

### CASHLESS TREATMENT OF ROAD ACCIDENT VICTIMS SCHEME, 2025



The Government of India recently launched a groundbreaking cashless treatment scheme for road accident victims across the country, ensuring swift and hassle-free medical care for those affected.

- Under the scheme, any individual injured in a road accident involving a motor vehicle on any public road in India will be eligible for cashless medical treatment at designated hospitals.
- The maximum benefit under the scheme is capped at Rs 1.5 lakh and is valid for up to seven days from the date of the accident.
- Treatment at hospitals that are not designated under the scheme will be limited to stabilisation measures, as further detailed in the scheme's guidelines.
- To ensure seamless execution, the National Health Authority (NHA) will serve as the coordinating agency.
  - It will work in collaboration with the police, hospitals and respective State Health Agencies to operationalise the scheme effectively.

The State Road Safety Council in each state and Union Territory will act as the nodal agency responsible for the scheme's implementation within their jurisdiction.

- This includes coordinating with the National Health Authority for the onboarding of designated hospitals, the treatment of victims, payment processes to hospitals, and other related matters through a dedicated portal.
- A 17-member steering committee headed by the road transport secretary will monitor the implementation of the scheme.

### HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2025



- It is an annual publication by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that evaluates and compares countries based on human development rather than just economic growth.
- It analyses development progress across a range of indicators known as the Human Development Index (HDI), which encompasses achievements in health and education, along with levels of income.

#### Highlights of HDR 2025:

- The 2025 HDR, titled “A Matter of Choice: People and Possibilities in the Age of AI”, highlights the critical role of artificial intelligence in shaping the next chapter of human development.
- Iceland, with an HDI value of 0.972, ranked at the top of the Index, followed by Norway and Switzerland. South Sudan was at the bottom at 193 with 0.388.
- India is ranked 130th on the Human Development Index (HDI), out of 193 countries and territories.
- India improved its HDI value from 0.676 in 2022 to 0.685 in 2023, with the country remaining in the medium human development category, although moving closer to the threshold for high human development ( $HDI \geq 0.700$ ).
- It also noted that India’s HDI value has increased by over 53 percent since 1990, growing faster than both the global and South Asian averages.
- Among India’s neighbours, China (75th), Sri Lanka (78th), and Bhutan (127th) are ranked above India, while Bangladesh (130th) is ranked at par. Nepal (145th), Myanmar (149th), and Pakistan (168th) are ranked below India.

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#### KALESHWARAM LIFT IRRIGATION PROJECT (KLIP)?



- It is a **multi-purpose irrigation project** on the **Godavari River** in Kaleshwaram, Bhupalpally,
  - It is designed to provide water for irrigation and drinking purposes to about 45 lakh acres in 20 of the 31 districts in Telangana, apart from Hyderabad and Secunderabad.
  - Currently the **world's largest multi-stage lift irrigation project**, its farthest upstream influence is at the **confluence of the Pranahita and Godavari rivers**.
    - The **Pranahita River** is itself a **confluence of various smaller tributaries**, including the **Wardha, Painganga and Wainganga rivers**, which combine to form the seventh-largest drainage basin on the subcontinent.
  - It comprises seven links and 28 packages, stretching over a distance of approximately 500 km (310 mi) across 13 districts.
  - The extensive canal network associated with the project spans over 1,800 km (1,100 mi).
  - The project aims to produce a total of 240 TMC (Thousand Million Cubic Feet) of water, which is allocated for various purposes such as **irrigation, municipal water supply to Hyderabad, industrial use, and drinking water** in nearby villages.

#### GLOBAL SPACE EXPLORATION SUMMIT (GLEX) 2025



India will host the 12th edition of the Global Space Exploration Conference (GLEX 2025) from 7th to 9th May 2025 in New Delhi.

- GLEX 2025's theme is **"Reaching New Worlds: A Space Exploration Renaissance,"** emphasizing innovation, inclusivity, and international cooperation in space science.

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- GLEX 2025 is jointly organised by:
  - **International Astronautical Federation (IAF)** – the world’s leading space advocacy body.
  - **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** – as the primary host.
  - **Astronautical Society of India (ASI)** – as the co-host.
- The conference represents a milestone in India’s expanding global space leadership, highlighting its transition from a regional space power to a key international player.

### About the IAF (International Astronautical Federation)

- Founded in 1951, the IAF has over 500 members from 78 countries, including major space agencies, private firms, research institutes, and universities.
- Its motto “Connecting @ll Space People” and vision “A space-faring world cooperating for the benefit of humanity” guide its efforts to promote global space cooperation.
- The GLEX series, organized by IAF, serves as a platform to share **programmatic, technical and policy insights**, and **facilitate collaborative space missions** across nations.

### INDIA TIGHTENS SECURITY RULES FOR SATELLITE COMMUNICATION SERVICE PROVIDERS

- The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has issued a set of security and operational guidelines for satellite communication firms such as Starlink (Elon Musk), Amazon’s Kuiper, Eutelsat OneWeb, and Jio.
- **Key Compliance Requirements**
  - **Local Manufacturing**
    - Companies must submit a year-wise phased manufacturing plan, aiming to indigenise at least 20% of the ground segment within five years of starting commercial operations.

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- **Data Localisation**
  - All satellite communication-related data must be stored within India.
- **Domestic Navigation System Integration**
  - Mandatory integration of NavIC, India's regional navigation system, in user terminals on a best-effort basis, with full transition required by 2029.
- **Website Blocking Mechanism**
  - Firms must enable systems to block government-identified websites.
- **Cooperation with Law Enforcement**
  - Companies are required to collect and share metadata with security agencies when requested.
- **National Security and Law Enforcement Cooperation**
  - **Service Restrictions During Emergencies**
    - Companies must be capable of restricting services to individuals, subscriber groups, or regions during periods of hostilities or national emergencies.
  - **Clearances for Voice and Data Services**
    - Separate security clearances are required before launching voice or data communication services.
  - **Special Monitoring Zones (SMZs)**
    - Designated zones include areas within 50 km of international borders and coastal regions up to the Exclusive Economic Zone (200 nautical miles).
    - These zones will be monitored by law enforcement and security agencies.
  - **Real-Time User Terminal Tracking**
    - Operators must provide real-time location data (latitude-longitude) of all user terminals, both fixed and mobile, upon request.
    - They must also report foreign or unregistered terminals connecting from within Indian territory.



### CIVIL SERVICES IN INDIA: CHALLENGES AND THE NEED FOR REFORM

- On Civil Services Day 2025, Cabinet Secretary highlighted the indispensable role of civil services in upholding Indian democracy.
- While praising their contributions to governance, elections, and development administration, he also acknowledged the deep-rooted challenges that impede their efficiency and credibility.
- In the context of evolving governance needs, civil services in India stand at a critical juncture where reform is not just desirable, but imperative.

#### **Evolution and Role of Civil Services in India**

- **Civil services in India date back to 1858**, when the British established the Indian Civil Service based on a merit system to manage administrative functions.
- Post-independence, this role was taken over by the **Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)**, which has since remained the cornerstone of merit-based recruitment.

#### **Structural Framework and the Merit vs. Spoils System**

- India follows a **merit-based system**, which entails rigorous selection through competitive examinations conducted by independent agencies like UPSC.
- In contrast, the **spoils system**, historically practiced in the U.S., involved appointments based on political allegiance and was largely dismantled by 1883.
- Despite India's formal reliance on merit, creeping political interference threatens to convert the Indian system into a partial spoils framework, especially in appointments, transfers, and tenures.

#### **Major Challenges Facing Indian Civil Services**

- **Erosion of Neutrality:**
  - A foundational trait of civil services, neutrality is fast declining.
  - Bureaucrats are increasingly seen aligning with political interests, which compromises the integrity and impartiality expected of them.
- **Political Interference:**

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- Frequent and arbitrary transfers, especially of upright officers, discourage independent functioning.
- Administrative decisions are often influenced by political calculations rather than public interest.
- **Generalist Bias and Lack of Domain Expertise:**
  - The generalist model of the Indian bureaucracy, where officers rotate across sectors, limits their capacity to address increasingly technical and specialized challenges.
  - This results in sub-optimal policy design and implementation.
- **Endemic Corruption:**
  - Corruption exists at multiple levels of the bureaucracy.
  - Despite the existence of vigilance mechanisms, many cases go unpunished, eroding public trust in civil servants.

#### Reforms for a Future-Ready Civil Service

- **Insulation from Political Pressure:**
  - To ensure the rule of law and constitutional governance, civil servants must be granted a reasonable degree of autonomy in postings, tenures, and transfers.
- **Shift from Procedures to Outcomes:**
  - Currently, bureaucratic performance is judged by inputs (expenditure) or outputs (activities).
  - There is a need to transition to outcome-based monitoring to align public service with actual societal impact.
- **Lateral Entry of Domain Experts:**
  - Introducing professionals from outside the service at senior levels can bring fresh perspectives and technical proficiency.
  - This complements the institutional knowledge of career bureaucrats and enhances governance quality.

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### JUDICIARY VS. EXECUTIVE: ANALYSING THE VICE-PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS ON JUDICIAL OVERREACH

- **Separation of powers:**
  - The doctrine of separation of powers is a **cornerstone** of the Indian Constitution.
  - It ensures that the **three organs** - Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary - **function independently**.
  - **Any overreach** by one organ into another's domain **undermines constitutional governance**.
  - Even the **independence of the judiciary** is fully secured because of the principle of separation of powers [L. Chandra Kumar versus Union of India (1997)].
  - If at any time judges try to exercise their powers arbitrarily, it shall be a gross violation of **Article 50 of DPSP**, and the government may initiate a process for a removal of the judge concerned.
- **Supremacy of the Constitution:**
  - **The rule of law** and the supremacy of the Constitution are **foundational doctrines**.
  - Even the President, Governors, and judiciary are bound by constitutional provisions.
  - **No authority is beyond scrutiny** if it violates constitutional boundaries.

#### **Dissecting the Vice-President's Remarks:**

- **The 'super parliament' comment:**
  - The term "super parliament" is misleading and **constitutionally unsound**.
  - Parliament, as a body elected by the people, holds legislative power - but this **does not mean** that the **judiciary's constitutional review powers encroach** upon Parliament's supremacy.
  - The judiciary acts as a **guardian** of the Constitution, ensuring no law violates constitutional limits.



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- **Judiciary's role regarding Presidential assent:**

- The President of India, under **Article 52**, is the constitutional head and must act on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers (**Articles 74, 78**).
- S/he is elected according to the provisions contained in **Articles 54 and 55** establishing **India as a Republic**.
- If there is **undue delay** in granting assent to a bill, the **judiciary can intervene** to protect **popular sovereignty**.

### Judicial Accountability Mechanisms:

- **Constitutional limits on judicial power:**

- All judicial powers stem from the Constitution and must be **exercised within its limits**.
- Judges can be **removed** only on grounds of "**proved misbehaviour**", which includes **violation of the Constitution**.

- **Parliament's role:**

- Parliament holds the power to **enact laws that can alter or overrule judicial decisions**, provided it follows constitutional procedure.
- This reflects the **democratic principle of checks and balances**.

### Interplay Between Judicial Independence, Popular Sovereignty, and Judicial Activism:

- **Judicial independence:**

- Vital for upholding the **basic structure doctrine**.
- **Shielded from arbitrary** executive or legislative interference.

- **Popular sovereignty:** The judiciary's actions, such as setting deadlines for the President or Governor to assent bills, aim to **uphold public interest and constitutional compliance**.

- **Article 142 and judicial activism:**

- Empowers the Supreme Court to pass orders for **complete justice**.
- Such provisions underscore the Court's role in **filling legislative or executive voids** when constitutional mechanisms are silent.