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Flying aces



Taking stock: Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh, centre, with officials in front of a MiG-29UPG fighter aircraft during his visit to an Air Force Station, in Punjab on Thursday. The IAF chief reviewed the overall operational preparedness of the command. PTI

Taking stock: Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh, centre, with officials in front of a MiG-29UPG fighter aircraft during his visit to an Air Force Station, in Punjab on Thursday. The IAF chief reviewed the overall operational preparedness of the command.

In RS, MPs raise U.P. school closures, judicial diversity

PCS: GS V

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Concerns over the state of public education in Uttar Pradesh, lack of social diversity in the higher judiciary, and the implications of permitting 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the insurance sector dominated Zero Hour in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday.

Raising the issue of school closures, Javed Ali Khan of the Samajwadi Party said the government's primary education network in Uttar Pradesh had been "nearly dismantled". Of the 4.18 lakh sanctioned teaching posts, 85,000 remain vacant, while 1.5 lakh Shiksha Mitras continue on low wages. He noted that 2,586 schools operate with single teachers, and around 27,000 schools have either been shut or merged.

Teachers, he said, are overburdened with non-academic duties ranging



Proceedings under way in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday. ANI

from Census and cattle counts to welfare scheme surveys, and in some States even managing stray cattle and dogs.

Citing an order of the Allahabad High Court directing the government to relieve teachers of such additional tasks, he urged the Centre to ensure they are allowed to focus solely on teaching.

P. Sandosh Kumar of the Communist Party of India called upon the government to reconsider the decision to allow 100% FDI in

insurance, arguing that the sector safeguards the savings of millions and should not be left entirely to foreign capital.

P. Wilson of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam revisited the issue of social diversity within the judiciary, renewing his demand for regional Benches of the Supreme Court of India. He pointed out that of the 593 High Court judges appointed in the past five years, nearly 80% were from forward communities.

13Mar. In RS, MPs raise U.P. school closures, judicial diversity राज्यसभा में सांसदों ने यूपी स्कूल बंद और न्यायिक विविधता को उठाया

- Concerns over the state of **public education** in Uttar Pradesh, lack of **social diversity** in the higher judiciary, and the implications of permitting 100% **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** in the **insurance sector** dominated **Zero Hour** in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday.
उत्तर प्रदेश में सार्वजनिक शिक्षा की स्थिति, उच्च न्यायपालिका में सामाजिक विविधता की कमी, और बीमा क्षेत्र में 100% विदेशी प्रत्यक्ष निवेश (FDI) की अनुमति के निहितार्थों को लेकर गुरुवार को राज्यसभा में ज़ीरो ऑवर का वर्चस्व रहा।



- Raising the issue of school closures, **Javed Ali Khan** of the **Samajwadi Party** said the government's **primary education network** in Uttar Pradesh had been "nearly dismantled".
समाजवादी पार्टी के जावेद अली खान ने स्कूल बंद होने के मुद्दे को उठाते हुए कहा कि उत्तर प्रदेश में सरकार का **प्राथमिक शिक्षा नेटवर्क** लगभग "विनष्ट" हो गया है।
- Of the 4.18 lakh sanctioned teaching posts, 85,000 remain vacant, while 1.5 lakh **Shiksha Mitras** continue on low wages.
4.18 लाख अनुमोदित शिक्षण पदों में से 85,000 खाली हैं, जबकि 1.5 लाख **शिक्षा मित्र** कम वेतन पर कार्यरत हैं।
- He noted that 2,586 schools operate with single teachers, and around 27,000 schools have either been shut or merged.
उन्होंने कहा कि 2,586 स्कूलों में केवल एक शिक्षक काम कर रहे हैं, और लगभग 27,000 स्कूल या तो बंद कर दिए गए हैं या विलय किए गए हैं।
- Teachers, he said, are overburdened with **non-academic duties** ranging from **Census and cattle counts** to **welfare scheme surveys**, and in some States even managing **stray cattle and dogs**.
उन्होंने कहा कि शिक्षक **गैर-शैक्षणिक कार्यों** से भारी बोझ में हैं, जिसमें **जनगणना और पशु गिनती** से लेकर **कल्याण योजना सर्वेक्षण** तक शामिल हैं, और कुछ राज्यों में तो **भटकते पशु और कुत्तों** का प्रबंधन भी करना पड़ता है।
- Citing an order of the **Allahabad High Court** directing the government to relieve teachers of such additional tasks, he urged the **Centre** to ensure they are allowed to focus solely on **teaching**.
इलाहाबाद उच्च न्यायालय के आदेश का हवाला देते हुए, जिसमें सरकार को शिक्षकों को ऐसे अतिरिक्त कार्यों से मुक्त करने का निर्देश दिया गया था, उन्होंने **केंद्र** से आग्रह किया कि सुनिश्चित करें कि उन्हें केवल **शिक्षण** पर ध्यान केंद्रित करने की अनुमति दी जाए।
- **P. Sandosh Kumar** of the **Communist Party of India** called upon the government to reconsider the decision to allow 100% FDI in **insurance**, arguing that the sector safeguards the **savings of millions** and should not be left entirely to **foreign capital**.
भारत की कम्युनिस्ट पार्टी के P. Sandosh Kumar ने सरकार से बीमा में 100% FDI की अनुमति देने के निर्णय पर पुनर्विचार करने का आग्रह किया, यह तर्क देते हुए कि यह क्षेत्र **करोड़ों की बचत** की सुरक्षा करता है और इसे पूरी तरह से **विदेशी पूंजी** पर नहीं छोड़ना चाहिए।
- **P. Wilson** of the **Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam** revisited the issue of **social diversity** within the **judiciary**, renewing his demand for **regional Benches** of the **Supreme Court of India**.
द्रविड़ा मुनेत्रा कज़गम के P. Wilson ने न्यायपालिका में **सामाजिक विविधता** के मुद्दे को फिर से उठाया, और भारत के **सुप्रीम कोर्ट** में **क्षेत्रीय बेंचों** की मांग को दोहराया।
- He pointed out that of the 593 **High Court judges** appointed in the past five years, nearly 80% were from **forward communities**.
उन्होंने कहा कि पिछले पांच वर्षों में नियुक्त 593 **उच्च न्यायालय के न्यायाधीशों** में से लगभग 80% **सामान्य वर्ग** से थे।



Beijing-Pyongyang train service is back after a six-year gap

PCS

Reuters
BEIJING

The first passenger train service between the Chinese and North Korean capitals left Beijing Railway Station on Thursday, ending a six-year gap, as China moves to shore up cross-border infrastructure and rebuild ties with its neighbour.

Train K27 will arrive in the North Korean capital at 6.07 p.m. on Friday, after a journey of 24 hours and 41 minutes skirting north of the Bohai Sea with a stopover in the border city of Dandong, China's railway authority said.

China and North Korea are "friendly neighbours" and across-border passenger train service facilitates people-to-people exchanges, a foreign ministry spokesperson told reporters on Thursday. China also backs stronger communication between both sides to ease such exchanges, the spokesperson added.

The service was suspended when the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in 2020.

North Korea is largely closed to foreign tourism, with few exceptions, largely for Russian tour groups under restricted arrangements, say travel agencies organising trips to the country.

The service linking the capitals will operate four days a week in both directions, running on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, China's railway authority said in a notice.

Tickets, restricted to business visa holders, were sold out for Thursday's trip, but those for March 18 were still available, a Beijing travel agency said. The shorter Dandong-Pyongyang link will operate daily in both directions, the official news agency Xinhua said.

- The service was suspended when the **COVID-19 pandemic** broke out in 2020. सेवा 2020 में **COVID-19 महामारी** के फैलने पर निलंबित कर दी गई थी।
- **North Korea** is largely closed to **foreign tourism**, with few exceptions, largely for **Russian tour groups** under restricted arrangements, say travel agencies organising trips to the country. उत्तरी कोरिया मुख्य रूप से **विदेशी पर्यटन** के लिए बंद है, कुछ अपवादों के साथ, जो मुख्य रूप से **रूसी यात्रा समूहों** के लिए सीमित व्यवस्था के तहत हैं, यात्रा एजेंसियां जो देश की यात्राओं का आयोजन करती हैं, कहती हैं।
- The service linking the capitals will operate four days a week in both directions, running on **Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays**, **China's railway authority** said in a notice. राजधानियों को जोड़ने वाली सेवा सप्ताह में चार दिन दोनों दिशाओं में चलेगी, **सोमवार, बुधवार, गुरुवार और शनिवार** को चलती है, **चीन की रेलवे प्राधिकरण** ने एक नोटिस में कहा।
- Tickets, restricted to **business visa holders**, were sold out for Thursday's trip, but those for **March 18** were still available, a **Beijing travel agency** said.

13Mar. Beijing-Pyongyang train service is back after a six-year gap
बीजिंग-प्योंगयांग ट्रेन सेवा छह साल के अंतराल के बाद फिर से शुरू

• The first **passenger train service** between the **Chinese** and **North Korean capitals** left **Beijing Railway Station** on Thursday, ending a six-year gap, as **China** moves to shore up **cross-border infrastructure** and rebuild ties with its neighbour.

पहली यात्री ट्रेन सेवा चीनी और उत्तरी कोरियाई राजधानियों के बीच गुरुवार को बीजिंग रेलवे स्टेशन से रवाना हुई, छह साल के अंतराल को समाप्त करते हुए, क्योंकि चीन सीमा पार अवसंरचना को मजबूत करने और अपने पड़ोसी के साथ संबंध पुनर्निर्माण करने की ओर बढ़ रहा है।

• Train **K27** will arrive in the **North Korean capital** at 6.07 p.m. on Friday, after a journey of 24 hours and 41 minutes skirting north of the **Bohai Sea** with a stopover in the **border city of Dandong**, **China's railway authority** said.

ट्रेन K27 शुक्रवार को 6.07 बजे उत्तरी कोरियाई राजधानी पहुंचेगी, 24 घंटे और 41 मिनट की यात्रा के बाद, बोहोई सागर के उत्तर की ओर घूमते हुए और सीमा शहर दान्दोंग में ठहराव के साथ, चीन की रेलवे प्राधिकरण ने कहा।

• **China** and **North Korea** are "**friendly neighbours**" and **across-border passenger train service** facilitates **people-to-people exchanges**, a **foreign ministry spokesperson** told reporters on Thursday.

चीन और उत्तरी कोरिया "मैत्रीपूर्ण पड़ोसी" हैं और सीमा पार यात्री ट्रेन सेवा लोगों के बीच आदान-प्रदान को सुविधाजनक बनाती है, एक विदेश मंत्रालय प्रवक्ता ने गुरुवार को पत्रकारों को बताया।

• **China** also backs stronger **communication** between both sides to ease such exchanges, the **spokesperson** added.

प्रवक्ता ने जोड़ा कि चीन दोनों पक्षों के बीच ऐसे आदान-प्रदान को आसान बनाने के लिए मजबूत संचार का समर्थन भी करता है।



टिकट, जो केवल व्यवसाय वीजा धारकों के लिए सीमित थे, गुरुवार की यात्रा के लिए बिक चुके थे, लेकिन 18 मार्च के लिए अभी भी उपलब्ध थे, एक बीजिंग यात्रा एजेंसी ने कहा।

- The shorter **Dandong-Pyongyang link** will operate daily in both directions, the official news agency **Xinhua** said.
छोटी दान्दोंग-प्योंगयांग लिंक रोजाना दोनों दिशाओं में चलेगी, आधिकारिक समाचार एजेंसी जिन्हुआ ने कहा।

GS Paper 1: History,	
TOPICS COVERED	13 March 2026
13Mar	QUIZ

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. The duration of the

Dandi March. **Ans: 24 days**

2. It was done to resist the tax imposed on this commodity. **Ans: Salt**

3. The start and end points of this march.

Ans: Sabarmati and Dandi

4. Another name for this march, owing to the fact that all the people were joining the procession wearing white Khadi. **Ans: White Flowing River**

5. The culmination of the Dandi March led to this eventual consequence. **Ans: Civil disobedience movement**

Visual: Identify this march, parallelly held by C. Rajagopalachari, the coast where it was held.

Ans: Vedaranyam salt march, east coast

Early birds: Arun Kumar Singh | K.N.

Viswanathan | Parimal Das | Sudhir Thapa|

C. Saravanan

QUIZ

Duration of the Dandi March

Correct Answer: 24 Days

- The **Dandi March**, also known as the **Salt March**, was a major event of the **Civil Disobedience Movement** led by **Mahatma Gandhi** against the **British salt tax**.
- The march began on **12 March 1930** from **Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad** and concluded on **6 April 1930** at the coastal village of **Dandi in Gujarat**, covering about **390 kilometres (240 miles)**.
- The entire journey lasted **24 days**, during which Gandhi and his followers travelled through several villages.

Historical Significance

- The march symbolized **non-violent resistance (Satyagraha)** against unjust colonial laws.
- By reaching Dandi and **making salt from seawater**, Gandhi openly violated the **British Salt Law**, which prohibited Indians from producing their own salt.
- The act inspired **millions of Indians** across the country to join the Civil Disobedience Movement through protests, boycotts of British goods, and refusal to pay certain taxes.

Impact on the Freedom Movement

- The **24-day march** drew massive public attention both in **India and internationally**, exposing the exploitative nature of British rule.
- Thousands of people joined the movement after the march, and many leaders including Gandhi were arrested.
- The event significantly strengthened **India's struggle for independence** and became a powerful example of **peaceful mass protest against colonial authority**.

Commodity Targeted During the Dandi March

Correct Answer: Salt

- The **Dandi March (Salt March)** was organised by **Mahatma Gandhi** in **1930** to protest the **British monopoly and tax on salt**.



- Under colonial law, Indians were **not allowed to produce or sell salt independently** and had to purchase heavily taxed salt from the British government.
- Gandhi chose **salt** because it was an **essential commodity used by every household**, including the poorest people.
- By challenging the salt tax, he aimed to unite the masses against British economic exploitation.

Historical Context

- The **Salt Act of 1882** gave the British government complete control over the **production and sale of salt in India**. This law prevented Indians from collecting or making salt even from **natural sea sources**.
- During the **Dandi March (12 March–6 April 1930)**, Gandhi symbolically broke this law by **producing salt from seawater at Dandi in Gujarat**, marking the beginning of a nationwide campaign of **civil disobedience**.

Significance in the Freedom Struggle

- The protest against the **salt tax** transformed the **Civil Disobedience Movement** into a **mass movement**. Thousands of Indians began making salt illegally and boycotting British goods.
- The issue of **salt**, a simple daily necessity, effectively exposed the **unjust economic policies of British rule** and mobilised widespread public participation in the struggle for **India's independence**.

Start and End Points of the Dandi March

Correct Answer: Sabarmati and Dandi

- The **Dandi March**, also known as the **Salt March**, began from **Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad, Gujarat**, and ended at the coastal village of **Dandi in Gujarat**.
- It started on **12 March 1930** and concluded on **6 April 1930**. Mahatma Gandhi led **78 selected volunteers** from Sabarmati Ashram and walked about **390 kilometres (240 miles)** to reach Dandi.
- At Dandi, Gandhi **symbolically produced salt from seawater**, openly defying the **British Salt Law**.

Historical Context

- Sabarmati Ashram served as **Gandhi's headquarters for the national movement**, making it the symbolic starting point.
- The destination, **Dandi**, was chosen because it was a **coastal area where natural salt could be collected**.
- The march passed through numerous villages in **Gujarat**, mobilising people and spreading awareness about **civil disobedience against British rule**.

Significance in the Freedom Movement

- The journey from **Sabarmati to Dandi** became a powerful demonstration of **non-violent resistance (Satyagraha)**.
- It inspired **mass participation across India**, including salt-making protests, boycotts of British goods, and refusal to pay certain taxes.
- The event drew **international attention** and marked the beginning of the **Civil Disobedience Movement (1930–34)** against colonial rule.

Another Name of the Dandi March



Correct Answer: White Flowing River

- The **Dandi March (1930)**, led by **Mahatma Gandhi**, was sometimes described as a “**White Flowing River**” because thousands of participants joined the procession wearing **white Khadi clothes**.
- Khadi symbolised **self-reliance (Swadeshi)** and resistance to **British economic control**.
- As the march progressed through villages of **Gujarat**, large crowds wearing white garments walked together, creating the visual impression of a **continuous white stream moving across the landscape**.

Historical Context

- The march began on **12 March 1930** from **Sabarmati Ashram** and ended at **Dandi** on **6 April 1930**. Gandhi initially started with **78 volunteers**, but thousands joined along the route.
- The widespread use of **Khadi**, promoted by Gandhi, represented the boycott of **British-made textiles** and encouraged **indigenous production through spinning and weaving**.

Significance in the Freedom Struggle

- The imagery of a “**White Flowing River**” symbolised the **unity and peaceful mobilisation** of people in the **Civil Disobedience Movement**.
- It demonstrated how the nationalist movement used **simple symbols like Khadi and salt** to mobilise masses across regions and social groups, strengthening India’s struggle against **colonial rule**.

Consequence of the Dandi March

Correct Answer: Civil Disobedience Movement

- The **Dandi March (Salt March)** in **1930**, led by **Mahatma Gandhi**, marked the formal beginning of the **Civil Disobedience Movement** against **British colonial rule**.
- On **6 April 1930**, Gandhi reached **Dandi in Gujarat** and broke the **Salt Law** by producing salt from seawater.
- This symbolic act encouraged Indians across the country to **openly defy unjust British laws**, including the salt tax and other colonial regulations.

Expansion of the Movement

- After the Dandi March, people in many parts of **India** started **manufacturing salt illegally**, boycotting **foreign goods**, and refusing to pay certain **taxes imposed by the British government**.
- The movement witnessed participation from **students, peasants, workers, and women**, transforming it into a **nationwide mass protest** against colonial authority.

Historical Significance

- The **Civil Disobedience Movement (1930–1934)** became one of the most significant phases of **India’s freedom struggle**.
- It weakened the legitimacy of British rule and attracted **global attention** to India’s demand for **self-rule (Swaraj)** through **non-violent resistance (Satyagraha)**.



GS Paper II: Polity,

TOPICS COVERED

13 March 2026

13Mar	SC to study what constitutes 'personal data' in DPDP laws डीपीडीपी कानूनों में 'व्यक्तिगत डेटा' क्या है, यह अध्ययन करने के लिए एससी
13Mar	'Parental income alone cannot set creamy layer status' 'केवल माता-पिता की आय से क्रिमी लेयर की स्थिति तय नहीं की जा सकती'
13Mar	Women's political participation in India भारत में महिलाओं की राजनीतिक भागीदारी

SC to study what constitutes 'personal data' in DPDP laws

GS II: Polity

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday agreed to examine what constitutes "personal data" under India's new digital personal data law, which allegedly uses data privacy norms to block the right to information.

A three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant said the need to define "public data" and "personal data" has arisen following the implementation of the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023 and its corresponding Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025.

The court issued formal notice to the Union govern-

ment on a petition jointly filed by journalist Geeta Seshu and the Software Freedom Law Center, represented by senior advocate Indira Jaising and advocate Paras Nath Singh, who said the DPDP laws effectively stall journalists from accessing data of public interest concerning those who hold public offices.

"While enacted under the ostensible objective of protecting personal data, the DPDP laws in effect legalise disproportionate state surveillance, create a compensation vacuum for citizens, dilute the Right to Information, erode the ability of journalists to practice their profession and establish a data protection regulator that is



INDIRA JAISING
Senior advocate

The term 'public interest' has been deleted from the DPDP Act. Journalists cannot access data which is in public interest

structurally dependent upon the Executive," the petition said.

For one, the petition said, Section 44(3) of the Act imposes a "blanket ban" on Right to Information (RTI) applications seeking disclosure of 'personal information'.

"The term 'public interest' has been deleted from the DPDP Act. Journalists cannot access data which is in public interest. A journalist need not have perso-

nal data, but needs information which is in the public interest to satisfy the public's right to information and knowledge." Ms. Jaising submitted.

'No clear definition'
She said the Act does not clearly define terms such as "information" and "personal". The state could mount sweeping surveillance on anyone, Ms. Jaising said.

She highlighted how the

Act allowed compensation for illegally accessing personal data to go directly to the government and not the injured person.

"While the DPDP Act introduces a penalty-centric framework with fines running into hundreds of crores, such penalties are payable exclusively to the Consolidated Fund of India. The data principal whose privacy is violated receives no compensation, restitution or restoration, even in cases involving identity theft, financial fraud, reputational harm or dignitary injury," the petition said.

The Chief Justice said a balance had to be struck between privacy and the right to information. One right should not compro-

mise the other, the court said.

"At what point should data regarding a respectable person holding public office be treated as public and when should it be seen as personal?" the CJ asked. The Chief Justice pointed out that an individual's data privacy has to be protected against sweeping provisions of law. "Entire personal data of the citizenry from a substantial part of the globe are flowing into bigwig private entities. Data has become the true wealth of the day," Chief Justice Kant said.

The court asked Ms. Jaising to frame questions of law and scheduled the case for detailed hearing on March 23.

13Mar. SC to study what constitutes 'personal data' in DPDP laws डीपीडीपी कानूनों में 'व्यक्तिगत डेटा' क्या है, यह अध्ययन करने के लिए एससी

- The Supreme Court on Thursday agreed to examine what constitutes "personal data" under India's new digital personal data law, which allegedly uses data privacy norms to block the right to information.

सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने गुरुवार को यह अध्ययन करने के लिए सहमति व्यक्त की कि भारत के नए डिजिटल व्यक्तिगत डेटा कानून के तहत "व्यक्तिगत डेटा" क्या है, जो कथित तौर पर डेटा गोपनीयता मानकों का उपयोग सूचना के अधिकार को रोकने के लिए करता है।

- A three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant said the need to define "public data" and "personal data" has arisen following the implementation of the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023 and its corresponding Digital Personal Data Protection Rules, 2025.

तीन न्यायाधीशों की बेंच, जिसका नेतृत्व भारत के मुख्य न्यायाधीश सूर्य कांत कर रहे हैं, ने कहा कि "सार्वजनिक डेटा" और "व्यक्तिगत डेटा" को परिभाषित करने की आवश्यकता डिजिटल पर्सनल डेटा प्रोटेक्शन (DPDP) अधिनियम, 2023 और इसके संबंधित डिजिटल पर्सनल डेटा प्रोटेक्शन नियम, 2025 के लागू होने के बाद उत्पन्न हुई है।

- The court issued formal notice to the Union government on a petition jointly filed by journalist Geeta Seshu and the Software Freedom Law Center, represented by senior advocate Indira Jaising and advocate Paras Nath Singh, who said the DPDP laws effectively stall journalists from accessing data of public interest concerning those who hold public offices.



कोर्ट ने **केंद्रीय सरकार** को औपचारिक नोटिस जारी किया, जो पत्रकार **गीता शेषु** और **सॉफ्टवेयर फ्रीडम लॉ सेंटर** द्वारा संयुक्त रूप से दायर याचिका पर आधारित था, जिनका प्रतिनिधित्व वरिष्ठ अधिवक्ता **इंदिरा जैसिंग** और अधिवक्ता **Paras Nath Singh** ने किया, जिन्होंने कहा कि DPDP कानून वास्तव में पत्रकारों को सार्वजनिक हित के डेटा तक पहुंचने से रोकते हैं जो सार्वजनिक पदों पर रहते हैं।

- “While enacted under the ostensible objective of protecting personal data, the DPDP laws in effect legalise **disproportionate state surveillance**, create a **compensation vacuum** for citizens, dilute the **Right to Information**, erode the ability of journalists to practice their profession and establish a **data protection regulator** that is structurally dependent upon the Executive,” the petition said.

“हालांकि व्यक्तिगत डेटा की सुरक्षा के कथित उद्देश्य के तहत लागू किए गए, DPDP कानून वास्तव में **असमान राज्य निगरानी** को वैध बनाते हैं, नागरिकों के लिए **मुआवजा शून्यता** पैदा करते हैं, **सूचना के अधिकार** को कमजोर करते हैं, पत्रकारों की पेशेवर क्षमता को कम करते हैं और एक **डेटा सुरक्षा नियामक** स्थापित करते हैं जो संरचनात्मक रूप से कार्यपालिका पर निर्भर है,” याचिका में कहा गया।

- For one, the petition said, Section 44(3) of the Act imposes a “**blanket ban**” on **Right to Information (RTI)** applications seeking disclosure of ‘personal information’.
एक ओर, याचिका में कहा गया कि अधिनियम की धारा 44(3) में ‘व्यक्तिगत जानकारी’ के प्रकटीकरण के लिए **सूचना के अधिकार (RTI)** आवेदन पर “**संपूर्ण प्रतिबंध**” लगाया गया है।

- “The term ‘**public interest**’ has been deleted from the DPDP Act. Journalists cannot access data which is in public interest. A journalist need not have personal data, but needs information which is in the public interest to satisfy the public’s right to information and knowledge.” Ms. Jaising submitted.

“DPDP अधिनियम से ‘**सार्वजनिक हित**’ शब्द हटा दिया गया है। पत्रकार उस डेटा तक पहुंच नहीं सकते जो सार्वजनिक हित में हो। एक पत्रकार के पास व्यक्तिगत डेटा होना आवश्यक नहीं है, लेकिन उसे ऐसी जानकारी की आवश्यकता है जो सार्वजनिक हित में हो ताकि जनता के **सूचना और ज्ञान के अधिकार** को पूरा किया जा सके।” श्रीमती जैसिंग ने प्रस्तुत किया।

‘No clear definition’ ‘कोई स्पष्ट परिभाषा नहीं’

- She said the Act does not clearly define terms such as “**information**” and “**personal**”. The state could mount **sweeping surveillance** on anyone, Ms. Jaising said.
उन्होंने कहा कि अधिनियम “**सूचना**” और “**व्यक्तिगत**” जैसे शब्दों को स्पष्ट रूप से परिभाषित नहीं करता। राज्य किसी पर भी **व्यापक निगरानी** कर सकता है, श्रीमती जैसिंग ने कहा।
- She highlighted how the Act allowed **compensation for illegally accessing personal data** to go directly to the government and not the injured person.
उन्होंने बताया कि अधिनियम कैसे **अवैध रूप से व्यक्तिगत डेटा तक पहुंचने के लिए मुआवजा** सीधे सरकार को जाता है, न कि प्रभावित व्यक्ति को।

- “While the DPDP Act introduces a **penalty-centric framework** with fines running into hundreds of crores, such penalties are payable exclusively to the **Consolidated Fund of India**. The **data principal** whose privacy is violated receives no **compensation, restitution or restoration**, even in cases involving **identity theft, financial fraud, reputational harm or dignitary injury**,” the petition said.

“हालांकि DPDP अधिनियम **दंड-केंद्रित ढांचा** पेश करता है जिसमें जुर्माने सैकड़ों करोड़ों तक होते हैं, ऐसे दंड केवल **भारत के समेकित कोष** को दिए जाते हैं। जिसका **डेटा मुख्य** प्रभावित होता है, उसे कोई **मुआवजा, पुनर्स्थापना या पुनर्प्राप्ति** नहीं मिलती, यहां तक कि **पहचान की चोरी, वित्तीय धोखाधड़ी, प्रतिष्ठा को नुकसान या गरिमा पर चोट** के मामलों में भी,” याचिका में कहा गया।

- The Chief Justice said a balance had to be struck between **privacy** and the **right to information**. One right should not compromise the other, the court said.
मुख्य न्यायाधीश ने कहा कि **गोपनीयता** और **सूचना के अधिकार** के बीच संतुलन स्थापित करना आवश्यक है। एक अधिकार दूसरे को प्रभावित नहीं करना चाहिए, कोर्ट ने कहा।

- “At what point should data regarding a respectable person holding public office be treated as **public** and when should it be seen as **personal**?” the CJI asked.

“किस बिंदु पर सार्वजनिक पद धारक व्यक्ति के बारे में डेटा को **सार्वजनिक** माना जाना चाहिए और कब इसे **व्यक्तिगत** माना जाना चाहिए?” CJI ने पूछा।



- The Chief Justice pointed out that an individual's **data privacy** has to be protected against **sweeping provisions of law**. "Entire personal data of the citizenry from a substantial part of the globe are flowing into **bigwig private entities**. Data has become the true wealth of the day," Chief Justice Kant said.

मुख्य न्यायाधीश ने बताया कि किसी व्यक्ति की **डेटा गोपनीयता** को **कानून की व्यापक प्रावधानों** के खिलाफ सुरक्षित किया जाना चाहिए। "पूरी दुनिया के बड़े हिस्से से नागरिकों का व्यक्तिगत डेटा **बड़े निजी संस्थाओं** में बह रहा है। डेटा आज का असली धन बन गया है," मुख्य न्यायाधीश कांत ने कहा।

- The court asked Ms. Jaising to frame **questions of law** and scheduled the case for detailed hearing on **March 23**.

कोर्ट ने श्रीमती जैसिंग से **कानूनी प्रश्न** तैयार करने को कहा और मामले की विस्तृत सुनवाई **23 मार्च** को निर्धारित की।

Parental income alone cannot set creamy layer status'

GS II: Polity
Abhinav Lakshman
NEW DELHI

Settling the decades-long confusion over how to calculate wealth or income to determine the creamy layer status of OBC candidates for reservation, the Supreme Court ruled this week that it "cannot be decided solely on the basis of the [parental] income".

This is likely to widen the reservation pool to include the children of senior public sector officials who had earlier been excluded on the basis of their parents' annual salary income being above the ₹8 lakh threshold.

The court said the framework to exclude the creamy layer from the OBC quota is clear that parental income from salaries and agricultural land are to be kept out while applying the income/wealth test.

A Bench of Justices P.S. Narasimha and R. Mahadevan was hearing an appeal by the Union government against lower court rulings in favour of such OBC candidates. The cases arise from confusion over how to apply the income/wealth test for OBC children of PSU/PSB officials in the absence of equivalence with government posts, and whether income from salaries can be included in these calculations. During the hearings, OBC candidates selected in civil services examinations over the past decade argued that the Centre had incorrectly deemed them as part of the excluded creamy layer by including the salaries of their parents who worked in Central and State PSUs.

'Based on status'

In its March 11 judgment, the court noted that the creamy layer exclusion criteria were "status-based rather than purely income-based, reflecting the policy understanding that advancement within the governmental service hierarchy denotes social progression independent of fluctuating salary levels".

When the OBC quota was introduced in 1993, a guiding charter was created to exclude OBC candidates whose families had accumulated certain social and economic privileges over the years, known as the creamy layer.

This would then allow reservation benefits only for those declared as "non-creamy layer" candidates, based on several criteria,



The SC said the OBC creamy layer exclusion criteria status-based.

including a crucial income or wealth test.

The 1993 charter of the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) had declared some OBC families ineligible on the basis of their occupations.

Thus, children of people in constitutional posts, senior Central and State government employees, members of the armed forces, and property owners supposedly could not avail themselves of the OBC quota for the civil services.

However, exceptions were carved out of these exclusions: for instance, children of MPs and MLAs; government officials who have been promoted, not hired, into senior positions; and owners of unirrigated agricultural land, among others, are all eligible for OBC quotas, subject to a parental annual income limit of ₹8 lakh.

However, the DoPT has differentiated in how this income test is applied. With the help of a clarificatory letter issued in October 2004, the interpretation that has been applied was that parental salaries could be counted separately to apply the income test for determining the creamy layer for candidates whose parents worked in Central or State PSUs, an interpretation that was contested in the present cases.

'Unequal treatment'

Delivering the judgment in this batch of cases, the Supreme Court said, "Treating the children of those employed in PSUs or private employment, etc., as being excluded from the benefit of reservation only on the basis of their income derived from salaries, and without reference to their posts (whether Group A or B, or Group C or D) would certainly lead to hostile discrimination between parties who are similarly placed and would amount to equals being treated unequally."

13Mar. 'Parental income alone cannot set creamy layer status'

'केवल माता-पिता की आय से क्रिमी लेयर की स्थिति तय नहीं की जा सकती'

- Settling the decades-long confusion over how to calculate **wealth or income** to determine the **creamy layer status** of **OBC candidates** for reservation, the **Supreme Court** ruled this week that it "cannot be decided solely on the basis of the [parental] income".

आरक्षण के लिए **OBC उम्मीदवारों** की **क्रिमी लेयर स्थिति** निर्धारित करने के लिए **धन या आय** की गणना कैसे की जाए, इस दशकों पुराने भ्रम को सुलझाते हुए, इस सप्ताह **सुप्रीम कोर्ट** ने फैसला सुनाया कि इसे केवल [माता-पिता की] आय के आधार पर "निर्धारित नहीं किया जा सकता।"

- This is likely to widen the **reservation pool** to include the children of senior **public sector officials** who had earlier been excluded on the basis of their parents' **annual salary income** being above the ₹8 lakh threshold.

यह संभावना है कि **आरक्षण पूल** का दायरा बढ़ जाएगा और इसमें वरिष्ठ **सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के अधिकारियों** के बच्चे शामिल होंगे, जिन्हें पहले उनके माता-पिता की **वार्षिक वेतन आय** ₹8 लाख की सीमा से अधिक होने के आधार पर बाहर रखा गया था।

- The court said the framework to exclude the **creamy layer** from the **OBC quota** is clear that **parental income** from **salaries** and **agricultural land** are to be kept out while applying the **income/wealth test**.

कोर्ट ने कहा कि **OBC कोटा** से **क्रिमी लेयर** को बाहर करने का ढांचा स्पष्ट है कि **माता-पिता की आय**, चाहे वह **वेतन** से हो या **कृषि भूमि** से, **आय/धन परीक्षण** लागू करते समय बाहर रखी जानी चाहिए।

- A Bench of Justices **P.S. Narasimha** and **R. Mahadevan** was hearing an **appeal** by the **Union government** against lower court rulings in favour of such OBC candidates.

न्यायमूर्ति **P.S. नरसिम्हा** और **R. महादेवन** की बेंच ऐसे OBC उम्मीदवारों के पक्ष में निचली अदालत के फैसलों के खिलाफ **केंद्र सरकार** की **अपील** सुन रही थी।

- The cases arise from confusion over how to apply the **income/wealth test** for OBC children of **PSU/PSB officials** in the absence of equivalence with government posts, and whether **income from salaries** can be included in these calculations.

ये मामले तब उत्पन्न हुए जब **PSU/PSB अधिकारियों** के OBC बच्चों के लिए **आय/धन परीक्षण** कैसे लागू किया जाए, इस बारे में भ्रम था, खासकर जब सरकारी पदों के समानता की अनुपस्थिति हो, और यह कि क्या **वेतन से आय** को इन गणनाओं में शामिल किया जा सकता है।



- During the hearings, OBC candidates selected in **civil services examinations** over the past decade argued that the **Centre** had incorrectly deemed them as part of the excluded **creamy layer** by including the **salaries of their parents** who worked in **Central and State PSUs**.
सुनवाई के दौरान, पिछले दशक में सिविल सेवा परीक्षा में चयनित OBC उम्मीदवारों ने तर्क दिया कि केंद्र ने उन्हें क्रिमी लेयर से बाहर किए गए भाग के रूप में गलत तरीके से माना क्योंकि इसमें उनके माता-पिता के वेतन शामिल किए गए जो केंद्र और राज्य PSUs में काम करते थे।

‘Based on status’ ‘स्थिति के आधार पर’

- In its March 11 judgment, the court noted that the **creamy layer exclusion criteria** were “**status-based** rather than purely income-based, reflecting the policy understanding that advancement within the governmental service hierarchy denotes social progression independent of fluctuating salary levels”.
अपने 11 मार्च के निर्णय में, कोर्ट ने नोट किया कि क्रिमी लेयर बहिष्कार मानदंड “स्थिति-आधारित हैं न कि केवल आय-आधारित, जो इस नीति की समझ को दर्शाते हैं कि सरकारी सेवा पदानुक्रम में उन्नति वेतन स्तर के उतार-चढ़ाव से स्वतंत्र सामाजिक प्रगति को दर्शाती है।”
- When the **OBC quota** was introduced in 1993, a guiding charter was created to exclude OBC candidates whose families had accumulated certain **social and economic privileges** over the years, known as the **creamy layer**.
जब 1993 में OBC कोटा पेश किया गया, तो एक मार्गदर्शक चार्टर बनाया गया ताकि उन OBC उम्मीदवारों को बाहर किया जा सके जिनके परिवारों ने वर्षों में कुछ सामाजिक और आर्थिक विशेषाधिकार जमा किए थे, जिन्हें क्रिमी लेयर कहा जाता है।
- This would then allow **reservation benefits** only for those declared as “**non-creamy layer**” candidates, based on several criteria, including a crucial **income or wealth test**.
इसके बाद केवल उन उम्मीदवारों को आरक्षण लाभ मिलेगा जिन्हें “नॉन-क्रिमी लेयर” घोषित किया गया हो, कई मानदंडों के आधार पर, जिसमें एक महत्वपूर्ण आय या धन परीक्षण शामिल है।
- The 1993 charter of the **Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT)** had declared some OBC families ineligible on the basis of their **occupations**.
कार्मिक और प्रशिक्षण विभाग (DoPT) का 1993 का चार्टर कुछ OBC परिवारों को उनके व्यवसायों के आधार पर अयोग्य घोषित करता था।
- Thus, children of people in **constitutional posts**, senior **Central and State government employees**, members of the **armed forces**, and **property owners** supposedly could not avail themselves of the **OBC quota** for the **civil services**.
इस प्रकार, संवैधानिक पदों पर लोग, वरिष्ठ केंद्रीय और राज्य सरकारी कर्मचारी, सशस्त्र बलों के सदस्य, और संपत्ति मालिकों के बच्चे कथित तौर पर सिविल सेवा के लिए OBC कोटा का लाभ नहीं ले सकते थे।
- However, exceptions were carved out of these exclusions: for instance, children of **MPs and MLAs**; government officials who have been **promoted**, not hired, into **senior positions**; and owners of **unirrigated agricultural land**, among others, are all eligible for **OBC quotas**, subject to a **parental annual income limit** of ₹8 lakh.
हालांकि, इन बहिष्कारों से अपवाद बनाए गए: उदाहरण के लिए, सांसद और विधायक के बच्चे; ऐसे सरकारी अधिकारी जिन्हें हायर नहीं बल्कि पदोन्नत किया गया है वरिष्ठ पदों में; और असिंचित कृषि भूमि के मालिक, अन्य के साथ, सभी OBC कोटा के लिए पात्र हैं, बशर्ते माता-पिता की वार्षिक आय सीमा ₹8 लाख हो।
- However, the **DoPT** has differentiated in how this **income test** is applied.
हालांकि, DoPT ने यह अलग किया है कि यह आय परीक्षण कैसे लागू किया जाता है।
- With the help of a clarificatory letter issued in October 2004, the interpretation that has been applied was that **parental salaries** could be counted separately to apply the **income test** for determining the **creamy layer** for candidates whose parents worked in **Central or State PSUs**, an interpretation that was contested in the present cases.
अक्टूबर 2004 में जारी एक स्पष्टिकरण पत्र की मदद से, लागू की गई व्याख्या यह थी कि माता-पिता के वेतन को अलग से गिना जा सकता है ताकि केंद्र या राज्य PSUs में काम करने वाले माता-पिता वाले उम्मीदवारों के लिए क्रिमी लेयर निर्धारित करने के लिए आय परीक्षण लागू किया जा सके, जिसे वर्तमान मामलों में चुनौती दी गई थी।



‘Unequal treatment’ ‘असमान व्यवहार’

- Delivering the judgment in this batch of cases, the **Supreme Court** said, “Treating the children of those employed in **PSUs or private employment**, etc., as being excluded from the benefit of **reservation** only on the basis of their **income derived from salaries**, and without reference to their **posts** (whether **Group A or B, or Group C or D**) would certainly lead to **hostile discrimination** between parties who are similarly placed and would amount to **equals being treated unequally**.”

इस बैच के मामलों में निर्णय सुनाते हुए, **सुप्रीम कोर्ट** ने कहा, “उन लोगों के बच्चों को जो **PSUs या निजी रोजगार** में कार्यरत हैं, केवल उनके **वेतन से प्राप्त आय** के आधार पर **आरक्षण** के लाभ से बाहर मानना, और उनके **पदों** का संदर्भ न लेना (चाहे **ग्रुप A या B, या ग्रुप C या D**) निश्चित रूप से समान स्थिति वाले पक्षों के बीच **शत्रुतापूर्ण भेदभाव** पैदा करेगा और इसका अर्थ होगा कि **समानों के साथ असमान व्यवहार** किया जा रहा है।”

PATRIOTIC IAS



Women's political participation in India

While the turnout of women voters has increased over the years, campaign participation still shows a clear gender gap. The disparity in Parliamentary representation also remains wide, reflecting limited candidature, party nominations, and constraints on political autonomy.

MOB FULL CONTEXT

GS II: Polity
Sanjay Kumar
Vibha Attri

The story so far:
Women's relationship with electoral politics has undergone a profound transformation over the past six decades. Women today vote in numbers nearly equal to men, and in several State elections, even surpass them. Yet this remarkable rise in participation has not translated proportionately into representation or power. The Indian case presents a striking paradox: electoral inclusion without structural equality.

Women as voters
In the decades after Independence, electoral participation showed clear gender disparities. Although women were formally included in the electoral process, their turnout remained significantly lower than that of men. In the 1967 Lok Sabha election, male turnout was 66.7 percent while female turnout was 55.5 percent—a gap of 11.2 percentage points (Chart 1). Similar disparities continued into the 1970s. In 1971, the gap widened slightly to 11.8 points. These patterns reflected structural constraints such as lower female literacy, restricted mobility, domestic responsibilities, and limited political outreach to women.

From the 1980s onward, the gap began to narrow steadily. By 2009 it had fallen to 4.4 percentage points. The most notable shift came in the last decade: in 2014 the gap dropped to 1.5 points, and in both 2019 and 2024 women voted at nearly the same rate as men.

A similar trend is evident in State Assembly elections between 1990 and 2025 (Chart 2). In the early 1990s, women's voter turnout was on average 4-5 percentage points lower than that of men. This gender gap narrowed steadily through the 2000s, falling to -1.8 percentage points during the 2005-07 elections and to -1 percentage point by 2008-10.

After 2010, the pattern reversed. Women began voting at slightly higher rates than men, with the average turnout gap turning positive at 1.13 percentage points during 2011-13 and widening to 2.82 percentage points in 2015-16. Although the margin moderated in subsequent years, it remained positive at 1.6 percentage points during 2020-25. Overall, the average gender turnout gap in State Assembly elections from 1990 to 2025 shows a clear long-term convergence, followed by a modest but sustained advantage in women's voter participation.

Electoral participation beyond voting
While voter turnout has approached parity, campaign-level participation continues to show a clear gender gap (Table 3). Across Lok Sabha elections from 2009 to 2024, men consistently report higher involvement in public political activities.

Women's participation in campaign activities has been gradually increasing, though a clear gender gap persists. Attendance at election meetings and rallies rose from 9 percent in 2009 to around 16 percent in recent elections, while men's participation has remained roughly double.

Similar patterns are visible in processions and door-to-door canvassing, where women's involvement increased

Winds of change

The data for the charts were sourced from the Women and Politics study conducted by Lokniti-CSDS

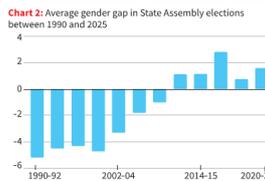
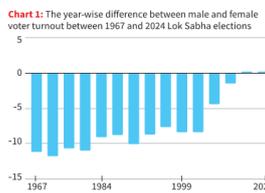


Table 3: Gender-wise participation in political activities over the years

Campaign activity	2009		2014		2019		2024	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Election meetings/rallies	9%	28%	15%	34%	14%	29%	16%	31%
Participation in processions	5%	20%	6%	15%	8%	14%	11%	18%
Participation in door to door canvassing	6%	17%	6%	14%	7%	13%	11%	19%

from about 5-6 percent to 11 percent, yet still lagged behind men. These trends suggest that while women are becoming more visible in public political activities, but they have limited engagement in electoral campaigns.

A key factor limiting women's public political engagement is the need for family permission. The Lokniti-CSDS Survey on Women and Politics, conducted in 2019, shows that most women report requiring approval for activities such as attending rallies, candidate meetings, or campaigning. These constraints highlight that gender gaps in visible political participation are shaped not only by interest or capability but also by social and familial norms (Table 4).

From participation to representation
If women have achieved parity as voters, representation in Parliament tells a different story.

In the first Lok Sabha in 1952, only 22 women were elected. For decades, women's representation fluctuated at modest levels. Even in 1977, the number dropped to 19. A visible shift began only in the 21st century. The number of women MPs rose from 59 in 2009 to 62 in 2014, and then to a historic high of 78 in 2019, before declining slightly to 74 in 2024 (Chart 5).

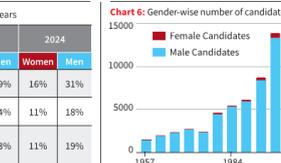
Yet even at its peak, women constituted only about 14 percent of the Lok Sabha—far below their near 50 percent share of the electorate.

The nomination bottleneck
The representational gap becomes clearer when examining candidature. In 1957, only 45 women contested parliamentary



Table 4: The share of who said they needed permission to participate in select political activities (in %)

Activity	Need Permission Yes (%)
Attend a political rally	64
Attend a candidate meeting	62
Join a protest	63
Campaign for a candidate or party	61



elections. By 1996, that number had risen sharply to 599. In recent elections, female candidature has continued to expand—688 women contested in 2014, 726 in 2019, and 800 in 2024 (Chart 6). However, these numbers must be viewed in context: male candidates still number in the thousands. Women remain a small minority among the total contestants.

Political parties often justify limited nominations by arguing that women are less "electable." Yet success rate data complicates this claim. In 1957, 49 percent of women candidates won compared to 33 percent of men (Chart 7). In 1962, women's success rate was 47 percent against 25 percent for men. Even in recent elections, women's success rates are comparable or slightly higher: in 2019, 11 percent of women candidates won, compared to 6 percent of men. In 2024, the success rates were 9 percent for women and 6 percent for men. These figures indicate that when women are given tickets, they are capable of winning.

Autonomy and political socialisation
Women's underrepresentation in legislatures reflects not only limited candidature and party nominations but also constraints on political autonomy and socialisation. While women now vote at near-parity with men, their decisions are not always independent. In 2014, 51 percent reported voting without advice, a figure that slightly declined to 50 percent by 2024.

These patterns are also reflected in women's attitudes toward political alignment within the family. A majority of women (52 percent) consider it important to share the same political views as their family (Chart 8)

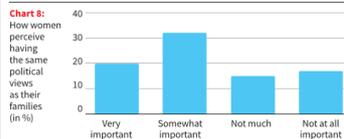
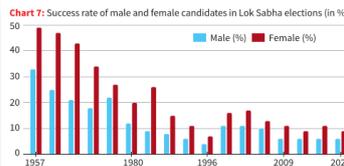
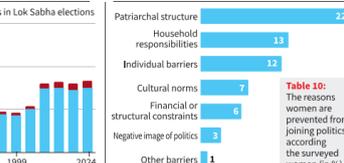


Table 9: The share of women who agree with the following statements about structural barriers (in %)

Statement	Agree (%)
Easier for woman with a political background to enter politics	58
Easier for woman from upper economic status to join politics compared to a woman from lower economic status	57
Parties routinely favour men over women, regardless of candidate merit	44
Voters are more likely to vote for men than women	44



THE GIST

Post Independence, electoral participation showed clear gender disparities. Although women were formally included in the electoral process, their turnout remained lower than that of men. From the 1980s onward, the gap began to narrow.

While voter turnout has approached parity, campaign-level participation continues to show a gender gap. Across Lok Sabha elections from 2009 to 2024, men report higher involvement in public political activities.

Representational gap in Parliament and State legislatures is prominent. Beyond family and social constraints, women also face systemic obstacles, with many perceiving that political opportunities are not equally accessible.

Beyond family and social constraints, women also face systemic obstacles within political institutions. Many perceive that political opportunities are not equally accessible. Data from the Lokniti-CSDS study on women and politics show that 58 percent of women believe it is easier for a woman from a political family to enter politics, while 57 percent feel that women from higher economic backgrounds have an advantage. Nearly half (44 percent) think that political parties prefer men when allocating tickets, and a similar proportion believe that voters favour male candidates over female (Table 9).

Structural and social barriers
When asked about the broader challenges that shape women's political participation, women pointed to a range of structural and social factors. Patriarchal structures are the biggest obstacle, cited by 22 percent of women, followed by household responsibilities (13 percent) and individual-level constraints such as lack of confidence, awareness or experience (12 percent). Cultural norms (7 percent) and financial or structural constraints (6 percent) were also reported (Table 10).

While women now vote at near-parity, true power and representation remain limited. The passage of the Women's Reservation Bill provides a structural path to bridge this gap, but the challenge remains to ensure that women's participation translates into real authority and decision-making. (Sanjay Kumar is a Professor and Political Analyst. Vibha Attri is a Researcher working with Lokniti-CSDS. Views expressed by the authors are personal.)

13Mar. Women's political participation in India भारत में महिलाओं की राजनीतिक भागीदारी

- Women's relationship with electoral politics has undergone a **profound transformation over the past six decades.**

पिछले छह दशकों में चुनावी राजनीति के साथ महिलाओं के संबंध में गहरा परिवर्तन आया है।

- Women today vote in numbers nearly equal to men, and in several **State elections even surpass them.**

आज महिलाएँ पुरुषों के लगभग बराबर संख्या में मतदान करती हैं, और कई राज्य चुनावों में उनसे अधिक मतदान करती हैं।

- Yet this remarkable rise in **participation** has not translated proportionately into **representation or power.**

फिर भी भागीदारी में इस उल्लेखनीय वृद्धि का प्रतिनिधित्व या सत्ता में समान रूप से अनुवाद नहीं हुआ है।



- The Indian case presents a striking paradox: **electoral inclusion without structural equality**.
भारतीय स्थिति एक स्पष्ट विरोधाभास प्रस्तुत करती है: **संरचनात्मक समानता के बिना चुनावी समावेशन**।

Women as voters मतदाता के रूप में महिलाएँ

- In the decades after **Independence**, electoral participation showed **clear gender disparities**.
स्वतंत्रता के बाद के दशकों में चुनावी भागीदारी में स्पष्ट लैंगिक असमानताएँ दिखाई देती थीं।
- Although women were formally included in the **electoral process**, their turnout remained **significantly lower than that of men**.
हालाँकि महिलाओं को औपचारिक रूप से **चुनावी प्रक्रिया में शामिल किया गया**, फिर भी उनका मतदान प्रतिशत **पुरुषों की तुलना में काफी कम रहा**।
- In the **1967 Lok Sabha election**, male turnout was **66.7 percent** while female turnout was **55.5 percent**.
1967 के लोकसभा चुनाव में पुरुष मतदान **66.7 प्रतिशत** था जबकि महिला मतदान **55.5 प्रतिशत** था।
- This represented a **gap of 11.2 percentage points**.
यह **11.2 प्रतिशत अंक का अंतर** था।
- Similar disparities continued into the **1970s**.
ऐसी ही असमानताएँ **1970 के दशक में भी जारी रहीं**।
- In **1971**, the gap widened slightly to **11.8 percentage points**.
1971 में यह अंतर थोड़ा बढ़कर **11.8 प्रतिशत अंक** हो गया।
- These patterns reflected **structural constraints** such as **lower female literacy, restricted mobility, domestic responsibilities, and limited political outreach to women**.
ये प्रवृत्तियाँ **संरचनात्मक बाधाओं** को दर्शाती थीं जैसे **महिलाओं की कम साक्षरता, सीमित गतिशीलता, घरेलू जिम्मेदारियाँ और महिलाओं तक सीमित राजनीतिक पहुँच**।
- From the **1980s onward**, the gap began to **narrow steadily**.
1980 के दशक के बाद यह अंतर **धीरे-धीरे कम होने लगा**।
- By **2009**, it had fallen to **4.4 percentage points**.
2009 तक यह घटकर **4.4 प्रतिशत अंक** रह गया।
- The most notable shift came in the **last decade**.
सबसे उल्लेखनीय बदलाव **पिछले दशक में** आया।
- In **2014**, the gap dropped to **1.5 percentage points**.
2014 में यह अंतर घटकर **1.5 प्रतिशत अंक** रह गया।
- In both **2019 and 2024**, women voted at **nearly the same rate as men**.
2019 और 2024 दोनों चुनावों में महिलाओं ने **लगभग पुरुषों के बराबर मतदान** किया।
- A similar trend is evident in **State Assembly elections between 1990 and 2025**.
इसी प्रकार की प्रवृत्ति **1990 से 2025 के बीच राज्य विधानसभा चुनावों में भी** दिखाई देती है।
- In the **early 1990s**, women's voter turnout was on average **4–5 percentage points lower than men**.
1990 के शुरुआती वर्षों में महिलाओं का मतदान प्रतिशत औसतन **पुरुषों से 4–5 प्रतिशत अंक कम** था।
- This gender gap narrowed steadily through the **2000s**.
यह लैंगिक अंतर **2000 के दशक में लगातार कम हुआ**।
- During the **2005–07 elections**, it fell to **–1.8 percentage points**.
2005–07 के चुनावों के दौरान यह घटकर **–1.8 प्रतिशत अंक** रह गया।
- By **2008–10**, it further reduced to **–1 percentage point**.
2008–10 तक यह और घटकर **–1 प्रतिशत अंक** हो गया।
- After **2011**, the pattern reversed.
2011 के बाद यह प्रवृत्ति उलट गई।
- Women began voting at **slightly higher rates than men**.
महिलाएँ **पुरुषों की तुलना में थोड़ी अधिक दर से मतदान** करने लगीं।
- The average turnout gap turned positive at **1.13 percentage points during 2011–13**.
2011–13 के दौरान औसत मतदान अंतर **1.13 प्रतिशत अंक** सकारात्मक हो गया।
- It widened to **2.82 percentage points during 2015–16**.
यह **2015–16 में बढ़कर 2.82 प्रतिशत अंक** हो गया।



- Although the margin moderated in **subsequent years**, it remained positive at **1.6 percentage points during 2020–25**.
हालाँकि आगामी वर्षों में यह अंतर कुछ कम हुआ, फिर भी 2020–25 के दौरान यह 1.6 प्रतिशत अंक सकारात्मक रहा।
- Overall, the average gender turnout gap in **State Assembly elections from 1990 to 2025** shows a **clear long-term convergence**.
कुल मिलाकर 1990 से 2025 तक राज्य विधानसभा चुनावों में लैंगिक मतदान अंतर दीर्घकालिक अभिसरण को दर्शाता है।
- This convergence was followed by a **modest but sustained advantage in women's voter participation**.
इसके बाद महिलाओं की मतदाता भागीदारी में मामूली लेकिन स्थायी बढ़त देखी गई।

Electoral participation beyond voting मतदान से आगे चुनावी भागीदारी

- While **voter turnout** has approached **parity**, **campaign-level participation** continues to show a **clear gender gap** (Table 3).
हालाँकि मतदाता मतदान प्रतिशत लगभग समानता तक पहुँच गया है, फिर भी चुनावी अभियान स्तर की भागीदारी में स्पष्ट लैंगिक अंतर बना हुआ है (Table 3)।
- Across **Lok Sabha elections from 2009 to 2024**, men consistently report **higher involvement in public political activities**.
2009 से 2024 तक के लोकसभा चुनावों में पुरुषों की सार्वजनिक राजनीतिक गतिविधियों में भागीदारी लगातार अधिक रही है।
- Women's participation in **campaign activities** has been **gradually increasing**, though a **clear gender gap persists**.
चुनावी अभियान गतिविधियों में महिलाओं की भागीदारी धीरे-धीरे बढ़ रही है, लेकिन स्पष्ट लैंगिक अंतर अभी भी बना हुआ है।
- Attendance at **election meetings and rallies** rose from **9 percent in 2009** to around **16 percent in recent elections**.
चुनावी सभाओं और रैलियों में उपस्थिति 2009 में 9 प्रतिशत से बढ़कर हाल के चुनावों में लगभग 16 प्रतिशत हो गई है।
- Men's participation has remained **roughly double**.
पुरुषों की भागीदारी अभी भी लगभग दोगुनी बनी हुई है।
- Similar patterns are visible in **processions and door-to-door canvassing**.
इसी प्रकार के पैटर्न जुलूसों और घर-घर प्रचार में भी दिखाई देते हैं।
- Women's involvement increased from about **5–6 percent** to **11 percent**.
महिलाओं की भागीदारी लगभग 5–6 प्रतिशत से बढ़कर 11 प्रतिशत हो गई।
- Yet it **still lagged behind men**.
फिर भी यह पुरुषों से पीछे ही रही।
- These trends suggest that women are becoming **more visible in public political activities**.
ये प्रवृत्तियाँ दर्शाती हैं कि महिलाएँ सार्वजनिक राजनीतिक गतिविधियों में अधिक दिखाई देने लगी हैं।
- But they still have **limited engagement in electoral campaigns**.
लेकिन चुनावी अभियानों में उनकी भागीदारी अभी भी सीमित है।
- A key factor limiting women's **public political engagement** is the need for **family permission**.
महिलाओं की सार्वजनिक राजनीतिक भागीदारी को सीमित करने वाला एक प्रमुख कारण परिवार की अनुमति की आवश्यकता है।
- The **Lokniti–CSDS Survey on Women and Politics (2019)** shows that most women require **approval for attending rallies, candidate meetings, or campaigning**.
लोकनीति–CSDS सर्वेक्षण (2019) के अनुसार अधिकांश महिलाओं को रैलियों, उम्मीदवारों की बैठकों या प्रचार में भाग लेने के लिए अनुमति की आवश्यकता होती है।
- These constraints highlight that gender gaps in **visible political participation** are shaped by **social and familial norms** (Table 4).
ये बाधाएँ दर्शाती हैं कि दिखाई देने वाली राजनीतिक भागीदारी में लैंगिक अंतर केवल रुचि या क्षमता से नहीं बल्कि सामाजिक और पारिवारिक मानदंडों से भी प्रभावित होता है (Table 4)।



From participation to representation भागीदारी से प्रतिनिधित्व तक

- If women have achieved **parity as voters**, representation in **Parliament** tells a **different story**.
यदि महिलाएँ मतदाता के रूप में समानता प्राप्त कर चुकी हैं, तो संसद में प्रतिनिधित्व एक अलग कहानी बताता है।
- In the **first Lok Sabha in 1952**, only **22 women were elected**.
1952 की पहली लोकसभा में केवल **22 महिलाएँ** निर्वाचित हुई थीं।
- For decades, women's representation **fluctuated at modest levels**.
दशकों तक महिलाओं का प्रतिनिधित्व **निम्न स्तर पर उतार-चढ़ाव** करता रहा।
- Even in **1977**, the number dropped to **19**.
1977 में यह संख्या घटकर **19** रह गई।
- A visible shift began only in the **21st century**.
स्पष्ट परिवर्तन केवल **21वीं सदी** में दिखाई देना शुरू हुआ।
- The number of women MPs rose from **59 in 2009** to **62 in 2014**.
महिला सांसदों की संख्या **2009 में 59** से बढ़कर **2014 में 62** हो गई।
- It then reached a **historic high of 78 in 2019**.
इसके बाद **2019 में 78 का ऐतिहासिक उच्च स्तर** प्राप्त हुआ।
- The number declined slightly to **74 in 2024 (Chart 5)**.
इसके बाद **2024 में यह थोड़ी घटकर 74** रह गई (Chart 5)।
- Even at its peak, women constituted only about **14 percent of the Lok Sabha**.
अपने उच्चतम स्तर पर भी महिलाएँ **लोकसभा का केवल लगभग 14 प्रतिशत** ही थीं।
- This is far below their **nearly 50 percent share of the electorate**.
यह उनके मतदाताओं में लगभग **50 प्रतिशत हिस्से** से बहुत कम है।

The nomination bottleneck नामांकन की बाधा

- The representational gap becomes clearer when examining **candidature**.
प्रतिनिधित्व का अंतर **उम्मीदवारी** का विश्लेषण करने पर और स्पष्ट हो जाता है।
- In **1957**, only **45 women contested parliamentary elections**.
1957 में केवल **45 महिलाओं ने संसदीय चुनाव लड़ा**।
- By **1996**, the number had risen sharply to **599**.
1996 तक यह संख्या बढ़कर **599** हो गई।
- Female candidature has continued to expand in recent elections.
हाल के चुनावों में **महिलाओं की उम्मीदवारी लगातार बढ़ती रही है**।
- **668 women contested in 2014**.
2014 में 668 महिलाओं ने चुनाव लड़ा।
- **726 women contested in 2019**.
2019 में 726 महिलाओं ने चुनाव लड़ा।
- **800 women contested in 2024 (Chart 6)**.
2024 में 800 महिलाओं ने चुनाव लड़ा (Chart 6)।
- However, male candidates still **number in the thousands**.
फिर भी पुरुष उम्मीदवारों की संख्या **हजारों में** है।
- Women remain a **small minority among total contestants**.
महिलाएँ कुल उम्मीदवारों में अभी भी **छोटा अल्पसंख्यक समूह** हैं।
- Political parties often justify limited nominations by claiming women are **less "electable"**.
राजनीतिक दल अक्सर सीमित टिकट देने को यह कहकर उचित ठहराते हैं कि महिलाएँ **कम "electable"** हैं।
- However, **success rate data** challenges this claim.
लेकिन **सफलता दर के आँकड़े** इस दावे को चुनौती देते हैं।
- In **1957**, **49 percent of women candidates won** compared to **33 percent of men (Chart 7)**.
1957 में 49 प्रतिशत महिला उम्मीदवार जीतीं, जबकि पुरुषों की सफलता दर **33 प्रतिशत** थी (Chart 7)।



- In **1962**, women's success rate was **47 percent** compared to **25 percent** for men.
1962 में महिलाओं की सफलता दर **47 प्रतिशत** थी जबकि पुरुषों की **25 प्रतिशत**।
- Even in recent elections, women's success rates remain **comparable or slightly higher**.
हाल के चुनावों में भी महिलाओं की सफलता दर **समान या थोड़ी अधिक** रही है।
- In **2019**, **11 percent of women candidates won** compared to **6 percent of men**.
2019 में **11 प्रतिशत महिला उम्मीदवार जीतीं**, जबकि पुरुषों में यह **6 प्रतिशत** था।
- In **2024**, the success rates were **9 percent for women and 6 percent for men**.
2024 में सफलता दर **महिलाओं के लिए 9 प्रतिशत और पुरुषों के लिए 6 प्रतिशत** रही।
- These figures indicate that **when women are given tickets, they are capable of winning**.
ये आँकड़े दर्शाते हैं कि **जब महिलाओं को टिकट दिया जाता है तो वे जीतने में सक्षम होती हैं**।

Autonomy and political socialisation स्वायत्तता और राजनीतिक समाजीकरण

- Women's **underrepresentation in legislatures** reflects not only **limited candidature and party nominations** but also **constraints on political autonomy and socialisation**.
विधायिकाओं में महिलाओं का **कम प्रतिनिधित्व** केवल **सीमित उम्मीदवारी और पार्टी नामांकन** का परिणाम नहीं है, बल्कि **राजनीतिक स्वायत्तता और समाजीकरण पर प्रतिबंधों** को भी दर्शाता है।
- While women now vote at **near-parity with men**, their decisions are **not always independent**.
हालाँकि महिलाएँ अब **पुरुषों के लगभग बराबर मतदान** करती हैं, लेकिन उनके निर्णय हमेशा **स्वतंत्र नहीं होते**।
- In **2014**, **51 percent** reported **voting without advice**.
2014 में **51 प्रतिशत** महिलाओं ने बताया कि उन्होंने **बिना सलाह के मतदान** किया।
- This figure slightly declined to **50 percent by 2024**.
यह आँकड़ा **2024 तक घटकर 50 प्रतिशत** रह गया।
- These patterns are also reflected in women's **attitudes toward political alignment within the family**.
ये पैटर्न परिवार के भीतर **राजनीतिक विचारों के सामंजस्य के प्रति महिलाओं के दृष्टिकोण** में भी दिखाई देते हैं।
- A majority of women (**52 percent**) consider it important to **share the same political views as their family (Chart 8)**.
अधिकांश महिलाएँ (**52 प्रतिशत**) यह मानती हैं कि **परिवार के साथ समान राजनीतिक विचार साझा करना महत्वपूर्ण है (Chart 8)**।
- Beyond **family and social constraints**, women also face **systemic obstacles within political institutions**.
परिवार और सामाजिक बाधाओं के अलावा महिलाएँ **राजनीतिक संस्थाओं के भीतर भी प्रणालीगत बाधाओं** का सामना करती हैं।
- Many perceive that **political opportunities are not equally accessible**.
कई महिलाओं का मानना है कि **राजनीतिक अवसर समान रूप से उपलब्ध नहीं हैं**।
- Data from the **Lokniti-CSDS study on women and politics** show that **58 percent of women** believe it is easier for a **woman from a political family to enter politics**.
महिलाओं और राजनीति पर लोकनीति-CSDS अध्ययन के आँकड़ों के अनुसार **58 प्रतिशत महिलाएँ** मानती हैं कि **राजनीतिक परिवार से आने वाली महिला के लिए राजनीति में प्रवेश करना आसान होता है**।
- **57 percent** feel that women from **higher economic backgrounds** have an advantage.
57 प्रतिशत का मानना है कि **उच्च आर्थिक पृष्ठभूमि की महिलाओं को लाभ मिलता है**।
- Nearly **44 percent** think that **political parties prefer men when allocating tickets**.
लगभग **44 प्रतिशत** का मानना है कि **टिकट वितरण के समय राजनीतिक दल पुरुषों को प्राथमिकता देते हैं**।
- A similar proportion believe that **voters favour male candidates over female (Table 9)**.
लगभग उतनी ही संख्या का मानना है कि **मतदाता महिला उम्मीदवारों की तुलना में पुरुष उम्मीदवारों को प्राथमिकता देते हैं (Table 9)**।



Structural and social barriers संरचनात्मक और सामाजिक बाधाएँ

- When asked about the broader challenges shaping **women's political participation**, women pointed to **multiple structural and social factors**.
जब महिलाओं की राजनीतिक भागीदारी को प्रभावित करने वाली व्यापक चुनौतियों के बारे में पूछा गया, तो महिलाओं ने कई संरचनात्मक और सामाजिक कारकों की ओर संकेत किया।
- Patriarchal structures** were identified as the **biggest obstacle**, cited by **22 percent** of women.
पितृसत्तात्मक संरचनाएँ सबसे बड़ी बाधा मानी गई, जिन्हें 22 प्रतिशत महिलाओं ने उल्लेखित किया।
- This was followed by **household responsibilities (13 percent)**.
इसके बाद घरेलू जिम्मेदारियाँ (13 प्रतिशत) प्रमुख बाधा रहीं।
- Individual-level constraints such as **lack of confidence, awareness or experience** were cited by **12 percent**.
व्यक्तिगत स्तर की बाधाएँ जैसे आत्मविश्वास, जागरूकता या अनुभव की कमी को 12 प्रतिशत महिलाओं ने बताया।
- Cultural norms (7 percent)** were also reported as barriers.
सांस्कृतिक मानदंड (7 प्रतिशत) को भी बाधा के रूप में बताया गया।
- Financial or structural constraints (6 percent)** were also mentioned (Table 10).
वित्तीय या संरचनात्मक बाधाएँ (6 प्रतिशत) भी बताई गई (Table 10)।
- While women now vote at **near-parity**, **true power and representation remain limited**.
हालाँकि महिलाएँ अब लगभग समान स्तर पर मतदान करती हैं, फिर भी वास्तविक शक्ति और प्रतिनिधित्व सीमित है।
- The passage of the **Women's Reservation Bill** provides a **structural path to bridge this gap**.
महिला आरक्षण विधेयक का पारित होना इस अंतर को कम करने का एक संरचनात्मक मार्ग प्रदान करता है।
- However, the challenge remains to ensure that **women's participation translates into real authority and decision-making**.
फिर भी चुनौती यह बनी हुई है कि महिलाओं की भागीदारी वास्तविक अधिकार और निर्णय लेने की शक्ति में परिवर्तित हो।

GS Paper II: International Relations

TOPICS COVERED

13 March 2026

13Mar Is India tailing the U.S. in its West Asia policy?
क्या भारत पश्चिम एशिया नीति में अमेरिका का अनुसरण कर रहा है?



Is India tailing the U.S. in its West Asia policy?



Amb. Talmiz Ahmad is a former Indian diplomat. He served as Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the UAE.

PARLEY

A major war has erupted in West Asia, with Israel, the U.S., and Iran locked in direct conflict. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Israel just before the country, along with the U.S., attacked Iran. India has not condemned the killing of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Meanwhile, the war has resulted in rising energy prices, economic risks, and put at risk the safety of hundreds of thousands of Indian families in the region. Is India tailing the U.S. in its West Asia policy? Talmiz Ahmad and Kabir Taneja discuss this question in a conversation moderated by Smriti Sudesh. Edited excerpts:



Kabir Taneja is the Executive Director of Observer Research Foundation Middle East.

How is India's response to the Israel-U.S.-Iran war affecting its energy, economy, and citizens' safety?

Talmiz Ahmad: Given India's long-term stakes in regional peace, energy security, trade, investment, connectivity projects, and the welfare of 10 million Indians in the region, the government's approach has been surprisingly detached.

Developments over the past two years, including Hamas attacks on Israel, a two-year war killing 72,000 people, and Israeli and U.S. strikes on Iran, should have demanded urgent attention. India could have played a central role in urging restraint, but its response was half-hearted. Our External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar did have one meeting with the GCC Foreign Ministers and also one meeting in January with the Arab League Foreign Ministers. But the sense of urgency and the sense that we have a collective view with regard to regional security, none of that appears to have emerged. And, Mr. Modi's visit to Israel just before the conflict sent signals of affiliation. In moments of significant strategic churn, we do not take sides. You should keep your options open.

Iranian drones and missiles have struck Gulf territories. They have actively intercepted these threats but have explicitly ruled out direct military participation in the war. How sustainable is this stance?

Kabir Taneja: Most Gulf countries are currently framing their actions as purely defensive. They seem to be very careful not to use terminology such as "war" or indicate any offensive position they want to take. They have made it very clear that they are only taking down projectiles that have been launched against them. However, cracks are emerging in their air defences. If they shift to an offensive posture and strike targets in Iran, they would be seen as joining



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu during a press conference in Jerusalem on February 26. AFP

Israel and the U.S. against Iran. That is not something that is going to be palatable in the long term for the Gulf countries themselves.

If this conflict prolongs in the manner in which it is continuing right now, it will become unsustainable for them to react in the way they are currently reacting. They could face shortages of air defences if such attacks persist for a continuous period.

Modi's Israel visit occurred just before the joint Israeli-U.S. strikes, and India has not condemned the killing of Khamenei. Does this indicate that India is taking a side?

TA: Mr. Modi's visit to Israel and his warm engagement with the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, and his speech at the Knesset, indicate that Mr. Modi followed his heart. He believed that Israel needs India now. You could also argue that this emotional bonding with Israel could be justified on security and strategic grounds. Israel, at the end of the day, is a major supplier of security-related technology and defence equipment to us.

However, strategic ambiguity can sometimes serve national interests better than openly signalling a one-sided affiliation on the eve of conflict.

India's relationship with Iran has historically been friendly. But as Tehran faces sustained air strikes, New Delhi has maintained silence. What does it say about the current state of India-Iran ties?

KT: Many believe India's bilateral trade with Iran seems limited beyond oil and the Chabahar Port project, making it appear that economic ties are mainly transactional.

From an Indian point of view, our relationship with Iran is strategically very critical because of the work that we can do with them on issues such as Pakistan and Afghanistan, and now of course with connectivity to Central Asia and the South Caucasus. Given this strategic significance,



Most Gulf countries are currently framing their actions as purely defensive. They seem to be very careful not to use terminology such as "war" or indicate any offensive position they want to take.

KABIR TANEJA

It is somewhat perplexing that India has not been able to use certain terms such as "protection of sovereignty" and similar language when discussing what has taken place in Iran, including the assassination of Khamenei. There have been top-level conversations. Also, Mr. Jaishankar alluded to the fact that there have been difficulties in reaching President Masoud Pezeshkian as well. At present, it is very muddled.

To what extent does the U.S. influence India's policy towards West Asia?

TA: Beyond the already complex state of global affairs, we now face a significant source of unpredictability and aggression in the persona of U.S. President Donald Trump. He has allowed himself to be manipulated by Mr. Netanyahu.

It is in this background that we have to evaluate how India has dealt with the region and the U.S. President. Mr. Modi engaged with Mr. Trump in February, believing that he could pick up where he left off at the end of Mr. Trump's first term. Several things went wrong.

First, he imposed huge tariffs upon us. Then we had the issue of penal tariffs relating to Russian oil sales. Then we had to negotiate the FTA, which by most accounts turned out to be quite one-sided.

Mr. Trump also expected India to publicly credit him for 'brokering' the India-Pakistan ceasefire. I suspect in his heart of hearts, he believes that the Nobel Prize denied to him is largely on account of India not giving him the plaudits that he felt he deserved. And that has made him hostile to India and to Mr. Modi.

When Mr. Modi told the Finnish President that "war does not solve anything", that message should have been conveyed in Washington and Tel Aviv as well. Besides the murder of large numbers of civilians, which has now become an Israeli habit, they have created a very serious crisis: energy crisis, economic crisis and threats to the life and livelihood of millions of our people.

What is the current outlook for the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)?

KT: It has not really moved forward since it was announced. The October 7 Hamas terror attack against Israel was a fundamental institutional blow to IMEC. Prior to that, there was some positivity about at least beginning discussions on how it could be constructed as a trade corridor. But since the Gaza crisis, it has been almost completely absent from government agendas. It continues to be discussed in Track-Two dialogues and research circles, but at the government level, there is no one particularly keen on pushing that project forward right now. With the current crisis taking place, it has been pushed even further to the back of everyone's mind. From an academic point of view, it is easy to draw lines across countries and say a corridor can run through here or there. But if capital and business are not interested in using it, there is no point. Right now, we are seeing a level of instability in the Gulf that we have not witnessed in a long time.

As far as IMEC is concerned, it is definitely on the back burner at this point of time.

What is your overall assessment of the trajectory of this war?

TA: Talking about the regional scenario after the war is difficult at this stage. My hope is that they are able to bring a ceasefire into play very soon.

In conflicts like this, the Americans may need to intervene to end the fighting. Unlike post-9/11 U.S. interventions, there is no immediate crisis now, and Iran's weapons programme shows no evidence of revival. Then what is this war about?

Mr. Trump had encouraged a dialogue with the Iranians. They had three rounds of dialogue. There is every evidence that Iran's approach was extraordinarily constructive. But despite this, Mr. Trump went to war. The future of Israel is uncertain because it is connected with the fortunes of Mr. Netanyahu. He has always put his personal fortunes ahead of the national interest. It remains to be seen what the attitude of the Israeli people is, whether they are in a forgiving mood and uphold him as 'Mr. Security' once again.

West Asia lacks a platform for serious security discussions. Track-Two dialogues should pave the way for I.S-level engagement, eventually leading to government-to-government talks. India, China, Russia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam can play a significant role if they assume responsibility for facilitating constructive dialogue.



To listen to the full interview
Scan the code or go to the link
www.thehindu.com

13Mar. Is India tailing the U.S. in its West Asia policy?

क्या भारत पश्चिम एशिया नीति में अमेरिका का अनुसरण कर रहा है?

- A major war has erupted in West Asia, with Israel, the U.S., and Iran locked in direct conflict.

पश्चिम एशिया में एक बड़ा युद्ध छिड़ गया है, जिसमें इज़राइल, अमेरिका और ईरान सीधे संघर्ष में शामिल हैं।

- Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Israel just before the country, along with the U.S., attacked Iran.

भारतीय प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने इज़राइल का दौरा किया, ठीक उससे पहले जब अमेरिका के साथ मिलकर इज़राइल ने ईरान पर हमला किया।

- India has not condemned the killing of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

भारत ने आयतोल्ला अली खामेनेई की हत्या की निंदा नहीं की है।

- Meanwhile, the war has resulted in rising energy prices and economic risks.

इस बीच इस युद्ध के कारण ऊर्जा कीमतों में वृद्धि और आर्थिक जोखिम बढ़ गए हैं।

- It has also put at risk the safety of hundreds of thousands of Indian families in the region.

इसने क्षेत्र में रहने वाले लाखों भारतीय परिवारों की सुरक्षा को भी खतरे में डाल दिया है।

- The question arises: Is India tailing the U.S. in its West Asia policy?

यह प्रश्न उठता है कि क्या भारत पश्चिम एशिया नीति में अमेरिका का अनुसरण कर रहा है?

- This issue was discussed by Talmiz Ahmad and Kabir Taneja, in a conversation moderated by Smriti Sudesh.

इस मुद्दे पर तलमीज़ अहमद और कबीर तनेजा ने चर्चा की, जिसका संचालन स्मृति सुदेश ने किया।

Energy, economy and citizens' safety

ऊर्जा, अर्थव्यवस्था और नागरिकों की सुरक्षा



- **Talmiz Ahmad** stated that given India's long-term stakes in regional peace, energy security, trade, investment and connectivity projects, the government's approach has been **surprisingly detached**.
तलमीज़ अहमद के अनुसार क्षेत्रीय शांति, ऊर्जा सुरक्षा, व्यापार, निवेश और संपर्क परियोजनाओं में भारत के दीर्घकालिक हितों को देखते हुए सरकार का दृष्टिकोण आश्चर्यजनक रूप से उदासीन रहा है।
- India also has to consider the **welfare of 10 million Indians living in the region**.
भारत को क्षेत्र में रहने वाले लगभग 10 मिलियन भारतीयों के कल्याण पर भी ध्यान देना चाहिए।
- Developments over the past **two years** include **Hamas attacks on Israel**.
पिछले दो वर्षों की घटनाओं में हमास द्वारा इज़राइल पर हमला शामिल है।
- There has also been a **two-year war killing 72,000 people**.
इसके साथ दो वर्षों से चल रहे युद्ध में 72,000 लोगों की मृत्यु हुई है।
- Additionally, there have been **Israeli and U.S. strikes on Iran**.
इसके अलावा इज़राइल और अमेरिका द्वारा ईरान पर हमले भी हुए हैं।
- These developments should have demanded **urgent attention from India**.
इन घटनाओं को भारत से तत्काल ध्यान देने की आवश्यकता थी।
- India could have played a **central role in urging restraint**.
भारत संयम की अपील करने में केंद्रीय भूमिका निभा सकता था।
- However, its response was described as **half-hearted**.
लेकिन इसकी प्रतिक्रिया को आधा-अधूरा बताया गया।
- India's **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar** held **one meeting with GCC Foreign Ministers**.
भारत के विदेश मंत्री एस. जयशंकर ने GCC के विदेश मंत्रियों के साथ एक बैठक की।
- He also had **one meeting in January with the Arab League Foreign Ministers**.
उन्होंने जनवरी में अरब लीग के विदेश मंत्रियों के साथ भी एक बैठक की।
- However, the **sense of urgency and a collective regional security view did not emerge**.
लेकिन तत्कालता की भावना और क्षेत्रीय सुरक्षा पर सामूहिक दृष्टिकोण सामने नहीं आया।
- Mr. Modi's **visit to Israel just before the conflict sent signals of affiliation**.
संघर्ष से ठीक पहले मोदी की इज़राइल यात्रा ने संबद्धता के संकेत दिए।
- During moments of **significant strategic churn**, countries usually **avoid taking sides**.
महत्वपूर्ण रणनीतिक परिवर्तन के समय, देश आमतौर पर किसी पक्ष का समर्थन करने से बचते हैं।
- Countries are expected to **keep their options open**.
देशों से अपेक्षा की जाती है कि वे अपने विकल्प खुले रखें।

Gulf countries' defensive stance

खाड़ी देशों की रक्षात्मक स्थिति

- **Iranian drones and missiles** have struck **Gulf territories**.
ईरानी ड्रोन और मिसाइलों ने खाड़ी क्षेत्रों को निशाना बनाया है।
- These countries have **actively intercepted these threats**.
इन देशों ने इन खतरों को सक्रिय रूप से रोकने का प्रयास किया है।
- However, they have **explicitly ruled out direct military participation in the war**.
लेकिन उन्होंने युद्ध में प्रत्यक्ष सैन्य भागीदारी से स्पष्ट रूप से इनकार किया है।
- According to **Kabir Taneja**, most **Gulf countries** frame their actions as **purely defensive**.
कबीर तनेजा के अनुसार अधिकांश खाड़ी देश अपने कार्यों को पूरी तरह रक्षात्मक बताते हैं।
- They avoid using terms such as **"war" or offensive posture**.
वे "युद्ध" या आक्रामक स्थिति जैसे शब्दों का उपयोग करने से बचते हैं।
- They emphasise that they are **only intercepting projectiles launched against them**.
वे इस बात पर जोर देते हैं कि वे केवल अपने खिलाफ दागे गए प्रोजेक्टाइल को रोक रहे हैं।
- However, **cracks are emerging in their air defence systems**.
लेकिन उनकी वायु रक्षा प्रणालियों में कमजोरियाँ दिखाई देने लगी हैं।
- If Gulf countries **shift to an offensive posture and strike targets in Iran**, they would be seen as **joining Israel and the U.S. against Iran**.
यदि खाड़ी देश आक्रामक रुख अपनाकर ईरान पर हमला करते हैं, तो उन्हें ईरान के खिलाफ इज़राइल और अमेरिका के साथ शामिल माना जाएगा।



- Such a move would **not be palatable for Gulf countries in the long term.**
ऐसा कदम दीर्घकाल में खाड़ी देशों के लिए स्वीकार्य नहीं होगा।
- If the conflict **continues for a prolonged period**, their current defensive strategy may become **unsustainable.**
यदि यह संघर्ष लंबे समय तक जारी रहता है, तो उनकी वर्तमान रक्षात्मक रणनीति **अस्थिर हो सकती है।**
- They could even face **shortages of air defence systems** if attacks continue.
यदि हमले जारी रहते हैं, तो उन्हें **वायु रक्षा प्रणालियों की कमी** का सामना करना पड़ सकता है।

Modi's Israel visit and India's West Asia policy मोदी की इज़राइल यात्रा और भारत की पश्चिम एशिया नीति

- Modi's Israel visit occurred just before the joint Israeli-U.S. strikes, and India has not condemned the killing of Khamenei.
मोदी की इज़राइल यात्रा संयुक्त इज़राइल-अमेरिका हमलों से ठीक पहले हुई, और भारत ने खामेनेई की हत्या की निंदा नहीं की है।
- Does this indicate that India is taking a side?
क्या यह संकेत देता है कि **भारत किसी एक पक्ष का समर्थन कर रहा है?**

Talmiz Ahmad's view तलमीज़ अहमद का दृष्टिकोण

- Mr. Modi's visit to Israel and his warm engagement with the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, indicate that Mr. Modi followed his heart.
मोदी की इज़राइल यात्रा और इज़राइल के प्रधानमंत्री बेंजामिन नेतन्याहू के साथ उनकी गर्मजोशी भरी बातचीत से संकेत मिलता है कि **मोदी ने भावनात्मक दृष्टिकोण अपनाया।**
- He believed that **Israel needs India now.**
उन्हें लगा कि **इज़राइल को इस समय भारत की आवश्यकता है।**
- This emotional bonding with Israel could also be **justified on security and strategic grounds.**
इज़राइल के साथ यह भावनात्मक संबंध **सुरक्षा और रणनीतिक कारणों से भी उचित ठहराया जा सकता है।**
- Israel is a **major supplier of security-related technology and defence equipment to India.**
इज़राइल भारत को **सुरक्षा तकनीक और रक्षा उपकरणों का एक प्रमुख आपूर्तिकर्ता है।**
- However, **strategic ambiguity** can sometimes serve **national interests better.**
लेकिन **रणनीतिक अस्पष्टता कभी-कभी राष्ट्रीय हितों की बेहतर रक्षा कर सकती है।**
- This is especially true instead of **openly signalling a one-sided affiliation on the eve of conflict.**
विशेषकर **संघर्ष से ठीक पहले किसी एक पक्ष का खुला समर्थन करने के बजाय।**

India-Iran relations भारत-ईरान संबंध

- India's relationship with Iran has **historically been friendly.**
भारत और **ईरान के संबंध ऐतिहासिक रूप से मित्रतापूर्ण रहे हैं।**
- However, as **Tehran faces sustained air strikes**, New Delhi has maintained **silence.**
लेकिन जब **तेहरान लगातार हवाई हमलों का सामना कर रहा है**, तब **नई दिल्ली ने चुप्पी बनाए रखी है।**
- Many believe India's **bilateral trade with Iran is limited beyond oil and the Chabahar Port project.**
कई लोगों का मानना है कि **ईरान के साथ भारत का द्विपक्षीय व्यापार तेल और चाबहार बंदरगाह परियोजना से आगे सीमित है।**
- This makes it appear that **economic ties are mainly transactional.**
इससे ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि **आर्थिक संबंध मुख्यतः लेन-देन आधारित हैं।**
- However, from India's perspective, the **relationship with Iran is strategically critical.**
लेकिन भारत के दृष्टिकोण से **ईरान के साथ संबंध रणनीतिक रूप से अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण हैं।**



- This includes cooperation on issues related to **Pakistan and Afghanistan**.
इसमें **पाकिस्तान और अफगानिस्तान से जुड़े मुद्दों पर सहयोग** शामिल है।
- It also includes **connectivity with Central Asia and the South Caucasus**.
इसके साथ **मध्य एशिया और दक्षिण काकेशस के साथ संपर्क** भी शामिल है।
- Given this **strategic significance**, India's silence has been described as **perplexing**.
इस **रणनीतिक महत्व** को देखते हुए भारत की चुप्पी को **उलझनभरा** बताया गया है।
- India has not used terms such as "**protection of sovereignty**" while discussing the events in Iran.
भारत ने ईरान की घटनाओं पर चर्चा करते समय "**संप्रभुता की रक्षा**" जैसे शब्दों का उपयोग भी नहीं किया।
- This includes the **assassination of Khamenei**.
इसमें **खामेनेई की हत्या** भी शामिल है।
- There have been **top-level conversations between the two countries**.
दोनों देशों के बीच **उच्च स्तर की बातचीत** भी हुई है।
- External Affairs Minister **S. Jaishankar mentioned difficulties in reaching President Masoud Pezeshkian**.
विदेश मंत्री **एस. जयशंकर ने राष्ट्रपति मसूद पेज़ेश्कियन से संपर्क करने में कठिनाइयों का उल्लेख किया।**
- At present, the situation remains **very muddled**.
वर्तमान में स्थिति **काफी अस्पष्ट और उलझी हुई** है।

U.S. influence on India's West Asia policy

भारत की पश्चिम एशिया नीति पर अमेरिकी प्रभाव

- The current global situation already involves **complex geopolitical dynamics**.
वर्तमान वैश्विक स्थिति में पहले से ही **जटिल भू-राजनीतिक परिस्थितियाँ** मौजूद हैं।
- Another factor is the **unpredictability of U.S. President Donald Trump**.
एक अन्य कारक **अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप की अनिश्चितता** है।
- It is argued that **Trump allowed himself to be influenced by Netanyahu**.
यह तर्क दिया जाता है कि **ट्रंप नेतन्याहू के प्रभाव में आ गए**।
- In **February**, Mr. Modi engaged with **Mr. Trump**, hoping to continue the relationship from **Trump's first term**.
फरवरी में मोदी ने ट्रंप से मुलाकात की, यह उम्मीद करते हुए कि ट्रंप के पहले कार्यकाल के संबंधों को आगे बढ़ाया जा सके।
- However, several issues arose afterward.
लेकिन इसके बाद कई समस्याएँ उत्पन्न हुईं।
- The U.S. **imposed large tariffs on India**.
अमेरिका ने **भारत पर बड़े टैरिफ लगा दिए**।
- There were also **penal tariffs relating to Russian oil sales**.
इसके अलावा **रूसी तेल बिक्री से जुड़े दंडात्मक टैरिफ** भी सामने आए।
- India also had to **negotiate a Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**.
भारत को **मुक्त व्यापार समझौते (FTA)** पर भी बातचीत करनी पड़ी।
- According to many accounts, this agreement **appeared quite one-sided**.
कई आकलनों के अनुसार यह समझौता **काफी एकतरफा** प्रतीत हुआ।
- Mr. Trump also expected India to **publicly credit him for brokering the India-Pakistan ceasefire**.
ट्रंप ने यह भी अपेक्षा की कि **भारत-पाकिस्तान युद्धविराम का श्रेय सार्वजनिक रूप से उन्हें दिया जाए**।
- It is suggested that Trump believed he was **denied the Nobel Prize partly because India did not praise him enough**.
यह भी कहा जाता है कि ट्रंप को लगा कि **भारत द्वारा पर्याप्त प्रशंसा न मिलने के कारण उन्हें नोबेल पुरस्कार नहीं मिला**।
- This perception may have **made him hostile towards India and Mr. Modi**.
इस धारणा ने संभवतः उन्हें **भारत और मोदी के प्रति अधिक कठोर बना दिया**।
- When Mr. Modi told the **Finnish President** that "**war does not solve anything**", that message should have been conveyed in **Washington and Tel Aviv** as well.
जब **मोदी ने फिनलैंड के राष्ट्रपति से कहा कि "युद्ध किसी समस्या का समाधान नहीं करता"**, तो यह संदेश **वॉशिंगटन और तेल अवीव तक भी पहुँचाया जाना चाहिए था**।



- The conflict has caused **large-scale civilian deaths**.
इस संघर्ष में बड़ी संख्या में नागरिकों की मौत हुई है।
- It has also created a **serious energy crisis and economic crisis**.
इसने गंभीर ऊर्जा संकट और आर्थिक संकट भी पैदा किया है।
- It threatens the **life and livelihood of millions of Indians living in the region**.
यह क्षेत्र में रहने वाले लाखों भारतीयों के जीवन और आजीविका के लिए खतरा बन गया है।

India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) भारत-मध्य पूर्व-यूरोप आर्थिक गलियारा (IMEC)

- What is the **current outlook for the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)**?
भारत-मध्य पूर्व-यूरोप आर्थिक गलियारे (IMEC) की वर्तमान स्थिति क्या है?
- **Kabir Taneja** stated that the project **has not really moved forward since it was announced**.
कबीर तनेजा के अनुसार इस परियोजना की घोषणा के बाद से इसमें वास्तव में कोई प्रगति नहीं हुई है।
- The **October 7 Hamas terror attack against Israel** dealt a **fundamental institutional blow to IMEC**.
7 अक्टूबर के हमास आतंकवादी हमले ने IMEC को एक मूलभूत संस्थागत झटका दिया।
- Prior to that, there was **some positivity about beginning discussions on how the corridor could be constructed**.
उससे पहले इस गलियारे के निर्माण पर चर्चा शुरू करने को लेकर कुछ सकारात्मक माहौल था।
- However, since the **Gaza crisis**, IMEC has been **almost completely absent from government agendas**.
लेकिन गाजा संकट के बाद से IMEC लगभग पूरी तरह सरकारों के एजेंडे से गायब हो गया है।
- The project continues to be discussed in **Track-Two dialogues and research circles**.
यह परियोजना अभी भी ट्रैक-टू संवादों और शोध समुदायों में चर्चा का विषय है।
- But at the **government level**, no country seems particularly keen on **pushing the project forward**.
लेकिन सरकारी स्तर पर फिलहाल कोई भी देश इस परियोजना को आगे बढ़ाने के लिए विशेष रूप से उत्सुक नहीं दिखता।
- With the **current regional crisis**, the project has been **pushed further to the back of everyone's mind**.
वर्तमान क्षेत्रीय संकट के कारण यह परियोजना और अधिक पीछे चली गई है।
- From an **academic perspective**, it is easy to **draw lines across countries and propose a corridor**.
शैक्षणिक दृष्टिकोण से देशों के बीच रेखाएँ खींचकर एक गलियारा प्रस्तावित करना आसान होता है।
- However, if **capital and business are not interested**, such corridors **cannot succeed**.
लेकिन यदि पूंजी और व्यापार इसमें रुचि नहीं रखते, तो ऐसे गलियारे सफल नहीं हो सकते।
- Currently, the **Gulf region is experiencing a level of instability not witnessed in a long time**.
वर्तमान में खाड़ी क्षेत्र में लंबे समय बाद इतनी अस्थिरता देखी जा रही है।
- Therefore, **IMEC is clearly on the back burner at present**.
इसलिए वर्तमान में IMEC स्पष्ट रूप से ठंडे बस्ते में है।

Trajectory of the war युद्ध की दिशा

- **Talmiz Ahmad** stated that assessing the **regional scenario after the war is difficult at this stage**.
तलमीज़ अहमद के अनुसार इस समय युद्ध के बाद के क्षेत्रीय परिदृश्य का आकलन करना कठिन है।
- He hopes that a **ceasefire can be achieved very soon**.
उन्हें उम्मीद है कि बहुत जल्द युद्धविराम संभव हो सकेगा।
- In conflicts like this, the **United States may need to intervene to end the fighting**.
ऐसे संघर्षों में लड़ाई समाप्त करने के लिए अमेरिका को हस्तक्षेप करना पड़ सकता है।



- Unlike the **post-9/11 U.S. interventions**, there is **no immediate crisis at present**.
9/11 के बाद के अमेरिकी हस्तक्षेपों के विपरीत, अभी कोई तात्कालिक संकट नहीं है।
- There is also **no evidence of Iran's weapons programme being revived**.
इसके अलावा ईरान के हथियार कार्यक्रम के पुनर्जीवित होने का कोई प्रमाण नहीं है।
- This raises the question: **what exactly is this war about?**
इससे प्रश्न उठता है कि यह युद्ध वास्तव में किस कारण से हो रहा है।
- **Donald Trump** had earlier **encouraged dialogue with Iran**.
डोनाल्ड ट्रंप ने पहले ईरान के साथ संवाद को प्रोत्साहित किया था।
- There were **three rounds of dialogue between the two sides**.
दोनों पक्षों के बीच तीन दौर की बातचीत हुई थी।
- Evidence suggests that **Iran's approach during the talks was constructive**.
प्रमाण बताते हैं कि बातचीत के दौरान ईरान का रुख काफी रचनात्मक था।
- Despite this, **Trump chose to go to war**.
इसके बावजूद ट्रंप ने युद्ध का रास्ता चुना।
- The **future of Israel** is also described as **uncertain**.
इज़राइल का भविष्य भी अनिश्चित बताया गया है।
- This uncertainty is linked to the **political fortunes of Benjamin Netanyahu**.
यह अनिश्चितता बेंजामिन नेतन्याहू के राजनीतिक भविष्य से जुड़ी हुई है।
- It is argued that **Netanyahu has often prioritised his personal political survival over national interest**.
यह तर्क दिया जाता है कि नेतन्याहू ने अक्सर राष्ट्रीय हितों से अधिक अपने राजनीतिक भविष्य को प्राथमिकता दी है।
- It remains to be seen whether **Israeli citizens will continue to support him as "Mr. Security"**.
यह देखना बाकी है कि क्या इज़राइली जनता उन्हें फिर से "Mr. Security" के रूप में समर्थन देगी।

Need for regional dialogue क्षेत्रीय संवाद की आवश्यकता

- West Asia currently **lacks a platform for serious regional security discussions**.
वर्तमान में पश्चिम एशिया में गंभीर क्षेत्रीय सुरक्षा चर्चा के लिए कोई मंच नहीं है।
- **Track-Two dialogues** could help pave the way for **1.5-level engagement**.
ट्रैक-टू संवाद आगे चलकर 1.5-स्तरीय सहभागिता का मार्ग प्रशस्त कर सकते हैं।
- This could eventually lead to **formal government-to-government negotiations**.
इसके बाद औपचारिक सरकार-से-सरकार वार्ता संभव हो सकती है।
- Countries such as **India, China, Russia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam** can play a **significant role in facilitating constructive dialogue**.
भारत, चीन, रूस, इंडोनेशिया, मलेशिया और वियतनाम जैसे देश रचनात्मक संवाद को बढ़ावा देने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभा सकते हैं।

GS Paper III: Economy,	
TOPICS COVERED	13 March 2026
13Mar	Arbitrary and opaque मनमाना और अपारदर्शी
13Mar	Economic Survey promises, impact of new labour codes आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण के वादे, नए श्रम संहिताओं का प्रभाव
13Mar	Sugar mill body welcomes SC order शुगर मिल संगठन ने एससी के आदेश का स्वागत किया



GS III: Economy

Arbitrary and opaque

EPFO has tweaked pension scheme rules without wide consultations

The manner in which the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)'s Central Board of Trustees (CBT) approved the Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS) 2026, on March 2, replacing the EPS 1995 scheme, has raised serious transparency concerns. This affects approximately 5.4 crore contributing members and 82 lakh pensioners. Although the EPS and the Employees' Provident Fund and Employees' Deposit-Linked Insurance Schemes were designed as a corollary to the Code on Social Security, 2020 – which was abruptly notified in November 2025 along with three other Codes – neither the government nor the Labour Ministry had, until now, given any hint of the new schemes. The stakeholders were not consulted by the authorities. More than any other scheme, the EPS 1995, has over the past decade, dominated headlines due to litigation in various courts, including the Supreme Court of India. Over the past 12 years, certain features of the scheme were altered, to the detriment of employees. For instance, coverage of the Pension Scheme was limited to those earning up to ₹15,000 a month, instead of offering universal coverage as originally intended. The pensionable salary calculation changed from the average pay in the last 12 months to 60 months, substantially reducing the amount of eligible pension. The unrestricted option for pension on a higher pension was limited to those who had exercised the option within a year of the modified scheme that came into force on September 1, 2014. With the Supreme Court's intervention in 2022, the higher pension option was extended to post-2014 retirees as a special case. Unfortunately, pre-2014 retirees were left in the lurch as the unrealistic conditions set by the PF body made most of them ineligible for higher pension.

In the new Pension Scheme approved by the CBT, the option provision has been removed as it is considered 'obsolete' for reflecting a narrow legal interpretation. Moreover, those hoping for an upward revision of the ₹15,000 PF contribution ceiling are disappointed, as no such indication has been given so far. Both the wage ceiling and the minimum pension of ₹1,000 were fixed over 11 years ago. The EPFO's overall approach seems to be aimed at reducing what authorities describe as the burden of pension commitment. With greater government funding and higher contributions from employers and willing employees, the EPFO can well meet pension challenges. A positive mindset along with empathy for pensioners and contributors is what is needed from the Union government and EPFO. A mere change of laws, regulations and procedures will not deliver the results desired by crores of members and lakhs of pensioners.

scheme were **altered, to the detriment of employees.**

पिछले 12 वर्षों में इस योजना की कुछ विशेषताओं में कर्मचारियों के नुकसान के लिए बदलाव किए गए।

- For instance, coverage of the Pension Scheme was limited to those earning up to **₹15,000 a month.**

उदाहरण के लिए पेंशन योजना का दायरा केवल ₹15,000 मासिक तक कमाने वालों तक सीमित कर दिया गया।

13Mar. Arbitrary and opaque मनमाना और अपारदर्शी

- EPFO has **tweaked pension scheme rules without wide consultations**

EPFO ने पेंशन योजना के नियमों में बिना व्यापक परामर्श के बदलाव (tweaked) किया है

- The manner in which the **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)'s Central Board of Trustees (CBT)** approved the **Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS) 2026**, on **March 2**, replacing the **EPS 1995 scheme**, has raised serious **transparency concerns.**

कर्मचारी भविष्य निधि संगठन (EPFO) के सेंट्रल बोर्ड ऑफ ट्रस्टीज़ (CBT) द्वारा 2 मार्च को कर्मचारी पेंशन योजना (EPS) 2026 को स्वीकृत करने का तरीका, जिसने EPS 1995 योजना को प्रतिस्थापित किया, गंभीर पारदर्शिता संबंधी चिंताओं को जन्म देता है।

- This affects approximately **5.4 crore contributing members and 82 lakh pensioners.** यह लगभग 5.4 करोड़ अंशदाता सदस्यों और 82 लाख पेंशनरों को प्रभावित करता है।

- Although the **EPS and the Employees' Provident Fund and Employees' Deposit-Linked Insurance Schemes** were designed as a corollary to the **Code on Social Security, 2020.**

हालाँकि EPS, कर्मचारी भविष्य निधि और कर्मचारी जमा-लिंक्ड बीमा योजनाएँ सामाजिक सुरक्षा संहिता, 2020 के पूरक के रूप में बनाई गई थीं।

- Which was abruptly notified in **November 2025 along with three other Codes.**

जिसे नवंबर 2025 में तीन अन्य संहिताओं के साथ अचानक अधिसूचित किया गया।

- Neither the **government nor the Labour Ministry** had until now given any hint of the **new schemes.**

अब तक सरकार या श्रम मंत्रालय ने नई योजनाओं के बारे में कोई संकेत नहीं दिया था।

- The **stakeholders were not consulted by the authorities.**

हितधारकों से अधिकारियों द्वारा कोई परामर्श नहीं किया गया।

- More than any other scheme, the **EPS 1995** has over the past decade dominated **headlines due to litigation in various courts including the Supreme Court of India.**

अन्य किसी भी योजना से अधिक, EPS 1995 पिछले एक दशक में भारत के सुप्रीम कोर्ट सहित विभिन्न अदालतों में मुकदमों के कारण सुर्खियों में रही है।

- Over the past **12 years**, certain features of the



- Instead of offering **universal coverage as originally intended**.
जबकि मूल रूप से इसका उद्देश्य सार्वभौमिक कवरेज प्रदान करना था।
- The **pensionable salary calculation changed from the average pay in the last 12 months to 60 months**.
पेंशन योग्य वेतन की गणना अंतिम 12 महीनों के औसत वेतन से बदलकर 60 महीनों के औसत वेतन पर कर दी गई।
- **Substantially reducing the amount of eligible pension**.
जिससे योग्य पेंशन की राशि में काफी कमी आई।
- The **unrestricted option for pension on a higher pension was limited to those who had exercised the option within a year of the modified scheme that came into force on September 1, 2014**.
उच्च पेंशन के लिए बिना प्रतिबंध विकल्प केवल उन्हीं लोगों तक सीमित कर दिया गया जिन्होंने 1 सितंबर 2014 से लागू संशोधित योजना के एक वर्ष के भीतर विकल्प चुना था।
- With the **Supreme Court's intervention in 2022, the higher pension option was extended to post-2014 retirees as a special case**.
2022 में सुप्रीम कोर्ट के हस्तक्षेप से 2014 के बाद सेवानिवृत्त हुए लोगों को विशेष मामले के रूप में उच्च पेंशन का विकल्प दिया गया।
- Unfortunately, **pre-2014 retirees were left in the lurch**.
दुर्भाग्य से 2014 से पहले सेवानिवृत्त हुए लोग असमंजस की स्थिति में छोड़ दिए गए।
- As the **unrealistic conditions set by the PF body made most of them ineligible for higher pension**.
क्योंकि PF निकाय द्वारा तय अवास्तविक शर्तों ने अधिकांश को उच्च पेंशन के लिए अयोग्य बना दिया।
- In the **new Pension Scheme approved by the CBT, the option provision has been removed**.
CBT द्वारा स्वीकृत नई पेंशन योजना में विकल्प का प्रावधान हटा दिया गया है।
- As it is considered **'obsolete' for reflecting a narrow legal interpretation**.
क्योंकि इसे संकीर्ण कानूनी व्याख्या को दर्शाने के कारण 'पुराना' माना गया है।
- Moreover, those hoping for an **upward revision of the ₹15,000 PF contribution ceiling are disappointed**.
इसके अलावा ₹15,000 PF योगदान सीमा में वृद्धि की उम्मीद रखने वाले निराश हैं।
- As **no such indication has been given so far**.
क्योंकि अब तक ऐसा कोई संकेत नहीं दिया गया है।
- Both the **wage ceiling and the minimum pension of ₹1,000 were fixed over 11 years ago**.
वेतन सीमा और ₹1,000 की न्यूनतम पेंशन दोनों 11 वर्ष से अधिक पहले निर्धारित की गई थीं।
- The **EPFO's overall approach seems to be aimed at reducing what authorities describe as the burden of pension commitment**.
EPFO का समग्र दृष्टिकोण ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि वह जिसे अधिकारी पेंशन दायित्व का बोझ कहते हैं उसे कम करने की दिशा में है।
- With **greater government funding and higher contributions from employers and willing employees, the EPFO can well meet pension challenges**.
अधिक सरकारी वित्तपोषण और नियोक्ताओं तथा इच्छुक कर्मचारियों से अधिक योगदान के साथ EPFO पेंशन से जुड़ी चुनौतियों का सामना कर सकता है।
- A **positive mindset along with empathy for pensioners and contributors is what is needed from the Union government and EPFO**.
पेंशनरों और अंशदाताओं के प्रति सहानुभूति के साथ सकारात्मक सोच ही केंद्र सरकार और EPFO से अपेक्षित है।
- A **mere change of laws, regulations and procedures will not deliver the results desired by crores of members and lakhs of pensioners**.
केवल कानूनों, नियमों और प्रक्रियाओं में बदलाव से करोड़ों सदस्यों और लाखों पेंशनरों को अपेक्षित परिणाम नहीं मिलेंगे।



Economic Survey promises, impact of new labour codes

GS III: Economy

MOB

India's new labour codes, with draft central rules released in December 2025, have been presented as a reform with transformative potential. The Economic Survey 2025-26 makes an optimistic case: these codes are expected to increase formalisation from 60.4% to 75.5%, generate 77 lakh jobs, reduce unemployment, boost female labour force participation and contribute 1.25% to GDP by 2029-30. These projections assume that simplifying compliance for firms will incentivise formalisation and expand registered employment.

However, over 80% of India's workers are in the informal sector, and they remain outside most of the labour code protections. The scale of informality is increasing. Firms, when given flexibility, tend to respond by shifting away from formal employment. Between 2011 and 2023, direct factory employment fell from 61% to 47%. Contract workers grew to 42% of the factory workforce. Regular employment in central public sector enterprises declined by 30,000 workers in 2024 alone, replaced by casual and contract workers (Public Enterprises Survey 2025). The organised sector, once associated with stable employment, is shrinking in India. And the new codes accelerate this by loosening regulatory definitions and protections, making it easier for firms to avoid permanent employment relationships.

Formalisation illusion

A striking feature of the codes is how they respond to informality by raising the thresholds for protections. The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code raises the definition of a "factory" from 10 workers to 20 (with power) and from 20 to 40 (without power), increases the contract labour threshold from 20 to 50 workers and raises the threshold for prior approval for lay-offs from 100 to 300 workers.

At the same time, the government expects these codes to increase formalisation. This rests



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The promises of reform cannot hide the realities in India's informal workforce

largely on expanding "fixed-term employment", that is, letting firms hire on short-term contracts instead of permanent jobs. Formal employment has historically meant job security, regular wages, social security and the ability for collective bargaining. Fixed-term employment offers some benefits under the codes, such as appointment letters and equal gratuity after one year, but undermines the key feature that distinguishes formal work from precarious work: job security.

Grey areas

While the codes require platform companies to contribute 1%-2% of annual turnover for gig worker schemes, rules on how companies must contribute, benefit levels, coverage and claim details are all left to be "notified through subsequent schemes". The reskilling fund for retrenched workers follows the same pattern: employers must deposit 15 days' wages per worker. How to access these funds, who provides training and what skills are taught are unspecified. Like India's many cess and welfare funds, collection may happen, but utilisation may lag perpetually.

The Code on Wages creates a National Floor Wage and a National Minimum Wage but offers no clear methodology for setting either and how they will differ. The new rules make space for greater administrative discretion instead. Defenders of flexible labour markets often argue that minimum wages destroy jobs. The logic is that if you force employers to pay more than market rates, they will hire fewer workers. But decades of empirical research have shown that the job loss predictions consistently fail to materialise (Dube 2019). Higher wages reduce turnover costs for firms. And, when low paid workers get raises, they spend more on food, transport, housing and goods. The increased consumption boosts aggregate demand. In labour markets where employers often have substantial power to set wages below competitive levels,

minimum wages actually improve efficiency by reducing employer exploitation.

Further, the rebranding of labour inspectors as "Inspector-cum-Facilitators" might sound progressive, but when inspectors become facilitators helping employers comply, enforcement weakens. This is made explicit by allowing employers to compound serious violations such as wage theft or unpaid overtime by paying prescribed fines. If penalties are lower than compliance costs, breaking the law can become a rational business decision. This is particularly damaging in the informal sector. In the absence of unions, labour courts or workers' awareness of rights, labour inspectors could have been the only channel for redressal. Converting them to facilitators eliminates even this minimal accountability.

There are many assumptions

The labour codes fail to confront what drives informality in the first place. It is not that regulations are too complex for firms to navigate but that informality is structurally profitable. While technology is automating routine jobs, the new platform jobs it is creating are bypassing employment relationships entirely.

The optimistic projections of the Economic Survey rest on assumptions that contradict many of the labour market realities. Making formal jobs more flexible will not lead to formalisation as long as informality remains cheaper and more profitable.

Lower compliance costs will also not create better jobs if firms respond by replacing permanent workers with contract workers. The numbers may eventually materialise, such as higher formalisation percentages, but they will measure changes in how firms account for workers, not improvements in how workers actually live.

The views expressed are personal

13Mar. Economic Survey promises, impact of new labour codes आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण के वादे, नए श्रम संहिताओं का प्रभाव

- India's new labour codes, with draft central rules released in December 2025, have been presented as a reform with transformative potential.
भारत की नई श्रम संहिताएँ, जिनके केंद्रीय मसौदा नियम दिसंबर 2025 में जारी किए गए, को परिवर्तनकारी क्षमता वाले सुधार के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया गया है।
- The Economic Survey 2025-26 makes an optimistic case.
आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण 2025-26 इस विषय में आशावादी दृष्टिकोण प्रस्तुत करता है।
- These codes are expected to increase formalisation from 60.4% to 75.5%.
इन संहिताओं से औपचारिककरण 60.4% से बढ़कर 75.5% होने की उम्मीद है।
- They are also expected to generate 77 lakh jobs.
इनसे 77 लाख नौकरियाँ उत्पन्न होने की भी अपेक्षा है।
- They are projected to reduce unemployment.
इनसे बेरोज़गारी में कमी आने का अनुमान है।
- They are expected to boost female labour force participation.
इनसे महिला श्रम बल भागीदारी में वृद्धि होने की उम्मीद है।
- They are projected to contribute 1.25% to GDP by 2029-30.
इनसे 2029-30 तक GDP में 1.25% योगदान होने का अनुमान है।
- These projections assume that simplifying compliance for firms will incentivise formalisation and expand registered employment.
ये अनुमान इस धारणा पर आधारित हैं कि कंपनियों के लिए अनुपालन को सरल बनाने से औपचारिककरण को प्रोत्साहन मिलेगा और पंजीकृत रोजगार बढ़ेगा।
- However, over 80% of India's workers are in the informal sector.
हालाँकि भारत के 80% से अधिक श्रमिक अनौपचारिक क्षेत्र में हैं।
- They remain outside most of the labour code protections.
वे अधिकांश श्रम संहिता सुरक्षा प्रावधानों से बाहर रहते हैं।



- The **scale of informality is increasing**.
अनौपचारिकता का पैमाना बढ़ रहा है।
- Firms, when given **flexibility**, tend to respond by **shifting away from formal employment**.
कंपनियाँ जब लचीलापन प्राप्त करती हैं, तो वे औपचारिक रोजगार से दूर जाने की प्रवृत्ति दिखाती हैं।
- Between **2011 and 2023**, direct factory employment fell from **61% to 47%**.
2011 से 2023 के बीच कारखानों में प्रत्यक्ष रोजगार 61% से घटकर 47% रह गया।
- **Contract workers grew to 42% of the factory workforce**.
संविदा श्रमिक कारखाना कार्यबल का 42% हो गए।
- Regular employment in **central public sector enterprises** declined by **30,000 workers in 2024 alone**.
केंद्रीय सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के उपक्रमों में नियमित रोजगार सिर्फ 2024 में ही 30,000 श्रमिकों की कमी के साथ घट गया।
- These were replaced by **casual and contract workers**.
इनकी जगह अस्थायी और संविदा श्रमिकों ने ले ली।
- This was reported in the **Public Enterprises Survey 2025**.
यह जानकारी **Public Enterprises Survey 2025** में दी गई है।
- The **organised sector**, once associated with **stable employment**, is **shrinking in India**.
संगठित क्षेत्र, जो कभी स्थिर रोजगार से जुड़ा था, भारत में सिमट रहा है।
- The **new codes accelerate this by loosening regulatory definitions and protections**.
नई श्रम संहिताएँ इस प्रक्रिया को तेज करती हैं, क्योंकि वे नियामक परिभाषाओं और सुरक्षा प्रावधानों को ढीला करती हैं।
- This makes it easier for firms to **avoid permanent employment relationships**.
इससे कंपनियों के लिए स्थायी रोजगार संबंधों से बचना आसान हो जाता है।

Formalisation illusion औपचारिककरण का भ्रम

- A striking feature of the codes is how they **respond to informality by raising the thresholds for protections**.
इन संहिताओं की एक उल्लेखनीय विशेषता यह है कि वे सुरक्षा प्रावधानों की सीमा बढ़ाकर अनौपचारिकता का जवाब देती हैं।
- The **Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code** raises the definition of a “factory” from **10 workers to 20 (with power)**.
Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code में “फैक्ट्री” की परिभाषा 10 श्रमिकों से बढ़ाकर 20 (बिजली के साथ) कर दी गई है।
- It raises the definition from **20 to 40 workers (without power)**.
यह परिभाषा बिना बिजली के 20 से बढ़ाकर 40 श्रमिक कर दी गई है।
- It increases the **contract labour threshold from 20 to 50 workers**.
इसमें संविदा श्रमिक सीमा 20 से बढ़ाकर 50 श्रमिक कर दी गई है।
- It raises the threshold for **prior approval for lay-offs from 100 to 300 workers**.
छूटनी के लिए पूर्व स्वीकृति की सीमा 100 से बढ़ाकर 300 श्रमिक कर दी गई है।
- At the same time, the government expects these codes to **increase formalisation**.
इसके साथ ही सरकार को उम्मीद है कि ये संहिताएँ औपचारिककरण बढ़ाएँगी।
- This rests largely on expanding “**fixed-term employment**”.
यह मुख्यतः “फिक्सड-टर्म रोजगार” के विस्तार पर आधारित है।
- That is, allowing firms to **hire on short-term contracts instead of permanent jobs**.
अर्थात् कंपनियों को स्थायी नौकरियों के बजाय अल्पकालिक अनुबंधों पर नियुक्ति करने की अनुमति देना।
- Formal employment has historically meant **job security, regular wages, social security, and the ability for collective bargaining**.
ऐतिहासिक रूप से औपचारिक रोजगार का अर्थ नौकरी की सुरक्षा, नियमित वेतन, सामाजिक सुरक्षा और सामूहिक सौदेबाजी की क्षमता रहा है।
- **Fixed-term employment** offers some benefits under the codes.
फिक्सड-टर्म रोजगार इन संहिताओं के तहत कुछ लाभ प्रदान करता है।
- These include **appointment letters and equal gratuity after one year**.
इनमें नियुक्ति पत्र और एक वर्ष बाद समान ग्रेच्युटी शामिल हैं।



- However, it **undermines the key feature that distinguishes formal work from precarious work.**
लेकिन यह उस मुख्य विशेषता को कमजोर करता है जो औपचारिक कार्य को अस्थिर कार्य से अलग करती है।
- That key feature is **job security.**
वह मुख्य विशेषता है नौकरी की सुरक्षा।

Grey areas धुंधले क्षेत्र

- While the codes require **platform companies** to contribute **1%-2% of annual turnover** for **gig worker schemes**, rules on how companies must contribute, benefit levels, coverage and claim details are all left to be **“notified through subsequent schemes”**.
जबकि संहिताएँ प्लेटफॉर्म कंपनियों को गिग श्रमिक योजनाओं के लिए वार्षिक टर्नओवर का 1%-2% योगदान करने की आवश्यकता बताती हैं, लेकिन कंपनियाँ कैसे योगदान देंगी, लाभ स्तर, कवरेज और दावा विवरण सभी को **“बाद की योजनाओं के माध्यम से अधिसूचित”** करने के लिए छोड़ दिया गया है।
- The **reskilling fund for retrenched workers** follows the same pattern.
निकाले गए श्रमिकों के लिए पुनः कौशल निधि भी इसी पैटर्न का पालन करती है।
- Employers must **deposit 15 days’ wages per worker.**
नियोक्ताओं को प्रति श्रमिक 15 दिनों के वेतन के बराबर राशि जमा करनी होगी।
- How to access these funds, who provides training and what skills are taught are **unspecified.**
इन निधियों तक कैसे पहुँचा जाएगा, प्रशिक्षण कौन देगा और कौन-कौन से कौशल सिखाए जाएँगे, यह स्पष्ट नहीं किया गया है।
- Like India’s many **cess and welfare funds**, collection may happen but **utilisation may lag perpetually.**
भारत के कई **सेस और कल्याण कोषों** की तरह संग्रह तो हो सकता है लेकिन उपयोग लगातार पीछे रह सकता है।
- The **Code on Wages** creates a **National Floor Wage and a National Minimum Wage** but offers **no clear methodology** for setting either and how they will differ.
वेतन संहिता (Code on Wages) राष्ट्रीय फ्लोर वेतन और राष्ट्रीय न्यूनतम वेतन बनाती है, लेकिन इन्हें तय करने की कोई स्पष्ट पद्धति नहीं देती और यह भी स्पष्ट नहीं करती कि दोनों में क्या अंतर होगा।
- The new rules make space for **greater administrative discretion** instead.
इसके बजाय नए नियम प्रशासनिक विवेक के लिए अधिक स्थान प्रदान करते हैं।
- Defenders of **flexible labour markets** often argue that **minimum wages destroy jobs.**
लचीले श्रम बाजार के समर्थक अक्सर तर्क देते हैं कि **न्यूनतम वेतन नौकरियों को समाप्त कर देता है।**
- The logic is that if employers are forced to **pay more than market rates**, they will **hire fewer workers.**
तर्क यह है कि यदि नियोक्ताओं को बाजार दर से अधिक वेतन देने के लिए मजबूर किया जाए, तो वे कम श्रमिकों को नियुक्त करेंगे।
- But decades of **empirical research** have shown that the **job loss predictions consistently fail to materialise (Dube 2019).**
लेकिन दशकों के प्रायोगिक शोध से पता चला है कि **नौकरी नुकसान की भविष्यवाणियाँ लगातार गलत साबित होती हैं (Dube 2019)।**
- Higher wages reduce **turnover costs for firms.**
उच्च वेतन कंपनियों के टर्नओवर लागत को कम करता है।
- When **low-paid workers get raises**, they spend more on **food, transport, housing and goods.**
जब कम वेतन वाले श्रमिकों की आय बढ़ती है, तो वे भोजन, परिवहन, आवास और वस्तुओं पर अधिक खर्च करते हैं।
- The increased **consumption boosts aggregate demand.**
इस बढ़ी हुई खपत से समग्र मांग बढ़ती है।
- In labour markets where employers have **substantial power to set wages below competitive levels**, minimum wages actually **improve efficiency by reducing employer exploitation.**



ऐसे श्रम बाजारों में जहाँ नियोक्ताओं के पास प्रतिस्पर्धी स्तर से कम वेतन तय करने की शक्ति होती है, वहाँ न्यूनतम वेतन वास्तव में नियोक्ता शोषण को कम करके दक्षता बढ़ाते हैं।

- Further, the rebranding of labour inspectors as “Inspector-cum-Facilitators” might sound progressive.
इसके अलावा श्रम निरीक्षकों को “Inspector-cum-Facilitators” के रूप में पुनः नामित करना प्रगतिशील लग सकता है।
- But when inspectors become facilitators helping employers comply, enforcement weakens.
लेकिन जब निरीक्षक नियोक्ताओं की सहायता करने वाले सुविधादाता बन जाते हैं, तो कानून का प्रवर्तन कमजोर हो जाता है।
- This is made explicit by allowing employers to compound serious violations such as wage theft or unpaid overtime by paying prescribed fines.
यह तब स्पष्ट होता है जब नियोक्ताओं को निर्धारित जुर्माना देकर वेतन चोरी या अवैतनिक ओवरटाइम जैसे गंभीर उल्लंघनों को निपटाने की अनुमति दी जाती है।
- If penalties are lower than compliance costs, breaking the law can become a rational business decision.
यदि जुर्माना अनुपालन लागत से कम है, तो कानून तोड़ना व्यावसायिक रूप से तर्कसंगत निर्णय बन सकता है।
- This is particularly damaging in the informal sector.
यह विशेष रूप से अनौपचारिक क्षेत्र में अधिक हानिकारक है।
- In the absence of unions, labour courts or workers’ awareness of rights, labour inspectors could have been the only channel for redressal.
यूनियनों, श्रम न्यायालयों या श्रमिकों के अधिकारों की जागरूकता के अभाव में, श्रम निरीक्षक ही न्याय का एकमात्र माध्यम हो सकते थे।
- Converting them to facilitators eliminates even this minimal accountability.
उन्हें सुविधादाता में बदल देने से यह न्यूनतम जवाबदेही भी समाप्त हो जाती है।

There are many assumptions कई धारणाएँ

- The labour codes fail to confront what drives informality in the first place.
श्रम संहिताएँ अनौपचारिकता के मूल कारणों का सामना करने में विफल रहती हैं।
- It is not that regulations are too complex for firms to navigate.
यह समस्या नहीं है कि नियम कंपनियों के लिए बहुत जटिल हैं।
- Rather, informality is structurally profitable.
बल्कि अनौपचारिकता संरचनात्मक रूप से लाभदायक है।
- While technology is automating routine jobs, the new platform jobs it is creating are bypassing employment relationships entirely.
जबकि तकनीक नियमित नौकरियों को स्वचालित कर रही है, वह जो नए प्लेटफॉर्म रोजगार बना रही है वे रोजगार संबंधों को पूरी तरह दरकिनार कर रहे हैं।
- The optimistic projections of the Economic Survey rest on assumptions that contradict many labour market realities.
आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण के आशावादी अनुमान कई श्रम बाजार वास्तविकताओं से विरोधाभास रखते हैं।
- Making formal jobs more flexible will not lead to formalisation as long as informality remains cheaper and more profitable.
जब तक अनौपचारिक रोजगार सस्ता और अधिक लाभदायक रहेगा, तब तक औपचारिक नौकरियों को अधिक लचीला बनाना औपचारिककरण नहीं ला पाएगा।
- Lower compliance costs will also not create better jobs if firms respond by replacing permanent workers with contract workers.
यदि कंपनियाँ स्थायी कर्मचारियों को संविदा कर्मचारियों से बदल देती हैं, तो कम अनुपालन लागत भी बेहतर नौकरियाँ पैदा नहीं करेगी।
- The numbers may eventually materialise, such as higher formalisation percentages.
संभव है कि आंकड़े अंततः औपचारिककरण प्रतिशत में वृद्धि दिखाएँ।
- But they will measure changes in how firms account for workers, not improvements in how workers actually live.



लेकिन वे कंपनियों द्वारा श्रमिकों को दर्ज करने के तरीके में बदलाव को मापेंगे, न कि श्रमिकों के वास्तविक जीवन में सुधार को।

Sugar mill body welcomes SC order

GS III: Economy



Sweet tidings: If SC had upheld Karnataka High Court order, it would have resulted in major revenue losses for sugar mills.

The Hindu Bureau
COIMBATORE

The Indian Sugar and Bio-Energy Manufacturers Association welcomed the Supreme Court order against preferential treatment for a standalone Dedicated Ethanol Plant (DEP) in allocation of ethanol to be sourced by oil market-

ing companies.

If the SC had upheld the Karnataka High Court order in favour of DEP, almost 199 crore litre ethanol could have shifted away from non-DEPs and sugar-based ethanol would have seen a cut of about 73 crore litre resulting in major revenue losses for sugar mills, the Association said.

के पक्ष में आदेश को बनाए रखा होता, तो लगभग 199 करोड़ लीटर एथेनॉल non-DEPs से हटकर चला जाता और शुगर-आधारित एथेनॉल में लगभग 73 करोड़ लीटर की कटौती होती, जिससे शुगर मिल्स के लिए बड़े राजस्व हानि होती, एसोसिएशन ने कहा।

13Mar. Sugar mill body welcomes SC order

शुगर मिल संगठन ने एससी के आदेश का स्वागत किया

- The Indian Sugar and BioEnergy Manufacturers Association welcomed the Supreme Court order against preferential treatment for a standalone Dedicated Ethanol Plant (DEP) in allocation of ethanol to be sourced by oil marketing companies.

इंडियन शुगर एंड बायोएनर्जी मैनुफैक्चरर्स एसोसिएशन ने सुप्रीम कोर्ट के उस आदेश का स्वागत किया, जो स्टैंडअलोन डेडिकेटेड एथेनॉल प्लांट (DEP) को तेल विपणन कंपनियों द्वारा स्रोत किए जाने वाले एथेनॉल के आवंटन में पसंदगी व्यवहार देने के खिलाफ था।

- If the SC had upheld the Karnataka High Court order in favour of DEP, almost 199 crore litre ethanol could have shifted away from non-DEPs and sugar-based ethanol would have seen a cut of about 73 crore litre resulting in major revenue losses for sugar mills, the Association said.

यदि एससी ने कर्नाटक उच्च न्यायालय के DEP

GS Paper III: S&T,

TOPICS COVERED

13 March 2026

13Mar	Big care, tiny scars: a parent's guide to navigating paediatric urology बड़ी देखभाल, छोटे निशान: बाल मूत्ररोग विज्ञान को समझने के लिए अभिभावकों की मार्गदर्शिका
13Mar	As peptide therapy becomes a popular trend, experts call for caution जैसे-जैसे पेप्टाइड थेरेपी एक लोकप्रिय प्रवृत्ति बन रही है, विशेषज्ञ सावधानी बरतने की सलाह देते हैं



Big care, tiny scars: a parent's guide to navigating paediatric urology

For any parent, hearing that their child needs medical or surgical intervention can be frightening and overwhelming. But times have changed, and with advancing medical technology, paediatric urology today focuses on minimal intervention, maximum results; early knowledge allows reassurance, preparation, and preventive intervention

ISSUES
Ramesh Babu Srinivasan

It is a moment etched into the memory of every parent: the quiet hum of the ultrasound room, the cool gel on the skin admixed with the joy and anticipation of seeing that tiny, flickering heartbeat. But sometimes, the mood shifts as the sonographer lingers a little longer on the baby's midsection.

And concern clouds the parents' mind once the doctor mentions "dilated kidneys" or "renal pelvis stretching." In that very moment, the joy of pregnancy can be clouded by a fog of "what-ifs." A train of queries floods their minds: What does it mean? How will my baby be delivered? Is it treatable and does my newborn need surgery once born? Can my baby ever lead a normal life?

We live now, in a golden age of medical technology. What once required major surgery and weeks of recovery can now often be managed with a "wait and watch" approach or precision, keyhole procedures.

Why early diagnosis is a gift

Decades ago, kidney issues in children were often only discovered when a child became severely ill or developed a high fever. Today, the majority of these conditions are caught antenatally (before birth). Modern high-resolution ultrasounds act as a sophisticated early-warning system. While hearing that your unborn child has a "kidney anomaly" is terrifying, it has a significant advantage in allowing doctors to plan and monitor the foetus. Often these so-called "anomalies" are simply variations in development that require nothing more than a follow-up scan after the baby is born, with no need for intervention.

When it comes to your child's health, early knowledge isn't just information; it allows reassurance, preparation, and preventive intervention.

Understanding hydronephrosis

If your doctor mentions "kidney stretching" or "dilation," they are likely talking about hydronephrosis. This is the most common condition identified during prenatal scans. Essentially, it means the area of the kidney where urine collects (the renal pelvis) is wider than normal. The good news is that in a vast majority of babies, this dilation is transient. As the baby grows and the urinary system matures, the stretching often resolves on its own.

While parental anxiety is high here, the medical strategy is often "watchful waiting", with the use of postnatal ultrasounds to track the dilation. In most cases, no treatment is needed. Early detection allows for careful monitoring, turning what can feel scary into a story of normal development and reassurance.

The valve issue

In some cases, the ultrasound shows that both kidneys and ureters are dilated and the baby's bladder is unusually thick or full. This can point to a condition known as Posterior Urethral Valves (PUV), which occurs only in boys.

In Posterior Urethral Valves, there is a



Medical advancements: Decades ago, kidney issues in children were often only discovered when a child became severely ill or developed a high fever. Today, the majority of these conditions are caught antenatally. GETTY IMAGES

small, extra fold of tissue (the valve) in the tube that carries urine out of the bladder (the urethra).

Because the urine can't exit easily, it backs up, causing pressure to both the bladder and the kidneys. When detected early in pregnancy, it involves extensive counselling of the parents regarding the nature of illness, continuation of pregnancy (dependent on level of liquor-fluid within mother's uterus and nature of kidneys), and the natural course of the disease.

Treating the condition the "old way" might have involved open surgery, opening out the urinary bladder/ureter, on a fragile newborn. The "modern way" is far more elegant and even during the newborn period, paediatric urologists use a tiny camera (cystoscope) to enter the urethra and "ablate" or clear the valve. No incision/scar is visible externally. A path for the passage of urine is cleared, and this provides immediate relief of pressure on the kidneys.

Recurrent infections

Once your child comes home, one thing to stay alert for is a Urinary Tract Infection (UTI). Recurrent infections, especially those accompanied by high fever often signal an underlying issue called Vesicoureteral Reflux (VUR). Normally, urine flows one way: from the kidneys, down the ureters, into the bladder. In VUR, the valve mechanism where the ureter meets the bladder doesn't close properly, allowing urine to wash back up toward the kidney, raising

Often these so-called 'anomalies' are simply variations in development that require nothing more than a follow-up scan after the baby is born, with no need for intervention

the risk of infection and kidney damage if ignored.

Parents often worry about long-term antibiotic use or "big" surgeries. The good news? Treatment today is safe, effective and minimally invasive. It can involve:

Endoscopic injection: This is a simple fix with a quick recovery. Using a tiny camera, the doctor places a special gel at the opening of the ureter forming a small cushion that works like a one-way gate, preventing urine from flowing backward. It is a day-care procedure with no cuts and your child is back home the same day after recovery.

Laparoscopic surgery: For a higher grade of such cases, there are now strong solutions via a gentle approach. Surgeons use tiny instruments through 3-5mm incisions to reposition the ureter to a normal location. This offers the success rates of traditional open surgery with smaller scars and a fraction of the pain.

Ailments in older children

A common scenario involves a 5-15-year-old child complaining of intermittent "flank pain" (pain in the side or back), especially after drinking a lot of fluids with swelling of the tummy, often

caused by a Pelviureteric Junction (PUJ) Obstruction – a condition with blockage at the point where the kidney meets the ureter.

For these older children, the gold standard is now robotic-assisted surgery. The surgeon operates with a 3D, high-definition view (10x magnification) and "wristed", tremor-filtered instruments that have a greater range of motion than the human hand. Robotic surgery allows for incredibly fine suturing in the delicate tissues of a child, ensuring the blockage is cleared with microscopic accuracy. With 1-2 days of hospital stay, your child is back on his/her feet within a week.

Towards safe, gentle care

For any parent, hearing that their child needs intervention can be frightening and overwhelming. But times have changed, and with advancing medical technology, paediatric urology today focuses on minimal intervention, maximum results.

We are moving away from large scars and long hospital stays. From newborns to teens, with the tools at our disposal – endoscopes, laparoscopes, and robotics – care is gentler than ever. With advanced, child-friendly technology, fixing problems gently and safely is a reality so that your little one can get back their laughter, playtime, and a healthy childhood.

(Prof. Dr. Ramesh Babu Srinivasan is senior consultant in paediatric urology, Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education, Chennai. drameshbabu@gmail.com)

THE GIST

▼ We live now, in a golden age of medical technology. What once required major surgery and weeks of recovery can now often be managed with a "wait and watch" approach or precision, keyhole procedures

▼ Robotic-assisted surgery, ultrasound, cystoscopy, endoscopic injection, laparoscopic surgery are some of the modern tools that are used to treat myriad conditions

▼ Modern high-resolution ultrasounds act as a sophisticated early-warning system. Early detection allows for careful monitoring, turning what can feel scary into a story of normal development and reassurance. With advanced, child-friendly technology, fixing problems gently and safely is a reality

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बड़ी देखभाल, छोटे निशान: बाल मूत्ररोग विज्ञान को समझने के लिए अभिभावकों की मार्गदर्शिका

Why early diagnosis is a gift
प्रारम्भिक निदान क्यों एक वरदान है

- It is a moment etched into the memory of every parent: the quiet hum of the **ultrasound room**, the **cool gel on the skin** admixed with the joy and anticipation of seeing that tiny, flickering **heartbeat**.

यह वह क्षण है जो हर माता-पिता की स्मृति में अंकित हो जाता है: **अल्ट्रासाउंड कक्ष** की शांत ध्वनि, त्वचा पर लगाया गया **ठंडा जेल**, और उस छोटे से झिलमिलाने **हृदय की धड़कन** को देखने की खुशी और उत्साह।

- But sometimes, the mood shifts as the **sonographer lingers a little longer on the baby's midsection**.



लेकिन कभी-कभी माहौल बदल जाता है जब सोनोग्राफर बच्चे के मध्य भाग पर थोड़ी देर अधिक ध्यान देता है।

- Concern clouds the parents' mind once the doctor mentions “dilated kidneys” or “renal pelvis stretching.”
जब डॉक्टर “गुर्दों का फैलना (dilated kidneys)” या “रीनल पेल्विस का फैलाव” बताते हैं तो माता-पिता के मन में चिंता उत्पन्न हो जाती है।
- In that moment, the joy of pregnancy can be clouded by a fog of “what-ifs.”
उस क्षण गर्भावस्था की खुशी “क्या होगा?” जैसे प्रश्नों के धुंध से घिर सकती है।
- A train of queries floods their minds: **What does it mean? How will my baby be delivered? Is it treatable? Does my newborn need surgery? Can my baby lead a normal life?**
उनके मन में कई प्रश्न उठते हैं: इसका क्या अर्थ है? मेरा बच्चा कैसे जन्म लेगा? क्या इसका इलाज संभव है? क्या नवजात को सर्जरी की आवश्यकता होगी? क्या मेरा बच्चा सामान्य जीवन जी सकेगा?
- We live now in a **golden age of medical technology.**
आज हम चिकित्सा तकनीक के स्वर्ण युग में जी रहे हैं।
- What once required **major surgery and weeks of recovery** can now often be managed with “wait and watch” approaches or **precision keyhole procedures.**
जो समस्याएँ पहले बड़ी सर्जरी और कई सप्ताह के उपचार की मांग करती थीं, अब अक्सर “वेट एंड वॉच” दृष्टिकोण या सटीक कीहोल प्रक्रियाओं से प्रबंधित की जा सकती हैं।
- Decades ago, **kidney issues in children** were often discovered only when a child became **severely ill or developed a high fever.**
दशकों पहले बच्चों में किडनी संबंधी समस्याएँ तब पता चलती थीं जब बच्चा गंभीर रूप से बीमार हो जाता या उसे तेज बुखार हो जाता।
- Today, most of these conditions are detected **antenatally (before birth).**
आज अधिकांश ऐसी स्थितियाँ एंटेनैटल यानी जन्म से पहले ही पहचान ली जाती हैं।
- Modern **high-resolution ultrasounds** act as a sophisticated **early-warning system.**
आधुनिक उच्च-रिज़ॉल्यूशन अल्ट्रासाउंड एक उन्नत प्रारंभिक चेतावनी प्रणाली की तरह काम करते हैं।
- Hearing that your unborn child has a “**kidney anomaly**” is frightening, but it allows doctors to **plan and monitor the foetus.**
यह सुनना कि अजन्मे बच्चे में “किडनी असामान्यता” है, डरावना हो सकता है, लेकिन इससे डॉक्टर भ्रूण की योजना और निगरानी कर सकते हैं।
- Often these so-called “**anomalies**” are simply **variations in development.**
अक्सर ये तथाकथित “असामान्यताएँ” केवल विकास में प्राकृतिक भिन्नताएँ होती हैं।
- Many require nothing more than a **follow-up scan after birth.**
कई मामलों में जन्म के बाद केवल फॉलो-अप स्कैन की आवश्यकता होती है।
- In most cases **no intervention is needed.**
अधिकांश मामलों में कोई उपचार आवश्यक नहीं होता।
- Early knowledge allows **reassurance, preparation, and preventive intervention.**
प्रारंभिक जानकारी आश्वासन, तैयारी और निवारक हस्तक्षेप का अवसर प्रदान करती है।

Understanding hydronephrosis

हाइड्रोनेफ्रोसिस को समझना

- If the doctor mentions “**kidney stretching**” or “**dilation,**” they are likely referring to **hydronephrosis.**
यदि डॉक्टर “किडनी का फैलाव” या “डाइलेशन” कहते हैं तो संभवतः वे हाइड्रोनेफ्रोसिस की बात कर रहे होते हैं।
- This is the **most common condition identified during prenatal scans.**
यह प्रसवपूर्व स्कैन में पहचानी जाने वाली सबसे सामान्य स्थिति है।
- It means the area where **urine collects in the kidney (renal pelvis)** is **wider than normal.**
इसका अर्थ है कि वह स्थान जहाँ मूत्र एकत्रित होता है (रीनल पेल्विस) सामान्य से अधिक चौड़ा हो गया है।
- The good news is that in **most babies the dilation is transient.**
अच्छी खबर यह है कि अधिकांश शिशुओं में यह फैलाव अस्थायी होता है।
- As the baby grows and the **urinary system matures,** the stretching often **resolves on its own.**
जैसे-जैसे बच्चा बढ़ता है और मूत्र प्रणाली परिपक्व होती है, यह फैलाव अक्सर अपने आप ठीक हो जाता है।



- Although **parental anxiety is high**, the medical strategy is often “**watchful waiting.**” हालाँकि **माता-पिता की चिंता अधिक होती है**, लेकिन चिकित्सीय रणनीति अक्सर “**सतर्क प्रतीक्षा (watchful waiting)**” होती है।
- Doctors use **postnatal ultrasounds** to track the dilation. डॉक्टर **जन्म के बाद अल्ट्रासाउंड** द्वारा इस फैलाव की निगरानी करते हैं।
- In most cases **no treatment is required.** अधिकांश मामलों में **किसी उपचार की आवश्यकता नहीं होती।**
- Early detection allows **careful monitoring.** प्रारंभिक पहचान **सावधानीपूर्वक निगरानी** संभव बनाती है।
- It turns what seems frightening into a story of **normal development and reassurance.** यह जो पहले डरावना लगता है उसे **सामान्य विकास और आश्वासन की कहानी** में बदल देता है।

The valve issue

वाल्व से संबंधित समस्या

- In some cases, the **ultrasound** shows that **both kidneys and ureters are dilated** and the baby's **bladder is unusually thick or full.** कुछ मामलों में **अल्ट्रासाउंड** से पता चलता है कि **दोनों किडनी और यूरेटर फैले हुए हैं** और बच्चे का **मूत्राशय असामान्य रूप से मोटा या भरा हुआ है।**
- This can point to a condition known as **Posterior Urethral Valves (PUV)**, which occurs **only in boys.** यह स्थिति **Posterior Urethral Valves (PUV)** नामक रोग की ओर संकेत कर सकती है, जो **केवल लड़कों में** पाया जाता है।
- In **Posterior Urethral Valves**, there is a **small extra fold of tissue (the valve)** in the tube that carries urine out of the bladder (**urethra**). **Posterior Urethral Valves** में मूत्राशय से मूत्र बाहर ले जाने वाली नली (यूरेथ्रा) में **ऊतक की एक छोटी अतिरिक्त परत (वाल्व)** होती है।
- Because the **urine cannot exit easily**, it **backs up**, causing **pressure on the bladder and kidneys.** क्योंकि **मूत्र आसानी से बाहर नहीं निकल पाता**, वह **पीछे की ओर लौटने लगता है**, जिससे **मूत्राशय और किडनी पर दबाव पड़ता है।**
- When detected **early in pregnancy**, it requires **extensive counselling of the parents.** यदि यह स्थिति **गर्भावस्था के प्रारंभिक चरण में** पता चल जाए, तो **माता-पिता की विस्तृत परामर्श प्रक्रिया** की आवश्यकता होती है।
- Counselling includes explaining the **nature of illness**, the **continuation of pregnancy** (depending on the **level of liquor-fluid in the uterus** and the **condition of the kidneys**), and the **natural course of the disease.** इस परामर्श में **रोग की प्रकृति**, **गर्भावस्था जारी रखने का निर्णय** (जो गर्भाशय में **अमियोटिक द्रव** के स्तर और **किडनी की स्थिति** पर निर्भर करता है), तथा **रोग की प्राकृतिक प्रगति** के बारे में जानकारी दी जाती है।
- Treating the condition the “**old way**” might have required **open surgery on a fragile newborn**, involving opening the **urinary bladder or ureter.** इस स्थिति के उपचार का **पुराना तरीका** अक्सर **नवजात पर ओपन सर्जरी** करना होता था, जिसमें **मूत्राशय या यूरेटर को खोलना** पड़ता था।
- The **modern approach** is far more **precise and minimally invasive.** **आधुनिक तरीका** अधिक **सटीक और न्यूनतम हस्तक्षेप वाला** है।
- During the **newborn period**, paediatric urologists use a **tiny camera called a cystoscope** to enter the **urethra.** **नवजात अवस्था में** बाल मूत्ररोग विशेषज्ञ **cystoscope** नामक एक **छोटे कैमरे** की सहायता से **यूरेथ्रा में प्रवेश करते हैं।**
- They then **ablate or clear the valve.** इसके बाद वे **वाल्व को हटाते या नष्ट करते हैं।**
- There is **no external incision or visible scar.** इस प्रक्रिया में **बाहरी चीरा या दिखाई देने वाला निशान नहीं होता।**
- A **clear pathway for urine** is created. इससे **मूत्र के प्रवाह का स्पष्ट मार्ग** बन जाता है।



- This provides **immediate relief from pressure on the kidneys**.
इससे किडनी पर पड़े दबाव से तुरंत राहत मिलती है।

Recurrent infections

बार-बार होने वाले संक्रमण

- Once the child comes home, parents should stay alert for **Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)**.
जब बच्चा घर आ जाए, तो माता-पिता को **मूत्र मार्ग संक्रमण (UTI)** के प्रति सतर्क रहना चाहिए।
- **Recurrent infections**, especially those accompanied by **high fever**, may signal an underlying condition called **Vesicoureteral Reflux (VUR)**.
बार-बार होने वाले संक्रमण, विशेषकर उच्च बुखार के साथ, **Vesicoureteral Reflux (VUR)** नामक एक अंतर्निहित समस्या का संकेत हो सकते हैं।
- Normally, **urine flows in one direction** from the **kidneys** → **ureters** → **bladder**.
सामान्यतः **मूत्र एक दिशा में बहता है**, अर्थात् **किडनी** → **यूरेटर** → **मूत्राशय**।
- In **VUR**, the **valve mechanism between the ureter and bladder** does not close properly.
VUR में **यूरेटर और मूत्राशय के बीच का वाल्व तंत्र** सही से बंद नहीं होता।
- This allows **urine to flow back toward the kidneys**.
इससे **मूत्र वापस किडनी की ओर जाने लगता है**।
- Such backflow **increases the risk of infection and kidney damage if ignored**.
यदि इसे अनदेखा किया जाए, तो यह **संक्रमण और किडनी क्षति के जोखिम को बढ़ा देता है**।

Modern treatment options and outcomes

आधुनिक उपचार विकल्प और परिणाम

- Parents often worry about **long-term antibiotic use** or **“big” surgeries**.
माता-पिता अक्सर **लंबे समय तक एंटीबायोटिक उपयोग** या **“बड़ी” सर्जरी** को लेकर चिंतित रहते हैं।
- The good news is that **treatment today is safe, effective and minimally invasive**.
अच्छी खबर यह है कि आज का **उपचार सुरक्षित, प्रभावी और न्यूनतम हस्तक्षेप वाला है**।
- Treatment today can involve **Endoscopic injection** or **Laparoscopic surgery**.
आज उपचार में **एंडोस्कोपिक इंजेक्शन** या **लैप्रोस्कोपिक सर्जरी** शामिल हो सकती है।

Endoscopic injection

एंडोस्कोपिक इंजेक्शन

- This is a **simple fix with quick recovery**.
यह **सरल उपचार** है जिसमें **तेज़ रिकवरी** होती है।
- Using a **tiny camera**, the doctor places a **special gel at the opening of the ureter**.
छोटे कैमरे की सहायता से डॉक्टर **यूरेटर के मुहाने पर एक विशेष जेल** रखते हैं।
- The gel forms a **small cushion acting like a one-way gate**.
यह जेल **एक छोटे कुशन** की तरह बनता है जो **एकतरफा द्वार** की तरह कार्य करता है।
- This prevents **urine from flowing backward**.
यह **मूत्र को पीछे की ओर बहने से रोकता है**।
- It is a **day-care procedure with no cuts**.
यह **डे-केयर प्रक्रिया** है जिसमें **कोई चीरा नहीं लगता**।
- The child usually **returns home the same day after recovery**.
बच्चा आमतौर पर **उसी दिन रिकवरी के बाद घर लौट जाता है**।

Laparoscopic surgery

लैप्रोस्कोपिक सर्जरी

- For **higher grade cases**, stronger solutions are available through a **gentle approach**.
उच्च स्तर के मामलों में **सौम्य विधि** से अधिक प्रभावी समाधान उपलब्ध हैं।
- Surgeons use **tiny instruments through 3–5 mm incisions**.
सर्जन **3–5 मिमी के छोटे चीरे** के माध्यम से **सूक्ष्म उपकरणों** का उपयोग करते हैं।



- They **reposition the ureter to a normal location**.
वे यूरेटर को सामान्य स्थान पर पुनः स्थापित करते हैं।
- This provides the **success rates of traditional open surgery**.
यह पारंपरिक ओपन सर्जरी जितनी सफलता दर प्रदान करता है।
- However, it involves **smaller scars and far less pain**.
लेकिन इसमें छोटे निशान और बहुत कम दर्द होता है।

Ailments in older children बड़े बच्चों में होने वाली समस्याएँ

- A common scenario involves a **5–15-year-old child** complaining of **intermittent flank pain**.
एक सामान्य स्थिति में 5–15 वर्ष का बच्चा बार-बार होने वाले **फ्लैक दर्द** की शिकायत करता है।
- Flank pain means **pain in the side or back**.
फ्लैक दर्द का अर्थ **कमर या शरीर के बगल में दर्द** है।
- It often appears **after drinking a lot of fluids** and may include **swelling of the abdomen**.
यह अक्सर **अधिक तरल पदार्थ पीने के बाद** होता है और **पेट में सूजन** भी हो सकती है।
- This condition is often caused by **Pelviureteric Junction (PUJ) Obstruction**.
यह स्थिति अक्सर **Pelviureteric Junction (PUJ) Obstruction** के कारण होती है।
- In this condition, there is a **blockage where the kidney meets the ureter**.
इस स्थिति में **किडनी और यूरेटर के मिलने वाले स्थान पर अवरोध** होता है।
- For such cases, the **gold standard treatment is robotic-assisted surgery**.
ऐसे मामलों में **रोबोटिक-सहायता प्राप्त सर्जरी** को **स्वर्ण मानक उपचार** माना जाता है।
- The surgeon operates using a **3D high-definition view with 10× magnification**.
सर्जन **10 गुना आवर्धन वाली 3D हाई-डेफिनिशन दृश्य प्रणाली** का उपयोग करते हैं।
- They also use **wristed, tremor-filtered instruments**.
वे **कलाई जैसी गतिशीलता और कंपन-नियंत्रित उपकरणों** का उपयोग करते हैं।
- These instruments provide a **greater range of motion than the human hand**.
ये उपकरण **मानव हाथ से अधिक गतिशीलता प्रदान करते हैं**।
- Robotic surgery enables **extremely precise suturing in delicate tissues**.
रोबोटिक सर्जरी **नाजुक ऊतकों में अत्यंत सटीक टांके लगाने** की अनुमति देती है।
- This ensures the **blockage is cleared with microscopic accuracy**.
इससे **अवरोध को सूक्ष्म स्तर की सटीकता से हटाया जाता है**।
- The hospital stay is usually **1–2 days**.
अस्पताल में रहने की अवधि सामान्यतः **1–2 दिन** होती है।
- The child can **resume normal activities within about a week**.
बच्चा लगभग **एक सप्ताह में सामान्य गतिविधियों पर लौट सकता है**।

Towards safe, gentle care सुरक्षित और सौम्य उपचार की ओर

- For parents, hearing that a child needs **medical intervention** can be **frightening and overwhelming**.
माता-पिता के लिए यह सुनना कि बच्चे को **चिकित्सीय हस्तक्षेप** की आवश्यकता है, **डरावना और तनावपूर्ण** हो सकता है।
- However, **medical technology has advanced significantly**.
हालाँकि **चिकित्सा तकनीक में महत्वपूर्ण प्रगति हुई है**।
- Modern **paediatric urology focuses on minimal intervention and maximum results**.
आधुनिक **बाल मूत्ररोग विज्ञान न्यूनतम हस्तक्षेप और अधिकतम परिणामों** पर केंद्रित है।
- Medicine is moving away from **large scars and long hospital stays**.
चिकित्सा अब **बड़े निशानों और लंबे अस्पताल प्रवास** से दूर जा रही है।
- From **newborns to teenagers**, advanced tools such as **endoscopes, laparoscopes and robotic systems** are used.
नवजात से लेकर किशोरों तक, **एंडोस्कोप, लैप्रोस्कोप और रोबोटिक प्रणालियाँ** जैसे उन्नत उपकरण उपयोग किए जाते हैं।



- These technologies make treatment **gentler and safer than ever before**.
ये तकनीकें उपचार को पहले से अधिक सौम्य और सुरक्षित बनाती हैं।
- With **advanced child-friendly medical technology**, problems can be fixed **gently and safely**.
उन्नत बाल-अनुकूल चिकित्सा तकनीक के साथ समस्याओं को सौम्यता और सुरक्षा के साथ ठीक किया जा सकता है।
- This allows children to return to **laughter, playtime, and a healthy childhood**.
इससे बच्चे हँसी, खेल और स्वस्थ बचपन की ओर वापस लौट सकते हैं।

As peptide therapy becomes a popular trend, experts call for caution

GS III: S&T

Athira Elssa Johnson

Globally, peptide therapeutics have been gaining attention in research as well as clinical practice. Studies show that more than 80 peptide-based drugs have already been approved worldwide, while over 150 peptide medicines are currently being studied in clinical trials for several medical conditions.

This trend is growing due to the promise of precision medicine and is mostly popular in wellness, fitness and anti-ageing promotions, as these medicines are seen as a targeted and 'advanced' way to improve health, appearance and performance.

How they work

Peptides are very small chains of amino acids, the basic building blocks of proteins in the body. They naturally act as

messengers that regulate functions such as hormone release, metabolism, immune responses and tissue repair, said Pearly Grace Rajan, senior consultant, internal medicine, Rela Institute and Medical Centre, Chennai. Because they can bind to specific receptors, peptides can be designed to influence particular biological pathways with precision.

In therapy, these molecules are used as medicines that mimic the body's natural signals and send targeted instructions to certain cells. Since they resemble substances already produced by the body, they often act in a more targeted manner and are generally better tolerated than some conventional drugs.

Studies show that peptide drugs account for nearly 9% of new medicines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in recent years.



Peptide therapy is growing due to the promise of precision medicine and is mostly popular in wellness, fitness and anti-ageing promotions. GETTY IMAGES

According to Y. D. Meherprasad, senior consultant, endocrinology and preventive healthcare, MGM Healthcare, Malar, Chennai, peptide therapies are designed to influence particular biological processes in the body. Unlike some traditional

medicines that may affect many systems at once, peptide-based treatments are developed to act on specific targets. Many peptide medicines are given through injections because they can be broken down in the digestive system if taken by mouth.

Dr. Rajan said interest has grown particularly in metabolic diseases such as diabetes and obesity, especially with GLP-1-based peptide drugs that help regulate blood sugar and appetite.

Peptides are explored in various fields. In oncology, they can target tumour receptors or deliver drugs directly to cancer cells. Studies suggest that oncology accounts for a significant share of peptide drug research pipelines.

In endocrinology, these therapies are used for conditions such as infertility, growth disorders and thyroid disease. Peptides that influence immune responses are also being studied for viral infections and inflammatory diseases.

In regenerative medicine, experimental peptides are being explored for their

potential to stimulate tissue repair in muscles, tendons and nerves. Antoinetta Ashwini, consultant dermatologist at Apollo Hospitals, Chennai, said peptides are also being studied in dermatology, wound healing, osteoporosis and cardiovascular diseases, highlighting their expanding therapeutic potential.

According to Dr. Rajan, therapies such as insulin analogues and hormonal peptides are routinely used in clinical practice, though peptide therapies are not always recognised as a separate treatment category in many hospitals.

Risks of misuse

While several peptide drugs are already part of routine medical care, experts point out that the rising popularity of these in the biohacking, fitness and anti-ageing markets has led to over-marketing and

misuse. Experts stress many peptides promoted online have limited or no human clinical trials.

Hundreds of peptide compounds remain in early-stage laboratory or pre-clinical research, and only a small proportion eventually become approved medicines.

Some products sold online as 'research chemicals' may contain impurities or incorrect dosing. Because peptides can influence hormonal pathways, improper use may lead to metabolic disturbances, endocrine imbalance or cardiovascular risks.

Self-injecting unapproved peptides can pose serious health risks.

Experts stress the importance of consulting a doctor about safety, research evidence and possible side effects is essential before starting such therapies. (athira.elsa@thehindu.co.in)

13Mar. As peptide therapy becomes a popular trend, experts call for caution जैसे-जैसे पेप्टाइड थेरेपी एक लोकप्रिय प्रवृत्ति बन रही है, विशेषज्ञ सावधानी बरतने की सलाह देते हैं

Peptide therapeutics पेप्टाइड चिकित्सीय उपचार

- Globally, **peptide therapeutics** have been gaining attention in **research as well as clinical practice**.
वैश्विक स्तर पर **पेप्टाइड आधारित चिकित्सीय उपचार अनुसंधान और क्लिनिकल प्रैक्टिस** दोनों में ध्यान आकर्षित कर रहे हैं।
- Studies show that **more than 80 peptide-based drugs** have already been approved **worldwide**.
अध्ययनों से पता चलता है कि **दुनिया भर में 80 से अधिक पेप्टाइड आधारित दवाओं को पहले ही मंजूरी मिल चुकी है**।
- More than **150 peptide medicines** are currently being studied in clinical trials.
150 से अधिक पेप्टाइड दवाओं पर वर्तमान में क्लिनिकल परीक्षण चल रहे हैं।
- These trials are for **several medical conditions**.
ये परीक्षण **विभिन्न चिकित्सा स्थितियों** के लिए किए जा रहे हैं।
- This trend is growing due to the promise of **precision medicine**.
यह प्रवृत्ति **प्रेसिजन मेडिसिन** की संभावनाओं के कारण बढ़ रही है।
- Peptide therapies are especially popular in **wellness, fitness and anti-ageing promotions**.
पेप्टाइड थेरेपी **वेलनेस, फिटनेस और एंटी-एजिंग** प्रचार में विशेष रूप से लोकप्रिय हो रही है।
- These medicines are seen as a **targeted and advanced way to improve health, appearance and performance**.
इन दवाओं को **स्वास्थ्य, रूप-रंग और प्रदर्शन सुधारने का लक्षित और उन्नत तरीका** माना जाता है।



How they work ये कैसे काम करते हैं

- Peptides are **very small chains of amino acids**.
पेप्टाइड अमीनो एसिड की बहुत छोटी श्रृंखलाएँ होती हैं।
- Amino acids are the **basic building blocks of proteins in the body**.
अमीनो एसिड शरीर में प्रोटीन के मूल निर्माण खंड होते हैं।
- Peptides naturally act as **messengers regulating hormone release, metabolism, immune responses and tissue repair**.
पेप्टाइड स्वाभाविक रूप से संदेशवाहक की तरह कार्य करते हैं, जो हार्मोन स्राव, चयापचय, प्रतिरक्षा प्रतिक्रिया और ऊतक मरम्मत को नियंत्रित करते हैं।
- This explanation was noted by **Pearlsy Grace Rajan**, senior consultant, **internal medicine, Rela Institute and Medical Centre, Chennai**.
यह जानकारी Pearlsy Grace Rajan, वरिष्ठ सलाहकार इंटरनल मेडिसिन, Rela Institute and Medical Centre, Chennai द्वारा दी गई।
- Because peptides can **bind to specific receptors**, they can influence **particular biological pathways with precision**.
क्योंकि पेप्टाइड विशिष्ट रिसेप्टर से जुड़ सकते हैं, इसलिए वे विशिष्ट जैविक मार्गों को सटीकता से प्रभावित कर सकते हैं।
- In therapy, these molecules are used as **medicines that mimic the body's natural signals**.
चिकित्सा में इन अणुओं का उपयोग ऐसी दवाओं के रूप में किया जाता है जो शरीर के प्राकृतिक संकेतों की नकल करती हैं।
- They send **targeted instructions to specific cells**.
वे विशिष्ट कोशिकाओं को लक्षित निर्देश भेजते हैं।
- Since they resemble **substances already produced by the body**, they act in a **more targeted manner**.
क्योंकि ये शरीर द्वारा पहले से निर्मित पदार्थों के समान होते हैं, इसलिए ये अधिक लक्षित तरीके से कार्य करते हैं।
- They are also **better tolerated than some conventional drugs**.
ये कुछ पारंपरिक दवाओं की तुलना में बेहतर सहन किए जाते हैं।
- Studies indicate that **peptide drugs account for nearly 9% of new medicines approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in recent years**.
अध्ययनों के अनुसार हाल के वर्षों में U.S. Food and Drug Administration द्वारा स्वीकृत नई दवाओं में लगभग 9 प्रतिशत पेप्टाइड दवाएँ हैं।
- According to **Y. D. Meherprasad**, senior consultant **endocrinology and preventive healthcare, MGM Healthcare, Malar, Chennai**, peptide therapies are designed to influence **specific biological processes**.
Y. D. Meherprasad, वरिष्ठ सलाहकार एंडोक्रिनोलॉजी और प्रिवेंटिव हेल्थकेयर, MGM Healthcare, Malar, Chennai के अनुसार पेप्टाइड थेरेपी विशिष्ट जैविक प्रक्रियाओं को प्रभावित करने के लिए विकसित की जाती हैं।
- Unlike some **traditional medicines that affect many systems at once**, peptide treatments act on **specific targets**.
कुछ पारंपरिक दवाओं के विपरीत जो कई प्रणालियों को एक साथ प्रभावित करती हैं, पेप्टाइड उपचार विशिष्ट लक्ष्यों पर कार्य करते हैं।
- Many peptide medicines are given through **injections**.
कई पेप्टाइड दवाएँ इंजेक्शन के माध्यम से दी जाती हैं।
- This is because they can be **broken down in the digestive system if taken orally**.
ऐसा इसलिए क्योंकि यदि इन्हें मुँह से लिया जाए तो पाचन तंत्र में टूट सकती हैं।
- Interest has grown particularly in **metabolic diseases such as diabetes and obesity**.
विशेष रूप से **मेटाबोलिक रोगों जैसे मधुमेह और मोटापा** में इनकी रुचि बढ़ी है।
- This growth is linked to **GLP-1-based peptide drugs**.
यह वृद्धि **GLP-1 आधारित पेप्टाइड दवाओं** से जुड़ी है।
- These medicines help **regulate blood sugar and appetite**.
ये दवाएँ **ब्लड शुगर और भूख** को नियंत्रित करने में मदद करती हैं।



Therapeutic applications of peptides

पेप्टाइड के चिकित्सीय उपयोग

- Peptides are explored in **various fields** of medicine.
पेप्टाइड का उपयोग चिकित्सा के **विभिन्न क्षेत्रों** में किया जा रहा है।
- In **oncology**, they can **target tumour receptors** or **deliver drugs directly to cancer cells**.
ऑन्कोलॉजी में ये **ट्यूमर रिसेप्टर को लक्षित** कर सकते हैं या **दवाओं को सीधे कैंसर कोशिकाओं तक पहुँचा सकते हैं**।
- Studies suggest that **oncology accounts for a significant share of peptide drug research pipelines**.
अध्ययन बताते हैं कि **पेप्टाइड दवा अनुसंधान पाइपलाइन में ऑन्कोलॉजी का महत्वपूर्ण हिस्सा है**।
- In **endocrinology**, these therapies are used for conditions such as **infertility, growth disorders and thyroid disease**.
एंडोक्रिनोलॉजी में इनका उपयोग **बांझपन, वृद्धि विकार और थायरॉयड रोग** जैसी स्थितियों के उपचार में किया जाता है।
- Peptides that influence **immune responses** are also being studied for **viral infections and inflammatory diseases**.
प्रतिरक्षा प्रतिक्रिया को प्रभावित करने वाले पेप्टाइड का अध्ययन **वायरल संक्रमण और सूजन संबंधी रोगों** के लिए भी किया जा रहा है।
- In **regenerative medicine**, experimental peptides are explored for their ability to **stimulate tissue repair in muscles, tendons and nerves**.
रिजेनेरेटिव मेडिसिन में प्रयोगात्मक पेप्टाइड का अध्ययन **मांसपेशियों, टेंडन और नसों में ऊतक मरम्मत को प्रोत्साहित करने** की क्षमता के लिए किया जा रहा है।
- According to **Antoinetta Ashwini**, consultant dermatologist at **Apollo Hospitals, Chennai**, peptides are also studied in **dermatology, wound healing, osteoporosis and cardiovascular diseases**.
Antoinetta Ashwini, सलाहकार त्वचा रोग विशेषज्ञ **Apollo Hospitals, Chennai** के अनुसार पेप्टाइड का अध्ययन **त्वचा रोग, घाव भरने, ऑस्टियोपोरोसिस और हृदय रोगों** में भी किया जा रहा है।
- This highlights the **expanding therapeutic potential of peptides**.
यह **पेप्टाइड के बढ़ते चिकित्सीय महत्व** को दर्शाता है।
- According to **Dr. Rajan**, therapies such as **insulin analogues and hormonal peptides** are already used **routinely in clinical practice**.
Dr. Rajan के अनुसार **इंसुलिन एनालॉग और हार्मोनल पेप्टाइड** जैसी थेरेपी पहले से ही **क्लिनिकल प्रैक्टिस में नियमित रूप से उपयोग** की जाती हैं।
- However, peptide therapies are **not always recognised as a separate treatment category in many hospitals**.
हालाँकि कई अस्पतालों में **पेप्टाइड थेरेपी को अलग उपचार श्रेणी के रूप में हमेशा नहीं पहचाना जाता**।

Risks of misuse

दुरुपयोग के जोखिम

- While several peptide drugs are already part of **routine medical care**, experts warn about their **misuse in biohacking, fitness and anti-ageing markets**.
हालाँकि कई पेप्टाइड दवाएँ **नियमित चिकित्सा उपचार का हिस्सा** हैं, विशेषज्ञ **बायोहैकिंग, फिटनेस और एंटी-एजिंग बाजारों में इनके दुरुपयोग** को लेकर चेतावनी देते हैं।
- Experts emphasise that many peptides promoted **online** have **limited or no human clinical trials**.
विशेषज्ञ बताते हैं कि **ऑनलाइन प्रचारित कई पेप्टाइड के लिए मानव क्लिनिकल परीक्षण सीमित या बिल्कुल नहीं हैं**।
- Hundreds of peptide compounds remain in **early-stage laboratory or pre-clinical research**.
सैकड़ों पेप्टाइड यौगिक अभी भी **प्रारंभिक प्रयोगशाला या प्री-क्लिनिकल अनुसंधान चरण** में हैं।
- Only a **small proportion eventually become approved medicines**.
इनमें से **केवल थोड़े से ही अंततः स्वीकृत दवाएँ बन पाते हैं**।
- Some products sold online as **“research chemicals”** may contain **impurities or incorrect dosing**.



ऑनलाइन “research chemicals” के रूप में बेचे जाने वाले कुछ उत्पादों में अशुद्धियाँ या गलत खुराक हो सकती है।

- Because peptides can influence **hormonal pathways**, improper use may lead to **metabolic disturbances**.

क्योंकि पेप्टाइड हार्मोनल मार्गों को प्रभावित कर सकते हैं, इसलिए गलत उपयोग से **मेटाबोलिक असंतुलन** हो सकता है।

- Improper use may also cause **endocrine imbalance or cardiovascular risks**. गलत उपयोग से **एंडोक्राइन असंतुलन** या **हृदय संबंधी जोखिम** भी हो सकते हैं।
- Self-injecting **unapproved peptides** can pose **serious health risks**. **अस्वीकृत पेप्टाइड को स्वयं इंजेक्शन द्वारा लेना गंभीर स्वास्थ्य जोखिम पैदा कर सकता है।**
- Experts emphasise that it is essential to **consult a doctor before starting such therapies**. विशेषज्ञ बताते हैं कि ऐसी थेरेपी शुरू करने से पहले **डॉक्टर से परामर्श करना आवश्यक** है।
- Patients should discuss **safety, research evidence and possible side effects** with a medical professional.

रोगियों को **सुरक्षा, अनुसंधान साक्ष्य और संभावित दुष्प्रभावों** के बारे में चिकित्सक से चर्चा करनी चाहिए।

PATRIOTIC IAS