



Exploitation of Domestic Workers

For Prelims: [Supreme Court of India](#), [Care economy](#), [International Labour Organization](#), [Code on Social Security, 2020](#)

For Mains: Domestic workers in India, Labour Laws and Reform, Welfare and Protection

Source: [TH](#)

Why in News?

The [Supreme Court \(SC\) of India](#) has raised concerns over the **exploitation and abuse of domestic workers in India** due to the **absence of a protective legal framework**.

- It has directed the Centre to form an **inter-ministerial expert committee** to assess the need for a protective law.

Who are Domestic Workers?

- **About:** According to the [ILO](#), Domestic workers are those workers who **perform work in or for a private household or households**.
 - They provide **direct and indirect care services**, and as such are key members of the [care economy](#).
- **Status of Domestic Workers in India:** Women make up the majority of domestic workers in India, with **26 lakh of the 39 lakh workers being female**, according to 2019 government estimates.
 - **12.6 million minors** are employed as domestic workers (**86% are girls, and 25% are under 14 years old**).
- **Characteristics of Domestic Workers:**
 - **Informal and Unregulated:** Most domestic workers **lack job contracts, social security, and legal protection**.
 - **Live-in and Part-time Work:** Some workers live with their employers (live-in workers), while others work in multiple households (part-time workers).
 - **Migration:** Domestic workers often migrate from **poverty-stricken states like Jharkhand, Bihar, and Odisha** to cities such as Delhi, Bengaluru, and Mumbai, as well as to **Arab States**, due to extreme poverty and a lack of job opportunities.
 - **Marginalized Communities:** The workforce is primarily composed of marginalized communities from [Scheduled Castes \(SCs\)](#), [Other Backward Classes \(OBCs\)](#), and [Scheduled Tribes \(STs\)](#).

What are the concerns of Domestic Workers India?

- **Low Wages:** Many earn below the **minimum wage**, with **no formal contracts**. They often work **excessive hours** without breaks or **overtime pay**.
- **Abuse:** Workers face **physical and emotional abuse**, including beatings, harsh conditions, [sexual harassment](#), [forced labour](#), and [human trafficking](#), particularly minors

from vulnerable communities.

- The **ILO** states domestic work as a "**modern slavery**" practice, where workers, including minors, are vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, forced labor, and trafficking.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Female workers are vulnerable to sexual abuse. Many cases of abuse go **unreported due to fear of retaliation** or the lack of legal recourse.
- **Exploitation by Agencies:** Placement agencies exploit domestic workers by charging **high fees for employment**, without guaranteeing fair wages or safe conditions.
 - Workers are often not informed about the terms of their employment, including wages or job responsibilities.
- **Pandemic: Covid-19** worsened conditions, a 2020 study found that 57% of domestic workers in Kochi, Delhi, and Mumbai faced discrimination, while 40% worked without safety measures.

What Laws Govern Domestic Work in India?

- **No Dedicated Central Law:** Domestic workers are excluded from mainstream labor laws as "**workman**" and "**workplace**" definitions do not cover household work, often seen as "**unproductive**" women's labor.
 - Multiple attempts were made to pass a Central law to protect domestic workers, including the **Domestic Workers (Conditions of Employment) Bill of 1959** and the **Domestic Workers (Regulation of Work and Social Security) Bill of 2017**.
 - The **2019 National Domestic Worker Policy** aimed to regulate agencies and ensure workers' rights, **including wages**, social security, and benefits. **However, none of these proposed laws were enacted.**
- **Weak Legal Protections:**
 - **Unorganised Sector Social Security Act, 2008:** Provided some benefits but was later replaced by the **Code on Social Security, 2020**, which **has not been implemented**.
 - **Minimum Wages Act, 1948:** Recognizes domestic work, but **only 10 states** have set minimum wages for domestic workers.
 - **Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act, 2013:** Recognizes domestic workers but **lacks an enforcement mechanism**.
 - **Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986:** In 2006, India banned minors under 14 from domestic work, deeming it "**hazardous child labor**," but the **Child Labour Act, 1986**, allows **children over 14 to work in homes, considering them a "safe" place**.
- **State Laws: Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Kerala** have implemented laws to protect domestic workers.
 - These states have established **specialized bodies** to oversee social security benefits, maternity care, education assistance, medical reimbursements, and minimum wages.
- **Global Protections:** In 2011, India voted in favor of **ILO Convention 189**, which aims to improve domestic workers' conditions by recognizing **domestic work as legitimate work** ensuring domestic workers enjoy the same rights as others. **However, India has yet to ratify the convention.**

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Core Conventions of the ILO: - The eight Core Conventions of the ILO (also called fundamental/human rights conventions) are:

- Forced Labour Convention (No. 29)
- Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (No.105)
- Equal Remuneration Convention (No.100)
- Discrimination (Employment Occupation) Convention (No.111)
- Minimum Age Convention (No.138)
- Worst forms of Child Labour Convention (No.182)

(The above Six have been ratified by India)

- Freedom of Association and Protection of Right to Organised Convention (No.87)
- Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention (No.98)

(The above two conventions have not been ratified by India)

Way Forward

- **Policy Changes:** Implement the **Draft National Domestic Worker Policy, 2019** to regulate placement agencies, ensure mandatory contracts with fair wages and benefits, and include domestic workers in social security and pension schemes.
 - Ratify the **ILO Convention 189**, create laws to protect domestic workers' rights, recognize their **work as legitimate**, and ensure legal protection and policy enforcement.
- **Anti-Trafficking Measures:** Mandatory registration of **placement agencies to ensure transparency, additionally**, ensure strict enforcement of anti-trafficking laws under the **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023** which mandates punishment up to **life imprisonment** for trafficking offenses, including those involving domestic workers.
- **Empower Workers:** Raise awareness of domestic workers' rights, provide access to legal aid and social services, and establish a **statutory body to address grievances**.

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. Critically examine the exploitation of domestic workers in India and suggest measures to improve their working conditions and social security.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Mains

Q. Distinguish between 'care economy' and 'monetized economy'. How can the care economy be brought into a monetized economy through women empowerment? (2023)

Writ Jurisdiction and the State

For Prelims: [Supreme Court \(SC\)](#), [Scheduled Banks](#), [NBFCs](#), [Writ Jurisdiction](#), [State](#), [RBI](#), [Statutory Bodies](#), [Fundamental Rights](#), [Parliament](#), [Municipalities](#), [Panchayats](#), [Article 12](#), [Articles 32 and 226](#).

For Mains: Application of writ jurisdiction on private bodies, Type of writs and scope.

- **Source: DH**
- Why in News?
- In **S. Shobha vs. Muthoot Finance Ltd Case, 2025**, the **Supreme Court (SC)** ruled that **private companies**, including **scheduled banks** and **NBFCs**, are **not** subject to **writ jurisdiction** as they **do not perform public functions or duties**.
- The SC held that **NBFCs are not a "State"** under Article 12 and **'function' test** should decide the **maintainability of a writ application**.
- What are the Key Highlights of the Case?
- **Case Background:** The appellant argued that though NBFCs are not a "State" under Article 12, NBFCs violating **RBI rules** should be **subject to writ jurisdiction**.
- **Supreme Court Verdict:** Being subject to **regulatory guidelines** under a statute **does not** automatically make an entity subject to **writ jurisdiction**.
- **Function Test:** Writ jurisdiction applies only if an entity performs public duties such as **governmental or essential public functions imposed by a statute** or statutory rule.
- Writ jurisdiction applies to **state authorities**, **statutory bodies**, **state-owned or funded private bodies**, and private entities performing **public duties**.
- NBFCs duties are confined to **account holders and borrowers**, not the general public.

- **Public Law Element Requirement:** If a private body **denies rights** concerning a public duty imposed on it, a writ can be enforced.
- What are Writs?
- **About:** A writ is a **legal order** issued by **Constitutional courts** under **Articles 32 and 226** of the Indian Constitution to **protect citizens' rights**. It is adopted from English "**prerogative writs**."
- **Authority to Issue Writs:**
- **Supreme Court (Article 32):** Can issue writs only for the enforcement of **Fundamental Rights (FRs)**.
- **High Courts (Article 226):** Can issue writs for the enforcement of **FRs** and **other legal rights**.
- **Before 1950:** Only the High Courts of **Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras** had the power to issue writs.
- **Parliament (Under Article 32):** Can empower **any other court to issue writs**, but **no such provision** has been made yet.
- **Types of Writs and Their Scope:**

| Writ | Purpose | Issued To | Court's Role | Not Issued If | Example |
|----------------------|--|--|---|--|--|
| Habeas Corpus | "To Have the Body" - Protects individuals from illegal detention. | Any public authority or private individual responsible for unlawful detention . | Examines the legality of detention and orders release if unlawful. | Detention is lawful, detention due to contempt of court or legislature, detention ordered by a competent court, outside jurisdiction of the court. | If a person is detained without legal justification, a Habeas Corpus writ can secure their release. |
| Mandamus | "We Command" - Directs a public official, body, corporation, tribunal, or government to perform a duty they have failed to fulfill. | Government officials, public corporations, tribunals, and courts. | Directs the performance of a duty that has been neglected. | Private individuals/organizations, discretionary duties, duties with no statutory backing, against President/Governors, Chief Justice acting judicially. | If a government official refuses to issue a passport despite fulfilling all legal requirements, a Mandamus writ can be issued. |
| Prohibition | "To Forbid" - Prevents lower courts or tribunals from exceeding their jurisdiction or acting illegally. | Higher courts (Supreme Court or High Courts). | Prevents unlawful actions or excess jurisdiction . | Administrative authorities, legislative bodies, private individuals/organizations. | If a district court takes up a case beyond its legal authority, the High Court can issue a Prohibition writ. |
| Certiorari | "To Be Certified" - Transfers a case or quashes an | Judicial or quasi-judicial bodies, administrative authorities | Quashes illegal or unconstitutional orders, or | Legislative bodies, private individuals/organizations. | If a tribunal passes an unlawful order violating natural justice, |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|---|--|---|---|
| | illegal or unconstitutional order of a lower court/tribunal. | (after 1991 SC ruling). | transfers cases. | | the High Court can quash it using Certiorari. |
| Quo Warranto | "By What Authority" - Prevents illegal occupation of a public office by a person not entitled to hold it. | Any person wrongly occupying a substantive public office . | Challenges unlawful occupation of public offices. | Private offices, ministerial (non-substantive) offices. | If a person is appointed as a Minister without meeting the legal requirements, a Quo Warranto writ can be issued. |

Differences in Writ Jurisdiction of SC and HC:

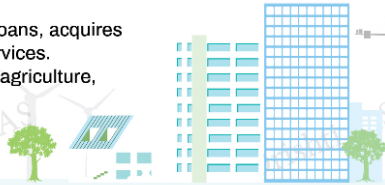
| Aspect | Supreme Court | High Court |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| Scope of Enforcement | Can issue writs only for FRs violations. | Can issue writs for FRs and other legal rights (broader scope) . |
| Territorial Jurisdiction | Can issue writs throughout India . | Can issue writs only within its territorial jurisdiction , except when the cause of action arises within its jurisdiction. |
| Nature of the Right | Writ jurisdiction is a FRs itself (Article 32), so the court cannot refuse to exercise it . | Writ jurisdiction is discretionary (Article 226) , meaning the High Court may refuse to issue a writ. |

What is the Definition of a State under Article 12?

- **About:** [Article 12](#) has defined the term "State" for the purposes of **Part III (FRs)** that has been used in **different provisions** concerning **fundamental rights**.
- **Scope of 'State':** According to Article 12, the State includes the following:
 - **Government and Parliament of India**, and **Government and legislature of states** (i.e., **executive and legislative** organs of the government).
 - All **local authorities**, that is, **municipalities, panchayats**, district boards, improvement trusts, etc.
 - All other authorities, that is, **statutory or non-statutory authorities** like **LIC, ONGC, SAIL**, etc.
 - Thus, the State has been defined in a **wider sense** so as to include **all its agencies**. It is the **actions** of these agencies that can be challenged in the courts as violating the Fundamental Rights.
- **Judicial Stand:** The **SC** in the **Binny Ltd Case, 2005** held that even a **private body or an agency** working as an **instrument of the State** falls within the meaning of the 'State' under **Article 12**.

Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs)

A Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) provides loans, acquires financial securities, and offers leasing & insurance services. However, it excludes companies primarily engaged in agriculture, industrial activities, trading, or real estate.

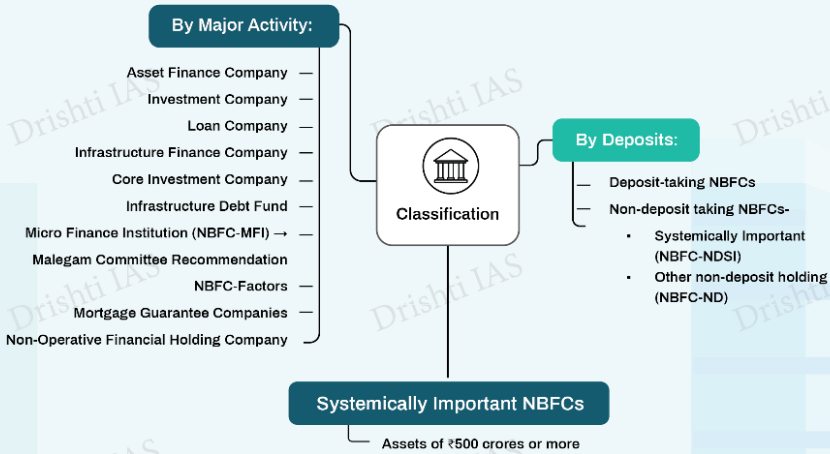


About:

- Do not have a banking license; not part of the payment system; cannot issue cheques
- Can accept public deposits for 12-60 months (no demand deposits)
- Registration → Companies Act, 1956
- Insurance by Deposit Insurance & Credit Guarantee Corporation → not available for NBFC depositors
- NBFCs require an investment-grade credit rating
- Key Services Offered- Personal loans, Home loans, Vehicle Financing, Gold Loans, Microfinance, Infrastructure Financing, Insurance Services, Investment Management



Classification:



Regulation:

| Type of Institution | Regulatory Authority |
|--|--|
| NBFCs registered with RBI | RBI |
| Housing Finance Institutions | National Housing Bank |
| Merchant Banking Companies, Venture Capital Fund Companies, Stock Broking, Collective Investment Schemes (CIS) | SEBI |
| Nidhi Companies, Mutual Benefit Companies | Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) |
| Chit Fund Companies | State Government |
| Insurance Companies | IRDAI |
| Non-Banking Non-Financial Companies | Statute- Companies Act 1956 Regulator- Ministry of Corporate Affairs Enforcement Agency- State Governments |

Benefits of NBFCs:

- Financial Inclusion
- Innovative Products
- Liquidity
- Support for MSMEs

Challenges of NBFCs:

- Funding Constraints
- Asset Quality & Credit Risk
- Regulatory Compliance
- Corporate Governance



Conclusion

The **Supreme Court and High Courts** issue writs to address **violations of fundamental and legal rights**, focusing on entities performing **public duties**. Writ jurisdiction is determined based on whether the **entity performs public duties**. Only **statutory bodies** and entities performing governmental functions are subject to writs.

Drishti Mains Question:

Discuss the scope of writ jurisdiction under Articles 32 and 226 of the Indian Constitution.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. In India, Judicial Review implies (2017)

- (a) the power of the Judiciary to pronounce upon the constitutionality of laws and executive orders.
- (b) the power of the Judiciary to question the wisdom of the laws enacted by the Legislatures.
- (c) the power of the Judiciary to review all the legislative enactments before they are assented to by the President.
- (d) the power of the Judiciary to review its own judgements given earlier in similar or different cases.

Ans: (a)

Q. Who/Which of the following is the custodian of the Constitution of India? (2015)

- (a) The President of India
- (b) The Prime Minister of India
- (c) The Lok Sabha Secretariat
- (d) The Supreme Court of India

Ans: (d)

Mains

Q. Judicial Legislation is antithetical to the doctrine of separation of powers as envisaged in the Indian Constitution. In this context justify the filing of a large number of public interest petitions praying for issuing guidelines to executive authorities. (2020)

India-Bhutan Ties and Subnational Diplomacy

For Prelims: [Five Year Plan](#), [Gelephu Mindfulness City Project](#), [Punatshangchhu-II hydro Project](#), [Town Twinning](#), [Farakka Water-Sharing Treaty 1996](#), [Union List](#), [GDP](#), [Manas National Park](#), [Royal Manas National Park](#).

For Mains: India-Bhutan ties, Potential of subnational diplomacy in advancing India's national interests.

Source: [BL](#)

Why in News?

Following the **King of Bhutan** visit to **India**, both countries **committed** to strengthening **India and Bhutan** ties in which **Subnational diplomacy** by states like **Assam** can further strengthen **economic and cultural relations**.

What were the Key Outcomes of the Visit?

- **Strengthened Cooperation:** Bhutan expressed gratitude for India's continued support for its 13th [Five Year Plan \(2024-29\)](#) and for India's contributions to **Bhutan's Economic Stimulus Programme**.
- **Economic Development:** India has assured continued support for the [Mindfulness City project](#), a sustainable **economic hub**.
- **Hydropower Cooperation:** Significant progress has been made in the **1020 MW Punatshangchhu-II hydro project** and both countries agreed to expedite the completion of the **Punatsangchhu-I project**.
- **Cross-Border Connectivity:** The **Integrated Check Post (ICP) at Darranga, Assam**, was inaugurated to boost **tourism and economic activities** in Bhutan's eastern region and Assam's border areas.



What is Subnational Diplomacy?

- **About:** Subnational diplomacy (paradiplomacy) refers to **subnational entities (like states or regions)** engaging in international relations to **promote their mutual interests**.
 - Globalization has fueled **subnational diplomacy**, with regional governments seeking to advance their goals in an **interconnected world**.
- **Institutional Mechanisms in India:**
 - **States Division:** The 'States Division' under the **MEA** facilitates better **Centre-state interaction**, helping states develop foreign linkages in **trade, tourism, investment, and more**.
 - **Consular Offices and Federal Foreign Affairs Offices:** Foster diplomacy with **sub-national units**.
 - **City Diplomacy: City Diplomacy, or town twinning**, focuses on cultural and economic exchanges. E.g., **Kobe-Ahmedabad Sister Cities**.
- **Global City Diplomacy Examples: Sao Paulo city** in Brazil has its own policy for conducting international relations with support from Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
 - **Barcelona** (Spain), **Quebec** (Canada), **California** (USA), London (UK), Vancouver (Canada) also conduct foreign relations.
- **Subnational Diplomacy in India:** Indian states enjoy some liberty in **foreign policy implementation** in areas like trade, commerce, and cultural exchange.
 - In 2015, **Andhra Pradesh's CM** led a delegation to **China before the Prime Minister's (PM) visit**, and **West Bengal's CM joined India's PM in Bangladesh**.
 - Gujarat's "**Vibrant Gujarat Global Investors Summit**" promotes investment in Gujarat.
 - Other states like **Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Bihar attract FDI** boosting trade opportunities
 - In **1992, Maharashtra** partnered with **MNCs (Enron and General Electric)** to finance the **Dabhol Power Project**.
 - The **1996 Farakka water-sharing** issue was resolved after **West Bengal CM's** visit to

Bangladesh, resulting in the [Farakka Water-Sharing Treaty 1996](#).

- **Benefits:**
 - **State-Level Influence:** Indian states shape **foreign policy** by aligning **federal and state policies** in sectors like land, labor, and health.
 - It can prevent issues like [Kachchatheevu Island](#) where the union's decision **negatively affected the local population**.
 - **Complementary Strengths:** Indian states and their counterparts collaborate in sectors like **IT and automotive**, adopting **tailor made approaches** based on the mutual requirements.
 - **Global Challenges:** State cooperation in **climate change** and **pandemic recovery** can offer **effective solutions at local levels for the global world**.
 - **Long-Term Alliances:** Subnational diplomacy fosters **grassroots partnerships**, encourages [P2P and B2B relations](#), ensuring lasting relations.
- **Concerns:**
 - **Constitutional Constraints:** Foreign affairs are under the [Union List](#) in India's Constitution, **limiting states' involvement** and raising concerns **over central authority encroachment**.
 - **National Security Concerns:** Subnational diplomacy could impact **national security**, particularly in sensitive areas like the **Northeast or states bordering Pakistan and China**.
 - **External Influence:** Local governments may become targets of **disinformation**, affecting their ability to manage international relations independently.
 - Smaller cities may be vulnerable to **manipulation by foreign powers**.
 - **Public Backlash:** Independent foreign relations by states can lead to **public opposition and diplomatic friction** if they conflict with national interests.

How Subnational Diplomacy with Assam can Enhance India-Bhutan Ties?

- **Trade and Connectivity:** Establishing more ICPs like **Darranga** and developing railway links like **Kokrajhar-Gelephu and Banarhat-Samtse**, along with Assam's natural resources (**tea, oil, Joha rice, Bhut Jolokia**), will boost **trade with Bhutan**.
 - Currently, more than **70% of trade** between **India and Bhutan** passes through the **Jaigaon Land Customs Station (LCS) in West Bengal**.
- **Energy Cooperation:** Long-term [power purchase agreement \(PPA\)](#) with Bhutan's hydroelectric companies can help meet **Assam's energy needs**.
 - The sale of hydro-power accounts for **about 63% of Bhutan's GDP**.
- **Maritime Connectivity:** Bhutan can reduce transport costs to Bangladesh by using **Dhubri River port** and utilising **Assam's Asom Mala initiative** (road infrastructure development program).
- **Ecological Collaboration:** Collaboration on [Manas National Park](#) (Assam) and [Royal Manas National Park](#) (Bhutan) will strengthen **conservation and eco-tourism**, attracting more tourists.
- **Cultural Diplomacy:** Assam's cultural links with Bhutan can foster **greater solidarity through cultural exchanges**.

Conclusion

Subnational diplomacy, particularly through Assam, plays a vital role in strengthening **India-Bhutan ties by enhancing trade, energy cooperation, and cultural exchanges**. It offers innovative solutions to global challenges, while also fostering grassroots partnerships for long-term bilateral collaboration.

Drishti Mains Question:

Discuss the potential benefits and concerns of subnational diplomacy in India's foreign policy.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Mains

Q. Terrorist activities and mutual distrust have clouded India-Pakistan relations. To what extent the use of soft power like sports and cultural exchange could help generate goodwill between the two countries. Discuss with suitable examples. (2015)

Injecting Liquidity in Economy

Source: TOI

Why in News?

The [Reserve Bank of India \(RBI\)](#) has announced measures to inject over **Rs 1.5 lakh crore** to increase **money liquidity** in the economy.

What are Key Points About RBI's Liquidity Measures?

- **Money Liquidity:** It refers to the **availability of cash and easily accessible funds** in the economy, influencing **spending and investment**.
 - **Liquidity** refers to how **quickly and easily** an asset can be converted into **cash** without impacting its price much.
- **Reason for Liquidity Shortfall:** The RBI's **forex sale** to stabilize the rupee amid **foreign institutional investors (FIIs) outflows** led to a liquidity deficit.
 - RBI sells US dollars in exchange for rupees, reducing the **supply of rupees** in the banking system.
 - It led to **tighter short-term interest rates** and increased borrowing costs.
- **Measures Taken by RBI:** RBI's liquidity infusion plan comprises **three measures**:
 - **Government Bond Buyback:** It means the central bank or the government **repurchases bonds** from the market **before maturity**.
 - It **injects liquidity by paying bondholders** (banks, financial institutions, or investors), increasing fund availability in the banking system.
 - **Repo Auction:** Repo auction is a **liquidity adjustment tool** used by the RBI where banks **bid for funds** at desired borrowing rates, and the **RBI accepts the lowest bids** until the required amount is allotted.
 - **US Dollar-Rupee Swap Auction:** A **swap auction** increases liquidity in the market by facilitating the **temporary exchange** of currencies or financial instruments.
 - **Borrowing dollars** stabilizes the domestic currency and prevents a liquidity drain by **avoiding rupee sales** in the forex market.
- **Potential Repo Rate Cut:** Addressing the **liquidity deficit** may be a **precursor to a possible repo rate cut** in the upcoming monetary policy review.
 - **Sufficient liquidity** will ensure that any future **repo rate cuts are effectively transmitted** to borrowers through lower interest rates.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. If the RBI decides to adopt an expansionist monetary policy, which of the following would it not do?(2020)

1. Cut and optimize the Statutory Liquidity Ratio
2. Increase the Marginal Standing Facility Rate
3. Cut the Bank Rate and Repo Rate

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Ans: (b)

Q. Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)?(2017)

1. It decides the RBI's benchmark interest rates.
2. It is a 12-member body including the Governor of
3. RBI and is reconstituted every year.
4. It functions under the chairmanship of the Union Finance Minister.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Ans: (a)

First Indian to Pilot Axiom Mission

Source: BS

Indian Air Force Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla is set to become the **first Indian** astronaut to travel to the **International Space Station (ISS)** on a **private mission** in 2025.

- It is led by NASA astronaut **Peggy Whitson**, and **Shubhanshu Shukla** will serve as the **mission pilot**.
 - He is also the **astronaut-designate** for India's human spaceflight program, **Gaganyaan**.
- He will board the **SpaceX Dragon spacecraft** from **Kennedy Space Center** in Florida as part of the **Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4)**, a joint venture between **NASA** and **ISRO**.
- The **Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4)** will involve astronauts from **India, Poland, and Hungary** and is the **first such collaboration in over 40 years**.
- The astronauts will spend **14 days aboard the ISS** conducting **scientific experiments**, educational outreach, and commercial activities with **NASA and ISRO**.
- **Rakesh Sharma** was the **first Indian** to travel to space in **1984** aboard the **Soviet Soyuz T-11**

mission under the **Interkosmos program**.

Read More: [Gaganyaan Astronauts Selected for Axiom-4 Mission](#)

Card Tokenization in India

Source: [BL](#)

Card tokenization has become a significant **technological advancement** in India, **enhancing security and customer convenience** in [digital payments](#).

- **Over 91 crore tokens** were issued by December 2024 and has enabled nearly **98% of e-commerce transactions** to be processed without actual card data, **reducing** the risk of **data breaches**.
- **Tokenization:** It **substitutes** actual card details with a **unique code, or "token,"** which acts as a **secure identifier** during transactions.
 - **Types: Device tokenization** (specific to each **device**) and **Card-on-File tokenization** (specific to each **merchant**).
 - **Security Benefits:** Tokens **prevent** merchants from storing **sensitive card details**, safeguarding customers' information in case of a security breach.
 - **Future Expansion:** Tokenization is expected to grow **beyond e-commerce** into contactless payments, recurring transactions, and potentially **UPI-linked credit card payments**.
 - **Cybersecurity Regulations:** In **October 2022**, RBI mandated that **merchants and payment processors** no longer store customer card data, relying entirely on tokenization.

Read more: [Tokenization of Cards in India](#)

Inter-State Committees for Workers' Social Security

Source: [TH](#)

Labour Ministers and Secretaries from Union and State governments concluded with major discussions on [labour reforms](#) and **workers' welfare**.

- It focused on the **implementation of the new Labour Codes** and expanding [social security coverage](#).
- **Three committees** comprising **five states** each will develop a **sustainable model for social security** for workers, with reports due in **March 2025**.
- A key labor reform proposed **shifting** from a **labor inspector model** to an **inspector-cum-facilitator** to reduce compliance burden and enhance [ease of doing business](#).
- It emphasized the need for **sustainable models** to utilize the [cess funds](#) for [pension schemes](#) and **education for children of construction workers**.
 - The welfare of **construction workers** was prioritized, with concerns over **Rs 70,744.16 crore** in **unused cess funds**.
- The government is also working on a **dedicated Social Security Scheme** for [gig and platform](#)

[workers](#), focusing on **funding**, **data collection**, and **registration** on the [eShram portal](#).

Read More: [India's Labour Reforms](#)

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