



Bihar Man Files FIR Against Political Leader | Bihar | 23 Jan 2025

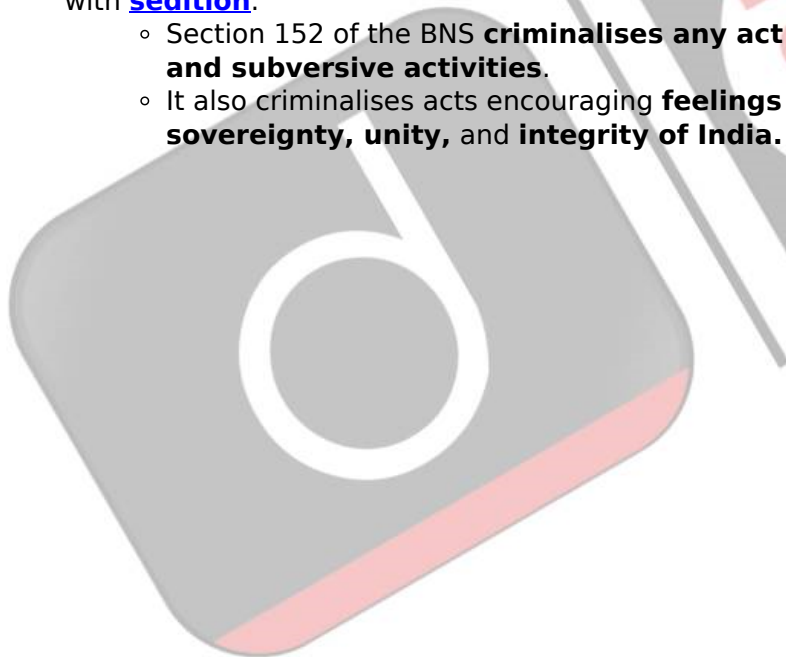
Why in News?

A Bihar resident has **filed a case against a political party leader**, accusing him of causing financial loss.

Key Points

- The complainant, reportedly a milk vendor, approached the local court, **alleging that a political rally led by a political leader disrupted his business operations.**
- The complainant, however, has asserted **his right to seek compensation** for the inconvenience caused by the rally.
 - The incident underscores the growing trend of citizens seeking legal redress for grievances stemming from political events, **reflecting a larger debate on balancing political expression with public convenience.**
- A resident of Sonupur village is seeking the trial of the political leader under various sections of the **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023**, including **Section 152**, which deals with **sedition**.
 - Section 152 of the BNS **criminalises any act of exciting secession, armed rebellion, and subversive activities.**
 - It also criminalises acts encouraging **feelings of separatism** or **endangering the sovereignty, unity, and integrity of India.**

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BHARATIYA NYAYA SANHITA (BNS), 2023

BNS 2023 replaced Indian Penal Code 1860, incorporating 358 sections (511 in IPC), maintaining most of the IPC provisions, introducing new offences, eliminating court- struck-down offences, and enhancing penalties for various offences.

New Offences

- **Promise to Marry:** Criminalising “deceitful” promises to marry
- **Mob Lynching:** Codify offences linked to mob lynching and hate-crime murders
- Ordinary criminal law now covers **Organized Crime** and **Terrorism**, including a broader scope for terror financing in BNS compared to UAPA
- **Attempt to Suicide:** Criminalises attempts to commit suicide with intent to compel or restrain any public servant from discharging official duty
- **Community Service:** Added as possible form of punishment

Deletions

- **Unnatural Sexual Offences:** Section 377 of the IPC, which criminalised homosexuality among other “unnatural” sexual activities repealed completely
- **Adultery:** Offence of adultery omitted in consonance of apex court judgement
- **Thugs:** Section 310 of IPC fully omitted
- **Gender Neutrality:** Some laws dealing with children modified to bring gender neutrality



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Other Modifications

- **Fake News:** Criminalisation of publishing false and misleading information
- **Sedition:** Introduced under a new name ‘deshdroh’ with wider definition
- **Mandatory Minimum Sentence:** In several provisions, mandatory minimum sentences prescribed which may limit scope for judicial discretion
- **Damage to Public Property:** Carry a graded fine (i.e. fine corresponding to the amount of damage caused)
- **Death by Negligence:** Elevates punishment for causing death by negligence from two to five years (for doctors - 2 yrs imprisonment)

Key Issues

- **Criminal Responsibility Age Discrepancy:** Criminal responsibility starts at seven, extendable to 12 based on maturity, potentially conflicting with global recommendations
- **Inconsistencies in Child Offense Definitions:** It sets child age below 18, but age criteria for offenses like rape differ, causing inconsistency
- **Retention of IPC Provisions on Rape and Sexual Harassment:** Maintains IPC provisions on rape and sexual harassment, omitting **Justice Verma Committee's 2013** suggestions for gender-neutral rape and recognizing marital rape as an offense.

UP Cabinet Approves Key Projects at Maha Kumbh | Uttar Pradesh | 23 Jan 2025

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet, led by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, held a significant meeting on 22nd January, 2025, at the [Maha Kumbh Mela](#) site in Prayagraj.

- The State government reiterated its focus on creating a safe, prosperous, and well-connected Uttar Pradesh, blending **economic development** with **cultural pride**.

Key Points

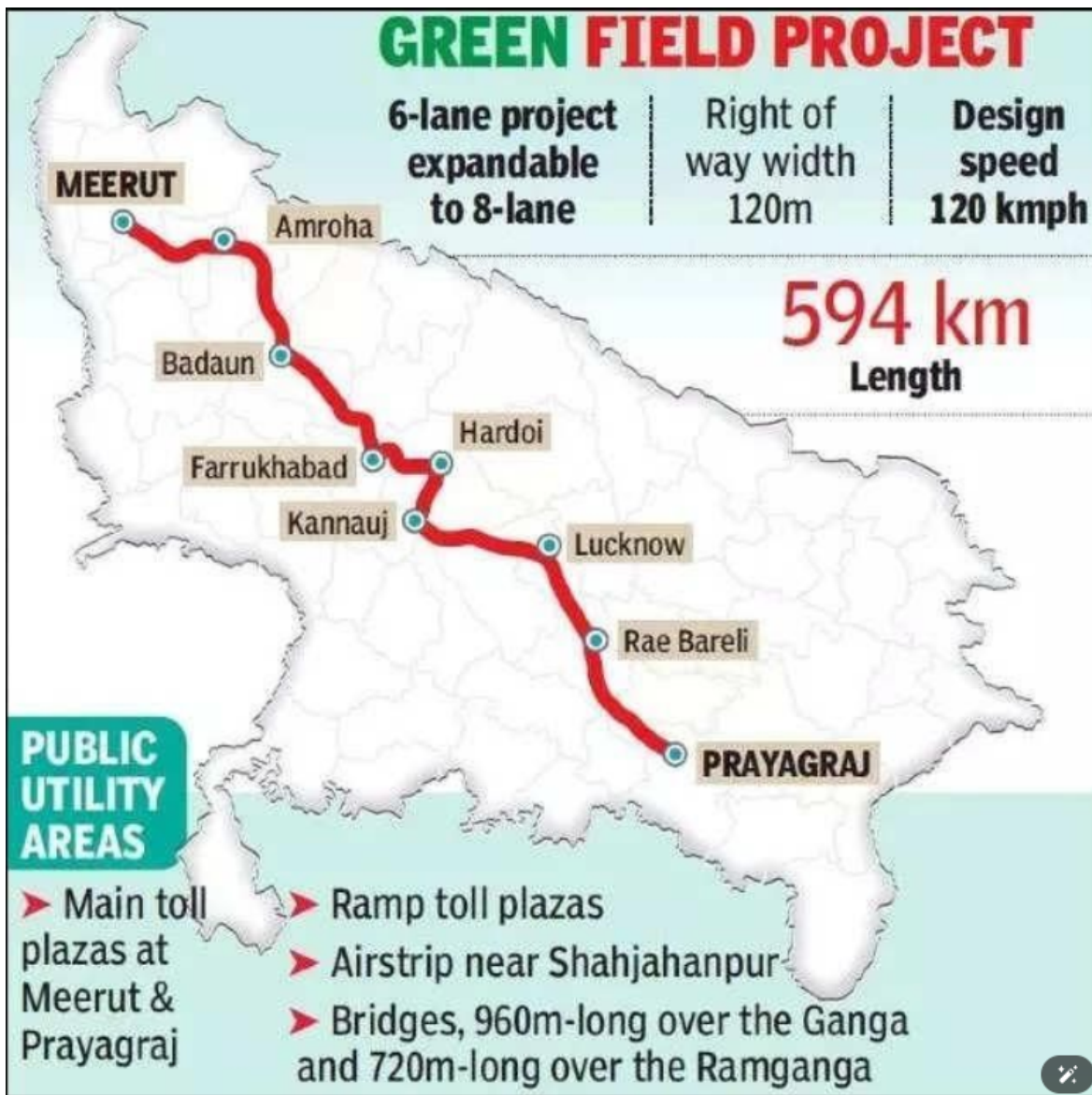
Key Highlights of the Meeting:

▪ Major Decisions and Announcements:

- The Cabinet approved a **revamp of the State's aerospace and defence policies**.
- New incentives were introduced to attract substantial investments in these sectors, aligning with **Uttar Pradesh's vision for economic growth and industrial development**.
- Two significant expressway projects received in-principle approval:
 - **Vindhya Expressway:** A 320-kilometre-long project connecting Prayagraj, Mirzapur, Varanasi, Chandauli, and Sonbhadra.
 - **Vindhya-Purvanchal Link Expressway:** A 100-kilometre-long expressway aimed at further improving regional connectivity.
- **Significance:**
 - The **Vindhya Expressway** will link **Prayagraj and Sonbhadra**, starting from the **Ganga Expressway** and ending at **National Highway (NH 39)**.
 - The expressway will strengthen Uttar Pradesh's infrastructure and improve access to neighboring States like **Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh**.
 - These projects are expected to boost social and economic development, particularly in the **Vindhya and Purvanchal regions**, while complementing the State's existing network of expressways.

Ganga Expressway

- This expressway, connecting the state from **east to west**, will traverse **518 villages across 12 districts**, significantly reducing travel time between **Meerut and Prayagraj**.
- It is designed to accommodate six lanes initially, expandable to eight lanes, boasting a **maximum speed of 120 kilometers per hour**.
- Another important feature includes two long bridges spanning the **Ganga and Ramganga rivers**, allowing even big planes to land. A **3.50-kilometer airstrip** near Jalalabad tehsil in Shahjahanpur adds to the project's versatility.
- To enhance public convenience, nine public amenities complexes are planned along the expressway, with main toll plazas at Meerut and Prayagraj, and ramp toll plazas at 15 locations.
- The Ganga Expressway is not merely a transportation link but a testament to Uttar Pradesh's commitment to modernising its connectivity landscape.



Punjab & Haryana HC Issues Notice on Anti-Begging Laws | Haryana | 23 Jan 2025

Why in News?

The [Punjab and Haryana High Court](#) has issued notices to the governments of Haryana and Punjab regarding a [Public Interest Litigation \(PIL\)](#) petition that challenges the **constitutionality of certain provisions in 50-year-old state laws that criminalise begging**.

Key Points

- **About the Petition:**
 - The petition contends that **anti-begging laws** in **Punjab** and **Haryana** are discriminatory

and infringe upon the [rights to equality](#), **life**, and **personal liberty guaranteed** by the Constitution of India.

- The PIL argues that the State has a social contract to ensure its citizens are able to live a dignified life and that the State **“cannot be allowed”** to treat begging as an offence.
- The petition further takes issue with the way the act of begging has been defined in these laws, arguing that they **violated [Articles 14, 19, and 21](#)** of the [Constitution of India](#).

▪ **Definition of Begging:**

- The definition classifies **any act of soliciting or receiving alms in public places as begging, including by singing, dancing, fortune-telling, performing tricks, or selling articles.**
- The only difference between these vocations and others is that these vocations have **“no price tag”** as that’s been left to the audience to pay.
- The law also defines begging as asking for alms on **private property**, especially if it involves **showing wounds, deformities, or injuries.**
- The definition of begging in the [Haryana Prevention of Beggary Act, 1971](#), which has been challenged, is based on the [Bombay Prevention of Beggary Act, 1959](#).
- It is a definition that is used by the **Union government**, to identify people engaged in begging, for **welfare** and **rehabilitation schemes.**

▪ **Legal Implications:**

- The outcome of this case could have significant implications for the **treatment of [marginalized communities](#)** and the **legal framework surrounding [poverty](#)** and **homelessness** in India.

UGC Halts PhD Admissions in Three Rajasthan Universities | Rajasthan | 23 Jan 2025

Why in News?

The [University Grants Commission \(UGC\)](#) has prohibited three universities in Rajasthan from enrolling new **Ph.D. students**. This action follows investigations into **allegations of issuing fake and backdated degrees.**

Key Points

- **Universities Affected:** The institutions barred from enrolling new Ph.D. scholars are **OPJS University, Churu, Sunrise University, Alwar and Singhania University, Jhunjhunu.**
- **Allegations:** A Standing **Committee** appointed by UGC has found that the three Universities did not follow the **provisions of the UGC PhD Regulations** and the **academic norms** for awarding of PhD degrees.
- **UGC's Action:** The **Standing Committee** has recommended that the **UGC** may debar these Universities from **enrolling PhD students** for the **next five years.**
- **Implications:** This incidence raises concerns about the quality and credibility of higher education institutions in Rajasthan.
 - It underscores the need for stringent oversight to maintain academic standards and protect students' interests.

University Grants Commission (UGC)

- UGC came into existence on **28th December, 1953** and became a **statutory Organisation** of the Government of India under the **University Grants Commission Act, 1956** for the **coordination, determination** and maintenance of standards of **teaching,**

examination and **research** in university education.

- The UGC operates under the **Ministry of Education**, the Central Government appoints a **Chairman, a Vice-Chairman**, and **ten other members to the UGC**.
 - The Chairman is chosen from people who are not officers of the Central Government or any State Government.
- Apart from **providing grants** to eligible universities and colleges, the Commission also advises the Central and State Governments on the measures that are necessary for the development of Higher Education.
- It functions from New Delhi as well as its six Regional offices located in Bangalore, Bhopal, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Pune.
- It also **regulates the recognition of fake universities**, autonomous colleges, deemed to be universities and distance education institutions.

Mount Abu Records Lowest Temperature at 2.4°C | Rajasthan | 23 Jan 2025

Why in News?

Mount Abu, Rajasthan's only hill station, recorded a **temperature of 2.4 degrees Celsius**, marking the **state's lowest temperature**.

Note: The highest peak in the [Aravalli Range](#) is [Guru Shikhar](#), located on [Mount Abu](#).

Key Points

- **Other Regions:** In the plains, **Sangaria of Hanumangarh** recorded a minimum of 5.8°C followed by 6.8°C in Lunkaransar, 7.3°C each in Sirohi and Fatehpur.
 - According to the [Indian Meteorological Department \(IMD\)](#), Pilani recorded 7.6°C followed by 7.8°C in Churu, 8.2°C each in Sikar and Sriganganagar and 8.8°C in Nagaur.
- **Weather Conditions:** The cold conditions have affected various parts of Rajasthan, with temperatures significantly lower than usual for this time of year.
- **Impact:** The unusual cold has prompted discussions about its effects on daily life, agriculture, and [tourism](#) in the region.

India Meteorological Department (IMD)

- **About:**
 - **IMD** was established in **1875**. It is the **National Meteorological Service** of the country and the principal government agency in all matters relating to meteorology and allied subjects.
 - It works as an agency of the **Ministry of Earth Sciences** of the **Government of India**.
 - It is headquartered in **New Delhi**.
 - IMD is also one of the **six Regional Specialized Meteorological Centres** of the [World Meteorological Organization](#).
- **Roles and Responsibilities:**
 - To take meteorological observations and to provide current and forecast meteorological

information for optimum operation of weather-sensitive activities like **agriculture, irrigation, shipping, aviation, offshore oil explorations**, etc.

- To warn against severe weather phenomena like **tropical cyclones**, norwesters, **dust storms**, heavy rains and snow, cold and **heat waves**, etc., which cause destruction of life and property.
- To provide meteorological statistics required for agriculture, water resource management, industries, oil exploration and other nation-building activities.
- To conduct and promote research in meteorology and allied disciplines.

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