

# TODAY'S NEWS

Curated Insights from 'The Hindu' Newspaper

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**Disclaimer:** While we strive to provide accurate and relevant summaries of the major news from 'The Hindu', we encourage readers to verify important details independently. If you notice any discrepancies, please notify us.



Feature	Old Pension Scheme (OPS)	National Pension System (NPS)	Unified Pension Scheme (UPS)
<b>Pension Structure</b>	50% of last drawn salary, <b>defined benefit</b>	<b>Defined contribution</b> , market-linked returns	50% of average basic pay (last 12 months), combines defined benefits and contributions
<b>Family Pension</b>	30% of last drawn salary (if in service) or 50% of pension (if after retirement)	No direct family pension, depends on annuity purchased	60% of the pension that the employee was receiving or eligible for, regardless of death in service or post-retirement
<b>Commutation Option</b>	Up to 40% of the pension could be commuted for a lumpsum	No commutation option	No commutation option mentioned
<b>Age-based Pension Hikes</b>	Additional 20% at age 80, with increments every 5 years	No age-based hikes	Unclear if age-based hikes will be provided
<b>Inflation Adjustment</b>	Pension adjusted for inflation (Dearness Allowance linked)	No guaranteed inflation adjustment	Pension adjusted in line with consumer price trends
<b>Government Contribution</b>	Fully funded by the government (no contributions required)	10% of salary (employee) + 14% (government)	10% of salary (employee) + 18.5% (government)
<b>Pay Commission Adjustments</b>	Pensions revised in line with Pay Commission recommendations	No direct link with Pay Commissions	Unclear if UPS will factor in future Pay Commission adjustments

## How will morality law hit Afghan women?

Why has the Taliban announced draconian measures targeting women? Who are the Muhtasib? Did Afghanistan always enforce certain bans for women? What has been the reaction on the ground to the fresh decrees? How have the United Nations responded to the new law?

Priscilla Johnson

The story so far:

The Taliban last week announced a new law on the "Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice" which imposes its interpretation of Sharia or Islamic law on the people of Afghanistan. It allows women's voices to be heard from their homes, wearing global attire, and also seeks to regulate many aspects of daily life.

What does the law say?

The 14-page document published in the official gazette says that women must cover their entire bodies and faces "from the hair to the feet of the feet", in the presence of unrelated men, as well as men and women. It also bans women from wearing "loose-fitting" clothing, such as trousers, skirts, and dresses, and from wearing "ornaments" such as jewelry, watches, and nail polish. It also bans women from wearing "makeup" such as lipstick, eye makeup, and hair dye. It also bans women from wearing "perfume" and from wearing "shoes" that are not "modest".

Men must grow their beards, and must not wear neckties or have Western-style haircuts. All games and forms of entertainment, even traditional children's games played with marbles



Restrictive law: Afghan women in Samsat, Afghanistan on August 27, 2021

or women, are banned as a form of gambling. Travel must be planned to avoid times of prayer, and drivers are forbidden from transporting women who are not accompanied by a related male guardian. The morality police, called Muhtasib, are authorised to issue and enforce discretionary punishment, including up to three days in prison. They can strip people of their IDs, revoke Islamic symbols, and check phones and laptops to ensure there are no images of being beings. They can also ensure that women's voices or music do not emanate from homes.

Is this a new development?

Many of these regulations are already in place in Afghanistan, with some having been declared through Taliban decrees over the past three years, or imposed more leniently by local enforcers. Observers fear that the official codification of these so-called "morality laws", however, will lead to more brutal punishment and give a stronger backing to the Muhtasib.

Look at Afghanistan's past: the extreme repression of these laws, Afghan women were the right to vote in 1979, and by the 1980s, women had become ministers and judges, doctors and engineers, although progress was more limited in rural areas. The Taliban's first rule, from 1996 to 2001, brutally dragged women back to the medieval era, but over the next two decades, a new generation grew up in relative freedom, and many hoped that the Taliban which returned in 2021 had also evolved. "They were portrayed as Taliban 2.0, more moderate, as we engaged with them," former Afghan lawmaker Faruq Khatib told CNN after the new laws were announced. The next day, he said, "I was shocked to see that the Taliban had not changed at all."

exclusive schools and universities for girls will reopen - and the issue of girls' education will be a key test of the Taliban's power in Afghanistan," she said.

How are women in Afghanistan reacting?

Some Afghan women have defied the ban on raising their voices in public, with videos being posted on social media showing them singing, even while covered from head to toe. A few have even reportedly protested on the streets, which "indicates that a small number do not care about their life and death because they have nothing left to lose," Ms. Khatib told CNN.

Other women are more compliant, but with long-term effects. Farhana Durrani, now in exile, founded a non-profit called LULU, which runs free underground schools within Afghanistan, where girls study clandestinely, in shifts, changing locations when they learn of Taliban surveillance. Videos posted a few days after the new law was announced show girls in backpacks learning science, mathematics and language. "They may not do the things but they can't take away our dreams," Ms. Durrani wrote.

What has been the international response?

UN Women and the new rules were "oppressive", while the office of the UN Commissioner for Human Rights called for the "utterly intolerable" law to be repealed. However, after the Taliban said it would no longer cooperate with the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, UN spokeswoman Stephanie Dujarric emphasised that the UN "will continue to engage with all stakeholders in Afghanistan, including the Taliban". "I am a firm believer that political pressure will make the Taliban respond, but that political pressure has never been enough," Ms. Khatib told CNN, noting that the UN had agreed to the Taliban demand to exclude Afghan women from talks in India this summer.

"So the Taliban thinks the world doesn't really care about women's rights," she said, adding that differences between the global north and south has "further emboldened the Taliban". Officials in the Ministry of External Affairs shared a statement reiterating India's position.

"We have tried with various efforts to this regard, India has consistently supported the cause of women's rights," the said, adding that India has been emphasising the importance of the establishment of an inclusive and representative government that ensures equal rights of women and girls to participate in all aspects of society, including access to higher education," he said.

## Taliban's New Law on Virtue and Vice

The Taliban announced a new law on the "**Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice**," imposing its interpretation of Sharia law on the Afghan population. This law severely restricts women's rights, sparking global outrage, and seeks to regulate various aspects of daily life.

### Key Provisions of the Law

- **Women's Restrictions:** Women must cover their entire bodies and faces in the presence of unrelated men and non-Muslims. Their voices are deemed "intimate" and must not be heard in public, with punishments for violations.

- **Men's Appearance:** Men are required to grow beards, avoid Western-style haircuts, and not wear neckties.
- **Daily Life Regulations:** Entertainment, games, and interactions between unrelated men and women are banned. Travel and other activities must align with prayer times, and women must be accompanied by male guardians.
- **Morality Police Authority:** The Muhtasib can enforce these laws, issue punishments, and check personal devices to ensure compliance.

## Historical Context and New Developments

While many of these restrictions were already in place, the formal codification intensifies their enforcement, potentially leading to more brutal punishments. The law represents a regression to Taliban's previous rule (1996-2001), rolling back the rights women had gained over the past two decades.

## Reactions from Afghan Women

Afghan women are responding with resistance, both overt and covert. Some are defying the ban on public singing, while others continue educating girls through underground schools, symbolizing resilience in the face of oppression.

Core Theme	UPSC Paper	Relevance
Women's Rights and Gender Equality	GS Paper I (Indian Society)	The Taliban's restrictions on women serve as a case study for examining gender equality, social empowerment, and the impact of cultural and religious norms on women's rights.
Governance and Ethical Dilemmas	GS Paper IV (Ethics, Integrity, and Aptitude)	Explores the ethical implications of the Taliban's moral laws on governance, personal freedoms, and cultural relativism versus universal human rights.
International Relations and Geopolitics	GS Paper II (International Relations)	Analyzes the global response to the Taliban's regime, with a focus on international diplomacy, human rights issues, and geopolitical strategies.
Social Empowerment and Education	GS Paper II (Social Justice)	Examines the impact of the Taliban's ban on women's education, linking it to broader themes of social empowerment, inclusive governance, and educational access in conflict zones.
Human Rights and International Intervention	Essay Paper	Provides material for essays on human rights, the role of international organizations, and the impact of religious and cultural laws on governance.

Core Theme	BPSC Paper	Relevance
Women's Rights and Gender Equality	GS Paper I (Indian Culture and Current Events)	The Taliban's restrictive laws on women can be related to discussions on women's rights, social empowerment, and the impact of cultural and religious practices on society.
Governance and Ethical Dilemmas	GS Paper II (Indian Polity and Economy)	Explores governance challenges, the role of the state in personal freedoms, and ethical dilemmas in implementing laws influenced by cultural or religious beliefs.
International Relations and Geopolitics	GS Paper II (Indian Economy and Geography)	Analyzes the international response to the Taliban's rule and its impact on global geopolitics, particularly focusing on India's stance and regional security concerns.
Social Empowerment and Education	GS Paper II (Role of Science and Technology in Development)	Discusses the impact of Taliban policies on education, particularly the suppression of women's education, and its broader implications for social progress and development.
Human Rights and International Intervention	Essay Paper	Provides material for essays on human rights, governance challenges in conflict zones, and the role of international organizations in protecting civil liberties.

## International Response

The international community has condemned the law as oppressive, with UN agencies and officials calling for its repeal. However, the Taliban's disregard for global pressure, combined with geopolitical divisions, has emboldened them to continue their repressive policies. India has reiterated its support for women's rights and education in Afghanistan, emphasizing the need for an inclusive government.

## Conclusion

The Taliban's new law on virtue and vice is a chilling reminder of the group's fundamentalist roots and a severe blow to the progress made in Afghanistan over the past two decades. As the world watches, the resilience of Afghan women and the international community's response will be critical in shaping the future of the country. This law is not just about the Taliban's interpretation of Sharia; it's about the broader struggle for human rights, dignity, and the fight against oppression.



## Will an extended space stay affect astronauts?

Why will Sunita Williams and Barry Wilmore have to stay onboard the International Space Station till 2025?

Yasudevan Mukundh

**The story so far:**  
On August 24, NASA announced that Boeing's Starliner crew capsule that took astronauts Sunita Williams and Barry Wilmore to the International Space Station (ISS), as part of its first crewed test flight, wasn't safe enough to transport them back. Instead, NASA extended Williams' and Wilmore's stay onboard the ISS until February 2025, when they will return in a SpaceX crew capsule to be launched in September 2024.

**How does space affect the body?**  
While hundreds of astronauts have flown to space (100 km above mean sea level and experiencing microgravity conditions), they don't make up a cohort large enough for researchers to study and reliably elucidate all the effects of spaceflight on their bodies. They have also spent different amounts of time there and reported different symptoms after different trips. Nonetheless, some broad trends have emerged: control of the body's bones, digestion, eyes, heart, muscles and nerves. For example, in microgravity, bones become weaker. Food may move more slowly through the gut and lead to weight gain. Around 70% of astronauts involved in long-duration spaceflight develop a condition called spaceflight associated neuro-ocular syndrome (SANS), where fluid buildup affects eyesight.

**Space omics** is a set of studies involved in understanding all the ways in which the body can be affected by the space environment. Further, because of the body's weightlessness experience, the heart is required to do less work and could shrink. Similarly, other parts of the musculature could shed muscle mass and strength. The blood loses more red blood cells per day than it does on the ground (a 2022 study in *Nature Medicine* quantified the loss rate but couldn't discern the cause), which means astronauts' diets need to be adjusted to deliver more energy for their bodies to make more of these cells. The signals from the body the brain uses to help maintain balance and a sense of place could also be disrupted in space.

**What causes these symptoms?**  
Researchers have identified some important causes, including radiation exposure, confined environments, and gravitation. Time is also an important factor. The longer astronauts spend in space, the more pronounced the symptoms. The average range of time an astronaut spends in space has increased from one minute to one month in the 1960s to 10 minutes to six months in the 2020s. Each expedition to the ISS can be up to six months long. By January 31, 2025, Williams and Wilmore will have spent 240 days in space. Whether a mission is short or long, space agencies require their astronauts to adhere to a strict exercise regime and maintain predictable routines while in orbit in order to work the body without incurring stress. Agencies have also developed communication and work-management protocols that keep astronauts engaged as well as relaxed.

**How much do we not know?**  
Our understanding of the effects of spaceflight on humans has many uncertainties. A June 2024 paper in *Nature Communications* said researchers still need to understand which effects of spaceflight are of "health-related importance", avoid over interpreting data "given the small sample sizes and the small number of studies", establish "suitable ground controls", and find alternative ways to replicate their findings. There are some specific results, however. Researchers are studying whether various nutrients and drugs are metabolised differently in space. They have already identified some changes in metabolic pathways involved in DNA and amino acid synthesis, and a condition in which excess iron in the body presents along with low urinary magnesium. In a 2022 report, a group at NASA suggested developing a more portable optical coherence tomography machine to check for SANS onboard spacecraft. If it is present, the group recommended studying countermeasures including applying "lower body negative pressure", exposure to artificial gravity through "human centrifugation", and taking drugs that lower the intracranial pressure.

**What is "space omics"?**  
"Space omics" is a set of studies involved in understanding all the ways in which the body can be affected by the space environment. A famous example is NASA's Twins Study, where scientists examined differences in the bodies of two identical twins – astronauts Mark Kelly and Scott Kelly – after the latter spent a year in space. They found around 8,600 genes were expressed differently between them. Scientists from around the world, including India, are part of the International Standards for Space Omics Processing to develop research and ethics guidelines for space omics.

On August 24, NASA announced that Boeing's Starliner crew capsule was deemed **unsafe for returning** astronauts **Sunita Williams** and **Barry Wilmore** from the ISS. Their return has been postponed until February 2025, with a SpaceX capsule scheduled to bring them back.

## Effects of Space on the Body

### Microgravity Impact:

- **Bones and Muscles:** Prolonged exposure to microgravity **weakens bones** and **reduces muscle mass and strength**.
- **Digestive System:** **Slower** digestion can lead to weight gain.
- **Vision:** 70% of astronauts develop **Spaceflight Associated Neuro-ocular Syndrome (SANS)**, where **fluid buildup affects eyesight**.
- **Cardiovascular System:** The **heart shrinks** due to reduced workload in space.
- **Blood:** Increased red blood cell loss requires dietary adjustments.

### Causes of Symptoms:

- **Radiation Exposure:** Contributes to various health issues.
- **Confined Environment:** Affects physical and mental health.
- **Gravitational Changes:** Alters bodily functions and metabolism.

### Research and Uncertainties

#### Knowledge Gaps:

- **Long-Term Effects:** More research needed to understand long-term health impacts.
- **Data Limitations:** Small sample sizes and few studies limit the reliability of findings.
- **Ongoing Studies:** Investigations into metabolic changes and potential countermeasures for conditions like SANS.

#### Future Directions:

- **Space Omics:** Research focusing on how space affects gene expression and bodily functions. NASA's Twins Study, comparing identical twins with one in space, revealed significant gene expression changes.

## Space Omics

**Definition:** Space omics studies how space environments impact biological systems, using tools like NASA's Twins Study to explore gene expression differences.

### International Collaboration:

- **Global Research:** Efforts involve international scientists to establish standards and guidelines for space-related research.

## IACS scientists discover a new target for cancer treatment

A combination of inhibitors that target different aspects of cell cycle and DNA replication makes it hard for cancer cells to survive, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of the treatment

**The first step towards targeted chemotherapy**

IACS researchers have discovered a new target for killing cancer cells. The study, published in the journal *Nature Communications*, shows that a combination of inhibitors that target different aspects of cell cycle and DNA replication makes it hard for cancer cells to survive, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of the treatment.

The study, led by Dr. Anirban Ghosh, a senior research fellow at IACS, Kolkata, and his team, focused on the CDK1 protein and the TDP1 enzyme, both involved in DNA repair. They found that inhibiting these two proteins simultaneously could significantly reduce the survival of cancer cells.

The researchers used a combination of CDK1 inhibitors and TDP1 inhibitors to study their effects on cancer cells. They found that the combination of these two inhibitors was more effective than either one alone in killing cancer cells.

The study also showed that the combination of these two inhibitors could enhance the effectiveness of chemotherapy. This suggests that targeting these two proteins could be a promising strategy for cancer treatment.

The researchers are now working to develop new drugs that target these proteins. They hope that these drugs will be used to treat a variety of cancer types.

Scientists at the **Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (IACS)** in Kolkata have **identified a new target** for killing cancer cells by focusing on the **CDK1 protein** and the **TDP1 enzyme**, both involved in DNA repair.

Their study suggests that **combining CDK1 inhibitors with Top1 (Topoisomerase 1) inhibitors could disrupt cancer cells' repair mechanisms**, making it harder for them to survive chemotherapy.

This approach could potentially lead to more effective cancer treatments. However, further research is needed to confirm these findings and their application in personalised therapies.

## The chemical treasury in garlic

A recent dossier of the medicinal uses of garlic, citing very ancient and modern evidence, is to show that the plant is a treasure trove of health benefits. It is a natural source of many essential nutrients and antioxidants, and it has been found to have a wide range of health benefits, including improving heart health, boosting the immune system, and reducing inflammation.

Garlic is a member of the Allium family, which includes onions, leeks, and chives. It is a bulbous plant with a strong, pungent odor. The bulb is made up of several cloves, which are the part of the plant that is eaten. The leaves are also edible and have a milder flavor than the bulb.

Garlic has been used for centuries as a natural remedy for a variety of ailments. It is believed to have antibacterial, antiviral, and antifungal properties. It is also thought to have anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects. Modern research has confirmed many of these traditional uses.

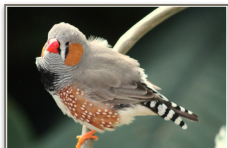
Garlic is a good source of many essential nutrients, including vitamin C, vitamin B6, and manganese. It also contains a variety of antioxidants, which help to protect the body from damage caused by free radicals. This makes garlic a valuable addition to a healthy diet.

Plants, unable to escape predators, have **evolved chemical defences**.

Garlic, in particular, is rich in over 2,300 chemicals, many of which have protective roles for both plants and humans. These include nutrients like **manganese, selenium, and vitamin B6**, as well as compounds like **allicin** and **flavonoids** that benefit cardiovascular health and may prevent diseases like Alzheimer's.

Garlic's pungency is **due to allicin**, formed when garlic is crushed or chewed.

While garlic has many health benefits, moderation is key to avoiding side effects. India is a major producer of garlic, offering a variety of flavoured and aromatic types.



## Social experiences shape song preference learning in finches

A study on songbirds sheds light on the power of social interaction to facilitate learning, insights that potentially apply to human development. Researchers discovered that zebra finches deprived of early social experiences could still form strong bonds with a partner later. Once placed into cohabitation with a male, females that had never heard a mating song before could quickly develop a preference for his melody. This challenges the belief that early experiences alone are critical for learning song preference.

The study on zebra finches provides valuable insights into **human development**. It suggests that while early experiences are important, the capacity for learning and forming preferences can also be **significantly influenced by social interactions later in life**.

This implies that, similarly to songbirds, humans might have the ability to adapt and learn from social interactions even if they miss certain early experiences.

Understanding this can help in designing educational and developmental interventions that emphasize the importance of social engagement throughout various stages of growth.

Nutrient/Compound	Core Health Benefit
Manganese	Supports bone health and metabolism.
Selenium	Provides antioxidant protection and supports immune function.
Vitamin B6	Aids in brain function and metabolism.
Allicin	Reduces inflammation and improves cardiovascular health.
Flavonoids	Offers antioxidant protection and supports cardiovascular health.



## Gut molecule in *C. elegans* worms slows fat burning

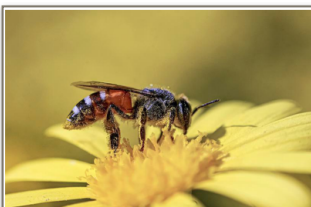
Scientists have discovered why, when the *C. elegans* worm eats less, slowly it loses fat. In *C. elegans*, they found one molecule that had a large effect on a form of insulin. In the worms, the insulin molecule made by gut cells was impacting fat metabolism via the brain. Although the exact molecule they identified in the worms has not yet been studied in humans, the study finds the brain and digestive system communicate in both directions to control metabolism based on food availability.

Researchers have found out **why the tiny worm *C. elegans* loses fat when it eats less.**

They discovered that a specific molecule in the worm's gut affects fat storage **by sending signals to its brain.**

This finding **shows** that the **brain and digestive system work together to manage how fat is used**, depending on how much food is available.

Although this exact molecule hasn't been studied in humans yet, the study helps us understand **how our body might control fat** based on our food intake.



## Honey bees may spread viruses to wild bumble bees

Honey bees may play a role in increasing virus levels in wild bumble bees each spring, according to researchers who analysed seasonal trends of parasite and virus transmission in bees. It found that honey bees had higher levels of viruses. While both types of bees had lower virus prevalence in the winter, only bumble bees experienced negligible levels by spring. Honey bees may be reinfesting bumble bees that otherwise would have very low virus prevalence.

Researchers found that **honey bees** might be **contributing** to **higher virus levels** in **wild bumble bees** each spring.

The study showed that honey bees carry more viruses, and during winter, both honey and bumble bees have low virus levels. However, as spring arrives, bumble bees end up with higher virus levels, likely because they get reinfected by honey bees.

This suggests that honey bees could be spreading viruses to bumble bees as the seasons change.



Honey Bee



Bumble Bee

**Note:** Spreading viruses from honey bees to wild bumble bees can lead to increased bumble bee mortality, reduced pollination services, and disruptions in ecosystem balance and agricultural productivity.



### Question Corner

#### Exploiting signals

Do some spiders exploit firefly's flashing signals to lure more prey?

Fireflies rely on flashing signals to communicate with other fireflies using light-emitting lanterns on their abdomens. In fireflies of the species *Arctostola terminalis*, males make multi-pulse flashes with two lanterns to attract females, and females make single-pulse flashes with their one lantern to attract males. Researchers now have evidence that an orb-weaving spider (*Araneus ventricosus*) manipulates the flashing signals of male fireflies ensnared in its web such that they mimic the typical

flashes of a female firefly, thereby luring other males to serve as their next meal. They found that the spider's web more often captured male fireflies when the spider was present. The signals made by male fireflies looked a lot more like the signals of free females. Specifically, the ensnared males used single-pulse signals using only one of their lanterns, not both. The findings suggested that the males weren't altering their flashes as a distress signal. The researchers propose that the spiders alter the firefly's signal.

Readers may send their questions/answers to [questioncorner@bpscpoint.co.in](mailto:questioncorner@bpscpoint.co.in)

Researchers have discovered that **orb-weaving spiders** (*Araneus ventricosus*) **exploit the flashing signals of male fireflies** to attract more prey. These spiders manipulate the signals of male fireflies caught in their webs, making them mimic the **female** fireflies' single-pulse flashes. This deception lures additional male fireflies into the web, which then become the spiders' next meal. The study shows that the presence of the spider increases the chances of capturing male fireflies, as their signals change to resemble those of females.

**Note:** In the context of spiders, "**orb**" refers to the **shape of their web**. An orb-weaving spider constructs a web that is typically round and wheel-shaped, resembling an orb. These webs are characterised by their radial symmetry and are used by the spider to catch flying insects, which become entangled in the sticky silk threads.



## BJP leader's house torched in Manipur

Fresh unrest in the conflict-ridden state after Kuki-Zo tribal organisations take out rallies to push for separate administration. Chief Minister Biren Singh condemns the attack, vows action against agitators who failed to provide security; shutdown enforced by police groups affects normal life in Imphal

The Hindu Bureau  
Imphal

Unidentified attackers torched the house of a BJP spokesperson in ethnic conflict-ridden Manipur on Saturday during general elections, the state's tribal people demanding a separate administration. The arson was carried out at a village in the state's Churachandpur district. The targeted house belonged to the parents of Michael Lamjathang, the BJP spokesperson and leader of the Thadou tribe, one of whose members did not want to be identified.



A protest against the Kuki Inpi Manipur, an ethnic tribal body, and Kuki Students' Organisation. One of the banners displayed by the protesters read: "The protest in Manipur, Mother India has to deliver a new holy constitution called Kukiland". They raised slogans against the BJP for a violent attack on which he is heard allegedly admitting to his complicity in the ethnic violence. The Manipur Police said the attack was done by a group of people. On August 29, Mr. Singh rejected the demand for a separate administration first raised by 10 Kuki-Zo tribes after ethnic violence broke out in 2023.

Chief Minister Biren Singh condemned the attack. "The reported targeting of our people, often on the basis of caste, is a deeply troubling trend," he said. "Such acts of provocation will not be tolerated. We will ensure that those responsible are held accountable. The police will take action against the concerned individuals who failed to provide adequate security, despite prior warnings of potential threats," he wrote on X. Mr. Lamjathang said that the incident was the

In Manipur, during protests demanding a **separate administration** for **Kuki-Zo tribal people**, unidentified attackers set fire to the house of BJP spokesperson Michael Lamjathang Haokip in Peniel village, Churachandpur district.

This attack is part of ongoing ethnic conflict, with Haokip's family being targeted multiple times.

Protests, organized by the Kuki Inpi Manipur and Kuki Students' Organisation, involved large rallies calling for the **creation of a separate state**, "**Kukiland**," and criticized Chief Minister N. Biren Singh.

Singh condemned the violence, promised action against the perpetrators, and rejected the demand for a separate administration, suggesting **increased autonomy** for **existing councils** instead.

### Note:

Manipur, a northeastern state of India, has experienced ethnic and community tensions, particularly between the **Meitei community**, which predominantly resides in the **Imphal Valley**, and the **Kuki-Zo tribal people**, who mainly live in the **hill districts**. These tensions often stem from historical grievances, competition for resources, and political representation.

The **Kuki-Zo tribal groups** have been advocating for a separate administration or statehood, citing perceived **marginalization** and **lack of autonomy** within the existing state structure. They argue that a separate administration would better address their needs and issues.

## Atrocities against women a serious concern, says PM

The spirit of new criminal laws was citizen first, dignity first and justice first, says Modi, adding that the quicker the decisions in criminal cases, the greater would be the assurance to women

The Hindu Bureau  
New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday that he is deeply troubled by the atrocities against women and the safety of children in a society. He said, "The spirit of the new criminal laws is citizen first, dignity first and justice first. The quicker the decisions in criminal cases, the greater would be the assurance given to women. We must stop calling the district judiciary the 'subordinate judiciary' because it is not a subordinate but a part of the judiciary. We must stop calling the district judiciary the 'subordinate judiciary' because it is not a subordinate but a part of the judiciary. We must stop calling the district judiciary the 'subordinate judiciary' because it is not a subordinate but a part of the judiciary."



Narendra Modi and CJI Chandrachud at the opening of the National Conference of District Judiciary in New Delhi on Saturday. He said that the spirit of the new criminal laws, including the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, was "citizen first, dignity first and justice first." He said that the spirit of the new criminal laws, including the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, was "citizen first, dignity first and justice first."

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**, at the National Conference of District Judiciary, stressed the need for expedited decisions in cases of crimes against women to enhance their safety and justice. He emphasized that the new criminal laws, including the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, are guided by the principles of "**citizen first, dignity first, and justice first**." Modi highlighted the importance of fast-track courts, deposition centres for witnesses, and district committees involving local authorities. Chief Justice D.Y.

**CJI** called for recognition of the district judiciary's critical role and the need to overcome colonial-era attitudes.

Senior advocate **Kapil Sibal** urged empowerment of lower courts to uphold justice impartially.



## INBRIEF



### Centre plans foot-and-mouth disease-free zones in 8 States

The Union government has decided to establish foot-and-mouth disease-free zones in eight States – Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra, and Gujarat – to boost exports of Indian animal products and improve global market presence.

Advanced vaccination efforts are currently underway in these States.

The Union government plans to establish **foot-and-mouth disease-free zones** in eight States – Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra, and Gujarat – to **boost exports of Indian animal products** and **improve global market presence**.

#### Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD)

Aspect	Description
Cause and Virus	Caused by the Foot-and-Mouth Disease Virus (FMDV), belonging to the Picornaviridae family. There are seven main serotypes: O, A, C, SAT 1, SAT 2, SAT 3, and Asia 1.
Symptoms	High fever, blisters and sores in the mouth and on the feet, excessive drooling, lameness, and loss of appetite. Economic impact includes reduced milk production and weight gain.
Transmission	Direct contact through infected animals' secretions, excretions, or bodily fluids. Indirect contact via contaminated equipment and feed. Airborne spread over long distances.
Diagnosis and Control	Diagnosis through clinical signs and laboratory tests (ELISA, PCR, virus isolation). Control measures include vaccination, culling infected animals, biosecurity, and movement controls.
Impact on Trade	Affected countries face export restrictions or bans on animal products.
Current Situation	Global efforts include vaccination campaigns and establishment of disease-free zones to control and eventually eradicate FMD.

### Centre plans to boost '2G ethanol' production, set up enzyme-manufacturing facilities to reduce imports

Jaishankar

NEW DELHI

After the Centre unveiled its BioE3 policy to boost bio-technology and bio-manufacturing in its bid to expand export opportunities for Indian animal products, and enhance the country's global market presence, according to Alka Upadhyaya, Secretary of the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, while speaking at a workshop on Saturday.



The Union government has decided to establish foot-and-mouth disease-free zones in eight States – Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra, and Gujarat – to boost exports of Indian animal products and improve global market presence.

The Union government has decided to establish foot-and-mouth disease-free zones in eight States – Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra, and Gujarat – to boost exports of Indian animal products and improve global market presence.

The Union government's **BioE3 policy** aims to enhance biotechnology-driven manufacturing, including setting up **enzyme-manufacturing facilities** to support ethanol production.

The first such plant might be established in **Manesar, Haryana**, supplying enzymes to bioethanol plants in **Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Haryana**.

#### Generations of Ethanol Production

Generation	Feedstock	Technology	Advantages	Challenges
1st Generation	Food crops (e.g., corn, sugarcane)	Fermentation of sugars from feedstock	Established technology; high energy yield	Competition with food supply; high water usage
2nd Generation	Agricultural residues (e.g., rice straw, maize stover)	Cellulosic conversion, often involving enzymatic hydrolysis	Reduces waste; uses non-food biomass	Higher production costs; complex technology
3rd Generation	Algae	Algal fermentation or transesterification	High yield potential; less competition with food crops	High cost of cultivation; scalability issues
4th Generation	Synthetic biology and engineered microorganisms	Advanced fermentation technologies and genetic engineering	Highly efficient; potential for using various feedstocks	Emerging technology; still under research

India needs about 13.5 billion litres of ethanol annually by 2025-26, primarily for fuel blending.

The **second-generation (2G) ethanol**, made from rice straw instead of molasses, **requires enzymes** for efficient production. Currently, these enzymes are imported, but Indian scientists have developed competitive alternatives that could reduce costs significantly.

Enzyme production is critical for converting rice stubble into ethanol, offering a sustainable alternative to burning stubble and supporting India's ethanol blending goals.





Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, is **renowned** for crafting the **Saraswati veena**, an ancient musical instrument, earning it the **first Geographical Indication (GI) tag** in India **for a musical instrument**.

The town's artisans, dedicated to the art for generations, face challenges as **fewer younger people join the trade due to low profitability**.

The intricate process of making a veena involves carving **jackfruit** wood into the resonator, neck, and tuning box, requiring 15-20 days of skilled craftsmanship.

The veena can be made in two styles: ottu veena (assembled from separate parts) and ekantha veena (carved from a single piece of wood).

## 'Slowing of GDP growth due to lower govt. spending, MCC'

RBI Governor Das says enforcement of the model code of conduct for Lok Sabha polls dampened government spending thereby dragging down growth; expects a pick up in the coming quarters

Press Trust of India  
BHUBANESWAR

The slowing of India's economic growth to a 15-month low of 6.7% in the April-June quarter was due to "lower" government spending in the wake of the enforcement of the model code of conduct for the recent Lok Sabha polls, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said here on Saturday.



"The Reserve Bank projected a growth rate of 7.1% for the first quarter. However, the first advance estimates... showed the

growth of more than 7%, he said.

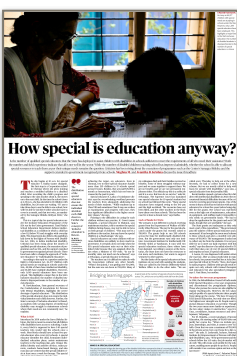
Only two aspects had pulled growth slightly down. Those were government (both Central and State) expenditure and agriculture, the RBI governor pointed out. He said government expenditure was low during the first quarter, perhaps due to elections and operation of model code of conduct.

"We would expect the government expenditure to pick up in coming quarters and provide the required support to growth," Mr. Das said.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor, Shaktikanta Das, attributed India's economic growth slowdown to 6.7% in the April-June quarter primarily to **reduced government spending**, which was **influenced by the model code of conduct** during the Lok Sabha elections.

Despite strong performance in consumption, investment, manufacturing, services, and construction, **lower government expenditure** and **agricultural performance** were key factors impacting growth.

The RBI anticipates that increased government spending in future quarters will support economic growth.



**Special educators** in **Tamil Nadu** face **significant challenges** under the Inclusive Education Programme of the **Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)**.

With only 1,649 special educators serving 64,377 children with special needs, there is a severe shortage, affecting the quality of education.

Special educators are **overwhelmed by their workload**, low honorarium, and lack of support.

The SSA aims to provide individualized attention, but the current system is flawed, and many educators are **assigned additional duties**, leading to **inadequate care for students**.

The shortage of qualified professionals and financial constraints further exacerbate the difficulties in providing effective education and support.



People in Punjab, originally from Bihar, Punjab, with their families, on the outskirts of the Punjab village in Mohali district, Punjab, India (Source: Reuters)

## In Punjab, cultural and economic turf tussles

A village group in the State's Mohali district has asked for migrants, most from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, to leave the village, claiming they are not welcome.

Punjab, an increasingly polarized state, is facing a new wave of migration. In the last few years, the state has seen a significant influx of migrants, particularly from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. This influx has led to tensions between local residents and migrants, particularly in the Mohali district. The tensions are rooted in cultural and economic differences. Local residents feel that migrants are taking over their land and resources, while migrants feel that they are being treated unfairly. The situation is further complicated by the fact that many migrants are from the same region as the local residents, leading to a sense of competition for resources.

According to a report by the Punjab Sahitya Akademi, the state has seen a significant increase in the number of migrants in the last few years. This increase has led to tensions between local residents and migrants, particularly in the Mohali district. The tensions are rooted in cultural and economic differences. Local residents feel that migrants are taking over their land and resources, while migrants feel that they are being treated unfairly. The situation is further complicated by the fact that many migrants are from the same region as the local residents, leading to a sense of competition for resources.

The tensions are rooted in cultural and economic differences. Local residents feel that migrants are taking over their land and resources, while migrants feel that they are being treated unfairly. The situation is further complicated by the fact that many migrants are from the same region as the local residents, leading to a sense of competition for resources. The growing presence of migrants has prompted mixed reactions from locals, with some viewing them as economic contributors and others as a strain on community resources and cultural practices.

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## Rising Tensions Between Locals and Migrants

Recently, tensions have escalated between local Punjabis and migrant workers in Kurali, Mohali, following accusations of theft and cultural clashes.

## Implementation of Restrictive Rules

In response to these tensions, local residents have imposed rules restricting migrant behavior. These regulations include prohibitions on public spitting and wearing underwear in public, as well as requirements for landlords to ensure tenant compliance with local norms and cleanliness standards.

## Police Intervention and Local Reactions

The police intervened to moderate the rules, leading to some adjustments. Local officials **attribute the conflict to cultural differences rather than issues inherent to the migrant community**. The growing presence of migrants has prompted mixed reactions from locals, with some viewing them as economic contributors and others as a strain on community resources and cultural practices.

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## Economic Contributions and Community Impact

Migrants, who have come to Punjab in search of better economic opportunities, have become integral to the local economy, particularly in sectors like construction and domestic work. The influx has led to increased property rentals and economic benefits, but has also heightened concerns among some locals about the impact on their cultural and social stability.

## Ongoing Challenges

The situation **underscores** the ongoing challenges related to **migration, community integration, and cultural sensitivity**. The divergent views on migrants reflect broader issues of economic resilience and cultural adaptation within rapidly changing communities.

**"In a rapidly evolving society, the true challenge lies not in the arrival of new faces but in how we bridge cultural divides and integrate diverse communities into a shared sense of belonging."**

## "News Highlights: Key Updates in Brief"

- The Election Commission **postponed** the **Haryana Assembly election** from October 1 to October 5 and vote counting to October 8 to accommodate the Bishnoi community's festival and address concerns from the Haryana BJP about low voter turnout.
- The Indian Embassy **rescued** 47 Indians trapped in cyber scam centres in **Laos' Golden Triangle SEZ**, with 30 already returned to India and 17 awaiting travel arrangements.

**Note:** The **Golden Triangle** is a region in Southeast Asia where the borders of **Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar** meet. This area is named for its historical association with the **opium trade**, which was a major economic activity in the region during the 19th and 20th centuries.



- The Karnataka government is issuing show-cause notices to telecom providers and the DoT after mobile networks were found operational inside Bengaluru's Parappana Agrahara Central Prison, despite the installation of network jammers.
- In Arunachal Pradesh, around 600 **Adi community members** protested against a **12,500-MW hydropower project** by NHPC, opposing the survey and pre-feasibility report for the dam.

### Adi Community

Aspect	Details
Location	Primarily in Siang district, Arunachal Pradesh
Language	Various dialects of the Tani language family
Culture	Rich heritage with distinct traditional practices, festivals, and art forms
Social Structure	Clan and village-based communities
Economic Activities	Predominantly agriculture; staple crops include rice and millet
Environmental Stance	Actively opposes large hydropower projects that may impact their land and resources

- The **Union Health Ministry** and **ICMR** are setting up **Technical Resource Centres (TRCs)** to **develop evidence-based healthcare guidelines**. Each TRC will get up to ₹20 lakh per year for three years, with possible renewals. TRCs will conduct systematic reviews, training on the GRADE methodology, and monitor implementation. Applications will be reviewed by an expert committee, with selections announced in September 2024.
- India's Trade Ministry has proposed an **anti-dumping duty** on **aluminium foil** imported from China due to a significant increase in Chinese shipments, which have captured nearly a third of India's market share despite existing local production capacity. The recommendation suggests a duty of \$619-\$873 per metric ton for foil up to 80 microns thick, excluding those below 5.5 microns for non-capacitor uses, to protect domestic manufacturers.
- India is set for three months of surplus rainfall, with September expected to see above-normal precipitation. This could impact crops nearing harvest, especially those that mature quickly. The IMD warns of heavy rainfall and potential flooding in parts of Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh. The increased rainfall is due to frequent low-pressure systems over the Bay of Bengal and a normal monsoon trough.

## Practice Mains Question

1. The Taliban's "Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice" law imposes severe restrictions on personal freedoms, particularly affecting women. Analyze the impact of this law on women's rights and societal governance in Afghanistan. Discuss the role of international organizations in addressing such human rights violations and propose strategies for the global community to tackle similar issues in authoritarian regimes. (Answer in 150 words)
2. In a rapidly evolving society, the true challenge lies not in the arrival of new faces but in how we bridge cultural divides and integrate diverse communities into a shared sense of belonging. Examine. (Answer in 250 words)
3. Discuss the impact of ethnic and community tensions on regional stability in Manipur, with a focus on the recent violence related to demands for a separate administration for the Kuki-Zo tribal people. Analyze the potential consequences of such demands on the broader socio-political landscape of the state. (Answer in 250 words)

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## Practice Prelims Question

1. In the context of ecological interactions, consider the following statements:

1. Orb-weaving spiders (*Araneus ventricosus*) manipulate the flashing signals of male fireflies to mimic female fireflies' signals.
2. This manipulation results in the spider capturing more male fireflies by attracting them with altered signals.

Which of the statements above is/are correct?

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

Answer:

- c) Both 1 and 2

Explanation:

1. **Orb-weaving spiders (*Araneus ventricosus*) manipulate the flashing signals of male fireflies to mimic female fireflies' signals:** This statement is correct. The research shows that the orb-weaving spider alters the flashing signals of the male fireflies it captures, making them resemble the typical signals of a female firefly. This alteration is a strategic adaptation by the spider to lure more prey.
2. **This manipulation results in the spider capturing more male fireflies by attracting them with altered signals:** This statement is also correct. The study found that the spider's manipulation of the male fireflies' signals led to a higher capture rate of male fireflies, as the altered signals attracted more males to the spider's web.

Thus, both statements are accurate, making option c) **Both 1 and 2** the correct answer.

2. What is the primary objective of the Technical Resource Centres (TRCs) being established by the Union

Health Ministry and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)?

- a. To conduct clinical trials for new medications.
- b. To develop and promote evidence-based healthcare guidelines.
- c. To manage financial support for healthcare infrastructure.
- d. To train healthcare professionals in advanced surgical techniques.

Answer: b. To develop and promote evidence-based healthcare guidelines.

3. Consider the following statements about the Thanjavur veena:

1. Thanjavur is renowned for making the Saraswati veena, which is the only type of veena crafted there.
2. The Saraswati veena has received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag as the first musical instrument in India.
3. The production of the veena involves using jackfruit wood and requires detailed craftsmanship over 15-20 days.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: D) 1, 2, and 3

Explanation:

1. **Thanjavur is known for crafting the Saraswati veena:** True. Thanjavur is renowned for its Saraswati veena, which is unique to the region.
2. **The Saraswati veena is the first musical instrument in India to receive a GI tag:** True. It was the first musical instrument in India to be awarded the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.
3. **Veena production uses jackfruit wood and takes 15-20 days:** True. The veena is made from jackfruit wood, and the crafting process is detailed and time-consuming.



## End of Summary

This marks the end of today's summary from *The Hindu*. We trust this has added value to your exam preparation. Keep engaging with current affairs to sharpen your insights and strengthen your knowledge. We'll be back tomorrow with more updates to guide you on your path to success.

*Thank you for reading. Stay focused and dedicated!*

**Understanding current affairs** is crucial for **UPSC/State PSC preparation**, as it bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application, ensuring that candidates are well-informed, relevant, and capable of making insightful analyses on contemporary issues.

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