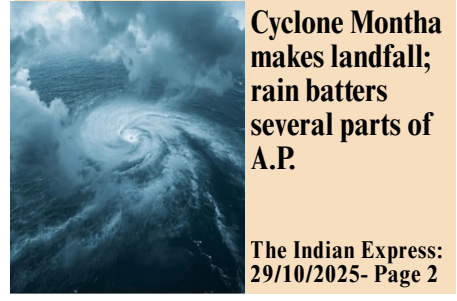


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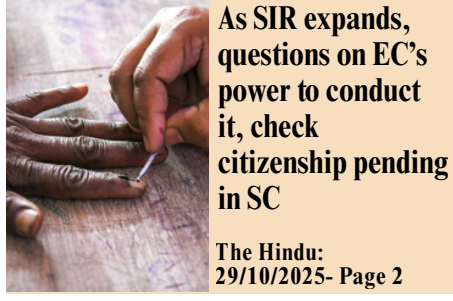


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**Cyclone Montha makes landfall; rain batters several parts of A.P.**

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**As SIR expands, questions on EC's power to conduct it, check citizenship pending in SC**

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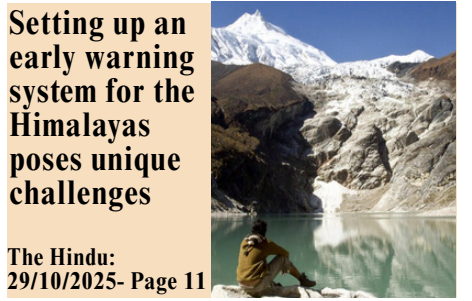
**Silver flares fired into clouds: Delhi takes two shots at summoning rain**

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**HAL signs pact with Russian firm for civil aircraft production**

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**Setting up an early warning system for the Himalayas poses unique challenges**

The Hindu: 29/10/2025- Page 11

## Centre approves terms of 8th Central Pay Commission



The Union Cabinet has approved the Terms of Reference of the eighth Central Pay Commission (CPC), the body in charge of deciding the pay structure and retirement benefits of Union government employees, the government announced on Tuesday. The government had announced the formation of the CPC in January this year to examine and recommend changes in the salaries and other benefits of Central government employees. The formation of this commission is described as timely.

Several Ministries with large numbers of Central government employees, such as Defence, Home, Railways, and the Department of Personnel and Training, were consulted. The Commission will comprise one chairperson, one part-time member and one member-secretary. It will make its recommendations within 18 months of the date of its constitution. Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai (retd.) will act as the chairperson. Professor Pulak Ghosh of the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, has been appointed a part time member, while Petroleum Secretary Pankaj Jain will serve as the member-secretary. The government said the CPC would have to keep several factors in mind while coming up with its recommendations. These included the economic conditions in the country and the need for fiscal prudence, the need to ensure that adequate resources are available for developmental expenditure and welfare measures, the unfunded cost of non contributory pension schemes, the impact of its recommendations on State finances, as well as the current emolument structure, benefits and working conditions of employees of Central public sector undertakings and the private sector.



The peak of Japan's Mount Fuji was capped with snow for the first time this winter on October 23, reaching the milestone 21 days later than the average since records began in 1894, the country's meteorological agency said. The sacred mountain is among Japan's most enduring symbols.



In a first, India is inviting the European Union's leadership — President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen and President of the European Council Antonio Costa — as chief guests for the Republic Day celebrations next year. The process of the formal invitation and the official confirmation of acceptance is underway. It will be announced by New Delhi and Brussels shortly after the process is completed. An invitation to be the Republic Day chief guest is highly symbolic from the Indian government's perspective.



# STATE

## Silver flares fired into clouds: Delhi takes two shots at summoning rain

What is cloud seeding?

- A 2024 document by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune, defined it as a technique “used to modify suitable clouds with ‘seed’ particles to increase rainfall.” Globally, it was first tested in the 1940s.
- Generally, water vapour condenses around small particles in the air to form the droplets that make up a cloud. These droplets collide and grow; as they get heavy and the cloud gets saturated, it rains.
- The seed particles are “cloud condensation nuclei (CCN), a particle on which water vapour condensates” or “ice nuclei particles, a particle on which water freezes”.

But how is cloud seeding carried out?

- To induce rain artificially, clouds are usually injected with salts like silver iodide, potassium iodide, or sodium chloride, which is the ‘seed’. These salts are expected to provide additional nuclei around which more cloud droplets can form. They are dispersed into the cloud either using aircraft or through generators on the ground.
- The IITM noted that rockets, drones or flares can be used for dispersal. In Delhi’s case, flares were deployed, which are pyrotechnic material and burning agent compressed inside a tube and attached to the wings of an aircraft. These flares dispense the seeding material into the clouds.
- Cloud seeding is done to increase the radius of the cloud droplets so that they will grow bigger and because of gravity, they will come down as rainfall. But with a clear sky, it isn’t possible.
- In winter, clouds form over Delhi when a western disturbance moves over the region. These are storms that originate in the Caspian or Mediterranean Sea and bring non-monsoonal rainfall to northwest India.
- In India, cloud seeding has mostly been tried to deal with drought-like conditions, with varying results.
- Apart from concerns about the efficacy, doubts have been cast over the strategy to target the effect rather than the cause of air pollution — vehicular pollution, industrial emissions, and dust around the year, with stubble burning, weather conditions and fireworks during the winter months worsening the situation in areas in and around Delhi.

## Cyclone Montha makes landfall; rain batters several parts of A.P.

- Cyclone Motha has caused extensive damage to agriculture and power infrastructure in Andhra Pradesh, affecting more than 43,000 hectares of crops and impacting nearly 83,000 farmers across 292 mandals in 1,712 villages.
- Major crops impacted include paddy and cotton, together accounting for over 80% of the total damaged crop area; paddy fields in 31,267 hectares and cotton in 4,393 hectares suffered the highest losses, with maize, black gram, red gram, and soybean also affected.
- The preliminary damage assessment by the Agriculture Department and power distribution companies estimates losses to the power sector alone at around ₹2,200 crore, mainly due to large-scale damage to substations, transformers, poles, and power lines.
- Specific districts like B.R. Ambedkar Konaseema have reported the highest crop damages, with more than 10,000 hectares submerged under floodwaters from the cyclone.
- Rapid restoration work is underway in the power sector despite challenging conditions, including heavy rains and flooding; all urban centers and sensitive installations are prioritized for normalization of power supply within 24 hours.
- State government response includes round-the-clock monitoring by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, deployment of NDRF and SDRF teams in vulnerable areas, and detailed field enumerations to assess the full extent of damage.
- The rise in frequent and intense cyclones are attributed to sea surface temperatures (SST) in the Bay of Bengal, which, according to meteorologists, create ideal conditions for tropical cyclone formation.
- Scientific commentary notes that SST in the Bay of Bengal has risen by about 0.5°C to 1°C over recent decades, contributing to more frequent severe cyclonic storms in Andhra Pradesh since 2010.
- Climate change and warming of sea waters are considered key factors behind this trend, which also enhances the atmosphere’s moisture-holding capacity, resulting in increased rainfall during cyclones and greater risk of coastal erosion and infrastructure loss.
- Recent positive phases of the Indian Ocean Dipole and La Niña, as well as coastal erosion, deforestation, and degradation of coastal ecosystems, further exacerbate cyclone impacts on the region’s agriculture and power sectors.

## As SIR expands, questions on EC's power to conduct it, check citizenship pending in SC

- The Supreme Court is currently examining the Election Commission's (EC) authority to conduct the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, with core concerns raised by petitioners regarding the constitutional and procedural validity of the exercise, especially after its first phase in Bihar.
- The petitioners' doubts focus on whether the EC has the statutory power to undertake SIR and criticize the adequacy and fairness of the procedures, fearing that arbitrary exclusions of voters could violate fundamental rights guaranteed by the Representation of the People Act, 1950 and the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960.
- The Supreme Court did not halt the Bihar SIR but issued orders to improve procedural transparency, such as publishing the draft electoral roll and accepting Aadhaar as a 12th document of proof, and it pushed for measures to prevent arbitrary exclusions.
- A hearing in October suggested that the court views SIR on a pan-India basis as a fait accompli, but it will still hear arguments on the constitutional validity of the pan-India SIR from November 4 onwards.
- The court also highlights that the latest SIR phase, now covering 12 states and union territories, includes modifications like accepting Aadhaar for identification and exempting certain documents at the enumeration stage, which may enhance inclusion but do not address concerns over statutory support for the process.
- The SC bench, headed by Justice Surya Kant, noted that while EC needs to improve the process further for future SIR operations, the main responsibility for ensuring inclusion on the voter list remains with the voter.
- There is ongoing legal debate about whether the EC can verify citizenship during SIR without a formal challenge from others, with petitioners asserting that the issue of citizenship—whether Indian or linking to aliens—must be dealt with under specific laws like the Citizenship Act and Foreigners Act, not ECO exercises alone.
- Ultimately, this underscores how the SC's final decisions on these issues will significantly shape the powers of the EC in future revisions and the process safeguarding voter rights in India.

## 'Relocation of forest dwellers from tiger reserves must be voluntary'

- The Union Tribal Affairs Ministry has mandated that the relocation of forest-dwelling communities from tiger reserves must be "exceptional, voluntary, and evidence-based," emphasizing respect for rights and dignity, rather than top-down eviction.
- The new policy framework establishes mechanisms for communities to continue living in traditional forest habitats while exercising their legal rights under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) and stresses that relocation within tiger reserves should only occur with the explicit consent of the affected villagers.
- Procedural guidelines require involvement of Environment and Tribal Affairs Ministries, standardized protocols for recording, tracking, and auditing relocations, and establishing accountability through documentation of compensation and community status after relocation.
- The policy calls for on-ground audits by empowered agencies to check compliance with legal protections, ensure human rights standards, and develop models for sustainable co-habitation and community-driven conservation within the reserves.
- The ministry's move is a direct response to concerns about last year's National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) directive ordering states to prioritize village relocations from tiger reserve core areas—a directive that led to protests by Gram Sabhas, tribal advocates, and forest rights groups.
- In 2024, 591 villages and 64,801 families were living in the core areas of tiger reserves, highlighting the scale and sensitivity of the relocation issue; activists and tribal representatives have demanded policy changes to protect community rights.
- The Tribal Affairs Ministry has consulted widely with State governments, community leaders, and NGOs, emphasizing the necessity for a collaborative, participatory approach and the urgent need to "examine substantive issues" before initiating any relocations.
- Ultimately, the policy insists on upholding internationally recognized principles of justice, scientific validation, and dignity for all forest dwellers who may be affected by conservation-linked resettlements.



## HAL signs pact with Russian firm for civil aircraft production

- Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Russia's United Aircraft Corporation (UAC) for manufacturing the SJ-100, a twin-engine, narrow-body civil commuter aircraft, marking a key step for India's domestic aviation sector.
- The SJ-100 model is already in commercial operation with over 200 units produced and used by more than 16 global airlines, demonstrating proven reliability and market success.
- With this agreement, HAL will have the rights to manufacture SJ-100 aircraft for Indian customers, intended to boost regional connectivity under India's UDAN scheme, which aims for improved short-haul air transport across the country.
- The partnership involves significant technology transfer and trust, being the first major civil aviation project for HAL since the indigenously built AVRO HS-748 program that ran from 1961 to 1988.
- Over the next decade, the Indian aviation sector is expected to require over 200 aircraft in the SJ-100's class for regional connectivity and an additional 350 for the Indian Ocean region to serve international tourist and business destinations.
- HAL emphasizes that this pact marks a new chapter for Indian aviation, aims to strengthen the private sector, and will create direct and indirect jobs, driving economic activity linked to aviation manufacturing.
- The MoU was signed in Moscow, underscoring international cooperation, with HAL's Prabhat Ranjan and UAC's Oleg Bogomolov as signatories.
- Enhances India's strategic autonomy in the aviation sector, reducing reliance on Western suppliers and diversifying procurement sources.
- Supports India's ambition to become a regional hub for aviation services, including maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO), with potential for exports to neighboring countries and Indian Ocean nations.
- Strengthens bilateral relations with Russia in high-technology sectors and demonstrates India's emergence as a co-partner in global aerospace projects.

## Trade talks with EU reduced 'outstanding issues', says Goyal

- India and the European Union (EU) have made notable progress in closing gaps on key trade negotiation issues following three days of intensive discussions in Brussels, with statements from Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal highlighting "significant reduction" in outstanding issues.
- The meetings aimed to push forward the India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA), with both sides agreeing on frameworks to enable a "win-win for our economies," and characterizing the sessions as "intense but very productive".
- EU Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič stated that negotiations were conducted in an environment of "full transparency and trust," but acknowledged that further work is needed despite substantial advances in several areas, particularly with industrial tariffs.
- A high-level EU trade delegation, led by Director-General Sabine Weyand, will visit New Delhi next week for technical tariff negotiations, with another delegation from the European Parliament also scheduled to discuss challenges and opportunities.
- Outstanding issues discussed included tariffs on agricultural products (a crucial issue for both parties), as well as tariffs on European automobiles sold in India and India's regulatory stance on the EU's carbon border tax and imports.
- Regulatory matters, especially around the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, have also remained contentious, with both sides seeking further understanding and solutions.
- Both ministers asserted that the talks established a robust and balanced foundation for a future agreement, with ongoing negotiations expected to address residual issues and potentially pave the way for a comprehensive India-EU FTA.
- While India and the EU have concluded several chapters, including digital services, both trade partners have differed on key areas, including automobiles and agriculture.



## UN report finds countries' emission reductions short of goal set in Paris

- The UN “synthesis report” ahead of COP 30 reveals that countries are on track to reduce emissions by only 17% compared to 2019 levels by 2035, which is much less than required to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C or even 2°C above pre-industrial levels.
- To achieve these crucial thresholds, countries actually need to cut emissions by 37% (for 2°C) and 57% (for 1.5°C) compared to 2019 levels by 2035, underscoring a significant international shortfall.
- The current analysis is based on 64 nations' updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)—pledges to cut fossil fuel emissions or increase forest cover—but with only partial data, as many countries (including India) have yet to submit their new NDCs.
- Besides emission cut pledges, the report highlights the growing emphasis on adaptation and resilience to climate change, with 73% of NDCs now including components aimed at adapting to and managing the impacts of warming.
- Total greenhouse gas emission from new NDCs is projected to be about 13 billion tonnes CO2 equivalent in 2035, which is 6% below the level previously promised by countries in their past pledges (submitted 2020–2022).
- Nations are also increasingly announcing domestic initiatives such as afforestation, reforestation, tripling renewable energy capacity, expanding hydrogen production, and boosting carbon capture and storage (CCUS) to address climate challenges.
- The findings stress insufficient ambition and action toward the Paris Agreement targets, despite some progress in incorporating adaptation, finance, technology transfer, and capacity-building into climate planning.
- The significance of the UN's report lies in its stark warning that current national commitments to reduce emissions fall far short of what is required to keep global temperature rise within safe limits, as set out in the Paris Agreement.

## Setting up an early warning system for the Himalayas poses unique challenges

- This sheds light on the increasing frequency and severity of disasters in the Himalayas due to climate change and human development, with events such as floods, landslides, and glacial lake bursts killing hundreds across Nepal, Darjeeling, and beyond.
- The region's steep mountain slopes, loose soil, and complex geology make it prone to landslides, earthquakes, and glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs).
- Its high-altitude climate is sensitive to temperature and precipitation changes, where minor variations can trigger major hazards like avalanches and flash floods.
- Data from NASA and Down To Earth (DTE) shows a dramatic rise in disasters from 1953–2023, with extreme weather incidents, earthquakes, and landslides becoming more common, especially post-1990 as development expanded in the region.
- The Himalayan terrain's “abyssally poor” infrastructure, remote settlements, and lack of basic communication make it even harder to respond quickly and effectively to disasters.
- Scientists stress that robust early warning systems (EWS)—using low-cost, rugged sensors and models—are urgently needed to monitor hazards like glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), landslides, and avalanches, and to alert vulnerable populations before disaster strikes.
- Case studies such as averted glacier collapse at Batten village in the Swiss Alps and Chinese research on GLOFs show that EWS can dramatically reduce fatalities, save lives, and support quick evacuations by using targeted local data and timely alerts.
- Despite promising technology, implementation in the Himalayas is lagging; challenges include data collection, terrain complexity, local language support, risk communication, and lack of national prioritization and funding.
- Seismologists and disaster management experts argue for a national mission and government priority on Himalayan EWS, drawing from examples in Switzerland and China, to protect lives and property as threats worsen due to warming and development.
- Ultimately, this calls for immediate action to develop simple, reliable, and locally adaptable early warning systems for the Himalayas, emphasizing that this should be a central policy priority to avert avoidable loss of life and catastrophic damage.

**PRELIMS CORNER :**

1.It is the second-largest wetland system in India. Currently, it is shrinking, and its unique biodiversity is under threat of ecological decay. It is declared as a Ramsar site. The above statements are about which of the below lake ?

- (a) Loktak Lake
- (b) Vembanad lake
- (c) Chilika Lake
- (d) Kolleru Lake

2.With reference to the Indian Constitution, any change to the list of Scheduled Castes specified in the President's order can be made by :

- (a) President by an order
- (b) Parliament or State legislature by law
- (c) State legislature by law
- (d) Parliament by law

3.These are a group of Buddhist caves that were carved and sculpted from the 2nd Century BCE. to the 5th century CE. The caves were declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. The forests surrounding the caves are adjacent to the Gautala Autramghat Wildlife Sanctuary. The above statements are about which cave ?

- (a) Ajanta Caves
- (b) Ellora Caves
- (c) Bagh Caves
- (d) Elephanta Caves

**DETAILED ANSWER KEY IN THE CIVIL SERVICE CHRONICLE PAGE**

## Oil Minister allays fears over Russian crude oil supplies

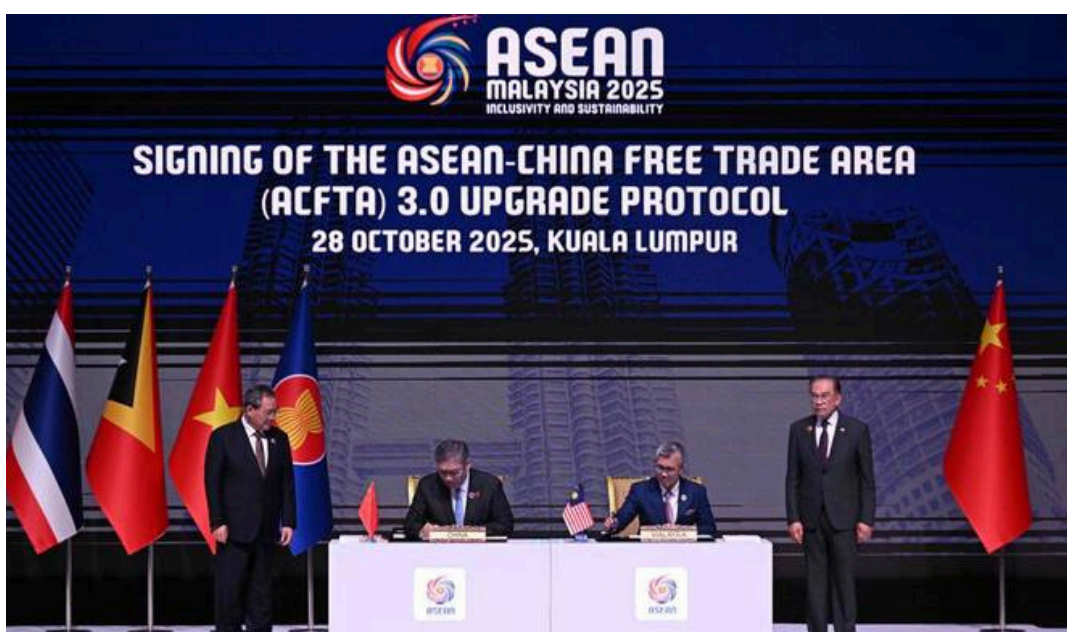
- Following new U.S. sanctions on two Russian oil companies, India's Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri reassured the public that India's oil supply is secure, emphasizing the diversity of sources and flexibility Indian refiners have developed to handle disruptions.
- Puri pointed out that while sourcing Russian oil may become more challenging, India can turn to other suppliers, as the number of countries from which India imports crude oil has increased from 27 to 40 in recent years[Screenshot.
- The Minister highlighted India's strong export capacity, with refined petroleum products shipped to as many as 50 countries, generating \$45 billion in value annually.
- He described the global oil trade as flexible, not governed by fixed rules like GATT, which allows players to adjust sourcing strategies as needed[Screenshot.
- India's energy outlook is described as promising, with refinery capacity set to grow from 258 million tonnes (MT) to 310 MT by 2030, and ambitious plans to surpass 400 MT in the longer term.
- Refineries are increasingly diversifying into petrochemicals to meet shifting global energy and market demands, positioning India favorably for future economic growth[Screenshot.
- Puri also noted that the Indian and global oil sectors are evolving, and with strong policy frameworks and improved infrastructure, India's energy sector can achieve greater ambitions, potentially becoming a larger global refining and export hub.
- This underscores India's reliance on a flexible oil import strategy, ongoing capacity expansion, and policy preparedness as key factors safeguarding the country's energy security amid rising geopolitical uncertainties.



# INTERNATIONAL

## China and ASEAN, hit by U.S. tariffs, sign upgraded free trade agreement

- China and the ASEAN bloc have signed an upgrade to their free trade agreement, known as the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (3.0 Upgrade Protocol), deepening integration in digital, green, and other emerging sectors.
- The upgraded pact aims to increase market access and trade barriers reduction, covering agriculture, digital economy, and pharmaceuticals, addressing challenges caused by U.S. tariffs and global disruptions.
- The 11-member ASEAN bloc is China's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade reaching \$771 billion in the previous year, representing a critical economic relationship for both sides.
- The signing comes in the backdrop of heightened U.S. tariffs on both China and ASEAN, which have prompted Beijing to seek deeper connectivity and supply chain resilience with Southeast Asia.
- Leaders at the summit emphasized that the agreement would foster trade and investment liberalization, secure supply chains, and address political uncertainty in times of global economic headwinds.
- ASEAN leaders, including Malaysia's Anwar Ibrahim and Singapore's Lawrence Wong, described the deal as essential for supply chain connectivity, economic opportunities, and rare-earth minerals cooperation.
- Both sides are part of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the world's largest trading bloc, and analysts see this pact as a strategic counter to U.S. protectionism and its possible impact on global trade flows.
- Some challenges persist due to competing interests among ASEAN members, but the upgraded agreement highlights a commitment to economic integration despite external pressures.



## India's diaspora diplomacy and the limits of cultural nationalism abroad

- The growing visibility and controversy surrounding India's diaspora diplomacy, with recent incidents highlighting the limits of faith, culture, and public behaviour among Indians abroad, such as the display of Ganapati statues in water bodies or Deepavali fireworks in foreign cities.
- It analyzes the political reactions following such incidents, including law enforcement response in Canada and the rise of nationalist campaigns in Australia, the U.S., and Canada targeting people of Indian origin, which reflects increasing discrimination, cultural clashes, and tensions over perceived "cultural exhibitionism" by the diaspora.
- The piece notes that diaspora support for Indian cultural and political positions overlaps with the global rise of nationalism, especially in the wake of the Modi government's promotion of territorial nationalism and Hindutva ideology abroad; this approach is often at odds with host country norms and anti-immigrant sentiment.
- Issues of dual loyalty and foreign interference have emerged, as several Western governments (U.S., Canada, Australia, Europe) are increasingly concerned about diaspora involvement in domestic politics or support for home country positions, as seen with recent protests and security-related allegations against ethnic Chinese and Russian communities.
- This points out India's policy of not allowing dual citizenship, though it provides special categories like Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI), which do not equate to full citizenship and are subject to restrictions regarding voting and property rights; this limits the legal-political role of the Indian diaspora but maintains strong emotional and cultural connections.
- Recent trends show that while India enjoys less hostility than China or Russia in the West, there is increasing scrutiny of the diaspora's political and cultural activities, with India's government keenly monitoring these developments and balancing diaspora influence with broader diplomatic interests.
- This concludes that diaspora diplomacy is complex: governments must navigate respect for host country laws, rising nationalism, and domestic interests, making cultural outreach a balancing act rather than an unbridled asset for India's foreign policy objectives.

# Prelims Corner: Explanations

**Q1. Ans b**

In India, Vembanad lake, in the state of Kerala, is the second largest wetland after the Sunderbans of West Bengal. Despite being declared a Ramsar site, the lake is now under serious environmental degradation because of the recurring floods, increased pollution, reduced water spread area and increased weed growth. The Vembanad Lake was declared as a Ramsar Site in the year of 2002. Vembanad Wetland is the largest brackish, humid tropical wetland ecosystem fed by 10 rivers. A Ramsar site is a wetland site designed to be of international importance under the Ramsar Convention, also known as the 'Convention of Wetlands'.



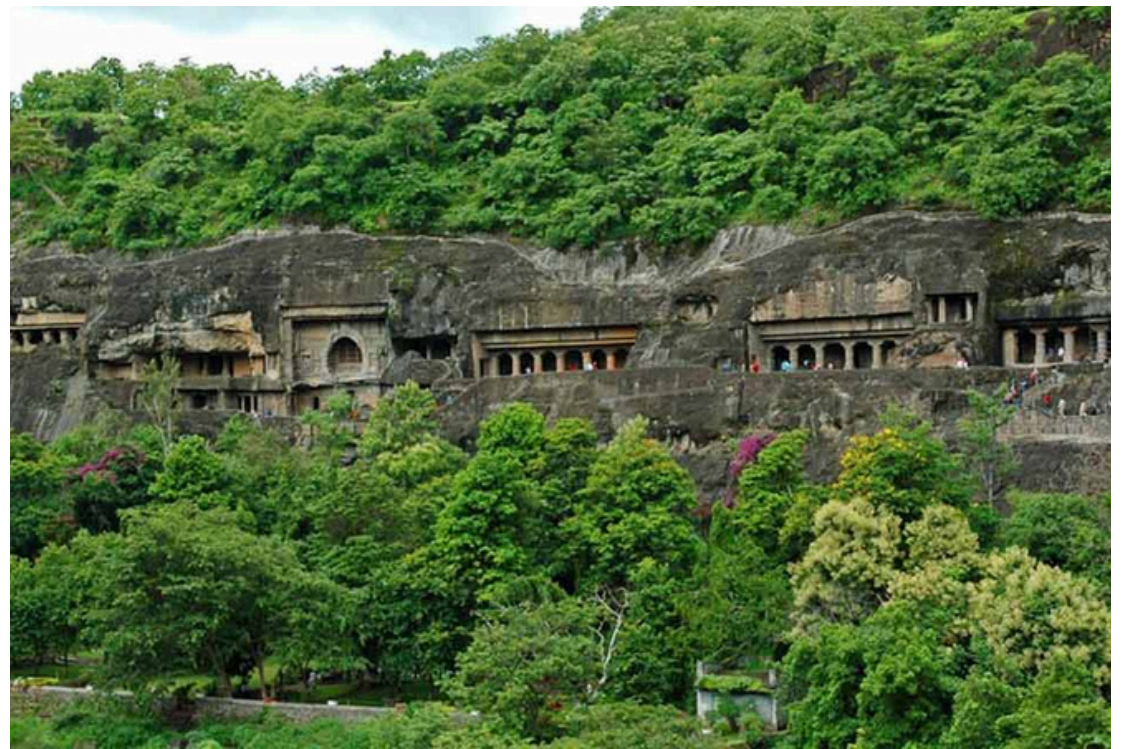
**Q2. Ans d**

The President of India has to make the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order. Under Article 341(2), any change to the list of Scheduled Castes specified in the President's order can only be made by Parliament by law. A parliamentary law alone can include in or exclude from the list of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950, as amended in 1976, a particular caste. Thus, It explains that any changes to the list of Scheduled Castes specified in the President's order can be made by the Parliament by law.



**Q3. Ans a**

Ajanta cave is a complex of 31 Buddhist caves. The Ajanta caves are carved in the Basaltic Gorge of river Waghur. Basaltic Gorge is a unique geological formation with various lava flows that created the Deccan trap. The forests surrounding Ajanta are adjacent to the GautalaAutramghat Wildlife Sanctuary. The caves were excavated in different periods (circa. 2nd century B.C. to 6th century A.D.) Ajanta Caves exemplifies one of the greatest achievements in ancient Buddhist rock-cut architecture. The artistic traditions at Ajanta present an important and rare specimen of art, architecture, painting, and the sociocultural, religious, and political history of contemporary society in India. The development of Buddhism manifested through architecture, sculptures, and paintings is unique and bear testimony to the importance of Ajanta as a major hub of such activities. Hence these caves were declared as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1983.



**NARAYANA MURTHY**

## Case Study:



After 50 years of local extinction, the blackbuck has returned to Chhattisgarh's Barnawapara Sanctuary. Through careful conservation and habitat restoration, the antelope now survives, rejuvenating the grasslands and restoring balance to the ecosystem. For half a century, the Barnawapara Wildlife Sanctuary in Chhattisgarh knew the blackbuck only as a memory. Once plentiful across the open grasslands of Balodabazar district, this elegant antelope, celebrated for its striking horns and swift and graceful movements, had disappeared from the state by the 1970s. Rampant poaching, the encroachment of human settlements, and the fragmentation of its habitat had driven it to local extinction, leaving the meadows eerily silent, bereft of one of their most iconic inhabitants. In 2018, the Chhattisgarh Forest Department resolved to make this change. Recognising both the ecological and symbolic void left by the blackbuck, officials embarked upon a historic reintroduction programme at Barnawapara. The initiative was not just an act of restoration, but a precisely devised five-year revival plan spanning 2021 to 2026, intended to reestablish the species in its ancestral home. By 2025, Barnawapara boast approximately 190 blackbucks. Their return has not only revived a species but also rejuvenated the grassland ecosystem.

## Chhath Puja 2025



Chhath Puja is a four-day elaborate celebration in honour of the Sun. It involves a long fast without water, and making offerings to Usha and Pratyusha, the light of the rising and the setting Sun, while standing in a water body. Several beliefs are prevalent about why Chhath is observed. Some believe that it is a carryover from the time that man worshipped nature. Today, Chhath is a festival that epitomises religiosity in Bihar. Chhath Puja begins six days after Diwali, in October-November. Some people celebrate it in the month of Chaitra also (in April), which is called the Chaiti Chhath. Chhathi maiya or Mother Chhathi, Sun's sister, is considered an exacting but generous deity. There are many reasons that Chhath has such a special place in Purvanchalis' heart. This festival means the coming together of the community, the legendary Bihari migrants returning home to soak themselves in the homeland and its culture once more.

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