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SC cites Preamble to reject plea against Banu Mushtaq opening Dasara in Mysuru

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday reminded a petitioner, who did not want “Muslim” Booker Prize winner Banu Mushtaq to inaugurate the historical Mysuru Dasara festivities, about the Preamble which enshrines secularism, liberty of thought and faith, as well as equality and fraternity as ideals cardinal to national unity.

Dismissing the petition, a Bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta asked the petitioner, Bengaluru resident H.S. Gaurav, whether he had read the Preamble to the Indian Constitution. “What is the Preamble of the Constitution?” Justice Nath asked Mr. Gaurav, represented by senior advocate P.B. Suresh.

Mr. Suresh said the in-

Secularism, a basic feature

Supreme Court, while dismissing the plea, highlighted that liberty of thought and faith, equality and fraternity are ideals cardinal to national unity

■ The petitioner argued that the inaugural pooja was a religious practice reserved for Hindus

■ The court emphasised that the event was conducted by the State of Karnataka, which is secular and ‘maintains no religion of its own’



■ The court reiterated that the State’s neutral attitude to all religions did not prevent it from intervening to ‘eliminate practices which impede the right to equality’

auguration of Dasara festivities at Chamundeshwari temple on September 22 had two aspects – the “ribbon-cutting”, which was a secular activity, and then the inaugural pooja before the temple deity, an essentially Hindu religious and spiritual activity. The latter would involve lighting of lamps before the sanctum sanctorum of Goddess Chamundeshwari, along with the offering of flowers

and other traditional items to the deity.

“Inviting her was a purely political act by the State,” the senior counsel argued. The petition contended that having a Hindu dignitary perform the pooja was part of the essential religious practice protected under Article 25 of the Constitution.

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SC cites Preamble to reject plea against Banu Mushtaq opening Dasara in Mysuru

Source – The Hindu, Page No. 1

Category – GS-2 (Polity) | Prelims (Preamble, Secularism)

Context

- A petition opposed Muslim Booker Prize winner Banu Mushtaq inaugurating the Mysuru Dasara festivities, arguing that the inaugural pooja is a Hindu religious practice reserved for Hindus.
- The Supreme Court dismissed the plea, citing the Preamble, secularism, liberty of thought, faith, equality, and fraternity as guiding constitutional principles.

About Mysuru Dasara Festival

- Over 400 years old, started under Vijayanagara kings and patronized by the Wadiyars of Mysore.
- State Festival of Karnataka (Naada Habba).
- Celebrates victory of Chamundeshwari (Durga) over Mahishasura.
- Famous for Chamundeshwari Temple rituals, Jumbo Savari (elephant procession), and cultural events.



Indian vs. Western Secularism

Indian Secularism

- Based on “Sarva Dharma Sambhava” (equal respect for all religions).
- Positive secularism → State can engage with all religions to ensure equality and reform.
- Example: State interventions in temple entry, abolition of untouchability, reforming personal laws.

Western Secularism

- Based on strict separation of Church and State.
- Negative secularism → State maintains complete distance from religion.
- Example: France’s Laïcité, USA’s “wall of separation” doctrine

Important Observations of the Supreme Court

1. Secularism – Basic Feature: The Preamble enshrines secularism, liberty of thought and faith, equality, and fraternity.
2. State Neutrality: The State of Karnataka is secular and maintains no religion of its own.

3. Dual Aspects: Inauguration involved ribbon-cutting (secular) and temple pooja (religious).

4. No Exclusive Right: Hindu-only participation is not constitutionally mandated.

5. Equality Clause: The State may act to eliminate practices that impede equality while remaining neutral to religion.



①

The Preamble to the Constitution of India is

- (a) a part of the Constitution but has no legal effect
- (b) not a part of the Constitution and has no legal effect either
- (c) a part of the Constitution and has the same legal effect as any other part
- (d) a part of the Constitution but has no legal effect independently of other parts

2020

②

Which one of the following objectives is **not** embodied in the Preamble to the Constitution of India ?

- (a) Liberty of thought
- (b) Economic liberty
- (c) Liberty of expression
- (d) Liberty of belief

2017

③

What was the exact constitutional status of India on 26th January, 1950?

- (a) A Democratic Republic
- (b) A Sovereign Democratic Republic
- (c) A Sovereign Secular Democratic Republic
- (d) A Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic

2021

④

'Economic Justice' as one of the objectives of the Indian Constitution has been provided in

- (a) the Preamble and the Fundamental Rights
- (b) the Preamble and the Directive Principles of State Policy
- (c) the Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles of State Policy
- (d) None of the above

2015

⑤

Consider the following statements :

1. The Constitution of India defines its 'basic structure' in terms of federalism, secularism, fundamental rights and democracy.
2. The Constitution of India provides for 'judicial review' to safeguard the citizens' liberties and to preserve the ideals on which the Constitution is based.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?

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

2020



A climate-health vision with lessons from India

On July 29-31, 2025, Brazil hosted the 2025 Global Conference on Climate and Health, with delegates from 90 countries shaping the Belém Health Action Plan. Set to be launched at COP30 to be held in November 2025, this plan will define the global agenda on climate and health. India was not officially represented – a significant missed opportunity to emerge as a global exemplar, given its developmental approach offers lessons for implementing the Belém Plan.

Insights from India's welfare programmes

For countries in the Global South seeking synergistic policies that advance multiple developmental goals, India's intersectoral welfare programmes offer valuable insights. Consider the Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN), India's flagship nutrition scheme covering over 11 crore children across nearly 11 lakh schools. Its accomplishment lies in also connecting the dots between health, education, agriculture and food procurement systems. By promoting millets and traditional grains, it addresses malnutrition and also builds climate-resilient food systems.

Similarly, the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has tackled sanitation, public health, human dignity and environmental sustainability, while MNREGA's environmental works have improved rural livelihoods while restoring degraded ecosystems. And with Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), the switch to clean cooking fuel has reduced household air pollution, a major cause of respiratory illness, while cutting carbon emissions.

None of these initiatives was designed explicitly as "climate policies", yet they have had significant health and climate co-benefits. These policies demonstrate a critical insight: non-health interventions can generate substantial health co-benefits while addressing climate challenges. Each intervention has also proved that intentional, intersectoral action can multiply impact. India's experience has takeaways for operationalising an integrated climate-health



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India's non-health interventions are a model that can generate substantial health co-benefits and also address climate challenges

vision. First, strong political leadership makes a difference. PMUY and Swachh Bharat gained benefits from direct Prime Ministerial involvement, ensuring cooperation across Ministries. When political leaders frame climate action as a health emergency rather than just an environmental issue, it commands attention across government departments and receives wider public support.

Second, community engagement is a vital ingredient. Swachh Bharat leveraged cultural symbolism, invoking Mahatma Gandhi's vision of cleanliness. PM POSHAN built grass-root support through parent-teacher associations and school committees. Similarly, climate action needs cultural anchoring, linking environmental protection to societal values of health and prosperity.

Third, past policies succeeded by building on existing institutions rather than creating parallel structures. Climate action must be embedded in existing social and institutional frameworks. Accredited Social Health Activists, self-help group members, municipal bodies and panchayat representatives can become powerful advocates, especially when they internalise the interlinks between environmental changes and community well-being.

Some challenges

However, experience also reveals fundamental constraints in implementing intersectoral policy through siloed administrative machineries. As policies progress from providing proximal outputs to delivering associated outcomes, divergent responsibilities and institutional mandates of various sectors begin to reassert themselves. For instance, high LPG refill costs under PMUY persist, partly due to oil marketing business interests outweighing beneficiary needs. Further, social and cultural barriers will continue to hinder utilisation and equitable access in the absence of sustained reinforcing mechanisms. These challenges show that climate solutions must also address structural inequities through institutionalised mechanisms that measure

outcomes, not just outputs. India's experience points toward a framework for institutionalised, health-anchored climate governance, built on three pillars.

The first is strategic prioritisation by political leaders through framing climate policies in terms of immediate health rather than abstract future risks. Just as PMUY succeeded by positioning clean cooking as women's empowerment, climate action needs a similar high-level framing that connects environmental policies to health outcomes that people experience directly.

The second is procedural integration across government departments by embedding health impact assessments into all climate-relevant policies. Just as environmental clearances are now standard for major projects, health considerations should be mandatory for policies affecting energy, transport, agriculture and urban planning.

Third, participatory implementation that leverages health as a mobilising force. Communities understand the health benefits of cleaner air, safer water and nutritious food more intuitively than carbon accounting. Local health workers can become climate advocates when they see direct connections between environmental changes and health outcomes in their practice.

A clear choice

The choice is clear. India can continue fighting climate change and health challenges separately, with limited success and mounting costs. Or, it can leverage the institutional wisdom embedded in its welfare policies and deepen its international engagement to create a new model of governance that treats these challenges as interconnected problems requiring coordinated solutions. The stakes are high, the costs of inaction devastating, and the potential for transformative impact immense. India and the world cannot afford anything less than a bold, intersectoral, whole-of-society approach.

The views expressed are personal

A climate-health vision with lessons from India

Source: The Hindu Page No: 10 Category: Editorial

GS Paper: GS-2 (Health), GS-3 (Climate)

Context

Brazil hosted the Global Conference on Climate and Health (July 29–31, 2025). The Belém Health Action Plan, to be launched at COP30 (Nov 2025), will guide the global agenda on climate and health. India was absent, but its welfare schemes show how health and climate goals can align.

Belém Health Action Plan

- **Launch: COP30, 2025.**
- **Defines global climate-health agenda.**
- **3 Pillars:**

1. **Prioritise climate as a health issue at the political level.**
2. **Embed health impact assessments in climate-relevant policies.**
3. **Use health benefits (clean air, safe water, nutrition) to mobilise communities.**

Important Schemes

1. **PM POSHAN (2021, Ministry of Education) → School meals, millet promotion, nutrition + climate-resilient food systems.**
2. **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (2014, MoHUA & Jal Shakti) → Sanitation, public health, dignity, waste management, environmental gains.**
3. **MGNREGA (2005, Ministry of Rural Development) → 100 days employment + water conservation, afforestation, soil restoration.**
4. **PM Ujjwala Yojana (2016, Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas) → Subsidised LPG, reduced indoor air pollution, better women's health, cut emissions.**

Summary

- **India's welfare schemes, though not framed as climate policies, deliver major climate-health co-benefits.**
- **Political leadership (PMUY, SBA) ensured visibility and success.**
- **Community participation anchored outcomes (Swachh Bharat's cultural symbolism, POSHAN's grassroots mobilisation).**

- **Existing institutions (health workers, SHGs, panchayats) enhanced implementation instead of parallel structures.**
- **Challenges: high LPG refill costs, administrative silos, cultural barriers, lack of sustained outcome measurement.**
- **Key lesson: Integrated climate-health governance is essential; India's model shows how non-health interventions can address health, environment, and development goals simultaneously.**



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Consider the following statements :

Statement I :

At the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28), India refrained from signing the 'Declaration on Climate and Health'.

Statement II :

The COP28 Declaration on Climate and Health is a binding declaration; and if signed, it becomes mandatory to decarbonize health sector.

Statement III :

If India's health sector is decarbonized, the resilience of its health-care system may be compromised.

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

- (a) Both Statement II and Statement III are correct and both of them explain Statement I
- (b) Both Statement II and Statement III are correct but only one of them explains Statement I
- (c) Only one of the Statements II and III is correct and that explains Statement I
- (d) Neither Statement II nor Statement III is correct

2025



‘SEBI, RBI in talks to boost trading in corporate bond index derivatives’

Akshata Gorde
MUMBAI

The Securities and Exchange Board of India and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) are in advanced talks to encourage trading in corporate bond index derivatives to deepen the debt market, a top SEBI official said on Friday.

Speaking at the Assocham National Council for Corporate Bonds event, SEBI Whole-Time Member Ananth Narayan said, “Corporate bond index derivatives trading is another frontier. Good discussions are ongoing between SEBI and the RBI, and we are hopeful that we will see progress soon.”

Secondary bond trading volumes, at about ₹1.4-lakh crore a month, lag equity markets that trade similar volumes in a single day.

This is even as bond issuances have picked up pace, with nearly ₹10-lakh crore raised in FY25 and ₹3.5-lakh crore already issued till July this fiscal.

SEBI had first cleared the way for futures in corporate bond indices in Ja-

nuary 2023, by allowing stock exchanges to introduce Cash-Settled Corporate Bond Index Futures (CBIF) contracts on indices of corporate debt securities rated AA+ and above.

The idea is to renew the push by collaborating with the RBI, as the earlier attempt failed to gain traction. “If we can make bond trading more comparable to equity trading – in settlement, platforms, even trading culture – we might well see this investment class take off,” he said.

Outstanding corporate bonds have also grown steadily, rising from ₹17.5-lakh crore at the end of FY15 to ₹53.6-lakh crore as of March 2025. “But the market remains dominated by institutional investors – banks, insurers, provident funds, mutual funds. Retail and foreign investors remain on the fringes,” he said. The municipal bond market remains nascent. Since 2017, only 16 issuances worth ₹3,134 crore have been made – equivalent to just 0.02% of GDP.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

SEBI and RBI are in talks to boost trading in corporate bond index derivatives to deepen India’s debt market, which currently sees low volumes and is dominated by institutional investors.

Corporate Bond

- **Debt security issued by a company to raise capital.**
- **Pays interest (coupon) and returns principal at maturity.**
- **Risk depends on issuer’s credit rating.**
- **Regulator in India: SEBI (RBI indirectly for money market instruments).**



7

In India, which of the following can trade in Corporate Bonds and Government Securities ?

1. Insurance Companies
2. Pension Funds
3. Retail Investors

Select the correct answer using the code given below :

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

2024



EXPLAINED SCIENCE

HOW DID HANDS EVOLVE? THE ANSWER IS BEHIND YOU

ABOUT 360 MILLION years ago, our fishy ancestors moved from water to land. Along the way, their fins turned into feet, with toes. And hundreds of millions of years later, the front pair evolved into hands. Scientists have spent decades to understand this profound evolutionary transformation. Now, the precise DNA-editing technology known as CRISPR is letting them do just that.

It turns out that hands and feet were not the products of new genes doing new things. Rather, through natural selection, pieces of old genetic recipes for ancient body parts were cobbled together into new combinations. A study published in the journal *Nature* on Wednesday found that the recipe for building hands was borrowed in part from the one for our nether regions.

How genes work

An embryo begins as a fertilised egg with a single set of genes; it then divides into new cells, each of which inherits those same genes. Along the way, the cells turn these genes on and off in different patterns, enabling them to become particular tissues and organs.

The cells also send out molecules that trigger neighbours to change their own genetic melody. Those signalling molecules switch genes on by grabbing DNA at a precise location, like a key turning in a lock. Many genes need several keys to open locks before they can become active.

Scientists have identified some of the locks that enable human (and other) embryos to grow limbs. In 2011, a half-dozen molecular locks sitting along a stretch of DNA called 5DOM were discovered. When 5DOM was snipped out of a mouse embryo's DNA, the embryo grew legs but failed to grow feet.

5DOM & nether regions

The question 5DOM evolved. Upon studying zebrafish, with whom mammals share an ancient common ancestor that lived more than 400 million years ago, scientists found that it, too, had 5DOM.



A female zebrafish. Wikimedia Commons

Aurélie Hintermann, a researcher in the Stowers Institute for Medical Research (the US), grew zebrafish embryos from which she removed the 5DOM locks using CRISPR. To her surprise deleting 5DOM had little effect on the developing fins.

But it disrupted a region on the underside of the zebrafish's tail, where there are two openings: the anus, and a hole for the bladder and for sexual organs. Researchers took a closer look at the same region in mouse embryos — here too 5DOM was found building that region.

New hypothesis

These and other experiments led the scientists to a new hypothesis. The story starts a half-billion years ago, with the earliest fish. Their bodies were little more than heads connected to long-ribbon-like bodies; they swallowed food, which made its way down a long digestive tract until the remnants escaped through the anus. A nearby opening was used for sex, and the release of urine.

The embryos of this protofish unlocked different genes to create the different body parts: 5DOM unlocked the genes for the anus and the opening for its urethra and sexual organs.

5DOM still controls the development of that region in zebrafish, mice, and humans. But about 360 million years ago, the scientists propose, 5DOM also began building our fingers and toes. **THE NYT**

This article explains how scientists discovered the origins of hands and feet in animals by studying fish genes, showing that parts of our genetic code for limbs originally helped form other body parts in ancient species.

Article Summary

- About 360 million years ago, fish evolved to walk on land; their fins became limbs like hands and feet.
- Scientists used new DNA-editing methods (like CRISPR) to study how these limbs evolved, finding that old gene combinations—not entirely new genes—led to the development of hands and feet.
- The 5DOM region in DNA, discovered in both mice and zebrafish, plays a crucial role in forming limbs and also forms body openings like the anus and urethra.
- By experimenting on zebrafish, researchers learned that the genes for limbs and certain body openings share a common genetic origin.
- This research suggests that the genes for building hands and feet are ancient, re-used over millions of years to create new body parts like human fingers and toes.



8

Consider the following statements :

1. Some species of turtles are herbivores.
2. Some species of fish are herbivores.
3. Some species of marine mammals are herbivores.
4. Some species of snakes are viviparous.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 2 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

2019

9

Consider the following :

1. Butterflies
2. Fish
3. Frogs

How many of the above have poisonous species among them ?

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

2024

