

NATIONAL OVERSEAS SCHOLARSHIP (NOS) SCHEME



- It is a Central Sector Scheme to facilitate the low-income students from marginalized communities, including the Scheduled Castes (SC), Denotified Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes, Landless Agricultural Labourers, and Traditional Artisans, to obtain higher education, , Master degree or Ph.D courses, by studying abroad.
- The scheme is administered by the **Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment**.
- Under the NOS Scheme, **each selection year, 125 fresh candidates** are selected, subject to the availability of funds.
- Out of the 125 candidates who are awarded scholarships, **115 are for SC candidates**, 6 for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes, and 4 are for Landless Agricultural Labourers candidates and Traditional Artisans.
- **30%** of the scholarships for each year are earmarked for **female candidates**.
- **Eligibility:**
 - The applicant should be **less than 35 years** of age on 1st April of the selection year.
 - The applicant must have been admitted to or received an **unconditional offer of admission** for pursuing a master's/Ph.D. **from an institute/university located abroad**.
 - The institute/university of the applicant **must be accredited by the Government/authorized body of that country**.
 - The applicant must have secured at least **60% marks or equivalent grade in the qualifying examination** (In the case of Ph.D. courses, the qualifying exam is a Master's Degree; In the case of a Master's Degree, the qualifying exam is a Bachelor's Degree)

- The **total income of the family** of the applicant (from all sources) is **less than or equal to ₹ 8 lakh per annum**.
- **Exclusions:**
 - **Bachelors-level courses**, in any discipline, are **not covered** under this scheme.
 - **No more than two children of the same parents/guardians** will be **eligible for scholarships**. The second child of the same parents/guardians will be considered only if slots are still available in the last cycle of the year in which the applicant has applied.
 - **Candidates already staying or studying** or having completed studies **abroad by utilizing any other scholarship** from the State Government, other agency, or through their own funds are **not eligible** to apply under this scheme.
 - The candidate is **not eligible for a scholarship to pursue the same level (Masters/Ph.D.) of course** for which he/she has already acquired the qualification from any University/Institution either in India or abroad.

WHAT IS THE DEFENCE ACCOUNTS DEPARTMENT (DAD)?

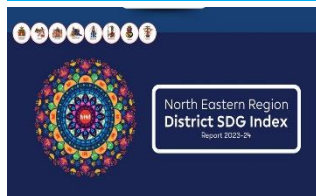


- It functions **under the administrative control of the Ministry of Defence**.
- It is **headed by the Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA)**.
- The mandate given to the department is broadly **audit, financial advice, payment, and accounting of all charges pertaining to the Armed Forces**.
 - It includes bills for supplies and services rendered and for construction and repair work, **pay and allowances, pension** of defence personnel and civilians, and **audit of cash and store accounts of all organizations under the Ministry of Defence**.
- The DAD has a vast geographical spread with a network of 1110 offices to cater to the needs of all elements of the Indian Defence Services i.e., **Army, Air Force, and Navy**, as also all other organizations under Ministry of Defence viz **Defence Ordnance**

Factories (41), DRDO Laboratories/Projects (50), Coast Guard , DGQA , DGBR, DGNCC, DG Defence Estates, Canteen Stores Department (CSD), etc.

- As the **principal accounting officer** for the Ministry of Defence, the CGDA furnishes necessary information for the Appropriation Accounts to the Ministry of Defence.
- CGDA also prepares the **Annual Consolidated Accounts of Defence Services Receipts & Charges** and acts as the **Principal Accounts Officer for Civil Estimates of the Ministry of Defence**.
- DAD is also responsible for rendering the **annual accounts for the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB), Military Farms, Canteen Stores Department, and Works Expenditure**.
- In addition, the **Annual Audit Certificate** for the Defence Services, rendered by the CGDA to the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (C&AG) through the Ministry of Defence, is tabled in the Parliament.
- Of late, **Audit of offset claims** has also been entrusted to the Department.

NORTH EASTERN REGION DISTRICT SDG INDEX



- It is developed by NITI Aayog and the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MoDoNER), with technical support from UNDP.
- The Index is built upon the momentum of **the first edition** released on 26 August 2021
- It measures the performance of districts across **eight North Eastern States on the SDGs**.
- Based on NITI Aayog's SDG India Index methodology, it serves as a **key tool for monitoring development related progress** at the district level in the region to inform decision making.
- **Districts are categorised into four categories:**
 - **Achiever:** Score equals 100 (achieved the targets set for identified indicators);
 - **Front Runner:** Score between 65 and 99 (excluding 100);

- **Performer:** Score between 50 and 65 (excluding 65); and
- **Aspirant:** Score less than 50.

Key Findings of the Index

- The composite scores for the 121 districts range from 58.71 in Longding, Arunachal Pradesh to 81.43 in Hnahthial, Mizoram.
- **All districts in Mizoram, Sikkim and Tripura have achieved Front Runner status,** with no districts falling in the Aspirant or Achiever categories.
- **Mizoram has the highest-scoring district** in the entire Northeast region (Hnahthial at 81.43) and **Arunachal Pradesh has the lowest-scoring district** in the entire region (Longding at 58.71).
- **Sikkim** has the narrowest range (5.5 points) in terms of the score of the highest and lowest district, showing the most consistent performance across its districts.
- **Tripura** has the distinction of having some of the highest-scoring districts with minimum intra-state variation (6.5 points).
- **Mizoram and Nagaland** have some of the **highest-scoring districts** but also exhibit variation (ranges of 13.72 and 15.07, respectively).

BRICS SUMMIT 2025 - ADVANCING GLOBAL SOUTH COOPERATION FOR INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE GOVERNANCE

- The **17th BRICS Summit** was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil under the **theme** "Strengthening Global South Cooperation for a More Inclusive and Sustainable Governance".
- This Summit, which concluded with the '**Rio de Janeiro Declaration**', marks a **strategic shift towards inclusivity, expansion, and stronger South-South cooperation.**

India at BRICS Summit 2025:

- **India's leadership vision - BRICS in a "New Form":**

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- At the 17th BRICS Summit, the Indian PM announced **India's upcoming BRICS presidency for 2026**, outlining a transformative vision and proposing a new interpretation of BRICS -
 - Building
 - Resilience and
 - Innovation for
 - Cooperation and
 - Sustainability
 - Echoed India's G20 Presidency theme of "**People-centricity and Humanity First**", placing Global South concerns at the core.
 - **India's strategic gains from BRICS 2025:**
 - At the 17th BRICS Summit, **India emerged as a leading voice in shaping the BRICS agenda**, advancing themes of de-dollarization, climate finance, digital governance, and global institutional reform.
 - **BRICS Pay** and national currency settlement frameworks were discussed, though a common BRICS currency was ruled out.
 - A **BRICS Multilateral Guarantee (BMG)** mechanism was launched by the New Development Bank (NDB) to mobilize private investment in infrastructure, climate, and sustainable development.
 - **Improving India–China relations:**
 - A bilateral between PM Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping led to agreements on:
 - **De-escalation** along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), and
 - Resumption of border patrols.
 - This may **restore investor confidence**, particularly in electronics and manufacturing sectors.
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KASHMIR'S UNPRECEDENTED HEATWAVE EXPLAINED

On July 5, the Kashmir Valley recorded its highest day temperature in over 70 years, with Pahalgam experiencing its hottest day ever. This follows the valley's hottest June in nearly 50 years.

Understanding Kashmir's Climate: A Balance of Seasons and Natural Cooling

- The Kashmir Valley experiences a temperate climate characterized by four well-defined seasons—spring, summer, autumn, and winter.
- Spring (March to May) and autumn (September to November) are generally pleasant and marked by moderate temperatures, making them ideal for tourism and agriculture.
- Winter (December to February) is harsh, with temperatures often plunging below freezing, especially in higher altitudes.
 - Snowfall is common—heavy in the mountains and moderate in the plains.
- Summers (June to August), in contrast to many parts of India, are relatively mild.
- The region benefits from **frequent western disturbances** during this season, which bring intermittent rainfall that naturally cools the atmosphere.
- However, the recent surge in summer temperatures marks a notable deviation from these long-standing climatic norms.

Rising Heat and Erratic Weather Disrupt Kashmir's Climate Norms

- In recent years, Kashmir has witnessed a noticeable shift in its climate, marked by rising temperatures and prolonged dry spells.
- The region recorded its hottest June in nearly five decades, with temperatures averaging about 3°C above normal.
- On July 5, Srinagar reached 37.4°C—the highest in over 70 years and the third-highest ever recorded.
- These trends signal a clear departure from the Valley's traditionally moderate summer climate.
- **Consistent Heat, Not Just Isolated Spikes, Raises Concern in Kashmir**

- Unlike past years where high temperatures were rare and short-lived, 2024 has seen **persistently elevated maximum and minimum temperatures**.
- This consistency in above-normal readings suggests a deeper climatic shift rather than an isolated weather anomaly, making the situation more worrisome for the region's environmental stability and public health.

Factors Behind Kashmir's Rising Temperatures

- The rise in Kashmir's temperatures is the result of multiple interlinked factors.
- **Global warming** is the overarching cause, raising baseline temperatures globally.
- Traditionally, when Kashmir's temperature crossed 35°C, rainfall would follow, offering natural relief. However, this pattern is now disrupted due to extended dry spells.
- Experts attributed this to a reduction in water vapour, caused by declining snowfall in the mountains.
- The little snow that does fall melts by March, leaving the mountains bare and reducing natural cooling.
- Additionally, Urban Heat Islands (UHIs)—areas where urbanisation traps heat—are further intensifying temperatures in cities like Srinagar.

Urban Heat Islands: How Cities Like Srinagar Are Getting Hotter

- Urban Heat Islands (UHIs) are urban zones that are significantly warmer than surrounding rural areas.
- In Kashmir, rapid **urbanisation, concretisation, and the loss of vegetation and water bodies** have intensified the UHI effect—especially in cities like Srinagar.
- These hard, heat-retaining surfaces absorb and radiate more heat, while limited green spaces offer little natural cooling.
- Added to this are **vehicular emissions and industrial activities**, which further elevate temperatures, making urban areas markedly hotter than their rural counterparts.



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JAPONICA RICE



Scientists at the Delhi-based National Institute of Plant Genome Research (NIPGR) have used CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing technology to increase phosphate uptake and transport in japonica rice varieties.

- Japonica is one of the two major eco-geographical races of *O. sativa* (*O. sativa japonica*), the other is Indica.
- It is a group of rice varieties from **northern and eastern China** grown extensively in some areas of the world.
- It is an **Asian rice** variety that belongs within the broader **sinica rice family**.
- It is **characterized** by its short to medium grain and is harder, thicker, and stickier than traditional white rice.
- Japonica grains are short, roundish, spikelets are awnless to long-awned, grains do not shatter easily, and **have 0-20% amylose content**.
- It includes several varieties, including the sushi rice and glutinous rice, which despite its name, is entirely gluten free.
- **Climate:** It is found in the cooler zones of the subtropics and in the temperate zones.
- **Major growing areas:** It is the primary type of rice **grown and consumed in Japan** and also in China, Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia.
- The different varieties of **Japonica are called cultivars**. Each Japonica rice cultivar has been developed to exhibit unique qualities, making them suitable for various culinary uses and growing conditions.

DUDHWA TIGER RESERVE



- **Location:** It is located on the **Indo-Nepal border** in the district Lakhimpur-Kheri in **Uttar Pradesh**.
- It includes the **Dudhwa National Park**, and two nearby Sanctuaries, viz. Kishanpur and Katerniaghat, besides forest areas of North Kheri, South Kheri, and Shahjahanpur forest divisions in its buffer.
- **Topography:** It is a typical **Tarai-Bhabar habitat** of the upper Gangetic plains Biogeographic province.
- **Rivers:** The **Sharda River** flows by the **Kishanpur WL Sanctuary**, the Geruwa River flows through the Katerniaghat WL Sanctuary, and the Suheli and Mohana streams flow in the Dudhwa National Park, all of which are tributaries of the mighty Ghagra River.
- **Vegetation:** The vegetation is of the North Indian **Moist Deciduous type**, containing some of the finest examples of **Sal forests** (*Shorea robusta*) in India.
- **Flora:** It consists of **Sal Forest** along with its associate tree species like *Terminalia alata* (Asna), *Lagerstroemia parviflora* (Asidha), *Adina cordifolia* (Haldu), *Mitragyna parviflora* (Faldu), *Gmelina arborea* (Gahmhar), *Holoptelea integrifolia* (Kanju), etc.
- **Fauna:** Guldar, Tiger, Fishing cat, Monkey, Langur, Mongoose, Small Indian Mongoose, small Indian civet, Jackal, etc.