

WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT



According to a U.N.-backed World Happiness report 2026, heavy social media use is harming young people's well-being in many countries.

- **World Happiness Report** is the world's foremost publication on global wellbeing and how to improve it.
- **Published by:** It is an annual report published by the University of Oxford's Wellbeing Research Centre in partnership with Gallup, the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network
- It asks people to **rate their life on a 0-10 scale**, from the worst possible life (0) to the best possible life (10).
- Country rankings were based on answers given by **around 100,000 people in 140 countries** and territories who were asked to rate their own lives.
- **Factors for evaluation of happiness ranking**
 - GDP per capita
 - Life expectancy
 - Social support
 - Freedom to make life choices
 - Generosity
 - Perceptions of corruption

Highlights of World Happiness Report 2026:

- **Top 5 Happiest Countries:** Finland, Iceland, Denmark, Costa Rica, Sweden.
- **Unhappy Countries:** Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Malawi, Zimbabwe
- **India** improved its ranking from **126th in 2024 to 118th in 2025.**



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APPROVED LIST OF MODELS AND MANUFACTURERS (ALMM) FRAMEWORK



Recently, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has introduced ALMM List-III for ingots and wafers, which will come into effect from the 1st of June, 2028.

- It is a **quality-and-reliability framework** that ensures **solar equipment** used in the country's solar projects meet the domestic manufacturing standards.
- It was introduced under the Approved List of Models and Manufacturers (ALMM) Order, 2019.

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Government of India.

Features of Approved List of Models and Manufacturers (ALMM) framework:

- **Tier Structure:** ALMM shall consist of **LIST-I**, specifying models and manufacturers of **Solar PV Modules** and **LIST-II**, specifying models and manufacturers of **Solar PV Cells** and **List-III** includes **ingots and wafers**.
- Only the models and **manufacturers included in ALMM** are **eligible for use in Government Projects** under Government Schemes & Programmes, Net-Metering Projects, installed in the country, including Projects set up for sale of electricity to Government.
- **Grandfathering Provisions:** Projects already in the pipeline or those with bids submitted **before the cut-off date** (7 days after the first list is published) are protected to avoid disruption.
- **Domestic Content Requirement (DCR):** This order reinforces and does not dilute existing DCR provisions under current MNRE schemes.



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RELIEF INITIATIVE



- It is aimed at supporting **Indian exporters affected by extraordinary freight escalation**, heightened insurance premia and war-related export risks arising from disruptions in the Gulf and wider West Asia maritime corridor.
- It is a **time-bound and targeted intervention** launched under the Export Promotion Mission (EPM).
- **Features of RELIEF Initiative:**
 - **Enhanced Risk Coverage (Past Shipments):** Exporters with existing ECGC cover for shipments between 14 February and 15 March 2026 receive **up to 100% risk coverage** for additional conflict-linked losses.
 - **Support for Prospective Exports:** For shipments planned between 16 March and 15 June 2026, the government **supports up to 95% risk coverage** to maintain exporter confidence.
 - **MSME Reimbursement:** Non-insured MSME exporters **can claim up to 50% reimbursement** (capped at ₹50 lakh per exporter) for extraordinary freight and insurance surcharges incurred during the initial disruption month.
 - **Regional Scope:** Applies to all consignments destined for or transshipped through the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Israel, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Iraq, Iran, and Yemen.
 - **Operational Reliefs:** Includes waivers of storage and dwell time charges at ports and procedural relaxations for stranded cargo coordinated by the IMG.
 - **Real-time Monitoring:** ECGC will **maintain a dashboard-based system** for tracking claims and fund utilization, with periodic reviews by the EPM Steering Committee.
- **Implementation:** By ECGC Ltd

SC SCRAPS AGE LIMIT FOR MATERNITY LEAVE IN ADOPTIONS

The Supreme Court of India struck down a rule that **denied** maternity leave to government employees adopting children **over three months of age**, ruling it unconstitutional and discriminatory.

The bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan delivered the verdict recently in the case **Hamsaanandini Nanduri v. Union of India** case.

Background of the Case

- The **Maternity Benefit Act, 1961** and its successor, the **Code on Social Security, 2020**, were amended to include adoption-related benefits within their scope.
 - Section 60(4) of the Social Security Code, 2020 restricted leave to adoptions of children under 3 months.
- However, petitioners argued that the **three-month age cap** was "artificial and violative of Article 14" — the right to equality under the law.
- The government defended the cap by saying women adopting older children could use **crèche facilities** instead; this argument was rejected by the Court.

What the Court Said?

- The bench noted children raised in institutions often develop **emotional bonds** with caregivers there.
- Going beyond biology, the court relied on the meaning of "maternity" as the "**state of being a mother**" — not limited to childbirth only.
- Research was cited showing that caregiving is crucial for a child's emotional development.
- **Impossible Criteria — Key Legal Findings**
 - Under the **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015** and **central adoption regulations**, a child cannot be placed for adoption until they have been declared "legally free" — a process that takes time.

- The bench held that "by the time the child is legally placed with the adoptive mother, the statutory age limit would, in most cases, stand exhausted" — calling the benefit "largely inoperative in practice."
- It argued that the right to autonomy, dignity, and bodily integrity cannot be denied to adoptive mothers.
- The bench also noted that adoption is an equally valid exercise of reproductive autonomy under **Article 21**, and not secondary to biological parenthood.
- **Purpose of Maternity Benefits**
 - The court broke down the purpose of maternity leave into two components:
 - **Biological care** — time to develop an emotional bond between mother and child
 - **Integration into the family** — for adoptive mothers, the first two months are legally spent holding the order, making the mandatory two-month window **too narrow** to consider
 - It described parenthood as "not a solitary function performed by one parent but a shared responsibility."

Significance of the Verdict

- **Principle of Equality and Non-Discrimination** - The Court stressed that adoptive mothers must receive equal treatment as biological mothers. Denying maternity benefits based on age of the child amounts to discrimination against adoptive families.
- **Recognition of Adoptive Parenthood** - The judgment acknowledges that adoption involves emotional, psychological, and caregiving responsibilities similar to biological parenting. It reinforces the idea that family structures are diverse and must be treated equally under law.
- **Broader Legal and Social Significance**
 - Strengthens women's rights and workplace equality.
 - Promotes adoption as a socially supported institution.
 - Aligns with constitutional values of dignity, equality, and social justice.

TRANSFER OF OFFICIALS DURING ELECTIONS BY THE EC

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) is a constitutional body responsible for conducting free and fair elections under **Article 324 of the Constitution**.
- It has wide-ranging powers to supervise, direct, and control elections to Parliament, State Legislatures, and the offices of President and Vice-President.
- To ensure neutrality in administration, the ECI takes several measures during elections, including:
 - Deployment of central forces
 - Enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC)
 - Transfer or replacement of officials involved in election duties
- These steps aim to maintain a level playing field for all political parties.

Model Code of Conduct and Administrative Control

- The **Model Code of Conduct (MCC)** comes into force as soon as the election schedule is announced.
 - It lays down guidelines for political parties and candidates
 - It restricts the misuse of official machinery
 - It ensures that government officials act impartially
- Once the MCC is in effect, the Election Commission increases its oversight over administrative machinery, including civil and police officials.

Legal Basis for Transfer of Officials

- The power of the Election Commission to transfer officials during elections is derived from statutory provisions.
- **Section 13CC of the Representation of the People Act, 1950**
 - This provision states that officials involved in election work are deemed to be on deputation to the Election Commission.
 - During this period, they are under the control, superintendence, and discipline of the ECI.

Supreme Court and Institutional Clarification

- There were earlier disputes regarding the extent of ECI's control over officials. In the 1990s, the issue was taken to the Supreme Court.
- A settlement clarified that the ECI has the authority to transfer officials and replace them in case of perceived bias or dereliction of duty.

Practice of Transfers During Elections

- The transfer of officials during elections is not a new practice.
 - It is done to remove officers perceived to be close to any political party
 - It helps ensure neutrality in election administration
 - It is applied across states during both the Assembly and the Lok Sabha elections
- For example, similar actions were taken during the **2024 General Elections**, where several senior officials were transferred across states.

Legal Position on Consultation

- While consultation with State governments is often practised, it is **not legally mandatory**.
 - The law gives the ECI overriding authority during elections
 - Officers on election duty are directly accountable to the Commission
- Thus, the Commission can act independently if required.

Significance of the Issue

• Ensuring Free and Fair Elections

Transfers help prevent bias and ensure that officials do not influence electoral outcomes.

• Federal Tensions

- The issue highlights tensions between the Central authority (Election Commission) and the State governments.
- Such conflicts are common during politically sensitive elections.

• Administrative Neutrality

- The neutrality of the bureaucracy is crucial for democratic functioning. Frequent transfers, however, may raise concerns about administrative stability.

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RAS LAFFAN UNDER FIRE: WHY INDIA'S ENERGY SECURITY HANGS IN THE BALANCE

Iranian missiles struck **Ras Laffan Industrial City**, Qatar — home to the world's biggest LNG facility — hours after Israel hit South Pars, the world's largest natural gas field shared between Iran and Qatar. The attack has major implications for global LNG supply and India's energy security.

Why Ras Laffan Matters for India?

- India imports ~88% of crude oil and ~50% of its gas needs
- Qatar supplies **~one-third of India's LPG and nearly half of its LNG**
- Earlier disruptions were limited to Strait of Hormuz shipping delays; now, physical damage to processing facilities makes recovery far slower and uncertain

India's LNG Dependency

- Qatar is India's **largest LNG source** — India depends on LNG for roughly half its natural gas demand.
- Over **two-fifths of India's LNG** comes from Qatar, almost entirely from Ras Laffan.
- In 2024–25, India imported 27 million tonnes of LNG; 11.2 million tonnes (41.4%) came from Qatar.
- Qatar Energy's production capacity is 77 million TPA, expanding to ~81 million TPA by 2025.

India Diversifying Away from the Gulf

- Previously, ~60% of LPG imports came from Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. India is now sourcing from: **US, Norway, Canada, Algeria, and Russia**
- This reduces geopolitical risk but **raises costs** due to longer shipping routes.



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SATHYAMANGALAM TIGER RESERVE



- **Location:** It is located in Tamil Nadu.
- It is nestled at the junction of the Eastern and the Western

Ghats in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve

- It is contiguous with the **Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, Bandipur Tiger Reserve** (Karnataka), and **BR Tiger Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuary** (Karnataka).
- **Terrain:** The terrain is hilly and undulating with altitude ranging between 750 m and 1649 m.
- **Climate:** It is subtropical and dry.
 - The summers are hot and dry; the monsoons are wet and cooler, with river flooding.
- **Rivers:** Some of the prominent rivers in the region include **the Bhavani, Moyar, and Noyyal rivers.**
- **Tribal Communities:** It is home to several indigenous tribal communities, including **the Irula and Kurumba tribes.**

Vegetation: It consists of southern **tropical dry thorn forests**, mixed deciduous forests, semi-evergreen forests, and riparian forests.

Flora: It includes **teak, sandalwood, bamboo, Terminalia,** and **Albizia,** alongside medicinal plants and shrubs that support both wildlife and local communities.

Fauna: The major species are **Elephant, Tiger, Panther, Sloth bear, Gaur, Black Buck, Spotted deer, Wild boar, Black napped hare, Common langur Nilgiri langur, Striped neck mongoose,** and **Bonnet macaque.**



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