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Tension rises in Manipur after Meitei man's killing

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Central bank readies liquidity boost of Rs 1.25 lakh crore

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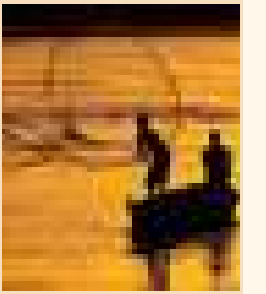
RBI calls on states to frame 'clear glide path' to reduce debt

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Diversify your fish basket, Union govt. advises States

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Govt discusses protocols akin to national anthem for Vande Mataram



A high-level government meeting was recently held to discuss whether protocols should be framed for the recitation of the national song Vande Mataram, similar to those for the national anthem Jana Gana Mana. Vande Mataram, written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, became a rallying cry during the Swadeshi movement and was given equal honour by the Constituent Assembly, but it currently has no compulsory rules or legal requirements for its singing. The Ministry of Home Affairs discussed whether rules should define when the song may be sung, whether it should be sung with the anthem, and whether disrespect should attract penalties.

At present, the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971 provides penalties only for disrespect to the national anthem, not the national song. The government earlier told the Supreme Court that no instructions exist for Vande Mataram. The anthem, unlike the song, is protected by law and detailed executive orders. The issue has also figured in recent political and parliamentary debates.

'Granth Kutir' for classical Indian books, manuscripts opens

Granth Kutir, the library of scriptures at Rashtrapati Bhavan, has been created to shed colonial legacy and highlight India's cultural, philosophical, literary and intellectual heritage. It houses works in Tamil, Sanskrit, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, Odia, Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, Assamese and Bengali. The collection includes books and manuscripts on epics, philosophy, linguistics, history, governance, science and devotional literature, along with the Constitution of India in classical languages. About 50 manuscripts, many handwritten on materials like palm leaf, paper, bark and cloth, are part of the collection.



Earlier, several books related to British figures and magazines were kept here, but they have now been moved to another space and digitised for online access. The initiative supports the Gyan Bharatam Mission, which aims to preserve and digitise manuscripts. The IGNCA is providing professional support. The President said classical languages and texts like Tirukkural and Arthashastra remain relevant, and ancient scholars continue to inspire the world.

Tension rises in Manipur after Meitei man's killing

What happened? A Meitei man visiting his Kuki-Zo wife in Churachandpur was abducted and shot dead by unidentified armed men, with the killing filmed and circulated online. The incident has reignited tensions in Manipur, highlighting the fragile peace and deepening ethnic fault lines between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities.

Why it matters? The repeated ethnic violence between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities stems from decades of mistrust caused by unequal resource distribution, biased political representation, and weak governance. The problem is worsened by a porous Myanmar border, cross-border militant links, illegal immigration, the drug trade, and citizenship concerns. **Way forward:** Ending violence and disarming all armed groups is essential. Trust must be rebuilt through dialogue involving civil society and academics, not just political leadership. Land and development benefits must be shared more fairly. Political representation and governance structures must be reformed to reduce hill–valley and ethnic divisions.

- Manipur merged with India in 1949, became a Union Territory in 1956, and a state in 1972.
- It has three main ethnic groups: Meiteis in the Imphal valley, and Nagas and Kukis in the hills.
- Since the 1960s, ethnic militant groups have emerged, with Kukis and Nagas demanding separate homelands, conflicting with Meitei concerns over Manipur's territorial integrity.

A dangerous march towards a Himalayan ecocide

What happened? In 2025, the Himalayas faced nearly 331 days of climate extremes, causing over 4,000 deaths, with Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand worst affected. Towns like Dharali, Harsil, Uttarkashi, Chamoli, Kullu, Mandi, and Kishtwar were devastated by cloudbursts, landslides, avalanches, and flash floods. Despite this, 43 hectares of forest were cleared for Char Dham road widening, involving felling nearly 7,000 deodar trees. This ecologically fragile zone near the Gangotri glacier and within the 4,000 sq km Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone risks further disasters by destroying natural slope stabilisers and river protectors.



Why it matters? Unchecked development in the Himalayas, especially the Char Dham road project, has ignored ecological limits through faulty design, hill cutting, and dumping of debris. Along nearly 700 km of roads, over 800 landslide zones have emerged, blocking routes and worsening disasters. Projects violate environmental policy and destabilise fragile slopes, while deodar forest loss removes natural protection. Unsafe land use, tunnels and hydropower projects, combined with climate change—warming 50% faster than the global average—are making disasters more frequent. This short-term, unscientific development is pushing one of the world's most sensitive ecosystems toward irreversible collapse.

Secondary particulate matter main cause of pollution: CAQM report

What happened? A synthesis of studies commissioned by the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has revealed the main sources of winter air pollution in Delhi-NCR. The largest contributor is secondary particulate matter (27%), formed through chemical reactions in the atmosphere. This is followed by transport emissions (23%), biomass burning including waste and crop residue (20%), dust (15%), and industrial emissions (9%). The findings highlight that pollution is not driven by a single source but by multiple, interlinked factors requiring a comprehensive, multi-sectoral response.



Why it matters? Studies show that while sources emit primary pollutants like NO_x, SO₂ and VOCs, the largest pollution load comes from secondary particulate matter, formed in the atmosphere. This formation is strongly driven by ammonia, nearly 80% of which comes from fertilisers and livestock waste. The findings shift focus from only visible sources like vehicles and dust to chemical processes in the air, helping policymakers target the actual mechanisms worsening AQI in the region.

Gubernatorial walkouts test constitutional limits

What happened? The walkouts by Governors from the inaugural sessions of the State Legislative Assemblies in Opposition-ruled Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala mark a departure from the constitutionally envisaged “limited freewheeling” of the office.



Why it matters? Article 176(1) mandates that the Governor must address the State Legislature at the start of each year, conveying the policy of the elected government. This address is an executive function performed on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers, and the Governor has no discretion to alter or skip it. Constitutional debates and Supreme Court judgments, including Shamsher Singh, Nabam Rebia, and the Tamil Nadu Governor case, clearly state that Governors cannot act against the Cabinet or take public positions against government policy. Allowing such discretion would undermine parliamentary democracy and the authority of elected governments.

WORLD - REVIEW

Fractured Yemen

What happened? Fighting broke out between Yemen's Saudi-backed government and the UAE-backed Southern Transitional Council (STC) when the STC launched a surprise offensive in Hadhramaut and al-Mahra in early December and briefly captured large parts of former South Yemen. Government forces, supported by Saudi air power, soon recaptured the areas and entered Aden on January 7, forcing the STC to go to Riyadh for talks. There, the STC announced its dissolution and its leader reportedly fled to the UAE. The crisis exposed open tensions between Saudi Arabia and the UAE, with Riyadh accusing Abu Dhabi of arming separatists and carrying out air strikes on Mukalla port, after which the UAE announced its withdrawal from Yemen.

Why it matters? The crisis has exposed geopolitical fault lines in the Persian Gulf and brought Saudi-UAE differences into the open, revealing cracks within the coalition in Yemen. It shows how regional rivalries and proxy forces are prolonging the conflict: while southern forces fight among themselves, the Houthis have consolidated power in the north, deepening instability and the humanitarian crisis. Lasting peace will require cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the UAE and an agreement among Yemeni factions on a federal political structure.

Yemen continues to suffer a severe humanitarian crisis, with millions near famine, a shattered economy, and devastated infrastructure.

Trump tells Norway his Greenland threats linked to Nobel Prize snub



What happened? U.S. President Donald Trump in a written message to Norway's Prime Minister said he no longer feels obligated "to think purely of Peace" because he had not been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, and repeated his demand for control of Greenland. Mr. Trump said Denmark cannot protect Greenland from Russia or China.

Why it matters? Trump's foreign policy is described as deeply personal, transactional, and driven by individual authority rather than institutional definitions of national interest. Scholars interpret Trump not as an aberration but as an emblem of a broader return of royalism, where power shifts away from institutions and back to personalised authority. His disdain for NATO, scepticism of international organisations, and reliance on tariffs reveal how weak institutional constraints on leaders have become.

While "No Kings" rallies showed domestic resistance in the US, internationally allies and adversaries initially chose accommodation due to America's overwhelming coercive power. The weakening of institutional checks means the US can neither pursue a productive national strategy nor sustain the foundations of the international order.

Central bank readies liquidity boost of Rs 1.25 lakh crore

The Reserve Bank of India announced new liquidity measures to inject ₹1.25 lakh crore into the financial system. These include a 90-day variable rate repo operation of ₹25,000 crore on January 30 and a three-year dollar-rupee buy/sell swap auction of \$10 billion on February 4. The RBI will also buy government securities worth ₹1 lakh crore through two open market operations in February, as banking system liquidity has been shrinking. Market participants had asked the RBI to provide relief after a sharp rise in certificate of deposit rates. Continuous intervention in the forex market due to a weaker rupee has been draining liquidity from the system. At the same time, rising credit demand and slow deposit growth have increased pressure on banking system liquidity. An economist said the RBI's action was needed because of a high credit-deposit ratio and dollar sales to stabilise the currency. He added that liquidity pressure will increase in March due to advance tax outflows, and short-term rates may rise further if liquidity remains tight, affecting monetary policy transmission. He also said longer-term forex swaps signal durable liquidity support. The RBI has been infusing liquidity since December. It injected ₹4.5 lakh crore in December and January through OMOs and forex swaps, and purchased bonds worth ₹5.2 lakh crore in the current financial year.

According to Bloomberg data, the average liquidity stood at Rs 1.78 lakh crore in November, and fell to Rs 72,550 crore in December and Rs 57,121 crore in January.

Diversify your fish basket, Union govt. advises States



Due to tariff uncertainty, climate change and disease risks affecting seafood exports, the Union Fisheries Ministry has advised States and the fishing industry to diversify both markets and species. In a meeting with States, farmers, processors and exporters, the Ministry suggested cultivating more species and adopting practices like integrated multi-trophic aquaculture to increase production in the same space and access new markets. The Minister also met envoys from over 40 countries to explore new export destinations.

Officials said dependence on one species is risky, as disease can spread across States. Earlier, the white spot virus had destroyed black tiger shrimp farming. States have been asked to promote scampi, tilapia and pangasius instead of rohu and catla, and to develop production and processing clusters. Scientists are improving indigenous species like *Penaeus indicus* and *Penaeus monodon*, which are exported to over 100 countries. There is also global demand for seabass and pearl spot, and plans to expand brackish water farming, seaweed and marine cage culture, especially in saline areas.

RBI calls on states to frame 'clear glide path' to reduce debt

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has asked State governments to reduce their debt levels, stating that high debt restricts investment and growth. In its study of States' budgets for 2025–26, the RBI noted that the combined debt of all States had declined to 28.1% of GDP by March 2024 from a peak of 31% in March 2021. However, it is expected to rise again to 29.2% by the end of 2025–26. According to the report, State government finances have weakened compared to last year. Geopolitical uncertainty, high debt, and rising contingent liabilities from guarantees and cash transfer schemes pose risks. State finances after 2025–26 will be influenced by factors such as the Sixteenth Finance Commission, the 8th Pay Commission, GST rate rationalisation and changes in GST compensation cess

The RBI said that such high debt levels require a clear, transparent and time-bound glide path for debt consolidation. It also recalled that the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Review Committee had recommended 20% of GSDP as the upper limit for State debt. From 2026–27, the Centre will start targeting its debt-to-GDP ratio instead of the fiscal deficit. The Union Budget estimates aim to reduce the Centre's debt from 56.1% this year to 50% by 2030–31. Referring to this approach, the RBI suggested that highly leveraged States should also frame a similar glide path for reducing debt.

High debt at both the Centre and State levels, together called general government debt, has often been pointed out by global rating agencies as a weakness of India's public finances.

The RBI noted that debt rose sharply during 2020–21 due to the economic contraction and higher public spending during the pandemic. Since borrowed money carries interest, higher debt increases interest payments. This puts pressure on State finances because these payments are often met by cutting productive expenditure, which in turn affects medium-term economic growth. Finally, RBI stressed better fiscal data transparency, uniform accounting by 2027–28, improved reporting of subsidies and off-budget borrowings, and a proper database and reporting system for DBT schemes.

Key Takeaways from RBI on State Finances

- States' fiscal deficit has crossed the 3% mark recently - due to extra borrowing allowed by the Centre for capital investment.
- States plan to maintain similar deficit levels in future : by better spending quality, controlling revenue expenditure and focusing on capital spending.
- States' overall debt burden has come down from pandemic levels and remains broadly sustainable.
- Debt sustainability indicators remain comfortable - no immediate fiscal risks.
- Different states at different stages of demographic transition- it is increasingly shaping their fiscal position.
- Younger States - better growth and revenue potential due to a rising working-age population.
- Ageing States - increasing fiscal pressure because of higher pension, healthcare and committed expenditures and slower revenue growth.

PRELIMS CORNER :

1) With reference to 'Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)' sometimes mentioned in the news while forecasting Indian monsoon, which of the following statements is/are correct? (2017)

1. The IOD phenomenon is characterised by a difference in sea surface temperature between tropical Western Indian Ocean and tropical Eastern Pacific Ocean.
2. An IOD phenomenon can influence an El Nino's impact on the monsoon.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

2) Consider the following rivers: (2014)

1. Barak
2. Lohit
3. Subansiri

Which of the above flows/flows through Arunachal Pradesh?

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

CASE STUDY **Y V Reddy**



When Sri Y.V. Reddy was working at the Rayalaseema Development Board, he was assigned the task of preparing a development plan for the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh. The work involved a difficult balance between maintaining rationality in planning and managing pressures from political leadership. Political leaders often demanded more development projects for their own regions, even when such demands were not always based on objective need or feasibility.

To address this problem, Sri Y.V. Reddy introduced a system based on clear and objective criteria. For example, he proposed that electricity would be provided only to villages located within a certain distance from existing power lines. Once such criteria were agreed upon, political demands outside these limits could be politely but firmly rejected.

Prelims Corner: Explanations

1) Answer is option b

Statement 1: The Indian Ocean Dipole also known as the Indian Niño is a climate pattern affecting the Indian Ocean. During a positive phase, warm waters are pushed to the Western part of the Indian Ocean, while cold deep waters are brought up to the surface in the Eastern Indian Ocean. This pattern is reversed during the negative phase of the IOD. (not tropical eastern pacific ocean).

Statement 2: IOD has a much more significant effect on the rainfall patterns in south-east Australia than the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) in the Pacific Ocean as shown in several recent studies.

El Niño-Southern Oscillation is a climate pattern in the Pacific Ocean that has two phases: El Niño and La Niña. During an El Niño event, the winds that usually push warm waters near Asia weaken causing sea level to rise in the eastern tropical Pacific and to fall in the western tropical Pacific. La Niña is the opposite phase of El Niño with warm water piling up in the western Pacific and colder water in the eastern Pacific causing higher sea level in the western tropical Pacific and lower sea level in the eastern tropical Pacific. The temperature of the water also changes, which causes weather patterns to shift across the globe.

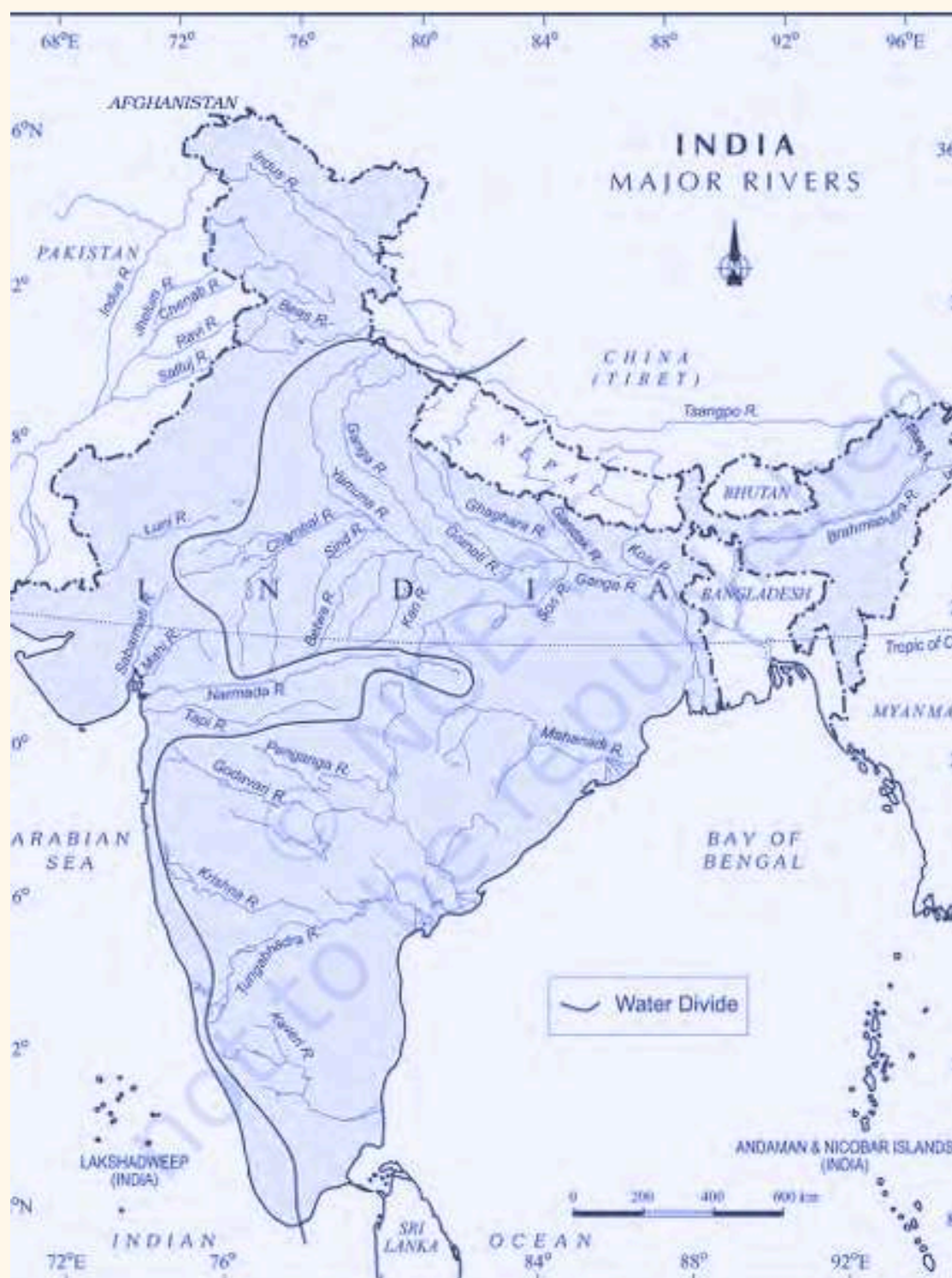
2) Answer is option b

1) Barak: Incorrect. The Barak River flows mainly through Manipur and Assam, but it does not flow through Arunachal Pradesh.

2) Lohit: Correct. The Lohit River originates in Tibet and flows through Arunachal Pradesh before merging with the Brahmaputra River.

3) Subansiri: Correct. The Subansiri River also originates in Tibet and flows through Arunachal Pradesh, eventually joining the Brahmaputra River. The Subansiri which has its origin in Tibet, is an antecedent river.

- Left bank tributaries of Brahmaputra :
Burhi Dihing, Dhansari
- Right bank tributaries : Subansiri, Kameng, Manas and Sankosh.



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