

# THE PALA CIVIL TIMES



Civil Service Institute | Pala | Thiruvananthapuram | South India's Premier Civil Service Coaching Institute | [www.civilservicepala.org](http://www.civilservicepala.org)



**Hantavirus outbreak raises alarm**

THE INDIAN EXPRESS Explained



**Apple draws ₹100-cr. 'green' plan for India**

THE HINDU : 08-05-2026 : Page 8



**Overall crime rate drops 6%; cybercrime up by 17%: NCRB**

THE HINDU : 07-05-2026 : Page 1

## NATIONAL Page 3



**India–Bangladesh Border Challenges**

THE PALA CIVIL TIMES Special Feature



## PRELIMS CORNER

Page 8



The Poona Pact  
Chauri Chaura Incident  
UPSC PYQ analysis - Modern India

### One year after Operation Sindoor: For India, some diplomatic wins, some hard lessons

Operation Sindoor marked a major shift in India's counter-terrorism approach after the terror attack near Pahalgam in 2025. India carried out precision strikes on terror infrastructure and selected military-linked targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The operation reinforced India's "new normal" based on three principles — assured retaliation against terror attacks, refusal to distinguish between state and non-state actors supporting terrorism, and rejection of nuclear deterrence as a shield for cross-border terrorism. The operation was viewed as a tactical and military success in several respects. It demonstrated India's long-range strike capabilities, validated the effectiveness of certain indigenous and imported weapon systems, and expanded India's perceived operational space under conditions of nuclear deterrence. It also projected India's intent to impose visible costs for terror attacks originating from across the border.

*(Read the full report on Page 2)*

## EDITORIALS DECODED

Page 5



**Building hazards**  
*India needs to do more to prevent and fight fires*



**Amid disruptions, a timely lifeline**



**Stardom to statecraft**  
*Vijay's charisma up against realities of realpolitik*

## One year after Operation Sindoor: For India, some diplomatic wins, some hard lessons

Despite the tactical success of Operation Sindoor, broader strategic outcomes from this episode remain more complex. The operation did not eliminate Pakistan-based anti-India terror networks, as infiltration attempts and terror-related incidents reportedly continued afterward. Questions also emerged regarding whether coercive military responses alone can alter Pakistan's long-term security posture or permanently deter cross-border terrorism. The post-operation diplomatic environment further highlighted important limitations. Although the international community strongly condemned the initial terror attack, many countries later shifted towards calls for restraint, de-escalation, and dialogue once military strikes began. Major powers, including the U.S and several European governments, avoided fully endorsing India's military actions and instead focused on regional stability between two nuclear-armed neighbours.

### Strategic Communication and Narrative Management

One of the clearest lessons from Operation Sindoor concerns strategic communication and global narrative management. India launched diplomatic outreach through multi-party delegations to several countries in order to explain its position and highlight the issue of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism. These efforts achieved international attention towards groups such as The Resistance Front. However, Pakistan simultaneously conducted an aggressive international messaging campaign portraying itself as a victim of escalation. Analysts observed that Pakistan's communication strategy appeared more centralised and politically coordinated, while India faced criticism in some international circles regarding transparency and information management during the conflict.



### Geopolitical Realities and External Balancing

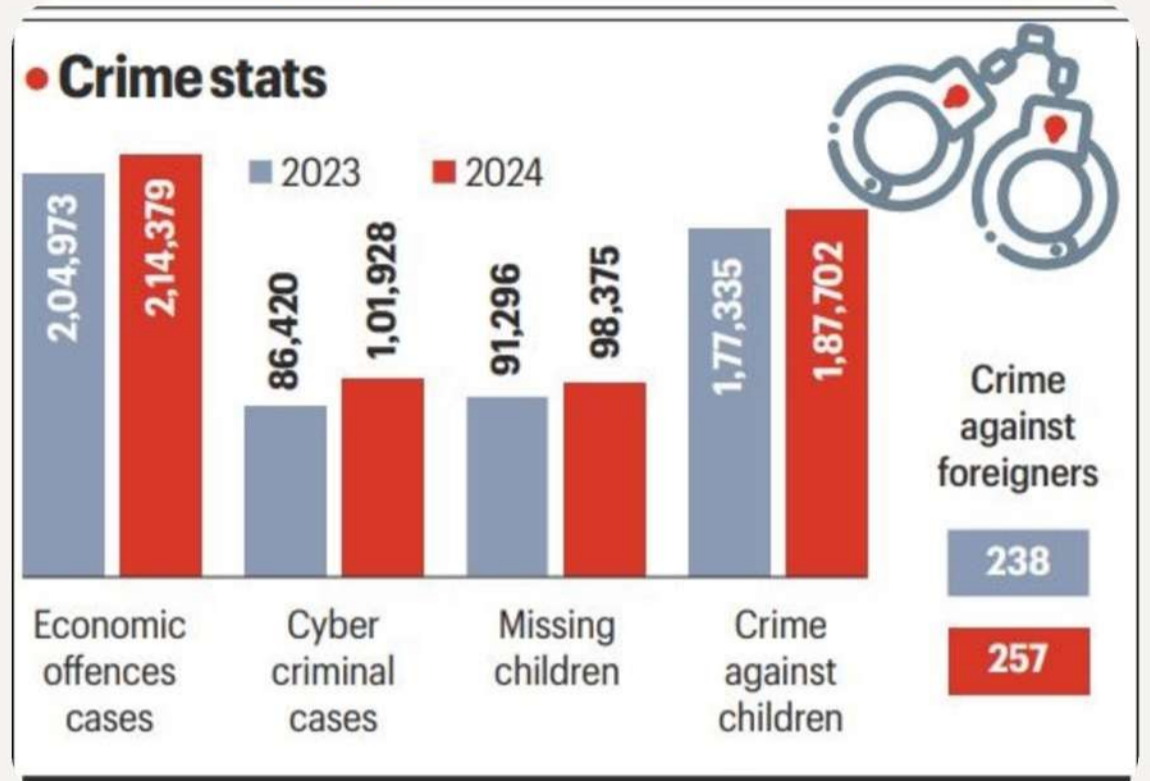
The events following Operation Sindoor also revealed the continued importance of geopolitical calculations in international diplomacy. Pakistan retained significant strategic relevance for several global powers due to its *geographic position, regional influence, and role in West Asian and Afghan security dynamics*. This limited the possibility of its international isolation despite India's diplomatic efforts. For India, an important lesson was that counter-terrorism operations now operate within a highly interconnected geopolitical environment. Future responses to terrorism may therefore require not only military preparedness, but also stronger diplomatic coordination, strategic partnerships, and sustained international communication.

### The Broader Strategic Takeaway

Overall, Operation Sindoor demonstrated India's growing willingness and capability to conduct calibrated military responses against terrorism. At the same time, it exposed the limits of military coercion when not accompanied by broader diplomatic and strategic outcomes. It has reinforced the need for a balanced approach combining deterrence, counter-terror operations, international engagement, crisis communication, and regional stability management. The operation also highlighted a larger strategic reality: while tactical military actions can impose immediate costs, durable peace and long-term stability in the region ultimately depend on managing escalation risks, sustaining diplomatic space, and preventing recurring cycles of conflict between two nuclear-armed neighbours.

## Overall crime rate drops 6%; cybercrime up by 17%: NCRB

The latest data released by the National Crime Records Bureau shows that total registered crime cases in India declined by around 6% in 2024. The total number of cases fell from 62.41 lakh in 2023 to 58.85 lakh in 2024. Correspondingly, the overall crime rate per lakh population also declined from 448.3 to 418.9 during the same period. Despite this broader decline, certain categories such as cyber crimes and economic offences recorded significant increases.



### Rise in Cyber Crimes & Economic Offences

*Cyber crimes emerged as one of the fastest-growing categories in 2024.* A total of **1,01,928** cyber crime cases were registered, marking a **18%** increase compared to **86,420 cases in 2023**. The cyber crime rate increased from **6.2 to 7.3 per lakh population**. Fraud remained the dominant motive behind cyber crimes, accounting for over 72% of all cases. Other major categories included sexual exploitation and extortion. **Economic offences also increased during the year.** Cases rose from 2,04,973 in 2023 to 2,14,379 in 2024, registering a growth of 4.6%. Within this category, forgery, cheating, and fraud constituted nearly 90% of all cases, while criminal breach of trust formed the second-largest component.

### Crimes Against Women and Children

Crimes against women showed a marginal decline of 1.5%, with 4.41 lakh cases registered in 2024 (4.48 lakh in 2023). The crime rate against women also slightly reduced from 66.2 to 64.6 per lakh. Cruelty by husband or relatives remained the largest category of offences, followed by kidnapping, crimes against minors, and assault intended to outrage modesty.

Child safety indicators, however, showed concern. Nearly 98,375 children were reported missing in 2024, representing a 7.8% increase. Girls accounted for the majority of missing cases. Delhi recorded the highest number and crime rate among metropolitan cities, followed by Chennai and Bengaluru.

### Crimes Against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

The report recorded a decline in crimes against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Crimes against SCs decreased by 3.6%, while crimes against STs declined by 23.1% in 2024. Among States, Uttar Pradesh reported the highest number of crimes against SCs, followed by Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. In crimes against STs, Madhya Pradesh recorded the highest number of cases, followed by Rajasthan and Maharashtra.

### Crimes Involving Foreigners

Cases involving foreigners also showed an upward trend. Crimes against foreigners increased by 8%, with theft and offences under the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act forming major categories. At the same time, crimes committed by foreigners increased by nearly 10%, with most cases registered under the Foreigners Act, Registration of Foreigners Act, and Passport Act.

India's overall crime situation in 2024 presents a mixed picture. On the one hand, the overall number of registered crimes and the national crime rate per lakh population declined compared to 2023. Crimes against women, Scheduled Castes, and Scheduled Tribes also recorded marginal declines statistically, while murder cases showed a slight reduction. However, the data simultaneously highlights a structural shift in the nature of crime in India. Technology-driven offences, particularly cyber crimes and economic fraud, are rising rapidly and becoming increasingly significant components of the national crime landscape.

## India–Bangladesh Border Challenges: Illegal Migration, Border Security, and Repatriation Concerns

A fresh diplomatic concern emerged between India and Bangladesh after India urged Bangladesh to speed up the nationality verification process of nearly 3,000 suspected illegal Bangladeshi immigrants residing in India. The issue gained attention after Bangladesh warned that it would respond if individuals were “forcibly pushed” across the border without proper procedures. According to the Indian government, nearly 2,862 nationality verification requests are pending with Bangladesh, with some cases awaiting clearance for several years. India argued that effective repatriation requires cooperation and timely verification from the Bangladeshi side.

### Broader Concern: Illegal Migration Across the Border

Illegal migration from Bangladesh, along with movement of Rohingya migrants through eastern borders, has remained a long-standing internal security and governance concern for India. The issue is linked not only to demographic and economic pressures in border regions but also to concerns regarding illegal documentation networks, smuggling, infiltration, and cross-border criminal activities. Although there are no universally accepted figures regarding the total number of illegal migrants, different official and unofficial estimates have suggested between 12-20 million over the years. The challenge is difficult to quantify because illegal entry often occurs through clandestine and undocumented routes.

### Investment and Emerging Sectors

The India–Bangladesh border stretches 4096-km across densely populated riverine areas. While large portions have already been fenced, significant gaps still remain, especially in parts of West Bengal. The issue of incomplete fencing has repeatedly reached the Supreme Court of India and the Calcutta High Court where it resulted in delays linked to land acquisition, administrative clearances, and transfer of acquired land to the Border Security Force. The High Court also stressed that fencing the border is directly connected to national security and territorial integrity.



### Factors Aiding Illegal Cross-Border Movement

Both countries reaffirmed their commitment to the **Joint Vision Statement on Defence Partnership towards 2030** and agreed to deepen cooperation in areas such as joint military exercises, maritime security, naval cooperation, hydrography, defence technology, co-production, training, and search-and-rescue operations. India’s defence Lines of Credit to Vietnam were also acknowledged as important for strengthening Vietnam’s defence capabilities. Both countries reiterated their shared commitment to a free, open, inclusive, and rules-based Indo-Pacific region. Both sides emphasized the importance of freedom of navigation and overflight, peaceful dispute resolution, and adherence to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

### Way Forward

The issue has increasingly highlighted the need for modernised border management rather than relying only on physical fencing and manpower deployment. Greater use of surveillance technology, digital identity verification systems, smart fencing, drones, and integrated border monitoring systems is being viewed as essential for improving efficiency and reducing vulnerabilities. Overall, the India–Bangladesh border issue today reflects the intersection of migration management, national security, humanitarian concerns, and bilateral diplomacy. While India seeks stricter enforcement against illegal migration and stronger border controls, the issue also requires sustained diplomatic cooperation with Bangladesh to ensure that repatriation processes remain lawful, verifiable, and coordinated.

**The Indian EXPRESS**

## Op Sindoor shone light on challenges ahead

The response to the Pahalgam attack and the subsequent Operation Sindoor marked a significant evolution in India's counter-terrorism and strategic doctrine. The operation demonstrated India's ability to undertake calibrated military action against state-sponsored terrorism while avoiding uncontrolled escalation in a nuclearised regional environment. By targeting strategic and military assets and simultaneously projecting itself as a responding rather than aggressing power, India sought to raise the costs of cross-border terrorism without crossing the threshold into full-scale war. At the operational level, the attack reinforced the centrality of intelligence gathering, particularly human intelligence, as the first line of defence against infiltration and terrorism. Growing defence and intelligence cooperation between China and Pakistan is a crucial challenge to national security which necessitates multi-dimensional preparedness. The broader lesson is that contemporary national security strategy requires a combination of military preparedness, diplomatic agility, technological adaptation, narrative management, and strategic restraint.

**Editorial to Exam - Most probable question from this editorial**

*India's evolving response to cross-border terrorism reflects a shift towards calibrated deterrence in a complex regional security environment.*

*Examine the strategic lessons from recent counter-terrorism operations for India's national security doctrine.*



## Building hazards

The recurring incidence of fatal fires in Indian cities highlights deep structural weaknesses in urban planning, building safety, and disaster preparedness. Recent fire accidents in areas such as Delhi exposed serious deficiencies in emergency evacuation systems, including inaccessible terraces, electronically locked exits, and metal-grilled balconies that trapped residents. The problem is further aggravated by inadequate fire-fighting infrastructure, narrow urban layouts, poor compliance with safety norms, and delayed emergency response. The issue is rooted in weak preventive governance. An often overlooked cause of urban fires is faulty electrical infrastructure. During peak summer months, excessive use of high-load appliances like air conditioners leads to overloading. In many residential buildings, safety mechanisms such as circuit breakers are either poorly maintained, increasing the risk of electrical fires. Effective urban disaster management therefore requires a shift from reactive fire-fighting to preventive urban governance.

**Editorial to Exam - Most probable question from this editorial**

*Recurring urban fire accidents in India reflect deeper deficiencies in urban governance and disaster preparedness rather than isolated safety failures.*

*Discuss the structural causes of urban fire disasters in India and examine the measures required to strengthen preventive urban safety and emergency response systems.*

thehindu **businessline.**

TUESDAY - MARCH 31, 2026

## Stardom to statecraft

In the fractured verdict in the 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly election, C. Joseph Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam emerged as the single-largest party but fell short of a majority. The situation has triggered intense coalition negotiations involving parties such as the Congress, Left parties, and regional outfits, highlighting the complexities of coalition politics in India. While the Governor's insistence on proof of majority support before inviting Vijay to form the government is constitutionally sound, it also exposes the inconsistency in gubernatorial discretion across states. Previous instances in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Goa, and Manipur demonstrated more flexible interpretations of constitutional conventions, often leading to accusations of partisan conduct by Governors. Tamil Nadu's political developments within the broader context of India's evolving federalism shows that opposition-ruled states increasingly interact with an assertive Union government. In this regard, electoral popularity and celebrity appeal alone may not translate into stable governance.

**Editorial to Exam - Most probable question from this editorial**

*Fragmented electoral mandates often test the functioning of constitutional offices and coalition politics in India.*

*Discuss the role of Governors in government formation and examine the challenges coalition governments pose to federal governance and political stability.*

## Apple draws ₹100-cr. 'green' plan for India

Apple Inc. recently announced a series of clean energy and sustainability initiatives in India aimed at supporting renewable energy expansion and strengthening green entrepreneurship. A major component of the announcement is Apple's partnership with CleanMax, under which the company plans an initial investment of nearly ₹100 crore to support more than **150 megawatts of renewable energy capacity across India**. The project is expected to generate enough clean energy to power around **1.5 lakh Indian households** annually and help scale renewable energy adoption within Apple's growing Indian supply chain.

The company is also expanding partnerships with WWF-India and waste-management organisations to improve recycling systems and reduce plastic leakage into ecosystems. In addition, Apple has partnered with Acumen to support startups in waste management, circular economy solutions, regenerative agriculture, sustainable livelihoods, and electric mobility. These initiatives complement *Apple's broader goal of becoming carbon neutral across its global operations and supply chains by 2030*.

### Why the Investment Matters for India

Apple's announcement aligns closely with India's expanding climate and renewable energy commitments. India has emerged as one of the world's leading countries in climate action and clean energy transition. India has already made substantial progress toward the pledges made during the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference. The country achieved its earlier target of 40% non-fossil fuel-based installed electricity capacity years ahead of schedule and has now crossed more than 52% non-fossil fuel capacity by early 2026. India has also reduced its emissions intensity considerably since 2005 and has raised its future climate ambitions further under updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), including a stronger target for renewable energy adoption and carbon sink creation by 2035.



### Role of Private Investment in India's Energy Transition

India's renewable energy transition requires large-scale investments. Estimates suggest that nearly \$400 billion in financing may be required to achieve the country's renewable energy targets by 2030. In this context, investments by major global companies like Apple become crucial as they bring out capital along with technology, sustainability standards, innovation ecosystems, and global investor confidence. Apple's investment also reflects the growing integration of sustainability into manufacturing and supply chains as the company expands production partnerships in India through domestic firms.

### Broader Economic and Environmental Significance

The initiatives highlight how climate action is increasingly linked with industrial growth, technology, employment generation, and sustainable development. Support for clean energy, recycling systems, electric mobility, and sustainable agriculture contributes to reducing emissions while simultaneously creating green jobs and strengthening local innovation ecosystems.

### Overall Assessment

Overall, Apple's clean energy investment in India is significant not merely as a corporate sustainability initiative, but as part of a larger global and national transition toward green development. The partnership supports India's renewable energy expansion, strengthens sustainable manufacturing ecosystems, encourages climate-focused entrepreneurship, and contributes to the country's long-term objective of balancing rapid economic growth with environmental sustainability and net-zero commitments by 2070.

## Hantavirus outbreak raises alarm

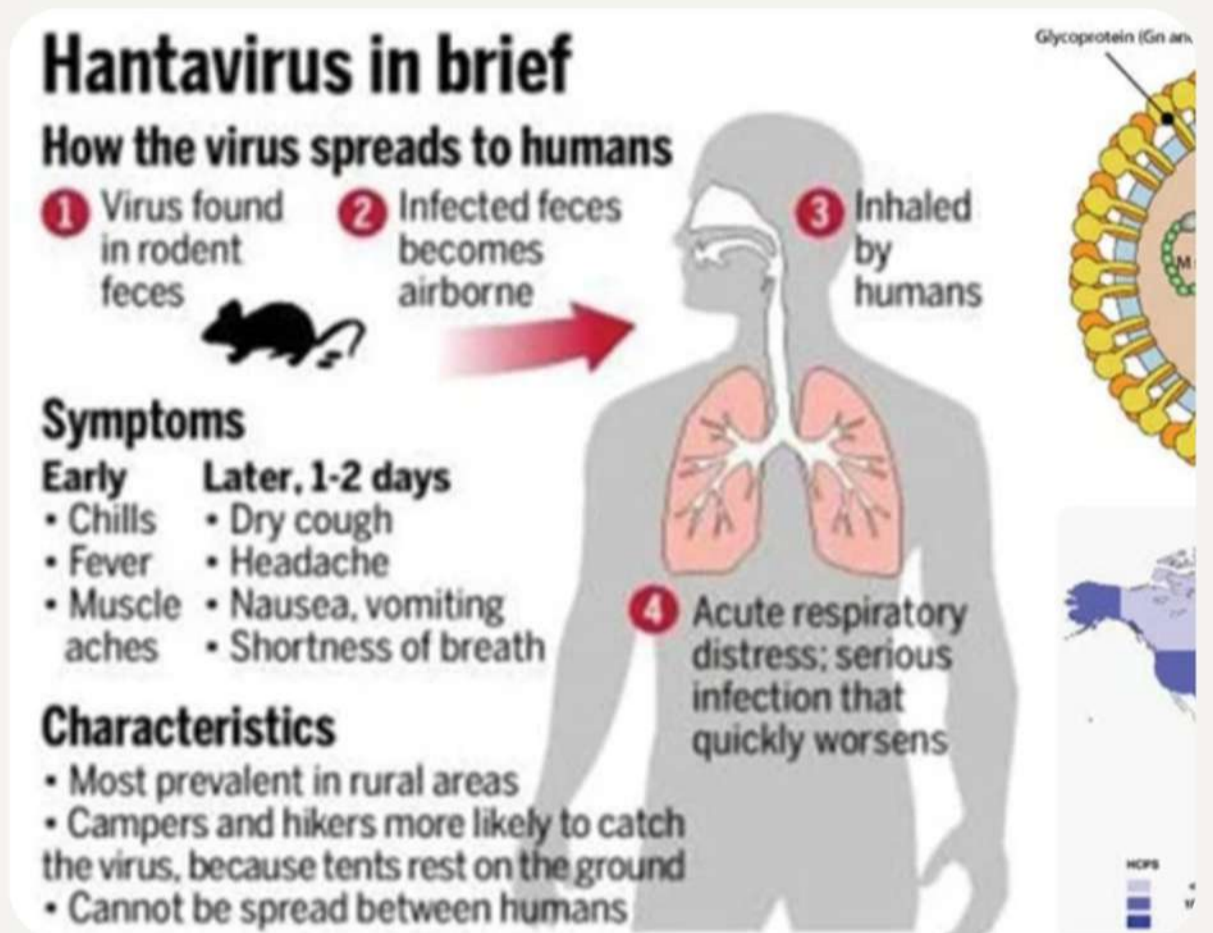
A serious hantavirus outbreak aboard the MV Hondius has triggered global public health concerns after multiple passengers and crew members travelling from Argentina towards Spain were infected with the virus. At least seven cases have been identified so far, with three deaths already reported and another patient critically ill. The ship, carrying passengers from the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, and the Netherlands, has been placed under isolation protocols resembling the quarantines seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The outbreak has also generated diplomatic and administrative challenges. Spain agreed to allow the ship to dock in the Canary Islands after requests from the World Health Organization, despite resistance from local authorities concerned about public safety. International health agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, are now closely monitoring passengers and coordinating containment efforts.

### Understanding Hantavirus and Its Severity

Hantavirus refers to a group of rodent-borne viruses capable of causing severe and potentially fatal illness in humans. The virus spreads mainly through contact with **rodent urine, saliva, droppings, or contaminated dust particles inhaled from infected environments**. Although human-to-human transmission is generally rare, limited transmission has previously been observed with the Andes strain circulating in parts of South America. The infection initially presents with flu-like symptoms such as fever, fatigue, and muscle pain, but can rapidly progress into severe respiratory distress, kidney failure, low blood pressure, and internal bleeding. There is currently no specific cure for severe hantavirus pulmonary syndrome, making early detection and supportive treatment critically important.

The latest hantavirus outbreak is not merely a medical incident but also a reminder of the growing intersection between public health, climate change, international travel, and global governance.



### Climate Change and Emerging Disease Risks

Experts believe the recent outbreak may be linked to climate variability. Prolonged droughts followed by intense rainfall have reportedly altered rodent population dynamics, increasing food availability and allowing infected rodent populations to expand rapidly. This reflects a growing global concern over the spread of zoonotic diseases by disrupting ecosystems and increasing human exposure to disease-carrying animals. It also highlights how environmental instability, biodiversity changes, and extreme weather events can increasingly influence global public health emergencies. Argentina has consistently recorded some of the highest hantavirus incidence rates in Latin America, making disease surveillance and ecological monitoring crucial.

### WHO's position

WHO currently assesses the overall global public health risk as low. But the outbreak has revived memories of the early COVID-19 era, particularly fears surrounding cruise-ship quarantines, international travel restrictions, and cross-border disease transmission. Questions on quarantine management, international mobility, and emergency preparedness have once again come into focus.

**PRELIMS CORNER:**

1) Subsequent to which one of the following events, Gandhiji, who consistently opposed untouchability and appealed for its eradication from all spheres, decided to include the upliftment of 'Harijans' in his political and social programme?

- (a) The Poona Pact
- (b) The Gandhi-Irwin (Delhi Pact) Agreement
- (c) Arrest of Congress leadership at the time of the Quit India Movement
- (d) Promulgation of the Government of India Act, 1935

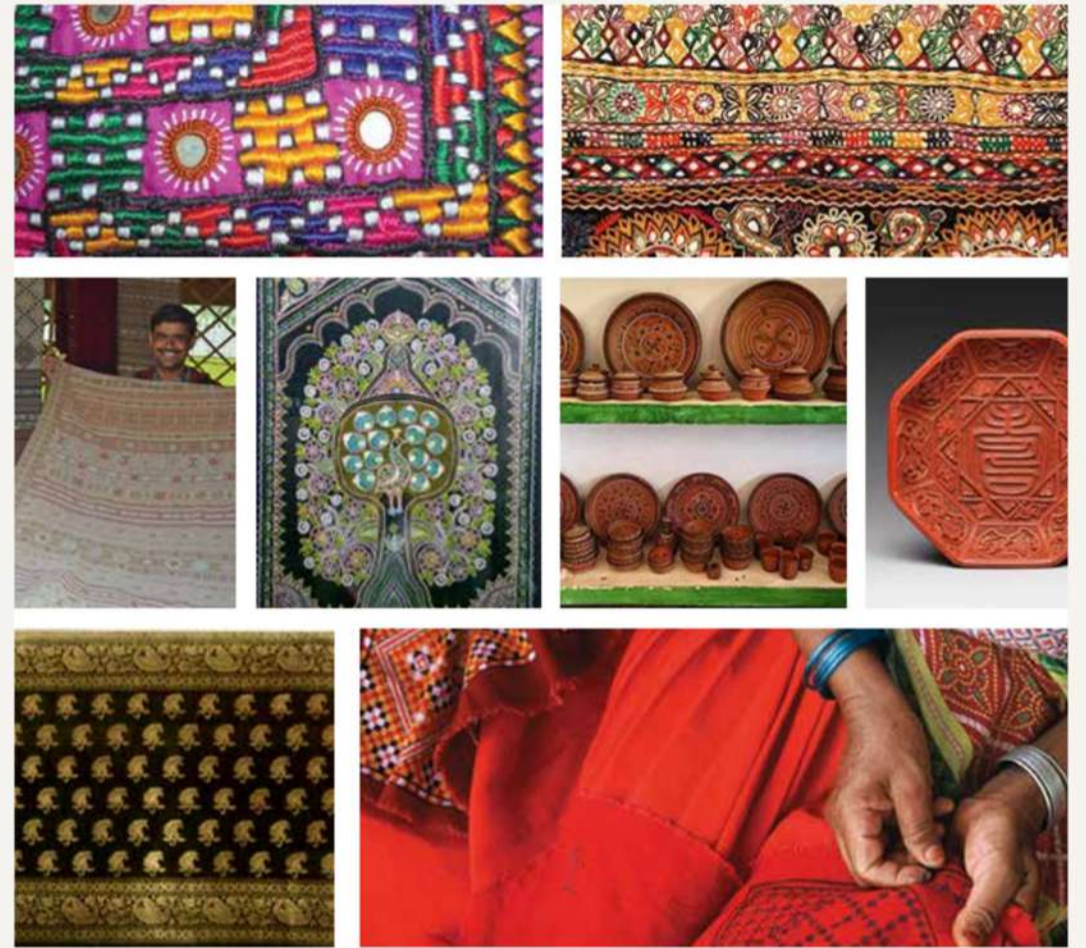


2) Who provided legal defence to the people arrested in the aftermath of Chauri Chaura incident?

- (a) C. R. Das
- (b) Madan Mohan Malaviya and Krishna Kant
- (c) Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew and Khwaja Hasan Nizami
- (d) M. A. Jinnah

**WONDERS OF INDIA**

*Discover the diverse cultural heritage of India, one element at a time.*

**Textile heritage of Gujarat**

The textile heritage of Gujarat reflects centuries of artistic excellence, community traditions, and skilled craftsmanship.

Among the most famous traditions is Bandhani, an ancient tie-and-dye technique in which tiny knots are tied on fabric before dyeing to create colourful patterns. Widely used in sarees, dupattas, and turbans, Bandhani is closely associated with festivals and weddings, especially in places like Jamnagar and Kutch. Equally celebrated is Patola Silk from Patan, known for its complex double ikat weaving and geometric designs, symbolising luxury and precision. The region is also famous for Ajrakh block printing, practised in Ajrakhpur and nearby areas, where artisans use natural dyes and hand-carved wooden blocks to create symmetrical motifs. Kutch embroidery, recognised for its mirror work, bright colours, and tribal patterns, represents the cultural identity of local communities. Other important traditions include applique work and Tangaliya weaving, a rare craft practised by the Dangasia community that produces distinctive geometric patterns on shawls.

Together, these textile traditions highlight Gujarat's blend of creativity, sustainability, and living heritage.



# Prelims Corner: Explanations

1) The correct answer is (a) The Poona Pact  
 The inclusion of the upliftment of 'Harijans' in Mahatma Gandhi's political and social programme gained major momentum after the Poona Pact of 1932.

The background to the Pact lay in the Communal Award announced by British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald on 16 August 1932. The Award granted separate electorates to the Depressed Classes, treating them as a separate political community. B. R. Ambedkar had demanded separate electorates during the First Round Table Conference to ensure political representation for the depressed classes.

Gandhi strongly opposed this provision because he believed it would permanently divide Hindu society. In protest, he began a fast unto death in Yeravada Jail on 20 September 1932. After negotiations between Gandhi and Ambedkar, the Poona Pact was signed. The agreement abandoned separate electorates but increased the number of reserved seats for the Depressed Classes in provincial legislatures from 71 to 148.

Following the Pact, Gandhi intensified his campaign against untouchability. He began referring to untouchables as "Harijans" ("Children of God"), a term inspired by the medieval saint-poet Narsinh Mehta. He also renamed his weekly journal Young India as Harijan in 1933, signalling that the eradication of untouchability had become central to his social and political mission.



2) The correct answer is (b) Madan Mohan Malaviya and Krishna Kant

Madan Mohan Malaviya played a crucial role in providing legal defence to those arrested after the Chauri Chaura incident. The Chauri Chaura incident occurred in February 1922 in present-day Uttar Pradesh, when a violent clash took place between protesters and police during the Non-Cooperation Movement led by Mahatma Gandhi. Protesters set fire to a police station, leading to the death of several policemen. Shocked by the violence, Gandhi subsequently withdrew the Non-Cooperation Movement. In the legal proceedings that followed, the Sessions Court awarded death sentences to about 170 accused persons.



At this stage, Madan Mohan Malaviya, who had earlier withdrawn from active legal practice to dedicate himself to national service, returned to the courtroom to defend the accused in the Allahabad High Court. Assisted by Krishna Kant, he argued the case effectively and succeeded in saving 155 individuals from execution. The remaining accused also benefited from recommendations for clemency, and their death sentences were later commuted to life imprisonment. Malaviya's intervention is remembered as a major humanitarian and legal contribution during the freedom struggle. Besides being a distinguished lawyer, he was also the founder of Banaras Hindu University and a prominent nationalist leader.