

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

Time: 45 Min

Date: 11-11-2024

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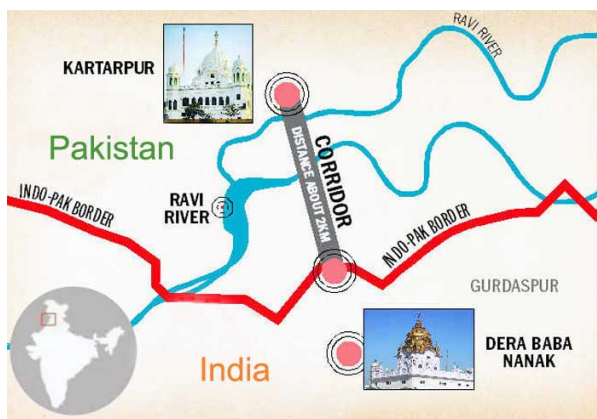
5 YEARS OF KARTARPUR SAHIB CORRIDOR

In News

- The **Kartarpur Sahib Corridor** between India and Pakistan marks its **five-year anniversary**.

About Kartarpur Sahib Corridor

- Background** : The corridor was initially proposed in early 1999 by the then Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Nawaz Sharif, as part of the **Delhi–Lahore Bus diplomacy initiative**.
- Developments**: Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the corridor on November 9, 2019, coinciding with the **550th Prakash Purb of Guru Nanak Dev Ji**.
 - The corridor leads to Gurdwara Sri Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan's Narowal district, where **Guru Nanak Dev Ji spent his last 18 years**.



- Features**: It serves as a visa-free border crossing and religious corridor, linking the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur near Narowal in Pakistan to Gurdwara Dera Baba Nanak in Punjab's Gurdaspur district in India.
 - The gurdwara in Kartarpur is located on the **bank of river Ravi in Pakistan**.
 - India and Pakistan have agreed to extend the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor Agreement for an additional five years.

About Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539)

- He was born in a village, Talwandi Rai Bhoi, near Lahore (it was renamed later as Nankana Sahib).
- Guru Nanak Dev initiated inter-faith dialogue way back in the 16th century and had conversations with most of the religious denominations of his times.
- His written compositions were included in the Adi Granth compiled by Guru Arjan (1563-1606), the fifth Sikh guru.

- This came to be known as Guru Granth Sahib after the additions made by the 10th guru Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708).
- In compiling the Adi Granth, Guru Arjan showed a remarkable commitment to pluralism while retaining the unity of thought initiated by Guru Nanak Dev
- Guru Nanak Dev Jayanti is observed on the full-moon day in the month of Katak to celebrate the birth of Guru Nanak Dev

His Beliefs

- He advocated the 'Nirguna' form of bhakti.
- He rejected sacrifices, ritual baths, image worship, austerities and the scriptures of both Hindus and Muslims.
- He set up rules for congregational worship (Sangat) involving collective recitation.
- He appointed one of his disciples, Angad, to succeed him as the preceptor (guru), and this practice was followed for nearly 200 years.

Source : TH

SC'S JUDGMENT ON DISABILITY RIGHTS

In News

- The Supreme Court affirmed that accessibility to environments, services, and opportunities is an essential human and fundamental right for **persons with disabilities**, yet this right is largely unfulfilled.

Disability rights in India

- Disability rights in India are undergoing a transformative shift, propelled by the government's commitment to inclusivity and empowerment for persons with disabilities (PwDs).
- This movement is supported by various policies and initiatives aimed at ensuring that every individual, regardless of ability, can access opportunities and participate fully in society.
- Recently, the Supreme Court directed the government to update the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules to enforce mandatory standards within three months.

Key efforts Taken

- Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPwD)**: Replaces the 1995 Act, aligning with the UNCRPD to promote dignity, non-discrimination, and equal opportunities for PwDs.

- **National Trust Act, 1999:** Establishes a body dedicated to the welfare of individuals with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation, and Multiple Disabilities.
- **Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992:** Regulates rehabilitation services, standardizes syllabi, and maintains a Central Rehabilitation Register for qualified professionals.
- **Scheme for Implementation of RPwD Act (SIPDA):** Aims to provide skill development training to PwDs aged 15-59, particularly for those with hearing and speech impairments.
- **ADIP Scheme:** Provides aids and assistive devices, including cochlear implants for children with hearing impairments, through funding to agencies.
- **SAMARTH Respite Care:** Offers temporary housing support for orphans, crisis-affected families, and PwDs from low-income groups.
- **Deendayal Divyangjan Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS):** Provides grants to NGOs running special schools, early intervention programs, and community-based rehabilitation projects for PwDs.
- **National Divyangjan Finance and Development Corporation (NDFDC):** Offers concessional loans for PwDs' socio-economic empowerment via Divyangjan Swavalamban Yojana and Vishesh Microfinance Yojana.
- **PM-DAKSH-DEPwD Portal:** Offers two modules: Skill Training for PwDs and Divyangjan Rozgar Setu, which connects PwDs to employment opportunities.
- **Accessible India Campaign:** This initiative aims to create a barrier-free environment in education, transportation, and public spaces to enhance accessibility for everyone.
- **Divya Kala Mela:** This event celebrates the craftsmanship of differently-abled artisans, promoting economic self-reliance and showcasing their talents.

Issues and Concerns

- **Ground-Level Disparities:** There are inconsistencies in accessible infrastructure across regions, such as Delhi having 3,775 wheelchair-accessible buses versus Tamil Nadu's 1,917, and highlighted that newer facilities, like Andheri Metro Station, meet standards, while older ones, like the Bombay Art Gallery, lack **basic accessibility features**.
- **Overlooked Right to Relationships:** society often neglects the emotional and relational rights of PwDs, including the need for love, privacy,

and intimacy, which are often denied due to inadequate private spaces.

- **Mandatory Accessibility Standards:** There are concerns for the lack of mandatory accessibility standards .
- **Social Model of Disability:** The "social model of disability," which shifts the focus from "fixing" individuals to removing physical, organizational, and attitudinal barriers that create disability in society.
- **Role of Society:** Disability becomes a tragedy only if society fails to provide adequate resources and support to PwDs.

Suggestions and Way Forward

- **Built Environment Accessibility:** There is a need to ensure accessible indoor and outdoor facilities, such as schools, medical centers, and workplaces.
 - ♦ **Remove physical barriers** to create inclusive environments benefiting everyone, including persons with disabilities (PwDs).
- **Transportation System Accessibility:** Enable accessible transportation options across air travel, buses, taxis, and trains.
- **Information and Communication Accessibility:** Provide accessible information to enable informed decision-making in daily life (e.g., reading price tags, event participation, healthcare info, train schedules).
- **Increasing Sign Language Interpreters:** Expand the number of sign language interpreters to support individuals relying on sign language.

Source : TH

BREACHING OF ANTITRUST LAWS BY FOOD DELIVERY GIANTS

Context

- A recent investigation by the **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** found that food delivery giants Zomato and Swiggy breached antitrust laws by **favouring select restaurants** listed on their platforms.

Ethical Concerns

- Unfair Competition, Exploitation of Small Businesses, Lack of Transparency & Consumer Manipulation

About the Antitrust Laws in India

- These are also known as **Competition Laws**, are designed to promote fair competition and prevent monopolistic practices that can harm consumers and the economy.

- In India, the primary legislation governing antitrust issues is the **Competition Act, 2002**, which is **enforced by the Competition Commission of India (CCI)**.

About Competition Act, 2002

- **Aim:** To prevent practices that have an adverse effect on competition, promote and sustain competition in markets, protect the interests of consumers, and ensure freedom of trade.
- **Key Components**
 - ♦ **Anti-Competitive Agreements:** These are agreements that can cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition within India. They are classified into:
 - **Horizontal Agreements:** Agreements between enterprises at the same level of the production chain, such as price-fixing, market allocation, and bid-rigging.
 - **Vertical Agreements:** Agreements between enterprises at different levels of the production chain, such as tie-in arrangements, exclusive supply agreements, and resale price maintenance.
- **Abuse of Dominant Position:** This occurs when an enterprise uses its dominant position in the market to affect competitors or consumers unfairly. Practices such as predatory pricing, limiting production, and creating barriers to entry fall under this category.
- **Regulation of Combinations:** This involves the regulation of mergers, acquisitions, and amalgamations to ensure they do not lead to a significant reduction in competition.

Competition Commission of India (CCI)

- **About:** It plays a pivotal role in **maintaining a fair and competitive market** environment in India.
 - ♦ It was established under the **Competition Act, 2002**, with the **aim to prevent practices that have an adverse effect on competition, promote and sustain competition, protect the interests of consumers, and ensure freedom of trade in Indian markets.**

Vision and Mission: To promote and sustain an enabling competition culture through engagement and enforcement.

Key Functions: The CCI investigates and adjudicates cases related to anti-competitive agreements and abuse of dominant positions. It includes cartels, bid-rigging, and other practices that distort competition.

- The CCI reviews mergers, acquisitions, and amalgamations to ensure they do not adversely affect competition. Recent amendments to the Competition Act have introduced new thresholds for mergers, particularly in the digital ecosystem.
- The CCI engages in advocacy to promote awareness about competition issues among businesses, consumers, and other stakeholders. It includes workshops, conferences, and publications.
- The CCI collaborates with international competition authorities to share best practices and enhance enforcement capabilities.

Challenges Associated with the Competition Law in India

- Despite the robust framework, enforcing antitrust laws in India faces several challenges, including **lengthy legal processes, Low rate of recovery of penalties**, and the **need for greater awareness among businesses and consumers.**

Way Ahead

- **Data Analytics and AI for Market Surveillance:** Equip CCI with advanced data analytics and AI capabilities to proactively monitor market trends, pricing patterns, and potential anti-competitive conduct.
- **Strengthening Regional Presence:** To streamline case handling and reduce delays, the government should consider establishing regional CCI offices.
- **Enhanced Collaboration with Global Regulators:** Form alliances and MOUs with competition regulators from other countries, like the EU, US, and Japan, to share insights, best practices, and coordinate on cases involving multinational corporations to ensure consistency in handling cross-border anti-competitive practices.
- **Public Awareness and Transparency Initiatives:** Launch programs to educate businesses and consumers on their rights and responsibilities under the Competition Act.

Source: TH

DECLINE IN OUT-OF-POCKET EXPENDITURE (OOPE) IN HEALTH IN INDIA

Context

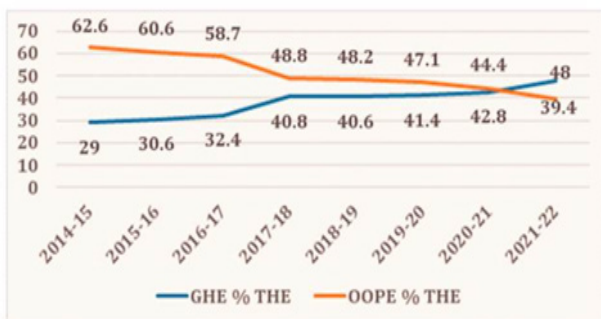
- According to **National Health Accounts estimates for 2021-22**, India has recorded a decline in out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE).

- The report suggests that the OOPE declined from **64.2% in 2013-14 to 39.4% in 2021-22**.

Out-of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE)

- Out-of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE) in healthcare refers to the **money people pay directly from their own pockets for medical services**, such as doctor visits, medicines, and hospital stays.
- OOPE forces low-income families to spend a large portion of their earnings or savings on healthcare.
- This financial burden can **push families into poverty, create debt**, and make it harder for them to afford other essentials like food and education.

Government Health Expenditure (GHE) and Out-Of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE) as % of Total Health Expenditure (THE)



Reasons for the Decline in OOPE

- **Government Health Expenditure (GHE):** Between 2014-15 and 2021-22, the government's share of health expenditure grew from 1.13% to 1.84% of GDP.
- **Expansion of Social Security Expenditure (SSE):** Government-funded health insurance and social health programs, rose from **5.7%** of Total Health Expenditure (THE) in **2014-15 to 8.7%** in **2021-22**.
- **Government-Funded Insurance Schemes:** Programs like **Ayushman Bharat**, along with various state-level health insurance schemes, have provided insurance coverage to economically vulnerable populations.
- **Targeted Programs for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs):** With rising cases of NCDs, the government has initiated targeted programs to manage and prevent these long-term health conditions.
- **Focus on Public Health Infrastructure and Workforce** has increased in rural and underserved regions.

Government Schemes

- **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY):** It provides health coverage of up to 5 lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization.

- **Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Yojana (PMJAY):** It provides quality generic medicines available at affordable prices through Jan Aushadhi Kendras.
- **Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY):** It offers health insurance for below-poverty-line (BPL) families, with coverage up to 30,000 for most diseases requiring hospitalization.
- **Telemedicine Services (eSanjeevani):** Facilitates remote consultation services, which help in reducing the cost burden associated with traveling and in-person consultations.
- **Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA):** It provides assured, comprehensive, and quality antenatal care, free of cost, on the 9th of every month.

Implications of Reduced OOPE for India's Healthcare System

- **Increased Financial Stability for Households:** With less of their income going towards healthcare expenses, families can allocate funds toward other essentials, improving their financial resilience.
- **Foundation for Universal Health Coverage:** The decline in OOPE and strengthened public healthcare funding align with India's long-term goal of achieving universal health coverage.
- **Encouragement for Workforce Participation in Healthcare:** With better government funding, healthcare facilities can hire and train more staff, which improves service delivery, especially in underserved areas.

Concluding remarks

- The reduction in OOPE is a transformative shift, marking India's commitment to a more inclusive healthcare system.
- As the government continues to invest in healthcare, the future holds the potential for universal health coverage where everyone, irrespective of income, has access to quality medical services.
- This shift does not only signify financial relief but also enhances India's public health resilience, promoting a healthier, more economically stable population.

Source: PIB

ADAPTATION GAP REPORT 2024

Context

- The **"Adaptation Gap Report 2024: Come Hell and High Water"** was released by the United Nations Environment Programme.

Adaptation Gap Report (AGR)

- It is an **annual publication** by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- **Its purpose** is to assess global progress on climate change adaptation, i.e. the efforts made by countries to adjust and prepare for current and future climate impacts.
- **Adaptation gap** refers to the difference between the actual adaptation efforts being implemented and the adaptation needs required to mitigate the risks posed by climate change.

Key Highlights

- **Adaptation Finance Gap:** Although international public adaptation finance for developing countries increased to **\$28 billion in 2022**, the overall gap remains substantial.
 - ♦ Even doubling adaptation finance from 2019 levels, as targeted by 2025 under the **Glasgow Climate Pact**, would only reduce the finance gap by about 5%.
- **Adaptation Planning and Implementation:** 87% of countries now have at least one national adaptation planning instrument. Of these, 51 per cent have a second, and 20 per cent have a third.
 - ♦ Aligning **National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)** and **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** is crucial for strategic implementation.
- **UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience (FGCR):** Progress towards UAE FGCR targets, agreed at COP 28, is mixed, with thematic areas like poverty reduction and cultural heritage protection needing more focus.
 - ♦ Many NAPs reference UAE FGCR targets but lack comprehensive data and planning for all sectors.
- **Capacity-Building and Technology Transfer:** Enhancing capacity and technology transfer in developing countries is vital but currently lacks effectiveness due to uncoordinated, short-term efforts.

Challenges in bridging the Finance Gap

- **Complexity of Financing Instruments:** The adaptation finance landscape includes resilience bonds, debt-for-adaptation swaps, and performance-based climate grants.
 - ♦ Implementing these instruments effectively requires strong institutional capacity, which is lacking in developing nations.
- **Policy Barriers:** An absence of robust enabling policies, such as climate risk disclosure frameworks and adaptation taxonomies, hinders private sector engagement.

- **High Dependence on Public Finance:** The report highlights the limited involvement of the private sector, which could contribute more, especially in sectors where there are revenue-generating opportunities.

Policy Recommendations

- Adaptation efforts must **prioritize fairness and equity** to avoid exacerbating existing inequalities, especially concerning gender and disadvantaged communities.
- The principle of **“common but differentiated responsibilities”** should be reinforced in climate finance discussions.
- Implement holistic approaches that cover **adaptation finance, capacity-building, and technology transfer** as part of an integrated development strategy.

India's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs) Goals

- India seeks to achieve following targets by **2030**;
 - ♦ **Emission Reduction:** India aims to reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 45% by 2030, compared to 2005 levels.
 - ♦ **Renewable Energy:** The country seeks to achieve 50% of its energy needs from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030, with a target of installing 500 GW of renewable energy capacity.
 - ♦ **Carbon Sink:** India plans to create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent through afforestation and reforestation efforts.

Source: UNEP

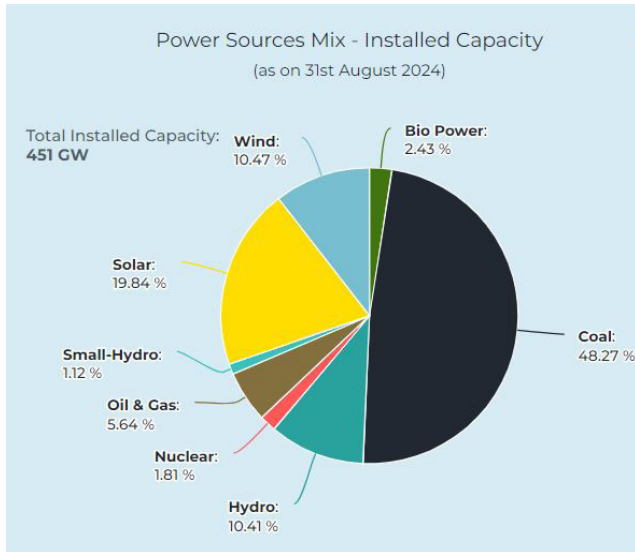
ON IMPROVING WIND ENERGY GENERATION

Context

- The Tamil Nadu government introduced the **Tamil Nadu Repowering, Refurbishment, and Life Extension Policy for Wind Power Projects - 2024**, aiming to enhance wind energy output by repowering or refurbishing small wind turbines.
 - ♦ However stakeholders have raised objections to the policy, citing concerns about its effectiveness.

Wind Energy Potential in India

- India has wind power potential for 1,163.86 GW at 150 metres above ground level, and is **ranked fourth** in the world for installed wind energy capacity.



- Only about 6.5% of this wind potential is used at the national level.
- **Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Andhra Pradesh** are the leading States for installed wind energy capacity, collectively contributing **93.37%** of the country's wind power capacity installation.
- As of 2024, **renewable energy-based electricity generation capacity** stands at **201.45 GW**, accounting for **46.3 percent** of the country's total installed capacity.
 - ♦ **Solar power** contributes towards **90.76 GW**, **wind power** follows closely with 47.36 GW, **hydroelectric power** generating 46.92 GW and small hydro power adding 5.07 GW, and **biopower**, including biomass and biogas energy, adds another **11.32 GW**.

India's Targets

- India has a vision to achieve **Net Zero Emissions by 2070**, in addition to attaining the short-term targets which include:
 - ♦ Increasing renewables capacity to **500 GW by 2030**, out of which **140 GW will be coming from wind power**.
 - ♦ Meeting **50% of energy requirements** from renewables.
 - ♦ Reducing cumulative emissions by **one billion tonnes by 2030**, and
 - ♦ Reducing emissions intensity of India's gross domestic product (GDP) by **45% by 2030 from 2005 levels**.

Challenges

- **Dependency on Natural Factors:** Energy sources like solar and wind are variable as they rely on natural factors like sunlight, wind and water availability.

- **Limited Wind Resource Areas:** India's wind resource potential is largely concentrated in specific regions, such as Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan.
 - ♦ As the wind energy sector expands, land in these regions is becoming increasingly scarce.
- **Wildlife Impact:** Wind turbines pose a threat to bird and bat populations, which can collide with the blades.
- **High Cost:** The cost of turbines, installation, and grid connection can be prohibitive, though costs have been declining in recent years.
- **Turbine Lifecycle:** Wind turbines typically have a lifespan of around 20-25 years.
 - ♦ Decommissioning and recycling turbine blades, which are made of composite materials, has become a significant concern due to their difficulty in recycling.
- **Offshore wind farms** are more difficult and expensive to build than onshore ones due to the need for specialized vessels, equipment, and installation techniques.
 - ♦ These projects are often located in deep waters, requiring floating turbines, which are still in the experimental stages.

Government Initiatives

- **National Offshore Wind Energy Policy (2015):** This policy was introduced to develop offshore wind energy potential in India, especially along the coastlines of Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and other maritime regions.
- **National Wind Energy Mission:** Focuses on the development and expansion of wind energy in India. The target for wind energy capacity is set at 140 GW by 2030.
- **National Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy (2018):** The main objective of the policy is to provide a framework for promotion of large grid connected wind-solar PV hybrid systems for optimal and efficient utilization of wind and solar resources.
- **Wind Resource Assessment:** The National Institute of Wind Energy (NIWE) under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), conducts wind resource assessments to identify potential sites for wind energy generation across the country.
- **Wind Farm Development:** The program promotes the development of wind power plants by providing financial incentives, including subsidies for setting up wind energy projects in identified areas.

- **Wind Energy Auctions (Competitive Bidding):** The government conducts competitive auctions where developers submit bids for setting up wind power projects.
- **Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO):** This requires power distribution companies and large electricity consumers to procure a certain percentage of their power from renewable sources, encouraging the demand for renewable energy.

Source: TH

NEWS IN SHORT

4B MOVEMENT

Context

- After Donald Trump's victory, social media in the US is seeing the rise of the '**4B**' movement, where women reject sex and marriage with men to protest patriarchal and often misogynist institutions and practices.

About: 4B Movement

- It was started in **South Korea** after the 'MeToo' and 'escape the corset' movements.
- 4B stands for the **four "Nos"**, B is a shorthand for no in Korean, and these are "biyeonae" (**no** dating men); "bisekseu" (**no** sex with men); "bihon" (**no** marrying men); and "bichulsan" (**no** having children).
- 4B is sometimes **expanded to 6B4T**, which advocates staying away from firms perceived as misogynist, rejecting the fandom culture, rejecting beauty standards that conform to the male gaze, etc.

Reasons

- The 4B movement belongs to the strain of **radical feminism** that believes that heterosexual relationships at their heart remain **structures of oppression**, and women need to break free of them to be truly independent and happy.
- The **proponents of the 4B movement**, also believe that unless men work more actively for a gender-just society, women should not reward them with children, love, and emotional and other forms of labour.

Impacts

- In 2021, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said that **such movements** were "blocking healthy relationships" between women and men in the nation.

- In fact, in June 2024, **South Korea declared** a "demographic national emergency" due to a declining birth rate, with critics suggesting that the 4B movement may have contributed to this trend.

Source: IE

QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

In News

- The **QS World University Rankings: Asia (2025)** has recently been released, highlighting the top universities across Asia.

About

- The QS World University Rankings: Asia (2025) assesses **984 institutions across 25 countries in Eastern, Southern, South-Eastern, and Central Asia**.
- Compiled by **Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)**, an organization known for offering data, expertise, and solutions in the global higher education sector, these rankings highlight key indicators that reflect institutional quality.
- The rankings focus on **key indicators**: Academic Reputation, Employer Reputation, Faculty-Student Ratio, and International Research Network to assess university quality and global impact.

Indian Universities Ranking

- India has **2 institutions** in the top 50 and 7 in the top 100.
- **Top Institutions**: Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IITD) leads at 44th, followed by IIT Bombay at 48th.
 - ◆ Other top 100 institutions include IIT Madras (56), IIT Kharagpur (60), Indian Institute of Science (62), IIT Kanpur (67), and University of Delhi (81).
- **Notable Achievements**: IIT Delhi (44th) achieved a high employer reputation score of 99%.
 - ◆ IIT Bombay (48th) scored 99.5% in employer reputation and 96.6% in academic reputation.
 - ◆ University of Delhi rose from 94th to 81st, scoring 96.4% in the International Research Network.
- **Growth in Ranking Representation**: India has the highest number of institutes in the rankings, with a 318% increase in ranked institutions from 11 in 2015 to 46 in 2025.
- **Regional Dominance**: India leads in Southern Asia, with seven institutions in the region's top ten.

Source: AIR

RECRUITMENT RULES FOR GOVERNMENT JOBS CAN'T BE CHANGED MIDWAY

Context

- The Supreme Court held that the **'rules of the game'** for the selection of candidates to public services cannot be changed midway once the recruitment commences.

About

- The **'game'** is the process of selection and appointment.
- The 'rules' fell into **two categories**;
 - One which prescribes the **eligibility criteria** or the essential qualifications of the candidates seeking employment, and
 - The other which stipulates the **method and manner of making the selection** from amongst the eligible candidates.

Supreme Court ruling

- The **Eligibility criteria** notified at the commencement of the recruitment process, cannot be changed midway through the recruitment process unless the extant rules so permit, or the advertisement, which is not contrary to the extant rules, so permits
- Even if the criteria has to be altered, the change will have to meet the requirements of **Articles 14 (right to equality), and Articles 16 (equal opportunity in public employment and non-discrimination)** of the Constitution and satisfy the test of non-arbitrariness.

CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA (CJI)

Context

- Supreme Court (SC) judge **Justice Sanjiv Khanna** was sworn in as the 51st Chief Justice of India (CJI), and his term will last until May 13, 2025.

About: Appointment of the CJI

- The Constitution of India **does not mention any procedure** for appointment of the CJI.
- Article 124 (1)** of the Constitution merely says, "there shall be a Supreme Court of India consisting of a Chief Justice of India."
- Clause (2) of Article 124** of the Constitution says that every Judge of the Supreme Court shall be **appointed by the President**.

- Thus, in the absence of a constitutional provision, the procedure to appoint CJI relies on convention.

What is the Convention?

- The outgoing CJI recommends his successor a practice, which is **based on seniority**.
- Seniority at the apex court, however, is **not defined by age**, but by the date a judge was appointed to the SC.
- If two judges are elevated to the Supreme Court on the same day,
 - the one who was **sworn in first** as a judge would trump another;
 - if both were sworn in as judges on the same day, the one with **more years of high court service** would 'win' in the seniority stakes;
 - an appointment **from the bench** would 'trump' in seniority an appointee from the bar.

Do you know?

- Justice Khanna has been part of **several landmark Supreme Court judgements** such as upholding the sanctity of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), scrapping the electoral bonds scheme, upholding the abrogation of Article 370 and the granting of interim bail to former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Source: TH

GLUTEN

Context

- Gluten is infamous for the allergic reaction it induces in some people.

About

- Gluten:** Many cereal grains — but in particular **barley, wheat, and rye** — contain specific proteins that, when **mixed with water and kneaded**, create an **elastic mass, called gluten**.
 - Two important types of these proteins are **gliadins and glutenins**.
 - At the microscopic level, gluten is an **elastic mesh of the protein molecules**.
- Allergy:** An enzyme called **protease** helps digest proteins but it cannot break down **gluten**.
 - When such gluten reaches the small intestine, the body can develop **gastrointestinal problems**.

- **Coeliac disease:** It's characterised by a severe allergic reaction in the small intestine, prompting the immune system to produce a large number of antibodies that attack the body's own proteins.
 - ♦ The disease is present in around **2% of the general population.**
 - ♦ **Maintaining a diet very low in gluten** is the only effective way to treat coeliac disease at present.

Source: TH

INDIAN FIRMS ON U.S. BLACKLIST

Context

- The US has sanctioned 19 Indian companies involved in supplying dual use items to Russia.

About

- The U.S. government issued an executive order titled "**Blocking Property With Respect To Specified Harmful Foreign Activities of the Government of the Russian Federation**".
- The order allows the U.S. to take action against entities aiding Russia in its activities considered harmful by the U.S.
- The recent ban was sanctioned for providing dual-use technologies to Russia and other transactions with Russian companies.
 - ♦ These companies are identified as "**Third-Country Sanctions Evaders.**"

Implications of Sanctions

- These companies will now be on a U.S. "blacklist", have **assets or funds in the U.S. frozen, and face travel bans.**
- India does not recognize unilateral sanctions imposed by the U.S. or any other country.
 - ♦ India adheres only to sanctions imposed by the United Nations (UN).

Source: TH

LIGHTNING RODS TO PREVENT LIGHTNING STRIKES

Context

- The need for lightning rods to prevent strikes is rising as climate change amplifies lightning frequency, causing about 24,000 deaths annually.

What is lightning?

- Lightning is an **electrical discharge between charged particles** in a cloud and the ground.

- Although air is typically an electrical insulator, when exposed to a high voltage of approximately **3 million V/m**, its insulating properties break down, allowing it to conduct current.

What is a lightning rod?

- While a lightning strike occurs between a cloud and an object on or near the ground, it takes the **path of least resistance**, which means it moves towards the closest object with the highest electric potential.
- A lightning rod is a **pointed metal rod** installed on top of buildings and structures.
- The pointed shape of the rod creates a stronger electric field around it, ionizing the surrounding air first and offering a clear path for the lightning to flow.

Where does the current in a lightning rod go?

- An electric current flows from a place with higher electric potential to a place with lower electric potential.
- The lightning **rod is connected to a wire** that drops through the length of the building into the ground, where it dissipates its electric charges into its surroundings.
- The **earth acts as an abundant source of lower electric potential**, helping to dissipate the electric charges safely.

What are Lightning Arresters?

- Lightning arresters are **specialized devices** used to protect electrical systems from sudden high currents induced by lightning strikes.
- They work by **diverting the high current** away from sensitive electrical equipment and directing it through a path that can handle the surge, thus preventing damage.

Can Lightning Avoid a Lightning Rod?

- Despite the effectiveness of lightning rods, strikes may sometimes evade them due to several reasons;
 - ♦ **Improper installation:** Rods installed at incorrect heights, angles, or too close to other structures.
 - ♦ **Poor grounding:** If the rod is not properly grounded, it fails to channel the current effectively.
 - ♦ **Multiple thunderstorms:** High frequency of strikes can sometimes overwhelm the system.
 - ♦ **Flawed design or maintenance:** Rods that are misshapen, corroded, or poorly maintained may not function as intended.

Source: TH

PINAKA MULTI-BARREL ROCKET LAUNCH (MBRL) SYSTEM

Context

- France is considering India's Pinaka Multi-Barrel Rocket Launch (MBRL) system for its requirements and is soon going to carry out a detailed evaluation of the system.

About

- The Pinaka MBRL system was developed by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** of India.

- The system is named after "**Pinaka**," a **mythical weapon used by Lord Shiva**.
- It has the capability to hit targets at **75 kilometers and beyond**.
- The Pinaka MBRL is capable of launching a salvo of **12 rockets in 44 seconds**, which makes it an effective weapon for quickly overwhelming enemy defenses.
- **Armenia** became the first export customer for the indigenously developed Pinaka with interest expressed by several countries in the system.

Source: TH

