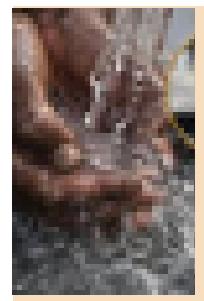


Civil Service Institute | Pala | Thiruvananthapuram | South India's Premier Civil Service Coaching Institute | [www.civilservicepala.com](http://www.civilservicepala.com)

Indore death toll due to unsafe water rises to 10;

The Hindu: 01/01/2026- Page 1



DRDO Pralay Missile Salvo Launch

The Hindu: 01/01/2026- Page 16



'Draft rules for Four Labour Laws

The Indian Express: 01/01/2026- Page 8



US Firm and NTPC to team up, fuel India's Thorium ambitions

The Indian Express: 01/01/2026- Page 8



Himachal Pradesh government to legalise Cannabis cultivation

The Hindu: 01/01/2026- Page 16

## Centre Extends Relief to Vodafone Idea AGR

The Union government has provided significant relief to Vodafone Idea Ltd. (VIL) by freezing and rescheduling a portion of its Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) dues, offering temporary financial breathing space to the stressed telecom operator. The move comes amid concerns over sectoral stability and the need to preserve competition in India's telecommunications market. Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) refers to the usage and licence fees charged by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) on telecom operators' revenues. Following a 2019 Supreme Court verdict, the definition of AGR was broadened, increasing the financial liabilities of telecom companies.



**Scale of dues:** Vodafone Idea's total AGR liability exceeds ₹2 lakh crore, making it the most affected player.

**Relief measures announced:** Of the total dues, ₹87,695 crore has been frozen for a period of five years, with repayments scheduled to begin from FY 2031–32. This provides immediate relief to VIL's cash flow.

**Unchanged repayment obligations:** As per the Supreme Court's 2019 ruling, VIL must still clear AGR dues related to FY 2017–18 & FY 2018–19 between FY 2025–26 & FY 2030–31, and this schedule remains unchanged.

**Rationale for government support:** The Centre's intervention aims to ensure the presence of multiple telecom operators, prevent market concentration, and maintain healthy competition in a sector critical for digital connectivity, economic growth, and national security.

**Consumer and sectoral impact:** The relief is expected to safeguard services for over 20 crore VIL subscribers.

**Earlier support measures:** In a previous step to stabilise the company, the government had also acquired a 49% equity stake in Vodafone Idea, signalling its intent to keep the operator afloat.

Overall, the Centre's move reflects a balancing act between judicial compliance, fiscal prudence, and sectoral sustainability, as it seeks to stabilise India's telecom sector while adhering to the Supreme Court's AGR framework.

## Indian Army to Showcase Animal Contingent at R-Day Parade

The Indian Army will debut a specially curated animal contingent as a key attraction at this year's republic day parade. The Remount and Veterinary Corps (RVC) contingent will feature 2 Bactrian camels, known for their ability to survive in the harsh climate of Ladakh, and 4 indigenous Zanskar ponies, valued for their strength and endurance in high-altitude regions. The contingent will also include 4 trained raptors, used for bird-strike control and surveillance. In addition, 10 Indian-breed Army dogs, including the Mudhol Hound and Rampur Hound, will take part alongside 6 conventional military dogs. The unique showcase underlines the indispensable contribution of animals in supporting the Army across challenging terrains and frontiers.



## Sewage Contamination of Drinking Water Claims Ten Lives in Indore

At least ten people have lost their lives, and over 100 residents are undergoing treatment, following a water contamination incident in Indore, Madhya Pradesh. Preliminary findings point to sewage mixing with the drinking water supply, triggering a serious public health emergency.

### Administrative lapse

- Initial investigations revealed grave construction and regulatory lapses. A toilet had been built directly above a drinking water pipeline, without the installation of a mandatory safety tank. This violation of basic construction norms led to sewage leakage into the main water supply line, detected near a police outpost. The breach allowed contaminated water to enter households, exposing residents to severe health risks.

### Impact of the incident

- The outbreak came to light when multiple residents reported sudden symptoms, including vomiting, diarrhoea, and acute illness. Due to the lack of early awareness about water contamination, patients were initially hospitalised without a clear diagnosis, delaying targeted treatment and response.

### Accountability measures

- Following primary inquiries, accountability measures were initiated against the water supply assistant engineer, sub-engineer and the zonal officer for lapses in oversight, highlighting administrative responsibility in the incident.

### Mitigation efforts

- On the public health front, curative measures were promptly rolled out. Authorities undertook door-to-door verification in affected localities, alongside the distribution of Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) to contain dehydration and prevent further complications.

### Wider implications

- The incident has exposed serious gaps in civic infrastructure management, particularly the poor coordination between water supply and sanitation departments, weak enforcement of construction norms, and inadequate accountability mechanisms.
- The tragedy underscores the urgent need for regular infrastructure audits, stricter compliance checks, and improved inter-departmental coordination to prevent such avoidable public health disasters.



## DRDO Successfully Tests Indigenous Pralay Missiles

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully conducted a salvo launch of two indigenous Pralay missiles off the Odisha coast, marking a key milestone in India's missile development programme.

Both missiles followed their intended trajectories and met all mission objectives. Their flight performance was closely tracked by advanced sensors deployed by the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur. The final impact events were further confirmed through telemetry systems installed on naval vessels positioned near the target areas, ensuring comprehensive monitoring of the launch.

Pralay is a conventional, quasi-ballistic surface-to-surface missile with a strike range of 150 to 500 kilometres, designed to enhance India's tactical strike capability. It is capable of carrying a variety of conventional warheads, including high-explosive pre-formed fragmentation warheads, penetration-cum-blast (PCB) warheads, and runway denial penetration submunitions (RDPS), allowing it to engage diverse battlefield targets. The missile is equipped with advanced navigation systems and integrated avionics, enabling high precision and accuracy, even against well-defended targets.

## Cannabis cultivation to get a new face in H.P

The Himachal Pradesh government is planning to raise between ₹1,000 crore and ₹2,000 crore in annual revenue by legalising and regulating cannabis cultivation in the State. The move marks a significant shift in policy towards a crop that has long been linked to illegal activity in certain regions. Over the years, districts such as Kullu, Mandi, and Chamba have often been associated with the illegal drug trade, posing challenges for law enforcement and governance. The proposed policy seeks to address these concerns by bringing cultivation under a regulated legal framework. The State Cabinet is considering a policy aimed at repositioning cannabis for its medicinal value, particularly for applications such as pain management and anti-inflammatory treatment. By focusing on regulated use, the government hopes to curb illegal practices while generating revenue for the State.



## Centre Pre-Publishes Draft Rules for Four Labour Code

The Union Ministry of Labour and Employment has pre-published the draft Rules for the four Labour Codes. The move opens the draft framework to public consultation for 45 days, allowing stakeholders to submit feedback before finalisation.

The draft Rules operationalise the provisions of the Code on Wages, Code on Social Security, Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions(OSH), and the Code on Industrial Relations, covering a wide spectrum of labour-related issues.

### Working Hours and Workplace Regulations

- The draft Rules reiterate a 48-hour work week as the standard norm. However, workplaces following flexible schedules including work from home provisions are awaiting details on rest day and intervals.

### Coverage of Workers and Employment Types

- The Rules provide clarity on the types of employment, including permanent, fixed-term, contractual, gig, and platform work. It has also discussed in detail about the definition of Wages, gratuity, bonus, and social security entitlements. Moreover, Inclusion of gig workers and platform workers within the social security framework marks a major shift from earlier labour laws.

### Fixing of Minimum Wages

- Under the new framework, minimum wages will be fixed based on objective and transparent criteria by considering a standard working-class family, defined as three adult consumption units. Caloric intake of 2,700 calories per consumption unit per day as well as housing, clothing, and other essential needs will be accounted for determining minimum wage. Additional factors such as geographical location, experience, and skill level—classified as unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled, and highly skilled—will also be considered.



### Institutional Measures

- A technical committee, headed by the Director-General of Employment, will advise the Centre on skill categorisation. Furthermore, a Central Advisory Board will be constituted to assess minimum living standards, including food, housing, clothing, and related requirements

### Inclusive outlook

- Going forward, a National Social Security Board will be established, with representation for unorganised workers, gig workers, and platform workers focusing on inclusive labour welfare.
- For women employees working night shifts, the OSH draft Rules lay down safeguards, including written consent of the employee, Safe transportation arrangements, adequate facilities at the workplace and CCTV surveillance to ensure security.

### Pro-labour stance

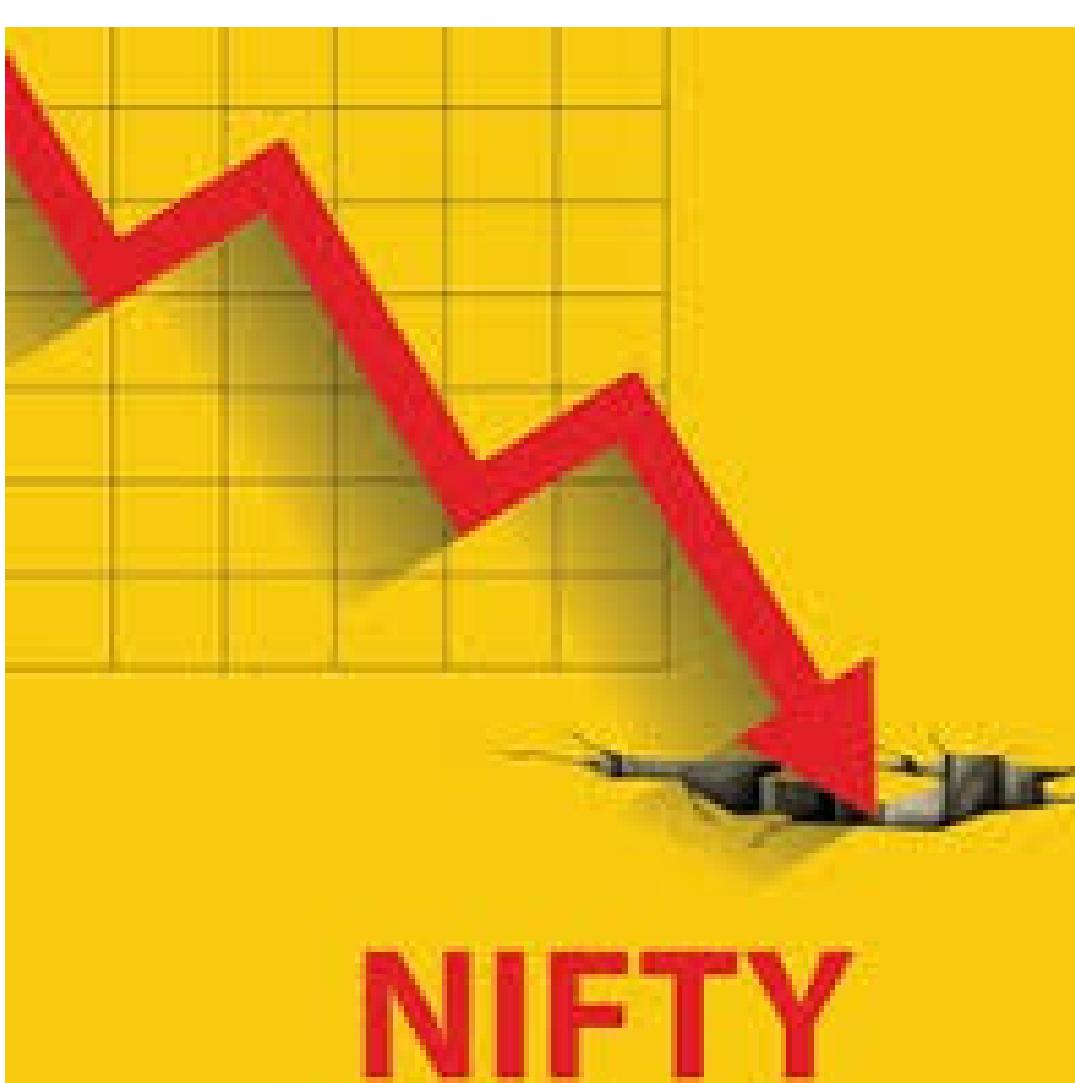
- Under the Code on Industrial Relations, the Rules outline procedures for trade union registration, use of secret ballots for union verification and classification of workers into permanent, fixed-term, and other categories.

## 'Why foreign investors are pulling out of Indian market?

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) recorded a net outflow of about ₹1.6 lakh crore from Indian equity markets in 2025, reflecting sustained caution towards Indian assets. The NSE Nifty 50 fell by nearly 6% in February, and FIIs remained net sellers in eight of the 12 months, indicating weak foreign investor sentiment.

- Shift, not exit:
- Despite selling direct equities, FIIs increased their exposure to Indian equity mutual funds, which saw a net inflow of ₹2,245 crore. This suggests a move towards diversified and lower-risk investment channels
- High market valuations:
- India's price-to-earnings (P/E) ratio of around 22 makes it one of the costliest equity markets globally, limiting upside potential for foreign investors.
- Rupee depreciation:
- The rupee weakened to about ₹91 per US dollar as a compounded impact of FII exit, sharply reducing returns for foreign investors. As a result, Indian equities delivered poor returns in dollar terms, discouraging fresh inflows.
- Global reallocation towards AI hubs:
- Growing global enthusiasm for artificial intelligence-driven economies, especially Japan and Taiwan, has redirected capital towards markets perceived as AI-ready.

Overall, the decline in FII equity investments in 2025 reflects a combination of valuation concerns, currency risks, and shifting global investment priorities.



## India's Growth Outlook for 2026

In the December 2025 Financial Stability Report, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra expressed confidence in India's growth prospects for 2026, even as global financial systems face stress from trade tensions and rising protectionism. Unlike many economies, India's growth momentum is expected to remain resilient, driven largely by domestic factors.

- Key growth drivers:
- Strong domestic consumption and sustained investment activity continue to serve as the main pillars of India's economic expansion, providing insulation against external shocks.
- Emerging challenges:
- The RBI flagged concerns over stretched valuations of risk assets, rising public debt, and increasing interconnectedness between banks and non-banking financial institutions (NBFCs), which could amplify systemic risks if left unaddressed.
- Global uncertainties:
- Ongoing geopolitical tensions, trade-related uncertainties, and volatility in global financial markets pose external risks to India's growth trajectory.

The RBI emphasised that an evolving financial landscape requires continuous monitoring and timely policy responses to safeguard macroeconomic stability and sustain long-term growth.

## Beware of Stablecoins: RBI Flags Systemic Risks

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cautioned that the widespread adoption of stablecoins could pose serious systemic risks to national economies. The central bank warned that privately issued digital currencies, even when pegged to fiat money, may undermine monetary sovereignty and financial stability if left inadequately regulated.

- Threat to monetary sovereignty:
- Crypto assets including Stablecoins reduce the central bank's ability to control money supply, manage inflation, and transmit monetary policy effectively.
- Financial stability concerns:
- Risks arising from unregulated crypto usage includes capital flight, speculative flows linking to money laundering and terrorism.
- CBDCs as the preferred alternative: Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) offer the benefits of digital payments while preserving state control, financial stability, and regulatory oversight.

RBI's warning reflects growing global concern that unchecked stablecoin adoption could reshape financial systems in ways that outpace regulatory frameworks.

## PRELIMS CORNER :

1) In the context of WHO Air Quality Guidelines, consider the following statements: (2022)

1. The 24-hour mean of PM2.5 should not exceed 15  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  and annual mean of PM2.5 should not exceed 5  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ .

2. In a year, the highest levels of ozone pollution occur during the periods of inclement weather.

3. PM10 can penetrate the lung barrier and enter the bloodstream.

4. Excessive ozone in the air can trigger asthma.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

2) With reference to ancient South India, Korkai, Poompuhar and Muchiri were well known as (2023)

- (a) capital cities
- (b) ports
- (c) centres of iron-and-steel making
- (d) shrines of Jain Tirthankaras

## **CCTE–NTPC Partnership Signals Push for Thorium-Based Nuclear Energy**

Chicago-based Clean Core Thorium Energy (CCTE) will partner with NTPC Ltd, India's largest power utility, to develop thorium as an alternative nuclear fuel to uranium. The collaboration marks a significant step in India's efforts to diversify its nuclear fuel base and strengthen India–U.S. cooperation in the atomic energy sector.

CCTE is only the second U.S. company in nearly two decades to receive approval from the U.S. Department of Energy to export nuclear technology to India. As part of the partnership, NTPC has acquired a minority stake in CCTE, signalling strategic intent for a long term partnership.

### **Alignment with India's Long-Term Nuclear Goals**

- The minority investment aligns with India's objective of achieving 30 GWe of installed nuclear power capacity by 2047. It also reflects the government's interest in exploring thorium-based fuel deployment in India's existing fleet of Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs), which form the backbone of the country's nuclear power programme.

### **SHANTI Act, 2025: Enabling Sectoral Reform**

- In December 2025, Parliament passed the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act, 2025, marking a major policy shift. The Act allows private players to participate in the operational side of the nuclear energy sector, creating space for innovation in fuel development, fuel management, and reactor technologies, while retaining strategic oversight.

### **Why Thorium Matters for India**

- Thorium, a radioactive metallic element, has long been central to India's vision of energy security, particularly due to the country's limited uranium reserves. Its advantages include:
- Greater natural availability, with significant deposits along the Kerala and Odisha coasts
- Lower generation of long-lived radioactive waste compared to uranium-based fuel cycles
- Reduced nuclear proliferation risk, as thorium is not directly weaponisable
- Higher energy density, enabling efficient fuel utilisation

### **Strategic Significance**

The CCTE–NTPC partnership combines foreign technological expertise with India's long-term nuclear roadmap, potentially accelerating progress towards a thorium-based nuclear fuel cycle. If successfully developed and deployed, thorium could play a decisive role in strengthening India's clean energy transition and strategic autonomy in nuclear power.

# Prelims Corner: Explanations

Q1. Ans: b

1. The 24-hour mean of PM2.5 should not exceed  $15 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  and annual mean of PM2.5 should not exceed  $5 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . This statement is correct. According to the WHO Air Quality Guidelines, the 24-hour mean of PM2.5 should not exceed  $15 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ , and the annual mean should not exceed  $5 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  to protect public health from the harmful effects of fine particulate matter.

2. In a year, the highest levels of ozone pollution occur during the periods of inclement weather: This statement is incorrect. Ozone pollution typically peaks during periods of sunny, warm weather, as sunlight helps to create ozone through chemical reactions. Inclement weather (such as cloudy or rainy weather) does not contribute to the highest levels of ozone.

3. PM10 can penetrate the lung barrier and enter the bloodstream. This statement is incorrect. While PM10

(particulate matter with a diameter of 10 micrometers or less) can irritate the lungs and respiratory system, it is PM2.5 (smaller particles) that are more likely to penetrate deeper into the lungs and enter the bloodstream, not PM10.

4. Excessive ozone in the air can trigger asthma: This statement is correct. High levels of ozone can exacerbate asthma symptoms, cause respiratory irritation, and trigger asthma attacks, particularly in sensitive individuals such as children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing respiratory conditions.

Thus, the correct statements are 1 and 4, making b) 1 and 4 only the correct answer.



Q2) Ans : b

Korkai, Poompuhar, and Muchiri were ancient port towns in South India, known for their significant role in maritime trade and commerce during the Sangam period and beyond.

**Korkai:** Located in present-day Tamil Nadu, Korkai was the capital of the Pandya kingdom and a major port famous for pearl fishing.

**Poompuhar:** Known as Kaveripattinam in ancient times, it was the port city of the Cholas, situated at the mouth of the Kaveri River. It was an important hub for maritime trade.

**Muchiri:** Known as Muziris, this was a famous port in present-day Kerala, thriving in trade with the Roman Empire, Arabs, and other foreign traders



**Civil Service Institute Pala**  
GLORIOUS 27 YEARS 375 SUCCESS STORIES Pioneers in IAS/KAS Coaching

**Full-Time Prelims-cum-Mains Course 2026-27**  
Admission Started

**Four Months BRIDGE COURSE**  
375 YEARS OF LEADERSHIP 375 SUCCESS STORIES  
SHAPING LEADERS SHAPING INDIA SCIENTIA ET CIVITAS EMICEMUS

**No Extra Fees** well begun is half done **JOIN NOW !!**  
Admission Continues

Model Exams  
Answer key discussions  
Current affairs classes  
NCERT revision classes  
Newspaper reading sessions  
Mentorship  
Library

For Details Scan the QR

95393 81100 [www.civilservicepala.org](http://www.civilservicepala.org)

# GOVERNMENT JOB VACANCIES

Prepare Your  
Competitive Exams  
Join!



**More details**



+91 95393 81100



[www.civilservicepala.com](http://www.civilservicepala.com)



JOB ALERTS  
#103  
DATED:  
01-01-2026



## UP Police Constable Recruitment 2026

- **Eligibility:** 12th Pass
- **Salary:** ₹21,700 – ₹69,100 (Level-3)
- **Last Date:** 30 January 2026

No. of  
Vacancies  
32,679

## IOCL Non- Executive Recruitment 2026

- **Eligibility:** Diploma in Engg / B. Sc (Min 50%)
- **Pay Scale:** ₹25,000 – ₹1,05,000/-
- **Last Date:** 09 January 2026

No. of  
Vacancies  
394

## RRB Ministerial & Isolated Categories Recruitment 2025

- **Eligibility:** 12th Pass / Graduate / PG (Post Wise)
- **Salary:** Level 2 to Level 7 (Up to ₹70,000 P.M.)
- **Last Date:** 29 January 2026

No. of  
Vacancies  
312

## BEL Trainee Engineer & Officer Recruitment 2026

- **Eligibility:** B.E/B.Tech/B.Sc Engg / MBA
- **Salary:** Up to ₹40,000/Month + Allowances
- **Walk-in Date:** 11 Jan 2026  
(Register by 09 Jan)

No. of  
Vacancies  
119

## GRSE Executive Cadre Recruitment 2026

- **Eligibility:** B.E / B.Tech / MBA / CA / MBBS / Diploma
- **Salary:** Up to ₹ 3,00,000/- Per Month
- **Last Date:** 09 January 2026

No. of  
Vacancies  
Multiple  
Officer

## UP Police Constable Recruitment 2026

[CLICK HERE](#) ➤ [Download Notification Here](#)

## IOCL Non-Executive Recruitment 2026

[CLICK HERE](#) ➤ [Download Notification Here](#)

## Download Notification Here

[CLICK HERE](#) ➤ [Download Notification Here](#)

## Download Notification Here

[CLICK HERE](#) ➤ [Download PDF Here](#)

## GRSE Executive Cadre Recruitment 2026

[CLICK HERE](#) ➤ [Download Notification](#)



**"Hard work beats talent when talent  
doesn't work hard."**

**Tim Notke**