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Remove stray dogs from public places, says SC



Expressing concern over the “disturbing increase” in dog bite incidents across the country, the Supreme Court on Friday directed all the States and the Union Territories to “forthwith” remove stray dogs from educational institutions, hospitals, sports complexes, bus stands and depots, and railway stations, and relocate them “to a designated shelter”. The dogs have to be sterilised and vaccinated in accordance with the Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2023 before relocation.

The directions were issued in the suo motu proceedings aimed at framing a national framework for stray dog management and ensuring compliance with existing regulations. Placing the responsibility of implementation on local bodies, the court directed the respective municipal authorities to ensure the immediate removal of stray dogs and to submit compliance reports within eight weeks, detailing the remedial measures under taken to secure adherence to the court’s directions. It directed the National Highways Authority of India, and transport and municipal authorities to ensure the removal of cattle and other stray animals from the highways. The matter will be taken up again on January 13, 2026. All local self-government institutions have been directed to ensure that the premises of such establishments are properly secured with fencing, boundary walls, and gates to prevent the ingress of stray animals. This will be preceded by a survey conducted by State governments, to be completed within two weeks, identifying all government and private educational institutions from where stray canines have to be removed. The Bench also mandated that each institution designate a nodal officer for upkeep and surveillance of each such premise.



He Xiaopeng, cofounder and chairman of Chinese electric vehicle maker Xpeng, launches Xpeng's next-gen Iron humanoid robot during AI Day press conference at its headquarter in Guangzhou, in southern China's Guangdong province. The Next-Gen IRON robot features an "extreme anthropomorphism" design, including a bionic spine, artificial muscles, and soft, flexible full-body skin.



The centenary celebrations of Indian hockey was officially launched on Friday (November 7) at the iconic Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, marking a monumental occasion in the sport's history. The event, a joint effort by Hockey India, the Sports Authority of India, and the Ministry of Sports, brought together individuals from across the country to reflect on a century of achievements, resilience, and national pride. The day's celebrations highlighted the evolution of Indian hockey, starting from its origins in 1925, through its challenges and revivals, right up to its current resurgence.



NATIONAL

Panel seeks higher protection for Rhesus Macaque under Wildlife Act

Background and Recommendation

- The Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL), chaired by the Union Environment Minister, has proposed reinstating the Rhesus Macaque under Schedule II of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- The primary goal is to restore legal protection, increase enforcement against illegal capture and cruelty, and enable better scientific management of the species.

Rationale and Context

- The move addresses longstanding requests from animal welfare organizations, including the Animal Welfare Board of India and the Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations, to curb cruelty, exploitation, and illegal trade involving Rhesus Macaques.
- The decision comes after broad consultation with various state governments and expert organizations, reflecting a consensus-building approach.

Panel's Deliberations and State Responses

- The Environment Ministry's officials indicated that listing under Schedule II may be reconsidered in the future, depending on the level of conflict and management needs.
- All divisional forest officers have been directed to prepare management and conservation plans, and states must develop mitigation and rescue protocols.
- States such as Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, and Himachal Pradesh support reinstating the species' protection, while Assam, Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, and Andhra Pradesh opposed the move, mainly due to rising human-macaque conflict in these areas.

Implementation Measures

- The panel recommended that state governments prepare mitigation plans identifying and categorizing conflict zones.
- Baseline studies by the Wildlife Institute of India will guide the operationalization of these plans.
- Appropriate rescue and rehabilitation centers are to be established to support enforcement and conservation measures.

Policy and Conservation Impact

- Reinforcing statutory protection is viewed as crucial for curbing cruelty and exploitation of Rhesus Macaques and for promoting scientific and humane wildlife management.
- The move may also enhance coordination and planning among states, enabling more systematic conflict management and supporting long-term conservation objectives.



Wildlife board panel clears 12 key defence projects in Ladakh

- The Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife (SC-NBWL) has recommended approval for 12 key defence projects in Ladakh, citing the necessity for "high level of operational preparedness" due to increasing assertiveness by China's PLA (People's Liberation Army).
- The projects include a training node at Tara, an artillery battery at Leh, two formation ammunition storage facilities (FASFs), a brigade HQ at Chushul, and various border outposts and roads across ecologically sensitive zones including the Changthang Cold Desert Sanctuary and Karakoram Wildlife Sanctuary.

Rationale and Strategic Context

- The Defence Ministry highlighted that these projects are essential because of heightened PLA activity and post-Galwan tensions, reflecting lessons learned from previous border stand-offs.
- The infrastructure aims to ensure quick troop mobilisation, improved operational readiness, and sustained military presence along sensitive border areas.

Environmental Impact and Mitigation

- Some of the proposed facilities will utilize land from protected sanctuaries, including 24.2 hectares in Changthang and 47.1 hectares in Karakoram, both noted for rare and endangered species like Tibetan wolf, antelope, wild yak, snow leopard, and Himalayan mouse.
- The Union Environment Ministry emphasized minimal ecological impact, urging caution and comprehensive mitigation as recommended by wildlife boards and forest officials.

Project Details and Specifics

- Projects approved span a variety of operational needs: artillery, ammunition storage, military headquarters, border outposts, and strategic roads to remote locations like Durbuk and Chushul.

Specific projects include:

- A Counter Insurgency Force (CIF) base in Leh.
- Strategic road to Durbuk, which will aid rapid deployment and supply lines.
- Brigade headquarter establishment at Chushul; crucial due to frequent standoffs and its proximity to flashpoints like Pangong Tso.

Balancing National Security and Conservation

- The approvals reflect a shift in prioritizing national security infrastructure but with efforts to balance ecological conservation, especially in biodiverse and officially protected areas.
- The government has asked for detailed plans to ensure the minimum wildlife disturbance and recommended safeguards in final execution.

Policy Implications and Broader Significance

- This move marks continued strategic infrastructure buildup along the India-China border, signaling intent to prevent repeat of 2020 friction due to lack of preparedness.
- It also highlights the government's approach to integrate environmental assessments, even when rapid defence infrastructure development is deemed necessary.

EXPLAINED

Why the nomination process needs reform?



Procedural Complexities in Nomination

- This highlights that the existing process of filing nominations for elections is overly complex, with excessive attention often paid to procedural technicalities rather than assessing the substantial character or qualifications of candidates.
- Instances are cited where candidates are rejected because of minor clerical errors—such as mismatches in forms or missing details—rather than any substantive flaw or ineligibility.

Legal and Administrative Framework

- The RPA, particularly sections 33, 36, and the Conduct of Elections Rules, governs how nominations are scrutinized and accepted.
- Law mandates certain strict standards, and even trivial mistakes (e.g. a wrong digit in a bank account) can lead to disqualification, despite the Law's intent being to weed out only candidates with true eligibility defects.
- Recent Supreme Court judgments affirm that only “substantial defects” should result in rejection, not inconsequential errors.

Impact on Candidates and Electoral Representation

- The complicated process can discourage qualified individuals from contesting, effectively limiting democratic choice.
- There is no statutory appeal mechanism for rejected nominations—candidates often must approach courts, which delays and complicates resolution and may disenfranchise them until after elections are over.

Potential for Discretion and Bias

- The discretion exercised by Returning Officers can sometimes be arbitrary, with insufficient recourse for candidates to defend themselves against technical objections.
- The process is vulnerable to manipulation and delays, and inconsistencies in the application of rules between constituencies.

Suggestions for Reform

- This advocates for a shift in scrutiny towards evaluating actual statutory qualifications rather than focusing on minor procedural lapses.
- It suggests digitizing the nomination process, standardizing forms, and establishing more robust mechanisms for appeals and reviews before elections.
- A more candidate-friendly regime is recommended, with faster resolution of disputes and less technical rejection of nominees. India's nomination process remains unduly procedural, risking arbitrary exclusion and denying voters choice.
- Real-life examples (such as the case of the Dadra and Nagar Haveli council elections) illustrate the human cost of technical disqualifications, emphasizing the urgent need for reform.

Conclusion

- For the meaningful democratization of the nomination process requires refocusing on substantive eligibility and due process, replacing current technicalities with fairer, more efficient procedures to safeguard democracy.

PRELIMS CORNER :

1. Which one of the following texts helped to identify the initial year of the Gupta era by stating that the Gupta era began 241 years after the beginning of the Shaka era ?

- (a) Raghuvamsa
- (b) Razmnama
- (c) Amarakosha
- (d) Tahqiq-i-Hind

2. Who among the following enhanced the power and prestige of the Maratha Empire by defeating the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Rajput Governor of Malwa and the Governor of Gujarat?

- (a) Balaji Viswanath
- (b) Baji Rao I
- (c) Balaji Baji Rao
- (d) Madhav Rao I

3. The earliest epigraphic reference to image worship in Jainism is found in :

- (a) Nashik inscription
- (b) Junagarh inscription
- (c) Hathigumpha inscription
- (d) Mathura inscription

4. Which of the below Articles of the Indian Constitution speaks specifically of religious and linguistic minorities ?

- (a) Article 30
- (b) Article 29
- (c) Article 350A
- (d) Article 16

DETAILED ANSWER KEY IN THE CIVIL SERVICE CHRONICLE PAGE

Indian banks far more mature than a decade ago: Malhotra

Policy Change and Rationale

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to allow banks to finance acquisitions, ending previous restrictions and aiming to stimulate real economic growth.
- RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra emphasized that acquisition finance is a core feature of a mature financial system because it optimizes resource allocation across sectors.

Measures to Ensure Stability

- The RBI's new stance comes with regulatory guardrails—there will be prudent caps, eligibility criteria, and structural safeguards to avoid unhealthy concentration and manage potential credit risks.
- Proposals include stronger limits based on Loan to Value (LTV) ratios and alignment of exposure limits with international best practices.

Institutional and Market Impact

- Relaxing acquisition finance restrictions will benefit banks and the wider economy, providing capital for business expansion and facilitating more robust M&A activity.
- Non-bank entities like NBFCs, bond markets, and FinTechs are already providing acquisition finance, and the framework will further enhance their role in the financial ecosystem.
- Only investment-grade debt securities may be used as collateral, which conserves credit quality.

Prudential Reforms

- The RBI's decision is part of broader reforms, including updates to the Specified Borrower Framework and Large Exposure Framework (LEF) that bring India's banking sector in line with international norms.
- Forward-looking Expected Credit Loss (ECL) provisioning will help banks spot asset quality deterioration earlier and make risk management more proactive.

Benefits and Systemic Effects

- These measures should trigger a constructive feedback loop for India's bond market and real sector lending, ideally leading to better financial stability and sustainable credit growth.
- Project Finance Directions issued recently aim to clarify, expedite, and risk-proof financing for infrastructure and land acquisition.

The Governor's Perspective

- Governor Malhotra highlighted these reforms as incremental but systematic, noting that India's banking architecture is being restructured to be more resilient without undermining safety.
- All new measures work together to create a regulatory scaffold that manages risks while fostering a dynamic lending ecosystem.

INTERNATIONAL

China launches new aircraft carrier Fujian as it seeks to project power

Strategic Significance

- China commissioned its third aircraft carrier, Fujian, after extensive trials, reflecting the nation's commitment to expanding its navy's capabilities and global reach.
- The launch was attended by President Xi Jinping and showcases China's growing naval ambitions and military modernization drive, aimed at achieving "world class" status for the Chinese armed forces by 2035.

Technological Advancements

- Fujian is distinguished by its use of an electromagnetic launch system, skipping past the steam catapult technology common on older American and Soviet carriers.
- This technology, found only on the latest U.S. Navy Ford-class carriers, allows for more precise control and speed, reduces stress on aircraft and ships, and can launch a broader range of planes than steam catapults.

Regional and Global Implications

- The carrier is a centerpiece in China's efforts to dominate the South China Sea, East China Sea, and waters near the First Island Chain—including strategic locations like Japan, Taiwan, and the Philippines.
- China also seeks to contest control of the Second Island Chain, which encompasses U.S. military facilities on Guam and other critical points in the Pacific, escalating competition with the United States.

Comparative Assessment

- Fujian is China's third carrier—preceded by Liaoning (Soviet-made) and Shandong (Chinese-built but based on Soviet design)—while the U.S. Navy possesses 11 aircraft carriers, all nuclear-powered and capable of unlimited operation without refueling.
- The difference in propulsion technology means Chinese carriers, including the Fujian, are conventionally powered and thus limited in operational endurance compared to U.S. carriers.

Long-Term Objectives

- The Fujian represents a key step in China's strategic plan for military overhaul and naval expansion, responding to both regional security imperatives and global ambitions set out in President Xi's defense vision through mid-century.
- The launch signals further evolution in Chinese shipbuilding, as Fujian is the first carrier completely designed and built domestically, underscoring self-reliance in defense manufacturing.

Expert Insights

- Analysts warn the new carrier could alter naval balances in Asia, with growing potential for superpower competition and direct contests over vital sea lanes and island chains.
- The move is seen as enhancing China's capacity for power projection far beyond its territorial waters.

Hasina says security forces 'certainly made' mistakes in response against protesters

Security Forces and Protest Response

- Sheikh Hasina acknowledges that mistakes were "certainly made" by Bangladeshi security forces in their response to the uprising and protests, describing the situation as highly disordered and fast-changing.
- She emphasizes that these errors were committed in good faith and that decisions made by senior officials aimed to minimize violence and loss of life, but concedes that handling could have been different.

Critique of Interim Government and Election Proposal

- Hasina criticizes the interim government led by Dr. Yunus for disenfranchising millions, arguing that elections conducted without participation of the Awami League would not reflect genuine democratic consent.
- She expresses skepticism about the February 2026 election, suggesting that even if polls take place, they will not be democratic unless the Awami League's ban is lifted and its supporters allowed to take part.

Justice and Accountability

- She reiterates that the ICT acts as a tool for political vendetta, fueled by rivals and external influences, rather than upholding impartial justice.

Rights, Representation, and Referendum

- Hasina strongly argues that governance needs broad consent and cannot be legitimate if millions are excluded from voting; she is particularly concerned about the disenfranchisement of minorities and Awami League supporters.
- This also highlights Hasina's rejection of the interim government's proposed constitutional referendum, noting Bangladesh's existing constitution is sufficient for democracy and that rushed changes undermine public participation.

Call for Peaceful Campaign and Relationship with India

- Despite tension and division, Hasina promises that her campaign will remain peaceful, regardless of political developments or government actions.
- She stresses the need for the government to maintain the Awami League ban if it wishes to restore credibility and avoid further upheaval, and cautions that Bangladesh's relationship with India should remain a priority despite domestic disturbances.

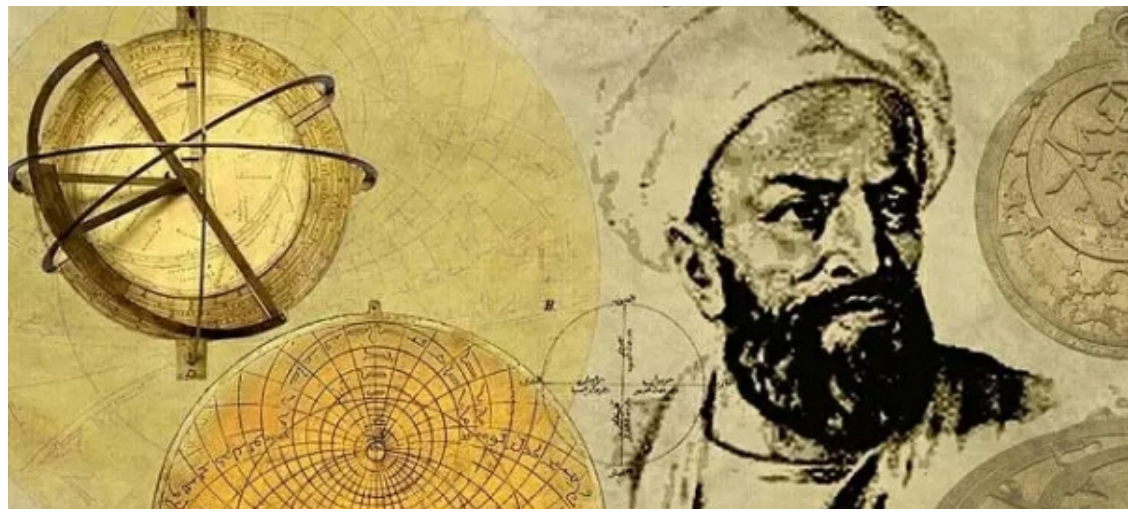
Legitimacy, Resignation, and Future Outlook

- The ex-Prime Minister asserts she did not resign before fleeing, questions the legitimacy of the new regime, and refuses to recognize the authority of Dr. Yunus's administration.
- She displays little confidence in the conduct or outcome of the February 2026 elections, signaling the likelihood of continued instability and contestation over Bangladesh's democratic future.

Prelims Corner: Explanations

Q1. Ans d

The political history of c. 300-600 CE, which in general, is known as the Gupta era in Indian history, has been largely reconstructed on the basis of inscriptions and coins. There are no specific details about the origins or social backgrounds of the Guptas. Apart from the historical value of his descriptions of 11th-century India, Al-Biruni helped modern historians identify the initial year of the Gupta era in his Tahqiq-i-Hind states that the Gupta era began 241 years after the beginning of the Shaka era. Since the Shaka era began in 78 CE, this places the beginning of the Gupta era in 319-320 CE.



Q2. Ans b

Baji Rao I (1720–1740) was appointed as Peshwa in 1720 by Shahu after Balaji Viswanath (father of Baji Rao I). Baji Rao's achievements include establishing Maratha dominance in southern India and political power in northern India. As a result, he played a key role in establishing Maratha supremacy in Gujarat, Malwa, Rajputana, and Bundelkhand, as well as liberating Konkan (India's western coast) from Janjira Siddis and Portuguese dominance. After consolidating Maratha power in central India, Baji Rao resolved to reassert the Maratha right to collect taxes from the prosperous province of Gujarat. Sarbuland Khan, the Mughal governor of the Gujarat province, gave permission to the Marathas to collect Chauth. The Marathas defeated the Nizam of Hyderabad, and Peshwa Baji Rao I forced him to sign a peace treaty on March 6, 1728, in the village of Mungi-Paithan. The Nizam agreed to make some concessions to the Peshwa under the Munji Shivagaon Treaty. Thus, Baji Rao enhanced the power and prestige of the Maratha Empire by defeating the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Rajput Governor of Malwa and the Governor of Gujarat.

Q3. Ans c

The 1st century BCE Hathigumpha inscription of the Kalinga king Kharavela refers to his retrieving an image of a Jina. This inscription is the earliest epigraphic reference to image worship in Jainism. The Udayagiri and Khandagiri caves in Orissa are among the oldest long-standing centres of Jaina monasticism. A large number of Jaina images and inscriptions from the Mathura area indicate the popularity of Jainism. Kharavela, the Chedi king of Kalinga (in eastern India), claims in his Hathigumpha inscription to have defied a king named Satakarni in his second regnal year. He also claims two years later, he defeated the Rathikas of the Maratha country and the Bhojas of Vidarbha, who seem to have been subordinates of the Satavahanas. A possible indication of Nanda military victories in Kalinga is suggested by the later Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela, which mentions a king named Nanda building a canal and either conquering a place or taking away a Jaina shrine or image from Kalinga.

Q4. Ans a

Article 30 of the Indian Constitution speaks about the right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions. This Article consists of provisions that safeguard various rights of the minority community in the country, keeping in mind the principle of Equality as well. Article 30 (1): Promises to all linguistic and religious minorities the 'right to establish' and the 'right to administer' educational institutions of their own choice. This clause provides the right for two types of minorities, namely, religious and linguistic minorities. Article 30 (2): Restricts the State from making discrimination in the matter of providing help to any educational institution on the ground that it is managed by a religious minority or linguistic minority. Thus, Article 30 of the constitution speaks specifically of religious and linguistic minorities.

Case Study:



West Bank's oldest olive tree 'a symbol of endurance'

As guardian of the occupied West Bank's oldest olive tree, Salah Abu Ali prunes its branches and gathers its fruit even as violence plagues the Palestinian territory during this year's harvest. "This is no ordinary tree. We're talking about history, about civilisation, about a symbol," the 52-year old said proudly, smiling behind his thick beard in the village of Al-Walajah, south of Jerusalem. Mr. Abu Ali said experts had estimated the tree to be between 3,000 and 5,500 years old. It has endured millennia of drought and war in this parched land scarred by conflict. Around the tree's vast trunk and its dozen off shoots — some named after his family members — Abu Ali has cultivated a small oasis of calm. "It has become a symbol of Palestinian endurance. The olive tree represents the Palestinian people themselves, rooted in this land for thou sands of years," said Al-Walajah mayor Khader Al Araj. The Palestinian Authority's Agriculture Ministry even recognised the tree as a Palestinian natural landmark and appointed Abu Ali as its official caretaker. "The oil from this tree is exceptional. The older the tree, the richer the oil," said Mr. Abu Ali. Tourists once came in droves to see the tree, but numbers have dwindled since the start of the war in Gaza in October 2023, he said, with checkpoints tightening across the West Bank.



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