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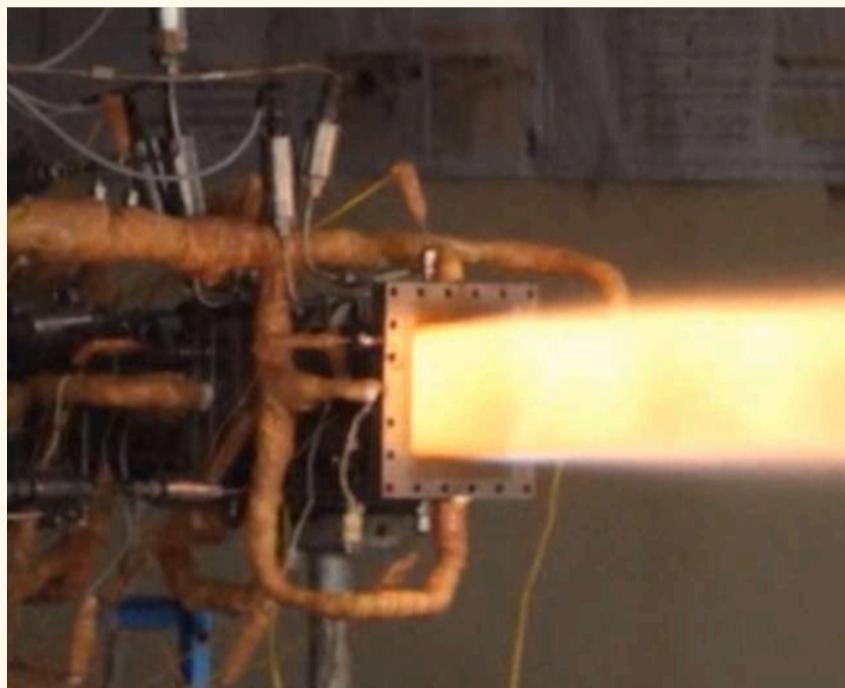


Education Minister releases 55 volumes of literary works

NATIONAL REVIEW



DRDO conducts successful long-duration scramjet combustor test



The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has achieved a major milestone in India's hypersonic missile programme with the successful long-duration ground test of an actively-cooled scramjet full-scale combustor, which sustained performance for over 12 minutes.

Hypersonic missiles are an important emerging class of strategic weapons due to their very high speed and manoeuvrability. Actively-cooled combustors are a critical technology for such systems as they must withstand and manage the extreme temperatures generated during hypersonic flight. The successful test places India among a small group of countries with advanced capabilities in hypersonic aerospace technology.

Iran defies Trump, warns protesters of crackdown

Iran's leadership has signalled a possible crackdown on anti-government protesters after state media repeatedly described demonstrators as "terrorists" amid widespread unrest that has drawn international attention. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei dismissed public support for the protests by the U.S. president, accusing Washington of interference and asserting that security forces would respond firmly. Iranian judiciary chief said punishment for those involved "will be decisive."

The developments follow vocal expressions of support for the demonstrators by the U.S. President Donald Trump that have been interpreted in Tehran as external interference in domestic affairs. In response, Iran's leadership reiterated its commitment to maintaining internal order, framing the protests as influenced by foreign agendas.



NHRC demands report on Gandhinagar typhoid surge



The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has taken suo motu cognisance of a reported surge in typhoid cases in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, allegedly caused by the consumption of contaminated drinking water. The State Health Department has confirmed around 70 active cases concentrated in specific areas of the city, with investigations pointing to leakages in the newly laid water pipeline system that allowed sewage to mix with drinking water. Observing that the incident, if true, raises serious concerns regarding violation of the right to health and access to safe drinking water, the Commission has issued a notice to the Chief Secretary of Gujarat, seeking a detailed report within two weeks on the health situation and remedial measures taken.

The NHRC, a statutory body established under the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, is empowered to inquire into human rights violations either on petitions or suo motu.

Shah launches database on bomb blasts in India

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday launched the National Improvised Explosive Device Data Management System (NIDMS), a centralised digital platform aimed at strengthening India's counter-terrorism and investigation capabilities by systematically recording and analysing bomb blast incidents across the country.

The NIDMS is a comprehensive data system that contains details of every bomb blast in India since 1999. It is designed to help investigating agencies identify patterns, link past and present cases, and improve the quality of forensic and intelligence-based investigations. The system is headquartered at the National Security Guard (NSG) garrison in Manesar, Haryana, and will be accessible to State police forces, Central Armed Police Forces and other authorised agencies.

One of the key features of the platform is its ability to establish "signature links" between different incidents based on factors such as the type of explosion, circuit design, materials used and location. For instance, investigators were able to link the Rameswaram cafe blast (2024) and the Mangaluru blast (2022) due to similarities in the timer mechanism used. The system is also being developed with AI-based analytical tools to support predictive analysis and trend mapping.



Gold ETFs score over equities in Dec.

Net inflows into gold exchange traded funds (ETFs) surged to a record high in December 2025, reflecting a clear shift in investor preference towards safe-haven assets amid elevated global uncertainty. The rise in gold ETF investments comes at a time when geopolitical tensions and macroeconomic volatility have increased risk aversion in financial markets.

Analysts note that strong returns from gold in 2025 and persistent global instability have encouraged investors to move away from equity-oriented schemes, whose inflows declined during the same period. This trend highlights a classic “risk-off” behaviour, where investors prefer stable assets like gold over riskier instruments such as equities during uncertain times. The development also points to a gradual diversification of Indian household savings and a growing role of gold-backed financial products in portfolio allocation.



Regulation, supervision must stay risk-based, tech-neutral: RBI Governor



RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra has said that financial regulation and supervision in the digital age must remain risk-based, proportionate and technology-neutral, while ensuring that human accountability is not replaced by automation.

Speaking on the growing role of technology in the financial sector, the Governor said that digitalisation has widened access to financial services and improved efficiency, but it has also reshaped and accelerated the transmission of risks across the system. He stressed that while technology is transforming banking and finance, it must embed compliance rather than bypass it.

Mr. Malhotra underlined that accountability must always remain human, and automation should only sharpen responsibility, not dilute it. He said regulated entities must develop a better understanding of regulatory expectations, especially in areas where business models, partnerships, data usage and digital delivery platforms create new types of risks.

He also cautioned against a “tick-box” approach to compliance, stating that institutions should imbibe the spirit of regulation, not merely follow rules mechanically.

Air Force Chief Calls for Timely Delivery of Combat Aircraft

LCA TEJAS



- **Type:** Single-engine, delta wing, multirole light fighter.
- **Origin:** India (HAL, ADA, DRDO).

What happened : The Indian Air Force (IAF) has highlighted the importance of timely delivery of indigenous fighter aircraft such as the LCA Tejas to remain operationally prepared and cut down reliance on imported defence equipment.

Why it mattered : Adhering to delivery timelines strengthens India's ability to design and manufacture complex aircraft using modern technologies such as advanced manufacturing, digital design, new propulsion systems, flight testing and AI tools — reducing dependence on foreign suppliers in a strategic sector.

SC denied bail to Umar and Sharjeel

What happened : The Supreme Court on Monday denied bail to activists Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam in a case related to the February 2020 Delhi riots under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), while granting conditional bail to five other accused..

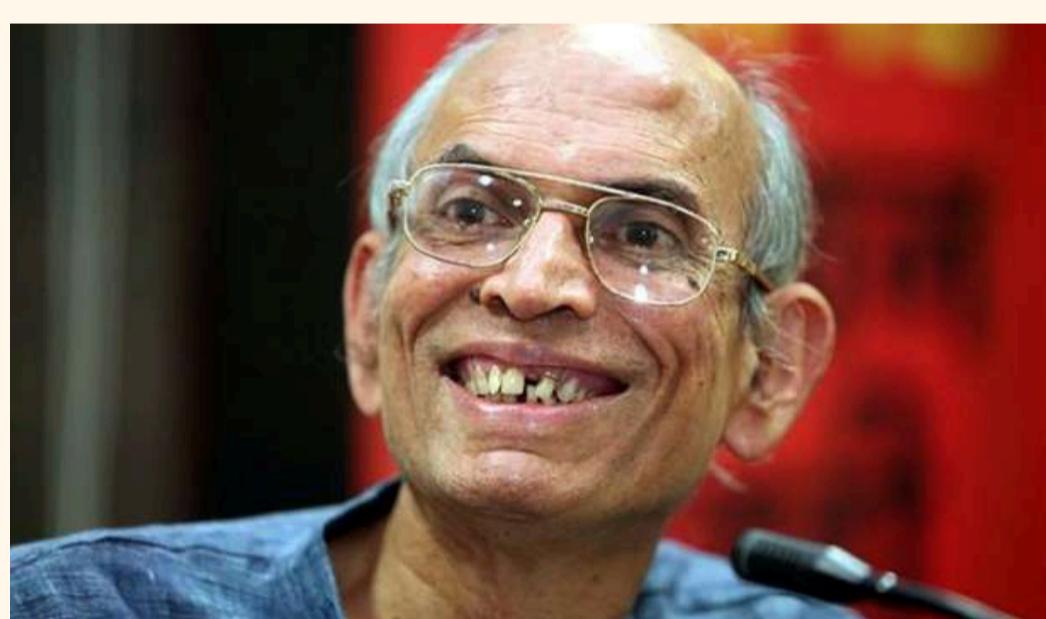
Why it mattered : The Supreme Court classified alleged roles were "subsidiary or facilitative" for the co-accused while Mr. Khalid and Mr. Imam played a "central and formative role" in the violence, reflecting a "hierarchy of participation.

Education Minister releases 55 volumes of literary works

What happened : The Union Education Minister released 55 volumes of literary works in classical Indian languages, including a sign-language Tirukkural, emphasizing India's linguistic heritage, inclusivity, and the National Education Policy's vision.

Why it mattered : The release of classical language literature highlights India's rich linguistic heritage and promotes cultural pride. It aligns with the government's vision of an inclusive India, recognizing all Indian languages as national languages. This move supports education, research, and the use of mother tongues in learning.

Voice for People-Driven Conservation (Madhav Gadgil) : (1934–2026)



India's foremost ecologist, Madhav Gadgil, passed away on January 7. He leaves behind a legacy of rigorous scientific scholarship and community-oriented conservation. A pioneering figure in India's environmental movement, he made foundational contributions to biodiversity conservation. Shifted focus from strict urban conservation to recognizing marginalized communities as integral parts of the ecosystem.

U.S. Captures Maduro After Strikes in Venezuela



What happened : Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, were captured on Saturday following U.S. military strikes on Caracas, marking one of the most direct foreign interventions against a sitting head of state in recent decades.

Why it mattered : The operation has drawn international attention not only for its scale, but also for its implications for established norms of territorial integrity and political sovereignty enshrined in the United Nations Charter. While Washington has justified the action on security and legal grounds, the intervention bypassed multilateral mechanisms, raising concerns about the role and relevance of international institutions in managing inter-state disputes.

Trump asserts India cut Russian Oil to secure trade deal

What happened : US President Trump claimed India reduced Russian oil imports to secure a trade deal, while India's MEA previously called US sanctions "double standards."

Why it mattered : The proposed U.S. sanctions with tariffs up to 500% on countries importing Russian oil could hurt India's exports and increase energy costs. This would put pressure on India's trade balance, inflation, and overall economic stability.

U.S. President Donald Trump pushes to bring Greenland under U.S. control

What happened : Following U.S. President Donald Trump's renewed call to bring Greenland under U.S. control on grounds of national and economic security, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen responded that any military action against a NATO member would effectively undermine the foundations of the transatlantic security architecture.

Why it mattered : In light of recent developments in Venezuela, the possibility of the United States using coercive means cannot be entirely dismissed. Any such move, however, would cause severe and possibly irreversible damage to the transatlantic alliance and the existing international security order

U.S. pulls out of 66 global bodies



INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE

What happened : The Trump administration has announced the United States' withdrawal from 66 international bodies, including the India-France-led International Solar Alliance, marking a broader shift in U.S. foreign policy.

Why it mattered : Analysts warn that the latest round of withdrawals could create leadership and funding gaps in global governance, particularly in areas such as climate action and multilateral cooperation.

OPEC+ meets amid rising tensions among oil-producing nations

What happened : the recent OPEC+ meeting deliberately avoided political deliberations, while reaffirming cooperation to sustain global oil output and manage oil prices.

Why it mattered : oil prices are currently driven more by geopolitical uncertainty than pure supply-demand fundamentals. With Russian exports under sanctions and Iranian oil facing restrictions, the grouping is prioritising market stability over aggressive output moves. For India, which is heavily import-dependent, any global disruption can trigger inflation and balance-of-payments stress.

Delhi govt. to raise funds from market for infra projects

What happened : The Delhi government, for the first time, signed an MoU with RBI to raise funds from the open market for capital expenditure, enabled by the separation of its Public Accounts from the Union government.

Why it mattered : This marks a historic financial reform for Delhi by giving it an independent banking and borrowing structure for the first time. By enabling Delhi to raise funds through State Development Loans (SDLs), it allows direct market borrowing for large-scale capital infrastructure creation. This strengthens fiscal autonomy, improves financial discipline, and supports infrastructure-led economic growth.

Why silver prices surged a 160% wave in 2025



What happened : The year 2025 saw record growth in gold and silver prices, fuelled by global and domestic political developments.

Why it mattered : silver holds inherent physical properties that make it a key component in the manufacture of batteries and solar panels. Furthermore, silver has found a substantial demand base with the growing Artificial Intelligence sector as the metallic element is used in smart grid infrastructure and data transmissions.

Stock brokers can now offer services overseen by RBI and IRDAI

What happened : The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has permitted stock brokers to undertake activities that fall under the regulatory ambit of authorities such as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).

Why it mattered : The decision is expected to allow stock brokers to expand their business models and provide a wider range of financial services to clients through a single platform, while remaining under the supervision of the respective sectoral regulators.

PRELIMS CORNER :

1) With reference to Rowlatt Satyagraha, which of the following statements is/are correct? (2015)

1. The Rowlatt Act was based on the recommendations of the 'Sedition Committee'.
2. In Rowlatt Satyagraha Gandhiji tried to use the Home Rule League.
3. Demonstrations against the Simon Commission coincided with the Rowlatt Satyagraha.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

2) What is the application of "Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer Technology"? (2017)

- Production of biolarvicides
- Manufacture of biodegradable plastics
- Reproductive cloning of animals
- Production of organisms free of diseases

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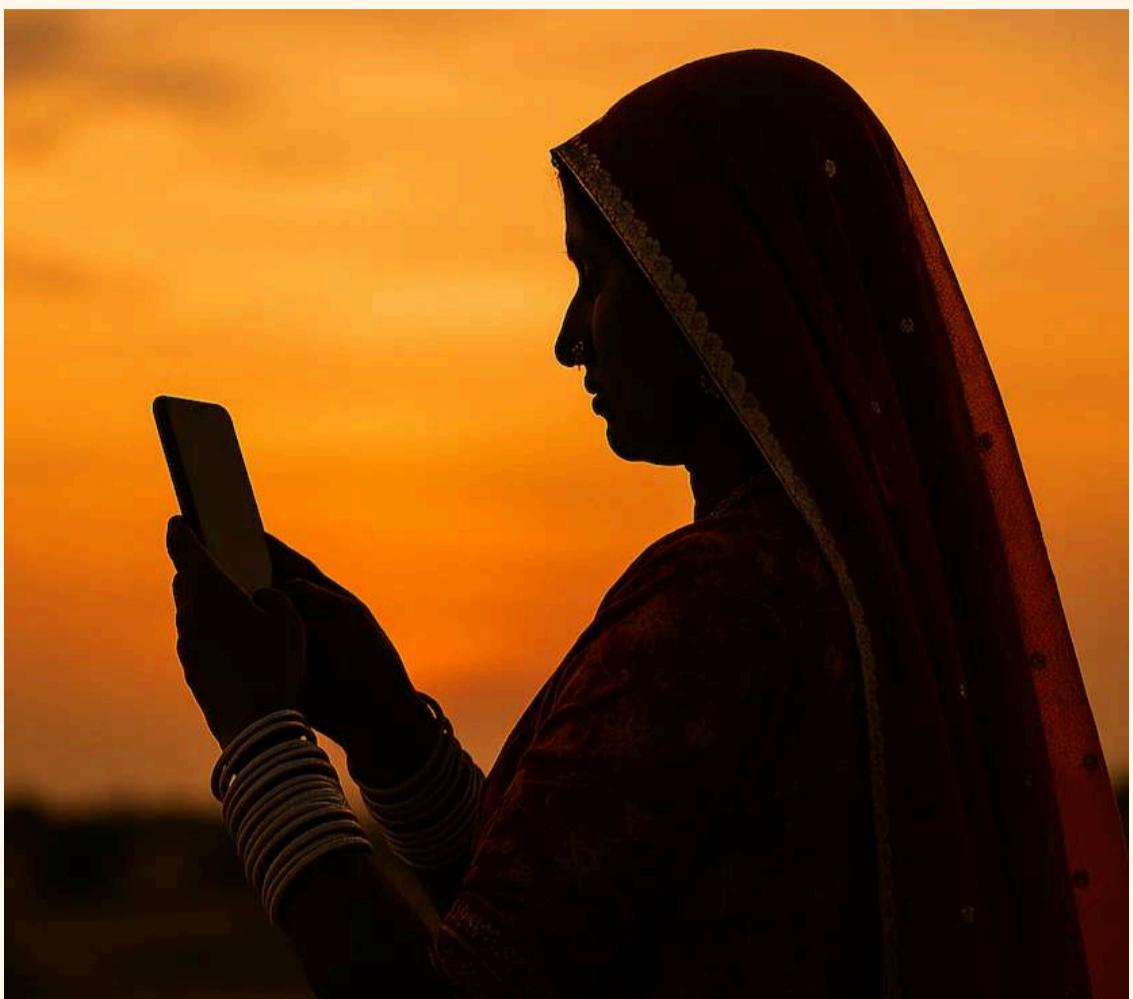
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CASE STUDY - NHRC



The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued a notice to the Jalore district administration over a controversial decision by a local community body that imposed a ban on smartphone usage by women in 15 villages of the district. The notice has been addressed to district collector Pradeep Gawande, directing him to conduct an inquiry into the matter and submit an action taken report within two weeks.

Confirming the development, Gawande said the NHRC has issued a notice seeking action in the matter. He informed that although the community representatives have withdrawn their decision, the administration will still conduct a detailed inquiry and submit a factual report to the commission within the stipulated time frame.

According to the information, the NHRC took suo motu cognisance after a complaint highlighted that the restriction was imposed exclusively on women, amounting to gender-based discrimination and a violation of their fundamental human rights. It observed that such directives curbing women's access to communication and technology are unconstitutional and beyond the authority of panchayats or social groups.

Prelims Corner: Explanations

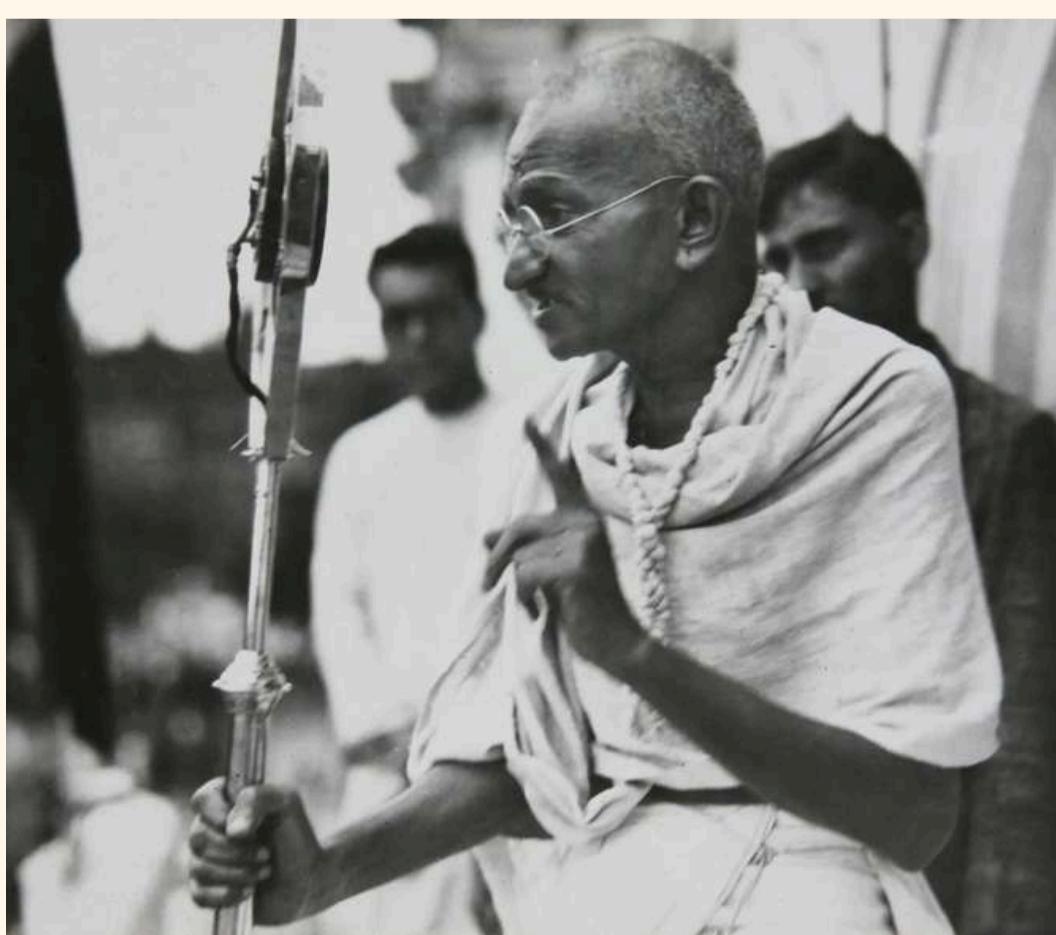
1) Answer is option B

Statement 1 is Correct. The Rowlatt Act (1919) was based on the recommendations of the Sedition Committee, chaired by Justice S.A.T. Rowlatt.

This committee was formed to investigate revolutionary activities in India, and its recommendations led to the enactment of the Rowlatt Act, which allowed imprisonment without trial and curbed civil liberties.

Statement 2 is correct. During the Rowlatt Satyagraha, Gandhi tried to use the Home Rule League as a platform to mobilize support against the draconian provisions of the Rowlatt Act. The league was already established as an organizational framework for political activism, and Gandhi sought to integrate its efforts with the satyagraha.

Statement 3 is incorrect. Demonstrations against the Simon Commission occurred in 1928, almost a decade after the Rowlatt Satyagraha of 1919. The two events were not connected chronologically or thematically.



2) Answer is option C

Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer (SCNT) Technology is a cloning technique used to create an organism that is genetically identical to the donor organism. The process involves transferring the nucleus of a somatic (body) cell into an enucleated egg cell (an egg cell whose nucleus has been removed). The resulting embryo is then implanted into a surrogate mother for development.

This technology is famously used in reproductive cloning, such as the creation of Dolly the sheep, the first mammal cloned from an adult somatic cell.

SCNT can also be used for therapeutic cloning to produce stem cells for research and medical treatments.

