



Employment and Social Trends 2026 Report

► Overview :

The **Employment and Social Trends 2026 Report** is published by the **International Labour Organization (ILO)**. It provides a comprehensive assessment of global and regional labour market trends, employment challenges, and social inequalities. The report is important for understanding employment dynamics, economic recovery, and inclusive growth.

About International Labour Organization (ILO)

- Established in 1919.
- Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland.
- Specialized agency of the United Nations.
- Tripartite structure involving governments, employers, and workers.
- Key reports: Global Wage Report, World Employment and Social Outlook.

Highlights of Employment and Social Trends 2026 Report

- Global employment growth remains weak and uneven.
- Youth unemployment continues to be significantly higher than adult unemployment.
- Informal employment dominates labour markets in developing countries.
- Productivity growth has slowed in many economies.
- Gender gap in labour force participation remains persistent.
- Rising impact of automation and Artificial Intelligence on job structures.
- Green transition is creating new jobs but skill gaps remain a major concern.

Findings Related to India

- India remains one of the fastest-growing major economies.
- Manufacturing employment growth is slower compared to services.



- Informal sector continues to employ a large share of the workforce.
- Significant green skill gap in renewable energy and climate-resilient sectors.
- Female labour force participation remains comparatively low.

Challenges Highlighted

- Jobless growth in several economies.
- Skill mismatch between education systems and labour market needs.
- Rising inequality in wages and employment quality.
- Vulnerability of informal and gig workers.
- Technological disruption without adequate social protection.

Policy Recommendations

- Invest in skill development and lifelong learning.
- Strengthen social protection systems.

- Promote formalisation of labour markets.
- Encourage green jobs and sustainable employment.
- Support women and youth employment through targeted policies.

Conclusion

The Employment and Social Trends 2026 Report highlights structural challenges in global and Indian labour markets and underlines the need for inclusive, sustainable, and future-ready employment policies.

Prelims : (PYQs) (2014)

Q. Which of the following ILO Conventions are related to Child Labour?
1. Minimum Age Convention (No. 138)
2. Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182)

Answer: Both 1 and 2 are correct.



India's First State-Funded BSL-4 Laboratory

News in Brief

- ▶▶ India's first state-funded Biosafety Level-4 (BSL-4) laboratory is being set up in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- ▶▶ It is funded and operated by the Gujarat State Government.
- ▶▶ The project is implemented through the Gujarat Biotechnology Research Centre (GBRC).

What is a BSL-4 Laboratory?

- BSL-4 is the highest level of biosafety laboratory.

- Used to study highly dangerous and infectious pathogens.
- These pathogens usually have no effective vaccine or treatment.
- Strict safety measures are followed to prevent any leakage.

Why is this Lab Important?

- ▶ First BSL-4 lab in India fully funded by a state government.
- ▶ Strengthens India's biosecurity and health preparedness.
- ▶ Helps in research on deadly viruses and future pandemics.
- ▶ Reduces dependence on foreign laboratories.

- ▶ Supports vaccine and drug development.

Location and Details

- Location: Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- Cost: Around ₹362 crore.
- It will include facilities for human and animal disease research.

Existing BSL-4 Facility in India

- India's first civilian BSL-4 lab is at National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune.

Strategic Significance

- ▶▶ Improves India's capacity to handle pandemics.
- ▶▶ Supports the 'One Health' approach.
- ▶▶ Boosts biotechnology research ecosystem.



What is Export Preparedness Index (EPI)

- Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2024 is released by NITI Aayog.
- It measures how well Indian States and Union Territories are prepared to promote exports.
- It focuses on the role of states in increasing India's export growth.

Objective of EPI :

- ▶▶ To encourage export-led growth at the

state level.

- ▶▶ To support competitive federalism among states.
- ▶▶ To help India achieve long-term export targets.

Features :

- EPI 2024 is the 4th edition of the index.
- First EPI was released in 2020.
- States and UTs are ranked based on export readiness.
- The index uses data from official government sources.

Four Main Pillars of EPI :

- Export Infrastructure – transport, logistics, power, ports.
- Business Ecosystem – finance, innovation, ease of doing business.
- Policy and Governance – state export policies and institutions.
- Export Performance – actual export outcomes.

Top Performers – Large States (EPI 2024) :

- Maharashtra – Rank 1

- Tamil Nadu – Rank 2
- Gujarat – Rank 3
- Uttar Pradesh – Rank 4
- Andhra Pradesh – Rank 5

Top Performers – Small States / UTs :

- ▶▶ Uttarakhand – Rank 1 among small states.
- ▶▶ Jammu & Kashmir – Rank 2.
- ▶▶ Other good performers include Goa and Nagaland.

Why EPI is Important...?

- ▶ Helps states identify gaps in export infrastructure.
- ▶ Encourages policy reforms at the state level.
- ▶ Supports MSMEs to enter global markets.
- ▶ Reduces regional imbalance in exports.

Conclusion

Export Preparedness Index 2024 helps states improve export capacity and plays an important role in India's export-led economic growth.

BORDER ROADS ORGANISATION (BRO)

Motto : "Shramena Sarvam Sadhyam" – Everything is achievable through hard work.

Introduction

The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) is India's premier infrastructure development agency responsible for building and maintaining strategic roads and infrastructure in border and remote regions. It plays a crucial role in national security, socio-economic development, and disaster response.

Establishment and Administrative Control

- Established on 7 May 1960.
- Functions under the Ministry of Defence (MoD).
- Operates through the Border Roads Development Board (BRDB).
- Initially began with Project Vartak and Project Beacon.

Mandate and Core Functions :

- Construction and maintenance of strategic roads, bridges, tunnels, and airstrips.
- Ensuring all-weather connectivity in border areas.
- Supporting logistics and mobility of Indian Armed Forces.
- Peace-time role: Regional development and connectivity.
- War-time role: Rapid infrastructure support to defence operations.
- Snow clearance, disaster response, and



maintenance of critical routes.

Organisational Structure

- ▶ Headquarters: Seema Sadak Bhawan, New Delhi.
- ▶ Headed by Director General, BRO.
- ▶ Personnel include Border Roads Engineering Service (BRES) officers and General Reserve Engineer Force (GREF).

Major Achievements

- ▶ Construction of thousands of kilometres of roads and hundreds of bridges.
- ▶ Strategic projects like Atal Tunnel, Sela Tunnel, and Shinkun La Tunnel.
- ▶ Overseas projects in Bhutan, Myanmar, and Afghanistan.
- ▶ Record infrastructure development in

border regions in recent years.

Strategic Importance

- ▶ Enhances national defence preparedness.
- ▶ Promotes economic development and integration of border areas.
- ▶ Strengthens regional diplomacy through overseas infrastructure projects.

Challenges

- Harsh terrain and extreme climatic conditions.
- Natural disasters such as landslides and floods.
- Logistical and operational difficulties in remote areas.

BBNJ Agreement Enters into Force



Overview

The Agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), also known as the High Seas Treaty, is a legally binding international agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). It focuses on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Why was the BBNJ Agreement Needed?

- High seas lacked a comprehensive legal framework for biodiversity conservation.
- Existing ocean governance was

fragmented across multiple sectoral bodies.

- Increasing threats from overfishing, pollution, climate change, and deep-sea mining.
- UNCLOS did not provide specific operational mechanisms for biodiversity protection in ABNJ.

Entry into Force

- Adopted in March 2023 under the United Nations.
- Required 60 ratifications to enter into force.
- The agreement entered into force on 17 January 2026.

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Geographical Scope

- Applies to Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ).
- Includes high seas (beyond Exclusive Economic Zones).
- Covers the international seabed and subsoil.
- ABNJ constitute nearly two-thirds of the world's oceans.

Four Core Pillars of the BBNJ Agreement

1. Marine Genetic Resources (MGRs)
 - Fair and equitable sharing of benefits from marine genetic resources.
2. Area-Based Management Tools (ABMTs)
 - Includes Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the high seas.
3. Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs)
 - Mandatory assessments for activities impacting marine biodiversity.
4. Capacity Building and Transfer of Marine Technology
 - Support for developing countries in implementation.

Institutional Framework

- Conference of Parties (COP).
- Scientific and Technical Body.
- Clearing-House Mechanism.
- Secretariat for implementation and coordination.

Significance

- First global treaty exclusively focused on high seas biodiversity.
- Strengthens global ocean governance.
- Supports SDG 14 – Life Below Water.
- Aims to protect 30% of global oceans by 2030.

India's Position

- India signed the BBNJ Agreement in 2024.
- Domestic ratification is pending.
- Implementation will require legislative and institutional measures.

Challenges

- Operationalising the agreement through COP decisions.
- Balancing conservation with economic activities.
- Enforcement in vast international waters.
- Capacity constraints of developing countries.

Conclusion

The BBNJ Agreement marks a historic step in global ocean governance by providing a legal framework to protect marine biodiversity beyond national boundaries and promoting sustainable use of ocean resources.



Prelims – (PYQs)

Q1. (UPSC Prelims 2018)

Which of the following are governed by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)?

1. Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone
2. High Seas
3. International Seabed Area

Answer: 1, 2 and 3

Recent Appointment :

- The President of India appointed Shri Praveen Vashista as Vigilance Commissioner in the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC).
- Appointment made under Section 4(1) of the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003.

Central Vigilance Commission (CVC): Overview

- Apex statutory body for vigilance and anti-corruption in the Central Government.
- Ensures integrity and probity in public administration.
- Acts as a key pillar of India's vigilance and anti-corruption framework.

Origin and Evolution

- Established in 1964 based on recommendations of the Santhanam Committee (1962–64).
- Initially a non-statutory body.
- Granted statutory status in 1998 through a Union Government Ordinance.
- Formalised by the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003.



Composition & Appointment

- Multi-member body consisting of:
 - One Central Vigilance Commissioner.
 - Up to two Vigilance Commissioners.
- Appointed by the President of India.
- Selection Committee: Prime Minister (Chairperson), Union Home Minister, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha.
- Tenure: 4 years or until 65 years of age, whichever is earlier.

Independence and Safeguards :

- Salary, allowances and service conditions of Central Vigilance Commissioner equal to Chairman of UPSC.
- Vigilance Commissioners' conditions equal to Members of UPSC.
- Conditions of service cannot be varied to disadvantage after appointment.
- All expenses charged to the Consolidated Fund of India.
- Expenditure not subject to Parliamentary vote.

Removal Process :

- President may remove a Vigilance Commissioner on grounds of Insolvency, Conviction involving moral turpitude, Engaging in paid employment outside duties, Physical or mental infirmity, Financial

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or other interests prejudicial to office.

- For proved misbehaviour or incapacity: President refers matter to Supreme Court, Removal only after Supreme Court inquiry and recommendation.

Functions :

- Inquires into offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.
- Covers Central Government employees and specified public sector officials.
- Exercises superintendence over the CBI in corruption cases.
- Reviews progress of CBI investigations.
- Advises Central Government on vigilance matters.
- Reviews requests for sanction of prosecution.
- Handles whistle-blower complaints under PIDPI Resolution.
- Notified authority for suspicious trans-

action reporting under PMLA, 2002.

Role after Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 :

- Conducts preliminary inquiries on Lokpal-referred complaints.
- Covers Group A, B, C and D Central Government employees.
- Recommends appointments to senior positions in: Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Directorate of Enforcement.

Jurisdiction & Coverage :

- All India Services officers on Central deputation.
- Group A officers of the Central Government.
- Senior officials of: Public Sector Banks, Reserve Bank of India (RBI), NABAR, Public Sector Undertakings, Insurance companies.

Organisational Structure

- Secretariat of the CVC.

- Chief Technical Examiners' Wing for technical audits.
- Commissioners for Departmental Inquiries (CDIs) for conducting inquiries.

Working & Reporting

- Possesses powers of a civil court.
- Advice tendered to departments is generally binding; deviations require recorded reasons.
- Submits Annual Report to the President of India.
- Annual Report is laid before Parliament.

Conclusion

The Central Vigilance Commission plays a crucial role in ensuring probity, transparency and accountability in governance. Recent appointments reinforce its institutional continuity and relevance in India's anti-corruption framework.

UPSC Prelims – PYQ (2019)

Q. Consider the following statements: (2019)

1. The United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) has a 'Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air'.
2. The UNCAC is the ever-first legally binding global anti-corruption instrument.

3. A highlight of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) is the inclusion of a specific chapter aimed at returning assets to their rightful owners from whom they had been taken illicitly.
4. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is mandated by its member States to assist in the imple-

mentation of both UNCAC and UNTOC.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 2 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Ans: (c)

THIRUVALLUVAR DAY

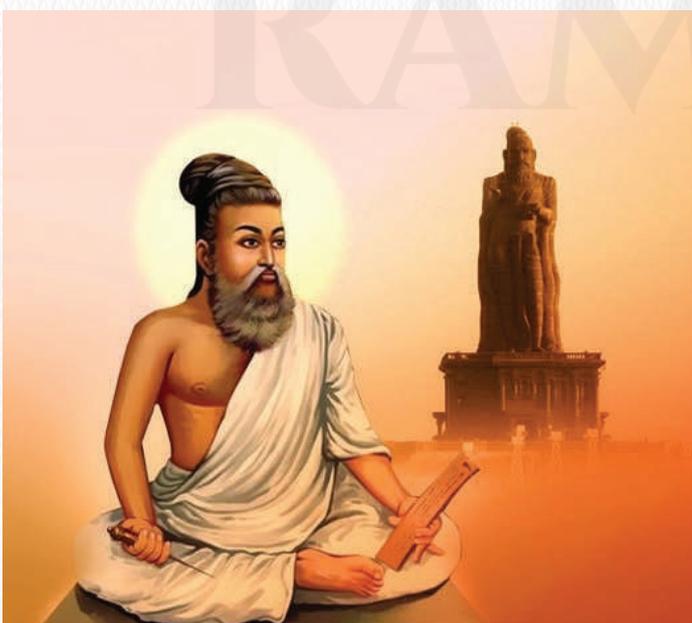
Why in News...?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid homage to Thiruvalluvar on Thiruvalluvar Day.
- He highlighted the timeless relevance of Thiruvalluvar's ideals.
- He urged people to read and follow the Tirukkural.

About Thiruvalluvar :

- Renowned Tamil poet, saint, and philosopher.
- Belonged to the Sangam age.
- Lived around 2000 years ago.
- Traditionally associated with Mylapore in present-day Chennai.

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Other Names and Reverence :

- Also known as Valluvar.
- Revered as a saint across South India.
- In some traditions, regarded as an incarnation of Brahma.
- Respected across religious and cultural boundaries.

Social and Religious Context :

- Lived during a period when Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism coexisted.
- Scholars associate him with Jainism or Hinduism.
- Emphasised that householder life can

lead to spiritual excellence.

- Rejected the idea that renunciation is necessary for moral and spiritual attainment.
- Advocated ethical living within society.

About Tirukkural :

- Authored by Thiruvalluvar.
- Consists of 1330 couplets (kural).
- Divided into three sections: Aram (Ethics), Porul (Governance and Economy, ĩ Inbam (Love and Social Life)
- Focuses on ethics, good governance,

and social harmony.

- Revered across religious traditions.

Prelims PYQ (2020)

Q. Which of the following statements about Sangam literature is correct?
(a) Sangam poems are devoid of references to material culture
(b) Varna social classification was known to Sangam poets
(c) Sangam literature does not refer to warrior ethic
(d) Sangam poems refer to magical forces as irrational

Correct Answer: (b)

SECOND RANGE-WIDE DOLPHIN SURVEY

Why in News...?

- The Second Range-wide Dolphin Survey has been launched from Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh.
- The survey is conducted under Project Dolphin.
- It aims to update dolphin population estimates, assess habitat quality, and identify threats across India's river systems.

Project Dolphin: Overview :

- Project Dolphin is a national conservation initiative of the Government of India.
- It focuses on the protection of riverine and oceanic dolphins.
- The project emphasises habitat conservation, scientific monitoring, and community participation.

Project Details

- Launched on: 15 August 2020.
- Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
- Main objective: Conservation of dolphin diversity in India.
- Addresses threats such as: Water pollution, Habitat degradation, Accidental capture in fishing nets (bycatch), Altered river flow due to dams and barrages.
- Encourages involvement of local communities and stakeholders.

Features of Project Dolphin :

- Ten-year conservation initiative with pan-India coverage.
- Covers both riverine and oceanic dolphin species.



- Uses scientific surveys and long-term monitoring.
- Linked with river ecosystem conservation and policy planning.

Second Range-wide Dolphin Survey :

- A nationwide scientific exercise to estimate dolphin population.
- Assesses: Population size and distribution, Habitat condition, Human-induced and ecological threats.
- Covers riverine and estuarine dolphins in a systematic manner.

Implementation and Coverage :

- Coordinating agency: Wildlife Institute of India (WII).
- Implemented with State Forest Departments and conservation partners.

Phase I Coverage

- Main stem of River Ganga from Bijnor to Ganga Sagar.
- Indus River system.
- Main stem of other major rivers.

Phase II Coverage

- Brahmaputra River system.
- Tributaries of the Ganga.
- Sundarbans delta region.
- River and estuarine systems of Odisha.

Survey Methodology

- Uses standardised scientific protocols.
- Employs hydrophones for acoustic monitoring of dolphins.
- Conducted by trained field teams.

Oceanic Dolphins in India

- Found in Indian coastal waters.
- Major species include: Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops aduncus*), Spinner dolphin (*Stenella longirostris*).
- Commonly seen along: Gujarat coast, Kerala coast, Odisha coast.
- Present in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal.

Previous Survey Findings (2021–2023) :

- About 6,327 riverine dolphins recorded in India.
- Highest populations found in: Uttar Pradesh, Bihar.
- Followed by: West Bengal, Assam.
- A small population of Indus River Dolphin recorded in the Beas river system.

Prelims PYQ (2014)

Q. Other than poaching, which of the following are possible reasons for the decline in the population of Ganga River Dolphins?

1. Construction of dams and barrages.
2. Increase in crocodile population.
3. Dolphins getting trapped in fishing nets.
4. Use of synthetic fertilisers and agricultural chemicals.

Correct Answer: 1, 3 and 4 only.