



Maintenance Rights of Divorced Muslim Women

For Prelims: [Supreme Court \(SC\)](#), [Criminal Procedure Code](#), [Muslim Women \(Protection of Rights on Divorce\) Act, 1986](#), [Family courts](#)

For Mains: Protection of Rights on Divorce, Government policies and interventions

Source: [IE](#)

Why in News?

In the case of *Mohd Abdul Samad v. the State of Telangana, 2024*, the [Supreme Court \(SC\) of India](#), dismissed a petition challenging the applicability of **Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC)** to a divorced Muslim woman.

What was the Petition About?

- The petition was filed by a Muslim man challenging a direction to pay interim maintenance to his divorced wife under **Section 125 CrPC**.
 - The petitioner argued that the [Muslim Women \(Protection of Rights on Divorce\) Act, 1986](#), should override the secular law of Section 125 CrPC.
- The petitioner claimed that the 1986 Act, being a special law, provided more comprehensive maintenance provisions and should therefore take precedence over the **general provisions of Section 125 CrPC**.
 - The petitioner argued that Sections 3 and 4 of the 1986 Act, with a **non-obstante clause**, empower First Class Magistrates to decide matters of **Maher** (mandatory gift that the husband gives to his wife at the wedding) and subsistence allowances.
 - He insisted that **family courts lack jurisdiction** as the Act mandates Magistrates to handle these issues. The petitioner emphasised the wife's failure to submit an affidavit opting for CrPC provisions over the 1986 Act, as required by Section 5.
- It was argued that the **1986 Act implicitly repealed Section 125 CrPC for Muslim women** due to its specific provisions, thus barring them from seeking relief under Section 125 CrPC.

What is the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986?

- **Purpose:** The Act was enacted to protect the rights of Muslim women who have been divorced by, or have obtained divorce from, their husbands. It provides for matters connected with or incidental to the protection of these rights.
 - This Act was a response to the *Mohd. Ahmad Khan vs. Shah Bano Begum, 1985*. In which the **SC delivered held that section 125 of the CrPC** is a secular provision **applicable to all, irrespective of religion**.
 - The right to maintenance under CrPC is not negated by provisions of personal law.
- **Provisions:**
 - A divorced Muslim woman is **entitled to a reasonable and fair provision and maintenance** from her former husband, to be paid within the **iddat period**.

- **Iddat is a period, usually of three months**, which a woman must observe after the death of her husband or a divorce before she can remarry.
 - The Act also covers the payment of **mahr (dower)** and the return of properties given to the woman at the time of marriage.
- It allows a divorced woman and her former husband to choose to be governed by the **provisions of sections 125 to 128 of the CrPC, 1973**. If they make a joint or separate declaration to this effect at the first hearing of the application.
- **Evolution:**
 - A Constitution bench of the SC had in its 2001 judgement in the case *Danial Latifi & Another vs Union Of India* upheld the constitutional validity of the 1986 Act and said that its provisions do not offend [Articles 14, 15 and 21](#) of the Constitution of India.
 - It extended the right of Muslim women to receive maintenance until they remarry **beyond the iddat period**.
 - ***Shabana Bano v. Imran Khan Case, 2009: The SC reiterated that divorced Muslim women could claim maintenance under Section 125 of the CrPC, even beyond the iddat period, as long as they do not remarry. This affirmed the principle that the CrPC provision applies irrespective of religion.***

What Does Section 125 of the CrPC Say?

- Section 125 of the CrPC mandates that a **Magistrate of the first class** may order a **person with sufficient means to make a monthly allowance for the maintenance** of:
 - His wife, if she is unable to maintain herself.
 - His legitimate or illegitimate minor child, whether married or not, unable to maintain itself.
 - His legitimate or illegitimate adult child with physical or mental abnormalities or injuries that render them unable to maintain themselves.
 - His father or mother, unable to maintain themselves.

What are the Supreme Court Observations?

- SC held that **Section 125 CrPC applies to all women**, not just married women. It emphasised that the provision would apply universally.
- The SC's judgement reaffirms the rights of divorced Muslim women to claim maintenance under Section 125 CrPC, ensuring legal parity and safeguarding constitutional [guarantees of equality and non-discrimination](#).
- The Supreme Court dismissed the appeal, reaffirming that Muslim women can seek maintenance under **Section 125 CrPC despite the existence of the 1986 Act**.
- The Court noted that Section 3 of the 1986 Act, starting with a **non-obstante clause, does not restrict the application** of Section 125 CrPC, but rather provides an additional remedy.
- The SC emphasised the need for **Indian men to financially empower their wives who lack independent income**. It highlighted the **difference between financially independent or employed married women** and those who stay at home without any means to meet their personal expenses.
- The Court affirmed that divorced Muslim women, including those divorced through **triple talaq (now deemed illegal)**, can claim maintenance under Section 125 CrPC irrespective of personal laws.
 - Triple talaq has been declared as void by the SC and criminalised by the [Muslim Women \(Protection of Rights on Marriage\) Act 2019](#).

Note

Instant triple talaq, or talaq-e-bidat, is a practice within the Muslim community where a **man can instantly divorce his wife by pronouncing "talaq" three times in one sitting**, through phone, or even via text message. The divorce is immediate and irrevocable, regardless of the husband's later desire to reconcile.

Read more: [Right to Maintenance of Muslim Women](#)

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. Examine the interplay between Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986, and Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code. Analyse the Supreme Court's approach in resolving conflicts.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Which Article of the Constitution of India safeguards one's right to marry the person of one's choice? (2019)

- (a) Article 19
- (b) Article 21
- (c) Article 25
- (d) Article 29

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- The right to marry is a component of the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution of India which states that "No person shall be deprived of his life and personal liberty except according to the procedure established by law".
- In Lata Singh v. State of Uttar Pradesh 2006, the Supreme Court viewed the right to marry as a component of the right to life under Article 21 of Indian Constitution. Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.]

Mains

Q. Customs and traditions suppress reason leading to obscurantism. Do you agree? (2020)

22nd India-Russia Annual Summit

For Prelims: Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle, Programme-2030, [Make in India](#), [Chennai-Vladivostok Eastern Maritime Corridor](#), [International Solar Alliance](#), Gross National Income, [World Bank](#), [Atmanirbhar Bharat](#), [International North-South Transport Corridor](#)

For Mains: Significance of India- Russia Relations, International Cooperation and Multilateral Forums

Source: TH

Why in News?

The **22nd India-Russia Annual Summit** in Moscow, brought together Prime Minister Narendra Modi and

President Vladimir Putin to discuss a wide range of issues. The summit aimed to solidify the **strategic partnership between the two nations**, particularly in light of the ongoing geopolitical tensions.

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What are the Key Highlights of the 22nd India-Russia Annual Summit?

- **Diplomatic Achievements:** President Vladimir Putin conferred **Russia's highest civilian honour, the "Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle,"** on Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
 - The Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle was established by **Tsar Peter the Great** in 1698 and reinstated in 1998, featuring a **double-headed eagle emblem and a light blue silk moire ribbon.**
 - The award is named after **Saint Andrew, the patron saint of Russia and Scotland**, known for spreading Christianity across Europe and Asia.
 - Prime Minister Modi was honoured with this award for promoting the strategic partnership and friendly **relations between Russia and India**, and the announcement was made in 2019, highlighting Modi's pivotal role in enhancing bilateral cooperation
 - Foreign leaders such as **Chinese President Xi Jinping** and former Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev have also been honoured with this award.



- **Economic Cooperation: A new bilateral trade target of USD 100 billion by 2030 was set, significantly higher than the previous target of USD 30 billion by 2025, which was nearly doubled in 2023.**
 - This is mainly due to [India's increased imports of Russian crude](#) at a discount after the US and Europe imposed oil sanctions on Russia following the invasion of Ukraine.
 - Agreement to prepare a comprehensive "**Programme-2030**" for developing promising areas of economic cooperation.
 - This program will be coordinated by the **India-Russia Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technical and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC)**.
 - **IRIGC-TEC is the apex G2G forum** for bilateral economic cooperation, **chaired by the External Affairs Minister of India and the Deputy Prime Minister of Russia.**
 - **India and the Eurasian Economic Union** have commenced negotiations for a **Free Trade Agreement on goods**. They also plan to explore a bilateral free-trade agreement in services and investments.
 - The Leaders agreed to facilitate participation of **Russian businesses in "[Make in India](#)" and "[Atmanirbhar Bharat](#)" programs**, and Indian companies in investment projects in Russia.
- **Defence and Technology: Transition from buyer-seller relationship to joint research, development, co-development, and joint production of advanced defence technology and systems.**
 - They also aim to **encourage joint manufacturing** of spare parts and components for **Russian-origin arms and defence equipment in India** under the **Make-in-India program**.
 - This includes setting up **joint ventures for meeting the needs of the Indian Armed Forces** and for subsequent export to friendly third countries.
 - They have agreed to establish a new Working Group on Technological Cooperation to discuss its provisions in the next meeting of **Intergovernmental Commission on Military and Military Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-M&MTC)**.
 - Russian President Vladimir Putin has accepted the Prime Minister of India's request

to **discharge Indian military recruits serving in the Russian military** on the [Ukrainian war](#) front and wishing to return to India.

- Russian law allows the **recruitment of foreign soldiers** after thorough screening, including mental and physical checks.
- The summit ended without the signing of the long-awaited [Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Agreement \(RELOS\)](#). The agreement would have provided logistical support for military operations between Russia and India.
 - The Indian Navy would have benefited the most from the agreement, gaining access to **Russian military facilities in the Arctic**.
- **Transport and Connectivity:** The Sides are focused on developing stable and efficient transport corridors in Eurasia, including the [Chennai-Vladivostok Eastern Maritime Corridor](#) and the [International North-South Transport Corridor \(INSTC\)](#).
 - The **Chennai-Vladivostok Maritime Corridor**, is a sea link between ports on the east coast of India and ports in the far-east region of Russia was proposed in 2019 and it aims to transport various types of cargo and **reduce the transportation time to Russia by 40%**.
 - The INSTC is a multi-modal transportation route established in 2000 in St. Petersburg by **Iran, Russia, and India** to promote transportation cooperation among member states.
 - The corridor connects the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea via Iran, and then is connected to St. Petersburg and Northern Europe via the Russian Federation.
 - They aim to increase infrastructure capacity and use the potential of the [Northern Sea Route](#). Both Sides will work together to reduce time and cost of cargo transportation and promote connectivity in the Eurasian space.
- **International Cooperation: Russia appreciated [India's non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council \(2021-22\)](#) and supported India's efforts in peacekeeping and counter-terrorism.**
 - Russia reiterated its support for **India's permanent membership** in a reformed and expanded [UN Security Council](#).
 - India expressed full support for **Russia's BRICS Chairship in 2024** under the theme "**Strengthening Multilateralism for Just Global Development and Security**."
 - Close cooperation in international forums such as the UN, [G20](#), BRICS, and [Shanghai Cooperation Organization \(SCO\)](#) is emphasised to reinvigorate multilateralism.
 - The Indian side looked forward to Russia's joining of the [International Solar Alliance \(ISA\)](#), the [Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure \(CDRI\)](#), and the [International Big Cat Alliance \(IBCA\)](#).
- **Global Issues:**
 - **Climate Change:** Commitment to combating climate change and achieving the goals of the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#) and the [Paris Agreement](#), including cooperation on [low-carbon development](#) and [green financing](#).
 - **Multipolar World Order:** Emphasis on the need for a multipolar world order and the development of an architecture of equal and indivisible regional security in the **Eurasian space and the Indian and Pacific ocean regions**.
 - **Counter Terrorism:** The leaders unequivocally **condemned terrorism** and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations, including the cross-border movement of terrorists and terrorism financing networks.
 - The sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening multilateral cooperation in combating [transnational organised crime](#), [money laundering](#), [terrorist financing](#), and [drug trafficking](#).

Note:

In another development Russia has reached a significant economic milestone by being upgraded from

an **upper-middle-income to a high-income country** by the [World Bank](#), despite ongoing Western sanctions.

What Factors Contributed to Russia's Status as a High-Income Country?

- **Economic Growth Across Sectors:** The World Bank classifies countries based on their [Gross National Income \(GNI\) per capita](#), expressed in US dollars using the Atlas method (accounting for [purchasing power parity](#)).
 - As of July 2024, the **threshold for "high-income" is USD 14,005**. Russia crossed this threshold in 2023 with a GNI per capita of USD 14,250.
 - Russia saw notable growth in trade (+6.8%), the financial sector (+8.7%), and construction (+6.6%) in recent years, boosting both real (3.6%) and nominal (10.9%) GDP.
- **Impact of Military Spending:** A substantial increase in military-related activities in 2023 bolstered economic activity, though experts suggest this growth may not be sustainable.
- **Trade Diversification:** Western sanctions led to a shift in trade patterns, reducing dependence on **G7 and EU countries** and **increasing transactions with China, India, Türkiye, Central Asia, and the South Caucasus**.
- **Resilient Energy Sector:** Despite sanctions on its energy sector, Russia maintained steady overall export volumes, **leveraging global oil prices** and strategic trade diversification.
- **Fiscal Stimulus and Investment:** Government initiatives, including fiscal stimulus and increased defence spending (estimated at 7% of [GDP](#)), supported economic recovery and growth.
- **Job Market and Consumer Spending:** Low unemployment, rising wages, and strong private consumption contributed positively to economic stability and growth.
 - Overcoming earlier sanctions from 2014, Russia adapted its economic policies and infrastructure investments to mitigate ongoing challenges.

What is the World Bank's Country Income Classification?

- **About:** The World Bank Group **assigns the world's economies to four income groups:** low, lower-middle, upper-middle, and high.
 - The **classifications are updated annually on 1st July** based on the GNI per capita of the previous calendar year.
 - The World Bank's income classification aims **to reflect a country's level of development**, using Atlas GNI per capita as an indicator of economic capacity.
- **Classification Thresholds:**
 - Low-income: USD 1,145 or less;
 - Lower-middle-income: USD 1,146 to USD 4,515;
 - Upper-middle-income: USD 4,516 to USD 14,005;
 - High-income: More than USD 14,005.
 - Factors such as **economic growth, inflation, exchange rates, and population growth** can influence a country's GNI per capita.
- **Regional Highlights:**
 - In South Asia, the share of low-income countries has fallen from 100% in 1987 to just 13% in 2023.
 - According to the World Bank, **India is a lower-middle income country. India has been in this category since 2007**, when it moved up from the low-income category.
 - As of 2023, **India's GNI per capita** in terms of PPP is **approximately USD 10,030**.
 - In the Middle East and North Africa, the share of low-income countries has increased from 0% in 1987 to 10% in 2023.
 - **In Latin America and the Caribbean, the share of high-income countries has climbed from 9% in 1987 to 44% in 2023.**

- Europe and Central Asia have a slightly lower share of high-income countries in 2023 (69%) than it did in 1987 (71%).
- **Note:** GNI measures the **total domestic and foreign value added claimed by residents at a given period**, usually a year, expressed in international dollars using purchasing power parity rates.
 - It includes **GDP plus net receipts of primary income from nonresident sources** and provides an aggregate measure of income.

Conclusion

The 22nd India-Russia Annual Summit underscored the robust strategic partnership between the two nations, marked by significant diplomatic honours, ambitious economic targets. Despite global geopolitical challenges, both countries **reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing bilateral ties across various sectors**. The summit's outcomes reflect a shared vision for regional stability, economic growth, and mutual respect on the global stage, reinforcing the enduring nature of the **Indo-Russian relationship amidst evolving international dynamics**.

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. How have recent geopolitical shifts, such as the rise of multipolarity and increasing global strategic competition, influenced the strategic partnership between India and Russia?

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Recently, India signed a deal known as 'Action Plan for Prioritization and Implementation of Cooperation Areas in the Nuclear Field' with which of the following countries? (2019)

- (a) Japan
- (b) Russia
- (c) The United Kingdom
- (d) The United States of America

Ans: B

Mains

Q. What is the significance of Indo-US defence deals over Indo-Russian defence deals? Discuss with reference to stability in the Indo-Pacific region. (2020)

Major Military Exercises of India

For Prelims: [Joint Exercise](#), [Indian Army](#), [Counter Terrorist operations](#), [Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief](#), [UN Peacekeeping](#), High Altitude operations, Desert Warfare, Urban Warfare and Jungle Warfare, Grey Zone Warfare

Source: PIB

Why in News?

Recently, the **16th edition of India-Mongolia** Joint Military Exercise **NOMADIC ELEPHANT** commenced at Foreign Training Node, Umroi (Meghalaya).

What are the Major Joint Exercises Conducted by the Indian Army?

▪ About:

- **Joint Exercises** are the **flagship events of defence cooperation** showcasing the **Indian Army's** professional competence in various operational scenarios and providing an opportunity for the participants to learn best practices.
- The scope of joint exercises is **realistic and diversified** including **Counter Terrorist operations, Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief, UN Peacekeeping**, High Altitude operations, Desert Warfare, Urban Warfare, and Jungle Warfare.
- The complexity of scope is increased by **adding the latest practices in warfighting and realistic situations** like Drone Warfare, **Grey Zone Warfare**, etc.

▪ Joint Exercises:

| Country | Exercise |
|------------|----------------------|
| Australia | Ex AUSTRALIA HINDBAH |
| Bangladesh | Ex SAMPRITI |
| China | Ex HAND IN HAND |
| France | Ex SHAKTI |
| Indonesia | Ex GARUDA SHAKTI |
| Kazakhstan | Ex PRABAL DOSTYKK |
| Kyrgyzstan | Ex KHANJAR |
| Maldives | Ex EKUVERIN |
| Mongolia | Ex NOMADIC ELEPHANT |
| Myanmar | IMBEX |
| Nepal | Ex SURYA KIRAN |
| Oman | AL NAGAH |
| Russia | Ex INDRA |
| Seychelles | Ex LAMITIYE |
| Sri Lanka | Ex MITRA SHAKTI |
| Thailand | Ex MAITREE |
| UK | Ex AJEYA WARRIOR |
| USA | Ex YUDHABHAYAS |
| USA | Ex VAJRA PRAHAR |

What are the Joint Exercises Conducted by the Indian Navy?

▪ Joint Exercises:

| Exercise | Countries |
|--------------|--|
| MALABAR | India, USA, Japan, Australia |
| Varuna | India, France |
| La Perouse | India, Australia, United States, France, Japan, and United Kingdom |
| Sea Dragon | India, USA, Japan, Canada, South Korea |
| Konkan | India, UK |
| AIME & IMDEX | India, ASEAN Countries |
| Bright Star | India, 34 Countries |

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| SALVEX | India, USA |
| SLINEX | India, Sri Lanka |
| Samudra Shakti | India, Indonesia |
| Al-Mohed Al-Hindi | India, Saudi Arabia |
| India - France - UAE trilateral exercise | India, France, UAE |
| India - France - UAE trilateral PASSEX | India, France, UAE |
| KOMODO | India, Multiple (36 Countries) |
| AUSINDEX | India, Australia |
| SIMBEX | India, Singapore |

▪ **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) & Search and Rescue (SAR) Operations:**

| Operation Name | Description | Location |
|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------|
| Operation Kaveri | Evacuation of Indian nationals from Sudan | Red Sea |
| Operation Karuna | Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) to Myanmar (post-Cyclone Mocha) | Yangon, Myanmar |
| Brahmapuram Firefighting Assistance | Assisted local authorities in firefighting efforts in Brahmapuram solid waste treatment plant | Kochi, India |

What are the Major Exercises Conducted by the Air Force?

▪ **Joint Exercises:**

| Exercise Name | Description | Location |
|-------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Ex Veer Guardian | First Air Exercise between India and Japan | - |
| Ex PASSEX with France | Joint exercise with French fighter aircraft | Indian Ocean Region |
| Ex Desert Flag-8 in UAE | First participation of Tejas in an international air exercise | Al-Dhafra, UAE |
| Ex Cobra Warrior | Multinational Air Exercise | UK |
| Ex Cope India | Joint exercise of India with USAF and Japan (observer) | AFS Kalaikunda & Panagarh, India |
| Ex Orion | Multinational exercise | France |
| Ex INIOCHOS | First Air Exercise between India and Greece | Greece |
| Ex Bright Star | Joint exercise with Egypt | Egypt |

▪ **Integrated Exercises With Sister Services:**

| Exercise Name | Description |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Ex Kranti Mahotsav | 01 Multi-Role Helicopter (MLH) |
| Ex Chakra Drishti | Fighter aircraft, Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA), and Airborne Early Warning & Control System (AEW&C) |
| Western Command Theatre | Helicopters, Transport aircraft, RPA, and Fighter aircraft |
| Long-Range Maritime Strike | Fighters, Transport aircraft, and AWACS (Airborne Warning And Control System) |
| MiG-29K Detachment at AFS Naliya | Joint detachment with Indian Navy's MiG-29K fighters |

▪ **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief:**

| Operation Name | Location | Description |
|----------------|----------|-------------|
|----------------|----------|-------------|

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| Op Dost - Turkiye and Syria | Turkiye, Syria | Earthquake relief |
| Op Kaveri - Sudan | Sudan | Evacuation of Indian citizens |
| Op Ajay (Israel - Hamas Conflict) | Israel, Gaza | Medical and disaster relief |

What are the Advantages of the Military Exercises?

- **Enhanced Interoperability:** Exercises foster the development of shared tactical languages and cultural understanding between soldiers. Successful multinational operations rely not just on technical compatibility but on cohesive teams that can anticipate and adapt to each other's actions.
- **Knowledge Exchange:** Exercises like [NATO's Defender series](#) have fostered a "**Collaborative Innovation Environment**" where militaries co-develop solutions to real-world problems. This fosters a culture of joint creativity and speeds up technological advancements.
- **Diplomatic Relations:** Military exercises serve as a form of defence diplomacy, strengthening political ties between participating nations.
 - For example, the [Malabar naval exercises](#) have not only improved interoperability but also served as a confidence-building measure, **signaling a united front against regional challenges**.
- **Capability Assessment:** Exercises can reveal underlying structural issues within militaries.
 - A **2022 RAND Corporation report highlights** how a recent US-allied exercise **exposed communication gaps** between special operation forces and conventional units leading to a significant restructuring of communication protocols within the US military.
- **Deterrence:** Joint exercises signal military readiness and alliance strength to potential adversaries.
 - For example, **the Russo-Belarusian exercises** preceding the invasion of Ukraine not only showcased military might but also **served as a form of psychological warfare**, potentially intended to intimidate [Ukraine](#) and the West.
- **Humanitarian Assistance Preparation:** Many exercises now incorporate real-world complexities like civilian participation and media presence.
 - The **UN's 2023 World Humanitarian Data Report** emphasises the **need for improved interagency coordination during humanitarian crises**. Exercises that involve civilian aid organisations can bridge these gaps.

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. Evaluate the role of bilateral and multilateral exercises in enhancing strategic cooperation and mutual trust among participating nations.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims:

Q. Which one of the following statements best reflects the issue with Senkaku Islands, sometimes mentioned in the news?

- (a) It is generally believed that they are artificial islands made by a country around South China Sea.

(b) China and Japan engage in maritime disputes over these islands in East China Sea.

(c) A permanent American military base has been set up there to help Taiwan to increase its defence capabilities.

(d) Though International Court of Justice declared them as no man's land, some South-East Asian countries claim them.

Ans: (b)

Criteria For Classical Language

For Prelims: [Classical language](#), [University Grants Commission](#), [Schedule 8](#)

For Mains: Advantages of Classical Language Status, Criteria for Inclusion, Demand for Inclusion in Classical language list.

Source: [TH](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the **Central government** has decided to **modify the criteria for granting classical language status**, following recommendations from the **Linguistics Expert Committee of the Union Culture Ministry**.

What are Classical Languages?

▪ **About:**

- In 2004, the Government of India decided to create a new category of languages called "**classical languages**".
- In 2006, it laid down the **criteria for conferring classical language** status. So far, the 6 languages are granted classical language status.

| Sl. No. | Languages | Year of Declaration |
|---------|-----------|---------------------|
| 1. | Tamil | 2004 |
| 2. | Sanskrit | 2005 |
| 3. | Telugu | 2008 |
| 4. | Kannada | 2008 |
| 5. | Malayalam | 2013 |
| 6. | Odia | 2014 |

▪ **Criteria:**

- **High antiquity** of early texts/recorded history spanning 1,500–2,000 years.
- Possession of a **body of ancient literature/texts** considered valuable heritage by generations.
- **Presence of an original literary** tradition not borrowed from another speech community.
- The classical **language and literature being distinct from modern**, there can **also be a discontinuity between the classical language** and its later forms or its offshoots.
- **Benefits:**
 - Once a language is declared classical, it gets **financial assistance for setting up a centre of excellence** for the study of that language and also opens up an avenue for two major awards for scholars of eminence.
 - Additionally, the [University Grants Commission](#) can be requested to establish professional chairs for scholars of classical languages, starting with central universities.
- **Recent Developments:**
 - The Central government has decided to **modify the criteria for granting classical language status**, following recommendations from the **Linguistics Expert Committee of the Union Culture Ministry**.
 - The Linguistics Expert Committee comprises representatives of the Union Ministries of Home, Culture and four to five linguistic experts at any given time. It is **chaired by the president** of the [Sahitya Akademi](#).
 - The new criteria will be officially notified once **approved by the Union Cabinet**.
 - It has delayed the consideration of **languages like Marathi for classical status**.
 - There have been demands from other languages groups to classify their languages as classical language. For example Bengali, Tulu etc.
 - According to [National Education Policy-2020](#) works of literature of **Pali, Persian, and Prakrit** shall also be preserved.

What are the Arguments for Inclusion of Various Languages as Classical Language?

- **Bengali:** According to the language family, **Bengali is categorised as a Modern or New Indo-Aryan language** of the Indo-European language family.
 - **Bengali alphabets and terms** started to appear in the literatures of as **early as 10th century AD**. Since then it had gone through significant stages of development to finally take the present shape.
 - However, a panel established by the Bengal government established that Bengali's origin is **2,500 years ago** with **concrete evidence showing its written existence** as early as the 3rd-4th BCE.
 - Research indicates that bengali **retains its fundamental syntactic structure**, as well as its distinct morphological and phonological patterns, throughout its course of evolution at least from 3rd BCE.
- **Tulu:** Tulu is a Dravidian language spoken mainly in two coastal districts Dakshina Kannada and Udupi of Karnataka and Kasaragod district of Kerala.
 - Scholars suggest **Tulu is the language that was segregated from the original Dravidian languages some 2,000 years ago** and is one of the **most highly developed languages of the Dravidian family**.
 - The language has also been **mentioned in the Sangama Literature of Tamil and in Greek Mythology**.
 - **Tulu has a rich oral literature tradition** with folk-song forms like paddana, and traditional folk theatre yakshagana.

What are the Constitutional Provisions Related to Language?

- **Eighth Schedule:**
 - It was intended **to promote the progressive use of Hindi** and for the enrichment and **promotion of the language**.
 - **Article 344(1)** provides for the **constitution of a Commission** by the President on **expiration of five years** from the commencement of the Constitution for the progressive use of Hindi for official purposes of the Union.

- **Article 351** of the Constitution provides that it shall be the **duty of the Union to promote the spread of the Hindi language** to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India.
- **Languages in the Eighth Schedule:** The Eighth Schedule to the Constitution consists of the following 22 languages:
 - Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Bodo, Santhali, Maithili and Dogri.
 - Of these languages, **14 were initially included.**
 - Sindhi language was added in 1967 (**21st Amendment Act**).
 - Three more languages Konkani, Manipuri and Nepali were included in 1992 (**71st Amendment Act**).
 - Bodo, Dogri, Maithili and Santhali were added in 2004 (**92nd Amendment Act**).
- **Demands of Languages for Inclusion in the Eighth Schedule:** At present, there are **demands for inclusion of 38** more languages in the Eighth Schedule. Example: Angika, Banjara, Bazika, Bhojpuri etc.
- **Present Status on Inclusion of Languages in the Eighth Schedule:** As the **evolution of dialects and languages is dynamic**, influenced by socio eco-political developments, the matter is still under government consideration and the decision will be taken in line with the recommendation of the **Pahwa (1996) and Sitakant Mohapatra (2003) Committee.**
- **Language of The Union:**
 - **Article 120:** Deals with the language to be used in **Parliament.**
 - **Article 210:** Similar to Article 120 but applies to the **State Legislature.**
 - **Article 343:** Declares **Hindi in Devnagari script** as the official language of the Union.
- **Regional Languages:**
 - **Article 345:** Allows the state legislature to adopt **any official language** for the state.
 - **Article 346:** Specifies the **official language for communication** between states and between states and the Union.
 - **Article 347:** Allows the **President to recognise any language** spoken by a section of the population of a state if demanded.
- **Special Directives:**
 - **Article 29:** It **protects the interests of minorities.** It states that any section of citizens with a distinct language, script, or culture has the **right to preserve it.**
 - **Article 350:** Ensures that every person has the right to submit a representation for the **redress of any grievance in any language** used in the Union or the State.
 - **Article 350A:** Directs States to provide **adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue** at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups.
 - **Article 350B:** Establishes a **Special Officer for linguistic minorities appointed by the President**, tasked with investigating matters relating to safeguards provided for linguistic minorities under the Constitution.

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. Discuss the ongoing demand for granting classical language status to various languages in India. Also analyse the implications of such recognitions.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims:

Q. Which one of the following was given classical language status recently? (2015)

(a) Odia

- (b) Konkani
(c) Bhojpuri
(d) Assamese

Ans: (a)

Q. Consider the following languages: (2014)

1. Gujarati
2. Kannada
3. Telugu

Which of the above has/have been declared as 'Classical Language/Languages' by the Government?

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

Ans: (c)

Mains:

Q. Do you agree that regionalism in India appears to be a consequence of rising cultural assertiveness. (2020)

51,200 Year Old Cave Painting Discovered

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

Recent research has revealed that the **world's oldest known figurative cave painting** is **approximately 51,200 years old**, as determined by the **use of a new dating technique**.

- **The painting is located on the ceiling of a limestone cave in the Island of Sulawesi, Indonesia.**

What are the Key Observations about the Painting?



- **Artistic Representation:** The painting shows:
 - A **pig standing still** with its mouth partly open.
 - **Three human-like figures** surrounding the pig:
 - The largest figure with **outstretched arms** gripping a rod.
 - The **second figure in front** of the pig, holding a stick.
 - The **third figure upside-down**, with legs pointing upwards and one hand reaching toward the pig's head.
- **Technique Used in Dating:**
 - Researchers dated rock art using **uranium series (U-series) analysis** of **calcite deposits** in limestone caves.
 - Researchers used laser **beams to compare the ratio of a specific isotope of uranium to a specific isotope of thorium** in order to determine the age of the paintings.
 - An **isotope** is a **variant of an atom within the same element**, sharing the same atomic number and chemical properties but differing in atomic mass and physical characteristics.
 - This method was **also used to date another cave painting** at **Leang Bulu' Sipong 4**, initially estimated to be 43,900 years old.
 - The findings showed the painting is at least 4,000 years older than previously thought.
 - There is a significant amount of rock art in locations such as Madhya Pradesh in India, but there has **not been a dating method of this kind**.
 - The **oldest paintings of Bhimbetka**, Madhya Pradesh are estimated to be around **30,000 years old**.
- **Significance:**
 - Researchers found that figurative art of humans and animals in scenes has deeper historical roots than previously thought.
 - **Neanderthals** began marking caves around **75,000 years ago**, but their **markings were non-figurative**.
 - This not only provides insights into the cultural practices of early humans but also suggests the emergence of a sophisticated narrative tradition that employed **visual arts to represent the relationships between humans and animals**.

Bhimbetka Rock Paintings

- **Location:** It is located **south of Bhopal in Vidhyan ranges** of Madhya Pradesh with rock shelters having more than 500 rock paintings.
 - The caves of Bhimbetka were discovered in **1957-58 by V. S. Wakankar**
 - It was declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 2003.
- **Timeline:** The oldest paintings are estimated to be **30,000 years old** and have survived due to

its location deep inside the caves.

- There is **marked continuity in occupancy** of the caves from **100,000 BC to 1000 AD** with many paintings being painted on top of another.
 - In some places, there are as many as 20 layers of paintings, one on top of another
- The paintings at Bhimbetka belong to **Upper Paleolithic, Mesolithic, Chalcolithic, early historic** and medieval period.
 - However, most of the paintings belong to the Mesolithic age.
- **Painting Techniques:** Various colours like red ochre, purple, brown, white, yellow and green are used, obtained from natural resources.
 - Haematite ores were used for red colour and white probably from Limestone.
 - Green prepared from a green coloured rock called Chalcedony.
 - The Brushes were made of plant fibre.
- **Themes of the Paintings:** Every-day life of prehistoric men often in stick-like human figures.
 - Various animals like elephant, bison, deer, peacock and snake are depicted.
 - Hunting scenes and war scenes with armed men.
 - Simple geometric designs and symbols.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims:

Q. The well-known painting “Bani Thani” belongs to the (2018)

- (a) Bundi school
- (b) Jaipur school
- (c) Kangra school
- (d) Kishangarh school

Ans: (d)

Q. The painting of Bodhisattva Padmapani is one of the most famous and oft-illustrated paintings at (2017)

- (a) Ajanta
- (b) Badami
- (c) Bagh
- (d) Ellora

Ans: (a)

India's Balance of Payments

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the [Reserve Bank of India \(RBI\)](#) data revealed that **India's current account registered a surplus** in the fourth quarter (Jan-Mar) of the 2023-24 financial year. This was the first surplus in 11 quarters.

- This achievement underscores the significance of **India's Balance of Payments (BoP)**, highlighting its impact on currency exchange rates, sovereign ratings, and overall economic health.

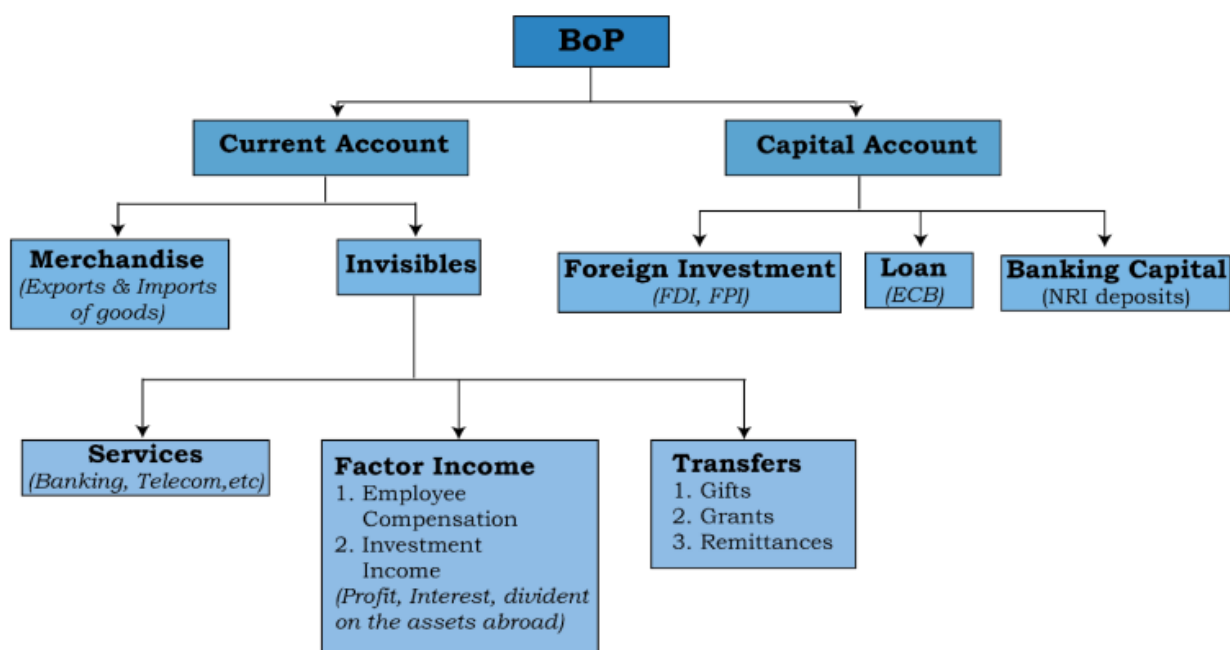
Understanding India's Balance of Payments

| (In \$ billion) | | Q4.FY24 | FY24 | FY23 | FY21 | FY25# |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|---------|------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| Current account* | | 6 | -23.3(0.7%ofGDP) | -67(2%ofGDP) | 24(0.9%ofGDP) | -39(1%ofGDP) |
| | Trade of Goods | -51 | -242 | -265 | -102 | -268 |
| | Trade of Services (Invisibles) | 57 | 218 | 198 | 126 | 229 |
| | Services | 43 | 163 | 143 | 89 | 171 |
| | Transfers | 29 | 106 | 101 | 74 | 106 |
| Capital account* | | 25 | 86 | 59 | 63 | 77 |
| | Foreign investment | 13 | 54 | 23 | 80 | 52 |
| | FDI | 2 | 10 | 28 | 44 | 20 |
| | FII | 11 | 44 | -5 | 36 | 32 |
| | Loans | 2 | 2 | 8 | 6 | 10 |
| | Banking Capital | 7 | 41 | 21 | -21 | 15 |
| | Other Capital | 3 | -10 | 7 | -2 | 0 |
| Balance of Payments* | | 31 | 64 | -9 | 87 | 38 |
| Change in Forex** | | -31 | -64 | 9 | -87 | |

What is Balance of Payments?

- **About:** The BoP serves as a crucial **economic indicator**, detailing all financial transactions between India and the rest of the world.
 - This comprehensive ledger tracks the inflow and outflow of money where inflows are marked positive and outflows negative, reflecting the country's economic interactions globally.
 - It measures the **relative demand for the rupee against foreign currencies**, crucially influencing exchange rates and economic stability.
- **Constituents of BoP:**
 - **Current Account:**
 - **Trade of Goods:** Tracks physical imports and exports, indicating the **balance of trade**. A deficit suggests higher imports than exports.
 - **Trade of Services (Invisibles):** Includes sectors like IT, tourism, and **remittances**, contributing positively to India's current account surplus despite trade deficits.
 - The **net of these two components determines the current account balance**. In Q4 of 2023-24, India registered a surplus on the current account, with a surplus in invisible but a deficit in the trade account.
 - **Capital Account:**
 - Captures investments such as **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** and **Foreign Institutional Investments (FII)**, essential for economic growth and stability. The capital account flow reflects factors such as commercial borrowings, banking, investments, loans, and capital.

- In Q4 of 2023-24, India showed a net surplus of USD 25 billion on the capital account.



- **Disequilibrium:** A disequilibrium in the balance of payment means its condition of Surplus or deficit.
 - A BoP surplus occurs when a **country's earnings from exports, services, and investments exceed its expenditures on imports and external obligations.**
 - Conversely, a deficit indicates higher expenditures than earnings, necessitating external financing or asset sales to cover the shortfall.
- **Challenges:** BoP calculations **include errors and omissions** due to complexities in recording international transactions accurately.
 - **Persistent deficits can strain a nation's economic stability,** potentially requiring external borrowing or assistance from international financial institutions like the **IMF.**
 - Contrary to popular perception, **deficits aren't inherently negative nor surpluses unequivocally positive.** A deficit can signify strategic investments, while a surplus may stem from reduced imports rather than robust economic health.
- **Managing BoP:**
 - **Foreign Exchange Reserves:** RBI manages BoP fluctuations by adjusting foreign exchange reserves through market interventions and by using tools such as **adjusting interest rates, open market operations** and influencing borrowing and spending.
 - **Policy Interventions:** Governments implement trade policies and regulatory measures to stabilise BoP dynamics, ensuring sustainable economic growth.
 - Deflation is the deliberate reduction of money supply or aggregate demand. It can result in **lower domestic prices, which may make exports more competitive, and reduced consumption,** including of imports. However, it also poses risks such as economic slowdown or recession and increased unemployment.
 - **Foreign Investment Promotion:** Promoting foreign investment to enhance the capital account by offering tax incentives, improving infrastructure, business environment, and streamlining regulations for foreign businesses.
 - This can attract foreign capital and technology, leading to potential improvement in export capacity.

UPSC Civil Services, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q1. Consider the following actions which the Government can take: (2011)

1. Devaluing the domestic currency.
2. Reduction in the export subsidy.
3. Adopting suitable policies which attract greater FDI and more funds from FII's.

Which of the above action/actions can help in reducing the current account deficit?

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

Ans: (d)

Q2. With reference to Balance of Payments, which of the following constitutes/constitute the Current Account? (2014)

1. Balance of trade
2. Foreign assets
3. Balance of invisibles
4. Special Drawing Rights

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

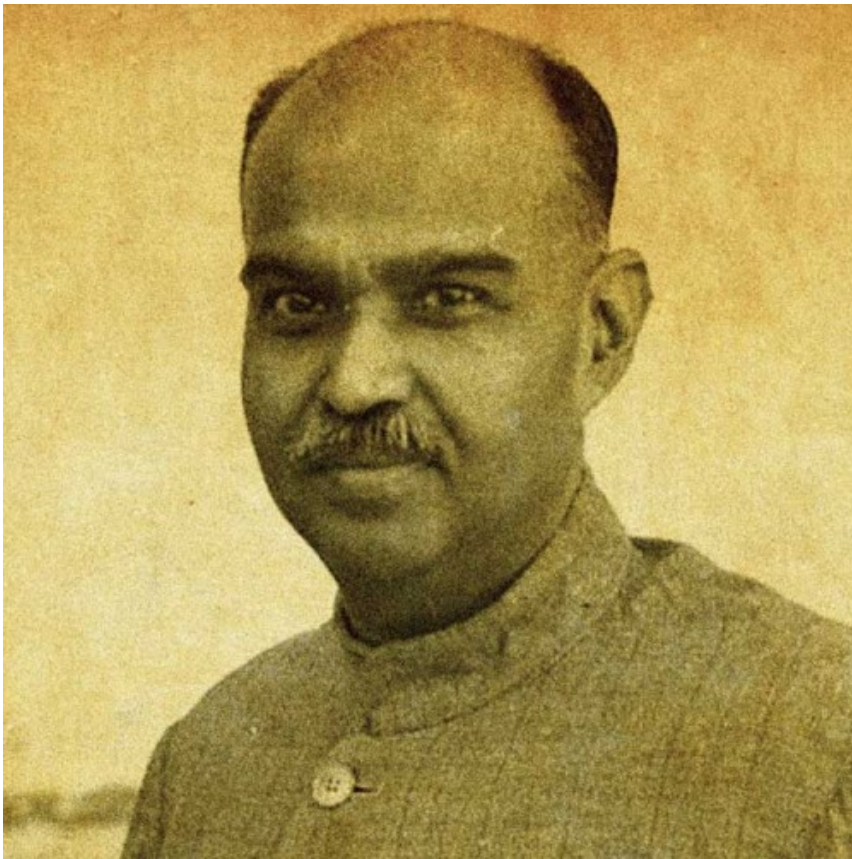
Ans: (c)

Birth Anniversary of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee

[Source: PIB](#)

The **Prime Minister** recently paid tribute to **Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee** on his **birth anniversary**.

- Shyama Prasad Mukherjee was born in a Bengali Brahmin family on the **6th July 1901**, in Calcutta.
- **He was an Indian politician, barrister, and academician who served as the Minister for Industry and Supply in Prime Minister [Jawaharlal Nehru's](#) cabinet.**
- He started "**Bang Wani**", a **Bengali journal, in 1922** and **The Nationalist in 1940's**.
- At the age of 33, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee became the **youngest vice-chancellor of Calcutta University in 1934**.
- He **demande**d the **[partition of Bengal](#) in 1946** to prevent the inclusion of its Hindu-majority areas in a Muslim-dominated East Pakistan.
- He also **opposed a failed bid for a united but independent Bengal** made in 1947 by Sarat Bose, the brother of Subhas Chandra Bose, and Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, a Bengali Muslim politician.
- He **founded the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS)**, the predecessor of the modern-day Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).
- He died in mysterious circumstances during detention in 1953 while protesting against the **[special status given to Kashmir](#)**.



Read more: [Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee](#)

Dr Gangadhar as NMC Chairperson

Source: [IE](#)

Recently, The [Appointment Committee of the Cabinet](#) appointed officiating chairperson **Dr BN Gangadhar as the head of the [National Medical Commission \(NMC\)](#)** while appointing **Dr Sanjay Behari as president of [Medical Assessment and Rating Board](#).**

- NMC has been constituted by an act of Parliament known as [National Medical Commission Act, 2019](#) replacing the [Medical Council of India \(MCI\)](#).
 - The reform aims to **overhaul the medical education sector**, specifically **targeting the replacement of the MCI**, which has been **plagued by [corruption](#) and other issues.**
- The NMC acts as **India's top regulator of medical education and practice.**
- It will have **four separate autonomous boards** for:
 - Undergraduate medical education.
 - Postgraduate medical education.
 - Medical assessment and rating.
 - Ethics and medical registration.

Read More: [National Medical Commission](#)

Discovery of Prehistoric Ostrich Nest

[Source: IE](#)

Recently, archaeologists have discovered a **41,000-year-old ostrich nest** in Prakasam, Andhra Pradesh.

- This provides crucial insights into the **extinction of megafauna** (animals weighing **more than 50 kg**) in India.
- **Earlier Evidences of Ostriches in India:**
 - Ostrich fossils were first reported in **1884** from the **Dhok Pathan deposits** in the **Upper Siwalik Hills, Pakistan**.
 - The discovery of ostrich fossils in the Himalayas indicates the region had **drier, cooler periods in the past** due to **weaker Indian monsoons**, unlike peninsular India during the Pleistocene.
 - Later, **ostrich eggshell beads and engravings** dating back to **50,000-40,000 years ago** were found at an **Upper Palaeolithic site in Patne, Maharashtra** in 1989.
 - In 2017, evidence showed that **ostriches existed in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat 25,000 years ago**.
- **Ostriches (*Struthio camelus*):**
 - [IUCN Status](#): Least Concern
 - **Largest Living Birds: 2-2.8 metres** tall, weight **90-160 kg**
 - **Flightless** birds, exceptional runners with speeds up to 43 mph.
 - Native to **African savannas and deserts** (Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa)
 - Live in **small herds** (fewer than a dozen), **led by males** who primarily mate with the leading female.

[Read More...](#)

SEHER Program

[Source: PIB](#)

Recently, the [Women Entrepreneurship Platform \(WEP\)](#) and **TransUnion CIBIL** launched the **SEHER program** to empower women entrepreneurs in India.

- It aims to **increase awareness among women entrepreneurs** about **finances, accessing and managing credit** by providing personalised resources and tools.
- India has the potential to create **more than 30 million** new women-owned enterprises and **150-170 million more jobs** by accelerating women's entrepreneurship.
- **Women in Business in India:**
 - India has **63 million [Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises \(MSMEs\)](#)**, with around **20%** owned by women, **employing 27 million** people.
 - The **demand for business loans by women** has **grown 3.9 times** in the last 5 years (FY 2019 - FY 2024).
 - The **share of women borrowers** holding a business loan increased by **10%** between FY 2019 and FY 2024.
 - **Rural areas** have a slightly **higher share of women-owned enterprises (22.24%)** compared to urban areas (18.42%).
- WEP was launched in **2018** by [NITI Aayog](#) and transitioned into a [Public-Private Partnership \(PPP\)](#) in 2022 with the goal of **supporting women entrepreneurs** in India.
- TransUnion CIBIL is India's leading **credit information company** with one of the largest collections of consumer information.

India and Pakistan Exchange List of Prisoners

[Source: TH](#)

Recently, [India and Pakistan](#) exchanged lists of **civilian prisoners and fishermen** held in each other's custody through diplomatic channels simultaneously at New Delhi and Islamabad.

- Under the provisions of the [bilateral Agreement on Consular Access 2008](#), such lists are exchanged **every year on 1st January and on 1st July**.
 - **Section 4** of the agreement states that **both nations' governments must offer consular access to citizens** of the other nation within three months of their arrest, detention, or imprisonment.
 - **Section 5** of the agreement stipulates that **both governments must release and repatriate individuals** within one month of confirming their national status and completing their sentences.
- The Government of India has called for **early release and repatriation of civilian prisoners, fishermen along with their boats, and missing Indian defence personnel** from Pakistan's custody.

[Read more...](#)

Cognitive Test

[Source: IE](#)

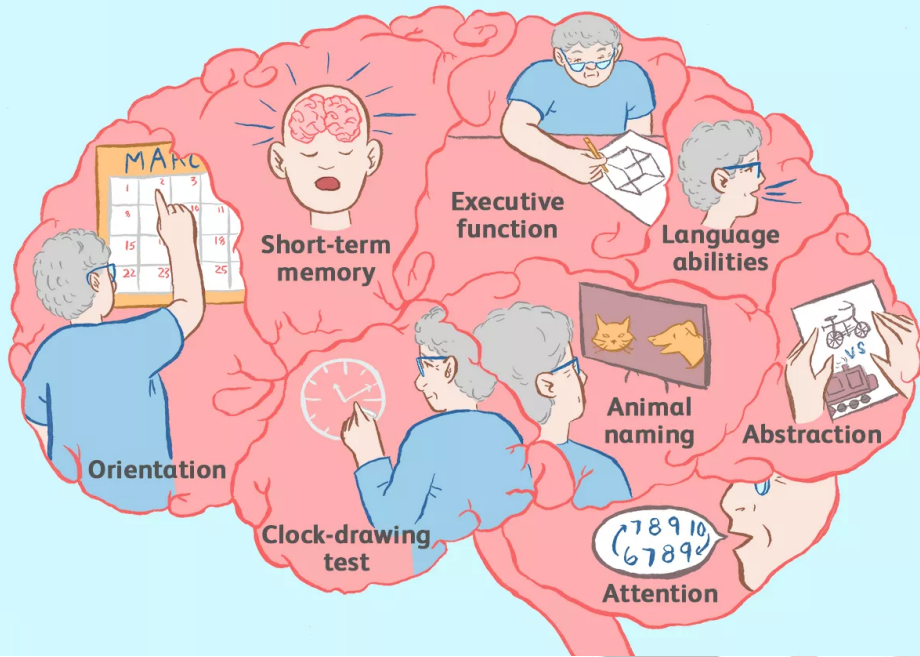
- Recently, the US President is facing calls to take a **cognitive test** amid concerns over his fitness for the presidency.
- The **cognitive test** evaluates **mental function** and **how the brain processes thoughts** by **asking basic questions** and having **individuals perform simple tasks**.
 - **Cognition** is the brain's ability to process all the information it takes in from your senses.
- It identifies **cognitive deficits, their causes, and the affected brain regions**.
 - Based on the test results, a **diagnosis is made of cognitive impairment, dementia, or pseudo-dementia**, leading to interventions such as **behaviour and cognitive therapies**.
- It is recommended for people experiencing **memory deficits, perceived memory loss or forgetfulness, difficulty focusing or making judgments**.

Common Cognitive Screening Tests:

- **Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA)** involves tasks like memorising words, naming objects, and copying shapes.
- **Mini-Mental State Exam (MMSE)** includes counting backwards, identifying objects, and stating the date.
- **Mini-Cog** requires memorising words, drawing a clock, and adding time points.

What Does the Montreal Cognitive Assessment Evaluate?

The MoCA assesses cognitive abilities, including:



[Read more...](#)

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-analysis/10-07-2024/print>

