



TATHASTU
Institute Of Civil Services

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

04th OCTOBER, 2024



TATHASTU
Institute Of Civil Services

☎ 9560300770  www.tathastuics.com ✉ support@tathastuics.com

**HEAD OFFICE: 53/1, UPPER GROUND FLOOR, BADA BAZAR ROAD,
OLD RAJINDER NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110060**



S.NO.	TOPIC
1.	WHY ITALY MATTERS TO INDIA?
2.	CASTE BIAS, SEGREGATION IN PRISONS VIOLATE DIGNITY: SC
3.	LEOPARD POPULATION IN ODISHA'S FORESTS JUMPS BY 22% TO 696 IN TWO YEARS
4.	WHAT IS THE STATUS OF SWACHH BHARAT MISSION 2.0?
5.	MARATHI, BENGALI AMONG FIVE GRANTED CLASSICAL LANGUAGE STATUS BY UNION CABINET
6.	THE WAR ON SICKLE CELL DISEASE

WHY ITALY MATTERS TO INDIA?

Why Italy matters to India

In this age of 'polycrisis', Italy and India share common interests but also joint challenges in the Indo-Mediterranean Sea. This region is vital for global trade, especially for Italy which ranks sixth among the world's largest exporters. It is also crucial for digital connectivity: the Blue-Raman submarine data cables will soon connect Genoa with Mumbai. Piracy in the Red Sea, the conflict in Gaza and Lebanon, and the effects of Russia's aggression against Ukraine on agricultural and oil trade require our joint efforts to ensure a free, open, and prosperous Indo-Mediterranean.

Therefore, Italy has stepped up its commitment in security and defence in the Indian Ocean Region and West Asia. Apart from joining the Group of Friends of UNCTAD in 2021, it has been the second largest contributor to the European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) Atalanta and the European Maritime Awareness in the Strait of Hormuz (EMASoH). Since February 2024, Italy has been a driving force in the EU military operation, EUNAVFOR ASPIDES, to safeguard freedom of navigation in the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Gulf.

Naval presence

We have also increased our naval presence in India. After joining the Information Fusion Centre of the Indian Ocean Region in March 2023, patrol ship *ITS Francesco Morosini* visited Mumbai in August 2023. The Italian Carrier Strike Group (aircraft carrier *ITS Cavour* and frigate *ITS Alpino*) is currently in Goa. We are expecting the amazing tall ship *ITS Amerigo Vespucci* in Mumbai from November 28 to December 2. It is the training vessel of the Italian Navy. We are also planning to build an 'Italy village' that will offer cultural, fashion, and culinary events, as well as conferences and exhibitions.

ITS Cavour is a short take off and vertical landing ship constructed by the Italian naval shipyard Fincantieri and has been in the service

Antonio Bartoli

Ambassador of Italy to India

Piracy in the Red Sea, the conflict in the Middle East, and the effects of Russia's aggression against Ukraine on agricultural and oil trade require our joint efforts to ensure a free, open, and prosperous Indo-Mediterranean

of the Italian Navy since 2009. As a 'dual use' vessel, it can project maritime power, but also provide logistical autonomy and serve environmental and humanitarian interventions. We are delighted that PASSEX exercises (training exercises to develop and maintain mariner skills and strengthen interoperability) are being held during the stay. *ITS Cavour* is also hosting a workshop on defence industry cooperation. At the same time, it serves as a hospital to operate children with facial malformations: a team of Indian and Italian doctors is performing surgeries under the framework of 'Operation Smile', organised by the Smile House Foundation, Italy.

Defence ties

Bilaterally, the Italy-India defence cooperation relies on a defence agreement signed in October 2023. This document lays the basis for a further expansion of our defence ties in many fields, from research to industrial cooperation, maritime domain awareness, sharing of information, and education and environmental issues related to military activities. At the same time, our defence cooperation strongly relies on regular talks such as the Italy-India Military Cooperation Group meeting, held in March in New Delhi.

When it comes to defence production, Italy matters to India: two of our companies, Leonardo and Fincantieri, are ranked among the first 50 of SIPRI's top arms-producing and military services companies in the world (2022), while other companies, such as Beretta, Elettronica and KNDS, albeit smaller in size, possess outstanding technical know-how. Over the last few years, Italian defence companies have shown to be open to joint ventures, co-production, and joint development. Fincantieri is cooperating with Cochin Shipyard since 2020, while Elettronica signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Bharat Electronics Limited in 2019. This partnership approach is in line with India's 'Make in India' ambitions and can respond to growing

requirements by the Indian armed forces.

Italy also looks at India as a valuable partner for development of the Indian Ocean Region, from East Africa to India's shores via the Arabian Sea. Both Italy and India are keen promoters of Africa in international fora and jointly supported the inclusion of the African Union in the G20. During the Italy-Africa Summit in January, Italy launched a new initiative with Africa, the Mattei Plan, aimed at creating a mutually beneficial partnership to realise several important projects across the continent. This initiative mobilises Italian capabilities with €5.5 billion in public investments and the involvement of all public entities and the private sector. Among the first countries chosen for this plan, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Mozambique are adjacent to the Indo-Mediterranean area. The ambition is to engage with other partners to realise sustainable projects which will help drive economic and social development in Africa.

At the same time, Italy has supported the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). Amid the conflict in Gaza and the escalating tensions in West Asia, we believe that IMEC can be part of a long-term vision to ensure shared prosperity in the region. Railway connections, ports, logistics and custom systems can support peace endeavours along a trade route that is as essential for Italy as it is for India.

People-to-people ties

Italy matters to India as a friend. We host the second largest Indian diaspora in the EU. Italy is a reliable economic and defence partner, the second largest manufacturing country in Europe, and a robust security provider taking up responsibilities as a member of the EU and NATO. What persists over time are people-to-people ties. These bonds dig deep into an ancient history of contacts between our two civilizations and find new inspiration with every story of cultural exchange, integration, and business success.

Context:

- ❖ In this age of 'polycrisis', Italy and India share common interests but also joint challenges in the Indo-Mediterranean Sea. This region is vital for global trade, especially for Italy which ranks sixth among the world's largest exporters.

About Italy:

- Italy is a boot-shaped peninsula that juts out of southern Europe into the **Adriatic Sea, Tyrrhenian Sea, Mediterranean Sea**, and other waters.
- International borders with **Austria, France, the Holy See (Vatican City), San Marino, Slovenia, and Switzerland**.
- Maritime borders with **Albania, Algeria, Croatia, Greece, Libya, Malta, Montenegro, Spain, and Tunisia**.





- **Capital:** Rome
- **Major Mountains:** Alps, Apennines
- **Major Rivers:** Po, Adige, Arno, Tiber



India – Italy Relations:

❖ Historical Ties:

- * India and Italy are ancient civilizations but young states. Italian port cities were important trading posts on the **spice route**.
- * The **Venetian merchant Marco Polo**, during his travels to the East, also travelled to India in the 13th century and wrote about his experiences.

❖ Political:

- * Political relations between India and Italy were established in **1947**.
- * In **March 2023**, India and Italy elevated their relationship to a **Strategic Partnership**.

❖ Economic:

- * The bilateral trade between the two countries was valued at **USD 14.25 billion in 2022-23**. Italy is among India's top **5 trading partners in the European Union**.
- * Indian exports to Italy are **ready-made garments, leather, iron ore, motor vehicles, textiles, chemicals, gems & jewelry**.
- * Import from Italy are general and **special purpose machinery, machine tools, metallurgical products, and engineering items**.

❖ Security:

- * The **India-Italy Military Cooperation Group (MCG)** is a forum established to boost defense cooperation between the both countries.

❖ Other Initiatives Involving India and Italy:

- * **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor**
- * **Global Biofuel Alliance**
- * **Blue-Raman project**





Overview of the Indo-Mediterranean Region's Importance

❖ Global Trade:

- * Vital for global trade, especially for Italy, which is the 6th largest exporter globally.
- * The region plays a crucial role in agricultural and oil trade, impacted by geopolitical tensions (Russia-Ukraine conflict).

❖ Digital Connectivity:

- * The Blue-Raman submarine cable will soon connect Genoa (Italy) with Mumbai (India), enhancing digital infrastructure.

❖ Security Threats:

- * Piracy in the Red Sea.
- * Conflicts in Gaza, Lebanon, and the broader West Asian region.

Security and Defence Cooperation in the Indo-Mediterranean:

❖ Italy's Increased Security Role:

- * Stepped-up commitment in the Indian Ocean and West Asia to safeguard freedom of navigation.
- * Italy's notable participation in international naval efforts, including:
 - **EU NAVFOR Atalanta** (anti-piracy operations).
 - **EMASoH** (European Maritime Awareness in the Strait of Hormuz).
 - Italy's driving force role in **EUNAVFOR ASPIDES** (protection of navigation in the Red Sea, Indian Ocean, and Gulf).

Italy's Naval Presence in India:

❖ Joint Naval Exercises and Visits:

- * March 2023: Italy joins the Indian Ocean Region's Information Fusion Centre.
- * August 2023: Italian patrol ship **ITS Francesco Morosini** visits Mumbai.
- * **Carrier Strike Group** (including **ITS Cavour** and **ITS Alpino**) visits Goa for joint exercises and workshops.
- * November-December 2023: **ITS Amerigo Vespucci** (training vessel) to visit Mumbai.

- ❖ **PASSEX Exercises:** Italy and India hold naval exercises to strengthen interoperability and develop mariner skills.

Defence Ties and Industrial Cooperation:

❖ Italy-India Defence Agreement (October 2023):

- * Expands cooperation in defence-related research, maritime domain awareness, and military education.
- * Regular defence talks such as the **Italy-India Military Cooperation Group**.

❖ Defence Production Cooperation:

- * Italian companies like **Leonardo**, **Fincantieri**, and **Elettronica** collaborate with Indian partners under the 'Make in India' initiative.



- * Co-production and joint ventures support the growing needs of the Indian armed forces.

Joint Interests in Africa:

❖ Italy's Mattei Plan:

- * Aimed at creating mutually beneficial projects in East Africa, aligning with India's strategic interests in the region.
- * Focus on sustainable economic and social development through €5.5 billion in investments.
- * Countries like Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Mozambique are part of the initiative, forming a link to the Indo-Mediterranean region.

People-to-People Ties:

❖ Indian Diaspora in Italy:

- * Italy hosts the second-largest Indian diaspora in the EU, strengthening cultural and economic ties.

❖ Historical and Cultural Bonds:

- * Deep-rooted historical connections between the two civilizations, continually reinforced by modern cultural exchange and business collaboration.

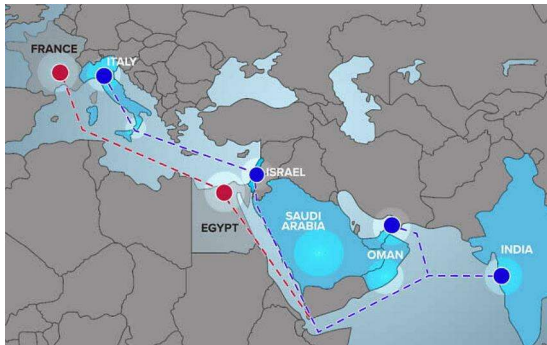
❖ Strategic Corridors and Infrastructure Development: Example - IMEC

India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor

- ❖ The proposed IMEC will consist of **Railroad, Ship-to-Rail networks** and Road transport routes extending across two corridors, that is,
 - * **The East Corridor** – connecting **India to the Arabian Gulf**,
 - * **The Northern Corridor** – connecting the **Gulf to Europe**.
 - * It aims to create a **comprehensive transportation network**, comprising rail, road, and sea routes, connecting India, the Middle East, and Europe.
- ❖ The IMEC corridor will also include **an electricity cable, a hydrogen pipeline and a high-speed data cable**.
- ❖ **Signatories** : India, the US, Saudi Arabia, UAE, the **European Union**, Italy, France, and Germany.

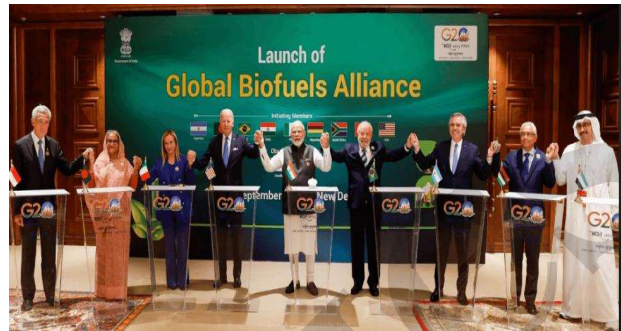


Blue Raman Project



- ❖ The **Blue-Raman** project is a submarine cable system aimed at enhancing digital connectivity between Europe and Asia.
- ❖ It will connect **Genoa (Italy)** with **Mumbai (India)** through undersea data cables, improving the flow of internet and communication services between the two regions.
- ❖ This project is crucial for supporting faster internet speeds and secure digital infrastructure, further solidifying the connection between India and Europe in the digital age.

Global Biofuels Alliance



- ❖ GBA is an **India-led Initiative** to develop an **alliance of Governments, International organisations and Industry.**
- ❖ **Aims** to facilitate adoption of biofuels through international cooperation.
- ❖ Nineteen countries and 12 international organizations have already agreed to join or support the GBA.

Way Forward

- ❖ India and Italy share a strong and evolving relationship, elevated to a strategic partnership, rooted in historical ties and mutual interests. Their collaboration spans key areas like trade, digital connectivity, security, and defence, particularly in the Indo-Mediterranean region. Initiatives like the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor and Blue-Raman project highlight their joint efforts for a connected, secure, and prosperous future. Amid global challenges, their growing defence cooperation and people-to-people ties further strengthen this crucial partnership.

Attempt It !

Q.1 Italy looks at the Indo-Pacific from the perspective of an “enlarged Mediterranean”. Analyse, what are the facets of India’s growing relationship with Italy?

CASTE BIAS, SEGREGATION IN PRISONS VIOLATE DIGNITY: SC

Caste bias, segregation in prisons violate dignity: SC

Central, State jail manuals and laws must be revised within three months, rules the Bench headed by CJI; it says distribution of work on the basis of caste amounts to untouchability

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday declared that caste-based discrimination of prisoners, segregation of their work according to caste hierarchy, and the treatment of inmates from the de-notified tribes as "habitual offenders" within prison walls across India are oppressive to fundamental human dignity and personality.

The top court directed the revision of prison manuals within three months. It ordered the deletion of the 'caste column' and any references to caste from registers of undertrials and convicts maintained in prisons. The court underscored that members of de-notified tribes must not be

Removing bias

The Bench says "everyone is born equal" and cannot suffer lifelong due to stigma attached to their caste.

The directions include:

- States and UTs should revise their Prison Manuals/Rules in three months
- Centre should address caste-based discrimination in the Model Prison Manual 2016 and the Model Prisons and Correctional Services Act 2023 in

three months

- "Caste columns" and references to caste in prisoners' registers should be removed



subjected to arbitrary arrest.

'Violates Constitution'

"Everyone is born equal. There cannot be any stigma attached to the existence, touch or presence of any person... More than 75 years since Independence, we have not been able to eradicate the evil of caste discrimination," a three-

judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud observed.

The CJI, who authored the judgment, referred to Article 15(1) of the Constitution which enshrines the fundamental right against discrimination. "But if the state itself discriminates against a citizen, then it is discrimination of the highest form. After all, the state

is expected to prevent discrimination, not perpetuate it," he noted. He held that discrimination among prisoners and distribution of work on the basis of caste amounted to untouchability, which is forbidden under Article 17 of the Constitution.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

Supreme Court Judgment:

- ❖ Caste-based discrimination and segregation of prisoners based on caste hierarchy is unconstitutional.
- ❖ The court emphasized that treating inmates from de-notified tribes as "habitual offenders" is oppressive and violates human dignity.
- ❖ **Prison Manuals Revision:**
 - * The court ordered a revision of Central and State jail manuals within **three months**.
 - * It directed the deletion of the 'caste column' and any references to caste from prison registers for undertrials and convicts.
- ❖ **Violation of Constitutional Rights:**
 - * The judgment highlighted Article 15(1) of the Constitution, which guarantees protection against discrimination.
 - * The state must prevent discrimination rather than perpetuate it; caste-based discrimination violates **Article 17**, which forbids untouchability.
- ❖ **Chief Justice's Remarks:**
 - * Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, who authored the judgment, noted that despite over 75 years of independence, caste discrimination remains a prevalent issue.
 - * The court stressed that everyone is born equal, and no stigma should be attached based on caste.



❖ **Action on De-notified Tribes:**

- * Arbitrary arrests and discriminatory treatment of individuals from de-notified tribes must stop.

* Acc to Entry 4 of List II (State List) of 7th Schedule of Indian Constitution "Prison" and "Persons confined inside" are State Subjects.☆☆

Problems of Prisons in India:

1. Custodial Torture:

❖ **Prevalence:**

- * Despite the prohibition of third-degree torture by police after the **D.K. Basu judgment (1986)**, instances of **custodial violence** are still prevalent inside prisons.

❖ **Custodial Deaths:**

- * According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, **146 custodial deaths** were reported between 2017 and 2018.
- * **Gujarat** reported the highest number of custodial deaths (80), followed by **Maharashtra (76)** and **Uttar Pradesh (41)** over the last five years.

2. Women and Children in Prisons:

❖ **Women Prisoners:**

- * Women are relatively fewer in number but face specific issues such as **lack of sanitation facilities, inadequate care during pregnancy**, and limited access to **educational and vocational training**.

❖ **Children in Correctional Homes:**

- * Children of prisoners are generally kept in **correctional homes** rather than jails for reformative purposes.
- * Despite this, they often face **abuse** and suffer from **psychological trauma** due to the harsh environment they are exposed to.

❖ **Overcrowding of Prisons:** According to the National Crimes Record Bureau (NCRB), the occupancy rate of jails is **118.5%** of their capacity.

❖ There are about **4,78,600 prisoners** in different prisons, while the capacity is just **4,03,700**.

3. Health and Hygiene:

❖ **Lack of Medical Facilities:**

- * Many prisons lack **proper medical infrastructure**, resulting in neglect and untreated health issues among prisoners.

❖ **Hygiene Problems:**

- * Hygiene is often inadequate, leading to poor health conditions within the prison environment. This exacerbates the risk of diseases spreading quickly in overcrowded prisons.





4. Delay in Trials:

- ❖ **Pending Cases:** A significant number of cases remain **pending for years**, causing disruptions in prison administration.
- ❖ **Supreme Court Ruling:**
 - * In the case of **Hussainara Khatoun v. Home Secretary (1979)**, the Supreme Court recognized the **right to a speedy trial**, yet delays continue to impact the justice system, leading to overcrowding.

Model Prisons Act 2023

- ❖ **Will replace a British-era law, (the Prisons Act of 1894)**, to overhaul the prison administration that will focus on the reformation and rehabilitation of inmates.

Need for Revising the Prisons Act:

- ❖ **Lacunae in the Old Act (1894):**
 - * The Prisons Act of 1894 has several gaps and lacks focus on rehabilitation and reform of prisoners.
 - * The act mainly concentrates on custody, discipline, and order but overlooks correctional and rehabilitative efforts.
- ❖ **Focus of the Prisons Act (1894):**
 - * Primarily emphasizes keeping criminals in custody.
 - * No provisions for the reform, rehabilitation, or reintegration of prisoners into society.

Salient Features of the New Act

Punishment for Use of Prohibited Items

- Strict provisions for penalizing prisoners and jail staff for using or possessing prohibited items, such as mobile phones, inside jails.

High-Security and Open Jails

- Establishment of **high-security jails** and **open or semi-open jails** for specific categories of prisoners.

Protection from Hardened Criminals

- Special provisions to protect society from the criminal activities of **hardened criminals** and **habitual offenders**.

Legal Aid and Good Conduct Incentives

- Access to **legal aid**, and opportunities for **parole, furlough, and premature release** to encourage good behavior among prisoners.

Security Assessment and Prisoner Segregation

- Measures for security assessment, segregation of prisoners, and **individual sentence planning**.
- Focus on prisoner grievances, attitudinal changes, and **separate accommodations** for women, transgender persons, and others with specific needs.

Use of Technology in Prisons

- Adoption of **technology** to bring transparency, such as **videoconferencing with courts** and **scientific and technological interventions** in prison management.





★ Mulla Committee } → Committees
 Law Commission 268 report } on Prison reforms
 Justice Amitava Roy Committee }

Significance of the New Act:

- ❖ **Guiding Document for States:** Since prisons are a **State subject** in India, the **Model Prisons Act 2023** will serve as a guiding framework for states to reform prison systems.
- ❖ **Assimilation of Old Acts:** Relevant provisions from the **Prisoners Act of 1900** and **Transfer of Prisoners Act of 1950** are incorporated into the new act, aiming to modernize prison administration.
- ❖ **Alignment with International Standards:** The act is expected to bring **much-needed reforms** to Indian prisons and align them with **international standards** for correctional institutions.

Initiatives Related to Prison Reforms in India

Modernisation of Prisons Project (2021-26)
 financial assistance to states / U.T. for modern security equipments

E-Prisons Project

NALSA
 under Legal Services Authorities Act 1987.
 ↳ legal services for weaker sections.

Model Prison Manual 2016 → provides info of free legal services

Conclusion:

- ❖ The prison system in India has undergone significant reforms since ancient times, but it still requires further improvement in modern times.
- ❖ Despite the various prison reforms implemented in India, **the situation has not improved significantly**. It is important to recognize that **while prisoners have committed crimes, they still possess certain rights** that cannot be taken away from them.





UPSC CSE PYQ 2023:

Q.2 Consider the following statements:

Statement-I: In India, prisons are managed State Governments with their own rules and regulations for the day-to-day administration of prisons.

Statement-II: In India, prisons are governed by the Prisons Act, 1894 which expressly kept the subject of prisons in the control of Provincial Governments.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- [A] Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
- [B] Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I
- [C] Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect
- [D] Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct

Answer: A

- ❖ The Prisons Act 1894 is one of the oldest pieces of legislation in India dealing with laws enacted in relation to prisons in India.
- ❖ Statement I is correct: Prison is a State subject under List-II of the Seventh Schedule in the Constitution. States have the primary role, responsibility and power to change the current prison laws, rules and regulations. Hence it is true that prisons are managed by the state governments with their own rules and regulations.
- ❖ Statement II is correct: The management and administration of Prisons falls exclusively in the domain of the State Governments and is governed by the Prisons Act, 1894 and the Prison Manuals of the respective State Governments. Hence it is true that the Prisons Act 1894 kept the subject of prisons in the Provincial government (State governments) and this explains why State governments have the power to frame their own rules and regulations regarding prison management





LEOPARD POPULATION IN ODISHA'S FORESTS JUMPS BY 22% TO 696 IN TWO YEARS

Leopard population in Odisha's forests jumps by 22% to 696 in two years

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

Some good news for wildlife enthusiasts: Odisha's leopard population has increased by 22%, rising from 568 to 696 in two years between 2022 and 2024, despite ongoing concerns about poaching and the illegal trade of leopard skins in the State.

The All Odisha Leopard Estimation 2024, released on Thursday, estimates the State's leopard population to range between 668 and 724, with a median count of 696.

However, the present leopard population lags behind the 2018 census carried out by National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), which put Odisha's

big cats number at 760. In 2022, the population dropped to 568.

The Forest Department had conducted an estimation across 47 divisions, aimed at much more intensive State-level leopard monitoring. A State-wide field survey was also conducted to identify the presence of leopards through various signs, including pug marks, scrapes, scats, rakes, urine spray, vocalisations, and livestock depredation.

Camera trap

"Sites with confirmed direct or indirect evidence of leopard were monitored using camera traps to estimate the minimum number of unique adult leopards based on their



Smile, big cat: A leopard captured by cameras installed in a forest in Odisha. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

distinctive rosette patterns. Camera trap identification of leopard is a scientifically recognised method and is used in national-level leopard population assessments," says the estimation report.

Susant Nanda, Principal Chief Conservator of For-

est (Wildlife), said: "The big cat population is healthy. In 2022, the estimation was taken up in a limited area while we had taken up the estimation in much larger area capturing leopards in camera traps. We could discover many melanistic leopards in our

forests."

As per the latest NTCA report, the leopard population in India stands at 13,874. The leopard population has dwindled by 75-90% across the country over the last 120-200 years.

According to Wildlife Protection Society of India, around 1,485 leopards were poached in the country in the last 10 years.

As per the information furnished by the Forest and Environment Department in the Assembly, as many as 59 leopard skins were seized from wildlife smugglers between 2018 and 2023. Similarly, a Special Task Force (STF) of the State police has recovered 57 leopard skins from poachers and wildlife article dealers from 2019 to

2024. Overall, 116 leopards were killed and their skins taken. Wildlife experts said in dozens of cases, leopard skins might have reached their destinations unnoticed and unintercepted.

Forest cover

Odisha's forest cover accounts for 33.50% of the State's total geographic area. The State government said there is one national park, 19 wildlife sanctuaries and two conservation reserves in Odisha.

The latest population estimate report says, "Protected areas proved to be the regions with the highest leopard abundance. Similipal Tiger Reserve has the largest leopard population in Odisha. Due to its

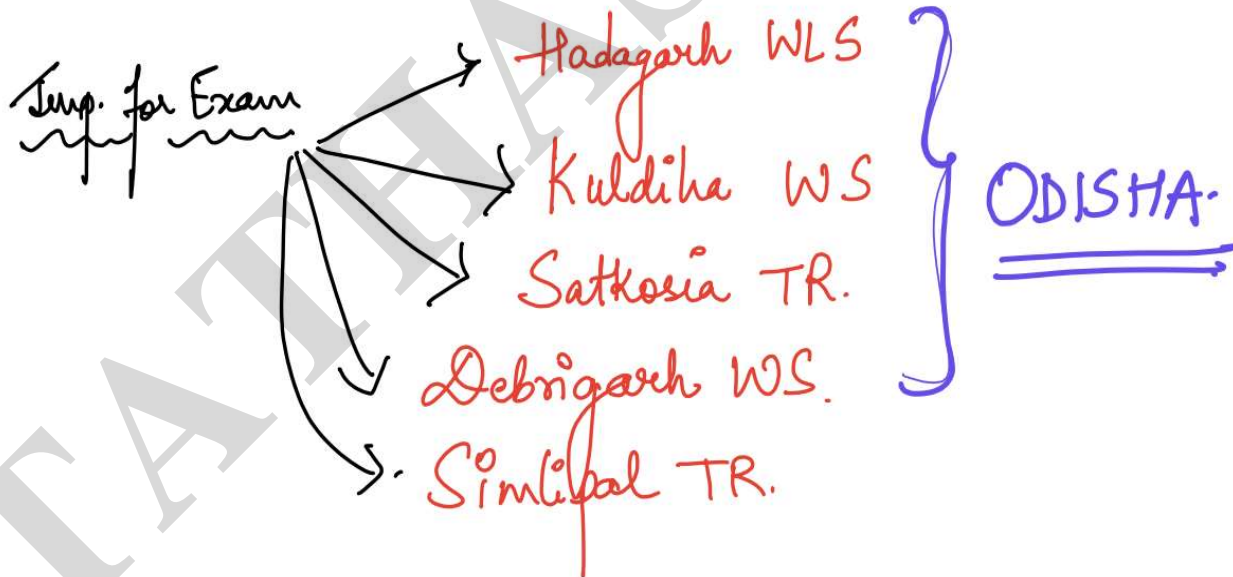
extensive size, Similipal landscape plays a crucial role as a source population for leopards in the surrounding region. It is connected to Hadagarh Wildlife Sanctuary and Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary, which are essential for leopards to disperse from Similipal to these other protected areas."

The report further states that Satkosia landscape turned out to be another promising site for leopards and boasts of the second highest leopard population in the State. Similarly, Hirakud Wildlife Division, which includes Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary, is another key habitat for leopards and has a significant leopard population.

"As high as 45% of the leopard population in Odisha is located outside the protected area network and thus the territorial forest divisions have considerable leopard presence. The rare melanistic leopard morph was recorded from three forest divisions," it observes.

"From the next year, this camera trap based All Odisha Leopard Estimation exercise will be synchronised with the annual All Odisha Tiger Estimation exercise. This comprehensive exercise will involve collecting data on both the big cat occupancy, prey base estimation, and assessments of vegetation structure and human disturbance in the State," the Forest Department said.

Leopard → IUCN: Vulnerable
CITES: Appendix I
WPA: Schedule I.





WHAT IS THE STATUS OF SWACHH BHARAT MISSION 2.0?

What is the status of the Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0?

What are the various health and environmental risks arising from legacy waste dumpsites?

Sreeparna Chakrabarty

The story so far:

India has more than 3,000 legacy waste dumpsites, with 2,424 of them having a waste load of more than 1,000 tonnes. The Central government launched the legacy waste management project as part of the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) 2.0 in October 2021, for a period of five years till 2026. However, more than halfway through the time period, only 471 out of the 2,424, that is 19.43% of dumpsites have been completely remediated.

What are legacy waste dumpsites?

Legacy waste dumpsites are dumpsites that contain solid waste that have been collected and stored for years in an unscientific and uncontrolled manner. Municipal solid waste generation in India is estimated to be around 1,50,000 tonnes per day, according to the State of India's Environment 2023 report. With almost no installed facility in India for handling solid

waste, the municipal corporations, municipal councils and *nagar* (city) panchayats have traditionally opted for creating man-made garbage hills.

These dumpsites originally developed on the outskirts of the cities. However, with the expansion of cities, these sites are now often found in the heart of cities on barren land or in landfills. According to estimates of the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry, approximately 15,000 acres of prime real estate is buried under nearly 16 crore tonnes of legacy waste across the country.

What are the health hazards?

Legacy waste dumpsites can pose a number of health hazards for citizens. Exposure to emissions from hazardous waste can irritate the mouth and throat. Inhaling methane from landfills can cause nausea, vomiting, and loss of coordination. Ragpickers who work at landfills can develop skin allergies from years of exposure to waste. People who live near landfills may be prone to

developing tuberculosis, asthma, diabetes, depression, cholera, malaria, and other diseases. They are also a source of greenhouse gas emissions, such as methane and carbon dioxide.

What is the Swachh Bharat Mission?

The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) or Clean India Mission is a country-wide campaign launched by the Central government on October 2, 2014 to eliminate open defecation and to create Open Defecation Free (ODF) villages. The mission aimed to achieve an "open-defecation free" India by October 2, 2019 coinciding with the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi through the construction of toilets.

In 2021, the Government launched its second edition – the five-year Swachh Bharat (Clean India) Mission-Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0), committing to making all cities "garbage-free cities" by 2026, while maintaining ODF status across 4,372 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). It also has a vision of 100% source segregation, door

to door collection and scientific management of all fractions of waste, including safe disposal in scientific landfills. The SBM 2.0 aims to remediate all legacy dumpsites and convert them into green zones. The mission has also made provisions for scientific landfills to dispose of untreated inert waste and process rejects, in order to prevent fresh dumpsites being created.

Action plans amounting to ₹3,226 crore of Central Share (CS) assistance on remediation of legacy waste dumpsites has been approved so far. An advisory has also been issued to the States/Union Territory administrations on landfill reclamation. As per financial norms of centrally sponsored schemes, State/UT governments are required to put in a matching share from their own side, while disbursing the funds to respective ULBs.

What has been the progress so far?

According to the dashboard of the Swachh Bharat Mission website, as on September 24, out of the 2,424 dumpsites, 471 sites have been remediated, remediation in 1,226 has been approved and is on-going, and 727 sites have been untouched. As far as area is concerned, of the total 17,039.71 acres, 27% has been reclaimed and 73% is yet to be reclaimed.

Among States, Tamil Nadu has the maximum area reclaimed from dumpsites at 837 acres (42%). Gujarat is the best performing State with 75% area (698 out of 938 acres) of landfills reclaimed.

THE GIST

The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) or Clean India Mission is a country-wide campaign launched by the Central government on October 2, 2014 to eliminate open defecation and to create Open Defecation Free (ODF) villages.

In 2021, the Government launched its second edition – the five-year Swachh Bharat (Clean India) Mission-Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0), committing to making all cities "garbage-free cities" by 2026.

Exposure to emissions from hazardous waste can irritate the mouth and throat. Inhaling methane from landfills can cause nausea, vomiting, and loss of coordination.



• Clean India Mission

• Oct 2014

• eliminate OD.

• SBMU 2.0 (2021).

↓
- all cities garbage free by 2026.





What are the various health and environmental risks arising from legacy waste dumpsites?

Legacy waste dumpsites: large, old, unmanaged waste disposal areas where garbage has accumulated for several decades.

Key features

- long term accumulation without proper segregation
- pollution & health risks
- GHG emissions: esp. Methane as waste decomposes anaerobically
- Challenges in remediation: mixed nature of waste.

Health risks

- water contamination → leaching
- diseases → breeding grounds.
- Biodiv. loss → ecosystem destroyed.
- air pollution/water.

Solutions..

- Landfill bioremediation
- Waste to Energy Conversion
- Leachate Management → RO technique to treat water
- Segregation at Source.





MARATHI, BENGALI AMONG FIVE GRANTED CLASSICAL LANGUAGE STATUS BY UNION CABINET

Marathi, Bengali among five granted classical language status by Union Cabinet

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Thursday approved classical language status to Marathi, Bengali, Assamese, Pali, and Prakrit.

The demand for classical status for Marathi has been pending since 2013 and the approval comes just ahead of the Assembly election in Maharashtra. The approval for Bengali comes amid Durga Puja, the biggest festival in West Bengal.

India has had six classical languages till now – Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Sanskrit, and Odia. Tamil was the first language to be given classical status in 2004, followed by Sanskrit in 2005.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi took to X to congratulate all speakers of the newly designated classical languages. "Marathi is India's pride. Congratulations on this phenomenal language being accorded the status of a Classical Language. This honour acknowledges the rich cultural contribution of Marathi in our nation's history," he said.

"Bengali literature has inspired countless people for years. I congratulate all the Bengali speakers all ov-

Till now, India had 6 classical languages – Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Sanskrit, Odia

er the world on this," he added.

According to the Union Culture Ministry, the criteria for bestowing classical status was revised by the Linguistics Experts Committee, chaired by the Sahitya Akademi president, in a meeting in July.

The Hindu had reported on July 8 that the Central government was all set to tweak the criteria.

The Linguistics Expert Committee comprises of representatives of the Union Ministries of Home, Culture, and four or five linguistic experts at any given time.

Once a language is notified as a classical language, the Education Ministry provides certain benefits to promote it which includes two major annual international awards for scholars of eminence in the said languages, a Centre of Excellence for studies in classical languages and the University Grants Commission is requested to create, to start with at least in the Central

Universities, a certain number of professional chairs for the classical languages.

"The inclusion will create significant employment opportunities, particularly in academic and research fields. Additionally, the preservation, documentation, and digitisation of ancient texts of these languages will generate jobs in archiving, translation, publishing, and digital media," the Ministry said in a statement.

Welcoming the move, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde tweeted, "Finally, Marathi language has been given the status of classical language. This battle has been successful. Maharashtra government had continuously followed up with the Centre for this. I thank PM Narendra Modi ji, Home Minister Amit Shahji, Cultural Affairs Minister Gajendrasinha Shekhavatji. Several Marathi speaking people, Marathi intellectuals, linguists, writers, critics have helped in this. A heartfelt thank you!"

Maharashtra Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis said, "It is a golden moment and a historic day. This is a very proud moment! Eternally thankful to rime Minister Narendra Modiji."

Languages granted Classical Status:

- ❖ Marathi, Bengali, Assamese, Pali, and Prakrit.

Six languages that enjoy the 'Classical' status in India:

- ❖ Tamil (declared in 2004), Sanskrit (2005), Kannada (2008), Telugu (2008), Malayalam (2013), and Odia (2014).
- ❖ All the Classical Languages are listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.





- ❖ The **Ministry of Culture** provides the guidelines regarding Classical languages.
- ❖ **Guidelines for declaring a language as 'Classical' are:**
 - * High antiquity of its early texts/recorded history over a period of 1500-2000 years;
 - * A body of ancient literature/texts, which is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers;
 - * The literary tradition be original and not borrowed from another speech community;
 - * The classical language and literature being distinct from modern, there may also be a discontinuity between the classical language and its later forms or its offshoots.

Revised Criteria for Classical Status:

- ❖ **Linguistics Experts Committee:**
 - * The committee is chaired by the **Sahitya Akademi president** and includes members from the Union Ministries of Home, Culture, and linguistic experts.
 - * In **July 2023**, the criteria for bestowing classical status were revised by the committee.

Benefits of Classical Status:

- ❖ **Educational Support:**
 - * Two major **annual international awards** for scholars in classical languages.
 - * Establishment of a **Centre of Excellence** for studies in these languages.
 - * **UGC** is requested to create professional chairs for classical languages in **Central Universities**.





THE WAR ON SICKLE CELL DISEASE

The war on sickle cell disease: how one hospital is making a difference

Sickle cell disease shortens life by at least twenty years. Slow-progressing organ failure is common in older patients, and acute chest syndrome, a form of lung injury, is a significant cause of death among the young. The symptoms vary among patients, leading to a wide range of complications

Dawn Kuruvilla

I know sickle cell disease (SCD) less from the medical textbooks and more from the suffering of patients I've treated. Over time, this disease has ceased to be just a diagnosis on a chart. It has become something I deeply despise from the core of my being. It has drawn many of my young, tender-looking patients into painful crises, causing me to cry out in desperation, hoping to see it eradicated – though I know that's just a daydream. Because it's a genetic illness with no definitive cure to date.

But desperation and hopelessness cannot be the final word. In Agatha Christie's words, "I like living. I have sometimes been wildly, despairingly, acutely miserable, racked with sorrow, but through it all, I still know quite certainly that just to be alive is a grand thing." For the sake of patients, the fight continues, no matter the adversity. We cannot lose.

The brutality of the disease

I have witnessed first hand the plight of young people afflicted by sickle cell disease at three mission hospitals. Patients come in with intense pain, high fever, chest infections, or severe anaemia, needing blood transfusions. Whether in southern Odisha, north Maharashtra, or western Uttar Pradesh, the patients are almost always poor, young, rural, and from the same family.

Sickle cell disease shortens life by at least twenty years. Slow-progressing organ failure is common in older patients, and acute chest syndrome, a form of lung injury, is a significant cause of death among the young. The disease's symptoms vary widely among patients, leading to a wide range of complications from anaemia due to the destruction of blood cells to blockage of blood vessels in limbs, causing both severe pain and death due to organ failure.

Practising medicine is generally hard, but over time, you learn to trust in your skills, hoping that drugs and interventions will relieve suffering. However, sickle cell disease has the reputation of defeating even the most courageous healthcare professionals.

Doctors on the frontlines

I attribute much of my knowledge about managing this disease to Dr. Ashita Singh, with whom I worked at Chinchpada Christian Hospital in Maharashtra. She has seen this dreaded disease up close and has not shrunk back in horror, but has loved her patients, looking for ways to relieve the suffering of patients and improve their quality of life.

She has dealt with several practical challenges in the management of the disease.

Since sickle cell disease is a genetic condition, its treatment is lifelong. Only gene therapy or bone marrow transplant can cure it, but these treatments are out of reach for many in India because of the costs. But Dr. Ashita, who works in a resource-poor setting, has moved mountains to introduce measures that can help control the disease's symptoms, making it bearable for the poor patients who receive treatment from her. Her hard work has upheld the health and dignity of many of her patients through various hospital initiatives that deal with the



Sickle cell patients at Health Centre Bagicha, Jashpur in Chhattisgarh. FILE PHOTO

reality of living with sickle cell disease.

Chinchpada Hospital's initiatives

One of Chinchpada Hospital's most significant initiatives is that the hospital secured State Blood Transfusion Council (SBTC) cards for around 250 of the 350 sickle cell disease patients. These took two years to procure.

The cards guarantee that patients will receive free blood transfusions across Maharashtra, a vital service that can be lifesaving for those suffering from severe anaemia.

Recognising that sickle cell disease patients are highly prone to infections like bacterial pneumonia, influenza, and meningitis, the hospital has also provided these patients free preventive vaccinations for all these diseases. This challenging but crucial task will prevent patients from developing life-threatening infections.

The hospital has subsidised the cost of hydroxyurea, a drug that reduces the defective haemoglobin entity (Hb S) and increases normal haemoglobin by using hospital funds and donations.

Hydroxyurea is a drug that reduces the number of times a patient has worsening symptoms or life-threatening crises. It also minimises the need for blood transfusions. Subsidising this drug has significantly improved patient compliance, as patients can afford to take it for as long as their disease requires, increasing their quality of life. The government, too, should recognise hydroxyurea's benefits and make it cost-free.

The hospital works to enrol SCD patients in government disability schemes, ensuring they receive regular pensions and other essential benefits. With the help of donors and well-wishers, the hospital treats life-threatening infections and anaemia

Since sickle cell disease is a genetic condition, its treatment is lifelong. Only gene therapy or bone marrow transplant can cure it, but these treatments are out of reach for many in India because of the costs

episodes at low costs or even writes off bills. They also provide free food to patients and their families, thus meeting their nutritional needs during treatment, especially during extended hospital stays. The hospital's experience in palliative care has been instrumental in providing effective pain relief and symptom management for SCD patients.

The hospital organises events like World Sickle Cell Day and sends personalised birthday cards to patients. These efforts help patients feel valued and supported, reinforcing the hospital's commitment to their well-being.

On a community basis, the hospital conducts awareness programs in villages and schools to educate the community about SCD, its symptoms, and the importance of early diagnosis and treatment. Teachers, some of whom are patients of the disease, play a vital role in identifying children with symptoms and ensuring they receive appropriate care.

The hospital opposes policies promoting the diagnosis of sickle cell disease in a child during pregnancy, which might lead to abortions.

A battle that is far from over

Despite these remarkable efforts, the battle against sickle cell disease is far from over. The disease remains a significant challenge, mainly where medical students and young doctors need adequate training to recognise and treat it. The lack of awareness and testing facilities further

exacerbates the problem, leading to many undiagnosed and untreated cases.

My experiences in Uttar Pradesh highlight the widespread ignorance about SCD. Many patients had been receiving iron supplements for years before being correctly diagnosed with SCD. We must work hard to educate, manage, and give hope to these lives because it's our collective pain.

This message Dr. Ashita sent me after losing a young lady to a recent SCD crisis reminds us why we can't lose. "Twenty-year-old J had been off hydroxyurea treatment for the last few years and came to the hospital with acute chest syndrome following a severe vaso-occlusive crisis. Despite our best efforts, she passed away, joining her sister, who had died from a sickle cell crisis a few years earlier. This loss, like so many others, compels us to continue our fight against this terrible disease."

In conclusion, our experience from Chinchpada Hospital shows that our approach to tackling SCD must be comprehensive, addressing not just the medical aspects but also the socio-economic factors perpetuating suffering. We must continue to fight for the lives of those suffering from SCD because every life is worth saving, and we can't afford to lose this battle.

With inputs from Christianez

Ratna Kiruba

(Dr. Dawn Kuruvilla is a physician working in a secondary mission hospital at UP-Jiwan Jyoti Christian Hospital at Sonbhadra. He is passionate about bedside clinical medicine and bringing hope and clarity to patients in despair and senseless suffering.)

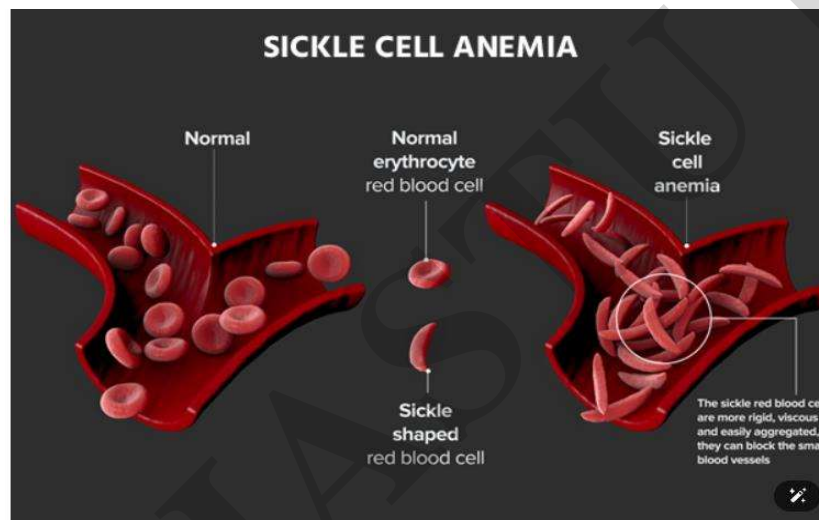
(Dr. Christianez Ratna Kiruba is an internal medicine doctor with a passion for patient rights advocacy. christianezdennis@gmail.com)





About Sickle Cell disease:

- ❖ Sickle cell disease is a group of inherited red blood cell disorders that affect haemoglobin, the protein that carries oxygen through the body.
- ❖ The red blood cells are disc-shaped and flexible enough to move easily through the blood vessels. If people have sickle cell disease, their red blood cells are crescent or “sickle” shaped.
- ❖ These cells do not bend or move easily and can block blood flow to the rest of their body leading to serious problems, including **stroke, eye problems, infections, and episodes of pain called pain crises**. The cause of Sickle cell disease is a **defective gene, called a sickle cell gene**.
- ❖ A person will be born with sickle cell disease **only if two genes are inherited**—one from the mother and one from the father.
- ❖ The **only cure** for this disease is **bone marrow or stem cell transplantation**.



Solution by Chinchpada Christian Hospital:

- ❖ **State Blood Transfusion Council (SBTC) Cards:** The hospital secured free blood transfusion cards for 250 patients, ensuring access to life-saving treatment for severe anaemia.
- ❖ **Preventive Vaccinations:** The hospital provides free vaccinations for infections like pneumonia and meningitis, protecting patients from life-threatening illnesses.
- ❖ **Subsidized Hydroxyurea:** The hospital subsidizes this essential drug, reducing the frequency of sickle cell crises and improving patient compliance.
- ❖ **Enrolling Patients in Government Schemes:** Ensures patients receive pensions and other essential benefits through disability schemes.
- ❖ **Nutritional and Financial Support:** Free food and low-cost treatment for patients during extended hospital stays.
- ❖ **Palliative Care:** Provides effective pain relief and symptom management for long-term suffering.
- ❖ **Community Awareness:** Conducts education programs in villages and schools to spread awareness about SCD and encourage early diagnosis.

★ National Sickle Cell Anaemia Eliminator Mission → eliminate by 2047.

