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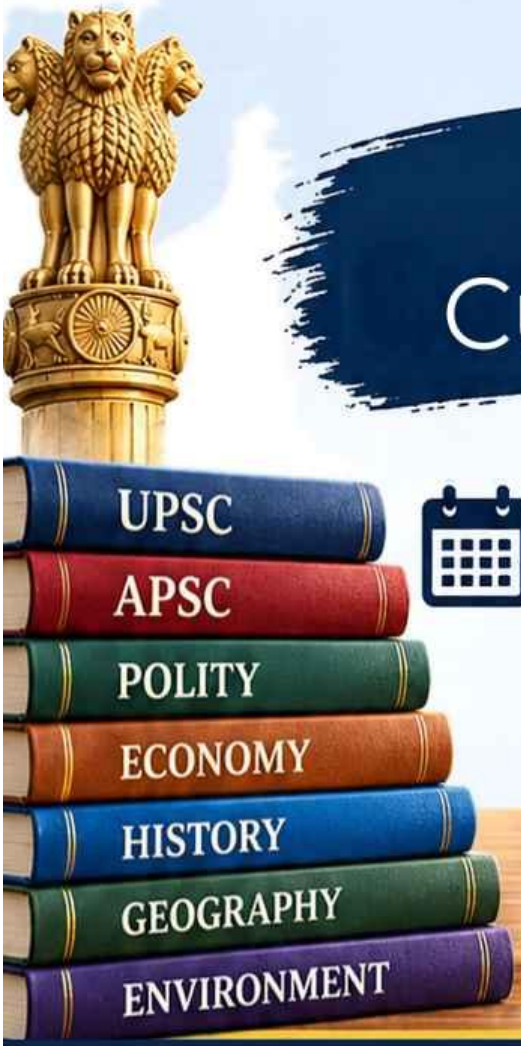
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GS Paper V (Assam)

State Civilian Awards 2025

State Cabinet announces civilian award recipients

Assam Baibhav, Assam Saurav, Assam Gaurav to be presented in Dec

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, Oct 23: The Assam Cabinet on Friday finalised the recipients for the 2025 State civilian awards – Assam Baibhav, Assam Saurav and Assam Gaurav – which will be presented in December.

While Dr Harsha Bhattacharjee (ophthalmologist and pioneer in eye treatment and eye donation movement) has been chosen for Assam Baibhav, Dr Kushal Konwar Sarma (wildlife expert), Nuruddin Ahmed (arts director), Pulak Banerjee (singer), and Dr Purnima Devi Barman (Hargila conservationist) will receive Assam Saurav.

Assam Gaurav will be presented to Devi Prasad Bagrodia (social worker),



CM Himanta Biswa Sarma addresses the media after the Cabinet meeting.

Halicharan Narzary (footballer), Simu Das (cricketer), Harakanta Basumatary (palm oil cultivator), Dhanjit Talukdar (manuscript conservationist), Nibedita Yein (food and tourism entrepreneur), Mayank Chakrabarty (chess player), Jiten Phangcho (ginger cultivator), Tonumaya Sonar Viswakarma (dairy farming), Dikpal Lahan (travel and tourism), Kalong Kapili (NGO), and Padum Pothar Agro Organic Producer Company (FPO).

The Cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma also approved the notification of the Assam Mineral Regulation and Dealers (Amendment) Rules, 2026 amending the Assam Mineral Regulation and Dealers (Amendment) Rules, 2020.

The amendment categorizes extracted limestone into distinct grades such as high, medium and base cement grade across Category 1, Category 2, and Category 3. This ensures the Government collects proportional royalties based on the quality of the limestone rather than a single flat rate.

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Key Highlights

The Assam Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, finalised the recipients of the 2025 State Civilian Awards, which will be presented in December.

Award Recipients

Assam Baibhav- Dr Harsha Bhattacharjee (Ophthalmologist; contributions to eye treatment and the eye donation movement.)

Assam Saurav

Recipient	Field
Dr Kushal Konwar Sarma	**Wildlife conservation and veterinary science**
Nuruddin Ahmed	**Arts direction**
Pulak Banerjee	**Singing**
Dr Purnima Devi Barman	**Hargila conservation**

Assam Gaurav

Recipient	Field
Devi Prasad Bagrodia	Social work
Halicharan Narzary	Football
Simu Das	Cricket
Harakanta Basumatary	Palm oil cultivation
Dhanjit Talukdar	Manuscript conservation
Nibedita Yein	Food and tourism entrepreneurship
Mayank Chakrabarty	Chess
Jiten Phangcho	Ginger cultivation
Tonumaya Sonar Viswakarma	Dairy farming
Dikpal Lahan	Travel and tourism
Kalong Kapili	NGO activities
Padum Pothar Agro Organic Producer Company	Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO)

Prelims Practice MCQs

Q1. Which of the following is associated with Hargila conservation?

A. Dr Harsha Bhattacharjee

B. Dr Purnima Devi Barman

C. Dr Kushal Konwar Sarma

D. Nuruddin Ahmed

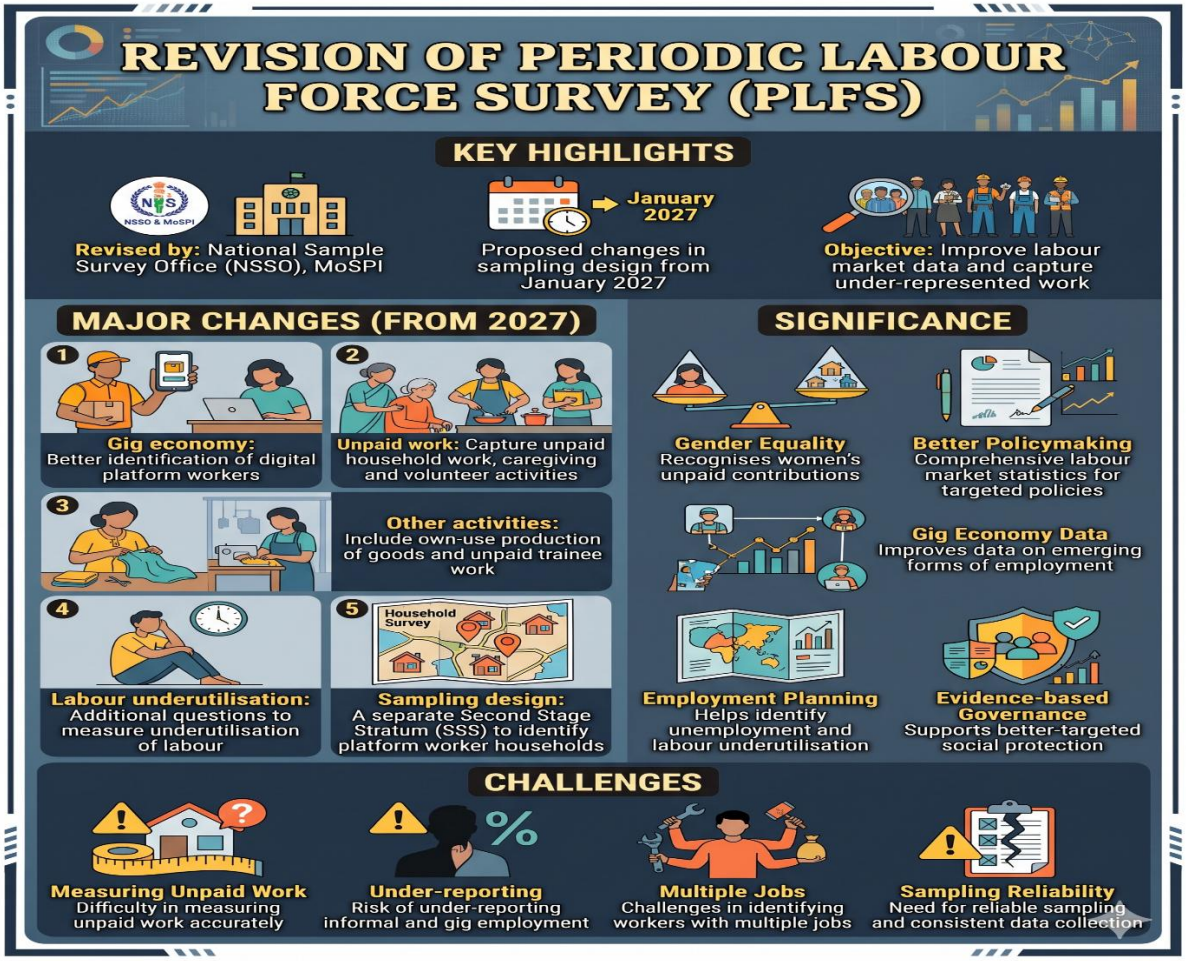
Answer: B. Dr Purnima Devi Barman

Mains Question

Q. Discuss the significance of state civilian awards in recognising contributions to Assam's social, cultural, environmental and economic development. (150 words)

GS Paper III (Indian Economy)

Revision of Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)



Key Highlights

- Revised by: National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- **Implementation: Proposed changes in sampling design from January 2027.**
- **Objective**: Improve labour market data and capture previously under-represented forms of work.

Major changes:

1. Gig economy: Better identification of digital platform workers.

2. Unpaid work: Capture unpaid household work, caregiving and volunteer activities.

3. Other activities: Include own-use production of goods and unpaid trainee work.

4. Labour underutilisation: Additional questions to measure underutilisation of labour.

5. Sampling design: A separate Second Stage Stratum (SSS) will help identify households with digital platform workers.

Significance

- **Gender equality**: Recognises women's unpaid household and caregiving contributions.
- **Better policymaking**: Provides more comprehensive labour market statistics.
- **Gig economy**: Improves data on emerging forms of employment.
- **Employment planning**: Helps identify unemployment and labour underutilisation.
- **Evidence-based governance**: Supports better-targeted employment and social protection policies.

Challenges

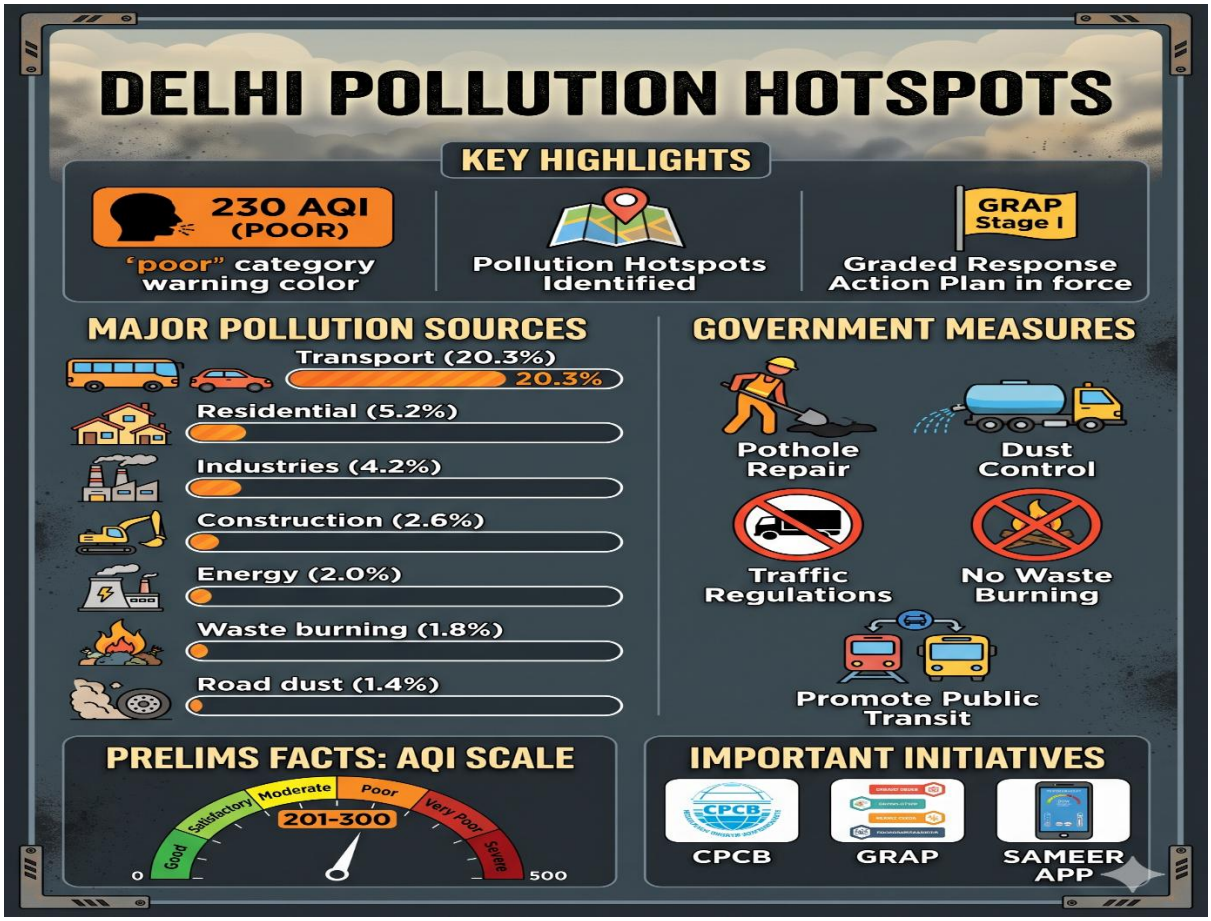
- **Difficulty in measuring unpaid work accurately.**
- **Risk of under-reporting informal and gig employment.**
- **Challenges in identifying workers with multiple jobs.**
- **Need for reliable sampling and consistent data collection.**

Mains Question

Q. Why is the measurement of unpaid work and gig employment important for understanding India's labour market? Discuss the significance of the proposed changes to PLFS. (150 words)

GS Paper III (Environment)

Delhi Pollution Hotspots



Key Highlights

- **Issue**: Delhi's air quality remained in the poor category, prompting targeted pollution-control measures.
- **Action taken**: Delhi government directed officials to identify pollution hotspots and prepare location-specific action plans.
- **AQI:** Delhi's average AQI was 230 (Poor), according to the report.
- **Responsible agency**: Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) monitors air quality.
- **Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP):** Stage I was in force.

Major pollution sources in Delhi (as reported):

Source	Contribution
Transport	**20.3%**
Residential sources	**5.2%**
Industries	**4.2%**

Construction	**2.6%**
Energy	**2.0%**
Waste burning	**1.8%**
Road dust	**1.4%**

Measures Directed by the Government

- Identify local pollution sources using AQI monitoring data.
- Repair potholes and remove road encroachments.
- Treat exposed roadside soil and sprinkle water to control dust.
- Regulate heavy vehicles, particularly during peak hours.
- Prevent garbage burning and illegal waste dumping.
- Encourage public transport and carpooling.
- Assign clear responsibilities and deadlines to concerned agencies.

Important Prelims Facts

Air Quality Index (AQI)

AQI range	**Category**
0–50	**Good**
51–100	**Satisfactory**
101–200	**Moderate**
201–300	**Poor**
301–400	**Very Poor**
401–500	**Severe**

Important institutions and initiatives:

- **CPCB: Central Pollution Control Board.**
- **GRAP: Graded Response Action Plan to address deteriorating air quality in Delhi-NCR.**
- **Sameer App: Provides air quality information and AQI updates.**

Mains Question

Q. Air pollution in Indian cities requires coordinated action at the local level. Discuss the major sources of urban air pollution and suggest effective control measures. (150 words)

GS Paper II (Governance)

AI-Based Attendance Verification in Rural Employment Scheme

Key Highlights

- Initiative: AI-based attendance verification under the VB-G RAM G rural employment programme.
- Announced by: Union Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan.
- Objective: Prevent fake attendance, protect workers' wages and ensure transparency in public expenditure.

Key features:

- AI-based face verification and liveness detection.
- Photo de-duplication to detect repeated photographs.
- Anti-tampering security measures.
- Automatic withholding of wage lists and Fund Transfer Orders (FTOs) when suspicious entries are detected, pending verification.
- Offline attendance recording in areas with poor network connectivity.
- Exception mechanisms for elderly workers, persons with disabilities and technical failures.
- Background: Face authentication was introduced in the National Mobile Monitoring System in March 2026 under MGNREGA.

Mains Question

Q. Discuss the role of Artificial Intelligence in improving transparency and accountability in rural employment programmes. Examine the associated challenges. (150 words)