

CURRENTLY - FROM NEWS TO NOTES

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

The Hindu & The Indian express

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NTCA limits tiger corridors to minimal requirement, multiple projects to benefit	The Indian Express, Page Number 10
Once a week, Collectorate's courtyard in Sikkim's Namchi turns into a melting pot of artisans, farmers selling wares	The Hindu, Page Number 4

What has NOTTO said about organ donations to women?

What does data say about organ donations with respect to men and women? Is there a gender disparity?

Bindu Shajan Perappadan

The story so far:

The National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO) recently issued a direction stating that women patients and relatives of deceased donors will receive priority in organ allocation. This is part of a 10-point advisory aimed at addressing gender disparity in organ transplants and encouraging donations.

Is there a gender disparity?

An article titled 'India's organ transplant paradox: women donate the most and receive the least' published in the *British Medical Journal* noted that as per data released by NOTTO, 63.8% of all living organ donors from 2019 to 2023 were women. Yet men received the most donated organs, accounting for 69.8% of the recipients. The data further said that in the past five years women made 36,038

of the 56,509 living organ donations in India, yet only 17,041 were transplanted into women, while 39,447 went to men.

What laws oversee organ donation?

The Central Government has established NOTTO as the apex government body to oversee organ donations. Each hospital of the country which engages in transplant activity, whether in retrieval or transplant, must link with the NOTTO. Organ transplantation and donation is covered under the Transplantation of Human Organs Act 1994, which has allowed organ donation by live and brain-stem dead donors. In 2011, an amendment to the Act also brought in donation of human tissues. As per the Act, buying/selling of organs in any way is punishable and has a significant financial as well as judicial penalty.

In its recent advisory, the NOTTO has asked State governments to create permanent posts for transplant

coordinators at hospitals that perform organ transplantation or retrieval. "It is advised that you develop facilities for organ and tissue retrieval in all trauma centres and register them as organ retrieval centres," the letter said, while calling for training emergency responders and ambulance staff to identify potential deceased donors early, particularly among victims of road traffic accidents and stroke patients.

What is the status of organ donation?

Globally, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that over 1,30,000 solid organ transplants are performed each year, but this meets only about 10% of the worldwide need. Countries with higher awareness and streamlined donor systems have achieved significantly better outcomes, showing what is possible when organ donation becomes a social norm.

An organ donor can be anyone whose healthy organs are transplanted to a

patient in urgent need. These organs, donated after brain or cardiac death, can be preserved and transplanted to save multiple lives. "Every year, over 1.8 lakh Indians develop end-stage kidney disease, yet only about 12,000 kidney transplants take place across the country. Even a small increase in organ donation rates could help thousands of patients get a second chance at life," said Sushanth Kulkarni, senior consultant urologist, laparoscopic and renal transplant surgeon at CARE Hospital, Telangana.

Doctors note that lack of awareness, cultural myths, and hesitation to discuss organ donation within families remain the biggest obstacles. But with modern transplantation techniques and effective medicines, recipients can live long and healthy lives. A single donor can save up to eight lives through organ donation and enhance many more through tissue donation such as corneas and skin.

Are appeals made for organs?

According to information released by the Central Government, any special appeal usually results in more people agreeing to become donors. However, family appeals will not result in an organ immediately becoming available for the person on whose behalf the appeal was made. The patient will still be on the waiting list, just like everyone else, and the rules that govern the matching and allocation of donor organs to recipients still apply.

THE GIST

As per data released by NOTTO, 63.8% of all living organ donors from 2019 to 2023 were women.

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Headline: What has NOTTO said about organ donations to women?

Source: The Hindu Page No.: 10

GS2 (Health)

Context

The article highlights the gender disparity in organ transplantation in India, where women donate more but receive fewer organs. It discusses NOTTO's new directive, the governing law, key statistics, challenges, and global comparisons

Summary

1. The Story So Far

- NOTTO (National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation) has directed that women patients and relatives of deceased donors will get priority in organ allocation.
- Part of a 10-point advisory to reduce gender disparity and promote donations.

2. Gender Disparity

- From 2019–2023, 63.8% of living donors were women, but 69.8% of recipients were men.
 - In the past 5 years, 36,038 women patients received transplants.
 - Of 56,509 living donations, only 17,044 went to women, while 39,447 went to men.

3. Legal Framework

- Governed by Transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994 (amended 2011 to include tissues and stem cells).
 - NOTTO is the apex body regulating transplants; hospitals must register with it.
- Act bans commercial dealings; coordinators are appointed in hospitals to facilitate retrieval and donation.
- Trauma centres are advised to create retrieval facilities and train responders to identify potential donors.

4. Who Can Donate Organs?

- **Living Donors:** A healthy person can donate certain organs (such as one kidney, part of the liver, or bone marrow) during their lifetime.
- **Deceased Donors:** Organs can be retrieved after brain or cardiac death and transplanted to save multiple lives.

5. What is the Status of Organ Donation?

- **Globally:** WHO estimates that more than 1,30,000 solid organ transplants are performed each year, meeting only about 10% of the worldwide need.
- Countries with greater awareness and streamlined donor systems achieve significantly better outcomes, showing that organ donation can succeed when it becomes a social norm.

6. Patient Need and Shortfall in India

- Each year, over 1.8 lakh Indians develop end-stage kidney disease, but only about 12,000 kidney transplants take place.

- A small increase in organ donation could help thousands of patients get a second chance at life.

“Why has NOTTO issued a directive giving priority to women in organ allocation, and what challenges persist in India’s organ donation system?” (150 words)

7. Obstacles

- Lack of awareness, cultural myths, hesitation to discuss donation remain key barriers.
- Yet, with modern medicine, recipients can live long and healthy lives.
- One donor can save up to 8 lives and help many through tissue donation.

8. Appeals for Organs

- Government appeals usually lead to more people pledging organs.
- Family appeals may not lead to immediate donation, but can encourage future pledges.

Justice is not about 'teaching someone a lesson'

In a recent judgment on a custodial death case from Chhattisgarh, the Chhattisgarh High Court made an observation that should unsettle anyone who believes in the rule of law. The High Court noted that the police officers involved in the death of a man in custody appeared to have intended "to teach a lesson" to the victim for misbehaving in public.

The facts of the case are as troubling as the language used. In this case, a Dalit man, arrested for alleged public misbehaviour, died in custody just hours after a medical check found no injuries. However, the postmortem revealed 26 wounds. Four police officers were convicted of murder by the trial court, but the High Court reduced it to culpable homicide, citing lack of intent but knowledge that the assault could cause death.

Violence cannot be framed as deterrence

The statement, quietly embedded in a detailed legal opinion, is not just an off-hand remark. It is the reflection of a deeply problematic institutional mindset, one that rationalises state violence not as a constitutional aberration but as a tolerable, even necessary, tool for discipline.

The judiciary must resist the temptation to rationalise police brutality, especially under the moral guise of correction or deterrence. "Teaching a lesson" is neither a principle found in the Constitution of India nor a recognised standard of justice. Rather, it is a phrase rooted in vigilante logic, a framework where violence is met with greater violence; where the law is enforced not through rights and procedures but through fear and punishment.

The real concern lies not in the commutation of the sentence, but in the conceptual framing of what happened. By stating that the officers intended to "teach a lesson", the High Court inadvertently reinforces the very logic that normalises custodial torture in India. It suggests that the High Court views the violence not as a product of systemic rot but as a misguided form of discipline, excessive, perhaps, but still



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The judiciary must resist the temptation to rationalise custodial brutality, especially under the moral guise of correction or deterrence

anchored in purpose. This is not a matter of semantics. Language shapes legal reasoning, and legal reasoning shapes policy. When a constitutional court appears to accept teaching a lesson as a partial justification or explanation for custodial violence, it reinforces a culture where officers feel emboldened to act as both enforcer and judge. It invites future violators to believe their actions will be read not as unlawful, but as excessive zeal.

Violence as a caste-coded enforcement

What gets erased in this framework is the identity of the victim, in this case a member of a Scheduled Caste. The trial court acquitted the prime accused under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 (SC/ST Act) and the High Court did not interfere. By demanding specific proof that the violence was caste motivated, the High Court ignored the lived reality of caste power. A Dalit man beaten to death in police custody by upper caste officers in rural India is not an incidental tragedy. It reflects a broader pattern of caste-coded enforcement.

India's jurisprudence around the SC/ST Act remains trapped in a narrow reading. Courts tend to interpret the law as requiring explicit evidence that the assault occurred because of caste, ignoring that structural power itself often motivates and enables the violence. As long as the legal system demands overt slurs or declared caste intent to invoke the Act, it will continue to deny justice in most of the very cases the law was designed to address.

That India has a custodial violence problem is no longer in dispute. Multiple judgments by the Supreme Court of India, from *Shri D.K. Basu, Ashok K. Johri vs State of West Bengal, State of U.P. to Munshi Singh Gautam (D) and Ors. vs State of M.P.*, have emphasised the need for procedural safeguards, transparency in detention and strict limits on police force. Yet, deaths in custody continue at an alarming rate, disproportionately affecting Dalits, Adivasis and the poor. Despite

clear judicial guidelines, compliance remains sporadic and enforcement weak. Investigations are often conducted by the very institutions implicated in the abuse.

The path for judicial integrity

This is why judicial language matters. Courts must not only hold individuals accountable but also interrogate the institutional norms that enable violence. Every time a court suggests that violence was used "to teach a lesson", it sends a subtle but powerful message that state brutality is regrettable, but sometimes understandable. That some people, under some circumstances, may deserve it.

This is a dangerous path. The police are not agents of correction through coercion, but constitutional functionaries bound by the law. Justifying custodial violence for a minor offence such as public nuisance blurs that line dangerously. "Teaching a lesson" is not justice. It undermines a system built on proportionality, dignity and due process. Deterrence comes from legal punishment, not from state-sanctioned force. When courts validate such reasoning, they weaken the very constitutional order they are meant to uphold.

What is needed is not symbolic outrage but structural change. Courts must reinforce that violence in custody is never disciplinary. It is, in fact, criminal. The SC/ST Act must be robustly applied in every case where social power is weaponised. Independent accountability mechanisms must be strengthened and procedural safeguards made enforceable.

Most of all, the judiciary must not give moral shelter to extra-legal instincts. The idea that public misbehaviour deserves private punishment is not justice but authoritarianism in slow motion. A Constitution built on dignity, equality, and the rule of law cannot coexist with a justice system that tolerates "lessons" written in bruises.

The views expressed are personal

Headline: Justice is not about 'teaching someone a lesson'

Source: The Hindu (Editorial) Page No.: 8

Subject: GS2 – Polity, Governance, Judiciary

Context

The editorial analyses a recent Chhattisgarh High Court judgment on a custodial death case, where police officers allegedly killed a Dalit man in custody. The High Court reduced the conviction from murder to culpable homicide, stating the intent was to "teach a lesson." The author critiques this reasoning, arguing that framing state violence as discipline or deterrence undermines constitutional values of justice, due process, and equality.



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1. Four police officers were convicted of murder by the trial court, but the High Court reduced charges to culpable homicide, interpreting intent as “teaching a lesson.”

2. Problematic Framing

- Violence framed as discipline is deeply problematic.
- The remark reflects an institutional mindset that normalises custodial torture.
- “Teaching a lesson” is not a legal principle in the Constitution, but vigilante logic that legitimises violence as correction.

- The issue is not only the reduced sentence but the conceptual framing of violence as a tolerable tool for discipline.

3. Caste Dimension

- The victim was a Dalit, yet caste context was erased.
- The trial court acquitted the main accused under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, and the High Court did not interfere.
- This reflects a pattern of caste-coded enforcement where structural caste power motivates custodial violence.

4. Larger Problem of Custodial Violence

- Custodial violence is a persistent issue despite Supreme Court rulings (e.g., D.K. Basu, Munshi Singh Gautam).
- Procedural safeguards exist, yet custodial deaths remain frequent, disproportionately affecting Dalits, Adivasis, and the poor.

5. Judicial Language and Its Impact

- Judicial reasoning shapes policy. By validating “teaching a lesson,” courts send a dangerous message: that brutality is sometimes understandable.
- This undermines proportionality, dignity, and due process, weakening constitutional morality.

6. Way Forward

- Judiciary must resist rationalising custodial violence.
- SC/ST Act must be enforced robustly in every custodial death involving caste victims.
- Independent accountability mechanisms and stronger procedural safeguards are needed.
- The law must reinforce that custodial violence is criminal, not disciplinary.
- True justice is about equality and dignity, not authoritarian punishment.



THREE PLUS ONE

While India's engagements with Russia, China are independent of Trump disruptions, they have acquired a new dimension

THE RECENT TO-AND-FRO in India-Russia-China diplomacy and their impending summits could be viewed, arguably, against the backdrop of New Delhi's recent discomforts with US President Donald Trump. In what has been a particularly active week for Indian foreign policy, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi was in New Delhi for the 24th round of boundary talks, after which External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar travelled to Moscow to co-chair the 26th session of the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission. In less than two weeks, PM Modi will meet with President Xi Jinping at the SCO, and Russian President Vladimir Putin is set to visit India later this year. While these engagements are independent of the Trump disruptions, in the face of tensions with Washington, they have acquired a new dimension.

India's immediate concern with respect to Russia is Trump's threat of secondary tariffs on cheap oil purchases. With the Trump-Putin summit in Alaska offering little clarity on the Ukraine war, the US has doubled down on the tariff threat: The US Treasury Secretary, Scott Bessent, this week accused India of profiteering from Russian oil, while Trump's trade adviser, Peter Navarro, wrote an op-ed bluntly titled 'India's oil lobby is funding Putin's war machine — that has to stop'. India can only hope that the US and Russia reach a deal over Ukraine and that Trump rolls back the additional 25 per cent tariff threat. Whatever direction this issue takes, however, going ahead, the larger lesson is that New Delhi must pursue independent relations with the "great powers", and foreign policy agility must be shored up by unity and long-overdue economic reform at home.

India's engagement with China has accelerated since the formal conclusion of the disengagement process nearly a year ago. During Wang's visit to Delhi, the two sides agreed to restart direct flights and border trade, and to establish new mechanisms on border management. Significantly, Beijing's official handout urged India and China to "demonstrate their responsibility as major powers". Yet it would be naive to believe that China will not continue to view relations with India through a zero-sum competitive lens. The border dispute remains unresolved, and while disengagement has taken place, the de-escalation that Jaishankar reiterated in his talks with Wang (who visited Islamabad right after New Delhi) still hasn't begun. Beijing appears to see merit in keeping up the pressure along the border. China's defence capacity has grown formidable, while India continues to run a trade deficit of over \$100 billion with it, amid tensions with its largest export market, the US. This makes it all the more vital for India to step up domestic economic reform, enhance its technological capabilities, modernise the defence sector — India successfully test-fired Agni-5 on Wednesday — and strengthen security partnerships with its Asian partners. Only by moving towards narrowing the gap with China can New Delhi build enough leverage with Beijing.

Three Plus One

Source: The Indian Express, Page Number 14

Subject: GS2 – International Relations

Context

The article analyzes India's recent diplomatic engagements with Russia and China, set against the backdrop of increasing discomfort in US-India relations due to President Donald Trump's policies. It discusses India's efforts to maintain independent and agile foreign policy in the face of global power tensions and evolving economic and strategic challenges.

Summary

Independent Diplomacy: India's recent summits with Russia and China are taking place amid US-India friction, especially over oil tariffs and Ukraine-related issues. Even as Washington's stance influences the global environment, India pursues direct engagement with Moscow and Beijing.

Key Engagements:

- Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited Delhi for boundary talks.
- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar went to Moscow to lead the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission
- India is preparing for meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin.
- **US-Russia Tensions:** Trump's policies have resulted in threats of sanctions against India's imports of cheap Russian oil and public accusations of profiting from Russian resources. The article highlights the need for India to maintain autonomous relations with major powers, learning not to be caught in great power conflicts.



China Relations: India's engagement with China has accelerated, focusing on resuming flights, border trade, and strengthening border management. Despite dialogue and de-escalation, border disputes still persist, and China remains competitive with a significant trade surplus.

Strategic Recommendations: The article stresses the importance of India strengthening economic reforms, investing in technology and defense (e.g., Agni-5 missile test), and deepening partnerships with Asian powers to balance China's influence.

Conclusion: For India to gain leverage in its China relationship, it must modernize its economy and defense while reducing its trade gap and strengthening regional ties.





NTCA limits tiger corridors to minimal requirement, multiple projects to benefit

JAY MAZOOMDAAR
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 21

IN A volte-face less than a month after it affirmed before the Bombay High Court that the identification of tiger corridors must take cognizance of multiple scientific studies and parameters, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) issued a clarification yesterday, limiting the number of such corridors, primarily, to only 32 "least cost pathways" identified in 2014.

Tiger corridors are vital wildlife pathways that connect tiger habitats, enabling animal movement, gene flow, and long term survival. Under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, development projects requiring land in or around tiger reserves or corridors require statutory clearance from the standing committee of the National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL).

Among the potential beneficiaries of the new limited definition of tiger corridors are

Western Coalfields Limited (Durgapur open cast mines) and Lloyds Metals & Energy (Surajgarh iron ore mines) in Maharashtra.

Asked about the turnabout, NTCA's inspector general (forests) Sanjayan Kumar, who issued the clarification in a letter to all state governments yesterday, declined to comment.

While discussing the Western Coalfields mining project within a tiger corridor connecting the Tadoba-Kanhargoan-Tipeshwar forests in Maharashtra's Chandrapur district at the March 12 meeting of the SC-NBWL, a senior ministry official observed that projects that did not fall within the least cost pathways designated for tigers were being sent from Maharashtra even though such projects should not require SC-NBWL approval.

Considering the same project at the 84th meeting of the SC-NBWL on June 26, the Director General (Forests) noted that "Maharashtra alone is facing this

issue" and the Environment Secretary said that the NTCA should "clarify that the only the least cost pathways identified by them should be treated as tiger corridors."

But the NTCA was already issued notice by the Bombay High Court on June 25 in a case challenging the decision taken by the Maharashtra State Board for Wildlife (SBWL) on April 17 to send for SC-NBWL approval only those projects that fell within the least cost tiger pathways.

Among the projects up for discussion at that SBWL meeting were two proposals requiring 9.5 sq km of forest land — mining of hematite from quartzite, systemic recovery of iron ore, and laying out of roadside conveyors — in Surajgarh mines run by Lloyds Metals & Energy in Gadchiroli's Etapalli.

On July 25, in its affidavit before the Bombay HC, the NTCA cited a letter issued "with the power conferred to it" under the Wildlife Act to Maharashtra in 2023 to reiterate multiple

benchmarks for defining tiger corridors:

■ Protected Areas occupied by tigers,

■ Least cost pathways identified in 2014,

■ Corridors marked in Tiger Conservation Plans (TCPs) of each reserve,

■ Corridors identified by Wildlife Institute of India (WII) — "Tiger corridors of eastern Vidarbha landscape" — in 2016,

■ Corridors identified by WII — "Telemetry based tiger corridors of Vidarbha" landscape" — in 2021, and

■ Distribution of tigers based on quadrennial all-India Tiger Estimations (AITEs)

At today's hearing, the NTCA modified that stand by placing on record the clarification it issued yesterday. This reduced the benchmarks for tiger corridors only to the "least cost pathways" identified in its 2014 report and the ones recorded by tiger reserves in their individual TCPs.

The exclusion of multiple WII studies and the robust AITE data

has surprised many as the 2014 NTCA report itself cautioned that "the corridors shown in this report are minimal requirement" and that "alternative connectivities do exist in many areas" which "need to be conserved."

In fact, the last month's affidavit said that the NTCA was "in the process of the refinement of tiger corridors" based on the AITE data. "It is unlikely that a refined corridor report will be released before the Maharashtra issues are settled unless the HC specifically asks for it," said an Environment ministry official.

The case will come up again after two weeks.

This July, researchers from Nagpur-based LRC Foundation applied contemporary Circuitscape modelling, which reflects multiple probable paths of animal movement—not just the "shortest route" — to come up with 192 corridors form a dense network across 10 central Indian states, enabling tiger movement across 30 tiger reserves and around 150 protected areas.

NTCA limits tiger corridors to minimal requirement, multiple projects to benefit

Source: The Indian Express, Page Number 10

Subject: GS3 – Environment

Context

The article discusses a policy shift by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), which has now limited the definition of tiger corridors to the bare minimum—specifically, to only 32 "least cost pathways" identified in 2014. This move was made less than a month after NTCA previously affirmed in court that the identification of tiger corridors must be based on multiple scientific parameters.

Summary (Pointwise)

- NTCA has issued a clarification restricting tiger corridors to just 32 "least cost pathways" from 2014, impacting environmental clearance for development projects.



- Tiger corridors are wildlife pathways crucial for connecting tiger habitats, enabling gene flow, animal movement, and long-term survival.
- The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 requires infrastructure projects near tiger habitats to secure statutory clearance from the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL).
 - This change allows several mining and infrastructure projects to benefit, as only those within the designated corridors need NBWL approval.
- The move reduced benchmarks for tiger corridor identification, favoring corridor pathways marked in 2014 over wider scientific recommendations.

- Researchers recently proposed up to 192 corridors to cover 10 central Indian states, facilitating tiger movement among 30 reserves and around 150 protected areas.
 - The decision has drawn criticism, since NTCA's previous affidavit emphasized considering multiple scientific studies for corridor identification.
- The case is subject to ongoing judicial review and the Bombay High Court is expected to revisit the issue.

National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)

- About NTCA: NTCA is a statutory body in India established under the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006. It functions under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

- Role: NTCA is responsible for the planning, promotion, and coordination of tiger conservation in India. It oversees the implementation of Project Tiger and monitors tiger reserves and corridors for effective conservation.

National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)

- About NBWL: NBWL is the highest decision-making body on wildlife matters in India, constituted under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- Role: NBWL grants statutory clearances for developmental projects that may impact wildlife habitats, including tiger reserves and corridors. Projects involving land diversion in or near protected areas require NBWL approval to ensure ecological sustainability.

Key Terms

Tiger Corridors: These are natural pathways that connect fragmented tiger habitats, enabling tigers to migrate, find mates, and access larger territories. Corridors maintain genetic diversity and long-term survival of tiger populations by allowing safe animal movement between forests or reserves.

Least Cost Pathways: These are scientifically identified routes considered the easiest or most suitable pathways for tiger movement, minimizing risks like human conflict or physical barriers. The term refers to specific corridors mapped based on ecological and geographic data to optimize tiger connectivity.



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Once a week, Collectorate's courtyard in Sikkim's Namchi turns into a melting pot of artisans, farmers selling wares

Rahul Karmakar
NAMCHI (SIKKIM)

It is not business as usual at the Namchi District Collectorate once a week. Every Thursday, groups of villagers set up stalls on the Collectorate's courtyard, measuring about 138 square metres, to sell their wares — home-cooked meals, snacks, farm products, and utilitarian handicraft items.

They also utilise a passage in the Collectorate building, the district's epicentre of administration, 78 km southwest of Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim.

For Nirpara Rai and other members of the Nirpara self-help group (SHG), travelling 2 km from their village Dabuwa to be trade-ready at the Collectorate by



Members of self-help groups and farmer-producer bodies catering to customers at the collectorate in Namchi. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

10 a.m. every Thursday has become a habit.

The same is true for Laxmi Tamang and fellow members of the Samjhauta SHG from a village 6 km away.

Yet, they did not expect Thursday to be their best-selling day of the week when Anupa Tamling, the District Magistrate, experimented with Project Prayas almost a year ago after find-

ing that farmers and villages engaged in small-scale industries struggle with visibility, value, and volume.

Prayas, meaning effort, was born from a simple idea: What if places of governance that generally record high footfall on work days can also serve as platforms for empowerment?

"The common people often hesitate or are not comfortable enough to

come to administrative offices or government spaces, which are meant for them. In September 2024, we offered rural collectives free space at the Collectorate to try and sell what they produce," Ms. Tamling told *The Hindu*.

The offer came with riders. Only SHGs, farmer-producer organisations (FPOs), and rural cooperatives were allowed to set up 15 stalls at the Collectorate, provided they maintain cleanliness, shun single-use plastic, and avoid selling pre-manufactured goods.

The experiment clicked.

The SHGs, FPOs, and cooperatives found a captive market in dozens of employees at the Collectorate and scores of people who came for official work.

The employees, on the other hand, looked forward to Thursday as a "no-tiffin day" and an opportunity to buy farm-fresh vegetables at the office. "Thursday, indeed, means a break from preparing food for lunch at the office before leaving home," Methela Rai, an Aspirational Block Fellow at the Collectorate, said.

'Beneficial initiative'

"The initiative has been beneficial for us. Thursdays mean weekly interaction with the villagers and others who come for their wares toward bridging the gap between the public and the administration, helping us learn about their problems first-hand and monitor their growth," the District Magistrate said.

Once a week, Collectorate's courtyard in Sikkim's Namchi turns into a melting pot of artisans, farmers selling wares

Source: The Hindu, Page Number 4

Context:

This article highlights a weekly initiative at the Namchi District Collectorate in Sikkim where villagers set up stalls to sell home-cooked meals, farm products, snacks, and handicrafts. This initiative, called Project Prayas, provides rural self-help groups and farmer-producer organizations free space to market their goods, enhancing their visibility and empowering them economically. It bridges the gap between rural producers and government employees, creating a sustainable platform for rural livelihoods.



Civil Servant Involved: Anupa Tamling, the District Magistrate, experimented with Project Prayas to support rural producers.

Usage in UPSC Mains

This article can be used as a case study or example in:

- **GS2 (Governance):** Innovations in governance promoting rural entrepreneurship and community engagement.
- **GS3 (Rural Development & Economy):** Empowerment of rural farmers and artisans through enhanced market access.
- **GS4 (Ethics):** Inclusive governance and empowerment of marginalized communities.

DAILY MCQs FOR PRACTICE

Q1. Consider the following statements about tiger corridors in India:

1. Tiger corridors are essential for enabling genetic diversity and animal movement between fragmented habitats.
2. The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) recently limited recognition of corridors to “least cost pathways” identified in 2014.
3. Projects outside these designated corridors no longer require statutory clearance from the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL).

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

Q2. The Project Prayas initiative in Sikkim is significant because it:

- A) Provides rural producers access to market their products inside government spaces, facilitating economic empowerment.
- B) Is a state-run scheme aiming to modernize agricultural equipment for farmers.
- C) Offers financial subsidies directly to self-help groups (SHGs) for production enhancement.
- D) Focuses on urban artisans to promote handicrafts through online platforms.

Q3. With reference to custodial violence and the judiciary’s stance, consider the following:

1. Teaching a lesson as justification for custodial violence is constitutionally recognized in India.
2. The Supreme Court has rejected “teaching a lesson” as violating fundamental rights of dignity and due process.
3. Courts have emphasized that deterrence cannot come from disproportionate use of state power.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

DAILY MCQs FOR PRACTICE

Q4.The phrase “Three Plus One” in the context of Indian foreign policy refers to:

- A) India’s diplomatic engagement with three Asian countries and one African nation.
- B) India’s balancing act involving diplomacy with Russia, China, the United States, plus India’s independent foreign policy.
- C) India’s regional economic partnerships plus one global economic bloc.
- D) Three major regional organizations India is part of, plus its domestic economic reform agenda.

Q5.Which of the following statements best describe the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)?

- 1.It is a statutory body established under the Wildlife Protection Act (Amendment) 2006.
- 2.It supervises the implementation of Project Tiger and tiger reserve management.
- 3.NTCA directly grants environmental clearances for all mining projects in tiger habitats.

Select the correct answer using the code below:

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

Answers

- 1: D
- 2: A
- 3: B
- 4: B
- 5: A