

FINDER

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FORTUNE IAS NEWS DAILY EXPLAINER

Human judgment remains vital for safe robotic surgery

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1
Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies - 3
Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.

1.Context

- **Elon Musk claimed that surgical robots may outnumber surgeons** within three years.
- This statement **generated excitement, speculation, and criticism.**
- Medicine is both a scientific and deeply human-centered field.
- Technological predictions in healthcare **often fail to match real-world timelines.**
- Current evidence does not support rapid full automation of surgery.

2.Nature of Surgery: Adaptability over Precision

- The **fundamental challenge in surgery is adaptability** rather than precision.
- **Surgical procedures vary significantly between patients** such as children and the elderly.
- **Outcomes are influenced by comorbidities** (having more than one disease or medical condition at the same time in a person) and **prior treatments.**
- Variations in anatomy and physiology **make standardization difficult.**
- AI systems struggle to handle such unpredictable and diverse conditions.

3.Limits of Automation (Lessons from Other Sectors)

- **Autonomous driving has undergone years of testing** but still lacks full regulatory approval.
- In aviation, **AI is limited to assistance roles** rather than full automation.
- Surgery involves frequent and high-risk unpredictable situations.
- Unlike machines, surgical procedures do not allow a safe emergency stop.

4.Current Status and Challenges of Surgical AI

- Most surgical robots operate at basic assistance levels.
- Only a few systems have **limited task-specific or conditional autonomy.**
- **Fully autonomous surgical systems are not yet deployed** in clinical practice.
- There is a **lack of large, high-quality surgical datasets** for training AI.
- **High costs, computational demands, and unclear legal liability** remain major barriers.

5.Future Outlook: Augmentation, Not Replacement

- AI is **more likely to assist surgeons rather than replace them.**
- It **can reduce operation time and lower complication rates.**
- AI can **support tasks like navigation, tissue handling, and real-time guidance.**
- **Human surgeons remain essential for judgment** and complex decision-making.
- The **future of surgery lies in effective human-AI collaboration.**

Is India's Maoist insurgency finally over?

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1
Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies - 3
Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security; money-laundering and its prevention.

1.Context

- The killing of Nambala Keshava Rao in 2025 and the surrender of his successor Thippiri Tirupati by early 2026 have left the CPI (Maoist) largely leaderless.
- With most top leaders eliminated or arrested, **the government claims the decades-old Maoist insurgency is nearing its end.**

2.Is the Maoist Movement Over?

- **Operation Kagar (2024) has weakened the CPI (Maoist)** with major surrenders, arrests, and leadership loss.

Operation Kagar (Black Forest) is a large-scale counterinsurgency initiative launched by the Government of India in 2024 to dismantle the Maoist (Naxalite) insurgency led by the CPI (Maoist). It focuses on coordinated operations across the "Red Corridor," especially in states like Chhattisgarh and Telangana, targeting insurgent strongholds.

- Their **presence has shrunk from 180 districts to mainly Bijapur and Sukma** in southern Chhattisgarh.
- However, Maoists have historically revived from near collapse.
- Their **secretive structure makes their actual strength uncertain.**
- Thus, the movement is weakened but not completely over.

3.Rise and Growth of the Naxalite Movement

- The **movement began in 1967 with the Naxalbari uprising led by Charu Majumdar in Naxalbari,** demanding land rights for peasants.

- It was **based on Maoist ideology inspired by Mao Zedong,** advocating armed struggle by rural peasants against "class enemies" like landlords.
- Though initially suppressed, **the movement spread to regions like Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh, where tribal uprisings demanded "land to the tiller."**
- After declining in the early 1970s, it revived in the 1980s under Kondapalli Seetharamaiah through the People's War Group in Telangana.
- The movement expanded by recruiting educated youth and consolidating under the CPI (Maoist) formed in 2004.
- **Militarised through the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) of the Communist Party of India (Maoist), using guerrilla tactics and Improved Explosive Devices (IEDs),** before declining after 2018.

4.Decline of the Naxalite–Maoist Movement

- **Internal divisions** – Ideological splits and leadership conflicts weakened unity.
- **Security crackdown** – Operations like Greyhounds and Operation Kagar destroyed strongholds.
- **Tribal disconnect** – Tribal fighters vs non-tribal leadership created rifts.
- **Ideological decline** – Welfare schemes reduced support for Maoist ideas.
- **Low recruitment** – Falling support and rise of democratic options.

5.Is Revival of the Maoist Movement Possible?

- Strong security presence **makes resurgence difficult.**
- Some cadres may **rebuild networks through non-violent means.**
- **Rehabilitation success** depends on effective reintegration of surrendered leaders.
- Serious charges and court scrutiny hinder return to mainstream life.

What led to the Noida workers' protest?

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1
Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies - 2
Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

1. Context

- Noida workers' protest escalated into violence on **April 13**, creating a major law-and-order issue in Uttar Pradesh.
- The protests were driven mainly by demands for **higher wages and better working conditions** in industrial units.
- On **April 14**, domestic workers in high-rise societies like **Cleo County** also joined the agitation.
- Industrial activity in parts of Noida was disrupted, affecting a key investment hub of the state.
- The government responded with a **mix of crackdown and concessions**.
- A **20–21% minimum wage hike**, effective from **April 1 (retrospective)**, was announced to ease tensions.
- The issue gained **political significance ahead of elections**, giving Opposition parties a point of attack.

2. Causes of the Protest

- Key trigger was **wage disparity with Haryana**, where minimum wages rose by **35% (₹14,000 → ₹19,000)** compared to Noida's **₹11,000–₹13,000**.
- Workers argued that periodic revisions via **Variable Dearness Allowance (VDA)** were insufficient.
- Rising **cost of living (LPG, food prices)** worsened economic pressure.
- Widespread violation of the **8-hour workday norm**, with **12-hour shifts becoming common**.
- Reports of **unpaid overtime and no weekly off**.
- Increasing **informalisation of labour** even in registered factories.
- Lack of **job contracts, EPF(Employee Provident Fund) access, and insurance benefits**.
- Allegations of **contractor exploitation and wage cuts by middlemen**.

- Weak or absent **trade union representation**.

3. Workers' Demands

- Minimum wage raised to **₹20,000–₹26,000 per month** for unskilled workers.
- Direct company hiring** to remove contractor-based exploitation.
- Double wages for overtime** beyond standard shift hours.
- Clearance of **pending bonuses and wage arrears**.
- Increase in **House Rent Allowance (HRA)** due to high rents.
- Strict **8-hour workday with voluntary overtime only**.
- Guaranteed **paid weekly holidays**.
- Setting up of **Internal Complaints Committees** for workplace harassment.
- Withdrawal of **FIRs and release of arrested protesters**.

4. Government Response

- Centre is accelerating discussion on a **national floor wage under the Code on Wages, 2019**.
- UP government aims to restore industrial stability and protect Noida's **investment-friendly image**.
- Announced **20–21% interim wage hike (Noida–Ghaziabad), effective from April 1**.
- Plan to set up a **Wage Board** for long-term, region-based wage structure.
- Labour audits** launched to detect EPF/ESI violations and wage skimming.
- Push for **direct bank transfers of wages** to reduce contractor role.
- Formation of **sector-wise grievance committees** for regular dispute resolution.
- Industry bodies warn of stress on **MSMEs**, urging a balance between welfare and viability.

Why has Punjab introduced a new law on sacrilege?

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1
Indian Polity and Governance-Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.

Mains: General Studies - 2
Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

1. Background & Context

- On **April 13, 2026**, the Punjab Assembly passed the **Jaagat Jot Sri Guru Granth Sahib Satkar (Amendment) Bill, 2026**.
- It amends the **2008 Act**, originally focused on **regulating the printing, publication, and distribution of the Guru Granth Sahib to preserve its sanctity**.
- Previous attempts (**2016, 2018, 2024**) to introduce stricter laws on **sacrilege** failed due to lack of **Presidential assent**.
 - ➡ Asserting that **all religions must be treated equally under India's secular framework**
- The issue gained importance due to repeated **sacrilege incidents** affecting **law and order** and **communal harmony**.

2. Objectives of the Bill

- To **prevent sacrilege** of the **Guru Granth Sahib**.
- To ensure **deterrence** through **stringent punishment**.
- To maintain **peace and communal harmony** in Punjab.
- The government calls it a **"historic correction"** to fix past **legal gaps**.

3. Key Provisions of the Bill

Punishment:

- 7-20 years imprisonment + ₹2-10 lakh fine** for sacrilege.
- 10 years to life imprisonment + ₹5-25 lakh fine** for **criminal conspiracy**.

Nature of offences:

- Cognisable, non-bailable, and non-compoundable**.

Expanded liability:

- Aiders and conspirators were treated** as equally guilty.
- Guardians of an offender and Custodian of Guru Granth Sahib** held **legally responsible**.

Definition of sacrilege:

- Includes **damage, burning, tearing, theft, or offensive speech/writing (including electronic means)**

Investigation only by **senior police officers** (DSP/ACP level).

4. Criticism & Legal Concerns

- Critics say it **deviates** from the original **regulatory purpose** of the 2008 Act.
- Possible **constitutional conflict**:
 - ➡ **Criminal law** falls under both **State and Central jurisdiction**.
- Under **Section 295A IPC / Section 299 BNS**, punishment is only up to **3 years**.
- The Bill prescribes **life imprisonment**, creating a **conflict with Central law**.
- In such conflicts, **Central law prevails**, making the Bill **legally vulnerable**.

KEYWORDS

Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS)

- The **Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS)** is a **tri-service organisation** responsible for providing **healthcare** to **armed forces personnel**, their **dependents**, **ex-servicemen** and their dependents.
- It also carries out various **medical and public health tasks** assigned by the **government**.
- AFMS plays a key role in **postgraduate medical training** for doctors within the services, catering to **specialised healthcare needs**.
- The organisation is headed by the **Director General Armed Forces Medical Services (DGAFMS)**, (in the rank of Lt Gen or equivalent), who is responsible to the **Government of India** for overall **medical policy related to the armed forces**.

Western Disturbances

- Western Disturbances are **extratropical cyclones** originating over the **Mediterranean region**, driven towards the Indian subcontinent by the high-altitude **Subtropical Westerly Jet Stream**.
- In winter, they bring **winter rainfall** to Northwest India and **snowfall** to the Himalayas, which is crucial for the optimal growth of winter-sown **Rabi crops**, especially **wheat**.
- **Late-season anomalies** in March and April bring unseasonal heavy rains and hailstorms, causing severe damage and **"lodging"** (flattening) of mature standing crops in agrarian states like **Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan**.
- They have a dual impact on **air quality**: preceding strong winds temporarily spike **dust pollution**, while the subsequent rainfall acts as a **wet scrubber**, washing away pollutants and improving the **AQI**.
- When late-season WDs interact with the advancing **Southwest Monsoon**, this meteorological convergence triggers catastrophic **cloudbursts and flash floods** in fragile **Himalayan states**.

- The heavy winter snowfall from WDs is vital for North India's water security, as it **replenishes glaciers** and ensures the **perennial flow** of major northern rivers (like the Ganges and Indus) during dry summer months.