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Q1. With reference to the Penicillin-G manufacturing facility at Kakinada, consider the following statements:

1. It is located in Andhra Pradesh.
2. It is associated with the PLI Scheme for Bulk Drugs.
3. Penicillin-G is an antibiotic used to treat certain bacterial infections.
4. The scheme aims to increase India's dependence on imported pharmaceutical ingredients.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: B

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. Rani Chennamma led an armed rebellion against the British East India Company due to the violation of the trade agreement by the British East India Company.
2. Kittur Utsav is a three-day festival which celebrates the Queen Rani Chennamma's victory over East India's company in 1824.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- [A] 1 only

[B] 2 only

[C] Both 1 and 2

[D] Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: B

Articles

- Free bus travel has given women more mobility
- 18 held, ₹100 crore traced in Northeast drug raids: govt.
- Lee Commission
- Thummidihatti project
- Oskar Klein medal

Free bus travel has given women more mobility

The Time Use Survey data from 2019 and 2024 show that women's travel went up in four States that offer free bus rides to women

DATA POINT

Sravani Yenkatraju

Between 2021 and 2024, four States made travel in ordinary government buses free for women. Punjab and Tamil Nadu introduced the scheme in 2021, Karnataka followed in June 2023 and Telangana in December 2023. Such schemes are expected to help women reach jobs, colleges and hospitals more easily.

The National Statistics Office (NSO) has conducted two all-India Time Use Surveys, one through 2019 and another through 2024, in which about 4.5 lakh persons in each round reported how they spent every half hour of a day. The two can be compared to see whether women are now moving out of their homes more often.

Analysing movement

In the four States, the share of women aged 15-59 who made at least one trip on the survey day went up from 38.7% in 2019 to 45.3% in 2024, an increase of 6.6 percentage points, while for men the increase was 3.7 points (Table 1). In the 12 other large States that were studied, it was the other way round, as women's travel went up by 4.4 points and men's by 7.6 points.

Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, which were one State till 2014, offer a useful comparison. Telangana's Mahalakshmi scheme started in December 2023, but Andhra Pradesh's Stree Shakti scheme came only in August 2025, after the 2024 survey was over. In 2019, 43.7% of women in Telangana and 40.8% in Andhra Pradesh had made a trip on the survey day. By 2024, this had gone up to 54.6% in Telangana, while in Andhra Pradesh it stayed almost the same at 41.6%.

Since travel went up in almost every State after the pandemic years, it is more useful to check

whether women's travel grew faster than men's within the same State. This was the case in all four free-bus States (Chart 1). In most States without free buses, including Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, women's travel grew slower than men's, and Bihar was the only clear exception.

Women's travel in the four States grew about six percentage points more than in the other States, which is well beyond the survey's margin of error.

More reason to step out

The survey also records the purpose of each trip. The share of women who travelled for paid work went up by 2.3 points in the free-bus States and by 1.2 points in the others. The biggest change was in trips made for care, such as dropping children at school or taking a family member to the hospital, which nearly tripled in the free-bus States (Table 2). Trips for social, religious and leisure purposes also increased in the free-bus States, but remained the same in the others.

In the free-bus States, the share of women who were travelling went up the most around 9 a.m. and 6 p.m., but there was also an increase in the late morning and afternoon travels, which are not usual office hours and are more likely to be the time for care and household work (Chart 2).

The time of these trips tells a similar story. However, the data do not show a similar rise in paid work so far. The share of women aged 15-59 who did any paid work on the survey day rose from 30.3% to 34.4% in the free-bus States, which is about four points, but in the other States it rose slightly more, from 18.4% to 22.9%. This suggests that free buses have made it easier for women to step out of their homes, but getting a job depends on other things as well, such as whether there is work nearby, whether childcare is available and whether the journey is safe.

Going the distance

The data were sourced from the National Statistics Office's Time Use Survey for the years 2019 and 2024. The author is a 12-year student of the MA in Cities and Governance programme at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad



All aboard: Working women in the State travel free of cost in government-owned buses in Chennai.

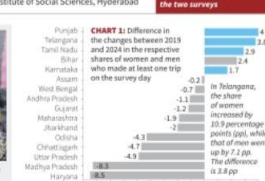


TABLE 1: Share of women aged 15-59 who made at least one trip on the survey day, and the changes for women and men

State	Free-bus States	Women 2019 (%)	Women 2024 (%)	Change, women (ppt)	Change, men (ppt)
Telangana	Dec 2023	43.7	54.6	10.9	7.3
Tamil Nadu	2021	43.8	50.6	6.7	3.8
Karnataka	Jun 2023	36.6	41.5	5	3.2
Punjab	Apr 2021	22.5	28.6	6.1	3.2
All free-bus States	—	38.7	45.3	6.6	3.7
Andhra Pradesh	Aug 2025*	40.8	41.6	0.8	3.9
Other States**	None	23.9	28.3	4.4	7.6

**The 12 States listed in Chart 1 that were taken for comparison including Andhra Pradesh

*Andhra Pradesh's scheme began after the 2024 survey ended



TABLE 2: Share of women aged 15-59 who made a trip for different purposes on the survey day (in %)

Purpose of trip	Free-bus States 2019	Free-bus States 2024	Other States 2019	Other States 2024
Paid work	22.4	24.7	11.7	12.9
Household errands	3.9	5.2	2.9	4.3
Care (school, hospital)	0.9	2.8	0.6	2.2
Social	7.8	8	6.3	6.8
Religious, leisure	1.4	7.6	4.5	4.5



Context:

The Time Use Survey data from 2019 and 2024 show that women's travel went up in four States that offer free bus rides to women

Between 2021 and 2024, four States made travel in ordinary government buses free for women. Punjab and Tamil Nadu introduced the scheme in 2021, Karnataka followed in June 2023 and Telangana in December 2023. Such schemes are expected to help women reach jobs, colleges and hospitals more easily.

In the four States, the share of women aged 15-59 who made at least one trip on the survey day went up from 38.7% in 2019 to 45.3% in 2024, an increase of 6.6 percentage points, while for men the increase was 3.7 points (Table 1). In the 12 other large States that were studied, it was the other way round, as women's travel went up by 4.4 points and men's by 7.6 points.

States providing free bus travel to women

Punjab: Free bus travel for women in government buses was introduced in 2021.

Tamil Nadu: The Vidiyal Payanam scheme was introduced in 2021 for women travelling in ordinary government buses.

Karnataka: The Shakti Scheme was launched in 2023.

Telangana: The Mahalakshmi Scheme introduced free travel for women in eligible Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) buses in December 2023.

Andhra Pradesh: The Stree Shakti scheme was launched in August 2025, after the period covered by the article.

Why is free bus travel important?

A. Women's empowerment

Promotes women's independence and freedom of movement.

Reduces dependence on family members for transportation.

Improves access to public spaces and opportunities.

B. Economic empowerment

Reduces daily commuting expenditure.

Helps women seek employment and access workplaces.

Can improve participation in the formal and informal labour markets.

C. Social empowerment

Improves access to educational institutions, hospitals and public services.

Facilitates participation in social, religious and recreational activities.

Can improve women's ability to make independent decisions.

D. Gender equality

Addresses the unequal mobility constraints faced by women.

Supports substantive equality by reducing an economic barrier to mobility.

Challenges and limitations

Fiscal burden: Governments must allocate funds to reimburse transport corporations.

Overcrowding: Increased passenger demand can strain existing bus services.

Last-mile connectivity: Free bus travel alone cannot solve the problem of reaching bus stops or final destinations.

Safety concerns: Women need safe buses, bus stops and reliable services, particularly at night.

Service quality: Adequate frequency, accessibility and punctuality must be maintained.

Employment constraints: Free transport cannot independently eliminate barriers such as unpaid care work, skill gaps and workplace discrimination.

Environmental concerns: Greater demand requires investment in efficient, low-emission public transport.

Way forward

Improve public transport infrastructure: Increase bus fleets and service frequency in underserved areas.

Ensure women's safety: Strengthen lighting, surveillance, grievance redressal and emergency response.

Integrate transport systems: Improve last-mile connectivity with feeder buses and other public transport.

Ensure fiscal sustainability: Conduct regular cost-benefit assessments and transparent reimbursement to transport corporations.

Promote women's employment: Combine mobility schemes with skill development, childcare facilities and employment support.

Measure outcomes: Use periodic surveys to assess changes in employment, education, healthcare access and women's time use.

Adopt sustainable transport: Gradually expand reliable electric buses and accessible public transport infrastructure.

18 held, ₹100 crore traced in Northeast drug raids: govt.

Home Ministry says Central agencies, police target international 'narco-hawala' network in Aizawl, Champhai, Zokhawthar in Mizoram, Churachandpur in Manipur, and the Cachar region of Assam

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

In a major crackdown on drug trafficking, enforcement agencies have conducted simultaneous raids at 38 locations across Assam, Mizoram, and Manipur, leading to the arrest of 18 accused persons and the detection of ₹100 crore in "hawala" transactions in connection with an international "narco-hawala" racket.

Congratulating the anti-narcotics team comprising Central agencies and police forces of the three States, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said the Narendra Modi government had dealt another "lethal blow" to drugs with "Operation Trident".

"Our agencies launched a barrage of simultaneous crackdowns across 38 loca-

Drug control

Central agencies carried out searches over alleged trafficking of drugs from Myanmar and 'hawala' settlements of proceeds

Local carriers were hired by Myanmar-based organisers to move consignments

Payments routed through 'hawala' accounts receiving drug proceeds from across the Northeast

Bank accounts in Champhai, Aizawl, and Lawngtlai of Mizoram received drug money and settled with suppliers in Myanmar, says the ED



The offensive attests to India's Himalayan resolve to realise the mission of eradicating every drug network by Dec. 31, 2029

AMIT SHAH
Union Home Minister

tions in Assam, Mizoram, and Manipur on October 23, smashing an international narco-cartel," Mr. Shah said in a post on X.

Coordinated action

The operation led by the Narcotics Control Bureau in coordination with the State police and Directo-

rate of Enforcement resulted in the freezing of 1,424 bank accounts, the attachment of assets estimated at ₹17.82 crore, the seizure of 500 detonators, and ₹12 lakh in cash, and the arrest of 18 people, a release by the Union Home Ministry said on Sunday.

The coordinated opera-

tion after days of collating confidential intelligence comprehensively covered major urban centres and sensitive border corridors such as Aizawl, Champhai, and Zokhawthar in Mizoram, Churachandpur in Manipur, and the transit corridor in the Cachar region of Assam, the Ministry said.

"The network trafficked narcotics across the borders of India, Myanmar, and Bangladesh through the Death Triangle Corridor. The offensive attests to India's Himalayan resolve to realise the mission of eradicating every drug network by December 31, 2029. India will hammer until the last nail is driven into the coffin of drug cartels," Mr. Shah said.

CONTINUED ON
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Why is this in the news?

Central agencies and police conducted coordinated raids at 38 locations across Assam, Mizoram and Manipur. According to the article, 18 people were arrested and ₹100 crore in alleged hawala transactions was traced. The operation targeted an international drug-trafficking and narco-hawala network linked to Myanmar. The Union Home Minister described the operation as a major crackdown on drug trafficking.

Why is Northeast India vulnerable to drug trafficking?

International borders: The region shares borders with Myanmar, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and China.

Golden Triangle proximity: The Golden Triangle—Myanmar, Laos and Thailand—is a major historical centre of illicit drug production and trafficking.

Porous borders: Difficult terrain, forests and remote settlements complicate surveillance.

Insurgent networks: Drug revenues can potentially finance armed and other organised criminal groups.

Financial concealment: Hawala and other informal channels can make tracing illicit proceeds difficult.

Connectivity challenges: Remote border areas may have limited enforcement infrastructure.

Q1. With reference to drug trafficking and enforcement agencies in India, consider the following statements:

1. The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act was enacted in 1985.
2. The Directorate of Enforcement investigates money laundering under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.
3. The Golden Triangle comprises India, Myanmar and Bangladesh.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO OCTOBER 26, 1926

The Indian civil service

Simla, October 25: The following Press Communiqué is issued: In accordance with the recommendation of the Lee Commission, direct recruits to the Indian Civil Service are now being selected in equal numbers from Europeans and Indians. For the purpose of calculation, London examination of one year and Allahabad examination and nominations of the next year are taken together as forming one year. In the year 1925-26, i.e. London examination of 1926 and Allahabad examination and nominations of 1925, numbers actually recruited were 20 Europeans and 22 Indians. These figures are being adjusted in the year 1926-27 by recruiting 29 Europeans and 27 Indians. The London examination of 1926 has yielded 19 Europeans and 11 Indians. This leaves 16 Indians to be recruited in India in 1927 through examination and nomination. Nine of these vacancies are definitely offered for open competition of the Allahabad examination to be held in January next, while the remaining seven are for the present held in reserve to be filled by nomination.

The Lee Commission was established in 1923 under the chairmanship of Lord Lee, with an equal number of Indian and British members, with the goal of studying the racial composition of the government of India's superior public service. In 1924, the Lee Commission proposed that 40% of future entrants be British, 40% be directly recruited Indians, and 20% be promoted from the provincial service.

Lee Commission – Recommendations

- The Commission proposed categorizing main services into three categories: (a) all India, (b) central, and (c) provincial.
- The secretary of state should continue to recruit for the ICS, the Service of Engineers' Irrigation Branch, the Indian Forest Service, and so on.
- Provincial governments recruit for transferred fields such as education and civil medical service.
- In 15 years, direct recruitment to ICS on the basis of 50:50 parity between Europeans and Indians will be achieved.
- The Public Service Commission should be established right away (as laid down in the Government of India Act, 1919).
- The central services dealt with Indian states and foreign affairs, as well as the administration of state railways, posts and telegraphs, customs, audit and accounts, and scientific and technological departments.
- The Commission recommended that the Secretary of State retain appointment and control of All India Services (primarily the Indian Civil Service, the Indian Police Service, the Indian Medical Service, the Indian Forest Service, and the Indian Service of Engineers) operating in reserved fields of administration.
- The Lee Commission's most important recommendation concerning services operating in transferred fields (e.g., Indian Educational Service, Indian Agricultural Service, Indian Veterinary Services, etc.), the recruitment and appointment of which were to be made by the respective local governments. As a result, those services were to be decentralised.
- Existing members of the All India Services were to retain all rights of officers in the All India Services, but the provincial governments were to be given appointment powers only when new vacancies arose.

Q2. Which one of the following options is correct with reference to Evolution of civil services in India?

- [A] Wellesley was the first to bring into existence and organize the civil services in India.
- [B] Cornwallis set up the Fort William college for training of new recruits.
- [C] Aitchison committee recommended for a Public Service Commission to be immediately established.
- [D] Lee commission recommended 50:50 parity between the Europeans and the Indians in direct recruitment of ICS.

CM to meet Fadnavis for Tummidihatti project height approval

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has stepped up efforts to revive the long-pending Tummidihatti Barrage across the Pranahita river at Tummidihatti on the Telangana-Maharashtra border, with the State government delegation set to hold crucial talks with Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in Mumbai on Monday to secure consent for raising its proposed height from 148 metres to 150-152 metres Full Reservoir Level (FRL).

tion department. The Maharashtra Chief Minister would be assisted by Minister for Water Resources Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil and senior officials and engineers of the department.

Earlier agreement

In 2016, an agreement was reached between the two governments, with K. Chandrashekar Rao and Devendra Fadnavis at the helm of affairs, and the height agreed for the Tummidihatti Barrage was 148 metres as Maharashtra objected to the 152 metres FRL due to possible submergence of parts of a wildlife sanctuary in Maharashtra. In the same meeting, the Medigadda Barrage was agreed to at 100 metres FRL. The project subsequently lost priority as the BRS govern-



Telangana believes that the earlier agreed proposal of 148 metre FRL barrage at Tummidihatti, in Koutala mandal of Adilabad district, will not serve its intended purpose. FILE PHOTO

ment concentrated on the Kaleshwaram project. Now, the Congress government is planning to revive the Pranahita-Chavella project by taking up a barrage at Tummidihatti with 152 metres FRL, as originally planned in 2007, to take water by gravity and a small lift to Yellampally

project. The Telangana government is arguing that only 2,300 acres of land would face submergence with the barrage at 152 metres FRL and less than 1,000 acres with 150 metres FRL. Government is prepared to consider 150 metres if that helps secure Maharashtra's approval.

Telangana delegation led by Revanth Reddy to hold crucial talks today seeking clearance from the upper riparian State to raise height of the barrage to 152m FRL

On May 26, Mr. Revanth Reddy wrote to Mr. Fadnavis, requesting time for a Telangana delegation to discuss the barrage's height, submergence implications and other inter-State issues. Subsequently, he wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on June 11, seeking the Centre's intervention. The Telangana government is of the view that a barrage with 148 metres FRL would not serve the intended purpose of water diversion.

The government is ready with a backwater study report conducted by the Central Water and Power Research Station (CWPRS), Pune, in its support.

Apart from irrigating two lakh acres of land in the backward Adilabad district, the barrage is being planned to serve the Kaleshwaram Project ayacut and drinking water and industrial needs bypassing the three damaged barrages of Kaleshwaram Project.

The Telangana Chief Minister would reach Mumbai on Sunday night and stay there for Monday's meeting. The Congress government has also requested the BJP leadership in Telangana, including the two Union Ministers, to convince its Central leadership to suggest Maharashtra to agree for 152 metres FRL.

What is the Tummidihatti-Yellampalli Proposal?

The proposal involves diverting water from Tummidihatti (on Pranahita) to Yellampalli reservoir (on Godavari) through a suitable alignment.

Four different alignments are being studied based on:

- elevation differences (critical for lift irrigation).
- Distance and canal feasibility
- pumping requirements
- cost efficiency
- water transmission losses
- The objective is to ensure that water from the upstream Pranahita region is effectively utilised for irrigation across Telangana.

Irrigation Significance for Telangana

The project is crucial for Telangana due to:

- semi-arid climate and rainfall variability
- dependence on lift irrigation in plateau regions
- need to irrigate upland agricultural zones
- requirement to stabilise existing irrigation systems

Theoretical physicist Ashoke Sen wins Oskar Klein Medal

Vasudevan Mukunth

Theoretical physicist Ashoke Sen has been awarded the 2026 Oskar Klein Medal, becoming the first Indian laureate to receive the honour, awarded by Stockholm University and the Nobel Committee for Physics of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

The Medal recognises significant contributions to theoretical physics. Dr. Sen is the ICTS-Infosys Madhava Chair Professor at the International Centre for Theoretical Sciences (ICTS), Bengaluru. He also delivered the memorial lecture accompanying the Medal in Stockholm on October 22, titled "Gravity from Strings and Strings from Gravity".

In his career, Dr. Sen has focused on string theory, which is the name of an attempt by physicists to describe matter and nature's fundamental forces, including gravity, within a single framework called



Ashoke Sen is the first Indian to win this award. R. RAVINDRAN

quantum gravity. Currently, they are split across two frameworks, quantum physics and relativity. String theory offers ways to reconcile them, but while it is mathematically a highly evolved theory, it has been unable to make predictions that can be confirmed with experiments using today's technologies.

In the 1980s, Dr. Sen helped establish how the equations describing hypothetical strings moving

through space could relate to the equations that describe the physical fields that surround it. In the 1990s, he helped show that two apparently different ways to describe physical forces were really equivalent, an idea called S-duality.

Sen conjectures

He also proposed three related ideas, together called the Sen conjectures, in 1999 that gave physicists

new ways to understand the behaviour of the strings of string theory. Dr. Sen graduated from Presidency College in Kolkata before going to IIT-Kanpur and thereon to earning his Ph.D. from Stony Brook University, New York, in 1982. After working at institutions including the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) in Mumbai and the Harish-Chandra Research Institute (HRI) in Prayagraj, he moved to ICTS in 2021.

For his work, he has won the S.S. Bhatnagar Prize (1994), the Infosys Prize (2009), the Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics (2012), and the Dirac Medal (2014).

He also received the Padma Shri in 2001 and the Padma Bhushan in 2013.

The impact of Dr. Sen's contributions has exceeded their own ambit. In one 2014 interview, U.S. theoretical physicist Edward Witten – widely con-

sidered to be the greatest living mathematical physicist – called one of Dr. Sen's papers "short but brilliant" and that it "convinced me that the duality had to be right". Dr. Witten also said Dr. Sen's findings had inspired work that paved the way for more breakthroughs in understanding how subatomic particles interact with each other.

He has also done important work on black holes. Physicists had long known that these enigmatic cosmic beasts had entropy but could not explain its origins in their physical theories. Dr. Sen developed mathematical methods to make sense of a black hole's microscopic states in a way that could account for its observable, macroscopic characteristics.

Together, many physicists agree, his contributions have considerably advanced the theories physicists use to understand quantum gravity.

The Oskar Klein Medal

and the accompanying Memorial Lectures was launched in 1988 to honour the Swedish physicist Oskar Klein (1894-1977). In 1926, Klein, building on the work of German mathematician Theodor Kaluza, explored whether electromagnetism and gravity could be described in a common framework by introducing an extra dimension of space. The result, known as Kaluza-Klein theory, exerted a significant influence on later attempts by physicists – including string theory – to unify these forces.

India in particular has an influential community of string theorists, especially at TIFR Mumbai, ICTS Bengaluru, HRI Prayagraj, and the Indian Institute of Science Education Research in Pune. Aside from Dr. Sen, the community's notable members include Nabamita Banerjee, Shiraz Minwalla, Sunil Mukhi, P. Ramadevi, and Spenta Wadia.

- Professor Ashoke Sen, a distinguished Indian theoretical physicist, has been awarded the Oskar Klein medal for his pioneering contributions to physics.

- He is the first Indian physicist to receive this international honour, which recognizes distinguished contributions to physics.
- Sen is renowned for his work in string theory, particularly for demonstrating the equivalence of different string theories.
- His research aims to unify the theory of gravitation and quantum theory, bridging inconsistencies between them. He currently serves as an ICTS-Infosys Madhava Chair Professor at the International Centre for Theoretical Sciences (ICTS) in Bengaluru.
- Professor Sen has received numerous accolades, including the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize (1994), Padma Shri (2001), Infosys Prize (2009), Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics (2012), Padma Bhushan (2013), and the Dirac Medal (2014).
- He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society (FRS) in 1998.
- Sen's career includes research at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) and the Harish Chandra Institute before joining ICTS.

