

DAILY PT POINTERS

30 January, 2025



HEADLINES OF THE DAY



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ISRO's 100th launch lifts NavIC satellite



New horizons: The GSLV-F15 lifting off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on Wednesday. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Hemanth C.S.
BENGALURU

The Indian Space Research Organisation on Wednesday morning launched its historic 100th mission – GSLV-F15 lifting off with a navigation satellite from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.

The launch vehicle with an indigenous cryogenic stage lifted off from the spaceport's second launch pad at 6.23 a.m. The rocket successfully placed the NVS-02 satellite in the intended orbit.

CONTINUED ON

- ISRO marked its historic 100th launch with the successful liftoff of the GSLV-F15 carrying the NVS-02 satellite, part of India's NavIC navigation system. The launch took place from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre and placed the satellite into a Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit.
- The NavIC system provides accurate position, velocity, and timing services over India and surrounding regions.
- The NVS-02 satellite, part of a new generation of NavIC satellites, enhances the system's capabilities with advanced atomic clocks and increased service coverage. ISRO has now launched 548 satellites, including 433 foreign ones, and continues to expand its space program.

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SC orders complete stop on practice of manual scavenging in six metros

Court directs State officials in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad to file affidavits by Feb. 13 on when and how manual scavenging and sewer cleaning ceased in their cities

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday ordered a complete stop on the practice of manual scavenging and hazardous manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks in top metros across the country.

"We hereby order manual sewer cleaning and manual scavenging shall be stopped in all top metropolitan cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad," a Special Bench of Justices Sudhanshu Dhulia and Aravind Kumar directed in a petition filed by Dr. Balram Singh.

Centre's submission

The Centre, represented by Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, submitted a report that out



The Centre, represented by Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, submitted a report that out of 775 districts in the country, 465 have not reported any manual scavenging. FILE PHOTO

advocate K. Parameshwar, however, said the data presented by the States to the Union government may not be accurate as some of these districts had not constituted committees to

Bench observe that claims of fraternity, equality, and dignity among citizens remain a mere illusion if a sizeable section of society was forced to enter sewers for a living and die there

gers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013.

The apex court had referred to its October 20, 2023 judgment in which it issued directions to the Union and States to take measures to eradicate manual scavenging and hazardous cleaning in the country. The court had noted that these "inhuman" occupations continue, often with fatal results.

'We will not leave it'

"This is something very close to our hearts and minds. We will not leave it. We tell you, we will go to any extent to get our judgment of October 2023 complied with, come what may," the Bench had observed then.

On Wednesday, the court directed the State officials in the six metros concerned to file affidavits by February 13 on exactly

- The Supreme Court ordered a complete stop on the practice of manual scavenging and hazardous manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks in top metros across the country.
- Manual scavenging is the practice of removing human excreta by hand from sewers or septic tanks. India banned the practice under the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (PEMSR). The Act bans the use of any individual for manually cleaning, carrying, disposing of or otherwise handling in any manner, human excreta till its disposal.
- In 2013, the definition of manual scavengers was also broadened to include people employed to clean septic tanks, ditches, or railway tracks. The Act recognizes manual scavenging as a "dehumanizing practice," and cites a need to "correct the historical injustice and indignity suffered by the manual scavengers."

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How many cases lodged under triple talaq law, SC asks Centre

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday ordered the Centre to collect the total number of criminal cases registered against Muslim men under a law which penalises the declaration of triple or instant talaq.

The utterance of triple talaq was declared “null and void” by a Constitution Bench in a majority judgment in August 2017. The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019 came into force with retrospective effect from September 19, 2018. The law held triple talaq to be a non-bailable offence punishable with three years imprisonment.

The court questioned the point of a penal law when the practice of divorce by triple talaq had it-



 This is the minimum required to be done to protect women. The effect of triple talaq was instantaneous, irrevocable

TUSHAR MEHTA
Solicitor-General

Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna asked Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, appealing for the Centre.

The Bench, including Justice Sanjay Kumar, directed the Centre to produce on record the number of first information reports (FIRs) registered and chargesheets filed against Muslim men under the 2019 Act. The court said it specifically wanted data on the number of FIRs lodged in rural areas of the country.

Advocate Nizam Pasha,

nal intimidation” was basically a threat. “Yet it is an offence under Section 506 of the Indian Penal Code... It is not the threat, but the consequences of the threat that really matters,” he argued.

Mr. Pasha responded that Section 506 of the IPC did not, however, criminalise an ineffectual threat made by a husband to his wife to divorce her.

The Solicitor-General said the law was brought to counter the abandonment of Muslim women by their

vocable... You say talaq to your wife, and the very next moment, she is not your wife,” he said.

But, Mr. Pasha interjected to point out that the practice of triple talaq ceased to have any legal effect since the Supreme Court declared it “manifestly arbitrary” in the *Shayara Bano* case in 2017.

Justice Khanna, after the hearing, orally remarked that not a single advocate present in the courtroom would say triple talaq was a good thing. But he indicated that criminalising a practice after it was declared void would raise doubts. The court fixed the next hearing in the week commencing on March 17.

The petitioners, including Jamiat Ulama-I-Hind, said the Act was both “disproportionate and excessive”. Another petition by

- The Supreme Court has directed the Centre to collect data on criminal cases registered against Muslim men under the 2019 law that penalizes triple talaq (instant divorce).
- This law, which came into effect in 2018, makes triple talaq a non-bailable offence punishable by three years in prison. The court questioned the necessity of penalizing a practice that was already declared void by the Supreme Court in 2017.
- It asked for data on FIRs, particularly from rural areas. Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta defended the law as necessary to protect women from abandonment, while petitioners argued it was disproportionate and excessive. The next hearing is scheduled for March 2025.

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Lack of a protective law exposes domestic workers to abuse, says SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Anguished by the years of abuse an impoverished tribal woman from Chhattisgarh suffered as a domestic worker in the national capital and neighbouring cities, the Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the Union government to work on bringing a law to protect this burgeoning but unorganised workforce from exploitation.

“The simple reason for this harassment and rampant abuse, which seems to be prevalent throughout the country, is the legal vacuum which exists vis-à-vis the rights and protection of domestic workers. As a



A legal framework can help to uphold the rights of domestic workers, says court.

rya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan ordered the Centre to form an inter-ministerial committee to “consider the desirability of recommending a legal framework for the

ment, Law and Justice and Social Justice and Empowerment. The report of the committee must be placed before the Union government in six months, after which the Centre would decide on the necessity of a law for domestic workers, who were mainly women.

Justice Kant, who wrote the judgment, said the lack of a Central law was indeed a vacuum.

State laws

The court drew attention to States such as Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Kerala which had not waited for a Central law but took the initiative to enact their laws to safeguard domestic

tance, and medical expense reimbursement, etc.

The court noted that multiple attempts were made in the past to bring a Central law to protect domestic workers, from the Domestic Workers (Conditions of Employment) Bill of 1959 to the Domestic Workers (Regulation of Work and Social Security) Bill of 2017. None of these proposed laws were enacted.

Justice Kant said the demand for domestic workers was mounting in India in consonance with rapid urbanisation. However, this indispensable workforce remained the most vulnerable to abuse. Noting that “Domestic work-

- The Supreme Court directed the Union government to create a law to protect domestic workers, particularly after the abuse suffered by a tribal woman from Chhattisgarh.
- The court highlighted the legal vacuum that leaves workers vulnerable to low wages, unsafe conditions, and exploitation. It ordered the formation of an inter-ministerial committee to propose a legal framework, with a report due in six months.
- The court also noted that states like Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Kerala have already implemented protections. Despite past attempts, no central law has been enacted, leaving domestic workers—often from marginalized communities—particularly vulnerable in the face of growing demand due to urbanization.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY



The Hindu-GS3(Economy)

Cabinet okays ₹16,300 crore mission to secure critical minerals

Reuters
NEW DELHI

India has approved a ₹16,300 crore (\$1.88 billion) plan to develop its critical minerals sector, the Information Minister said on Wednesday, as the world's fastest-growing major economy aspires to secure raw materials such as lithium.

- India has approved a ₹16,300 crore (\$1.88 billion) plan to develop its critical minerals sector, as the world's fastest-growing major economy aspires to secure raw materials such as lithium.
- The government also said it expects additional investment of ₹18,000 crore from the public sector in critical minerals.
- The mission will intensify the exploration of critical minerals within the country and in its offshore areas... Additionally, the mission will offer financial incentives for critical mineral exploration
- The funding illustrates India's efforts to reduce its reliance on imports of minerals such as lithium, key to energy transition technologies. India is still in the process of developing lithium processing technology, a sector predominantly led by China. India has contacted many countries, including Australia, Russia and the U.S. for technical help to develop lithium processing technology.

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Govt launches credit guarantee scheme for MSMEs announced in FY25 Budget

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 29

TWO DAYS before the presentation of the Union Budget for the next financial year 2025-26, the government on Wednesday approved the introduction of a new credit guarantee scheme for the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that was announced in the FY25 Budget. The scheme, which is called Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs (MCGS-MSME), will extend credit guarantee coverage to lending institutions for credit facilities of up to Rs 100 crore to eligible MSMEs, for the procurement of equipment and machinery, a statement by the Ministry of Finance said.

The MCGS- MSME aims at providing 60 per cent guarantee coverage by National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (NCGTC) to Member Lending Institutions (MLIs) for

credit facility up to Rs 100 crore to eligible MSMEs for purchase of equipment/machinery, the Ministry said. "The scheme will facilitate collateral-free loans by banks and financial institutions to MSMEs who are in need of debt capital for their expansion and growth," it said.

Under the scheme, the MSMEs should have a valid Udyam Registration Number; the loan amount guaranteed under the scheme will not exceed Rs 100 crore; project cost could be of higher amounts, and minimum cost of equipment/ machinery will be 75 per cent of project cost. Loan upto Rs 50 crore under the scheme will have repayment period of upto 8 years with upto 2 years moratorium period on principal installments. For loans above Rs 50 crore, higher repayment schedule and moratorium period on principal installments can be considered, it said. An initial contribution of 5 per cent of the loan amount will need to be deposited

at the time of application of guarantee cover. The Annual Guarantee Fee on loan under the scheme will be nil during the year of sanction, it said, adding, it would be 1.5 per cent per annum of loan outstanding as on March 31 of previous year for the next three years, and thereafter, annual guarantee fee shall be 1 per cent per annum of loan outstanding as on March 31 of previous year, it said.

The scheme will be applicable to all loans sanctioned under MCGS-MSME during the period of four years from the date of issue of operational guidelines of the scheme or till cumulative guarantee of Rs 7 lakh crore are issued, whichever is earlier, it said.

The scheme is expected to facilitate the availability of credit for purchase of plant and machinery / equipment by MSMEs and give a "major boost to manufacturing and thereby to 'Make in India'", it said.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

- The government has approved the Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSMEs (MCGS-MSME), which offers 60% credit guarantee coverage for loans up to Rs 100 crore to eligible MSMEs for purchasing machinery and equipment. Key details include:
 - MSMEs must have a valid Udyam Registration Number.
- Loans up to Rs 50 crore have an 8-year repayment period with up to 2 years of moratorium.
- A 5% initial deposit is required, and guarantee fees are based on the loan balance.
- The scheme is valid for four years or until Rs 7 lakh crore in guarantees are issued.