INTERNATIONAL LABOUR DAY 2025
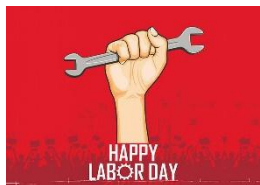
- International Labour Day, also known as **May Day,** is observed annually on **May 1** to honor the dedication and contributions of workers across the globe.
- It is a **memorial to the labor movement's** struggles and victories.

History:
  - The origins of International Labor Day are found in **Chicago**, where on **May 1, 1886, workers called for a strike for an eight-hour workday.**
  - The protest, which **turned into** what is now remembered as the **Haymarket Affair**, was a turning point in labor history.
  - On May 4, **violence broke** out in Haymarket Square when a bomb was thrown at police officers.
  - The **resulting gunfire resulted in several deaths**, including six officers and a number of civilians.
  - This turning point **stimulated trade unions and socialist federations** across Europe **to declare May 1 an International Day of Workers' solidarity,** formally approved in 1889 at the Paris meeting.

- While International Labour Day commemorates events in the United States, both the **US and Canada observe Labour Day on the first Monday of September**, not May 1.
- **Over 80 countries,** including **India, Cuba, and China, mark International Labour Day.**
- In India, the **first Labour Day celebration** was held in **Chennai (then Madras) in 1923 by the Labour Kisan Party of Hindustan.**
- The day usually involves parades, union gatherings, and celebrations that emphasize employee rights.

NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (NHRC)

- The **NHRC is a statutory body**, constituted under the **Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993**.
- It was **established on 12th October 1993** as an **independent institution** to protect and promote **human rights**, defined under **Section 2(1)(d)** of Act.

Mandate and Objectives

- The NHRC safeguards rights related to **life, liberty, equality**, and **human dignity**, guaranteed by the **Constitution of India** and **international human rights treaties**.
- Its primary objectives include:
  - **Strengthening institutional frameworks** to address human rights issues.
  - **Independent investigation** of alleged human rights violations.
  - **Supporting and enhancing** the work of other institutions in promoting human rights.

Composition and Structure

- The NHRC consists of a **Chairperson** and up to **five members**, including:
  - A **retired Chief Justice of India** (as Chairperson).
  - A **retired or sitting Supreme Court judge**.
  - A **retired or sitting Chief Justice of a High Court**.
  - **Three experts** in human rights, with **at least one woman** among them.
- Additionally, **seven ex-officio members** include the Chairpersons of:
  - **National Commissions for SCs, STs, Minorities, Women, Backward Classes, Child Rights**, and the **Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities**.

Appointment and Tenure

- Members are **appointed by the President of India** based on the recommendation of a **six-member committee** led by the **Prime Minister**.
- Tenure: **Three years** or **until the age of 70**, whichever is earlier. Members are **eligible for reappointment** but **barred from further government employment** post-tenure.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISORY BOARD (NSAB) REVAMPED

- **NSAB** is a key body under India's three-tier national security structure.
    - National Security Council (NSC) – Apex body headed by the Prime Minister.
    - Strategic Policy Group (SPG) – Chaired by the National Security Advisor.
    - National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) – Advisory body providing long-term analysis.
- It provides inputs on strategic and security-related matters and plays a crucial role in shaping India's national security policies by bringing together domain experts.
- **Need for NSAB**
    - To provide a broad-based perspective on national security challenges.
    - To incorporate views from outside the government structure for innovative and non-bureaucratic insights.
    - To ensure informed decision-making on complex and evolving threats (e.g., cyber, space, terror, climate).
    - To enhance strategic thinking and foresight on foreign and security matters.
- **Legal Mandate**
    - The NSAB has no statutory or constitutional status.
    - It operates under the framework of the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS). It is an **advisory and non-binding body** — its recommendations are not enforceable but carry weight.
- **Composition**
    - Headed by a Chairperson (usually a former senior official or expert).
    - Includes 7 members from diverse fields such as diplomacy, military, academia, economics, science & tech.
    - Members are appointed by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) or on NSA's recommendation. It is non-permanent, and its composition may change based on government needs.

- **Functions and Responsibilities**
  - Provides policy perspectives and recommendations to the National Security Council (NSC).
  - Offers strategic guidance on evolving threats and national interests.
  - Focuses on research, foresight, and independent analysis to support government decision-making.
- **Current Agenda of NSAB**
  - Neighbourhood strategy and Western neighbourhood
  - Border management
  - Maritime security
  - Internal security
  - Strategic industries and technology
  - Strategic communications

NSAB Reconstituted

- The government has reconstituted the **National Security Advisory Board (NSAB)** and appointed **former R&AW chief Alok Joshi** as its new chairman.
- The seven-member board includes:
  - **Military Veterans**:
    - Air Marshal P.M. Sinha (Former Western Air Commander)
    - Lt Gen A.K. Singh (Former Southern Army Commander)
    - Rear Admiral Monty Khanna
  - **Police Officers**:
    - Rajiv Ranjan Verma (Retired IPS)
    - Manmohan Singh (Retired IPS)
  - **Diplomat**:
    - B. Venkatesh Varma (Retired IFS)

WHAT IS NOTICE TO AIR MISSION (NOTAM)?
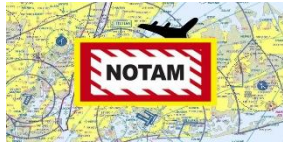
- Notice to Air Mission, also known as **Notice to Airmen**, is a **notice containing information concerning** the **establishment, condition, or change in** any **aeronautical facility, service, procedure, or hazard,** the timely knowledge of which is **essential to personnel concerned with flight operations.**

- NOTAMs **update pilots about changes in airspace, airports, and equipment** that affect aircraft operations.

- It is a **bulletin issued by a country's aviation authority.**

- NOTAMs are issued by national authorities **for a number of reasons, such as:**

  - **Hazards** such as air-shows, parachute jumps and glider or micro-light flying;

  - **Flights by important people** such as heads of state;

  - **Closed runways,** taxiways, etc;

  - Unserviceable radio navigational aids;

  - **Military exercises** with resulting airspace restrictions;

  - **Unserviceable lights** on tall obstructions;

  - Temporary erection of obstacles near airfields (e.g. cranes).

- For reasons of conciseness and precision, **NOTAMs are encoded,** although the code is usually **sufficiently self-evident to allow the user to identify a hazard.**

- NOTAMs are **communicated** by the issuing agency **using the fastest available means to all addressees** for whom the information is assessed as being of direct operational significance, and who would not otherwise have at least seven days' prior notification.

- NOTAMs are typically **accessible through online platforms, electronic flight planning tools, and aviation weather services**, allowing pilots to conveniently access up-to-date information and make informed decisions regarding their flight activities.

- **Pilots who do not review NOTAMS** before flight **put themselves (and others) in danger.**

CABINET COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL AFFAIRS CABINET APPROVES CASTE CENSUS

- **Overview of Population Census**
  - The first census in India began in 1872 (non-synchronous), while the first synchronous census was held in 1881 under British rule by W.C. Plowden.
  - It is conducted every 10 years by the **Office of the Registrar General** and **Census Commissioner** under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
  - Census is a **Union subject** under Entry 69, Union List, Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution. It is governed by the Census Act, 1948.

History and Status of Caste Census

- Caste data was collected during British India censuses from 1881 to 1931.
- Post-1951, caste enumeration was discontinued, except for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).
- In 1961, the Centre recommended that States conduct their own OBC surveys, since central OBC reservations did not exist then.
- Though census is a central subject, the Collection of Statistics Act, 2008 enables states and local bodies to collect data — as done by Karnataka (2015) and Bihar (2023).
- **Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC)**
  - The last attempt at caste data collection at a national level took place in 2011 through the SECC, intended to assess the socio-economic condition of households alongside caste information.
  - Only the socio-economic data was published in 2016; the caste data was withheld.
  - It is unclear if the group submitted its report—no report was ever made public.

Key Highlights on Caste Census Decision

- **Digital Mode & Drop-Down Caste Directory**
  - For the first time, the Census will be conducted in digital mode, using a mobile app. A new "Other" column will be included beside the SC/ST column.

- **Major Policy Shift After Decades**
  - o The CCPA's approval to include caste data in the upcoming census marks the first comprehensive caste enumeration since 1931 (excluding SC/ST data).

- **Historical Context of Caste Enumeration**
  - o Caste data was excluded from post-Independence censuses (1951–2011), except for SC/ST figures.
  - o The last full caste census was in 1931, with unpublished data from 1941.

- **Reliance on Estimates So Far**
  - o In the absence of official data, estimates like the Mandal Commission's 52% OBC figure have guided policy and electoral decisions.

- **Inconsistent State-Level OBC Lists**
  - o Different states have varying OBC lists and sub-categories like Most Backward Classes, complicating efforts to create a standardized national caste database.

- **Renewed Debate on Governance and Representation**
  - o The move revives the broader debate on how caste data should inform governance, social justice, and political representation in India.

What Happens Now

- About 30 lakh government officials will need retraining for the new digital format.
- The Census will occur in two phases:
  - o **Phase 1**: House listing & housing schedule (31 questions; already notified in 2020).
  - o **Phase 2:** Population enumeration (28 questions; tested in 2019, yet to be officially notified).
- **Significance for Delimitation & Women's Reservation**
  - o The new Census findings will be used to:
    - ▪ Redraw Lok Sabha constituencies (delimitation).
    - ▪ Implement 33% women's reservation in Parliament and State Assemblies.

SUPREME COURT DECLARES DIGITAL ACCESS A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT UNDER ARTICLE 21

In a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court of India has ruled that **digital access is an intrinsic part of** the fundamental right to life and liberty under **Article 21** of the Constitution.

This pronouncement **reinforces the constitutional obligation of the State** to **bridge the digital divide** (marked by lack of infrastructure, skills, accessible content) and **ensure inclusive digital infrastructure**.

Key Highlights of the Verdict:

- **Relevant constitutional provisions invoked:**
  - **Article 21:** Right to life and dignity.
  - **Article 14:** Right to equality.
  - **Article 15:** Prohibition of discrimination.
  - **Article 38 (DPSP):** Obligation of the state to promote welfare and reduce inequalities.

- **Digital access as a constitutional right:**
  - The Court held that the right to digital access is an "**instinctive component**" of the right to life and liberty.
  - The right is now deemed **a constitutional imperative.**
  - **It is essential for access to governance**, education, healthcare, essential services, and economic opportunities in the **digital era**.
  - The principle of **substantive equality** (which ensures policies accommodate varied needs beyond formal equality) mandates that digital transformation must be **inclusive and equitable.**

- **Bridging the digital divide:**
  - **Given India's rapid digital growth** (via Aadhaar, online platforms, net banking), **it is important to consider if technology is available to everyone**, especially the vulnerable and historically excluded.

- o The judgment highlights that **rural populations**, senior citizens, economically weaker sections, linguistic minorities, and persons with disabilities face **systemic exclusion** due to lack of digital access.
- o The Court asserted that addressing the digital divide is **not just policy discretion**, but a **constitutional responsibility** to **uphold dignity, autonomy, and equal participation in public life**.

Petition Background and Relief Granted:

- **Case of acid attack victims:**
  - o The verdict came in response to petitions by two acid attack survivors s**uffering from 100% blindness** and facial disfigurement.
  - o They were **unable to complete the digital KYC**/e-KYC process due to inability to take a live photograph by blinking, which **hindered access to banking and telecom services**.
- **Directions issued by the court:** RBI and other government bodies were directed to:
  - o **Revise** KYC norms for visually- and hearing-impaired users.
  - o Develop **alternative** formats like Braille, voice-enabled, and accessible digital interfaces.
  - o Provide alternative modes to verify "liveness" during KYC.
  - o Continue allowing **paper-based KYC** as an accessible option.

Implications for Governance and Policy:

- **Inclusive digital governance:**
  - o The verdict reiterates the need for the State to **proactively design inclusive digital ecosystems.**
  - o **Technology must accommodate diverse needs** to prevent exclusion and ensure true inclusion.