



TELEGRAM CHANNEL: <https://t.me/patrioticIAS>
YOUTUBE CHANNEL: <https://www.youtube.com/@PatrioticIAS>
CONTACT: 9971932488



PATRIOTIC IAS

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

THE HINDU NEWSPAPER

31 DECEMBER 2025

YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/@PatrioticIAS>

Telegram Channel: <https://t.me/patrioticIAS>

PCS Special:		31 December 2025
1.	Khaleda Zia, first woman PM of Bangladesh and the main rival of Hasina, is no more खालिदा जिया, बांग्लादेश की पहली महिला प्रधानमंत्री और हसीना की मुख्य प्रतिद्वंद्वी, का निधन	
2.	QUIZ	

Address : 3rd Floor, KV Tower, Padleyganj Road, Gorakhpur
Email Id : info@patrioticias.in
Contact Number : 9971932488
Website : patrioticias.in



Khaleda Zia, first woman PM of Bangladesh and the main rival of Hasina, is no more

PCS

Associated Press

DHAKA

Former Bangladeshi Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, whose rivalry with the deposed Premier Sheikh Hasina defined the country's politics for a generation, died on Tuesday, her Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) said in a statement. She was 80.

Ms. Zia was the first woman elected Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's interim government announced a three-day mourning following her death. A general holiday was announced for Wednesday when Ms. Zia's funeral prayers are scheduled to be held in front of the country's national Parliament building in Dhaka. Ms. Zia will be buried with full state honours beside her husband, former President General Ziaur Rahman, the interim government said.

Bangladesh's interim leader Muhammad Yunus issued a statement on Tuesday citing Ms. Zia's contributions to the country. "Her role in the struggle to establish democracy, a multi-party political culture, and the rights of the people in Bangladesh will be remembered forever," Mr. Yunus said.



KHALEDA ZIA (1945-2025)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered condolences in a statement, noting that "as the first woman Prime Minister of Bangladesh, her important contributions toward the development of Bangladesh, as well as India-Bangladesh relations, will always be remembered."

Irreparable loss: Hasina Ms. Hasina issued a statement from exile in India, where she has been staying since her ouster in August 2024, saying Ms. Zia's death was "an irreparable loss" for politics in Bangladesh and recalled her contributions in establishing the nation's democracy.

Ms. Zia was sentenced to 17 years in jail in two separate corruption cases for misuse of power in embezzling funds meant for a

charity named after her late husband. Her party had said the charges were politically motivated to weaken the Opposition, but the Hasina government said it did not interfere and the case was a matter for the courts.

Bangladesh's Supreme Court, in January this year, acquitted Ms. Zia in the last corruption case against her, which would have let her run in the general election in February 2026.

The BNP said that after she was released from prison due to illness in 2020, her family sought permission for treatment abroad at least 18 times from Ms. Hasina's administration, but the requests were rejected.

MORE REPORTS
» PAGES 5 & 14

Khaleda Zia, first woman PM of Bangladesh and the main rival of Hasina, is no more

खालिदा जिया, बांग्लादेश की पहली महिला प्रधानमंत्री और हसीना की मुख्य प्रतिद्वंद्वी, का निधन

She was 80.

वह 80 वर्ष की थीं।

- Ms. Zia was the first woman elected Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

- "Her role in the struggle to establish democracy, a multi-party political culture, and the rights of the people in Bangladesh will be remembered forever," Mr. Yunus said.

- Ms. Hasina issued a statement from exile in India, where she has been staying since her ouster in August 2024, saying Ms. Zia's death was "an irreparable loss" for politics in Bangladesh and recalled her contributions in establishing the nation's democracy.

- The BNP said that after she was released from prison due to illness in 2020, her family sought permission for treatment abroad at least 18 times from Ms. Hasina's administration, but the requests were rejected.

बीएनपी ने कहा कि 2020 में बीमारी के कारण जेल से रिहा होने के बाद, उनके परिवार ने विदेश में इलाज के लिए कम से कम 18 बार सुश्री हसीना के प्रशासन

से अनुमति मांगी, लेकिन ये अनुरोध खारिज कर दिए गए।



Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz:

1. Where did the summit between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin take place? **Ans: Anchorage, Alaska**
2. The Prime Minister of this Western European country resigned after less than a month in office, only to be reinstated. **Ans: France**
3. The Preah Vihear Temple remains a point of contention between which two Southeast Asian countries. **Ans: Cambodia and Thailand**
4. Where did the mass shooting attack on tourists occur that led to a military escalation between India and Pakistan? **Ans: Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir**
5. Which African city hosted this year's G20 Summit? **Ans: Johannesburg, South Africa**
6. Which country enforced the world's first social media ban for children under 16? **Ans: Australia**
7. Where was the year's deadliest earthquake recorded? **Ans: Sagaing**

QUIZ

Where did the summit between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin take place?

- Anchorage, Alaska.

The Preah Vihear Temple Dispute — Cambodia and Thailand

- The **Preah Vihear Temple** remains a point of contention between **Cambodia** and **Thailand**.
- An **ancient Hindu temple complex** dedicated to **Lord Shiva**
- Constructed between the **9th and 12th centuries CE**
- Built during the **Khmer Empire**
- Located atop a **cliff in the Dângrêk Mountains**
- Architecturally aligned along a **north–south axis**, which is distinctive in Khmer architecture

Cultural and Civilisational Significance

- One of the **most important Khmer heritage sites**
- A symbol of **Cambodia's historical identity and sovereignty**
- Represents advanced **Khmer engineering, art, and religious traditions**
- Situated **very close to the Cambodia–Thailand border**
- During **1904–1907**, border demarcation was carried out between **French-controlled Cambodia and Siam (Thailand)**
- A **1907 map** prepared by French authorities placed the temple in Cambodian territory
- Thailand later disputed the **legal validity of this map**

International Court of Justice (ICJ) Ruling

- **1962**: The **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** ruled that:
 - **Sovereignty over the Preah Vihear Temple belongs to Cambodia**
- Thailand accepted the judgment regarding the temple but **disagreed over nearby surrounding land**
- **2008**: **Preah Vihear was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site** under Cambodia
- Thailand objected to the listing, arguing it could prejudice unresolved boundary claims

Where did the mass shooting attack on tourists occur that led to a military escalation between India and Pakistan?

- Location: **Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir**



- Pahalgam is a **hill town and prominent tourist destination** in the **Anantnag district** of Jammu and Kashmir.
- **It is located along the Lidder River** and lies at an altitude of around **2,200 metres** above sea level.
- The town **serves as a major base camp for the annual Amarnath Yatra**.
- Known for its **meadows, trekking routes, alpine scenery, and river valleys**, Pahalgam has long been associated with tourism-driven livelihoods.

Which African city hosted this year's G20 Summit? — Johannesburg, South Africa

- **Host City: Johannesburg**
- **Country: South Africa**
- The **Group of Twenty (G20)** is a forum of the world's major economies.
- **It comprises 19 countries and the European Union.**
- The forum addresses:
 - Global economic stability
 - Development finance
 - Climate action
 - Reforms of global governance institutions

Why the G20 Matters

- The **Leaders' Summit** is the **highest decision-making platform of the G20**.
- It shapes international coordination on:
 - Growth and recovery
 - Debt relief for developing countries
 - Climate finance
 - Multilateral cooperation
- **South Africa is the only African country** that is a permanent member of the G20.

Which country enforced the world's first social media ban for children under 16? — Australia

- **Country: Australia**
- Australia enforced the **world's first nationwide social media ban for children under the age of 16**.
- The law shifts the **legal responsibility to social media companies**, not to children or parents.

Where was the year's deadliest earthquake recorded? — Sagaing (Myanmar)

- **Location: Sagaing, Myanmar**
- Sagaing is a **region and city in north-central Myanmar**.
- **It lies west of the Irrawaddy River**, opposite Mandalay.
- The area is significant due to **population concentration** and links to central Myanmar.

Seismic Importance

- Sagaing lies along the **Sagaing Fault**, one of the **most active tectonic faults in Southeast Asia**.



- The fault marks interaction between the **Indian Plate** and the **Sunda Plate**.
- This makes the region **highly prone to strong, shallow earthquakes**.

UN Security Council support for autonomy plan in Western Sahara — Morocco

- **Sovereignty: Morocco**
- **Western Sahara is a disputed territory in North-West Africa.**
- It is bordered by:
 - **Morocco** to the north
 - **Algeria** to the northeast
 - **Mauritania** to the east and south
 - **Atlantic Ocean** to the west
- The territory was formerly known as **Spanish Sahara, a Spanish colony until 1975.**
- **Morocco** asserted sovereignty over the territory.
- The **Polisario Front**, backed primarily by Algeria, demanded independence.
- The Polisario Front proclaimed the **Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR).**
- **An armed conflict followed between Morocco and the Polisario Front.**
- A **UN-brokered ceasefire in 1991** halted large-scale fighting.

MINURSO

- The UN established the **United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) in 1991.**
- Mandate:
 - Monitor the ceasefire
 - Facilitate a **referendum on self-determination**
- The referendum has **not taken place** due to disputes over voter eligibility and political disagreements.

Morocco's Autonomy Plan

- Proposed by **Morocco in 2007.**
- Offers **substantial autonomy** to Western Sahara:
 - Elected local legislature
 - Autonomous executive and judicial institutions
- **Defence, foreign policy, currency, and national sovereignty** remain with Morocco.
- Western Sahara would function as a **self-governing region under Moroccan sovereignty.**

The 2025 Nobel Peace Prize winner was from this South American country — Venezuela

- **Country: Venezuela**
- The **Nobel Peace Prize** is one of the original Nobel Prizes instituted by **Alfred Nobel**.
- It is awarded annually by the **Norwegian Nobel Committee.**
- The prize recognises outstanding contributions to:
 - Peacebuilding
 - Conflict resolution
 - Human rights protection
 - Promotion of democracy and non-violence



- Unlike other Nobel Prizes awarded in Sweden, the **Peace Prize is awarded in Oslo, Norway**.

GS Paper 1: History,	
TOPICS COVERED	31 December 2025
1.	Spiritual life and social life cannot be separated, says Vice-President आध्यात्मिक जीवन और सामाजिक जीवन को अलग नहीं किया जा सकता: उपराष्ट्रपति
2.	Pilgrims flow picks up as Sabarimala temple opens for Makaravilakku मकरविलक्कु के लिए सबरीमाला मंदिर खुलने के साथ तीर्थयात्रियों का flow बढ़ा

Shared celebration



All are welcome: Women perform the traditional folk dance **Kolattam** during a procession to celebrate **Vaikunta Ekadashi** near the Charminar in Hyderabad on Tuesday. PTI

All are welcome: Women perform the **traditional folk dance Kolattam** during a procession to **celebrate Vaikunta Ekadashi** near the Charminar in Hyderabad on Tuesday



Spiritual life and social life cannot be separated, says Vice-President

GS I: History

The Hindu Bureau

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Sivagiri pilgrimage teaches us the powerful truth that spiritual life and social life cannot be separated, Vice-President C.P. Radhakrishnan said. He was speaking after inaugurating the 93rd Sivagiri pilgrimage at Sivagiri Madhom at Varkala in Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday.

“If any faith does not uplift society, then it remains incomplete. Faith can heal society. Here spirituality is not isolated from the world, but it is integrated with the world. Faith when guided by reasoning and compassion becomes a force for social unity and collective growth. Institutions inspired by Sree Narayana Guru have a vital responsibility to guide the



Vice-President C.P. Radhakrishnan pays homage at the samadhi of Sree Narayana Guru at the Sivagiri Madhom on Tuesday. ANI

youth, foster harmony, resist extremism and strengthen the nation,” he said.

‘Greatest contributions’

He said Sree Narayana Guru and Adi Sankara were the greatest contributions of Kerala to Indian society. “If there was no Sankaracharya, India could not have been as united as it is

today. If there was no Narayana Guru, there would be no reformation and no Sanatana Dharma in Kerala. Guru neither provoked nor divided society; he transformed it,” he said.

Mr. Radhakrishnan said when Narayana Guru conceived the pilgrimage, he did not imagine mere rituals or traditions, but

about awakening the people. “He wanted to awaken through education, cleanliness, better organisation, skill training and building self-respect. It is a pilgrimage for the comprehensive betterment of man, which is a perfect blend of spiritual seeking and economic and social progress. The Sivagiri pilgrimage, in which people of all religions and castes take part, is a living example of harmony,” he said.

Mr. Radhakrishnan said that through the Union government’s Pilgrimage Rejuvenation And Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) scheme, pilgrimage sites were being upgraded.

Shashi Tharoor’s latest book, *The Sage Who Reimagined Hinduism: The Life, Lessons, & Legacy of Sree Narayana Guru*, was released at the function.

Spiritual life and social life cannot be separated, says Vice-President

आध्यात्मिक जीवन और सामाजिक जीवन को अलग नहीं किया जा सकता: उपराष्ट्रपति

- He was speaking after inaugurating the 93rd Sivagiri pilgrimage at Sivagiri Madhom at Varkala in Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday.
- “If there was no Sankaracharya, India could not have been as united as it is today. If there was no Narayana Guru, there would be no reformation and no Sanatana Dharma in Kerala. Guru neither provoked nor divided society; he transformed it,” he said.
- “यदि शंकराचार्य न होते, तो भारत आज जितना एकजुट है, उतना नहीं होता। यदि नारायण गुरु न होते, तो केरल में न तो सुधार होता और न ही सनातन धर्म होता। गुरु ने न समाज को उकसाया, न विभाजित किया; उन्होंने उसे रूपांतरित किया,” उन्होंने कहा।
- Mr. Radhakrishnan said when Narayana Guru conceived the pilgrimage, he did not imagine mere rituals or traditions, but about awakening the people.
- Mr. Radhakrishnan said that through the Union government’s Pilgrimage Rejuvenation And Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) scheme, pilgrimage sites were being upgraded.

श्री राधाकृष्णन ने कहा कि केंद्र सरकार की तीर्थस्थल पुनरुद्धार और आध्यात्मिक संवर्धन अभियान (PRASAD) योजना के माध्यम से तीर्थस्थलों का उन्नयन किया जा रहा है।



- **Shashi Tharoor's** latest book, **The Sage Who Reimagined Hinduism: The Life, Lessons, & Legacy of Sree Narayana Guru**, was released at the function.
कार्यक्रम में शशि थरूर की नवीनतम पुस्तक द सेज हू रीडिमेंजिंड हिंदुइज़्म: द लाइफ, लेसन, एंड लेगेसी ऑफ श्री नारायण गुरु का विमोचन किया गया।

Pilgrims flow picks up as Sabarimala temple opens for Makaravilakku

GS I: History

The Hindu Bureau
PATHANAMTHITTA

The Ayyappa temple at Sabarimala opened on Tuesday evening for the Makaravilakku festival season.

Melshanti E.D. Prasad reopened the sanctum sanctorum at 5 p.m., accompanied by Tantri Kandararu Mahesh Mohanaru. This was followed by the opening of the Malikappuram Devi temple.

Even before the ceremonial opening, a steady stream of pilgrims, especially from neighbouring States, began their ascent



The head priest opening the temple in Sabarimala on Tuesday. LEJU KAMAL

to the temple via Pampa and Pullumedu. The temple, which closed after the Mandalam pilgrimage sea-

son on December 27, will remain open until January 19. The Makaravilakku festival is scheduled for January 14.

Tension prevails

Security arrangements have been significantly stepped up, with a 1,593-member police force deployed under the leadership of Crime Branch Superintendent of Police M. Krishnan.

The Travancore Devaswom Board has also put in place extensive arrangements to manage the expected surge in pilgrim in-

flow during the period.

Tension flared along the traditional forest route from Erumely on Monday evening after devotees were prevented from entering the forest, with officials stating that the path would open only at 7 a.m. on Tuesday.

At Koikkakkavu and Azhuthakkadavu, devotees, frustrated by prolonged waiting, broke through restrictions and continued their journey. Similar scenes unfolded at Perurthodu, where protests erupted following disruption to the pilgrimage.

Pilgrims flow picks up as Sabarimala temple opens for Makaravilakku मकरविलक्कु के लिए सबरीमाला मंदिर खुलने के साथ तीर्थयात्रियों का flow बढ़ा

- Pilgrims flow picks up as Sabarimala temple opens for Makaravilakku मकरविलक्कु के लिए सबरीमाला मंदिर खुलने के साथ तीर्थयात्रियों का flow बढ़ा
- The Ayyappa temple at Sabarimala opened on Tuesday evening for the Makaravilakku festival season.
सबरीमाला में अयप्पा मंदिर मंगलवार शाम मकरविलक्कु उत्सव सत्र के लिए खोला गया।
- Melshanti E.D. Prasad reopened the sanctum sanctorum at 5 p.m., accompanied by Tantri Kandararu Mahesh Mohanaru.
मेलशांति ई.डी. प्रसाद ने शाम 5 बजे तंत्री कंदरारु महेश मोहनारु के साथ गर्भगृह को पुनः खोला।
- This was followed by the opening of the Malikappuram Devi temple.
इसके बाद मलिकप्पुरम देवी मंदिर खोला गया।

GS Paper 1: Geography

TOPICS COVERED

31 December 2025

1. Narva, a Russian-speaking Estonian city, united in fear, divided in politics
नारवा, एक रूसी भाषी एस्टोनियाई शहर, भय में एकजुट, राजनीति में विभाजित



Tribal festival



In step: Kota tribeswomen celebrate *Aiyanoor Ammanoor* festival at Solur Kokkal near Udhagamandalam on Tuesday. SATHYAMOORTHY M.

In step: Kota tribeswomen celebrate Aiyanoor Ammanoor festival at Solur Kokkal near Udhagamandalam on Tuesday. SATHYAMOORTHY M

PATRIOTIC



Narva, a Russian-speaking Estonian city, united in fear, divided in politics

Half of Narva are Estonian citizens, 33.2% Russian citizens, and 12.5% without any citizenship — those stateless people with memories of homes in Crimea, Georgia or other conflict zones; an uneasy calm prevails here with many choosing silence over discussing the war and political alignments

GS I, Geography, Mapping

Smita Sharma
NARVA, ESTONIA

Kirik is a 41-year-old real estate agent. His older brother, Ilja, is a journalist. Unlike many other people in this distant town of Narva in Estonia, the brothers are approachable and speak to a foreign journalist in English with ease about their lives in the shadow of a neighbouring war.

Some 201 km away from capital Tallinn, Narva is the most Russian speaking town of Europe with over 96% Russian speakers among its roughly 53,000 residents. The Narva river flows into the Russian Federation barely 101 metres away, and the forests lead to highways nearly 250 km away from St. Petersburg.

A small nostalgic Friendship Bridge, over the dark grey river with white foam, connects the magnificent Hermann's castle on the Estonian side built by the Danes in the 13th century to the Ivangorod Fortress built by Russian Tsar Ivan III in 1492. Both historical monuments were controlled by different conquering forces until the Estonians broke free from five decades of Soviet occupation in 1991, and the river border divided the countries.

Lived reality

But polarisation, instead of 'friendship', is the lived reality here today. Half the population in Narva are Estonian citizens, 33.2% are Russian citizens and 12.5% without any citizenship — those stateless citizens with grey passports issued to ethnic Russians who were relocated during the



Link to a past: A small nostalgic Friendship Bridge over the river connects the Hermann's castle on the Estonian side built by the Danes in the 13th century to the Ivangorod Fortress in 1492. SMITA SHARMA

Soviet era, but post Estonian independence refused to sign up for either nationality. Many of them belong to Crimea, Georgia or other conflict zones in the region.

Mr. Kirik and Mr. Ilja avoid speaking to their parents. "The war has pulled people apart," says Mr. Ilja. "Many families don't even talk to each other. The older people avoid talking about the war because they favour Russian President Putin. Young people like me mostly support Ukraine," adds Mr. Kirik. The young feel the older generation is swept by the propaganda narratives on Russian TV which is watched here through a simple antenna despite a ban on its transmission in Europe.

"Four years ago, it was scary as journalists from different channels and countries came here and started saying, 'You will be next, how will you live with that?'" Now I see most of the people are not worried about any invasion because we are NATO members," says Mr. Kirik. Though an uneasy calm

prevails in the town with many choosing silence instead of discussing the war and uncomfortable political alignments.

"I had Russian friends but not anymore. But most of them have moved to other countries," says Mr. Kirik with a smile.

Interestingly, in 2021, this historic town chose a new slogan for itself: "Europe begins here". And with the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, this slogan brought home the traumatic question — "what if we are next?"

Narrowing passage

This question forced several changes to the Border Check Points (BCPs) across the country, including in Narva, which facilitate movement of people on both sides. Before the pandemic hit, four million record numbers of people were crossing the check point in 2019. Around 27,000 people daily. But post Covid, and with the beginning of the war, the volume dropped by almost 95%. Some 1,600-1,700 people now cross daily even

as the timings have changed from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. The border earlier operated 24/7. Tourist visas have been stopped. Only those with some residential rights within European Union are allowed permits to travel.

And with a suspected air space violation in Finland by the Russians, all vehicular, truck and bus operations were suspended at the BCPs in May last year.

The vigil was also sharpened to prevent border smuggling. Russian gasoline, alcohol and cigarettes would often find their way into Narva earlier while Estonian cheese and dairy were in demand on the other side.

Indrek, listed among Estonia's top chefs, runs a quirky restaurant close to the border. He has a Russian wife. Asked about the impact of the war on personal relationships, he says, "Relationships are always challenging, nationality does not matter." Russian tourists do not frequent his restaurant anymore, where wolf paws are on display and bull tes-

ticles on the menu.

The Narva Museum, housed inside the Hermann's castle, is at the centre of a narrative battle. Its director Maria Smorzhevskikh Smirnova was 14 years old when the Soviet Union collapsed. Her grandparents were in the Soviet army during the Second World War. She points to Mr. Putin's speech in June 2022 referring to Narva as a potential target when he seemed to compare himself to the 18th century Russian Tsar 'Peter the Great' in drawing a parallel between the historic quests to win back Russian land and his military action. "Peter the Great waged the Great Northern War for 21 years. It would seem that he was at war with Sweden, he took something from them. He did not take anything from them, he returned [what was Russia's]," Mr. Putin said.

Culture in war time

A poster put up across the museum on the other side of the river in Ivangorod in 2023 announced "Russia's borders do not end anywhere." In May this year, the flag tower of the Narva castle hit back with a poster referring to Mr. Putin as 'Putler - war criminal'. Smirnova is today a wanted criminal for the Russians. "Culture cannot remain silent in war time," she responds.

Estonia, which lived through Russian and Nazi occupation, has today increased its defence spending like the rest of Europe has been forced to. Before the war, the Nordic NATO nation was spending 2% of its GDP on defence. It went up to 3.5% during the full war and will be increased

to 5% in 2026.

"If you want peace, you must prepare for peace...and you must prepare smartly", quipped Kaimo Kuusk, Permanent Secretary at the Estonian Defence Ministry in capital Tallinn earlier. A former intelligence official, he was the Ambassador to Ukraine when Russian ballistic missiles announced the start of the invasion on February 24, 2022. He stressed that Estonia does not have the resources to buy squadrons of fighters and hence the NATO membership is so crucial and 450 million people in the EU is an added value and collective strength for a small country. A sentiment that resonated strongly by Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna who told this author that Russia poses an existential threat to Europe. And this is what needs to be explained to India and Prime Minister Modi who he hoped could help build pressure for

truce. Interestingly, the Estonian newsrooms chose to cover the lack of major defence agreements during the recent Putin visit to Delhi as India's 'snub'.

It is an information war out there as the game of throne continues. Narva for now is calm on the surface. But a resident who chose to remain anonymous expressed his nervousness that Russian speakers are under the microscope to gauge their allegiances. And people choose to stay silent than discuss the war and ask for trouble.

(Smita Sharma is an independent journalist reporting on Foreign Affairs. She was in Estonia as part of an Indian media delegation invited by the government.)

Narva, a Russian-speaking Estonian city, united in fear, divided in politics नारवा, एक रूसी भाषी एस्टोनियाई शहर, भय में एकजुट, राजनीति में विभाजित

- Half of Narva are **Estonian citizens**, **33.2% Russian citizens**, and **12.5% without any citizenship** — those stateless people with memories of homes in **Crimea, Georgia** or other **conflict zones**; an uneasy calm prevails here with many choosing silence over discussing the war and political alignments.

नारवा की आधी आबादी **एस्टोनियाई नागरिक** है, **33.2% रूसी नागरिक** हैं, और **12.5%** बिना किसी नागरिकता के हैं — ये **stateless** लोग हैं जिनकी यादें **क्राइमिया, जॉर्जिया** या अन्य संघर्ष क्षेत्रों के घरों से जुड़ी हैं; यहाँ एक असहज शांति बनी हुई है और कई लोग युद्ध और राजनीतिक संरक्षण पर चर्चा करने के बजाय मौन रखना चुनते हैं।

- Kirik is a 41-year-old **real estate agent**. His older brother, Ilja, is a **journalist**. Unlike many other people in this distant town of Narva in Estonia, the brothers are approachable and speak to a foreign journalist in English with ease about their lives in the shadow of a



neighbouring war.

किरिक् 41 वर्षीय **रियल एस्टेट एजेंट** हैं। उनके बड़े भाई, इल्जा, **पत्रकार** हैं। एस्टोनिया के इस दूरदराज़ शहर नारवा में कई अन्य लोगों के विपरीत, ये भाई सहज हैं और पड़ोसी युद्ध के साए में अपने जीवन के बारे में विदेशी पत्रकार से आसानी से अंग्रेजी में बात करते हैं।

- Some 201 km away from capital Tallinn, **Narva is the most Russian speaking town of Europe with over 96% Russian speakers among its roughly 53,000 residents. The Narva river flows into the Russian Federation barely 101 metres away**, and the forests lead to highways nearly 250 km away from St. Petersburg.

राजधानी टाल्लिन से लगभग 201 किमी दूर, नारवा यूरोप का सबसे **रूसी भाषी शहर** है, जिसमें लगभग 53,000 निवासियों में 96% से अधिक रूसी बोलने वाले हैं। **नारवा नदी** मात्र 101 मीटर दूर रूसी संघ में बहती है, और जंगल सेंट पीटर्सबर्ग से लगभग 250 किमी दूर हाइवे तक पहुँचते हैं।

- A small nostalgic **Friendship Bridge**, over the dark grey river with white foam, connects the magnificent **Hermann's castle** on the Estonian side built by the Danes in the 13th century to the **Ivangorod Fortress** built by Russian Tsar Ivan III in 1492.

एक छोटा नॉस्टैल्जिक **फ्रेंडशिप ब्रिज**, गहरे ग्रे रंग की नदी पर सफेद झाग के साथ, एस्टोनियाई पक्ष में 13वीं शताब्दी में डेनिशों द्वारा निर्मित भव्य **हर्मन का किला** को 1492 में रूसी ज़ार इवान III द्वारा बनाए गए **इवांगरोड किले** से जोड़ता है।

- Both historical monuments were controlled by different conquering forces until the Estonians broke free from five decades of **Soviet occupation** in 1991, and the river border divided the countries.

दोनों ऐतिहासिक स्मारकों को अलग-अलग विजेता ताकतों ने नियंत्रित किया जब तक कि एस्टोनियाई 1991 में पांच दशकों की **सोवियत कब्जे** से स्वतंत्र नहीं हुए, और नदी की सीमा ने देशों को विभाजित कर दिया।

Lived reality

जिया हुआ वास्तविकता

- But polarisation, instead of 'friendship', is the lived reality here today. Half the population in Narva are **Estonian citizens**, 33.2% are **Russian citizens** and 12.5% without any citizenship — those stateless citizens with grey passports issued to ethnic Russians who were relocated during the Soviet era, but post Estonian independence refused to sign up for either nationality. Many of them belong to **Crimea, Georgia** or other conflict zones in the region.
- "Four years ago, it was scary as journalists from different channels and countries came here and started saying, 'You will be next, how will you live with that?' Now I see most of the people are not worried about any invasion because we are **NATO members**," says Mr. Kirik. "चार साल पहले, यह डरावना था क्योंकि विभिन्न चैनलों और देशों के पत्रकार यहाँ आए और कहने लगे, 'आप अगला होंगे, आप इसके साथ कैसे जीएंगे?' अब मैं देखता हूँ कि अधिकांश लोग किसी भी आक्रमण को लेकर चिंतित नहीं हैं क्योंकि हम **NATO सदस्य** हैं," किरिक् कहते हैं।

GS Paper II: Polity,	
TOPICS COVERED	31 December
1.	EC gives one more week for U.P. SIR in another extension ईसी ने यूपी एसआईआर के लिए एक और सप्ताह का विस्तार दिया
4.	Law on 'suspension of sentence' 'सजा के निलंबन' पर कानून



EC gives one more week for U.P. SIR in another extension

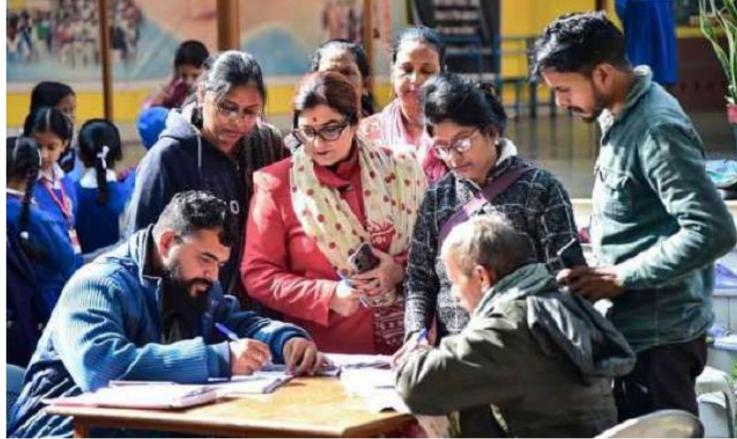
Draft list to be published on January 6, final list on March 6; claims and objections will be invited from January 6 to February 6; more than one crore voters in draft list are 'unmapped', say officials

GS II: Polity

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission of India (EC) on Tuesday revised the schedule for the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Uttar Pradesh yet again, extending it by a week. Now the draft list will be published on January 6, instead of December 31, and the final list on March 6, instead of February 28. Claims and objections from voters will be invited from January 6 to February 6, while the notice stage, disposal of claims and objections, and decisions on enumeration forms will continue from January 6 to February 27, after which the final electoral roll will be published on March 6. The SIR process in the State began on November 4.

2.89 cr. deletions likely
The draft roll is expected to contain around 12.55 crore voters, with about 2.89 crore names deleted from the pre-SIR list for reasons such as death, change of residence, or duplication, officials said. They added that more than one crore voters on the



Keeping track: Booth-level officers during the enumeration process for the SIR in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh. The draft roll is expected to contain nearly 12.55 crore voters. FILE PHOTO

draft list fall under the "unmapped" category and will be required to submit documents prescribed by the EC to retain their names in the final roll.

Earlier this month, the EC had extended the schedule by 15 days, after which the draft rolls were to be published on December 31. Before that, on November 30, the EC had extended the process in 12 States and Union Territories by a week.

'HIT-AND-TRIAL PROCESS'
» PAGE 5

EC relaxes SIR hearing for Bengal's ailing, elderly

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Amid outrage among a section of the electorate over elderly and ailing voters being summoned for hearings under the special intensive revision (SIR) in West Bengal, the Election Commission of India (EC) has, in a notification issued on

Monday, directed officials not to call such electors – particularly those aged 85 years and above – for physical hearings. In cases of notices being issued to such electors, officials have been instructed to carry out the verification at their residences.

FULL REPORT ON
» PAGE 4

EC gives one more week for U.P. SIR in another extension ईसी ने यूपी एसआईआर के लिए एक और सप्ताह का विस्तार दिया

- Draft list to be published on **January 6**, final list on **March 6**; claims and objections will be invited from **January 6 to February 6**; more than **one crore voters** in draft list are 'unmapped', say officials
ड्राफ्ट सूची 6 जनवरी को प्रकाशित होगी, अंतिम सूची 6 मार्च को; दावे और आपत्तियां 6 जनवरी से 6 फरवरी तक आमंत्रित की जाएंगी; ड्राफ्ट सूची में एक करोड़ से अधिक मतदाता 'अनमैप्ड' हैं, ऐसा अधिकारियों ने कहा
- The **Election Commission of India (EC)** on **Tuesday** revised the schedule for the ongoing **special intensive revision (SIR)** of electoral rolls in **Uttar Pradesh** yet again, extending it by a week.
भारत निर्वाचन आयोग (ईसी) ने मंगलवार को उत्तर प्रदेश में चल रहे विशेष गहन पुनरीक्षण (एसआईआर) की समय-सारिणी को फिर से संशोधित करते हुए इसे एक सप्ताह के लिए बढ़ा दिया।



- Now the **draft list** will be published on **January 6**, instead of **December 31**, and the **final list** on **March 6**, instead of **February 28**.
अब ड्राफ्ट सूची 31 दिसंबर के बजाय 6 जनवरी को और अंतिम सूची 28 फरवरी के बजाय 6 मार्च को प्रकाशित होगी।
- **Claims and objections** from voters will be invited from **January 6 to February 6**, while the **notice stage, disposal of claims and objections, and decisions on enumeration forms** will continue from **January 6 to February 27**, after which the **final electoral roll** will be published on **March 6**.
मतदाताओं से दावे और आपत्तियां 6 जनवरी से 6 फरवरी तक आमंत्रित की जाएंगी, जबकि नोटिस चरण, दावों और आपत्तियों का निपटान, और गणना प्रपत्रों पर निर्णय 6 जनवरी से 27 फरवरी तक जारी रहेगा, जिसके बाद अंतिम निर्वाचक सूची 6 मार्च को प्रकाशित होगी।
- The **SIR process** in the State began on **November 4**.
राज्य में एसआईआर प्रक्रिया 4 नवंबर को शुरू हुई थी।

2.89 cr. deletions likely

2.89 करोड़ नाम हटने की संभावना

- The **draft roll** is expected to contain around **12.55 crore voters**, with about **2.89 crore names deleted** from the pre-SIR list for reasons such as **death, change of residence, or duplication**, officials said.
ड्राफ्ट रोल में लगभग 12.55 करोड़ मतदाता होने की उम्मीद है, जबकि मृत्यु, निवास परिवर्तन, या दोहराव जैसे कारणों से प्री-एसआईआर सूची से लगभग 2.89 करोड़ नाम हटाए जाएंगे, ऐसा अधिकारियों ने कहा।
- They added that more than **one crore voters** on the draft list fall under the **“unmapped” category** and will be required to submit **documents prescribed by the EC** to retain their names in the **final roll**.
उन्होंने बताया कि ड्राफ्ट सूची में शामिल एक करोड़ से अधिक मतदाता “अनमैप्ड श्रेणी” में आते हैं और उन्हें अंतिम सूची में नाम बनाए रखने के लिए ईसी द्वारा निर्धारित दस्तावेज जमा करने होंगे।
- Earlier this month, the **EC** had extended the schedule by **15 days**, after which the draft rolls were to be published on **December 31**.
इस महीने की शुरुआत में, ईसी ने समय-सारिणी को 15 दिन बढ़ाया था, जिसके बाद ड्राफ्ट रोल 31 दिसंबर को प्रकाशित होने थे।
- Before that, on **November 30**, the **EC** had extended the process in **12 States and Union Territories** by a **week**.
इससे पहले, 30 नवंबर को ईसी ने 12 राज्यों और केंद्र शासित प्रदेशों में इस प्रक्रिया को एक सप्ताह के लिए बढ़ाया था।



Law on 'suspension of sentence'

In life imprisonment cases like Kuldeep Singh Sengar's, what factors must appellate courts weigh before suspending a sentence? Does the Delhi High Court's view that an MLA is not a 'public servant' under the POCSO framework expose a gap that weakens protection against aggravated abuses by elected representatives?

ISS II: Policy

LETTER & SPIRIT

Kartikey Singh

In December 29, a three-judge vacation bench of the Supreme Court, comprising CJI Surya Kant, Justice J.K. Maheshwari and Justice A.G. Masih, issued notice and stayed the Delhi High Court's judgment suspending the life sentence of a former four-time MLA, Kuldeep Singh Sengar and granting him bail pending appeal in the 2017 infamous Unnao rape case. The intervention came just six days after the High Court, on December 23, suspended Sengar's life sentence, which triggered intense public debate.

The case stems from allegations that in June 2017, the survivor, then a minor, was raped by the convict, the then-sitting MLA, at his residence. Amid allegations of police inaction and intimidation, the probe was transferred to the CBI in April 2018, and the trial shifted to Delhi pursuant to the SC's directions. On December 16, 2019, the trial court in Delhi convicted Sengar, and by a separate order on December 20, 2019, sentenced him to imprisonment for the remainder of his natural life.

Once a trial concludes, an accused is either acquitted or convicted. A conviction displaces the "presumption of innocence" and renders the sentence operative, requiring the convict to undergo the awarded punishment. However, the conviction remains appealable, and during the pendency of appellate scrutiny, the convict may, under Section 389 of the CrPC, 1973 (now Section 430 of the BNS, 2023), seek suspension of the execution of the sentence and consequential bail if in custody, keeping its enforcement in abeyance. Importantly, 'suspension of sentence', which is a discretionary judicial power, halts only the punishment and not the finding of guilt.

When do courts suspend a sentence? The law draws a clear distinction between 'suspension of sentence' in cases involving short-term or fixed-term sentences, where it is the norm, and in serious offences, often punishable with life imprisonment, where it is an exception. In *Bhagwan Rama Shinde Gosi vs. State of Gujarat (1989)*, the SC held that when a fixed-term sentence is under appeal, appellate courts must liberally exercise their discretion to suspend the sentence, barring exceptional circumstances. Conversely, in serious offences or those punishable with life imprisonment, such as Sengar's case, 'suspension of sentence' under Section 389 CrPC is rare and must follow an objective assessment of factors including the nature and gravity of the offence, the manner of its commission, and the desirability of releasing the convict on bail, as reiterated by the top court in *Shivani Tyagi vs. State of Uttar Pradesh (2024)*, an acid attack case.

In allowing Sengar's 'suspension of sentence' application, the High Court focused primarily on his conviction under Section 5(c) of the POCSO Act, which criminalises 'aggravated' penetrative sexual assault by a "public servant" on a child and attracts punishment under Section 6. Under the criminal law framework, offences committed by persons in positions of trust or authority, such as police or armed force personnel, public servants, and staff of institutions including hospitals, jails, or educational



Public voices: Women stage a protest demanding justice for the Unnao gangrape victim outside Delhi High Court in New Delhi.

establishments, are treated as "aggravated" and subjected to enhanced punishment, reflecting legislative recognition of abuse of power and heightened victim vulnerability.

Definition of public servant Importantly, the POCSO Act does not define the term "public servant." Under Section 2(2) of the POCSO Act, undefined expressions shall draw their meaning from the IPC (1860), CrPC (1973), the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, or the Information Technology Act, 2000. Among these, only the IPC defines "public servant" under Section 21, encompassing categories such as judges, military officers, and arbitrators, etc., but not elected legislators. Relying on this statutory scheme and the top court's ruling in *R.S. Nayak vs. A.R. Antulay (1984)*, the HC held that an MLA does not qualify as a "public servant" under the IPC and, consequently, the POCSO Act. This is a departure from the trial court's approach, which had sustained Sengar's conviction under Section 5(c) by importing the broader definition of "public servant" from Section 2(viii) of the Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA), 1988, which includes any person holding an office to perform a public duty.

Consequently, the HC held, *prima facie*, that Sengar's case did not fall within the category of rape committed by a "public servant" under Section 5(c) of the POCSO Act or Section 376(2)(b) IPC. This finding formed the central basis for suspending his sentence and granting regular bail. The HC also noted that Sengar had undergone over seven years of imprisonment, and, relying on *Kashmiri Singh vs. State of Punjab (1977)*, observed that prolonged incarceration could cause injustice if the conviction or sentence were ultimately modified.

Addressing the survivor's apprehension of threat, rooted in a documented history of systemic intimidation, the custodial death of her father (for which Sengar stands convicted under Section 304(ii) IPC), police callousness, and the 2019 truck-car accident that critically injured her and her lawyer and killed her two aunts, the HC noted that the SC had granted her CRPF protection in August 2019. Nevertheless, the HC held that "suspension of sentence" could not be denied solely on the apprehension that

police or paramilitary forces might fail in their protective duties, as such a premise would undermine their role.

In a case that laid bare a prolonged struggle for justice, structural barriers and deep institutional failures in confronting entrenched power, the suspension of a life sentence raises serious concerns.

First, while the HC is legally correct in holding that it could not expand the statutory definition of "public servant" by amending the legislation to import the broader meaning under the PCA, its interpretation could have been more purposive. The resulting anomaly is troubling: while a *patwari* (village accountant) or police constable qualifies as a "public servant" and attracts punishment under the POCSO Act, an elected MLA does not. This ambiguity in the POCSO framework was also flagged by the SC bench. By narrowing the scope of the POCSO Act, a special, victim-centric statute designed to protect children, the HC accorded insufficient weight to its object and intent. Offences under Section 5(c) are undoubtedly graver than corruption offences by MPs or MLAs: while corruption undermines governance, offences under the POCSO Act involve the direct abuse of children, causing severe physical and psychological trauma with lasting social consequences.

The apex court has repeatedly cautioned against interpretive literalism that weakens POCSO's protective core. In *Attorney General for India vs. Satish (2021)*, it rejected the Bombay HC's untenable narrow interpretation that groping a minor through clothing, without direct "skin-to-skin" contact, did not amount to "touch" or "physical contact" so as to attract the offence of "sexual assault" under Section 7 of the POCSO Act. Similarly, in *Independent Thought vs. Union of India (2017)*, the SC harmoniously and purposively interpreted child-protection law by reading down Exception 2 to Section 375 IPC, which had exempted non-consensual sexual intercourse with one's wife aged between 15 and 18, from the offence of rape. Together, these rulings affirm that when child protection is at stake, statutory interpretation must advance, not dilute, the law's protective purpose.

Second, the HC's decision rests primarily on the *prima facie* inapplicability of Section 5(c) of the POCSO Act and the period of

incarceration already undergone.

However, the SC has held that in cases involving life imprisonment, 'suspension of sentence' under Section 389 CrPC requires the appellate court to assess whether the convict has a fair chance of acquittal. Recently, in *Chhotelal Yadav vs. State of Jharkhand (2025)*, the apex court set aside a 'suspension of sentence', holding that in life imprisonment cases, suspension is warranted only where the convict demonstrates a palpable or gross error in the trial court's judgment sufficient to show that the appeal may succeed and result in acquittal. In Sengar's case, the HC ought to have examined whether the non-applicability of Section 5(c) would lead to his complete acquittal. Further, in *Shivani Tyagi vs. State of Uttar Pradesh (2024)*, the SC clarified that long incarceration alone cannot justify 'suspension of sentence' in life imprisonment cases.

In the same vein, in *Janna Lal vs. State of Rajasthan (2025)*, involving a POCSO conviction carrying a 20-year sentence, the SC set aside an order suspending sentence, holding that once the trial court has found the victim to be a minor, such a finding cannot be lightly unsettled at the suspension stage.

Third, the HC should have accorded greater weight to the undisputed record of intimidation and violence, including the survivor's father's death, and alleged witness tampering, and the exceptional security measures required during trial.

What is next?

The HC's literal interpretation highlights a statutory framework that recognises authority only when formally mentioned, not when exercised through entrenched political power, as seen in the definition of "public servant." This limitation is legislatively inherited, not judicially created. While legality and justice often align, they do not always converge.

Beyond legal questions, the case also exposes how the criminal justice system operates for survivors of sexual violence. It lays bare the fact that, in reality, the fundamental right of equality before law and equal protection of laws under Article 14 of our Constitution is not truly treated as equal for every individual. Yet, these courageous survivors bear the cost not to vindicate the system, but to reveal its limits and expand justice for all. *Kartikey Singh is a lawyer based in New Delhi. Views expressed are personal.*

THE GIST

The law draws a distinction between 'suspension of sentence' in cases involving short-term or fixed-term sentences, where it is the norm, and in serious offences, where it is an exception.

'Suspension of sentence', which is a discretionary judicial power, halts only the punishment and not the finding of guilt.

The POCSO Act does not define the term "public servant." The Act says undefined expressions shall draw their meaning from the IPC, CrPC, the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015, or the IT Act, 2000.

Law on 'suspension of sentence' 'सजा के निलंबन' पर कानून

- In life imprisonment cases like Kuldeep Singh Sengar's, what factors must appellate courts weigh before suspending a sentence? कुलदीप सिंह सेंगर जैसे आजीवन कारावास के मामलों में, अपील अदालतों को सजा निलंबित करने से पहले किन कारकों पर विचार करना चाहिए?
- Does the Delhi High Court's view that an MLA is not a 'public servant' under the POCSO framework expose a gap that weakens protection against aggravated abuses by elected representatives?



क्या दिल्ली उच्च न्यायालय का यह दृष्टिकोण कि POCSSO ढाँचे के तहत एक विधायक (MLA) 'लोक सेवक' नहीं है, ऐसा अंतराल उजागर करता है जो निर्वाचित प्रतिनिधियों द्वारा किए गए गंभीर दुरुपयोगों के खिलाफ सुरक्षा को कमजोर करता है?

On December 29, Supreme Court intervention in the Unnao rape case 21 दिसंबर मामले में सुप्रीम कोर्ट का हस्तक्षेप

- On December 29, a three-judge vacation bench of the Supreme Court, comprising CJI Surya Kant, Justice J.K. Maheshwari and Justice A.G. Masih, issued notice and stayed the Delhi High Court's judgment suspending the life sentence of a former four-time MLA, Kuldeep Singh Sengar, and granting him bail pending appeal in the 2017 infamous Unnao rape case.
29 दिसंबर को सुप्रीम कोर्ट की तीन न्यायाधीशों की अवकाश पीठ, जिसमें सीजेआई सूर्य कांत, न्यायमूर्ति जे.के. महेश्वरी और न्यायमूर्ति ए.जी. मसीह शामिल थे, ने नोटिस जारी किया और दिल्ली हाई कोर्ट के उस फैसले पर रोक लगाई, जिसमें पूर्व चार बार के विधायक कुलदीप सिंह सेंगर की आजीवन कारावास की सज़ा निलंबित कर 2017 के कुख्यात उन्नाव बलात्कार मामले में अपील लंबित रहने तक ज़मानत दी गई थी।
- The intervention came just six days after the High Court, on December 23, suspended Sengar's life sentence, which triggered intense public debate.
यह हस्तक्षेप 23 दिसंबर को हाई कोर्ट द्वारा सेंगर की आजीवन सज़ा निलंबित किए जाने के सिर्फ़ छह दिन बाद हुआ, जिसने तीव्र सार्वजनिक बहस को जन्म दिया।
- The case stems from allegations that in June 2017, the survivor, then a minor, was raped by the convict, the then-sitting MLA, at his residence.
यह मामला आरोपों से जुड़ा है कि जून 2017 में पीड़िता, जो तब नाबालिग थी, के साथ तत्कालीन विधायक और अब दोषी ठहराए गए व्यक्ति ने अपने आवास पर बलात्कार किया।
- Amid allegations of police inaction and intimidation, the probe was transferred to the CBI in April 2018, and the trial shifted to Delhi pursuant to the SC's directions.
पुलिस की निष्क्रियता और धमकी के आरोपों के बीच, अप्रैल 2018 में जाँच सीबीआई को सौंपी गई और सुप्रीम कोर्ट के निर्देशों के अनुसार मुकदमा दिल्ली स्थानांतरित किया गया।
- On December 16, 2019, the trial court in Delhi convicted Sengar, and by a separate order on December 20, 2019, sentenced him to imprisonment for the remainder of his natural life.
16 दिसंबर 2019 को दिल्ली की ट्रायल कोर्ट ने सेंगर को दोषी ठहराया, और 20 दिसंबर 2019 के अलग आदेश से उसे शेष प्राकृतिक जीवन के लिए कारावास की सज़ा सुनाई।
- Once a trial concludes, an accused is either acquitted or convicted.
एक बार मुकदमा समाप्त होने पर, आरोपी या तो बरी होता है या दोषी ठहराया जाता है।
- A conviction displaces the "presumption of innocence" and renders the sentence operative, requiring the convict to undergo the awarded punishment.
दोषसिद्धि के साथ "निर्दोषता की धारणा" समाप्त हो जाती है और सज़ा प्रभावी हो जाती है, जिससे दोषी को निर्धारित दंड भुगतना होता है।
- However, the conviction remains appealable, and during the pendency of appellate scrutiny, the convict may, under Section 389 of the CrPC, 1973 (now Section 430 of the BNSS, 2023), seek suspension of the execution of the sentence and consequential bail if in custody, keeping its enforcement in abeyance.
हालाँकि, दोषसिद्धि अपील योग्य रहती है, और अपील लंबित रहने के दौरान दोषी दंड प्रक्रिया संहिता, 1973 की धारा 389 (अब BNSS, 2023 की धारा 430) के तहत सज़ा के क्रियान्वयन के निलंबन और परिणामी ज़मानत की माँग कर सकता है, जिससे सज़ा का अमल स्थगित रहता है।
- Importantly, 'suspension of sentence', which is a discretionary judicial power, halts only the punishment and not the finding of guilt.
महत्वपूर्ण रूप से, 'सज़ा का निलंबन', जो एक न्यायिक विवेकाधीन शक्ति है, केवल दंड को रोकता है, दोष निर्धारण को नहीं।

When do courts suspend a sentence?
अदालतें सज़ा का निलंबन कब करती हैं?



- The law draws a **clear distinction** between ‘**suspension of sentence**’ in cases involving **short-term or fixed-term sentences**, where it is the **norm**, and in **serious offences**, often punishable with **life imprisonment**, where it is an **exception**.
क्रानून अल्पकालिक या निश्चित अवधि की सज़ाओं वाले मामलों में ‘सज़ा के निलंबन’ (जहाँ यह सामान्य नियम है) और गंभीर अपराधों में, जो प्रायः आजीवन कारावास से दंडनीय होते हैं (जहाँ यह अपवाद है), के बीच स्पष्ट अंतर करता है।
- In **Bhagwan Rama Shinde Gosai vs. State of Gujarat (1999)**, the **SC** held that when a **fixed-term sentence** is under appeal, **appellate courts** must **liberally exercise** their discretion to **suspend the sentence**, barring **exceptional circumstances**.
भगवान राम शिंदे गोसाई बनाम गुजरात राज्य (1999) में सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने कहा कि निश्चित अवधि की सज़ा अपील में होने पर अपील अदालतों को, असाधारण परिस्थितियों को छोड़कर, उदारतापूर्वक सज़ा निलंबित करनी चाहिए।
- Conversely, in **serious offences** or those punishable with **life imprisonment**, such as **Sengar’s case**, ‘**suspension of sentence**’ under **Section 389 CrPC** is **rare** and must follow an **objective assessment** of factors including the **nature and gravity of the offence**, the **manner of its commission**, and the **desirability of releasing the convict on bail**, as reiterated by the top court in **Shivani Tyagi vs. State of Uttar Pradesh (2024)**, an **acid attack case**.
इसके विपरीत, गंभीर अपराधों या आजीवन कारावास से दंडनीय मामलों में, जैसे सेंगर का मामला, धारा 389 CrPC के तहत ‘सज़ा का निलंबन’ दुर्लभ है और इसके लिए अपराध की प्रकृति और गंभीरता, अपराध करने का तरीका, तथा ज़मानत पर रिहाई की उपयुक्तता जैसे कारकों का वस्तुनिष्ठ आकलन आवश्यक है, जैसा कि शिवानी त्यागी बनाम उत्तर प्रदेश राज्य (2024) एसिड अटैक मामले में दोहराया गया।
- In allowing **Sengar’s ‘suspension of sentence’ application**, the **High Court** focused primarily on his conviction under **Section 5(c) of the POCSO Act**, which criminalises ‘**aggravated**’ **penetrative sexual assault** by a “**public servant**” on a **child** and attracts punishment under **Section 6**.
सेंगर के ‘सज़ा निलंबन’ आवेदन को स्वीकार करते हुए, हाई कोर्ट ने मुख्य रूप से POCSO अधिनियम की धारा 5(c) के तहत उसकी दोषसिद्धि पर ध्यान दिया, जो “लोक सेवक” द्वारा बच्चे पर किए गए ‘गंभीर’ भेदनात्मक यौन उत्पीड़न को अपराध ठहराती है और धारा 6 के तहत दंड निर्धारित करती है।
- Under the **criminal law framework**, offences committed by persons in **positions of trust or authority**, such as **police or armed force personnel, public servants, and staff of institutions** including **hospitals, jails, or educational establishments**, are treated as ‘**aggravated**’ and subjected to **enhanced punishment**, reflecting **legislative recognition of abuse of power** and **heightened victim vulnerability**.
आपराधिक क़ानूनी ढाँचे के तहत, विश्वास या अधिकार के पदों पर बैठे व्यक्तियों द्वारा किए गए अपराध — जैसे पुलिस या सशस्त्र बल कर्मी, लोक सेवक, तथा अस्पतालों, जेलों या शैक्षणिक संस्थानों के कर्मचारी — ‘गंभीर’ माने जाते हैं और उन पर कठोर दंड लगाया जाता है, जो सत्ता के दुरुपयोग और पीड़ित की बड़ी हुई संवेदनशीलता की विधायी मान्यता को दर्शाता है।

Definition of public servant लोक सेवक की परिभाषा

- Importantly, the **POCSO Act** does not define the term “**public servant**.” महत्वपूर्ण रूप से, **POCSO अधिनियम** में “लोक सेवक” शब्द की परिभाषा नहीं दी गई है।
- Under **Section 2(2) of the POCSO Act**, undefined expressions shall draw their meaning from the **IPC (1860), CrPC (1973), the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, or the Information Technology Act, 2000**.
POCSO अधिनियम की धारा 2(2) के तहत, अपरिभाषित शब्दों का अर्थ **IPC (1860), CrPC (1973), किशोर न्याय (बालकों की देखभाल और संरक्षण) अधिनियम, 2015, या सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी अधिनियम, 2000** से लिया जाएगा।
- Among these, only the **IPC** defines “**public servant**” under **Section 21**, encompassing categories such as **judges, military officers, and arbitrators, etc.**, but **not elected legislators**.
इनमें से केवल **IPC** की धारा 21 में “लोक सेवक” की परिभाषा दी गई है, जिसमें **न्यायाधीश, सैन्य अधिकारी, मध्यस्थ** आदि शामिल हैं, लेकिन **निर्वाचित जनप्रतिनिधि** शामिल नहीं हैं।



- Relying on this **statutory scheme** and the top court's ruling in **R.S. Nayak vs. A.R. Antulay (1984)**, the **HC** held that an **MLA** does not qualify as a **"public servant"** under the **IPC** and, consequently, the **POCSO Act**.

इस वैधानिक ढाँचे और **R.S. नायक बनाम A.R. अंतुले (1984)** में शीर्ष अदालत के निर्णय पर भरोसा करते हुए, **हाई कोर्ट** ने माना कि **विधायक (MLA)** **IPC** के तहत **"लोक सेवक"** नहीं है और परिणामस्वरूप **POCSO अधिनियम** के अंतर्गत भी नहीं।
- This is a **departure from the trial court's approach**, which had sustained Sengar's conviction under **Section 5(c)** by importing the **broader definition** of **"public servant"** from **Section 2(viii) of the Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA), 1988**, which includes any person holding an office to perform a **public duty**.

यह ट्रायल कोर्ट के दृष्टिकोण से विचलन है, जिसने **भ्रष्टाचार निवारण अधिनियम, 1988** की धारा 2(viii) से **"लोक सेवक"** की विस्तृत परिभाषा अपनाते हुए, धारा 5(c) के तहत सेंगर की दोषसिद्धि को बनाए रखा था, जिसमें **लोक कर्तव्य** निभाने वाला कोई भी पदधारी शामिल है।
- Consequently, the **HC held, prima facie**, that Sengar's case did not fall within the category of rape committed by a **"public servant"** under **Section 5(c) of the POCSO Act** or **Section 376(2)(b) IPC**.

परिणामस्वरूप, **हाई कोर्ट** ने प्रथम दृष्टया माना कि सेंगर का मामला **POCSO अधिनियम की धारा 5(c)** या **IPC की धारा 376(2)(b)** के तहत **"लोक सेवक"** द्वारा किए गए बलात्कार की श्रेणी में नहीं आता।
- This finding formed the **central basis** for **suspending his sentence** and **granting regular bail**.

यही निष्कर्ष सज़ा निलंबन और नियमित ज़मानत देने का **मुख्य आधार** बना।
- The **HC** also noted that Sengar had undergone **over seven years of imprisonment**, and, relying on **Kashmira Singh vs. State of Punjab (1977)**, observed that **prolonged incarceration could cause injustice if the conviction or sentence were ultimately modified**.

हाई कोर्ट ने यह भी नोट किया कि सेंगर सात वर्ष से अधिक की कैद काट चुका है, और **कश्मीरा सिंह बनाम पंजाब राज्य (1977)** पर भरोसा करते हुए कहा कि यदि अंततः दोषसिद्धि या सज़ा संशोधित होती है तो लंबा कारावास अन्याय का कारण बन सकता है।
- Addressing the **survivor's apprehension of threat**, rooted in a **documented history of systemic intimidation**, the **custodial death of her father** (for which Sengar stands convicted under **Section 304(II) IPC**), **police callousness**, and the **2019 truck-car accident that critically injured her and her lawyer and killed her two aunts**, the **HC** noted that the **SC** had granted her **CRPF protection in August 2019**.

पीड़िता की सुरक्षा संबंधी आशंकाओं को संबोधित करते हुए, जो प्रणालीगत धमकी के प्रलेखित इतिहास, उसके पिता की हिरासत में मृत्यु (जिसके लिए सेंगर **IPC धारा 304(II)** के तहत दोषी ठहराया गया), **पुलिस की संवेदनहीनता**, तथा **2019 के ट्रक-कार हादसे** से जुड़ी थीं, जिसमें वह और उसका वकील **गंभीर रूप से घायल** हुए और उसकी **दो मौसियों की मृत्यु** हुई, **हाई कोर्ट** ने नोट किया कि **सुप्रीम कोर्ट** ने उसे **अगस्त 2019** में **CRPF सुरक्षा** प्रदान की थी।
- Nevertheless, the **HC** held that **'suspension of sentence'** could not be denied **solely on the apprehension** that police or paramilitary forces might fail in their **protective duties**, as such a premise would **undermine their role**.

फिर भी, **हाई कोर्ट** ने कहा कि केवल इस **आशंका** के आधार पर कि पुलिस या अर्धसैनिक बल अपनी **सुरक्षात्मक जिम्मेदारियों** में विफल हो सकते हैं, **'सज़ा निलंबन'** से इनकार नहीं किया जा सकता, क्योंकि ऐसा मानना उनके **किरदार को कमज़ोर** करेगा।
- In a case that laid bare a **prolonged struggle for justice**, **structural barriers**, and **deep institutional failures** in confronting **entrenched power**, the **suspension of a life sentence** raises **serious concerns**.

एक ऐसे मामले में, जिसने **न्याय के लिए लंबे संघर्ष**, **संरचनात्मक बाधाओं**, और **जमी हुई सत्ता** से निपटने में **गंभीर संस्थागत विफलताओं** को उजागर किया, **आजीवन कारावास की सज़ा का निलंबन गंभीर चिंताएँ** उत्पन्न करता है।
- First, while the **HC** is **legally correct** in holding that it could not **expand the statutory definition** of **"public servant"** by importing the broader meaning under the **PCA**, its **interpretation could have been more purposive**.

पहला, यद्यपि **हाई कोर्ट** यह कहने में **कानूनी रूप से सही** है कि वह **PCA** के तहत दी गई विस्तृत परिभाषा को अपनाकर **"लोक सेवक"** की **वैधानिक परिभाषा का विस्तार** नहीं कर सकती, फिर भी इसकी **व्याख्या अधिक उद्देश्यपरक** हो सकती थी।



- The resulting **anomaly** is troubling: **while a patwari (village accountant) or police constable qualifies as a “public servant” and attracts punishment under the POCSO Act, an elected MLA does not.**
इससे उत्पन्न **विसंगति** चिंताजनक है: जहाँ **पटवारी (ग्राम लेखाकार)** या **पुलिस कांस्टेबल “लोक सेवक”** माने जाते हैं और **POCSO अधिनियम** के तहत दंडित होते हैं, वहीं एक **निर्वाचित विधायक** नहीं।
- This **ambiguity** in the **POCSO framework** was also **flagged by the SC bench.**
POCSO ढाँचे में मौजूद इस **अस्पष्टता** को **सुप्रीम कोर्ट की पीठ** ने भी रेखांकित किया।
- By **narrowing the scope** of the **POCSO Act, a special, victim-centric statute designed to protect children,** the **HC** accorded **insufficient weight** to its **object and intent.**
बच्चों की सुरक्षा के लिए बनाए गए **विशेष, पीड़ित-केंद्रित क़ानून POCSO अधिनियम** के **दायरे को सीमित** करके, **हाई कोर्ट** ने इसके **उद्देश्य और मंशा** को **पर्याप्त महत्व नहीं दिया।**
- Offences under **Section 5(c)** are undoubtedly **graver than corruption offences by MPs or MLAs:** while **corruption undermines governance,** offences under the **POCSO Act** involve the **direct abuse of children,** causing **severe physical and psychological trauma** with **lasting social consequences.**
धारा 5(c) के अंतर्गत **अपराध निस्संदेह सांसदों या विधायकों द्वारा किए गए भ्रष्टाचार अपराधों से अधिक गंभीर** हैं: जहाँ **भ्रष्टाचार शासन व्यवस्था** को कमजोर करता है, वहीं **POCSO अधिनियम** के अंतर्गत **अपराधों में बच्चों का प्रत्यक्ष शोषण** शामिल होता है, जो **गंभीर शारीरिक और मानसिक आघात** तथा **दीर्घकालिक सामाजिक परिणाम** पैदा करता है।
- The apex court has repeatedly cautioned against **interpretive literalism** that weakens **POCSO’s protective core.**
सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने बार-बार **अत्यधिक शाब्दिक व्याख्या** के विरुद्ध चेताया है, जो **POCSO की संरक्षणात्मक भावना** को कमजोर करती है।
- In **Attorney General for India vs. Satish (2021),** it rejected the **Bombay HC’s** untenable narrow interpretation that groping a minor through clothing, without direct **“skin-to-skin” contact,** did not amount to **“touch” or “physical contact”** so as to attract the offence of **“sexual assault”** under **Section 7 of the POCSO Act.**
अटॉर्नी जनरल फॉर इंडिया बनाम सतीश (2021) में, सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने **बॉम्बे हाई कोर्ट** की उस असंगत संकीर्ण व्याख्या को खारिज किया, जिसके अनुसार कपड़ों के ऊपर से नाबालिग को छूना, बिना **“त्वचा से त्वचा संपर्क”,** **POCSO अधिनियम की धारा 7** के तहत **“यौन हमला”** नहीं माना जाएगा।
- Similarly, in **Independent Thought vs. Union of India (2017),** the **SC** harmoniously and purposively interpreted child-protection law **by reading down Exception 2 to Section 375 IPC,** which had **exempted non-consensual sexual intercourse with one’s wife aged between 15 and 18 from the offence of rape.**
इसी प्रकार, **इंडिपेंडेंट थॉट बनाम भारत संघ (2017)** में, **सुप्रीम कोर्ट** ने बाल संरक्षण कानून की **उद्देश्यपूर्ण व्याख्या** करते हुए **IPC की धारा 375 के अपवाद 2** को सीमित किया, जो **15 से 18 वर्ष** की पत्नी के साथ गैर-सहमति यौन संबंध को बलात्कार से बाहर रखता था।
- Together, these rulings affirm that when **child protection** is at stake, statutory interpretation must **advance,** not **dilute,** the law’s **protective purpose.**
ये निर्णय स्पष्ट करते हैं कि जब **बाल संरक्षण** का प्रश्न हो, तब क़ानूनी व्याख्या को कानून के **संरक्षणात्मक उद्देश्य को मजबूत** करना चाहिए, न कि **कमज़ोर।**
- Second, the **HC’s decision** rests primarily on the **prima facie inapplicability of Section 5(c) of the POCSO Act** and the **period of incarceration already undergone.**
दूसरे, **हाई कोर्ट का निर्णय** मुख्यतः **POCSO अधिनियम की धारा 5(c)** की प्रथम दृष्टया अनुपयुक्तता और पहले से भुगते गए **कारावास की अवधि** पर आधारित है।
- However, the **SC** has held that in cases involving **life imprisonment, ‘suspension of sentence’** under **Section 389 CrPC** requires the appellate court to assess whether the convict has a **fair chance of acquittal.**
हालाँकि, **सुप्रीम कोर्ट** ने कहा है कि **आजीवन कारावास** वाले मामलों में **CrPC की धारा 389** के तहत **सज़ा निलंबन** तभी हो सकता है जब अपीलीय न्यायालय यह आकलन करे कि अभियुक्त के **बरी होने की वास्तविक संभावना** है।
- Recently, in **Chhotelal Yadav vs. State of Jharkhand (2025),** the apex court set aside a **‘suspension of sentence’,** holding that in life imprisonment cases, suspension is warranted only where the convict demonstrates a **palpable or gross error** in the trial court’s judgment sufficient to show that the appeal may succeed and result in **acquittal.**
हाल ही में, **छोटेराल यादव बनाम झारखंड राज्य (2025)** में, सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने **सज़ा निलंबन** को निरस्त



करते हुए कहा कि आजीवन कारावास के मामलों में निलंबन तभी उचित है जब ट्रायल कोर्ट के निर्णय में स्पष्ट या गंभीर त्रुटि हो, जिससे अपील में बरी होने की संभावना दिखे।

- In **Sengar's case**, the HC ought to have examined whether the **non-applicability of Section 5(c)** would lead to his **complete acquittal**.
सेंगर के मामले में, हाई कोर्ट को यह परखना चाहिए था कि धारा 5(c) की अनुपयुक्तता क्या उसके पूर्ण रूप से बरी होने का आधार बनती है।
- Further, in **Shivani Tyagi vs. State of Uttar Pradesh (2024)**, the SC clarified that **long incarceration alone cannot justify 'suspension of sentence' in life imprisonment cases**.
इसके अतिरिक्त, शिवानी त्यागी बनाम उत्तर प्रदेश राज्य (2024) में सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने स्पष्ट किया कि लंबा कारावास मात्र आजीवन कारावास के मामलों में सज़ा निलंबन का आधार नहीं बन सकता।
- In the same vein, in **Jamna Lal vs. State of Rajasthan (2025)**, involving a **POCSO conviction carrying a 20-year sentence**, the SC set aside an order suspending sentence, holding that once the trial court has found the victim to be a **minor**, such a finding cannot be lightly unsettled at the **suspension stage**.
इसी क्रम में, जमना लाल बनाम राजस्थान राज्य (2025) में, जहाँ POCSO के तहत 20 वर्ष की सज़ा थी, सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने सज़ा निलंबन के आदेश को रद्द करते हुए कहा कि जब ट्रायल कोर्ट पीड़ित को नाबालिग मान चुका हो, तो निलंबन चरण पर उस निष्कर्ष को हल्के में नहीं बदला जा सकता।
- Third, the HC should have accorded **greater weight** to the undisputed record of **intimidation and violence**, including the **survivor's father's death**, alleged **witness tampering**, and the **exceptional security measures** required during trial.
तीसरे, हाई कोर्ट को धमकी और हिंसा के निर्विवाद रिकॉर्ड को अधिक महत्व देना चाहिए था, जिसमें पीड़िता के पिता की मृत्यु, कथित गवाहों से छेड़छाड़, और मुकदमे के दौरान आवश्यक विशेष सुरक्षा प्रबंध शामिल हैं।

What is next? आगे क्या?

- The HC's **literal interpretation** highlights a statutory framework that recognises authority only when **formally mentioned**, not when exercised through **entrenched political power**, as seen in the definition of **"public servant."**
हाई कोर्ट की शाब्दिक व्याख्या एक ऐसे वैधानिक ढाँचे को उजागर करती है जो सत्ता को केवल तब मान्यता देता है जब वह औपचारिक रूप से परिभाषित हो, न कि तब जब वह जमी हुई राजनीतिक शक्ति के रूप में प्रयुक्त हो, जैसा कि "लोक सेवक" की परिभाषा में दिखता है।
- This limitation is **legislatively inherited**, not **judicially created**.
यह सीमा विधायी रूप से विरासत में मिली है, न कि न्यायिक रूप से निर्मित।
- While **legality and justice** often align, they do not always **converge**.
हालाँकि कानून और न्याय अक्सर एक दिशा में चलते हैं, वे हमेशा एक बिंदु पर नहीं मिलते।
- Beyond legal questions, the case also exposes how the **criminal justice system** operates for **survivors of sexual violence**.
कानूनी प्रश्नों से परे, यह मामला यह भी दिखाता है कि यौन हिंसा के पीड़ितों के लिए आपराधिक न्याय प्रणाली कैसे कार्य करती है।
- It lays bare the fact that, in reality, the **fundamental right of equality before law and equal protection of laws under Article 14** of our Constitution is **not truly treated as equal** for every individual.
यह इस सच्चाई को उजागर करता है कि वास्तव में हमारे संविधान के अनुच्छेद 14 के तहत कानून के समक्ष समानता और समान संरक्षण का मूल अधिकार हर व्यक्ति के लिए समान रूप से लागू नहीं होता।
- Yet, these **courageous survivors** bear the cost not to vindicate the system, but to **reveal its limits** and **expand justice for all**.
फिर भी, ये साहसी पीड़ित यह कीमत व्यवस्था को सही ठहराने के लिए नहीं, बल्कि उसकी सीमाएँ उजागर करने और सभी के लिए न्याय का विस्तार करने के लिए चुकाते हैं।



GS Paper II: Governance,	
TOPICS COVERED	31 December
1.	M.P. Cong. claims national water conservation award won with AI images; teachers issued notice एम.पी. कांग्रेस का दावा: एआई तस्वीरों से जीता गया राष्ट्रीय जल संरक्षण पुरस्कार; शिक्षकों को नोटिस जारी

M.P. Cong. claims national water conservation award won with AI images; teachers issued notice

GS II: Governance

Mehul Malpani
BHOPAL

At least 20 teachers, including the District Education Officer (DEO), have been served notices in Madhya Pradesh's Khandwa for allegedly uploading AI-generated images as part of a water conservation project after the Congress alleged that the civic body won a national award based on fake images.

On Monday, State Congress president Jitu Patwari accused Madhya Pradesh government of corruption, claiming that the Khandwa district administration won the national water conservation award using AI-generated images.

Khandwa district administration, however, rejected the allegations.

The district had secured first place for outstanding work in water conservation



M.P. Congress chief Jitu Patwari

under the Centre's 'Jal Sanchay, Jan Bhagidari' (JSJB) campaign.

"Where the BJP government should teach our children the proper use of AI, it is itself indulging in corruption using AI. In Khandwa, officials of the BJP government turned two-foot-deep pits into wells using AI, and uploaded AI-generated images of various development works across the area on the portal. Based on these images, they even took an award from the President," Mr. Patwari

said in a post on X.

"When the ground reality came to light, fields and empty grounds were found there. Clearly, this was not water conservation, but a game of technology-created images," he claimed, alleging that even corruption had become "smart" under the BJP government".

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Jila Panchayat CEO Nagarjun B. Gowda denied the charges.

"In June, a team from the Ministry of Jal Shakti conducted physical verification of more than 1,500 random sites. The award was declared after all the scrutiny," he added.

The CEO added that the JSJB portal was closed about six months ago and the AI-generated images were posted on the Catch the Rain portal in October for information, education and campaign purposes.

M.P. Cong. claims national water conservation award won with AI images; teachers issued notice



एम.पी. कांग्रेस का दावा: एआई तस्वीरों से जीता गया राष्ट्रीय जल संरक्षण पुरस्कार; शिक्षकों को नोटिस जारी

- The district had secured **first place** for outstanding work in **water conservation** under the Centre's '**Jal Sanchay, Jan Bhagidari**' (JSJB) campaign.

GS Paper II: International Relations	
TOPICS COVERED	31 December
1.	SAARC leader Khaleda Zia had a constant engagement with India's neighbourhood सार्क नेता खालिदा ज़िया का भारत के पड़ोस के साथ निरंतर जुड़ाव रहा
2.	A multipolar world with bipolar characteristics द्विध्रुवीय विशेषताओं वाला बहुध्रुवीय विश्व
3.	Between the Begums, a bitter rivalry, vengeful past बेगमों के बीच, कड़वी प्रतिद्वंद्विता, प्रतिशोध से भरा अतीत

SAARC leader Khaleda Zia had a constant engagement with India's neighbourhood

From finding a mention as the wife of Bangladesh President in the diplomatic records of a 1979 banquet to hosting the Indian Prime Minister in SAARC summits, the Bangladeshi leader has a long history of interactions with the Indian leadership; her last noted interaction with Indian leadership was in 2015 when she met Modi in Dhaka

GS II: IR: India Bangladesh

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

Apart from deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Khaleda Zia was the only Prime Minister from Bangladesh whose political and institutional interactions with the Indian leadership stretched back to the 1970s and continued till the 21st century.

Begum Zia, as she was known to the people of Bangladesh, started her public life as the spouse of then President of Bangladesh General Ziaur Rahman, and she was a witness to the diplomacy between India and Bangladesh during a difficult period in the 1970s.

Ms. Zia first found mention in Indian diplomatic records when Prime Minister Morarji Desai acknowledged her presence during a banquet in Dhaka during his visit to Bangladesh on April 16, 1979.

It was a visit that took place during a rough patch in bilateral relations. Just three-and-a-half years ago, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated in Dhaka along with most of his fa-

mily members and Indira Gandhi, a well-wisher of Mujib, was out of power after being overthrown in the 1977 election.

Earlier, President Nilam Sanjiva Reddy had held a banquet for President Rahman on December 19, 1977, when he visited Delhi (without Ms. Zia) and was welcomed at the New Delhi airport by Desai.

The Rahmans were met by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi when they became the first foreign guests that Indira met after being sworn into office for her last term in office in January 1980. The high-level visits between the two sides came at a sensitive period during 1977-1980 as Sheikh Hasina, one of the two surviving children of the slain Mujib, was based in India during this time. As relations improved between the two sides after President Rahman's meeting with Indira, Ms. Hasina returned to Bangladesh on May 17, 1981.

On May 30, 1981, President Rahman was assassinated in a failed military coup while he was on a visit to Chittagong. Hearing of the violent death, Indira



Rich history: Former Prime Minister of Bangladesh Khaleda Zia with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. AN/FILEPHOTO

said, "The shocking assassination of President Ziaur Rahman shows the instability which many developing countries are facing. We in India are vigilant and shall take all necessary steps to safeguard our interests."

First woman PM

In the first six months of 1991, the subcontinent witnessed several shockers. On April 29, Bangladesh was hit by one of the most destructive cyclones in history of the region and then on May 21, as India was get-

ting ready for the election, former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated. But prior to these developments, on March 20, Ms. Zia took charge as the first female Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

On March 7, 1991, the Ministry of External Affairs had said, "Any government in Bangladesh as much as any government in India, realises the importance of good relations between the two neighbours. We had welcomed the return of democracy, when the results of the elections were an-

nounced a few days ago, and expressed our hope and intention to work with Bangladesh, to strengthen our bilateral relations, based on our mutual national interests."

India, like Bangladesh, was witnessing a transition and the outreach therefore was aimed at ensuring a working relationship with Prime Minister Zia. In the last week of May 1992, Ms. Zia was hosted by Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao. She made it clear that SAARC, a dream project of her late husband, was

She was a witness to diplomacy between India and Bangladesh during a difficult period in the 1970s

close to her heart.

Next year, during April 10-11, 1993, Rao visited Dhaka when Ms. Zia hosted the seventh SAARC summit and welcomed the King of Bhutan Jigme Singye Wangchuck; President of Maldives Maumoon Abdul Gayoom; Nepal Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala; Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan and the Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa. What made this outreach significant was that India and Bangladesh tried to put relations back on track after the regional tension spiked because of the demolition of Babri Masjid by Hindu karsevaks in Ayodhya.

Despite the tension, ties were maintained during this time and next year when a cyclone hit Bangladesh, India reached out with relief.

In her second full-fledged term during 2001-2006, the Gujarat riots of

2002 cast a shadow on bilateral ties and that apart, India's concerns on terrorism and insurgency did not attract sufficient attention from Bangladesh.

Yet, before the onset of political uncertainty in the second half of 2006, Ms. Zia visited India and held talks with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and signed a revised trade pact. Prior to that, she had hosted the 13th SAARC summit in November 2005. Her last visit to India took place during October 28-November 3, 2012, when she was the Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sansad.

She met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. She started that trip by meeting her counterpart, then Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Sushma Swaraj.

Her last noted interaction with the Indian leadership was in June 2015 when she came to Hotel Sonargaon in Dhaka where Prime Minister Narendra Modi met several Bangladeshi leaders after the India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement was sealed.



SAARC leader Khaleda Zia had a constant engagement with India's neighbourhood

सार्क नेता खालिदा ज़िया का भारत के पड़ोस के साथ निरंतर जुड़ाव रहा

- SAARC leader Khaleda Zia had a constant engagement with India's neighbourhood
सार्क नेता खालिदा ज़िया का भारत के पड़ोस के साथ निरंतर जुड़ाव रहा
- From finding a mention as the wife of **Bangladesh President** in the diplomatic records of a **1979 banquet** to hosting the **Indian Prime Minister** in **SAARC summits**, the Bangladeshi leader has a long history of interactions with the **Indian leadership**; her last noted interaction with Indian leadership was in **2015 when she met Modi in Dhaka**
1979 के भोज के कूटनीतिक अभिलेखों में **बांग्लादेश के राष्ट्रपति की पत्नी** के रूप में उल्लेख से लेकर **सार्क शिखर सम्मेलनों** में **भारतीय प्रधानमंत्री** की मेज़बानी तक, बांग्लादेशी नेता का **भारतीय नेतृत्व** के साथ लंबा संपर्क रहा है; भारतीय नेतृत्व के साथ उनका अंतिम उल्लेखनीय संपर्क **2015 में ढाका में मोदी** से मुलाकात के दौरान हुआ
- Apart from deposed **Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina**, **Khaleda Zia** was the only Prime Minister from Bangladesh whose political and institutional interactions with the **Indian leadership** stretched back to the **1970s** and continued till the **21st century**.
पदच्युत **प्रधानमंत्री शेख हसीना** के अलावा, **खालिदा ज़िया** बांग्लादेश की एकमात्र प्रधानमंत्री थीं जिनकी **भारतीय नेतृत्व** के साथ राजनीतिक और संस्थागत बातचीत **1970 के दशक** से शुरू होकर **21वीं सदी** तक चली।
- **Begum Zia**, as she was known to the people of Bangladesh, started her public life as the **spouse of then President of Bangladesh General Ziaur Rahman**, and she was a witness to the diplomacy between **India and Bangladesh** during a difficult period in the **1970s**.
बांग्लादेश की जनता में **बेगम ज़िया** के नाम से जानी जाने वाली, उन्होंने अपना सार्वजनिक जीवन तत्कालीन **बांग्लादेश के राष्ट्रपति जनरल ज़ियाउर रहमान** की पत्नी के रूप में शुरू किया, और **1970 के दशक** के एक कठिन दौर में **भारत और बांग्लादेश** के बीच कूटनीति की साक्षी रहीं।
- Ms. Zia first found mention in **Indian diplomatic records** when **Prime Minister Morarji Desai** acknowledged her presence during a banquet in **Dhaka** during his visit to **Bangladesh** on **April 16, 1979**.
सुश्री ज़िया का पहला उल्लेख **भारतीय कूटनीतिक अभिलेखों** में तब मिला जब **प्रधानमंत्री मोरारजी देसाई** ने **16 अप्रैल 1979** को **बांग्लादेश** यात्रा के दौरान **ढाका** में आयोजित भोज में उनकी उपस्थिति को स्वीकार किया।
- It was a visit that took place during a rough patch in **bilateral relations**.
यह यात्रा **द्विपक्षीय संबंधों** के एक कठिन दौर के दौरान हुई थी।
- **Just three-and-a-half years ago, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman** was assassinated in **Dhaka** along with most of his family members and **Indira Gandhi**, a well-wisher of Mujib, was out of power after being overthrown in the **1977 election**.
सिर्फ साढ़े तीन वर्ष पहले, **शेख मुजीबुर रहमान** की **ढाका** में उनके अधिकांश परिवारजनों के साथ हत्या कर दी गई थी और मुजीब की शुभचिंतक **इंदिरा गांधी 1977 के चुनाव** में सत्ता से बाहर हो गई थीं।
- Earlier, **President Nilam Sanjiva Reddy** had held a banquet for **President Rahman** on **December 19, 1977**, when he visited **Delhi** (without Ms. Zia) and was welcomed at the **New Delhi airport** by **Desai**.
इससे पहले, **राष्ट्रपति नीलम संजीव रेड्डी** ने **19 दिसंबर 1977** को **राष्ट्रपति रहमान** के लिए भोज आयोजित किया था, जब वे **दिल्ली** आए थे (सुश्री ज़िया के बिना) और **नई दिल्ली हवाई अड्डे** पर उनका स्वागत **देसाई** ने किया था।
- The Rahmans were met by **Prime Minister Indira Gandhi** when they became the first foreign guests that **Indira** met after being sworn into office for her last term in **January 1980**.
रहमान दंपति से **प्रधानमंत्री इंदिरा गांधी** ने तब मुलाकात की जब वे **जनवरी 1980** में अपने अंतिम कार्यकाल के लिए शपथ लेने के बाद मिलने वाले पहले विदेशी अतिथि बने।
- The high-level visits between the two sides came at a sensitive period during **1977-1980** as **Sheikh Hasina**, one of the two surviving children of the slain Mujib, was based in **India** during this time.
दोनों पक्षों के बीच उच्चस्तरीय यात्राएँ **1977-1980** के संवेदनशील दौर में हुईं क्योंकि मारे गए मुजीब की दो जीवित संतानों में से एक **शेख हसीना** इस समय **भारत** में रह रही थीं।



- As relations improved between the two sides after **President Rahman's meeting with Indira**, Ms. Hasina returned to **Bangladesh on May 17, 1981**.
राष्ट्रपति रहमान की इंदिरा से मुलाकात के बाद दोनों देशों के संबंध सुधरे और **17 मई 1981** को सुश्री हसीना बांग्लादेश लौट गई।
- On May 30, 1981, President Rahman was assassinated in a failed military coup while he was on a visit to Chittagong.**
30 मई 1981 को चिटगाँव यात्रा के दौरान एक असफल सैन्य तख्तापलट में राष्ट्रपति रहमान की हत्या कर दी गई।
- Hearing of the violent death, **Indira** said, "The **shocking assassination of President Ziaur Rahman shows the instability which many developing countries are facing. We in India are vigilant and shall take all necessary steps to safeguard our interests.**"
हिंसक मृत्यु की खबर सुनकर इंदिरा ने कहा, "राष्ट्रपति ज़ियाउर रहमान की चौंकाने वाली हत्या उस अस्थिरता को दर्शाती है जिसका सामना कई विकासशील देश कर रहे हैं। भारत में हम सतर्क हैं और अपने हितों की रक्षा के लिए सभी आवश्यक कदम उठाएंगे।"
- First woman PM**
पहली महिला प्रधानमंत्री
- In the first six months of 1991**, the subcontinent witnessed several shockers.
1991 के पहले छह महीनों में उपमहाद्वीप ने कई झटके देखे।
- On **April 29, Bangladesh** was hit by one of the most destructive cyclones in history of the region and then on **May 21**, as **India** was getting ready for the election, former **Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi** was assassinated.
29 अप्रैल को बांग्लादेश क्षेत्र के इतिहास के सबसे विनाशकारी चक्रवातों में से एक से प्रभावित हुआ और फिर **21 मई** को, जब भारत चुनाव की तैयारी कर रहा था, पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री राजीव गांधी की हत्या कर दी गई।
- But prior to these developments, on **March 20**, Ms. Zia took charge as the **first female Prime Minister of Bangladesh**.
लेकिन इन घटनाओं से पहले, **20 मार्च** को, सुश्री ज़िया ने बांग्लादेश की पहली महिला प्रधानमंत्री के रूप में पदभार संभाला।
- On **March 7, 1991**, the **Ministry of External Affairs** had said, "Any government in **Bangladesh** as much as any government in **India**, realises the importance of good relations between the two neighbours."
7 मार्च 1991 को विदेश मंत्रालय ने कहा था, "बांग्लादेश की कोई भी सरकार उतनी ही जितनी भारत की कोई भी सरकार, दोनों पड़ोसियों के बीच अच्छे संबंधों के महत्व को समझती है।"
- "We had welcomed the return of democracy, when the results of the elections were announced a few days ago, and expressed our hope and intention to work with **Bangladesh**, to strengthen our **bilateral relations**, based on our **mutual national interests.**"
"हमने कुछ दिन पहले चुनाव परिणाम घोषित होने पर लोकतंत्र की वापसी का स्वागत किया था और बांग्लादेश के साथ मिलकर हमारे द्विपक्षीय संबंधों को आपसी राष्ट्रीय हितों के आधार पर मजबूत करने की आशा और मंशा व्यक्त की थी।"
- India**, like **Bangladesh**, was witnessing a transition and the outreach therefore was aimed at ensuring a working relationship with **Prime Minister Zia**.
भारत, बांग्लादेश की तरह, परिवर्तन के दौर से गुजर रहा था और इसलिए संपर्क का उद्देश्य प्रधानमंत्री ज़िया के साथ कार्यशील संबंध सुनिश्चित करना था।
- In the last week of May 1992**, Ms. Zia was hosted by **Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao**.
मई 1992 के अंतिम सप्ताह में, सुश्री ज़िया की मेज़बानी प्रधानमंत्री पी.वी. नरसिम्हा राव ने की।
- She made it clear that **SAARC**, a dream project of her late husband, was close to her heart. उन्होंने स्पष्ट किया कि उनके दिवंगत पति की स्वप्न परियोजना सार्क उनके दिल के करीब है।
- Next year, during **April 10-11, 1993**, Rao visited **Dhaka** when Ms. Zia hosted the **seventh SAARC summit** and welcomed the **King of Bhutan Jigme Singye Wangchuck**; **President of Maldives Maumoon Abdul Gayoom**; **Nepal Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala**; **Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan** and the **Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa**.
अगले वर्ष **10-11 अप्रैल 1993** को राव ने ढाका का दौरा किया, जब सुश्री ज़िया ने सातवें सार्क शिखर सम्मेलन की मेज़बानी की और भूटान के राजा जिग्मे सिंग्ये वांगचुक, मालदीव के राष्ट्रपति मौमून अब्दुल



गयूम; नेपाल के प्रधानमंत्री गिरिजा प्रसाद कोइराला; पाकिस्तान के प्रधानमंत्री नवाज़ शरीफ़ और श्रीलंका के राष्ट्रपति रणसिंघे प्रेमदासा का स्वागत किया।

- What made this outreach significant was that **India and Bangladesh** tried to put relations back on track after the regional tension spiked because of the demolition of **Babri Masjid** by **Hindu karsevaks** in **Ayodhya**.
इस संपर्क को महत्वपूर्ण बनाने वाली बात यह थी कि **भारत और बांग्लादेश** ने **अयोध्या** में **हिंदू कारसेवकों** द्वारा **बाबरी मस्जिद** गिराए जाने से बढ़े क्षेत्रीय तनाव के बाद संबंधों को पटरी पर लाने की कोशिश की।
- Despite the tension, ties were maintained during this time and next year when a cyclone hit **Bangladesh**, **India** reached out with relief.
तनाव के बावजूद इस अवधि में संबंध बनाए रखे गए और अगले वर्ष जब **बांग्लादेश** में चक्रवात आया, तो **भारत** ने राहत के साथ हाथ बढ़ाया।
- In her second full-□edged term during **2001-2006**, the **Gujarat riots of 2002** cast a shadow on **bilateral ties** and that apart, **India's concerns on terrorism and insurgency** did not attract sufficient attention from **Bangladesh**.
2001-2006 के दौरान अपने दूसरे पूर्ण कार्यकाल में, **2002 के गुजरात दंगे** ने **द्विपक्षीय संबंधों** पर साया डाला और इसके अलावा **आतंकवाद और उग्रवाद पर भारत की चिंताओं** को **बांग्लादेश** से पर्याप्त ध्यान नहीं मिला।
- Yet, before the onset of **political uncertainty** in the second half of **2006**, Ms. Zia visited **India** and held talks with **Prime Minister Manmohan Singh** and signed a **revised trade pact**.
फिर भी, **2006** के दूसरे हिस्से में **राजनीतिक अनिश्चितता** शुरू होने से पहले, सुश्री ज़िया ने **भारत** का दौरा किया और **प्रधानमंत्री मनमोहन सिंह** से वार्ता की तथा **संशोधित व्यापार समझौते** पर हस्ताक्षर किए।
- Prior to that, she had hosted the **13th SAARC summit** in **November 2005**.
इससे पहले, उन्होंने **नवंबर 2005** में **13वें सार्क शिखर सम्मेलन** की मेज़बानी की थी।
- Her last visit to **India** took place during **October 28–November 3, 2012**, when she was the **Leader of the Opposition** in the **Jatiya Sansad**.
भारत की उनकी अंतिम यात्रा **28 अक्टूबर–3 नवंबर 2012** के दौरान हुई, जब वह **जातीय संसद** में **विपक्ष की नेता** थीं।
- She met **Prime Minister Manmohan Singh**.
उन्होंने **प्रधानमंत्री मनमोहन सिंह** से मुलाकात की।
- She started that trip by meeting her counterpart, then **Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Sushma Swaraj**.
उन्होंने उस यात्रा की शुरुआत अपने समकक्ष, तब **लोकसभा में विपक्ष की नेता सुषमा स्वराज** से मुलाकात कर की।
- Her last noted interaction with the **Indian leadership** was in **June 2015** when she came to **Hotel Sonargaon** in **Dhaka** where **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** met several Bangladeshi leaders after the **India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement** was sealed.
भारतीय नेतृत्व के साथ उनका अंतिम उल्लेखनीय संपर्क **जून 2015** में हुआ, जब वह **ढाका** के **होटल सोनारगांव** पहुँचीं, जहाँ **भारत-बांग्लादेश भूमि सीमा समझौता** संपन्न होने के बाद **प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी** ने कई बांग्लादेशी नेताओं से मुलाकात की।



A multipolar world with bipolar characteristics

ISSUE

MOB

As 2025 draws to a close, a highlight is that the United States has undertaken its largest troop mobilisation in the Caribbean in decades. Its Navy has deployed its most advanced aircraft carrier, along with fighter jets, amphibious vessels, attack submarines and tens of thousands of troops, as it intensifies its pressure on Venezuela in an effort to force President Nicolás Maduro from power.

The Trump administration's National Security Strategy (NSS), released in early December 2025, identifies Latin America and the Caribbean as a strategic priority. Reviving the 19th century Monroe Doctrine, the document asserts that the U.S. must deny influence or control by outside powers (read China) in Latin America and ensure that the Western Hemisphere remains under American political, economic and military influence.

The push to reinforce American primacy in Latin America coincides with U.S. President Donald Trump's waning interest in Europe, another long-standing U.S. sphere of influence. Since the end of the Second World War, the U.S. has served as Europe's primary security guarantor. If Washington kept western Europe together through a tightly knit alliance during the Cold War, it expanded this security umbrella to eastern Europe after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, creating a large transatlantic bloc. Under Mr. Trump, however, the U.S. is no longer interested in shouldering the burden of European security – a position explicitly articulated in the NSS. Why is America, at a moment when Russia and China are seeking to overturn the U.S.-built and U.S.-led security and economic order, stepping back from Europe while moving to consolidate its influence in the Western Hemisphere?

It is difficult to discern a cohesive doctrine in Mr. Trump's foreign policy, marked by the President's impulses and unpredictability. Yet, even these impulses, this unpredictability and his ideological orientation rooted in Christian nationalism and America's might cannot ignore the structural shifts reshaping the international order. Mr. Trump is not the 'President of peace' that he claims to be – he has already bombed six countries, even if he has stopped short of a full-scale war.

At the same time, Mr. Trump, despite his rhetoric about American military and economic dominance, recognises that he no longer lives in a unipolar world. His reluctant aggression and strategic recalibration are reflections of the changes now taking shape in the global balance of power.

Three great powers

When the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991, a new order emerged with the U.S. at its centre. There was no other great power positioned to challenge American primacy. The unipolar moment, however, has since passed. While future historians may better identify the precise point of



Stanly Johny

rupture, one such moment was Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. The ensuing conflict in eastern Ukraine, the tepid western response, and Russia's ability to endure despite sanctions reinforced the limits of the 'rules-based order'.

The end of unipolarity, however, does not mean the end of American dominance. The U.S. remains, and will remain, for the foreseeable future, the world's pre-eminent military and economic power. What has changed is that Washington is no longer the sole great power shaping geopolitical outcomes. China and Russia now occupy that space as well, deepening what Realist thinkers describe as the inherently anarchic nature of the international system.

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union was America's principal rival, and in the 1970s, Washington reached out to China to exploit fissures within the communist bloc. Today, the U.S. identifies China as its principal and systemic challenger. This, in turn, leaves open the possibility of a reset in ties with Russia – an idea embraced by Mr. Trump's MAGA (Make America Great Again) ideologues, who frame Russia as part of a shared 'Christian civilisation'.

The reigning power versus the rising power

The U.S. faces a unique challenge in China. The Soviet economy, in its prime in the early 1970s, reached about 57% of the U.S. GDP, before it began slowing down. China's economy, now the world's second largest, already amounts to about 66% of the U.S. economy. China continues to grow at a faster pace, steadily narrowing the gap.

As China's economic power expands, it is being converted into military capability (it has already built the world's largest Navy, by number of ships). Like other great powers, Beijing is seeking to establish regional hegemony and global dominance. So, a prolonged contest between the U.S., the reigning power, and China, the rising power, appears unavoidable. The situation is comparable to 19th century Europe, when a rising imperial Germany threatened to upstage Britain during Pax Britannica, unsettling the 'Concert of Europe'.

Russia is the weakest link among the three powers. It is a relatively smaller economy with a shrinking sphere of influence. But Russia's nuclear arsenal, expansive geography, abundant energy and mineral resources and its demonstrated willingness to use force to achieve its strategic objectives keep it in the great power constellation. From Moscow's perspective, the country drifted into the wilderness in the 1990s before announcing its return in 2008 with the war in Georgia. Since then, it has sought to rewrite the post-Soviet security architecture in Europe. As the West, having expanded the North Atlantic Treaty Organization into the Russian sphere of influence, responded to Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine with sweeping sanctions on Russia and military support for Kyiv, Moscow moved ever closer to China. Russia and China

have found common ground in opposing the western 'rules-based order' – Russia thinks that the order denies it its rightful place in the world and seeks to revise it accordingly, while China, by contrast, as Rush Doshi argues in *The Long Game*, wants to replace it with a China-centric order.

Fluid multipolarity

All three great powers today understand that the world is no longer organised around a single centre of authority. In that sense, the world is already multipolar. But unlike the post-Second World War and post-Cold War transitions, the structures of the new order have yet to fully emerge. During the Cold War, the world was divided into two ideological blocs and two largely separate economic systems. Today, China lacks the kind of satellite state networks that characterised the 20th century superpowers, while the U.S. is reassessing the sustainability of its alliance frameworks, including its commitment to Europe.

Russia, with its own great power ambitions, is wary of being seen as a Chinese ally irrespective of its close strategic partnership with Beijing. This opens a window for a Washington-Moscow reset. But the war in Ukraine remains a stumbling block. Russia may not want to challenge America's global leadership, but it certainly wants to re-establish its primacy in its sphere of influence.

Thus, there are three great powers with divergent interests that are pulling the global order in different directions, rendering the emerging multipolarity fluid rather than as a structured system akin to the post-Second World War order. This also means that middle powers, including superpower allies such as Japan and Germany, and autonomous actors such as India and Brazil, would continue to hedge their bets.

Mr. Trump wants Europe to shoulder greater responsibility for its own security, reset relations with Russia and reassert American primacy in its immediate neighbourhood even as Washington prepares for a prolonged great power competition with China. The idea is to return to the classic offshore balancing. Even if Mr. Trump fails in executing it, future American Presidents may not be able to ignore the shifts that he has initiated. Russia, for its part, seeks to carve out a sphere of influence. China aims to preserve its close strategic partnership with Russia to keep the Eurasian landmass within its orbit, while establishing regional hegemony in East and Southeast Asia – moves that would cement its status as a long-term superpower, much as the U.S. did by asserting its hegemony in the Western Hemisphere in the 19th century, and across the Atlantic in the 20th century. In this fluid landscape, Russia has emerged as the new 'swing great power' between the two superpowers, paradoxically lending the emerging multipolar order a distinctly bipolar character.

stanly.johny@thehindu.co.in

The three great powers understand that the world is no longer organised around a single centre of authority

A multipolar world with bipolar characteristics

द्विध्रुवीय विशेषताओं वाला बहुध्रुवीय विश्व

- As 2025 draws to a close, a highlight is that the **United States** has undertaken its **largest troop mobilisation** in the **Caribbean** in decades.

जैसे-जैसे 2025 समाप्ति की ओर बढ़ रहा है, एक प्रमुख तथ्य यह है कि संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका ने दशकों में कैरिबियन में अपनी सबसे बड़ी सैन्य तैनाती की है।



- Its **Navy** has deployed its **most advanced aircraft carrier**, along with **fighter jets**, **amphibious vessels**, **attack submarines** and **tens of thousands of troops**, as it intensifies its pressure on **Venezuela** in an effort to force President **Nicolás Maduro** from power.
उसकी नौसेना ने अपना सबसे उन्नत विमानवाहक पोत, साथ ही लड़ाकू जेट, उभयचर पोत, आक्रमणकारी पनडुब्बियाँ और दसियों हज़ार सैनिक तैनात किए हैं, क्योंकि वह वेनेज़ुएला पर दबाव बढ़ा रहा है ताकि राष्ट्रपति निकोलस मादुरो को सत्ता से हटाया जा सके।
- The **Trump administration's National Security Strategy (NSS)**, released in **early December 2025**, identifies **Latin America and the Caribbean** as a **strategic priority**.
ट्रंप प्रशासन की राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा रणनीति (NSS), जो दिसंबर 2025 की शुरुआत में जारी हुई, लैटिन अमेरिका और कैरिबियन को एक रणनीतिक प्राथमिकता के रूप में चिह्नित करती है।
- Reviving the **19th century Monroe Doctrine**, the document asserts that the **U.S. must deny influence or control by outside powers** (read **China**) in **Latin America** and ensure that the **Western Hemisphere** remains under **American political, economic and military influence**.
19वीं सदी के मुनरो सिद्धांत को पुनर्जीवित करते हुए, यह दस्तावेज़ दावा करता है कि अमेरिका को लैटिन अमेरिका में बाहरी शक्तियों के प्रभाव या नियंत्रण (अर्थात् चीन) को रोकना चाहिए और यह सुनिश्चित करना चाहिए कि पश्चिमी गोलार्ध अमेरिकी राजनीतिक, आर्थिक और सैन्य प्रभाव के अधीन रहे।
- The push to reinforce **American primacy in Latin America** coincides with U.S. President **Donald Trump's** waning interest in **Europe**, another long-standing U.S. sphere of influence.
लैटिन अमेरिका में अमेरिकी वर्चस्व को मज़बूत करने का यह प्रयास, अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति **डोनाल्ड ट्रंप** की यूरोप में घटती रुचि के साथ मेल खाता है, जो अमेरिका का एक और पारंपरिक प्रभाव-क्षेत्र रहा है।
- Since the end of the **Second World War**, the U.S. has served as **Europe's primary security guarantor**.
द्वितीय विश्व युद्ध की समाप्ति के बाद से, अमेरिका यूरोप का प्रमुख सुरक्षा गारंटर रहा है।
- If Washington kept **western Europe** together through a tightly knit alliance during the **Cold War**, it expanded this **security umbrella** to **eastern Europe** after the disintegration of the **Soviet Union**, creating a large **transatlantic bloc**.
यदि शीत युद्ध के दौरान वाशिंगटन ने पश्चिमी यूरोप को एक सघन गठबंधन के माध्यम से एकजुट रखा, तो सोवियत संघ के विघटन के बाद उसने इस सुरक्षा छतरी को पूर्वी यूरोप तक विस्तारित किया, जिससे एक बड़ा पार-अटलांटिक ब्लॉक बना।
- Under **Mr. Trump**, however, the U.S. is no longer interested in **shouldering the burden of European security** — a position explicitly articulated in the **NSS**.
हालाँकि श्री ट्रंप के नेतृत्व में, अमेरिका अब यूरोपीय सुरक्षा का बोझ उठाने में रुचि नहीं रखता — यह रुख **NSS** में स्पष्ट रूप से व्यक्त किया गया है।
- **Why is America, at a moment when Russia and China are seeking to overturn the U.S.-built and U.S.-led security and economic order, stepping back from Europe while moving to consolidate its influence in the Western Hemisphere?**
ऐसे समय में जब रूस और चीन अमेरिका-निर्मित और अमेरिका-नेतृत्व वाले सुरक्षा एवं आर्थिक व्यवस्था को चुनौती देने का प्रयास कर रहे हैं, अमेरिका यूरोप से पीछे क्यों हट रहा है और पश्चिमी गोलार्ध में अपना प्रभाव क्यों मज़बूत कर रहा है?
- **It is difficult to discern a cohesive doctrine in Mr. Trump's foreign policy, marked by the President's impulses and unpredictability.**
श्री ट्रंप की विदेश नीति में किसी सुसंगत सिद्धांत को पहचानना कठिन है, जो राष्ट्रपति की आवेगशीलता और अनिश्चितता से चिह्नित है।
- Yet, even these impulses, this unpredictability and his **ideological orientation rooted in Christian nationalism and America's might** cannot ignore the **structural shifts** reshaping the **international order**.
फिर भी, ये आवेग, यह अनिश्चितता और ईसाई राष्ट्रवाद तथा अमेरिकी शक्ति में निहित उनकी वैचारिक प्रवृत्ति भी अंतरराष्ट्रीय व्यवस्था को पुनः आकार देने वाले संरचनात्मक परिवर्तनों की अनदेखी नहीं कर सकती।



- **Mr. Trump** is not the 'President of peace' that he claims to be — he has already **bombed six countries**, even if he has stopped short of a **full-scale war**.
श्री ट्रंप वह 'शांति के राष्ट्रपति' नहीं हैं जैसा कि वे दावा करते हैं — उन्होंने पहले ही **छह देशों पर बमबारी** की है, भले ही उन्होंने **पूर्ण पैमाने के युद्ध** से परहेज़ किया हो।
- At the same time, **Mr. Trump**, despite his rhetoric about **American military and economic dominance**, recognises that he no longer lives in a **unipolar world**.
साथ ही, **अमेरिकी सैन्य और आर्थिक प्रभुत्व** पर अपनी बयानबाज़ी के बावजूद, श्री ट्रंप यह स्वीकार करते हैं कि अब दुनिया **एकध्रुवीय** नहीं रही है।
- His **reluctant aggression** and **strategic recalibration** are reflections of the changes now taking shape in the **global balance of power**.
उनकी **संकोचपूर्ण आक्रामकता** और **रणनीतिक पुनर्संयोजन वैश्विक शक्ति संतुलन** में आकार ले रहे परिवर्तनों का प्रतिबिंब हैं।

Three great powers तीन महान शक्तियाँ

- When the **Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991**, a new order emerged with the **U.S.** at its centre.
जब **1991** में **सोवियत संघ** का विघटन हुआ, तो **अमेरिका** के केंद्र में एक नई व्यवस्था उभरी।
- There was no other **great power** positioned to challenge **American primacy**.
उस समय **अमेरिकी वर्चस्व** को चुनौती देने के लिए कोई अन्य **महान शक्ति** मौजूद नहीं थी।
- The **unipolar moment**, however, has since passed.
हालाँकि, वह **एकध्रुवीय क्षण** अब बीत चुका है।
- While future historians may better identify the precise point of rupture, one such moment was **Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014**.
भविष्य के इतिहासकार भले ही टूटन के सटीक बिंदु को बेहतर ढंग से पहचानें, लेकिन ऐसा ही एक क्षण **2014** में **रूस द्वारा क्रीमिया का अधिग्रहण** था।
- The **ensuing conflict in eastern Ukraine, the tepid western response, and Russia's ability to endure despite sanctions** reinforced the limits of the '**rules-based order**'.
इसके बाद **पूर्वी यूक्रेन** में संघर्ष, **पश्चिम की कमजोर प्रतिक्रिया**, और **प्रतिबंधों के बावजूद रूस की सहनशीलता** ने '**नियम-आधारित व्यवस्था**' की सीमाओं को उजागर किया।
- The **end of unipolarity, however, does not mean the end of American dominance**.
हालाँकि, **एकध्रुवीयता का अंत अमेरिकी प्रभुत्व के अंत का अर्थ नहीं है**।
- The **U.S. remains**, and will remain, for the foreseeable future, the **world's pre-eminent military and economic power**.
अमेरिका निकट भविष्य तक दुनिया की **सर्वोच्च सैन्य और आर्थिक शक्ति** बना रहेगा।
- **What has changed is that Washington is no longer the sole great power shaping geopolitical outcomes**.
जो बदला है वह यह कि **वाशिंगटन** अब **भूराजनीतिक परिणामों** को आकार देने वाली **एकमात्र महान शक्ति** नहीं है।
- **China and Russia now occupy that space as well, deepening what Realist thinkers describe as the inherently anarchic nature of the international system**.
अब **चीन और रूस** भी उस स्थान पर मौजूद हैं, जिससे **यथार्थवादी विचारकों** द्वारा वर्णित **अंतरराष्ट्रीय प्रणाली की अंतर्निहित अराजक प्रकृति** और गहरी होती है।
- **During the Cold War, the Soviet Union was America's principal rival, and in the 1970s, Washington reached out to China to exploit fissures within the communist bloc**.
शीत युद्ध के दौरान, **सोवियत संघ** अमेरिका का **मुख्य प्रतिद्वंद्वी** था, और **1970 के दशक** में वाशिंगटन ने **कम्युनिस्ट ब्लॉक** के भीतर दरारों का लाभ उठाने के लिए **चीन** से संपर्क किया।



- Today, the **U.S. identifies China as its principal and systemic challenger**.
आज अमेरिका, चीन को अपना मुख्य और प्रणालीगत प्रतिद्वंद्वी मानता है।
- This, in turn, leaves open the possibility of a **reset in ties with Russia** — an idea embraced by **Mr. Trump's MAGA (Make America Great Again) ideologues**, who frame **Russia as part of a shared 'Christian civilisation'**.
इसके परिणामस्वरूप रूस के साथ संबंधों के पुनर्संयोजन की संभावना खुलती है — एक विचार जिसे श्री ट्रंप के **MAGA (मेक अमेरिका ग्रेट अगेन) विचारक** अपनाते हैं, जो रूस को साझा 'ईसाई सभ्यता' का हिस्सा बताते हैं।

The reigning power versus the rising power

सत्तारूढ़ शक्ति बनाम उभरती शक्ति

- The **U.S. faces a unique challenge in China**.
अमेरिका को चीन से एक विशिष्ट चुनौती का सामना करना पड़ रहा है।
- The **Soviet economy, in its prime in the early 1970s, reached about 57% of the U.S. GDP, before it began slowing down**.
1970 के दशक की शुरुआत में अपने उत्कर्ष पर सोवियत अर्थव्यवस्था, अमेरिकी GDP के लगभग 57% तक पहुँच गई थी, इसके बाद उसकी गति धीमी होने लगी।
- **China's economy, now the world's second largest, already amounts to about 66% of the U.S. economy**.
चीन की अर्थव्यवस्था, जो अब दुनिया की दूसरी सबसे बड़ी है, पहले ही अमेरिकी अर्थव्यवस्था के लगभग 66% के बराबर हो चुकी है।
- **China continues to grow at a faster pace, steadily narrowing the gap**.
चीन तेज़ गति से बढ़ना जारी रखे हुए है और लगातार अंतर को कम कर रहा है।
- **As China's economic power expands, it is being converted into military capability (it has already built the world's largest Navy, by number of ships)**.
जैसे-जैसे चीन की आर्थिक शक्ति बढ़ती है, वह सैन्य क्षमता में परिवर्तित हो रही है (जहाज़ों की संख्या के आधार पर उसने पहले ही दुनिया की सबसे बड़ी नौसेना बना ली है)।
- **Like other great powers, Beijing is seeking to establish regional hegemony and global dominance**.
अन्य महान शक्तियों की तरह, बीजिंग भी क्षेत्रीय वर्चस्व और वैश्विक प्रभुत्व स्थापित करना चाहता है।
- **So, a prolonged contest between the U.S., the reigning power, and China, the rising power, appears unavoidable**.
इसलिए सत्तारूढ़ शक्ति अमेरिका और उभरती शक्ति चीन के बीच एक दीर्घकालिक प्रतिस्पर्धा अपरिहार्य प्रतीत होती है।
- The situation is comparable to **19th century Europe**, when a rising imperial Germany threatened to upstage Britain during Pax Britannica, unsettling the 'Concert of Europe'.
यह स्थिति 19वीं सदी के यूरोप के समान है, जब उभरते साम्राज्यवादी जर्मनी ने पैक्स ब्रिटानिका के दौरान ब्रिटेन को चुनौती दी, जिससे 'कॉन्सर्ट ऑफ यूरोप' अस्थिर हो गया।
- **Russia is the weakest link among the three powers**.
तीन शक्तियों में रूस सबसे कमज़ोर कड़ी है।
- **It is a relatively smaller economy with a shrinking sphere of influence**.
यह एक तुलनात्मक रूप से छोटी अर्थव्यवस्था है, जिसका प्रभाव-क्षेत्र सिमट रहा है।
- **But Russia's nuclear arsenals, expansive geography, abundant energy and mineral resources and its demonstrated willingness to use force to achieve its strategic objectives keep it in the great power constellation**.
लेकिन रूस के परमाणु हथियार, विस्तृत भौगोलिक क्षेत्र, प्रचुर ऊर्जा और खनिज संसाधन, तथा रणनीतिक उद्देश्यों की प्राप्ति के लिए बल प्रयोग की उसकी सिद्ध तत्परता उसे महान शक्ति समूह में बनाए रखते हैं।
- From **Moscow's perspective**, the country drifted into the **wilderness in the 1990s** before announcing its return in **2008 with the war in Georgia**.



मॉस्को के दृष्टिकोण से, देश 1990 के दशक में हाशिये पर चला गया था, इससे पहले कि उसने 2008 में जॉर्जिया युद्ध के साथ अपनी वापसी की घोषणा की।

- Since then, it has sought to **rewrite the post-Soviet security architecture in Europe**. तब से, उसने यूरोप में उत्तर-सोवियत सुरक्षा संरचना को पुनर्लेखित करने का प्रयास किया है।
- As the **West**, having expanded the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization** into the **Russian sphere of influence**, responded to **Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine** with **sweeping sanctions on Russia** and **military support for Kyiv**, **Moscow moved ever closer to China**. जब पश्चिम ने नाटो का विस्तार रूसी प्रभाव-क्षेत्र तक किया और व्लादिमीर पुतिन के यूक्रेन युद्ध के जवाब में रूस पर व्यापक प्रतिबंध तथा कीव को सैन्य समर्थन दिया, तो मॉस्को चीन के और निकट चला गया।
- **Russia and China** have found **common ground** in opposing the western '**rules-based order**'.
- **Russia and China** ने पश्चिमी '**नियम-आधारित व्यवस्था**' का विरोध करने में साझा आधार पाया है।
- **Russia** thinks that the order **denies it its rightful place in the world and seeks to revise it accordingly**, while **China**, by contrast, as **Rush Doshi** argues in **The Long Game**, wants to **replace it with a China-centric order**.

रूस का मानना है कि यह व्यवस्था उसे दुनिया में उसका उचित स्थान नहीं देती और वह इसे अनुसार संशोधित करना चाहता है, जबकि चीन, इसके विपरीत, रश दोशी द्वारा **The Long Game** में तर्क दिए अनुसार, इसे चीन-केंद्रित व्यवस्था से प्रतिस्थापित करना चाहता है।

Fluid multipolarity

तरल बहुध्रुवीयता

- **All three great powers** today understand that the world is **no longer organised around a single centre of authority**. आज तीनों महान शक्तियाँ समझती हैं कि दुनिया अब एकल सत्ता-केंद्र के आसपास संगठित नहीं है।
- In that sense, the world is already **multipolar**. इस अर्थ में, दुनिया पहले से ही बहुध्रुवीय है।
- But unlike the **post-Second World War** and **post-Cold War** transitions, the **structures of the new order** have yet to **fully emerge**. लेकिन द्वितीय विश्व युद्ध और शीत युद्ध के बाद के संक्रमणों के विपरीत, नई व्यवस्था की संरचनाएँ अभी पूरी तरह उभरनी बाकी हैं।
- **During the Cold War**, the world was divided into **two ideological blocs** and **two largely separate economic systems**. शीत युद्ध के दौरान, दुनिया दो वैचारिक गुटों और दो बड़े पैमाने पर अलग आर्थिक प्रणालियों में विभाजित थी।
- Today, **China** lacks the kind of **satellite state networks** that characterised the **20th century superpowers**, while the **U.S.** is **reassessing the sustainability** of its **alliance frameworks**, including its **commitment to Europe**. आज चीन के पास 20वीं सदी की महाशक्तियों जैसी उपग्रह राज्य नेटवर्क नहीं हैं, जबकि अमेरिका अपने गठबंधन ढाँचों की स्थिरता का पुनर्मूल्यांकन कर रहा है, जिसमें यूरोप के प्रति उसकी प्रतिबद्धता भी शामिल है।
- **Russia**, with its own **great power ambitions**, is **wary** of being seen as a **Chinese ally** irrespective of its **close strategic partnership** with **Beijing**. रूस, अपनी महान शक्ति महत्वाकांक्षाओं के साथ, बीजिंग के साथ घनिष्ठ रणनीतिक साझेदारी के बावजूद, चीनी सहयोगी के रूप में देखे जाने को लेकर सतर्क है।
- This opens a window for a **Washington–Moscow reset**. यह वाशिंगटन–मॉस्को पुनर्संयोजन के लिए एक अवसर खोलता है।
- But the **war in Ukraine** remains a **stumbling block**. लेकिन यूक्रेन का युद्ध एक बड़ी बाधा बना हुआ है।



- Russia may not want to challenge America's global leadership, but it certainly wants to re-establish its primacy in its sphere of influence.**
रूस शायद अमेरिका के वैश्विक नेतृत्व को चुनौती नहीं देना चाहता, लेकिन वह निश्चित रूप से अपने प्रभाव-क्षेत्र में अपना वर्चस्व पुनः स्थापित करना चाहता है।
- Thus, there are three great powers with divergent interests that are pulling the global order in different directions, rendering the emerging multipolarity fluid rather than a structured system akin to the post-Second World War order.**
इस प्रकार, विभिन्न हितों वाली तीन महान शक्तियाँ वैश्विक व्यवस्था को अलग-अलग दिशाओं में खींच रही हैं, जिससे उभरती बहुध्रुवीयता द्वितीय विश्व युद्धोत्तर व्यवस्था जैसी संरचित प्रणाली के बजाय तरल बन जाती है।
- This also means that middle powers, including superpower allies such as Japan and Germany, and autonomous actors such as India and Brazil, would continue to hedge their bets.**
इसका यह भी अर्थ है कि मध्य शक्तियाँ, जिनमें महाशक्ति सहयोगी जैसे जापान और जर्मनी, तथा स्वायत्त अभिनेता जैसे भारत और ब्राज़ील शामिल हैं, अपने विकल्प खुले रखेंगी।
- Mr. Trump wants Europe to shoulder greater responsibility for its own security, reset relations with Russia and reassert American primacy in its immediate neighbourhood even as Washington prepares for a prolonged great power competition with China.**
श्री ट्रंप चाहते हैं कि यूरोप अपनी सुरक्षा की अधिक ज़िम्मेदारी उठाए, रूस के साथ संबंधों का पुनर्संयोजन करे और चीन के साथ दीर्घकालिक महान शक्ति प्रतिस्पर्धा की तैयारी के बीच अपने तात्कालिक पड़ोस में अमेरिकी वर्चस्व को फिर से स्थापित करे।
- The idea is to return to the classic offshore balancing.
उद्देश्य क्लासिक ऑफ़शोर बैलेंसिंग की ओर लौटना है।
- Even if Mr. Trump fails in executing it, future American Presidents may not be able to ignore the shifts that he has initiated.
भले ही श्री ट्रंप इसे लागू करने में असफल रहें, भविष्य के अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति उनके द्वारा शुरू किए गए परिवर्तनों की अनदेखी नहीं कर पाएँगे।
- Russia, for its part, seeks to carve out a sphere of influence.**
रूस अपने हिस्से के रूप में एक प्रभाव-क्षेत्र गढ़ना चाहता है।
- China aims to preserve its close strategic partnership with Russia to keep the Eurasian landmass within its orbit, while establishing regional hegemony in East and Southeast Asia.**
चीन रूस के साथ अपनी घनिष्ठ रणनीतिक साझेदारी को बनाए रखना चाहता है ताकि यूरेशियाई भूभाग उसके प्रभाव-क्षेत्र में रहे, साथ ही पूर्व और दक्षिण-पूर्व एशिया में क्षेत्रीय वर्चस्व स्थापित कर सके।
- These moves would cement its status as a long-term superpower, much as the U.S. did by asserting its hegemony in the Western Hemisphere in the 19th century, and across the Atlantic in the 20th century.
ये कदम उसे दीर्घकालिक महाशक्ति के रूप में स्थापित करेंगे, ठीक वैसे ही जैसे अमेरिका ने 19वीं सदी में पश्चिमी गोलार्ध में और 20वीं सदी में अटलांटिक पार अपना वर्चस्व स्थापित किया था।
- In this fluid landscape, Russia has emerged as the new 'swing great power' between the two superpowers, paradoxically lending the emerging multipolar order a distinctly bipolar character.**
इस तरल परिदृश्य में, रूस दो महाशक्तियों के बीच नई 'स्विंग महान शक्ति' के रूप में उभरा है, जो विरोधाभासी रूप से उभरती बहुध्रुवीय व्यवस्था को एक स्पष्ट द्विध्रुवीय चरित्र प्रदान करता है।



Between the Begums, a bitter rivalry, vengeful past

With former Bangladesh Prime Minister and BNP leader Khaleda Zia's passing, her decades-long feud with Sheikh Hasina, another former PM and Awami League leader, who is now in exile in India, will also be put to rest; during the 'Battle of the Begums', the two women leaders alternated in power, taking turns to prosecute each other and trade accusations of orchestrating violent attacks

NEWS ANALYSIS

Suhasini Haidar

In the years that their public rivalry was most bitter, few could have predicted such an end to the 'Battle of the Begums' in Bangladesh. With former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's passing, her decades-long feud with former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, now in exile in India, will also be put to rest. During that time, the two women alternated tenures in power, taking turns to prosecute the other, and accusing each other of orchestrating violent attacks on the other.

Condoling her death on Tuesday, Ms. Hasina issued a statement extolling

Ms. Zia's contribution to establishing democracy in Bangladesh. Those words hark back to the late 1980s where the two 'Begums' had last worked together – one the daughter of the slain founder of the country Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and the other the widow of his successor Gen. Ziaur Rehman, who was also assassinated, six years after Mujib.

United against military Both Mujib and Gen. Zia had fought on the same side during Bangladesh's war of liberation. Ms. Hasina and Khaleda, the leaders of the Awami League and the Bangladesh National Party (BNP), respectively, fought on the same side just once, to oust the autocratic President, Gen.

Muhammad Ershad (1982-1990) from power. They both boycotted the 1988 elections, when Ershad's Jatiya Party won a whopping and obviously manufactured mandate of 251 out of 300 seats.

As women, the two leaders could not be more different – Ms. Hasina lived with the grief of losing her entire family, and was a scrappy politician, not afraid of taking her battle to the streets.

Zia, who also lived with the grief of losing her husband's assassination at their home, described herself as a "shy housewife" of a military officer, ruled more from her living room, while her party men hit the streets. Both engendered the undying loyalty of her followers.



Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia allied once against Gen. Ershad in 1990, ending his autocracy before their rivalry began. AP/PTI

Gen. Ershad eventually agreed to step down in 1990, in the face of massive pro-democracy protests held jointly by the Awami League and the BNP, paving the way for free and fair elections. In the elections in 1991, the BNP won and Khaleda Zia became Ban-

gladesh's first woman Prime Minister, and Sheikh Hasina the leader of the Opposition, while Gen. Ershad was imprisoned on corruption charges. One of her first actions as PM was to turn Bangladesh into a parliamentary democracy, diluting the power of the

President of the country.

PM Zia did not, however, reverse the Islamisation of Bangladeshi politics that had followed after Sheikh Mujib, including the shift away from a secular republic to an Islamic one, that Gen. Ershad enshrined through a Constitutional amendment. As relations with Sheikh Hasina soured, Zia grew more beholden to Jamaat-e-Islami. This also strained ties between India and Bangladesh during Zia's tenures, as training camps for extremist groups targeting India began to grow.

As it became clear that Zia would not prosecute Mujib's killers, and was even gaining political support from them, Ms. Hasina began to target her more directly. The entire

Opposition resigned from Parliament and decided to boycott general elections held in February 1996, which Zia won with ease as a result. Zia regretted the election almost immediately, saying in an interview to this correspondent that she had pleaded with Ms. Hasina to reconsider the boycott.

Awami League protests followed, forcing Zia to step down in less than a month, and Ms. Hasina won the next election a few months later. In 2001, the tables turned again, with Zia being elected back to power, and in 2008 Ms. Hasina returned to power.

Fall of Hasina

When Ms. Hasina had to flee the country in August 2024, something Zia predicted would happen, the rivalry endured, and the BNP welcomed the conviction and death sentence that was handed down to Ms. Hasina in absentia in November this year.

Reports suggested the BNP was preparing to field her as a candidate in the coming elections in February.

With her death, and Ms. Hasina's exile, Bangladesh now faces an election without either of its two Begums. The real beneficiaries then are Bangladesh's radical Islamists and fundamentalists seeking to overthrow centrist politics in the country. The question is whether their parties can chart a different course in the future, or continue down the same vengeful path.

Between the Begums, a bitter rivalry, vengeful past बेगमों के बीच, कड़वी प्रतिद्वंद्विता, प्रतिशोध से भरा अतीत

- Between the Begums, a bitter rivalry, vengeful past
बेगमों के बीच, कड़वी प्रतिद्वंद्विता, प्रतिशोध से भरा अतीत
- With former **Bangladesh Prime Minister** and **BNP leader Khaleda Zia's** passing, her decades-long feud with **Sheikh Hasina**, another former PM and **Awami League leader**, who is now in **exile in India**, will also be put to rest; during the '**Battle of the Begums**', the two women leaders alternated in power, taking turns to prosecute each other and trade accusations of orchestrating violent attacks
पूर्व बांग्लादेश की प्रधानमंत्री और बीएनपी नेता खालिदा ज़िया के निधन के साथ, शेख हसीना, एक अन्य पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री और आवामी लीग नेता, जो अब भारत में निर्वासन में हैं, के साथ उनकी दशकों पुरानी दुश्मनी भी समाप्त हो जाएगी; 'बेगमों की लड़ाई' के दौरान, दोनों महिला नेताओं ने सत्ता में बारी-बारी से शासन किया, एक-दूसरे पर मुकदमे चलाए और हिंसक हमलों की साजिश रचने के आरोप लगाए
- In the years that their public rivalry was most bitter, few could have predicted such an end to the '**Battle of the Begums**' in Bangladesh.
उन वर्षों में जब उनकी सार्वजनिक प्रतिद्वंद्विता सबसे कड़वी थी, बहुत कम लोग बांग्लादेश में 'बेगमों की लड़ाई' के ऐसे अंत की कल्पना कर सकते थे।
- With former Prime Minister **Khaleda Zia's** passing, her decades-long feud with former Prime Minister **Sheikh Hasina**, now in exile in **India**, will also be put to rest.
पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री खालिदा ज़िया के निधन के साथ, पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री शेख हसीना, जो अब भारत में निर्वासन में हैं, के साथ उनकी दशकों पुरानी दुश्मनी भी समाप्त हो जाएगी।



- During that time, the two women alternated tenures in power, taking turns to prosecute the other, and accusing each other of orchestrating violent attacks on the other.
उस दौरान, दोनों महिलाओं ने सत्ता में बारी-बारी से कार्यकाल निभाया, एक-दूसरे पर मुकदमे चलाए, और एक-दूसरे पर हिंसक हमलों की साजिश रचने के आरोप लगाए।
- Condoling her death on **Tuesday, Ms. Hasina** issued a statement extolling **Ms. Zia's** contribution to establishing democracy in Bangladesh.
मंगलवार को उनके निधन पर शोक व्यक्त करते हुए, **सुश्री हसीना** ने बांग्लादेश में लोकतंत्र स्थापित करने में **सुश्री ज़िया** के योगदान की सराहना करते हुए एक बयान जारी किया।
- Those words hark back to the late **1980s** where the two '**Begums**' had last worked together — one the daughter of the slain founder of the country **Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**, and the other the widow of his successor **Gen. Ziaur Rehman**, who was also assassinated, six years after Mujib.
ये शब्द **1980 के दशक** के उत्तरार्ध की याद दिलाते हैं, जब दोनों '**बेगमों**' ने आखिरी बार साथ काम किया था — एक देश के मारे गए संस्थापक **शेख मुजीबुर रहमान** की बेटी, और दूसरी उनके उत्तराधिकारी **जनरल ज़ियाउर रहमान** की विधवा, जिनकी भी मुजीब के छह साल बाद हत्या कर दी गई थी।

United against military सैन्य शासन के खिलाफ़ एकजुट

- Both **Mujib** and **Gen. Zia** had fought on the same side during **Bangladesh's war of liberation**.
मुजीब और **जनरल ज़िया** दोनों ने **बांग्लादेश के मुक्ति संग्राम** के दौरान एक ही पक्ष में लड़ाई लड़ी थी।
- **Ms. Hasina** and **Khaleda**, the leaders of the **Awami League** and the **Bangladesh National Party (BNP)**, respectively, fought on the same side just once, to oust the autocratic President, **Gen. Muhammad Ershad (1982-1990)** from power.
सुश्री हसीना और **खालिदा**, क्रमशः **आवामी लीग** और **बांग्लादेश नेशनल पार्टी (बीएनपी)** की नेता, केवल एक बार एक ही पक्ष में लड़ीं, ताकि निरंकुश राष्ट्रपति **जनरल मुहम्मद इरशाद (1982-1990)** को सत्ता से हटाया जा सके।
- They both boycotted the **1988 elections**, when **Ershad's Jatiya Party** won a whopping and obviously manufactured mandate of **251 out of 300 seats**.
उन्होंने **1988 के चुनावों** का बहिष्कार किया, जब **इरशाद की जातीय पार्टी** ने **300 में से 251 सीटों** का भारी और स्पष्ट रूप से गढ़ा गया जनादेश हासिल किया।
- As women, the two leaders could not be more different — **Ms. Hasina** lived with the grief of losing her entire family, and was a scrappy politician, not afraid of taking her battle to the streets.
महिलाओं के रूप में, दोनों नेता इससे अधिक अलग नहीं हो सकती थीं — **सुश्री हसीना** अपने पूरे परिवार को खोने के दुख के साथ रहीं, और एक जुझारू राजनेता थीं, जिन्हें अपनी लड़ाई सड़कों तक ले जाने से डर नहीं लगता था।
- **Zia**, who also lived with the grief of her husband's assassination at their home, described herself as a "**shy housewife**" of a military officer, ruled more from her living room, while her party men hit the streets.
ज़िया, जो अपने घर में अपने पति की हत्या के दुख के साथ भी रहीं, ने खुद को एक सैन्य अधिकारी की "**शर्मिली गृहिणी**" बताया, जो अधिकतर अपने ड्राइंग रूम से शासन करती थीं, जबकि उनकी पार्टी के लोग सड़कों पर उतरते थे।
- Both engendered the undying loyalty of her followers.
दोनों ने अपने समर्थकों की अटूट निष्ठा अर्जित की।
- **Gen. Ershad** eventually agreed to step down in **1990**, in the face of massive **pro-democracy protests** held jointly by the **Awami League** and the **BNP**, paving the way for **free and fair elections**.
जनरल इरशाद ने अंततः **1990 में आवामी लीग** और **बीएनपी** द्वारा संयुक्त रूप से किए गए विशाल **लोकतंत्र समर्थक प्रदर्शनों** के दबाव में पद छोड़ने पर सहमति दी, जिससे **स्वतंत्र और निष्पक्ष चुनावों** का मार्ग प्रशस्त हुआ।
- In the elections in **1991**, the **BNP** won and **Khaleda Zia** became Bangladesh's **first woman Prime Minister**, and **Sheikh Hasina** the leader of the **Opposition**, while **Gen. Ershad** was imprisoned on corruption charges.



1991 के चुनावों में **बीएनपी** जीती और **खालिदा ज़िया** बांग्लादेश की पहली महिला प्रधानमंत्री बनीं, और **शेख हसीना विपक्ष** की नेता बनीं, जबकि **जनरल इरशाद** को भ्रष्टाचार के आरोपों में जेल भेजा गया।

- One of her first actions as PM was to turn Bangladesh into a **parliamentary democracy**, diluting the power of the प्रधानमंत्री के रूप में उनके पहले कदमों में से एक बांग्लादेश को **संसदीय लोकतंत्र** बनाना था, जिससे सत्ता की शक्ति कम हुई
- cited would happen, the rivalry endured, and the **BNP** welcomed the conviction and death sentence that was handed down to **Ms. Hasina** in absentia in **November** this year. जैसा कि अनुमान लगाया गया था, प्रतिद्वंद्विता जारी रही, और **बीएनपी** ने **नवंबर** में **सुश्री हसीना** को अनुपस्थिति में सुनाई गई सजा और मृत्युदंड का स्वागत किया।
- Reports suggested the **BNP** was preparing to field her as a candidate in the coming elections in **February**. रिपोर्टों से संकेत मिला कि **बीएनपी** आने वाले **फरवरी** के चुनावों में उन्हें उम्मीदवार के रूप में उतारने की तैयारी कर रही थी।
- With her death, and **Ms. Hasina's** exile, Bangladesh now faces an election without either of its two **Begums**. उनकी मृत्यु और **सुश्री हसीना** के निर्वासन के साथ, बांग्लादेश अब अपनी दोनों **बेगमों** के बिना चुनाव का सामना कर रहा है।
- The real beneficiaries then are Bangladesh's **radical Islamists and fundamentalists** seeking to overthrow **centrist politics** in the country. तब वास्तविक लाभार्थी बांग्लादेश के **कट्टर इस्लामी और कट्टरपंथी** होंगे, जो देश में **केंद्रपंथी राजनीति** को उखाड़ फेंकना चाहते हैं।
- The question is whether their parties can chart a different course in the future, or continue down the same **vengeful path**. सवाल यह है कि क्या उनकी पार्टियां भविष्य में कोई अलग राह चुन सकती हैं, या उसी **प्रतिशोधी मार्ग** पर आगे बढ़ेंगी।
- The opposition resigned from Parliament and decided to boycott general elections held in **February 1996**, which **Zia** won with ease as a result. विपक्ष ने संसद से इस्तीफा दे दिया और **फरवरी 1996** में हुए आम चुनावों का बहिष्कार करने का निर्णय लिया, जिसका परिणाम यह हुआ कि **ज़िया** ने आसानी से जीत हासिल की।
- **Zia** regretted the election almost immediately, saying in an interview to this correspondent that she had pleaded with **Ms. Hasina** to reconsider the boycott. **ज़िया** ने लगभग तुरंत ही उस चुनाव पर पछतावा जताया, और इस संवाददाता को दिए साक्षात्कार में कहा कि उन्होंने **सुश्री हसीना** से बहिष्कार पर पुनर्विचार करने की विनती की थी।
- **Awami League** protests followed, forcing **Zia** to step down in less than a month, and **Ms. Hasina** won the next election a few months later. इसके बाद **आवामी लीग** के विरोध प्रदर्शन हुए, जिससे **ज़िया** को एक महीने से भी कम समय में पद छोड़ना पड़ा, और कुछ महीनों बाद हुए अगले चुनाव में **सुश्री हसीना** जीतीं।
- In **2001**, the tables turned again, with **Zia** being elected back to power, and in **2008 Ms. Hasina** returned to power. **2001** में फिर पासा पलटा, **ज़िया** दोबारा सत्ता में आईं, और **2008** में **सुश्री हसीना** सत्ता में लौटीं।

Fall of Hasina हसीना का पतन

- When **Ms. Hasina** had to flee the country in **August 2024**, something **Zia** predicted जब **सुश्री हसीना** को **अगस्त 2024** में देश छोड़कर भागना पड़ा, कुछ ऐसा जिसकी **ज़िया** ने पूर्व
- President of the country. देश के राष्ट्रपति।
- PM **Zia** did not, however, reverse the **Islamisation of Bangladeshi politics** that had followed after **Sheikh Mujib**, including the shift away from a **secular republic** to an **Islamic one**, that **Gen. Ershad** enshrined through a **Constitutional amendment**. हालाँकि प्रधानमंत्री **ज़िया** ने **शेख मुजीब** के बाद बांग्लादेशी राजनीति के **इस्लामीकरण** को पलटा नहीं, जिसमें **धर्मनिरपेक्ष गणराज्य** से **इस्लामी गणराज्य** की ओर बदलाव शामिल था, जिसे **जनरल इरशाद** ने **संवैधानिक संशोधन** के माध्यम से स्थापित किया।



- As relations with **Sheikh Hasina** soured, **Zia** grew more beholden to **Jamaat-e-Islami**.
जैसे-जैसे **शेख हसीना** के साथ संबंध बिगड़ते गए, **ज़िया जमात-ए-इस्लामी** पर अधिक निर्भर होती चली गई।
- This also strained ties between **India and Bangladesh** during **Zia's tenures**, as training camps for **extremist groups** targeting **India** began to grow.
इससे **ज़िया** के कार्यकाल के दौरान **भारत और बांग्लादेश** के संबंध भी तनावपूर्ण हो गए, क्योंकि **भारत** को निशाना बनाने वाले **उग्रवादी समूहों** के प्रशिक्षण शिविर बढ़ने लगे।
- PM **Zia** did not, however, reverse the **Islamisation of Bangladeshi politics** that had followed after **Sheikh Mujib**, including the shift away from a **secular republic** to an **Islamic one**, that **Gen. Ershad** enshrined through a **Constitutional amendment**.
हालाँकि प्रधानमंत्री **ज़िया** ने **शेख मुजीब** के बाद बांग्लादेशी राजनीति के **इस्लामीकरण** को नहीं पलटा, जिसमें **धर्मनिरपेक्ष गणराज्य** से **इस्लामी गणराज्य** की ओर बदलाव शामिल था, जिसे **जनरल इरशाद** ने **संवैधानिक संशोधन** के माध्यम से स्थापित किया था।
- As relations with **Sheikh Hasina** soured, **Zia** grew more beholden to **Jamaat-e-Islami**.
जैसे-जैसे **शेख हसीना** के साथ संबंध बिगड़ते गए, **ज़िया जमात-ए-इस्लामी** पर अधिक निर्भर होती चली गई।
- This also strained ties between **India and Bangladesh** during **Zia's tenures**, as training camps for **extremist groups** targeting **India** began to grow.
इससे **ज़िया** के कार्यकाल के दौरान **भारत और बांग्लादेश** के संबंध भी तनावपूर्ण हो गए, क्योंकि **भारत** को निशाना बनाने वाले **उग्रवादी समूहों** के प्रशिक्षण शिविर बढ़ने लगे।
- As it became clear that **Zia** would not prosecute **Mujib's killers**, and was even gaining political support from them, **Ms. Hasina** began to target her more directly.
जब यह स्पष्ट हो गया कि **ज़िया**, **मुजीब के हत्यारों** पर मुकदमा नहीं चलाएँगी और उनसे राजनीतिक समर्थन भी हासिल कर रही हैं, तो **सुश्री हसीना** ने उन्हें अधिक सीधे तौर पर निशाना बनाना शुरू किया।

The entire पूरा

- The opposition resigned from **Parliament** and decided to boycott general elections held in **February 1996**, which **Zia** won with ease as a result.
पूरे **विपक्ष ने संसद** से इस्तीफा दे दिया और **फरवरी 1996** में हुए आम चुनावों का बहिष्कार करने का निर्णय लिया, जिसके परिणामस्वरूप **ज़िया** ने आसानी से जीत हासिल की।
- Zia** regretted the election almost immediately, saying in an interview to this correspondent that she had pleaded with **Ms. Hasina** to reconsider the boycott.
ज़िया ने लगभग तुरंत ही उस चुनाव पर पछतावा जताया और इस संवाददाता को दिए साक्षात्कार में कहा कि उन्होंने **सुश्री हसीना** से बहिष्कार पर पुनर्विचार करने की विनती की थी।
- Awami League** protests followed, forcing **Zia** to step down in less than a month, and **Ms. Hasina** won the next election a few months later.
इसके बाद **आवामी लीग** के विरोध प्रदर्शन हुए, जिससे **ज़िया** को एक महीने से भी कम समय में पद छोड़ना पड़ा, और कुछ महीनों बाद हुए अगले चुनाव में **सुश्री हसीना** जीतीं।
- In **2001**, the tables turned again, with **Zia** being elected back to power, and in **2008 Ms. Hasina** returned to power.
2001 में फिर परिस्थितियाँ बदलीं, **ज़िया** दोबारा सत्ता में आईं, और **2008** में **सुश्री हसीना** सत्ता में लौटीं।

Fall of Hasina हसीना का पतन

- When **Ms. Hasina** had to flee the country in **August 2024**, something **Zia** predicted would happen, the rivalry endured, and the **BNP** welcomed the conviction and death sentence that was handed down to **Ms. Hasina** in absentia in **November** this year.
जब **सुश्री हसीना** को **अगस्त 2024** में देश छोड़कर भागना पड़ा, जो कुछ **ज़िया** ने पहले ही अनुमान लगाया था, तब भी प्रतिद्वंद्विता जारी रही, और **बीएनपी** ने **नवंबर** में **सुश्री हसीना** को अनुपस्थिति में सुनाई गई सज़ा और मृत्युदंड का स्वागत किया।
- Reports suggested the **BNP** was preparing to field her as a candidate in the coming elections in **February**.
रिपोर्टों से संकेत मिला कि **बीएनपी** आने वाले **फरवरी** के चुनावों में उन्हें उम्मीदवार के रूप में उतारने की तैयारी कर रही थी।



- With her death, and **Ms. Hasina's exile**, **Bangladesh** now faces an election without either of its two **Begums**.
उनकी मृत्यु और **सुश्री हसीना** के निर्वासन के साथ, **बांग्लादेश** अब अपनी दोनों **बेगमों** के बिना चुनाव का सामना कर रहा है।
- The real beneficiaries then are **Bangladesh's radical Islamists and fundamentalists** seeking to overthrow **centrist politics** in the country.

GS Paper III: Economy,	
TOPICS COVERED	31_12_2025
1.	India is now the fourth largest economy: Centre भारत अब चौथी सबसे बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्था है: केंद्र
2.	Gig, platform workers to go on strike today to protest 'exploitation' 'शोषण' के विरोध में आज हड़ताल पर जाएंगे गिग, प्लेटफॉर्म वर्कर
3.	HAL enters civil market with Dhruv NG helicopter HAL ने ध्रुव NG हेलीकॉप्टर के साथ सिविल बाज़ार में प्रवेश किया
4.	Himachal apple growers oppose reduced import duty on New Zealand हिमाचल के सेब उत्पादकों ने न्यूज़ीलैंड पर घटाई गई आयात शुल्क का विरोध किया
5.	Too good to last ज्यादा समय तक टिकने के लिए बहुत अच्छा
6.	The India-New Zealand FTA — unlocking growth भारत-न्यूज़ीलैंड एफटीए — विकास के द्वार खोलना
7.	Sagarmala board approves ₹4,300-cr. of maritime loans सागरमाला बोर्ड ने ₹4,300 करोड़ के समुद्री ऋण को मंजूरी दी



India is now the fourth largest economy: Centre

With GDP valued at \$4.18 trillion, India has surpassed Japan and is poised to displace Germany from the third rank in the next few years with a projected GDP of \$7.3 trillion by 2030, it says

GS III: Economy

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

India has surpassed Japan to become the world's fourth largest economy with a size of \$4.18 trillion and is poised to overtake Germany to become the third largest by 2030, the government said on Tuesday.

With continuing good growth numbers, India is also the world's fastest-growing major economy, it said.

India's real GDP grew 8.2% in the second quarter of 2025-26, up from 7.8% in the first quarter and 7.4% in the fourth quarter of the last fiscal.

"With GDP valued at \$4.18 trillion, India has surpassed Japan to become the world's fourth largest economy and is poised to displace Germany from the third rank in the next 2.5 to 3 years with a projected GDP of \$7.3 trillion by 2030," said the government in a statement providing a snapshot of reforms in 2025.

The U.S. is the world's



Domestic drivers, led by robust private consumption, played a big role in supporting this expansion, the government has said. AFP

largest economy, and China occupies the second spot.

The growth momentum further surprised on the upside, with GDP expanding to a six-quarter high in Q2 of 2025-26, reflecting India's resilience amid persistent global trade uncertainties, it said.

Domestic drivers, led by robust private consumption, played a central role in supporting this expansion.

The release said international agencies have echoed this optimism and

cited projections made by various entities. The World Bank has projected a 6.5% growth in 2026, and Moody's expects India to remain the fastest-growing G20 economy with a growth of 6.4% in 2026 and 6.5% in 2027. The International Monetary Fund has raised its projections to 6.6% for 2025 and 6.2% for 2026, and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development forecasts 6.7% growth in 2025 and 6.2% in 2026. Also, the S&P anticipates a growth of 6.5% in the current fiscal

and 6.7% in the next, the Asian Development Bank has lifted its 2025 forecast to 7.2%, and Fitch has raised its FY26 projection to 7.4% on stronger consumer demand.

"India is among the world's fastest-growing major economies and is well-positioned to sustain this momentum. With the ambition of attaining high middle-income status by 2047 - the centenary year of its independence, the country is building on strong foundations of economic growth, structural reforms, and social progress," the government said.

The release highlighted that inflation remains below the lower tolerance threshold, unemployment is declining, and export performance continues to improve. Furthermore, financial conditions have stayed benign, with strong credit flows to the commercial sector, while demand conditions remain firm, supported by a further strengthening of urban consumption.

India is now the fourth largest economy: Centre भारत अब चौथी सबसे बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्था है: केंद्र

- India is now the fourth largest economy: Centre
भारत अब चौथी सबसे बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्था है: केंद्र
- With **GDP valued at \$4.18 trillion**, India has surpassed **Japan** and is poised to displace **Germany** from the third rank in the next few years with a projected **GDP of \$7.3 trillion by 2030**, it says
\$4.18 ट्रिलियन के GDP के साथ भारत ने **जापान** को पीछे छोड़ दिया है और आने वाले कुछ वर्षों में **जर्मनी** को तीसरे स्थान से हटाने की स्थिति में है, जहाँ **2030 तक \$7.3 ट्रिलियन GDP** का अनुमान है, ऐसा कहा गया
- **India has surpassed Japan to become the world's fourth largest economy with a size of \$4.18 trillion and is poised to overtake Germany to become the third largest by 2030**, the government said on **Tuesday**.



भारत ने \$4.18 ट्रिलियन के आकार के साथ जापान को पीछे छोड़कर दुनिया की चौथी सबसे बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्था बन गई है और 2030 तक जर्मनी को पीछे छोड़कर तीसरी सबसे बड़ी बनने की स्थिति में है, सरकार ने मंगलवार को कहा।

- With continuing good growth numbers, India is also the world's **fastest-growing major economy**, it said.
लगातार अच्छे विकास आँकड़ों के साथ, भारत दुनिया की सबसे तेज़ी से बढ़ने वाली प्रमुख अर्थव्यवस्था भी है, ऐसा कहा गया।
- India's real GDP grew **8.2%** in the **second quarter of 2025-26**, up from **7.8%** in the **first quarter** and **7.4%** in the **fourth quarter** of the last fiscal.
भारत की वास्तविक GDP 2025-26 की दूसरी तिमाही में 8.2% बढ़ी, जो पहली तिमाही में 7.8% और पिछले वित्त वर्ष की चौथी तिमाही में 7.4% थी।
- **"With GDP valued at \$4.18 trillion, India has surpassed Japan to become the world's fourth largest economy and is poised to displace Germany from the third rank in the next 2.5 to 3 years with a projected GDP of \$7.3 trillion by 2030,"** said the government in a statement providing a snapshot of reforms in 2025.
"\$4.18 ट्रिलियन के GDP के साथ भारत ने जापान को पीछे छोड़कर दुनिया की चौथी सबसे बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्था बन गई है और अगले 2.5 से 3 वर्षों में जर्मनी को तीसरे स्थान से हटाने की स्थिति में है, जहाँ 2030 तक \$7.3 ट्रिलियन GDP का अनुमान है," सरकार ने 2025 में सुधारों की झलक देते हुए एक बयान में कहा।
- **The U.S. is the world's largest economy, and China occupies the second spot.**
अमेरिका दुनिया की सबसे बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्था है, और चीन दूसरे स्थान पर है।
- The growth momentum further surprised on the upside, with GDP expanding to a **six-quarter high in Q2 of 2025-26**, reflecting India's **resilience** amid persistent **global trade uncertainties**, it said.
विकास की गति ने और अधिक सकारात्मक आश्चर्य दिया, जहाँ 2025-26 की दूसरी तिमाही में GDP छह तिमाहियों के उच्चतम स्तर पर पहुँची, जो लगातार बनी वैश्विक व्यापार अनिश्चितताओं के बीच भारत की लचीलापन को दर्शाता है, ऐसा कहा गया।
- Domestic drivers, led by **robust private consumption**, played a central role in supporting this expansion.
मजबूत निजी उपभोग के नेतृत्व में घरेलू कारकों ने इस विस्तार को सहारा देने में केंद्रीय भूमिका निभाई।
- The release said international agencies have echoed this optimism and cited projections made by various entities.
विज्ञप्ति में कहा गया कि अंतरराष्ट्रीय एजेंसियों ने इस आशावाद को दोहराया है और विभिन्न संस्थाओं द्वारा किए गए अनुमानों का उल्लेख किया है।
- The **World Bank** has projected a **6.5% growth in 2026**, and **Moody's** expects India to remain the **fastest-growing G20 economy with a growth of 6.4% in 2026 and 6.5% in 2027**.
विश्व बैंक ने 2026 में 6.5% विकास का अनुमान लगाया है, और मूडीज़ को उम्मीद है कि भारत G20 की सबसे तेज़ी से बढ़ने वाली अर्थव्यवस्था बना रहेगा, जहाँ 2026 में 6.4% और 2027 में 6.5% की वृद्धि होगी।
- The **International Monetary Fund** has raised its projections to **6.6% for 2025** and **6.2% for 2026**, and the **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development** forecasts **6.7% growth in 2025** and **6.2% in 2026**.
अंतरराष्ट्रीय मुद्रा कोष ने अपने अनुमानों को 2025 के लिए 6.6% और 2026 के लिए 6.2% तक बढ़ाया है, और आर्थिक सहयोग और विकास संगठन ने 2025 में 6.7% तथा 2026 में 6.2% वृद्धि का अनुमान लगाया है।
- Also, the **S&P** anticipates a growth of **6.5% in the current fiscal** and **6.7% in the next**, the **Asian Development Bank** has lifted its **2025 forecast to 7.2%**, and **Fitch** has raised its **FY26 projection to 7.4%** on stronger **consumer demand**.
इसके अलावा, एस एंड पी ने वर्तमान वित्त वर्ष में 6.5% और अगले में 6.7% वृद्धि का अनुमान लगाया है, एशियाई विकास बैंक ने 2025 का अनुमान 7.2% तक बढ़ाया है, और फिच ने मजबूत उपभोक्ता मांग के आधार पर FY26 का अनुमान 7.4% तक बढ़ाया है।
- "India is among the world's **fastest-growing major economies** and is **well-positioned** to sustain this momentum.
"भारत दुनिया की सबसे तेज़ी से बढ़ने वाली प्रमुख अर्थव्यवस्थाओं में शामिल है और इस गति को बनाए रखने के लिए अच्छी स्थिति में है।



- With the ambition of attaining **high middle-income status by 2047** - the **centenary year of its independence**, the country is building on strong foundations of **economic growth, structural reforms, and social progress**,” the government said.
2047 तक उच्च मध्यम-आय स्थिति प्राप्त करने की महत्वाकांक्षा के साथ — जो उसकी **स्वतंत्रता की शताब्दी** है — देश **आर्थिक विकास, संरचनात्मक सुधारों, और सामाजिक प्रगति** की मजबूत नींव पर आगे बढ़ रहा है,” सरकार ने कहा।
- The release highlighted that **inflation** remains below the **lower tolerance threshold**, **unemployment** is declining, and **export performance** continues to improve.
विज्ञप्ति में बताया गया कि **महंगाई निचली सहनशीलता सीमा** से नीचे बनी हुई है, **बेरोज़गारी घट रही है**, और **निर्यात प्रदर्शन** में लगातार सुधार हो रहा है।
- Furthermore, **financial conditions** have stayed **benign**, with strong **credit flows** to the commercial sector, while **demand conditions** remain **firm**, supported by a further strengthening of **urban consumption**.
इसके अलावा, **वित्तीय परिस्थितियाँ अनुकूल** बनी हुई हैं, जहाँ वाणिज्यिक क्षेत्र को मजबूत **ऋण प्रवाह** मिल रहा है, जबकि **मांग की स्थिति मजबूत** बनी हुई है, जिसे **शहरी उपभोग** में और मजबूती का समर्थन मिल रहा है।

PATRIOTIC IAS



Gig, platform workers to go on strike today to protest 'exploitation'

GS III: Economy

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Gig and platform worker unions have announced a strike on Wednesday against "systemic exclusion from core labour entitlements" of the workers in the segment.

In a letter to Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, they urged the Centre's immediate intervention to stop "exploitation" of workers by platforms in the food delivery and taxi service sectors.

The Gig and Platform Services Workers Union (GIPSWU) said in the letter that a nationwide strike by delivery workers on December 25 underscored the severe implications for India's growth if the issues of workers went unaddressed.

"Gig workers continue to face systemic exclusion from core labour entitlements under Indian law and constitutional guaran-

tees. Reports document pervasive harassment, discrimination, and violence against workers. This strike unites gig workers and allies to demand immediate government intervention," the letter said.

'Scrap quick delivery'

In a demand charter submitted to the Minister, the GIPSWU said the '10-20-minute service delivery mandates' should be urgently discontinued to prioritise worker safety.

"Fix minimum per-kilometre rates at ₹20 for Zomato, Swiggy, Blinkit, Zepeto, Flipkart, and BigBasket workers; ensure workplace safety for women; grant emergency leave and comprehensive maternity protection to women service workers; eliminate arbitrary ID blocking and punitive rating systems; and guarantee minimum monthly earnings of ₹40,000," the charter added.

नहीं किया गया तो भारत की विकास पर इसके गंभीर प्रभाव होंगे।

- "Gig workers continue to face systemic exclusion from core labour entitlements under Indian law and constitutional guarantees. Reports document pervasive harassment, discrimination, and violence against workers. This strike unites gig workers and allies to demand immediate government intervention," the letter said.

पत्र में कहा गया, "गिग वर्कर भारतीय कानून और संवैधानिक गारंटियों के तहत मूल श्रम अधिकारों से व्यवस्थित बहिष्कार का सामना करते रह रहे हैं। रिपोर्टों में श्रमिकों के खिलाफ व्यापक उत्पीड़न, भेदभाव और हिंसा दर्ज की गई है। यह हड़ताल तत्काल सरकारी हस्तक्षेप की मांग के लिए गिग वर्करों और उनके सहयोगियों को एकजुट करती है।"

'Scrap quick delivery' 'त्वरित डिलीवरी को खत्म करें'

- 'Scrap quick delivery'
'त्वरित डिलीवरी को खत्म करें'
- In a demand charter submitted to the Minister, the GIPSWU said the '10-20-minute service delivery mandates' should be urgently discontinued to prioritise worker safety.

Gig, platform workers to go on strike today to protest 'exploitation'

'शोषण' के विरोध में आज हड़ताल पर जाएंगे गिग, प्लेटफॉर्म वर्कर

- Gig, platform workers to go on strike today to protest 'exploitation'
'शोषण' के विरोध में आज हड़ताल पर जाएंगे गिग, प्लेटफॉर्म वर्कर

- Gig and platform worker unions have announced a strike on Wednesday against "systemic exclusion from core labour entitlements" of the workers in the segment.

गिग और प्लेटफॉर्म वर्कर यूनियनों ने इस क्षेत्र के श्रमिकों को "मूल श्रम अधिकारों से व्यवस्थित रूप से बाहर रखने" के खिलाफ बुधवार को हड़ताल की घोषणा की है।

- In a letter to Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, they urged the Centre's immediate intervention to stop "exploitation" of workers by platforms in the food delivery and taxi service sectors.

केंद्रीय श्रम मंत्री मनसुख मंडाविया को लिखे पत्र में उन्होंने केंद्र के तत्काल हस्तक्षेप की मांग की है ताकि फूड डिलीवरी और टैक्सी सेवा क्षेत्रों में प्लेटफॉर्म द्वारा श्रमिकों के "शोषण" को रोका जा सके।

- The Gig and Platform Services Workers Union (GIPSWU) said in the letter that a nationwide strike by delivery workers on December 25 underscored the severe implications for India's growth if the issues of workers went unaddressed.

गिग एंड प्लेटफॉर्म सर्विसेज वर्कर्स यूनियन (GIPSWU) ने पत्र में कहा कि 25 दिसंबर को डिलीवरी वर्करों की राष्ट्रव्यापी हड़ताल ने यह रेखांकित किया कि यदि श्रमिकों के मुद्दों का समाधान



मंत्री को सौंपे गए मांग पत्र में GIPSWU ने कहा कि श्रमिकों की सुरक्षा को प्राथमिकता देने के लिए '10-20 मिनट की सेवा डिलीवरी अनिवार्यता' को तत्काल समाप्त किया जाना चाहिए।

- "Fix minimum per-kilometre rates at ₹20 for Zomato, Swiggy, Blinkit, Zepto, Flipkart, and BigBasket workers; ensure workplace safety for women; grant emergency leave and comprehensive maternity protection to women service workers; eliminate arbitrary ID blocking and punitive rating systems; and guarantee minimum monthly earnings of ₹40,000," the charter added.

मांग पत्र में जोड़ा गया, "जोमैटो, स्विगी, ब्लिंकिट, जेप्टो, फ्लिपकार्ट और बिगबास्केट वर्कर्स के लिए ₹20 प्रति किलोमीटर न्यूनतम दर तय की जाए; महिला श्रमिकों की कार्यस्थल सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित की जाए; महिला सेवा श्रमिकों को आपातकालीन अवकाश और समग्र मातृत्व संरक्षण दिया जाए; मनमानी आईडी ब्लॉकिंग और दंडात्मक रेटिंग सिस्टम को समाप्त किया जाए; और ₹40,000 की न्यूनतम मासिक आय की गारंटी दी जाए।"

HAL enters civil market with Dhruv NG helicopter

Designed and manufactured in India, the 5.5-tonne, light twin-engine, multi-role chopper has been engineered to operate across diverse terrains; maiden flight inaugurated by Civil Aviation Minister

GS III: Economy: Industries

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) on Tuesday marked a breakthrough in India's civil aviation ecosystem as the Dhruv New Generation (NG) helicopter successfully undertook its maiden flight at the HAL's Helicopter Division in Bengaluru.

This signals the PSU's formal entry into the civil helicopter market and a significant step towards self-reliance in civil aviation.

The inaugural flight was flagged off by Union Civil Aviation Minister K. Ram-mohan Naidu in the presence of D.K. Sunil, Chairman and Managing Director, HAL; Maneesh Kumar, Joint Director-General, DGCA; Sanjeev Razdan, CMD, Pawan Hans Ltd; and senior HAL officials.

During the event, HAL received the DGCA certification for indigenous manufacturing of the Shakti civil engine, a first-of-its-kind achievement in Indian aviation. This marks



State-of-the-art machine: Civil Aviation Minister K. Rammohan Naidu, HAL Chairman and Managing Director D.K. Sunil, and others with the Dhruv NG helicopter in Bengaluru on Tuesday. J. ALLEN EGENUSE

the first aero engine certified by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) for indigenous production, representing a significant leap in India's self-reliance in critical aviation technologies. The milestone was achieved with the participation of Safran engines and close coordination with the DGCA.

The HAL said the Dhruv NG was progressing steadily towards full civil certification within the next

three or four months, positioning it as a key platform for India's growing civil helicopter market.

Describing the occasion as a "flight of Aatmanirbhar Bharat", Mr. Naidu said the maiden sortie reflected India's growing confidence and capability in aviation manufacturing.

"HAL has successfully conducted the inaugural flight within a year of showcasing the demo. Dhruv NG has emerged as

a platform for several operators, and 'Make in India' is now a seal of global quality," Mr. Naidu said.

Mr. Sunil termed the Dhruv NG the cornerstone of the company's civil aviation expansion.

Designed and manufactured in India, the Dhruv NG is a 5.5-tonne, light twin-engine, multi-role helicopter, engineered to operate across diverse and challenging Indian terrains.



HAL enters civil market with Dhruv NG helicopter HAL ने ध्रुव NG हेलीकॉप्टर के साथ सिविल बाज़ार में प्रवेश किया

- HAL enters civil market with Dhruv NG helicopter
HAL ने ध्रुव NG हेलीकॉप्टर के साथ सिविल बाज़ार में प्रवेश किया
- Designed and manufactured in India, the **5.5-tonne**, light twin-engine, multi-role chopper has been engineered to operate across diverse terrains; maiden flight inaugurated by **Civil Aviation Minister**
भारत में डिज़ाइन और निर्मित, **5.5-टन** का हल्का ट्विन-इंजन, मल्टी-रोल हेलीकॉप्टर विभिन्न भौगोलिक क्षेत्रों में संचालन के लिए इंजीनियर किया गया है; **नागरिक उड्डयन मंत्री** द्वारा पहली उड़ान का उद्घाटन
- **Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL)** on **Tuesday** marked a breakthrough in **India's civil aviation ecosystem** as the **Dhruv New Generation (NG) helicopter successfully undertook its maiden flight at the HAL's Helicopter Division in Bengaluru.**
हिंदुस्तान एयरोनॉटिक्स लिमिटेड (HAL) ने मंगलवार को **भारत के सिविल उड्डयन पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र** में एक बड़ी उपलब्धि दर्ज की, जब **ध्रुव न्यू जनरेशन (NG) हेलीकॉप्टर** ने **बेंगलुरु** स्थित HAL के **हेलीकॉप्टर डिविजन** में अपनी पहली उड़ान सफलतापूर्वक भरी।
- **This signals the PSU's formal entry into the civil helicopter market and a significant step towards self-reliance in civil aviation.**
यह PSU के **सिविल हेलीकॉप्टर बाज़ार** में औपचारिक प्रवेश और सिविल उड्डयन में **आत्मनिर्भरता** की दिशा में एक महत्वपूर्ण कदम का संकेत देता है।
- The inaugural flight was agreed on by **Union Civil Aviation Minister K. Ram Mohan Naidu** in the presence of **D.K. Sunil**, Chairman and Managing Director, HAL; **Maneesh Kumar**, Joint Director-General, **DGCA**; **Sanjeev Razdan**, CMD, **Pawan Hans Ltd**; and senior HAL officials.
पहली उड़ान को **केंद्रीय नागरिक उड्डयन मंत्री के. राममोहन नायडू** ने **डी.के. सुनील**, अध्यक्ष एवं प्रबंध निदेशक, HAL; **मनीष कुमार**, संयुक्त महानिदेशक, **DGCA**; **संजीव रज़दान**, CMD, **पवन हंस लिमिटेड**; तथा HAL के वरिष्ठ अधिकारियों की उपस्थिति में रवाना किया।
- **During the event, HAL received the DGCA certification for indigenous manufacturing of the Shakti civil engine, a first-of-its-kind achievement in Indian aviation.**
कार्यक्रम के दौरान HAL को **शक्ति सिविल इंजन** के स्वदेशी निर्माण के लिए **DGCA प्रमाणन** प्राप्त हुआ, जो भारतीय उड्डयन में अपनी तरह की पहली उपलब्धि है।
- This marks the **first aero engine** certified by the **Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)** for indigenous production, representing a significant leap in India's **self-reliance** in critical aviation technologies.
यह स्वदेशी उत्पादन के लिए **नागरिक उड्डयन महानिदेशालय (DGCA)** द्वारा प्रमाणित पहला **एयरो इंजन** है, जो महत्वपूर्ण उड्डयन प्रौद्योगिकियों में भारत की **आत्मनिर्भरता** में एक बड़ा कदम दर्शाता है।
- **The milestone was achieved with the participation of Safran engines and close coordination with the DGCA.**
यह उपलब्धि **सैफ्रान इंजन्स** की भागीदारी और **DGCA** के साथ घनिष्ठ समन्वय से हासिल की गई।
- The HAL said the **Dhruv NG** was progressing steadily towards full **civil certification** within the next **three or four months**, positioning it as a key platform for India's growing civil helicopter market.
HAL ने कहा कि **ध्रुव NG** अगले **तीन या चार महीनों** में पूर्ण **सिविल प्रमाणन** की ओर लगातार बढ़ रहा है, जिससे यह भारत के बढ़ते सिविल हेलीकॉप्टर बाज़ार के लिए एक प्रमुख प्लेटफॉर्म बनेगा।
- Describing the occasion as a "night of **Aatmanirbhar Bharat**", **Mr. Naidu** said the maiden sortie reflected India's growing confidence and capability in aviation manufacturing.
इस अवसर को **"आत्मनिर्भर भारत की उड़ान"** बताते हुए **श्री नायडू** ने कहा कि पहली उड़ान ने उड्डयन निर्माण में भारत के बढ़ते आत्मविश्वास और क्षमता को दर्शाया।
- "HAL has successfully conducted the inaugural flight within a year of showcasing the demo. **Dhruv NG** has emerged as a platform for several operators, and 'Make in India' is now a seal of global quality," **Mr. Naidu** said.
"HAL ने डेमो दिखाने के एक वर्ष के भीतर पहली उड़ान सफलतापूर्वक संचालित की है। **ध्रुव NG** कई ऑपरेटरों के लिए एक प्लेटफॉर्म के रूप में उभरा है, और **'मेक इन इंडिया'** अब वैश्विक गुणवत्ता की मुहर बन चुका है," **श्री नायडू** ने कहा।



- **Mr. Sunil** termed the **Dhruv NG** the cornerstone of the company's **civil aviation expansion**.
श्री सुनील ने ध्रुव NG को कंपनी के सिविल उड्डयन विस्तार की आधारशिला बताया।
- Designed and manufactured in India, the **Dhruv NG** is a **5.5-tonne**, light twin-engine, multi-role helicopter, engineered to operate across diverse and challenging **Indian terrains**
भारत में डिज़ाइन और निर्मित, ध्रुव NG एक 5.5-टन का हल्का ट्विन-इंजन, मल्टी-रोल हेलीकॉप्टर है, जिसे विविध और चुनौतीपूर्ण भारतीय भौगोलिक क्षेत्रों में संचालन के लिए इंजीनियर किया गया है

Himachal apple growers oppose reduced import duty on New Zealand

GS III: Economy

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

Apple growers in Himachal Pradesh fear that the Centre's proposal to slash the import duty on New Zealand apples from 50% to 25% following a trade deal will severely impact their livelihoods, and have sought Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla's "intervention to safeguard livelihoods".

In a memorandum to the Governor on Tuesday, a group of apple growers led by Kuldeep Singh Rathore, the Congress MLA from Theog constituency in Shimla district, raised concerns about the proposed reduction in import duty from 2026-27.

Mr. Rathore said the reduced duty would cause a significant loss of market share for Indian apples and bring down prices, push-



The Centre has proposed to slash duty from 50% to 25%. PTI

ing growers, struggling with climate change-induced uncertainties, rising input costs, labour shortages, and shrinking margins, into deep economic distress.

He said the apple industry formed the "backbone of Himachal Pradesh's rural economy" and contributed approximately ₹5,500 crore annually and supported over 1.5 lakh families, most of whom were

small and marginal farmers. "The State produces around 6.5 lakh tonnes of apples every year, accounting for nearly 25% of India's total apple production. With average landholdings of only one to two acres and limited scope for diversification due to the hilly terrain, apple cultivation remains the primary source of livelihood for these farmers," Mr. Rathore said.

He said implementation of the free trade agreement in its "present form" would set a "dangerous precedent". "Other major apple-exporting nations such as the U.S., Chile, and Italy which together account for over 40% of global apple exports are likely to demand similar concessions, which will be disastrous to farmer community of Himachal Pradesh," he said.



Himachal apple growers oppose reduced import duty on New Zealand हिमाचल के सेब उत्पादकों ने न्यूज़ीलैंड पर घटाई गई आयात शुल्क का विरोध किया

- Himachal apple growers oppose reduced import duty on New Zealand
हिमाचल के सेब उत्पादकों ने न्यूज़ीलैंड पर घटाई गई आयात शुल्क का विरोध किया
- Apple growers in Himachal Pradesh fear that the Centre's proposal to slash the import duty on New Zealand apples from 50% to 25% following a trade deal will severely impact their livelihoods, and have sought Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla's "intervention to safeguard livelihoods".
हिमाचल प्रदेश के सेब उत्पादकों को आशंका है कि व्यापार समझौते के बाद न्यूज़ीलैंड के सेबों पर आयात शुल्क को 50% से 25% करने के केंद्र के प्रस्ताव से उनकी आजीविका पर गंभीर असर पड़ेगा, और उन्होंने राज्यपाल शिव प्रताप शुक्ला से "आजीविका की रक्षा के लिए हस्तक्षेप" की मांग की है।
- In a memorandum to the Governor on Tuesday, a group of apple growers led by Kuldeep Singh Rathore, the Congress MLA from Theog constituency in Shimla district, raised concerns about the proposed reduction in import duty from 2026-27.
मंगलवार को राज्यपाल को दिए गए एक ज्ञापन में, शिमला ज़िले की थेओग विधानसभा से कांग्रेस विधायक कुलदीप सिंह राठौर के नेतृत्व में सेब उत्पादकों के एक समूह ने 2026-27 से आयात शुल्क में प्रस्तावित कटौती पर चिंता जताई।
- Mr. Rathore said the reduced duty would cause a significant loss of market share for Indian apples and bring down prices, pushing growers, struggling with climate change-induced uncertainties, rising input costs, labour shortages, and shrinking margins, into deep economic distress.
श्री राठौर ने कहा कि घटा हुआ शुल्क भारतीय सेबों के बाज़ार हिस्से में भारी गिरावट लाएगा और कीमतें कम करेगा, जिससे जलवायु परिवर्तन से उत्पन्न अनिश्चितताओं, बढ़ती इनपुट लागत, श्रम की कमी, और घटते मुनाफे से जूझ रहे उत्पादक गहरे आर्थिक संकट में चले जाएंगे।
- He said the apple industry formed the "backbone of Himachal Pradesh's rural economy" and contributed approximately ₹5,500 crore annually and supported over 1.5 lakh families, most of whom were small and marginal farmers.
उन्होंने कहा कि सेब उद्योग "हिमाचल प्रदेश की ग्रामीण अर्थव्यवस्था की रीढ़" है और यह सालाना लगभग ₹5,500 करोड़ का योगदान देता है तथा 1.5 लाख से अधिक परिवारों को सहारा देता है, जिनमें से अधिकांश छोटे और सीमांत किसान हैं।
- "The State produces around 6.5 lakh tonnes of apples every year, accounting for nearly 25% of India's total apple production. With average landholdings of only one to two acres and limited scope for diversification due to the hilly terrain, apple cultivation remains the primary source of livelihood for these farmers," Mr. Rathore said.
"राज्य हर साल लगभग 6.5 लाख टन सेब का उत्पादन करता है, जो भारत के कुल सेब उत्पादन का लगभग 25% है। औसतन केवल एक से दो एकड़ की जोत और पर्वतीय भू-भाग के कारण विविधीकरण की सीमित संभावना के चलते, सेब की खेती इन किसानों की आजीविका का मुख्य स्रोत बनी हुई है," श्री राठौर ने कहा।
- He said implementation of the free trade agreement in its "present form" would set a "dangerous precedent".
उन्होंने कहा कि मुक्त व्यापार समझौते का "वर्तमान स्वरूप" में कार्यान्वयन एक "खतरनाक मिसाल" स्थापित करेगा।
- "Other major apple-exporting nations such as the U.S., Chile, and Italy which together account for over 40% of global apple exports are likely to demand similar concessions, which will be disastrous to farmer community of Himachal Pradesh," he said.
"अन्य प्रमुख सेब निर्यातक देश जैसे अमेरिका, चिली, और इटली, जो मिलकर वैश्विक सेब निर्यात का 40% से अधिक हिस्सा रखते हैं, समान रियायतों की मांग कर सकते हैं, जो हिमाचल प्रदेश के किसान समुदाय के लिए विनाशकारी होगा," उन्होंने कहा।



GS III: Economy

Too good to last

The headwinds facing the economy are not going away soon

India's relatively strong industrial performance in November 2025, especially driven by the manufacturing sector as it was, was more likely a flash in the pan than the start of a consistent trend. The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) grew 6.7% in November, the fastest growth rate in 25 months. Within this, the manufacturing sector grew 8%, which also was the fastest in 25 months. On the face of it, this would look remarkable and heartening, especially since October 2025 had seen growth slow to a 14-month low. However, this surge in growth was more likely due to seasonal and one-off factors. According to economists, the strongest push for growth came from sellers re-stocking their supplies following the festive season. The second factor is that the government timed the Goods and Services Tax (GST) rate reductions to coincide with the festive season. This temporary bump in demand would have further eroded stock levels, which then need to be replenished. In fact, the consumer durables and non-durables sectors saw growth in November rebounding to 10.3% and 7.3%, a 12-month and 25-month high, respectively. The third factor that seems to have worked in November is the bounce back of the mining sector following two months of contractions due to an unseasonably long monsoon. The mining sector saw growth come in at a reasonably strong 5.4% in November 2025. All of these are legitimate reasons for growth to pick up, but are not sustainable ones. The electricity and mining sectors will be bound by the vagaries of the weather. Overall consumer demand has been sluggish and industry players are talking of the GST-related boost already ebbing. And the festive season will not come back around until October-November 2026.

In fact, the IIP grew just 3.3% in the longer April-November period, the lowest for these eight months in any of the post-COVID-19 pandemic years. The consumer non-durables sector contracted 1% during this period, showing that the boost in November is not indicative. That the strong growth in November is more an anomaly than a sign of things to come should not come as a surprise. The Reserve Bank of India, earlier this month, predicted that growth in Q3 would slow to 7% from an average of 8% in the first two quarters. The fourth quarter is predicted to slow even further, to 6.5%. All of the previous headwinds still exist. The 50% tariffs by the U.S. are still in place, private investment remains sluggish, foreign capital is pulling out of the country, the weakening rupee is making imports more expensive for an import-dependent economy, real wages are not growing fast enough, and consumer demand remains tepid. Ironically, November's positive industrial data bring into focus the headwinds the economy is really facing.

7.3%, a 12-month and 25-month high, respectively.

वास्तव में, उपभोक्ता टिकाऊ और गैर-टिकाऊ क्षेत्रों में नवंबर में वृद्धि क्रमशः 10.3% और 7.3% तक उछल गई, जो क्रमशः 12-महीने और 25-महीने का उच्च स्तर था।

Too good to last ज्यादा समय तक टिकने के लिए बहुत अच्छा

The headwinds facing the economy are not going away soon

अर्थव्यवस्था के सामने मौजूद प्रतिकूल परिस्थितियाँ जल्द समाप्त होने वाली नहीं हैं

India's relatively strong industrial performance in November 2025, especially driven by the manufacturing sector as it was, was more likely a flash in the pan than the start of a consistent trend.

नवंबर 2025 में भारत का अपेक्षाकृत मजबूत औद्योगिक प्रदर्शन, विशेषकर जैसा कि यह विनिर्माण क्षेत्र द्वारा संचालित था, किसी स्थायी प्रवृत्ति की शुरुआत के बजाय अधिकतर एक क्षणिक उछाल होने की संभावना थी।

The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) grew 6.7% in November, the fastest growth rate in 25 months.

औद्योगिक उत्पादन सूचकांक (IIP) नवंबर में 6.7% बढ़ा, जो 25 महीनों में सबसे तेज़ वृद्धि दर थी।

Within this, the manufacturing sector grew 8%, which also was the fastest in 25 months.

इसके भीतर, विनिर्माण क्षेत्र 8% बढ़ा, जो कि 25 महीनों में सबसे तेज़ था।

On the face of it, this would look remarkable and heartening, especially since October 2025 had seen growth slow to a 14-month low.

ऊपरी तौर पर यह उल्लेखनीय और उत्साहजनक प्रतीत होता है, विशेषकर इसलिए क्योंकि अक्टूबर 2025 में वृद्धि 14-महीने के निचले स्तर तक धीमी हो गई थी।

However, this surge in growth was more likely due to seasonal and one-off factors.

हालाँकि, वृद्धि में यह उछाल अधिकतर मौसमी और एकमुश्त कारकों के कारण होने की संभावना थी।

According to economists, the strongest push for growth came from sellers re-stocking their supplies following the festive season.

अर्थशास्त्रियों के अनुसार, वृद्धि के लिए सबसे मजबूत प्रोत्साहन त्योहारी मौसम के बाद विक्रेताओं द्वारा अपने स्टॉक को फिर से भरने से आया।

The second factor is that the government timed the Goods and Services Tax (GST) rate reductions to coincide with the festive season.

दूसरा कारक यह है कि सरकार ने वस्तु एवं सेवा कर (GST) दरों में कटौती को त्योहारी मौसम के साथ समयबद्ध किया।

This temporary bump in demand would have further eroded stock levels, which then need to be replenished.

मांग में इस अस्थायी उछाल ने स्टॉक स्तरों को और घटा दिया होगा, जिन्हें बाद में फिर से भरना पड़ा।

In fact, the consumer durables and non-durables sectors saw growth in November rebounding to 10.3% and



- The third factor that seems to have worked in **November** is the **bounce back of the mining sector following two months of contractions due to an unseasonably long monsoon.**
नवंबर में प्रभावी दिखने वाला तीसरा कारक **खनन क्षेत्र** की वापसी है, जो **असामान्य रूप से लंबे मानसून** के कारण **दो महीनों की गिरावट** के बाद हुई।
- The **mining sector** saw growth come in at a reasonably strong **5.4%** in **November 2025.**
नवंबर 2025 में **खनन क्षेत्र** में वृद्धि अपेक्षाकृत मजबूत **5.4%** रही।
- All of these are **legitimate reasons** for growth to pick up, but are **not sustainable ones.**
ये सभी वृद्धि के उभरने के **वैध कारण** हैं, लेकिन **टिकाऊ नहीं** हैं।
- The **electricity and mining sectors will be bound by the vagaries of the weather.**
बिजली और खनन क्षेत्र मौसम की अनिश्चितताओं से बंधे रहेंगे।
- **Overall consumer demand has been sluggish** and industry players are talking of the **GST-related boost already ebbing.**
कुल मिलाकर **उपभोक्ता मांग सुस्त** रही है और उद्योग जगत **GST से जुड़े प्रोत्साहन के पहले ही घटने** की बात कर रहा है।
- And the **festive season** will not come back around until **October–November 2026.**
और **त्योहारी मौसम अक्टूबर–नवंबर 2026** तक फिर से नहीं आएगा।
- In fact, the **IIP** grew just **3.3%** in the longer **April–November period**, the **lowest** for these **eight months** in any of the **post-COVID-19 pandemic years.**
वास्तव में, **अप्रैल–नवंबर अवधि** में **IIP** केवल **3.3%** बढ़ा, जो **कोविड-19 महामारी के बाद के वर्षों** में इन **आठ महीनों** के लिए **सबसे कम** है।
- The **consumer non-durables sector** contracted **1%** during this period, showing that the boost in **November** is **not indicative.**
इस अवधि के दौरान **उपभोक्ता गैर-टिकाऊ क्षेत्र** में **1%** की गिरावट आई, जो दर्शाता है कि **नवंबर का उछाल संकेतात्मक नहीं** है।
- That the strong growth in **November** is more an **anomaly** than a sign of things to come should not come as a surprise.
यह आश्चर्यजनक नहीं होना चाहिए कि **नवंबर** की मजबूत वृद्धि भविष्य के संकेत की बजाय अधिकतर एक **अपवाद** है।
- The **Reserve Bank of India**, earlier this month, predicted that growth in **Q3** would slow to **7%** from an average of **8%** in the **first two quarters.**
भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक ने इस महीने की शुरुआत में अनुमान लगाया कि **Q3** में वृद्धि **पहली दो तिमाहियों** के औसत **8%** से घटकर **7%** हो जाएगी।
- The **fourth quarter** is predicted to slow even further, to **6.5%.**
चौथी तिमाही में वृद्धि के और धीमी होकर **6.5%** रहने का अनुमान है।
- All of the previous **headwinds** still exist.
पहले से मौजूद सभी **विपरीत परिस्थितियाँ** अब भी बनी हुई हैं।
- The **50% tariffs by the U.S.** are still in place, **private investment remains sluggish, foreign capital is pulling out of the country, the weakening rupee is making imports more expensive for an import-dependent economy, real wages are not growing fast enough, and consumer demand remains tepid.**
अमेरिका द्वारा लगाए गए 50% शुल्क अब भी लागू हैं, **निजी निवेश सुस्त** बना हुआ है, **विदेशी पूंजी देश से निकाल रही है, कमज़ोर होता रुपया आयात-निर्भर अर्थव्यवस्था के लिए आयात को महँगा बना रहा है, वास्तविक मजदूरी पर्याप्त तेज़ी से नहीं बढ़ रही है, और उपभोक्ता मांग मंद बनी हुई है।**
- Ironically, **November's positive industrial data** bring into focus the **headwinds the economy is really facing.**
विडंबना यह है कि **नवंबर के सकारात्मक औद्योगिक आँकड़े** उन **वास्तविक चुनौतियों** को उजागर करते हैं, जिनका अर्थव्यवस्था वास्तव में सामना कर रही है।



The India-New Zealand FTA — unlocking growth

GS III: Economy

MOB

At a time when developing and developed countries alike are navigating an increasingly unpredictable global trading regime, India is at a crossroads, fast emerging as a resilient player in international trade and as an increasingly reliable economic partner. The conclusion of the India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA), announced by Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Christopher Luxon on December 22, 2025, is a clear signal of this growing confidence. Coming soon after India's FTAs with the United Kingdom and Oman, this agreement reflects a broader global shift toward diversifying trade partnerships and strengthening engagement with India. Domestically, the fast-tracked negotiations concluded within nine months, reflecting a political will to forge mutually beneficial global partnerships which concomitantly further India's national goals and its global vision for a just, equitable and rules-based trading system.



Chandrajit Banerjee

is Director General, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)

Complementarity without compromise

Primed to be signed early next year, the India-New Zealand FTA emphasises services and labour mobility – areas where India enjoys a clear comparative advantage, but which have remained underleveraged in trade agreements. From both sides, there have been firsts, with India extending duty concessions on apples, and New Zealand offering India the widest service access so far, covering sectors such as IT, education, fintech, telecom, tourism and construction. There is also a commitment by New Zealand to invest \$20 billion in India over 15 years.

Mobility provisions for skilled professionals in IT, engineering, health care, and education, and post-study work opportunities for Indian students, would increase the competitiveness of service providers, positioning India as a key supplier of high- and semi-skilled workforce. Moreover, amid policy unpredictability in several advanced economies posing headwinds for

The free trade agreement reflects confidence in India as a resilient player in international trade and also a reliable economic partner

regulatory cooperation, streamlined customs procedures and transparency.

Once implemented, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) recommends optimally leveraging the trade pact, with business associations, large enterprises and policymakers sharing responsibility to build awareness and developing capabilities to translate the negotiated benefits into effective market access. They should also look beyond tariffs and expand services trade, deepen skills and education linkages, and leverage mobility and diaspora networks.

A strong foundation exists
The FTA can build on the strong foundations of a growing middle class, a skilled workforce, and a reform-driven, innovation-based Indian economy. It carries elements of global integrated production and service export growth (India already ranks among the top five globally), both of which can propel Indian firms up global value chains and towards the \$7 trillion economy goal by 2030. Notably, with the India-New Zealand FTA deal, India has now concluded economic partnership agreements with all Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) members, except China.

Notwithstanding the modest quantum of bilateral trade, the significance of the India-New Zealand FTA lies not just in trade data. Rather, it marks a coming of age in the way India is viewed on the world stage. The kind of access in terms of labour mobility and services that New Zealand is willing to extend to India, reflects growing strategic trust from developed economies in bilateral economic engagements. This is a particularly welcome development amid India's trade talks with other partners, including the European Union, lending credence to India as a country with a stable trade policy, and capable of establishing norms of effective cooperation through balanced, high-quality agreements that protect domestic interests while promoting openness and growth.

Challenges in optimal utilisation

Overall bilateral trade, which was approximately \$2.4 billion in 2024-25, is projected to double by 2030, post implementation of the FTA. However, it must be heeded that the success of any FTA lies in how it is utilised. In the past, India has exhibited a low utilisation rate of only about 25%, as in contrast with developed economies touching 70%-80%. FTAs often remain underused due to awareness gaps, compliance challenges, and non-tariff barriers (NTBs). However, the India-New Zealand FTA has provisions to address technical barriers to trade through enhanced

The India-New Zealand FTA — unlocking growth भारत-न्यूज़ीलैंड एफटीए — विकास के द्वार खोलना

- At a time when developing and developed countries alike are navigating an increasingly unpredictable global trading regime, India is at a crossroads, fast emerging as a resilient player in international trade and as an increasingly reliable economic partner.

जब विकासशील और विकसित देश समान रूप से एक तेजी से अप्रत्याशित वैश्विक व्यापार व्यवस्था से जूझ रहे हैं, ऐसे समय में भारत एक महत्वपूर्ण मोड़ पर खड़ा है और अंतरराष्ट्रीय व्यापार में एक लचीले खिलाड़ी तथा एक विश्वसनीय आर्थिक भागीदार के रूप में तेजी से उभर रहा है।

- The conclusion of the India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA), announced by Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Christopher Luxon on December 22, 2025, is a clear signal of this growing confidence.

22 दिसंबर 2025 को प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी और क्रिस्टोफर लक्सन द्वारा घोषित भारत-न्यूज़ीलैंड मुक्त व्यापार समझौते (FTA) का निष्कर्ष इस बढ़ते आत्मविश्वास का एक स्पष्ट संकेत है।

- Coming soon after India's FTAs with the United Kingdom and Oman, this agreement reflects a broader global shift toward diversifying trade partnerships and strengthening engagement with India.

यूनाइटेड किंगडम और ओमान के साथ भारत के एफटीए के तुरंत बाद आया यह समझौता व्यापार साझेदारियों के विविधीकरण और भारत के साथ जुड़ाव को मजबूत करने की व्यापक वैश्विक प्रवृत्ति को दर्शाता है।

- Domestically, the fast-tracked negotiations concluded within nine months, reflecting a political will to forge mutually beneficial global partnerships which concomitantly further India's national goals and its global vision for a just, equitable and rules-based trading system.

घरेलू स्तर पर, नौ महीनों के भीतर तेजी से पूरी की गई वार्ताएँ इस राजनीतिक इच्छाशक्ति को दर्शाती हैं



कि परस्पर लाभकारी वैश्विक साझेदारियाँ बनाई जाएँ, जो साथ ही भारत के राष्ट्रीय लक्ष्यों और न्यायसंगत, समान और नियम-आधारित व्यापार प्रणाली के उसके वैश्विक दृष्टिकोण को आगे बढ़ाएँ।

Complementarity without compromise बिना समझौते के पूरकता

- **Primed to be signed early next year, the India-New Zealand FTA emphasises services and labour mobility — areas where India enjoys a clear comparative advantage, but which have remained underleveraged in trade agreements.**
अगले वर्ष की शुरुआत में हस्ताक्षर के लिए तैयार भारत-न्यूज़ीलैंड एफटीए में सेवाओं और श्रम गतिशीलता पर जोर दिया गया है — वे क्षेत्र जहाँ भारत को स्पष्ट तुलनात्मक लाभ प्राप्त है, लेकिन जिन्हें अब तक व्यापार समझौतों में कम उपयोग किया गया है।
- **From both sides, there have been firsts, with India extending duty concessions on apples, and New Zealand offering India the widest service access so far, covering sectors such as IT, education, fintech, telecom, tourism and construction.**
दोनों पक्षों से पहली बार पहल हुई है, जहाँ भारत ने सेब पर शुल्क रियायतें दी हैं, और न्यूज़ीलैंड ने अब तक की सबसे व्यापक सेवा पहुँच भारत को दी है, जिसमें आईटी, शिक्षा, फिनटेक, टेलीकॉम, पर्यटन और निर्माण जैसे क्षेत्र शामिल हैं।
- **There is also a commitment by New Zealand to invest \$20 billion in India over 15 years.**
न्यूज़ीलैंड द्वारा 15 वर्षों में भारत में \$20 बिलियन निवेश करने की प्रतिबद्धता भी दी गई है।
- **Mobility provisions for skilled professionals in IT, engineering, health care, and education, and post-study work opportunities for Indian students, would increase the competitiveness of service providers, positioning India as a key supplier of high- and semi-skilled workforce.**
आईटी, इंजीनियरिंग, स्वास्थ्य देखभाल और शिक्षा में कुशल पेशेवरों के लिए गतिशीलता प्रावधान, तथा भारतीय छात्रों के लिए पोस्ट-स्टडी कार्य अवसर, सेवा प्रदाताओं की प्रतिस्पर्धात्मकता बढ़ाएँगे और भारत को उच्च व अर्ध-कुशल कार्यबल के एक प्रमुख आपूर्तिकर्ता के रूप में स्थापित करेंगे।
- **Moreover, amid policy unpredictability in several advanced economies posing headwinds for skilled mobility, they offer alternatives and stability for India's youth and knowledge workers.**
इसके अलावा, कई उन्नत अर्थव्यवस्थाओं में नीतिगत अनिश्चितता के कारण कुशल गतिशीलता के सामने उत्पन्न प्रतिकूल परिस्थितियों के बीच, ये प्रावधान भारत के युवाओं और ज्ञान कर्मियों को विकल्प और स्थिरता प्रदान करते हैं।
- **New Zealand has agreed to eliminate duties on 100% of its tariff lines, giving duty-free access to all Indian exports, while India has offered market access on 70% of its tariff lines.**
न्यूज़ीलैंड ने अपने 100% टैरिफ लाइनों पर शुल्क समाप्त करने पर सहमति दी है, जिससे सभी भारतीय निर्यातों को शुल्क-मुक्त पहुँच मिलेगी, जबकि भारत ने अपनी 70% टैरिफ लाइनों पर बाज़ार पहुँच प्रदान की है।
- **Benefits could accrue to India in labour-intensive sectors: textiles, apparel, leather, engineering goods, pharmaceuticals and farm products.**
श्रम-प्रधान क्षेत्रों में भारत को लाभ मिल सकता है: वस्त्र, परिधान, चमड़ा, इंजीनियरिंग वस्तुएँ, औषधियाँ और कृषि उत्पाद।
- **Also, duty-free intermediate inputs such as wooden logs, coking coal, metal waste and scrap would lower manufacturing costs for final products, especially in steel, engineering goods and construction.**
इसके अतिरिक्त, लकड़ी के लट्टे, कोकिंग कोल, धातु अपशिष्ट और स्क्रेप जैसे शुल्क-मुक्त मध्यवर्ती इनपुट अंतिम उत्पादों की निर्माण लागत को कम करेंगे, विशेष रूप से इस्पात, इंजीनियरिंग वस्तुओं और निर्माण में।
- **Inclusion of an annex on health and traditional medicine services creates new opportunities for India's pharmaceutical and health-care sectors, giving them an edge over competitors such as China and the European Union.**
स्वास्थ्य और पारंपरिक चिकित्सा सेवाओं पर एक अनुलग्नक का समावेश भारत के फार्मास्यूटिकल और स्वास्थ्य-सेवा क्षेत्रों के लिए नए अवसर पैदा करता है, जिससे उन्हें चीन और यूरोपीय संघ जैसे प्रतिस्पर्धियों पर बढ़त मिलती है।



- It would also reinforce India's growing role as a global health partner.
यह वैश्विक स्वास्थ्य भागीदार के रूप में भारत की बढ़ती भूमिका को भी मजबूत करेगा।
- Agriculture, often a sensitive area in trade negotiations, has been handled with balance.
कृषि, जो अक्सर व्यापार वार्ताओं में एक संवेदनशील क्षेत्र होती है, को संतुलन के साथ संभाला गया है।
- The FTA envisages value chain development through knowledge transfers and agri-technology collaboration on apples, kiwifruit, and honey.
यह एफटीए सेब, कीवीफ्रूट और शहद पर ज्ञान हस्तांतरण और कृषि-प्रौद्योगिकी सहयोग के माध्यम से मूल्य श्रृंखला विकास की परिकल्पना करता है।
- The livelihood of farmers, however, will not stand compromised since no duty concessions have been made in dairy, sugar, spices and edible oils.
हालांकि, किसानों की आजीविका से समझौता नहीं किया गया है, क्योंकि डेयरी, चीनी, मसाले और खाद्य तेलों में कोई शुल्क रियायत नहीं दी गई है।

Challenges in optimal utilisation सर्वोत्तम उपयोग में चुनौतियाँ

- Overall bilateral trade, which was approximately \$2.4 billion in 2024-25, is projected to double by 2030, post implementation of the FTA.
कुल द्विपक्षीय व्यापार, जो 2024-25 में लगभग \$2.4 बिलियन था, FTA के कार्यान्वयन के बाद 2030 तक दोगुना होने का अनुमान है।
- However, it must be heeded that the success of any FTA lies in how it is utilised.
हालांकि, यह ध्यान में रखना आवश्यक है कि किसी भी FTA की सफलता इस बात पर निर्भर करती है कि उसका उपयोग कैसे किया जाता है।
- In the past, India has exhibited a low utilisation rate of only about 25%, as in contrast with developed economies touching 70%–80%.
अतीत में, भारत ने केवल लगभग 25% की कम उपयोग दर दिखाई है, जबकि विकसित अर्थव्यवस्थाएँ 70%–80% तक पहुँच चुकी हैं।
- FTAs often remain underused due to awareness gaps, compliance challenges, and non-tariff barriers (NTBs).
FTA अक्सर जागरूकता की कमी, अनुपालन संबंधी चुनौतियों, और गैर-शुल्क बाधाओं (NTBs) के कारण कम उपयोग में रह जाते हैं।
- However, the India-New Zealand FTA has provisions to address technical barriers to trade through enhanced regulatory cooperation, streamlined customs procedures and transparency.
हालांकि, भारत-न्यूज़ीलैंड FTA में नियामक सहयोग के सुदृढीकरण, सरलीकृत सीमा-शुल्क प्रक्रियाओं, और पारदर्शिता के माध्यम से तकनीकी व्यापार बाधाओं को संबोधित करने के प्रावधान हैं।
- Once implemented, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) recommends optimally leveraging the trade pact, with business associations, large enterprises and policymakers sharing responsibility to build awareness and develop capabilities to translate the negotiated benefits into effective market access.
कार्यान्वयन के बाद, भारतीय उद्योग परिसंघ (CII) इस व्यापार समझौते के सर्वोत्तम उपयोग की सिफ़ारिश करता है, जिसमें व्यावसायिक संघ, बड़े उद्यम, और नीतिनिर्माता जागरूकता बढ़ाने और क्षमताएँ विकसित करने की साझा ज़िम्मेदारी निभाएँ, ताकि समझौते से प्राप्त लाभों को प्रभावी बाज़ार पहुँच में बदला जा सके।
- They should also look beyond tariffs and expand services trade, deepen skills and education linkages, and leverage mobility and diaspora networks.
उन्हें शुल्क से आगे बढ़कर सेवा व्यापार का विस्तार करने, कौशल और शिक्षा संबंधों को गहरा करने, और गतिशीलता व प्रवासी नेटवर्क का लाभ उठाने पर भी ध्यान देना चाहिए।

A strong foundation exists एक मज़बूत आधार मौजूद है

- The FTA can build on the strong foundations of a growing middle class, a skilled workforce, and a reform-driven, innovation-based Indian economy.



FTA एक बढ़ते मध्यम वर्ग, कुशल कार्यबल, और सुधार-प्रेरित, नवाचार-आधारित भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था के मज़बूत आधार पर आगे बढ़ सकता है।

- It carries elements of **global integrated production** and **service export growth** (India already ranks among the top five globally), both of which can propel Indian firms up **global value chains** and towards the **\$7 trillion economy goal by 2030**.
इसमें वैश्विक एकीकृत उत्पादन और सेवा निर्यात वृद्धि के तत्व शामिल हैं (भारत पहले ही वैश्विक स्तर पर शीर्ष पाँच में है), जो भारतीय कंपनियों को वैश्विक मूल्य शृंखलाओं में ऊपर ले जा सकते हैं और 2030 तक \$7 ट्रिलियन अर्थव्यवस्था के लक्ष्य की ओर अग्रसर कर सकते हैं।
- Notably, with the **India-New Zealand FTA deal**, India has now concluded **economic partnership agreements** with all **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) members, except China**.
विशेष रूप से, भारत-न्यूज़ीलैंड FTA के साथ, भारत ने अब चीन को छोड़कर सभी क्षेत्रीय व्यापक आर्थिक साझेदारी (RCEP) सदस्यों के साथ आर्थिक साझेदारी समझौते संपन्न कर लिए हैं।
- Notwithstanding the **modest quantum of bilateral trade**, the **significance of the India-New Zealand FTA lies not just in trade data**.
द्विपक्षीय व्यापार की सीमित मात्रा के बावजूद, भारत-न्यूज़ीलैंड FTA का महत्व केवल व्यापार आँकड़ों तक सीमित नहीं है।
- Rather, it marks a **coming of age** in the way **India is viewed on the world stage**.
बल्कि, यह उस तरीके में परिपक्वता का संकेत देता है, जिससे भारत को वैश्विक मंच पर देखा जाता है।
- The kind of access in terms of **labour mobility** and **services** that **New Zealand** is willing to extend to **India**, reflects **growing strategic trust** from **developed economies** in **bilateral economic engagements**.
न्यूज़ीलैंड द्वारा भारत को श्रम गतिशीलता और सेवाओं के संदर्भ में दिया जाने वाला यह स्तर विकसित अर्थव्यवस्थाओं द्वारा द्विपक्षीय आर्थिक सहभागिता में बढ़ते रणनीतिक विश्वास को दर्शाता है।
- This is a **particularly welcome development** amid **India's trade talks** with other partners, including the **European Union**, lending **credence** to **India** as a country with a **stable trade policy**, and capable of establishing norms of **effective cooperation** through **balanced, high-quality agreements** that **protect domestic interests** while promoting **openness and growth**.
यह यूरोपीय संघ सहित अन्य भागीदारों के साथ भारत की व्यापार वार्ताओं के बीच एक विशेष रूप से स्वागतयोग्य विकास है, जो स्थिर व्यापार नीति वाले देश के रूप में भारत की विश्वसनीयता को मज़बूत करता है और यह दर्शाता है कि भारत घरेलू हितों की रक्षा करते हुए खुलापन और विकास को बढ़ावा देने वाले संतुलित, उच्च-गुणवत्ता समझौतों के माध्यम से प्रभावी सहयोग के मानदंड स्थापित करने में सक्षम है।



Sagarmala board approves ₹4,300-cr. of maritime loans

GS III: Economy

Press Trust of India
 NEW DELHI

Sagarmala Finance Corporation announced its foray into maritime financing with its board sanctioning loans of ₹4,300 crore for disbursement in the current fiscal.

Sagarmala Finance Corporation Ltd. (SMFCL) was inaugurated as India's first Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) in the maritime sector.

"Including this loan sanction of ₹4,300 crore scheduled for the disbursement in the present fiscal year, the company is aiming to build the loan book size of ₹8,000 crore in FY 2025-26, to further strengthen its position in maritime financing," SMFCL said in a statement.

The rating assignment by the major rating agencies is expected shortly

SMFCL is aiming to build the loan book size of ₹8,000 cr. in FY26 to further boost maritime financing

which will further enhance in leveraging the borrowing cost, it added.

SMFCL said the ambitious strategy charted by the company is further backed by the strong support and trust shown by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, which has designated SMFCL as the nodal agency for the setting-up and operational co-ordination for flagship Maritime Development Fund of ₹25,000 crore. The fund shall include Maritime Investment Fund (MIF) with a corpus of ₹20,000 crore, and the Interest Incentivisation Fund (IIF), with a corpus of ₹5,000 crore.

Sagarmala board approves ₹4,300-cr. of maritime loans

सागरमाला बोर्ड ने ₹4,300 करोड़ के समुद्री ऋण को मंजूरी दी

• **Sagarmala Finance Corporation Ltd. (SMFCL)** was inaugurated as **India's first Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) in the maritime sector.**

• The rating assignment by the major rating agencies is expected shortly which will further enhance in leveraging the **borrowing cost**, it added.

इसमें जोड़ा गया कि प्रमुख रेटिंग एजेंसियों द्वारा रेटिंग आवंटन शीघ्र होने की उम्मीद है, जिससे उधारी लागत के लाभ को और बढ़ाया जा सकेगा।

• **SMFCL** said the ambitious strategy charted by the company is further backed by the strong support and trust shown by the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways**, which has designated **SMFCL** as the nodal agency for the setting-up and operational co-ordination for flagship **Maritime Development Fund of ₹25,000 crore.**

• The fund shall include **Maritime Investment Fund (MIF) with a corpus of ₹20,000 crore**, and the **Interest Incentivisation Fund (IIF), with a corpus of ₹5,000 crore.**

इस कोष में समुद्री निवेश कोष (MIF) शामिल होगा, जिसकी राशि ₹20,000 करोड़ होगी, और ब्याज प्रोत्साहन कोष (IIF) शामिल होगा,

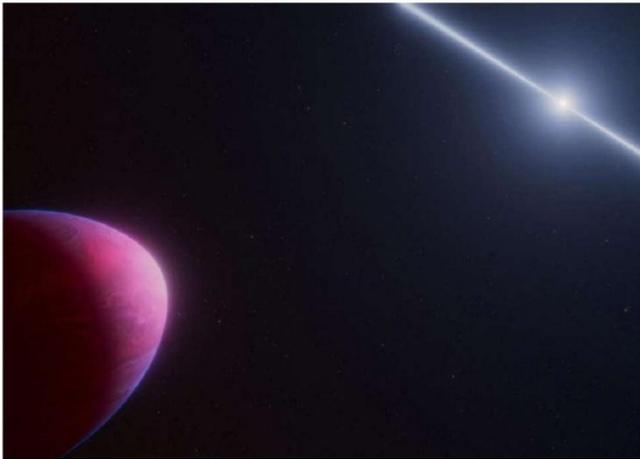
जिसकी राशि ₹5,000 करोड़ होगी।

GS Paper III: S&T,

TOPICS COVERED

31 12 2025

1. Why do we get headaches?
 हमें सिरदर्द क्यों होता है?



This artistic concept developed by NASA based on data from the James Webb Space Telescope shows the exoplanet PSR J2322-2650b (left) as it orbits a pulsar (right) emitting twin radio beams. The pulsar's gravitational pull has distorted the planet into the shape of a lemon. How it came to be is a mystery. -n57/nasa

• This artistic concept developed by NASA based on data from the **James Webb Space Telescope** shows the **exoplanet PSR J2322-2650b** (left) as it orbits a pulsar (right) emitting twin radio beams.

• The **pulsar's** gravitational pull has distorted the planet into the shape of a lemon. **Pulsar: A rapidly rotating neutron star that emits beams of electromagnetic radiation.**

• Observed as pulses when the beam points toward Earth.



The biology of a headache

GS III: S&T



Q: Why do we get headaches?

A: A headache happens when tissues in and around the head that are sensitive to pain become irritated or

pushed out of balance. While the brain tissue itself doesn't feel pain, structures nearby such as blood vessels in the coverings around the brain (the meninges), nerves that carry sensation from the face and scalp, muscles in the neck and jaw, and the sinuses do. When these tissues are stretched, inflamed, squeezed or chemically "activated" in some way, they send signals to the brainstem and higher brain areas, which interpret them as pain.

Different headaches start in different ways. In tension headaches, prolonged muscle tension and stress-related changes in pain processing can make the scalp and neck feel sore and tight. In migraines, the nervous system becomes unusually sensitive: brain networks that regulate sensory input, blood vessel tone, and pain can shift into a hyper-responsive state. This can trigger a cascade involving inflammatory molecules around nerves and changes in brainstem circuits, producing throbbing pain, nausea, and sensitivity to light or sound. (Scientists have unearthed many clues about why the sensitivity increases but they haven't determined a single cause yet.) Dehydration, missed meals, poor sleep, alcohol, infections, and bright light can all be triggers for headaches because



Dehydration, missed meals, poor sleep, alcohol, infections, and bright light can all be triggers for headaches. USMAN YOUSAF/UNSPLASH

they alter hydration, blood sugar, hormones and/or immune signals.

Finally, while most headaches are not dangerous, a sudden and really bad headache, a headache with fever and stiff neck, weakness, confusion or one after a head injury deserves urgent medical attention.

For feedback and suggestions
for 'Science', please write to
science@thehindu.co.in
with the subject 'Daily page'

Why do we get headaches? हमें सिरदर्द क्यों होता है?

- A headache happens when tissues in and around the head that are sensitive to pain become irritated or pushed out of balance.
उत्तर: सिरदर्द तब होता है जब सिर के अंदर और आसपास के वे ऊतक जो दर्द के प्रति संवेदनशील होते हैं, उत्तेजित हो जाते हैं या उनका संतुलन बिगड़ जाता है।
- While the brain tissue itself doesn't feel pain, structures nearby such as blood vessels in the coverings around the brain (the meninges), nerves that carry sensation from the face and scalp, muscles in the neck and jaw, and the sinuses do.
हालाँकि मस्तिष्क ऊतक स्वयं दर्द महसूस नहीं करता, लेकिन इसके आसपास की संरचनाएँ जैसे मस्तिष्क को ढकने वाली परतों (मेनिजीज़) में रक्त वाहिकाएँ, चेहरे और खोपड़ी से संवेदना ले जाने वाली नसें, गर्दन और जबड़े की मांसपेशियाँ, तथा साइनस दर्द महसूस करते हैं।



- When these tissues are **stretched, inflamed, squeezed** or chemically **“activated”** in some way, they send signals to the **brainstem** and higher brain areas, which interpret them as **pain**.

जब ये ऊतक खींचे जाते हैं, सूज जाते हैं, दबते हैं, या किसी रासायनिक तरीके से “सक्रिय” हो जाते हैं, तो वे ब्रेनस्टेम और मस्तिष्क के उच्च क्षेत्रों को संकेत भेजते हैं, जिन्हें **दर्द** के रूप में समझा जाता है।

- Different headaches start in different ways. अलग-अलग प्रकार के सिरदर्द अलग-अलग तरीकों से शुरू होते हैं।
- In **tension headaches**, prolonged **muscle tension** and **stress-related changes** in pain processing can make the **scalp and neck feel sore and tight**.

टेंशन हेडके में, लंबे समय तक रहने वाला **मांसपेशीय तनाव** और दर्द प्रसंस्करण में **तनाव से जुड़े बदलाव** **खोपड़ी और गर्दन** को दर्दयुक्त और कसा हुआ महसूस करा सकते हैं।

- In **migraines**, the **nervous system** becomes unusually **sensitive**: brain networks that regulate **sensory input, blood vessel tone, and pain** can shift into a **hyper-responsive state**.

माइग्रेन में, तंत्रिका तंत्र असामान्य रूप से **अत्यधिक संवेदनशील** हो जाता है: **संवेदी इनपुट, रक्त वाहिकाओं के टोन, और दर्द** को नियंत्रित करने वाले मस्तिष्क नेटवर्क **अत्यधिक प्रतिक्रियाशील अवस्था** में चले जाते हैं।

- This can trigger a cascade involving **inflammatory molecules** around nerves and changes in **brainstem circuits**, producing **throbbing pain, nausea, and sensitivity to light or sound**.

यह नसों के आसपास **सूजनकारी अणुओं** और **ब्रेनस्टेम सर्किट्स** में बदलाव की एक श्रृंखला को सक्रिय कर सकता है, जिससे **धड़कता हुआ दर्द, मतली, और रोशनी या आवाज़ के प्रति संवेदनशीलता** होती है।

- Scientists have unearthed many clues about why the sensitivity increases but they haven't determined a **single cause** yet.

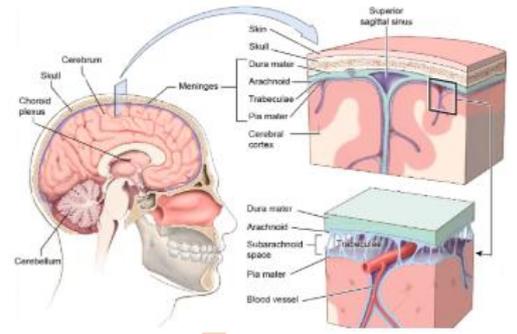
(वैज्ञानिकों ने संवेदनशीलता बढ़ने के कई संकेत पाए हैं, लेकिन अभी तक इसका कोई **एकमात्र कारण** निर्धारित नहीं किया गया है।)

- Dehydration, missed meals, poor sleep, alcohol, infections, and bright light** can all be **triggers** for headaches because they **alter hydration, blood sugar, hormones and/or immune signals**.

निर्जलीकरण, भोजन छोड़ना, अपर्याप्त नींद, शराब, संक्रमण, और तेज़ रोशनी सभी सिरदर्द के ट्रिगर हो सकते हैं क्योंकि ये **हाइड्रेशन, ब्लड शुगर, हार्मोन, और/या प्रतिरक्षा संकेतों** को प्रभावित करते हैं।

- Finally, **while most headaches are not dangerous, a sudden and really bad headache, a headache with fever and stiff neck, weakness, confusion or one after a head injury** deserves **urgent medical attention**.

अंत में, जबकि **अधिकांश सिरदर्द खतरनाक नहीं होते**, लेकिन **अचानक और बहुत तेज़ सिरदर्द, बुखार और गर्दन में अकड़न के साथ सिरदर्द, कमज़ोरी, भ्रम, या सिर में चोट के बाद होने वाला सिरदर्द तत्काल चिकित्सकीय ध्यान** की आवश्यकता रखता है।



GS Paper III: IS

TOPICS COVERED

31_12_2025

- Defence Ministry inks contracts for procurements for Army and Navy रक्षा मंत्रालय ने सेना और नौसेना के लिए खरीद अनुबंधों पर हस्ताक्षर किए**



Defence Ministry inks contracts for procurements for Army and Navy

GS III: IS: Defence

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Defence on Tuesday signed defence procurement contracts worth ₹4,666 crore for the acquisition of Close Quarter Battle (CQB) Carbines for the Indian Army and Navy and Heavyweight Torpedoes for the Indian Navy, in a major push towards modernisation and operational preparedness of the armed forces.

The contracts were inked in the presence of Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh at South Block, New Delhi, officials said.

According to Ministry of Defence, under the first contract, over 4.25 lakh CQB Carbines along with accessories, valued at ₹2,770 crore, will be procured for the Indian Army and the Indian Navy from Bharat Forge Ltd. and PLR Systems Pvt Ltd. The induction of these indigenously manufactured carbines marks the



The contracts were inked in the presence of the Defence Secretary at South Block, New Delhi, on Tuesday. PIB

culmination of a long-standing effort to replace legacy small arms with modern, high-lethality weapons in line with the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' vision.

A decisive advantage

Designed as a key component of the modern infantry arsenal, the CQB Carbine offers a compact design, high rate of fire and enhanced lethality, providing a decisive advantage in close-combat and con-

finer-space operations. The project also underscores growing government-private sector synergy, strengthening the Make in India initiative while boosting employment, supporting MSMEs, and deepening India's indigenous defence manufacturing ecosystem, the Ministry added.

The second contract, valued at approximately ₹1,896 crore, was signed with WASS Submarine Systems S.R.L., Italy for the

procurement and integration of 48 Heavyweight Torpedoes along with associated equipment for the Indian Navy's Kalvari Class (Project-75) submarines. The acquisition will significantly enhance the combat capability of the Navy's six submarines under the class.

To begin by 2028

Officials said delivery of the heavyweight torpedoes will start from is scheduled to commence from April 2028 and will be completed by early 2030. Equipped with advanced technological features and robust operational capabilities, the torpedoes will strengthen the Navy's underwater warfare prowess.

In the Financial Year 2025-26, the Ministry of Defence has so far signed capital acquisition contracts worth ₹1,82,492 crore, reflecting a sustained focus on the modernisation and indigenisation of India's defence forces.

Defence Ministry inks contracts for procurements for Army and Navy रक्षा मंत्रालय ने सेना और नौसेना के लिए खरीद अनुबंधों पर हस्ताक्षर किए

- Defence Ministry inks contracts for procurements for Army and Navy
रक्षा मंत्रालय ने सेना और नौसेना के लिए खरीद अनुबंधों पर हस्ताक्षर किए
- The Ministry of Defence on Tuesday signed defence procurement contracts worth ₹4,666 crore for the acquisition of Close Quarter Battle (CQB) Carbines for the Indian Army and Navy and Heavyweight Torpedoes for the Indian Navy, in a major push towards modernisation and operational preparedness of the armed forces.
रक्षा मंत्रालय ने मंगलवार को ₹4,666 करोड़ के रक्षा खरीद अनुबंधों पर हस्ताक्षर किए, जिनमें भारतीय सेना और नौसेना के लिए क्लोज़ क्वार्टर बैटल (CQB) कार्बाइन और भारतीय नौसेना के लिए हेवीवेट टॉरपीडो की खरीद शामिल है, जो सशस्त्र बलों के आधुनिकीकरण और संचालनात्मक तैयारी की दिशा में एक बड़ा कदम है।
- The contracts were inked in the presence of Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh at South Block, New Delhi, officials said.
अधिकारियों ने कहा कि ये अनुबंध नई दिल्ली के साउथ ब्लॉक में रक्षा सचिव राजेश कुमार सिंह की उपस्थिति में किए गए।
- According to the Ministry of Defence, under the first contract, over 4.25 lakh CQB Carbines along with accessories, valued at ₹2,770 crore, will be procured for the Indian Army and the



Indian Navy from Bharat Forge Ltd. and PLR Systems Pvt Ltd.

रक्षा मंत्रालय के अनुसार, पहले अनुबंध के तहत ₹2,770 करोड़ मूल्य की 4.25 लाख से अधिक CQB कार्बाइन, सहायक उपकरणों सहित, भारतीय सेना और भारतीय नौसेना के लिए भारत फोर्ज लिमिटेड और पीएलआर सिस्टम्स प्राइवेट लिमिटेड से खरीदी जाएंगी।

- The induction of these **indigenously manufactured carbines** marks the culmination of a longstanding effort to replace **legacy small arms** with **modern, high-lethality weapons** in line with the '**Aatmanirbhar Bharat**' vision.

इन स्वदेशी रूप से निर्मित कार्बाइनों की तैनाती पुराने छोटे हथियारों को आधुनिक, उच्च मारक क्षमता वाले हथियारों से बदलने के लंबे प्रयास की परिणति है, जो 'आत्मनिर्भर भारत' दृष्टि के अनुरूप है।

A decisive advantage

एक निर्णायक बढ़त

- A decisive advantage
एक निर्णायक बढ़त
- Designed as a key component of the **modern infantry arsenal**, the **CQB Carbine** has a **compact design, high rate of fire and enhanced lethality**, providing a decisive advantage in **close-combat** and **concerned-space operations**.
आधुनिक पैदल सेना के शस्त्रागार के एक प्रमुख घटक के रूप में डिज़ाइन की गई **CQB कार्बाइन कॉम्पैक्ट डिज़ाइन, उच्च फायर दर और बढ़ी हुई मारक क्षमता** प्रदान करती है, जो नज़दीकी युद्ध और सीमित स्थानों में संचालन में निर्णायक बढ़त देती है।
- The project also underscores growing **government–private sector synergy**, strengthening the **Make in India initiative** while **boosting employment, supporting MSMEs, and deepening India's indigenous defence manufacturing ecosystem**, the Ministry added.
मंत्रालय ने कहा कि यह परियोजना बढ़ती हुई **सरकार–निजी क्षेत्र की सहभागिता** को भी रेखांकित करती है, जिससे **मेक इन इंडिया पहल** को मजबूती मिलती है, **रोज़गार** बढ़ता है, **एमएसएमई** को समर्थन मिलता है और **भारत के स्वदेशी रक्षा विनिर्माण पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र** को गहराई मिलती है।
- The **second contract, valued at approximately ₹1,896 crore, was signed with WASS Submarine Systems S.R.L., Italy** for the procurement and integration of **48 Heavyweight Torpedoes** along with associated equipment for the **Indian Navy's Kalvari Class (Project-75) submarines**.
लगभग ₹1,896 करोड़ मूल्य का दूसरा अनुबंध इटली की **WASS सबमरीन सिस्टम्स एस.आर.एल.** के साथ **भारतीय नौसेना की कलवरी श्रेणी (प्रोजेक्ट-75) पनडुब्बियों** के लिए **48 हेवीवेट टॉरपीडो** और संबंधित उपकरणों की खरीद एवं एकीकरण हेतु किया गया।
- The acquisition will significantly enhance the **combat capability** of the Navy's **six submarines** under the class.
यह अधिग्रहण इस श्रेणी की नौसेना की **छह पनडुब्बियों की युद्ध क्षमता** को काफी बढ़ाएगा।

To begin by 2028

2028 से शुरुआत

- To begin by 2028
2028 से शुरुआत
- Officials said delivery of the **heavyweight torpedoes** will start from is scheduled to commence from **April 2028** and will be completed by **early 2030**.
अधिकारियों ने कहा कि **हेवीवेट टॉरपीडो** की आपूर्ति **अप्रैल 2028** से शुरू होने वाली है और **2030 की शुरुआत** तक पूरी कर ली जाएगी।
- Equipped with **advanced technological features** and **robust operational capabilities**, the torpedoes will strengthen the Navy's **underwater warfare prowess**.
उन्नत तकनीकी विशेषताओं और **मजबूत संचालनात्मक क्षमताओं** से लैस ये टॉरपीडो नौसेना की **जलमग्न युद्ध क्षमता** को मजबूत करेंगे।
- In the **Financial Year 2025–26**, the **Ministry of Defence** has so far signed **capital acquisition contracts** worth **₹1,82,492 crore**, reflecting a sustained focus on the **modernisation and indigenisation** of India's defence forces.



GS Paper III: DM	
TOPICS COVERED	31_12_2025
1. Track record	रिकॉर्ड का लेखा-जोखा

GS III: DM

Track record

The Indian Railways must spare no expense in installing safety features

The Tatanagar-Ernakulam Express fire accident in Andhra Pradesh was a major one, in terms of severity if not the extent of casualties. Chance, quick thinking and timely action by railway staff and other agencies as well as enhanced safety measures adopted by the railways over time likely contributed to a low toll — one passenger. That the accident happened in the train's air-conditioned (a/c) coaches, however, points to the need for increased requirements in these coaches in terms of fire safety and response. At around 12.40 a.m. on Monday, as the train approached Yelamanchili station, a passenger sounded the alarm after apparently noticing a fire. The use of the emergency chain alerted the train crew who took the train to the loop line which had a platform. The train was not scheduled to stop at Yelamanchili. This helped passengers alight safely. The insides of two a/c coaches were gutted in the fire that agencies put out in about two hours.

Over the years, the safety record of the Indian Railways has improved. The total number of accidents in 2024-25 was down by more than 70% compared to 10 years ago. Major accidents have, however, seen ups and downs year on year without an appreciable fall. Fire accidents account for some 10% to 20% of accidents in a typical year. Fires are triggered by rolling stock defects and errors on the part of the railways as well as by passengers who carry inflammable, even explosive articles. The cause of the Tatanagar-Ernakulam Express fire is not decisively known as yet and an inquiry has been ordered. Fire in a/c coaches has been a cause of concern and the railways has focused on them for fitment of fire warning and fighting systems such as portable extinguishers. The Indian Railways Annual Report & Accounts 2023-24 notes that fire and smoke detection systems have been fitted in some 20,000 a/c coaches; the goal is to fit all a/c coaches, including new ones, with such systems. The report says that all a/c as well as non-a/c coaches in passenger trains have fire extinguishers. Railway authorities say that the fire alarm system in the Tatanagar-Ernakulam Express coach activated upon detection of smoke/fire, adding that the coach mechanic, bed-roll staff and the travelling ticket examiner alerted the passengers and used the fire extinguishers, which helped control the fire. Perhaps fixed fire extinguishing systems, which can also be used in electrical fires, can be considered for a/c coaches in all trains. These activate automatically in case a fire is detected and douse it completely. No safety feature is too expensive.

आपातकालीन चेन के उपयोग से ट्रेन चालक दल सतर्क हुआ और ट्रेन को प्लेटफॉर्म वाली लूप लाइन पर ले जाया गया।

- The train was **not scheduled to stop** at Yelamanchili. ट्रेन का येलामंचिली पर निर्धारित ठहराव नहीं था।
- This helped passengers **alight safely**. इससे यात्रियों को सुरक्षित रूप से उतरने में मदद मिली।
- The insides of **two a/c coaches** were **gutted** in the fire that agencies put out in about **two hours**. आग में दो ए/सी कोचों का अंदरूनी हिस्सा पूरी तरह जल गया, जिसे एजेंसियों ने लगभग दो घंटे में बुझाया।
- Over the years, the **safety record** of the **Indian Railways** has improved. वर्षों के दौरान भारतीय रेलवे का सुरक्षा रिकॉर्ड बेहतर हुआ है।

Track record रिकॉर्ड का लेखा-जोखा

- The **Indian Railways** must spare **no expense** in installing **safety features**
भारतीय रेलवे को सुरक्षा सुविधाओं की स्थापना में कोई खर्च बचाना नहीं चाहिए

The Tatanagar-Ernakulam Express fire accident in Andhra Pradesh आंध्र प्रदेश में टटानगर-एर्नाकुलम एक्सप्रेस अग्नि दुर्घटना

- The Tatanagar-Ernakulam Express fire accident in **Andhra Pradesh** was a major one, in terms of **severity** if not the extent of casualties. आंध्र प्रदेश में टटानगर-एर्नाकुलम एक्सप्रेस की अग्नि दुर्घटना **गंभीरता** के लिहाज़ से एक बड़ी घटना थी, भले ही हताहतों की संख्या के संदर्भ में नहीं।

- **Chance, quick thinking** and **timely action** by railway staff and other agencies as well as **enhanced safety measures** adopted by the railways over time likely contributed to a **low toll — one passenger**. **संयोग, त्वरित निर्णय** और रेलवे कर्मचारियों व अन्य एजेंसियों द्वारा **समय पर कार्रवाई**, साथ ही समय के साथ रेलवे द्वारा अपनाए गए **बेहतर सुरक्षा उपायों** ने संभवतः **कम हताहत — एक यात्री** — में योगदान दिया।

- That the accident happened in the train's **air-conditioned (a/c) coaches**, however, points to the need for **increased requirements** in these coaches in terms of **fire safety and response**. हालाँकि, यह तथ्य कि दुर्घटना ट्रेन के **वातानुकूलित (ए/सी) कोचों** में हुई, इन कोचों में **अग्नि सुरक्षा और प्रतिक्रिया** के संदर्भ में **अधिक आवश्यकताओं** की ओर संकेत करता है।

- At around **12.40 a.m. on Monday**, as the train approached **Yelamanchili station**, a passenger sounded the alarm after apparently noticing a **fire**.

लगभग **सोमवार रात 12.40 बजे**, जब ट्रेन **येलामंचिली स्टेशन** के पास पहुँची, तो एक यात्री ने स्पष्ट रूप से **आग** देखकर अलार्म बजाया।

- The use of the **emergency chain** alerted the train crew who took the train to the **loop line** which had a **platform**.



- The total number of accidents in 2024-25 was down by more than 70% compared to 10 years ago.
2024-25 में कुल दुर्घटनाओं की संख्या 10 साल पहले की तुलना में 70% से अधिक कम थी।
- Major accidents have, however, seen ups and downs year on year without an appreciable fall.
हालाँकि, बड़ी दुर्घटनाओं में वर्ष-दर-वर्ष उतार-चढ़ाव देखा गया है, बिना किसी उल्लेखनीय गिरावट के।
- Fire accidents account for some 10% to 20% of accidents in a typical year.
एक सामान्य वर्ष में आग की दुर्घटनाएँ कुल दुर्घटनाओं का लगभग 10% से 20% होती हैं।
- Fires are triggered by rolling stock defects and errors on the part of the railways as well as by passengers who carry inflammable, even explosive articles.
आग रोलिंग स्टॉक की खामियों, रेलवे की त्रुटियों, तथा ज्वलनशील, यहाँ तक कि विस्फोटक वस्तुएँ ले जाने वाले यात्रियों के कारण भी लगती है।
- The cause of the Tatanagar-Ernakulam Express fire is not decisively known as yet and an inquiry has been ordered.
टाटानगर-एर्नाकुलम एक्सप्रेस में आग का कारण अभी तक निश्चित रूप से ज्ञात नहीं है और जाँच के आदेश दिए गए हैं।
- Fire in a/c coaches has been a cause of concern and the railways has focused on them for fitment of fire warning and fighting systems such as portable extinguishers.
ए/सी कोचों में आग एक चिंता का विषय रही है और रेलवे ने इनमें फायर वार्निंग और फायर-फाइटिंग सिस्टम, जैसे पोर्टेबल अग्निशामक, लगाने पर ध्यान केंद्रित किया है।
- The Indian Railways Annual Report & Accounts 2023-24 notes that fire and smoke detection systems have been fitted in some 20,000 a/c coaches; the goal is to fit all a/c coaches, including new ones, with such systems.
भारतीय रेलवे वार्षिक रिपोर्ट एवं लेखे 2023-24 में उल्लेख है कि आग और धुआँ पहचान प्रणाली लगभग 20,000 ए/सी कोचों में लगाई जा चुकी है; लक्ष्य सभी ए/सी कोचों, जिनमें नए कोच भी शामिल हैं, में ऐसी प्रणालियाँ लगाना है।
- The report says that all a/c as well as non-a/c coaches in passenger trains have fire extinguishers.
रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि यात्री ट्रेनों के सभी ए/सी और गैर-ए/सी कोचों में अग्निशामक उपलब्ध हैं।
- Railway authorities say that the fire alarm system in the Tatanagar-Ernakulam Express coach activated upon detection of smoke/fire, adding that the coach mechanic, bedroll staff and the travelling ticket examiner alerted the passengers and used the fire extinguishers, which helped control the fire.
रेलवे अधिकारियों का कहना है कि टाटानगर-एर्नाकुलम एक्सप्रेस के कोच में धुआँ/आग का पता लगते ही फायर अलार्म सिस्टम सक्रिय हो गया, और कोच मैकेनिक, बेडरोल स्टाफ तथा चल टिकट परीक्षक ने यात्रियों को सतर्क किया और अग्निशामकों का उपयोग किया, जिससे आग पर काबू पाया गया।
- Perhaps fixed fire extinguishing systems, which can also be used in electrical fires, can be considered for a/c coaches in all trains.
संभवतः स्थायी अग्निशामन प्रणालियाँ, जिन्हें विद्युत आग में भी उपयोग किया जा सकता है, सभी ट्रेनों के ए/सी कोचों के लिए विचार की जा सकती हैं।
- These activate automatically in case a fire is detected and douse it completely.
ये आग का पता चलते ही स्वतः सक्रिय हो जाती हैं और उसे पूरी तरह बुझा देती हैं।
- No safety feature is too expensive.
कोई भी सुरक्षा सुविधा बहुत महंगी नहीं होती।