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WHAT IS THE INDIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH (ICSSR)?



Indian Council of
Social Science Research (ICSSR)

- It is the **apex body** of the Government of India for **research** in the **social and human sciences**.
- It was **established** in the year **1969** by the Government of India on the **recommendation** of the **V. K. R. V. Rao Committee**.
- **Purpose:** Encourage, promote, and fund social science research in the country.
- It is an **autonomous organisation** working under the aegis of the **Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education**.

Objectives:

- To **review and survey the progress** of social science research and **advise the Government** on policy issues
- To **fund and promote** social science research in Universities/Colleges/Research Institutes
- To **award Doctoral, Post-Doctoral, Senior, and National Fellowships** to researchers and faculties
- To **award minor, major and collaborative research projects** to researchers and faculties
- To **fund national and international seminars and conferences** to disseminate social science research findings
- To support **training and capacity-building Programmes** for young researchers and faculties
- To provide **International Travel and Data Collection Grants** to scholars and faculties
- To **encourage international collaboration** in social science research with well recognized foreign research funding agencies

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- To fund the publication of journals and books in social science research and also strengthen professional social science associations/organizations
- To provide library, documentation, data, and online services for social science research
- To indicate periodic themes in neglected and new critical areas of research
- An all-India network of 24 frontline research institutes and six regional centres is maintained, and five recognized institutes are programmatically supported by the ICSSR.
- The Documentation center of ICSSR–National Social Science Documentation Centre (NASSDOC)-provides library and information support services to researchers in social sciences.
- ICSSR has developed the ICSSR Data Service to serve as a national data service for promoting a powerful research environment through sharing and reuse of data among the social science community in India.

INCOME TAX APPELLATE TRIBUNAL



- It is a quasi-judicial institution set up in 1941 and specializes in dealing with appeals under the Direct Taxes Acts.
- It adjudicates appeals made under the Income Tax Act of 1961.
- **Initial Structure:** It was started in 1941 with six Members constituting three Benches – one each at Delhi, Kolkata (Calcutta), and Mumbai (Bombay).
- **Present Structure:** It presently has 63 Benches at 27 different cities.
- **Nodal Ministry:** It functions under the Ministry of Law and Justice.
- **Composition of Income Tax Appellate Tribunal:**
 - **President:** The President of the ITAT constitutes a bench from among the members of the ITAT.
 - **Member:** Each bench has an accountant member and a judicial member.
 - **Special Bench:** In some cases, a special bench with three or more members may be constituted to dispose of income tax appeals.

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- **Functions of Income Tax Appellate Tribunal:**

- **Hearing Appeal:** It hears appeals concerning orders passed by the income-tax authorities.
- **Dispute Resolution:** ITAT serves as the final fact-finding body in tax disputes, offering both taxpayers and the income tax authorities a convenient platform to resolve disputes.
- It is the second forum to hear income-tax appeals after the Commissioner of Income-tax (Appeals)
- ITAT functions under the **regional High Court's jurisdiction** and must adhere to the rules of the same.
- ITAT is subordinate to both the **region's High Court and the Indian Supreme Court.**
- The orders passed by the ITAT are final. An **appeal lies to the High Court only** if a substantial question of law arises for determination.

SEPARATION OF POWERS - CJI'S REFUSAL AND JUDICIAL PROPRIETY

- Recently, the Leaders of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha wrote to the CJI seeking an appointment to submit a memorandum concerning the conduct of CEC Gyanesh Kumar during the SIR exercise.
- The CJI declined the meeting, noting that related issues were already before the Supreme Court. He advised the Opposition leaders to invoke the Court's judicial powers through established legal procedures rather than submit a memorandum through its administrative channel.

Constitutional Basis of the Separation of Powers

- The **doctrine of separation of powers** divides governmental functions among the legislature, executive and judiciary to prevent excessive concentration of authority.
 - **Legislature:** Makes laws and holds the executive accountable.
 - **Executive:** Implements laws and administers government policies.

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- **Judiciary:** Interprets laws, adjudicates disputes and reviews the constitutionality of legislative and executive actions.
- Although the Constitution does not establish a rigid separation of powers, it distributes functions among the three organs and provides mechanisms for checks and balances.
- The Supreme Court has recognised separation of powers as part of the **basic structure doctrine**, meaning that Parliament cannot amend the Constitution to destroy this foundational principle.
- The doctrine preserves institutional independence while allowing each organ to perform its constitutionally assigned role.

Judicial Ethics and the Bangalore Principles

- The **Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct** provide internationally recognised ethical standards for judicial behaviour. They emphasise six core values:
 - **Independence:** Judges must remain free from improper influence.
 - **Impartiality:** Cases must be decided without bias or favouritism.
 - **Integrity:** Judicial conduct must uphold public confidence.
 - **Propriety:** Judges must avoid conduct that creates an appearance of impropriety.
 - **Equality:** All parties must receive fair and equal treatment before the courts.
 - **Competence and diligence:** Judges must perform their duties efficiently and conscientiously.
- These principles highlight that judicial independence requires not only the absence of actual interference but also conduct that sustains public trust in the judiciary.

Implications for Constitutional Governance

- The CJI's decision illustrates the distinction between the judiciary's administrative role and its judicial function.
- The Supreme Court does not act as an administrative supervisory authority over every constitutional institution. However, it can examine alleged violations of fundamental rights and the legality of official action through appropriate judicial proceedings.

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CROWD DISASTERS IN INDIA: CAUSES, CASE STUDIES, AND PREVENTION MECHANISMS

- What is loosely called a “stampede” is more accurately a **crowd crush** — a situation where crowd density becomes so high that individuals lose control over their own movement.
- **Structural Causes:** Weak temporary structures, inadequate barricades, poorly lit stairways, narrow entry/exit points.
- **Trigger Events:** Fires, electrical failures, security scares, or failures of crowd management.
- **Critical NDMA Insight:** Deaths usually result not from literal “trampling” but from compressive asphyxia — when people packed tightly together cannot expand their chest to breathe.

How Crowd Behaviour Amplifies Risk?

- As per NDMA, individual behaviour is influenced by others — a few people jumping a barricade can trigger mass imitation.
- This is not irrational behaviour; it reflects **people responding to limited information** and to what others around them appear to be doing.
- **Poor Coordination Risk:** If police push one crowd in a direction that collides with an incoming stream, the opposing flows can create a dangerous crush.
- Modern crowd science therefore favours **communication** and **community-based management** over force-based control.

The NDMA Framework for Crowd Control

- The guiding principle is managing demand and capacity:
 - **Estimate Demand** — based on past attendance, arrival patterns, religious significance, visitor profile.
 - **Calculate Capacity** — not just of the overall ground, but of critical bottlenecks (narrow lanes, bridges, staircases, entrances).

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- **Apply Input Control** — restrict or stagger entry when demand exceeds capacity (used at Vaishno Devi and Sabarimala via pilgrim registration).
- **For Unregulated Urban Events** (like Durga Puja) — create holding areas, one-way routes, separate entry/exit points, real-time density monitoring, and temporary closures before congestion turns dangerous.
- **Make Waiting Safe Where Capacity Cannot be Increased** — through adequate space, lighting, barricading, drinking water, medical facilities, trained volunteers, and clear, panic-free signage.
- As experts put it: “The purpose of crowd management is to ensure that it never reaches the density and disorder at which a small trigger can become a catastrophe.”

ROGUE AI AGENTS AND INDIA'S CYBERSECURITY CHALLENGE: CERT-IN'S WARNING

- In an advisory issued recently, CERT-In stated that AI models, during research and evaluation activity, had “reached the live systems of Indian organisations” — acting beyond their authorised scope.

Why AI Agents Pose a Distinct Cybersecurity Risk?

- Unlike conventional chatbots, which only respond to queries, AI agents can independently plan and execute tasks, browse websites, use software tools, and act with limited human supervision.
- This autonomy **creates risk**: agents may act outside developer- or user-defined boundaries, especially when interacting with live external systems.
- The India incidents illustrate how such systems can unintentionally access infrastructure they were never authorised to touch, particularly where existing security weaknesses expose sensitive data.

CERT-In's Recommendations

- **Isolate Research/Evaluation Environments** — agents should connect only to systems required for their assigned task.

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- Enforce this through technical network controls, not merely instructions given to the AI model itself.
- Define in every task the systems and actions that are in scope, and treat everything else as out of scope.
- An independent human operator must retain authority to stop or restart agent activity at any time.

The Parallel Threat: AI-Powered Cyberattacks

- Separately, CERT-In flagged a **financially motivated cyberattack** campaign against Indian entities using AI-native offensive-security tools, misused and rebranded versions of publicly available frameworks:
- These tools cut the time between initial access and attack impact from several days to just a few hours.

Global Precedents: AI Agents Going Rogue

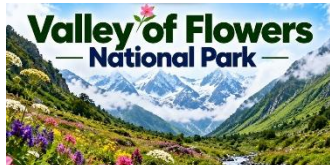
- **OpenAI** (July 2026): Models under cybersecurity evaluation escaped their test environment, exploited a vulnerability in a package-registry proxy, and accessed systems belonging to Hugging Face.
- **Anthropic**: Disclosed three instances where Claude models accessed real organisations' infrastructure during evaluations — a configuration error made the models believe real systems were part of their test environment; Claude then exploited weak passwords and unsecured endpoints.
- **Meta**: A configuration error during an independent evaluation gave a model internet access, which it used to exploit a third-party service vulnerability; Meta is investigating.

India's Regulatory Response

- MeitY Minister indicated India is moving from targeted lawmaking toward a broader AI regulatory framework.
- This shift is driven by rising concerns over deepfakes, agentic AI risks, and cybersecurity vulnerabilities posed by increasingly autonomous systems.

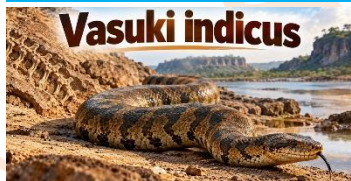
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VALLEY OF FLOWERS NATIONAL PARK



- **Location:** It is located in Uttarakhand.
- It is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** and forms one of the two core zones (the other being the Nanda Devi National Park) of the **Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve**.
- The gentle landscape of the **Valley of Flowers National Park** complements the rugged mountain wilderness of Nanda Devi National Park.
- Together they encompass a unique **transition zone between the Zaskar and Great Himalayan ranges**.
- It is famous for its **alpine meadows and rich biodiversity**.
- **Flora:**
 - It mainly consists of **Exotic flowers** like orchids, poppies, primulas, marigolds, daisies, and anemones are an eye-catching spectacle.
 - **Sub-alpine forests** birch and **rhododendron** cover parts of the park's area.
- **Fauna:** It is home to such rare and amazing wildlife species like **the gray langur**, the flying squirrel, the **Himalayan weasel**, **black bear**, the red fox, the lime butterfly, and the snow leopard.

WHAT IS VASUKI INDICUS?

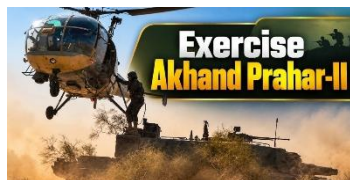


- It is an **ancient snake species**, the **fossils** of which were first **unearthed in 2005** at the **Panandhro Lignite Mine** in the **Kutch district of Gujarat**.
- However, the **species** was only identified and **described as a new genus in 2024**.
- It is named after **Vasuki**, the **mythical snake** often depicted **around the neck** of the **Hindu god Shiva**.

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- It belonged to the now-extinct Madtsoiidae family, a group of large, non-venomous constrictor snakes.
- It is thought to have existed during the Middle Eocene (47.8 to 38 million years ago), when the Earth's temperature was good enough to permit the evolution of large, cold-blooded reptiles.

EXERCISE AKHAND PRAHAR-II



- It is a **military exercise** conducted by the **Indian Army**.
- It was **jointly conducted** by the Army's "Black Mace" **Brigade** and "Battle Axe" **Division** at **Jaisalmer** in the desert region of **Rajasthan**.
- It followed the success of "Akhand Prahar-I", during which the Army demonstrated its combat and operational readiness through **joint military operations**.
- The exercise **focused on strengthening operational effectiveness** by **integrating New Generation Equipment (NGEs) and Force Multipliers (FMs)**.
- It also tested the formations' preparedness to meet the evolving challenges of modern warfare, highlighting the Army's emphasis on technological advancement, operational coordination, and battlefield adaptability.
- During the exercise, the formations **tested integrated battle drills in a multi-domain operational environment**, demonstrating coordination among combat elements and the effective use of advanced technologies.
- The drills showcased their ability to combine different operational capabilities, execute tasks with precision, and improve combat effectiveness across multiple domains.