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THE HINDU NEWSPAPER

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PCS Special:	17April
17A	Kerala botanist wins WWF award for app केरल के वनस्पति वैज्ञानिक को ऐप के लिए WWF पुरस्कार मिला
17A	Queen on the board बोर्ड पर रानी



Kerala botanist wins WWF award for app

PCS

GS III: Environment

GS III: S&T
MALAPPURAM

A botany researcher who developed an AI-powered mobile application to identify invasive plant species in Kerala has been awarded the WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) National Award.

N. Alim Yusuf, a researcher at the Malabar Botanical Garden and Institute for Plant Sciences (MBGIPS), Olavanna, Kozhikode, received the honour for his innovative application capable of identifying nearly 100 invasive plant species recorded in Kerala.

He was presented the award at the National ECHO Youth Innovation Summit 2026, held as part of the International Youth

Biodiversity Conference in Telangana. As part of the recognition, he will also receive a seed grant of ₹1.5 lakh from the WWF to further develop and scale his project. His application, Neophyte ID, was earlier launched at the Kerala Science Congress held in Kochi in February this year.

Powered by the advanced machine learning model YOLOv11, the app allows users to identify whether a plant is invasive simply by capturing its image.

Available in both Malayalam and English, it also integrates geospatial tracking to map the spread of invasive species, offering valuable data for researchers and the Forest department.

17A. Kerala botanist wins WWF award for app केरल के वनस्पति वैज्ञानिक को ऐप के लिए WWF पुरस्कार मिला

A Kerala botany researcher who developed an AI-powered mobile application to identify invasive plant species in Kerala has been awarded the WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) National Award.

केरल के एक वनस्पति शोधकर्ता को, जिन्होंने केरल में आक्रामक पौधों की पहचान के लिए एक AI-संचालित मोबाइल एप्लिकेशन विकसित किया, उन्हें WWF (वर्ल्ड वाइड फंड फॉर नेचर) राष्ट्रीय पुरस्कार से सम्मानित किया गया है।

N. Alim Yusuf, a researcher at the Malabar Botanical Garden and Institute for Plant Sciences (MBGIPS), Olavanna, Kozhikode, received the honour for his innovative application capable of identifying nearly 100 invasive plant species recorded in Kerala.

एन. अलीम यूसुफ, जो मालाबार बॉटनिकल गार्डन एंड इंस्टीट्यूट फॉर प्लांट साइंसेज (MBGIPS), ओलवन्ना, कोझिकोड के शोधकर्ता हैं, को इस अभिनव ऐप के लिए सम्मान मिला जो केरल में दर्ज लगभग 100 आक्रामक पौधों की पहचान कर सकता है।

He was presented the award at the National ECHO Youth Innovation Summit 2026, held as part of the International Youth Biodiversity Conference in Telangana.

उन्हें यह पुरस्कार नेशनल ECHO यूथ इनोवेशन समिट 2026 में प्रदान किया गया, जो तेलंगाना में आयोजित अंतरराष्ट्रीय युवा जैव विविधता सम्मेलन का हिस्सा था।

- As part of the recognition, he will also receive a seed grant of ₹1.5 lakh from the WWF to further develop and scale his project.

इस सम्मान के तहत उन्हें अपने प्रोजेक्ट को आगे विकसित और विस्तार करने के लिए WWF से ₹1.5 लाख का सीड ग्रांट भी मिलेगा।

- His application, Neophyte ID, was earlier launched at the Kerala Science Congress held in Kochi in February this year.

उनका ऐप Neophyte ID, इस वर्ष फरवरी में कोच्चि में आयोजित केरल साइंस कांग्रेस में पहले ही लॉन्च किया गया था।

- Powered by the advanced machine learning model YOLOv11, the app allows users to identify whether a plant is invasive simply by capturing its image.

उन्नत मशीन लर्निंग मॉडल YOLOv11 द्वारा संचालित यह ऐप उपयोगकर्ताओं को केवल पौधे की तस्वीर लेकर यह पहचानने में सक्षम बनाता है कि वह आक्रामक है या नहीं।

- Available in both Malayalam and English, it also integrates geospatial tracking to map the spread of invasive species, offering valuable data for researchers and the Forest department.

यह ऐप मलयालम और अंग्रेजी दोनों में उपलब्ध है और इसमें आक्रामक प्रजातियों के प्रसार को मैप करने के लिए जियोस्पेशियल ट्रैकिंग भी शामिल है, जो शोधकर्ताओं और वन विभाग के लिए उपयोगी डेटा प्रदान करता है।



Queen on the board

Vaishali's success should lead to greater depth in women's chess

PCS

The significance of R. Vaishali winning the Women's Candidates cannot be overstated. The winner of the gruelling 14-round tournament, featuring the world's top chess players, gets the right to challenge the World champion; now the 24-year-old, who was not among the favourites in Cyprus, will take on China's Ju Wenjun in the World championship later this year. Vaishali is the first Indian to win the Women's Candidates, which dates back to 1952, and now only the second Indian to contest the Women's World (classical) chess championship match. She must be aiming to become the first Indian to capture the crown that matters most in women's chess. Besides Vaishali, Divya Deshmukh also played at the Candidates, though she had a forgettable tournament, finishing seventh in a field of eight. Divya had made history herself last July when she won the World Cup: she was the first Indian woman to win that prestigious event. It is remarkable that two young Indian women have won two of the biggest events in world chess within a space of nine months. And Koneru Humpy had clinched her second World rapid championship in December 2024.

Notwithstanding their successes, and the fact that Indian women, like the men, are the reigning World team champions (by winning the Chess Olympiad), the country cannot boast of great depth in women's chess. While there is no shortage of fresh talent among boys on the Indian chessboard, the story is different when it comes to girls. Women like Vaishali and Divya are not products of the system; they have succeeded because of their parents, and in the case of the former, generous corporate sponsorship has also played a role. Corporates have also contributed to the staggering growth of Indian chess. The WestBridge Anand Chess Academy (WACA), founded by Sandeep Singhal and five-time World champion Viswanathan Anand, ensured that money was no constraint for Gukesh's challenge for the World title against Ding Liren in 2024. Indian chess can get only better if more corporates step forward. To ensure that women's chess keeps its momentum, the chess federation should focus on girls, get them trained by Grandmasters, and organise more tournaments for them.

within a space of nine months.

यह उल्लेखनीय है कि दो युवा भारतीय महिलाओं ने नौ महीनों के भीतर विश्व शतरंज की दो सबसे बड़ी प्रतियोगिताएँ जीती हैं।

- And **Koneru Humpy** had clinched her second **World rapid championship** in December 2024.

और **Koneru Humpy** ने दिसंबर 2024 में अपनी दूसरी **World Rapid Championship** जीती।

- Notwithstanding their successes, and the fact that Indian women, like the men, are the reigning **World team champions** (by winning the Chess Olympiad), the country cannot boast of great depth in women's chess.

17A. Queen on the board बोर्ड पर रानी

- The significance of **R. Vaishali winning the Women's Candidates** cannot be overstated.

R. Vaishali द्वारा **Women's Candidates** जीतने का महत्व अत्यधिक है और इसे कम करके नहीं आंका जा सकता।

- The winner of the gruelling **14-round tournament**, featuring the world's top chess players, gets the right to challenge the **World champion**; now the 24-year-old, who was not among the favourites in Cyprus, will take on **China's Ju Wenjun** in the **World championship** later this year.

कठिन **14-राउंड टूर्नामेंट**, जिसमें विश्व के शीर्ष शतरंज खिलाड़ी शामिल होते हैं, का विजेता **विश्व चैंपियन** को चुनौती देने का अधिकार प्राप्त करता है; अब 24 वर्षीय खिलाड़ी, जो साइप्रस में पसंदीदा खिलाड़ियों में शामिल नहीं थीं, इस वर्ष के अंत में चीन की **Ju Wenjun** का सामना करेंगी।

- **Vaishali** is the **first Indian** to win the **Women's Candidates**, which dates back to 1952, and now only the **second Indian** to contest the **Women's World (classical) chess championship match**.

वैशाली **पहली भारतीय** हैं जिन्होंने **Women's Candidates** जीता है, जो 1952 से आयोजित हो रहा है, और अब वे **Women's World (classical)** शतरंज चैंपियनशिप मैच में भाग लेने वाली केवल **दूसरी भारतीय** हैं।

- **She must be aiming to become the first Indian to capture the crown that matters most in women's chess.**

वे निश्चित रूप से महिलाओं के शतरंज में सबसे महत्वपूर्ण खिताब जीतने वाली **पहली भारतीय** बनने का लक्ष्य रखती होंगी।

- Besides Vaishali, **Divya Deshmukh** also played at the Candidates, though she had a forgettable tournament, finishing seventh in a field of eight. वैशाली के अलावा, **Divya Deshmukh** ने भी Candidates में भाग लिया, हालांकि उनका प्रदर्शन कमजोर रहा और वे आठ खिलाड़ियों में सातवें स्थान पर रहीं।

- **Divya had made history herself last July when she won the World Cup: she was the first Indian woman to win that prestigious event.**

दिव्या ने पिछले जुलाई में **World Cup** जीतकर इतिहास रचा था: वे इस प्रतिष्ठित प्रतियोगिता को जीतने वाली पहली भारतीय महिला बनीं।

- It is remarkable that two young Indian women have won two of the biggest events in world chess



उनकी सफलताओं के बावजूद, और इस तथ्य के बावजूद कि भारतीय महिलाएँ पुरुषों की तरह वर्तमान **विश्व टीम चैंपियन** हैं (Chess Olympiad जीतकर), देश महिलाओं के शतरंज में गहराई का दावा नहीं कर सकता।

- While there is no shortage of fresh talent among boys on the Indian chessboard, the story is different when it comes to girls.
जहाँ भारतीय शतरंज में लड़कों के बीच प्रतिभा की कमी नहीं है, वहीं लड़कियों के मामले में स्थिति अलग है।
- **Women like Vaishali and Divya are not products of the system; they have succeeded because of their parents, and in the case of the former, generous corporate sponsorship has also played a role.**
वैशाली और दिव्या जैसी महिलाएँ प्रणाली की उपज नहीं हैं; वे अपने माता-पिता के कारण सफल हुई हैं, और वैशाली के मामले में उदार **कॉर्पोरेट प्रायोजन** ने भी भूमिका निभाई है।
- Corporates have also contributed to the staggering growth of Indian chess.
कॉर्पोरेट क्षेत्र ने भारतीय शतरंज की तीव्र प्रगति में भी योगदान दिया है।
- The **WestBridge Anand Chess Academy (WACA)**, founded by **Sandeep Singhal** and five-time World champion **Viswanathan Anand**, ensured that money was no constraint for **Gukesh's challenge** for the World title against **Ding Liren** in 2024.
WestBridge Anand Chess Academy (WACA), जिसकी स्थापना **Sandeep Singhal** और पाँच बार के विश्व चैंपियन **Viswanathan Anand** ने की, ने यह सुनिश्चित किया कि 2024 में **Gukesh** की विश्व खिताब के लिए **Ding Liren** के खिलाफ चुनौती में धन कोई बाधा न बने।
- **Indian chess can get only better if more corporates step forward.**
यदि अधिक कॉर्पोरेट आगे आते हैं तो भारतीय शतरंज और बेहतर हो सकता है।

GS Paper 1: History		17 April 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
17A	Culture Ministry spent ₹76 lakh on RSS centenary print advertisements: RTI reply संस्कृति मंत्रालय ने RSS शताब्दी प्रिंट विज्ञापनों पर ₹76 लाख खर्च किए: RTI उत्तर	
17A	FIFA surprises Keralites on Vishu with AI-generated image of Messi विशु पर FIFA ने केरलवासियों को AI-जनरेटेड मेसी की तस्वीर से चौंकाया	
17A	QUIZ	

PICTURE OF THE WEEK
Colours of joy



Assamese girls perform the Bihu dance during Rongali Bihu festival in Guwahati on Tuesday. Rongali Bihu, a vibrant festival in Assam, marks the Assamese New Year with feasting, dancing, and traditional rituals. BY IAS EXAMINERS

Assamese girls perform the Bihu dance during Rongali Bihu festival in Guwahati on Tuesday. Rongali Bihu, a vibrant festival in Assam, marks the Assamese New Year with feasting, dancing, and traditional rituals.

BIHU FESTIVAL (ASSAM)

- It represents the **agrarian cycle**, marking different stages of cultivation and harvest.
- It is celebrated by the **Assamese community** **irrespective of caste, religion, or class**, symbolizing unity and

cultural identity.

Historical Background

- Bihu has its origins in **ancient agrarian traditions** of Assam.
- It is believed to have evolved from **pre-Aryan agricultural practices** of indigenous communities such as the **Bodos and Kacharis**.
- The festival reflects a blend of **tribal customs, fertility rites, and later Hindu influences**.

Types of Bihu



Rongali Bihu (Bohag Bihu)

- Celebrated in **mid-April (around 14–15 April)** marking the Assamese New Year.
- It coincides with other Indian festivals like **Vaisakhi and Puthandu**.
- It is the most vibrant Bihu, symbolizing **spring, fertility, and new beginnings**.
- Traditional dance (**Bihu dance**) and music are performed widely.

Kongali Bihu (Kati Bihu)

- Celebrated in **October during the sowing season**.
- It is a **simple and solemn festival**, reflecting scarcity in agricultural fields.
- **Earthen lamps (diyas)** are lit in fields and near **Tulsi plants** to seek protection for crops.

Bhogali Bihu (Magh Bihu)

- Celebrated in **January after the harvest season**.
- It is associated with **feasting, community gatherings, and bonfires (Meji)**.
- Symbolizes **abundance and prosperity**.

Culture Ministry spent ₹76 lakh on RSS centenary print advertisements: RTI reply

GS I: History

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Culture spent ₹76.13 lakh on print advertisements to mark the centenary of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). The information was shared under a Right to Information (RTI) application filed by RTI activist Ajay Basudev Bose.

Mr. Bose, in his RTI application to the Culture Ministry, had sought information on government expenditure related to the 100-year milestone of the RSS, the ideological mother of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party at the Centre.

"In this regard, it is informed that an amount of ₹76,13,129 has been spent on advertisement given in



Founded by Keshav Baliram Hedgewar in 1925, the RSS is commemorating its centenary year since October 2 last year. PTI

various print media by Ministry of Culture on the occasion of completion of 100 years of RSS," a response from the Ministry, undersigned by Pappunjay Kumar, Under Secretary to the Government of India and CPIO, whose copy was shared by Mr. Bose, said.

Founded by Keshav Bali-

ram Hedgewar in 1925, the RSS is commemorating its centenary year since Vijaydashmi of 2025, which was celebrated on October 2.

On October 1, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the centenary celebrations of the RSS as chief guest in New Delhi, where he released a spe-

cially designed ₹100 commemorative coin and postage stamp to mark the occasion. Mr. Modi termed the RSS as the embodiment of "timeless national consciousness" and added that the contribution of the Sangh will be crucial in the mission of building a developed India by 2047.

'People-led movement'

The website of the Culture Ministry stated that the RSS has grown as a people-led movement for national reconstruction, rooted in the values of discipline, service, and patriotism. Over the decades, it has played a pivotal role in education, health, tribal upliftment, disaster relief, and community empowerment.

17A. Culture Ministry spent ₹76 lakh on RSS centenary print advertisements: RTI reply

संस्कृति मंत्रालय ने RSS शताब्दी प्रिंट विज्ञापनों पर ₹76 लाख खर्च किए: RTI उत्तर

• The Culture Ministry spent ₹76.13 lakh on print advertisements to mark the centenary of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

संस्कृति मंत्रालय ने राष्ट्रीय स्वयंसेवक संघ (RSS) की शताब्दी मनाने के लिए प्रिंट विज्ञापनों पर ₹76.13 लाख खर्च किए।

• Founded by Keshav Baliram Hedgewar in 1925, the RSS is commemorating its centenary year

since Vijaydashmi of 2025, which was celebrated on October 2.

केशव बलिराम हेडगेवार द्वारा 1925 में स्थापित RSS वर्ष विजयदशमी 2025 से अपना शताब्दी वर्ष मना रहा है, जिसे 2 अक्टूबर को मनाया गया।

- On October 1, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the centenary celebrations of the RSS as chief guest in New Delhi, where he released a specially designed ₹100 commemorative coin and postage stamp to mark the occasion.

1 अक्टूबर 2025 को प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने नई दिल्ली में RSS के शताब्दी समारोह में मुख्य अतिथि के रूप में भाग लिया, जहां उन्होंने इस अवसर को चिह्नित करने के लिए एक विशेष रूप से डिज़ाइन किया गया ₹100 स्मारक सिक्का और डाक टिकट जारी किया।

- The website of the Culture Ministry stated that the RSS has grown as a people-led movement for national reconstruction, rooted in the values of discipline, service, and patriotism.

संस्कृति मंत्रालय की वेबसाइट में कहा गया है कि RSS एक जन-नेतृत्व वाले आंदोलन के रूप में विकसित हुआ है जो राष्ट्रीय पुनर्निर्माण के लिए अनुशासन, सेवा और देशभक्ति के मूल्यों पर आधारित है।



- Over the decades, it has played a pivotal role in education, health, tribal upliftment, disaster relief, and community empowerment.
दशकों से इसने शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य, जनजातीय उत्थान, आपदा राहत और सामुदायिक सशक्तिकरण में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई है।

FIFA surprises Keralites on Vishu with AI-generated image of Messi

GS I: History: A&C

Nirmal Harindran
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Vishu appeared to have gone global on Wednesday. In a nod to Kerala's endearing love for football, the International Association Football Federation (FIFA) World Cup's official Instagram account surprised Keralites celebrating the first day of the Malayalam annual calendar by broadcasting an AI-generated image of soccer legend, Lionel Messi, exulting on the ground after scoring a goal with a platter of "Vishu Kani" in the foreground.

The FIFA World Cup page also conveyed the international sports body's



The page also conveyed Vishu greetings in Malayalam.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Vishu Greetings in Malayalam, "Vishu Ashamsakal". The post went super viral on social media.

Notably, the AI image has a backstory. The State government had announced that Argentina, Messi's home team, would play a friendly international match to regale fans in Kochi in 2025.

Kerala's Sports Minister, V. Abdurahiman, visited Spain last September and met with Argentine Football Association officials to secure the deal, sponsored by a media house in the State.

Broken ties

However, the Kerala government's relationship with AFA soured in April 2026, with Mr. Abdurahiman stating that the Argen-

tina team had let the State down by failing to honour its commitment. He also said the AFA had accepted an advance payment of ₹250 crore, but dishonoured the contract.

Football fans in Kerala had expressed their profound disappointment on social media.

Kerala's football fan base is deeply divided between Argentine and Brazilian loyalists. Colourful cardboard cutouts of Argentine and Brazilian footballing icons herald World Cup season in the State.

The comment section on the FIFA World Cup page also saw light-hearted sparring between the fans.

17A. FIFA surprises Keralites on Vishu with AI-generated image of Messi विषु पर FIFA ने केरलवासियों को AI-जनरेटेड मेसी की तस्वीर से चौंकाया

- Vishu appeared to have gone global on Wednesday.
विषु बुधवार को वैश्विक होता हुआ दिखाई दिया।
- In a nod to Kerala's endearing love for football, the **International Association Football Federation (FIFA) World Cup's official Instagram account** surprised Keralites celebrating the first day of the Malayalam annual calendar by broadcasting an **AI-generated image** of soccer legend, **Lionel Messi**, exulting on the ground after scoring a goal with a platter of "Vishu Kani" in the foreground.
केरल के फुटबॉल प्रेम को ध्यान में रखते हुए, अंतरराष्ट्रीय फुटबॉल महासंघ (FIFA) वर्ल्ड कप के आधिकारिक इंस्टाग्राम अकाउंट ने मलयालम वार्षिक कैलेंडर के पहले दिन विषु मना रहे केरलवासियों को चौंकाते हुए एक **AI-जनरेटेड छवि** साझा की, जिसमें फुटबॉल दिग्गज **लियोनेल मेसी** गोल करने के बाद मैदान पर उत्साहित दिखाई दे रहे हैं और सामने "विषु कानी" की थाली रखी है।
- The **FIFA World Cup page** also conveyed the international sports body's Vishu greetings in Malayalam, "**Vishu Ashamsakal**".
FIFA वर्ल्ड कप पेज ने अंतरराष्ट्रीय खेल संगठन की ओर से मलयालम में विषु की शुभकामनाएं भी दीं, "**विषु आशंमसकल**"।
- Football fans in Kerala had expressed their profound disappointment on social media.
केरल के फुटबॉल प्रशंसकों ने सोशल मीडिया पर गहरी निराशा व्यक्त की थी।
- Kerala's football fan base is deeply divided between **Argentine and Brazilian loyalists**.
केरल का फुटबॉल फैन बेस **अर्जेंटीना और ब्राजील समर्थकों** के बीच गहराई से विभाजित है।



Questions and answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. The letter by Martin Luther King Jr. famously argues that "injustice anywhere is..." **Ans: "a threat to justice everywhere"**

2. King was responding to this document or statement in the letter. **Ans: "A Call for Unity" by eight white clergymen**

3. King compares himself and the protesters to this early Christian figure. **Ans: The Apostle Paul**

4. The full letter was first published publicly as a **Ans: As a pamphlet by the American Friends Service Committee**

5. Historical examples used by King to justify civil disobedience. **Ans: Socrates, the early Christians, the Boston Tea Party, and Shadrach/Meshach/Abednego**

Visual: The connection of the 1964 book 'Why We Can't Wait', to the letter from Birmingham jail. **Ans: The book includes a revised and expanded version of the letter**

Early birds: K.N. Viswanathan | Sukdev Shet | Pulkit Sathe | Sumana Dutta | Prem Nath Tiwari

protests as untimely and extreme. King defended nonviolent direct action, arguing **that waiting for justice perpetuated injustice.**

- His reply highlighted moral urgency, the legitimacy of peaceful protest, and the need to confront systemic racial discrimination in the United States.

Comparison with **The Apostle Paul**

- In Letter from Birmingham Jail, Martin Luther King Jr. compares himself and fellow activists to **The Apostle Paul**. He explains that just as Paul traveled beyond his hometown to spread the gospel, he too felt compelled to carry the message of justice beyond Birmingham.
- This analogy justified civil rights activism as a moral duty, emphasizing urgency, outreach, and the universal responsibility to fight injustice.

First Publication of the Letter

- Letter from Birmingham Jail by Martin Luther King Jr. was first published in full as a pamphlet by the American Friends Service Committee in 1963.
- Initially, portions appeared in newspapers and magazines, but the pamphlet ensured wider circulation.
- This publication helped disseminate King's arguments on civil rights, nonviolence, and justice, making the letter a foundational document of the movement.

Historical Examples Justifying Civil Disobedience

- In Letter from Birmingham Jail, Martin Luther King Jr. cited examples like **Socrates, early Christians, the Boston Tea Party, and Shadrach Meshach** and Abednego to justify civil disobedience.

17A. QUIZ

Martin Luther King Jr. – Famous Quote

- In his famous work Letter from Birmingham Jail (1963), Martin Luther King Jr. wrote that **"injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."**
- This statement emphasizes the interconnected nature of justice, arguing that injustice in one place affects moral order globally.
- It justified nonviolent resistance against racial segregation and remains a universal principle advocating equality, human rights, and collective responsibility in democratic societies.

Response to "A Call for Unity"

- **Martin Luther King Jr. wrote a Letter from Birmingham Jail in response to A Call for Unity issued by eight white clergymen in 1963.**
- The statement criticized civil rights

protests as untimely and extreme. King defended nonviolent direct action, arguing **that waiting for justice perpetuated injustice.**

- His reply highlighted moral urgency, the legitimacy of peaceful protest, and the need to confront systemic racial discrimination in the United States.

GS Paper 1: Geography		17 April 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
17A	Syria says it took over northeast base after the pullout of coalition सीरिया ने गठबंधन की वापसी के बाद उत्तर-पूर्वी बेस पर कब्जा लेने की बात कही	



Honouring the dead



In memories: A woman looking at lights set up to commemorate the victims of the 2016 Kumamoto earthquake, at Nishihara Village Sports Park on Thursday in Kumamoto Prefecture. AFP

In memories: A woman looking at lights set up to commemorate the victims of the 2016 Kumamoto earthquake, at Nishihara Village Sports Park on Thursday in Kumamoto Prefecture.

Kumamoto Prefecture

- **Kumamoto Prefecture** is located on the island of **Kyushu** in southwestern **Japan**.
- It is an important administrative region known for its **volcanic landscapes, agriculture, and cultural heritage**.

- The capital city is **Kumamoto**.
- Kumamoto lies in the **central part of Kyushu island**, facing the **Ariake Sea** to the west.
- It is characterized by **mountainous terrain, plains, and coastal areas**.
- The region forms part of the **Pacific Ring of Fire**, making it geologically active.
- **Mount Aso** is one of the **largest active volcanoes in the world**.
- It has one of the **largest calderas (about 25 km in diameter)** globally.
- The volcano is still active and influences the region's geology and soil fertility.

DAMASCUS

Syria says it took over northeast base after the pullout of coalition



GS I: Geography: Mapping
Syria said on Thursday that it had taken control of Qasrak air base in Hasakeh province in the northeast after forces from the U.S.-led international coalition against the Islamic State group withdrew. Qasrak was considered a key U.S. base in northeast Syria and served as a logistics hub for convoys heading towards Iraq. AFP

17A. Syria says it took over northeast base after the pullout of coalition सीरिया ने गठबंधन की वापसी के बाद उत्तर-पूर्वी बेस पर कब्जा लेने की बात कही

- Syria said on Thursday that it had taken control of **Qasrak air base in Hasakeh province** in the northeast after forces from the **U.S.-led international coalition** against the **Islamic State group** withdrew. सीरिया ने गुरुवार को कहा कि उसने उत्तर-पूर्व में स्थित **हसाकेह प्रांत के कस्राक एयर बेस** पर नियंत्रण ले लिया है, जब **इस्लामिक स्टेट समूह** के खिलाफ **U.S.-नेतृत्व वाले अंतरराष्ट्रीय गठबंधन** की सेनाएँ वहाँ से वापस चली गईं।
- **Qasrak air base** was considered a key **U.S. base** in northeast Syria and served as a logistics hub for **convoys heading towards Iraq**. **कस्राक एयर बेस** को उत्तर-पूर्वी सीरिया में एक प्रमुख **U.S. बेस** माना जाता था और यह **इराक** की ओर जाने वाले काफिलों के लिए एक लॉजिस्टिक्स हब के रूप में काम करता था।

GS Paper II: Polity		17 April 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
17A	South's share of seats will not be cut, PM and Shah tell Lok Sabha दक्षिण की सीटों का हिस्सा नहीं काटा जाएगा, पीएम और शाह ने लोकसभा को बताया	
17A	HC seeks replies from 2 Indore councillors who refused to sing Vande Mataram at civic meet	



	एचसी ने इंदौर के 2 पार्षदों से जवाब मांगा जिन्होंने नागरिक बैठक में वंदे मातरम् गाने से इनकार किया
17A	Seat allocation for States: a look at what is being said by who, and what is written राज्यों के लिए सीट आवंटन: कौन क्या कह रहा है और क्या लिखा है उस पर एक नजर
17A	'Delimitation with old data can upset electoral framework' 'पुराने डेटा के साथ परिसीमन चुनावी ढांचे को बिगाड़ सकता है'
17A	The institutionalised sluggishness of the legal system कानूनी व्यवस्था की संस्थागत धीमापन
17A	On the Sabarimala temple entry case सबरिमला मंदिर प्रवेश मामले पर

South's share of seats will not be cut, PM and Shah tell Lok Sabha

Home Minister slams those 'spreading misconceptions'; he says LS seats of South will rise from 129 to 195, and reassures T.N. that its 'power is increasing'; Priyanka says if the Constitution Amendment Bill is passed, 'democracy will be finished'

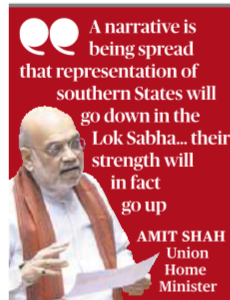
GS II: Polity

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday told the Lok Sabha that the Bills to amend the women's reservation law and carry out a fresh delimitation exercise will keep current proportional representation of southern States intact while increasing the absolute number of seats for each State approximately by 50%.

While the Prime Minister gave an assurance that the proportional distribution of seats among States will be maintained, it was the Home Minister who gave a detailed scenario for each southern State after the three Bills become law.

The debate followed the introduction of three Bills: the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026, to enable implementation of the women's reservation by the 2029 Lok Sabha polls; the Delimitation Bill, 2026, to readjust parliamentary and Assembly constituencies through a Delimitation Commission;



Proposed figures

The table shows the estimated number of seats for southern States as announced by Union Home Minister Amit Shah

State	Current seats	As a share of current 543 seats	50% increase (approx.)	New status (as a share of 816 seats)
Karnataka	28	5.15%	42	5.14%
Andhra Pradesh	25	4.60%	38	4.65%
Telangana	17	3.13%	26	3.18%
Tamil Nadu	39	7.18%	59	7.23%
Kerala	20	3.68%	30	3.67%
Total	129	23.76%	195	23.87%

and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, to extend the reservation to the legislatures of Delhi, Puducherry, and Jammu & Kashmir.

Mr. Shah said that as the Minister piloting the Bill, he was placing this interpretation before the House officially. "I understand my responsibility. Those who are spreading misconceptions perhaps do not understand," he said.

Shah's illustration

The Minister showed how the representation of the southern States would not go down. The Lok Sabha will have 816 seats after de-

limitation. He said that in a House of existing 543 members, Karnataka has 28 seats, or 5.15% of MPs. After the Bill is passed, Karnataka's share will become 42, and its percentage of seats in a Lok Sabha of 816 members will be 5.14%. Andhra Pradesh, with its 25 seats (4.60%), will have 38 MPs (4.65%). Likewise, Telangana's 17 seats (3.13%) will become 26 (3.18%), Kerala's 20 seats (3.68%) will touch 30 (3.67%), and Tamil Nadu's 39 seats (7.18%) will become 59 (7.23%). Mr. Shah said many MPs from Tamil Nadu have come wearing black clothes, but he reassured

the people of the State that "your power is not decreasing, it is increasing."

He said the number of Lok Sabha seats in the five southern States will go up from the existing 129 to 195, with the percentage share increasing from 23.76% to 23.87%.

Participating in the debate, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra slammed the delimitation and said that "if the Constitution Amendment Bill is passed in Parliament, democracy will be finished in India."

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, while expressing support for wo-

men's reservation law, said it should be implemented only after the ongoing Census is complete.

The Home Minister said he would give his detailed reply in the Lok Sabha on Friday.

"I will explain, provided they sit to listen and do not walk out. I will explain it with such simplicity that even a child in KG (kindergarten) would understand," Mr. Shah said. The government will need the support from parties outside the National Democratic Alliance to pass the Constitution Amendment Bill since it requires two-thirds majority. In the current Lok Sabha strength of 540 members, the government needs the support of 360 members but is falling short by over 60 MPs.

Responding to Ms. Vadra's accusation that the government will put its own people in the Delimitation Commission, he said: "We have not made any changes to the Delimitation Commission Act. We have repeated your Delimitation Commission Act down to the full stops and commas."

17A. South's share of seats will not be cut, PM and Shah tell Lok Sabha दक्षिण की सीटों का हिस्सा नहीं काटा जाएगा, पीएम और शाह ने लोकसभा को बताया

- Home Minister slams those 'spreading misconceptions'; he says LS seats of South will rise from 129 to 195, and reassures T.N. that its 'power is increasing'
गृह मंत्री ने 'गलतफहमियां फैलाने वालों' की आलोचना की; उन्होंने कहा कि दक्षिण की लोकसभा (LS) सीटें 129 से बढ़कर 195 होंगी, और तमिलनाडु (T.N.) को भरोसा दिया कि उसकी 'शक्ति बढ़ रही है'



- The debate followed the introduction of three Bills: the **Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026**, to enable implementation of the women's reservation by the 2029 Lok Sabha polls; the **Delimitation Bill, 2026**, to readjust parliamentary and Assembly constituencies through a Delimitation Commission; and the **Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026**, to extend the reservation to the legislatures of Delhi, Puducherry, and Jammu & Kashmir.
यह बहस तीन विधेयकों के प्रस्तुत होने के बाद हुई: **संविधान (131वां संशोधन) विधेयक, 2026**, जो 2029 लोकसभा चुनावों तक महिला आरक्षण लागू करने को सक्षम बनाएगा; **परिसीमन विधेयक, 2026**, जो परिसीमन आयोग के माध्यम से संसदीय और विधानसभा क्षेत्रों का पुनर्निर्धारण करेगा; और **केंद्र शासित प्रदेश कानून (संशोधन) विधेयक, 2026**, जो दिल्ली, पुडुचेरी और जम्मू-कश्मीर की विधानसभाओं में आरक्षण लागू करेगा।
- He said that in a House of existing 543 members, Karnataka has 28 seats, or 5.15% of MPs. उन्होंने कहा कि मौजूदा 543 सदस्यों वाले सदन में कर्नाटक के पास 28 सीटें हैं, यानी 5.15% सांसद।
- After the Bill is passed, Karnataka's share will become 42, and its percentage of seats in a **Lok Sabha** of 816 members will be 5.14%. विधेयक पारित होने के बाद कर्नाटक की सीटें 42 हो जाएंगी, और 816 सदस्यीय **लोकसभा** में उसका प्रतिशत 5.14% होगा।
- Andhra Pradesh, with its 25 seats (4.60%), will have 38 MPs (4.65%). आंध्र प्रदेश की 25 सीटें (4.60%) बढ़कर 38 सांसद (4.65%) हो जाएंगी।
- Likewise, Telangana's 17 seats (3.13%) will become 26 (3.18%), Kerala's 20 seats (3.68%) will touch 30 (3.67%), and Tamil Nadu's 39 seats (7.18%) will become 59 (7.23%). इसी तरह तेलंगाना की 17 सीटें (3.13%) बढ़कर 26 (3.18%) होंगी, केरल की 20 सीटें (3.68%) बढ़कर 30 (3.67%) होंगी, और तमिलनाडु की 39 सीटें (7.18%) बढ़कर 59 (7.23%) हो जाएंगी।
- He said **the number of Lok Sabha seats in the southern States will go up from the existing 129 to 195, with the percentage share increasing from 23.76% to 23.87%**. उन्होंने कहा कि पांच दक्षिणी राज्यों में **लोकसभा** सीटों की संख्या मौजूदा 129 से बढ़कर 195 हो जाएगी, और प्रतिशत हिस्सा 23.76% से बढ़कर 23.87% हो जाएगा।

HC seeks replies from 2 Indore councillors who refused to sing Vande Mataram at civic meet

GS II: Polity

Press Trust of India
INDORE

The Madhya Pradesh High Court on Thursday sought replies from two Congress women councillors who refused to sing national song Vande Mataram at a meeting of the Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC).

The direction by the HC's Indore Bench came during hearing on a public interest litigation, which sought formulation of a clear legal framework to ensure dignified conduct by people present during the singing of Vande Mataram at government events or public platforms.

A Division Bench of Justices Vijay Kumar Shukla and Alok Awasthi issued

show-cause notices to Congress councillors from Indore, Faujia Sheikh Aleem and Rubina Iqbal Khan, along with the State government.

The petition was filed by local lawyer Yogesh Hemnani, who argued his case in the court.

He submitted that the two councillors not only refused to sing Vande Mataram during an IMC event last week, but also showed disrespect towards the national song by making objectionable remarks.

The petitioner argued that such conduct by elected representatives violated constitutional provisions related to citizens' fundamental duties and was punishable

under the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971.

Cong. probe panel

Meanwhile, Congress's central leadership has constituted a committee to probe into the Vande Mataram row involving its two Indore councillors, who refused to sing the national song at an event, and issues arising out of media comments of local leaders, a party functionary said on Thursday.

He said All India Congress Committee in-charge for Madhya Pradesh Harish Chaudhary formed the two-member panel on Wednesday and asked it to submit a report within a week to enable organisational action.

17A. HC seeks replies from 2 Indore councillors who refused to sing Vande Mataram at civic meet

एचसी ने इंदौर के 2 पार्षदों से जवाब मांगा जिन्होंने नागरिक बैठक में वंदे मातरम् गाने से इनकार किया

- The petitioner argued that such conduct by elected representatives violated constitutional provisions related to citizens' fundamental duties and was punishable under the **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971**.

याचिकाकर्ता ने तर्क दिया कि निर्वाचित प्रतिनिधियों का यह व्यवहार नागरिकों के मौलिक कर्तव्यों से संबंधित संवैधानिक प्रावधानों का उल्लंघन है और यह **राष्ट्रीय सम्मान अपमान निवारण अधिनियम, 1971** के तहत दंडनीय है।



Seat allocation for States: a look at what is being said by who, and what is written

GS II: Polity

NEWS ANALYSIS

Varghese K. George
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah told the Lok Sabha on Thursday that the proposed increase in its size – from the current maximum of 550 seats to a maximum of 850 – will be done in a manner that each State in the country will have an additional 50% seats.

Mr. Shah also read out the exact numbers for several States – Tamil Nadu from 39 to around 59, Karnataka from 28 to 42, Kerala from 20 to 30, Andhra Pradesh from 25 to 38 and Telangana from 17 to 26.

The Home Minister said he would explain on Friday how this assurance aligns with the proposals in the drafts of the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill and the Delimitation Bill. The

Prime Minister and Home Minister said that the current proportion of seats of each State in the Lok Sabha, which was determined on the basis of the 1971 population in 1973, will continue unchanged.

Two-step process

The distribution of Lok Sabha seats across States is governed by Articles 81 and 82 of the Constitution, in a two-step process, set in two separate sub-clauses of clause 2 of Article 81.

The first step is to allocate seats among individual States. The second step is to divide each State into territorial constituencies. The two separate steps are written in the Constitution to balance the principles of federalism (representation of States) and democracy (representation of the individual – the 'one person, one vote, one value principle').

As per amendments done during the tenure of

Bills seek to start the reallocation of seats immediately, removing the 2026 sunset proviso

Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 2001 and 2003, these two steps were tied to two different censuses. Step one, the distribution between the States, was tied to the population of the 1971 Census; and step two, the division into territorial constituencies within the States was tied to population distribution in the 2001 Census.

Article 81 has a sunset proviso – that this arrangement would be valid until the first census after 2026. Article 82 puts a freeze on readjustment of allocation of Lok Sabha seats until the first census after 2026. If nothing changes in the Constitution as it exists today, the process for the next redistribution and de-

limitation of Lok Sabha seats would have been kicked off after the data for Census 2027 were published.

The current Bills seek to advance this process and start the reallocation of seats and their delimitation immediately, removing the sunset proviso of 2026 and the linkage of two different censuses to the two steps. In the proposed version of Article 81, both steps will be tied to the population of the same census which parliament will determine from time to time.

In other words, a Constitutional safeguard for the proportion of the States that have stabilised their population which would have anyway expired after a year or two, is being removed with immediate effect in the amendment.

Based on the enabling Constitutional amendment, in the draft Delimitation Bill, the Centre is seek-

ing Parliament's approval to set the population count in the latest census, which is the 2011 Census, to be the basis for both step one and two.

This means, if this becomes an Act, the new number of Lok Sabha seats will have to be distributed according to the population figures in the latest census. The draft refers to the latest census several times.

Clause 4 and 8

Clause 4 says: "It shall be the duty of the Commission to readjust, on the basis of the latest census figures, the allocation of seats in House of the People to the States and Union Territories..."

Clause 8 says, "The Commission shall, on the basis of the latest census figures...determine...the number of seats in the House of People to be allocated to each State and Union Territory..."

17A. Seat allocation for States: a look at what is being said by who, and what is written

राज्यों के लिए सीट आवंटन: कौन क्या कह रहा है और क्या लिखा है उस पर एक नजर

- The Prime Minister and Home Minister said that the **current proportion of seats of each State in the Lok Sabha, which was determined on the basis of the 1971 population in 1973**, will continue unchanged.

प्रधानमंत्री और गृह मंत्री ने कहा कि प्रत्येक राज्य की **लोकसभा** में सीटों का वर्तमान अनुपात, जो 1973 में 1971 की जनसंख्या के आधार पर तय किया गया था, अपरिवर्तित रहेगा।

Two-step process दो-चरणीय प्रक्रिया

- The **distribution of Lok Sabha seats across States is governed by Articles 81 and 82** of the Constitution, **in a two-step process, set in two separate sub-clauses of clause 2 of Article 81**. राज्यों में **लोकसभा** सीटों का वितरण संविधान के अनुच्छेद **81 और 82** द्वारा दो-चरणीय प्रक्रिया में संचालित होता है, जो अनुच्छेद 81 के खंड 2 के दो अलग-अलग उप-खंडों में निर्धारित है।
- The first step is to allocate seats among individual States**. पहला चरण व्यक्तिगत राज्यों के बीच सीटों का आवंटन करना है।
- The second step is to divide each State into territorial constituencies**. दूसरा चरण प्रत्येक राज्य को क्षेत्रीय निर्वाचन क्षेत्रों में विभाजित करना है।
- The two separate steps are written in the Constitution to balance the principles of federalism (representation of States) and democracy (representation of the individual — the 'one person, one vote, one value principle')**. ये दो अलग-अलग चरण संविधान में **संघवाद** (राज्यों का प्रतिनिधित्व) और **लोकतंत्र** (व्यक्ति का प्रतिनिधित्व — 'एक व्यक्ति, एक वोट, एक मूल्य' सिद्धांत) के संतुलन के लिए लिखे गए हैं।
- As per amendments done during the tenure of Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 2001 and 2003, these two steps were tied to two different censuses**.

अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी के कार्यकाल में 2001 और 2003 में किए गए संशोधनों के अनुसार, इन दोनों चरणों को दो अलग-अलग जनगणनाओं से जोड़ा गया था।



- Step one, the distribution between the States, was tied to the population of the 1971 Census; and step two, the division into territorial constituencies within the States was tied to population distribution in the 2001 Census.
पहला चरण, राज्यों के बीच वितरण, 1971 की जनगणना की जनसंख्या से जुड़ा था; और दूसरा चरण, राज्यों के भीतर निर्वाचन क्षेत्रों का विभाजन, 2001 की जनगणना की जनसंख्या से जुड़ा था।
- Article 81 has a sunset proviso — that this arrangement would be valid until the first census after 2026.

'Delimitation with old data can upset electoral framework'

NEWS ANALYSIS

GS II: Polity

Krishnadas Rajagopal

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court cautioned in 2025 that delimitation conducted on Census data gathered prior to 2026 risked destabilising the "uniform electoral framework" envisaged by the Constitution and blurring the clear demarcation between constitutional prescription and political discretion.

The court was dealing with a plea for the conduct of delimitation of Assembly seats in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The petitioner, K. Purushottam Reddy, had argued that by conducting delimitation in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir in 2022, the Centre was discriminating against the two States. The plea had sought parity.

The court highlighted that even "legitimate expectations" of the electorate could not overawe the constitutional embargo under the provisos to Articles 82 and 170 of the Constitution that "no readjustment of seats or division of States into territorial constituencies can be undertaken until the relevant data from the first census conducted after 2026 is published". The court said isolated departures from the constitutional embargo for the sake of two States would amount to an impermissible deviation from the equality principle embedded in Article 14 of the Constitution.

Rejecting the plea, the court held that a "contravention of the constitutional timeline provided under Article 170(3) would not only destabilise the uniform electoral framework envisaged by the Constitution but also blur the clear demarcation between constitutional prescription



The court has held that it can intervene if delimitation is found to be arbitrary.

and political discretion".

The stand of the top court gains significance with the Parliament holding a three-day Special Session from Thursday to debate the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill and Delimitation Bill.

Judicial review limited

The Supreme Court has consistently held that though judicial review of delimitation was limited, the court could intervene if the exercise was capricious and unreasonable.

The court, in the 1975 case of *Indira Nehru Gandhi versus Raj Narain*, said the Constitution empowered Parliament with the task of framing electoral laws for "free and fair elections", which included "delimitation of constituencies and allotment of seats" to Parliament and the State legislatures.

The Constitution expected the legislature to ensure that these laws upheld representative and equitable democracy. On that trust, it had limited the power of the courts to intervene.

The court's 2024 decision in the *Kishorchandra Chhanganlal Rathod* case has tilted away from the inviolability of the delimitation exercise. It held that it could certainly intervene if the delimitation was found to be "manifestly arbitrary and irreconcilable to constitutional values".

अनुच्छेद 81 में एक सनसेट प्रावधान है — जिसके अनुसार यह व्यवस्था 2026 के बाद पहली जनगणना तक ही वैध होगी।

- Article 82 puts a freeze on readjustment of allocation of Lok Sabha seats until the first census after 2026.

अनुच्छेद 82 लोकसभा सीटों के पुनः समायोजन पर 2026 के बाद पहली जनगणना तक रोक लगाता है।

- If nothing changes in the Constitution as it exists today, the process for the next redistribution and delimitation of Lok Sabha seats would have been kicked off after the data for Census 2027 were published.

यदि वर्तमान संविधान में कोई बदलाव नहीं किया जाता, तो अगला पुनर्वितरण और परिसीमन प्रक्रिया 2027 की जनगणना के आंकड़े प्रकाशित होने के बाद शुरू होती।

- The current Bills seek to advance this process and start the reallocation of seats and their delimitation immediately, removing the sunset provision of 2026 and the linkage of two different censuses to the two steps.

वर्तमान विधेयक इस प्रक्रिया को आगे बढ़ाकर सीटों के पुनः आवंटन और परिसीमन को तुरंत शुरू करना चाहते हैं, जिसमें 2026 के सनसेट प्रावधान और दो अलग-अलग जनगणनाओं से जुड़े दोनों चरणों की कड़ी को हटाया जाएगा।

- In the proposed version of Article 81, both steps will be tied to the population of the same census which parliament will determine from time to time.

अनुच्छेद 81 के प्रस्तावित संस्करण में दोनों चरण एक ही जनगणना की जनसंख्या से जुड़े होंगे, जिसे संसद समय-समय पर निर्धारित करेगी।

- Based on the enabling Constitutional amendment, in the draft Delimitation Bill, the Centre is seeking Parliament's approval to set the population count in the latest census, which is the 2011 Census, to be the basis for both step one and two.

संवैधानिक संशोधन के आधार पर, मसौदा परिसीमन विधेयक में केंद्र संसद से अनुमति मांग रहा है कि नवीनतम जनगणना यानी 2011 की जनगणना को दोनों चरणों के लिए आधार बनाया जाए।

- This means, if this becomes an Act, the new number of Lok Sabha seats will have to be distributed according to the population figures in the latest census.

इसका मतलब है कि यदि यह कानून बनता है, तो लोकसभा सीटों की नई संख्या को नवीनतम जनगणना के आंकड़ों के अनुसार वितरित करना होगा।

- The draft refers to the latest census several times. मसौदे में कई बार नवीनतम जनगणना का उल्लेख किया गया है।

Clause 4 and 8 खंड 4 और 8

- Clause 4 says: "It shall be the duty of the Commission to readjust, on the basis of the latest census figures, the allocation of seats in the House of the People to the States and Union Territories...."

खंड 4 कहता है: "आयोग का यह कर्तव्य होगा कि वह नवीनतम जनगणना के आंकड़ों के आधार पर राज्यों और केंद्र शासित प्रदेशों के लिए लोकसभा में सीटों का पुनः समायोजन करे...।"



- Clause 8 says, “The Commission shall, on the basis of the latest census figures...determine...the number of seats in the House of People to be allocated to each State and Union Territory...”
खंड 8 कहता है, “आयोग नवीनतम जनगणना के आंकड़ों के आधार पर... प्रत्येक राज्य और केंद्र शासित प्रदेश को आवंटित लोकसभा सीटों की संख्या निर्धारित करेगा...”

17A. ‘Delimitation with old data can upset electoral framework’ ‘पुराने डेटा के साथ परिसीमन चुनावी ढांचे को बिगाड़ सकता है’

- The **Supreme Court** cautioned in 2025 that delimitation conducted on **Census data** gathered prior to 2026 risked destabilising the “uniform electoral framework” envisaged by the Constitution and blurring the clear demarcation between constitutional prescription and political discretion.
सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने 2025 में चेतावनी दी कि 2026 से पहले एकत्र की गई **जनगणना डेटा** पर किया गया परिसीमन संविधान द्वारा परिकल्पित “समान चुनावी ढांचे” को अस्थिर करने का जोखिम रखता है और संवैधानिक प्रावधान तथा राजनीतिक विवेक के बीच स्पष्ट अंतर को धुंधला कर सकता है।
- The court was dealing with a plea for the conduct of delimitation of Assembly seats in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.
अदालत आंध्र प्रदेश और तेलंगाना में विधानसभा सीटों के परिसीमन कराने की याचिका पर सुनवाई कर रही थी।
- The petitioner, **K. Purushottam Reddy**, had argued that by conducting delimitation in the Union Territory of **Jammu and Kashmir** in 2022, the Centre was discriminating against the two States.
याचिकाकर्ता **के. पुरुषोत्तम रेड्डी** ने तर्क दिया था कि 2022 में **जम्मू और कश्मीर** केंद्र शासित प्रदेश में परिसीमन करके केंद्र सरकार दो राज्यों के साथ भेदभाव कर रही है।
- The court highlighted that even “legitimate expectations” of the electorate could not overawe the constitutional embargo under the **provisos to Articles 82 and 170 of the Constitution that “no readjustment of seats or division of States into territorial constituencies can be undertaken until the relevant data from the first census conducted after 2026 is published”**.
अदालत ने कहा कि मतदाताओं की “वैध अपेक्षाएं” भी संविधान के अनुच्छेद **82 और 170** के प्रावधानों के तहत लगाए गए संवैधानिक प्रतिबंध पर हावी नहीं हो सकतीं, जिसके अनुसार “2026 के बाद पहली जनगणना के आंकड़े प्रकाशित होने तक सीटों के पुनः समायोजन या राज्यों को क्षेत्रीय निर्वाचन क्षेत्रों में विभाजित करने की कोई प्रक्रिया नहीं की जा सकती”।
- The court said isolated departures from the constitutional embargo for the sake of two States would amount to an impermissible deviation from the equality principle embedded in Article **14** of the Constitution.
अदालत ने कहा कि दो राज्यों के लिए इस संवैधानिक प्रतिबंध से अलग जाना अनुच्छेद **14** में निहित समानता के सिद्धांत का अस्वीकार्य उल्लंघन होगा।
- Rejecting the plea, the court held that a “contravention of the constitutional timeline provided under Article **170(3)** would not only destabilise the uniform electoral framework envisaged by the Constitution but also blur the clear demarcation between constitutional prescription and political discretion”.
याचिका खारिज करते हुए अदालत ने कहा कि अनुच्छेद **170(3)** के तहत निर्धारित संवैधानिक समय-सीमा का उल्लंघन न केवल संविधान द्वारा परिकल्पित समान चुनावी ढांचे को अस्थिर करेगा बल्कि संवैधानिक प्रावधान और राजनीतिक विवेक के बीच स्पष्ट अंतर को भी धुंधला करेगा।
- The court, in the 1975 case of **Indira Nehru Gandhi versus Raj Narain**, said the Constitution empowered Parliament with the task of framing electoral laws for “free and fair elections”, which included “delimitation of constituencies and allotment of seats” to Parliament and the State legislatures.
अदालत ने 1975 के मामले **इंदिरा नेहरू गांधी बनाम राज नारायण** में कहा था कि संविधान संसद को “स्वतंत्र और निष्पक्ष चुनाव” के लिए चुनावी कानून बनाने का अधिकार देता है, जिसमें संसद और राज्य विधानसभाओं के लिए “निर्वाचन क्षेत्रों का परिसीमन और सीटों का आवंटन” शामिल है।
- The court’s 2024 decision in the **Kishorchandra Chhanganlal Rathod case** has tilted away from the inviolability of the delimitation exercise.



अदालत का 2024 का निर्णय किशोरचंद्र छगनलाल राठौड़ मामले में परिसीमन प्रक्रिया की अछूती स्थिति से हटकर गया है।

- It held that it could certainly intervene if the delimitation was found to be “manifestly arbitrary and irreconcilable to constitutional values”. इसमें कहा गया कि यदि परिसीमन “स्पष्ट रूप से मनमाना और संवैधानिक मूल्यों के साथ असंगत” पाया जाता है तो अदालत निश्चित रूप से हस्तक्षेप कर सकती है।

The institutionalised sluggishness of the legal system

GS II: Polity, Judiciary

MOB

For the millions of Indians who have spent years navigating the labyrinthine corridors of our legal system, the courthouse is often a place where hope goes to languish. While high-profile cases capture the headlines and move through the docket with visible momentum, the average citizen finds himself trapped in a cycle of adjournments and procedural hurdles that can span generations. We have reached a point where the phrase “justice delayed is justice denied” is no longer a warning but a standard operating procedure.

It's time for the focus to shift away from the judge holding the gavel and towards the people standing in the dock. The urgency of judicial reform in India is not a professional concern for lawyers or a theoretical exercise for academics; it is a fundamental human rights crisis that demands a total reimagining of how the state delivers on its promise of fairness.

The excruciating wait

The primary grievance of the common person is the sheer, suffocating weight of pendency. With over five crore cases currently clogging the arteries of our courts, the system has become its own worst enemy. For a layman, the legal process feels like a black hole where time and money disappear without a clear horizon for resolution. This backlog emboldens the lawbreaker and exhausts the law-abiding. When a land dispute takes 20 years to resolve, the winner often finds the victory hollow, having spent more on legal fees than the property was worth.

The institutionalised sluggishness of the Indian legal system has transformed the pursuit of justice into an endurance test, giving rise to the grim observation that “the process is the punishment.” Unnecessary procedural bottlenecks and the culture of frequent, and often frivolous adjournments create a gravitational pull that keeps cases in limbo for decades, effectively stripping the accused of their dignity, livelihood, and social standing long before a verdict is ever reached. This systemic failure is most visible in the tragic stories of individuals charged with grave offenses who are eventually acquitted, only to find their lives in ruins and their prime years spent behind bars, without compensation.

It is particularly unconscionable that those charged under stringent anti-terrorism laws, such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), languish in overcrowded prisons without trial and without the possibility of bail, as the *prima facie* evidence standard often makes



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For a layman, the legal process feels like a black hole where time and money disappear without a clear horizon for resolution

incarceration the rule rather than the exception. To uphold the constitutional promise of liberty, the judiciary must urgently lay down clear, mandatory guidelines that fix a firm timeline – perhaps no longer than one or two years – within which the state must either commence a meaningful trial or grant the accused bail.

This transition requires a radical embrace of the 21st century. For too long, our courts have operated as if they were frozen in the colonial era, reliant on mountains of physical files, and the personal presence of litigants who must often travel hundreds of miles just to hear a new date for the hearing. The digital revolution that has transformed how we bank, shop, and communicate must now also conquer the judiciary. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data-driven case management are not luxuries, but necessary tools to dismantle the backlog. Imagine a system where AI handles the routine administrative filing, flags delays, and even assists in legal research, allowing judges to focus their cognitive energy on the heart of the matter.

Need for inclusivity and accessibility

However, a faster court is only half the battle; we also require a more inclusive one. Citizens' trust in the law is deeply tied to whether they see themselves reflected in the people who interpret it. The judiciary has long been criticised for being an insular “old boys’ club,” where the glass ceiling for women and marginalised communities remains intact, with too many judges being relatives of earlier generations of judges. True reform means breaking these barriers to ensure that the Bench represents the vast and diverse tapestry of India. This is not about identity politics; it is about judicial quality. A Bench that understands the lived realities of a diverse population is a Bench that can deliver more nuanced and empathetic rulings. When a woman or a person from a historically oppressed community sits in judgment, she brings a perspective that enriches the law and makes it more responsive to the nuances of Indian society.

Beyond the composition of the Bench, there is the crushing issue of affordability. In its current form, justice is a luxury good. The cost of hiring competent counsel and the incidental expenses of long-term litigation effectively price out a significant portion of the population. India must overhaul the legal aid system, transforming it into a high-calibre institution that offers the poor a comparable quality of the representation available to the rich. If the state can provide food

and education, it must also provide the means for a citizen to defend their life and liberty.

Furthermore, the geographical centralisation of our highest courts remains a relic of the past. The idea that a litigant from south India must travel to the capital for a final appeal is an unnecessary burden. Regional Benches or a more robust system of virtual hearings for the Supreme Court would go a long way in making the highest level of justice a local reality rather than a distant dream.

Beneath these logistical changes lies the soul of the reform: the preservation of constitutional morality and judicial independence. The people need a judiciary that acts as a fearless referee, one that can hold the powerful to account without blinking. This independence is the bedrock of a functioning democracy. Yet, independence should not be confused with a lack of accountability. By opening up the process – through live-streaming of important cases and clearer criteria for judicial appointments – the court can rebuild the ‘social contract’ it has with the people.

A systemic overhaul

The country must stop treating judicial reform as a series of small, incremental adjustments and start treating it as a national emergency. The current state of affairs is a slow-motion catastrophe that erodes the rule of law every day. The people are not looking for grand speeches or ceremonial promises; they are looking for a system that works, and is fast and fair. We need to move away from the adversarial culture that views every legal disagreement as a battle to the death, toward a culture of resolution. We need judges who are as comfortable with a computer screen as they are with a law book, and a legal profession that values the closing of a case more than the prolongation of a fee.

As we move towards ‘Viksit Bharat’ 2047, the measure of our success as a nation will not just be our GDP or our technological prowess, but how we treat the person seeking justice in our courts. If we fail to reform, we risk a future where the law is seen merely as a tool of the powerful rather than as a shield for the weak.

But if we succeed, we can create a system where the scales of justice are finally balanced, ensuring that no Indian is ever again forced to wait a lifetime for a truth that should have been delivered in a day. The time for deliberation has passed; the time for a transformation that puts the citizen first, is now.

17A. The institutionalised sluggishness of the legal system

कानूनी व्यवस्था की संस्थागत धीमापन

The excruciating wait पीड़ादायक प्रतीक्षा

- It is particularly unconscionable that those charged under stringent anti-terrorism laws, such as the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)**, languish in overcrowded prisons without trial and without the possibility of bail, as the **prima facie evidence standard** often makes incarceration the rule rather than the exception.

यह अत्यंत अमानवीय है कि कठोर आतंकवाद-रोधी कानूनों जैसे **UAPA** के तहत आरोपित लोग बिना सुनवाई और जमानत के अवसर के भीड़भाड़ वाली जेलों में रहते हैं, क्योंकि **prima facie साक्ष्य मानक** के कारण कारावास सामान्य नियम बन जाता है।



- To uphold the constitutional promise of **liberty**, the judiciary must urgently lay down clear, mandatory guidelines that fix a firm timeline — perhaps no longer than one or two years — within which the state must either commence a meaningful trial or grant the accused bail. **स्वतंत्रता** के संवैधानिक वादे को बनाए रखने के लिए न्यायपालिका को स्पष्ट और अनिवार्य दिशानिर्देश बनाने चाहिए, जिनमें एक निश्चित समयसीमा — संभवतः एक या दो वर्ष — तय हो, जिसके भीतर राज्य को या तो मुकदमा शुरू करना होगा या जमानत देनी होगी।
- This transition requires a radical embrace of the **21st century**. यह परिवर्तन **21वीं सदी** को पूरी तरह अपनाने की मांग करता है।
- For too long, our courts have operated as if they were frozen in the **colonial era**, reliant on mountains of physical files, and the personal presence of litigants who must often travel hundreds of miles just to hear a new date for the hearing. बहुत लंबे समय तक, हमारे न्यायालय ऐसे संचालित होते रहे हैं मानो वे **औपनिवेशिक युग** में जमे हुए हों, जहाँ कागजी फाइलों के ढेर और वादियों की व्यक्तिगत उपस्थिति आवश्यक होती है, जिन्हें केवल अगली तारीख सुनने के लिए सैकड़ों मील यात्रा करनी पड़ती है।
- The **digital revolution** that has transformed how we bank, shop, and communicate must now also conquer the judiciary. जिस **डिजिटल क्रांति** ने हमारे बैंकिंग, खरीदारी और संचार को बदल दिया है, उसे अब न्यायपालिका में भी लागू किया जाना चाहिए।
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data-driven case management** are not luxuries, but necessary tools to dismantle the backlog. **कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता (AI)** और **डेटा-आधारित केस प्रबंधन** विलासिता नहीं बल्कि लंबित मामलों को समाप्त करने के लिए आवश्यक उपकरण हैं।
- True reform means breaking these barriers to ensure that the **Bench** represents the vast and diverse tapestry of India. वास्तविक सुधार का अर्थ है इन बाधाओं को तोड़ना ताकि **पीठ (Bench)** भारत की व्यापक और विविध संरचना का प्रतिनिधित्व कर सके।
- This is not about identity politics; it is about **judicial quality**. यह पहचान की राजनीति का विषय नहीं है; यह **न्यायिक गुणवत्ता** का विषय है।
- A Bench that understands the lived realities of a diverse population is a Bench that can deliver more **nuanced and empathetic rulings**. एक ऐसी पीठ जो विविध जनसंख्या के वास्तविक जीवन अनुभवों को समझती है, वह अधिक **सूक्ष्म और सहानुभूतिपूर्ण निर्णय** दे सकती है।
- When a woman or a person from a historically oppressed community sits in judgment, she brings a perspective that enriches the law and makes it more responsive to the nuances of Indian society. जब कोई महिला या ऐतिहासिक रूप से वंचित समुदाय का व्यक्ति न्याय करता है, तो वह एक ऐसा दृष्टिकोण लाता है जो कानून को समृद्ध बनाता है और इसे भारतीय समाज की जटिलताओं के प्रति अधिक संवेदनशील बनाता है।
- Beyond the composition of the Bench, there is the crushing issue of **affordability**. पीठ की संरचना से परे, एक गंभीर समस्या **सुलभता (affordability)** की है।
- In its current form, justice is a **luxury good**. वर्तमान स्वरूप में न्याय एक **विलासिता की वस्तु** बन गया है।
- The cost of hiring competent counsel and the incidental expenses of long-term litigation effectively price out a significant portion of the population. योग्य वकील नियुक्त करने की लागत और दीर्घकालिक मुकदमेबाजी के सहायक खर्च जनसंख्या के बड़े हिस्से को न्याय से वंचित कर देते हैं।
- Furthermore, the **geographical centralisation** of our highest courts remains a relic of the past. इसके अतिरिक्त, हमारे सर्वोच्च न्यायालयों का भौगोलिक **केन्द्रीकरण** अतीत की एक विरासत बना हुआ है।
- **Regional Benches** or a more robust system of **virtual hearings** for the Supreme Court would go a long way in making the highest level of justice a local reality rather than a distant dream. क्षेत्रीय पीठ या सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के लिए एक मजबूत **वर्चुअल सुनवाई प्रणाली (virtual hearings)** न्याय को स्थानीय वास्तविकता बनाने में सहायक होगी।



On the Sabarimala temple entry case

As a Supreme Court Bench examines the broader implications of its 2018 Sabarimala ruling, the case prompts a look into the evolution of the essential religious practice doctrine, role of the State and the judiciary in religious reform, and the arguments over whether Ayyappa followers qualify as a religious denomination

ISS II: Policy
LETTER AND SPIRIT

Kartikay Singh
Monalisa Nanda

The story so far:
A nine-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court (SC), led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, is currently hearing petitions relating to discrimination against women at religious places, examining the correctness and broader constitutional implications of its 2018 ruling in *Indian Young Lawyers' Association vs. State of Kerala* on women's entry into the Sabarimala Temple in Kerala.

On September 28, 2018, a five-judge Constitution Bench of the apex court, by a 4:1 majority, struck down the age-based restriction, declaring Rule 3(b) of the Kerala Hindu Places of Public Worship (Authorisation of Entry) Rules, 1965 - which permitted 'religious denominations' to exclude women from public places of worship on grounds of custom - as unconstitutional. The exclusion of women of "menstruating age" violated the guarantees of equality, non-discrimination and dignity, the apex court had held. It further ruled that devotees of Lord Ayyappa do not constitute a separate "religious denomination", and that the said custom does not qualify as an "essential religious practice" (ERP).

Balancing religious freedom and equality
Articles 25-28 under Part III (Fundamental Rights) of the Constitution guarantee the right to freedom of religion, with the Sabarimala matter focused on the interplay between Articles 25 and 26. While Article 25 secures to "all persons" the freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practise, and propagate religion, Article 26 protects the autonomy of 'religious denominations' to manage their own affairs in matters of religion, establish institutions, and acquire and administer property. Both rights are subject to 'public order', 'morality', and 'health', with Article 25 additionally limited by 'other fundamental rights'. Framed against the backdrop of India's religious diversity, these provisions safeguard the beliefs and practices of all faiths.

The doctrinal foundation for interpreting these provisions lies in *Sri Lakshminidra Thiruha Swamikal of Shirur Mutt* (1954), where the Supreme Court held that religion also includes practices essential to the faith while distinguishing them from secular activities, particularly administration, property and finance, which remain amenable to state regulation. This sacred-secular distinction is decided through the ERP doctrine, which requires courts to assess, with reference to religious texts and tenets, whether a practice is integral to a faith, i.e., whether its absence would fundamentally alter the religion itself, as was clarified in *Acharu Jagdishwarananda Avadhuta* (2004). The doctrine seeks to balance 'religious autonomy' with 'constitutional accountability'.

Union government's contentions
The Union government, led by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, had advanced three primary contentions: first, that "constitutional morality" is inherently subjective and not an independent ground of judicial review; second, that



On September 28, 2018, the Supreme Court struck down the ban on entry of women of 'menstruating age' into the Sabarimala temple. P11

Judges should not be social reformers, which must instead emanate from the legislature and society; and third, that the judiciary is ill-equipped to determine ERPs, as the Constitution leaves questions of religious essentiality to the faith itself. Building on this, the Union further argued that the 2018 ruling failed to account for the internal plurality of Indian religions and the phrase "any section thereof" in Article 26, which, it contends, extends denominational protection to sub-groups within a faith.

Moreover, Mr. Mehta, citing the example of temples where men are excluded, and a Kerala temple where men enter dressed as women, argued that religions may impose male or female-centric restrictions, which have nothing to do with gender stereotypes or patriarchy. In a related vein, the application of Article 17 (abolition of untouchability) to the exclusion of women was contested on the ground that it is historically confined to caste-based practices and cannot be extended to biological conditions such as menstruation without distorting its constitutional purpose.

On conducting reforms in religion
At its core, the issue turns to how the Constitution distinguishes between protected religious practices and those amenable to reform. While Article 25(1) guarantees freedom of conscience and religion, Article 25(2) permits regulation of secular activities associated with religious practice. During the Constituent Assembly debates, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar pointed out the need to separate what is "essentially religious" from secular activities intertwined with religion, advocating limits on religious definitions to allow State intervention in non-essential practices. Yet, despite the Constitutional provision not clearly demarcating this boundary, the framers' intent was to protect all practices that are inherently and essentially religious under Article 25(1) - a position now narrowed by the evolving ERP doctrine, which shifts the inquiry from whether a practice is inherently religious to whether it is indispensable to a religion's core identity.

In doing so, the judicial position taken in earlier cases adjudicated by the top court between 1950 and 1980, including that in *Mahant Sri Jagannath Ramanuj Das* (1954) and *Seshummal* (1972), is undone.

These verdicts recognised that Article 25(1) protects not only doctrine but also rituals, observances, ceremonies, and modes of worship, i.e., all practices that are essentially religious and not merely things that have scriptural backing to be "essential to the religion". This stands in contrast to later rulings such as *Adi Salva Shivacharyalga* (2015) and *Indian Young Lawyers' Association* (2018), wherein the Supreme Court held that even if there is proof of a certain practice being followed since pre-constitutional times, it cannot be afforded protection under Article 25(1) if it is not essential to the core functions of the religion. This pattern points to a gradual narrowing of the religious protections afforded under Article 25(1), with the court allowing for practices and rituals falling at the periphery of religious practice to be reformed.

Importantly, Article 25(2)(a) allows the 'State' to make laws regulating secular functions associated with religion while also empowering it under Article 25(2)(b) to provide for social welfare or reforms. Article 25(2)(b) was originally designed to dismantle caste-based exclusion in Hindu religious institutions, not gender-based restrictions. As reflected in the Constituent Assembly debates, particularly the views of K.M. Munshi and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the phrase "all persons are equally entitled" emerged in the context of caste and communal inequities. Accordingly, gender equality claims are better grounded in Articles 14 and 15, rather than by expanding Article 25(2)(b).

Thus, the Constitutional text reflects the framers' intent to vest the power of reform in the State, which must calibrate such measures in a manner that is aligned with the needs of its constituent society. So, what role does the judiciary play? While Article 25(2) vests the power of reform in the State, courts retain the authority to intervene where religious practices (like witchcraft or human sacrifice) offend public order, morality or health. Therefore, a combined reading of Articles 25 (1) and (2) indicates that, while the State has the power to actively pursue social reforms in matters of religion with a limited scope of application of "transformative constitutionalism" by the courts, the judiciary retains the power to strike down practices that may be completely abhorrent to the spirit of a democratic society.

THE GIST

Articles 25-28 under Part III (Fundamental Rights) of the Constitution guarantee the right to freedom of religion, with the Sabarimala matter focused on the interplay between Articles 25 and 26.

The Union government argued that "constitutional morality" is subjective and not an independent ground for judicial review; that judges should not act as social reformers, with reforms instead emanating from the legislature and society; and that the judiciary is ill-equipped to determine essential religious practices.

At its core, the issue turns to how the Constitution distinguishes between protected religious practices and those amenable to reform.

The definition of religious denomination

Religious denominations or sects enjoy a special set of rights under Article 26, extending beyond the general protections under Article 25, including autonomy in managing religious affairs. Additionally, while the right under Article 25 is subject to all other fundamental rights, the same is not the case with the 'denominational rights' granted under Article 26, making the "denomination" status extremely covetable.

In *Shirur Mutt* (1954), the apex court adopted the Oxford Dictionary meaning of "denomination" and laid down a three-part test to be fulfilled by a group of individuals to qualify as a denomination - (1) common faith, (2) common organisation, and (3) designation by a distinct name. Applying this in the *Indian Young Lawyers' Association* (2018), the SC denied denominational status to Ayyappa devotees, holding that they were not distinct from the broader Hindu faith, particularly as the temple permitted entry to Hindus across sects rather than exclusively to Ayyappa followers.

However, critics often rely on an argument tracing the origins of Article 26 to propound for denominational rights to the devotees of Ayyappa Swami. Article 26 of the Indian Constitution is borrowed from Article 44 of the Irish Constitution from 1937, which at one point in time, specifically enumerated denominations like the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and so on. Therefore, the expression "religious denomination" is one that was originally used in the context of clearly defined and organised Christian sects. This definition, when juxtaposed in the context of Hinduism's open architectural background, often loses meaning, as sects often do not function independently of the primary Hindu tenets.

Presumably to account for this difference, the framers of the Constitution extended denominational rights to every religious denomination "or any section thereof" under Article 26(1). This allows for a scenario where sections of a larger faith, even if not completely distinct from the said faith, enjoy 'denominational rights' available under the provision. (*Kartikay Singh is a lawyer based in New Delhi. Monalisa Nanda is a lawyer and public policy professional. Views expressed are personal.*)

17A. On the Sabarimala temple entry case सबरीमला मंदिर प्रवेश मामले पर

- A nine-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court (SC), led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, is currently hearing petitions relating to discrimination against women at religious places, examining the correctness and broader constitutional implications of its 2018 ruling in *Indian Young Lawyers' Association vs. State of Kerala* on women's entry into the Sabarimala Temple in Kerala.

भारत के सर्वोच्च न्यायालय की नौ-न्यायाधीशीय संविधान पीठ, जिसकी अध्यक्षता भारत के मुख्य न्यायाधीश सूर्यकांत कर रहे हैं, वर्तमान में धार्मिक स्थलों पर महिलाओं के विरुद्ध भेदभाव से संबंधित याचिकाओं की सुनवाई कर रही है, जिसमें 2018 के निर्णय *Indian Young Lawyers' Association बनाम*



State of Kerala में सबरीमाला मंदिर में महिलाओं के प्रवेश से जुड़े निर्णय की वैधता और व्यापक संवैधानिक प्रभावों की जांच की जा रही है।

- On September 28, 2018, a **five-judge Constitution Bench** of the apex court, by a **4:1 majority**, struck down the **age-based restriction**, declaring Rule 3(b) of the **Kerala Hindu Places of Public Worship (Authorisation of Entry) Rules, 1965** – which permitted ‘religious denominations’ to exclude women from public places of worship on grounds of custom — as unconstitutional.
- 28 सितंबर 2018 को, सर्वोच्च न्यायालय की पाँच-न्यायाधीशिय संविधान पीठ ने 4:1 बहुमत से आयु-आधारित प्रतिबंध को निरस्त कर दिया, और केरल हिंदू सार्वजनिक पूजा स्थल (प्रवेश की अनुमति) नियम, 1965 के नियम 3(ब) — जो ‘धार्मिक संप्रदायों’ को परंपरा के आधार पर महिलाओं को सार्वजनिक पूजा स्थलों से बाहर रखने की अनुमति देता था — को असंवैधानिक घोषित किया।
- The exclusion of women of “**menstruating age**” violated the guarantees of **equality, non-discrimination and dignity**, the apex court had held.
- न्यायालय ने माना कि “**रजस्वला आयु**” की महिलाओं का बहिष्कार **समानता, अभेदभाव-निषेध और गरिमा** के संवैधानिक अधिकारों का उल्लंघन करता है।
- It further ruled that devotees of **Lord Ayyappa** do not constitute a separate ‘**religious denomination**’, and that the said custom does not qualify as an “**essential religious practice (ERP)**”.
- न्यायालय ने यह भी कहा कि **भगवान अयप्पा** के भक्त एक अलग **धार्मिक संप्रदाय** नहीं बनाते, और यह परंपरा **आवश्यक धार्मिक प्रथा** के रूप में मान्य नहीं है।

Balancing religious freedom and equality धार्मिक स्वतंत्रता और समानता का संतुलन

- Articles 25-28** under Part III (**Fundamental Rights**) of the Constitution guarantee the **right to freedom of religion**, with the Sabarimala matter focused on the interplay between **Articles 25 and 26**.
- संविधान के भाग III (**मौलिक अधिकार**) के अंतर्गत **अनुच्छेद 25-28** धर्म की स्वतंत्रता के अधिकार की गारंटी देते हैं, और सबरीमाला मामला विशेष रूप से **अनुच्छेद 25 और 26** के बीच संबंध पर केंद्रित है।
- Both rights are **subject to ‘public order’, ‘morality’, and ‘health’,** with Article 25 additionally limited by **‘other fundamental rights’**.
- दोनों अधिकार ‘सार्वजनिक व्यवस्था’, ‘नैतिकता’ और ‘स्वास्थ्य’ के अधीन हैं, तथा अनुच्छेद 25 पर अतिरिक्त रूप से ‘**अन्य मौलिक अधिकारों**’ की भी सीमा लागू होती है।
- The **doctrinal foundation** for interpreting these provisions lies in **Sri Lakshmindra Thirtha Swamiar of Shirur Mutt (1954)**, where the **Supreme Court** held that religion also includes **practices essential to the faith** while distinguishing them from **secular activities**, particularly **administration, property and finance**, which remain amenable to **state regulation**.
- इन प्रावधानों की व्याख्या के लिए **सैद्धांतिक आधार Sri Lakshmindra Thirtha Swamiar of Shirur Mutt (1954)** में निहित है, जहाँ **सर्वोच्च न्यायालय** ने माना कि धर्म में **धर्म के लिए आवश्यक प्रथाएँ** भी शामिल होती हैं, जबकि उन्हें **धर्मनिरपेक्ष गतिविधियों**, विशेषकर **प्रशासन, संपत्ति और वित्त**, से अलग किया गया, जो **राज्य विनियमन** के अधीन रहते हैं।
- This **sacred-secular distinction** is decided through the **ERP doctrine**, which requires courts to assess, with reference to **religious texts and tenets**, whether a practice is **integral to a faith**, i.e., whether its absence would fundamentally alter the religion itself, as was clarified in **Acharya Jagdishwarananda Avadhuta (2004)**.
- यह **पवित्र-धर्मनिरपेक्ष भेद आवश्यक धार्मिक प्रथा** सिद्धांत के माध्यम से निर्धारित किया जाता है, जिसके अंतर्गत न्यायालयों को **धार्मिक ग्रंथों और सिद्धांतों** के संदर्भ में यह आकलन करना होता है कि कोई प्रथा **धर्म का अभिन्न अंग** है या नहीं, अर्थात् उसकी अनुपस्थिति धर्म को मूल रूप से बदल देगी या नहीं, जैसा कि **Acharya Jagdishwarananda Avadhuta (2004)** में स्पष्ट किया गया।
- The **doctrine seeks to balance ‘religious autonomy’ with ‘constitutional accountability’**.
- यह सिद्धांत **धार्मिक स्वायत्तता और संवैधानिक जवाबदेही** के बीच संतुलन स्थापित करने का प्रयास करता है।

Union government’s contentions केंद्र सरकार के तर्क



- The **Union government**, led by **Solicitor General Tushar Mehta**, had advanced three primary contentions: first, that **“constitutional morality”** is inherently **subjective** and not an independent ground of **judicial review**; second, that judges should not be **social reformers**, which must instead emanate from the **legislature and society**; and third, that the judiciary is **ill-equipped to determine ERPs**, as the Constitution leaves questions of **religious essentiality** to the faith itself.

केंद्र सरकार, जिसका प्रतिनिधित्व महाधिवक्ता तुषार मेहता कर रहे थे, ने तीन मुख्य तर्क प्रस्तुत किए: पहला, कि **संवैधानिक नैतिकता** स्वभावतः **व्यक्तिपरक** है और **न्यायिक समीक्षा** का स्वतंत्र आधार नहीं है; दूसरा, कि न्यायाधीशों को **सामाजिक सुधारक** नहीं होना चाहिए, यह कार्य **विधायिका और समाज** से आना चाहिए; और तीसरा, कि न्यायपालिका **आवश्यक धार्मिक प्रथाओं** का निर्धारण करने में सक्षम नहीं है, क्योंकि संविधान **धार्मिक आवश्यकताओं** के प्रश्न को स्वयं धर्म पर छोड़ता है।

- Building on this, the Union further argued that the **2018 ruling failed to account for the internal plurality of Indian religions and the phrase “any section thereof”** in Article 26, which, it contends, extends **denominational protection to sub-groups within a faith**. इसी आधार पर, केंद्र ने आगे तर्क दिया कि **2018 का निर्णय** भारतीय धर्मों की **आंतरिक विविधता** को ध्यान में रखने में विफल रहा तथा अनुच्छेद 26 में प्रयुक्त **“उसका कोई भी वर्ग”** वाक्यांश **धार्मिक संप्रदायों की सुरक्षा** को **धर्म के भीतर उप-समूहों** तक विस्तारित करता है।

- Moreover, **Mr. Mehta**, citing the example of temples where men are excluded, and a Kerala temple where men enter dressed as women, argued that religions may impose **male or female-centric restrictions**, which have nothing to do with **gender stereotypes or patriarchy**.

इसके अतिरिक्त, श्री मेहता ने उन मंदिरों का उदाहरण देते हुए जहाँ पुरुषों का प्रवेश वर्जित है तथा केरल के एक मंदिर में जहाँ पुरुष महिलाओं के वेश में प्रवेश करते हैं, यह तर्क दिया कि धर्म **पुरुष या महिला-केंद्रित प्रतिबंध** लगा सकते हैं, जिनका **लैंगिक रूढ़ियों या पितृसत्ता** से कोई संबंध नहीं है।

- In a related vein, the application of **Article 17 (abolition of untouchability)** to the exclusion of women was contested on the ground that it is historically confined to **caste-based practices** and cannot be extended to **biological conditions such as menstruation** without **distorting its constitutional purpose**.

इसी संदर्भ में, महिलाओं के बहिष्कार पर **अनुच्छेद 17 (अस्पृश्यता का उन्मूलन)** के प्रयोग का विरोध इस आधार पर किया गया कि यह ऐतिहासिक रूप से **जाति-आधारित प्रथाओं** तक सीमित है और इसे **मासिक धर्म जैसी जैविक अवस्थाओं** तक विस्तारित करना इसके संवैधानिक उद्देश्य को विकृत करेगा।

- During the **Constituent Assembly debates**, **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar** pointed out the need to separate what is **“essentially religious”** from **secular activities intertwined with religion**, advocating limits on religious definitions to allow **State intervention in non-essential practices**.

संविधान सभा की बहसों के दौरान, डॉ. बी.आर. अम्बेडकर ने यह इंगित किया कि **मूलतः धार्मिक तत्वों** को धर्म से जुड़ी **धर्मनिरपेक्ष गतिविधियों** से अलग करना आवश्यक है तथा उन्होंने धार्मिक परिभाषाओं पर सीमाएँ निर्धारित करने का समर्थन किया ताकि **गैर-आवश्यक प्रथाओं में राज्य हस्तक्षेप** संभव हो सके।

- These verdicts recognised that **Article 25(1)** protects not only **doctrine** but also **rituals, observances, ceremonies, and modes of worship**, i.e., all practices that are **essentially religious** and not merely things that have **scriptural backing to be “essential to the religion”**.

इन निर्णयों ने यह मान्यता दी कि **अनुच्छेद 25(1)** केवल **सिद्धांतों** ही नहीं बल्कि **अनुष्ठानों, आचारों, समारोहों और पूजा की विधियों** की भी रक्षा करता है, अर्थात् वे सभी प्रथाएँ जो **मूलतः धार्मिक हैं**, न कि केवल वे जिनके पास **धार्मिक ग्रंथों में अनिवार्यता का आधार** है।

- This stands in contrast to later rulings such as **Adi Saiva Sivachariyargal (2015)** and **Indian Young Lawyers’ Association (2018)**, wherein the **Supreme Court** held that even if there is proof of a certain practice being followed since **pre-constitutional times**, it cannot be a **orded protection under Article 25(1)** if it is not **essential to the core functions of the religion**.

यह स्थिति बाद के निर्णयों, जैसे **Adi Saiva Sivachariyargal (2015)** और **Indian Young Lawyers’ Association (2018)** से भिन्न है, जिनमें **सर्वोच्च न्यायालय** ने कहा कि यदि कोई प्रथा **संविधान पूर्व काल** से चली आ रही हो, तब भी उसे **अनुच्छेद 25(1)** के अंतर्गत संरक्षण नहीं मिलेगा यदि वह **धर्म के मूल कार्यों के लिए आवश्यक** नहीं है।



- This pattern points to a gradual narrowing of the **religious protections** afforded under **Article 25(1)**, with the court allowing for practices and rituals falling at the **periphery of religious practice** to be reformed.
यह प्रवृत्ति दर्शाती है कि **अनुच्छेद 25(1)** के अंतर्गत प्रदान किए गए **धार्मिक संरक्षण** धीरे-धीरे सीमित हो रहे हैं, जहाँ न्यायालय **धार्मिक प्रथाओं के बाहरी क्षेत्र** में आने वाली प्रथाओं और अनुष्ठानों को **सुधार योग्य** मान रहा है।
- Importantly, **Article 25(2)(a)** allows the 'State' to make laws regulating **secular functions associated with religion** while also empowering it under **Article 25(2)(b)** to provide for **social welfare or reforms**.
महत्वपूर्ण रूप से, **अनुच्छेद 25(2)(a)** राज्य को धर्म से संबंधित धर्मनिरपेक्ष कार्यों के विनियमन के लिए कानून बनाने की अनुमति देता है, जबकि **अनुच्छेद 25(2)(b)** के तहत उसे **सामाजिक कल्याण या सुधार** के लिए सशक्त किया गया है।
- **Article 25(2)(b)** was originally designed to dismantle **caste-based exclusion in Hindu religious institutions, not gender-based restrictions**.
अनुच्छेद 25(2)(b) मूलतः हिंदू धार्मिक संस्थानों में जाति-आधारित भेदभाव को समाप्त करने के लिए बनाया गया था, न कि **लैंगिक प्रतिबंधों** के लिए।
- As reflected in the **Constituent Assembly debates**, particularly the views of **K.M. Munshi** and **Dr. B. R. Ambedkar**, the phrase "**all persons are equally entitled**" emerged in the **context of caste and communal inequities**.
जैसा कि **संविधान सभा की बहसों** में, विशेषकर **के.एम. मुंशी** और **डॉ. बी.आर. अम्बेडकर** के विचारों में परिलक्षित होता है, "**सभी व्यक्तियों को समान अधिकार है**" यह वाक्यांश **जातिगत और सामुदायिक असमानताओं** के संदर्भ में उभरा।
- Accordingly, **gender equality claims** are better grounded in **Articles 14 and 15**, rather than by expanding **Article 25(2)(b)**.
अतः **लैंगिक समानता के दावे** को **अनुच्छेद 14 और 15** में आधार मिलना अधिक उपयुक्त है, न कि **अनुच्छेद 25(2)(b)** के विस्तार के माध्यम से।
- Thus, the **Constitutional text** reflects the framers' intent to vest the **power of reform** in the **State**, which must calibrate such measures in a manner that is aligned with the needs of its constituents.
इस प्रकार **संवैधानिक पाठ** निर्माताओं की उस मंशा को दर्शाता है जिसमें **सुधार की शक्ति राज्य** को प्रदान की गई है, जिसे अपने नागरिकों की आवश्यकताओं के अनुरूप इन उपायों को संतुलित करना चाहिए।
- While **Article 25(2)** vests the power of reform in the **State**, courts retain the authority to intervene where **religious practices** (like **witchcraft or human sacrifice**) offend **public order, morality or health**.
जहाँ **अनुच्छेद 25(2)** सुधार की शक्ति **राज्य** को प्रदान करता है, वहीं न्यायालयों के पास यह अधिकार बना रहता है कि वे उन **धार्मिक प्रथाओं** (जैसे **जादूटोना या मानव बलि**) में हस्तक्षेप करें जो **लोक व्यवस्था, नैतिकता या स्वास्थ्य** के विरुद्ध हों।
- Therefore, a combined reading of **Articles 25 (1) and (2)** indicates that, while the **State** has the power to actively pursue **social reforms in matters of religion** with a limited scope of application of "**transformative constitutionalism**" by the courts, the **judiciary** retains the power to strike down practices that may be completely **abhorrent to the spirit of a democratic society**.
अतः **अनुच्छेद 25 (1) और (2)** का संयुक्त अध्ययन यह दर्शाता है कि जहाँ **राज्य** के पास **धार्मिक मामलों में सामाजिक सुधार** करने की शक्ति है तथा न्यायालयों द्वारा **परिवर्तनकारी संवैधानिकता** का सीमित प्रयोग किया जा सकता है, वहीं **न्यायपालिका** के पास उन प्रथाओं को निरस्त करने का अधिकार है जो **लोकतांत्रिक समाज की भावना के पूर्णतः विपरीत** हों।

The definition of religious denomination धार्मिक संप्रदाय की परिभाषा

- **Religious denominations** or sects enjoy a special set of rights under **Article 26**, extending beyond the general protections under **Article 25**, including **autonomy in managing religious affairs**.
धार्मिक संप्रदाय या पंथों को **अनुच्छेद 26** के अंतर्गत विशेष अधिकार प्राप्त हैं, जो **अनुच्छेद 25** के सामान्य संरक्षण से आगे बढ़ते हुए **धार्मिक मामलों के प्रबंधन में स्वायत्तता** प्रदान करते हैं।
- Additionally, while the right under **Article 25** is subject to all other **fundamental rights**, the same is not the case with the '**denominational rights**' granted under **Article 26**, making the



“denomination” status extremely covetable.

इसके अतिरिक्त, जहाँ अनुच्छेद 25 के अंतर्गत अधिकार अन्य सभी मौलिक अधिकारों के अधीन हैं, वहीं अनुच्छेद 26 के अंतर्गत दिए गए संप्रदायिक अधिकार इस प्रकार सीमित नहीं हैं, जिससे संप्रदाय का दर्जा अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण बन जाता है।

- In **Shirur Mutt (1954)**, the apex court adopted the **Oxford Dictionary meaning** of “denomination” and laid down a **three-part test** to be fulfilled by a group of individuals to qualify as a denomination - (1) **common faith**, (2) **common organisation**, and (3) **designation by a distinct name**.

Shirur Mutt (1954) में सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने “denomination” की **ऑक्सफोर्ड शब्दकोश की परिभाषा** को अपनाते हुए एक **तीन-स्तरीय परीक्षण** निर्धारित किया, जिसके अंतर्गत किसी समूह को संप्रदाय माने जाने के लिए (1) **समान आस्था**, (2) **समान संगठन**, और (3) **विशिष्ट नाम द्वारा पहचान** होना आवश्यक है।

- Applying this in the **Indian Young Lawyers’ Association (2018)**, the **SC denied** denominational status to **Ayyappa devotees**, holding that they were not distinct from the broader **Hindu faith**, particularly as the temple permitted entry to Hindus across sects rather than exclusively to Ayyappa followers.

इसे **Indian Young Lawyers’ Association (2018)** में लागू करते हुए, **सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने अयप्पा भक्तों** को संप्रदाय का दर्जा देने से इनकार किया, यह कहते हुए कि वे व्यापक **हिंदू धर्म** से अलग नहीं हैं, विशेषकर क्योंकि मंदिर सभी पंथों के हिंदुओं को प्रवेश देता है, न कि केवल अयप्पा अनुयायियों को।

- However, critics often rely on an argument tracing the origins of **Article 26** to propound for denominational rights to the devotees of **Ayyappa Swami**.

हालाँकि, आलोचक प्रायः **अनुच्छेद 26** की उत्पत्ति का संदर्भ देकर **अयप्पा स्वामी के भक्तों** को संप्रदायिक अधिकार देने का समर्थन करते हैं।

- **Article 26** of the **Indian Constitution** is borrowed from **Article 44 of the Irish Constitution (1937)**, which at one point in time, specifically enumerated denominations like the **Methodist Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and so on**.

भारतीय संविधान का अनुच्छेद 26, आयरलैंड के संविधान 1937 के अनुच्छेद 44 से लिया गया है, जिसमें एक समय पर विशेष रूप से आयरलैंड का मेथोडिस्ट चर्च, आयरलैंड का प्रेस्बिटेरियन चर्च आदि संप्रदायों का उल्लेख किया गया था।

- Therefore, the expression “**religious denomination**” is one that was originally used in the context of clearly defined and organised **Christian sects**.

अतः “**धार्मिक संप्रदाय**” की अभिव्यक्ति मूलतः स्पष्ट रूप से परिभाषित और संगठित **ईसाई पंथों** के संदर्भ में प्रयुक्त हुई थी।

- This definition, when juxtaposed in the context of **Hinduism’s open architectural background**, often loses meaning, as sects often do not function independently of the primary **Hindu tenets**.

यह परिभाषा जब **हिंदू धर्म की खुली संरचनात्मक पृष्ठभूमि** में लागू की जाती है, तो इसका अर्थ प्रायः कमजोर पड़ जाता है, क्योंकि पंथ अक्सर **हिंदू सिद्धांतों** से स्वतंत्र रूप से कार्य नहीं करते।

- Presumably to account for this difference, the framers of the Constitution extended denominational rights to every **religious denomination “or any section thereof”** under **Article 26(1)**.

संभवतः इस अंतर को ध्यान में रखते हुए, संविधान निर्माताओं ने **अनुच्छेद 26(1)** के अंतर्गत प्रत्येक **धार्मिक संप्रदाय “या उसके किसी भी वर्ग”** को संप्रदायिक अधिकार प्रदान किए।

- This allows for a scenario where sections of a larger faith, even if not completely distinct from the said faith, enjoy “**denominational rights**” available under the provision.

इससे ऐसी स्थिति उत्पन्न होती है जहाँ किसी बड़े धर्म के अंतर्गत आने वाले वर्ग, भले ही पूरी तरह पृथक न हों, फिर भी **संप्रदायिक अधिकारों** का लाभ प्राप्त कर सकते हैं।

GS Paper II: International Relations		17 April 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
17A	War brings U.S. close to net crude exporter for first time since WW2 युद्ध के कारण U.S. द्वितीय विश्व युद्ध के बाद पहली बार शुद्ध कच्चे तेल (crude) निर्यातक बनने के करीब	
17A	‘U.S. in a losing position in the Gulf, but Israel is winning’	



'U.S. खाड़ी (Gulf) में हार की स्थिति में है, लेकिन इज़राइल जीत रहा है'

War brings U.S. close to net crude exporter for first time since WW2



War dividend: Chemical and oil tankers anchored in New York harbour in New York City, U.S. REUTERS

GS III: IR
Reuters
HOUSTON

The U.S. nearly turned into a net crude exporter last week for the first time since World War Two as shipments surged close to a record high to meet demand from Asian and European buyers scrambling to replace Middle East supplies cut by the Iran war.

The U.S. and Israel's war with Iran triggered the largest ever disruption to the global energy market as Iranian threats to shipping stopped around a fifth of the world's oil and gas supplies from transiting the Strait of Hormuz waterway.

Refiners in Asia and Europe that depend on those supplies have bought alternative cargoes from wherever they can, sharply boosting demand for oil from the U.S., the world's largest producer. However, analysts and traders say the U.S. is rapidly approaching its export capacity.

producer.

एशिया और यूरोप की रिफाइनरियाँ जो इन आपूर्तियों पर निर्भर हैं, उन्होंने जहाँ से भी संभव हो वैकल्पिक कार्गो खरीदे, जिससे दुनिया के सबसे बड़े उत्पादक U.S. के तेल की मांग तेजी से बढ़ गई।

- On an annual basis, the U.S. was last a net exporter of crude in 1943, data showed. वार्षिक आधार पर, U.S. अंतिम बार 1943 में शुद्ध कच्चा तेल निर्यातक था, आंकड़ों से पता चला।

Net imports narrow

Net imports of crude oil, or the difference between imports and exports, narrowed to 66,000 barrels per day last week, the lowest on record in weekly data that goes back to 2001, according to U.S. government data released on Wednesday, while exports climbed to 5.2 million bpd, the highest in seven months.

On an annual basis, the U.S. was last a net exporter of crude in 1943, data showed.

Rising U.S. crude exports are evidence that Atlantic Basin and Asian buyers are reaching further out for available supply, with regional oil price differences making up for the costs of shipping, said Rystad vice president of oil markets, Janiv Shah.

Countries such as Greece have snapped up U.S. crude for the first time ever in recent months. About 2.4 million bpd, or some 47% of U.S. exports last week sailed toward Europe, according to ship tracking service Kpler. Around 1.49 million bpd, or about 37%, headed to Asia, up from 30% a year ago.

Top buyers included the Netherlands, Japan, France, Germany and South Korea.

A vessel carrying 5,00,000 barrels of crude signaled it was en route to Turkey, which would mark the first U.S. export to the country in at least a year, Kpler data showed.

Imports to the U.S., meanwhile, dropped by more than 1 million bpd to 5.3 million bpd last week. The U.S. still imports a lot of its crude as its refineries are designed to take heavier, more sour grades than the light sweet crude it produces.

The disruption to Middle East supplies blew out the premium for Brent crude futures over U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude futures to as much as \$20.69 a barrel last month, reducing U.S. buyers' appetite for imports, while making U.S. crude attractive to refiners in Europe and Asia.

The price of physical crude oil cargoes for prompt delivery to Europe hit a record high near \$150 a barrel on Monday.

17A. War brings U.S. close to net crude exporter for first time since WW2

युद्ध के कारण U.S. द्वितीय विश्व युद्ध के बाद पहली बार शुद्ध कच्चे तेल (crude) निर्यातक बनने के करीब

- The U.S. nearly turned into a net crude exporter last week for the first time since World War Two as shipments surged close to a record high to meet demand from Asian and European buyers scrambling to replace Middle East supplies cut by the Iran war.

U.S. पिछले सप्ताह लगभग पहली बार द्वितीय विश्व युद्ध के बाद शुद्ध कच्चा तेल निर्यातक (crude exporter) बन गया, क्योंकि शिपमेंट रिकॉर्ड स्तर के करीब पहुँच गए ताकि एशियाई और यूरोपीय खरीदारों की मांग पूरी की जा सके, जो ईरान युद्ध के कारण कटे हुए मध्य पूर्व आपूर्ति को बदलने के लिए संघर्ष कर रहे थे।

- Refiners in Asia and Europe that depend on those supplies have bought alternative cargoes from wherever they can, sharply boosting demand for oil from the U.S., the world's largest

GS Paper III: Economy		17 April 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
17A	India's rural models are shaping development diplomacy भारत के ग्रामीण मॉडल विकास कूटनीति को आकार दे रहे हैं	
17A	India-Zambia critical minerals talks stall over mining rights भारत-जाम्बिया क्रिटिकल मिनरल्स वार्ता खनन अधिकारों पर अटकी	
17A	Auto sector reaches 'broad' consensus on CAFE-III norms ऑटो सेक्टर में CAFE-III मानकों पर 'व्यापक' सहमति बनी	
17A	India could limit sulphur exports as supplies tighten भारत आपूर्ति तंगी के बीच सल्फर निर्यात सीमित कर सकता है	
17A	'India better placed than others to brave West Asia war impact'	



	‘भारत पश्चिम एशिया युद्ध के प्रभाव को झेलने में अन्य देशों से बेहतर स्थिति में है’
17A	Relaxation of U.S. day-trading rules opens the door to impulsive, high risk YOLO trading U.S. डे-ट्रेडिंग नियमों में ढील से आवेगी, उच्च जोखिम वाले YOLO ट्रेडिंग का रास्ता खुला

India's rural models are shaping development diplomacy

ISS III: Economy

MOB

When India launched the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) in 2011, under the Ministry of Rural Development, it did so with an ambitious objective: to tackle multidimensional poverty by enabling rural households to access gainful employment and sustainable livelihoods through self-employment, financial inclusion, and learning new skills.

Now, 15 years later, the programme's scale, endurance, and outcomes have exceeded even its early champions' expectations. Over 20 million women members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) earn over ₹1,00,000 in income, and women banking correspondents are present in over 60% of local governments. Further, over 50 million women have accessed bank credit, boosting female labour force participation since 2018.

Remarkably, the NRLM has crossed borders, guiding rural livelihood initiatives across the Global South, particularly in Africa, and is subtly shaping India's development diplomacy.

India's quiet transformation

The magnitude of the NRLM's achievements is striking. As of mid-2025, the mission is active in 742 districts; has reached over 100 million households; mobilised more than nine million SHGs; facilitated ₹51,368 crore in capitalisation support; and enabled bank linkages amounting to ₹12 lakh crore, an expansion unprecedented in both scale and its focus on women. The Union Budget 2026-27 strengthened this trajectory with a ₹19,200 crore allocation, reaffirming the NRLM as India's flagship programme for rural poverty alleviation. What sets the NRLM apart is not only its breadth but the ecosystem it has nurtured. It has created federated community institutions at the village, cluster, and block levels; established community-based cadres delivering last-mile services; and embedded rural women in formal financial systems. Such a combination of social mobilisation, institutional architecture, and



Veda Vaidyanathan

Fellow, Centre for Social and Economic Progress

In recent years, a growing number of African governments have begun exploring the Indian SHG-based livelihoods framework

access to credit and skills has made the mission a unique and enduring intervention in global development practice.

Beyond borders

Innovations in development rarely travel easily across borders because they are shaped by local political economies, social structures, and state capacities. Yet the NRLM's design appears unusually portable. In recent years, a growing number of African governments have begun exploring the Indian SHG-based livelihoods framework. Delegations from Ethiopia, Tanzania, Malawi, Kenya, and Rwanda have undertaken detailed study visits to India, examining not just the outcomes of the NRLM but the operational mechanics that make it work. They sought to understand how India managed to scale SHGs to tens of millions of women; how credit linkages with banks were created and sustained; how communities were mobilised into federations; how trained cadres were deployed at scale; and how accountability and financial discipline were embedded in the system. This surge of interest reflects a wider shift in how countries of the Global South envision development: no longer in terms of Western knowledge templates but through peer learning, centred on contextually relevant and locally rooted innovation.

African policymakers are drawn to the NRLM for several interrelated reasons. First, its focus on women's collective empowerment resonates strongly with ongoing efforts across Africa to deepen women's economic participation. The SHG model, built on pooled savings, peer learning, and trust-based credit discipline, offers a structured yet flexible way to strengthen women's agency. Second, the NRLM's architecture is cost-effective, relying not on heavy capital investment but on community-driven processes and cadre systems that allow even resource-constrained governments to scale the programme. Third, the model aligns well with the

realities of large informal economies across Africa, where livelihood diversification and microenterprise formation are crucial. And finally, the model appeals to these countries because it is an institution-building approach rather than a mere scheme; it strengthens local governance, enhances accountability, and creates long-term community capacity.

India's emerging development diplomacy

India's development cooperation has historically emphasised capacity-building, concessional finance, and technical assistance. The dissemination of the NRLM marks a clear evolution – the country is now exporting social-sector institutions grounded in its own developmental experience. Such institutional models create sustained linkages between bureaucracies, implementing agencies, and community organisations, offering a distinct channel for international engagement. They also provide potential entry points for collaboration in digital governance, agriculture, and financial architecture. The NRLM example illustrates how India's domestic innovations are shaping South-South cooperation by circulating knowledge and institutional practices rather than resources alone. To build on this momentum, India could institutionalise the sharing of its rural livelihoods knowledge through a dedicated Rural Livelihoods Knowledge Exchange Platform, linking state livelihood missions, training institutions, and African governments. Expanded training, longer fellowships, immersion visits and joint pilot projects could help adapt SHG-based initiatives to local contexts.

The NRLM is no longer only India's story of rural transformation. Growing interest from African nations demonstrates that India can generate solutions that develop livelihoods far beyond its borders. In doing so, New Delhi is shaping a new paradigm for global development.

Views expressed are personal.

17A. India's rural models are shaping development diplomacy भारत के ग्रामीण मॉडल विकास कूटनीति को आकार दे रहे हैं

- When India launched the **National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)** in 2011, under the Ministry of Rural Development, it did so with an ambitious objective: to tackle **multidimensional poverty** by enabling rural households to access gainful employment and **sustainable livelihoods** through self-employment, financial inclusion, and learning new skills.

जब भारत ने 2011 में **National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)** को ग्रामीण विकास मंत्रालय के अंतर्गत शुरू किया, तो इसका उद्देश्य **बहुआयामी गरीबी** से निपटना था, जिसके लिए ग्रामीण परिवारों को स्वरोजगार, वित्तीय समावेशन और नए कौशल सीखने के माध्यम से **सतत आजीविका** और लाभकारी रोजगार उपलब्ध कराना था।

- Now, 15 years later, the programme's scale, endurance, and outcomes have exceeded even its early champions' expectations.
अब, 15 वर्षों बाद, इस कार्यक्रम का विस्तार, स्थायित्व और परिणाम उसके प्रारंभिक समर्थकों की अपेक्षाओं से भी अधिक हो चुके हैं।
- Over 20 million women members of **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** earn over ₹1,00,000 in income, and women **banking correspondents** are present in over 60% of local governments.



Self-Help Groups (SHGs) की 20 मिलियन से अधिक महिला सदस्य ₹1,00,000 से अधिक आय अर्जित कर रही हैं, और महिला **बैंकिंग प्रतिनिधि** 60% से अधिक स्थानीय सरकारों में मौजूद हैं।

- Further, **over 50 million women have accessed bank credit, boosting female labour force participation since 2018.**
इसके अतिरिक्त, 50 मिलियन से अधिक महिलाओं ने **बैंक ऋण** प्राप्त किया है, जिससे 2018 के बाद महिला श्रम भागीदारी में वृद्धि हुई है।
- Remarkably, the **NRLM has crossed borders, guiding rural livelihood initiatives across the Global South, particularly in Africa, and is subtly shaping India's development diplomacy.**
विशेष रूप से, NRLM ने सीमाओं को पार कर लिया है और **Global South**, विशेषकर अफ्रीका में ग्रामीण आजीविका पहलों का मार्गदर्शन कर रहा है, तथा भारत की **विकास कूटनीति** को भी आकार दे रहा है।

India's quiet transformation

भारत का शांत परिवर्तन

- The magnitude of the NRLM's achievements is striking.
NRLM की उपलब्धियों का विस्तार अत्यंत प्रभावशाली है।
- **As of mid-2025, the mission is active in 742 districts; has reached over 100 million households; mobilised more than nine million SHGs; facilitated ₹51,368 crore in capitalisation support; and enabled bank linkages amounting to ₹12 lakh crore, an expansion unprecedented in both scale and its focus on women.**
मध्य 2025 तक, यह मिशन **742 जिलों** में सक्रिय है; **100 मिलियन से अधिक परिवारों** तक पहुँच चुका है; **नौ मिलियन से अधिक SHGs** का गठन कर चुका है; ₹51,368 करोड़ की **पूंजी सहायता (capitalisation support)** प्रदान कर चुका है; और ₹12 लाख करोड़ के बैंक लिंकेज सक्षम कर चुका है, जो विस्तार और महिला-केंद्रित दृष्टिकोण दोनों में अभूतपूर्व है।
- **The Union Budget 2026-27 strengthened this trajectory with a ₹19,200 crore allocation, reaffirming the NRLM as India's flagship programme for rural poverty alleviation.**
केंद्रीय बजट 2026-27 ने ₹19,200 करोड़ के आवंटन के साथ इस दिशा को मजबूत किया, जिससे NRLM भारत का **प्रमुख कार्यक्रम (flagship programme)** बना हुआ है।
- What sets the NRLM apart is not only its breadth but the ecosystem it has nurtured.
NRLM को विशिष्ट बनाने वाली बात केवल इसका विस्तार नहीं बल्कि वह पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र है जिसे इसने विकसित किया है।
- It has created **federated community institutions** at the village, cluster, and block levels; **established community-based cadres delivering last-mile services;** and embedded rural women in formal financial systems.
इसने गाँव, क्लस्टर और ब्लॉक स्तर पर **संघटित सामुदायिक संस्थाएँ (federated community institutions)** बनाई हैं; **समुदाय-आधारित कार्यबल (community-based cadres)** स्थापित किए हैं जो अंतिम स्तर तक सेवाएँ प्रदान करते हैं; और ग्रामीण महिलाओं को औपचारिक वित्तीय प्रणाली में जोड़ा है।
- **Delegations from Ethiopia, Tanzania, Malawi, Kenya, and Rwanda have undertaken detailed study visits to India, examining not just the outcomes of the NRLM but the operational mechanics that make it work.**
इथियोपिया, तंजानिया, मलावी, केन्या और रवांडा के प्रतिनिधिमंडलों ने भारत का विस्तृत अध्ययन दौरा किया, जहाँ उन्होंने NRLM के परिणामों के साथ-साथ उसके **संचालन तंत्र (operational mechanics)** को भी समझा।
- Second, the **NRLM's architecture is cost-effective, relying not on heavy capital investment but on community-driven processes and cadre systems that allow even resource-constrained governments to scale the programme.**
दूसरा, NRLM की संरचना **लागत-प्रभावी (cost-effective)** है, जो भारी पूंजी निवेश के बजाय सामुदायिक प्रक्रियाओं और कैडर प्रणाली पर आधारित है, जिससे सीमित संसाधनों वाली सरकारें भी इसे विस्तार दे सकती हैं।
- Third, the model aligns well with the realities of large **informal economies** across Africa, where livelihood diversification and **microenterprise formation** are crucial.
तीसरा, यह मॉडल अफ्रीका की बड़ी **अनौपचारिक अर्थव्यवस्थाओं** के अनुरूप है, जहाँ आजीविका विविधीकरण और **सूक्ष्म उद्यम (microenterprise)** अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण हैं।
- And finally, the **model appeals to these countries because it is an institution-building approach rather than a mere scheme;** it strengthens local governance, enhances



accountability, and creates long-term community capacity.

अंततः, यह मॉडल इन देशों को आकर्षित करता है क्योंकि यह केवल एक योजना नहीं बल्कि एक **संस्थागत निर्माण (institution-building)** दृष्टिकोण है, जो स्थानीय शासन को मजबूत करता है, जवाबदेही बढ़ाता है और दीर्घकालिक सामुदायिक क्षमता का निर्माण करता है।

India's emerging development diplomacy भारत की उभरती विकास कूटनीति

- India's development cooperation has historically emphasised **capacity-building**, concessional finance, and technical assistance.
भारत का विकास सहयोग ऐतिहासिक रूप से **क्षमता निर्माण (capacity-building)**, रियायती वित्त और तकनीकी सहायता पर केंद्रित रहा है।
- The **dissemination** of the NRLM marks a clear evolution — the country is now exporting **social-sector institutions** grounded in its own developmental experience.
NRLM का प्रसार एक स्पष्ट परिवर्तन दर्शाता है — अब भारत अपने अनुभव पर आधारित **सामाजिक क्षेत्र की संस्थाओं** का निर्यात कर रहा है।
- **Such institutional models create sustained linkages between bureaucracies, implementing agencies, and community organisations, offering a distinct channel for international engagement.**
ऐसे संस्थागत मॉडल **प्रशासनिक तंत्र (bureaucracies)**, क्रियान्वयन एजेंसियों और सामुदायिक संगठनों के बीच स्थायी संबंध स्थापित करते हैं, जो अंतरराष्ट्रीय सहयोग का एक विशिष्ट माध्यम प्रदान करते हैं।
- They also provide potential entry points for collaboration in **digital governance**, agriculture, and financial architecture.
ये मॉडल **डिजिटल शासन**, कृषि और वित्तीय संरचना में सहयोग के अवसर भी प्रदान करते हैं।



GS III: Economy

India-Zambia critical minerals talks stall over mining rights

India's talks with Zambia over critical minerals mining have stalled amid a lack of assurances from Lusaka on mining rights, two sources familiar with the matter told *Reuters*. India last year received an allocation of 9,000 square kms to explore cobalt — a key component in batteries for EVs and mobile phones — as well as copper, widely used in power generation, electronics and construction. India dispatched a team of geologists last year, who have since returned with samples of minerals, including cobalt and copper. The exploration in Zambia was set to run for three years, after which New Delhi had planned to invite private sector companies to participate, subject to securing mining rights.

जो अब वापस आ चुकी है और अपने साथ **कोबाल्ट** और **काँपर** सहित खनिजों के नमूने लाई है।

- The exploration in **Zambia** was set to run for **three years**, after which **New Delhi** had planned to invite **private sector companies** to participate, subject to securing **mining rights**.
जाम्बिया में यह अन्वेषण **तीन वर्षों** तक चलने वाला था, जिसके बाद **नई दिल्ली** ने **निजी क्षेत्र की कंपनियों** को भाग लेने के लिए आमंत्रित करने की योजना बनाई थी, बशर्ते कि **खनन अधिकार (mining rights)** सुरक्षित हो जाएं।

17A. India-Zambia critical minerals talks stall over mining rights

भारत-जाम्बिया क्रिटिकल मिनरल्स वार्ता खनन अधिकारों पर अटकी

- India's talks with Zambia over critical minerals mining have stalled amid a lack of assurances from Lusaka on mining rights, two sources familiar with the matter told *Reuters*.

भारत की जाम्बिया के साथ क्रिटिकल मिनरल्स खनन पर बातचीत रुक गई है क्योंकि लुसाका की ओर से खनन अधिकारों पर आश्वासन की कमी है, मामले से परिचित दो सूत्रों ने रॉयटर्स को बताया।

- **India** last year received an allocation of **9,000 square kms** to explore **cobalt** — a key component in **batteries** for **EVs** and mobile phones — as well as **copper**, widely used in **power generation**, electronics and construction.

पिछले वर्ष **भारत** को **9,000 वर्ग किलोमीटर** का आवंटन मिला था ताकि वह **कोबाल्ट** की खोज कर सके — जो **EVs** और मोबाइल फोन की **बैटरियों** का एक प्रमुख घटक है — साथ ही **काँपर** की भी, जिसका उपयोग व्यापक रूप से **बिजली उत्पादन**, इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स और निर्माण में होता है।

- **India** dispatched a team of **geologists** last year, who have since returned with samples of minerals, including **cobalt and copper**.

पिछले वर्ष **भारत** ने **भूवैज्ञानिकों (geologists)** की एक टीम भेजी थी, जो अब वापस आ चुकी है और अपने साथ **कोबाल्ट** और **काँपर** सहित खनिजों के नमूने लाई है।



Auto sector reaches 'broad' consensus on CAFE-III norms

GS III: Economy

Latest proposal applies flatter compliance curve across five years rather than steep annual tightening, removes relaxations for lighter vehicles

Jagriti Chandra
Lalendu Mishra
NEW DELHI/MUMBAI

A "broad" consensus emerged on the long-contested, upcoming carbon emission norms for cars for 2027 at a high-level inter-ministerial meeting on Thursday, with small car makers making only "minor suggestions", industry sources said.

The draft proposal of Carbon Average Fuel Efficiency-3 floated by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency in September 2025, which has gone through multiple iterations, had reached a deadlock as the industry remained split between small and large car manufacturers over relaxations to the former.

The latest proposal circulated last week applies a flatter compliance curve across five years rather than steep annual tightening, and removes relaxations offered to lighter vehicles.

Auto industry sources said there was a "broad agreement" over the latest version of CAFE-3 norms at a discussion held with the industry representatives and top officials of the Ministry of Power, Ministry of Heavy Industries and Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

Some had sought that the government make no further changes to it and notify the latest draft.



Shifting gears: The latest proposal also comprises a super credit scheme in which battery EVs get maximum super credits. REUTERS

"While it is a stretch to meet some of the provisions, we have agreed to comply for the larger national interest," a top industry source at a Mumbai-based auto firm seeking anonymity said adding they appreciated the Centre's efforts to incorporate industry views. Another industry representative also seeking not to be named said small car makers remained dissatisfied and had offered suggestions, without elaborating. Some had proposed minor changes to the Centre's super credit scheme.

Last week's draft proposes a flatter slope — .00158 instead of 0.002 in the first year and .00131 in the fifth year.

The slope, expressed in grams of CO₂ per kilometre per unit of vehicle mass, determines how emission targets vary with a vehicle's weight. It also removes weight-based relaxations for smaller cars. But

a flatter curve is understood to have the effect of tightening targets for heavier vehicles while reducing the targets for those below the industry average weight of 1,229 kg.

The latest version also comprises a super credit scheme within which battery electric vehicles and range extended electric vehicles have the maximum super credits at 3. Within this scheme, the sale of each EV is counted as a sale of multiple EVs helping raise the average of the fleet and in reaching the emission targets.

The September draft had split the industry, with Maruti on one side and Mahindra and Tata on the other. Larger carmakers argued that the weight-based carve-out favoured Maruti's small-car-heavy portfolio while shifting the compliance burden onto companies that had invested heavily in EVs and cleaner technologies.

slope — .00158 instead of 0.002 in the first year and .00131 in the fifth year.

पिछले सप्ताह के मसौदे में एक सपाट ढलान (slope) प्रस्तावित किया गया है — पहले वर्ष में 0.002 के बजाय 0.00158 और पाँचवें वर्ष में 0.00131।

- The slope, expressed in grams of CO₂ per kilometre per unit of vehicle mass, determines how emission targets vary with a vehicle's weight.

यह ढलान, जो वाहन के द्रव्यमान प्रति यूनिट पर प्रति किलोमीटर CO₂ ग्राम में व्यक्त की जाती है, यह निर्धारित करती है कि उत्सर्जन लक्ष्य वाहन के वजन के अनुसार कैसे बदलते हैं।

- It also removes weight-based relaxations for smaller cars. यह छोटे वाहनों के लिए वजन-आधारित छूटों को भी हटा देता है।

17A. Auto sector reaches 'broad' consensus on CAFE-III norms ऑटो सेक्टर में CAFE-III मानकों पर 'व्यापक' सहमति बनी

• A "broad" consensus emerged on the long-contested, upcoming carbon emission norms for cars for 2027 at a high-level inter-ministerial meeting on Thursday, with small car makers making only "minor suggestions", industry sources said.

एक "व्यापक" सहमति 2027 के लिए कारों के लंबे समय से विवादित आगामी कार्बन उत्सर्जन मानकों पर गुरुवार को एक उच्च-स्तरीय अंतर-मंत्रालयी बैठक में बनी, जिसमें छोटी कार निर्माता कंपनियों ने केवल "छोटे सुझाव" दिए, उद्योग सूत्रों ने बताया।

• The draft proposal of Carbon Average Fuel Efficiency-3 floated by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency in September 2025, which has gone through multiple iterations, had reached a deadlock as the industry remained split between small and large car manufacturers over relaxations to the former.

ब्यूरो ऑफ एनर्जी एफिशिएंसी (BEE) द्वारा सितंबर 2025 में जारी कार्बन एवरेज फ्यूल एफिशिएंसी-3 (CAFE-3) का मसौदा, जो कई बार संशोधित हुआ है, गतिरोध में पहुंच गया था क्योंकि उद्योग छोटे और बड़े कार निर्माताओं के बीच छोटे निर्माताओं को दी जाने वाली छूटों पर विभाजित था।

• Auto industry sources said there was a "broad agreement" over the latest version of CAFE-3 norms at a discussion held with the industry representatives and top officials of the Ministry of Power, Ministry of Heavy Industries and Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

ऑटो उद्योग सूत्रों ने कहा कि CAFE-3 मानकों के नवीनतम संस्करण पर उद्योग प्रतिनिधियों और विद्युत मंत्रालय, भारी उद्योग मंत्रालय और सड़क परिवहन एवं राजमार्ग मंत्रालय के शीर्ष अधिकारियों के साथ हुई चर्चा में "व्यापक सहमति" बनी।

- Last week's draft proposes a later



GS III: Economy

India could limit sulphur exports as supplies tighten

India is considering a proposal to restrict sulphur exports after industry lobby groups raised concerns about soaring prices and disruption to supplies from the Gulf, three sources aware of the development said. Export restrictions could add to upward pressure on global sulphur prices, as supplies from the Middle East are disrupted by the Iran war and with China also set to restrict sulphuric acid exports from next month. "Sulphur supplies are tightening due to falling imports from the Middle East," a senior government official told Reuters. "Allowing exports could further pressure availability, so discussions are under way on whether exports should be limited." Sulphur is used to produce fertilisers such as ammonium sulphate and single super phosphate, both widely used in India.

17A. India could limit sulphur exports as supplies tighten

भारत आपूर्ति तंगी के बीच सल्फर निर्यात सीमित कर सकता है

- "Sulphur supplies are tightening due to falling imports from the Middle East," a senior government official told Reuters. "सल्फर आपूर्ति मध्य पूर्व से घटते आयात के कारण तंग हो रही है," एक वरिष्ठ सरकारी अधिकारी ने रॉयटर्स को बताया।
- "Allowing exports could further pressure availability, so discussions are under way on whether exports should be limited." "निर्यात की अनुमति देने से उपलब्धता पर और दबाव बढ़ सकता है, इसलिए इस पर चर्चा चल रही है कि क्या निर्यात को सीमित किया जाना चाहिए।"
- Sulphur is used to produce fertilisers such as ammonium sulphate and single super phosphate, both widely used in India. सल्फर का उपयोग उर्वरक बनाने में किया जाता है जैसे अमोनियम सल्फेट और

'India better placed than others to brave West Asia war impact'

GS III: Economy

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

As the war in West Asia enters an uncertain phase, casting long shadows over global energy markets and growth forecasts, former World Bank top official, Keiko Honda, professor at Waseda Business School and former Chief Executive Officer of Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) [of the World Bank Group], in an interview with *The Hindu* said that India is at a significantly better position than most nations to absorb the cascading shocks of the ongoing conflict.

"The West Asia war is having a cascading effect on everything because they are all dependent on energy," Prof. Honda said ahead of an event organised by the India Exim Bank in Mumbai.

"But I think India will be better than many others [countries] even if this war continues," she said.

She said this is due to the confluence of structural advantages that are often underappreciated even within India itself.

At the heart of Prof.



India has sunlight coming in most part of the year. You could generate a lot of solar power. That is very different from building oil infra

KEIKO HONDA,
Former World Bank official

Honda's assessment is India's demographic profile. With a population of 1.4 billion, which is predominantly young, India commands a scale and resilience that few economies can match, she emphasised.

"It is amazing to keep 1.4 billion people as one nation. India has been very successful, and this internal cohesion doesn't get the recognition it deserves," she observed.

Diversified economy

Unlike many West Asian economies whose prosperity rests on hydrocarbon wealth and whose social compacts are now under strain, India has been building a more diversified economic foundation, she stated.

Acknowledging that India's state-owned oil com-

panies are absorbing significant losses daily as global energy prices remain elevated, an arithmetic that disrupts even conservative growth projections, she said India has a natural advantage that no Gulf state can claim.

"India has sunlight coming in most part of the year. You could generate a lot of solar power. That is very different from building oil infrastructure," she pointed out.

This solar potential, combined with India's stated push toward electric vehicles and improvements in urban public transportation, positions India to gradually reduce its dependence on imported hydrocarbons in a way that energy-exporting nations structurally cannot, she stated.

Stating that the conflict

does create genuine vulnerabilities she said a significant volume of India's remittances come from workers in the West Asia's hydrocarbons sector.

"Should the war persist, disruptions to that corridor could dent household incomes and consumption but a structural shift is already underway. The ratio of high-skilled workers, data scientists, cyber security professionals, is increasing. These are global professionals who earn more," she stated.

She expressed enthusiasm for India's potential in cyber security, calling it "probably the biggest area" of future high-skilled employment.

Prof. Honda said India is not merely a passive beneficiary of favourable geography, but an active cornerstone of any stable global order.

"The geopolitical location of India is much better than that of Japan which is in Pacific Ocean and is facing Russia, China and Korea from one side. India has a large role to play," she said. "You are a cornerstone. You really are," she emphasised.

सिंगल सुपर फॉस्फेट, जो दोनों भारत में व्यापक रूप से उपयोग किए जाते हैं।



17A. 'India better placed than others to brave West Asia war impact' 'भारत पश्चिम एशिया युद्ध के प्रभाव को झेलने में अन्य देशों से बेहतर स्थिति में है'

- As the war in **West Asia** enters an uncertain phase, casting long shadows over global **energy markets** and growth forecasts, former World Bank top official, **Keiko Honda**, professor at Waseda Business School and former Chief Executive Officer of **Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) [of the World Bank Group]**, in an interview with The Hindu said that India is at a significantly better position than most nations to absorb the cascading shocks of the ongoing conflict.

जैसे-जैसे **पश्चिम एशिया** में युद्ध अनिश्चित चरण में प्रवेश कर रहा है, जो वैश्विक **ऊर्जा बाजारों** और विकास पूर्वानुमानों पर लंबे साए डाल रहा है, पूर्व वर्ल्ड बैंक शीर्ष अधिकारी **Keiko Honda**, जो Waseda Business School की प्रोफेसर और **Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)** [वर्ल्ड बैंक समूह] की पूर्व CEO हैं, ने द हिंदू को दिए एक इंटरव्यू में कहा कि भारत अधिकांश देशों की तुलना में इस चल रहे संघर्ष के क्रमिक झटकों को झेलने के लिए काफी बेहतर स्थिति में है।

Relaxation of U.S. day-trading rules opens the door to impulsive, high risk YOLO trading

NEWS ANALYSIS
Reuters
NEW YORK
A regulatory move allowing smaller, everyday investors to engage in more day trading could spur impulsive, high-risk "YOLO", or "you-only-live-once," trades and allow eager individual traders to take an even bigger role in driving markets.
The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission late on Tuesday approved a proposal to remove restrictions that limited accounts under \$25,000 to three day trades — defined as the buying and selling of the same security within the



Bull play: The Charging Bull statue, also known as the Wall St. Bull, is seen in the financial district of New York City, U.S. REUTERS

der capitalised traders to take more "YOLO" shots in today," said Ophir Gottlieb, CEO of Capital Market Laboratories.

'Lose money faster'
"That can mean more freedom to lose money faster," Gottlieb added.

Gottlieb noted there will still be some guardrails on retail trading under the new rules, where instead of the \$25,000 minimum account size, customers would need to meet certain margin requirements based on market exposure. "Retail traders have been a large part of this market since COVID and it's time to allow more flexibility rather than a hard gate," he said.

Prior to 2020, individual investors with small accounts at brokerages like Charles Schwab, Fidelity Investments and other firms accounted for about 15% of trading on U.S. exchanges daily, according to several academic studies. But the COVID-19 pandemic, together with big leaps in technology and the advent of new trading platforms, helped retail traders to boost that share as high as 25%, and become key players on particularly volatile days. Retail investors have especially been drawn to trading as markets rallied from their recent slump, and there has been heightened buzz around stocks that attracted retail interest such as footwear-to-All firm Allbirds, which saw a surge of buying on Wednesday.

"The pattern day trader rule really still restricted the ability of our smaller clients to participate in the markets and reduced their opportunities to take advantage of big market moves," said Anthony Denier, group president and U.S. CEO at Webull, whose stock soared 11% on Wednesday.

Denier said the average Webull client has about \$5,000 in trading account, far below the \$25,000 in assets that, under the pattern day trader rule, would entitle them to engage in over three day trades in a five-day period.

17A. Relaxation of U.S. day-trading rules opens the door to impulsive, high risk YOLO trading

U.S. डे-ट्रेडिंग नियमों में ढील से आवेगी, उच्च जोखिम वाले YOLO ट्रेडिंग का रास्ता खुला

- A regulatory move allowing smaller, everyday investors to engage in more **day trading** could spur

impulsive, high-risk "YOLO", or "you-only-live-once," trades and allow eager individual traders to take an even bigger role in driving markets.

छोटे, आम निवेशकों को अधिक **डे-ट्रेडिंग** करने की अनुमति देने वाला एक नियामक कदम आवेगी, उच्च जोखिम वाले "YOLO" यानी "you-only-live-once" ट्रेड्स को बढ़ावा दे सकता है और उत्साही व्यक्तिगत ट्रेडर्स को बाजार को प्रभावित करने में और बड़ी भूमिका दे सकता है।

- The **U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)** late on Tuesday approved a proposal to remove restrictions that limited accounts under **\$25,000** to three day trades — defined as the buying and selling of the same security within the same trading day — within five business days, known as the "**pattern day trader rule**".

U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) ने मंगलवार देर रात एक प्रस्ताव को मंजूरी दी, जिसमें उन प्रतिबंधों को हटाया गया था जो **\$25,000** से कम खातों को पाँच कार्यदिवसों में केवल तीन **डे ट्रेड्स** (एक ही दिन में एक ही सुरक्षा की खरीद-बिक्री) तक सीमित करते थे, जिसे "**pattern day trader rule**" कहा जाता है।

- The decision was a win for brokerage firms like **Webull** and **Robinhood** and retail traders who now have a much greater ability to buy and sell frequently, but may also take on higher risk with YOLO trades driven by conviction or impulse rather than research and portfolio planning.

यह निर्णय **Webull** और **Robinhood** जैसी ब्रोकरेज फर्मों और रिटेल ट्रेडर्स के लिए एक जीत है, जिन्हें अब अधिक बार खरीद-बिक्री करने की बड़ी सुविधा मिलेगी, लेकिन वे अब शोध और पोर्टफोलियो योजना के बजाय विश्वास या आवेग से प्रेरित **YOLO ट्रेड्स** में अधिक जोखिम भी उठा सकते हैं।

GS Paper III: Science and Technology		17 April 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
17A	Why India should establish a vaccine injury compensation mechanism भारत को वैक्सीन चोट मुआवजा तंत्र क्यों स्थापित करना चाहिए	
17A	Understanding Parkinson's disease and its symptoms पार्किन्सन रोग और उसके लक्षणों की समझ	



17A Should the Mythos AI model raise cybersecurity alarms?
क्या Mythos AI मॉडल को साइबर सुरक्षा के संदर्भ में चिंता उत्पन्न करनी चाहिए?

Why India should establish a vaccine injury compensation mechanism

When the state strongly promotes vaccination as a civic duty, it must also accept responsibility for those who bear the rare but real costs of that collective effort: it is incumbent upon India now to enact a policy and set up a mechanism to compensate those who suffer adverse effects following immunisation

GS III, S&T

Yashweer Singh

In the winter of 2021, millions of Indians lined up outside government health centres to receive COVID-19 vaccines. They were responding to public calls from official campaigns and, in many contexts, were effectively mandated by employers and institutions. With over 219.86 crore doses administered by late 2022, vaccination was not merely a personal choice but a social contract. What was never made equally clear was what would happen to those who, through no fault of their own, suffered serious harm because they answered that call.

India's silence on vaccine injuries is a governance deficit that cuts to the heart of constitutional accountability and the social compact between citizens and the state. Now, the Supreme Court has directed the Union government, in the *Rachana Gangu v. Union of India* (2026) case, to frame a no-fault compensation policy for serious adverse events following COVID-19 vaccination.

Rare but real

Vaccines are among the most consequential public health innovations in human history. Their role in eliminating smallpox, nearly eradicating polio, and dramatically reducing child mortality is beyond dispute. Yet the medical literature is equally unambiguous that serious adverse events following immunisation, while rare, do occur. Anaphylaxis, thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS) linked to certain adenoviral vector vaccines, vaccine-associated paralytic polio from oral polio formulations, and encephalopathy following some childhood vaccines are all documented.

The rarity of these events is not a reason to dismiss them. It is the very reason a compensation mechanism becomes ethically necessary. When a harm is rare and unpredictable, the individual who suffers it is just someone who took a risk on behalf of collective immunity and lost. The government's own affidavit recorded 92,114 Adverse Events Following Immunisation (AEFI) cases, including 89,332 minor, 2,782 serious or severe AEFIs, and 1,171 deaths.

Protecting public health

The Constitution does not merely permit the State to run vaccination programmes, but creates an affirmative obligation to protect public health as part of the right to life under Article 21, which includes the right to health. If the state derives legitimacy from promoting collective welfare through mandatory interventions, it must also bear the duty to remedy harm caused by those interventions. The "doctrine of legitimate expectation" supports this, as citizens who comply with state health directives may legitimately expect not to be abandoned if compliance causes injury. A wealthy individual can access specialists and courts; a daily-wage worker who suffers



The big shot: Vaccines are among the most consequential public health innovations in human history. Yet the medical literature is equally unambiguous that serious adverse events following immunisation, while rare, do occur. NIRMAL HARINDRAN

post-vaccination paralysis cannot, making the absence of a scheme not a neutral gap but a deeply unequal one.

Existing legal remedies for vaccine injury are poorly suited to the problem. Tort law requires proof of fault that the manufacturer or state acted below the required standard of care. Where a serious adverse event occurs because of individual immune response rather than any error, there is simply no fault to establish and no cause of action to bring. The Consumer Protection Act 2019, allows claims for deficiency in service. However, where vaccines are supplied free, the 'consumer' relationship is legally contested, and consumer forums are ill-equipped to assess pharmacovigilance evidence.

Even PILs are too blunt an instrument for individual compensation. A PIL can direct policy, as the Supreme Court has now done, but it cannot administer a claims process, leaving the legal ecosystem structurally incapable of uniform redress.

Practices abroad

India is not starting from scratch in a conceptual sense. The no-fault vaccine injury compensation model has been road-tested widely. In the U.S., the Vaccine Injury Compensation Programme operates through a dedicated federal "vaccine court" where claimants bear a lower evidentiary standard and are compensated from a trust fund levied on manufacturers, saying that the burden of collective immunity shall not be privately borne.

The U.K.'s Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme provides a fixed lump-sum payment to those who suffer severe

Vaccination is a social bargain. The individual accepts a small, quantifiable risk so that the community is protected from a larger one

disablement from a covered vaccination, without requiring proof of negligence. Japan, Germany, New Zealand, and several Nordic countries maintain comparable no-fault frameworks. Taiwan processed thousands of COVID-19 compensation claims within months of rollout, offering a model that India should study.

A framework for India

India requires a Vaccine Injury Compensation Act, not a circular, which can be quietly withdrawn between elections, but a Parliamentary statute with defined rights and independent oversight. Second, a no-fault presumptive causation table is needed. The law should maintain a "Vaccine Injury Table": conditions occurring within a specified time window following a specific vaccine are presumed to be caused by it, shifting the evidentiary default toward the injured while allowing the state to rebut in exceptional cases. Third, an independent administrative tribunal is required.

Claims should be decided by a dedicated quasi-judicial body with medical and legal expertise, accessible without mandatory legal representation. Fourth, a dedicated compensation fund must be set up. Funding should be shared between the Central government and vaccine manufacturers through a levy system, aligning manufacturers' interests

with vigilant post-market surveillance rather than incentivising suppression. Fifth, transparent AEFI reporting must be prioritised. India must strengthen its surveillance system through mandatory disaggregated state-level reporting, independent audits and public dashboards, as a compensation framework is only as credible as the data behind it.

The trust dividend

Sceptics may argue that a compensation scheme emboldens anti-vaccination sentiment. The comparative evidence suggests the opposite: robust compensation systems consistently correlate with higher voluntary vaccination uptake. Trust is built not through silence about risk, but through transparency and accountability, and with India's recently launched massive HPV vaccination programme, it becomes urgent.

Vaccination is a social bargain. The individual accepts a small, quantifiable risk so that the community is protected from a larger, diffuse one. When the state manages, promotes, or mandates that bargain, it becomes a party to it. A party to a bargain that causes harm bears responsibility for that harm. What India's legislature, Health Ministry, and legal community must now ensure is that the policy that emerges is not a minimalist gesture of compliance but a genuine institutional commitment, one that honours, finally and formally, the price some citizens pay for the protection of all.

(Yashweer Singh is a penultimate year student at Gujarat National Law University, Gandhinagar. yashweerr@gmail.com)

THE GIST

India's silence on vaccine injuries is a governance deficit that cuts to the heart of constitutional accountability and the social compact between citizens and the State.

Existing legal remedies for vaccine injury are poorly suited to the problem. Tort law requires proof of fault that the manufacturer or state acted below the required standard of care

India requires a Vaccine Injury Compensation Act, not a circular, which can be quietly withdrawn between elections, but a Parliamentary statute with defined rights and independent oversight



17A. Why India should establish a vaccine injury compensation mechanism भारत को वैक्सीन चोट मुआवजा तंत्र क्यों स्थापित करना चाहिए

- When the **state** strongly promotes **vaccination** as a **civic duty**, it must also accept **responsibility** for those who bear the rare but real costs of that collective effort.
जब राज्य दृढ़ता से टीकाकरण को एक नागरिक कर्तव्य के रूप में बढ़ावा देता है, तो उसे उन लोगों के लिए भी जिम्मेदारी स्वीकार करनी चाहिए जो इस सामूहिक प्रयास की दुर्लभ लेकिन वास्तविक लागत वहन करते हैं।
- Now, the **Supreme Court has directed the Union government, in the *Rachana Gangu v. Union of India (2026)* case, to frame a no-fault compensation policy for serious adverse events following COVID-19 vaccination.**
अब सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने *Rachana Gangu v. Union of India (2026)* मामले में केंद्र सरकार को COVID-19 टीकाकरण के बाद होने वाली गंभीर प्रतिकूल घटनाओं के लिए **नो-फॉल्ट मुआवजा नीति** बनाने का निर्देश दिया है।

Rare but real दुर्लभ लेकिन वास्तविक

- Vaccines are among the most consequential public health innovations in human history.
टीके मानव इतिहास में सबसे महत्वपूर्ण सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य नवाचारों में से एक हैं।
- **Their role in eliminating smallpox, nearly eradicating polio, and dramatically reducing child mortality is beyond dispute.**
चेचक को समाप्त करने, पोलियो को लगभग खत्म करने और बाल मृत्यु दर को उल्लेखनीय रूप से कम करने में उनकी भूमिका निर्विवाद है।
- Yet the medical literature is equally unambiguous that serious adverse events following immunisation, while rare, do occur.
फिर भी चिकित्सा साहित्य स्पष्ट रूप से बताता है कि टीकाकरण के बाद गंभीर प्रतिकूल घटनाएँ, यद्यपि दुर्लभ, होती हैं।
- **Anaphylaxis, thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS) linked to certain adenoviral vector vaccines, vaccine-associated paralytic polio from oral polio formulations, and encephalopathy following some childhood vaccines are all documented.**
एनाफिलेक्सिस, थ्रोम्बोसिस विद थ्रोम्बोसाइटोपेनिया सिंड्रोम (TTS), मौखिक पोलियो टीकों से जुड़ा पैरालिटिक पोलियो, और कुछ बाल्यावस्था टीकों के बाद एन्सेफैलोपैथी — ये सभी प्रलेखित हैं।
- The rarity of these events is not a reason to dismiss them.
इन घटनाओं की दुर्लभता उन्हें नज़रअंदाज़ करने का कारण नहीं है।
- It is the very reason a compensation mechanism becomes ethically necessary.
यही कारण है कि एक **मुआवजा तंत्र** नैतिक रूप से आवश्यक बन जाता है।
- **When a harm is rare and unpredictable, the individual who suffers it is just someone who took a risk on behalf of collective immunity and lost.**
जब कोई हानि दुर्लभ और अप्रत्याशित होती है, तो पीड़ित व्यक्ति वह होता है जिसने **सामूहिक प्रतिरक्षा** के लिए जोखिम उठाया और हार गया।
- The government's own affidavit recorded 92,114 Adverse Events Following Immunisation (AEFI) cases, including 89,332 minor, 2,782 serious or severe AEFIs, and 1,171 deaths.
सरकार के अपने हलफनामे में 92,114 **AEFI (Adverse Events Following Immunisation)** मामले दर्ज किए गए, जिनमें 89,332 मामूली, 2,782 गंभीर और 1,171 मौतें शामिल हैं।

Protecting public health सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य की रक्षा

- The Constitution does not merely permit the State to run vaccination programmes, but creates an affirmative obligation to protect public health as part of the right to life under Article 21, which includes the right to health.
संविधान राज्य को केवल टीकाकरण कार्यक्रम चलाने की अनुमति ही नहीं देता, बल्कि **अनुच्छेद 21** के तहत



जीवन के अधिकार के हिस्से के रूप में सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य की रक्षा का सकारात्मक दायित्व भी स्थापित करता है, जिसमें स्वास्थ्य का अधिकार शामिल है।

- If the state derives legitimacy from promoting collective welfare through mandatory interventions, it must also bear the duty to remedy harm caused by those interventions. यदि राज्य अनिवार्य हस्तक्षेपों के माध्यम से सामूहिक कल्याण को बढ़ावा देकर वैधता प्राप्त करता है, तो उसे उन हस्तक्षेपों से हुई हानि की भरपाई का दायित्व भी वहन करना चाहिए।
- The “doctrine of legitimate expectation” supports this, as citizens who comply with state health directives may legitimately expect not to be abandoned if compliance causes injury. **वैध अपेक्षा का सिद्धांत (Doctrine of Legitimate Expectation)** इसका समर्थन करता है, क्योंकि जो नागरिक राज्य के स्वास्थ्य निर्देशों का पालन करते हैं, वे यह अपेक्षा कर सकते हैं कि चोट लगने पर उन्हें छोड़ा नहीं जाएगा।
- A wealthy individual can access specialists and courts; a daily-wage worker who suffers post-vaccination paralysis cannot, making the absence of a scheme not a neutral gap but a deeply unequal one.

एक समृद्ध व्यक्ति विशेषज्ञों और अदालतों तक पहुँच सकता है; लेकिन एक दैनिक मजदूर जो टीकाकरण के बाद लकवाग्रस्त हो जाता है, ऐसा नहीं कर सकता, जिससे किसी योजना का अभाव एक साधारण कमी नहीं बल्कि गहरी असमानता बन जाता है।

Existing legal remedies for vaccine injury are poorly suited to the problem.
वैक्सीन चोट के लिए मौजूदा कानूनी उपाय इस समस्या के लिए उपयुक्त नहीं हैं।

- Tort law requires proof of fault that the manufacturer or state acted below the required standard of care. **टॉर्ट कानून** यह साबित करने की मांग करता है कि निर्माता या राज्य ने आवश्यक देखभाल के मानक से नीचे कार्य किया।
- Where a serious adverse event occurs because of individual immune response rather than any error, there is simply no fault to establish and no cause of action to bring. जहाँ कोई गंभीर प्रतिकूल घटना किसी त्रुटि के बजाय व्यक्तिगत प्रतिरक्षा प्रतिक्रिया के कारण होती है, वहाँ दोष स्थापित करने या मुकदमा चलाने का कोई आधार नहीं होता।
- The **Consumer Protection Act 2019**, allows claims for deficiency in service. **उपभोक्ता संरक्षण अधिनियम 2019** सेवा में कमी के लिए दावों की अनुमति देता है।
- However, where vaccines are supplied free, the ‘consumer’ relationship is legally contested, and consumer forums are ill-equipped to assess pharmacovigilance evidence. हालाँकि, जहाँ टीके मुफ्त में दिए जाते हैं, वहाँ ‘उपभोक्ता’ संबंध कानूनी रूप से विवादित होता है, और उपभोक्ता मंच फार्माकोविजिलेंस साक्ष्य का आकलन करने में सक्षम नहीं होते।
- Even PILs are too blunt an instrument for individual compensation. यहाँ तक कि जनहित याचिकाएँ (PILs) भी व्यक्तिगत मुआवजे के लिए अत्यधिक सामान्य साधन हैं।
- A PIL can direct policy, as the Supreme Court has now done, but it cannot administer a claims process, leaving the legal ecosystem structurally incapable of uniform redress. एक PIL नीति निर्देशित कर सकती है, जैसा कि अब सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने किया है, लेकिन यह दावों की प्रक्रिया संचालित नहीं कर सकती, जिससे कानूनी व्यवस्था समान राहत देने में संरचनात्मक रूप से अक्षम रह जाती है।

Practices abroad
विदेशों में प्रथाएँ

- India is not starting from scratch in a conceptual sense. भारत वैचारिक रूप से शून्य से शुरुआत नहीं कर रहा है।
- The no-fault vaccine injury compensation model has been road-tested widely. **नो-फॉल्ट वैक्सीन चोट मुआवजा मॉडल** का व्यापक रूप से परीक्षण किया जा चुका है।
- **In the U.S., the Vaccine Injury Compensation Programme** operates through a dedicated federal ‘vaccine court’ where claimants bear a lower evidentiary standard and are compensated from a trust fund levied on manufacturers, saying that the burden of collective immunity shall not be privately borne.

अमेरिका में Vaccine Injury Compensation Programme एक विशेष संघीय ‘वैक्सीन कोर्ट’ के माध्यम से संचालित होता है, जहाँ दावेदारों पर कम प्रमाण मानक लागू होता है और उन्हें निर्माताओं पर लगाए गए ट्रस्ट



TELEGRAM CHANNEL: <https://t.me/patrioticIAS>

YOUTUBE CHANNEL: <https://www.youtube.com/@PatrioticIAS>

CONTACT: 9971932488



फंड से मुआवजा दिया जाता है, यह सुनिश्चित करते हुए कि **सामूहिक प्रतिरक्षा** का बोझ व्यक्तिगत रूप से न उठाया जाए।

- **The U.K.'s Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme** provides a fixed lump-sum payment to those who suffer severe disablement from a covered vaccination, without requiring proof of negligence.

यू.के. की **Vaccine Damage Payment Scheme** उन लोगों को निश्चित एकमुश्त राशि प्रदान करती है जो टीकाकरण से गंभीर विकलांगता झेलते हैं, बिना लापरवाही साबित किए।

- Japan, Germany, New Zealand, and several Nordic countries maintain comparable no-fault frameworks.

जापान, जर्मनी, न्यूज़ीलैंड और कई नॉर्डिक देश समान नो-फॉल्ट ढाँचे बनाए रखते हैं।

A framework for India

भारत के लिए एक रूपरेखा

- **India requires a Vaccine Injury Compensation Act**, not a circular, which can be quietly withdrawn between elections, but a Parliamentary statute with defined rights and independent oversight.

भारत को एक **Vaccine Injury Compensation Act** की आवश्यकता है, न कि एक ऐसा परिपत्र जिसे चुनावों के बीच चुपचाप वापस लिया जा सके, बल्कि एक ऐसा **संसदीय कानून** जिसमें स्पष्ट अधिकार और स्वतंत्र निगरानी हो।

- Second, a **no-fault presumptive causation table** is needed. दूसरा, एक **नो-फॉल्ट अनुमानित कारण तालिका** की आवश्यकता है।
- The law should maintain a **'Vaccine Injury Table'**: conditions occurring within a specified time window following a specific vaccine are presumed to be caused by it, shifting the evidentiary default toward the injured while allowing the state to rebut in exceptional cases. कानून में एक **'Vaccine Injury Table'** होना चाहिए: किसी विशेष टीके के बाद निर्दिष्ट समयावधि में होने वाली स्थितियों को उसी से उत्पन्न माना जाए, जिससे प्रमाण का भार पीड़ित की ओर झुके, जबकि राज्य को अपवादात्मक मामलों में इसका खंडन करने की अनुमति हो।
- Third, an **independent administrative tribunal** is required. तीसरा, एक **स्वतंत्र प्रशासनिक न्यायाधिकरण** की आवश्यकता है।
- Fourth, a **dedicated compensation fund** must be set up. चौथा, एक **समर्पित मुआवजा कोष** स्थापित किया जाना चाहिए।

- Sceptics may argue that a compensation scheme emboldens anti-vaccination sentiment. संशयवादी यह तर्क दे सकते हैं कि मुआवजा योजना **टीका-विरोधी भावना** को बढ़ावा देती है।

- The comparative evidence suggests the opposite: robust compensation systems consistently correlate with higher voluntary vaccination uptake.

तुलनात्मक साक्ष्य इसके विपरीत संकेत देते हैं: मजबूत **मुआवजा प्रणाली** स्वैच्छिक टीकाकरण की अधिक दर से जुड़ी होती है।

- Trust is built not through silence about risk, but through transparency and accountability, and with India's recently launched massive HPV vaccination programme, it becomes urgent. विश्वास जोखिम के बारे में चुप्पी से नहीं, बल्कि **पारदर्शिता और जवाबदेही** से बनता है, और भारत के हाल ही में शुरू किए गए बड़े **HPV टीकाकरण कार्यक्रम** के साथ यह और भी आवश्यक हो जाता है।



Understanding Parkinson's disease and its symptoms

GS III: S&T
Serena Josephine M.

April marks Parkinson's disease Awareness Month, highlighting the need for early recognition of this progressive neurodegenerative disorder and the importance of support groups for patients and caregivers. Though awareness has improved, healthcare providers still find delayed diagnosis a major challenge as symptoms are often overlooked or misunderstood. Identifying the condition early and starting appropriate treatment can help manage symptoms effectively and improve quality of life, they say.

Natesan Damodaran, clinical lead, epilepsy and functional neurosurgery, Rela Hospital, Chennai, said compared to 10 years ago, the awareness of Parkinson's disease is definitely getting better. "One of the main challenges that we face is people missing a diagnosis. Some patients may have tremors in the hand, but may think that this is due to generalised tiredness or nerve weakness. So, by the time they reach a neurologist for a proper evaluation, diagnosis is delayed."

There are three cardinal symptoms of Parkinson's disease, Dr. Damodaran said: "Tremors or shaking



Tremors or shaking of hands is one of the symptom of Parkinson's disease. ISTOCKPHOTO

of hands is one of them. Slowness is the other main symptom. They may walk slowly or drink coffee slowly. Tightness (rigidity) is the third symptom of this disease."

Vivek Iyer, joint director and senior consultant, neurology, SIMS Hospital, Chennai, pointed out that patients with Parkinson's are usually in the fifth or sixth decade of their life. Constipation and rapid eye movement, sleep behaviour disorders such as acting out of dreams or violent movements during sleep are the cardinal non-motor symptoms that can predate onset of motor symptoms by one or two decades. Most patients

do not present to a neurologist if non-motor symptoms are predominant, resulting in delays in diagnosis, he explained.

Dr. Damodaran said that appropriate diagnosis is crucial. The ultimate goal of treatment, he added, is providing a good quality of life. "Enabling patients to be independent is the aim," he said.

Though, currently there is no cure for Parkinson's disease, early detection is vital in order to slow down the progress of the disease and control symptoms. Medicines can be prescribed according to the symptoms – tremor, rigidity and emotional disturbances, he said.

Surgical treatment

Dr. Iyer said that Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) was a surgical treatment offered for Parkinson's disease. However, it may not be suitable for all patients. There is also adaptive DBS, a technology which can be programmed as per the patient's needs. This adapts to specific symptoms in patients such as tremors or stiffness. It can automatically adjust electrical stimulation in real time, based on the brain's activity. "MR-guided focused ultrasound treatment is for tremor dominant

Parkinson's disease and other varieties of tremors, available in select centres in India," he added.

For a condition like Parkinson's disease, support groups play an important role not only for patients but also their caregivers. "A support system is essential for patients and their caregivers. For patients, it is a common forum where they can discuss their problems and get a chance to undergo physiotherapy, psychotherapy, psychological counselling and occupational therapy. For caregivers, it helps understand the disease and help avoid burn out," said Shubha Subramanian, senior consultant, neurology, Kauvery Hospital, Vadapalani, Chennai.

Though there are a number of support groups, not many are aware of them. This gap needs to be addressed, she said.

In Chennai, a number of hospitals have patient support groups. These groups get together every month and discuss support and care including speech therapy, physical exercises, physiotherapy, and measures essential to maintain functional independence. Such groups can help address day to day challenges faced by patients and their caregivers. (serena.m@thehindu.co.in)

17A. Understanding Parkinson's disease and its symptoms पार्किन्सन रोग और उसके लक्षणों की समझ

- April marks **Parkinson's disease Awareness Month**, highlighting the need for **early recognition** of this **progressive neurodegenerative disorder** and the importance of **support groups** for patients and caregivers.

अप्रैल माह **Parkinson's disease जागरूकता माह** को चिह्नित करता है, जो इस **प्रगतिशील न्यूरोडीजेनेरेटिव विकार** की **शीघ्र पहचान** की आवश्यकता और रोगियों तथा देखभालकर्ताओं के लिए **सहायता समूहों** के महत्व को उजागर करता है।

- "One of the main challenges that we face is people missing a diagnosis. "हम जिन मुख्य चुनौतियों का सामना करते हैं, उनमें से एक है लोगों का **निदान से चूक जाना**।"
- Some patients may have **tremors in the hand**, but may think that this is due to **generalised tiredness or nerve weakness**.

कुछ रोगियों के हाथ में **कंपन (tremors)** हो सकता है, लेकिन वे इसे **सामान्य थकान** या **नसों की कमजोरी** मान लेते हैं।

- So, by the time they reach a **neurologist** for a proper evaluation, diagnosis is delayed." इसलिए जब तक वे उचित मूल्यांकन के लिए **न्यूरोलॉजिस्ट** के पास पहुँचते हैं, तब तक निदान में देरी हो जाती है।"
- There are three **cardinal symptoms** of Parkinson's disease, Dr. Damodaran said: "**Tremors or shaking of hands is one of them**. Parkinson's disease के तीन **मुख्य लक्षण** हैं, डॉ. Damodaran ने कहा: "**कंपन (Tremors)** उनमें से एक है।"
- **Slowness is the other main symptom**. **धीमापन (Slowness)** दूसरा मुख्य लक्षण है।
- They may walk slowly or drink coffee slowly. वे धीरे-धीरे चल सकते हैं या धीरे-धीरे कॉफी पी सकते हैं।
- **Tightness (rigidity) is the third symptom of this disease.** **कठोरता (Rigidity)** इस रोग का तीसरा लक्षण है।"



- Patients with Parkinson's are usually in the **fifth or sixth decade** of their life.
Vivek Iyer, संयुक्त निदेशक और वरिष्ठ सलाहकार, न्यूरोलॉजी, SIMS Hospital, Chennai, ने बताया कि Parkinson's के रोगी सामान्यतः जीवन के **पाँचवें या छठे दशक** में होते हैं।
- **Constipation and rapid eye movement sleep behaviour disorders**, such as acting out of dreams or violent movements during sleep, are the **cardinal non-motor symptoms** that can predate onset of motor symptoms by one or two decades.
कब्ज और REM sleep behaviour disorders, जैसे सपनों को क्रियान्वित करना या नींद में हिंसक गतिविधियाँ, ऐसे **गैर-गतिशील प्रमुख लक्षण** हैं जो मोटर लक्षणों से पहले दिखाई दे सकते हैं।
- Though, currently there is **no cure** for Parkinson's disease, **early detection** is vital in order to slow down the progress of the disease and **control symptoms**.
हालाँकि वर्तमान में कोई **उपचार (cure)** नहीं है, लेकिन **शीघ्र पहचान** रोग की प्रगति को धीमा करने और **लक्षणों को नियंत्रित करने** के लिए आवश्यक है।
- Medicines can be prescribed according to the symptoms — **tremor, rigidity and emotional disturbances**, he said.
उन्होंने कहा कि लक्षणों — **कंपन, कठोरता और भावनात्मक विकारों** — के अनुसार दवाएँ दी जा सकती हैं।

Surgical treatment शल्य चिकित्सा उपचार

- Dr. Iyer said that **Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS)** was a surgical treatment offered for Parkinson's disease.
डॉ. Iyer ने कहा कि **Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS)** Parkinson's disease के लिए एक शल्य चिकित्सा उपचार है।
- However, it may not be suitable for all patients.
हालाँकि, यह सभी रोगियों के लिए उपयुक्त नहीं हो सकता।
- There is also **adaptive DBS**, a technology which can be programmed as per the patient's needs.
एक **adaptive DBS** तकनीक भी है, जिसे रोगी की आवश्यकता के अनुसार प्रोग्राम किया जा सकता है।
- This adapts to specific symptoms in patients such as **tremors or stiffness**.
यह रोगियों में विशिष्ट लक्षणों जैसे **कंपन या कठोरता** के अनुसार अनुकूलित होता है।
- It can automatically adjust **electrical stimulation** in real time, based on the brain's activity.
यह मस्तिष्क की गतिविधि के आधार पर वास्तविक समय में **विद्युत उत्तेजना** को समायोजित करता है।
- **"MR-guided focused ultrasound treatment** is for tremor dominant Parkinson's disease and other varieties of tremors, available in select centres in India," he added.
उन्होंने कहा, **"MR-guided focused ultrasound treatment** कंपन-प्रधान Parkinson's disease के लिए उपलब्ध है।"
- In Chennai, a number of hospitals have **patient support groups**.
चेन्नई में कई अस्पतालों में **रोगी सहायता समूह** हैं।
- These groups get together every month and discuss **support and care** including **speech therapy, physical exercises, physiotherapy**, and measures essential to maintain **functional independence**.
ये समूह हर महीने मिलते हैं और **देखभाल, स्पीच थेरेपी, व्यायाम, फिजियोथेरेपी** तथा **कार्यात्मक स्वतंत्रता** बनाए रखने पर चर्चा करते हैं।



- Such groups can help address **day to day challenges** faced by patients and their caregivers. ऐसे समूह रोगियों और उनके देखभालकर्ताओं द्वारा सामना की जाने वाली **दैनिक चुनौतियों** को दूर करने में मदद करते हैं।

Should the Mythos AI model raise cybersecurity alarms?



Aseem Jakhar
Founder of Papatu and co-founder of the Nullcon cybersecurity conference



Sharda Tickoo
Country Manager, India at Trend AI, formerly Trend Micro

PARLEY
On April 7, AI firm Anthropic said its new model, Mythos, is so powerful at finding cybersecurity vulnerabilities that it will not be released publicly. Instead, the company said it will be shared with firms that build critical software used across the economy. The initiative, known as Project Glasswing, has raised cybersecurity concerns among most firms, which must now contend with AI-enabled attackers using so-called “zero-day” exploits, which are unknown even to a given piece of software’s developers, and therefore are not patched through software updates. *The Hindu* reported last week that the Union government and the Indian IT sector’s main cybersecurity body are both studying the implications of Mythos. Should the Mythos AI model raise cybersecurity alarms? Aseem Jakhar and Sharda Tickoo discuss this in a conversation moderated by Aroon Deep. Edited excerpts:

Mythos is being billed as a powerful model for cybersecurity. To what extent will this have ripple effects? How seriously should the government and industry take it?

Aseem Jakhar: As per Anthropic, based on what their research and blog posts say – we do not know exactly what is going on behind the scenes – Mythos is quite a leap from previous models, because they say it could do a lot of steps autonomously, whereas current researchers typically need to define and do it in an agentic fashion. We are going to see a lot of bugs being identified. It is not just Anthropic; other companies will also develop their models. I think delaying its release is good, but eventually, they will have to release it.

From the government side, I think the urgency is real. What Mythos and other research demonstrate is the ability to autonomously identify bugs, triage them, and even create exploits. This is going to give a lot of power to zero-day sellers, both in underground markets and companies that are selling it. I think things are going to change once these models are available to the general public.

Sharda Tickoo: Governments and industry should take it seriously, but not in a sensational way. It is not like AI is entering the cyber for the first time; what has changed is the level of autonomy, scale, and sophistication. It is not just about AI finding vulnerabilities faster; it is also about compressing the entire lifecycle.



GETTY IMAGES

Because when we talk about vulnerabilities, there are multiple phases. You discover it, work on the exploit, develop, and maybe then try to weaponise it. The shift is there. That is where I think the urgency is more than before, because it is definitely going to be a very threatening move for governments and the public sector. But here is the practitioner’s reality: whenever we have been dealing with enterprises for a very long time, the discovery of the vulnerability has never been the biggest bottleneck.

The biggest bottleneck has always been execution. The reality is that while there is a focus on discovering new vulnerabilities, most enterprises are still struggling to patch even known (N-day) vulnerabilities.

If AI starts finding vulnerabilities at scale, it might cause a problem. But vulnerability management is not a scanning exercise; it is a full-fledged programme. Discovery is just one part of it. I think the real challenge is still prioritisation, validation, and managing it at scale.

So yes, this is a wake-up call. But the real response is not “find faster,” but rather to protect faster and smarter. And that is where I think multiple other controls have to work together from a defensive mechanism standpoint.

What does the growing integration of LLMs into cybersecurity mean for cybersecurity professionals? Many Indians have made handsome sums in “bug bounties” by alerting companies to vulnerabilities in their code...

AJ: It depends on the time horizon. Over the next five years, I think it will help bug bounty hunters find vulnerabilities faster. It will enable faster identification and reporting, and on the



What Mythos and other research demonstrate is the ability to autonomously identify bugs, triage them, and even create exploits. This is going to give a lot of power to zero-day sellers

ASEEM JAKHAR

customer side, it will help with triaging. Specifically for cybersecurity professionals, it will be good for those focusing on core learning, and in the future, they will need less expertise on specific subjects.

For example, in vulnerability identification today, you need deep expertise in reverse engineering across different architectures, such as ARM and Intel. That requirement will go down over the years. Those who focus on core learning and learn to use AI efficiently in their workflow will benefit the most. Over the long term, let us say 10 years, we may not need that much expertise, as AI will handle most of the heavy lifting.

ST: I think this will reshape how we view cybersecurity as a profession. It will also raise the bar for many professionals. Of course, some part of vulnerability hunting may become more efficient and automated. If a model can autonomously identify and exploit sophisticated flaws, then lower-level, repetitive work will get commoditised. Anthropic has said that even non-experts were able to use Mythos to find serious vulnerabilities, and in several cases, the model could also autonomously develop exploits.

However, I believe this does not mean the research will become less relevant – in fact, the opposite may happen. The bottleneck will shift from merely finding vulnerabilities or bugs to contextualising, prioritising, validating them, and defending at scale.

Human research will still matter. While AI will give much-needed assistance and improve accuracy, human research will remain essential in deciding what is truly exploitable in real-world environments and in understanding, for example, factors such as business impact and attack paths.

On bug bounties specifically, I would not expect elimination. Definitely there will be some disruption. Trend AI runs zero-day initiatives; it is one of the largest bug bounty programmes that we run and we are already seeing that it

getting more and more efficient through the use of AI. So if AI can find vulnerabilities faster, then yes, some of the discovery work may get automated. But that is not where the real value lies anyway. It is good that it gets automated. I think the real value lies in the reality that we currently have more vulnerabilities than we can handle.

What happens to state-sponsored attackers, like governments that use Pegasus to hack into phones using zero-day exploits? Does that ecosystem of firms get a new weapon or is it under threat?

AJ: I think it will work both ways. Every new technology goes through Fear, Uncertainty, and Doubt (FUD) cycles, where people say, “If you don’t do this, you will be compromised.” The bad guys are eventually going to get access to these [Mythos-class] tools and use them. A lot of research shows that small open-source models with a few billion parameters were also able to identify what Mythos was able to find.

Both the attackers and defenders will catch up. One change that will happen for the attackers is that the price of zero-day vulnerabilities will drop, because you can identify them cheaply. The economics of zero-day attacks will change.

ST: This will definitely make life harder for cyber-offensive outfits, because they typically rely on exclusivity, like an exploit that is not available to anyone else, and a time lag. If there are Mythos-class or similar AI capabilities that can find and patch vulnerabilities faster, the shelf life of zero-days shrinks.

Some brokers might find their business models under pressure. But sophisticated offensive attackers will respond by moving faster. Maybe they will chain vulnerabilities and target environments where patching and visibility remain weak. So while opportunist actors may struggle, sophisticated groups will evolve. There will be focus on issues such as misconfigurations as a source of vulnerability.

The practitioner’s reality is that even today, many successful attacks do not rely on zero-days, but on known vulnerabilities that were not patched in time.



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

17A. Should the Mythos AI model raise cybersecurity alarms?

क्या Mythos AI मॉडल को साइबर सुरक्षा के संदर्भ में चिंता उत्पन्न करनी चाहिए?

- On April 7, AI firm **Anthropic** said its new model, **Mythos**, is so powerful at finding **cybersecurity vulnerabilities** that it will not be released publicly.

7 अप्रैल को AI कंपनी **Anthropic** ने कहा कि उसका नया मॉडल **Mythos** साइबर सुरक्षा कमजोरियों को खोजने में इतना शक्तिशाली है कि इसे सार्वजनिक रूप से जारी नहीं किया जाएगा।

- Instead, the company said it will be shared with firms that build **critical software** used across the economy.

इसके बजाय, कंपनी ने कहा कि इसे उन कंपनियों के साथ साझा किया जाएगा जो अर्थव्यवस्था में उपयोग होने वाले **महत्वपूर्ण सॉफ्टवेयर** का निर्माण करती हैं।

- The **initiative, known as Project Glasswing**, has raised **cybersecurity concerns** among most firms, which must now contend with **AI-enabled attackers** using so-called “**zero-day**” exploits, which are unknown even to a given piece of software’s developers, and therefore are not patched through software updates.

यह पहल, जिसे **Project Glasswing** कहा जाता है, ने अधिकांश कंपनियों के बीच **साइबर सुरक्षा चिंताओं** को बढ़ा दिया है, जिन्हें अब **AI-सक्षम हमलावरों** से निपटना होगा जो तथाकथित “**zero-day**” exploits का उपयोग करते हैं, जो स्वयं सॉफ्टवेयर डेवलपर्स को भी ज्ञात नहीं होते हैं और इसलिए सॉफ्टवेयर अपडेट के माध्यम से ठीक नहीं किए जाते।

- Aseem Jakhar:** As per **Anthropic**, based on what their research and blog posts say — we do not know exactly what is going on behind the scenes — **Mythos is quite a leap from previous models**, because they say it could do a lot of steps **autonomously**, whereas current researchers typically need to define and do it in an **agentic fashion**.

असीम जाखर: **Anthropic** के अनुसार, उनके शोध और ब्लॉग पोस्ट के आधार पर — हम यह ठीक-ठीक



नहीं जानते कि पर्दे के पीछे क्या हो रहा है — **Mythos** पिछले मॉडलों की तुलना में एक बड़ा उछाल है, क्योंकि यह कई कार्य **स्वायत्त रूप से (autonomously)** कर सकता है, जबकि वर्तमान शोधकर्ताओं को इसे आमतौर पर **एजेंटिक तरीके** से करना पड़ता है।

- **What Mythos and other research demonstrate is the ability to autonomously identify bugs, triage them, and even create exploits.**

Mythos और अन्य शोध यह दर्शाते हैं कि यह **स्वायत्त रूप से त्रुटियों की पहचान**, उनका वर्गीकरण और यहाँ तक कि **एक्सप्लॉइट (exploits)** तैयार करने की क्षमता रखता है।

- **Sharda Tickoo:** Governments and industry should take it **seriously, but not in a sensational way.**

शारदा टिकू: सरकारों और उद्योग को इसे गंभीरता से लेना चाहिए, लेकिन **सनसनीखेज** तरीके से नहीं।

- **It is not like AI is entering cyber for the first time; what has changed is the level of autonomy, scale, and sophistication.**

ऐसा नहीं है कि **AI** पहली बार साइबर क्षेत्र में आ रहा है; जो बदला है वह **स्वायत्तता, पैमाना और जटिलता** का स्तर है।

- **It is not just about AI finding vulnerabilities faster; it is also about compressing the entire lifecycle.**

यह केवल **AI** द्वारा कमजोरियों को तेजी से खोजने का मामला नहीं है; यह पूरे **जीवन-चक्र (lifecycle)** को **संकुचित करने** का भी विषय है।

- **Because when we talk about vulnerabilities, there are multiple phases.**

क्योंकि जब हम कमजोरियों की बात करते हैं, तो इसमें कई चरण होते हैं।

- **You discover it, work on the exploit, develop, and maybe then try to weaponise it.**

आप इसे खोजते हैं, एक्सप्लॉइट पर काम करते हैं, उसे विकसित करते हैं, और फिर संभवतः उसे **हथियार के रूप में उपयोग (weaponise)** करते हैं।

- **But vulnerability management is not a scanning exercise; it is a full-fledged programme.**

लेकिन **vulnerability management** केवल स्कैनिंग का कार्य नहीं है; यह एक **पूर्ण कार्यक्रम** है।

- Discovery is just one part of it.

खोज इसका केवल एक भाग है।

- I think the **real challenge is still prioritisation, validation, and managing it at scale.**

मेरा मानना है कि वास्तविक चुनौती अभी भी **प्राथमिकता निर्धारण, सत्यापन और बड़े पैमाने पर प्रबंधन** है।

- So yes, this is a **wake-up call.**

इसलिए हाँ, यह एक **चेतावनी संकेत (wake-up call)** है।

- But the **real response is not "find faster," but rather to protect faster and smarter.**

लेकिन वास्तविक प्रतिक्रिया "तेज़ी से खोजो" नहीं बल्कि **तेज़ और अधिक बुद्धिमानी से सुरक्षा करना** होना चाहिए।

- **Over the next five years, I think it will help bug bounty hunters find vulnerabilities faster.**

अगले **पाँच वर्षों** में, मुझे लगता है कि यह **bug bounty hunters** को कमजोरियों को तेजी से खोजने में मदद करेगा।

- **It will enable faster identification and reporting, and on the customer side, it will help with triaging.**

यह तेज़ **पहचान और रिपोर्टिंग** को सक्षम करेगा, और ग्राहक पक्ष पर यह **triating** में सहायता करेगा।

- For example, in **vulnerability identification** today, you need deep expertise in **reverse engineering** across different architectures, such as **ARM and Intel.**

उदाहरण के लिए, आज **कमजोरी पहचान (vulnerability identification)** में आपको विभिन्न आर्किटेक्चर जैसे **ARM और Intel** में **reverse engineering** की गहरी विशेषज्ञता की आवश्यकता होती है।

- **If a model can autonomously identify and exploit sophisticated flaws, then lower-level, repetitive work will get commoditised.**

यदि कोई मॉडल **स्वायत्त रूप से जटिल कमजोरियों की पहचान और उनका शोषण** कर सकता है, तो निम्न-स्तरीय, दोहराए जाने वाले कार्य **सामान्यीकृत (commoditised)** हो जाएंगे।

- **Anthropic has said that even non-experts were able to use Mythos to find serious vulnerabilities, and in several cases, the model could also autonomously develop exploits.**

Anthropic ने कहा है कि **गैर-विशेषज्ञ (non-experts)** भी **Mythos** का उपयोग करके गंभीर कमजोरियों को खोजने में सक्षम थे, और कई मामलों में मॉडल **स्वायत्त रूप से एक्सप्लॉइट विकसित** भी कर सकता था।



- Trend AI runs **zero-day initiatives**; it is one of the largest bug bounty programmes that we run and we are already seeing that it is getting more and more **efficient through the use of AI**.
Trend AI **zero-day initiatives** संचालित करता है; यह हमारे द्वारा चलाए जा रहे सबसे बड़े bug bounty कार्यक्रमों में से एक है और हम पहले ही देख रहे हैं कि यह **AI के उपयोग से अधिक कुशल** होता जा रहा है।
- What happens to **state-sponsored attackers**, like governments that use **Pegasus** to hack into phones using **zero-day exploits**?
राज्य-प्रायोजित हमलावरों (state-sponsored attackers) का क्या होता है, जैसे वे सरकारें जो **Pegasus** का उपयोग करके **zero-day exploits** के माध्यम से फोन हैक करती हैं?
- Every new technology goes through **Fear, Uncertainty, and Doubt (FUD)** cycles, where people say, "If you don't do this, you will be compromised."
हर नई तकनीक **Fear, Uncertainty, and Doubt (FUD)** के चक्र से गुजरती है, जहाँ लोग कहते हैं, "यदि आप यह नहीं करते, तो आप समझौता (compromised) हो जाएंगे।"
- The bad guys are eventually going to get access to these **[Mythos-class] tools** and use them.
अंततः बुरे तत्व इन **[Mythos-class] उपकरणों** तक पहुँच प्राप्त कर लेंगे और उनका उपयोग करेंगे।
- If there are **Mythos-class or similar AI capabilities** that can find and patch vulnerabilities faster, the **shelf life of zero-days shrinks**.
यदि **Mythos-class या समान AI क्षमताएँ** तेजी से कमजोरियों को खोज और ठीक कर सकती हैं, तो **zero-days की अवधि (shelf life) घट जाएगी**।
- There will be focus on issues such as **misconfigurations as a source of vulnerability**.
misconfigurations को कमजोरी के स्रोत के रूप में देखने पर ध्यान केंद्रित किया जाएगा।

GS Paper III: Environment		17 April 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
17A	German rescuers plan to use air cushions to save stranded whale जर्मन बचाव दल फंसी हुई व्हेल को बचाने के लिए एयर कुशन का उपयोग करने की योजना बना रहा है	

German rescuers plan to use air cushions to save stranded whale



GS III: Environment AP
Rescuers in Germany began an elaborate operation on Thursday to save a sick **humpback whale** that has been repeatedly stranded off the **Baltic Sea coast**. Experts have come up with a sophisticated plan to **use air cushions to lift the animal onto a tarp**, which will be secured to two pontoons and attached to a tugboat. AP

17A. German rescuers plan to use air cushions to save stranded whale

जर्मन बचाव दल फंसी हुई व्हेल को बचाने के लिए एयर कुशन का उपयोग करने की योजना बना रहा है

- rescuers in **Germany** began an elaborate operation on Thursday to save a sick **humpback whale** that has been repeatedly stranded off the **Baltic Sea coast**.
जर्मनी में बचाव दल ने गुरुवार को एक विस्तृत अभियान शुरू किया ताकि एक बीमार हंपबैक व्हेल को बचाया जा सके, जो बार-बार बाल्टिक सागर तट पर फँसती रही है।

GS Paper III: Disaster Management		17 April 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
17A	Creeping risk क्रमिक जोखिम	



Creeping risk

Industrial accidents occur due to neglect of risks built up over time

GS III: Disaster Management

An engineering reality underlying the recent spate of boiler explosions is that boilers almost never fail this way suddenly. They are usually due to overpressure, scaling, mismanaged water level, and/or revival stress, the risk of each of which builds over time. The boiler explosion in Sakti, Chhattisgarh, that killed 20 people also shares a few similarities with the Visakhapatnam gas leak in 2020 and the blast at a thermal power station in Neyveli in 2020. In the former, safety systems at a unit had been inactive or uncalibrated following a post-lockdown restart while a plant restart process triggered the explosion at the latter. The Sakti plant had likewise been recently acquired, recently commissioned, and was operating at under its full capacity at the time of the blast. In these unstable operating regimes, failures often result due to transient thermal and pressure imbalances. However, in practice, neither the national boiler inspection regime nor the regulatory framework heighten oversight in these phases. Certification is valid for up to a year even though boiler conditions vary on a daily basis. The current structure also penalises downtime instead of unsafe operations and rewarding maintenance shutdowns. Events such as those at Sakti are also evidence that the framework's focus on fabrication standards rather than continuous instrumentation and auditing is not working. The Centre's focus on 'ease of doing business' has favoured self-certification and scheduled third-party audits in place of surprise government inspections. The Boiler Accident Inquiry Rules were notified in 2025; whether they will address these structural gaps remains to be seen.

The expansion of India's industrial capacity is pushing ageing infrastructure harder, more plants are operating closer to their limits, and flaws in their management are being exposed to more media coverage and political attention. It is possible that these facilities have long been exposing their workers to hazardous working conditions, and the ensuing crises are not altogether accidental. Contract labour is the most exposed. A growing share of workers are migrants hired via subcontractors, who trade blame with the operator after a disaster. The safety signage and manuals are often unavailable in workers' native languages. Investigators have reported workers in the Pune industrial belt since 2021 and following explosions in Sangareddy in 2024 and 2025 being unaware of the names and properties of the chemicals in their workplace. The new OSHW Code 2020 also does not clearly hold the principal employer criminally liable for safety lapses in contractors' operations but qualifies it on the employer's negligence. These are old complaints about how India treats its labour. Until this culture is dismantled, firms' and regulators' incentives, labour arrangements, and factory-floor practices will keep absorbing 'accidents' as the cost of doing business.

workers' native languages.

सुरक्षा संकेत और मैनुअल अक्सर श्रमिकों की मातृभाषा में उपलब्ध नहीं होते।

- Investigators have reported workers in the Pune industrial belt since 2021 and following explosions in **Sangareddy in 2024 and 2025** being unaware of the names and properties of the chemicals in their workplace.

17A. Creeping risk क्रमिक जोखिम

Industrial accidents occur due to neglect of risks built up over time.

औद्योगिक दुर्घटनाएँ समय के साथ धीरे-धीरे बढ़ते जोखिमों की अनदेखी के कारण होती हैं।

They are usually due to **overpressure, scaling, mismanaged water level, and/or revival stress**, the risk of each of which builds over time.

ये सामान्यतः **अत्यधिक दाब (overpressure), स्केलिंग, जल स्तर का गलत प्रबंधन, और/या पुनःचालू तनाव (revival stress)** के कारण होते हैं, जिनका जोखिम समय के साथ बढ़ता है।

The boiler explosion in **Sakti, Chhattisgarh**, that killed 20 people also shares a few similarities with the **Visakhapatnam gas leak in 2020** and the blast at a **thermal power station in Neyveli in 2020**.

छत्तीसगढ़ के सक्ती में हुआ बॉयलर विस्फोट, जिसमें 20 लोगों की मृत्यु हुई, 2020 के **विशाखापत्तनम गैस रिसाव** और 2020 में **नेयवेली ताप विद्युत स्टेशन** के विस्फोट से कुछ समानताएँ रखता है।

However, in practice, neither the **national boiler inspection regime** nor the **regulatory framework** heighten oversight in these phases.

व्यवहार में न तो **राष्ट्रीय बॉयलर निरीक्षण प्रणाली** और न ही **नियामक ढांचा** इन चरणों में निगरानी बढ़ाते हैं।

The Centre's focus on '**ease of doing business**' has favoured **self-certification** and **scheduled third-party audits** in place of **surprise government inspections**.

केंद्र का '**व्यवसाय सुगमता**' पर ध्यान **स्व-प्रमाणीकरण** और निर्धारित **तृतीय-पक्ष ऑडिट** को बढ़ावा देता है, बजाय आकस्मिक सरकारी निरीक्षण के।

The **Boiler Accident Inquiry Rules** were notified in 2025; whether they will address these structural gaps remains to be seen.

Boiler Accident Inquiry Rules को 2025 में अधिसूचित किया गया; क्या वे इन संरचनात्मक कमियों को दूर करेंगे, यह देखना शेष है।

The expansion of India's **industrial capacity** is pushing ageing infrastructure harder, more plants are operating closer to their limits, and flaws in their management are being exposed to more media coverage and political attention.

भारत की **औद्योगिक क्षमता** का विस्तार पुरानी अवसंरचना पर अधिक दबाव डाल रहा है, अधिक संयंत्र अपनी सीमा के करीब कार्य कर रहे हैं, और प्रबंधन की खामियाँ अधिक मीडिया और राजनीतिक ध्यान में आ रही हैं।

Contract labour is the most exposed.

संविदा श्रमिक (Contract labour) सबसे अधिक प्रभावित होते हैं।

A growing share of workers are **migrants hired via subcontractors**, who trade blame with the operator after a disaster.

श्रमिकों का एक बड़ा हिस्सा **उपठेकेदारों के माध्यम से नियुक्त प्रवासी** हैं, जो दुर्घटना के बाद संचालक के साथ दोषारोपण करते हैं।

The **safety signage and manuals** are often unavailable in



TELEGRAM CHANNEL: <https://t.me/patrioticIAS>

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जाँचकर्ताओं ने 2021 से पुणे औद्योगिक क्षेत्र में तथा **संगरेड्डी (2024 और 2025)** के विस्फोटों के बाद यह पाया कि श्रमिक अपने कार्यस्थल पर रसायनों के नाम और गुणों से अनभिज्ञ थे।

- The new **OSHW Code 2020** also does not clearly hold the principal employer criminally liable for safety lapses in contractors' operations but qualifies it on the employer's negligence. नया **OSHW Code 2020** भी ठेकेदारों के संचालन में सुरक्षा चूक के लिए प्रमुख नियोक्ता को स्पष्ट रूप से आपराधिक रूप से उत्तरदायी नहीं ठहराता, बल्कि इसे नियोक्ता की लापरवाही पर निर्भर करता है।
- These are old complaints about how India treats its labour. ये भारत में श्रम के साथ व्यवहार को लेकर पुरानी शिकायतें हैं।
- Until this culture is dismantled, firms' and regulators' incentives, labour arrangements, and **factory-floor practices** will keep absorbing 'accidents' as the **cost of doing business**. जब तक इस संस्कृति को समाप्त नहीं किया जाता, तब तक कंपनियों और नियामकों के प्रोत्साहन, श्रम व्यवस्थाएँ और **कारखाना-स्तर की प्रथाएँ** 'दुर्घटनाओं' को **व्यवसाय की लागत** के रूप में स्वीकार करती रहेंगी।

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