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NATIONAL SHIPPING BOARD



Recently, the National Shipping Board (NSB) held its first 'Sagar Samvad' and has proposed a five-point roadmap to add 100 vessels to India's merchant fleet over the next five years.

- It is a **permanent statutory body** established in 1959, under Section 4 of **Merchant Shipping Act, 1958**.

Function: It advises the Government of India on matters related to **shipping including the development**.

- It has played a very distinguished role in the Maritime development of the country, as its deliberation and recommendations have contributed to the evolution of a sound and **pragmatic National Maritime Policy over the years**.

Composition:

- It consists of **Chairman and Members**.
- **Six Members** elected by Parliament (Four from the **Lok Sabha** and two from **Rajya Sabha** from amongst its Members).
- Such Members of other **members not exceeding sixteen** as the Central Government may think fit to appoint on the Board to represent the Central Government, Ship-owners, and Seamen.
- **Tenure:** The Chairman and other members of the Board held **office for a period of two years**.

Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.

CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK

School of Research Based Learning & Competition

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PRAGATI PLATFORM



- PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation) is the Government of India's flagship platform launched in 2015.
- It focuses on **fast-tracking projects**, schemes, and grievance redressal through direct, real-time review by the **Prime Minister**, in **partnership with States and Union Ministries**.
- The system has been designed in-house by the **PMO team with the help of the National Informatics Center (NIC)**.
- It uniquely brings together three modern technologies—**digital data management, video conferencing, and geospatial technology**.
- **Key Features of PRAGATI Platform:**
 - It is a **three-tier system** (PMO, Union Government Secretaries, and Chief Secretaries of the States).
 - At the apex level, the **Prime Minister chairs PRAGATI review meetings** with Chief Secretaries of States and Secretaries of Central Ministries/Departments to resolve issues related to identified projects and schemes.
 - The design is such that when PM reviews the issue, he should have on his screen the issue as well as the latest updates and visuals regarding the same.
 - Following the meetings, a multi-tier follow-up mechanism ensures timely implementation of decisions.
 - **Projects are monitored by the Cabinet Secretariat**, while schemes and grievances are reviewed at the Ministry level under continuous oversight of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).
 - Issues to be flagged before the PM are picked up from the available database regarding public grievances, ongoing programmes, and pending projects.

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GARBHINI MITRA COURSE



Garbhini Mitra Course

- It is a **structured healthcare skill-development programme**.
- It is aimed at **training personnel** to provide health education, lifestyle guidance and community-level support to women during pregnancy and the postnatal period.
- **Implementing Body:** It is implemented by the All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) an autonomous institution under the **Ministry of Ayush**.
- **Course Design:**
 - It is designed as a **six-month offline training programme**.
 - It is based on traditional Ayurvedic concepts of **Garbhini Paricharya** (antenatal care), **Sutika Paricharya** (postnatal care) and **Garbhadhana Vidhi** (pre-conceptional care).
 - It equips participants with practical skills in **trimester-specific dietetics**, lifestyle modifications, pregnancy-safe yoga, emotional support during labour, newborn massage, and basic life support protocols.
 - The curriculum also emphasizes infection control, sanitization, biomedical waste management, and workplace safety.
 - It also covers **infection control, sanitisation**, biomedical waste management and workplace safety.
- **Eligibility:** Candidates who have **passed the Senior Secondary (10+2) examination** from any recognised board in India and are **at least 18 years old are eligible to apply**. Candidates awaiting their Class 12 results can also submit provisional applications.
- After completing the course, candidates can pursue roles **such as Garbhini Mitra Assistants**, prenatal and postnatal care assistants, antenatal wellness guides and maternal health support workers.

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THE GORKHA STATEHOOD DEMAND: FROM AN 1907 PETITION TO THE CENTRE'S NEW COMMITTEE

Recently, the govt constituted a **high-level committee** following a key meeting between Gorkha leaders, Union Home Minister, and West Bengal government representatives in Siliguri.

The committee has been tasked with preparing a framework for a "permanent political solution" to the Gorkha issue — a demand whose roots stretch back over a century.

Roots of the Gorkha Demand

- The Gorkha movement for a **separate administrative identity** is among the oldest such movements in India.
- Darjeeling and its adjoining areas — Kalimpong, Kurseong, the Terai, and the Dooars — are culturally, ethnically, and linguistically distinct from the rest of West Bengal.
- Because the region's population predominantly speaks Nepali and has distinct physical features, residents frequently face racial profiling and are mistakenly identified as citizens of Nepal or China.
- This persistent alienation has fuelled a deep identity crisis, driving demands for a separate state to affirm their Indian citizenship.

The Gorkhaland Movement: Post-Independence Escalation

- The demand took a violent, high-profile turn in the 1980s under Subhas Ghising, founder of the **Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF)**, who coined the term "**Gorkhaland**."
- The resulting unrest led to the creation of the **Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC)** in 1988 — a **semi-autonomous body** that governed the hills for 23 years.
- In 2007, Bimal Gurung formed the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM), reviving the statehood demand and leading to the establishment of the **Gorkha Territorial Administration (GTA) in 2011**, replacing the DGHC.

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- Agitations flared again in 2013 after the Centre's decision to carve Telangana out of Andhra Pradesh, triggering fresh strikes and central security deployment in the hills.

The 2017 Crisis: Longest Period of Unrest

- The Darjeeling hills witnessed their most intense unrest in 2017, sparked by the West Bengal government's decision to make **Bengali a mandatory language** in state-run schools across the region.
- GJM supporters clashed with security forces, burning outposts and prompting military intervention.
- The agitation lasted 104 days, resulting in 11 protestor deaths, bomb blasts in Darjeeling and Kalimpong (killing a civic volunteer), and a complete collapse of the region's tourism economy.

Mandate of the New Committee

- The newly formed committee will examine all dimensions of the Gorkha issue within the framework of the Indian Constitution.
- Beyond structural governance, the panel will also assess financial assistance for the region and review a roadmap to grant Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to 11 key Gorkha communities.

Conclusion

The Gorkha statehood demand represents one of India's oldest **sub-regional political movements**, evolving from a constitutional petition in 1907 into a decades-long struggle marked by both peaceful advocacy and violent agitation.

While repeated administrative arrangements — the DGHC and GTA — have offered partial autonomy, the underlying demand for identity recognition remains unresolved.

The Centre's new committee, with its constitutional mandate and focus on ST status and financial support, signals a fresh attempt at a lasting political settlement, though its success will depend on balancing Gorkha aspirations with West Bengal's territorial integrity.

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REIMAGINING INDIA'S SKILLING ECOSYSTEM - BRIDGING THE EDUCATION-EMPLOYMENT GAP FOR VIKSIT BHARAT

- NITI Aayog identified 8.7 crore people aged 15–29 as NEET (**Not in Education, Employment or Training**), accounting for 11% of the population outside the labour force.
- **Lack of awareness** is a major barrier to skilling.
 - **For example**, around 47% of women, 43% of youth, 36% of higher-education students, 52% of formal workers and 55% of informal workers, do not pursue skills. This is due to inadequate information about suitable programmes among the leading reasons.

Social Stigma Around Vocational Education:

- Technical and vocational pathways such as ITIs, diplomas and vocational training continue to be viewed as “**second-tier**” options by many families and students.
- Career choices are frequently influenced by -
 - Examination scores and family preferences;
 - Perceived social status of conventional degrees;
 - Cost of acquiring additional skills;
 - Inadequate knowledge of career alternatives; and
 - Absence of visible success stories from vocational pathways.
- This creates a **degree-centric education culture**, even when alternative pathways may offer better employment prospects.

Skilling Has Significant Wage Returns:

- The report cites BCG data showing that a generic undergraduate without additional skilling earns an average starting salary of about ₹22,000 per month, compared with ₹29,000 for a similarly qualified graduate with skilling.
- At the reported growth rate, the initial ₹7,000 monthly difference could translate into an estimated ₹9.7 lakh cumulative income gap over 10 years.

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Structural Weaknesses in Existing Skilling Architecture:

- Existing programmes often measure success through enrolment and completion, rather than placement; wage progression; career advancement; or long-term employability.
- Awareness of schemes such as **PMKVY**, **DDU-GKY** and **PM Internship Scheme** remains inadequate, particularly among those who could benefit most.

India needs to move from an input-based skilling model to an **outcome-based model**, where funding and institutional performance are linked to employment, earnings and career.

NITI Aayog's Policy Roadmap:

- Shift towards industry-linked education:** Generic degrees should be redesigned into **applied specialisations**, such as B.A. Hospitality; B. Sc. Applied Technology; and B. Com. Analytics.
- Expand work-based learning:** Scale up Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Programmes (AEDP) and Work-Integrated Degree Programmes (WIDP) to integrate classroom learning with practical experience.
- Target sunrise and transition sectors:**
 - Skilling should prioritise high-growth sectors such as green industries, **electric vehicles** and emerging technologies.
 - At the same time, workers affected by technological disruption or structural decline in sectors such as traditional automotive manufacturing and mining require reskilling and transitional income support.

Conclusion:

- India's skilling challenge requires a **whole-of-education-and-employment approach** rather than isolated training schemes.
- General employability should be strengthened through **digital literacy**, **financial literacy**, communication and workplace readiness, alongside entrepreneurship skills.
- The larger objective should be to create a demand-driven, industry-backed and outcome-linked skilling ecosystem in which degrees signal relevant capabilities rather than merely educational attainment.

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THE LIMITS OF AIR POWER, IMPLICATIONS FOR THEATRE-ISATION

- The wars in Ukraine and Iran have exposed a fundamental limitation of modern air power: **control of the skies does not automatically ensure victory.**
- Ukraine's networked air defence prevented Russia from securing uncontested airspace, while allied air dominance over Iran failed to compel Tehran to end the conflict.
- **Air power remains indispensable**, but it cannot win a war independently.
- For India, this raises important questions about the Indian Air Force's preference for operational flexibility over fixed theatre commands.
- While this approach has worked against Pakistan, its effectiveness against China remains untested.

Air Power's Limits Exposed

- **Denial of Airspace**
 - The Ukraine conflict shows that aircraft numbers alone cannot guarantee air superiority. Integrated air-defence networks can deny access even to a larger air force.
 - For India, this creates a **two-sided challenge**: strong air defence could deny China control of Indian skies, while inadequate integration could expose India to similar vulnerabilities.
- **Air Dominance Does Not Guarantee Victory**
 - The allied campaign against Iran demonstrated that air dominance does not necessarily produce strategic victory.
 - Even when opposing forces can strike everything they detect, concealed and dispersed capabilities may survive.
 - This matters for India because Pakistan and China represent very different strategic challenges.
 - Pakistan has limited strategic depth and can be pressured relatively quickly, whereas China has greater military capacity, geographical depth and endurance.

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The Cost of Delay

- The IAF's **position is defensible** because its flexibility has produced results against Pakistan.
- The unresolved question is whether the same model can deliver rapid mobilisation, efficient resource allocation and effective joint operations against China.
- If tensions simultaneously escalate in Ladakh and Siachen, India may have to allocate limited Rafale aircraft and S-400 systems between multiple fronts.
- Such decisions cannot depend on lengthy consultation during an active conflict.
- In war, such delays could directly affect **India's ability to protect its territory**.

Conclusion

- Theatre-isation should not be viewed simply as a dispute between the IAF and advocates of integrated commands because the larger question is **India's preparedness for a conflict with China**.
 - Modern warfare requires air power to function alongside air defence, drones, missiles, intelligence, electronic warfare, logistics and joint command structures.
 - The IAF's flexibility remains **valuable**, but China presents a different challenge in scale, geography and endurance.
 - India must therefore resolve its organisational questions before a crisis forces decisions under battlefield conditions.
 - The responsibility ultimately belongs to the **political leadership**, which must ensure that India's armed forces are prepared before the next war tests them.
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