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# PATRIOTIC IAS

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### THE HINDU NEWSPAPER

### 21 JANUARY 2025

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**GS Paper 1: Geography**

**TOPICS COVERED**

**21 January 2026**

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## Peatlands

- **Peatlands** are a specific type of wetland ecosystem where partially decomposed plant material accumulates over thousands of years under **waterlogged and oxygen-poor conditions**.
- This accumulated organic material is known as **peat**, which is extremely rich in **carbon** and has a high **water-holding capacity**.
- Although peatlands occupy only a small fraction of the Earth's land surface, they are among the **largest natural carbon stores on the planet**.

### Punta Arenas, Chile

- **Punta Arenas** is located in **southern Chile**, within the **Magallanes and Chilean Antarctic Region**, at the edge of **Patagonia**.
- The region has a **cold, wet, and windy climate**, which is ideal for peat formation because **low temperatures and high moisture slow down decomposition**.
- Large expanses of **Patagonian peatlands** developed here after the **last glacial period**, making them some of the most extensive peat ecosystems in the Southern Hemisphere



Scientists examine pompon moss in a pristine peat bog during an expedition by the International Peatland Conservation Group, which promotes the conservation and restoration of peatlands, carbon and water rich ecosystems that play a crucial role in climate change mitigation, in Punta Arenas, Chile. REUTERS

### Why Peatlands Are Carbon-Rich

- Plants growing in peatlands absorb **carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)** from the atmosphere through photosynthesis.
- Due to water saturation and lack of oxygen, dead plant material does not fully decompose.
- As a result, **carbon remains locked in peat soils for thousands of years**, rather than being released back into the atmosphere.
- Globally, peatlands store **more carbon than all the world's forests combined**, despite covering only about **3 percent of land area**.

### Water-Rich Nature and Hydrological Importance

- Peat soils can retain **several times their own weight in water**, making peatlands natural **water reservoirs**.
- In the Punta Arenas region, peatlands regulate **local water cycles** by absorbing rainfall releasing water slowly into rivers and streams reducing flood risks during heavy precipitation
- This water-regulating function supports **ecosystem stability**, freshwater availability, and biodiversity in Patagonia.

### GS Paper II: Polity,

#### TOPICS COVERED

21 January 2026

1. **Governor altered policy speech in Assembly, says Kerala CM**  
केरल विधानसभा में राज्यपाल ने नीति भाषण में बदलाव किया, केरल के मुख्यमंत्री का आरोप



2.	<b>Governor refuses to read the customary speech in T.N. House</b> तमिलनाडु विधानसभा में राज्यपाल ने परंपरागत भाषण पढ़ने से इनकार किया
3.	<b>SIR order was legislative, aims to 'purify' rolls, has a liberal approach, EC tells SC</b> SIR आदेश विधायी था, मतदाता सूचियों को 'शुद्ध' करने का उद्देश्य, उदार दृष्टिकोण अपनाया गया: EC ने SC से कहा
4.	<b>Governor's address as Centre's adverse attitude on funds release for T.N.</b> राज्यपाल का अभिभाषण T.N. के लिए धन जारी करने पर केंद्र के प्रतिकूल रवैये को ags करता है
5.	<b>SC to examine query by T.N., Kerala on whether ED is a 'juristic person'</b> ईडी 'ज्यूरिस्टिक पर्सन' है या नहीं — इस पर तमिलनाडु, केरल की याचिका की जांच करेगा सुप्रीम कोर्ट
6.	<b>Activists urge SC to treat hate speech as a constitutional tort</b> कार्यकर्ताओं ने सुप्रीम कोर्ट से हेट स्पीच को संवैधानिक टॉर्ट मानने का आग्रह किया
7.	<b>LS attendance to be marked only from members' seats, says Birla</b> लोकसभा की उपस्थिति केवल सदस्यों की सीटों से ही दर्ज होगी, बोले बिरला
8.	<b>Congress urges Centre to ensure reservation in private institutions under Article 15(5)</b> कांग्रेस ने केंद्र से अनुच्छेद 15(5) के तहत निजी संस्थानों में आरक्षण सुनिश्चित करने का आग्रह किया
9.	<b>Augean mess</b> ऑजियन अव्यवस्था

PATRIOTIC IAS



# Governor altered policy speech in Assembly, says Kerala CM

Pinarayi Vijayan says Arlekar made changes to speech prepared by State in Assembly; only Cabinet-approved version will prevail in keeping with constitutional practice, he adds; Governor's speech dropped reference to adverse actions by Centre

GS II: Polity

Tiki Rajwi

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala Legislative Assembly saw extraordinary scenes on Tuesday after Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar had made changes to the policy speech prepared by the State government while delivering the customary address at the start of the first session of the New Year.

Back in the Assembly after seeing off the Governor, Mr. Vijayan said Mr. Arlekar had made changes to paragraphs 12, 15 and 16 of the Cabinet-approved text of the speech. While certain sections were omitted, some additions were made elsewhere, he said.

He said the Cabinet-approved version would prevail in keeping with the constitutional practice and legislative precedent in Kerala. "The Governor addresses the Legislative Assembly at the start of the



Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan welcoming Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar to the Assembly on Tuesday. A. JAYAMOHAN

first session of a year. Since the Governor presents the policy of the State government in the House, paragraphs 12, 15 and 16 as approved by the Cabinet will prevail," the Chief Minister said.

Mr. Vijayan urged Speaker A.N. Shamseer to approve the speech ratified by the Cabinet as the official version of the address.

The English and Malayalam copies of the policy address distributed to the MLAs and the press remained the versions ap-

proved by the Cabinet.

There was no official response from the Governor's office despite repeated efforts.

**Omitted lines**

In the approved text, paragraph 12 read: "Despite these social and institutional achievements, Kerala continues to face severe fiscal stress arising from a series of adverse Union Government actions that undermine the constitutional principles of fiscal federalism." However, in the

speech delivered by the Governor, the paragraph read: "Despite these social and institutional achievements, Kerala continues to face severe fiscal stress arising from curtailment of advances."

In paragraph 15, the Governor omitted the following section from the Cabinet-approved version: "Bills passed by State legislatures have remained pending for prolonged periods. My government has approached the Supreme Court on these issues, which have been referred to a Constitution Bench."

The Cabinet-approved section in paragraph 16 stated: "Tax devolution and Finance Commission grants are constitutional entitlements of States and not acts of charity, and any pressure on constitutional bodies entrusted with this task undermines federal principles." Mr. Vijayan said the Governor prefaced this section with the words, "My government feels..."

Article 176 of the Constitution mandates a special address by the Governor to State legislatures at the commencement of the first session after a general election and at the start of the first session each year. Tuesday's address by Mr. Arlekar marked the beginning of the first session of 2026 and the 16th and final session of the 15th Kerala Assembly. The State is due to go to the polls later this year.

The CPI(M)-led government's relations with Lok Bhavan have not been cordial in recent years. In January 2024, then-Governor Arif Mohammed Khan had created headlines when he wrapped up his policy address in less than a minute. The government's relationship with Mr. Arlekar had also soured over a number of issues, including delays in securing assent for Bills passed by the Assembly.

SCRIPTED ACT, SAYS CONG.  
» PAGE 3

## Governor altered policy speech in Assembly, says Kerala CM

केरल विधानसभा में राज्यपाल ने नीति भाषण में बदलाव किया, केरल के मुख्यमंत्री का आरोप

- Pinarayi Vijayan says Arlekar made changes to speech prepared by the State in Assembly; only Cabinet-approved versions will prevail in keeping with constitutional practice, he adds; Governor's speech dropped reference to adverse actions by Centre.

पिनाराई विजयन ने कहा कि अरलेकर ने विधानसभा में राज्य द्वारा तैयार किए गए भाषण में बदलाव किए; संवैधानिक परंपरा के अनुरूप केवल कैबिनेट-स्वीकृत संस्करण ही मान्य होगा; उन्होंने जोड़ा कि राज्यपाल के भाषण में केंद्र की प्रतिकूल कार्रवाइयों का उल्लेख हटा दिया गया।

- Article 176 of the Constitution mandates a special address by the Governor to State legislatures at the commencement of the first session after a general election and at the start of the first session each year.

संविधान का अनुच्छेद 176 राज्य विधानसभाओं को राज्यपाल द्वारा सामान्य चुनाव के बाद पहले सत्र के आरंभ और हर वर्ष के पहले सत्र की शुरुआत में विशेष संबोधन को अनिवार्य करता है।

## Jal Jeevan Mission

जल जीवन मिशन

- The Jal Jeevan Mission was being implemented with the contributions of both the Union and State governments to supply 55 litres of safe drinking water per person per day.

जल जीवन मिशन को केंद्र और राज्य सरकारों के संयुक्त योगदान से लागू किया जा रहा था, ताकि प्रति व्यक्ति प्रतिदिन 55 लीटर सुरक्षित पेयजल उपलब्ध कराया जा सके।

- "Despite the exemplary performance of the State government, funds to the tune of ₹3,112 crore, required for the implementation of this scheme in Tamil Nadu, have not been released by the Union government for the past one-and-a-half years, nor has approval been accorded for any new project.



“राज्य सरकार के उत्कृष्ट प्रदर्शन के बावजूद, तमिलनाडु में इस योजना के कार्यान्वयन के लिए आवश्यक ₹3,112 करोड़ की राशि पिछले डेढ़ वर्षों से केंद्र सरकार द्वारा जारी नहीं की गई है, और न ही किसी नई

## SC to examine query by T.N., Kerala on whether ED is a ‘juristic person’

GS II: Polity

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday decided to examine petitions filed by the States of Kerala and Tamil Nadu asking if the Enforcement Directorate (ED), a Central agency, is a “juristic person” who can approach High Courts for enforcement of its “rights”.

A ‘juristic’ person is a legal fiction by which a non-human, like an incorporated company, is recognised to have rights, duties, sue or be sued like a ‘natural’ person.

A Bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Satish Chandra Sharma took serious note of the question of law raised by the States, which have been riddled by ED raids and legal actions in recent times. The



Kerala said the ED cannot consider itself a ‘person’ but is only a statutory creation.

Bench issued a notice to the ED, posting the case for hearing after four weeks.

Kerala said the ED cannot consider itself a “person” but is only a statutory creation.

The train of events began with the ED filing a writ petition under Article 226 of the Constitution be-

fore the Kerala High Court. The agency had challenged a notification issued by the State in May 2021 setting up a Commission of Inquiry (CoI) to investigate an audio clip and a letter from two accused persons in the gold smuggling case. The duo had alleged that ED officials were coaxing them to implicate persons holding high offices in the State. The State government had tasked the Inquiry Commission to probe if there was a conspiracy afoot against the State’s political leaders and, if so, to unearth the identity of those behind the plot.

On hearing of Kerala’s cause, Tamil Nadu has joined ranks with its neighbour in the Supreme Court.

Tamil Nadu accused the ED of indulging in a “gross

and blatant abuse of the process of law by invoking the writ jurisdiction of the Madras High Court seeking mandamus for registration of a case relating to alleged illegal mining”. It argued that the ED’s writs in the High Court were “unmaintainable”.

Both States want the Supreme Court to decide the question of law authoritatively.

“A statutory body can exercise only the power conferred by the relevant statute and all statutory bodies need not be body corporate with power to sue. Only a body corporate, with power to sue specifically conferred by the statute, can claim legal status or juristic person, which the Enforcement Directorate admittedly does not have...,” Kerala argued.

परियोजना को स्वीकृति दी गई है।

### SC to examine query by T.N., Kerala on whether ED is a ‘juristic person’ ईडी ‘ज्यूरिस्टिक पर्सन’ है या नहीं — इस पर तमिलनाडु, केरल की याचिका की जांच करेगा सुप्रीम कोर्ट

- The **Supreme Court** on Tuesday decided to examine petitions • led by the States of **Kerala** and **Tamil Nadu** asking if the **Enforcement Directorate (ED)**, a Central agency, is a “**juristic person**” who can approach High Courts for enforcement of its “rights”.

सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने मंगलवार को केरल और तमिलनाडु राज्यों द्वारा दायर याचिकाओं की जांच करने का निर्णय लिया, जिनमें पूछा गया है कि क्या केंद्रीय एजेंसी प्रवर्तन निदेशालय (ईडी) एक “ज्यूरिस्टिक पर्सन” है, जो अपने “अधिकारों” के प्रवर्तन के लिए उच्च न्यायालयों का रुख कर सकता है।

- A ‘**juristic**’ person is a legal action by which a non-human, like an incorporated company, is recognised to have rights, duties, sue or be sued like a ‘**natural**’ person.

‘ज्यूरिस्टिक’ पर्सन एक कानूनी कल्पना है, जिसके तहत किसी गैर-मानव इकाई, जैसे कि एक पंजीकृत कंपनी, को ‘प्राकृतिक’ व्यक्ति की तरह अधिकार, कर्तव्य, मुकदमा करने या उस पर मुकदमा चलाने का दर्जा दिया जाता है।



# Activists urge SC to treat hate speech as a constitutional tort

GS II: Polity

**Aaratrika Bhaumik**  
NEW DELHI

Prominent activists and religious leaders on Tuesday urged the Supreme Court to recognise hate speech as a “constitutional tort” rather than a mere disruption of law and order. They contended that its inherently “discriminatory” character strikes at the core of constitutional guarantees.

A constitutional tort is a judicial remedy through which the State can be held vicariously liable for the actions of its agents when they violate constitutional guarantees.

A Bench of Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Sandeep Mehta was hearing a batch of petitions highlighting the rise in hate speech incidents and seeking directions to regulate religious gatherings and congregations that promote such practices. The Bench reserved its order and directed the parties to file their written submissions within two weeks.

Appearing for activist Syeda Hameed and academic Alok Rai, advocate Shahrukh Alam submitted that hate speech could not be reduced to a routine policing concern. “Hate speech must be viewed beyond the prism of law and order, given its discriminatory impact. Treating it as a constitutional tort would ensure greater accountability,” she told the court.

Echoing these concerns, advocate Nizam Pasha, appearing for journalist-petitioners Shaheen Abdullah and Qurban Ali, pointed out that despite the Supreme Court’s October 21,



Petitioner contended that there is a direct correlation between hate speech and hate crimes.

2022, order directing States to register *suo motu* FIRs against those delivering hate speeches that incite communal violence, there had been little change on the ground.

“Such speeches are often delivered by habitual offenders. There is clear prior knowledge of the nature of these religious congregations, yet there is persistent inaction by State investigating agencies,” Mr. Pasha said.

He further contended that even when aggrieved individuals approach police stations seeking registration of FIRs, law enforcement authorities routinely flout the court’s directions. “In several cases, FIRs are either refused or, even when registered, the appropriate penal provisions are not invoked...,” he said.

Mr. Pasha further apprised the Bench that there is a direct correlation between hate speech and hate crimes, with acts of violence frequently following incendiary public speeches. Urging the court not to dispose of the petitions, he sought continued judicial oversight of the matter.

## Activists urge SC to treat hate speech as a constitutional tort

कार्यकर्ताओं ने सुप्रीम कोर्ट से हेट स्पीच को संवैधानिक टॉर्ट मानने का आग्रह किया

Prominent activists and religious leaders on Tuesday urged the Supreme Court to recognise hate speech as a “constitutional tort” rather than a mere disruption of law and order.

मंगलवार को प्रमुख कार्यकर्ताओं और धार्मिक नेताओं ने सुप्रीम कोर्ट से हेट स्पीच को केवल कानून-व्यवस्था में बाधा मानने के बजाय “संवैधानिक टॉर्ट” के रूप में मान्यता देने का आग्रह किया।

They contended that its inherently “discriminatory” character strikes at the core of constitutional guarantees.

उन्होंने तर्क दिया कि इसका अंतर्निहित “भेदभावपूर्ण” स्वरूप संवैधानिक गारंटियों के मूल पर प्रहार करता है।

A constitutional tort is a judicial remedy through which the State can be held vicariously liable for the actions of its agents when they violate constitutional guarantees.

संवैधानिक टॉर्ट एक न्यायिक उपाय है, जिसके माध्यम से राज्य को उसके एजेंटों की कार्रवाइयों के लिए प्रत्यक्ष रूप से उत्तरदायी ठहराया जा सकता है, जब वे संवैधानिक गारंटियों का उल्लंघन करते हैं।



## LS attendance to be marked only from members' seats, says Birla

GS II: Polity

The Hindu Bureau  
LUCKNOW

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Tuesday said that the attendance of Members of Parliament will now be recorded only when they are physically present inside the House at their designated seats, a move that would encourage them to be present from the start of proceedings each day. The new rule will come into ef-



Om Birla

fect from the upcoming Budget Session.

Mr. Birla says that the move would enhance accountability and transpa-

rency. Earlier, MPs were allowed to mark their attendance from outside the House chamber within the Parliament premises.

Mr. Birla also praised the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly, describing it as a "symbol of vibrant democracy," and credited Assembly Speaker Satish Mahana for adopting good practices in the country's largest Legislative Assembly.

their attendance from outside the House chamber within the Parliament premises.

पहले सांसदों को संसद परिसर के भीतर सदन कक्ष के बाहर से अपनी उपस्थिति दर्ज करने की अनुमति थी।

- Mr. Birla also praised the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly Speaker Satish Mahana for adopting good practices in the country's largest Legislative Assembly.

श्री बिरला ने उत्तर प्रदेश विधान सभा की भी प्रशंसा की, इसे "सशक्त लोकतंत्र का प्रतीक" बताते हुए, और देश की सबसे बड़ी विधान सभा में अच्छी प्रथाओं को अपनाने का श्रेय विधानसभा अध्यक्ष सतीश महाना को दिया।

LS attendance to be marked only from members' seats, says Birla  
लोकसभा की उपस्थिति केवल सदस्यों की सीटों से ही दर्ज होगी, बोले बिरला

• effect from the upcoming Budget Session.

आगामी बजट सत्र से प्रभावी।

• Mr. Birla says that the move would enhance accountability and transparency.

श्री बिरला ने कहा कि यह कदम जवाबदेही और पारदर्शिता को बढ़ाएगा।

• Earlier, MPs were allowed to mark

their attendance from outside the House chamber within the Parliament premises.

PATRIOTIC IAS



# Congress urges Centre to ensure reservation in private institutions under Article 15(5)

**GS II: Polity: FR**  
**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday said that any regulator for higher education must be mandated to oversee the implementation of Article 15(5) of the Constitution, which empowers the state to provide reservation for the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in private educational institutions.

Referring to the **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025**, which seeks to establish a single regulator for higher education and was introduced in the Lok Sabha on December 15, 2025, before being referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee, Congress general secretary (communications) **Jairam Ramesh** said such a body must have a clear mandate to ensure



Jairam Ramesh

the implementation of Article 15(5).

“Any such regulator should be mandated to oversee the implementation of Article 15(5) of the Constitution, which came into effect exactly 20 years ago today,” he said.

### Full implementation

He urged the Centre to fully implement Article 15(5) on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its enactment through the 93rd Constitutional Amendment by the Man-

monan Singh-led UPA government.

Calling it a historic moment, Mr. Ramesh said the amendment enabled the introduction of a 27% reservation for OBC students in Centrally funded higher education institutions (HEIs), including the IITs, IIMs, Central Universities, and NITs. “Since then, lakhs of students from the OBC communities have availed of this reservation, bringing economic and social mobility to millions,” he said.

Article 15(5) also permits the government to mandate reservation for SC, ST and OBC students in private higher education institutions, Mr. Ramesh said, noting that its validity was upheld by the Supreme Court in the *Pramati Educational and Cultural Trust vs Union of India* judgment on May 6, 2014.

## Congress urges Centre to ensure reservation in private institutions under Article 15(5)

कांग्रेस ने केंद्र से अनुच्छेद 15(5) के तहत निजी संस्थानों में आरक्षण सुनिश्चित करने का आग्रह किया

- The Congress on Tuesday said that any regulator for higher education must be mandated to oversee the implementation of Article 15(5) of the Constitution, which empowers the state to provide reservation for the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in private educational institutions.

कांग्रेस ने मंगलवार को कहा कि उच्च शिक्षा के लिए किसी भी नियामक को संविधान के अनुच्छेद 15(5) के कार्यान्वयन की निगरानी का दायित्व दिया जाना चाहिए, जो राज्य को निजी शैक्षणिक संस्थानों में अनुसूचित जातियों (SCs), अनुसूचित जनजातियों (STs) और अन्य पिछड़ा वर्ग (OBCs) के लिए आरक्षण प्रदान करने का अधिकार देता है।

- Referring to the **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025**, which seeks to establish a single regulator for higher education and was introduced in the Lok Sabha on December 15, 2025, before being referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee, Congress general secretary (communications) **Jairam Ramesh** said such a body must have a clear mandate to ensure the implementation of Article 15(5).



विकसित भारत शिक्षा अधिष्ठान विधेयक, 2025 का उल्लेख करते हुए, जो उच्च शिक्षा के लिए एकल नियामक स्थापित करने का प्रयास करता है और जिसे 15 दिसंबर 2025 को लोकसभा में पेश किया गया था, बाद में संयुक्त संसदीय समिति को भेजा गया, कांग्रेस महासचिव (संचार) जयराम रमेश ने कहा कि ऐसे निकाय के पास अनुच्छेद 15(5) के कार्यान्वयन को सुनिश्चित करने का स्पष्ट दायित्व होना चाहिए।

- “Any such regulator should be mandated to oversee the implementation of **Article 15(5) of the Constitution**, which came into force exactly **20 years ago today**,” he said. उन्होंने कहा, “ऐसे किसी भी नियामक को संविधान के अनुच्छेद 15(5) के कार्यान्वयन की निगरानी का दायित्व दिया जाना चाहिए, जो ठीक आज से 20 वर्ष पहले प्रभाव में आया था।”

## Full implementation पूर्ण कार्यान्वयन

- He urged the **Centre** to fully implement **Article 15(5)** on the **20th anniversary** of its enactment through the **93rd Constitutional Amendment** by the **Manmohan Singh-led UP government**. उन्होंने केंद्र से अनुच्छेद 15(5) के 20वें वर्षगांठ पर इसके पूर्ण कार्यान्वयन का आग्रह किया, जिसे मनमोहन सिंह के नेतृत्व वाली यूपीए सरकार द्वारा 93वें संविधान संशोधन के माध्यम से लागू किया गया था।
- Calling it a **historic moment**, Mr. Ramesh said the amendment enabled the introduction of a **27% reservation for OBC students in Centrally funded higher education institutions (HEIs)**, including the **IITs, IIMs, Central Universities, and NITs**. इसे एक ऐतिहासिक क्षण बताते हुए, श्री रमेश ने कहा कि इस संशोधन से केंद्र द्वारा वित्तपोषित उच्च शिक्षा संस्थानों (HEIs) में OBC छात्रों के लिए 27% आरक्षण लागू हो सका, जिनमें IITs, IIMs, केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय और NITs शामिल हैं।
- “Since then, lakhs of students from the **OBC communities** have availed of this reservation, bringing **economic and social mobility** to millions,” he said. उन्होंने कहा, “तब से OBC समुदायों के लाखों छात्रों ने इस आरक्षण का लाभ उठाया है, जिससे करोड़ों लोगों को आर्थिक और सामाजिक गतिशीलता मिली है।”
- **Article 15(5)** also permits the government to mandate reservation for **SC, ST and OBC students in private higher education institutions**, Mr. Ramesh said, noting that its validity was upheld by the **Supreme Court** in the **Pramati Educational and Cultural Trust vs Union of India** judgment on **May 6, 2014**. श्री रमेश ने कहा कि अनुच्छेद 15(5) सरकार को निजी उच्च शिक्षा संस्थानों में SC, ST और OBC छात्रों के लिए आरक्षण अनिवार्य करने की भी अनुमति देता है, और इसकी वैधता को 6 मई 2014 को प्रमाती एजुकेशनल एंड कल्चरल ट्रस्ट बनाम भारत संघ मामले में सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने बरकरार रखा था।



GS II: Polity

## Augean mess

The ECI aims to clean the rolls but it is scrubbing off genuine voters

With the Election Commission of India (ECI)'s Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process in its claims and corrections phase, it is prudent to ask, yet again, whether the entire process to "clean the electoral rolls" has become a dragnet affecting genuine electors across 12 States. On Monday, the Supreme Court of India issued fresh directions to the ECI to "ease the strain and stress" of millions of electors facing verification notices in West Bengal. Complaints of genuine electors having to run from pillar to post after being sent notices – many are flawed due to errors in the 2002 list used by the ECI for "mapping" or due to glitches in ad hoc software – have forced petitioners to raise questions. As seen during the SIR in Bihar, the Court has again had to issue guidelines to ease the process. In the case of Bihar, the Court's order for Aadhaar to be used as the twelfth identity document provided succour to millions, yet the final electorate numbers showed an egregious anomaly – the deletion of more women electors than men, suggesting that the process was flawed to begin with. This was confirmed in *The Hindu's* analyses of the deleted electors' lists in Bihar, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal which had shown anomalies that merited further investigation but did not get the ECI's response.

In Tamil Nadu, the deletion process has been so aggressive in many booths that the sum of electors who voted in the 2024 general election and names deleted during the SIR reportedly exceeds the total number of electors originally on the rolls. This suggests that genuine electors who voted in 2024 have also been deleted. Furthermore, the process of deduplicating names has, in many cases, resulted in the deletion of electors' names entirely. While the claims and corrections phase is witnessing lakhs of electors trying to re-enter the rolls, the ECI's insistence on their registering as fresh electors (using Form 6) is illogical and prevents an audit of how many genuine electors were wrongly removed in the first place. Then there is the incomprehensible mismatch in Uttar Pradesh. The State Election Commission, while preparing rolls for rural body polls, found that its count of the rural electorate alone exceeds the ECI's count for the entire State in the draft rolls. By not deciding on the constitutionality of this aggressive self-enumeration early on, the Court is now left managing the fallout of a process that has turned the simple act of maintaining an electoral list into one posing a threat to universal adult franchise. The question is no longer just about "cleaning the rolls" but also on whether genuine voters are being scrubbed off.

- The **State Election Commission**, while preparing rolls for rural body polls, found that its count of the rural electorate alone exceeds the ECI's count for the entire State in the draft rolls.

## Augean mess ऑजियन अव्यवस्था

- The ECI aims to clean the rolls but it is scrubbing off genuine voters.

ECI का उद्देश्य मतदाता सूचियों को साफ करना है, लेकिन इस प्रक्रिया में वास्तविक मतदाताओं को भी हटाया जा रहा है।

### Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of Electoral Rolls

निर्वाचक नामावली का विशेष गहन पुनरीक्षण (SIR)

- Complaints of genuine electors having to run from pillar to post after being sent notices – many are flawed due to errors in the 2002 list used by the ECI for "mapping" or due to glitches in ad hoc software – have forced petitioners to raise questions.

वास्तविक मतदाताओं द्वारा नोटिस मिलने के बाद दर-दर भटकने की शिकायतें — जिनमें से कई 2002 की सूची में त्रुटियों या एड-हॉक सॉफ्टवेयर की खामियों के कारण दोषपूर्ण हैं — ने याचिकाकर्ताओं को सवाल उठाने पर मजबूर किया है।

- In the case of Bihar, the Court's order for Aadhaar to be used as the twelfth identity document provided succour to millions, yet the final electorate numbers showed an egregious anomaly — the deletion of more women electors than men, suggesting that the process was flawed to begin with.

बिहार के मामले में, आधार को बारहवें पहचान दस्तावेज के रूप में उपयोग करने का न्यायालय का आदेश लाखों लोगों के लिए राहत बना, फिर भी अंतिम मतदाता आंकड़ों में एक गंभीर विसंगति दिखी — पुरुषों की तुलना में अधिक महिला मतदाताओं का विलोपन, जो दर्शाता है कि प्रक्रिया शुरू से ही दोषपूर्ण थी।

- While the claims and corrections phase is witnessing lakhs of electors trying to re-enter the rolls, the ECI's insistence on their registering as fresh electors (using Form 6) is illogical and prevents an audit of how many genuine electors were wrongly removed in the first place.

जबकि दावे और सुधार चरण में लाखों मतदाता नामावली में पुनः प्रवेश की कोशिश कर रहे हैं, Form 6 के माध्यम से उन्हें नए मतदाता के रूप में पंजीकरण कराने पर ECI का जोर अतार्किक है और इससे यह ऑडिट संभव नहीं हो पाता कि शुरुआत में कितने वास्तविक मतदाता गलत तरीके से हटाए गए।

- Then there is the incomprehensible mismatch in Uttar Pradesh. इसके बाद उत्तर प्रदेश में समझ से परे असंगति सामने आती है।



राज्य निर्वाचन आयोग ने ग्रामीण निकाय चुनावों के लिए नामावली तैयार करते समय पाया कि केवल ग्रामीण मतदाताओं की उसकी संख्या ही ड्राफ्ट नामावली में पूरे राज्य के लिए ECI की गणना से अधिक है।

## GS Paper II: Governance,

### TOPICS COVERED

21 January 2026

1. **DGCA directs airline operators to appoint a 'chief of flight safety'**  
डीजीसीए ने एयरलाइन ऑपरेटरों को 'चीफ ऑफ फ्लाइट सेफ्टी' नियुक्त करने का निर्देश दिया

# DGCA directs airline operators to appoint a 'chief of flight safety'

## GS II: Governance

**S. Vijay Kumar**  
CHENNAI

With accident investigations consistently pointing to recurring causal factors and systemic deficiencies within aviation operations, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has directed airline operators to appoint a 'chief of flight safety' to ensure implementation of safety protocols.

In a bid to prevent accidents or incidents, the aviation regulator asked the operators to set up a dedicated "flight safety department" with an adequate number of competent personnel for promoting flight safety and implementing accident/incident prevention programme.

In addition, the operators shall nominate a "deputy chief of flight safety". "It shall be ensured that if chief of flight safety is a pilot, the deputy chief shall



The DGCA says accident investigations have highlighted recurring causal factors and systemic deficiencies. FILE PHOTO

be an engineer and vice-versa," the DGCA said.

### Systemic deficiencies

Explaining the necessity for creating such posts, the DGCA said accident investigations had consistently highlighted recurring causal factors and systemic deficiencies within aviation operations.

While such investigations remained valuable for incremental improvements, the scope for significant safety enhancement through reactive measures

alone was limited.

With the effective implementation of a safety management system (SMS), the aviation industry had shifted from a reactive approach to a proactive approach which helped in identification of safety concerns before they escalated into incidents or accidents.

It was essential to integrate safety management system with the safety awareness and accident/incident prevention programmes, which established a structured

framework for continuous monitoring, evaluation, and improvement of operational practices. "To ensure the highest levels of safety in aircraft operations, it is imperative that every operator implement such a programme," the DGCA said. The DGCA said the instructions would apply to all operators engaged in scheduled air transport services/cargo services/non-scheduled air transport services.

Calling for building safety culture in the aviation sector, the regulator said operators should conduct internal safety audit of different divisions such as operations, maintenance, ground support among others.

"Flight and duty time limitations shall be laid down for the operating crew to ensure that the crew are not fatigued which may affect safety of operations," the DGCA said.

## DGCA directs airline operators to appoint a 'chief of flight safety'

डीजीसीए ने एयरलाइन ऑपरेटरों को 'चीफ ऑफ फ्लाइट सेफ्टी' नियुक्त करने का निर्देश दिया

- With accident investigations consistently pointing to recurring causal factors and systemic deficiencies within aviation operations, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)



has directed airline operators to appoint a **'chief of flight safety'** to ensure implementation of safety protocols.

दुर्घटना जांच में बार-बार सामने आ रहे कारणों और विमानन परिचालन में मौजूद प्रणालीगत कमियों को देखते हुए **नागरिक उड्डयन महानिदेशालय (DGCA)** ने एयरलाइन ऑपरेटर्स को सुरक्षा प्रोटोकॉल के कार्यान्वयन को सुनिश्चित करने के लिए **'चीफ ऑफ फ्लाइट सेफ्टी'** नियुक्त करने का निर्देश दिया है।

- In a bid to prevent accidents or incidents, the **aviation regulator** asked the operators to set up a dedicated **"flight safety department"** with an adequate number of competent personnel for promoting flight safety and implementing accident/incident prevention programmes.

दुर्घटनाओं या घटनाओं को रोकने के उद्देश्य से, विमानन नियामक ने ऑपरेटर्स से उड़ान सुरक्षा को बढ़ावा देने और दुर्घटना/घटना रोकथाम कार्यक्रम लागू करने के लिए पर्याप्त संख्या में सक्षम कर्मियों के साथ एक समर्पित **"फ्लाइट सेफ्टी डिपार्टमेंट"** स्थापित करने को कहा।

<b>GS Paper II:</b>	
<b>TOPICS COVERED</b>	<b>21 January 2026</b>
1.	<b>Bridging the Gulf</b> खाड़ी सेतु निर्माण
2.	<b>The 'Donroe doctrine', a broken international order</b> 'डॉनरो सिद्धांत', एक टूटी हुई अंतरराष्ट्रीय व्यवस्था
3.	<b>Enhancing China-India youth ties</b> चीन-भारत युवा संबंधों को मजबूत करना
4.	<b>To compete with China, India may need China</b> चीन से प्रतिस्पर्धा करने के लिए, भारत को चीन की आवश्यकता पड़ सकती है
5.	<b>The importance of Pax Silica for India</b> भारत के लिए पैक्स सिलिका का महत्व
6.	<b>Trump slams U.K.'s move to hand over Chagos Islands</b> ट्रंप ने चागोस द्वीप समूह सौंपने के यू.के. के फैसले की आलोचना की
7.	<b>Syria announces a new four-day ceasefire with Kurdish-led forces</b> सीरिया ने कुर्द-नेतृत्व वाली सेनाओं के साथ नए चार-दिवसीय संघर्षविराम की घोषणा की
8.	<b>With threats to take over Greenland, Trump turns NATO against NATO</b> ग्रीनलैंड पर कब्जा करने की धमकियों के साथ, ट्रंप ने नाटो को नाटो के खिलाफ मोड़ दिया
9.	<b>World leaders assess Trump's Board of Peace invitation which hints at rivalling UNSC</b> विश्व नेता ट्रंप के बोर्ड ऑफ पीस आमंत्रण का मूल्यांकन करते हैं, जो UNSC को प्रतिस्पर्धा देने का संकेत देता है



GS II: IR MQB  
**Bridging the Gulf**

India must tread cautiously as it negotiates defence ties with Gulf nations

**T**he nearly two-hour visit of UAE President and Ruler of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (MbZ) to Delhi on Monday, with only one meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, ended with a number of far-reaching outcomes. The UAE is India's third-largest trading partner, its second biggest export destination, seventh biggest foreign investor, and concluded its first bilateral trade agreement with India in 2022. The agreements on Monday focused on the economic partnership – a commitment to double bilateral trade to \$200 billion, an LNG deal for \$3 billion and UAE investment in Gujarat. However, the major announcement was the intention to conclude a framework agreement for an India-UAE "Strategic Defence partnership", the first of its kind. Details are still to be revealed. However, it is clear that West Asia and South Asia will be watching closely given the complicated security environment in both regions. MbZ's sudden India visit came amidst heightened tensions between the UAE and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Both countries were once a part of the same military coalition against the Houthi uprising in 2014. Their power tussle has also intensified over forces in Sudan, and the lack of communication between MbZ and Saudi leader Mohammed Bin Salman (MbS) is now being called the Gulf region's new "cold war". In addition, protests in Iran and the U.S.'s threats to intervene as well as the tenuous Gaza ceasefire and U.S. President Donald Trump's plans for a Board of Peace have led to concerns about internal and external instability. Israel's bombing in Qatar in September 2025, that led the Saudi government to rush a "mutual defence pact" with Pakistan, and reported negotiations of including Türkiye in the pact, portend a more complex and unstable region, with repercussions for India.

The announcement of the UAE-India negotiations for a defence agreement is being read by some as a possible military front to counter other regional alignments. Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri attempted to downplay concerns, holding that the treaty was not about India's involvement in "a hypothetical future scenario in the region". Even so, the government must keep in mind ties not only with the UAE but also other important Gulf region countries, where nearly 10 million Indians reside. The GCC-area is a major energy source, especially as U.S. and EU sanctions have curtailed all of India's other important sources. India's cross-regional connectivity plans through Iran's Chabahar port, the International North South Transport Corridor and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor have been imperilled due to all the tensions as their future depends on cooperation with all players there. With important relationships in the region, and so many faultlines within it, India has little option but to tread lightly.

**Bridging the Gulf  
खाड़ी सेतु निर्माण**

The UAE is India's third-largest trading partner, its second biggest export destination, seventh biggest foreign investor, and concluded its first bilateral trade agreement with India in 2022.

यूएई, भारत का तीसरा सबसे बड़ा व्यापारिक भागीदार, दूसरा सबसे बड़ा निर्यात गंतव्य, सातवाँ सबसे बड़ा विदेशी निवेशक है, और 2022 में भारत के साथ पहला द्विपक्षीय व्यापार समझौता कर चुका है।

The agreements on Monday focused on the economic partnership, a commitment to double bilateral trade to \$200 billion, an LNG deal for \$3 billion, and UAE investment in Gujarat.

सोमवार को हुए समझौते आर्थिक साझेदारी पर केंद्रित थे, जिनमें द्विपक्षीय व्यापार को 200 अरब डॉलर तक दोगुना करने, 3 अरब डॉलर का LNG समझौता, और गुजरात में यूएई निवेश की प्रतिबद्धता शामिल थी।

However, the major announcement was the intention to conclude a framework agreement for an India-UAE "Strategic Defence partnership", the first of its kind.

हालाँकि, मुख्य घोषणा भारत-यूएई "रणनीतिक रक्षा साझेदारी" के लिए एक फ्रेमवर्क समझौता करने के इरादे की थी, जो अपने प्रकार का पहला होगा।

Details are still to be revealed. इसके विवरण अभी सामने आने बाकी हैं।

However, it is clear that West Asia and South Asia will be watching closely given the complicated security environment in both regions. फिर भी यह स्पष्ट है कि दोनों क्षेत्रों में जटिल सुरक्षा वातावरण को देखते हुए पश्चिम एशिया और दक्षिण एशिया इस पर करीबी नज़र रखेंगे।

MbZ's sudden India visit came amidst heightened tensions between the UAE and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

MbZ की अचानक भारत यात्रा यूएई और सऊदी अरब के बीच बढ़े हुए तनाव के बीच हुई।

Both countries were once a part of the same military coalition against the Houthi uprising in 2014.

दोनों देश कभी 2014 के हूती विद्रोह के खिलाफ एक ही सैन्य गठबंधन का हिस्सा थे।

Their power tussle has also intensified over forces in Sudan, and the lack of communication between MbZ and Saudi leader Mohammed Bin Salman (MbS) is now being called the Gulf region's new "cold war".

सूडान में ताकतों को लेकर उनका सत्ता संघर्ष भी तेज हुआ है, और MbZ तथा सऊदी नेता मोहम्मद बिन सलमान (MbS) के बीच संवाद की कमी को अब खाड़ी क्षेत्र का नया "शीत युद्ध" कहा जा रहा है।



- **Israel's bombing in Qatar in September 2025**, that led the Saudi government to rush a **"mutual defence pact" with Pakistan**, and reported negotiations of including **Türkiye** in the pact, portend a more **complex and unstable region**, with **repercussions for India**.  
सितंबर 2025 में कतर में इज़राइल की बमबारी, जिसके बाद सऊदी सरकार ने पाकिस्तान के साथ "आपसी रक्षा समझौता" जल्दबाज़ी में किया, और उसमें तुर्किये को शामिल करने की रिपोर्टेड वार्ताएँ, एक और अधिक जटिल व अस्थिर क्षेत्र का संकेत देती हैं, जिसके भारत पर प्रभाव पड़ेंगे।
- The **announcement of the UAE-India negotiations for a defence agreement is being read by some as a possible military front to counter other regional alignments**.  
रक्षा समझौते के लिए यूएई-भारत वार्ताओं की घोषणा को कुछ लोग अन्य क्षेत्रीय गठबंधनों के मुकाबले एक संभावित सैन्य मोर्चा मान रहे हैं।
- **Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri** attempted to **downplay concerns**, holding that the treaty was not about India's involvement in **"a hypothetical future scenario in the region"**.  
विदेश सचिव विक्रम मिस्त्री ने चिंताओं को कमतर आँकने का प्रयास करते हुए कहा कि यह संधि क्षेत्र में "किसी काल्पनिक भविष्य परिदृश्य" में भारत की भागीदारी के बारे में नहीं है।
- Even so, the government must keep in mind ties not only with the **UAE** but also other important **Gulf region countries, where nearly 10 million Indians reside**.  
फिर भी, सरकार को केवल यूएई ही नहीं बल्कि अन्य महत्वपूर्ण खाड़ी देशों के साथ संबंधों को भी ध्यान में रखना होगा, जहाँ लगभग एक करोड़ भारतीय रहते हैं।
- The **GCC-area is a major energy source**, especially as **U.S. and EU sanctions** have curtailed all of India's other important sources.  
GCC क्षेत्र एक प्रमुख ऊर्जा स्रोत है, विशेषकर तब जब अमेरिका और यूरोपीय संघ के प्रतिबंधों ने भारत के अन्य महत्वपूर्ण स्रोतों को सीमित कर दिया है।
- **India's cross-regional connectivity plans through Iran's Chabahar port, the International North South Transport Corridor, and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor** have been **imperilled** due to all the tensions as their future depends on **cooperation with all players** there.  
ईरान के चाबहार बंदरगाह, अंतरराष्ट्रीय उत्तर-दक्षिण परिवहन गलियारे, और भारत-मध्य पूर्व-यूरोप आर्थिक गलियारे के माध्यम से भारत की अंतर-क्षेत्रीय संपर्क योजनाएँ सभी तनावों के कारण खतरे में पड़ गई हैं, क्योंकि उनका भविष्य वहाँ के सभी पक्षों के सहयोग पर निर्भर करता है।



## The 'Donroe doctrine', a broken international order

GS II: IR

The new year began with a stark reminder that the over 200-year-old 'Monroe Doctrine' is not merely alive but has been given a fresh dimension, in keeping with the personality of United States President Donald Trump. In a swift operation as 2026 unfolded, U.S. airborne troops abducted Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife and incarcerated them in the U.S. on charges of undermining the security of the U.S. This action is being sanctified as the new 'Donroe Doctrine'.

**Actions under the Trump administration**  
Protests worldwide against the U.S.'s action in violating the sovereignty of Venezuela have, however, been rather muted. This seems to convey the belief that the post-1945 international order is dead, and what exists now is a 'free for all' in the global commons. Voices are also being heard 'sotto voce', that the latest action by the U.S. might well become a prelude for similar actions by nations such as China and Russia to lay claim to countries and regions falling within their zone of influence – China's claim to Taiwan being one.

The action carried out has been characterised by Mr Trump himself as a modern version of the (1823) Monroe Doctrine, viz., that the U.S. is the sole guarantor of security in the Western Hemisphere and would not brook any interference by powers outside the Hemisphere. A careful reading of President Trump's latest U.S. National Security Strategy, or NSS (November 2025) – which unequivocally states that after years of neglect, the U.S. expects to reassert its pre-eminence in the Western Hemisphere, denying non-Hemispheric competitors the ability to position forces or threaten U.S. vital assets in the Hemisphere – would suggest that the Venezuelan operation was a carefully thought through manoeuvre, and an updated 21st century version of 'US shock and awe' tactics. There is even an implicit threat of actions similar to Venezuela against Cuba, Colombia and Mexico. There is again an implicit reference to taking control of Greenland which is viewed by the U.S. as a security necessity.

From a U.S. perspective, it would seem that 2026 could see significant changes in different regions of the globe. Europe, for instance, which has come in for sharp criticism in the NSS document, has been excoriated on the ground that it had lost most, if not all, its sheen, alongside the suggestion that the U.S. could help Europe regain its former greatness if it backed patriotic European parties and 'genuine democracy'. The NSS document wants Europe to assume 'primary responsibility for its own defence', alongside a veiled reference to achieving strategic stability with Russia.

Going beyond Mr. Trump's NSS, realistically speaking, it would seem that the conflict in Ukraine, which appears stalemated at present, could move toward resolution, but which could



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It is a mixed bag as far as the global outlook for 2026 is concerned, marked by an updated version of the U.S.'s 'shock and awe' tactics

be unsatisfactory to both sets of antagonists. The alternative, according to U.S. policymakers, appears to be that otherwise, it could lead to further escalation, alongside fears that it would engulf more regions of Europe.

### The situation closer to India

The situation in West Asia, it would seem, is beginning to resemble the proverbial curate's egg, good in parts. Israel's pogrom has come to an end for the present, but peace in the regime remains highly elusive. The situation in Gaza, in particular, remains highly sensitive and violence seems for the most part just round the corner.

Meantime, the growing violence and unrest that have engulfed Iran and the Khamenei regime is acting as a catalyst for a fresh round of conflict in and across the region. Iran is witnessing widespread internal violence, and the declared that it is "fighting on four fronts, viz., an economic war, a psychological war, a military war against the US and Israel, and 'a war on terrorism'". The West has responded with warnings of imposing additional sanctions on Iran. Implicit in all this, is that both Israel and the U.S. see an opportunity to complete the unfinished conflict of 2025, and ensure that it reaches a 'satisfactory conclusion' in undermining the Khamenei regime in Iran.

Northwest Asia, specially Afghanistan, is meanwhile, set to confront more troubles this year. The Tehreek-e-Taliban and other Afghan terrorist groups appear, of late, to have gained a fresh lease of life, and this spells problems for Pakistan as well. The Afghanistan-Pakistan border will, hence, continue to remain troubled during much of this year. So, 2026 is again, not likely to be a good year for democracy in Pakistan, with the military taking firmer control of the country's affairs and Field Marshal Asim Munir eclipsing the importance of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, striking another blow to the country's democratic trajectory. However, Pakistan does appear to have gained a fresh lease of life, with the U.S. embracing it as an ally, promising a fresh tranche of state-of-the-art weapons, and in some ways being perceived as 'the most favoured nation of the US' in this part of the world. Meantime, uncertainty about the future of democracy will continue to prevail in the highly troubled state of Bangladesh, notwithstanding the promise of fresh elections and restoration of an elected government.

For China, 2025 seemed like a good year. While China-U.S. rivalry appeared to intensify, Beijing successfully withstood the tariff barrage unleashed by Mr. Trump, and even seemed to turn it to its advantage. China raised the value of its manufacturing and also demonstrated its hold over global supply chains.

China's restrictions on rare earth exports in the tussle with the U.S., seemed to enhance its ability to not only withstand U.S. pressures but also to convert the situation in its favour. While there were few opportunities for a trial of

strength in the Pacific, China's growing presence in Southeast Asia is adding to China's importance in Asian and world affairs. It is increasingly becoming apparent as well that the Eastern Pacific is no longer a U.S. bailiwick. China's presence in the Indian Ocean is also growing and represents not only a major threat to nations bordering the Indian Ocean but, more importantly, also a challenge to U.S. supremacy here.

### Notes for New Delhi

As 2026 progresses, India appears to stand at the crossroads, unsure as to where it stands. There has been no letup in Mr. Trump's tirade against India for continuing to import subsidised Russian oil, notwithstanding the fact that India is inclined to side with the U.S. on most matters. An implicit coldness in India-U.S. relations seems to be affecting India's relations with many other countries, resulting in New Delhi's relative isolation when it comes to conflict zones such as West Asia. Mr. Trump's public endorsement of Field Marshal Munir and the lifting of restrictions on arms supplies to Pakistan is also not helping. Despite this, there have been some positive developments with regard to an expansion of India-U.S. cooperation in some areas. Several mini-lateral initiatives, such as the I2U2 (India, Israel, the U.S., the UAE) and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor appear to be progressing.

As of now, Washington's foreign policy calculus and Beijing's disinterested approach to India are putting India at a disadvantage in political and economic terms, especially the latter. China's tactical advantage in trade and tariff disputes leaves little room or scope for India to hedge against U.S. threats to further raise tariffs on trade, thus aggravating current anxieties. For India, there is again little room for comfort in the fact that China's economic growth has not picked up of late, or that its domestic consumption remains stagnant. All this is notwithstanding an improvement in India-China ties following the Tianjin meeting of Prime Minister Modi and President Xi Jinping in 2025. A further stabilisation of India-China ties does not, however, appear likely in 2026.

Overall, 2026 may not have any great prospects for India. It may not, however, face any major terror attack during the year, but terrorism will remain an ever-present reality. West Asia having just undergone a sustained military campaign by Israel may be spared major terror attacks, but the upheaval in Iran and the attempt by Israel and the U.S. to wade into troubled waters could instigate some terror attacks. The Islamic State and al Qaeda seem better positioned in Africa as of now, but this is no reason to let one's guard down, as, overall, more attacks by insurgent and terrorist entities can be anticipated in Asia, West Asia and Africa. Terrorism could, hence, be regarded as a critical national security threat during 2026.

## The 'Donroe doctrine', a broken international order

### ‘डॉनरो सिद्धांत’, एक टूटी हुई अंतरराष्ट्रीय व्यवस्था

- The action carried out has been characterised by **Mr Trump** himself as a modern version of the **(1823) Monroe Doctrine**, viz., that the **U.S. is the sole guarantor of security in the Western Hemisphere** and would not brook any **interference** by powers outside the **Hemisphere**.

इस कार्रवाई को स्वयं **श्री ट्रंप** ने **1823 के मोनरो सिद्धांत** के आधुनिक रूप के तौर पर बताया है, अर्थात् **पश्चिमी गोलार्ध में सुरक्षा का एकमात्र गारंटर अमेरिका** है और वह बाहरी शक्तियों के किसी भी **हस्तक्षेप** को बर्दाश्त नहीं करेगा।

- A careful reading of **President Trump's latest U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS), November 2025**, which unequivocally states that after years of **neglect**, the **U.S. expects to reassert its pre-eminence in the Western Hemisphere**, denying **non-Hemispheric competitors** the ability to position forces or threaten **U.S. vital assets**, would suggest that the **Venezuelan operation** was a **carefully thought through manoeuvre**, and an updated **21st century version of 'US shock and awe' tactics**.

**नवंबर 2025** की राष्ट्रपति **ट्रंप** की नवीनतम अमेरिकी राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा रणनीति (NSS) का सावधानीपूर्वक अध्ययन, जिसमें स्पष्ट कहा गया है कि वर्षों की उपेक्षा के बाद **अमेरिका पश्चिमी गोलार्ध में अपनी सर्वोच्चता पुनः स्थापित करेगा**, और **गोलार्ध से बाहर की शक्तियों को अमेरिकी महत्वपूर्ण परिसंपत्तियों को खतरा पहुँचाने या सैन्य तैनाती से रोकेगा**, यह संकेत देता है कि **वेनेजुएला की कार्रवाई एक सुनियोजित कदम** थी और **21वीं सदी के 'यूएस शॉक एंड ऑ'** का अद्यतन रूप है।



- There is even an **implicit threat** of actions **similar to Venezuela against Cuba, Colombia and Mexico**.  
क्यूबा, कोलंबिया और मेक्सिको के खिलाफ वेनेजुएला जैसी कार्रवाइयों का भी एक अप्रत्यक्ष खतरा मौजूद है।
- There is again an **implicit reference** to taking **control of Greenland**, which is viewed by the **U.S.** as a **security necessity**.  
ग्रीनलैंड पर नियंत्रण को लेकर भी एक अप्रत्यक्ष संकेत है, जिसे अमेरिका अपनी सुरक्षा आवश्यकता के रूप में देखता है।
- From a **U.S. perspective**, it would seem that **2026** could see **significant changes** in different regions of the globe.  
अमेरिकी दृष्टिकोण से देखा जाए तो **2026** में दुनिया के विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में महत्वपूर्ण परिवर्तन दिखाई दे सकते हैं।
- **Europe**, for instance, which has come in for **sharp criticism in the NSS document**, has been **excoriated** on the ground that it had lost most, if not all, its **sheen**, alongside the suggestion that the **U.S.** could help Europe regain its **former greatness if it backed patriotic European parties and 'genuine democracy'**.  
उदाहरण के लिए यूरोप, जिसे **NSS दस्तावेज़** में **कड़ी आलोचना** का सामना करना पड़ा है, पर यह आरोप लगाया गया है कि उसने अपनी अधिकांश **चमक** खो दी है, साथ ही यह सुझाव भी दिया गया है कि यदि वह **देशभक्त यूरोपीय दलों** और **'वास्तविक लोकतंत्र'** का समर्थन करे तो **अमेरिका** उसे उसकी **पूर्व महानता** वापस दिलाने में मदद कर सकता है।
- The **NSS document** wants Europe to assume **'primary responsibility for its own defence'**, alongside a **veiled reference to achieving strategic stability with Russia**.  
**NSS दस्तावेज़** चाहता है कि यूरोप **'अपनी रक्षा की प्राथमिक जिम्मेदारी'** स्वयं संभाले, साथ ही **रूस के साथ रणनीतिक स्थिरता** प्राप्त करने का एक **संकेतात्मक उल्लेख** भी करता है।
- While **China-U.S. rivalry** appeared to **intensify**, **Beijing** successfully withstood the **tariff barrage** unleashed by **Mr. Trump**, and even seemed to **turn it to its advantage**.  
जबकि **चीन-अमेरिका प्रतिद्वंद्विता** तेज़ होती दिखी, **बीजिंग** ने **श्री ट्रंप** द्वारा शुरू किए गए **शुल्क हमलों** का सफलतापूर्वक सामना किया, और यहाँ तक कि उसे **अपने लाभ में बदलता** हुआ भी दिखा।
- **China** raised the value of its **manufacturing** and also demonstrated its hold over **global supply chains**.  
**चीन** ने अपने **विनिर्माण** के मूल्य को बढ़ाया और **वैश्विक आपूर्ति शृंखलाओं** पर अपनी पकड़ भी प्रदर्शित की।
- **China's presence in the Indian Ocean** is also growing and represents not only a **major threat** to nations bordering the **Indian Ocean** but, more importantly, also a **challenge to U.S. supremacy** here.  
**हिंद महासागर में चीन की मौजूदगी** भी बढ़ रही है और यह न केवल **हिंद महासागर से सटे देशों** के लिए एक **बड़ा खतरा** है, बल्कि इससे भी अधिक महत्वपूर्ण रूप से यहाँ **अमेरिकी वर्चस्व** के लिए एक **चुनौती** है।



# Enhancing China-India youth ties

GS II: IR: India-China

**T**he youth are the most active, dynamic, and promising force in all countries, especially in China and India. Both President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have attached great importance to the role of Gen Z and Gen Alpha in developing our countries and reaching centenary goals. Bilaterally and internationally, mutual understanding and friendly exchanges of the youth play a vital role in the healthy development of ties.

## The Chinese youth

In China, young people have long been the vanguard in pursuing national dreams. In the past century of upheavals and changes, China's youth have remained a staunch force in contributing to the country and serving the people. Today, young people enjoy better living and development conditions given China's high-quality growth. In 2023, China's nine-year compulsory education achieved a consolidation rate of 95.7%; in 2024, its university enrolment rate reached 60.8%, with around 40% of the students enrolled in STEM programmes. During the 14th Five-Year period, millions of people received online college education, and over 50% of young workers have taken vocational training. Between 1978 and 2024, around 7.43 million Chinese students completed their studies abroad; of them, more than 6.44 million had returned to China.

Unlike the pre-1990s binary of 'farmers' and 'workers', young people in China today have diverse career choices. The service industry has increasingly attracted young workers, accounting for nearly half of the total employment in recent years. Rapid science and technology innovation and social transformation have turned high-tech sectors, non-public entities, and new social organisations into the main channels for employment. Young



**Qin Jie**

Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Mumbai

Mutual understanding and friendly exchanges of the youth play a vital role in the healthy development of ties

people are increasingly engaged in the digital economy and IT-based business and platforms, such as e-sports players, live-streaming hosts, and web writers. Liang Wenfeng, from Gen Z, led his young team to found the quantitative hedge fund High-Flyer and the open AI model DeepSeek. China's space station, Tiangong, hosts young crews of astronauts in their 30s and 40s. In creative industries such as culture, sports, and entertainment, young people account for more than half the workforce, and are at the helm of many unicorn and gazelle companies. The youth have also played a significant role in China's strategic projects, transporting electricity from western to eastern regions, diverting water from the south to the north, and constructing milestone facilities such as deep-sea submersibles, quantum science satellite, and the lunar and Mars probes.

China's youth uphold the belief that the world is a community with a shared future. As China's opening-up policy grows in both depth and scope, its youth are actively embracing the world, drawing inspiration from the achievements of other civilisations, and pursuing greater integration with the rest of the world. They are more confident and self-reliant in studying, working, and travelling abroad.

China and India have the world's largest youth populations. We have not only the largest number of students on campus, but also the highest numbers of students studying abroad. Over the years, our young leaders in business and trade have played a key role in strengthening economic and trade ties. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Chinese and Indian youth were engaged in frequent exchanges in fields such as education, culture, arts, sports, and the media under various cultural and people-to-people exchange mechanisms. In November 2025, the Chinese Consulate General in Mumbai held photo exhibitions on the Indian

Youth Delegation's 2024 Visit to China at St. Xavier's College and Somaiya Vidyavihar University. Themed 'Beyond borders, between hearts', the photos retold the stories of young Indians in China, especially focusing on their interactions with Chinese peers. These events have drawn the attention of thousands of students.

## Development of ties

We have already seen many strong and positive signals. The successful Kazan and Tianjin meetings between President Xi and Prime Minister Modi in 2024 and 2025 have led to a steady and continuous improvement in ties. In the first nine months of 2025, China-India bilateral trade grew 11.95% year-on-year to \$104 billion, and in November, India's export of goods to China increased 90% year-on-year to \$2.2 billion, making China the third largest export destination for Indian goods. China resumed the pilgrimage for the Indian people to the sacred Mount Gang Renpoche and Lake Mapam Yun Tso in Xizang's Ngari Prefecture and India resumed tourist visas issuance to Chinese citizens. Several direct flights between the Chinese mainland and India have been resumed, and in 2026 we are seeing more flight lines. China's famous pianist, Lang Lang, performed in India recently, enhancing cultural exchanges between Chinese and Indian artists.

More than 100 years ago, the Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore told Indian parents, "Don't limit a child to your own learning, for he was born in another time." In China, Chairman Mao said to the youth in 1957, "The world is yours, as well as ours, but in the final sense, it is yours. You young people, full of vigour and vitality, are in the bloom of life, like the sun at eight or nine in the morning." In pursuing the modernisation dreams of our two countries, we are glad to see more fruitful exchanges between our young generations.



## Enhancing China-India youth ties चीन-भारत युवा संबंधों को मजबूत करना

- Both **President Xi Jinping** and **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** have attached **great importance** to the role of **Gen Z and Gen Alpha** in developing our countries and reaching **centenary goals**.  
राष्ट्रपति शी जिनपिंग और प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी दोनों ने अपने देशों के विकास और शताब्दी लक्ष्यों को प्राप्त करने में **Gen Z और Gen Alpha** की भूमिका को **अत्यधिक महत्व** दिया है।
- **Young people** are increasingly engaged in the **digital economy** and **IT-based business and platforms**, such as **e-sports players, live-streaming hosts, and web writers**.  
युवा तेजी से **डिजिटल अर्थव्यवस्था** और **आईटी-आधारित व्यवसायों व प्लेटफॉर्मों** में संलग्न हो रहे हैं, जैसे **ई-स्पोर्ट्स खिलाड़ी, लाइव-स्ट्रीमिंग होस्ट, और वेब लेखक**।
- **China's space station, Tiangong**, hosts **young crews of astronauts** in their **30s and 40s**.  
चीन का **अंतरिक्ष स्टेशन, तियांगोंग, 30 और 40 वर्ष** आयु वर्ग के **युवा अंतरिक्ष यात्रियों के दलों** की मेज़बानी करता है।
- The successful **Kazan and Tianjin meetings** between **President Xi** and **Prime Minister Modi** in **2024 and 2025** have led to a **steady and continuous improvement in ties**.  
**2024 और 2025** में राष्ट्रपति शी और प्रधानमंत्री मोदी के बीच हुई **कज़ान और तियानजिन बैठकों** ने संबंधों में **निरंतर और स्थिर सुधार** को जन्म दिया है।



# To compete with China, India may need China

With India set to scrap curbs on Chinese FDI, will China want to invest in India?

GS II: India-China

MOB

## DATA POINT

Nitika Francis

The Ministry of Finance is set to scrap curbs on Chinese firms bidding for government contracts, which were introduced in 2020. The curbs were imposed following a deadly clash between the countries' troops in the Galwan Valley. They required Chinese bidders to register with an Indian government committee and obtain political and security clearances. According to Reuters, this resulted in China losing out on contracts worth \$700-750 billion.

Notably, even during periods when India had a more favourable stance, direct Chinese investment remained low. China directly contributed less than 1% of India FDI equity inflows from 2000 to 2021 (Chart 1), showing that recent curbs only add pressure.

However, China's cumulative (direct and indirect) FDI inflows before 2020 into India are difficult to calculate as they were mostly routed through tax havens, according to Santosh Pai, Partner at Denton's Link Legal and Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies. "Chinese investments almost never go directly into a country," he told *The Hindu*.

These means of investments were wholly altered when the Indian government issued 'Press Note 3' in April 2020, which specifically stated that an entity of a country, which shares a land border with India, or where the beneficial owner is a citizen of any such country, requires mandatory approval from the Government of India before for an investment can be executed. Pai estimated that this denied any indirect investments that Chinese companies had slated for India.

A few years after this policy amendment, India's Ministry of Finance, in its annual Economic Survey for 2023-24, suggested that in-

creased FDI inflows from China can help increase India's global supply chain participation and push exports. The Ministry took note of the U.S.' and Europe's shift away from sourcing imports directly from China. The U.S.' total trade with China reduced in 2023 and remained stagnant in 2024 (Chart 2A). The European Union also saw a similar dip in trade with China in 2023 (Chart 2B).

The Survey stated that FDI from China could boost India's exports to the U.S., "similar to how East Asian economies did in the past." Pai elaborated on India's change of heart. "Due to China's dominance in most markets, India cannot attract global supply chains which want to diversify from China without including Chinese companies in the mix," he said.

India has proven to be a ready alternative for the U.S. to replace China in at least one of the major items. Due to its dominance in the manufacturing of components, China made up more than 60% of the U.S.'s imports of smartphones in 2016. However, 10 years later, China's share has dwindled to about 22% of the U.S.'s smartphone imports, majorly due to higher tariffs (Chart 3A). Meanwhile, countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, and India have shown upticks in their shares of U.S.'s smartphone imports (Chart 3B). However, the possibility of replicating this success, without China's help, in other items as well is slim as of now.

While China's FDI stock (or cumulative FDI inflows) to most of its staple investment destinations have increased over the years, its stock with India has declined over the past decade. Table 4 shows that when Chinese FDI stock is ranked, India fell by 19 ranks between 2014 and 2024.

Pai stated that although China was eager to invest in Indian companies, the curbs that were set in 2020 may have projected an unpredictable environment for investment.

## Pragmatism over protectionism

The data were sourced from DPIIT, UN Comtrade, Eurostat, U.S. Census and China's Ministry of Commerce



Chart 2A: The U.S.'s total trade (sum of imports and exports) with China over the years (in \$, bn = billion)

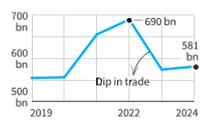
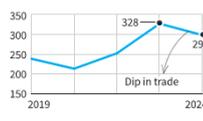


Chart 2B: The European Union's total trade (sum of imports and exports) with China over the years (in \$)



The figures in chart 2B for the EU's trade were sourced from Eurostat data wherein exports and imports are indexed at 100 each, with 2013 as the starting year. Using this method, EU's total trade in 2013, which includes imports and exports, is represented as 200. In 2019 the index had increased to 239

Table 4: China's country-wise Outward Direct Investment (ODI) stock in 2014 and 2024. The countries are ranked in descending order of China's ODI stock with them. Stock corresponds to cumulative FDI flows over the years



The figure for the years between 2000 and 2021 is cumulative

Chart 3A: The U.S.'s overall smartphone imports over the years. Values in (\$ = billion)



Chart 3B: Select countries' share in the U.S.'s import of smartphones over the years. Here, data on "smartphones" refers to the import of "Telephones for cellular networks or for other wireless networks"

2014 rank	Country	Stock at end-2014 (\$ million)	2024 rank	Country	Stock at end-2024 (\$ million)
1	Hong Kong	509,919.83	1	Hong Kong	1,920,809.36
2	British Virgin Islands	49,320.41	2	British Virgin Is.	331,910.47
3	Cayman Islands	44,236.72	3	Cayman Islands	214,933.81
4	United States	38,010.97	4	Singapore	102,641.42
5	Australia	23,882.26	5	United States	89,959.17
6	Singapore	20,639.95	6	Netherlands	38,422.28
7	Luxembourg	15,666.77	7	Australia	34,011.22
8	United Kingdom	12,804.65	8	United Kingdom	30,575.22
9	Russia	8,694.63	9	Indonesia	25,482.34
10	Canada	7,789.08	10	Luxembourg	25,153.62
.15	India	3,407.21	...34	India	2,449.77

## To compete with China, India may need China

चीन से प्रतिस्पर्धा करने के लिए, भारत को चीन की आवश्यकता पड़ सकती है

- The Ministry of Finance is set to scrap curbs on Chinese firms bidding for government contracts, which were introduced in 2020.

वित्त मंत्रालय सरकारी ठेकों में बोली लगाने वाली चीनी कंपनियों पर लगे प्रतिबंधों को हटाने जा रहा है, जिन्हें 2020 में लागू किया गया था।

- The curbs were imposed following a deadly clash between the countries' troops in the Galwan Valley.

ये प्रतिबंध गलवान घाटी में दोनों देशों की सेनाओं के बीच हुई घातक झड़प के बाद लगाए गए थे।

- They required Chinese bidders to register with an Indian government committee and obtain political and security clearances.

इनके तहत चीनी बोलीदाताओं को भारत सरकार की एक समिति में पंजीकरण कराना और राजनीतिक व सुरक्षा मंजूरी लेना आवश्यक था।

- According to Reuters, this resulted in China losing out on contracts worth \$700-750 billion. रॉयटर्स के अनुसार, इसके कारण चीन को \$700-750 अरब मूल्य के ठेके गंवाने पड़े।



- Notably, even during periods when India had a **more favourable stance**, **direct Chinese investment remained low**.  
गौरतलब है कि भारत के अधिक अनुकूल रुख वाले दौर में भी सीधा चीनी निवेश कम रहा।
- **China directly contributed less than 1% of India FDI equity inflows from 2000 to 2021** (Chart 1), showing that **recent curbs only add pressure**.  
**2000 से 2021** के बीच भारत में **FDI इक्विटी प्रवाह** में चीन का **सीधा योगदान 1% से भी कम** रहा (चार्ट 1), जिससे स्पष्ट है कि **हालिया प्रतिबंधों ने केवल दबाव बढ़ाया**।
- A few years after this policy amendment, India's **Ministry of Finance, in its Economic Survey for 2023–24, suggested that increased FDI inflows from China can help increase India's global supply chain participation and push exports**.  
इस नीति संशोधन के कुछ वर्षों बाद, भारत के वित्त मंत्रालय ने अपने **आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण 2023–24** में कहा कि **चीन से बढ़ा FDI प्रवाह** भारत की **वैश्विक सप्लाय चैन में भागीदारी बढ़ाने** और **निर्यात को प्रोत्साहित** करने में मदद कर सकता है।
- The Ministry took note of the **U.S.' and Europe's shift away from sourcing imports directly from China**.  
मंत्रालय ने **अमेरिका और यूरोप द्वारा सीधे चीन से आयात करने से दूरी बनाने** के रुझान का उल्लेख किया।
- The **U.S.' total trade with China reduced in 2023** and remained **stagnant in 2024** (Chart 2A).  
**2023 में अमेरिका-चीन कुल व्यापार घटा** और **2024 में स्थिर** रहा (चार्ट 2A)।

PATRIOTIC IAS



# The importance of Pax Silica for India

The Pax Silica initiative seeks to reduce coercive dependencies, secure global tech/AI supply chains, and build trusted digital infrastructure. India seeks to join it as it has a strong digital infrastructure, and a growing AI market

## WORLD INSIGHT

Sanjay Pulipaka

**B**oth enduring continuities and significant shifts define the functioning of the global economy. While the North-South divide in per capita income and resource utilisation remains an enduring feature, new technologies such as semiconductors and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are gaining greater salience in powering the global economy. These technologies will have a significant impact on the everyday lives of many people around the world. Consequently, there is now a growing urgency to secure the supply of Rare Earth Elements (REEs) and to nurture manufacturing processes associated with these technologies.

On December 12, 2025, the U.S. convened the inaugural Pax Silica Summit to secure the supply chain of critical minerals and build advanced manufacturing and logistics capabilities critical to new frontier technologies such as semiconductors and AI. 'Pax' in Latin means 'peace' and 'silica' is a key compound used in chip manufacturing – taken together they suggest that the supply chain for new technologies should promote peace and prosperity. The Pax Silica Declaration noted that the initiative seeks to reduce coercive dependencies, secure global tech/AI supply chains, and build trusted digital infrastructure.

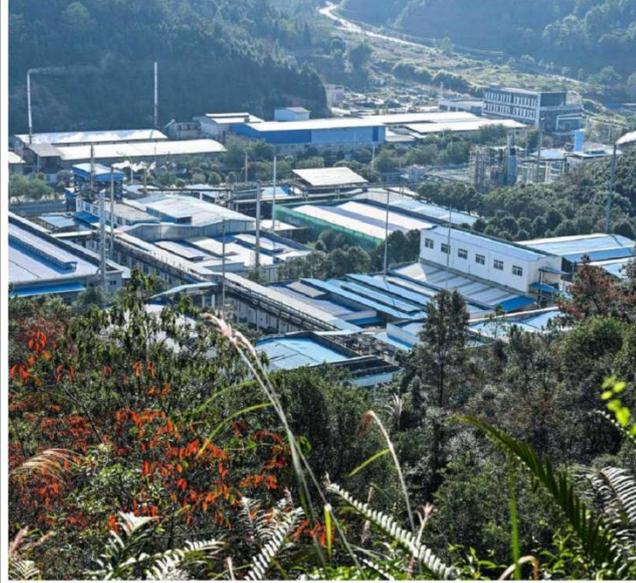
### Major participants

The membership of the Pax Silica is evolving. While the U.S. and Japan are technological powerhouses, Australia is the leading exporter of Lithium (a key component in rechargeable batteries and digital products) and has significant REE deposits. The Netherlands has leading firms such as ASML, which develop advanced lithography technology that enables semiconductor chip engineering, while South Korea is well-known for its manufacturing prowess in memory chips. Singapore also has a long history of chip manufacturing in collaboration with leading U.S. firms. Israel has made significant strides in AI software, defence-related technologies and cybersecurity. Moreover, the United Kingdom has the third largest AI market and a robust innovation ecosystem, which includes established research labs and start-ups. Qatar and the United Arab Emirates command large investment funds and have initiated measures to develop world-class AI ecosystems.

Canada, the European Union, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and Taiwan participated in the inaugural Pax Silica Summit as observers, and they may be admitted as members at a later date.

### Countering China

Pax Silica is a response to new geopolitical realities. There are concerns that China has emerged as a principal supplier of REEs and acquired the capability to shape the global flow of these resources. In recent years, China has restricted the flow of critical resources to achieve its desired political and economic ends. Last year, in response to U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff policies, China suspended the export of REEs to the U.S. and other countries. India also experienced disruptions to the import of rare-earth magnets from China, negatively impacting the country's automobile and electronics industries. The supply of rare-earth magnets to India was restored only after



**Global demand:** A view of a rare earth processing plant in Dingnan County, Ganzhou, in eastern China's Jiangxi province, on November 20, 2025. AFP

Indian companies complied with China's stringent licensing regulations, which included providing an undertaking that imported rare-earth magnets would not be used for defence or dual-use purposes.

Even before the recent challenges in accessing REEs, the pandemic demonstrated the limitations of supply chains that are heavily reliant on a single country. In 2021, India, along with Australia and Japan, launched the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative. India was also working with the Quad countries to strengthen the supply chain resilience of critical and emerging technologies. The Quad Critical Minerals Initiative was launched at the foreign ministers' meeting in Washington in 2025. Interestingly, despite being a member of the above-mentioned initiatives, India was not invited to the inaugural meeting of Pax Silica. However, on January 12, the new U.S. Ambassador to India, Sergio Gor, in his arrival speech, stated that India will soon be invited to join the Pax Silica.

### India's challenges

What would India bring to the table in the Pax Silica? Indian and American firms have a history of healthy collaboration in the technology domain. India has a strong digital infrastructure, and its AI market is growing rapidly, with many enterprises adopting AI solutions. It is also true that India's AI and semiconductor ecosystems are well behind those of Pax Silica countries. However, it should be noted that India has launched AI and Semiconductor Missions with substantial financial allocations in recent years. While Indian private companies such as the Tatas have invested in the semiconductor segment, leading U.S. chip

manufacturers such as Micron have also invested in India. There has also been a steady increase in the number of newly funded AI companies in India. Furthermore, India is sending a large number of educated young people to pursue graduate and PhD programmes in computer science and related fields in the U.S. If the current U.S. visa policies persist, many of these engineers will have to return to their home country, providing India with a large, highly trained human resource pool to power AI and semiconductor industries.

Moreover, India has been working to develop resilient semiconductor supply chains with other Pax Silica countries such as Japan and Singapore. Indian private-sector companies are also collaborating with Israeli firms to establish semiconductor fabrication plants in India. By participating in the Pax Silica, India can scale-up its collaborations with other countries to develop robust semiconductor and AI ecosystems in the country.

However, India will need to be mindful of a few challenges that it needs to navigate carefully. Thus far, the member countries of the Pax Silica, in addition to their technological strengths, are U.S. allies and high-income countries. If India decides to join the Pax Silica, it will be the first developing country to do so. India will also be the first non-ally (but a strategic partner) of the U.S. to join the Pax Silica. This may create an 'expectation gap' between India and the other members of Pax Silica. While India's response to global security threats may not undermine the interests of the U.S. and its allies, it will differ in nuance. India will be keen to ensure that its strategic

autonomy is not diluted through its participation in the Pax Silica.

As a developing country, India has relatively young semiconductor and AI ecosystems compared with those of other Pax Silica countries. Consequently, India will seek to protect its semiconductor and AI ecosystems by granting domestic firms preferential treatment through subsidies, government procurement, and calibrated import regulations. While the current mood in Washington may not be in agreement with such policy measures, it remains unclear how other Pax Silica countries will respond to such initiatives.

### The road ahead

At the moment, China is a leading player in the REE supply chain and has already instituted export control regulations to preserve its dominant position. Beijing has also not demonstrated a willingness to create REE supply chains that are sensitive to the development needs of emerging economies such as India. It is likely that the Pax Silica will come up with its own export regulation framework. Over time, two REE supply chains will dominate the global economy, namely that of China's and Pax Silica's. Given the history of collaboration between Indian and Western firms in information technology and related domains, India may lean towards the Pax Silica.

However, given the current strain in economic relations with the U.S., India may seek to have more conversations to better understand the possible trajectory of Pax Silica's evolution. Sanjay Pulipaka is the Chairperson of the Politeia Research Foundation. The views expressed here are personal.

## THE GIST

On December 12, 2025, the United States (U.S.) convened the inaugural Pax Silica Summit to secure the supply chain of critical minerals and build advanced manufacturing and logistics capabilities critical to new frontier technologies such as semiconductors and AI.

Pax Silica is a response to new geopolitical realities. There are concerns that China has emerged as a principal supplier of REEs and acquired the capability to shape the global flow of these resources.

As a developing country, India has relatively young semiconductor and AI ecosystems compared with those of other Pax Silica countries.

## The importance of Pax Silica for India भारत के लिए पैक्स सिलिका का महत्व

- On December 12, 2025, the U.S. convened the inaugural Pax Silica Summit to secure the supply chain of critical minerals and build advanced manufacturing and logistics capabilities critical to new frontier technologies such as semiconductors and AI.

12 दिसंबर 2025 को संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका ने पैक्स सिलिका शिखर सम्मेलन का पहला आयोजन किया, जिसका उद्देश्य महत्वपूर्ण खनिजों की आपूर्ति श्रृंखला को सुरक्षित करना और सेमीकंडक्टर तथा AI जैसी उन्नत प्रौद्योगिकियों के लिए उन्नत विनिर्माण और लॉजिस्टिक्स क्षमताएँ विकसित करना था।

- 'Pax' in Latin means 'peace' and 'Silica' is a key compound used in chip manufacturing, taken together they suggest that the supply chain for new technologies should promote peace and prosperity.

लैटिन में 'पैक्स' का अर्थ 'शांति' है और 'सिलिका' चिप निर्माण में प्रयुक्त एक प्रमुख यौगिक है, और दोनों



मिलकर यह संकेत देते हैं कि नई प्रौद्योगिकियों की आपूर्ति शृंखला को शांति और समृद्धि को बढ़ावा देना चाहिए।

- The **Pax Silica Declaration** noted that the initiative seeks to **reduce coercive dependencies, secure global tech/AI supply chains, and build trusted digital infrastructure.**

पैक्स सिलिका घोषणा में कहा गया कि यह पहल **जबरन निर्भरताओं को कम करने, वैश्विक तकनीक/AI आपूर्ति शृंखलाओं को सुरक्षित करने, और विश्वसनीय डिजिटल अवसंरचना के निर्माण का प्रयास करती है।**

### Major participants प्रमुख सहभागी

- The **membership of the Pax Silica** is evolving.  
पैक्स सिलिका की सदस्यता निरंतर विकसित हो रही है।
- While the **U.S. and Japan** are **technological powerhouses**, **Australia** is the leading exporter of **Lithium**, a key component in **rechargeable batteries and digital products**, and has **significant REE deposits**.  
जहाँ अमेरिका और जापान प्रौद्योगिकी महाशक्तियाँ हैं, वहीं ऑस्ट्रेलिया लिथियम का प्रमुख निर्यातक है, जो रिचार्जबल बैटरियों और डिजिटल उत्पादों का एक प्रमुख घटक है, और उसके पास पर्याप्त REE भंडार भी हैं।
- The **Netherlands** has leading firms such as **ASML**, which develop **advanced lithography technology** that enables **semiconductor chip engineering**, while **South Korea** is well-known for its **manufacturing prowess in memory chips**.  
नीदरलैंड में ASML जैसी अग्रणी कंपनियाँ हैं, जो उन्नत लिथोग्राफी तकनीक विकसित करती हैं, जिससे सेमीकंडक्टर चिप इंजीनियरिंग संभव होती है, जबकि दक्षिण कोरिया मेमोरी चिप निर्माण में अपनी उत्कृष्ट क्षमता के लिए प्रसिद्ध है।
- **Singapore** also has a long history of **chip manufacturing** in collaboration with leading **U.S. firms**.  
सिंगापुर का भी अग्रणी अमेरिकी कंपनियों के साथ मिलकर चिप निर्माण का लंबा इतिहास रहा है।
- **Israel** has made significant strides in **AI software, defence-related technologies, and cybersecurity**.  
इज़राइल ने AI सॉफ्टवेयर, रक्षा-संबंधी प्रौद्योगिकियों, और साइबर सुरक्षा में उल्लेखनीय प्रगति की है।
- Moreover, the **United Kingdom** has the **third-largest AI market** and a **robust innovation ecosystem**, which includes established **research labs and start-ups**.  
इसके अतिरिक्त, यूनाइटेड किंगडम के पास तीसरा सबसे बड़ा AI बाज़ार और एक मजबूत नवाचार पारितंत्र है, जिसमें स्थापित अनुसंधान प्रयोगशालाएँ और स्टार्ट-अप्स शामिल हैं।
- **Qatar** and the **United Arab Emirates** command **large investment funds** and have initiated measures to develop **world-class AI ecosystems**.  
कतर और संयुक्त अरब अमीरात के पास विशाल निवेश कोष हैं और उन्होंने विश्व-स्तरीय AI पारितंत्र विकसित करने के लिए पहल शुरू की है।
- **Canada, the European Union, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and Taiwan** participated in the inaugural **Pax Silica Summit as observers**, and they may be admitted as **members at a later date**.  
कनाडा, यूरोपीय संघ, आर्थिक सहयोग और विकास संगठन (OECD) और ताइवान ने पैक्स सिलिका शिखर सम्मेलन में पर्यवेक्षकों के रूप में भाग लिया, और भविष्य में उन्हें सदस्य के रूप में शामिल किया जा सकता है।
- **India** also experienced **disruptions** to the import of **rare-earth magnets** from China, negatively impacting the country's **automobile and electronics industries**.  
भारत को भी चीन से दुर्लभ मृदा मैग्नेट के आयात में बाधाओं का सामना करना पड़ा, जिससे देश के ऑटोमोबाइल और इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स उद्योगों पर नकारात्मक प्रभाव पड़ा।
- The supply of rare-earth magnets to India was restored only after **Indian companies complied with China's stringent licensing regulations**, which included providing an undertaking that imported rare-earth magnets would not be used for **defence or dual-use purposes**.  
भारत को दुर्लभ मृदा मैग्नेट की आपूर्ति तभी बहाल हुई जब भारतीय कंपनियों ने चीन के कठोर लाइसेंसिंग



नियमों का पालन किया, जिसमें यह आश्वासन देना शामिल था कि आयातित मैग्नेट का उपयोग रक्षा या द्वैध-उपयोग उद्देश्यों के लिए नहीं होगा।

- Even before the recent challenges in accessing REEs, the **pandemic** demonstrated the limitations of **supply chains heavily reliant on a single country**.  
REEs तक पहुँच की हालिया चुनौतियों से पहले ही महामारी ने एक ही देश पर अत्यधिक निर्भर आपूर्ति शृंखलाओं की सीमाओं को उजागर कर दिया था।
- **In 2021, India, along with Australia and Japan, launched the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative.**  
2021 में भारत ने ऑस्ट्रेलिया और जापान के साथ मिलकर सप्लाइ चेन रेज़िलिएंस इनिशिएटिव शुरू की।
- India was also working with the **Quad countries** to strengthen the **supply chain resilience of critical and emerging technologies**.  
भारत क्वाड देशों के साथ मिलकर महत्वपूर्ण और उभरती प्रौद्योगिकियों की आपूर्ति शृंखला लचीलापन मजबूत करने पर भी काम कर रहा था।
- The **Quad Critical Minerals Initiative** was launched at the **foreign ministers' meeting in Washington in 2025**.  
2025 में वाशिंगटन में हुई विदेश मंत्रियों की बैठक में क्वाड क्रिटिकल मिनरल्स इनिशिएटिव शुरू की गई।
- However, **India has launched AI and Semiconductor Missions with substantial financial allocations in recent years**.  
हालाँकि भारत ने हाल के वर्षों में **AI और सेमीकंडक्टर मिशन** शुरू किए हैं, जिनके लिए पर्याप्त वित्तीय आवंटन किए गए हैं।
- Indian private companies such as the **Tatas** have invested in the **semiconductor segment**, and leading U.S. chip manufacturers such as **Micron** have also invested in India.  
टाटा जैसी भारतीय निजी कंपनियों ने **सेमीकंडक्टर क्षेत्र** में निवेश किया है और माइक्रोन जैसी अग्रणी अमेरिकी चिप कंपनियों ने भी भारत में निवेश किया है।
- There has been a **steady increase** in the number of **newly funded AI companies** in India.  
भारत में **नए वित्तपोषित AI कंपनियों** की संख्या में लगातार वृद्धि हुई है।
- India is sending a large number of **educated young people** to pursue **graduate and PhD programmes in computer science and related fields** in the **U.S.**.  
भारत बड़ी संख्या में **शिक्षित युवाओं** को अमेरिका में **कंप्यूटर विज्ञान और संबंधित क्षेत्रों** में स्नातकोत्तर और पीएचडी कार्यक्रमों के लिए भेज रहा है।
- If the current **U.S. visa policies** persist, many of these engineers will have to **return to India**, providing a **large, highly trained human resource pool for AI and semiconductor industries**.  
यदि मौजूदा **अमेरिकी वीजा नीतियाँ** जारी रहती हैं, तो इनमें से कई इंजीनियरों को **भारत लौटना** पड़ेगा, जिससे **AI और सेमीकंडक्टर उद्योगों** के लिए एक बड़ा, अत्यधिक प्रशिक्षित मानव संसाधन भंडार उपलब्ध होगा।
- India has been working to develop **resilient semiconductor supply chains** with other **Pax Silica countries** such as **Japan and Singapore**.  
भारत **जापान और सिंगापुर** जैसे अन्य **पैक्स सिलिका देशों** के साथ **लचीली सेमीकंडक्टर आपूर्ति शृंखलाएँ** विकसित करने पर काम कर रहा है।
- Indian private-sector companies are also collaborating with **Israeli firms** to establish **semiconductor fabrication plants** in India.  
भारतीय निजी क्षेत्र की कंपनियाँ **इज़राइली कंपनियों** के साथ मिलकर भारत में **सेमीकंडक्टर फैब्रिकेशन संयंत्र** स्थापित करने के लिए सहयोग कर रही हैं।
- By participating in the **Pax Silica**, India can **scale up collaborations** with other countries to develop **robust semiconductor and AI ecosystems** in the country.  
**पैक्स सिलिका** में भागीदारी करके भारत अन्य देशों के साथ **सहयोग का विस्तार** कर सकता है और देश में **मजबूत सेमीकंडक्टर और AI पारितंत्र** विकसित कर सकता है।
- **However, India will need to be mindful of a few challenges**  
**हालाँकि भारत को कुछ चुनौतियों के प्रति सतर्क रहना होगा**
- India will need to be mindful of a few **challenges** that it needs to navigate carefully.  
भारत को कुछ **चुनौतियों** के प्रति सतर्क रहना होगा, जिन्हें उसे सावधानीपूर्वक संभालना पड़ेगा।
- The member countries of **Pax Silica**, in addition to their **technological strengths**, are **U.S. allies** and **high-income countries**.



पैक्स सिलिका के सदस्य देश, अपनी तकनीकी क्षमताओं के साथ-साथ अमेरिका के सहयोगी और उच्च आय वाले देश हैं।

- If India decides to join the **Pax Silica**, it will be the **first developing country** to do so. यदि भारत पैक्स सिलिका में शामिल होने का निर्णय लेता है, तो वह ऐसा करने वाला **पहला विकासशील देश** होगा।
- India will also be the **first non-ally**, though a **strategic partner**, of the **U.S.** to join the Pax Silica. भारत अमेरिका का रणनीतिक साझेदार होते हुए भी **पहला गैर-सहयोगी देश** होगा जो पैक्स सिलिका में शामिल होगा।
- This may create an **expectation gap** between India and the other members of Pax Silica. इससे भारत और पैक्स सिलिका के अन्य सदस्यों के बीच एक **अपेक्षा अंतर** उत्पन्न हो सकता है।
- India's response to **global security threats** may not undermine the interests of the **U.S. and its allies**, but it will **differ in nuance**.  
**वैश्विक सुरक्षा खतरों** पर भारत की प्रतिक्रिया **अमेरिका और उसके सहयोगियों** के हितों को नुकसान नहीं पहुँचाएगी, लेकिन उसका **दृष्टिकोण भिन्न** हो सकता है।
- India will be keen to ensure that its **strategic autonomy** is not **diluted** through its participation in the Pax Silica. भारत यह सुनिश्चित करने को इच्छुक रहेगा कि पैक्स सिलिका में भागीदारी से उसकी **रणनीतिक स्वायत्तता कमज़ोर** न हो।
- As a **developing country**, India has relatively **young semiconductor and AI ecosystems** compared with other Pax Silica countries. एक **विकासशील देश** होने के नाते भारत के **सेमीकंडक्टर और एआई पारितंत्र** अन्य पैक्स सिलिका देशों की तुलना में अपेक्षाकृत **नवीन** हैं।
- India will seek to **protect its semiconductor and AI ecosystems** by granting **preferential treatment** to domestic firms through **subsidies, government procurement, and calibrated import regulations**. भारत अपने **सेमीकंडक्टर और एआई पारितंत्र** की रक्षा के लिए घरेलू कंपनियों को **सब्सिडी, सरकारी खरीद, और संतुलित आयात नियमों** के माध्यम से **विशेष प्राथमिकता** देना चाहेगा।
- The current mood in **Washington** may not agree with such **policy measures**, and it remains unclear how other Pax Silica countries will respond. **वॉशिंगटन** का वर्तमान रुख इन **नीतिगत उपायों** से सहमत न भी हो सकता है, और यह स्पष्ट नहीं है कि अन्य पैक्स सिलिका देश कैसे प्रतिक्रिया देंगे।



# Trump slams U.K.'s move to hand over Chagos Islands

**Associated Press**

LONDON

GS II: IR

A startled British government on Tuesday defended its decision to hand sovereignty of the Chagos Islands to Mauritius, after U.S. President Donald Trump attacked the plan, which his administration had previously supported.

Mr. Trump said that relinquishing the remote Indian Ocean archipelago, home to a strategically important American naval and bomber base, was an act of “stupidity” that shows why he needs to take over Greenland.

“Shockingly, our brilliant NATO Ally, the United Kingdom, is currently planning to give away the Island of Diego Garcia, the site of a vital U.S. Military Base, to Mauritius, and to do so FOR NO REASON WHATSOEVER,” he said in a post on his social media platform Truth Social. “There is no doubt that China and Russia have noticed this act of total weakness.”

“The U.K. giving away extremely important land is an act of GREAT STUPIDITY, and is another in a ve-



**Ground zero:** An aerial view of the Diego Garcia island. Thousands of Chagos islanders were evicted to make way for the U.S. base. AP

ry long line of National Security reasons why Greenland has to be acquired,” Mr. Trump said.

## 99-year lease

The United Kingdom and Mauritius signed a deal in May 2025 to give Mauritius sovereignty over the Chagos Islands after two centuries under British control, though the U.K. will lease back Diego Garcia where the U.S. base, home to about 2,500 mostly American personnel, is located, for at least 99 years.

The U.S. government welcomed the agreement at the time, saying it “secures the long-term, stable, and effective operation of the joint U.S.-U.K.

military facility at Diego Garcia.”

But the deal has met strong opposition from British opposition parties, which say that giving up the islands puts them at risk of interference by China and Russia.

The U.K. kept control of the Chagos Islands after Mauritius gained independence from Britain in the 1960s. But it evicted thousands of Chagos islanders, who have since mounted a series of legal claims for compensation in British courts. An estimated 10,000 displaced Chagossians and their descendants now live primarily in Britain, Mauritius and the Seychelles.

## Trump slams U.K.'s move to hand over Chagos Islands

### ट्रंप ने चागोस द्वीप समूह सौंपने के यू.के. के फैसले की आलोचना की

- A startled British government on Tuesday defended its decision to hand sovereignty of the **Chagos Islands to Mauritius**, after **U.S. President Donald Trump** attacked the plan, which his administration had previously supported.

मंगलवार को हैरान ब्रिटिश सरकार ने चागोस द्वीप समूह की संप्रभुता मॉरीशस को सौंपने के अपने फैसले का बचाव किया, जब अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप ने इस योजना पर हमला किया, जिसे पहले उनके प्रशासन का समर्थन प्राप्त था।

- Mr. Trump said that relinquishing the remote **Indian Ocean archipelago**, home to a **strategically important American naval and bomber base**, was an act of “stupidity” that shows why he needs to take over **Greenland**.

श्री ट्रंप ने कहा कि रणनीतिक रूप से महत्वपूर्ण अमेरिकी नौसैनिक और बॉम्बर बेस वाले दूरस्थ हिंद



महासागर द्वीपसमूह को छोड़ना “मूर्खता” का कार्य है, जो दिखाता है कि उन्हें ग्रीनलैंड पर कब्जा क्यों करना चाहिए।

- “Shockingly, our brilliant NATO Ally, the United Kingdom, is currently planning to give away the Island of Diego Garcia, the site of a vital U.S. Military Base, to Mauritius, and to do so FOR NO REASON WHATSOEVER,” he said in a post on his social media platform Truth Social.

“चौकाने वाली बात है कि हमारा शानदार नाटो सहयोगी, यूनाइटेड किंगडम, वर्तमान में डिएगो गार्सिया द्वीप—जहां एक महत्वपूर्ण अमेरिकी सैन्य अड्डा स्थित है—को मॉरीशस को देने की योजना बना रहा है, और वह भी बिना किसी कारण के,” उन्होंने अपने सोशल मीडिया प्लेटफॉर्म ट्रुथ सोशल पर पोस्ट में कहा।

## 99-year lease

### 99-वर्षीय पट्टा

- The United Kingdom and Mauritius signed a deal in May 2025 to give Mauritius sovereignty over the Chagos Islands after two centuries under British control, though the U.K. will lease back Diego Garcia where the U.S. base, home to about 2,500 mostly American personnel, is located, for at least 99 years.  
यूनाइटेड किंगडम और मॉरीशस ने मई 2025 में एक समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर किए, जिसके तहत दो सदियों के ब्रिटिश नियंत्रण के बाद चागोस द्वीप समूह की संप्रभुता मॉरीशस को दी जाएगी, हालांकि यू.के. कम से कम 99 वर्षों के लिए डिएगो गार्सिया को पट्टे पर वापस लेगा, जहां लगभग 2,500 अधिकतर अमेरिकी कर्मियों वाला अमेरिकी बेस स्थित है।
- The U.S. government welcomed the agreement at the time, saying it “secures the long-term, stable, and effective operation of the joint U.S.-U.K. military facility at Diego Garcia.”  
अमेरिकी सरकार ने उस समय इस समझौते का स्वागत किया था, यह कहते हुए कि यह “डिएगो गार्सिया में संयुक्त यू.एस.-यू.के. सैन्य सुविधा के दीर्घकालिक, स्थिर और प्रभावी संचालन को सुरक्षित करता है।”
- But the deal has met strong opposition from British opposition parties, which say that giving up the islands puts them at risk of interference by China and Russia.  
लेकिन इस समझौते को ब्रिटिश विपक्षी दलों से कड़ा विरोध मिला है, जो कहते हैं कि द्वीपों को छोड़ने से चीन और रूस के हस्तक्षेप का खतरा बढ़ जाता है।
- The U.K. kept control of the Chagos Islands after Mauritius gained independence from Britain in the 1960s.  
यू.के. ने 1960 के दशक में मॉरीशस को ब्रिटेन से स्वतंत्रता मिलने के बाद भी चागोस द्वीप समूह पर नियंत्रण बनाए रखा।
- But it evicted thousands of Chagos islanders, who have since mounted a series of legal claims for compensation in British courts.  
लेकिन उसने हजारों चागोस द्वीपवासियों को बेदखल कर दिया, जिन्होंने इसके बाद ब्रिटिश अदालतों में मुआवजे के लिए कई कानूनी दावे दायर किए।
- An estimated 10,000 displaced Chagossians and their descendants now live primarily in Britain, Mauritius and the Seychelles.  
अनुमानित 10,000 विस्थापित चागोसियन और उनके वंशज अब मुख्य रूप से ब्रिटेन, मॉरीशस और सेशेल्स में रहते हैं।



## World leaders assess Trump's Board of Peace invitation which hints at rivalling UNSC

ISS II IR

MOE

Associated Press

Israel has been asked to join U.S. President Donald Trump's new Board of Peace that will supervise the next phase of the Gaza peace plan, an Israeli official said on Monday, while France is holding off accepting for now.

A Trump reference in the invitation letters sent out to the leaders saying that the body would "embark on a bold new approach to resolving global conflict" suggested it could act as a rival to the UN Security Council (UNSC), the most powerful body of the global organisation created

in the wake of the Second World War.

France, though, does not plan to join the Board of Peace "at this stage" despite receiving an invitation, a French official close to President Emmanuel Macron said on Monday. The issue is raising questions, particularly with regard to respect for the principles and structure of the United Nations, said the official, speaking anonymously in line with the French presidency's customary practices.

Russia, Belarus, Slovenia, Thailand, and the European Union's executive arm also were among the

latest to receive invitations.

A \$1 billion contribution secures permanent membership on the board instead of a three-year appointment, which has no contribution requirement, according to a U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity about the charter, which has not been made public. The official said the money raised would go to rebuilding Gaza.

It is unclear how many leaders have been asked to join the board, and the large number of invitations being sent out, including to countries that don't get along, has raised questions



The U.S. is likely to announce the official list of the board members during the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. AP

about the board's mandate and decision-making processes. Also unknown is Israel's potential role on a board in charge of imple-

menting the ceasefire agreement that directly involves them.

Morocco's King Mohammed VI accepted a

spot on Monday, becoming the first Arab leader and at least the fifth world leader to join. Vietnam, Kazakhstan, Hungary, and Argentina also have signed on.

**Clarity on nuances**

Russian President Vladimir Putin received the invitation, and the Kremlin is now "studying the details" and will seek clarity of "all the nuances" in contacts with the U.S., said Kremlin spokesman person Dmitry Peskov. Mr. Trump confirmed on Monday night that Mr. Putin had been invited.

European Commission spokesperson Olof Gill said

that President Ursula von der Leyen would be speaking to other EU leaders about Gaza. Mr. Gill did not say whether the invitation had been accepted, but that the commission wants "to contribute to a comprehensive plan to end the Gaza conflict."

Israeli far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich on Monday dismissed the Board of Peace as a raw deal for Israel and called for its dissolution.

"It is time to explain to the President that his plan is bad for the state of Israel and to cancel it," Mr. Smotrich said. "Gaza is ours, its future will affect our future

more than anyone else's. We will take responsibility for what happens there, impose military administration, and complete the mission."

Mr. Netanyahu said later on Monday that while there are differences with the U.S. about the composition of the advisory committee accompanying the next phase in Gaza, it would not harm his relationship with Trump.

The U.S. is expected to announce its official list of members in the coming days, likely during the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, Switzerland.

### World leaders assess Trump's Board of Peace invitation which hints at rivalling UNSC

विश्व नेता ट्रंप के बोर्ड ऑफ पीस आमंत्रण का मूल्यांकन करते हैं, जो UNSC को प्रतिस्पर्धा देने का संकेत देता है

- Israel has been asked to join **U.S. President Donald Trump's new Board of Peace that will supervise the next phase of the Gaza peace plan**, an Israeli official said on Monday, while France is holding off accepting for now.

एक इज़राइली अधिकारी ने सोमवार को कहा कि इज़राइल को अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप के नए बोर्ड ऑफ पीस में शामिल होने के लिए कहा गया है, जो गाज़ा शांति योजना के अगले चरण की निगरानी करेगा, जबकि फ्रांस ने फिलहाल इसे स्वीकार करने से परहेज किया है।

- A Trump reference in the invitation letters sent out to the leaders saying that the body would "embark on a bold new approach to resolving global conflict" suggested **it could act as a rival to the UN Security Council (UNSC)**, the most powerful body of the global organisation created in the wake of the **Second World War**.

आमंत्रण पत्रों में ट्रंप का एक संदर्भ, जिसमें कहा गया कि यह निकाय "वैश्विक संघर्ष को हल करने के लिए एक साहसिक नया दृष्टिकोण अपनाएगा", ने सुझाव दिया कि यह **संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद (UNSC)** का प्रतिद्वंद्वी बन सकता है, जो **द्वितीय विश्व युद्ध** के बाद बनाई गई वैश्विक संस्था का सबसे शक्तिशाली निकाय है।

- Morocco's King Mohammed VI accepted a spot on Monday, becoming the first Arab leader and at least the fifth world leader to join.**

**मोरक्को के राजा मोहम्मद VI** ने सोमवार को एक स्थान स्वीकार किया, जिससे वे पहले अरब नेता और कम से कम पांचवें विश्व नेता बने जो शामिल हुए।

- Vietnam, Kazakhstan, Hungary, and Argentina also have signed on.**

**वियतनाम, कजाखस्तान, हंगरी, और अर्जेंटीना** ने भी शामिल होने के लिए हस्ताक्षर किए हैं।

#### Clarity on nuances

##### सूक्ष्मताओं पर स्पष्टता

- Russian President Vladimir Putin received the invitation**, and the Kremlin is now "studying the details" and will seek clarity of "all the nuances" in contacts with the U.S., said Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

रूसी राष्ट्रपति **व्लादिमीर पुतिन** को आमंत्रण मिला है, और क्रेमलिन अब "विवरणों का अध्ययन" कर रहा है और अमेरिका के साथ संपर्क में "सभी सूक्ष्मताओं" की स्पष्टता खोजेगा, क्रेमलिन प्रवक्ता **दिमित्री पेस्कोव** ने कहा।

- The **U.S.** is expected to announce its official list of members in the coming days, likely during the **World Economic Forum** meeting in **Davos, Switzerland**.

आगामी दिनों में **अमेरिका** अपनी सदस्य सूची की आधिकारिक घोषणा करने की उम्मीद है, संभवतः **विश्व आर्थिक मंच की दावोस, स्विट्ज़रलैंड** में बैठक के दौरान।



## GS Paper III: Economy,

### TOPICS COVERED

21 January 2026

1. **From 'exible' to fearful: women gig workers hemmed in by new rules**  
**'exible' से भयग्रस्त तक: नए नियमों में घिरी महिला गिग वर्कर्स**
2. **Kisan Sabha has draft Seeds Bill, says it is unacceptable**  
**किसान सभा ने मसौदा बीज विधेयक पर आपत्ति जताई, इसे अस्वीकार्य बताया**
3. **The EV boom is accelerating a copper crunch**  
**ईवी बूम तांबे की कमी को तेज कर रहा है**

## From 'flexible' to fearful: women gig workers hemmed in by new rules

### GS III: Economy: Employment

**Ashna Butani**  
NEW DELHI

Women gig workers employed on service platforms say the promise of "flexibility" is collapsing amid new rules, constant surveillance, and a growing sense of insecurity.

"I always used to think this job was good for me; I have covered my children's education because of it. But recent policy changes have left us mentally and physically exhausted," said Manisha (name changed), a Delhi-based Urban Company (UC) worker. Amid ongoing protests by gig workers' unions across the country, women providing spa, massage, beauty, home service, and cleaning work say they are battling their own set of challenges. What was promoted as a "flexible" way to earn has become in-

creasingly rigid.

Ms. Manisha says the company has recently introduced mandatory "peak hour" requirements. Workers now receive requests during specific time blocks, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., and cannot switch off the app during these hours without penalty. "Some of us are having to choose between work and dropping our children to school," she said.

**'We're being watched'** Shanti (name changed), another UC worker based in Delhi, says that workers can face automatic ID blocks if they cancel more than three jobs in a month. She notes that "bundle booking", where customers book multiple services at once, means deeper discounts for clients but reduces workers' earnings.



Seema, GIPSWU president, said women workers across the gig economy face distinct vulnerabilities. ASHNA BUTANI

Even during off-hours, Ms. Shanti says she cannot escape the company's monitoring systems. When she turns off her location, her phone begins buzzing within seconds, prompting her to turn it back on. "We feel like we're being watched all the time. If anyone takes offline work, their IDs will instantly be blocked. I don't take offline work, so I'm not scared,

but I don't want to be tracked 24x7," she said.

### Ongoing struggle

The Gig and Platform Service Workers Union (GIPSWU), a women-led union, submitted memorandums to the UC management in Jaipur on January 7. Their demands include removing the peak-hour system, restrictive cancellation rules, and the bundle-

booking model. The union also wrote to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on January 12, seeking intervention on ID blocking and bundle-booking practices. The Hindu contacted UC with detailed queries but did not receive a response till the time of going to press. Around 150-200 workers in Jaipur have kept their apps switched off since January 8. The union says workers across India will follow suit on January 26 and February 3 as a sign of protest.

Seema, a former UC worker and now GIPSWU president, said women workers across the gig economy, whether with UC, Amazon, or Flipkart, face distinct vulnerabilities. "Male clients sometimes book services pretending to be female. And when women are on long shifts during their period, there

are no toilets," she said.

### Blocked IDs

Ms. Manisha says any minor disagreement with a customer can trigger a strike. "We have to agree with clients, no matter how they treat us. Otherwise, we are the ones who suffer," she said. Ms. Shanti recalls being expected to travel from central Delhi to Greater Noida in just 15 minutes. When she took leave for a family wedding, the first in years, she received no job requests for days, which she believes was a form of punishment. Neha (name changed), a former worker whose ID was blocked after she attended protests in 2023, has been off the app for four years. "Earlier, we thought flexible work was a big benefit. Now, with constant surveillance and pressure, I never want to go back," she said.

## From 'exible' to fearful: women gig workers hemmed in by new rules

### 'exible' से भयग्रस्त तक: नए नियमों में घिरी महिला गिग वर्कर्स

- Women gig workers employed on service platforms say the promise of "flexibility" is collapsing amid new rules, constant surveillance, and a growing sense of insecurity. सेवा प्लेटफॉर्म पर कार्यरत महिला गिग वर्कर्स का कहना है कि "flexibility" का वादा नए नियमों, निरंतर निगरानी और बढ़ती असुरक्षा की भावना के बीच ढह रहा है।
- "I always used to think this job was good for me; I have covered my children's education because of it. But recent policy changes have left us mentally and physically exhausted," said **Manisha** (name changed), a **Delhi-based Urban Company (UC) worker**. "मैं हमेशा सोचती थी कि यह नौकरी मेरे लिए अच्छी है; मैंने इसके कारण अपने बच्चों की पढ़ाई का खर्च उठाया है। लेकिन हालिया नीतिगत बदलावों ने हमें मानसिक और शारीरिक रूप से थका दिया है," **दिल्ली स्थित अर्बन कंपनी (UC) वर्कर मनीषा** (नाम बदला हुआ) ने कहा।
- Amid ongoing protests by **gig workers' unions** across the country, **women providing spa, massage, beauty, home service, and cleaning work say they are battling their own set of challenges.**



देशभर में गिग वर्कर्स यूनियनों के जारी विरोध प्रदर्शनों के बीच, स्पा, मसाज, ब्यूटी, होम सर्विस और क्लीनिंग सेवाएं देने वाली महिलाएं कहती हैं कि वे अपनी अलग चुनौतियों से जूझ रही हैं।

- What was promoted as a "flexible" way to earn has become increasingly rigid. जिसे कमाई का एक "exible" तरीका बताया गया था, वह अब लगातार कठोर होता जा रहा है।
- Ms. **Manisha** says the company has recently introduced **mandatory "peak hour" requirements**.  
सुश्री **मनीषा** कहती हैं कि कंपनी ने हाल ही में अनिवार्य "पीक आवर" आवश्यकताएं लागू की हैं।
- Workers now receive requests during specific time blocks, **9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.**, and cannot switch to the app during these hours without penalty.  
अब वर्कर्स को **सुबह 9 बजे से 11 बजे और शाम 4 बजे से 8 बजे** के विशिष्ट समय ब्लॉकों में अनुरोध मिलते हैं, और वे इन घंटों के दौरान बिना दंड के ऐप बंद नहीं कर सकते।
- "Some of us are having to choose between work and dropping our children to school," she said.  
"हममें से कुछ को काम और बच्चों को स्कूल छोड़ने के बीच चुनना पड़ रहा है," उन्होंने कहा।

### 'We're being watched'

'हम पर निगरानी रखी जा रही है'

- **Shanti** (name changed), another **UC worker** based in **Delhi**, says that workers can face automatic **ID blocks** if they cancel more than three jobs in a month.  
**दिल्ली** स्थित एक अन्य **UC वर्कर शांति** (नाम बदला हुआ) कहती हैं कि यदि वे एक महीने में तीन से अधिक जॉब रद्द करती हैं तो वर्कर्स को स्वचालित **आईडी ब्लॉक** का सामना करना पड़ सकता है।
- She notes that "**bundle booking**", where customers book multiple services at once, means **deeper discounts for clients but reduces workers' earnings**.  
वह बताती हैं कि "**बंडल बुकिंग**", जिसमें ग्राहक एक साथ कई सेवाएं बुक करते हैं, ग्राहकों के लिए ज्यादा छूट लाती है लेकिन वर्कर्स की कमाई घटाती है।
- **Their demands include removing the peak-hour system, restrictive cancellation rules, and the bundle has no toilets,**" she said.  
उनकी मांगों में **पीक-आवर सिस्टम**, कठोर कैंसलेशन नियम और बंडलारे no toilets," she said. को हटाना शामिल है।
- **Neha** (name changed), a former worker whose **ID was blocked** after she attended protests in **2023**, has been on the app for **four years**.  
**नेहा** (नाम बदला हुआ), एक पूर्व वर्कर, जिनकी आईडी **2023** में विरोध प्रदर्शनों में शामिल होने के बाद ब्लॉक कर दी गई थी, **चार वर्षों** से ऐप से बाहर हैं।
- "**Earlier, we thought flexible work was a big benefit. Now, with constant surveillance and pressure, I never want to go back,**" she said.  
"पहले हमें लगता था कि exible काम एक बड़ा लाभ है। अब लगातार निगरानी और दबाव के साथ, मैं कभी वापस नहीं जाना चाहती," उन्होंने कहा।
- "Male clients sometimes book services pretending to be female. And when women are on long shifts during their period, there  
"पुरुष ग्राहक कभी-कभी महिला बनकर सेवाएं बुक करते हैं। और जब महिलाएं अपने पीरियड के दौरान लंबी शिफ्ट में होती हैं, तो वहां
- There are no **toilets**," she said.  
वहाँ **शौचालय** नहीं हैं," उन्होंने कहा।



## Kisan Sabha has draft Seeds Bill, says it is unacceptable

किसान सभा ने मसौदा बीज विधेयक पर आपत्ति जताई, इसे अस्वीकार्य बताया

### Kisan Sabha flags draft Seeds Bill, says it is unacceptable

GS III: Economy

The provisions of the draft Seeds Bill undermine the role of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and other public sector research institutions and allow monopoly of the private sector over the seed sector, the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) said in its response to the Union Agriculture Ministry on the draft Seeds Bill. The AIKS asked the government to consult farmers' organisations, state governments, and scientific communities engaged in the seed sector. "Any law on seeds should protect the basic rights of the farmers to grow, sow, re-sow, save, use, exchange, share or sell seeds. This should be protected as an inalienable right," AIKS said.

exchange, share or sell seeds.

“बीजों पर कोई भी कानून किसानों के मूल अधिकारों — बीज उगाने, बोने, पुनः बोने, बचाने, उपयोग करने, विनिमय करने, साझा करने या बेचने — की रक्षा करे।

• The provisions of the **draft Seeds Bill** undermine the role of the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)** and other **public sector research institutions** and allow **monopoly of the private sector** over the **seed sector**, the **All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS)** said in its response to the **Union Agriculture Ministry** on the **draft Seeds Bill**.

मसौदा बीज विधेयक के प्रावधान भारतीय कृषि अनुसंधान परिषद (ICAR) और अन्य सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के अनुसंधान संस्थानों की भूमिका को कमजोर करते हैं और बीज क्षेत्र पर निजी क्षेत्र के एकाधिकार की अनुमति देते हैं, ऐसा अखिल भारतीय किसान सभा (AIKS) ने केंद्रीय कृषि मंत्रालय को मसौदा बीज विधेयक पर अपनी प्रतिक्रिया में कहा।

• The **AIKS** asked the **government** to consult **farmers' organisations**, **state governments**, and **scientific communities** engaged in the **seed sector**.

AIKS ने सरकार से किसान संगठनों, राज्य सरकारों, और बीज क्षेत्र से जुड़ी वैज्ञानिक समुदायों से परामर्श करने को कहा।

• “Any law on seeds should protect the **basic rights** of the farmers to **grow, sow, re-sow, save, use,**



# The EV boom is accelerating a copper crunch

GS III: Economy

MOB

The global shift toward electric vehicles (EVs) is widely celebrated as a technological breakthrough and a vital step toward a greener future. However, there also lies a growing and underappreciated challenge: an impending copper crunch. Copper is indispensable for electrification and forms the backbone of EV batteries, motors, wiring, charging infrastructure, and power grids. As EV adoption accelerates, copper demand has entered a phase of exponential growth that many policymakers and markets have underestimated. Over the past decade, EVs have moved from a niche product to the fastest-growing segment of the global automotive industry, with profound consequences for the global commodity systems.

Between 2015 and 2025, global EV sales rose from approximately 0.55 million units to an estimated 20 million units, while associated copper consumption surged from roughly 27.5 thousand tonnes to over 1.28 million tons, showing copper to be the hidden backbone of the EV revolution. However, supply growth has lagged due to decades of underinvestment, declining ore grades, and the 10-15 year development cycle for new mines. Consequently, a structural supply deficit could emerge as early as 2026, reshaping global trade, intensifying geopolitical competition and influencing the cost and the pace of EV adoption. Therefore, the EV transition must be understood not only as a technological shift but also as a resource-intensive transformation constrained by metals as much as by markets.

## In near perfect lockstep

One of the most striking features of the electric vehicle (EV) transition is the near one-to-one relationship between EV sales growth and copper demand, as reflected in elasticity estimates.

Between 2016 and 2024, the copper demand elasticity with respect to EV sales mostly exceeded 1.0, indicating that copper



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With demand threatening to outpace supply, there need to be bold actions in recycling and technological innovation

consumption increased faster than EV adoption despite sustained efforts to reduce metal intensity. During this period, EV-related copper demand surged from approximately 39,000 tonnes in 2016 to over 1.1 million tonnes in 2024, while global EV sales expanded from approximately 0.75 million units to around 17 million units. The linkage was especially pronounced in 2019, when elasticity peaked at 1.76, signalling a sharp rise in copper use per vehicle – driven by larger battery packs, increased power electronics and rapid charging infrastructure expansion. Although elasticity is projected to ease to approximately 0.90 by 2025, as efficiency gains emerge, the absolute copper demand will continue to rise owing to the scale of EV deployment. With EVs requiring four to five times more copper than internal combustion vehicles and no viable large-scale substitutes available, this synchrony underscores the persistent structural demand pressure. Ultimately, this copper-intensive trajectory, more than battery technology alone, will shape the pace of global electrification.

## A global copper deficit phase

While copper demand is rising sharply, global supply has begun to plateau, creating a widening gap often described as a "jaw-opening deficit". Declining ore grades at existing mines, decade-long development timelines for new projects, and environmental opposition in major producing regions such as Chile, Peru and the United States constrain supply growth. In 2024, global supply is expected to exceed demand by approximately 0.3 million tonnes, but by 2026, demand is projected to reach 30 million tonnes, while supply lags at around 28 million tonnes.

This gap is expected to widen to 4.5 million tons by 2028 and nearly 8 million tons by 2030, equivalent to the output of the world's 10 largest copper mines combined. Such shortages could increase EV costs, delay the development of

charging infrastructure, and strain decarbonisation targets. As electrification accelerates, copper scarcity may become the main bottleneck unless mining, recycling and material innovation are rapidly scaled up.

## A reshaping of global market dynamics

The geography of EV-driven copper consumption signals a major shift in the global power balance, with China emerging as the dominant force in electric vehicle adoption and copper usage. China's EV-related copper demand surged from about 78,000 tonnes in 2020 to nearly 6,78,000 tonnes in 2024 and is projected to reach around 7,80,000 tonnes by 2025, accounting for almost 60% of global EV-based copper consumption. This dominance is driven not only by strong EV sales but also by China's control of over 70% of global battery cell production and its deeply integrated supply chain.

By 2025, EV-related copper demand is expected to reach approximately 210,000 tonnes in the European Union and 1,14,000 tonnes in the U.S., while India remains modest at roughly 7,200 tonnes. This asymmetry provides China with a structural advantage in terms of pricing power, long-term supply contracts, and strategic leverage over copper-rich regions. As copper becomes central to energy transition, securing access will rival battery technology as a global priority.

The EV revolution is not only reshaping transportation but also the global metals economy. Copper has emerged as a vital artery of electrification, and the world is rapidly approaching a moment when demand outpaces supply in ways that are unprecedented in modern industrial history. Policymakers, investors and environmental planners must recognise that the energy transition is inseparable from resource strategy. Without bold actions on copper supply, recycling, and technological innovation, the pace of electrification will be dictated by geology rather than ambition.

## The EV boom is accelerating a copper crunch ईवी बूम तांबे की कमी को तेज कर रहा है

- The global shift toward **electric vehicles (EVs)** is widely celebrated as a **technological breakthrough** and a vital step toward a **greener future**.  
इलेक्ट्रिक वाहनों (EVs) की ओर वैश्विक बदलाव को एक तकनीकी उपलब्धि और हरित भविष्य की दिशा में एक महत्वपूर्ण कदम के रूप में व्यापक रूप से सराहा जा रहा है।
- However, there also lies a growing and **underappreciated challenge**, an impending **copper crunch**.  
हालाँकि, इसके साथ ही एक बढ़ती हुई और कम आंकी गई चुनौती भी है, अर्थात् आने वाला तांबे का संकट।
- Copper is indispensable for electrification and forms the backbone of EV batteries, motors, wiring, charging infrastructure, and power grids.**  
तांबा विद्युतीकरण के लिए अपरिहार्य है और EV की बैटरियों, मोटर्स, वायरिंग, चार्जिंग अवसंरचना और बिजली ग्रिड की रीढ़ बनता है।
- As **EV adoption** accelerates, **copper demand** has entered a phase of **exponential growth** that many **policymakers and markets** have underestimated.  
जैसे-जैसे EV को अपनाने की गति बढ़ती है, तांबे की मांग घातीय वृद्धि के चरण में प्रवेश कर चुकी है, जिसे कई नीतिनिर्माताओं और बाज़ारों ने कम आँका है।
- Over the past decade, EVs have moved from a **niche product** to the **fastest-growing segment** of the global **automotive industry**, with profound consequences for **global commodity systems**.  
पिछले एक दशक में EVs एक विशेष उत्पाद से बढ़कर वैश्विक ऑटोमोबाइल उद्योग के सबसे तेज़ी से बढ़ते खंड बन गए हैं, जिसके वैश्विक जिंस प्रणालियों पर गहरे प्रभाव पड़े हैं।
- Between **2015 and 2025**, global EV sales rose from approximately **0.55 million units** to an estimated **20 million units**, while associated **copper consumption** surged from roughly **27.5 thousand tonnes to over 1.28 million tons**, showing copper to be the **hidden backbone** of the EV revolution.  
2015 से 2025 के बीच, वैश्विक EV बिक्री लगभग 0.55 मिलियन इकाइयों से बढ़कर अनुमानित 20 मिलियन



इकाइयों तक पहुँच गई, जबकि संबंधित तांबे की खपत लगभग 27.5 हजार टन से बढ़कर 1.28 मिलियन टन से अधिक हो गई, जो EV क्रांति में तांबे को छिपी हुई रीढ़ के रूप में दर्शाती है।

- However, **supply growth has lagged due to decades of underinvestment, declining ore grades, and the 10–15 year development cycle for new mines.**  
हालाँकि, **आपूर्ति वृद्धि** दशकों की **कम निवेश**, **अयस्क की घटती गुणवत्ता**, और नई खदानों के लिए **10–15 वर्ष के विकास चक्र** के कारण पीछे रह गई है।
- The linkage was especially pronounced in **2019**, when **elasticity peaked at 1.76**, signalling a sharp rise in **copper use per vehicle, driven by larger battery packs, increased power electronics and rapid charging infrastructure expansion.**  
यह संबंध विशेष रूप से **2019** में स्पष्ट था, जब **लोच 1.76** पर पहुँच गई, जो प्रति वाहन तांबे के उपयोग में तेज़ वृद्धि का संकेत देती है, जिसका कारण **बड़े बैटरी पैक**, **अधिक पावर इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स**, और **तेज़ चार्जिंग अवसंरचना का विस्तार** था।
- Although elasticity is projected to ease to approximately **0.90 by 2025**, as **efficiency gains emerge**, the **absolute copper demand** will continue to rise owing to the **scale of EV deployment.**  
हालाँकि **दक्षता में सुधार** के साथ **2025** तक लोच के लगभग **0.90** तक घटने का अनुमान है, फिर भी **EV तैनाती के पैमाने** के कारण तांबे की कुल मांग बढ़ती रहेगी।
- With **EVs requiring four to five times more copper than internal combustion vehicles** and no **viable large-scale substitutes** available, this synchrony underscores the **persistent structural demand pressure.**  
चूँकि **EVs को आंतरिक दहन इंजन वाले वाहनों की तुलना में चार से पाँच गुना अधिक तांबे की आवश्यकता** होती है और कोई **व्यवहार्य बड़े पैमाने का विकल्प उपलब्ध नहीं है**, यह तालमेल **लगातार संरचनात्मक मांग दबाव** को रेखांकित करता है।
- **Declining ore grades** at existing mines, **decade-long development timelines** for new projects, and **environmental opposition** in major producing regions such as **Chile, Peru and the United States** constrain **supply growth.**  
मौजूदा खदानों में **अयस्क की घटती गुणवत्ता**, नई परियोजनाओं के लिए **दशक भर का विकास काल**, और **चिली, पेरू तथा संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका** जैसे प्रमुख उत्पादक क्षेत्रों में **पर्यावरणीय विरोध**, **आपूर्ति वृद्धि** को सीमित कर रहे हैं।
- **China's EV-related copper demand** surged from about **78,000 tonnes in 2020** to nearly **6,78,000 tonnes in 2024** and is projected to reach around **7,80,000 tonnes by 2025**, accounting for almost **60% of global EV-based copper consumption.**  
**चीन की EV-संबंधित तांबे की मांग 2020 में लगभग 78,000 टन से बढ़कर 2024 में लगभग 6,78,000 टन हो गई और 2025 तक लगभग 7,80,000 टन तक पहुँचने का अनुमान है, जो वैश्विक EV-आधारित तांबा खपत का लगभग 60% है।**
- **This dominance is driven not only by strong EV sales but also by China's control of over 70% of global battery cell production and its deeply integrated supply chain.**  
यह **प्रभुत्व** केवल मजबूत **EV बिक्री** से ही नहीं, बल्कि **वैश्विक बैटरी सेल उत्पादन के 70% से अधिक पर चीन के नियंत्रण** और उसकी **गहराई से एकीकृत आपूर्ति श्रृंखला** से भी प्रेरित है।
- By **2025**, **EV-related copper demand** is expected to reach approximately **210,000 tonnes in the European Union** and **1,14,000 tonnes in the U.S.**, while **India remains modest at roughly 7,200 tonnes.**  
**2025 तक, EV-संबंधित तांबा मांग यूरोपीय संघ में लगभग 210,000 टन और अमेरिका में 1,14,000 टन तक पहुँचने की उम्मीद है, जबकि भारत लगभग 7,200 टन पर अपेक्षाकृत कम बना रहेगा।**
- **This asymmetry provides China with a structural advantage in terms of pricing power, long-term supply contracts, and strategic leverage over copper-rich regions.**  
यह **असमानता चीन को मूल्य निर्धारण शक्ति, दीर्घकालिक आपूर्ति अनुबंध, और तांबा-समृद्ध क्षेत्रों पर रणनीतिक प्रभाव** के रूप में एक **संरचनात्मक बढ़त प्रदान** करती है।
- **As copper becomes central to the energy transition, securing access will rival battery technology as a global priority.**  
जैसे-जैसे **तांबा ऊर्जा संक्रमण का केंद्र बनता जा रहा है**, इसकी उपलब्धता सुनिश्चित करना **बैटरी तकनीक के बराबर एक वैश्विक प्राथमिकता** बन जाएगा।
- The **EV revolution** is not only reshaping **transportation** but also the **global metals economy.**  
**EV क्रांति** केवल **परिवहन** को ही नहीं, बल्कि **वैश्विक धातु अर्थव्यवस्था** को भी नया रूप दे रही है।



## GS Paper III: S&T,

### TOPICS COVERED

21 January 2026

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1. | <b>Why only female Darwin's bark spiders weave the toughest webs</b><br>केवल मादा डार्विन्स बार्क स्पाइडर ही सबसे मजबूत जाले क्यों बुनती हैं                  |
| 2. | <b>What happens if you have a medical emergency onboard the ISS?</b><br>यदि ISS पर चिकित्सा आपातकाल हो जाए तो क्या होता है                                    |
| 3. | <b>How reusability can lead to sustainable, cost-effective access to space</b><br>पुनः उपयोगिता कैसे अंतरिक्ष तक सतत, लागत-प्रभावी पहुँच सुनिश्चित कर सकती है |

PATRIOTIC IAS



# Why only female Darwin's bark spiders weave the toughest webs

The Darwin's bark spider, found in the forests of Madagascar, weaves silk that outperforms steel and most human-made fibres in both strength and toughness. Its silk has a tensile strength of about 1.6 gigapascals, around three times higher than that of iron, making it the toughest biological material ever tested

Ipsita Herlekar

One of the strongest materials on the earth is not made in a factory or synthesised in a laboratory but spun by a creature barely two inches long.

The Darwin's bark spider (*Caerostris darwini*), found in the forests of Madagascar, weaves silk that outperforms steel and most human-made fibres in both strength and toughness.

### Larger webs, stronger threads

Its silk has a tensile strength of about 1.6 gigapascals, around three times higher than that of iron, making it the toughest biological material ever tested. But as scientists are now finding, this extraordinary strength is not something every individual produces.

Across spider species, body size is often linked to silk quality. Larger spiders generally produce tougher silks to capture larger or faster prey. In orb-weaving spiders such as the Darwin's bark spider, larger bodies over evolutionary time have accompanied larger webs and stronger silk threads.

Scientists from institutions in China, Madagascar, Slovenia, and the U.S. studied bark spiders to understand the conditions in which they produce the tough silk. Their findings were recently published in *Integrative Zoology*.

### Three hypotheses

The study focused on two bark spider species in Madagascar: *Caerostris darwini*, which spins the largest orb webs ever recorded, and its close relative *Caerostris kumtneri*.

Egg sacs from both species were collected from Analamazaotra National Park and the spiders were raised in laboratory conditions. This allowed the scientists to compare silk produced by males and females at different life stages while keeping environmental factors such as diet and humidity constant.

The team tested three competing hypotheses. The first proposed that all individuals – males and females, juveniles and adults – produce silk of similar toughness. The second suggested only females produce tougher silk, regardless of size. The third said only large individuals, especially large adult females, produce exceptionally tough silk as and when their body size and ecological role demand it.

### Dragline silk

The size difference between male and female bark spiders is striking. In *C. darwini*, adult females are about three times larger than males. In *Caerostris kumtneri*, they can be up to five times



A Darwin's bark spider in Madagascar, 2010. MATJAZ GREGORIC (CC BY-SA)

larger, suggesting that females are under much stronger evolutionary pressure to invest in tougher silk. To measure silk quality, the researchers collected dragline silk, also known as major ampullate silk, from spiders of both sexes and at different life stages in each species. Each strand was carefully mounted on a cardboard frame and stretched to test its strength, stiffness, and ability to absorb energy before breaking.

Dragline silk is one of the most important types of spider silk. Nearly invisible to the naked eye, it forms the structural backbone of an orb web and serves as safety lines, anchor threads, and emergency escape ropes for the spiders.

Producing this silk, however, is metabolically expensive. The energy required to synthesise the amino acids that make up dragline silk varies; some such as proline, which plays an important role in making silk elastic, are particularly expensive.

Darwin's bark spider silk contains unusually high levels of this protein, explaining its exceptional mechanical properties but in turn increasing its



We think that very tough silk evolved because it was needed to structurally support the huge webs built by *Caerostris* spiders, rather than as an adaptation to hunt any specific prey

**MATJAZ GREGORIC**  
Researcher at the Jovan Hadži Institute of Biology

metabolic cost.

### Quality and architecture

The study's results were unequivocal: only large adult females produced exceptionally tough silk. Their silk was also stiffer and more capable of absorbing far more mechanical strain before breaking than the silk produced by males or juveniles. The silk from adult males and juvenile males and females was mechanically indistinguishable.

The study also found that adult females produce high-performance silk only when it's biologically necessary. As the females grow larger and begin building large webs

capable of intercepting fast-moving prey, they 'turn on' the physiological machinery required to manufacture the superior silk.

The study also uncovered a close link between silk quality and the architecture of the web. Adult female Darwin's bark spiders build more sparse webs, with wider gaps between threads, using less silk per unit area. Despite being economical, these webs are highly effective because each thread can absorb relatively enormous forces. Juveniles and males on the other hand spin more dense webs made of metabolically cheaper and weaker silk.

Curiously, not all the properties of the silk varied with size and sex. Regardless of age or sex, all individuals produced silk of comparably high stretchability, or how much the silk could be stretched before it broke. It suggested that the elasticity of the silk of spiders of the genus *Caerostris* is a genetically conserved feature – while extreme toughness is tuned according to body size and ecological demand.

### Time versus energy

At the molecular level, differences in silk properties arise from changes in protein composition, how the proteins are arranged and cross-linked, and even the shape and length of the ducts that spin silk inside the spider's body. *C. darwini* has an unusually long and complex spinning duct that scientists believe could be allowing silk proteins to produce exceptionally strong silk fibre.

The trade-off however is time and energy. Female bark spiders produce less silk overall, take longer to rebuild their webs, and invest more in quality over quantity.

"We think that very tough silk evolved because it was needed to structurally support the huge webs built by *Caerostris* spiders, rather than as an adaptation to hunt any specific prey," Matjaz Gregoric, the lead author of the study and a researcher at the Jovan Hadži Institute of Biology, Slovenia, said.

The strategy pays off in the spider's distinctive habitat. *C. darwini* builds enormous webs, up to 25 m wide, suspended over rivers and lakes. These aerial traps allow the spider to capture swarms of flies and beetles that most other spiders can.

Silk production in Darwin's bark spiders has evolved to ensure energy is invested only where it can yield a greater survival advantage. The extraordinary properties of its silk thus emerge from a complex interplay between body size, sex, ecology, and behaviour.

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[ipsitaherlekar@gmail.com](mailto:ipsitaherlekar@gmail.com))

### THE GIST

Across spider species, body size is often linked to silk quality. Larger spiders generally produce tougher silks to capture larger or faster prey

In this study on two bark spider species from Madagascar, the adult females were much larger than the males and were found to be producing exceptionally tough silk. Their silk was also stiffer and capable of absorbing far more mechanical strain before breaking than the silk produced by males or juveniles

The study also found that the adult females produce high-performance silk only when it is biologically necessary and their webs are more sparse with wider gaps, using less silk per unit area

Female bark spiders produce less silk overall, take longer to rebuild their webs, and invest more in quality over quantity

## Why only female Darwin's bark spiders weave the toughest webs

केवल मादा डार्विन्स बार्क स्पाइडर ही सबसे मजबूत जाले क्यों बुनती है

- **Darwin's bark spider, found in the forests of Madagascar, weaves silk that outperforms steel and most human-made fibres in both strength and toughness.** डार्विन्स बार्क स्पाइडर, जो मेडागास्कर के जंगलों में पाई जाती है, ऐसा रेशम (सिल्क) बुनती है जो मजबूती और कठोरता दोनों में स्टील और अधिकांश मानव-निर्मित रेशों से बेहतर होता है।
- **Its silk has a tensile strength of about 1.6 gigapascals, around three times higher than that of iron, making it the toughest biological material ever tested.** इसके रेशम की तन्य शक्ति (टेंसाइल स्ट्रेंथ) लगभग 1.6 गीगापास्कल है, जो लोहे से लगभग तीन गुना अधिक है, और इसे अब तक परखा गया सबसे कठोर जैविक पदार्थ बनाती है।

One of the strongest materials on the earth  
पृथ्वी पर सबसे मजबूत सामग्रियों में से एक

- **One of the strongest materials on the earth is not made in a factory or synthesised in a laboratory but spun by a creature barely two inches long.**



पृथ्वी पर सबसे मजबूत सामग्रियों में से एक कारखाने में नहीं बनाई जाती और न ही प्रयोगशाला में संश्लेषित की जाती है, बल्कि इसे लगभग दो इंच लंबा एक जीव स्वयं बुनता है।

- But as scientists are now finding, this **extraordinary strength** is not something **every individual produces**.  
लेकिन जैसा कि वैज्ञानिक अब खोज रहे हैं, यह **असाधारण मजबूती** हर एक जीव द्वारा उत्पन्न नहीं की जाती।
- Across spider species, **body size** is often linked to **silk quality**.  
स्पाइडर की विभिन्न प्रजातियों में **शरीर का आकार** अक्सर **रेशम की गुणवत्ता** से जुड़ा होता है।
- **Larger spiders generally produce tougher silks to capture larger or faster prey.**  
बड़ी मकड़ियाँ आमतौर पर **बड़े या तेज शिकार** को पकड़ने के लिए **अधिक कठोर रेशम** बनाती हैं।
- **Scientists from institutions in China, Madagascar, Slovenia, and the U.S. studied bark spiders to understand the conditions in which they produce the tough silk.**  
**चीन, मेडागास्कर, स्लोवेनिया और अमेरिका** के संस्थानों के वैज्ञानिकों ने यह समझने के लिए बार्क स्पाइडर का अध्ययन किया कि वे किन परिस्थितियों में **कठोर रेशम** बनाती हैं।



- The study focused on two bark spider species in Madagascar, **Caerostris darwini**, which **spins the largest orb webs ever recorded**, and its close relative **Caerostris kuntneri**.  
अध्ययन मेडागास्कर की दो बार्क स्पाइडर प्रजातियों पर केंद्रित था, **Caerostris darwini**, जो अब तक के **सबसे बड़े ऑर्ब जाले** बुनती है, और इसकी करीबी रिश्तेदार **Caerostris kuntneri**।
- **In C. darwini**, adult females are about **three times larger than males**.  
**C. darwini** में वयस्क मादाएँ नर से लगभग **तीन गुना बड़ी** होती हैं।
- **In Caerostris kuntneri**, they can be up to **five times larger**, suggesting that females are under much stronger **evolutionary pressure** to invest in **tougher silk**.  
**Caerostris kuntneri** में मादाएँ **पाँच गुना तक बड़ी** हो सकती हैं, जो दर्शाता है कि मादाओं पर **अधिक कठोर रेशम** बनाने का **विकासवादी दबाव** अधिक होता है।
- The **energy required to synthesise the amino acids** that make up dragline silk varies, and some such as **proline**, which plays an important role in making silk **elastic**, are particularly **expensive**.  
ड्रैगलाइन सिल्क बनाने वाले **अमीनो अम्लों** के संश्लेषण में लगने वाली ऊर्जा अलग-अलग होती है, और **प्रोलिन** जैसे कुछ अमीनो अम्ल, जो रेशम को **लचीला** बनाने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाते हैं, विशेष रूप से महंगे होते हैं।
- **As the females grow larger and begin building large webs capable of intercepting fast-moving prey, they 'turn on' the physiological machinery** required to manufacture the **superior silk**.  
जैसे-जैसे मादाएँ **बड़ी** होती हैं और **तेज़ गति वाले शिकार** को रोकने में सक्षम **बड़े जाले** बनाना शुरू करती हैं, वे **उत्कृष्ट रेशम** बनाने के लिए आवश्यक **शारीरिक तंत्र** को **'सक्रिय'** कर देती हैं।
- The study also uncovered a close link between **silk quality** and the **architecture of the web**.  
अध्ययन में **रेशम की गुणवत्ता** और **जाले की संरचना** के बीच घनिष्ठ संबंध भी सामने आया।
- **Adult female Darwin's bark spiders build more sparse webs, with wider gaps between threads, using less silk per unit area.**  
वयस्क मादा **डार्विनस बार्क स्पाइडर** अधिक **विरल जाले** बनाती हैं, जिनमें **रेशों के बीच अधिक अंतर** होता है, और प्रति इकाई क्षेत्र में **कम रेशम** का उपयोग होता है।
- Despite being **economical**, these webs are **highly effective** because each thread can absorb **relatively enormous forces**.  
**किफायती** होने के बावजूद, ये जाले **अत्यंत प्रभावी** होते हैं क्योंकि प्रत्येक रेशा **तुलनात्मक रूप से बहुत बड़े बल** को अवशोषित कर सकता है।
- **Juveniles and males on the other hand spin more dense webs made of metabolically cheaper and weaker silk.**  
दूसरी ओर, **किशोर और नर** अधिक **घने जाले** बुनते हैं, जो **चयापचय की दृष्टि से सस्ते और कमजोर रेशम** से बने होते हैं।



- Curiously, not all the properties of the silk varied with **size and sex**.  
रोचक रूप से, रेशम के सभी गुण **आकार और लिंग** के साथ नहीं बदले।
- Regardless of **age or sex**, all individuals produced silk of **comparably high stretchability**, or how much the silk could be **stretched before it broke**.  
**आयु या लिंग** की परवाह किए बिना, सभी जीवों ने **समान रूप से उच्च खिंचाव क्षमता** वाला रेशम बनाया, अर्थात् रेशम को **टूटने से पहले कितना खींचा जा सकता है**।
- It suggested that the **elasticity** of the silk of spiders of the genus **Carostris** is a **genetically conserved feature** while **extreme toughness** is tuned according to **body size and ecological demand**.  
यह संकेत देता है कि **Carostris** वंश की मकड़ियों के रेशम की **लोचशीलता** एक **आनुवंशिक रूप से संरक्षित गुण** है, जबकि **अत्यधिक कठोरता** को **शरीर के आकार और पारिस्थितिक आवश्यकता** के अनुसार समायोजित किया जाता है।

### Time versus energy समय बनाम ऊर्जा

- At the **molecular level**, differences in silk properties arise from changes in **protein composition**, how the proteins are **arranged and cross-linked**, and even the **shape and length of the ducts** that spin silk inside the spider's body.  
आणविक स्तर पर, रेशम के गुणों में अंतर **प्रोटीन संरचना**, प्रोटीन की **व्यवस्था और क्रॉस-लिंकिंग**, और मकड़ी के शरीर के भीतर रेशम बनाने वाली **नलिकाओं के आकार और लंबाई** में बदलाव से उत्पन्न होता है।
- **C. darwini** has an **unusually long and complex spinning duct** that scientists believe could be allowing silk proteins to produce **exceptionally strong silk fibre**.  
**C. darwini** में असामान्य रूप से **लंबी और जटिल स्पिनिंग डक्ट** होती है, जिसे वैज्ञानिक **असाधारण रूप से मजबूत रेशम रेशा** बनने का कारण मानते हैं।



## Call the doctor



**Q: What happens if you have a medical emergency onboard the ISS? GS III: S&T**

**A:** On January 15 morning, Crew-11 to the International Space

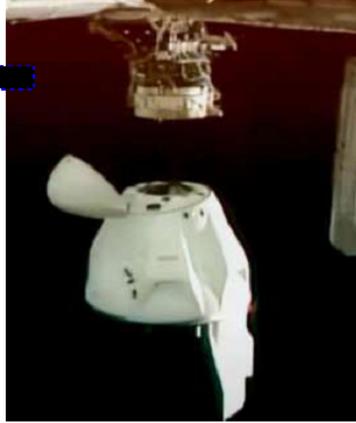
Station (ISS) performed a rapid evacuation, with NASA getting the astronauts back to the earth around one month early due to an undisclosed medical concern with one crew member.

When a medical emergency occurs on the International Space Station (ISS), the crew has a strict protocol it needs to follow, with help from ground support.

Every mission includes at least one Crew Medical Officer (CMO). This astronaut is usually not a doctor but would have received specialised training to perform procedures like stitch wounds and administer injections. The ISS is also stocked with medical kits including some drugs, first aid supplies, and diagnostic equipment such as ultrasound machines.

When there is an emergency, the crew contacts flight surgeons at mission control on earth: these are doctors who have access to the astronauts' medical records as well as real-time health data. If required they can guide the CMO through conducting simple medical examinations and administer treatments through private video and audio channels.

If an illness or injury is too severe to be managed on the station, the final option is immediate evacuation. The crew's transport capsule, such as a



This screengrab from video provided by NASA TV shows the SpaceX Dragon departing from the ISS shortly after undocking with four NASA Crew-11 members inside on January 14, 2026. AP

SpaceX Dragon or Soyuz spacecraft, is designated a 'lifeboat' and the relevant astronauts can undock from the ISS onboard it, re-enter the earth's atmosphere, and finally splash down or land on the earth within hours.

The Crew-11 return on January 15 demonstrated such an evacuation.

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देने जैसी प्रक्रियाओं के लिए विशेष प्रशिक्षण प्राप्त होता है।

- The ISS is also stocked with **medical kits** including some **drugs, first aid supplies, and diagnostic equipment** such as **ultrasound machines**.

ISS में चिकित्सा किट भी उपलब्ध होती हैं, जिनमें कुछ दवाएँ, प्राथमिक उपचार सामग्री, और अल्ट्रासाउंड मशीन जैसे नैदानिक उपकरण शामिल होते हैं।

- When there is an emergency, the crew contacts **flight surgeons at mission control on earth**: these are **doctors** who have access to the astronauts' **medical records** as well as **real-time health data**.

आपात स्थिति में चालक दल पृथ्वी पर मिशन कंट्रोल में मौजूद फ्लाइट सर्जनों से संपर्क करता है, जो ऐसे डॉक्टर होते हैं जिनके पास अंतरिक्ष यात्रियों के चिकित्सा रिकॉर्ड और रीयल-टाइम स्वास्थ्य डेटा तक पहुँच होती है।

- If an **illness or injury** is too **severe** to be managed on the station, the **final option** is **immediate evacuation**.

यदि कोई बीमारी या चोट स्टेशन पर संभालने के लिए बहुत गंभीर हो, तो अंतिम विकल्प तत्काल निकासी होता है।

- The crew's **transport capsule**, such as a **SpaceX Dragon** or **Soyuz spacecraft**, is designated a '**lifeboat**' and the relevant astronauts can **undock from the ISS** onboard it, **re-enter the earth's atmosphere**, and finally **splash down or land on the earth within hours**. चालक दल का परिवहन कैप्सूल, जैसे **SpaceX Dragon** या **Soyuz अंतरिक्ष यान**, को '**लाइफबोट**' के रूप में नामित किया जाता है, और संबंधित अंतरिक्ष यात्री इसके माध्यम से **ISS से अलग होकर**, पृथ्वी के वायुमंडल में पुनः प्रवेश कर, अंततः **कुछ घंटों के भीतर समुद्र में उतर या भूमि पर उतर सकते हैं**।

## What happens if you have a medical emergency onboard the ISS?

यदि ISS पर चिकित्सा आपातकाल हो जाए तो क्या होता है

- On **January 15 morning**, **Crew-11** to the **International Space Station (ISS)** performed a **rapid evacuation**, with **NASA** getting the astronauts back to the **earth** around **one month early** due to an **undisclosed medical concern** with **one crew member**.

उत्तर: 15 जनवरी की सुबह, अंतरराष्ट्रीय अंतरिक्ष स्टेशन (ISS) पर मौजूद क्रू-11 ने तेजी से निकासी की, जिसमें नासा ने एक चालक दल सदस्य की अप्रकट चिकित्सा चिंता के कारण अंतरिक्ष यात्रियों को लगभग एक महीने पहले ही पृथ्वी पर वापस ला लिया।

- Every mission includes at least one **Crew Medical Officer (CMO)**.

हर मिशन में कम से कम एक क्रू मेडिकल ऑफिसर (CMO) शामिल होता है।

- This astronaut is usually **not a doctor** but would have received **specialised training** to perform procedures like **stitch wounds** and **administer injections**.

यह अंतरिक्ष यात्री आमतौर पर डॉक्टर नहीं होता, लेकिन उसे घावों में टांके लगाने और इंजेक्शन



## GS Paper III: IS

### TOPICS COVERED

21 January 2026

1. **Ex-CAPF officials led contempt plea in SC over IPS deputation**  
पूर्व CAPF अधिकारियों ने IPS प्रतिनियोजन को लेकर SC में अवमानना याचिका दायर की

# Ex-CAPF officials file contempt plea in SC over IPS deputation

GS III: Internal Security  
Vijaita Singh  
NEW DELHI

Retired Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) officers have filed a contempt petition in the Supreme Court against the Union Home Secretary following the non-implementation of the court's 2025 ruling to "progressively reduce" the deputation of Indian Police Service (IPS) officers in the Senior Administrative Grade or up to the rank of Inspector-General (IG) in CAPFs.

The petition has been filed against Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan by four retired officials - Mahender Singh Deo, Radha Mohan Meena, Vikesh Kumar and Sanjay Prakash, the original petitioner in the case. The petitions were filed on December 3, 6, and 9.

#### Deputation cut

On May 23, 2025, the Supreme Court ruled that Group A Executive Cadre officers of CAPFs are Organised Group A Services (OGAS) for all purposes. Besides progressively reducing the IPS deputation in CAPFs up to the level of IGs in the next two years, the court asked for time-bound review of cadre and

#### In 2025, SC sought a two-year cut in IPS deputation up to IG rank and a review of cadre, service rules

service rules in six months.

The Union Home Ministry, the cadre-controlling authority of both the CAPFs and the IPS, challenged the judgment but on October 28, 2025, the top court dismissed the review petition, making the ruling final. On December 26, the Ministry wrote to the Directors General of all CAPFs - the Central Reserve Police Force, Border Security Force, Sashastra Seema Bal, Indo Tibetan Border Police, Central Industrial Security Force and the Assam Rifles - to undertake a comprehensive review of Group A cadres and submit detailed proposals to the Ministry.

Cadre review is done every five years to estimate future human resources requirements, plan recruitment to avoid future promotional blocks, and to harmonise the functional needs with the legitimate career expectations of its members. The last cadre review of CAPFs was done in 2016.

## Ex-CAPF officials led contempt plea in SC over IPS deputation

पूर्व CAPF अधिकारियों ने IPS प्रतिनियोजन को लेकर SC में अवमानना याचिका दायर की

- Retired Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) officers have led a contempt petition in the Supreme Court against the Union Home Secretary following the non-implementation of the court's 2025 ruling to "progressively reduce" the deputation of Indian Police Service (IPS) officers in the Senior Administrative Grade or up to the rank of Inspector-General (IG) in CAPFs.

सेवानिवृत्त केंद्रीय सशस्त्र पुलिस बल (CAPF) अधिकारियों ने सुप्रीम कोर्ट में केंद्रीय गृह सचिव के खिलाफ अवमानना याचिका दायर की है, क्योंकि अदालत के 2025 के फैसले को लागू नहीं किया गया, जिसमें CAPFs में भारतीय पुलिस सेवा (IPS) अधिकारियों के सीनियर एडमिनिस्ट्रेटिव ग्रेड या इंस्पेक्टर-जनरल (IG) रैंक तक के प्रतिनियोजन को क्रमिक रूप से कम करने का निर्देश दिया गया था।

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