

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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LS PASSED REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2026

Context

- The Lok Sabha has passed the **Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2026**.

About

- Aim:** To amend the **Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969**.
 - The new bill has been brought to make **provisions for delayed registration more stringent** and to **encourage timely reporting** of events of birth and death.
- Registration of Birth and Death:** If a birth or death is reported to the Registrar **more than one year but within two years**, it may be registered **only with the approval of** the District Magistrate, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, or an Executive Magistrate authorised by the District Magistrate.
- Registration After More than 2 Years:** If a birth or death is reported to the Registrar more than two years, it will be registered **only on the order of a Judicial Magistrate of the First Class**.
- Mandatory Verification:** It also mandates that the designated authority **must verify the authenticity of the reported birth or death** before granting permission for delayed registration.

Registration of Births and Deaths in India

- The registration of births and deaths is **mandatory**, and the certificate issued provides **legal identity to an individual**.
- Data on births, deaths and stillbirths** are recorded under a continuous and compulsory mechanism known as the **Civil Registration System (CRS)**.
 - It serves as a **foundational source of India's population data** such as **estimated births and deaths**, for the accurate estimation of **mortality, fertility and sex ratio at birth**.
- It functions under the **Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India** under the **Home Ministry**.

- The CRS has been legally **operational since 1970**, though the coverage and completeness of reporting were historically poor.
- The system operates under the **Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969, which was amended in 2023**.
- Births and deaths are ordinarily required to be **reported within 21 days**.
 - In hospitals**, the medical officer in charge or an authorised official is responsible for reporting such events.
 - For events at home**, responsibility generally lies with the head of the household or another prescribed informant.

Data Over the Years

- Until 2000**, India registered only **56% of births and 48% of deaths**. By 2014, this figure **rose to around 86.6% and 72.5%, respectively**.
- In 2024**, birth registration **reached 99.1%** and death registration **reached 99.4%**.
 - The improvement is also visible across states, in 2024, 18 states and Union Territories achieved 100% birth registration, while 21 states and UTs achieved 100% death registration.

Reasons for the Rise in Registration of Data in 2024

- Rise in Registration of Birth:** The increase in **institutional deliveries** in hospitals or health facilities incentivised by post-delivery benefits.
 - Birth certificates** are also now necessary for school admission, identity documents, welfare benefits and other official purposes.
- Rise in Death Registration:** More people are **accessing formal healthcare** through expanded health insurance and public health schemes like PM-JAY.
 - Also, families require **death certificates** for pensions, insurance, inheritance, property transfer, bank accounts and other administrative processes.
- Amendment in the Act:** The Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Act, 2023 made civil registration more **complete, timely, and accessible**.

Significance of the Data

- **Administrative Purpose:** Like assessing the impact of health and social policies and understanding trends in fertility, mortality, and population change.
- **Real Time Information:** Timely registration of births and deaths can provide real-time information on demographic changes and population health.
 - ♦ CRS is also important for **understanding seasonal mortality changes that are** driven by high temperatures and pollution.
- **Local Planning:** A complete CRS can support local planning under decentralised governance since district and sub-district level data are far more useful for programme design than national or state-level estimates alone.
- **Individual Identity:** Registrations also **enable individuals to prove their identity from a legal standpoint.**

Concerns

- **Regional Disparities:** Significant variations in the quality and completeness of Civil Registration System (CRS) implementation persist across states and regions.
- **Delayed Registration:** Many births and deaths are not registered within the legally prescribed 21-day period, affecting the timeliness and reliability of vital statistics.
- **Poor quality of mortality data:** Registration of deaths does not necessarily include medically certified causes of death, limiting the utility of CRS data for public health planning and disease surveillance.
- **Need for better data quality and governance:** Greater emphasis is required on timely registration, accurate record-keeping, robust medical certification, and secure, responsible use of digital records.
- **Absence of internal migration records:** The lack of a mechanism to systematically record internal migration limits the effectiveness of administrative planning and service delivery.

Way Ahead

- **Strengthen registration coverage and timeliness** by improving awareness, simplifying procedures, and enhancing last-mile service delivery, especially in underserved regions.
- **Improve data quality** by expanding Medical Certification of Cause of Death (MCCD), conducting regular data audits, and ensuring accurate and timely record-keeping.
- **Bridge regional and rural-urban disparities** through targeted capacity building, better digital infrastructure, and stronger monitoring of low-performing states and districts.
- **Leverage digital governance** by ensuring secure use of CRS data, integrating internal migration records, and enhancing inter-agency coordination for evidence-based policymaking.

Source: AIR

HOW LAWS TREATS OBSCENITY, PROFANITY IN INDIA

Context

- Noida Police registered a Zero FIR against a woman over remarks made about the Prime Minister during a protest at Delhi's Jantar Mantar.

About

- The FIR invokes **Sections 352, 353(1) and 356(1)** of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), covering **insult, public mischief and defamation.**
- **Section 352** requires proof that the accused intended, or knew it was likely, that the insult would **provoke an actual breach of public peace** and not simply that someone felt insulted.
- **Public mischief under Section 253 is aimed at incitement:** mutiny within the armed forces, fear likely to push people toward offences against the state, or enmity between communities.
 - ♦ This is a considerably higher bar than sharp criticism of a leader.
- **Defamation,** too, carries long-standing exceptions for good-faith comment on a public figure's conduct in their public role.
- The case has triggered a public debate, veering into moralistic notions about **profanity, especially against public leaders.**

Obscenity Laws in India

- The legal framework **regulating obscenity in online content** is under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, and the Information Technology Act, 2000.
- **Definition:** Any content shall be deemed to be obscene if it is **lascivious or appeals to the prurient interest**, or if its effect tends to deprave and corrupt persons likely to read, see or hear the content.
- **Public Spaces:** It prohibits obscene acts and songs in public spaces. The maximum punishment for the person convicted under this charge is **three-month jail and a fine**.
- **Online Content:** Section 294 of BNS, 2023 **criminalises the sale, import, export, advertisement, and display of obscene materials, including online content**.
 - ♦ It specifically targets “lascivious” material or content that “appeals to the prurient interest” or is excessively sexual in nature.
 - ♦ The penalty can include up to two years imprisonment and a fine of up to Rs 5,000 for first-time offenders.
- **Section 67 of the IT Act criminalises** the publication or transmission of obscene material in electronic form.
 - ♦ This provision is similar to the definition under Section 294 of the BNS, carries a more stringent punishment of up to **three years imprisonment and a fine of up to Rs 5 lakh for a first-time offence**.

Related SC Judgments

- **Hicklin Test:** Until 2014, the judiciary used the **Hicklin test** to determine if something is obscene or not.
 - ♦ The Hicklin Test was established in **English Law** after the **case of Regina vs Hicklin (1868)**.
 - ♦ According to it, a work can be considered obscene if any portion of it is found to **“deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such influences”**.
- **In 2014**, the SC did away with the Hicklin Test while hearing the case of **Aveek Sarkar & Anr vs State Of West Bengal and Anr**.

- ♦ The court held that while judging as to whether a particular photograph, an article or book is obscene, regard must be had to the contemporary mores and national standards and not the standard of a group of susceptible or sensitive persons.

Profanity or vulgarity as a crime

- In 2024, a ban was sought on TVF's web series because the content was seen as obscene under the Information Technology Act.
 - ♦ The SC, however, quashed the FIR, holding that **vulgarity and profanity are not, by themselves, the same as obscenity**.
 - ♦ While the literal meaning of the terms used may be sexual in nature, their usage does not arouse sexual feelings in any viewer of ordinary prudence and common sense.
 - ♦ Rather, the common usage of these words is **reflective of emotions of anger, rage, frustration, grief, or perhaps excitement**.

Conclusion

- In 2025, the Telangana High Court held that **social media posts might be harsh, or even use nasty language, but cannot attract Sections 352 or 353 if there is no real threat to public order**.
- Court rulings on this issue frequently state that for **an utterance to be considered obscene, it must be shown that it was lascivious**.
 - ♦ Lascivious is an adjective that means feeling, showing, or expressing a strong, often inappropriate desire for sex.
- Anything that falls short of that yardstick is likely not to be considered “obscene” in criminal law.

Source: TH

‘SAMUDRA MANTHAN’ - NATIONAL OFFSHORE EXPLORATION SCHEME

In News

- The Union Cabinet has approved ‘Samudra Manthan’ – the National Offshore Exploration Scheme with an approved outlay of Rs.84,084 crore for implementation up to FY 2030–31.

Offshore Exploration

- Offshore exploration is the search for natural resources, primarily crude oil, natural gas and seabed minerals, that lie beneath the ocean floor.
- It requires complex geological, geophysical and engineering methods to locate and evaluate potential reserves hidden beneath marine waters, before commercial drilling or extraction.

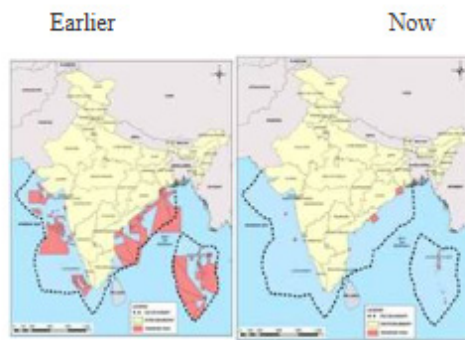


Fig 2 :

Earlier Offshore Areas Restricted for Exploration

Fig 3:

Nearly 99% of India's EEZ Now Open for exploration

Benefits of Offshore Exploration

- **Energy Security:** Tapping offshore reserves enhances national self-reliance, reducing vulnerability to global geopolitical conflicts, supply chain shocks, and volatile crude prices.
- **Economic Growth:** Major offshore projects generate large amounts of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), create jobs requiring high skills, and generate large amounts of government revenues through royalties, taxes, and corporate profits.
- **Great Untapped Potential:** Offshore basins harbour large quantities of the world's undiscovered hydrocarbon reserves and rare-earth minerals on the seabed.
- **Technological advances:** Offshore activities stimulate technological advances in subsea engineering, robotics, seismic imaging and maritime logistics, spurring domestic manufacturing and ancillary service sectors.
- **Transition:** Offshore natural gas discovery offers a cleaner-burning transition fuel to bridge the gap between heavy fossil fuels and zero-emission renewable energy systems

Challenges

- **Financial Risk:** Deep water drilling requires multi-billion dollar up-front investments, long lead times, and has a high risk of 'dry wells' in the early stages of exploratory drilling.
- **Technology challenges:** High pressure, low temperature and ultra-deep environments require state-of-the-art technology, specialised drilling rigs, and complex subsea architecture.
- **Environmental Risks:** Marine ecosystems face threats from seismic surveys, discharges of waste, noise pollution underwater and the very real risk of marine oil spills.

- **Geopolitical disputes:** Offshore basins frequently overlap disputed Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), maritime boundaries and defense-sensitive "no-go" zones.
- **Energy Transition Dynamics:** The global transition to renewables poses long-term demand uncertainty, making private investors hesitant to lock up capital in offshore projects that last decades.

Governments steps

- **'Samudra Manthan' Scheme:** It is a Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas
 - ♦ It is inspired by the vision of unlocking India's offshore energy potential and aims to strengthen energy security and support the goal of Viksit Bharat.
 - ♦ **Components**
 - Acquisition and processing of modern offshore seismic data with an outlay of 28,534 crore;
 - Drilling of 60 deepwater exploration wells with an allocation of 43,200 crore, including Government support of up to 50% of eligible drilling cost or 675 crore per well, whichever is lower
 - Development of common offshore infrastructure hubs with an outlay of 10,000 crore to facilitate commercialisation of discoveries; asnd
 - Establishment of Oil and Gas Manufacturing and Services Zones with an outlay of 2,000 crore to promote domestic manufacturing and localisation of critical equipment and services

- ♦ **Objectives:** It aims to enhance India's energy security by unlocking over 600 Million Metric Tons of Oil Equivalent (MMTOE) of offshore reserves, boosting domestic oil and gas output
 - It aims to decrease import reliance, generate employment, attract investments, and bolster Make in India via indigenous offshore technologies.
 - It will build a globally competitive energy ecosystem and aid India's long-term economic growth.
- **Opening Up Offshore Acreage:** More than 99% of the earlier "No-Go" areas have been removed, making over one million square kilometres of India's Exclusive Economic Zone available for exploration for the first time.
- **Modernising the Contractual Regime:** India transitioned from Production Sharing Contracts to Revenue Sharing Contracts, simplifying the fiscal framework and improving transparency while reducing administrative intervention.
- **Legislative Reforms:** The Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Amendment Act, 2025 modernised the legal framework governing the sector by providing contractual stability, recognising integrated petroleum operations, strengthening dispute resolution mechanisms, and establishing a contemporary regulatory architecture.
- **Implementation Through New Rules:** The Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules, 2025 operationalised these reforms by promoting ease of doing business, improving regulatory efficiency, and streamlining the administration of petroleum leases.
- **Uniform Decision-Making Framework:** The Government has also standardised the composition and mandate of the Empowered Committee of Secretaries across all contract regimes, ensuring consistency and a level playing field for all operators, irrespective of when their contracts were signed.
- **Sharper Focus on Exploration:** The performance parameters of ONGC and Oil India have been reoriented to place greater emphasis on exploration activities, reinforcing the Government's commitment to expanding India's domestic hydrocarbon resource base.

Conclusion

- Offshore exploration is a strategic pillar of India's energy security and economic development as it underpins the discovery of domestic resources and reduces dependence on imports.
- The Samudra Manthan initiative aims to promote exploration-led growth through risk-sharing support and advanced technology and investment incentives for deepwater hydrocarbon exploration in the frontier basins of Krishna-Godavari, Cauvery, Mahanadi and Andaman.
- However, sustainable development is the reconciliation of resource utilisation with environmental protection and the transition to clean energy.
- Innovation, efficient regulation and responsible exploration will enhance India's energy resilience and help realise the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

Source: [TH](#)

PARLIAMENT PASSED PREVENTION OF INSULTS TO NATIONAL HONOUR (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2026

Context

- Parliament has passed the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026, extending the same legal protection currently available to the National Anthem (Jana Gana Mana) to the National Song (Vande Mataram).

Key Highlights

- The Bill amends **Section 3** of the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971.
- It makes it an offence to:
 - ♦ intentionally prevent the singing of **Vande Mataram**; or
 - ♦ disturb an assembly engaged in singing it.
- The punishment remains unchanged: imprisonment up to **3 years**, or fine, or both.
- The enhanced punishment under **Section 3A** for repeat offenders will also apply.

Why was the Amendment Proposed?

- Although Dr. Rajendra Prasad, while addressing the Constituent Assembly on **24 January 1950**, stated that Vande Mataram should be honoured equally with Jana Gana Mana, the **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971** provided statutory protection only to the National Anthem, creating a legislative gap that the Amendment seeks to address.

The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971

- Enacted on 23rd December 1971, the Act extends to the whole of India and provides statutory protection to the **Indian National Flag, the Constitution of India and the Indian National Anthem, Jana Gana Mana**.
- Key Provisions of the Existing Act:**
 - Section 2 - National Flag and Constitution:** Deals with insults to the Indian National Flag and the Constitution of India. It stipulates that anyone who burns, mutilates, defaces, defiles, disfigures, destroys, tramples upon, or otherwise shows disrespect to the Flag or the Constitution in a public place can face imprisonment for up to three years, a fine, or both.
 - Lawful criticism protected:** Comments criticising the Constitution, the National Flag or government measures, when made with a view to securing lawful amendment or alteration, do not constitute an offence under Section 2.
 - Section 3 - National Anthem:** Specifically addresses the National Anthem. It states that anyone who intentionally prevents the singing of the Indian National Anthem or causes a disturbance to any assembly engaged in singing it shall be punished with imprisonment extending up to three years, or a fine, or both.
 - Section 3A - Repeat offences:** Added by a **2003 amendment**, this section enforces an enhanced minimum penalty of one year of imprisonment for second and subsequent convictions under Sections 2 or 3.

Vande Mataram

- Vande Mataram meaning "Mother, I Bow to Thee" was written by **Bankim Chandra Chatterjee** and was first published in **Bangadarshan** on 7 November 1875.
- It was later incorporated into his **novel Anandamath (1882)**, and set to music by **Rabindranath Tagore**.
- The song became a unifying symbol of Indian nationalism and freedom struggle, inspiring movements such as the **Swadeshi Movement (1905)** and serving as a rallying cry against British rule.

- The words '**Vande Mataram**' were displayed by **Madam Bhikaji Cama** on the first Indian tricolour unfurled abroad (1907) and invoked by many revolutionaries including **Madan Lal Dhingra** as a patriotic slogan.

Source: [PIB](#)

NEWS IN SHORT

BROAD PEAK AVALANCHE

In News

- A massive avalanche struck a 10-member international climbing expedition on the slopes of **Broad Peak** in the Karakoram range.

About

- Broad Peak** (locally known as **Falchan Kangri**) is the **12th-highest mountain in the world**, with an elevation of **8,051 m**.
- Located in the **Karakoram Range**, on the border of **Gilgit-Baltistan (Pakistan)** and **Xinjiang (China)**.
- Situated about **8 km southeast of K2**, within the **Gasherbrum massif**.
- It is named by **Sir Martin Conway (1892)** after its unusually **broad summit ridge**, resembling the **Breithorn** in the Swiss Alps.
- First successfully climbed in **1957** by a four-member Austrian team **without supplementary oxygen**.
- It is formed due to the **collision of the Indo-Australian and Eurasian tectonic plates**. Feeds the **Godwin-Austen Glacier** and the **Baltoro Glacier**.

Source: [India Today](#)

CABINET APPROVES REVAMPED KHELO INDIA SCHEME

Context

- The Union Cabinet has approved an expanded **Khelo India Scheme** and enhanced **Assistance to National Sports Federations (ANSFs)** with a combined outlay of 36,441 crore rupees for the period **2026-27 to 2030-31**.

About

- The ‘**Khelo India – National Programme for Development of Sports**’ was launched in **2016-17** with the **twin objective of mass participation and promotion of excellence in sports across the country**.
- The revamped scheme is designed to **create a seamless pathway for every talented young Indian, from school playgrounds and village sports fields to the Olympic podium**.
 - ♦ It is aligned with the vision of **Khelo Bharat Niti 2025** and the **National Education Policy 2020**.
- The scheme establishes an **integrated nationwide sports ecosystem** comprising National Centres of Excellence (NCOEs), Khelo India Centres of Excellence (KICoEs), SAI Training Centres (STCs), Khelo India Accredited Academies (KIAAs), Khelo India Centres (KICs) and Youth Sports Companies (YSCs) of the Armed Forces.
 - ♦ Together, these institutions will provide **world-class coaching, sports science support and modern infrastructure across the country**.
- **Emerging Khelo India Athletes:** It has created an Emerging Khelo India Athletes (E-KIAs) category, this will expand the structured athlete development ecosystem by nearly ten times.
- **The Fit India Movement** will be significantly expanded to promote fitness as a nationwide movement, particularly among young people.
- The Government will establish the **National Coach Accreditation Board (NCAB)** to standardise coaching qualifications, improve professional standards and strengthen the capacity of coaches and support staff across the country.
- **Strengthened Assistance to National Sports Federations (ANSF) Scheme** for the period **2026-31**.
 - ♦ The scheme will support **Indian athletes and teams** through funding for coaching, sports science, modern equipment, international exposure, coaching camps, engagement of foreign experts and participation in major international competitions.
 - ♦ It will also support **sports cooperation with countries of the Global South** and promote India’s indigenous sports internationally.

Source: **AIR**

PRADHAN MANTRI SURYA SAROVAR YOJANA (PM-SSY)

Context

- The Union Cabinet approved the ‘**Pradhan Mantri Surya Sarovar Yojana (PM-SSY)**’.

About

- The scheme is for the development of **Floating Solar Photovoltaic (FSPV) Projects with Energy Storage Systems (ESS)** with a total outlay of Rs.5,070 crore.
- The scheme envisages the development of **5,000 MW of Floating Solar Photovoltaic projects** with co-located Energy Storage Systems having **a minimum storage capacity of two hours i.e., 10,000 MWh**.
- The projects will be sanctioned during **FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31**, with disbursement of **financial support continuing up to FY 2032-33**.
- **Central Financial Assistance (CFA)** of **Rs. One crore per MW** will be provided for eligible Floating Solar Photovoltaic projects after successful commissioning.
 - ♦ In addition, CFA of up to Rs.50 lakh per project will be available for undertaking feasibility studies.
- **Significance:**
 - ♦ The scheme would enhance the floating Solar PV capacity in the country by **5,000 MW, which is presently around 700 MW only**.
 - ♦ It would provide an **opportunity to gainfully utilize existing reservoirs & industrial ponds, and eliminate competition for scarce land resources**.
 - ♦ The integration of an **energy storage system will help strengthen grid reliability**.
 - ♦ The scheme would help in the **reduction of around 10 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions annually**.
 - ♦ It would help in the generation of approximately **16,000–17,000 full-time equivalent employment opportunities**.

Floating Solar Photovoltaic (FSPV)

- Also known as “floatovoltaics,” is a technology where **solar panels are installed on buoyant structures** floating on water bodies like reservoirs, lakes, and dams.

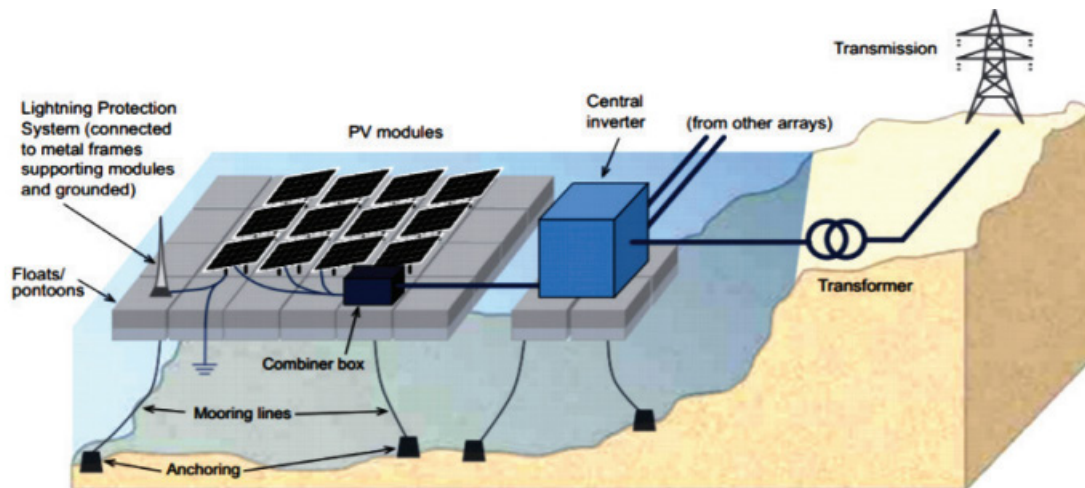


Figure 1. Typical schematic of FSPV plant ⁴

- Globally, floating solar reached about **9.6 GW by 2024**, nearly **90% of it in Asia**.
 - ♦ China leads, with installations such as a 120 MW plant on a fish farm in Poyang Lake.
 - ♦ The **Netherlands** accounts for **roughly three-fourths of Europe's capacity**, built largely on quarry lakes.
- India's flagship is the **Omkareshwar floating solar park on the Narmada river in Madhya Pradesh** — at 278 MW, the country's largest, with plans to scale to 600 MW.

Source: **PIB**

BLOOMBERG GLOBAL AGGREGATE BOND INDEX

Context

- Bloomberg Index Services Ltd. (BISL) has once again deferred the inclusion of Indian government bonds in the **Bloomberg Global Aggregate Bond Index**.

About Bloomberg Global Aggregate Bond Index

- It is Bloomberg's flagship global investment-grade bond index, tracking government, corporate and securitised bonds across developed and emerging markets.
- It serves as a benchmark for global fixed-income investors and passive investment funds.
- Countries included in the index generally attract larger foreign investments into their bond markets.

Why has India's inclusion been deferred?

- According to BISL:
 - ♦ India has made **meaningful progress** towards meeting global standards.
 - ♦ However, investors want: wider implementation of automated trading systems; smoother account opening and onboarding for foreign investors; and greater evidence that recent reforms are functioning effectively in practice.

Source: **IE**