

PREVENTION OF MONEY LAUNDERING ACT (PMLA), 2002



The Punjab and Haryana High Court has made it clear that courts can order release of an accused under police custody without fulfilling twin conditions as mandated under the PMLA, 2002.

Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 is an act to prevent money laundering and to provide for the **confiscation of property** derived from or involved in money laundering.

- The Act was formulated for the **following objectives**:
 - Prevent money-laundering.
 - Combat/**prevent the channelising of money into illegal activities** and economic crimes.
 - Provide for the **confiscation of property** derived from, or involved/used in, money laundering.
 - **Penalise the offenders** of money laundering offences.
 - **Appointing an adjudicating authority** and **appellate tribunal** for taking charge of money laundering matters.
 - Provide for matters connected and incidental to the acts of money laundering.
- The **Enforcement Directorate (ED)** in the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, is responsible for investigating the offences of money laundering under the PMLA.
- **Financial Intelligence Unit–India (FIU-IND)**, under the Department of Revenue, is the central national agency responsible for receiving, processing, analyzing and disseminating information relating to suspect financial transactions.
- The scheduled offences are **separately investigated by the agencies** mentioned under respective acts, for example, the local police, CBI, customs departments, SEBI or any other investigative agency, as the case may be.
- **Actions that can be initiated** against the person involved in money laundering:

- **Seizure/freezing of property and records** and attachment of property obtained with the proceeds of crime.
 - Any person who commits the offence of money laundering shall be **punishable with rigorous imprisonment** for a minimum term of three years, and this may extend up to seven years and **fine** (without any limit).
 - The PMLA and rules notified thereunder impose **obligations on banking companies, financial institutions**, and intermediaries and persons carrying on a designated business or profession, to verify identity of clients, maintain records and furnish information to FIU-IND.
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WHAT ARE SLAPP SUITS?

A Supreme Court bench recently recorded observations on how courts should decide pre-trial injunctions against media organisations, and the growing use of SLAPP suits.



- The term ‘SLAPP’, stands for **Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation**. The concept of a SLAPP lawsuit evolved in the US, where it was observed that certain lawsuits were filed targeting individual or group litigants who voiced their concern over important or considerable social issues in the public arena.
- The **subject matter** of the suit would target an act of public participation, such as engaging in an issue of societal or political significance, **in the form of journalism, advocacy, whistleblowing**, peaceful protests or boycotts, activism, or simply speaking out against abuse of power.
- As such, **winning the lawsuit is not the focus**. The plaintiff’s goal is typically accomplished if the defendant succumbs to fear, intimidation, mounting legal costs or simple exhaustion and abandons the criticism.
- The **remedies sought** are usually **substantial amounts of damages** and generally aggressive or disproportionate to the subject matter of the dispute.

- SLAPP suits are **routinely filed for libel, slander, defamation, abuse of process, malicious prosecution, conspiracy, invasion of privacy, and tortious interference with contract or business relationships.**
 - The most common SLAPP suits have often involved a powerful corporation suing local citizens for speaking against their company.
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MOHINIYATTAM



In a historic move, the Kerala Kalamandalam, a deemed university for arts and culture, has lifted gender restrictions to learn Mohiniyattam.

Mohiniyattam is an Indian classical dance form that evolved in the state of Kerala.

- **History and Evolution:**
 - Its roots date back to the age-old **Sanskrit Hindu text** on performing arts called ‘**Natya Shastra**’.
 - It is used to be **performed by Devadasis** (temple dancers) in temples during the rule of the **Chera kings** from 9 to 12 C.E.
- **Features:**
 - It is conventionally a **solo dance** performed by **female artists**. It adheres to **the Lasya type** that showcases a more graceful, gentle and feminine form of dancing.
 - **Theme:** The dance form Mohiniyattam has **love and devotion to God** as its major themes, with usually **Lord Vishnu or his incarnation Lord Krishna** as the lead character.
 - It emotes a play through **dancing and singing**, where the song is customarily in Manipravala, which is a mix of Sanskrit and Malayalam language.
 - The recitation may be performed by the dancer or a vocalist, with the music style being Carnatic. The dance is characterized by its graceful swaying body movements with no abrupt jerks or sudden leaps.

- More than the footwork, **emphasis** is given to **hand gestures and Mukhabhinaya** or subtle facial expressions. The hand gestures, 24 in number, are mainly adopted from ‘**Hastha Lakshana Deepika**’, a text followed by Kathakali.
- Costumes in Mohiniyattam include plain white or ivory cream traditional sari embroidered with bright gold-laced brocade.
- **Instruments used:** Mridangam, Madhalam, Idakka, flute, Veena and Kuzhitalam(cymbals).

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

As per the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), over 4,500 Rohingya refugees set off across the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea in 2023.



United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees protects refugees worldwide and facilitates their return home or resettlement.

Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland

- It was established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1950 in the **aftermath of the Second World War** to help the millions of people who had lost their homes.
- It is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for people forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution.
- It was **awarded Nobel Peace Prizes** in 1954 and 1981. It started Nansen Refugee Award in 1954 for recognition of outstanding service to the cause of refugees, displaced or stateless people.

Who are the Rohingya refugees?

- The Rohingya are a **Muslim minority ethnic group** with their roots in the Arakan kingdom in **Myanmar**.
- According to the Council on Foreign Relations notes that Rohang derives from the word ‘Arakan’ in the Rohingya dialect and ga or gya means from.

- They are culturally and religiously distinct from the majority Buddhist population in Myanmar and **speak a Bengali dialect** which is different from the common Burmese language. Myanmar has refused to recognise them as an ethnic group, denying them citizenship since 1982.
 - According to **Myanmar's 1982 citizenship law**, members of the Rohingya community, along with other ethnic minorities, can only attain citizenship if they prove their ancestors **resided in Myanmar before 1823**.
 - Otherwise, even if one of their parents is a Myanmar citizen, they are deemed to be “resident foreigners” or “associate citizens.”
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WHAT IS KALAM-250?



Recently, Skyroot Aerospace, the leading space-tech company, has successfully test-fired the Kalam-250 at the propulsion testbed of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

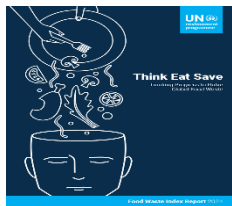
- It is a **stage-2 of Vikram-1** space launch vehicle. It is a high-strength carbon **composite rocket motor**, which uses solid fuel and a high-performance **Ethylene-Propylene-Diene terpolymers (EPDM)** thermal protection system (TPS).
- The stage includes a carbon ablative flex nozzle along with high-precision electro-mechanical actuators for thrust vector control of the vehicle, aiding in achieving the desired trajectory.
- The second stage of Vikram-1 will play a crucial role in the ascent of the launch vehicle, propelling it from the atmosphere to the deep vacuum of outer space.

Key facts about the Vikram-1 Rocket:

- It is **named after** the father of India's space programme, **Vikram Sarabhai** and is a multi-stage launch vehicle with a capacity to place around 300 kg of payloads **in low-earth orbit**.

- It has been built by Hyderabad-based **Skyroot Aerospace**. It is an all-carbon-fibre-bodied rocket that can place multiple satellites into orbit.
- Being a solid-fuel rocket and using relatively simpler technologies would mean that launching this vehicle would require minimal infrastructure and that the rocket could be assembled and launched within 24 hours from any site.

FOOD WASTE INDEX REPORT 2024



According to the Food Waste Index Report 2024, households across the globe wasted over one billion meals a day in 2022.

Food Waste Index Report 2024 is a study jointly authored by the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** and **WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme)**, a U.K.-based non-profit.

- It tracks the **global and national generation** of food and inedible parts wasted at the retail and consumer (household and food service) levels.
- **Highlights of the report:**
 - The report defines “**food waste**” as “food and the associated inedible parts removed from the human food supply chain”.
 - “**Food loss**” is defined as “all the crop and livestock human-edible commodity quantities that, directly or indirectly, completely exit the post-harvest/slaughter production/supply chain up to, and excluding, the retail level”.
 - It noted that in 2022, there were 1.05 billion tonnes of food waste generated (including inedible parts), amounting to 132 kilograms per capita and almost one-fifth of all food available to consumers.
 - Many **low- and middle-income countries** continue to **lack adequate systems** for tracking progress to meet Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 of halving food waste by 2030.
 - At present, **only four G-20 countries** (Australia, Japan, U.K., U.S.) and the European Union have **food waste estimates** suitable for tracking progress.

- **Hotter countries** appear to generate **more food waste** per capita in households, potentially due to higher consumption of fresh foods with substantial inedible parts and a lack of robust cold chains.
 - As compared to urban areas, rural ones generally wasted less food, due to “greater diversion of food scraps to pets, livestock and home composting”.
 - As of 2022, only **21 countries** had included **food loss and/or waste reduction** in their climate plans or **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)**.
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WHAT IS COVINET?



Recently, World Health Organisation (WHO) has launched a new network for coronaviruses, CoViNet.

- It is a **network of global laboratories** with expertise in human, animal and environmental coronavirus surveillance. It will identify and **monitor potentially novel coronaviruses** that could emerge shortly.
- The network will now have animal health and environmental surveillance and timely risk assessment to feed WHO policies and protective measures.
- In low- and middle-income countries, CoViNet will support the building of more laboratories to monitor MERS-CoV and novel coronaviruses of public health importance.
- Data generated through CoViNet's efforts will guide the work of WHO's Technical Advisory Groups on Viral Evolution (TAG-VE) and Vaccine Composition (TAG-CO-VAC).
- It currently comprises 36 laboratories from 21 countries in all six WHO regions. **Three Indian laboratories** namely; the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute, the Indian Council of Medical Research-National Institute of Virology in Pune, and the Translational Health Science and Technology Institute are part of this network.

Key facts about World Health Organisation (WHO):

- It was **established in 1948**, is a **specialized agency** of the **United Nations** that connects nations, partners and people to promote health.
 - The **governance structure** of the WHO is designed to support the implementation of its mandate and the achievement of its objectives. It includes:
 - **Membership:** It currently has 194 member states.
 - **World Health Assembly (WHA):** The highest decision-making body of WHO and comprises representatives from all member States.
 - **Secretariat:** Responsible for carrying out the policies and programs approved by the WHA.
 - **Director-General:** Director-General heads the WHA and is supported by a senior management team.
 - **Regional Offices:** WHO also has six regional offices: Africa, the Americas, Southeast Asia, Europe, Eastern Mediterranean and Western Pacific.
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EC RULES REGARDING CASH CARRYING LIMIT DURING ELECTION

Measures to curb money power

- **Strict vigil on the movement of cash, liquor etc.**
 - Before each election, the Election Commission provides clear directions to the police, railways, airports, the Income Tax department, and other enforcement agencies.
- **Appointment of expenditure observers**
 - EC also appoints expenditure observers for every district, alongside static surveillance teams and flying squads.
- **Role of surveillance teams**
 - Surveillance teams put up check posts on roads, video graphing the entire checking process.
 - Their location is changed frequently to maintain an element of surprise.

What are the rules for carrying cash and other items?

- **Rules for Airports**
 - According to EC instructions, the CISF or police at airports must immediately inform the Income Tax Dept if anyone is carrying cash exceeding Rs. 10 lakh or more than 1 kg of bullion.
- **At check-posts controlled by the surveillance team**
 - At check-posts, if over Rs. 10 lakh cash is found in a vehicle without any suspicion, it will not be seized.
 - Instead, the Income Tax authority will be informed for necessary action.
- **Rules for vehicle carrying a candidate, or his/her agent or party worker**
 - If a vehicle with a candidate, agent, or party worker has more than Rs. 50,000 cash or items like drugs, liquor, arms, or gifts worth over Rs. 10,000, they will be confiscated.

What happens after a seizure?

- **Seized cash/items are returned**
 - In case any cash or other items are seized, authorities are meant to return them if they are not related to any candidate or a crime.
 - Once seized, the money will be deposited as instructed by the Court.
 - A copy of the seizure of cash exceeding Rs. 10 lakhs will be sent to the Income Tax authority handling the matter.
- **Grievance redressal committee**
 - A district-level committee will look at grievances in order to avoid inconvenience to the public and genuine persons.
 - The Committee shall suo-motu examine each case of seizure:
 - where no FIR/complaint has been filed, or
 - where the seizure is not linked with any candidate, political party or election campaign.
 - Moreover, it shall take immediate steps to return any cash seized.