

STANDING UP FOR THE NATIONAL ANTHEM: WHAT THE SUPREME COURT HAS RULED

Context

- An executive magistrate in Srinagar has sent **11 men to jail after they were detained for allegedly not rising for the National Anthem at an event.**
- There have been many debates in the society and petitions were filed in the court as to **whether and why it is important to stand whenever the national anthem is played** and also if it has any effect upon constitutional patriotism - **love and respect for the constitution.**

Code of Conduct for the National Anthem

- Whenever the National Anthem is sung or played, the **audience shall stand in the attention**
- Do not indulge in any type of indiscriminate singing or playing of the Anthem.
- When the National Anthem is performed as part of a newsreel or documentary, the audience is not required to stand up.
- The full version of the anthem should be played in **52 seconds** and a short version consisting of the first and last lines of the National Anthem should be played in about 20 seconds.

Laws Related to the National Anthem

- **The Prevention of Insults to National Honours Act, 1971**
 - It **prohibits the violation or insult to any national symbols** which include the national flag, the Constitution of India, the national anthem, and the map of India.
 - Any person who intentionally refuses or prevents the singing of the Indian National Anthem or if causes any disturbance in the assembly engaged in such singing, would be punished with **imprisonment up to the term of 3 years or with fine or with both.**
- **Article 51 A of the Constitution of India: Fundamental Duties**
 - The code of conduct for the national anthem is **derived based on the first fundamental duty** which says “To abide by the Indian Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem.”

BRAIN-EATING AMOEBIA

Why in news?

- A 15-year-old boy in Kerala's Alappuzha district has died due to a rare infection caused by *Naegleria fowleri* or "brain-eating amoeba".
 - He used to take a bath in a stream near his home, the likely source of the amoeba, which is known to thrive in any natural environment, particularly in warm water habitats.
 - However, it does not survive in saline conditions and is hence not found in sea water. It survives on bacteria found in the sediment in lakes and rivers.
- He died after a week of high fever and rapid deterioration in his vitals.

What is *Naegleria fowleri*?

- Commonly known as "brain-eating amoeba," it is a single-cell organism.
- It is found in a warm freshwater environment such as lakes, hot springs and even in poorly maintained swimming pools.
- First discovered in Australia in 1965, it is so small that it can only be seen with a microscope.
- Only one species of *Naegleria*, *Naegleria fowleri*, infects people.

How does it infect humans?

- The amoeba enters the human body through the nose and then travels up to the brain.
 - This can usually happen when someone goes for a swim, or dive or even when they dip their head in a freshwater body.
- Once *Naegleria fowleri* goes to the brain, it destroys brain tissues and causes a dangerous infection known as primary amebic meningoencephalitis (PAM).

What are the symptoms of PAM?

- As per the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the first signs of PAM start showing within one to 12 days after the infection.

- In the initial stages, they might be similar to symptoms of meningitis, which are headache, nausea and fever.
- In the later stages, one can suffer from a stiff neck, seizures, hallucinations, and even coma.

Can it also spread from one person to another?

- It does not spread from person to person, nor does it manifest symptoms when contracted in other forms.
- The infection is primarily associated with a warm freshwater environment, especially during hot summer months when water temperatures are higher.

What are the chances of survival?

- Brain-eating amoeba can be fatal, with a recorded death rate of 97 per cent. The chances of survival from this infection are unfortunately low.
- The infection rapidly destroys brain tissue, leading to inflammation and neurological symptoms.
- Early diagnosis and prompt initiation of treatment are crucial, but even then, the prognosis remains grim.

What prevention measures should a swimmer consider?

- Limit activities in warm fresh water bodies such as lakes, hot springs and ponds unless they are disinfected with chlorine.
- Use nose protection while swimming or diving, maintain clean swimming pools, follow proper hygiene, washing your hands thoroughly with soap and water before and after water activities, as well as before eating.
- Use sterile water for nasal cleaning.

FARMERS DISTRESS INDEX

The Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA), an institution under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) started working on a kind of an early warning system called 'farmers distress index.



About Farmers Distress Index:

- **Aim:** The main aim behind creating such an index is **to minimise the agrarian distress** in the form of crop loss / failure and income shock.
- The index will try to **anticipate this distress and prevent** its spread from a few farmers to the village or block level by pre-warning different stakeholders, including central, state, local and also non-government agencies.

Methodology to track distress

- The first step will be to **look for incidence of farmers distress** like localised cases of issues with debt repayment, death by suicide, pest attacks, drought, floods, migration, among others.
- Following this, contacts of **marginal and small farmers or tenant farmers** from the area will be collected to conduct telephonic interviews, which will have 21 standardised questions to gauge early signs of distress.
- The answers will be mapped against **seven indicators:**
 - Exposure to droughts, floods, crop failure due to pest attacks, livestock deaths
 - Debt
 - Adaptive capacity of farmer and local government through different schemes
 - Land holding and irrigation facilities.
 - Sensitivity, mitigation and adaptation strategies like growing of contingency crops if main crop fails.
 - Triggers for immediate distress like health-related expenditure.
 - Socio-psychological factors and impacts.

What will the index look like?

- The index will have **values from 0-1**. A value between 0-0.5 will indicate '**low distress**', 0.5-0.7 will indicate '**moderate**' distress and above 0.7 will indicate '**severe**' distress.
- If the index is severe, it will identify which component, among the seven, is more severe and contributes maximum to farmers' distress.
- The index is currently being worked out in the form of a mobile or desktop application.

- After completion of the ongoing work, CRIDA will be handing over the index to the central government and it will be made available to different state governments, agriculture departments, rural development departments, agriculture universities
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ATAL INNOVATION MISSION (AIM)



Recently, the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) in collaboration with Bayer launched a unique industry visit initiative under Atal Tinkering labs at Bayer's manufacturing facility in Vapi, Gujarat.

About Atal Innovation Mission:

- It is the Government of India's **flagship initiative** to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country **and was set up in 2016.**
- **Objective:** To create and promote an **ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship** across the country at school, university, research institutions, MSME and industry levels.
- All the initiatives of AIM are currently monitored and managed systematically using real-time MIS systems and dynamic dashboards.
- **Implementing Agency:** NITI Aayog
- AIM has multiple programs to encourage and support innovation in the country.
- **Some of the components of AIM:** Atal Tinkering Labs, Atal Incubation Centres, Atal New India Challenge, Mentor of Change Program, Atal Community Innovation Centre and Atal Research & Innovation for Small Enterprises (ARISE)

What are Atal Tinkering Labs?

- **Atal Tinkering Labs:** These are **state-of-the-art space established** in a school with a goal to foster curiosity and innovation in young minds, between grade 6th to 12th across the country through tools and technologies such as Internet of Things, 3D printing, rapid prototyping tools, robotics etc.
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PERFORMING GRADE INDEX: CHANDIGARH, PUNJAB TOP PERFORMERS IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

Why in News?

- According to the Union Ministry of Education's Performing Grade Index (PGI), Chandigarh and Punjab emerged as the best performers in school education for the year 2021-22.



India's School Education System:

- The Indian Education System is **one of the largest in the world** with more than 1.5 million schools, 8.5 million teachers and 250 million children from varied socio-economic backgrounds.
- The **Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4)** adopted by India in 2015 seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030.
- Such a goal will require **proper assessment and monitoring of indicators** set out in goals.

What is the Performance Grading Index (PGI) on School Education?

- It was designed by the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, and launched in **2017**.
- It helps States/UTs to **identify specific interventions** required to **make transformational changes in school education**.

PGI 2.0:

- In the last 4 years, **States/UTs reached saturation level in many indicators of PGI**, and few indicators became redundant due to rapid changes adopted during COVID-19 period.
- Certain policy initiatives and interventions introduced post implementation of **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** also necessitated for aligning indicators of PGI for proper tracking the progress.

Categories	Domain	Indicators	Total Weight
1. Outcomes	Learning Outcomes and Quality (LO)	12	24
	Access (A)	7	8
	Infrastructure & Facilities (IF)	15	19
	Equity (E)	16	26
2. Governance Management (GM)	Governance Processes (GP)	15	13
	Teacher Education & Training (TE&T)	8	10
Total		73	100

- Therefore, indicators of PGI (70) have undergone transformational changes in 2021-22 and were renamed as PGI-2.0.

Highlights of the PGI for the year 2021-22:

PUNJAB, RAJ, CHANDIGARH BEST IN LEARNING OUTCOMES

Grade	Overall grade Score	States/UTs attaining overall grade	Learning Outcomes	Access	Infra	Equity	Governance Processes	Teacher education & Training
Daksh	941-1000	NIL	NIL	Delhi	NIL	Delhi	NIL	NIL
Utkarsh	881-940	NIL	NIL	8	NIL	31	NIL	Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Delt Chandigarh
Atti-Uttam	821-880	NIL	NIL	10	NIL	4	Gujarat	10
Uttam	761-820	NIL	NIL	12	Chandigarh	NIL	Kerala	13
Prachesta -1	701-760	NIL	NIL	4	5	NIL	11	5
Prachesta -2	641-700	2 (Chandigarh, Punjab)	Punjab, Chandigarh & Rajasthan	1	10	NIL	15	2
Prachesta -3	581-640	6	4	NIL	14	NIL	7	1
Akanshi-1	521-580	13	19	NIL	6	NIL	1	NIL
Akanshi-2	461-520	12	10	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
Akanshi-3	401-460	3	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL

Rajasthan while **no states/ UTs could achieve the top grade for teacher education and training.**

- The two domains - **access and equity** - are the only ones where any state (Delhi) managed the top grade (Daksh).
- **For learning outcomes**, one of the key indicators of good performance, the top performers are Punjab, Chandigarh and Rajasthan while **no states/ UTs could achieve the top grade for teacher education and training.**
- In 2019-20, Punjab, Chandigarh, Tamil Nadu, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Kerala topped the index, while the index during the Covid period (2020-21) recorded Kerala, Maharashtra and Punjab as the best performing states.
- **Punjab and Chandigarh** find place in the sixth grade (Prachesta- 2) while six states could make it to the seventh grade (Prachesta-3).
- **The three poorest performing states/UTs** are Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Mizoram.
- Highlighting the **inter-state disparity**, the maximum and minimum scores obtained by states/ UTs in 2021-22 are 659.01 and 420.64 respectively.
 - The deviation of **23.8%** indicates that states like Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Mizoram **have to put more effort to reach the top slot.**
 - **This disparity was 51%** in 2017-18 indicating that PGI also helped bridge the performance gap among states/UTs over the years.

GITA PRESS GORAKHPUR

Why in News?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while attending the closing ceremony of the centenary celebrations of the Gita Press in Gorakhpur, described the publishing house as “not less than any temple” adding the publisher is “guiding humanity” through its work.

About Gita Press:

- Gita Press was established in 1923 by **Jaya Dayal Goyanka** and **Ghanshyam Das Jalan**, two Marwari businessmen.
- The institution's main objective is to **promote and spread the principles of Sanatana Dharma, the Hindu religion among the general public** by publishing Gita, Ramayana, Upanishads, Puranas, Discourses of eminent Saints, etc.
- It aims to promote the art of living as propounded in the Gita for peace & happiness and the ultimate upliftment of mankind.
- The institution neither solicits donations nor accepts advertisements in its publications.
- The deficit is met by the surplus from other departments of the society which render services at reasonable cost.
- Gita Press now claims to have **published more than 910 million copies of 1,800 different religious and spiritual books** and other materials in 15 languages since its inception.
- It has become a household name in most of the Hindi heartland with its low-priced, popular Hindu religious texts.
- In the contemporary age of Internet revolution, the Press is aiming for a major expansion, aided by tech, by making available Gita, Ramayana, discourses of eminent Hindu saints, Upanishads, Puranas and other religious books and magazines online, many free of cost.

UGC'S CHANGED RULE TO HIRE ENTRY-LEVEL PROFESSORS

Why in news?

- It is no longer mandatory to have a PhD degree to apply for the post of assistant professor in colleges and universities.
- It is enough to clear the National Eligibility Test (NET), State Eligibility Test (SET), or State Level Eligibility Test (SLET) to be eligible for appointment.
- The University Grants Commission (UGC) had recently notified this change.

The University Grant Commission (UGC)

- About

- The UGC was formally established in November 1956 as a **statutory body** by the UGC Act 1956.
- It was set up by the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education.
- It was established for the coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of university education in India.
- It is essentially an autonomous government agency that channels public funds (grants) to higher education institutions.
- This is done in exchange for their compliance with set quality criteria.
- It is **headquartered in New Delhi** and it has six regional centres in Pune, Bhopal, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Guwahati and Bangalore.

What was the system earlier?

• 2010 notification

- As per the 2010 notification, candidates for assistant professor must qualify in the NET, SET, or SLET. However, candidates who had PhDs were exempted from this eligibility condition.
- In other words, if a candidate had a doctoral degree, she could apply for appointment even if she had not cleared NET, SET, or SLET.

• 2018 notification

- The UGC issued a notification in July 2018, which said, “The PhD Degree shall be a mandatory qualification for direct recruitment to the post of Assistant Professor in Universities with effect from 01.07.2021.
- UGC also directed universities and colleges to implement the new minimum criteria for recruitment from 2021.
- However, due to the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the UGC pushed the July 2021 deadline to July 2023.

• Current status

- However, even before 2023 deadline could kick in, UGC has once again notified that a PhD is no longer mandatory.