



# **CURRENTLY - FROM NEWS TO NOTES**

# **DAILY CURRENT AFFIARS**

## **The Hindu & The Indian express**

<b>Headline</b>	<b>Source</b>
SC pulls up Telangana Speaker over pending defection petitions against 10 BRS MLAs	The Hindu   Page 1
Canada plans to recognise Palestine, Trump steps up trade war over move	The Indian Express   Page 14
Myanmar ends state of emergency, plans to hold elections by year-end	The Hindu   Page 14
India a 'bright spot', says govt amid Trump tirade	The Indian Express, Page 1
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Why the world needs better green technologies	The Hindu   Page 10







## Mains Enrichment

Headline	Source
Why Mussoorie hotels must now register guests on govt portal	<b>(The Indian Express   Page 12)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotes sustainable tourism via tech-driven visitor tracking, enhances safety, resource planning, and ecological balance.</li> </ul>
How a doomsday cult in Kenya left at least 400 people dead	<b>(The Indian Express   Page 12)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exposes the risks of blind faith and need for stronger regulation to prevent human rights abuse and mass manipulation</li> </ul>

### Daily MCQs for Practice

Which one of the following Schedules of the Constitution of India contains provisions regarding anti-defection?

- (a) Second Schedule
- (b) Fifth Schedule
- (c) Eighth Schedule
- (d) Tenth Schedule

**[PYQ 2014]**

### Consider the following statements:

I. If any question arises as to whether a Member of the House of the People has become subject to disqualification under the 10th Schedule, the President's decision in accordance with the opinion of the Council of Union Ministers shall be final.

**SC pulls up Telangana Speaker over pending defection petitions against 10 BRS MLAs**

Krishna Das Rajagopal  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court said on Thursday that it was about time Parliament reviewed its expectation that Assembly Speakers and Chairpersons would live up to the dignity of their high office and crush the "evil of political defection" by deciding disqualification proceedings against legislators in time and without favour.

The top court sounded the warning bells while directing the Telangana Assembly Speaker to decide the disqualification petitions pending for several months against 10 Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) MLAs who shifted allegiance to the ruling Congress in the State in 2024.

The verdict by a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai said the Speaker must decide the anti-defection proceedings as early as possible, and not exceed three months at any cost. The court noted that disqualification proceedings often died a "natural death" after being kept in limbo by Speakers for months together until the tenure of the Assembly drew to an end.

The court further ordered that the Telangana Speaker should draw adverse inference against any MLA who tries to delay the disqualification proceedings.

Chief Justice Gavai, quoting from a speech made by the late parliamentarian Rajesh Pilot, observed the only intent to have made the Speaker/Chairman act as a Tribunal to adjudicate

whether the Speaker or the Chairman of avoiding delays in deciding the issue with regard to disqualification has been adhered to by the incumbents in the high office of Speaker and the Chairman or not? Chief Justice Gavai said.

The court said the Telangana Speaker certainly did not make the cut as far as "dilly-dallying" went. The Speaker had issued notice on the disqualification proceedings only after BRS leaders had appealed to the Supreme Court in January 2025.

"We ask ourselves whether the Speaker had acted in an expeditious manner. When expedition was one of the main reasons, why had Parliament entrusted the important task of adjudicating disqualification petitions to the Speaker/Chairman... Non-issuance of any notice for a period of more than seven months, and issuing notice only after the proceedings were filed before this court or after this court had heard the matter for the first time cannot by any stretch be envisaged as acting in an expeditious manner," Chief Justice Gavai noted.

Chief Justice Gavai noted that the top court has had many petitions complaining of delay by the Assembly Speaker, making the Tenth Schedule a mockery.

The court further clarified that the Speaker, while acting as a Tribunal under the Tenth Schedule, did not enjoy any constitutional immunity from judicial review by the High Courts or the Supreme Court.

CJI noted that the SC has had many pleas complaining of delay by Assembly Speakers.

disqualification petitions were to "avoid dilly-dallying in the courts of law or the Election Commission".

With the experience of over 30 years of working of the Tenth Schedule anti-defection law to the Constitution, the question that we will have to ask ourselves is whether the trust which the Parliament entrusted in the high office of

II. There is no mention of the word 'political party' in the Constitution of India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) I only
- (b) II only
- (c) Both I and II
- (d) Neither I nor II

**[PYQ 2025]**







## Context:

The Supreme Court has reprimanded the Telangana Assembly Speaker for delaying decisions on anti-defection petitions filed against 10 BRS MLAs who defected to the ruling Congress in 2024.

- Key Observations by SC:
- Parliament must review the expectation that Speakers will act impartially in anti-defection cases.
- Disqualification proceedings must be completed within 3 months.
- Delays often cause a “natural death” of petitions, especially when timed with the end of Assembly tenure.
- Repeated delays make the Tenth Schedule ineffective, defeating its purpose.
- Speakers/Chairpersons must act like tribunals, with no immunity from judicial scrutiny

“With over 30 years of working of the Tenth Schedule, the real question is whether the trust of Parliament in the Speaker’s office has been misplaced.”

## Tenth Schedule (Anti-Defection Law):

- Introduced: 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1985
- Purpose:

- Prevent political defections motivated by lure of office or personal gain
- Ensure political stability by discouraging floor-crossing

## Grounds for Disqualification under Tenth Schedule:

1. If an elected member voluntarily gives up the membership of their party.
2. If they vote or abstain from voting contrary to party directions without prior permission.
3. For independent MLAs: If they join any party after election.
4. For nominated MLAs: If they join a party after 6 months of nomination.

## Deciding Authority:

- Speaker/Chairman of the respective House
- Subject to judicial review as per Kihoto Hollohan (1992) judgment







The term "two-state solution" is sometimes mentioned in the news in the context of the affairs of

- (a) China
- (b) Israel
- (c) Iraq
- (d) Yemen

**[PYQ 2018]**

## What is the Two-State Solution?

It refers to the proposed solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, envisioning:

1. An independent State of Palestine,
2. Coexisting peacefully with the State of Israel,
3. Based on pre-1967 borders (before the Six-Day War),
4. With East Jerusalem as Palestine's capital.

## Summary

- Canada to recognise State of Palestine at UNGA (Sept 2025) if Gaza war continues.
- Follows France & UK pledging support for Palestinian statehood.
- Gaza crisis worsens with starvation and famine warnings.
- Trump reacts by threatening trade war over pro-Palestine recognition.
- Portugal also considers recognition.

### ISRAEL ALLOWED CATASTROPHE TO UNFOLD IN GAZA: CARNEY

## Canada plans to recognise Palestine, Trump steps up trade war over move

REUTERS  
OTTAWA, JERUSALEM, JULY 31

CANADAIANS to recognise the State of Palestine at a meeting of the United Nations in September, Prime Minister Mark Carney announced on Wednesday, ratcheting up pressure on Israel as starvation spreads in Gaza.

The announcement came after France said last week it would recognize a Palestinian state and a day after Britain said it would recognize the state at September's U.N. General Assembly meeting if the fighting in Gaza, part of the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel, had not stopped by then.

Carney told reporters that the reality on the ground, including starvation of people in Gaza, meant "the prospect of a Palestinian state is literally reeling between our fingers."

"Canada condemns the fact that the Israeli government has allowed a catastrophe to unfold in Gaza," he said. Carney said the planned recognition was based in part on repeated assurances from the Palestinian Authority, which represents the State of Palestine at the U.N., that it was reforming its governance and is willing to hold general elections in 2026 in which Hamas "can play no part."



Palestinians rush to collect aid airdropped into Zawawiya in central Gaza on Thursday. AP

The announcements by some of Israel's closest allies reflect growing international outrage over Israel's restrictions on food and other aid to Gaza in its war against Hamas militants, and the dire humanitarian crisis there. A global hunger monitor has warned that a worst-case scenario of famine is unfolding in Gaza.

US President Donald Trump intensified his trade war with Canada a day ahead of his August

1 deadline for a tariff agreement, saying it would be "very hard" to make a deal with Canada after it gave its support to Palestinian statehood. "Wow! Canada has just announced that it is backing statehood for Palestine. That will make it very hard for us to make a Trade Deal with them," Trump said on Truth Social.

Canada Prime Minister Mark Carney previously said tariff negotiations with Washington had

been constructive, but the talks may not conclude by the deadline. Talks between the two countries were at an impasse, he added, but a deal that would remove all US tariffs was unlikely. Meanwhile, Portugal's government will consult political parties and conservative President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa about the potential recognition of a Palestinian state. Prime Minister Luis Montenegro said Thursday

US envoy meets Netanyahu for Gaza food aid, ceasefire push

Jerusalem: US Special Envoy Steve Witkoff met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday in a bid to salvage Gaza truce talks and avert a humanitarian crisis in the enclave, where a global hunger monitor has warned that famine is unfolding. Shortly after Witkoff's arrival, President Donald Trump posted on his Truth Social network: "The fastest way to end the humanitarian crisis in Gaza is for Hamas to SURRENDER AND RELEASE THE HOSTAGES!"

Indirect ceasefire talks between Israel and Palestinian Islamist group Hamas in Doha ended in deadlock last week with the sides trading blame for the imposed and paper-fingered over issues including the extent of an Israeli military withdrawal. Witkoff arrived with Israel facing mounting international pressure over the widespread destruction of Gaza and constraints on aid in the territory, with Canada the latest Western power to say it will recognize a Palestinian state. REUTERS



## UN Membership Process - Palestine

1. Apply to UN Secretary-General
2. UNSC Approval: Needs 9/15 votes & no P5 veto (US has blocked before)
3. UNGA Approval: Needs 2/3rd majority

## Palestine's Status:

- Not a full UN member
- Holds non-member observer state status since 2012





## Myanmar ends state of emergency, plans to hold elections by year-end

The government has restructured its administrative bodies to prepare for new elections, the head of the military regime, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, gives up two posts but will serve in other positions that keep him at the centre of power

Associated Press  
BANGKOK

**M**yanmar's military government announced on Thursday it was ending the state of emergency it first declared after seizing power four and a half years ago and restructuring its administrative bodies to prepare for a new election at the end of the year.

The plans for the polls on an unspecified date in December face serious obstacles, including a civil war raging over most of the country and vows by opponents of military rule to derail the election because



The military's spokesperson says the state of emergency has been lifted to allow the election process to continue. REUTERS

The joint announcements came at the last of seven consecutive six-month emergency rule decrees set to expire on Thursday at midnight.

### Fraud claims

The military imposed emergency rule and created new administrative structures after it ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi on February 1, 2021, arresting her and members of her ruling National League for Democracy party. The military claimed Mrs. Suu Kyi's government failed to address fraud claims in the 2020 election, though in-

dependent observers did not find irregularities.

Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun, the military's spokesperson, said the state of emergency has been lifted to allow the election process to continue.

"Elections will be held within six months after the emergency period is lifted," he said. The existing administrative bodies formed after the army takeover, including the State Administration Council, have been dissolved and all government functions have been handed to the National Defence and Security Council, Mr. Zaw Min Tun said.

they believe it can be neither free nor fair. Under the restructuring, the head of the military government, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, gives up two posts but will serve in other positions that keep him at the centre of power.



### Short Summary:

- Military ends emergency after 4.5 years since 2021 coup.
- Elections by year-end, but civil war and opposition may derail process.
- Military ousted Aung San Suu Kyi, citing fraud (not backed by observers).
- New administrative bodies created under military rule.

## India a 'bright spot', says govt. amid Trump tirade

U.S. President lashes out at India on ties with Russia, membership of 'anti-American' BRICS, high tariffs | He announces that the U.S. and Pakistan have concluded a deal to develop massive oil reserves | Commerce Minister defends India's trade record, cites deals with UAE, U.K., Australia, and EFTA

T.A.G. Bhargava  
New Delhi

**I**ndia and Russia could "take their relationship to the next level", U.S. President Donald Trump said on Thursday, as he began the 25th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. The president's remarks came as he continued his tirade against India, citing its ties with Russia, membership of the 'anti-American' BRICS, and high tariffs.

Commerce Minister Nirmala Sitharaman defended India's trade record, citing deals with the UAE, U.K., Australia, and EFTA. She also mentioned India's growing trade ties with the U.S. and its role in the global economy.

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## Consider the following statements:

Statement-I: India does not import apples from the United States of America.

Statement-II: In India, the law prohibits the import of Genetically Modified food without the approval of the competent authority.

## Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II explains Statement-I
- Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct, but Statement-II does not explain Statement-I
- Statement-I is correct, but Statement-II is incorrect
- Statement-I is incorrect, but Statement-II is correct

**[PYQ 2024]**

## What Happened?

- U.S. President Donald Trump launched a sharp attack on India for:
- Its strategic ties with Russia
- Membership in the "anti-American" BRICS bloc
- A massive trade surplus and high tariffs on U.S. goods

Trump announced a 25%+ tariff on Indian imports, especially defence and energy goods from Russia.

- He also mocked Pakistan's oil deal with the U.S., suggesting it may eventually "sell oil to India."



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## India's Response:

- Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal defended India's economic path, calling it a "bright spot" in the global economy.
- He highlighted India's expanding trade network through Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with:
- UAE, UK, Australia, EFTA etc.

"India is among the top five global economies and is pursuing inclusive and sustainable growth," said Goyal.

## India-US Trade Snapshot (2024):

- 📦 Total Trade: \$186 billion
- 💰 India's Surplus: \$41 billion





## New phase

**NISAR has capped a decade-long bilateral effort of NASA and ISRO**

**T**he GSLV-F16 mission lifted off from Sriharikota on July 30, placing the NASA ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) satellite into a sun synchronous orbit. The ascent capped a decade-long bilateral effort and opened a new phase in global earth observation cooperation. NISAR is a 2.8-tonne observatory that combines a NASA-built L-band radar with an ISRO-made S-band radar – also a first. They allow NISAR to detect surface changes measuring only a few centimetres, even through clouds and vegetation. NISAR will supply freely accessible data on ground deformation, glacier flow, biomass, land use changes, and sea ice dynamics. As its dawn-dusk orbit repeats every 12 days, its radars will be able to revisit the same point under nearly identical lighting conditions. This geometry, coupled with a duty cycle exceeding 50% in the L-band, has been designed to yield closely spaced time series observations that can quantify geological processes. Indeed, its various engineering firsts lead up to NISAR's unusually broad science agenda: map mangrove extent, urban subsidence, crop-soil interactions, and calving rates in polar ice shelves in a single orbital cycle. Its data could help support the Sendai Framework on reducing disaster risk and refine IPCC models.

For ISRO, flying a flagship payload on the GSLV Mk II rocket is notable for a vehicle once dubbed "naughty boy" for its early-career setbacks. The ISRO-NASA partnership would also have eased technology transfer between the two countries. Developing the S-band radar would have demanded tighter tolerances in radiofrequency electronics, thermal stability, and data throughput than previous Indian satellites. From a diplomatic standpoint, the launch confirms that India can be trusted with high-value hardware and demanding integration schedules, although it is still learning to shape joint missions on equal terms. The 12-metre reflector, the Ka band downlink, and much of the flight software stack were imported, and the key design reviews were led by NASA. Achieving parity will require larger domestic investments in advanced materials, deep-space communications, and systems engineering plus earlier Indian involvement in framing the scientific agenda of future multilateral missions. NISAR's data downlink rate also presents a challenge. ISRO must expand its Ka-band ground network, automate cloud-based processing, and release analysis-ready products within hours if state agencies are to make timely use of the data. Sustaining the time-wise data will also depend on authorising follow-on SAR spacecraft before 2030 and finalising data-sharing rules that encourage private analytics while protecting sensitive scenes. Addressing these gaps will determine how fully NISAR's potential is realised in India.

**With reference to India's satellite launch vehicles, consider the following statements:**

1. PSLV- L launch the satellites useful for Earth resources monitoring whereas GSLVs are designed mainly to launch communication satellites.
2. Satellites launched by PSLV appear to remain permanently fixed in the same position in the sky, as viewed from a particular location on Earth.
3. GSLV Mk III is a four-staged launch vehicle with the first and third stages using solid rocket motors; and the second and fourth stages using liquid rocket engines.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3
- (c) 1 and 2
- (d) 3 only

**[PYQ 2018]**

**With reference to 'Astrosat', the astronomical observatory launched by India, which of the following statements is/are correct?**

1. Other than USA and Russia, India is the only country to have launched a similar observatory into space.
2. Astrosat is a 2000 kg satellite placed in an orbit at 1650 km above the surface of the Earth.





Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**[PYQ 2016]**

### **NISAR Launch: A New Phase in NASA-ISRO Partnership**

On July 30, GSLV-F16 launched the NISAR satellite – a joint NASA-ISRO Earth observation mission.

NISAR uses L-band radar (NASA) and S-band radar (ISRO) to detect minute surface changes, even through clouds and vegetation.

It will monitor glacier flow, land use, sea ice, urban subsidence, and support disaster risk reduction and climate models.

It revisits the same spot every 12 days under similar lighting for accurate time-series data.



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## GSLV vs PSLV

Feature	GSLV (Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle)	PSLV (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle)
Orbit Type	Geostationary / high Earth orbits	Sun-synchronous / low Earth orbits
Payload Capacity	Higher (~2.5-5 tons)	Lower (~1.5 tons)
Usage	Communication satellites	Earth observation, remote sensing
Stages	3-stage, with cryogenic upper stage	4-stage, solid-liquid alternation Export to Sheets

## L-band vs S-band Radar

Feature	L-band Radar	S-band Radar
Frequency	Lower (1-2 GHz)	Higher (2-4 GHz)
Wavelength	Longer (~24 cm)	Shorter (~10 cm)
Penetration	Deeper (can pass through vegetation, soil)	Less penetration
Used for	Monitoring soil, vegetation, crust movements	Monitoring crop, rainfall, shallow layers





## Why the world needs better green technologies

As nations grapple with land constraints, geopolitical conflicts, rising carbon dioxide levels, and the urgency of energy self-sufficiency, the imperative grows not just to deploy more renewable tech but to invest in smarter, more efficient, and more diverse energy innovation

### FULL CONTEXT

Chinmoy Chakrabarti

**A**s the global demand for sustainable energy grows and countries strive to meet climate commitments, advanced green technologies are being deployed to speed up the transition. As the energy transition accelerates, a critical question arises: how can we ensure that the green energy revolution does not leave behind the poor and vulnerable, or in a worse case, exacerbate existing inequalities?

The transition to green energy is not just about the source of energy but also about the technology used. Today's solar panel technologies not only harness the sun's energy but also use advanced materials and manufacturing techniques to improve efficiency and reduce costs.

**Efficient photovoltaics**  
The widely used solar panels, or silicon photovoltaics, have significantly improved in efficiency over the last decade. In the U.S., the first deployment of silicon photovoltaics was in 1958, and today, they are used in a wide range of applications, from small-scale consumer electronics to large-scale power generation.

Another solar panel technology is perovskite, which has shown a rapid increase in efficiency, reaching over 25% in recent years. Perovskite solar panels are also more flexible and can be integrated into building materials, opening up new possibilities for solar energy integration.

The best research-based solar cell efficiency is around 47.1% for silicon, 31.2% for perovskite, and 33.9% for a tandem silicon-perovskite cell. However, the production of silicon solar cells is energy-intensive, and the use of rare materials like silver in the production of silicon solar cells is a concern.

Because silicon solar panel efficiency is below 25%, they need to have greater area exposed to generate the same amount of electricity. When the efficiency of silicon solar panels is low, the required collection area is high.

Land area is becoming a critical constraint for solar energy, especially in densely populated areas. This is where advanced solar technologies like perovskite and tandem cells come in, as they offer higher efficiency and can be integrated into building materials.



Most for green hydrogen, India has the potential. Thermal Power Corporation power plant in Jajpur, Odisha, on March 1, 2023.

**While a lot of research is being done on green hydrogen, the technology is still in the early stages. However, the potential is huge. Green hydrogen can be used in a wide range of applications, from transportation to industrial processes.**

**Costs of green hydrogen**  
The widespread adoption of green hydrogen will depend on the cost of production. Currently, the cost of green hydrogen is around \$4-6 per kg, which is much higher than the cost of fossil fuels.

Green hydrogen is a clean energy source that can be used in a wide range of applications. It is produced by using renewable energy to split water into hydrogen and oxygen.

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### THE GIST

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• It is produced by using renewable energy to split water into hydrogen and oxygen.

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## With reference to green hydrogen, consider the following statements:

1. It can be used directly as a fuel for internal combustion.
2. It can be blended with natural gas and used as fuel for heat or power generation.
3. It can be used in the hydrogen fuel cell to run vehicles.

## How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

**[PYQ 2023]**

## Consider the following heavy industries:

- Fertilizer plants
- Oil refineries
- Steel plants

## Green hydrogen is expected to play a significant role in decarbonizing how many of the above industries

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

**[PYQ 2023]**

## Why We Need Better Green Technologies

**(The Hindu, Page 10)**

**Silicon Solar Panels: Most common but land-intensive and reaching efficiency limits. Over 80% supply chain depends on China.**

## Green Hydrogen: Produced from water using renewable energy.

- Used in steel, shipping, aviation.
- Needs heavy infrastructure and energy to store/transport.
- Acts as a complement, not a replacement for solar.





## Green Ammonia:

- Made using green hydrogen.
- Easier to store and transport.
- Key for fertilizers and as a fuel.

## Green Methanol:

- Produced from CO<sub>2</sub> + green hydrogen.
- Can be used as a clean fuel in shipping and chemical industries.
- Helps in carbon recycling and reducing fossil fuel dependence.

**Europe's RFNBO Push: Fuels from non-biological, renewable sources (without biomass) to promote green hydrogen and its derivatives.**

**CCS (Carbon Capture and Storage): Captures CO<sub>2</sub> from industries and stores it underground to cut emissions.**

## Way Forward:

- Mix of solar, green hydrogen, ammonia, methanol, and CCS
- Invest in R&D, reduce land use, promote tech innovation
- Encourage public-private collaboration

## MAINS ENRICHMENT

### Why Mussoorie hotels **must** now register guests on govt portal

**AISWARYA RAJ**  
DEHRADUN, JULY 31

OWNERS OF hotels, guesthouses, and homestays in Mussoorie will now have to register their guests on an Internet portal run by the Uttarakhand Department of Tourism as part of measures to ensure that the fragile ecology of the region is not burdened beyond its 'carrying capacity' — which refers to the maximum number of individuals an ecosystem or specific area can sustainably support without degrading natural resources or causing significant environmental damage.

This directive is part of a suite of 19 preventive and remedial measures recommended in a 2023 report by a committee appointed by

the National Green Tribunal (NGT) to protect the environment of the tourist destination.

On May 8, the Tribunal took note of the action taken based on the report in an affidavit by the state government, and pressed the state to expedite the implementation of these steps.

#### Process of registration

"Registration of tourists should be done according to the carrying capacity of the area, especially the available parking space, guest room availability, etc. Tourists can be charged for visiting the Mussoorie area, and the payment can be utilised for managing waste and cleanliness," the 2023 report had said.

After dragging its feet for some time, the state Tourism Department began trials on the registration of tourists, which was one of the

19 recommendations, on Wednesday. A meeting was convened to apprise owners of hotels and homestays of the order, district tourism development officer Brijendra Pandey said.

"We have given a live demo to the managers and owners on how to register their units in the system and fill in the data of the tourists. This registration will be carried out in real time when visitors check in," Pandey said.

#### Rising tourism pressure

Tourist arrivals in Mussoorie, which is around 320 km from Delhi and well connected by road and rail (till Dehradun), have been increasing steadily. From an estimated 1.5 lakh in 1958, the number of tourists reached 3 lakh in 1966, and 8.5 lakh by 2000. In 2019, the last year before the Covid-19 pandemic, more than

30 lakh tourists visited the hill station.

The rush of tourists has put great pressure on Mussoorie's physical infrastructure. As of 2023, the registered accommodation in the area included 303 hotels, 201 homestays, and six dharamshalas. All public and private parking together had space for only 1,240 vehicles, and the committee had suggested in 2023 that the number of tourist vehicles should be limited to this number.

The 2011 Census recorded the resident population of Mussoorie at 30,188. The 2023 report estimated this number would increase by 23% by 2037 and 52% by 2052. The hill station already suffers from a shortage of water — the 769 million litres per day supply from six pumping stations and six gravity sources by the Mussoorie Nagar Palika has

to be augmented by water from the Yamuna Water Supply Scheme.

#### Fragile Himalayan zone

The hill station, located at an altitude of 2,065 metres above sea level in the foothills of the Garhwal Himalayas, is in Seismic Zone IV, one step below the most active Zone V.

A 2007 study had concluded that the highly jointed, fractured, and weathered carbonate rock mass, and the steep slopes and high water percolation into them, create ideal conditions for slope instability in the area. Many buildings stand on slopes steeper than 40 degrees, and many are taller than the 12-metre height permissible under the Uttarakhand Building By-Laws and Regulation, 2001.

The NGT had earlier cited a report by the

Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration on Mussoorie's carrying capacity in 2001, which had concluded that no further constructions were viable. Dr Vikram Gupta of Dehradun's Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology had backed this finding, saying that the limestone in Mussoorie was weak with microcracks.

In 2023, following the Joshimath land subsidence incident, the NGT had flagged similar risks to Mussoorie and surrounding areas.

"Over-concentration leads to landslides. The proposed tunnel below Mussoorie is dangerous. So is the proposed ropeway from Dehradun to Mussoorie. The ropeway and tunnel have damaged Joshimath. Excessive building activities are beyond the capacity of Mussoorie," it had said.

## Mains Usage:

**GS3 (Environment): Digital regulation = sustainable tourism.**

**Disaster Management: Curbing over-construction in hill towns.**

**Case Study: Post-Joshimath preventive action.**



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## EXPLAINED GLOBAL

### HOW A DOOMSDAY CULT IN KENYA LEFT AT LEAST 400 PEOPLE DEAD

A COURT IN Kenya has ordered the exhumation of around 400 bodies suspected to be of people who starved themselves to death in a cult ritual two years ago. These bodies are believed to have been buried in shallow graves on the outskirts of Malindi, Reuters reported.

#### Mackenzie & his church

At the centre of the scandal is Paul Mackenzie, a taxi driver turned evangelist who has been a religious leader for two decades.

Unlike the Roman Catholic or Anglican churches, which are governed by hierarchies and rules, many evangelical churches in Kenya are "run by independent preachers who have no oversight", according to a 2023 report by *The New York Times*. Mackenzie's Good News International, with its sprawling campus in the Shakahola forests near Malindi, was one such church.

According to the church's website, it was established "to nurture the faithful holistically in all matters of Christian spirituality as we prepare for the second coming of Jesus Christ through teaching and evangelism".

Its TV show, titled *End Time Messages*, would broadcast "God's word based teachings, preaching and prophecy on end times...to bring the Gospel of our LORD Jesus Christ which is free of deceit and man's intellect," the website said.

#### A deadly plan

Mackenzie gained a cult following on the back of his TV show and YouTube videos. And with that, his message became increasingly deadly. In early 2023,

he told his followers that the world was going to end by August, and that Satan would rule for the next 1,000 years. Subsequently, he ordered them to starve themselves and their children to death so they could meet Jesus in heaven instead.

According to police, Mackenzie is said to have had a three-stage plan: first to be killed would be the children, followed by the women, and then he himself would die with the men. He was able to make headway in his plan by brainwashing his followers, and cutting them off from their families and society. "Education is evil... Children are being taught lesbianism and gayism in school curriculums," he said in one video in 2023.

In March 2023, a resident of the area told police that his brother and sister-in-law had starved their children to death in the forest on Mackenzie's orders. Officers searched and found the bodies, after which Mackenzie was arrested. But a magistrate freed him, after which he returned to the forest and speeded up his plans.

He was arrested again after another tip-off in April. A search of the 800-acre Shakahola campus led to the discovery of around 80 bodies, most showing signs of death by starvation, and some by asphyxiation. Mackenzie, who now faces charges of murder and terrorism, denies the accusations against him.

Kenya's President William Ruto had said the government would form a judicial commission of inquiry to establish why Mackenzie's alleged activities were not detected earlier. The President has faced strong criticism for his handling of the incident.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

## Mains Usage

**GS1 (Society):** Case of religious radicalization and cult influence on vulnerable communities.

**GS2 (Governance):** Highlights lack of oversight on religious institutions and delayed state response.

**GS3 (Internal Security):** Shows how online platforms aid extremism, comparable to non-state actor radicalisation.

**GS4 (Ethics):** Example of abuse of moral authority, and failure of ethical governance.

## THE HINDU

### NEWS IN NUMBERS

**Public grievances redressed in the past four months**

**4.47** in lakh. Out of more than 6.6 lakh public grievances received between April and July 24 this year, 4.47 lakh have been redressed. The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances conducts monthly review meetings with all departments. PTI

**Extra budget allocation for the PMKSY scheme**

**1,920** In ₹ crore. The Union Cabinet raised budgetary outlay for the flagship scheme Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY) to ₹6,520 crore to boost the food processing sector. The enhanced funds will be utilised for 100 food testing labs. PTI

**The amount approved as a grant-in-aid to the NCDC by Cabinet**

**2,000** In ₹ crore. The Union Cabinet approved a ₹2,000 crore grant-in-aid to the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) for four years, a move that will help the organisation to mobilise more funds for lending. PTI

**Forest land diverted by India in 2021-25 for various projects**

**78,000** ha. Union Minister Kirti Vardhan Singh said the government approved the diversion of 12,324.32 ha of forest land in first half of 2025. Madhya Pradesh accounted for the highest area approved for diversion. PTI

**Area undertaken for planting trees in India in the last five years**

**93.7** lakh hectares. The Minister of State for Environment said the government is currently carrying out afforestation and tree plantation under the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' campaign launched on June 5, 2024. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM



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# MCQs For Practice

**Q1. With reference to the Tenth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, consider the following statements:**

1. It was inserted by the 44th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1978.
2. The decision of the Speaker under the Tenth Schedule is subject to judicial review.
3. A legislator is disqualified if they voluntarily give up membership of their political party.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

**Q2. Consider the following statements regarding Palestine's status at the United Nations:**

1. Palestine is a full member of the United Nations.
2. Any new member requires approval by the Security Council and a two-thirds majority in the General Assembly.
3. A veto by any permanent member of the Security Council can block Palestine's full membership.

**Which of the statements is/are correct?**

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

**Q3. Which country recently ended its prolonged state of emergency and announced elections amid ongoing conflict?**

- |              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| a) Sri Lanka | c) Sudan    |
| b) Myanmar   | d) Ethiopia |







# MCQs For Practice

**Q4. Which of the following are potential applications of the NISAR satellite?**

1. Monitoring glacier movement
2. Studying sea ice dynamics
3. Assessing agricultural biomass
4. Detecting space weather anomalies

**Select the correct answer using the code below:**

- A) 1, 2 and 3 only
- B) 2 and 4 only
- C) 1 and 4 only
- D) All of the above

**Q5. With reference to "Renewable Fuels of Non-Biological Origin (RFNBOs)", consider the following:**

**These are produced without using any fossil fuels or biomass.**

**Green ammonia and green methanol fall under this category.**

**India currently leads the global adoption of RFNBOs.**

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- A) 1 and 2 only
- B) 2 and 3 only
- C) 1 only
- D) 1, 2 and 3

**Q. Mains Question For Practice (GS2 – International Relations)**

**Myanmar's return to electoral promises after years of military rule is overshadowed by internal conflict and democratic erosion.**

**Discuss the implications of political instability in Myanmar on India's strategic, security, and regional interests. (150 words)**

