



CURRENT AFFAIRS JULY 2025

INTER STATE WATER DISPUTE (ISWD)

The Ravi and Beas Waters Tribunal, formed in 1986, has got an extension of another year to resolve water sharing issues between Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan.

- Also, Centre will constitute a high-level technical committee to examine concerns around the Polavaram Banakacherla Link Project (PBLP) and other pending inter-state water issues between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.
- Additionally, Odisha and Chhattisgarh expressed willingness to resolve Mahanadi water dispute 'amicably'.
- Inter-State water dispute in India can be traced back to the British colonial period with Cauvery water dispute between British-controlled Madras Presidency and Princely State of Mysore.

Reasons for ISWD

- Asymmetric access to river water resources
 - o Geographical factors: When rivers flow across state boundaries, upper riparian states have advantageous access to river water.
 - o State Reorganisation: Post- independence reorganisation of boundaries of states have emphasised less on the river basin-based boundary distribution.
- Increasing Demand: Rapid population growth, agricultural expansion, urbanisation, and economic development have significantly increased the demand for water.
- Development Projects: Disputes often arise when one state develops major water resource projects like dams (e.g., Narmada, Cauvery River basin disputes).
- Fragmented water governance approach
 - o Union Government: Lack of structure for the governance of interstate water disputes.

o State Government: Divergent perspective and reductionist water management strategy.

o Unscientific Approach: Lack of integrated river basin based management.

- Lack of proper data: Non-uniformity in data collection of river water related to its flow, volume etc.

Legal and Constitutional Framework to resolve dispute

- Article 262: Provides for the adjudication of inter-state water disputes
 - o Parliament by law can provide for the adjudication of any inter-state water dispute (Article 262(1))
 - o Parliament may also provide that neither Supreme Court nor any other court is to exercise jurisdiction in respect of any such dispute or complaint (Article 262(2))
- Exercising its power under the Article 262 of the Constitution Parliament has enacted two laws
 - o The River Boards Act, 1956: This empowers Union Government to establish River Boards for the regulation of inter-state rivers and river valleys in consultation with State Governments.
 - o Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956: Union Government can establish a tribunal for the adjudication of inter-state river water dispute if requested by the state.
- Seventh schedule
 - o Entry 56 of the Union List: Regulation and development of inter-state rivers.
 - o Entry 17 of the State List: Water, that is to say, water supplies, irrigation and canals, drainage and embankments, water storage and water power subject to the provisions of entry 56 of List I.



LOWERING OF AGE FOR VOTING

Globally, several countries, including Germany, Austria, Malta, Estonia, Argentina, Nicaragua, have lowered their voting age from 18 to 16 years.

- Recently United kingdom also announced plans to reduce the voting age from 18 to 16.
- In India, a Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2020 was proposed to amend Article 326 to reduce the voting age from 18 to 17 years.

- o It was a private member's bill.

Constitutional provisions related to voting age in India

- Article 326 provides for universal adult suffrage for every citizen who is not less than 18 years of age.
 - o India reduced the voting age from 21 to 18 years through 61st Constitutional Amendment in 1988.
 - o Right to Vote is a statutory right that can be amended by ordinary law of the Parliament.

REMOVAL OF JUDGES IN HIGHER JUDICIARY

Member of Parliaments across party lines submit motion in Parliament to remove Justice Yashwant Varma.

- A total of 145 Lok Sabha members have signed a motion against Justice Verma under Articles 124, 217, and 218 of the Constitution.
- Also, the Rajya Sabha Chairman received a motion for the removal signed by more than 50 members of Rajya Sabha.

Constitutional provisions regarding removal of judges

- Article 124(4): It deals with removal of judges of the Supreme Court.



o Grounds for Removal : Proven misbehavior and incapacity.

- Article 124(5): It deals with the power of parliament to regulate the procedure for the presentation of an address and for the investigation and proof of the misbehavior or incapacity of a Judge under clause (4)

- o Procedure is regulated by Judges Enquiry Act (1968). (enacted under article 124(5)).

- Article 217(1)(b): It deals with removal of a Judge of a High Court.

- o It states that a High Court Judge may be removed from his office by the President in the manner provided in clause (4) of article 124 for the removal of a Judge of the Supreme Court.

- Article 218: It extends the Applicability of clause (4) and clause (5) of article 124 to High courts.

GIRMITIYA COMMUNITY

On his Trinidad and Tobago visit, the Prime Minister said India is working to create a Girmitya community database and to regularly host World Girmitya Conferences.

- Extension of OCI cards to the sixth generation of the Indian diaspora in Trinidad and Tobago was also announced.

- Additionally, Trinidad and Tobago has become the first country in the region to adopt India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI).

About Girmityas

- “Girmityas” were Indian indentured labourers who left India in the mid to late 19th century to work in British colonies especially after enforcement of British Slavery Abolition Act 1833, causing labour shortage.

- o The term “Girmity” is a mispronunciation of “Agreement,” referring to the contract under which they migrated.

o They went to work on sugar plantations, tea gardens etc. in the colonies, and many eventually settled there.

- Distribution: Mauritius, Fiji, South Africa, Caribbean (mostly Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Suriname, and Jamaica).

KALADAN MULTIMODAL TRANSIT TRANSPORT PROJECT (KMTTP)

Union Minister said that KMTTP will be Operational by 2027.

- Jointly identified by India and Myanmar, it offers multimodal transportation of cargo from Eastern Ports of India to Myanmar and to India's North-Eastern Region (NER) through Myanmar.

About KMTTP

- Framework Agreement: Signed in 2008.
- Nodal Ministry: Ministry of External Affairs.
- Project Development Consultant (PDC): Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI).
- Transit Components
 - o Waterway Component: On Kaladan River from Sittwe Port (Rakhine, Myanmar) to Paletwa in Myanmar.
 - o Road Component: From Paletwa to Zorinpui on India-Myanmar border in Mizoram.

Significance of KMTTP for India

- End Geographic Isolation of NER: Region is connected with rest of India through the "Chicken's Neck" (narrow corridor of just 21 km) and is surrounded by International borders.
- Aligns with India's Act East Policy (AEP): Announced in 2014, focuses on India's connectivity with the neighbourhood.

- Logistics Cost and Time: Cost and time for transportation of goods from Kolkata to Aizawl would drop by more than 50%.

Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project



US DECIDES TO PULL OUT OF UNESCO

The withdrawal was announced, citing the agency's support for woke and divisive causes and anti-Israel bias.

- This marks the third US exit from UNESCO and the second under the current leadership.
- Additionally, the US also took steps to withdraw from other UN bodies and agencies, such as the WHO, and significantly reduced funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine.

Impact of US withdrawal

- Budgetary Impact: The US contributes nearly 8% of UNESCO's total budget.



- Geopolitical Impact: The withdrawal may create space for increased influence by other powers, particularly China.
- Impact on Multilateralism: Exiting a UN body may weaken trust in multilateral institutions and signal a retreat from global cooperation.

About UNESCO

- It is a specialized agency of the United Nations.
- Purpose: To contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture.
- Its Headquarters in Paris serves as the Organization's main building.
- It has 194 Members and 12 Associate Members.

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT (ICC)

International Criminal Court welcomed Ukraine as 125th State Party to the Rome Statute.

About the ICC

- It is the first international permanent court to investigate and prosecute individuals accused of serious international crimes: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression.
- Established under the Rome Statute (adopted in 1998 entered into force in 2002).
- India is not party to the Rome Statute.
- Hq: The Hague, Netherlands.

HENLEY PASSPORT INDEX 2025

India's ranking in Henley Passport Index jumps from 85 (2024) to 77 (2025).

- Indian citizens can now travel to 59 destinations without needing to secure a visa beforehand.

About Henley Passport Index

- It is the original, authoritative ranking of all the world's passports according to the number of destinations their holders can access without a prior visa.
- It is based on exclusive data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA).
- Singapore holds the top spot in the Index.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS IN INDIA

India's Intellectual Property (IP) filings rose by 44% in last 5 years, led by a 380% surge in Geographical Indications.

Reasons for Increase in IP Boom

- Legal & Procedural Simplification of IP laws & rules E.g. Patent examination timeline reduced from 48 months to 31 months and mandatory e-submission for patent documents.
- Modernization of IP Offices: IP offices have been digitized with a comprehensive e-filing system, leading to over 95% of applications being filed online.
- International standards: E.g. adoption of international classification under Locarno Agreement for Industrial Designs.
 - o Locarno agreement is an international agreement under the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) signed in 1968.
- Awareness & Capacity Building E.g. SPRIHA Scheme aims to integrate IPR education into higher learning institutions across the country
 - o National Intellectual Property (IP) Awards: To recognize and reward the top achievers for their IP creations and commercialization.
- Other: Fee Concessions (10% fee reduction for online filings), Digital initiatives (IP Sarthi Chatbot for applicant support and IP Dashboard to provide real-time IP data) and use of AI and Machine Learning etc.

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

- Definition: IPR are the rights given to persons over the creations of their minds. They usually give the creator an exclusive right over the use of his/her creation for a certain period of time.

- o 8 types of IPR are covered under IPR Policy Management (IPRPM) framework: (i) Patents, (ii) Trade mark, (iii) Industrial Designs, (iv) Copyrights, (v) Geographical Indications, (vi) Semiconductor Integrated Circuit Layout Design, (vii) Trade Secret, and (viii) Plant Varieties.

- Administered by: Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trademarks which is under the control of the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

ETHANOL BLENDING

Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas announced India's achievement of 20% Ethanol blending target in petrol.

- The target was achieved as envisaged in Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme.
- Ethanol blending in petrol increased from 1.5% in 2014 to 20% in 2025 (Nearly 13-fold increase).

About Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme

- Genesis: Launched in 2003 to promote blending of ethanol in petrol.
- About Ethanol Blending

- o Definition: Ethanol blending refers to the process of mixing ethanol with petrol to create a more sustainable and cleaner burning fuel.

- o Types: E10 (10% Ethanol by Volume), E20 (20% Ethanol), E85 fuel (85% ethanol by volume).

> The use of E-20 gives better acceleration, better ride quality and lowered carbon emissions by approximately 30% as compared to E10 fuel.

- Target: National Policy on Biofuels (2018), as amended in 2022, advanced the target of 20% blending of ethanol in petrol to 2025-26 from 2030.

PACIFIC RING OF FIRE

- A powerful magnitude 8.8 earthquake struck near Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula which is part of the seismically active Pacific Ring of Fire triggering tsunami waves that hit coastal towns in Russia and Japan.



Features of Circum-Pacific Belt:

- Geography: It has led to the formation of mountains, island arcs, deep underwater trenches, like the Mariana Trench (world's deepest spot).
- Source of geothermal energy: More than 40% of global geothermal energy resources are stored in that region.
- Minerals: Home to many rich mineral deposits, such as gold, copper, molybdenum, and other metals.



- Agricultural Significance: Volcanic soils are fertile (good for crops like rice, coffee)

RISING SUICIDES AMONG STUDENTS

Noting the 'deepening crisis' of suicides, Supreme Court (SC) in *Sukdeb Saha v State of Andhra Pradesh* issued guidelines to Protect Mental Health of Students In Colleges & Coaching Centres.

Rising Mental Health Crisis amongst Students

- National Crime Records Bureau ('NCRB') in its "Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India" (2022) found that out of the total cases of suicides, 7.6% corresponds to students.
- Male student suicides surged to 99% while female jumped to 92% (2012-2022).



Other related SC Judgements



Amit Kumar v. Union of India (2025)

National Task Force constituted to address the mental health concerns of students and prevent suicides in Higher Educational Institutions.



Shatrughan Chauhan v. Union of India (2014) and Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India (2018)

Held that Mental health is an integral component of Right to Life under Article 21 of the Constitution.

KASHMIRI PASHMINA SHAWL

Indian Prime Minister during his Ghana visit gifted handcrafted artefacts such as Kashmiri Pashmina shawl to the country's top leaders.

Kashmiri Pashmina shawl

- It is woven from the fine undercoat of the Changthangi goat.
 - Changthangi goat, also known as the Pashmina goat, is a breed raised in the high-altitude regions of Ladakh, India.
- Celebrated for its softness and warmth

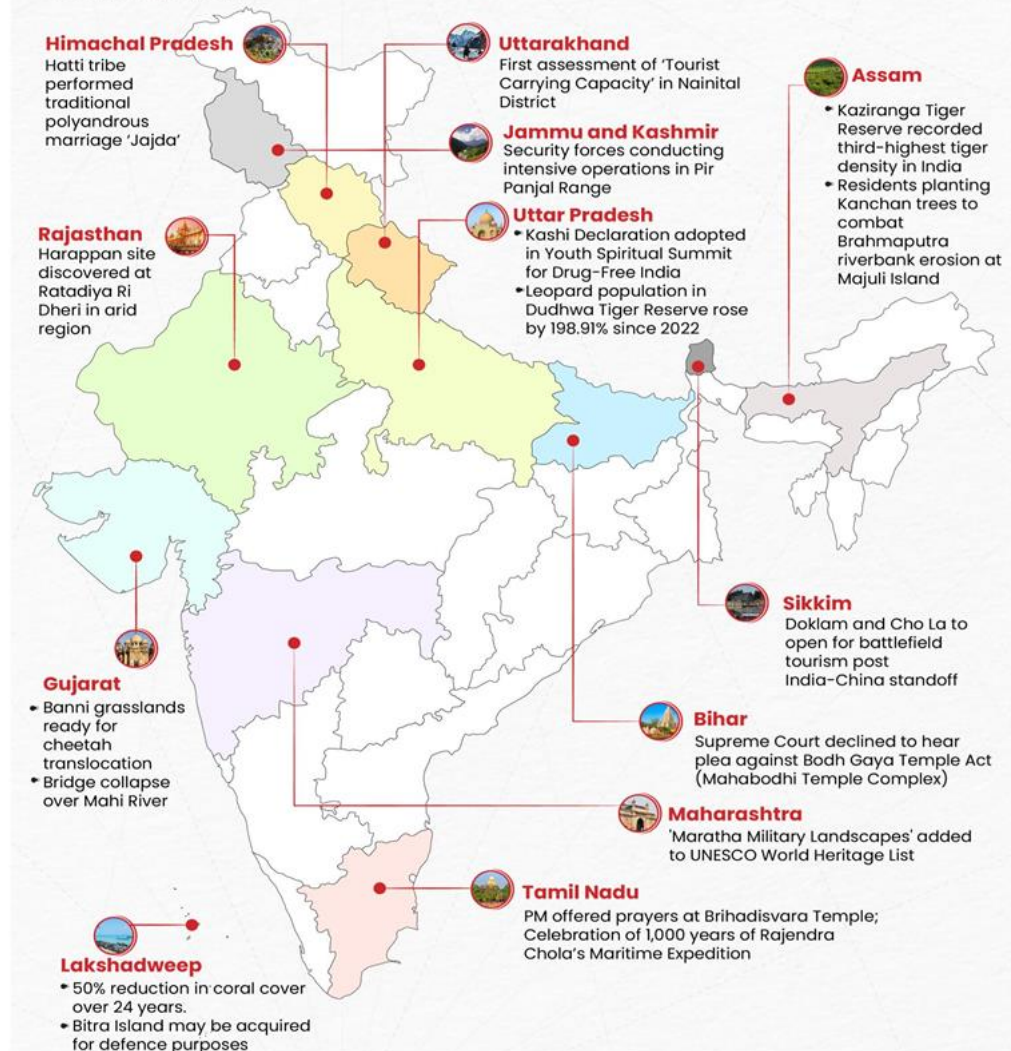


Other Handicrafts

- Bidriware vases (Bidar, Karnataka): The vases feature a zinc-copper alloy base with a distinctive black finish and fine silver inlay.
 - o These are engraved with floral motifs, they symbolise beauty, prosperity and harmony.
- Silver filigree purse (Cuttack, Odisha): It is known for its Tarakasi work.
 - o The purse combines intricate floral and vine designs with modern style.
- Miniature Ambawari elephant (West Bengal): It is handcrafted from polished synthetic ivory — an ethical alternative to natural ivory.

Please note: All the listed handicrafts, except the Miniature Ambawari Elephant, have been granted a Geographical Indication (GI) tag.

Places in News India



Places in News World

