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*Shield & Coin
Chronicles of India's
Defence and Fiscal Plans*



NISHTHA- THE CIVIL SERVICES SOCIETY HANSRAJ COLLEGE



NISHTHA

The Civil Services Society of Hansraj College



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From the Principal's Desk

प्रिय पाठकों,

निष्ठा- द सिविल सर्विसेज सोसाइटी ऑफ हंसराज कॉलेज के मासिक समाचार पत्र "निश्चय" के नवीनतम संस्करण के प्रक्षेपण पर मैं संपादक मंडल और सभी सदस्यों को हार्दिक बधाई देती हूँ। निष्ठा द्वारा नियमित रूप से आयोजित किए जाने वाले विभिन्न कार्यक्रमों और वक्ता सत्रों से मैं वास्तव में प्रसन्न हूँ। निष्ठा ने उम्मीदवारों की आकांक्षाओं और उनकी सहायता करने के लिए हर संभव प्रयास किया है। मासिक समाचार पत्र सबसे प्रतिष्ठित यूपीएससी-सीएसई के सभी महत्वपूर्ण कार्यक्षेत्रों को संरेखित करने की प्रतिबद्धता और एकमात्र उद्देश्य को दर्शाता है। सरकारी नीतियों के व्यावहारिक विश्लेषण से लेकर सिविल सेवकों के प्रेरक प्रोफाइल तक, आपके लेख उस कठोर और विचारशील विचारों को प्रदर्शित करते हैं जिसे हम हंसराज कॉलेज में बढ़ावा देने का प्रयास करते हैं और निष्ठा सोसाइटी के माध्यम से राष्ट्र निर्माण हेतु कुशल प्रशासकों की स्वर्णिम पीढ़ी के निर्माण हेतु हंसराज कॉलेज प्रतिबद्ध है।



मैं इस न्यूजलेटर को फलीभूत करने के लिए सभी योगदानकर्ताओं की कड़ी मेहनत और समर्पण के लिए हार्दिक प्रशंसा करना चाहती हूँ। आपके अथक प्रयास हमारे कॉलेज समुदाय की ताकत और जीवंतता की गवाही देते हैं।

हंसराज के अमृत काल में सिविल सेवकों की अगली पीढ़ी को पोषित करने के लिए समर्पित सोसाइटी के रूप में, मुझे विश्वास है कि आप आने वाले वर्षों में अपनी उपलब्धियों पर हमें गौरवान्वित करना जारी रखेंगे। स्टूडेंट्स की भलाई के लिए आपकी लगन और प्रतिबद्धता वास्तव में प्रेरणादायक है। मुझे संदेह नहीं है कि आप अपने चुने हुए क्षेत्र में सार्थक प्रभाव डालेंगे।

एक बार फिर, मैं आपको इस उत्कृष्ट समाचार पत्र को लॉन्च करने के लिए बधाई देती हूँ, और मैं हमारे कॉलेज समुदाय के सभी सदस्यों को इसके द्वारा उठाए गए प्रासंगिक मुद्दों को पढ़ने और संलग्न करने के लिए प्रोत्साहित करती हूँ।

प्रो.(डॉ) रमा
प्राचार्या, हंसराज कॉलेज

From the Convenor's Desk

प्रिय पाठकों,

निष्ठा सोसाइटी मासिक पत्रिका " निश्चय" के दसवें संस्करण के प्रकाशन पर संपादकीय मंडल को हार्दिक बधाई। प्रति द्विमासिक प्रकाशित होने वाली यह पत्रिका प्रशासनिक सेवा के परीक्षा की तैयारी कर रहे अभ्यर्थियों के लिए पूरक की भूमिका निभाती है। इस प्रतिष्ठित परीक्षा के पाठ्यक्रम के महत्वपूर्ण विषयों पर बेहद सरल भाषा और रचनात्मकतापूर्ण लेख पाठकों के समक्ष परोसा गया है। पत्रिका में सामान्य अध्ययन तथा ज्वलनशील सामयिक घटनाओं का बहुआयामी दृष्टिकोण से विश्लेषण प्रस्तुत किया गया है। इंटरनेट पर मौजूद स्रोतों के बहुमर के बीच यह पत्रिका अपने विषय सामग्री के सार्थकता और प्रामाणिकता के मापदंड पर खरा उतरती है।



इस पत्रिका के विषय वस्तु के चयन, प्रूफ और उनके संपादन के दृष्टि से संपादक मंडल, तकनीकी विभाग और सभी सदस्यों ने जो श्रमसाध्य कार्य किया है वह अभिनंदनीय है। कॉलेज की प्राचार्या प्रो. रमा ने हमेशा की तरह इस बार भी समुचित मार्गदर्शन और सानिध्य से इस अंक को अंतिम रूप देने में बड़ी भूमिका निभाई है और हंसराज के अमृत काल में अनेक ज्ञानवर्धक गतिविधियों के प्रोत्साहन के लिए प्राचार्या महोदया का विशेष धन्यवाद। प्राचार्या प्रो. रमा मैम के कुशल नेतृत्व में हंसराज कॉलेज राष्ट्र निर्माण हेतु कुशल प्रशासकों के निर्माण हेतु प्रतिबद्ध है।

आशा है कि "निश्चय" का यह अंक आपको पसंद आएगा और आपके परीक्षा-उन्मुख ज्ञान को नया आयाम प्रदान करेगा।
धन्यवाद

प्रो.(डॉ) प्रभांशु ओझा
संयोजक, निष्ठा सोसायटी

From the President's Desk

Dear readers,

I am filled with gratification and ecstasy to announce the launch of our next edition of the monthly newsletter-Nishchay. This endeavour is dedicated to nurturing and inspiring fervent individuals and proffering them valuable insights across a range of pivotal topics shaping the vibrant tapestry of the coveted Civil Services Examination.



In a world that is constantly evolving, the significance of staying informed and connected cannot be overstated; thus this novel initiative is designed to harmonize all the crucial aspects of the prestigious UPSC-CSE, emphasizing both the foundational elements of the exam syllabus & ever-changing current affairs.

We firmly believe that this newsletter will serve as a source of motivation, catalyst of collective progress, and repository of knowledge that enlightens us with the latest developments around the globe along with the static portion.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each one of you for your unwavering support, and we hope you enjoy this meticulously crafted newsletter.

Sincerely,
Ashwamegh Singh
President

Nishtha - The Civil Services Society of Hansraj College

India's defence system is a vital component of its strategic posture and serves as a buffer against foreign threats for a developing nation. In a complicated geopolitical framework, this military system is vital to safeguarding India's sovereignty and internal interests. It must therefore be properly balanced with the budgetary requirements of the nation's emerging economy. Thus, the newsletter explores the changing relationship between India's defence budget and economic aspirations and also highlights each one's distinct relevance under the theme – Shield and Coin: Chronicles of India's Defence and Fiscal Plans.

The Indian Defence system is a complex force that is intended to protect the nation's territorial integrity and exert influence within its borders. The Army, the Navy and the Air Force make up the Indian Armed Forces; each is supported by numerous strategic commands and paramilitary units. The Indian military is improving its capabilities with a modernization focus. The amount spent on defence has increased dramatically as a result. In addition, the defence sector's "Make in India" initiative seeks to strengthen home-grown production capacities and lessen dependency on imports of weaponry from elsewhere.

A significant percentage of India's financial resources must also be directed towards social and economic advancement. Thus, the theme also draws attention to the financial factors that compete with defence spending. The nation prioritises funding for programmes aimed at reducing poverty, healthcare, education, and infrastructure. India's shield and coin interplay will be multifaceted in the future. It represents the country's goals of becoming a regional power, its dedication to independence, and its will to improve the lot of its citizens. Maintaining a strong shield to protect its interests and making sure that economic prosperity continues to shine brilliantly for the inclusive development of its diverse population are the challenges.

INTRO

BORDER SECURITY: THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF INDIA'S DEFENCE SYSTEM

Holding 4th place out of 145 countries in the world's strongest military strength evaluation is not something that comes overnight. It is through decades of hard work, sacrifice, and the continuous contribution of our people and governments, that we have reached this position. Our nation takes pride in having such a glorious, distinguished, and substantial defence.

The defence system is a never-ending requirement for mankind, as the element, namely hatred, will always come face-to-face with humans on one day or another. It is a system where a group of heavily trained personnel is equipped with highly advanced equipment to protect Line Zero.

It is the basis on which our country roars as an eminent and pronounced democratic nation. If we look at the scenario 2 or 3 centuries ago, then mainly kingdoms with their army guarding their interests on every front existed. But now the situation is very different and tactically advanced.

Having enough of the definitions and explanations, look up to India's land defence structure, which comprises various forces working on the border as well as inside the country because protection is required from both outside factors and inner conflicts. In this article, the main pivot will be on forces working on the international borders.



India's land defence structure stretches from the Western coast of Gujarat- along the Thar desert of Rajasthan, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir (sharing borders with both Pakistan and China), Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand- to the Eastern part of India- U.P., Bihar, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, and comprising several other states of the Eastern frontier.

Talking about the major developments regarding land defence, took place when revolts started taking place in 1857 against colonial rule. The need for an army to fight against the British was felt on a wide basis. Also, some major contributions were made by freedom fighters like Subhas Chandra Bose, who formed the Azad Hind Fauj.

Although the main structure came into place after independence, which was followed by proper distinction of duties, the Indian Army was originally founded on April 1, 1895, fighting wars for the British under colonial rule. After independence and partition, it started to function independently.

Looking back into the past shows how our land defence system has been involved in various matters, disputes, and wars. It is only because of immense strength and sacrifice that the nation has withstood so many disturbances from all sides for such a long time. India's land defence system consists of various regiments coming from different regions and states with various qualities and strengths. The government allocates huge amounts of funds every year to keep the defence system running upright, leading to the integrity of the country, standing with valour and pride.

What is one of the major threats mentioned in the text that India faces?

- A) Natural Disasters
- B) Economic instability
- C) Pakistan and China
- D) Political Corruption

Which countries has India purchased arms and ammunition from, according to the text?

- A) China, Pakistan, and Bangladesh
- B) Russia, France, and the U.S.A.
- C) Germany, Japan, and the UK
- D) Australia, Canada, and South Korea

A very important aspect of a land defence system is the level of high-tech weapons and ammunition that are available with it. For a very long time, India has been purchasing arms and ammunition from foreign countries like Russia, France, the USA, Israel, etc. Apart from buying inputs from other countries, we have also looked towards innovations in our domestic manufacturing units to promote self-dependence.



Talking about the current situation, we still have threats from all sides of our land stretch, and this land defence system plays a major role in settling those and keeping the citizens secure. Some disputes are still going on for a very long time on several matters. We can take the examples of POK and COK. Since independence, the country has seen several wars and armed conflicts with Pakistan and China.

In the upcoming decades or centuries, it will play a very important role as it protects us from any direct threat. It also gives shape to the entire nation, forming an image that resides in the hearts of citizens like us from a very young age.

Indian land defence is a very complex structure laden with several guided weapons and technologies, which together work to pose a very strong force to outside forces.

We can also have a look at our land defence structure geographically, which includes several important points in the Himalayan ranges, stretching for a very long distance and in different regions.

When was the Indian Army originally founded?

- A) 1857
- B) 1897
- C) 1947
- D) 1965



What is the rank of India's military strength in the world, according to the text?

- A) 1st
- B) 2nd
- C) 3rd
- D) 4th

The recruitment of the various forces is done through several written and physical examinations. One has to pass through very tough and rigorous training and various stages to be able to stand alongside the forces on borders and safeguard the sovereignty of the nation.

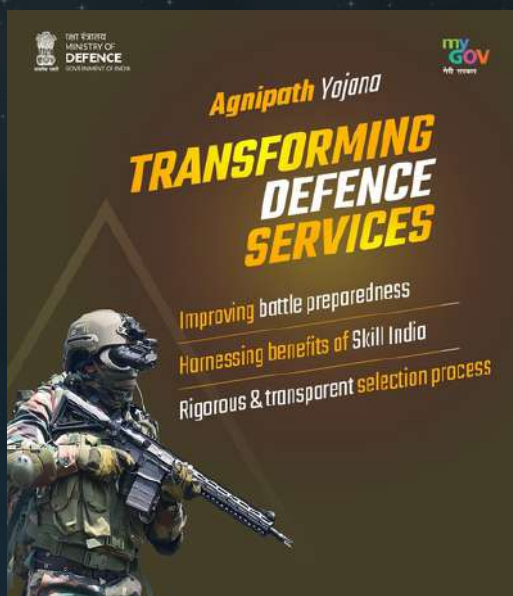
The recruitment is also done on a permanent and temporary basis. Recently, temporary recruitment has been initiated through the Agnipath Scheme, of which 25 per cent are retained. Permanent recruitment is done through the NDA and also through the normal process in the Indian Army.

The whole of the nation's peace eternally depends on the defence structure. May this ever-needed structured outlay serve its purpose, leading to integrity and prosperity.

What role does the land defence system play in India, according to the text?

- A) Protecting cultural heritage**
- B) Maintaining diplomatic relations**
- C) Settling disputes with neighbouring countries**
- D) Keeping citizens secure from direct threats**

AGNIPATH SCHEME: COMPREHENSIVE OVERVIEW OF INDIA'S BORDER INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT & THE GEOPOLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF AGNIVEERS IN INDIA'S DEFENCE STRATEGY



In the ever-evolving landscape of national security, India's strategic focus on border infrastructure development has taken a momentous turn with the introduction of the Agnipath Scheme. This groundbreaking initiative, approved in June 2022, serves as a linchpin in not only restructuring the recruitment process of the Indian Armed Forces but also in fortifying the nation's borders and enhancing its geopolitical influence. At the heart of the Agnipath Scheme lies the concept of Agniveers—young, dynamic soldiers recruited and trained to serve a four-year term. This cadre, carefully selected and trained, forms a crucial part of India's border defence strategy. With a target annual recruitment of around 50,000 Agniveers, the scheme aims to infuse youthful energy into the armed forces, addressing the need for agility and adaptability in the face of emerging threats.

India shares long sensitive borders on two sides, demanding a nuanced and robust defence strategy. The Agnipath Scheme bolsters the imperative of border infrastructure development. The infusion of Agniveers into the armed forces aligns with the broader goal of modernising defence capabilities.

These young soldiers, stationed strategically along the borders, contribute to the implementation of cutting-edge technologies and surveillance mechanisms, creating a formidable line of defence.



The scheme's emphasis on recruiting individuals aged between 17.5 and 21 ensures a youthful profile for the armed forces. This youthful vigour is crucial for maintaining constant vigilance along the vast and diverse

terrains of India's borders. Agniveers, in their prime physical and mental condition, become instrumental in responding swiftly to evolving threats, ensuring a proactive defence stance. Since modern border defence necessitates technological prowess, Agniveers, trained and equipped to adapt to emerging technologies, contribute to maintaining a technological edge. Their role goes beyond conventional defence, incorporating the use of drones, surveillance systems, and other advanced tools to secure India's borders effectively.

“ Apart from border defence, what geopolitical significance do Agniveers hold?

- a) Economic development
- b) Environmental conservation
- c) Enhancing India's diplomatic standing
- d) Cultural exchange

”



The deployment of Agniveers is not merely about personnel; it is a strategic move to enhance border infrastructure. The scheme aligns with the creation of a modern and integrated border infrastructure network. Improved roads, communication systems, and surveillance capabilities become inherent elements of India's defence architecture, ensuring a comprehensive approach to border security.

“
What percentage of seats are reserved for Agniveers in BSF?

- a) 15
 - b) 20
 - c) 10
 - d) 12
- ”

“
How many Agniveers does the Agnipath scheme aim to recruit annually?

- a) 20,000
 - b) 30,000
 - c) 40,000
 - d) 50,000
- ”

Beyond their role in border defence, Agniveers hold geopolitical significance, contributing to India's standing on the global stage, through a disciplined and motivated armed force represented by them. It enhances India's diplomatic standing. The scheme also symbolises India's commitment to a secure and resilient future, thus showcasing a proactive approach to national security. This, in turn, strengthens India's diplomatic hand, fostering collaborations and partnerships on the international front.

The Agnipath scheme addresses not only security concerns but also regional and economic disparities. By providing opportunities for the youth in less industrialised states, the scheme contributes to regional stability. The 10% reservation in the Border Security Force (BSF) for retiring Agniveers demonstrates a commitment to inclusive development, mitigating post-retirement concerns. Agniveers also contribute to building a future-ready force. The notion of a reservist force, trained and ready for deployment when needed, aligns with global practices. This flexibility enhances India's strategic posture and enables a rapid and effective response to emerging geopolitical challenges.



In light of the above facts, the Agnipath scheme emerges not just as a recruitment strategy but as a comprehensive approach to national security. It intertwines the crucial aspects of border infrastructure development and geopolitical vitality as well. As these young soldiers stand guard along India's frontiers, they represent the embodiment of India's commitment to a secure, technologically advanced, and diplomatically influential future. The Agnipath scheme, therefore, stands tall as a pillar of India's national security architecture, forging a path towards a resilient and fortified nation.

“
What is the age range for individuals recruited under the Agnipath scheme?
”

- a) 18.5 to 25
- b) 20 to 30
- c) 17.5 to 21
- d) 22 to 26

“
What is the main focus of India's Agnipath scheme?
”

- a) Economic development
- b) Environmental conservation
- c) Border infrastructure development
- d) Cultural exchange



"BRIDGING THE FINANCIAL HORIZON: UNDERSTANDING THE INTERIM BUDGET OF INDIA 2024"



INDIA
INTERIM
BUDGET
2024



Embracing a vision for a prosperous future, the Interim Budget 2024–25, presented yesterday in Parliament, sets the stage for change. As the guiding star of 'Viksit Bharat' in 2047, it heralds a new era of inclusive development. The allocation budget ensures that the government will finance essential expenditures and infrastructure until the budget is complete.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman highlighted the dramatic transformation witnessed in the Indian economy through structural reforms and highlighted the government's initiatives targeting women, youth, and the economically disadvantaged. Highlighting the priority given by the government to these groups, she said that the progress of the country is intricately linked to their progress. Over the last decade, India has witnessed incredibly positive changes, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who supported inclusive growth through the ethos of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas,



Sabka Vishwas". Economic forecasts predict a sturdy approach, with real GDP growth projected at 7.3%, in line with the revised estimates provided by the Reserve Bank of India.

The International Monetary Fund has also raised its growth forecast for India to 6.3%, and India is predicted to emerge as the third-largest economy by 2027. The estimates for FY 2024–25 reflect a dynamic economic environment.

Total receipts, including debt, are around Rs 30.80 lakh crore, and total expenditure is expected to reach Rs 47.66 lakh crore. Estimated tax revenue is Rs 26.02 lakh crore; GST collection crossed the 1.6 lakh crore mark seven times, reaching Rs 1.65 lakh crore by December 2023. Gross and net market debt through dated securities could be Rs 14.13 and Rs 11.75 lakh crore, respectively.



The budget outlines a comprehensive strategy, with an emphasis on infrastructure, digital public services, and tax reform. In addition, the revised fiscal deficit for 2023–24 is 5.8% of GDP, targeted to be reduced to 4.5% by 2025–26, reflecting concerted efforts towards economic prudence and sustainable development. The interim budget maintains existing tax rates for individuals and corporations while extending tax benefits through March 2025 for the underlying investments. There is no income tax for individuals earning up to ₹7 lakh.

The focus of the government remains firmly on uplifting the marginalised sections of society. Notable achievements include lifting 25 crore people out of multi-layered poverty and extending credit assistance to 7.8 crore street vendors under the PM's personal fund. Women empowerment schemes like Mudra Yojana contributed to the disbursement of 30 crore loans and helped 1 million women through self-help groups. It includes the training of 4 crore individuals and the sanction of 43 crore loans under the PM Money Scheme to ensure entrepreneurial aspirations.

What is the guiding vision outlined in the Interim Budget 2024–25?

- a) Vikram Bharat
- b) Vikrant Bharat
- c) Vikas Bharat
- d) Viksit Bharat



What major initiative is outlined in the budget for promoting clean energy?

- a) Wind energy stabilization
- b) Offshore coal gasification
- c) Rooftop solar subsidies
- d) E-car ecosystem promotion

According to the budget, what is the projected real GDP growth rate for India in 2024?

- a) 6.3%
- b) 7.3%
- c) 8.3%
- d) 5.3%



According to the budget, what is the projected real GDP growth rate for India in 2024?

- a) 6.3%
- b) 7.3%
- c) 8.3%
- d) 5.3%



In agriculture, 11.8 lakh farmers received direct financial assistance under PM Kisan, and crop insurance was extended to 4 lakh farmers through the Crop Insurance Scheme. In addition, the consolidation of 1,361 mandis under e-NAM (National Agriculture Market) has facilitated agricultural production. For infrastructure, the government plans to implement three major rail projects, focusing on energy, minerals, cement roads, port connectivity, and high-traffic roads. In aviation, existing airports are being squeezed out and new ones built under the UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) scheme. The urban transport program includes the promotion of the metro rail system and the Namo Bharat program for urban transformation. In the clean energy industry, the projects aim to stabilize wind energy through economic differentiation, particularly offshore wind with an initial 1-GW targeted capacity to install 100 million metric tons of coal gasification and melting capacity by 2030, with a mandatory phased blending for CNG and its associated uses. Financial support has been provided for biomass harvesting equipment, while the rooftop solar energy programme aims to provide up to 300 units of free electricity per month for 10 million households. Focus on the e-car ecosystem by strengthening and introducing new systems for biomanufacturing and bio-foundries- to promote environmentally friendly processes.

The government aims to subsidize 30 million affordable rural homes and launch a medium-sized housing scheme. Initiatives include promoting cervical cancer vaccination among healthy girls and introducing the U-WIN approach to protective efforts. The Ayushman Bharat Yojana expands to include ASHAs and Anganwadi workers.

In health, the initiatives include cervical cancer awareness among girls aged 9–14 years and the U-Win platform for Mission Rainbow Immunization. Expansion of the Ayushman Bharat scheme for ASHA workers and Anganwadi workers, and the addition of assistants. The effort will focus on promoting the use of nano-DAPs in agriculture, supporting dairy farmers, and increasing their self-sufficiency in oilseeds. A new department of 'Fishery Resources' has been set up to cater to the needs of fishermen in the fishing industry.

The government announced the continuation of the 50-year interest-free loan scheme, with Rs 75,000 crore and Rs 1.3 lakh crore as reserves for state-led reforms. Emphasis will be placed on the empowerment of the Eastern region for balanced development. In addition, the Rs 1 lakh crore corpus will support research and innovation in emerging industries, encouraging private-sector participation. To address demographic challenges, the high-powered committee will make recommendations in alignment with the vision of 'Viksit Bharat', which will lead to holistic development.

In conclusion, the Interim Budget 2024–25 articulates the government's commitment to inclusive growth and stability. Focusing on harnessing India's demographics, democracy, and diversity, along with its commitment to national development in a 'time of responsibility', it sets the stage for a systematic and sustainable road to ensure a developed India by 2047.



LEADERSHIP AND LEGACY: SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE'S INFLUENCE ON THE INDIAN ARMED FORCES

The Indian National Army (INA), or Azad Hind Fauj, was the military force founded during World War II with the aim of securing independence for India from the British. It was an Indian military formation that fought on the side of the Japanese against the British between 1942 and 1945. Mohan Singh, a former member of the British Indian Army, created this force on September 1, 1942. Many prisoners of war joined the INA due to resentment against the British and the conditions in the prisoner-of-war camps. Despite considerable support from the Imperial Japanese Army and the ethnic population of Southeast Asia, disagreements between Mohan Singh



and the Japanese Army Command led to the disbandment of the first INA in December 1942.

Azad Hind Fauj was taken over by Subhas Chandra Bose on July 4, 1943. Subhas Chandra Bose, who had escaped house arrest in India, played a pivotal role in the reformation of the force. "For an enslaved person, there can be no greater pride, no higher honour, than to be the first soldier in the army of liberation." These words of Bose immediately rejuvenated the army and gave them wings of hope. There was a surge in the number of volunteers seeking to join INA after Bose took over the leadership.

Who took over the leadership of the Indian National Army (INA) on July 4, 1943?

- a) Mahatma Gandhi
- b) Jawaharlal Nehru
- c) Subhas Chandra Bose
- d) Bhagat Singh

When was the Indian National Army (INA) formally established during World War II?

- a) 1940
- b) 1942
- c) 1945
- d) 1947

Who was the initial leader of the Indian National Army (INA) before Subhas Chandra Bose took over?

- a) Mahatma Gandhi
- b) Jawaharlal Nehru
- c) Mohan Singh
- d) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Which country provided significant support to the Indian National Army (INA) during World War II?

- a) China
- b) United States
- c) Japan
- d) United Kingdom

What was the name of the all-women's regiment formed within the INA?

- a) Rani of Jhansi Regiment
- b) Lakshmi Bai Brigade
- c) Indira Gandhi Division
- d) Sarojini Naidu Corps

This interim administration, which declared war on both the United Kingdom and the United States, was recognized by the Axis countries. Additionally, the Rani of Jhansi Regiment was established, which was an all-women's regiment. Army recruits were instructed to march from Rangoon (Burma), where the INA Headquarters had moved in January 1944, while spouting the battle cry "Delhi Chalo!"

INA was given control of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands by the Japanese forces on November 6, 1943, which were renamed Shaheed Dweep and Swaraj Dweep. Mahatma Gandhi was hailed as the "Father of the Nation" on Azad Hind Radio by Subhas Chandra Bose in 1944 (the first person to address Mahatma Gandhi as the "Father of the Nation"). Bose also requested Gandhi's approval for "India's final war of independence".

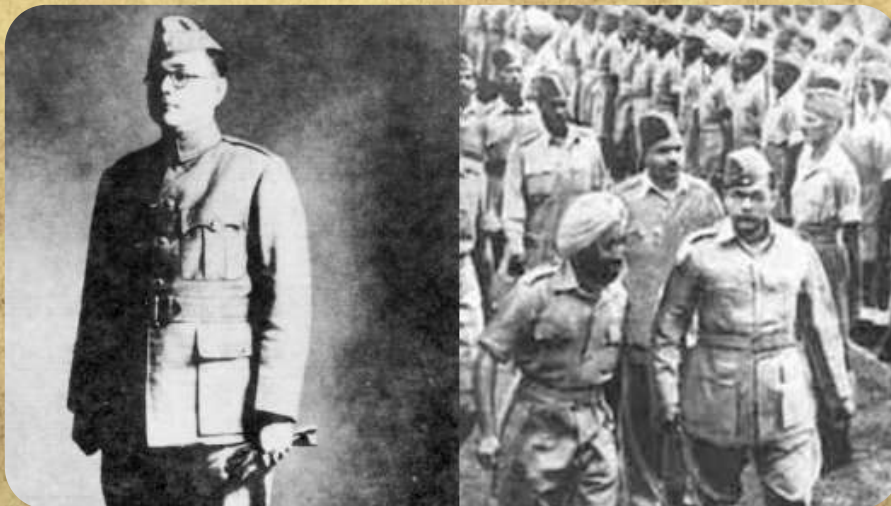
The Japanese Army was permitted to bring one INA battalion, under the command of Shah Nawaz, to the Indo-Burma front and participate in the Imphal battle. The Indian soldiers were wrongfully denied weapons and rations. They were also made to perform menial tasks for the Japanese troops, which led to the disgust and demoralization of the soldiers.

INA's dream of liberating the nation was squashed by Japan's continued withdrawal after that, which continued till mid-1945. The Second World War ended with the acquiescence of Japan on August 15, 1945, and the INA followed suit.

After Japan's defeat in World War II, the majority of the members of Azad Hind Fauj were captured by the British. Bose evaded arrest and made his way to Dalian, which was close to the Soviet border, at the time of Japan's capitulation in 1945. But soon after, news broke that he had perished in a plane crash close to Taiwan. Following Bose's passing, the surviving members of the INA surrendered themselves to the British Indian troops in Singapore.

Though the INA failed to achieve its goal, it made a significant contribution to the freedom struggle. INA's fight showed unity among Indians. Unaffected by the communal divides, Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs all fought as Indians. The Rani of Jhansi regiment showcased the prowess of women in the armed resistance against the Britishers. INA also displayed the passion and support of overseas Indians for their homeland's freedom struggle.

The story of Subhas Chandra Bose and INA is a complex one, riddled with contradictions and controversies. Regardless of perspective, their courage in challenging the mighty British Raj and their unwavering belief in an independent India remain etched in history. The INA's flame may have flickered and died, but the embers of their sacrifice and the words of Subhas Chandra Bose, "Give me blood, and I will give you freedom," continue to inspire millions, reminding us of the unwavering human spirit that fights for liberty, even in the face of overwhelming odds.



TOP PERFORMERS

Once again, Nishtha community has been astounded by the remarkable contributions made by our brilliant members who enrich our collective heritage through their unshakeable commitment and perseverance. We firmly believe that such dedicated efforts warrants commendation. Thus, it is with great pleasure that we announce the exemplary achievers for the month of January 2024.

Creative Wing



Kumari Riya

Technical Wing



Monika Kumari

PR & Spons. Wing



Abhishek Goswami

Editorial Wing



Khusbhu Pal

Organizing Wing



Vaibhavi Awasthi

We express our warmest congratulations to individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary abilities to propel our shared cause forward. As we chronicle these outstanding endeavours, let us reignite the spirit of collaboration, reminding ourselves of the remarkable feats attainable through collective effort. May these instances of dedication, diligence, and resilience inspire each member of our community.

We applaud you for harnessing your exceptional talents and abilities to further our common aims. We hope that you all continue to strive for success and serve as an inspiration to others.



1) India Showcases Military Might and Women's Power at 75th Republic Day

This time taking the spotlight to 'Nari Shakti', for the first time, over 100 women artists played Indian instruments to commence the parade. An all-women tri-service contingent marched down the Kartavya path for the first time in history, while women personnel of the CRPF, the BSF and the SSB performed daredevil stunts on motorcycles.



2) PM Suryodaya Yojana 2024:

On 22 January 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched this scheme to install rooftop solar panels on the houses of middle and poor-class people. The aim of the PM behind launching this scheme is to reduce the electricity bills of poor and middle-class in the country.



3) ISRO successfully launched the PSLV-C58 XPoSat mission:

The Indian Space Research Organisation kicked off the new year with the launch of the PSLV-C58 X-ray Polarimeter Satellite on 1 January. This PSLV, launched from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, is the first dedicated scientific satellite from ISRO to carry out research in space-based polarisation measurements of X-ray emission of celestial bodies.



4) Decoding the Green Transition for India:

The Climate Conference 2024, themed "Decoding the Green Transition for India, took place on 12 January 2024, in Mumbai, Maharashtra. This event was organised by the Ministry of Environment and focused on the important role of the private sector, institutional investors and climate tech startups in mobilising financial resources and technical capabilities.

5) India Showcases Military Might and Women's Power at 75th Republic Day

This time taking the spotlight to 'Nari Shakti', for the first time, over 100 women artists played Indian instruments to commence the parade. An all-women tri-service contingent marched down the Kartavya path for the first time in history, while women personnel of the CRPF, the BSF and the SSB performed daredevil stunts on motorcycles.



6) ICJ Rules on South Africa's Genocide Case Against Israel

The International Court of Justice passes judgement on South Africa's genocide case against Israel: In the wake of the 1948 Genocide Convention, a majority of 15 out of 17 judges of the International Court of Justice, including the court's president, Joan E Donoghue, voted in favour of imposing its provisional measures on Israel. This ruling requires Israel to prevent and punish any public incitement to commit genocide against Palestinians in Gaza and preserve any evidence related to any allegations of genocide there.



7) Karnataka Introduces 'Digital Detox' Programme

The Karnataka government in collaboration with the All India Game Developers Forum (AIGDF) announced the launch of a new programme called 'Digital Detox' on 1st February. This programme has been started to foster an environment where technology is used meaningfully and constructively, as well as minimise its harmful and negative impacts by setting up various counselling and support systems for individuals who are willing to understand mindful technology.



8) Rajya Sabha Passes Constitution (ST) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2024

On February 5, 2024, the Rajya Sabha passed the Constitution (ST) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2024. The bill seeks to amend the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, in relation to Andhra Pradesh and also adds the Bondo Porja, Khond Porja and Konda Savaras tribes to the list of Scheduled Tribes of Andhra Pradesh. This cleared the way for the addition of several new communities to the ST list of Odisha and the inclusion of synonyms and phonetic variations of existing tribes in the ST lists of both Andhra Pradesh and Odisha.



Ranking and Time Sequence Test

Introduction:-

Number, ranking, and time sequence tests are based on an arrangement of characters/persons/objects in a particular order based on specific parameters.

Formulas:-

The position or rank can be determined with the help of the following formulas:-

- **Total no. of persons in a row**
(Rank of a person from the upper or left end) + (Rank of that person from the lower or right end) - 1
- **Rank of a person from the upper or left end**
(Total no. of persons in a row) - (Rank of that person from lower or right end) + 1
- **Rank of a person from the lower or right end**
(Total no. of persons in a row) - (Rank of that person from the upper or left end) + 1
- **In cases of the interchanging of positions**
 - Total no. of persons =
[Initial position of 1st person + interchanged position of 2nd person] - 1
 - New position of 2nd person =
[Difference in the two positions of the 1st person] + [Initial position of the 2nd person]

Time Sequence Test:- To solve such problems, the candidate must have a basic knowledge of the calendar and clock.



Practice Questions

- Manik is 14th from the right end in a row of 40 boys. What is his position from the left end?
a) 24 b) 25 c) 26 d) 27
- In a row of girls, Shilpa is 8th from the left and Reena is 17th from the right. If they interchange their positions, Shilpa becomes 14th from the left. How many girls are there in the row?
a) 29 b) 30 c) 31 d) 32
- Five boys participated in a competition. Rohit was ranked lower than Sanjay. Vikas was ranked higher than only Dinesh. Kamal's rank was between Rohit & Vikas. Who was the highest?
a) Kamal b) Rohit c) Vikas d) Sanjay
- 15 students failed in a class of 52. After removing the names of failed students, a merit order list has been prepared, in which Ramesh is in 22nd position from the top. What is his position from the bottom?
a) 18th b) 17th c) 16th d) 15th
- Sunita leaves her house at 20 minutes to 7 in the morning and reaches Vineeta's house in 25 minutes. They finish their breakfast in another 15 minutes and then they leave for their office, which takes another 35 mins. At what time, did they leave Vineeta's house to reach their office?
a) 7:40 am b) 7:20 am c) 7:55 am d) 8:15 am
- If $\text{Pen} < \text{Pencil}$, $\text{Pencil} < \text{Book}$ and $\text{Book} > \text{Cap}$. Then which one of the following is always true?
a) $\text{Pen} < \text{Cap}$ b) $\text{Pen} < \text{Book}$ c) $\text{Pencil} = \text{Cap}$ d) $\text{Pencil} > \text{Cap}$
- In a class of 45 students, a boy is ranked 20th. When two boys joined, his rank was dropped by one. What is his new rank from the end?
a) 25th b) 26th c) 27th d) 28th
- Ravi is 7 ranks ahead of Sumit in a class of 39. If Sumit's rank is 17th from the last, what is Ravi's rank from the start?
a) 14 b) 15 c) 16 d) 17

Solutions

- d) 27
- b) 30
- d) Sanjay
- c) 16th
- b) 7:20 am
- b) $\text{Pen} < \text{Book}$
- c) 27th
- c) 16





A STORY TO INSPIRE



Mr. Rajesh P. Patil, IAS

Mr. Rajesh Prabhakar Patil, a notable IAS officer from Maharashtra, serves as a guiding light for aspirants with his steadfast story of struggle. Mr. Rajesh Patil had an unwavering aspiration to become a civil servant despite living in extreme poverty. Against all odds, he achieved his goal of becoming an IAS officer in 2005, which brought immense joy to his mother. However, his journey was far from easy, as he had to work tirelessly to reach his current position.

He belongs to a small village in Jalgaon, located in the Khandesh region of Maharashtra. His parents owned a small piece of agricultural land, but they often had to resort to manual labour to support their children's education. He also often came out to support his family by selling fruits and vegetables until his graduation. The hardship of earning a livelihood was quite challenging.

Mr. Rajesh Patil joined the civil services as a Sub-Divisional Magistrate in Athgarh, Koraput, in the Odisha cadre in 2006. Since then, he has been working diligently in various fields to provide relief and assistance to citizens in need.

In 2014, he undertook a commendable initiative and brought a water supply system without using electricity to a tribal village called Kendujhar in Mayurbhanj district of Odisha.

Mayurbhanj district, under the leadership of Mr. Patil, was recognised as the top district for effectively implementing the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee (MGNREGA) Scheme in 2015. The scheme provided employment to 2.9 lakh people from two lakh households in the district.

In 2016, Mr. Patil achieved another milestone by making Mayurbhanj a child-labour free district. He rescued 365 child labourers who were working in brick cleaning and provided counselling to their parents.



Mr. Rajesh P. Patil, IAS

The children were freed so that they could pursue their education. In April 2013, Mr. Patil launched a campaign called “Mu Bi Padhibi” (I will also read), which became popular throughout the district. By 2016, Mayurbhanj had become the first child-labour-free district in India.

Additionally, the administration provided these children with basic necessities to ensure they did not have to struggle to survive. Mr. Patil was recognised for his exceptional contribution and dedication to his work and was honoured with the prestigious title of “Top Collector” by the Chief Minister of Odisha, Mr. Naveen Patnaik. He has also written a book titled ‘Maa, I’ve Become a Collector: My Journey from Crushing Rural Poverty, to the Corridors of Power.’ In this book, he shares all the struggles he faced during his journey towards success. The life of Mr. Rajesh Patil is a great inspiration, not only for UPSC aspirants but also for students who are struggling to succeed in their lives.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS



‘AAKALAN’

On February 2nd, 2024, Nishtha - The Civil Services Society of Hansraj College, in collaboration with PW OnlyIAS, organised a Scholarship Test, as a part of their Monthly Test series "Aakalan". This initiative aims to support aspiring Civil Servants by providing them with opportunities to test their knowledge and skills. Approximately 150–200 students participated in the test, showcasing the strong interest and commitment amongst youth towards pursuing a career in Civil Services. This Monthly Test series by Nishtha aids aspirants by assessing their strengths, improving time management, and fostering a supportive community. It enhances examination skills and offers a platform for networking, crucial for Civil Services preparation.



'एकत्रितम' - The Inter-Wing Meets

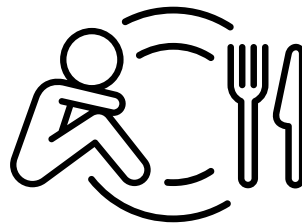
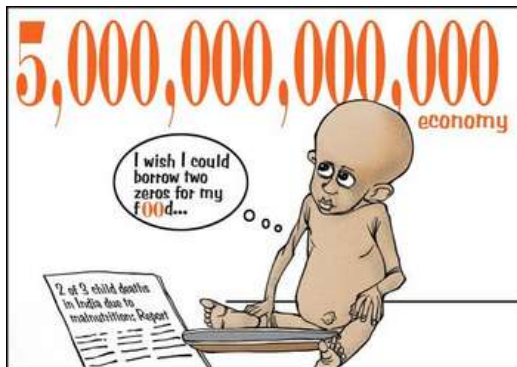
The society organised 'एकत्रितम', whose inter-wing meets on February 23rd, 24th, and 26th, 2024. It aimed to facilitate interaction among members from different wings. The primary goal was to foster understanding of each wing's role and society's overall functioning for improved progress. Each day featured sub-meetings between two wings and focused on specific themes. Meetings began with an overview of the involved wings' functions and significance and were followed by interactive discussions where members shared innovative ideas for enhancing society's operations. These sessions provided insight into the collaborative nature of society's tasks and each wing's contribution, concluding with constructive ideas for society's advancement.



VYAKHYAN MALA EP.8

On March 4, 2024, a speaker session was organised by the society, which featured Mr. O. P. Chaudhary, the Finance Minister of Chhattisgarh and former IAS Officer. Sir shared his journey to his current position, emphasising personal challenges and the importance of civil services. He highlighted education initiatives such as 'Nanhey Parindey' and 'Choo Lo Aasman' aiding underprivileged students. His focus was on initiatives for Chhattisgarh's improvement and the role of politics in governance. He offered exam strategy tips for aspirants, stressing the importance of managing subject diversity, self-analysis, and prioritising personality. Dr. Nitin Malik, registrar of BR Ambedkar University, also shared insights from his journey, particularly his experiences in Chhattisgarh. The session concluded with a brief address by Principal Dr. Rama ma'am and a vote of thanks from our President.

AN UTTAR PRADESH MODEL TO TACKLE MALNUTRITION



Tackling the problem of malnutrition has been a good step towards women's empowerment. Uttar Pradesh has emerged as a quoted example of the same. The community-based microenterprises, led by self-help groups, produce and provide nutritious food to pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers as takeaway rations. This has been done through the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme. The Department of Women and Child Development collaborated with the Uttar Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission to set up a model for the same. It is a decentralised take-home rations model that is worked upon by a 20-member women's group. They use automated equipment that has a capacity of 5 metric tonnes per day. The rations are then sent to the desired Anganwadi centres, and the women are reimbursed accordingly. This model is feasible, as declared by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). It has two pilot plants, set up in Unnao and Fatehpur. After receiving affirmative feedback from the Government of Uttar Pradesh, the project eventually expanded to 202 production units across 43 districts in just over two years. It has been responsible for creating livelihood opportunities for around 4000 women, thus covering 12 million ICDS beneficiaries.

This has been a unique gender transformative approach that has provided the local women with livelihood opportunities, thus helping them economically. Over 4000 women have organised themselves in SHGs in around 43 districts. They have been provided with all the desired machinery and raw materials at a subsidised rate to produce and distribute the take-home ration.

This model has acted as an excellent opportunity to provide a livelihood and contribute to the local economy as well. Earlier, for the same task, the Government of Uttar Pradesh awarded private companies the tender of this model, but now it has shifted to a decentralised model where women from self-help groups prepare the specific caloric value ration and manage its supply. It eventually provides them with an additional income of 8,000 rupees a month.

The Department of Women and Child Development has used this opportunity to reformulate take-home rations by including a more nutritious diet to improve health conditions and prevent malnutrition. Before the products are dispatched to the Anganwadi centres, they are tested by the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories to certify the requisite calorie and protein values and ensure food safety.

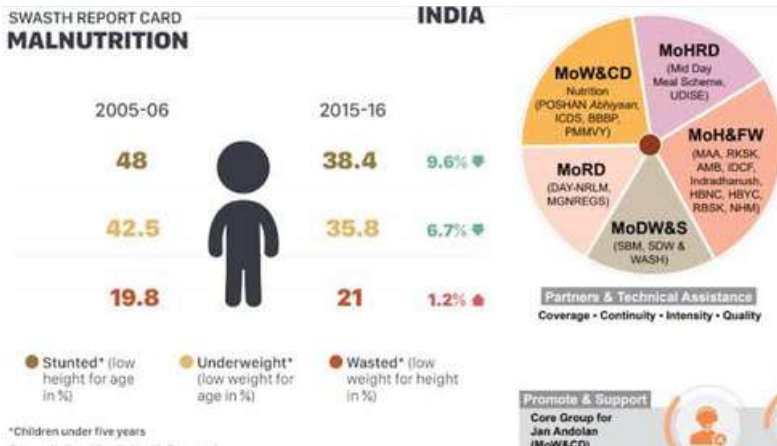




The focus of the model is to enhance and diversify the nutritional value of take-home rations to increase their consumption. This has been achieved by a series of processes that improve existing products and develop new ones under the ICDS norms. To ensure its vitality, research was conducted, which included various production trials, shelf life analyses, and acceptability studies. Apart from basic sweet and savoury options, easy-to-eat meals were also included. Details like nutritional information, cooking instructions, food safety, hygiene tips, manufacturing dates, etc. were also given consideration and have been included as per the regulations set up by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India.

An app-based solution is also being developed for this model. Also, women will be given training to work efficiently for this model. The use of QR codes is being encouraged during delivery. The WFP will support this project and help the government track every basic and minimal detail, like delivery status, value chain, etc. Thus, this model highlights the significance of the multi-stakeholder approach towards technical sound options and also targets the role of women in improving long-term nutrition in a community.

THE BURDEN OF MALNUTRITION



FOOD NORMS UNDER MID-DAY MEAL (PER CHILD PER DAY IN GRAMS)

For Primary Classes	Food Item	For Upper Primary Classes
100gms	Foodgrains	150gms
20gms	Pulses	30gms
50gms	Vegetables	75gms
5gms	Oil and Fats	7.5gms

Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development
ndtv.com/swasthindia | #BanegaSwasthindia

In the pursuit of a healthier nation, understanding the intricate dance between nutrition and overall well-being is crucial. One significant battleground in this endeavour is the fight against anaemia, a condition often fuelled by iron deficiency. It is sad that women and children suffer the most from this health issue. What many might not realise is the two-way street between nutritional deficiencies and certain disorders, a dynamic that calls for multifaceted solutions.

A key player in the realm of nutritional deficiencies is iron, which is vital for maintaining healthy haemoglobin levels. In India, where many people have a problem with low blood levels (anaemia), fixing this has become very important. Government initiatives, including the Anaemia Mukta Bharat (AMB) programme, aim to combat anaemia by administering iron and folic acid (IFA) tablets and other preventive measures. The Mid-Day Meal Scheme for schoolchildren is another crucial intervention. Despite these efforts, challenges to effective implementation persist, underscoring the complexity of the malnutrition landscape.

Nutrition, the cornerstone of good health, has witnessed a transformation in recent times. The shift from diverse and locally sourced foods to processed and sugary alternatives has left many with calorie-rich yet nutritionally deficient diets. The responsibility now lies with individuals to recognise the importance of reducing processed food consumption for the sake of better health outcomes. The traditional thali, a balanced mix of cereals, pulses, and vegetables seasoned with spices and herbs, serves as a nostalgic reminder of a time when our diets were more wholesome.

However, the battle against malnutrition goes beyond personal food choices. A staggering 46% of South Asia's population lacks access to an affordable, balanced diet, according to FAO data. In India, around 74% of people cannot afford a nutritious diet, and 39% lack important nutrients, according to The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, 2023. Recognising the urgency of the situation, the government has introduced initiatives like Large-Scale Food Fortification (LSFF). While food fortification may not be a panacea, it stands as a vital initial step. Countries worldwide embraced universal food fortification years ago, but India has been slower in this regard.

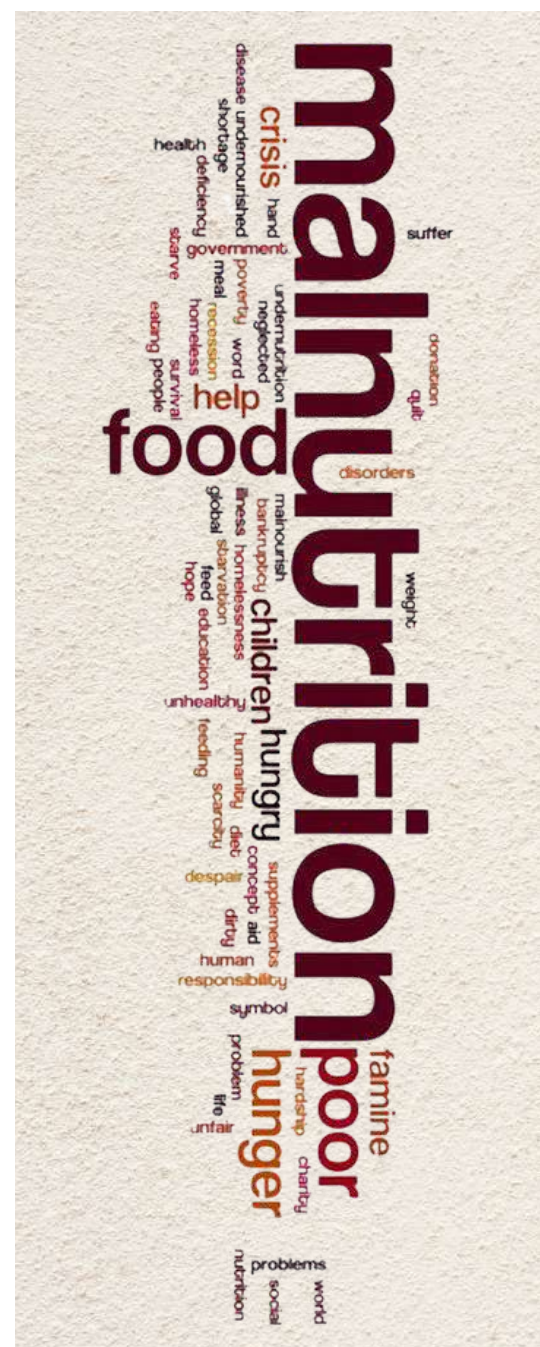




Notably, fortification strategies are not entirely foreign to India. The success story of iodised salt under the National Iodine Deficiency Disorders Control Programme in 1992, which significantly reduced goitre rates, serves as a beacon of hope. Today, India's food fortification programme includes adding micronutrients to staples such as wheat flour, rice, edible oils, and salt. However, despite these efforts, the acceptance of fortified foods amongst the intended beneficiaries remains a challenge.

Addressing this challenge requires a concerted effort to raise awareness. The appearance and texture of fortified foods, like rice kernels, often trigger scepticism. Intensive information, education, and communication (IEC) campaign becomes imperative to dispel misconceptions. Research indicates that fortified foods pose no danger of iron toxicity, as the iron quantity is comparable to naturally occurring nutrients. To overcome resistance, diverse awareness strategies employing community radio, videos, and door-to-door outreach, with a focus on vernacular languages, can ensure that information is easily understood and trust is built.

The path forward demands a combined effort, encompassing both individuals and state-level strategies like LSFF. Encouraging healthier dietary practices at the community level must go hand in hand with these initiatives. As we navigate the complex web of nutritional challenges, fortifying our nation's health requires not just government programmes but a collective shift in awareness and action towards a more nutritionally secure future.



JUSTICE ON THE UP



In the editorial, the author emphasised the remarkable progress made by Uttar Pradesh in addressing crimes against women. The article highlighted the latest report from the National Crime Records Bureau of 2022, which showed a considerable increase in the conviction rate for crime against women in Uttar Pradesh from 59.1% in 2021 to an impressive rate of 70.8% in 2022, surpassing the national average of 25.3%.

This impressive growth that has been witnessed in the state is largely attributed to the effective implementation of strong administrative goals and the determined “Mission Shakti” programme launched in the year 2022. “Mission Shakti” aims to empower women against the violence and exploitation they face in society. The programme is built on two founding pillars: the first pillar ensures that women receive all the benefits and schemes that are designed to uplift and empower them, while the second pillar focuses on enhancing women’s safety and ensuring that perpetrators of violence against women are punished within a limited time frame.

To achieve the second objective, a special women’s help desk has been set up at all 1500+ police stations in the state, which is managed by women police personnel. The women’s help desk provides a safe and secure environment for women to report any incidents of violence or harassment without fear of judgement or retaliation, 24x7. Furthermore, the police personnel working at these help desks have been trained to be empathetic and supportive towards the women who come seeking help.

As a result of this initiative, 13,099 convictions have been awarded in UP in 2022 for crimes against women, which accounts for more than one-third of the 37,551 convictions nationwide.



This is a significant achievement that not only reflects the success of the “Mission Shakti” programme but also highlights the importance of creating safe spaces for women to report incidents of violence and harassment.

Over the years, the police, prosecution officers, and judiciary have collaborated more effectively by establishing dedicated monitoring cells in every district in Uttar Pradesh. The hitherto under-supervised public prosecutors and ad hoc government counsels have also started feeling the heat of accountability. This remarkable development has not only fostered a more transparent and accountable environment but has also contributed to the creation of a highly professional and efficient system at all levels.





Forensic laboratories, previously a weak point in the justice system, now have renewed motivation. Cases against women who were previously stuck waiting for DNA matches are now being processed with greater efficiency. The forensic lab infrastructure in Uttar Pradesh has been improved. To meet the increasing need for forensic experts in the growing number of laboratories, the Uttar Pradesh State Institute of Forensic Science, affiliated with the National Forensic Science University in Gujarat, has become operational as the first forensic institute in Uttar Pradesh.

Due to the great efforts of the state and administrative departments, the number of convictions has been increasing day by day. In various districts of Uttar Pradesh, healthy competition has been observed in terms of having the maximum number of convictions in a minimum interval of time. The state has encouraged this competition and facilitated the top performers at state-level ceremonies and in the press. It is noteworthy that the felicitation was reserved for the on-ground reserves, such as investigating officers, public prosecutors, and constables involved in the case presented in court.

The recorded achievement is quite remarkable and can be easily observed through the comparative conviction statistics of large states with a similar crime rate. For instance, while Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and West Bengal have much lower conviction rates of 37.2%, 11.2%, and 8.9%, respectively, Uttar Pradesh stands out with a conviction rate of nearly 71%, indicating a significant improvement in the state's law enforcement and judicial processes.

There is substantial global research to support the belief that a time-bound justice delivery system is a powerful deterrent against crimes committed against women.



**महिलाओं के
विरुद्ध अपराधों में
487 अभियुक्तों को आजीवन
कारावास, 4,092 अभियुक्तों
को कारावास**

**पाँक्सो अधिनियम
के तहत सजा दिलाने में
देश में उत्तर प्रदेश नंबर 1**



THE WOMEN BEFORE US



As India developed its new constitution in the late 1940s following independence, the prevailing question was: What rights and protections should this founding document provide to women? At the time, women in India faced immense discrimination and hardship solely due to their gender. Child marriage was rampant, with nearly 50% of Indian girls marrying before turning 18. Widowhood condemned women to isolation and poverty, as they were seen as a stain on their families. Educational opportunities were virtually non-existent, with only 2–6% of Indian women being literate at the time.

Yet against this landscape of rampant gender inequality, many prominent women activists and feminist organisations mobilised to demand equal rights for women in the constitution. Key amongst them was the All India Women's Conference (AIWC), founded in 1927 by Margaret Cousins, an Irish suffragist who made India her home after falling in love with the country's struggle for liberty and equality. She was joined by fellow Indian feminists like Sarojini Naidu, Hansa Mehta, and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur as they grew the AIWC into one of India's leading women's organisations.

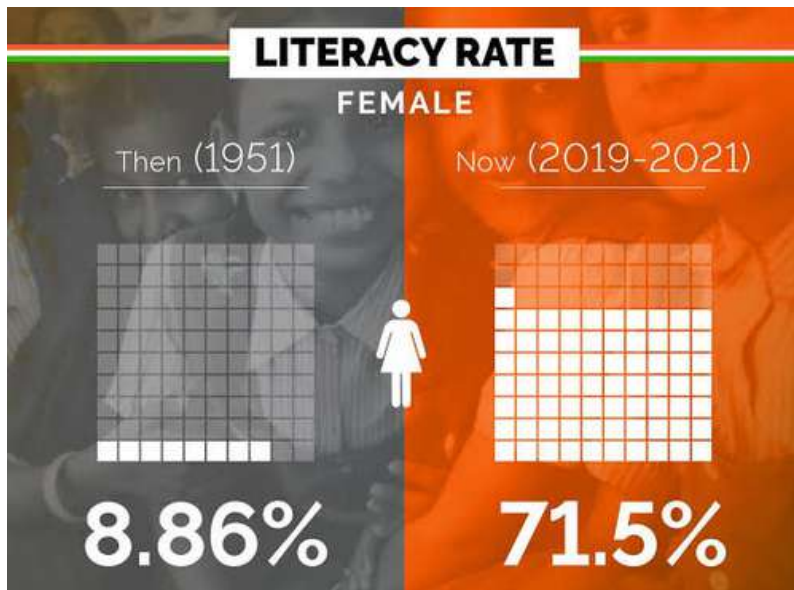
The AIWC brought together many of India's leading feminist voices to advocate for women's voting rights and greater protection for women's health, education, marriage, and inheritance. They organised marches, rallies, and petitions to persuade both the public and politicians that the female half of India deserved equal rights. As the constitution was being drafted between 1946 and 1949 by the Constituent Assembly under chairperson Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the AIWC presented forceful appeals, submissions, and recommendations formally to the assembly, pushing for a full guarantee of non-discrimination on the basis of sex, alongside other principles of equality.



Facing opposition from more conservative Assembly members, the AIWC worked side-by-side with nationalists like Jawaharlal Nehru and Rajendra Prasad to insert more progressive provisions into the constitution drafts. They helped convince the Assembly to replace references to "men" with "all persons," bringing women into the idea of equality promised by the constitution. After years of this painstaking advocacy, the constitution that emerged in 1950 did just that.

Its preamble affirmed the principle of gender equality as a core tenet of the nation.



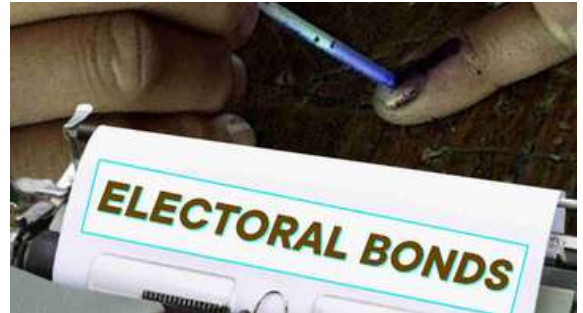
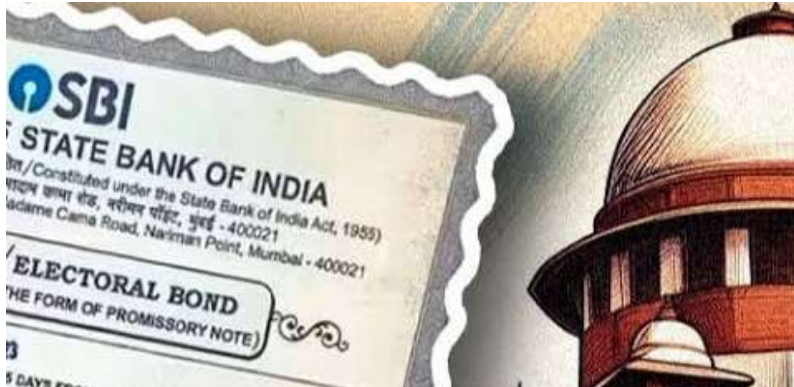


It explicitly abolished discrimination against women under law and guaranteed women equal access and rights regarding public spaces, employment, education, and state institutions, enumerating these rights directly alongside those assured to all Indian citizens regardless of caste, creed, or colour. It also established full equality between men and women in voting rights, workplace wages, and opportunities to hold public office at all levels of government.

These constitutional rights and directives provided the foundation for later laws in the 1950s and 1960s that advanced women's freedoms even further, like those banning dowry practices and raising the minimum marriage age for girls. Today, the literacy rate for Indian women has risen to 70%, and they hold many top roles in academia, business, law, and government.

As the Indian feminist movement marks over a century of activism this year with the AIWC's centenary celebrations, we must remember and honour these earlier heroines in sarees who fought tirelessly, so today's Indian women could enjoy more expansive rights and protections under law. The fruits of their labours are enshrined in the cornerstone of India's democracy— its constitution —proving once more that organised and principled activism focused wholly on claiming one's legitimate rights as equal citizens can indeed pave the road to progress no matter what resistance it faces along the way.

IS THE ELECTORAL BOND SCHEME OPAQUE?



On February 15, 2024, the Supreme Court of India took the decision to strike down the electoral bond scheme. We all know that democracy needs transparency, so the question arises as to why electoral bonds were struck down by the Supreme Court? Is the Electoral Bond Scheme opaque?

Electoral bonds were included in the finance law in 2017, with the goal of channelling all political donations and funding via official banks. This initiative attempted to ensure that every rupee given to the political realm was traceable and lawful. Electoral bonds gave contributors anonymity, protecting them from political backlash or retribution. However, the Supreme Court has expressed concern about the scheme's 'anonymity.' The Supreme Court highlights that the electoral bond plan appeared to infringe Article 19(1) of the Indian Constitution, which relates to the right to information, and Article 14 of the right to equality, since Articles 19 and 14 are fundamental rights that cannot be violated.

Another factor is that prior to the electoral bond program, there was a financing cap in place to guarantee that no black money was used, which was lifted with the introduction of the electoral bond. There is no mechanism in this program to oversee donations from loss-making enterprises, which implies that shell companies might be formed only for the purpose of fundraising.

The judgment says, "The chief reason for the corporate funding of political parties is to influence the political process, which may, in turn, improve the company's business performance. Previously, only the RBI and central banks, as approved by the RBI Act, were permitted to draw, accept, or issue electoral bonds.

However, the Central Government now has the authority to license any scheduled bank to issue electoral bonds. This amendment, too, is struck down in this decision.

The essence of Judgement: The Supreme Court judgment summarises that the electoral bond system was knocked down, and all amendments to the RPA Act, Finance Act 2017, and Companies Act 2013 are violative. The Supreme Court has now instructed SBI, the only bank authorized to issue electoral bonds, to cease issuing them and to give a complete report on all electoral bonds issued thus far to the Election Commission of India by March 6, 2024.





Then the Election Commission must post information on its website within two weeks.

In conclusion, the issue of money in elections, which includes bribery, black money and bribing of voters using campaign funds, remains. We need political parties to prioritise transparency and actively work towards the advancement of society and the nation.

Electoral Bonds

01 What is Electoral Bond?



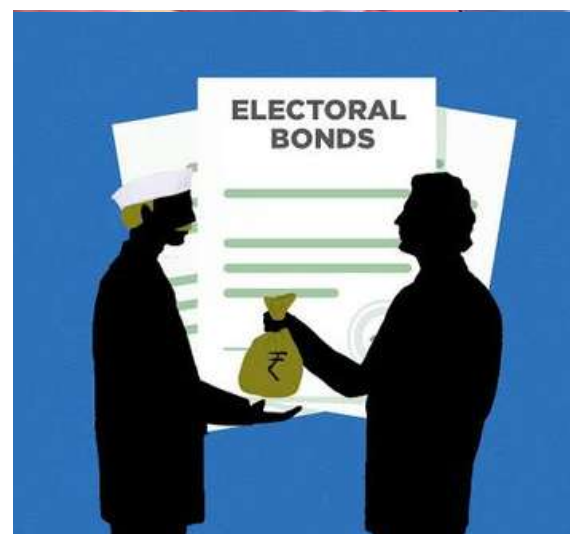
- Interest-free bearer bonds or money instruments.
- Can be purchased by companies and individuals in India from authorized branches of the State Bank of India.
- Bonds are sold in multiples of Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1 lakh, Rs 10 lakh, and Rs 1 crore.
- Can be purchased through a Know Your Customer (KYC)-compliant account to make donations to a political party.
- The political parties have to encash them within a stipulated time.

02 Eligibility Criteria

- Only the political parties registered under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
- Those who have secured **not less than 1%** of the votes polled in the last general election to the House of the People or the Legislative Assembly are eligible to receive electoral bonds.
- Both conditions are necessary.

03 Electoral Bond Scheme

- The Electoral Bond Scheme was introduced in the Finance Act, 2017 and was implemented in 2018.
- The Finance Act, 2017 amended the Representation of the People Act, 1951, Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, Income Tax Act, 1961 and, the Companies Act, 2013 for the implementation of the Electoral Bond Scheme.



Quiz

Q1. Who has been appointed as the chairman of the 16th Finance Commission?

- A. Dr. Arvind Panagariya
- B. N.K. Singh
- C. Dr. Y. V. Reddy
- D. Dr. Vijay Lal Kelkar

Q2. Which country has officially declared the snow leopard as its national symbol?

- A. Kyrgyzstan
- B. Uzbekistan
- C. Afghanistan
- D. Tajikistan

Q3. Parakram Divas, celebrated on January 23rd, marks the birth anniversary of which of the following leaders?

- A. Bal Gangadhar Tilak
- B. Bhagat Singh
- C. Neta ji Subhash Chandra Bose
- D. Lala Lajpat Rai

Q4. Ramban Anardana, a fruit tree, has been recently conferred with a Geographical Indicator. What state does this fruit belong to?

- A. Maharashtra
- B. Karnataka
- C. Jammu and Kashmir
- D. Himachal Pradesh

Q5. When is the National Voter's Day Celebrated?

- A. 24 January
- B. 25 January
- C. 26 January
- D. 27 January

Q6. Where was the India-US Trade Policy Forum meeting held?

- A. Washington DC
- B. San Francisco
- C. Kolkata
- D. New Delhi

Q7. What is the name of the India-Egypt joint special forces exercise?

- A. TRIUMPH
- B. CYCLONE
- C. BLIZZARD
- D. THUNDER

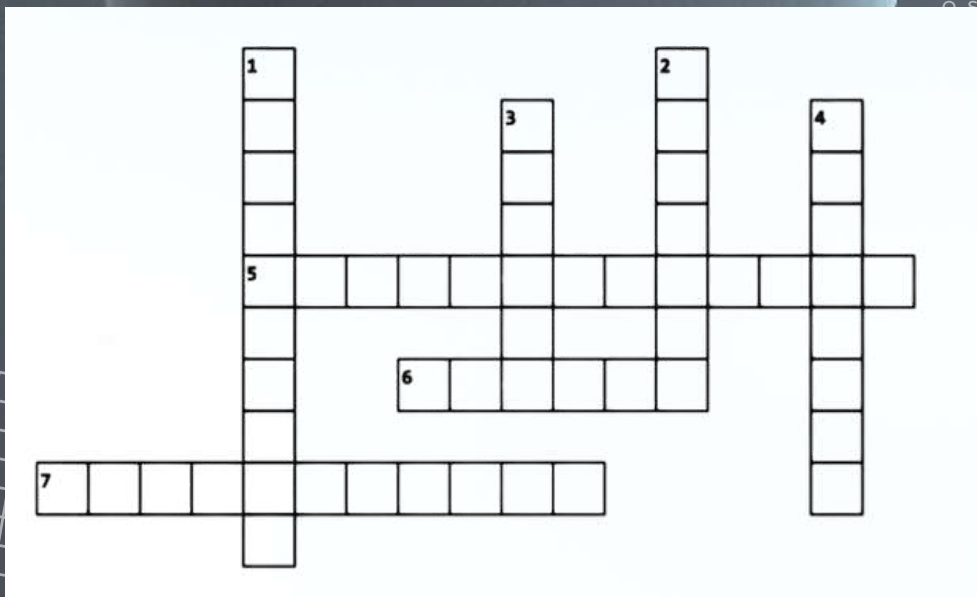
Q8. What is the name of the indigenous assault rifle launched by the DRDO?

- A. Ghaatak
- B. Vinaash
- C. Ugram
- D. Prahaar

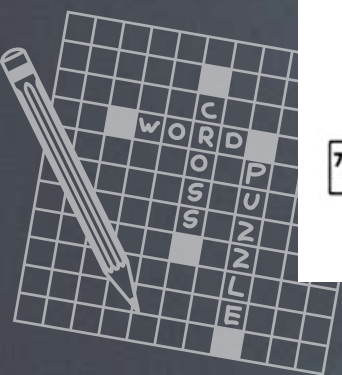
Answers 1 : D 5 : A
2 : C 6 : B
3 : A 7 : C
4 : B 8 : A

Crossword

1. World's largest mangrove forest
2. Asia's largest brackish water lagoon
3. Coastal state also known as Spices' State
4. Article of the Indian Constitution guaranteeing equality before law
5. First Indian to win an Individual Olympic gold medal
6. Father of Indian Nuclear Program
7. First Harappan site to have grid-patterned city planning



MANLJHUTFNLBTI
OSLITTAKVWGIQI
EGVVLUCINEKR
SCHIORUQUUQS
BABBONATALEW
PANETTONEIFK
UNASTRINNEVE
REGALIVEUZGJ
NGELOJRANTSX
ELLAYXBNASTC
FOFFBISCOTTI
IALBEROGAHIX
DGHIRLANDASK
PVQKDKFRENN



NISHCHAY

EDITION X



NISHTHA

THE CIVIL SERVICES SOCIETY OF HANSRAJ COLLEGE