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TODAY'S ANALYSIS

(03 January 2025)

TOPICS TO BE COVERED

- **DIGITAL MAHAKUMBH**
- **HIGH RELIGIOUS RESTRICTIONS IN INDIA**
- **ARE FORMER PMs MANDATED MEMORIALS?**
- **MCQs**



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DIGITAL MAHAKUMBH

Making of Maha Kumbh

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
|  |  |  |  |
| 1.5 lakhs | 2600+ | 24x7 | 10 |
| Tentage & Toilets Being Monitored | Crowd Monitoring Setup Cameras | ICCC Monitoring | Digital Lost & Found Centres |

The Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, will combine spirituality with modern technology, improving the experience for millions of pilgrims. The government is using new technology to make the event **safer, easier, and more convenient** for everyone.

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| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Event Duration | Start Date: January 13, 2025 (Paush Purnima Snan) End Date: February 26, 2025 (Maha Shivratri) |
| Location | Triveni Sangam , Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh (Confluence of Ganges, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers) |
| Estimated Devotees | 40-45 crore pilgrims |
| Purpose of the Event | Religious pilgrimage for the attainment of salvation (moksha) through holy dips in sacred rivers |
| Festival Rotation | Held every 12 years at four sacred sites: 1. Haridwar (Ganges) 2. Ujjain (Shipra) 3. Nashik (Godavari) 4. Prayagraj (Ganges, Yamuna, Sarasvati) |

CYBER SECURITY MEASURES

- **Cyber Experts:** A team of 56 specialists will monitor and protect the online environment to stop scams and fraud.
- **Maha Kumbh Cyber Police Station:** A special police station will be set up to deal with online fraud, fake websites, and scams on social media.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** 40 Variable Messaging Displays (VMDs) will show warnings about online safety and how to avoid online tricks.
- **Cyber Helpline (1920):** A helpline available 24/7 to help with cyber-related issues like fraud or suspicious websites.

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- **Monitoring Fake Websites:** Cyber experts will keep an eye on social media platforms like Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and Instagram to find and block fake websites.
- **Promoting Safe Websites:** Pilgrims will be encouraged to use only official government websites for safe online transactions.

IMMERSIVE DIGITAL EXPERIENCES

- **360-Degree VR Stalls:** Ten virtual reality stalls will let people experience major events like:
 - The Peshwai (grand procession of Akhadas)
 - Holy bathing days (Snaan)
 - Ganga Aarti and other rituals.
- **Drone Light Show:** A stunning evening light show with 2,000 drones will tell the stories of "Prayag Mahatmyam" and "Samudra Manthan" (Churning of the Ocean), showing the spiritual importance of Prayagraj.

INFRASTRUCTURE & LAND DIGITALISATION

- **Online Land & Facility Booking:** A website will help institutions book land and services online. Over 10,000 institutions will use this system.

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- **Drone Surveys:** Drones will map the land before and after the monsoon to make planning easier.
- **Online Application Process:** People can track their land booking requests online, avoiding long queues.
- **GIS-Based Maps:** Google Maps will show important places like:
 - Police stations, hospitals, and emergency services.
 - Food courts, toilets, parking, and vending areas.
 - Roads, bridges, and other key facilities to help people get around.

ENHANCED SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS

- **Remote-Controlled Life Buoys:** Life-saving buoys will be sent to the river to help rescue people in trouble, especially during the holy bathing.
- **Underwater Drones:** Drones will monitor the river 24/7 and send live updates to the control center to keep everyone safe.
- **AI-Powered Cameras:** Smart cameras will watch for unusual behavior and alert authorities to act quickly if needed.
- **Drones & Anti-Drone Technologies:** Drones and technologies to stop them will be used for extra security and surveillance.

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Lost and Found Services

- **Digital Registration:** Lost pilgrims will be registered in a central system. Their details will be shared on social media and through public announcements.
- **Police Assistance:** If a person is not found after 12 hours, police will help to make sure they are safe.

Online Stay Booking

- **Booking Platforms:** Pilgrims can book their stay through websites like IRCTC, Make My Trip, Go IBIBO, or the official Maha Kumbh app (booking window: Jan 10 - Feb 28, 2025).
- **Tent City Security:** CCTV cameras and first-aid services will ensure the safety and comfort of pilgrims staying in the Tent City.

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HIGH RELIGIOUS RESTRICTIONS IN INDIA

- A **Pew Research Center** report released recently places India among the 25 countries with the highest levels of **religious restrictions**.
- This includes both **social hostilities** related to religion and **government restrictions** on religious practices.
- India's **Social Hostilities Index (SHI)** score of **9.3 out of 10** and its **Government Restrictions Index (GRI)** score of **6.4 out of 10** rank it among the countries with the most severe restrictions on religious freedoms globally.

SOCIAL HOSTILITY INDEX (SHI)

The **SHI** measures **religion-related hostilities** such as **harassment, mob violence, terrorism, militant activity, and conflicts over religious symbols, practices, or conversions**.

India's SHI:

- **India scored 9.3 out of 10** in 2022 on the SHI, which is the **highest score** among 198 nations.

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- A score above **7.2** is considered “**very high**”, indicating that India experiences significant levels of **religion-related violence, harassment, and hostility**.

GLOBAL CONTEXT WRT SHI

- **India** is not alone; **24 other countries** also have **high SHI scores** in 2022.
- This includes countries like **Nigeria, Pakistan, Syria, Egypt, Afghanistan, Israel, and France**.

India's score highlights the challenges related to **religious violence**, including attacks on religious minorities and conflicts over religious practices, attire, and symbols. These social hostilities often manifest in forms like **mob lynching, terrorist attacks, and religious riots**.

GOVERNMENT RESTRICTION INDEX (GRI)

The **GRI** evaluates the level of **government-imposed restrictions** on religion, including laws, policies, and actions that restrict or regulate religious practices. This can include:

- Banning or restricting certain religious practices.
- Unequal treatment of religious groups by the state.
- Bureaucratic rules that hinder religious groups' ability to operate freely.

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India's GRI:

- India scored **6.4 out of 10** on the **GRI** in 2022, categorizing it as having **“high” government restrictions on religious freedom.**
- A score above **6.6** is considered **“very high”**, which means **India's GRI score is significant, but not at the absolute highest level.**

GLOBAL CONTEXT WRT GRI

- In **2022**, **only 12%** (25 countries) had both **high or very high** scores on both **GRI** and **SHI**.
- This group includes countries like **Nigeria, Pakistan, Syria, Egypt, Afghanistan, Israel,** and **Bangladesh.**
- **India** is part of this group, signifying that the country not only faces significant **social hostilities** (violence, harassment) but also has **government-imposed restrictions** on religious freedom.

TYPES OF GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS

A. Harassment by Governments:

- **Harassment by government** was one of the most common types of religious restrictions.

This type of harassment was reported in **186 out of 198 countries** (94% of nations studied).

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- It involves both **verbal** and **physical pressure** on religious groups, with governments using **legal, social, and political measures to restrict religious freedom.**

B. Interference in Worship:

- **Government interference in worship** was also widespread. In **170 countries (86% of the countries analyzed)**, governments interfered in religious practices such as:
 - **Denying permission to worship.**
 - **Closing places of worship.**
 - **Disrupting religious rituals** or practices like **burial.**

CORRELATION BETWEEN GRI & SHI

The report found that **government restrictions** and **social hostilities** are often closely linked:

- **Countries with higher government restrictions** tend to have **higher levels of social hostilities**, and vice versa.
- **Countries with lower scores** on these indices generally have **fewer conflicts** related to religion.

This suggests that addressing government policies that restrict religious freedom could help reduce religion-related social hostilities in many countries.

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ARE FORMER PMs MANDATED MEMORIALS?

- On **December 26, 2024**, former Prime Minister **Manmohan Singh** passed away. In line with the traditions for state funerals, the **Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** announced **seven days of state mourning** and a **state funeral** for the former PM.
- He was cremated at **Nigambodh Ghat** in central Delhi, marking the **first time** that a former PM had been cremated at this public cremation ground.
- This sparked a controversy, with the **Congress party** accusing the government of an **"insult"** for not allocating a separate, designated place for the funeral and demanding a **memorial** at the cremation site.

IS THERE A RULE REGARDING MEMORIALS?

- While there are established **guidelines for state funerals**, **no specific rule** or **government order** exists regarding the **allocation of space for memorials** for former Prime Ministers (PMs).
- According to **constitutional expert P.D.T. Achary**, there is no set rule for memorials.
- He highlighted that the **convention** had been that **former PMs were cremated at designated locations**, but **Manmohan Singh's cremation at Nigambodh Ghat** marked a **departure** from this tradition.

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- While India upholds the principle that all citizens are equal before the law, Achary pointed out that former PMs, especially someone like **Manmohan Singh**, who was respected both nationally and globally, **deserved a special place** for their last rites.

THE TREND OF MEMORIALS

Apart from **Vishwanath Pratap Singh**, who did not have a memorial, **all other former PMs** have had **memorials** dedicated to them, most of which are located in **Delhi**, with a few in other parts of the country. Here are some notable examples:

- **Jawaharlal Nehru's** memorial is known as **Shanti Vana**.
- **Lal Bahadur Shastri's** memorial is called **Vijay Ghat**.
- **Charan Singh's** memorial is called **Kisan Ghat**.
- **Indira Gandhi's** memorial is at **Shakti Sthal**.
- **Rajiv Gandhi's** memorial is known as **Vir Bhumi**.

Additionally, in **2015**, a memorial for **P. V. Narasimha Rao** was established at **Ekta Sthal** in Delhi, **10 years after his death in 2004**.

In **2013**, the **Congress government** decided that all future memorials would be built at **Smriti Sthal** due to a **shortage of space** in Delhi.

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WHO MAINTAINS THE MEMORIALS?

The responsibility for the **maintenance** of memorials varies:

- According to a **2012 reply** by the **Culture Ministry** in the **Lok Sabha**, **local state governments** and **municipalities** are primarily responsible for maintaining the memorials of various **personalities**.
- However, the **Central Government**, specifically the **Ministry of Urban Development**, oversees the upkeep of **certain prominent memorials**. These include:
 - **Rajghat (New Delhi)**.
 - **Morarji Desai's Samadhi at Abhay Ghat (Ahmedabad)**.
 - **Rajiv Gandhi Memorial at Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu**.

DEMAND OF CONGRESS

- On **December 27, 2024**, **Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge** wrote a letter to **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**, requesting that the **Union Government identify a designated place** for the funeral rites of **Manmohan Singh** and that a memorial be constructed at the site.

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- Despite this request, the **cremation took place at Nigambodh Ghat on December 28**, which was a **public cremation ground**.

Following the public outcry, the **MHA** released a **press statement on December 27 at 11:45 pm**, stating that:

- The government had **received the request** for the **allocation of space for a memorial**.
- After the **Cabinet meeting**, **Home Minister Amit Shah** conveyed to **Kharge and Singh's family** that the government would **allocate space for the memorial**.
- The government also stated that a **Trust** needed to be formed, and only after that could space be allocated for the memorial.

As of **December 30, 2024**, the memorial for **Manmohan Singh** had not yet been announced.

COMPARISON WITH ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE'S MEMORIAL

In contrast to the ongoing discussions about **Manmohan Singh's memorial**, the **memorial for Atal Bihari Vajpayee**, who passed away on **August 16, 2018**, was quickly addressed:

- Atal Bihari Vajpayee was cremated at **Smriti Sthal**, which is also the place designated for the memorials of other prominent leaders.
- A **memorial** for Vajpayee was constructed at **Smriti Sthal** within **45 days** of his passing.

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- The memorial cost **₹10.51 crore**, which was fully funded by the **Atal Smriti Nyas Society**, a trust set up for the purpose.

CONCLUSION

Currently, there is no **mandate** or **rule** regarding the creation of memorials for former Prime Ministers, and each case has been handled on an individual basis. While there have been traditions followed in the past, the **cremation of Manmohan Singh at Nigambodh Ghat** has sparked debate, with the **Congress party** demanding a **dedicated memorial** at the site. The **MHA** has confirmed that the **government will allocate space for the memorial**, but details remain to be finalized.

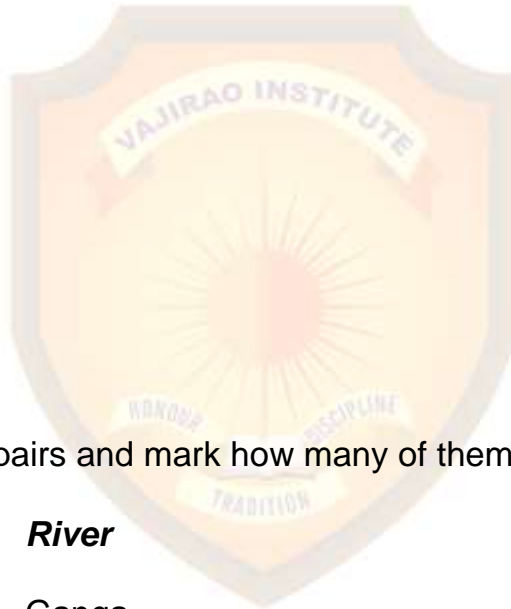
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MCQs

1. Consider the following statements and mark the correct one:
1. The Maha Kumbh is an event that happens once in 12 years.
 2. The purpose of this event is the attainment of salvation (moksha) through holy dips in sacred rivers.
- (A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 & 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2



Ans. (C)

2. Consider the following pairs and mark how many of them are correct?

Place

River

- | | |
|-------------|----------|
| 1. Haridwar | Ganga |
| 2. Nashik | Shipra |
| 3. Ujjain | Godavari |

- (A) Only 1 pair is correctly matched
(B) Only 2 pairs are correctly matched
(C) All the pairs are correctly matched
(D) None of the pairs are correctly matched

Ans. (A)

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3. Consider the following statements and mark the correct one:

1. Countries with higher government restrictions tend to have higher levels of social hostilities.
2. Countries with lower scores on GRI & SHI indices generally have fewer conflicts related to religion.

- (A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 & 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2



Ans. (C)

4. Which of these pairs is not matched correctly?

- (A) Jawaharlal Nehru : Shanti Van
(B) Rajiv Gandhi : Vijay Ghat
(C) Indira Gandhi : Shakti Sthal
(D) Charan Singh : Kisan Ghat

Ans. (B)

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