



## Indian Navy's Motor Car Rally | West Bengal | 17 Mar 2025

### Why in News?

On 3rd March 2025, **Naval Officer-in-Charge (West Bengal)** flagged off the [Indian Navy's Motor Car Rally Expedition](#) on the East Coast from INS Netaji, Kolkata.

- The rally will cover the **route from Kolkata to Chennai, proceed to Kanyakumari, and return to Chennai on 21 March 2025.**



### Key Points

- **Objectives of the Rally:**
  - Enhance **maritime awareness** among the public.
  - Engage with youth and civil society to **inspire participation in naval careers.**
  - Promote [the Agnipath Scheme](#) and other career opportunities in the Indian Navy.
  - Advocate for women's empowerment under [the Naari Shakti initiative.](#)
  - **Interact with Naval Veterans and Veer Naaris**, updating them on government and naval welfare policies.
- **Participation and Coverage:**
  - A total of **56 Indian Naval personnel, including Officers, Sailors, and their family members, are participating.**
  - The expedition will traverse approximately 3,800 km through West Bengal, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu, engaging with local communities.
- **Historical and Corporate Support:**
  - The **event is supported by M/s Hyundai Ltd.**

- The rally will explore [India's rich maritime heritage](#), visiting historical naval sites and locations along ancient maritime trade routes.

## Agnipath Scheme

- The term "**Agniveer**" translates to "Fire-Warriors" and is a **new military rank**.
- It is a scheme of **recruiting army personnel below officer ranks** such as **soldiers, airmen, and sailors** who are not commissioned officers to the **Indian Armed Forces**.
- They are recruited for a period of **4 years**, after which, **up to 25%** of these recruits (called Agniveers), can join the services on a **permanent commission** (another 15 years), subject to merit and organisational requirements.
- At present, **all sailors, airmen, and soldiers**, except the technical cadre of the medical branch, are recruited to the services under this scheme.

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## Grants for Rural Local Bodies of West Bengal | West Bengal | 17 Mar 2025

### Why in News?

The Union Government has released [the Fifteenth Finance Commission \(XV FC\) Grants](#) for [Rural Local Bodies in West Bengal](#) during the Financial Year 2024-25.

### Key Points

- **Grant Disbursement:**
  - The Union Government disbursed **the second installment of Untied Grants** amounting to Rs 694.4446 crores.
  - These **funds will support 21 District Panchayats, 326 Block Panchayats, and 3,220 Gram Panchayats**.
- **Utilization of Grants:**
  - **Untied Grants:** [Panchayati Raj Institutions \(PRIs\)](#)/Rural Local Bodies (RLBs) will use these funds for location-specific felt needs, as per **the 29 Subjects** under [the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution](#), excluding salaries and establishment costs.
  - **Tied Grants:** These funds will be utilized for essential services, including:
    - **Sanitation and maintenance of ODF status**, covering household waste management, human excreta treatment, and fecal sludge management.
    - Drinking water supply, rainwater harvesting, and water recycling to ensure water security in rural areas.
- **Role of Government Ministries:**
  - The Ministry of Panchayati Raj and [the Ministry of Jal Shakti](#) recommend the release of XV FC Grants to States for Rural Local Bodies.
  - The Ministry of Finance subsequently disburses these funds in two installments per Financial Year.
- **Impact of the Grants:**
  - Strengthens rural local governance by **enhancing financial resources at the grassroots level**.
  - Improves **accountability and transparency** in fund utilization.
  - **Promotes self-reliance** in villages, enabling local bodies to address critical infrastructure and service needs effectively.

## 15th Finance Commission

- The **Finance Commission (FC)** is a **constitutional body** that determines the method and formula for **distributing the tax proceeds between the Centre and states**, and among the states as per the constitutional arrangement and present requirements.
- Under **Article 280 of the Constitution**, **the President of India** is required to constitute a Finance Commission at an interval of five years or earlier.
- The 15th Finance Commission was constituted by the President of India in November 2017, **under the chairmanship of NK Singh**. Its recommendations will cover a **period of five years from the year 2021-22 to 2025-26**.

## Eleventh Schedule

- The Eleventh Schedule, added by **the 73rd Amendment Act in 1992**, contains provisions that outline **the powers, authority, and responsibilities of Panchayats (rural local governments)**.
- It places as many as **29 functions within the purview of the Panchayati Raj bodies including agricultural extension, land improvement, implementation of land reforms etc.**

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PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/statepcs/05-01-2023/west-bengal/print>

