

Current Edge: Daily Brief

7th November 2025

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THE BIG PICTURE

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QUOTES OF THE DAY

"The human spirit must prevail over technology." – **ALBERT EINSTEIN**

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"For New York’s mayor-elect, the hard yards are yet to begin." – **THE GUARDIAN**

NEWS / OPINION / COLUMNS / 150 years on, Vande Mataram is still nation's soul, evokes unity

150 years on, Vande Mataram is still nation’s soul, evokes unity

This song reminds us that the motherland is not an abstraction; it is a living force. To revere her is among the highest acts of life. 'Vande Mataram' teaches us that patriotism is not a momentary emotion; it is a lifelong act of devotion and duty.



It is regrettable that today, some self-proclaimed intellectuals question the sanctity of 'Vande Mataram'. At times, they dismiss it as communal; at others, they seek to confine its universality within sectarian bounds.

IE Opinion; By Yogi Adityanath;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – History, Art & Culture [Link](#)

Journey, Meaning & Legacy

- Origins → **Bankim Chandra (1875 draft)**; in **Anandamath (1882)** → monks’ chorus → freedom call
- Early spread → **INC 1896: Tagore sings; 1905 Swadeshi**: rallies, schools, pickets → mass idiom
- Revolution motif → gallows chants; **Bhikaji Cama (Berlin, 1907)** unfurls tricolour with “Vande Mataram”
- Text motifs (vv.1–2) → **Sujalam, Suphalam** (water, fertility) → **Malayaja-śītaḷam** (cool breeze) → **Śaśya-śyāmalam** (green fields) → agrarian abundance + mother-as-nation
- Cultural impact → literature/theatre/music adaptations; gramophone records (early 1900s) → patriotic canon
- Ethos → **bhakti (devotion) + ś disciplined duty** → patriotism as lifelong sādhanā, not momentary emotion

Status, Debates & 150-yr Drive

- Constitutional note (24 Jan 1950) → “**Honoured equally with the Anthem**”; civic use → **first two verses**

Why in News?

India marks **150 years of ‘Vande Mataram’** with year-long programmes (from **7 Nov 2025**).

- Protocol → Anthem has codified norms; **Song: no formal code** → flexible civic practice
- Inclusivity debate → vv.1–2 **non-sectarian**; later verses invoke **Durga** → periodic concerns; govt stance → **equal respect, voluntary**
- Contemporary politics → unity symbol vs. sectarian charge → discourse on **anthem vs. national song** parity
- 150-year commemorations (2025–26) → national inaugural (Delhi) → exhibitions, archival audio, youth outreach
- Govt & states plan → **AIR/DD specials**, tree drives, school/university events, diaspora shows; WB focus on **Chinsurah (composition site) & Naihati (birthplace)**
- Key dates (at a glance) → **1875 draft, 1882 publication, 1896 Tagore, 1905–08 Swadeshi, 1907 Berlin flag, 1950 CA resolution**

Test Your Knowledge

Q. With reference to ‘Vande Mataram’, consider the following:

- 1) Drafted in 1875 → later included in Anandamath.
- 2) First publicly sung at INC by Rabindranath Tagore.
- 3) The Constitution explicitly declares it the “National Song”.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 & 2 only
- (b) 2 & 3 only
- (c) 1 & 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 & 3

Hint:

Drafted 1875 ✓ → Anandamath 1882 ✓ → INC 1896 Tagore ✓ → But not explicitly in Constitution (only in CA Resolution).

Centre says right to vote different from freedom of voting

The Centre has said that the ‘right to vote’ was a statutory right conferred by Section 62 of the Representation of the People Act of 1951, but freedom of voting was a “species of the right to expression under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution”

TH News; By Krishnadas Rajagopal;

Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Polity & Governance [Link](#)

Why in News?

Centre’s affidavit in SC distinguishes “right to vote” ≠ “freedom of voting”, defending validity of **uncontested election provisions** under RP Act, 1951.



Core Legal Issue

- Petition by **Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy + ADR** → challenge to **Section 53(2), RP Act, 1951 & Rule 11 + Forms 21/21B**, Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961.
- Claim → violates **Art. 19(1)(a)** (freedom of expression) by denying voters chance to use **NOTA** in uncontested polls.

Govt’s Argument → “Right” vs “Freedom”

- **Right to vote** → ♦ *Statutory*, under **Sec 62, RP Act, 1951** → limited by statute.

- **Freedom of voting** → ♦ *Fundamental*, under **Art. 19(1)(a)** → expression of opinion at the moment of casting vote.
- Quoted **PUCL v. Union (2003)** → vote = expression only *when poll occurs*.
- Hence, **freedom of voting exists only if poll is held** → “freedom of voting is an incidence of a poll”.

Application to Uncontested Polls

- **Sec 53(2)** → if *candidates = seats*, RO declares all “duly elected” → **no poll conducted**.
- **Sec 53(1)** → poll occurs if *candidates > seats*.
- **Sec 53(3)** → no poll if *candidates < seats*.
- Thus, **NOTA inapplicable** → since NOTA needs a poll to exist.

Position on NOTA

- **Centre** → NOTA ≠ “candidate” (Sec 79(b), RP Act) → cannot “contest”.
- Elections can’t be left **indecisive**; must declare winners where uncontested.
- **EC’s affidavit** → concurs; treating NOTA as candidate needs **legislative amendment**.
- **Empirical note** → only **9 uncontested elections (1951–2024)** → issue limited but constitutionally significant.

Key Takeaways

- “Right to vote” = statutory entitlement
- “Freedom of voting” = expressive act under Art.19(1)(a)
- NOTA ≠ candidate → no scope in uncontested polls
- Sec 53(2) valid as per current statutory-constitutional framework

Test Your Knowledge

Q. With reference to the Centre’s affidavit on uncontested elections, consider the following statements:

- 1) The right to vote is a fundamental right under Article 19(1)(a).
- 2) The freedom of voting—that is, the act of casting a vote—is treated as a form of expression under Article 19(1)(a).
- 3) Both rights are derived directly from the Constitution.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only

- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 & 2 only
- (d) 1, 2 & 3 only

Hint:

ovt said freedom of voting arises only when poll occurs; NOTA ≠ candidate, hence no NOTA in uncontested polls.

Karnataka’s menstrual leave policy: progressive step or symbolic gesture?



While the move has received widespread appreciation, it has sparked debate on whether a single day of leave is sufficient and whether it will achieve its intended purpose

TH Science; By Afshan Yasmeen;
Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Society & Social Issues [Link](#)

Why in News?

Karnataka clears **1 paid menstrual leave/month (12/yr)** for all women across gov+private sectors—first such across-the-board State policy in India.



Policy Snapshot

- Scope → Govt depts, schools/colleges, factories, IT/MNCs, garments, private orgs; **once notified**.
- Quantum → **1 day/month** → **12 days/yr**; optional; SOPs via sub-committee.

- India context → **Bihar (1992)**: 2 days/month for women govt staff; **Kerala (2023)**: menstrual leave for university students. (
- Private precedents → **Zomato (2020)**: **10 days/yr**; others (Culture Machine, etc.).
- Global refs → **Japan (1947)**, **S. Korea (2001)**, **Indonesia (2 days first 2 cycle days)**, **Taiwan (½ pay day/month)**, **Spain (2023: 3–5 days with doctor’s note)**.

Rationale & Evidence

- Symptom burden → Dysmenorrhea prevalence **50–90% global**; **60–75% India**; **~45% moderate–severe**.
- Productivity loss → Absenteeism **1.3 d/yr**; presenteeism ↓productivity **23.2 d/yr** → **8.9 d total loss/yr**.
- Conditions → Endometriosis global cases **~22.3M (2021)**; major QoL/work impact; India prioritising econ burden research.
- **Validation effect** → Policy signals legitimacy of menstrual health → potential ↓stigma/↑morale (Spain/others as norm-setters).

Concerns & Critiques

- “1 day enough?” → Symptom peaks vary (some need **2–3 days**); risk of **symbolic** relief only.
- Uptake reality → **Spain** first year: just **1,559 leaves in 11 months** → barriers = diagnosis note, awareness, stigma.
- Bias risk → Potential employer hesitation on key roles; calls for explicit anti-retaliation clauses. (Policy debates & India op-eds).
- Administrative → Karnataka policy **awaits notification**; clarity needed on proof, tracking, and privacy.

Medical Guidance

- Don’t normalise severe pain → Seek gynae eval for **recurrent heavy flow, dysmenorrhea, migraines**. (Clinical consensus).
- Self-care (mild–mod) → **Heat pads, hydration, light exercise, sleep hygiene, NSAIDs (OTC)**. (Standard advice; Indian studies).
- Treat root causes → Endometriosis/adenomyosis/fibroids → **hormonal therapy, procedures, lifestyle, workplace adjustments**.

Implementation & Safeguards

- Simple access → **Self-declaration** (no medical note) for day-of use; digital request; protect

health data privacy. (Best-practice draws from Spain’s lesson).

- Anti-discrimination → **No career penalty** clauses; manager sensitisation modules; grievance channel. (Comparative HR guidance).
- Flex menu → **Split leave (½-day x2)**, WFH/hybrid option, flexible hours; on-site amenities (**rest space, sanitary products, heat packs**). (Global policy reviews).
- Monitor & iterate → Quarterly dashboard: uptake %, departments, satisfaction, productivity; adjust **1→2 days cap** if evidence supports. (Policy eval norms; India think-tanks).

Way Forward

- Pair leave + care → Workplace screening camps; referral tie-ups; insurance cover for gynae care; **endometriosis awareness** drives.
- Equity guardrails → Gender-neutral language for users of menstruation; opt-in disclosure; anonymised analytics only. (Comparative HR notes).
- Public benchmarking → List orgs adopting best SOPs; publish annual uptake & outcomes to normalise usage (learn from **Spain’s low uptake**).

Bottom Line

Strong signal on menstrual health ✓; **impact hinges** on easy access (no-proof), anti-bias safeguards, and integrated women’s health services—else risks **symbolism > substance**.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Which of the following countries has enacted a national menstrual leave law allowing up to five days of medical leave per month?

- Japan
- South Korea
- Taiwan
- Spain

Hint:

Spain (2023) → first European nation; 3–5 days/month with doctor’s certificate; globally Japan, S. Korea, Indonesia, Taiwan also allow limited menstrual leave.

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News Analysis

Trump's nuclear test threat risks upending global test ban regime

TH Premium

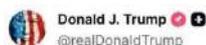
President Donald Trump's call for fresh nuclear tests threatens to shatter decades of restraint by countries. One nation's decision could trigger a cascade across nuclear powers

TH News; By Stanly Johny;

Syllabus: Pre/Mains – Science & Tech [Link](#)

Why in News?

Trump (Oct 29) said U.S. will “start testing” nuclear weapons → threatens global test-ban norm.



The United States has more Nuclear Weapons than any other country. This was accomplished, including a complete update and renovation of existing weapons, during my First Term in office. Because of the tremendous destructive power, I HATED to do it, but had no choice! Russia is second, and China is a distant third, but will be even within 5 years. Because of other countries testing programs, I have instructed the Department of War to start testing our Nuclear Weapons on an equal basis. That process will begin immediately. Thank you for your attention to this matter! PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP

1.33k ReTruths 5.28k Likes

Oct 29, 2025, 9:04 PM

Claims vs Facts

- **Who's testing?** → DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) yes; U.S./Russia/China moratorium since 1990s; recent Russian Burevestnik (SSC-X-9 “Skyfall”) & Poseidon (Status-6) tests ≠ nuclear detonations.
- **U.S. line** → Sec. of Energy (Nov 2): no return to explosive tests; **only “subcritical” experiments under NNSA** (National Nuclear Security Administration) Stockpile Stewardship Program.

Treaties & Legal Status

- **PTBT (Partial Test Ban Treaty, 1963)** → bans tests in atmosphere/space/underwater → underground only thereafter.
- **CTBT (Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, 1996)** → bans all nuclear explosions; signed U.S./China, not ratified; Russia ratified then de-ratified (2023) → norm weakened.
- **CTBT EIF (Entry-Into-Force) hurdle** → 8 Annex-2 states pending: U.S., China, Egypt, Iran, Israel (signed not ratified); India, Pakistan, DPRK (not signed).

- **Verification** → CTBTO (Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization)
 - **IMS (International Monitoring System):** 337 planned facilities → seismic, hydro-acoustic, infrasound, radionuclide; global near-real-time data → rapid detection (e.g., DPRK 2006/2009/2013/2016/2017).

Arsenals & Test History

- **Stockpiles (approx.)** → Russia ~4,309; U.S. ~3,700; China >1,000 warheads (FAS).
- **Historic test count** → 2,056 total since Trinity (1945): U.S. 1,030; USSR/Russia 715; France 210; China >45; U.K. ~45; India 6 (1974, 1998); Pakistan 6 (1998); DPRK 6 (2006–2017).
- **Last explosive tests** → Russia 1990; U.S. 1992; China 1996; DPRK 2017 (claimed thermonuclear, very high yield).

What “Testing” Means?

- **Full-scale nuclear test** → supercritical chain reaction → validates new/modified warheads; enables MIRV miniaturization, yield tuning, hardening against ABM.
- **Subcritical experiment** → chemical explosives compress Pu-239/U-235 below criticality → materials science data; supports life-extension programs (LEPs) without violating CTBT norm.
- **Alternatives** → **hydrodynamic tests**, high-energy lasers (e.g., NIF—National Ignition Facility), advanced HPC (high-performance computing) → model validation without yield.

Environmental & Health Evidence

- **Underground ≠ harmless** → cavity collapse/venting → radionuclide release risk; aquifer/soil contamination.
- **Case studies** → **Nevada Test Site “downwinders”** (thyroid cancers/leukemia clusters); Semipalatinsk (Kazakhstan) ↑ congenital anomalies/cancer burden; Bikini Atoll (Castle Bravo, 1954, 15 Mt) long-term displacement & lagoon contamination.
- **Persistence** → long half-lives (Cs-137, Sr-90, Pu isotopes) → decades-centuries of risk.

Escalation Pathways

- **Russia** → stated reciprocity: U.S. tests → Russia tests → arms-race signaling.
- **China** → Lop Nur site readiness reports; parity drive vs U.S./Russia.

- **South Asia coupling** → China → India (Pokhran precedent: 1974 “Smiling Buddha”, 1998 “Shakti”) → Pakistan (Chagai-I/II, 1998) → action-reaction spiral.
- **Extended deterrence** → pressure on U.S. allies (Japan, ROK) policy debates ↑; proliferation resistance stress-test.

Strategic Consequences

- **Norm erosion** → CTBT credibility ↓; verification regime politicized; NPT (Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons) trust deficit ↑.
- **Force modernization race** → MIRVs, hypersonic glide vehicles (HGVs), novel propulsion (nuclear-powered cruise) validated faster with tests.
- **Crisis instability** → test windows ↔ military exercises → misperception/accident risk ↑; signaling ambiguity.
- **Diplomacy cost** → sanctions/UNGA (United Nations General Assembly) resolutions; coalition frictions with non-nuclear states.

What to Watch (Indicators)?

- **Site activity** → NNSS (Nevada National Security Site), Novaya Zemlya (Russia), Lop Nur (China) → tunneling, power, logistics spikes.
- **Seismic/radionuclide signatures** → IMS detections, noble gases (Xe-133/135) → prompt attribution.
- **U.S. policy docs** → NPR (Nuclear Posture Review) updates, NNSA test-readiness timelines (e.g., 6–24 months signals).
- **Parliamentary signals** → Duma/Bundestag/US Congress funding lines; CTBT ratification debates (reversal/renewal).
- **Regional rhetoric** → India/China/Pakistan official statements; DPRK propaganda cycles.

Bottom Line

- U.S. resumption of explosive tests → high probability of reciprocal tests (Russia/China) → South Asia knock-on → CTBT norm collapse, environmental harm, and accelerated global arms race.

- 2) India and Pakistan have not signed the CTBT.
- 3) Russia ratified the CTBT but later withdrew its ratification.

Select the correct answer using the code below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Hint:

CTBT has not entered into force (U.S., China, Egypt, Iran, Israel, India, Pakistan, DPRK pending).

India & Pakistan have not signed.

Russia ratified but de-ratified in 2023.

Test Your Knowledge

Q. Which of the following statements regarding the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) are correct?

- 1) It has entered into force after ratification by all five permanent members of the UNSC.

