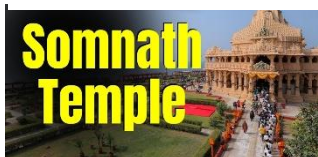


SOMNATH TEMPLE



Prime Minister of India is set to visit the iconic Somnath Temple to mark the 75th anniversary of the restored Hindu temple's inauguration by President Rajendra Prasad in 1951.

- It is a **Hindu temple** dedicated to **Lord Shiva**.
- It is located in **Prabhas Patan** near **Veraval** in **Saurashtra** on the **western coast of Gujarat**.
- It is the **first of the 12 jyotirlinga shrines** in India that are regarded as the manifestation of the **Lord Shiva Himself**.
- The site of Somnath has been a **pilgrimage site from ancient times** on account of being a **Triveni Sangam**: the **confluence of three rivers, namely Kapila, Hiran, and Saraswati**.
- The **ancient temple's timeline** can be **traced from 649 BC** but is believed to be older than that.
- The temple **faced several invasions**, the most **notable being by Mahmud Ghazni** in the **11th century**.
- **Reconstruction Efforts**: Rebuilt multiple times by different dynasties, including the **Paramaras, Chalukyas, and the Marathas**.
- The **present temple** was reconstructed in the **Chalukya style** of Hindu temple architecture and completed in **May 1951**.
- The **reconstruction was completed by Vallabhbhai Patel**.
- **Architecture**:
 - The temple features an elaborate and extravagant architecture marked with many **rich, intricate carvings**.
 - The temple is **seven-storied** and reaches up to a height of **155 ft**.

- The temple's **positioning is quite unique**. The temple is positioned in such a way that **not a single piece of land is visible from the Somnath seashore until Antarctica**.
- A magnificent **Kalash or pot vessel tops** the temple Shikhara and weighs up to 10 tons approximately.
- The summit is adorned with a flag whose mast is 37 ft in length.

WHAT ARE WESTERN DISTURBANCES?



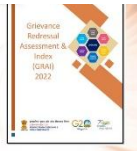
- They are **extratropical storm systems** that form over the **Mediterranean Sea** and travel eastwards towards the **Indian subcontinent**.
- They carry **moisture-laden air** and interact with the **subtropical jet stream**, influencing **weather conditions** over vast regions, including parts of **Pakistan, India, Nepal, and Bangladesh**.
- Western Disturbances **primarily affect India** during the winter months, from November to March.
- They **bring crucial rainfall and snowfall**, vital for the **Rabi crop season**, especially in northwestern India, including Punjab, Haryana, and Delhi.

Why is it named Western Disturbances?

- Western Disturbances are named so because of their **origin and movement patterns**.
- These weather systems **originate from the western regions of the Earth**, specifically from the **Mediterranean region**. As they form over the Mediterranean Sea and adjacent areas, they are referred to as Western Disturbances.
- The term **“disturbance”** indicates the **disruptive nature** of these weather systems as they travel eastwards from their origin towards the Indian subcontinent and beyond.
- While they are called **Western Disturbances in India**, similar weather phenomena may be referred to by different names in other regions of the world, depending on their origin and impact.

GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL ASSESSMENT AND INDEX

Grievance
Redressal
Assessment
and Index



According to the department of administrative reforms and public Grievance, for March 2026 the department of financial services' insurance division tops Grievance Redressal Assessment and Index (GRAI) Rankings in Group A Category.

- It is developed by the **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)**.
- **Objective:** It evaluates ministries and departments on the **effectiveness and timeliness of grievance resolution** through the **Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS)**.
- It has been formulated based on **4 dimensions** (Efficiency, Feedback, ,Domain and Organisational Commitment and corresponding) **and 11 indicators**.

Key Facts about Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System

- It is an **online platform available to the citizens 24×7** to lodge their grievances to the public authorities on any subject related to service delivery.
- It was developed and monitored by the **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)**, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions.
- It is a **single portal connected to all the ministries/departments** of the Government of India and States.
- The status of the grievance filed in **CPGRAMS can be tracked with the unique registration ID** provided at the time of registration of the complainant.
- The grievances received on the CPGRAMS shall be resolved promptly as soon as they are received but **within a maximum period of 21 days**.

NITI AAYOG REPORT ON SCHOOL EDUCATION - DROPOUT CRISIS AND POLICY REFORMS

- India's school education system is one of the largest in the world, comprising **14.71 lakh schools serving 24.69 crore students**.
- While the country has achieved near-universal enrolment at the primary level, the system continues to face deep structural problems affecting quality, retention, and learning outcomes.

Key Findings of the NITI Aayog Report

- **The Pyramid Problem: Fragmented School Structure**
 - While the country has 7.3 lakh primary schools (Classes 1-5), the number drops drastically to 1.64 lakh higher secondary schools (Classes 11-12).
 - Only about 5% of schools offer continuous education from Grade 1 to Grade 12.
 - This fragmentation forces students to change school multiple times, after Class 5, Class 8, and Class 10, contributing to poor retention and high attrition rates.
- **Sharp Dropout Rates After Elementary Education**
 - While primary-level dropout has fallen to just 0.3%, it rises to 3.5% at the upper primary level and jumps to 11.5% at the secondary stage.
 - Although the national transition rate improved from 67.7% in 2014-15 to 75.1% in 2024-25, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the higher secondary level stands at only 58.4% nationally. States like Bihar (38.1%), Meghalaya (39.7%), Nagaland (39.8%), and Assam (43.5%) report the lowest GER at this level.
- **Weak Learning Outcomes**
 - In mathematics, only 45.8% of Grade 8 students can solve a basic division problem. The report found that 35% of Class 5 students in low-fee private schools cannot read a Class 2 textbook, while 60% are unable to solve a basic division problem.
- **Teacher Shortages and Single-Teacher Schools**

- Around 1.04 lakh schools, over 7% of all schools, operate with just one teacher, who must handle multiple grades while managing administrative duties and mid-day meals. Nearly 14% of planned teaching days are lost to non-academic work such as elections and surveys.
- **Weak Teacher Preparation**
 - Data from NITI Aayog's SATH-E programme found that many teachers score below 60-70% in subject papers of the grades they teach.
- **Infrastructure Gaps**
 - 1.19 lakh schools lack access to functional electricity. While 99% of schools now have drinking water facilities, 14,505 schools still lack functional water sources, and nearly 59,829 lack handwashing facilities.

NITI Aayog's Recommendations

- **Cylindrical Schooling Model**
 - The report recommends shifting from the current pyramidal structure to a cylindrical model built around composite schools offering education from Grades 1 to 12 under one roof.
- **Foundational Learning Over Textbook Completion**
 - NITI Aayog calls for a shift from "textbook completion to foundational mastery," recommending that children be taught at their actual learning level rather than strictly by grade.
- **Teacher Reforms**
 - The report recommends that professional development move beyond occasional lecture-based sessions toward sustained, practice-centred learning.
 - It proposes structured career pathways, from senior to master to mentor-teacher roles, and urges that teachers be freed from non-teaching duties.
- **Sushikshit Bharat Abhiyaan**
 - Incremental change will not be sufficient; meeting the aspirations of a resurgent India will demand a system-wide transformation of school education.

PANNA TIGER RESERVE



- Situated in the **Vindhyan mountain range** in the northern part of **Madhya Pradesh**, the reserve is spread over the Panna and Chhatarpur districts.

- It is the **only tiger reserve** in the entire **Bundhelkhand region**.
- It falls in biogeographic zones of the **Deccan Peninsula** and the **Biotic Province** of the **Central highlands**.
- **Landscape:**
 - It is characterized by a '**Table Top**' topography.
 - The terrain here consists of **extensive plateaus and gorges**.
 - Two plateaus run parallel to each other from southwest to northeasterly direction.
- **River:** Flowing from the south to the north through the reserve is the River **Ken**.
- The reserve is also dotted with **two-thousand-year-old rock paintings**.
- The **region surrounding** the reserve is home to various indigenous **tribes**, each with its distinct culture and traditions. The **Baiga and Gond tribes** are among the prominent ones.
- **Flora:**
 - The dominant vegetation type is **dry deciduous forest** interspersed with grassland areas.
 - It forms the **northernmost tip of the natural teak forests** and the **easternmost tip of the natural Anogeissus pendula (Kardhai) forests**.
 - The tree species *Acacia catachu* dominates the dry, steep slopes of the plateaus here.
- **Fauna:**
 - It supports a sizable population of **Tiger, Sloth Bear, Leopard, and Striped Hyena**.

- Other prominent carnivores are Jackal, Wolf, Wild Dog, Jungle Cat, and Rusty Spotted Cat.
- It is also a haven for **birdlife**. Notable sightings include the **white-necked stork**, **bar-headed goose**, **honey buzzard**, blossom-headed parakeet, paradise flycatcher, slaty-headed scimitar babbler, and five species of vultures.

KEY FACTS ABOUT BAIGA TRIBE



- They are one of India's **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)**.
- They are found in **central India**, primarily in the state of **Madhya Pradesh**, and in smaller numbers in the surrounding states of **Uttar Pradesh**, **Chhattisgarh**, and **Jharkhand**.

Language: The Baiga tribe primarily speaks **Baigani**, a dialect of **Chhattisgarhi** heavily influenced by **Gondi** and **Hindi**.

Livelihood: Traditionally **semi-nomadic**, they practised **slash-and-burn cultivation**, locally called "**Bewar**", and now depend mainly on **minor forest produce**.

- **Live-in relationships** are **common** among the Baiga. If marriage does take place, the man compensates the woman's family for the loss of a working member.
- **Tattooing** is integral to their culture, with **specific tattoos** designated for **different body parts** and age groups.
- Tattoos are made using kajal derived from Ramtilla seeds (Niger seeds).
- **Mahua Tree:** These are **fermented and distilled to prepare an intoxicant**, forming an essential part of their diet and culture.
- The Baiga tribe is the **first community in India to be granted habitat rights**, reflecting their deep connection with forests.

TEESTA RIVER



- **Origin:** It originates from the **Tso Lhamo Lake** at an elevation of approximately 5,280 meters in **North Sikkim, India**.
- It is glacier-fed, with sources like **Pahurni Glacier, Khangse Glacier,** and ChhoLhamo Lake contributing to its flow.
- It is a **major tributary of the Brahmaputra River** (known as the Jamuna in Bangladesh) and **flows through India and Bangladesh**.

Course:

- It flows cutting a deep gorge through the **Siwalik Hills east of Darjiling** (in West Bengal, India).
- It turns southeast to **run through the Sivok Khola pass** onto the plains of West Bengal.
- It then enters Bangladesh, where it joins the Brahmaputra River (known as the Jamuna River in Bangladesh).

Tributaries: Major tributaries include Lachung Chhu, Dik Chhu, and Rangpo Chhu on the left bank and the **Rangit River** on the **right bank**.

- Notably, 83% of the basin lies in India, while 17% is in Bangladesh.

INS SAGARDHWANI



- It is an **oceanographic research vessel** which was commissioned in Jul 1994.
- The meaning of the name '**Sagardhwani**' is **sound/ voice of the sea**.
- It was designed by **Naval Physical and Oceanographic Laboratory (NPOL)**, Kochi.

- It was built by **Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE)**.
- It is equipped with **an array of scientific equipment** and laboratories for conduct of scientific research in the field of oceanography.

Objective: The vessel has served as a key platform for **marine scientific research**, contributing significantly to advancements in **marine acoustics and naval oceanography**.

- It works in tandem with scientific organisations and laboratories of DRDO like Naval Science and Technology Laboratory, Defence Research and Development Laboratory.

It has participated in the **Sagar Maitri initiative**.

- Sagar Maitri is a flagship collaborative **initiative of the Indian Navy and DRDO**, aligned with the Government of India's vision of 'Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions (MAHASAGAR)'.
○ The initiative aims to **promote closer cooperation in socio-economic aspects** and greater scientific interaction, especially in ocean research, among **Indian Ocean Rim (IOR) countries**.