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# PATRIOTIC IAS

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

### THE HINDU NEWSPAPER

## 06 FEBRUARY 2026

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# Mobile phone ban in Himachal Pradesh schools from March 1

PCS

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHANDIGARH

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Thursday announced that students will be prohibited from using mobile phones in all government and private schools across the State, beginning March 1, 2026.

The Chief Minister said the decision has been taken as a step towards improving the academic environment and protecting students' well-being. He made the announcement during the closing ceremony of the 69th National School Games Under-19 Girls Handball Tournament held at Ghumarwin in Bilaspur district.

"Under the new regulations, students will no longer be permitted to bring

**Those found in possession of a phone would face a fine of ₹500 and the confiscation of the device, the CM said**

mobile devices in the school premises," he said, adding that any student found in possession of a phone would face a fine of ₹500 and the confiscation of the device.

**SOP for compliance**

"Additionally, parents will be required to attend mandatory counselling sessions at the school. To ensure long-term compliance, the Education Department has been tasked with drafting a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to address repeated violations," he said.

दौरान की।

- "Under the new regulations, students will no longer be permitted to bring **mobile devices** in the **school premises**," he said, adding that any student found in possession of a phone would face a **fine of ₹500** and the **confiscation of the device**.

"नई नियमावली के तहत छात्रों को **स्कूल परिसर में मोबाइल उपकरण** लाने की अनुमति नहीं होगी," उन्होंने कहा, साथ ही यह भी जोड़ा कि मोबाइल पाए जाने पर **₹500 का जुर्माना** और **डिवाइस की जब्ती** की जाएगी।

**SOP for compliance**  
**अनुपालन के लिए एसओपी**

- "Additionally, **parents** will be required to attend mandatory **counselling sessions** at the school. To ensure long-term compliance, the **Education Department** has been tasked with drafting a **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** to address repeated violations," he said. "इसके अतिरिक्त, **अभिभावकों** को स्कूल में अनिवार्य **काउंसलिंग सत्रों** में भाग लेना होगा। दीर्घकालिक अनुपालन सुनिश्चित करने के लिए **शिक्षा विभाग** को बार-बार उल्लंघन से निपटने हेतु **मानक संचालन प्रक्रिया (एसओपी)** तैयार करने का कार्य सौंपा गया है," उन्होंने कहा।

**Mobile phone ban in Himachal Pradesh schools from March 1**  
**हिमाचल प्रदेश के स्कूलों में 1 मार्च से मोबाइल फोन प्रतिबंध**

- **Mobile phone ban in Himachal Pradesh schools from March 1**  
हिमाचल प्रदेश के स्कूलों में 1 मार्च से मोबाइल फोन पर प्रतिबंध

- **Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu** on Thursday announced that **students will be prohibited from using mobile phones in all government and private schools** across the State, beginning **March 1, 2026**.

हिमाचल प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री सुखविंदर सिंह सुखू ने गुरुवार को घोषणा की कि **1 मार्च 2026** से राज्य भर के सभी **सरकारी और निजी स्कूलों** में छात्रों के लिए मोबाइल फोन का उपयोग प्रतिबंधित होगा।

- The **Chief Minister** said the decision has been taken as a step towards improving the **academic environment** and protecting students' **well-being**.

**मुख्यमंत्री** ने कहा कि यह निर्णय **शैक्षणिक वातावरण** में सुधार और छात्रों की **भलाई** की रक्षा के लिए लिया गया है।

- He made the announcement during the closing ceremony of the **69th National School Games Under-19 Girls Handball Tournament** held at **Ghumarwin in Bilaspur district**.

उन्होंने यह घोषणा **बिलासपुर जिले के घुमारवीं** में आयोजित **69वें राष्ट्रीय स्कूल खेल अंडर-19 बालिका हैंडबॉल टूर्नामेंट** के समापन समारोह के



# Webinar on biotechnology education, skill development to be held on February 8

## Career Counselling

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

The Vellore Institute of Technology, Chennai, in association with *The Hindu*, has launched the “**Biotechnology: Role in Industry 5.0 - Sustainable Future Pathways**” initiative to examine the expanding role of biotechnology in an Industry 5.0 landscape that emphasises human-centric innovation, sustainability, and technological integration.

As biotechnology continues to drive advances across healthcare, agriculture, environmental solutions, and research-led innovation, the initiative seeks to create wider awareness of its societal impact while positioning it as a dynamic and future-ready career domain.

As part of this ongoing



initiative, the second webinar in the series, titled “**Biotechnology Education: Skills & Opportunities for a Sustainable Future**”, will focus on how education and skill development in biotechnology are evolving to meet these emerging demands.

The second webinar will be held on February 8, 2026 from 11.30 a.m. onwards. It will bring together experts from academia, international education, and research, to discuss

how biotechnology education is evolving to meet the demands of a sustainable and innovation-led future.

The webinar will feature G. Jayaraman, professor and dean, School of Bio Sciences and Technology, VIT Chennai; Pooja Shivanand Breh, Environmental and Life Sciences Programme, Faculty of Science, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei; K.S. Nagabhushana, Director - Research, Prayoga Institute of Education Research, Bengaluru; and Jayanthi Velayudhan, Project Post Doctoral Fellow and alumni, VIT. The discussion will be moderated by Soma Basu, journalist.

To register, visit <https://newsth.live/THVITBTSE> or scan the QR code.



## Webinar on biotechnology education, skill development to be held on February 8

### जैव प्रौद्योगिकी शिक्षा और कौशल विकास पर वेबिनार 8 फरवरी को आयोजित होगा

- The Vellore Institute of Technology, Chennai, in association with *The Hindu*, has launched the “**Biotechnology: Role in Industry 5.0 – Sustainable Future Pathways**” initiative to examine the expanding role of biotechnology in an Industry 5.0 landscape that emphasises human-centric innovation, sustainability, and technological integration.

वेल्लोर इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ टेक्नोलॉजी, चेन्नई ने द हिंदू के सहयोग से “बायोटेक्नोलॉजी: इंडस्ट्री 5.0 में भूमिका – सतत भविष्य के मार्ग” पहल की शुरुआत की है, जिसका उद्देश्य इंडस्ट्री 5.0 परिदृश्य में जैव प्रौद्योगिकी की बढ़ती भूमिका का अध्ययन करना है, जो मानव-केंद्रित नवाचार, सततता और प्रौद्योगिकी एकीकरण पर बल देता है।

- As biotechnology continues to drive advances across healthcare, agriculture, environmental solutions, and research-led innovation, the initiative seeks to create wider awareness of its societal impact while positioning it as a dynamic and future-ready career domain.

जैव प्रौद्योगिकी जब लगातार स्वास्थ्य सेवा, कृषि, पर्यावरणीय समाधान और अनुसंधान-आधारित नवाचार में प्रगति को आगे बढ़ा रही है, तब यह पहल इसके सामाजिक प्रभाव के प्रति व्यापक जागरूकता पैदा करने के साथ-साथ इसे एक गतिशील और भविष्य-उन्मुख करियर क्षेत्र के रूप में स्थापित करने का प्रयास करती है।

- As part of this ongoing initiative, the second webinar in the series, titled “**Biotechnology Education: Skills & Opportunities for a Sustainable Future**”, will focus on how education and skill development in biotechnology are evolving to meet these emerging demands.



# UN human rights agency in 'survival mode': Volker Turk

**PCS**  
**Agence France-Presse**  
GENEVA

The UN human rights chief said on Thursday his agency was "in survival mode" due to funding shortfalls, as he launched a \$400 million appeal to tackle global rights crises in 2026.

Volker Turk warned countries that at a time when global human rights are under significant assault, his office was facing dire funding shortages hampering its increasingly important and life-saving work.

"Our reporting provides credible information on atrocities and human rights trends at a time when truth is being eroded by disinformation and censorship," he told diplomats at the UN rights office



Volker Turk

headquarters in Geneva.

In 2025, the UN Human Rights Office's regular budget – set by the UN General Assembly of member states – was \$246 million, but it ultimately received only \$191.5 million of that money.

The UN human rights office lost around 300 out of 2,000 staff last year and had to end or scale back its work in 17 countries.

## UN human rights agency in 'survival mode': Volker Turk संयुक्त राष्ट्र मानवाधिकार एजेंसी 'सर्वाइवल मोड' में है: वोल्कर टर्क

• The **UN human rights chief** said on Thursday his agency was "in survival mode" due to **funding shortfalls**, as he launched a **\$400 million appeal** to tackle global rights crises in **2026**.

संयुक्त राष्ट्र मानवाधिकार प्रमुख ने गुरुवार को कहा कि वित्तीय कमी के कारण उनकी एजेंसी "सर्वाइवल मोड" में है, क्योंकि उन्होंने 2026 में वैश्विक मानवाधिकार संकटों से निपटने के लिए 400 मिलियन डॉलर की अपील शुरू की है।

• **Volker Turk warned countries that at a time when global human rights are under significant assault**, his office was facing **dire funding shortages** hampering its increasingly important and life-saving work.

वोल्कर टर्क ने देशों को चेतावनी दी कि जब वैश्विक मानवाधिकार पर गंभीर हमले हो रहे हैं, उस समय उनका कार्यालय गंभीर वित्तीय कमी का सामना कर रहा है, जिससे उसका बढ़ता हुआ महत्वपूर्ण और जीवनरक्षक कार्य प्रभावित हो रहा है।

• "Our reporting provides credible information on atrocities and human rights trends at a time when truth is being eroded by disinformation and censorship," he told diplomats at the **UN rights office headquarters in Geneva**.

"हमारी रिपोर्टिंग अत्याचारों और मानवाधिकार रुझानों पर विश्वसनीय जानकारी प्रदान करती है, ऐसे समय में जब सत्य को दुष्प्रचार और सेंसरशिप द्वारा कमजोर किया जा रहा है," उन्होंने

जिनेवा में संयुक्त राष्ट्र मानवाधिकार कार्यालय मुख्यालय में राजनयिकों से कहा।

- In **2025**, the **UN Human Rights Office's regular budget** — set by the **UN General Assembly of member states** — was **\$246 million**, but it ultimately received only **\$191.5 million** of that money.

2025 में, संयुक्त राष्ट्र मानवाधिकार कार्यालय का नियमित बजट — जिसे संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासभा के सदस्य देशों द्वारा तय किया गया — 246 मिलियन डॉलर था, लेकिन अंततः उसे केवल 191.5 मिलियन डॉलर ही प्राप्त हुए।

- The **UN human rights office** lost around **300 out of 2,000 staff** last year and had to **end or scale back its work** in **17 countries**.

संयुक्त राष्ट्र मानवाधिकार कार्यालय ने पिछले वर्ष 2,000 में से लगभग 300 कर्मचारियों को खो दिया और उसे 17 देशों में अपना काम समाप्त या कम करना पड़ा।

# Smriti-Voll blitz powers RCB to second crown

The two put on a record 165-run stand for the second wicket as the Bengaluru side chases down 204 in a thrilling finish; the Delhi outfit falls short in a final for the fourth successive time

**PCS**  
**WPL-4**  
**Vivek Krishnan**  
VADODARA

Smriti Mandhana and Georgia Voll couldn't have found a better occasion to produce a partnership for the ages.

With the Women's Premier League trophy up for grabs against Delhi Capitals at the Kotambi Stadium on Thursday, the Royal Challengers Bengaluru pair came together in pursuit of a target of 204 and

left the opponent in a daze with a sublime show of strokeplay.

The record stand between skipper Smriti and Voll, worth 165 runs, helped RCB clinch its second title in four years. While Smriti caressed her way to a 41-ball 87 (12x4, 3x6), Voll hit 79 (54b, 14x4) as the southern side tracked down the highest target in a WPL final with six wickets in hand and two balls to spare.

The climax wasn't without its nervous moments as RCB lost three wickets in

## SCOREBOARD

### DELHI CAPITALS

Lizelle Lee c Harris b de Klerk 37 (26b, 3x4, 3x6), Shafali Verma c Richa b Arundhati 20 (13b, 3x4), Laura Wolvaardt run out 44 (25b, 3x4, 2x6), Jemimah Rodrigues c de Klerk b Sayali 57 (37b, 8x4), Chinelle Henry (not out) 35 (15b, 4x4, 2x6), Extras (w-10): 30, Total (for four wkts. in 20 overs): 203.

### FALL OF WICKETS

quick succession. With 10 runs needed by the Bengaluru outfit off the final over, coupled by Shree Charani, a bowler of singles were

1-49 (Shafali, 5.5 overs), 2-72 (Lee, 7.3), 3-148 (Jemimah, 15.6), 4-203 (Wolvaardt, 19.6).

### RCB BOWLING

Bell 4-0-19-0, Sayali 4-0-46-1, Arundhati 4-0-40-1, Shreyanka 2-0-32-0, de Klerk 4-0-48-1, Radha 2-0-18-0.

### ROYAL CHALLENGERS

Grace Harris b Henry 9 (7b, 2x4), Smriti Mandhana b Henry 87

(41b, 12x4, 3x6), Georgia Voll c Shafali b Minnu 79 (54b, 14x4), Richa Ghosh c Minnu b Nandani 6 (6b, 1x4), Nadine de Klerk (not out) 7 (5b, 1x4), Radha Yadav (not out) 12 (5b, 2x4), Extras (b-2, w-2): 4; Total (for four wkts. in 19.4 overs): 204.

### FALL OF WICKETS

1-9 (Harris, 1.1), 2-174 (Voll, 16.3), 3-181 (Richa, 17.4), 4-191

(Smriti, 18.4).

### CAPITALS BOWLING

Kapp 4-0-38-0, Henry 4-0-34-2, Nandani 4-0-41-1, Shree Charani 3-4-0-46-0, Shafali 1-0-9-0, Minnu 2-0-19-1, Sneha 1-0-15-0.

### Toss: RCB.

### PoM: Smriti.

RCB won by six wickets with two balls to spare to clinch the title.

## The award winners

Orange Cap: Smriti Mandhana (RCB); Purple Cap: Sophie Devine (SG); MVP: Devine Emerging Player: Nandani Sharma (DC).

RCB's response with the bat overshadowed Jemimah's 37-ball 57. The rest of the Capitals batters chipped in with brisk contributions.

Laura Wolvaardt (44, 25b, 3x4, 2x6) and Chinelle Henry (35 n.o., 15b, 4x4, 2x6) provided the finishing kick with a blistering stand of 55 off just 24 balls. Wolvaardt also forged a 76-run partnership with Jemimah.

twinkling feet against spin in serene fashion, notably dancing down the track to Shree Charani for a six over long-on in the 11th over.

RCB's response with the bat overshadowed Jemimah's 37-ball 57. The rest of the Capitals batters chipped in with brisk contributions.

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## Smriti-Voll blitz powers RCB to second crown स्मृति-वोल की विस्फोटक साझेदारी ने आरसीबी को दूसरा खिताब दिलाया

- **Smriti-Voll blitz powers RCB to second crown**  
स्मृति-वोल की आक्रामक बल्लेबाज़ी ने आरसीबी को दूसरा खिताब दिलाया
- **Smriti Mandhana and Georgia Voll** couldn't have found a better occasion to produce a partnership for the ages.  
स्मृति मंधाना और जॉर्जिया वोल को यादगार साझेदारी के लिए इससे बेहतर मौका नहीं मिल सकता था।
- With the **Women's Premier League trophy up for grabs against Delhi Capitals at the Kotambi Stadium on Thursday**, the **Royal Challengers Bengaluru** pair came together in pursuit of a target of **204** and left the opponent in a daze with a sublime show of strokeplay.  
गुरुवार को कोटाम्बी स्टेडियम में दिल्ली कैपिटल्स के खिलाफ महिला प्रीमियर लीग ट्रॉफी दांव पर होने के दौरान, रॉयल चैलेंजर्स बेंगलुरु की जोड़ी ने 204 के लक्ष्य का पीछा करते हुए शानदार स्ट्रोकप्ले से विरोधी टीम को स्तब्ध कर दिया।
- The record stand between skipper **Smriti** and **Voll**, worth **165 runs**, helped RCB clinch its second title in **four years**.  
कप्तान स्मृति और वोल के बीच 165 रनों की रिकॉर्ड साझेदारी ने आरसीबी को चार वर्षों में दूसरा खिताब दिलाया।
- While Smriti caressed her way to a **41-ball 87 (12x4, 3x6)**, Voll hit **79 (54b, 14x4)** as the southern side tracked down the highest target in a **WPL final** with **six wickets** in hand and **two balls** to spare.  
जहां स्मृति ने 41 गेंदों में 87 रन (12x4, 3x6) बनाए, वहीं वोल ने 79 रन (54 गेंद, 14x4) जड़े, जिससे दक्षिणी टीम ने डब्ल्यूपीएल फाइनल में छह विकेट शेष रहते और दो गेंदें बाकी रहते सर्वोच्च लक्ष्य हासिल किया।
- The climax wasn't without its nervous moments as RCB lost **three wickets** in quick succession.  
अंतिम क्षणों में तनाव रहा क्योंकि आरसीबी ने जल्दी-जल्दी तीन विकेट गंवा दिए।
- With **10 runs** needed by the Bengaluru outfit off the final over, bowled by **Shree Charani**, a couple of singles were followed by back-to-back fours from **Radha Yadav** to finish the game in style.  
अंतिम ओवर में 10 रन चाहिए थे, जो श्री चरणी ने डाला, पहले दो सिंगल आए और फिर राधा यादव ने लगातार दो चौके लगाकर मैच को शानदार अंदाज़ में समाप्त किया।
- Radha was dropped by **Minnu Mani** in the penultimate over of the chase.  
चेज़ के अंतिम से पहले ओवर में मिन्नू मणि ने राधा का कैच छोड़ा।
- For **Jemimah Rodrigues' DC**, a **fourth straight runner-up finish** will be a bitter pill to swallow.  
जेमिमा रोड्रिग्स की डीसी के लिए लगातार चौथी बार उपविजेता रहना कड़वा अनुभव होगा।
- Despite the dismissal of **Grace Harris** in the second over, RCB kept up with the asking rate through the partnership between Smriti and Voll.  
दूसरे ओवर में ग्रेस हैरिस के आउट होने के बावजूद, स्मृति और वोल की साझेदारी के जरिए आरसीबी ने आवश्यक रन गति बनाए रखी।
- In the initial stages, Smriti didn't get much strike. Voll took charge — cheeky ramps behind the wicket, fierce cuts square on the off-side and elegant drives in front all flowed from the Australian's willow.  
शुरुआती चरण में स्मृति को ज्यादा स्ट्राइक नहीं मिली। वोल ने कमान संभाली — विकेट के पीछे चतुर रैंप, ऑफ-साइड पर तेज कट और सामने की ओर शानदार ड्राइव ऑस्ट्रेलियाई बल्लेबाज़ के बल्ले से निकले।
- Through the middle overs, Smriti came into her own.  
मध्य ओवरों में स्मृति अपने पूरे रंग में नजर आईं।





- She deployed her twinkling feet against spin in serene fashion, notably dancing down the track to **Shree Charani** for a six over long-on in the **11th over**.  
उन्होंने स्पिन के खिलाफ शानदार फुटवर्क दिखाया, खास तौर पर **11वें ओवर** में **श्री चरणी** की गेंद पर लॉन्ग-ऑन के ऊपर छक्का जमाने के लिए पिच पर आगे बढ़ते हुए।
- RCB's response with the bat overshadowed Jemimah's **37-ball 57**.  
आरसीबी की बल्लेबाज़ी ने जेमिमा के **37 गेंदों में 57 रन** को पीछे छोड़ दिया।
- The rest of the Capitals batters chipped in with brisk contributions.  
कैपिटल्स की अन्य बल्लेबाज़ों ने भी तेज योगदान दिया।
- **Laura Wolvaardt (44, 25b, 3x4, 2x6)** and **Chinelle Henry (35 n.o., 15b, 4x4, 2x6)** provided the finishing kick with a blistering stand of **55 off just 24 balls**.  
**लौरा वोल्वार्ट (44, 25 गेंद, 3x4, 2x6)** और **चिनेल हेनरी (35 नाबाद, 15 गेंद, 4x4, 2x6)** ने मात्र **24 गेंदों में 55 रनों** की विस्फोटक साझेदारी से अंत में तेज़ी दी।
- Wolvaardt also forged a **76-run partnership** with Jemimah.  
वोल्वार्ट ने जेमिमा के साथ **76 रनों** की साझेदारी भी की।

<b>GS Paper 1: History,</b>	
<b>TOPICS COVERED</b>	<b>06 February 2026</b>
<b>1. QUIZ</b>	

**PICTURE OF THE WEEK**  
A time for reflection



Kashmiri Shiite Muslims light candles at the graves of their relatives to mark Shab-e-Barat, at a graveyard in Srinagar. Shab-e-Barat means the Night of Salvation and it reflects the belief that Allah grants mercy to those who sin and blesses those who pray. BIRAN NESSAR

Kashmiri Shiite Muslims light candles at the graves of their relatives to mark **Shab-e-Barat**, at a graveyard in Srinagar. Shab-e-Barat means the Night of Salvation and **it reflects the belief that Allah grants mercy to those who sin and blesses those who pray.**



in 1912. She was the wife of which famous political figure from history?

### QUESTION 5

This Hungarian-American socialite and actor was born on February 6, 1917. Her most famous film was *Moulin Rouge*. Who was she?

**Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz:** 1. On February 5, 1958, the U.S. Air Force lost a hydrogen bomb named 'Tybee' and never recovered it. What is the U.S. military's term for such events?

**Ans: Broken Arrow incidents**

2. In 1968, a U.S. B-52 aircraft carrying four thermonuclear bombs crashed onto the sea ice off the coast of \_\_\_\_\_. **Ans: Greenland**

bomb was **never recovered**, making it one of the most famous **Broken Arrow** incidents in history.

### Greenland B-52 crash (1968)

- In **January 1968**, a U.S. Air Force **B-52 bomber** carrying **four thermonuclear bombs** crashed on the **sea ice near Thule Air Base, Greenland**, after an onboard fire forced the crew to abandon the aircraft.
- The crash triggered a major **nuclear accident response**, classified by the U.S. military as a **Broken Arrow** incident, meaning an accident involving nuclear weapons without risk of nuclear war.
- **Aftermath and recovery**  
The explosion of conventional materials spread **radioactive contamination** over ice and sea. The U.S. launched **Operation Crested Ice**, a large clean-up mission involving thousands of personnel.
- Most nuclear components were recovered, though debate continued about one missing bomb part. The incident led to tighter **nuclear safety rules**, improved airborne alert policies, and eventually the end of routine U.S. nuclear bomber patrols over Greenland.

### Alexander Lebed and "suitcase nuclear devices" claim

- After the **collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991**, former Russian national security adviser **Alexander Lebed** stated in **1997** that the Russian military had lost track of around **100 portable nuclear devices**, often described as "**suitcase-sized**" bombs. He suggested these weapons were small tactical nuclear demolition munitions developed during the Cold War for sabotage missions, raising global concern about nuclear security and possible proliferation risks.
- Russian authorities, including the Defence Ministry and security agencies, **denied Lebed's claim**, stating that all nuclear weapons were fully accounted for and securely controlled. U.S. intelligence assessments also found **no confirmed evidence** of missing suitcase bombs. The issue nevertheless prompted stronger **international nuclear security cooperation**, improved safeguarding of former Soviet arsenals, and expansion of programs to secure and dismantle nuclear materials after the Cold War.

## QUIZ

### Broken Arrow incidents

- **Meaning of the term**

The U.S. military uses the term "**Broken Arrow**" to describe accidents involving **nuclear weapons** that do not create the risk of nuclear war.

- These incidents include loss, accidental dropping, theft, or damage of a nuclear weapon without intentional use. The term is part of the U.S. Department of Defense's official nuclear incident classification system developed during the **Cold War** for emergency response and reporting.

- **Tybee bomb incident (1958)**

**On February 5, 1958**, a U.S. Air Force **B-47 bomber** collided with an F-86 fighter near Georgia, USA, during a training mission. The bomber released a **Mark-15 hydrogen bomb**, nicknamed "**Tybee**", into waters near Tybee Island for safety. Despite extensive search operations by the U.S. military, the



## Project Azorian (1974 CIA Recovery Mission)

- Mission overview**  
 In 1974, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency launched a highly secret **\$800-million mission** called **Project Azorian** to recover a **sunken Soviet submarine K-129** from the Pacific Ocean. The submarine had sunk in 1968 carrying nuclear missiles and cryptographic material. The operation used the specially built ship **Glomar Explorer**, officially presented as a deep-sea mining vessel to conceal the true intelligence objective during the Cold War.
- Outcome and significance**  
 The CIA managed to lift part of the submarine from extreme depth, but a mechanical failure caused most of it to fall back to the ocean floor. Some materials, including human remains and limited intelligence items, were reportedly recovered. Though only partially successful, **Project Azorian** became one of the most complex covert operations ever, advancing deep-sea engineering and highlighting Cold War nuclear intelligence competition between the United States and the Soviet Union.

## Nanda Devi nuclear monitoring device mission (1965)

- Mission background**  
 In 1965, the CIA and India's Intelligence Bureau jointly attempted to install a **plutonium-powered remote monitoring device** on **Nanda Devi peak** in the Himalayas. The objective was to monitor **Chinese nuclear and missile tests** after China's 1964 nuclear explosion. The device used a radioisotope thermoelectric generator containing plutonium to power long-term surveillance equipment in extreme high-altitude conditions during the Cold War.
- Loss of the device and concerns**  
 During the expedition, severe weather forced the team to abandon the device on the mountain. When they returned in 1966, it had disappeared, likely swept away by an avalanche. The loss raised concerns about **radioactive contamination** in the Himalayan environment and Ganga river system. Later monitoring reported no confirmed harmful radiation impact, but the episode remains a notable Cold War intelligence operation involving India and the United States.

<b>GS Paper 1: Society</b>	
<b>TOPICS COVERED</b>	<b>06 February 2026</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Infertility in India: bringing mental health to the forefront of condition</b> <b>भारत में बांझपन: मानसिक स्वास्थ्य को स्थिति के केंद्र में लाना</b>



# Infertility in India: bringing mental health to the forefront of condition

Mental health is not a peripheral concern in fertility care, it is a central determinant of reproductive health; until it is treated as an integral component of care for all genders, gap between what science knows and what society believes will widen; stigma should be replaced with science, silence with dialogue, and blame with compassion

SS | Society  
Rashikkha Ra. Iyer

Is womanhood synonymous with motherhood? This question has lingered in the Indian social imagination for generations. The country's fertility landscape remains firmly anchored in a patriarchal narrative, where a woman's worth, identity, and social legitimacy are overwhelmingly tied to her ability to bear children.

Despite the biological fact that conception requires both a man and a woman, the moral burden of infertility is placed almost exclusively on women. Women without children are openly discouraged from attending weddings, baby showers, or religious ceremonies. Such exclusions deepen feelings of shame, isolation, embarrassment, identity fragmentation, and perceived moral failure.

Infertility, though a medical condition like any other, is frequently subjected to moral scrutiny. Even when medical evaluations clearly identify male-factor issues – such as low sperm counts or unexplained infertility – the cultural script continues to place blame squarely on women. This persistent assumption reinforces a deeply entrenched gender bias that distorts both responsibility and compassion.

## Men's mental health

What often goes unacknowledged in these conversations is that male infertility itself is deeply intertwined with mental health, and that psychological distress can directly impair sperm quality. This is well-established in contemporary reproductive science. A 2024 original research article in *Frontiers in Endocrinology* found that depression is significantly associated with decreased semen quality, including reduced sperm concentration and motility (Zhang et al., 2024). This means that the very men who are culturally insulated from blame may themselves be experiencing psychological states that biologically diminish fertility potential.

Further evidence comes from a 2025 open-access study in *Reproductive Biology and Endocrinology*, which demonstrates that depression, anxiety, and stress impair sperm quality through dysregulation of the mitochondrial PDK-PDC axis, a pathway essential for healthy sperm metabolism (Wang et al., 2025). This mechanistic insight reinforces that mental health is not merely an emotional overlay, but a physiological determinant of reproductive function.

Ironically, the very patriarchal norms that so swiftly assign fault to women also conspire to keep men silent about their own psychological distress. This enforced quietude does more than perpetuate stigma – it may be actively undermining fertility itself. Observations from clinical reviews indicate that chronic psychological stress triggers activation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, driving up cortisol levels and destabilising the hormonal milieu essential for healthy spermatogenesis.

What emerges from this body of research is a striking paradox: while women absorb the social, emotional, and reputational costs of infertility, men's unaddressed mental health burdens may be biologically fuelling the very condition for which women are castigated.



Research shows that heightened anxiety and depressive symptoms are associated with lower success rates in procedures such as IVF. The monthly cycle of hope, hyper-vigilance, and disappointment compound this stress, creating a physiological environment that is less conducive to conception. GETTY IMAGES

**Infertility, though a medical condition like any other, is subjected to moral scrutiny. If the silence around men's mental health obscures its biological consequences, the landscape for women is even more fraught**

Acknowledging this dual reality is not merely a matter of fairness or empathy – it is central to improving reproductive outcomes.

If the silence around men's mental health obscures its biological consequences, the emotional landscape for women is even more fraught – and the science here is equally unambiguous. Mental health challenges do not merely accompany infertility; they can actively impair reproductive function. A landmark study in *Human Reproduction* found that women experiencing high levels of psychological stress had significantly lower probabilities of conception during each menstrual cycle, with elevated salivary alpha-amylase – a biomarker of stress – correlating with reduced fecundability (Lynch et al., 2014). In other words, stress is not just a by-product of infertility; it can be a precursor.

Findings from a number of studies underscore that emotional distress is not simply "in the mind" – it is inscribed in the endocrine system.

Taken together, the evidence paints a sobering picture: women are not only socially penalised for infertility but may also be physiologically disadvantaged by the very emotional burdens that stigma imposes. It is a cruel feedback loop – one in which social pressure becomes a biological impediment, and biology becomes further ammunition for social blame. Recognising this interplay is essential. Mental health is not a peripheral concern in fertility care, it is a central determinant of reproductive health. Until emotional well-being is treated with the same seriousness as hormonal assays and ultrasound scans,

the gap between what science knows and what society believes will continue to widen, to the detriment of the very people seeking to build families. The consequences of this emotional burden extend even further when couples enter the realm of infertility treatment. Assisted reproductive technologies are often portrayed as purely biomedical solutions, yet their success is intimately tied to psychological wellbeing. Chronic stress – fuelled by stigma, family pressure, financial strain, and the relentless expectation to conceive – can disrupt hormonal regulation, impair ovulation, and interfere with the body's responsiveness to treatment protocols.

## Pressures of treatment

Research consistently shows that heightened anxiety and depressive symptoms are associated with lower success rates in procedures such as IVF. The monthly cycle of hope, hyper-vigilance, and disappointment compound this stress, creating a physiological environment that is less conducive to conception.

The pressures of infertility treatment also reshape the most intimate dimensions of a couple's relationship. What is ordinarily an expression of desire, connection, or spontaneity can become tightly choreographed around ovulation windows, clinic schedules, and medical directives. Many couples describe sex during treatment as increasingly mechanical – an obligation rather than an act of intimacy.

This can erode relational closeness. Over time, the emotional strain can dampen libido, heighten anxiety, and create a sense of detachment between partners. Ironically, the very effort to conceive can undermine the relational and psychological conditions that support healthy sexual functioning.

Recognising this dynamic is crucial. Fertility treatment is not only a medical journey but a relational one. Without compassionate support that acknowledges the toll on intimacy,

couples may find themselves navigating not only the challenges of infertility but also the quiet erosion of the connection that once anchored their partnership.

## The path forward

India stands at a crossroads. The science is clear, the human cost undeniable, and yet our cultural narratives remain stubbornly unchanged.

The first step forward is cultural honesty. We must finally sever the idea that womanhood is validated through motherhood. As long as society treats fertility as a measure of virtue, women will continue to pay with their dignity, their mental health, and in many cases, their biological chances of conceiving. Equally urgent is the need to bring men into the centre of the conversation. The data shows that male mental health directly affects fertility, yet patriarchal norms keep men silent, unexamined, and emotionally unsupported.

Clinics, too, must evolve. Mental health support cannot remain a decorative add-on to reproductive care. It must be embedded into every stage of assessment and treatment. Screening for anxiety, depression, and relational strain should be as routine as semen analysis or hormone testing. When emotional wellbeing is treated as essential, outcomes improve – not just medically, but humanely. Finally, couples need support that protects their relationships from the corrosive pressures of treatment. Infertility should not be allowed to hollow out intimacy or turn partnership into performance.

The way forward is not complicated – it is simply long overdue. We must replace stigma with science, silence with dialogue, and blame with compassion. Only then can fertility care in India move from being a site of quiet suffering to one of dignity, equity, and genuine healing.

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## THE GIST

Despite the biological fact that conception requires both man and a woman, the moral burden of infertility is placed almost exclusively on women. Even when medical evaluations clearly identify male-factor issues – such as low sperm counts or unexplained infertility – the cultural script continues to place blame squarely on women.

Mental health challenges not merely accompany infertility; they can actively impair reproductive function. Findings from a number of studies underscore that emotional distress is not simply "in the mind" – it is inscribed in the endocrine system.

Mental health support cannot remain a decorative add-on to reproductive care. It must be embedded into every stage of assessment and treatment. Screening for anxiety, depression, and relational strain should be as routine as semen analysis or hormone testing.

## Infertility in India: bringing mental health to the forefront of condition भारत में बांझपन: मानसिक स्वास्थ्य को स्थिति के केंद्र में लाना

- Mental health is not a peripheral concern in fertility care, it is a central determinant of reproductive health; until it is treated as an integral component of care for all genders, gap between what science knows and what society believes will widen; stigma should be replaced



with science, silence with dialogue, and blame with compassion

मानसिक स्वास्थ्य प्रजनन देखभाल में कोई हाशिये का विषय नहीं है, यह प्रजनन स्वास्थ्य का एक केंद्रीय निर्धारक है; जब तक इसे सभी लिंगों के लिए देखभाल का अभिन्न हिस्सा नहीं माना जाएगा, तब तक विज्ञान क्या जानता है और समाज क्या मानता है के बीच की खाई बढ़ती जाएगी; कलंक को विज्ञान से, मौन को संवाद से, और दोषारोपण को करुणा से बदलना चाहिए

**Is womanhood synonymous with motherhood?  
क्या स्त्रीत्व मातृत्व का पर्याय है?**

- **Is womanhood synonymous with motherhood?** This question has lingered in the Indian social imagination for generations. The country's fertility landscape remains firmly anchored in a patriarchal narrative, where a woman's worth, identity, and social legitimacy are overwhelmingly tied to her ability to bear children. क्या स्त्रीत्व मातृत्व का पर्याय है? यह प्रश्न भारतीय सामाजिक कल्पना में पीढ़ियों से बना हुआ है। देश का प्रजनन परिदृश्य एक पितृसत्तात्मक कथा में दृढ़ता से जड़ा हुआ है, जहाँ एक महिला का मूल्य, पहचान और सामाजिक वैधता अत्यधिक रूप से उसकी संतान उत्पन्न करने की क्षमता से जुड़ी होती है।
- Despite the biological fact that conception requires both a man and a woman, the moral burden of infertility is placed almost exclusively on women. Women without children are openly discouraged from attending weddings, baby showers, or religious ceremonies. Such exclusions deepen feelings of shame, isolation, embarrassment, identity fragmentation, and perceived moral failure. इस जैविक तथ्य के बावजूद कि गर्भाधान के लिए पुरुष और महिला दोनों आवश्यक हैं, बांझपन का नैतिक बोझ लगभग पूरी तरह महिलाओं पर डाल दिया जाता है। बिना बच्चों वाली महिलाओं को शादियों, गोद भराई या धार्मिक समारोहों में शामिल होने से खुलकर हतोत्साहित किया जाता है। ऐसे बहिष्कार शर्म, अलगाव, संकोच, पहचान के विखंडन और नैतिक असफलता की अनुभूति को और गहरा करते हैं।
- Infertility, though a medical condition like any other, is frequently subjected to moral scrutiny. Even when medical evaluations clearly identify male-factor issues — such as low sperm counts or unexplained infertility — the cultural script continues to place blame squarely on women. This persistent assumption reinforces a deeply entrenched gender bias that distorts both responsibility and compassion. बांझपन, अन्य की तरह एक चिकित्सीय स्थिति होने के बावजूद, अक्सर नैतिक जांच के अधीन रहता है। यहाँ तक कि जब चिकित्सीय परीक्षण स्पष्ट रूप से पुरुष-कारक समस्याओं — जैसे कम शुक्राणु संख्या या अस्पष्ट बांझपन — की पहचान करते हैं, तब भी सांस्कृतिक सोच दोष सीधे महिलाओं पर डालती रहती है। यह लगातार धारणा गहराई से जड़े हुए लैंगिक पक्षपात को मजबूत करती है, जो जिम्मेदारी और सहानुभूति दोनों को विकृत करती है।

**Men's mental health  
पुरुषों का मानसिक स्वास्थ्य**

- What often goes unacknowledged in these conversations is that male infertility itself is deeply intertwined with mental health, and that psychological distress can directly impair sperm quality. This is well-established in contemporary reproductive science. A 2024 original research article in *Frontiers in Endocrinology* found that depression is significantly associated with decreased semen quality, including reduced sperm concentration and motility (Zhang et al., 2024). This means that the very men who are culturally insulated from blame may themselves be experiencing psychological states that biologically diminish fertility potential. जो बात अक्सर इन चर्चाओं में अनदेखी रह जाती है, वह यह है कि पुरुष बांझपन स्वयं मानसिक स्वास्थ्य से गहराई से जुड़ा है, और मनोवैज्ञानिक तनाव सीधे शुक्राणु गुणवत्ता को प्रभावित कर सकता है। यह आधुनिक प्रजनन विज्ञान में अच्छी तरह स्थापित है। 2024 में *Frontiers in Endocrinology* में प्रकाशित एक शोध ने पाया कि अवसाद का संबंध घटती हुई वीर्य गुणवत्ता, जिसमें कम शुक्राणु एकाग्रता और गतिशीलता शामिल है (Zhang et al., 2024), से महत्वपूर्ण रूप से जुड़ा है। इसका अर्थ है कि जो पुरुष सांस्कृतिक रूप से दोष से बचे रहते हैं, वे स्वयं ऐसे मनोवैज्ञानिक अवस्थाओं का अनुभव कर रहे हो सकते हैं जो जैविक रूप से प्रजनन क्षमता को कम करती हैं।
- Further evidence comes from a 2025 open-access study in *Reproductive Biology and Endocrinology*, which demonstrates that depression, anxiety, and stress impair sperm



quality through dysregulation of the **mitochondrial PDK–PDC axis**, a pathway essential for healthy **sperm metabolism** (Wang et al., 2025). This mechanistic insight reinforces that **mental health** is not merely an **emotional overlay**, but a **physiological determinant of reproductive function**.

आगे के प्रमाण 2025 में **Reproductive Biology and Endocrinology** में प्रकाशित एक ओपन-एक्सेस अध्ययन से मिलते हैं, जो दर्शाता है कि **अवसाद, चिंता और तनाव माइटोकॉन्ड्रियल PDK–PDC अक्ष** के असंतुलन के माध्यम से शुक्राणु गुणवत्ता को प्रभावित करते हैं, जो स्वस्थ **शुक्राणु चयापचय** के लिए आवश्यक मार्ग है (Wang et al., 2025). यह यांत्रिक समझ मजबूत करती है कि **मानसिक स्वास्थ्य** केवल एक **भावनात्मक परत** नहीं है, बल्कि प्रजनन कार्य का एक **शारीरिक निर्धारक** है।

- Ironically, the very **patriarchal norms** that so swiftly assign **fault to women** also conspire to keep **men silent** about their own **psychological distress**. This enforced **quietude** does more than perpetuate **stigma** — it may be actively **undermining fertility** itself. Observations from **clinical reviews** indicate that chronic **psychological stress** triggers activation of the **hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal (HPA) axis**, driving up **cortisol levels** and destabilising the **hormonal milieu** essential for healthy **spermatogenesis**.

विडंबना यह है कि वही **पितृसत्तात्मक मानदंड** जो तेजी से **दोष महिलाओं पर** डालते हैं, **पुरुषों को चुप** रहने के लिए भी मजबूर करते हैं, जिससे वे अपने **मनोवैज्ञानिक तनाव** के बारे में नहीं बोलते। यह थोपी गई **चुप्पी** केवल **कलंक** को ही कायम नहीं रखती — बल्कि संभवतः स्वयं **प्रजनन क्षमता को कमजोर** कर रही है। **क्लिनिकल समीक्षाओं** के अवलोकन बताते हैं कि दीर्घकालिक **मनोवैज्ञानिक तनाव हाइपोथैलेमिक–पिट्यूटरी–एड्रेनल (HPA) अक्ष** को सक्रिय करता है, जिससे **कॉर्टिसोल स्तर** बढ़ जाते हैं और स्वस्थ **शुक्रजनन** के लिए आवश्यक **हार्मोनल संतुलन** अस्थिर हो जाता है।

### Paradox and Reproductive Outcomes विरोधाभास और प्रजनन परिणाम

- What emerges from this **body of research** is a striking **paradox**: while **women** absorb the **social, emotional, and reputational costs of infertility**, **men’s unaddressed mental health burdens** may be biologically fuelling the very **condition** for which women are **castigated**.  
इस शोध के समूह से एक स्पष्ट **विरोधाभास** उभरता है: जहाँ **महिलाएँ बांझपन की सामाजिक, भावनात्मक और प्रतिष्ठागत कीमत** झेलती हैं, वहीं **पुरुषों का अनसुलझा मानसिक स्वास्थ्य बोझ** उसी स्थिति को जैविक रूप से बढ़ा सकता है जिसके लिए महिलाओं को **दोषी ठहराया** जाता है।
- Acknowledging this **dual reality** is not merely a matter of **fairness or empathy** — it is central to improving **reproductive outcomes**.  
इस **द्वैध वास्तविकता** को स्वीकार करना केवल **न्याय या सहानुभूति** का प्रश्न नहीं है — यह **प्रजनन परिणामों** को सुधारने के लिए केंद्रीय है।

### Women’s Mental Health and Fertility महिलाओं का मानसिक स्वास्थ्य और प्रजनन

- If the silence around **men’s mental health** obscures its **biological consequences**, the **emotional landscape for women** is even more fraught — and the **science** here is equally unambiguous.  
यदि **पुरुषों के मानसिक स्वास्थ्य** के आसपास की चुप्पी उसके **जैविक परिणामों** को छिपा देती है, तो **महिलाओं का भावनात्मक परिदृश्य** और भी जटिल है — और यहाँ का **विज्ञान** भी उतना ही स्पष्ट है।
- **Mental health challenges** do not merely accompany **infertility**; they can actively impair **reproductive function**.  
**मानसिक स्वास्थ्य की चुनौतियाँ** केवल **बांझपन** के साथ नहीं चलतीं; वे सक्रिय रूप से **प्रजनन कार्य** को प्रभावित कर सकती हैं।
- A landmark study in **Human Reproduction** found that women experiencing high levels of **psychological stress** had significantly **lower probabilities of conception during each menstrual cycle**, with elevated **salivary alpha-amylase — a biomarker of stress — correlating with reduced fecundability** (2014).  
**Human Reproduction** में प्रकाशित एक महत्वपूर्ण अध्ययन ने पाया कि उच्च स्तर के **मनोवैज्ञानिक तनाव** का अनुभव करने वाली महिलाओं में प्रत्येक **मासिक धर्म चक्र** के दौरान **गर्भधारण की संभावना** काफी कम



थी, और बढ़ा हुआ लार अल्फा-एमाइलेज — जो तनाव का जैवचिह्न है — कम प्रजनन क्षमता से जुड़ा था (2014).

- In other words, **stress** is not just a **by-product of infertility**; it can be a **precursor**. दूसरे शब्दों में, तनाव केवल **बांझपन का परिणाम** नहीं है; यह उसका **पूर्वगामी कारण** भी हो सकता है।
- **Endocrine Imprint of Emotional Distress**  
**भावनात्मक तनाव की अंतःस्रावी छाप**
- Findings from a number of **studies** underscore that **emotional distress** is not simply “in the mind” — it is inscribed in the **endocrine system**. कई **अध्ययनों** के निष्कर्ष बताते हैं कि **भावनात्मक तनाव** केवल “मन में” नहीं होता — यह **अंतःस्रावी तंत्र** में भी अंकित होता है।

### Social Pressure and Biological Impact सामाजिक दबाव और जैविक प्रभाव

- Taken together, the **evidence** paints a sobering picture: women are not only **socially penalised for infertility** but may also be **physiologically disadvantaged** by the very **emotional burdens** that **stigma** imposes. सभी **साक्ष्यों** को मिलाकर एक गंभीर चित्र सामने आता है: महिलाएँ केवल **बांझपन के लिए सामाजिक रूप से दंडित** नहीं होतीं बल्कि उसी **भावनात्मक बोझ** से **शारीरिक रूप से भी प्रभावित** हो सकती हैं जो **कलंक** उन पर डालता है।
- It is a cruel **feedback loop** — one in which **social pressure** becomes a **biological impediment**, and **biology** becomes further ammunition for **social blame**. यह एक क्रूर **फीडबैक चक्र** है — जिसमें **सामाजिक दबाव** एक **जैविक बाधा** बन जाता है, और **जीवविज्ञान** आगे **सामाजिक दोषारोपण** का आधार बन जाता है।
- Recognising this **interplay** is essential. **Mental health** is not a **peripheral concern** in fertility care, it is a **central determinant of reproductive health**. इस **परस्पर संबंध** को पहचानना आवश्यक है। **मानसिक स्वास्थ्य** प्रजनन देखभाल में कोई **द्वितीयक चिंता** नहीं है, बल्कि यह **प्रजनन स्वास्थ्य का केंद्रीय निर्धारक** है।
- Until **emotional well-being** is treated with the same seriousness as **hormonal assays and ultrasound scans**, the gap between what **science knows** and what **society believes** will continue to widen, to the detriment of the very **people seeking to build families**. जब तक **भावनात्मक कल्याण** को **हार्मोनल परीक्षण और अल्ट्रासाउंड जांच** के समान गंभीरता से नहीं लिया जाएगा, तब तक **विज्ञान की समझ** और **समाज की मान्यता** के बीच की खाई बढ़ती रहेगी, जिससे उन **लोगों** को नुकसान होगा जो **परिवार बनाने** की कोशिश कर रहे हैं।

### Psychological Stress and Infertility Treatment मनोवैज्ञानिक तनाव और बांझपन उपचार

- The **consequences of this emotional burden** extend even further when couples enter the realm of **infertility treatment**. इस **भावनात्मक बोझ के परिणाम** तब और बढ़ जाते हैं जब दंपति **बांझपन उपचार** के क्षेत्र में प्रवेश करते हैं।
- **Assisted reproductive technologies** are often portrayed as purely **biomedical solutions**, yet their success is intimately tied to **psychological wellbeing**. **सहायक प्रजनन तकनीकों** को अक्सर केवल **जैव-चिकित्सीय समाधान** के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया जाता है, फिर भी उनकी सफलता गहराई से **मनोवैज्ञानिक कल्याण** से जुड़ी होती है।
- Chronic **stress** — fuelled by **stigma, family pressure, financial strain, and the relentless expectation to conceive** — can disrupt **hormonal regulation**, impair **ovulation**, and interfere with the body's **responsiveness to treatment protocols**. दीर्घकालिक **तनाव** — जो **कलंक, पारिवारिक दबाव, आर्थिक बोझ और गर्भधारण की निरंतर अपेक्षा** से बढ़ता है — **हार्मोनल नियंत्रण** को बाधित कर सकता है, **ओव्यूलेशन** को प्रभावित कर सकता है, और उपचार के प्रति शरीर की **प्रतिक्रिया क्षमता** में हस्तक्षेप कर सकता है।

### Pressures of treatment उपचार का दबाव



- Pressures of **treatment** Research consistently shows that heightened **anxiety** and **depressive symptoms** are associated with lower **success rates** in procedures such as **IVF**.  
उपचार का दबाव शोध लगातार दिखाता है कि बढ़ी हुई चिंता और अवसाद के लक्षण IVF जैसे उपचारों में कम सफलता दर से जुड़े होते हैं।
- The monthly cycle of **hope, hyper-vigilance, and disappointment** compound this **stress**, creating a **physiological environment** that is less conducive to **conception**.  
आशा, अत्यधिक सतर्कता और निराशा का मासिक चक्र इस तनाव को बढ़ाता है, जिससे ऐसा शारीरिक वातावरण बनता है जो गर्भधारण के लिए कम अनुकूल होता है।
- The pressures of **infertility treatment** also reshape the most **intimate dimensions** of a couple's **relationship**.  
बांझपन उपचार का दबाव दंपति के रिश्ते के सबसे घनिष्ठ पहलुओं को भी बदल देता है।
- What is ordinarily an expression of **desire, connection, or spontaneity** can become tightly choreographed around **ovulation windows, clinic schedules, and medical directives**.  
जो सामान्यतः इच्छा, जुड़ाव या स्वाभाविकता की अभिव्यक्ति होता है, वह ओव्यूलेशन समय, क्लिनिक शेड्यूल और चिकित्सकीय निर्देशों के अनुसार नियंत्रित हो जाता है।
- Many couples describe **sex during treatment** as increasingly **mechanical** — an **obligation** rather than an act of **intimacy**.  
कई दंपति उपचार के दौरान यौन संबंध को अधिक यांत्रिक बताते हैं — यह घनिष्ठता की बजाय एक कर्तव्य बन जाता है।
- This can erode **relational closeness**.  
यह रिश्ते की निकटता को कमजोर कर सकता है।
- Over time, the **emotional strain** can dampen **libido**, heighten **anxiety**, and create a sense of **detachment** between partners.  
समय के साथ भावनात्मक दबाव यौन इच्छा को कम कर सकता है, चिंता बढ़ा सकता है और साझेदारों के बीच दूरी पैदा कर सकता है।
- Ironically, the very **effort to conceive** can undermine the **relational and psychological conditions** that support healthy **sexual functioning**.  
विडंबना यह है कि गर्भधारण का प्रयास ही स्वस्थ यौन कार्यक्षमता को सहारा देने वाली रिश्तात्मक और मनोवैज्ञानिक स्थितियों को कमजोर कर सकता है।
- Recognising this **dynamic** is crucial.  
इस स्थिति को पहचानना अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण है।
- **Fertility treatment** is not only a **medical journey** but a **relational one**.  
प्रजनन उपचार केवल एक चिकित्सीय यात्रा नहीं बल्कि एक संबंधात्मक यात्रा भी है।
- Without **compassionate support** that acknowledges the **toll on intimacy**, couples may find themselves navigating not only the **challenges of infertility** but also the quiet **erosion of the connection** that once anchored their **partnership**.  
यदि संवेदनशील सहयोग नहीं मिलता जो घनिष्ठता पर प्रभाव को समझे, तो दंपति न केवल बांझपन की चुनौतियों से बल्कि अपने रिश्ते के कमजोर होने से भी जूझते हैं।

### The path forward आगे का मार्ग

- **India** stands at a **crossroads**. The **science** is clear, the **human cost** undeniable, and yet our **cultural narratives** remain stubbornly unchanged.  
भारत एक मोड़ पर खड़ा है। विज्ञान स्पष्ट है, मानवीय कीमत असंदिग्ध है, फिर भी हमारी सांस्कृतिक धारणाएँ अब भी नहीं बदली हैं।
- The first step forward is **cultural honesty**.  
आगे बढ़ने का पहला कदम सांस्कृतिक ईमानदारी है।
- We must finally sever the idea that **womanhood** is validated through **motherhood**.  
हमें अंततः इस विचार को तोड़ना होगा कि स्त्रीत्व की पुष्टि मातृत्व से होती है।
- As long as society treats **fertility** as a measure of **virtue**, women will continue to pay with their **dignity, mental health, and biological chances of conceiving**.  
जब तक समाज प्रजनन क्षमता को नैतिकता का मापदंड मानता रहेगा, महिलाएँ अपनी गरिमा, मानसिक स्वास्थ्य और गर्भधारण की जैविक संभावना की कीमत चुकाती रहेंगी।



- Equally urgent is the need to bring **men** into the centre of the **conversation**.  
उतना ही जरूरी है कि **पुरुषों** को इस **संवाद** के केंद्र में लाया जाए।
- The **data** shows that **male mental health** directly affects **fertility**, yet **patriarchal norms** keep men **silent, unexamined, and emotionally unsupported**.  
**आंकड़े** दिखाते हैं कि **पुरुषों का मानसिक स्वास्थ्य** सीधे **प्रजनन क्षमता** को प्रभावित करता है, फिर भी **पितृसत्तात्मक मानदंड** पुरुषों को **चुप, अनदेखा और भावनात्मक रूप से असहाय** रखते हैं।
- **Clinics**, too, must evolve.  
**क्लिनिकों** को भी बदलना होगा।
- **Mental health support** cannot remain a decorative **add-on** to **reproductive care**.  
**मानसिक स्वास्थ्य सहयोग** केवल **प्रजनन देखभाल** का एक अतिरिक्त हिस्सा नहीं रह सकता।
- It must be **embedded** into every stage of **assessment and treatment**.  
इसे **मूल रूप से शामिल** किया जाना चाहिए **जांच और उपचार** के हर चरण में।
- Screening for **anxiety, depression, and relational strain** should be as routine as **semen analysis or hormone testing**.  
**चिंता, अवसाद और रिश्तों के तनाव** की जांच उतनी ही नियमित होनी चाहिए जितनी **वीर्य परीक्षण या हार्मोन जांच**।
- When **emotional wellbeing** is treated as **essential**, outcomes improve — not just **medically**, but **humanely**.  
जब **भावनात्मक कल्याण** को **आवश्यक** माना जाता है, परिणाम बेहतर होते हैं — केवल **चिकित्सीय रूप से** नहीं बल्कि **मानवीय रूप से** भी।
- Finally, couples need **support** that protects their **relationships** from the **corrosive pressures of treatment**.  
अंततः, दंपतियों को ऐसा **सहयोग** चाहिए जो उनके **रिश्तों को उपचार के दबाव** से बचाए।
- **Infertility** should not be allowed to hollow out **intimacy** or turn **partnership** into **performance**.  
**बांझपन को घनिष्ठता** को कमजोर करने या **साझेदारी को औपचारिक प्रदर्शन** में बदलने की अनुमति नहीं दी जानी चाहिए।
- The way forward is not complicated — it is simply long overdue.  
आगे का मार्ग जटिल नहीं है — यह केवल बहुत समय से लंबित है।
- We must replace **stigma with science, silence with dialogue, and blame with compassion**.  
हमें **कलंक को विज्ञान से, चुप्पी को संवाद से और दोष को करुणा से बदलना** होगा।
- Only then can **fertility care in India** move from being a site of **quiet suffering** to one of **dignity, equity, and genuine healing**.  
तभी **भारत में प्रजनन देखभाल मौन पीड़ा** से निकलकर **गरिमा, समानता और वास्तविक उपचार** की दिशा में आगे बढ़ सकेगी।



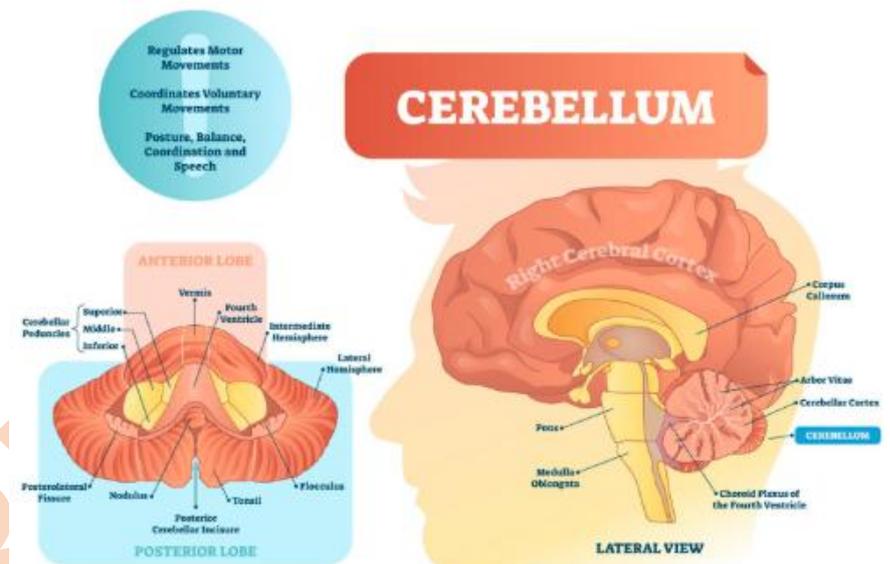
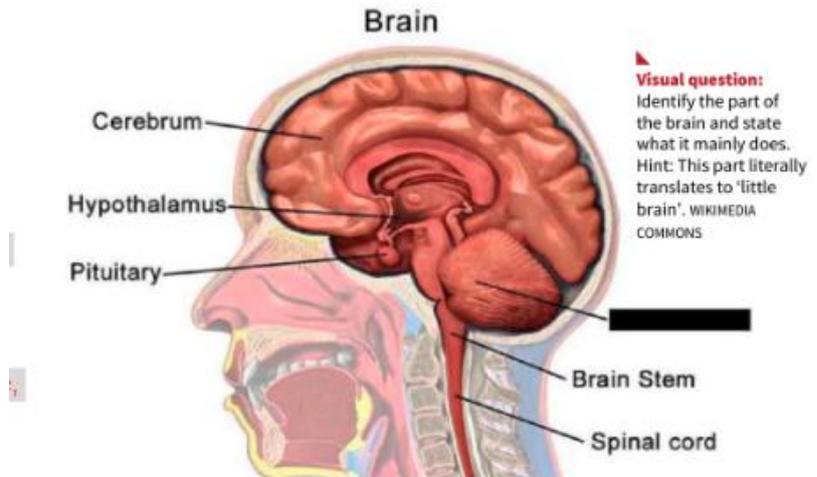
## Cerebellum

- The Cerebellum means “little brain.” It is located at the lower back of the brain, beneath the cerebrum and behind the brainstem.
- The cerebellum mainly controls balance, posture, and coordination of voluntary muscles.

It ensures that body movements are smooth, precise, and properly timed.

- For example, when a person walks straight, rides a bicycle, writes smoothly, or plays sports like cricket, the cerebellum coordinates muscles and maintains stability.
- It also supports motor learning, meaning repeated practice such as typing, dancing, or cycling becomes automatic and well coordinated over time.
- Damage to the cerebellum can cause loss of balance, shaky movements, poor coordination, and difficulty in controlled motion, highlighting its vital role in everyday physical activities.

- The brain has three main parts: Cerebrum controls thinking and memory, Cerebellum manages balance and coordination, and Brainstem regulates breathing and heartbeat.
- The cerebellum receives information from the inner ear, eyes, and muscles to maintain body equilibrium and smooth motion.
- Though smaller than the cerebrum, it contains a very large number of neurons and plays a key role in precise body control.



## GS Paper 1: Geography

TOPICS COVERED

06 February 2026

1. **TDB aims at tackling pollution in Pampa river ahead of next Sabarimala season**  
अगले सबरीमला सत्र से पहले पम्पा नदी में प्रदूषण से निपटने का लक्ष्य टीडीबी का



# TDB aims at tackling pollution in Pampa river ahead of next Sabarimala season

**GS I: Geography: Mapping**

**Hiran Unnikrishnan**  
PATHANAMTHITTA

Stung by criticism over the continuing pollution of the Pampa river, the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) is gearing up for a crackdown on the practice of pilgrims discarding clothes in the river.

The campaign will be rolled out in April across all south Indian States using a multi-pronged strategy involving press conferences, social media blitzes, newspaper and TV coverage, and FM radio alerts.

The details of the campaign will be finalised at a meeting on Friday, originally being convened to evaluate the just-conclud-



A view of the Pampa river, which has now become mucky due to dumping of clothes and plastic. LEJU KAMAL

ed pilgrimage season.

“We will do everything to end this dangerous practice of dumping clothes, a ritual that is not necessary,” said K. Jayakumar, TDB president. While legal action against violators has been ruled out for now, the

board plans to deploy volunteers along the riverbanks alongside sanitation staff to ensure enforcement.

The board will also highlight the issue in its upcoming Sabarimala pilgrimage guide, to be published in

five languages aiming to put a stop to the ritual by the next season.

## Chemical residue

An official from the Kerala State Pollution Control Board highlighted the hidden dangers of dumping clothes, particularly synthetic ones, into the Pampa. “These garments release microfibres, dyes, and chemical residues. Since the Pampa is the life-line of at least two central Kerala districts, this contamination quickly enters the food chain,” the official said. He added that the ecological stakes are even higher because of the river’s proximity to the Periyar Tiger Reserve.

## TDB aims at tackling pollution in Pampa river ahead of next Sabarimala season अगले सबरीमला सत्र से पहले पम्पा नदी में प्रदूषण से निपटने का लक्ष्य टीडीबी का

- Stung by criticism over the continuing **pollution** of the **Pampa river**, the **Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB)** is gearing up for a crackdown on the practice of pilgrims discarding **clothes** in the river.  
पम्पा नदी में लगातार हो रहे प्रदूषण को लेकर आलोचना से आहत त्रावणकोर देवस्वोम बोर्ड (टीडीबी) तीर्थयात्रियों द्वारा नदी में कपड़े फेंकने की प्रथा पर सख्ती की तैयारी कर रहा है।
- The campaign will be rolled out in **April** across all **south Indian States** using a **multi-pronged strategy** involving **press conferences**, **social media blitzes**, **newspaper and TV coverage**, and **FM radio alerts**.  
यह अभियान अप्रैल में सभी दक्षिण भारतीय राज्यों में बहु-आयामी रणनीति के साथ शुरू किया जाएगा, जिसमें प्रेस कॉन्फ्रेंस, सोशल मीडिया अभियान, अखबार और टीवी कवरेज, तथा एफएम रेडियो अलर्ट शामिल होंगे।
- The details of the campaign will be **finalised** at a meeting on **Friday**, originally being convened to evaluate the just-concluded **pilgrimage season**.  
अभियान का विवरण शुक्रवार को होने वाली बैठक में अंतिम रूप दिया जाएगा, जिसे मूल रूप से अभी-अभी समाप्त हुए तीर्थयात्रा सत्र की समीक्षा के लिए बुलाया गया था।
- “We will do everything to end this dangerous practice of dumping clothes, a ritual that is **not necessary**,” said **K. Jayakumar**, **TDB president**.  
**टीडीबी अध्यक्ष के. जयकुमार** ने कहा, “हम कपड़े फेंकने की इस खतरनाक प्रथा को समाप्त करने के लिए हर संभव प्रयास करेंगे, यह एक ऐसी रस्म है जो **आवश्यक नहीं** है।”



- While **legal action** against violators has been ruled out for now, the board plans to deploy **volunteers** along the riverbanks alongside **sanitation staff** to ensure enforcement.  
हालाँकि अभी उल्लंघन करने वालों के खिलाफ **कानूनी कार्रवाई** से इनकार किया गया है, लेकिन बोर्ड **स्वच्छता कर्मचारियों** के साथ नदी किनारों पर **स्वयंसेवकों** की तैनाती की योजना बना रहा है ताकि पालन सुनिश्चित किया जा सके।
- The board will also highlight the issue in its upcoming **Sabarimala pilgrimage guide**, to be published in **five languages** aiming to put a stop to the ritual by the **next season**.  
बोर्ड इस मुद्दे को अपनी आगामी **सबरीमला तीर्थयात्रा मार्गदर्शिका** में भी प्रमुखता से उठाएगा, जिसे **पाँच भाषाओं** में प्रकाशित किया जाएगा, ताकि **अगले सत्र** तक इस रस्म को रोका जा सके।

## Chemical residue रासायनिक अवशेष

- An official from the **Kerala State Pollution Control Board** highlighted the hidden dangers of dumping clothes, particularly **synthetic** ones, into the Pampa.  
**केरल राज्य प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड** के एक अधिकारी ने पम्पा नदी में विशेषकर **सिंथेटिक कपड़ों** को फेंकने के छिपे खतरों को रेखांकित किया।
- "These garments release **microfibres, dyes, and chemical residues**.  
"ये कपड़े **माइक्रोफाइबर, रंग, और रासायनिक अवशेष** छोड़ते हैं।
- Since the Pampa is the **lifeline** of at least **two central Kerala districts**, this contamination quickly enters the **food chain**," the official said.  
चूँकि पम्पा कम से कम **मध्य केरल के दो जिलों** की **जीवनरेखा** है, इसलिए यह प्रदूषण तेजी से **खाद्य श्रृंखला** में प्रवेश कर जाता है," अधिकारी ने कहा।
- He added that the **ecological stakes** are even higher because of the river's proximity to the **Periyar Tiger Reserve**.  
उन्होंने कहा कि नदी की **पेरियार टाइगर रिज़र्व** से निकटता के कारण **पारिस्थितिक जोखिम** और भी अधिक बढ़ जाते हैं।

<b>GS Paper II: Polity,</b>	
<b>TOPICS COVERED</b>	<b>06 February 2026</b>
1.	<b>Opposition defiled the temple of democracy, but nation's poor are behind me, says Modi</b> विपक्ष ने लोकतंत्र के मंदिर को अपवित्र किया, लेकिन देश के गरीब मेरे साथ हैं, मोदी ने कहा
2.	<b>Congress flags 'procedural irregularities' in Lok Sabha</b> कांग्रेस ने लोकसभा में 'प्रक्रियात्मक अनियमितताओं' को उठाया
3.	<b>Told PM to skip LS as MPs planned protest: Speaker</b> सांसदों द्वारा विरोध की योजना के चलते पीएम को लोकसभा न आने को कहा: अध्यक्ष
4.	<b>Tensions escalate in Rajya Sabha over Rahul issue, Opposition stages walkout</b> राहुल मुद्दे पर राज्यसभा में तनाव बढ़ा, विपक्ष ने वॉकआउट किया
5.	<b>Should the Governor's address be scrapped?</b> क्या राज्यपाल का अभिभाषण समाप्त कर दिया जाना चाहिए?
6.	<b>Trump attacks U.S. voting structure, mulls federal takeover of elections</b> ट्रंप ने अमेरिका की मतदान व्यवस्था पर हमला किया, चुनावों के संघीय अधिग्रहण पर विचार



# Opposition defiled the temple of democracy, but nation's poor are behind me, says Modi

GS II: Polity

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

In a scathing attack on the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said successive defeats inflicted by the National Democratic Alliance on the Opposition were proving indigestible to it, but he had the support of the poor of India that any plans to "dig his grave" would not be successful.

Replying to the debate in the Upper House on the Motion of Thanks to the President for her Address to the joint sitting of Parliament, he referred to the absence of a reply by him in the Lok Sabha on the same debate as a "defilement of the temple of democracy" and an insult to not just President Droupadi Murmu, her position, and her tribal identity, but the Constitution as well.

The Opposition benches staged a walkout as Mr. Modi began his speech.

Referring to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata



All ears: Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaking in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday. SANSAD TV/ANI

Banerjee's appearance in the Supreme Court in the special intensive revision (SIR) case without directly naming her, he termed the Trinamool Congress-led government as *nirmam* or merciless, pushing for inclusion of "infiltrators rather than citizens", whereas every country in the world was determined to stop infiltrators along their borders.

He deplored Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's "traitor" comment on Union Minister Ravneet Singh Bittu, and termed it an in-

sult to the entire Sikh community.

## Congress retorts

The Congress, on the other hand, accused the Prime Minister of "hiding behind" Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. After Mr. Birla claimed that Opposition members were planning to hurt Mr. Modi, speaking outside the House, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra dismissed the claim as "absolute lie".

Referring to slogans about "digging Modi's grave", he said that those

## Told PM to avoid LS over Congress 'plot': Birla

Sreeparna Chakrabarty  
NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said he had asked Prime Minister Modi not to come to the Lower House to deliver his response to the Motion of Thanks to

the President's Address since he had "concrete information" that many Congress MPs could carry out an "unexpected act" of protest at the PM's seat.

FULL REPORT ON  
» PAGE 5

who talk of '*mohabbat ki dukaan*' (a shop of love used by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi) are raising slogans like '*Modi teri kabr khudegi*' (Modi we will dig your grave), which he said, highlighted the Opposition's frustration over successive electoral defeats. "They will never be able to dig my grave, the blessings of the poor are with me," he said.

The Prime Minister listed out the achievements of his government in the last 11 years.

"The trade deals that we

struck with nine countries and then the 27 countries of the European Union will open opportunities for growth," he said.

Mr. Modi laid a big emphasis on his government's implementation of projects, speaking at length of the PRAGATI project monitoring programme supervised by himself.

The speech lasted 97 minutes, and the Rajya Sabha, in the absence of the Opposition, passed the Motion of Thanks to the President, concluding the debate.

## Opposition defiled the temple of democracy, but nation's poor are behind me, says Modi

विपक्ष ने लोकतंत्र के मंदिर को अपवित्र किया, लेकिन देश के गरीब मेरे साथ हैं, मोदी ने कहा

- Opposition defiled the temple of democracy, but nation's poor are behind me, says **Modi**  
विपक्ष ने लोकतंत्र के मंदिर को अपवित्र किया, लेकिन देश के गरीब मेरे साथ हैं, **मोदी** ने कहा
- In a scathing attack on the **Opposition** in the **Rajya Sabha** on Thursday, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** said successive defeats inflicted by the **National Democratic Alliance** on the Opposition were proving indigestible to it, but he had the support of the poor of India that any plans to "dig his grave" would not be successful.

गुरुवार को राज्यसभा में विपक्ष पर तीखा हमला करते हुए प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने कहा कि राष्ट्रीय जनतांत्रिक गठबंधन द्वारा विपक्ष को दी गई लगातार हार उसे पच नहीं रही है, लेकिन उन्हें भारत के गरीबों का समर्थन प्राप्त है, जिससे "उनकी कब्र खोदने" की कोई भी योजना सफल नहीं होगी।

- Replying to the debate in the **Upper House** on the **Motion of Thanks** to the **President** for her Address to the joint sitting of Parliament, he referred to the absence of a reply by him in the **Lok Sabha** on the same debate as a "defilement of the temple of democracy" and an insult to not just **President Droupadi Murmu**, her position, and her tribal identity, but the **Constitution** as well.

संसद के संयुक्त सत्र में दिए गए राष्ट्रपति के अभिभाषण पर धन्यवाद प्रस्ताव पर उच्च सदन में हुई बहस का



जवाब देते हुए उन्होंने लोकसभा में उसी बहस पर अपने उत्तर के अभाव को “लोकतंत्र के मंदिर का अपवित्रीकरण” बताया और कहा कि यह न केवल राष्ट्रपति द्रौपदी मुर्मू, उनके पद और उनकी जनजातीय पहचान, बल्कि संविधान का भी अपमान है।

- The **Opposition benches** staged a walkout as Mr. **Modi** began his speech. जैसे ही श्री **मोदी** ने अपना भाषण शुरू किया, **विपक्षी बेंचों** ने वॉकआउट कर दिया।
- Referring to **West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's** appearance in the **Supreme Court** in the special intensive revision (**SIR**) case without directly naming her, he termed the **Trinamool Congress-led** government as **nirmam** or merciless, pushing for inclusion of “**infiltrators** rather than citizens”, whereas every country in the world was determined to stop infiltrators along their borders.  
**पश्चिम बंगाल की मुख्यमंत्री ममता बनर्जी** का नाम लिए बिना विशेष गहन पुनरीक्षण (**SIR**) मामले में **सुप्रीम कोर्ट** में उनकी उपस्थिति का उल्लेख करते हुए उन्होंने **तृणमूल कांग्रेस-नेतृत्व** वाली सरकार को **निर्मम** बताया, जो “नागरिकों के बजाय **घुसपैठियों**” को शामिल करने पर जोर दे रही है, जबकि दुनिया का हर देश अपनी सीमाओं पर घुसपैठियों को रोकने के लिए प्रतिबद्ध है।
- He deplored **Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's** “traitor” comment on **Union Minister Ravneet Singh Bittu**, and termed it an insult to the entire **Sikh community**.  
उन्होंने **कांग्रेस नेता राहुल गांधी** द्वारा **केंद्रीय मंत्री रवनीत सिंह बिट्टू** पर की गई “गद्दार” टिप्पणी की निंदा की और इसे पूरे **सिख समुदाय** का अपमान बताया।

## Congress retorts कांग्रेस का पलटवार

- The **Congress**, on the other hand, accused the **Prime Minister** of “hiding behind” **Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla**.  
दूसरी ओर, **कांग्रेस** ने **प्रधानमंत्री** पर **लोकसभा अध्यक्ष ओम बिरला** के “पीछे छिपने” का आरोप लगाया।
- After Mr. **Birla** claimed that **Opposition** members were planning to hurt Mr. **Modi**, speaking outside the House, **Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra** dismissed the claim as “absolute lie”.  
श्री **बिरला** के यह कहने के बाद कि **विपक्ष** के सदस्य सदन के बाहर बोलते हुए श्री **मोदी** को नुकसान पहुंचाने की योजना बना रहे हैं, **कांग्रेस नेता प्रियंका गांधी वाड़ा** ने इस दावे को “पूर्ण झूठ” बताया।
- Referring to slogans about “digging **Modi's** grave”, he said that those who talk of ‘**mohabbat ki dukaan**’ are raising slogans like ‘**Modi teri kabr khudegi**’, which he said, highlighted the **Opposition's** frustration over successive electoral defeats.  
“**मोदी** की कब्र खोदने” के नारों का जिक्र करते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि जो लोग ‘**मोहब्बत की दुकान**’ की बात करते हैं, वे ‘**मोदी तेरी कब्र खुदेगी**’ जैसे नारे लगा रहे हैं, जो **विपक्ष** की लगातार चुनावी हार से उपजी हताशा को दर्शाता है।
- “They will never be able to dig my grave, the blessings of the **poor** are with me,” he said.  
उन्होंने कहा, “वे कभी मेरी कब्र नहीं खोद पाएंगे, **गरीबों** का आशीर्वाद मेरे साथ है।”
- The **Prime Minister** listed out the achievements of his government in the last **11 years**.  
**प्रधानमंत्री** ने पिछले **11 वर्षों** में अपनी सरकार की उपलब्धियों को गिनाया।
- “The **trade deals** that we struck with **nine countries** and then the **27 countries of the European Union** will open opportunities for growth,” he said.  
उन्होंने कहा, “हमने **नौ देशों** और फिर **यूरोपीय संघ के 27 देशों** के साथ जो **व्यापार समझौते** किए हैं, वे विकास के अवसर खोलेंगे।”
- Mr. **Modi** laid a big emphasis on his government's implementation of projects, speaking at length of the **PRAGATI** project monitoring programme supervised by himself.  
श्री **मोदी** ने अपनी सरकार द्वारा परियोजनाओं के क्रियान्वयन पर विशेष जोर दिया और स्वयं की निगरानी में चल रहे **PRAGATI** परियोजना निगरानी कार्यक्रम पर विस्तार से बात की।
- The speech lasted **97 minutes**, and the **Rajya Sabha**, in the absence of the **Opposition**, passed the **Motion of Thanks** to the **President**, concluding the debate.  
यह भाषण **97 मिनट** तक चला और **विपक्ष** की अनुपस्थिति में **राज्यसभा** ने **राष्ट्रपति** के **धन्यवाद प्रस्ताव** को पारित कर बहस का समापन किया।



## Congress flags 'procedural irregularities' in Lok Sabha

GS II: Polity

NEW DELHI

Congress MP K.C. Venugopal on Thursday wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla alleging "serious procedural irregularities" and questioning the "authenticity" of the procedure adopted to pass the Motion of Thanks to the President without the customary reply by the Prime Minister.

In his letter, he said that under Rule 20 of the Rules of Procedure, it is mandatory for the Prime Minister to explain the government's position at the end of the discussion. If the Prime Minister is unable to do so, the House must be informed, he said, adding that neither of these requirements was met.

"In the present case, neither did the Hon'ble Prime Minister reply to the debate nor was the House informed about his inability to do so. This clearly amounts to a violation of provisions of Rule 20," the Congress leader wrote.

Mr. Venugopal also referred to Rule 362, under which a debate may be closed without a Minister's reply only if a motion to that effect is moved by a member and approved by the House. He said that no such motion had been moved before the Motion of Thanks was put to vote. "This action, therefore, constitutes a violation of Rule 362," he added.

## Congress flags 'procedural irregularities' in Lok Sabha काँग्रेस ने लोकसभा में 'प्रक्रियात्मक अनियमितताओं' को उठाया

• Congress MP K.C. Venugopal on Thursday wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla alleging "serious procedural irregularities" and questioning the "authenticity" of the procedure adopted to pass the Motion of Thanks to the President without the customary reply by the Prime Minister.

काँग्रेस सांसद के.सी. वेणुगोपाल ने गुरुवार को लोकसभा अध्यक्ष ओम बिरला को पत्र लिखकर "गंभीर प्रक्रियात्मक अनियमितताओं" का आरोप लगाया और राष्ट्रपति के अभिभाषण पर धन्यवाद प्रस्ताव को प्रधानमंत्री के परंपरागत उत्तर के बिना पारित करने की प्रक्रिया की "प्रामाणिकता" पर सवाल उठाया।

• In his letter, he said that under Rule 20 of the Rules of Procedure, it is mandatory for the Prime Minister to explain the government's position at the end of the discussion.

अपने पत्र में उन्होंने कहा कि कार्य संचालन नियमों के नियम 20 के तहत चर्चा के अंत में प्रधानमंत्री के लिए सरकार का पक्ष स्पष्ट करना अनिवार्य है।

• If the Prime Minister is unable to do so, the House must be informed, he said, adding that neither of these requirements was met. उन्होंने कहा कि यदि प्रधानमंत्री ऐसा करने में असमर्थ हों तो सदन को इसकी सूचना दी जानी चाहिए, और जोड़ा कि इन दोनों में से किसी भी आवश्यकता का पालन नहीं किया गया।

• "In the present case, neither did the Hon'ble Prime Minister reply to the debate nor was the House informed about his inability to do so. This clearly amounts to a violation of provisions of Rule 20," the Congress leader wrote.

"वर्तमान मामले में, न तो माननीय प्रधानमंत्री ने बहस का उत्तर दिया और न ही सदन को ऐसा न कर पाने की सूचना दी गई। यह स्पष्ट रूप से नियम 20 के प्रावधानों का उल्लंघन है," काँग्रेस नेता ने लिखा।

• Mr. Venugopal also referred to Rule 362, under which a debate may be closed without a Minister's reply only if a motion to that effect is moved by a member and approved by the House.

वेणुगोपाल ने नियम 362 का भी उल्लेख किया, जिसके तहत किसी मंत्री के उत्तर के बिना बहस तभी समाप्त की जा सकती है जब इस आशय का प्रस्ताव किसी सदस्य द्वारा लाया जाए और सदन द्वारा स्वीकृत किया जाए।

• He said that no such motion had been moved before the Motion of Thanks was put to vote.

उन्होंने कहा कि धन्यवाद प्रस्ताव को मतदान के लिए रखे जाने से पहले ऐसा कोई प्रस्ताव पेश नहीं किया गया।

• "This action, therefore, constitutes a violation of Rule 362," he added. "इस प्रकार, यह कार्रवाई नियम 362 का उल्लंघन है," उन्होंने जोड़ा।



# Told PM to skip LS as MPs planned protest: Speaker

Lok Sabha passes Motion of Thanks without Prime Minister's customary reply; House adjourned amid continued Opposition protest over U.S. trade deal and Rahul 'not being allowed to speak'

GS II: Polity

**Sreeparna Chakrabarty**  
NEW DELHI

**L**ok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said on Thursday that he had asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi not to come to the Lower House to deliver his response to the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address since he had "concrete information" that many Congress MPs could carry out an "unexpected act" of protest at the PM's seat.

The House had earlier passed the Motion of Thanks by a voice vote, without Prime Minister's customary reply, amid protests by the Opposition over the Indo-U.S. trade deal as well as the Chair "not allowing" Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi to make a speech.

After repeated disruptions since morning, the Speaker took up the Motion of Thanks and put the amendments moved by the Opposition to vote. They were rejected. Mr. Birla then read out the Motion of Thanks to the President for her Address on January 28, which was passed by a voice vote, even as the Opposition sloganeering continued.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was not present in the House when the Motion was put to vote. Union



**Stormy scenes:** Opposition leaders trooping into the Well in the Lok Sabha during the Budget Session in New Delhi on Thursday. SANSAD TV

Home Minister Amit Shah and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh were also not present.

The last time that the Motion of Thanks to the President's Address was passed without the Prime Minister's reply was in June 2004, when then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh could not deliver his reply to the debate in the Lok Sabha following BJP protests.

He had then asked the Lok Sabha to put the Motion to vote without his reply. In his 2005 speech, Dr. Singh mentioned that he had not been allowed to speak the previous year.

**'Concrete information'**  
On Thursday, as the Opposition continued its protest

after the passage of the Motion, Mr. Birla adjourned the proceedings yet again.

When the House reconvened at 3 p.m., the Speaker said: "When the Leader of the House was to reply, I had concrete information that many members of the Congress party could carry out an unexpected act by reaching the spot where the Prime Minister sits."

The Speaker added: "If this incident had taken place, then this would have left the democratic traditions of the country in shreds."

The Speaker added that the conduct of some Opposition members in his office on Wednesday was not appropriate and was, in fact, "like a black spot".

On Wednesday, women MPs from Opposition parties charged towards the Prime Minister's seat in the Lok Sabha, holding up banners ahead of his scheduled speech. The incident took place while BJP member P.P. Chaudhary was making his remarks on the Motion of Thanks. The Prime Minister was not present in the House at that point.

Mr. Birla thanked the Prime Minister for acceding to his request and avoiding unpleasant scenes in the Lok Sabha by not coming to the House on Wednesday.

He then adjourned the House for the day as Opposition members continued to protest and raise slogans.

**Told PM to skip LS as MPs planned protest: Speaker**

सांसदों द्वारा विरोध की योजना के चलते पीएम को लोकसभा न आने को कहा: अध्यक्ष



- Lok Sabha passes **Motion of Thanks** without **Prime Minister's customary reply**; House adjourned amid continued **Opposition protest** over **U.S. trade deal** and **Rahul 'not being allowed to speak'**  
लोकसभा ने प्रधानमंत्री के परंपरागत उत्तर के बिना धन्यवाद प्रस्ताव पारित किया; अमेरिका व्यापार समझौते और राहुल गांधी को बोलने की अनुमति न मिलने को लेकर जारी विपक्षी विरोध के बीच सदन स्थगित
- Lok Sabha Speaker **Om Birla** said on **Thursday** that he had asked **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** not to come to the **Lower House** to deliver his response to the **Motion of Thanks to the President's Address** since he had "**concrete information**" that many **Congress MPs** could carry out an "**unexpected act**" of protest at the **PM's seat**.  
लोकसभा अध्यक्ष ओम बिरला ने गुरुवार को कहा कि उन्होंने प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी से राष्ट्रपति के अभिभाषण पर धन्यवाद प्रस्ताव पर उत्तर देने के लिए निचले सदन में न आने को कहा था, क्योंकि उनके पास "ठोस जानकारी" थी कि कई कांग्रेस सांसद प्रधानमंत्री की सीट पर "अप्रत्याशित कृत्य" के रूप में विरोध कर सकते हैं।
- The House had earlier passed the **Motion of Thanks** by a **voice vote**, without **Prime Minister's customary reply**, amid protests by the **Opposition** over the **Indo-U.S. trade deal** as well as the **Chair "not allowing"** **Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi** to make a speech.  
सदन ने इससे पहले आवाज मत से धन्यवाद प्रस्ताव पारित किया था, प्रधानमंत्री के परंपरागत उत्तर के बिना, जबकि भारत-अमेरिका व्यापार समझौते और पीठ द्वारा नेता प्रतिपक्ष राहुल गांधी को बोलने की अनुमति न देने को लेकर विपक्ष विरोध कर रहा था।
- After repeated disruptions since morning, the **Speaker** took up the **Motion of Thanks** and put the amendments moved by the **Opposition** to vote.  
सुबह से बार-बार व्यवधान के बाद अध्यक्ष ने धन्यवाद प्रस्ताव लिया और विपक्ष द्वारा लाए गए संशोधनों को मतदान के लिए रखा।
- They were rejected.  
उन्हें खारिज कर दिया गया।
- **Mr. Birla** then read out the **Motion of Thanks to the President** for her **Address on January 28**, which was passed by a **voice vote**, even as the **Opposition sloganeering** continued.  
इसके बाद बिरला ने 28 जनवरी को दिए गए राष्ट्रपति के अभिभाषण पर धन्यवाद प्रस्ताव पढ़कर सुनाया, जिसे आवाज मत से पारित किया गया, जबकि विपक्ष का नारेबाजी जारी रही।
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** was not present in the House when the Motion was put to vote. **Union Home Minister Amit Shah** and **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** were also not present.  
जब प्रस्ताव को मतदान के लिए रखा गया, तब प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी सदन में उपस्थित नहीं थे। केंद्रीय गृह मंत्री अमित शाह और रक्षा मंत्री राजनाथ सिंह भी मौजूद नहीं थे।
- The last time that the **Motion of Thanks to the President's Address** was passed without the **Prime Minister's reply** was in **June 2004**, when then **Prime Minister Manmohan Singh** could not deliver his reply to the debate in the **Lok Sabha** following **BJP protests**.  
आखिरी बार राष्ट्रपति के अभिभाषण पर धन्यवाद प्रस्ताव प्रधानमंत्री के उत्तर के बिना जून 2004 में पारित हुआ था, जब तत्कालीन प्रधानमंत्री मनमोहन सिंह भाजपा के विरोध के कारण लोकसभा में बहस का उत्तर नहीं दे सके थे।
- He had then asked the **Lok Sabha** to put the Motion to vote without his reply.  
तब उन्होंने लोकसभा से अपने उत्तर के बिना ही प्रस्ताव को मतदान के लिए रखने को कहा था।
- In his **2005 speech**, **Dr. Singh** mentioned that he had not been allowed to speak the previous year.  
अपने 2005 के भाषण में डॉ. सिंह ने उल्लेख किया था कि उन्हें पिछले वर्ष बोलने की अनुमति नहीं दी गई थी।

### 'Concrete information' 'ठोस जानकारी'

- On **Thursday**, as the **Opposition** continued its protests after the passage of the Motion, **Mr. Birla** adjourned the proceedings yet again.  
गुरुवार को, प्रस्ताव के पारित होने के बाद भी विपक्ष का विरोध जारी रहने पर बिरला ने कार्यवाही फिर से स्थगित कर दी।



- When the House reconvened at **3 p.m.**, the **Speaker** said: “When the **Leader of the House** was to reply, I had **concrete information** that many members of the **Congress party** could carry out an **unexpected act** by reaching the spot where the **Prime Minister** sits.”  
जब सदन दोपहर 3 बजे पुनः बैठा, तो अध्यक्ष ने कहा: “जब सदन के नेता को उत्तर देना था, तब मेरे पास ठोस जानकारी थी कि कांग्रेस पार्टी के कई सदस्य उस स्थान पर पहुँचकर, जहाँ प्रधानमंत्री बैठते हैं, अप्रत्याशित कृत्य कर सकते हैं।”
- The Speaker added: “If this incident had taken place, then this would have left the **democratic traditions of the country** in shreds.”  
अध्यक्ष ने जोड़ा: “यदि यह घटना होती, तो इससे देश की लोकतांत्रिक परंपराएँ तार-तार हो जातीं।”
- The Speaker added that the conduct of some **Opposition members** in his **office on Wednesday** was not appropriate and was, in fact, “**like a black spot**”.  
अध्यक्ष ने कहा कि बुधवार को उनके कार्यालय में कुछ विपक्षी सदस्यों का आचरण उचित नहीं था और वास्तव में वह “काले धब्बे जैसा” था।
- On **Wednesday**, women **MPs from Opposition parties** charged towards the **Prime Minister's seat** in the **Lok Sabha**, holding up **banners** ahead of his scheduled speech.  
बुधवार को विपक्षी दलों की महिला सांसद लोकसभा में प्रधानमंत्री की सीट की ओर बैनर उठाए हुए दौड़ीं, यह घटना उनके निर्धारित भाषण से पहले हुई।
- The incident took place while **BJP member P.P. Chaudhary** was making his remarks on the **Motion of Thanks**.  
यह घटना उस समय हुई जब भाजपा सदस्य पी.पी. चौधरी धन्यवाद प्रस्ताव पर अपनी बात रख रहे थे।
- The **Prime Minister** was not present in the House at that point.  
उस समय प्रधानमंत्री सदन में उपस्थित नहीं थे।
- Mr. **Birla** thanked the **Prime Minister** for acceding to his request and avoiding unpleasant scenes in the **Lok Sabha** by not coming to the House on **Wednesday**.  
बिरला ने प्रधानमंत्री को उनके अनुरोध को स्वीकार करने और बुधवार को सदन में न आकर लोकसभा में अप्रिय दृश्य टालने के लिए धन्यवाद दिया।
- He then adjourned the House for the day as **Opposition members** continued to protest and raise **slogans**.  
इसके बाद उन्होंने दिन भर के लिए सदन स्थगित कर दिया, क्योंकि विपक्षी सदस्य विरोध और नारेबाज़ी जारी रखे हुए थे।



# Tensions escalate in Rajya Sabha over Rahul issue, Opposition stages walkout

GS II: Polity

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Congress and other Opposition parties staged a walkout from the Rajya Sabha on Thursday, accusing the government of preventing Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi from speaking during the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President for her Address to the joint sitting of Parliament. The protest followed a heated exchange between the Treasury and Opposition benches.

In the Upper House, Leader of the Opposition and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge attempted to read out excerpts from an unpublished book by former Army chief General M.M. Naravane (retd), the very point of contention in the Lok Sabha. **Chairman and Vice-President C.P. Radhakrishnan disallowed him from doing so, prompting Opposition members to walk out in protest.**

Leader of the House J.P. Nadda criticised the Congress, and said that the party should not allow itself to be held hostage by an **"abodh balak (ignorant child)"**, in a reference to Mr. Gandhi.

Tensions escalated soon after **Zero Hour** began. Raising the issue first, Mr. Kharge said Mr. Gandhi



**Speech row:** Rajya Sabha MP Mallikarjun Kharge speaking in the Rajya Sabha during the Budget Session on Thursday. SANSAD TV

had not been permitted to speak in the Lok Sabha despite wanting to address matters of national interest. Before he could continue, Mr. Radhakrishnan ruled that the proceedings of the Lok Sabha could not be discussed in the Rajya Sabha, and handed the floor to Mr. Nadda.

Mr. Nadda countered, saying that the Opposition should advise its Lok Sabha members to participate in the debate rather than disrupt the House. Opposition MPs responded with slogans, alleging that democracy was being "throttled".

**Rijiju questions protest** Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju questioned the timing of the protest, noting that the Rajya Sabha debate had proceeded uninterrupted for three days. Reiterating his ruling, the Rajya Sabha

Chairman cited a precedent based on an intervention by former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, advising against references to Lok Sabha proceedings in the Upper House.

Mr. Nadda said the government was prepared for discussion "in all forms and at all times". He advised Mr. Kharge, as Congress chief, to run the party independently and not allow it to become hostage to the **"abodh balak"**. He added: "You shouldn't let pride, arrogance and ignorance dictate... Arrogance and ignorance are a potent combination and you should stay away from it."

The Congress president said such language was unacceptable and accused the BJP of stifling democratic processes. Mr. Kharge said BJP members were not free to speak their minds even as they lectured the Opposition.

**Tensions escalate in Rajya Sabha over Rahul issue, Opposition stages walkout**  
**राहुल मुद्दे पर राज्यसभा में तनाव बढ़ा, विपक्ष ने वॉकआउट किया**

- The **Congress** and other **Opposition parties** staged a **walkout** from the **Rajya Sabha** on **Thursday**, accusing the **government** of preventing **Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi** from speaking during the debate on the **Motion of Thanks to the**



**President** for her **Address to the joint sitting of Parliament.**

कांग्रेस और अन्य विपक्षी दलों ने गुरुवार को राज्यसभा से वॉकआउट किया और सरकार पर लोकसभा में नेता प्रतिपक्ष राहुल गांधी को संसद के संयुक्त सत्र में राष्ट्रपति के अभिभाषण पर धन्यवाद प्रस्ताव की बहस के दौरान बोलने से रोकने का आरोप लगाया।

- The protest followed a **heated exchange** between the **Treasury** and **Opposition benches**. यह विरोध सत्तापक्ष और विपक्षी बेंचों के बीच तीखी बहस के बाद हुआ।
- In the **Upper House**, **Leader of the Opposition** and **Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge** attempted to read out excerpts from an **unpublished book** by former **Army chief General M.M. Naravane (retd)**, the very point of contention in the **Lok Sabha**.  
उच्च सदन में नेता प्रतिपक्ष और कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष मल्लिकार्जुन खड़गे ने पूर्व सेना प्रमुख जनरल एम.एम. नरवणे (सेवानिवृत्त) की एक अप्रकाशित पुस्तक से अंश पढ़ने की कोशिश की, जो लोकसभा में विवाद का मुख्य विषय था।
- **Chairman and Vice-President C.P. Radhakrishnan** disallowed him from doing so, prompting **Opposition members** to walk out in protest.  
सभापति और उपराष्ट्रपति सी.पी. राधाकृष्णन ने इसकी अनुमति नहीं दी, जिसके बाद विपक्षी सदस्यों ने विरोध में वॉकआउट किया।
- **Leader of the House J.P. Nadda** criticised the **Congress**, and said that the party should not allow itself to be held hostage by an “**abodh balak (ignorant child)**”, in a reference to **Mr. Gandhi**.  
सदन के नेता जे.पी. नड्डा ने कांग्रेस की आलोचना करते हुए कहा कि पार्टी को स्वयं को “अबोध बालक (अज्ञानी बच्चा)” के हाथों बंधक नहीं बनने देना चाहिए, यह टिप्पणी राहुल गांधी के संदर्भ में थी।
- **Tensions escalated** soon after **Zero Hour** began.  
शून्यकाल शुरू होते ही तनाव बढ़ गया।
- Raising the issue first, **Mr. Kharge** said **Mr. Gandhi** had not been permitted to speak in the **Lok Sabha** despite wanting to address matters of **national interest**.  
सबसे पहले मुद्दा उठाते हुए खड़गे ने कहा कि राहुल गांधी को राष्ट्रीय हित के मुद्दों पर बोलना चाहने के बावजूद लोकसभा में बोलने की अनुमति नहीं दी गई।
- Before he could continue, **Mr. Radhakrishnan** ruled that the proceedings of the **Lok Sabha** could not be discussed in the **Rajya Sabha**, and handed the **floor** to **Mr. Nadda**.  
इससे पहले कि वे आगे बोल पाते, राधाकृष्णन ने निर्णय दिया कि लोकसभा की कार्यवाही पर राज्यसभा में चर्चा नहीं की जा सकती और उन्होंने नड्डा को बोलने का अवसर दिया।
- **Mr. Nadda** countered, saying that the **Opposition** should advise its **Lok Sabha members** to participate in the debate rather than **disrupt** the House.  
नड्डा ने जवाब देते हुए कहा कि विपक्ष को अपने लोकसभा सदस्यों को सदन में व्यवधान डालने के बजाय बहस में भाग लेने की सलाह देनी चाहिए।
- **Opposition MPs** responded with **slogans**, alleging that **democracy** was being “**throttled**”.  
विपक्षी सांसदों ने नारेबाज़ी करते हुए आरोप लगाया कि लोकतंत्र का “गला घोंटा जा रहा है।”

### Rijju questions protest

रिजिजू ने विरोध पर सवाल उठाया

- **Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju** questioned the timing of the **protest**, noting that the **Rajya Sabha debate** had proceeded **uninterrupted** for **three days**.  
संसदीय कार्य मंत्री किरेन रिजिजू ने विरोध के समय पर सवाल उठाते हुए कहा कि राज्यसभा की बहस तीन दिनों तक बिना बाधा चली थी।
- Reiterating his ruling, the **Rajya Sabha Chairman** cited a **precedent** based on an intervention by former **Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru**, advising against references to **Lok Sabha proceedings** in the **Upper House**.  
अपने निर्णय को दोहराते हुए राज्यसभा सभापति ने पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री जवाहरलाल नेहरू के हस्तक्षेप पर आधारित एक नज़ीर का हवाला दिया, जिसमें उच्च सदन में लोकसभा की कार्यवाही का संदर्भ न देने की सलाह दी गई थी।
- **Mr. Nadda** said the **government** was prepared for discussion “**in all forms and at all times**”.  
नड्डा ने कहा कि सरकार “हर रूप में और हर समय” चर्चा के लिए तैयार है।
- He advised **Mr. Kharge**, as **Congress chief**, to run the party independently and not allow it to become hostage to the “**abodh balak**”.



उन्होंने कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष के रूप में खड़गे को पार्टी को स्वतंत्र रूप से चलाने और उसे “अबोध बालक” के हाथों बंधक न बनने देने की सलाह दी।

- He added: “You shouldn’t let **pride, arrogance and ignorance** dictate... **Arrogance and ignorance** are a potent combination and you should stay away from it.”  
उन्होंने जोड़ा: “आपको **अहंकार, घमंड और अज्ञानता** को मार्गदर्शक नहीं बनने देना चाहिए... **घमंड और अज्ञानता** एक खतरनाक संयोजन हैं और इससे दूर रहना चाहिए।”
- The **Congress president** said such language was **unacceptable** and accused the **BJP** of **stifling democratic processes**.  
कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष ने ऐसी भाषा को **अस्वीकार्य** बताया और **भाजपा** पर **लोकतांत्रिक प्रक्रियाओं को दबाने** का आरोप लगाया।
- **Mr. Kharge** said **BJP members** were not free to speak their minds even as they lectured the **Opposition**.  
खड़गे ने कहा कि **भाजपा सदस्य** स्वयं अपनी बात खुलकर कहने के लिए स्वतंत्र नहीं हैं, जबकि वे **विपक्ष** को उपदेश दे रहे हैं।

## Should the Governor's address be scrapped?



**P.D.T. Achary**  
Former Secretary General of the Lok Sabha



**Alok Prasanna Kumar**  
Co-founder of Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy

### PARLEY

Last month, during the joint session of the Karnataka Legislature, Governor Thawarchand Gehlot walked out of the House after reading only a few lines of his customary address prepared by the State Cabinet. The Chief Minister accused the Governor of violating his constitutional obligation. The incident followed similar developments in other Opposition-ruled States. In DMK-ruled Tamil Nadu, Governor R.N. Kavi walked out of the Assembly without delivering his inaugural address. In LDF-ruled Kerala, Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar omitted portions of the speech cleared by the Cabinet. Should the practice of Governors addressing the State legislatures be scrapped? P.D.T. Achary and Alok Prasanna Kumar discuss the question in a conversation moderated by Aaratrika Bhaumik. Edited excerpts:

#### Does a Governor's refusal to read the Cabinet-approved opening address violate the Constitution?

**P.D.T. Achary:** Under Article 176, a Governor is constitutionally mandated to address the State legislature at the commencement of the first session each year and at the first session following a general election. The address sets out the government's legislative agenda, outlining the policies and programmes it proposes to pursue during the session and the year ahead. The text of this address is prepared by the State Cabinet, and the Governor, as a constitutional functionary, is required to deliver it in that form. A Governor who declines to address the House, or who makes only a token appearance by reading selective portions of the address, cannot be said to be acting in conformity with the mandate of Article 176.

**Alok Prasanna Kumar:** Such conduct is contrary to the constitutional mandate. The Governor is an integral part of the State legislature, as recognised under Article 168 of the Constitution. This aspect is often overlooked, as the legislature is frequently understood to comprise only one or two Houses of elected representatives. As a constitutional head within this structure, the Governor is expected to facilitate, not obstruct, the functioning of the legislature.

#### Can a Governor use discretion to alter such an address?

**Alok Prasanna Kumar:** No. In *Nabam Rebia v. Deputy Speaker* (2016), the Supreme Court clarified that the Governor's address to the



Karnataka Governor Thawarchand Gehlot at the joint session of the State legislature, at Vidhana Soudha, in Bengaluru.

House is an executive function performed strictly on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers. The recurring departures from this constitutional convention are a consequence of the existing institutional design. Unlike the President, who is indirectly elected and subject to impeachment by Parliament, the Governor holds office at the pleasure of the President, in effect, the Union government. Consequently, while the President remains institutionally answerable to Parliament, the Governor's continuance in office depends upon the confidence of the Union government rather than the legislature within which the office functions.

**P.D.T. Achary:** I agree. The Governor cannot alter the address prepared by the State Cabinet and is required only to read it before the House. The Governor bears no responsibility for its contents and incurs no liability for what it states. In a representative democracy such as ours, executive authority is vested in the Council of Ministers, as the elected representatives of the people. The Governor is therefore precluded from running a parallel government or taking independent decisions de hors the aid and advice of the State Cabinet.

#### What recourse does a Governor have if there are genuine reservations about the address's contents?

**Alok Prasanna Kumar:** The Governor cannot hold an independent view on whether the government's policies are desirable or even constitutional. Personal opinions need not be forfeited, but they must be conveyed through candid, private exchanges with the State Cabinet. Once the Governor assumes office, such personal views must yield to constitutional discipline. A Governor may offer counsel, but must recognise the limits of the office. At the same time, it is a healthy convention



At least two other sessions of the State legislature each year commence without a Governor's address, which indicates that the legislature's functioning is not inherently dependent on this ceremonial formality.

**P.D.T. Achary**

for the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers to maintain regular communication with the Governor and to be receptive to any contrarian views he or she might have. Where such rapport and constitutional civility exist, it is unlikely that an elected government would disregard the Governor's counsel.

#### Is this address a colonial remnant that ought to be dispensed with?

**Alok Prasanna Kumar:** The practice ought to be retained, even if it is largely symbolic and serves little functional purpose. The focus should be on addressing instances of constitutionally impermissible gubernatorial discretion rather than abandoning the convention altogether. The address recognises the Governor's place as an integral part of the legislature and reflects the continuity of the Westminster parliamentary model adopted in India.

**P.D.T. Achary:** I do not believe there is anything sacrosanct about this practice. At least two other sessions of the State legislature each year commence without a Governor's address, which indicates that the legislature's functioning is not inherently dependent on this ceremonial formality. Moreover, Article 175 of the Constitution provides an alternative mechanism through which the Governor may address the House or send messages regarding any pending legislation. Reconsideration of this practice becomes particularly pertinent in light of the increasing instances of visibly partisan conduct by Governors in Opposition-ruled States.

Further, Article 355 imposes a duty upon the Union government to ensure that the governance of every State is carried on in accordance with the Constitution. When a Governor declines to deliver the address mandated under Article 176, it raises concerns about whether that constitutional obligation is being meaningfully upheld. Such situations also risk precipitating a constitutional crisis, as the legislative session cannot formally commence in the absence of the Governor's address.

#### Is Presidential intervention necessary when Governors fail to discharge their

#### constitutional duties?

**P.D.T. Achary:** Yes. When Governors act in a partisan manner and fail to discharge their constitutional duties, it is incumbent upon the President to intervene and require the Governor either to perform those duties or to demit office. Article 100 of the Constitution empowers the President to issue directions for the discharge of a Governor's functions, particularly to address contingencies not expressly provided for in the Constitution. However, there have been no notable instances of Presidents invoking such powers to avert situations where gubernatorial conduct threatens to create a constitutional crisis in the States.

#### Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has called for a constitutional amendment to do away with this address. How feasible is it to bring about such an amendment?

**P.D.T. Achary:** It is unlikely that such a constitutional amendment will be achievable. The Union government is unlikely to support it, and its passage would require a special majority in Parliament – a majority of the total membership of each House and a two-thirds majority of members present and voting. This is a difficult threshold to meet without a broad consensus between the government and the Opposition. Moreover, when the existing framework yields evident political benefit, there is little incentive to alter it.

**Alok Prasanna Kumar:** Such an amendment would be futile. If the Constitution is to be amended, a more meaningful reform would be to reconsider the manner in which Governors are appointed and removed. Such reform could ensure that Governors remain mindful of their allegiance lies with the Constitution, not the Union government, and that any departure from this role carries consequences for their continuance in office. This also explains why Presidents generally discharge their functions without controversy, while Governors often do not. The former is institutionally accountable to Parliament by virtue of indirect election and the possibility of impeachment.

However, as Mr. Achary has pointed out, even this would require political consensus that may be difficult to secure. Nevertheless, a serious discussion on such reforms is necessary to halt the gradual weakening of constitutional governance in Opposition-ruled States.



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## Should the Governor's address be scrapped?

### क्या राज्यपाल का अभिभाषण समाप्त कर दिया जाना चाहिए?

#### Governor's Address and Constitutional Mandate

#### राज्यपाल का अभिभाषण और संवैधानिक दायित्व

- Last month, during the **joint session of the Karnataka Legislature**, Governor **Thawarchand Gehlot** walked out after reading only a few lines of his **customary address** prepared by the **State Cabinet**.



पिछले महीने कर्नाटक विधानसभा के संयुक्त सत्र के दौरान, राज्यपाल थावरचंद गहलोट ने राज्य मंत्रिमंडल द्वारा तैयार परंपरागत अभिभाषण की केवल कुछ पंक्तियाँ पढ़कर सदन से बाहर चले गए।

- The **Chief Minister** accused the Governor of **violating his constitutional obligation**.  
**मुख्यमंत्री** ने राज्यपाल पर **संवैधानिक दायित्व का उल्लंघन** करने का आरोप लगाया।
- The incident followed similar developments in other **Opposition-ruled States**.  
यह घटना अन्य **विपक्ष शासित राज्यों** में हुए समान घटनाक्रम के बाद हुई।
- In **DMK-ruled Tamil Nadu**, Governor **R.N. Ravi** walked out without delivering his **inaugural address**.  
**DMK शासित तमिलनाडु** में राज्यपाल **आर.एन. रवि** बिना **उद्घाटन अभिभाषण** दिए सदन से बाहर चले गए।
- In **LDF-ruled Kerala**, Governor **Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar** omitted portions of the **Cabinet-approved speech**.  
**LDF शासित केरल** में राज्यपाल **राजेंद्र विश्वनाथ आर्लेकर** ने मंत्रिमंडल द्वारा स्वीकृत भाषण के कुछ हिस्सों को छोड़ दिया।
- The question arises whether the **practice of Governors addressing State legislatures** should be **scrapped**.  
प्रश्न उठता है कि क्या **राज्यपालों द्वारा विधानसभा को संबोधित करने की परंपरा** को समाप्त कर देना चाहिए।
- **P.D.T. Achary** and **Alok Prasanna Kumar** discussed the issue in a conversation moderated by **Aaratrika Bhaumik**.  
**पी.डी.टी. आचार्य** और **आलोक प्रसन्न कुमार** ने इस विषय पर **आरात्रिका भौमिक** द्वारा संचालित चर्चा में विचार व्यक्त किए।

**Does refusal violate the Constitution?**

**क्या इनकार संविधान का उल्लंघन है?**

- **P.D.T. Achary:** Under **Article 176**, the Governor is **constitutionally mandated** to address the State legislature at the **first session each year** and after a **general election**.  
**पी.डी.टी. आचार्य:** अनुच्छेद 176 के तहत राज्यपाल को **संवैधानिक रूप से बाध्य** किया गया है कि वे **हर वर्ष के पहले सत्र और सामान्य चुनाव के बाद** विधानसभा को संबोधित करें।
- The address outlines the **government's legislative agenda, policies and programmes** for the session and the year ahead.  
यह अभिभाषण **सरकार की विधायी एजेंडा, नीतियाँ और कार्यक्रमों** को प्रस्तुत करता है।
- The text is prepared by the **State Cabinet**, and the Governor must **deliver it in that form** as a **constitutional functionary**.  
इसका पाठ **राज्य मंत्रिमंडल** द्वारा तैयार किया जाता है और राज्यपाल को इसे उसी रूप में **संवैधानिक पदाधिकारी** के रूप में प्रस्तुत करना होता है।
- A Governor who **declines to address the House** or reads only **selective portions** is **not acting in conformity with Article 176**.  
जो राज्यपाल **सदन को संबोधित करने से इनकार करते हैं** या केवल **चयनित भाग पढ़ते हैं**, वे **अनुच्छेद 176 के अनुरूप कार्य नहीं करते**।
- **Alok Prasanna Kumar:** Such conduct is **contrary to the constitutional mandate**.  
**आलोक प्रसन्न कुमार:** ऐसा आचरण **संवैधानिक आदेश के विपरीत** है।
- The Governor is an **integral part of the State legislature under Article 168**.  
राज्यपाल **अनुच्छेद 168 के तहत राज्य विधानमंडल का अभिन्न अंग** हैं।
- This aspect is often **overlooked**, as the legislature is seen as comprising only **elected Houses**.  
यह पहलू अक्सर **अनदेखा** किया जाता है क्योंकि विधानमंडल को केवल **निर्वाचित सदनों** तक सीमित समझा जाता है।
- As a **constitutional head**, the Governor is expected to **facilitate, not obstruct, the functioning of the legislature**.  
एक **संवैधानिक प्रमुख** के रूप में राज्यपाल से अपेक्षा की जाती है कि वे **विधानमंडल के कार्य को सुगम बनाएँ, बाधित नहीं करें**।



## Discretion and Governor's Address विवेकाधिकार और राज्यपाल का अभिभाषण

- Can a **Governor use discretion** to alter such an **address**?  
क्या **राज्यपाल** ऐसे **अभिभाषण** को बदलने के लिए **विवेकाधिकार** का उपयोग कर सकते हैं?
- **Alok Prasanna Kumar**: No. In **Nabam Rebia v. Deputy Speaker (2016)**, the **Supreme Court** clarified that the Governor's address is an **executive function** performed strictly on the **aid and advice of the Council of Ministers**.  
**आलोक प्रसन्न कुमार**: नहीं। **Nabam Rebia v. Deputy Speaker (2016)** में **सुप्रीम कोर्ट** ने स्पष्ट किया कि राज्यपाल का अभिभाषण एक **कार्यपालिका कार्य** है जो केवल **मंत्रिपरिषद की सहायता और सलाह** पर किया जाता है।
- Recurring departures from this **constitutional convention** arise from the **institutional design**.  
इस **संवैधानिक परंपरा** से बार-बार विचलन **संस्थागत संरचना** के कारण होता है।
- Unlike the **President**, who is indirectly elected and subject to **impeachment by Parliament**, the **Governor holds office at the pleasure of the President (Union government)**.  
**राष्ट्रपति**, जो अप्रत्यक्ष रूप से निर्वाचित होते हैं और **संसद द्वारा महाभियोग** के अधीन होते हैं, के विपरीत **राज्यपाल राष्ट्रपति (केंद्र सरकार) की इच्छा पर पद धारण करते हैं**।
- Thus, while the **President is answerable to Parliament**, the Governor's continuance depends on the **confidence of the Union government**, not the State legislature.  
इस प्रकार जहाँ **राष्ट्रपति संसद के प्रति उत्तरदायी** हैं, वहीं राज्यपाल का पद **केंद्र सरकार के विश्वास** पर निर्भर करता है, न कि राज्य विधानमंडल पर।
- **P.D.T. Achary**: I agree. The Governor **cannot alter the address** prepared by the **State Cabinet** and must only **read it before the House**.  
**पी.डी.टी. आचार्य**: मैं सहमत हूँ। राज्यपाल **राज्य मंत्रिमंडल द्वारा तैयार अभिभाषण को बदल नहीं सकते** और उन्हें केवल **सदन के समक्ष पढ़ना** होता है।
- The Governor bears **no responsibility** for its contents and incurs **no liability**.  
राज्यपाल इसकी सामग्री के लिए **उत्तरदायी नहीं** होते और उन पर **कोई दायित्व नहीं** होता।
- In a **representative democracy**, executive authority rests with the **Council of Ministers**, the **elected representatives of the people**.  
**प्रतिनिधि लोकतंत्र** में कार्यपालिका की शक्ति **मंत्रिपरिषद**, यानी **जनता के निर्वाचित प्रतिनिधियों** में निहित होती है।
- The Governor cannot run a **parallel government** or take **independent decisions** without the **aid and advice of the State Cabinet**.  
राज्यपाल **समानांतर सरकार नहीं चला सकते** और **राज्य मंत्रिमंडल की सहायता और सलाह के बिना स्वतंत्र निर्णय नहीं ले सकते**।

## Governor's recourse in case of reservations आपत्तियों की स्थिति में राज्यपाल के विकल्प

- What recourse does a Governor have if there are **genuine reservations** about the **address's contents**?  
यदि अभिभाषण की सामग्री को लेकर राज्यपाल को **वास्तविक आपत्तियाँ** हों तो उनके पास क्या विकल्प हैं?
- **Alok Prasanna Kumar**: The Governor **cannot hold an independent view** on whether the government's policies are **desirable or constitutional**.  
**आलोक प्रसन्न कुमार**: राज्यपाल यह तय करने के लिए **स्वतंत्र दृष्टिकोण नहीं रख सकते** कि सरकार की नीतियाँ **वांछनीय या संवैधानिक** हैं या नहीं।
- Personal opinions may exist, but must be conveyed through **private and candid communication with the State Cabinet**.  
व्यक्तिगत विचार हो सकते हैं, लेकिन उन्हें **राज्य मंत्रिमंडल के साथ निजी और स्पष्ट संवाद** के माध्यम से व्यक्त किया जाना चाहिए।
- Once in office, personal views must yield to **constitutional discipline**.  
पद ग्रहण करने के बाद व्यक्तिगत विचारों को **संवैधानिक अनुशासन** के अधीन होना चाहिए।
- A Governor may **offer counsel**, but must recognise the **limits of the office**.  
राज्यपाल **परामर्श दे सकते हैं**, लेकिन उन्हें **पद की सीमाओं** को समझना चाहिए।



- At the same time, it is healthy for the **Chief Minister and Council of Ministers** to maintain **regular communication** with the Governor and consider **contrarian views**.  
साथ ही, **मुख्यमंत्री और मंत्रिपरिषद्** द्वारा राज्यपाल के साथ **नियमित संवाद** बनाए रखना और **विपरीत विचारों** पर ध्यान देना स्वस्थ परंपरा है।
- Where **constitutional civility and rapport** exist, it is unlikely that an elected government would **ignore the Governor's counsel**.  
जहाँ **संवैधानिक मर्यादा और आपसी तालमेल** होता है, वहाँ निर्वाचित सरकार द्वारा **राज्यपाल के परामर्श की उपेक्षा** की संभावना कम होती है।

### Governor's Address: Colonial Remnant or Constitutional Practice राज्यपाल का अभिभाषण: औपनिवेशिक अवशेष या संवैधानिक परंपरा

- Is the **Governor's address** a **colonial remnant** that should be **dispensed with**?  
क्या **राज्यपाल का अभिभाषण** एक **औपनिवेशिक अवशेष** है जिसे **समाप्त कर देना चाहिए**?
- **Alok Prasanna Kumar**: The practice should be **retained**, even if largely **symbolic** and serving little **functional purpose**.  
**आलोक प्रसन्न कुमार**: इस परंपरा को **जारी रखा जाना चाहिए**, भले ही यह काफी हद तक **प्रतीकात्मक** हो और कम **कार्यात्मक उद्देश्य** पूरा करती हो।
- The focus must be on correcting **constitutionally impermissible gubernatorial discretion** rather than abandoning the **convention**.  
ध्यान **संवैधानिक रूप से अस्वीकार्य राज्यपाल के विवेकाधिकार** को सुधारने पर होना चाहिए, न कि इस **परंपरा को समाप्त करने पर**।
- The address recognises the **Governor as an integral part of the legislature** and reflects the **Westminster parliamentary model** adopted in India.  
यह अभिभाषण **राज्यपाल को विधानमंडल का अभिन्न अंग** मान्यता देता है और भारत द्वारा अपनाए गए **वेस्टमिंस्टर संसदीय मॉडल** को दर्शाता है।
- **P.D.T. Achary**: There is nothing **sacrosanct** about this practice.  
**पी.डी.टी. आचार्य**: इस परंपरा में कुछ भी **अत्यंत पवित्र** नहीं है।
- At least **two other legislative sessions** each year begin **without a Governor's address**, showing that legislative functioning is not dependent on this **ceremonial formality**.  
कम से कम **दो अन्य विधानसभा सत्र** हर वर्ष **राज्यपाल के अभिभाषण के बिना** शुरू होते हैं, जिससे स्पष्ट है कि विधानमंडल का कार्य इस **औपचारिकता पर निर्भर नहीं** है।
- **Article 175** provides an **alternative mechanism** for the Governor to address the House or send **messages on pending legislation**.  
**अनुच्छेद 175** राज्यपाल को सदन को संबोधित करने या **लंबित विधेयकों पर संदेश भेजने का वैकल्पिक प्रावधान** देता है।
- Reconsideration becomes important due to **increasing partisan conduct by Governors in Opposition-ruled States**.  
**विपक्ष शासित राज्यों में राज्यपालों के बढ़ते पक्षपातपूर्ण आचरण** के कारण इस पर पुनर्विचार महत्वपूर्ण हो जाता है।
- **Article 355** imposes a duty on the **Union government** to ensure governance of every State in accordance with the **Constitution**.  
**अनुच्छेद 355** के तहत **केंद्र सरकार** पर यह दायित्व है कि हर राज्य का शासन **संविधान के अनुसार** चले।
- When a Governor declines to deliver the **Article 176 mandated address**, it raises concerns about whether this **constitutional obligation** is being upheld.  
जब राज्यपाल **अनुच्छेद 176 के तहत अनिवार्य अभिभाषण** देने से इनकार करते हैं, तो यह प्रश्न उठता है कि क्या यह **संवैधानिक दायित्व** निभाया जा रहा है।
- Such situations risk creating a **constitutional crisis**, since the **legislative session cannot formally commence** without the Governor's address.  
ऐसी स्थिति **संवैधानिक संकट** पैदा कर सकती है, क्योंकि राज्यपाल के अभिभाषण के बिना **विधान सत्र औपचारिक रूप से शुरू नहीं हो सकता**।

### Presidential intervention and Governor's duties राष्ट्रपति का हस्तक्षेप और राज्यपाल के दायित्व



- Is **Presidential intervention** necessary when Governors fail to discharge their **constitutional duties**?  
जब राज्यपाल अपने **संवैधानिक दायित्वों** का निर्वहन करने में विफल हों, तो क्या **राष्ट्रपति का हस्तक्षेप** आवश्यक है?
- **P.D.T. Achary:** Yes. When Governors act in a **partisan manner** and fail in their **constitutional duties**, the **President must intervene**.  
**पी.डी.टी. आचार्य:** हाँ। जब राज्यपाल **पक्षपातपूर्ण ढंग से कार्य करते हैं** और अपने **संवैधानिक दायित्वों** का पालन नहीं करते, तो **राष्ट्रपति को हस्तक्षेप करना चाहिए**।
- The President may require the Governor to **perform duties or demit office**.  
राष्ट्रपति राज्यपाल को **कर्तव्यों का पालन करने या पद छोड़ने** के लिए कह सकते हैं।
- **Article 160** empowers the President to issue **directions for discharge of Governor's functions**, especially in **unforeseen contingencies**.  
**अनुच्छेद 160** राष्ट्रपति को **राज्यपाल के कार्यों के निर्वहन हेतु निर्देश जारी करने** की शक्ति देता है, विशेषकर **अप्रत्याशित परिस्थितियों** में।
- However, there are **no notable instances** of Presidents invoking such powers to avert **constitutional crises caused by gubernatorial conduct**.  
हालाँकि, ऐसे **कोई उल्लेखनीय उदाहरण नहीं हैं** जहाँ राष्ट्रपति ने **राज्यपाल के आचरण से उत्पन्न संवैधानिक संकट** को टालने के लिए इन शक्तियों का उपयोग किया है।

### Feasibility of Constitutional Amendment on Governor's Address राज्यपाल के अभिभाषण पर संवैधानिक संशोधन की व्यवहार्यता

- **Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin** has called for a **constitutional amendment** to abolish the **Governor's address**.  
**तमिलनाडु के मुख्यमंत्री एम.के. स्टालिन** ने **राज्यपाल के अभिभाषण** को समाप्त करने के लिए **संवैधानिक संशोधन** की मांग की है।
- How feasible is such an **amendment**?  
ऐसा **संशोधन** कितना संभव है?
- **P.D.T. Achary:** It is **unlikely** that such a constitutional amendment will be achieved.  
**पी.डी.टी. आचार्य:** ऐसा **संवैधानिक संशोधन** संभवतः **सफल नहीं होगा**।
- The **Union government** is unlikely to support it, and it requires a **special majority in Parliament**.  
**केंद्र सरकार** इसका समर्थन करने की संभावना कम है, और इसके लिए **संसद में विशेष बहुमत** आवश्यक है।
- This means a **majority of total membership** of each House and a **two-thirds majority of members present and voting**.  
इसका अर्थ है कि प्रत्येक सदन की **कुल सदस्यता का बहुमत** और उपस्थित व मतदान करने वाले सदस्यों का **दो-तिहाई बहुमत** चाहिए।
- Such a **threshold is difficult** without **broad consensus between government and Opposition**.  
ऐसी **सीमा को पार करना कठिन** है जब तक **सरकार और विपक्ष के बीच व्यापक सहमति** न हो।
- When the current framework yields **political benefit**, there is **little incentive to change it**.  
जब मौजूदा व्यवस्था **राजनीतिक लाभ** देती है, तो उसे बदलने का **प्रोत्साहन कम** होता है।
- **Alok Prasanna Kumar:** Such an amendment would be **futile**.  
**आलोक प्रसन्न कुमार:** ऐसा संशोधन **निरर्थक** होगा।
- A more meaningful reform would be to reconsider the **appointment and removal of Governors**.  
अधिक सार्थक सुधार **राज्यपालों की नियुक्ति और हटाने की प्रक्रिया** पर पुनर्विचार होगा।
- This would ensure Governors remain loyal to the **Constitution**, not the **Union government**.  
इससे सुनिश्चित होगा कि राज्यपाल **संविधान के प्रति वफादार** रहें, न कि **केंद्र सरकार के प्रति**।
- Any departure from this role should have **consequences for continuation in office**.  
इस भूमिका से विचलन के **पद पर बने रहने पर परिणाम** होने चाहिए।
- This explains why **Presidents usually function without controversy**, while **Governors often do not**.  
यही कारण है कि **राष्ट्रपति सामान्यतः विवाद रहित कार्य करते हैं**, जबकि **राज्यपाल अक्सर नहीं**।



- The **President is institutionally accountable to Parliament through indirect election and impeachment.**  
राष्ट्रपति संसद के प्रति संस्थागत रूप से उत्तरदायी होते हैं, क्योंकि उनका अप्रत्यक्ष चुनाव और महाभियोग संभव है।
- However, even such reform requires **political consensus**, which may be difficult.  
हालाँकि, ऐसे सुधार के लिए भी राजनीतिक सहमति आवश्यक है, जो कठिन हो सकती है।
- Nevertheless, a **serious discussion on reforms** is needed to prevent the **weakening of constitutional governance** in **Opposition-ruled States.**  
फिर भी, संवैधानिक शासन के कमजोर होने को रोकने के लिए सुधारों पर गंभीर चर्चा आवश्यक है, विशेषकर विपक्ष शासित राज्यों में।

## Trump attacks U.S. voting structure, mulls federal takeover of elections

**AGS II: Polity**  
WASHINGTON

From calls for his Republican Party to “nationalise” voting to his repeated false claims of a stolen election, President Donald Trump is ramping up attacks on the electoral system ahead of this year’s U.S. midterms.

The latest idea from Mr. Trump – who still refuses to acknowledge his 2020 election defeat by Democrat Joe Biden – is to take responsibility for organising elections away from some U.S. States and hand it to the federal government instead.

“The Republicans should say, ‘We want to take over. We should take over the voting in at least – may be, 15 places.’ The Republicans ought to nationalise the voting,” Mr. Trump told podcaster and



**Man and message:** President Donald Trump makes his campaign pitch in Iowa, U.S. ahead of this year’s midterm elections. AFP

former FBI deputy director Dan Bongino this week.

**Low approval ratings**  
His extraordinary comments – which were condemned by Democrats – come as Republicans face losing control of Congress in the November 3 midterm elections.

Polls show low approval ratings for the second-term

President while Republicans have suffered a string of losses in local elections.

Mr. Trump has, however, doubled down on his long-standing but debunked claims of widespread voter fraud – and his insistence that he needs to tackle it. “I don’t know why the federal government doesn’t do them anyway,” Mr. Trump told re-

porters in the Oval Office on Tuesday when asked about his comments about **nationalising elections.**

Mr. Trump pressed the case in an interview with *NBC News* that aired on Wednesday, alleging “there are some areas in our country that are extremely corrupt.”

Mr. Trump’s comments have sparked fears that he will – and not for the first time – go up against the U.S. Constitution itself.

“The Constitution clearly says that States are the ones that do the running (of elections),” Justin Levitt, a professor at Loyola Law School, said. “There is no debate about this.”

Mr. Levitt said this was partly because of the huge size of the United States but also a “separation of powers” and an “anti-corruption measure.”

### Trump attacks U.S. voting structure, mulls federal takeover of elections

ट्रंप ने अमेरिका की मतदान व्यवस्था पर हमला किया, चुनावों के संघीय अधिग्रहण पर विचार

- Trump attacks **U.S. voting structure**, mulls **federal takeover of elections**  
ट्रंप ने अमेरिकी मतदान ढांचे पर हमला किया, चुनावों के संघीय अधिग्रहण पर विचार किया
- From calls for his **Republican Party** to “nationalise” voting to his repeated **false claims** of a **stolen election**, President **Donald Trump** is ramping up attacks on the **electoral system** ahead of this year’s **U.S. midterms.**  
अपनी रिपब्लिकन पार्टी से मतदान को “राष्ट्रीयकृत” करने की अपील से लेकर चुनाव चोरी के अपने बार-बार किए गए झूठे दावों तक, राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप इस वर्ष के अमेरिकी मध्यावधि चुनावों से पहले चुनावी प्रणाली पर हमले तेज कर रहे हैं।



- The latest idea from Mr. Trump — who still refuses to acknowledge his **2020 election defeat** by Democrat **Joe Biden** — is to take responsibility for organising elections away from some **U.S. States** and hand it to the **federal government** instead.  
श्री ट्रंप का नवीनतम विचार — जो अब भी डेमोक्रेट **जो बाइडन** से अपनी **2020 की चुनावी हार** स्वीकार करने से इनकार करते हैं — कुछ **अमेरिकी राज्यों** से चुनाव आयोजित करने की जिम्मेदारी लेकर उसे **संघीय सरकार** को सौंपने का है।
- “The **Republicans** should say, ‘We want to take over. We should take over the voting in at least — maybe, **15 places**.’ The Republicans ought to **nationalise the voting**,” Mr. Trump told podcaster and former **FBI** deputy director **Dan Bongino** this week.  
“**रिपब्लिकनों** को कहना चाहिए, ‘हम नियंत्रण लेना चाहते हैं। हमें कम से कम — शायद **15 स्थानों** में — मतदान का नियंत्रण लेना चाहिए।’ रिपब्लिकनों को **मतदान का राष्ट्रीयकरण** करना चाहिए,” श्री ट्रंप ने इस सप्ताह पॉडकास्टर और पूर्व **एफबीआई** उप निदेशक **डैन बॉन्जिनो** से कहा।

## Low approval ratings कम अनुमोदन रेटिंग

- His extraordinary comments — which were condemned by **Democrats** — come as **Republicans** face losing control of **Congress** in the **November 3 midterm elections**.  
उनकी असाधारण टिप्पणियां — जिनकी **डेमोक्रेट्स** ने निंदा की — ऐसे समय आई हैं जब **रिपब्लिकन 3 नवंबर के मध्यावधि चुनावों** में कांग्रेस पर नियंत्रण खोने का सामना कर रहे हैं।
- Polls show low **approval ratings** for the **second-term President** while **Republicans** have suffered a string of losses in **local elections**.  
सर्वेक्षणों में **दूसरे कार्यकाल के राष्ट्रपति** के लिए कम **अनुमोदन रेटिंग** दिखाई देती है, जबकि **रिपब्लिकनों** को **स्थानीय चुनावों** में लगातार हार का सामना करना पड़ा है।
- Mr. Trump has, however, doubled down on his long-standing but **debunked claims** of widespread **voter fraud** — and his insistence that he needs to tackle it.  
हालांकि श्री ट्रंप ने व्यापक **मतदाता धोखाधड़ी** के अपने पुराने लेकिन **खारिज किए जा चुके दावों** पर जोर देना जारी रखा है — और इस पर कार्रवाई की अपनी जिद भी।
- “I don’t know why the **federal government** doesn’t do them anyway,” Mr. Trump told reporters in the **Oval Office** on **Tuesday** when asked about his comments about **nationalising elections**.  
“मुझे नहीं पता कि **संघीय सरकार** वैसे भी यह क्यों नहीं करती,” श्री ट्रंप ने **मंगलवार** को **ओवल ऑफिस** में रिपोर्टर्स से कहा, जब उनसे **चुनावों के राष्ट्रीयकरण** पर उनकी टिप्पणियों के बारे में पूछा गया।
- Mr. Trump pressed the case in an interview with **NBC News** that aired on **Wednesday**, alleging “there are some areas in our country that are **extremely corrupt**.”  
श्री ट्रंप ने **बुधवार** को प्रसारित **एनबीसी न्यूज़** के एक साक्षात्कार में यह कहते हुए अपना पक्ष रखा कि “हमारे देश में कुछ क्षेत्र **बेहद भ्रष्ट** हैं।”
- Mr. Trump’s comments have sparked fears that he will — and not for the **first time** — go up against the **U.S. Constitution** itself.  
श्री ट्रंप की टिप्पणियों ने इस आशंका को जन्म दिया है कि वह — और यह **पहली बार नहीं** — स्वयं **अमेरिकी संविधान** के खिलाफ जाएंगे।
- “The **Constitution** clearly says that **States** are the ones that do the running (of elections),” **Justin Levitt**, a professor at **Loyola Law School**, said. “There is no debate about this.”  
“**संविधान** स्पष्ट रूप से कहता है कि **राज्य** ही (चुनावों का) संचालन करते हैं,” **लोयोला लॉ स्कूल** के प्रोफेसर **जस्टिन लेविट** ने कहा। “इस पर कोई बहस नहीं है।”
- Mr. Levitt said this was partly because of the huge size of the **United States** but also a “**separation of powers**” and an “**anti-corruption measure**.”  
श्री लेविट ने कहा कि यह आंशिक रूप से **संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका** के विशाल आकार के कारण है, लेकिन साथ ही यह “**सत्ता का पृथक्करण**” और एक “**भ्रष्टाचार-रोधी उपाय**” भी है।



GS Paper II: Governance,	
TOPICS COVERED	06 February 2026
1.	<b>Shah launches Bharat Taxi in Delhi-NCR and Gujarat</b> शाह ने दिल्ली-एनसीआर और गुजरात में भारत टैक्सी लॉन्च की
2.	<b>U.S. shuts down 200 'illegal' online pharmacies tied to an India-based criminal organisation</b> अमेरिका ने भारत-आधारित आपराधिक संगठन से जुड़ी 200 'अवैध' ऑनलाइन फ़ार्मेशियों को बंद किया
3.	<b>SC flags States' preference for 'ad-hoc' DGP appointments</b> एससी ने राज्यों की 'एड-हॉक' डीजीपी नियुक्तियों को लेकर प्राथमिकता पर सवाल उठाए
4.	<b>UPSC adds more norms for Civil Services aspirants</b> यूपीएससी ने सिविल सेवा अभ्यर्थियों के लिए और नियम जोड़े
5.	<b>Number of Indian based orgs' websites seized by U.S.</b> अमेरिका द्वारा जब्त की गई भारतीय आधारित संगठनों की वेबसाइटों की संख्या
6.	<b>Public grievances received against the Centre and State</b> केंद्र और राज्य के विरुद्ध प्राप्त सार्वजनिक शिकायतें



### Shah launches Bharat Taxi in Delhi-NCR and Gujarat

शाह ने दिल्ली-एनसीआर और गुजरात में भारत टैक्सी लॉन्च की

- Shah launches **Bharat Taxi** in Delhi-NCR and Gujarat
- Union Minister **Amit Shah** on Thursday launched **Bharat Taxi**, the country's first **co-operative-run ride-hailing platform**, which will start services in **Delhi-NCR and Gujarat** initially and **pan-India** in the next **three years**.

केंद्रीय मंत्री अमित शाह ने गुरुवार को देश के पहले सहकारी-संचालित राइड-हेलिंग प्लेटफॉर्म भारत टैक्सी को लॉन्च किया, जो शुरुआत में दिल्ली-एनसीआर और गुजरात में सेवाएं शुरू करेगा और अगले तीन वर्षों में पूरे भारत में विस्तार करेगा।

- **Bharat Taxi platform**, which has been established by **India's top eight co-operative organisations**, including dairy major **Amul**, will enhance **drivers' income** significantly, besides giving them **ownership**, the Minister highlighted.

मंत्री ने बताया कि **भारत टैक्सी प्लेटफॉर्म**, जिसे **अमूल** सहित **भारत की शीर्ष आठ सहकारी संस्थाओं** द्वारा स्थापित किया गया है, **डाइवरों की आय** में उल्लेखनीय वृद्धि करेगा और उन्हें **स्वामित्व** भी प्रदान करेगा।

- Addressing an event after launching the service, **Mr. Shah** said the rival **ride-hailing platforms** have reduced **commission** and are offering many other **incentives** seeing the success of **Bharat Taxi** during the **pilot operation**.

सेवा लॉन्च करने के बाद एक कार्यक्रम को संबोधित करते हुए **श्री शाह** ने कहा कि **पायलट संचालन** के दौरान **भारत टैक्सी** की सफलता को देखते हुए प्रतिद्वंद्वी **राइड-हेलिंग प्लेटफॉर्म** ने **कमीशन** घटाया है और कई अन्य प्रोत्साहन भी दे रहे हैं।

## Shah launches Bharat Taxi in Delhi-NCR and Gujarat

GS II: Governance

Union Minister **Amit Shah** on Thursday launched **Bharat Taxi**, the country's first **co-operative-run ride-hailing platform**, which will start services in **Delhi-NCR and Gujarat** initially and **pan-India** in the next **three years**. **Bharat Taxi** platform, which has been established by **India's top eight co-operative organisations**, including dairy major **Amul**, will enhance drivers' income significantly, besides giving them ownership, the Minister highlighted. Addressing an event after launching the service, Mr. Shah said the rival ride-hailing platforms have reduced commission and are offering many other incentives seeing the success of **Bharat Taxi** during the pilot operation. PTI



# U.S. shuts down 200 'illegal' online pharmacies tied to an India-based criminal organisation

**GS II: Governance**  
**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has announced the shutdown of over 200 website domains tied to an India-based transnational criminal organisation (TCO) allegedly responsible for at least six fatal and four non-fatal overdoses. Four persons have been arrested so far.

The DEA executed the operation in cooperation with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York. "The TCO tied to these illegal online pharmacies has been under investigation by DEA's Rocky Mountain Field Division since 2022," read its statement.

"Leveraging its global reach, DEA actively collaborates with our Government of India law enforcement partners to identify, investigate, and dismantle dangerous criminal organisations that engage in these types of illegal drug trafficking operations," said the DEA, adding that it would continue its crackdown on illicit pharmaceutical distributors at the source through joint operations.



The DEA says that counterfeit medications are often made with fentanyl and taking them can lead to serious health risks. FILE PHOTO

The DEA says that counterfeit medications are often made with fentanyl and taking them can lead to serious health risks. FILE PHOTO

The DEA says that counterfeit medications are often made with fentanyl and taking them can lead to serious health risks. FILE PHOTO

The DEA says that counterfeit medications are often made with fentanyl and taking them can lead to serious health risks. FILE PHOTO

Show Cause (OTSC) against DEA-registered pharmacies. "These actions were in addition to the U.S. government shutting down more than 200 online pharmacies accused of filling hundreds of thousands of orders of diverted pharmaceuticals and counterfeit pills without valid prescriptions," the DEA said.

The agency has approached hundreds of customers who bought medication through them.

"This case demonstrates how foreign-based traffickers exploit our healthcare system, hide behind the internet, and use people inside the United States to move dangerous drugs under the guise of legitimate commerce," said DEA Administrator Terrance Cole. In 2024, DEA had cautioned the

U.S. citizens against an increase in illegal online pharmacies, many of which sold and shipped counterfeit pills made with fentanyl to unsuspecting customers, it said.

The agency said that many of the sites taken down as part of Operation Meltdown claimed to be legitimate, based in the U.S., and FDA-approved, but it found that their operators were often working with drug traffickers to fulfill online orders with counterfeit pills or diverted pharmaceuticals.

"These counterfeit medications are often made with fentanyl or methamphetamine and taking them can lead to serious health risks, including harmful side effects, ineffective treatment, and even death," it added.

## U.S. shuts down 200 'illegal' online pharmacies tied to an India-based criminal organisation

अमेरिका ने भारत-आधारित अपराधिक संगठन से जुड़ी 200 'अवैध' ऑनलाइन फ़ार्मसियों को बंद किया

- The **U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)** has announced the shutdown of over **200 website domains** tied to an **India-based transnational criminal organisation (TCO)** allegedly responsible for at least **six fatal** and **four non-fatal overdoses**.

अमेरिकी ड्रग एनफोर्समेंट एडमिनिस्ट्रेशन (डीईए) ने एक भारत-आधारित अंतरराष्ट्रीय अपराधिक संगठन (टीसीओ) से जुड़े 200 से अधिक वेबसाइट डोमेन बंद करने की घोषणा की है, जो कथित तौर पर कम से कम छह घातक और चार गैर-घातक ओवरडोज़ के लिए जिम्मेदार है।

- **Four persons** have been arrested so far. अब तक **चार व्यक्तियों** को गिरफ्तार किया गया है।
- The DEA executed the operation in cooperation with the **U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York**. डीईए ने यह अभियान **न्यूयॉर्क के ईस्टर्न डिस्ट्रिक्ट के लिए अमेरिकी अटॉर्नी कार्यालय** के सहयोग से चलाया।
- "The **TCO** tied to these illegal online pharmacies has been under investigation by DEA's **Rocky Mountain Field Division** since **2022**," read its statement. "इन अवैध ऑनलाइन फ़ार्मसियों से जुड़ा **टीसीओ 2022** से डीईए के **रॉकी माउंटेन फ़्रील्ड डिवीजन** की जांच के दायरे में है," बयान में कहा गया।
- "Leveraging its **global reach**, DEA actively collaborates with our **Government of India law enforcement partners** to identify, investigate, and dismantle dangerous criminal organisations that engage in these types of **illegal drug trafficking operations**," said the DEA, adding that it would continue its **crackdown** on illicit pharmaceutical distributors at the **source** through **joint operations**. "अपनी **वैश्विक पहुंच** का उपयोग करते हुए, डीईए इस प्रकार के **अवैध मादक पदार्थ तस्करी अभियानों** में शामिल खतरनाक अपराधिक संगठनों की पहचान, जांच और उन्हें खत्म करने के लिए **भारत सरकार** के



कानून प्रवर्तन साझेदारों के साथ सक्रिय रूप से सहयोग करता है," डीईए ने कहा, साथ ही यह जोड़ा कि वह संयुक्त अभियानों के माध्यम से स्रोत पर अवैध फ़ार्मास्यूटिकल वितरकों के खिलाफ कार्रवाई जारी रखेगा।

- The agency's **field offices** launched the searches on **January 27** across the **U.S.**, leading to the arrest of **four individuals** along with the issuance of **five Immediate Suspension Orders (ISO)** and **one Order to Show Cause (OTSC)** against **DEA-registered pharmacies**.  
एजेंसी के फ़ील्ड कार्यालयों ने 27 जनवरी को पूरे अमेरिका में तलाशी अभियान शुरू किया, जिसके परिणामस्वरूप चार व्यक्तियों की गिरफ्तारी हुई और डीईए-पंजीकृत फ़ार्मसियों के खिलाफ पाँच तत्काल निलंबन आदेश (आईएसओ) तथा एक कारण बताओ आदेश (ओटीएससी) जारी किया गया।
- "These actions were in addition to the **U.S. government** shutting down more than **200 online pharmacies** accused of filling **hundreds of thousands of orders of diverted pharmaceuticals** and **counterfeit pills** without valid prescriptions," the DEA said.  
"ये कार्रवाइयों उन कदमों के अतिरिक्त थीं जिनके तहत अमेरिकी सरकार ने 200 से अधिक ऑनलाइन फ़ार्मसियों को बंद किया, जिन पर वैध पर्चों के बिना डायवर्ट की गई दवाओं और नकली गोलियों के लाखों ऑर्डर पूरे करने का आरोप था," डीईए ने कहा।
- The agency has approached **hundreds of customers** who bought medication through them. एजेंसी ने उनके माध्यम से दवाएँ खरीदने वाले सैकड़ों ग्राहकों से संपर्क किया है।
- "This case demonstrates how **foreign-based traffickers** exploit our **healthcare system**, hide behind the **internet**, and use people inside the **United States** to move dangerous drugs under the guise of **legitimate commerce**," said **DEA Administrator Terrance Cole**.  
"यह मामला दर्शाता है कि कैसे विदेश-आधारित तस्क़र हमारे स्वास्थ्य प्रणाली का दुरुपयोग करते हैं, इंटरनेट के पीछे छिपते हैं और वैध व्यापार की आड़ में संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका के भीतर लोगों का उपयोग कर खतरनाक दवाओं को आगे बढ़ाते हैं," डीईए प्रशासक टेरेस कोल ने कहा।
- In **2024**, DEA had cautioned the **U.S. citizens** against an increase in **illegal online pharmacies**, many of which sold and shipped **counterfeit pills** made with **fentanyl** to unsuspecting customers, it said.  
2024 में, डीईए ने अमेरिकी नागरिकों को अवैध ऑनलाइन फ़ार्मसियों में वृद्धि के खिलाफ चेतावनी दी थी, जिनमें से कई फ़ेटानिल से बनी नकली गोलियाँ अनजान ग्राहकों को बेचती और भेजती थीं।
- The agency said that many of the sites taken down as part of **Operation Meltdown** claimed to be **legitimate**, based in the **U.S.**, and **FDA-approved**, but it found that their operators were often working with **drug traffickers** to fulfil online orders with **counterfeit pills** or **diverted pharmaceuticals**.  
एजेंसी ने कहा कि ऑपरेशन मेल्टडाउन के तहत हटाई गई कई साइटें खुद को वैध, अमेरिका-आधारित और एफडीए-स्वीकृत बताती थीं, लेकिन पाया गया कि उनके संचालक अक्सर ड्रग तस्क़रों के साथ मिलकर नकली गोलियों या डायवर्ट की गई दवाओं से ऑनलाइन ऑर्डर पूरे कर रहे थे।
- "These **counterfeit medications** are often made with **fentanyl** or **methamphetamine** and taking them can lead to serious **health risks**, including harmful **side effects**, ineffective treatment, and even **death**," it added.  
"ये नकली दवाएँ अक्सर फ़ेटानिल या मेथाम्फेटामाइन से बनाई जाती हैं और इन्हें लेने से गंभीर स्वास्थ्य जोखिम, हानिकारक दुष्प्रभाव, अप्रभावी उपचार और यहाँ तक कि मृत्यु भी हो सकती है," उसने जोड़ा।



# SC flags States' preference for 'ad-hoc' DGP appointments

CJI-led Bench says States are opting for 'Acting' police chiefs of their choice in violation of 2006 verdict, directs UPSC to approach top court if process for appointing regular DGPs is delayed

GS II: Governance

Krishnadas Rajagopal  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday observed that States were avoiding appointment of regular Directors-General of Police (DGPs) with a fixed tenure of two years, opting instead for "Acting" police chiefs of their choice in violation of a 20-year-old top court judgment.

The court, in a 2006 judgment in the *Prakash Singh* case, had made it clear that the office of DGP should be divorced from political or other external pressures and cautioned governments against mixing politics and law enforcement.

It had invoked its extraordinary powers under Article 142 to direct that DGPs must be selected by States from among the three senior-most and meritorious officers empanelled by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). The court had thrown out the "concept" of Acting DGPs. It had held that State police chiefs should have a minimum fixed tenure of two years.

There are several States which keep on delaying the submission of proposals for appointment of regular DGPs in total disregard of the direction of the Supreme Court in the *Prakash Singh* case... An ad-hoc arrangement by appointing an Acting DGP is preferred

SUPREME COURT



Subsequent top court orders in July 2018 and March 2019 detailed the appointments mechanism, which included the State concerned sending a proposal to the UPSC three months ahead of the retirement of the incumbent DGP. The UPSC would prepare a panel of suitable officers. The State would appoint one of the empanelled officers as DGP "immediately".

On Thursday, the UPSC informed a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant that the reality on the ground hardly resembled the process envisaged in the 2006 judgment.

The Bench was hearing the case of Telangana, where the UPSC said the

last regular DGP retired about nine years ago, in November 2017. The State had not forwarded any proposals to initiate the appointment of a regular DGP, choosing to carry on with 'Acting' DGPs. "A State will send a proposal only when it wants to appoint a certain officer," Chief Justice Kant said.

## Meritorious officers

The court said many meritorious and senior police officers had lost their opportunity at becoming DGPs owing to the "inordinate delay" shown by State governments to send proposals to the UPSC. "There are several States which keep on delaying the submission of proposals for

appointment of regular DGPs in total disregard of the direction of the Supreme Court in the *Prakash Singh* case... An ad-hoc arrangement by appointing an Acting DGP is preferred," the Bench observed.

The court said the UPSC should not fall into ploys of the States. The Bench directed the Commission to write to States to send timely proposals for appointment of regular DGPs whenever such an occasion arises in the future. The Bench gave the UPSC liberty to approach the Supreme Court in case the States chose to ignore such communication.

"Then necessary consequences, including accountability of those responsible for the delay would follow," the court observed in its order.

Noting that there was a "serious lapse" on the part of Telangana in not sending a timely proposal to the UPSC, it gave the Commission four weeks to hold meetings and make the recommendations to the Telangana government on the appointment of a regular DGP.

## SC flags States' preference for 'ad-hoc' DGP appointments

एससी ने राज्यों की 'एड-हॉक' डीजीपी नियुक्तियों को लेकर प्राथमिकता पर सवाल उठाए

- CJI-led Bench says States are opting for 'Acting' police chiefs of their choice in violation of 2006 verdict, directs UPSC to approach top court if process for appointing regular DGPs is delayed

सीजेआई-नेतृत्व वाली पीठ ने कहा कि राज्य 2006 के फैसले का उल्लंघन करते हुए अपनी पसंद के 'कार्यवाहक (Acting)' पुलिस प्रमुख नियुक्त कर रहे हैं, और यूपीएससी को निर्देश दिया कि यदि नियमित डीजीपी की नियुक्ति प्रक्रिया में देरी हो तो सुप्रीम कोर्ट का रुख करे

- The Supreme Court on Thursday observed that States were avoiding appointment of regular Directors-General of Police (DGPs) with a fixed tenure of two years, opting instead for "Acting" police chiefs of their choice in violation of a 20-year-old top court judgment.



सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने गुरुवार को कहा कि राज्य दो साल के निश्चित कार्यकाल वाले नियमित पुलिस महानिदेशक (डीजीपी) की नियुक्ति से बच रहे हैं और 20 साल पुराने शीर्ष अदालत के फैसले का उल्लंघन करते हुए अपनी पसंद के “कार्यवाहक” पुलिस प्रमुख चुन रहे हैं।

- The court, in a 2006 judgment in the Prakash Singh case, had made it clear that the office of DGP should be divorced from political or other external pressures and cautioned governments against mixing politics and law enforcement.  
अदालत ने प्रकाश सिंह मामले में 2006 के फैसले में स्पष्ट किया था कि डीजीपी का पद राजनीतिक या अन्य बाहरी दबावों से मुक्त होना चाहिए और सरकारों को राजनीति और कानून-प्रवर्तन को मिलाने से आगाह किया था।
- It had invoked its extraordinary powers under Article 142 to direct that DGPs must be selected by States from among the three senior-most and meritorious officers empanelled by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).  
अदालत ने अनुच्छेद 142 के तहत अपनी असाधारण शक्तियों का उपयोग करते हुए निर्देश दिया था कि डीजीपी की नियुक्ति यूपीएससी द्वारा पैनल में शामिल तीन सबसे वरिष्ठ और मेधावी अधिकारियों में से की जानी चाहिए।
- The court had thrown out the “concept” of Acting DGPs.  
अदालत ने ‘कार्यवाहक डीजीपी’ की अवधारणा को खारिज कर दिया था।
- It had held that State police chiefs should have a minimum fixed tenure of two years.  
अदालत ने कहा था कि राज्य पुलिस प्रमुखों का न्यूनतम निश्चित कार्यकाल दो वर्ष होना चाहिए।
- Subsequent top court orders in July 2018 and March 2019 detailed the appointments mechanism, which included the State concerned sending a proposal to the UPSC three months ahead of the retirement of the incumbent DGP.  
इसके बाद जुलाई 2018 और मार्च 2019 में शीर्ष अदालत के आदेशों में नियुक्ति की प्रक्रिया को विस्तार से बताया गया, जिसमें संबंधित राज्य द्वारा मौजूदा डीजीपी की सेवानिवृत्ति से तीन महीने पहले यूपीएससी को प्रस्ताव भेजना शामिल था।
- The UPSC would prepare a panel of suitable officers.  
इसके बाद यूपीएससी उपयुक्त अधिकारियों का पैनल तैयार करता।
- The State would appoint one of the empanelled officers as DGP “immediately”.  
राज्य को पैनल में शामिल अधिकारियों में से किसी एक को “तत्काल” डीजीपी नियुक्त करना होता।
- On Thursday, the UPSC informed a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant that the reality on the ground hardly resembled the process envisaged in the 2006 judgment.  
गुरुवार को यूपीएससी ने मुख्य न्यायाधीश भारत सुर्यकांत की अध्यक्षता वाली पीठ को बताया कि जमीनी हकीकत 2006 के फैसले में परिकल्पित प्रक्रिया से बिल्कुल मेल नहीं खाती।
- The Bench was hearing the case of Telangana, where the UPSC said the last regular DGP retired about nine years ago, in November 2017.  
पीठ तेलंगाना के मामले की सुनवाई कर रही थी, जहाँ यूपीएससी ने बताया कि अंतिम नियमित डीजीपी लगभग नौ साल पहले, नवंबर 2017 में सेवानिवृत्त हुए थे।
- The State had not forwarded any proposals to initiate the appointment of a regular DGP, choosing to carry on with ‘Acting’ DGPs.  
राज्य ने नियमित डीजीपी की नियुक्ति शुरू करने के लिए कोई प्रस्ताव नहीं भेजा और ‘कार्यवाहक डीजीपी’ के साथ काम चलाना चुना।
- “A State will send a proposal only when it wants to appoint a certain officer,” Chief Justice Kant said.  
मुख्य न्यायाधीश कांत ने कहा, “कोई राज्य तभी प्रस्ताव भेजता है जब वह किसी विशेष अधिकारी को नियुक्त करना चाहता है।”

### Meritorious officers मेधावी अधिकारी

- The court said many meritorious and senior police officers had lost their opportunity at becoming DGPs owing to the “inordinate delay” shown by State governments to send proposals to the UPSC.  
अदालत ने कहा कि राज्य सरकारों द्वारा यूपीएससी को प्रस्ताव भेजने में की गई “अत्यधिक देरी” के कारण कई मेधावी और वरिष्ठ पुलिस अधिकारी डीजीपी बनने का अवसर खो चुके हैं।



- “There are several States which keep on delaying the submission of proposals for appointment of regular DGPs in total disregard of the direction of the Supreme Court in the Prakash Singh case... An ad-hoc arrangement by appointing an Acting DGP is preferred,” the Bench observed.  
पीठ ने कहा, “कई राज्य हैं जो प्रकाश सिंह मामले में सुप्रीम कोर्ट के निर्देशों की पूरी तरह अनदेखी करते हुए नियमित डीजीपी की नियुक्ति के प्रस्ताव भेजने में देरी करते रहते हैं... और कार्यवाहक डीजीपी की एड-हॉक व्यवस्था को प्राथमिकता दी जाती है।”
- The court said the UPSC should not fall into ploys of the States.  
अदालत ने कहा कि यूपीएससी को राज्यों की चालों में नहीं आना चाहिए।
- The Bench directed the Commission to write to States to send timely proposals for appointment of regular DGPs whenever such an occasion arises in the future.  
पीठ ने आयोग को निर्देश दिया कि भविष्य में जब भी ऐसा अवसर आए, तो राज्यों को समय पर नियमित डीजीपी की नियुक्ति के प्रस्ताव भेजने के लिए पत्र लिखें।
- The Bench gave the UPSC liberty to approach the Supreme Court in case the States chose to ignore such communication.  
पीठ ने यूपीएससी को यह स्वतंत्रता दी कि यदि राज्य इस तरह के पत्राचार की अनदेखी करें तो वह सुप्रीम कोर्ट का रुख कर सके।
- “Then necessary consequences, including accountability of those responsible for the delay would follow,” the court observed in its order.  
अदालत ने अपने आदेश में कहा, “फिर आवश्यक परिणाम सामने आएँगे, जिनमें देरी के लिए जिम्मेदार लोगों की जवाबदेही भी शामिल होगी।”
- Noting that there was a “serious lapse” on the part of Telangana in not sending a timely proposal to the UPSC, it gave the Commission four weeks to hold meetings and make the recommendations to the Telangana government on the appointment of a regular DGP.  
तेलंगाना द्वारा यूपीएससी को समय पर प्रस्ताव न भेजने को “गंभीर चूक” बताते हुए अदालत ने आयोग को चार सप्ताह का समय दिया कि वह बैठकें कर तेलंगाना सरकार को नियमित डीजीपी की नियुक्ति पर अपनी सिफारिशें दें।



# UPSC adds more norms for Civil Services aspirants

GS II: Governance

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Union Public Services Commission has expanded the restrictions on applying for the Civil Services Examination from 2026 for candidates who are allotted the Indian Police Service or any other Central Services Group "A", said the notification for the 2026 exam issued on Wednesday.

The notification said the UPSC was looking to fill approximately 933 vacancies this year, of which 33 would be reserved for Persons with Benchmark Disability.

While keeping the restrictions for those already allotted the Indian Administrative Service or the Indian Foreign Service in past CSEs unchanged, it introduced a set of conditions. A candidate allotted any of these services in the CSE 2026 would be eligible for the CSE 2027 if they are granted an exemption from training for that service by the "authority concerned".

The notification added that the candidate would be eligible for grant of one-time exemption only from joining the training in order to enable him/her to appear in CSE-2027. It ad-

**A notification says that the conditions will apply to those allotted IPS or any 'Group A' service**

ded that such a candidate should join the training for "foundation course only".

Further, the notification said that such candidates would not be allowed to appear in CSE 2028 or any subsequent CSEs "unless he/she resigns from the allocated service".

**One-time opportunity**  
The notification said that candidates who had been allotted any service based on CSE 2025 or earlier years, would have "a one-time opportunity" to appear either in this year's examination or the one for 2027 without having to resign from their service.

If their aim was to use their remaining attempts for CSE 2028 or subsequent exams, they would have to follow the resignation rule, the UPSC said.

The notification said that this set of conditions would apply to those being allotted Indian Police Service or any Central Service categorised as Group A.

## UPSC adds more norms for Civil Services aspirants यूपीएससी ने सिविल सेवा अभ्यर्थियों के लिए और नियम जोड़े

The Commission has expanded the restrictions on applying for the **Civil Services Examination** from **2026** for candidates who are allotted the **Indian Police Service** or any other **Central Services Group "A"**, said the notification for the **2026 exam** issued on **Wednesday**.

आयोग ने **2026** से **सिविल सेवा परीक्षा** में आवेदन करने को लेकर **भारतीय पुलिस सेवा** या किसी अन्य **केंद्रीय सेवा समूह "A"** में आवंटित उम्मीदवारों के लिए प्रतिबंधों का विस्तार किया है, ऐसा **बुधवार** को जारी **2026 परीक्षा** की अधिसूचना में कहा गया।

The notification said the **UPSC** was looking to fill approximately **933 vacancies** this year, of which **33** would be reserved for **Persons with Benchmark Disability**.

अधिसूचना में कहा गया कि **यूपीएससी** इस वर्ष लगभग **933 रिक्तियाँ** भरना चाहता है, जिनमें से **33 बेंचमार्क दिव्यांग व्यक्तियों** के लिए आरक्षित होंगी।

While keeping the restrictions for those already allotted the **Indian Administrative Service** or the **Indian Foreign Service** in past CSEs unchanged, it introduced a set of conditions.

पिछली सीएसई में पहले से **भारतीय प्रशासनिक सेवा** या **भारतीय विदेश सेवा** में आवंटित उम्मीदवारों के लिए प्रतिबंधों को यथावत रखते हुए, इसने शर्तों का एक नया समूह पेश किया।

A candidate allotted any of these services in the **CSE 2026** would be eligible for the **CSE 2027** if they are granted an exemption from training for that service by the "**authority concerned**".

**सीएसई 2026** में इन सेवाओं में से किसी में आवंटित उम्मीदवार **सीएसई 2027** के लिए पात्र होगा, यदि उसे संबंधित सेवा के प्रशिक्षण से "**संबंधित प्राधिकारी**" द्वारा छूट दी जाती है।

The notification added that the candidate would be eligible for grant of **one-time exemption** only from joining the training in

order to enable him/her to appear in **CSE-2027**.

अधिसूचना में जोड़ा गया कि उम्मीदवार को **सीएसई-2027** में उपस्थित होने के लिए केवल प्रशिक्षण में शामिल होने से **एक बार की छूट** दी जाएगी।

It added that such a candidate should join the training for "**foundation course only**".

इसमें यह भी कहा गया कि ऐसे उम्मीदवार को केवल "**फाउंडेशन कोर्स**" के लिए प्रशिक्षण में शामिल होना चाहिए।

Further, the notification said that such candidates would not be allowed to appear in **CSE 2028** or any subsequent CSEs "**unless he/she resigns from the allocated service**".

इसके अलावा, अधिसूचना में कहा गया कि ऐसे उम्मीदवारों को **सीएसई 2028** या इसके बाद की किसी भी सीएसई में "**जब तक वह आवंटित सेवा से इस्तीफा नहीं देता/देती**", तब तक उपस्थित होने की अनुमति नहीं होगी।

### One-time opportunity

#### एक बार का अवसर

The notification said that candidates who had been allotted any service based on **CSE 2025** or earlier years, would have "**a one-time opportunity**" to appear either in this year's examination or the one for **2027** without having to resign from their service.

अधिसूचना में कहा गया कि **सीएसई 2025** या उससे पहले के वर्षों के आधार पर किसी भी सेवा में आवंटित उम्मीदवारों को बिना सेवा से इस्तीफा दिए इस वर्ष की परीक्षा या **2027** की परीक्षा में उपस्थित होने का "**एक बार का अवसर**" मिलेगा।

If their aim was to use their remaining attempts for **CSE 2028** or subsequent exams, they would have to follow the **resignation rule**, the **UPSC** said.



यदि उनका उद्देश्य **सीएसई 2028** या बाद की परीक्षाओं के लिए अपने शेष प्रयासों का उपयोग करना है, तो उन्हें **इस्तीफे के नियम** का पालन करना होगा, **यूपीएससी** ने कहा।

- The notification said that this set of conditions would apply to those being allotted **Indian Police Service** or any **Central Service** categorised as **Group A**.  
अधिसूचना में कहा गया कि शर्तों का यह समूह **भारतीय पुलिस सेवा** या **समूह A** के रूप में वर्गीकृत किसी भी **केंद्रीय सेवा** में आवंटित उम्मीदवारों पर लागू होगा।

## Number of Indian based orgs' websites seized by U.S.

GS II: Governance

**200** U.S. federal authorities have seized more than 200 website domains tied to an India-based transnational criminal organisation having illegal online pharmacies. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration field offices throughout the country also conducted multiple operations leading to the arrest of four individuals, it said in a statement.

leading to the **arrest of four individuals**, it said in a **statement**.

**अमेरिकी ड्रग एनफोर्समेंट एडमिनिस्ट्रेशन** के देश भर के फील्ड कार्यालयों ने भी **कई अभियान** चलाए, जिनके परिणामस्वरूप **चार व्यक्तियों की गिरफ्तारी** हुई, ऐसा एक **बयान** में कहा गया।

## Number of Indian based orgs' websites seized by U.S.

**अमेरिका द्वारा जब्त की गई भारतीय आधारित संगठनों की वेबसाइटों की संख्या**

- **200**
- **200**
- **U.S. federal authorities** have seized more than **200 website domains** tied to an **India-based transnational criminal organisation** having **illegal online pharmacies**.  
**अमेरिकी संघीय अधिकारियों** ने **भारत आधारित अंतरराष्ट्रीय आपराधिक संगठन** से जुड़ी **200 से अधिक वेबसाइट डोमेन** जब्त की हैं, जिनमें **अवैध ऑनलाइन फार्मेशियाँ** शामिल थीं।
- The **U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration** field offices throughout the country also conducted **multiple operations**

## Public grievances received against the Centre and State

GS II: Governance

**22** in lakh. These public grievances against Union Ministries/departments and State/Union territories governments were received during 2024-25 through a dedicated CPGRAMS portal. The government has undertaken a comprehensive set of measures to reduce grievance pendency. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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- The **government** has undertaken a **comprehensive set of measures** to reduce **grievance pendency**.  
**सरकार** ने **शिकायतों के लंबित मामलों को कम करने के लिए व्यापक उपायों का एक समूह** अपनाया है।

## Public grievances received against the Centre and State

**केंद्र और राज्य के विरुद्ध प्राप्त सार्वजनिक शिकायतें**

- **22**
- **22**
- **in lakh**.  
**लाख में।**
- These **public grievances** against **Union Ministries/departments** and **State/Union territories governments** were received during **2024-25** through a dedicated **CPGRAMS portal**.  
**ये सार्वजनिक शिकायतें केंद्रीय मंत्रालयों/विभागों तथा राज्य/केंद्र शासित प्रदेश सरकारों के विरुद्ध 2024-25 के दौरान एक समर्पित CPGRAMS पोर्टल के माध्यम से प्राप्त**



<b>GS Paper II: International Relations</b>	
<b>TOPICS COVERED</b>	<b>06 February 2026</b>
1.	<b>India's payment to UN Regular Budget for 2026</b> 2026 के लिए संयुक्त राष्ट्र नियमित बजट में भारत का भुगतान
2.	<b>Nuclear diplomacy set to resume in Muscat as U.S., Iran stay far apart</b> अमेरिका और ईरान में मतभेद बने रहने के बीच मस्कट में परमाणु कूटनीति फिर शुरू होने की तैयारी
3.	<b>New START's expiry risks pushing the world to unchecked nuclear rivalry</b> न्यू स्टार्ट की समाप्ति से दुनिया अनियंत्रित परमाणु प्रतिस्पर्धा की ओर बढ़ने का खतरा

## India's payment to UN Regular Budget for 2026

GS II: IR

**35.18** In dollar million. India has paid \$35.18 million to the UN Regular Budget for 2026, joining the "honour roll" of 47 Member states who have paid their regular budget dues in full to the world body on time. The UN Committee on Contributions said that 47 Member states have paid their regular budget assessments in full. ११

**Member states** have paid their regular budget assessments in full.

## **India's payment to UN Regular Budget for 2026** 2026 के लिए संयुक्त राष्ट्र नियमित बजट में भारत का भुगतान

- 35.18 In a million. डॉलर मिलियन में।
- India has paid \$35.18 million to the UN Regular Budget for 2026, joining the "honour roll" of 47 Member states who have paid their regular budget dues in full to the world body on time. भारत ने 2026 के लिए संयुक्त राष्ट्र नियमित बजट में \$35.18 मिलियन का भुगतान किया है, जिससे वह उन 47 सदस्य देशों की "ऑनर रोल" सूची में शामिल हो गया है जिन्होंने विश्व निकाय को अपना नियमित बजट बकाया पूर्ण रूप से समय पर चुका दिया है।
- The UN Committee on Contributions said that 47



संयुक्त राष्ट्र योगदान समिति ने कहा कि 47 सदस्य देशों ने अपना नियमित बजट आकलन पूर्ण रूप से चुका दिया है।

# Nuclear diplomacy set to resume in Muscat as U.S., Iran stay far apart

Tehran says the format of the talks will mirror previous rounds held before the Israeli attacks in June 2025; U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio says the dialogue should include the range of Iran's ballistic missiles and its support for militant groups

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After weeks of uncertainty and military tensions in the Persian Gulf, Iran confirmed on Thursday that it would hold nuclear talks with the U.S. in the Omani capital, Muscat, on Friday. However, statements from both sides indicated that wide gaps remain, starting with disagreements over the very format of the talks.

"Nuclear talks with the United States are scheduled to be held in Muscat at about 10 am Friday. I'm grateful to our Omani brothers for making all necessary arrangements," Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi wrote in a social media post. The White House had said on Tuesday that Steve Witkoff, a special envoy of President Donald Trump, would meet Iranian officials later this week. According to Iranian state media, Mr. Araghchi would lead the delegation, which would also include Majid Takht-Ravanchi,



**Miles away:** People walk past an anti-U.S. mural on a street in Tehran, Iran, on Thursday. REUTERS

bas Araghchi wrote in a social media post. The White House had said on Tuesday that Steve Witkoff, a special envoy of President Donald Trump, would meet Iranian officials later this week. According to Iranian state media, Mr. Araghchi would lead the delegation, which would also include Majid Takht-Ravanchi,

nian officials later this week. According to Iranian state media, Mr. Araghchi would lead the delegation, which would also include Majid Takht-Ravanchi,

Iran's former Permanent Representative to the UN, and Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi.

"The format of the talks will mirror previous rounds held before the unlawful U.S.-Israeli war on Iran last June, which derailed the diplomatic process," said a report in the state-owned Press TV.

Mr. Araghchi and Mr. Witkoff had held five rounds of talks last year. Israel attacked Iran on June 13, just two days ahead of the scheduled sixth round of talks.

While Iran insists that talks should focus solely on its "peaceful nuclear programme", the U.S. wants

the framework to also include Iran's ballistic missile production and its support for various militia groups in the region.

"If the Iranians want to meet, we're ready," U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Wednesday at the State Department. "[T]hey will have to include certain things, and that includes the range of their ballistic missiles... their sponsorship of terrorist organisations across the region... the nuclear programme... the treatment of their own people," said Mr. Rubio, contradicting the Iranian claim that the talks would be only on the nuclear programme.

## Nuclear diplomacy set to resume in Muscat as U.S., Iran stay far apart

अमेरिका और ईरान में मतभेद बने रहने के बीच मस्कट में परमाणु कूटनीति फिर शुरू होने की तैयारी

- Tehran says the format of the talks will mirror previous rounds held before the **Israeli attacks in June 2025**; **U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio** says the dialogue should include the range of **Iran's ballistic missiles** and its support for **militant groups**.  
तेहरान का कहना है कि वार्ता का प्रारूप **जून 2025 में इज़रायली हमलों** से पहले हुए पिछले दौरों जैसा होगा; **अमेरिकी विदेश मंत्री मार्को रुबियो** ने कहा कि संवाद में **ईरान की बैलिस्टिक मिसाइलों** की सीमा और **उग्रवादी समूहों** को उसके समर्थन को शामिल किया जाना चाहिए।
- After weeks of uncertainty and military tensions in the **Persian Gulf**, Iran confirmed on Thursday that it would hold **nuclear talks** with the **U.S.** in the **Omani capital, Muscat**, on Friday.  
**फ़ारस की खाड़ी** में हफ्तों की अनिश्चितता और सैन्य तनाव के बाद, ईरान ने गुरुवार को पुष्टि की कि वह **शुक्रवार को ओमान की राजधानी मस्कट में अमेरिका** के साथ **परमाणु वार्ता** करेगा।
- However, statements from both sides indicated that wide gaps remain, starting with disagreements over the very **format of the talks**.  
हालाँकि, दोनों पक्षों के बयानों से संकेत मिला कि **वार्ता के प्रारूप** को लेकर ही गहरे मतभेद बने हुए हैं।
- "Nuclear talks with the **United States** are scheduled to be held in **Muscat** at about **10 am Friday**. I'm grateful to our **Omani brothers** for making all necessary arrangements," Iran's **Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi** wrote in a social media post.  
"अमेरिका के साथ **परमाणु वार्ता** शुक्रवार को लगभग **सुबह 10 बजे मस्कट** में निर्धारित है। सभी आवश्यक व्यवस्थाएँ करने के लिए मैं अपने **ओमानी भाइयों** का आभारी हूँ," ईरान के **विदेश मंत्री अब्बास अराघची** ने सोशल मीडिया पोस्ट में लिखा।
- The **White House** had said on Tuesday that **Steve Witkoff**, a special envoy of President **Donald Trump**, would meet Iranian officials later this week.



व्हाइट हाउस ने मंगलवार को कहा था कि राष्ट्रपति **डोनाल्ड ट्रम्प** के विशेष दूत **स्टीव विटकोफ़** इस सप्ताह के अंत में ईरानी अधिकारियों से मिलेंगे।

- According to Iranian state media, **Mr. Araghchi** would lead the delegation, which would also include **Majid Takht-Ravanchi**, Iran's former **Permanent Representative to the UN**, and **Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi**.  
ईरानी सरकारी मीडिया के अनुसार, प्रतिनिधिमंडल का नेतृत्व **अराघची** करेंगे, जिसमें ईरान के पूर्व **संयुक्त राष्ट्र में स्थायी प्रतिनिधि माजिद तख्त-रवांची** और **उप विदेश मंत्री काज़ेम गरीबाबादी** भी शामिल होंगे।
- "The format of the talks will mirror previous rounds held before the **unlawful U.S.-Israeli war on Iran last June**, which derailed the diplomatic process," said a report in the state-owned **Press TV**.  
सरकारी चैनल **प्रेस टीवी** की रिपोर्ट में कहा गया, "वार्ता का प्रारूप पिछले दौरों जैसा होगा जो **पिछले जून में ईरान पर हुए अवैध अमेरिका-इज़रायल युद्ध** से पहले हुए थे, जिसने कूटनीतिक प्रक्रिया को पटरी से उतार दिया था।"
- **Mr. Araghchi** and **Mr. Witkoff** had held **five rounds of talks** last year. **Israel** attacked Iran on **June 13**, just two days ahead of the scheduled **sixth round of talks**.  
**अराघची** और **विटकोफ़** ने पिछले वर्ष **पाँच दौर की वार्ता** की थी। निर्धारित **छठे दौर की वार्ता** से केवल दो दिन पहले **13 जून** को **इज़रायल** ने ईरान पर हमला किया था।
- While Iran insists that talks should focus solely on its "**peaceful nuclear programme**", the **U.S.** wants the framework to also include Iran's **ballistic missile production** and its support for various **militia groups** in the region.  
जहाँ ईरान इस बात पर ज़ोर देता है कि वार्ता केवल उसके "**शांतिपूर्ण परमाणु कार्यक्रम**" पर केंद्रित होनी चाहिए, वहीं **अमेरिका** चाहता है कि ढाँचे में ईरान का **बैलिस्टिक मिसाइल उत्पादन** और क्षेत्र में विभिन्न **मिलिशिया समूहों** को उसका समर्थन भी शामिल हो।
- "If the Iranians want to meet, we're ready," **U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio** said on Wednesday at the **State Department**.  
"अगर ईरानी मिलना चाहते हैं, तो हम तैयार हैं," **अमेरिकी विदेश मंत्री मार्को रुबियो** ने बुधवार को **स्टेट डिपार्टमेंट** में कहा।
- "[T]hey will have to include certain things, and that includes the range of their **ballistic missiles... their sponsorship of terrorist organisations** across the region... the **nuclear programme... the treatment of their own people**," said **Mr. Rubio**, contradicting the Iranian claim that the talks would be only on the nuclear programme.  
"उन्हें कुछ बातों को शामिल करना होगा, जिनमें उनकी **बैलिस्टिक मिसाइलों** की सीमा... पूरे क्षेत्र में **आतंकी संगठनों** को उनका समर्थन... **परमाणु कार्यक्रम**... और **अपने ही लोगों के साथ व्यवहार** शामिल है," **रुबियो** ने कहा, जो इस ईरानी दावे का खंडन करता है कि वार्ता केवल परमाणु कार्यक्रम पर ही होगी।

## New START's expiry risks pushing the world to unchecked nuclear rivalry

**NEWS ANALYSIS**

**Vasudevan Mukunth**

The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) officially expired on February 5, marking the end of the last remaining bilateral agreement constraining the nuclear arsenals of the U.S. and Russia. The New START treaty emerged from a period of diplomatic reset between Washington and Moscow in the late 2000s. After entering into force on February 5, 2011, New START set up verifiable limits on the strategic offensive arms of both nations, including capping the number of deployed war-

heads to 1,550, and required both parties to reach these limits within seven years and maintain them thereafter. It also allowed 18 on-site inspections a year, mandated data exchange, and set up a bilateral commission to resolve issues.

New START was constantly beleaguered. Russia often argued that U.S. missile defense systems undermined the strategic balance, suggesting that if one side could neutralise the other's retaliatory strike, the 'mutually assured destruction' dynamic would be broken. The U.S. expressed concerns over conventional prompt global strike capabilities, where precise conven-

al warheads are placed on ballistic missiles, systems that New START counted under its nuclear limits.

Later Russia also unveiled several novel strategic systems, including the Sarmat heavy ICBM and the Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle. While the U.S. successfully argued that these should be counted under New START, other systems like the nuclear-powered underwater drone Poseidon and nuclear-powered cruise missile Burevestnik remained outside the treaty's technical definitions.

**No binding limits**

The treaty was originally set to expire in 2021. Just days before the deadline,



For the first time since 1972, there are no legally binding limits on the number of nuclear weapons the U.S. and Russia can deploy. AP

the Biden administration and the Kremlin agreed to a one-time, five-year extension, moving the expiration date to February 5, 2026. But in February 2023, after the conflict in Ukraine escalated and undermined bilateral rela-

tions, President Vladimir Putin said he was suspending Russia's participation in New START because, Moscow said, the U.S. was seeking a "strategic defeat" of Russia and that western aid to Ukraine made on-site inspections in Russia

impossible. The U.S. soon followed. Today, for the first time since 1972, there are no legally binding limits on the number of strategic nuclear weapons the U.S. and Russia can deploy. The formal channels to verify the locations and status of nuclear forces have ceased to exist, forcing intelligence agencies to rely entirely on satellite imagery and other unilateral methods, which are more error-prone and easier to politicise.

Nuclear and non-nuclear strategic systems are also entangled today and that, together with the premium both sides place on non-contact options like cyberattacks, can threaten nuclear command and

control without crossing a nuclear threshold. This is why analysts have stressed the loss of predictability rather than the appearance of new warheads alone.

New START's expiry also makes the prospect of including China and other nuclear states in a larger nonproliferation regime harder in practice. Washington can now argue that it shouldn't be the only state constrained while Beijing grows. Moscow can argue that it shouldn't accept constraints while NATO's aggregate capabilities shape its security environment. And Beijing has already argued that its arsenal is smaller than those of the U.S. and Russia and

that therefore it's "not fair or reasonable" to demand it enter their disarmament framework now.

In 2025, Arms Control Association board chairman Thomas Countryman argued that the most realistic near-term path is a regime with three prongs: the U.S. and Russia establishing measures to restore basic level of transparency, the P5 group standardising definitions and modest transparency practices; and setting up of nonproliferation tools such as hotlines, launch notifications, and fissile material prevention, and fissile material security, to involve more states without immediately forcing them to count each other's warheads.

**New START's expiry risks pushing the world to unchecked nuclear rivalry**  
**न्यू स्टार्ट की समाप्ति से दुनिया अनियंत्रित परमाणु प्रतिस्पर्धा की ओर बढ़ने का खतरा**



- The **New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START)** officially expired on **February 5**, marking the end of the last remaining bilateral agreement constraining the nuclear arsenals of the **U.S. and Russia**.  
न्यू स्टार्टेजिक आर्म्स रिडक्शन ट्रीटी (न्यू स्टार्ट) आधिकारिक रूप से **5 फरवरी** को समाप्त हो गई, जिससे अमेरिका और रूस के परमाणु शस्त्रागार को सीमित करने वाला अंतिम द्विपक्षीय समझौता भी समाप्त हो गया।
- The **New START treaty** emerged from a period of **diplomatic reset** between **Washington and Moscow** in the late **2000s**.  
न्यू स्टार्ट संधि की उत्पत्ति **2000 के दशक** के उत्तरार्ध में **वाशिंगटन और मॉस्को** के बीच **कूटनीतिक रीसेट** की अवधि से हुई।
- After entering into force on **February 5, 2011**, **New START** set up **verifiable limits** on the **strategic offensive arms** of both nations, including capping the number of **deployed warheads to 1,550**, and required both parties to reach these limits within **seven years** and maintain them thereafter.  
**5 फरवरी 2011** को प्रभाव में आने के बाद, **न्यू स्टार्ट** ने दोनों देशों के **रणनीतिक आक्रामक हथियारों** पर **सत्यापन योग्य सीमाएँ** तय कीं, जिसमें **तैनात वारहेड्स की संख्या 1,550** तक सीमित करना शामिल था, और दोनों पक्षों को **सात वर्षों** के भीतर इन सीमाओं तक पहुँचने और उसके बाद उन्हें बनाए रखने की आवश्यकता थी।
- It also allowed **18 on-site inspections a year**, mandated **data exchange**, and set up a **bilateral commission** to resolve issues.  
इसने प्रति वर्ष **18 ऑन-साइट निरीक्षणों**, **डेटा के आदान-प्रदान** को अनिवार्य किया और मुद्दों के समाधान के लिए एक **द्विपक्षीय आयोग** की स्थापना की।
- **New START** was constantly **beleaguered**.  
न्यू स्टार्ट लगातार **विवादों** से घिरा रहा।
- **Russia** often argued that **U.S. missile defense systems** undermined the **strategic balance**, suggesting that if one side could neutralise the other's retaliatory strike, the '**mutually assured destruction**' dynamic would be broken.  
रूस अक्सर तर्क देता रहा कि **अमेरिकी मिसाइल रक्षा प्रणालियाँ** **रणनीतिक संतुलन** को कमजोर करती हैं, यह सुझाव देते हुए कि यदि एक पक्ष दूसरे की जवाबी कार्रवाई को निष्क्रिय कर सके, तो '**म्यूचुअली एश्योर्ड डिस्ट्रक्शन**' की गतिशीलता टूट जाएगी।
- The **U.S.** expressed concerns over **conventional prompt global strike capabilities**, where precise conventional warheads are placed on ballistic missiles, systems that **New START** counted under its nuclear limits.  
अमेरिका ने **कन्वेंशनल प्रॉम्प्ट ग्लोबल स्ट्राइक क्षमताओं** पर चिंता जताई, जिनमें सटीक पारंपरिक वारहेड्स को बैलिस्टिक मिसाइलों पर लगाया जाता है, और जिन्हें **न्यू स्टार्ट** ने अपनी परमाणु सीमाओं के अंतर्गत गिना था।
- Later **Russia** also unveiled several **novel strategic systems**, including the **Sarmat heavy ICBM** and the **Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle**.  
बाद में **रूस** ने कई **नए रणनीतिक प्रणालियाँ** भी पेश कीं, जिनमें **सरमाट हेवी आईसीबीएम** और **अवांगार्ड हाइपरसोनिक ग्लाइड वाहन** शामिल थे।
- While the **U.S.** successfully argued that these should be counted under **New START**, other systems like the **nuclear-powered underwater drone Poseidon** and **nuclear-powered cruise missile Burevestnik** remained outside the treaty's **technical definitions**.  
जहाँ **अमेरिका** ने सफलतापूर्वक तर्क दिया कि इन्हें **न्यू स्टार्ट** के अंतर्गत गिना जाना चाहिए, वहीं **न्यूक्लियर-पावर्ड अंडरवाटर ड्रोन पोसाइडन** और **न्यूक्लियर-पावर्ड क्रूज़ मिसाइल बुरेवेस्टनिक** जैसी अन्य प्रणालियाँ संधि की तकनीकी परिभाषाओं से बाहर रहीं।

### No binding limits

#### कोई बाध्यकारी सीमाएँ नहीं

- The treaty was originally set to expire in **2021**.  
यह संधि मूल रूप से **2021** में समाप्त होने वाली थी।
- In **2025**, **Arms Control Association** board chairman **Thomas Countryman** argued that the most realistic near-term path is a regime with **three prongs**.  
**2025** में, **आर्म्स कंट्रोल एसोसिएशन** के बोर्ड अध्यक्ष **थॉमस कंट्रीमैन** ने तर्क दिया कि निकट भविष्य का सबसे यथार्थवादी रास्ता **तीन स्तंभों** वाला एक ढाँचा है।



- The **U.S. and Russia are establishing** measures to restore basic levels of **transparency**.  
अमेरिका और रूस द्वारा पारदर्शिता के बुनियादी स्तर को बहाल करने के उपाय स्थापित करना।
- The **P5 group** standardizes **definitions** and modest **transparency practices**.  
पी5 समूह द्वारा परिभाषाओं और सीमित पारदर्शिता प्रथाओं का मानकीकरण।
- And setting up **nonproliferation tools** such as **hotlines, launch notifications, incident prevention, and fissile material security**, to involve more states without immediately forcing them to count each other's warheads.  
और हॉटलाइन, लॉन्च नोटिफिकेशन, घटना रोकथाम, और फिसाइल सामग्री सुरक्षा जैसे गैर-प्रसार उपकरणों की स्थापना, ताकि अधिक राज्यों को शामिल किया जा सके बिना तुरंत एक-दूसरे के वारहेड गिनने के लिए मजबूर किए।
- Today, for the **first time since 1972**, there are **no legally binding limits** on the number of **strategic nuclear weapons** the **U.S. and Russia** can deploy.  
आज, 1972 के बाद पहली बार, अमेरिका और रूस द्वारा तैनात किए जा सकने वाले रणनीतिक परमाणु हथियारों की संख्या पर कोई कानूनी बाध्यकारी सीमा नहीं है।
- The formal channels to verify the locations and status of **nuclear forces** have ceased to exist, forcing intelligence agencies to rely entirely on **satellite imagery** and other **unilateral methods**, which are more **error-prone** and easier to **politicise**.  
परमाणु बलों के स्थान और स्थिति को सत्यापित करने के औपचारिक चैनल समाप्त हो चुके हैं, जिससे खुफिया एजेंसियों को पूरी तरह उपग्रह चित्रों और अन्य एकतरफा तरीकों पर निर्भर होना पड़ रहा है, जो अधिक त्रुटिपूर्ण और राजनीतिकरण के लिए आसान हैं।
- **Nuclear and non-nuclear strategic systems** are also **entangled today** and that, together with the premium both sides place on **non-contact options** like **cyberattacks**, can threaten **nuclear command and control** without crossing a **nuclear threshold**.  
आज परमाणु और गैर-परमाणु रणनीतिक प्रणालियाँ भी आपस में उलझी हुई हैं और साइबर हमलों जैसे गैर-संपर्क विकल्पों को दोनों पक्षों द्वारा दी जा रही प्राथमिकता के साथ मिलकर यह परमाणु कमांड और नियंत्रण को परमाणु सीमा पार किए बिना ही खतरे में डाल सकती है।
- This is why analysts have stressed the **loss of predictability** rather than the appearance of **new warheads alone**.  
इसी कारण विश्लेषकों ने केवल नए वारहेड्स के उभरने के बजाय पूर्वानुमेयता के नुकसान पर जोर दिया है।

<b>GS Paper III: Economy,</b>	
<b>TOPICS COVERED</b>	<b>06 February 2026</b>
1.	<b>'Talks under way, India-U.S. statement on deal in days'</b> <b>'बातचीत जारी, भारत-अमेरिका समझौते पर बयान कुछ दिनों में'</b>
2.	<b>Ensuring energy security of Indians is top priority: govt.</b> <b>भारतीयों की ऊर्जा सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित करना सर्वोच्च प्राथमिकता: सरकार</b>
3.	<b>MSF raises concerns over FTA impact on medicines in India</b> <b>एमएसएफ ने भारत में दवाओं पर एफटीए के प्रभाव को लेकर चिंता जताई</b>
4.	<b>More, and less</b> <b>अधिक, और कम</b>
5.	<b>DISCOMs and the road ahead</b> <b>डिस्कॉम और आगे का मार्ग</b>
6.	<b>India, GCC nations sign terms of reference for FTA</b> <b>भारत और जीसीसी देशों ने एफटीए के लिए टर्म्स ऑफ़ रेफरेंस पर हस्ताक्षर किए</b>
7.	<b>India-U.S. trade deal provides macro predictability: Nasscom</b> <b>भारत-अमेरिका व्यापार समझौता व्यापक आर्थिक पूर्वानुमेयता प्रदान करता है: नैसकॉम</b>



# 'Talks under way, India-U.S. statement on deal in days'

**GS III: Economy**

**T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan**  
NEW DELHI

India and the U.S. will "finalise and sign" a joint statement on the first tranche of the bilateral trade agreement in the next four to five days, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said on Thursday.

He said U.S. tariffs on Indian exports will be cut from 50% to 18% through an executive order from the U.S. President following the statement.

India can reduce tariffs on U.S. imports after signing the legal and formal agreement, which is expected mid-March, the Minister said.

"Meaningful talks are going on between India and the U.S. on the decisions that were announced by the leaders of the two countries," Mr. Goyal said. "The first tranche of the Bilateral Trade Agreement is nearly ready."

On the commitment to buy goods worth \$500 billion from the U.S., the Minister cited India's growth

Meaningful talks are going on between India and the U.S. on the decisions that were announced by the leaders of the two countries

**PIYUSH GOYAL**  
Commerce Minister



requirements and said one "can clearly see before our eyes as potential that we can import from the U.S. over the next five years."

Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said a joint statement has followed each free trade agreement that India has negotiated with other countries.

## \$500-billion imports

"Once the joint statement is there, it needs to be converted into a legal agreement," he said. "The legal agreement will give us the authority to reduce our tariffs. Their (U.S.) tariffs are executive tariffs [and so can be amended by executive orders]. Our tariffs are

most-favoured nation (MFN) tariffs that can only be cut after the legal agreement has been signed."

Mr. Goyal said India's growth would require large volumes of energy, data centre equipment, information and communication technology products and aircraft plus spares. "When we estimated what we would need from the U.S., we came to a figure of at least \$500 billion," he said.

India's global imports of critical items are above \$300 billion, said Mr. Agrawal. "In five years, these are going to be over \$2 trillion... U.S., will add to diversification," he said.

## 'Talks under way, India-U.S. statement on deal in days' 'बातचीत जारी, भारत-अमेरिका समझौते पर बयान कुछ दिनों में'

- 'Talks under way, **India-U.S.** statement on deal in days'  
'बातचीत जारी, **भारत-अमेरिका** समझौते पर बयान कुछ दिनों में'
- India and the **U.S.** will "finalise and sign" a joint statement on the first tranche of the **bilateral trade agreement** in the next four to five days, **Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal** said on Thursday.  
**वाणिज्य मंत्री पीयूष गोयल** ने गुरुवार को कहा कि भारत और **अमेरिका** अगले चार से पाँच दिनों में **द्विपक्षीय व्यापार समझौते** की पहली किश्त पर एक संयुक्त बयान को "अंतिम रूप देकर हस्ताक्षर" करेंगे।
- He said **U.S. tariffs** on **Indian exports** will be cut from **50% to 18%** through an executive order from the **U.S. President** following the statement.  
उन्होंने कहा कि बयान के बाद **अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति** के एक कार्यकारी आदेश के जरिए **भारतीय निर्यात** पर **अमेरिकी शुल्क 50% से घटाकर 18%** कर दिए जाएंगे।



- India can reduce tariffs on **U.S. imports** after signing the legal and formal agreement, which is expected **mid-March**, the Minister said.  
मंत्री ने कहा कि **अमेरिकी आयात** पर शुल्क में कटौती भारत कानूनी और औपचारिक समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर के बाद कर सकता है, जिसकी उम्मीद **मार्च के मध्य** है।
- “Meaningful talks are going on between **India and the U.S.** on the decisions that were announced by the leaders of the two countries,” **Mr. Goyal** said.  
**श्री गोयल** ने कहा, “दोनों देशों के नेताओं द्वारा घोषित निर्णयों पर **भारत और अमेरिका** के बीच सार्थक बातचीत चल रही है।”
- “The first tranche of the **Bilateral Trade Agreement** is nearly ready.”  
“**द्विपक्षीय व्यापार समझौते** की पहली किश्त लगभग तैयार है।”
- On the commitment to buy goods worth **\$500 billion** from the **U.S.**, the Minister cited **India’s growth requirements** and said one “can clearly see before our eyes as potential that we can import from the U.S. over the next five years.”  
**अमेरिका** से **\$500 बिलियन** मूल्य के सामान खरीदने की प्रतिबद्धता पर मंत्री ने **भारत की विकास आवश्यकताओं** का हवाला देते हुए कहा कि “हम अगले पाँच वर्षों में अमेरिका से आयात की स्पष्ट संभावनाएँ देख सकते हैं।”
- **Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal** said a joint statement has followed each **free trade agreement** that India has negotiated with other countries.  
**वाणिज्य सचिव राजेश अग्रवाल** ने कहा कि भारत द्वारा अन्य देशों के साथ किए गए प्रत्येक **मुक्त व्यापार समझौते** के बाद एक संयुक्त बयान आया है।

### **\$500-billion imports** **\$500 बिलियन का आयात**

- “Once the joint statement is there, it needs to be converted into a legal agreement,” he said.  
उन्होंने कहा, “संयुक्त बयान आने के बाद उसे कानूनी समझौते में बदला जाना आवश्यक है।”
- “The legal agreement will give us the authority to reduce our tariffs. Their (**U.S.**) tariffs are executive tariffs [and so can be amended by executive orders]. Our tariffs are **most-favoured nation (MFN)** tariffs that can only be cut after the legal agreement has been signed.”  
“कानूनी समझौता हमें अपने शुल्क घटाने का अधिकार देगा। उनके (**अमेरिका**) शुल्क कार्यकारी शुल्क हैं [और कार्यकारी आदेशों से बदले जा सकते हैं]। हमारे शुल्क **सर्वाधिक अनुकूल राष्ट्र (MFN)** शुल्क हैं, जिन्हें केवल कानूनी समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर के बाद ही घटाया जा सकता है।”
- **Mr. Goyal** said India’s growth would require large volumes of **energy, data centre equipment, information and communication technology products and aircraft plus spares.**  
**श्री गोयल** ने कहा कि भारत की वृद्धि के लिए बड़ी मात्रा में **ऊर्जा, डेटा सेंटर उपकरण, सूचना एवं संचार प्रौद्योगिकी उत्पाद और विमान तथा उनके पुर्जे** की आवश्यकता होगी।
- “When we estimated what we would need from the **U.S.**, we came to a figure of at least **\$500 billion**,” he said.  
उन्होंने कहा, “जब हमने **अमेरिका** से अपनी आवश्यकताओं का अनुमान लगाया, तो यह कम से कम **\$500 बिलियन** तक पहुँचा।”
- India’s global imports of **critical items** are above **\$300 billion**, said **Mr. Agrawal.**  
**श्री अग्रवाल** ने कहा कि **महत्वपूर्ण वस्तुओं** का भारत का वैश्विक आयात **\$300 बिलियन** से अधिक है।
- “In five years, these are going to be over **\$2 trillion**... **U.S.**, will add to diversification,” he said.  
उन्होंने कहा, “पाँच वर्षों में यह **\$2 ट्रिलियन** से अधिक हो जाएगा... **अमेरिका** विविधीकरण में योगदान देगा।”



# Ensuring energy security of Indians is top priority: govt.

GS III: Economy

NEW DELHI

India's latest decisions on energy sourcing were taken keeping in mind the need for "diversifying" energy supplies, the External Affairs Ministry said on Thursday in response to a question regarding U.S. President Donald Trump's announcement that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had "agreed to stop buying Russian oil".

Elaborating further on Mr. Trump's assertions regarding India agreeing to purchase crude oil from Venezuela, made on social media platform Truth Social on Monday, Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India "remains open to exploring the commercial merits" of crude oil supply from multiple sources, "including from Venezuela".

"Diversifying our energy sourcing in keeping with objective market conditions and evolving international dynamics is at the core of our strategy to ensure this. All of India's actions are taken and will be taken with this in mind," he said, highlighting that "ensuring energy security of 1.4 billion Indians is the supreme priority" for the government.

Russia had emerged as the biggest supplier of crude oil to India against the backdrop of the Ukraine conflict that erupted on February 24, 2022.

Russia attracted immediate sanctions from the West as the war escalated, but India maintained that the energy trade with Russia was in its interest. However, officials here indicated that India is weary of "overreliance" on any single source as such dependence increases the vulnerability of the Indian



Randhir Jaiswal

economy to any possible supply disruption.

## Ties with Venezuela

Mr. Jaiswal described Venezuela as a "long-standing partner of India in the energy sector encompassing trade and investments". "Consistent with India's approach to energy security, India remains open to exploring the commercial merits of any new crude supply options, including from Venezuela," he said.

Mr. Jaiswal described the India-U.S. trade deal announced by Mr. Modi and Mr. Trump on Monday as one of the biggest commercial moves by the two sides.

"This agreement will give a major boost to India's export, labour intensive industries, job creation, growth and bring prosperity to our people," he said.

In remarks shared with the news agency ANI, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said that he was not "directly" part of the negotiations on the deal and referred to the role played by Mr. Goyal.

"It is hard for me to say, and the Commerce Minister would know it better, because he is in direct engagement with the U.S. Trade Representative," Mr. Jaishankar said, adding that "a detailing of the trade negotiations is under way as we speak".

## Ensuring energy security of Indians is top priority: govt.

भारतीयों की ऊर्जा सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित करना सर्वोच्च प्राथमिकता: सरकार

• India's latest decisions on energy sourcing were taken keeping in mind the need for "diversifying" energy supplies, the External Affairs Ministry said on Thursday in response to a question regarding U.S. President Donald Trump's announcement that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had "agreed to stop buying Russian oil".

भारत के ऊर्जा स्रोतों से जुड़े नवीनतम निर्णय "विविधीकरण" की आवश्यकता को ध्यान में रखते हुए लिए गए हैं, विदेश मंत्रालय ने गुरुवार को अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप के उस बयान से जुड़े सवाल के जवाब में कहा, जिसमें कहा गया था कि प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने "रूसी तेल खरीदना बंद करने पर सहमति जताई है"।

• Elaborating further on Mr. Trump's assertions regarding India agreeing to purchase crude oil from Venezuela, made on social media platform Truth Social on Monday, Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India "remains open to exploring the commercial merits" of crude oil supply from multiple sources, "including from Venezuela".

ट्रंप के दावों पर आगे विस्तार से बताते हुए, जो सोमवार को सोशल मीडिया मंच ट्रुथ सोशल पर वेनेजुएला से कच्चा तेल खरीदने को लेकर किए गए थे, मंत्रालय के प्रवक्ता रणधीर जायसवाल ने कहा कि भारत कई स्रोतों से कच्चे तेल की आपूर्ति के "व्यावसायिक लाभों की खोज के लिए खुला" है, "जिसमें वेनेजुएला भी शामिल है"।

• "Diversifying our energy sourcing in keeping with objective market conditions and evolving international dynamics is at the core of our strategy to ensure this. All of India's actions are taken and will be taken with this in mind," he said, highlighting that "ensuring energy security of 1.4 billion Indians is the supreme priority" for the government.

उन्होंने कहा, "ऊर्जा स्रोतों का विविधीकरण वस्तुनिष्ठ बाज़ार परिस्थितियों और बदलती अंतरराष्ट्रीय गतिशीलता के अनुरूप हमारी रणनीति का मूल है। भारत की सभी कार्यवाइयाँ इसी सोच के साथ की गई हैं और की जाएँगी," और इस पर ज़ोर दिया कि "1.4 अरब भारतीयों की ऊर्जा सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित करना सर्वोच्च प्राथमिकता" है।

• Russia had emerged as the biggest supplier of crude oil to India against the backdrop of the Ukraine conflict that erupted on February 24, 2022.

रूस 24 फ़रवरी 2022 को शुरू हुए यूक्रेन संघर्ष की पृष्ठभूमि में भारत का सबसे बड़ा कच्चा तेल आपूर्तिकर्ता बनकर उभरा था।

• Russia attracted immediate sanctions from the West as the war escalated, but India maintained that the

energy trade with Russia was in its interest.

युद्ध के बढ़ने के साथ ही रूस पर पश्चिमी देशों के प्रतिबंध लगे, लेकिन भारत ने कहा कि रूस के साथ ऊर्जा व्यापार उसके हित में है।

- However, officials here indicated that India is weary of "overreliance" on any single source as such dependence increases the vulnerability of the Indian economy to any possible supply



### disruption.

हालाँकि, अधिकारियों ने संकेत दिया कि भारत किसी एक स्रोत पर “अत्यधिक निर्भरता” को लेकर सतर्क है, क्योंकि ऐसी निर्भरता भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था को किसी भी संभावित आपूर्ति बाधा के प्रति अधिक संवेदनशील बनाती है।

### Ties with Venezuela वेनेजुएला के साथ संबंध

- Mr. Jaiswal described Venezuela as a “long-standing partner of India in the energy sector encompassing trade and investments”.  
जायसवाल ने वेनेजुएला को “ऊर्जा क्षेत्र में व्यापार और निवेश को समाहित करने वाला भारत का दीर्घकालिक साझेदार” बताया।
- “Consistent with India’s approach to energy security, India remains open to exploring the commercial merits of any new crude supply options, including from Venezuela,” he said.  
उन्होंने कहा, “ऊर्जा सुरक्षा को लेकर भारत के दृष्टिकोण के अनुरूप, भारत किसी भी नए कच्चे तेल आपूर्ति विकल्प, जिसमें वेनेजुएला भी शामिल है, के व्यावसायिक लाभों की खोज के लिए खुला है।”
- Mr. Jaiswal described the India-U.S. trade deal announced by Mr. Modi and Mr. Trump on Monday as one of the biggest commercial moves by the two sides.  
जायसवाल ने सोमवार को मोदी और ट्रंप द्वारा घोषित भारत-अमेरिका व्यापार समझौते को दोनों पक्षों की ओर से किया गया सबसे बड़ा वाणिज्यिक कदम बताया।
- “This agreement will give a major boost to India’s export, labour intensive industries, job creation, growth and bring prosperity to our people,” he said.  
उन्होंने कहा, “यह समझौता भारत के निर्यात, श्रम-प्रधान उद्योगों, रोजगार सृजन और विकास को बढ़ा बढ़ावा देगा और हमारे लोगों के लिए समृद्धि लाएगा।”
- In remarks shared with the news agency ANI, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said that he was not “directly” part of the negotiations on the deal and referred to the role played by Mr. Goyal.  
समाचार एजेंसी एनआई के साथ साझा की गई टिप्पणियों में विदेश मंत्री एस. जयशंकर ने कहा कि वह इस समझौते की वार्ताओं का “प्रत्यक्ष” हिस्सा नहीं थे और गोयल की भूमिका का उल्लेख किया।
- “It is hard for me to say, and the Commerce Minister would know it better, because he is in direct engagement with the U.S. Trade Representative,” Mr. Jaishankar said, adding that “a detailing of the trade negotiations is under way as we speak”.  
जयशंकर ने कहा, “मेरे लिए कहना कठिन है, और वाणिज्य मंत्री इसे बेहतर जानते होंगे, क्योंकि वह अमेरिकी व्यापार प्रतिनिधि के साथ सीधे संपर्क में हैं,” और जोड़ा कि “व्यापार वार्ताओं का विस्तृत विवरण इस समय चल रहा है।”



# MSF raises concerns over FTA impact on medicines in India

GS III: Economy

**Bindu Shajan Perappadan**  
NEW DELHI

**Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), an international aid organisation that provides emergency medical assistance to populations in distress in more than 80 countries, has written to the European Union expressing its concern over the recently announced EU-India Free Trade Agreement.**

The group said that the proposed restrictive provisions will have major consequence for access to medicines in India and the rest of the developing world. "We are concerned that the EU-India FTA may contain provisions with dire consequences for access to medicines in India and the rest of the developing world," MSF said in its letter to the European

Commissioner for Trade.

"They will strengthen and extend the monopoly rights of multinational pharmaceutical manufacturers at the expense of patients in India and beyond," the group warned.

MSF has specifically expressed concern over data exclusivity that could effectively block compulsory licences, patent term extensions, enforcement and border measures that seek to detain imports or exports of good suspected of infringing intellectual property rights.

It also said that some provisions of the negotiation seeks to limit, and in some cases completely block, generic competition. "Generic competition has proven to be key in lowering the prices of medicines..." the letter said.

## MSF raises concerns over FTA impact on medicines in India एमएसएफ ने भारत में दवाओं पर एफटीए के प्रभाव को लेकर चिंता जताई

- Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), an international aid organisation that provides emergency medical assistance to populations in distress in more than **80 countries**, has written to the **European Union** expressing its concern over the recently announced **EU-India Free Trade Agreement**.  
मेडीसां सॉ फ्रोंटिएर (एमएसएफ), जो 80 से अधिक देशों में संकटग्रस्त आबादी को आपातकालीन चिकित्सा सहायता प्रदान करने वाला एक अंतरराष्ट्रीय सहायता संगठन है, ने हाल ही में घोषित **ईयू-भारत मुक्त व्यापार समझौते** को लेकर **यूरोपीय संघ** को अपनी चिंता व्यक्त करते हुए पत्र लिखा है।
- The group said that the proposed **restrictive provisions** will have major consequences for **access to medicines** in India and the rest of the **developing world**.  
समूह ने कहा कि प्रस्तावित **प्रतिबंधात्मक प्रावधानों** का भारत और शेष **विकासशील विश्व** में दवाओं की **उपलब्धता** पर गंभीर प्रभाव पड़ेगा।
- "We are concerned that the **EU-India FTA** may contain provisions with **dire consequences** for access to medicines in India and the rest of the developing world," MSF said in its letter to



the **European Commissioner for Trade**.

“हमें चिंता है कि **ईयू-भारत एफटीए** में ऐसे प्रावधान हो सकते हैं जिनके भारत और बाकी विकासशील दुनिया में दवाओं की उपलब्धता पर **गंभीर परिणाम** होंगे,” एमएसएफ ने **यूरोपीय व्यापार आयुक्त** को लिखे अपने पत्र में कहा।

- “They will strengthen and extend the **monopoly rights** of **multinational pharmaceutical manufacturers** at the expense of **patients** in India and beyond,” the group warned.  
“ये प्रावधान भारत और अन्य देशों के **मरीजों** की कीमत पर **बहुराष्ट्रीय दवा कंपनियों** के **एकाधिकार अधिकारों** को मजबूत और विस्तारित करेंगे,” समूह ने चेतावनी दी।
- MSF has specifically expressed concern over **data exclusivity** that could effectively block **compulsory licences, patent term extensions, enforcement** and **border measures** that seek to detain imports or exports of goods suspected of infringing **intellectual property rights**.

एमएसएफ ने विशेष रूप से **डेटा एक्सक्लूसिविटी** को लेकर चिंता जताई है, जो प्रभावी रूप से **अनिवार्य लाइसेंस, पेटेंट अवधि विस्तार, प्रवर्तन** और **सीमा उपायों** को अवरुद्ध कर सकती है, जिनका उद्देश्य **बौद्धिक संपदा अधिकारों** के उल्लंघन के संदेह में आयात या निर्यात को रोकना है।

- It also said that some provisions of the negotiation seek to limit, and in some cases completely block, **generic competition**.  
इसने यह भी कहा कि वार्ता के कुछ प्रावधान **जेनेरिक प्रतिस्पर्धा** को सीमित करने और कुछ मामलों में पूरी तरह अवरुद्ध करने का प्रयास करते हैं।
- “**Generic competition** has proven to be key in lowering the prices of medicines...,” the letter said.  
पत्र में कहा गया, “**जेनेरिक प्रतिस्पर्धा** दवाओं की कीमतों कम करने में महत्वपूर्ण साबित हुई है...”

PATRIOTIC IAS



GS III: Budget

## More, and less

The health-care component of Budget 2026 is a mixed bag

**W**hile this year's health-care allocations are aggressive in certain key sectors, it has failed expectations that Budget 2026 would be a milestone for increased health-care spending as a percentage of GDP. The total allocation this year is over ₹1.05 lakh crore, marking an increase of about 10% over the previous year's revised estimates. However, experts have pointed out that the 2026 health budget is approximately 1.9% of the total government expenditure, and about 0.26% of GDP. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman fronted the Biopharma SHAKTI scheme, among the projects with the single highest budgetary allocations this year. This ₹10,000 crore government initiative will transform India into a manufacturing hub for biologics and biosimilars over the next five years, she said. A pan-country clinical state-of-the-art trial infrastructure will also be created, through a network of 1,000 accredited clinical trial sites. No doubt, this will take care of an angle that has long been languishing in India – research and development. Additionally, the government will set up three new National Institutes of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER) and modernise seven existing units, besides establishing a second NIMHANS campus in north India and two upgraded national mental health institutes. The government has set itself a target of training one lakh allied health professionals over the next five years, while another 1.5 lakh care workers will also be trained to take care of the health needs of the elderly; this is appreciable at a time when India is well on its way towards becoming a grey nation, with fertility levels falling. In the area of making care affordable, the government has exempted 17 cancer medicines and several treatments for rare diseases from customs and import duties, while also reducing the tax collected at source on medical and educational remittances from 5% to 2%. For patients suffering from these conditions, and their families, this will no doubt lead to better affordability for treatments.

Primarily under fire was the Union government's stodgy refusal to increase the allocation for health care to reach 2.5% of GDP by 2025, as committed in the National Health Policy of 2017. Public health activists have lambasted the drop in funding for the National Health Mission, despite the fact that funds have been consistently well utilised here. While fiscal devolution has enabled States to invest more heavily in the health sector, there are concerns, however, that the Centre steadily reducing its share will result in patchy outcomes, not even improvements, in the health-care sector of the country.

बनाई जाएगी, जो 1,000 मान्यता प्राप्त क्लिनिकल ट्रायल साइट्स के नेटवर्क के माध्यम से होगी।

- No doubt, this will take care of an angle that has long been languishing in India — **research and development**. निस्संदेह, यह भारत में लंबे समय से उपेक्षित क्षेत्र — अनुसंधान और विकास — को संबोधित करेगा।
- Additionally, the government will set up **three new National Institutes of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER)** and modernise **seven existing units**, besides

## More, and less अधिक, और कम

• The health-care component of Budget 2026 is a mixed bag  
बजट 2026 का स्वास्थ्य-सेवा घटक एक मिश्रित स्थिति है

### Health-Care Allocations in Budget 2026 बजट 2026 में स्वास्थ्य क्षेत्र के आवंटन

• While this year's **health-care allocations** are **aggressive** in certain key sectors, it has failed expectations that **Budget 2026** would be a milestone for increased **healthcare spending as a percentage of GDP**.

हालाँकि इस वर्ष के स्वास्थ्य क्षेत्र के आवंटन कुछ प्रमुख क्षेत्रों में आक्रामक हैं, लेकिन यह उम्मीदों पर खरा नहीं उतरा कि बजट 2026 GDP के प्रतिशत के रूप में स्वास्थ्य व्यय बढ़ाने में मील का पत्थर साबित होगा।

• The **total allocation** this year is over **₹1.05 lakh crore**, marking an increase of about **10%** over the previous year's revised estimates. इस वर्ष का कुल आवंटन ₹1.05 लाख करोड़ से अधिक है, जो पिछले वर्ष के संशोधित अनुमान से लगभग 10% की वृद्धि दर्शाता है।

• However, experts have pointed out that the **2026 health budget** is approximately **1.9% of the total government expenditure**, and about **0.26% of GDP**.

हालाँकि विशेषज्ञों ने बताया है कि 2026 का स्वास्थ्य बजट कुल सरकारी व्यय का लगभग 1.9% और GDP का लगभग 0.26% है।

• Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman fronted the **Biopharma SHAKTI scheme**, among the projects with the **single highest budgetary allocations** this year.

वित्त मंत्री निर्मला सीतारमण ने इस वर्ष के सबसे अधिक बजटीय आवंटन वाली परियोजनाओं में से एक बायोफार्मा शक्ति योजना को प्रस्तुत किया।

• This **₹10,000 crore** government initiative will transform India into a **manufacturing hub for biologics and biosimilars** over the next **five years**, she said.

उन्होंने कहा कि यह ₹10,000 करोड़ की सरकारी पहल अगले पाँच वर्षों में भारत को बायोलॉजिक्स और बायोसिमिलर्स के निर्माण केंद्र में बदल देगी।

• A **pan-country clinical state-of-the-art trial infrastructure** will also be created, through a network of **1,000 accredited clinical trial sites**.

देशव्यापी अत्याधुनिक क्लिनिकल ट्रायल अवसंरचना भी



establishing a **second NIMHANS campus in north India** and **two upgraded national mental health institutes**.

इसके अतिरिक्त, सरकार **तीन नए नेशनल इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ फार्मास्यूटिकल एजुकेशन एंड रिसर्च (NIPER)** स्थापित करेगी और **सात मौजूदा इकाइयों का आधुनिकीकरण** करेगी, साथ ही **उत्तरी भारत में दूसरा NIMHANS परिसर** और **दो उन्नत राष्ट्रीय मानसिक स्वास्थ्य संस्थान** स्थापित करेगी।

- The government has set itself a target of training **one lakh allied health professionals** over the next **five years**, while another **1.5 lakh care workers** will also be trained to take care of the **health needs of the elderly**.

सरकार ने अगले **पाँच वर्षों में एक लाख सहयोगी स्वास्थ्य पेशेवरों** को प्रशिक्षित करने का लक्ष्य रखा है, जबकि अन्य **1.5 लाख देखभाल कर्मियों** को **वृद्धों की स्वास्थ्य आवश्यकताओं** की देखभाल के लिए प्रशिक्षित किया जाएगा।

- This is appreciable at a time when India is well on its way towards becoming a **grey nation**, with **fertility levels falling**.

यह उस समय सराहनीय है जब भारत **वृद्ध होती जनसंख्या वाले देश** की ओर बढ़ रहा है और **प्रजनन दर घट रही है**।

- In the area of making care **affordable**, the government has exempted **17 cancer medicines** and several treatments for **rare diseases** from **customs and import duties**, while also reducing the **tax collected at source from 5% to 2%** on medical and educational remittances.

स्वास्थ्य सेवा को **सस्ती** बनाने के क्षेत्र में, सरकार ने **17 कैंसर दवाओं** और **दुर्लभ बीमारियों** के कई उपचारों को **सीमा शुल्क और आयात शुल्क** से मुक्त किया है, साथ ही चिकित्सा और शैक्षिक प्रेषण पर **स्रोत पर कर 5% से घटाकर 2%** कर दिया है।

- For patients suffering from these conditions, and their families, this will no doubt lead to better **affordability for treatments**.

इन स्थितियों से पीड़ित मरीजों और उनके परिवारों के लिए, इससे निश्चित रूप से **उपचार की वहनीयता** बेहतर होगी।

- Primarily under fire was the **Union government's refusal to increase health-care allocation to 2.5% of GDP by 2025**, as committed in the **National Health Policy 2017**.

मुख्य रूप से आलोचना का विषय था **2025 तक स्वास्थ्य व्यय को GDP के 2.5% तक बढ़ाने से केंद्र सरकार का इनकार**, जैसा कि **राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य नीति 2017** में वादा किया गया था।

- Public health activists have lambasted the **drop in funding for the National Health Mission**, despite the fact that funds have been consistently **well utilised** here.

सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य कार्यकर्ताओं ने **राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य मिशन के लिए धन में कमी** की कड़ी आलोचना की, जबकि यहाँ धन का लगातार **अच्छा उपयोग** हुआ है।

- While **fiscal devolution** has enabled States to invest more heavily in the **health sector**, there are concerns that the **Centre reducing its share** will result in **patchy outcomes**, not even improvements, in the healthcare sector of the country.

हालाँकि **वित्तीय विकेंद्रीकरण** ने राज्यों को **स्वास्थ्य क्षेत्र** में अधिक निवेश करने में सक्षम बनाया है, लेकिन चिंता है कि **केंद्र की हिस्सेदारी कम होने** से देश के स्वास्थ्य क्षेत्र में **असमान परिणाम** होंगे, सुधार भी नहीं।



# DISCOMs and the road ahead

DISCOMs show improvement in performance, recording a positive turnaround marked by reduced AT&C losses, a narrowed ACS-ARR gap and improved financial discipline; however, many utilities continue to rely on tariff subsidies and loss takeovers by State governments, underscoring the scope for further improvement

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## EXPLAINER

T. Ramakrishnan

**B**etter days seem to be ahead for the country's electricity sector, especially power distribution utilities, including power departments, commonly known as DISCOMs.

For long, DISCOMs, now numbering 72 across the country (44 State-owned, 16 private-sector entities, and 12 power departments), had presented a grim picture with never-diminishing losses, also called Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses, and the consequent widening gap between the Average Cost of Supply (ACS) and the Average Revenue Realised (ARR). Between 2020-21 and 2024-25, accumulated losses rose from ₹5.5 lakh crore to ₹6.47 lakh crore, with outstanding debt increasing to ₹7.26 lakh crore. Non-cost-reflective tariffs and delayed payment of State subsidies were among the factors that contributed to this state of affairs.

### A legacy of losses

As far as India is concerned, DISCOMs and losses have become synonymous, forcing specialists to use the prefix "minus" whenever a power utility's ARR exceeds its ACS. One may argue that loss-making is a legacy matter, as these power utilities – in their previous 'avatar', State Electricity Boards (SEBs), formed under the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1948 – were mostly in the red. But what was overlooked, even then and now, was that Section 59 of the law had originally required SEBs to make a profit of three more per cent, as specified by State governments.

### Signs of a turnaround

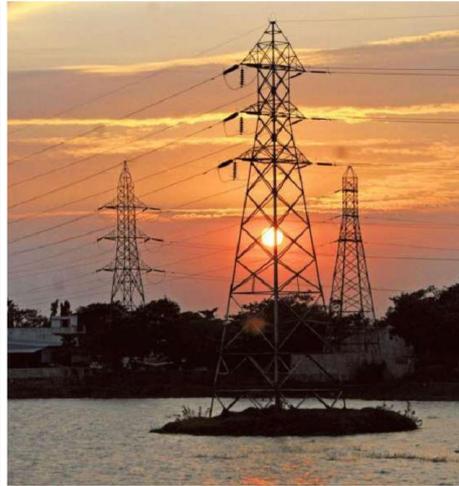
Even though many DISCOMs are struggling to cope with chronic issues, several others have begun improving their performance perceptibly in the wake of steps taken by various stakeholders, including those of the Union government. A Survey revealed that DISCOMs recorded a positive Profit After Tax (PAT) of ₹ 2,701 crore in the financial year 2024-25, marking "a decisive turnaround" from a loss of ₹67,962 crore in 2013-14. This improvement was accompanied by a reduction in AT&C losses from 22.62% to 15.04 % during the years in question. Further, the ACS-ARR gap (on an accrual basis) came down from 78 paise per unit (kilowatt-hour) to 0.06 paise per unit, signalling much improved cost recovery.

In mid-January, the Union government also made public the performance details of DISCOMs for the financial year that ended March 31, 2025. Claiming credit for the financial turnaround, the government attributed it to several measures, including the implementation of the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), amendments to the Electricity Rules, and the introduction of the Late Payment Surcharge Rules.

The RDSS's objective is to improve the quality and reliability of power through a financially sustainable and operationally efficient distribution sector, with the release of funds linked to the execution of necessary measures. The effective implementation of the Rules has helped utilities arrest the mounting surcharges on legacy dues, as it allows DISCOMs to clear their dues through a maximum of 48 equated monthly instalments (EMIs).

### Discipline and debt reduction

Prior to the Rules coming into force,



Call for change: Political will, combined with public-spirited bureaucracy, can easily transform the face of DISCOMs into that of viable and consumer-friendly entities. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

## On the grid

The table presents an assessment of select States based on key operational and financial parameters, including AT&C losses, accumulated surplus or deficit, and the ACS-ARR gap for 2023-24 and 2024-25.

State	AT&C loss (in %)		Accumulated Surplus / -Deficit (₹ in crore)		ACS-ARR gap* (₹ per kilo watt per hour or unit) [-deficit]	
	2023-24	2024-25	2023-24	2024-25	2023-24	2024-25
Assam	14.03	15.44	-1,324	-1,028	0.22	0.26
Manipur	13.41	12.90	-295	-290	0.45	0.20
Bihar	20.32	15.51	-18,529	-16,526	0.18	0.41
Uttar Pradesh						
State sector	16.39	19.54	-90,039	-1,00,858	-0.55	-0.73
Private sector	7.75	8.48	1,426	1,561	0.57	0.15
Punjab	10.96	19.21	-9,620	-3,404	0.20	0.30
Rajasthan	22.13	15.18	-91,565	-90,303	-0.31	0.04
Gujarat						
State sector	8.97	8.25	5,165	7,355	0.58	0.40
Private sector	3.92	3.63	2,823	3,892	-0.14	0.42
Maharashtra						
State sector	23.86	17.69	-36,226	-35,671	-0.28	-0.56
Private sector	5.39	4.99	474	1,245	0.99	2.04
Madhya Pradesh	22.89	22.76	-69,506	-71,394	-0.18	0.04
Chhattisgarh	15.88	14.25	-10,016	-10,423	0.20	0.19
Jharkhand	30.51	28.19	-18,512	-20,512	-1.66	-0.95
West Bengal						
State sector	17.13	17.17	158	174	-0.17	-0.03
Private sector	4.64	4.77	197	205	-0.13	0.30
Odisha**	19.59	17.81	824	1,263	-0.10	-0.18
Telangana	19.01	19.84	-67,276	-69,741	-0.75	-0.27
Karnataka	11.89	11.92	-26,109	-34,980	-1.08	-0.69
Kerala	7.44	6.61	-37,543	-38,648	-0.42	-0.17
Andhra Pradesh	12.05	7.87	-29,210	-29,420	-0.34	0.15
Tamil Nadu	11.39	10.96	-1,66,944	-1,19,153	-0.11	0.18
<b>ALL INDIA</b>	<b>15.97</b>	<b>15.04</b>	<b>6,91,416</b>	<b>6,47,210</b>	<b>0.20</b>	<b>0.06</b>

AT&C - Aggregate Technical and Commercial; ACS - Average Cost of Supply; ARR - Average Revenue Realised, which covers tariff subsidy received basis but without regulatory income and LDW grant; \*Where all the DISCOMs belong to the private sector

Source: 14th Annual Integrated Rating & Ranking of Power Distribution Utilities, Power Finance Corporation

delays and non-payments by DISCOMs had made it difficult for generators to pay for the fuel, which had to be prepaid, to continue generation, apart from having to pay the Railways in advance for the rakes.

When the Rules came into force on June 3, 2022, outstanding legacy dues totalled ₹1,29,947 crore. Since then, utilities in 13 States and Union Territories paid ₹ 1,31,942 crore till December 2025 through

## Even though many DISCOMs are struggling to cope with chronic issues, several others have begun improving their performance

39 EMIs, prepayments, and reconciliations. In January 2026, the dues went down further to ₹ 4,927 crore, with DISCOMs largely paying their current dues on time, reflecting a marked improvement in sectoral financial discipline.

Yet, not everything is rosy. Many DISCOMs, if not most, have been able to achieve the turnaround, essentially due to tariff subsidies received from and the takeover of losses by their respective governments. For instance, in the case of Tamil Nadu, during 2024-25, the Tamil Nadu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (TNPDC), the successor to the Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (TANGEDCO), received ₹15,772 crore as tariff subsidy and ₹16,107 crore towards the takeover of losses. In fact, the utility recorded a profit (after tax) of ₹2,073 crore only after receiving the State government's largesse. But for the takeover of losses, TNPDC had registered a loss of ₹4,034 crore,

according to the findings of the 14th Integrated Rating Exercise conducted by the Power Finance Corporation Limited (PFC) under a framework approved by the Union Ministry of Power. The findings were released in late January 2026.

Take the case of Rajasthan: Jodhpur Vidya Vitran Nigam Limited (JVVNL), which, according to PFC's assessment, improved its showing during 2024-25 compared to the past. This utility recorded a profit of ₹92 crore, but this was after the receipt of ₹ 11,625 crore towards tariff subsidy and ₹ 2,540 crore towards loss takeover.

Besides, even the present position of DISCOMs enjoying revenue surplus appears to be transient, because when the utilities may have to effect pay revision for employees in a few years, the probability of them slipping back to square one – revenue deficit – is quite high.

### The way forward

Still, the emphasis on government support, which is nothing new, is not to be viewed as taking away the credit for DISCOMs for enhanced performance. However, there is still scope for further improvement. At present, feeder segregation works, taken up in States such as Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Maharashtra with large rural or agricultural consumer bases separating feeders for agricultural use from non-agricultural use, should be extended to other States such as Tamil Nadu, where an unmetered power supply to the farm sector has been the norm. Only then will there be data, closer to the real picture, regarding the quantum of power supplied to agriculturists.

As Niti Aayog noted in its August 2021 study on the distribution sector, DISCOMs should be proactive in promoting the use of solar pumps in agriculture, a move that would lead to a significant decrease in power procurement costs. The political executive must resist the temptation to offer free electricity universally to domestic consumers or any other category, as economically stronger sections of society invariably benefit disproportionately by any such measure. Political will, combined with public-spirited bureaucracy, can easily transform the face of DISCOMs into that of viable and consumer-friendly entities.

## THE GIST

DISCOMs record a decisive turnaround, with reduced AT&C losses, a sharply narrowed ACS-ARR gap and improved cost recovery following reforms and rule changes.

Financial discipline improves, as legacy dues decline, current payments are largely made on time and mounting surcharges are arrested through structured instalments.

Government support remains central, with tariff subsidies and loss takeovers underpinning profits, even as scope for further improvement persists through feeder segregation and efficiency measures.

## DISCOMs and the road ahead डिस्कॉम और आगे का मार्ग

- DISCOMs show improvement in performance, recording a positive turnaround marked by reduced AT&C losses, a narrowed ACS-ARR gap and improved financial discipline; however, many utilities continue to rely on tariff subsidies and loss takeovers by State governments, underscoring the scope for further improvement
- डिस्कॉम के प्रदर्शन में सुधार दिखाई देता है, जिसमें एटी एंड सी हानियों में कमी, एसीएस-एआरआर अंतर में संकुचन और वित्तीय अनुशासन में सुधार के साथ सकारात्मक बदलाव दर्ज हुआ है; हालांकि, कई



यूटिलिटीज अभी भी टैरिफ सब्सिडी और राज्य सरकारों द्वारा हानियों के अधिग्रहण पर निर्भर हैं, जो अधिक सुधार की गुंजाइश को रेखांकित करता है

## DISCOMs and India's Power Distribution Turnaround डिस्कॉम और भारत के बिजली वितरण क्षेत्र का सुधार

- Better days seem to be ahead for the country's **electricity sector**, especially **power distribution utilities**, including power departments, commonly known as **DISCOMs**. देश के **बिजली क्षेत्र** के लिए बेहतर दिन आने वाले प्रतीत होते हैं, विशेषकर **बिजली वितरण कंपनियों** के लिए, जिन्हें सामान्यतः **डिस्कॉम** कहा जाता है।
- For long, DISCOMs, now numbering **72 across the country (44 State-owned, 16 private-sector entities, and 12 power departments)**, had presented a grim picture with never-declining **line losses**, also called **Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses**, and the consequent widening gap between the **Average Cost of Supply (ACS)** and the **Average Revenue Realised (ARR)**. लंबे समय तक, पूरे देश में **72 डिस्कॉम (44 राज्य स्वामित्व वाले, 16 निजी क्षेत्र और 12 बिजली विभाग)** ने गिरावट का चित्र प्रस्तुत किया, जिसमें लगातार **लाइन लॉस**, जिन्हें **एग्रीगेट टेक्निकल एंड कमर्शियल (AT&C) लॉस** कहा जाता है, और **औसत आपूर्ति लागत (ACS)** तथा **औसत प्राप्त राजस्व (ARR)** के बीच बढ़ती खाई शामिल थी।
- Between **2020-21 and 2024-25**, accumulated losses rose from **₹5.5 lakh crore to ₹6.47 lakh crore**, with outstanding debt increasing to **₹7.26 lakh crore**. **2020-21 से 2024-25** के बीच, संचयी घाटा **₹5.5 लाख करोड़ से बढ़कर ₹6.47 लाख करोड़** हो गया और बकाया ऋण **₹7.26 लाख करोड़** तक पहुंच गया।
- **Non-cost-reflective tariffs** and delayed payment of **State subsidies** were among the factors contributing to this state of affairs. **लागत के अनुरूप न होने वाले टैरिफ और राज्य सब्सिडी के भुगतान में देरी** इस स्थिति के प्रमुख कारणों में शामिल थे।

### A legacy of losses घाटे की विरासत

- As far as India is concerned, **DISCOMs and losses** have become synonymous, forcing specialists to use the prefix "**minus**" whenever a power utility's **ARR exceeds its ACS**. भारत में **डिस्कॉम और घाटा** लगभग समानार्थी बन गए हैं, जिससे विशेषज्ञों को तब "**माइनस**" शब्द का उपयोग करना पड़ता है जब किसी बिजली कंपनी का **ARR उसके ACS से अधिक होता है**।
- One may argue that loss-making is a **legacy issue**, as these utilities — earlier **State Electricity Boards (SEBs)** formed under the **Electricity (Supply) Act, 1948** — were mostly in the red. यह तर्क दिया जा सकता है कि घाटा एक **विरासत समस्या** है, क्योंकि ये कंपनियाँ पहले **राज्य विद्युत बोर्ड (SEBs)** थीं, जो **विद्युत (आपूर्ति) अधिनियम, 1948** के तहत बनी थीं और अधिकांशतः घाटे में थीं।
- However, **Section 59** of the law had originally required SEBs to make a **profit of three per cent or more**, as specified by State governments. हालाँकि, कानून की धारा **59** ने मूल रूप से SEBs को **कम से कम तीन प्रतिशत लाभ** कमाने की आवश्यकता बताई थी, जैसा कि राज्य सरकारों द्वारा निर्धारित किया गया था।

### Signs of a turnaround सुधार के संकेत

- Even though many DISCOMs continue to struggle with **chronic issues**, several others have begun improving performance due to steps taken by stakeholders, including the **Union government**. हालाँकि कई डिस्कॉम अभी भी **पुरानी समस्याओं** से जूझ रहे हैं, फिर भी कई अन्य ने **केंद्र सरकार सहित विभिन्न हितधारकों** द्वारा उठाए गए कदमों के कारण अपने प्रदर्शन में सुधार किया है।
- A Survey revealed that DISCOMs recorded a **positive Profit After Tax (PAT) of ₹2,701 crore in FY 2024-25**, marking "**a decisive turnaround**" from a loss of **₹67,962 crore in 2013-14**.



एक सर्वेक्षण में पाया गया कि डिस्कॉम ने वित्त वर्ष 2024-25 में ₹2,701 करोड़ का सकारात्मक PAT दर्ज किया, जो 2013-14 में ₹67,962 करोड़ के घाटे से निर्णायक सुधार दर्शाता है।

- This improvement was accompanied by a reduction in **AT&C losses from 22.62% to 15.04%**.  
इस सुधार के साथ **AT&C लॉस 22.62% से घटकर 15.04%** हो गया।
- The **ACS-ARR gap** (accrual basis) declined from **78 paise per unit to 0.06 paise per unit**, signalling improved **cost recovery**.  
**ACS-ARR अंतर** (आधार पर) **78 पैसे प्रति यूनिट से घटकर 0.06 पैसे प्रति यूनिट** हो गया, जो बेहतर लागत वसूली दर्शाता है।
- In **mid-January**, the Union government released performance details of DISCOMs for the year ending **March 31, 2025**.  
**जनवरी मध्य** में केंद्र सरकार ने **31 मार्च 2025** को समाप्त वर्ष के लिए डिस्कॉम के प्रदर्शन का विवरण जारी किया।
- The government attributed the **financial turnaround** to measures including the **Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS)**, **amendments to Electricity Rules**, and the **Late Payment Surcharge Rules**.  
सरकार ने इस **वित्तीय सुधार** का श्रेय **रीवैम्ड डिस्ट्रीब्यूशन सेक्टर स्कीम (RDSS)**, **बिजली नियमों में संशोधन**, और **लेट पेमेंट सरचार्ज नियमों** जैसे कदमों को दिया।

### RDSS, Financial Discipline and DISCOM Performance आरडीएसएस, वित्तीय अनुशासन और डिस्कॉम प्रदर्शन

- The **RDSS's objective** is to improve the **quality and reliability of power** through a **financially sustainable and operationally efficient distribution sector**, with the **release of funds linked to execution of necessary measures**.  
**आरडीएसएस का उद्देश्य** आवश्यक उपायों के क्रियान्वयन से जुड़े धन के निर्गम के माध्यम से वित्तीय रूप से टिकाऊ और संचालनात्मक रूप से कुशल वितरण क्षेत्र द्वारा बिजली की गुणवत्ता और विश्वसनीयता में सुधार करना है।
- The **effective implementation of the Rules** has helped utilities **arrest mounting surcharges on legacy dues**, as it allows DISCOMs to clear dues through a maximum of **48 equated monthly instalments (EMIs)**.  
**नियमों के प्रभावी क्रियान्वयन** ने उपयोगिताओं को **पुराने बकाए पर बढ़ते अधिभार को रोकने** में मदद की है, क्योंकि इससे डिस्कॉम को अधिकतम **48 समान मासिक किस्तों (EMIs)** में बकाया चुकाने की अनुमति मिलती है।

### Discipline and debt reduction अनुशासन और ऋण में कमी

- Before the Rules came into force, **delays and non-payments by DISCOMs** made it difficult for generators to **prepay for fuel** and pay the **Railways in advance for rakes**, affecting generation continuity.  
नियम लागू होने से पहले, **डिस्कॉम द्वारा देरी और भुगतान न करने** से जनरेटरों के लिए **ईंधन का अग्रिम भुगतान और रेलवे को रक के लिए अग्रिम भुगतान** करना कठिन हो गया था, जिससे उत्पादन प्रभावित हुआ।
- When the Rules came into force on **June 3, 2022**, outstanding **legacy dues totalled ₹1,39,947 crore**.  
जब नियम **3 जून 2022** को लागू हुए, तब **पुराने बकाए ₹1,39,947 करोड़** थे।
- Since then, utilities in **13 States and Union Territories** paid **₹1,31,942 crore till December 2025** through **39 EMIs, prepayments and reconciliations**.  
तब से **13 राज्यों और केंद्रशासित प्रदेशों** की उपयोगिताओं ने **दिसंबर 2025 तक ₹1,31,942 करोड़** का भुगतान **39 EMIs, अग्रिम भुगतान और समायोजन** के माध्यम से किया।
- In **January 2026**, dues fell further to **₹4,927 crore**, with DISCOMs largely paying **current dues on time**, showing improved **financial discipline**.  
**जनवरी 2026** में बकाया और घटकर **₹4,927 करोड़** रह गया, और डिस्कॉम द्वारा **वर्तमान बकाया समय पर चुकाने** से बेहतर **वित्तीय अनुशासन** दिखा।
- Yet, not everything is rosy. Many DISCOMs achieved turnaround largely due to **tariff subsidies and takeover of losses by State governments**.



फिर भी सब कुछ सकारात्मक नहीं है। कई डिस्कॉम ने सुधार मुख्यतः **टैरिफ सब्सिडी और राज्य सरकारों द्वारा घाटा उठाने** के कारण हासिल किया।

- In Tamil Nadu (2024-25), Tamil Nadu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (TNPDC) received ₹15,772 crore as tariff subsidy and ₹16,107 crore towards takeover of losses. तमिलनाडु (2024-25) में तमिलनाडु पावर डिस्ट्रीब्यूशन कॉर्पोरेशन लिमिटेड (TNPDC) को ₹15,772 करोड़ टैरिफ सब्सिडी और ₹16,107 करोड़ घाटा उठाने हेतु प्राप्त हुए।
- The utility recorded PAT of ₹2,073 crore only after receiving State support, otherwise it would have posted a loss of ₹14,034 crore. उपयोगिता ने ₹2,073 करोड़ का लाभ केवल राज्य सहायता के बाद दर्ज किया, अन्यथा ₹14,034 करोड़ का घाटा होता।
- These findings came from the 14th Integrated Rating Exercise by Power Finance Corporation (PFC) under a framework approved by the Union Ministry of Power, released in late January 2026. ये निष्कर्ष पावर फाइनेंस कॉर्पोरेशन (PFC) द्वारा किए गए 14वें इंटीग्रेटेड रेटिंग अभ्यास से आए, जिसे केंद्रीय विद्युत मंत्रालय ने स्वीकृत किया था, और जो जनवरी 2026 के अंत में जारी हुआ।
- In Rajasthan, Jodhpur Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited (JDVVNL) showed improvement in 2024-25 and recorded a profit of ₹92 crore. राजस्थान में जोधपुर विद्युत वितरण निगम लिमिटेड (JDVVNL) ने 2024-25 में सुधार दिखाया और ₹92 करोड़ का लाभ दर्ज किया।
- However, this was after receiving ₹11,625 crore as tariff subsidy and ₹2,540 crore towards loss takeover. हालाँकि, यह ₹11,625 करोड़ टैरिफ सब्सिडी और ₹2,540 करोड़ घाटा उठाने हेतु प्राप्त होने के बाद संभव हुआ।
- Besides, even the present position of DISCOMs enjoying revenue surplus appears to be transient, because when the utilities may have to effect pay revision for employees in a few years, the probability of them slipping back to revenue deficit is quite high. इसके अलावा, डिस्कॉम की वर्तमान राजस्व अधिशेष स्थिति भी अस्थायी प्रतीत होती है, क्योंकि कुछ वर्षों में कर्मचारियों के वेतन संशोधन के बाद उनके फिर से राजस्व घाटे में जाने की संभावना अधिक है।

### The way forward आगे का मार्ग

- Still, the emphasis on **government support**, which is nothing new, is not to be viewed as taking away the credit for **DISCOMs' enhanced performance**. फिर भी **सरकारी समर्थन** पर जोर, जो नया नहीं है, को डिस्कॉम के बेहतर प्रदर्शन का श्रेय कम करने के रूप में नहीं देखा जाना चाहिए।
- However, there is still **scope for further improvement**. हालाँकि, अभी भी **अधिक सुधार की संभावना** है।
- At present, **feeder segregation works** undertaken in Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Maharashtra, separating **agricultural feeders from non-agricultural feeders**, should be extended to other States such as Tamil Nadu, where **unmetered power supply to the farm sector** has been the norm. वर्तमान में राजस्थान, आंध्र प्रदेश, गुजरात, कर्नाटक और महाराष्ट्र में किए गए **फीडर पृथक्करण कार्य**, जिसमें **कृषि और गैर-कृषि फीडर अलग किए गए हैं**, को तमिलनाडु जैसे राज्यों तक विस्तारित किया जाना चाहिए, जहाँ **कृषि क्षेत्र को बिना मीटर बिजली आपूर्ति सामान्य** रही है।
- Only then will there be **reliable data** on the **actual quantum of power supplied to agriculturists**. तभी किसानों को दी गई वास्तविक बिजली की मात्रा पर विश्वसनीय डेटा उपलब्ध होगा।
- As NITI Aayog noted in its **August 2021 study**, DISCOMs should promote **solar pumps in agriculture**, which would significantly reduce **power procurement costs**. जैसा कि **नीति आयोग** ने **अगस्त 2021 अध्ययन** में बताया, डिस्कॉम को **कृषि में सोलर पंपों को बढ़ावा देना चाहिए**, जिससे **बिजली खरीद लागत** में काफी कमी आएगी।
- The **political executive** must resist offering **free electricity universally**, as **economically stronger sections** benefit disproportionately.



राजनीतिक नेतृत्व को सार्वभौमिक मुफ्त बिजली देने के प्रलोभन से बचना चाहिए, क्योंकि इसका लाभ आर्थिक रूप से मजबूत वर्गों को अधिक मिलता है।

- **Political will**, combined with **public-spirited bureaucracy**, can transform DISCOMs into **viable and consumer-friendly entities**.

राजनीतिक इच्छाशक्ति और जनहितकारी नौकरशाही मिलकर डिस्कॉम को व्यवहार्य और उपभोक्ता-अनुकूल संस्थाओं में बदल सकती हैं।

# India, GCC nations sign terms of reference for FTA

Appropriate that we enter a robust trading arrangement for greater free flow of goods and services, and predictability, stability to policy: Goyal

**GS III: Economy**

**T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan**  
NEW DELHI

**R**epresentatives of India and the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) on Thursday signed the Terms of Reference for negotiations on a free trade agreement (FTA). The GCC countries are together India's largest merchandise trade partners, with total merchandise trade exceeding that done with even the EU and the U.S.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) were signed by India's chief negotiator for the FTA, Additional Secretary Ajay Bhadoo, and his counterpart representing the Secretariat General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Raja Al Marzouki. The signing of the ToR is a necessary precursor for the start of formal negotiations. The GCC countries



The GCC countries are together India's largest merchandise trade partners.

are Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

"It is most appropriate that we now enter into a much stronger and robust trading arrangement, which will enable a greater free flow of goods and services, bring predictability and stability to policy, help encourage greater degree of investments and take our bilateral relations between the six nation GCC

group and India to greater heights," Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, who presided over the signing, said in his speech.

### Bilateral benefit

Mr. Goyal pointed out that the two sides could significantly benefit from each other, with India's workforce both within the GCC countries as well as in India standing to gain from the eventual agreement.

"The GCC countries can help us with further diversification and growth of our energy sources, opportunities for our youth, and massive amounts of investments that different countries have already committed at different points of time, which will further get an impetus with a free trade agreement between India and the GCC nations," he added.

## India, GCC nations sign terms of reference for FTA

भारत और जीसीसी देशों ने एफटीए के लिए टर्म्स ऑफ़ रेफरेंस पर हस्ताक्षर किए

- Appropriate that we enter a robust trading arrangement for greater free flow of goods and services, and predictability, stability to policy: **Goyal**



वस्तुओं और सेवाओं के अधिक मुक्त प्रवाह, तथा नीति में **पूर्वानुमेयता** और **स्थिरता** के लिए एक मज़बूत व्यापारिक व्यवस्था में प्रवेश करना उपयुक्त है: **गोयल**

- Representatives of **India** and the **six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** on Thursday signed the **Terms of Reference** for negotiations on a **free trade agreement (FTA)**.  
**भारत और छह देशों वाले गल्फ कोऑपरेशन काउंसिल (GCC)** के प्रतिनिधियों ने गुरुवार को **मुक्त व्यापार समझौते (FTA)** पर बातचीत के लिए **टर्म्स ऑफ़ रेफरेंस** पर हस्ताक्षर किए।
- The **GCC countries** are together India's largest **merchandise trade partners**, with total merchandise trade exceeding that done with even the **EU** and the **U.S.**.  
**जीसीसी देश** मिलकर भारत के सबसे बड़े **वस्तु व्यापार भागीदार** हैं, जिनके साथ कुल वस्तु व्यापार **ईयू** और **अमेरिका** से भी अधिक है।
- The **Terms of Reference (ToR)** were signed by India's chief negotiator for the FTA, **Additional Secretary Ajay Bhadoo**, and his counterpart representing the **Secretariat General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, Raja Al Marzouki**.  
**टर्म्स ऑफ़ रेफरेंस (ToR)** पर भारत की ओर से एफटीए के मुख्य वार्ताकार **अतिरिक्त सचिव अजय भट्ट** और **गल्फ कोऑपरेशन काउंसिल के सचिवालय** का प्रतिनिधित्व कर रहे **राजा अल मरज़ूकी** ने हस्ताक्षर किए।
- The signing of the **ToR** is a necessary precursor for the start of **formal negotiations**.  
**ToR** पर हस्ताक्षर **औपचारिक वार्ताओं** की शुरुआत के लिए एक आवश्यक पूर्व-शर्त है।
- The **GCC countries** are **Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE**.  
**जीसीसी देश** हैं — **बहरीन, कुवैत, ओमान, क़तर, सऊदी अरब और यूएई**।
- "It is most appropriate that we now enter into a much stronger and robust trading arrangement, which will enable a greater free flow of goods and services, bring predictability and stability to policy, help encourage greater degree of investments and take our bilateral relations between the six nation GCC group and India to greater heights," **Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal**, who presided over the signing, said in his speech.  
"यह अत्यंत उपयुक्त है कि अब हम एक अधिक मज़बूत और सुदृढ़ व्यापारिक व्यवस्था में प्रवेश करें, जो वस्तुओं और सेवाओं के अधिक मुक्त प्रवाह को सक्षम बनाए, नीति में पूर्वानुमेयता और स्थिरता लाए, निवेश को प्रोत्साहित करे और छह देशों वाले जीसीसी समूह तथा भारत के बीच द्विपक्षीय संबंधों को नई ऊँचाइयों तक ले जाए," हस्ताक्षर कार्यक्रम की अध्यक्षता कर रहे **वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग मंत्री पीयूष गोयल** ने अपने भाषण में कहा।

## Bilateral benefit द्विपक्षीय लाभ

- Mr. **Goyal** pointed out that the two sides could significantly benefit from each other, with **India's workforce** both within the GCC countries as well as in India standing to gain from the eventual agreement.  
**गोयल** ने कहा कि दोनों पक्ष एक-दूसरे से उल्लेखनीय रूप से लाभान्वित हो सकते हैं, और **भारत का श्रमबल**, चाहे वह जीसीसी देशों में हो या भारत में, इस संभावित समझौते से लाभ पाएगा।
- "The **GCC countries** can help us with further diversification and growth of our **energy sources**, opportunities for our **youth**, and massive amounts of **investments** that different countries have already committed at different points of time, which will further get an impetus with a free trade agreement between India and the GCC nations," he added.  
"**जीसीसी देश** हमारे **ऊर्जा स्रोतों** के और अधिक विविधीकरण व विस्तार, हमारे **युवाओं** के लिए अवसरों, तथा विभिन्न देशों द्वारा अलग-अलग समय पर किए गए भारी **निवेश** में मदद कर सकते हैं, जिन्हें भारत और जीसीसी देशों के बीच मुक्त व्यापार समझौते से और गति मिलेगी," उन्होंने जोड़ा।



# India-U.S. trade deal provides macro predictability: Nasscom

GS III: Economy

The Hindu Bureau  
BENGALURU

The India-U.S. trade deal provided much-needed macro predictability at a time when technology, talent and trust are central to global competitiveness, said Nasscom President Rajesh Nambiar. "Indian technology companies are already delivering measurable outcomes for the U.S. economy – high-quality jobs, regional investment and innovation at scale," he said at a Nasscom U.S. CEO Forum meeting held in Washington DC, shortly after the announcement of the trade deal.

Energy security also emerged as a strategic priority, with the U.S. scaling AI-critical energy capacity and India integrating green and nuclear energy to support next-generation data centres, the forum noted.

According to the forum, Indian technology companies are increasingly contributing to AI-driven energy optimisation, grid analytics, and digital in-

**Indian tech firms are increasingly contributing to AI-driven energy optimisation**

frastructure, reinforcing the resilience of the U.S. innovation ecosystem.

The meeting held at Capitol Hill, brought together leading Indian technology business leaders and senior U.S. policymakers to advance a shared agenda focused on enhancing innovation, AI, trusted supply chains, workforce development and local job creation across the U.S., Nasscom said in a statement on Thursday.

Meanwhile, in another statement, Nasscom said AI models and tools would continue to drive exponential innovation and rapid adoption. "However, concerns that such tools will significantly disrupt or eliminate the technology services sector where India has a strong global presence are misplaced," the apex trade body said.

**digital infrastructure, reinforcing the resilience of the U.S. innovation ecosystem.**

फोरम के अनुसार, भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी कंपनियाँ एआई-आधारित ऊर्जा अनुकूलन, ग्रिड एनालिटिक्स और डिजिटल अवसंरचना में बढ़ता योगदान दे रही हैं, जिससे अमेरिकी नवाचार पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र की लचीलापन मज़बूत हो रहा है।

- The meeting held at **Capitol Hill**, brought together leading **Indian technology business leaders** and senior **U.S. policymakers** to advance a shared agenda focused on enhancing **innovation, AI, trusted supply chains, workforce development** and **local job creation** across the **U.S.**, **Nasscom** said in a statement on **Thursday**.

कैपिटल हिल में आयोजित बैठक में प्रमुख भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी उद्योग नेता और वरिष्ठ अमेरिकी नीति-निर्माता एक साझा एजेंडा को आगे बढ़ाने के लिए एकत्र हुए, जिसका फोकस नवाचार, एआई, विश्वसनीय आपूर्ति श्रृंखलाएँ, कार्यबल विकास और अमेरिका भर में स्थानीय रोजगार सृजन पर था, यह नैसकॉम ने गुरुवार को जारी बयान में कहा।

- Meanwhile, in another statement, **Nasscom** said **AI models and tools** would continue to drive **exponential innovation** and **rapid adoption**.

**India-U.S. trade deal provides macro predictability: Nasscom**

**भारत-अमेरिका व्यापार समझौता व्यापक आर्थिक पूर्वानुमेयता प्रदान करता है: नैसकॉम**

- The **India-U.S. trade deal** provided much-needed **macro predictability** at a time when **technology, talent and trust** are central to **global competitiveness**, said **Nasscom President Rajesh Nambiar**.

भारत-अमेरिका व्यापार समझौते ने ऐसे समय में आवश्यक व्यापक आर्थिक पूर्वानुमेयता प्रदान की है, जब प्रौद्योगिकी, प्रतिभा और विश्वास वैश्विक प्रतिस्पर्धात्मकता के केंद्र में हैं, यह बात नैसकॉम अध्यक्ष राजेश नांबियार ने कही।

- "Indian technology companies are already delivering measurable outcomes for the **U.S. economy — high-quality jobs, regional investment** and **innovation at scale**," he said at a **Nasscom U.S. CEO Forum** meeting held in **Washington DC**, shortly after the announcement of the trade deal.

“भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी कंपनियाँ पहले से ही अमेरिकी अर्थव्यवस्था के लिए मापनीय परिणाम दे रही हैं — उच्च-गुणवत्ता वाली नौकरियाँ, क्षेत्रीय निवेश और बड़े पैमाने पर नवाचार,” उन्होंने व्यापार समझौते की घोषणा के तुरंत बाद वाशिंगटन डीसी में आयोजित नैसकॉम यू.एस. सीईओ फोरम की बैठक में कहा।

- Energy security** also emerged as a **strategic priority**, with the **U.S.** scaling **AI-critical energy capacity** and **India** integrating **green and nuclear energy** to support **next-generation data centres**, the forum noted.

फोरम ने कहा कि ऊर्जा सुरक्षा भी एक रणनीतिक प्राथमिकता के रूप में उभरी, जहाँ अमेरिका एआई-आवश्यक ऊर्जा क्षमता बढ़ा रहा है और भारत हरित और परमाणु ऊर्जा को अगली पीढ़ी के डेटा केंद्रों के समर्थन के लिए एकीकृत कर रहा है।

- According to the forum, **Indian technology companies** are increasingly contributing to **AI-driven energy optimisation, grid analytics, and**



इस बीच, एक अन्य बयान में नैसकॉम ने कहा कि एआई मॉडल और उपकरण घातीय नवाचार और तेज़ अपनाने की प्रक्रिया को आगे बढ़ाते रहेंगे।

- “However, concerns that such tools will significantly disrupt or eliminate the **technology services sector** where **India** has a strong **global presence** are misplaced,” the **apex trade body** said.  
“हालाँकि, यह आशंका कि ऐसे उपकरण प्रौद्योगिकी सेवा क्षेत्र को, जहाँ भारत की मज़बूत वैश्विक उपस्थिति है, गंभीर रूप से बाधित करेंगे या समाप्त कर देंगे, गलत है,” शीर्ष व्यापार निकाय ने कहा।

<b>GS Paper III: S&amp;T,</b>	
<b>TOPICS COVERED</b>	<b>06 February 2026</b>
<b>1. QUIZ</b>	
<b>2. Rethinking battery strategy in India: the case for sodium-ion technology</b>	<b>भारत में बैटरी रणनीति पर पुनर्विचार: सोडियम-आयन प्रौद्योगिकी के पक्ष में तर्क</b>
<b>3. ISS countdown to return to Earth brings an era of global cooperation to a close</b>	<b>पृथ्वी पर वापसी की ISS उलटी गिनती वैश्विक सहयोग के एक युग के अंत का संकेत देती है</b>

Despite centuries of research, the brain continues to remain the most mysterious of organs in the human body. Here is a quiz testing your knowledge about the important organ and how to care for it?

Zubeda Hamid

**QUESTION 1**

What is the human brain primarily made of? This comprises about 60% of the brain, with the remaining 40% being protein, carbohydrates, salt and water.

**QUESTION 2**

We all know about grey matter and white matter in the central nervous system. In your spinal cord, which matter is on the outside, and which is inside?

**QUESTION 3**

Is the following statement true or false? Walnuts are good for brain health and can also help improve memory.

**QUESTION 4**

Which daily hygiene ritual that many of us skip is believed to reduce the risk of stroke?

**QUESTION 5**

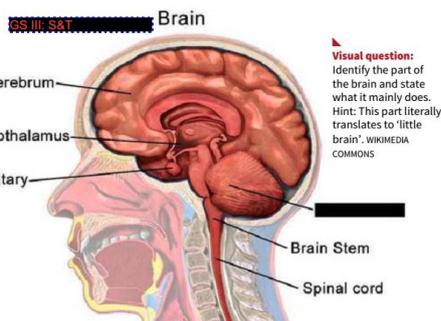
Looking after which of your organs, besides the brain, is one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk of dementia?

**QUESTION 6**

Take a guess as to how many neurons the brain is believed to have: a) Over 100 billion b) Between 40 and 50 billion c) Between 80 and 90 billion

**QUESTION 7**

Is the following statement true or false? The brain's ability to change stops with age.



**Answers to previous edition's quiz:**

1. Which virus is most often the culprit behind your common cold? **Ans: Rhinoviruses** 2. After a viral infection, some people contract \_\_\_\_\_, a condition in which the airways of the lungs get inflamed. **Ans: Acute bronchitis** 3. Paracetamol is commonly used as a fever reliever and to manage symptoms of winter infections. What is the safe dosage for adults in a 24-hour period? **Ans: Adults can take two 500mg tablets, 4 times in 24 hours. You must wait at least 4 hours between doses** 4. True or False: Cold air kills viruses. **Ans: False** 5. Pneumonia is a common winter infections. Which part of the lungs does it affect? **Ans: Air sacs or alveoli** 6. The influenza virus

causes the flu, and people often contract it in winter. Influenza viruses A, B and C are the common viruses behind the flu. Is the flu contagious? **Ans: Yes** 7. RSV is a common virus, usually mild, causing cold-like symptoms. Immunity from contracting this infection does not last, so people can get it more than once. What is the full form of RSV? **Ans: Respiratory syncytial virus** 8. Which vitamin is more useful to help prevent winter illnesses? **Ans: Vitamin D** Visual: Black pepper, commonly used as a home remedy to soothe symptoms of stuffy noses and sore throats. What is the active compound in it that helps, called? **Ans: Piperine** **Winners:** C. Saravanan | Tamal Biswas | Manda Venkata Apparao

**QUIZ**

**Rhinoviruses and the common cold**

- Rhinoviruses are the primary cause of the common cold**, responsible for about half of infections worldwide. They belong to the **Enterovirus genus and spread through respiratory droplets and contaminated surfaces**. After entering the nose or throat, they multiply in respiratory tissues, producing symptoms like sneezing, throat, cough, and runny nose. **Mutations and more than 160 types make vaccine development difficult**, so prevention relies on hand hygiene, masks, and avoiding contact.

**Acute bronchitis after viral infection**

- Acute bronchitis is a short-term inflammation of the bronchial tubes that often follows a viral infection such as the common cold or influenza**. Viruses irritate the airway lining, causing swelling, mucus production, cough, chest discomfort, and mild breathing difficulty. The condition usually lasts one to three weeks and rarely needs antibiotics because most cases



are viral. Treatment focuses on rest, fluids, steam inhalation, and symptom relief, while prevention includes hygiene, vaccination, and avoiding respiratory irritants like smoke.

### Safe adult dosage of Paracetamol

- Paracetamol is widely used to reduce fever and relieve mild to moderate pain.
- For adults, the commonly accepted safe maximum dose is **4,000 mg (4 g) in 24 hours**, usually taken as **two 500 mg tablets up to four times daily**, with at least **4 hours between doses**.
- Exceeding this limit can cause serious **liver damage**.
- People with liver disease, alcohol dependence, or underweight individuals should use lower doses and consult a doctor before use.

### Cold air and viruses

- Cold air does not kill viruses. Many respiratory viruses, including influenza and rhinoviruses, actually **survive longer in cold, dry conditions**.
- Winter weather may increase infections because people stay indoors, ventilation decreases, and close contact spreads viruses easily. Cold air can also dry the respiratory tract, weakening natural defenses. Proper prevention includes hand hygiene, masks, ventilation, vaccination, and maintaining immunity, rather than relying on temperature to eliminate viruses.

### Pneumonia and the lungs

- Pneumonia is an infection that primarily affects the **air sacs (alveoli)** of the lungs.
- These tiny sacs normally fill with air for oxygen exchange, but during pneumonia they become **inflamed and filled with fluid or pus**, causing cough, fever, chest pain, and breathing difficulty.
- It may be caused by **bacteria, viruses, or fungi**.
- Severe cases can reduce oxygen supply to the body.
- Prevention includes vaccination, hygiene, nutrition, and timely medical treatment, especially for children and elderly.

### Contagious nature of influenza (Flu)

- Yes, influenza is highly contagious. The influenza viruses **A, B, and C** spread mainly through respiratory droplets released when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, and also through contaminated surfaces.
- A person can transmit the virus **one day before symptoms appear and up to 5–7 days after illness begins**.
- Common symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, and fatigue. Vaccination, hygiene, masks, and isolation during illness help prevent transmission and outbreaks.

### Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

- RSV stands for **Respiratory Syncytial Virus**, a common respiratory virus that usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms such as runny nose, cough, fever, and wheezing. It spreads through respiratory droplets and contaminated surfaces. Immunity after infection is **not long-lasting**, so reinfection can occur throughout life. RSV can be serious for **infants, elderly, and immunocompromised people**, sometimes leading to bronchiolitis or pneumonia. Prevention includes hand hygiene, avoiding close contact, ventilation, and protective measures for high-risk groups.

### Vitamin D and prevention of winter illnesses



- Vitamin D plays an important role in supporting the immune system and may help reduce the risk of winter respiratory infections. It enhances the body's antimicrobial defenses and regulates immune responses. Sunlight exposure is the primary natural source, but winter often reduces synthesis, increasing deficiency risk. Foods like fortified milk, eggs, and fish help maintain levels. Health authorities recommend adequate Vitamin D intake, especially for elderly and low-sunlight populations, to support respiratory health.

### Piperine in black pepper

- Piperine is the active compound found in black pepper that contributes to its medicinal properties. It has anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and mild antimicrobial effects, which may help relieve symptoms like nasal congestion and sore throat. Piperine also improves the absorption of certain nutrients and medicines, including curcumin. Traditionally used in home remedies, black pepper supports respiratory comfort, though it is not a cure for infections and should complement, not replace, medical treatment.

# Rethinking battery strategy in India: the case for sodium-ion technology

India's dependence on lithium-ion batteries exposes structural constraints linked to critical minerals, import dependence, and supply security; sodium-ion batteries emerge as a safer alternative with lower material risk, compatible with existing infrastructure, and the potential to strengthen energy security

GS III: S&T

MOB

Jaideep Saraswat  
Nikhil Mall

**B**atteries have become deeply embedded in modern life. From laptops, mobile phones, wearable devices such as smartwatches and wireless earphones, to power tools, electric vehicles (EVs), and large-scale battery energy storage systems, batteries now underpin both personal convenience and critical infrastructure. A newer trend is also emerging, with batteries being integrated directly into household appliances. These developments collectively point to a future saturated with batteries, making energy storage a foundational pillar of economic growth, energy security, and the clean energy transition.

#### Dominant, not a perfect solution

Among the various battery chemistries that have existed or are still in use, lithium-ion batteries have emerged as the dominant global technology. This dominance is largely driven by their high energy density, low self-discharge rates, and long cycle life. Sustained global focus on lithium-ion technology over the past two decades has resulted in steady improvements in performance, manufacturing efficiency, and large-scale capacity build-out. By 2024, global lithium-ion manufacturing capacity had reached nearly 2.5 times annual demand, further accelerating cost reductions through economies of scale. As a result, costs have fallen dramatically, from nearly \$1,100 per kWh in the early 2010s to about \$108 per kWh in 2025.

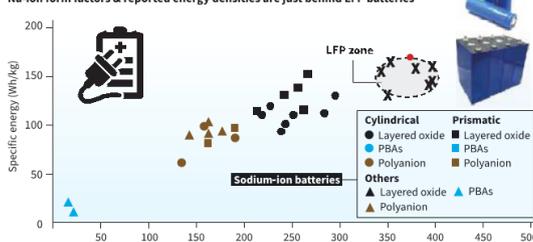
However, the success of lithium-ion batteries masks several structural challenges. These batteries are highly resource-intensive and depend on critical minerals such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, and graphite. The availability of these materials is unevenly distributed across a handful of countries, while refining and processing capacities are even more geographically concentrated. This creates vulnerabilities related to supply security, price volatility, and geopolitical risk. As global demand for batteries accelerates, these constraints are likely to intensify, reinforcing the need for alternative technologies that can support a more resilient and equitable energy transition.

#### Ambitions and structural constraints

The Government of India has made sustained efforts to build domestic battery manufacturing capacity, most notably through the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for Advanced Chemistry Cells

### Within reach

Na-ion form factors & reported energy densities are just behind LFP batteries



The specific energy density of a battery indicates the amount of electrical energy it can store per unit of its own mass, measured in Watt-hours per kilogram (Wh/kg), determining how light a battery can be for a given potential. The volumetric energy density of a battery refers to the amount of energy it can store per unit volume, measured in Watt-hours per litre (Wh/L), defining how compact a battery is. Ideally, both should be high. We notice that commercially available layered oxide sodium-ion batteries of different shapes have better specific energy density and volumetric energy density than their sodium-ion counterparts built of polyanionic compounds and Prussian blue analogues (PBAs). However, they have lower specific energy density and volumetric energy density than lithium iron phosphate (LFP) batteries, indicated as (x). Data from the Volta Foundation's Annual Battery Report 2024

launched in 2021. Under this scheme, around 40 GWh of manufacturing capacity has been allocated so far. While this represents meaningful progress, deployment remains at an early stage, with just over 1 GWh commissioned to date and additional capacities expected to come online gradually.

More critically, India's upstream ecosystem, from raw material availability and mineral processing to cathode and anode active material production and separator manufacturing, remains underdeveloped. Domestic reserves of lithium are limited and yet to be proven commercially viable, while processing infrastructure is still nascent. Consequently, import dependence for lithium-ion batteries is likely to persist for a considerable period. This reality underscores the importance of parallel investments in alternative battery technologies that can reduce material risk and strengthen long-term energy security. Sodium-ion batteries (SiBs) represent one such technology, offering significant promise for India in the medium to long term.

#### Energy density: sodium vs lithium

From a fundamental perspective, sodium-ion batteries exhibit lower specific energy (Wh/kg) than lithium-ion batteries, largely

because sodium has a higher atomic mass than lithium, which intuitively leads to more mass per unit of stored energy. However, this performance gap is often overstated. In practice, it can be significantly narrowed if the mass of other cell components in sodium-ion batteries is reduced, thereby compensating for the higher mass of sodium itself. Moreover, among commercially available sodium-ion chemistries, layered transition-metal oxide cathodes already deliver higher specific energy than polyanionic compounds and Prussian blue analogues, underscoring the growing competitiveness of sodium-ion technology.

Importantly, layered oxide sodium-ion batteries are now approaching the specific energy of lithium iron phosphate (LFP) batteries, as illustrated in Figure 1. Although their volumetric energy density (Wh/L) still trails that of LFP, ongoing materials and cell-level optimisations are expected to substantially narrow this gap and potentially lead to meaningful overlap. It is also important to emphasise that this comparison is based on commercially available products, whereas laboratory-scale and pilot-level research results suggest even greater performance potential. By contrast, comparisons with high-energy lithium nickel manganese cobalt (NMC) chemistries are less

**EV manufacturers should be encouraged through procurement policies, pilot programmes, and regulatory nudges to type-test and approve vehicle platforms using sodium-ion batteries alongside lithium-ion options. This approval strategy would allow rapid substitution in response to supply disruptions or cost fluctuations**

instructive, as NMC batteries occupy a distinct performance space and entail separate trade-offs related to safety and reliance on critical minerals.

#### Safety first

Safety is one of the most compelling advantages of sodium-ion batteries. Studies, including those conducted by the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory, have shown that sodium-ion cells exhibit significantly lower peak temperature rise during thermal runaway events compared to lithium-ion cells. This intrinsic safety advantage extends well beyond cell performance into storage, handling, and transportation.

Lithium-ion batteries are classified as "Dangerous Goods" by national and international transport authorities, necessitating strict packaging, handling, and transportation requirements. They are typically shipped at a state of charge not exceeding 30%, which increases logistical complexity and cost. These restrictions stem from the use of copper current collectors on the anode side, which can dissolve at low voltages and redeposit on the cathode, increasing the risk of internal short circuits.

Sodium-ion batteries do not suffer from these limitations. They use aluminium current collectors on both the anode and cathode sides, as sodium does not form unstable alloys with aluminium. As a result, sodium-ion cells can be safely stored and transported at zero volts without degradation or safety risks. Prolonged storage at zero volts has been shown not to compromise cycling stability. This feature offers significant benefits across the value chain, including safer handling, lower transportation costs, and greater flexibility in manufacturing and installation.

#### Manufacturing ready

Another critical advantage of sodium-ion batteries is their compatibility with existing lithium-ion manufacturing infrastructure.



## Rethinking battery strategy in India: the case for sodium-ion technology भारत में बैटरी रणनीति पर पुनर्विचार: सोडियम-आयन प्रौद्योगिकी के पक्ष में तर्क

- India's dependence on lithium-ion batteries exposes structural constraints linked to critical minerals, import dependence, and supply security; sodium-ion batteries emerge as a safer alternative with lower material risk, compatible with existing infrastructure, and the potential to strengthen energy security

लिथियम-आयन बैटरियों पर भारत की निर्भरता से महत्वपूर्ण खनिजों से जुड़ी संरचनात्मक बाधाएँ, आयात निर्भरता और आपूर्ति सुरक्षा के मुद्दे उजागर होते हैं; सोडियम-आयन बैटरियाँ कम सामग्री जोखिम के साथ एक सुरक्षित विकल्प के रूप में उभरती हैं, जो मौजूदा अवसंरचना के अनुकूल हैं और ऊर्जा सुरक्षा को मजबूत करने की क्षमता रखती हैं



### Batteries and the Future of Energy Storage बैटरियाँ और ऊर्जा भंडारण का भविष्य

- Batteries have become deeply embedded in **modern life**. बैटरियाँ आधुनिक जीवन में गहराई से समाहित हो गई हैं।
- From **laptops, mobile phones, wearable devices such as smartwatches and wireless earphones**, to **power tools, electric vehicles (EVs), and large-scale battery energy storage systems**, batteries now underpin both **personal convenience and critical infrastructure**. लैपटॉप, मोबाइल फोन, स्मार्टवॉच और वायरलेस ईयरफोन जैसे पहनने योग्य उपकरणों से लेकर पावर टूल्स, इलेक्ट्रिक वाहन (EVs) और बड़े पैमाने के बैटरी ऊर्जा भंडारण सिस्टम तक, बैटरियाँ अब व्यक्तिगत सुविधा और महत्वपूर्ण अवसंरचना दोनों का आधार बन चुकी हैं।
- A newer trend is emerging with batteries being integrated directly into **household appliances**. एक नया रुझान उभर रहा है जिसमें बैटरियाँ सीधे घरेलू उपकरणों में एकीकृत की जा रही हैं।
- These developments indicate a future **saturated with batteries**, making **energy storage a foundational pillar of economic growth, energy security, and clean energy transition**. ये विकास ऐसे भविष्य की ओर संकेत करते हैं जो बैटरियों से परिपूर्ण होगा, जिससे ऊर्जा भंडारण आर्थिक विकास, ऊर्जा सुरक्षा और स्वच्छ ऊर्जा परिवर्तन का आधार बन जाएगा।

### Dominant, not a perfect solution प्रमुख, परंतु पूर्ण समाधान नहीं

- Among various battery chemistries, **lithium-ion batteries** have emerged as the **dominant global technology**. विभिन्न बैटरी तकनीकों में लिथियम-आयन बैटरियाँ वैश्विक स्तर पर प्रमुख तकनीक बनकर उभरी हैं।
- This dominance is due to **high energy density, low self-discharge, and long cycle life**. यह प्रभुत्व उच्च ऊर्जा घनत्व, कम स्वयं-डिस्चार्ज और लंबी जीवन चक्र के कारण है।
- Global focus over the last **two decades** improved **performance, manufacturing efficiency and capacity build-out**. पिछले दो दशकों में वैश्विक ध्यान ने प्रदर्शन, निर्माण दक्षता और क्षमता विस्तार में सुधार किया।
- By **2024**, global lithium-ion manufacturing capacity reached nearly **2.5 times annual demand**, reducing costs through **economies of scale**. 2024 तक वैश्विक लिथियम-आयन निर्माण क्षमता वार्षिक मांग से लगभग 2.5 गुना हो गई, जिससे स्केल की अर्थव्यवस्था के कारण लागत कम हुई।
- Costs fell from nearly **\$1,100 per kWh in early 2010s** to about **\$108 per kWh in 2025**. लागत 2010 के दशक की शुरुआत में \$1,100 प्रति kWh से घटकर 2025 में लगभग \$108 प्रति kWh हो गई।
- However, lithium-ion batteries face **structural challenges**. हालाँकि, लिथियम-आयन बैटरियों को संरचनात्मक चुनौतियों का सामना है।



- They depend on **critical minerals such as lithium, cobalt, nickel and graphite**, which are unevenly distributed globally.  
ये लिथियम, कोबाल्ट, निकेल और ग्रेफाइट जैसे महत्वपूर्ण खनिजों पर निर्भर हैं, जो वैश्विक स्तर पर असमान रूप से वितरित हैं।
- Refining and processing capacities are **geographically concentrated**, creating risks related to **supply security, price volatility and geopolitics**.  
शोधन और प्रसंस्करण क्षमता भौगोलिक रूप से केंद्रित है, जिससे आपूर्ति सुरक्षा, मूल्य अस्थिरता और भू-राजनीतिक जोखिम उत्पन्न होते हैं।
- As demand rises, these constraints will intensify, highlighting the need for **alternative battery technologies** for a **resilient and equitable energy transition**.  
जैसे-जैसे मांग बढ़ेगी, ये बाधाएँ बढ़ेगी, जिससे लचीले और न्यायसंगत ऊर्जा परिवर्तन के लिए वैकल्पिक बैटरी तकनीकों की आवश्यकता स्पष्ट होती है।

### Ambitions and structural constraints महत्वाकांक्षाएँ और संरचनात्मक बाधाएँ

- The **Government of India** has sought to build domestic battery manufacturing capacity through the **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for Advanced Chemistry Cells launched in 2021**.  
भारत सरकार ने 2021 में शुरू की गई एडवांस्ड केमिस्ट्री सेल के लिए उत्पादन आधारित प्रोत्साहन (PLI) योजना के माध्यम से घरेलू बैटरी निर्माण क्षमता बढ़ाने का प्रयास किया है।
- Around **40 GWh manufacturing capacity** has been allocated under the scheme.  
इस योजना के तहत लगभग **40 GWh निर्माण क्षमता** आवंटित की गई है।
- However, deployment remains at an **early stage**, with just over **1 GWh commissioned so far**, and additional capacity expected to come online **gradually**.  
हालाँकि, कार्यान्वयन अभी प्रारंभिक चरण में है, अब तक केवल **1 GWh से अधिक क्षमता शुरू हुई है**, और अतिरिक्त क्षमता क्रमशः शुरू होने की अपेक्षा है।

### India's Battery Ecosystem and Sodium-ion Potential भारत का बैटरी पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र और सोडियम-आयन की संभावना

- More critically, India's **upstream ecosystem**, from **raw material availability and mineral processing to cathode and anode active material production and separator manufacturing**, remains **underdeveloped**.  
अधिक महत्वपूर्ण रूप से, भारत का अपस्ट्रीम पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र, जिसमें कच्चे माल की उपलब्धता, खनिज प्रसंस्करण, कैथोड और एनोड सक्रिय सामग्री उत्पादन तथा सेपरेटर निर्माण शामिल हैं, अभी भी अविकसित है।
- Domestic reserves of **lithium are limited** and yet to be proven **commercially viable**, while **processing infrastructure is nascent**.  
लिथियम के घरेलू भंडार सीमित हैं और अभी व्यावसायिक रूप से व्यवहार्य सिद्ध नहीं हुए हैं, जबकि प्रसंस्करण अवसंरचना प्रारंभिक अवस्था में है।
- Consequently, **import dependence for lithium-ion batteries** is likely to persist for a **considerable period**.  
परिणामस्वरूप, लिथियम-आयन बैटरियों के लिए आयात निर्भरता लंबे समय तक बनी रहने की संभावना है।
- This underscores the need for **parallel investments in alternative battery technologies** to reduce **material risk and strengthen long-term energy security**.  
यह वैकल्पिक बैटरी तकनीकों में समानांतर निवेश की आवश्यकता को दर्शाता है ताकि सामग्री जोखिम कम हो और दीर्घकालिक ऊर्जा सुरक्षा मजबूत हो।
- **Sodium-ion batteries (SiBs)** represent one such technology with **significant promise for India in the medium to long term**.  
सोडियम-आयन बैटरियाँ (SiBs) ऐसी ही एक तकनीक हैं जिनमें भारत के लिए मध्यम से दीर्घकाल में महत्वपूर्ण संभावना है।

Energy density: sodium vs lithium  
ऊर्जा घनत्व: सोडियम बनाम लिथियम



- From a fundamental perspective, **sodium-ion batteries** have **lower specific energy (Wh/kg)** than **lithium-ion batteries**, due to **higher atomic mass of sodium**.  
मौलिक दृष्टि से, **सोडियम-आयन बैटरियों की विशिष्ट ऊर्जा (Wh/kg)**, **लिथियम-आयन बैटरियों** से कम होती है, क्योंकि **सोडियम का परमाणु द्रव्यमान अधिक** होता है।
- However, this **performance gap is often overstated**.  
हालाँकि, यह **प्रदर्शन अंतर अक्सर बढ़ा-चढ़ाकर बताया जाता है**।
- In practice, the gap can be narrowed by reducing the **mass of other cell components**, compensating for sodium's higher mass.  
व्यवहार में, अन्य **सेल घटकों का द्रव्यमान कम करके** इस अंतर को घटाया जा सकता है, जिससे सोडियम के अधिक द्रव्यमान की भरपाई होती है।
- Among commercial sodium-ion chemistries, **layered transition-metal oxide cathodes** already deliver **higher specific energy** than **polyanionic compounds and Prussian blue analogues**.  
व्यावसायिक सोडियम-आयन रसायनों में, **लेयर्ड ट्रांजिशन-मेटल ऑक्साइड कैथोड** पहले ही **पोलिएनायोनिक यौगिकों और प्रशियन ब्लू एनालॉग्स** की तुलना में अधिक **विशिष्ट ऊर्जा** प्रदान करते हैं।
- Layered oxide sodium-ion batteries are approaching the **specific energy of lithium iron phosphate (LFP) batteries**.  
लेयर्ड ऑक्साइड सोडियम-आयन बैटरियाँ **लिथियम आयरन फॉस्फेट (LFP) बैटरियों की विशिष्ट ऊर्जा** के करीब पहुँच रही हैं।
- Although **volumetric energy density (Wh/L)** still trails LFP, ongoing **materials and cell-level optimisation** are expected to narrow the gap.  
हालाँकि **आयतन ऊर्जा घनत्व (Wh/L)** अभी भी LFP से कम है, लेकिन चल रहे **सामग्री और सेल-स्तरीय अनुकूलन** से यह अंतर कम होने की उम्मीद है।
- Laboratory and **pilot-level research** indicate even **greater performance potential**.  
प्रयोगशाला और **पायलट स्तर के शोध** और भी **उच्च प्रदर्शन क्षमता** दर्शाते हैं।
- Comparisons with **high-energy lithium nickel manganese cobalt (NMC) batteries** are less useful due to **different performance space and safety-mineral trade-offs**.  
**उच्च ऊर्जा लिथियम निकेल मैंगनीज कोबाल्ट (NMC) बैटरियों** से तुलना कम उपयोगी है क्योंकि उनकी **प्रदर्शन विशेषताएँ और सुरक्षा-खनिज समझौते अलग** होते हैं।

### Safety first सुरक्षा पहले

- Safety is one of the most compelling advantages of **sodium-ion batteries**.  
**सोडियम-आयन बैटरियों** का सबसे महत्वपूर्ण लाभ **सुरक्षा** है।
- Studies, including those conducted by the **U.S. Naval Research Laboratory**, have shown that **sodium-ion cells** exhibit **significantly lower peak temperature rise during thermal runaway events** compared to **lithium-ion cells**.  
अध्ययनों, जिनमें **यू.एस. नेवल रिसर्च लेबोरेटरी** के अध्ययन शामिल हैं, ने दिखाया है कि **सोडियम-आयन सेल्स** में **थर्मल रनअवे के दौरान अधिकतम तापमान वृद्धि** **लिथियम-आयन सेल्स** की तुलना में काफी कम होती है।
- This intrinsic **safety advantage** extends beyond cell performance into **storage, handling, and transportation**.  
यह अंतर्निहित **सुरक्षा लाभ** केवल प्रदर्शन तक सीमित नहीं है, बल्कि **भंडारण, हैंडलिंग और परिवहन** तक विस्तारित होता है।
- **Lithium-ion batteries** are classified as **"Dangerous Goods"** by national and international transport authorities, requiring **strict packaging, handling, and transportation rules**.  
**लिथियम-आयन बैटरियों** को राष्ट्रीय और अंतरराष्ट्रीय परिवहन प्राधिकरणों द्वारा **"खतरनाक वस्तु"** के रूप में वर्गीकृत किया गया है, जिसके लिए **कड़े पैकेजिंग, हैंडलिंग और परिवहन नियम** आवश्यक हैं।
- They are typically shipped at a **state of charge not exceeding 30%**, increasing **logistical complexity and cost**.  
इन्हें सामान्यतः **30% से अधिक चार्ज की स्थिति** में नहीं भेजा जाता, जिससे **लॉजिस्टिक जटिलता और लागत** बढ़ती है।
- These restrictions arise from the use of **copper current collectors** on the anode side, which can dissolve at **low voltages** and redeposit on the cathode, raising the risk of **internal short**



### circuits.

ये प्रतिबंध एनोड पर उपयोग होने वाले **कॉपर करंट कलेक्टर** के कारण होते हैं, जो **कम वोल्टेज** पर घुल सकते हैं और कैथोड पर जमा होकर **आंतरिक शॉर्ट सर्किट** का जोखिम बढ़ाते हैं।

- **Sodium-ion batteries** do not suffer from these limitations. **सोडियम-आयन बैटरियाँ** इन सीमाओं से प्रभावित नहीं होतीं।
- They use **aluminium current collectors** on both the anode and cathode sides, since sodium does not form **unstable alloys with aluminium**. इनमें एनोड और कैथोड दोनों पर **एल्यूमिनियम करंट कलेक्टर** उपयोग होते हैं, क्योंकि सोडियम **एल्यूमिनियम के साथ अस्थिर मिश्रधातु** नहीं बनाता।
- As a result, sodium-ion cells can be safely **stored and transported at zero volts** without **degradation or safety risks**. इस कारण, सोडियम-आयन सेल्स को **शून्य वोल्ट पर सुरक्षित रूप से संग्रहीत और परिवहन** किया जा सकता है, बिना **क्षरण या सुरक्षा जोखिम** के।
- Prolonged storage at **zero volts** has been shown not to compromise **cycling stability**. **शून्य वोल्ट** पर लंबे समय तक भंडारण से **साइक्लिंग स्थिरता** प्रभावित नहीं होती।
- This feature offers major benefits across the value chain, including **safer handling, lower transportation costs, and greater manufacturing flexibility**. यह विशेषता मूल्य श्रृंखला में **सुरक्षित हैंडलिंग, कम परिवहन लागत और अधिक निर्माण लचीलापन** जैसे बड़े लाभ प्रदान करती है।

### Manufacturing ready निर्माण के लिए तैयार

- Another critical advantage of **sodium-ion batteries** is their **compatibility with existing lithium-ion manufacturing infrastructure**. **सोडियम-आयन बैटरियों** का एक और महत्वपूर्ण लाभ यह है कि वे **मौजूदा लिथियम-आयन निर्माण अवसंरचना के साथ संगत** हैं।

## ISS countdown to return to Earth brings an era of global cooperation to a close

**ISS: US & Russia**  
PARIS

When the International Space Station (ISS) comes back to Earth in 2030, it will mark the end of three decades of peaceful international cooperation – and an era when space became central to our daily lives.

Since November 2000, there have always been several humans on board the football field-sized scientific laboratory, whipping around the planet at eight kilometres per second.

With a new crew of astronauts set to blast off for the station as soon as next week, some of those who have helped the station from the ground are nos-

talgic about its looming demise.

"The ISS is a cathedral to human cooperation and collaboration across borders, languages and cultures," John Horack, the former manager of NASA's Science and Mission Systems Office, told AFP.

"For more than 25 years, we have had people in space, 24/7/365," added Mr. Horack.

"It is a testament to how we can 'figure it out' rather than 'fight it out' when we wish to interact with each other."

The ISS was first proposed in the aftermath of the Cold War, illustrating a newfound spirit of cooperation between space race rivals Russia and the Unit-

ed States. While many ties between Russia and the West have been severed over Moscow's war in Ukraine, cooperation has continued on board the space station.

"The history of human spaceflight is first and foremost the space race," Lionel Suchet of France's space agency CNES told AFP.

"This is a very interesting moment in the evolution of space exploration," said Mr. Suchet, who coordinated several early ISS projects after witnessing its predecessor, the Mir space station, de-orbiting in 2001.

However, the ISS is getting old and its equipment is outdated.



**Eye in the sky:** Image of the International Space Station taken by a crew member onboard the space shuttle Endeavour. REUTERS

NASA announced last year it had selected Elon Musk's SpaceX to build a vehicle that can push the station back into Earth's atmosphere in 2030, where it will break up.

"This large rocket en-

gine will slow down the ISS, and enable it to have a precise re-entry over the Pacific Ocean, far from land, people or any other potential hazards," Mr. Horack explained.

Several spacecraft and

telescopes – including Mir – have met a similar fate, splashing down at an isolated spot in the ocean called Point Nemo.

After 2030, the only space station orbiting Earth will be China's Tiangong.

#### Private players

For the future, the U.S. is focusing more on space stations built and operated by private companies.

"We are moving into an era where space stations have a much more commercial dimension," similar to what has already happened with rockets and satellites, Mr. Horack said.

National space agencies would then need to pay

these companies to stay on board.

Several companies, including Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin and Axiom Space, are already working on plans to build the first commercial space station.

Mr. Suchet emphasised that "the business model will still be largely institutional because countries are always interested in sending astronauts into low-Earth orbit".

Scientific research and exploration also remain an "objective of all humanity", he added, pointing to treaties that govern how nations are supposed to act in space.

Whether these treaties will hold once humans make it to the Moon – the

U.S. and China both have plans to build lunar bases – remains to be seen.

For Mr. Horack, the end of the ISS could be seen as "quite sad".

But the end of this era will mark the opening of another, he added.

"We must grow as humans in our space-faring capacity, in our exploration of space, and in the use of space to generate social, economic, educational and quality of life outcomes for all people everywhere."

He finished by quoting the former head of the European Space Agency, Jean-Jacques Dordain: "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

## ISS countdown to return to Earth brings an era of global cooperation to a close पृथ्वी पर वापसी की ISS उलटी गिनती वैश्विक सहयोग के एक युग के अंत का संकेत देती है

- ISS countdown to return to **Earth** brings an era of **global cooperation** to a close पृथ्वी पर वापसी की **आईएसएस** उलटी गिनती **वैश्विक सहयोग** के एक युग के अंत को दर्शाती है
- When the **International Space Station (ISS)** comes back to Earth in 2030, it will mark the end of **three decades** of peaceful international cooperation — and an era when **space** became central to our **daily lives**. जब अंतरराष्ट्रीय अंतरिक्ष स्टेशन (आईएसएस) 2030 में पृथ्वी पर लौटेगा, तो यह **तीन दशकों** के शांतिपूर्ण



अंतरराष्ट्रीय सहयोग के अंत — और उस युग का संकेत होगा जब अंतरिक्ष हमारे दैनिक जीवन का केंद्र बन गया।

- Since **November 2000**, there have always been several **humans** on board the football field-sized **scientific laboratory**, whipping around the planet at **eight kilometres per second**.  
नवंबर 2000 से, फुटबॉल मैदान के आकार की वैज्ञानिक प्रयोगशाला में हमेशा कई मानव मौजूद रहे हैं, जो ग्रह के चारों ओर आठ किलोमीटर प्रति सेकंड की गति से घूमते रहे हैं।
- With a new crew of **astronauts** set to blast off for the station as soon as **next week**, some of those who have helped the station from the ground are **nostalgic** about its looming demise.  
अगले सप्ताह ही स्टेशन के लिए रवाना होने वाले अंतरिक्ष यात्रियों के नए दल के साथ, ज़मीन से स्टेशन की मदद करने वालों में से कुछ इसके आसन्न अंत को लेकर नॉस्टैल्जिक हैं।
- “The ISS is a **cathedral to human cooperation** and collaboration across borders, languages and cultures,” **John Horack**, the former manager of **NASA’s Science and Mission Systems Office**, told **AFP**.  
“आईएसएस मानव सहयोग का एक गिरजाघर है, जो सीमाओं, भाषाओं और संस्कृतियों के पार सहयोग को दर्शाता है,” नासा के साइंस एंड मिशन सिस्टम्स ऑफिस के पूर्व प्रबंधक जॉन होरेक ने एएफपी से कहा।
- “For more than **25 years**, we have had people in space, **24/7/365**,” added Mr. Horack.  
“25 वर्षों से अधिक समय से, हमारे पास अंतरिक्ष में लोग 24/7/365 मौजूद रहे हैं,” श्री होरेक ने जोड़ा।
- “It is a **testament** to how we can ‘**figure it out**’ rather than ‘**fight it out**’ when we wish to interact with each other.”  
“यह इस बात का प्रमाण है कि जब हम एक-दूसरे से जुड़ना चाहते हैं, तो हम ‘लड़ने’ की बजाय ‘समाधान निकाल’ सकते हैं।”
- The ISS was first proposed in the aftermath of the **Cold War**, illustrating a newfound spirit of **cooperation** between space race rivals **Russia** and the **United States**.  
आईएसएस का प्रस्ताव पहली बार शीत युद्ध के बाद रखा गया था, जो अंतरिक्ष दौड़ के प्रतिद्वंद्वियों रूस और संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका के बीच नए सहयोग की भावना को दर्शाता है।
- While many ties between **Russia** and the **West** have been severed over **Moscow’s war in Ukraine**, cooperation has continued on board the **space station**.  
हालांकि यूक्रेन में मास्को के युद्ध को लेकर रूस और पश्चिम के बीच कई संबंध टूट गए हैं, फिर भी अंतरिक्ष स्टेशन पर सहयोग जारी रहा है।
- “The history of **human spaceflight** is first and foremost the **space race**,” **Lionel Suchet** of France’s space agency **CNES** told **AFP**.  
“मानव अंतरिक्ष उड़ान का इतिहास सबसे पहले अंतरिक्ष दौड़ है,” फ्रांस की अंतरिक्ष एजेंसी सीएनईएस के लियोनेल सुशे ने एएफपी से कहा।
- “This is a very interesting moment in the **evolution of space exploration**,” said Mr. Suchet, who coordinated several early ISS projects after witnessing its predecessor, the **Mir space station**, de-orbiting in **2001**.  
“यह अंतरिक्ष अन्वेषण के विकास में एक बहुत दिलचस्प क्षण है,” श्री सुशे ने कहा, जिन्होंने 2001 में इसके पूर्ववर्ती मिर अंतरिक्ष स्टेशन के डी-ऑर्बिट होने के बाद कई शुरुआती आईएसएस परियोजनाओं का समन्वय किया।
- However, the ISS is getting **old** and its equipment is **outdated**.  
हालांकि, आईएसएस पुराना हो रहा है और इसके उपकरण पुराने पड़ चुके हैं।
- **NASA** announced last year it had selected **Elon Musk’s SpaceX** to build a vehicle that can push the station back into **Earth’s atmosphere** in **2030**, where it will **break up**.  
नासा ने पिछले वर्ष घोषणा की कि उसने एलन मस्क की स्पेसएक्स को एक ऐसा वाहन बनाने के लिए चुना है जो 2030 में स्टेशन को पृथ्वी के वायुमंडल में वापस धकेल सके, जहां वह टूट जाएगा।
- “This large **rocket engine** will slow down the ISS, and enable it to have a **precise re-entry** over the **Pacific Ocean**, far from land, people or any other potential hazards,” Mr. Horack explained.  
“यह बड़ा रॉकेट इंजन आईएसएस को धीमा करेगा और प्रशांत महासागर के ऊपर सटीक पुनःप्रवेश को संभव बनाएगा, जो भूमि, लोगों या अन्य संभावित खतरों से दूर होगा,” श्री होरेक ने समझाया।
- Several spacecraft and **telescopes** — including **Mir** — have met a similar fate, splashing down at an isolated spot in the ocean called **Point Nemo**.  
मीर सहित कई अंतरिक्ष यान और दूरबीनें इसी तरह के अंत का सामना कर चुकी हैं, और महासागर के एक एकांत स्थान प्वाइंट नीमो पर गिर चुकी हैं।



- After **2030**, the only space station orbiting Earth will be **China's Tiangong**.  
2030 के बाद, पृथ्वी की कक्षा में मौजूद एकमात्र अंतरिक्ष स्टेशन **चीन का तियांगोंग** होगा।

## Private players निजी खिलाड़ी

- For the future, the **U.S.** is focusing more on space stations built and operated by **private companies**.  
भविष्य के लिए, **अमेरिका निजी कंपनियों** द्वारा बनाए और संचालित किए जाने वाले अंतरिक्ष स्टेशनों पर अधिक ध्यान केंद्रित कर रहा है।
- "We are moving into an era where space stations have a much more **commercial dimension**," similar to what has already happened with **rockets** and **satellites**, Mr. Horack said.  
"हम ऐसे युग में प्रवेश कर रहे हैं जहां अंतरिक्ष स्टेशनों का **व्यावसायिक आयाम** कहीं अधिक होगा," ठीक वैसे ही जैसे **रोकेटों** और **उपग्रहों** के साथ हो चुका है, श्री होरैक ने कहा।
- **National space agencies** would then need to **pay** these companies to stay on board.  
इसके बाद **राष्ट्रीय अंतरिक्ष एजेंसियों** को स्टेशन पर रहने के लिए इन कंपनियों को **भुगतान** करना होगा।
- Several companies, including **Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin** and **Axiom Space**, are already working on plans to build the **first commercial space station**.  
**जेफ बेजोस की ब्लू ओरिजिन** और **एक्सिओम स्पेस** सहित कई कंपनियां पहले से ही **पहले वाणिज्यिक अंतरिक्ष स्टेशन** के निर्माण की योजनाओं पर काम कर रही हैं।
- Mr. Suchet emphasised that "the **business model** will still be largely **institutional** because countries are always interested in sending astronauts into **low-Earth orbit**".  
श्री सुशे ने जोर देकर कहा कि "**व्यावसायिक मॉडल** अभी भी काफी हद तक **संस्थागत** रहेगा क्योंकि देश हमेशा **निम्न-पृथ्वी कक्षा** में अंतरिक्ष यात्रियों को भेजने में रुचि रखते हैं।"
- **Scientific research** and **exploration** also remain an "**objective of all humanity**", he added, pointing to **treaties** that govern how nations are supposed to act in space.  
उन्होंने जोड़ा कि **वैज्ञानिक अनुसंधान** और **अन्वेषण** भी "**समस्त मानवता का उद्देश्य**" बने हुए हैं, और उन **संधियों** की ओर इशारा किया जो अंतरिक्ष में देशों के आचरण को नियंत्रित करती हैं।
- Whether these **treaties** will hold once humans make it to the **Moon** — the **U.S.** and **China** both have plans to build **lunar bases** — remains to be seen.  
यह देखना बाकी है कि जब मानव **चंद्रमा** तक पहुंचेंगे — जहां **अमेरिका** और **चीन** दोनों के **चंद्र आधार** बनाने की योजनाएं हैं — तब ये **संधियां** टिकेंगी या नहीं।
- For Mr. Horack, the end of the ISS could be seen as "**quite sad**".  
श्री होरैक के लिए, आईएसएस का अंत "**काफी दुखद**" माना जा सकता है।
- But the end of this era will mark the opening of **another** era, he added.  
लेकिन उन्होंने जोड़ा कि इस युग का अंत **एक नए** युग की शुरुआत को चिह्नित करेगा।
- "We must grow as humans in our **space-faring capacity**, in our **exploration of space**, and in the use of space to generate **social, economic, educational and quality of life outcomes** for all people everywhere."  
"हमें मनुष्यों के रूप में अपनी **अंतरिक्ष-यात्रा क्षमता**, **अंतरिक्ष अन्वेषण**, और अंतरिक्ष के उपयोग के माध्यम से **सामाजिक, आर्थिक, शैक्षिक और जीवन गुणवत्ता के परिणाम** उत्पन्न करने में आगे बढ़ना चाहिए, सभी लोगों के लिए, हर जगह।"
- He finished by quoting the former head of the **European Space Agency, Jean-Jacques Dordain**: "If you want to go **fast**, go alone. If you want to go **far**, go together".  
उन्होंने **यूरोपीय अंतरिक्ष एजेंसी** के पूर्व प्रमुख **ज्यां-जैक डोर्डेन** के उद्धरण के साथ बात समाप्त की: "यदि आप **तेज़** जाना चाहते हैं, तो अकेले जाएं। यदि आप **दूर** जाना चाहते हैं, तो साथ मिलकर जाएं।"



<b>GS Paper III: Environment,</b>	
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1.	<b>'Reduction in air pollution isn't a victory, but a positive signal'</b> <b>'वायु प्रदूषण में कमी जीत नहीं, बल्कि एक सकारात्मक संकेत है'</b>
2.	<b>Intent and outcome</b> <b>इरादा और परिणाम</b>
3.	<b>The fading of India's environmental jurisprudence</b> <b>भारत के पर्यावरणीय न्यायशास्त्र का क्षरण</b>

## 'Reduction in air pollution isn't a victory, but a positive signal'

Development and employment in NCR, home to eight crore people, must be balanced with the need for clean air, says Central pollution panel official

GS III: Environment

INTERVIEW

**Tarun Kumar Pithode**

Nikhil M. Babu

**T**arun Kumar Pithode, Member Secretary of the Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas, says there is a shift of focus from farm fires to the transport sector when it comes to tackling pollution. Edited excerpts:

**How do you assess anti-pollution efforts this winter season?**

Actions taken by the commission and other stakeholders have brought positive changes that are evident. One of the biggest



The CAQM Member Secretary said the transport sector, industries and road dust are the panel's focus areas.

changes has been in the practice of stubble burning. The number of farm fires has declined.

We have not seen many days with an AQI [air quality index] beyond 450. That gives us positive signals.

**What worked?**

We conducted numerous inspections of industrial facilities and construction

sites. We also acted against industries in non-conforming areas, violating norms.

**What is the target for reducing air pollution?**

Over the next five years, we can work hard to achieve a significant reduction. But we don't want to spell out a specific target.

**Why has the issue not been solved despite two SC-monitored panels – the CAQM, constituted in 2020, and its predecessor, founded in 1998 – working on it?**

Eight crore people live in the NCR, which is more than the population of many countries. We must strive for a fine balance between concerns such as development and employment, and the need to keep the air clean.

Many gains have been made over the years, but some of those have been offset by the spike in population and vehicles.

**What are the main challenges in reducing pollution?**

Ensuring a concerted effort involving every stakeholder, from the person who sweeps the road to the most senior bureaucrat. It is a humongous effort. Data suggest a trend of reduction in pollution. But we are not claiming it as a victory. It is an encouraging trend that shows reducing air pollution is possible.

**Initially, there was a lot of focus on stubble burning and less on the transport sector. Will that change now?**

There has already been a

shift of focus. We're focusing on the public transportation system and controlling vehicular emissions. Road dust and industries are the other focus areas.

**The CAQM said 2025 was the cleanest year in Delhi in eight years, except for 2020.**

**However, there are allegations of 'data manipulation' at air quality measuring stations by spraying water near the sensors.**

We receive daily AQI data from the CPCB (Central Pollution Control Board). The CPCB and the Delhi Pollution Control Committee maintain the air quality monitoring stations in Delhi. They can better explain the functioning of these stations.

**A question has also**

**been raised about the reliability of claims of a reduction in stubble burning, with reported instances of such activities being carried out in ways that evade satellites. Also, as per official data, the burnt areas increased in Punjab and Haryana in 2023 and again in 2024 in Punjab.**

We don't rely only on stubble burning data. Data on burnt areas also show a reduction in Punjab and Haryana. I'm not going into specific data.

Yes, the reduction in 'burnt area' is not as significant as the 'fire counts', which indicates that there have been evasions (by farmers).

However, there is regular feedback from our ground teams about a decrease in stubble burning.

## 'Reduction in air pollution isn't a victory, but a positive signal'

**'वायु प्रदूषण में कमी जीत नहीं, बल्कि एक सकारात्मक संकेत है'**

- Development and employment in **NCR**, home to **eight crore people**, must be balanced with the need for **clean air**, says **Central pollution panel official**  
**आठ करोड़ लोगों का घर एनसीआर में विकास और रोजगार को स्वच्छ हवा की आवश्यकता के साथ संतुलित किया जाना चाहिए, केंद्रीय प्रदूषण पैनल के अधिकारी ने कहा**
- **Tarun Kumar Pithode**, Member Secretary of the **Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas**, says there is a shift of focus from **farm fires** to the **transport sector** when it comes to tackling pollution. **Edited excerpts:**  
**तरुण कुमार पिथोड़े, राष्ट्रीय राजधानी क्षेत्र और आस-पास के क्षेत्रों में वायु गुणवत्ता प्रबंधन आयोग के सदस्य सचिव, कहते हैं कि प्रदूषण से निपटने में ध्यान पराली जलाने से हटकर परिवहन क्षेत्र पर गया है। संपादित अंश:**

**How do you assess anti-pollution efforts this winter season?**

**इस सर्दी में आप प्रदूषण-रोधी प्रयासों का आकलन कैसे करते हैं?**



- Actions taken by the **commission** and other **stakeholders** have brought **positive changes** that are evident.  
आयोग और अन्य हितधारकों द्वारा उठाए गए कदमों से स्पष्ट सकारात्मक परिवर्तन आए हैं।
- One of the biggest changes has been in the practice of **stubble burning**. The number of **farm fires** has declined.  
सबसे बड़े परिवर्तनों में से एक पराली जलाने की प्रथा में आया है। खेतों में आग की संख्या घटी है।
- We have not seen many days with an **AQI [air quality index]** beyond **450**. That gives us **positive signals**.  
हमने 450 से ऊपर AQI (वायु गुणवत्ता सूचकांक) वाले बहुत अधिक दिन नहीं देखे हैं। यह हमें सकारात्मक संकेत देता है।

### What worked?

#### क्या कारगर रहा?

- We conducted numerous **inspections** of **industrial facilities** and **construction sites**.  
हमने औद्योगिक इकाइयों और निर्माण स्थलों का अनेक निरीक्षण किया।
- We also acted against **industries** in **non-conforming areas**, **violating norms**.  
हमने मानकों का उल्लंघन करने वाले गैर-अनुरूप क्षेत्रों की उद्योगों के खिलाफ भी कार्रवाई की।

### What is the target for reducing air pollution?

#### वायु प्रदूषण घटाने का लक्ष्य क्या है?

- Over the next **five years**, we can work hard to achieve a **significant reduction**.  
अगले पाँच वर्षों में हम महत्वपूर्ण कमी हासिल करने के लिए कड़ी मेहनत कर सकते हैं।
- But we don't want to spell out a **specific target**.  
लेकिन हम कोई विशिष्ट लक्ष्य बताना नहीं चाहते।
- **Why has the issue not been solved despite two SC-monitored panels — the CAQM, constituted in 2020, and its predecessor, founded in 1998 — working on it?**  
**दो सुप्रीम कोर्ट-निगरानी वाले पैनल — 2020 में गठित सीएक्यूएम और 1998 में स्थापित उसके पूर्ववर्ती — के काम करने के बावजूद यह मुद्दा क्यों हल नहीं हुआ?**
- **Eight crore people** live in the **NCR**, which is more than the population of many countries.  
**एनसीआर में आठ करोड़ लोग रहते हैं, जो कई देशों की आबादी से अधिक है।**
- We must strive for a **fine balance** between concerns such as **development and employment**, and the need to keep the air **clean**.  
हमें विकास और रोजगार जैसी चिंताओं और हवा को स्वच्छ रखने की आवश्यकता के बीच सूक्ष्म संतुलन बनाना होगा।
- Many gains have been made over the years, but some of those have been **offset** by the spike in **population and vehicles**.  
वर्षों में कई उपलब्धियाँ मिली हैं, लेकिन उनमें से कुछ जनसंख्या और वाहनों में वृद्धि से निरस्त हो गई हैं।

### What are the main challenges in reducing pollution?

#### प्रदूषण घटाने में मुख्य चुनौतियाँ क्या हैं?

- Ensuring a **concerted effort** involving **every stakeholder**, from the person who **sweeps the road** to the **most senior bureaucrat**.  
सड़क साफ करने वाले व्यक्ति से लेकर सबसे वरिष्ठ नौकरशाह तक, हर हितधारक की समन्वित कोशिश सुनिश्चित करना।
- It is a **humongous effort**.  
यह एक विशाल प्रयास है।
- Data suggest a **trend of reduction** in pollution.  
डेटा प्रदूषण में कमी की प्रवृत्ति का संकेत देते हैं।
- But we are not claiming it as a **victory**.  
लेकिन हम इसे जीत के रूप में दावा नहीं कर रहे हैं।
- It is an **encouraging trend** that shows **reducing air pollution is possible**.  
यह एक उत्साहजनक प्रवृत्ति है जो दिखाती है कि वायु प्रदूषण घटाना संभव है।



- **Initially, there was a lot of focus on stubble burning and less on the transport sector. Will that change now?**  
शुरुआत में पराली जलाने पर अधिक और परिवहन क्षेत्र पर कम ध्यान था। क्या अब यह बदलेगा?
- There has already been a **shift of focus**.  
पहले ही ध्यान में बदलाव आ चुका है।
- We're focusing on the **public transportation system** and controlling **vehicular emissions**.  
हम सार्वजनिक परिवहन प्रणाली और वाहन उत्सर्जन को नियंत्रित करने पर ध्यान दे रहे हैं।
- **Road dust** and **industries** are the other focus areas.  
सड़क की धूल और उद्योग अन्य प्रमुख फोकस क्षेत्र हैं।
- The **CAQM** said **2025** was the **cleanest year in Delhi in eight years**, except for **2020**.  
सीएक्यूएम ने कहा कि **2025, 2020** को छोड़कर, दिल्ली में आठ वर्षों में सबसे स्वच्छ वर्ष था।
- However, there are allegations of '**data manipulation**' at **air quality measuring stations** by **spraying water** near the sensors.  
हालाँकि, सेंसरों के पास पानी छिड़कने से वायु गुणवत्ता मापन स्टेशनों पर 'डेटा में हेरफेर' के आरोप हैं।
- We receive daily **AQI data** from the **CPCB (Central Pollution Control Board)**.  
हमें सीपीसीबी (केंद्रीय प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड) से दैनिक **AQI** डेटा प्राप्त होता है।
- The **CPCB** and the **Delhi Pollution Control Committee** maintain the **air quality monitoring stations** in Delhi.  
दिल्ली में वायु गुणवत्ता निगरानी स्टेशन सीपीसीबी और दिल्ली प्रदूषण नियंत्रण समिति द्वारा संचालित किए जाते हैं।
- They can better explain the **functioning** of these stations.  
इन स्टेशनों के कार्यप्रणाली को वे बेहतर ढंग से समझा सकते हैं।
- A question has also been raised about the **reliability** of claims of a reduction in **stubble burning**, with reported instances of such activities being carried out in ways that **evade satellites**.  
पराली जलाने में कमी के दावों की विश्वसनीयता पर भी सवाल उठे हैं, जहाँ ऐसी गतिविधियाँ उपग्रहों से बचकर किए जाने की रिपोर्ट हैं।
- Also, as per **official data**, the **burnt areas increased** in **Punjab and Haryana** in **2023** and again in **2024** in **Punjab**.  
साथ ही, आधिकारिक आंकड़ों के अनुसार **2023** में पंजाब और हरियाणा तथा **2024** में फिर से पंजाब में जले हुए क्षेत्रों में वृद्धि हुई।
- We don't rely only on **stubble burning data**.  
हम केवल पराली जलाने के डेटा पर निर्भर नहीं रहते।
- Data on **burnt areas** also show a **reduction** in **Punjab and Haryana**.  
जले हुए क्षेत्रों के आंकड़े भी पंजाब और हरियाणा में कमी दिखाते हैं।
- I'm not going into **specific data**.  
मैं विशिष्ट आंकड़ों में नहीं जा रहा हूँ।
- Yes, the reduction in '**burnt area**' is not as **significant** as the '**fire counts**', which indicates that there have been **evasions (by farmers)**.  
हाँ, 'जले क्षेत्र' में कमी 'आग की संख्या' जितनी महत्वपूर्ण नहीं है, जो यह दर्शाता है कि (किसानों द्वारा) बचाव किए गए हैं।
- However, there is **regular feedback** from our **ground teams** about a **decrease in stubble burning**.  
हालाँकि, हमारी ग्राउंड टीमों से पराली जलाने में कमी के बारे में नियमित फीडबैक मिलता है।



CS III: Environment

## Intent and outcome

### India must match its climate ambitions with higher allocations

Union Budgets began reflecting greater climate concerns from 2021, in the thick of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a modest ₹4,500 crore to localise solar photovoltaic production and to reduce India's dependence on Chinese imports. But there has been a cautious, disjointed approach to the scale and allocations. While five broad sectors (cement, steel, aluminium and fertilizers; decentralised solar power; greening irrigation pump sets; green hydrogen; and nuclear energy) received attention in Budget 2026-27, the most prominent announcement was the proposed five-year outlay of ₹20,000 crore for Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS). This is a modest provision for a suite of costly and complex technologies. The allocation signals that India is entering a pilot and demonstration phase, rather than embarking on immediate industrial deployment. While operational examples exist in Norway, Canada and the U.S., scaling CCUS has proven expensive and uneven. The technology is primarily relevant to sectors where emissions are embedded in the production process. The EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) will impose carbon costs on imports of high-emission products, so for India, decarbonising industrial production is no longer only a climate imperative. It is now a question of export competitiveness, particularly for steel and aluminium, which form the bulk of India's CBAM-exposed exports to the EU.

The Budget also substantially scales up the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana rooftop solar scheme – ₹22,000 crore in 2026-27 from ₹17,000 crore (RE) for the current year. It is a welcome push towards decentralised energy systems that reduce land pressure, transmission losses and household energy costs. However, implementation challenges remain, including discom cooperation and upfront finance. Similarly, allocations for PM-KUSUM (solar irrigation pumps), have been sustained at ₹5,000 crore. Revised estimates suggest stronger-than-anticipated absorption. For nuclear energy, the government has extended zero basic customs duty on imports of nuclear plant equipment until 2035. While this reduces input costs, nuclear power remains capital intensive, with long construction timelines and financing risks. Recent legal changes permit private participation, but whether private capital will enter a sector entwined with national security, safety and liability concerns remains uncertain. Green hydrogen, despite budgetary support, continues to see modest actual spending, highlighting the persistent gap between policy ambition and execution. Overall, India's climate budget for 2026-27 repeats a pattern: big on intent, cautious on allocations, and uncertain in its ability to mobilise the private capital required to accelerate decarbonisation across vital sectors.

- The technology is primarily relevant to sectors where emissions are embedded in the production process.  
यह तकनीक मुख्यतः उन क्षेत्रों के लिए प्रासंगिक है जहाँ उत्पादन प्रक्रिया में उत्सर्जन अंतर्निहित होता है।

## Intent and outcome इरादा और परिणाम

- India must match its climate ambitions with higher allocations  
भारत को अपनी जलवायु महत्वाकांक्षाओं के अनुरूप उच्चतर आवंटन करना चाहिए

### Union Budgets and Climate Concerns केंद्रीय बजट और जलवायु संबंधी चिंताएँ

- Union Budgets began reflecting greater climate concerns from 2021, in the thick of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a modest ₹4,500 crore to localise solar photovoltaic production and to reduce India's dependence on Chinese imports.

2021 से, COVID-19 महामारी के दौरान, केंद्रीय बजट में अधिक जलवायु चिंताओं को दर्शाना शुरू हुआ, जिसमें ₹4,500 करोड़ का प्रावधान सौर फोटोवोल्टिक उत्पादन को स्थानीय बनाने और चीनी आयात पर भारत की निर्भरता कम करने के लिए किया गया।

- But there has been a cautious, disjointed approach to the scale and allocations.  
लेकिन पैमाने और आवंटन के प्रति एक सतर्क, बिखरा हुआ दृष्टिकोण रहा है।

- While five broad sectors (cement, steel, aluminium and fertilizers; decentralised solar power; greening irrigation pump sets; green hydrogen; and nuclear energy) received attention in Budget 2026-27, the most prominent announcement was the proposed five-year outlay of ₹20,000 crore for Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS).

जबकि बजट 2026-27 में पाँच प्रमुख क्षेत्रों (सीमेंट, इस्पात, एल्युमिनियम और उर्वरक; विकेन्द्रीकृत सौर ऊर्जा; सिंचाई पंप सेट का हरितकरण; ग्रीन हाइड्रोजन; और परमाणु ऊर्जा) पर ध्यान दिया गया, सबसे प्रमुख घोषणा कार्बन कैप्चर, उपयोग और भंडारण (CCUS) के लिए प्रस्तावित पाँच-वर्षीय ₹20,000 करोड़ का प्रावधान था।

- This is a modest provision for a suite of costly and complex technologies.

यह महंगी और जटिल तकनीकों के समूह के लिए एक सीमित प्रावधान है।

- The allocation signals that India is entering a pilot and demonstration phase, rather than embarking on immediate industrial deployment.

यह आवंटन संकेत देता है कि भारत तत्काल औद्योगिक तैनाती के बजाय पायलट और प्रदर्शन चरण में प्रवेश कर रहा है।

- While operational examples exist in Norway, Canada and the U.S., scaling CCUS has proven expensive and uneven.

जबकि नॉर्वे, कनाडा और अमेरिका में परिचालन उदाहरण मौजूद हैं, CCUS का विस्तार महंगा और असमान साबित हुआ है।



- The EU's **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)** will impose **carbon costs** on imports of **high-emission products**, so for India, **decarbonising industrial production** is no longer only a climate imperative.  
यूरोपीय संघ का कार्बन बॉर्डर एडजस्टमेंट मैकेनिज्म (CBAM) उच्च-उत्सर्जन उत्पादों के आयात पर कार्बन लागत लगाएगा, इसलिए भारत के लिए औद्योगिक उत्पादन का डीकार्बोनाइजेशन अब केवल जलवायु की आवश्यकता नहीं है।
- It is now a question of **export competitiveness**, particularly for **steel and aluminium**, which form the bulk of India's **CBAM-exposed exports to the EU**.  
अब यह निर्यात प्रतिस्पर्धा का प्रश्न है, विशेषकर **इस्पात और एल्युमिनियम** के लिए, जो भारत के **EU को CBAM-प्रभावित निर्यात** का बड़ा हिस्सा बनाते हैं।
- The Budget also substantially scales up the **PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana rooftop solar scheme — ₹22,000 crore in 2026-27 from ₹17,000 crore (RE)** for the current year.  
बजट में **PM सूर्य घर मुफ्त बिजली योजना रूफटॉप सोलर योजना — 2026-27 में ₹22,000 करोड़**, जो चालू वर्ष के **₹17,000 करोड़ (RE)** से अधिक है, का भी महत्वपूर्ण विस्तार किया गया है।
- It is a welcome push towards **decentralised energy systems** that reduce **land pressure, transmission losses and household energy costs**.  
यह विकेन्द्रीकृत ऊर्जा प्रणालियों की ओर एक स्वागत योग्य कदम है जो **भूमि दबाव, ट्रांसमिशन हानि और घरेलू ऊर्जा लागत** को कम करता है।
- However, **implementation challenges** remain, including **discom cooperation and upfront finance**.  
हालांकि, **कार्यान्वयन चुनौतियाँ** बनी हुई हैं, जिनमें **डिस्कॉम सहयोग और प्रारंभिक वित्त** शामिल हैं।
- Similarly, allocations for **PM-KUSUM (solar irrigation pumps)** have been sustained at **₹5,000 crore**.  
इसी प्रकार, **PM-कुसुम (सौर सिंचाई पंप)** के लिए आवंटन **₹5,000 करोड़** पर बनाए रखा गया है।
- Revised estimates suggest **stronger-than-anticipated absorption**.  
संशोधित अनुमान **अपेक्षा से अधिक अवशोषण** का संकेत देते हैं।
- For **nuclear energy**, the government has extended **zero basic customs duty** on imports of **nuclear plant equipment until 2035**.  
**परमाणु ऊर्जा** के लिए, सरकार ने **2035 तक परमाणु संयंत्र उपकरणों** के आयात पर **शून्य मूल सीमा शुल्क** बढ़ा दिया है।
- While this reduces **input costs**, nuclear power remains **capital intensive**, with **long construction timelines and financing risks**.  
हालांकि इससे **इनपुट लागत** कम होती है, लेकिन परमाणु ऊर्जा अभी भी **पूंजी-गहन** है, जिसमें **लंबी निर्माण अवधि और वित्तीय जोखिम** शामिल हैं।
- Recent legal changes permit **private participation**, but whether **private capital** will enter a sector entwined with **national security, safety and liability concerns** remains uncertain.  
हाल के कानूनी बदलाव **निजी भागीदारी** की अनुमति देते हैं, लेकिन क्या **निजी पूंजी राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा, सुरक्षा और दायित्व चिंताओं** से जुड़े क्षेत्र में प्रवेश करेगी, यह अनिश्चित है।
- **Green hydrogen**, despite **budgetary support**, continues to see **modest actual spending**, highlighting the persistent **gap between policy ambition and execution**.  
**ग्रीन हाइड्रोजन**, बजटीय समर्थन के बावजूद, वास्तविक खर्च कम बना हुआ है, जो नीति महत्वाकांक्षा और क्रियान्वयन के बीच अंतर को दर्शाता है।
- Overall, India's **climate budget for 2026-27** repeats a pattern: **big on intent, cautious on allocations, and uncertain in its ability to mobilise private capital** required to accelerate **decarbonisation across vital sectors**.  
समग्र रूप से, भारत का **2026-27 का जलवायु बजट** एक पैटर्न दोहराता है: **इरादे में बड़ा, आवंटन में सतर्क, और महत्वपूर्ण क्षेत्रों में डीकार्बोनाइजेशन तेज करने के लिए आवश्यक निजी पूंजी जुटाने की क्षमता में अनिश्चित**।



# The fading of India's environmental jurisprudence

CS III: Environment

MOB

From its Aravalli ranges to its mangroves, India is at the same moral crossroads that Amitav Ghosh captures in *The Hungry Tide*, where the tides remember what the law chooses to forget. If environmental justice continues to be diluted in the name of development, the Constitution of India risks becoming a silent witness to ecological loss, where the consequences, like the tide itself, will return with unforgiving force.

On December 18, 2025, for non-coal mining projects, the policy of land acquisition first and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) later was changed. Now, an EIA can be done without details about the location and area. The Supreme Court of India helped in the dilution of environmental justice by recalling the case, *Vanashakti vs Union Of India* (2025) that banned retrospective environmental clearances. Within five months, a Bench led by (then) Chief Justice of India (CJ) B.R. Gavai, recalled the progressive judgment.

## From mountains to mangroves

Recent developments indicate a slow, but systematic, dilution of ecological protection. The CJ, Justice Surya Kant, *suo motu*, stayed the controversial order, saving the reputation of the Court. But the debate concerning the Aravallis is not just about a technical argument on definition. It marks a paradigm change in the perception of development, the role of the environment, and the constitutional obligation by the state.

Similarly, the judicial sanctions to the destruction of 158 mangroves for Adani Cementation Limited (2025) in Raigarh, Maharashtra, and the new environmentally unfriendly infrastructure schemes such as the Char Dham highway in the Himalayas, highlight a dangerous trend – that the health of the environment is further being undermined by the government whose proximity with the corporate world is an open secret though it is also true that the private sector has been severely criticised in the annual Economic Survey presented in January 2026.

The Aravallis, traditionally acknowledged as the ecological backbone of north-western India, play a vital role which includes checking desertification, enhancing the recharge of groundwater, controlling micro-climates and maintaining biodiversity. Interestingly, the Court itself has recognised this ecological role. In *M.C. Mehta vs Union of India and Ors.* (2004), a ban was imposed on mining in the Aravalli region.

Later orders that culminated in the year 2010 admitted that unregulated mining in the area had had irreparable effects on the environment. More importantly, in these proceedings, the Court quashed efforts to restrict the Aravallis to a definition based on the landform's height, especially the suggestion that only landforms over 100 metres could be a component of the Aravalli ranges.

The Court realised how such a strict interpretation would ignore huge tracts of ecologically crucial land, thus foiling the objective of environmental conservation. The 100m norm was discarded in 2010 on an ecological basis. The



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The higher judiciary appears to be aiding a watering down of environmental protection

hills and ridges at a low altitude are of significant importance in the preservation of groundwater and soil stability in the semi-arid landscapes. The Aravallis are not just a cluster of isolated peaks but are a geomorphological system. Unfortunately, the latest height-centric definition does not pay attention to crucial factors such as hydrology, biodiversity and ecological interdependence. It was due to the need to circumvent this reductionist strategy that the Court relied on the precautionary principle, in *Vellore Citizens' Welfare Forum vs Union of India and Others* (1996), rejecting the idea of any artificial limit.

The strange acceptance by the top court of the 100-metre definition, in *In Re: Issue Relating to Definition of Aravalli Hills and Ranges* (2025), marked a clear departure from the position taken in 2010. In trying to keep landforms above a predetermined elevation as the sole subject of legal protection, the Court has efficiently deprived the Aravalli ranges of any statutory and judicial protection over large portions. Such a change has serious constitutional implications.

The right to a clean and healthy environment, which has been broadly understood in the application of Article 21, is directly involved. Article 48A, which requires the state to ensure the conservation and the enhancement of the environment, is now a hollow proclamation in instances where the interpretation of the law by the judiciary can promote rather than safeguard ecological exclusion. In fact, India's courts have been more enthusiastic about cow slaughter (Article 48) and uniform civil code (Article 44).

The discriminatory protection or preservation of some landforms in relation to their height creates an absurd classification that has no rational nexus to ecological goals. An interpretation of a law that safeguards outstanding hills and exposes the surrounding ecosystems to exploitation contravenes the principle of non-arbitrariness that forms the core of Article 14.

## A leniency

This watering down of environmental protection is seen not only in the case of the Aravallis. This has been the case over years with courts and regulatory bodies supporting development projects based on the assurance of mitigation instead of their enforcing environmental norms to the letter. This is evident in the undermining of the EIA process and the legalisation of post-facto and conditional clearances, even after the judicial warnings. In *Common Cause vs Union of India* (2017), the Court had made it clear that the legalisation of illegal mining and environmental offences could not be done after the fact, and that the environmental law is to serve as a deterrent. But judicial leniency later in regard to lapses in procedure corresponds to a slow weakening of this principle.

The results of this kind of dilution are seen in cases of coastal urban ecology, especially the mangroves of Mumbai. Mangroves are multi-layered ecosystems which act as natural flood control systems, sinks of carbon and reservoirs of biodiversity. They protect against

storm surges and tidal flooding. Continued judicial authorisations to fell (and transplant) about 34,000 mangrove trees to build infrastructure are a setback. Allowing mangrove destruction on a large scale on the 'promise of compensatory afforestation' marks the destruction of ecological science and constitutional responsibility. It requires decades to develop mature mangrove ecosystems, which cannot be compensated by having a plantation drive in some other place.

Another example is the Char Dham highway project in Uttarakhand. A June 2025 study identified 811 landslide zones along the Char Dham project. The Himalayan ecosystem is one of the most delicate in the world, and the road widening project on such a large scale has grave dangers – triggering landslides and disturbing rivers.

In *Citizens for Green Doon vs Union of India* (2021), the Court recognised the ecological importance of the area, but still allowed wider roads on the grounds of strategic defence needs. The flash floods and ecological disturbances that affected Uttarakhand raise questions about this 'balancing act'. The ill-effects of the current infrastructural rush affect future generations, especially when the constitutional obligations on the government and the citizen, under Article 48A and Article 51A(g), make it clear that it is the responsibility of citizens to safeguard the environment.

## Strong players and the issue of fairness

Environmental clearances of corporations and large-scale infrastructure projects, especially those supported by serious capital in mining, highways or urban redevelopment, can pass through regulatory barriers rather easily. If there is a hearing, it is cut short, objections raised are considered obstructionist, and environmental compliance becomes a mere checklist. This casts grave doubts on procedural fairness and transparency which are contained in Article 14. When it disproportionately gives more privileges to economically strong players, environmental governance can destroy the trust of the populace and constitutional equality.

The changing stance of the judiciary in this dismal picture is crucial. Traditionally, courts have been the custodians of environmental rights as they have broadened the constitutional interpretation on issues of environmental damage. Judgments such as *M.C. Mehta vs Kamal Nath and Ors.* (1996) held that the public trust doctrine was deeply rooted in the belief that natural resources belonged to the state, were held in the trust of the people and could not be sold to be exploited privately. When such definitions or clearances are approved by the courts to promote the degradation of the environment, they basically go against the court's own jurisprudence. The Green Bench of the Supreme Court must sit regularly. Similar Benches must be set up in all the High Courts. Ease of business should not make destruction of the environment easy.

The views expressed are personal

## The fading of India's environmental jurisprudence

### भारत के पर्यावरणीय न्यायशास्त्र का क्षरण

#### Environment, Constitution and Ecological Justice

#### पर्यावरण, संविधान और पारिस्थितिक न्याय

- From its **Aravalli ranges** to its **mangroves**, India is at the same **moral crossroads** that **Amitav Ghosh** captures in **The Hungry Tide**, where the tides remember what the law chooses to forget.  
अपने अरावली पर्वतमाला से लेकर मैंग्रोव तक, भारत उसी **नैतिक चौराहे** पर खड़ा है जिसे **अमिताव घोष** ने **The Hungry Tide** में दर्शाया है, जहाँ ज्वार वह याद रखते हैं जिसे कानून भूल जाता है।
- If **environmental justice** continues to be diluted in the name of **development**, the **Constitution of India** risks becoming a silent witness to **ecological loss**, where the consequences, like the tide itself, will return with **unforgiving force**.



यदि पर्यावरणीय न्याय को विकास के नाम पर कमजोर किया जाता रहा, तो भारत का संविधान पारिस्थितिक हानि का मौन साक्षी बन सकता है, जहाँ परिणाम ज्वार की तरह कठोर शक्ति के साथ लौटेंगे।

- On December 18, 2025, for non-coal mining projects, the policy of land acquisition first and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) later was changed.  
18 दिसंबर 2025 को गैर-कोयला खनन परियोजनाओं के लिए पहले भूमि अधिग्रहण और बाद में पर्यावरण प्रभाव आकलन (EIA) की नीति बदल दी गई।
- Now, an EIA can be done without details about the location and area.  
अब EIA बिना स्थान और क्षेत्र के विवरण के भी किया जा सकता है।
- The Supreme Court of India helped in the dilution of environmental justice by recalling the case, Vanashakti vs Union Of India (2025) that banned retrospective environmental clearances.  
भारत के सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने Vanashakti vs Union Of India (2025) मामले को वापस लेकर पर्यावरणीय न्याय को कमजोर करने में भूमिका निभाई, जिसने पूर्वव्यापी पर्यावरणीय स्वीकृतियों पर प्रतिबंध लगाया था।
- Within five months, a Bench led by (then) Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai, recalled the progressive judgment.  
पाँच महीनों के भीतर, (तत्कालीन) मुख्य न्यायाधीश बी.आर. गवाई की अध्यक्षता वाली पीठ ने प्रगतिशील निर्णय को वापस ले लिया।

### From mountains to mangroves पहाड़ों से मैंग्रोव तक

- Recent developments indicate a slow, but systematic, dilution of ecological protection.  
हाल के घटनाक्रम धीमी लेकिन व्यवस्थित रूप से पारिस्थितिक संरक्षण के कमजोर होने का संकेत देते हैं।
- The Chief Justice Surya Kant, suo motu, stayed the controversial order, saving the reputation of the Court.  
मुख्य न्यायाधीश सूर्यकांत ने स्वप्रेरणा से विवादास्पद आदेश पर रोक लगाई, जिससे न्यायालय की प्रतिष्ठा बची।
- But the debate concerning the Aravallis is not just about a technical argument on definition.  
लेकिन अरावली को लेकर बहस केवल परिभाषा के तकनीकी तर्क तक सीमित नहीं है।
- It marks a paradigm change in the perception of development, the role of the environment, and the constitutional obligation by the state.  
यह विकास की धारणा, पर्यावरण की भूमिका और राज्य के संवैधानिक दायित्व में मौलिक परिवर्तन को दर्शाता है।
- Similarly, the judicial sanctions to the destruction of 158 mangroves for Adani Cementation Limited (2025) in Raigarh, Maharashtra, and the new environmentally unfriendly infrastructure schemes such as the Char Dham highway in the Himalayas, highlight a dangerous trend.  
इसी प्रकार, रायगढ़, महाराष्ट्र में Adani Cementation Limited (2025) के लिए 158 मैंग्रोव के विनाश की न्यायिक अनुमति, और हिमालय में चार धाम राजमार्ग जैसी नई पर्यावरण के अनुकूल न होने वाली अवसंरचना योजनाएँ, एक खतरनाक प्रवृत्ति को दर्शाती हैं।
- That the health of the environment is further being undermined by the government, whose proximity with the corporate world is an open secret, though the private sector has been criticised in the Economic Survey January 2026.  
कि पर्यावरण का स्वास्थ्य आगे भी सरकार द्वारा कमजोर किया जा रहा है, जिसकी कॉर्पोरेट जगत से निकटता एक खुला रहस्य है, जबकि निजी क्षेत्र की आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण जनवरी 2026 में आलोचना भी की गई है।
- The Aravallis, traditionally acknowledged as the ecological backbone of north-western India, play a vital role.  
अरावली, जिन्हें पारंपरिक रूप से उत्तर-पश्चिम भारत की पारिस्थितिक रीढ़ माना जाता है, एक महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाते हैं।
- Which includes checking desertification, enhancing groundwater recharge, controlling micro-climates and maintaining biodiversity.  
जिसमें मरुस्थलीकरण रोकना, भूजल पुनर्भरण बढ़ाना, सूक्ष्म जलवायु नियंत्रित करना और जैव विविधता बनाए रखना शामिल है।



- Interestingly, the **Court itself recognised this ecological role.**  
दिलचस्प रूप से, न्यायालय ने स्वयं इस पारिस्थितिक भूमिका को स्वीकार किया।
- In **M.C. Mehta vs Union of India and Ors. (2004)**, a ban on mining in the Aravalli region was imposed.  
**M.C. Mehta vs Union of India and Ors. (2004)** में अरावली क्षेत्र में खनन पर प्रतिबंध लगाया गया था।
- Later orders culminating in **2010** admitted that **unregulated mining had irreparable environmental effects.**  
बाद के आदेश जो **2010** में समाप्त हुए, उन्होंने माना कि अनियंत्रित खनन के अपूरणीय पर्यावरणीय प्रभाव पड़े।
- More importantly, the Court quashed efforts to restrict the **Aravallis to a height-based definition**, especially the suggestion that only **landforms over 100 metres** could be part of the range.  
और महत्वपूर्ण यह कि न्यायालय ने अरावली को ऊँचाई आधारित परिभाषा तक सीमित करने के प्रयास को खारिज किया, विशेषकर यह सुझाव कि केवल **100 मीटर से अधिक ऊँचाई वाले भू-आकृति** ही इसका हिस्सा हो सकते हैं।
- The Court realised such a **strict interpretation** would ignore **ecologically crucial land** and defeat **environmental conservation.**  
न्यायालय ने समझा कि ऐसी कठोर व्याख्या पारिस्थितिक रूप से महत्वपूर्ण भूमि की अनदेखी करेगी और पर्यावरण संरक्षण के उद्देश्य को विफल कर देगी।
- The **100m norm was discarded in 2010** on an **ecological basis.**  
**100 मीटर मानदंड** को **2010** में पारिस्थितिक आधार पर खारिज कर दिया गया।
- The **hills and ridges at low altitude** are significant for **groundwater preservation and soil stability in semi-arid landscapes.**  
**कम ऊँचाई वाली पहाड़ियाँ और धारें अर्ध-शुष्क परिदृश्यों में भूजल संरक्षण और मृदा स्थिरता** के लिए महत्वपूर्ण हैं।
- The **Aravallis are a geomorphological system**, not just isolated peaks.  
**अरावली एक भू-आकृतिक प्रणाली है**, केवल अलग-अलग चोटियाँ नहीं।
- Unfortunately, the latest **height-centric definition** ignores **hydrology, biodiversity and ecological interdependence.**  
दुर्भाग्य से, नवीनतम **ऊँचाई-केंद्रित परिभाषा** जल विज्ञान, जैव विविधता और पारिस्थितिक पारस्परिकता की अनदेखी करती है।
- The Court earlier relied on the **precautionary principle** in **Vellore Citizens' Welfare Forum vs Union of India (1996)**, rejecting **artificial limits.**  
न्यायालय ने पहले **Vellore Citizens' Welfare Forum vs Union of India (1996)** में सावधानी सिद्धांत का उपयोग करते हुए कृत्रिम सीमाओं को खारिज किया था।
- The acceptance of the **100-metre definition** in **In Re: Issue Relating to Definition of Aravalli Hills and Ranges (2025)** marked a **departure from 2010 position.**  
**In Re: Issue Relating to Definition of Aravalli Hills and Ranges (2025)** में **100 मीटर परिभाषा** की स्वीकृति **2010** की स्थिति से विचलन दर्शाती है।
- It deprived the **Aravalli ranges of statutory and judicial protection** over large portions.  
इससे **अरावली पर्वतमाला** के बड़े हिस्सों को **वैधानिक और न्यायिक संरक्षण** से वंचित कर दिया गया।
- Such change has serious **constitutional implications.**  
ऐसा परिवर्तन गंभीर **संवैधानिक प्रभाव** रखता है।
- The **right to a clean and healthy environment under Article 21** is directly involved.  
**अनुच्छेद 21** के अंतर्गत स्वच्छ और स्वस्थ पर्यावरण का अधिकार सीधे तौर पर प्रभावित है।
- **Article 48A** requiring the state to ensure **environmental conservation and enhancement** risks becoming a **hollow proclamation.**  
**अनुच्छेद 48A**, जो राज्य को **पर्यावरण संरक्षण और संवर्धन सुनिश्चित** करने के लिए बाध्य करता है, **खोखली घोषणा** बन सकता है।
- In fact, India's courts have been more enthusiastic about **cow slaughter (Article 48)** and **uniform civil code (Article 44).**  
वास्तव में, भारत की अदालतें **गौ-हत्या (अनुच्छेद 48)** और **समान नागरिक संहिता (अनुच्छेद 44)** के प्रति अधिक उत्साही रही हैं।



## Equality, Environment and Judicial Approach समानता, पर्यावरण और न्यायिक दृष्टिकोण

- The **discriminatory protection** or preservation of some landforms in relation to their **height** creates an **absurd classification** that has no **rational nexus to ecological goals**.  
कुछ भू-आकृतियों का उनकी ऊँचाई के आधार पर **भेदभावपूर्ण संरक्षण** एक **अतार्किक वर्गीकरण** बनाता है जिसका **पारिस्थितिक लक्ष्यों से कोई तार्किक संबंध नहीं** है।
- An interpretation of a law that safeguards **outstanding hills** and exposes the **surrounding ecosystems to exploitation** contravenes the **principle of non-arbitrariness** that forms the core of **Article 14**.  
ऐसी कानून की व्याख्या जो **उत्कृष्ट पहाड़ियों** की रक्षा करती है और **आसपास के पारिस्थितिक तंत्रों को शोषण के लिए उजागर करती है**, **अनुच्छेद 14 के मनमानी के विरुद्ध सिद्धांत** का उल्लंघन करती है।

### A leniency एक उदारता

- This **watering down of environmental protection** is seen not only in the case of the **Aravallis**.  
**पर्यावरण संरक्षण का कमजोर होना** केवल **अरावली** के मामले में ही नहीं देखा गया है।
- This has been the case over years with **courts and regulatory bodies** supporting **development projects** based on the assurance of **mitigation** instead of enforcing **environmental norms strictly**.  
वर्षों से **अदालतें और नियामक संस्थाएँ विकास परियोजनाओं** का समर्थन करती रही हैं, **पर्यावरणीय मानकों को सख्ती से लागू करने के बजाय निवारण के आश्वासन पर**।
- This is evident in the **undermining of the EIA process** and the **legalisation of post-facto and conditional clearances**, even after **judicial warnings**.  
यह **EIA प्रक्रिया को कमजोर करने और न्यायिक चेतावनियों के बावजूद पश्चात और सशर्त स्वीकृतियों के वैधीकरण में स्पष्ट है**।
- In **Common Cause vs Union of India (2017)**, the Court made it clear that **legalisation of illegal mining and environmental offences** cannot be done **after the fact**, and environmental law must serve as a **deterrent**.  
**Common Cause vs Union of India (2017)** में न्यायालय ने स्पष्ट किया कि **अवैध खनन और पर्यावरण अपराधों का वैधीकरण बाद में नहीं किया जा सकता**, और पर्यावरण कानून को **निवारक** के रूप में कार्य करना चाहिए।
- But later **judicial leniency** regarding **procedural lapses** corresponds to a **slow weakening** of this principle.  
लेकिन बाद में **प्रक्रियात्मक त्रुटियों पर न्यायिक उदारता** इस सिद्धांत के **धीमे कमजोर होने** को दर्शाती है।
- The results of this **dilution** are seen in **coastal urban ecology**, especially the **mangroves of Mumbai**.  
इस प्रकार के **कमजोर होने** के परिणाम **तटीय शहरी पारिस्थितिकी**, विशेषकर **मुंबई के मैंग्रोव में देखे जाते हैं**।
- **Mangroves are multi-layered ecosystems** acting as **natural flood control systems, carbon sinks and biodiversity reservoirs**.  
**मैंग्रोव बहु-स्तरीय पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र हैं जो प्राकृतिक बाढ़ नियंत्रण, कार्बन अवशोषण और जैव विविधता भंडार के रूप में कार्य करते हैं**।
- They protect against **storm surges and tidal flooding**.  
वे **तूफानी लहरों और ज्वारीय बाढ़ से सुरक्षा प्रदान करते हैं**।
- Continued judicial authorisations to fell and transplant about **34,000 mangrove trees** to build **infrastructure** are a **setback**.  
लगभग **34,000 मैंग्रोव पेड़ों को अवसंरचना निर्माण** के लिए काटने और स्थानांतरित करने की लगातार न्यायिक अनुमति एक **झटका है**।
- Allowing large-scale mangrove destruction on the promise of **compensatory afforestation** undermines **ecological science and constitutional responsibility**.  
**प्रतिपूरक वनीकरण के वादे पर बड़े पैमाने पर मैंग्रोव विनाश की अनुमति पारिस्थितिक विज्ञान और संवैधानिक जिम्मेदारी को कमजोर करती है**।



- It takes **decades** to develop mature mangrove ecosystems, which cannot be compensated by plantations elsewhere.  
परिष्कृत मैंग्रोव पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र विकसित होने में **दशकों** लगते हैं, जिन्हें अन्य स्थानों पर वृक्षारोपण से प्रतिस्थापित नहीं किया जा सकता।
- Another example is the **Char Dham highway project in Uttarakhand**.  
एक अन्य उदाहरण **उत्तराखंड में चार धाम राजमार्ग परियोजना** है।
- A **June 2025 study** identified **811 landslide zones** along the project.  
**जून 2025 के अध्ययन** में परियोजना के साथ **811 भूस्खलन क्षेत्र** चिह्नित किए गए।
- The **Himalayan ecosystem** is one of the **most delicate in the world**, and large-scale road widening poses **grave dangers** such as **landslides and river disturbance**.  
**हिमालयी पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र** दुनिया के **सबसे नाजुक तंत्रों** में से एक है, और बड़े पैमाने पर सड़क चौड़ीकरण **भूस्खलन और नदियों में व्यवधान** जैसे गंभीर खतरे उत्पन्न करता है।
- In **Citizens for Green Doon vs Union of India (2021)**, the Court recognised the **ecological importance** but still allowed **wider roads** citing **strategic defence needs**.  
**Citizens for Green Doon vs Union of India (2021)** में न्यायालय ने **पारिस्थितिक महत्व** को स्वीकार किया, फिर भी **रणनीतिक रक्षा आवश्यकताओं** के आधार पर **चौड़ी सड़कें** अनुमति दी।
- The **flash floods and ecological disturbances** in Uttarakhand question this **balancing act**.  
उत्तराखंड में **अचानक बाढ़ और पारिस्थितिक व्यवधान** इस **संतुलन नीति** पर प्रश्न उठाते हैं।
- The ill-effects of infrastructural rush affect **future generations**, especially under **Article 48A and Article 51A(g)** which make **environmental protection a duty of citizens and state**.  
अवसंरचनात्मक तेजी के दुष्प्रभाव **भविष्य की पीढ़ियों** को प्रभावित करते हैं, विशेषकर **अनुच्छेद 48A और 51A(g)** के तहत जहाँ **पर्यावरण संरक्षण नागरिकों और राज्य का कर्तव्य** है।

### Strong players and the issue of fairness मजबूत पक्ष और निष्पक्षता का प्रश्न

- Environmental clearances of **corporations and large infrastructure projects** often pass **regulatory barriers easily**.  
**कॉर्पोरेट और बड़े अवसंरचना परियोजनाओं** की पर्यावरणीय स्वीकृतियाँ अक्सर **नियामक बाधाओं को आसानी से पार कर जाती हैं**।
- Hearings are **cut short**, objections termed **obstructionist**, and environmental compliance becomes a **mere checklist**.  
**सुनवाई संक्षिप्त कर दी जाती है**, आपत्तियों को **अवरोधक** कहा जाता है, और पर्यावरण अनुपालन **औपचारिक सूची** बन जाता है।
- This raises doubts on **procedural fairness and transparency under Article 14**.  
यह **अनुच्छेद 14 के तहत प्रक्रियात्मक निष्पक्षता और पारदर्शिता** पर संदेह पैदा करता है।
- When it favours **economically strong players**, environmental governance can **erode public trust and constitutional equality**.  
जब यह **आर्थिक रूप से मजबूत पक्षों** को लाभ देता है, तो पर्यावरण शासन **जन विश्वास और संवैधानिक समानता** को कमजोर कर सकता है।
- The **changing stance of the judiciary** is crucial in this scenario.  
इस परिदृश्य में **न्यायपालिका का बदलता रुख** महत्वपूर्ण है।
- Traditionally, courts have been **custodians of environmental rights** by broadening **constitutional interpretation**.  
परंपरागत रूप से, अदालतें **संवैधानिक व्याख्या का विस्तार** कर **पर्यावरणीय अधिकारों की संरक्षक** रही हैं।
- In **M.C. Mehta vs Kamal Nath (1996)**, the **public trust doctrine** held that **natural resources belong to the state and are held in trust for people**.  
**M.C. Mehta vs Kamal Nath (1996)** में **पब्लिक ट्रस्ट सिद्धांत** ने कहा कि **प्राकृतिक संसाधन राज्य के हैं और जनता के विश्वास में रखे गए हैं**।
- Approving definitions or clearances that promote **environmental degradation** contradicts the Court's **own jurisprudence**.  
ऐसी परिभाषाओं या स्वीकृतियों को मंजूरी देना जो **पर्यावरणीय क्षरण** को बढ़ावा दें, न्यायालय की **स्वयं की न्यायशास्त्र** के विपरीत है।
- The **Green Bench of the Supreme Court** must sit **regularly**, and similar benches should exist in **all High Courts**.



सुप्रीम कोर्ट की ग्रीन बेंच को नियमित रूप से बैठना चाहिए, और इसी प्रकार की पीठें सभी उच्च न्यायालयों में होनी चाहिए।

- **Ease of business** should not make **destruction of the environment** easy. व्यापार में सुगमता से पर्यावरण विनाश आसान नहीं होना चाहिए।

<b>GS Paper III: DM,</b>	
<b>TOPICS COVERED</b>	<b>06 February 2026</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Explosion in illegal Meghalaya mine kills 18</b> <b>मेघालय की अवैध खदान में विस्फोट, 18 की मौत</b>

## Explosion in illegal Meghalaya mine kills 18

The explosion was likely caused by dynamite and has trapped several persons, police said

CM has promised action following one of the worst mining tragedies in the State since 2012

Activists claim mine owners continue to operate illegally, despite the blanket ban on coal mining

**GS III: Disaster Management**  
**Rahul Karmakar**  
GUWAHATI

An explosion in an illegally operated rat-hole coal mine in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district killed 18 miners on Thursday, officials said.

This is one of the biggest mining-related tragedies since July 2012, when 15 miners died in a flooded mine in the State's South Garo Hills district. Two years later, in 2014, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) had banned the hazardous mining method.

Vikash Kumar, East Jaintia Hills district's Superintendent of Police, said the police received information about an explosion at an illegal coal mine at Mynsyngat in the Thangsko area around 11 a.m. A team rushed to the spot and confirmed that an explosion,

suspected to have been caused by dynamite, had trapped several persons at an unspecified depth. "We mobilised rescue and disaster response operations and recovered 18 bodies from the site of the explosion. An injured person, initially rushed to a community health centre, was referred to a higher medical centre for further treatment," he said.

**CM vows action**  
Expressing condolences to the families of those killed, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma said the government has ordered an inquiry. "Accountability will be fixed, and those responsible will face strict legal action," he said. He also said that the government has announced an ex-gratia of ₹3 lakh for the next of kin of each deceased mine worker.



Blast site: A videograb of the mine where the explosion occurred in East Jaintia Hills on Thursday. PTI

### Deep death traps

Many workers have died in Meghalaya's rat-hole coal mines before and after the NGT banned the practice in April in 2014. Some of the major mishaps:

- **July 2012:** Underground stream flooded a mine in South Garo Hills district, killing at least 15 miners
- **Dec. 2013:** Five fell to death after a cable of a carriage mechanism breaks in East Jaintia Hills district
- **Dec. 13, 2018:** At least 15 drowned in a flooded 370-foot-deep mine in East Jaintia Hills
- **Jan. 21, 2021:** Six killed after a crane snaps in East Jaintia Hills district
- **May 30, 2021:** Five miners died after a dynamite blast caused flooding of a mine in East Jaintia Hills district
- **Jan. 7, 2025:** At least three killed on Assam-Meghalaya border as a mine wall collapsed
- **Feb. 5, 2026:** At least 16 died after a suspected dynamite blast trapped them

Rescue Team have been engaged at the site to continue with the rescue and recovery efforts. Officials said they were trying to identify the victims, although locals said most of the deceased were from Assam.

Activists claim mine owners, backed by politicians and other influential people, continue to operate illegally despite the NGT's blanket ban on the mining of coal and its transportation in April 2014, which was later upheld by the Supreme Court.

### Several accidents

There have been several incidents of coal mine accidents before and after the ban, killing at least 50 workers to date. The last major incident was in December 2018, also in East Jaintia Hills district, where at least 15 miners were

trapped in a flooded mine 370 feet below the surface. Multiple agencies, including the Indian Navy, could retrieve only two bodies in the rescue operation that lasted months.

"Rat-hole mining, entailing digging holes about 4-5 feet in height, allowing an adult to squat and work, is risky. However, daily wages as high as ₹2,000 attract many people to take up the job," Shillong-based anti-illegal mining activist Agnes Kharshing said.

Earlier, the High Court of Meghalaya constituted the one-man Justice (retired) B.P. Katakey Committee to investigate, monitor, and recommend measures for environmental restoration following the ban on illegal coal mining in the State. The panel's periodic reports have hardly made any difference, activists say.

"We have started an investigation and have sought information from the people about the miscreants involved in this illegal act," Mr. Kumar said, adding that the police were gathering information about the mine owner and

the people who were running it.

The police registered a *suo motu* first information report (FIR) at the Khliehriat (district headquarters) police station under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, read

with the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act and the Explosives Substances Act.

District officials said teams from the National Disaster Response Force and State Disaster Response Force, and Special

## Explosion in illegal Meghalaya mine kills 18 मेघालय की अवैध खदान में विस्फोट, 18 की मौत

- The explosion was likely caused by **dynamite** and has trapped several persons, police said पुलिस ने कहा कि विस्फोट संभवतः **डायनामाइट** के कारण हुआ और इसमें कई लोग फंस गए
- CM has promised **action** following one of the worst mining tragedies in the State since **2012** मुख्यमंत्री ने **2012** के बाद राज्य की सबसे भीषण खनन त्रासदियों में से एक के बाद **कार्रवाई** का आश्वासन दिया
- Activists claim mine owners continue to operate **illegally**, despite the blanket ban on **coal mining** कार्यकर्ताओं का दावा है कि **कोयला खनन** पर पूर्ण प्रतिबंध के बावजूद खदान मालिक **अवैध रूप से** संचालन जारी रखे हुए हैं
- An explosion in an **illegally operated rat-hole coal mine** in Meghalaya's **East Jaintia Hills district** killed **18 miners** on Thursday, officials said अधिकारियों ने कहा कि **मेघालय के पूर्वी जयंतिया हिल्स जिले में अवैध रूप से संचालित रैट-होल कोयला खदान में विस्फोट से गुरुवार को 18 खनिकों की मौत हो गई**
- This is one of the biggest mining-related tragedies since **July 2012**, when **15 miners** died in a flooded mine in the State's **South Garo Hills district** यह **जुलाई 2012** के बाद खनन से जुड़ी सबसे बड़ी त्रासदियों में से एक है, जब राज्य के **दक्षिण गारो हिल्स जिले में एक जलमग्न खदान में 15 खनिकों की मौत हो गई थी**



- Two years later, in **2014**, the **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** had banned the hazardous mining method  
दो साल बाद, **2014** में, **राष्ट्रीय हरित अधिकरण (NGT)** ने इस खतरनाक खनन पद्धति पर प्रतिबंध लगा दिया था
- **Vikash Kumar**, East Jaintia Hills district's **Superintendent of Police**, said the police received information about an explosion at an illegal coal mine at **Mynsyngat** in the **Thangsko** area around **11 a.m.**  
पूर्वी जयंतिया हिल्स जिले के **पुलिस अधीक्षक विकाश कुमार** ने कहा कि पुलिस को **सुबह 11 बजे** के आसपास **थांग्सको क्षेत्र के मिनसिंगाट** में एक अवैध कोयला खदान में विस्फोट की सूचना मिली
- A team rushed to the spot and confirmed that an explosion, suspected to have been caused by **dynamite**, had trapped several persons at an **unspecified depth**  
एक टीम मौके पर पहुंची और पुष्टि की कि **डायनामाइट** से होने की आशंका वाले विस्फोट में कई लोग **अज्ञात गहराई** पर फंस गए थे
- "We mobilised **rescue and disaster response operations** and recovered **18 bodies** from the site of the explosion. An injured person, initially rushed to a **community health centre**, was referred to a **higher medical centre** for further treatment," he said  
उन्होंने कहा, "हमने **बचाव और आपदा प्रतिक्रिया अभियान** शुरू किए और विस्फोट स्थल से **18 शव** बरामद किए। एक घायल व्यक्ति को पहले **सामुदायिक स्वास्थ्य केंद्र** ले जाया गया और बाद में **उच्च चिकित्सा केंद्र** रेफर किया गया"

## CM vows action

### मुख्यमंत्री ने कार्रवाई का आश्वासन दिया

- Expressing condolences to the families of those killed, **Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma** said the government has ordered an **inquiry**  
मारे गए लोगों के परिवारों के प्रति संवेदना व्यक्त करते हुए **मेघालय के मुख्यमंत्री कॉनराड के. संगमा** ने कहा कि सरकार ने **जांच** के आदेश दिए हैं
- "**Accountability** will be fixed, and those responsible will face strict **legal action**," he said  
उन्होंने कहा, "**जवाबदेही** तय की जाएगी और जिम्मेदार लोगों के खिलाफ कड़ी **कानूनी कार्रवाई** होगी"
- He also said that the government has announced an **ex-gratia of ₹3 lakh** for the next of kin of each deceased mine worker  
उन्होंने यह भी कहा कि सरकार ने प्रत्येक मृत खदान श्रमिक के परिजनों के लिए **₹3 लाख की अनुग्रह राशि** की घोषणा की है
- "We have started an **investigation** and have sought information from the people about the **miscreants** involved in this illegal act," Mr. Kumar said  
श्री कुमार ने कहा, "हमने **जांच** शुरू कर दी है और इस अवैध कृत्य में शामिल **अपराधियों** के बारे में लोगों से जानकारी मांगी है"
- He added that the police were gathering information about the **mine owner** and the people who were running it  
उन्होंने कहा कि पुलिस **खदान मालिक** और उसे संचालित करने वाले लोगों के बारे में जानकारी जुटा रही है
- The police registered a **suo motu first information report (FIR)** at the **Khliehriat** police station under relevant sections of the **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita**, read with the **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act** and the **Explosives Substances Act**  
पुलिस ने **ख्लिएरियात** पुलिस स्टेशन में **भारतीय न्याय संहिता**, **खान और खनिज (विकास और विनियमन) अधिनियम** तथा **विस्फोटक पदार्थ अधिनियम** की संबंधित धाराओं के तहत **स्वतः संज्ञान FIR** दर्ज की
- District officials said teams from the **National Disaster Response Force**, **State Disaster Response Force**, and **Special Rescue Team** have been engaged at the site to continue with the rescue and recovery efforts  
जिला अधिकारियों ने कहा कि **राष्ट्रीय आपदा प्रतिक्रिया बल**, **राज्य आपदा प्रतिक्रिया बल** और **विशेष बचाव दल** की टीमों बचाव और बरामदगी कार्य जारी रखने के लिए स्थल पर तैनात हैं
- Officials said they were trying to **identify the victims**, although locals said most of the deceased were from **Assam**  
अधिकारियों ने कहा कि वे **पीड़ितों की पहचान** करने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं, हालांकि स्थानीय लोगों का कहना है कि अधिकांश मृतक **असम** से थे



- Activists claim mine owners, backed by **politicians** and other **influential people**, continue to operate illegally despite the NGT's blanket ban on the mining of coal and its transportation in **April 2014**, which was later upheld by the **Supreme Court**  
कार्यकर्ताओं का दावा है कि **राजनीतिज्ञों** और अन्य **प्रभावशाली लोगों** के समर्थन से खदान मालिक **अप्रैल 2014** में कोयला खनन और परिवहन पर NGT के पूर्ण प्रतिबंध, जिसे बाद में **सुप्रीम कोर्ट** ने भी बरकरार रखा, के बावजूद अवैध रूप से संचालन जारी रखे हुए हैं

### Several accidents कई दुर्घटनाएं

- There have been several incidents of coal mine accidents before and after the ban, killing at least **50 workers** to date  
प्रतिबंध से पहले और बाद में कोयला खदान दुर्घटनाओं की कई घटनाएं हुई हैं, जिनमें अब तक कम से कम **50 श्रमिकों** की मौत हो चुकी है
- The last major incident was in **December 2018**, also in **East Jaintia Hills district**, where at least **15 miners** were trapped in a flooded mine **370 feet** below the surface  
अंतिम बड़ी घटना **दिसंबर 2018** में **पूर्वी जयंतिया हिल्स जिले** में हुई थी, जहां सतह से **370 फीट** नीचे एक जलमग्न खदान में कम से कम **15 खनिक** फंस गए थे
- Multiple agencies, including the **Indian Navy**, could retrieve only **two bodies** in the rescue operation that lasted months  
**भारतीय नौसेना** सहित कई एजेंसियां महीनों चले बचाव अभियान में केवल **दो शव** ही निकाल सकीं
- **"Rat-hole mining**, entailing digging holes about **4-5 feet** in height, allowing an adult to squat and work, is risky. However, daily wages as high as **₹2,000** attract many people to take up the job," Shillong-based anti-illegal mining activist **Agnes Kharshiing** said  
शिलांग की अवैध खनन विरोधी कार्यकर्ता **एग्नेस खारशिग** ने कहा, **"रेट-होल खनन**, जिसमें लगभग **4-5 फीट** ऊंचे गड्ढे खोदे जाते हैं और एक वयस्क को बैठकर काम करना पड़ता है, जोखिम भरा है। लेकिन **₹2,000** तक की दैनिक मजदूरी कई लोगों को इस काम की ओर आकर्षित करती है"
- Earlier, the **High Court of Meghalaya** constituted the one-man **Justice (retired) B.P. Katakey Committee** to investigate, monitor, and recommend measures for **environmental restoration** following the ban on illegal coal mining in the State  
पहले, **मेघालय उच्च न्यायालय** ने राज्य में अवैध कोयला खनन पर प्रतिबंध के बाद **पर्यावरणीय बहाली** के लिए जांच, निगरानी और उपाय सुझाने हेतु एकल सदस्यीय **न्यायमूर्ति (सेवानिवृत्त) बी.पी. कटकै समिति** का गठन किया था
- The panel's periodic reports have hardly made any difference, activists say  
कार्यकर्ताओं का कहना है कि पैनल की आवधिक रिपोर्टों से शायद ही कोई फर्क पड़ा है

<b>GS Paper III:</b>	
<b>TOPICS COVERED</b>	<b>06 February 2026</b>
1.	<b>DAC to weigh acquisition of Rafale ahead of Macron visit</b> मैक्रों की यात्रा से पहले राफेल की खरीद पर विचार करेगा डीएसी
2.	<b>Centre signs tripartite pact to create Naga authority</b> केंद्र ने नागा प्राधिकरण के गठन के लिए त्रिपक्षीय समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर किए
3.	<b>More money for defence, now fix the process</b> रक्षा के लिए अधिक धन, अब प्रक्रिया को ठीक करें



# DAC to weigh acquisition of Rafale ahead of Macron visit

Eighteen aircraft are likely to be acquired in flyaway condition to meet immediate needs, with the rest to be manufactured in India, an official says; the source code will remain with the French side

**GS III: Internal Security**

**Saurabh Trivedi**  
NEW DELHI

**A**head of French President Emmanuel Macron's visit to India for the artificial intelligence Summit, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, is scheduled to meet in the second week of February to consider key procurement proposals aimed at enhancing the operational capabilities of the armed forces.

A senior defence official confirmed that the DAC meeting would grant Acceptance of Necessity for several acquisition proposals. During his stay, President Macron is expected to meet Mr. Singh to discuss bilateral defence cooperation between India and France.

Another defence official said that multiple proposals will be tabled at the meeting, including the acquisition of 114 Rafale fighter aircraft from France. Following DAC clearance, the proposal will be placed



The procurement will take the total Rafale fleet in India to 176, with the IAF already operating 36. PTI

before the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), chaired by the Prime Minister, for final approval.

Under the proposed plan, the bulk of the aircraft will be manufactured in India, with indigenous components accounting for approximately 30% to 40% of the overall content, providing a significant boost to domestic defence manufacturing. The official added that 18 aircraft are likely to be acquired in flyaway condition to meet the Indian Air Force's im-

mediate operational requirements, while the remaining jets will be manufactured in India. The source code, however, will remain with the French side.

## Largest acquisitions

Defence experts noted that once cleared by the CCS, the deal will rank among the largest defence acquisitions undertaken by India. The procurement will take the total Rafale fleet in the country to 176 aircraft, with the IAF already oper-

ating 36 Rafale jets and the Indian Navy having placed orders for 26 naval variants last year.

The AI summit is expected to see participation from representatives of several countries, including Brazil, Switzerland, Greece, Serbia, Spain and Finland.

Separately, Indian Air Force chief Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh, in his interaction with presspersons earlier, had flagged concerns over delays in fighter aircraft deliveries, noting that Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. has fallen behind schedule, partly due to delays in the supply of the F404-IN20 engines from GE.

The IAF has repeatedly underscored the urgency of strengthening its fighter fleet amid a rapidly evolving regional security environment. "To maintain a comfortable strength, we need two squadrons, around 30 to 40 aircraft, produced every year. Replacement is not a choice; it's a necessity," the Air Chief had said earlier.

## DAC to weigh acquisition of Rafale ahead of Macron visit मैक्रों की यात्रा से पहले राफेल की खरीद पर विचार करेगा डीएसी

- Eighteen aircraft are likely to be acquired in **flyaway condition** to meet **immediate needs**, with the rest to be manufactured in **India**, an official says; the **source code** will remain with the **French side**.

एक अधिकारी के अनुसार **तत्काल आवश्यकताओं** को पूरा करने के लिए **फ्लायअवे कंडीशन** में **18 विमान** खरीदे जाने की संभावना है, जबकि शेष का निर्माण **भारत** में किया जाएगा; **सोर्स कोड फ्रांसीसी पक्ष** के पास ही रहेगा।



- Ahead of **French President Emmanuel Macron's visit** to India for the **artificial intelligence Summit**, the **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)**, chaired by **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh**, is scheduled to meet in the **second week of February** to consider key procurement proposals aimed at enhancing the **operational capabilities** of the armed forces.  
कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता शिखर सम्मेलन के लिए फ्रांस के राष्ट्रपति इमैनुएल मैक्रों की भारत यात्रा से पहले, रक्षा मंत्री राजनाथ सिंह की अध्यक्षता वाली रक्षा अधिग्रहण परिषद (डीएसी) की बैठक फरवरी के दूसरे सप्ताह में प्रस्तावित है, जिसमें सशस्त्र बलों की संचालन क्षमता बढ़ाने से जुड़े प्रमुख खरीद प्रस्तावों पर विचार किया जाएगा।
- A senior defence official confirmed that the DAC meeting would grant **Acceptance of Necessity** for several acquisition proposals.  
एक वरिष्ठ रक्षा अधिकारी ने पुष्टि की कि डीएसी बैठक में कई अधिग्रहण प्रस्तावों को आवश्यकता की स्वीकृति दी जाएगी।
- During his stay, President Macron is expected to meet **Mr. Singh** to discuss **bilateral defence cooperation between India and France**.  
अपने प्रवास के दौरान राष्ट्रपति मैक्रों के श्री सिंह से मिलने और भारत तथा फ्रांस के बीच द्विपक्षीय रक्षा सहयोग पर चर्चा करने की उम्मीद है।
- Another defence official said that multiple proposals will be tabled at the meeting, including the acquisition of **114 Rafale fighter aircraft** from **France**.  
एक अन्य रक्षा अधिकारी ने कहा कि बैठक में कई प्रस्ताव रखे जाएंगे, जिनमें फ्रांस से 114 राफेल लड़ाकू विमानों की खरीद भी शामिल है।
- Following **DAC clearance**, the proposal will be placed before the **Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)**, chaired by the **Prime Minister**, for **final approval**.  
डीएसी की मंजूरी के बाद प्रस्ताव को प्रधानमंत्री की अध्यक्षता वाली सुरक्षा मामलों की कैबिनेट समिति (सीसीएस) के समक्ष अंतिम स्वीकृति के लिए रखा जाएगा।
- Under the proposed plan, the bulk of the aircraft will be manufactured in **India**, with **indigenous components** accounting for approximately **30% to 40%** of the overall content, providing a significant boost to **domestic defence manufacturing**.  
प्रस्तावित योजना के तहत अधिकांश विमानों का निर्माण भारत में किया जाएगा, जिसमें कुल सामग्री का लगभग 30% से 40% स्वदेशी घटकों का होगा, जिससे घरेलू रक्षा विनिर्माण को बड़ा प्रोत्साहन मिलेगा।
- The official added that **18 aircraft** are likely to be acquired in **flyaway condition** to meet the **Indian Air Force's immediate operational requirements**, while the remaining jets will be manufactured in **India**.  
अधिकारी ने जोड़ा कि भारतीय वायु सेना की तत्काल संचालन आवश्यकताओं को पूरा करने के लिए 18 विमान फ्लायअवे कंडीशन में खरीदे जाने की संभावना है, जबकि शेष जेट भारत में बनाए जाएंगे।
- The **source code**, however, will remain with the **French side**.  
हालाँकि सोर्स कोड फ्रांसीसी पक्ष के पास ही रहेगा।

## Largest acquisitions सबसे बड़े अधिग्रहण

- Defence experts noted that once cleared by the **CCS**, the deal will rank among the **largest defence acquisitions** undertaken by **India**.  
रक्षा विशेषज्ञों ने कहा कि सीसीएस से मंजूरी मिलने के बाद यह सौदा भारत द्वारा किए गए सबसे बड़े रक्षा अधिग्रहणों में शामिल होगा।
- The procurement will take the total **Rafale fleet** in the country to **176 aircraft**, with the **IAF** already operating **36 Rafale jets** and the **Indian Navy** having placed orders for **26 naval variants** last year.  
इस खरीद से देश में राफेल बेड़े की कुल संख्या 176 विमान हो जाएगी, जहाँ भारतीय वायु सेना पहले से 36 राफेल जेट संचालित कर रही है और भारतीय नौसेना ने पिछले वर्ष 26 नौसैनिक संस्करणों का ऑर्डर दिया है।
- The **AI summit** is expected to see participation from representatives of several countries, including **Brazil, Switzerland, Greece, Serbia, Spain and Finland**.  
एआई शिखर सम्मेलन में ब्राज़ील, स्विट्ज़रलैंड, ग्रीस, सर्बिया, स्पेन और फ़िनलैंड सहित कई देशों के प्रतिनिधियों की भागीदारी की उम्मीद है।



- Separately, **Indian Air Force chief Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh**, in his interaction with presspersons earlier, had flagged concerns over delays in **fighter aircraft deliveries**, noting that **Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd.** has fallen behind schedule, partly due to delays in the supply of the **F404-IN20 engines** from **GE**.  
अलग से, **भारतीय वायु सेना प्रमुख एयर चीफ मार्शल ए.पी. सिंह** ने पहले मीडिया से बातचीत में **लड़ाकू विमानों की आपूर्ति** में देरी को लेकर चिंता जताई थी, यह कहते हुए कि **हिंदुस्तान एयरोनॉटिक्स लिमिटेड** समय से पीछे चल रही है, जिसका एक कारण **जीई** से **F404-IN20 इंजनों** की आपूर्ति में देरी है।
- The **IAF** has repeatedly underscored the urgency of strengthening its **fighter fleet** amid a rapidly evolving **regional security environment**.  
तेजी से बदलते **क्षेत्रीय सुरक्षा वातावरण** के बीच **भारतीय वायु सेना** ने अपने **लड़ाकू बेड़े** को मजबूत करने की तात्कालिकता को बार-बार रेखांकित किया है।
- “To maintain a comfortable strength, we need **two squadrons**, around **30 to 40 aircraft**, produced every year. Replacement is not a choice; it’s a **necessity**,” the **Air Chief** had said earlier.  
**एयर चीफ** ने पहले कहा था, “पर्याप्त शक्ति बनाए रखने के लिए हमें हर साल लगभग **30 से 40 विमान**, यानी **दो स्क्वाड्रन**, तैयार करने की जरूरत है। प्रतिस्थापन कोई विकल्प नहीं, बल्कि एक **आवश्यकता** है।”

PATRIOTIC IAS



## Centre signs tripartite pact to create Naga authority

**GS III: Internal Security**  
**Vijaita Singh**  
NEW DELHI

A tripartite agreement for creation of the Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority (FNTA) was signed between Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO), Nagaland government and Union Home Ministry on Thursday.

The agreement was signed in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio. ENPO is an apex body representing eight recognised Naga tribes of the six eastern districts of Nagaland.

The agreement paves the way for creation of the FNTA for six districts of Nagaland – Tuensang, Mon, Kiphire, Longleng, Noklak and Shamator – and devolution of powers in respect of 46 subjects to the FNTA.

Mr. Shah said it was a significant day for a dispute-free Northeast. "Eleven years ago, several armed groups and disputes in the Northeast were pushing the region towards fragmentation and disturbing its peace. At the same time, many inter-State disputes were disrupting the peace of the States," he said.

Mr. Shah said that since 2019, the Centre has signed 12 important agreements in the Northeast. Mr. Shah said that he wants to assure the representatives of ENPO that the Government of India will assist in the development of Eastern Nagaland and also will shoulder its responsibility. He added that a fixed amount will be determined every year, and the MHA will cover the initial expenditure for its establishment. The agreement provides, *inter alia*, for a mini-Secretariat for FNTA, headed by Additional Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary, sharing of development outlay for the Eastern Nagaland region proportional to population and area. However, this agreement does not affect in any manner, the provisions of Article 371(A) of the Constitution, the Ministry said.

निभाएगी।

- He added that a **fixed amount** will be determined every year, and the **MHA** will cover the **initial expenditure** for its **establishment**.  
उन्होंने जोड़ा कि हर वर्ष एक **निश्चित राशि** तय की जाएगी और **एमएचए** इसके **स्थापना** के लिए **प्रारंभिक व्यय** वहन करेगा।
- The agreement provides, *inter alia*, for a **mini-Secretariat** for **FNTA**, headed by **Additional Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary**, sharing of **development outlay** for the **Eastern Nagaland region** proportional to **population and area**.  
समझौते में, **अन्य बातों के साथ**, **FNTA** के लिए **मिनी-सचिवालय**, जिसे **अतिरिक्त मुख्य सचिव/प्रधान सचिव** द्वारा संचालित किया जाएगा, तथा **पूर्वी नागालैंड क्षेत्र** के लिए **जनसंख्या और क्षेत्रफल** के अनुपात में **विकास व्यय** के बंटवारे का प्रावधान है।

## Centre signs tripartite pact to create Naga authority केंद्र ने नागा प्राधिकरण के गठन के लिए त्रिपक्षीय समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर किए

• A tripartite agreement for creation of the **Frontier Nagaland Territorial Authority (FNTA)** was signed between **Eastern Nagaland People's Organisation (ENPO)**, **Nagaland government** and **Union Home Ministry** on **Thursday**.

**फ्रंटियर नागालैंड टेरिटोरियल अथॉरिटी (FNTA)** के गठन के लिए **त्रिपक्षीय समझौते पर ईस्टर्न नागालैंड पीपुल्स ऑर्गनाइजेशन (ENPO)**, **नागालैंड सरकार** और **केंद्रीय गृह मंत्रालय** के बीच **गुरुवार** को हस्ताक्षर किए गए।

• The agreement was signed in the presence of **Union Home Minister Amit Shah** and **Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio**.

यह समझौता **केंद्रीय गृह मंत्री अमित शाह** और **नागालैंड के मुख्यमंत्री नेफियू रियो** की उपस्थिति में हस्ताक्षरित किया गया।

• **ENPO** is an apex body representing **eight recognised Naga tribes** of the **six eastern districts of Nagaland**.

**ENPO**, **नागालैंड के छह पूर्वी जिलों** की **आठ मान्यता प्राप्त नागा जनजातियों** का प्रतिनिधित्व करने वाली शीर्ष संस्था है।

• The agreement paves the way for creation of the **FNTA** for **six districts of Nagaland — Tuensang, Mon, Kiphire, Longleng, Noklak and Shamator —** and devolution of powers in respect of **46 subjects** to the **FNTA**.

यह समझौता **नागालैंड के छह जिलों — तुएनसांग, मोन, किफिरे, लोंगलेंग, नोकलाक और शामाटोर —** के लिए **FNTA** के गठन और **46 विषयों** से संबंधित शक्तियों के **FNTA** को हस्तांतरण का मार्ग प्रशस्त करता है।

• **Mr. Shah** said it was a **significant day** for a **dispute-free Northeast**.

**श्री शाह** ने कहा कि यह **विवाद-मुक्त पूर्वोत्तर** के लिए **एक महत्वपूर्ण दिन** है।

• "**Eleven years ago**, several **armed groups** and disputes in the **Northeast** were pushing the region towards **fragmentation** and disturbing its **peace**. At the same time, many **inter-State disputes** were disrupting the peace of the States," he said.

"**ग्यारह वर्ष पहले**, **पूर्वोत्तर** में कई **सशस्त्र समूह** और **विवाद** इस क्षेत्र को **विखंडन** की ओर धकेल रहे थे और इसकी **शांति** को बाधित कर रहे थे। साथ ही, कई **अंतर-राज्यीय विवाद** राज्यों की शांति को प्रभावित कर रहे थे," उन्होंने कहा।

• **Mr. Shah** said that since **2019**, the **Centre** has signed **12 important agreements** in the **Northeast**.

**श्री शाह** ने कहा कि **2019** से **केंद्र** ने **पूर्वोत्तर** में **12 महत्वपूर्ण समझौते** किए हैं।

• **Mr. Shah** said that he wants to assure the representatives of **ENPO** that the **Government of India** will assist in the **development of Eastern Nagaland** and also will shoulder its **responsibility**.

**श्री शाह** ने कहा कि वह **ENPO** के प्रतिनिधियों को आश्वस्त करना चाहते हैं कि **भारत सरकार** **पूर्वी नागालैंड के विकास** में सहायता करेगी और अपनी **जिम्मेदारी** भी



- However, this agreement does **not affect** in any manner the provisions of **Article 371(A) of the Constitution**, the **Ministry** said.  
हालांकि, मंत्रालय ने कहा कि यह समझौता किसी भी प्रकार से संविधान के अनुच्छेद 371(A) के प्रावधानों को प्रभावित नहीं करता।

## More money for defence, now fix the process

GS III: Internal Security

MOB

**T**he Finance Minister has been rather generous. The new defence budget is being touted as being the first double digit jump in India's defence expenditure in decades, ever since its steady decline from 2017. At 2% of the Budget, it sends a signal of strategic determination in a more than unusually turbulent world. The funds will have to be used prudently and expeditiously, which demand systemic change, not tinkering, in the Budget process. As 'frenemies' abound and a tenuous 'rules-based order' collapses, there is no time to lose.

### The good and the bad

The most talked about aspect is the Budget's 15% hike hitting 2% of GDP (up from 1.9% last year). Second, in a notable shift, capital expenditure has outpaced the revenue budget, up more than 22%, reversing years of neglect. Third, there is a clear thrust toward modernisation. The Indian Air Force gets a hefty 32% rise, while the Indian Army has got a 30% hike for heavy vehicles and weapons.

Oddly, the Indian Navy, with its ambitious commitments in the Indian Ocean, gets 3%. Ironically, this is probably due to its success in indigenisation, and a proven capability to absorb allotted funds.

All this is good. But the rupee has weakened substantially against the dollar, which means that payment for capital goods such as aircraft has become more expensive. It is not all bad news. Defence exports are rising – ₹23,000 crore last year as against ₹1,000 crore in 2014. A chunk of the Indian Army's mobility equipment is made here by the Tatas, Ashok Leyland and others. But this does eat into the 'double digit' increase.

There are also the pension payments which



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A defence budget has to also be seen as a tool that powers growth

rose by 6.56% but it is still at 21.84% when compared to 27.95% for capital expenditure of the Ministry of Defence (MoD)'s allocation. Before FY1987-88, they came under central government pensions and were not clubbed with the defence budget. Despite this, the Budget was still 3.31% of GDP. The size of the economy then was less than half of what it is today, but it still provides a certain perspective.

It might be time to reinvent that wheel.

### Bureaucracy and delays

A welcome aspect is that 75% of the capital acquisition budget for procurement has been earmarked for domestic industries, which includes private players. The government's thrust in this direction has been consistent, with defence production recording a 174% surge from 2014-15. But beyond this is the reality of a complex bureaucratic system, one aspect of which is the L-1 (lowest cost) rule which favours large industries rather than innovators who are vital for a tech-intensive industry. They cannot compete, especially when transitioning to manufacturing. This needs not only hand holding but also clarity in forward planning and promised volumes.

The next factor is this – the interminable delays in vital programmes such as Project 75 for submarines approved in 1997. Expected delivery times are now in the mid 2030s. The Rafale fighter aircraft deal which was envisioned in the 1990s, saw results only 2019-20. It is unsurprising then that the MoD had to return ₹12,500 crore of its capital allocation in FY2024-25.

It is time to re-examine the repeated demand for a Non-Lapsable Defence Modernisation Fund, which was announced in the FY 2004-05 Budget

speech but never implemented. Financial convenience cannot result in the defence industry being held hostage.

### R&D lies scattered

A key area is research and development (R&D). Funds for the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and a slew of research organisations have been increased; many have potential benefits for defence production. But research is segmented. Despite often being dual use, it seldom translates into better defence capabilities. India's overall research budget also remains 0.66% of GDP. Compare that to Japan at 3.70%, funded primarily by the private sector. In India, there is a near absence of private sector R&D. Those in the big league must loosen up and unify research and its direction.

A 'pacifist' country such as Japan has now allocated 2.2% for its defence. So has Australia with a far lower threat profile. Europe too is moving to larger allocations. At issue here is the 'guns vs butter' lens through which the defence budget is viewed. Instead, it needs to be melded with the vision of Viksit Bharat's \$30 trillion economy. The Border Roads Organisation, for instance, delivers the connectivity for 'Vibrant Villages' programme which is vital to border development.

In another example, the Prime Minister remarked that indigenous shipbuilding has a 6.5 multiplier effect on employment, with its multiple ancillary industries. This applies almost across the board. The Budget has to be seen as a tool for powering growth, rather than being a 'non development' section. Once this is done, the processes will follow.

## More money for defence, now fix the process

## रक्षा के लिए अधिक धन, अब प्रक्रिया को ठीक करें

### Defence Budget and Strategic Outlook

### रक्षा बजट और रणनीतिक दृष्टिकोण

- The **Finance Minister** has been rather **generous**.  
वित्त मंत्री अपेक्षाकृत उदार रही हैं।
- The new **defence budget** is being touted as the **first double digit jump** in India's defence expenditure in **decades**, after its steady **decline from 2017**.  
नया रक्षा बजट भारत के रक्षा व्यय में दशकों बाद पहली दो अंकीय वृद्धि के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया जा रहा है, जो 2017 से गिरावट के बाद आया है।
- At **2% of the Budget**, it sends a signal of **strategic determination** in a **turbulent world**.  
बजट के 2% पर, यह अशांत विश्व में रणनीतिक दृढ़ता का संकेत देता है।
- The funds must be used **prudently and expeditiously**, requiring **systemic change** in the Budget process, not mere **tinkering**.  
इन निधियों का उपयोग सावधानीपूर्वक और शीघ्रता से किया जाना चाहिए, जिसके लिए बजट प्रक्रिया में केवल छेड़छाड़ नहीं बल्कि प्रणालीगत परिवर्तन आवश्यक है।
- As **'frenemies'** abound and a fragile **rules-based order collapses**, there is **no time to lose**.  
जब मित्र-शत्रु संबंध बढ़ रहे हों और कमजोर नियम-आधारित व्यवस्था टूट रही हो, तब समय गंवाने का अवसर नहीं है।



## The good and the bad अच्छा और बुरा

- The most talked about aspect is the **15% hike** reaching **2% of GDP**, up from **1.9% last year**. सबसे चर्चित पहलू **15% की वृद्धि** है जो **GDP के 2%** तक पहुँची, जो **पिछले वर्ष 1.9%** थी।
- In a notable shift, **capital expenditure** has outpaced the **revenue budget**, rising over **22%**, reversing years of **neglect**. एक महत्वपूर्ण बदलाव में, **पूंजीगत व्यय** ने **राजस्व बजट** को पीछे छोड़ दिया, जो **22% से अधिक** बढ़ा, और वर्षों की **उपेक्षा** को उलट दिया।
- There is a clear thrust toward **modernisation**. **आधुनिकीकरण** की ओर स्पष्ट जोर है।
- The **Indian Air Force** gets a **32% rise**, while the **Indian Army** receives a **30% hike for heavy vehicles and weapons**. **भारतीय वायु सेना** को **32% वृद्धि** मिली, जबकि **भारतीय सेना** को **भारी वाहन और हथियारों** के लिए **30% वृद्धि** मिली।
- Oddly, the **Indian Navy** gets only **3%**, despite its **Indian Ocean commitments**. अजीब बात है कि **भारतीय नौसेना** को केवल **3%** मिला, जबकि उसके **हिंद महासागर में महत्वपूर्ण दायित्व** हैं।
- This is probably due to its **success in indigenisation** and ability to **absorb funds efficiently**. यह संभवतः **स्वदेशीकरण में सफलता** और **निधियों को प्रभावी ढंग से उपयोग करने की क्षमता** के कारण है।
- All this is **good**, but the **rupee has weakened against the dollar**, making **capital goods like aircraft more expensive**. यह सब **अच्छा** है, लेकिन **रुपया डॉलर के मुकाबले कमजोर** हुआ है, जिससे **विमान जैसे पूंजीगत सामान महंगे** हो गए हैं।
- It is not all bad news — **defence exports are rising**, reaching **₹23,000 crore last year**, up from **₹1,000 crore in 2014**. यह पूरी तरह बुरी खबर नहीं है — **रक्षा निर्यात बढ़ रहे हैं**, जो **पिछले वर्ष ₹23,000 करोड़** तक पहुँचे, जबकि **2014 में ₹1,000 करोड़** थे।
- A large portion of the **Indian Army's mobility equipment** is manufactured domestically by **Tata, Ashok Leyland and others**. **भारतीय सेना के गतिशीलता उपकरणों** का बड़ा हिस्सा देश में **टाटा, अशोक लेलैंड और अन्य** द्वारा निर्मित किया जाता है।
- However, this reduces the effect of the **double digit increase**. हालाँकि, इससे **दो अंकीय वृद्धि** का प्रभाव कम हो जाता है।
- **Pension payments** rose by **6.56%**, but still stand at **21.84%**, compared to **27.95% for capital expenditure of the Ministry of Defence (MoD)**. **पेंशन भुगतान** में **6.56% वृद्धि** हुई, लेकिन यह अभी भी **21.84%** है, जबकि **रक्षा मंत्रालय के पूंजीगत व्यय का 27.95%** है।
- Before **FY1987-88**, pensions were part of **central government pensions**, not the defence budget. **FY1987-88 से पहले**, पेंशन **केंद्र सरकार की पेंशन** का हिस्सा थीं, **रक्षा बजट का नहीं**।
- Despite this, the Budget was **3.31% of GDP** at that time. इसके बावजूद, उस समय बजट **GDP का 3.31%** था।
- The economy then was **less than half of today**, yet it offers **perspective**. उस समय अर्थव्यवस्था **आज की आधी से भी कम** थी, फिर भी यह एक **दृष्टिकोण** प्रदान करती है।
- It may be time to **reinvent that wheel**. शायद अब उस व्यवस्था को **फिर से नया रूप देने** का समय आ गया है।

## Bureaucracy and delays नौकरशाही और देरी

- A welcome aspect is that **75% of the capital acquisition budget** for procurement has been earmarked for **domestic industries**, including **private players**.



एक सकारात्मक पहलू यह है कि **पूँजीगत अधिग्रहण बजट का 75%** खरीद के लिए **घरेलू उद्योगों**, जिसमें **निजी क्षेत्र** भी शामिल है, के लिए निर्धारित किया गया है।

- The government's thrust has been consistent, with **defence production rising 174% since 2014-15**.

सरकार का जोर लगातार बना रहा है, और **2014-15 से रक्षा उत्पादन 174% बढ़ा** है।

- But the reality is a **complex bureaucratic system**, including the **L-1 (lowest cost) rule**, which favours **large industries** over **innovators** in a **tech-intensive sector**.  
लेकिन वास्तविकता **जटिल नौकरशाही व्यवस्था** है, जिसमें **L-1 (सबसे कम लागत) नियम** शामिल है, जो **तकनीकी-गहन क्षेत्र** में **नवप्रवर्तकों** की बजाय **बड़े उद्योगों** को बढ़ावा देता है।
- Innovators cannot compete, especially during the **transition to manufacturing**, and need **hand holding, forward planning and assured volumes**.  
नवप्रवर्तक प्रतिस्पर्धा नहीं कर पाते, विशेषकर **निर्माण में संक्रमण** के दौरान, और उन्हें **सहयोग, अग्रिम योजना और सुनिश्चित मात्रा** की आवश्यकता होती है।
- Another factor is **interminable delays** in key programmes such as **Project 75 submarines approved in 1997**, with delivery now expected in the **mid-2030s**.  
एक अन्य कारक **अंतहीन देरी** है, जैसे **1997 में स्वीकृत प्रोजेक्ट 75 पनडुब्बी**, जिसकी डिलीवरी अब **2030 के दशक के मध्य** में अपेक्षित है।
- The **Rafale fighter aircraft deal**, envisioned in the **1990s**, delivered results only in **2019-20**.  
**राफेल लड़ाकू विमान सौदा**, जिसकी कल्पना **1990 के दशक** में की गई थी, परिणाम केवल **2019-20** में मिला।
- It is unsurprising that the **MoD returned ₹12,500 crore capital allocation in FY2024-25**.  
इसलिए आश्चर्य नहीं कि **रक्षा मंत्रालय ने FY2024-25 में ₹12,500 करोड़ पूँजीगत आवंटन लौटाया**।
- There is a need to revisit the **Non-Lapsable Defence Modernisation Fund**, announced in **FY2004-05**, but never implemented.  
**FY2004-05** में घोषित **नॉन-लैप्सेबल रक्षा आधुनिकीकरण कोष** पर पुनर्विचार की आवश्यकता है, जिसे कभी लागू नहीं किया गया।
- **Financial convenience** should not hold the **defence industry hostage**.  
**वित्तीय सुविधा** के कारण **रक्षा उद्योग को बंधक नहीं बनाना चाहिए**।

#### R&D lies scattered

अनुसंधान और विकास बिखरा हुआ

- A key area is **research and development (R&D)**.  
एक प्रमुख क्षेत्र **अनुसंधान और विकास (R&D)** है।
- Funds for **DRDO and other research organisations** have increased, with potential benefits for **defence production**.  
**DRDO और अन्य अनुसंधान संस्थानों** के लिए धन बढ़ा है, जिससे **रक्षा उत्पादन** को संभावित लाभ है।
- But research remains **segmented**, and despite **dual-use potential**, seldom translates into **defence capability**.  
लेकिन अनुसंधान **खंडित** बना हुआ है, और **द्वि-उपयोग क्षमता** के बावजूद, यह शायद ही **रक्षा क्षमता** में बदलता है।
- India's **overall research budget is 0.66% of GDP**, compared to **Japan's 3.70%**, largely funded by the **private sector**.  
भारत का **कुल अनुसंधान बजट GDP का 0.66%** है, जबकि **जापान का 3.70%**, जो मुख्यतः **निजी क्षेत्र** द्वारा वित्तपोषित है।
- In India, there is a **near absence of private sector R&D**, and major players must **unify and align research direction**.  
भारत में **निजी क्षेत्र के R&D की लगभग अनुपस्थिति** है, और बड़े खिलाड़ियों को **अनुसंधान को एकीकृत और दिशा-निर्देशित** करना चाहिए।
- A **pacifist country like Japan** now spends **2.2% of GDP on defence**, and **Australia** too has higher allocations.  
**जापान जैसे शांतिवादी देश** अब **GDP का 2.2% रक्षा पर खर्च** करते हैं, और **ऑस्ट्रेलिया** ने भी उच्च आवंटन किया है।
- **Europe** is also moving toward **higher defence spending**.  
**यूरोप** भी उच्च रक्षा व्यय की ओर बढ़ रहा है।



- The issue is often seen through the **'guns vs butter' lens**, but it should align with the vision of **Viksit Bharat and a \$30 trillion economy**.  
इस मुद्दे को अक्सर 'गन बनाम बटर' दृष्टिकोण से देखा जाता है, लेकिन इसे विकसित भारत और \$30 ट्रिलियन अर्थव्यवस्था के दृष्टिकोण से जोड़ना चाहिए।
- The **Border Roads Organisation** supports connectivity for the **Vibrant Villages programme**, crucial for **border development**.  
बॉर्डर रोड्स ऑर्गनाइजेशन वाइब्रेंट विलेज कार्यक्रम के लिए कनेक्टिविटी प्रदान करता है, जो सीमा विकास के लिए महत्वपूर्ण है।
- The Prime Minister noted **indigenous shipbuilding has a 6.5 employment multiplier effect** through its **ancillary industries**.  
प्रधानमंत्री ने कहा कि स्वदेशी जहाज निर्माण का 6.5 रोजगार गुणक प्रभाव है, जो इसकी सहायक उद्योगों के माध्यम से है।
- This impact applies **across sectors**, making defence a **growth driver**, not a **non-development expenditure**.  
यह प्रभाव सभी क्षेत्रों में लागू होता है, जिससे रक्षा एक विकास चालक बनती है, न कि गैर-विकास व्यय।
- Once this perspective is adopted, **processes will follow**.  
एक बार यह दृष्टिकोण अपनाया जाए, तो प्रक्रियाएँ स्वतः आगे बढ़ेंगी।

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