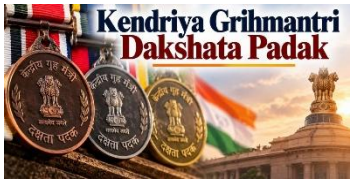
KENDRIYA GRIHMANTRI DAKSHATA PADAK



The 'Kendriya Grihmantri Dakshata Padak' has been awarded to 490 personnel for the year 2026.

- It has been instituted by the **Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India in 2024.**
- The award aims to encourage professional standards and boost the morale of officers and officials across the country.

  It is given to recognize excellent work, promote high professional standards and boost the morale of the concerned official/officer **in the following fields:**
  - Special Operation
  - Investigation
  - Intelligence
  - Forensic Science
- It was **created by merging** the **4 previously existing MHA awards** –The Special Operation Medal, Medal for Excellence in Investigation, Exceptional Intelligence Efficiency Medal, and Union Home Minister's Award for Meritorious Service.

  Eligibility: It is conferred on members of the **Police Forces, Security Organization**, Intelligence Wing/Branch/Special Branch of State/Union Territories/Central Police Organizations (CPOs)/Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and Forensic Science (Central / State / Union Territories) throughout the Indian Union.

  The medal is announced on **31st of October every year,** on the occasion of the Birth Anniversary of **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.**

Cross And Climb

PUNAH BHARAN MOBILE APPLICATION



- It is developed for advancing **scientific groundwater recharge planning through geospatial technology.**
- It is developed by the **Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics (BISAG-N)** in collaboration with the **National Water Mission (NWM).**
- **Features:**
  - It enables users to identify **potential artificial recharge zones** within a **radial distance of up to 3 km** and explore suitable recharge structures based on local conditions.
  - The platform **utilises geospatial datasets**, including rainfall, groundwater levels, groundwater yield, slope and drainage, to help identify potential recharge areas and plan appropriate interventions.

What is Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics?

- It is an **autonomous scientific society** registered under **the Societies Registration Act, 1860**, under the **Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology** (MeitY), Government of India.
- **Objective:** To undertake technology development & management, research & development, facilitate national and international cooperation, capacity building, and support technology transfer & entrepreneurship development in the area of geospatial technology.
- **BISAG-N has three main domain areas:** satellite communication, geo-informatics and geo-spatial technology.
- BISAG-N provides specialized services and solutions in implementing **map-based Geographic Information Systems (GIS).**
- **Location:** Gandhinagar, Gujarat

Cross And Climb

NATIONAL SOCIAL SECURITY BOARD FOR UNORGANISED WORKERS AND GIG & PLATFORM WORKER

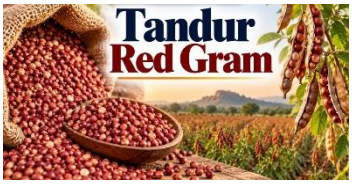


- It is established under the statutory framework of the **Code on Social Security.**
- **Mandate:** The Boards are mandated to **design, monitor, and recommend targeted welfare schemes** to **bridge the social security gap** for millions of gig & platform workers alongside traditional unorganised workers.
- **Composition:**
  - **Chairman:** The Boards will be presided over by the **Union Minister for Labour & Employment**.
  - **Representatives:** It comprise representatives from **Central and State Governments**, prominent aggregator companies, employers, civil society organizations, workers' unions and gig & platform Associations.
  - **Meetings:** It shall meet at least thrice a year.

Functions:

- It **recommends** to the Central Government for **framing suitable schemes** for different sections of unorganised workers, gig workers and platform workers;
- It **advises the Central Government** on such matters arising out of the administration of this Code as may be referred to it;
- It **monitors such social welfare schemes** for unorganised workers, gig workers and platform workers as are administered by the Central Government,
- It **reviews the record keeping functions** performed at the State level;
- It also reviews the expenditure from the fund and account; and
- It undertakes other functions as are assigned to it by the Central Government from time to time.

TANDUR RED GRAM



- It is popularly **known as Tandur Toor Dal.**
- It is **primarily cultivated in the rainfed tracts** of four mandals in the Tandur region namely Tandur, Basheerabad, Peddemul and Yelal of Telangana.
- Its distinctive characteristics are associated with the region's fertile deep black soils, the presence of **attapulgite clay mineral deposits,** and **substantial limestone deposits.**
- It is the first **agricultural product** from **the Telangana** State to receive **Geographical Indication (GI) registration in 2022.**

Nutritional Value:

- It has more **protein content than cereals.**
- It contains **approximately 22–24 per cent protein,** nearly three times the protein content of cereals.
- It is valued for its **excellent taste, superior cooking quality**, and enhanced storage quality.

Key Facts about Geographical Indications Tag

- It is a sign used on products that **have a specific geographical origin** and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- This is typically used for agricultural products, **foodstuffs, wine and spirit drinks, handicrafts and industrial products.**
- The **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999** seeks to provide for the registration and better protection of geographical indications relating to goods in India.
- This GI tag is **valid for 10 years following** which it can be renewed.

Cross And Climb

POVERTY REDUCTION IN INDIA - WORLD BANK REPORT 2026

- The World Bank's October 2026 Poverty and Equity Brief reported a significant decline in India's extreme poverty rate to 2.6% in 2023, from 27.1% in 2011, while highlighting persistent wage disparities and regional concentration of poverty.

Understanding Poverty and Its Measurement

- Poverty is a multidimensional development challenge involving inadequate income, limited access to essential services and insufficient opportunities for a dignified standard of living. It is generally assessed through two broad approaches:
    - **Monetary poverty:** Measures whether individuals or households have sufficient income or consumption expenditure to meet a defined poverty threshold.
    - **Multidimensional poverty:** Assesses deprivation across indicators such as health, education and living standards.
- The World Bank uses international poverty lines expressed in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms to compare poverty across countries.

Purchasing Power Parity (PPP)

- PPP measures the relative purchasing power of currencies by accounting for differences in the prices of goods and services across countries.
- It helps compare living standards by estimating how much of a common basket of goods and services can be purchased in different economies.

Factors Behind Poverty Reduction

- The World Bank identified multiple factors contributing to India's progress:
    - **Strong consumption growth:** Rising household consumption has contributed to improvements in living standards.
    - **Employment expansion:** Employment increased by approximately 13.4 crore people between 2017 and 2023, nearly twice the growth in the working-age population.

- **Women's workforce participation:** Much of the employment increase was driven by rural women entering paid work, increasing the number of earners within households.
- **Social transfers:** Expanded government support, including food subsidies, contributed to improved household welfare.

Persistent Challenges: Inequality and Regional Concentration

- **Wage Inequality**
  - Wage disparities remain pronounced in India. In 2023, median earnings among the top 10% of workers were approximately 13 times those of the bottom 10%.
  - At the same time, the consumption-based Gini index declined from 28.8 in 2011-12 to 25.5 in 2022-23 and further to 23.0 in 2023.
- **Geographical Concentration of Poverty**
  - Poverty is becoming increasingly concentrated geographically. Approximately 57% of India's poor population lives in a contiguous belt stretching from Uttar Pradesh to West Bengal.
- **Employment Quality and Youth Unemployment**
  - Although employment expanded significantly between 2017 and 2023, the World Bank noted that real earnings remained broadly unchanged, with employment growth concentrated in relatively low-productivity activities.
  - Youth unemployment also increased from 14.6% in the first quarter of FY2025-26 to 15.9% in the corresponding quarter of FY2026-27. The increase was particularly notable among rural young women.

Future Poverty Projections

- The World Bank expects poverty in India to continue declining, although at a more gradual pace.
- According to its projections, the proportion of the population below the $4.20-per-day lower-middle-income poverty line is expected to decline to 14.2% in 2026 and further to 12.1% by 2028.

CAN INDIA AND CHINA COEXIST PEACEFULLY?

- **India-China relations** are characterised by managed coexistence, combining diplomatic engagement with persistent border tensions and strategic mistrust.
- Despite being two ancient civilisations, both countries struggle to establish lasting peace.
- Historical grievances, territorial disputes and geopolitical competition undermine **mutual confidence.**
- However, conflict is neither inevitable nor desirable. Peaceful coexistence, strategic stability and diplomatic dialogue are essential for securing **long-term peace in Asia.**

An Analysis of Divide and Development Between India and China

- **Historical Grievances and Border Disputes**
  - The 1962 Sino-Indian War remains a defining moment in bilateral relations.
  - China's military action shattered India's confidence after years of **Hindi–Chini Bhai Bhai**
  - Territorial disagreements over Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh subsequently deepened mutual suspicion.
  - The **2020 Galwan Valley clash**, which killed 20 Indian soldiers, further damaged relations. Disagreements over patrolling arrangements and territorial claims continue to threaten peace along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).
  - **China's rejection of the McMahon Line** adds to tensions in the eastern sector. Nevertheless, historical grievances must not become permanent obstacles to reconciliation.
- **Geopolitical Competition and the United States**
  - India's growing partnership with the United States, particularly through the **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD),** has intensified Chinese suspicions.
  - Beijing frequently interprets India's participation as part of an American strategy to contain China.

Cross And Climb

Is China an Existential Threat to India?

- China's economic influence, technological advancement and military modernisation make it a major global power.
- Nevertheless, this does not mean that **conflict with India is inevitable.**
- China seeks to achieve its long-term ambition of becoming a leading world power by 2049, while India prioritises economic growth and national development.
- A prolonged conflict would impose **enormous economic and strategic costs** on both countries. Therefore, military confrontation cannot sustainably resolve bilateral disputes.

Conclusion

- Despite historical grievances, **unresolved territorial disputes** and geopolitical competition, peaceful coexistence remains achievable. Renewed diplomacy, effective border-management mechanisms, military restraint and realistic assessments of strategic intentions are essential.
- India must remain vigilant without allowing suspicion to dominate its foreign policy.
- By combining diplomatic engagement with credible defence preparedness, India and China can transform **managed coexistence i**nto a durable partnership, contributing to regional peace and global stability.

BALLOT PAPERS IN INDIAN ELECTIONS: WHERE THEY ARE STILL USED AND WHY

Ballot Papers in Panchayat Elections

- Most elections to Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads still use ballot papers.

Reasons Given by States. States using ballot papers cited two main hurdles:

  - Lack of funds, Lack of voter awareness about EVMs.
- The IIPA report found the awareness argument weak. The same voters use EVMs in Assembly and Lok Sabha elections.

Drawbacks of Ballot Papers

- The report highlighted several problems:
  - Counting is slow and cumbersome.
  - It requires huge manpower.
  - It is not environment-friendly.

Municipal and Student Union Elections

- **Municipal Bodies**
  - Municipal elections fall under the State Election Commissions (SECs). SECs can choose between EVMs and ballot papers.
- **Student Unions**
  - Student union polls also use both methods.
  - Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU): Uses EVMs. Candidate names appear in alphabetical order, so names and ballot numbers matter.
  - Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union (JNUSU)**:** Uses ballot papers.

Single Transferable Vote: Where Ballot Papers Are Necessary

- Some elections must use ballot papers. These are elections held through the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system.
- **Legislative Councils** - Under Article 171, MLC elections follow proportional representation through STV. Voters mark their first, second, third and further preferences. This ranking makes the vote transferable. It can only be done on paper, not on an EVM.
- **Rajya Sabha** - Rajya Sabha elections also use STV and ballot papers. Here, voting MLAs follow an open ballot; they must show their vote to their party's agent.

Conclusion

Ballot papers remain vital where STV voting, local symbols or simultaneous multi-tier polls make EVMs impractical. However, slow counting, high costs and environmental concerns persist. Gradual, well-funded adoption of EVMs in local polls, with strong voter trust, can balance efficiency and credibility.