

# Headlines

**Vote theft - Page No.1 , GS2**

**Stubble-burning - Page No.1 , GS 3**

**COP30 - Page No.8 , GS 3**

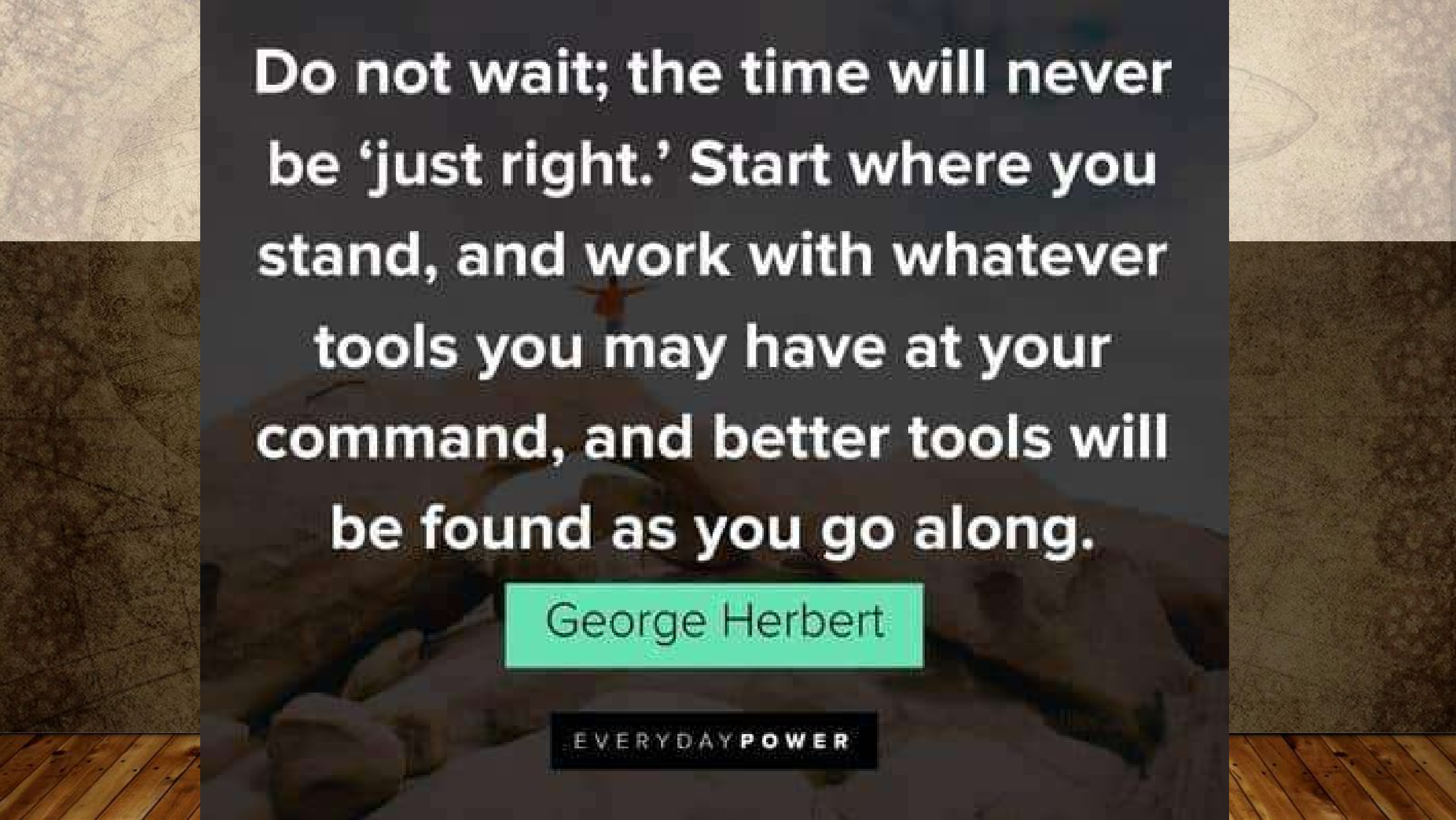
**Road accidents - Page No.8 , GS 3**

**Code of Conduct - Page No.9 , GS 2**

**QS World University Rankings - Page No.14 , GS 2**

**Contempt of court – Text and Context**

**Umngot River – Prelims Fact**

A person is seen climbing a large, light-colored rock face. The background is a dark, textured sky. The quote is overlaid in white text on a dark grey background. The quote is: "Do not wait; the time will never be 'just right.' Start where you stand, and work with whatever tools you may have at your command, and better tools will be found as you go along." The author's name, "George Herbert", is in a teal box. The logo "EVERYDAYPOWER" is in a black box at the bottom.

**Do not wait; the time will never be 'just right.' Start where you stand, and work with whatever tools you may have at your command, and better tools will be found as you go along.**

**George Herbert**

**EVERYDAYPOWER**



# Rahul alleges 'vote theft' took place in Haryana with EC help

Page No. 1, GS 2

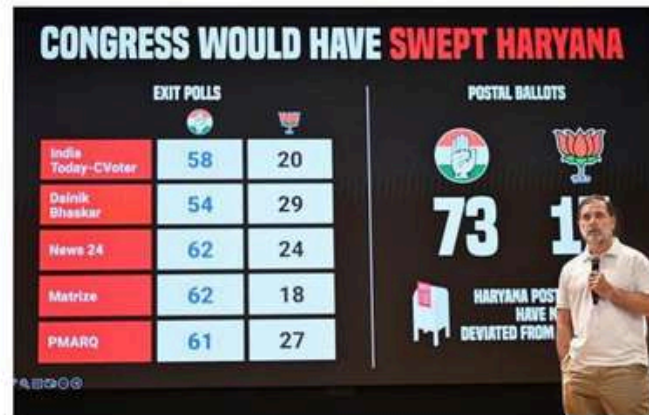
In presentation titled 'H-files', Congress leader alleges there had been 25 lakh fake voters on electoral rolls ahead of polls, says a Brazilian model's photo was used for 22 names; he claims 'EC is in partnership with the BJP to destroy democracy'

**Sandeep Phukan**  
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday made another major allegation of "vote theft", saying 25 lakh fake voters were added to the electoral rolls of Haryana ahead of the Assembly election in the State in 2024, which the Bharatiya Janata Party won.

Addressing his third press conference under the vote *chori* (theft) campaign, Mr. Gandhi, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, shared the voters' list of the Rai Assembly constituency of Haryana which had the photograph of a Brazilian model 22 times under different names across 10 booths.

While Mr. Gandhi called



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi at a press conference on vote theft allegation in New Delhi on Wednesday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

his presentation "H-files", his party colleagues referred to it as the much-anticipated "Hydrogen bomb". In his 80-minute presentation, he said there were 1,24,177 voters with fake photos in Haryana. "One in eight voters in Haryana are fake, and despite that, the Congress lost by a

mere 22,779 votes, which was the difference in eight seats," he said.

The Congress leader alleged "Operation Sarkar Chori [government theft]" was launched in Haryana to prevent the Congress from coming to power despite all exit polls and opinion polls predicting a

landslide win for the party. "The EC is in a partnership with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah to destroy Indian democracy," he said. "If the voter list is a lie, then there is no democracy."

The BJP and EC officials rejected his claims.

With a day to go before the first phase of voting in the Bihar election, the Congress has now alleged that "vote theft" will be employed in the State as the system has been "industrialised".

"You can ask me why you didn't detect them in the voters' list of Bihar. That is because the voters' list comes to us in the last minute," Mr. Gandhi said.

**CONTINUED ON**  
» PAGE 12

## Claims are unfounded, says poll panel

**Sreeparna Chakrabarty**  
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission has dismissed Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's claims as "unfounded", asking why the Congress did not report alleged multiple voting during the Haryana Assembly polls.

It added that the claims ironically support the special intensive revision of poll rolls. It noted that only 22 petitions were pending in the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

**FULL REPORT ON**  
» PAGE 12



## **Content.**

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- **While Mr. Gandhi called his presentation “H-files”, his party colleagues referred to it as the much-anticipated “Hydrogen bomb”. In his 80-minute presentation, he said there were 1,24,177 voters with fake photos in Haryana. “One in eight voters in Haryana are fake, and despite that, the Congress lost by a mere 22,779 votes, which was the difference in eight seats,” he said.**

## **Content.**

- **The court upheld the voters' right to remain on the electoral roll in a democracy. "People have a right to know. A high degree of transparency is required to inspire voters' confidence. Put up the names of excluded electors with reasons out there for all to see," Justice Bagchi addressed the EC.**
- **It also said electors whose names were excluded could file their objections by applying with a copy of Aadhaar. "Aadhaar is a statutorily recognised instrument of identity and residence. It can be submitted as a document," Justice Bagchi observed. This is the first time the court has formally directed the use of Aadhaar as a proof of identity and residence in the Bihar SIR exercise.**



## **Content.**

- **A Special Intensive Revision involves door-to-door verification of electoral rolls through house-to-house enumeration.**  
**Legal Basis: Conducted under Section 21(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, and Article 324 of the Constitution, empowering ECI for electoral roll supervision.**
- **Section 16 disqualifies non-citizens from being enrolled in the electoral rolls.**
- **Section 19 mandates that a person must be at least 18 years old on the qualifying date and be an ordinary resident of the constituency.**
- **The Supreme Court's judgment in Lal Babu Hussein v. Electoral Registration Officer (1995) held that individuals already listed in the electoral roll cannot be asked to re-prove their citizenship.**

## **Why is Special Revision Needed?**

- **Duplicate Entries:** Rapid migration, urbanisation, and dual enrolment have inflated electoral rolls (ECI, 2025).
- **Political Complaints:** Accusations of voter roll manipulation in states like Maharashtra necessitated re-verification (e.g. Rahul Gandhi's allegation).
- **Long Gap Since Last Intensive Revision:** Bihar's last SIR was in 2003; outdated records can compromise electoral integrity.
- **Foreign Nationals Concern:** In border states like Bihar, earlier EC records highlight infiltration risks requiring proof-based verifications.
- **Electoral Transparency:** SIR seeks to enhance voter roll credibility before high-stakes elections, especially in politically sensitive states.



## **Arguments Against the SIR:**

- **Burden Shift on Citizens:** Unlike past practice, the burden of proof now lies on voters, not objectors (contradicts Rule 18, Registration of Electors Rules).
- **Arbitrary Post-2003 Divide:** Only voters enrolled after 2003 face strict checks—an illogical cutoff lacking legal precedent.
- **Disenfranchisement Risk:** In Seemanchal and flood-prone areas, voters without birth certificates may be excluded despite Aadhaar or EPIC.
- **Procedural Irregularities:** Field complaints include wrong addresses (e.g., “cremation ground”), missing names, and blank entries in Muzaffarpur.
- **Political Timing & Selective Targeting:** Conducted only in Bihar before polls—opposition alleges manipulation to benefit ruling alliance.



## Mains Question

**Q. “Free and fair elections are the lifeblood of democracy, but the increasing influence of money, media, and technology poses new challenges to this ideal.”** Critically examine the measures taken by the Election Commission of India and the judiciary to uphold electoral integrity in India.

**प्रश्न:** “स्वतंत्र और निष्पक्ष चुनाव लोकतंत्र की जीविरेखा हैं, परंतु धन, मीडिया और तकनीकी प्रभाव इस आदर्श के लक्ष्य में बाधा डाल रहे हैं।” भारत में निवाचन की निष्पक्षता बनाए रखने हेतु निवाचन आयोग और न्यायपालिका द्वारा उठाए गए कदमों की आलोचनात्मक समीक्षा कीजिए।



# Stubble-burning area in key Punjab districts 20% lower than last year, reveals satellite data

**Jacob Koshy**  
NEW DELHI

While instances of stubble burning in Punjab in October were at a five-year low, the area that was actually set afire in three major districts – Amritsar, Taran Taran and Ferozpur – was likely 20% less than last year's, according to data sourced by *The Hindu* from a satellite-imagery firm and a senior official formerly with the Punjab Pollution Control Board.

However, the first fortnight of November is historically when farm fires in Punjab peak and there may well be a surge in the burnt area.



**Inferno footprint:** Punjab's burnt area rose from 15.4 lakh hectares in 2022 to about 19 lakh in 2023, and stayed similar in 2024. ANI

The government regularly shares daily data on the fire count but does not disclose burnt area. The link between fire counts and burnt area is significant for an accurate picture on efforts to curb farm fires, which in previous years have contributed as

much as 35% of the daily winter pollution load in Delhi.

Last November, *The Hindu* reported – triggering the Supreme Court to order increased scrutiny – that Punjab's claims of a reduction in farm fires, by publicising only fire counts

caught on satellite, did not capture reality. The area actually burnt in Punjab had increased in 2023 (19.1 lakh hectares) compared to 2022 (15.4 lakh hectares). This was likely due to farmers burning stubble after satellite-passes to avoid detection. In 2024, the burnt area was nearly the same as 2023, at 19.4 lakh hectares.

This year, satellite imagery of farm fires over Punjab only began emerging around October 10 – almost a month-long delay – due to heavy rain and flooding during most of September, contributing to a delayed harvest. Between October 13 and 28,

2.46 lakh hectares were burnt in these districts, according to an analysis shared with *The Hindu* by Noida-based Suhora Technologies.

Krunesh Garg, who had served as the Member Secretary, Punjab Pollution Control Board, until September 2025, told *The Hindu* that data with him showed "the three districts at the same time last year reported 3.15 lakh hectares of burnt area". "If it is indeed 2.46 lakh hectares, that is a reduction and is certainly a positive sign...it shows that measures implemented in the last five years have started to show results," he added.







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### **Mains Question**

**Q. The recurring issue of stubble burning in Punjab, Haryana, and Western Uttar Pradesh reflects not only an environmental crisis but also challenges in cooperative federalism and agricultural governance.**

Discuss how coordination between the Union, State Governments, and local bodies can ensure effective and sustainable crop residue management. Suggest institutional and policy mechanisms to balance farmers' livelihoods with environmental sustainability.

- **प्रश्न:** पंजाब, हररयाणा और पजचचमी उत्तर प्रदेर् में पराली जलियों की पुरावृतूतत्त केवल एक पयावशरणीयसंकट िहीं बजककसहकारीसंघवाद और कृत्ति र्ासि की चिौनतयों को भी दर्ातशीह। इससंदभ शमें केंद्र, राज्य सरकारों तथा स्थिीयनिकायों के समन्वय से टटकाऊ फसलअवरि प्रबंधि सुनिजचचत करि के उपायों पर चचा शकीजजए। ककसियों कीआजीत्तवकाऔर पयावशरणीय जस्थरता के बीच संतुलि हेतु संस्थागत एवं िीनतगत तंत्र सुझाइए।



# Chinese varsities dominate QS Asia rankings; India slips

Page No. 14, GS  
2

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

China has overtaken India as the most-represented location in the QS World University Rankings: Asia 2026, according to the rankings released this week.

While India added 132 universities and institutes to the list this year, taking its tally to a record high of 294, China added 259 institutions, bringing its total to 394.

In the last two editions, India had the highest number of universities and institutes in the rankings, ahead of China. This year, a total of 1,526 universities were ranked, of which 557 are new entries.

## **Among the top 100**

Seven Indian institutions feature in the top 100, with the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, ranked

**This year, a total of 1,526 universities have been ranked, of which 557 are new**

highest at 59, followed by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), and the IITs in Madras, Bombay, Kharagpur, and Kanpur, along with the University of Delhi. China, meanwhile, has 25 universities in the top 100. While India retained the same number of institutes in the top 100 as last year, their rankings declined. The IIT-Delhi slipped from 44 in the 2025 rankings to 59 this year.

Delhi University fell from 81 to 95, the IISc from 62 to 64, and the IIT Madras from 56 to 70.

The top 10 positions in the 2026 rankings were dominated by universities from Hong Kong, Singapore, and China.



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## **Content.**

- **The QS Asia University Rankings is an annual regional assessment that evaluates Asia's leading higher education institutions based on academic reputation, employability, research productivity, and international outlook.**  
**Published by: Compiled by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), a UK-based higher education analytics firm, known globally for its QS World University Rankings.**

### **Aim:**

- **To benchmark Asian universities using globally comparable indicators.**
- **To highlight academic excellence, innovation, and research impact in the region.**
- **To promote quality, global competitiveness, and collaboration in Asian higher education.**



## **Criteria Used (11 Indicators):**

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**Academic Reputation (30%) – Based on global survey of academics.**

**Employer Reputation (20%) – Assesses employability of graduates.**

**Faculty/Student Ratio (10%) – Reflects quality of academic engagement.**

**International Research Network (10%) – Evaluates global research partnerships.**

**Citations per Paper (10%) – Measures impact of published research.**

**Papers per Faculty (5%) – Indicates research productivity.**

**Staff with PhD (5%) – Represents academic qualifications.**

**International Faculty Ratio (2.5%)**

**International Student Ratio (2.5%)**

**Inbound Exchange Students (2.5%)**

**Outbound Exchange Students (2.5%) – Reflect internationalisation and student mobility.**



## **Top 5 Indian Institutions (QS Asia University Rankings 2026):**

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**IIT Delhi – Rank 59 (fell from 44th in 2025)**

**IISc Bengaluru – Rank 64**

**IIT Madras – Rank 70**

**IIT Bombay – Rank 71**

**IIT Kanpur – Rank 77**

## **Top 5 Universities in Asia (QS Asia University Rankings 2026):**

**The University of Hong Kong – Rank 1**

**Peking University (China) – Rank 2**

**Nanyang Technological University (Singapore) – Rank 3**

**National University of Singapore (NUS) – Rank 3 (joint)**

**Fudan University (China) – Rank 5**



# What constitutes as contempt of court in India?

How does the Constitution define courts of record? What are the two types of contempt?

**C. B. P. Srivastava**

**T**he recent controversy over the alleged contemptuous and derogatory remarks against the Chief Justice of India and the Supreme Court has not only raised eyebrows, but can also be considered an act of diminishing the 'authority' of India's top court. Moreover, such remarks being spread through media and social media may also be seen as an act of interfering and obstructing the administration of justice, thereby directly damaging the edifice of constitutional morality. This has been the basis for the demand to initiate contempt proceedings.

## Understanding contempt

The phrase 'contempt of court' is used in Article 19(2) as one of the grounds for imposing reasonable restriction on fundamental freedoms yet the Constitution does not give guidelines on

how to initiate such proceedings. In India, the Supreme Court and High Court have been designated as courts of record under Article 129 and 215 respectively. A court of record is one whose decisions are kept in reserve for future references and inherently it also has the power to punish for its contempt. This implicit constitutional provision is explained in the Contempt of Court Act, 1971.

The Act classifies contempt into civil and criminal. Section 2(b) of the Act defines civil contempt as wilful disobedience to any judgment, decree, direction, order, writ or other process of a court or wilful breach of an undertaking given to a court. On the other hand, criminal contempt is defined in Section 2(c) of the Act, as the publication (whether by words spoken or written or by signs or by visible representations or otherwise) of any matter or the doing of any act which – (i) scandalises or lowers the authority of any court; or (ii)

prejudices or interferes or tends to interfere with, the due course of any judicial proceeding; or (iii) interferes or tends to interfere with the administration of justice in any other manner. This makes it clear that contempt is different from mere disrespect. It is beyond just covering disobedience and disruption in the working of the justice system. The Act further states that the High Court or Supreme Court may initiate contempt proceedings *suo moto*. It may also be initiated by a third party provided the petition has consent from the Attorney General or Advocate General for the Supreme Court and High Court respectively.

## The mode of criticism

It is now a settled principle that fair criticism of a decided case is not contempt, but criticism that transgresses the limits of fair commentary may be considered contemptuous as held in

*Ashwini Kumar Ghosh versus Arabinda Bose* (1952). Further, in *Anil Ratan Sarkar versus Hirak Ghosh* (2002), it was held that the power to punish for contempt must be exercised with caution and shall only be exercised when there is a clear violation of an order. One of the landmark cases is of *M. V. Jayarajan versus High Court of Kerala* (2015) in which the top court upheld a contempt finding against an individual for using abusive language in a public speech while criticising a High Court order, establishing that such actions could be considered criminal contempt for undermining the judiciary's authority and disrupting the administration of justice. The top Court recently in *Shanmugam @ Lakshminarayanan vs. High Court of Madras* (2025) has held that the very purpose to punish for contempt is to ensure administration of justice.

Criticising the Courts' action democratically is not wrong; however, one needs to consider that the judiciary is playing a crucial role by contributing to setting the priorities for the state so that the sanctity of administration of justice is maintained. Both the state and the citizens need to understand that any kind of misrepresentation would not only amount to contempt, it would also be detrimental to democratic principles, affecting the delivery of substantive justice (elimination of injustices).

*The author is President, Centre for Applied Research in Governance, Delhi.*

## THE GIST

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- **Further, in Anil Ratan Sarkar versus Hiralal Ghosh (2002), it was held that the power to punish for contempt must be exercised with caution and shall only be exercised when there is a clear violation of an order.**



# The malleable Code of Conduct

**A**mbedkar famously remarked in the Constituent Assembly, "However good a Constitution may be, it is sure to turn out bad because those who are called to work it happen to be a bad lot". Well, it applies equally to any law or code framed for functioning of the country and its various public processes.

The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) for guidance of political parties and candidates is a set of norms which has evolved with the consensus of political parties. They have consented to abide by the principles embodied in the said code. It binds them to respect and observe it in its letter and spirit. This code began to be implemented strictly in the 1990s and has been revised in 2013 by the Election Commission of India (EC).

The MCC is operational from the date on which the election schedule is announced until the date of announcement of result.

The MCC lays down code for general conduct during campaign process by political parties and contesting candidates. With respect to the party or parties in power, it stipulates that ministers and other authorities shall not announce any financial grants, promise any construction of roads or provision of drinking water, announce new projects, lay foundation stone for projects or schemes of any kind which may have the effect of influencing the voters in favour of the party or parties in power.

## Violations galore

The MCC is a voluntary set of norms to be followed by political parties and candidates. It is by itself not legally enforceable. Violations of certain provisions of the MCC with respect to campaign process can be enforced through invoking corresponding provisions in criminal laws and the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RP Act). However, it is the announcement of financial grants or of new projects by the ruling



**Rangarajan R**

is a former IAS officer and author of 'Courseware on Polity Simplified'. He currently trains at Officers IAS Academy. Views expressed are personal.

Successive governments at both the Centre and various States, representing the entire spectrum of political parties in India, are breaking the spirit of MCC

government just before elections that can vitiate the level playing field thereby impairing free and fair elections. The code does not restrict grants or disbursements under ongoing programmes on the date of announcement of elections.

A famous quote from Hamlet goes, "more honoured in the breach than in the observance". This is meant for customs and laws that are better off being ignored than being followed. In the Indian electoral context, however, it has become a norm to breach the codes and laws. Politicians find ingenious ways of circumventing the MCC when it comes to announcement of projects or distribution of grants.

## Cash politics

The recent example is the launch of Mukhyamantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana (MMRY) in Bihar in August 2025. Under the scheme, women are eligible to receive ₹10,000 as grant for self-employment and livelihood opportunities. The disbursements started on September 26, 2025 with the Prime Minister transferring the grant to 75 lakh women. Subsequently weekly instalments are being transferred to beneficiaries since October with recent one being on October 31 and the next on November 7. One-time cash transfer to the underprivileged and needy women, despite its fiscal burden on the state, does provide some much-needed succour.

However, with the elections scheduled to be held in two phases on November 6 and November 11, it is a valid criticism that this is breaking the MCC in spirit and influencing voters in favour of the ruling party through direct cash transfers. Taking refuge under the guise of an ongoing scheme, which was anyway launched just a month before the announcement of elections, does not seem kosher.

It is not the first time that MCC has been broken in spirit when it comes to announcements of new

projects just before elections. Successive ruling governments at both the Centre and various States, representing the entire spectrum of political parties in India, are guilty of this breach. The MMRY scheme, nonetheless, does push the dubious envelope of such breach to a new low.

## Stop the sham

In 2013, the Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice, recommended making the MCC legally binding. However, the EC is not in favour since the elections have to be completed within a relatively short period of around 45 days while judicial proceedings take longer.

There has been criticism directed at the EC for turning a blind eye to such blatant violations of the MCC, if not in letter but in spirit. However, considering the Machiavellian ability of our political leaders to invent new ways of working around election laws, even the sincerest attempts in curbing such practices would be a wild goose chase.

"It is much more important to kill bad laws than to pass good ones," said the former U.S. President Calvin Coolidge. It may be apt to apply this to most parts of MCC that deal with government schemes and projects. Violation of code with respect to campaign process can be suitably dealt with by the EC under its existing powers.

However, the MCC guidelines that stipulate no fresh projects or financial grants after announcement of elections can be done away with as they are more breached in spirit than followed.

One of the arguments for conduct of simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and State Assemblies is to minimise the impact of MCC that restricts new government programmes and schemes with multiple elections every year. Scrapping these provisions in MCC would at least result in one farcical reason being less for the arguments in favour of simultaneous polls.



## **Content.**

- **Ambedkar famously remarked in the Constituent Assembly, “However good a Constitution may be, it is sure to turn out bad because those who are called to work it happen to be a bad lot”. Well, it applies equally to any law or code framed for functioning of the country and its various public processes.**
- **The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) for guidance of political parties and candidates is a set of norms which has evolved with the consensus of political parties.**
- **They have consented to abide by the principles embodied in the said code.**
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- **Violations of certain provisions of the MCC with respect to campaign process can be enforced through invoking corresponding provisions in criminal laws and the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RP Act).**
- **However, it is the announcement of financial grants or of new projects by the ruling government just before elections that can vitiate the level playing field thereby impairing free and fair elections.**
- **The code does not restrict grants or disbursements under ongoing programmes on the date of announcement of elections.**
- **Cash politics**



- **In 2013, the Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice, recommended making the MCC legally binding. However, the EC is not in favour since the elections have to be completed within a relatively short period of around 45 days while judicial proceedings take longer.**
- **There has been criticism directed at the EC for turning a blind eye to such blatant violations of the MCC, if not in letter but in spirit.**
- **However, considering the Machiavellian ability of our political leaders to invent new ways of working around election laws, even the sincerest attempts in curbing such practices would be a wild goose chase.**



# In Brazil, COP30 and the moment of truth

Page No. 8, GS 3

**T**oday, in the Brazilian Amazon, the Belém Summit opens ahead of the 30th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30). World leaders convened here in the days leading up to the COP so that we can all commit to acting with the urgency that the climate crisis demands.

If we fail to move beyond speeches into real action, our societies will lose faith not only in the COPs but also in multilateralism and international politics more broadly. That is why I have summoned leaders to the Amazon: to make this the COP of Truth; the moment we demonstrate the seriousness of our shared commitment to the planet.

Humanity has shown its ability to overcome great challenges when it acts together and guided by science. We protected the ozone layer. The global response to the COVID-19 pandemic proved that the world can act decisively when there is courage and political will.

## Back to Brazil

Brazil hosted the Earth Summit in 1992. We approved the Conventions on Climate Change, Biological Diversity and Combating Desertification, and adopted principles that defined a new paradigm for preserving our planet and our humanity. Over the past 33 years, these gatherings have produced important agreements and targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions – from ending deforestation by 2030 to tripling renewable energy use.

More than three decades later, the world has returned to Brazil to confront climate change. It is no coincidence that COP30 takes place in the heart of the Amazon rainforest. This is an opportunity for politicians, diplomats, scientists, activists and journalists to witness the reality of the Amazon.

We want the world to see the true state of the forests, the planet's largest river basin, and the millions of people who live in the region. COPs cannot be mere showcases of good ideas or



**Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva**

is the President of Brazil

The setting of the Belém Summit – in the Amazon – will help lead the way in effective action to tackle climate change

annual gatherings for negotiators. They must be moments of contact with reality and of effective action to tackle climate change.

To confront this crisis together, we need resources. And we must recognise that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities remains the non-negotiable foundation of any climate pact.

That is why the Global South demands greater access to resources – not out of charity, but justice. Rich countries have benefited the most from the carbon-based economy. They must now rise to their responsibilities, not only by making commitments but also by honouring their debts.

Brazil is doing its part. In just two years, we have already halved deforestation in the Amazon, showing that concrete climate action is possible.

## A move to preserve forests, other measures

In Belém, we will launch an innovative initiative to preserve forests: the Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF). It is innovative because it operates as an investment fund, not a donation mechanism.

The TFFF will reward those who keep their forests standing and those who invest in the fund; a genuine win-win approach to tackling climate change. Leading by example, Brazil has announced a \$1 billion investment in the TFFF, and we expect equally ambitious announcements from other countries.

We also set an example by becoming the second country to present a new Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). Brazil has committed to reducing its emissions by 59% to 67%, covering all greenhouse gases and all sectors of the economy.

In this spirit, we call on all countries to present equally ambitious NDCs and to implement them effectively.

The energy transition is fundamental to meeting Brazil's NDC. Our energy matrix is among the cleanest in the world, with 88% of our electricity coming from renewable sources. We

lead in biofuels and are advancing in wind, solar and green hydrogen energy.

Redirecting revenues from oil production to finance a just, orderly and equitable energy transition will be essential. Over time, oil companies worldwide, including Brazil's Petrobras, will transform into energy companies, because a growth model based on fossil fuels cannot last.

People must be at the centre of political decisions about climate and the energy transition. We must recognise that the most vulnerable sectors of our society are the most affected by the impacts of climate change, which is why just transition and adaptation plans must aim to combat inequality.

We cannot forget that two billion people lack access to clean technologies and fuels for cooking, and 673 million still live with hunger. In response, we will launch in Belém, a 'Declaration on Hunger, Poverty and Climate'. Our commitment to fight global warming must be directly linked to the fight against hunger.

## The need for a climate change council

It is also fundamental that we advance the reform of global governance. Today, multilateralism suffers from the paralysis of the United Nations Security Council. Created to preserve peace, it has failed to prevent wars. It is our duty, therefore, to fight for the reform of this institution.

At COP30, we will advocate the creation of a UN Climate Change Council linked to the General Assembly. It would be a new governance structure with the force and the legitimacy to ensure that countries deliver on their promises, and an effective step toward reversing the current paralysis of the multilateral system.

At every Climate Conference, we hear many promises but see too few real commitments. The era of declarations of good intentions has ended: the time for action plans has arrived. That is why, today, we begin the COP of Truth.



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## Death on the move

Road accidents are not resulting in an overhaul of infrastructure and licensing

**T**he highway accident on November 3 that claimed 19 lives at Chevella near Hyderabad was far too routine to change India's disgraceful record in fatal road accidents. The driver of a gravel-laden truck apparently swerved to avoid a pothole and rammed into a bus. There were no dividers, no streetlights and no signages on that stretch of National Highway 163. India's roads are a major public hazard. Pedestrians, bus riders and two-wheeler motorists constitute the majority of the over 400 people who die on India's roads on average, the equivalent to a full transcontinental flight going down. Flight disasters invite scrutiny, multi-agency probes and quick remedial actions but road accident deaths that mostly involve poorer folk trigger perfunctory probes and glacial change in rules, if any. Government documents identify human error as the most common cause but deeper reasons – vehicular and infrastructural – are unaddressed.

In India, the road test for getting a driving licence examines whether the person is able to handle a vehicle of certain specification, largely a skill test, rather than one of his knowledge and execution of safe driving practices. No safety training is mandated. Most accidents are collisions from the back – whereas exemplar driving tests in other countries filter out tailgating tendencies and arbitrary lane changing. The system of certifying and monitoring drivers and vehicles is broken and corrupt. For nearly all Indians, navigating RTOs is unpleasant. The SaveLIFE Foundation advocates License Seva Kendras – on the lines of Passport Seva Kendras – so that they are transparent, digitised, and ensure good driver skills and safety awareness. One in five accidents are head-on collisions, which have happened even on four-lane highways, indicating wrong-side driving and the state of road dividers. In general, national highways need to adhere to Indian Roads Congress guidelines but States have made no mandates as required by the Motor Vehicles Act. There are potholes, dangerous curves, drainage systems, bridge parapets and concrete objects, but no crash barriers or energy absorbers. Collision-risk warning devices are relatively inexpensive and can be mandated on commercial vehicles. Better pedestrian infrastructure alone can prevent many fatalities. In Hyderabad, a community health-care centre was available for immediate treatment and a government hospital was not far away. But that is often not the case elsewhere. In States such as Bihar, fatality rates are double because of inadequate trauma care infrastructure. An overhaul of the road transport system is an urgent requirement in India.



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## **Fact**

- **Brasilia Declaration on Road Safety, 2015:** Under it, the countries plan to achieve SDG 3.6, i.e. to halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2030. India signed it in 2015.
- **Awareness and Education:** Annual National Road Safety Month, inclusion of road safety in school curricula, and campaigns like Sadak Suraksha, Jeevan Raksha to promote behavioural change.
- **Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030:** The UN General Assembly adopted the “Improving global road safety” resolution to prevent at least 50% of road traffic deaths and injuries by 2030.

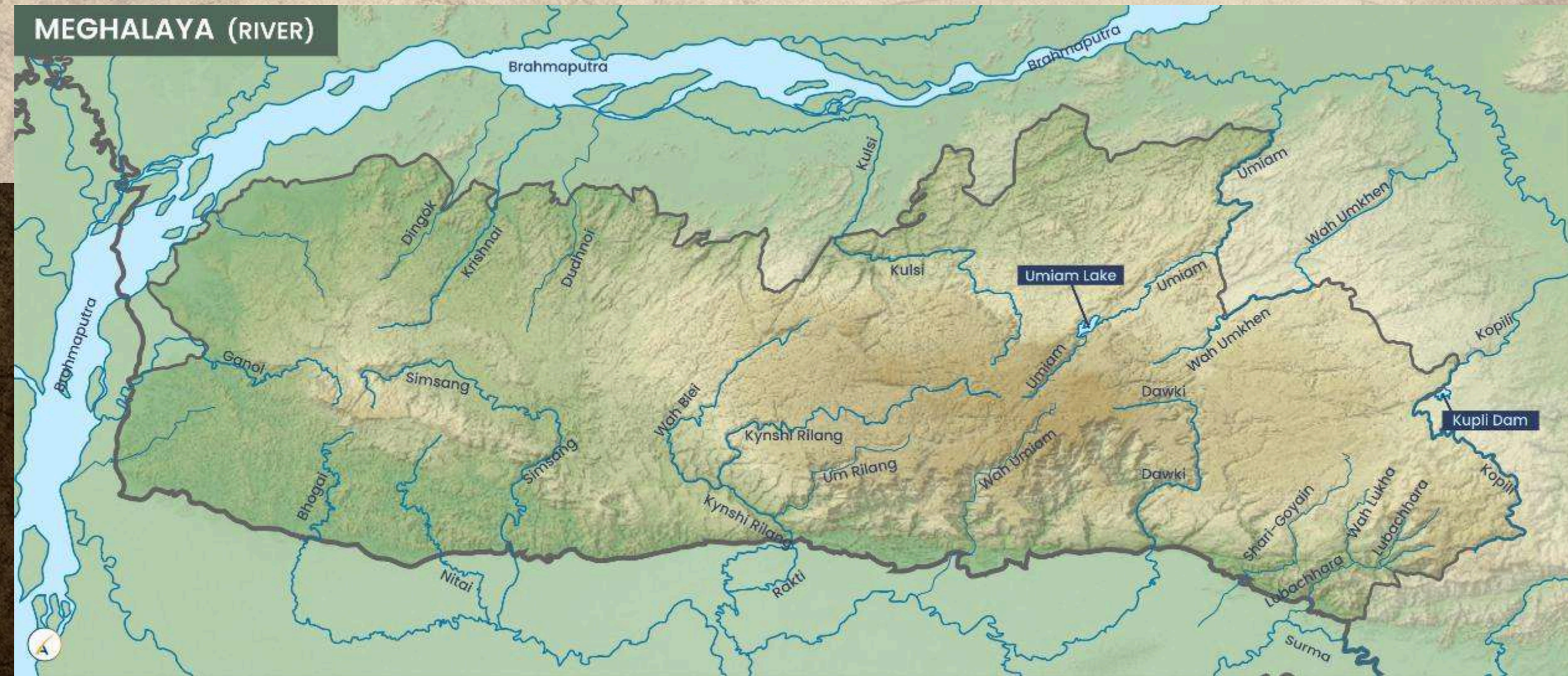


# Umngot River





## MEGHALAYA (RIVER)





## **Content.**

- The Umngot River in Meghalaya — famous for its crystal-clear waters that attract thousands of tourists to Dawki and Shnongpdeng — has turned murky and brown this year, raising concerns over pollution from highway construction activities.
- The Umngot River, also known as the Dawki River, is one of India's cleanest and most scenic rivers, known for its transparent, emerald-green water that makes boats appear to float in air. It is a vital tourism and ecological asset for Meghalaya.
- Origin: It originates from the Eastern Shillong Peak in the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya.

### **Flow through:**

- The river flows through the West Jaintia Hills district, passing through Mawlynnong village, Dawki, and Shnongpdeng, before reaching the India–Bangladesh border, where it continues as the Shari Goyain River in Bangladesh.



### **Key Features:**

- **Acts as a natural boundary between India and Bangladesh.**
- **Famous for boat rides and underwater visibility, often up to several metres during winter.**
- **Supports local livelihoods through tourism, fishing, and eco-camping.**
- **Surrounded by lush forests and limestone formations, contributing to its unique turquoise hue.**

### **Issues:**

- **The river has turned turbid and muddy due to construction debris, soil dumping, and hill-cutting linked to the NHIDCL Shillong–Dawki highway project.**
- **The Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board has flagged violations, citing dumped excavated soil sliding into the river and lack of containment measures.**









**Thank You!**