

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

Time: 45 Min

Date: 12-06-2026

Table of Content

Strict Enforcement of PCPNDT Act Needed: SC

India's Care Economy: Recognising the Invisible Foundation of Development

Declining Fertility Rate in India

R&D Underspensing in India

India's Textile Industry Weaves a New Growth Story

News In Short

Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958

SC Invokes Article 142 to Set Aside POCSO Conviction

Shigellosis Outbreak in Kerala

HIMARS

Epichlorohydrin

New Rule Requires Fish Survival Test for Caustic Soda Industry Wastewater

STRICT ENFORCEMENT OF PCPNDT ACT NEEDED: SC

Context

- The Supreme Court underscored the **need for strict enforcement of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act.**

About

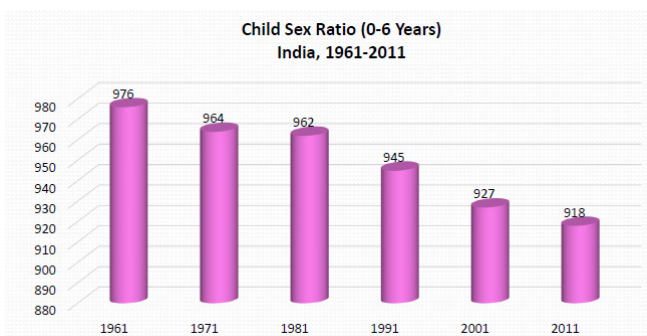
- It voiced concern over the **persistent societal preference for male children** and the continued practice of sex-selective measures rooted in deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes.
 - While acknowledging the progress made in recent years, the court noted that significant challenges remain, with several states continuing to report sex ratios at birth below the national average.

Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act (1994)

- It is the overarching **legal framework governing the misuse of technology for detection and disclosure of sex of the fetus.**
 - It prohibit sex selection before or after conception.
- All genetic counselling centres, genetic laboratories, genetic clinics, ultrasound clinics, and imaging centres must be registered.
- Punishment**
 - First offence:** Up to 3 years imprisonment and fine up to 10,000.
 - Subsequent offences:** Up to 5 years imprisonment and higher fines.
 - Medical practitioners may face suspension or cancellation of registration by the State Medical Council.

Sex Ratio in India

- Census 2011:**



- The sex ratio at all India levels was **943** and the same for **rural and urban areas are 949 and 929 respectively.**
- The sex ratio for the **0-19 age group** was **908** while that of the **60+ age** group was **1033.**
- The sex ratio in the economically active age group (15-59 years) was **944.**
- The sex ratio was **highest in Kerala** (1084) followed by Puducherry (1037) and **lowest in Daman & Diu** (618) followed by Dadar & Nagar Haveli (774) and then Chandigarh (818).
- National Family Health Survey 2021:**
 - According to the NFHS-5, the overall **sex ratio at birth in India was 929.**
 - The sex ratio of the population for the country was estimated as **1020.**

Why Historically there has been an Imbalance in the Sex Ratio in India?

- Cultural Preference for Sons:** Sons were preferred for carrying on the family name, performing religious rites, and providing financial support in old age.
 - This led to a neglect of daughters, who were seen as a financial burden due to dowry practices.
- Gender Discrimination:** Girls have historically faced neglect in terms of nutrition, education, and healthcare, which contributed to higher mortality rates among females.
- Female Infanticide:** In some regions, female infants were either abandoned or killed due to their perceived lower value.
- Sex-Selective Abortion:** Advances in medical technology, such as ultrasound, enabled the practice of sex-selective abortion, leading to a disproportionate number of male births.
- Economic Factors:** In agrarian societies, the labor of sons was seen as more valuable for agricultural work, further reinforcing the preference for male children.

Government Initiatives to Improve Sex Ratio

- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP):** Launched in 2015, this campaign aims to address gender-based discrimination, promote the value of the girl child, and improve access to education for girls.

- ♦ It also focuses on raising awareness about the importance of girls' welfare and preventing female foeticide.
- **Sukanya Samridhi Yojana:** This is a savings scheme for the girl child, which encourages families to save for the future education and marriage of their daughters. It promotes a positive perception of girls.
- **Maternity Benefits:** The government has introduced maternity benefits through schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), which provides financial assistance to pregnant women and lactating mothers, aiming to reduce the economic burden on families and support maternal and child health.
- **The National Health Mission (NHM):** This program focuses on improving healthcare services for women, including maternal health, to reduce the mortality rate among women and girls.
- **Awareness Campaigns and Legal Reforms:** The government conducts awareness campaigns to sensitize people about the importance of gender equality.

Way Ahead

- **Community Awareness and Education:** Campaigns like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao should continue to raise awareness about the value of the girl child and the harmful effects of gender discrimination.
- **Improving Women's Health and Access to Healthcare:** Providing better healthcare access for women and girls, especially in rural areas, can help reduce female mortality rates.
- **Changing Social Norms and Attitudes:** Promoting gender-sensitive education, involving men in gender equality discussions, and tackling the dowry system can help break the traditional biases against girls.
- **Robust Data Collection and Research:** Continuous monitoring and research into the reasons behind sex ratio imbalances can help tailor future interventions and track the success of existing initiatives.

Source: AIR

INDIA'S CARE ECONOMY: RECOGNISING THE INVISIBLE FOUNDATION OF DEVELOPMENT

Context

- The Supreme Court's 2026 judgment recognising homemakers as "**nation builders**" and assigning a minimum value of ₹**30,000 per month** to unpaid domestic care work has brought renewed attention to India's care economy.

What is the Care Economy?

- The care economy refers to **all paid and unpaid activities** related to the care of children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities etc.
 - ♦ Care work forms a critical pillar of **human development, labour productivity, and social welfare systems** in modern economies.
- According to the **International Labour Organisation**, increasing investments in the care services sector have the potential to generate **475 million jobs** globally by **2030**.
 - ♦ For India specifically, direct public investment equivalent to **2% of GDP** can potentially generate **11 million jobs**, nearly **70%** of which will go to women.



Components of India's Care Economy

- **Unpaid Care Work:** It includes activities such as **childcare, elderly care, cooking**, cleaning, household management, and **care for sick family members**, which are essential for family well-being but remain largely unpaid and unrecognised.
- **Paid Care Work:** Paid care work includes services provided by **healthcare workers, nurses, doctors, ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers**, domestic workers, childcare providers, social workers, and caregivers.

- ◆ These services form an important part of India's **social and economic infrastructure**.
- **Community Care Services:** Community-based care services include support systems provided through **self-help groups**, community health workers, and welfare programmes that assist vulnerable populations.

Why is the Demand for Care Services Rising?

- **Demographic Transition:** India's ageing population is increasing the need for long-term eldercare services.
- **Urbanisation and Migration:** Rapid urbanisation and migration are weakening traditional joint family systems. Nuclear families often lack informal support networks for caregiving.
- **Rising Female Workforce Participation:** More women entering the workforce has increased the demand for organised childcare and caregiving services.

Government Initiatives Related to the Care Economy

- **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS):** Launched in **1975** to provide early childhood care, nutrition, health services, and preschool education through Anganwadi centres.
 - ◆ Targets children (0–6 years), pregnant women, and lactating mothers.
 - ◆ Provides supplementary nutrition, immunization, health check-ups, and preschool education.
- **POSHAN Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission):** Focuses on reducing stunting, undernutrition, and Anaemia among women and children.
 - ◆ Promotes behavioural change, use of technology (**POSHAN Tracker**), and convergence of health and nutrition services.
- **Mission Shakti:** Umbrella programme for women empowerment and safety.
 - ◆ It includes schemes supporting childcare services and economic empowerment of women.
- **Palna Scheme (National Crèche Scheme):** It provides day-care facilities for children aged **6 months to 6 years**.
 - ◆ It offers nutrition, health care, and early learning support, helping mothers participate in the workforce.
 - ◆ Operates under Mission Shakti with Centre–State funding support.

Challenges in Implementing Care Economy Reforms

- **Fiscal Constraints:** Expanding care infrastructure and workforce training requires substantial public investment and long-term financial commitment.
- **Social Attitudes Towards Care Work:** Caregiving continues to be viewed as a private family responsibility rather than a public policy concern. Deep-rooted patriarchal norms limit recognition of unpaid care work.
- **Weak Regulatory Capacity:** Ensuring quality standards and monitoring care institutions across India remains administratively challenging.
- **Lack of Skilled Care Workforce:** India faces a shortage of professionally trained caregivers, especially in eldercare, disability support, and early childhood care.

Way Ahead

- **Recognise Care as Essential Social Infrastructure:** Policymakers should treat care services as a core component of economic and social infrastructure similar to education and healthcare.
- **Increase Investment in Care Services:** India should substantially increase public investment in childcare centres, eldercare facilities, rehabilitation centres, and community support systems.
 - ◆ Care policies should be aligned with labour reforms, gender budgeting, and women's empowerment programmes.
- **Improve Data Collection and Measurement:** India should strengthen time-use surveys and statistical frameworks to estimate the economic contribution of unpaid care work.

Source: [TH](#)

DECLINING FERTILITY RATE IN INDIA

Context

- For decades, Indian policymakers have encouraged population control, however, recently **India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has now dropped to 1.9**.

TFR as per the Sample Registration System (SRS) Statistical Report 2024

- **India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR)**, the average number of children a woman would have in her lifetime assuming she lives through her reproductive years (15-49 years), has **fallen below the replacement level of 2.1**.

- ♦ **Replacement rate** is the number of child births a woman must go through to keep the population constant from one generation to the next without migration.
- **The only states in India with a TFR higher than 2.1 in 2024** were Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Chhattisgarh.
- **Delhi records the lowest TFR at 1.2**, followed by Tamil Nadu, Kerala and West Bengal at 1.3 each.
 - ♦ **The southern states** have always had TFRs well below the national average. This has gone down further in the last two decades.
- **In 1985, India's TFR was 4.3** and has fallen at a rate of about 0.06 per year and there is no sign that this decline will reverse.
 - ♦ At the current pace, India's TFR is projected to drop below 1.6 by 2031.
- **Rising Ageing Population:** A sustained low fertility rate will increase the proportion of elderly citizens.
 - ♦ India may face challenges similar to those experienced by countries such as Japan and South Korea i.e. higher pension liabilities, greater healthcare expenditure and increased demand for geriatric care and social security.
- **Future Labour Force Challenges:** A declining birth rate eventually leads to fewer entrants into the labour market. Economic growth could slow if productivity improvements do not compensate for a smaller workforce.
- **Regional Demographic Imbalances:** Fertility rates vary significantly across states, most southern and western states have well below replacement fertility, while states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan continue to record relatively higher fertility levels.
 - ♦ This may alter the internal migration patterns, political representation, resource allocation and labour market dynamics.

Reasons for Declining Fertility Rate in India

- **Delayed Marriage and Childbearing:** The average age of marriage has increased, especially in urban areas, couples are postponing childbirth due to career considerations.
- **Urbanisation:** Urban living is associated with higher costs of housing, education, healthcare, and childcare. Limited living space and changing lifestyles encourage smaller family sizes.
- **Improved Access to Contraception and Family Planning:** Expansion of reproductive health services and contraceptive availability has enabled couples to plan the number and spacing of children.
- **Declining Infant and Child Mortality:** Improvements in healthcare, immunisation, nutrition, and sanitation have reduced child mortality.
- **Economic Factors:** The cost of raising and educating children has increased substantially. Families increasingly prefer investing more resources in fewer children to improve their quality of life and educational outcomes.
- **Demographic Transition:** India is moving through the later stages of the Demographic Transition Model, characterised by low birth rates, low death rates, slower population growth.

Implications

- **Slower Population Growth and Eventual Stabilisation:** A fertility rate below replacement level means that, over time, each generation will be smaller than the previous one. Eventually, the population is expected to stabilize and later decline.

Government Initiatives

- **State-Level Population Policies:** Andhra Pradesh's Population Management Policy (2026) provides cash incentives for second, third and fourth children, free education support, fertility clinics, and improved maternal healthcare.
 - ♦ Sikkim has introduced measures such as extended maternity and paternity leave and support for IVF treatment to address declining fertility.
- **Infertility Support Programmes:** The Jiyo Parsi Scheme provides financial assistance for infertility treatment, child-care support, and awareness campaigns to arrest the decline of the Parsi population.
- **Maternal and Child Health Schemes:** Programmes under the National Health Mission (NHM) improve maternal and child health, reduce infant mortality, and create conditions that support family formation and childbearing.
 - ♦ Schemes like Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) provide maternity benefits to pregnant and lactating women.

Way Ahead

- **Adopt a Balanced Population Policy:** Shift from a sole focus on population control to a demographic strategy that balances population stabilization with concerns over declining fertility.

- **Strengthen Family Support Measures:** Provide affordable childcare, parental leave, and flexible work arrangements for young couples.
- **Expand Fertility and Reproductive Healthcare:** Improve access to infertility treatment, assisted reproductive technologies (ART), and reproductive health services, especially in smaller cities and rural areas.
- **Promote Gender Equality:** Encourage greater sharing of caregiving responsibilities and enhance women's workforce participation through supportive workplace policies.
- **Focus on State-Specific Interventions:** Tailor policies to regional demographic trends, as fertility levels vary significantly across states.
- **Invest in Human Capital:** Alongside fertility measures, improve education, healthcare, and skill development to maximize the benefits of India's demographic transition.
- **Premature Financialisation of Corporate Sector:** Many firms prioritize short-term financial returns over long-term investments such as R&D. Pressure from shareholders and focus on quarterly performance discourage innovation spending.
- **High Uncertainty and Risk Aversion:** Long-gestation R&D projects face uncertainty regarding regulations, markets, and returns. Businesses therefore apply high discount rates to future gains and prefer safer investments.
- **Weak Industry Participation:** India's GERD remains around 0.6–0.7% of GDP, with private-sector contribution significantly lower than in major innovation-driven economies.

R&D Expenditure in India

Conclusion

- India's response to declining fertility should focus not merely on increasing birth rates but on creating an environment where individuals and families can have their desired number of children while ensuring sustainable economic and social development.
- Another factor contributing to this is the **relatively low investment by India's private sector**, accounting for **only around 36%**, whereas in the aforementioned countries, **private sector contributions are more than 70%**.
- The Central Government contributes **43.7% of total R&D expenditure**.

Source: TH

R&D UNDERSPENDING IN INDIA

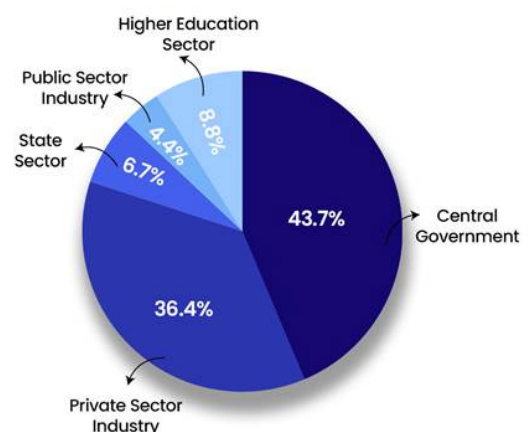
Context

- India's low spending on Research & Development (R&D) is not due to a single factor; it is the outcome of **systemic, historical, financial, and cultural factors interacting with each other**.

Reasons for Low R&D Spending

- **Large Domestic Market and Limited Competitive Pressure:** India's vast domestic market allows firms to grow without facing intense global competition. This reduces incentives to invest in risky and expensive frontier innovation.
- **Historical Legacy of Colonial De-industrialisation:** Colonial policies weakened indigenous manufacturing capabilities and encouraged a trading-oriented business culture. This historical trajectory reduced emphasis on innovation-driven manufacturing.

Sector-wise Share in India's National R&D Expenditure (2020–21)



Source - Department of Science & Technology

Need for Funding in R&D

- **Economic Growth:** Drives new industries, improves productivity, and enhances global competitiveness.

- **Technological Advancement:** Facilitates breakthroughs in fields like AI, biotechnology, and renewable energy.
- **Social Challenges:** Helps address poverty, healthcare, education, and environmental sustainability issues.
- **Job Creation:** Innovation generates employment opportunities and stimulates entrepreneurship.
- **Global Positioning:** Positions India as a global leader in science, technology, and knowledge.
- **Attracts Investment:** Promotes foreign and domestic investments in research-driven sectors.
- **BioE3 Policy, 2024:** It encourages the creation of Biomanufacturing and Bio-AI hubs, along with a national Biofoundry network, to accelerate technology development and commercialisation.
- **National Supercomputing Mission (NSM):** Launched in 2015, the initiative empowers universities, research institutions, and government agencies with state-of-the-art supercomputing systems connected through the National Knowledge Network.
- **India Semiconductor Mission (ISM):** Established in 2021, the mission seeks to build a robust ecosystem for semiconductor and display manufacturing.

Government Initiatives

- **Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Scheme:** Approved with a 1 lakh crore corpus, this scheme aims to energise private-sector R&D and deep-tech startups.
 - ♦ It offers long-term, low- or zero-interest loans, equity investments, and funds a new Deep-Tech Fund of Funds via the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF).
- **Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF):** The ANRF established in 2023, provides high-level strategic direction for research, innovation, and entrepreneurship in science and technology.
 - ♦ The Foundation aims to mobilise funds amounting to 50,000 crore during 2023–28 through multiple streams, including the ANRF Fund, Innovation Fund, Science and Engineering Research Fund, and Special Purpose Funds.
- **National Geospatial Policy, 2022:** It seeks to position India as a global leader in the geospatial sector by 2035.
 - ♦ The policy liberalises access to geospatial data, encouraging its use in governance, business, and research.
- **Indian Space Policy, 2023:** It builds on the space reforms introduced in 2020, which opened the domain to non-governmental entities for end-to-end participation.
 - ♦ It aims to enhance space capabilities, promote a flourishing commercial space industry, and foster collaboration between public and private entities.
- **National Quantum Mission:** Allocated 6,003.65 crore for 2023–31, to advance quantum technologies through scientific and industrial R&D.
- ♦ India has already approved 10 semiconductor projects across six states, including the first commercial Silicon Carbide fabrication facility in Odisha.
- **India AI Mission:** The IndiaAI Mission embodies the vision of “Making AI in India and Making AI Work for India.”
 - ♦ It is advancing rapidly, having already increased computing capacity from an initial target of 10,000 GPUs to 38,000 GPUs, ensuring accessible AI infrastructure for startups, researchers, and industries.
- **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM):** To foster innovation at the grassroots level by providing support to students, startups, and entrepreneurs.
- **The National Mission on High-Yielding Seeds** will focus on strengthening the research ecosystem and developing high-yielding, pest-resistant, and climate-resilient seeds, aligning with DBT’s efforts in agricultural biotechnology.

Source: IE

INDIA'S TEXTILE INDUSTRY WEAVES A NEW GROWTH STORY

Context

- The Union Minister of Textiles, highlighted the achievements of India's textile sector emphasizing its transformation into a globally competitive, innovation-driven and employment-intensive industry.

Textile Sector of India

- **Share in Domestic Trade:** The domestic apparel & textile industry in India contributes approx. **2.3 % to the country's GDP, 13%** to industrial production and **12%** to exports.
 - ♦ It has expanded to nearly **USD 190 billion** in 2025-26.

- **Share in Global Trade:** India has a **4%** share of the global trade in textiles and apparel.
- **Export:** India is the **6th largest exporter of Textiles & Apparel** in the world.
 - ♦ The share of textile and apparel (T&A) including handicrafts in India's total exports stands at a significant **8.21%** in 2023-24.
- **Production of Raw Material:** India is one of the largest producers of cotton and jute in the world.
 - ♦ India is also the 2nd largest producer of silk in the world and 95% of the world's hand-woven fabric comes from India.
- **Employment Generation:** The industry is the 2nd largest employer in the country providing direct employment to 45 million people and 100 million people in the allied sector.
- **Regions:** Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Haryana, Jharkhand, and Gujarat are the top textile and clothing manufacturing states in India.

Initiatives to Promote Textile Sector

- **PM Mega Integrated Textile Regions and Apparel (PM MITRA) Parks Scheme:** Its objective is to develop 7 mega integrated textile parks across India in **Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh**.
 - ♦ It aims to create a **modern, integrated, world class plug and play** textile infrastructure.
 - ♦ **Foreign direct investment (FDI):** Japanese investment aligns well with India's goals under the "Make in India for the World" and "China-plus-one" manufacturing strategies.
- **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme:** The Scheme for Textiles was approved to promote production of **Man-Made Fibre (MMF) Apparel, MMF Fabrics** and **products of Technical Textiles** in the country to enable the textile sector to achieve size and scale and to become competitive.
- **Exports Promotion Councils (EPCs):** There are eleven Exports Promotion Councils (EPCs) representing various segments of the textiles & apparel value chain from Fibre to finished goods as well as traditional sectors like handloom, handicrafts and carpets.
- **National Technical Textiles Mission (NTTM):** Launched in 2020 to promote the production, innovation, and export of technical textiles in India.
- **National Fibre Mission:** Aims to improve the productivity, quality, and sustainability of natural and man-made fibres.
- **Handloom and Handicrafts Sector:** Nearly **₹2,000 crore** has been invested under the **National Handloom Development Programme**.
 - ♦ Initiatives such as the **Government e-Marketplace (GeM), India Handmade Portal, GI tagging, Mega Handloom Clusters, and the Weavers' MUDRA Scheme** have expanded market opportunities and strengthened artisans' incomes.

Challenges in India's Textile Sector

- The sector remains **highly fragmented**, with a **predominance of small and informal enterprises** that face constraints in scaling up, adopting technology, and accessing formal finance.
- **Low labour productivity** and **skill gaps** persist due to outdated production practices, limited formal training, and inadequate industry-academia linkages.
- **India faces high logistics and transaction costs**, and delays in customs clearance, reducing export competitiveness.
- **Access to affordable credit** remains a major issue for MSMEs and handloom units.

Way Ahead

- **Stronger branding, design, and marketing support is essential** to move districts from contract manufacturing to own-label and geographical indication-based products.
- **Regular impact assessment** and course correction, based on export performance, employment creation, and formalisation indicators, should be institutionalised.
- **Digital platforms and data systems** should be leveraged for real-time tracking of production, skilling outcomes, exports, and market linkages at the district level.

Source: [PIB](#)

IN SHORT

ARMED FORCES (SPECIAL POWERS) ACT, 1958

Context

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced that the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) is likely to be withdrawn from almost the entire Northeast by 2027, except for one or two States.

What is AFSPA?

- The **Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958** empowers the armed forces to operate in areas declared as “disturbed areas”.
- It grants **special powers to security forces** to maintain public order and combat insurgency.
- **Major Provisions:**
 - ♦ The **Governor of a State**, the Administrator of a Union Territory, or the Central Government may declare an area as a “**disturbed area**”.
 - ♦ **Grants special powers to armed forces**, including use of force (even causing death under specified conditions), arrest without warrant, search without warrant, and destruction of arms dumps or militant hideouts.
 - ♦ **No prosecution, suit, or legal proceeding** can be initiated against armed forces personnel for actions taken under AFSPA without prior approval of the Central Government.

Major Committees on AFSPA

- **Justice B.P. Jeevan Reddy Committee (2005):** Recommended the repeal of AFSPA and incorporation of its essential provisions into the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967**, along with stronger grievance redressal and accountability mechanisms.
- **Santosh Hegde Commission (2013):** Found that the six encounter cases examined in **Manipur** were not genuine, highlighted misuse of AFSPA provisions, and recommended greater accountability and periodic review of the Act.
- **Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2007):** Recommended repeal of AFSPA, arguing that it had become a symbol of discrimination and alienation in affected regions.

Source: [TH](#)

SC INVOKES ARTICLE 142 TO SET ASIDE POCSO CONVICTION

Context

- The Supreme Court invoked its extraordinary powers under **Article 142** of the Constitution to set aside the conviction of a man under the **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO Act)**.

Article 142 of Indian Constitution

- **Article 142 of the Indian Constitution** grants the Supreme Court extraordinary power to pass any decree or order necessary to do “**complete justice**” in any pending matter.
- It is designed to bridge statutory gaps and provide equitable relief where strict adherence to existing laws might lead to unfair outcomes.

What is the POCSO Act?

- The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 was introduced by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development** to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation.
- The Act criminalises both **penetrative and non-penetrative sexual assault**, sexual harassment, and child pornography, and applies to all children below 18 years of age.
- **POCSO is a gender-neutral law** and states that minors cannot give valid consent for sexual activity.
- It ensures **child-friendly legal procedures, including special courts, private hearings (in-camera trials),** and video-recorded testimonies.
- The Act also **punishes** those involved in **child trafficking** for sexual purposes and allows strict penalties based on the seriousness of the crime.

Source: [TH](#)

SHIGELLOSIS OUTBREAK IN KERALA

Context

- Kerala has reported 85 confirmed cases and over 70 probable cases of shigellosis (bacillary dysentery) till June 2026.

What is Shigellosis?

- Shigellosis is a **highly contagious bacterial infection** caused by bacteria of the genus *Shigella*.
 - ♦ It primarily **affects the intestines** and causes bacillary dysentery, characterized by severe diarrhoea.
- **Symptoms:** Fever, diarrhoea (often with blood or mucus), vomiting and nausea, abdominal cramps etc.
- **Transmission:** Consumption of contaminated food and water, person-to-person contact through the fecal-oral route.

Source: [TH](#)

HIMARS

Context

- Taiwan recently conducted its first-ever live-fire exercise using the **High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) in the Taiwan Strait**, simulating a defence scenario against a potential Chinese military threat.

About HIMARS

- It is a US-supplied mobile rocket artillery system manufactured by **Lockheed Martin**.
- It is mounted on a **six-wheeled truck**, enabling rapid movement across roads and rough terrain.
- The system is known for its **“shoot-and-scoot”** capability, allowing it to fire rockets and quickly relocate to avoid enemy counterattacks.
- With a range of around **300 km**, HIMARS can strike targets across the Taiwan Strait, including coastal areas in China's **Fujian Province**.

Do you know?

- HIMARS has been extensively used by Ukraine during its conflict with Russia and has emerged as one of its key long-range strike systems.



Source: [CNN](#)

EPICHLOROHYDRIN

Context

- India has banned the use of epichlorohydrin, a paper-strengthening chemical classified as a potential carcinogen, and chlorine bleaching in tea bags sold in the country.

About Epichlorohydrin

- **Epichlorohydrin** is a chemical commonly used in paper manufacturing to improve the strength and **durability of paper products**.
- It has been used in the production of **tea bag paper to prevent tearing during brewing**.
- The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classifies **epichlorohydrin as probably carcinogenic to humans**.
- Concerns have been raised that residues of the chemical may migrate into beverages when tea bags are immersed in hot water.
- The ban aims to reduce potential health risks associated with prolonged exposure to hazardous chemicals in food-contact materials.

Source: [Mint](#)

