



**Kerala's paradox can spark its global vision**

KERALA - REVIEW



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**NATIONAL SCIENCE DAY 2026**

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## Open war': Afghan Taliban seeks 'dialogue' as Pakistan bombs Kabul, other cities

Pakistan carried out large-scale air strikes on major cities in Afghanistan, including Kabul, following months of border clashes. Pakistan described the situation as “open war” after Afghan forces allegedly attacked Pakistani troops. The Afghan Taliban government reported significant Pakistani casualties, while Pakistan claimed heavy losses among Taliban fighters. Tensions are linked to Pakistan’s accusations that Afghanistan has failed to act against the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which has increased attacks inside Pakistan. Several countries, including China and Saudi Arabia, have urged de-escalation and renewed dialogue.

## Israel Attacks Iran : News of the Hour

*United States and Israel reportedly launched coordinated strikes on Iran on Saturday, with one reported impact near offices associated with Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.* Israel launched a joint 'preventive missile attack' with US on Saturday on Iran's capital, with US President Donald Trump saying that the US had begun “major combat operations in Iran”. He claimed Iran has continued to develop its nuclear programme and plans to develop missiles to reach the US. Iranian media stated that strikes occurred in multiple locations, including the capital, where smoke was observed. There has been no official confirmation regarding Khamenei’s location at the time of the reported strike.



## Kerala's paradox can spark its global vision

(THE HINDU 28-02-2026 Editorial)

Kerala has practiced global trade for centuries. Traders once gathered at Muziris for spices and textiles. Romans, Arabs, and Chinese exchanged goods here. These contacts shaped Kerala's open social culture. Today, Malayalees work across the world. They send large remittances back home yearly. This remittance economy supports many families statewide. However, Kerala must now build innovation locally.

### Leveraging Strengths

Heavy industries do not suit Kerala's geography. The state has dense population and fragile ecology. Therefore, knowledge sectors offer better growth paths. Kerala leads India in health indicators. The state can expand into precision medicine research. Institutes like Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology support medical device production. With the right guidance, local firms can produce stents and valves, eliminating import dependency.



Kerala must shift from remittance dependence to innovation leadership. The state must use its global diaspora wisely. It must turn ageing, ecology, and density into strengths. Kerala can build biotech, medtech, marine, and space sectors. It can add value at Vizhinjam port. It can lead in fintech and arbitration services. It can upgrade Ayurveda through scientific validation. It can export climate resilience solutions worldwide. It must strengthen research universities and support startups through policy stability. Public and private investment must align with long-term knowledge growth. Kerala must compare itself with small global leaders. The state must collaborate with cities like Amsterdam, Singapore, and Kyoto. Kerala must become a global destination, not a bridge.



### Navigating Challenges

Kerala also faces rapid population ageing. The state can build quality assisted living services. It can develop community-based elder care models with trained caregivers. It can attract retired residents from India and abroad through climate-friendly retirement hubs. This sector can generate skilled jobs while improving dignity and healthcare access for senior citizens.

### Discovering Potential

Ayurveda can gain global trust through research. Kerala holds rich biodiversity in the Western Ghats. Farmers can adopt advanced glasshouse farming methods. They can promote Pokkali rice and spices. The Vizhinjam International Seaport offers trade potential. Kerala must add logistics and processing hubs. Green energy can supply future maritime fuels. Space research centers already operate in Thiruvananthapuram. Centers like Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre already support emerging private startups in the arena.



## What changed in Hong Kong after National Security Law?

Xi Jinping came to power in 2013. The Chinese Communist Party increased control over Hong Kong. Beijing wants closer ties with mainland China. This raises doubts about "one country, two systems." Hong Kong's Basic Law promised special freedoms. The National Security Law changed everything in 2020.

### Start of the Tussle

Tensions grew in 2014 with the Umbrella Movement. Protests started over Chief Executive election rules. Beijing wanted to vet all candidates first. Hong Kong people demanded real democratic choice. Demonstrations lasted 79 days across the city. Police cleared the protests by force.

### 2019 Protests and Response

In 2019, protests erupted over an extradition bill. The bill allowed sending suspects to mainland China. Critics feared unfair trials and torture there. Hong Kong withdrew the bill later. Protesters still demanded more democracy. Beijing called the unrest terrorism. Police suppressed the demonstrations fully. COVID-19 lockdowns helped control dissent next.

### What the National Security Law Does

China passed the National Security Law (NSL) in June 2020. The law was introduced to strengthen central authority over Hong Kong. It criminalises acts of secession, which means attempts to separate Hong Kong from China. It also prohibits subversion, including actions that undermine the authority of the central government. The law targets terrorist activities, especially those involving violence or serious threats to public safety. It further bans collusion with foreign forces, including seeking external support to impose sanctions or interfere in China's internal affairs. Supporters argue that the law restores stability, while critics believe it restricts political freedoms and dissent.

### Impact on Media Freedom

Media freedom in Hong Kong began to decline in 2015. Authorities linked to China detained five booksellers associated with Mighty Current for selling banned political books. This incident signalled tighter control over critical publishing. Jimmy Lai, founder of Apple Daily, was later charged under the National Security Law. Courts convicted him over protest-related cases, and the newspaper closed in 2021. Stand News also shut after arrests for alleged seditious publications. The National Security Law narrowed dissent and reshaped Hong Kong's distinct identity under "one country, two systems."



## International law is not dead, its rules stay resilient

Rising tensions between the United States and Iran have revived concerns about the weakening of international law. The Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Israel's military operations in Gaza, and unilateral American actions in places such as Venezuela have deepened these anxieties. Observers argue that repeated violations of Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter, which prohibits the threat or use of force, signal a drift toward a norm-free global order. The growing influence of populist-authoritarian politics has intensified fears that powerful states no longer feel compelled to justify their actions within legal frameworks.

### What Do Historical Lessons Suggest?

History shows that international law has faced severe crises before. During the Cold War, wars in Afghanistan, the Falklands, Iraq, and the Balkans tested the prohibition on the use of force. Yet the norm survived because even powerful states framed their actions using legal language, especially by expanding interpretations of self-defence. This demonstrated that international law retained authority as a standard for accountability and debate. The framework allowed space for dialogue, criticism, and institutional response.



### What Has Changed and What Is the Current Status?

The key change today lies in the growing brazenness of states that bypass legal justification altogether. However, the decline of compliance in matters of force does not mean the collapse of international law. Beyond the UN Charter, international law governs trade, climate, aviation, oceans, and human rights. New treaties and courts, such as the International Criminal Court, continue to function. The author argues that international law still operates quietly and effectively in many domains. Rather than declaring its death, states must defend and strengthen this legal order against emerging challenges.

### Limits of Viewing the UN Charter as the Sole Pillar

Much of the current anxiety focuses narrowly on violations of Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter. This article prohibits the threat or use of force in international relations. Repeated breaches have created the impression that the entire international legal order is collapsing. However, reducing international law to the UN Charter presents a distorted picture. The Charter is a foundational pillar, but it is not the whole structure. International law today extends far beyond rules on war and peace. Therefore, the weakness of one norm does not automatically mean the death of the entire system.

## PRELIMS CORNER :

1) With reference to the usefulness of the by products of the sugar industry, which of the following statements is / are correct? (2013)

1. Bagasse can be used as biomass fuel for the generation of energy.
2. Molasses can be used as one of the feedstocks for the production of synthetic chemical fertilizers.
3. Molasses can be used for the production of ethanol.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.

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

2) Consider the following pairs: (2014)

Region	Well-known for the production of
1. Kinnaur	: Areca nut
2. Mewat	: Mango
3. Coromandel	: Soya bean

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

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

**PRELIMS 2026 COUNTDOWN**



**85 DAYS TO GO**

## HERITAGE

### Sir C. V. Raman



C. V. Raman remains one of India's greatest scientific minds. Every year on February 28, India celebrates National Science Day to mark his discovery of the Raman Effect. This discovery transformed modern physics and placed India firmly on the global scientific map. In 1930, he became the first Asian scientist to win the Nobel Prize in Physics.

Raman achieved this distinction without studying abroad. He completed his entire education in India and proved that world-class science could emerge from Indian institutions. In the early years of his career, he worked as a government accountant in Kolkata. Despite his demanding job, he pursued research in his spare time at the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science. The Raman Effect itself was discovered using simple instruments. His work demonstrated that scientific excellence depends more on curiosity and clarity than on expensive laboratories. Raman also had a deep interest in music. He studied the physics of Indian instruments such as the tabla and the violin, exploring how vibrations produce rich tonal sounds. He refused to patent the Raman Effect because he believed scientific knowledge should benefit humanity. After retirement, he founded the Raman Research Institute in Bengaluru, where he mentored young scientists. His life continues to inspire generations to pursue science with integrity and passion.

# Prelims Corner: Explanations

## 1) Answer is option c

1. Bagasse can be used as biomass fuel for the generation of energy: This statement is Correct. Bagasse, the fibrous residue left after extracting juice from sugarcane, is an excellent biomass fuel. It is commonly used in sugar mills to generate electricity and steam for their operations.

2. Molasses can be used as one of the feedstocks for the production of synthetic chemical fertilizers: This statement is incorrect. Molasses is not directly used as a feedstock for synthetic chemical fertilizers. It is primarily used in the production of ethanol, animal feed, and certain chemicals, but it has no significant role in fertilizer production.

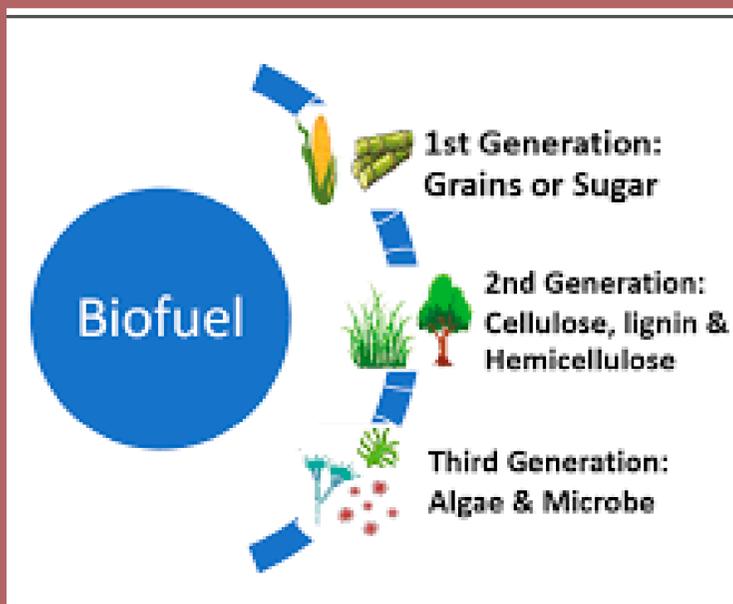
3. Molasses can be used for the production of ethanol: This statement is correct. Molasses, a by-product of sugar production, is rich in sugars and is widely used for producing ethanol through fermentation.

## 2) Answer is option d

1) Kinnaur - Areca nut: ● Correct. Kinnaur, a region in Himachal Pradesh, is well-known for the cultivation of Areca nut (also called betel nut), which is a significant crop in the region.

2) Mewat - Mango: This is Correct. Mewat, a region located in Haryana and Rajasthan, is known for mango cultivation, especially the famous Chaunsa variety of mangoes.

3) Coromandel - Soya bean: This is Correct. The Coromandel region, which refers to the southeastern coast of India (mainly in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh), is known for the cultivation of soya bean among other crops.



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