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# Right of way

## India needs to build more footpaths to help pedestrians walk freely

**A**s part of the Supreme Court's expansion of Article 21 since the 1970s, it has declared the right to walk on demarcated footpaths a fundamental right. The Bench of Justices P.S. Narasimha and Atul S. Chandurkar reaffirmed the right in a case seeking higher compensation for a five-year-old boy's death after being struck and killed by a tanker lorry in Karnataka. As motorised transport has become more widespread, the Bench noted with regret that walking has become an inconvenience, with motorists often treating pedestrians as a 'nuisance' to be tolerated or cleared. In the absence of a national law governing pedestrian rights, responsibility for pedestrian safety is split across municipal laws, town-planning statutes, and street design guidelines. As such, pedestrians are considered to be safe if they face no immediate physical harm. Most cities also lack continuous unobstructed footpaths; where footpaths do exist, they are often encroached on by parking, vendors, utilities, and construction debris, and competing pressures such as road widening work.

While a right to walk is desirable, the ideas that pavements belong to pedestrians and that they have right of way should be cultural in order to endure. Rights-based legislation in India that has sought to change public culture has had mixed success. The Street Vendors Act 2014 sought to protect vendors from harassment as under Article 19(1)(g). But in most cities, municipalities still conduct "eviction drives" while implementation has lagged because the Act requires surveys, town vending committees, and the demarcation of vending zones – processes that many urban local bodies have delayed or simply abandoned. Weak implementation has allowed informal rent-seeking by officials to persist in some cases. The new judgment is also likely to set up disputes with the 2014 Act. Second, the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act 2003 curtailed public smoking over 20 years, but not by "restitutionary remedies", as the Court has suggested for walking, but with consistent social messaging and small, immediate fines. Finally, despite strict laws and 'Swachh Bharat' mandates, the culture of littering remains because the law focuses on citizens' duty to segregate whereas the state has often overlooked its duty to collect segregated waste. Similarly, if the state does not build footpaths, the citizen's right will be meaningless. The Court's constitutional nudge may thus lead to no real change if it remains a legal tool for compensation after a tragedy. A state using it to 'cleanse' streets of informal commercial activity could also gentrify these public spaces and criminalise the survival of the urban poor. The nudge's principal path to success will be by moving the state's funds towards pedestrian infrastructure.

'Right to Privacy' is protected under which Article of the Constitution of India?

(a) Article 15

(b) Article 19

(c) Article 21

(d) Article 29

Which Article of the Constitution of India safeguards one's right to marry the person of one's choice?

(a) Article 19

(b) Article 21

(c) Article 25

(d) Article 29

The National Green Tribunal Act, 2010 was enacted in consonance with which of the following provisions of the Constitution of India?

1. Right to healthy environment, construed as a part of Right to life under Article 21
2. Provision of grants for raising the level of administration in the Scheduled Areas for the welfare of Scheduled Tribes under Article 275(1)
3. Powers and functions of Gram Sabha as mentioned under Article 243(A)

Select the correct answer using the codes given below :

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

प्रासंगिक संवैधानिक प्रावधानों और निर्णय विधियों की मदद से लैंगिक न्याय के संवैधानिक परिप्रेक्ष्य की व्याख्या कीजिए।

Explain the constitutional perspectives of Gender Justice with the help of relevant Constitutional Provisions and case laws.



# EXPANSION OF ARTICLE 21: RIGHT TO LIFE & PERSONAL LIBERTY



From "Procedure Established by Law" to "Due Process of Law" – A Journey Towards Dignified Life

## 1 FOUNDATION OF MODERN ARTICLE 21



### KEY JUDGMENTS (Illustrative)

**Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978)**

### KEY PRINCIPLES / CONTRIBUTION

- Introduced "Just, Fair and Reasonable Procedure".
- Introduced Indian version of **SUBSTANTIVE DUE PROCESS**.
- Linked Articles 14, 19 and 21 – "Golden Triangle".
- Life under Article 21 means living with **HUMAN DIGNITY**, not mere animal existence.

## 2 LIVELIHOOD & SHELTER



### KEY JUDGMENTS (Illustrative)

- Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation (1985)**
- Chameli Singh v. State of U.P. (1996)**

### KEY PRINCIPLES / CONTRIBUTION

→ Right to Livelihood is an integral part of Right to Life.

→ Right to Shelter is part of the Right to Life with dignity.

## 3 HEALTH & MEDICAL CARE



### KEY JUDGMENTS (Illustrative)

- Parmanand Katara v. Union of India (1989)** → Right to timely medical treatment in emergency.
- Consumer Education & Research Centre v. Union of India (1995)** → Right to Health and medical facilities.
- Paschim Banga Khet Mazdoor Samity v. State of West Bengal (1996)** → State has obligation to provide adequate medical care.

### KEY PRINCIPLES / CONTRIBUTION

## 4 ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



### KEY JUDGMENTS (Illustrative)

- Rural Litigation & Entitlement Kendra v. State of U.P. (1985)**
- Subhash Kumar v. State of Bihar (1991)**
- M.C. Mehta v. Union of India (Ganga Pollution Case, Oleum Gas Leak Case, Taj Trapezium Case)**
- M.C. Mehta v. Kamal Nath (1997) – Public Trust Doctrine**
- Vellore Citizens Welfare Forum v. Union of India (1996)**
- A.P. Pollution Control Board v. Prof. M.V. Nayudu (1999)**

### KEY PRINCIPLES / CONTRIBUTION

- Right to clean, healthy and pollution-free environment.
- Right to pollution-free water and air.
- Right to clean environment.
- Public Trust Doctrine – State is a trustee of natural resources for the people.
- Precautionary Principle & Polluter Pays Principle.
- Sustainable Development – balance between development and environment.

## 5 EDUCATION



### KEY JUDGMENTS (Illustrative)

- Mohini Jain v. State of Karnataka (1992)** → Right to education is part of Right to Life.
- Unnikrishnan J.P. v. State of A.P. (1993)** → Later constitutionalised through Article 21A by the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002.

### KEY PRINCIPLES / CONTRIBUTION

## 6 PRIVACY, DATA PROTECTION & DIGITAL RIGHTS



### KEY JUDGMENTS (Illustrative)

- K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017) (9-Judge Bench)** → Right to privacy is a fundamental right under Article 21.
- Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India (2020)** → Internet access is essential for exercise of freedoms under Articles 19 and 21.

### KEY PRINCIPLES / CONTRIBUTION

## 7 GENDER JUSTICE, IDENTITY & BODILY AUTONOMY



### KEY JUDGMENTS (Illustrative)

- Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan (1997)**
- National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) v. Union of India (2014)**
- Laxmi v. Union of India (2014)**
- Naveet Singh Johar v. Union of India (2018)**
- Joseph Shine v. Union of India (2018)**
- X v. Principal Secretary, Health & Family Welfare Department (2022)**

### KEY PRINCIPLES / CONTRIBUTION

- Safe workplace and protection from sexual harassment at workplace.
- Right to self-identify gender; recognition of transgender persons.
- Dignity and rehabilitation of acid attack survivors.
- Sexual orientation protected under dignity and privacy.
- Equality and personal autonomy; adultery decriminalised.
- Reproductive autonomy and bodily integrity are part of personal liberty.

## 8 CHOICE, MARRIAGE & INDIVIDUAL AUTONOMY



### KEY JUDGMENTS (Illustrative)

- Shafin Jahan v. Asokan K.M. (2018)** → Right to marry a person of one's choice.
- Shakti Vahini v. Union of India (2018)** → Protection against honour crimes and family/community interference with adult choice.

### KEY PRINCIPLES / CONTRIBUTION

## 9 DIGNITY IN DEATH



### KEY JUDGMENTS (Illustrative)

- Common Cause v. Union of India (2018)** → Passive euthanasia and Living Will are part of Right to Life with dignity.
- In Re: State of Maharashtra v. Praful Desai (2023)** → Clarified guidelines; simplified procedure for execution of Living Will.

### KEY PRINCIPLES / CONTRIBUTION

## 10 SAFE MOBILITY & PUBLIC SPACES



- Mallikarjun v. Divisional Manager, National Insurance Co. Ltd. (2025/26)**

### KEY PRINCIPLES / CONTRIBUTION

→ Right to walk safely on designated footpaths is part of Article 21. State must ensure pedestrian-friendly infrastructure and unblocked footpaths.

# PRESIDENT OF INDIA GRACES INTERNATIONAL SICKLE CELL DAY COMMEMORATION AT OMKARESHWAR, MADHYA PRADESH

## NATIONAL SICKLE CELL ANAEMIA ELIMINATION MISSION IS ONE OF THE LARGEST INITIATIVES FOR GENETIC DISEASE SCREENING IN THE WORLD: PRESIDENT DROUPADI MURMU

Posted On: 19 JUN 2026 1:24PM by PIB Delhi

The President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu graced the International Sickle Cell Day commemoration at Omkareshwar, Madhya Pradesh today (June 19, 2026).



Speaking on the occasion, the President said that commemoration of the International Sickle Cell Day is a meaningful effort towards addressing a significant challenge in the health sector. She was happy to note that the target of screening under the National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission was achieved ahead of schedule. She said that screening of seven crore people, ranging from newborns to those up to 40 years of age, is not a small achievement; it is one of the largest initiatives for genetic disease screening in the world.



The President said that it is the result of screening conducted in mission mode that sickle cell disease has been detected in approximately 2.5 lakh people so far, and over 20 lakh carriers of the disease have also been identified. She underlined the need to understand the challenges posed by such a large number of carriers. She appreciated the Central and State governments for not only identifying patients and carriers of sickle cell disease but also for ensuring their proper healthcare. She said that the state of Madhya Pradesh has made an invaluable contribution in addressing the issue of sickle cell disease by setting a record for screening over four lakh women under the "Swasth Nari, Sashakt Parivar Abhiyan" held from September 17 to October 2, 2025.



The President noted that Madhya Pradesh government launched the "Sickle Mitra" initiative last year on the International Sickle Cell Day. Under this initiative, representatives from government and non-government institutions and voluntary organisations, as well as NCC cadets, have been trained to raise awareness and provide assistance to patients. She expressed confidence that through the collective strength and active engagement of all states, we will succeed in achieving our national goal of eradicating sickle cell-related diseases from the country well before the year 2047.

In the context of hereditary diseases, consider the following statements :

1. Passing on mitochondrial diseases from parent to child can be prevented by mitochondrial replacement therapy either before or after *in vitro* fertilization of egg.
2. A child inherits mitochondrial diseases entirely from mother and not from father.

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

Consider the following statements in the context of interventions being undertaken under **Anaemia Mukta Bharat Strategy** :

1. It provides prophylactic calcium supplementation for pre-school children, adolescents and pregnant women.
2. It runs a campaign for delayed cord clamping at the time of child-birth.
3. It provides for periodic deworming to children and adolescents.
4. It addresses non-nutritional causes of anaemia in endemic pockets with special focus on malaria, hemoglobinopathies and fluorosis.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

1. **Context:** President Droupadi Murmu reviewed the progress of the **National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission (NSCAEM)** and reiterated India's commitment to eliminate Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) as a public health challenge by 2047.

## 2. **Sickle Cell ANEMIA**

**Definition:** A hereditary blood disorder caused by abnormal Haemoglobin-S (HbS), which makes Red Blood Cells (RBCs) rigid and sickle-shaped.

**Pathology:** Abnormal HbS → Sickling of RBCs → Rapid RBC destruction + Blood vessel blockage.

**Consequences:** Chronic haemolytic anaemia • Reduced oxygen supply to tissues • Recurrent pain crises • Multi-organ damage (brain, lungs, kidneys, spleen).

**Management:** Early screening • Genetic counselling • Hydroxyurea therapy • Folic acid supplementation • Vaccination & infection control • Blood transfusion (severe cases) • Bone Marrow Transplant (potential cure).

## 3. **National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission (NSCAEM)**

**Launched:** 1 July 2023 (announced in Union Budget 2023–24)

**Target:** Eliminate SCD as a public health problem by 2047.

**Coverage:** Screening of 7 crore individuals (0–40 years), particularly in tribal-dominated areas.

**Approach:** Screen → Identify → Counsel → Treat → Prevent transmission.

**Progress:** 7 crore screened • ~2.5 lakh patients identified • 20 lakh+ carriers identified.



## **Prime Minister Narendra Modi disburses ₹2,400 crore under Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana**

**PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana is about empowering first-time employees and building a bridge between youth and industry: PM**

**The aspirations, skills and potential of our youth shape the path to a Viksit Bharat: PM**

**India's youth will be at the forefront of driving global growth, innovation and entrepreneurship in the years to come: PM**

**Key Dignitaries lead Regional PM-VBRY events at 200 venues pan-India Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, both workers and employers are now recognised as nation builders and equal partners in India's growth story: Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya**

**17 crore jobs generated between 2014 and 2024, says Dr. Mandaviya**

**70 lakh first-time employees brought into the formal workforce under PM-VBRY since August 2025; incentive under PMVBRY supported employment for over 15 lakh beneficiaries**

Posted On: 19 JUN 2026 8:22PM by PIB Delhi

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi today disbursed incentives amounting to approximately ₹2,400 crore under the Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PM-VBRY) at a special programme held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

## About PM-VBRY

PM-VBRY came into effect on 1 August 2025 and is designed to promote formal employment and incentivise job creation. Under Part A of the scheme, first-time employees registered with EPFO and earning wages up to ₹1 lakh per month are eligible for an incentive equivalent to one month's wage, up to ₹15,000, in two installments.

Under Part B of the scheme, employers generating additional employment are eligible for incentives of up to ₹3,000 per month per additional employee for a period of two years. Recognising the importance of manufacturing in driving employment growth, employers in the manufacturing sector are eligible to receive incentives for an additional two years.

With a total outlay of ₹99,446 crore, PM-VBRY aims to facilitate the creation of more than 3.5 crore jobs over a two-year period. Of these, around 1.92 crore beneficiaries are expected to be first-time entrants into the workforce.

Since August 2025, more than 70 lakh first-time employees have been brought into the formal workforce under PM-VBRY, with women accounting for nearly 30% of the beneficiaries. Employees who remain in continuous employment for more than six months become eligible to receive benefits under the Scheme.

The PMVBRY Scheme has already demonstrated significant early success in promoting formal employment and supporting both workers and employers. In March 2026, benefits amounting to ₹461 crore were disbursed. Under Part A of the Scheme, Rs 247 Crore were disbursed to 4.41 lakh first-time employees, providing direct financial support to young workers entering the formal workforce. Under Part B, incentives worth ₹214 crore were released to 17,551 establishments that generated additional employment of approximately 6.46 lakh workers.

The successful nationwide implementation of PM-VBRY reaffirms the Government's commitment to employment-led growth, workforce formalisation and universal social security coverage. By supporting both employees and employers, the scheme is contributing significantly towards the vision of a Viksit Bharat and ensuring that the benefits of India's economic progress reach every section of society.

1. **Context:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi released ₹2,400 crore under the Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PM-VBRY), aimed at promoting formal employment, expanding social security coverage and creating quality jobs for India's youth.

## 2. Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PM-VBRY)

**Type:** Central Sector Scheme | **Ministry:** Ministry of Labour & Employment | **Launch:** 1 August 2025 | **Implementation:** Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) | **Outlay:** ₹99,446 crore.

**Objective:** Formal employment generation • First-time workforce participation • Employer-led job creation • Expansion of social security coverage.

**Target:** 3.5 crore+ jobs in 2 years, including 1.92 crore first-time employees.

### Key Features

\* **Employee Incentive:** First-time EPFO-registered employees (salary up to ₹1 lakh/month) receive incentive up to ₹15,000.

\* **Employer Incentive:** Up to ₹3,000/month per additional employee for 2 years; manufacturing sector receives extended support.

3. **Progress:** ₹2,400 crore disbursed | 70 lakh+ first-time employees formalised | ~30% women beneficiaries | 15 lakh+ beneficiaries supported

# Four glacial lakes in Arunachal have expanded in a decade: study

Analysis by geospatial intelligence firm shows that the 'high-risk' lakes have increased in area, with one of them growing by 10 hectares; expert says expansion warrants attention but should not be interpreted as evidence of an impending disaster

**Jacob Koshy**  
NEW DELHI

A satellite-based assessment of five glacial lakes in the Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh has found that four have expanded over the last decade, with one lake showing rapid growth, adding fresh evidence to concerns over the threat posed by Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) in the eastern Himalaya.

The analysis – a report and not a peer-reviewed study – conducted by the Noida-based geospatial intelligence firm Suhora Technologies, examined five lakes in the Mago Chu basin that have been classified by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) as “high-risk” or “very high-risk”.

The assessment comes amid heightened attention on glacial hazards in the region following a recent risk evaluation by the Centre for Earth Sciences and Himalayan Studies (CESHS), Arunachal Pradesh.

Using imagery from ICEYE, PlanetScope, and LISS-IV satellites, Suhora compared the extent of the lakes between 2016 and June 2026. In a press state-



A new satellite study has flagged the importance of continuous monitoring of high-risk glacial lakes in Arunachal Pradesh. PTI

ment, the company said that “four out of five lakes have expanded, reflecting a general trend of glacial retreat and meltwater storage”. However, it cautioned that “lake expansion does not directly indicate a flood event” and said the findings instead highlighted “the importance of regular monitoring and further assessment to better understand future risks”.

## High-risk lakes

Among the lakes analysed, Sanhapo Lake showed the most significant growth. Suhora estimated its area at 78.07 hectares in 2019, increasing to 88.81 hectares by mid-June 2026. The company said that

while uncertainties remain regarding its historical extent because of ice cover visible in its 2016 imagery, the lake has exhibited sustained expansion in recent years. Given its size and continued growth, Suhora identified it as the highest-priority lake among those assessed for detailed hazard modelling, continuous monitoring and possible early-warning systems.

The remaining lakes showed more modest changes. Two lakes categorised by the NDMA as “very high risk” expanded by about a hectare over the decade, while Dharkha Tso, listed as “high risk”, also recorded gradual growth. A fifth lake remained broadly stable over

the observation period.

Amit Kumar, co-founder and chief operating officer of Suhora Technologies, said satellite observations were increasingly important for monitoring remote mountain regions where field access was often difficult. “By comparing satellite imagery across multiple years, it is possible to track changes in glacial lake extent...with the monsoon season approaching, continuous observation of glacial lakes becomes increasingly important”, he added.

Anil Kulkarni, glaciologist and distinguished fellow at the Divecha Centre for Climate Change, Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru and who wasn't connected to the study, said the observed expansion warranted attention but should not be interpreted as evidence of an impending disaster.

“If lakes are expanding, then it is considered as an unstable lake,” he said. However, he stressed that the key question was why a lake was growing. Lakes impounded by moraines – ridges of rock and debris deposited by glaciers – can become hazardous when retreating glaciers increase the volume of water

trapped behind them. Yet several other factors determine risk, including the possibility of landslides, avalanches or rockfalls entering the lake.

“Mere increase in area, even over a decade, cannot be a single criterion” for judging how dangerous a lake is, Mr. Kulkarni told *The Hindu*. “It can be a concern, but how risky it is, we do not know.”

## Concerns over floods

Worries over Himalayan glacial hazards have intensified since the October 2023 disaster in Sikkim, when a breach associated with South Lhonak Lake triggered floods that killed dozens of people and destroyed the Chungthang hydro-power dam. GLOFs can occur when natural moraine dams fail or when large avalanches, landslides, or icefalls suddenly displace water and generate destructive waves.

Mr. Kulkarni said India's ability to identify potentially dangerous glacial lakes had improved considerably through satellite monitoring and modelling. However, he argued that translating scientific assessments into practical risk reduction remained a major challenge.

Bring out the relationship between the shrinking Himalayan glaciers and the symptoms of climate change in the Indian sub-continent.

2014 (10 marks)

# Four Glacial Lakes in Arunachal Expanded in a Decade: Study

The Hindu | Page 10 | GS-III – Environment & Disaster Management

## CONTEXT

A satellite-based assessment by Suhora Technologies has found that four out of five NDMA-classified high-risk glacial lakes in the Mago Chu Basin, Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh, have expanded over the last decade (2016–2026). One lake showed rapid growth, raising concerns over GLOF risk.

## 1 KEY FINDINGS

- 4 out of 5 high-risk glacial lakes have expanded in area.
- Sanapho Lake** (highest growth):  
78.07 ha (2019) → 88.81 ha (June 2026)
- Two “very high-risk” lakes expanded by ~1 hectare each.
- One lake remained broadly stable.
- Expansion indicates glacier retreat & meltwater accumulation, but does not imply an imminent disaster.

## 3 HOW DOES A GLOF HAPPEN?

- Glacier Retreat:** Rising temperatures cause glaciers to shrink.
- Meltwater Accumulation:** Meltwater collects in depressions or behind natural barriers.
- Lake Formation:** Water accumulates to form a glacial lake.
- Moraine / Ice Dam Formation:** The lake is held back by moraine (debris) or ice/rock dam.
- Dam Weakening / Instability:** The natural dam becomes weak due to various factors.
- Sudden Breach:** The dam collapses or is overtopped.
- Flash Flooding Downstream:** Large volume of water rushes down the valley, causing severe damage.

## 4 WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

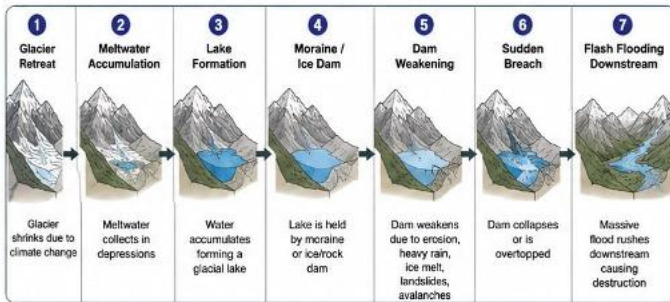
- GLOFs are among the most dangerous climate-change induced disasters in the Himalayas.
- Can cause sudden flash floods with little or no warning.
- Threatens lives, settlements, roads, bridges, hydropower projects and infrastructure downstream.
- Risk depends on dam stability, lake volume, avalanches, landslides and heavy rainfall, not merely lake size.

## KEY TERMS

**Glacial:** Relating to glaciers or formed by the action of glaciers.  
**Moraine:** Accumulation of rocks, soil and debris transported and deposited by glaciers.  
**Glacial Lake:** Lake formed by the accumulation of meltwater from glaciers.  
**Ice Dam / Moraine Dam:** Natural barrier of ice, rock and debris that blocks water.

## 2 WHAT IS GLOF?

**Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF)** is a sudden release of large volume of water from a glacial lake due to the failure or breach of its natural dam (moraine, ice or rock debris), causing downstream flash floods and destruction.



## 5 RECENT EXAMPLES

Year	Event	Impact
2021	<b>GLOF in Rishi Ganga</b> (Chamoli district, Uttarakhand)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Triggered by avalanche into glacier.</li><li>Caused flash floods in Rishi Ganga &amp; Dhauliganga rivers.</li><li>Damaged NTPC project, bridges and roads.</li><li>Loss of lives and property.</li></ul>
2023	<b>GLOF in South Lhonak Lake</b> (Sikkim)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Breach triggered devastating floods.</li><li>Damaged Chungthang Hydropower Project.</li><li>Caused loss of lives and widespread destruction.</li></ul>

## WAY FORWARD



**KEY TAKEAWAY:** Expansion of glacial lakes is a warning signal. Continuous monitoring, early warning and risk reduction are crucial to minimise the impact of future Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs).

# + SEBI reintroduces open market stock buyback at board meet

**Ashokamithran T**

MUMBAI

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) reintroduced open market buybacks via stock exchanges after Finance Ministry eased tax treatment of such transactions in Union Budget 2026.

At the first board meeting of FY27, the capital markets watchdog okayed proposals to ease stock buybacks, deepen investments in municipal bonds, transfer of securities to heirs of deceased among others.

Buybacks must be announced electronically and the process should be completed within 66 working days. Buybacks will be done through the normal trading window. SEBI said.

Employing merchant bankers for buyback deals would be optional.

SEBI Chairperson Tuhin Kanta Pandey told the media the findings of the study to review the impact of derivatives trading on retail investors would be released in July. SEBI also approved a 'quick transmission process' for transfer of securities of deceased to legal heirs.

SEBI amended municipal debt security regulation to develop the M-bond markets. Local bodies can now issue bonds to refinance existing debt for specific projects. To encourage retail participation, issuers of M-bonds can now offer incentives to senior citizens, women serving defence personnel and bereaved spouses and ex-defence personnel.

Also, SEBI brought in changes to social stock exchange framework to ease investments into them.

**Consider the following statements :**

- I. The Reserve Bank of India mandates all the listed companies in India to submit a Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report (BRSR).**
- II. In India, a company submitting a BRSR makes disclosures in the report that are largely non-financial in nature.**

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

- |                          |                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>(a) I only</b>        | <b>(b) II only</b>          |
| <b>(c) Both I and II</b> | <b>(d) Neither I nor II</b> |

## 1. Context

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) approved:

- \* Reintroduction of open-market share buybacks.
- \* Reforms to deepen the Municipal Bond (M-Bond) market.
- \* Faster transmission of securities to legal heirs.

## 2. Municipal Bonds (M-Bonds) & Share Buybacks

### Municipal Bonds (M-Bonds)

- \* Debt instruments issued by Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to raise funds for urban infrastructure.
- \* Used for roads, water supply, sewage, metro and smart-city projects.
- \* Urban Local Body → Raises Funds from Investors → Pays Interest + Principal

### Share Buyback

- \* A company purchases its own shares from existing shareholders.
- \* Reduces shares available in the market.
- \* Improves Earnings Per Share (EPS) and often signals confidence in future growth.

**Open-Market Buyback:** Shares are repurchased through stock exchanges during normal trading hours.

## 3. Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)

- \* Established: 1988
- \* Statutory Status: Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992
- \* Ministry: Ministry of Finance

### Core Functions

- \* Protect investor interests.
- \* Regulate securities and capital markets.
- \* Prevent insider trading and unfair trade practices.

# 75 years on, the First Amendment still casts a long shadow



TRIPURDAMAN SINGH

**J**UNE 18, 2026 will mark 75 years since Rajendra Prasad gave his reluctant assent to the First Amendment — a “seismic shift” in India’s constitutional architecture, the aftermath of which the country’s pre-eminent legal scholar Upendra Baxi labelled the “Second Constitution”. Few seem to have recalled the grim events of 1951, but it was a moment that continues to course through the nation’s body politic, and one that has had profound and deleterious effects on its democracy and constitutional order.

On January 26, 1950, the Republic of India, described by the Oxford don Kenneth Wheare as the world’s greatest experiment in democratic government, was inaugurated to great acclaim. Many had considered it an impossibility: Clement Attlee had even cautioned Jawaharlal Nehru against it, calling republicanism of the kind India was contemplating an alien import from Europe. At the heart of this transition lay the country’s new constitution, containing what *The New York Times* approvingly termed “the most detailed document of fundamental rights found anywhere”, widely seen to reflect India turning the page on its colonial past and taking a giant step towards a liberal new future.

It was a future that failed to materialise as imagined. By early 1951, the Nehru government had pronounced the Constitution to be the chief impediment in the way of its social policy and a stumbling block on the way to progress. The “magnificent Constitution” had, as he declared, been “kidnapped and purloined by lawyers”. How had such a situation arisen? Three key legal battles fought around three key fundamental rights — the right to freedom of speech, the right to freedom from discrimination, and the right to property — shaped Nehru’s assessment.

Government attempts to censor the *Organiser* (a scathing critic of its purported indifference towards the plight of refugees from East Bengal) and *Cross Roads* (a left-leaning weekly harshly criticising the brutal treatment of communist detainees) had been countermanded by the Supreme Court, which had also found the underlying legislation to be unconstitutional, knocking, to quote Sardar Patel, the bottom out of the laws used to control the press. In Madras, where a woman named Champakam Dorairajan had challenged the existing policy of strict caste- and community-based quotas, the High Court had found that religion, race, and caste could not be a basis for admissions to educational institutions and that reservation beyond that provided to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes was thus violative of the right to freedom from discrimination. The Patna High Court had struck the final blow in March 1951 when it held the Bihar Land Reform Act to be unconstitutional. Interestingly, rather than the right to property (as many had feared), it was the right to equality that proved to be the Act’s undoing. The slid-

ing scale of compensation it prescribed, where the rate went down as the size of the land parcel went up, was the culprit.

Collectively, the three judicial pronouncements had taken a sledgehammer to the government’s ability to censor and regulate the dissemination of opinion, eroded its credibility, and thrown its social agenda into disarray. For Nehru, the very fact that the courts were willing to adjudicate on such matters was a step too far. It was his government, he argued, that represented the will of the people — and the Constitution was in the way. The result was the First Amendment.

It knecapped the right to property and allowed the government to circumvent the right to freedom from discrimination in pursuit of social upliftment for “backward classes”. Under the guise of protecting land reform legislation, it created the Ninth Schedule, a repository where laws could be placed to make them immune to judicial review even if they violated fundamental rights — described by the jurist A G Noorani as an “obscenity created by wilful resolve”. More importantly, it introduced new grounds for restricting freedom of speech, including public order, incitement to offences, relations with foreign states, and the security interests of the state.

The consequences of the First Amendment have been far from benign. It dealt a crushing blow to the nascent forces of Indian liberalism, creating the constitutional plumbing for a vast armoury of repressive and coercive laws, including sedition. Moreover, it established the terrible precedent of retrospectively amending the Constitution to overcome adverse

judicial pronouncements.

The cavalier disregard for democratic propriety established a pattern for future egregiousness. Political power triumphed over constitutional order, eroding democratic norms even before the ink had dried on the original Constitution.

Disdain for civil liberties; prioritising the needs of the state; an aversion to public criticism cloaked in the language of “fake news” and “subversive activities”; a brute parliamentary majority riding roughshod over

the protestations of the Opposition and civil society; a government agenda and party ideology elevated above fundamental rights; the claim that the wishes of the legislature should enjoy primacy over constitutional principles: The resonances with the contemporary world are more than semantic. Yet, there seems to be little inclination to register its 75th anniversary or revisit the long shadow it has cast on Indian democracy. Neither by its original supporters, now on the receiving end of the legal architecture it helped create, nor its original opponents, its prime targets now ensconced in the ruling establishment.

What we would do well to remember, however, is the prescient warning Syama Prasad Mookerjee, the man who led the opposition to the amendment and who could see that an uncontrollable weapon was being bequeathed to the future, issued to the government: “Maybe you will continue for eternity, in the next generation, for generations unborn; that is quite possible. But supposing some other party comes into authority. What is the precedent you are laying down?”

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1. **Context:** Enacted on 18 June 1951, the **First Constitutional Amendment Act** was Parliament's response to early Supreme Court judgments on free speech, reservations and land reforms. Upendra Baxi described it as India's "**Second Constitution**" due to its transformative impact.

## 2. Key Triggers & Constitutional Response

### (i) Freedom of Speech [Article 19(1)(a)]

- \* **Cases:** Romesh Thappar v. State of Madras (1950); Brij Bhushan v. State of Delhi (1950)
- \* **Response:** Amendment of Article 19(2)
- \* **Added Grounds:** Public Order • Friendly Relations with Foreign States • Incitement to an Offence

### (ii) Reservations & Equality [Article 15]

- \* **Case:** State of Madras v. Champakam Dorairajan (1951)
- \* **Response:** Insertion of Article 15(4)
- \* **Outcome:** Constitutional basis for reservations for Socially & Educationally Backward Classes (SEBCs), Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).

### (iii) Land Reforms & Right to Property [Article 31]

- \* **Issue:** Zamindari abolition and agrarian reforms challenged before courts.
- \* **Response:** Insertion of Articles 31A & 31B and creation of the Ninth Schedule.
- \* **Outcome:** Protection of land reform laws from judicial challenge.



### 3. Why is the First Constitutional Amendment Still Debated After 75 Years?

#### Supporters' Argument

- \* Protected land reforms and abolition of zamindari.
- \* Enabled affirmative action through Article 15(4).
- \* Strengthened the welfare-state vision and socio-economic transformation.
- \* Ensured that judicial interpretation did not obstruct democratic reforms.

#### Critics' Argument

- \* Expanded State power over civil liberties through changes to Article 19(2).
- \* Introduced the Ninth Schedule, reducing judicial scrutiny.
- \* Set a precedent for using constitutional amendments to overcome adverse court rulings.
- \* Raised concerns regarding constitutional checks and balances.

### 4. Constitutional Voices (GS-II & PSIR Value Addition)

#### Jawaharlal Nehru

The Constitution must serve as an instrument of social transformation and not become an obstacle to reform.

#### Syama Prasad Mookerjee

Excessive concentration of State power may undermine democratic freedoms and individual liberty.

#### Upendra Baxi

Described the First Constitutional Amendment as India's "Second Constitution" because it fundamentally altered the constitutional balance.

#### A.G. Noorani

Criticised the Ninth Schedule for insulating laws from constitutional scrutiny and weakening judicial review.