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J&K beckons



Tulip blossoms: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday threw open the annual Tulip festival at the iconic Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden situated at the foothills of the Zabarwan Range in Srinagar. www.ksmtv.com

Tulip blossoms: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday threw open the annual Tulip festival at the iconic Indira **Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden** situated at the foothills of the **Zabarwan Range in Srinagar**.

Naval warships escort Indian vessels from Gulf of Oman

PCS

Saurabh Trivedi
Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

The Indian Navy has deployed warships to escort Indian-flagged merchant vessels transiting through the Persian Gulf region, according to official sources.

Three Indian Navy ships have escorted the Indian-flagged merchant ships *Shivalik*, *Nanda Devi*, and *Jag Laadki* from the Gulf of Oman after they crossed the Strait of Hormuz. The warships ensured safe transit of the vessels through vulnerable waters.

Though the conflict has been intense in the Persian Gulf west of the Strait of Hormuz, the Gulf of Oman, east of the strait, has also seen attacks. *Jag Laadki*, carrying more than 80,000 tonnes of crude oil, left Fujairah terminal



Safe arrival: LPG carrier *Shivalik* reached the Mundra port on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

in the UAE on Sunday. The vessel had a narrow escape when the terminal was attacked while it was loading.

Sources said that naval ship escort to Indian merchant ships will continue to be provided. Some 22 Indian-flagged ships are still stranded west of the strait.

While officials declined to disclose the names of the naval ships involved, a

senior official confirmed that the warships were operating in the region under Operation Sankalp, a mission aimed at safeguarding merchant shipping and protecting India's maritime interests in the Gulf region.

Launched in June 2019, Operation Sankalp ensures safe passage of Indian-flagged vessels through critical sea lanes, and saw

action, including during the Houthi attacks.

Meanwhile, LPG carrier *Shivalik* reached Mundra Port on Monday evening, the government confirmed. Earlier in the day, Rajesh Kumar Sinha, Special Secretary at the Ministry of Shipping, told reporters in an inter-ministerial briefing that priority berthing and documentation has been arranged to ensure there is no delay in discharging the cargo.

Nanda Devi, another LPG carrier, is expected to reach Kandla port on Tuesday. Individually, the vessels are holding 46,000 tonnes of cargo, cumulatively, 92,172 tonnes.

"Seafarers on board [all the three vessels] are all safe and would be reaching tomorrow at Mundra port," Mr. Sinha said.

Addressing reporters at

the same briefing, Sujata Sharma, Joint-Secretary at the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, said that cooking gas continues to be an "issue of concern", though supply of LPG to domestic consumers continues uninterrupted. No dry out has been reported among distributors, she added.

Separately, in response to a query, the senior official informed that domestic LPG production had increased 36% since the supply maintenance order.

Responding to queries about U.S. President Donald Trump seeking countries send warships to guard passage of vessels from the Strait of Hormuz, Randhir Jaiswal, spokesperson at the External Affairs Ministry, said the issue has not been taken up in any bilateral setting.

17Mar. Naval warships escort Indian vessels from Gulf of Oman

नौसैनिक युद्धपोतों ने ओमान की खाड़ी से भारतीय जहाजों को सुरक्षित एस्कॉर्ट किया

- The **Indian Navy** has deployed **warships** to escort **Indian-flagged merchant vessels** transiting through the **Persian Gulf region**, according to official sources.
आधिकारिक स्रोतों के अनुसार भारतीय नौसेना ने पर्शियन गल्फ क्षेत्र से गुजरने वाले भारतीय ध्वज वाले व्यापारी जहाजों को एस्कॉर्ट करने के लिए युद्धपोतों को तैनात किया है।
- Three **Indian Navy ships** escorted the **Indian-flagged merchant ships** **Shivalik, Nanda Devi, and Jag Laadki** from the **Gulf of Oman** after they crossed the **Strait of Hormuz**.
तीन भारतीय नौसेना के जहाजों ने स्ट्रेट ऑफ होर्मुज पार करने के बाद ओमान की खाड़ी से भारतीय ध्वज वाले व्यापारी जहाज शिवालिक, नंदा देवी और जग लाडकी को एस्कॉर्ट किया।
- The **warships** ensured safe transit of the vessels through **vulnerable waters**.
इन युद्धपोतों ने जहाजों की संवेदनशील समुद्री क्षेत्रों से सुरक्षित आवाजाही सुनिश्चित की।
- Though the **conflict** has been intense in the **Persian Gulf west of the Strait of Hormuz**, the **Gulf of Oman**, east of the strait, has also seen **attacks**.
हालाँकि स्ट्रेट ऑफ होर्मुज के पश्चिम में पर्शियन गल्फ में संघर्ष तीव्र रहा है, लेकिन जलडमरूमध्य के पूर्व में स्थित ओमान की खाड़ी में भी हमले देखे गए हैं।



- **Jag Laadki**, carrying more than **80,000 tonnes of crude oil**, left **Fujairah terminal** in the **UAE** on Sunday.
जग लाडकी, जो 80,000 टन से अधिक कच्चा तेल ले जा रही थी, रविवार को यूएई के फुजैरा टर्मिनल से खाना हुई।
- The vessel had a **narrow escape** when the terminal was **attacked** while it was loading.
जब जहाज लोडिंग कर रहा था तभी टर्मिनल पर हमला हुआ, जिससे जहाज बाल-बाल बच गया।
- Sources said that **naval ship escort to Indian merchant ships** will continue to be provided.
सूत्रों ने कहा कि भारतीय व्यापारी जहाजों को नौसैनिक एस्कोर्ट उपलब्ध कराना जारी रहेगा।
- Some **22 Indian-flagged ships** are still stranded west of the **strait**.
लगभग 22 भारतीय ध्वज वाले जहाज अभी भी जलडमरूमध्य के पश्चिम में फंसे हुए हैं।
- While officials declined to disclose the names of the **naval ships involved**, a senior official confirmed that the **warships** were operating in the region under **Operation Sankalp**, a mission aimed at **safeguarding merchant shipping and protecting India's maritime interests in the Gulf region**.
हालाँकि अधिकारियों ने शामिल नौसैनिक जहाजों के नाम बताने से इनकार किया, लेकिन एक वरिष्ठ अधिकारी ने पुष्टि की कि ये युद्धपोत ऑपरेशन संकल्प के तहत क्षेत्र में काम कर रहे थे, जिसका उद्देश्य व्यापारी जहाजों की सुरक्षा और गल्फ क्षेत्र में भारत के समुद्री हितों की रक्षा करना है।
- **Launched in June 2019, Operation Sankalp** ensures safe passage of **Indian-flagged vessels through critical sea lanes**, and saw action, including during the **Houthi attacks**.
जून 2019 में शुरू किया गया ऑपरेशन संकल्प महत्वपूर्ण समुद्री मार्गों से गुजरने वाले भारतीय ध्वज वाले जहाजों की सुरक्षित आवाजाही सुनिश्चित करता है और इसमें हूती हमलों के दौरान भी कार्रवाई की गई।
- Meanwhile, **LPG carrier Shivalik** reached **Mundra Port** on Monday evening, the government confirmed.
इस बीच एलपीजी कैरियर शिवालिक सोमवार शाम मुंद्रा बंदरगाह पहुँच गया, जिसकी पुष्टि सरकार ने की।
- Earlier in the day, **Rajesh Kumar Sinha, Special Secretary** at the **Ministry of Shipping**, told reporters in an **inter-ministerial briefing** that **priority berthing and documentation** has been arranged to ensure there is no delay in **discharging the cargo**.
दिन में पहले पोत परिवहन मंत्रालय के विशेष सचिव राजेश कुमार सिन्हा ने एक अंतर-मंत्रालयी ब्रीफिंग में पत्रकारों को बताया कि कार्गो उतारने में देरी न हो, इसके लिए प्राथमिकता बर्थिंग और दस्तावेजी व्यवस्था की गई है।
- **Nanda Devi**, another **LPG carrier**, is expected to reach **Kandla port** on Tuesday.
दूसरा एलपीजी कैरियर नंदा देवी मंगलवार को कांडला बंदरगाह पहुँचने की उम्मीद है।



Sahitya Akademi announces awards for 2025 in 24 languages

Eight books of poetry, four novels, six books of short stories, two essays, one literary criticism work, an autobiography, and two memoirs win

PCS

GS I: History: A&C

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Sahitya Akademi on Monday announced its awards for 2025 in the 24 languages recognised by it, nearly three months after the process was abruptly put on hold following directives from the Union Culture Ministry.

Among the winners are former diplomat Navtej Sarna, awarded in the English language category for his novel *Crimson Spring*; Hindi writer Mamta Kalia for her memoir *Jeete Jee Allahabad*; and Tamil author Sa Tamilselvan for his work *Thamizh Sirukathaiyin Thadangal* in the literary criticism genre. "Eight books of poetry, four novels, six books of short stories, two essays, one literary criticism, one autobiography, and two memoirs have won the Sahitya Akademi Awards 2025," the Akademi said in a statement.

Others named in the 2025 awards are Prasun



Former diplomat Navtej Sarna's *Crimson Spring* has won the award in the English language category. FILE PHOTO

Bandyopadhyay for *Shrestha Kabita* in Bengali; Yogesh Vaidya for *Bhattkhadaki* in Gujarati; Amresh Nugadoni for *Dada Seerisu Tande* in Kannada; N. Prabhakaran for *Maayamanushyar* in Malayalam; Raju Baviskar for *Kalyanilya Resha* in Marathi; Nandini Sidha Reddy for *Animesha* in Telugu; Jinder for *Safety Kit* in Punjabi; and Jitender Kumar Soni for *Bharkhama*

in Rajasthani. The awardees will receive a casket containing an engraved copper plaque, a shawl, and an amount of ₹1 lakh at a ceremony on March 31.

The Akademi had cancelled its press conference for the announcement on December 18 last, after a last minute directive from the Union Culture Ministry cited a need for the "restructuring" of the awards.

17Mar. Sahitya Akademi announces awards for 2025 in 24 languages साहित्य अकादमी ने 24 भाषाओं में 2025 के पुरस्कारों की घोषणा की

- **Eight books of poetry, four novels, six books of short stories, two essays, one literary criticism work, an autobiography, and two memoirs** win.
आठ काव्य पुस्तकें, चार उपन्यास, छह लघु कहानी संग्रह, दो निबंध, एक साहित्यिक आलोचना कृति, एक आत्मकथा, और दो संस्मरण विजेता बने।
- The **Sahitya Akademi on Monday announced its awards for 2025 in the 24 languages recognised by it**, nearly **three months** after the process was abruptly **put on hold** following directives from the **Union Culture Ministry**.



साहित्य अकादमी ने सोमवार को अपनी मान्यता प्राप्त 24 भाषाओं में 2025 के पुरस्कारों की घोषणा की, यह प्रक्रिया केंद्रीय संस्कृति मंत्रालय के निर्देशों के बाद लगभग तीन महीने तक अचानक स्थगित रही थी।

- Among the winners are former diplomat Navtej Sarna, awarded in the English language category for his novel **Crimson Spring**; Hindi writer Mamta Kalia for her memoir **Jeete Jee Allahabad**; and Tamil author Sa Tamilselvan for his work **Thamizh Sirukathaiyin Thadangal** in the literary criticism genre.
विजेताओं में पूर्व राजनयिक नवतेज सरना शामिल हैं जिन्हें अंग्रेजी भाषा श्रेणी में उनके उपन्यास **Crimson Spring** के लिए सम्मानित किया गया; हिंदी लेखिका ममता कालिया को उनके संस्मरण **Jeete Jee Allahabad** के लिए; और तमिल लेखक सा तमिलसेलवन को साहित्यिक आलोचना की श्रेणी में उनकी कृति **Tamil Siru Kathaigal In Thadangal** के लिए सम्मानित किया गया।
- “Eight books of poetry, four novels, six books of short stories, two essays, one literary criticism, one autobiography, and two memoirs have won the Sahitya Akademi Awards 2025,” the Akademi said in a statement.
अकादमी ने एक बयान में कहा, “आठ काव्य पुस्तकें, चार उपन्यास, छह लघु कहानी संग्रह, दो निबंध, एक साहित्यिक आलोचना, एक आत्मकथा, और दो संस्मरण ने साहित्य अकादमी पुरस्कार 2025 जीते हैं।”
- Others named in the 2025 awards are Prasun Bandyopadhyay for Shrestha Kabita in Bengali; Yogesh Vaidya for Bhattkhadaki in Gujarati; Amresh Nugadoni for Dada Seerisu Tande in Kannada; N. Prabhakaran for Maayamanushyar in Malayalam; Raju Baviskar for Kalyanilya Resha in Marathi; Nandini Sidha Reddy for Animesha in Telugu; Jinder for Safety Kit in Punjabi; and Jitender Kumar Soni for Bharkhama in Rajasthani.
2025 के पुरस्कारों में अन्य विजेताओं में प्रसून बंद्योपाध्याय (बंगाली) के लिए Shrestha Kabita; योगेश वैद्य (गुजराती) के लिए Bhatt Khadki; अमरेश नुगाडोनी (कन्नड़) के लिए Dada Seerisu Tande; एन. प्रभाकरण (मलयालम) के लिए Maayamanushyar; राजू बाविस्कर (मराठी) के लिए Kalya Nilya Resha; नंदिनी सिधा रेड्डी (तेलुगु) के लिए Animesha; जिंदर (पंजाबी) के लिए Safety Kit; और जितेंद्र कुमार सोनी (राजस्थानी) के लिए Bharkhama शामिल हैं।
- The awardees will receive a casket containing an engraved copper plaque, a shawl, and an amount of ₹1 lakh at a ceremony on March 31.
पुरस्कार विजेताओं को 31 मार्च को होने वाले समारोह में उकेरी हुई तांबे की पट्टिका, एक शॉल, और ₹1 लाख की राशि से युक्त संदूक प्रदान किया जाएगा।
- The Akademi had cancelled its press conference for the announcement on December 18 last, after a last minute directive from the Union Culture Ministry cited a need for the “restructuring” of the awards.
अकादमी ने 18 दिसंबर को पुरस्कार घोषणा के लिए अपनी प्रेस कॉन्फ्रेंस रद्द कर दी थी, क्योंकि केंद्रीय संस्कृति मंत्रालय के अंतिम समय के निर्देश में पुरस्कारों के “पुनर्गठन” की आवश्यकता बताई गई थी।



One Battle After Another wins Oscar, in coronation for Paul Thomas Anderson

APCS
LOS ANGELES

Paul Thomas Anderson's *One Battle After Another* was crowned best picture at the 98th Academy Awards, handing Hollywood's top honour to a comic, multi-generational American saga of political resistance.

The ceremony on Sunday, which also saw Michael B. Jordan win best actor and *Sinners* cinematographer Autumn Durald Arkapaw make Oscar history as the first female director of photography to win the award, was a long-in-coming coronation for Mr. Anderson, a San Fernando Valley native who made his first short at age 18 and has been one of America's most lionised filmmakers for decades. Before Sunday, Mr. Anderson had never won an Os-



Director Paul Thomas Anderson and cast members of *One Battle After Another* pose after winning the Oscar on Sunday. AFP

car. But *One Battle After Another*, the favourite coming in, won six Oscars, including best director and best adapted screenplay for Mr. Anderson, the Oscars' first trophy for best casting and best supporting actor for an absent Sean Penn.

"I wrote this movie for my kids to say sorry for the housekeeping mess that we left in this world - we're handing off to them,"

said Mr. Anderson while accepting the screenplay trophy. "But also with the encouragement that they will be the generation that hopefully brings us some common sense and decency."

Ryan Coogler's Jim Crow-set, blues-soaked vampire tale *Sinners*, which came in with a record 16 nominations, also landed some big and even historic wins. Mr. Coogler,

the widely loved filmmaker, won the first Oscar in an unblemished career that started out with Mr. Jordan in 2013's *Fruitvale Station*.

Ms. Arkapaw was also the first Black person to win for best cinematography. Only the fourth female cinematographer ever nominated, her win was a long-in-coming triumph for women behind the camera.

"I really want all the women in room to stand up," said Ms. Arkapaw. "Because I don't feel like I get here without you guys."

Jessie Buckley won best actress for her performance as Agnes Shakespeare in *Hamnet*, making her the first Irish performer to ever win in the category.

Amy Madigan won best supporting actress for her performance in the horror thriller *Weapons*.

17Mar. One Battle After Another wins Oscar, in coronation for Paul Thomas Anderson

वन बैटल आफ्टर अनदर ने ऑस्कर जीता, पॉल थॉमस एंडरसन के लिए ताजपोशी

- **Paul Thomas Anderson's *One Battle After Another* was crowned best picture at the 98th Academy Awards, handing Hollywood's top honour to a comic, multi-generational American saga of political resistance.**

पॉल थॉमस एंडरसन की फिल्म वन बैटल आफ्टर अनदर को 98वें अकादमी अवॉर्ड्स में सर्वश्रेष्ठ फिल्म का पुरस्कार मिला, जिससे हॉलीवुड का सर्वोच्च सम्मान एक राजनीतिक प्रतिरोध की हास्यपूर्ण बहु-पीढ़ी अमेरिकी गाथा को मिला।

- The ceremony on **Sunday**, which also saw **Michael B. Jordan win best actor and *Sinners* cinematographer Autumn Durald Arkapaw make Oscar history as the first female director of photography to win the award**, was a long-in-coming coronation for Mr. Anderson.

रविवार को हुए समारोह में माइकल बी. जॉर्डन ने सर्वश्रेष्ठ अभिनेता का पुरस्कार जीता और सिनर्स की सिनेमैटोग्राफर ऑटम ड्यूराल्ड अर्कापा ने ऑस्कर इतिहास रचते हुए पुरस्कार जीतने वाली पहली महिला डायरेक्टर ऑफ फोटोग्राफी बनीं, और यह मिस्टर एंडरसन के लिए लंबे समय से प्रतीक्षित ताजपोशी थी।

- He is a **San Fernando Valley native** who made his **first short at age 18** and has been one of **America's most lionised filmmakers for decades**.

वह सैन फर्नांडो वैली के निवासी हैं जिन्होंने 18 वर्ष की उम्र में अपनी पहली शॉर्ट फिल्म बनाई थी और दशकों से अमेरिका के सबसे प्रशंसित फिल्म निर्माताओं में से एक रहे हैं।

- Before **Sunday**, Mr. Anderson had **never won an Oscar**. रविवार से पहले मिस्टर एंडरसन ने कभी ऑस्कर नहीं जीता था।
- But ***One Battle After Another*, the favourite coming in, won six Oscars, including best director and best adapted screenplay for Mr. Anderson.**



लेकिन वन बैटल आफ्टर अनदर, जो पहले से सबसे प्रबल दावेदार थी, ने छह ऑस्कर जीते, जिनमें सर्वश्रेष्ठ निर्देशक और सर्वश्रेष्ठ रूपांतरित पटकथा का पुरस्कार मिस्टर एंडरसन को मिला।

- The film also won the **Oscars' first trophy for best casting and best supporting actor for an absent Sean Penn.**
फिल्म ने ऑस्कर के इतिहास में पहली बार दिए गए सर्वश्रेष्ठ कास्टिंग पुरस्कार और अनुपस्थित शॉन पेन के लिए सर्वश्रेष्ठ सहायक अभिनेता का पुरस्कार भी जीता।
- "I wrote this movie for my kids to say **sorry for the housekeeping mess that we left in this world — we're handing it off to them,**" said Mr. Anderson while accepting the **screenplay trophy.**
"मैंने यह फिल्म अपने बच्चों के लिए लिखी है ताकि इस दुनिया में छोड़ी गई अव्यवस्था के लिए माफी मांग सकूँ — अब हम यह दुनिया उन्हें सौंप रहे हैं," मिस्टर एंडरसन ने पटकथा पुरस्कार स्वीकार करते हुए कहा।
- "But also with the **encouragement** that they will be the **generation** that hopefully brings us some **common sense and decency.**"
"लेकिन साथ ही प्रोत्साहन भी कि वे वह पीढ़ी बनें जो हमें फिर से सामान्य समझ और शालीनता की ओर ले जाए।"
- Ryan Coogler's Jim Crow-set, blues-soaked vampire tale Sinners,** which came in with a **record 16 nominations,** also landed some **big and even historic wins.**
रयान कूगलर की जिम क्रो युग पर आधारित, ब्लूज से प्रभावित वैम्पायर कहानी 'सिनर्स', जिसे रिकॉर्ड 16 नामांकन मिले थे, ने भी महत्वपूर्ण और ऐतिहासिक जीत हासिल की।
- Mr. Coogler, the widely loved filmmaker,** won the **first Oscar in an unblemished career** that started out with **Mr. Jordan in 2013's Fruitvale Station.**
मिस्टर कूगलर, जो एक लोकप्रिय फिल्म निर्माता हैं, ने अपने निर्दोष करियर का पहला ऑस्कर जीता, जिसकी शुरुआत 2013 की फिल्म फ्रूटवेल स्टेशन में मिस्टर जॉर्डन के साथ हुई थी।
- Ms. Arkapaw was also the first Black person to win for best cinematography.**
मिस अरकापाँ सर्वश्रेष्ठ सिनेमैटोग्राफी का पुरस्कार जीतने वाली पहली अश्वेत व्यक्ति भी बनीं।
- Only the **fourth female cinematographer ever nominated,** her win was a **long-in-coming triumph for women behind the camera.**
नामांकन पाने वाली केवल चौथी महिला सिनेमैटोग्राफर, उनकी जीत कैमरे के पीछे काम करने वाली महिलाओं के लिए लंबे समय से प्रतीक्षित विजय थी।
- "I really want **all the women in the room to stand up,**" said Ms. Arkapaw.
मिस अरकापाँ ने कहा, "मैं वास्तव में चाहती हूँ कि कमरे में मौजूद सभी महिलाएँ खड़ी हों।"
- "Because I don't feel like I get here without you guys."
"क्योंकि मुझे नहीं लगता कि मैं यहाँ आप लोगों के बिना पहुँच पाती।"
- Jessie Buckley won best actress for her performance as Agnes Shakespeare in Hamnet,** making her the **first Irish performer to ever win in the category.**
जेसी बकले ने हैमनेट में एग्नेस शेक्सपियर की भूमिका के लिए सर्वश्रेष्ठ अभिनेत्री का पुरस्कार जीता, जिससे वह इस श्रेणी में जीतने वाली पहली आयरिश कलाकार बन गईं।
- Amy Madigan won best supporting actress for her performance in the horror thriller Weapons.**
एमी मैडिगन ने हॉरर थ्रिलर 'वेपन्स' में अपने अभिनय के लिए सर्वश्रेष्ठ सहायक अभिनेत्री का पुरस्कार जीता।

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17Mar **How red marks liminal thresholds between life, death, sacrifice and renewal**
लाल रंग कैसे जीवन, मृत्यु, बलिदान और पुनर्जन्म के बीच सीमांत अवस्थाओं को दर्शाता है



FAITH

GS I: History: A&C

Significance of Gudi Padwa

Gudi Padwa is a special festival for Maharashtra and Goa. It is celebrated on the first day of the Chaitra month which synchronises with the first day of the new moon. This day signifies the beginning of the new year, the heralding of spring and the harvesting of rabi crops. This is also the day when it is believed that Brahma created the universe and the sense of time. Lord Rama returned to Ayodhya on this day. Some rural Marathi and Konkan Hindu communities bond with Lord Siva's cosmic dancing and congregate together at Siva temples. People in Maharashtra also celebrate the day by commemorating the famous ruler Sivaji's victory over the Mughals, said Prof. Kumool Abbi.

The festival is celebrated by cleaning and decorating homes with rangoli. The day starts by consuming the bitter neem and jaggery, which is believed to purify the body, which expresses the acceptance of both bitter and sweet experiences, characterising life. Preparation of sweets such as puran poli, basundi and kesari bath is also made in earnest. The day is considered auspicious to start new undertakings, business ventures, vastu puja and investing in gold and silver and buying new vehicles.

The word Gudi Padwa has a very interesting meaning and significance. Padwa refers to the first day of the lunar fortnight, while Gudi refers to a flag made of bamboo that is anointed with garlands of flowers, mango and neem leaves, sugar crystals and an overturned silver or copper vessel.

As the flag is hoisted, it brings good luck, eclipsing all negativity. Gudi is hoisted on the right side of the house. All the constituents of Gudi signify something.

and congregate together at Siva temples.

कुछ ग्रामीण मराठी और कोंकण हिंदू समुदाय भगवान शिव के ब्रह्मांडीय नृत्य से जुड़ते हैं और शिव मंदिरों में एकत्रित होते हैं।

- People in Maharashtra also celebrate the day by commemorating the famous ruler Sivaji's victory over the Mughals, said Prof. Kumool Abbi.

महाराष्ट्र के लोग इस दिन को प्रसिद्ध शासक शिवाजी की मुगलों पर विजय को स्मरण करते हुए भी मनाते हैं, ऐसा प्रो. कुमूल अब्बी ने कहा।

- The festival is celebrated by cleaning and decorating homes with rangoli. इस त्योहार को घरों की सफाई और रंगोली से सजाकर मनाया जाता है।
- The day starts by consuming the bitter neem and jaggery, which is believed to purify the body, which expresses the acceptance of both bitter and sweet experiences, characterising life.

दिन की शुरुआत कड़वे नीम और गुड़ के सेवन से होती है, जिसे शरीर को शुद्ध करने वाला माना जाता है और जो कड़वे और मीठे दोनों अनुभवों को स्वीकार करने का प्रतीक है, जो जीवन को दर्शाता है।

- Preparation of sweets such as puran poli, basundi and kesari bath is also made in earnest. इस अवसर पर पारंपरिक मिठाइयाँ जैसे पुरण पोली, बसुंदी और केसरी बाथ भी पूरे उत्साह से बनाई जाती हैं।
- The day is considered auspicious to start new undertakings, business ventures, vastu puja and investing in gold and silver and buying new vehicles.

यह दिन नए कार्यों की शुरुआत, व्यापारिक उपक्रम, वास्तु पूजा, सोना-चांदी में निवेश और नए वाहन खरीदने के लिए शुभ माना जाता है।

- The word Gudi Padwa has a very interesting meaning and significance. गुड़ी पड़वा शब्द का बहुत रोचक अर्थ और महत्व है।
- Padwa refers to the first day of the lunar fortnight, while Gudi refers to a flag made of bamboo that is anointed with garlands of flowers, mango and neem leaves, sugar crystals and an overturned silver or copper vessel.

पड़वा का अर्थ चंद्र पक्ष का पहला दिन होता है, जबकि गुड़ी का अर्थ बांस से बना ध्वज है जिसे फूलों की मालाओं, आम और नीम की पत्तियों, चीनी के क्रिस्टल और उलटे रखे चांदी या तांबे के पात्र से सजाया जाता है।

- As the flag is hoisted, it brings good luck, eclipsing all negativity. जब यह ध्वज फहराया जाता है, तो यह सौभाग्य लाता है और सभी नकारात्मकता को दूर करता है।

17Mar. Significance of Gudi Padwa गुड़ी पड़वा का महत्व

- Gudi Padwa is a special festival for Maharashtra and Goa. गुड़ी पड़वा महाराष्ट्र और गोवा का एक विशेष त्योहार है।
- It is celebrated on the first day of the Chaitra month which synchronises with the first day of the new moon. यह चैत्र महीने के पहले दिन मनाया जाता है जो अमावस्या के पहले दिन के साथ मेल खाता है।
- This day signifies the beginning of the new year, the heralding of spring and the harvesting of rabi crops. यह दिन नए वर्ष की शुरुआत, वसंत ऋतु के आगमन और रबी फसलों की कटाई का संकेत देता है।
- This is also the day when it is believed that Brahma created the universe and the sense of time. यह वह दिन भी माना जाता है जब ब्रह्मा ने ब्रह्मांड की रचना की और समय की अवधारणा की शुरुआत हुई।
- Lord Rama returned to Ayodhya on this day. इसी दिन भगवान राम अयोध्या लौटे थे।
- Some rural Marathi and Konkan Hindu communities bond with Lord Siva's cosmic dancing



- **Gudi** is hoisted on the **right side of the house**.
गुड़ी को घर के दाहिने ओर फहराया जाता है।
- All the **constituents of Gudi** signify something.
गुड़ी के सभी घटक किसी विशेष प्रतीकात्मक अर्थ को दर्शाते हैं।

How red marks liminal thresholds between life, death, sacrifice and renewal

Red ochre burials, ritual markings and myths across cultures show that red repeatedly marks liminal thresholds such as puberty, sacrifice and death; anthropologists argue that the colour functions as a technology of collective ritual and value, binding communities through shared symbolic acts

GS I: History: A&C

Satwik Gade

In 1823, English geologist William Buckland discovered a skeleton in a limestone cave in Paviland, southern Wales, which he identified as a prostitute from the Roman era, as the bones were coated in red ochre. Nearly a hundred years later, further studies, including that of grave goods, also painted in red, proved that the skeleton, which was dubbed "Red Lady of Paviland," was actually a man and that the burial was not from the Roman era but from around 33,000 years before present! Since then, archaeologists have found similar ochre burials across continents: at Qafzeh in present-day Israel, at Sungir in Russia, at Lake Mungo in Australia, in sites across Africa where it continues to the present day in the cosmetic ritual practices of women from the Himba community. As the evolutionary anthropologist Camilla Power has written, red ochre decoration of bodies and clothes is "a recurrent and structured feature of ritual behaviour." It marks a transition: puberty, which is an initiation into a new phase of life, or death, which is believed to lead the soul to an afterlife.

Victor Turner, the anthropologist of ritual, would later call such moments "liminal" – thresholds where ordinary

hierarchies or naturally existing freedoms dissolve and a different order briefly governs. Power has argued that red pigment, especially in early human societies, likely functioned as a "technology of collective ritual," shaping people's behaviour long before administrative law or coinage existed. Across cultures, the administration of red – the mixing of ochre, the marking of bodies, the handling of blood – is often entrusted to those who themselves stand in liminal spaces. Ethnographic accounts from Siberia to the Americas describe ritual specialists whose gender expression does not align neatly with male or female roles. Many Indigenous North American traditions speak of Two-Spirit figures; Siberian shamanic traditions describe initiates who symbolically "die" and return altered; in parts of South Asia, hijra communities historically performed roles in rites of birth and fertility.

Archaeological work by Alison Watts demonstrates that red ochre from particular sources, in Middle Stone Age Africa, was transported across significant distances despite the local availability of similar pigments. Such a patterned preference indicates that red ochre's value was not reducible to its chemical function or to its colour value. Colour, texture and a socially charged location, as well as the human effort that went into

sourcing, supplying and administering, were all seen as part of total meaning-making. Such long-distance networks bound communities divided by time and space into networks of total prestation, as Marcel Mauss called it, where society becomes bound across economic, aesthetic, legal, and religious spheres all at once.

In the Rig Veda, dawn (Uṣas) is described as *aruna*, flushed and radiant, the sky streaked with the colour of awakening sacrifice. In the Greek epics, Homer often calls the sea "oinops", meaning wine-dark, and likens battlefields to fields of spilled blood, where bronze and flesh meet in crimson blur. In the Hebrew Bible, the word *adam* (red) shares its root with *adam* (human) and *adamah* (earth), binding soil, body, and mortality into one linguistic field. In ancient China, vermilion marked imperial gates and ritual seals, the cinnabar pigment associated with life-force and alchemical transformation. Roman writers describe the use of red ochre and cinnabar in triumphal processions and funerary rites, while in Mesoamerican codices, red pigments signal both sacrifice and renewal. Across these traditions, red signals thresholds: dawn and dusk, war and fertility, earth and blood, death and consecration.

Economic Anthropologist David

Graeber, in his book, *Toward An Anthropological Theory of Value*, notes that in the earliest Brahmanas (texts that explain or provide commentary to the Vedas), red as a colour value becomes the basis for a ritual system of value exchange long before the emergence of commercial markets. The sages of these Brahmanas negotiate with gods and coax them into allowing red to become a colour of substitution so that gods see the sacrifice of red objects or animals as equivalent to the sacrifice of human life itself.

Goethe, writing millennia later, would describe red as the colour that approaches the eye with warmth and immediacy. Ochre, he noted, belongs to the "earth colours," close to bodily sensation, never fully abstract. Red does not recede like blue. It confronts. It occupies. In *Zur Farbenlehre*, which was published in 1810, Goethe describes an experiment where a spectrum is viewed through a prism at the edges of light and dark. He observes that when blue deepens toward darkness, it intensifies into violet; when yellow deepens toward darkness, it intensifies into red. For Goethe, red was the culmination of intensification, where light thickens toward matter.

(Satwik Gade is a Chennai-based writer and illustrator. This article is part of a series on the history and development of colours)

17Mar. How red marks liminal thresholds between life, death, sacrifice and renewal

लाल रंग कैसे जीवन, मृत्यु, बलिदान और पुनर्जन्म के बीच सीमांत अवस्थाओं को दर्शाता है

- In 1823, English geologist William Buckland discovered a skeleton in a limestone cave in Paviland, southern Wales, which he identified as a prostitute from the Roman era, as the bones were coated in red ochre.

1823 में, अंग्रेज भूवैज्ञानिक विलियम बकलैंड ने दक्षिण वेल्स के पाविलैंड की चूना पत्थर की गुफा में एक कंकाल खोजा, जिसे उन्होंने लाल गेरू के कारण रोमन युग की वेश्या माना।

- Nearly a hundred years later, further studies, including that of grave goods, also painted in red, proved that the skeleton, which was dubbed "Red Lady of Paviland," was actually a man and that the burial was not from the Roman era but from around 33,000 years before present! लगभग सौ साल बाद, आगे के अध्ययन से पता चला कि "Red Lady of Paviland" वास्तव में एक पुरुष था और यह दफन 33,000 वर्ष पुराना था।
- Since then, archaeologists have found similar ochre burials across continents: at Qafzeh (Israel), Sungir (Russia), Lake Mungo (Australia), and across Africa. इसके बाद ऐसे दफन इज़राइल, रूस, ऑस्ट्रेलिया और अफ्रीका में पाए गए।
- Where it continues in the practices of women from the Himba community. जहाँ आज भी हिम्बा समुदाय की महिलाएँ इसका उपयोग करती हैं।





- As **Camilla Power** wrote, **red ochre decoration is a “recurrent and structured feature of ritual behaviour.”**

कैमिला पावर के अनुसार लाल गेरू एक नियमित और संरचित अनुष्ठानिक व्यवहार है।

- It marks transitions such as puberty and death.**
यह **यौवन और मृत्यु** जैसे बदलाव को दर्शाता है।
- Victor Turner** called such moments “liminal” — thresholds.
विक्टर टर्नर ने इन्हें “लिमिनल” (सीमांत अवस्था) कहा।
- Where normal hierarchies dissolve temporarily.
जहाँ सामान्य सामाजिक व्यवस्था अस्थायी रूप से समाप्त हो जाती है।
- Power argued red pigment acted as a “**technology of collective ritual.**”
पावर ने कहा कि यह एक **सामूहिक अनुष्ठान की तकनीक** थी।
- Shaping behaviour before **law or currency existed.**
जो कानून और मुद्रा से पहले व्यवहार को नियंत्रित करती थी।
- Across cultures, red use is handled by those in **liminal roles.**
विभिन्न संस्कृतियों में इसका उपयोग **सीमांत भूमिकाओं** वाले लोग करते हैं।
- Ethnographic accounts show people with **non-binary gender roles.**
एथनोग्राफिक अध्ययन में **गैर-द्विआधारी लिंग भूमिकाएं** दिखाई देती हैं।
- Many Indigenous traditions refer to **Two-Spirit • gures.**
कई परंपराओं में **टू-स्परिट** व्यक्तियों का उल्लेख है।
- Siberian traditions describe initiates who **symbolically die and return altered.**
साइबेरिया में व्यक्ति **प्रतीकात्मक रूप से मरकर बदलकर लौटते हैं।**
- In South Asia, **hijra communities** performed roles in **birth and fertility rituals.**
दक्षिण एशिया में **हिजड़ा समुदाय** जन्म और प्रजनन से जुड़े अनुष्ठानों में शामिल थे।
- Archaeological work by **Alison Watts** shows red ochre was transported across distances in **Middle Stone Age Africa.**
एलिसन वॉट्स के अनुसार मध्य पाषाण युग में गेरू दूर-दूर तक ले जाया जाता था।
- Despite local availability of similar pigments.
जबकि स्थानीय स्तर पर भी यह उपलब्ध था।
- This indicates its value was not just **chemical or colour-based.**
यह दर्शाता है कि इसका महत्व केवल **रासायनिक या रंग** तक सीमित नहीं था।
- Colour, texture, location and human effort all mattered.
रंग, बनावट, स्थान और मानव प्रयास सभी महत्वपूर्ण थे।
- Such long-distance networks bound communities divided by time and space into networks of **total prestation**, as **Marcel Mauss** called it, where society becomes bound across **economic, aesthetic, legal, and religious spheres** all at once.
. ऐसे लंबी दूरी के नेटवर्क समुदायों को **समय और स्थान** से परे जोड़ते थे, जिन्हें **Marcel Mauss** ने **total prestation** कहा, जहाँ समाज **आर्थिक, सौंदर्यात्मक, कानूनी और धार्मिक क्षेत्रों** में एक साथ बंध जाता है।
- In the **Rig Veda**, dawn (**Uṣas**) is described as **aruṇa**, • ushed and radiant, the sky streaked with the colour of awakening sacri• ce.
ऋग्वेद में, भोर (**उषा**) को **अरुण** बताया गया है, जो चमकदार है और आकाश जागृत **यज्ञ** के रंग से भरा होता है।
- In the Greek epics, **Homer** often calls the sea “**oinops**”, meaning **wine-dark**, and likens battle• elds to • elds of spilled blood.
ग्रीक महाकाव्यों में **होमर** समुद्र को “**oinops**” (शराब जैसा गहरा) कहते हैं और युद्धभूमि को **रक्त** से भरे मैदान जैसा बताते हैं।
- In the **Hebrew Bible**, the word ‘**adom** (red) shares its root with **adam** (human) and **adamah** (earth).
हिब्रू बाइबिल में ‘**adom** (लाल), **adam** (मनुष्य) और **adamah** (पृथ्वी) एक ही मूल से जुड़े हैं।
- In **ancient China**, vermilion marked **imperial gates and ritual seals.**
प्राचीन चीन में सिंदूरी रंग **राजसी द्वार और अनुष्ठानिक मुहरों** में उपयोग होता था।
- The cinnabar pigment was associated with **life-force and transformation.**
सिनाबार रंग **जीवन शक्ति और परिवर्तन** से जुड़ा था।
- Roman writers describe red ochre in **triumphal processions and funerary rites.**
रोमन लेखक लाल गेरू का उपयोग **विजय जुलूस और अंतिम संस्कार** में बताते हैं।



- In **Mesoamerican codices**, red pigments signal **sacri• ce and renewal**.
मेसोअमेरिकी ग्रंथों में लाल रंग बलिदान और पुनर्जन्म का संकेत है।
- Across traditions, red signals **thresholds: dawn, dusk, war, fertility, death**.
सभी परंपराओं में लाल रंग **सीमांत अवस्थाओं** (भोर, संध्या, युद्ध, प्रजनन, मृत्यु) का संकेत है।
- **David Graeber**, in **Toward An Anthropological Theory of Value**, notes red became a basis of **ritual value exchange**.
डेविड ग्रेबर के अनुसार लाल रंग **अनुष्ठानिक मूल्य विनिमय** का आधार बना।
- In early **Brahmanas**, red substituted **human sacri• ce**.
प्रारंभिक **ब्राह्मण ग्रंथों** में लाल रंग **मानव बलि का प्रतीक** बन गया।
- Red objects or animals were treated as equal to **human life sacri• ce**.
लाल वस्तुएँ या पशु **मानव जीवन बलि** के समान माने गए।
- **Goethe** described red as a colour of **warmth and immediacy**.
गोethe ने लाल को **ऊष्मा और निकटता** का रंग बताया।
- Ochre belongs to “**earth colours**” close to bodily sensation.
गेरू “**पृथ्वी रंग**” है जो शरीर से जुड़ा है।
- Red does not recede like blue — it **confronts and occupies**.
लाल पीछे नहीं हटता, यह **सामने आता और जगह घेरता** है।
- In **1810**, Goethe’s **Zur Farbenlehre** described colour intensi• cation.
1810 में गोethe की **Zur Farbenlehre** में रंगों की तीव्रता बताई गई।
- Blue deepens into **violet**, yellow into **red**.
नीला गहरा होकर **बैंगनी**, पीला गहरा होकर **लाल** बनता है।
- Red was the culmination where **light thickens into matter**.
लाल वह स्थिति है जहाँ **प्रकाश पदार्थ में बदलता** है।

GS Paper 1: Society

TOPICS COVERED

17 March 2026

17Mar	‘Couple being happy not a reason to quash child marriage case ‘दंपत्ति का खुश होना बाल विवाह मामले को रद्द करने का कारण नहीं
17Mar	Importance of sex education in academia शिक्षा जगत में यौन शिक्षा का महत्व

‘Couple being happy not a reason to quash child marriage case’

GS I: Society
The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A criminal case registered under the provisions of the **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006**, cannot be quashed merely because the **couple at present are living happily**, the Karnataka High Court has said.

“**Criminal liability is measured at the moment of commission, not neutralised by the subsequent domestic peace. To accept otherwise would be to convert penal law into a matter of retrospective validation through sentiment.** Parents who ought to bless their daughters with en-

couragement, education and empowerment, instead bless them with premature matrimony,” the court sternly observed.

“If such conduct were to receive judicial indulgence, the eradication of child marriage would remain an illusive aspiration,” the court further said.

Justice M. Nagaprasanna made these observations while refusing to quash a case registered in 2021 under provisions of the Act against the groom, who was 27 at the time of marriage, his parents, and parents of the minor girl, who was 16 at the time.

17Mar. ‘Couple being happy not a reason to quash child marriage case

‘दंपत्ति का खुश होना बाल विवाह मामले को रद्द करने का कारण नहीं

• A **criminal case** registered under the provisions of the **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006**, cannot be **quashed** merely because the **couple** at present are **living happily**, the **Karnataka High Court** has said.

बाल विवाह निषेध अधिनियम, 2006 के प्रावधानों के तहत दर्ज **आपराधिक मामला** केवल इस कारण **रद्द नहीं** किया जा सकता कि **दंपत्ति** वर्तमान में **खुशी से रह रहे हैं**, ऐसा **कर्नाटक उच्च न्यायालय** ने कहा।

• “**Criminal liability** is measured at the moment of **commission**, not neutralised by the subsequent **domestic peace**.

“**आपराधिक दायित्व** का आकलन **अपराध के समय** किया जाता है, न कि बाद में आई **घरेलू शांति** से इसे समाप्त किया जा सकता है।

• To accept otherwise would be to convert **penal law** into a matter of **retrospective validation through**



sentiment.

इसे स्वीकार करना दंड कानून को भावनाओं के आधार पर पूर्वव्यापी वैधता में बदलने जैसा होगा।

- **Parents** who ought to bless their **daughters** with **encouragement, education and empowerment**, instead bless them with **premature matrimony**,” the court sternly observed. **माता-पिता** जिन्हें अपनी **बेटियों** को **प्रोत्साहन, शिक्षा और सशक्तिकरण** देना चाहिए, वे इसके बजाय उन्हें **असमय विवाह** का आशीर्वाद दे देते हैं,” अदालत ने कड़े शब्दों में कहा।
- “If such conduct were to receive **judicial indulgence**, the eradication of **child marriage** would remain an **illusive aspiration**,” the court further said. “यदि ऐसे आचरण को **न्यायिक उदारता** मिलती है, तो **बाल विवाह** का उन्मूलन केवल एक **मृगतृष्णा जैसा लक्ष्य** बनकर रह जाएगा,” अदालत ने आगे कहा।
- **Justice M. Nagaprasanna** made these observations while refusing to **quash a case** registered in **2021** under provisions of the **Act** against the **groom**, who was **27** at the time of marriage, his **parents**, and **parents of the minor girl**, who was **16** at the time. **न्यायमूर्ति एम. नागप्रसन्ना** ने ये टिप्पणियाँ **2021** में दर्ज मामले को **रद्द करने से इनकार** करते हुए कीं, जो **अधिनियम** के तहत **दूल्हे** (जो विवाह के समय **27 वर्ष** का था), उसके **माता-पिता**, और **नाबालिग लड़की के माता-पिता** (जो उस समय **16 वर्ष** की थी) के खिलाफ दर्ज किया गया था।

Importance of sex education in academia

GS I: Society

Sexuality, intimacy, and mental health are closely linked yet heavily stigmatised, resulting in a culture of silence; shame and fear surrounding sex and intimacy can exacerbate mental health issues. The WHO has stated that “immense suffering can occur when people lack bodily autonomy, control over their fertility or the freedom to experience safe, consensual and satisfying sexual relationships”. In 2024, the Supreme Court emphasised the need for comprehensive sex education programmes in order to promote open discussions about intimacy and sexual health.

As German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) fellows between Germany and India, the authors’ classroom experiences of teaching about the diversity of human sexualities, in both contexts, found that there is a need to resist and challenge the marginalisation, invalidation and disenfranchisement of lived intimacies in higher educational institutions. Deeply ingrained social stigmas, silence and taboos about intimate relationships are perpetuated in academia, evidenced by the miniscule number of courses and discussions on the topic. Academia often promotes a culture of resistance, fear and anxiety over informed exchange and empowering discourse, particularly in the light of increasing student suicides in India. By prioritising a biomedical approach as well as majoritarian norms, higher educational spaces disregard the dimension of pleasure and the impact of socio-cultural and oppressive factors on intimate experiences.

Lack of proper vocabulary
In India, the mental health curriculum is often found to be heteronormative and cisgendered without accounting for sexual marginalisation and human diversity. ‘Sexuality’ is limited to heterosexual dysfunctions, erasing



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By creating diversity-aware and compassionate learning environments, students can develop the tools to navigate contemporary challenges and create a more inclusive, equitable, and just world

topics such as consent and sexual politics, framing it as a medical issue alone. Complex lived realities and the structural violence faced by queer people are erased, inhibiting the development of cultural and structural competence required for effective clinical practice. As a consequence, sexual minorities often experience institutional discrimination and inadequacies in the provision of support when they access counselling services. With psychologists being increasingly appointed in universities to deal with suicide and mental health problems in India, such ethical and epistemic gaps fail to reckon with oppressive institutional contexts. It diminishes the capacity of mental health professionals to initiate transformative structural change oriented on sexuality, gender and relationship equality.

Exercises to open up

Addressing sensitive topics such as mental health, violence, and intimacy in higher educational settings comes with particular challenges. A workshop and film screening that took place at the University of Münster in Germany featuring a filmmaker who uses unconventional pornography as a form of sex education highlighted some of the difficulties. While appreciating the effort to tackle the issue, students found themselves uneasy during the discussion. Was it appropriate to open up about one’s own experiences, or was it safer to maintain a detached, impersonal, and abstract tone, as is often expected in academic settings?

The authors’ interactions with students in India and Germany highlighted the importance of creating safer and accountable spaces when teaching sensitive topics. To achieve this, innovative approaches at the beginning of each class can help. Instead of diving straight into theory and methodology, icebreaker exercises and small-group discussions encourage students to share their

personal perspectives on topics. By answering questions like ‘What does intimacy mean to you?’, students can connect the course material to their own lives and experiences. Such an approach emphasises the need for instructors to foster a classroom environment that builds trust, rapport, and open communication among participants.

Inclusive classrooms

Education should harness the diversity within classrooms and transcend mere knowledge transfer and workforce training, aiming instead to cultivate critical thinking and awareness. This is particularly urgent in today’s context, where anti-democratic movements seek to erase and marginalise the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals, promoting a narrow and exclusionary view of sexuality and intimacy. Furthermore, it is crucial to address the growing mental health concerns affecting young people, who face immense pressure from family expectations, societal demands, and the weight of multiple global crises. In 2025, the Supreme Court sought responses from the government on integrating transgender-inclusive comprehensive sexuality education into school curricula. In the same year, the Court issued pan-India guidelines to address suicide and mental health issues among students in which gender and sexual orientation figured as reasons for discrimination at higher educational institutions. By creating diversity-aware and compassionate learning environments, students can develop the tools to navigate contemporary challenges and create a more inclusive, equitable, and just world. Fostering allyship and care communities within educational institutions should take precedence over short-term fixes such as hiring more mental health professionals or facilitating isolated events or workshops, without creating a sustained conversation or support system.



17Mar. Importance of sex education in academia

शिक्षा जगत में यौन शिक्षा का महत्व

- **Sexuality, intimacy, and mental health are closely linked yet heavily stigmatised, resulting in a culture of silence; shame and fear surrounding sex and intimacy can exacerbate mental health issues.**
यौनिकता, अंतरंगता और मानसिक स्वास्थ्य आपस में जुड़े हुए हैं, लेकिन भारी कलंक के कारण चुप्पी का माहौल बनता है; शर्म और डर मानसिक स्वास्थ्य समस्याओं को बढ़ाते हैं।
- The **WHO** has stated that “immense suffering can occur when people lack bodily autonomy, control over their fertility or the freedom to experience safe, consensual and satisfying sexual relationships”.
WHO ने कहा है कि जब लोगों के पास शारीरिक स्वायत्तता और सुरक्षित संबंधों की स्वतंत्रता नहीं होती, तो अत्यधिक पीड़ा होती है।
- In **2024**, the **Supreme Court** emphasised the need for **comprehensive sex education programmes** in order to promote open discussions about intimacy and sexual health.
2024 में **सुप्रीम कोर्ट** ने **व्यापक यौन शिक्षा** की आवश्यकता पर जोर दिया।
- As **DAAD fellows** between Germany and India, the authors’ classroom experiences of teaching about the diversity of human sexualities, in both contexts, found that there is a need to resist and challenge the marginalisation, invalidation and disenfranchisement of lived intimacies in higher educational institutions.
DAAD फेलोशिप के तहत अनुभव से पता चला कि उच्च शिक्षा में यौन विविधता को नजरअंदाज किया जाता है और इसे चुनौती देने की जरूरत है।
- **Deeply ingrained social stigmas, silence and taboos about intimate relationships are perpetuated in academia, evidenced by the miniscule number of courses and discussions on the topic.**
गहरे सामाजिक कलंक और चुप्पी अकादमिक संस्थानों में भी मौजूद हैं, जहाँ इस विषय पर बहुत कम पाठ्यक्रम हैं।
- Academia often promotes a culture of resistance, fear and anxiety over informed exchange and empowering discourse, particularly in the light of increasing **student suicides in India**.
अकादमिक संस्थान अक्सर डर और चिंता को बढ़ावा देते हैं, विशेषकर **भारत में बढ़ती छात्र आत्महत्याओं** के संदर्भ में।
- **By prioritising a biomedical approach as well as majoritarian norms, higher educational spaces disregard the dimension of pleasure and the impact of socio-cultural and oppressive factors on intimate experiences.**
बायोमेडिकल दृष्टिकोण और सामाजिक मानदंडों को प्राथमिकता देकर, शिक्षा संस्थान अंतरंग अनुभवों के सामाजिक पहलुओं को नजरअंदाज करते हैं।

Lack of proper vocabulary

उचित शब्दावली की कमी

- In India, the mental health curriculum is often found to be **heteronormative and cisgendered** without accounting for sexual marginalisation and human diversity.
भारत में मानसिक स्वास्थ्य पाठ्यक्रम अक्सर **heteronormative और cisgendered** होता है।
- **‘Sexuality’ is limited to heterosexual dysfunctions, erasing topics such as consent and sexual politics, framing it as a medical issue alone.**
‘Sexuality’ को केवल विषमलैंगिक समस्याओं तक सीमित किया जाता है और **consent व sexual politics** को नजरअंदाज किया जाता है।
- Complex lived realities and the structural violence faced by **queer people** are erased, inhibiting the development of cultural and structural competence required for effective clinical practice.
queer लोगों के अनुभवों को नजरअंदाज किया जाता है, जिससे प्रभावी चिकित्सा अभ्यास बाधित होता है।
- As a consequence, sexual minorities often experience **institutional discrimination** and inadequacies in the provision of support when they access counselling services.
इसके परिणामस्वरूप यौन अल्पसंख्यक **संस्थागत भेदभाव** का सामना करते हैं।
- With psychologists being increasingly appointed in universities to deal with suicide and mental health problems in India, such **ethical and epistemic gaps** fail to reckon with oppressive



institutional contexts.

विश्वविद्यालयों में मनोवैज्ञानिकों की नियुक्ति के बावजूद **ethical gaps** बने हुए हैं।

- It diminishes the capacity of mental health professionals to initiate transformative structural change oriented on **sexuality, gender and relationship equality**.
यह मानसिक स्वास्थ्य विशेषज्ञों की क्षमता को कम करता है कि वे **यौनिकता, लैंगिक समानता और संबंध समानता** पर बदलाव ला सकें।

Exercises to open up खुलने के लिए अभ्यास

- Addressing sensitive topics such as mental health, violence, and intimacy in higher educational settings comes with particular challenges.
उच्च शिक्षा में मानसिक स्वास्थ्य, हिंसा और अंतरंगता जैसे विषयों पर चर्चा करना चुनौतीपूर्ण होता है।
- A workshop and • Im screening that took place at the **University of Münster in Germany** featuring a • Immaker who uses unconventional pornography as a form of sex education highlighted some of the di• culties.
जर्मनी के यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ म्यूनस्टर में आयोजित कार्यशाला और फिल्म प्रदर्शन ने इन कठिनाइयों को उजागर किया।
- While appreciating the e• ort to tackle the issue, students found themselves uneasy during the discussion.
छात्रों ने इस प्रयास की सराहना की, लेकिन चर्चा के दौरान असहज महसूस किया।
- Was it appropriate to open up about one's own experiences, or was it safer to maintain a detached, impersonal, and abstract tone, as is often expected in academic settings?
क्या व्यक्तिगत अनुभव साझा करना सही है या अकादमिक दूरी बनाए रखना बेहतर है—यह प्रश्न सामने आया।
- The authors' interactions with students in **India and Germany** highlighted the importance of creating safer and accountable spaces when teaching sensitive topics.
भारत और जर्मनी में छात्रों से बातचीत ने सुरक्षित और जवाबदेह माहौल की आवश्यकता को दर्शाया।
- To achieve this, innovative approaches at the beginning of each class can help.
इसके लिए कक्षा की शुरुआत में नए तरीकों का उपयोग किया जा सकता है।
- Instead of diving straight into theory and methodology, icebreaker exercises and small-group discussions encourage students to share their personal perspectives on topics.
थ्योरी की बजाय **icebreaker exercises** और समूह चर्चा से छात्र अपने विचार साझा करते हैं।
- By answering questions like 'What does intimacy mean to you?', students can connect the course material to their own lives and experiences.
'आपके लिए अंतरंगता का क्या मतलब है?' जैसे सवाल छात्रों को विषय से जोड़ते हैं।
- Such an approach emphasises the need for instructors to foster a classroom environment that builds trust, rapport, and open communication among participants.
यह दृष्टिकोण शिक्षकों को विश्वास और संवाद का माहौल बनाने पर जोर देता है।

Inclusive classrooms समावेशी कक्षाएँ

- Education should harness the diversity within classrooms and transcend mere knowledge transfer and workforce training, aiming instead to cultivate critical thinking and awareness.
शिक्षा को विविधता को अपनाकर केवल ज्ञान तक सीमित नहीं रहना चाहिए बल्कि सोच विकसित करनी चाहिए।
- This is particularly urgent in today's context, where **anti-democratic movements** seek to erase and marginalise the experiences of **LGBTQ+ individuals**.
आज के समय में यह आवश्यक है क्योंकि **LGBTQ+ समुदाय** को हाशिए पर डाला जा रहा है।
- Promoting a narrow and exclusionary view of sexuality and intimacy.
जो यौनिकता का संकीर्ण दृष्टिकोण बढ़ाता है।
- Furthermore, it is crucial to address the growing **mental health concerns** a• ecting young people.
युवाओं में बढ़ती **मानसिक स्वास्थ्य समस्याओं** पर ध्यान देना जरूरी है।
- Who face immense pressure from family expectations, societal demands, and the weight of multiple global crises.
जो परिवार, समाज और वैश्विक संकटों के दबाव में हैं।



- In **2025**, the **Supreme Court** sought responses from the government on integrating **transgender-inclusive comprehensive sexuality education** into school curricula. **2025 में सुप्रीम कोर्ट** ने ट्रांसजेंडर समावेशी शिक्षा पर सरकार से जवाब मांगा।
- In the same year, the Court issued **pan-India guidelines** to address suicide and mental health issues among students. उसी वर्ष कोर्ट ने **देशव्यापी दिशानिर्देश** जारी किए।
- In which gender and sexual orientation • gured as reasons for discrimination at higher educational institutions. जिसमें लैंगिक पहचान को भेदभाव का कारण माना गया।
- By creating diversity-aware and compassionate learning environments, students can develop the tools to navigate contemporary challenges. समावेशी और संवेदनशील वातावरण छात्रों को चुनौतियों से निपटने में मदद करता है।
- And create a more inclusive, equitable, and just world. और एक अधिक न्यायपूर्ण समाज का निर्माण करता है।
- Fostering **allyship and care communities** within educational institutions should take precedence over short-term • xes. शैक्षणिक संस्थानों में **allyship और care communities** को प्राथमिकता दी जानी चाहिए।
- Such as hiring more mental health professionals or facilitating isolated events or workshops, without creating a sustained conversation or support system. सिर्फ पेशेवर नियुक्ति या कार्यक्रम पर्याप्त नहीं हैं, निरंतर संवाद आवश्यक है।

GS Paper II: Polity,

TOPICS COVERED

17 March 2026

17Mar	Karnataka Speaker adjourns House as govt. delays replies सरकार द्वारा उत्तर देने में देरी पर कर्नाटक विधानसभा अध्यक्ष ने सदन स्थगित किया
17Mar	Opposition notice seeking CEC's removal cites his remarks against Rahul मुख्य चुनाव आयुक्त को हटाने की विपक्ष की नोटिस में राहुल के खिलाफ उनकी टिप्पणियों का उल्लेख

Karnataka Speaker adjourns House as govt. delays replies

U.T. Khader halts proceedings over failure of govt. in responding to members' queries; only 30% of unstarred questions receive replies, he notes; House resumes after talks with CM Siddaramaiah

GS II: Polity

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a rare development in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly, Speaker U.T. Khader on Monday abruptly adjourned the House, expressing disappointment with the Congress government for failing to provide answers to questions raised by members despite repeated directions.

The Speaker's action – significant given that Mr. Khader himself is a Congress MLA from Mangaluru – came after Ministers and departments failed to submit written replies to a number of unstarred questions submitted by mem-



U.T. Khader

bers. Opposition members had been repeatedly complaining about this.

When the Speaker asked the government to table answers, Home Minister G. Parameshwara placed 84 replies against the 230 sought. Expressing strong displeasure, Mr. Khader said he had issued

clear directions from the Chair four times.

"This session is not meant for Ministers. It is meant for legislators who meet once in three months to raise issues concerning their constituencies. Only 15 starred questions are taken up during Question Hour. If a majority of unstarred questions go unanswered, why should members come to the House?" he asked.

Stating that there had been no improvement despite repeated warnings, he said, "Until the Ministers and the secretaries concerned explain this lapse, I will not run this House." He went on to adjourn the proceedings.

Before adjournment, Leader of the Opposition R. Ashok said it was the fifth time the Speaker had warned the government over the issue. Last week, Mr. Khader had cautioned Ministers saying: "Just because I speak softly, do not mistake it for my weakness." He had pointed out that only around 30% of unstarred questions had received replies.

After adjourning the House, the Speaker held a meeting with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. Following the talks, he resumed the proceedings. Mr. Parameshwara assured members strict measures would be taken to prevent recurrence of such incidents.

17Mar. Karnataka Speaker adjourns House as govt. delays replies

सरकार द्वारा उत्तर देने में देरी पर कर्नाटक विधानसभा अध्यक्ष ने सदन स्थगित किया

• U.T. Khader halts proceedings over failure of govt. in responding to members' queries; only 30% of unstarred questions receive replies, he notes; House resumes after talks with CM Siddaramaiah.

यू. टी. खदर ने सदस्यों के प्रश्नों का उत्तर देने में सरकार की विफलता के कारण कार्यवाही रोक दी; उन्होंने कहा कि केवल 30% अनस्टारर्ड प्रश्नों के उत्तर मिले; मुख्यमंत्री सिद्धारमैया से बातचीत के बाद सदन फिर शुरू हुआ।

• In a rare development in the Karnataka Legislative

Assembly, Speaker U.T. Khader on Monday abruptly adjourned the House, expressing disappointment with the Congress government for failing to provide answers to questions



raised by members despite repeated directions.

एक दुर्लभ घटनाक्रम में कर्नाटक विधानसभा में अध्यक्ष यू. टी. खदर ने सोमवार को अचानक सदन स्थगित कर दिया और बार-बार निर्देश देने के बावजूद सदस्यों के प्रश्नों के उत्तर देने में विफल रहने पर कांग्रेस सरकार पर निराशा व्यक्त की।

- The **Speaker's action** — significant given that **Mr. Khader** himself is a **Congress MLA from Mangaluru** — came after **Ministers and departments** failed to submit written replies to a number of **unstarred questions** submitted by members.
अध्यक्ष की यह कार्रवाई — जो महत्वपूर्ण है क्योंकि श्री खदर स्वयं मंगलुरु से कांग्रेस विधायक हैं — तब हुई जब मंत्रियों और विभागों ने सदस्यों द्वारा पूछे गए कई अनस्टार्ड प्रश्नों के लिखित उत्तर प्रस्तुत नहीं किए।
- **Opposition members** had been repeatedly complaining about this.
विपक्षी सदस्य लगातार इस बारे में शिकायत कर रहे थे।
- When the **Speaker** asked the **government** to table answers, **Home Minister G. Parameshwara** placed **84 replies** against the **230 sought**.
जब अध्यक्ष ने सरकार से उत्तर प्रस्तुत करने को कहा, तो गृह मंत्री जी. परमेश्वर ने मांगे गए 230 उत्तरों में से केवल 84 उत्तर प्रस्तुत किए।
- Expressing strong displeasure, **Mr. Khader** said he had issued clear directions from the **Chair** four times.
कड़ी नाराज़गी व्यक्त करते हुए श्री खदर ने कहा कि उन्होंने अध्यक्ष पद से चार बार स्पष्ट निर्देश जारी किए थे।
- “This **session** is not meant for **Ministers**.
“यह सत्र मंत्रियों के लिए नहीं है।
- It is meant for **legislators** who meet once in **three months** to raise issues concerning their **constituencies**.
यह विधायकों के लिए है जो तीन महीने में एक बार अपनी निर्वाचन क्षेत्रों से जुड़े मुद्दे उठाने के लिए मिलते हैं।
- Only **15 starred questions** are taken up during **Question Hour**.
प्रश्नकाल के दौरान केवल 15 स्टार्ड प्रश्न ही लिए जाते हैं।
- If a majority of **unstarred questions** go unanswered, why should members come to the **House**?” he asked.
यदि अधिकांश अनस्टार्ड प्रश्नों का उत्तर नहीं मिलता, तो सदस्य सदन में क्यों आएँ?” उन्होंने पूछा।
- Stating that there had been no improvement despite repeated warnings, he said, “Until the **Ministers** and the **secretaries concerned** explain this **lapse**, I will not run this **House**.”
उन्होंने कहा कि बार-बार चेतावनी देने के बावजूद कोई सुधार नहीं हुआ और कहा, “जब तक मंत्री और संबंधित सचिव इस चूक की व्याख्या नहीं करते, मैं इस सदन को नहीं चलाऊंगा।”
- He went on to **adjourn the proceedings**.
इसके बाद उन्होंने कार्यवाही स्थगित कर दी।
- Before **adjournment**, **Leader of the Opposition R. Ashok** said it was the **fifth time** the **Speaker** had warned the **government** over the issue.
स्थगन से पहले विपक्ष के नेता आर. अशोक ने कहा कि यह पांचवीं बार है जब अध्यक्ष ने इस मुद्दे पर सरकार को चेतावनी दी है।
- Last week, **Mr. Khader** had cautioned **Ministers** saying: “Just because I speak softly, do not mistake it for my **weakness**.”
पिछले सप्ताह श्री खदर ने मंत्रियों को चेतावनी देते हुए कहा था: “सिर्फ इसलिए कि मैं धीरे बोलता हूँ, इसे मेरी कमजोरी मत समझिए।”
- He had pointed out that only around **30% of unstarred questions** had received replies.
उन्होंने बताया था कि केवल लगभग 30% अनस्टार्ड प्रश्नों के उत्तर मिले हैं।
- After **adjourning the House**, the **Speaker** held a meeting with **Chief Minister Siddaramaiah**.
सदन स्थगित करने के बाद अध्यक्ष ने मुख्यमंत्री सिद्धारमैया के साथ बैठक की।
- Following the talks, he **resumed the proceedings**.
बातचीत के बाद उन्होंने कार्यवाही फिर शुरू की।
- **Mr. Parameshwara** assured members **strict measures** would be taken to prevent recurrence of such **incidents**.
श्री परमेश्वर ने सदस्यों को आश्वासन दिया कि ऐसी घटनाओं की पुनरावृत्ति रोकने के लिए कड़े कदम उठाए जाएंगे।



Opposition notice seeking CEC's removal cites his remarks against Rahul

GS II: Polity
The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The notice seeking the removal of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar cites concerns ranging from the selection process for the post to his public confrontation with Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, and reports of widespread deletion of voters in two constituencies in Karnataka, an Opposition leader said on Monday.

The Opposition is yet to make the contents of the 10-page notice against Mr. Kumar public. The notice signed by 193 Opposition MPs — 130 in the Lok Sabha and 63 in the Rajya Sabha — has listed seven charges against Mr. Kumar including “partisan and discriminatory conduct”, “obstruction of inquiries into electoral fraud” and “mass disenfranchisement”.

The Opposition alleges that the special intensive revision (SIR) exercise was

The notice signed by 193 Opposition MPs has listed seven charges against Gyanesh Kumar

used to benefit the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party.

The notices, filed on Friday, follow months of Opposition protests over the SIR of electoral rolls. MPs have alleged “manipulation” of voter lists and accused the Election Commission (EC) of overlooking complaints of disenfranchisement.

According to an Opposition leader, the notices draw heavily from Mr. Gandhi's February 2025 dissent note, submitted when Mr. Kumar was selected as CEC by the three-member committee comprising the Prime Minister, the Home Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Gandhi had termed the government's late-night decision to appoint the

CEC “disrespectful and discourteous”, pointing out that the committee's composition and process were under challenge in the Supreme Court. The main point of contention has been the removal of Chief Justice of India from the selection committee, which now comprises the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, and a Union Cabinet Minister, securing a majority for the government.

The notices also cite Mr. Kumar's public ultimatum to Mr. Gandhi at an August 2025 press conference, where the CEC demanded that he either apologise or file a signed affidavit backing his allegations of “vote theft”. The Opposition parties said that such remarks were partisan and compromised the neutrality of the office.

They have also flagged alleged voter-roll manipulation in two Karnataka Assembly seats, Aland and Mahadevapura.

17Mar. Opposition notice seeking CEC's removal cites his remarks against Rahul

मुख्य चुनाव आयुक्त को हटाने की विपक्ष की नोटिस में राहुल के खिलाफ उनकी टिप्पणियों का उल्लेख

The notice seeking the removal of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar cites concerns ranging from the selection process for the post to his public confrontation with Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, and reports of widespread deletion of voters in two constituencies in Karnataka, an Opposition leader said on Monday.

मुख्य चुनाव आयुक्त (CEC) ज्ञानेश कुमार को हटाने की मांग करने वाली नोटिस में पद के चयन प्रक्रिया से लेकर लोकसभा में विपक्ष के नेता राहुल गांधी के साथ उनके सार्वजनिक टकराव और कर्नाटक की दो विधानसभा सीटों में मतदाताओं के व्यापक रूप से हटाए जाने की रिपोर्टों तक की चिंताओं का उल्लेख किया गया है, ऐसा सोमवार को एक विपक्षी नेता ने कहा।

The Opposition is yet to make the contents of the 10-page notice against Mr. Kumar public.

विपक्ष ने अभी तक श्री कुमार के खिलाफ 10

पृष्ठों की नोटिस की सामग्री सार्वजनिक नहीं की है।

- The notice signed by **193 Opposition MPs — 130 in the Lok Sabha and 63 in the Rajya Sabha** — has listed **seven charges** against Mr. Kumar including “**partisan and discriminatory conduct**”, “**obstruction of inquiries into electoral fraud**” and “**mass disenfranchisement**”.

193 विपक्षी सांसदों — जिनमें लोकसभा के 130 और राज्यसभा के 63 सदस्य शामिल हैं — द्वारा हस्ताक्षरित इस नोटिस में **श्री कुमार के खिलाफ सात आरोप** लगाए गए हैं, जिनमें “**पक्षपातपूर्ण और भेदभावपूर्ण आचरण**”, “**चुनावी धोखाधड़ी की जांच में बाधा**” और “**बड़े पैमाने पर मताधिकार से वंचित करना**” शामिल हैं।

- The **Opposition** alleges that the **special intensive revision (SIR) exercise** was used to benefit the ruling **Bharatiya Janata Party**. **विपक्ष का आरोप है कि स्पेशल इंटेंसिव रिविजन (SIR) अभ्यास का उपयोग सत्तारूढ़ भारतीय जनता पार्टी को लाभ पहुंचाने के लिए किया गया।**
- The notices, filed on **Friday**, follow months of **Opposition protests** over the **SIR of electoral rolls**. **शुक्रवार को दाखिल की गई ये नोटिस मतदाता सूचियों के SIR को लेकर कई महीनों से चल रहे विपक्ष के विरोध प्रदर्शनों के बाद आई हैं।**
- MPs have alleged “**manipulation**” of voter lists and accused the **Election Commission (EC)** of overlooking complaints of **disenfranchisement**. **सांसदों ने मतदाता सूचियों में “हेरफेर” का आरोप लगाया है और चुनाव आयोग (EC) पर मताधिकार से वंचित किए जाने की शिकायतों को नजरअंदाज करने का आरोप लगाया है।**
- According to an **Opposition leader**, the notices draw heavily from **Mr. Gandhi's February 2025 dissent note**, submitted when **Mr. Kumar** was selected as **CEC** by the **three-member**



committee comprising the Prime Minister, the Home Minister and the Leader of the Opposition.

एक विपक्षी नेता के अनुसार यह नोटिस काफी हद तक फरवरी 2025 में श्री गांधी के असहमति नोट से ली गई है, जिसे तब प्रस्तुत किया गया था जब प्रधानमंत्री, गृह मंत्री और विपक्ष के नेता वाली तीन सदस्यीय समिति ने श्री कुमार को मुख्य चुनाव आयुक्त चुना था।

- Mr. Gandhi had termed the government's late-night decision to appoint the CEC "disrespectful and discourteous", pointing out that the committee's composition and process were under challenge in the Supreme Court.

श्री गांधी ने CEC की नियुक्ति के लिए सरकार के देर रात लिए गए फैसले को "अपमानजनक और असभ्य" बताया था और कहा था कि समिति की संरचना और प्रक्रिया को सुप्रीम कोर्ट में चुनौती दी गई है।

- The main point of contention has been the removal of the Chief Justice of India from the selection committee, which now comprises the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, and a Union Cabinet Minister, securing a majority for the government.

मुख्य विवाद का मुद्दा चयन समिति से भारत के मुख्य न्यायाधीश को हटाना रहा है, जिसमें अब प्रधानमंत्री, लोकसभा में विपक्ष के नेता, और एक केंद्रीय कैबिनेट मंत्री शामिल हैं, जिससे सरकार को बहुमत मिल जाता है।

- The notices also cite Mr. Kumar's public ultimatum to Mr. Gandhi at an August 2025 press conference, where the CEC demanded that he either apologise or file a signed affidavit backing his allegations of "vote theft".

नोटिस में अगस्त 2025 की प्रेस कॉन्फ्रेंस में श्री गांधी को दिए गए श्री कुमार के सार्वजनिक अल्टीमेटम का भी उल्लेख है, जहां मुख्य चुनाव आयुक्त ने उनसे या तो माफी मांगने या "वोट चोरी" के आरोपों का समर्थन करने वाला हस्ताक्षरित हलफनामा दाखिल करने को कहा था।

- The Opposition parties said that such remarks were partisan and compromised the neutrality of the office.

विपक्षी दलों ने कहा कि ऐसी टिप्पणियां पक्षपातपूर्ण थीं और उन्होंने पद की निष्पक्षता को प्रभावित किया।

- They have also flagged alleged voter-roll manipulation in two Karnataka Assembly seats, Aland and Mahadevapura.

उन्होंने कर्नाटक की दो विधानसभा सीटों, आलंद और महादेवपुरा, में कथित मतदाता सूची में हेरफेर का भी मुद्दा उठाया है।

Oppn. flags govt. plan to move Bill on IPS deputation in CAPFs

GS II: Governance

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Opposition members on Monday questioned the government's intention to introduce a Bill in the ongoing session of the Parliament to codify the deputation of Indian Police Service (IPS) officers in the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), despite a Supreme Court ruling to progressively reduce IPS deputation up to the rank of Inspector-General in the CAPFs and grant them organised group stature.

Against this backdrop, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday met Ajay Malik, Assistant Commandant of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), who lost a leg in an Improvised Explosive Device blast during an anti-Maoist operation in Jharkhand on March 1. Mr. Malik who was airlifted to the AIIMS, Delhi

had to undergo amputation and is presently recuperating at the CRPF's camp hospital in Delhi. He joined the CRPF in 2011 as an AC and 15 years on, remains at the same post.

The CAPFs officers have argued that despite leading operations from the front and several of them having been killed in the line of action, they face career stagnation and most times the first promotion comes only after 15-18 years of service.

Presently, 20% of posts in the rank of Deputy Inspector-General and 50% of posts in the rank of Inspector-General in the CAPFs are reserved for IPS officers through an executive order. The total strength of the CAPF is around 10 lakh, which includes 13,000 Group A cadre officers. The Home Ministry is the cadre controlling authority of both the CAPFs and IPS.

GS Paper II: Governance,

TOPICS COVERED

17 March 2026

17Mar

Oppn. flags govt. plan to move Bill on IPS deputation in CAPFs
विपक्ष ने CAPFs में IPS प्रतिनियुक्ति पर विधेयक लाने की सरकार की योजना पर सवाल उठाए

17Mar. Oppn. flags govt. plan to move Bill on IPS deputation in CAPFs

विपक्ष ने CAPFs में IPS प्रतिनियुक्ति पर विधेयक लाने की सरकार की योजना पर सवाल उठाए

- Opposition members on Monday questioned the government's intention to introduce a Bill in the ongoing session of the Parliament to codify the deputation of Indian Police Service (IPS) officers in the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), despite a Supreme Court ruling to progressively reduce IPS deputation up to the rank of Inspector-General in the CAPFs and grant them organised group stature.



विपक्षी सदस्यों ने सोमवार को सरकार की मंशा पर सवाल उठाया कि वह संसद के वर्तमान सत्र में केंद्रीय सशस्त्र पुलिस बलों (CAPFs) में भारतीय पुलिस सेवा (IPS) अधिकारियों की प्रतिनियुक्ति को संहिताबद्ध करने के लिए विधेयक लाने जा रही है, जबकि सुप्रीम कोर्ट के निर्णय में CAPFs में इंस्पेक्टर जनरल तक के पद पर IPS प्रतिनियुक्ति को धीरे-धीरे कम करने और उन्हें ऑर्गनाइज्ड ग्रुप का दर्जा देने की बात कही गई है।

- Against this backdrop, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday met Ajay Malik, Assistant Commandant of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), who lost a leg in an Improvised Explosive Device blast during an anti-Maoist operation in Jharkhand on March 1.

इस पृष्ठभूमि में कांग्रेस नेता राहुल गांधी ने सोमवार को अजय मलिक, जो केंद्रीय रिजर्व पुलिस बल (CRPF) में असिस्टेंट कमांडेंट हैं, से मुलाकात की, जिन्होंने 1 मार्च को झारखंड में एक माओवादी विरोधी अभियान के दौरान इम्प्रोवाइज्ड एक्सप्लोसिव डिवाइस (IED) विस्फोट में अपना पैर खो दिया।

- Mr. Malik who was airlifted to the AIIMS, Delhi had to undergo amputation and is presently recuperating at the CRPF's camp hospital in Delhi.

श्री मलिक को AIIMS, दिल्ली में एयरलिफ्ट किया गया था, जहां उनका अंग विच्छेदन (amputation) करना पड़ा और वे वर्तमान में दिल्ली के CRPF कैंप अस्पताल में स्वस्थ हो रहे हैं।

- He joined the CRPF in 2011 as an AC and 15 years on, remains at the same post. उन्होंने 2011 में CRPF में असिस्टेंट कमांडेंट (AC) के रूप में शामिल हुए थे और 15 वर्ष बाद भी वे उसी पद पर बने हुए हैं।

- The CAPFs officers have argued that despite leading operations from the front and several of them having been killed in the line of action, they face career stagnation and most times the first promotion comes only after 15-18 years of service.

CAPFs अधिकारियों का तर्क है कि सामने से अभियानों का नेतृत्व करने और कई के ड्यूटी के दौरान शहीद होने के बावजूद उन्हें करियर में ठहराव का सामना करना पड़ता है और अक्सर पहली पदोन्नति 15-18 वर्षों की सेवा के बाद ही मिलती है।

- Presently, 20% of posts in the rank of Deputy Inspector-General and 50% of posts in the rank of Inspector-General in the CAPFs are reserved for IPS officers through an executive order.

वर्तमान में CAPFs में डिप्टी इंस्पेक्टर जनरल के पदों का 20% और इंस्पेक्टर जनरल के पदों का 50% IPS अधिकारियों के लिए कार्यकारी आदेश के माध्यम से आरक्षित है।

- The total strength of the CAPF is around 10 lakh, which includes 13,000 Group A cadre officers.

CAPF की कुल शक्ति लगभग 10 लाख है, जिसमें 13,000 ग्रुप-A कैडर अधिकारी शामिल हैं।

- The Home Ministry is the cadre controlling authority of both the CAPFs and IPS. गृह मंत्रालय ही CAPFs और IPS दोनों का कैडर नियंत्रक प्राधिकरण है।

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USCIRF is creating a distorted picture of India, says Centre

USCIRF
NEW DELHI

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), in its latest report, has presented a "distorted and selective picture of India", the External Affairs Ministry said on Monday.

"For several years now, the USCIRF has persisted in presenting a distorted and selective picture of India, relying on questionable sources and ideological narratives rather than objective facts. Such repeated misrepresentations only undermine the credibility of the Commission itself," Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said after the USCIRF in its latest report called for "targeted sanctions" against India's external intelligence agency, the Research & Analysis Wing, and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), "for their responsibility and tolerance of several violations of religious freedom by freezing those individuals' and entities assets and barring their entry into the United States".

The report further said that bilateral trade policies with India should be linked to "improvements in religious freedoms".



Randhir Jaiswal

"Instead of persisting with selective criticism of India, USCIRF would do well to reflect on the disturbing incidents of vandalism and attacks on Hindu temples in the United States," Mr. Jaiswal said.

'Needs attention'

"Growing intolerance and intimidation of members of the Indian diaspora in the United States merit serious attention," Mr. Jaiswal added.

There have been several incidents of violence against individuals belonging to the Indian community in the U.S. as well as members of the Indian diaspora in the U.S. in recent years.

There have also been several incidents of vandalism at Hindu temples and properties that India has urged the U.S. to address.

17Mar. USCIRF is creating a distorted picture of India, says Centre

USCIRF भारत की विकृत तस्वीर प्रस्तुत कर रहा है, केंद्र का कहना

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), in its latest report, has presented a "distorted and selective picture of India", the External Affairs Ministry said on Monday.

अंतरराष्ट्रीय धार्मिक स्वतंत्रता पर अमेरिकी आयोग (USCIRF) ने अपनी ताज़ा रिपोर्ट में "भारत की विकृत और चयनात्मक तस्वीर" प्रस्तुत की है, यह बात विदेश मंत्रालय ने सोमवार को कही।

"For several years now, the USCIRF has persisted in presenting a distorted and selective picture of India, relying on questionable sources and ideological narratives rather than objective facts.

"कई वर्षों से USCIRF लगातार भारत की विकृत और चयनात्मक तस्वीर प्रस्तुत करता रहा है, जो निष्पक्ष तथ्यों के बजाय संदिग्ध स्रोतों और वैचारिक कथाओं पर आधारित है।

Such repeated misrepresentations only undermine the credibility of the Commission itself," Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said after the USCIRF in its latest report called for "targeted sanctions" against India's external intelligence agency, the Research & Analysis Wing, and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

ऐसी बार-बार की जाने वाली गलत प्रस्तुतियाँ केवल आयोग की विश्वसनीयता को कमजोर करती हैं," मंत्रालय के प्रवक्ता रणधीर जायसवाल ने यह बात कही, जब USCIRF ने अपनी ताज़ा रिपोर्ट में भारत की बाहरी खुफिया एजेंसी, रिसर्च एंड एनालिसिस विंग (RAW) और राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ (RSS) पर "लक्षित प्रतिबंध" लगाने की मांग की।

- The report said this was "for their responsibility and tolerance of several violations of religious freedom by freezing those individuals' and entities' assets and barring their entry into the United States".

रिपोर्ट में कहा गया कि यह कदम "धार्मिक स्वतंत्रता के कई उल्लंघनों के लिए उनकी जिम्मेदारी और सहनशीलता के कारण संबंधित व्यक्तियों और संस्थाओं की संपत्तियाँ फ्रीज़ करने तथा उन्हें संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका में प्रवेश से रोकने" के लिए होना चाहिए।

- The report further said that bilateral trade policies with India should be linked to "improvements in religious freedoms".

रिपोर्ट में आगे कहा गया कि भारत के साथ द्विपक्षीय व्यापार नीतियों को "धार्मिक स्वतंत्रता में सुधार" से जोड़ा जाना चाहिए।

- "Instead of persisting with selective criticism of India, USCIRF would do well to reflect on the disturbing incidents of vandalism and attacks on Hindu temples in the United States," Mr. Jaiswal said.

श्री जायसवाल ने कहा, "भारत की चयनात्मक आलोचना जारी रखने के बजाय USCIRF को संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका में हिंदू मंदिरों पर तोड़फोड़ और हमलों की चिंताजनक घटनाओं पर भी विचार करना चाहिए।"

'Needs attention'

'ध्यान देने की आवश्यकता'

- "Growing intolerance and intimidation of members of the Indian diaspora in the United States merit serious attention," Mr. Jaiswal added.
श्री जायसवाल ने आगे कहा, "संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका में भारतीय प्रवासी समुदाय के सदस्यों के प्रति बढ़ती असहिष्णुता और धमकी के मामलों पर गंभीर ध्यान देने की आवश्यकता है।"
- There have been several incidents of violence against individuals belonging to the Indian community in the U.S. as well as members of the Indian diaspora in the U.S. in recent



years.

हाल के वर्षों में अमेरिका में भारतीय समुदाय के व्यक्तियों और भारतीय प्रवासी समुदाय के सदस्यों के खिलाफ हिंसा की कई घटनाएँ हुई हैं।

- There have also been several incidents of vandalism at Hindu temples and properties that India has urged the U.S. to address. इसके अलावा हिंदू मंदिरों और संपत्तियों पर तोड़फोड़ की कई घटनाएँ भी हुई हैं, जिन्हें लेकर भारत ने अमेरिका से कार्रवाई करने का आग्रह किया है।

Neighbourhood diplomacy and its West Asia challenge

GS II IR

With the sinking of the Iranian warship, *IRIS Dena*, in the Indian Ocean, by the United States on March 4, the war in West Asia came home to South Asia. With each passing day, the war that began on February 28 has reached South Asian homes in a number of ways — disrupting the availability of daily necessities, travel, trade, food and fuel for cooking and transport, fertilizers, and the safety of citizens in the West Asia region.

Approximately 25 million South Asians live and work in West Asia, including 10 million Indians, five million Pakistanis, between five to six million Bangladeshis, two million Nepalis, and significant numbers from Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and the Maldives. Afghans — between five to eight million — are refugees in Iran. In addition, Indians make up about 15% of the population of seafarers, or crew aboard merchant ships worldwide, along with other South Asians, all of whom are at risk of harm, particularly those positioned around the Strait of Hormuz, where Iran has weaponised access. As New Delhi formulates its next steps in the war, it is necessary to consider not only what it will mean for the whole region but also its own ties with each neighbour.

India's stance could raise eyebrows

It is important to recognise that New Delhi's posture at the start of the war — when U.S.-Israel strikes killed Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and much of his immediate family — has been out of step with most of the region. Bangladesh and Pakistan issued statements condoling Khamenei's death almost immediately, the Maldives condemned the U.S.-Israel attacks on Iran and Iran's counter-attacks equally, and the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister offered his condolences. In contrast, it took South Block five days to send Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri to the Iranian Embassy.

It took another week for the Ministry of External Affairs to express "grief" over the killing of more than 150 students and teachers at a school for girls abutting a naval base in Minab. Even in the wider region, a statement by Foreign Ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) criticised U.S. and Israel for "initiating" attacks, and subsequent attacks by Iran.

This is less about optics and more about India's — and South Asia's — cultural values: the killing of Khamenei, an 86-year-old religious leader of a sect, violated international norms, regardless of how his policies were viewed. That India's statements in the following days condemned Iran's retaliatory strikes without ever criticising U.S. or Israeli actions against Iran and Lebanon is an anomaly.

It is possible to explain the initial reactions in light of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to



Suhasini Haider

Israel two days before the strikes, and his statement in the Knesset that India would stand with Israel "in the moment and beyond". But as the horror of the escalating war mounts and the Iranian regime demonstrates its resilience, there is a need to calibrate a more balanced response. India's traditional position, of building strong bilateral ties with every country in West Asia, without taking sides in regional fault lines has always kept it in a position of trust and goodwill; this was proven during Mr. Modi's outreach to Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian for the passage of Indian ships in the Strait of Hormuz.

In addition, the U.S.'s unabashed pride in bombing *IRIS Dena* near Sri Lanka without even attempting to help the surviving sailors has come as a shock to many in the region. It is admirable that the Indian Navy immediately assisted the Sri Lankan Navy in the rescue operations, and that both Delhi and Colombo offered safe harbour to other Iranian military ships in the area. Yet, the Indian Navy's failure to express its condolences for the deaths of the sailors who had recently been its guests at India's multinational naval exercise MILAN 2026 and the International Fleet Review in Visakhapatnam in February, is difficult to understand.

Economic, regional and maritime security

Going forward, India must reassure its neighbours — other than Pakistan, which it has no relationship with at present — that it remains cognisant of their concerns. As energy shortages deepened, New Delhi received requests for petrol and diesel from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives; landlocked Nepal and Bhutan may follow suit if the situation worsens. India must plan ahead to avoid a repeat of 2021, when it had to halt vaccine supplies to its neighbourhood for several critical weeks to deal with the crisis caused by the spread of the delta variant of SARS-CoV-2. Subsequently, India's "Vaccine Maitri" programme did much to ease those memories, and enforced the need for an "all of region" approach to such situations.

Since 2020, South Asia has been buffeted by several crises: COVID-19, supply chain blockages from India-China tensions along the Line of Actual Control, sanctions affecting grain, oil, and urea amid the Russia-Ukraine conflict, fluctuations in remittances due to constant flare-ups in West Asia, the impact of the Trump administration's tariff policy on the region's labour-intensive apparel and fashion industry, and seafood exports, and the growing shadow of Artificial Intelligence on jobs in a region with a restless young population.

It is not a coincidence that many of India's neighbours have seen youth protests erupt, and new governments installed as a result — an example is Nepal's election on March 5 which brought its first Gen-Z-led government to power.

The Bharatiya Janata Party's poll losses in the general election in 2024, which resulted in Mr. Modi's first minority government within a coalition, are also attributed to the disaffection of unemployed and underemployed youth. The changes have impacted India's diplomacy, as the Modi government has had to amend its more muscular neighbourhood policy to engage leaders elected on these mandates and who are less beholden to India.

India must also recognise that its position as "net security provider" in the region has been challenged by the U.S.'s sinking of the *IRIS Dena*, which cuts more deeply given their joint membership of the Quad (the strategic forum comprising the U.S., Japan, India, and Australia).

At their last meeting in July 2025, the Quad Foreign Ministers issued a statement reaffirming their commitment to "peace and stability" in the Indo-Pacific region and declaring that they "strongly oppose any unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo by force or coercion", a reference to China. With the U.S. behaving unilaterally, India must move to strengthen its own coalitions in the maritime region, including the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), the Colombo Security Conclave, and the Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) so that it is not caught unawares in the future. South Asia requires more regional trade, connectivity and energy sharing platforms, along with more conversations on regional security, as each country in the subcontinent is a stakeholder.

On the global stage, India's position as Chair of the Quad requires it to host a summit this year — when U.S. President Donald Trump is to visit India. But India's immediate priority should be to convene a Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting to ensure better communication and chart a more stable course for the maritime region in view of the West Asia war.

New Delhi must restore the balance

On the other side of the global North-South divide, India is also due to convene the BRICS Summit in 2026 — while bringing current rivals and BRICS members Iran and the United Arab Emirates to the table may be difficult given current tensions, New Delhi's diplomatic skills must be exerted in forging consensus for a BRICS statement that also highlights South Asia's economic and security concerns. Having momentarily abandoned its balancing act between the U.S.-Israel and Iran, it is time for India to restore the balance in its West Asia policy. New Delhi's traditional position on the tightrope may be tense, but it gives a more beneficial vantage point from which to steer the future of its people and those across the wider neighbourhood.

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17Mar. Neighbourhood diplomacy and its West Asia challenge पड़ोसी कूटनीति और उसका पश्चिम एशिया चुनौती

- **With the sinking of the Iranian warship, IRIS Dena, in the Indian Ocean, by the United States on March 4, the war in West Asia came home to South Asia.** 4 मार्च को भारतीय महासागर में अमेरिकी कार्रवाई से ईरानी युद्धपोत IRIS Dena के डूबने के साथ, पश्चिम एशिया का युद्ध दक्षिण एशिया तक पहुँच गया।
- With each passing day, the war that began on **February 28** has reached South Asian homes in a number of ways — disrupting the availability of daily necessities, travel, trade, food and fuel for cooking and transport, fertilizers, and the safety of citizens in the West Asia region. हर गुजरते दिन के साथ **28 फरवरी** से शुरू हुआ युद्ध दक्षिण एशिया के घरों तक पहुँच रहा है—दैनिक आवश्यकताओं, यात्रा, व्यापार, भोजन, ईंधन, उर्वरक और नागरिकों की सुरक्षा को प्रभावित कर रहा है।
- Approximately **25 million South Asians** live and work in **West Asia**, including **10 million Indians**, **5 million Pakistanis**, **5–6 million Bangladeshis**, **2 million Nepalis**, and significant numbers from **Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and Maldives**.



लगभग 25 मिलियन दक्षिण एशियाई पश्चिम एशिया में रहते और काम करते हैं, जिनमें 10 मिलियन भारतीय, 5 मिलियन पाकिस्तानी, 5-6 मिलियन बांग्लादेशी, 2 मिलियन नेपाली शामिल हैं।

- **Afghans — 5 to 8 million — are refugees in Iran. 5-8 मिलियन अफगान ईरान में शरणार्थी हैं।**
- In addition, Indians make up about **15% of the population of seafarers**, or crew aboard merchant ships worldwide, along with other South Asians, all of whom are at risk of harm, particularly those positioned around the **Strait of Hormuz**, where Iran has weaponised access.
भारतीय वैश्विक समुद्री कर्मियों का लगभग 15% हैं, जो विशेष रूप से **Strait of Hormuz** के आसपास खतरे में हैं।
- As **New Delhi** formulates its next steps in the war, it is necessary to consider not only what it will mean for the whole region but also its own ties with each neighbour.
जब **नई दिल्ली** आगे की रणनीति बना रहा है, तो उसे पूरे क्षेत्र और पड़ोसी देशों के साथ संबंधों को ध्यान में रखना होगा।

India's stance could raise eyebrows भारत का रुख सवाल खड़े कर सकता है

- It is important to recognise that New Delhi's posture at the start of the war — when **U.S.-Israel strikes** killed Iran's Supreme Leader **Ayatollah Ali Khamenei** — has been out of step with most of the region.
यह समझना महत्वपूर्ण है कि युद्ध की शुरुआत में **अमेरिका-इज़राइल हमलों** में **अयातुल्ला अली खामेनेई** की मृत्यु पर भारत का रुख क्षेत्र के अन्य देशों से अलग था।
- **Bangladesh** and **Pakistan** issued statements condemning Khamenei's death almost immediately, the **Maldives** condemned both sides, and **Sri Lanka** offered condolences.
बांग्लादेश और **पाकिस्तान** ने तुरंत शोक व्यक्त किया, **मालदीव** ने दोनों पक्षों की निंदा की और **श्रीलंका** ने भी संवेदना व्यक्त की।
- In contrast, it took South Block **five days** to send Foreign Secretary **Vikram Misri** to the Iranian Embassy.
इसके विपरीत, भारत को **5 दिन** लगे और विदेश सचिव **विक्रम मिस्त्री** को ईरानी दूतावास भेजा गया।
- It took another week for the **Ministry of External Affairs** to express "grief" over the killing of more than **150 students and teachers** at a school for girls in **Minab**.
इसके बाद **विदेश मंत्रालय** ने **150 से अधिक छात्रों और शिक्षकों** की हत्या पर शोक व्यक्त करने में एक और सप्ताह लिया।
- Even in the wider region, a statement by **ASEAN Foreign Ministers** criticised the U.S. and **Israel** for initiating attacks and Iran for retaliation.
विस्तृत क्षेत्र में भी **ASEAN विदेश मंत्रियों** ने **अमेरिका-इज़राइल** और ईरान दोनों की आलोचना की।
- This is less about optics and more about **cultural values**: the killing of **Khamenei (86 years)** violated international norms.
यह केवल छवि का नहीं बल्कि **सांस्कृतिक मूल्यों** का मुद्दा है—**86 वर्षीय खामेनेई** की हत्या अंतरराष्ट्रीय मानदंडों का उल्लंघन थी।
- That India's statements condemned **Iran's retaliatory strikes** without criticising the U.S. or **Israel** is an anomaly.
भारत द्वारा केवल **ईरान के जवाबी हमलों** की आलोचना करना और **अमेरिका-इज़राइल** की नहीं करना एक असामान्यता है।
- It is possible to explain the initial reactions in light of **Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Israel** two days before the strikes.
शुरुआती प्रतिक्रिया को **प्रधानमंत्री मोदी के इज़राइल दौरे** से जोड़ा जा सकता है।
- His statement in the **Knesset** that India would stand with Israel "in the moment and beyond" also shaped perceptions.
Knesset में दिए गए उनके बयान ने भी धारणा को प्रभावित किया।
- But as the war escalates and Iran shows resilience, there is a need to calibrate a more **balanced response**.
जैसे-जैसे युद्ध बढ़ रहा है, भारत को अधिक **संतुलित प्रतिक्रिया** देने की आवश्यकता है।
- India's traditional position of maintaining ties with all countries in **West Asia** without taking sides has ensured **trust and goodwill**.



भारत की पारंपरिक नीति, पश्चिम एशिया में सभी देशों के साथ संतुलन बनाए रखने की, विश्वास और सद्भावना बनाए रखती है।

- This was evident during outreach to Iranian President **Masoud Pezeshkian** regarding the safe passage of Indian ships through the **Strait of Hormuz**.
यह **Masoud Pezeshkian** से बातचीत में दिखा, जहाँ **Strait of Hormuz** से भारतीय जहाजों की सुरक्षित आवाजाही सुनिश्चित की गई।
- **In addition, the U.S.'s unabashed pride in bombing IRIS Dena near Sri Lanka without even attempting to help the surviving sailors has come as a shock to many in the region.**
इसके अलावा, श्रीलंका के पास IRIS Dena पर बमबारी करने के बाद जीवित नाविकों की मदद न करने पर अमेरिका का खुला गर्व क्षेत्र के कई लोगों के लिए झटका है।
- It is admirable that the **Indian Navy** immediately assisted the **Sri Lankan Navy** in the rescue operations, and that both **Delhi and Colombo** served as safe harbour to other Iranian military ships in the area.
यह सराहनीय है कि **भारतीय नौसेना** ने तुरंत **श्रीलंकाई नौसेना** की सहायता की और **दिल्ली और कोलंबो** ने ईरानी जहाजों को सुरक्षित आश्रय दिया।
- Yet, the Indian Navy's failure to express its condolences for the deaths of the sailors who had recently been its guests at **MILAN 2026** and the **International Fleet Review (Visakhapatnam, February)** is difficult to understand.
फिर भी, **MILAN 2026** और **फरवरी में विशाखापत्तनम फ्लीट रिव्यू** में भाग लेने वाले नाविकों की मृत्यु पर भारतीय नौसेना की संवेदना न व्यक्त करना समझ से परे है।

Economic, regional and maritime security आर्थिक, क्षेत्रीय और समुद्री सुरक्षा

- Going forward, **India** must reassure its neighbours — other than **Pakistan** — that it remains cognisant of their concerns.
आगे बढ़ते हुए, **भारत** को **पाकिस्तान** को छोड़कर अपने पड़ोसियों को आश्वस्त करना होगा कि वह उनकी चिंताओं को समझता है।
- As energy shortages deepened, **New Delhi** received requests for **petrol and diesel** from **Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Maldives**; landlocked **Nepal and Bhutan** may follow.
ऊर्जा संकट बढ़ने पर **नई दिल्ली** को **बांग्लादेश, श्रीलंका और मालदीव** से **पेट्रोल-डीजल** की मांग मिली, और **नेपाल-भूटान** भी ऐसा कर सकते हैं।
- India must plan ahead to avoid a repeat of **2021**, when it halted **vaccine supplies** due to the **Delta variant (SARS-CoV-2)** crisis.
भारत को **2021** जैसी स्थिति से बचने के लिए योजना बनानी चाहिए, जब **डेल्टा वैरिएंट** के कारण वैक्सीन आपूर्ति रोक दी गई थी।
- Subsequently, India's "**Vaccine Maitri**" programme helped restore trust and highlighted the need for an "**all of region**" approach.
बाद में "**वैक्सीन मैत्री**" कार्यक्रम ने विश्वास बहाल किया और **क्षेत्रीय सहयोग** की आवश्यकता को दर्शाया।
- Since **2020**, South Asia has faced multiple crises: **COVID-19, India-China tensions (LAC), Russia-Ukraine war impacts**, and supply disruptions in **grain, oil, urea**.
2020 से दक्षिण एशिया ने कई संकटों का सामना किया: **COVID-19, भारत-चीन तनाव, रूस-यूक्रेन युद्ध** और आपूर्ति बाधाएं।
- It also faced fluctuations in **remittances**, impacts of **Trump tariff policies**, and challenges to **apparel, seafood exports**, and rising threat of **Artificial Intelligence on jobs**.
इसके अलावा **रेमिटेंस** में उतार-चढ़ाव, **ट्रंप टैरिफ नीति**, और **टेक्सटाइल, समुद्री निर्यात तथा AI से रोजगार पर खतरा** भी शामिल हैं।
- It is not a coincidence that many of India's neighbours have seen **youth protests** and new governments emerging.
यह संयोग नहीं है कि कई पड़ोसी देशों में **युवा आंदोलन** हुए और नई सरकारें बनीं।
- An example is **Nepal's election (March 5)** which brought its first **Gen-Z-led government** to power.
उदाहरण के लिए, **5 मार्च नेपाल चुनाव** में पहली बार **Gen-Z सरकार** बनी।



- The **BJP's losses in the 2024 general election** and **Modi's first coalition minority government** are also linked to youth disaffection.
2024 चुनाव में BJP की हार और मोदी की गठबंधन सरकार भी युवाओं की असंतुष्टि से जुड़ी है।
- These changes have impacted India's diplomacy, requiring a shift from a more **muscular neighbourhood policy** to engaging with newly elected leaders.
इन बदलावों ने भारत की कूटनीति को प्रभावित किया है, जिससे **आक्रामक पड़ोसी नीति** को बदलकर नए नेताओं से संवाद करना पड़ा।
- **India must also recognise that its position as "net security provider" in the region has been challenged by the U.S.'s sinking of the IRIS Dena, which cuts more deeply given their joint membership of the Quad (the strategic forum comprising the U.S., Japan, India, and Australia).**
भारत को यह भी समझना चाहिए कि क्षेत्र में "net security provider" के रूप में उसकी स्थिति को **IRIS Dena** को डुबाने की अमेरिकी कार्रवाई ने चुनौती दी है, विशेषकर **Quad** सदस्यता के संदर्भ में।
- At their last meeting in **July 2025**, the **Quad Foreign Ministers** issued a statement reaffirming their commitment to "**peace and stability**" in the **Indo-Pacific region**.
जुलाई 2025 की बैठक में **Quad** विदेश मंत्रियों ने **इंडो-पैसिफिक** में शांति और स्थिरता के प्रति प्रतिबद्धता जताई।
- They declared that they "**strongly oppose any unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo by force or coercion**", a reference to **China**.
उन्होंने कहा कि वे **एकतरफा बल या दबाव से स्थिति बदलने** का विरोध करते हैं, जो **चीन** की ओर संकेत था।
- With the **U.S. behaving unilaterally**, India must move to strengthen its own coalitions in the maritime region.
जब **अमेरिका एकतरफा व्यवहार** कर रहा है, भारत को अपने समुद्री गठबंधनों को मजबूत करना चाहिए।
- This includes the **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)**, the **Colombo Security Conclave**, and the **Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)**.
इसमें **IORA**, **Colombo Security Conclave**, और **IFC-IOR** जैसे मंच शामिल हैं।
- So that it is not caught unawares in the future.
ताकि भविष्य में भारत अप्रत्याशित स्थिति में न फंसे।
- South Asia requires more **regional trade, connectivity and energy sharing platforms**, along with more conversations on **regional security**.
दक्षिण एशिया को अधिक **क्षेत्रीय व्यापार, कनेक्टिविटी और ऊर्जा साझेदारी** तथा **क्षेत्रीय सुरक्षा संवाद** की आवश्यकता है।
- As each country in the subcontinent is a stakeholder.
क्योंकि उपमहाद्वीप का हर देश एक हितधारक है।
- On the global stage, India's position as **Chair of the Quad** requires it to host a summit this year — when **U.S. President Donald Trump** is to visit India.
वैश्विक स्तर पर, **Quad के अध्यक्ष** के रूप में भारत को इस वर्ष शिखर सम्मेलन आयोजित करना है, जब **डोनाल्ड ट्रंप** भारत आएंगे।
- But India's immediate priority should be to convene a **Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting** to ensure better communication and stability.
लेकिन भारत की प्राथमिकता **Quad विदेश मंत्रियों की बैठक** बुलाना होनी चाहिए।
- To chart a more stable course for the maritime region in view of the **West Asia war**.
ताकि **पश्चिम एशिया युद्ध** के संदर्भ में समुद्री क्षेत्र के लिए स्थिर दिशा तय की जा सके।

New Delhi must restore the balance नई दिल्ली को संतुलन बहाल करना चाहिए

- On the other side of the global **North-South divide**, India is also due to convene the **BRICS Summit in 2026**.
वैश्विक **उत्तर-दक्षिण विभाजन** के बीच, भारत को **2026 में BRICS शिखर सम्मेलन** आयोजित करना है।
- Bringing rivals and BRICS members **Iran and UAE** together may be difficult due to tensions.
ईरान और UAE जैसे प्रतिद्वंद्वी देशों को साथ लाना चुनौतीपूर्ण हो सकता है।
- New Delhi's **diplomatic skills** must be used to forge consensus for a **BRICS statement** highlighting South Asia's concerns.
नई दिल्ली को अपनी **कूटनीतिक क्षमता** का उपयोग कर **BRICS बयान** में दक्षिण एशिया की चिंताओं को शामिल करना होगा।



- Having momentarily abandoned its balancing act between **U.S.-Israel and Iran**, it is time for India to restore the balance in its **West Asia policy**.
अमेरिका-इज़राइल और ईरान के बीच संतुलन खोने के बाद अब भारत को अपनी **पश्चिम एशिया नीति** में संतुलन बहाल करना चाहिए।
- New Delhi's traditional position on the tightrope may be tense, but it provides a more beneficial vantage point for shaping the future.
भारत की संतुलन नीति चुनौतीपूर्ण है, लेकिन यह भविष्य को दिशा देने के लिए अधिक लाभकारी स्थिति प्रदान करती है।

Why Trump will find it hard to reopen Strait of Hormuz?



Extreme step: Analysts have always regarded the closure of the strait as a measure of last resort. REUTERS

GS II: IR
Reuters

U.S. President Donald Trump has demanded help from allies to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, which usually carries about a fifth of global energy supplies, but even if he can assemble a major coalition it could prove very hard to end Iran's blockade. Iran lies along one side of the narrow strait and has responded to the U.S.-Israeli attack from February 28 by using drones, missiles and mines to make the vital waterway unsafe for the colossal oil and gas tankers that slowly traverse it each day.

When a commander in Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps warned in 2011 that cutting off the strait would be "easier than drinking a glass of water", the threat to the strait had already been made many times before.

In the years since, the Guards have continued to warn they could close it, including during tensions over sanctions and Iran's nuclear programme in 2016 and 2018, and again during Israeli and U.S. strikes in June last year.

Analysts have always regarded the closure of the strait as a measure of last resort because of the long-term strategic changes it might prompt among Iran's enemies, and the potential for retaliation against its own energy sector. The attack on Iran starting on February 28 with the killing of its supreme leader has changed that equation. Iranian officials describe the war as existential and the hardline Guards have increasingly taken charge of strategy.

What is at stake

The narrow passage of water between Iran and Oman that links the Gulf with the Gulf of Oman is the only sea exit for oil- and gas-producing countries such as Kuwait, Iran, Iraq, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

Oil prices briefly climbed to their highest level since 2022 on Monday. High oil prices could trigger another cost-of-living crisis, as happened after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, according to the United Nations.

A prolonged conflict could also cause a fertilizer shock, risking global food security. About 33% of the world's fertilisers, including sulphur and ammonia, pass through the strait, according to analytics firm Kpler.

An extended war could fuel fears of a global economic crisis similar to those that followed the Middle East oil shocks of the 1970s.

Shipping lanes are just two nautical miles wide and ships must make a turn opposite Iranian islands and a mountainous coast that provides cover for Iranian forces, according to shipping broker SSS Global.

Iran's conventional navy has largely been destroyed but the Guards still have plenty of options including fast-attack craft, mini submarines, mines and even jet skis packed with explosives, said Tom Sharpe, a retired Royal Navy commander. Tehran has the capacity to produce around 10,000 drones a month, according to the Centre for Information Resilience, a non-profit research group.

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जब ईरान की इस्लामिक रिवोल्यूशनरी गार्ड कॉर्प्स के एक कमांडर ने 2011 में कहा था कि जलडमरूमध्य को बंद करना "एक गिलास पानी पीने से भी आसान" होगा, तब तक इस जलडमरूमध्य को बंद करने की धमकी कई बार दी जा चुकी थी।

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- In the years since, the **Guards** have continued to warn they could **close it**, including during tensions over **sanctions** and **Iran's nuclear programme** in **2016 and 2018**, and again during **Israeli and U.S. strikes** in **June last year**.
इसके बाद के वर्षों में **गार्ड्स** लगातार चेतावनी देते रहे कि वे इसे **बंद कर सकते हैं**, जिसमें **2016 और 2018**

17Mar. Why will Trump find it hard to reopen the Strait of Hormuz?

ट्रम्प के लिए होर्मुज़ जलडमरूमध्य को फिर से खोलना कठिन क्यों होगा?

- **U.S. President Donald Trump** has demanded help from **allies** to reopen the **Strait of Hormuz**, which usually carries about a **fifth of global energy supplies**, but even if he can assemble a **major coalition** it could prove very hard to end **Iran's blockade**.

अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रम्प ने सहयोगियों से **होर्मुज़ जलडमरूमध्य** को फिर से खोलने में मदद मांगी है, जो सामान्यतः **वैश्विक ऊर्जा आपूर्ति का लगभग पाँचवाँ हिस्सा** वहन करता है, लेकिन यदि वे **बड़ा गठबंधन** भी बना लें तो **ईरान की नाकाबंदी** समाप्त करना बहुत कठिन हो सकता है।

- **Iran** lies along one side of the **narrow strait** and has responded to the **U.S.-Israeli attack from February 28** by using **drones, missiles and mines** to make the **vital waterway unsafe** for the colossal **oil and gas tankers** that slowly traverse it each day.

ईरान इस **संकीर्ण जलडमरूमध्य** के एक किनारे पर स्थित है और उसने **28 फरवरी के अमेरिकी-इजरायली हमले** के जवाब में **ड्रोन, मिसाइल और बारूदी सुरंगों** का उपयोग करके इस **महत्वपूर्ण जलमार्ग** को विशाल **तेल और गैस टैंकरों** के लिए असुरक्षित बना दिया है।

- When a commander in **Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps** warned in **2011** that cutting off the **strait**



में प्रतिबंधों और ईरान के परमाणु कार्यक्रम को लेकर तनाव के दौरान और पिछले वर्ष जून में इजरायल और अमेरिका के हमलों के समय भी शामिल है।

- **Analysts** have always regarded the **closure of the strait** as a **measure of last resort** because of the **long-term strategic changes** it might prompt among **Iran's enemies**, and the potential for **retaliation against its own energy sector**.
विश्लेषकों ने हमेशा जलडमरूमध्य को बंद करने को अंतिम उपाय माना है क्योंकि इससे ईरान के विरोधियों में दीर्घकालिक रणनीतिक बदलाव हो सकते हैं और उसके अपने ऊर्जा क्षेत्र के खिलाफ जवाबी कार्रवाई की संभावना भी रहती है।
- The **attack on Iran** starting on **February 28** with the **killing of its supreme leader** has changed that **equation**.
28 फरवरी को ईरान के सर्वोच्च नेता की हत्या से शुरू हुए हमले ने इस समीकरण को बदल दिया है।
- **Iranian officials** describe the **war** as **existential** and the **hardline Guards** have increasingly taken charge of **strategy**.
ईरानी अधिकारी इस युद्ध को अस्तित्वगत बता रहे हैं और कट्टरपंथी गार्ड्स ने रणनीति की कमान तेजी से संभाल ली है।

What is at stake क्या दांव पर लगा है

- The **narrow passage of water** between **Iran and Oman** that links the **Gulf** with the **Gulf of Oman** is the only **sea exit** for **oil- and gas-producing countries** such as **Kuwait, Iran, Iraq, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates**.
ईरान और ओमान के बीच स्थित यह संकीर्ण जलमार्ग, जो फारस की खाड़ी को ओमान की खाड़ी से जोड़ता है, कुवैत, ईरान, इराक, कतर और संयुक्त अरब अमीरात जैसे तेल और गैस उत्पादक देशों के लिए एकमात्र समुद्री मार्ग है।
- **Oil prices** briefly climbed to their **highest level since 2022** on Monday.
सोमवार को तेल की कीमतें संक्षिप्त समय के लिए 2022 के बाद के उच्चतम स्तर तक पहुंच गईं।
- High **oil prices** could trigger another **cost-of-living crisis**, as happened after **Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022**, according to the **United Nations**.
संयुक्त राष्ट्र के अनुसार तेल की ऊँची कीमतें फिर से जीवनयापन लागत संकट पैदा कर सकती हैं, जैसा कि 2022 में रूस के यूक्रेन पर आक्रमण के बाद हुआ था।
- A prolonged **conflict** could also cause a **fertilizer shock**, risking **global food security**.
लंबे समय तक चलने वाला संघर्ष उर्वरक संकट पैदा कर सकता है, जिससे वैश्विक खाद्य सुरक्षा खतरे में पड़ सकती है।
- About **33% of the world's fertilisers**, including **sulphur and ammonia**, pass through the **strait**, according to analytics firm **Kpler**.
एनालिटिक्स फर्म **Kpler** के अनुसार दुनिया के लगभग **33% उर्वरक**, जिनमें **सल्फर और अमोनिया** शामिल हैं, इसी **जलडमरूमध्य** से होकर गुजरते हैं।
- An extended **war** could fuel fears of a **global economic crisis** similar to those that followed the **Middle East oil shocks of the 1970s**.
लंबा युद्ध वैश्विक आर्थिक संकट की आशंका को बढ़ा सकता है, जैसा कि 1970 के दशक के मध्य-पूर्व तेल संकट के बाद हुआ था।
- **Shipping lanes** are just **two nautical miles wide** and ships must make a **turn opposite Iranian islands** and a **mountainous coast** that provides **cover for Iranian forces**, according to **shipping broker SSY Global**.
शिपिंग मार्ग केवल दो समुद्री मील चौड़े हैं और जहाजों को ईरानी द्वीपों के सामने मोड़ लेना पड़ता है, जहां पहाड़ी तटरेखा ईरानी बलों को सुरक्षा प्रदान करती है, ऐसा शिपिंग ब्रोकर **SSY Global** के अनुसार है।
- **Iran's conventional navy** has largely been **destroyed** but the **Guards** still have plenty of **options** including **fast-attack craft, mini submarines, mines** and even **jet skis packed with explosives**, said **Tom Sharpe**, a **retired Royal Navy commander**.
ईरान की पारंपरिक नौसेना काफी हद तक नष्ट हो चुकी है, लेकिन गार्ड्स के पास अभी भी कई विकल्प हैं, जिनमें तेज हमलावर नौकाएँ, मिनी पनडुब्बियाँ, बारूदी सुरंगें और यहां तक कि विस्फोटकों से भरे जेट स्की शामिल हैं, ऐसा सेवानिवृत्त रॉयल नेवी कमांडर **टॉम शार्प** ने कहा।
- **Tehran** has the capacity to produce around **10,000 drones a month**, according to the **Centre for Information Resilience**, a **non-profit research group**.



सेंटर फॉर इन्फॉर्मेशन रेज़िलिएंस नामक गैर-लाभकारी शोध समूह के अनुसार तेहरान के पास प्रति माह लगभग 10,000 ड्रोन बनाने की क्षमता है।

GS Paper III: Economy,

TOPICS COVERED

17 March 2026

17Mar	India to sign U.S. deal only after clarity on rates दर स्पष्ट होने के बाद ही भारत करेगा अमेरिका के साथ समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर
17Mar	Are 40 out of 100 children malnourished in Gujarat? क्या गुजरात में 100 में से 40 बच्चे कुपोषित हैं?
17Mar	Why India must electrify its kitchens भारत को अपने किचन का विद्युतीकरण क्यों करना चाहिए
17Mar	Gujarat's GMDC, NMDC ink pact on rare earth elements गुजरात की GMDC और NMDC ने दुर्लभ मृदा तत्वों पर समझौता किया
17Mar	Goods export flat in Feb.; official sees dip in March on conflict फरवरी में वस्तु निर्यात स्थिर; संघर्ष के कारण मार्च में गिरावट की आशंका
17Mar	Sensex, Nifty50 surge 1.1% as concerns over energy supply ease ऊर्जा आपूर्ति की चिंताएँ कम होने से सेंसेक्स और निफ्टी50 में 1.1% की तेजी

India to sign U.S. deal only after clarity on rates

Any deal must be weighed against tariff structure and comparative advantage, says senior official

U.S. court ruling against tariffs hadn't come when

However, Commerce Secretary maintains India is engaged with U.S. for a mutually beneficial deal

GS III: Economy
T. Chitra Sridharan Kishanram
NEW DELHI

India will sign a trade deal with the U.S. only after the country settles its "tariff architecture" and clarifies country-wise tariff rate, sources in the government have said.

"Any deal that we finalise and sign has to be seen against the tariff structure or comparative advantage that India gets in the U.S. market," a senior official in the Ministry of Commerce said. "The U.S. is working on trying to recreate a tariff architecture globally. If they are able to finalise that, at that juncture it would be right to sign the deal," the official said.

This comes against the backdrop of two trade-related investigations the U.S. is carrying out that could potentially see additional tariffs being levied on a number of countries,

Tariff travails

In 2025, U.S. imposed 25% reciprocal tariffs on India. An additional 25% linked to import of Russian oil was later imposed taking total tariffs to 50%. A timeline of events thereafter:

- Feb. 6, 2026: India and the U.S. issue a statement on framework on interim pact
- Feb. 20: U.S. SC strikes down reciprocal tariffs on India: 25%
- Feb. 24: U.S. imposes 10% tariff on all countries for 150 days. Tariff on India: 10%
- Mar. 11-12: USTR launches probe which could lead to additional tariffs
- Mar. 16: Govt. sources say deal will only be signed after U.S. finalises tariffs on India and other countries

including India.

Meanwhile, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said that India remains engaged with the U.S. on a trade deal.

"Pursuant to the U.S. Supreme Court judgment dated February 20, 2026 invalidating reciprocal tariffs, the reciprocal tariffs are no longer in force," Mr. Agrawal told presspersons

on Monday. "The U.S. government has issued Executive Orders imposing 10% tariffs pursuant to Section 122 of the Trade Act, 1974 on certain products from all countries," he added. "India remains engaged with the U.S. side for a mutually beneficial trade agreement," he said.

India and the U.S. announced a trade deal on

India's trade deficit stands at \$4 billion in Feb.

NEW DELHI
India's trade balance stood at a deficit of about \$4 billion in February compared with a surplus of \$2.7 billion a year earlier due in large part to merchandise exports staying flat while imports of both merchandise and services grew significantly during the month. » PAGE 12

February 2 and a joint statement on the finalisation of a framework for the deal was released on February 7. At the time, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal had said that the deal would be signed in March.

The U.S. Supreme Court on February 20 ruled against the validity of U.S. President Donald Trump's

use of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) to levy reciprocal tariffs on America's trade partners. It is after this that the U.S. imposed the 10% tariffs on all its trade partners under Section 122 of the Trade Act, 1974. These tariffs are in force for a period of 150 days from February 24.

"The U.S. deal was to be signed in March. When we said this, at that time the Supreme Court judgement on IEEPA tariffs had not come," the official explained. "Now with the Supreme Court judgement on IEEPA tariffs, the tariffs per se don't exist."

Additionally, over the course of March 11-12, the U.S. Trade Representative initiated two separate investigations into the U.S.' trade partners under Section 301 of the Trade Act, 1974. If the findings of these investigations war-

rant it, the U.S. can impose additional tariffs on particular countries.

Under the framework announced by the two countries, the U.S. was to impose an 18% tariff on most goods imported from India. Now, the new rate will depend on the rates the U.S. imposes on India's competitors.

"Depending on how their tariff architecture settles, that will determine where India will land," the official said. "In case all others are at 19%, 20%, 21%, 22%, then India will remain at 18%. But if others come down, then India will also come down. That is something for the U.S. also to take a call on."

On Russian oil

Mr. Agrawal also highlighted that the U.S.' removal of tariffs on India is linked to its import of Russian oil.

"On February 7, 2026,

the 25% additional ad-valorem tariffs imposed by the U.S. on certain Indian exports citing India's imports of Russian oil were removed," Mr. Agrawal noted.

Following the start of the ongoing conflict in West Asia, the U.S. Treasury Department issued an order to "allow" India to import oil from Russia, a concession it later expanded to all countries.

"On petroleum, whether we are buying it at a premium [from Russia], the Petroleum Ministry would be the right forum to answer it in detail," Mr. Agrawal said.

He said, "But we do monitor the import data and we can say that we are buying Russian oil and there has been an increased buying of Russian oil in the current month because of the challenges we are facing."

17Mar. India to sign U.S. deal only after clarity on rates

दर स्पष्ट होने के बाद ही भारत करेगा अमेरिका के साथ समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर



- India will sign a **trade deal** with the **U.S.** only after the country settles its **tariff architecture** and clarifies **country-wise tariff rate**, sources in the government have said.
भारत अमेरिका के साथ व्यापार समझौते पर तभी हस्ताक्षर करेगा जब देश अपनी टैरिफ संरचना तय कर लेगा और देश-वार टैरिफ दर स्पष्ट कर देगा, ऐसा सरकार के सूत्रों ने कहा है।
- “Any deal that we finalise and sign has to be seen against the **tariff structure** or **comparative advantage** that India gets in the **U.S. market**,” a senior official in the **Ministry of Commerce** said.
“किसी भी समझौते को जिसे हम अंतिम रूप देकर हस्ताक्षर करेंगे, उसे टैरिफ संरचना या तुलनात्मक लाभ के संदर्भ में देखना होगा जो भारत को अमेरिकी बाजार में मिलता है,” वाणिज्य मंत्रालय के एक वरिष्ठ अधिकारी ने कहा।
- “The **U.S.** is working on trying to recreate a **tariff architecture globally**.
अमेरिका वैश्विक स्तर पर एक नई टैरिफ संरचना बनाने की कोशिश कर रहा है।
- If they are able to finalise that, at that juncture it would be right to sign the deal,” the official said.
यदि वे इसे अंतिम रूप देने में सक्षम हो जाते हैं, तो उस समय समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर करना सही होगा,” अधिकारी ने कहा।
- This comes against the backdrop of two **trade-related investigations** the **U.S.** is carrying out that could potentially see additional **tariffs** being levied on a number of countries, including **India**.
यह उस पृष्ठभूमि में आया है जब अमेरिका दो व्यापार-संबंधित जांच कर रहा है जिनके परिणामस्वरूप भारत सहित कई देशों पर अतिरिक्त टैरिफ लगाए जा सकते हैं।
- Meanwhile, **Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal** said that **India** remains engaged with the **U.S.** on a **trade deal**.
इस बीच वाणिज्य सचिव राजेश अग्रवाल ने कहा कि भारत अमेरिका के साथ व्यापार समझौते पर बातचीत में बना हुआ है।
- “Pursuant to the **U.S. Supreme Court** judgment dated **February 20, 2026** invalidating **reciprocal tariffs**, the reciprocal tariffs are no longer in force,” Mr. Agrawal told presspersons on Monday.
“20 फरवरी 2026 को दिए गए अमेरिकी सुप्रीम कोर्ट के निर्णय, जिसमें पारस्परिक टैरिफ को अमान्य घोषित किया गया, के बाद ये टैरिफ अब लागू नहीं हैं,” श्री अग्रवाल ने सोमवार को पत्रकारों से कहा।
- “The **U.S. government** has issued **Executive Orders** imposing **10% tariffs** pursuant to **Section 122 of the Trade Act, 1974** on certain products from all countries,” he added.
उन्होंने कहा, “अमेरिकी सरकार ने ट्रेड एक्ट, 1974 की धारा 122 के तहत सभी देशों से आने वाले कुछ उत्पादों पर 10% टैरिफ लगाने के लिए कार्यकारी आदेश जारी किए हैं।”
- “**India** remains engaged with the **U.S. side** for a **mutually beneficial trade agreement**,” he said.
उन्होंने कहा, “भारत एक पारस्परिक रूप से लाभकारी व्यापार समझौते के लिए अमेरिकी पक्ष के साथ बातचीत में बना हुआ है।”
- **India** and the **U.S.** announced a **trade deal** on **February 2** and a **joint statement** on the finalisation of a **framework** for the deal was released on **February 7**.
भारत और अमेरिका ने 2 फरवरी को एक व्यापार समझौते की घोषणा की और 7 फरवरी को इस समझौते के ढांचे को अंतिम रूप देने पर एक संयुक्त बयान जारी किया गया।
- At the time, **Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal** had said that the deal would be signed in **March**.
उस समय वाणिज्य मंत्री पीयूष गोयल ने कहा था कि समझौते पर मार्च में हस्ताक्षर किए जाएंगे।
- The **U.S. Supreme Court** on **February 20** ruled against the validity of **U.S. President Donald Trump’s** use of the **International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA)** to levy **reciprocal tariffs** on **America’s trade partners**.
20 फरवरी को अमेरिकी सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप द्वारा अंतरराष्ट्रीय आपातकालीन आर्थिक शक्तियां अधिनियम (IEEPA) का उपयोग करके अमेरिका के व्यापारिक साझेदारों पर पारस्परिक टैरिफ लगाने को अवैध ठहराया।
- It is after this that the **U.S.** imposed **10% tariffs** on all its **trade partners** under **Section 122 of the Trade Act, 1974**.
इसके बाद ही अमेरिका ने ट्रेड एक्ट, 1974 की धारा 122 के तहत अपने सभी व्यापारिक साझेदारों पर 10% टैरिफ लगा दिया।



- These tariffs are in force for a period of **150 days** from **February 24**.
ये टैरिफ **24 फरवरी** से **150 दिनों** की अवधि के लिए लागू हैं।
- “The **U.S. deal** was to be signed in **March**.
“अमेरिका के साथ समझौता मार्च में हस्ताक्षरित होना था।
- When we said this, at that time the **Supreme Court judgement** on **IEEPA tariffs** had not come,” the official explained.
जब हमने यह कहा था, उस समय **IEEPA टैरिफ** पर **सुप्रीम कोर्ट का निर्णय** नहीं आया था,” अधिकारी ने समझाया।
- “Now with the **Supreme Court judgement** on **IEEPA tariffs**, the tariffs per se don't exist.”
“अब **IEEPA टैरिफ** पर **सुप्रीम कोर्ट के निर्णय** के बाद ये टैरिफ वास्तव में मौजूद नहीं हैं।”
- Additionally, over the course of **March 11-12**, the **U.S. Trade Representative** initiated two separate **investigations** into the **U.S.' trade partners** under **Section 301 of the Trade Act, 1974**.
इसके अतिरिक्त **11-12 मार्च** के दौरान **अमेरिकी व्यापार प्रतिनिधि** ने **ट्रेड एक्ट, 1974 की धारा 301** के तहत **अमेरिका के व्यापारिक साझेदारों** के खिलाफ दो अलग-अलग **जांच** शुरू कीं।
- If the findings of these investigations warrant it, the **U.S.** can impose additional **tariffs** on particular countries.
यदि इन जांचों के निष्कर्ष उचित ठहरते हैं, तो **अमेरिका** कुछ देशों पर अतिरिक्त **टैरिफ** लगा सकता है।
- Under the framework announced by the two countries, the **U.S.** was to impose an **18% tariff** on most goods imported from **India**.
दोनों देशों द्वारा घोषित ढांचे के तहत **अमेरिका** को **भारत** से आयातित अधिकांश वस्तुओं पर **18% टैरिफ** लगाना था।
- Now, the new rate will depend on the rates the **U.S.** imposes on **India's competitors**.
अब नई दर इस बात पर निर्भर करेगी कि **अमेरिका** **भारत के प्रतिस्पर्धियों** पर कितनी दरें लागू करता है।
- “Depending on how their **tariff architecture** settles, that will determine where **India** will land,” the official said.
अधिकारी ने कहा, “यह इस बात पर निर्भर करेगा कि उनकी **टैरिफ संरचना** कैसे तय होती है, उसी से यह तय होगा कि **भारत** कहाँ खड़ा होगा।”
- “In case all others are at **19%, 20%, 21%, 22%**, then **India** will remain at **18%**.
“यदि अन्य सभी देशों पर **19%, 20%, 21%, 22%** टैरिफ हैं, तो **भारत 18%** पर बना रहेगा।
- But if others come down, then **India** will also come down.
लेकिन यदि अन्य देशों की दरें कम होती हैं, तो **भारत** की दर भी कम होगी।
- That is something for the **U.S.** also to take a call on.”
इस पर निर्णय **अमेरिका** को भी लेना होगा।”

On Russian oil रूसी तेल पर

- Mr. Agrawal also highlighted that the **U.S.' removal of tariffs** on **India** is linked to its import of **Russian oil**.
श्री अग्रवाल ने यह भी बताया कि **भारत** पर **अमेरिका** द्वारा **टैरिफ हटाना** उसके **रूसी तेल** आयात से जुड़ा हुआ है।
- “On **February 7, 2026**, the **25% additional ad-valorem tariffs** imposed by the **U.S.** on certain **Indian exports** citing **India's imports of Russian oil** were removed,” Mr. Agrawal noted.
“**7 फरवरी 2026** को **अमेरिका** द्वारा **भारत के रूसी तेल आयात** का हवाला देते हुए कुछ **भारतीय निर्यातों** पर लगाए गए **25% अतिरिक्त एड-वेलोरम टैरिफ** हटा दिए गए,” श्री अग्रवाल ने कहा।
- Following the start of the ongoing conflict in **West Asia**, the **U.S. Treasury Department** issued an order to “allow” **India** to import oil from **Russia**, a concession it later expanded to all countries.
पश्चिम एशिया में जारी संघर्ष शुरू होने के बाद **अमेरिकी ट्रेजरी विभाग** ने **भारत** को **रूस** से तेल आयात करने की “अनुमति” देने का आदेश जारी किया, जिसे बाद में सभी देशों तक बढ़ा दिया गया।
- “On **petroleum**, whether we are buying it at a **premium** [from Russia], the **Petroleum Ministry** would be the right forum to answer it in detail,” Mr. Agrawal said.



श्री अग्रवाल ने कहा, “पेट्रोलियम के मामले में, क्या हम इसे प्रीमियम पर रूस से खरीद रहे हैं, इसका विस्तृत उत्तर पेट्रोलियम मंत्रालय ही दे सकता है।”

- He said, “But we do monitor the import data and we can say that we are buying Russian oil and there has been an increased buying of Russian oil in the current month because of the challenges we are facing.”

उन्होंने कहा, “लेकिन हम आयात आंकड़ों की निगरानी करते हैं और हम कह सकते हैं कि हम रूसी तेल खरीद रहे हैं और वर्तमान महीने में हमारी चुनौतियों के कारण रूसी तेल की खरीद बढ़ी है।”

Are 40 out of 100 children malnourished in Gujarat?

Data indicates that the statement is true and that there is a higher burden of malnutrition among the tribal communities of the State

ES III: Economy

DATA POINT

Devvanshi Bihani

On March 12, child malnutrition in Gujarat became the subject of a debate in the Legislative Assembly. During a discussion on the budgetary demands of the Women and Child Development Department, Congress MLA Jignesh Mevani stated that, “despite..BJP government ...[having] more than 150 seats and 28 years of rule, only one figure comes on record, that 40 out of 100 children are malnourished. A very large section of them are tribals.”

Women and Child Development Minister Manisha Vakil responded that the Opposition was relying on figures from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS 2019-21) and asked members to “update your knowledge”. Ms. Vakil told the Assembly that, according to the Poshan Tracker system, “only 11.4% of children in Gujarat” were malnourished as of January 2026.

Different methods

The Poshan Tracker and the NFHS cannot be directly compared as they use different methods. The NFHS is a sample-based household survey conducted on a representative population, while the Poshan Tracker is a real-time monitoring system under Mission Poshan 2.0 that records growth data for children registered at *anganwadi* centres. “There are several issues in using Poshan Tracker data to counter NFHS figures. Poshan Tracker is supposed to be a complete census of children attending or at least enrolled at *anganwadis*, we do not know how complete the information is. NFHS data on the other hand is supposed to be representative of the entire population (including children who do not go to *anganwadis*,” said Economist Reetika Khera. The two datasets cover different populations and use different methods and

their figures are not strictly comparable.

“We do not know to what extent one can take Poshan Tracker data at face value. *Anganwadi* workers are under pressure to keep data entry on the Tracker updated and they experience all kinds of issues with the app and connectivity, so often they just enter some data, which may or may not reflect the child’s actual weight and height,” she added.

The latest publicly available Poshan Tracker data is for July 2025, and provides separate figures for stunting (low height for age), wasting (low weight for height) and underweight (low weight for age) rather than a single combined malnutrition percentage. It shows that about 32.7% of children were stunted, 7.2% were wasted and 18.4% were underweight in Gujarat (Chart 1). Among 36 States and Union Territories, the State ranks 21st in stunting and 31st in both wasting and underweight, placing it in the poorest performers bracket among States in key malnutrition indicators.

Poshan Tracker data for July 2025 shows that several States in central and eastern India rank near the bottom on these indicators. Bihar (9.3%), Chhattisgarh (7.7%) and Madhya Pradesh (8.1%) are among the worst performers in wasting, while Madhya Pradesh (24.8%) records the highest proportion of underweight children. In the case of stunting, Uttar Pradesh (48.8%) has the highest prevalence, followed by Jharkhand, Assam, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, each with more than 42% of children found to be stunted. In contrast, States such as Goa, Sikkim, Manipur, Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu rank among the better performers, reporting lower levels of stunting, wasting and underweight.

Verifying the claim

NFHS-5 (2019-21) is the latest round of the nationally representa-

tive survey on health and nutrition released so far, as the results for NFHS-6 (scheduled for 2023-24) are yet to be published.

In NFHS-5, 39% of children under the age of five in Gujarat were stunted, 25.1% were wasted, and 39.7% were underweight. NFHS does not report a single overall malnutrition percentage and these indicators are widely used to assess child malnutrition. The corresponding national averages were 36% for stunting, 19.3% for wasting and 32.1% for underweight (Chart 2). Stunting and underweight levels are both close to 40%, so the statement that around “40 out of 100 children” are malnourished is consistent with NFHS findings, depending on which indicator is used.

Mr. Mevani also said that “a large proportion of them belonged to tribal communities.” District level figures based on NFHS-5 show that several of the worst performing districts are among those identified as tribal districts by the Tribal Development Department of the Gujarat government (Table 3). In the case of stunting, four of the five worst affected districts: Dahod (55.3% stunted), Chhota Udaipur (48.6%), Narmada (47.2%) and Panchmahal (47.1%) are tribal districts. Wasting shows a similar pattern, with The Dangs (40.9% wasted), Tapi (36.6%), Panchmahal (35.7%) and Sabarkantha (33.1%) also ranking among the highest, all of them tribal districts. In the case of underweight, all five of the worst affected districts are tribal districts: The Dangs (53.1% underweight), Dahod (53%), Narmada (52.8%), Panchmahal (51.9%) and Tapi (51.8%).

The claim that about 40% of children in Gujarat are malnourished is thus supported by NFHS-5 data, which shows that stunting and underweight levels are close to the claim. District level data also shows that several of the worst affected districts are tribal districts, pointing to a higher burden of malnutrition in tribal communities.

Scale of malnutrition

The data for the charts were sourced from the National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-21) and Rajya Sabha Question and Answers

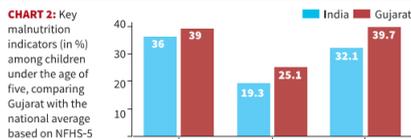
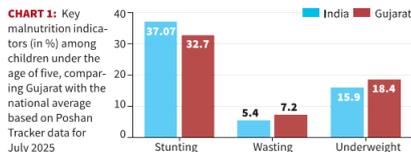


TABLE 3:

District	Stunted	Wasted	Underweight
Dahod	55.3	27.8	53
Chhota Udaipur	48.6	28.4	48.1
Narmada	47.2	23	52.8
Panchmahal	47.1	35.7	51.9
Aravali	47.1	29	47.2
Tapi	41.7	36.6	51.8
Bharuch	40.9	24.5	45.5
Banaskantha	39	25.5	44.1
Valsad	37.8	23.2	34.8
The Dangs	37.6	40.9	53.1
Sabarkantha	37	33.1	41
Navsari	36.8	29	43.6
Surat	36.1	26	32.5

17Mar. Are 40 out of 100 children malnourished in Gujarat? क्या गुजरात में 100 में से 40 बच्चे कुपोषित हैं?

- Data indicates that the statement is true and that there is a higher burden of malnutrition among the tribal communities of the State
Data से पता चलता है कि यह कथन सही है और State की tribal communities में कुपोषण का अधिक बोझ है



- On March 12, child malnutrition in Gujarat became the subject of a debate in the Legislative Assembly.
12 मार्च को गुजरात में बाल कुपोषण विधान सभा में बहस का विषय बना।
- During a discussion on the budgetary demands of the **Women and Child Development Department**, Congress MLA **Jignesh Mevani** stated that, महिला एवं बाल विकास विभाग के बजट पर चर्चा के दौरान कांग्रेस विधायक **जिग्नेश मेवाणी** ने कहा कि,
- “despite..BJP government...[having] more than **150 seats** and **28 years of rule**, only one • gure comes on record, that **40 out of 100 children are malnourished**.
“150 से अधिक सीटों और 28 वर्षों के शासन के बावजूद केवल एक आंकड़ा सामने आता है कि 100 में से 40 बच्चे कुपोषित हैं।
- A very large section of them are **tribals**.”
उनमें से बहुत बड़ी संख्या **आदिवासियों** की है।”
- **Women and Child Development Minister Manisha Vakil** responded that the Opposition was relying on • gures from the **NFHS (2019-21)**.
महिला एवं बाल विकास मंत्री **मनीषा वकिल** ने कहा कि विपक्ष **NFHS (2019-21)** के आंकड़ों पर निर्भर है।
- And asked members to “**update your knowledge**”.
और सदस्यों से कहा कि “**अपना ज्ञान अपडेट करें**।”
- Ms. Vakil told the Assembly that, according to the **Poshan Tracker system**, “only **11.4% of children in Gujarat** were malnourished as of **January 2026**.”
उन्होंने कहा कि **पोषण ट्रैकर** के अनुसार **जनवरी 2026** तक केवल **11.4% बच्चे** कुपोषित हैं।

Di• erent methods विभिन्न तरीके

- The **Poshan Tracker** and the **NFHS** cannot be directly compared as they use di• erent methods.
पोषण ट्रैकर और **NFHS** की तुलना सीधे नहीं की जा सकती क्योंकि इनके तरीके अलग हैं।
- The **NFHS** is a **sample-based household survey** conducted on a representative population.
NFHS एक **सैंपल आधारित सर्वेक्षण** है।
- While the **Poshan Tracker** is a **real-time monitoring system** under **Mission Poshan 2.0**.
जबकि **पोषण ट्रैकर मिशन पोषण 2.0** के तहत **रियल-टाइम सिस्टम** है।
- That records growth data for children registered at **anganwadi centres**.
जो **आंगनवाड़ी केंद्रों** में बच्चों का डेटा रिकॉर्ड करता है।
- “There are several issues in using Poshan Tracker data to counter NFHS • gures.
“पोषण ट्रैकर के डेटा से NFHS के आंकड़ों का मुकाबला करने में कई समस्याएं हैं।
- Poshan Tracker is supposed to be a complete **census of children** attending or enrolled at anganwadis.
पोषण ट्रैकर आंगनवाड़ी में बच्चों का **पूर्ण डेटा** दिखाने वाला माना जाता है।
- We do not know how complete the information is.
लेकिन यह कितना पूर्ण है, यह ज्ञात नहीं है।
- NFHS data is representative of the **entire population** (including children who do not go to anganwadis),” said **Reetika Khera**.
NFHS डेटा **पूरी जनसंख्या** का प्रतिनिधित्व करता है,” **रीतिका खेड़ा** ने कहा।
- The two datasets cover di• erent populations and are not strictly comparable.
दोनों डेटा अलग-अलग जनसंख्या को कवर करते हैं और तुलना योग्य नहीं हैं।
- “We do not know to what extent one can take Poshan Tracker data at face value.
“हम नहीं जानते कि पोषण ट्रैकर के डेटा पर कितना भरोसा किया जा सकता है।
- Anganwadi workers face issues with **app and connectivity**.
आंगनवाड़ी कार्यकर्ताओं को **ऐप और कनेक्टिविटी** की समस्या होती है।
- So often they just enter some data, which may not re• ect actual weight and height,” she added.
इसलिए डेटा वास्तविक स्थिति नहीं दिखाता,” उन्होंने कहा।
- The latest publicly available **Poshan Tracker data (July 2025)** provides separate • gures.
जुलाई 2025 का नवीनतम पोषण ट्रैकर डेटा अलग-अलग आंकड़े देता है।



- For **stunting, wasting and underweight**.
स्टंटिंग, वेस्टिंग और अंडरवेट के लिए।
- It shows **32.7% stunted, 7.2% wasted, and 18.4% underweight** children in Gujarat.
इसमें **32.7% स्टंटेड, 7.2% वेस्टेड, और 18.4% अंडरवेट** बच्चे हैं।
- Among **36 States/UTs**, Gujarat ranks **21st in stunting**.
36 राज्यों/केंद्रशासित प्रदेशों में गुजरात **स्टंटिंग में 21वें स्थान** पर है।
- And **31st in wasting and underweight**.
और **वेस्टिंग व अंडरवेट में 31वें स्थान** पर है।
- Placing it among the **poorest performers** in malnutrition indicators.
जिससे यह कुपोषण के मामलों में **कमजोर प्रदर्शन करने वाले राज्यों** में शामिल है।
- **Poshan Tracker data for July 2025 shows that several States in central and eastern India rank near the bottom on these indicators.**
जुलाई 2025 के पोषण ट्रैकर डेटा से पता चलता है कि मध्य और पूर्वी भारत के कई राज्य इन सूचकों में नीचे हैं।
- **Bihar (9.3%), Chhattisgarh (7.7%) and Madhya Pradesh (8.1%)** are among the worst performers in **wasting**.
बिहार (9.3%), छत्तीसगढ़ (7.7%) और मध्य प्रदेश (8.1%) वेस्टिंग में सबसे खराब प्रदर्शन करने वाले राज्यों में हैं।
- While **Madhya Pradesh (24.8%)** records the highest proportion of **underweight children**.
जबकि **मध्य प्रदेश (24.8%)** में सबसे अधिक **अंडरवेट बच्चे** हैं।
- In the case of **stunting**, **Uttar Pradesh (48.8%)** has the highest prevalence.
स्टंटिंग में उत्तर प्रदेश (48.8%) सबसे अधिक है।
- Followed by **Jharkhand, Assam, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh**, each with more than **42%** children stunted.
इसके बाद **झारखंड, असम, बिहार और मध्य प्रदेश** हैं, जहां **42% से अधिक बच्चे** स्टंटेड हैं।
- In contrast, States such as **Goa, Sikkim, Manipur, Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu** report lower levels.
इसके विपरीत **गोवा, सिक्किम, मणिपुर, हिमाचल प्रदेश और तमिलनाडु** में कम स्तर पाए गए।
- Of **stunting, wasting and underweight**.
स्टंटिंग, वेस्टिंग और अंडरवेट में बेहतर प्रदर्शन है।

Verifying the claim

दावे का सत्यापन

- **NFHS-5 (2019-21)** is the latest nationally representative survey.
NFHS-5 (2019-21) नवीनतम राष्ट्रीय सर्वेक्षण है।
- As **NFHS-6 (2023-24)** results are yet to be published.
क्योंकि **NFHS-6 (2023-24)** के परिणाम अभी प्रकाशित नहीं हुए हैं।
- In NFHS-5, **39% children** in Gujarat were **stunted**.
NFHS-5 में गुजरात के **39% बच्चे स्टंटेड** थे।
- **25.1% were wasted and 39.7% were underweight**.
25.1% वेस्टेड और 39.7% अंडरवेट थे।
- NFHS does not report a single overall malnutrition percentage.
NFHS कुल कुपोषण का एकल प्रतिशत नहीं देता।
- These indicators are used to assess child malnutrition.
इन सूचकों से कुपोषण का आकलन किया जाता है।
- The national averages were **36% stunting, 19.3% wasting, and 32.1% underweight**.
राष्ट्रीय औसत **36% स्टंटिंग, 19.3% वेस्टिंग, और 32.1% अंडरवेट** था।
- Stunting and underweight levels are close to **40%**.
स्टंटिंग और अंडरवेट लगभग **40%** के करीब हैं।
- So the statement that **“40 out of 100 children”** are malnourished is consistent with NFHS findings.
इसलिए **“100 में 40 बच्चे कुपोषित”** का दावा NFHS से मेल खाता है।
- Depending on which indicator is used.
यह उपयोग किए गए सूचक पर निर्भर करता है।



- Mr. Mevani also said that “a large proportion belonged to **tribal communities.**”
मेवाणी ने कहा कि बड़ी संख्या **आदिवासी समुदाय** से है।
- District level NFHS-5 data shows several worst performing districts are **tribal districts.**
जिला स्तर के डेटा से पता चलता है कि कई खराब प्रदर्शन वाले जिले **आदिवासी जिले** हैं।
- In **stunting**, worst districts include **Dahod (55.3%), Chhota Udaipur (48.6%), Narmada (47.2%), Panchmahal (47.1%).**
स्टंटिंग में दाहोद (55.3%), छोटा उदयपुर (48.6%), नर्मदा (47.2%), पंचमहल (47.1%) सबसे खराब हैं।
- All of them are **tribal districts.**
ये सभी **आदिवासी जिले** हैं।
- In **wasting**, **The Dangs (40.9%), Tapi (36.6%), Panchmahal (35.7%), Sabarkantha (33.1%)** are highest.
वेस्टिंग में डांग्स (40.9%), तापी (36.6%), पंचमहल (35.7%), साबरकांठा (33.1%) शीर्ष पर हैं।
- All are **tribal districts.**
ये सभी **आदिवासी जिले** हैं।
- In **underweight**, worst districts are **The Dangs (53.1%), Dahod (53%), Narmada (52.8%), Panchmahal (51.9%), Tapi (51.8%).**
अंडरवेट में डांग्स (53.1%), दाहोद (53%), नर्मदा (52.8%), पंचमहल (51.9%), तापी (51.8%) सबसे खराब हैं।
- All of them are **tribal districts.**
ये सभी **आदिवासी जिले** हैं।
- The claim that about **40% children** are malnourished is supported by **NFHS-5 data.**
40% बच्चों के कुपोषित होने का दावा NFHS-5 से सही साबित होता है।
- District data shows higher burden in **tribal communities.**
जिला डेटा से **आदिवासी समुदायों में अधिक कुपोषण** दिखता है।

PATRIOTIC IAS



Why India must electrify its kitchens

Is electric cooking cheaper and more efficient than LPG for Indian households? Can induction cooktops handle the realities of everyday Indian cooking? Can smart technologies help flatten electricity peaks? What policy changes are needed for India to shift from LPG to electric kitchens?

SS III: Economy

EXPLAINER

Kalyan Mangalapati

The story so far:

India spends \$26.4 billion a year importing cooking gas, most of it shipped through the Strait of Hormuz. It has 332 million LPG connections, yet 37% of households still burn firewood and dung. The arithmetic has shifted: cooking with electricity is now cheaper than cooking with unsubsidised LPG. But moving hundreds of millions of kitchens from flame to wire raises a chain of questions about cost, grid stress, and who pays when demand spikes.

Why is gas-based clean cooking hitting a wall?

Domestic LPG connections grew from 150 million in 2015 to 332 million by 2025, but India imports 60% of its LPG and 50% of its natural gas. The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) estimates that the combined import bill reached \$26.4 billion in FY24-25 – a 50% jump in six years.

Every West Asian escalation sends a price shock straight into Indian kitchens. Gas-based clean cooking has hit an affordability ceiling.

Can electricity beat gas on cost, efficiency, and everyday cooking?

An IEEFA study from October 2025 found that electric cooking is 37% cheaper than non-subsidised LPG and 14% cheaper than piped natural gas for a family of four in Delhi – even without any electricity subsidy. Only the heavily subsidised Prime Minister Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) pricing undercuts e-cooking, and that subsidy costs the exchequer thousands of crores each year.

The efficiency gap is equally stark. Induction cooktops use just 15% of their energy to the vessel, while an LPG burner manages roughly 40%. Electric pressure cookers, tested across the MECES programme's multi-country cooking diaries, use less energy than any other device assessed.

Indian cooking is not a single-pot affair. Anyone who makes chapatis, does a *tadka*, and stirs a *dal* simultaneously knows that a standard single-plate induction unit will not suffice.

The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) argues that research and development on multi-pot and flame-replicating induction models is essential before mass adoption can take off, not as an afterthought, possibly explaining the 5% electric cooking share in 2021.

Both the International Institute for Sustainable Development and IEEFA recommend starting with urban kitchens, thereby freeing imported LPG for rural areas that still lack reliable electricity.

The logic is sound – but it leads to a harder question: if a hundred million urban kitchens switch on induction cooktops in the evening, what happens to the power grid?

What is a 'peak'?

Electricity demand shifts throughout the day. It ramps up around 3 p.m. and again from 9-11 p.m., mostly because households all flip on lights, fans, TVs, and ACs at the same time. This surge is called the 'peak'.

India's peak demand rose from 148 GW in 2014 to a record 242.5 GW in December 2025. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), for every degree



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rise in average daily temperature, peak demand now increases by more than 7 GW.

When demand spikes beyond a distribution company's (discom's) contracted supply, it has a few options – none of them cheap.

It can buy power on the spot market, typically through the Indian Energy Exchange, where prices can swing from ₹3.50 per unit in normal hours to ₹9-10 during peak slots. It can fire up expensive gas-based peaking plants or release stored hydropower. It can dispatch grid-scale batteries – BSES Rajdhani in Delhi has commissioned India's first commercial battery storage system for precisely this kind of energy arbitrage.

Or, as a last resort, it can impose planned power cuts, rotating blackouts across zones – what is known as load shedding – which disrupts livelihoods, damages industrial output, and is increasingly penalised by regulators.

Now imagine adding millions of induction cooktops to that evening peak window. Without intelligent management, mass electric cooking would steepen the evening peak, raise spot-market costs, and increase the risk of outages. The question is not whether to electrify cooking, but how to do so without overwhelming the grid. That is where automated demand response enters the picture.

Can smart technology flatten the peak automatically?

OpenADR – Open Automated Demand Response – is a two-way communication standard that enables automated participation of smart thermostats, EV chargers, water heaters, and cooktops in demand response, ancillary services (frequency/voltage), and DER coordination. These devices can adjust their consumption automatically, without anyone having to lift a finger.

Born after California's 2002 energy crisis, its latest version plugs into modern

energy systems using standard web protocols.

India has begun deploying it. Tata Power Delhi Distribution ran the country's first OpenADR pilot across 167 commercial and industrial consumers, achieving an average peak reduction of 14%. A study done of the pilot stated that peak shaving ability of close to 7% could be achieved if the technology were deployed across buildings in India.

Internationally, South Korea's AutoDR pilot reduced electricity use by 24%; such programmes typically pay for themselves within four years by deferring the cost of new grid infrastructure.

What discoms still lack is the full stack: OpenADR-compliant servers, smart-meter-embedded receivers, and aggregator platforms that can orchestrate distributed loads into virtual power plants.

Can rooftop solar and neighbourhood trading take the pressure off the grid?

A rooftop solar panel paired with a battery can turn a household into a 'prosumer' – both a producer and a consumer. The solar panel generates power by day; the battery stores surplus energy; and that stored energy can be used in the evening to run the induction cooktop. This offsets precisely the peak that mass e-cooking would otherwise create.

A 2025 Australian national-grid study referred to a halving of peak load and reduction of grid reinforcement costs by 75% when residential electrification was combined with rooftop solar, batteries, and off-peak scheduling. India's rooftop solar capacity is

projected to more than double from 24 GW in 2026 to over 41 GW by 2030, boosted by the PM-Surya Ghar Yojana, which aims to provide 300 units of free electricity to 10 million households.

The real impact comes when surplus solar is not just stored but traded. Peer-to-peer (P2P) energy trading allows households to sell excess electricity directly to neighbours through digital platforms, bypassing the traditional discom route.

India ran South Asia's first blockchain-based P2P solar trading pilot in Lucknow, led by the India Smart Grid Forum and Australia's Powerledger, under a regulatory sandbox approved by the Uttar Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission. Prosumers set prices, tracked trades in real time, and settled transactions through smart contracts. The result was a 43% reduction in the energy buy price compared with the retail tariff.

Following the pilot's success, Uttar Pradesh directed all its utilities to make provisions for P2P trading – a first for any State. In February 2026, the Centre announced a P2P facility under the India Energy Stack for Delhi and western Uttar Pradesh. If a cluster of homes on a single feeder can trade solar surpluses during the evening cooking hours, the local peak flattens, the discom avoids buying expensive exchange power, and the neighbourhood effectively becomes a micro virtual power plant.

What needs to happen, and how soon?

New York's All-Electric Buildings Act mandates that most new buildings under seven stories be all-electric from January 2026, and taller buildings from 2029.

India has begun laying the groundwork. The Go Electric campaign and the National Efficient Cooking Programme target two million induction stoves. The Bureau of Energy Efficiency has launched star labelling for induction hobs; the PM-Surya Ghar scheme links rooftop solar adoption to household savings.

But a wider architecture is needed: redirect part of the estimated ₹40,000 crore annual LPG subsidy towards one-time capital support for induction cooktops. Expand Energy Efficiency Services Limited's (EESL) bulk-procurement model to e-cooking appliances. Mandate time-of-use tariffs for e-cooking and require OpenADR compatibility in new appliances and smart meters. Fund R&D on multi-pot induction technology designed for Indian cooking. And mandate all-electric construction for new residential buildings in Tier-1 cities.

The urgency is as much geopolitical as it is economic. Every dollar India spends on LPG imports goes through supply chains exposed to the Strait of Hormuz and the decisions of oil producers.

Electricity is different – you can generate it from solar panels on rooftops and store it in batteries we assemble here. We are talking about moving from imported fuel to power we generate ourselves. That is not just energy policy, that is sovereignty.

Urban India is the obvious place to start this shift. The grid works, smart meters are already rolling out, and rooftop solar pays for itself in cities. The technology is there. The numbers add up. We know how to manage the grid. The question is whether the policy framework will catch up before the next oil shock forces the issue.

(The author is an Energy and Emerging Technologies expert)

THE GIST

Electric cooking is now cheaper than unsubsidised LPG, but shifting hundreds of millions of kitchens from flame to wire raises questions about grid stress and peak demand.

Induction cooktops are far more efficient than LPG burners, yet mass adoption will require multi-pot appliances, smart demand response, and upgrades to distribution infrastructure.

Rooftop solar, batteries, and peer-to-peer energy trading could help flatten evening peaks and reduce India's dependence on imported LPG.

17Mar. Why India must electrify its kitchens

भारत को अपने किचन का विद्युतीकरण क्यों करना चाहिए

- India spends \$26.4 billion a year importing cooking gas, most of it shipped through the Strait of Hormuz.

भारत हर साल \$26.4 बिलियन कुकिंग गैस आयात पर खर्च करता है, जिसका अधिकांश हिस्सा स्ट्रेट ऑफ होर्मुज़ से आता है।

- It has 332 million LPG connections, yet 37% of households still burn redwood and dung. भारत में 332 मिलियन LPG कनेक्शन हैं, फिर भी 37% परिवार अब भी लकड़ी और गोबर जलाते हैं।



- The arithmetic has shifted: cooking with **electricity is now cheaper** than cooking with **unsubsidised LPG**.
अब गणित बदल गया है: **बिजली से खाना बनाना बिना सब्सिडी वाले LPG से सस्ता है।**
- But moving hundreds of millions of kitchens from ame to wire raises questions about **cost, grid stress, and demand spikes**.
लेकिन करोड़ों रसोईयों को गैस से बिजली में बदलने से **लागत, ग्रिड दबाव और मांग बढ़ने** के सवाल उठते हैं।

Why is gas-based clean cooking hitting a wall? गैस आधारित स्वच्छ खाना पकाना क्यों रुक रहा है?

- Domestic LPG connections grew from **150 million (2015) to 332 million (2025)**.
घरेलू LPG कनेक्शन **150 मिलियन (2015)** से बढ़कर **332 मिलियन (2025)** हो गए।
- But India imports **60% LPG and 50% natural gas**.
लेकिन भारत **60% LPG और 50% प्राकृतिक गैस** आयात करता है।
- The IEEFA estimates import bill reached **\$26.4 billion in FY24-25, a 50% rise in six years**.
IEEFA के अनुसार आयात बिल **FY24-25 में \$26.4 बिलियन** हुआ, जो **6 वर्षों में 50% वृद्धि** है।
- Every **West Asian escalation** sends a **price shock** into Indian kitchens.
हर **पश्चिम एशिया तनाव** भारतीय रसोई तक **कीमत झटका** लाता है।
- Gas-based clean cooking has hit an **affordability ceiling**.
गैस आधारित कुकिंग अब **महंगी हो गई है।**

Can electricity beat gas on cost, efficiency, and everyday cooking? क्या बिजली लागत और दक्षता में गैस से बेहतर है?

- An IEEFA study (October 2025) found electric cooking is **37% cheaper than LPG**.
IEEFA (अक्टूबर 2025) के अनुसार बिजली से खाना बनाना **LPG से 37% सस्ता** है।
- And **14% cheaper than piped natural gas** for a family of four in Delhi.
और दिल्ली में चार सदस्यीय परिवार के लिए **PNG से 14% सस्ता** है।
- Even **without electricity subsidy**.
यह **बिना सब्सिडी** के भी सस्ता है।
- Only **PMUY subsidised LPG** is cheaper, but it costs **thousands of crores** to the government.
केवल **PMUY सब्सिडी वाला LPG** सस्ता है, लेकिन सरकार को **हजारों करोड़** खर्च करने पड़ते हैं।
- The efficiency gap is stark: **Induction (85%) vs LPG (40%)**.
दक्षता में बड़ा अंतर है: **इंडक्शन (85%) बनाम LPG (40%)**।
- Electric pressure cookers** use the **least energy** (MECS programme).
इलेक्ट्रिक प्रेशर कुकर सबसे कम ऊर्जा उपयोग करते हैं (MECS कार्यक्रम)।
- Indian cooking is **multi-tasking (chapati, tadka, dal)**.
भारतीय खाना पकाना **मल्टीटास्किंग** है (रोटी, तड़का, दाल)।
- A **single-plate induction** is not enough.
एक **सिंगल प्लेट इंडक्शन** पर्याप्त नहीं है।
- TERI says R & D is needed for **multi-pot and flame-like induction models**.
TERI के अनुसार **मल्टी-पॉट और फ्लेम जैसे मॉडल** पर शोध जरूरी है।
- Explaining only **5% electric cooking share (2021)**.
इससे **2021 में केवल 5% इलेक्ट्रिक कुकिंग** समझ में आती है।
- IISD and IEEFA suggest starting with **urban kitchens**.
IISD और IEEFA शहरी रसोई से शुरुआत का सुझाव देते हैं।
- To free LPG for **rural areas lacking electricity**.
ताकि LPG को **ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों** के लिए बचाया जा सके।
- But if **100 million urban kitchens** switch to induction in the evening, what happens to the **power grid?**
लेकिन यदि **10 करोड़ शहरी रसोई** शाम को इंडक्शन चलाएँ, तो **पावर ग्रिड पर क्या प्रभाव पड़ेगा?**

What is a 'peak'? 'पीक' क्या है?



- Electricity demand shifts throughout the day.
दिनभर बिजली की मांग बदलती रहती है।
- It ramps up around **3 p.m.** and again from **9-11 p.m.**, mostly because households all up on **lights, fans, TVs, and ACs** at the same time.
यह लगभग **3 बजे** और फिर **9-11 बजे** बढ़ती है, क्योंकि घरों में **लाइट, पंखे, टीवी और AC** एक साथ चालू होते हैं।
- This surge is called the '**peak.**'
इस बढ़ोतरी को '**पीक**' कहा जाता है।
- India's peak demand rose from **148 GW (2014)** to a record **242.5 GW (December 2025)**.
भारत की पीक मांग **148 GW (2014)** से बढ़कर **242.5 GW (दिसंबर 2025)** हो गई।
- According to the **International Energy Agency (IEA)**, for every degree rise in average daily temperature, peak demand now increases by more than **7 GW**.
IEA के अनुसार तापमान में हर वृद्धि पर पीक मांग **7 GW से अधिक** बढ़ती है।
- When demand spikes beyond a distribution company's (**discom's**) contracted supply, it has a few options — none of them cheap.
जब मांग **डिस्कॉम** की सप्लाई से अधिक हो जाती है, तो विकल्प महंगे होते हैं।
- It can buy power on the **spot market (Indian Energy Exchange)**, where prices can swing from **₹3.50 per unit** in normal hours to **₹9-10** during peak slots.
यह **स्पॉट मार्केट (IEX)** से बिजली खरीद सकता है, जहाँ कीमतें **₹3.50 से ₹9-10 प्रति यूनिट** तक जाती हैं।
- It can re-up expensive **gas-based peaking plants** or release stored **hydropower**.
यह **गैस आधारित प्लांट** चला सकता है या **जलविद्युत** उपयोग कर सकता है।
- It can dispatch **grid-scale batteries — BSES Rajdhani (Delhi)** has commissioned India's
• rst commercial battery storage system.
यह **बैटरी स्टोरेज (BSES राजधनी, दिल्ली)** का उपयोग कर सकता है।
- Or, as a last resort, it can impose **load shedding (power cuts)**.
या अंतिम विकल्प के रूप में **लोड शेडिंग** लागू कर सकता है।
- Which disrupts livelihoods and damages industrial output.
जिससे जीवन और उद्योग प्रभावित होते हैं।
- Now imagine adding millions of **induction cooktops** to that evening peak window.
अब सोचिए कि शाम के पीक समय में लाखों **इंडक्शन चूल्हे** जुड़ जाएं।
- Without intelligent management, mass electric cooking would raise **costs and outage risks**.
बिना प्रबंधन के इससे **लागत और बिजली कटौती का जोखिम** बढ़ेगा।
- The question is not whether to electrify cooking, but how to do so without overwhelming the grid.
प्रश्न यह है कि ग्रिड पर दबाव डाले बिना बिजली से खाना कैसे बनाया जाए।
- That is where **automated demand response** enters the picture.
यहीं **ऑटोमेटेड डिमांड रिस्पॉन्स** काम आता है।

Can smart technology attend the peak automatically?

क्या स्मार्ट तकनीक पीक को कम कर सकती है?

- **OpenADR — Open Automated Demand Response** is a **two-way communication standard**.
OpenADR एक **दो-तरफा संचार प्रणाली** है।
- That enables automated participation of **smart thermostats, EV chargers, water heaters, and cooktops**.
जो **स्मार्ट उपकरणों** को जोड़ती है।
- In demand response, ancillary services (**frequency/voltage**), and **DER coordination**.
डिमांड रिस्पॉन्स, **फ्रीक्वेंसी/वोल्टेज** और **DER** समन्वय में।
- These devices can adjust their consumption automatically, without anyone having to lift a
• nger.
ये उपकरण खुद ही बिजली उपयोग नियंत्रित करते हैं।
- Born after **California's 2002 energy crisis**.
यह **2002 कैलिफोर्निया ऊर्जा संकट** के बाद विकसित हुआ।



- Its latest version uses standard web protocols.
इसका नया संस्करण आधुनिक वेब प्रोटोकॉल उपयोग करता है।
- India has begun deploying it.
भारत में इसका उपयोग शुरू हो गया है।
- **Tata Power Delhi Distribution** ran the • rst OpenADR pilot across **167 consumers**.
टाटा पावर दिल्ली ने 167 उपभोक्ताओं पर पायलट किया।
- Achieving **14% peak reduction**.
जिससे **14% कमी** आई।
- Peak shaving of **7%** possible across India.
भारत में **7% पीक कमी** संभव है।
- Internationally, **South Korea reduced 24% electricity use**.
अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर **दक्षिण कोरिया ने 24% कमी** की।
- Such programmes pay back within **four years**.
ये कार्यक्रम **4 साल में लागत वसूल** कर लेते हैं।
- What discoms lack is the full stack:
डिस्कॉम के पास पूरी व्यवस्था नहीं है:
- **OpenADR servers, smart-meter receivers, aggregator platforms**.
OpenADR सर्वर, स्मार्ट मीटर, एग्रीगेटर प्लेटफॉर्म।
- That can create **virtual power plants**.
जो **वर्चुअल पावर प्लांट** बना सकते हैं।
- Building this stack is essential — but it is only half the solution.
यह बनाना जरूरी है, लेकिन यह आधा समाधान है।
- The other half lies in making households **active grid participants**.
दूसरा हिस्सा घरों को **सक्रिय भागीदार** बनाना है।
- And upgrading load capacity from **3 kW to 5 kW**.
और क्षमता **3 kW से 5 kW** करना है।
- Through investment in **transformers and feeder infrastructure**.
इसके लिए **ट्रांसफॉर्मर और फीडर** में निवेश जरूरी है।

Can rooftop solar and neighbourhood trading take the pressure off the grid? क्या रूफटॉप सोलर और नेबरहुड ट्रेडिंग ग्रिड पर दबाव कम कर सकते हैं?

- A rooftop solar panel paired with a battery can turn a household into a **‘prosumer’— both a producer and a consumer**.
रूफटॉप सोलर और बैटरी एक घर को **‘प्रोस्यूमर’— उत्पादक और उपभोक्ता दोनों** बना सकते हैं।
- The solar panel generates power by day; the battery stores surplus energy; and that stored energy can be used in the evening to run the induction cooktop.
सोलर पैनल दिन में बिजली बनाता है; बैटरी अतिरिक्त ऊर्जा संग्रहित करती है; और वही ऊर्जा शाम को उपयोग होती है।
- This • sets precisely the **peak** that mass e-cooking would otherwise create.
यह उसी **पीक** को कम करता है जो इलेक्ट्रिक कुकिंग से बढ़ता।
- A **2025 Australian national-grid study** referred to a halving of **peak load**.
2025 ऑस्ट्रेलियाई अध्ययन में पीक लोड आधा होने की बात कही गई।
- And reduction of **grid reinforcement costs by 75%**.
और **ग्रिड लागत में 75% कमी**।
- When residential electrification was combined with **rooftop solar, batteries, and o-peak scheduling**.
जब इसे **रूफटॉप सोलर, बैटरी और ऑफ-पीक उपयोग** से जोड़ा गया।
- India’s rooftop solar capacity is projected to grow from **24 GW (2026) to 41 GW (2030)**.
भारत में रूफटॉप सोलर क्षमता **24 GW (2026) से बढ़कर 41 GW (2030)** होगी।
- Boosted by the **PM-Surya Ghar Yojana**.
जिससे **PM-सूर्य घर योजना** से बढ़ावा मिला है।
- Which aims to provide **300 units free electricity to 10 million households**.
जो **1 करोड़ घरों को 300 यूनिट मुफ्त बिजली** देने का लक्ष्य रखती है।



- The real impact comes when surplus solar is **traded**.
असली प्रभाव तब आता है जब अतिरिक्त सोलर ऊर्जा का **व्यापार** होता है।
- **Peer-to-peer (P2P) energy trading** allows households to sell excess electricity directly to neighbours.
P2P ऊर्जा व्यापार घरों को अतिरिक्त बिजली पड़ोसियों को बेचने की अनुमति देता है।
- Through **digital platforms**, bypassing the discom route.
डिजिटल प्लेटफॉर्म के माध्यम से, बिना डिस्कॉम के।
- India ran South Asia's • **rst blockchain-based P2P solar trading pilot in Lucknow**.
भारत ने लखनऊ में दक्षिण एशिया का पहला **ब्लॉकचेन आधारित P2P पायलट** चलाया।
- Led by the **India Smart Grid Forum and Powerledger**.
जिसे **India Smart Grid Forum और Powerledger** ने चलाया।
- Under a regulatory sandbox approved by the **UP Electricity Regulatory Commission**.
UPERC के तहत।
- Prosumers set prices, tracked trades in real time, and settled transactions through **smart contracts**.
प्रोस्यूमर ने कीमत तय की, रियल टाइम ट्रेडिंग की और **स्मार्ट कॉन्ट्रैक्ट** से लेनदेन किया।
- The result was a **43% reduction in energy buy price**.
परिणामस्वरूप कीमत में **43% कमी** आई।
- Following success, **Uttar Pradesh directed utilities to enable P2P trading**.
सफलता के बाद **उत्तर प्रदेश ने P2P ट्रेडिंग लागू करने को कहा**।
- In **February 2026**, the Centre announced a P2P facility under the **India Energy Stack**.
फरवरी 2026 में केंद्र ने **India Energy Stack** के तहत P2P सुविधा घोषित की।
- For **Delhi and western Uttar Pradesh**.
दिल्ली और पश्चिमी उत्तर प्रदेश के लिए।
- If homes on a feeder trade solar during **evening cooking hours**, the local peak • **attens**.
यदि घर शाम के समय सोलर ट्रेड करें तो **पीक कम हो जाता है**।
- The discom avoids buying expensive power.
डिस्कॉम को महंगी बिजली नहीं खरीदनी पड़ती।
- And the neighbourhood becomes a **micro virtual power plant**.
और पूरा क्षेत्र एक **माइक्रो वर्चुअल पावर प्लांट** बन जाता है।

What needs to happen, and how soon? क्या किया जाना चाहिए, और कितनी जल्दी?

- **New York's All-Electric Buildings Act** mandates that most new buildings under **seven storeys** be all-electric from **January 2026**, and taller buildings from **2029**.
न्यूयॉर्क का All-Electric Buildings Act के अनुसार **सात मंजिल तक की इमारतें जनवरी 2026 से और ऊँची इमारतें 2029 से पूरी तरह बिजली आधारित होंगी**।
- India has begun laying the groundwork.
भारत ने आधार तैयार करना शुरू कर दिया है।
- The **Go Electric campaign** and the **National Efficient Cooking Programme** target **two million induction stoves**.
Go Electric अभियान और National Efficient Cooking Programme का लक्ष्य **20 लाख इंडक्शन स्टोव** है।
- The **Bureau of Energy Efficiency** has launched **star labelling for induction hobs**.
Bureau of Energy Efficiency ने **इंडक्शन के लिए स्टार लेबलिंग** शुरू की है।
- The **PM-Surya Ghar scheme** links rooftop solar adoption to **household savings**.
PM-सूर्य घर योजना रूफटॉप सोलर को **घरेलू बचत** से जोड़ती है।
- But a wider architecture is needed:
लेकिन एक व्यापक ढांचे की आवश्यकता है:
- Redirect part of the estimated **₹40,000 crore annual LPG subsidy** towards **one-time capital support for induction cooktops**.
₹40,000 करोड़ LPG सब्सिडी का हिस्सा **इंडक्शन कुकटॉप** के लिए उपयोग किया जाए।
- Expand **EESL's bulk-procurement model** to e-cooking appliances.
EESL के बल्क प्रोक्योरमेंट मॉडल को ई-कुकिंग तक बढ़ाया जाए।



- Mandate **time-of-use tariffs** for e-cooking.
टाइम-ऑफ-यूज टैरिफ लागू किया जाए।
- Require **OpenADR compatibility** in appliances and smart meters.
उपकरणों में **OpenADR अनुकूलता** अनिवार्य हो।
- Fund **R&D on multi-pot induction technology**.
मल्टी-पॉट इंडक्शन तकनीक पर शोध किया जाए।
- Mandate **all-electric construction in Tier-1 cities**.
टियर-1 शहरों में **ऑल-इलेक्ट्रिक भवन** अनिवार्य हों।
- The urgency is as much **geopolitical** as **economic**.
यह आवश्यकता **भूराजनीतिक और आर्थिक** दोनों है।
- Every dollar spent on LPG imports goes through **Strait of Hormuz supply chains**.
हर डॉलर **स्ट्रेट ऑफ होर्मुज़** से जुड़े आपूर्ति मार्ग से जाता है।
- Electricity can be generated from **rooftop solar and batteries** domestically.
बिजली **रूफटॉप सोलर और बैटरी** से देश में ही बनाई जा सकती है।
- This shift is from **imported fuel to domestic energy**.
यह बदलाव **आयातित ईंधन से घरेलू ऊर्जा** की ओर है।
- That is not just energy policy, that is **sovereignty**.
यह केवल ऊर्जा नीति नहीं, बल्कि **संप्रभुता** है।
- **Urban India** is the obvious place to start.
शहरी भारत शुरुआत के लिए सबसे उपयुक्त है।
- The grid works, **smart meters** are rolling out.
यहाँ ग्रिड और **स्मार्ट मीटर** उपलब्ध हैं।
- **Rooftop solar** pays for itself in cities.
रूफटॉप सोलर शहरों में लाभकारी है।
- The technology is there. The numbers add up.
तकनीक उपलब्ध है और आंकड़े भी अनुकूल हैं।
- We know how to manage the grid.
हमें ग्रिड प्रबंधन आता है।
- The question is whether the **policy framework** will catch up before the next **oil shock**.
प्रश्न यह है कि क्या **नीतिगत ढांचा** अगले **तेल संकट** से पहले तैयार होगा।



Gujarat's GMDC, NMDC ink pact on rare earth elements

GS III: Economy

A Government of Gujarat enterprise Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation (GMDC) has entered into an MoU with central public sector enterprise NMDC to explore opportunities for collaboration in the Rare Earth Elements (REE) sector. Both organisations, under the MoU, will work together to evaluate opportunities for technical collaboration, project development and potential business structures. The focus will be assessing the potential development of an integrated rare earth value chain in Gujarat, including exploration, mining, beneficiation, processing and downstream applications. The engagement will primarily explore opportunities associated with GMDC's Ambadungar Rare Earth deposit. The partnership is also expected to facilitate knowledge exchange, technical evaluation and coordinated efforts towards advancing rare earth resource development, GMDC said on Monday.

17Mar. Gujarat's GMDC, NMDC ink pact on rare earth elements

गुजरात की GMDC और NMDC ने दुर्लभ मृदा तत्वों पर समझौता किया

- A Government of Gujarat enterprise Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation (GMDC) has entered into an MoU with central public sector enterprise NMDC to explore opportunities for collaboration in the Rare Earth Elements (REE) sector.



गुजरात सरकार के उद्यम गुजरात मिनरल डेवलपमेंट कॉर्पोरेशन (GMDC) ने केंद्रीय सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के उपक्रम NMDC के साथ दुर्लभ मृदा तत्व (REE) क्षेत्र में सहयोग के अवसर तलाशने के लिए एक समझौता ज्ञापन (MoU) किया है।

- Both organisations, under the **MoU**, will work together to evaluate opportunities for **technical collaboration, project development** and **potential business structures**.
दोनों संगठन इस MoU के तहत तकनीकी सहयोग, परियोजना विकास और संभावित व्यावसायिक संरचनाओं के अवसरों का मूल्यांकन करने के लिए साथ मिलकर काम करेंगे।
- The focus will be assessing the potential development of an **integrated rare earth value chain in Gujarat**, including **exploration, mining, beneficiation, processing** and **downstream applications**.
मुख्य ध्यान गुजरात में एकीकृत दुर्लभ मृदा मूल्य श्रृंखला के संभावित विकास का आकलन करने पर होगा, जिसमें अन्वेषण, खनन, बेनिफिशिएशन, प्रसंस्करण और डाउनस्ट्रीम अनुप्रयोग शामिल होंगे।
- The engagement will primarily explore opportunities associated with **GMDC's Ambadungar Rare Earth deposit**.
यह सहयोग मुख्य रूप से GMDC के अंबाडुंगर दुर्लभ मृदा भंडार से जुड़े अवसरों की खोज करेगा।
- The **partnership** is also expected to facilitate **knowledge exchange, technical evaluation** and **coordinated efforts** towards advancing rare earth resource development, GMDC said on Monday.

GMDC ने सोमवार को कहा कि यह साझेदारी ज्ञान के आदान-प्रदान, तकनीकी मूल्यांकन और समन्वित प्रयासों को बढ़ावा देने में भी सहायक होगी, जिससे दुर्लभ मृदा संसाधनों के विकास को आगे बढ़ाया जा सकेगा।

Goods export flat in Feb.; official sees dip in March on conflict

Commerce Secretary Agrawal noted March may be challenging on account of logistical issues on West Asia crisis, while releasing Feb. data

GS III: Economy

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

India's trade balance stood at a deficit of about \$4 billion in February compared with a surplus of \$2.7 billion a year earlier due in large part to merchandise exports staying flat while imports of both merchandise and services grew significantly during the month.

Releasing the data, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said exports in March are likely to be impacted by the ongoing conflict in West Asia.

As per the Ministry of Commerce and Industry data, total exports, including merchandise and services, grew 11% to \$76.1 billion, while total imports rose 21.7% to \$80.1 billion.

Within this, merchandise imports widened gap over exports. Merchandise exports were largely flat at

Widening deficit

Chart shows India's merchandise trade performance in Feb. 2025 and Feb. 2026. Figures in \$ bn.



\$36.6 billion in February compared with \$36.9 billion a year earlier. Merchandise imports, however, climbed 24.2% to \$63.7 billion over this period.

'Likely to worsen'

Mr. Agrawal said the situation may worsen in March on West Asia crisis.

"Despite all of the challenges, our merchandise exports have been doing well," Mr. Agrawal told the press. "The month of

March will be a challenging one as well, because of too many logistics challenges, and when one part of the geography gets constrained, then too much of exports will not happen. Exports will likely see a downward trend this month because of the logistical challenges."

In February, services exports climbed almost 25% to \$39.5 billion while imports grew almost 13% to \$16.4 billion.





17Mar. Goods export flat in Feb.; official sees dip in March on conflict फरवरी में वस्तु निर्यात स्थिर; संघर्ष के कारण मार्च में गिरावट की आशंका

- **Commerce Secretary Agrawal** noted **March** may be **challenging** on account of **logistical issues** in the **West Asia crisis**, while releasing **Feb. data**.
वाणिज्य सचिव अग्रवाल ने फरवरी के आँकड़े जारी करते हुए कहा कि पश्चिम एशिया संकट के कारण लॉजिस्टिक समस्याओं के चलते मार्च चुनौतीपूर्ण हो सकता है।
- **India's trade balance** stood at a **deficit of about \$4 billion** in **February** compared with a **surplus of \$2.7 billion** a year earlier due in large part to **merchandise exports staying flat** while **imports of both merchandise and services grew significantly** during the month.
भारत का व्यापार संतुलन फरवरी में लगभग 4 अरब डॉलर के घाटे पर रहा, जबकि एक वर्ष पहले 2.7 अरब डॉलर का अधिशेष था, जिसका मुख्य कारण वस्तु निर्यात का स्थिर रहना और वस्तुओं व सेवाओं के आयात में उल्लेखनीय वृद्धि होना था।
- Releasing the **data**, **Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal** said **exports in March** are likely to be **impacted by the ongoing conflict in West Asia**.
आँकड़े जारी करते हुए, वाणिज्य सचिव राजेश अग्रवाल ने कहा कि मार्च में निर्यात पर पश्चिम एशिया में जारी संघर्ष का प्रभाव पड़ने की संभावना है।
- As per the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry data**, **total exports**, including **merchandise and services**, grew **11% to \$76.1 billion**, while **total imports** rose **21.7% to \$80.1 billion**.
वाणिज्य और उद्योग मंत्रालय के आँकड़ों के अनुसार कुल निर्यात, जिसमें वस्तु और सेवाएँ शामिल हैं, 11% बढ़कर 76.1 अरब डॉलर हो गया, जबकि कुल आयात 21.7% बढ़कर 80.1 अरब डॉलर हो गया।
- Within this, **merchandise imports widened the gap over exports**.
इसमें वस्तु आयात और निर्यात के बीच का अंतर बढ़ गया।
- **Merchandise exports** were largely flat at **\$36.6 billion** in **February** compared with **\$36.9 billion** a year earlier.
वस्तु निर्यात फरवरी में लगभग 36.6 अरब डॉलर पर स्थिर रहा, जो एक वर्ष पहले 36.9 अरब डॉलर था।
- **Merchandise imports**, however, climbed **24.2% to \$63.7 billion** over this period.
हालांकि वस्तु आयात इस अवधि में 24.2% बढ़कर 63.7 अरब डॉलर हो गया।

'Likely to worsen'

'और बिगड़ने की संभावना'

- **Mr. Agrawal** said the **situation may worsen in March** because of the **West Asia crisis**.
श्री अग्रवाल ने कहा कि पश्चिम एशिया संकट के कारण मार्च में स्थिति और बिगड़ सकती है।



- “Despite all of the **challenges**, our **merchandise exports** have been **doing well**,” Mr. **Agrawal** told the **press**.
श्री अग्रवाल ने प्रेस से कहा, “सभी चुनौतियों के बावजूद हमारे वस्तु निर्यात ने अच्छा प्रदर्शन किया है।”
- “The month of **March** will be a **challenging one** as well, because of too many **logistics challenges**, and when one part of the **geography gets constrained**, then too much of **exports will not happen**.
उन्होंने कहा, “मार्च का महीना भी चुनौतीपूर्ण रहेगा क्योंकि कई लॉजिस्टिक चुनौतियाँ हैं, और जब भौगोलिक क्षेत्र का एक हिस्सा बाधित हो जाता है तो अधिक निर्यात संभव नहीं हो पाता।
- **Exports** will likely see a **downward trend this month** because of the **logistical challenges**.”
लॉजिस्टिक चुनौतियों के कारण इस महीने निर्यात में गिरावट का रुझान देखने को मिल सकता है।”
- In **February**, **services exports** climbed almost **25% to \$39.5 billion** while **imports** grew almost **13% to \$16.4 billion**.
फरवरी में सेवा निर्यात लगभग 25% बढ़कर 39.5 अरब डॉलर हो गया, जबकि आयात लगभग 13% बढ़कर 16.4 अरब डॉलर हो गया।

Sensex, Nifty50 surge 1.1% as concerns over energy supply ease

GS III: Economy

Ashokamithran T.
MUMBAI

India's benchmark indices climbed 1.1% after concerns over energy supply eased with two Indian ships transporting LPG to India for the first time since the Iran war began.

Nifty50 and BSE Sensex30 opened at 23,116.10 and 74,415.79 respectively with a slight dip reaching the day's low after trading for more than an hour. The indices gradually gained and touched a high of 23,502 and 75,805.27 before closing at 23,408.80 and 75,502.85 respectively.

The optimism was not broad-based with about 2,212 stocks advancing and 1,074 stocks declining in over 3,371 stocks that traded on Monday on the NSE. Just six of the 21 NSE sectoral indices were positive.

The benchmarks had slid over 5% last week.

While the indices show signs of optimism, it has not reflected in oil prices and foreign exchange rates. Brent Crude Futures continued to trade at about



A man outside the BSE.

\$102 a barrel and rupee at over ₹92 a dollar. Besides, wholesale inflation came in at a 11-month high of 2.3% in February 2026.

“The sentiment was under pressure during the first half due to the global oil benchmark rising by about 1.7% to \$105/barrel. However, markets rebounded sharply on reports the U.S. was preparing to form a coalition to escort ships via Strait of Hormuz, easing concerns over disruptions to global energy supplies,” said Siddhartha Khemka, head of research, wealth management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd.

17Mar. Sensex, Nifty50 surge 1.1% as concerns over energy supply ease

ऊर्जा आपूर्ति की चिंताएँ कम होने से सेसेक्स और निफ्टी50 में 1.1% की तेजी

• India's benchmark indices climbed 1.1% after concerns over energy supply eased with two Indian ships transporting LPG to India for the first time since the Iran war began.

भारत के बेंचमार्क सूचकांक 1.1% बढ़े क्योंकि ऊर्जा आपूर्ति को लेकर चिंताएँ कम हो गईं जब ईरान युद्ध शुरू होने के बाद पहली बार दो भारतीय जहाज LPG लेकर भारत पहुँचे।

• Nifty50 and BSE Sensex30 opened at 23,116.10 and 74,415.79 respectively with a slight dip reaching the day's low after trading for more than an hour.

निफ्टी50 और बीएसई सेसेक्स30 क्रमशः 23,116.10 और



74,415.79 पर खुले और लगभग एक घंटे के कारोबार के बाद हल्की गिरावट के साथ दिन के निचले स्तर तक पहुँच गए।

- The indices gradually gained and touched a high of 23,502 and 75,805.27 before closing at 23,408.80 and 75,502.85 respectively.
इसके बाद सूचकांक धीरे-धीरे बढ़े और 23,502 तथा 75,805.27 के उच्च स्तर को छूने के बाद क्रमशः 23,408.80 और 75,502.85 पर बंद हुए।
- The optimism was not broad-based with about 2,212 stocks advancing and 1,074 stocks declining in over 3,371 stocks that traded on Monday on the NSE.
यह आशावाद व्यापक नहीं था क्योंकि NSE पर सोमवार को कारोबार करने वाले 3,371 से अधिक शेयरों में से लगभग 2,212 शेयर बढ़े जबकि 1,074 शेयर गिरे।
- Just six of the 21 NSE sectoral indices were positive.
NSE के 21 सेक्टरल सूचकांकों में से केवल छह ही सकारात्मक रहे।
- The benchmarks had slid over 5% last week.
बेंचमार्क सूचकांक पिछले सप्ताह 5% से अधिक गिर गए थे।
- While the indices show signs of optimism, it has not reflected in oil prices and foreign exchange rates.
हालाँकि सूचकांक आशावाद के संकेत दिखा रहे हैं, लेकिन यह तेल की कीमतों और विदेशी मुद्रा दरों में दिखाई नहीं दिया है।
- Brent Crude Futures continued to trade at about \$102 a barrel and rupee at over ₹92 a dollar.
ब्रेंट क्रूड फ्यूचर्स लगभग 102 डॉलर प्रति बैरल पर और रुपया 92 रुपये प्रति डॉलर से अधिक पर बना रहा।
- Besides, wholesale inflation came in at a 11-month high of 2.3% in February 2026.
इसके अलावा फरवरी 2026 में थोक मुद्रास्फीति 11 महीने के उच्च स्तर 2.3% पर पहुँच गई।
- “The sentiment was under pressure during the first half due to the global oil benchmark rising by about 1.7% to \$105/barrel.
उन्होंने कहा, “पहले हिस्से में वैश्विक तेल बेंचमार्क के लगभग 1.7% बढ़कर 105 डॉलर प्रति बैरल होने के कारण बाजार भावना दबाव में थी।
- However, markets rebounded sharply on reports the U.S. was preparing to form a coalition to escort ships via Strait of Hormuz, easing concerns over disruptions to global energy supplies,” said Siddhartha Khemka, head of research, wealth management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd.
हालाँकि रिपोर्ट आई कि अमेरिका हॉर्मुज़ जलडमरूमध्य के रास्ते जहाजों की सुरक्षा के लिए गठबंधन बनाने की तैयारी कर रहा है, जिससे वैश्विक ऊर्जा आपूर्ति में व्यवधान की चिंताएँ कम हुईं और बाजार तेजी से उछल गया, ऐसा सिद्धार्थ खेमका, हेड ऑफ रिसर्च, वेल्थ मैनेजमेंट, मोतिलाल ओसवाल फाइनेंशियल सर्विसेज लिमिटेड ने कहा।

GS Paper III: S&T,

TOPICS COVERED

17 March 2026

17Mar	Kerala HC permits extraction of gametes of brain-dead man केरल उच्च न्यायालय ने ब्रेन-डेड व्यक्ति के गैमीट्स निकालने की अनुमति दी
17Mar	Centre clears 'quantum lab' installation at 23 institutions केंद्र ने 23 संस्थानों में 'क्वांटम लैब' स्थापना को मंजूरी दी
17Mar	'IIIT-Hyderabad app turns impaired speech into clear speech in near-real-time' 'IIIT-हैदराबाद ऐप impaired speech को near-real-time में clear speech में बदलता है'
17Mar	The dual impact of Artificial Intelligence on the finance industry वित्त उद्योग पर कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता का द्वैध प्रभाव



Kerala HC permits extraction of gametes of brain-dead man

GS III: S&T

The Kerala High Court has granted interim permission to extract and cryopreserve the gametes of a person who had been declared brain-dead and is on ventilator support, after his wife approached the court with the demand, considering the possibility of having a biological child in the future. In the interim order, a Bench of Justice M.B. Snehalatha added that, other than the extraction and preservation of the gametes, no further procedure under the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Act shall be carried out, without the permit of the court.

ब्रेन-डेड घोषित किया गया है और जो वेंटिलेटर सपोर्ट पर है, यह निर्णय तब लिया गया जब उसकी पत्नी ने भविष्य में जैविक संतान होने की संभावना को देखते हुए अदालत का रुख किया।

- In the interim order, a Bench of Justice M.B. Snehalatha added that, other than the extraction and preservation of the gametes, no further procedure under the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Act shall be carried out, without the permit of the court.

अंतरिम आदेश में न्यायमूर्ति एम.बी. स्नेहलता की पीठ ने यह भी कहा कि गैमीट्स के निष्कर्षण और संरक्षण के अलावा असिस्टेड रिप्रोडक्टिव टेक्नोलॉजी (रेगुलेशन) अधिनियम के तहत कोई अन्य प्रक्रिया अदालत की अनुमति के बिना नहीं की जाएगी।

17Mar. Kerala HC permits extraction of gametes of brain-dead man

केरल उच्च न्यायालय ने ब्रेन-डेड व्यक्ति के गैमीट्स निकालने की अनुमति दी

- The Kerala High Court has granted interim permission to extract and cryopreserve the gametes of a person who had been declared brain-dead and is on ventilator support, after his wife approached the court with the demand, considering the possibility of having a biological child in the future.

केरल उच्च न्यायालय ने एक ऐसे व्यक्ति के गैमीट्स निकालने और क्रायोप्रीजर्व करने के लिए अंतरिम अनुमति दी है जिसे

Centre clears 'quantum lab' installation at 23 institutions

GS III: S&T

Jacob Koshy

NEW DELHI

Twenty-three academic institutions across India have been approved for setting up quantum teaching laboratories under the National Quantum Mission (NQM), with another 100 proposals currently being evaluated, according to details from the joint monthly meeting of Secretaries of the Science Ministries held in New Delhi on Monday.

The NQM, approved with a ₹6003.65 crore budget (2023-2031), aims to develop 50-1,000 qubit quantum computers, satellite-based secure communication, and high-precision quantum sensors/materials.

The meeting, chaired by the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Dr. Jitendra Singh, also reviewed preparations for the India International Science Festival 2026, with Pune identified as the proposed venue. The Department of Biotechnology said it had begun work on the event's framework, though a final programme and schedule are yet to be decided and will be discussed with stakeholder agencies in coming weeks.

17Mar. Centre clears 'quantum lab' installation at 23 institutions

केंद्र ने 23 संस्थानों में 'क्वांटम लैब' स्थापना को मंजूरी दी

- Twenty-three academic institutions across India have been approved for setting up quantum teaching laboratories under the National Quantum Mission (NQM), with another 100 proposals currently being evaluated, according to details from the joint monthly meeting of Secretaries of the Science Ministries held in New Delhi on Monday.

भारत के 23 शैक्षणिक संस्थानों को नेशनल क्वांटम मिशन (NQM) के तहत क्वांटम शिक्षण प्रयोगशालाएं स्थापित करने की मंजूरी दी गई है, जबकि अन्य 100 प्रस्तावों का वर्तमान में मूल्यांकन किया जा रहा है, यह जानकारी सोमवार को नई दिल्ली में आयोजित विज्ञान मंत्रालयों के सचिवों की संयुक्त मासिक बैठक से मिली।

- The NQM, approved with a ₹6003.65 crore budget (2023-2031), aims to develop 50-1,000 qubit quantum computers, satellite-based secure communication, and high-precision quantum sensors/materials.

नेशनल क्वांटम मिशन (NQM), जिसे ₹6003.65 करोड़ के बजट (2023-2031) के साथ मंजूरी दी गई है, का उद्देश्य 50-1,000 क्यूबिट क्वांटम कंप्यूटर, सैटेलाइट आधारित सुरक्षित संचार, और उच्च सटीकता वाले क्वांटम सेंसर/सामग्री विकसित करना है।



- The meeting, chaired by the **Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Dr. Jitendra Singh**, also reviewed preparations for the **India International Science Festival 2026**, with **Pune** identified as the **proposed venue**.
इस बैठक की अध्यक्षता **विज्ञान एवं प्रौद्योगिकी राज्य मंत्री (स्वतंत्र प्रभार) डॉ. जितेंद्र सिंह** ने की और इसमें **इंडिया इंटरनेशनल साइंस फेस्टिवल 2026** की तैयारियों की भी समीक्षा की गई, जिसमें **पुणे** को **प्रस्तावित स्थल** के रूप में चिन्हित किया गया।
- The **Department of Biotechnology** said it had begun work on the **event's framework**, though a **final programme and schedule** are yet to be decided and will be discussed with **stakeholder agencies** in coming weeks.
जैव प्रौद्योगिकी विभाग ने कहा कि उसने **कार्यक्रम की रूपरेखा** पर काम शुरू कर दिया है, हालांकि **अंतिम कार्यक्रम और समय-सारणी** अभी तय नहीं हुई है और आने वाले हफ्तों में **हितधारक एजेंसियों** के साथ इस पर चर्चा की जाएगी।

PATRIOTIC IAS



'IIT-Hyderabad app turns impaired speech into clear speech in near-real-time'

While the current project runs in English, the team's next aim is to take these technologies to regional languages, like Hindi, Telugu, and Tamil, as many in India do not have the means to benefit from accessibility-focused AI models. For this work, Vineet Gandhi won the ANRF award in 2026

INTERVIEW

Vineet Gandhi

OS III S&T
Divya Gandhi

A whisper. A few slurred words. For those who suffer from dysarthria, a motor speech disorder, basic communication is a challenge, indelibly affecting both their professional and personal life. But now a new innovation based on artificial intelligence (AI) and developed in India could be life-changing.

Led by associate professor Vineet Gandhi of the International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), Hyderabad, a team has developed a simple app that can help people talk as an audio translation converts the speaker's voice almost in real-time. The app can either convert slurred speech into clear, natural-sounding speech or use a camera to analyse lip movements and subtle throat vibrations to generate intelligible speech.

While the current project runs in English, the team's next aim is to take these technologies to regional languages, including Hindi, Telugu, and Tamil, as many across the country do not have the means to benefit from accessibility-focused AI models. For this work, Mr. Gandhi won the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) award in 2026.

Excerpts from an interview:

What inspired you to begin work on this humanitarian AI project?

My research has always been driven by a simple question: what real problem can technology help solve?

While my academic training is primarily in computer vision, about four years ago, I began to see exciting possibilities emerging in speech research and decided to explore the field more deeply. I became increasingly aware of the challenges faced by many individuals who lose their ability to speak due to medical conditions: the impact of this loss extends far beyond communication – it affects independence, identity, and connection.

Recognising this need inspired me to focus my work on accessibility-driven technologies designed to restore or enable speech, with the goal of helping people regain their voice.

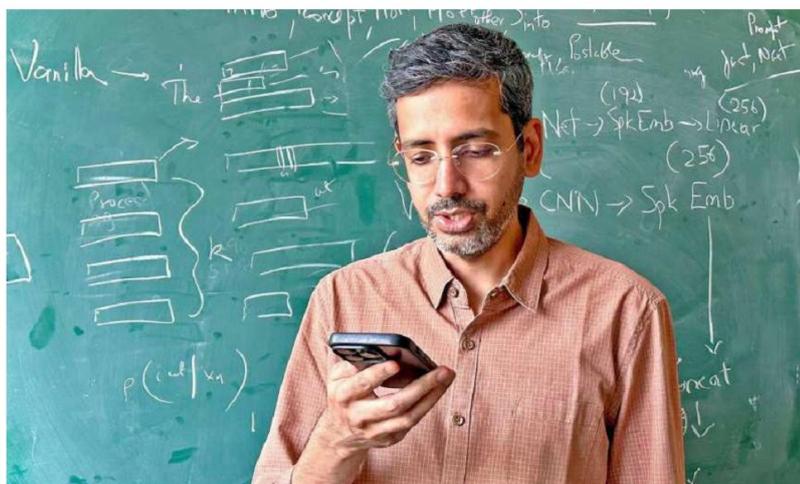
Could you describe how the app works for people with speech impairment?

The app is designed to convert impaired or distorted speech into clear, natural-sounding speech with only a few hundred milliseconds of delay. A user simply speaks in their own voice, and the system processes it to produce intelligible speech for the listener.

We are also developing a complementary lip-to-speech capability, where a person can silently move their lips and the system generates the corresponding speech.

A key aspect we are focusing on is personalisation, where users can calibrate and refine the application to their voice by reading few minutes of text on the app.

We aim for these technologies to be integrated into common communication platforms, such as web-based calling applications, making everyday communication



Speech alchemist: Vineet Gandhi of IIIT-Hyderabad, leader of the team that developed an app that converts slurred speech into clear speech or uses a camera to analyse lip movements and subtle throat vibrations to generate intelligible speech.

easier for people with speech impairments.

You also aim to expand this technology to regional Indian languages. How do you hope to achieve this?

At present, much of the global speech technology ecosystem is predominantly designed for English, and our initial experiments have naturally followed the same trajectory. However, a major goal of our research is to extend these capabilities to regional Indian languages, where accessible speech technologies are equally important.

To achieve this, we plan to collect speech data in Indian languages and develop data-efficient models suited for low-resource scenarios. Our approach includes data augmentation and efficient fine-tuning of pre-trained models.

We have already conducted preliminary experiments in Hindi with promising results, and with support from the Anusandhan National Research Foundation, we aim to further enhance and expand this work to additional Indian languages.

You believe that "accessibility and linguistic diversity" are crucial for AI research in India. Could you elaborate?

Accessibility and linguistic diversity are fundamental considerations for AI research in India. Having spent several years in Europe, I observed that accessibility is far more systematically integrated into public infrastructure and digital services there.

In contrast, India still has significant gaps, even in public spaces such as railway stations, where basic accessibility provisions are often limited. This highlights the broader need to design technologies that consciously include people with disabilities.

At the same time, India's linguistic diversity presents another important dimension. In many parts of the country, particularly in rural regions, speech remains the most natural and primary mode of interac-

tion. Text-heavy or typing-based interfaces may not always be practical or inclusive in such contexts. Therefore, AI systems designed for India must prioritise speech-based interaction and support multiple regional languages.

Taken together, meaningful accessibility and strong support for linguistic diversity are essential if digital technologies are to be truly inclusive and widely usable across the country.

WHO has said the "future of healthcare is digital"...

The World Health Organization has emphasised that the future of healthcare will be increasingly digital. In a country like India, telemedicine can play a transformative role, particularly when supported by basic diagnostic infrastructure at the local level, which enables more accurate remote consultations.

Another important direction is AI-assisted diagnostics, where machine learning systems analyse medical images, speech, or health records to support early disease detection and prediction.

Practical solutions are already emerging. For example, 'Shishu Maapan' developed by Wadhvani AI helps measure newborn weight and size simply from mobile photos and is being adopted by frontline health workers such as ASHA workers.

Digital tools are also enabling assistive healthcare technologies, including speech restoration systems for individuals who have lost their ability to speak, and wearable devices that continuously monitor health parameters and alert doctors to potential anomalies. These developments illustrate how digital innovation can make healthcare more accessible and scalable.

A common criticism of AI-generated speech is that while it's intelligible, it often fails to capture the unique cadence of the speaker. When restoring a voice to someone with dysarthria, how do you balance the need for clear communication with the need to preserve the user's

individual human essence?

This is an important concern. If recordings of the speaker's original voice from before the onset of dysarthria are available, modern voice cloning techniques can recreate that voice with as little as 10 seconds of speech. So preserving an individual's vocal identity is technically feasible today, and there is substantial research demonstrating this capability.

Our current app, however, focuses primarily on restoring content intelligibility, ensuring that what the user intends to say is conveyed clearly. For now, the generated speech uses a common voice rather than a personalised one.

That said, text-to-speech systems are becoming increasingly natural, to the point that they are now being integrated into conversational bots replacing many traditional customer service applications. Emotional nuance remains more challenging, as we discussed in our earlier work on empathic speech generation, but progress is rapid.

How does the model differentiate between impaired speech and a noisy background as the user navigates, say, a busy Indian street?

This is indeed a significant challenge in India, where real-world environments can be extremely chaotic. Anyone who has thought about deploying self-driving cars here quickly realises how unpredictable our roads can be: traffic patterns, honking, pedestrians, and vehicles all interacting in highly dynamic ways. Speech technology faces a similar level of complexity.

In our experiments, we improve robustness using noise augmentation, where we simulate different noisy environments during training so the model learns to handle background sounds.

Ultimately, the most effective solution is to collect and train on more real-world data from noisy settings. Even then, some performance degradation is inevitable because separating impaired speech from heavy background noise is fundamentally a difficult problem.

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17Mar. 'IIT-Hyderabad app turns impaired speech into clear speech in near-real-time'

'IIT-हैदराबाद ऐप impaired speech को near-real-time में clear speech में बदलता है'

A whisper. A few slurred words.

एक फुसफुसाहट। कुछ अस्पष्ट शब्द।



- For those who suffer from **dysarthria**, a motor speech disorder, basic communication is a challenge, indelibly affecting both their professional and personal life.
जो लोग **dysarthria** (एक मोटर स्पीच डिसऑर्डर) से पीड़ित हैं, उनके लिए बुनियादी संचार एक चुनौती है, जो उनके पेशेवर और व्यक्तिगत जीवन दोनों को स्थायी रूप से प्रभावित करता है।
- But now a new innovation based on **artificial intelligence (AI)** and developed in **India** could be life-changing.
लेकिन अब **कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता (AI)** पर आधारित और **भारत** में विकसित एक नया नवाचार जीवन बदलने वाला हो सकता है।
- Led by associate professor **Vineet Gandhi** of the **International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), Hyderabad**, a team has developed a simple app that can help people talk as an audio translation converts the speaker's voice almost in realtime.
IIIT, हैदराबाद के एसोसिएट प्रोफेसर **विनीत गांधी** के नेतृत्व में एक टीम ने एक सरल ऐप विकसित किया है, जो लोगों की आवाज़ को लगभग रियल-टाइम में ऑडियो ट्रांसलेशन के माध्यम से स्पष्ट बना देता है।
- The app can either convert slurred speech into clear, natural-sounding speech or use a camera to analyse lip movements and subtle throat vibrations to generate intelligible speech.
यह ऐप अस्पष्ट बोलचाल को स्पष्ट और प्राकृतिक ध्वनि में बदल सकता है या कैमरे की मदद से होंठों की गतिविधियों और गले के हल्के कंपन का विश्लेषण कर समझने योग्य भाषण उत्पन्न करता है।
- While the current project runs in **English**, the team's next aim is to take these technologies to regional languages, including **Hindi, Telugu, and Tamil**, as many across the country do not have the means to benefit from accessibility-focused AI models.
वर्तमान परियोजना **अंग्रेज़ी** में चल रही है, लेकिन टीम का अगला लक्ष्य इसे **हिंदी, तेलुगु और तमिल** जैसी क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं तक ले जाना है, क्योंकि देश में कई लोगों के पास ऐसे AI मॉडल का लाभ लेने के साधन नहीं हैं।
- For this work, Mr. Gandhi won the **Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) award in 2026**.
इस कार्य के लिए श्री गांधी को **2026 में अनुसंधान नेशनल रिसर्च फाउंडेशन (ANRF) पुरस्कार** मिला।

Excerpts from an interview:

साक्षात्कार के अंश:

What inspired you to begin work on this humanitarian AI project?

इस मानवीय AI परियोजना पर काम शुरू करने की प्रेरणा क्या थी?

- My research has always been driven by a simple question: what real problem can technology help solve?
मेरा शोध हमेशा एक सरल प्रश्न से प्रेरित रहा है: तकनीक कौन सी वास्तविक समस्या को हल कर सकती है?
- While my academic training is primarily in **computer vision**, about four years ago, I began to see exciting possibilities emerging in speech research and decided to explore the field more deeply.
मेरी शैक्षणिक पृष्ठभूमि मुख्यतः **कंप्यूटर विज्ञान** में है, लेकिन लगभग चार साल पहले मैंने स्पीच रिसर्च में नई संभावनाएं देखीं और इस क्षेत्र को गहराई से समझने का निर्णय लिया।
- I became increasingly aware of the challenges faced by many individuals who lose their ability to speak due to medical conditions: the impact of this loss extends far beyond communication — it affects independence, identity, and connection.
मैं उन लोगों की समस्याओं के प्रति अधिक जागरूक हुआ जो चिकित्सा स्थितियों के कारण बोलने की क्षमता खो देते हैं: इसका प्रभाव संचार से कहीं अधिक है—यह स्वतंत्रता, पहचान और संबंधों को प्रभावित करता है।
- Recognising this need inspired me to focus my work on **accessibility-driven technologies designed to restore or enable speech**, with the goal of helping people regain their voice.
इस आवश्यकता को पहचानते हुए मैंने अपने काम को ऐसी तकनीकों पर केंद्रित किया जो भाषण को पुनर्स्थापित या सक्षम बनाती हैं, ताकि लोग अपनी आवाज़ फिर से पा सकें।

Could you describe how the app works for people with speech impairment?

क्या आप बता सकते हैं कि यह ऐप भाषण बाधा वाले लोगों के लिए कैसे काम करता है?

- The app is designed to convert impaired or distorted speech into clear, natural-sounding speech with only a few hundred milliseconds of delay.



यह ऐप प्रभावित या विकृत भाषण को केवल कुछ सौ मिलीसेकंड की देरी में स्पष्ट और प्राकृतिक ध्वनि में बदल देता है।

- A user simply speaks in their own voice, and the system processes it to produce intelligible speech for the listener.
उपयोगकर्ता अपनी आवाज़ में बोलता है और सिस्टम इसे प्रोसेस करके श्रोता के लिए समझने योग्य भाषण बनाता है।
- We are also developing a complementary **lip-to-speech capability**, where a person can silently move their lips and the system generates the corresponding speech.
हम एक अतिरिक्त **lip-to-speech** तकनीक भी विकसित कर रहे हैं, जिसमें व्यक्ति बिना आवाज़ के होंठ हिलाता है और सिस्टम उससे भाषण उत्पन्न करता है।
- A key aspect we are focusing on is **personalisation**, where users can calibrate and refine the application to their voice by reading few minutes of text on the app.
एक महत्वपूर्ण पहलू **पर्सनलाइजेशन** है, जिसमें उपयोगकर्ता कुछ मिनट का टेक्स्ट पढ़कर ऐप को अपनी आवाज़ के अनुसार समायोजित कर सकते हैं।
- We aim for these technologies to be integrated into common communication platforms, such as **web-based calling applications**, making everyday communication easier for people with speech impairments.
हमारा लक्ष्य इन तकनीकों को **वेब-आधारित कॉलिंग एप्लिकेशन** में एकीकृत करना है, जिससे भाषण बाधा वाले लोगों के लिए रोज़मर्रा का संचार आसान हो सके।
- **You also aim to expand this technology to regional Indian languages. How do you hope to achieve this?**
आप इस तकनीक को भारतीय क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं तक विस्तार देना चाहते हैं। आप इसे कैसे प्राप्त करना चाहते हैं?
- At present, much of the global speech technology ecosystem is predominantly designed for **English**, and our initial experiments have naturally followed the same trajectory.
वर्तमान में वैश्विक स्पीच टेक्नोलॉजी का अधिकांश हिस्सा **अंग्रेज़ी** के लिए डिज़ाइन किया गया है, और हमारे प्रारंभिक प्रयोग भी उसी दिशा में रहे हैं।
- However, a major goal of our research is to extend these capabilities to regional Indian languages, where accessible speech technologies are equally important.
हालांकि, हमारे शोध का एक प्रमुख लक्ष्य इन क्षमताओं को भारतीय क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं तक विस्तारित करना है, जहाँ ऐसी तकनीकों की समान रूप से आवश्यकता है।
- To achieve this, we plan to collect speech data in Indian languages and develop **data-efficient models** suited for **low-resource scenarios**.
इसे प्राप्त करने के लिए हम भारतीय भाषाओं में स्पीच डेटा एकत्र करेंगे और **कम संसाधन परिस्थितियों** के लिए **डेटा-एफिशिएंट मॉडल** विकसित करेंगे।
- Our approach includes **data augmentation** and efficient fine-tuning of **pre-trained models**.
हमारी रणनीति में **डेटा ऑगमेंटेशन** और **प्री-ट्रेड मॉडल्स** का कुशल फाइन-ट्यूनिंग शामिल है।
- We have already conducted preliminary experiments in **Hindi** with promising results, and with support from the **Anusandhan National Research Foundation**, we aim to further enhance and expand this work to additional Indian languages.
हमने **हिंदी** में प्रारंभिक प्रयोग सफल परिणामों के साथ किए हैं, और **ANRF** के समर्थन से इसे अन्य भारतीय भाषाओं तक विस्तार देने का लक्ष्य है।

You believe that “accessibility and linguistic diversity” are crucial for AI research in India. Could you elaborate?

आप मानते हैं कि “accessibility और linguistic diversity” भारत में AI अनुसंधान के लिए महत्वपूर्ण हैं। क्या आप विस्तार से बता सकते हैं?

- Accessibility and linguistic diversity are fundamental considerations for **AI research in India**.
Accessibility और **linguistic diversity** भारत में **AI अनुसंधान** के लिए मूलभूत विचार हैं।
- Having spent several years in **Europe**, I observed that accessibility is far more systematically integrated into public infrastructure and digital services there.
यूरोप में कई वर्षों तक रहने के बाद मैंने देखा कि वहाँ **accessibility** सार्वजनिक अवसंरचना और डिजिटल सेवाओं में अधिक व्यवस्थित रूप से शामिल है।



- In contrast, India still has significant gaps, even in public spaces such as **railway stations**, where basic accessibility provisions are often limited.
इसके विपरीत, भारत में अभी भी कई कमियाँ हैं, यहाँ तक कि **रेलवे स्टेशनों** जैसे सार्वजनिक स्थानों पर भी, जहाँ बुनियादी accessibility सुविधाएँ सीमित हैं।
- This highlights the broader need to design technologies that consciously include people with **disabilities**.
यह इस व्यापक आवश्यकता को दर्शाता है कि तकनीकों को इस तरह डिज़ाइन किया जाए कि वे **विकलांग व्यक्तियों** को भी शामिल करें।
- At the same time, India's **linguistic diversity** presents another important dimension.
साथ ही, भारत की **भाषाई विविधता** एक अन्य महत्वपूर्ण आयाम प्रस्तुत करती है।
- In many parts of the country, particularly in **rural regions**, speech remains the most natural and primary mode of interaction.
देश के कई हिस्सों में, विशेषकर **ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों** में, बोलचाल ही सबसे प्राकृतिक और प्राथमिक संवाद का माध्यम है।
- Text-heavy or typing-based interfaces may not always be practical or inclusive in such contexts.
ऐसे संदर्भों में टेक्स्ट-आधारित या टाइपिंग इंटरफेस हमेशा व्यावहारिक या समावेशी नहीं होते।
- Therefore, AI systems designed for India must prioritise **speech-based interaction** and support multiple **regional languages**.
इसलिए भारत के लिए बनाए गए AI सिस्टम को **speech-based interaction** को प्राथमिकता देनी चाहिए और कई **क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं** का समर्थन करना चाहिए।
- Taken together, meaningful accessibility and strong support for linguistic diversity are essential if digital technologies are to be truly inclusive and widely usable across the country.
इन सभी को मिलाकर, वास्तविक **accessibility** और **linguistic diversity** का समर्थन आवश्यक है ताकि डिजिटल तकनीकें वास्तव में समावेशी और पूरे देश में उपयोगी बन सकें।

WHO has said the “future of healthcare is digital”...

WHO ने कहा है कि “स्वास्थ्य सेवा का भविष्य डिजिटल है”...

- The **World Health Organization** has emphasised that the future of healthcare will be increasingly **digital**.
विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन (WHO) ने जोर दिया है कि स्वास्थ्य सेवा का भविष्य अधिकाधिक **डिजिटल** होगा।
- In a country like **India**, **telemedicine** can play a transformative role, particularly when supported by basic diagnostic infrastructure at the local level, which enables more accurate remote consultations.
भारत जैसे देश में **टेलीमेडिसिन** एक परिवर्तनकारी भूमिका निभा सकता है, विशेषकर जब स्थानीय स्तर पर बुनियादी डायग्नोस्टिक सुविधाओं का समर्थन हो, जिससे अधिक सटीक दूरस्थ परामर्श संभव हो सके।
- Another important direction is **AI-assisted diagnostics**, where **machine learning systems** analyse medical images, speech, or health records to support early disease detection and prediction.
एक अन्य महत्वपूर्ण दिशा **AI-सहायता प्राप्त डायग्नोस्टिक्स** है, जहाँ **मशीन लर्निंग सिस्टम** चिकित्सा चित्रों, भाषण या स्वास्थ्य रिकॉर्ड का विश्लेषण करके बीमारी का प्रारंभिक पता लगाने और भविष्यवाणी में मदद करते हैं।
- Practical solutions are already emerging.
व्यावहारिक समाधान पहले से सामने आ रहे हैं।
- For example, **‘Shishu Maapan’** developed by **Wadhvani AI** helps measure newborn weight and size simply from mobile photos and is being adopted by frontline health workers such as **ASHA workers**.
उदाहरण के लिए, **Wadhvani AI** द्वारा विकसित **‘Shishu Maapan’** मोबाइल फोटो से नवजात शिशु का वजन और आकार मापने में मदद करता है और इसे **आशा कार्यकर्ताओं** द्वारा अपनाया जा रहा है।
- Digital tools are also enabling assistive healthcare technologies, including **speech restoration systems** for individuals who have lost their ability to speak, and **wearable devices** that continuously monitor health parameters and alert doctors to potential anomalies.
डिजिटल टूल्स सहायक स्वास्थ्य तकनीकों को सक्षम बना रहे हैं, जैसे कि **speech restoration systems**



और **wearable devices**, जो लगातार स्वास्थ्य मानकों की निगरानी करते हैं और संभावित असामान्यताओं पर डॉक्टरों को सतर्क करते हैं।

- **These developments illustrate how digital innovation can make healthcare more accessible and scalable.**

ये विकास दिखाते हैं कि डिजिटल नवाचार कैसे स्वास्थ्य सेवा को अधिक **सुलभ** और **विस्तार योग्य** बना सकता है।

A common criticism of AI-generated speech is that while it's intelligible, it often fails to capture the unique cadence of the speaker. When restoring a voice to someone with dysarthria, how do you balance the need for clear communication with the need to preserve the user's individual human essence?

AI-जनित भाषण की एक सामान्य आलोचना यह है कि यह समझने योग्य तो होता है, लेकिन वक्ता की विशिष्ट शैली (cadence) को पकड़ने में विफल रहता है। dysarthria वाले व्यक्ति की आवाज़ को पुनर्स्थापित करते समय, स्पष्ट संचार और व्यक्तिगत मानवीय पहचान के बीच संतुलन कैसे बनाया जाता है?

- This is an important concern.
यह एक महत्वपूर्ण चिंता है।
- **If recordings of the speaker's original voice from before the onset of dysarthria are available, modern voice cloning techniques can recreate that voice with as little as 10 seconds of speech.**

यदि **dysarthria** से पहले की मूल आवाज़ की रिकॉर्डिंग उपलब्ध हो, तो आधुनिक **voice cloning तकनीक** केवल **10 सेकंड** की आवाज़ से उसे पुनः बना सकती है।

- So preserving an individual's vocal identity is technically feasible today, and there is substantial research demonstrating this capability.
इस प्रकार किसी व्यक्ति की आवाज़ की पहचान को सुरक्षित रखना आज तकनीकी रूप से संभव है और इस पर पर्याप्त शोध उपलब्ध है।
- **Our current app, however, focuses primarily on restoring content intelligibility, ensuring that what the user intends to say is conveyed clearly.**
हालांकि, हमारा वर्तमान ऐप मुख्य रूप से **content intelligibility** पर केंद्रित है, ताकि उपयोगकर्ता जो कहना चाहता है वह स्पष्ट रूप से पहुंच सके।
- For now, the generated speech uses a **common voice** rather than a personalised one.
फिलहाल, उत्पन्न भाषण **सामान्य आवाज़** का उपयोग करता है, न कि व्यक्तिगत आवाज़ का।
- That said, **text-to-speech systems** are becoming increasingly natural, to the point that they are now being integrated into **conversational bots** replacing many traditional customer service applications.
इसके बावजूद, **text-to-speech सिस्टम** अब अधिक प्राकृतिक हो रहे हैं और **conversational bots** में उपयोग किए जा रहे हैं, जो पारंपरिक ग्राहक सेवा को बदल रहे हैं।
- **Emotional nuance** remains more challenging, as we discussed in our earlier work on empathic speech generation, but progress is rapid.
भावनात्मक अभिव्यक्ति (emotional nuance) अभी भी चुनौतीपूर्ण है, जैसा कि हमने अपने पहले के कार्य में चर्चा की थी, लेकिन प्रगति तेज़ है।

How does the model differentiate between impaired speech and a noisy background as the user navigates, say, a busy Indian street?

जब उपयोगकर्ता एक व्यस्त भारतीय सड़क पर होता है, तो मॉडल **impaired speech** और **शोरयुक्त वातावरण** में अंतर कैसे करता है?

- This is indeed a significant challenge in **India**, where real-world environments can be extremely chaotic.
यह वास्तव में **भारत** में एक बड़ी चुनौती है, जहाँ वास्तविक वातावरण अत्यधिक अव्यवस्थित हो सकता है।
- Anyone who has thought about deploying **self-driving cars** here quickly realises how unpredictable our roads can be: traffic patterns, honking, pedestrians, and vehicles all interacting in highly dynamic ways.
जो भी **self-driving cars** के बारे में सोचता है, वह जल्दी समझ जाता है कि यहाँ की सड़कें कितनी अप्रत्याशित हैं: ट्रैफिक, हॉर्न, पैदल यात्री और वाहन लगातार बदलते रहते हैं।



- Speech technology faces a similar level of complexity. स्पीच टेक्नोलॉजी भी इसी स्तर की जटिलता का सामना करती है।
- In our experiments, we improve robustness using **noise augmentation**, where we simulate different noisy environments during training so the model learns to handle background sounds. हम अपने प्रयोगों में **noise augmentation** का उपयोग करते हैं, जिसमें अलग-अलग शोरयुक्त वातावरण को प्रशिक्षण के दौरान सिमुलेट किया जाता है ताकि मॉडल उन्हें संभालना सीख सके।
- Ultimately, the most effective solution is to collect and train on more **real-world data** from noisy settings. अंततः सबसे प्रभावी समाधान यह है कि अधिक **real-world data** को एकत्र कर उस पर प्रशिक्षण दिया जाए।
- Even then, some performance degradation is inevitable because separating impaired speech from heavy background noise is fundamentally a difficult problem. फिर भी, कुछ प्रदर्शन में कमी अवश्य होगी क्योंकि भारी शोर से impaired speech को अलग करना मूल रूप से एक कठिन समस्या है।

- **Dysarthria** is a **motor speech disorder** caused by impaired control of muscles used for speaking.
- It results from **damage to the nervous system**, affecting coordination, strength, or tone of speech muscles.
- Speech becomes **unclear, slow, or distorted**, even though language comprehension remains intact.

The dual impact of Artificial Intelligence on the finance industry

From automating complex processes to transforming client interactions, AI technologies are becoming integral to how financial institutions operate; According to a 2023 Deloitte report, 77% of financial institutions cited efficiency gains as a primary driver for adoption of artificial intelligence

NEWS ANALYSIS

Senthilkumar Govindarajulu

One of the most significant benefits of AI in finance is enhanced operational efficiency. AI-powered algorithms can process vast amounts of data in real time, enabling quicker and more accurate decision-making. For example, machine learning models are now used for credit scoring, portfolio management, and algorithmic trading, resulting in improved accuracy and reduced costs.

According to a 2023 Deloitte report, 77% of financial institutions cited efficiency gains as a primary driver for AI adoption.

Risk management has also been revolutionised by AI. Advanced analytics tools enable financial firms to detect anomalies and predict potential threats before they materialise. AI-driven fraud detection systems are capable of analysing millions of transactions per second, flagging suspicious activity with far greater speed and accuracy than traditional methods.

A study by the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners found that AI-based systems reduced fraud losses by 54% in organizations that implemented them. Customer experience



Third eye: AI-driven fraud detection systems are capable of analysing millions of transactions per second, flagging suspicious activity with greater accuracy than traditional methods. REUTERS

is another area where AI is making a substantial impact. Chatbots and virtual assistants provide round-the-clock support, while personalized product recommendations are improving client satisfaction and loyalty. AI-driven insights allow institutions to tailor services to individual needs, driving engagement and growth.

Negative impact

Despite its benefits, AI introduces significant challenges and risks to the finance industry. One of the most pressing concerns is job displacement.

Automation threatens roles that involve repetitive tasks, such as data entry, routine analysis, and even



Despite its benefits, AI introduces significant challenges and risks to the finance industry. One of the most pressing concerns is job displacement

some customer service positions. A 2022 McKinsey Global Institute study estimated that up to 800,000 finance jobs in the U.S. could be automated by 2030.

Ethical concerns and security risks also warrant attention. AI systems can inadvertently perpetuate biases present in training data, leading to unfair

lending decisions or discriminatory practices. Additionally, as AI becomes more sophisticated, the potential for cyberattacks targeting algorithmic vulnerabilities increases.

The Financial Stability Board has highlighted the need for robust governance and oversight to ensure AI technologies do not compromise market integrity or consumer trust.

Employment impact

The introduction of AI is driving significant changes in the finance sector's workforce. While automation is expected to reduce demand for certain roles, it is also creating opportunities for new, higher-skilled positions.

According to the World

Economic Forum's 'Future of Jobs' report (2023), 58% of surveyed financial institutions anticipate a net increase in technology and data-related jobs over the next five years.

Skill requirements are shifting toward analytical thinking, digital literacy, and AI management. Financial professionals are increasingly expected to collaborate with AI systems, interpret algorithmic outputs, and ensure ethical compliance.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a 16% growth in jobs for financial analysts and data scientists from 2024 to 2030, reflecting this evolving demand. However, the transition may not be seamless for all workers. Reskilling and continuous learning will be essential to help employees adapt to new roles and technologies. Industry leaders are investing in training programs and partnerships with educational institutions to bridge the skills gap and ensure a resilient workforce.

Research insights

A 2023 PwC survey found that 60% of U.S. financial services firms have already implemented or are piloting AI solutions.

The global AI in finance market is projected to reach \$64.03 billion by 2030, growing at a compound annual rate of 23.7%

(Fortune Business Insights, 2024).

AI-driven fraud detection reduced investigation times by 70% in major U.S. banks, according to a 2022 report by the American Bankers Association.

The World Economic Forum estimates that while 1.1 million jobs in finance may be displaced globally by AI by 2030, 1.3 million new jobs will be created in areas such as digital risk analysis, compliance, and AI system management.

Conclusion

Balancing innovation and responsibility; artificial intelligence is poised to deliver transformative benefits to the finance industry, from heightened efficiency and improved risk management to enhanced customer experiences. However, these advancements come with challenges, including job displacement, ethical dilemmas, and security risks. The future of employment in finance will depend on the industry's ability to manage these risks while investing in workforce development and responsible AI governance. To maximize the positive impact of AI, financial institutions should prioritize transparency, fairness, and ongoing education.

(The writer is a New York-based Finance Professional and a chartered financial analyst)



17Mar. The dual impact of Artificial Intelligence on the finance industry वित्त उद्योग पर कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता का द्वैध प्रभाव

- From **automating complex processes to transforming client interactions, AI technologies** are becoming integral to how **financial institutions operate**.
जटिल प्रक्रियाओं के स्वचालन से लेकर ग्राहक संवाद में परिवर्तन तक, एआई तकनीकें इस बात का अभिन्न हिस्सा बनती जा रही हैं कि **वित्तीय संस्थान कैसे कार्य करते हैं**।
- According to a **2023 Deloitte report, 77% of financial institutions cited efficiency gains as a primary driver for adoption of artificial intelligence**.
2023 की डेलॉइट रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, 77% वित्तीय संस्थानों ने कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता को अपनाने का मुख्य कारण **दक्षता में वृद्धि** को बताया।
- One of the most **significant benefits of AI in finance** is enhanced **operational efficiency**.
वित्त में एआई का एक महत्वपूर्ण लाभ **परिचालन दक्षता में वृद्धि** है।
- **AI-powered algorithms** can process **vast amounts of data in real time**, enabling **quicker and more accurate decision-making**.
एआई-संचालित एल्गोरिद्म वास्तविक समय में विशाल डेटा को संसाधित कर सकते हैं, जिससे तेज़ और अधिक सटीक निर्णय-निर्माण संभव होता है।
- For example, **machine learning models** are now used for **credit scoring, portfolio management, and algorithmic trading**, resulting in **improved accuracy and reduced costs**.
उदाहरण के लिए **मशीन लर्निंग मॉडल** अब **क्रेडिट स्कोरिंग, पोर्टफोलियो प्रबंधन, और एल्गोरिद्मिक ट्रेडिंग** में उपयोग किए जाते हैं, जिससे **सटीकता में सुधार और लागत में कमी** आती है।
- According to a **2023 Deloitte report, 77% of financial institutions cited efficiency gains as a primary driver for AI adoption**.
2023 की डेलॉइट रिपोर्ट के अनुसार 77% वित्तीय संस्थानों ने एआई अपनाने का प्रमुख कारण **दक्षता में वृद्धि** बताया।
- **Risk management** has also been **revolutionised by AI**.
जोखिम प्रबंधन भी एआई द्वारा **क्रांतिकारी रूप से बदल गया है**।
- **Advanced analytics tools** enable **financial firms to detect anomalies and predict potential threats** before they materialise.
उन्नत विश्लेषणात्मक उपकरण **वित्तीय कंपनियों को असामान्यताओं का पता लगाने और संभावित खतरों की भविष्यवाणी** करने में सक्षम बनाते हैं।
- **AI-driven fraud detection systems** are capable of **analysing millions of transactions per second**, flagging **suspicious activity** with far greater **speed and accuracy** than **traditional methods**.
एआई आधारित धोखाधड़ी पहचान प्रणाली प्रति सेकंड लाखों लेन-देन का **विश्लेषण** कर सकती हैं और **संदिग्ध गतिविधियों को पारंपरिक तरीकों की तुलना में कहीं अधिक तेज़ और सटीक** तरीके से चिन्हित करती हैं।
- A study by the **Association of Certified Fraud Examiners** found that **AI-based systems** reduced **fraud losses by 54%** in organisations that implemented them.
एसोसिएशन ऑफ सर्टिफाइड फ्रॉड एग्जामिनर्स के अध्ययन में पाया गया कि **एआई आधारित प्रणालियों** ने उन्हें अपनाने वाले संगठनों में **धोखाधड़ी से होने वाले नुकसान को 54% तक कम** कर दिया।
- **Customer experience** is another area where **AI** is making a **substantial impact**.
ग्राहक अनुभव एक और क्षेत्र है जहां **एआई का महत्वपूर्ण प्रभाव** पड़ रहा है।
- **Chatbots and virtual assistants** provide **round-the-clock support**, while **personalized product recommendations** are improving **client satisfaction and loyalty**.
चैटबॉट और वर्चुअल असिस्टेंट 24 घंटे सहायता प्रदान करते हैं, जबकि **व्यक्तिगत उत्पाद सुझाव ग्राहक संतुष्टि और वफादारी** को बढ़ा रहे हैं।
- **AI-driven insights** allow **institutions to tailor services to individual needs**, driving **engagement and growth**.
एआई आधारित अंतर्दृष्टि संस्थानों को **व्यक्तिगत जरूरतों के अनुसार सेवाएँ प्रदान** करने में सक्षम बनाती हैं, जिससे **भागीदारी और विकास बढ़ता है**।

Negative impact नकारात्मक प्रभाव



- Despite its **benefits**, **AI** introduces **significant challenges and risks** to the **finance industry**.
अपने लाभों के बावजूद एआई वित्त उद्योग के लिए महत्वपूर्ण चुनौतियाँ और जोखिम भी लाता है।
- One of the most **pressing concerns** is **job displacement**.
सबसे गंभीर चिंताओं में से एक नौकरी का विस्थापन है।
- **Automation** threatens roles that involve **repetitive tasks**, such as **data entry**, **routine analysis**, and even some **customer service positions**.
स्वचालन उन भूमिकाओं को प्रभावित करता है जिनमें दोहराए जाने वाले कार्य होते हैं जैसे डेटा एंट्री, सामान्य विश्लेषण, और कुछ ग्राहक सेवा पद।
- A **2022 McKinsey Global Institute study** estimated that up to **800,000 finance jobs** in the **U.S.** could be **automated by 2030**.
2022 मैकिन्से ग्लोबल इंस्टीट्यूट अध्ययन के अनुसार अमेरिका में 8 लाख तक वित्तीय नौकरियाँ 2030 तक स्वचालित हो सकती हैं।
- **Ethical concerns** and **security risks** also warrant attention.
नैतिक चिंताएँ और सुरक्षा जोखिम भी ध्यान देने योग्य हैं।
- **AI systems** can inadvertently **perpetuate biases** present in **training data**, leading to **unfair lending decisions** or **discriminatory practices**.
एआई प्रणालियाँ प्रशिक्षण डेटा में मौजूद पूर्वाग्रहों को बनाए रख सकती हैं, जिससे अनुचित ऋण निर्णय या भेदभावपूर्ण प्रथाएँ उत्पन्न हो सकती हैं।
- Additionally, as **AI becomes more sophisticated**, the potential for **cyberattacks targeting algorithmic vulnerabilities** increases.
जैसे-जैसे एआई अधिक उन्नत होता जा रहा है, एल्गोरिदिक कमजोरियों को निशाना बनाने वाले साइबर हमलों की संभावना भी बढ़ती है।
- The **Financial Stability Board** has highlighted the need for **robust governance and oversight** to ensure **AI technologies** do not compromise **market integrity or consumer trust**.
फाइनेंशियल स्टेबिलिटी बोर्ड ने यह सुनिश्चित करने के लिए मजबूत शासन और निगरानी की आवश्यकता पर जोर दिया है कि एआई तकनीकें बाजार की अखंडता या उपभोक्ता विश्वास को नुकसान न पहुँचाएँ।

Employment impact रोज़गार पर प्रभाव

- The introduction of **AI** is driving **significant changes** in the **finance sector's workforce**.
एआई का परिचय वित्त क्षेत्र के कार्यबल में महत्वपूर्ण परिवर्तन ला रहा है।
- While **automation** is expected to **reduce demand for certain roles**, it is also creating **opportunities for new, higher-skilled positions**.
जहाँ स्वचालन से कुछ भूमिकाओं की मांग कम होने की संभावना है, वहीं यह उच्च कौशल वाले नए पदों के अवसर भी पैदा कर रहा है।
- According to the **World Economic Forum's 'Future of Jobs' report (2023)**, **58% of surveyed financial institutions** anticipate a **net increase in technology and data-related jobs** over the next five years.
वर्ल्ड इकोनॉमिक फोरम की 'फ्यूचर ऑफ जॉब्स' रिपोर्ट (2023) के अनुसार 58% वित्तीय संस्थान अगले पाँच वर्षों में तकनीक और डेटा से जुड़े रोजगारों में शुद्ध वृद्धि की उम्मीद करते हैं।
- **Skill requirements** are shifting toward **analytical thinking**, **digital literacy**, and **AI management**.
कौशल आवश्यकताएँ अब विश्लेषणात्मक सोच, डिजिटल साक्षरता, और एआई प्रबंधन की ओर बढ़ रही हैं।
- **Financial professionals** are increasingly expected to **collaborate with AI systems**, **interpret algorithmic outputs**, and ensure **ethical compliance**.
वित्तीय पेशेवरों से अब अपेक्षा की जाती है कि वे एआई प्रणालियों के साथ सहयोग करें, एल्गोरिदिक परिणामों की व्याख्या करें, और नैतिक अनुपालन सुनिश्चित करें।
- The **U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics** projects a **16% growth in jobs** for **financial analysts and data scientists** from **2024 to 2030**.
यूएस ब्यूरो ऑफ लेबर स्टैटिस्टिक्स के अनुसार 2024 से 2030 के बीच वित्तीय विश्लेषकों और डेटा वैज्ञानिकों की नौकरियों में 16% वृद्धि होगी।



- However, the **transition** may not be **seamless for all workers**.
हालाँकि यह परिवर्तन सभी कर्मचारियों के लिए सहज नहीं होगा।
- **Reskilling and continuous learning** will be **essential** to help **employees adapt to new roles and technologies**.
पुनः कौशल विकास और निरंतर सीखना कर्मचारियों को नई भूमिकाओं और तकनीकों के अनुकूल बनने में महत्वपूर्ण होगा।
- **Industry leaders** are investing in **training programs** and **partnerships with educational institutions** to bridge the **skills gap** and ensure a **resilient workforce**.
उद्योग के नेता प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रमों और शैक्षणिक संस्थानों के साथ साझेदारी में निवेश कर रहे हैं ताकि कौशल अंतर को कम किया जा सके और मजबूत कार्यबल सुनिश्चित किया जा सके।

Research insights

अनुसंधान अंतर्दृष्टि

- A 2023 PwC survey found that **60% of U.S. financial services firms** have already **implemented or are piloting AI solutions**.
2023 PwC सर्वेक्षण के अनुसार अमेरिका की 60% वित्तीय सेवा कंपनियों ने पहले ही एआई समाधान लागू कर दिए हैं या उनका परीक्षण कर रही हैं।
- The **global AI in finance market** is projected to reach **\$64.03 billion by 2030**, growing at a **compound annual rate of 23.7%**.
वित्त क्षेत्र में वैश्विक एआई बाजार 2030 तक 64.03 अरब डॉलर तक पहुँचने का अनुमान है, जिसकी वार्षिक वृद्धि दर 23.7% होगी।
- **AI-driven fraud detection** reduced **investigation times by 70%** in major **U.S. banks**.
एआई आधारित धोखाधड़ी पहचान प्रणाली ने अमेरिका के प्रमुख बैंकों में जांच समय को 70% तक कम कर दिया।
- The **World Economic Forum** estimates that while **1.1 million jobs in finance** may be **displaced globally by AI by 2030**, **1.3 million new jobs** will be created in areas such as **digital risk analysis, compliance, and AI system management**.
वर्ल्ड इकोनॉमिक फोरम के अनुसार जहाँ 2030 तक वैश्विक स्तर पर 11 लाख वित्तीय नौकरियाँ एआई के कारण प्रभावित हो सकती हैं, वहीं 13 लाख नई नौकरियाँ डिजिटल जोखिम विश्लेषण, अनुपालन और एआई प्रणाली प्रबंधन जैसे क्षेत्रों में पैदा होंगी।

Conclusion

निष्कर्ष

- Balancing **innovation and responsibility**, **artificial intelligence** is poised to deliver **transformative benefits** to the **finance industry**.
नवाचार और जिम्मेदारी के संतुलन के साथ कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता वित्त उद्योग को परिवर्तनकारी लाभ देने के लिए तैयार है।
- These include **heightened efficiency, improved risk management, and enhanced customer experiences**.
इनमें उच्च दक्षता, बेहतर जोखिम प्रबंधन, और बेहतर ग्राहक अनुभव शामिल हैं।
- However, these **advancements** come with **challenges**, including **job displacement, ethical dilemmas, and security risks**.
हालाँकि ये प्रगति चुनौतियों के साथ आती हैं, जिनमें नौकरी विस्थापन, नैतिक दुविधाएँ, और सुरक्षा जोखिम शामिल हैं।
- The **future of employment in finance** will depend on the **industry's ability to manage these risks** while investing in **workforce development** and **responsible AI governance**.
वित्त क्षेत्र में रोजगार का भविष्य इस बात पर निर्भर करेगा कि उद्योग इन जोखिमों का प्रबंधन करते हुए कार्यबल विकास और जिम्मेदार एआई शासन में कितना निवेश करता है।
- To maximize the **positive impact of AI**, **financial institutions** should prioritize **transparency, fairness, and ongoing education**.
एआई के सकारात्मक प्रभाव को अधिकतम करने के लिए वित्तीय संस्थानों को पारदर्शिता, निष्पक्षता, और निरंतर शिक्षा को प्राथमिकता देनी चाहिए।



GS Paper III: Environment,

TOPICS COVERED

17 March 2026

17Mar	Crab in Silent Valley found displaying both male and female biological traits साइलेंट वैली में मिला केकड़ा जिसमें नर और मादा दोनों जैविक लक्षण पाए गए
17Mar	Environment: yet another casualty of the West Asia war पर्यावरण: पश्चिम एशिया युद्ध का एक और शिकार
17Mar	Belém as a test of a new model of forest finance Belém एक नए forest finance मॉडल की परीक्षा के रूप में

Crab in Silent Valley found displaying both male and female biological traits

GS III: Environment

Aathira Haridas
KOCHI

A tiny crab displaying both male and female biological traits on the same body has been discovered in the Western Ghats. Discovered from the forests of the Silent Valley National Park, this freshwater crab belongs to the species *Vela carli* and is both male and female at the same time.

The dual-sex condition was observed in three crabs found in tree holes in Silent Valley.

Vela carli is an endemic freshwater crab found only in the forests and streams of the Central Western Ghats.

The study documents



This phenomenon is rare in *crustaceans* and has never before been reported in the freshwater crab family *Gecarcinucidae*. FILE PHOTO

the first instance of gynandromorphy (a rare condition in which individuals exhibit both male and female characteristics) in *Vela carli*. This phenomenon is rare in *crustaceans* and has never before been re-

ported in the freshwater crab family *Gecarcinucidae*, according to the researchers.

The study was carried out by K.S. Anoop Das and K.T. Fahis from the Centre for Conservation Ecology,

MES Mampad College, in collaboration with scientist and crab specialist Sameer K. Pati and Purnima Kumari from the Zoological Survey of India. Their findings were recently published in the international journal *Crustaceana*.

Mr. Das, Head and Assistant Professor at the Centre, said that while gynandromorphy has been documented in several marine and freshwater crab families, it has not been reported in the family *Gecarcinucidae*.

"The bodies of the crabs displayed male reproductive structures, while other parts showcased female features, including gonopores," said Mr. Das.

17Mar. Crab in Silent Valley found displaying both male and female biological traits

साइलेंट वैली में मिला केकड़ा जिसमें नर और मादा दोनों जैविक लक्षण पाए गए

- A tiny **crab** displaying both **male and female biological traits** on the same body has been discovered in the **Western Ghats**.
एक छोटा **केकड़ा** जिसमें एक ही शरीर पर **नर और मादा दोनों जैविक लक्षण** दिखाई देते हैं, **पश्चिमी घाट** में खोजा गया है।
- Discovered from the forests of the **Silent Valley National Park**, this **freshwater crab** belongs to the species ***Vela carli*** and is both **male and female at the same time**.
साइलेंट वैली नेशनल पार्क के जंगलों से खोजा गया यह **मीठे पानी का केकड़ा *Vela carli*** प्रजाति का है और यह एक ही समय में **नर और मादा दोनों** है।
- The **dual-sex condition** was observed in **three crabs** found in **tree holes** in **Silent Valley**.
द्विलिंगी स्थिति साइलेंट वैली में पेड़ों के खोखलों में पाए गए **तीन केकड़ों** में देखी गई।



- **Vela carli** is an **endemic freshwater crab** found only in the **forests and streams of the Central Western Ghats**.
Vela carli एक स्थानिक मीठे पानी का केकड़ा है जो केवल केंद्रीय पश्चिमी घाट के जंगलों और जलधाराओं में पाया जाता है।
- The **study** documents the first instance of **gynandromorphy** (a rare condition in which individuals exhibit both **male and female characteristics**) in **Vela carli**.
इस अध्ययन में **Vela carli** में पहली बार **गाइनैड्रोमॉर्फ़ी** (एक दुर्लभ स्थिति जिसमें किसी जीव में नर और मादा दोनों के लक्षण होते हैं) का दस्तावेजीकरण किया गया है।
- This **phenomenon** is rare in **crustaceans** and has never before been reported in the **freshwater crab family Gecarcinucidae**, according to the **researchers**.
शोधकर्ताओं के अनुसार यह घटना क्रस्टेशियंस में दुर्लभ है और मीठे पानी के केकड़ों के परिवार **Gecarcinucidae** में पहले कभी रिपोर्ट नहीं की गई थी।
- The **study** was carried out by **K.S. Anoop Das** and **K.T. Fahis** from the **Centre for Conservation Ecology, MES Mampad College**, in collaboration with **scientist and crab specialist Sameer K. Pati** and **Purnima Kumari** from the **Zoological Survey of India**.
यह अध्ययन के.एस. अनूप दास और के.टी. फाहिस द्वारा सेंटर फॉर कंजरवेशन इकोलॉजी, एमईएस मंपाड कॉलेज से किया गया, जिसमें वैज्ञानिक और केकड़ा विशेषज्ञ समीर के. पाटी और पूर्णिमा कुमारी (ज़ूलॉजिकल सर्वे ऑफ इंडिया) ने सहयोग किया।
- Their **findings** were recently published in the **international journal Crustaceana**.
उनके निष्कर्ष हाल ही में अंतरराष्ट्रीय जर्नल **Crustaceana** में प्रकाशित हुए।
- **Mr. Das, Head and Assistant Professor** at the **Centre**, said that while **gynandromorphy** has been documented in several **marine and freshwater crab families**, it has not been reported in the **family Gecarcinucidae**.
श्री दास, जो केंद्र में प्रमुख और सहायक प्रोफेसर हैं, ने कहा कि हालांकि **गाइनैड्रोमॉर्फ़ी** कई समुद्री और मीठे पानी के केकड़ा परिवारों में दर्ज की गई है, लेकिन **Gecarcinucidae** परिवार में इसकी रिपोर्ट नहीं की गई है।
- “The **bodies of the crabs** displayed **male reproductive structures**, while other parts showcased **female features**, including **gonopores**,” said **Mr. Das**.
श्री दास ने कहा, “इन केकड़ों के शरीर में नर प्रजनन संरचनाएं दिखाई दीं, जबकि अन्य हिस्सों में मादा के लक्षण, जिनमें गोनोपोर्स भी शामिल हैं, पाए गए।”



Environment: yet another casualty of the West Asia war

GS III: Environment

Agence France Presse

From the jet fuel used in bombing raids to acrid smoke from burning oil depots, the conflict in West Asia is inflicting a significant toll on nature and the climate.

U.S. and Israeli aircraft use a considerable amount of fuel reaching the Gulf and flying sorties over Iran, said Benjamin Neimark at Queen Mary University of London.

Deploying stealth bombers and fighter jets around the clock adds a significant amount of planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere.

"The U.S. Navy also has a significant fleet which will be operating remotely for some time," Neimark said. "That is a significant number of U.S. troops that need to be fed, housed, and working around the clock. These floating cities all need energy."

This is provided in part by diesel generators, even if most larger aircraft carriers are nuclear powered, an energy source that produces far less emissions than fossil fuels. But many experts take into account everything from the manufacture of weapons and explosives to post-war reconstruction efforts when

The Gaza conflict generated some 33 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, an amount comparable to 7.6 million petrol-powered cars

estimating the total environmental impact of conflict.

According to one study published in the peer-reviewed journal *One Earth*, the Gaza conflict generated some 33 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, an amount comparable to 7.6 million petrol-powered cars or the annual emissions of a small country like Jordan.

By one estimate, the war in Ukraine has caused more than 300 million tonnes of additional emissions, equivalent to France's annual output.

This estimate, by the Initiative on GHG Accounting of War, takes into account military operations and reconstruction efforts, forest fires, and longer flight routes.

This conflict is playing out on the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial artery for the passage of oil and gas supplies to global markets that depend on energy from the Gulf.

Ships transporting these highly flammable fuels through the narrow waterway, along with the region's oil and gas refineries and storage facilities, were "all a target" in this war, said Neimark.

"We have already seen a significant amount of refineries targeted. These toxic flames are deadly and have a severe climate cost."

Since erupting on February 28, the conflict has sent oil prices soaring and focused fresh attention on the global transition to cleaner, more climate-friendly forms of energy.

Andreas Rudinger, from the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations, said the economic knock-on effects of the war had put policy makers "under pressure to reduce the burden on prices over climate action".

But there's also a "glass half-full perspective", Rudinger said: "From a purely economic standpoint... rising fossil fuel prices make decarbonisation and electrification solutions more attractive," he said.

He pointed to the rise in popularity of heat pumps in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which caused energy prices in Europe to rise sharply.

Apart from climate concerns, strikes on energy infrastructure, oil tankers and military targets pollute the surrounding air and water and spread highly toxic chemicals far and wide, experts say.

**17Mar.
Environment: yet another casualty of the West Asia war**

पर्यावरण: पश्चिम एशिया युद्ध का एक और शिकार

• From the jet fuel used in bombing raids to acrid smoke from burning oil depots, the conflict in West Asia is inflicting a significant toll on nature and the climate.

बमबारी में इस्तेमाल होने वाले जेट ईंधन से लेकर जलते तेल भंडारों से उठने वाले जहरीले धुएं तक, पश्चिम एशिया का संघर्ष प्रकृति और जलवायु पर गंभीर प्रभाव डाल रहा है।

• U.S. and Israeli aircraft use a considerable amount of fuel reaching the Gulf and flying sorties over Iran, said Benjamin Neimark at Queen Mary University of London.

अमेरिका और इज़राइल के विमान ईरान के ऊपर उड़ान भरने और खाड़ी क्षेत्र तक पहुंचने में भारी मात्रा में ईंधन का उपयोग करते हैं, ऐसा Benjamin Neimark (Queen Mary University of London) ने कहा।

• Deploying stealth bombers and fighter jets around the

clock adds a significant amount of planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere.

लगातार स्टेल्थ बॉम्बर्स और लड़ाकू विमानों की तैनाती से वातावरण में बड़ी मात्रा में ग्रीनहाउस गैस उत्सर्जन बढ़ता है।

• "The U.S. Navy also has a significant fleet which will be operating remotely for some time," Neimark said.

"अमेरिकी नौसेना के पास भी एक बड़ा बेड़ा है जो कुछ समय तक दूर से संचालित होगा," नीमार्क ने कहा।

• "That is a significant number of U.S. troops that need to be fed, housed, and working around the clock. These floating cities all need energy."



“यह बड़ी संख्या में सैनिक हैं जिन्हें भोजन, आवास और लगातार काम करने की आवश्यकता है। ये ‘तैरते शहर’ ऊर्जा की मांग करते हैं।”

- This is provided in part by **diesel generators**, even if most larger aircraft carriers are **nuclear powered**, an energy source that produces far less emissions than fossil fuels.

यह ऊर्जा आंशिक रूप से **डीजल जनरेटर** से मिलती है, जबकि बड़े एयरक्राफ्ट कैरियर **न्यूक्लियर ऊर्जा** से चलते हैं, जो जीवाश्म ईंधन की तुलना में कम उत्सर्जन करती है।

- But many experts take into account **everything from the manufacture of weapons and explosives to post-war reconstruction efforts when estimating the total environmental impact of conflict.**

लेकिन विशेषज्ञ संघर्ष के कुल पर्यावरणीय प्रभाव का आकलन करते समय हथियार निर्माण से लेकर युद्ध के बाद पुनर्निर्माण तक सभी पहलुओं को शामिल करते हैं।

- According to one study published in the peer-reviewed journal **One Earth**, the **Gaza conflict** generated some **33 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent**, an amount comparable to **7.6 million petrol-powered cars** or the annual emissions of a small country like **Jordan**.

One Earth जर्नल में प्रकाशित एक अध्ययन के अनुसार, **गाजा संघर्ष** से लगभग **33 मिलियन टन CO₂ उत्सर्जन** हुआ, जो **7.6 मिलियन पेट्रोल कारों** या **जॉर्डन** जैसे छोटे देश के वार्षिक उत्सर्जन के बराबर है।

- By one estimate, the **war in Ukraine has caused more than 300 million tonnes of additional emissions, equivalent to France's annual output.**

एक अनुमान के अनुसार, **यूक्रेन युद्ध** से **300 मिलियन टन** से अधिक अतिरिक्त उत्सर्जन हुआ, जो **फ्रांस** के वार्षिक उत्सर्जन के बराबर है।

- This estimate, by the **Initiative on GHG Accounting of War**, takes into account military operations and reconstruction efforts, **forest fires**, and longer flight routes.

यह अनुमान **Initiative on GHG Accounting of War** द्वारा दिया गया है, जिसमें सैन्य अभियान, पुनर्निर्माण, **जंगल की आग** और लंबी उड़ान मार्ग शामिल हैं।

- This conflict is playing out on the **Strait of Hormuz**, a crucial artery for the passage of oil and gas supplies to global markets that depend on energy from the **Gulf**.

यह संघर्ष **Strait of Hormuz** में हो रहा है, जो **खाड़ी** क्षेत्र से वैश्विक बाजारों तक तेल और गैस आपूर्ति का महत्वपूर्ण मार्ग है।

- Ships transporting these highly flammable fuels through the narrow waterway, along with the region's oil and gas refineries and storage facilities, were “all a target” in this war, said Neimark.

इन ज्वलनशील ईंधनों को ले जाने वाले जहाज और क्षेत्र के तेल-गैस रिफाइनरी तथा भंडारण सुविधाएँ इस युद्ध में “लक्ष्य” बन गई हैं, ऐसा नीमार्क ने कहा।

- “We have already seen a significant amount of refineries targeted. These toxic flames are deadly and have a severe climate cost.”

“हमने पहले ही कई रिफाइनरियों पर हमले देखे हैं। ये जहरीली आग घातक हैं और जलवायु पर गंभीर प्रभाव डालती हैं।”

- Since erupting on **February 28**, the conflict has sent oil prices soaring and focused fresh attention on the global transition to cleaner, more climate-friendly forms of energy.

28 फरवरी से शुरू हुए इस संघर्ष ने तेल की कीमतों को बढ़ा दिया और स्वच्छ ऊर्जा की ओर वैश्विक ध्यान आकर्षित किया।

- **Andreas Rudinger**, from the **Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations**, said the **economic knock-on effects of the war had put policy makers “under pressure to reduce the burden on prices over climate action”.**

Andreas Rudinger (Institute for Sustainable Development) ने कहा कि युद्ध के आर्थिक प्रभावों ने नीति निर्माताओं पर “कीमतों को कम करने के लिए दबाव” बढ़ा दिया है।

- But there’s also a “glass half-full perspective”, Rudinger said: “**From a purely economic standpoint... rising fossil fuel prices make decarbonisation and electrification solutions more attractive,**” he said.

लेकिन “सकारात्मक दृष्टिकोण” भी है: बढ़ती जीवाश्म ईंधन कीमतें **decarbonisation** और **electrification** को अधिक आकर्षक बनाती हैं।

- He pointed to the **rise in popularity of heat pumps in the aftermath of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine**, which caused energy prices in **Europe** to rise sharply.

उन्होंने **यूक्रेन पर रूस के आक्रमण** के बाद **यूरोप** में ऊर्जा कीमतों में वृद्धि और **heat pumps** की बढ़ती लोकप्रियता का उल्लेख किया।



- Apart from climate concerns, strikes on energy infrastructure, oil tankers and military targets pollute the surrounding air and water and spread highly toxic chemicals far and wide, experts say.
जलवायु प्रभावों के अलावा, ऊर्जा अवसंरचना, तेल टैंकर और सैन्य ठिकानों पर हमले हवा और पानी को प्रदूषित करते हैं और जहरीले रसायनों को फैलाते हैं।

Belém as a test of a new model of forest finance

GS III: Environment

The climate summit that was held in Belém, Brazil in November 2025, refocused renewed global attention to a difficult but unavoidable truth: protecting tropical forests requires more than ambitious pledges – it requires a fundamental shift in who holds power over those forests. As world leaders gathered in the Amazon city, the signature initiative was Brazil's Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF), or a finance mechanism presented as a paradigm shift in global conservation. Yet, amid the flurry of announcements and diplomacy, persistent tensions revealed that major challenges remain around participation, equity and accountability.

The difference

The TFFF proposes to compensate countries for maintaining standing forests, not just for avoiding deforestation. As reported, the Fund has already secured more than \$5.5 billion in initial commitments, including a \$3 billion pledge from Norway. Unlike many past funds, it is not structured purely as a donation vehicle. Rather, it is set up to generate returns and reward long-term forest conservation. Critically, at least 20% of its performance-based payments are reserved for indigenous peoples and local communities, whose daily stewardship plays an outside role in keeping forests intact.

This allocation is not symbolic. According to the Rainforest Foundation US, indigenous and local communities were deeply involved in co-designing the facility. Across months of global consultations, more than 400 community leaders shared their perspectives. The model offers something new: not only financial support but also formal decision-making power. Yet, important gaps remain. For instance, indigenous representatives do not have voting rights on the main governing bodies of the Fund, raising questions about how genuinely inclusive decision-making will be.

Even as the TFFF proposes this inclusive architecture, many civil society groups have



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The real test is whether it will protect the communities protecting the forest

voiced their strong criticism. The Global Forest Coalition (GFC) described the fund as "colonialistic", arguing that it benefits intermediaries rather than forest peoples. Its worry was about a mechanism built around market logic and financial returns that may not address the root structural causes of deforestation, such as agribusiness expansion, all of which continue to drive forest loss. According to the GFC, rewarding standing forests without curbing exploitative activities risks creating a superficial conservation narrative.

Compounding this, some critics argue that the payment rate, around \$4 a hectare in earlier proposals, is inadequate given the manifold ecosystem services that forests provide. There is a risk that national governments could absorb most of the funds, while communities on the ground may see little benefit. The success of the TFFF, therefore, depends not just on its size but on strong delivery mechanisms and rigorous, locally accountable institutions.

Conservation overlooks power imbalances

Amid these debates, Brazil has taken steps to buttress access. On the sidelines of COP30, it announced a dedicated digital platform to help forest countries navigate TFFF eligibility. The platform, developed with partners such as the UNDP, FAO, WWF and the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (GATC), promises technical assistance, capacity building and peer collaboration. It is stated that independence from the TFFF's governing structures is meant to prevent conflict of interest while focusing on inclusion and knowledge sharing.

This structure matters because forest conservation has long overlooked deep power imbalances. For many indigenous groups, protecting the Amazon is not just an environmental fight but also a struggle for survival. This was clear at COP30, where indigenous protesters entered the venue

demanding territorial rights, insisting that their land cannot be treated as a commodity. Many felt excluded from decisions that directly affect their homes.

Land rights remain central to this debate. Ahead of COP30, the Forest and Climate Leaders' Partnership (FCLP) renewed its Forest and Land Tenure Pledge, committing \$1.8 billion from 2026 to 2030 to support indigenous, local and Afro-descendant communities. The pledge was a key part of the Belém agenda, reflecting scientific warnings that the Amazon's future remains at risk without secure land rights.

Civil society groups also stressed that climate justice and nature protection cannot be separated. Conservation International called COP30 a chance to secure long-term funding for the Amazon, supporting forest protection, community governance and sustainable livelihoods. They warned that sidelining indigenous leadership weakens both climate action and human rights.

Yet, financing alone cannot counter pressures from infrastructure, agribusiness and extractive industries. The protests in Belém showed that money means little without real shifts in power. Without strong accountability, funds risk flowing to intermediaries while local communities continue to face land loss and displacement.

Beyond the money

The TFFF's launch in Belém is a major step, but its credibility depends on whether it actually transfers power to forest communities rather than reinforcing old hierarchies. For indigenous peoples, forests are home and survival. The real challenge is in ensuring that finance reaches them in forms they control, turning promises into lasting protection. A future of genuine conservation will depend on whether global finance strengthens community rights instead of replicating old patterns of exclusion.

The views expressed are personal

17Mar. Belém as a test of a new model of forest finance Belém एक नए forest finance मॉडल की परीक्षा के रूप में

- The climate summit that was held in Belém, Brazil in November 2025, refocused renewed global attention to a difficult but unavoidable truth: protecting tropical forests requires more than ambitious pledges — it requires a fundamental shift in who holds power over those forests.
नवंबर 2025 में ब्राज़ील के बेलें में आयोजित जलवायु शिखर सम्मेलन ने एक कठिन लेकिन अपरिहार्य सत्य पर वैश्विक ध्यान केंद्रित किया: उष्णकटिबंधीय वनों की रक्षा के लिए केवल वादे नहीं बल्कि शक्ति के वितरण में बदलाव आवश्यक है।
- As world leaders gathered in the Amazon city, the signature initiative was Brazil's Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF), or a finance mechanism presented as a paradigm shift in global conservation.
जब विश्व नेता अमेज़न शहर में एकत्र हुए, तो मुख्य पहल ब्राज़ील की Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF) थी, जिसे वैश्विक संरक्षण में एक नई दिशा के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया गया।
- Yet, amid the flurry of announcements and diplomacy, persistent tensions revealed that major challenges remain around participation, equity and accountability.
घोषणाओं और कूटनीति के बीच यह स्पष्ट हुआ कि भागीदारी, समानता और जवाबदेही से जुड़ी चुनौतियाँ अभी भी बनी हुई हैं।



The difference अंतर

- The **TFFF** proposes to compensate countries for maintaining standing forests, not just for avoiding deforestation.
TFFF देशों को केवल वनों की कटाई रोकने के लिए नहीं बल्कि उन्हें बनाए रखने के लिए भुगतान करने का प्रस्ताव देता है।
- As reported, the Fund has already secured more than **\$5.5 billion** in initial commitments, including a **\$3 billion pledge from Norway**.
रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, इस फंड को **\$5.5 बिलियन** से अधिक की प्रतिबद्धताएँ मिल चुकी हैं, जिसमें **नॉर्वे का \$3 बिलियन** शामिल है।
- Unlike many past funds, it is not structured purely as a donation vehicle.
यह केवल दान आधारित फंड नहीं है, जैसा कि पहले के कई फंड थे।
- Rather, it is set up to generate returns and reward **long-term forest conservation**.
बल्कि इसे **दीर्घकालिक वन संरक्षण** को प्रोत्साहित करने के लिए तैयार किया गया है।
- Critically, at least **20% of its performance-based payments** are reserved for **indigenous peoples and local communities**.
महत्वपूर्ण रूप से, इसके **20% भुगतान स्थानीय समुदायों और आदिवासियों** के लिए आरक्षित हैं।
- Whose daily stewardship plays an outsize role in keeping forests intact.
जो अपने दैनिक प्रयासों से वनों को सुरक्षित रखते हैं।
- This allocation is not symbolic.
यह केवल प्रतीकात्मक नहीं है।
- According to the **Rainforest Foundation US**, indigenous and local communities were deeply involved in co-designing the facility.
Rainforest Foundation US के अनुसार, स्थानीय समुदाय इस योजना के निर्माण में सक्रिय रूप से शामिल थे।
- Across months of global consultations, more than **400 community leaders** shared their perspectives.
कई महीनों के परामर्श में **400 से अधिक नेताओं** ने अपनी राय दी।
- The model offers something new: not only financial support but also formal **decision-making power**.
यह मॉडल केवल वित्तीय सहायता ही नहीं बल्कि **निर्णय लेने की शक्ति** भी प्रदान करता है।
- Yet, important gaps remain.
फिर भी, महत्वपूर्ण कमियाँ बनी हुई हैं।
- For instance, indigenous representatives do not have **voting rights** on the main governing bodies of the Fund.
उदाहरण के लिए, आदिवासी प्रतिनिधियों को मुख्य निकायों में **मतदान अधिकार** नहीं दिया गया है।
- Raising questions about how genuinely inclusive decision-making will be.
जिससे समावेशिता पर प्रश्न उठते हैं।
- Even as the **TFFF** proposes this inclusive architecture, many civil society groups have voiced their strong criticism.
हालांकि **TFFF** समावेशी ढांचा प्रस्तुत करता है, कई नागरिक संगठनों ने आलोचना की है।
- The **Global Forest Coalition (GFC)** described the fund as “colonialistic”.
GFC ने इस फंड को “औपनिवेशिक” बताया।
- Arguing that it benefits intermediaries rather than forest peoples.
उनका तर्क है कि इसका लाभ बिचौलियों को मिलता है, न कि वन समुदायों को।
- Its worry was about a mechanism built around **market logic and financial returns**.
उनकी चिंता यह है कि यह **बाजार आधारित तंत्र** है।
- That may not address the root causes of deforestation, such as **agribusiness, oil, mining and infrastructure projects**.
जो **कृषि विस्तार, तेल, खनन और इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर** जैसी समस्याओं को नहीं रोकता।
- According to the **GFC**, rewarding standing forests without curbing exploitative activities risks creating a **superficial conservation narrative**.
GFC के अनुसार, केवल वनों को बनाए रखने के लिए भुगतान करना एक **सतही संरक्षण मॉडल** बन सकता है।



- Compounding this, some critics argue that the payment rate, around **\$4 a hectare**, is inadequate.
आलोचकों के अनुसार **\$4 प्रति हेक्टेयर** भुगतान अपर्याप्त है।
- Given the manifold ecosystem services that forests provide.
जबकि वन कई प्रकार की पारिस्थितिक सेवाएँ प्रदान करते हैं।
- There is a risk that national governments could absorb most of the funds.
यह जोखिम है कि सरकारें अधिकांश धन अपने पास रख लें।
- While communities on the ground may see little benefit.
और स्थानीय समुदायों को कम लाभ मिले।
- The success of the **TFFF**, therefore, depends not just on its size but on strong delivery mechanisms and **locally accountable institutions**.
इसलिए **TFFF** की सफलता केवल इसके आकार पर नहीं बल्कि मजबूत तंत्र और **स्थानीय जवाबदेही** पर निर्भर करेगी।

Conservation overlooks power imbalances संरक्षण शक्ति असंतुलन को नजरअंदाज करता है

- Amid these debates, **Brazil** has taken steps to buttress access.
इन बहसों के बीच **ब्राज़ील** ने पहुंच को मजबूत करने के कदम उठाए हैं।
- On the sidelines of **COP30**, it announced a dedicated digital platform to help forest countries navigate **TFFF eligibility**.
COP30 के दौरान, इसने एक डिजिटल प्लेटफॉर्म की घोषणा की जो देशों को **TFFF पात्रता** समझने में मदद करेगा।
- The platform, developed with partners such as the **UNDP, FAO, WWF and the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (GATC)**, promises technical assistance, capacity building and peer collaboration.
यह प्लेटफॉर्म **UNDP, FAO, WWF और GATC** के साथ मिलकर बनाया गया है, जो तकनीकी सहायता और सहयोग प्रदान करेगा।
- It is stated that independence from the **TFFF's governing structures** is meant to prevent conflict of interest while focusing on inclusion and knowledge sharing.
यह कहा गया है कि **TFFF के प्रशासन से स्वतंत्रता** हितों के टकराव को रोकने और समावेशन पर ध्यान देने के लिए है।
- This structure matters because forest conservation has long overlooked deep **power imbalances**.
यह संरचना महत्वपूर्ण है क्योंकि वन संरक्षण ने लंबे समय से **शक्ति असंतुलन** को नजरअंदाज किया है।
- For many indigenous groups, protecting the **Amazon** is not just an environmental fight but also a struggle for survival.
कई आदिवासी समूहों के लिए **अमेज़न** की रक्षा केवल पर्यावरणीय नहीं बल्कि अस्तित्व की लड़ाई है।
- This was clear at **COP30**, where indigenous protesters entered the venue demanding **territorial rights**.
यह **COP30** में स्पष्ट हुआ, जहाँ आदिवासी प्रदर्शनकारियों ने **भूमि अधिकारों** की मांग की।
- Insisting that their land cannot be treated as a commodity.
उन्होंने कहा कि उनकी भूमि को वस्तु की तरह नहीं देखा जा सकता।
- Many felt excluded from decisions that directly affect their homes.
कई लोगों ने महसूस किया कि उन्हें निर्णय प्रक्रिया से बाहर रखा गया।
- Land rights remain central to this debate.
भूमि अधिकार इस बहस का केंद्र हैं।
- Ahead of **COP30**, the **Forest and Climate Leaders' Partnership (FCLP)** renewed its **Forest and Land Tenure Pledge**.
COP30 से पहले, **FCLP** ने अपना **Forest and Land Tenure Pledge** नवीनीकृत किया।
- Committing **\$1.8 billion (2026–2030)** to support indigenous, local and Afro-descendant communities.
इसमें **\$1.8 बिलियन (2026–2030)** का समर्थन शामिल है।
- The pledge was a key part of the **Belém agenda**.
यह **बेलें एजेंडा** का महत्वपूर्ण हिस्सा था।



- Reflecting scientific warnings that the Amazon's future remains at risk without secure land rights.
यह वैज्ञानिक चेतावनियों को दर्शाता है कि भूमि अधिकार के बिना अमेज़न खतरे में है।
- Civil society groups also stressed that **climate justice and nature protection** cannot be separated.
नागरिक समूहों ने कहा कि **जलवायु न्याय और प्रकृति संरक्षण** अलग नहीं किए जा सकते।
- **Conservation International** called **COP30** a chance to secure long-term funding for the Amazon.
Conservation International ने **COP30** को दीर्घकालिक फंडिंग का अवसर बताया।
- Supporting forest protection, community governance and sustainable livelihoods.
जो वन संरक्षण और सतत आजीविका को समर्थन देता है।
- They warned that sidelining indigenous leadership weakens both **climate action and human rights**.
उन्होंने चेतावनी दी कि आदिवासी नेतृत्व को नजरअंदाज करना **जलवायु कार्रवाई और मानव अधिकारों** को कमजोर करता है।
- Yet, financing alone cannot counter pressures from **infrastructure, agribusiness and extractive industries**.
केवल वित्तपोषण **इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर, कृषि और खनन** के दबाव को नहीं रोक सकता।
- The protests in **Belém** showed that money means little without real shifts in power.
बेलें के विरोध ने दिखाया कि बिना शक्ति परिवर्तन के धन बेकार है।
- Without strong accountability, funds risk flowing to intermediaries while local communities continue to face **land loss and displacement**.
जवाबदेही के बिना धन बिचौलियों तक जा सकता है और समुदायों को **भूमि हानि और विस्थापन** झेलना पड़ सकता है।

Beyond the money पैसे से परे

- The **TFFF's launch in Belém** is a major step, but its credibility depends on whether it actually transfers power to forest communities.
बेलें में TFFF का लॉन्च महत्वपूर्ण है, लेकिन इसकी सफलता शक्ति हस्तांतरण पर निर्भर है।
- Rather than reinforcing old hierarchies.
पुरानी व्यवस्था को मजबूत करने के बजाय।
- For indigenous peoples, forests are home and survival.
आदिवासियों के लिए वन उनका घर और जीवन है।
- The real challenge is in ensuring that finance reaches them in forms they control.
वास्तविक चुनौती यह सुनिश्चित करना है कि धन उन तक पहुँचे और उनके नियंत्रण में हो।
- Turning promises into lasting protection.
ताकि वादे वास्तविक सुरक्षा में बदलें।
- A future of genuine conservation will depend on whether global finance strengthens **community rights**.
सच्चा संरक्षण तभी संभव है जब वैश्विक वित्त **समुदाय अधिकारों** को मजबूत करे।