

# TODAY'S NEWS

Curated Insights from 'The Hindu' Newspaper

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Our mission is to deliver concise yet comprehensive summaries of major news from 'The Hindu' Newspaper, crafted with a keen focus on exam relevance. Here's what sets BPSC POINT apart:

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**Analytical Insights:** Our approach goes beyond reporting; we provide analytical perspectives that help you grasp the broader implications of each issue.

**Holistic Approach:** We connect current affairs with key exam themes, helping you build a well-rounded and contextual knowledge base.

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In addition to news summaries, we offer practice questions designed to mirror the style and rigor of UPSC and BPSC exams. These questions are crafted to help you apply your knowledge and hone your analytical skills, preparing you for success in your exams.

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**Team BPSC POINT**

Dedicated to your exam success.

**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.

## By another name

Courts should act against fake medicine, not just control advertising.

**I**n August 27, a Bench of the Supreme Court of India found itself reaching, once again, for idioms over a matter involving misleading advertisements of ayurveda, siddha, and unani products. Earlier this year, another Bench had concluded proceedings against Patanjali Ayurved over its defiance of an order to not publicise unproven or unprovable medicinal claims attached to its products. Towards the end of that matter, various State-level regulatory agencies were finally roused to act against Patanjali Ayurved over these claims while the Court ordered it to publish media advertisements apologising for its actions. While the responses of the State bodies to the company are still evolving, the Court's own verdict seemed to embody a belief that nothing more could be done – and this belief casts the Court's current ire against the Ministry of AYUSH in a particular light. India's drug manufacturers and regulators are caught between ensuring high quality, which leads to higher manufacturing costs, while keeping consumer prices down so that patients can access the drugs they need. Unfortunately, which leads to higher manufacturing costs, while keeping consumer prices down so that patients can access the drugs they need. Unfortunately, which leads to higher manufacturing costs, while keeping consumer prices down so that patients can access the drugs they need.

With the Ministry's critical attempt now to sidestep Rule 170 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules 1945, which penalises misleading advertisements of ayurveda, siddha, and unani products, the Court confronts an old tendency in a new disguise. Public apologies and *post facto* action by regulatory bodies may have been the end of the line against one company. The Court may also seem sated by a demand, as it spelled out in its May 7 order, that all advertisers self-declare that they will not publish misleading advertisements. But similar concessionary measures will falter against a Ministry. Medicine quality and manufacturer inspections are disuniform, more so in the alternative medicines space, and regulating advertisements has emerged as a last-ditch backstop against bad products entering the market. In the face of progressively weakening protections against what is ultimately fake medicine, the most preferred outcome in the present matter would be for the Court to look at past declarations – self-made or otherwise – and into rectifying the quality-control regime, particularly to empower it, protect it from political capture, and bring alternative medicines under its purview.

The Supreme Court of India is once again addressing the issue of **misleading advertisements** for ayurveda, siddha, and unani products. Earlier this year, the Court ordered Patanjali Ayurved to stop promoting unverified medicinal claims, leading to some state-level regulatory actions and a public apology from the company.

However, the Court now faces a more complex challenge involving the Ministry of AYUSH, which has been criticized for allowing businesses to label various products as "Ayurvedic" without proper quality control, as seen in a case involving an Ayurvedic milk product.

The Ministry's recent attempt to sidestep **Rule 170** of the **Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945**, which penalises misleading advertisements, has raised concerns.

The Court **must now consider the broader issue** of weak medicine quality control and regulatory inspections, particularly in the alternative medicine sector, and the need to strengthen the quality-control regime to prevent the spread of fake medicines and ensure public safety.

## Biotech enigma

Biotechnology initiatives need long-term capital investments

**E**arlier this week the Cabinet cleared a proposal, though without specifying a budget, called BioE3 or Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment. The thrust is to boost manufacturing in the biotech industry sector. Since 1986, India has been a dedicated department for biotechnology, and which deserves substantial credit for its role in progress in vaccine development, diagnostics and its analogues, that has bolstered India's status as a 'vaccine factory'. It is due to the initiatives of this department. However, biotechnology did not quite spawn the equivalent of the IT revolution. There is much more to an industrialised biotechnology sector beyond vaccines. There are billion-dollar companies today that rest on high-value microbes, gene-modification techniques, bio-plastics, bio-materials, and high-precision medical devices. However, despite the know-how and human resource capital, only a few Indian biotech have global resonance, as there are few local manufacturers who can supply Indian laboratories with the ingredients and devices to make products. The reliance on imports means that India loses its international competitiveness. The BioE3 policy aims to correct this. In the last four decades, India has funded biotech research institutions but now sees that it needs to be going beyond and setting up companies, in public-private partnership mode, to bolster biotechnology manufacturing. The BioE3 policy envisages bio-based chemicals and enzymes, functional foods and smart proteins, precision biotherapeutics, climate-resilient agriculture, carbon capture, and futuristic marine and space research. Futurists have been saying that the era of fossil-fuel industrialisation is over and humanity will have to rely on the natural world – for food and for biotech consumer products. This is to solve the global problem of non-biodegradable waste and greenhouse emissions. Future industries must be grounded in environmentally benign products, and this is impossible without sophisticated biotechnology. By setting up bio-factories and bio-refineries in resource hubs, the policy hopes there will be avenues for a variety of biotechnologists to converge. Well-intentioned this may be, but India's woes with manufacturing have chronic causes. Without establishing enabling grounds for long-term capital investment – and those have little to do with biotechnology per se – top-down initiatives will have limited impact. The BioE3 policy must be a deeply collaborative effort between Centre and States. Rather than expect quick returns, the government must provide financial and infrastructural support over the long-term.

## Cabinet Clears BioE3 Initiative to Boost Biotechnology

Earlier this week, the Indian Cabinet approved the **BioE3 initiative (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment, and Employment)**, focusing on enhancing biotechnology manufacturing. Since its establishment in 1986, the Department of Biotechnology has significantly contributed to India's success in vaccine development and diagnostics, earning the country a reputation as a '**vaccine factory**'. However, unlike the IT sector, biotechnology has **not experienced a similar industrial revolution**. The BioE3 policy aims to address this by reducing reliance on imports and increasing local manufacturing, thereby enhancing India's global competitiveness.

## Focus on Six Key Verticals

The BioE3 initiative targets six main areas: **bio-based chemicals and enzymes, functional foods and smart proteins, precision biotherapeutics, climate-resilient agriculture, carbon capture, and futuristic marine and space research**. These efforts are aligned with the global shift towards environmentally friendly industrial practices. The policy emphasizes the need for sophisticated

biotechnology to create **environmentally benign products**, addressing issues like non-biodegradable waste and carbon emissions.

## Challenges and the Need for Long-term Support

Despite the policy's good intentions, India's manufacturing sector faces deep-rooted challenges that extend beyond biotechnology. For the BioE3 initiative to succeed, it requires a **collaborative effort** between the Centre and States, with a **focus on long-term capital investment, financial support, and infrastructure development**, rather than expecting quick returns.

In a significant diplomatic move, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** met with **Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy** in Kyiv. While India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) clarified that the meeting was not aimed at mediating the ongoing conflict, the timing and nature of the visit have sparked discussions about India's potential role in peace negotiations. Historically, India has maintained a **non-aligned and strategically autonomous foreign policy**, avoiding taking sides in the Russia-Ukraine war. However, the visit suggests a possible peace initiative, despite the current escalation of the conflict in the Kursk region.



## Balancing Act and Strategic Considerations

India's consistent foreign policy approach, which emphasizes peaceful resolution of disputes, positions the country as a neutral player in the conflict. By engaging with both Russia and Ukraine, **India aims to reinforce its image as a responsible global actor**. The visit also reflects India's broader strategy to play a more active role as a mediator or "communicator" in international conflicts, leveraging its unique relationships with both Moscow and Washington.

## International Stakeholders and Potential Impact

The visit could align with broader international strategies, particularly those of the **United States and European countries**, which are seeking a resolution to the conflict. The U.S. is interested in negotiating from a position of strength, while European countries face economic challenges due to the ongoing war. For President **Joe Biden**, brokering a solution could solidify his foreign policy legacy. Russia, too, may view India as a trusted mediator, given the longstanding friendship between the two countries.

## Implications for India

For **Prime Minister Modi**, successful mediation in the Russia-Ukraine conflict could enhance his global stature and serve as a **legacy-defining moment**. This aligns with his vision of India as a global leader in maintaining international peace and security. Despite the challenges, India's unique position could enable it to facilitate a temporary ceasefire or limited peace agreement, offering much-needed relief to all parties involved.

**"In a world where alliances shift and power dynamics evolve, the true measure of leadership lies not in choosing sides, but in bridging divides."**

## Moving the spotlight to grassroots democracy

The Election Commission of India (ECI), with its track record of conducting free and fair elections, and on time, to Parliament and State Legislatures, has emerged as one of independent India's most credible institutions. Yet, there are 34 State Election Commissions (SECs) that need serious attention and strengthening.

**Systemic disempowerment of SECs**  
The SECs were brought into existence by Articles 243R and 243ZA of the Constitution (introduced by the 73rd and 74th amendments in 1993), which vested them with the superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of the electoral rolls, and the conduct of, all elections to panchayats and urban local governments (ULGs). In reality, however, SECs are increasingly disempowered and, in certain cases, even in litigation with their State governments.

In a recent case, the Karnataka SEC filed a contempt petition against the Government of Karnataka for reneging on its commitment to the High Court to respond to a contempt petition filed by the SEC to allow it to proceed with the delimitation of panchayat raj institutions and conduct elections (already delayed by over three and a half years). The Karnataka government had assured the High Court in December 2022 that it would publish the delimitation and reservation details within two weeks to enable the SEC to conduct elections. In another set of cases filed by the Andhra Pradesh SEC and several others in 2020, the Supreme Court struck down an ordinance of Andhra Pradesh, which hindered elections to the panchayat raj institutions.

Our analysis of the performance audit of the implementation of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India across 16 States



Rishabh Shivamohan  
CEO at the Karnataka Centre for Governance and Democracy



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Head, Participatory Governance at the Karnataka Centre for Governance and Democracy

Empowering and reforming the State Election Commissions are crucial steps.

shows that 1,500 out of 2,240 urban local governments (70%) did not have an elected council at the time of the CAG audit. The CAG, in its Karnataka report, observed that the disempowerment of SECs is, more often than not, the cause for delay in on-time elections. Such delays undermine local governments and erode the trust of citizens in these important public institutions.

Annandurai's Annual Survey of India's City Systems (ASIS, 2022) shows that only 11 out of 34 States and Union Territories have empowered SECs to conduct ward delimitation. These States and Union Territories (namely, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, and West Bengal) account for only 38% of India's population, as in the 2011 Census.

**Electoral reforms to strengthen third tier**  
Regular and fair elections to local governments are non-negotiable for meaningful grassroots democracy and ensuring effective first-mile service delivery in the cities and the villages of the country. The requirement to conduct elections before the expiry of the five-year term of elected local governments is a constitutional mandate and must be as sacrosanct as the elections to the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha. To ensure this, SECs must be fully empowered on all matters of local government elections, on a par with the Election Commission of India, as observed by the Supreme Court in *Rajesh Singh Tomar v. Municipal Corporation of the City of Ahmedabad and Others* (2006). The following reforms are a must in order to bring about this change:

with the Election Commission of India in terms of transparency and independence in constitution and appointment. Notwithstanding the recent diffusion in the case of the Election Commission of India, can we not aspire to a three-member SEC, which is appointed by a committee that comprises the Chief Minister, Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly (Vidhan Sabha), and the Chief Justice of the High Court? A State government-appointed SEC is just not working. The Union government should amend the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act in this context.

Second, the delimitation of ward boundaries and reservations of seats must be mandated only at fixed intervals, say once in 10 years. The absence of this check can lead to State governments acting arbitrarily, causing undue delays in elections to local governments.

Third, the powers of ward delimitation and reservation of seats for local governments must be vested in the SECs. Further, the SECs must be entrusted with reservations to the positions of mayors/presidents, deputy mayors/vice-presidents of the local governments, say once in 10 years, where applicable. Election to these positions are delayed inordinately after local elections as State governments fail to publish the reservation roster to these positions on time.

Finally, malpractices by presiding officers appointed by the State governments have also emerged – an example is the election of the Mayor in the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation Council in 2024. SECs, therefore, should possibly be empowered with the election of mayors, presidents, chairpersons, and standing committees.

Thus, there is a need to bring SECs on a par

## The Role of SECs

The Election Commission of India (ECI) is renowned for conducting free, fair, and timely elections. However, the 34 State Election Commissions (SECs) responsible for local elections to panchayats and urban local governments require significant attention and strengthening. Established by Articles 243K and 243ZA of the Constitution, SECs are meant to have authority over local elections, but they often face disempowerment and conflict with State governments.

## Systemic Challenges

SECs frequently encounter obstacles from State governments, leading to delays in local elections. For example, the Karnataka SEC had to file a contempt petition against its government for delaying panchayat elections. Similarly, the Andhra Pradesh SEC challenged an ordinance hindering elections, which was struck down by the Supreme Court. A CAG audit revealed that 70% of urban local governments lacked elected councils, largely due to the disempowerment of SECs.

## Needed Electoral Reforms

To ensure regular and fair local elections, reforms are necessary:

- 1. Empowering SECs:** SECs should be made as independent and transparent as the ECI. This could involve appointing a three-member SEC by a committee including the Chief Minister, Leader of Opposition, and Chief Justice of the High Court.
- 2. Fixed Delimitation Intervals:** Ward boundaries and seat reservations should be revised only at fixed intervals, such as every 10 years, to prevent State governments from arbitrarily delaying elections.
- 3. SEC Authority:** SECs should have complete control over delimitation, seat reservations, and election of local government leaders, reducing undue delays and malpractices.

## Conclusion

Empowering SECs is crucial for upholding the constitutional mandate of regular and fair local elections, which are essential for grassroots democracy and effective service delivery.





## Need for Expertise

- **Specialized Roles:** Lateral entry aims to bring in expertise for specialized areas like disaster management, semiconductors, and FinTech, which regular IAS officers may lack.
- **Concerns:** The concern is that lateral entrants might not have the necessary experience in implementing policies, which could undermine effective governance.

## Risks and Challenges

- **Selection Process:** The rigorous selection process for IAS officers ensures that they are well-prepared for administrative roles. Lateral entry could bypass this process, leading to potential issues in competence and effectiveness.
- **Spoils System:** There are fears that lateral entry could lead to a spoils system where appointments are influenced by political loyalties, cronyism, and nepotism.

## Views on Implementation

- **Policymaking vs. Implementation:** There is a debate on whether lateral entrants should focus solely on policymaking or also be involved in implementation. Effective policymaking requires an understanding of implementation processes.
- **Appropriate Levels:** Some argue that lateral entry should be restricted to higher ranks, such as Joint Secretary, where expertise can be most beneficial, while others believe it could be useful at mid-levels as well.

## Reservation Concerns

- **Impact on Reservations:** There are concerns that lateral entry might bypass existing reservation policies for SCs, STs, OBCs, and other disadvantaged groups. The controversy has led to the withdrawal of recent advertisements for lateral entry positions.
- **Fairness in Appointments:** Suggestions include ensuring that reservation provisions are included in the lateral entry process to maintain fairness and inclusivity.

## Government Response

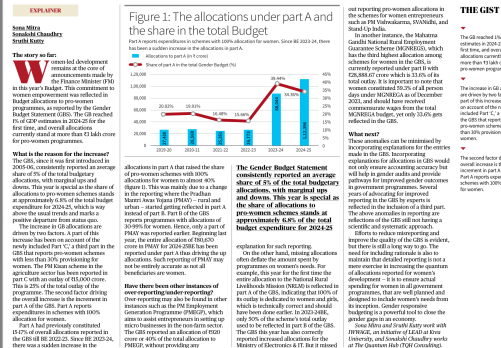
- **Re-evaluation:** The government has decided to re-examine the issue of lateral entry and its implications, particularly concerning reservations and the selection process.

## Increase in Pro-Women Allocations

- The Finance Minister's Budget highlights a significant increase in pro-women allocations, reaching **1% of GDP** for the **first time** in 2024-25, totalling over ₹3 lakh crore.
- The Gender Budget Statement (GBS) now shows approximately **6.8% of total budget expenditure** allocated to pro-women schemes, up from the usual 5%.

## Analysing the Gender Budget of 2024-25

What are the different components of the Gender Budget Statement? How instances of missing allocations being reported by experts with respect to the Gender Budget? How should these anomalies be rectified by the government?



## Reasons for Increase

- New Reporting Part:** The **introduction of Part 'C'** in the GBS includes **pro-women schemes** with **less than 30% female allocation**, such as the PM Kisan scheme.
- Increased Part A Allocations:** **Part A, reporting 100% allocations** for women, saw a rise due to PMAY being fully reflected here instead of Part B, despite the potential for inaccurate reporting.

## Issues of Reporting

- Over-Reporting:** Instances such as the **PM Employment Generation Programme** showing disproportionate allocations without explanation.
- Under-Reporting:** Missing allocations like those for women entrepreneurs and MGNREGS underestimating the actual spending on women.

## Future Directions

- To enhance accuracy, **explanations for GBS entries are needed** to minimize anomalies, support gender audits, and ensure actual spending aligns with reported allocations. Efforts to improve the GBS and its reporting methods are ongoing but require further refinement for effective gender-responsive budgeting.

**Southampton University to start campus in India**

**The Hindu Bureau**

**NEW DELHI**

The Centre on Thursday issued a Letter of Intent (LoI) to the University of Southampton, United Kingdom, to establish its first Indian campus in India, making it the first university to get the LoI under University Grants Commission (UGC) regulations for setting up foreign universities.

UGC Chairman M. Jagadeesh Kumar said the university is expected to start its academic programmes in July 2025 and also that the degree awarded by the Indian campus will be the same as in the host university. Professor Kumar also said that the setting up of the campus will be beneficial for students in terms of extending course and study opportunities in the country, research, knowledge exchange, enterprise, and engagement.

The Centre issued a Letter of Intent to the **University of Southampton** to establish its first Indian campus, with academic programs expected to start in July 2025 under UGC regulations.

**IMD warns of cyclone in Saurashtra, Bay of Bengal depression**

**India Today**

**NEW DELHI**

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has warned that a depression forming over Saurashtra is likely to become a cyclone. The depression is expected to move into the Arabian Sea and intensify, bringing heavy rainfall to Gujarat. The IMD also warned of a cyclone in the Bay of Bengal, which is expected to move into the northern Bay of Bengal and may intensify near north Andhra Pradesh and southern Odisha. Cyclones in August are unusual, with most occurring in May or during October and November.

The IMD has warned that a **land-based depression** over Saurashtra may become a cyclone by Friday, the first such occurrence in August since 1964. The depression is expected to move into the Arabian Sea and intensify, bringing heavy rainfall to Gujarat. A second depression has formed in the northern Bay of Bengal and may intensify near north Andhra Pradesh and southern Odisha. Cyclones in August are **unusual**, with most occurring in May or during October and November.



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

### Know your English

K. Subrahmanian

"Congratulations, I hear you've been made captain of the cricket team."  
"Who told you that?"  
"Your grandfather."  
"I'm sorry to say this, you've been disinforming."  
"You mean 'misinformed,' don't you?"  
"Disinformed or misinformed. They mean the same thing, don't they?"  
"First of all, the word is 'disinformation' not 'disinformed.' It is only the noun form 'disinformation' that is generally used."  
"Well, I know the meaning of 'misinform,' so tell me what 'disinformation' means."  
"Before I do that, you tell me what you understand by 'misinform.'"  
"It means giving somebody the wrong information about something."  
"Excellent. But that's only part of the meaning."  
"What do you mean?"  
"You see when you misinform someone, you can give him the wrong information either intentionally or unintentionally."  
"In other words, I can give you the wrong information deliberately or unintentionally. Now tell me, what does 'disinformation' mean?"  
"The act of spreading false information deliberately. But who would do that?"  
"Spies."  
"Spies? You mean secret agents like James Bond?"  
"Exactly. One of the jobs of secret agents is to give false information to foreign agents so that it confuses or misleads them. In fact, the word 'disinformation' was once mainly used in the spy business."  
"Really? That sounds really exciting."  
"But things are beginning to change now. The word 'disinformation' is beginning to be frequently used in the world of business and politics."  
"Business and politics, eh? That's understandable. Disinformation would certainly come in handy there. There are so many lies being told in business and politics that no one really knows what the truth is."  
"By the way, 'disinformation' is not found in all dictionaries. And the ones that contain it define it as 'deliberately false information especially given out by governments or services.' You generally talk about the 'disinformation campaign' by governments or political parties."  
"Well my grandfather doesn't work for the government or the secret service. So I guess he misinformed you about my being made captain."  
"Was I misinformed deliberately or unintentionally?"  
"I have to ask my grandfather."  
"Where will you find him?"  
"Where else? In the bedroom, watching TV."  
"Your grandfather is a couch potato, isn't he?"  
"Couch potato? What do you mean?"  
"A couch potato is a very lazy person. Someone who prefers to sit down and watch TV rather than do something."  
"That does sound like my grandfather."  
Published in *The Hindu* on March 23, 2024.

## Word of the day

**Insalubrious:**

Detrimental to health

**Synonym:** unhealthy

**Usage:** The area was deemed insalubrious, so tourism there is quite slow.

**Pronunciation:** /sɪz/ɪnsəˈlʊbrɪəs/

**International Phonetic Alphabet:** /sɪz/ɪnsəˈlʊbrɪəs/

Word	Meaning	Example
<b>Misinform</b>	To give someone incorrect information, either intentionally or unintentionally.	If someone tells you that a meeting is at 3 PM when it is actually at 2 PM, they have misinformed you.
<b>Disinformation</b>	The deliberate spread of false information, often used in espionage, politics, or business to mislead others.	A government spreading false news to mislead its enemies or create confusion is engaging in disinformation.
<b>Couch Potato</b>	A lazy person who prefers to sit and watch TV rather than engage in physical activities.	Someone who spends most of their day lounging on the sofa watching TV can be called a couch potato.

## SEBI moots UPI-like block mechanism for securities market

Press Trust of India  
NEW DELHI

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has proposed mandating Qualified Stock Brokers (QSBs) to offer the facility of trading in the secondary market using the UPI-based block mechanism to their clients, similar to the ASBA facility.

Per UPI block facility, clients can trade in the secondary market based on blocked funds in their bank accounts, instead of transferring it upfront to the trading member.

The facility is optional for investors, and is mandatory for Trading Members to offer as a service.



Application Supported by Blocked Amount (ASBA)-like facility is already available for the primary market, which ensures that money from an investor gets moved only when an allotment happens. Also, it was suggested that QSBs offer a '3-in-1 trading account facility' as an alternative to making the ASBA-like facility mandatory.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) wants to make it easier for people to trade stocks. They're suggesting a **new feature** that lets people block money in their bank accounts to use for buying stocks, instead of transferring the money to their stock broker right away.

This is similar to how people already use a system for buying new shares, called ASBA, where their money is only taken when they actually get the shares. The new feature would work the same way but for buying and selling stocks that are already

being traded.

This new feature is optional for investors and stock brokers. SEBI is also suggesting that brokers could offer a special type of trading account as another option.

## Bonda tribe student set to pursue MBBS programme in Odisha

It was first generation learner from a family which relies on food from the forest. I never imagined that I could earn a livelihood through education.

**M**angala Muduli, a 19-year-old student from the Bonda tribe, has become the first member of his tribe to enter medical education by securing admission to MKCG Medical College in Berhampur.

The Bonda tribe, which is one of the 105 Scheduled Tribes in Odisha, has a long history of living in isolation. Mangala's family, which resides in a remote village, has been struggling to make ends meet. However, Mangala's passion for education and his determination to improve his family's livelihood have driven him to pursue higher education.

Mangala's journey to education has been challenging. He had to overcome many obstacles, including a lack of access to quality education in his village. Despite these challenges, Mangala remained committed to his goal of becoming a doctor. He worked hard to secure admission to MKCG Medical College, a feat that has inspired his community.

Mangala Muduli, a 19-year-old student from the **Bonda tribe** in **Odisha**, has become the **first member of his tribe** to enter medical education by securing admission to MKCG Medical College in Berhampur.

His achievement follows a challenging journey from his remote village and overcoming significant obstacles, marking a historic moment for the Bonda tribe, which had previously lived in isolation and had limited interaction with the outside world.

## Submarine Arighaat set to add ballast to nuclear triad

It is India's second nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine; technological advancements undertaken indigenously make it significantly more advanced than its predecessor, Arihant

Dinakar Prati  
NEW DELHI

India's second nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, INS Arighaat, was commissioned into service at Visakhapatnam in the presence of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday. It joins the first such submarine, INS Arihant, which was commissioned in 2016.

"The Arighaat will further strengthen India's nuclear deterrence, establish strategic balance and peace and play a decisive role in the country's security," Mr. Singh said at the induction ceremony.

The technological advancements undertaken indigenously on this submarine make it significantly more advanced than its predecessor, Arihant, the Defence Minister said in a statement. The presence of both INS Arihant and INS Arighaat will enhance India's capability to deter potential adversaries and safeguard its national interests, it added.

As reported earlier by The Hindu, INS Arighaat was



quickly commissioned into service in August 2016. It has a displacement of around 6,000 tonnes and is powered by an S5W pressurised light-water reactor with enriched uranium. INS Arighaat retains the same reactor and dimensions, but has several technological upgrades. "It has the distinction of being the indigenous systems and equipment which were conceptualised, designed, manufactured and integrated by Indian scientists, industry and naval personnel," the Minister stated.

The completion of the nuclear triad was announced in November 2018, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on social media that INS Arihant had returned from its first deterrence patrol. The advanced technology and its first product, Arihant, was launched in 2009 by then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, and eventually commissioned in 2016.

The third of these submarines, which is at an advanced stage of construction, is set to be larger and more capable than the current two.

**Nuclear deterrence**  
INS Arihant is armed with a 750 km range K15 Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM), while a 3,500 km range SLBM K4 is under development, having been tested for the first time in 2020. The K4 will become the mainstay of India's nuclear deterrence, as it gives the stand-off capability to launch nuclear weapons while submerged in Indian waters.

India's **second nuclear-powered** ballistic missile submarine, **INS Arighaat**, was commissioned at Visakhapatnam.

It enhances India's nuclear triad and strategic capabilities, joining INS Arihant, which was commissioned in 2016.

INS Arighaat features **technological advancements over Arihant** and incorporates indigenous systems. Both submarines bolster India's nuclear deterrence.

INS Arighaat, like Arihant, is armed with the K-15 SLBM, while the K-4 SLBM, with a 3,500-km range, is under development. The third submarine in this class, still under construction, will be larger and more

advanced.



Why the Union govt banned 156 'irrational' fixed dose combinations

The Union Health Ministry has banned 156 "irrational" fixed dose combination (FDC) medicines, including antibiotics, painkillers, and multivitamins, due to health risks and lack of research supporting their safe use.

The ban, under the **Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940**, follows an expert committee's recommendation and aims **to prevent drug resistance and misuse**.

These FDCs, which combine multiple active ingredients in one dose, were previously approved by state authorities but **lacked necessary trials and approvals** from the central drug regulator.

The article discusses the shift in work culture towards valuing **work-life balance**, highlighting **Australia's new legislation** giving employees the **right to disconnect from work outside office hours**.

It contrasts this with India's work culture, where long hours and **constant availability are prevalent**, impacting mental health.

Despite international moves towards shorter workweeks and better work-life balance, India faces cultural and systemic barriers, including high average work hours and gender disparities in unpaid labor.

Experts emphasize the need for breaks and proper work-life separation for mental well-being and productivity.

## Why disconnecting from work is important for mental health

Zoheda Hamid  
CHENNAI

It used to be a point of pride: working round the clock, at all hours and being known in the family as the workaholic. But increasingly over the last decade, employees, backed by health professionals and researchers, have begun to say "enough". Being the first to arrive and last to leave the workplace is no longer seen as behaviour to be modelled; constantly talking calls and emails after office hours is frowned upon and being able to enjoy days off, without work intruding upon personal time, is the norm.

And in line with this, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, where the work from home culture was often blamed for blurring personal and professional boundaries, Australia, this week, became the latest in a list of countries that give employees the right to disconnect.

What does this mean? It means that workers in Australia can now refuse to respond to work-related communication outside of their working hours, unless doing so is unreasonable. This does not mean employers cannot contact employees outside work hours, but it does mean that the employee can choose to ignore this communication.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese is reported to have said: "We want to make sure that just as people don't get paid 24 hours a day, they don't have to work for 24 hours a day. It's a mental health issue, frankly, as well, for people to be able to disconnect from their work and connect with their family and their life."

But how seriously is work impacting mental health in India, where COVID-



Average work week lasts 47.7 hours in India, 13 hours more than that in Germany. (GTV IMAGES)

founders of companies have established the virtue of working long hours and achieving weekends, where around 90% of the workforce is in the unorganised sector, where self-employment thrives, often putting its workers at risk physically and mentally, and where a state government had considered extending daily work days to 14 hours?

According to data from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) India ranks among the top 10 countries when it comes to the number of hours worked per week, at an average of 47.7 over 12 hours more than average work week in Germany, at 34.3.

Long hours of work, combined with other factors can impact a person's mental health, says Radhika Sankar, professor of clinical psychology, NMIMS. "What you do and what your workplace is like also play a role in this. There are both systemic and individual factors - for some people there may not be a choice as to how many hours they work or how long they stay in office. For others there may be factors such as how much responsibility their role involves or how they plan their day," she said.

**The need to switch off**  
Overworking can decrease productivity and lead to burnout and the inability to switch off can lead to exhaustion and poor mental health, Dr. Sankar pointed out.

"Most of us don't practice this but it's very important. It's part of self-care - if you can't switch off from work and this perhaps affects your sleep and your eating habits, then all of these can affect your mental well-being," she said.

Leisure and breaks are crucial, studies have shown for instance that in high-stress

jobs such as the military and paramilitary forces, not being able to relax is a critical factor contributing to stress, she said.

Breaks play an important restorative function for positive mental health outcomes. "Long, unbroken or inflexible hours is listed as one of the risk factors to mental health, by the World Health Organisation. As much as disconnecting from work is healthy and vital, cultural constraints in India, where workers are trained to work long hours, pose a barrier," said Sana Mirza, principal economist at IFAWAGE, a Delhi-based organisation that aims at facilitating the agenda of women's economic empowerment.

"While the hybrid work model is great for flexibility, the expectation to respond immediately in order to show accountability that developed during the pandemic, has persisted even now. This means there is no 'off' time for employees. Women especially, are disproportionately affected as they are still expected to be primary caregivers of the household. In India, women spend almost five hours per day more than men on unpaid work at home. Imagine the length of the work day plus the time spent doing household work - where is the rest? This is how their mental health begins to get impacted," she said.

The right to disconnect apart, Ms. Mirza pointed to the fact that several countries have now moved to four day weeks, recognising the importance of weekends, time away from work. "Studies have shown that when these sort of arrangements are in place, it not only raises productivity, it boosts the mental health of the entire workforce. Why can't the global south begin to think about this," she asked.

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## "News Highlights: Key Updates in Brief"

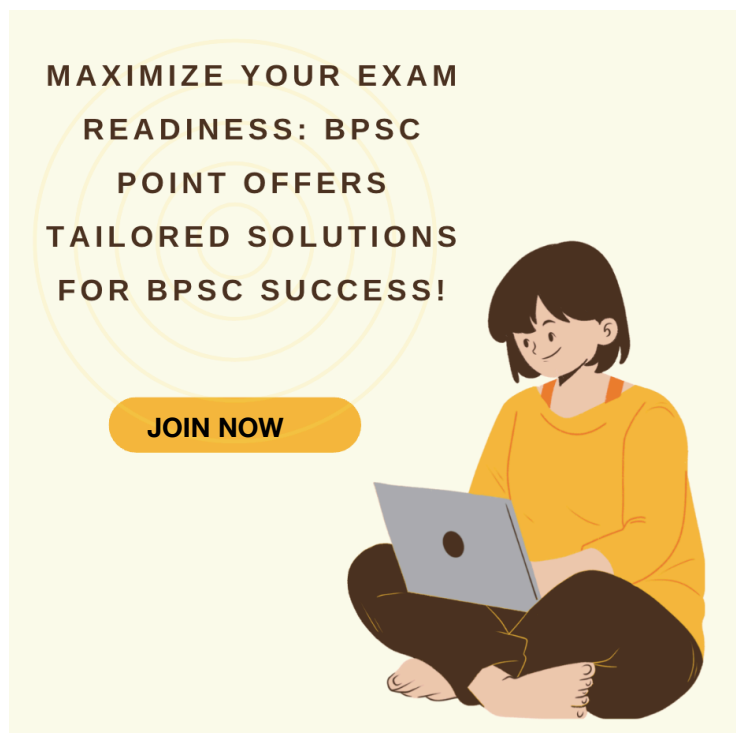
- **Gautam Adani's** net worth surged 95% to ₹11.6 lakh crore last year, surpassing Mukesh Ambani to become the richest Indian.
- **Life Insurance Corporation of India** paid a total dividend of ₹6,103.62 crore to the Centre for 2023-24, including ₹3,662.17 crore paid on Thursday and ₹2,441.45 crore as an interim dividend earlier.
- The **Centre** has **lifted restrictions** on **ethanol production** from sugarcane juice and various types of molasses for the upcoming supply year starting in November, with periodic reviews by the Department of Food and Public Distribution and the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- **Moody's** Ratings raised India's GDP growth forecast for 2024 to 7.2% due to signs of rural demand revival and easing inflation, while **Fitch** Ratings maintained India's long-term foreign-currency issuer rating at 'BBB-' with a stable outlook, citing fiscal weaknesses and structural issues as credit concerns. Fitch also projected India's GDP growth at 7.2% for 2024-25 but highlighted risks related to private investment and job creation.
- The **Finance Ministry** has **reduced the minimum requirement** for companies to list on international stock exchanges at **Gift City, Gandhinagar** from **25% to 10%** of their shares. This change aims to attract both Indian and foreign firms, especially start-ups and unicorns, by lowering the amount of ownership they need to make public. Previously, only foreign investors and NRIs could trade on these exchanges. The new rule is expected to increase access to foreign capital, though some experts warn it could reduce the number of shares available to the public, potentially affecting stock performance.
- The southwest monsoon is expected to last into late September due to a mid-month low-pressure system, potentially harming summer crops and affecting food inflation, but benefiting winter crop planting.
- The ₹76,220-crore **Vadhavan port**, set for groundbreaking by Prime Minister Modi, will enhance India's role in the **India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEEC)** and the **International North-South Transportation Corridor (INSTC)** by handling mega vessels and boosting trade. The port will add 23.2 million TEUs to India's container capacity and involves a mix of public-private funding. The project aims to improve connectivity and infrastructure for increased export-import trade.
- In Sri Lanka, as the country faces an economic crisis and prepares for presidential elections, many citizens are leaving for better opportunities abroad. Despite President Ranil Wickremesinghe's claims of recovery, economic challenges persist, especially for the impoverished Malaiyaha Tamils in tea estates. Opposition candidate Sajith Premadasa promises reforms and anti-corruption measures, but voter optimism is low, with many questioning the effectiveness of potential solutions.
- Hong Kong's pro-democracy news outlet Stand News and its former chief editors, Chung Pui-kuen and Patrick Lam, were **convicted of sedition** on Thursday, marking the first such convictions since the city's return to Chinese rule in 1997. This verdict is part of a **broader crackdown on free speech in Hong Kong**, attracting significant international criticism.
- In response to a deadly stabbing by a suspected Islamist in **Germany**, Interior Minister Nancy Faeser announced **stricter knife controls** and reduced benefits for some illegal migrants.
- Film legend Errol Morris condemned the Trump administration's **policy of separating migrant children from their parents** as "inhumane and cruel" at the Venice Film Festival, where his documentary "Separated" about the policy premiered.
- Tons of dead fish washed up in the port of **Volos, Greece**, on Wednesday, surrounding boats after a massive die-off linked to extreme climate fluctuations.



- India's aviation regulator, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), has intensified surveillance of SpiceJet due to financial issues causing flight disruptions and staff salary delays.
- Pakistan has invited Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's** Council of Heads of Government meeting in October, where it holds the rotating chairmanship.
- In the Nilgiris, wild elephants and sloth bears raiding fair price shops have led to the installation of electric fences, steel barriers, and reinforced shutters to prevent break-ins and reduce human-animal conflicts.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Mumbai and Palghar on Friday to address the **Global Fintech Fest** and lay the foundation stone for the ₹76,000 crore **Vadhvan Port project**.
- The Punjab Cabinet has decided to amend election rules to prevent candidates from contesting Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) elections on party symbols, following a decision to modify Rule 12 of the Punjab Panchayat Election Rules, 1994.
- A joint technical committee, led by the Indian Navy and including Maharashtra government officials and experts, has been formed to investigate the recent damage to the Chhatrapati Shivaji statue at Rajkot Fort, caused by exceptional weather conditions.
- The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has introduced Aadhaar validation for token-less devotees to receive laddu prasads, aiming to prevent black market sales and curb misuse by middlemen.
- The Andhra Pradesh Forest Department has advised District Collectors and other officials to plant indigenous tree species and avoid three exotic species—**Conocarpus erectus**, **Alstonia scholaris**, and **Terminalia mantaly**—due to environmental and health concerns, amid a pending PIL regarding their impact.
- India and China** held the 31st meeting of the **Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination (WMCC)** in Beijing, focusing on resolving issues along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Both sides engaged in a "frank and constructive" dialogue, agreeing to intensified diplomatic and military contacts to address differences and restore peace. This meeting follows recent high-level talks between Indian and Chinese foreign ministers and aims to address the ongoing military standoff in eastern Ladakh.
- National Security Adviser Ajit Doval arrived in Colombo to review the **Colombo Security Conclave (CSC)** and meet with political leaders ahead of Sri Lanka's presidential elections. The CSC, initially a trilateral initiative between **India, Sri Lanka**, and the **Maldives**, now includes **Mauritius, Bangladesh**, and the **Seychelles** as an **observer**.
- The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development has launched **SHe-Box**, a **centralized portal** for registering and monitoring workplace sexual harassment complaints, streamlining the process for filing, tracking, and redressing issues with Internal and Local Committees.
- The Assam Assembly passed the **Assam Compulsory Registration of Muslim Marriages and Divorces Bill, 2024**, making **government registration** of Muslim marriages and divorces mandatory, replacing the 1935 British-era act. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma emphasized that the Bill aims to eliminate the Qazi system, prevent child marriages, and enforce legal marriage ages of 18 for girls and 21 for boys.
- The Madras High Court approved **India's first Formula 4 night street race in Chennai**, contingent on obtaining an FIA homologation certificate by noon on Saturday. The court ordered that if the certificate is not obtained, the race should not proceed.
- The Supreme Court has upheld the job security of employees hired between 1978 and 1987 with SC/ST certificates from Karnataka, despite those castes being de-scheduled later. It affirmed the validity of Karnataka's protection measures for these employees but clarified they would not receive future SC/ST benefits.
- In protest against the Centre's suspension of the MGNREGS in West Bengal over corruption allegations, workers nationwide will donate ₹1 each and send handwritten appeals to the Prime Minister's Office, while the Centre owes ₹7,500 crore, including ₹2,744 crore in wages, to the State.

## Practice Mains Question

1. "Despite the robust framework provided by the Constitution, State Election Commissions (SECs) in India often face challenges that undermine their ability to conduct free and fair local elections. Discuss the systemic issues that weaken SECs and suggest reforms to empower them, ensuring the sanctity of local democracy." (Answer in 250 words)
2. Evaluate the pros and cons of introducing lateral entry into civil services for specialized roles. How can concerns about political bias, implementation challenges, and adherence to reservation policies be effectively managed? (Answer in 250 words)
3. Examine the objectives and expected outcomes of the BioE3 initiative launched by the Indian Cabinet. How does this initiative seek to advance India's biotechnology sector and address current challenges? Additionally, discuss the long-term support mechanisms required to ensure the successful implementation and sustainability of the BioE3 policy. (Answer in 250 words)



## Practice Prelims Question

**1. The Vadhavan port project, which recently received attention due to its groundbreaking ceremony, is set to play a significant role in India's maritime and trade infrastructure. Consider the following statements regarding the Vadhavan port:**

1. The Vadhavan port is being developed to enhance connectivity for the India–Middle East–Europe Corridor (IMEEC) and the International North–South Transportation Corridor (INSTC).
2. The port will increase India's container handling capacity by 50 million TEUs.
3. The project will be funded through a combination of public-private partnerships (PPP) and engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) models.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

**Answer: b) 1 and 3 only**

**Explanation:**

- **Statement 1** is correct as the Vadhavan port is indeed set to enhance connectivity for both the IMEEC and INSTC.
- **Statement 2** is incorrect; the port will add 23.2 million TEUs to India's container handling capacity, not 50 million TEUs.
- **Statement 3** is correct as the project funding includes both PPP and EPC models.

**2. As part of its afforestation drive, the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department has advised against planting certain exotic tree species due to their environmental and health impacts. Which of the following tree species is considered exotic and recommended for avoidance?**

1. *Conocarpus erectus*
2. *Alstonia scholaris*
3. *Terminalia mantaly*
4. *Mimusops elengi*

- A) 1, 2, and 3  
B) 1 and 2  
C) 2 and 3  
D) 3 and 4

**Correct Answer: A) 1, 2, and 3**

**Explanation:**

The Andhra Pradesh Forest Department has advised against planting three specific exotic tree species due to their detrimental effects on the environment and human health:

1. ***Conocarpus erectus*** (Buttonwood Mangrove) - This species is controversial due to concerns about its impact on groundwater levels and potential health issues such as respiratory problems and allergies.
2. ***Alstonia scholaris*** (Devil's Tree) - Known for its robust growth, this tree is discouraged because it can cause gastrointestinal irritations and other health issues.
3. ***Terminalia mantaly*** (Umbrella Tree / Madagascar Almond) - This species is not recommended due to its vulnerability in cyclone-prone areas.

On the other hand, ***Mimusops elengi*** (Bakul tree) is an indigenous species that is recommended for planting and does not fall into the category of exotic species.

Therefore, the correct answer is A) 1, 2, and 3, which identifies the exotic species advised against by the Forest Department.

**3. Consider the following statements regarding the SHe-Box initiative launched by the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development:**

1. SHe-Box is a centralized portal aimed at addressing complaints of sexual harassment of women at the workplace.
2. The portal provides a platform only for government sector complaints.
3. It enables tracking and processing of complaints by Internal and Local Committees.

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

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

**Answer: B) 1 and 3 only**

**Explanation:**

1. **Correct** – SHe-Box is designed to address sexual harassment complaints in both government and private sectors.
2. **Incorrect** – The portal covers complaints from both government and private sectors, not just the government.
3. **Correct** – The portal facilitates the tracking and processing of complaints by Internal and Local Committees.

**4. With reference to India's nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines, consider the following statements:**

1. INS Arighaat is equipped with both the K-15 and K-4 Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs).
2. INS Arighaat includes several technological upgrades compared to its predecessor, INS Arihant.
3. INS Arighaat has a displacement of 6,000 tonnes and uses a pressurised light-water reactor with enriched uranium.

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

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

**Answer: B) 2 and 3 only**

**Explanation:**

1. **Statement 1: INS Arighaat is equipped with both the K-15 and K-4 Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs).**

- This statement is **incorrect**. INS Arighaat is currently equipped with the K-15 SLBM, but the K-4 SLBM is still under development and not yet part of its armament.

2. **Statement 2: INS Arighaat includes several technological upgrades compared to its predecessor, INS Arihant.**

- This statement is **correct**. INS Arighaat features technological advancements over INS Arihant.

3. **Statement 3: INS Arighaat has a displacement of 6,000 tonnes and uses a pressurised light-water reactor with enriched uranium.**

- This statement is **correct**. INS Arighaat shares the same displacement and reactor specifications as INS Arihant.

Therefore, statements 2 and 3 are accurate, while statement 1 is incorrect.

**5. Which of the following statements regarding cyclones is correct?**

1. Cyclones commonly form during the monsoon season in India.
2. Cyclones are most likely to occur in the Indian region during the months of May and November.
3. The formation of cyclones over land is more common than over the sea.
4. Cyclones in the northern Bay of Bengal usually move towards the Arabian Sea.

Choose the correct answer from the options below:

- A) 1 and 3
- B) 2 and 4
- C) 2 only
- D) 1 and 4

**Correct Answer: C) 2 only**

**Explanation:**

1. **Cyclones commonly form during the monsoon season in India.**

This statement is incorrect. Cyclones in India are not commonly associated with the monsoon season. They are more frequently observed in May, October, and November, outside the main monsoon months.

2. **Cyclones are most likely to occur in the Indian region during the months of May and November.**

This statement is correct. Cyclones in the Indian region typically form during pre-monsoon (May) and post-monsoon (October-November) periods, due to favorable atmospheric conditions and sea surface temperatures.

3. **The formation of cyclones over land is more common than over the sea.**

This statement is incorrect. Cyclones generally form over warm ocean waters where they can gain energy. They are much less likely to form over land.

4. **Cyclones in the northern Bay of Bengal usually move towards the Arabian Sea.**

This statement is incorrect. Cyclones forming in the northern Bay of Bengal generally move towards the eastern coast of India or Bangladesh, not towards the Arabian Sea.

6. Which of the following states is predominantly known for the presence of the Bonda tribe?

- A) Andhra Pradesh
- B) Odisha

- C) Jharkhand
- D) West Bengal

**Answer: B) Odisha**

**Explanation:** The Bonda tribe primarily resides in the southern part of Odisha, particularly in the Malkangiri district. While they may have some presence in neighbouring areas, Odisha is their main habitat.

7. Which of the following statements about the Bonda tribe is/are correct?

- 1. The Bonda tribe is classified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) in India.
- 2. The Bonda tribe primarily resides in the highland regions and practices shifting cultivation.
- 3. The Bonda people are known for their extensive use of modern technology in their daily lives.
- 4. The Bonda tribe has a matrilineal system of inheritance.

- A) 1 and 2
- B) 2 and 3
- C) 1 and 4
- D) 3 and 4

**Answer: A) 1 and 2**

**Explanation:**

- 1. **Correct:** The Bonda tribe is indeed classified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG), reflecting their marginalized status and socio-economic challenges.
- 2. **Correct:** The Bonda tribe lives in highland areas and traditionally practices shifting cultivation, also known as slash-and-burn agriculture.
- 3. **Incorrect:** The Bonda tribe is not known for extensive use of modern technology. Their lifestyle remains relatively traditional.
- 4. **Incorrect:** The Bonda tribe follows a patrilineal system of inheritance, not matrilineal.



## 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!*

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