



## Indian Presidential Election

**For Prelims:** Constitutional Provisions related to the election of President, Election commission of India.

**For Mains:** Election of President and Impeachment.

### Why in News?

The tenure of the current President of India is set to end in July 2022, which is also when the 16<sup>th</sup> Indian Presidential election will be held to elect his successor.

### How is the President elected?

#### ▪ About:

- The Indian President is elected through **an electoral college system**, wherein the votes are cast by **national and State-level lawmakers**.
- The elections are conducted and overseen by the [Election Commission \(EC\) of India](#).
  - The electoral college is made up of all the **elected members of the [Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament](#)** (Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha MPs), and the **elected [Members of the Legislative Assemblies](#)** of States and Union Territories (MLAs).
- **Related Constitutional Provisions:**
  - **Article 54:** Election of President
  - **Article 55:** Manner of election of President.
  - **Article 56 :**Term of office of President
  - **Article 57:** Eligibility for re-election.
  - **Article 58:** Qualifications for election as President

#### ▪ Procedure:

- Before the voting, **comes the nomination stage**, where the candidate intending to stand in the election, files the nomination along with a signed list of 50 proposers and 50 seconders.
- These proposers and seconders can be anyone from the total members of the electoral college from the State and national level.
  - The **rule for securing 50 proposers and seconders was implemented when the EC noticed, in 1974**, that several candidates, many without even a bleak chance of winning, would file their nominations to contest the polls.
- An elector **cannot propose or second the nomination of more than one candidate**.

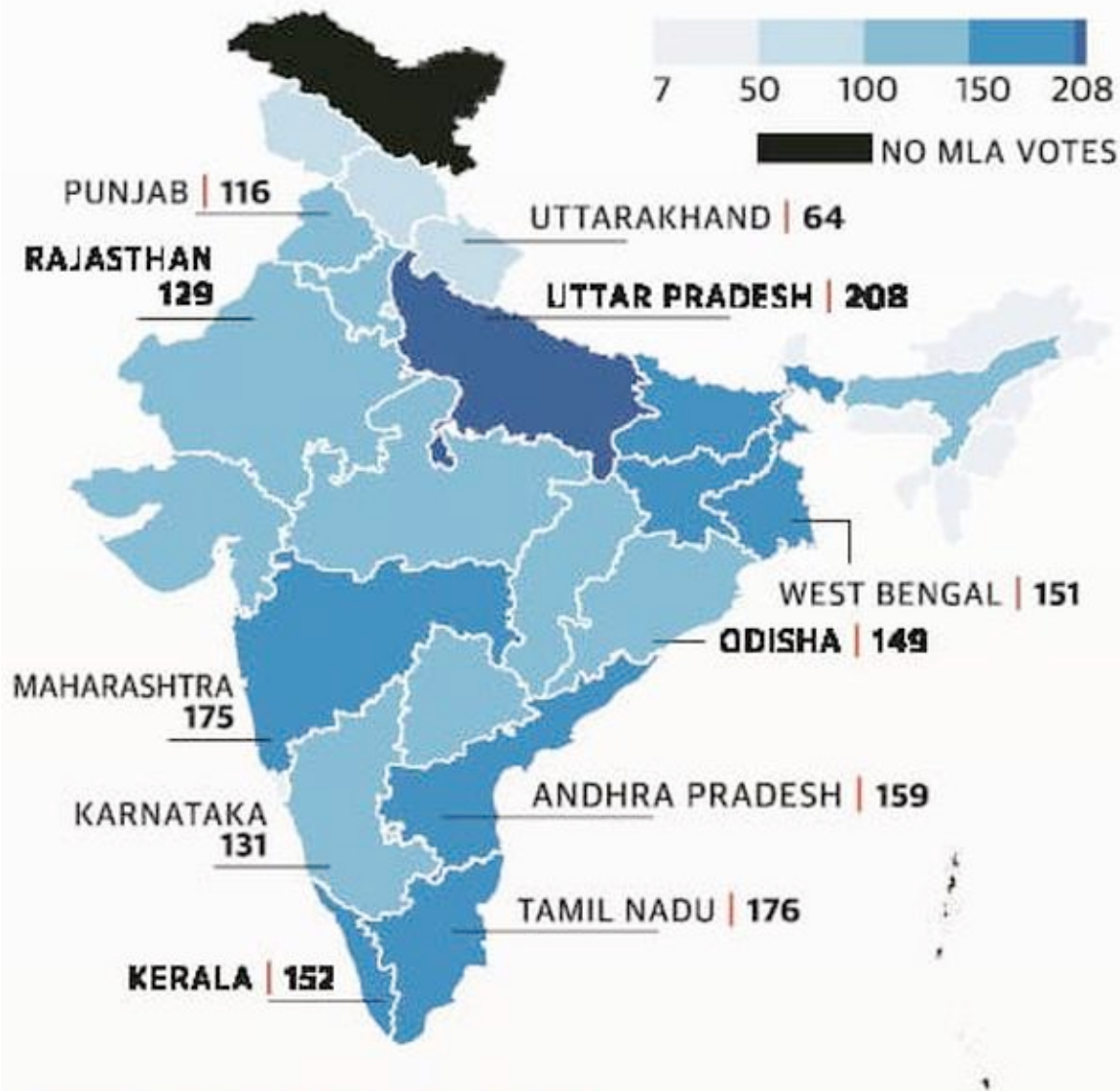
### What is the value of each vote and how is it calculated?

- A vote cast by each MP or MLA is not calculated as one vote.
- The **fixed value of each vote by an MP of the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha is 708**.
- Meanwhile, the **vote value of each MLA differs from State to State based on a calculation that factors in its population vis-a-vis the number of members** in its legislative Assembly.
  - As per the Constitution (Eighty-fourth Amendment) Act 2001, currently, the population of States is taken from the figures of the 1971 Census. This will change when the figures of the Census taken after the year 2026 are published.

- The value of each MLA's vote is determined by dividing the population of the State by the number of MLAs in its legislative Assembly, and the quotient achieved is further divided by 1000.
  - Uttar Pradesh for instance, has the highest vote value for each of its MLAs, at 208. The value of one MLA's vote in Maharashtra is 175, while that in Arunachal Pradesh is just 8.

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**1. VOTE VALUE OF EACH MLA** | Each MP carries a vote value of 708. However, the number of votes each MLA carries differs based on the State's population. The map shows the number of votes one MLA carries in a State



## What is required to secure a victory?

- A nominated candidate **does not secure victory based on a simple majority** but through a system of bagging a specific quota of votes. While counting, the EC totals up all the valid votes cast by the electoral college through paper ballots **and to win, the candidate must secure 50% of the total votes cast + 1.**
- Unlike general elections, where electors vote for a single party's candidate, **the voters of the electoral college write the names of candidates on the ballot paper in the order of preference.**

- The President's election **is held in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote** and the voting is **by secret ballot**.

## Can the President be Impeached?

- According to **Article 61**, the President can be removed from his office before the expiry of his term only **on the grounds of violation of the constitution**.
- However, the **Constitution does not define the meaning of the phrase 'violation of the constitution'**.
- The impeachment process **can be started from any house of the parliament by levelling charges against him**.
- The notice bearing the charges against the president must be signed by at least a quarter of the members of the house.
- The resolution to impeach the president **must be passed by a special majority (two-thirds) in the originating house**.
- Next, it is sent to the other house for consideration. The other house acts as the investigating horse. **A select committee is formed** to investigate the charges labelled against the president.
- During the process, the **President of India has the right to defend himself through authorised counsel**. He can choose to defend himself or appoint any person/lawyer or **attorney general of India** to do so.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Questions

**Q. With reference to the election of the President of India, consider the following statements: (2018)**

1. The value of the vote of each MLA varies from State to State.
2. The value of the vote of MPs of the Lok Sabha is more than the value of the vote of MPs of the Rajya Sabha.

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

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

**Ans: (a)**

**Source: TH**

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## Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan

**For Prelims:** Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**For Mains:** Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), 15th Finance Commission, Mission Mode Project on e-Panchayat, E-governance, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## Why in News?

The [Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs](#) has approved continuation of the revamped [Centrally Sponsored Scheme](#) of [Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan \(RGSA\)](#) for implementation during the period from **1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026** .

- The scheme is now co-terminus with the **15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission period**.
- The scheme is aimed **to develop governance capabilities of [Panchayati Raj Institutions \(PRIs\)](#)**.

## What is Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)?

- **Background:** The scheme was first approved by the **Cabinet in 2018** for implementation from 2018-19 to 2021-22.
- **Implementing Agency:** Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
- **Components:** The main Central Components were **Incentivisation of Panchayats** and Mission Mode Project on e-Panchayat including other activities at Central level.
  - The State component primarily includes **Capacity Building & Training (CB&T)** activities, institutional mechanisms for CB&T along with other activities at a limited scale.
- **Objectives:** It envisaged developing governance capabilities of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) **to deliver on the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#)**.
  - The key principles of SDGs, i.e. leaving no one behind, reaching the farthest first and universal coverage, along with gender equality will be embedded in the design of all capacity building interventions including training, training modules and materials.
  - Priority will be given to subjects of national importance principally under themes, namely:
    - Poverty free and enhanced livelihood in villages
    - Healthy Village
    - Child Friendly Village
    - Water Sufficient Village
    - Clean and Green Village
    - Self-Sufficient Infrastructure in Village
    - Socially Secured Village
    - Village with Good Governance
    - Engendered Development in Village.
- **Funding Pattern:** The revamped **RGSA will comprise Central and State components**. The Central Components of the scheme will be fully funded by the Government of India.
  - The funding pattern for State Components will be in the ratio of 60:40 among Centre and States respectively, except NE, **Hilly States and Union Territory (UT) of J&K where Central and State share will be 90:10**.
  - However, for other UTs, **Central share will be 100%**.
- **Vision:** It is an effort in the direction of achieving **“Sabka Sath, Sabka Gaon, Sabka Vikas”**.
- **Significance:**
  - **Socio-Economic Justice:** As panchayats have representation of [Schedule Castes](#), [Schedule Tribes](#) and women, and are institutions closest to the grassroots, strengthening panchayats will promote equity and inclusiveness, along with social justice and economic development of the community.
  - **Improved Public Service Delivery:** Increased use of e-governance by PRIs will help achieve improved service delivery and transparency.
  - **Developing PRI:** It will establish the institutional structure for capacity building of PRIs at the national, state and district level with adequate human resources and infrastructure.
- **Beneficiaries:** The approved scheme of RGSA will help more than **2.78 lakh Rural Local Bodies**.
  - Around 60 lakh elected representatives, functionaries and other stakeholders of rural local bodies, including traditional bodies, across the country will be direct beneficiaries of the scheme.
- **Scale:** This scheme extends to all States and UTs of the country and will also include institutions of rural local government in **non-Part IX areas**, where Panchayats do not exist.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

**Q. The fundamental object of Panchayati Raj system is to ensure which among the following? (2015)**

1. People's participation in development
2. Political accountability
3. Democratic decentralization
4. Financial mobilization

**Select the correct answer using the code given below**

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only  
(b) 2 and 4 only  
(c) 1 and 3 only  
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

**Ans: (c)**

**Exp:**

- The most fundamental objective of the Panchayati Raj system is to ensure people's participation in development and democratic decentralization.
- Establishment of Panchayati Raj Institutions does not automatically lead to political accountability.
- Financial mobilization is not the fundamental objective of Panchayati Raj, although it seeks to transfer finances and resources to the grass root government

**Source: IE**

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## Midday Meal Scheme

**For Prelims:** Midday Meal Scheme (MDMS, PM Poshan Shakti Nirman or PM Poshan, National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013.

**For Mains:** Issues Related to Children, Midday Meal Scheme and Related Issues.

### Why in News?

**Karnataka** is set to provide eggs under the [Midday Meal Scheme \(MDMS\)](#) for school children. MDMS is amongst the largest initiatives in the world to enhance nutrition levels of school-going children through hot cooked meals.

- However, the **inclusion of eggs has often been controversial.**

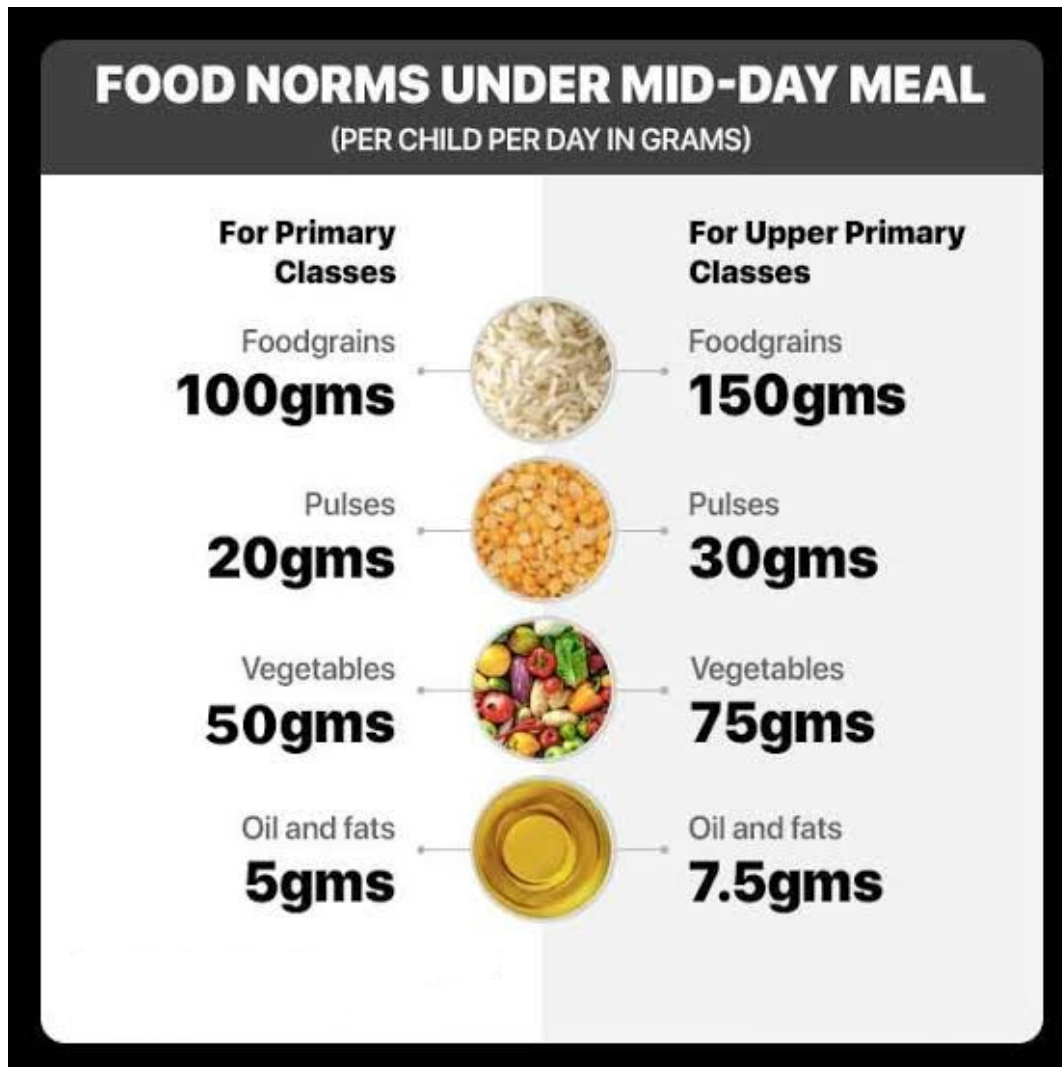
### What is the Mid Day Meal scheme?

- **About:** It is the **largest school feeding programme** of its kind in the world, covering students

enrolled in government schools from **Classes 1 to 8**.

- The basic objective of this **scheme is to enhance enrolment in schools**.

- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Education.
- **Background:** The programme was **first introduced in 1925 for disadvantaged children in Madras Municipal Corporation**.
  - The union government launched as a [centrally sponsored scheme](#) on a pilot basis in **1995 for children in Classes 1 to 5**.
  - By October 2007, **MDMS had been scaled up to Class 8**.
- **Current Status:** The current version of the programme, renamed [PM Poshan Shakti Nirman or PM Poshan in 2021](#).
- **Scale of Coverage:** The scheme covers 11.80 crore children across Classes 1 to 8 (age group 6 to 14).
- **Legal Entitlement:** It is not just a scheme, but a legal entitlement of all school-going children in primary and upper primary classes, through the [National Food Security Act \(NFSA\), 2013](#).
  - This was also reaffirmed by the [Supreme Court's](#) ruling in *People's Union of Civil Liberties vs Union of India and Others (2001)*.
- **Federal Setup:** Under the rules, the allocation of **Rs 4.97 per child per day (primary classes) and Rs 7.45 (upper primary)** are shared in **60:40 ratio** with states and UTs with a legislature, and **90:10 with the Northeastern states, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand**, while the Centre bears **100% of the costs in UTs without legislature**.



### What is the Issue Regarding Egg?

- In India, dietary choices are an intensely contested area in India **due to caste rigidities, religious conservatism and regional differences**.
- As a result, despite successive scientific studies, including those commissioned by state



governments, showing the **benefits of giving children eggs, many states have been reluctant about adding eggs to the school lunch menu.**

## What are Associated Issues and Challenges?

- **Corrupt Practices:** There have been instances of plain chapatis being served with salt, mixing of water in milk, food poisoning etc.
- **Caste Bias and Discrimination:** Food is central to the caste system, so in many schools, children are made to sit separately according to their caste status.
- **Menace of Malnutrition:** According to the [National Family Health Survey-5](#), several states across the country have reversed course and recorded worsening levels of child malnutrition.
  - India is home to about 30% of the world's stunted children and nearly 50% of severely wasted children under the age of five.
- **Global Nutrition Report-2021:** According to the recently released [Global Nutrition Report](#) (GNR, 2021), India has made no progress on anaemia and childhood wasting.
  - Over half of Indian women in the age group 15-49 years are anaemic.
- **Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2021:** India has slipped to 101st position in the [Global Hunger Index \(GHI\) 2021](#) of 116 countries, from its 2020 position of 94th.

## Way Forward

- **Early Detection & Care:** Interventions to improve maternal height and education must be implemented years before those girls and young women become mothers.
- **Holistic Perspective of Health:** The fight against stunting has often focussed on boosting nutrition for young children, but nutritionists have long argued that maternal health and well-being is the key to reduce stunting in their offspring.
- **Improving Menu in MDMS:** Expansion and improvement of school meals is needed for inter-generational pay-offs. As girls in India finish school, get married and have children all in just a few years — so school-based interventions can really help.

[Source: IE](#)

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## Policy for use of Land Acquired under CBA Act, 1957

**For Prelims:** CBA Act, Atmanirbhar Bharat, Coal gasification

**For Mains:** Coal Sector and associated challenges

## Why in News?

Recently, the Union Cabinet has **approved the policy for use of land acquired** under the **Coal Bearing Areas (Acquisition & Development) Act, 1957 [CBA Act]**.

- The policy **provides for utilisation of such land for the purpose of development** and setting up of infrastructure relating to coal and energy.

## What is the CBA Act, 1957?

- The **Coal Bearing Areas (Acquisition and Development) Act, 1957** provides for the

acquisition of land containing or likely to contain coal deposits and for matters connected therewith.

- Under the provisions of this Act, the **land is acquired for Government Companies only for coal mining** and activities strictly incidental to mining purposes.
- For other requirements, like permanent infrastructure, offices, residence etc. the land is acquired under **Land Acquisition Act, 1894**.
- **Mining rights and surface rights of a single patch of land** may not be acquired under different Acts.

## What are the Provisions of the Proposed Policy?

- **Provides Framework for Utilisation of Land:**
  - The policy **provides clear policy framework for utilisation** of following types of lands acquired under the CBA Act:
    - **Lands no longer suitable or economically viable** for coal mining activities; or
    - Lands from which coal has been mined out / de-coaled and such land has been reclaimed.
- **Coal India Ltd. (CIL) will Remain Owner of the Land:**
  - The Government coal companies, such as [Coal India Ltd. \(CIL\)](#) and its subsidiaries shall remain owners of these lands acquired under the CBA Act.
- **Leasing of Land for Specified Period:**
  - The Government company which owns the land **would lease such land for a specific period** given under the policy.
  - The **entities for leasing shall be selected through a transparent, fair and competitive bid process** and mechanism in order to achieve optimal value.
  - The lands will be considered for activities such as **setting up washeries, [coal gasification](#) and coal-to-chemical plants** and to set up or provide for energy-related infrastructure.

## What is the Significance of Such Policy?

- **Generate Employment:**
  - **Establishment of various coal and energy related infrastructure**, without transfer of ownership from Government companies, would lead to generation of a large number of direct and indirect employment.
    - The lands which are **mined out or are practically unsuitable for coal mining are prone to unauthorised encroachment** and entail avoidable expenditure on security and maintenance.
- **Reduce Cost of Operators:**
  - The unlocking of non-minable land for other purposes will **also help CIL in reducing its cost of operations** as it will be able to set up coal related infrastructure and other projects such as solar plants on its own land by adopting different business models in partnership with the private sector.
  - It will **make coal gasification projects viable** as coal need not be transported to distant places.
- **Ensure Proper Utilization of Land:**
  - The proposal to **utilise land for rehabilitation purposes would ensure proper utilization of land** and would **eliminate wastage of all-important land resources**, avoid acquisition of fresh chunks of land for rehabilitation of Project Affected Families, eliminate loading of additional financial burden on the projects and increase profit.
- **Address the Demand of the Displaced Families:**
  - It will **also address the demand of the displaced families** as they always prefer to stay as close as possible to their original residential places.
  - It will **help in obtaining local support for coal projects** and also providing land to the State Government for afforestation in lieu of forest land diverted to coal mining.
- **Help in Realizing the Goal of Atmanirbhar Bharat:**
  - The Policy will **help in realizing the goal of [Atmanirbhar Bharat](#)** by encouraging domestic



manufacturing, reducing import dependence, job creation, etc.

- The policy will **unlock land for various coal and energy infrastructure development activities** that would encourage investment in backward areas of the country.
- Utilisation of already acquired land would also **prevent fresh acquisition of land** and related displacement and would promote local manufacturing and industries.

## What are Key Highlights about Coal?

- It is one of the most abundantly found fossil fuels. It is **used as a domestic fuel**, in industries such as iron and steel, steam engines and to generate electricity. Electricity from coal is called thermal power.
- The coal which we are using today was **formed millions of years ago** when giant ferns and swamps got buried under the layers of earth. Coal is therefore referred to as Buried Sunshine.
- The **leading coal producers of the world** include China, US, Australia, Indonesia, India.
- The **coal producing areas of India** include Raniganj, Jharia, Dhanbad and Bokaro in Jharkhand.
- **Coal is also classified into four ranks:** anthracite, bituminous, subbituminous, and lignite. The ranking depends on the types and amounts of carbon the coal contains and on the amount of heat energy the coal can produce.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

### Q. Consider the following statements: (2019)

1. Coal sector was nationalized by the Government of India under Indira Gandhi.
2. Now, coal blocks are allocated on lottery basis.
3. Till recently, India imported coal to meet the shortages of domestic supply, but now India is self-sufficient in coal production.

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

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

### Ans: (a)

- Coal sector was nationalised in two phases **under the Indira Gandhi Government in 1972**.
- The coal blocks are allocated **through auctions and not on a lottery basis**.
- The coal sector is the monopolistic sector in India. India holds the 5<sup>th</sup> biggest coal reserves in the world, but due to the incapacity of coal production by monopolistic firms, it imports coal to meet the shortages of domestic supply. Hence, statement 3 is not correct.

[Source: PIB](#)

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## National Conference on Cooperation Policy

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**For Prelims:** National Conference on Cooperation Policy, Cooperatives, Ministry of Cooperation, 97<sup>th</sup> Amendment, Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles of State Policy.

**For Mains:** Government Policies & Interventions, Ministry of Cooperation and Its Significance, Cooperatives in India.

## Why in News?

Recently the **National Conference on Cooperation Policy** concluded in New Delhi.

## What are the Highlights of the Conference?

- The conference was **structured into six important** themes covering not only the whole life cycle of cooperatives but also touching upon all the facets of their business and governance.
- The panel discussions have been held on **following themes**:
  - **Present legal framework, identification of Regulatory policy, Operational barriers and measures** required for their removal leading to Ease of Doing Business and providing a **level playing field to cooperatives** and other economic entities.
  - **Reforms for strengthening governance** including cooperative principles, democratic member control, increasing member participation, transparency, regular elections, Human Resource Policy, leveraging International & National best practices, account keeping & auditing.
  - **Multi Cooperative Vibrant economic entities** by strengthening infrastructure, strengthening equity base, access to capital, diversification of activities, promoting entrepreneurship, promoting branding, marketing, business plan development, innovation, technology adoption and exports
  - **Training, Education, knowledge sharing and Awareness Building** including mainstreaming cooperatives, linking training with entrepreneurship, inclusion of Women, Youth & Weaker Sections.
  - **Promoting new cooperatives**, revitalising defunct ones, promoting cooperation among cooperatives, increasing membership, formalising collectives, developing cooperatives for sustainable growth, mitigating regional imbalances & exploring new sectors.
  - **Promoting social cooperative** and role of cooperatives in social security.
- The ministry is **planning a series of such conferences with different stakeholders**, besides, shortly, another workshop with all cooperative federations to invite their views.
- These efforts will culminate in the formulation of a new robust **National Cooperation Policy**, giving impetus to strengthen the cooperative based economic model in the country to realise the vision and mantra of **Sahkar Se Samaridhi**.

## What is the Ministry of Cooperation?

- **About:**
  - The Government of India, under the guidance of the Prime Minister had carved out a new **Ministry of Cooperation on 06<sup>th</sup> July 2021** with the objective to provide renewed impetus to the growth of the Cooperative Sector and realisation of vision from Cooperation to Prosperity.
  - The ministry is working incessantly for development of the cooperative sector for **formulation of new Schemes and the new Cooperation Policy**.
- **Significance:**
  - It will provide a **separate administrative, legal and policy framework** for strengthening the cooperative movement in the country.
  - It will help **deepen Co-operatives as a true people based movement** reaching upto the grassroots.
  - It will work to **streamline processes for 'Ease of doing business'** for co-operatives and enable development of Multi-State Co-operatives (MSCS).

## What are Cooperatives in India?

### ▪ Definition:

- The **International Cooperative Alliance (ICA)** defines a **Cooperative** as “an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.



### ◦ Examples of Successful Cooperatives in India:

- [National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India \(NAFED\)](#),
- [Indian Farmers Fertilisers Cooperative Limited \(IFFCO\)](#)
- [AMUL](#)

### ▪ Constitutional Provisions:

- The [Constitution \(97<sup>th</sup> Amendment\) Act, 2011](#) added a new Part IXB regarding the cooperatives working in India.
  - The word “cooperatives” was added after “unions and associations” in Article 19(1)(c) under Part III of the Constitution.
    - This enables all the citizens to form cooperatives by giving it the status of **fundamental right** of citizens.
  - A new Article 43B was added in the [Directive Principles of State Policy](#) (Part IV) regarding the “promotion of cooperative societies”.
- The subject ‘**Cooperative Societies**’ is a **State subject** included in Item 32 of List-II (State List) in the [Seventh Schedule of the Constitution](#).

## Way Forward

- New areas are emerging with the advancement of technology and **cooperative societies can play a huge role in making people familiar** with those areas and technologies.
- Principle of the cooperative movement is to unite everyone, even while remaining anonymous.

**The cooperative movement has the capacity to solve people's problems.**

- However, **there are irregularities in cooperatives and to check them there have to be rules and stricter implementation.**
- To strengthen the cooperatives there should be **market linkages for agricultural farmers as well as cooperative societies.**

[Source: PIB](#)

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## Birth Anniversary of B R Ambedkar

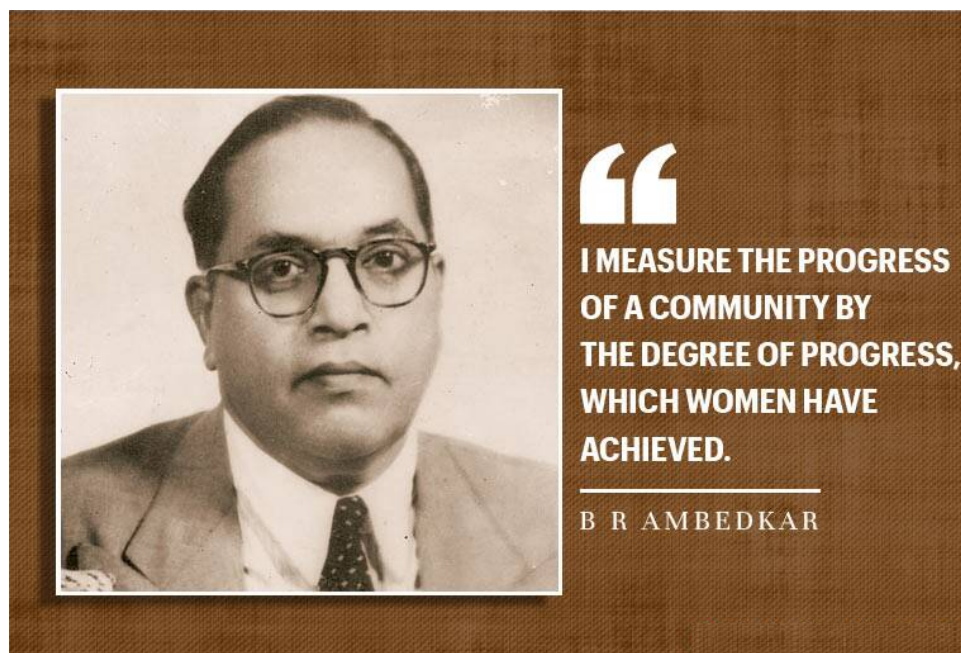
**For Prelims:** Dr. B R Ambedkar, Round Table Conferences.

**For Mains:** Important Personalities, Modern Indian History.

### Why in News?

The nation celebrated the **131<sup>st</sup> birth anniversary of B R Ambedkar** on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

- Dr. Ambedkar was a **social reformer, jurist, economist, author, polyglot** (knowing or using several languages) **orator, a scholar, and thinker of comparative religions.**



### What are the Key Points?

- **Birth:**
  - Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar was born in **1891 in Mhow, Central Province** (now Madhya Pradesh).
- **Brief Profile:**
  - He is known as the Father of the Indian Constitution and was **India's first Law Minister.**
  - He was the **Chairman of the Drafting Committee for the new Constitution.**

- He was a **well-known statesman who fought for the rights of the Dalits** and other socially backward classes.
- **Contributions:**
  - He led the **Mahad Satyagraha in March 1927 against Hindus** who were opposing the decision of the Municipal Board.
    - **In 1926, the Municipal Board of Mahad** (Maharashtra) passed an order to throw open the tank to all communities. Earlier, the untouchables were not allowed to use water from the Mahad tank.
  - He participated in **all three Round Table Conferences**.
  - **In 1932, Dr. Ambedkar signed the Poona pact with Mahatma Gandhi**, which abandoned the idea of separate electorates **for the depressed classes** (Communal Award).
    - However, the seats reserved for the depressed classes were increased from **71 to 147 in provincial legislatures** and to **18% of the total in the Central Legislature**.
  - His ideas before the **Hilton Young Commission served** as the foundation of the **[Reserve Bank of India \(RBI\)](#)**.
- **Election and Designation:**
  - **In 1936**, he was elected to the **Bombay Legislative Assembly** as a legislator (MLA).
  - He **was appointed** to the **Executive Council of Viceroy** as a Labour member **in 1942**.
  - **In 1947**, Dr. Ambedkar accepted **PM Nehru's invitation to become Minister of Law** in the first Cabinet of independent India.
- **Shift to Buddhism:**
  - **He resigned** from the cabinet in **1951**, over differences on the Hindu Code Bill.
  - He **converted to Buddhism**. He **died on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1956** ([Mahaparinirvan Diwas](#)).
    - **Chaitya Bhoomi** is a memorial to B R Ambedkar, located in Mumbai.
  - He was awarded India's highest civilian honour the **[Bharat Ratna](#)** in 1990.
- **Important Works:**
  - **Journals:**
    - Mooknayak (1920)
    - Bahishkrit Bharat (1927)
    - Samatha (1929)
    - Janata (1930)
  - **Books:**
    - Annihilation of Caste
    - Buddha or Karl Marx
    - The Untouchable: Who are They and Why They Have Become Untouchables
    - Buddha and His Dhamma
    - The Rise and Fall of Hindu Women
  - **Organisations:**
    - Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha (1923)
    - Independent Labor Party (1936)
    - Scheduled Castes Federation (1942)
- **Relevance of Ambedkar in Present Times:**
  - Caste-based inequality in India still persists. While Dalits have acquired a political identity through **[reservation](#)** and forming their own political parties, they **lack behind in social dimensions** (health and education) and economic dimension.
  - There has been a **rise of communal polarization and communalization of politics**. It is necessary that Ambedkar's vision of constitutional morality must supersede religious morality to avoid permanent damage to the Indian Constitution.

## What were Round Table Conferences?

- **First Round Table Conference:** It was held in London on 12<sup>th</sup> November, 1930 but the Congress did not participate in it.
  - In March 1931, Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Irwin (Viceroy of India 1926-31) entered into a Pact, called Gandhi-Irwin Pact, by which the Congress called off the Civil Disobedience Movement and agreed to participate in the Round Table Conference.
- **Second Round Table Conference:** It was held in London on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September, 1931.

- **Third Round Table Conference:** It was held in London on the 17<sup>th</sup> of November, 1932 to consider the reports of various sub-committees appointed from time to time. It ultimately led to the passage of the Govt. of India Act, 1935.
  - Congress did not participate as most of the leaders were in jail.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Questions

**Q. Which of the following parties were established by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar? (2012)**

1. The Peasants and Workers Party of India
2. All India Scheduled Castes Federation
3. The Independent Labour Party

**Select the correct answer using the codes given below:**

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

**Ans: (B)**

[Source: IE](#)

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## Mahavir Jayanti

**For Prelims:** Lord Mahavira, Jainism.

**For Mains:** Important Personalities, Ancient Indian History.

### Why in News?

The Prime Minister has greeted people on [Mahavir Jayanti](#), recalling the noble teachings of Bhagwan Mahavir, especially the emphasis on peace, compassion and brotherhood.

### What is Mahavir Jayanti?

- **About:**
  - Mahavir Jayanti is **one of the most auspicious festivals in the [Jain community](#)**.
  - This day marks the **birth of Vardhamana Mahavira**, who was the 24<sup>th</sup> and the last Tirthankara who succeeded the 23<sup>rd</sup> Tirthankara, Parshvanatha.
  - According to Jain texts, Lord Mahavira was born on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the bright half of the moon in the [month of Chaitra](#).



- As per the [Gregorian calendar](#), Mahavir Jayanti is usually celebrated during the month of March or April.
- A procession is called with the idol of Lord Mahavira **called the Rath Yatra**.
- Reciting stavans or Jain prayers, statues of the lord are given a ceremonial bath called [abhisheka](#).
- **Lord Mahavira:**
  - Mahavir was born to King Siddhartha of Kundagrama and Queen Trishala, a Lichchhavi princess in the year **540 BC in the Vajji kingdom**, identical with **modern day Vaishali in Bihar**.
  - Mahavira belonged to the **Ikshvaku dynasty**.
  - There are several historians who believe that he was born in a place called Ahalya bhumi and the land has not been plowed for hundreds of years by the family that owns it.
  - Lord Mahavir was named **Vardhamana, which means "one who grows"**.
  - He abandoned worldly life at the age of 30 and **attained 'kaivalya' or omniscience at the age of 42**.
  - Mahavira taught ahimsa (non-violence), Satya (truth), asteya (non-stealing), brahmacharya (chastity) and aparigraha (non-attachment) to his disciples and his **teachings were called Jain Agamas**.
  - Ordinary people were able to understand the teachings of Mahavira and his followers because **they used Prakrit**.
  - It is believed that the **Mahavira passed away and attained moksha (liberation from the cycle of birth and death) at the age of 72** in 468 BC at a place called **Pavapuri near modern Rajgir in Bihar**.

## What is Jainism?

- The word Jaina comes from the term **Jina, meaning conqueror**.
- Tirthankara is a Sanskrit word meaning '**Ford maker**', i.e., **one who is able to ford the river, to cross beyond the perpetual flow of earthly life**.
- Jainism attaches **utmost importance to ahimsa or non-violence**.
- It preaches **5 mahavratas** (the 5 great vows):
  - Ahimsa (Non-violence)
  - Satya (Truth)
  - Asteya or Acharya (Non-stealing)
  - Aparigraha (Non-attachment/Non-possession)
  - Brahmacharya (Celibacy/Chastity)
- Among these 5 teachings, the **Brahmacharya (Celibacy/Chastity) was added by Mahavira**.
- **The three jewels or Triratna of Jainism include:**
  - Samyak Darshana (right faith).
  - Samyak Gyana (right knowledge).
  - Samyak Charitra (right conduct).
- **Jainism is a religion of self-help.**
  - There are no gods or spiritual beings that will help human beings.
  - It does not condemn the varna system.
- In later times, it got divided into two sects:
  - **Shvetambaras (white-clad)** under Sthalabahu.
  - **Digambaras (sky-clad)** under the leadership of Bhadrabahu.
- The important idea in **Jainism is that the entire world is animated**: even stones, rocks, and water have life.
- Non-injury to living beings, especially to humans, animals, plants, and insects, is central to Jaina philosophy.
- According to Jain teachings, the **cycle of birth and rebirth is shaped through karma**.
- Asceticism and penance are required to free oneself from the cycle of karma and achieve the liberation of the soul.
- The **practice of Santhara is also a part of Jainism**.
  - It is the ritual of fasting unto death. Svetambara Jains call it Santhara whereas Digambaras call it Sallekhana.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

**Q. With reference to the religious practices in India, the “Sthanakvasi” sect belongs to (2018)**

- (a) Buddhism
- (b) Jainism
- (c) Vaishnavism
- (d) Shaivism

**Ans: (b)**

**Q. With reference to the religious history of India, consider the following statements: (2017)**

1. Sautrantika and Sammitiya were the sects of Jainism.
2. Sarvastivadin held that the constituents of phenomena were not wholly momentary, but existed forever in a latent form.

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

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

**Ans: (b)**

**Q. With reference to the history of ancient India, which of the following was/were common to both Buddhism and Jainism? (2012)**

1. Avoidance of extremities of penance and enjoyment
2. Indifference to the authority of the Vedas
3. Denial of efficacy of rituals

**Select the correct answer using the codes given below:**

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

**Ans: (b)**

**Q. Anekantavada is a core theory and philosophy of which one of the following? (2009)**

- (a) Buddhism
- (b) Jainism
- (c) Sikhism
- (d) Vaishnavism

**Ans: (b)**

## 4th India- US '2+2' Dialogue

**For Prelims:** '2+2' Dialogue, Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA)

**For Mains:** Bilateral Groupings & Agreements, Indo-Pacific, India as net provider of security, India US relations

### Why in News?

Recently, the **fourth '2+2' dialogue** between **India and the United States** took place in **Washington DC, US**. **India's External Affairs and Defence Ministers** meet with their American counterparts.

- This meeting was held on the sidelines of a **virtual meeting between the Prime Minister of India and the President of the US**.

### What are the Key Points of this Meeting?

- **Space Situational Awareness Arrangement:** India and the US have signed a **bilateral space situational awareness arrangement**.
  - This lays the groundwork for more advanced cooperation in space.
- **Inaugural Defense Artificial Intelligence Dialogue:** They also agreed to launch an **inaugural Defense Artificial Intelligence Dialogue**, while expanding joint cyber training and exercises.
- **Military Supply Chain Cooperation:** The US asserted that it supports India as a defence industry leader in the **Indo-Pacific and a net provider of security in the region**.
  - In this context, new supply chain cooperation measures were launched that will let both countries more swiftly support each other's **priority defence requirements**.
- **Observing Crisis in Ukraine:** They agreed to maintain close consultations on the **ongoing crisis in Ukraine**, including on humanitarian assistance efforts, and **echoed support for an independent investigation** into the brutal violence deployed against civilians.

### What is the Status of India's 2+2 Dialogue with the US?

- The US is India's oldest and most important 2+2 talks partner.
- The first 2+2 dialogue between the two countries was held during the **Trump Administration in 2018**.
- India and the US have signed a troika of **"foundational pacts"** for deep military cooperation:
  - **Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA)** in 2016,
  - Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) after the first 2+2 dialogue in 2018,
  - **Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) in 2020**.
- The strengthening of the mechanisms of cooperation between the two militaries are of significance in the context of an increasingly **aggressive China**.

### What is the 2+2 Dialogue?

- 2+2 Ministerial is the **highest-level institutional mechanism** between the two countries.
- It is a format of dialogue where the **defence/foreign ministers or secretaries** meet with their counterparts from another country.
- India has 2+2 dialogues with four key strategic partners: **the US, Australia, Japan, and Russia**.
  - Besides Russia, the other three countries are also India's partners in the **Quad**.

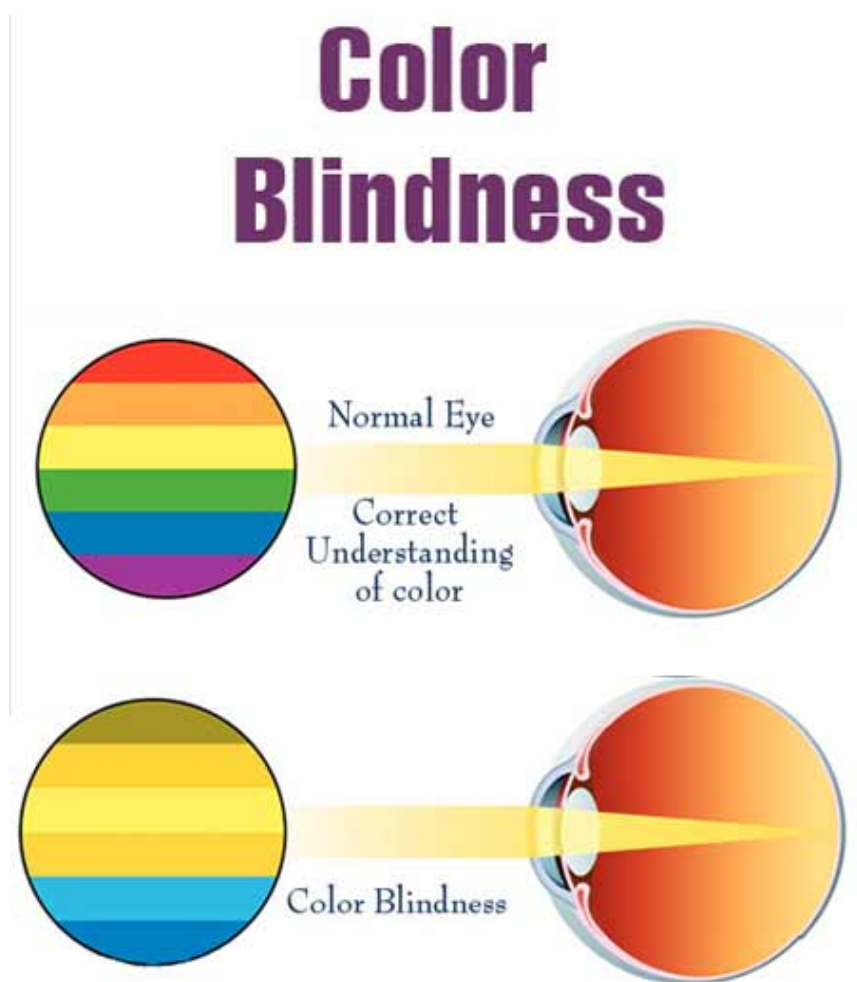
## Colour Blindness

**For Prelims:** Supreme Court Judgement, Film and Television Institute of India, Colour blindness

**For Mains:** Colour blindness, Health

### Why in News

Recently, the [Supreme Court](#) has directed the **Film and Television Institute of India (FTII)** not to exclude candidates suffering from **colour blindness** from its **courses on film making and editing** and **asked it to make changes to its curriculum** instead.



### What is Colour Blindness?

- **About:** Colour blindness is the **inability to see colours in the normal way**. Colour blind individuals often **cannot distinguish between certain colours** — usually **greens** and **reds**, and sometimes **blues** as well.

- It is also known as **colour deficiency**.
- **Anatomy:** Two types of cells in the **retina detect light:**
  - **Rods:** These help in distinguishing between **light and dark**.
  - **Cones:** These help in detecting **colour**.
  - There are three types of cones that see colour — **red, green, and blue** — and our brains use the information from these cells to perceive colour.
  - Colour blindness can be the result of the **absence of one or more of these cone cells, or their failure to work properly**.
- **Different Kinds:** Colour blindness may be of **different kinds and degrees**.
  - In a situation where **all three cone cells** are present **but one of them is malfunctioning**, mild colour blindness may occur.
  - **Mildly colour blind people** often see all colours properly only when the light is good.
  - In the most **severe kind** of colour blindness, **vision is black-and-white**, that is, everything appears as a **shade of grey**. This is not very common.
- **Causes:**
  - **Congenital Colour Blindness:** Most colour blind people are **born with the condition (congenital colour blindness)**. Congenital colour vision deficiencies are **usually passed on genetically**.
    - This type of Colour blindness **generally affects both eyes**, and the condition remains roughly the **same for as long as the individual is alive**.
  - **Medical Conditions:** A problem with colour vision that arises later in **life could be the result of disease, trauma, or ingested toxins**.
    - If colour blindness arises **out of disease, one eye may be affected differently** from the other, and the difficulty could worsen over time.
    - Medical conditions that **may increase the risk of getting colour blindness** include **glaucoma, diabetes, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, alcoholism, leukaemia, and sickle-cell anaemia**.
- **Treatment:** Colour blindness cannot as **yet be treated or reversed**.
  - However, it can be **corrected to some extent by wearing special contact lenses or colour filter glasses**.
  - There is some research that suggests **gene replacement therapy** can help modify the condition.
- **Gender Differentiation:** **Men** suffer from a **higher incidence of colour blindness** than **women**.
  - Around the world, **every tenth male is estimated to have some form of colour deficiency**.
  - Men of Northern European descent are considered to be especially vulnerable.
- **Restriction in Jobs:** Colour blindness impairs in some ways the **ability to do certain kinds of jobs**, such as being a **pilot or joining the armed forces**.
  - However, it depends on the severity of the colour blindness, and the **rules in place in different jurisdictions**.
  - There are an **estimated 300 million people in the world** with colour vision deficiency.
- **Initiative Taken by Government:** In June 2020, India's **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways** amended the **Central Motor Vehicles Rules 1989** to enable citizens with mild to medium colour blindness **to obtain a driver's licence**.

## What is the Film and Television Institute of India?

- The **Film and Television Institute of India (FTII)** was set up by the Government of India in 1960, in the premises of the erstwhile **Prabhat Studios in Pune**.
- Prabhat Studio was a pioneer in the **business of filmmaking** and shifted to Pune from Kolhapur in 1933.
- It is an autonomous body under the Union **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**.

[Source: IE](#)

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