

## LANDSLIDES KILL SIX IN NAGALAND; KEY NATIONAL HIGHWAY BLOCKED

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

**CONTEXT:** The landslides in Nagaland, triggered by heavy rainfall, have caused significant disruptions to transportation and infrastructure, leading to loss of life and economic consequences. The key national highway connecting Dimapur and Kohima has been severely damaged, impacting essential supplies and travel in the region.



**Deadly Landslides** Several landslides triggered by heavy rainfall in Nagaland led to the tragic loss of six lives and injuries to four others. The majority of the damage occurred in the Chumoukedima district.

**Infrastructure Disruption** The landslides severely impacted the crucial National Highway 29, blocking or washing away portions of the road. This disruption cut off essential road links between Dimapur and Kohima, affecting both Nagaland and Manipur.

**Emergency Response** Search and rescue operations are underway to locate missing individuals. The Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority is coordinating relief efforts.

**Panic Buying and Supply Concerns** The road closures caused panic buying of essential goods in Kohima, leading to concerns about supply shortages. The government has reassured the public that there is no shortage of fuel or necessities.

**Government Efforts** The Nagaland government is working diligently with the Centre and relevant agencies to restore normalcy and provide assistance to affected areas.

## EPFO PENSIONS CAN SOON BE COLLECTED VIA ANY BANK OR BRANCH

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

### Centralised Pension Payment System (CPPS) for EPFO Pensioners A Major Milestone in EPFO Modernization

The Union Labour Ministry has approved a proposal for the Centralised Pension Payment System (CPPS), a significant step towards modernizing the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995. This new system aims to streamline the pension disbursement process for over 78 lakh pensioners.

#### Key Benefits of CPPS

- **Flexibility and Convenience:** Pensioners can now receive their pensions from any bank, any branch across India.
- **Elimination of Transfer Hassles:** The CPPS ensures seamless pension disbursement, regardless of the pensioner's location or bank changes.
- **Reduced Administrative Burden:** The system will significantly reduce the administrative overhead associated with pension disbursement.

#### Implementation Timeline

The CPPS will be launched as part of the EPFO's ongoing IT modernization project, Centralised IT Enabled System (CITES 2.01), from January 1, 2025.

## Future Plans

The next phase of the CPPS will focus on integrating with the Aadhaar-based payment system. This will eliminate the need for pensioners to visit bank branches for verification, ensuring a more efficient and convenient process. Additionally, the EPFO anticipates a significant reduction in disbursement costs with the implementation of the new system.

# MODI TAKES AIM AT CHINA IN BRUNEI, SAYS INDIA DOES NOT BACK 'EXPANSIONISM'

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**CONTEXT:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks in Brunei, emphasizing "development, not expansionism," reflect India's growing strategic focus on the Indo-Pacific region, particularly in countering Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea. His visit underscores India's Act East Policy and aims to strengthen ties with Brunei in defence, space cooperation, and energy while advocating for peaceful resolution of maritime disputes under international law.



### India Advocates Development Over Expansionism in Brunei Visit

During a landmark visit to Brunei, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasized India's commitment to "development, not expansionism," in a veiled reference to China's assertive actions in the South China Sea and Indo-Pacific region. Speaking at a banquet hosted by Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah in Bandar Seri Begawan, Modi highlighted Brunei's significance in India's Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific Vision.

Following bilateral talks, both nations renewed a space cooperation agreement, with Brunei continuing to host the Indian Space Research Organisation's tracking station. Discussions also focused on strengthening defense ties and exploring long-term cooperation in LNG supplies. Modi called for the finalization of a regional Code of Conduct and peaceful dispute resolution, in line with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982.

While Brunei's strategic location strengthens its ties with the U.S., China has emerged as its largest trading partner and foreign investor, with bilateral trade worth \$2.6 billion, far surpassing India-Brunei trade at \$286.2 million.

# LATEST ILO STUDY LINKS AI TO DIP IN LABOUR INCOME

## ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

**CONTEXT:** The ILO report highlights the growing inequality and the stagnant labour income share globally, primarily attributed to AI and the COVID-19 pandemic.



### THE GROWING INEQUALITY CRISIS

The ILO's World Employment and Social Outlook paints a concerning picture of rising inequality and stagnant labour income worldwide. A significant contributor to this trend is artificial intelligence (AI), which while increasing productivity, can also reduce the share of income going to workers.

The report highlights that the global labour income share has declined steadily over the past two decades, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This decline has implications for sustainable development goals (SDGs), as progress on these goals is closely linked to equitable economic growth.

To address this growing inequality, the ILO calls for stronger policy responses to ensure that the benefits of technological progress are widely distributed. This includes measures such as promoting freedom of association, collective bargaining, and effective labour administration.



# CENTRE SUGGESTS MEASURES TO ENHANCE SECURITY AT HOSPITALS

## POLITY & GOVERNANCE

**CONTEXT:** The Union Health Ministry has suggested several measures to enhance security at hospitals, including employing ex-servicemen as security personnel, integrating with local police, and conducting background checks of contract workers, in response to the recent murder of a doctor in Kolkata.



### Enhancing Hospital Security: A Comprehensive Approach

The Union Health Ministry has outlined a series of measures to bolster security at hospitals across India, in response to the tragic murder of a doctor in Kolkata. These initiatives aim to create a safer working environment for healthcare professionals.

#### Key recommendations include:

- Recruitment of ex-servicemen and state security personnel in high-risk hospital areas.
- Mandated background checks for outsourced and contract workers.
- Integration with local police and establishment of protocols for rapid response to incidents.
- Implementation of bereavement protocols to assist healthcare workers in handling emotional situations arising from patient deaths.

- Security audits to assess and improve security measures in hospitals.
- Focus on high-risk areas such as emergency rooms, triage areas, and intensive care units.
- Installation and maintenance of CCTV cameras in strategic locations.
- Formation of internal security committees involving residents and students.

By implementing these comprehensive measures, the Health Ministry seeks to address the growing concerns regarding the safety of healthcare workers and create a more secure environment in hospitals nationwide.

## Trading up

### ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

#### World Bank Raises India's Growth Forecast

The World Bank has revised its growth forecast for India upward, citing the country's strong economic performance and resilience to global challenges. Despite a subdued external environment, India's GDP is projected to grow at a robust 7% in 2024-25.

#### Key factors driving this growth include:

- Recovery in private consumption and agriculture.
- Continued strength in manufacturing.
- Government initiatives to promote job creation.

However, the Bank has cautioned about potential risks, such as supply chain disruptions and inflation. To sustain long-term growth, India must rethink its trade strategy. By reducing trade barriers and actively participating in multilateral trade agreements, India can capitalize on the opportunities presented by global economic shifts.



*"If you invest more in your education, then you are likely to get more interest in it."*

*—Benjamin Franklin*

# DEATH FOR RAPE

## POLITY & GOVERNANCE

### Death Penalty: A Questionable Deterrent for Sexual Crimes

The recent spate of sexual assaults in India has led to renewed calls for harsher punishments, including the death penalty. While several states have amended their laws to introduce this penalty, there is little evidence to suggest its effectiveness as a deterrent.

Justice J.S. Verma committee had previously opposed the death penalty for rape, arguing that it would be a regressive step. However, the death penalty has been introduced for certain cases involving minors.

Instead of focusing solely on legal sanctions, it is crucial to address the root causes of sexual violence. Creating a safe environment for women in workplaces and homes is essential for preventing such crimes. Governments should prioritize implementing effective laws and ensuring that the police work diligently to prevent and punish sexual assault.

# SUB-CLASSIFICATION VERDICT THROUGH AMBEDKAR'S IDEALS

## POLITY & GOVERNANCE

The Supreme Court's judgment on sub-classification of reservations is a significant step towards achieving social justice for the most marginalized sections of Dalits. This decision aligns with B.R. Ambedkar's principles of fraternity and Maitri, emphasizing the need for cooperation and mutual respect within the Scheduled Castes (SC) community.

### Ambedkar's Struggle for Social Justice:

- Ambedkar tirelessly fought for the rights of the oppressed, advocating for both social and civil justice.
- He recognized the internal divisions within the SC community and emphasized the need to address these disparities.
- His practical measures, such as the Mahad Satyagraha and the Kalaram temple entry movement, challenged the caste hierarchy.

### The Need for a Nuanced Approach:

- The sub-classification judgment acknowledges the varying degrees of discrimination faced by different Jatis within the SC community.
- It aims to mitigate inequality by addressing the specific needs of each group.
- This decision reflects the idea of social jurisprudence, which takes into account the different sociological realities of each Jati.

### Criticism and Misconceptions:

- Some Dalit leaders have expressed concerns that sub-classification might fragment the Dalit movement.
- These arguments often overlook the historical and ongoing diversity within the Dalit community.
- The sub-classification judgment is not an imposition but a reflection of years of grassroots activism.

### Conclusion:

- The sub-classification judgment is a crucial step towards achieving equitable representation for all Dalit castes.
- It aligns with Ambedkar's vision of a just and inclusive society.
- The collective Dalit movement must embrace this judgment and work towards its effective implementation.
- By addressing the nuanced needs of each Jati, sub-classification can strengthen the collective identity of the SC community and promote social justice.



**VEDHIK**  
IAS ACADEMY  
*The New Learning Mantra*

INDIA'S TOP MOST CIVIL SERVANTS FOR COACHING

COME JOIN WITH US

START YOUR  
JOURNEY WITH THE  
**BEST**

# WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT ANIIDCO?

## POLITY & GOVERNANCE

### THE GIST

- The Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation (ANIIDCO) is the project proponent for the NITI Aayog-promoted ₹72,000 crore mega infrastructure project in Great Nicobar, the southernmost island in the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago.
- Its main activities, according to its website, include trading petroleum products, Indian-made foreign liquor and milk, managing tourism resorts, and infrastructure development for tourism and fisheries.
- When the Andaman and Nicobar Administration appointed ANIIDCO as project proponent in July 2020, ANIIDCO neither had an environment policy nor an environment cell. It did not even have the human resources needed to oversee, let alone implement and monitor the project it was tasked to implement.



### Aniidco: a questionable choice for a mega project

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation (ANIIDCO), a little-known quasi-government agency, has been tasked with implementing the ₹72,000 crore mega infrastructure project in Great Nicobar. However, questions have been raised about its qualifications and internal environmental governance.

#### Concerns regarding ANIIDCO:

- **Lack of expertise and experience:** ANIIDCO lacked the necessary personnel and policies for overseeing such a large-scale project.
- **Conflicts of interest:** key officials involved in the project had dual roles, raising concerns about impartiality.
- **Past performance:** ANIIDCO's previous experience in tourism operations has been criticized.

#### Environmental concerns:

- **Lack of environmental governance:** ANIIDCO initially lacked an environmental policy and administrative system.

- **EAC clearance:** the expert appraisal committee granted environmental clearance despite these shortcomings.
- **Conservation action trust petition:** the petition highlighted conflicts of interest and raised concerns about the adequacy of forest clearance.

### Conclusion:

The appointment of ANIIDCO as the project proponent raises serious questions about the process and potential outcomes of the Great Nicobar project. Given the project's scale and environmental significance, it is crucial to ensure that the agency responsible for its implementation has the necessary expertise and capacity to safeguard the island's biodiversity and the rights of its indigenous communities.



## MASTER THE NEW LEARNING MANTRA

[www.vedhikiasacademy.org](http://www.vedhikiasacademy.org)

# WE AIM TO INSPIRE YOU



# WHY HAS H.P. RAISED THE MARRIAGEABLE AGE FOR WOMEN?

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

## THE GIST

- On August 27, the Himachal Pradesh Assembly passed a Bill raising the minimum marriageable age for women from 18 to 21 years.
- Section 2(a) of the 2006 Act defines a "child" as someone "who, if male, has not completed twenty-one years of age, and if female, has not completed eighteen years of age." The Bill removes this distinction, redefining a "child" as "a male or female who has not completed twenty-one years of age."
- Author and activist Madhu Mera previously told The Hindu that raising the minimum marriage age for women to 21 years could upend young lives in a web of criminal prosecutions.

## HIMACHAL PRADESH RAISES MINIMUM MARRIAGEABLE AGE FOR WOMEN

The Himachal Pradesh Assembly has passed a Bill to increase the minimum marriageable age for women from 18 to 21 years. This move aims to promote gender equality and reduce instances of early pregnancy and motherhood.

### Key Provisions of the Bill:

- **Redefines "child":** The Bill removes the distinction between male and female children, defining a child as anyone under 21 years of age.
- **Extends the annulment period:** Individuals who were minors at the time of marriage can now file for annulment within five years of turning 21.
- **Takes precedence over other laws:** The Bill ensures its provisions override conflicting laws.

### President's Assent Required:

- Due to the potential conflict with the existing central law, the President's assent is necessary for the Bill to become law.
- This will allow the State law to take precedence over the central law within Himachal Pradesh.

### Concerns and Criticisms:

- Some experts argue that raising the marriage age could lead to increased criminal prosecutions of young couples.
- The Law Commission and National Human Rights Commission have previously recommended a uniform marriage age of 18 for both men and women.

### Conclusion:

The passage of this Bill represents a significant step towards promoting gender equality and protecting the rights of women in Himachal Pradesh. However, its potential impact and the challenges it may pose require careful consideration and evaluation.

# ETHANOL PUSH TURNS INDIA INTO CORN IMPORTER, SHAKING UP GLOBAL MARKET

ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT



**CONTEXT:** The government's push for ethanol has led India to become a net importer of corn for the first time in decades, impacting domestic poultry producers and global supply chains.

## India's Corn Import Surge: A Ripple Effect

India's transition to a net corn importer is a direct result of the government's push for ethanol production to reduce carbon emissions. This shift has led to increased demand for corn, surpassing domestic supply.

### Key Factors Driving Corn Imports:

- **Ethanol production:** The government's promotion of ethanol has increased demand for corn as a feedstock.

- **Procurement price hike:** The higher procurement price for corn-based ethanol has incentivized distilleries to use corn.
- **Reduced sugarcane use:** The government's decision to limit sugarcane use for fuel has further increased corn demand.

#### Impact on Domestic Industries:

- **Poultry industry:** Rising corn prices have significantly increased feed costs for poultry producers, impacting their profitability.
- **Starch industry:** Both the poultry and starch industries are competing for corn supplies, driving up prices.

#### Global Implications:

- **Increased corn demand:** India's rising corn imports have supported global corn prices.
- **Supply chain disruptions:** The shift in India's corn trade has affected global supply chains.

#### Conclusion:

India's decision to promote ethanol production has had far-reaching consequences. While it aligns with efforts to reduce carbon emissions, it has also created challenges for domestic industries and impacted global corn markets. Balancing environmental goals with the needs of domestic industries will be crucial for India's future.

## XI HOSTS AFRICAN LEADERS AT A GRAND SUMMIT IN BEIJING

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Chinese President Xi Jinping welcomed over 25 African leaders to Beijing for a major summit, pledging enhanced cooperation in infrastructure, energy, and education. The event marks one of Beijing's most significant diplomatic gatherings in recent years, highlighting China's deepening ties with Africa.

#### China-Africa Relations and Economic Cooperation

As Africa's largest trading partner, China has invested heavily in the continent, tapping into its natural resources such as copper, gold, lithium, and rare earth minerals. In addition to trade, China has provided billions of dollars in loans to African nations for infrastructure and development.

#### Strengthening Ties with Nigeria and Zimbabwe

During a meeting with Nigerian President Bola Tinubu, Xi called for greater cooperation in investment, trade, and infrastructure. Nigeria, one of China's largest borrowers in Africa, plays a key role in these relations. Xi also met with Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa, pledging support for Zimbabwe against "illegal sanctions" imposed by the U.S., while promising collaboration in mineral resources and other sectors.



**The More You Learn, The More You Earn**



[www.vedhikiasacademy.org](http://www.vedhikiasacademy.org)

  
**VEDHIK**  
IAS ACADEMY  
*The New Learning Mantra*





# MONGOLIA DEFIES ICC WARRANT FOR PUTIN'S ARREST, GIVES HIM A RED-CARPET WELCOME

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Russian President Vladimir Putin received a grand welcome in Mongolia on Tuesday, despite an International Criminal Court (ICC) warrant for his arrest over alleged war crimes related to the Ukraine conflict. Mongolia, a member of the ICC, faced pressure from Ukraine and the European Union to detain Putin. However, due to its heavy dependence on Russia, the landlocked nation opted to continue its diplomatic ties.

### Tightrope Between Russia and the West

Mongolia, historically aligned with the Soviet Union, has since diversified its partnerships with countries like the U.S. and Japan. However, its reliance on Russia for energy and security limits its ability to act against the Kremlin. Putin's visit marked his first to an ICC member state since the court issued its warrant in March 2023, and it showcased his ability to travel despite international legal challenges.

### Agreements and Protests

During the visit, Mongolia and Russia signed pacts on upgrading a power plant in Ulaanbaatar, supplying Russian aviation fuel, and conducting environmental studies for a hydroelectric project. Small protests occurred, but police quickly suppressed them. Meanwhile, Putin extended an invitation to Mongolian

President Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh to attend the upcoming BRICS summit in Kazan, Russia.

Despite the ICC warrant, Putin's visit underscores Mongolia's complex geopolitical position, caught between maintaining international obligations and safeguarding its critical ties with Russia.



CRACKING  
**CIVIL SERVICES**  
 NO MORE A  
 DIFFICULT TASK  
 COME JOIN WITH US







# VEDHIK

## IAS ACADEMY

*The New Learning Mantra*

# START YOUR JOURNEY WITH THE BEST

**INDIA'S  
TOP MOST  
CIVIL SERVANTS  
FOR COACHING**

[www.vedhikiasacademy.org](http://www.vedhikiasacademy.org)

*Head Office:*

**Vedhik IAS Academy**  
Mercy Estate,  
MG Road, Ravipuram,  
Ernakulam-682 015,

*Corporate office:*

**Vedhik IAS Academy**  
Samkalp Bhawan, Plot No.15,  
Sector 4, Rama Krishna Puram,  
New Delhi, Delhi-110022

*Regional office*

**Vedhik IAS Academy**  
202, Raheja Chambers, 12,  
Museum Road. Bangalore -  
560001. Karnataka, India.

*GCC Office:*

**Bobscoedu,**

Bobsco Trading & Contracting Co. W. L . L  
Office 22, Dream Tower 1,  
Road: 2701, Adliya, Kingdom of Bahrain  
[www.bobscoedu.com](http://www.bobscoedu.com)

