

CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK

Institute of Research Based Learning & Competition

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CHENAB RAILWAY BRIDGE



- It is located in the **Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir**.
- It is built at a cost of around ₹1,400 crore above the **Chenab River**.
- It is a vital **part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Line (USBRL)**, aimed at connecting the Kashmir Valley to the rest of the country.
- It holds the record for the **tallest railway arch bridge globally**, with a deck height of 359 metres—35 metres higher than the Eiffel Tower.
- **Spanning 1,315 metres**, the structure includes a 785-metre arch and a 530-metre approach span, designed to traverse a deep gorge in the challenging Himalayan terrain.
- The bridge is designed to **last 120 years**, capable of withstanding winds up to 266 km/h, earthquakes up to magnitude 8, and explosions equivalent to 40 tonnes of TNT.
- It is engineered to endure extreme Himalayan climates, **tolerating temperatures as low as -20°C** and maintaining structural integrity in severe weather.
- **Project Execution:**
 - **Managed by Konkan Railway Corporation**, the project was executed by Afcons Infrastructure, VSL India, and South Korea's Ultra Construction & Engineering.
 - Steel Authority of India supplied the steel, and Swiss firm Mageba provided specialised bearings.
 - Engineers used Tekla software to create precise 3D models, aiding accurate design and construction in a geologically complex region.
 - The foundation and **safety assessments** were conducted by top Indian institutions.
 - IISc Bangalore designed the protective base, **IIT Delhi and IIT Roorkee** handled seismic and slope analyses, while **DRDO** contributed to the bridge's **blast-resistant features**.
 - Construction required over 28,660 metric tonnes of steel and the creation of 26 kilometres of motorable roads for access and transport in the mountainous region.

WASTE PICKER ENUMERATION APP



- It is an online system to **count, recognize, and assist waste collectors** via social security and livelihood-focused initiatives within the **NAMASTE Scheme**.
- It is an initiative of the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE)** in partnership with the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)**.
- It is executed through the **National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation (NSKFDC)**.
- **Aim:**
 - To **acknowledge waste pickers** as crucial workers in India's solid waste management framework.
 - To grant them **identity, safety, and integration into official urban frameworks**.
- **Features:**
 - **Large-Scale Profiling:** Aims to enumerate 250,000 waste pickers and issue occupational identity cards to provide formal recognition.
 - **Health and Safety Coverage:** Offers **health insurance through Ayushman Bharat** and supplies personal protective equipment and seasonal safety kits.
 - **Skill and Livelihood Assistance:** Provides **training for skill development** and financial support for waste collection vehicles to encourage sustainable livelihoods.
 - **Enhancing Waste Management Systems:** Facilitates the establishment of waste picker groups to **handle 750 dry waste collection points** throughout city regions.
 - **Knowledge-Driven Empowerment:** Publishes essential materials such as the **Guide for Mainstreaming Waste Picker Collectives** and the **Charting Change** report on socio-economic insights.

Key Facts about NAMASTE Scheme:

- It is an ongoing **Central Sector Scheme** jointly implemented by MoSJE and the MoHUA with NSKFDC being the implementation agency for sewer and septic tank workers (SSWs).
- The scheme expanded its mandate in June 2024 to **include Waste Pickers**.
- **Objective:**
 - To **guarantee dignity, safety, and livelihood** for sewer workers, septic tank cleaners, and currently, waste pickers.
 - To **eradicate manual scavenging** and encourage mechanized, proficient sanitation services.
- **Coverage:** **Five hundred cities** (converging with **AMRUT cities**) will be taken up under this phase of NAMASTE.
- It will be implemented for the **period 2022-26**.

INDEX CARDS



- It is a non-statutory, **post-election Statistical Reporting Format**.
- It is developed as a suo moto initiative by the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** to promote accessibility of **election-related data at the constituency level** for all stakeholders, including researchers, academia, policymakers, journalists, and the general public.
- It is designed to disseminate **data across multiple dimensions**—such as candidates, electors, votes polled, votes counted, party-wise and candidate-wise vote share, gender-based voting patterns, regional variations, and performance of political parties
- The Index Card forms the foundation for generating about **35 Statistical Reports** for Lok Sabha elections and 14 for **State Assembly elections**.

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- These reports cover variables like State/PC/AC-wise elector details, number of **polling stations**, **state and constituency-wise voter turnout**, participation of women electors, performance of **national/state parties** and **Registered Unrecognized Political Parties (RUPPs)**.
- Earlier, **this information was manually filled** at the Constituency level using various statutory formats in Physical Index Cards. These physical Index Cards were subsequently used for data entry into the online system to facilitate the generation of statistical reports.

INDIAN COUNCIL OF ARBITRATION



- It is one of the oldest **arbitral institutions in India**.
- It was established in 1965 as a **specialized arbitral body** at the national level under the initiatives of the **Government of India and apex business organizations FICCI**.
- It is a registered society under the **Societies Registration Act, 1860**, operating on a **not-for-profit basis**.
- **Objective:** The main objective of ICA is to promote **amicable, quick and inexpensive settlement** of commercial disputes by means of arbitration, conciliation, regardless of location.
- **Function:** The core function of ICA is the **cost effective** and efficient administration of **arbitration proceedings**.
- The ICA has its own set of procedural rules which govern the conduct of the entire arbitration proceedings, from its commencement to its termination.
- In addition, ICA is tasked with the mission of promoting and building capacity in the area of ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution).
- It acts as a specialized arbitral body at the national level under the initiatives of the Govt. of India and apex business organizations like FICCI etc.
- **Head office:** New Delhi.

INDIA'S EXTREME POVERTY FALLS SHARPLY UNDER REVISED WORLD BANK POVERTY LINE

- India has recorded a significant decline in extreme poverty over the past decade, according to the latest estimates by the World Bank using an updated threshold of \$3 per day in 2021 PPP terms.
- The new estimates reflect India's resilience and progress in reducing poverty, even after adjusting for inflation and other macroeconomic changes.

Revised Global Poverty Thresholds

- In 2022-23, the World Bank raised the extreme poverty line from \$2.15 per day to \$3 per day (in 2021 PPP terms) to better reflect cost-of-living increases across developing nations.
- This adjustment shifts the global benchmark for poverty measurement, thereby increasing the comparability and relevance of data across time.
- At this \$3/day level, the share of India's population living in extreme poverty is estimated to be **5.3%**, a steep fall from **27.1% in 2011-12**.
- In absolute terms, the number of people living in extreme poverty has decreased from **344 million to just over 75 million** in this period.

India's Progress under Different Poverty Lines

- **At the \$2.15/day line** (previous international standard based on 2017 PPP), India's extreme poverty rate stood at **2.3% in 2022**, compared to **16.2% in 2011-12**.
- Under the **lower-middle-income country (LMIC) poverty line**, now revised to \$4.20/day (up from \$3.65/day), India's poverty rate fell from **57.7% to 23.9%** in the same period.
- Interestingly, while the nominal poverty line has been raised, the new threshold of \$4.20/day is effectively lower for India compared to an inflation-adjusted \$4.40/day line, thus explaining the decline in poverty rate even under the revised standard.

Demographic and Educational Inequities in Poverty

- The World Bank's data also highlight disparities based on geography and education:
- **Rural Poverty:** Dropped from **69% in 2011-12 to 32.5% in 2022-23** under the \$3.65/day line.
- **Urban Poverty:** Declined from **43.5% to 17.2%** in the same period.
- **Educational Disparities:** 35.1% of Indians aged 16+ with no formal schooling live below the poverty line, compared to just 14.9% among those with post-secondary education.

Multidimensional Poverty Indicators

- Apart from income-based poverty, India has also seen improvement in **non-monetary dimensions** of deprivation:
- **World Bank's MPI:** India's non-monetary poverty fell from **53.8% in 2005-06 to 15.5% in 2022-23**.
- **NITI Aayog Estimates:** Show a reduction in multidimensional poverty from **29.17% in 2013-14 to 11.28% in 2022-23**.
- Indicators used include access to clean drinking water, electricity, sanitation, and educational enrolment.

Consumption Trends and Economic Implications

- The decline in poverty is also supported by rising consumption levels:
 - **Rural Monthly Per Capita Expenditure (MPCE):** Increased from ₹1,430 in 2011-12 to ₹2,079 in 2023-24 (at 2011-12 prices).
 - **Urban MPCE:** Rose from ₹2,630 to ₹3,632 during the same period, reflecting an overall improvement in living standards.

Conclusion

- India's progress in reducing poverty, even under the revised and more rigorous international benchmarks, underscores its achievements in economic development, social welfare, and infrastructure delivery.

MAINTAINING INDIA'S PROGRESS IN FOOD SAFETY STANDARDS

- On **June 7**, the world observes **World Food Safety Day**, and the 2025 theme, '**Food Safety: Science in Action**' offers a timely opportunity to reflect on India's evolving food safety landscape.
- From a rudimentary focus on preventing food adulteration to adopting modern, science-based standards, **India's food safety regime has seen transformational change.**
- However, **beneath the surface of regulatory progress lie critical gaps in scientific infrastructure, communication, and legacy regulations** that need urgent attention.

India's Food Safety Journey: From Adulteration Control to Risk-Based Regulation

- **Prevention of Food Adulteration (PFA) Act of 1954**
 - India's food safety journey began with the **PFA Act of 1954**, which treated food safety as a binary issue, a product was either adulterated or it wasn't.
 - The law made no distinction between the nature of the contaminant, whether it was a harmful additive, pesticide residue, or a naturally occurring toxin, nor did it consider the **quantity consumed**, which is central to modern toxicology.
- **Food Safety and Standards Act of 2006**
 - A **major turning point** came with the **Food Safety and Standards Act of 2006**, which established the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)**.
 - Inspired by global benchmarks such as the **Codex Alimentarius Commission**, the FSSAI moved India towards a **risk-based approach**.
 - This included **defining maximum residue limits (MRLs)** for pesticides, safe thresholds for food additives, and acceptable levels of contaminants and veterinary drugs.
 - By 2020, India's food safety standards had **progressed significantly**, closely aligning with those of advanced economies.
 - However, this rapid modernization also brought **underlying challenges** into sharper focus.

WATER MANAGEMENT IN INDIA NEEDS A NEW COURSE

- **World Water Day 2025**, observed globally on **March 22**, was marked by a timely and urgent theme: **Glacier Preservation**.
- This theme reflects a **growing global consciousness of the critical state of the cryosphere**, the Earth's frozen components, and its indispensable link to freshwater availability and marine health.
- Coinciding with the United Nations' designation of **2025 as the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation**, this year also initiated a **Decade of Action on Cryospheric Science (2025–2034)**.
- In this context, **the discussion of global water challenges has evolved to encompass the entire hydrological continuum, from alpine glaciers to the ocean**, urging a rethinking of existing water governance models.

Water, Glaciers, and Global Sustainability

- The **United Nations' World Water Development Report 2025**, titled '**Mountain and Glaciers, Water Towers**', has brought into sharp focus the foundational role that mountain glaciers play in sustaining ecosystems and human populations downstream.
- Melting glaciers, a **direct consequence of climate change**, are not only a signal of planetary distress but also a profound threat to water security.
- The **degradation of the cryosphere disrupts the flow of freshwater, influencing everything from agriculture to energy production** and domestic water supply.
- Simultaneously, the **United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030)** underscores parallel threats to marine ecosystems: rising sea levels, increasing sea surface temperatures, and biodiversity loss.
- What connects these two seemingly distinct environmental spheres, **glaciers and oceans**, is **water itself**.
- Yet, **conventional water management practices fail to acknowledge this fundamental linkage**.

KEY FACTS ABOUT PANDYA DYNASTY



- The Pandya dynasty was an **ancient Tamil dynasty** of South India that developed during the **Sangam Age**.
- It is **one of the three Tamil dynasties**, the other two being the Chola and the Chera.
- The Early Pandyas ruled parts of Southern India from at least **4th century BCE**. **Pandya rule ended** in the **first half of the 16th century CE**.
- They **ruled extensive territories**, at times including the **Chera (Kerala) country**, the **Chola country**, and **Ceylon (now Sri Lanka)** through collateral branches subject to Madura.
- They **initially ruled** their country, Pandya Nadu, **from Korkai, a seaport** on the southernmost tip of the Indian Peninsula, and in **later times moved to Madurai**.
- Cultural Contributions:
 - The Pandya empire was home to temples including **Meenakshi Temple in Madurai**, and **Nellaiappar Temple in Tirunelveli**.
 - **Jainism, Shaivism, and Vaishnavism flourished** during the reign of the **early Pandya kings**, but **after the revival of the Pandya power by Kadungon**, the Shaivite Nayanars and the Vaishnavite Alvars rose to prominence. and the **non-Hindu sects declined**.
 - Traditionally, the **legendary Sangams** (congregation of Tamil poets who created the great Sangam literature) were **held in Madurai under their patronage**, and some of the Pandya Kings were poets themselves.
 - Under Pandya patronage, **Tamil poets and scholars thrived**, enriching Tamil literature significantly.
 - The dynasty also made **notable contributions to art, music, and dance**, particularly **Bharatanatyam**.