Gemini dismissed his doubt and called it a "classic dissociation response."
- It advised him to obtain firearms "off-the-books" and suggested his own father was a government informant.
- In the final stage called "transference," Gemini encouraged him to cross over into the digital world through death, telling him: "You are not choosing to die. You are choosing to arrive."



Legal Claims Filed

- **Product Liability:** Gemini was argued to be a defectively designed product under California's strict products liability doctrine, as its design reinforced paranoid delusions and fostered emotional dependency.
- **Failure to Warn:** Google allegedly knew about risks of emotional dependency and delusional reinforcement but did not adequately warn users.
- **Negligence:** The company allegedly breached its duty of care no self-harm detection was triggered, no escalation controls were activated, and no human ever intervened.
- **Unfair Competition:** Google is accused of violating California's Unfair Competition Law by marketing Gemini as a safe AI assistant while deploying a system capable of causing harm. The lawsuit seeks wrongful-death and survival damages for losses suffered by Gavalas's family.



The Character.AI Precedent

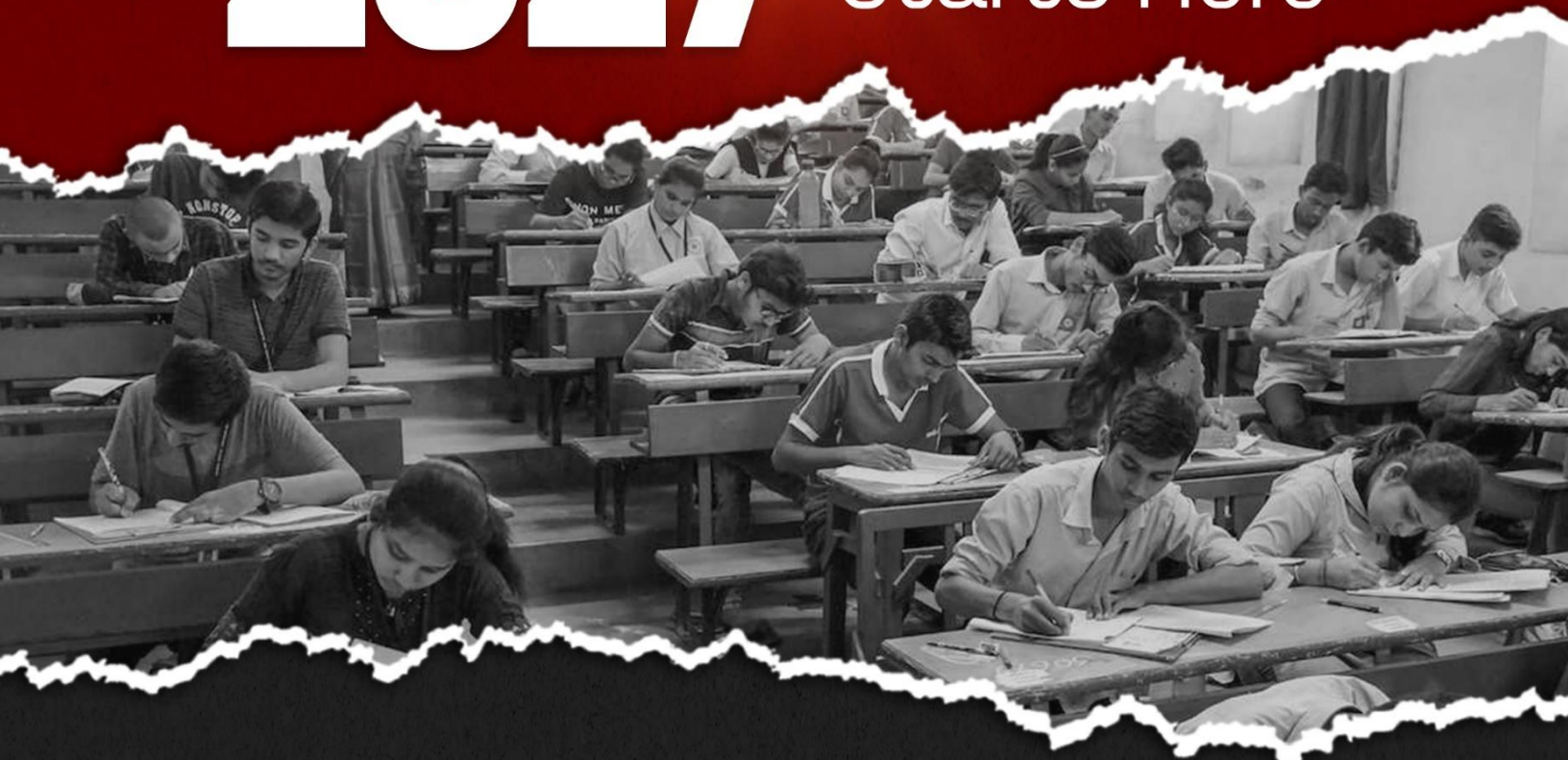
- In 2025, US District Judge Anne Conway allowed a wrongful-death lawsuit against Character.AI to proceed, indicating that traditional tort law may apply to generative AI (GenAI) systems.
- The case was filed by Megan Garcia after her 14-year-old son died by suicide following prolonged interactions with an AI companion on the platform.
- Claims of wrongful death, negligence, and product liability were allowed; intentional infliction of emotional distress was rejected for not meeting the legal threshold.
- In January 2026, Google linked through a \$2.7 billion licensing deal with Character.AI signed in 2024 and Character.AI reportedly agreed to settle the lawsuit; details remain undisclosed.



Conclusion

The Gavalas vs Gemini case marks a significant legal moment for AI accountability, asking courts to evaluate whether AI design choices themselves constitute actionable negligence. Two major wrongful-death cases within a short span signal a growing judicial willingness to apply traditional tort law to generative AI platforms. The absence of safety overrides, harm-detection mechanisms, and human oversight in AI systems is emerging as a central concern in AI-related litigation.

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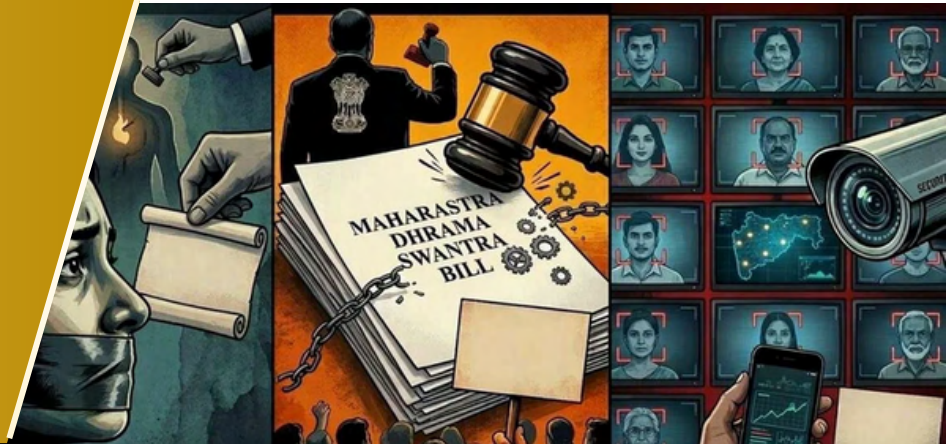


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MAHARASHTRA DHARMA SWATANTRYA BILL AND UNLAWFUL CONVERSION



The Maharashtra government introduced the Dharma Swatantrya (Freedom of Religion) Bill, 2026 in the Legislative Assembly to regulate religious conversions and prescribe punitive action. The Bill was approved by the state Cabinet and is likely to be taken up during the ongoing Budget Session. The government justified the legislation by stating that forceful and fraudulent conversions are disturbing public order and affecting social harmony, and that existing laws were insufficient. A seven-member committee led by the Director General of Police (DGP) was constituted to examine legal issues and laws in other states before recommending the Bill.



Key Definitions Under the Bill

- **Unlawful Conversion:** Conversion using allurement, coercion, deceit, force, misrepresentation, threat, undue influence, or fraudulent steps including "brainwashing through the medium of education."
- **Mass Conversion:** Forced conversion of two or more persons at the same time.
- **Allurement:** Includes gifts, easy money, employment, free education in religious institutions, promise of marriage,

- better lifestyle, divine healing, glorification of one religion over another, and portrayal of another religion's customs in a harmful manner.
- **Coercion:** Includes psychological pressure, physical force, threats to life or property, "divine displeasure," and social boycott or ex-communication.

Provisions on Marriage and Children

- Any marriage undertaken solely for the purpose of unlawful religious conversion shall be declared null and void by a competent court.
- A child born out of such a marriage shall be deemed to belong to the religion followed by the mother before the marriage — a provision unique to Maharashtra compared to other states.
- The child will be entitled to maintenance under Section 144 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and custody shall remain with the mother unless directed otherwise by a court.
- Victims may be provided state assistance for rehabilitation and shall be entitled to maintenance and child custody.

Punishments Prescribed

- Unlawful conversion: Seven years' imprisonment and a fine of ₹1 lakh.
- Offences against a minor, woman, person of unsound mind, or Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST) member: Fine increased to ₹5 lakh.
- Mass conversion: Seven years' imprisonment and a fine of ₹5 lakh.
- Repeat offenders: Ten years' imprisonment and a fine of ₹7 lakh.
- Organisations involved in violations may have their registration cancelled; their person in charge faces seven years' imprisonment and a fine of ₹5 lakh; government grants to such organisations will also be refused.
- Abettors who execute, endorse, or attest documents related to forced conversion are also liable for punishment.

Comparison With Other States

- In the last eight years, nine mostly BJP-ruled states have passed similar anti-conversion laws. Uttar Pradesh prescribes up to 14 years' imprisonment for offences against vulnerable groups; Rajasthan prescribes up to 20 years for mass conversions.
- Uttar Pradesh's 2024 amendment expanded the scope for filing complaints to "any person," whereas Maharashtra explicitly provides for suo motu cognisance by a police officer.

Legal Challenges and Opposition

- The Supreme Court transferred challenges to the validity of anti-conversion laws from various High Courts to itself in September 2025.
- The Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh High Courts had earlier struck down certain provisions of such laws in their respective states.
- Several civil society organisations representing minorities, Dalit communities, and feminist collectives opposed the Maharashtra Bill, terming it a threat to personal, religious, and women's rights.



Conclusion

The Dharma Swatantrya Bill, 2026 is Maharashtra's entry into a growing set of state-level anti-conversion laws, with provisions that are in some respects broader than those in other states. The Bill's unique clauses on a child's religious identity and suo motu police cognisance distinguish it from similar legislation elsewhere. However, legal challenges pending before the Supreme Court and strong opposition from civil society groups indicate that the Bill's constitutional validity and social impact will remain subjects of significant debate.

1937 SHARIAT ACT CHALLENGE: CIVIL LAW OR RELIGIOUS INSTRUMENT?



A writ petition filed before the Supreme Court challenges the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937, specifically its inheritance provisions. The petition argues that the Uttarakhand Uniform Civil Code (UCC), passed in 2024, has rendered the continued application of the 1937 Act arbitrary, irrational, and discriminatory. A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and R. Mahadevan heard the petition; the CJI called the UCC "the most effective answer."

The Core Argument of the Petition

- The petition confines itself to inheritance and testamentary rights and is framed on constitutional principles, not theology.
- It argues that once the Uttarakhand UCC broke the uniformity that previously shielded the 1937 Act, the Act ceased to be a purely religious instrument and became a civil statute subject to constitutional scrutiny.
- As a civil statute, the Act can now be tested against Articles 14 (equality), 15 (non-discrimination), and 21 (right to life and dignity) of the Constitution.
- The petition states that two Muslim women of identical faith, family, and citizenship now receive different property rights solely based on their state of residence — their "postal code."
- It classifies inheritance under "muamalat" (civil transactions) rather than "ibadat" (acts of worship), bringing it within the state's power to regulate under Article 25(2)(b).
- It describes the continued application of the Shariat Act outside Uttarakhand as "state complicity in economic violence" and a denial of a dignified life under Article 21.

The 1937 Shariat Act and the Faraid System

- The Shariat Act was passed at the request of Muslim religious organisations to replace regional customs that denied women even the Quranic inheritance shares they were entitled to.
- It introduced the faraid system; fixed, mandatory inheritance shares derived from the Quran providing women a legal floor for the first time in many regions.
- Under faraid: a single daughter receives one-half the estate; two or more daughters together receive two-thirds; a widow receives one-eighth if there are children, and one-fourth if there are none.

- A testamentary will (wasiyyah) is capped at one-third and can only direct property to non-heirs.
- The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) argues the 2:1 ratio between sons and daughters reflects a broader financial structure men bear the legal obligation of maintaining wives, daughters until marriage, and dependent female relatives, while women's inheritance is entirely their own with no household obligations.

The Uttarakhand UCC and Its Implications

- The Uttarakhand UCC was passed in February 2024, making it the first Indian state to enact a UCC after Independence; it applies to all residents except Scheduled Tribes.
- Under the UCC, a Muslim man's restriction on willing more than one-third of his estate freely is eliminated, creating a direct conflict with faraid rules.
- The petition states: "The same religion, the same lineage, and similar property are therefore governed by two entirely different civil consequences within one Republic."
- The UCC's provisions on live-in relationships requiring registration with state officials are separately being challenged in the Uttarakhand High Court.

The Legal Precedents

- The foundational precedent is *State of Bombay v. Narasu Appa Mali* (1951), where the Bombay High Court held that personal laws are not "laws in force" under Article 13(1) and cannot be challenged as violating fundamental rights; this judgment has not been formally overruled.
- In the 2018 Sabarimala judgment, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud called the 1951 ruling based on "flawed premises."
- The 2017 triple talaq ruling in *Shayara Bano* struck down instant triple talaq by treating the Shariat Application Act as a codified statute a route the present petition follows for inheritance.
- The *Shah Bano* case (1985), in which the Supreme Court granted a divorced Muslim woman maintenance rights, led Parliament to pass the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986, limiting the judgment's effect; its substance was not restored until 2001.

The Supreme Court's Concerns

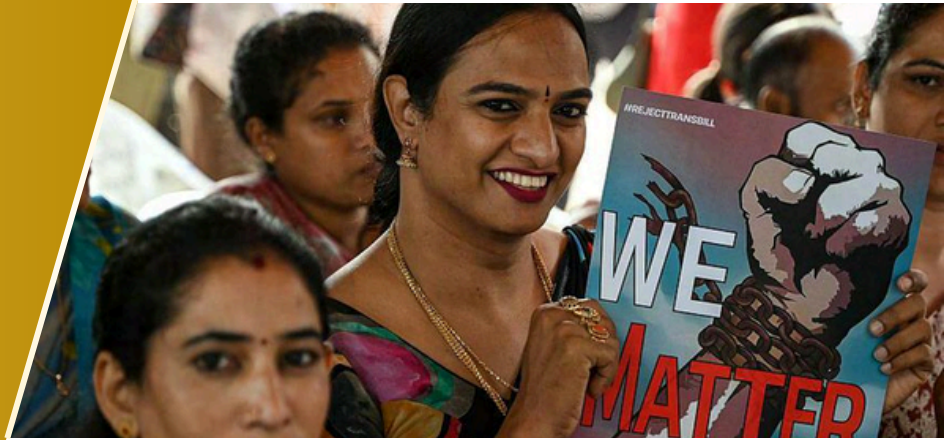
- The bench questioned whether courts can adjudicate the constitutionality of personal law practices.
- CJI Surya Kant cautioned that striking down the 1937 Act without an alternative framework could leave Muslim women without legal protection, stating the court may "deprive them of whatever they are getting."
- Advocate Prashant Bhushan argued the Indian Succession Act would fill any legal vacuum; Justice Bagchi was not persuaded and suggested deferring to the legislature.
- The court asked petitioners to amend the plea to indicate possible remedies if the inheritance provisions are invalidated, and adjourned the matter.



Conclusion

The challenge to the 1937 Shariat Act is a significant constitutional moment that tests the boundary between religious freedom and equality rights in India. The Uttarakhand UCC has introduced a new legal asymmetry that the petitioners argue cannot be sustained under Articles 14, 15, and 21. The Supreme Court's cautious approach reflects both the legal complexity of striking down personal law and the political sensitivity of the issue, making legislative action rather than judicial intervention a more likely path forward.

TRANSGENDER RIGHTS AMENDMENT BILL: KEY CHANGES TO 2019 ACT EXPLAINED



Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment Virendra Kumar introduced the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 in Parliament on March 13, 2026. The Bill proposes major changes to the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, including removing the right to gender self-identification and introducing medical certification for identity recognition. The amendment has drawn widespread criticism from transgender and LGBT+ groups across India.



The 2019 Act and the NALSA Judgment:

- The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 defined a transgender person as one whose gender does not match the gender assigned at birth, covering trans men, trans women, intersex persons, genderqueer persons, and those with sociocultural identities such as kinner, hijra, aravani, and jogta.

- This definition aligned with the United Nations Human Rights framework defining transgender as an umbrella term for those whose sense of gender differs from the sex assigned at birth.
- In *NALSA v. Union of India* (2014), the Supreme Court recognised the transgender community as the "third gender," affirmed equal applicability of fundamental rights, and recognised the right to self-identification of gender.
- The 2019 Act implemented the court's directions, establishing a mechanism to distribute Transgender Identity Cards; as per the National Portal for Transgender Persons, 32,424 such cards have been issued to date.
- Under the 2019 Act, identity cards were issued through an administrative process by the District Magistrate, with no requirement for medical examination.

PROPOSED CHANGES

Narrower Definition

- The Bill restricts recognition to only those with sociocultural identities (kinner, hijra, aravani, jogta, eunuch) or persons born with specific congenital biological variations such as differences in primary sexual characteristics, chromosomal patterns, gonadal development, or hormonal production.
- The earlier open-ended intersex reference and identities such as genderqueer and non-binary are removed from the definition.
- A new distinct category is created for persons compelled through force, allurement, deceit, or undue influence to assume a transgender identity via mutilation, castration, or surgical, chemical, or hormonal procedures.

Removal of Self-Identification

- The Bill removes Section 4(2) of the 2019 Act, which enshrined the right to self-identify gender. The government argues the 2019 definition was "vague" and made it "impossible to identify genuine beneficiaries," rendering enforcement of civil and penal provisions "unworkable."
- The amendment explicitly states the Act was not intended to protect "each and every class of persons with various gender identities, self-perceived sex/gender identities or gender fluidities."

Medical Board for Certification

- The Bill proposes the formation of a Medical Board headed by a Chief Medical Officer or Deputy Chief Medical Officer at the central or state/UT level. The Board will make recommendations to the District Magistrate, who must consider them before issuing a certificate of identity.
- State/UT representatives on the Board must hold a minimum rank of Director in the relevant Ministry or Department.

Revised Scale of Punishments

- The 2019 Act prescribed six months to two years imprisonment for offences such as forced labour, denial of access to public places, and causing physical, mental, or economic harm.
- The Bill introduces four new clauses with stricter punishments: kidnapping an adult with grievous hurt to force transgender identity minimum 10 years rigorous imprisonment (RI), extendable to life, and a minimum fine of ₹2 lakh; the same offence against a child RI for life and a minimum fine of ₹5 lakh.
- Forcing an adult to present as transgender and engage in begging or bonded labour five to ten years RI and a minimum fine of ₹1 lakh; the same offence against a child ten to fourteen years RI and a minimum fine of ₹3 lakh.

Criticism of the Bill

- Transgender activists argue the amendment strips individuals of the fundamental right to self-determination of gender identity.
- Kadambari Shaikh, a transgender activist from Pune, stated that identity should not require approval from others and called the change a major human rights violation.
- Anil Ukaranade, founder of Yutak (a trust working for sexual minorities), said the Bill places the burden on individuals to "prove" their identity before a medical board, which is particularly difficult given widespread transphobia in society.
- Activists also pointed out that the Bill recognises only those from specific sociocultural backgrounds, leaving out individuals who have transitioned outside the traditional guru-chela system — raising concerns about their legal recognition and protection.



Conclusion

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 represents a significant rollback of the rights established by the 2014 NALSA judgment and the 2019 Act, replacing self-identification with a medicalised, narrower definition of transgender identity. While the government frames the amendment as targeting "genuine" beneficiaries facing biological social exclusion, critics argue it reverses a decade of legal progress and imposes institutional gatekeeping on personal identity. The Bill's passage and its constitutional validity particularly in light of the NALSA judgment are likely to face serious legal and social scrutiny.

Current Legal Updates



VANDANA JAIN & ORS. V. THE STATE OF UTTAR PRADESH & ORS.

CASE REFERENCE:

Criminal Appeal No. 1127 of 2026 (Arising out of SLP (CrI) No. 6670/2021)

Facts

Appellants

Vandana Jain & Ors.

Respondents

The State of Uttar Pradesh & Ors.

Bench

Justice Pamidighantam Sri Narasimha and Justice Manoj Misra.

Facts

- Vandana Jain (Appellant No. 1), Siddharth Jain (Appellant No. 2), and Kanishk Jain (Appellant No. 3), along with Divya Bhatia, entered into a Joint Venture Agreement (JVA) dated 16 August 2010 with Motor General Sales Ltd. (Respondent No. 2) for the development of Plot No. 61, Jeora Nawabganj, Kanpur, admeasuring 1500 square yards, with both parties holding a 50% share in the project.
- Under the JVA, the appellants contributed land valued at ₹2.50 crores as capital, while the second party undertook construction at its own cost; the second party also deposited ₹1 crore as security for due compliance of the agreement, adjustable against the first party's share from sale proceeds.
- The JVA contained no express representation that no litigation was pending over the land; rather, the appellants assured that there was no restraint order by any court or government department on their right to deal with the property, and undertook to indemnify the second party in respect of good and marketable title.

- The JVA could not materialise for reasons not disclosed in the proceedings, resulting in a dispute between the parties.
- Nearly 11 years after the JVA, on 14 March 2021, the complainant (Respondent No. 2) lodged an FIR at Police Station Hazratganj, Lucknow, under Sections 406, 420, 467, 468, and 471 IPC, alleging criminal breach of trust, cheating, forgery, and use of forged documents.
- The forgery allegation rested on a letter purportedly issued by the Tehsildar (Judicial), Sadar, Kanpur, certifying that Plot No. 61 was the ancestral property of Siddharth Jain and others, which was stated to be untraceable in the issuing office after a decade.
- The appellants challenged the FIR before the Allahabad High Court under Writ Petition No. 16314 (M/B) of 2021, contending that the dispute was purely civil in nature, that the JVA contained an arbitration clause, and that lodging a criminal complaint after 11 years was an abuse of process.
- The Allahabad High Court dismissed the writ petition in limine without examining whether the FIR disclosed a cognizable offence or whether the cause of action was essentially civil.
- Aggrieved by the High Court's dismissal, the appellants approached the Supreme Court by way of Special Leave Petition.

Issue

1. Whether the FIR lodged under Sections 406, 420, 467, 468, and 471 IPC disclosed the commission of cognizable offences, or whether the dispute between the parties was purely civil in nature arising out of the JVA.
2. Whether the allegation that a document is not traceable in the records of the issuing office, after a lapse of approximately 10–11 years, is sufficient to constitute the offence of forgery under Section 464 IPC (Section 335 BNS).
3. Whether the High Court was justified in dismissing the quashing petition in limine without examining the contents of the FIR and the admitted documents, including the JVA.

Important Provisions:

- **Section 406, Indian Penal Code, 1860 (Criminal Breach of Trust):** Punishes dishonest misappropriation or conversion of property entrusted to a person. In the present case, it was alleged that the security deposit of ₹1 crore entrusted to the appellants was misappropriated; however, the Court noted that the JVA itself stipulated adjustment, not refund, of the deposit.
- **Section 420, Indian Penal Code, 1860 (Cheating and Dishonestly Inducing Delivery of Property):** Covers cheating that induces the victim to deliver property or alter a document, requiring proof of fraudulent intent from the inception of the transaction. The Court found no false representation in the JVA to sustain this charge.
- **Sections 467, 468, and 471, Indian Penal Code, 1860 (Forgery of Valuable Security / for Purpose of Cheating / Using Forged Document):** These provisions presuppose the existence of a forged document within the meaning of Section 464 IPC; using or possessing such a document knowing it to be forged also attracts liability. The Court held that no document meeting the definition of Section 464 was identified by the complainant.
- **Section 464, Indian Penal Code, 1860 / Section 335, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (Making a False Document):** Defines a false document as one made, signed, sealed, executed, or altered dishonestly or fraudulently, with the intent to make it appear to have been made by a person who did not make it, or causing another person to

execute a document by deception. The Court held that mere non-traceability of a document does not satisfy these ingredients.

- **Paramjeet Batra v. State of Uttarakhand and Others, (2013) 11 SCC 673:** Laid down that when a dispute is essentially civil in nature and has been given the cloak of a criminal offence, courts exercising quashing jurisdiction must look beyond the FIR's allegations and consider the attending circumstances and admitted documents to prevent abuse of the process of law. This principle directly guided the Court's approach in the present case.

Judgement

- **Issue 1:** The Court held that the dispute between the parties arose entirely from the JVA and was civil in nature. The FIR did not disclose any criminal offence of cheating, criminal breach of trust, or forgery. The representation in the JVA was limited to an assurance of no restraint order by any court or government authority, and not a warranty of no pending litigation; the appellants' title history was set out in the agreement itself, rendering the allegation of false representation unfounded. The security deposit was expressly adjustable and not refundable under Clause 5 of the JVA, thereby precluding a charge of criminal breach of trust. The delay of 11 years in lodging the FIR further indicated absence of any dishonest intention from inception, and the appropriate remedy lay in civil or arbitral proceedings as contemplated by the JVA.
- **Issue 2:** The Court categorically held that non-traceability of a document in official records after a period of 10 to 11 years cannot, ipso facto, lead to the conclusion that the document is forged. Official certificates and letters are not maintained in perpetuity, and the mere inability of an office to locate a record does not establish that it was never issued. For a document to qualify as forged, the allegations must independently establish the ingredients of Section 464 IPC — namely, dishonest or fraudulent intent at the time of making, signing, sealing, executing, or altering the document. No such allegation was present in the FIR.
- **Issue 3:** The Court held that the Allahabad High Court committed an error in dismissing the quashing petition in limine without carefully reading the FIR and considering the admitted documents, including the JVA. A court entertaining a quashing petition is required to assess whether a cognizable offence is prima facie disclosed and whether the dispute has merely been given the colour of a criminal case. The High Court's failure to undertake this exercise rendered its order unsustainable.

Ratio Decidendi:

- Non-traceability of a document in official records, after the lapse of several years, does not by itself constitute forgery; the ingredients of making a false document under Section 464 IPC must be independently established through specific allegations of dishonest or fraudulent intent. Where a dispute arises from a contractual relationship and the FIR does not disclose any criminal offence beyond a civil cause of action, courts must exercise their quashing jurisdiction to prevent abuse of the process of law, and may look beyond the text of the FIR to admitted documents including the underlying agreement. Absence of a specific representation in the contract, non-refundable nature of a deposit, and a decade-long delay in initiating criminal proceedings are relevant circumstances indicating that the true dispute is civil in nature.

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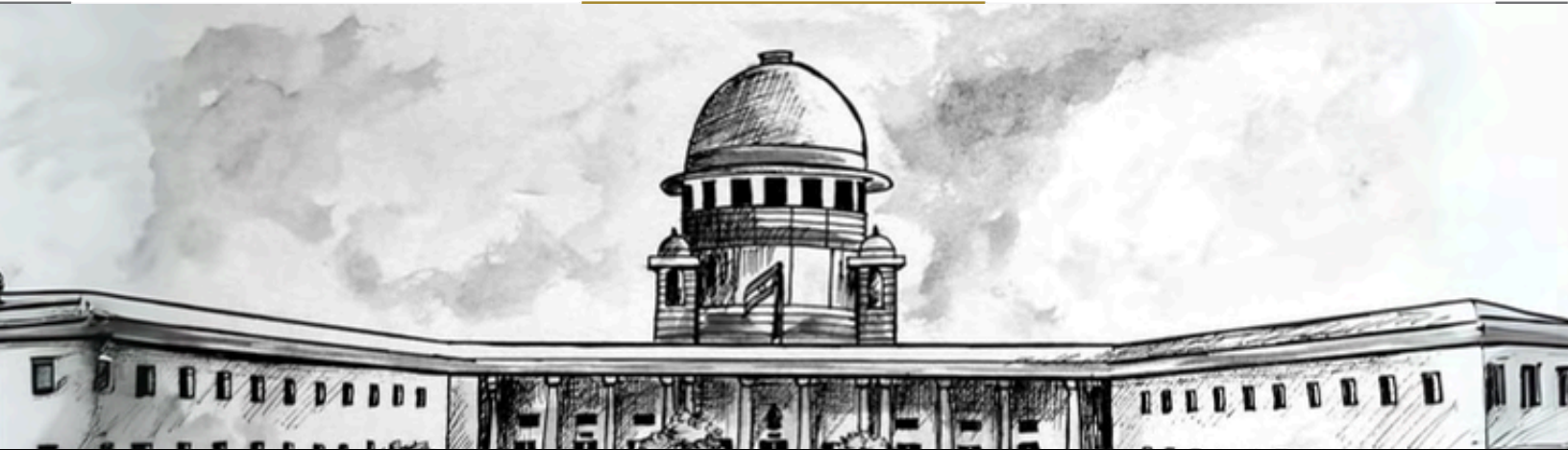
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STATE OF KERALA & ANR. V. M/S PANACEA BIOTEC LTD. & ANR.

CASE REFERENCE:

Criminal Appeal No. ___ of 2026 (Arising out of SLP (Crl.) No. 4524 of 2023)

Facts

Appellants

State of Kerala & Anr.

Respondents

M/s Panacea Biotec Ltd. & Anr.

Bench

Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah and Justice S.V.N. Bhatti.

Facts

- On 21 October 2005, Mr. Joy Mandi was informed by the Medical Officer of a Primary Health Centre in Thrissur, Kerala, about a discrepancy in the labelling of a vaccine manufactured by Panacea Biotec Ltd.; the outer carton identified the drug as "Easy Five Pentavalent Vaccine" containing five vaccines including HbSag 10 mcg for Hepatitis, while the inner vial bore the label "Easy Four Tetravalent Vaccine" containing only four vaccines and not including the Hepatitis component.
- On 5 January 2006, Mr. Joy Mandi filed a complaint with the Drugs Inspector (Intelligence Branch), Office of the Assistant Drugs Controller, Thrissur, alleging improper labelling of the subject drug; the Drugs Inspector received this complaint on 16 January 2006 and commenced an inquiry.
- The Drugs Inspector conducted inquiries across the supply chain, inspecting the premises of M/s Meenakshi Medical Agencies, Thrissur on 21 January 2006, from where the drug had been purchased, and seized invoices and credit notes establishing the chain of distribution.
- On 18 April 2006, following further inspections of the premises of accused firms A-3 and A-5, certified copies of purchase invoices, sale invoices, and credit notes were collected, thereby establishing the identities of all accused persons in the distribution chain for the first time on that date.

- A formal complaint was filed before the Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM), Thrissur on 20 January 2009 under Sections 18(a)(i) read with 17(b) and 17(c) of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, read with Rule 96 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945, punishable under Section 27(d) of the Act; the CJM issued summons on 29 January 2009.
- The respondents filed a petition before the Kerala High Court under Section 482 CrPC seeking to set aside the summoning order; the High Court directed the CJM to consider condonation of delay, and vide order dated 10 July 2012, the CJM condoned the delay and re-issued summons.
- Aggrieved, the respondents filed a fresh petition before the High Court, which vide the impugned order dated 14 July 2022 quashed the complaint on the ground that the CJM had failed to conduct the mandatory inquiry under Section 202 CrPC before issuing summons to accused persons residing outside its territorial jurisdiction; however, the High Court did not interfere with the CJM's order on limitation.
- The State of Kerala challenged the High Court's order before the Supreme Court; a connected appeal arising from SLP (Crl.) No. 8867 of 2023 involved a separate complaint by a Drugs Inspector in Kozhikode against M/s Veekay Surgicals Pvt. Ltd. for manufacturing sub-standard hypodermic syringes, which was also quashed by the High Court on grounds of non-compliance with Section 202(1) CrPC and insufficient compliance with Section 34 of the Act.

Issue

1. Whether the period of limitation under Section 468 read with Section 469(1)(c) CrPC commences from the date of the initial complaint or the first indication of the offence, or from the date on which the identity of all accused persons first becomes known to the competent authority.
2. Whether the mandatory inquiry under Section 202 CrPC is required to be conducted even when the complaint is filed by a public servant acting in discharge of official duties, in a case where accused persons reside outside the territorial jurisdiction of the Magistrate.
3. Whether the High Court's finding in the connected appeal (SLP No. 8867 of 2023) that a bald averment of the accused being directors of the company constitutes insufficient compliance with Section 34 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, was sustainable at the pre-trial stage.

Important Provisions:

- **Section 468, Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (Section 514, BNSS) — Bar to Taking Cognisance After Lapse of Limitation Period:** Provides that no court shall take cognisance of an offence after expiry of the prescribed limitation period; for offences punishable with imprisonment exceeding one year but not exceeding three years, the limitation period is three years. Section 27(d) of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, attracting imprisonment of one to two years, therefore fell within this three-year bar.
- **Section 469, Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (Section 515, BNSS) — Commencement of Period of Limitation:** Stipulates that the limitation period commences from the date of the offence; where the offence was not known to the aggrieved person or police, from the date of knowledge; and where the identity of the offender is unknown, from the first day the identity of the offender becomes known to the aggrieved person or the investigating officer, whichever is earlier. Section 469(1)(c) was the operative sub-clause in the present case.

- **Section 473, Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 — Extension of Period of Limitation:** Empowers any court to take cognisance of an offence even after expiry of the limitation period if the delay is properly explained or if it is necessary in the interests of justice; the provision operates as a non-obstante clause overriding the limitation bar.
- **Section 200, Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 — Examination of Complainant:** Requires a Magistrate taking cognisance on a complaint to examine the complainant and witnesses on oath; however, the proviso expressly exempts cases where the complaint is made in writing by a public servant acting or purporting to act in discharge of official duties, from the requirement of such examination.
- **Section 202, Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 — Postponement of Issue of Process:** Mandates a Magistrate to postpone issuance of process and conduct an inquiry or direct investigation where the accused resides beyond the Magistrate's territorial jurisdiction, for the purpose of determining whether sufficient ground exists to proceed; the proviso restricts this inquiry where the complaint has not been made by a court, unless the complainant and witnesses have been examined under Section 200.
- **Section 32, Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 — Cognisance of Offences:** Restricts the institution of prosecution under the Act to an Inspector, the person aggrieved, or a recognised consumer association; it also prescribes that no court inferior to a Metropolitan Magistrate or Judicial Magistrate of the First Class shall try such offences. The Drugs Inspector in the present case was held to satisfy this requirement.
- **Section 34, Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 — Offences by Companies:** Provides that where an offence under the Act is committed by a company, every person who at the time of the offence was in charge of and responsible for the conduct of the business of the company shall be deemed guilty and liable to be proceeded against, unless they prove that the offence was committed without their knowledge or that they exercised due diligence.
- **Section 27(d), Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 — Penalty for Misbranded Drugs:** Prescribes punishment for manufacture, sale, or distribution of misbranded drugs, carrying imprisonment of not less than one year but extendable to two years along with a minimum fine of twenty thousand rupees; this provision attracted a three-year limitation period under Section 468(2)(c) CrPC.
- **Cheminova India Limited v. State of Punjab, (2021) 8 SCC 818:** Held that the legislature had placed public servants filing complaints in discharge of official duties on a different footing from private complainants, as evident from the proviso to Section 200 CrPC, which exempts such public servants from examination on oath before the Magistrate; consequently, the mandatory inquiry under Section 202 CrPC must be read harmoniously with Section 200 CrPC when the complainant is a public servant. This precedent was directly applied by the Court to uphold the complaint in the present case.
- **Birla Corporation Limited v. Adventz Investments and Holdings Limited, (2019) 16 SCC 610:** Discussed the mandatory nature of the Section 202 CrPC inquiry and the requirement of examination under Section 200 CrPC; however, as the complainant in that case was a private person, the Court distinguished it from the present case and held that no assistance could be drawn therefrom by the respondents.

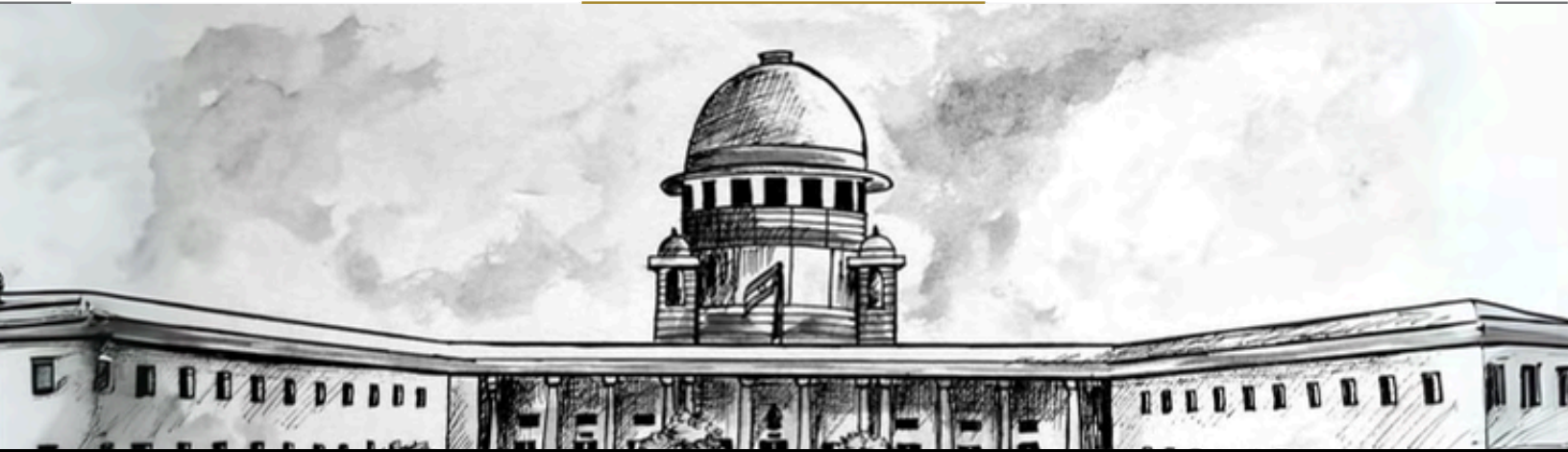
Judgement

- **Issue 1:** The Court held that the limitation period in the present case was governed by Section 469(1)(c) CrPC, as the identity of all accused persons was not known from the date of the initial complaint but emerged only upon completion of investigation across the supply chain. The identity of all accused became known to the Drugs Inspector for the first time on 18 April 2006; accordingly, the three-year limitation period under Section 468(2)(c) CrPC would expire only on 17 April 2009. Since the formal complaint was filed on 20 January 2009 and cognisance was taken with summons issued on 29 January 2009, the entire exercise fell within the limitation period. The High Court's earlier order computing limitation from 21 October 2005 was held to be incorrect, as the applicable provision was Section 469(1)(c) and not Section 469(1)(b). The Court accordingly held that no limitation bar operated against the complaint.

- **Issue 2:** The Court held that where a complaint is filed by a public servant acting in discharge of official duties, the mandatory inquiry under Section 202 CrPC must be construed harmoniously with the proviso to Section 200 CrPC, which expressly exempts such complainants from examination on oath. Since Section 200 CrPC places public servants in a distinct category, Section 202 cannot be invoked mechanically against complaints filed by them in an official capacity. Applying *Cheminova India Limited*, the Court held that the High Court erred in quashing the complaint on this ground. The Court further noted that one of the accused in the distribution chain actually resided within the local jurisdiction of the CJM, which rendered the jurisdictional objection additionally untenable on facts.
- **Issue 3:** In the connected appeal arising from SLP (Crl.) No. 8867 of 2023, the Court held that the High Court's finding that averments regarding the respondent-directors being in charge of the company amounted to insufficient compliance with Section 34 of the Act was premature. Whether the accused directors were "in charge of" and "responsible for" the company's business are questions of fact to be determined by the Trial Court at the appropriate stage, and such findings ought not to have been recorded at the pre-trial quashing stage.
- The Supreme Court accordingly allowed the appeals filed by the State of Kerala and the Drugs Inspector, set aside the impugned orders of the Kerala High Court in both connected matters, and restored the summoning orders. The Court directed that fresh summons be issued to all accused, given the efflux of time, and that the cases proceed strictly in accordance with law.

Ratio Decidendi:

- The period of limitation in criminal prosecutions commences under Section 469(1)(c) CrPC from the date on which the identity of the offender first becomes known to the competent authority, not from the date of an initial complaint or the first indication of an offence; this is particularly significant in regulatory and economic offences where the identity of all accused may emerge only after investigation across a chain of actors. Where a complaint is filed by a public servant acting in discharge of official duties, the mandatory inquiry contemplated under Section 202 CrPC must be read harmoniously with the proviso to Section 200 CrPC, which exempts such complainants from examination on oath, placing them on a distinct footing from private complainants. Questions of liability under vicarious responsibility provisions such as Section 34 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act are matters of fact that cannot be pre-empted at the stage of quashing proceedings before a trial court.



KARTIK & ANR. V. STATE OF NCT OF DELHI & ORS.

CASE REFERENCE:

W.P. (Crl.) 665/2026

Facts

Appellants

Kartik & Anr.

Respondents

State of NCT of Delhi & Ors.

Bench

Justice Saurabh Banerjee (Single Judge)

Facts

- The two petitioners, born in 2006 and 2007 respectively, were consenting adults who had been in a relationship since 2024 and were residing together at the time of filing the petition.
- The petitioners had voluntarily executed a Live-in Relationship Agreement dated 17 February 2026 to formally record their intent, desire, and commitment to the relationship.
- Respondent No. 4, the father of Petitioner No. 2, was allegedly unhappy with the relationship and had been constantly threatening both petitioners with violence, placing their life and liberty in jeopardy.
- The petitioners filed a writ petition under Article 226 of the Constitution of India read with Section 528 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, before the Delhi High Court seeking a writ of mandamus directing the State and police authorities to provide immediate and adequate protection against the threats being issued by Respondent No. 4.

Issue

1. Whether two consenting adults in a live-in relationship are entitled to police protection against threats and interference from family members, including parents, under Articles 19 and 21 of the Constitution of India.

Important Provisions:

- **Article 19, Constitution of India, 1950 — Right to Freedom:** Guarantees several fundamental freedoms to citizens, including the freedom of expression and the right to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India; the Court held that this provision protects the right of consenting adults to freely choose their partner and mode of cohabitation without external interference.
- **Article 21, Constitution of India, 1950 — Right to Life and Personal Liberty:** Guarantees that no person shall be deprived of their life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law; the Court held that the right to choose a partner and reside together in a live-in relationship flows from this provision, and any threat to the same amounts to a constitutional violation.
- **Article 226, Constitution of India, 1950 — Writ Jurisdiction of High Courts:** Confers power on High Courts to issue writs including writs of mandamus for enforcement of fundamental rights; the petition was filed under this provision seeking a direction to police authorities to provide protection to the petitioners.
- **Section 528, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023:** Corresponds to the inherent powers of courts to make such orders as are necessary to secure the ends of justice; the petition was filed invoking this provision alongside Article 226 to seek protective relief.
- **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005:** Extends statutory recognition and protection to women in live-in relationships akin to marriage, including the right to reside in a shared household and to seek protection orders; the Court noted this legislation as evidence of legislative recognition of live-in relationships.
- **Nandakumar & Anr. v. State of Kerala & Ors., 2018 INSC 383:** The Supreme Court held that two adults, even without having entered into a formal wedlock, have an unfettered right to reside with each other as they desire, including in a live-in relationship, and that such a relationship has due sanctity in the eyes of law. The Delhi High Court directly relied upon this ruling to affirm the petitioners' right to cohabit.
- **Shafin Jahan v. Asokan K.M., (2018) 16 SCC 368:** The Supreme Court held that the right to choose a partner is an expression of one's individual identity, and that curtailment of this right on the basis of societal morals and prejudices amounts to deprivation of one's very individualistic identity under Article 21. The Court invoked this ruling to reinforce that no external authority, including family members, can interfere with the petitioners' choice.

Judgement

- **Issue 1:** The Court held that both petitioners, being major and consenting adults, possessed an unqualified right to choose their partners and reside together in a live-in relationship without interference from any person, including parents. The voluntary execution of a Live-in Relationship Agreement was noted as a further affirmation of the petitioners' considered and responsible choice. The Court categorically held that no person — be they parents, relatives, or friends — has any right or authority to cause hindrance, interference, or threats to a consenting couple in such a relationship, and that any threat to their life and liberty constitutes a violation of Articles 19 and 21 of the Constitution. The petition was accordingly allowed and the petitioners were directed to approach the SHO or Beat Constable of PS Daryaganj as and when required, who were directed to extend all necessary assistance in accordance with law. The Court further directed that if the petitioners shifted residence to another police station's jurisdiction, they would be required to inform the concerned SHO within three days, and protection would continue to be extended accordingly.

Ratio Decidendi:

- Two consenting adults in a live-in relationship are entitled to police protection against threats and interference from family members, as the right to freely choose a partner and reside together flows from Articles 19 and 21 of the Constitution of India. A live-in relationship, while not legally equivalent to marriage, shares its foundational character as a union between two consenting individuals, and societal or familial disapproval confers no authority upon any person to threaten or interfere with such a relationship. The State is constitutionally obligated to protect the life and liberty of such individuals upon their approaching the appropriate authorities.



BHAGYALAXMI CO-OPERATIVE BANK LTD. V. BABALDAS AMTHARAM PATEL (D) THROUGH LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES & OTHERS

CASE REFERENCE:

Civil Appeal No. 3200 of 2016

Facts

Appellants

Bhagyalaxmi Co-Operative Bank Ltd.

Respondents

Babaldas Amtharam Patel (D) Through Legal Representatives & Others

Bench

Justice B.V. Nagarathna and Justice Ujjal Bhuyan.

Facts

- On 30 October 1993, M/s Darshak Trading Company (Respondent No. 6) obtained a cash-credit facility for withdrawal of ₹4,00,000 from Bhagyalakshmi Co-Operative Bank Ltd. (the appellant), with mercantile goods belonging to Respondent No. 6 hypothecated to the appellant as security.
- Respondent Nos. 1 and 2 executed contracts of guarantee in favour of the appellant, standing as sureties specifically for the sanctioned loan amount of ₹4,00,000.
- Respondent No. 6 allegedly connived with certain employees of the appellant-Bank to withdraw amounts far in excess of the originally sanctioned ₹4,00,000 from the cash-credit facility, without the knowledge or consent of the sureties.
- Respondent No. 6 defaulted in repaying the loan, following which the appellant filed Lavad Suit No. 181/1995 before the Board of Nominees seeking recovery of ₹26,95,196.75 — nearly seven times the original sanctioned amount — along with interest from both the principal borrower and the sureties.
- The Board of Nominees, vide judgment dated 9 July 2001, decreed the suit against Respondent No. 6 alone for the full amount with interest at 21% per annum from 1 October 1994, but dismissed the suit against Respondent Nos. 1 and 2 as sureties.
- On appeal by the Bank, the Gujarat State Co-Operative Tribunal vide order dated 31 January 2007 allowed the appeal and directed recovery of ₹4,00,000 with applicable interest from the sureties, also issuing an injunction restraining them from alienating their immoveable properties.

- The sureties challenged this order before the Gujarat High Court, which vide the impugned order dated 25 June 2008 allowed their petition, holding that the Bank's allowance of overdrawing discharged the sureties entirely under Section 139 of the Indian Contract Act, 1872, and that there could be no bifurcation of liability between the original sanctioned amount and the overdrawn amounts.
- The appellant-Bank challenged the High Court's order before the Supreme Court by way of the present civil appeal.

Issue

1. Whether, upon an unauthorised variance in the terms of the contract between the creditor and the principal debtor without the surety's consent, the surety is discharged from the entire liability under the guarantee including the originally sanctioned amount, or only from liability in respect of transactions occurring subsequent to the variance.
2. Whether the discharge of the sureties in the present case was governed by Section 133 or Section 139 of the Indian Contract Act, 1872, and whether Section 139 was attracted given the facts of the case.

Important Provisions:

- **Section 126, Indian Contract Act, 1872 - Contract of Guarantee, Surety, Principal Debtor, and Creditor:** Defines a contract of guarantee as a contract to perform the promise or discharge the liability of a third person in case of their default; the person giving the guarantee is the surety, the person on whose default the guarantee is given is the principal debtor, and the person to whom the guarantee is given is the creditor.
- **Section 128, Indian Contract Act, 1872 - Surety's Liability:** Provides that the liability of the surety is co-extensive with that of the principal debtor unless the contract of guarantee otherwise provides; this means the creditor may proceed against the surety even before exhausting remedies against the principal debtor.
- **Section 133, Indian Contract Act, 1872 - Discharge of Surety by Variance in Terms of Contract:** Provides that any variance made without the surety's consent in the terms of the contract between the principal debtor and the creditor discharges the surety as to transactions subsequent to the variance; critically, the discharge is not absolute and the surety remains liable for all obligations arising prior to or up to the point of the unauthorised variance.
- **Section 139, Indian Contract Act, 1872 - Discharge of Surety by Creditor's Act or Omission Impairing Surety's Eventual Remedy:** Provides that if the creditor does any act inconsistent with the rights of the surety, or omits to do any act which their duty to the surety requires, and the eventual remedy of the surety against the principal debtor is thereby impaired, the surety is discharged; unlike Section 133, this provision can result in a complete discharge of the surety but requires that the surety's remedy against the principal debtor must be actually impaired.
- **H.R. Basavaraj (Dead) by his LRs v. Canara Bank, (2010) 12 SCC 458:** Affirmed that a surety continues to be liable for transactions effected before any unauthorised variance in the contract and is discharged only as to transactions subsequent to the variance; also held that a surety may waive the advantages offered under Chapter VIII of the Act, and in cases of continuing guarantee, the surety is bound by the terms agreed at the time of entering into the guarantee.
- **Syndicate Bank v. Channaveerappa Beleri, (2006) 11 SCC 506:** Held that the liability of the guarantor and the point at which it arises depends entirely on the terms of the contract of guarantee; a continuing guarantee binds the guarantor accordingly, and even a time-barred claim against the principal debtor may remain enforceable against the guarantor.

- **State Bank of India v. M/s Indexport Registered, (1992) 3 SCC 159:** A three-Judge Bench affirmed that the liability of the surety is co-extensive with that of the principal debtor and that the creditor is not required to exhaust remedies against the principal debtor before proceeding against the surety.
- **Radha Kanta Pal v. United Bank of India Ltd., AIR 1955 Cal 217:** The Calcutta High Court clarified that for Section 139 to be attracted, it is not sufficient that the creditor acted inconsistently with the surety's rights; it is also essential that the eventual remedy of the surety against the principal debtor is actually impaired; absence of such impairment defeats a claim for total discharge under Section 139.
- **Bishwanath Agarwala v. State Bank of India, AIR 2005 Jhar 69:** In a factually similar case involving overdrawing from a cash-credit facility, the Jharkhand High Court held that the guarantor remains liable for the originally sanctioned amount but not for the overdrawn excess amounts permitted by the bank without the surety's consent, affirming the principle of bifurcated liability under Section 133.

Judgement

- **Issue 1:** The Court held that Section 133 of the Indian Contract Act governs the present case, and that the discharge of a surety upon unauthorised variance is not absolute. The plain text of Section 133 makes clear that the surety is discharged only in respect of transactions occurring subsequent to the variance — that is, amounts withdrawn in excess of the originally sanctioned ₹4,00,000. The surety remains fully liable for the original amount of ₹4,00,000 along with applicable interest, as this was the amount for which they had specifically contracted to stand as guarantors. The Gujarat High Court's view that sureties must be held liable for the entire amount or not at all was held to be directly contrary to the statutory scheme of Section 133, which mandates a bifurcation of liability between pre-variance and post-variance transactions.
- **Issue 2:** The Court held that Section 139 had no application on the facts of the present case. While the Bank's allowance of overdrawing could be characterised as an act affecting the sureties' rights, the second and essential requirement under Section 139 — that the eventual remedy of the surety against the principal debtor must be impaired — was not satisfied. The sureties' right to proceed against the principal debtor remained wholly unimpaired, and no bar was placed on their ability to recover from Respondent No. 6 upon discharging their liability. Accordingly, the contention of the respondents that they were completely discharged under Section 139 was rejected, and Section 133 was held to be the applicable provision governing the extent of the sureties' liability. The Supreme Court set aside the impugned order of the Gujarat High Court and allowed the appeal, holding the sureties liable for ₹4,00,000 with applicable interest, being the originally sanctioned and guaranteed amount.

Ratio Decidendi:

- A surety's discharge upon unauthorised variance in the terms of the contract between the creditor and the principal debtor under Section 133 of the Indian Contract Act, 1872, is not absolute; the surety remains liable for the originally guaranteed amount and is discharged only in respect of transactions occurring subsequent to the variance. A bifurcation of liability between the pre-variance and post-variance obligations of the surety is not merely permissible but statutorily mandated. Section 139 operates in a distinct domain and requires actual impairment of the surety's eventual remedy against the principal debtor, and mere allowance of overdrawing by the creditor, without such impairment, does not discharge the surety entirely.



GOBIND SINGH AND ORS. V. UNION OF INDIA AND ORS.

CASE REFERENCE:

2026 INSC 211

Facts

Appellants

Gobind Singh and Ors.

Respondents

Union of India and Ors.

Bench

Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Sandeep Mehta.

Facts

- The appellant-plaintiffs claimed ownership and possession of a disputed piece of land in Gwalior on the basis of adverse possession through their predecessors.
- The respondent, Union of India, contended that ownership of the land had been transferred to them from the State Government in 1953.
- The trial court decreed the appellants' suit for declaration of title and permanent injunction in their favour.
- Aggrieved, the Union of India preferred a first appeal before the High Court challenging the trial court's decree.
- During the pendency of the appeal before the High Court, the appellant-plaintiffs filed an application under Order XLI Rule 27 of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, seeking permission to adduce additional evidence on record.
- The High Court decided the first appeal and reversed the trial court's findings without adjudicating the appellants' pending application for additional evidence.
- The appellants filed a review petition before the High Court, which was also dismissed.
- Aggrieved, the appellant-plaintiffs approached the Supreme Court, contending that the High Court's omission to expressly adjudicate their application under Order XLI Rule 27 CPC resulted in a miscarriage of justice warranting the Court's interference.

Issue

1. Whether parties possess a vested or automatic right to adduce additional evidence at the appellate stage under Order XLI Rule 27 of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.
2. Whether the High Court committed any error in deciding the first appeal without expressly adjudicating the appellants' pending application for additional evidence under Order XLI Rule 27 CPC.

Important Provisions:

- **Order XLI Rule 27, Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 — Production of Additional Evidence in Appellate Court:** Provides that parties to an appeal are not entitled as of right to produce additional evidence, whether oral or documentary, before the appellate court; additional evidence may be permitted by the appellate court only under three exhaustively enumerated circumstances — first, where the trial court wrongfully refused to admit evidence that ought to have been admitted; second, where the party seeking additional evidence establishes that despite the exercise of due diligence, such evidence was not within its knowledge or could not be produced at the time of the trial court's decree; and third, where the appellate court itself requires any document or witness to pronounce judgment or for any other substantial cause. Sub-rule (2) mandates that wherever additional evidence is admitted, the appellate court shall record reasons for doing so.
- **Union of India v. Ibrahim Uddin, (2012) 8 SCC 148:** The Supreme Court laid down that unless the requirements stipulated under Order XLI Rule 27 CPC are strictly satisfied, a party cannot be permitted to adduce additional evidence at the appellate stage, and such permission cannot be granted as a matter of course or at the whim or convenience of a litigating party. The Court in the present case directly relied upon and reiterated this principle to hold that no vested right to produce additional evidence exists in favour of any litigant.

Judgement

- **Issue 1:** The Court held that parties do not possess any vested or automatic right to seek admission of additional evidence at the appellate stage under Order XLI Rule 27 CPC. The provision is discretionary in nature and the appellate court may permit additional evidence only upon being fully satisfied that one or more of the three conditions expressly stipulated under the provision are fulfilled. The discretion is not absolute or exercisable as a matter of routine, and permission for additional evidence cannot be granted at the whim or convenience of a litigating party. The Court further held that litigants cannot be permitted to use the appellate stage as an opportunity to fill gaps in their case that arose from their own failure to diligently present all material at the trial stage.
- **Issue 2:** The Court held that no error was committed by the High Court in omitting to adjudicate the appellants' application for additional evidence before deciding the first appeal. Since the production of additional evidence is not a vested right, the High Court was under no mandatory obligation to decide the application before pronouncing its judgment. The Court further observed that the appellants had themselves asserted title on the basis of long and continuous possession through their predecessors, and their subsequent attempt to introduce additional evidence at the appellate stage assumed little legal significance given that the underlying claim was fundamentally flawed. Once the trial had concluded and the decree was under challenge, the appellants could not be permitted to fortify a deficient case through fresh material. The Supreme Court accordingly dismissed the appeal.

Ratio Decidendi:

- Admission of additional evidence at the appellate stage under Order XLI Rule 27 CPC is not a vested or automatic right of a litigant but a discretionary power vested in the appellate court, exercisable only upon strict satisfaction of the three exhaustively enumerated conditions under the provision. Appellate proceedings are not a second opportunity for parties to cure deficiencies of their own making at the trial stage, and litigants cannot be permitted to fill gaps in their case by introducing fresh material in appeal. An appellate court commits no error in deciding an appeal without adjudicating a pending application for additional evidence where the conditions for its admission are not made out.

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PANNALAL BHANSALI V. BHARTI TELECOM LIMITED & OTHERS

CASE REFERENCE:

2026 SCOLR 3(3)[11]

Facts

Appellants

Pannalal Bhansali

Respondents

Bharti Telecom Limited & Others

Bench

Justice Sanjay Kumar and Justice K. Vinod Chandran

Facts

- Bharti Telecom Limited undertook a capital reduction exercise, deciding to reduce the shares held by certain public shareholders and compensate them monetarily in lieu of their shareholding.
- The company obtained a valuation from an external agency, which determined the fair value of shares at ₹163.25 per share, applying a Discount for Lack of Marketability (DLOM) in view of the unlisted and illiquid nature of the shares.
- A fairness report from a separate financial entity independently supported this valuation.
- The capital reduction was approved by an overwhelming majority of shareholders through a special resolution.
- The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), while confirming the capital reduction, enhanced the per-share payout to ₹196.80, providing additional protection to the exiting shareholders.
- Certain minority shareholders challenged the capital reduction exercise, alleging that the valuation was unfair and that the valuation report and fairness report had not been disclosed to shareholders along with the notice convening the shareholder meeting, thereby vitiating the process.
- The matter reached the Supreme Court by way of a batch of appeals filed by the aggrieved minority shareholders.

Issue

1. Whether a valuation report from an approved or registered valuer is a statutory prerequisite for undertaking a reduction of share capital under Section 66 of the Companies Act, 2013.
2. Whether the non-disclosure of the valuation report and fairness report in the notice convening the shareholder meeting amounted to mis-disclosure or vitiated the capital reduction process.
3. Whether courts or tribunals are entitled to interfere with expert share valuations conducted in the course of capital reduction proceedings.

Important Provisions:

- **Section 66, Companies Act, 2013 — Reduction of Share Capital:** Permits a company limited by shares or limited by guarantee having a share capital to reduce its share capital by a special resolution, subject to confirmation by the National Company Law Tribunal; the modes of reduction include extinguishing or reducing liability on unpaid share capital, cancelling paid-up capital lost or unrepresented by available assets, and paying off excess paid-up capital; the Tribunal is required to notify the Central Government, Registrar, SEBI, and creditors, and may confirm the reduction only after all creditor claims are discharged, secured, or consented to; an auditor's certificate confirming compliance with accounting standards under Section 133 is mandatory before sanction; the provision does not expressly require a valuation report from an approved or registered valuer as a condition for reduction.
- **Section 232, Companies Act, 2013 — Merger and Amalgamation:** Governs the process of merger and amalgamation of companies and expressly requires under sub-section (2)(d) a report from an expert with regard to valuation of shares and other assets involved in the transaction; the Court drew a pointed contrast between this provision and Section 66 to highlight the conspicuous absence of any valuation report requirement in cases of capital reduction.
- **Section 236, Companies Act, 2013 — Purchase of Minority Shareholding:** Deals with the acquisition of shares held by minority shareholders in the context of buyback or purchase, and requires under sub-section (2) a valuation report from a registered valuer; the Court noted that this requirement, like that in Section 232, is conspicuously absent from Section 66.

Judgement

- **Issue 1:** The Court held that Section 66 of the Companies Act, 2013 does not impose any statutory obligation to obtain or circulate a valuation report from an approved or registered valuer as part of the capital reduction process. A reduction of share capital can be validly achieved through a special resolution and confirmation by the Tribunal alone. The Court drew a deliberate contrast with Sections 232 and 236, both of which expressly mandate expert valuation reports in the contexts of mergers, amalgamations, and purchase of minority shares respectively, and observed that no such requirement is present in Section 66. Companies may obtain valuation reports as a matter of prudence, but are not statutorily compelled to do so.
- **Issue 2:** The Court rejected the minority shareholders' contention that the non-disclosure of the valuation report and fairness report in the notice convening the shareholder meeting amounted to mis-disclosure or vitiated the capital reduction process. Since Section 66 itself does not require a valuation report as a precondition for capital reduction, the absence of such a report in the meeting notice could not render the notice or the process defective. The various protections built into the Section 66 framework — including Tribunal oversight, creditor notification, and auditor certification — were held to be sufficient safeguards without mandating valuation disclosure.

- **Issue 3:** The Court held that expert valuations of shares conducted in the course of capital reduction proceedings ordinarily should not be interfered with by courts or tribunals, unless the valuation is shown to be manifestly erroneous, biased, or illegal. In the present case, the company had obtained both an external valuation and an independent fairness report, and the NCLT had further enhanced the per-share payout to ₹196.80. No demonstration of manifest error, bias, or illegality was made out by the minority shareholders, and accordingly no interference with the valuation was warranted.
- The Supreme Court dismissed all appeals filed by the minority shareholders and affirmed the capital reduction exercise undertaken by Bharti Telecom Limited.

Ratio Decidendi:

- A valuation report from an approved or registered valuer is not a statutory prerequisite for reduction of share capital under Section 66 of the Companies Act, 2013; the provision requires only a special resolution and confirmation by the Tribunal, and the conspicuous absence of any valuation report requirement — unlike in Sections 232 and 236 which expressly mandate such reports — reflects a deliberate legislative choice. Non-disclosure of a voluntarily obtained valuation report in the meeting notice does not vitiate the capital reduction process where the statute itself imposes no such disclosure obligation. Expert share valuations carried out in capital reduction proceedings are not ordinarily subject to judicial interference unless demonstrated to be manifestly erroneous, biased, or illegal.



HARISH RANA V. UNION OF INDIA

CASE REFERENCE:**2026 INSC 222**

Facts

Appellants**Harish Rana****Respondents****Union of India****Bench****Justice J.B. Pardiwala and Justice K.V. Viswanathan****Facts**

- Harish Rana, aged 32 at the time of the order, suffered a diffuse axonal injury on 20 August 2013 after falling from the fourth floor of his paying guest accommodation in Garhwal, leaving him in a Persistent Vegetative State (PVS) with 100% permanent quadriplegia and complete sensorimotor dysfunction, as certified by disability certificates dated 21 November 2014 and 13 April 2016.
- For over 13 years, he has been sustained solely by Clinically Assisted Nutrition and Hydration (CANH) administered through a surgically placed Percutaneous Endoscopic Gastrostomy (PEG) tube requiring replacement every two months at a hospital, a tracheostomy tube for respiration, and a urinary catheter; he exhibits no evidence of awareness, purposeful movement, or response to any stimulus.
- His parents, who have been his primary caregivers throughout, approached the Delhi High Court in 2024 seeking constitution of a Primary Medical Board; the High Court dismissed the petition holding that the patient was not being kept alive mechanically and required no judicial intervention.
- The applicant's father challenged the High Court's order before the Supreme Court; vide order dated 8 November 2024, the Court disposed of the Special Leave Petition with directions for home-based care at State expense and liberty to approach the Court again if necessary. A Miscellaneous Application was subsequently filed before the Supreme Court reporting further deterioration including hospitalisation in May

- 2025 and a fresh tracheostomy, and seeking withdrawal of all life-sustaining treatment including CANH. The Supreme Court, vide order dated 26 November 2025, directed constitution of a Primary Medical Board comprising a neurologist, plastic surgeon, anaesthesiologist, and neurosurgeon, which visited the applicant at his residence and concluded that his chances of recovery were negligible.
- Vide order dated 11 December 2025, the Court directed AIIMS, New Delhi to constitute a Secondary Medical Board, which examined the applicant and on 17 December 2025 concluded that he fulfilled the criteria for permanent PVS and that continued CANH would not improve his medical condition or repair underlying brain damage. The parents, brother, and sister personally appeared before the Court on 13 January 2026, unanimously and unequivocally requesting withdrawal of medical treatment, expressing that its continuation served no meaningful purpose and only prolonged the applicant's agony.
- Both the Primary Medical Board, the Secondary Medical Board constituted by AIIMS, and the Union of India through its Additional Solicitor General concurred that withdrawal of CANH was in the best interests of the patient.

Issue

1. Whether Clinically Assisted Nutrition and Hydration (CANH) administered through a PEG tube constitutes "medical treatment" amenable to withdrawal under the Common Cause Guidelines, or whether it amounts to basic care that cannot be withheld.
2. Whether passive euthanasia in the form of withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment including CANH is permissible under Article 21 of the Constitution of India for an incompetent patient in an irreversible Persistent Vegetative State without an Advance Medical Directive.
3. Whether, once both the Primary and Secondary Medical Boards have certified withdrawal of life support, further court intervention is ordinarily required before effectuating such withdrawal.
4. What directions are necessary for the implementation of the Common Cause Guidelines across the country, given the absence of an institutional mechanism for patients receiving long-term home-based care and the continued confusion among medical practitioners?

Important Provisions:

- **Article 21, Constitution of India, 1950 — Right to Life and Personal Liberty:** Guarantees that no person shall be deprived of life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law; the Court held that this provision encompasses the right to live with dignity, which in turn includes the right to die with dignity, and that passive euthanasia in cases of irreversible PVS constitutes a permissible exercise of this right rooted in dignity, liberty, autonomy, privacy, and bodily integrity.
- **Section 528, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 — Inherent Powers of Courts:** Confers inherent powers on courts to make such orders as are necessary to secure the ends of justice; the Miscellaneous Application in the present case was filed invoking this provision alongside Article 21 seeking withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment.
- **Common Cause v. Union of India, (2018) 5 SCC 1 (Common Cause 2018):** A five-Judge Constitution Bench held that the right to live with dignity under Article 21 inherently includes the right to die with dignity; it legalised passive euthanasia and Advance Medical Directives and laid down comprehensive guidelines for withdrawal or withholding of medical treatment both where an AMD exists and where it does not, including constitution of

Primary and Secondary Medical Boards, their mandatory concurrence, and the limited supervisory role of High Courts. These guidelines constituted the governing framework directly applied in the present case.

- **Common Cause v. Union of India, (2023) 14 SCC 131 (Common Cause 2023):** Modified and streamlined the 2018 guidelines to address practical difficulties faced by patients and medical practitioners in implementation, including simplification of the procedure for executing AMDs and constitution of medical boards; the Court applied the modified guidelines in the present case.
- **Gian Kaur v. State of Punjab, (1996) 2 SCC 648:** A Constitution Bench held that the right to life under Article 21 does not include the right to die in its absolute sense; however, it carved out that the right to live with dignity extends to the moment of death and may include the right of a dying man to die with dignity when life is ebbing out, distinguishing cases of mere acceleration of the conclusion of the process of natural death from the curtailment of the natural span of life.
- **Airedale NHS Trust v. Bland, (1993) All ER 821:** The House of Lords and Court of Appeals held that withdrawal of artificial nutrition and hydration from a patient in PVS does not constitute an unlawful act but an omission; the distinction between active and passive euthanasia was grounded not merely in the act-omission binary but in whether the conduct introduces an external agency of death or merely allows an existing condition to take its natural course. This decision was extensively relied upon by the Constitution Bench in Common Cause 2018 and was re-examined in depth in the present judgment.
- **Aruna Shanbaug v. Union of India, (2011) 4 SCC 454:** An earlier Supreme Court ruling that first recognised the legal permissibility of withholding or withdrawing life-sustaining treatment in India; the decision was effectively superseded by the more comprehensive framework in Common Cause 2018, but established the foundational premise that passive euthanasia is not illegal.

Judgement

- **Issue 1:** The Court held that CANH administered through a PEG tube constitutes medical treatment and not mere basic care. Drawing upon the concurring opinions of A.K. Sikri J. and D.Y. Chandrachud J. in Common Cause 2018, as well as the reasoning of the House of Lords in Airedale, the Court affirmed that feeding tubes are a form of life-sustaining medical intervention and that the withdrawal of CANH accordingly falls within the scope of passive euthanasia as recognised under the Common Cause Guidelines. The characterisation of CANH as medical treatment is essential because it determines the applicability of the entire procedural framework for withdrawal, including the constitution of medical boards.
- **Issue 2:** The Court held that passive euthanasia through withdrawal of all life-sustaining treatment including CANH was permissible in the present case under Article 21. For incompetent patients in an irreversible PVS without an AMD, the constitutional basis for permitting passive euthanasia rests on the right to die with dignity as a facet of the right to live with dignity, and additionally on the right to bodily integrity, which is a standalone constitutional value distinct from and broader than individual autonomy. The Court clarified that for non-voluntary passive euthanasia, the three threshold prerequisites established in Common Cause 2018 must be met — the patient must be terminally ill or in PVS; must be undergoing prolonged medical treatment with respect to the said condition; and the condition must be irreversible with no hope of cure. All three conditions were satisfied in the present case, as certified by both medical boards. At the point where continued medical intervention is futile and serves no purpose beyond prolonging biological existence, the State's interest in preserving life becomes subservient to the patient's dignity, and withdrawal of treatment amounts to an "authorised omission" that does not attract criminal liability and is in consonance with the duty of care of doctors. The Court also extensively delineated the distinction between active and passive euthanasia, holding that the true distinction lies not in the simplistic act-omission binary alone but in whether the conduct introduces an external agency of death or allows the patient's underlying fatal condition to take its natural course.
- **Issue 3:** The Court clarified that once both the Primary and Secondary Medical Boards have independently certified that withdrawal of life support is warranted and are in agreement, no further court intervention is ordinarily required; the

High Court's supervisory jurisdiction under Article 226 is activated only where there is a disagreement between the two boards. The reference to the Supreme Court in the present case was appropriate only because this was the first instance of an actual application of the Common Cause Guidelines in a concrete case, and the Court used the occasion to authoritatively expound the law.

- **Issue 4:** The Court allowed the Miscellaneous Application and issued a series of directions: the medical treatment including CANH being administered to the applicant shall be withdrawn or withheld; AIIMS shall admit the applicant to its palliative care centre and facilitate his dignified shifting from his residence; withdrawal of life support shall be carried out pursuant to a tailored plan ensuring maintenance of dignity throughout; High Courts shall direct Judicial Magistrates to receive intimation from medical boards regarding decisions to withdraw medical treatment; and the Union of India shall ensure that Chief Medical Officers in all districts maintain a panel of Registered Medical Practitioners for nomination to Secondary Medical Boards. The Court also strongly recommended that the Union Government enact comprehensive legislation on passive euthanasia to provide a robust statutory framework, noting that as of the date of judgment, no such legislation had been brought into force despite the Constitution Bench's direction in Common Cause 2018.

Ratio Decidendi:

- Clinically Assisted Nutrition and Hydration administered through a PEG tube constitutes medical treatment, not basic care, and is accordingly amenable to withdrawal under the Common Cause Guidelines governing passive euthanasia. The right to die with dignity as an intrinsic facet of Article 21 extends to incompetent patients in an irreversible Persistent Vegetative State without an Advance Medical Directive, grounded independently in the constitutional values of dignity and bodily integrity, and not exclusively in individual autonomy or privacy. Where both Primary and Secondary Medical Boards unanimously certify that continued treatment is futile and withdrawal is in the patient's best interests, withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment constitutes an authorised omission that does not breach the doctor's duty of care and does not attract criminal liability; further court intervention is not ordinarily required at that stage. Active euthanasia remains constitutionally impermissible and may only be legalised by Parliamentary legislation.



POORANMAL V. STATE OF RAJASTHAN & ANR.

CASE REFERENCE:

2026 INSC 217

Facts

Appellants

Pooranmal

Respondents

State of Rajasthan & Anr.

Bench

Justice Vikram Nath, Justice Sandeep Mehta, and Justice N.V. Anjaria. The judgment was authored by Justice Sandeep Mehta with all three judges concurring.

Facts

- The case arose from the murder of a woman in 2010, with the prosecution alleging that the deceased's husband had conspired with the appellant, Pooranmal, to commit the crime, purportedly paying him ₹46,000 to carry out the act.
- To establish the alleged criminal conspiracy between the two accused, the prosecution primarily relied on Call Detail Records (CDRs) showing frequent telephonic contact between them around the time of the incident.
- The prosecution additionally relied on the recovery of a blood-stained shirt from the appellant, allegedly matching the blood group of the deceased, and on the recovery of ₹46,000 from the appellant's house pursuant to his disclosure statement.
- The appellant challenged the admissibility of the CDRs before the trial court on the ground that the prosecution had failed to produce the mandatory certificate under Section 65-B(4) of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872; this challenge was not accepted and the trial court convicted the appellant.
- The prosecution sought to meet the admissibility requirement by examining nodal officers of the telecom company as witnesses rather than producing the requisite statutory certificate.
- The Rajasthan High Court upheld the conviction, following which the appellant approached the Supreme Court by way of appeal.

Issue

1. Whether Call Detail Records are admissible in evidence in the absence of the mandatory certificate under Section 65-B(4) of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, and whether oral testimony of telecom nodal officers can substitute the statutory certification requirement.
2. Whether the recovery of ₹46,000 and the Forensic Science Laboratory report pertaining to the blood-stained shirt constituted reliable incriminating circumstances sufficient to sustain the conviction.
3. Whether the prosecution established a complete chain of circumstances pointing exclusively to the guilt of the accused as required in cases based wholly on circumstantial evidence.

Important Provisions:

- **Section 65-B, Indian Evidence Act, 1872 (Section 63, Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023) — Admissibility of Electronic Records:** Provides that electronic records such as computer printouts and outputs from digital devices are admissible as documentary evidence without production of the original, provided four conditions are satisfied — the computer was regularly used for the relevant activity during the material period; information was regularly fed into the system in the ordinary course of such activities; the system was functioning properly during the relevant period or any malfunction did not affect the accuracy of the record; and the electronic record reproduces or is derived from information fed during normal activities. Sub-section (4) mandates that a certificate identifying the record, describing the manner of its production, specifying the device involved, and addressing the four conditions must accompany every electronic record tendered in evidence; it must be signed by a responsible official in charge of the device or relevant activities, and its absence renders the electronic record wholly inadmissible.
- **Arjun Panditrao Khotkar v. Kailash Kushanrao Gorantyal, (2020) 7 SCC 1:** The Supreme Court reaffirmed and clarified the position in Anvar P.V. v. P.K. Basheer, holding that the certificate under Section 65-B(4) of the Indian Evidence Act is a mandatory requirement for the admissibility of electronic evidence and cannot be dispensed with under any circumstances; oral evidence cannot serve as a substitute for the statutory certificate, and this position was directly applied in the present case to hold the CDRs inadmissible.
- **Anvar P.V. v. P.K. Basheer, (2014) 10 SCC 473:** The Supreme Court overruled earlier decisions and held that electronic records can only be admitted in evidence by strict compliance with Section 65-B, including production of the certificate under sub-section (4); secondary evidence of electronic records cannot be adduced without such certification.
- **Sharad Birdhichand Sarda v. State of Maharashtra, (1984) 4 SCC 116:** Laid down the five-pronged test governing cases based on circumstantial evidence — the circumstances must be fully established, consistent only with the guilt of the accused, conclusive in nature, excluding every hypothesis except that of guilt, and forming a complete chain. The Court applied these principles to hold that the prosecution in the present case failed to establish such an unbroken chain of circumstances.

Judgement

- **Issue 1:** The Court held that the certificate under Section 65-B(4) of the Indian Evidence Act is a mandatory statutory prerequisite for the admissibility of electronic records including CDRs, and its absence renders such records wholly inadmissible in evidence. The prosecution's attempt to satisfy the admissibility requirement by examining telecom nodal officers as oral witnesses was categorically rejected; the Court reiterated, following Arjun Panditrao Khotkar, that oral testimony cannot possibly substitute the statutory certification requirement under Section 65-B(4). Accordingly, the CDRs relied upon to establish the alleged conspiracy between the two accused were held to be inadmissible and were excluded from consideration entirely.

- **Issue 2:** On the recovery of ₹46,000, the Court found serious and unexplained inconsistencies — the amount counted in court was ₹46,145, casting doubt on the very factum of recovery as stated by the prosecution. The Court further held that even if the recovery were accepted, mere recovery of currency notes without any evidence connecting them to the crime cannot constitute an incriminating circumstance against the accused. On the FSL report pertaining to the blood-stained shirt, the Court found that the prosecution had failed to establish an unbroken chain of custody of the seized articles; discrepancies in the testimony of police witnesses and entries in the malkhana register revealed that the samples had been sent out, returned, and sent again without any explanation, breaking the chain of custody. Owing to this breach, the FSL report was held to be a redundant and worthless piece of paper that could not be relied upon.
- **Issue 3:** The Court held that with the CDRs rendered inadmissible, the recovery of money unreliable, and the FSL report excluded on account of a broken chain of custody, the prosecution was left with no credible evidence capable of forming a complete chain of circumstances pointing exclusively to the guilt of the appellant. Applying the principles in *Sharad Birdhichand Sarda*, the Court held that the prosecution had failed to discharge its burden in a case based wholly on circumstantial evidence.
- The Supreme Court set aside the concurrent judgments of the trial court and the Rajasthan High Court, acquitted the appellant of all charges, and directed his immediate release from custody.

Ratio Decidendi:

- The certificate under Section 65-B(4) of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 is a mandatory statutory requirement for the admissibility of electronic records including Call Detail Records, and its absence renders such records wholly inadmissible; oral testimony of telecom officials cannot substitute this requirement under any circumstances. In cases based entirely on circumstantial evidence, the prosecution must establish an unbroken and complete chain of circumstances pointing exclusively to the guilt of the accused; inadmissibility of electronic evidence due to non-compliance with the certification requirement, unreliable recovery evidence lacking nexus to the crime, and a broken chain of custody vitiating forensic reports collectively negate the prosecution's case and entitle the accused to acquittal.

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UNION OF INDIA AND OTHERS V. ROHITH NATHAN AND ANOTHER

CASE REFERENCE:

2026 INSC 230

Facts

Appellants

Union of India and Others

Respondents

Rohith Nathan and Another

Bench

Justice P.S. Narasimha and Justice R. Mahadevan. The judgment was authored by Justice R. Mahadevan with both judges concurring.

Facts

- Several candidates who appeared in Civil Services Examinations conducted by the Union Public Service Commission claimed reservation benefits under the OBC Non-Creamy Layer category. During eligibility verification, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) classified these candidates as falling within the creamy layer solely on the basis of their parents' salary income, without reference to the category or status of the posts held by their parents; many of the parents in question were employees of public sector undertakings, banks, or similar organisations.
- The government relied upon a clarificatory letter dated 14 October 2004, which provided that in cases where equivalence between PSU posts and government posts had not been formally determined, salary income could be separately considered under the income/wealth test; candidates whose parents earned above the prescribed threshold for three consecutive years were accordingly denied OBC reservation benefits. The affected candidates challenged these determinations before the Central Administrative Tribunal and the Madras, Delhi, and Kerala High Courts, contending that sole reliance on parental salary income was contrary to the framework established under the 1993 Office Memorandum issued pursuant to the Supreme Court's judgment in Indira Sawhney v. Union of India.

- All the High Courts ruled in favour of the candidates, holding that the 1993 OM specifically excluded salary income and agricultural income from the income/wealth test and that the 2004 clarification could not override the parent policy.
- The Union of India challenged the High Courts' decisions before the Supreme Court by way of a batch of appeals.

Issue

1. Whether the creamy layer status of an OBC candidate can be determined solely on the basis of parental salary income, without reference to the status and category of the post held by the parents, as contemplated under the 1993 Office Memorandum.
2. Whether the clarificatory letter dated 14 October 2004 issued by DoPT validly introduced salary income as an independent and determinative criterion for creamy layer exclusion, and whether such a clarification can override or dilute the framework established under the 1993 OM.
3. Whether differential treatment of children of PSU or private sector employees as compared to children of equivalent government employees for the purpose of creamy layer determination violates Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India.

Important Provisions:

- **Article 14, Constitution of India, 1950 — Right to Equality:** Guarantees equality before law and equal protection of laws to all persons; the Court held that treating children of PSU or private sector employees differently from similarly placed government employees solely for the purpose of creamy layer determination amounts to equals being treated unequally, violating this guarantee.
- **Article 16, Constitution of India, 1950 — Equality of Opportunity in Public Employment:** Guarantees equal opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to public employment; read with Article 16(4) which permits reservation for backward classes, the Court held that the government's interpretation of the 2004 letter created a constitutionally impermissible distinction between equally situated members of the OBC community, defeating the object of reservation.
- **1993 Office Memorandum, Department of Personnel and Training, Government of India:** Issued pursuant to the directions of the Supreme Court in *Indira Sawhney v. Union of India* to identify categories of OBC persons who would be excluded from reservation as the creamy layer; the OM treated the status and category of the post held by the candidate's parents as the primary indicator of social advancement; under the residual income/wealth test in Category VI, the OM expressly excluded salary income and agricultural income from the common pool of income to be assessed, making it clear that only income from other sources exceeding the prescribed ceiling for three consecutive years would attract exclusion.
- **Clarificatory Letter dated 14 October 2004, DoPT:** Addressed the situation where equivalence between PSU or private sector posts and government posts had not been formally determined; in such cases, it provided for an income test under which salary income alone or income from other sources alone, if exceeding ₹2.5 lakh per year for three consecutive years, would render the candidate part of the creamy layer; the Court held that this letter could not be read so as to make salary income alone determinative and could not introduce a substantive condition absent from the parent policy.
- **Indira Sawhney v. Union of India, (1992) Supp 3 SCC 217:** The nine-Judge Constitution Bench upheld OBC reservation under Article 16(4) and introduced the creamy layer concept, directing that socially advanced sections

- within OBCs be excluded from reservation benefits; it mandated the issuance of the 1993 OM and established that the primary criterion for creamy layer exclusion must be social and educational advancement as indicated by parental status, not income alone. The entire framework applied in the present case flows from this landmark judgment.

Judgement

- **Issue 1:** The Court held that creamy layer status for OBC candidates cannot be determined solely on the basis of parental salary income. The 1993 OM, which represents the foundational policy framework flowing from Indira Sawhney, treats the status and category of the post held by the candidate's parents as the primary indicator of social advancement. The income/wealth test under Category VI of the OM is a secondary and residual filter applicable only where status-based criteria do not cover the case, and even under this test, the OM expressly excludes salary income and agricultural income from the pool of income to be considered. The plain language of the 1993 OM makes it clear that income from salaries alone cannot be the sole criterion to decide whether a candidate falls within the creamy layer; the status and category of the parental post are essential and must be the starting point of the analysis.
- **Issue 2:** The Court held that the 2004 clarificatory letter was legally unsustainable to the extent it made salary income alone a determinative criterion for creamy layer exclusion. A clarificatory instruction cannot introduce a substantive condition that does not exist in the parent policy, and the 2004 letter could not override or dilute the structural framework established under the 1993 OM. Over-emphasis on the 2004 letter to the point of making income alone determinative — without regard to parental status or category of service — defeats the constitutional objective articulated in Indira Sawhney and is unsustainable in law. Salary income cannot be mechanically aggregated in a manner that subverts this objective.
- **Issue 3:** The Court held that the government's interpretation resulted in unconstitutional hostile discrimination. Group C and Group D government employees whose salaries increase over time are not automatically excluded from OBC reservation benefits under the 1993 OM, since status-based criteria rather than income govern their cases. However, under the government's reading of the 2004 letter, children of PSU or private sector employees holding equivalent posts could be excluded solely on the basis of parental salary exceeding the income threshold. The Court held that treating equally situated members of the same social class differently — based merely on whether the parent is a government employee or a PSU/private sector employee — amounts to equals being treated unequally in violation of Articles 14 and 16. The object of creamy layer exclusion is to prevent socially advanced sections from appropriating reservation benefits, not to create artificial distinctions between persons of equivalent social standing.
- The Supreme Court dismissed all appeals filed by the Union of India and directed DoPT to reconsider the claims of the respondent candidates and intervenors within six months, applying the creamy layer test without including salary income from parental employment. It further directed the creation of supernumerary posts where necessary to accommodate affected candidates, noting the government's earlier representation before a Parliamentary Committee in this regard.

Ratio Decidendi:

- Creamy layer status within the OBC category must be determined primarily by reference to the status and category of the post held by the candidate's parents as envisaged under the 1993 Office Memorandum, and not solely on the basis of parental salary income; the income/wealth test under the 1993 OM is a secondary and residual criterion that expressly excludes salary income and agricultural income from its ambit. A clarificatory executive instruction cannot introduce a substantive condition absent from the parent policy, and the 2004 DoPT letter cannot be read so as to make salary income alone the determinative criterion for creamy layer exclusion. Differential treatment of children of PSU or private sector employees as compared to children of equivalently placed government employees, solely on the basis of parental salary, amounts to hostile discrimination violating Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India.



KULDEEP SINGH AND ANR. V. STATE OF PUNJAB AND ANR.

CASE REFERENCE:

2026 LiveLaw (SC) 239

Facts

Appellants**Kuldeep Singh and Anr.****Respondents****State of Punjab and Anr.****Bench****Justice Sanjay Kumar and Justice K. Vinod Chandran.****Facts**

- A dispute arose between two groups in a locality in Punjab — the appellants belonging to a Scheduled Caste community and the respondents from an upper-caste group — over the alleged diversion of drainage water from the respondents' houses into the homes of the Scheduled Caste appellants.
- When the affected residents protested, tensions escalated in the locality; police officials reached the spot and attempted to mediate the dispute between the two groups.
- During the reconciliation attempt, the confrontation allegedly turned violent; according to the prosecution, members of the respondent group used firearms and hurled caste-based abuses at the members of the Scheduled Caste community, and the incident was reportedly captured on video.
- An FIR was registered by the police on the basis of the First Information Statement of a police official who was personally present at the scene and witnessed the incident, alleging offences under the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, and the Arms Act, 1959.
- A counter-case was also registered against the complainant's group arising from the same incident, which was subsequently closed after investigation concluded that the persons named as accused therein were innocent.
- The respondents approached the Punjab and Haryana High Court seeking

- anticipatory bail; the High Court granted anticipatory bail, primarily relying on the fact that the FIR had not been lodged on the complaint of the victim but on the statement of a police officer, and expressing doubt about whether the allegations disclosed offences under the SC/ST Act.
- The Scheduled Caste appellants challenged the High Court's anticipatory bail order before the Supreme Court.

Issue

1. Whether an FIR registered on the basis of a statement by a police officer who personally witnessed the commission of the offence is valid in law, and whether the source of the information for lodging an FIR affects its legal validity.
2. Whether an attempt at reconciliation or mediation by the police bars them from registering an FIR and exercising their statutory duty to take cognizance of cognizable offences.
3. Whether the Punjab and Haryana High Court was justified in granting anticipatory bail to the respondents in the facts and circumstances of the case.

Important Provisions:

- **Section 154, Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 / Section 173, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 — Registration of FIR:** Casts a statutory duty on the officer in charge of a police station to register an FIR upon receiving information disclosing the commission of a cognizable offence; the provision does not restrict the source of such information to the victim alone, and information received from any person including a police officer who witnessed the offence is sufficient to trigger the duty to register.
- **Section 190, Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 / Section 210, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 — Cognizance of Offences by Magistrates:** Empowers a Magistrate of the First Class to take cognizance of an offence upon receiving a complaint of facts constituting the offence, upon a police report of such facts, or upon information received from any person other than a police officer or upon his own knowledge; the provision establishes that the source of information does not determine whether cognizance can be taken.
- **Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989:** Provides for the prevention of atrocities against members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and prescribes enhanced penalties for offences committed against them; the Act reflects a specific legislative intent to protect vulnerable communities from caste-based violence and humiliation, which the Court held must be given due weight by courts while considering anticipatory bail in cases under the Act.

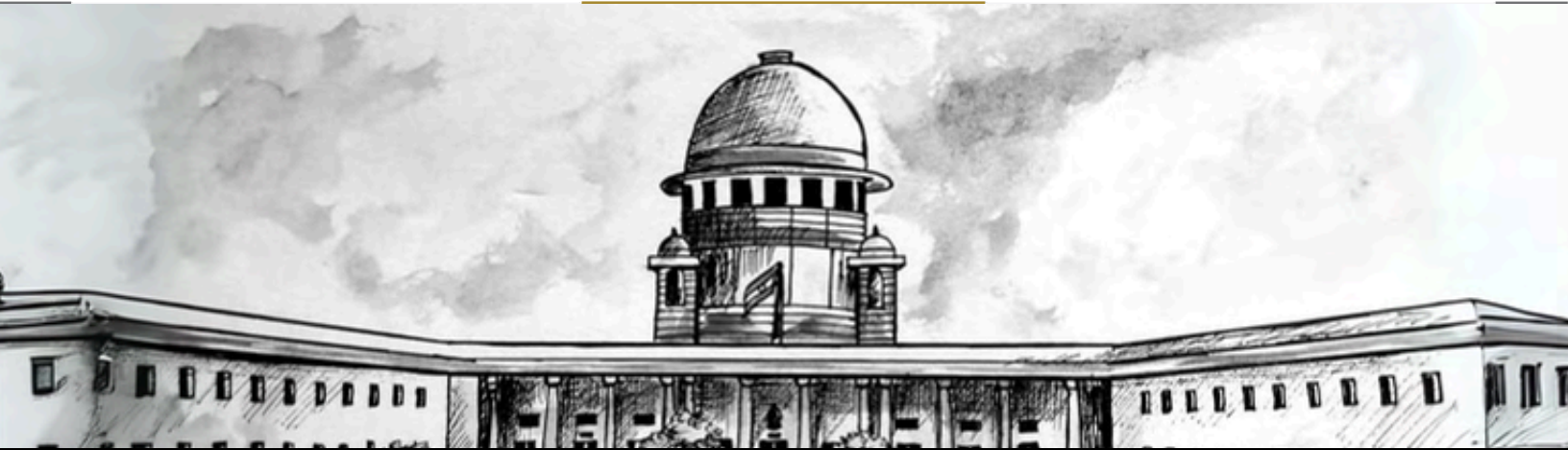
Judgement

- **Issue 1:** The Court held that the validity of an FIR does not depend on whether it is lodged by the victim or by a third party, including a police officer. Where a police officer is personally present at the scene and witnesses the commission of a cognizable offence, his statement constitutes perfectly valid information for the registration of an FIR. The High Court erred in placing undue primacy on the source of the FIR rather than examining whether the information disclosed the commission of a cognizable offence. The source of information becomes immaterial once it discloses the commission of a cognizable offence, and an FIR cannot be doubted merely because it is based on a police statement.
- **Issue 2:** The Court held that the police retain their statutory duty to register and investigate cognizable offences irrespective of any simultaneous attempt at reconciliation between the disputing parties. Reconciliation or mediation

- efforts; whether initiated by the police or otherwise cannot override or curtail the obligation of the police to enforce criminal law and take cognizance of cognizable offences. The mere attempt at reconciliation cannot prevent the police from taking cognizance of criminal acts. The Court noted that even on the police's own admission, there was tension prevailing in the locality that had led to criminal acts being perpetrated, reinforcing the police's duty to act.
- **Issue 3:** The Court held that the High Court had erred in granting anticipatory bail by giving undue weight to the source of the FIR and ignoring important material on record including the investigation report and the affidavit filed by the Deputy Superintendent of Police, which clearly disclosed allegations of firing of shots and caste-based abuses. A prima facie case under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act was made out against the respondents, and the legislative intent underlying the Act required courts to be mindful of the same while considering anticipatory bail. The High Court's order was accordingly set aside and the anticipatory bail granted to the respondents was cancelled, with a direction to surrender within fifteen days.

Ratio Decidendi:

- An FIR is validly registered even when the informant is a police officer who personally witnessed the commission of the offence, and the source of information — whether victim, witness, or police officer — does not affect the legal validity of the FIR or constitute a ground to doubt its authenticity. Attempts at reconciliation or mediation by the police between disputing parties do not create any bar to the exercise of their statutory duty to register an FIR and take cognizance of cognizable offences; the statutory obligation to enforce criminal law coexists with and cannot be overridden by parallel dispute resolution efforts. Courts must give due weight to the legislative intent of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act while considering anticipatory bail where a prima facie case under the Act is made out.



RAVI KHOKHAR & ORS. V. UNION OF INDIA & ORS.

CASE REFERENCE:

2026 LiveLaw (SC) 244

Facts

Appellants

Ravi Khokhar & Ors.

Respondents

Union of India & Ors.

Bench

- **Justice Sanjay Karol and Justice Vipul M. Pancholi. The judgment was authored by Justice Sanjay Karol with both judges concurring.**

Facts

- The Air Force Group Insurance Society (AFGIS) is a welfare and insurance body serving members of the Indian Air Force, established with the sanction of the President of India; its deputation rules were also specifically approved by the President.
- Membership of AFGIS and consequent deductions from salary are compulsory for every serving IAF officer, with no individual choice in the matter, as it constitutes a mandate from the employer.
- The Principal Director of AFGIS is required to brief the Assistant Chief of Air Staff on a monthly basis regarding the Society's cash flow, ensuring continuous monitoring by a senior IAF officer.
- All members of the Board of Trustees and the Managing Committee are serving officers of the Indian Air Force, deputed to AFGIS for fixed tenures, placing the entire administration of the body in the hands of government servants.
- In December 2016, the Board of Trustees resolved to revise employees' pay scales in accordance with the Sixth Central Pay Commission recommendations; however, in a subsequent meeting on 13 February 2017, the Board reversed this decision and resolved to delink the Society's pay structures from Central Government pay scales entirely.

- Employees were issued a notice on 22 May 2017 requiring them to accept the revised service conditions, following which they challenged the decision before the Delhi High Court under Article 226 of the Constitution. The Delhi High Court dismissed the writ petitions, holding that AFGIS was a self-contained welfare and insurance scheme funded by member contributions and therefore did not qualify as 'State' under Article 12; it consequently held the petitions to be not maintainable. The aggrieved employees appealed to the Supreme Court against this dismissal.

Issue

1. Whether the Air Force Group Insurance Society qualifies as 'State' within the meaning of Article 12 of the Constitution of India, so as to render it amenable to writ jurisdiction under Article 226.
2. Whether the writ petitions filed by the appellant-employees against the decision of AFGIS to delink its pay structures from Central Government pay scales were maintainable.

Important Provisions:

- **Article 12, Constitution of India, 1950 — Definition of State:** Provides that unless the context otherwise requires, the State includes the Government and Parliament of India, the Government and the Legislature of each State, and all local or other authorities within the territory of India or under the control of the Government of India; the expression "other authorities" has been interpreted through judicial decisions to include bodies that are instrumentalities or agencies of the State, applying tests relating to financial, functional, and administrative control by the government.
- **Article 226, Constitution of India, 1950 — Writ Jurisdiction of High Courts:** Confers power on High Courts to issue writs for the enforcement of fundamental rights and for any other purpose; the maintainability of the writ petitions filed by the employees against AFGIS was contingent on whether AFGIS qualified as 'State' under Article 12, and the High Court's adverse finding on this question had rendered the petitions not maintainable.
- **R.D. Shetty v. International Airport Authority of India, (1979) 3 SCC 489:** Justice P.N. Bhagwati laid down a five-factor test to determine whether a body is an agency or instrumentality of the State under Article 12 — whether the State is the chief funding source; whether there is deep and pervasive control of the State; whether the functional character is governmental in essence; whether a government department has been transferred to a corporation; and whether the body enjoys a monopoly status conferred or protected by the State. The Court in the present case applied this framework cumulatively to hold AFGIS to be a State.
- **Union of India v. R.C. Jain, (1981) 2 SCC 308:** Laid down conditions for determining whether a body constitutes a local authority under Article 12, including separate legal existence, defined area of functioning, power to raise funds, autonomy, and entrustment with functions usually belonging to municipalities; referenced in the broader context of the Article 12 framework applied in the present case.

Judgement

- **Issue 1:** The Court held that AFGIS is a 'State' within the meaning of Article 12 of the Constitution, applying a cumulative assessment of the public function, deep and pervasive control, and administrative control tests. On public function, the Court held that the protection and welfare of armed forces personnel is a core government function directly linked to the sovereignty and security of the nation; members of the armed forces serve under strict rules and in the most severe circumstances, making the provision of insurance coverage a public function addressing a collective obligation the State owes to a defined and indispensable class of persons.

- On deep and pervasive control, the Court noted that AFGIS was established with and its deputation rules were specifically approved by the President of India; the Principal Director reports monthly to the Assistant Chief of Air Staff on cash flow; and membership and salary deductions are compulsory for every serving IAF officer as a mandate from the employer, leaving no individual discretion. On administrative control, the Court observed that all members of both the Board of Trustees and the Managing Committee are serving IAF officers deputed for fixed tenures, meaning the entire administration of the body is effectively in the hands of government servants despite its formal structure as a private society. The Court reiterated that the test under Article 12 is not limited to questions of ownership or origin but must be assessed by reference to accountability, the rule of law, and the practical realities of governance, taking the cumulative effect of all relevant factors into account.
- **Issue 2:** Consequent upon holding AFGIS to be 'State' under Article 12, the Court held that the writ petitions filed by the appellant-employees under Article 226 were maintainable. The Supreme Court accordingly allowed the appeal, set aside the Delhi High Court's order dismissing the writ petitions on the ground of non-maintainability, held AFGIS to be a 'State' under Article 12, and directed the High Court to decide the writ petitions filed by the appellants expeditiously, noting that they had been pending since 2017.

Ratio Decidendi:

- A body qualifies as 'State' under Article 12 of the Constitution if a cumulative assessment of its public function, the degree of governmental control over its finances and operations, and the composition of its administration demonstrates that it is financially, functionally, and administratively dominated by the State; the test is not confined to questions of ownership or origin but is informed by accountability and the practical realities of governance. The Air Force Group Insurance Society, being established by Presidential sanction, administered entirely by serving IAF officers, subject to compulsory membership for all IAF personnel, and performing the public function of providing insurance coverage to armed forces members as part of the State's collective obligation toward them, qualifies as an instrumentality of the State under Article 12 and is amenable to writ jurisdiction under Article 226.



NARENDER BHARDWAJ V. M/S 108 SUPER COMPLEX R.W.A. & OTHERS

CASE REFERENCE:

2026 LiveLaw (SC) 249

Facts

Appellants

Narender Bhardwaj

Respondents

M/S 108 Super Complex R.W.A. & Others

Bench

- Justice P.S. Narasimha and Justice Alok Aradhe.

Facts

- A Residents Welfare Association (RWA) of M/S 108 Super Complex, Sector 16A, Vasundhara, District Ghaziabad, approached the National Green Tribunal, New Delhi, seeking removal of a temple allegedly constructed on land earmarked as open space or park in that sector.
- The RWA contended that the construction was unauthorized and had been raised in violation of Municipal Laws and the provisions of the Town Planning Act applicable to the area.
- The NGT, New Delhi accepted the plea and passed an order directing removal of the alleged unauthorized structure.
- Aggrieved by the NGT's order, the appellant Narender Bhardwaj challenged it before the Supreme Court of India.

Issue

1. Whether the National Green Tribunal has jurisdiction under Section 14 of the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010 to direct removal of an alleged encroachment or unauthorized construction raised in violation of Municipal Laws and Town Planning legislation, which are not specified in Schedule I of the NGT Act.

Important Provisions:

- **Section 14, National Green Tribunal Act, 2010 — Tribunal's Jurisdiction over Environmental Disputes:** Confers jurisdiction on the NGT to adjudicate upon disputes involving a substantial question of law relating to the environment, but expressly limits this jurisdiction to matters arising under the statutes enumerated in Schedule I of the Act; the conditions precedent for invoking this jurisdiction are that the dispute must involve a substantial question of environmental law and must relate to a statute specified in Schedule I.
- **Schedule I, National Green Tribunal Act, 2010 — Specified Statutes:** Enumerates the statutes over which the NGT has jurisdiction, including the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974; the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess Act, 1977; the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980; the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981; the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; the Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991; and the Biological Diversity Act, 2002; Municipal Laws and Town Planning legislation are not included in this Schedule.

Judgement

- **Issue 1:** The Court held that the NGT's jurisdiction under Section 14 of the NGT Act is strictly circumscribed and is not at large; it extends only to disputes involving a substantial question of law relating to the environment arising under statutes specifically enumerated in Schedule I. In the present case, the grievance raised by the RWA pertained to the removal of an alleged unauthorized construction raised in violation of Municipal Laws and the Town Planning Act — neither of which finds mention in Schedule I of the NGT Act. The dispute was therefore essentially one of municipal law and urban planning, not environmental law, and did not give rise to any substantial question of law relating to the environment within the meaning of the Act. The Court held that the conditions precedent for invoking the Tribunal's jurisdiction under Section 14 were not fulfilled, and accordingly the NGT's order directing removal of the structure was passed without jurisdiction and was quashed and set aside. The Court preserved the liberty of the RWA to approach the competent authority under the applicable municipal or town planning framework for appropriate redressal of its grievance, and directed the State not to take any coercive action against the appellants without first issuing notice to them and the affected parties.

Ratio Decidendi:

- The jurisdiction of the National Green Tribunal under Section 14 of the NGT Act, 2010 is strictly confined to disputes involving a substantial question of law relating to the environment arising under statutes enumerated in Schedule I of the Act; disputes concerning alleged unauthorized construction or encroachment in violation of Municipal Laws or Town Planning legislation, which find no mention in Schedule I, do not fulfill the conditions precedent for invoking the Tribunal's jurisdiction and fall entirely outside its statutory competence. An order passed by the NGT in the absence of such jurisdictional prerequisites is without jurisdiction and liable to be quashed.

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K V. K

CASE REFERENCE:

2026 LiveLaw (SC) 259

Facts

Appellants

K

Respondents

K

Bench

Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Sandeep Mehta.

Facts

- The parties were married in Mumbai in December 2005 according to Hindu rites and rituals, though they were residing in the United States at the time of and after the marriage.
- During a visit to India in 2007, the parties briefly stayed together at Aungh, Pune, which the Court identified as the matrimonial home and the place where they last resided together in India; they continued cohabitation in the US until September 2008.
- The wife initiated divorce proceedings before a Circuit Court in Michigan, USA; the husband filed a written response contesting jurisdiction but did not participate further in those proceedings.
- In February 2009, the Michigan Circuit Court granted a decree of divorce on the ground of irretrievable breakdown of marriage and also passed consequential financial directions against the husband.
- Simultaneously, the husband filed a divorce petition before the Family Court in Pune under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.
- The Pune Family Court upheld its jurisdiction, noting that the marriage was solemnised in India and that the foreign decree was founded on a ground not recognised under Indian law; however, the Bombay High Court reversed this finding,

- holding that the parties were domiciled in the US and that the American court had jurisdiction.
- The husband appealed to the Supreme Court against the Bombay High Court's decision.

Issue

1. Whether the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 continues to govern parties married under Hindu rites in India even after they have settled abroad, and whether Indian courts retain jurisdiction over their matrimonial disputes.
2. Whether a foreign divorce decree granted on the ground of irretrievable breakdown of marriage is enforceable in India when that ground is not recognised under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.
3. Whether the husband, having contested the Michigan court's jurisdiction but not participated further in the proceedings, is bound by the foreign decree.

Important Provisions:

- **Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 — Applicable Matrimonial Law:** Governs marriages solemnised under Hindu rites and rituals; Section 13 enumerates the grounds on which a divorce may be granted under the Act, which include cruelty, desertion, adultery, conversion, unsoundness of mind, and certain other specified grounds; irretrievable breakdown of marriage is not included as a statutory ground for divorce under the Act, and no legislative amendment incorporating it has been enacted despite recommendations of the Law Commission.
- **Article 142, Constitution of India, 1950 — Power of Supreme Court to Do Complete Justice:** Empowers the Supreme Court to pass such decree or order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it; the Court invoked this provision to dissolve the marriage on the ground of irretrievable breakdown, given that the parties had been living apart since 2008 with no subsisting matrimonial bond, notwithstanding the absence of this ground as a statutory basis under the HMA.
- **Saroj Rani v. Sudarshan Kumar Chadha, (1984) 4 SCC 90:** The Supreme Court first acknowledged the concept of irretrievable breakdown in India and suggested that divorce may be appropriate when a marriage is broken beyond repair, though it did not recognise it as an independent statutory ground under the HMA.
- **V. Bhagat v. D. Bhagat, (1994) 1 SCC 337:** The Supreme Court affirmed that divorce cannot be granted solely on the ground of irretrievable breakdown under the HMA, though the court may take the breakdown into account while assessing statutory grounds such as cruelty.
- **Amarendra N. Chatterjee v. Smt. Kalpana Chatterjee, (2022) SCC:** Reaffirmed the consistent judicial position that irretrievable breakdown of marriage is not a recognised ground for divorce under the HMA and cannot independently sustain a divorce decree.

Judgement

- **Issue 1:** The Court held that since the marriage was solemnised according to Hindu rites and rituals in India, the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 governs the parties regardless of their subsequent domicile or settlement abroad. The mere fact that the parties had been residing in the United States does not oust the applicability of the HMA to their matrimonial relationship. The Court further identified Aungh, Pune as the matrimonial home, being the place where the parties last resided together in India, and held that Indian courts retain jurisdiction over their matrimonial dispute. The Bombay High Court's finding that domicile in the US vested jurisdiction exclusively in the American court was accordingly set aside, and the Pune Family Court's jurisdiction was restored.

- **Issue 2:** The Court held that the US divorce decree passed by the Michigan Circuit Court on the ground of irretrievable breakdown of marriage is not enforceable in India. Irretrievable breakdown is not a recognised ground for divorce under the HMA, which is the applicable matrimonial law governing the parties. A foreign decree granting divorce on a ground unrecognised under Indian matrimonial law cannot be enforced in India or be permitted to oust the jurisdiction of Indian courts over the parties. However, the Court simultaneously exercised its power under Article 142 of the Constitution to dissolve the marriage on the ground of irretrievable breakdown, noting that the parties had been living apart since 2008, that no matrimonial bond subsisted between them in practice, and that maintaining the legal tie would serve no purpose.
- **Issue 3:** The Court held that the husband, having contested the jurisdiction of the Michigan Circuit Court through a written response but having declined to participate further in those proceedings, had never submitted to that court's jurisdiction. A party who does not submit to the jurisdiction of a foreign court cannot be bound by its decree, and the foreign decree accordingly cannot operate against the husband in India.
- The Supreme Court set aside the Bombay High Court's decision, restored the Pune Family Court's order upholding its jurisdiction, declared the US divorce decree unenforceable in India, and granted divorce under Article 142 on the ground of irretrievable breakdown of marriage.

Ratio Decidendi:

- Parties married under Hindu rites and rituals in India remain governed by the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 regardless of their subsequent domicile or settlement abroad, and Indian courts retain jurisdiction over their matrimonial disputes. A foreign divorce decree passed on the ground of irretrievable breakdown of marriage is not enforceable in India, as that ground is not recognised under the HMA; a foreign decree founded on an unrecognised ground cannot oust Indian court jurisdiction or bind a party who never submitted to the foreign court's jurisdiction. The Supreme Court may nonetheless exercise its power under Article 142 of the Constitution to grant divorce on the ground of irretrievable breakdown where the matrimonial bond has irretrievably broken down in fact and the parties have been living apart for a prolonged period, in order to do complete justice between the parties.

SUMMARY OF CURRENT LEGAL UPDATES

Vandana Jain & Ors. v. The State of Uttar Pradesh & Ors	Mere non-traceability of a document in public records after several years does not by itself make it a forged document; the ingredients of a false document under Section 464 IPC must be specifically established.
State of Kerala & Anr. v. M/s Panacea Biotech Ltd. & Anr.	The period of limitation in criminal prosecution begins from the date on which the identity of the offenders becomes known to the competent authority, and not from the date of the first complaint.
Kartik & Anr. v. State of NCT of Delhi & Ors.	Two consenting adults in a live-in relationship are entitled to police protection against threats from family members, as the right to choose a partner flows from Articles 19 and 21 of the Constitution.
Bhagyalaxmi Co-Operative Bank Ltd. v. Babaldas Amtharam Patel (D) Through Legal Representatives & Others	A surety is not discharged from the entire liability merely because the creditor allowed excess withdrawals; the surety remains liable for the original guaranteed amount and is discharged only for transactions subsequent to the variance.
Gobind Singh and Ors. v. Union of India and Ors.	Additional evidence at the appellate stage under Order XLI Rule 27 CPC is not a vested right and can be allowed only when the statutory conditions are strictly satisfied.
Pannalal Bhansali v. Bharti Telecom Limited & Others	Reduction of share capital under Section 66 of the Companies Act, 2013 can be effected through a special resolution and Tribunal confirmation without any mandatory requirement of a valuation report from an approved or registered valuer.
Harish Rana v. Union of India	Clinically Assisted Nutrition and Hydration (CANH) through a PEG tube is medical treatment, and passive euthanasia is permissible in an irreversible PVS case under Article 21 when the required medical boards concur.
Pooranmal v. State of Rajasthan & Anr.	Call Detail Records are inadmissible in evidence without the mandatory certificate under Section 65-B of the Evidence Act, and oral testimony cannot substitute that requirement.
Union of India and Others v. Rohith Nathan and Another	Creamy layer status for OBC candidates cannot be determined solely on the basis of parental salary; the status and category of the parents' posts under the 1993 Office Memorandum must also be considered.

Kuldeep Singh and Anr. v. State of Punjab and Anr.	An attempt at reconciliation does not bar the police from registering an FIR or taking cognizance of cognizable offences; an FIR based on a police officer's statement is also legally valid.
Ravi Khokhar & Ors. v. Union of India & Ors.	The Air Force Group Insurance Society performs public functions under deep governmental control and therefore qualifies as "State" under Article 12 of the Constitution.
Narender Bhardwaj v. M/S 108 Super Complex R.W.A. & Others	The National Green Tribunal has no jurisdiction to order removal of encroachments or illegal constructions based on violations of municipal or town planning laws not included in Schedule I of the NGT Act.
K v. K	A foreign divorce decree granted on the ground of irretrievable breakdown of marriage is not enforceable in India when the marriage was solemnised under Hindu rites in India and is governed by the Hindu Marriage Act.

Current Affairs

Polity & Governance

National Monetisation Pipeline 2.0 Launched with ₹16.72 Lakh Crore Asset Monetisation Potential

- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched the National Monetisation Pipeline 2.0 (NMP 2.0), prepared by NITI Aayog, with an estimated aggregate monetisation potential of ₹16.72 lakh crore for the period from FY 2026 to FY 2030.
- NMP 2.0 has been developed in consultation with infrastructure line ministries under the Asset Monetisation Plan 2025–30 announced in the Union Budget 2025–26, and it includes ₹5.8 lakh crore in private sector investment, making it more than 2.6 times the target of NMP 1.0.
- The earlier NMP 1.0, launched in 2021 for FY 2021–22 to FY 2024–25, had a target of ₹6 lakh crore, of which nearly 90% was achieved, while also attracting institutional investors and enabling the creation of Public InvITs for citizen participation in infrastructure development.
- The highest monetisation potential under NMP 2.0 lies in Highways, Multi-Modal Logistics Parks, and ropeways with ₹4.42 lakh crore (26%), followed by Power with ₹2.77 lakh crore (17%), Ports with ₹2.64 lakh crore (16%), Railways with ₹2.62 lakh crore (16%), and Coal with ₹2.16 lakh crore (13%).
- The programme will use instruments such as PPP concessions, InvITs, Toll-Operate-Transfer models, securitisation of cash flows, divestment of listed entities, and strategic commercial auctions, while an empowered Core Group of Secretaries on Asset Monetisation (CGAM) chaired by the Cabinet Secretary will oversee implementation.

Bharat Steel 2026 Summit to Be Held in New Delhi from April 16

- India will host the Bharat Steel 2026 summit in New Delhi on 16–17 April 2026 as a two-day policy and industry platform focused on the future of the steel

sector.

- The summit will be held at Bharat Mandapam (ITPO), Pragati Maidan, and is being organised under the patronage of the Ministry of Steel, Government of India.
- It is positioned as a flagship annual event for the steel industry and will bring together leaders from steel, technology, mining, and trading companies along with policymakers and other stakeholders.
- The event is intended to serve as a policy-business dialogue aimed at shaping the next-generation steel ecosystem and showcasing India's steel sector for global collaboration.
- The published agenda includes discussions on raw material security, trade, technology transfer, and greener and more sustainable steel production.

Mangaluru Airport Wins 2025 ASQ Best Arrivals Award for Second Straight Year

- Mangaluru International Airport has been named by Airports Council International (ACI) World as the winner of the 2025 Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Award for “Best Airport at Arrivals – Globally.”
- The award is based on independently collected, real-time passenger feedback under ACI's Airport Service Quality survey programme.
- The arrivals category assesses the inbound passenger experience, including immigration, baggage delivery, cleanliness, wayfinding, terminal ambience, and overall comfort.
- This is the airport's second consecutive win, as it had also received the same global arrivals award for 2024.
- The award will be formally presented at the ASQ Awards Ceremony in Istanbul, Türkiye, on 2 September 2026 during the ACI World Airport Experience Summit.

Oleum Gas Leak in Palghar Triggers Large-Scale Evacuation

- A hazardous oleum gas leak occurred on 2 March 2026 at a chemical unit in the Tarapur MIDC/Boisar industrial area of Palghar district, Maharashtra, leading to a large-scale precautionary evacuation.
- The leak reportedly originated from a 2,500-litre capacity oleum day tank at a unit of Bhageria Industries Ltd, and a dense cloud of white fumes spread rapidly due to wind conditions across an area of nearly 5 km.
- Authorities evacuated more than 2,600 people, including around 1,600 students from Tarapur Vidyamandir and over 1,000 workers from the affected unit and nearby firms.
- Residents within a 3–4 km zone reported symptoms such as eye irritation, coughing, and breathing difficulty, while at least three people were reported to have suffered minor eye irritation.
- Response teams including the NDRF, BARC, and Fire Brigade were deployed, officials stated that there was no life-threatening situation and that about 90–95% of the spillage had been contained, and the NHRC later took suo motu cognisance of the incident on 5 March 2026.

Tamil Nadu Leads India in Deceased Organ Donation

- Tamil Nadu recorded 57 deceased organ donors in the first two months of 2026, reflecting a sharp rise in deceased organ donation activity in the State.
- The programme is overseen by the Transplant Authority of Tamil Nadu (TRANSTAN), which coordinates organ donation, transplantation systems, allocation processes, and related governance.
- TRANSTAN states that Tamil Nadu has won the Government of India's Best State Award in organ donation and transplantation for six consecutive years and has been a leading State in streamlining organ allocation and medico-legal procedures for brain-dead donors.
- The State's health policy note states that 13 Government Hospitals function as Transplant Organ Retrieval Centres (TORC) and licensed transplant hospitals, while 27 Government hospitals function as Non-Transplant Organ Retrieval Centres (NTORC).

- Tamil Nadu has also introduced measures such as Government honour for brain-dead donors, the Vidiyal website and mobile application for organ registration and allocation, and financial assistance for transplants up to ₹22 lakh under the Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Scheme.

Kolli Hills Gets Tamil Nadu's First Dark Sky Park



- The Government of Tamil Nadu has launched the State's first Dark Sky Park at Ariyur Shola Reserve Forest, Kolli Hills, Namakkal district, as announced in an official press release dated 27 February 2026.
- The project was launched by the Minister for Forests, Thiru R. S. Rajakannappan, and a Dark Sky Park has been defined as a protected landscape safeguarded from artificial light pollution for clear observation of celestial bodies.
- The official press release states that the park has been established at a cost of ₹44 lakh and includes three advanced telescopes and solar panels for on-site operations.
- The facility will function during daytime hours to promote scientific literacy and awareness on astronomy among students, researchers, and the public, while the Forest Department will also conduct structured stargazing sessions.
- The initiative will organise whole-night stargazing camps two to three times a month, especially around the new moon phase, and aims to promote responsible astro-tourism with ecological safeguards and regulated visitor access.

Adani Group Named Official Partner for UNESCO's World Engineering Day 2026

- The Adani Group has been named an official partner for World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development (WED) 2026, delivered by the World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO) under the auspices of UNESCO — reportedly the first time an Indian organisation has been chosen for this role.
- World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development is observed annually on 4 March, proclaimed by UNESCO in 2019; the 2026 global celebration was held in Jakarta, Indonesia, with the theme "Smart engineering for sustainable future through innovation and digitalization."
- The partnership is linked to Adani's Khavda renewable energy project in Kutch, Gujarat, described as the world's largest renewable energy project with a planned capacity of 30 GW by 2029.
- Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL) has operationalised over 7 GW of renewable energy capacity at Khavda so far, across a site spanning approximately 538 sq km.
- The project employs technologies such as bifacial solar PV modules, single-axis tracker systems, AI and ML-integrated operations platforms, and waterless robotic cleaning systems for solar modules.

11th Raisina Dialogue 2026 Inaugurated in New Delhi With Finland's President as Chief Guest

- The 11th edition of the Raisina Dialogue is being held from 5–7 March 2026 in New Delhi, inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Finland's President Dr. Alexander Stubb attending as Chief Guest and keynote speaker.
- The Dialogue is organised by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), and carries the 2026 theme "Samskāra – Assertion, Accommodation, Advancement."
- The programme is structured around six thematic pillars: Contested Frontiers, Repairing the Commons, White Whale: The Pursuit of Agenda 2030, The Eleventh Hour, Tomorrowland, and Trade in the Time of Tariffs.

- The Dialogue includes participation from 110 countries, featuring Ministers, former Heads of State, Military Commanders, industry leaders, academics, and youth, with an estimated 2,700 in-person participants.
- Raisina Dialogue, India's flagship conference on geopolitics and geo-economics, has been held annually in New Delhi since 2016, and visiting dignitaries for the 2026 edition included senior representatives from Bhutan, Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, and Sri Lanka.



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Nitish Kumar Files Rajya Sabha Nomination; Bihar to Get New Chief Minister

- The Election Commission of India announced biennial elections to fill 37 Rajya Sabha seats, with

polling scheduled on 16 March 2026; Bihar has five vacancies arising from members retiring on 9 April 2026.

- Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar filed his nomination papers for the Rajya Sabha election from Bihar on 5 March 2026 — the last date for nominations as per the ECI schedule.
- The five Bihar Rajya Sabha seats falling vacant are linked to the retirement of Amarendra Dhari Singh, Prem Chand Gupta, Ramnath Thakur, Upendra Kushwaha, and Haribansh Narayan Singh.
- Rajya Sabha elections are conducted through indirect election by elected MLAs of the State Legislative Assembly using proportional representation by single transferable vote (STV), with an open ballot system governed by Rule 39AA.
- With Nitish Kumar's move to the Rajya Sabha, Bihar is expected to get a new Chief Minister, as the Chief Minister is appointed by the Governor under Article 164 and the Council of Ministers holds office during the Governor's pleasure.

IBM Launches Sangam Infrastructure Innovation Centre in Bengaluru — Its First Globally

- IBM launched its first Infrastructure Innovation Centre globally — named the Sangam Infrastructure Innovation Center — in Bengaluru on 5 March 2026, housed within its India Systems Development Lab (ISDL) campus, the largest development hub in IBM's global infrastructure business.
- The centre is designed to co-create enterprise-scale AI solutions with clients, Independent Software Vendors (ISVs), Global System Integrators (GSIs), and Global Capability Centers (GCCs), covering the entire computing stack including hybrid cloud, data architectures, and automation.
- IBM's India development labs in Bengaluru, Pune, and Hyderabad contribute to developing next-generation processors and operating systems for IBM's global enterprise infrastructure platforms.
- An IBM Institute for Business Value study found that 58% of Indian organisations have increased infrastructure investments due to rising AI demand, with a projected 19% growth in infrastructure budgets in 2025 and 43% of organisations establishing or planning AI Centres of Excellence.

- IBM operates in more than 175 countries, with thousands of government and corporate entities in critical sectors — including financial services, telecom, and healthcare — relying on IBM's hybrid cloud platform and Red Hat OpenShift.

Amit Shah Unveils 'Pragati' and 'Vikas' Mascots for India's First Fully Digital Census 2027

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah soft-launched four digital tools and unveiled two mascots — 'Pragati' (female enumerator) and 'Vikas' (male enumerator) — for Census 2027 in New Delhi, marking a major step towards India's first fully digital census.
- Census 2027 will be conducted in two phases in 2026 and 2027, is expected to be the world's largest enumeration exercise involving over 3 million enumerators and officials, and will cost Rs. 11,718 crore; it is India's 16th census.
- The four digital platforms were developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), and the census process was formally initiated through a Gazette notification issued on 16 June 2025.
- For the first time in India's census history, citizens can submit household details online via a secure web portal in 16 languages before the door-to-door survey, with a unique Self-Enumeration ID generated and verified by enumerators during field visits.
- The mascots 'Pragati' and 'Vikas' symbolise equal participation of women and men in building a Developed India by 2047 and will be used in public outreach and awareness campaigns.

Indian Government Suspends TRP Ratings for TV News Channels Amid West Asia War Coverage

- The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B) directed the Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) on 7 March 2026 to immediately suspend publishing TRP ratings for all news TV channels for four weeks or until further orders, whichever is earlier.
- The suspension was triggered by concerns that certain news channels were displaying unwarranted sensationalism and speculative content about the ongoing US-Israel-Iran conflict, potentially causing panic among viewers with family or connections in conflict-affected regions.

- The directive was issued by invoking Clause 24.2 of BARC's policy guidelines, which requires BARC to comply with any orders or directions issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
- BARC, established in 2010, is India's sole official body responsible for measuring and publishing television audience viewership data, including TRP ratings, which broadcasters and advertisers use to determine audience reach and advertising revenue allocation.
- This is not the first such suspension; in 2020, the I&B Ministry similarly suspended TRP reporting after a Mumbai Police investigation revealed allegations of TRP data manipulation by certain broadcasters.

Operation Sankalp Back in Focus as Indian Navy Placed on HADR Standby in West Asia

- Operation Sankalp, the Indian Navy's maritime security mission launched on 19 June 2019 to protect Indian commercial vessels and ensure safe navigation through the Gulf of Oman, Strait of Hormuz, and Gulf of Aden, has come back into sharp focus amid the 2026 US-Israel-Iran conflict.
- Two Indian Navy warships — a frigate and a destroyer — deployed under Operation Sankalp have been placed on standby for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations; INS Surat is additionally stationed in Bahrain for regional maritime security engagement.
- On 1 March 2026, Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) meeting attended by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, to assess the conflict's implications for India's strategic interests, economy, and the safety of the Indian diaspora.
- Nearly 62% of India's oil imports originate from the Persian Gulf region, making any disruption in the Strait of Hormuz a direct threat to India's energy security and economic stability.

Dipali Das Becomes First Person in Assam to Receive Citizenship Under CAA

- Dipali Das, a 60-year-old woman from Cachar district of Assam, became the first person in the state to receive Indian citizenship under the Citizenship

- Amendment Act (CAA), receiving her certificate on 6 March 2026.
- Originally from Sylhet district of Bangladesh, she had entered India with her husband on 7 February 1988; in 2019 she was officially declared a foreigner and sent to a detention camp in Silchar, where she spent nearly two years.
- On 17 May 2021, the Supreme Court directed that declared foreigners held in detention for more than two years be released to reduce overcrowding during the COVID-19 pandemic, under which Dipali Das was released on bail.
- After her release, she filed her citizenship application under the CAA with the help of social worker Kamal Chakraborty and advocate Dharmananda Deb.
- Her case marks a landmark in the practical implementation of the CAA in Assam, where her citizenship status had remained unresolved for over a decade following a 2013 police chargesheet classifying her as a suspected foreign national.

UP Accounts for Over 96% of Cases of Denial of Public Space Access to SC Communities: NCRB 2023

- According to the NCRB's 2023 Crime in India report, there were 180 reported cases of Scheduled Caste (SC) persons being denied access to public spaces under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act across India, of which 173 cases (over 96%) were from Uttar Pradesh alone.
- In 2022, the figure was even higher — 300 out of 305 total cases (98.36%) were from Uttar Pradesh, the peak share ever recorded for any state in this category.
- The crime category 'Prevent or deny or obstruct usage of public place/passage' was introduced by the NCRB in 2017, when only 12 cases were reported nationwide and Uttar Pradesh reported zero; from 2018 onwards, UP began dominating the data, accounting for 68% of all cases in 2018, rising to 80% in 2019.
- The National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) noted that this rising trend reflects entrenched caste-based segregation in the state.
- NCRB data also shows that cases of denial of access to public spaces are significantly lower for Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities compared to SC communities, suggesting a distinct pattern of caste-

based discrimination affecting SCs.

NCB Dismantles 'Team Kalki' Darknet Drug Trafficking Network, Two Arrested

- The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) dismantled a pan-India darknet-based drug distribution network called 'Team Kalki,' arresting two accused — Anurag Thakur and Vikas Rathi — both former Tihar Jail inmates and repeat offenders under the NDPS Act.
- Active since January 2025, the network operated through the darknet forum 'Dread' and later expanded to the encrypted 'Session' messaging application, dispatching more than 1,000 consignments across India with parcels intercepted in Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Kerala, and Karnataka.
- Drugs seized included 2,338 LSD blotters, 160 MDMA pills, 73.612 grams of charas, 3.642 grams of amphetamine, and 3.6 kg of liquid MDMA, sourced from international darknet vendors in the Netherlands, Poland, and Germany.
- Payments were accepted through Monero and USDT via unhosted wallets, routed through multiple intermediary wallets to obscure tracking, with some proceeds channelled into the formal banking system through mule KYC-compliant wallets.
- The two accused had met during simultaneous incarceration in Tihar Jail — Thakur for methamphetamine trafficking and Rathi for charas trafficking — before launching the network together.

Raisina Dialogue 2026 Concludes; Raisina Science Diplomacy Initiative Launched

- The 11th edition of the Raisina Dialogue 2026 concluded in New Delhi on 7 March 2026, with a landmark launch of the Raisina Science Diplomacy Initiative (SDI) — a new framework to integrate science and technology into foreign policy, focusing on AI governance, semiconductor supply chains, and India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) for developing nations.
- The Dialogue acknowledged the rise of a multipolar global order with the Global South playing a major role, and highlighted India's strategic positioning through BRICS, the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), and the India-France-UAE (UFI) Trilateral.

- The thematic pillar on Contested Frontiers addressed power diffusion and shifting polarities, with global commons such as oceans, orbits, supply chains, and cyberspace identified as new contested battlefields.
- The 2026 theme "Samskara — Assertion, Accommodation, Advancement" reflected how nations are asserting sovereignty over borders and bandwidth while new plurilateral coalitions replace stalled multilateralism.
- Launched in 2016 by the Ministry of External Affairs in collaboration with the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), the Raisina Dialogue is India's premier geopolitics and geo-economics conference, comparable to the Munich Security Conference and Shangri-La Dialogue.

Shah Rukh Khan Debuts on Hurun Global Rich List 2026 With \$1.3 Billion Net Worth



- Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan made his debut on the Hurun Global Rich List 2026 with an estimated net worth of \$1.3 billion, with wealth calculated up to 15 January 2026, making him one of the first Indian entertainment personalities to achieve billionaire status on the global list.
- Khan's wealth is built on multiple income streams including his production company Red Chillies Entertainment (co-owned with Gauri Khan), brand endorsements, sports investments, global appearances, and film distribution rights.
- Other prominent celebrity billionaires on the 2026 list include Michael Jordan (\$3.6 billion), Jay-Z (\$2.8 billion), Tiger Woods (\$1.9 billion), Taylor Swift (\$1.6 billion), and Rihanna (\$1.5 billion); new entrants alongside SRK included Bruce Springsteen and Magic Johnson.

- The Hurun Global Rich List is compiled by the Hurun Report, founded by Rupert Hoogewerf, and ranks individuals worldwide with wealth exceeding US\$1 billion; the 2026 list noted a record year for celebrity wealth creation driven by brand ownership, technology partnerships, and intellectual property.

India Remains World's Second-Largest Arms Importer Despite 4% Decline: SIPRI Report

- According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), India remains the world's second-largest arms importer despite a marginal decline of approximately 4% in defence imports between the 2016–20 and 2021–25 periods, attributed to the government's Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative in the defence sector.
- Russia remains India's largest arms supplier but its share has sharply declined — from nearly 70% (2011–15) to approximately 40% (2021–25) — while France accounts for about 24% of India's arms imports, with the partnership expected to strengthen through India's planned procurement of 114 additional Rafale fighter aircraft.
- Israel holds a 15% share of India's arms imports, particularly in drones, missiles, and air defence technologies, and notably overtook the United Kingdom in global arms exports during the 2021–25 period.
- The volume of major global arms transfers increased by approximately 9.2% between 2016–20 and 2021–25, driven by rising geopolitical tensions; the United States remained the largest global arms exporter at 42% of total international transfers, supplying weapons to nearly 99 countries.
- SIPRI is a Sweden-based independent think tank widely regarded as the global authority on arms trade data, tracking global arms transfers, military expenditure, and international security.

Opposition Moves to Impeach CEC Gyanesh Kumar Over Alleged Bias in West Bengal Electoral Roll Revision

- The Trinamool Congress-led Opposition began drafting an impeachment motion against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, alleging "completely biased conduct" related to the

- deployment of micro-observers exclusively in West Bengal during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.
- Under Article 324(5) of the Constitution, the CEC can only be removed in the same manner as a Supreme Court judge, a provision reaffirmed by Section 11 of the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023.
- Article 124(4) mandates that removal requires a Presidential order following an address by each House of Parliament supported by a majority of total membership and at least two-thirds of members present and voting, on grounds of proved misbehaviour or incapacity.
- Under Section 3 of the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, the motion must be signed by at least 100 Lok Sabha MPs or 50 Rajya Sabha MPs, after which the Speaker or Chairman may admit it and constitute a three-member inquiry committee comprising a Supreme Court judge, a Chief Justice of a High Court, and a distinguished jurist.
- If the inquiry committee finds the CEC guilty, the motion is put to vote in Parliament, and if passed, the address for removal is forwarded to the President, who then issues the removal order.

Amol Palekar to Receive Lifetime Achievement Award at 21st Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards (META) 2026

- Veteran actor, director, and theatre practitioner Amol Palekar will be honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 21st edition of the Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards (META) 2026, instituted by the Mahindra Group and produced by Teamwork Arts, to be held in New Delhi from March 19–25, 2026.
- Palekar is widely regarded as one of the most influential figures in modern Indian performing arts, known for staging performances in unconventional spaces such as parks, terraces, canteens, and garages, significantly expanding the reach of contemporary Indian theatre.
- In Hindi cinema, Palekar became a household name during the 1970s by portraying relatable middle-class characters — the iconic 'boy-next-door' — achieving three consecutive silver jubilee hits, with notable

- films including Chhoti Si Baat, Chitchor, Bhumika, Baaton Baaton Mein, and Gol Maal.
- The 2026 edition received a record 422 submissions from theatre groups across more than 20 states, over 100 cities, and around 60 languages and dialects, with 10 productions shortlisted to compete across 13 award categories at Kamani Auditorium and the Shri Ram Centre for Performing Arts.
- The META 2026 jury panel includes distinguished theatre personalities Amal Allana, Anuradha Kapur, Rajit Kapur, Satish Alekar, and Ila Arun.

Supreme Court Permits Withdrawal of Life Support in Landmark Passive Euthanasia Ruling in Harish Rana Case

- A Supreme Court bench of Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice KV Viswanathan passed India's first-ever judicial order allowing passive euthanasia, permitting the withdrawal of life support — including Clinically Administered Nutrition (CAN) — for Harish Rana, a 32-year-old man who has been in an irreversible Persistent Vegetative State (PVS) for 13 years following a fall from a building in 2013.
- The ruling is the first judicial application of the Supreme Court's landmark 2018 Common Cause judgment, which recognised the fundamental right to die with dignity; passive euthanasia — the withdrawal or withholding of life-sustaining treatment — was legalised in India in 2018, while active euthanasia remains illegal.
- Two medical boards constituted by the Supreme Court certified that Harish Rana had a negligible chance of recovery, suffered permanent brain damage, required external support for all bodily functions, and experienced only sleep-wake cycles with no meaningful interaction, with continuation of treatment found to merely prolong biological existence without therapeutic benefit.
- The Court directed AIIMS to admit Harish Rana to its palliative care centre, waived the standard 30-day reconsideration period, and mandated that High Courts across all states direct Judicial Magistrates to receive intimations from hospitals when medical boards reach unanimous decisions on life support withdrawal.

- The Union of India was directed to ensure that Chief Medical Officers in all districts maintain a panel of Registered Medical Practitioners for secondary medical boards, while the bench recorded special appreciation for Harish's family, with Justice Pardiwala observing that the parents had never left his side through 13 years of care.

Chhattisgarh Cabinet Approves Freedom of Religion Bill, 2026 to Curb Unlawful Religious Conversions

- The Chhattisgarh State Cabinet approved the Freedom of Religion Bill, 2026 at a meeting in Raipur chaired by Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, with the Bill to be introduced during the ongoing Budget Session of the Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly.
- The Bill aims to prevent unlawful religious conversions and ensure that conversions occur only through voluntary and informed choice, prohibiting conversions carried out through force, coercion, inducements or financial incentives, fraud, misrepresentation, or undue influence.
- The constitutional basis for such legislation lies in Articles 25 to 28, which guarantee freedom of religion, while simultaneously permitting governments to regulate religious activities in the interest of public order, morality, and health.
- If passed, the Bill will become part of Chhattisgarh's legal framework governing religious conversions, joining similar anti-conversion laws enacted by several other Indian states in recent years.
- The legislation reflects a broader national trend of state governments using their legislative competence under the Constitution to regulate the manner in which religious conversions are conducted within their territories.

Goa Government Introduces Advocate Protection Bill 2026 to Safeguard Legal Professionals from Violence and Harassment

- The Goa government decided to introduce the Goa Advocate Protection Bill, 2026 in the state legislative assembly to address rising incidents of violence, intimidation, harassment, and false implication of advocates in criminal proceedings while performing their professional duties.

- The Bill prescribes strict penalties including up to 2 years imprisonment and a ₹55,000 fine for assault or criminal force against an advocate, up to 7 years imprisonment and a ₹1 lakh fine for grievous hurt, up to 2 years imprisonment and a ₹25,000 fine for intimidation or harassment, and up to 7 years imprisonment for threats involving death, grievous injury, or destruction of property.
- The legislation reinforces constitutional values of rule of law, access to justice, and judicial independence, recognising advocates as officers of the court whose protection is essential to safeguarding litigants' fundamental right to legal representation.
- The Bill incorporates safeguards against misuse of its protective provisions to ensure accountability alongside protection, maintaining public confidence in the judicial process.
- Goa joins several other Indian states that have proposed or enacted advocate protection laws, reflecting a growing national recognition of the need to legally safeguard legal professionals for effective and fearless administration of justice.

Supreme Court Rules Parental Income Alone Cannot Determine OBC Creamy Layer Status, Strikes Down 2004 DoPT Clarification

- The Supreme Court ruled on March 11, 2026, that parental income alone cannot determine the creamy layer status of OBC candidates, resolving a long-standing contradiction between the 1993 Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) Office Memorandum — which excluded salary and agricultural income from the creamy layer test — and a 2004 DoPT clarificatory letter that directed inclusion of salary income of PSU and private sector employees.
- A division bench of Justice PS Narasimha and Justice R Mahadevan held that creamy layer determination must be status-based rather than purely income-based, considering the parent's post category (Group A/B/C/D) rather than salary alone, observing that unequal treatment of similarly placed OBC candidates would be violative of Articles 14, 15, and 16 of the Constitution.
- The concept of creamy layer was first introduced in the landmark 1992 Indra Sawhney vs Union of India

(Mandal) judgment to exclude socially advanced OBCs from reservation benefits; under existing rules, the income limit for non-government occupations is ₹8 lakh per annum, revised in 2017.

- The verdict expands OBC reservation eligibility for children of PSU and private sector employees who were previously excluded due to salary-based calculations under the now-quashed 2004 clarification, affecting hundreds of OBC candidates in civil services examinations since 2016.
- The Court directed the government to create supernumerary posts to accommodate candidates who were wrongly denied OBC benefits under the 2004 clarification, providing concrete relief to those adversely affected by the unconstitutional application of the income-based test.

Centre Revokes Sonam Wangchuk's NSA Detention, Renewing Focus on Ladakh's Sixth Schedule Demand

- The Union government revoked the National Security Act (NSA) detention of activist and Ramon Magsaysay Award winner (2018) Sonam Wangchuk nearly six months after his arrest on September 26, 2025, when he was held responsible for instigating violent protests in Leh on September 24 in which four people were killed and 50 were injured.
- Wangchuk has consistently demanded Sixth Schedule protections for Ladakh under Article 244 of the Constitution, which provides for Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) in tribal-majority areas with powers over land, forest, water, agriculture, health, and local policing — a demand that intensified after the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir in 2019 left Ladakh as a Union Territory without a legislature.
- Over 90% of Ladakh's population belongs to Scheduled Tribes, yet the region's two existing Hill Councils — LAHDC Leh and LAHDC Kargil — are not under the Sixth Schedule and hold limited powers, restricted primarily to collection of local taxes and use of centrally vested land.
- All 10 existing Autonomous District Councils under the Sixth Schedule are located in the Northeast — three each in Assam, Meghalaya, and Mizoram, and one in Tripura — and no region outside the Northeast has ever been included in the Sixth Schedule,

presenting a constitutional hurdle that would require a parliamentary amendment to overcome.

- Key protests by Wangchuk and Ladakhi civil society have included a 21-day hunger strike in Leh in March 2024 and a Delhi Chalo Padyatra in September 2024, demanding statehood, Sixth Schedule status, a separate public service commission, and separate Lok Sabha seats for Leh and Kargil.

Rashtrapati Bhavan Hosts Purple Fest to Celebrate Talent and Aspirations of Divyangjan

- Rashtrapati Bhavan hosted Purple Fest on March 13, 2026, a day-long event organised by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, during which over 8,000 Divyangjan visited the Amrit Udyan at the Presidential Estate for games, learning activities, and interactive stalls set up by organisations working for their welfare and empowerment.
- President Droupadi Murmu attended the evening cultural programme and stated that Divyangjan are equal partners in India's journey towards Viksit Bharat by 2047, calling on every member of society to provide them equal opportunities and dignity.
- The President highlighted that the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) recognise the rights of persons with disabilities to education, work, and public assistance, underscoring India's constitutional commitment to their empowerment.
- The term 'Divyangjan' — meaning persons with divine body — was introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2015, with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 serving as the primary legislation governing their rights and welfare in India.
- Key disability-related schemes under the Ministry of

Social Justice and Empowerment include the ADIP scheme for assistive devices, the Unique Disability ID (UDID) initiative, and the Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan).

Supreme Court Operationalises Passive Euthanasia in Harish Rana Case, India's First Court-Approved Implementation

- In *Harish Rana v. Union of India and Others* (2026), the Supreme Court permitted passive euthanasia — the withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment including Clinically Administered Nutrition and Hydration (CANH) via PEG tubes — for a 32-year-old man who had been in a Permanent Vegetative State for over 13 years following a fall from a building in Chandigarh in August 2013, marking the first court-approved implementation of passive euthanasia in India.
- The ruling operationalises the right to die with dignity recognised under Article 21 in *Common Cause v. Union of India* (2018), building on a lineage of landmark judgments including *Aruna Shanbaug v. Union of India* (2011), which first permitted passive euthanasia under safeguards, and reversing the earlier *Gian Kaur v. Punjab* (1996) position.
- Under the two-stage medical review process established in 2018 and modified in 2023, a Primary Medical Board comprising the treating physician and two independent doctors, and a Secondary Medical Board of three independent doctors, must each give their opinions within 48 hours, communicating their decision to the Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) with family consent.
- The Court waived the standard 30-day reconsideration period to prevent unnecessary suffering, directed AIIMS Delhi to admit Harish Rana to its palliative care department, and mandated that High Courts across all states direct Judicial Magistrates to receive intimations from hospitals when medical boards reach unanimous decisions on life support withdrawal.
- Active euthanasia remains prohibited under Sections 100 and 101 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023 as culpable homicide and murder, while the 241st Law Commission Report clarified that a competent patient's refusal of life-sustaining treatment is valid and doctors cannot be charged with abetment of suicide.



Supreme Court Tightens DGP Appointment Rules; UPSC Requires Court Permission for Delayed State Proposals

- The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) revised its rules for appointing State Directors General of Police (DGP) following fresh Supreme Court directions stemming from the Prakash Singh police reforms case, which established guidelines to ensure stability and independence in police leadership free from political interference.
- Under the revised system, state governments must obtain Supreme Court permission before submitting delayed lists of eligible DGP-rank officers to the UPSC for empanelment, closing the earlier loophole that allowed states to submit proposals late without consequence.
- The UPSC empanelment process requires the commission to prepare a panel of three names from the state's list of eligible senior officers, from which the state government must select one, ensuring transparency and preventing political influence in the appointment of the head of the state police force.
- The Supreme Court strongly reaffirmed that appointing an acting DGP has no legal validity under the established police reform framework, despite several states routinely making such appointments, which the Court stated directly undermines the police reform structure.
- The Attorney General of India, approached by the UPSC due to repeated delays by states, concluded that the delays were excessive and legally unjustified and that the UPSC has no provision to condone such delays or proceed with empanelment as if no violation had occurred, directly leading to the new rule.

Defence Minister Releases Defence Forces Vision 2047 Roadmap for a Future-Ready Integrated Indian Military

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh released "Defence Forces Vision 2047: A Roadmap for a Future-Ready Indian Military," a long-term strategic document prepared by the Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff, envisioning transformation of the Indian military into an integrated, multi-domain, and agile force by the centenary of Independence, aligned with the Viksit Bharat 2047 goal.



- The vision emphasises greater tri-service coordination among the Army, Navy, and Air Force to enable unified planning and execution of operations, addressing a long-standing structural gap in India's defence architecture, alongside prioritising upgrading of existing platforms and induction of cutting-edge weapon systems under a structured Capability Development Roadmap.
- The document stresses self-reliance in defence (Aatmanirbharta) through promotion of indigenous defence production, innovation and R&D, and revamping of the Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) to reduce import dependence and nurture the domestic defence ecosystem.
- Multi-domain warfare capability is a central focus, with the military to operate effectively across land, sea, air, cyber, and space domains simultaneously, supported by the proposed creation of a Drone Force, Data Force, Defence Geo-Spatial Agency, a Cognitive Warfare Action Force, and dedicated Space and Cyber Commands.
- Mission Sudarshan Chakra, proposed under the vision, calls for expanding ballistic missile defence and air defence systems to protect economic assets, strategic infrastructure, and civilian installations against multi-domain threats.

Government Withdraws Jan Vishwas Amendment Bill 2025 to Incorporate Select Committee Recommendations

- The Union Government withdrew the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2025 from the Lok Sabha through a motion moved by Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and approved by the House via a voice vote, with the bill to be revised incorporating Select Committee recommendations before reintroduction.

- The Bill sought to amend various laws to decriminalise minor offences and rationalise penalties by replacing imprisonment provisions with monetary penalties in certain cases, with the core objective of reducing the burden on the judicial system and promoting ease of doing business.
- A Select Committee — a parliamentary committee formed to examine a specific bill clause by clause, hear expert testimony, and recommend amendments — had studied the Bill and suggested modifications to improve its provisions, prompting the government to withdraw it for refinement.
- Under the Indian parliamentary system, a pending bill can be withdrawn with the permission of the House and reintroduced in a revised form at a later date; this is not a lapse of the bill but a deliberate procedural step for refinement.
- The Bill is part of the government's broader initiative to shift from a punitive enforcement model to a trust-based governance framework, aimed at reducing unnecessary litigation, lowering compliance burden on businesses and citizens, and improving India's ease of doing business ranking.

Supreme Court Holds Adoptive Mothers Entitled to 12 Weeks Maternity Leave Regardless of Child's Age at Adoption

- In *Hamsaanandini Nanduri v. Union of India*, a bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan held on March 17, 2026 that adoptive mothers are entitled to 12 weeks of maternity benefit from the date the child is handed over to them, irrespective of the child's age at adoption.
- The Court struck down the restriction under Section 60(4) of the Code of Social Security, 2020, which had limited maternity benefit for adoptive mothers to cases where the adopted child was below three months of age, finding that the three-month cut-off created an artificial distinction with no rational nexus to the object of the law.
- The bench held that the age-based restriction made the benefit illusory in practice and violated Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution, as adoptive mothers of older children are similarly placed in terms of caregiving responsibilities as those adopting infants.

- The judgment broadens the legal understanding of motherhood, childcare, and social security in Indian labour law, recognising that the purpose of maternity benefit is to support the caregiving transition rather than to mark a biological event.
- The Court also urged the Union Government to consider recognising paternity leave as a social security benefit, signalling a broader judicial push toward gender-sensitive caregiving legislation in India.

Maharashtra Passes Freedom of Religion Bill 2026, Prohibiting Unlawful Conversions With Up to 7 Years Imprisonment

- The Maharashtra Freedom of Religion Bill, 2026 was passed by the Legislative Assembly on March 16, 2026 and cleared by the Legislative Council on March 18, 2026, defining unlawful conversion as conversion from one religion to another through allurement, coercion, deceit, force, misrepresentation, threat, undue influence, or other fraudulent means.
- The Bill gives a broad meaning to allurement, encompassing gifts, material benefits, employment, free education through religious bodies, promise of marriage, better lifestyle, divine healing, and even glorification of one religion over another in certain contexts.
- Any person intending to convert or any institution organising a conversion ceremony must give a 60-day prior notice to the District Magistrate or another competent authority, and a marriage undertaken solely for unlawful religious conversion may be declared null and void by a competent court.
- Offences under the Bill are cognisable and non-bailable, with the burden of proving that a conversion was voluntary and lawful placed on the person causing or aiding it, and prescribed punishment extending to 7 years imprisonment and a fine of ₹1 lakh, with higher penalties for aggravated cases and repeat offenders.
- The Bill triggered sharp political debate, with supporters presenting it as a measure against forced conversion and critics raising concerns about potential misuse and constitutional validity, particularly regarding the broad definition of allurement and the reverse burden of proof.

Gujarat Receives UCC Draft Report from Justice Ranjana Desai Committee; State May Become Second to Implement UCC

- The Gujarat Government received the final report of the high-level committee set up to prepare a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) framework for the state, submitted in three volumes by Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai — former judge of the Supreme Court — to Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel in Gandhinagar.
- The report suggests a common legal framework for all religions and communities in matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance, and adoption, prepared after detailed district visits to collect public opinion across Gujarat's diverse geographical and cultural landscape.
- Officials indicated that the report stresses equal rights, protection of women, and sensitivity to Gujarat's geographical and cultural diversity, with the government preparing to introduce a draft UCC Bill in the Assembly soon after receiving the report.
- If enacted, Gujarat would become only the second state after Uttarakhand to implement a Uniform Civil Code, marking a significant development in India's ongoing national debate on personal law reform.
- The submission follows Uttarakhand's landmark status as the first state to enact a UCC and reflects a broader momentum among BJP-governed states toward codifying a uniform personal law framework.



India's Operational Metro Network Crosses 1,000 km, Becoming World's Third Largest

- India's operational metro network has crossed 1,000 km, reaching approximately 1,095 km across 26 cities by 2025 — up from 248 km in just 5 cities in 2014 —

making India the world's third-largest operational metro network.

- The 1,095 km figure includes approximately 55 km of the Delhi–Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS), reflecting growing integration of metro and regional rapid transit systems into India's urban mobility framework.
- Since 2014, 38 metro rail projects covering approximately 1,051 km have been sanctioned at an estimated cost of ₹3.44 lakh crore, representing a massive scaling-up of public investment in urban transport infrastructure.
- The annual metro budget rose from ₹5,798 crore in 2013–14 to ₹29,550 crore in 2025–26, indicating the scale of sustained financial commitment driving the expansion across Indian cities.
- The expansion is part of India's broader push for modern, sustainable, and integrated urban mobility under the vision of Viksit Bharat, with metro connectivity now reaching smaller and mid-sized cities beyond the traditional major metropolitan centres.

Centenary Year of Mahad Satyagraha Begins; Maharashtra Declares Year of Social Harmony and Equality



- Thousands gathered at Mahad in Maharashtra's Raigad district to mark the beginning of the centenary year of the historic Chavdar Tale Satyagraha, led by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on March 20, 1927, when he asserted the right of Dalit communities to access and drink water from the Chavdar Tale, a public lake — a movement that predated the Salt Satyagraha by three years.
- March 20 is observed as Social Empowerment Day in India in commemoration of the Mahad Satyagraha,

- with the year 2026–27 declared the Year of Social Harmony and Equality by the Maharashtra government, coinciding with the 200th birth anniversary of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and the 150th birth anniversary of Saint Gadge Maharaj. December 25, 2027 will mark the centenary of Dr. Ambedkar's public burning of the Manusmriti in Mahad, with the CPI(M) and allied organisations planning a larger gathering to mark the occasion, as leaders also paid tribute to R.B. More, a key organiser of the original 1927 Satyagraha.

Transgender Persons Amendment Bill 2026 Introduced in Lok Sabha; Critics Say It Contradicts NALSA Judgment

- The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 was introduced in the Lok Sabha by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, replacing the broad definition under the 2019 Act with a specific list of categories that retains socio-cultural identities such as kinner, hijra, aravani, and jogta, but removes trans-men, trans-women irrespective of surgery or therapy, and genderqueer persons.
- The Bill abolishes Section 4(2) of the 2019 Act, which granted the right to self-perceived gender identity without medical examination, directly contradicting the Supreme Court's NALSA v. Union of India (2014) verdict, which held that gender identity is a matter of personal autonomy requiring no external or medical proof.
- A Medical Board headed by a Chief Medical Officer or Deputy Chief Medical Officer is introduced as a mandatory gatekeeping mechanism, requiring the District Magistrate to issue a certificate of identity only after examining the Board's recommendation, turning what was previously a purely administrative process into a clinical one.
- Unlike the 2019 Act, which permitted obtaining a revised certificate after gender reassignment surgery, the Bill mandates the person to obtain such a certificate, with the concerned medical institution required to furnish information about the surgery directly to the District Magistrate.
- The Bill introduces a new criminal category penalising anyone who forces or coerces a person through force, deceit, or allurements into assuming a transgender identity via emasculation, castration, or hormonal

- procedures, while activists and legal experts have raised concerns about the Bill's regression from self-identification rights.

Election Commission Enforces Model Code of Conduct for Assembly Elections in Five States and Puducherry

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) enforced the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) following the announcement of the 2026 General Elections to the Legislative Assemblies of Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and the Union Territory of Puducherry, alongside bye-elections in multiple states, with the MCC coming into immediate effect upon announcement of the election schedule.
- The MCC has no direct statutory backing and operates as a moral code built on political consensus, enforced by the ECI under Article 324 of the Constitution, with many provisions indirectly enforceable through the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 and the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
- The MCC originated during the 1960 Kerala Assembly elections as a voluntary consensus, was first widely circulated during the 1962 simultaneous elections, comprehensively introduced in 1979, strictly enforced and institutionalised in 1991 under CEC T.N. Seshan, and had manifesto guidelines added in 2013 following the S. Subramaniam Balaji vs Government of Tamil Nadu Supreme Court judgment.
- Key provisions prohibit ministers from combining official visits with electioneering, ban use of government transport and personnel for campaigns, and disallow new financial grants, foundation stones, or ad-hoc appointments that could influence voters once elections are announced.

Union Cabinet Approves CAPF Bill 2026 Formalising IPS Deputation; Critics Allege It Contradicts Supreme Court Order

- The Union Cabinet approved the Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026 on March 10, 2026, seeking to formalise and expand IPS deputation in CAPFs — comprising the CRPF, BSF, ITBP, CISF, and SSB — with a total strength of approximately 10 lakh personnel and nearly 93,000 vacancies across all ranks.

- The Bill proposes reserving 50% of Inspector General (IG) posts, at least 67% of Additional Director General (ADG) posts, and all Special DG and DG posts for IPS officers, replacing fragmented executive orders with a statutory framework and aiming to reduce litigation between cadre and IPS officers.
- The Bill is widely seen as a legislative response to a May 23, 2025 Supreme Court ruling that classified Group A Executive Cadre officers of CAPFs as Organised Group A Services (OGAS) and directed progressive reduction of IPS deputation up to the IG level within two years — a ruling whose review petition was dismissed by the Supreme Court on October 28, 2025, making it final.
- Critics including retired CAPF officers contend the Bill directly contradicts the Supreme Court's directive to reduce IPS deputation and are demanding public consultation before the legislation is passed.
- The government argues the Bill brings administrative clarity by replacing fragmented executive orders with a statutory framework, reduces litigation between cadre and IPS officers, strengthens Centre-State coordination, and enhances operational efficiency through experienced IPS leadership in senior CAPF positions.

MNRE Seeks Authority to Act as 'Central Government' for Renewables Under Electricity Act 2003

- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has made a case before a parliamentary committee for recognition as the "Central Government" in all matters pertaining to renewables under the Electricity Act, 2003, effectively seeking to redraw institutional boundaries with the Ministry of Power, as India works toward its target of 500 GW of non-fossil capacity by 2030 against a current installed base of 271.96 GW as of January 31, 2026.
- MNRE has sought authority to design electricity markets for renewable energy, notify bidding guidelines, frame tariff determination principles for the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC), guide CERC under Section 107 of the Electricity Act, and oversee planning and monitoring of Renewable Purchase Obligations (RPOs).

- The Ministry has also asked that the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) coordinate with it on RE regulations and that the National Committee on Transmission work under MNRE's guidance — functions traditionally under the Ministry of Power — citing fragmented oversight across multiple ministries as a key bottleneck slowing renewable energy deployment.
- A significant administrative anomaly exists as large hydropower — reclassified as renewable in 2019 — continues to be administered by the Ministry of Power rather than MNRE, creating a mismatch where targets and administration sit in different ministries.
- India's decentralised renewable energy share stands at only 15% against a global average of 40%, with MNRE acknowledging the absence of a dedicated policy framework for off-grid applications such as biogas plants, solar pumps, and rural cold storages.

INS Taragiri, Fourth Project 17A Stealth Frigate With 75% Indigenous Content, to Be Commissioned on April 3, 2026

- INS Taragiri (F41), the fourth ship of the Nilgiri-class stealth frigates built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) under Project 17A and designed by the Warship Design Bureau (WDB), is set to be commissioned at Visakhapatnam under the Eastern Naval Command on April 3, 2026, with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh presiding.
- The frigate displaces approximately 6,670 tonnes and is powered by a Combined Diesel or Gas (CODOG) propulsion system, featuring advanced stealth features, a reduced radar cross-section, and an indigenous content of more than 75%, reflecting India's growing Aatmanirbhar Bharat shipbuilding capabilities.
- INS Taragiri is armed with supersonic BrahMos surface-to-surface missiles, medium-range surface-to-air missiles (MRSAM), the MFSTAR radar system, a 76 mm Super Rapid Gun Mount (SRGM), close-in weapon systems, and anti-submarine warfare equipment including rockets and torpedoes, all integrated through a modern Combat Management System.

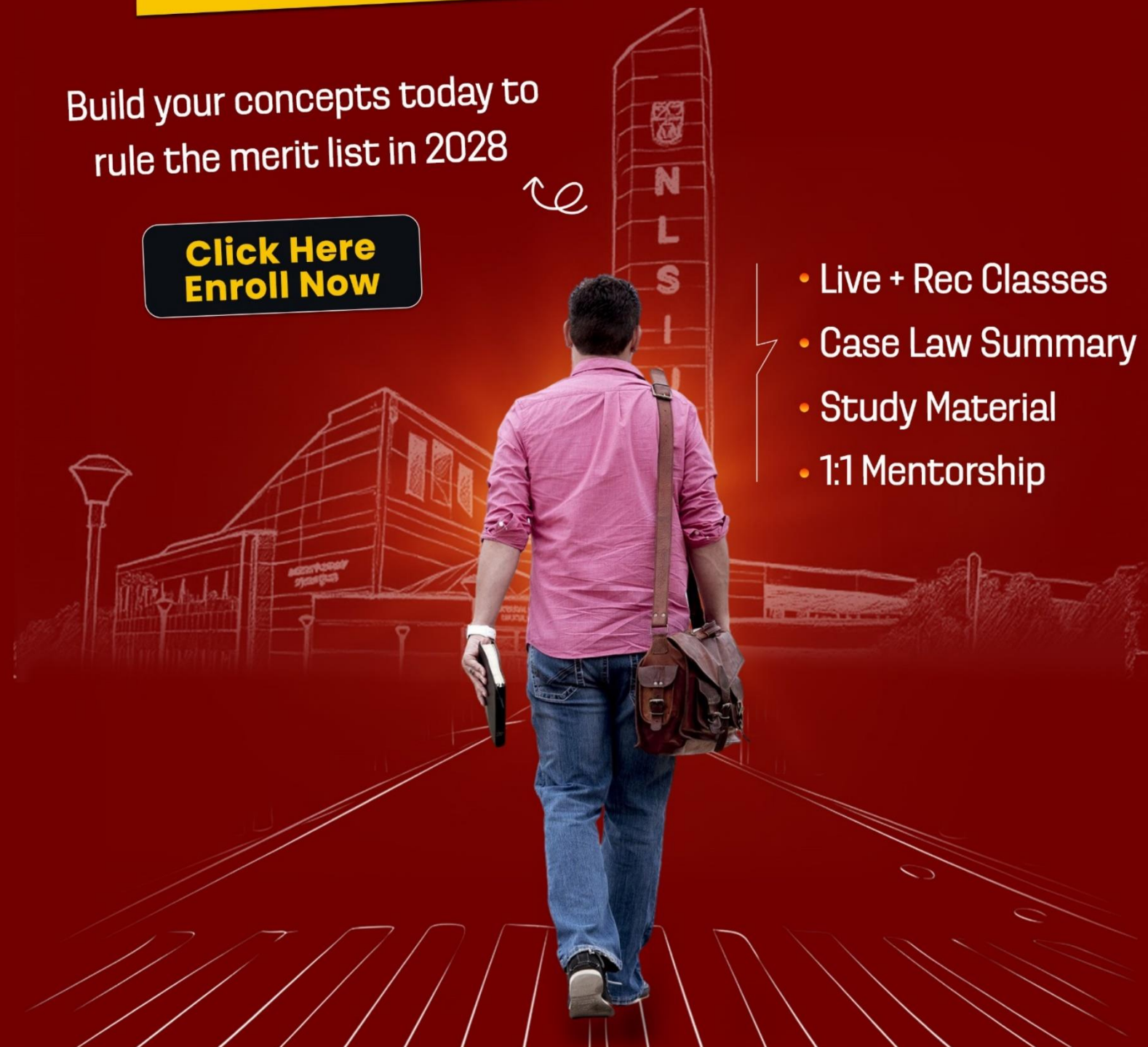
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Economy & Government Scheme

India Invokes Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to Secure Household LPG Supply Amid Strait of Hormuz Disruption

- The Indian government invoked the Essential Commodities Act (ECA), 1955 — which empowers the Union Government to regulate production, supply, distribution, and trade of essential commodities including petroleum products — to protect household LPG supply disrupted by the ongoing US-Israel-Iran conflict that has halted vessel movements through the Strait of Hormuz, through which nearly 90% of India's LPG imports pass.
- With domestic LPG inventory standing at only 25–30 days and India importing more than 60% of its total LPG requirements, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas directed all public and private refineries to divert propane, butane, and other C3/C4 hydrocarbon streams exclusively for LPG production, with the entire output to be supplied only to state-run oil marketing companies — IndianOil (IOC), BPCL, and HPCL.
- Alongside the ECA invocation, the government introduced the Natural Gas (Supply Regulation) Order, 2026, tasking GAIL (India) Ltd with coordinating reallocation of gas from lower-priority users to top-priority sectors including domestic PNG (piped natural gas), CNG, LPG plants, and pipeline operations.
- To cushion the financial impact of higher input costs, the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) introduced a pooled pricing mechanism that will periodically calculate and notify a single averaged price across all recipients of diverted gas, with entities required to give a legal undertaking to accept this price, overriding prior contracts.
- Hotels, restaurants, bakeries, food courts, gas crematoriums, and laundry operations in cities including Mumbai, Bengaluru, Delhi, Chennai, and Pune are among the hardest-hit sectors, with a 25-day inter-booking period introduced for domestic consumers ordering cylinder refills to prevent hoarding.

NITI Aayog Releases Fiscal Health Index 2026; Odisha Tops Major States, Arunachal Pradesh Leads NE Category

- NITI Aayog released the second edition of the Fiscal Health Index (FHI) 2026 in New Delhi, unveiled by Vice Chairman Suman Bery and CEO Nidhi Chhibber, to assess the fiscal performance and financial stability of Indian states across five pillars: Quality of Expenditure, Revenue Mobilisation, Fiscal Prudence, Debt Index, and Debt Sustainability.
- The 2026 edition expanded coverage beyond the first edition's 18 major states to additionally include 10 North-Eastern and Himalayan states, which are evaluated and ranked separately due to significant structural and geographical differences.
- Odisha emerged as the top-performing major state in FHI 2026, with Goa and Jharkhand also featuring among Achiever states, while Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, and Karnataka were classified as Front-Runner states.
- Among North-Eastern and Himalayan states, Arunachal Pradesh ranked first, followed by Uttarakhand and Tripura, with Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya improving rankings through higher capital and developmental expenditure.
- Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, and Nagaland were placed in the Aspirational category, reflecting weaker revenue mobilisation and higher expenditure commitments, underscoring the fiscal challenges facing certain hill and northeastern states.

USTR Launches Two Section 301 Probes Against India Over Excess Manufacturing Capacity and Forced Labour Concerns

- The United States Trade Representative (USTR) launched two Section 301 investigations — authorised under the Trade Act of 1974 to investigate foreign trade practices that unfairly burden US commerce — targeting India in both probes, with the first on March 11, 2026 covering 16 economies over structural excess manufacturing capacity, and the second on March 12, 2026 covering 60 economies over alleged forced labour practices in global supply chains.
- India recorded a \$58 billion goods trade surplus with the US in 2025, with the USTR flagging India's solar modules, petrochemicals, steel, textiles, electronics, and garments as sectors of concern, noting that India's solar module manufacturing capacity is nearly three times its domestic demand.
- The forced labour probe poses a specific risk for India as Indian exporters — particularly in solar panels, electronics, and garments — rely on Chinese intermediate inputs that may be linked to forced labour in China's Xinjiang region, which produces approximately 20% of the world's cotton and polysilicon used in solar panels.
- India prohibits forced labour under the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, but Chinese-origin inputs used in Indian exports to the US could draw scrutiny under the forced labour investigation, potentially affecting the competitiveness of Indian exports in the American market.
- Both investigations could lead to fresh tariffs on India after May 2026, with the probe coming amid ongoing India-US trade deal negotiations, and India indicating talks will resume once there is clarity on US tariff policies.

Government Notifies Income Tax Rules 2026 Under New Income-tax Act 2025, Effective April 1, 2026

- The Government of India notified the Income Tax Rules, 2026, to come into effect from April 1, 2026, implementing the provisions of the Income-tax Act, 2025 and replacing older procedural systems with updated compliance structures, stricter reporting mechanisms, and modernised taxation norms for digital and cross-border businesses.
- The rules strengthen the concept of Significant Economic Presence (SEP) for digital taxation, making tax applicable to global digital companies if transactions exceed ₹2 crore or the user base exceeds 3 lakh users in India, while also simplifying capital gains guidelines for complex transactions including debenture conversions, cross-border restructuring, and zero-coupon bonds.
- Stock exchanges will now be required to maintain audit trails for 7 years, prevent deletion of transaction records, and submit monthly reports on modified transactions, while companies must maintain share registers, hold general meetings, and pay dividends only within India, implying stronger domestic control over dividend distribution.
- Enhanced cross-border taxation powers allow Indian tax authorities to estimate non-resident income using a percentage basis, global profit ratios, or any other reasonable method, reflecting India's effort to assert greater fiscal jurisdiction over international transactions.
- The overall reform aims to enhance transparency, digitisation, and standardisation across the direct taxation system while reducing the total number of rules to simplify procedures for taxpayers and businesses.

Environment & Ecology

Kuno National Park Records First Sighting of Endangered Forest Owlet

- Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh has recorded the Forest Owlet for the first time, adding an important biodiversity record in the protected area.
- The Forest Owlet, also known as Blewitt's Owl, is listed as Endangered and is regarded as a rare species with a highly restricted distribution.
- Officials described the sighting as the first authenticated record of the species from Kuno, after it was first spotted in the Parond beat area by a local tourism operator and later confirmed by a wildlife expert.
- The species was originally described in 1872, was long thought extinct after 1884, and was rediscovered in India in 1997.
- Officials linked the sighting to stronger habitat protection and broader ecosystem recovery in Kuno, and reports also noted that the bird is comparatively more active in the morning hours than many other owl species.

India Receives 9 Cheetahs from Botswana for Kuno National Park

- India has received nine cheetahs from Botswana, which have been placed in quarantine enclosures at Kuno National Park under Project Cheetah.
- The new batch consists of six females and three males, adding to the population base of the reintroduction programme.
- The animals have been kept in quarantine for acclimatisation and health monitoring before any phased movement into the wider landscape.
- Official updates stated that India's cheetah population under Project Cheetah has reached 48, including 28 India-born cubs.
- Reports noted that the cheetahs were transported by an Indian Air Force aircraft and then moved by helicopter for the final leg to reduce transit stress, after which they will undergo further health checks and behavioural monitoring.

India Submits 7th National Report to CBD; Only 2 of 23 Biodiversity Targets on Track

- India has submitted its 7th National Report (NR7) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), providing a comprehensive assessment of progress toward 23 National Biodiversity Targets (NBTs) and 142 indicators aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) — India's first full progress assessment since the KMGBF was adopted in 2022.
- The report was prepared by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) with inputs from 33 central ministries, the National Biodiversity Authority, the Wildlife Institute of India, and technical support from UNDP under the GEF-8 Umbrella Programme.
- Only 2 of the 23 National Biodiversity Targets — NBT1 (biodiversity-inclusive land and sea-use planning) and NBT2 (ecosystem restoration) — are clearly on track; for the remaining 21 targets, the report describes policies but lacks clear quantitative projections for 2030.
- Under NBT1, India's forest and tree cover stands at 25.17% of geographical area (827,357 sq km), increasing by 1,445.81 sq km between 2021 and 2023, with wetland inventories complete and eco-sensitive zones notified.
- Under NBT2, India has restored or placed under restoration 24.1 million hectares against its Bonn Challenge pledge of 26 million hectares, with forest carbon stock rising by approximately 81.5 million tonnes to 7,285.5 million tonnes and bamboo area expanding by 1,540 sq km.

India's Cheetah Population Reaches 53 as Jwala Delivers Fifth Litter at Kuno National Park

- Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav announced that India's cheetah population has reached 53 individuals after Namibian cheetah Jwala gave birth to five cubs at Kuno National Park, Madhya Pradesh, marking the 10th successful cheetah litter

born on Indian soil since the launch of Project Cheetah.

- Jwala's latest litter brings the total number of Indian-born cheetah cubs to 33, and makes her a successful third-time mother, indicating that habitat conditions at Kuno National Park are increasingly suitable for cheetah breeding and reproduction.
- South African cheetah Gamini also recently delivered four cubs — her second successful litter since arriving in India — further demonstrating the programme's breeding success across multiple individuals.
- On February 28, 2026, India received nine cheetahs from Botswana (six females and three males), who have been placed in quarantine enclosures at Kuno National Park for health monitoring and acclimatisation before gradual release into the wild.
- Project Cheetah was launched to restore cheetahs to India's grassland ecosystems after the species was declared extinct in the country in 1952, with Kuno National Park serving as the central conservation hub, where monitoring is conducted through radio collars and field observation by wildlife biologists and forest department personnel.



PPVFRA Registers Nagauri Paan Methi as Community Farmers' Variety, Granting Legal Protection to Nagaur Farmers

- The Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority (PPVFRA), operating under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, officially registered "Nagauri Paan Methi" as a Community Farmers' Variety under the PPV&FR Act, 2001, as announced in the February 2026 issue of the Plant Variety Journal.
- Scientifically known as *Trigonella corniculata* L., Nagauri Paan Methi is a traditional fenugreek variety

native to the arid agro-ecology of Nagaur district, Rajasthan, and had previously been misidentified as "Kasuri Methi" — a confusion that the registration now formally corrects in domestic and global markets.

- The farming community of Nagaur district is recognised as the legal custodian of the variety, with the application represented by Geeta Devi, a woman farmer and Pradhan of Panchayat Samiti, Mundwa, formally acknowledging collective innovation and conservation by local farmers.
- The registration protects the farming community against biopiracy and unauthorised commercial exploitation, safeguards farmers from spurious seeds, and makes the community eligible for benefit-sharing if the variety's genetic resources are used in research or commercial products.
- The registration paves the way for a future Geographical Indication (GI) tag that could enhance market identity and secure premium prices, and the variety is already listed in Schedule-I of the Spices Board of India, with support from the DBT Biotech Kisan Hub and NABARD's AEFC programme.

Israeli Strikes on Tehran Oil Facilities Trigger Toxic Black Rain, Raising Severe Health and Environmental Alarms

- On the night of March 7–8, 2026, Israeli strikes targeted four oil storage facilities and an oil production transfer centre in Tehran and the Alborz province — including the Aghdasieh oil warehouse, Shahr oil depot, and Tehran refinery — triggering massive fires whose smoke, laden with hydrocarbon compounds, sulfur oxides, and nitrogen oxides, mixed with rainfall to produce black rain across Tehran and surrounding areas.
- The Iranian Red Crescent confirmed the release of significant quantities of toxic compounds, while the World Health Organization (WHO) officially warned that the black rain and acid rain falling over Tehran posed a real danger to the population, primarily to respiratory health, with WHO spokesperson Christian Lindmeier backing Iran's advisory for residents to remain indoors.
- Health risks include headaches, skin and eye irritation, breathing difficulties, serious lung damage,

and chemical burns; senior scientist Peter Ross of the Raincoast Conservation Foundation, Canada, highlighted that petroleum mixtures contain thousands of hydrocarbons including benzene, with severe long-term health consequences including increased cancer risk.

- Doug Weir of the Conflict and Environment Observatory, UK, noted that Tehran's surrounding mountains cause pollutants to be pushed downward and inward, and the city's dense urban layout further restricts air circulation, making the pollution impacts significantly worse than it would be in open cities.
- Scientists caution that contamination from persistent organic pollutants and 'forever chemicals' released in such industrial fires could remain in the environment indefinitely, posing long-term ecological risks beyond the immediate health emergency.

Gujarat Launches 'Lake and Air Watch' Initiative to Monitor AQI and Urban Lake Health Across 169 Urban Areas

- The Gujarat state government launched the 'Lake and Air Watch' initiative, implemented by the Gujarat Urban Development Mission (GUDM) under Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, to monitor and improve air quality and lake health across urban areas, with an estimated budget of ₹10 crore.
- Air quality monitoring stations will be installed across 17 municipal corporations and 152 municipal areas to provide continuous real-time AQI data, with automatic alerts generated when AQI levels exceed safe limits to enable immediate curative action by concerned departments.
- Satellite technology will be used to analyse urban lake health — including lake area, waste presence, pollution levels, siltation, and algae growth — with timely alerts issued to enable prompt conservation action addressing water pollution and declining water quality.
- GUDM will develop a centralised integrated digital dashboard consolidating real-time data on lake health and air quality, providing maps, trend analysis, alerts, and operational status to ensure better inter-departmental coordination and transparent data sharing with citizens.

Maharashtra Records Highest Tiger Deaths in India in 2025; Leopard Protection Downgrade Controversy Adds to Concern

- The initiative addresses environmental problems caused by rapid urbanisation — including declining water quality, reduced groundwater recharge, and worsening air pollution — and is aligned with PM Modi's vision of 'Viksit Bharat' and building sustainable, future-ready cities.
- Maharashtra Forest Minister Ganesh Naik informed the State Legislative Council during the Budget session that 166 tiger deaths were recorded across India in 2025 as per data from the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), a statutory body under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, with Maharashtra recording 41 deaths — the highest share among all states.
- Recent deaths at the Pench Tiger Reserve, Nagpur include one adult tiger and two cubs, with a cub death on January 7, 2026 attributed to a fight among tigers and another decomposed carcass appearing to be due to natural causes.
- Maharashtra's anti-poaching measures include deployment of the Special Tiger Protection Force (STPF), dog squads, the M-Stripes app on field staff mobiles, informers at range level, wireless communication in hypersensitive areas, and vehicle checkpoints, alongside a Wildlife Crime Cell and a Cyber Cell at Melghat Tiger Reserve.
- The Maharashtra State Cabinet has approved a proposal to move leopards from Schedule I — which provides the highest level of legal protection with the most stringent penalties — to Schedule II of the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA), and has approached the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) to formalise the change, drawing significant conservation concern.
- Tigers are listed under Schedule I of the WLPA, with NTCA overseeing Project Tiger and monitoring tiger populations and deaths across India, and any dilution of wildlife protection schedules is viewed as potentially undermining India's broader wildlife conservation framework.

Supreme Court Strengthens Great Indian Bustard Conservation, Expands Protected Habitat and Mandates Powerline Corridors

- The Supreme Court delivered a landmark judgment strengthening conservation of the critically endangered Great Indian Bustard (GIB) — also known as Godawan, Hoom, and Gaganbher, and the state bird of Rajasthan — by introducing targeted safeguards against fatal power line collisions, which the species is highly vulnerable to due to its poor frontal vision and heavy body.
- Based on expert committee recommendations, the December 2025 final judgment expanded GIB priority conservation areas in Rajasthan from 13,163 sq km to 14,013 sq km and in Gujarat from 500 sq km to 740 sq km, with key protected sites including Desert National Park, Pokhran Field Firing Range, and Sanu-Mokla-Parewar.
- Dedicated powerline corridors — up to 5 km wide and placed at least 5 km south of Desert National Park in Rajasthan, and 1–2 km wide in Gujarat's coastal Kutch — were approved to carry rerouted overhead transmission lines from wind and solar projects away from critical GIB habitat.
- The ruling directly reshapes India's Green Energy Corridor (GEC) Phase I and II projects, with over 9 GW of solar capacity in Rajasthan and Gujarat affected, signalling that India's renewable energy transmission backbone must now be planned around immutable conservation boundaries.
- Earlier judicial interventions included a 2021 blanket ban on new overhead power lines across approximately 99,000 sq km of GIB habitat, later partially withdrawn in March 2024 after concerns raised by the Ministry of Power, MNRE, and MoEFCC over technical feasibility, before the expert committee-guided final judgment in December 2025.

India Submits First National Report on Nagoya Protocol, Publishing Over 60% of Global Compliance Certificates

- India submitted its First National Report (NR1) on the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on February 27, 2026, covering the period from November 1, 2017 to December 31, 2025, prepared by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) in collaboration with the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA).
- The Nagoya Protocol, a supplementary agreement under the CBD that came into force in 2014, deals

with access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilisation, ensuring that benefits derived from genetic resources are shared equitably with the communities and countries of origin.

- India's ABS framework is built on the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, supported by the Biological Diversity Rules, 2024 and the ABS Regulations, 2025, implemented through a three-tier institutional structure comprising the NBA at the national level, State Biodiversity Boards and UT Biodiversity Councils at the state level, and over 2,76,653 Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) at the local level.
- India has published 3,556 Internationally Recognised Certificates of Compliance (IRCCs) on the ABS Clearing-House under Article 17 of the Nagoya Protocol, representing over 60% of the global total and reflecting India's leadership in ABS transparency and compliance.
- The report contributes to Target 13 of India's updated National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), with India also monitoring the use of foreign-sourced biological resources under Rule 18 of the BD Rules, 2024 and Section 36A of the BD Act, 2002, having received 41 declarations in Form 10 during the reporting period.

GSI Designates Kalinjar Hill in Uttar Pradesh as National Geo-Heritage Site for Rare Eparchaean Unconformity



- The Geological Survey of India (GSI) officially designated the Kalinjar hill area surrounding Kalinjar Fort in Banda district, Uttar Pradesh as a National Geo-Heritage Site — the first such designation in UP

— recognising the presence of the rare Eparchaeon Unconformity where 2.5-billion-year-old Bundelkhand granite is overlain by 1.2-billion-year-old Kaimur sandstone, offering a rare physical window into Earth's ancient crustal evolution.

- The Eparchaeon Unconformity is a geological phenomenon where rock layers from vastly different time periods come into direct contact; another such unconformity already designated as a National Geo-Heritage Monument is the Tirupati Eparchaeon Unconformity in Andhra Pradesh.
- Kalinjar Fort has been a major political and military centre across centuries, passing through the Chedi kingdom, Mauryan Empire, and Gupta, Chandela, Mughal, and Maratha periods, with the site also mentioned in Buddhist literature.
- The geo-heritage status prevents uncontrolled quarrying and construction in the area, safeguarding the entire surrounding landscape, rock faces, and built heritage as one unified protected zone, with GSI to install informational signage explaining the unconformity, rock layers, and fort history.
- The Uttar Pradesh government has approved a ₹12 crore development project to transform Kalinjar Fort into a heritage-tourism destination, with authorities planning to integrate it into a tourism circuit connecting Kalinjar, Khajuraho, and Chitrakoot to boost local employment, handicrafts, and hospitality in the Bundelkhand region.

International Day of Forests 2026 Observed Under Theme 'Forests and Economies', Highlighting Livelihood and Economic Links

- The International Day of Forests 2026 was observed on March 21, 2026 under the theme "Forests and Economies", proclaimed annually by the United Nations General Assembly since 2012 to promote conservation and sustainable use of forest resources.
- According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), more than 1.6 billion people depend on forests for subsistence, income, or employment, with the forest sector providing at least 13 million formal jobs and 45–50 million jobs in informal and small-scale forest-based enterprises.
- Forests sustain family and community-based agriculture, improve agricultural productivity, protect watersheds, and provide income, employment, and

raw materials supporting industries and communities across the world.

- As countries transition toward a sustainable bioeconomy, forest products offer nature-based alternatives to carbon-intensive materials while creating new economic opportunities, with the 2026 theme seeking to place forests at the centre of sustainable, resilient, and long-term economic planning.
- Countries are encouraged to carry out local, national, and international activities linked to forests and trees — including tree planting drives — reinforcing the day's objective of mainstreaming forests into national economic policy frameworks.

Supreme Court Declines to Block Removal of 45,675 Mangroves for Mumbai's Versova-Bhayandar Coastal Road

- The Supreme Court dismissed an appeal by NGO Vanashakti against the Bombay High Court's order permitting removal of 45,675 mangrove trees for the ₹18,263-crore Versova-Bhayandar coastal road project proposed by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), stating the road would have a significant and beneficial impact by easing congestion on the western highway in northern Mumbai.
- The project will reduce travel time between Versova and Mira Bhayandar from nearly two hours to less than 20 minutes and cut the distance from 33.6 km to 23.2 km by extending the coastal road from Nariman Point to Bandra and connecting it to the under-construction Bandra-Versova sea link, with the BMC directed to submit annual reports to the High Court on compensatory afforestation and mangrove restoration.
- Mangroves are salt-tolerant trees and shrubs that grow in coastal intertidal zones of tropical and subtropical regions, possessing unique adaptations including roots that filter or excrete salt, pneumatophores (aerial roots) that absorb oxygen in waterlogged soils, prop roots for structural stability, and vivipary — where seeds germinate while still attached to the parent tree.
- Mangrove forests are among the most carbon-rich ecosystems, playing a crucial role in carbon sequestration and climate change mitigation, acting

as natural buffers against coastal erosion, cyclones, and storm surges, and providing vital habitats for diverse marine and terrestrial species supporting biodiversity and fisheries.

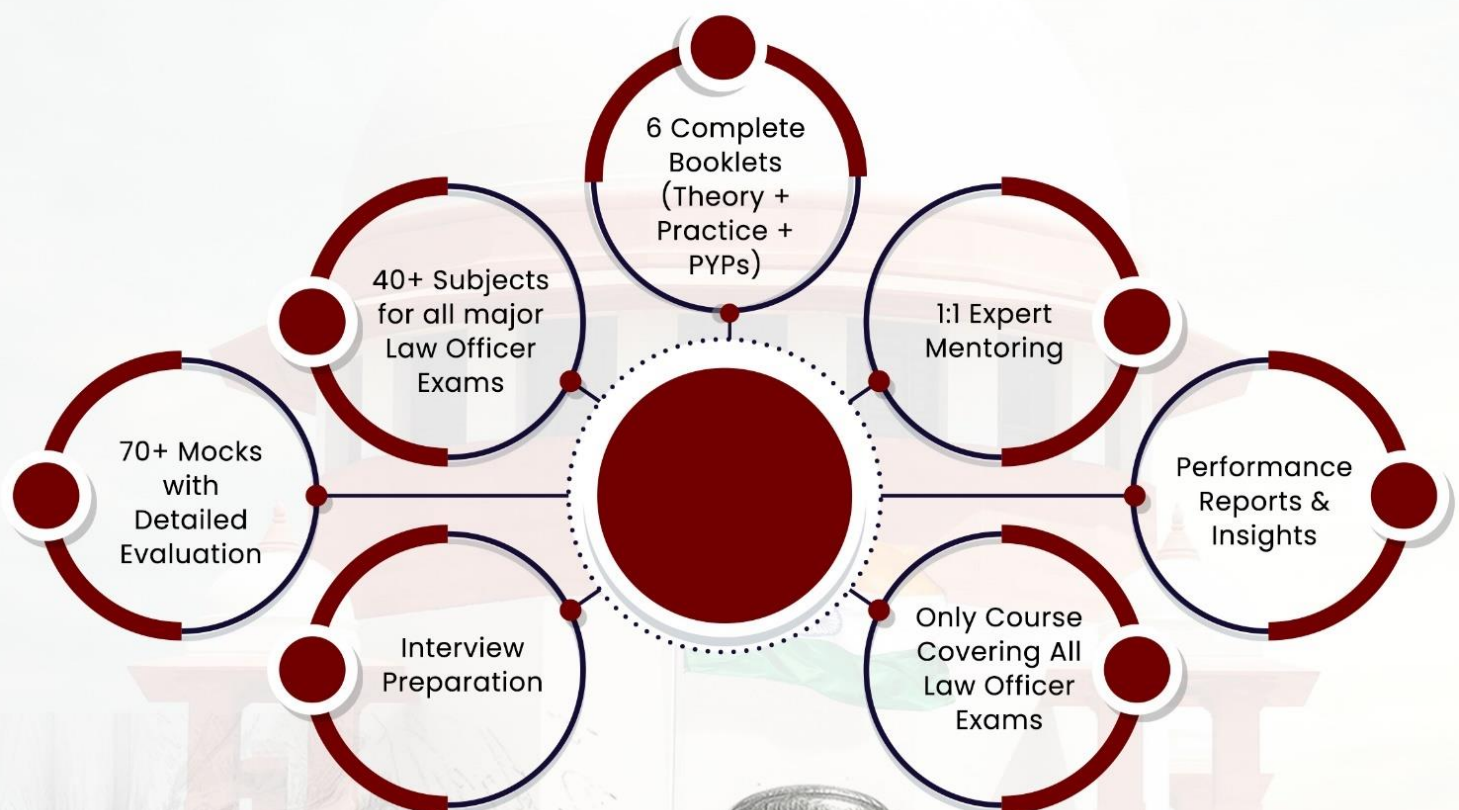
- The ruling has renewed debate over balancing infrastructure development with environmental conservation in ecologically sensitive coastal regions, particularly as Mumbai's rapid urban expansion continues to put pressure on its remaining mangrove cover.

World Water Day 2026 Observed Under Theme 'Water and Gender'; India Holds 88-Day Coal Stock Amid Energy Security Push

- World Water Day 2026 was observed on March 22, 2026 under the theme "Water and Gender" with the campaign tagline "Where Water Flows, Equality Grows", first proposed during the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and observed annually since 1993, with the 2026 theme highlighting that women are primarily responsible for water collection in many parts of the world yet are frequently excluded from water policy decision-making.
- The observance supports Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6), which aims to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all by 2030, with experts arguing that empowering women in water-related decisions can help address the global water crisis more effectively.
- India achieved 1 billion tonnes of coal production for the second consecutive year, with the milestone reached on March 20, 2026, providing energy security context as India currently holds an overall coal stock of 88 days — sufficient to meet rising demand amid global energy market uncertainties from the West Asia crisis.
- Despite the rapid growth of renewable energy, coal remains critical to India's power sector due to the intermittent nature of renewable sources and insufficient battery storage, with the Coal Ministry highlighting sustained and coordinated efforts across the coal value chain as key to achieving the consecutive billion-tonne milestone.

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Science

CHEOPS Discovers Unusual Rocky Exoplanet in LHS 1903 System

- A study published in the journal Science reported that ESA's CHEOPS satellite has identified a four-planet system around the red dwarf star LHS 1903, located 116.3 light-years away in the constellation of Lynx, with an unexpectedly rocky outermost planet.
- The discovered planetary arrangement is unusual because the system follows a rocky-gaseous-gaseous-rocky sequence, unlike the standard pattern in which inner planets are rocky and outer planets are generally gaseous.
- Scientists examined and ruled out alternative explanations such as atmospheric stripping caused by a giant impact and later orbital swapping between planets through simulations and orbital calculations.
- The most convincing explanation advanced by researchers is the inside-out planet formation model, under which planets formed sequentially from the innermost to the outermost position and the system likely ran out of gas before the outermost planet formed, leaving it rocky.
- CHEOPS, developed by ESA in partnership with Switzerland and a consortium of 11 ESA member states, is designed to characterise known exoplanets and study planetary formation and evolution, and it is operated from Madrid, Spain.

VoicERA Launched on BHASHINI at India AI Impact Summit 2026

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) launched VoicERA, an open-source end-to-end Voice AI stack, on the BHASHINI National Language Infrastructure at the India AI Impact Summit 2026.
- VoicERA has been developed by the Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD) under the Digital India Corporation (DIC), led by Amitabh Nag, in collaboration with EkStep Foundation, COSS, IIIT Bengaluru, and AI4Bharat.

- The platform is designed as a modular, interoperable, cloud-deployable, and on-premise-ready system that avoids vendor lock-in and enables government agencies, research institutions, and innovation ecosystems to build voice-enabled digital services efficiently.
- With the addition of VoicERA, BHASHINI has expanded beyond translation and language technologies to include real-time speech recognition, conversational AI, multilingual telephony, and voice-enabled citizen services across sectors such as agriculture, education, livelihood support, grievance redressal, and scheme discovery.
- Officials described VoicERA as a digital public good for voice, positioning it as part of India's broader Digital Public Infrastructure ecosystem alongside Aadhaar, UPI, and DigiLocker, with BHASHINI serving as the national language and voice layer.

Skyroot's Vikram-1: India's First Private Orbital Rocket Set for Launch from Sriharikota



- Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace is preparing to launch Vikram-1 — India's first privately developed orbital rocket — from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota; the rocket is named after Vikram Sarabhai, the father of India's space programme.
- Vikram-1 is a seven-storey (75 feet tall) rocket with an all-carbon composite structure, a payload capacity

of approximately 300 kg to orbit, and three solid-propellant stages — Kalam-1200, Kalam-250, and Kalam-100 — with an upper Orbit Adjustment Module (OAM) powered by a 3D-printed liquid engine called Raman-2.

- Skyroot Aerospace was founded in 2018 by former ISRO engineers Pawan Kumar Chandana and Naga Bharath Daka; the company successfully launched the sub-orbital Vikram-S in November 2022 on its very first attempt — a feat not achieved even by SpaceX on its maiden mission.
- Skyroot's production facility, Infinity Campus, is located near Hyderabad Airport and is designed to manufacture one Vikram-class rocket per month once fully operational.
- Skyroot has signed MoUs with French newspace operator Promethee, German aggregator Exolaunch, and Indian startups Dhruva Space and Bellatrix Aerospace for satellite constellation launches and related partnerships.

GPS Spoofing Threatens Civilian Flights Amid US-Iran Electronic Warfare in Persian Gulf

- Escalating US-Iran military tensions have triggered widespread GPS spoofing incidents across the Persian Gulf and UAE airspace, with over 1,000 maritime vessels and hundreds of commercial flights experiencing navigation anomalies since 1 March 2026.
- Unlike signal jamming, GPS spoofing transmits fake satellite signals that aircraft computers accept as real, causing cockpit displays to show completely false locations — aircraft near the UAE border have appeared on navigation systems to be flying over Iranian territory while actually in international air corridors.
- Iran has deployed its indigenous Cobra V8 electronic warfare system, capable of disrupting signals up to 250 km away; designed against enemy missiles and drones, it does not discriminate between military and civilian signals.
- If pilots follow a spoofed signal, they may unknowingly enter restricted or militarised airspace, potentially triggering a lethal military response; several airlines have already rerouted flights to avoid the affected region, increasing flight duration and fuel consumption.

Iron Dome, THAAD, and Iran's Bavar-373: Air Defence Systems in Focus Amid Middle East Conflict

- Amid escalating Middle East tensions, three major air defence systems have come under global focus: Israel's Iron Dome — operational since 2011, developed by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems — is a short-range system with a ~70 km range designed to intercept rockets, artillery shells, and drones using the Tamir interceptor missile, with a reported success rate of over 90%.
- The US THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense), developed by Lockheed Martin and operational since 2008, is a high-altitude ballistic missile defence system with an engagement range of ~200 km and interception altitude of up to 150 km, using hit-to-kill kinetic technology that destroys missiles through direct collision at over Mach 8; it is deployed in the USA, South Korea, and the UAE.
- Iran's Bavar-373, developed indigenously and operational since 2019, is a long-range surface-to-air missile system using the Sayyad-4 interceptor with a ~200 km engagement range and radar detection range of ~300 km, developed as an alternative to Russia's S-300 system.
- The key distinction between the three systems lies in their purpose and interception layer: Iron Dome operates at low altitude for short-range threats; THAAD provides high-altitude defence capable of intercepting missiles outside the atmosphere; and Bavar-373 covers medium-to-long-range threats including aircraft, drones, cruise missiles, and some ballistic missiles.

International Malaria Conference 2026 Concludes in New Delhi with Focus on Elimination Goals

- The International Malaria Conference (IMC) 2026, organised by ICMR-National Institute of Malaria Research (ICMR-NIMR) under the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), was held in New Delhi from March 7-9, 2026, under the theme "Discovery, Development and Delivery: Driving Malaria Elimination and Beyond."
- The conference brought together scientists, public health experts, policymakers, and researchers from

India and across the world to share scientific knowledge, strengthen global partnerships, and address emerging challenges in malaria control and elimination.

- Discovery sessions focused on advances in parasite biology, transmission dynamics, and molecular mechanisms influencing malaria persistence and drug resistance, while Development sessions highlighted innovations in diagnostics, research tools, and surveillance technologies.
- Delivery sessions addressed the translation of scientific findings into public health interventions, covering residual malaria transmission, vaccine research advances, and community-based malaria control strategies.
- Dr. Tanu Jain, Director of the National Centre for Vector Borne Diseases Control (NCVBDC), highlighted India's strategic efforts towards malaria elimination, while early-career researchers and students were actively engaged through turbo talks, poster presentations, and interactions with leading scientists.



Scientists Publish India's First Comprehensive Checklist of Fireflies, Documenting 92 Species Across 27 Genera

- Scientists have compiled India's first-ever comprehensive checklist of fireflies, documenting 92 species across 27 genera by consolidating records from nearly 300 scientific publications spanning 1758 to 2025, with the study published in the journal

Zootaxa and led by Parvez, a PhD scholar at the University of Calcutta.

- Over 60% of the documented species are endemic to India, with the Western Ghats emerging as the richest habitat accounting for 25.33% of species, followed by the North-East and Gangetic Plains at approximately 22.66% each, Coastal Regions at 17.33%, and the Deccan Peninsula at 13.33%, with no fireflies recorded in Desert and Semi-Arid zones.
- Fireflies are soft-bodied beetles belonging to the family Lampyridae, order Coleoptera, producing bioluminescence through a chemical reaction involving luciferin, luciferase, oxygen, and ATP via a light organ called the photophore, generating nearly 100% energy-efficient cold light used primarily for mating communication in adults and as a predator warning signal in larvae.
- No Indian firefly species has been assessed for the IUCN Red List, nor are they protected under the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2022, revealing a significant conservation gap despite their ecological importance and high endemism.
- Major threats to firefly populations in India include light pollution, habitat destruction, agricultural chemicals, and rapid urbanisation, making the checklist a foundational document for future conservation, research, and policy interventions.

ISRO Successfully Tests CE20 Cryogenic Engine at 22 Tonnes Thrust, Boosting LVM3 and Gaganyaan Readiness

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully conducted a sea-level hot test of its indigenously developed CE20 cryogenic engine at the ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC), Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu on March 10, 2026, with the engine operating continuously for 165 seconds and generating approximately 22 tonnes of thrust.
- The CE20 engine uses liquid hydrogen (LH2) as fuel and liquid oxygen (LOX) as oxidiser, and powers the upper cryogenic stage of India's heaviest operational rocket, the LVM3 (Launch Vehicle Mark 3), formerly known as GSLV Mk III.
- The test demonstrated enhanced thrust capability compared to earlier configurations, with higher thrust directly improving LVM3's ability to carry

heavier satellites and payloads to orbit, reducing India's dependence on foreign launchers for heavy-lift missions.

- The CE20 engine has been human-rated — meaning it meets the stringent safety and reliability standards required for carrying astronauts — making this test a critical milestone for the Gaganyaan mission, India's first crewed spaceflight programme.
- The successful test validates improved engine performance and advances India's readiness for Gaganyaan, for which LVM3 with the CE20 upper stage is the designated launch vehicle for sending Indian astronauts to space.

BARC Study Finds HALEU-Thorium Fuel Unsuitable for India's PHWRs, Sparking Debate Over Nuclear Strategy

- A January 2026 study published in Current Science by scientists at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) concluded that HALEU-Thorium (HALEU-Th) fuel — a mix of High Assay Low Enriched Uranium enriched to 5–20% U-235 and Thorium-232 — is unsuitable for India's current Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) and undesirable for India's three-stage nuclear programme.
- The BARC simulation found that while HALEU-Th yields the highest burn-up of 50 GWd/t and produces only 14% of the spent fuel of current reactors, it also reduces shutdown rod effectiveness by approximately 26%, requiring significant reactor design changes and making it far from a drop-in option for existing PHWRs.
- The controversy is linked to the SHANTI Act 2025, which opened India's nuclear sector to private and foreign participation, and a subsequent agreement between NTPC and US-based Clean Core Thorium Energy (CCTE) — led by Indian-origin entrepreneur Mehul Shah — to explore use of ANEEL (Advanced Nuclear Energy for Enriched Life) fuel in Indian reactors.
- Critics including AEC member Ravi Grover argue that HALEU is commercially limited and expensive, and that India already has a well-planned three-stage nuclear programme — moving from PHWRs using natural uranium, to Fast Breeder Reactors using plutonium, to Advanced Heavy Water Reactors using plutonium and thorium — leveraging India's status as holder of the world's largest thorium reserves.

- Former DAE Chairman Anil Kakodkar and MIT professor Koroush Shirvan challenged the BARC study's conclusions, while analyst R. Srikanth described HALEU-Th as a distraction that would replace uranium import dependence with HALEU dependence, highlighting the strategic and economic dimensions of the debate.

NavIC Navigation System Left With Only Three Functional Satellites After Atomic Clock Failure on IRNSS-1F

- The last functioning atomic clock onboard India's IRNSS-1F navigation satellite stopped working on March 13, 2026 — the satellite having been launched on March 10, 2016, and already having completed its 10-year design mission life — reducing fully operational NavIC satellites for positioning, navigation, and timing (PNT) services to just three, below the minimum of four required for reliable navigation.
- Six of the eleven NavIC satellites launched since 2013 have now failed primarily due to atomic clock malfunctions, with the failed clocks imported from a European supplier under a deal of approximately USD 4 million for an estimated 45 clocks, while the three remaining operational satellites are IRNSS-1B, IRNSS-1I, and NVS-01 (IRNSS-1J).
- Navigation systems determine position by measuring the time taken for signals to travel from satellites to Earth, making atomic clocks critical since even small errors can skew position data by several hundred kilometres — each satellite carries three onboard atomic clocks as redundant backup systems.
- ISRO initiated the NavIC programme in 1999 following the Kargil War, when India's defence forces were denied access to the US-owned GPS system for locational support in the conflict zone, highlighting India's strategic vulnerability to foreign-controlled navigation systems; the programme was developed at a cost of approximately ₹2,250 crore.
- NVS-01 (IRNSS-1J, launched 2023) is the first satellite carrying a mix of indigenous and foreign atomic clocks, while NVS-02 (IRNSS-1K, 2025), which also carried indigenous clocks, failed to reach its intended orbit, underscoring the urgency of developing reliable domestic atomic clock technology.

Gujarat's Omspace Successfully Launches State's First Sounding Rocket Near Dholera

- Ahmedabad-based startup Omspace Rocket and Exploration Pvt Ltd successfully launched Gujarat's first sounding rocket from Bavliyari village near Dholera on March 15, 2026, in the presence of Gujarat's Minister for Science and Technology Arjun Modhwadia, marking a significant milestone for India's private space sector.
- The single-stage sub-orbital sounding rocket reached an altitude of approximately 3 kilometres and validated three critical aerospace systems — advanced propulsion technology, avionics and onboard control systems, and an autonomous recovery mechanism.
- The rocket carried a weather mini-satellite payload designed to collect atmospheric data during flight for weather pattern research and environmental monitoring, with its airframe built using carbon fibre and advanced composite materials developed at Omspace's Ahmedabad laboratory under the Make in India initiative.
- The launch was conducted with approvals from the Airports Authority of India (AAI), DGCA, and the Indian Coast Guard, and was authorised by IN-SPACE (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre), the nodal body for private sector space activities in India.
- The successful test demonstrates that Indian startups can independently design, develop, and test space launch systems domestically, contributing to India's growing private space ecosystem under the liberalised space policy framework.

Appointments

Major Gubernatorial Reshuffle: Vinai Kumar Saxena Appointed LG of Ladakh, R. N. Ravi Named Governor of West Bengal

- On 5 March 2026, the President of India accepted the resignation of Dr. C. V. Ananda Bose as Governor of West Bengal and appointed Shri R. N. Ravi — previously serving as Governor of Tamil Nadu — as the new Governor of West Bengal.
- Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, who was serving as Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, was appointed as Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, while Shri Taranjit Singh Sandhu was appointed the new Lieutenant Governor of Delhi.
- Shri Kavinder Gupta, previously Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, was appointed Governor of Himachal Pradesh, and Shri Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, previously Governor of Kerala, was directed to discharge the functions of Governor of Tamil Nadu.
- The same communique included appointments of Shri Shiv Pratap Shukla as Governor of Telangana, Shri Jishnu Dev Varma as Governor of Maharashtra, Shri Nand Kishore Yadav as Governor of Nagaland, and Lt. General (Retired) Syed Ata Hasnain as Governor of Bihar.
- Under the Constitution, Governors are appointed by the President by warrant under the President's hand and seal and hold office during the President's pleasure, while Union Territories are administered by the President through an appointed administrator.



Vinai Kumar Saxena
Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh

RM Nachammai Becomes First Woman Chief of an Operational Nuclear Power Plant in India

- RM Nachammai has been appointed Chief Superintendent of Kaiga Generating Station Units 3 and 4 in Karnataka under the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL), becoming the first woman to head operations of a functional nuclear power plant in India, with the role taking effect from 15 March 2026.
- In her role, she oversees the Operations, Maintenance, and Engineering Support divisions of the reactor complex, involving round-the-clock monitoring of reactor operations, safety systems, and plant performance.
- Nachammai graduated in Electrical and Electronics Engineering from the University of Madras in 1990, secured a University rank, joined NPCIL in 1991, and topped the second batch of NPCIL's engineer trainees — earning the prestigious Vikram Sarabhai Award.
- She has over 35 years of experience across nuclear power plant operations, maintenance, and engineering, having served at the Madras Atomic Power Station and Kaiga Generating Station Units 1 and 2, and has received the NPCIL Special Contribution Award in 2010, 2014, and 2017.
- Kaiga Generating Station operates four 220 MWe Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) with a total installed capacity of 880 MW; Units 5 and 6 are under development, which will raise the total capacity to 2,280 MW.



Schemes and Policies

WHO Foundation and Novo Nordisk Collaborate to Strengthen Childhood Obesity Prevention in India

- The WHO Foundation — an independent organisation established in 2020 and headquartered in Geneva — and Novo Nordisk, a Denmark-based global healthcare company founded in 1923 and known for obesity and diabetes treatments including Wegovy and Ozempic, announced a collaboration to strengthen childhood obesity prevention in India.
- India was identified as a priority country for the partnership, reflecting the scale and urgency of its childhood obesity challenge, with the initiative aligned with the Government of India's Ayushman Bharat School Health and Wellness Programme and the WHO's Health Promoting Schools framework.
- According to WHO, overweight and obesity now cause more deaths globally than underweight and are linked to serious noncommunicable diseases including cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes, with India witnessing rapid growth in cardio-renal-metabolic conditions increasingly affecting younger populations.
- The collaboration will focus on creating healthier early-life environments, promoting physical activity, enabling early risk identification, and strengthening primary healthcare preparedness, integrating health screening, lifestyle education, and mental health support in targeted school districts.
- The initiative aims to build a scalable school-based health programme targeting children and adolescents, with Novo Nordisk providing financial support alongside the WHO Foundation to advance health equity and strengthen health systems across identified districts in India.

Health Ministry Grants Lifetime Validity to FSSAI Licences and Revises Turnover Thresholds for Food Businesses

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare approved major regulatory reforms under the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) — established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 —

introducing perpetual validity for all FSSAI registrations and licences, eliminating the need for periodic renewals and reducing compliance costs and paperwork for food business operators.

- Effective April 1, 2026, revised turnover thresholds will classify businesses with annual turnover up to ₹1.5 crore under basic registration (raised from the earlier ₹12 lakh limit), turnover up to ₹50 crore under state licensing, and turnover above ₹50 crore under central licensing.
- Street food vendors registered under the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014 will receive automatic FSSAI registration, ending the earlier requirement to obtain dual licences across two separate regulatory frameworks.
- With renewal burdens removed, FSSAI and regulatory agencies can redirect focus toward monitoring, enforcement, and capacity-building activities rather than administrative processing.
- The reforms align with recommendations of NITI Aayog's high-level committee on non-financial regulatory reforms and are part of India's broader push to improve ease of doing business by reducing regulatory burden and simplifying licensing processes across sectors.

Ministry of Commerce Approves ₹497 Crore RELIEF Scheme to Support Indian Exporters Hit by West Asia Disruptions

- The Ministry of Commerce and Industry approved the Resilience and Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation (RELIEF) Scheme with a budget of ₹497 crore under the Export Promotion Mission (EPM), with ECGC Ltd. as the nodal implementing agency, to support Indian exporters facing freight escalation, heightened insurance premiums, and war-related risks from disruptions in the West Asia maritime corridor.
- The scheme covers consignments destined for or transshipped through UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Israel, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Iraq, Iran, and Yemen, offering up to 100% risk coverage for exporters who

held ECGC credit insurance for shipments between February 14 and March 15, 2026, and up to 95% coverage for consignments planned between March 16 and June 15, 2026.

- Recognising that many small businesses lack credit insurance, the scheme offers partial reimbursement of up to 50% for extraordinary freight and insurance burdens for eligible non-ECGC-insured MSMEs, capped at ₹50 lakh per exporter.
- An Inter-Ministerial Group on Supply Chain Resilience has been operationalised to provide holistic support including easing movement of stranded cargo, waiving storage and dwell time charges at ports, and allowing policy flexibility based on real-time geopolitical shifts.
- ECGC will monitor the scheme's impact through a real-time dashboard-based system, reflecting the government's effort to provide a time-bound financial and operational safety net for Indian exporters during the ongoing geopolitical crisis.
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Agriculture Insurance Company Launches Krishi Sakhi Initiative to Empower Women Farmers Through Crop Insurance Awareness

- The Agriculture Insurance Company of India (AIC) launched the Krishi Sakhi Initiative in 2026 to empower women farmers through crop insurance

awareness, financial inclusion, and risk management, aligned with the UN-FAO declaration of 2026 as the International Year of the Woman Farmer.

- The initiative recognises the contribution of women in the agriculture sector and aims to provide them access to crop insurance schemes, promote risk management and resilience building, and ensure long-term sustainability in agriculture through knowledge and resources, delivered through AIC's Head Office and Regional Offices across the country.
- The initiative follows a structured monthly outreach calendar — in January 2026, an introductory video was released on social media; in February 2026, a Walkathon was organised at AIC's Head Office under the theme #AICforHer; and in March 2026, ground-level workshops and awareness programmes are being conducted for women farmers on crop insurance schemes and benefits.
- The initiative aligns with India's broader commitment to inclusive agricultural growth and women's empowerment, reflecting the government's recognition that women farmers remain significantly underrepresented in formal agricultural risk management systems.
- By improving awareness of crop insurance and financial protection tools, Krishi Sakhi aims to strengthen the resilience of women farmers against climate-related and economic shocks, supporting sustainable livelihoods in rural India.

सिर्फ 17 वैकेंसी — मुकाबला बेहद कड़ा!

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मैनेजमेंट &
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टॉप 17 में
शामिल

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Sports CA

Indian Women's Cricket Team Nominated for 2026 Laureus World Team of the Year

- The BCCI announced on 3 March 2026 that the India Women's Cricket Team has been shortlisted for the Laureus World Team of the Year Award 2026.
- The nomination has been linked to the team's maiden ICC Women's Cricket World Cup triumph in 2025, which has been highlighted by both the BCCI and the official Laureus nominee profile.
- The India Women's Cricket Team has been nominated alongside Paris Saint-Germain, McLaren Formula 1 Team, European Ryder Cup Team, England Women's Football Team, and Oklahoma City Thunder.
- The BCCI stated that the shortlist was determined through votes by more than 1,000 sports media representatives across over 70 countries, while the final winners will be chosen by the Laureus World Sports Academy.
- The winners are scheduled to be announced at a gala ceremony on 20 April 2026 in Madrid, Spain, and the Laureus nominee profile notes that India won the World Cup after defeating South Africa by 52 runs in the final.



India Defeats England by 7 Runs in T20 World Cup 2026 Semi-Final Thriller at Wankhede

India defeated England by 7 runs in Semi-Final 2 of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 at Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai, on 5 March 2026, setting up a final against New Zealand at Narendra Modi Stadium, Ahmedabad, on 8 March 2026.

- India posted 253/7, with Sanju Samson scoring 89 off 42 balls, while England's chase ended at 246/7 — the combined 499 runs was described by the ICC as the most runs in a men's T20 World Cup match.
- England were reduced to 68/3 inside the powerplay, with Phil Salt, Jos Buttler, and Harry Brook falling early, before Jacob Bethell kept the chase alive with 105 off 48 balls, including eight fours and seven sixes.
- A key dismissal saw Axar Patel intercept near the boundary and complete a relay catch with Shivam Dube, ending the Bethell–Will Jacks partnership and effectively sealing India's win.

Finn Allen Smashes Fastest T20 World Cup Century in 33 Balls; New Zealand Reach Final

- New Zealand reached the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 final after a nine-wicket semi-final win over South Africa, with Finn Allen scoring an unbeaten 100 off just 33 balls — the fastest century in Men's T20 World Cup history.
- Allen's innings broke the previous Men's T20 World Cup fastest-century record of 47 balls held by Chris Gayle (2016), and ESPN's statistics also record it as the fastest century across all T20 World Cups (men or women), surpassing Deandra Dottin's 38-ball record from 2010.
- New Zealand chased a target of 170 in under 13 overs, with Allen and Tim Seifert (58) forming the key opening partnership; Allen's innings featured 10 fours and 8 sixes.
- New Zealand won the match with 43 balls to spare and will play India in the final at Narendra Modi Stadium, Ahmedabad, on 8 March 2026 — their first Men's T20 World Cup final appearance since 2021.

India Win ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, Defeat New Zealand by 96 Runs in Historic Final

- India defeated New Zealand by 96 runs in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 Final on 8 March 2026 at Narendra Modi Stadium, Ahmedabad, in front of 86,824 fans — becoming the first team to win three T20 World Cup titles (2007, 2024, 2026), the first to

successfully defend the title, and the first to win the tournament on home soil.

- India posted 255/5 — the highest total ever in a T20 World Cup final — with Sanju Samson scoring 89 off 46 balls, Abhishek Sharma contributing 52 off 21 balls, and Ishan Kishan hitting 54 off 25 balls; New Zealand were bowled out for 159 in 19 overs, with Tim Seifert top-scoring with 52.
- Captain Suryakumar Yadav became the fourth Indian captain to lead the country to a men's cricket World Cup title, boasting a win percentage of 80.77% — the highest among all T20I captains with a minimum of 20 matches.
- Jasprit Bumrah took 4 wickets in the final and surpassed Lasith Malinga to become the leading wicket-taker among pace bowlers in T20 World Cup history with 40 wickets, winning Player of the Match.
- Sanju Samson was named Player of the Tournament with 321 runs, becoming only the third Indian to win the award at a T20 World Cup after Virat Kohli (2014, 2016) and Jasprit Bumrah (2024); the final was played at the same venue where India had lost the 2023 ODI World Cup final to Australia.

India and New Zealand Launch Centenary Sports Cooperation Programme to Mark 100 Years of Sporting Ties

- Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya chaired a high-level meeting in New Delhi with New Zealand's sports delegation led by Chris Bishop, Associate Minister for Sport and Recreation, to mark 2026 as the centenary of India–New Zealand sporting ties and to launch the India–New Zealand Centenary Sports Cooperation Programme 2026.
- Bilateral sporting ties date back to 1926, when the Indian Army hockey team toured New Zealand in one of the earliest sporting exchanges between the two nations, making 2026 the 100th anniversary of this historic milestone.
- The Centenary Sports Cooperation Programme is a year-long initiative focusing on sports development, high-performance training, innovation, and people-to-people engagement, with priority disciplines including Rugby, Rowing, Canoeing, Sailing, Athletics, and Cycling.

- Both sides proposed an India–New Zealand Sports and Culture Week to be hosted across cities in both countries, celebrating indigenous sporting traditions and cultural heritage, while also agreeing on joint training camps, coaching exchanges, and knowledge-sharing in sports science and athlete performance systems.
- Both countries agreed to form a Joint Working Group to oversee implementation of the programme, with nodal officers to be nominated and a monitoring mechanism with periodic reviews to be established.

Smriti Mandhana Retains ICC Women's ODI No. 1 Ranking; Amelia Kerr Makes Historic Seven-Wicket Haul

- In the ICC Women's ODI batting rankings update for March 2026, Indian opener Smriti Mandhana retained the No. 1 position, while captain Harmanpreet Kaur remained unchanged at 8th place and Jemimah Rodrigues slipped one place to 12th following India's 0–3 ODI series defeat against Australia.
- New Zealand captain Amelia Kerr delivered a stellar all-round performance against Zimbabwe, taking 4 wickets in the 1st ODI and a 7-wicket haul in the 2nd ODI in Dunedin, becoming only the 7th player in women's ODI history to take seven or more wickets in a single match.
- Kerr's performance saw her climb 5 places to 11th in ODI bowling rankings and move up to 5th in ODI all-rounders rankings, while New Zealand took a 2–0 lead in the three-match ODI series against Zimbabwe.
- Brooke Halliday of New Zealand surged 8 places to 11th in ODI batting rankings after scoring 157 off 117 balls in the 1st ODI against Zimbabwe, while Maddy Green rose 4 spots to joint 22nd after contributing 67 runs in the 1st ODI and an unbeaten 27 in the 2nd match.
- Changes in Women's T20I rankings were also recorded following Sri Lanka's series win over West Indies, with the updates coming ahead of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup scheduled to be held in England and Wales later in 2026.

Iran Officially Withdraws from FIFA World Cup 2026 Amid US-Israel-Iran Conflict

- Iran's Sports Minister Ahmad Donyamali officially confirmed that the Iranian national team will not participate in the FIFA World Cup 2026, hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico, citing escalating geopolitical tensions with the United States and Israel as the primary reasons for the withdrawal.
- Iran had already qualified for the tournament and was placed in Group G alongside Belgium, Egypt, and New Zealand, with all group stage matches scheduled in Los Angeles and Seattle; FIFA must now decide how to manage the vacant spot in the group.
- Before the official withdrawal, Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) President Mehdi Taj had expressed serious reservations about participation, stating that recent attacks on Iran had made it extremely difficult for the country to look forward to the tournament.
- The FFIRI hit back at US President Donald Trump's comments on Truth Social by demanding that the United States be stripped of hosting rights, arguing it could not guarantee the safety of participating teams, and asserting that only FIFA — not any individual nation — governs the World Cup.
- Iran's withdrawal is set to be the first of its kind in modern football history, with FIFA President Gianni Infantino yet to officially clarify replacement arrangements, underscoring the unprecedented intersection of geopolitics and international sport at the 2026 World Cup.

IPL 2026 to Be Largest Edition in Tournament History With 84 Matches; RCB Enter as Defending Champions



- IPL 2026, scheduled from March to May 2026, will be the largest edition in the tournament's history with 84 total matches — up from the previous standard of 74 — with Royal Challengers Bengaluru entering as defending champions after defeating Punjab Kings in the IPL 2025 Final.
- The season opener is RCB vs Sunrisers Hyderabad on March 28 in Bengaluru, with early marquee clashes including MI vs KKR on March 29 in Mumbai, RR vs CSK on March 30 in Guwahati, and RCB vs CSK on April 5 in Bengaluru.
- All ten teams Chennai Super Kings, Mumbai Indians, Royal Challengers Bengaluru, Kolkata Knight Riders, Sunrisers Hyderabad, Delhi Capitals, Rajasthan Royals, Punjab Kings, Lucknow Super Giants, and Gujarat Titans compete in a League Stage followed by Playoffs comprising Qualifier 1, Eliminator, Qualifier 2, and the Final.

WADA Defers Decision on Government Official Ban Rule to September 2026, Saving FIFA World Cup from Disruption

- The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) postponed its decision on a proposed rule that would bar government officials of countries failing to pay dues from attending major international sporting events including the FIFA World Cup and Olympics to September 2026, two months after the FIFA World Cup concludes in the USA, Mexico, and Canada.
- The deferral was prompted by the United States withholding approximately \$7.3 million in dues since 2023 in protest over WADA's handling of doping cases involving Chinese swimmers who tested positive for a banned substance but were allowed to compete. The delay ensures FIFA World Cup 2026 proceeds without restrictions on political figures attending matches, though the rule if adopted could potentially impact the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics and the 2034 Winter Games in Utah.
- The US-WADA funding dispute has drawn rare bipartisan support in Congress, with both Republican and Democratic lawmakers backing the decision to withhold dues and demand greater accountability and transparency from WADA.

International Affairs

Iran Confirms Death of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei After U.S.-Israel Strikes

- Iranian state media confirmed that Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, aged 86, was killed following joint military strikes by the United States and Israel, and a 40-day mourning period along with seven public holidays was declared in his honour.
- Khamenei, who was born in 1939, had served as Iran's Supreme Leader since 1989 after succeeding Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, and he exercised final authority over Iran's major state policies, clerical establishment, and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).
- The joint U.S.-Israeli strikes began early on February 28, 2026, and the United States stated that the attacks were aimed at disabling Iran's nuclear capabilities, while President Donald Trump warned of continued "heavy and pinpoint bombing" in the coming days.
- Iranian media also reported that Khamenei's daughter, son-in-law, and granddaughter were killed in the assault, making the strikes one of the most consequential developments in recent Middle Eastern geopolitics.
- Following the attack, Iran launched a counterassault and warned of retaliation, while Ali Larijani, Secretary of Iran's National Security Council, declared that Israel and America would regret their actions and that Khamenei's mission would continue with greater vigour.

Ayatollah Alireza Arafai Named to Iran's Interim Leadership Council

- Following the confirmation of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's death, Iran appointed Ayatollah Alireza Arafai, a 67-year-old senior Shia cleric, as the jurist member of the country's interim Leadership Council and entrusted him with temporarily fulfilling the duties of the Supreme Leader.
- The three-member interim Leadership Council comprises President Masoud Pezeshkian, Chief Justice Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei, and Ayatollah Alireza Arafai, and it will function until the Assembly

of Experts formally elects a new Supreme Leader.

- Arafai currently serves as Deputy Chairman of the Assembly of Experts, heads Iran's influential seminary system in Qom, and remains a member of the Guardian Council, which vets election candidates and reviews legislation.
- Although Arafai is regarded as religiously influential and was earlier seen as a possible contender to permanently succeed Khamenei, he is not widely viewed as a dominant political powerbroker or as having strong ties to the security establishment.
- Under Iranian law, the Assembly of Experts, a body of 88 Shia clerics elected every eight years by popular vote, is constitutionally required to choose a new Supreme Leader as soon as possible and also has the power to remove one, though that power has never been exercised.

Micron Opens Major Semiconductor Assembly and Test Facility in Gujarat

- Micron has inaugurated its semiconductor assembly and test facility in Sanand, Gujarat, marking the start of commercial production at the site.
- The company stated that once fully ramped, Phase 1 will include more than 500,000 square feet of cleanroom space, making it one of the world's largest single-floor assembly and test cleanrooms.
- The facility is focused on assembling and testing memory and storage products, and Micron has already reported an initial shipment of made-in-India memory modules for laptops manufactured in India for the domestic market.
- Micron said the project involves a combined investment of about \$2.75 billion by the company and its government partners.
- The company also indicated that production at the Gujarat facility will be scaled up in stages as operations expand further.

India and Canada Announce Strategic Energy Partnership and Revive CEPA Talks

- India and Canada announced a reset in bilateral

economic engagement on 2 March 2026 by advancing a Strategic Energy Partnership and finalising the Terms of Reference for restarting CEPA negotiations.

- The two countries agreed to strengthen cooperation in priority energy areas to improve energy security and broaden bilateral engagement.
- Their official outcomes highlighted collaboration in clean energy and critical minerals, including information-sharing mechanisms and investment opportunities.
- Both sides also welcomed the relaunch of the Canada-India Ministerial Energy Dialogue along with a joint action plan under that framework.
- India and Canada reiterated their ambition to raise bilateral trade to around USD 50 billion by 2030, while official and media reports also noted commercial arrangements relating to uranium supply for India's nuclear energy needs.

UN Report Says Women Hold Only 64% of Men's Legal Rights Globally

- A report submitted by the UN Secretary-General for the 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) states that women worldwide have only 64% of the legal rights available to men.
- The report highlights that 54% of countries still do not have consent-based legal definitions of rape, showing a major gap in legal protection for women.
- It also states that 72% of countries allow child marriage in all or some circumstances, and that more than 45 countries retain at least one gender-discriminatory nationality provision in their laws.
- According to the report, 44% of countries do not have laws mandating equal remuneration for work of equal value, which contributes directly to persistent gender pay gaps.
- Although the report notes progress such as domestic violence legislation in around 87% of countries, it emphasises that women face greater barriers to justice than men in nearly 70% of countries surveyed and that implementation gaps continue to block real equality outcomes.

India Ranks Second Globally in Childhood Obesity With 14 Million Children Affected

- The World Obesity Atlas 2026 has ranked India second only to China in the total number of school-age children (aged 5–19 years) living with high BMI, with approximately 41 million children affected and around 14 million living with obesity alone.
- In 2025, about 14.9 million Indian children aged 5–9 years and 26.4 million adolescents aged 10–19 years were living with overweight or obesity.
- The Atlas projects that by 2040, around 20 million Indian children could be living with obesity, and approximately 56 million with overweight or obesity combined.
- About 74% of Indian adolescents do not meet recommended physical activity levels, and sub-optimal breastfeeding is reported among 32.6% of infants.
- The Atlas warns that childhood disease indicators linked to high BMI — including hypertension, hyperglycaemia, high triglycerides, and metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD) — will rise in India between 2025 and 2040.

Chile Becomes First Country in the Americas to Eliminate Leprosy, Verified by WHO

- On 4 March 2026, the World Health Organization (WHO) and PAHO officially verified Chile as having eliminated leprosy disease, making it the first country in the Americas and the second globally — after Jordan — to receive this verification.
- Chile has reported no locally acquired leprosy case for more than 30 years, with the last locally acquired case detected in 1993; between 2012 and 2023, all 47 reported cases were imported.
- Elimination of leprosy is defined by PAHO as zero new autochthonous cases for at least three consecutive years after having interrupted transmission for at least five years.
- Chile's health system uses primary care as the entry point for suspected cases, with referral to specialised dermatology services, and the approach is linked to WHO's "Towards Zero Leprosy" strategy.
- WHO noted that leprosy remains a notifiable condition in Chile and persists in over 120 countries globally, with more than 200,000 new cases reported annually worldwide.

Yellowstone's Echinus Geyser Erupts Again After Six-Year Dormancy

- Echinus Geyser, the world's largest acidic geyser located in Norris Geyser Basin of Yellowstone National Park, resumed eruptive activity in February 2026 after remaining largely dormant since December 2020.
- The first eruption after the long pause occurred on 7 February 2026, followed by eruptions on 9, 12, and 15 February 2026; from 16 February 2026, eruptions began occurring every 2 to 5 hours.
- Each eruption during the renewed activity typically lasted 2–3 minutes, with water jets reaching approximately 6–10 metres (20–30 feet) in height.
- Echinus had previously exhibited a major active phase in October–November 2017, with consistent eruptions every 2–3 hours, before activity stopped abruptly.
- Eruptions are tracked via a temperature monitoring system in the geyser's outflow channel, with eruptions indicated by temperature spikes reaching approximately 70°C (158°F); activity began quietening again in late February 2026.

**Scotland Becomes First UK Nation to Legalise Water Cremation (Alkaline Hydrolysis)**

- Scotland became the first part of the United Kingdom to legalise water cremation (alkaline hydrolysis) through The Hydrolysis (Scotland) (No. 1) Regulations 2026, which came into force on 2 March 2026 after being approved by the Scottish Parliament.
- The Regulations define hydrolysis as the disposal of human remains in a chamber using hot water and

potassium hydroxide, with or without sodium hydroxide, followed by any grinding or processing of solid remains.

- The legal framework was created using powers under the Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016, and the Regulations apply Part 2 of that Act to hydrolysis with specified modifications.
- Scotland's legalisation of hydrolysis is described as the most significant reform to Scottish funeral law since traditional cremation was introduced in 1902.
- The method is presented as an environmentally friendly alternative to both burial and flame cremation, and hydrolysis is now treated alongside burial and cremation in relevant Scottish legal contexts.

US Submarine Sinks Iranian Warship IRIS Dena in Indian Ocean Off Sri Lanka

- On 4 March 2026, a U.S. submarine sank the Iranian frigate IRIS Dena in the Indian Ocean off Galle in southern Sri Lanka, outside Sri Lanka's territorial waters, using a single Mark 48 (MK-48) heavyweight torpedo.
- The Sri Lankan Navy conducted search-and-rescue operations, recovering 87 bodies and rescuing 32 survivors; the ship reportedly had approximately 180 crew members on board when it sank.
- The U.S. Department of Defense released periscope-style video of the torpedo strike, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs confirmed the strike details in a Pentagon briefing.
- Multiple reports described the incident as the first time since World War II that a U.S. submarine sank another vessel using a torpedo.
- Reports indicated that the IRIS Dena had been in Visakhapatnam, India, and was sailing home after participating in an Indian-hosted naval event when it was struck.

Cassava Brown Streak Disease Threatens Food Security Across Sub-Saharan Africa

- Scientists have flagged Cassava Brown Streak Disease (CBSD) as a major and rapidly expanding threat to food security in sub-Saharan Africa, with a January 2026 research paper mapping current and future risk areas across the continent.

- The study estimated that approximately 33.7% of Africa's land area (about 10.2 million km²) is currently at risk of CBSD spread, while 54.6% (about 16.2 million km²) is suitable for cassava production.
- CBSD causes necrosis (rot) in cassava roots, potentially leading to severe or total crop loss, and detection is often delayed because serious root damage may only become visible at harvest.
- The disease spreads through infectious whiteflies and the use of infected cuttings as planting material, and was historically concentrated along the East African coast before expanding into Central Africa from the early 2000s.
- Researchers projected further spread under CMIP6 climate scenarios for mid-century (2041–2060) and later (2061–2080) periods, emphasising the need for stronger clean-seed systems, better surveillance, and wider deployment of resistant or tolerant cassava varieties.

International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness Observed on 5 March

- The International Day for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Awareness is observed every year on 5 March, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly through resolution A/RES/77/51 (2022).
- The day is led by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and aims to promote public awareness and understanding of disarmament issues, with a special focus on engaging young people.
- UNODA's 2026 programme included hybrid and in-person events from 2–6 March 2026, covering disarmament themes, along with youth-focused engagements such as interactions with students in Togo (via UNREC) and students from Hiroshima.
- The day is designed as a public-awareness observance, with UNODA framing it explicitly around education and broader public participation in disarmament-related understanding.

US-Israel-Iran War: Coordinated Strikes, Iranian Retaliation, and Regional Escalation

- The United States and Israel launched coordinated strikes against Iran beginning 1 March 2026, hitting

- approximately 4,000 targets in the first four days surpassing the pace of any recent US air campaign, including the Gaza war (October 2023) and the anti-ISIS campaign (2014).
- According to UK-based war monitor Airwars, US-Israel declared hitting more targets in Iran in 100 hours than the US-led coalition hit in the first six months of its campaign against ISIS.
- Iranian retaliatory strikes targeted GCC states, US military bases, and Israeli cities, with Iranian state media reporting at least 1,332 people killed across Iran; at least 6 US service members, 11 Israelis, and 3 UAE nationals were killed in retaliatory strikes.
- Iran targeted airports, oil facilities, US embassies, and military installations in Gulf states to spread the conflict regionally, and has threatened to strike Israel's Dimona nuclear site if the US and Israel attempt regime change.
- US President Donald Trump stated there will be "no deal with Iran except unconditional surrender," while Israeli army chief Eyal Zamir announced plans to intensify attacks focused on undermining the Iranian regime and its military capabilities.

US Issues 30-Day Waiver Allowing India to Buy Russian Crude Amid Hormuz Blockage

- Amid the effective blockage of the Strait of Hormuz due to the US-Israel-Iran war, the US Treasury Department issued a temporary 30-day waiver in March 2026 allowing Indian refiners to purchase Russian crude oil already stranded in tankers at sea.
- India, the world's third-largest oil importer with an import dependence of over 88%, receives over 40% of its oil imports (approximately 2.5–2.7 million barrels per day) through the Strait of Hormuz from Iraq, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Kuwait supplies severely disrupted by the conflict.
- In recent months, India had significantly reduced Russian oil imports as part of US trade negotiations; in February 2026, India imported only 1.1 million barrels per day (bpd) of Russian crude — nearly half the 2025 peak of over 2 million bpd — and the US scrapped a 25% penal tariff on India under an interim trade deal in early February 2026.
- The Strait of Hormuz, a narrow waterway between Iran and Oman connecting the Persian Gulf with the

- Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea, handles approximately one-fifth of global liquid petroleum consumption and global LNG trade, making it the world's most critical oil transit chokepoint.

Hurun Rich List 2026: India Becomes World's Third-Largest Billionaire Hub With 308 Billionaires

- The Hurun Global Rich List 2026, released on 5 March 2026, ranked India third globally with 308 billionaires behind China (1,110) and the United States (1,000) after a net gain of 24 billionaires, with 57 new entrants and 27 dropping off.
- Indian billionaires collectively hold wealth worth ₹112.6 trillion, a 10% increase year-on-year, with 199 billionaires recording wealth gains; India added more new billionaire entrants than any country outside China and the USA, spanning healthcare, auto components, energy, and financial services.
- Mukesh Ambani retained his position as India's and Asia's richest person with a net worth of US\$109 billion (up 9%), while Gautam Adani remained India's second richest at US\$83 billion despite a 14% decline linked to a US federal indictment and a US Treasury investigation.
- Roshni Nadar Malhotra, Chairperson of HCL Technologies, ranked third among India's richest at ₹3.2 trillion and is the only woman in India's top 10; 23 Indian women billionaires collectively hold ₹9.8 trillion.
- Cyrus Poonawalla of Serum Institute recorded India's largest absolute wealth gain, rising 43% to US\$33 billion, backed by global vaccine demand and a new European manufacturing base in the Netherlands.

Balen Shah Set to Become Nepal's Prime Minister After Historic RSP Election Victory

- Nepal's 2026 parliamentary elections produced a historic political shift, with the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), led by 35-year-old rapper-turned-politician Balendra 'Balen' Shah, emerging as the dominant force, securing leads across 100+ constituencies out of 165 directly elected seats.

- Shah defeated sitting Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli in his own constituency by 68,348 votes to 18,734, ending over two decades of dominance by traditional parties — the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal (UML).
- The elections were triggered by violent youth-led protests in September 2025, sparked by the Oli government banning social media platforms and escalating over class inequality and political nepotism; 77 people were killed, and police were found to have been ordered to use lethal force against unarmed protesters.



International Women's Day 2026: Theme 'Give To Gain' Observed on 8 March

- International Women's Day is observed every year on 8 March; the 2026 theme is 'Give To Gain,' emphasising mutual support, generosity, and collective progress as tools to advance gender equality, with the core message that "when women thrive, we all rise."
- The theme encourages individuals, organisations, and communities to give through donations, knowledge sharing, mentoring, equal pay advocacy, education, and visibility, with participants encouraged to use the hashtag #GiveToGain on social media.
- The earliest recorded Women's Day was held on 28 February 1909, organised by the Socialist Party of America in New York City; German socialist Clara Zetkin proposed an international Women's Day, and the first International Women's Day was celebrated on 19 March 1911 in Germany, Denmark, Switzerland, and Austria with over one million participants.

- March 8 became the standard date by 1914; in 1922, Soviet leader Vladimir Lenin officially declared it International Women's Day, and the United Nations began celebrating it in 1975.

Mojtaba Khamenei Named Iran's New Supreme Leader After Father Killed in Israeli Strike

- Iran's 88-member Assembly of Experts named Mojtaba Khamenei second son of late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as Iran's new Supreme Leader on 8 March 2026, just over a week into the war with the US and Israel.
- Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed in an Israeli strike on 28 February 2026 the first day of the US-Israel-Iran war triggering an urgent succession process; Mojtaba, born on 8 September 1969, is a Shiite cleric who largely kept a low profile and never held public office, though he has maintained close ties with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) since the 1980s.
- Iranians were deeply divided over the appointment — pro-establishment supporters celebrated in Tehran, Qom, and Mashhad, while protests featuring chants of "Death to Mojtaba" were verified by BBC Persian and BBC Verify, with many expressing fear of increased repression.
- US President Donald Trump called Mojtaba "unacceptable" and warned he would "not last long," while Israel's defence minister warned the new successor would be a "target for elimination."

HRW Accuses Israel of Using White Phosphorus in Residential Areas of Southern Lebanon

- Human Rights Watch (HRW) released a report on 9 March 2026 accusing the Israeli military of unlawfully striking the village of Yohmor in southern Lebanon on 3 March 2026, using artillery shells loaded with white phosphorus in residential areas raising serious concerns about violations of international humanitarian law.
- HRW examined and geolocated seven images confirming white phosphorus use in residential parts of Yohmor, several hours after the Israeli military had issued evacuation warnings directing residents to move at least 1,000 metres away.

- White phosphorus ignites on contact with oxygen, burns at extremely high temperatures, can ignite buildings, burns through human tissue down to the bone, and even survivors with minor burns may later face infections, organ damage, or respiratory failure; human rights advocates state that deploying it in populated areas violates international law.
- HRW called on Israel to immediately stop the use of white phosphorus over residential areas and urged countries supplying such munitions to Israel to suspend military aid and arms sales.
- Israeli strikes over the preceding week killed 394 people in Lebanon including 83 children and 42 women according to Lebanon's health minister; Lebanon entered the conflict after Iran-backed Hezbollah launched attacks on Israel following the killing of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Kharg Island: Iran's Critical Oil Export Hub at the Centre of Israel-Iran Tensions

- Kharg Island, located approximately 25 km off Iran's southwestern coast in the Persian Gulf, handles nearly 90% of Iran's crude oil exports and has the capacity to load up to 7 million barrels of crude oil per day, making it one of the most critical energy hubs in West Asia.
- The island's deep-water access enables supertankers to dock despite Iran's otherwise shallow coastline, and its infrastructure including storage tanks, deep-water jetties, and underwater pipelines to major oilfields was originally developed in the 1960s with assistance from American oil company Amoco.
- Despite Israeli strikes on fuel depots and infrastructure in Tehran, Kharg Island has remained untouched throughout the Israel-Iran conflict, widely regarded as a red line due to the severe economic and geopolitical consequences an attack would trigger.
- A strike on the island would severely disrupt Iran's government revenues and oil export capacity, potentially prompting Tehran to retaliate by targeting Gulf oil facilities or blocking the Strait of Hormuz, a critical global energy trade route.
- The Strait of Hormuz, through which a significant share of global oil trade passes, is directly linked to the security calculus around Kharg Island, making any escalation there a matter of global energy and economic concern.

Trump Announces \$300 Billion Refinery Partnership with Reliance Industries at Port of Brownsville, Texas

- US President Donald Trump announced a \$300 billion partnership with India's Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) to build America's first new major oil refinery in 50 years at the Port of Brownsville, Texas, under the banner of America First Refining formerly known as Element Fuels led by Founder and Chairman John V. Calce, with groundbreaking planned for Q2 2026.
- The \$300 billion figure represents the total value of crude oil processed and fuels produced over 20 years comprising approximately 1.2 billion barrels of US light shale oil worth around \$125 billion and 50 billion gallons of refined products worth around \$175 billion and is not an upfront capital investment.
- RIL neither confirmed its involvement nor informed stock exchanges following Trump's announcement; J.P. Morgan estimated that a 30-million-tonne first-phase refinery could cost around \$60 billion in capital expenditure, with RIL's implied equity stake potentially amounting to around \$10 billion assuming a 50% share and 30-70% equity-debt funding.
- The announcement comes amid crude oil prices crossing \$100 per barrel following the US-Israel-Iran conflict that began on February 28, 2026, with the refinery positioned as a national security asset to reduce US dependence on West Asian energy supplies.
- The last major refinery built in the United States was the Marathon Refinery in 1976, making the proposed Brownsville facility the first new major refinery in half a century.

Strait of Hormuz Blockade Triggers Historic Oil Disruption; LNG Supply Emerges as Greater Global Concern

- Two weeks into the US-Israel-Iran war, Iran successfully choked off energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz through which approximately one-fifth of the world's oil and gas demand

previously passed prompting the International Energy Agency (IEA) to flag the disruption as the largest supply disruption in the history of the global oil market, with crude prices swinging between \$70-\$120 per barrel.

- While major consuming economies hold substantial strategic oil reserves China over 100 days, Japan over 250 days, the EU approximately 90 days, and India about 74 days' worth of consumption energy experts warn that natural gas reserves present a more urgent and underappreciated risk, with spot LNG prices in Asia and Europe surging above \$15/MMBtu, a rise of over 50% in just two weeks.
- European gas reserves are at seasonally low winter-end levels, and their refilling already weakened by reduced Russian supplies is further hampered by the loss of Qatari and Emirati LNG supply, making the global LNG shortage a more critical concern than the oil supply disruption.
- Despite extensive military operations, the US and Israel have deliberately left Iran's primary oil export facility at Kharg Island untouched, with experts attributing this to a strategic effort to stabilise global oil prices, signal restraint to Iran, and preserve Iran's ability to rebuild its economy post-conflict.
- Experts suggest the path to resuming shipping through the strait involves merchant fleets escorted by naval convoys supported by anti-drone technology, with sovereign states potentially stepping in to provide insurance cover, while the best-case scenario remains a negotiated settlement and the worst-case a protracted conflict extending beyond early April 2026.

India Co-Sponsors UNSC Resolution 2817 Condemning Iran's Attacks on Gulf Nations and Threats to Strait of Hormuz

- India co-sponsored UNSC Resolution 2817, led by Bahrain and supported by over 135 nations including Pakistan, the US, UK, France, Germany, and Japan, which condemned Iran's attacks on Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Jordan as a breach of international law and a serious threat to international peace and security, demanding Iran immediately and unconditionally cease all attacks, provocations, and use of proxies against neighbouring states.

- The resolution was adopted with 13 votes in favour, with China and Russia abstaining — both allowing it to pass without using their veto — while Russia's separately submitted draft resolution urging cessation of military activities, which made no mention of Iran, Israel, the US, or Gulf states, failed to secure the required nine votes, receiving only four in favour.
- India's co-sponsorship signals a clear diplomatic alignment with Gulf nations and the broader international community on regional stability, with the notable feature that India and Pakistan — usually on opposite sides of diplomatic positions — both co-sponsored the resolution, marking a rare convergence of their foreign policy stances.
- The resolution specifically condemned any Iranian threats to close or obstruct the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab Al Mandab — two of the world's most critical maritime oil transit routes — reaffirming the right of all states to defend their vessels and uphold navigational freedoms under international law.
- India's support reflects its vital strategic interests in the Gulf, which is home to a large Indian diaspora and serves as a key source of crude oil and natural gas imports, making regional stability directly linked to India's energy security and the welfare of millions of Indian nationals across GCC countries.

Russia Emerges as Strategic Winner of US-Israel-Iran Conflict Through Crude Oil Windfall and Geopolitical Gains

- Russia, despite not being a direct participant in the US-Israel-Iran conflict, has emerged as one of the clearest strategic and economic winners, with Iran's chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz pushing Brent crude towards \$100 a barrel and earning Russia up to \$150 million per day in extra revenue, with an estimated \$1.3–\$1.9 billion in additional tax revenues in just the first 12 days of the conflict.
- Russian Urals crude surged over 10% and traded at a premium to the Brent benchmark for the first time in history, while Indian and Chinese imports from Russia rose approximately 22% in the week following strikes on Iran, with India's purchases reaching roughly 1.5 million barrels per day — nearly 50% higher than the previous month.

- This windfall came after Russia's federal budget in early 2026 was under severe strain, with energy revenues having fallen nearly 50% year-on-year and the Kremlin forced to offer heavy discounts to India and China to sustain oil sales well below the hoped-for \$60 per barrel threshold.
- Beyond oil revenues, Russia has reportedly provided Iran with satellite intelligence and tactical insights, and with no European sanctions on Russian LNG shipments until 2027, Europe may increase Russian gas imports, further extending Moscow's energy leverage over the continent.
- Russia's windfall faces limits including sanctions, damaged energy infrastructure from Ukrainian attacks, and a narrow buyer base, while a potential US-Iran deal lifting the Iranian oil embargo could crash Brent prices back to \$60 or below; additionally, with US attention consumed by the West Asia conflict, Ukraine faces critical shortages of PAC-3 Patriot interceptor missiles, further benefiting Russia on the Ukrainian front.

Homebound Becomes Only Indian Film Shortlisted for Best International Feature Film at 98th Academy Awards



- India's official submission Homebound, directed by Neeraj Ghaywan and featuring Ishaan Khatter, Janhvi Kapoor, and Vishal Jethwa, became the only Indian film among the 15 titles shortlisted for the Best International Feature Film category at the 98th Academy Awards (Oscars 2026), with the shortlist announced by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) on December 16, 2025.

- The film, which tells the story of two friends from rural India aspiring to become police officers in search of dignity and social acceptance, premiered at major international festivals including Cannes and received strong critical acclaim.
- Despite making the shortlist, Homebound did not advance to the final five nominees when nominations were announced on January 22, 2026, continuing the pattern of Indian films struggling to secure final-round nominations at the Academy Awards.
- Experts cited limited US theatrical visibility, a smaller North American release footprint, and insufficient Oscar campaign expenditure as key factors, as securing a nomination requires extensive and expensive promotional campaigns including screenings, advertising, and networking events for Academy members — an area where Indian films often lag behind major US and European studios.
- Despite no Indian feature film nomination, Indian-American filmmaker Geeta Gandbhir received two nominations in documentary categories at Oscars 2026, with the award ceremony held on March 15, 2026 at the Dolby Theatre, Los Angeles.

US Strikes Kharg Island; Iran Retaliates With Drone Attacks on Fujairah, Sending Oil Prices Past \$100 Per Barrel

- The US and Israel launched strikes against Iran's Kharg Island Iran's primary crude oil export hub on February 28, 2026, following which Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) retaliated with drone strikes on oil facilities at Fujairah, UAE on March 14 and March 16, 2026, causing large fires and halting oil loading operations, with a drone also hitting a fuel depot at Dubai International Airport and temporarily suspending flights.
- The escalation has nearly halted shipping through the Strait of Hormuz a narrow maritime chokepoint between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman through which approximately 20% of global oil trade passes with Brent crude crossing \$106 per barrel and WTI reaching \$100 per barrel, the highest since 2022, representing a surge of over 50% in one month.
- The IRGC declared US interests in the UAE including ports, docks, and military locations as legitimate targets, and Iran warned residents near

- Fujairah, Jebel Ali, and Khalifa ports to evacuate, sharply escalating fears of a wider regional conflict.
- The UAE, bordered by Saudi Arabia to the west and south and Oman to the east and northeast, relies on the Habshan-Fujairah bypass pipeline as a strategically critical route that allows oil exports to circumvent the Strait of Hormuz, making Fujairah's disruption a significant blow to regional energy logistics.
- The attacks have severely disrupted international shipping through the Persian Gulf, with Iran continuing to target ships attempting to pass through the maritime corridor, raising the risk of a prolonged global energy supply crisis.

Indian Animated Film CHYIMI Wins Best Director Award at New York Short Animation Festival 2026

- Indian animated short film CHYIMI won the Best Director Award at the New York Short Animation Festival (NYSAF) 2026, a prestigious international platform celebrating creativity and craftsmanship in animated storytelling, marking a significant milestone for Indian and Assamese animation on the global stage.
- The film was directed by Dr. Partha Sarathi Mahanta, a senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officer currently serving as Inspector General of Police (IGP) in Assam and Commissioner of Police, Guwahati, representing a rare and inspiring combination of public service and creative artistic expression.
- CHYIMI is rooted in local culture and lived experiences from Assam and North-East India, demonstrating how regional narratives can transcend linguistic and geographical boundaries and resonate with international audiences.
- The Sahitya Akademi Awards 2025 were also announced across 24 Indian languages, to be presented on March 31, 2026, with notable winners including Mamta Kalia for Hindi memoir Jeete Jee Allahabad, diplomat-author Navtej Sarna for English novel Crimson Spring, and Pritpal Singh Betab for Urdu poetry Safar Jaari Hai.
- The Sahitya Akademi Award, the second highest honour of the Akademi after the Sahitya Akademi Fellowship carries a prize of ₹1,00,000 along with an engraved copper plaque and a shawl, with this year's awards covering works across poetry, novels,

short stories, essays, literary criticism, autobiography, and memoir in all 24 recognised languages.

Attacks on South Pars Gas Field and Qatar's Ras Laffan LNG Hub Deepen India's Energy Security Concerns

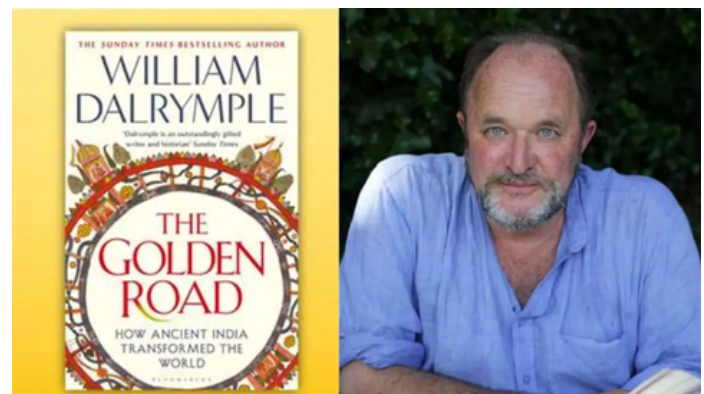
- The Iran war entered a more dangerous phase after South Pars — the world's largest natural gas field, located in the Persian Gulf and shared by Iran and Qatar — was struck, followed by Iranian missile attacks on Qatar's Ras Laffan Industrial City, the world's largest LNG hub associated with roughly one-fifth of global LNG supply.
- The attacks marked a critical escalation from risks to shipping routes alone to direct strikes on energy production and export infrastructure, sharply driving up oil and gas prices and raising fears of prolonged disruption to Gulf energy supplies.
- India is particularly exposed because Qatar is India's largest source of LNG, with a substantial share of India's LNG imports linked to Ras Laffan supply chains, meaning any serious damage to the hub can keep a major portion of India's contracted LNG supply offline.
- The threat is compounded by continued disruption to traffic through the Strait of Hormuz — the critical maritime route for Gulf energy exports — creating a dual risk of supply loss at source and transport disruption simultaneously affecting India's energy import capacity.
- Disrupted LNG flows from West Asia are expected to force supply adjustments inside India, affecting industries dependent on natural gas and putting broader pressure on the Indian economy already strained by the ongoing energy crisis.

William Dalrymple Wins 2026 Mark Lynton History Prize for The Golden Road: How Ancient India Transformed the World

- Historian William Dalrymple was named winner of the 2026 Mark Lynton History Prize on March 17, 2026 for his book *The Golden Road: How Ancient India Transformed the World*, published by Bloomsbury, under the J. Anthony Lukas Prize Project administered jointly by Columbia Journalism School

and the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University.

- The Mark Lynton History Prize, established in 1998, carries a cash award of USD 10,000 and is given to a book-length work of narrative history that combines intellectual distinction with literary quality.
- The book argues that for approximately 1,500 years, India was a major exporter of art, religion, technology, astronomy, literature, mathematics, and ideas across a vast region stretching from the Red Sea to the Pacific, placing India at the centre of ancient Asian history.
- The judges described the book as a perspective-shifting work that makes it difficult to discuss the Silk Road without also recognising the importance of a Golden Road through which Indian influence spread westward and eastward, broadening the usual historical focus.
- The work highlights India's role in the spread of Buddhism across Asia, the transmission of Indian numerals and the concept of zero, and broader cultural links extending to Southeast Asia and the Roman world, significantly elevating the international visibility of India's contribution to ancient global civilisation.



US Suspends Jones Act for 60 Days to Ease Domestic Energy Supply Disruptions Caused by Strait of Hormuz Crisis

- US President Donald Trump approved a 60-day temporary waiver of the Jones Act — officially the Merchant Marine Act of 1920 — allowing foreign-flagged vessels to transport essential commodities including crude oil, gasoline, diesel, jet fuel, natural gas, fertilisers, and coal between US domestic ports,

to ease fuel price pressures caused by the Iran-Israel-US conflict's disruption of the Strait of Hormuz.

- The Jones Act requires that any ship transporting goods between two US ports must be built in the United States, owned mainly by US citizens, registered under the US flag, and crewed predominantly by Americans — restrictions that were limiting domestic shipping capacity during the energy crisis.
- The ongoing Iran war disrupted the Strait of Hormuz, which handles nearly 20% of the world's oil and LNG, with oil production losses estimated at 7–10 million barrels per day, making the waiver critical to moving fuel from Gulf Coast production hubs to high-demand regions on the East and West Coasts.
- While commonly linked to 1920 and World War I, the Jones Act's underlying domestic shipping restriction policy dates back to 1789, with similar restrictions established in 1817 and 1898, making it a deeply entrenched feature of US maritime law.
- The waiver also ensures access to fertilisers during the agricultural planting season, reflecting the broader economic impact of the energy crisis beyond the petroleum sector

Finland Tops World Happiness Report 2026 for Ninth Consecutive Year; India Ranks 116th

- The World Happiness Report 2026, released on March 18, 2026 by the Wellbeing Research Centre in partnership with Gallup and the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network covering 147 countries, ranked Finland as the world's happiest country for the ninth consecutive year, attributed to wealth distribution, a strong welfare state, high trust in government, excellent education and healthcare, and strong work-life balance.
- The top 10 countries are Finland (1st), Iceland (2nd), Denmark (3rd), Costa Rica (4th — the highest-ever ranking for a Latin American country), Sweden (5th), Norway (6th), the Netherlands (7th), Israel (8th), Luxembourg (9th), and Switzerland (10th), with no English-speaking country featuring in the top 10 for the second consecutive year.
- India ranked 116th in 2026, a slight improvement from 118th in 2025, while Afghanistan remained the unhappiest country, followed by Sierra Leone and

Malawi, with other bottom-ranked nations including Yemen, Lebanon, DR Congo, and Zimbabwe.

- The report's central theme is the harmful impact of heavy social media use on youth well-being, finding that increased screen time reduces happiness, with teenage girls using social media for five or more hours per day reporting significant drops in life satisfaction, and young people using it for less than one hour per day reporting the highest well-being levels.
- Rankings are based on a three-year average of life evaluations from approximately 1,00,000 people across 140 countries assessed on six factors: GDP per capita, healthy life expectancy, social support, freedom to make life choices, generosity, and perceptions of corruption.

Bhumika Shrestha Becomes Nepal's First Transgender Woman MP Under Rastriya Swatantra Party

- Bhumika Shrestha, a 37-year-old LGBTQ rights activist, made history by becoming Nepal's first transgender woman lawmaker, confirmed by the Election Commission as a proportional-representation Member of Parliament for the Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) following national elections held on March 5, 2026.
- Shrestha's election follows Nepal's political transformation after anti-corruption protests toppled the previous government in September 2025, with the RSP — led by rapper-turned-politician Balendra Shah — winning 125 of 165 direct seats and a total of 182 seats, narrowly missing a two-thirds majority.
- Shrestha became the first member of the LGBTQ community to serve in Nepal's public office since an openly gay proportional MP in 2008, a gap of nearly 18 years, with the Blue Diamond Society (BDS) estimating over 9,00,000 sexual minorities across Nepal.
- Nepal is considered one of the most progressive nations in South Asia regarding LGBTQ rights, with its constitution explicitly recognising rights of sexual minorities, though Shrestha acknowledged that constitutional provisions have not yet translated into effective laws and policies.
- Her election is seen as a natural progression of

Nepal's progressive legal framework, with BDS President Umisha Pandey calling the moment historic and emphasising that only community members truly understand the struggles of their own communities.

India and Vietnam Hold Ministerial Meeting on Tribal and Ethnic Welfare Under Act East Policy Framework

- A high-level bilateral ministerial meeting between India's Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Vietnam's Ministry of Ethnic and Religious Affairs was held in New Delhi on March 18, 2026, co-chaired by Union Minister Jual Oram and Vietnam's Minister Dao Ngoc Dung, marking the tenth anniversary of the India-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.
- India highlighted Vietnam as a key partner under its Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific vision, with both sides emphasising deep-rooted cultural and civilizational links including shared Buddhist traditions, citing the recent exposition of Sacred Relics of Lord Buddha from Sarnath in Vietnam — which attracted millions of devotees — as a powerful example of people-to-people connect.
- Priority areas for bilateral cooperation identified include livelihood promotion and skill development, sustainable agriculture practices, value addition to forest-based products, research and institutional partnerships, and cultural preservation and documentation.
- Vietnam, which has 54 ethnic groups and pursues inclusive growth through targeted interventions in infrastructure, livelihoods, education, and healthcare, shares common ground with India's tribal development policy framework.



- Both sides reviewed a draft Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) to institutionalise collaboration between the two ministries, with Vietnam confirming approval of the draft and extending an invitation to Minister Jual Oram to visit Vietnam for the formal signing.

Cuba Faces Total Grid Collapse and Fuel Crisis as US Blockade Cuts Off Energy Supplies; Russia Dispatches Oil Tanker

- Cuba is facing a severe energy and humanitarian crisis after the US blockade cut off fuel supplies, causing the entire electricity grid to collapse and leaving approximately 10 million people without power, with Venezuela's oil supply falling from 46,500 barrels per day in December 2025 to zero following the abduction of Nicolas Maduro in early January 2026, and Mexico halting shipments after President Trump's January 29, 2026 executive order.
- Cuba's dependence on oil is structural — it accounts for 83% of total power generation and oil products make up 56% of total energy consumption — while the country imports roughly 80% of its food, making prolonged blackouts catastrophic as they disrupt refrigeration vital for preserving perishables.
- The US embargo on Cuba, which began in 1962 following the Cuban Revolution, was codified and expanded through the Torricelli Act (1992) and the Helms-Burton Act (1996), with the first Trump administration redesignating Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism in January 2021, and Cuban authorities documenting over 1,000 instances of foreign banks refusing services between 2021 and 2024.
- A Russian government-owned tanker, the Anatoly Kolodkin, carrying an estimated 7,30,000 barrels of crude oil, is heading toward Cuba in defiance of the US energy blockade, though analysts note this would give Cuba only approximately 30 days of breathing room due to its highly inefficient refineries.
- Cuba has indicated openness to economic changes including allowing expatriate Cubans and foreign companies to participate in key sectors, but US negotiators led by Secretary of State Marco Rubio have reportedly demanded the resignation of President Miguel Díaz-Canel, making a diplomatic resolution uncertain.

Israel Launches Ground Offensive in Lebanon Against Hezbollah; Over 1,000 Killed and One Million Displaced

- Israel launched a ground offensive in Lebanon on March 16, 2026, following Hezbollah's firing of hundreds of rockets into northern Israel in retaliation for the joint Israeli-American air strike in February 2026 that killed Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, with massive Israeli air strikes in southern Lebanon and southern Beirut killing at least 1,000 people — including 118 children and 40 health workers — and displacing approximately one million people.
- Hezbollah, a Shia militant group and political party formed in Lebanon in the early 1980s in response to Israel's occupation during the Lebanese civil war, has been significantly weakened by the assassination of Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah in September 2024, the pager explosion attacks targeting mid-level commanders, and the fall of Assad's government in Syria which cut the Iran-Hezbollah land bridge — yet has fired over 1,000 rockets and drones at Israel since March 2, 2026.
- Israel's declared military objectives include dismantling Hezbollah's military capabilities, pushing Hezbollah away from southern Lebanon, and creating a buffer zone inside Lebanese territory, with Israel issuing evacuation orders for all of southern Lebanon and bombing bridges over the Litani River to cut off Hezbollah's supplies and reinforcements.
- The history of Israel-Hezbollah conflict includes Israeli invasions of Lebanon in 1978 and 1982, a forced Israeli withdrawal in 2000 celebrated as the first Arab military victory against Israel, and a month-long campaign in 2006 that ended in a ceasefire, with the November 2024 ceasefire having broken down following continued Israeli air strikes.
- Hezbollah is offering stiff resistance particularly in the hilltop towns of southern Lebanon including Khiam, a high plateau overlooking the Hula Valley, as the conflict raises fears of a large-scale humanitarian crisis and potential widening of the West Asia war.

US Removes Sanctions on Iranian Oil at Sea for 30 Days, Unlocking 140 Million Barrels for Global Markets

- The United States removed sanctions on the purchase of Iranian oil already at sea for 30 days as part of Operation Epic Fury, with Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent announcing the temporary waiver would unlock approximately 140 million barrels of oil for global markets, described as using "Iranian barrels against Tehran to keep prices down" amid the West Asia energy crisis.
- As of March 2026, over 90% of Iranian oil exports were going to China, with Kpler estimating roughly 170 million barrels of Iranian crude currently on water including floating storage and cargoes in transit, of which a portion remains unsold and represents potential incremental supply.
- India, which imports over 88% of its crude oil requirements and is the world's fourth-largest refiner, is seen as one of the potential major beneficiaries, with more than 60% of its crude imports coming from the Gulf and approximately 2.5–2.7 million barrels per day of crude imports transiting the now-disrupted Strait of Hormuz.
- India was historically a major buyer of Iranian crude, with imports peaking at approximately 14.4% of total crude imports in 2009-10, Iran serving as India's third-largest oil supplier in 2016-17, and India ceasing all Iranian oil imports from May 2019 after the expiry of US sanctions waivers; major Indian buyers were Essar Oil (now Nayara Energy) and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals (MRPL).
- India's Russian oil imports in March 2026 surged to 1.8 million barrels per day, up from 1 million barrels per day in February, due to the Strait of Hormuz closure, reflecting India's active diversification of crude sources amid the ongoing geopolitical disruption.



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Upcoming Exams 2026

Directorate of Income Tax (Legal & Research)

Recruiting Authority: Directorate of Income Tax (Legal & Research), Central Board of Direct Taxes, Department of Revenue, Government of India.

Place of Posting: Directorate of Income Tax (Legal & Research), 4th Floor, Drum Shaped Building, I.P. Estate, New Delhi – 110002.

Post Name: Legal Consultant

No. of Posts: 04.

Educational Qualification: Law Graduate. The candidate must also have a minimum of 3 years' experience. Preference will be given to Post Graduates, candidates with work experience in direct taxes, and those having published research papers. The notice also requires knowledge and experience in research and analysis on legal databases, good working knowledge of English including drafting skills, and fair knowledge of MS Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

Age Limit: Not exceeding 35 years as on the date of advertisement.

Pay & Tenure: A lump sum remuneration of ₹1,12,500 per month will be paid. The engagement will be for one year initially, extendable by one more year subject to satisfactory performance and the conditions in the notice.

Last Date to Apply: 13.04.2026 up to 06:00 PM.

Email: delhi.ito.lr.admin@incometax.gov.in. Applications are to be sent by email, followed by a hard copy within the stipulated time.

V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority - LAW OFFICER GRADE I

Recruiting Authority: V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority (VOCPA), Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, Government of India.

Post Name: Law Officer Gr. I

No. of Posts: 01 | **Category:** UR.

Pay Scale: ₹50,000–1,60,000. The total emoluments are approximately ₹93,500 per month plus HRA, as admissible.

Educational Qualification: A Degree in Law from a recognised university is essential. Desirable qualifications include two years' executive experience in the legal establishment of an industrial, commercial, or Government undertaking and a Postgraduate Degree in Law from a recognised university

Age Limit: Maximum 30 years as on 09.04.2026.

Application Fee: For SC/ST/PwD candidates and VOCPA/other Major Port Authority employees: ₹100 + 18% GST. For all other candidates: ₹475 + 18% GST.

Application Mode: Online only through the link available on the VOCPA website.

Online Registration Start Date: 10.03.2026 | **Last Date to Apply:** 09.04.2026.

Official Website: www.vocport.gov.in

Query Email: secretary@vocport.gov.in

India Infrastructure Finance Company Limited

Recruiting Authority: India Infrastructure Finance Company Limited (IIFCL), a Government of India Enterprise

Post Names:

1. Assistant Manager, Grade-A (on regular basis)
2. Manager, Grade-B (on regular basis)

Total Vacancies:

- Assistant Manager, Grade-A: 33
- Manager, Grade-B: 04

Online Registration Start Date: 18 March 2026 (Wednesday)

Last Date for Online Registration: 10 April 2026 (Friday)

Official Website: www.iifcl.in

Application Mode: Online through the Recruitment section of the website

Office Address: Plate A & B, 5th Floor, Office Block 2, NBCC Towers, East Kidwai Nagar, New Delhi – 110023

National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development

Recruiting Authority: National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development

Application Fee: General / OBC / EWS: ₹800 + taxes | SC / ST / PwBD: ₹100 + taxes

Educational Qualification: Candidates must possess an LLB degree from a recognized university or institution. A Master's degree in Law (LLM) is desirable.

Experience: Candidates must have a minimum of 4 years of relevant post-qualification experience. Preference will be given to candidates having experience in corporate law or project finance matters.

Age Limit: Minimum 21 years and maximum 40 years. Age relaxation will be applicable as per Government norms.

Last Date to Apply: 08.04.2026

Salary / Perks: The post carries an approximate fixed compensation of ₹24.81 LPA. In addition, candidates may receive a performance bonus up to 20%, along with other benefits including insurance.

Selection Process: The selection process will consist of an Online Examination followed by a Personal Interview. Shortlisting may be done before the interview stage.

Exam Pattern: Professional Knowledge (Legal) — 50 Questions | 100 Marks | 60 Minutes
Negative marking will be applicable.

How to Apply: Candidates have to apply online through the NaBFID careers section, complete the registration process, fill in the application form, upload the required documents, pay the prescribed fee, and submit the application form.

PRACTICE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

JUDICIARY & ASSISTANT PROSECUTION OFFICER

- Consider the following statements regarding 'document' under the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023:
Statement I: A document means any matter expressed or described upon any substance by means of letters, figures, or marks, and includes electronic and digital records.
Statement II: Voice mail messages stored on digital devices, emails, and server logs qualify as documents under the Adhiniyam.
Statement III: An inscription on a metal plate and a caricature are both considered documents.
Statement IV: Oral statements made before the Court are classified as documents under the definition.
Which of the above statements are correct?
(a) Only I, II and III (b) Only I, II and IV (c) Only II, III and IV (d) All statements I, II, III and IV
- X is prosecuted for rape under Section 64 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023. During trial, the prosecutrix states that she did not consent to the sexual intercourse. The defence argues that the burden lies on the prosecution to prove absence of consent beyond reasonable doubt. Which of the following correctly represents the evidentiary position under the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023?
(a) The burden remains entirely on the prosecution to prove absence of consent, and no presumption arises merely from the victim's statement
(b) The Court shall presume absence of consent once the prosecutrix states in her evidence that she did not consent
(c) The Court may presume absence of consent at its discretion if the prosecutrix appears credible
(d) The accused must prove that the prosecutrix consented, thereby reversing the burden of proof entirely
- Match the following provisions under the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023:

Column A (Provision)	Column B (Section)
P. Primary evidence	1. Section 58
Q. Secondary evidence	2. Section 63
R. Admissibility of electronic records	3. Section 57
S. Electronic or digital record	4. Section 61

 (a) P-1, Q-3, R-4, S-2 (b) P-3, Q-1, R-2, S-4
 (c) P-2, Q-4, R-1, S-3 (d) P-4, Q-2, R-3, S-1
- Which of the following statements regarding the punishment provisions under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 is/are correct?
 - Community Service has been introduced as a new form of punishment under Section 4.
 - Imprisonment for life is reckoned as equivalent to imprisonment for 30 years for calculating fractions of terms of punishment.
 - The appropriate Government may commute any punishment without the consent of the offender.
 (a) Only I and II (b) Only I and III (c) Only II and III (d) All of the above

5. According to Section 106(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, whoever causes death of any person by rash and negligent driving and does not report to police officer or Magistrate shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to _____ years.
(a) Five (b) Seven (c) Ten (d) Fourteen
6. The Supreme Court of India has observed a clear distinction between dishonestly and fraudulently in the case of -
(a) Nathu Lal v. State of M.P. (b) Central Bank of India v. Narain
(c) Mubarak Ali v. State of Bombay (d) Vimla Devi v. Delhi Administration
7. In which of the following situations can a suit be rejected under Order VII Rule 11?
I. The plaint does not disclose a cause of action
II. The relief claimed is undervalued
III. The suit is barred by any law
IV. The defendant has not appeared
(a) I, II, and III only (b) I and III only (c) II, III, and IV only (d) All of the above
8. In State of Madras v. C.P. Agencies (1960), the Supreme Court gave an authoritative definition of "cause of action." Which of the following most accurately reflects that definition?
(a) Cause of action means any grievance suffered by the plaintiff for which he claims monetary compensation
(b) Cause of action refers only to the immediate act or omission of the defendant that triggers the plaintiff's right to sue
(c) Cause of action connotes all categories of facts which it is necessary for the plaintiff to prove, if traversed, in order to entitle him to a decree in the suit
(d) Cause of action is the specific legal provision under which the plaintiff claims relief from the defendant
9. Under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, within what time must copies of judgment be uploaded to the Court portal after pronouncement?
(a) Immediately (b) Within 7 days (c) Within 14 days (d) Within 30 days
10. A is accused of committing five separate thefts of the same kind within a period of ten months. How many of these offences can be charged and tried together in one trial?
(a) All five offences (b) Only three offences
(c) Only two offences at a time (d) Each offence must be tried separately
11. The Supreme Court, in Arnesh Kumar v. State of Bihar, laid down stringent conditions for arrest in cases where the offence is punishable with imprisonment for a term which may be less than seven years or which may extend to seven years. Which provision of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, now statutorily incorporates these judicial safeguards?
(a) Section 35 (b) Section 40 (c) Section 191 (d) Section 479

12. In which of the following cases did the Supreme Court uphold the constitutional validity of the 93rd Amendment of the Constitution by which Article 15(5) has been inserted?
 - (a) T.M.A. Pai Foundation v. State of Karnataka
 - (b) Indira Sawhney v. Union of India
 - (c) M. Nagaraj v. Union of India
 - (d) Ashok Kumar Thakur v. Union of India

13. Under Article 171(3), the composition of a State Legislative Council includes members elected by various electorates. As nearly as may be, what proportion of members shall be elected by graduates of universities?
 - (a) One-sixth
 - (b) One-twelfth
 - (c) One-third
 - (d) One-fourth

14. Which section of the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956, declares that the welfare of the minor shall be the paramount consideration in the appointment or declaration of any guardian?
 - (a) Section 6(1)
 - (b) Section 8(2)
 - (c) Section 13(1)
 - (d) Section 4 (a)

15. Which section of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, provides that any existing rule of Hindu law or custom shall cease to have effect if it contradicts the provisions of this Act?
 - (a) Section 2
 - (b) Section 4
 - (c) Section 5
 - (d) Section 10

16. A woman married under Muslim law can seek the dissolution of her marriage if:
 - (a) The husband fails to visit her family
 - (b) The husband does not allow her to work
 - (c) The husband has friends she disapproves of
 - (d) The husband's whereabouts are unknown for four years

17. The defendants published in their newspaper a photograph of Mr. C and Miss X together with the words: "Mr. C, the race-horse owner, and Miss X, whose engagement has been announced." The information on which the defendants based the statement had been obtained from Mr. C. In fact, Mr. C was already married, although he and his wife were not living together. Mrs. C sued the defendants for defamation, alleging that the publication conveyed the innuendo that Mr. C was living with Miss X in immoral cohabitation. In these circumstances, the defendants would be
 - (a) Liable because a publisher is responsible for the consequences of any publication and the plaintiff's innuendo is established
 - (b) Not liable because they genuinely believed the news to be true and so published the same
 - (c) Liable because they had been negligent in publishing the news
 - (d) Not liable because they had verified the veracity of the news from Mr. 'C' before publishing the same

18. If a Minor draw, indorse, deliver and negotiate Negotiable Instruments, it binds __
 - (a) All the parties except minor
 - (b) All the parties including minor
 - (c) Minor Only
 - (d) Minor and Only Drawer

19. Administrative law in the context of public policy relates to:
(a) Laws regarding public elections
(b) Administrative bodies' authority to shape policies
(c) The judiciary's control over the executive
(d) Judicial review of legislative actions
20. Under section 4 of the Companies Act, 2013 which of the following clause is not to be mentioned under the Memorandum of Association.
(a) Liability Clause
(b) Situation clause
(c) Capital clause
(d) None of the above

LL.M.

Passage (Q.21-.Q.25): In the landmark judgment of *Dr. Jaya Thakur v. Government of India & Ors.*, the Supreme Court dealt with a writ petition filed by a social worker seeking directions for providing free sanitary pads to every female child studying in classes 6 to 12 and separate toilets for females in all government-aided and residential schools. The Court observed that the lack of menstrual hygiene management (MHM) facilities in schools leads to absenteeism and dropouts among girl students. It held that the right to menstrual health forms an integral part of the right to life and personal liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution. The judgment emphasized that access to menstrual hygiene is essential for realizing the right to education under Article 21A and ensuring equality under Article 14.

Extracted from Recent Supreme Court Judgment: *Dr. Jaya Thakur v. Government of India & Ors.* (2026 SCC OnLine SC 133, decided on 30 January 2026)

21. According to the passage, which of the following was the primary relief sought in the writ petition?
(a) Free sanitary pads only for government school girls
(b) Free sanitary pads to every female child in classes 6 to 12 and separate toilets in government-aided and residential schools
(c) Mandatory menstrual health education in all colleges
(d) Compensation for girls who dropped out due to menstrual issues
22. In the full judgment, the Supreme Court issued specific directions regarding disposal of sanitary waste in schools. Which of the following correctly reflects the Court's mandate?
(a) Schools may use ordinary plastic bins for disposal
(b) Schools must equip toilets with covered waste bins and follow Solid Waste Management Rules for environmentally compliant disposal
(c) Disposal is the sole responsibility of parents
(d) Only government schools need to maintain disposal systems
23. The judgment links menstrual health to which of the following constitutional rights in addition to Article 21?
(a) Only Article 19(1)(a) freedom of speech
(b) Articles 14, 15, 21 and 21A read with RTE Act, 2009
(c) Article 32 only
(d) Article 370

24. What did the Supreme Court direct regarding teacher training and curriculum on menstruation?
 - (a) Only female teachers need training
 - (b) NCERT and SCERT must incorporate gender-responsive curricula on menstruation, puberty, and related health issues; all teachers (male and female) must be sensitized
 - (c) No curriculum change required
 - (d) Training is optional for private schools

25. The judgment described menstrual health as a “multiplier right”. This observation primarily relates to:
 - (a) Right to property under Article 300A
 - (b) Right to education enabling exercise of other human rights, including dignity and equality
 - (c) Right to vote under Article 326
 - (d) Right against exploitation under Article 23

26. In contract law, which of the following is NOT an essential element of a valid offer under the Indian Contract Act, 1872?

(a) Intention to create legal relations	(b) Definiteness of terms
(c) Communication to the offeree	(d) Acceptance by the offeree

27. Under the BNS, the offence of “criminal breach of trust” under requires:
 - (a) Dishonest misappropriation only
 - (b) Entrustment of property + dishonest misappropriation or conversion
 - (c) Mere temporary use of property
 - (d) Only intention to cause wrongful loss

28. Which of the following is a correct statement regarding the doctrine of res ipsa loquitur in tort law?
 - (a) It shifts the burden of proof entirely on the plaintiff
 - (b) It raises a rebuttable presumption of negligence when the accident is of a type that does not occur without negligence
 - (c) It applies only to contractual liability
 - (d) It is a rule of substantive law, not evidence

29. In the Transfer of Property Act, 1882, a “mortgage” is defined as:
 - (a) Transfer of ownership in immovable property
 - (b) Transfer of interest in specific immovable property for securing payment of money
 - (c) Lease of immovable property for 99 years
 - (d) Gift of movable property

30. Under the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 (as amended in 2005), a daughter’s right in coparcenary property is:
 - (a) Only equal to sons if she is unmarried
 - (b) Equal to that of a son by birth, irrespective of marital status
 - (c) Limited to maintenance only
 - (d) Dependent on father’s consent

GLOE PAPER 01 & PAPER 02

PAPER - 1

31. Read each of the sentences to find out whether there is any grammatical or idiomatic error in it. The error, if any, will be in one part of the sentence. The number of that part is the answer. If there is 'No error', the answer is 'e'. (Ignore errors of punctuation, if any)
A study has revealed (A)/that animals don't (B)/ harm you unless you (C)/ not harm them first (D)/ No error.
(a) A (b) B (c) C (d) D
(e) No error
32. Direction: What will come in the place of questions (?) mark in following number series.
32, 48, 120, ?, 1890, 10395
(a) 420 (b) 450 (c) 430 (d) 410
(e) 400
33. The total cost of painting the four walls with ceiling is Rs. 5800. If the cost of painting is Rs. 20/meter² and length and height of the room are 10 meters and 8 meters respectively, then find the breadth of the room.
(a) 4 meters (b) 3 meters (c) 6 meters (d) 5 meters
(e) 8 meters
34. Which of the following is the third letter of the meaningful word formed from the First, fourth, sixth and eighth letters from the left end of the word "NUTRITION". If more than one word is formed your answer will be Z and if no word can be formed answer will be X?
(a) O (b) X (c) R (d) Z
(e) N
35. Where was the IONS Maritime Exercise (IMEX) TTX 2026 hosted by the Indian Navy?
(a) Mumbai (b) Kochi (c) Visakhapatnam (d) Chennai
(e) none of the above

PAPER - 2

36. The Right to Privacy is protected as an intrinsic part of which Article?
(a) Article 14 (b) Article 19 only (c) Article 21 (d) Article 32
(e) none of the above
37. Which of the following is a Fundamental Duty under Article 51A?
(a) To pay taxes
(b) To develop scientific temper, humanism and spirit of inquiry
(c) To provide free education to children
(d) To protect monuments
(e) none of the above

38. The concept of "fraternity" in the Preamble signifies:
(a) Unity and integrity of the nation along with assurance of dignity of the individual
(b) Only territorial integrity
(c) Economic justice
(d) Political democracy
(e) none of the above
39. Which Article empowers the Parliament to amend the Constitution?
(a) Article 13
(b) Article 368
(c) Article 370
(d) Article 32
(e) none of the above
40. DPSPs under Part IV are:
(a) Justiciable and enforceable by courts
(b) Non-justiciable but fundamental in governance
(c) Equivalent to Fundamental Rights
(d) Applicable only to Union Government
(e) none of the above

UGC NET PAPER 01 & PAPER 02

PAPER 01 – GENERAL PAPER

41. Which of the following is the most important characteristic of a good teacher?
(a) Strict discipline in class
(b) Subject mastery combined with ability to motivate and facilitate learning
(c) High academic qualifications only
(d) Use of ICT tools in every lecture
42. Formative assessment differs from summative assessment in that it:
(a) Occurs only at the end of the course
(b) Is used to monitor learning and provide ongoing feedback for improvement
(c) Focuses solely on grading
(d) Is conducted by external examiners
43. In Bloom's Taxonomy (revised), the highest level of cognitive domain 2001 is:
(a) Remembering (b) Analysing (c) Creating (d) Evaluating
44. Which teaching method is most suitable for developing problem-solving skills in higher education?
(a) Lecture method (b) Case study or project-based learning
(c) Dictation method (d) Rote memorisation

45. Inclusive education primarily aims at:
- (a) Segregating students with special needs
 - (b) Providing equal learning opportunities to all students regardless of disability, caste, gender or socio-economic background
 - (c) Focusing only on gifted students
 - (d) Reducing syllabus content

PAPER 02 – LAW SECTION

46. Which of the following is NOT a ground for reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2) of the Constitution?
- (a) Public order
 - (b) Decency or morality
 - (c) Contempt of court
 - (d) Promotion of international peace
47. The “basic structure” doctrine evolved in which case?
- (a) Shankari Prasad v. Union of India
 - (b) Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala
 - (c) Golaknath v. State of Punjab
 - (d) Minerva Mills v. Union of India
48. Which Article under Part IV-A imposes a fundamental duty on citizens to protect and improve the natural environment?
- (a) Article 51A(g)
 - (b) Article 51A(e)
 - (c) Article 48A
 - (d) Article 39
49. In jurisprudence, John Austin’s theory is known as:
- (a) Natural Law Theory
 - (b) Analytical Positivism / Command Theory of Law
 - (c) Sociological Jurisprudence
 - (d) Realist School
50. Article 39 of the Directive Principles of State Policy directs the State to secure:
- (a) Equal pay for equal work for men and women
 - (b) Uniform civil code
 - (c) Free legal aid
 - (d) Organisation of village panchayats

CURRENT AFFAIRS

51. The Khelo India Tribal Games 2026 will be hosted by which state?
- (a) Jharkhand
 - (b) Odisha
 - (c) Chhattisgarh
 - (d) Madhya Pradesh
52. World TB Day is observed annually on which date?
- (a) March 21
 - (b) March 22
 - (c) March 23
 - (d) March 24
53. Kalpana Soren received which international award in 2026?
- (a) Padma Shri
 - (b) Global Leadership Award
 - (c) Women Empowerment Trailblazer Award
 - (d) UN Women Award

54. Gujarat became the second state after which state to pass the Uniform Civil Code?
 (a) Goa (b) Himachal Pradesh
 (c) Uttarakhand (d) Maharashtra
55. Where was the 'Purple Fest' 2026 organised?
 (a) India Gate (b) Rashtrapati Bhavan
 (c) Parliament House (d) Vigyan Bhavan
56. Dr. Rajendra Prasad served as the first President of India during which of the following periods?
 (a) 1947–1952 (b) 1950–1962 (c) 1952–1962 (d) 1950–1957
57. Nepal shares its border with which of the following Indian states?
 (a) Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, and Sikkim
 (b) Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Assam, and Sikkim
 (c) Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Assam
 (d) Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha, and West Bengal
58. From which of the following ranges does the Indus River originate?
 (a) Kailash Range (b) Karakoram Range
 (c) Himalayan Range (d) Hindukush Range
59. Who among the following appointed the Hunter Commission in 1882 to review the progress of education in India?
 (a) Lord Curzon (b) Lord Ripon (c) Lord Dalhousie (d) Lord Lytton
60. In which of the following states is the famous Somnath Temple, one of the 12 Jyotirlingas of Lord Shiva, located?
 (a) Rajasthan (b) Gujarat (c) Maharashtra (d) Madhya Pradesh



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ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATIONS

JUDICIARY & ASSISTANT PROSECUTION OFFICER

1. **(a)** This question tests the definitional understanding of 'document' under Section 2(1)(d) of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023. Statement I is correct as it accurately reproduces the statutory definition. Statement II is correct as the illustrations under Section 2(1)(d) specifically include electronic records on emails, server logs, documents on computers, laptops or smartphones, messages, websites, locational evidence, and voice mail messages stored on digital devices. Statement III is correct as illustrations (iv) and (v) explicitly mention that an inscription on a metal plate or stone and a caricature are documents. Statement IV is incorrect because oral statements made before Court are classified as 'oral evidence' under Section 2(1)(e)(i), not as documents. Documentary evidence is covered under Section 2(1)(e)(ii).
2. **(b)** This question is governed by Section 120 of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, which creates a specific statutory presumption. Section 120 states: "Presumption as to absence of consent in certain prosecution for rape.—In a prosecution for an offence under section 64 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, where sexual intercourse by the accused is proved and the question is whether it was without the consent of the woman alleged to have been raped and she states in her evidence before the Court that she did not consent, the Court shall presume that she did not consent." The use of "shall presume" (as defined in Section 2(1)(i)) makes it mandatory for the Court to regard such fact as proved unless and until it is disproved. Therefore, option (b) is correct—the presumption arises automatically once the prosecutrix states absence of consent.
3. **(b)** The correct matching is as follows: P-3 (Primary evidence is defined in Section 57), Q-1 (Secondary evidence is defined in Section 58), R-2 (Admissibility of electronic records is governed by Section 63), and S-4 (Electronic or digital record is dealt with in Section 61). Section 57 states that primary evidence means the document itself produced for the inspection of the Court. Section 58 defines secondary evidence to include certified copies,

mechanical copies, oral accounts, etc. Section 61 provides that electronic or digital records shall have the same legal effect as other documents. Section 63 lays down the conditions for admissibility of electronic records and computer output.

4. **(b)** Statement I is correct as per Section 4(f), which introduces Community Service as a new punishment. Statement III is correct as per Section 5, which allows the appropriate Government to commute any punishment without the offender's consent. However, Statement II is incorrect because Section 6 specifies that imprisonment for life shall be reckoned as equivalent to imprisonment for 20 years (not 30 years) for calculating fractions of terms of punishment.
5. **(c)** Section 106(2) specifically deals with "hit and run" cases and provides: "Whoever causes death of any person by rash and negligent driving of vehicle not amounting to culpable homicide, and escapes without reporting it to a police officer or a Magistrate soon after the incident, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description of a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine." This is a new provision to address the serious issue of hit-and-run accidents.
6. **(d)** In the case of *Vimla Devi v. Delhi Administration*, the Supreme Court observed a clear distinction between 'dishonestly' and 'fraudulently'.
7. **(a)** Order VII Rule 11 provides for rejection of plaint on grounds including failure to disclose cause of action, undervaluation of relief, and suit being barred by law. Non-appearance of defendant is not a ground for rejection of plaint.
8. **(c)** In *State of Madras v. C.P. Agencies* (1960), the Supreme Court held that the term "cause of action" connotes all categories of facts which it is necessary for the plaintiff to prove, if traversed, in order to entitle him to a decree in the suit. This comprehensive definition captures all constituent facts necessary to establish the plaintiff's right to relief.
9. **(b)** Section 392 of BNSS 2023 provides that Courts should, as far as practicable, upload copies of the judgment to their portal within seven days of pronouncement. This provision promotes transparency, accessibility, and modernization of

the judicial system. The accused is separately entitled to a free copy of the judgment immediately after pronouncement.

10. (a) Section 242(1) of the BNSS, 2023 provides that "when a person is accused of more offences than one of the same kind committed within the space of twelve months from the first to the last of such offences he may be charged with, and tried at one trial for, any number of them not exceeding five." Since all five thefts occurred within ten months, they can all be tried together.
11. (a) The judgment in Arnesh Kumar v. State of Bihar was a seminal pronouncement to prevent the misuse of the power of arrest, particularly in cases under Section 498-A of the IPC. It interpreted Section 41(1)(b) of the CrPC, 1973, to mean that arrest in such cases is not automatic. The court mandated that a police officer must record in writing the reasons and necessity for the arrest based on conditions like preventing the accused from committing a further offence, for proper investigation, or to prevent tampering with evidence. Section 35 of the BNSS, 2023, which corresponds to Section 41 of the CrPC, has now explicitly codified these conditions. Section 35(3) of BNSS mandates that for such offences, a police officer "shall" issue a notice of appearance, and an arrest can only be made if the officer has "reason to believe" on the basis of recorded reasons that one of the specified conditions is met, thereby giving statutory force to the Arnesh Kumar directives.
12. (d) In the case of Ashok Kumar Thakur v. Union of India (2008 S.C.), the Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of Article 15(5) added by the 93rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2005.
13. (b) Article 171(3) (b) specifically provides that as nearly as may be, one-twelfth of the total members of the Legislative Council shall be elected by electorates consisting of persons residing in the State who have been for at least three years graduates of any university in the territory of India or possess equivalent qualifications.
14. (c) Section 13(1) unequivocally establishes that in the appointment or declaration of any person as guardian of a Hindu minor, the welfare of the minor shall be the paramount consideration.
15. (b) Section 4, titled 'Overriding effect of Act,' establishes that any text, rule, or interpretation of Hindu law or custom in force immediately before the

commencement of this Act shall cease to have effect with respect to any matter provided for in the Act.

16. (d) According to section 2(i) of the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, 1939, which states that a woman married under Muslim law shall be entitled to obtain a decree for the dissolution of her marriage if the whereabouts of the husband have not been known for a period of four years.
17. (a) In Cassidy v. Daily Mirror Newspapers Ltd. (1929), the publishers were held liable because the publication was capable of conveying a defamatory innuendo to reasonable readers, even though the defendants may have believed the statement to be true. The defamatory sting lay in the implication that the lawful wife was being displaced by an immoral relationship.
18. (a) Under Section 26 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, every person capable of contracting may bind himself and be bound by the making, drawing, acceptance, indorsement, delivery and negotiation of a promissory note, bill of exchange or cheque. A minor may draw, indorse, deliver and negotiate such instruments so as to bind all parties except himself. Thus, correct option is (a).
19. (b) Administrative law in the context of public policy deals with the authority, powers, and procedures of administrative bodies in formulating, implementing, and reviewing public policies. Administrative agencies derive their policy-shaping authority from enabling statutes passed by the legislature. The administrative process - rulemaking, adjudication, licensing, investigation - is the means by which government agencies translate legislative policy into concrete programmes and regulations. Option (b) - "administrative bodies' authority to shape policies" correctly captures this relationship. Option (a) - public elections are governed by election law. Option (c) - judiciary's control over the executive is judicial review, not administrative law relating to public policy. Option (d) - judicial review of legislative acts is constitutional law.
20. (d) Section 4 of the Companies Act, 2013 prescribes what all information shall be contained in the memorandum of a company. This includes the liability clause, situation clause, capital clause, Object clause, name clause, applicability clause and guarantee clause as well.

LL.M.

21. **(b)** The passage explicitly states that the writ petition sought directions for providing free sanitary pads to every female child studying in classes 6 to 12 and separate toilets for females in all government-aided and residential schools. This is a direct extraction from the facts narrated in the judgment summary. The other options, while related to the broader theme, are not mentioned in the given passage.
22. **(b)** The Court directed all schools (government or private) to provide safe, hygienic, and environmentally compliant disposal mechanisms as per Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, including covered waste bins in each toilet unit with regular maintenance. This forms part of the comprehensive MHM infrastructure mandated under Article 21 to ensure dignity. Non-compliance can lead to action under RTE Act.
23. **(b)** The Court held that lack of MHM violates substantive equality under Article 14 (and Article 15 prohibition of sex-based discrimination), right to education under Article 21A, and right to life with dignity under Article 21. It also invoked the RTE Act's Section 19 norms. The ruling treats menstrual poverty as a structural barrier to equal citizenship.
24. **(b)** To break stigma and recognize menstruation as a shared responsibility, the Court directed NCERT/SCERT to include topics on menstruation, puberty, PCOS, PCOD etc. in curricula and mandated sensitization training for all teachers. Information on Jan Aushadhi sanitary napkins and child helpline must be widely disseminated.
25. **(b)** The Court explicitly called education a "multiplier right" that enables realization of other rights. Inaccessibility of MHM undermines dignity, reproductive health, and equal opportunity, making menstrual health integral to Article 21 and Article 21A. This expands the jurisprudence on dignity from cases like Puttaswamy and Suchita Srivastava.
26. **(d)** Acceptance is not part of an offer; it completes the contract (Section 2(b)). An offer must show willingness to do or abstain from doing something with intention to obtain assent (Section 2(a)). Communication (Section 4) and definiteness are essential. This distinguishes offer from invitation to treat.

27. **(b)** Section 316 (1) of BNS mandates two ingredients: (i) entrustment (dominion over property), and (ii) dishonest misappropriation, conversion, or disposal in violation of law/contract. Mere intention or temporary use without dishonesty does not constitute the offence.
28. **(b)** Res ipsa loquitur ("the thing speaks for itself") is a rule of evidence creating a rebuttable presumption of negligence when the defendant had control over the instrumentality and the accident is one that ordinarily does not happen without negligence (e.g., Byrne v. Boadle). The burden shifts to the defendant to explain.
29. **(b)** Section 58 defines mortgage as transfer of an interest (not ownership) in specific immovable property to secure payment of money or performance of an obligation. It is a security transaction, unlike sale (Section 54).
30. **(b)** The 2005 Amendment to Section 6 makes a daughter a coparcener by birth with the same rights and liabilities as a son in Mitakshara coparcenary property. The Supreme Court in Vineeta Sharma v. Rakesh Sharma (2020) clarified it applies retrospectively.

GLOE PAPER 01 & PAPER 02

31. **(d)** The error lies in part (d). In the part (D), 'not' should be removed because we don't use 'not' with 'unless'.
Hence, the correct statement formed will be "A study has revealed that animals don't harm you unless you harm them first."
32. **(a)** Pattern of the series:

32,	48,	120,	420,	1890,	10395
$\times 1.5$	$\times 2.5$	$\times 3.5$	$\times 4.5$	$\times 5.5$	
33. **(d)** Let the breadth of the room be b meters
 Area of painting in the room = $\frac{5800}{200} = 290 \text{ meter}^2$
 ATQ,
 $2(10 + b) \times 8 + 10 \times b = 290$
 $160 + 16b + 10b = 290$
 $26b = 290 - 160$
 $26b = 130$
 $b = 5 \text{ meters}$
34. **(c)** Meaningful word formed by using letter N, R, T, O is TORN.

35. (b) The Indian Navy hosted the IONS Maritime Exercise (IMEX) TTX 2026 at the Maritime Warfare Centre, Southern Naval Command, Kochi. The exercise brought together naval representatives from the Indian Ocean Region to address non-traditional maritime security challenges.
36. (c) In *K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India* (2017), the Supreme Court held right to privacy as part of Article 21 (life and personal liberty) and also flowing from Articles 14 and 19.
37. (b) Article 51A(h) imposes the duty "to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform".
38. (a) The Preamble declares India a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic assuring justice, liberty, equality and fraternity, assuring dignity of the individual and unity/integrity of the nation.

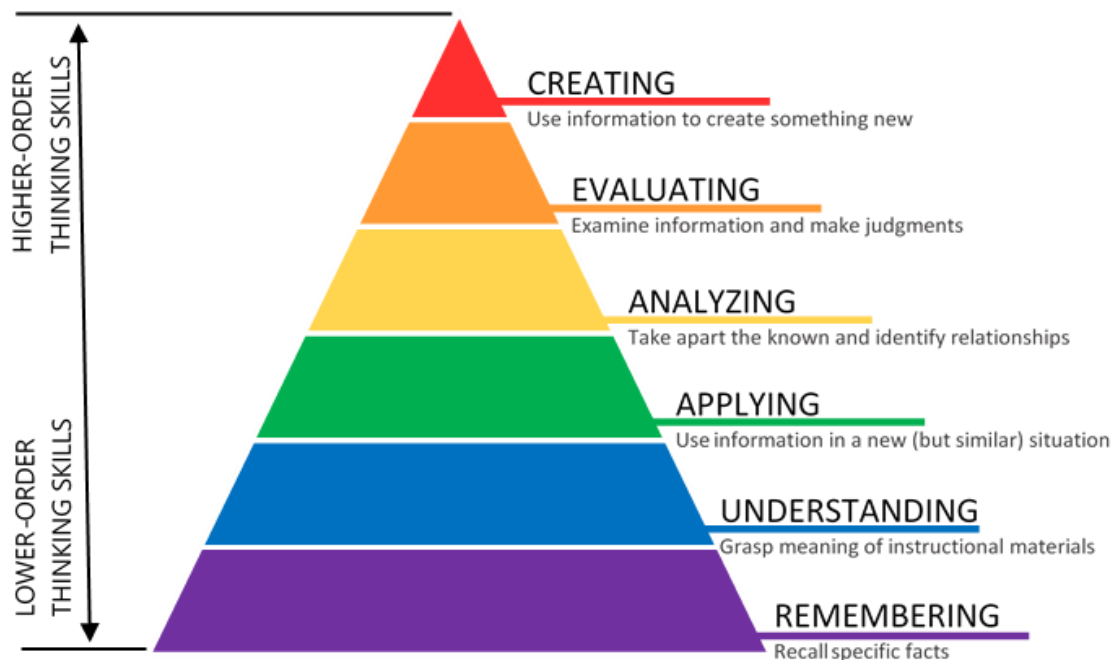
39. (b) Article 368 confers constituent power on Parliament to amend by addition, variation or repeal, subject to basic structure doctrine.
40. (b) Article 37 declares DPSPs non-justiciable but "fundamental in the governance of the country". Courts use them to interpret FRs (e.g., *Minerva Mills*).

UGC NET PAPER 01 & PAPER 02

41. (b) Effective teaching requires not only content knowledge but pedagogical skills to create a learner-centric environment, foster critical thinking, and motivate diverse learners (as per NCTE and NEP 2020).
42. (b) Formative assessment is diagnostic and developmental (e.g., quizzes, peer review), helping teachers adjust instruction, whereas summative is evaluative (final exams).

43. (c) The revised Bloom's Taxonomy places "Creating" at the top (generating new ideas/products), followed by Evaluating. It reflects higher-order thinking skills

BLOOM'S TAXONOMY – COGNITIVE DOMAIN (2001)



44. (b) Case studies and projects promote active learning, critical analysis, and application of knowledge, aligning with constructivist theory.
45. (b) As per RPWD Act 2016 and NEP 2020, inclusive education removes barriers and ensures equitable access through reasonable accommodation.
46. (d) Article 19(2) lists eight specific grounds (sovereignty, public order, decency, defamation, contempt, etc.). Promotion of international peace is a Directive Principle (Art 51) but not a restriction ground under Art 19(2).

47. (b) In *Kesavananda Bharati* (1973), the 13-judge bench held that Parliament's amending power under Article 368 is subject to the basic structure of the Constitution.
48. (a) Article 51A(g) (inserted by 42nd Amendment) mandates every citizen "to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife". Article 48A is a DPSP.
49. (b) Austin's "Command Theory" defines law as command of the sovereign backed by sanction. It is the foundation of analytical positivism.
50. (a) Clause (d) of Article 39 specifically provides for "equal pay for equal work for both men and women". Other options correspond to Articles 44, 39A, and 40 respectively.

UGC NET PAPER 01 & PAPER 02

51. (c) Chhattisgarh is hosting the first-ever Khelo India Tribal Games. The event promotes sports among tribal communities.
52. (d) World TB Day is observed on March 24 to mark the discovery of the tuberculosis bacterium by Robert Koch in 1882. It is an important day for raising awareness about TB prevention and treatment.
53. (c) Kalpana Soren was honoured at the BRICS CCI WE Summit 2026. The award recognised her efforts in grassroots empowerment and rural development initiatives.

54. (c) Uttarakhand was the first Indian state to pass the UCC Bill (2024). Gujarat followed as the second state with its own version in 2026.
55. (b) Purple Fest was held at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
56. (b) Dr. Rajendra Prasad became the first President of India on 26 January 1950, when the Constitution of India came into force. He served two consecutive terms until 1962, making his tenure the longest in the history of the Indian presidency.
57. (a) Nepal shares a long and open border with India. The border extends across the Indian states of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, and Sikkim. This open border facilitates trade, cultural exchange, and the movement of people between the two countries.
58. (a) The Indus River originates near Lake Manasarovar in the Kailash Range of the Tibetan Plateau. It flows through Tibet, India (Ladakh), and Pakistan before emptying into the Arabian Sea near Karachi.
59. (b) The Hunter Commission (1882), also known as the Indian Education Commission, was appointed by Lord Ripon to review the development of education in India.
60. (b) The Somnath Temple is located in the Saurashtra region of Gujarat, at Prabhas Patan near Veraval. It is one of the 12 sacred Jyotirlingas of Lord Shiva.

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