

The Supreme Court has sought more information from the government about 'Mission Shakti', an umbrella scheme for the safety, security, and empowerment of women, intrigued by a possible chronic shortage in 'protection officers' to deal with domestic violence cases. A government document in the top court shows that 4.4 lakh cases of domestic assault are pending across a sample 801 districts. Though most of these districts have 'one-stop centres', established under 'Mission Shakti' to receive victims, there is still a lack of clarity about how many of them actually employ protection officers to effectively help the traumatised survivors. Appointment of protection officers is mandated under Section 8 of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

The Supreme Court has directed the government to place on record within six weeks the steps taken by it to implement its nearly 10 year old judgment to end manual scavenging and prevent future generations from the "inhuman practice" while making entry into sewers without safety gear a crime even in emergency situations. A Bench led by Justice S. Ravindra Bhat recently took judicial notice of the fact that manual scavenging and deaths of people trapped in sewer lines continue though the practice was banned with the introduction of the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993 and the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act, 2013.

335 number of infrastructure projects, each entailing an investment of ₹150 crore or more, hit by cost overruns of more than ₹4.46 lakh crore, according to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, which monitors infrastructure projects worth ₹150 crore and above. Of the 1,454 projects, 871 projects were delayed.

Financial experts have sought an urgent intervention by the National Stock Exchange Board and the Securities and Exchange Board of India to review an NSE subsidiary's move to add five Adani Group firms in 14 Nifty indices, which will drive savings of lakhs of investors into the group's sinking stocks from March 31. On February 17, NSE Indices said that its Equity Index Maintenance Subcommittee has decided to replace stocks in various indices from March 31 as part of a periodic review. Among the stocks being included in its indices are Adani Wilmar (added to the Nifty Next 50 and Nifty 100), Adani Total Gas (Nifty Shariah 25) and Adani Power (10 different indices).

4,000 number of birds, including chickens and ducks, on which the process of culling began in Jharkhand's Bokaro after a bird flu outbreak was reported at a state run poultry farm, according to officials. H5N1, an avian influenza virus, was confirmed among a protein rich breed of chicken at the farm.

43 number of migrants who perished when their overcrowded wooden boat smashed into the rocky reefs just off

THE FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY REPORT

- Context:** The 2nd edition of the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) report was released by Dr Bibek Debroy, Chairman EAC-PM.
- FLN:** It is the ability of a child (between the ages of 3 and 8 years old) to read basic texts and do basic mathematical problems such as addition and subtraction. It is one of the main elements of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- About the FLN report:** It is a benchmark for states and UTs to track their performance in achieving universal foundational learning by 2026-27. Its findings cover the role of nutrition, access to digital technology and language-focused instructional approach.
- It captures:** The role of language in education and highlights distinct challenges faced in a multilingual environment. The fundamental concepts children require to become skilled readers. Improving the learning outcomes using appropriate assessments and medium of instruction.
- Recommendations:** Need to integrate the medium of instruction and teaching in languages familiar to children. Undertake various assessments pertaining to the – Linguistic system (includes phonology, vocabulary/lexicon, and syntax), Orthographic system (includes symbols and mapping principles), and Writing mechanisms. Need for data monitoring along with clearly defined outcome-based indicators on pedagogical framework and education in India.
- Initiatives to promote FLN:** DIKSHA or Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing: Launched in 2017, it is a national platform of the NCERT, where teachers can find interactive and engaging teaching material to make their classes interesting. NIPUN Bharat Mission: Launched in 2021 for ensuring that every child in the country necessarily attains foundational literacy by the end of the third grade by the year 2026-27.
- NISHTHA:** A new training program (in FLN) for the teachers, as well as the heads of the school launched by the NCERT. The National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Skills 2022: To meet a key focus area of the NEP 2020, to improve the foundational skills of students. Under this, 'jadui pitara' – learning and teaching material for the foundational stage of schooling, has been launched recently.

SECTION 153A OF THE IPC: ITS USE AND MISUSE

- Context:** The SC granted interim bail to a Congress leader (Pawan Khera) arrested for alleged hate speech (booked under Section 153A of the IPC) by Assam Police.
- Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC):** What the law says? It penalises (with imprisonment up to 3 years/fine/both) promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and committing offences against the maintenance of peace. The provision was enacted in 1898 and was not in the original penal code. In 1969, the offence was amended (made cognisable – arrest without a warrant) to enlarge its scope to prevent communal tensions.
- The application of the law:** Hate speech laws have been invoked under different regimes to crack down on criticism of public functionaries and to arrest individuals. For example, a Marathi actor was arrested (booked under Section 153A of the IPC) last year, for a Facebook post allegedly defaming an NCP leader. According to the NCRB data, the rate of conviction for Section 153A is very low. In 2020, 1,804 cases were registered (six times higher than in 2014), however, the conviction rate was 2%. Also, the registration of multiple FIRs across different states drains the resources of the accused to secure legal representation.
- Safeguards against misuse:** Section 153A requires prior sanction (before the trial begins, not at the stage of preliminary investigation) from the government for initiating prosecution. In the Arnesh Kumar v State of Bihar case (2014), the SC laid down a set of guidelines. For instance, the police cannot automatically arrest a suspect before investigation for crimes that carry a punishment of less than seven years. In 2021, the SC ruled that the state will have to prove intent (to cause disorder or incite people to violence) for securing a conviction under Section 153A.
- Conclusion:** Hate speech strikes at the foundational values of society. However, the suspected unlawful speech should be evaluated using the standards of reasonableness.

COP-28(DUBAI) MUST FOCUS ON ADAPTATION INSTEAD OF MITIGATION, SAYS INDIA

- The concepts of mitigation and adaptation are at the heart of international climate discourse. Adaptation measures for climate change. Adaptation refers to adjustments in ecological, social, or

southern Italy, due to adverse weather conditions the Italian Coast Guard informed. 80 persons were recovered alive, as some succeeded in reaching the shore after the shipwreck.

On February 21, the national capital recorded its third hottest February day (33.6° C) in more than five decades. According to the IMD, a region has a heat wave if its ambient temperature deviates by at least 4.5-6.4°C from the long term average. Heat waves are expected to become longer and more intense and frequent over the Indian subcontinent. We should further improve forecast warnings, issue them as soon as possible, and couple them with city wide graded heat action plans to protect the vulnerable.

On February 24, the Supreme Court refused to entertain a PIL about menstrual leave for workers and students across the country, calling it a policy matter. Not everyone who menstruates is in favour of menstrual leave. Some believe that it is not required and that it will backfire and lead to employer discrimination against women. Among State governments in India, Bihar and Kerala are the only ones to introduce menstrual leave to women.

India and the U.K. have agreed to make further progress on the ongoing negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and also to swiftly organise the next bilateral Economic and Financial Dialogue soon, the British government has said. India recently concluded the seventh round of talks with the U.K. At the end of the U.K. Chancellor Jeremy Hunt's India visit for the G-20 Finance Ministers' and Central Bank Governors' meeting.

Multiple U.S. newspapers have said they will stop publishing the popular "Dilbert" comic strip after its creator posted a video calling Black people a "hate group." Scott Adams, who rose to fame in the 1990s with his satirical take on white collar office life, has increasingly stoked controversy with his views on social issues.

A day after the G-20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) meeting in Bengaluru failed to issue a joint communique, Russia praised the role of the Indian Presidency and accused the Western countries of "open blackmail". A statement from Moscow's Foreign Ministry said Russia and China protested against the U.S. and its allies, accusing them of sowing "enmity and hatred".

economic systems in response to actual or expected. climatic stimuli and their effects or impacts. It focuses on assisting countries that are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change (coastal states, island nations) with finance and infrastructural assistance.

2. **Reason for Focusing on the adaptation of climate Change-** Can help manage the risks from climate disasters such as floods and droughts. Sponge cities concept to increase storing of water in city spaces to adapt to urban floods. Protection of ecosystems. Protecting agriculture and food security. Can allow populations to benefit from opportunities for climatic change.
3. **Mitigation measures for climate change-** Mitigation refers to actions taken to lower the concentration of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere and thereby reduce the extent to which the global climate system changes.
4. **Reason for Focusing on Mitigation of Climate Change-** To stabilize greenhouse gas levels in a sufficient time frame. Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+). Avoid significant human interference with the earth's climate. Enable economic development.
5. **Why India is pushing to focus on Adaptation:** Timeframe: Mitigation measures can take decades to have a significant impact but the impacts of climate change are already being felt and will continue to worsen in the short to medium term, making adaptation measures more urgent. The scale of impact: Adaptation measures can help reduce vulnerability and minimize the negative impacts of climate change. Political will: Adaptation measures, can be implemented at a local level and may be more feasible to achieve. Co-benefits: improving public health, enhancing ecosystem services, and increasing resilience to other natural disasters.

MATCHING OF THE eSHRAM BENEFICIARIES DATA WITH THE RATION CARD DATA

1. **Context:** Ministry of Labour and Employment initiates matching of the eShram beneficiaries' data with the Ration Card (National Food Security Act (NFSA)) data This initiative will ensure that Ration Card benefits under NFSA are made available to all eligible workers registered on eShram.
2. **About eShram Portal:** Launched by: Ministry of Labour & Employment. Objectives: To create a National Database of unorganized/migrant workers and to provide them with a Universal Account Number (UAN). To extend the benefits of social security and welfare schemes to unorganized workers especially migrant workers, and to identify workers who are deprived of the various benefits of the welfare schemes of the Central and/or State Government due to lack of awareness or otherwise.

CHICAGO CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION

1. **Context:** The Union government cleared three protocols related to amendments in Chicago Convention Significance: It would help India to become more instrumental in matters pertaining to international civil aviation.
2. **Ratified Protocols:** Amend Article 3 (refrain member States from use of weapons against civil aircraft in flight). Amend Article 50 (a) for raising the strength of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Council). Amend Article 56 (for raising the strength of the Air Navigation Commission).
3. **About ICAO:** The International Civil Aviation Organization (est. 1944, HQ: Montreal, Canada) is a specialized agency of the United Nations (linked to ECOSOC) that coordinates the principles and techniques of international air navigation and fosters the planning and development of international air transport to ensure safe and orderly growth.
4. It has 193 state parties including all UN members except Liechtenstein. Chicago Convention led to the creation of ICAO. India is a founding member of ICAO. It is not a global regulator; its standards never supersede the primacy of national regulatory requirements.



“Discipline produces result but discipline is not linked to the result; it is linked to you.”

DR. KHAN
(KSG)