



## Current Affairs of the Day

### GS Paper - II

- Indian Americans divided on India's trajectory, says survey
- Centre objects to plea against Special Marriage Act

### GS Paper - III

- Bengaluru scientists develop a new marigold variety



## Indian Americans divided on India's trajectory, says survey

Indian Americans are divided on their views about India's trajectory. It also found that most Indian Americans oppose government crackdowns on the media and the use of police force on peaceful protesters. The survey report is the second of a set of two studies of the political attitudes of Indian Americans done by the Indian American Attitudes Survey (IAAS).

### Highlights:

1. Respondents are also more liberal on U.S. issues while holding more conservative positions on Indian matters.
2. Thirty-nine per cent of Indian Americans feel India is moving in the wrong direction, while 36% feel it is on the right track. A larger share of Indian Americans born outside America felt that India was on the right track.
3. Most (65%) Indian Americans either strongly or somewhat oppose the use of police force against individuals peacefully opposing the government's citizenship laws (CAA and NRC).
4. Most (69%) also oppose the government's use of defamation and sedition laws to silence reporters critical of the Modi administration. However, over half support, the NRC (55%) and a wafer-thin majority support the CAA (51%).
5. Regarding how respondents felt about the extent of their support for India, the largest group — 35% — said they were “generally pro-India but also critical of ‘some’ of the Indian government's policies.” Another 23% were “generally pro-India but also critical of ‘many’ of the Indian government's policies”.

## Centre objects to plea against Special Marriage Act

The Centre has objected to a petition seeking to discontinue the provision of inviting objection from the public while applying for marriage registration under the Special Marriage Act (SMA).

### Gestation period

1. All marriages done under the SMA require publication of the names of the couple for inviting objections from the public for 30 days. Within this period, anyone can object to the marriage on the ground that it would contravene one or more of the conditions specified in section 4 of the SMA.



2. Some of the conditions include neither party has a spouse living; either of them is of unsound mind, incapable of giving a valid consent; and the man has completed twenty-one years and the woman eighteen years.
3. The provision was challenged by an interfaith couple on the ground that the 30 days gestation period was not warranted as the same objective can be mitigated on the basis of certificates issued by government hospitals and on the basis of undertaking by them.
4. However, the Law Ministry replied If any person raises an objection to the said marriage within a period of 30 days, the marriage officer shall not solemnise the marriage until he has inquired into the matter of objection. It may not be possible to verify the credibility of such a person if at least a thirty days period is not given.
5. According to the ministry, the procedure laid down in this Act for registration of marriage is fair and reasonable.

### Discrimination:

1. The question with regard to whether either party has a living spouse can arise in other religious marriages also, but they are exempted from 30 days' notice period.

### SMA sections

1. The petition has sought to quash section 6 and 7 of SMA, which mandates publication of the public notice, on the ground that it is unreasonable and arbitrary.
2. The 30-day period offers an opportunity to the kin of the couple to discourage an inter-caste or inter-religion marriage.

## Bengaluru scientists develop a new marigold variety

The new variety of marigold developed by the Hessarghatta-based Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR) can be used for extraction of crude carotene, which is mainly used in the pharmaceutical sector.

### Highlights:

1. All marigolds have a carotene content of up to 1.4%. However, the new Arka Shubha variety of marigold has a carotene content of 2.8%, which is the highest content from a plant source.



2. These flowers can be sold for ornamental purposes too. Farmers consider this variety purely for extraction of carotene. There is always a high demand for carotene in the pharma sector. Presently, India imports most of its carotene from China and other countries.
3. It is better to take up the carotene extraction venture through farmers' groups as a large area is needed for marigold cultivation. This also provides scope for exports.
4. The Arka Shubha variety is of use in the poultry sector as well. Its petals could be used as feed to get quality yolk. It is used as feed for sheep too.