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## Jal Jeevan outlay to be cut 60% this year



The Centre is planning to sharply reduce the outlay for the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in the revised estimates of the current financial year to about ₹17,000 crore from the ₹67,000 crore allocated in Budget 2025–26, as Cabinet approval for the scheme's extension till 2028 is still pending. Launched in August 2019, JJM aims to provide Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) supplying 55 litres per capita per day of drinking water to all rural households. The government has stated that since 2019, about 15 crore rural households, covering nearly 80% of the rural population, have received tap water connections. The scheme was earlier extended till 2028 to achieve 100% coverage. In 2024–25 also, the allocation was sharply cut at the revised estimate stage. The Mission has faced scrutiny over irregularities, with investigations in 2025 pointing to guideline changes that led to cost escalation and prompting the government to order inspections and initiate action against erring officials.

## Changing Crime Profile in Indian States – Case of Bihar

Recent crime data from Bihar shows a significant long-term decline in traditional violent crimes such as murder, dacoity, robbery and riots, even as total registered crime has increased due to a rise in theft, burglary, cyber offences and regulatory crimes. This indicates not merely a reduction in violence, but a structural transformation in the nature of crime.

While violent crimes that once shaped the “Jungle Raj” narrative have steadily fallen over the past two decades, property crimes and technology-driven offences have grown with urbanisation, asset expansion and digitisation. Experts note that this rise in registered cases is also a result of improved reporting, greater legal awareness and easier access to police and online complaint systems, rather than only a deterioration in law and order.

Importantly, kidnapping for ransom and organised rural violent crimes have declined sharply, suggesting better policing capacity and weakening of organised criminal and Naxal networks in several regions. Intensified operations by STF and anti-Naxal units, increased seizures of illegal arms and explosives, and the dismantling of illegal weapon manufacturing units point to a shift from reactive to preventive and intelligence-based policing.

The Bihar experience underlines a key governance insight: rising crime statistics do not automatically indicate worsening law and order. In many cases, they reflect stronger institutions, improved transparency, and greater citizen trust in the justice system.

Overall, the data suggests that Indian states are witnessing a transition from dominance of violent crimes to a more complex mix of cyber, property and regulatory offences, highlighting the need for policing reforms, technological capacity-building and judicial strengthening to match the evolving nature of crime.



## EV retrofit push : How converting old cars to electric works



As Delhi and other cities struggle with severe air pollution, governments are exploring EV retrofitting—the conversion of old petrol and diesel vehicles into electric—as a transitional solution under new EV policies. Delhi has proposed incentives to promote such conversions, signalling policy interest in extending the life of existing vehicles while reducing emissions.

### What is EV retrofitting?

EV retrofitting involves replacing the internal combustion engine, fuel tank and exhaust system with a battery, motor and controller, effectively converting an old vehicle into an electric one.

### Why it is seen as useful?

EV retrofitting is being projected as a bridge solution between old ICE vehicles and full EV adoption:

- Reduces urban air pollution without scrapping existing vehicles
- Extends vehicle life by 4–6 years.
- Lower running and maintenance cost compared to ICE vehicles
- Helps owners comply with regulatory restrictions on old vehicles.
- Particularly useful for commercial fleets and institutional buyers due to scale benefits

Retrofitting supports circular economy, resource efficiency and faster decarbonisation of transport.

## From next year, AI translations of House proceedings, paperwork in 22 languages

In a major step towards making parliamentary democracy more inclusive and accessible, the Lok Sabha Speaker has announced that from next year, parliamentary proceedings and official documents will be made available in all 22 scheduled languages using Artificial Intelligence (AI). For the first time, the proceedings of both Houses and their related paperwork will be accessible to the public in their entirety in multiple Indian languages.

This initiative is part of a broader push by the Lok Sabha Secretariat to use technology to modernise legislative functioning. Measures include digitisation of historical parliamentary records, faster delivery of replies to MPs' questions, and improved access to documents before debates to allow better preparation and more meaningful discussion.

At present, real-time translation is available in only 10 languages, but the full rollout to 22 languages is expected by 2026–27. The project aims to combine technology with linguistic diversity, reflecting the multilingual character of Indian democracy.





## India's 2025 rice exports surge to near record as curbs lifted

India's rice exports jumped 19.4% in 2025, reaching 21.55 million metric tons, the second-highest on record, after the government removed all export restrictions. The rebound followed a quick recovery in shipments once curbs imposed in 2022–23 were lifted, making Indian rice more competitive in the global market. Improved supplies also curbed exports from rivals such as Thailand and Vietnam, driving Asian rice prices to their lowest in nearly a decade, which benefited poor consumers in Africa and other regions.

Non-basmati rice exports rose sharply by 25% to 15.15 million tons, mainly to Bangladesh, Benin, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, and Djibouti, while basmati shipments increased 8% to a record 6.4 million tons, with higher demand from Iran, the UAE, and the UK. The surge reflects India's position as the world's largest rice exporter, the effectiveness of policy measures in boosting global competitiveness, and the strategic role of agricultural exports in enhancing India's food diplomacy and economic leverage.



## First time in 50 years, coal-fired electricity generation saw year-on-year decline in 2025



For the first time in nearly fifty years, coal-based electricity generation in India declined year-on-year in 2025, even as total power generation increased. This shift was mainly driven by the rapid expansion of renewable energy and higher generation from large hydro, along with a relatively milder summer and slower growth in power demand. While coal still remains the backbone of India's power system, its growth rate has been slowing for a few years, and 2025 marks an important turning point in the country's energy transition.

A diversified energy mix with a larger share of renewables reduces India's dependence on a single fuel and makes the power system more resilient to fuel supply disruptions and price shocks. The data also shows that even during peak demand periods, the full coal fleet is not always required, and renewable energy is increasingly supporting peak-hour supply. This improves system flexibility and lowers the risk of shortages.

At the same time, the existing coal capacity and projects already under construction are sufficient to meet near-term needs. With the strong pipeline of renewable and storage capacity, India may not need major new coal additions up to 2030.



## India to be invited to join U.S.-led initiative Pax Silica, says envoy

India is set to be invited to join “Pax Silica”, the U.S.-led multilateral initiative on semiconductors, critical minerals, and artificial intelligence, alongside Quad members Japan and Australia. Along with them, Israel, UAE, South Korea, Singapore, the UK, and the Netherlands are also going to be part of the initiative. This reflects India’s growing role in global supply chains and high-tech geopolitics. Bilateral trade negotiations—launched during PM Modi’s visit to the U.S.—have seen multiple rounds, stalled previously due to U.S. tariffs, and are now being actively pursued. While tensions remain over India’s Russian oil imports and U.S. claims regarding India–Pakistan issues, both sides aim to stabilize ties. Sergio Gor, newly appointed U.S. Ambassador and Special Envoy for South and Central Asia, has signaled optimism for stronger engagement, including potential high-level visits and a revived trade deal. The developments strengthen India’s economic security, technological sovereignty, and strategic alignment in the Indo-Pacific.



## Myanmar made Rohingya lives a nightmare: Gambia tells court in genocide case



The Gambia has told the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that Myanmar deliberately targeted the Rohingya minority with the intent to destroy the community, thereby violating the 1948 Genocide Convention during the 2017 military crackdown. The case was filed by The Gambia accusing Myanmar of committing genocide, a charge that Myanmar has denied.

During the hearings, The Gambia cited large-scale violence including mass killings, sexual violence, and destruction of Rohingya villages, which forced hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims to flee to Bangladesh. At present, about 1.17 million Rohingya are living in refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh.

Earlier, a UN investigation team had stated that Myanmar showed “genocidal intent” towards the Rohingya, and in 2022, the United States officially declared that the violence against the Rohingya amounted to genocide.



## From defence to visa-free transit, India and Germany push forward

India–Germany relations have entered a qualitatively new phase marked by strategic convergence, technological partnership, defence-industrial cooperation and a shared commitment to a rules-based global order. The 2026 visit of the German Chancellor and the outcomes flowing from it indicate that the partnership is now moving from economic-centric cooperation to a full-spectrum strategic partnership.

### *Defence and Security: From Buyer-Seller to Co-Creation*

The Defence Industrial Cooperation Roadmap establishes long-term partnerships for co-development, co-production, and technology collaboration between India and Germany. Deepening military ties—through joint exercises, technology cooperation in submarines, drones, C-UAS, and helicopters, and joint condemnation of terrorism—reflect a trust-based strategic relationship.

### *Green and Climate Partnership*

The Green and Sustainable Development Partnership (GSDP), backed by €10 billion till 2030, has become the flagship pillar of cooperation. It supports renewable energy, green hydrogen, battery storage, urban mobility, metro projects, climate-resilient infrastructure, India's National Green Hydrogen Mission and energy transition.

### *People-to-People, Education and Skilled Mobility*

The India–Germany partnership is becoming increasingly people-centric, highlighted by visa-free transit for Indians, initiatives to promote skilled mobility through the Global Skills Partnership, and a growing number of Indian students in Germany supported by deeper university collaborations.



### *Technology, Semiconductors and Critical Minerals: Strategic Autonomy Pillar*

The partnership now emphasizes future-critical sectors, including a semiconductor ecosystem, critical minerals, and cooperation in AI, telecom, Industry 4.0, and space (ISRO–DLR). These areas are vital for economic security, technological sovereignty, and resilient supply chains in the 21st century.

### *Indo-Pacific, Connectivity and Global Issues*

Both countries strongly support:

- A free and open Indo-Pacific
- India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) as a transformational connectivity corridor
- Peace efforts in Ukraine and the Two-State solution in West Asia

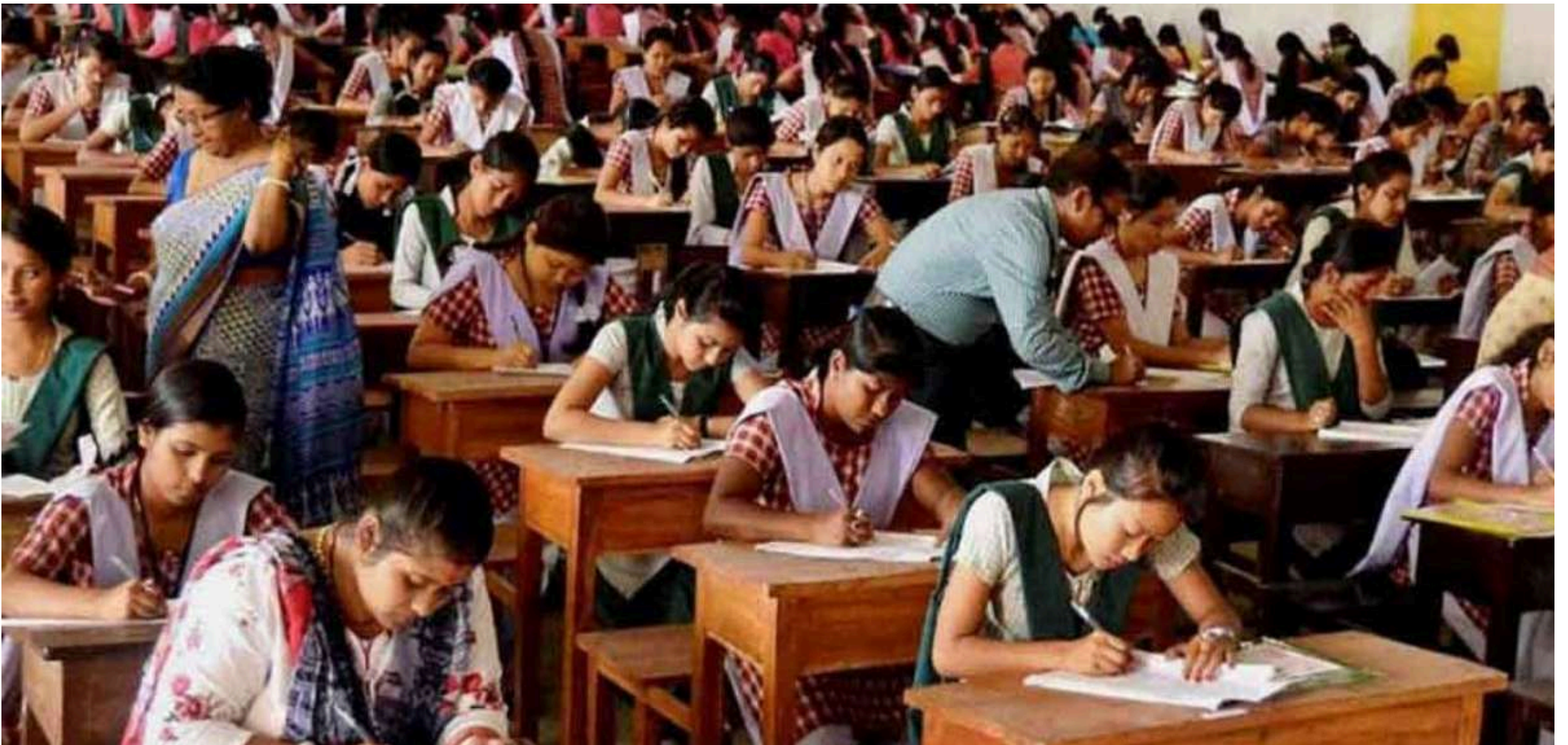
### *Trade and Economy*

India and Germany welcomed the sustained growth in bilateral trade and investment, with trade surpassing USD 50 billion in 2024, over 25% of India's trade with the EU. Both leaders highlighted strong two-way investments, the role of SMEs, startups, digitalization, AI, and innovation-driven enterprises in diversifying global supply chains, and encouraged further business collaboration. Prime Minister Modi invited German companies to invest in India's high-growth market, while Chancellor Merz emphasized Germany as an attractive destination for Indian investment. They reaffirmed support for the India–EU Free Trade Agreement and endorsed the German-Indian CEO Forum, promoting collaboration across key sectors including technology, automotives, defence, smart infrastructure, pharma, chemicals, biotechnology, and energy.

These developments underscore the deepening India–Germany partnership, reflecting strong strategic, technological, economic, and people-to-people cooperation, and set the stage for sustained collaboration across critical sectors in the years ahead.



## Overhauling India's School–Coaching Ecosystem



A Central Government committee has proposed major reforms in high school education to reduce students' dependence on coaching centres. The panel was set up by the Ministry of Education in June 2025 to examine gaps in school education, competitive exams, dummy schools, and the growing influence of coaching institutes.

### Challenges

- Overdependence on coaching centres, which have grown to fill gaps in the school system.
- Disconnect between school curriculum and competitive exams like JEE and NEET.
- Mismatch between CBSE's analytical approach and MCQ-based entrance exams.
- Rise of dummy schools and a parallel education system that sidelines formal schooling.
- Teachers in many schools not trained beyond board exam requirements.
- Schools lack testing systems, performance analytics, and curated materials.
- Stress point at the transition from Class 10 to Class 11.
- Psychological toll of high-stakes, single-attempt exams and pressure to join coaching early.
- Absence of structured counselling and career guidance in schools.
- Concerns over student well-being, equity of education, and narrowing definition of success.

### Initiatives and Proposals by the Committee

- Cap coaching classes at 2–3 hours per day.
- Redesign school curriculum to mirror competitive entrance examinations.
- Increase weightage of board exam results in college admissions.
- Explore introduction of competitive tests in Class 11.
- Make NCERT the nodal agency (with NTA, CBSE, and boards) to ensure syllabus alignment between school and entrance exams.
- NTA to share detailed exam data of last three years with IIT Kanpur to assess:
  - Validity
  - Reliability
  - Discriminatory power of exams
- Psychometric expert to analyse:
  - Difficulty level of questions
  - Ability to differentiate students in JEE, NEET, CUET, JEE Advanced
- Department of School Education and CBSE to conduct surveys on student engagement with coaching.
- CBSE to design remedial and mentoring classes within schools to reduce dependence on private coaching.



## Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century?

P. C. Cyriac IAS Former Chief Secretary, Tamil Nadu



(Source: Civil Service Institute, Pala — Current Affairs Handbook, March 2025)

The UNO had six main organs, the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, Trusteeship Council, International Court of Justice and the Secretariat. The UNO has many other Agencies under it, entrusted with specific responsibilities, like the UN Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, the World Health organization, International Labour organization, the Food and Agricultural organization, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), etc. It is clear from this elaborate structure and the specialized agencies, that the UNO was determined to fight against not only political disputes and wars but the social evils like hunger, disease, poverty, and illiteracy.

**But, when we look back after 75 years, has the UNO achieved its goals?**

Many local wars had erupted right from the 1950's, like the Korean War, the series of wars in West Asia between Israel and the Arabs, including the latest war between Israel and the Hamas in Gaza and the still raging Four-year-old war between Russia and Ukraine. Though the UN Peacekeeping Force had played effective roles in many cases, the UNO was helpless when the direct interest of big powers was involved, as the five big powers (USA, Britain, France Russia and China used their power to veto any Resolution proposing effective intervention.

All the other agencies like UNESCO, WHO, FAO, World Bank and IMF have helped many countries in their hour of need. It may be noted that hundreds of projects in India, have received financial and technical support from these UN agencies like the World Bank, WHO and UNESCO. In 1991, when our Country found itself in a foreign exchange crisis, we were helped by the IMF financially as well as by pressurising our government to liberalise our economy, which resulted in a vigorous growth spurt. In short, now, though the UNO was not crowned with success in all its ventures, it has played a very useful role.



## NATIONAL YOUTH WEEK - SPECIAL FEATURE

# Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)

### SCHEME SNAPSHOT

**Name:** Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana

**Ministry:** Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)

**Type:** Central Sector Scheme

**Funding Pattern:** 100% Centre

**Focus :** industry-relevant skill training to youth

### Evolution:

- PMKVY 1.0 (2015-16): 19.85 lakh trained
- PMKVY 2.0: 1.10 crore trained
- PMKVY 3.0: Introduced Customised Crash Course for COVID Warriors & Skill Hub Initiative; 7.37 lakh trained
- PMKVY 4.0 (2022-23 onward): Focus on On-Job Training (OJT), industry-aligned courses, career pathways; over 28.9 lakh trained; support for women, PWDs, and candidates from Special Areas

**PRADHAN MANTRI KAUSHAL VIKAS YOJANA (PMKVY)**

**Launch:** July 15, 2015; aims at short-term skill training, upskilling, and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

**Objective:** Equip youth with industry-relevant, employable skills across sectors like manufacturing, IT, healthcare, electronics, and retail, while promoting inclusivity (45% women; significant SC/ST/OBC participation).

**Evolution**

PMKVY 2015-16	PMKVY 1.0 (2015-16): 19.85 lakh trained
	PMKVY 2.0: 1.10 crore trained
	PMKVY 3.0: Introduced Customised Crash Course for COVID Warriors & Skill Hub Initiative; 7.37 lakh trained
	PMKVY 4.0 (2022-23 onward): Focus on On-Job Training (OJT)*2 industry-aligned courses, career pathways; over 28.9 lakh trained

**Future-focus:** Cutting-edge sectors including AI, robotics, drones, mechatronics, and IoT

**Significance:** Backbone of India's short-term skill ecosystem, bridging workforce gaps, enhancing employability, and aligning vocational education with the National Education Policy 2020.



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## PRELIMS CORNER :

1) Which one of the following is not a Harappan site? (2019)

- (a) Chanhudaro
- (b) Kot Diji
- (c) Sohgauro
- (d) Desalpur

2) Consider the following:

1. Areca nut
2. Barley
3. Coffee
4. Finger millet
5. Groundnut
6. Sesamum
7. Turmeric

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has announced the Minimum Support Price for which of the above?

- a) 1, 2, 3 and 7 only
- b) 2, 4, 5 and 6 only
- c) 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 only
- d) 1,2,3, 4, 5, 6 and 7

## From Welfare to Welfare Enforcement



“The Telangana government is planning to bring a law under which 10% of the salary of a government employee will be directly transferred to their parents if the employee is found to be neglecting them. The Chief Minister made this announcement while unveiling a series of welfare measures for the elderly and the disabled, and said that complaints by elderly parents against their children would be taken seriously. The government is also setting up daycare centres for senior citizens.

This reflects a new form of “welfare enforcement”, where the state uses administrative and financial instruments to enforce social responsibility, especially in the context of weakening family support systems and rising neglect of the elderly.

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NPCIL Recruitment 2026	• Eligibility: 10th / 12th / ITI / Diploma / Degree	• Salary: ₹21,700 – ₹55,932 (Approx)	• Last Date: 04 Feb 2026	114
Income Tax Mumbai TA, Steno & MTS Recruitment 2026	• Eligibility: 10th / 12th / Degree + Sports Person	• Salary: ₹18,000 – ₹81,100	• Last Date: 31 January 2026	97
Assam Rifles Sports Quota Recruitment 2026	• Eligibility: 10th Pass + Sports Person	• Salary: As per 7th CPC (Defence Pay)	• Last Date: 09 February 2026	95
CSIR CSIO MTS Recruitment 2026	• Eligibility: 10th Pass	• Salary: ₹36,306/Month (Approx)	• Last Date: 09 February 2026	7

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# Prelims Corner: Explanations

## 1) Answer is option C

**Sohgaura** - Sohgaura is not a Harappan site. It is located in Uttar Pradesh, India, and is associated with the Mauryan period, not the Harappan Civilization. It is known for its copper plate inscription related to famine relief during the Mauryan Empire.

**Chanhudaro** - It is a well-known Harappan site located in Sindh, Pakistan. It is famous for its bead-making industry and craft production. This was an important settlement during the Harappan period.

**Kot Diji** - It is another Harappan site located in Sindh, Pakistan. It belongs to the early Harappan phase and is known for its pre-Harappan fortified settlement.

**Desalpur** - It is a Harappan site located in Gujarat, India. It is known for its fortified settlement and is part of the Harappan cultural zone in Gujarat.

## 2) Answer is option b

**Minimum Support Price (MSP)** is a crucial mechanism through which the government supports farmers by purchasing their crops at a pre-determined price.

While recommending MSP, CACP considers important factors, i.e., cost of production, overall demand-supply situations of various crops in domestic and world markets, domestic and international prices, inter-crop price parity, and a minimum of 50 per cent as the margin over the cost of production.

Following are the crops covered by MSP:  
7 cereals (paddy, wheat, maize, sorghum, pearl millet, barley and ragi),  
5 pulses (gram, tur, moong, urad, lentil),  
7 oilseeds (groundnut, rapeseed-mustard, soyabean, seasmum, sunflower, safflower, nigerseed), and  
Commercial crops : copra, cotton and raw jute).

## IMPORTANT IVC SITES

Kot Diji - Sind

Kalibangan - Rajasthan

Rupar - Punjab

Banawali - Haryana,

Lothal - Gujarat

Surkotada - Gujarat

Dholavira - Gujarat





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