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THE HINDU NEWSPAPER

08 MAY 2026

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Cultural chronicles



Reviving rituals: Members of the **Samaritan sect** taking part in a traditional pilgrimage atop **Mount Gerizim**, ahead of the holiday of Shavuot, in Nablus in Israel-occupied West Bank on Thursday.

GS 1: History, A&C
Reviving rituals: Members of the Samaritan sect taking part in a traditional pilgrimage atop Mount Gerizim, ahead of the holiday of Shavuot, in Nablus in Israel-occupied West Bank on Thursday. REUTERS

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Samaritan Sect

- The Samaritan sect is **an ancient ethnoreligious community originating in the historical region of Samaria, located in present-day Israel and the Palestinian territories.**
- Samaritans consider themselves **descendants of the ancient Israelites**, particularly **the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh**, along with the **priestly tribe of Levi**.
- They follow a distinct form of worship and religious tradition that differs from mainstream Judaism.

Religious Beliefs

- Samaritans believe in the authority of the **Samaritan Pentateuch**, which is their version of the first five books of Moses.
- **Unlike mainstream Jews, Samaritans do not recognise Jerusalem as the holiest site.**
- They regard **Mount Gerizim** as the sacred place chosen by God for worship.
- The Samaritan faith emphasises:
 - Monotheism.
 - Observance of Mosaic Law.
 - Ritual purity.
 - Passover sacrifices on Mount Gerizim.

Historical Background

- The origins of the Samaritan community are linked to the Assyrian conquest of the Kingdom of Israel in the 8th century BCE.
- **Historical tensions developed between Jews and Samaritans during the Second Temple period due to differences in religious practices and sacred geography.**
- Samaritans are mentioned several times in the Bible, including in the famous parable of the “Good Samaritan” in the New Testament.

Present Status

- **Today, the Samaritan population is very small, numbering around 800–900 people globally.**
- Most Samaritans live in:
 - Kiryat Luza near Mount Gerizim in the West Bank.
 - Holon near Tel Aviv in Israel.



Mount Gerizim

- Mount Gerizim is a sacred mountain located near the city of Nablus in the West Bank, close to the ancient biblical city of Shechem.
- Samaritans believe that Mount Gerizim, not Jerusalem, was chosen by God as the true place of worship.
- According to Samaritan tradition:
 - Adam and Eve were created there.
 - Noah's Ark rested nearby after the Flood.
 - Abraham prepared to sacrifice Isaac on this mountain.
- Samaritan religious ceremonies, especially the Passover sacrifice, are still performed on Mount Gerizim.
- Mount Gerizim is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible as the "Mount of Blessing."
- During ancient times, a Samaritan temple existed on the mountain, competing with the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem.
- The temple was destroyed around the 2nd century BCE by the Hasmonean ruler John Hyrcanus.

Archaeological Importance

- Archaeological excavations have revealed:
 - Ancient temple remains.
 - Byzantine churches.
 - Roman structures.



- Samaritan inscriptions.

Present Status

- Mount Gerizim continues to function as the spiritual and cultural centre of the Samaritan faith.
- It is also an important archaeological and pilgrimage site.



Shavuot

- Shavuot is an **important Jewish festival** celebrated seven weeks after Passover.
- The word “Shavuot” means “Weeks” in Hebrew.
- It is one of the **three major pilgrimage festivals in Judaism**, along with Passover and Sukkot.

Religious Significance

- Shavuot commemorates:
 - The giving of the Torah to Moses at Mount Sinai.
 - The covenant between God and the Israelites.
- It also has agricultural significance as the ancient harvest festival marking the wheat harvest in Israel.

Biblical Basis

- The festival is mentioned in:
 - Exodus.
 - Leviticus.
 - Deuteronomy.



- In ancient Israel, people offered the “first fruits” of harvest at the Temple in Jerusalem during Shavuot.

Customs and Traditions

- Important practices during Shavuot include:
- Reading the Book of Ruth.
- All-night Torah study.
- Decorating homes and synagogues with greenery.
- Consuming dairy foods such as cheesecake and cheese dishes.

Samaritan Observance

- Samaritans also celebrate Shavuot, but according to their own religious calendar and traditions centred on Mount Gerizim.

Present Relevance

- Shavuot remains a major Jewish religious festival observed globally by Jewish communities.
- It symbolises spiritual renewal, divine law, and gratitude for agricultural abundance.

JUDAISM

- Judaism is one of the **world's oldest monotheistic religions and is regarded as the earliest Abrahamic faith.**
- It originated in the ancient Near East, particularly in the region historically known as **Canaan**, corresponding broadly to present-day Israel and Palestine.
- **Judaism is based on the belief in one God, known as Yahweh or Jehovah, who created and governs the universe.**
- Followers of Judaism are known as Jews.
- Judaism has deeply influenced Christianity and Islam, making it foundational to the Abrahamic religious tradition.
- As of 2026, the global Jewish population is estimated at around 15–16 million people, with major populations in Israel and the United States.

Ancient Background

- Judaism emerged around the **second millennium BCE among the ancient Hebrews.**
- The Hebrews were Semitic-speaking pastoral communities living in the Middle East.
- The early history of Judaism is closely associated with **biblical patriarchs** such as:



- Abraham.
- Isaac.
- Jacob.

Role of Abraham

- Abraham is regarded as the founding patriarch of Judaism.
- According to Jewish tradition, **Abraham entered into a covenant with God**, promising faithfulness in exchange for divine blessings.
- This covenant forms the theological foundation of Judaism.

Moses and the Exodus

- **Moses is considered one of the greatest prophets in Judaism.**
- According to tradition, **Moses led the Hebrews out of slavery in Egypt during the event known as the Exodus.**
- He is believed to have **received the Ten Commandments from God on Mount Sinai around the 13th century BCE.**
- The Mosaic Law became central to Jewish religious and social life.

Sacred Texts of Judaism

Torah

- The Torah is the holiest scripture in Judaism.
- It consists of the first five books:
 - Genesis.
 - Exodus.
 - Leviticus.
 - Numbers.
 - Deuteronomy.
- Jews believe the Torah was revealed by God to Moses.

Tanakh

- The Tanakh is the complete Hebrew Bible.
- It consists of:
 - Torah (Law).
 - Nevi'im (Prophets).
 - Ketuvim (Writings).

Talmud

- The Talmud is a compilation of rabbinical discussions, legal interpretations, ethics, and traditions.



- It serves as an important guide for Jewish religious practice and daily life.

Core Beliefs of Judaism

- **Monotheism:** Judaism strictly believes in one all-powerful and eternal God.
- **Covenant:** Jews believe they share a special covenantal relationship with God.
- **Law and Ethics:** Jewish life is governed by divine laws known as Mitzvot.
 - Ethical conduct, justice, charity, and compassion are central values.
- **Messiah Concept:** Judaism believes in the future arrival of a Messiah who will establish peace and justice.
- **Life After Death:** Different Jewish traditions hold varied beliefs regarding resurrection, afterlife, and the soul.

Important Religious Practices

Sabbath (Shabbat)

- Shabbat is the weekly day of rest observed from Friday evening to Saturday evening.
- It commemorates God's rest after creation.

Prayer and Worship

- Jews worship in synagogues.
- Religious leaders are known as Rabbis.

Dietary Laws

- Jewish dietary regulations are known as Kashrut.
- Foods permitted under these laws are called Kosher foods.

Circumcision

- **Male circumcision, known as Brit Milah,** symbolises the covenant with God.

Major Jewish Festivals

- **Passover (Pesach):** Celebrates the liberation of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery.
- **Yom Kippur:** Known as the Day of Atonement and considered the holiest day in Judaism.
- **Rosh Hashanah:** Jewish New Year festival.
- **Hanukkah:** Festival of Lights commemorating the rededication of the Second Temple.
- **Shavuot:** Celebrates the revelation of the Torah at Mount Sinai.



Five sacred Shiva temples

Smt. Desa Mangaiyarkarasi elaborated in a discourse that the **Pancha Bhootha Sthalams** are five sacred Shiva temples in south India, each representing one of the five fundamental elements of nature – Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Space. Together, they symbolise the deep connection between the divine and the natural world, guiding devotees toward spiritual understanding and liberation. The **Earth element (Prithvi)** is represented by the **Ekambareswarar Temple in Kanchipuram**, one of India's seven sacred sites of liberation. According to legend, Goddess Parvati performed penance here by creating a Shiva Lingam out of sand. When Lord Shiva tested her devotion by causing a flood, she embraced the Lingam to protect it.

The **Water element (Apu)** is embodied at the **Jambukeswarar Temple in Thiruvanaikaval near Tiruchi**, where the Lingam is constantly surrounded by water. The **Fire element (Agni)** is represented by the **Annamalaiyar Temple in Thiruvannamalai**. Here, Shiva manifested as an infinite pillar of fire, humbling Brahma and Vishnu. The **Air element (Vayu)** is associated with the **Srikalahasteeswara Temple in Andhra Pradesh**. The temple's name comes from a spider, a serpent, and an elephant who attained moksha here. A unique feature is the constantly flickering lamp in the sanctum, even in the absence of wind, symbolising the Vayu Lingam's presence. Finally, the **Space element (Akasa)** is represented by the **Natarajar Temple in Chidambaram**, where Lord Shiva performs the cosmic dance of bliss, the Ananda Tandava. Here, the divine is worshipped in a formless aspect known as the "Chidambara Rahasyam," symbolising boundless nature of space.

08M. Five sacred Shiva temples पाँच पवित्र शिव मंदिर

• Smt. Desa Mangaiyarkarasi elaborated in a discourse that the **Pancha Bhootha Sthalams** are five sacred Shiva temples in south India, each representing one of the five fundamental elements of nature — **Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Space**.

श्रीमती **Desa Mangaiyarkarasi** ने एक प्रवचन में विस्तार से बताया कि **Pancha Bhootha Sthalams** दक्षिण भारत के पाँच पवित्र शिव मंदिर हैं, जिनमें से प्रत्येक प्रकृति के पाँच मूलभूत तत्वों — **पृथ्वी, जल, अग्नि, वायु और आकाश** का प्रतिनिधित्व करता है।

• Together, they symbolise the deep connection between the **divine** and the **natural world**, guiding devotees toward spiritual understanding and liberation.

ये मिलकर **दिव्य और प्राकृतिक संसार** के बीच गहरे संबंध का प्रतीक हैं, जो भक्तों को आध्यात्मिक समझ और मोक्ष की ओर मार्गदर्शन करते हैं।

• The **Earth element (Prithvi)** is represented by the **Ekambareswarar Temple in Kanchipuram**, one of India's seven sacred sites of liberation.

पृथ्वी तत्व (Prithvi) का प्रतिनिधित्व **कांचीपुरम स्थित**

Ekambareswarar मंदिर करता है, जो भारत के सात मोक्षदायी पवित्र स्थलों में से एक है।

- According to legend, Goddess **Parvati** performed **According to legend, Goddess Parvati performed penance here by creating a Shiva Lingam out of sand**.
किंवदंती के अनुसार, देवी **पार्वती** ने यहाँ रेत से एक **शिव लिंगम** बनाकर तपस्या की थी।
- When Lord **Shiva** tested her devotion by causing a flood, she embraced the Lingam to protect it.
जब भगवान **शिव** ने बाढ़ लाकर उनकी भक्ति की परीक्षा ली, तो उन्होंने लिंगम को बचाने के लिए उसे गले लगा लिया।
- The **Water element (Apu)** is embodied at the **Jambukeswarar Temple in Thiruvanaikaval near Tiruchi**, where the **Lingam is constantly surrounded by water**.
जल तत्व (Apu) का प्रतिनिधित्व **तिरुचि के पास तिरुवनैकोवल स्थित Jambukeswarar मंदिर** करता है, जहाँ लिंगम हमेशा जल से घिरा रहता है।
- The **Fire element (Agni)** is represented by the **Annamalaiyar Temple in Thiruvannamalai**.
अग्नि तत्व (Agni) का प्रतिनिधित्व **तिरुवन्नामलाई स्थित Annamalaiyar मंदिर** करता है।
- Here, **Shiva** manifested as an infinite pillar of fire, humbling **Brahma and Vishnu**.
यहाँ **शिव** अनंत अग्नि स्तंभ के रूप में प्रकट हुए और उन्होंने **ब्रह्मा और विष्णु** को विनम्र किया।
- The **Air element (Vayu)** is associated with the **Srikalahasteeswara Temple in Andhra Pradesh**.
वायु तत्व (Vayu) का संबंध **आंध्र प्रदेश स्थित Srikalahasteeswara मंदिर** से है।
- The temple's name comes from a spider, a serpent, and an elephant who attained **moksha here**.
इस मंदिर का नाम एक मकड़ी, एक सर्प और एक हाथी से जुड़ा है, जिन्होंने यहाँ **मोक्ष** प्राप्त किया।
- A unique feature is the constantly flickering lamp in the sanctum, even in the absence of wind, symbolising the **Vayu Lingam's presence**.
इसका एक अनोखा पहलू गर्भगृह में हमेशा जलती हुई और टिमटिमाती दीपक है, जो हवा न होने पर भी जलती रहती है और **वायु लिंगम** की उपस्थिति का प्रतीक है।



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- Finally, the **Space element (Akasa)** is represented by the **Natarajar Temple in Chidambaram**, where Lord **Shiva** performs the cosmic dance of bliss, the **Ananda Tandava**. अंत में, आकाश तत्व (Akasa) का प्रतिनिधित्व चिदंबरम स्थित Natarajar मंदिर करता है, जहाँ भगवान शिव आनंद के ब्रह्मांडीय नृत्य, आनंद तांडव का प्रदर्शन करते हैं।
- Here, the divine is worshipped in a formless aspect known as the "**Chidambara Rahasyam**," symbolising **boundless nature of space**. यहाँ दिव्यता की पूजा एक निराकार रूप में की जाती है जिसे "चिदंबर रहस्यम्" कहा जाता है, जो आकाश की असीम प्रकृति का प्रतीक है।

GS Paper 1: Society		08 May 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
08M	Should the Abortion Law be Amended for Minor Rape Victims? क्या नाबालिग बलात्कार पीड़िताओं के लिए गर्भपात कानून में संशोधन किया जाना चाहिए?	

PATRIOTIC IAS



Should the abortion law be amended for minor rape victims?



Dipika Jain
Executive dean & professor of law, director, Centre for Justice, Law and Society, Jindal Global Law School

PARLEY

Why are so many pregnant persons approaching the courts for terminations? Do we need to remove time limits on abortions? Do abortion laws need to be delinked from criminal laws? How can access to safe abortions for all be improved? Dipika Jain and Alka Barua discuss in a conversation moderated by Zubeda Hamid. Edited excerpts.

Can we start with an overview of abortion laws in India?



Alka Barua
Abortion theme lead and steering committee member, CommonHealth India

Dipika Jain: There are two sets of laws that regulate abortion in India. Sections 88 to 94 of the BNS and the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971. Abortion is criminalised under Section 88 of the BNS, which means that a woman who terminates her pregnancy with her consent and the doctor who terminates her pregnancy with her consent and his consent can be criminalised. In 1979, there was an exception created via the MTP Act, which created a framework for conditional rights. Abortion is legal in India based on certain circumstances and conditions. The 2022 Supreme Court judgement also elaborates on abortion rights as fundamental rights. There are three components: unmarried women are entitled to seek termination; transgender persons are also included within the legal framework; and in India to terminate a pregnancy in the right is part of [the] decisional autonomy of a woman or a pregnant person.

Alka Barua: The law looks fairly liberal, but there isn't broad and progressive interpretation at the ground level. And there are reasons for it. One, the law places decision-making authority primarily with the doctors. So this gives scope for refusal based on personal beliefs or misunderstanding or unawareness of law. The law's implementation doesn't take into account the fact that we have a shortage of certified providers and adequately equipped facilities. And this is particularly more so now when the gestational limit has been increased and later gestational terminations are more complex and require greater skills, better facilities. As long as abortion remains linked to a criminal law, it is socially stigmatised. And many women delay care or seek unsafe pathways in such situations.

Is there a case to be made for the Supreme Court's asking for the removal of time limit



On paper: The Supreme Court, in 2022, has said that it recognises reproductive decisional autonomy as a fundamental right. GETTY IMAGES

on terminations of unwanted pregnancies in the case of minor rape victims?

DJ: The MTP Act sets out general outer limits of 24 weeks, with only two exceptions. One is substantial foetal anomalies, which has to be certified by a medical board, and the other is to save the life of the pregnant woman. In the past, the Supreme Court has, on multiple occasions, allowed termination up to 33 weeks of pregnancy in cases of foetal anomalies. [This] exposes a gap between legal categories that are rigid and real life, medical and social situations. So if it is safe, and it is with the consent of the pregnant person, and the termination is allowed in cases of foetal anomalies, why can't terminations be allowed in other cases where late-term termination becomes important? For example, sexual assault, rape, drastic life challenges, mental health crises. In my opinion, anyone whose pregnancy is safe to terminate should be allowed to terminate it.

AB: The law has not taken into account ground-level reality. There is no need for such rigid gestational limits for terminations, particularly in cases of sexual assault survivors, minors, or adolescents, etc. One reason is, they tend to come late, because of the trauma, the stigma, the lack of awareness about their entitlements under the MTP Act; in case of minors and adolescents, they often do not even know that they have conceived till late pregnancy. Then, most do not have access to resources; they have restricted mobility. Delayed access is not out of choice but because institutions, family structures, violence prevent them from timely access. We believe that risk should be assessed clinically. If it can be safely provided based on clinical judgment, then why this inflexible statutory cut-off? The intent of the

law has to be interpreted more broadly rather than using it as a barrier to provide services.

Do healthcare providers feel they may be at risk of criminal proceedings if they proceed with abortions?

DJ: Abortion is criminalised under law. But there is also an exception, which if followed, on the basis of certain conditions, termination can be offered. However, because it is conditional and the burden of proof is on the doctor, complications arise. This is not a rights-based framework. It is a conditional, qualified framework and sets out very strict conditions. If you fail in any of these conditions, there can be chances of prosecution. We know that in 2021, a doctor in Meghalaya was put behind bars for a month on a termination he didn't even do. There are also other laws that complicate the criminal framework and liability, for example, the PCPNDT [and] POCSO. Why can't we move from a criminal framework to a rights-based reproductive justice healthcare framework?

AB: The reason for this is not only lack of awareness about what their obligations are, what the service seekers' entitlements are, but also lack of awareness among those who are enforcing the law at the ground level. Most service providers are worried about police involvement in cases of rape and minors. They are confused about documentation requirements. Then there are concerns about the uncertainty around pregnancies near the stipulated gestational limits. There are no clear protocols in place. All this, in addition to the fact that there is a social pressure, let's not forget that doctors belong to the same society as [that of] service-seekers. All this leads to a chilling effect. They don't want to provide services in such cases, particularly the later gestation cases.

Are there other countries that allow for abortion on a demand basis rather than on a conditional basis? Is that what a reproductive health rights framework looks like?

DJ: The Supreme Court in 2022 has said that it recognises reproductive decisional autonomy as a fundamental right. It means that the decision to terminate a pregnancy ultimately belongs to the pregnant person, not the doctor or the State. That's what the law is saying. Now, should that not also be the practice? If a pregnant person decides to terminate, why should the State impose so many conditions? Why can't it be

based on decisional autonomy and on demand? There are many countries that have at least early-term abortion on demand or on request, and that's exactly how our law should be.

AB: Irrespective of what the law is, our experience is [that] when a woman decides to terminate a pregnancy, she does get it terminated. If restrictions are there, you are literally pushing her towards unsafe service providers. The MTP Act came into existence to prevent unsafe abortions and maternal deaths because of that. And if that very law, because of the conditions it has included in it, is leading service seekers towards unsafe practices, then the point is lost. [also] just wanted to distinguish between refusal on any grounds, be it ethical or professional, skill level, and denial of access. An individual service provider may decline to perform a procedure to which they have objections personally. The law says nothing against it right now. But then they should be made to refer the case, or ask someone else in the facility to provide the services.

Would a law that lifts all conditions and allows for abortion on request be in conflict with the POCSO law where the State has to look into sexual assault?

DJ: When the POCSO law was drafted, the focus was on child sexual abuse. Section 19 of the POCSO Act allows for mandatory reporting. What happens when it intersects with the MTP Act? In the MTP Act, when an adolescent or minor gets pregnant, they can seek termination. But when the adolescent walks into the hospital, the doctor has to report her mandatorily to the police. Now, what happens is, in case of a 16-year-old in a relationship with a 17-year-old boy, this 16-year-old girl will not go ahead and seek termination because she knows that the mandatory reporting will mean that the boy will be held for statutory rape. This is the problem. In 2022, the Supreme Court harmonised POCSO with the MTP Act. The court ruled that minors can access abortion services without their identities being disclosed. So to some extent, this has been addressed. However, it's not something that is working on the ground.



08M. Should the Abortion Law be Amended for Minor Rape Victims?

क्या नाबालिग बलात्कार पीड़िताओं के लिए गर्भपात कानून में संशोधन किया जाना चाहिए?

- **Why are so many pregnant persons approaching the courts for terminations?**
इतने अधिक गर्भवती व्यक्ति गर्भसमापन के लिए न्यायालयों का रुख क्यों कर रहे हैं?
- **Do we need to remove time limits on abortions?**
क्या गर्भपात पर लगाए गए समय-सीमा प्रतिबंधों को हटाने की आवश्यकता है?
- **Do abortion laws need to be delinked from criminal laws?**
क्या गर्भपात संबंधी कानूनों को आपराधिक कानूनों से अलग किया जाना चाहिए?
- **How can access to safe abortions for all be improved?**
सभी के लिए सुरक्षित गर्भपात तक पहुँच को कैसे बेहतर बनाया जा सकता है?
- **Dipika Jain and Alka Barua discuss in a conversation moderated by Zubeda Hamid.**
दीपिका जैन और अल्का बरुआ ने जुबेदा हामिद द्वारा संचालित एक वार्ता में इस विषय पर चर्चा की।
- Edited excerpts.
संपादित अंश।
- **Can we start with an overview of abortion laws in India?**
क्या हम भारत में गर्भपात कानूनों के एक अवलोकन से शुरुआत कर सकते हैं?
- **Dipika Jain:** There are two sets of laws that regulate abortion in India.
दीपिका जैन: भारत में गर्भपात को विनियमित करने वाले दो प्रकार के कानून हैं।
- **Sections 88 to 94 of the BNS and the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971.**
BNS की धारा 88 से 94 तथा मेडिकल टर्मिनेशन ऑफ प्रेग्नेंसी (MTP) अधिनियम, 1971।
- **Abortion is criminalised under Section 88 of the BNS,** which means that a woman who terminates her pregnancy with her consent and the doctor who terminates her pregnancy with her consent and his consent can be criminalised.



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BNS की धारा 88 के अंतर्गत गर्भपात को अपराध घोषित किया गया है, जिसका अर्थ यह है कि अपनी सहमति से गर्भसमापन कराने वाली महिला तथा उसकी सहमति से गर्भसमापन करने वाला चिकित्सक दोनों अपराधी माने जा सकते हैं।

- In 1979, there was an exception created via the MTP Act, which created a framework for conditional rights.
वर्ष 1979 में MTP अधिनियम के माध्यम से एक अपवाद स्थापित किया गया, जिसने सशर्त अधिकारों की रूपरेखा तैयार की।
- Abortion is legal in India based on certain circumstances and conditions.
कुछ विशेष परिस्थितियों और शर्तों के आधार पर भारत में गर्भपात वैध है।
- The 2022 Supreme Court judgement also elaborates on abortion rights as fundamental rights.
2022 के सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के निर्णय में भी गर्भपात अधिकारों को मौलिक अधिकारों के रूप में विस्तृत किया गया है।
- There are three components: unmarried women are entitled to seek termination; transgender persons are also included within the legal framework; and the right to terminate a pregnancy in India is part of decisional autonomy of a woman or a pregnant person.
इसके तीन प्रमुख घटक हैं: अविवाहित महिलाएँ गर्भसमापन का अधिकार रखती हैं; ट्रांसजेंडर व्यक्तियों को भी कानूनी ढाँचे में शामिल किया गया है; तथा भारत में गर्भसमापन का अधिकार किसी महिला या गर्भवती व्यक्ति की निर्णयात्मक स्वायत्तता का हिस्सा है।
- Alka Barua: The law looks fairly liberal, but there isn't broad and progressive interpretation at the ground level.
अल्का बरुआ: यह कानून देखने में काफी उदार प्रतीत होता है, किन्तु जमीनी स्तर पर इसकी व्यापक और प्रगतिशील व्याख्या नहीं की जाती।
- And there are reasons for it.
और इसके कई कारण हैं।
- One, the law places decision-making authority primarily with the doctors.
पहला, यह कानून मुख्य रूप से निर्णय लेने का अधिकार चिकित्सकों को प्रदान करता है।
- So this gives scope for refusal based on personal beliefs or misunderstanding or unawareness of law.
इससे व्यक्तिगत मान्यताओं, गलतफहमियों अथवा कानून की जानकारी के अभाव के आधार पर इनकार करने की गुंजाइश बन जाती है।
- The law's implementation doesn't take into account the fact that we have a shortage of certified providers and adequately equipped facilities.
कानून के क्रियान्वयन में इस तथ्य का पर्याप्त ध्यान नहीं रखा गया है कि हमारे पास प्रमाणित सेवा प्रदाताओं तथा पर्याप्त सुविधाओं से युक्त संस्थानों की कमी है।
- And this is particularly more so now when the gestational limit has been increased and later gestational terminations are more complex and require greater skills, better facilities.
और यह स्थिति अब और अधिक गंभीर हो गई है, क्योंकि गर्भावधि सीमा बढ़ा दी गई है तथा अधिक समय बाद किए जाने वाले गर्भसमापन अधिक जटिल होते हैं और उनके लिए अधिक कौशल तथा बेहतर सुविधाओं की आवश्यकता होती है।
- As long as abortion remains linked to a criminal law, it is socially stigmatized.
जब तक गर्भपात को आपराधिक कानून से जोड़ा जाएगा, तब तक यह सामाजिक रूप से कलंकित बना रहेगा।
- And many women delay care or seek unsafe pathways in such situations.
और ऐसी परिस्थितियों में अनेक महिलाएँ उपचार में देरी करती हैं या असुरक्षित उपायों का सहारा लेती हैं।
- Is there a case to be made for the Supreme Court's asking for the removal of time limit on terminations of unwanted pregnancies in the case of minor rape victims?



क्या उच्चतम न्यायालय द्वारा नाबालिग बलात्कार पीड़िताओं के मामलों में अवांछित गर्भधारण को समाप्त करने हेतु निर्धारित समय-सीमा को हटाने की मांग किए जाने का कोई औचित्य है?

- **DJ:** The **MTP Act sets out general outer limits of 24 weeks**, with only two exceptions.
डीजे: एमटीपी अधिनियम गर्भसमापन के लिए सामान्यतः 24 सप्ताह की अधिकतम सीमा निर्धारित करता है, जिसमें केवल दो अपवाद हैं।
- **One is substantial foetal anomalies, which has to be certified by a medical board, and the other is to save the life of the pregnant woman.**
एक अपवाद गंभीर भ्रूण विकृतियाँ हैं, जिनका प्रमाणन चिकित्सा बोर्ड द्वारा किया जाना आवश्यक है, और दूसरा अपवाद गर्भवती महिला के जीवन की रक्षा करना है।
- In the past, the **Supreme Court** has, on multiple occasions, allowed termination up to **33 weeks** of pregnancy in cases of **foetal anomalies**.
पूर्व में उच्चतम न्यायालय ने अनेक अवसरों पर भ्रूण विकृतियों के मामलों में गर्भावस्था के 33 सप्ताह तक गर्भसमापन की अनुमति प्रदान की है।
- This exposes a gap between legal categories that are rigid and real life, medical and social situations.
यह कठोर कानूनी प्रावधानों और वास्तविक जीवन की चिकित्सीय एवं सामाजिक परिस्थितियों के बीच की खाई को उजागर करता है।
- So if it is safe, and it is with the consent of the **pregnant person**, and the termination is allowed in cases of **foetal anomalies**, why can't terminations be allowed in other cases where **late-term termination** becomes important?
अतः यदि गर्भसमापन सुरक्षित है, और यह गर्भवती व्यक्ति की सहमति से किया जा रहा है, तथा भ्रूण विकृतियों के मामलों में इसकी अनुमति है, तो अन्य परिस्थितियों में, जहाँ देर से गर्भसमापन आवश्यक हो जाता है, इसकी अनुमति क्यों नहीं दी जा सकती?
- For example, **sexual assault, rape**, drastic life challenges, **mental health crises**.
उदाहरण के लिए, यौन उत्पीड़न, बलात्कार, जीवन की गंभीर चुनौतियाँ, तथा मानसिक स्वास्थ्य संकट।
- **In my opinion, anyone whose pregnancy is safe to terminate should be allowed to terminate it.**
मेरे विचार में, जिस किसी की गर्भावस्था का सुरक्षित रूप से समापन किया जा सकता है, उसे गर्भसमापन की अनुमति मिलनी चाहिए।
- **AB:** The law has not taken into account **ground-level reality**.
एबी: कानून ने जमीनी वास्तविकताओं को ध्यान में नहीं रखा है।
- **There is no need for such rigid gestational limits for terminations, particularly in cases of sexual assault survivors, minors, or adolescents, etc.**
गर्भसमापन के लिए इतनी कठोर गर्भकालीन सीमाओं की आवश्यकता नहीं है, विशेष रूप से यौन उत्पीड़न पीड़िताओं, नाबालिगों, या किशोरियों के मामलों में।
- One reason is, they tend to come late: because of the **trauma**, the **stigma**, the lack of awareness about their entitlements under the **MTP Act**.
एक कारण यह है कि वे प्रायः देर से सामने आती हैं, क्योंकि वे आघात, सामाजिक कलंक, तथा एमटीपी अधिनियम के अंतर्गत अपने अधिकारों के प्रति जागरूकता के अभाव से ग्रस्त होती हैं।
- **In case of minors and adolescents, they often do not even know that they have conceived till late pregnancy.**
नाबालिगों और किशोरियों के मामलों में, उन्हें प्रायः देर से गर्भावस्था तक यह भी ज्ञात नहीं होता कि वे गर्भवती हैं।
- Then, most do not have access to resources; they have restricted mobility.
इसके अतिरिक्त, अधिकांश के पास संसाधनों तक पहुँच नहीं होती तथा उनकी आवाजाही भी सीमित होती है।
- Delayed access is not out of choice but because institutions, family structures, violence prevent them from timely access.



सेवाओं तक विलंबित पहुँच उनकी पसंद नहीं होती, बल्कि संस्थागत व्यवस्थाएँ, पारिवारिक संरचनाएँ और हिंसा उन्हें समय पर सहायता प्राप्त करने से रोकती हैं।

- We believe that risk should be assessed clinically.
हमारा मानना है कि जोखिम का मूल्यांकन चिकित्सीय आधार पर किया जाना चाहिए।
- If it can be safely provided based on **clinical judgment**, then why this inflexible **statutory cut-off**?
यदि **चिकित्सीय निर्णय** के आधार पर सुरक्षित रूप से गर्भसमापन किया जा सकता है, तो फिर यह कठोर **वैधानिक समय-सीमा** क्यों होनी चाहिए?
- The intent of the law has to be interpreted more broadly rather than using it as a barrier to provide services.
कानून की भावना की व्यापक व्याख्या की जानी चाहिए, न कि उसे सेवाएँ प्रदान करने में बाधा के रूप में प्रयोग किया जाना चाहिए।
- Do **healthcare providers** feel they may be at risk of **criminal proceedings** if they proceed with **abortions**?
क्या **स्वास्थ्य सेवा प्रदाताओं** को यह महसूस होता है कि यदि वे **गर्भपात** करते हैं तो उनके विरुद्ध **आपराधिक कार्यवाही** हो सकती है?
- **DJ: Abortion** is criminalised under law.
डीजे: कानून के अंतर्गत **गर्भपात** को अपराध घोषित किया गया है।
- But there is also an exception, which if followed, on the basis of certain conditions, termination can be offered.
किन्तु इसमें एक अपवाद भी है, जिसके अंतर्गत कुछ निर्धारित शर्तों का पालन किए जाने पर गर्भसमापन किया जा सकता है।
- However, because it is conditional and the burden of proof is on the doctor, complications arise.
हालाँकि, चूँकि यह सशर्त है और प्रमाण प्रस्तुत करने का दायित्व चिकित्सक पर होता है, इसलिए अनेक जटिलताएँ उत्पन्न होती हैं।
- This is not a **rights-based framework**.
यह **अधिकार-आधारित ढाँचा** नहीं है।
- It is a conditional, qualified framework and sets out very strict conditions.
यह एक सशर्त और सीमित ढाँचा है, जो अत्यंत कठोर शर्तें निर्धारित करता है।
- If you fail in any of these conditions, there can be chances of prosecution.
यदि इनमें से किसी भी शर्त का पालन नहीं होता, तो अभियोजन चलाए जाने की संभावना हो सकती है।
- We know that in **2021**, a doctor in **Meghalaya** was put behind bars for a month on a termination he didn't even do.
हम जानते हैं कि **2021** में **मेघालय** में एक चिकित्सक को ऐसे गर्भसमापन के मामले में एक महीने तक जेल में रखा गया, जिसे उसने किया भी नहीं था।
- There are also other laws that complicate the criminal framework and liability, for example, the **PCPNDT** [and] **POCSO**.
इसके अतिरिक्त अन्य कानून भी हैं, जो आपराधिक ढाँचे और दायित्व को और जटिल बनाते हैं, जैसे **PCPNDT** तथा **POCSO**।
- **Why can't we move from a criminal framework to a rights-based reproductive justice healthcare framework?**
हम आपराधिक ढाँचे से हटकर **अधिकार-आधारित प्रजनन न्याय स्वास्थ्य-सेवा ढाँचे** की ओर क्यों नहीं बढ़ सकते?
- **AB:** The reason for this is not only lack of awareness about what their obligations are, what the service seekers' entitlements are, but also lack of awareness among those who are enforcing the law at the ground level.



- एबी:** इसका कारण केवल यह नहीं है कि लोगों को अपने दायित्वों और सेवा प्राप्त करने वालों के अधिकारों की जानकारी नहीं है, बल्कि यह भी है कि जमीनी स्तर पर कानून लागू करने वालों में भी जागरूकता का अभाव है।
- Most **service providers** are worried about **police involvement** in cases of **rape** and **minors**. अधिकांश सेवा प्रदाता बलात्कार और नाबालिगों से जुड़े मामलों में पुलिस हस्तक्षेप को लेकर चिंतित रहते हैं।
 - They are confused about **documentation requirements**. वे दस्तावेज़ी आवश्यकताओं को लेकर भ्रमित रहते हैं।
 - Then there are concerns about the uncertainty around pregnancies near the stipulated **gestational limits**. इसके अतिरिक्त निर्धारित गर्भावधि सीमाओं के निकट पहुँच चुकी गर्भावस्थाओं को लेकर भी अनिश्चितता बनी रहती है।
 - There are no clear protocols in place. इस संबंध में कोई स्पष्ट प्रोटोकॉल उपलब्ध नहीं हैं।
 - All this, in addition to the fact that there is a social pressure, let's not forget that doctors belong to the same society as [that of] service-seekers. इन सबके अतिरिक्त सामाजिक दबाव भी मौजूद है; यह नहीं भूलना चाहिए कि चिकित्सक भी उसी समाज का हिस्सा हैं, जिसका हिस्सा सेवा प्राप्त करने वाले लोग हैं।
 - All this leads to a **chilling effect**. ये सभी परिस्थितियाँ एक प्रकार के भयजनित प्रभाव को जन्म देती हैं।
 - They don't want to provide services in such cases, particularly the **later gestation cases**. वे ऐसे मामलों में, विशेषकर अधिक गर्भावधि वाले मामलों में, सेवाएँ प्रदान नहीं करना चाहते।

Are there other countries that allow for abortion on a demand basis rather than on a conditional basis? Is that what a reproductive health rights framework looks like?

क्या ऐसे अन्य देश हैं जो शर्तों के बजाय मांग के आधार पर गर्भपात की अनुमति देते हैं? क्या यही प्रजनन स्वास्थ्य अधिकारों की रूपरेखा है?

- **DJ:** The **Supreme Court** in 2022 has said that it recognises **reproductive decisional autonomy** as a **fundamental right**.
डीजे: उच्चतम न्यायालय ने वर्ष 2022 में कहा था कि वह प्रजनन संबंधी निर्णयात्मक स्वायत्तता को एक मौलिक अधिकार के रूप में मान्यता देता है।
- It means that the decision to terminate a pregnancy ultimately belongs to the **pregnant person**, not the doctor or the **State**.
इसका अर्थ यह है कि गर्भसमापन का अंतिम निर्णय गर्भवती व्यक्ति का होता है, न कि चिकित्सक या राज्य का।
- That's what the law is saying.
कानून भी यही कहता है।
- Now, should that not also be the practice?
अब क्या यही व्यवहारिक व्यवस्था भी नहीं होनी चाहिए?
- **If a pregnant person decides to terminate, why should the State impose so many conditions?**
यदि कोई गर्भवती व्यक्ति गर्भसमापन का निर्णय लेता है, तो राज्य को इतनी अधिक शर्तें क्यों लगानी चाहिए?
- Why can't it be based on **decisional autonomy** and on demand?
इसे निर्णयात्मक स्वायत्तता और मांग के आधार पर क्यों नहीं किया जा सकता?
- There are many countries that have at least **early-term abortion on demand** or on request, and that's exactly how our law should be.
ऐसे अनेक देश हैं जहाँ कम-से-कम प्रारंभिक चरण में मांग के आधार पर गर्भपात या अनुरोध पर गर्भसमापन की अनुमति है, और हमारा कानून भी ठीक वैसा ही होना चाहिए।



- **AB:** Irrespective of what the law is, our experience is that when a woman decides to terminate a pregnancy, she does get it terminated.
एबी: कानून चाहे जो भी हो, हमारा अनुभव यह है कि जब कोई महिला गर्भसमापन का निर्णय लेती है, तो वह अंततः गर्भसमापन करवा ही लेती है।
- If restrictions are there, you are literally pushing her towards **unsafe service providers**.
यदि प्रतिबंध लगाए जाते हैं, तो आप वास्तव में उसे **असुरक्षित सेवा प्रदाताओं** की ओर धकेल रहे होते हैं।
- The **MTP Act** came into existence to prevent **unsafe abortions and maternal deaths** because of that.
एमटीपी अधिनियम का अस्तित्व ही **असुरक्षित गर्भपातों** तथा उनसे होने वाली **मातृ मृत्यु** को रोकने के लिए हुआ था।
- And if that very law, because of the conditions it has included in it, is leading service seekers towards **unsafe practices**, then the point is lost.
और यदि वही कानून, अपनी शर्तों के कारण, सेवा प्राप्त करने वालों को **असुरक्षित प्रथाओं** की ओर ले जा रहा है, तो उसका उद्देश्य ही समाप्त हो जाता है।
- I also just wanted to distinguish between **refusal** on any grounds, be it ethical or professional, skill level, and **denial of access**.
मैं यह भी स्पष्ट करना चाहती हूँ कि किसी भी आधार पर **इन्कार**, चाहे वह नैतिक हो, व्यावसायिक हो, या कौशल स्तर से जुड़ा हो, और **सेवा से वंचित करना**, दोनों में अंतर है।
- An individual **service provider** may decline to perform a procedure to which they have objections personally.
कोई व्यक्तिगत **सेवा प्रदाता** उस प्रक्रिया को करने से मना कर सकता है, जिसके प्रति उसे व्यक्तिगत आपत्ति हो।
- The law says nothing against it right now.
वर्तमान में कानून इसके विरुद्ध कुछ नहीं कहता है।
- But then they should be made to refer the case, or ask someone else in the facility to provide the services.
किन्तु ऐसी स्थिति में उन्हें उस मामले को किसी अन्य चिकित्सक के पास भेजना चाहिए, अथवा उसी संस्था में किसी अन्य व्यक्ति से वह सेवा उपलब्ध करवानी चाहिए।
- Would a law that lifts all conditions and allows for **abortion on request** be in conflict with the **POCSO law** where the State has to look into **sexual assault**?
क्या ऐसा कानून, जो सभी शर्तों को हटाकर **मांग पर गर्भपात** की अनुमति देता हो, **POCSO कानून** से टकराव में होगा, जहाँ राज्य को **यौन उत्पीड़न** के मामलों की जाँच करनी होती है?
- **DJ:** When the **POCSO law** was drafted, the focus was on **child sexual abuse**.
डीजे: जब **POCSO कानून** का निर्माण किया गया था, तब उसका मुख्य ध्यान **बाल यौन शोषण** पर था।
- **Section 19 of the POCSO Act** allows for **mandatory reporting**.
POCSO अधिनियम की धारा 19 के अंतर्गत **अनिवार्य रिपोर्टिंग** का प्रावधान किया गया है।
- What happens when it interacts with the **MTP Act**?
जब इसका **MTP अधिनियम** के साथ संबंध स्थापित होता है, तब क्या स्थिति उत्पन्न होती है?
- In the **MTP Act**, when an adolescent or minor gets pregnant, they can seek termination.
MTP अधिनियम के अंतर्गत, जब कोई किशोरी या नाबालिग गर्भवती हो जाती है, तो वह गर्भसमापन की मांग कर सकती है।
- But when the adolescent walks into the hospital, the doctor has to report her mandatorily to the police.
किन्तु जब वह किशोरी अस्पताल पहुँचती है, तब चिकित्सक के लिए उसकी सूचना पुलिस को देना अनिवार्य हो जाता है।



- Now, what happens is, in case of a **16-year-old** in a relationship with a **17-year-old boy**, this **16-year-old girl** will not go ahead and seek termination because she knows that the **mandatory reporting** will mean that the boy will be held for **statutory rape**.
अब, यदि कोई **16 वर्षीय** लड़की किसी **17 वर्षीय लड़के** के साथ संबंध में है, तो वह **16 वर्षीय लड़की** गर्भसमापन के लिए आगे नहीं आएगी, क्योंकि उसे पता होगा कि **अनिवार्य रिपोर्टिंग** के कारण उस लड़के पर **वैधानिक बलात्कार** का आरोप लगाया जाएगा।
- This is the problem.
यही मुख्य समस्या है।
- In **2022**, the **Supreme Court** harmonised **POCSO** with the **MTP Act**.
वर्ष **2022** में **सर्वोच्च न्यायालय** ने **POCSO** और **MTP अधिनियम** के बीच सामंजस्य स्थापित किया।
- The **court ruled that minors can access abortion services without their identities being disclosed**.
न्यायालय ने निर्णय दिया कि **नाबालिग** अपनी पहचान उजागर किए बिना **गर्भपात सेवाओं** का लाभ प्राप्त कर सकते हैं।
- So to some extent, this has been addressed.
इस प्रकार, कुछ सीमा तक इस समस्या का समाधान किया गया है।
- However, it's not something that is working on the ground.
हालाँकि, यह व्यवस्था जमीनी स्तर पर प्रभावी रूप से कार्य नहीं कर रही है।

GS Paper II: Polity		08 May 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
08M	Entertaining petitions on religious practices can have far-reaching consequences, says SC धार्मिक प्रथाओं पर याचिकाओं को स्वीकार करना दूरगामी परिणाम दे सकता है, SC ने कहा	
08M	Was a 'proper debate' held in Parliament on CEC and ECs appointment law, asks SC क्या CEC और ECs की नियुक्ति कानून पर संसद में 'उचित बहस' हुई थी, SC ने पूछा	
08M	Governor must ensure formation of a stable government in a State राज्य में स्थिर सरकार के गठन को सुनिश्चित करना राज्यपाल का कर्तव्य है	
08M	EC lifts model code in States where polls concluded EC ने उन राज्यों में मॉडल कोड हटा दिया जहाँ चुनाव संपन्न हो चुके हैं	
08M	Scope of Legal Fiction in Party Mergers दलीय विलयों में विधिक कल्पना का दायरा	
08M	Labour challenged from all sides in U.K. elections U.K. चुनावों में लेबर पार्टी को सभी ओर से चुनौती	



Entertaining petitions on religious practices can have far-reaching consequences, says SC

GS II: Polity

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday said a deluge of petitions complaining about religious practices and religion would follow if the courts start interfering in matters of faith.

"If everybody starts questioning religious practices or matters of religion before a constitutional court, then what will happen to this civilisation where religion is so intimately connected with the Indian society. There will be hundreds of petitions questioning this right, that right, opening of temple, closure of the temple," Jus-

stice B.V. Nagarathna observed during a nine-judge Bench hearing of the Sabarimala review case.

Justice Nagarathna said India's uniqueness lay in the fact that it was a "civilisation" in which the intimate relationship between people and religion has been a constant, despite pluralities and diversities.

'Can't break ties'

The judge asked whether the courts were the right forum to question, examine and intervene in this relationship. "We nine judges, what we lay down is for a civilisation, that is India. India must progress. Despite all its develop-



Justice Nagarathna asked whether courts were the right forum to intervene in the relationship between people and religion.

ment, economy, everything, there is a constant in us, we cannot break that constant. That is what is troubling us," Justice Nagarathna said.

Justice M.M. Sundresh, on the Bench headed by

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, said entertaining petitions challenging religious practices and beliefs for violation of fundamental rights may open the flood gates with far-reaching consequences.

"Every religion will break, every constitutional court will have to be closed," the judge remarked.

'Governed by law'

Senior advocate Raju Ramchandran, for petitioners challenging the practice of excommunication in the Dawoodi Bohra community, pointed out that India was indeed a civilisation, but a civilisation governed by a Constitution.

"Therefore, nothing that goes against the grain of our Constitution can be countenanced in a civilised society governed by the Constitution," Mr. Ramchandran said.

08M. Entertaining petitions on religious practices can have far-reaching consequences, says SC

धार्मिक प्रथाओं पर याचिकाओं को स्वीकार करना दूरगामी परिणाम दे सकता है, SC ने कहा

- The Supreme Court on Thursday said a deluge of petitions complaining about religious practices and religion would follow if the courts start interfering in matters of faith. सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने गुरुवार को कहा कि यदि अदालतें आस्था के मामलों में हस्तक्षेप करना शुरू करती हैं तो धार्मिक प्रथाओं और धर्म के खिलाफ शिकायतों वाली याचिकाओं की बाढ़ आ जाएगी।
- "If everybody starts questioning religious practices or matters of religion before a constitutional court, then what will happen to this civilisation where religion is so intimately connected with Indian society?" "यदि हर कोई संवैधानिक अदालत के समक्ष धार्मिक प्रथाओं या धर्म के मामलों पर प्रश्न उठाना शुरू कर दे, तो इस सभ्यता का क्या होगा जहाँ धर्म भारतीय समाज से इतने गहरे रूप से जुड़ा हुआ है।
- There will be hundreds of petitions questioning this right, that right, opening of temple, closure of the temple," Justice B.V. Nagarathna observed during a nine-judge Bench hearing of the Sabarimala review case. "इस अधिकार, उस अधिकार, मंदिर खोलने, मंदिर बंद करने पर सवाल उठाने वाली सैकड़ों याचिकाएँ होंगी," जस्टिस B.V. Nagarathna ने Sabarimala review case की नौ-न्यायाधीश पीठ की सुनवाई के दौरान कहा।
- Justice Nagarathna said India's uniqueness lay in the fact that it was a "civilisation" in which the intimate relationship between people and religion has been a constant, despite pluralities and diversities. जस्टिस Nagarathna ने कहा कि भारत की विशिष्टता इस तथ्य में है कि यह एक "सभ्यता" है जिसमें लोगों और धर्म के बीच घनिष्ठ संबंध बहुलताओं और विविधताओं के बावजूद निरंतर रहा है।
- The judge asked whether the courts were the right forum to question, examine and intervene in this relationship. न्यायाधीश ने पूछा कि क्या अदालतें इस संबंध पर प्रश्न उठाने, जांच करने और हस्तक्षेप करने का सही मंच हैं।
- "We nine judges, what we lay down is for a civilisation, that is India. "हम नौ न्यायाधीश जो तय करते हैं, वह एक सभ्यता के लिए हैं, यानी भारत।



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

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- India must progress.
भारत को प्रगति करनी चाहिए।
- Despite all its development, economy, everything, there is a constant in us, we cannot break that constant.
सभी विकास, अर्थव्यवस्था और अन्य सब कुछ के बावजूद हमारे भीतर एक स्थिर तत्व है, जिसे हम तोड़ नहीं सकते।
- That is what is troubling us,” Justice Nagarathna said.
यही बात हमें परेशान कर रही है,” जस्टिस Nagarathna ने कहा।
- Justice M.M. Sundresh, on the Bench headed by Chief Justice of India **Surya Kant**, said entertaining petitions challenging **religious practices** and beliefs for violation of **fundamental rights** may open the flood gates with far-reaching consequences.
मुख्य न्यायाधीश **Surya Kant** की अध्यक्षता वाली पीठ में जस्टिस M.M. Sundresh ने कहा कि **धार्मिक प्रथाओं** और विश्वासों को **मौलिक अधिकारों** के उल्लंघन के आधार पर चुनौती देने वाली याचिकाओं को स्वीकार करना दूरगामी परिणामों के साथ बाढ़ का द्वार खोल सकता है।
- “Every religion will break, every **constitutional court** will have to be closed,” the judge remarked.
“हर धर्म टूट जाएगा, हर **संवैधानिक अदालत** को बंद करना पड़ेगा,” न्यायाधीश ने टिप्पणी की।
- Senior advocate Raju Ramachandran, for petitioners challenging the **practice of excommunication in the Dawoodi Bohra community**, pointed out that **India was indeed a civilisation, but a civilisation governed by a Constitution**.
वरिष्ठ अधिवक्ता Raju Ramachandran ने Dawoodi Bohra समुदाय में बहिष्कार की प्रथा को चुनौती देने वाली याचिकाओं की ओर से कहा कि भारत वास्तव में एक सभ्यता है, लेकिन एक ऐसी सभ्यता जो **संविधान** द्वारा शासित है।
- “Therefore, nothing that goes against the grain of our **Constitution** can be countenanced in a civilised society governed by the Constitution,” Mr. Ramachandran said.
“इसलिए, हमारे **संविधान** की भावना के खिलाफ कुछ भी एक संवैधानिक रूप से शासित सभ्य समाज में स्वीकार नहीं किया जा सकता,” श्री Ramachandran ने कहा।



Was a 'proper debate' held in Parliament on CEC and ECs appointment law, asks SC

GS II: Polity
Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked if there had been a "proper debate" in Parliament about the "ethos" of its 2023 judgment that took the appointment of members of the Election Commission out of the exclusive hands of the political executive, namely, "the party which not unnaturally has an interest in perpetuating itself in power".

In a 2023 judgment in *Anoop Baranwal versus Union of India*, a Constitution Bench of the court had replaced the mechanism of the President appointing the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs) on the sole advice of the Prime Minister with a more participatory appointment process involving a three-member selection committee of the Prime Minister,



the Opposition Leader in the Lok Sabha, and the Chief Justice of India. The court had said the committee would be in place till Parliament brought in a law to replace it.

The Union government had brought in a law which reverted to the dominant role of the executive in the appointments of the CEC and ECs. Under the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service, and Term of Office) Act of 2023, the CJI was replaced in the

selection committee by a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister.

"But was there a proper debate in Parliament about the *Anoop Baranwal* judgment? Is the ethos voiced in the judgment reflected in the Parliamentary debates... That is not clear," said Justice Dipankar Datta, heading a Bench comprising himself and Justice Satish Chandra Sharma.

Senior advocate Shadan Farasat, appearing for an intervenor, said the passing of the law had been preceded by an *en masse* suspension of Opposition MPs. "There was no proper debate in the Parliament," he said.

"A majority of the Opposition was suspended. [AI-MIM MP Asaduddin] Owaisi was the sole objector," advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for Association for Democratic Reforms, submitted.

08M. Was a 'proper debate' held in Parliament on CEC and ECs appointment law, asks SC

क्या CEC और ECs की नियुक्ति कानून पर संसद में 'उचित बहस' हुई थी, SC ने पूछा

- The **Supreme Court** on Thursday asked if there had been a "proper debate" in Parliament about the "ethos" of its 2023 judgment that took the **appointment of members of the Election Commission** out of the exclusive hands of the political executive, namely, "the party which not unnaturally has an interest in perpetuating itself in power".

सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने गुरुवार को पूछा कि क्या संसद में उसके 2023 के फैसले के "आदर्श/भावना (ethos)" पर "उचित बहस" हुई थी, जिसमें चुनाव आयोग के सदस्यों की नियुक्ति को राजनीतिक कार्यपालिका के एकमात्र



अधिकार से बाहर किया गया था, अर्थात “वह पार्टी जिसका स्वाभाविक रूप से सत्ता में बने रहने में हित होता है”।

- In a 2023 judgment in **Anoop Baranwal versus Union of India**, a Constitution Bench of the court had replaced the mechanism of the President appointing the **Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs)** on the sole advice of the Prime Minister with a more participatory appointment process involving a three-member selection committee of the Prime Minister, the Opposition Leader in the Lok Sabha, and the Chief Justice of India.

Anoop Baranwal बनाम Union of India के 2023 के फैसले में, अदालत की एक संविधान पीठ ने राष्ट्रपति द्वारा प्रधानमंत्री की एकमात्र सलाह पर **मुख्य चुनाव आयुक्त (CEC) और चुनाव आयुक्तों (ECs)** की नियुक्ति की व्यवस्था को बदलकर एक अधिक सहभागी प्रक्रिया अपनाई थी, जिसमें प्रधानमंत्री, लोकसभा में विपक्ष के नेता और भारत के मुख्य न्यायाधीश की तीन-सदस्यीय चयन समिति शामिल थी।

- The court had said the committee would be in place till Parliament brought in a law to replace it.

अदालत ने कहा था कि यह समिति तब तक बनी रहेगी जब तक संसद इसे बदलने के लिए कोई कानून नहीं लाती।

- The Union government had brought in a law which reverted to the dominant role of the executive in the appointments of the **CEC and ECs**.

केंद्र सरकार ने एक कानून लाया जिसमें **CEC और ECs** की नियुक्तियों में कार्यपालिका की प्रमुख भूमिका फिर से बहाल कर दी गई।

- Under the **Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service, and Term of Office) Act of 2023**, the CJI was replaced in the selection committee by a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister.

मुख्य चुनाव आयुक्त और अन्य चुनाव आयुक्त (नियुक्ति, सेवा शर्तें और कार्यकाल) अधिनियम, 2023 के तहत चयन समिति में मुख्य न्यायाधीश (CJI) की जगह प्रधानमंत्री द्वारा नामित एक केंद्रीय कैबिनेट मंत्री को शामिल किया गया।

- “But was there a proper debate in Parliament about the **Anoop Baranwal judgment**? Is the ethos voiced in the judgment reflected in the Parliamentary debates... That is not clear,” said Justice **Dipankar Datta**, heading a Bench comprising himself and Justice **Satish Chandra Sharma**.

“लेकिन क्या संसद में **Anoop Baranwal फैसले** पर उचित बहस हुई थी? क्या उस फैसले में व्यक्त **आदर्श (ethos)** संसदीय बहसों में दिखाई देता है... यह स्पष्ट नहीं है,” न्यायमूर्ति **Dipankar Datta** ने कहा, जो न्यायमूर्ति **Satish Chandra Sharma** के साथ पीठ की अध्यक्षता कर रहे थे।

- Senior advocate **Shadan Farasat**, appearing for an intervenor, said the **passing of the law had been preceded by an en masse suspension of Opposition MPs**.

वरिष्ठ अधिवक्ता **Shadan Farasat**, जो एक हस्तक्षेपकर्ता की ओर से पेश हुए, ने कहा कि इस कानून के पारित होने से पहले विपक्षी सांसदों को सामूहिक रूप से निलंबित किया गया था।

- “There was no proper debate in the Parliament,” he said.

“संसद में कोई उचित बहस नहीं हुई थी,” उन्होंने कहा।

- “A majority of the Opposition was suspended. [AIMIM MP Asaduddin] Owaisi was the sole objector,” advocate **Prashant Bhushan**, appearing for Association for Democratic Reforms, submitted.

“विपक्ष का बहुमत निलंबित था। [AIMIM सांसद Asaduddin] Owaisi ही एकमात्र आपत्ति दर्ज कराने वाले थे,” **Association for Democratic Reforms** की ओर से पेश अधिवक्ता **Prashant Bhushan** ने प्रस्तुत किया।



Governor must ensure formation of a stable government in a State

The Governor should prevent complete breakdown of constitutional machinery leading to President's Rule in a State; it will be a failure of constitutional machinery if no party or group is able to command a majority to form a popular government

GS II: Polity

NEWS ANALYSIS

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The insistence that Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) president C. Joseph Vijay must prove majority support in the Legislative Assembly is based on a time-tested legal principle that a Governor's first priority is the formation of a stable government to prevent the State from slipping into a situation of complete breakdown of constitutional machinery, leading to President's Rule.

Supreme Court precedents have said a Governor cannot refuse to allow the formation of a government once the majority is established. The only exception could be where the Governor is of the view that a stable government may not be formed by the claimants. On the other hand, the court has noted that a Governor is not expected to wait indefinitely, and in the process, encourage defections or adoption of other objectionable activities.

The apex court and the Sarkaria Commission have highlighted the importance of giving Governors



TVK chief Vijay meets Tamil Nadu Governor Rajendra Arlekar in Chennai on Wednesday to stake claim to form a government. ANI

reasonable time to "explore alternatives with political parties, groups and Independent MLAs" to form a stable government. The phrase "reasonable time" is not defined in the Constitution.

The "alternatives" before the Governor in a hung Assembly will be to invite a pre-poll alliance of parties with the largest number of seats to form the government first. The single largest party will be the second option if it could show majority support. A post-poll alliance or coalition is the last option before the Governor.

A nine-judge Bench in the 1994 S.R. Bommai judg-

ment, while endorsing this hierarchy of preference, liberally added that the Governor could either go for the single largest party or "group". It did not matter whether the "group" was formed before or after the election. It would be a case of failure of constitutional machinery if these alternatives fail, and no party or group is able to command a majority to form a popular government.

"Suppose after general elections, no political party or coalition of parties or groups is able to secure absolute majority in the Legislative Assembly and despite the Governor's exploring the alternatives,

the situation has arisen in which no political party is able to form stable government, it would be a case of completely demonstrable inability of any political party to form a stable government commanding the confidence of the majority members of the legislature. It would be a case of failure of constitutional machinery," the court observed in the Bommai judgment.

Partisan politics

However, the Supreme Court, in its seven-judge Bench judgment in *Rameshwar Prasad versus Union of India*, has also cautioned against Governors misusing their office for partisan politics.

"Whether it is a case of an existing government losing majority support or of installation of a new government after fresh elections, the act of the Governor in recommending dissolution of Assembly should be only with the sole object of preservation of the Constitution and not promotion of political interests of one or the other party," the court said.

The Rameshwar Prasad case flagged the criticism recorded in the Sarkaria Commission that Governors have, more often than

not, used their powers to recommend President's Rule under Article 356 to "promote the political interests of the party in power at the Centre".

"It is seen that one day a person is in active politics in as much as he holds the office of the Chief Minister or Minister or a party post and almost on the following day or, in any case, soon thereafter, the same person is appointed as the Governor in another State with hardly any cooling period. Ordinarily, it is difficult to expect detachment from party politics from such a person while performing the constitutional functions as Governor," the court had highlighted the need for a "cooling-off period".

Supreme Court judgments have acknowledged that coalition governments have become the norm rather than a rarity.

"Coalition governments are in place in several States and in fact at the Centre. There is nothing wrong in post-poll adjustments, and when ideological similarity weighs with any political party to support another political party though there was no pre-poll alliance... There is nothing wrong in it," the court has observed.

08M. Governor must ensure formation of a stable government in a State

राज्य में स्थिर सरकार के गठन को सुनिश्चित करना राज्यपाल का कर्तव्य है

- The Governor should prevent complete breakdown of constitutional machinery leading to President's Rule in a State; it will be a failure of constitutional machinery if no party or group is able to command a majority to form a popular government.

राज्यपाल को राज्य में संवैधानिक तंत्र के पूर्ण विफलता को रोकना चाहिए जिससे राष्ट्रपति शासन लागू हो; यदि कोई भी पार्टी या समूह लोकप्रिय सरकार बनाने के लिए बहुमत प्राप्त करने में सक्षम नहीं है तो यह संवैधानिक तंत्र की विफलता होगी।

- The insistence that Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) president C. Joseph Vijay must prove majority support in the Legislative Assembly is based on a time-tested legal principle that a Governor's first priority is the formation of a stable government to prevent the State from slipping into a situation of complete breakdown of constitutional machinery, leading to President's Rule.

यह जोर कि Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) के अध्यक्ष C. Joseph Vijay को विधान सभा में बहुमत समर्थन साबित करना चाहिए, एक समय-परीक्षित कानूनी सिद्धांत पर आधारित है कि राज्यपाल की



पहली प्राथमिकता स्थिर सरकार का गठन करना है ताकि राज्य संवैधानिक तंत्र के पूर्ण पतन की स्थिति में न जाए और राष्ट्रपति शासन लागू न हो।

- **Supreme Court precedents** have said a Governor cannot refuse to allow the formation of a government once the majority is established.
सुप्रीम कोर्ट के पूर्व निर्णयों ने कहा है कि बहुमत स्थापित हो जाने पर राज्यपाल सरकार गठन की अनुमति देने से इनकार नहीं कर सकता।
- The only exception could be where the Governor is of the view that a **stable government** may not be formed by the claimants.
केवल एक अपवाद तब हो सकता है जब राज्यपाल यह मानता हो कि दावेदारों द्वारा स्थिर सरकार नहीं बन सकती।
- On the other hand, the court has noted that a Governor is not expected to wait indefinitely, and in the process, encourage defections or adoption of other objectionable activities.
दूसरी ओर, अदालत ने कहा है कि राज्यपाल से अनिश्चितकाल तक प्रतीक्षा करने की अपेक्षा नहीं की जाती और इस प्रक्रिया में दलबदल या अन्य आपत्तिजनक गतिविधियों को बढ़ावा नहीं दिया जाना चाहिए।
- The apex court and the **Sarkaria Commission** have highlighted the importance of giving Governors reasonable time to “explore alternatives with political parties, groups and Independent MLAs” to form a **stable government**.
सर्वोच्च न्यायालय और **Sarkaria आयोग** ने इस बात पर जोर दिया है कि राज्यपालों को राजनीतिक दलों, समूहों और स्वतंत्र विधायकों के साथ “विकल्प तलाशने” के लिए उचित समय दिया जाना चाहिए ताकि स्थिर सरकार बनाई जा सके।
- The phrase “reasonable time” is not defined in the Constitution.
“उचित समय” शब्द की परिभाषा संविधान में नहीं दी गई है।
- The “alternatives” before the Governor in a **hung Assembly** will be to invite a pre-poll alliance of parties with the largest number of seats to form the government first.
एक त्रिशंकु विधानसभा में राज्यपाल के सामने “विकल्प” यह होगा कि सबसे अधिक सीटों वाले दलों के पूर्व-चुनाव गठबंधन को पहले सरकार बनाने के लिए आमंत्रित किया जाए।
- The single largest party will be the second option if it could show majority support.
यदि सबसे बड़ी पार्टी बहुमत समर्थन दिखा सके तो वह दूसरा विकल्प होगी।
- A post-poll alliance or coalition is the last option before the Governor.
चुनाव के बाद का गठबंधन या गठजोड़ राज्यपाल के सामने अंतिम विकल्प होता है।
- A nine-judge Bench in the 1994 **S.R. Bommai judgment**, while endorsing this hierarchy of preference, liberally added that the Governor could either go for the single largest party or “group”.
1994 के **S.R. Bommai फैसले** में नौ-न्यायाधीशों की पीठ ने इस प्राथमिकता क्रम को स्वीकार करते हुए कहा कि राज्यपाल एकल सबसे बड़ी पार्टी या “समूह” को भी आमंत्रित कर सकता है।
- It did not matter whether the “group” was formed before or after the election.
यह मायने नहीं रखता कि “समूह” चुनाव से पहले बना था या बाद में।
- It would be a case of failure of constitutional machinery if these alternatives fail, and no party or group is able to command a majority to form a popular government.
यदि ये सभी विकल्प विफल हो जाते हैं और कोई भी पार्टी या समूह बहुमत प्राप्त कर सरकार नहीं बना पाता, तो यह संवैधानिक तंत्र की विफलता का मामला होगा।
- “Suppose after general elections, no political party or coalition of parties or groups is able to secure absolute majority in the Legislative Assembly and despite the Governor’s exploring the alternatives, the situation has arisen in which no political party is able to form stable government, it would be a case of completely demonstrable inability of any political party to form a stable government commanding the confidence of the majority members of the legislature.
“मान लीजिए कि आम चुनावों के बाद कोई भी राजनीतिक पार्टी या गठबंधन विधानसभा में पूर्ण बहुमत प्राप्त नहीं कर पाता और राज्यपाल द्वारा विकल्प तलाशने के बावजूद ऐसी स्थिति बनती है जिसमें कोई भी पार्टी



स्थिर सरकार नहीं बना पाती, तो यह स्पष्ट रूप से किसी भी राजनीतिक पार्टी की अक्षमता होगी कि वह विधायिका के बहुमत सदस्यों का विश्वास प्राप्त कर सके और स्थिर सरकार बना सके।

- It would be a case of failure of constitutional machinery," the court observed in the **Bommai judgment**.

यह संवैधानिक तंत्र की विफलता का मामला होगा," अदालत ने **Bommai फैसले** में कहा।

Partisan politics पक्षपातपूर्ण राजनीति

- However, the **Supreme Court**, in its seven-judge Bench judgment in **Rameshwar Prasad versus Union of India**, has also cautioned against Governors misusing their office for **partisan politics**.
हालांकि, सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने अपने सात-न्यायाधीश पीठ के निर्णय **Rameshwar Prasad बनाम Union of India** में राज्यपालों को अपने पद का उपयोग **पक्षपातपूर्ण राजनीति** के लिए करने के खिलाफ चेतावनी दी है।
- "Whether it is a case of an existing government losing majority support or of installation of a new government after fresh elections, the act of the Governor in recommending dissolution of Assembly should be only with the sole object of preservation of the Constitution and not promotion of political interests of one or the other party," the court said.
"चाहे मौजूदा सरकार बहुमत खो दे या नए चुनावों के बाद नई सरकार बने, विधानसभा भंग करने की सिफारिश करते समय राज्यपाल का उद्देश्य केवल संविधान की रक्षा होना चाहिए, न कि किसी एक या दूसरे दल के राजनीतिक हितों को बढ़ावा देना," अदालत ने कहा।
- The **Rameshwar Prasad case** flagged the criticism recorded in the **Sarkaria Commission** that Governors have, more often than not, used their powers to recommend **President's Rule** under Article 356 to "promote the political interests of the party in power at the Centre".
Rameshwar Prasad मामले में **Sarkaria आयोग** की उस आलोचना को उजागर किया गया जिसमें कहा गया था कि राज्यपालों ने अक्सर अनुच्छेद 356 के तहत **राष्ट्रपति शासन** की सिफारिश केंद्र में सत्तारूढ़ दल के राजनीतिक हितों को बढ़ावा देने के लिए की है।
- "It is seen that one day a person is in active politics in as much as he holds the office of the Chief Minister or Minister or a party post and almost on the following day or, in any case, soon thereafter, the same person is appointed as the Governor in another State with hardly any cooling period.
"यह देखा गया है कि एक व्यक्ति एक दिन सक्रिय राजनीति में होता है क्योंकि वह मुख्यमंत्री या मंत्री या पार्टी पद पर होता है और अगले ही दिन या कुछ समय बाद उसी व्यक्ति को दूसरे राज्य का राज्यपाल नियुक्त कर दिया जाता है, बिना किसी 'कूलिंग पीरियड' के।
- Ordinarily, it is difficult to expect detachment from party politics from such a person while performing the constitutional functions as Governor," the court had highlighted the need for a "cooling-off period".
आमतौर पर ऐसे व्यक्ति से राज्यपाल के रूप में संवैधानिक कर्तव्यों का पालन करते समय पार्टी राजनीति से अलगव की अपेक्षा करना कठिन होता है," अदालत ने "कूलिंग-ऑफ पीरियड" की आवश्यकता पर जोर दिया।
- **Supreme Court judgments have acknowledged that coalition governments have become the norm rather than a rarity.**
सुप्रीम कोर्ट के फैसलों ने माना है कि **गठबंधन सरकारें** अब अपवाद नहीं बल्कि सामान्य स्थिति बन गई हैं।
- "Coalition governments are in place in several States and in fact at the Centre.
"गठबंधन सरकारें कई राज्यों में और वास्तव में केंद्र में भी मौजूद हैं।
- There is nothing wrong in post-poll adjustments, and when ideological similarity weighs with any political party to support another political party though there was no pre-poll alliance... There is nothing wrong in it," the court has observed.
चुनाव बाद समायोजन में कोई गलत बात नहीं है, और जब वैचारिक समानता के आधार पर कोई पार्टी बिना पूर्व-चुनाव गठबंधन के दूसरी पार्टी का समर्थन करती है... इसमें कोई गलत बात नहीं है," अदालत ने कहा।



EC lifts model code in States where polls concluded

GS II: Polity

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Thursday announced the lifting of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) following the declaration of results of Assembly elections in Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and the Union Territory of Puducherry, and byelections in the Assembly constituencies in Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Nagaland, and Tripura.

The MCC would, however, remain operational in Falta of West Bengal, where a fresh poll has been ordered by the panel.

“Now that the results in respect of general election to the Legislative Assemblies of Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and U.T. of Puducherry, 2026 and by-elections in constituencies of Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Nagaland, and Tripura have been declared by the concerned Returning Officers... the Model Code of Conduct has ceased to be in operation with immediate effect,” the EC said in a letter to the chief secretaries and Chief Electoral Officers of these States.

08M. EC lifts model code in States where polls concluded

EC ने उन राज्यों में मॉडल कोड हटा दिया जहाँ चुनाव संपन्न हो चुके हैं

• The **Election Commission (EC)** on Thursday announced the lifting of the **Model Code of Conduct (MCC)** following the declaration of results of Assembly elections in **Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and the Union Territory of Puducherry**, and byelections in the Assembly constituencies in **Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Nagaland, and Tripura**.

चुनाव आयोग (EC) ने गुरुवार को मॉडल कोड ऑफ कंडक्ट (MCC) हटाने की घोषणा की, जो असम, केरल, तमिलनाडु, पश्चिम बंगाल और केंद्र शासित प्रदेश पुडुचेरी में विधानसभा चुनावों के परिणाम घोषित होने के बाद तथा गुजरात, कर्नाटक, महाराष्ट्र, नागालैंड और त्रिपुरा की विधानसभा सीटों पर उपचुनावों के बाद की गई।

• The **MCC** would, however, remain operational in **Falta of West Bengal**, where a fresh poll has been ordered by the panel.

हालांकि, पश्चिम बंगाल के फलता में MCC अभी भी लागू रहेगा, जहाँ आयोग ने पुनः मतदान का आदेश दिया है।

• “Now that the results in respect of general election to the Legislative Assemblies of **Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and U.T. of Puducherry, 2026** and by-elections in constituencies of **Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Nagaland, and Tripura** have been declared by the concerned Returning Officers... the **Model Code of Conduct** has ceased to be in operation with immediate effect,” the **EC** said in a letter to the chief secretaries and Chief Electoral Officers of these States.

“अब जबकि असम, केरल, तमिलनाडु, पश्चिम बंगाल और केंद्र शासित प्रदेश पुडुचेरी, 2026 के विधानसभा आम चुनावों तथा गुजरात, कर्नाटक, महाराष्ट्र, नागालैंड और त्रिपुरा के निर्वाचन क्षेत्रों के उपचुनावों के परिणाम संबंधित रिटर्निंग अधिकारियों द्वारा घोषित कर दिए गए हैं... मॉडल कोड ऑफ कंडक्ट तत्काल प्रभाव से समाप्त हो गया है,” EC ने इन राज्यों के मुख्य सचिवों और मुख्य निर्वाचन अधिकारियों को भेजे पत्र में कहा।



Scope of legal fiction in party mergers

Henry Maine called legal fiction an agency by which law adapts to changing societies. In the Indian context, a 1955 ruling delineating the scope of legal fiction, reaffirmed by the Supreme Court in March, sets limits that the law on defections has yet to absorb.

ISSUE: Party

LETTER AND SPIRIT

V. Venkatesan

The law has a long-standing habit of pretending: that an adopted child is the natural child of the adoptive parents, that a registered company is a person capable of suing and being sued. Sir Henry Maine, in *Ancient Law* (1861), called the legal fiction one of three great agencies, alongside equity and legislation, by which law adapts to changing societies. The device has not been universally welcomed; historically, jurists worried that fictions allowed judges to make law in disguise. Lon Fuller, in his Stanford monograph *Legal Fictions* (1967), laid down the modern test: a fiction is honest only when its falsity is openly acknowledged; once it is "taken seriously", once people begin to treat the pretence as fact, it loses its utility and becomes dangerous. A fiction is a tool, fashioned for a defined end, and works only within that end.

On legal fiction in India

In Indian constitutional law, the leading authority on this discipline is *Bengal Immunity Co. Ltd. vs State of Bihar* (1955), decided by a seven-judge Constitution Bench. The case concerned a Calcutta-based company that manufactured vaccines and sera and sold them to buyers in Bihar; Bihar sought to tax those sales by relying on a deeming clause then attached to Article 286(1) of the Constitution, which treated a sale as having taken place in the State where the goods were delivered for consumption. The Court rejected Bihar's argument, holding that the deeming clause served only to fix the location of a sale for one purpose and could not be stretched to override the separate constitutional bar on State taxation of inter-State trade. Acting Chief Justice S.R. Das laid down the formulation that has since governed: a legal fiction is created for a definite



In April, the Raja Sabha Chairman accepted the merger of seven AAP MPs with BJP. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

purpose, must be limited to that purpose, and must not be extended beyond its legitimate field.

A complementary discipline came from Lord Asquith of the House of Lords in *East End Dwellings Co. Ltd. vs Finsbury Borough Council* (1952): one must imagine the necessary consequences of the fiction, but must not let imagination "boggle" beyond them. The Indian Supreme Court adopted that formulation in *J.K. Cotton Spinning and Weaving Mills Ltd. vs Union of India* (1987), confining a deeming fiction in the Central Excise Rules to its stated purpose.

That this discipline remains current was reaffirmed on March 10, 2026, in *Registrar Cane Cooperative Societies vs Gurdeep Singh Narval* by the Supreme Court. The case concerned two sugarcane growers' cooperative societies, Bajpur and Gadarpur, whose villages had fallen partly in Uttar Pradesh and partly in Uttarakhand after the new State was carved out of Uttar Pradesh in 2000. Years later, a member of the Bajpur society argued that his society had automatically become a "Multi-State"

cooperative society on the date of bifurcation by virtue of a deeming clause in Section 103 of the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002. Justices P.S. Narasimha and Alok Aradhya rejected the argument. The deeming fiction in Section 103 had a defined purpose: to govern societies whose stated objects extended to more than one State. It could not be extended to undo a completed reorganisation of societies whose objects were confined to a single State. The case was about cooperative societies; the principle it applied governs every deeming clause in every statute.

The merger of political parties

Among the deeming clauses of political consequence is paragraph 4(2) of the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution (on disqualification for defection). Paragraph 4 protects legislators when their original political party merges with another and two-thirds of the legislature party agree to it.

The merger of the original party is the substantive condition; the legislative threshold is the verifying court.

Paragraph 4(2) provides that a merger "shall be deemed to have taken place if, and only if" the two-thirds is met. Read against the *Bengal Immunity* case, these words tell the adjudicator how to verify a merger that has happened in the original political party, not that the legislators' assent is itself the merger.

That distinction was settled, on a parallel clause, by a 2007 Constitution Bench in *Rajendra Singh Rana vs Swami Prasad Maurya*. The argument that a legislature-party threshold could itself satisfy the substantive event in the original party would, the Court said, render one limb of the clause redundant. The court rejected it, holding further that the Speaker has no independent power under the Tenth Schedule to recognise either a split or a merger. The Punjab and Haryana High Court applied this in *Speaker, Haryana Vidhan Sabha vs Kuldeep Bishnoi* (2011): legislators alone cannot effect a merger; the original political party itself must take the substantive decision.

Recent practice, however, has allowed distortions. The Bombay High Court (Goa Bench) has twice upheld merger orders based solely on a two-thirds resolution of legislators, in 2022 and January 2025; the latter is under challenge before the Supreme Court. In April, the Raja Sabha Chairman accepted, by administrative decision, the merger of seven Aam Aadmi Party MPs with the BJP on the same reading. A disqualification petition by the AAP has been filed. *Bengal Immunity* and *Rana*, read together, would have arrived at the opposite conclusion.

The reason is doctrinal. A deeming clause read as constitutive ceases to be a fiction. It becomes a substantive grant of power: the power of a faction of legislators to declare a merger that the parent political party has not authorised. That is the danger Fuller named and acting Chief Justice Das addressed when he confined legal fictions to their definite purpose.

(V. Venkatesan is a journalist and legal researcher.)

THE GIST

Among the deeming clauses of political consequence is paragraph 4(2) of the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution. It protects legislators when their original political party merges with another and two-thirds of the legislature party agree to it.

The Bombay High Court (Goa Bench) has twice upheld merger orders based solely on a two-thirds resolution of legislators. In April, the Raja Sabha Chairman accepted the merger of seven Aam Aadmi Party MPs with the BJP on the same reading.

08M. Scope of Legal Fiction in Party Mergers

दलीय विलयों में विधिक कल्पना का दायरा

- Henry Maine called **legal fiction** an agency by which law adapts to changing societies. **हेनरी मेन ने विधिक कल्पना को ऐसा माध्यम बताया जिसके द्वारा कानून बदलते समाजों के अनुरूप स्वयं को अनुकूलित करता है।**
- In the Indian context, a **1955 ruling** delineating the scope of **legal fiction**, reaffirmed by the **Supreme Court** in March, sets limits that the law on **defections** has yet to absorb. **भारतीय संदर्भ में, विधिक कल्पना के दायरे को स्पष्ट करने वाला 1955 का निर्णय, जिसे मार्च में उच्चतम न्यायालय द्वारा पुनः पुष्टि प्रदान की गई, ऐसी सीमाएँ निर्धारित करता है जिन्हें दल-बदल विरोधी कानून अभी तक पूरी तरह आत्मसात नहीं कर पाया है।**
- The **law** has a long-standing habit of pretending: that an **adopted child** is the natural child of the adoptive parents, that a **registered company** is a person capable of suing and being sued. **कानून में लंबे समय से यह मानने की प्रवृत्ति रही है कि एक दत्तक बालक दत्तक माता-पिता की प्राकृतिक संतान है, तथा एक पंजीकृत कंपनी ऐसा व्यक्ति है जो मुकदमा कर सकती है और जिस पर मुकदमा चलाया जा सकता है।**
- Sir Henry Maine**, in **Ancient Law (1861)**, called the **legal fiction** one of three great agencies, alongside **equity** and **legislation**, by which law adapts to changing societies. **सर हेनरी मेन ने अपनी पुस्तक एंशिंट लॉ (1861) में कानूनी कल्पना (लीगल फिक्शन) को उन तीन प्रमुख साधनों में से एक बताया, जिनके माध्यम से कानून बदलते समाज के अनुसार स्वयं को अनुकूलित करता है; अन्य दो साधन न्यायसंगतता (Equity) और विधिनिर्माण (Legislation) हैं।**



- The device has not been universally welcomed; historically, jurists worried that fictions allowed judges to make law in disguise.
इस व्यवस्था को सार्वभौमिक स्वीकृति नहीं मिली; ऐतिहासिक रूप से विधिवेत्ताओं को यह चिंता रही कि कानूनी कल्पनाएँ न्यायाधीशों को अप्रत्यक्ष रूप से कानून बनाने की अनुमति देती हैं।
- **Lon Fuller**, in his **Stanford monograph Legal Fictions (1967)**, laid down the modern test: a fiction is honest only when its falsity is openly acknowledged; once it is “taken seriously”, once people begin to treat the pretence as fact, it loses its utility and becomes dangerous.
लॉन फुलर ने अपनी **स्टैनफोर्ड मोनोग्राफ ‘लीगल फिक्शन्स’ (1967)** में आधुनिक मानदंड प्रस्तुत किया कि कोई कल्पना तभी ईमानदार मानी जा सकती है, जब उसकी असत्यता को खुले रूप में स्वीकार किया जाए; किन्तु जब उसे “गंभीरता से” लिया जाने लगे और लोग उस दिखावे को तथ्य मानने लगे, तब वह अपनी उपयोगिता खो देती है और खतरनाक बन जाती है।
- A fiction is a tool, fashioned for a defined end, and works only within that end.
एक कानूनी कल्पना एक उपकरण है, जिसे एक निश्चित उद्देश्य के लिए निर्मित किया गया है, और यह केवल उसी उद्देश्य की सीमा के भीतर कार्य करती है।

On legal fiction in India

भारत में कानूनी कल्पना पर

- In **Indian constitutional law**, the leading authority on this discipline is **Bengal Immunity Co. Ltd. vs State of Bihar (1955)**, decided by a seven-judge **Constitution Bench**.
भारतीय संवैधानिक कानून में इस सिद्धांत पर प्रमुख प्राधिकार **बंगाल इम्युनिटी कंपनी लिमिटेड बनाम बिहार राज्य (1955)** का निर्णय है, जिसे सात-न्यायाधीशों वाली **संविधान पीठ** ने दिया था।
- The case concerned a **Calcutta-based company** that manufactured **vaccines** and **sera** and sold them to buyers in **Bihar**; Bihar sought to tax those sales by relying on a **deeming clause** then attached to **Article 286(1) of the Constitution**, which treated a sale as having taken place in the State where the goods were delivered for consumption.
यह मामला एक **कलकत्ता स्थित कंपनी** से संबंधित था, जो **टीकों** और **सीरम** का निर्माण कर उन्हें **बिहार** के खरीदारों को बेचती थी; बिहार सरकार ने उन बिक्री पर कर लगाने का प्रयास किया और इसके लिए संविधान के **अनुच्छेद 286(1)** में निहित एक **कानूनी कल्पना संबंधी प्रावधान (deeming clause)** का सहारा लिया, जिसके अनुसार बिक्री उसी राज्य में मानी जाती थी जहाँ वस्तुएँ उपभोग हेतु पहुँचाई जाती थीं।
- The Court rejected **Bihar’s** argument, holding that the **deeming clause** served only to fix the location of a sale for one purpose and could not be stretched to override the separate constitutional bar on State taxation of **inter-State trade**.
न्यायालय ने **बिहार** के तर्क को अस्वीकार करते हुए कहा कि यह **deeming clause** केवल एक विशेष उद्देश्य के लिए बिक्री का स्थान निर्धारित करने हेतु था और इसे इस सीमा तक विस्तारित नहीं किया जा सकता कि यह **अंतर-राज्यीय व्यापार** पर राज्य कराधान से संबंधित पृथक संवैधानिक निषेध को निरस्त कर दे।
- Acting Chief Justice **S.R. Das** laid down the formulation that has since governed: **a legal fiction is created for a definite purpose, must be limited to that purpose, and must not be extended beyond its legitimate field**.
कार्यवाहक मुख्य न्यायाधीश **एस.आर. दास** ने वह सिद्धांत प्रतिपादित किया, जो तब से मार्गदर्शक बना हुआ है: एक **कानूनी कल्पना** किसी निश्चित उद्देश्य के लिए निर्मित की जाती है, उसे उसी उद्देश्य तक सीमित रखा जाना चाहिए, और उसे उसकी वैध सीमा से आगे नहीं बढ़ाया जाना चाहिए।
- A complementary discipline came from **Lord Asquith** of the **House of Lords** in **East End Dwellings Co. Ltd. vs Finsbury Borough Council (1952)**: one must imagine the necessary consequences of the **fiction**, but must not let imagination “boggle” beyond them.
एक पूरक सिद्धांत **हाउस ऑफ लॉर्ड्स** के **लॉर्ड ऐस्किवथ** द्वारा **East End Dwellings Co. Ltd. vs Finsbury Borough Council (1952)** मामले में प्रस्तुत किया गया था: व्यक्ति को **विधिक कल्पना** के



आवश्यक परिणामों की कल्पना करनी चाहिए, किन्तु अपनी कल्पना को उन सीमाओं से आगे “भ्रमित” नहीं होने देना चाहिए।

- The **Indian Supreme Court** adopted that formulation in **J.K. Cotton Spinning and Weaving Mills Ltd. vs Union of India (1987)**, confining a **deeming fiction** in the **Central Excise Rules** to its stated purpose.
भारतीय उच्चतम न्यायालय ने इस सिद्धांत को **J.K. Cotton Spinning and Weaving Mills Ltd. vs Union of India (1987)** मामले में अपनाया और केंद्रीय उत्पाद शुल्क नियमों में निहित विधिक मान्यता (**deeming fiction**) को उसके घोषित उद्देश्य तक सीमित रखा।
- That this discipline remains current was reaffirmed on **March 10, 2026**, in **Registrar Cane Cooperative Societies vs Gurdeep Singh Narval** by the **Supreme Court**.
यह सिद्धांत आज भी प्रासंगिक है, इसकी पुनः पुष्टि **10 मार्च 2026** को उच्चतम न्यायालय द्वारा **Registrar Cane Cooperative Societies vs Gurdeep Singh Narval** मामले में की गई।
- The case concerned two **sugarcane growers' cooperative societies**, **Bajpur** and **Gadarpur**, whose villages had fallen partly in **Uttar Pradesh** and partly in **Uttarakhand** after the **new State was carved out of Uttar Pradesh in 2000**.
यह मामला दो **गन्ना उत्पादक सहकारी समितियों**, **बाजपुर** और **गदरपुर**, से संबंधित था, जिनके गाँव वर्ष 2000 में **उत्तर प्रदेश** से नया राज्य बनाए जाने के बाद आंशिक रूप से **उत्तर प्रदेश** और आंशिक रूप से **उत्तराखंड** में आ गए थे।
- **Years later**, a member of the **Bajpur society** argued that his society had automatically become a **“Multi-State”** cooperative society on the date of bifurcation by virtue of a **deeming clause in Section 103 of the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002**.
वर्षों बाद, **बाजपुर समिति** के एक सदस्य ने यह तर्क दिया कि उसकी समिति **Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002** की धारा 103 में निहित विधिक मान्यता प्रावधान (**deeming clause**) के कारण विभाजन की तिथि पर स्वतः ही एक **“बहु-राज्यीय”** सहकारी समिति बन गई थी।
- Justices **P.S. Narasimha** and **Alok Aradhe** rejected the argument.
न्यायमूर्ति **पी.एस. नरसिम्हा** और **आलोक अराधे** ने इस तर्क को अस्वीकार कर दिया।
- The **deeming fiction** in **Section 103** had a defined purpose: **to govern societies whose stated objects extended to more than one State**.
धारा 103 में निहित विधिक मान्यता का एक निश्चित उद्देश्य था: उन समितियों को नियंत्रित करना जिनके घोषित उद्देश्य एक से अधिक राज्यों तक विस्तृत थे।
- It could not be extended to undo a completed reorganisation of societies whose objects were confined to a single State.
इसे उन समितियों के पूर्ण हो चुके पुनर्गठन को निरस्त करने तक विस्तारित नहीं किया जा सकता था, जिनके उद्देश्य केवल एक राज्य तक सीमित थे।
- The case was about **cooperative societies**; the principle it applied governs every **deeming clause** in every statute.
यह मामला **सहकारी समितियों** से संबंधित था; किन्तु इसमें लागू किया गया सिद्धांत प्रत्येक कानून में निहित हर **विधिक मान्यता प्रावधान (deeming clause)** को नियंत्रित करता है।

The merger of political parties

राजनीतिक दलों का विलय

- Among the **deeming clauses** of political consequence is **paragraph 4(2) of the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution (on disqualification for defection)**.
राजनीतिक महत्व वाले **कानूनी कल्पना संबंधी प्रावधानों (deeming clauses)** में संविधान की दसवीं अनुसूची का अनुच्छेद **4(2)** प्रमुख है, जो **दल-बदल** के आधार पर अयोग्यता से संबंधित है।
- **Paragraph 4** protects legislators when their original **political party merges with another and two-thirds of the legislature party agree to it**.



अनुच्छेद 4 विधायकों को संरक्षण प्रदान करता है, जब उनकी मूल राजनीतिक पार्टी किसी अन्य दल में विलय कर जाती है और विधायी दल के दो-तिहाई सदस्य उससे सहमत होते हैं।

- The merger of the original party is the **substantive condition**; the legislative threshold is the **verifying count**.

मूल दल का विलय एक **मौलिक शर्त** है; जबकि विधायी संख्या-सीमा केवल उसकी पुष्टि करने का माध्यम है।

- Paragraph 4(2) provides that a merger “shall be deemed to have taken place if, and only if” the **two-thirds** requirement is met.

अनुच्छेद 4(2) यह प्रावधान करता है कि विलय “तभी और केवल तभी माना जाएगा” जब दो-तिहाई की शर्त पूरी हो।

- Read against the **Bengal Immunity case**, these words tell the adjudicator how to verify a merger that has happened in the original political party, not that the legislators’ assent is itself the merger.

बंगाल इम्युनिटी मामले के संदर्भ में पढ़े जाने पर, ये शब्द निर्णयकर्ता को यह बताते हैं कि मूल राजनीतिक दल में हुए विलय की पुष्टि कैसे की जाए; न कि यह कि विधायकों की सहमति ही स्वयं विलय है।

- That distinction was settled, on a parallel clause, by a **2007 Constitution Bench in Rajendra Singh Rana vs Swami Prasad Maurya**.

इस भेद को एक समानांतर प्रावधान के संदर्भ में **2007 की संविधान पीठ ने राजेंद्र सिंह राणा बनाम स्वामी प्रसाद मौर्य** मामले में स्पष्ट किया था।

- The argument that a legislature-party threshold could itself satisfy the substantive event in the original party would, the Court said, render one limb of the clause redundant.

न्यायालय ने कहा कि यह तर्क कि विधायी दल की संख्या-सीमा स्वयं मूल दल में विलय की मौलिक घटना को पूरा कर सकती है, प्रावधान के एक हिस्से को निरर्थक बना देगा।

- The court rejected it, holding further that the **Speaker has no independent power under the Tenth Schedule to recognise either a split or a merger**.

न्यायालय ने इस तर्क को अस्वीकार करते हुए यह भी कहा कि **स्पीकर** के पास **दसवीं अनुसूची** के अंतर्गत किसी विभाजन या विलय को स्वतंत्र रूप से मान्यता देने की शक्ति नहीं है।

- The **Punjab and Haryana High Court** applied this in **Speaker, Haryana Vidhan Sabha vs Kuldeep Bishnoi (2011)**: legislators alone cannot effect a merger; the original political party itself must take the substantive decision.

पंजाब और हरियाणा उच्च न्यायालय ने इस सिद्धांत को **स्पीकर, हरियाणा विधानसभा बनाम कुलदीप बिश्नोई (2011)** मामले में लागू करते हुए कहा कि केवल विधायक विलय नहीं कर सकते; मूल राजनीतिक दल को स्वयं यह मौलिक निर्णय लेना होगा।

- Recent practice, however, has allowed **distortions**.

हालिया व्यवहार ने, तथापि, **विकृतियों** को जन्म दिया है।

- The **Bombay High Court (Goa Bench)** has twice upheld merger orders based solely on a **two-thirds resolution** of legislators, in **2022** and **January 2025**; the latter is under challenge before the **Supreme Court**.

बॉम्बे उच्च न्यायालय (गोवा पीठ) ने **2022** और **जनवरी 2025** में दो बार केवल विधायकों के दो-तिहाई प्रस्ताव के आधार पर **विलय आदेशों** को वैध ठहराया; इनमें से बाद वाला मामला वर्तमान में **उच्चतम न्यायालय** के समक्ष चुनौती के अधीन है।

- In April, the **Rajya Sabha Chairman** accepted, by administrative decision, the merger of seven **Aam Aadmi Party MPs** with the **BJP** on the same reading.

अप्रैल में, **राज्यसभा के सभापति** ने प्रशासनिक निर्णय के माध्यम से सात **आम आदमी पार्टी सांसदों** के **भारतीय जनता पार्टी** में विलय को इसी व्याख्या के आधार पर स्वीकार कर लिया।

- A **disqualification petition** by the **AAP** has been filed.

आम आदमी पार्टी द्वारा एक **अयोग्यता याचिका** दायर की गई है।

- **Bengal Immunity** and **Rana**, read together, would have arrived at the opposite conclusion. यदि **Bengal Immunity** और **Rana** मामलों को साथ पढ़ा जाए, तो वे इसके विपरीत निष्कर्ष पर पहुँचते।



- The reason is **doctrinal**.
इसका कारण **सैद्धांतिक** है।
- A **deeming clause** read as constitutive ceases to be a **fiction**.
जब किसी **विधिक मान्यता प्रावधान (deeming clause)** को सृजनात्मक अधिकार के रूप में पढ़ा जाता है, तो वह **विधिक कल्पना** नहीं रह जाता।
- It becomes a substantive grant of **power**: the **power of a faction of legislators to declare a merger that the parent political party has not authorised**.
वह एक वास्तविक **अधिकार** प्रदान करने वाला प्रावधान बन जाता है — अर्थात् विधायकों के एक गुट को ऐसे **विलय** की घोषणा करने की शक्ति देना, जिसे मूल **राजनीतिक दल** ने अधिकृत नहीं किया हो।
- That is the danger **Fuller** named and acting Chief Justice **Das** addressed when he confined **legal fictions** to their definite purpose.
यही वह खतरा था जिसकी ओर **फुलर** ने संकेत किया था और कार्यवाहक मुख्य न्यायाधीश **दास** ने उसे संबोधित करते हुए **विधिक कल्पनाओं** को उनके निश्चित उद्देश्य तक सीमित रखा था।

Labour challenged from all sides in U.K. elections

Over 5,000 seats in 136 councils in England were up for grabs, with Labour defending 2,566 seats and the Conservatives 1,364. PM Starmer has struggled to keep the centrist and left flank of his party together over immigration and welfare policies; he has also suffered reputational damage over the appointment of Peter Mandelson, the UK's former envoy to the U.S. who had close links to Epstein

KS II Polity
Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and his Labour party were faced with the prospect of serious political damage as voting got under way in council elections in England and Assembly elections in Scotland and Wales on Thursday.

More than 5,000 seats in 136 councils in England were up for grabs, with Labour defending 2,566 seats and the Conservatives, 1,364 seats. The last elections for these seats were in 2022, when the nativist Reform UK had won just two seats. Last year, Reform had won 667 seats – the largest number – that were up for elections.

Mr. Starmer has struggled to keep the centrist and left flank of his party together over policies around attempts to tighten

immigration and welfare spending. He has also suffered reputational damage – including in his own party – over the appointment of Peter Mandelson, the UK's former envoy to the U.S. who had close links to the convicted paedophile and financier, Jeffrey Epstein. Labour is faced with the prospect of losing votes to both Reform on the right and the Greens on the left. Some, such as the University of Oxford's Stephen Fischer, project Labour to lose as much as 1,900 seats, or three quarters of its current tally.

"Those outcomes are so bad that the specifics don't matter," said Tim Bale, a political scientist of Queen Mary University of London, when asked how bad Labour's performance would need to be for it to end Mr. Starmer's premiership.

"And in any case the decision as to whether or not



Keir Starmer and his wife Victoria Starmer leave after casting their votes at a polling station in central London on Thursday. AFP

to oust Starmer depends less on how bad the results are ... more on whether they think anyone capable of challenging the PM can really improve the government's ratings," Mr. Bale told *The Hindu*.

Labour is fighting the Greens in inner London boroughs and the Greens and Liberal Democrats in the Northern metros such as Leeds and Sheffield. It is fighting Reform UK in other northern metros like Sunderland and Barnsley.

The Conservatives, who suffered big losses in the 2024 general election, could lose 1,010 seats according to Mr. Fischer. They are defending their seats in rural counties and the outer boroughs of London.

"I did not vote this year," said Sam Arora, a 39-year old British Indian businessman, from Wembley, a London area that is home to many South Asians.

"I find politics in this

country has really sort of taken a turn," he added.

Mr. Arora, who runs a business engaged in international trade used to vote for the Conservatives but feels the party is "becoming a bit too far right".

In both Scotland and Wales, Labour was projected to come in third – trailing behind Reform.

In Scotland, all 129 places in the Scottish Assembly at Holyrood were contested,

with voters animated by issues around the cost of living, health and social care and immigration, as per a Savanta poll for the BBC. (The online poll surveyed 2,136 people over 16 in Scotland, between January 29 and February 6).

The Scottish National Party (SNP), which won the election in 2021, with 64 seats – i.e., just one seat short of a majority – ran a campaign around Scottish

independence, promising a referendum on secession from the U.K., as early as 2028. A 2022 Supreme Court ruling had given the U.K. Parliament the sole power to call such a referendum, the last of which was in 2014.

First Minister John Swinney had said in recent weeks that the SNP getting a majority in Holyrood would be a solid argument for Westminster to give Holyrood the power to call a referendum.

Reforming NHS
However, a YouGov poll released on Wednesday, projected the SNP to win 62 seats, with Reform coming in second with 19 seats and Scottish Labour following closely behind in third place with 17 seats. The Greens were projected to get 16 seats, twice as many as they won in 2021.

Reforming the National Health Service (NHS), Britain's healthcare system, has been at the top of the list for Scottish Labour's leader, Anas Sarwar, a former dentist. Mr. Sarwar had urged voters to "save the NHS" which was "not safe" with the SNP and its leader.

In Wales, the Senedd (Assembly) is also being expanded from a strength of 60 members to 96, with every seat being contested. The same three issues – cost of living, healthcare and immigration ranked on top of Welsh voters concerns in another Savanta poll of 2,086 Welsh adults.

Labour has run the devolved (partly autonomous) government in Wales ever since the Senedd was formed in 1999. Polls published at the end of April and in early May have generally projected centre-left nationalist party Plaid Cymru coming in first, closely followed by Reform and Labour coming

in third.

Plaid leader Rhun ap Iwanerth, launching his manifesto in April had called a vote for Reform "a proxy vote for the politics of Trump", referring to the U.S. President. The party appears to have tamped down its approach to an independence referendum, saying instead in its manifesto that it would prepare a report on whether Wales should be independent from the U.K.

Support for Welsh Labour had been declining before Labour formed the U.K. government in 2024, according to Jac Larner, a professor of political behaviour at Cardiff University. But Mr. Starmer has not helped, he said. "In essence, Labour are paying a double cost of governing here – paying the price for an unpopular Welsh Government and an unpopular UK Government," Mr. Larner said.

08M. Labour challenged from all sides in U.K. elections

U.K. चुनावों में लेबर पार्टी को सभी ओर से चुनौती

- Over **5,000 seats** in **136 councils** in **England** were up for grabs, with **Labour** defending **2,566 seats** and the **Conservatives 1,364**.
इंग्लैंड के **136 काउंसिलों** में **5,000 से अधिक सीटें** दांव पर थीं, जिनमें **लेबर 2,566 सीटों** की रक्षा कर रही थी और **कंज़र्वेटिव्स 1,364 सीटों** की।
- Prime Minister **Starmer** has struggled to keep the **centrist and left flank** of his party together over **immigration and welfare policies**.
प्रधानमंत्री **Starmer** अपने पार्टी के **मध्यमार्गी और वामपंथी धड़े** को **आव्रजन और कल्याण नीतियों** पर एकजुट रखने में संघर्ष कर रहे हैं।
- He has also suffered reputational damage over the appointment of **Peter Mandelson**, the U.K.'s former envoy to the U.S. who had close links to **Epstein**.
उन्हें **Peter Mandelson** की नियुक्ति को लेकर भी प्रतिष्ठा संबंधी नुकसान हुआ है, जो U.K. के पूर्व अमेरिका दूत थे और जिनके **Epstein** से करीबी संबंध थे।
- **British Prime Minister Keir Starmer** and his **Labour party** were faced with the prospect of serious political damage as voting got under way in council elections in England and Assembly elections in Scotland and Wales on Thursday.



ब्रिटिश प्रधानमंत्री Keir Starmer और उनकी लेबर पार्टी को गंभीर राजनीतिक नुकसान की संभावना का सामना करना पड़ा क्योंकि गुरुवार को इंग्लैंड, स्कॉटलैंड और वेल्स में काउंसिल और विधानसभा चुनाव शुरू हुए।

- More than **5,000 seats** in **136 councils in England** were up for grabs, with **Labour defending 2,566 seats** and the **Conservatives 1,364 seats**.
इंग्लैंड के 136 काउंसिलों में 5,000 से अधिक सीटें दांव पर थीं, जिनमें लेबर 2,566 सीटों और कंज़र्वेटिव्स 1,364 सीटों की रक्षा कर रहे थे।
- The last elections for these seats were in 2022, when the nativist **Reform UK** had won just two seats.
इन सीटों के लिए पिछला चुनाव 2022 में हुआ था, जब nativist **Reform UK** ने केवल दो सीटें जीती थीं।
- Last year, **Reform** had won 667 seats – the largest number – that were up for elections.
पिछले वर्ष **Reform** ने 667 सीटें जीती थीं – जो सबसे अधिक थीं – जो चुनाव में थीं।
- Mr. **Starmer** has struggled to keep the centrist and left flank of his party together over policies around attempts to tighten **immigration and welfare spending**.
श्री **Starmer** अपने पार्टी के मध्यमार्गी और वामपंथी धड़े को **आव्रजन और कल्याण खर्च** सख्त करने की नीतियों पर एकजुट रखने में संघर्ष कर रहे हैं।
- He has also suffered reputational damage — including in his own party — over the appointment of **Peter Mandelson**, the U.K.'s former envoy to the U.S. who had close links to the convicted paedophile and financier **Jeffrey Epstein**.
उन्हें अपनी ही पार्टी में भी प्रतिष्ठा का नुकसान हुआ है, खासकर **Peter Mandelson** की नियुक्ति को लेकर, जो U.K. के पूर्व अमेरिका दूत थे और दोषी ठहराए गए यौन अपराधी और वित्तीयक **Jeffrey Epstein** से करीबी संबंध रखते थे।
- **Labour is faced with the prospect of losing votes to both Reform on the right and the Greens on the left.**
लेबर पार्टी को दाएं ओर Reform और बाएं ओर Greens दोनों से वोट खोने की संभावना का सामना है।
- Some, such as the University of Oxford's **Stephen Fischer**, project Labour to lose as much as **1,900 seats**, or three quarters of its current tally.
कुछ विशेषज्ञ जैसे Oxford University के **Stephen Fischer** का अनुमान है कि लेबर लगभग **1,900 सीटें** हार सकती है, यानी उसकी मौजूदा सीटों का तीन-चौथाई हिस्सा।
- “Those outcomes are so bad that the specifics don't matter,” said **Tim Bale**, a political scientist of **Queen Mary University of London**, when asked how bad Labour's performance would need to be for it to end Mr. Starmer's premiership.
“ये परिणाम इतने खराब हैं कि विवरण मायने नहीं रखते,” **Queen Mary University of London** के राजनीतिक वैज्ञानिक **Tim Bale** ने कहा, जब उनसे पूछा गया कि लेबर का प्रदर्शन कितना खराब होना चाहिए ताकि Starmer की प्रधानमंत्री पद पर स्थिति प्रभावित हो।
- “And in any case the decision as to whether or not to oust Starmer depends less on how bad the results are ... more on whether they think anyone capable of challenging the PM can really improve the government's ratings,” Mr. Bale told The Hindu.
“और किसी भी स्थिति में Starmer को हटाने का निर्णय इस पर कम निर्भर करेगा कि परिणाम कितने खराब हैं, बल्कि इस पर अधिक कि क्या कोई वैकल्पिक नेता सरकार की रेटिंग सुधार सकता है,” Mr. Bale ने The Hindu को बताया।
- Labour is fighting the Greens in inner London boroughs and the Greens and Liberal Democrats in northern metros such as Leeds and Sheffield.
लेबर पार्टी आंतरिक लंदन में **Greens** से और उत्तरी शहरों जैसे **Leeds और Sheffield** में **Greens और Liberal Democrats** से मुकाबला कर रही है।
- It is fighting **Reform UK** in other northern metros like Sunderland and Barnsley.
यह अन्य उत्तरी शहरों जैसे **Sunderland और Barnsley** में **Reform UK** से लड़ रही है।



- The Conservatives, who suffered big losses in the 2024 general election, could lose **1,010 seats** according to Mr. Fischer.
2024 आम चुनाव में भारी नुकसान झेल चुकी **Conservatives** पार्टी Mr. Fischer के अनुसार **1,010 सीटें** खो सकती है।
- They are defending their seats in rural counties and the outer boroughs of London.
वे ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों और लंदन के बाहरी इलाकों में अपनी सीटों की रक्षा कर रहे हैं।
- “I did not vote this year,” said **Sam Arora**, a 39-year-old British Indian businessman from Wembley.
“मैंने इस साल वोट नहीं दिया,” **Sam Arora**, 39 वर्षीय ब्रिटिश-भारतीय व्यवसायी ने कहा, जो Wembley से हैं।
- “I find politics in this country has really sort of taken a turn,” he added.
“मुझे लगता है कि इस देश की राजनीति ने एक अलग ही मोड़ ले लिया है,” उन्होंने जोड़ा।
- Mr. Arora, who runs a business engaged in international trade used to vote for the Conservatives but feels the party is “becoming a bit too far right”.
Mr. Arora, जो अंतरराष्ट्रीय व्यापार का व्यवसाय चलाते हैं, पहले Conservatives को वोट देते थे लेकिन अब उन्हें लगता है कि पार्टी “बहुत ज्यादा दक्षिणपंथी” हो रही है।
- In both Scotland and Wales, Labour was projected to come in third — trailing behind **Reform**.
स्कॉटलैंड और वेल्स दोनों में लेबर पार्टी के तीसरे स्थान पर आने का अनुमान था — **Reform** से पीछे।
- In Scotland, all **129 seats** in the Scottish Assembly at Holyrood were contested.
स्कॉटलैंड में Holyrood स्थित Scottish Assembly की सभी **129 सीटों** पर चुनाव हुआ।
- Voters were focused on issues like **cost of living, health and social care, and immigration**.
मतदाता **जीवन यापन की लागत, स्वास्थ्य एवं सामाजिक देखभाल, और आव्रजन** जैसे मुद्दों पर केंद्रित थे।
- The **Scottish National Party (SNP)**, which won in 2021 with 64 seats, campaigned around Scottish independence.
Scottish National Party (SNP), जिसने 2021 में 64 सीटें जीती थीं, ने स्कॉटिश स्वतंत्रता के मुद्दे पर अभियान चलाया।
- Plaid leader **Rhun ap Iwan** called a vote for Reform a “proxy vote for the politics of Trump”.
Plaid के नेता **Rhun ap Iwan** ने Reform के लिए वोट को “Trump की राजनीति के लिए अप्रत्यक्ष वोट” कहा।
- The party has toned down its approach to independence, instead promising a report on whether Wales should be independent.
पार्टी ने स्वतंत्रता पर अपना रुख नरम किया है और इसके बजाय वेल्स की स्वतंत्रता पर रिपोर्ट तैयार करने का वादा किया है।
- Support for Welsh Labour had been declining before Labour formed the UK government in 2024.
वेल्श लेबर का समर्थन 2024 में UK सरकार बनने से पहले ही घट रहा था।
- Labour is paying a “double cost of governing”, according to Professor **Jac Larner**.
प्रोफेसर **Jac Larner** के अनुसार लेबर “शासन की दोहरी कीमत” चुका रही है।
- He said this includes an unpopular Welsh Government and an unpopular UK Government.
उन्होंने कहा कि इसमें एक अलोकप्रिय वेल्श सरकार और अलोकप्रिय UK सरकार दोनों शामिल हैं।
- Reforming the **NHS** has been a key issue for Scottish Labour leader **Anas Sarwar**.
NHS में सुधार स्कॉटिश लेबर नेता **Anas Sarwar** के लिए प्रमुख मुद्दा रहा है।
- He urged voters to “save the NHS” which he said was “not safe” with SNP.
उन्होंने मतदाताओं से “NHS को बचाने” की अपील की और कहा कि SNP के साथ यह “सुरक्षित नहीं है”।
- In Wales, the Senedd is being expanded from **60 to 96 members**, with every seat contested.
वेल्स में Senedd को **60 से बढ़ाकर 96 सदस्य** किया जा रहा है और हर सीट पर चुनाव हो रहा है।



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

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

CONTACT: 9971932488



- Key issues for Welsh voters included **cost of living, healthcare, and immigration**.
वेल्श मतदाताओं के प्रमुख मुद्दों में **जीवन यापन की लागत, स्वास्थ्य सेवा और आब्रजन** शामिल थे।
- Labour has governed Wales since the Senedd was formed in 1999.
लेबर 1999 में Senedd बनने के बाद से वेल्स में शासन कर रही है।
- Polls suggested **Plaid Cymru** may come first, followed by Reform and Labour in third.
सर्वेक्षणों में अनुमान लगाया गया कि **Plaid Cymru** पहले स्थान पर, Reform दूसरे और लेबर तीसरे स्थान पर आ सकती है।
- Plaid leader said voting Reform is like a “proxy vote for Trump politics”.
Plaid नेता ने कहा कि Reform को वोट देना “Trump की राजनीति के लिए अप्रत्यक्ष वोट” जैसा है।
- The party has softened its stance on independence referendum.
पार्टी ने स्वतंत्रता जनमत संग्रह पर अपना रुख नरम किया है।
- Welsh Labour support was already declining before 2024 UK government formation.
2024 UK सरकार बनने से पहले ही वेल्श लेबर का समर्थन घट रहा था।
- Labour faces a “double cost of governing”, said Professor **Jac Larner**.
प्रोफेसर **Jac Larner** ने कहा कि लेबर “शासन की दोहरी कीमत” का सामना कर रही है।

GS Paper II: Governance		08 May 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
08M	Why are fathers missing in reproductive health interventions प्रजनन स्वास्थ्य हस्तक्षेपों में पिता क्यों अनुपस्थित हैं	



Why are fathers missing in reproductive health interventions

A father's lifestyle, diet, exercise, exposure to stress and other factors, can programme the next generation, influencing traits in their children; yet, men are barely involved in reproductive health programmes in India; under the RMNCH+A program, male involvement remains limited to the supplementation of iron tablets to adolescent boys

CS II Governance
Government Scheme
C. Aravinda

India's Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCH+A) programme has steadily reduced maternal mortality, neonatal deaths, and childhood mortality over the past three decades. Success is undeniable, when measured by survival. Yet, a quieter concern is surfacing in clinics and epidemiological data. Many children appear more vulnerable to recurrent infections, metabolic disturbances, and reduced physical robustness. The question is no longer about survival alone, but also about the biological quality of that survival. Increasingly, scientists are beginning to suspect that something fundamental may be missing in how we understand the inheritance of traits from parents.

Missing fathers

Reproductive health within the health system has traditionally focused almost exclusively on mothers. Antenatal care, maternal nutrition, and institutional deliveries form the core of national programmes. Fathers, in contrast, have largely remained outside the biological narrative. Emerging scientific evidence now suggests that this omission may not be trivial. A father's diet, lifestyle, exposure to toxins, stress and environment – long before conception – may influence the biology of the child in ways we are only beginning to understand. This shifts the conversation we need to have from a mother-centric model to a more inclusive, bi-parental understanding of health transmission.

The traditional model of reproduction is straightforward. The ovum contributes maternal genetic material, and the sperm delivers the paternal genome. The fusion of these two forms is a zygote, which develops under the guidance of DNA. In this framework, the father's role is limited to the transmission of DNA. His lifestyle choices (including whether he exercised, smoked, or lived in polluted surroundings) were believed to have no bearing on what was passed on. For over a century, this model was reinforced by August Weismann's idea of the blood-testis barrier, which held that environmental influences cannot affect germ (sperm and egg) cells. According to this view, a man's lifestyle, whether healthy or harmful, would not influence the sperm in a way that could be passed on to the next generation. The sperm was seen as a passive carrier of DNA, insulated from the external environment.

This assumption began to weaken in the early 2010s, when studies demonstrated that paternal exposures such as poor diet, alcohol consumption, and environmental toxins could influence offspring traits. These traits were not encoded in DNA changes, but appeared to be transmitted through epigenetic mechanisms. Small molecules, particularly RNA fragments in sperm, were identified as carriers of such



New findings: In India, there is no structured focus on paternal preconception health, no systematic screening for lifestyle risks among prospective fathers, and minimal emphasis on environmental exposures that may affect sperm quality. GETTY IMAGES

information. These molecules could regulate gene expression in early embryos, effectively transmitting information about the father's environment without altering the genetic code itself. This discovery marked a shift in biology, suggesting that inheritance is more dynamic than previously believed. However, one key question remained unanswered: how exactly are these signals transmitted, and how do they shape the child's biology?

New evidence

A recent study published in *Cell Metabolism* by Chinese researchers adds an important layer to this evolving story. In this study, male mice that underwent structured treadmill exercise for eight weeks produced offspring with significantly improved endurance and metabolic profiles. Quantitatively, these offspring ran longer and covered greater distances in treadmill tests, with statistically significant differences often exceeding 30%–40% compared to offspring of sedentary fathers. Oxygen consumption measurements showed higher VO₂ levels across light and dark cycles, indicating enhanced metabolic efficiency. Muscle analysis revealed a shift towards oxidative fibre types, with a notable increase in type I and type IIa fibres and a reduction in glycolytic fibres.

The most compelling contribution of the study lies in its proposed mechanism. The researchers demonstrate that paternal exercise alters the profile of sperm microRNAs, a class of small non-coding RNAs. These microRNAs are delivered to the oocyte at fertilisation and interact with early embryonic transcripts. The study suggests that microRNAs suppress nuclear receptor corepressor 1, a molecule that normally inhibits PGC-1 α , a master regulator of mitochondrial

function. By relieving this inhibition, the embryo is programmed towards enhanced oxidative metabolism and mitochondrial development. The study further strengthens this causal pathway by injecting sperm-derived small RNAs from exercised fathers into normal embryos, which then reproduced similar metabolic and endurance phenotypes in offspring. It suggests that these RNA molecules are not merely markers, but active agents of inheritance.

One of the most intriguing implications concerns how these molecular signals bypass the classical Weismann barrier. The study suggests that systemic physiological states, such as increased muscular PGC-1 α activity during exercise, can influence the composition of small RNAs in sperm. While the exact transport mechanism remains unclear, it is hypothesised that circulating RNA fragments or vesicle-mediated transport systems may allow signals from somatic tissues to influence germ cells. In effect, the barrier is not absolute but selectively permeable to regulatory molecules, particularly small RNAs that can re-programme gene expression without altering DNA.

During fertilisation, the sperm does more than deliver DNA. It contributes a complex molecular cargo, including proteins and RNA fragments. These molecules interact with the oocyte cytoplasm and influence the earliest stages of embryonic development.

The study highlights that sperm microRNAs can act immediately after fertilisation, modifying transcriptional networks before the embryo begins its own gene expression. This early window appears critical, as small changes in gene regulation at this stage can lead to lasting physiological differences in the offspring. Several uncertainties persist. The

precise fate of these microRNAs after fertilisation is not fully understood. It remains unclear how long they persist, and whether their effects extend beyond the first generation. Furthermore, the findings are based entirely on animal models, and extrapolation to humans must be done cautiously. Human reproductive biology is more complex, and environmental exposures are far more variable. There is also a limited understanding of dose-response relationships, that is, how much lifestyle change is required to produce measurable effects in offspring.

What needs to be done

Even though we still don't fully understand how a father's lifestyle influences his child's biology, what is increasingly clear is that it does. This understanding, however, is yet to translate into policy action.

In India, under the RMNCH+A program, male involvement remains limited to the supplementation of iron tablets to adolescent boys. There is no structured focus on paternal preconception health, no systematic screening for lifestyle risks among prospective fathers, and minimal emphasis on environmental exposures that may affect sperm quality.

Addressing lifestyle factors such as physical activity, substance use, and environmental exposures among men of reproductive age may offer a low-cost, high-impact strategy to improve population health across generations. If these findings hold true in humans, the implications are profound.

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THE GIST

Reproductive health within the health system has traditionally focused almost exclusively on mothers. Fathers, in contrast, have largely remained outside the biological narrative. Emerging scientific evidence now suggests that this omission may not be trivial.

A recent study published in *Cell Metabolism* by Chinese researchers showed that male mice that underwent structured treadmill exercise for eight weeks produced offspring with significantly improved endurance and metabolic profiles.

Addressing lifestyle factors such as physical activity, substance use, and environmental exposures among men of reproductive age may offer a low-cost, high-impact strategy to improve population health across generations.

08M. Why are fathers missing in reproductive health interventions

प्रजनन स्वास्थ्य हस्तक्षेपों में पिता क्यों अनुपस्थित हैं

- A father's lifestyle, diet, exercise, exposure to stress and other factors, can programme the next generation, influencing traits in their children; yet, men are barely involved in reproductive health programmes in India; under the RMNCH+A programme, male involvement remains limited to the supplementation of iron tablets to adolescent boys.

एक पिता की जीवनशैली, आहार, व्यायाम, तनाव और अन्य कारक अगली पीढ़ी को प्रोग्राम कर सकते हैं,

जिससे बच्चों के गुण प्रभावित होते हैं; फिर भी भारत में पुरुषों की भागीदारी प्रजनन स्वास्थ्य कार्यक्रमों में बहुत कम है; RMNCH+A कार्यक्रम के तहत पुरुषों की भागीदारी केवल किशोर लड़कों को आयर्न टैबलेट देने तक सीमित है।

- India's Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCH+A) programme has steadily reduced maternal mortality, neonatal deaths, and childhood mortality over the past three decades.



भारत का प्रजनन, मातृ, नवजात, बाल और किशोर स्वास्थ्य (RMNCH+A) कार्यक्रम पिछले तीन दशकों में मातृ मृत्यु, नवजात मृत्यु और बाल मृत्यु दर को लगातार कम करने में सफल रहा है।

- Success is undeniable, when measured by survival.
जीवित रहने के आधार पर मापने पर सफलता नकारा नहीं जा सकती।
- Yet, a quieter concern is surfacing in clinics and epidemiological data.
फिर भी क्लीनिकों और महामारी विज्ञान डेटा में एक शांत चिंता उभर रही है।
- Many children appear more vulnerable to recurrent infections, metabolic disturbances, and reduced physical robustness.
कई बच्चे बार-बार होने वाले संक्रमणों, चयापचय संबंधी गड़बड़ियों और कम शारीरिक मजबूती के प्रति अधिक संवेदनशील दिखाई देते हैं।
- The question is no longer about survival alone, but also about the biological quality of that survival.
अब प्रश्न केवल जीवित रहने का नहीं बल्कि उस जीवन की जैविक गुणवत्ता का भी है।
- Increasingly, scientists are beginning to suspect that something fundamental may be missing in how we understand the inheritance of traits from parents.
वैज्ञानिकों को अब संदेह होने लगा है कि माता-पिता से गुणों की विरासत को समझने में कुछ मौलिक बात छूट रही है।

Missing fathers

गायब पिता

- Reproductive health within the health system has traditionally focused almost exclusively on mothers.
स्वास्थ्य प्रणाली में प्रजनन स्वास्थ्य पारंपरिक रूप से लगभग पूरी तरह माताओं पर केंद्रित रहा है।
- Antenatal care, maternal nutrition, and institutional deliveries form the core of national programmes.
प्रसवपूर्व देखभाल, मातृ पोषण और संस्थागत प्रसव राष्ट्रीय कार्यक्रमों का मुख्य हिस्सा हैं।
- Fathers, in contrast, have largely remained outside the biological narrative.
इसके विपरीत, पिता जैविक चर्चा से लगभग बाहर ही रहे हैं।
- Emerging scientific evidence now suggests that this omission may not be trivial.
उभरते वैज्ञानिक प्रमाण बताते हैं कि यह उपेक्षा मामूली नहीं हो सकती।
- A father's diet, lifestyle, exposure to toxins, stress and environment — long before conception — may influence the biology of the child in ways we are only beginning to understand.
पिता का आहार, जीवनशैली, विषाक्त पदार्थों के संपर्क, तनाव और वातावरण — गर्भधारण से काफी पहले — बच्चे की जैविकी को ऐसे तरीकों से प्रभावित कर सकते हैं जिन्हें हम अभी समझना शुरू ही कर रहे हैं।
- This shifts the conversation we need to have from a mother-centric model to a more inclusive, bi-parental understanding of health transmission.
यह चर्चा को मातृ-केंद्रित मॉडल से बदलकर अधिक समावेशी, द्वि-अभिभावकीय स्वास्थ्य संचरण की समझ की ओर ले जाता है।
- The traditional model of reproduction is straightforward.
पारंपरिक प्रजनन मॉडल सरल है।
- The ovum contributes maternal genetic material, and the sperm delivers the paternal genome.
अंडाणु मातृ आनुवंशिक सामग्री देता है और शुक्राणु पितृ जीनोम प्रदान करता है।
- The fusion of these two forms is a zygote, which develops under the guidance of DNA.
इन दोनों के मिलन से ज़ाइगोट बनता है, जो DNA के मार्गदर्शन में विकसित होता है।
- In this framework, the father's role is limited to the transmission of DNA.
इस ढांचे में पिता की भूमिका केवल DNA के हस्तांतरण तक सीमित है।
- His lifestyle choices (including whether he exercised, smoked, or lived in polluted surroundings) were believed to have no bearing on what was passed on.



यह माना जाता था कि उसकी जीवनशैली (जैसे व्यायाम, धूम्रपान या प्रदूषित वातावरण में रहना) का अगली पीढ़ी पर कोई प्रभाव नहीं पड़ता।

- For over a century, this model was reinforced by **August Weismann's idea of the blood-testis barrier**, which held that environmental influences cannot affect germ (sperm and egg) cells.

एक सदी से अधिक समय तक यह मॉडल **August Weismann के blood-testis barrier सिद्धांत** से मजबूत होता रहा, जिसके अनुसार पर्यावरणीय प्रभाव जर्म कोशिकाओं (शुक्राणु और अंडाणु) को प्रभावित नहीं कर सकते।

- According to this view, a man's lifestyle, whether healthy or harmful, would not influence the sperm in a way that could be passed on to the next generation.

इस दृष्टिकोण के अनुसार, पुरुष की जीवनशैली स्वस्थ हो या हानिकारक, उसका प्रभाव शुक्राणु पर ऐसा नहीं पड़ता जो अगली पीढ़ी तक पहुंचे।

- The sperm was seen as a passive carrier of DNA, insulated from the external environment. शुक्राणु को DNA का एक निष्क्रिय वाहक माना जाता था, जो बाहरी वातावरण से सुरक्षित रहता है।
- This assumption began to weaken in the early 2010s, when studies demonstrated that paternal exposures such as poor diet, alcohol consumption, and environmental toxins could influence offspring traits.

यह धारणा 2010 के शुरुआती वर्षों में कमजोर होने लगी जब अध्ययनों ने दिखाया कि खराब आहार, शराब सेवन और पर्यावरणीय विषाक्त पदार्थ जैसे पितृ संपर्क संतानों के गुणों को प्रभावित कर सकते हैं।

- These traits were not encoded in DNA changes, but appeared to be transmitted through **epigenetic mechanisms**.

ये गुण DNA परिवर्तन से नहीं बल्कि **एपिजेनेटिक तंत्र** के माध्यम से स्थानांतरित होते प्रतीत हुए।

- Small molecules, particularly RNA fragments in sperm, were identified as carriers of such information.

छोटे अणु, विशेष रूप से शुक्राणु में मौजूद RNA टुकड़े, इस जानकारी के वाहक के रूप में पहचाने गए।

- These molecules could regulate gene expression in early embryos, effectively transmitting information about the father's environment without altering the genetic code itself.

ये अणु प्रारंभिक भ्रूण में जीन अभिव्यक्ति को नियंत्रित कर सकते हैं, जिससे पिता के वातावरण की जानकारी बिना DNA बदले ही स्थानांतरित हो जाती है।

- This discovery marked a shift in biology, suggesting that inheritance is more dynamic than previously believed.

इस खोज ने जीवविज्ञान में बदलाव लाया और दिखाया कि वंशानुगतता पहले से अधिक गतिशील है।

- However, one key question remained unanswered: how exactly are these signals transmitted, and how do they shape the child's biology?

हालांकि एक महत्वपूर्ण प्रश्न अभी भी अनुत्तरित था: ये संकेत वास्तव में कैसे पहुंचते हैं और बच्चे की जैविकी को कैसे आकार देते हैं?

New evidence

नए प्रमाण

- A recent study published in **Cell Metabolism** by Chinese researchers adds an important layer to this evolving story.

चीनी शोधकर्ताओं द्वारा **Cell Metabolism** में प्रकाशित एक हालिया अध्ययन इस विकसित हो रही कहानी में एक महत्वपूर्ण परत जोड़ता है।

- In this study, male mice that underwent structured treadmill exercise for eight weeks produced offspring with significantly improved endurance and metabolic profiles.

इस अध्ययन में, आठ सप्ताह तक संरचित ट्रेडमिल व्यायाम करने वाले नर चूहों ने ऐसे संतानों को जन्म दिया जिनमें सहनशक्ति और चयापचय प्रोफाइल काफी बेहतर थी।



- Quantitatively, these offspring ran longer and covered greater distances in treadmill tests, with statistically significant differences often exceeding 30% - 40% compared to offspring of sedentary fathers.
संख्यात्मक रूप से, इन संतानों ने अधिक दूरी तक दौड़ लगाई और 30%–40% से अधिक बेहतर प्रदर्शन किया।
- Oxygen consumption measurements showed higher VO₂ levels across light and dark cycles, indicating enhanced metabolic efficiency.
ऑक्सीजन उपभोग माप में VO₂ स्तर अधिक पाए गए, जो बेहतर चयापचय दक्षता को दर्शाते हैं।
- Muscle analysis revealed a shift towards oxidative fibre types, with a notable increase in type I and type IIa fibres and a reduction in glycolytic fibres.
मांसपेशी विश्लेषण में ऑक्सीडेटिव फाइबर की ओर बदलाव देखा गया, जिसमें टाइप I और IIa फाइबर बढ़े और ग्लाइकोलाइटिक फाइबर घटे।
- The most compelling contribution of the study lies in its proposed mechanism.
इस अध्ययन का सबसे महत्वपूर्ण योगदान इसके प्रस्तावित तंत्र में है।
- The researchers demonstrate that paternal exercise alters the profile of sperm microRNAs, a class of small non-coding RNAs.
शोधकर्ताओं ने दिखाया कि पितृ व्यायाम शुक्राणु के microRNAs की प्रोफाइल बदल देता है।
- These microRNAs are delivered to the oocyte at fertilisation and interact with early embryonic transcripts.
ये microRNAs निषेचन के समय अंडाणु में पहुंचते हैं और प्रारंभिक भ्रूण के ट्रांसक्रिप्ट्स से जुड़ते हैं।
- The study suggests that microRNAs suppress nuclear receptor corepressor 1, a molecule that normally inhibits PGC-1 α , a master regulator of mitochondrial function.
अध्ययन के अनुसार microRNAs nuclear receptor corepressor 1 को दबाते हैं, जो PGC-1 α को नियंत्रित करता है।
- By relieving this inhibition, the embryo is programmed towards enhanced oxidative metabolism and mitochondrial development.
इस अवरोध को हटाकर भ्रूण को बेहतर ऑक्सीडेटिव मेटाबॉलिज्म और माइटोकॉन्ड्रियल विकास की ओर प्रोग्राम किया जाता है।
- The study further strengthens this causal pathway by injecting sperm-derived small RNAs from exercised fathers into normal embryos, which then reproduced similar metabolic and endurance phenotypes in offspring.
अध्ययन ने इस कारणात्मक मार्ग को और मजबूत किया जब व्यायाम करने वाले पिता के RNA सामान्य भ्रूण में इंजेक्ट किए गए और समान प्रभाव उत्पन्न हुए।
- It suggests that these RNA molecules are not merely markers, but active agents of inheritance.
यह दर्शाता है कि ये RNA केवल संकेतक नहीं बल्कि सक्रिय वंशानुगत कारक हैं।
- One of the most intriguing implications concerns how these molecular signals bypass the classical Weismann barrier.
एक महत्वपूर्ण प्रश्न यह है कि ये संकेत Weismann barrier को कैसे पार करते हैं।
- The study suggests that systemic physiological states, such as increased muscular PGC-1 α activity during exercise, can influence the composition of small RNAs in sperm.
अध्ययन के अनुसार शरीर की शारीरिक अवस्थाएँ शुक्राणु के RNA को प्रभावित कर सकती हैं।
- While the exact transport mechanism remains unclear, it is hypothesised that circulating RNA fragments or vesicle-mediated transport systems may allow signals from somatic tissues to influence germ cells.
सटीक प्रक्रिया स्पष्ट नहीं है, लेकिन माना जाता है कि RNA या vesicle प्रणाली इसे संभव बनाती है।
- In effect, the barrier is not absolute but selectively permeable to regulatory molecules, particularly small RNAs that can re-programme gene expression without altering DNA.
इस प्रकार यह बाधा पूर्ण नहीं बल्कि चयनात्मक रूप से पारगम्य है।



- During fertilisation, the sperm does more than deliver DNA.
निषेचन के दौरान शुक्राणु केवल DNA नहीं देता।
- It contributes a complex molecular cargo, including proteins and RNA fragments.
यह प्रोटीन और RNA सहित जटिल आणविक सामग्री भी देता है।
- These molecules interact with the oocyte cytoplasm and influence the earliest stages of embryonic development.
ये अणु अंडाणु के साइटोप्लाज्म से जुड़कर प्रारंभिक विकास को प्रभावित करते हैं।
- The study highlights that sperm microRNAs can act immediately after fertilisation, modifying transcriptional networks before the embryo begins its own gene expression.
अध्ययन बताता है कि शुक्राणु microRNAs तुरंत कार्य करते हैं और भ्रूण की जीन अभिव्यक्ति शुरू होने से पहले उसे बदल सकते हैं।
- This early window appears critical, as small changes in gene regulation at this stage can lead to lasting physiological differences in the offspring.
यह प्रारंभिक चरण बहुत महत्वपूर्ण है क्योंकि छोटे परिवर्तन लंबे समय तक प्रभाव डाल सकते हैं।
- Several uncertainties persist.
कई अनिश्चितताएँ अभी भी बनी हुई हैं।
- The precise fate of these microRNAs after fertilisation is not fully understood.
इन microRNAs का निषेचन के बाद क्या होता है, यह पूरी तरह स्पष्ट नहीं है।
- It remains unclear how long they persist, which genes they consistently target, and whether their effects extend beyond the first generation.
यह भी स्पष्ट नहीं है कि वे कितने समय तक रहते हैं और किन जीनों को प्रभावित करते हैं।
- Furthermore, the findings are based entirely on animal models, and extrapolation to humans must be done cautiously.
ये निष्कर्ष केवल पशु मॉडलों पर आधारित हैं, इसलिए मनुष्यों पर लागू करना सावधानी से करना चाहिए।
- Human reproductive biology is more complex, and environmental exposures are far more variable.
मानव प्रजनन जैविकी अधिक जटिल है और पर्यावरणीय प्रभाव भी अधिक विविध हैं।
- There is also a limited understanding of dose-response relationships, that is, how much lifestyle change is required to produce measurable effects in offspring.
यह भी स्पष्ट नहीं है कि कितने जीवनशैली परिवर्तन से प्रभाव दिखाई देता है।

What needs to be done

क्या किया जाना चाहिए

- Even though we still don't fully understand how a father's lifestyle influences his child's biology, what is increasingly clear is that it does.
हालांकि हम पूरी तरह नहीं समझते कि पिता की जीवनशैली बच्चे को कैसे प्रभावित करती है, लेकिन यह स्पष्ट होता जा रहा है कि यह प्रभाव पड़ता है।
- This understanding however, is yet to translate into policy action.
लेकिन यह समझ अभी तक नीति में नहीं बदली है।
- In India, under the **RMNCH+A programme**, male involvement remains limited to the supplementation of iron tablets to adolescent boys.
भारत में **RMNCH+A कार्यक्रम** के तहत पुरुषों की भागीदारी केवल किशोर लड़कों को आयरन टैबलेट देने तक सीमित है।
- There is no structured focus on paternal preconception health, no systematic screening for lifestyle risks among prospective fathers, and minimal emphasis on environmental exposures that may affect sperm quality.
पितृ पूर्व-गर्भधारण स्वास्थ्य पर कोई संरचित ध्यान नहीं है, न ही संभावित पिताओं के लिए जीवनशैली जोखिम की जांच है।



- Addressing lifestyle factors such as physical activity, substance use, and environmental exposures among men of reproductive age may offer a low-cost, high-impact strategy to improve population health across generations.
प्रजनन आयु के पुरुषों में शारीरिक गतिविधि, नशा और पर्यावरणीय संपर्क जैसे कारकों को सुधारना कम लागत और उच्च प्रभाव वाली रणनीति हो सकती है।
- If these findings hold true in humans, the implications are profound.
यदि ये निष्कर्ष मनुष्यों पर भी सही साबित होते हैं, तो इसके परिणाम बहुत बड़े होंगे।

GS Paper II: International Relations		08 May 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
08M	CAG conducting audit of 101 cities to assess ease of living CAG द्वारा 101 शहरों में जीवन सुगमता का आकलन करने के लिए ऑडिट	



GS II: IR

CAG conducting audit of 101 cities to assess ease of living

India is conducting a special audit of 101 cities to assess ease of living from the citizen's perspective, Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) K. Sanjay Murthy said on Thursday. At the 5th BRICS Supreme Audit Institutions (SAI) Leaders' Summit here, Mr. Murthy said the CAG of India is auditing multi-modal transport and first-mile, last-mile logistics, in partnership with institutions like the IIT and IIM, and the World Bank. India is hosting the three-day summit under the overarching theme 'Ease of Living with a Focus on Urban Mobility'. Convened during India's year of BRICS Chairmanship 2026 by the Office of the CAG, it brings together 42 delegates, including Heads of SAIs from BRICS member countries, to deliberate on audit themes of shared relevance, exchange best practices, and strengthen public financial oversight. PTI

08M. CAG conducting audit of 101 cities to assess ease of living

CAG द्वारा 101 शहरों में जीवन सुगमता का आकलन करने के लिए ऑडिट

- India is conducting a special audit of **101 cities** to assess **ease of living** from the citizen's perspective, **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) K. Sanjay Murthy** said on Thursday. भारत नागरिकों के दृष्टिकोण से **जीवन सुगमता (ease of living)** का आकलन करने के लिए **101 शहरों** का विशेष ऑडिट कर रहा है, **नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक (CAG) K. Sanjay Murthy** ने गुरुवार को कहा।

- At the **5th BRICS Supreme Audit Institutions (SAI) Leaders' Summit** here, Mr. Murthy said the **CAG of India** is auditing **multi-modal transport and first-mile, last-mile logistics**, in partnership with institutions like the **IIT and IIM**, and the **World Bank**.

यहाँ आयोजित 5वें **BRICS सुप्रीम ऑडिट इंस्टीट्यूशंस (SAI) लीडर्स समिट** में श्री Murthy ने कहा कि **भारत का CAG** बहु-मोडल परिवहन और फर्स्ट-माइल, लास्ट-माइल लॉजिस्टिक्स का ऑडिट कर रहा है, जिसमें **IIT और IIM** तथा **विश्व बैंक** जैसी संस्थाओं के साथ साझेदारी की जा रही है।

- India is hosting the three-day summit under the overarching theme '**Ease of Living with a Focus on Urban Mobility**'.

भारत इस तीन दिवसीय समिट की मेजबानी '**Ease of Living with a Focus**

on Urban Mobility' थीम के तहत कर रहा है।

- Convened during India's year of **BRICS Chairmanship 2026** by the Office of the **CAG**, it **brings together 42 delegates**, including Heads of **SAIs** from BRICS member countries, to **deliberate on audit themes of shared relevance, exchange best practices, and strengthen public financial oversight**.

भारत के **BRICS अध्यक्षता 2026** वर्ष के दौरान **CAG कार्यालय** द्वारा आयोजित यह सम्मेलन **42 प्रतिनिधियों** को एक साथ लाता है, जिसमें BRICS सदस्य देशों के **SAIs प्रमुख** शामिल हैं, ताकि साझा महत्व के ऑडिट विषयों पर चर्चा की जा सके, सर्वोत्तम प्रथाओं का आदान-प्रदान हो सके और सार्वजनिक वित्तीय निगरानी को मजबूत किया जा सके।



GS Paper III: Economy		08 May 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
08M	'Compliance norms could derail EU FTA deal benefits' 'अनुपालन मानक EU FTA सौदे के लाभों को पटरी से उतार सकते हैं'	

'Compliance norms could derail EU FTA deal benefits'

Calling the agreement the 'mother of all deals', EU's Ambassador to India Hervé Delphin says it is, however, missing a chapter on investments; the deal could be implemented by early 2027, he says

GS III: Economy
T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

While hailing the India-European Union (EU) Free Trade Agreement (FTA) as creating a joint market comprising one quarter of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the EU's ambassador to India Hervé Delphin also struck a note of caution over regulatory hurdles and "unfinished business" that could overshadow the benefits of the deal.

Speaking at an event organised by the Federation of European Business in India, Mr. Delphin also said that the FTA would likely be implemented in "early 2027", a timeline that sources in the Indian government also confirm.

Negotiations on the FTA



Conditions apply: Conformity requirements should serve the purpose and not be barriers, said Mr. Delphin. BY ARRANGEMENT

were concluded in January this year.

"Both sides must ensure that the agreement is implemented smoothly and in good faith," he said. "For this to materialise, we need to align on a pro-FTA mindset and approach across our systems: customs procedures or conformity requirements should serve their purpose

and not be used as trade barriers."

"If administrative procedures are too burdensome businesses may consider that cost of compliance outweighs the benefits of preferential tariffs, in which case the FTA potential would be lost," Mr. Delphin added. "That would be a missed opportunity." Speaking a little more

about the opportunity created by the FTA, the Ambassador said that the agreement would create a free trade zone covering nearly two billion people and a quarter of global GDP. "It will be the largest FTA ever signed by either side. For all these reasons it has been rightly billed the 'mother of all deals,'" he said.

However, he also pointed out some of the shortcomings in the deal.

"The FTA does not cover all relevant areas," he said. "We need to look at 'unfinished business' and 'beyond FTA'. Investment is the main case in point... There is regrettably no FTA chapter on investment liberalisation in non-services sectors, which would have given investors more assurance and predictability."

08M. 'Compliance norms could derail EU FTA deal benefits'

'अनुपालन मानक EU FTA सौदे के लाभों को पटरी से उतार सकते हैं'

• Calling the agreement the 'mother of all deals', EU's Ambassador to India Hervé Delphin says it is, however, missing a chapter on investments; the deal could be implemented by early 2027, he says.

इस समझौते को 'mother of all deals' कहते हुए EU के भारत में राजदूत Hervé Delphin ने कहा कि इसमें निवेश (investments) पर एक अध्याय नहीं है; उनका कहना है कि यह सौदा 2027 की शुरुआत तक लागू हो सकता है।

- While hailing the **India-European Union (EU) Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** as creating a joint market comprising one quarter of global **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**, the EU's ambassador to India **Hervé Delphin** also struck a note of caution over regulatory hurdles and "unfinished business" that could overshadow the benefits of the deal.

India-European Union (EU) Free Trade Agreement (FTA) की सराहना करते हुए, जो वैश्विक **GDP (Gross Domestic Product)** का एक चौथाई हिस्सा बनाने वाला संयुक्त बाजार बनाएगा, EU के भारत में राजदूत **Hervé Delphin** ने नियामकीय बाधाओं और "अधूरे कार्य" को लेकर भी सावधानी जताई जो इस सौदे के लाभों पर भारी पड़ सकते हैं।

- Speaking at an event organised by the **Federation of European Business in India**, Mr. Delphin also said that the **FTA would likely be implemented in "early 2027"**, a timeline that sources in the Indian government also confirm.

Federation of European Business in India द्वारा आयोजित एक कार्यक्रम में बोलते हुए, श्री Delphin ने कहा कि FTA संभवतः "2027 की शुरुआत" में लागू होगा, जिसकी पुष्टि भारतीय सरकार के सूत्र भी करते हैं।

- **Negotiations on the FTA were concluded in January this year.** FTA पर बातचीत इस वर्ष जनवरी में पूरी हो गई थी।
- "Both sides must ensure that the agreement is implemented smoothly and in good faith," he said.



“दोनों पक्षों को सुनिश्चित करना चाहिए कि यह समझौता सुचारु रूप से और अच्छे विश्वास के साथ लागू हो,” उन्होंने कहा।

- “For this to materialise, we need to align on a pro-FTA mindset and approach across our systems: customs procedures or conformity requirements should serve their purpose and not be used as trade barriers.”
“इसे वास्तविक बनाने के लिए हमें अपने सिस्टम में pro-FTA सोच और दृष्टिकोण को अपनाना होगा: सीमा शुल्क प्रक्रियाएँ या अनुपालन आवश्यकताएँ अपने उद्देश्य की पूर्ति करें, न कि व्यापार बाधा बनें।”
- “If administrative procedures are too burdensome businesses may consider that cost of compliance outweighs the benefits of preferential tariffs, in which case the FTA potential would be lost,” Mr. Delphin added.
“यदि प्रशासनिक प्रक्रियाएँ बहुत बोझिल हों, तो व्यवसाय यह मान सकते हैं कि अनुपालन की लागत तरजीही टैरिफ के लाभ से अधिक है, और ऐसी स्थिति में FTA की क्षमता खो जाएगी,” श्री Delphin ने जोड़ा।
- “That would be a missed opportunity.”
“यह एक खोया हुआ अवसर होगा।”
- Speaking a little more about the opportunity created by the FTA, the Ambassador said that the agreement would create a free trade zone covering nearly two billion people and a quarter of global GDP.
FTA द्वारा बनाए गए अवसर पर और बात करते हुए, राजदूत ने कहा कि यह समझौता लगभग दो अरब लोगों और वैश्विक GDP के एक चौथाई हिस्से को कवर करने वाला मुक्त व्यापार क्षेत्र बनाएगा।
- “It will be the largest FTA ever signed by either side.”
“यह दोनों पक्षों में से किसी भी द्वारा अब तक का सबसे बड़ा FTA होगा।
- For all these reasons it has been rightly billed the ‘mother of all deals,’ he said.
इन सभी कारणों से इसे सही रूप में ‘mother of all deals’ कहा गया है,” उन्होंने कहा।
- However, he also pointed out some of the shortcomings in the deal.
हालांकि, उन्होंने इस सौदे की कुछ कमियों की ओर भी इशारा किया।
- “The FTA does not cover all relevant areas,” he said.
“FTA सभी संबंधित क्षेत्रों को कवर नहीं करता,” उन्होंने कहा।
- “We need to look at ‘unfinished business’ and ‘beyond FTA’.”
“हमें ‘अधूरे कार्य’ और ‘FTA से आगे’ पर भी विचार करना होगा।
- Investment is the main case in point...
“निवेश इसका मुख्य उदाहरण है...”
- “There is regrettably no FTA chapter on investment liberalisation in non-services sectors, which would have given investors more assurance and predictability.”
“दुर्भाग्य से गैर-सेवा क्षेत्रों में निवेश उदारीकरण पर FTA का कोई अध्याय नहीं है, जो निवेशकों को अधिक आश्वासन और पूर्वानुमेयता दे सकता था।”

GS Paper III: Science and Technology		08 May 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
08M	Wastewater surveillance revealed hidden COVID surges in Bengaluru बेंगलुरु में अपशिष्ट जल निगरानी ने छिपी हुई COVID लहरों का खुलासा किया	



Wastewater surveillance revealed hidden COVID surges in Bengaluru

SS III, S&T
Afshan Yasmeen

Wastewater surveillance in Bengaluru closely tracked COVID-19 trends during the first Omicron wave, but later emerged as an important tool in identifying hidden surges that were not fully captured through routine clinical testing, according to researchers studying the city's sewage-based monitoring network.

A study published in *PLOS Global Public Health* by researchers from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), International Centre for Theoretical Sciences (ICTS) which is a part of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) and Tata Institute for Genetics and Society (TIGS) found that wastewater surveillance mirrored the rise in COVID-19 cases during the Omicron wave, though it did not provide an early warning of the surge. Researchers said viral loads detected in sewage and reported infections rose almost simultaneously during that phase, limiting its usefulness as a predictive tool. However, subsequent wastewater monitoring indicated that as clinical testing declined in later phases of the pandemic, sewage surveillance became

increasingly valuable in identifying fresh waves of infection that may otherwise have gone underreported.

Four COVID-19 surges

Farah Ishtiaq, a researcher from TIGS who is one of the authors of the *PLOS* study, told *The Hindu* that Bengaluru experienced four distinct COVID-19 surges between December 2021 and April 2022. These included the BA.2.10 wave, followed by a mixed BA.2 lineage surge involving BA.4, BA.5 and BA.2.75 variants, then the XBB wave, and most recently the JN.1 surge.

"During the early phase, from December 2021 to June 2022, wastewater signals and reported clinical cases were closely aligned. That showed both surveillance systems were functioning effectively and capturing the spread of infection in the community," Dr. Ishtiaq said.

She said the situation changed from July 2022 to November 2023, when routine clinical testing declined substantially. Testing, she said, was often stepped up only after infections had already begun to rise. "That points to a reactive rather than proactive surveillance model. Wastewater monitoring, on the other hand, continued consistently and



Close study: Wastewater monitoring can become a dependable indicator of community transmission. FILE PHOTO

therefore became a more dependable indicator of community transmission," she said.

Reflection of trends

According to Dr. Ishtiaq, these trends were also reflected in a separate study in *The Lancet*, which analysed weekly wastewater monitoring data from Bengaluru. The study found that during the early phase of the Omicron period, virus levels in sewage closely matched reported

clinical cases, but later diverged as testing levels dropped. Researchers said sewage data clearly detected a major surge associated with the XBB variant in April 2023, followed by another rise linked to the JN.1 variant beginning in late December 2023. Both these waves were visible in wastewater trends but were not proportionately reflected in clinical case reporting or genomic surveillance data.

The findings, they said, underline

the importance of maintaining multiple surveillance systems, especially once public testing intensity declines after major pandemic waves. Bengaluru was among the early Indian cities to establish systematic wastewater surveillance, beginning citywide monitoring in August 2021. Samples were collected from 26 sewage treatment plants (STPs), which together process a large share of the city's wastewater.

For the *PLOS* study, researchers mapped wastewater catchment areas to 198 administrative wards under the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike, allowing comparison of viral load data from individual STPs with ward-level case counts. The analysis focused on November 15, 2021, to January 31, 2022, covering the first Omicron wave. Using statistical tools such as Pearson correlation and change-point analysis, researchers found strong correlation – often above 0.8 – between wastewater viral loads and case counts across most treatment plants, indicating that sewage surveillance can reliably track infection trends in real time. However, the study found no robust lead time that would allow

authorities to anticipate outbreaks significantly before clinical cases increased. Apparent short leads were attributed to interpolation of weekly wastewater data rather than genuine advance warning signals.

Complementary tool

Dr. Ishtiaq said wastewater surveillance should be viewed as a complementary public health tool rather than a replacement for clinical surveillance. "By the time a strong signal appears in wastewater, it often means that a substantial number of people in the community are already infected. That is why routine clinical testing at sentinel locations remains essential for early detection and timely response," she said. She added that maintaining consistent surveillance even between waves would help cities respond earlier, prepare hospitals and reduce the impact of future outbreaks. The findings underline that while wastewater monitoring cannot substitute clinical case detection, it offers a crucial window into community transmission patterns when routine testing systems weaken or public participation in testing declines. (yasmeen.afshan@thehindu.co.in)

08M. Wastewater surveillance revealed hidden COVID surges in Bengaluru

बंगलुरु में अपशिष्ट जल निगरानी ने छिपी हुई COVID लहरों का खुलासा किया

- **Wastewater surveillance in Bengaluru** closely tracked **COVID-19 trends during the first Omicron wave**, but later emerged as an important tool in identifying hidden surges that were not fully captured through routine clinical testing, according to researchers studying the **city's sewage-based monitoring network**.

बंगलुरु में अपशिष्ट जल निगरानी (Wastewater surveillance) ने पहली Omicron लहर के दौरान COVID-19 रुझानों को करीब से ट्रैक किया, लेकिन बाद में यह उन छिपी हुई लहरों की पहचान में एक महत्वपूर्ण उपकरण बन गया जो नियमित क्लिनिकल परीक्षणों में पूरी तरह दर्ज नहीं हो पाईं, शहर के सीवेज-आधारित निगरानी नेटवर्क का अध्ययन करने वाले शोधकर्ताओं के अनुसार।

- A study published in **PLOS Global Public Health** by researchers from the **Indian Institute of Science (IISc)**, **International Centre for Theoretical Sciences (ICTS)** which is a part of the **Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR)** and **Tata Institute for Genetics and Society (TIGS)** found that wastewater surveillance mirrored the rise in COVID-19 cases during the Omicron wave, though it did not provide an early warning of the surge.

PLOS Global Public Health में प्रकाशित एक अध्ययन में **Indian Institute of Science (IISc)**, **International Centre for Theoretical Sciences (ICTS)** जो **Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR)** का हिस्सा है, और **Tata Institute for Genetics and Society (TIGS)** के शोधकर्ताओं ने पाया कि अपशिष्ट जल निगरानी ने Omicron लहर के दौरान COVID-19 मामलों की वृद्धि को दर्शाया, हालांकि यह पहले से चेतावनी नहीं दे सका।

- Researchers said viral loads detected in sewage and reported infections rose almost simultaneously during that phase, limiting its usefulness as a predictive tool. शोधकर्ताओं ने कहा कि उस चरण में सीवेज में पाए गए वायरल लोड और रिपोर्ट किए गए संक्रमण लगभग एक साथ बढ़े, जिससे यह एक पूर्वानुमान उपकरण के रूप में सीमित हो गया।
- However, subsequent wastewater monitoring indicated that as clinical testing declined in later phases of the pandemic, **sewage surveillance became increasingly valuable in identifying fresh waves of infection that may otherwise have gone underreported**. हालांकि, बाद की महामारी अवस्थाओं में जब क्लिनिकल परीक्षण कम हो गया, तो अपशिष्ट जल निगरानी नए संक्रमण की लहरों की पहचान में अधिक उपयोगी साबित हुई, जो अन्यथा रिपोर्ट नहीं हो पातीं।



Four COVID-19 surges

चार COVID-19 लहरें

- **Farah Ishtiaq**, a researcher from **TIGS** who is one of the authors of the PLOS study, told The Hindu that **Bengaluru** experienced four distinct COVID-19 surges between December 2021 and April 2024.
TIGS की शोधकर्ता **Farah Ishtiaq**, जो PLOS अध्ययन की लेखकों में से एक हैं, ने The Hindu को बताया कि **बंगलुरु** में दिसंबर 2021 से अप्रैल 2024 के बीच COVID-19 की चार अलग-अलग लहरें आईं।
- These included **the BA.2.10 wave, followed by a mixed BA.2 lineage surge involving BA.4, BA.5 and BA.2.75 variants, then the XBB wave, and most recently the JN.1 surge.**
इनमें BA.2.10 लहर, उसके बाद BA.4, BA.5 और BA.2.75 वैरिएंट वाली मिश्रित BA.2 लहर, फिर XBB लहर और सबसे हाल में JN.1 लहर शामिल थीं।
- “During the early phase, from December 2021 to June 2022, wastewater signals and reported clinical cases were closely aligned.
“प्रारंभिक चरण में, दिसंबर 2021 से जून 2022 तक, अपशिष्ट जल संकेत और रिपोर्ट किए गए क्लिनिकल मामले करीब से मेल खाते थे।
- That showed both surveillance systems were functioning effectively and capturing the spread of infection in the community,” Dr. Ishtiaq said.
इससे पता चला कि दोनों निगरानी प्रणालियाँ प्रभावी रूप से काम कर रही थीं और समुदाय में संक्रमण के प्रसार को पकड़ रही थीं,” डॉ. Ishtiaq ने कहा।
- She said the situation changed from July 2022 to November 2023, when routine clinical testing declined substantially.
उन्होंने कहा कि स्थिति जुलाई 2022 से नवंबर 2023 के बीच बदल गई जब नियमित क्लिनिकल परीक्षण काफी कम हो गया।
- Testing, she said, was often stepped up only after infections had already begun to rise.
उन्होंने कहा कि परीक्षण अक्सर तभी बढ़ाया जाता था जब संक्रमण पहले ही बढ़ना शुरू हो चुका होता था।
- “That points to a reactive rather than proactive surveillance model.
“यह एक प्रतिक्रियात्मक (reactive) निगरानी मॉडल को दर्शाता है, न कि सक्रिय (proactive) मॉडल को।
- Wastewater monitoring, on the other hand, continued consistently and therefore became a more dependable indicator of community transmission,” she said.
इसके विपरीत, अपशिष्ट जल निगरानी लगातार जारी रही और इसलिए यह सामुदायिक संक्रमण का अधिक विश्वसनीय संकेतक बन गई,” उन्होंने कहा।

Reflection of trends

रुझानों का प्रतिबिंब

- According to Dr. Ishtiaq, these trends were also reflected in a separate study in **The Lancet**, which analysed weekly wastewater monitoring data from **Bengaluru**.
डॉ. Ishtiaq के अनुसार, ये रुझान **The Lancet** के एक अलग अध्ययन में भी दिखाई दिए, जिसने **बंगलुरु** के साप्ताहिक अपशिष्ट जल डेटा का विश्लेषण किया।
- The study found that during the early phase of the Omicron period, virus levels in sewage closely matched reported clinical cases, but later diverged as testing levels dropped.
अध्ययन में पाया गया कि Omicron अवधि के शुरुआती चरण में सीवेज में वायरस स्तर और क्लिनिकल मामलों में समानता थी, लेकिन बाद में परीक्षण घटने पर दोनों में अंतर आ गया।
- Researchers said **sewage data clearly detected a major surge associated with the XBB variant in April 2023, followed by another rise linked to the JN.1 variant beginning in late December 2023.**
शोधकर्ताओं ने कहा कि सीवेज डेटा ने अप्रैल 2023 में XBB वैरिएंट से जुड़ी बड़ी लहर और दिसंबर 2023 के अंत में JN.1 वैरिएंट से जुड़ी दूसरी वृद्धि को स्पष्ट रूप से दिखाया।



- Both these waves were visible in wastewater trends but were not proportionately reflected in clinical case reporting or genomic surveillance data.
ये दोनों लहरें अपशिष्ट जल प्रवृत्तियों में दिखाई दीं, लेकिन क्लिनिकल रिपोर्टिंग या जीनोमिक निगरानी डेटा में उतनी स्पष्ट रूप से नहीं दिखीं।
- The findings, they said, underline the importance of maintaining multiple surveillance systems, especially once public testing intensity declines after major pandemic waves.
शोधकर्ताओं ने कहा कि ये निष्कर्ष कई निगरानी प्रणालियों को बनाए रखने के महत्व को दर्शाते हैं, खासकर जब महामारी की बड़ी लहरों के बाद सार्वजनिक परीक्षण कम हो जाता है।
- **Bengaluru** was among the early Indian cities to establish systematic wastewater surveillance, beginning citywide monitoring in August 2021.
बेंगलुरु उन शुरुआती भारतीय शहरों में से एक था जिसने व्यवस्थित अपशिष्ट जल निगरानी शुरू की, जिसकी शुरुआत अगस्त 2021 में हुई।
- Samples were collected from 26 sewage treatment plants (STPs), which together process a large share of the city's wastewater.
नमूने 26 सीवेज ट्रीटमेंट प्लांट (STPs) से लिए गए, जो शहर के बड़े हिस्से के अपशिष्ट जल को संसाधित करते हैं।
- For the PLOS study, researchers mapped wastewater catchment areas to 198 administrative wards under the **Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike**, allowing comparison of viral load data from individual STPs with ward-level case counts.
PLOS अध्ययन के लिए, शोधकर्ताओं ने अपशिष्ट जल क्षेत्रों को **Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike** के 198 वार्डों से जोड़ा, जिससे STPs के वायरल लोड और वार्ड स्तर के मामलों की तुलना संभव हुई।
- The analysis focused on November 15, 2021, to January 31, 2022, covering the first Omicron wave.
विश्लेषण 15 नवंबर 2021 से 31 जनवरी 2022 तक केंद्रित था, जिसमें पहली Omicron लहर शामिल थी।
- Using statistical tools such as Pearson correlation and change-point analysis, researchers found strong correlation — often above 0.8 — between wastewater viral loads and case counts across most treatment plants, indicating that sewage surveillance can reliably track infection trends in real time.
Pearson correlation और change-point analysis जैसे सांख्यिकीय उपकरणों का उपयोग करते हुए, शोधकर्ताओं ने अधिकांश संयंत्रों में 0.8 से अधिक मजबूत संबंध पाया, जिससे पता चला कि अपशिष्ट जल निगरानी वास्तविक समय में संक्रमण को ट्रैक कर सकती है।
- However, the study found no robust lead time that would allow authorities to anticipate outbreaks significantly before clinical cases increased.
हालांकि, अध्ययन में ऐसा कोई मजबूत पूर्व संकेत नहीं मिला जिससे अधिकारियों को संक्रमण बढ़ने से पहले चेतावनी मिल सके।
- Apparent short leads were attributed to interpolation of weekly wastewater data rather than genuine advance warning signals.
जो छोटे अग्रिम संकेत दिखे, उन्हें साप्ताहिक डेटा के इंटरपोलेशन के कारण बताया गया, न कि वास्तविक चेतावनी संकेतों के कारण।

Complementary tool

पूरक उपकरण

- Dr. Ishtiaq said wastewater surveillance should be viewed as a complementary public health tool rather than a replacement for clinical surveillance.
डॉ. Ishtiaq ने कहा कि अपशिष्ट जल निगरानी को क्लिनिकल निगरानी के विकल्प के बजाय एक पूरक सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य उपकरण के रूप में देखा जाना चाहिए।
- “By the time a strong signal appears in wastewater, it often means that a substantial number of people in the community are already infected.



“जब अपशिष्ट जल में मजबूत संकेत दिखाई देते हैं, तो इसका अर्थ अक्सर यह होता है कि समुदाय में पहले से ही बड़ी संख्या में लोग संक्रमित हैं।

- That is why routine clinical testing at sentinel locations remains essential for early detection and timely response,” she said.
इसीलिए सेंटिनल स्थानों पर नियमित क्लिनिकल परीक्षण प्रारंभिक पहचान और समय पर प्रतिक्रिया के लिए आवश्यक है,” उन्होंने कहा।
- She added that maintaining consistent surveillance even between waves would help cities respond earlier, prepare hospitals and reduce the impact of future outbreaks.
उन्होंने कहा कि लहरों के बीच भी निरंतर निगरानी बनाए रखने से शहरों को जल्दी प्रतिक्रिया देने, अस्पताल तैयार करने और भविष्य के प्रकोपों के प्रभाव को कम करने में मदद मिलेगी।
- The findings underline that while wastewater monitoring cannot substitute clinical case detection, it offers a crucial window into community transmission—particularly when routine testing systems weaken or public participation in testing declines.
निष्कर्ष बताते हैं कि हालांकि अपशिष्ट जल निगरानी क्लिनिकल केस पहचान का विकल्प नहीं है, यह सामुदायिक संक्रमण को समझने का महत्वपूर्ण साधन है, खासकर जब नियमित परीक्षण प्रणाली कमजोर हो जाती है या लोगों की भागीदारी कम हो जाती है।

GS Paper III: Environment		08 May 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
08M	‘Empower Collectors to enforce waste management rules’ ‘कचरा प्रबंधन नियम लागू करने के लिए कलेक्टरों को सशक्त करें’	
08M	How Attenborough’s Imagery Hid a History of Colonial Harm एटनबरो की दृश्यात्मक प्रस्तुति ने औपनिवेशिक क्षति के इतिहास को कैसे छिपाया	

‘Empower Collectors to enforce waste management rules’

GS III: Environment
Aaratrika Bhaumik
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has directed the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to issue a notification under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 delegating its powers to Collectors across the country for one year to ensure strict implementation of the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules, 2026.

Observing that the rules embody efforts to protect the planet and the nation from “man-made destruction”, a Bench of Justices Pankaj Mithal and S.V.N. Bhatti issued a slew of directions aimed at securing uniform implementation of the framework, which came into effect on April 1, 2026.

“... the MoEFCC is directed to issue a notification under Section 23 and delegate the powers under Section 5 of the Environ-

ment Protection Act, 1986, to the District Collectors across the country for a period of one year, exclusively for supervising, administering and implementing SWM Rules, 2026, within their jurisdictional limits”, the Bench said in its May 5 order.

The Bench further directed District Collectors to constitute a “special cell” comprising all relevant officials to assist in supervising, administering and implementing the rules. The Collectors were also empowered to order disconnection of water and electricity supply to bulk generators of solid waste found to be in violation of the rules.

“The District Collectors are directed to conduct virtual spot inspections of the dumping sites, implement the rules, and forthrightly prepare and forward the report to the designated Secretaries in the respective States,” it said.

08M. ‘Empower Collectors to enforce waste management rules’

‘कचरा प्रबंधन नियम लागू करने के लिए कलेक्टरों को सशक्त करें’

- The **Supreme Court** has directed the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** to issue a notification under the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986** delegating its powers to **Collectors** across the country for one year to ensure strict implementation of the **Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules, 2026**.

सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने पर्यावरण, वन और जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय को निर्देश दिया है कि वह पर्यावरण (संरक्षण) अधिनियम, 1986 के तहत एक अधिसूचना जारी करे, जिसमें देश भर के कलेक्टरों को एक वर्ष के लिए अधिकार सौंपे जाएँ ताकि ठोस कचरा प्रबंधन (SWM) नियम, 2026 का सख्ती से पालन सुनिश्चित किया जा सके।

- Observing that the rules embody efforts to protect the planet and the nation from “man-made destruction”, a Bench of Justices **Pankaj Mithal** and **S.V.N. Bhatti** issued a slew of directions aimed at securing uniform implementation of the framework, which came into effect on April 1, 2026.

यह देखते हुए कि ये नियम “मानव-निर्मित विनाश” से ग्रह और राष्ट्र की रक्षा के प्रयासों को दर्शाते हैं, न्यायमूर्ति **Pankaj Mithal** और **S.V.N. Bhatti** की पीठ ने एक श्रृंखला में निर्देश जारी किए, जिनका उद्देश्य इस ढांचे का समान रूप से कार्यान्वयन सुनिश्चित करना है, जो 1 अप्रैल 2026 से प्रभावी हुआ।

- “... the **MoEFCC** is directed to issue a notification under



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

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

CONTACT: 9971932488



Section 23 and delegate the powers under Section 5 of the **Environment Protection Act, 1986**, to the **District Collectors** across the country for a period of one year, exclusively for supervising, administering and implementing SWM Rules, 2026, within their jurisdictional limits”, the Bench said in its May 5 order.

“... MoEFCC को निर्देश दिया जाता है कि वह धारा 23 के तहत अधिसूचना जारी करे और पर्यावरण संरक्षण अधिनियम, 1986 की धारा 5 के तहत अधिकार देश भर के जिला कलेक्टरों को एक वर्ष की अवधि के लिए सौंपे, केवल अपने अधिकार क्षेत्र में SWM नियम, 2026 की निगरानी, प्रशासन और क्रियान्वयन के लिए,” पीठ ने अपने 5 मई के आदेश में कहा।

- The Bench further directed District Collectors to constitute a “special cell” comprising all relevant officials to assist in supervising, administering and implementing the rules.
पीठ ने आगे निर्देश दिया कि जिला कलेक्टर एक “विशेष प्रकोष्ठ” का गठन करें जिसमें सभी संबंधित अधिकारी शामिल हों ताकि नियमों की निगरानी, प्रशासन और क्रियान्वयन में सहायता मिल सके।
- The Collectors were also empowered to order disconnection of water and electricity supply to bulk generators of solid waste found to be in violation of the rules.
कलेक्टरों को यह भी अधिकार दिया गया कि वे नियमों का उल्लंघन करने वाले बड़े ठोस कचरा उत्पन्न करने वालों की जल और बिजली आपूर्ति काटने का आदेश दे सकें।
- “The District Collectors are directed to conduct virtual spot inspections of the dumping sites, implement the rules, and fortnightly prepare and forward the report to the designated Secretaries in the respective States,” it said.
“जिला कलेक्टरों को निर्देश दिया जाता है कि वे डंपिंग स्थलों का वर्युअल निरीक्षण करें, नियमों को लागू करें और हर पखवाड़े रिपोर्ट तैयार कर संबंधित राज्यों के नामित सचिवों को भेजें,” इसमें कहा गया।



How Attenborough's imagery hid a history of colonial harm

David Attenborough's legacy of bringing nature's beauty to millions is unparalleled. However, his choice of aesthetics over politics sustained colonial myths and obscured the violent realities of modern conservation

GS III: Environment
Vasudevan Mukunth

The British natural historian David Attenborough turns 100 today. It is likely no one has done more to make the non-human world more legible and loveable to mass audiences. Attenborough's career as a host, starting with *Zoo Quest* in 1954, spans seven decades and nine documentary series. His influence on how several generations of people worldwide perceive ecology and conservation is unparalleled. Yet that is also what has made his work and his efforts to communicate it so troublesome.

Moving animals out
Zoo Quest made Attenborough famous, especially his genuine curiosity, but it also showed colonialism-like extractivism in action. The BBC filmed in exotic locations around the world, where wild animals would be captured and transported to the London zoo. While Attenborough has since said the show's attitude would not be acceptable today, he also stopped short of acknowledging the post-war infrastructure of British cultural imperialism it benefited from.

The BBC and London Zoo were producing *Zoo Quest* for the metropolitan British public, using tropical countries as theatres of spectacle. What the show represented also mattered to the BBC's history as its attitudes were baked into the broadcaster's Natural History Unit and subsequent productions.

Attenborough's own (professional) longevity has exacerbated his flaws. Among others, the English journalist George Monbiot has criticised Attenborough for saying almost nothing about the ecological catastrophe intensifying around him for decades. At various points in his career, Attenborough was feted for showcasing the beauty of the natural world – but which he often framed in a way to make it seem pristine, untouched by the difficult realities of ecological decline and the human hand in it. For reasons including the BBC's longstanding aversion to advocacy and his personal temperament, Attenborough chose aesthetics over the politics of harm. He told *The Guardian* in 2019 that he made "natural history programs not because I was a rampaging proselytizer preaching about conservation" but because he liked "looking at animals and seeing what they do". But the thing with being the voice of the planet, so to speak, is that what you do not talk about can become what does merit being talked about, and eventually what is not real.

Of people and tigers
The BBC Natural History Unit for a long time presented the natural world as a space apart from the one humans lived in and shaped. This idea is closely related to fortress conservation – a conservation paradigm that, in India and elsewhere, has been inhumane to Indigenous peoples and communities that depend on forests for their survival.

Among other 'features', fortress conservation holds that natural parks and sanctuaries must be free of human presence. However, researchers, scholars, activists, and members of forest-dependent communities have



David Attenborough stands with a floral sculpture of himself at Kew Gardens in London. AP

repeatedly proved that this requirement is a myth. These communities have played an important role throughout history by protecting these forests. Yet governments and forest departments have been fond of fortress conservation because it confers the ability to conserve with the instruments of bureaucratic authority and territorial control, with guns if needed.

The idea also has a parallel in some western models of conservation, which believe the wilderness must be 'defended' against, even violently, by the people who live there – and in the case of shows like *Zoo Quest*, these people were often Africans and Asians. It does not brook the possibility, indeed reality, that national parks in Europe often have working farms and towns, partly because Attenborough's documentaries poured enormous ideological work, even if they did not intend to, into sustaining the myth of the pristine natural. As the anthropologist Zoe Todd has said, Attenborough has been guilty of presenting the Anthropocene as a world shorn of the violence against Indigenous peoples.

In one show, *Seven Worlds, One Planet*, Attenborough said India's tigers have it harder than ever to raise families. This is partly true and that makes his statement doubly irksome. Independent India did not massacre tens of thousands of tigers and push them to the brink of extinction – but the British Raj did. Today, India's tiger populations face fragmented habitats, poaching, dwindling prey, disease, conflicts with humans, and the

ravenous appetite of crony capitalism for natural resources. But India has also been striving to conserve the animal, with tiger populations expanding considerably since independence. Attenborough painted an incomplete picture, giving the impression that what he was showing people was all of it. Just like that, the supposedly clueless people in India were to blame for the tiger's plight rather than the forebears of his viewers back home.

In fact, many Indigenous peoples today also want to use land in non-traditional ways, and the overall tigers-versus-tribals debate is much less straightforward today.

Problem focus
Attenborough has also patronised the U.K.-based Population Matters charity for years and in many of his documentaries has emphasised population growth as an important, or even the principal, driver of ecological distress. The focus on population remains disturbingly vital to this day, particularly among conservation philanthropists. Many neo-Malthusian assumptions among environmental NGOs and government agencies are also being deepened by climate migration and human demographic pressure on agricultural land. But despite repeated exhortations to the contrary, the world's population growth rate has been dropping since the early 1960s, shortly after Attenborough launched his career.

On the other hand, a recent report from Oxfam and the Stockholm Environment Institute found that in the 25

years from 1990, the world's richest 1% emitted twice as much carbon dioxide as the poorest 50%. Which should rank consumption patterns and the habits of industrialised societies far higher than population growth on the list of contributions to climate change. Yet Attenborough has not clarified this.

Such ideologies often stem from the notion that the populations of Commonwealth countries are growing 'too fast' today, thus moving blame away from the colonists. But as before, when Attenborough said "humans have overrun the world", he furthered a deleterious idea and amplified it to millions of people without the proper context, and it did even more harm as it entered an information landscape primed by the anxieties of far-right ecological nationalism.

To be sure, Attenborough is not an ecofascist – only that he has seemed to be unaware of the great effects of what he was and was not saying at any time. He has never professed any political views even though environmentalism is deeply political. He told *The Guardian* in the same interview that he wouldn't risk getting banned from the BBC. But when your voice is the most trusted on the subject of the natural universe, and when you decline to name colonialism as a historical cause of biodiversity loss, you implicitly exonerate it. When you insist on speaking to an undifferentiated humanity – rather than one aware that a farmer in the Congo has done much less to harm the earth than an investment banker in the U.S. – your false equivalence only serves power.

Public backlash against fortress conservation is gaining an increasingly risible momentum and is bound to prevail, especially in Africa and South Asia, where the lines between conservation and land-grabbing are becoming clearer.

Stopping at wonder

To be fair, these criticisms are not exclusive to Attenborough: they have become the pathologies of conservation practices that have only just begun to interrogate themselves in good faith. Even in 2021, 50 countries came together to commit to the '30 x 30' initiative, to protect 30% of land and the oceans by 2030. It drew enthusiastic support from Attenborough but vehement criticism from Indigenous rights organisations for paving the way for a new wave of dispossession in the name of conservation.

Protected areas around the world, rather than in the Global South alone, are what they are today thanks to millennia of human stewardship as well, in particular that of Indigenous peoples. Mistreating these people leads to biodiversity loss. It is that simple, yet many mainstream conservation circles still think this is a radical position and instead prefer Attenborough's sanitised aesthetics.

None of this diminishes Attenborough's other achievements. It is impossible to overstate the importance of his bringing the world into the living rooms of people who may otherwise have never imagined a coelacanth swimming through an indigo sea or the mesmerising dance of birds against a twilight sky. Even the grief he voiced in the latter part of his career about what the world had lost in his own lifetime seemed sincere and meaningful.

Many wildlife biologists and ecologists have anecdotes about how they were inspired to get into their fields after watching Attenborough's documentaries. And they may have gone on to ask the questions that he never did. However, there is no reason to believe the vast majority of Attenborough's viewers were prodded in the same direction.

The author is grateful to conservation biologist Neha Sinha for her feedback.

08M. How Attenborough's Imagery Hid a History of Colonial Harm

एटनबरो की दृश्यात्मक प्रस्तुति ने औपनिवेशिक क्षति के इतिहास को कैसे छिपाया

- **David Attenborough's** legacy of bringing nature's beauty to millions is unparalleled. लाखों लोगों तक प्रकृति की सुंदरता पहुँचाने में डेविड एटनबरो की विरासत अद्वितीय है।
- However, his choice of aesthetics over politics sustained colonial myths and obscured the violent realities of modern conservation. किन्तु राजनीति के स्थान पर सौंदर्यपरक प्रस्तुति को प्राथमिकता देने के कारण उन्होंने औपनिवेशिक मिथकों को बनाए रखा तथा आधुनिक संरक्षण की हिंसक वास्तविकताओं को अस्पष्ट कर दिया।



- The **British natural historian David Attenborough** turns **100** today.
ब्रिटिश प्रकृतिविद् डेविड एटनबरो आज **100 वर्ष** के हो गए हैं।
- It is likely no one has done more to make the **non-human world** more legible and loveable to mass audiences.
संभवतः किसी अन्य व्यक्ति ने **मानवेतर संसार** को आम जनमानस के लिए इतना अधिक समझने योग्य और प्रिय नहीं बनाया है।
- **Attenborough's** career as a host, starting with **Zoo Quest** in **1954**, spans seven decades and nine documentary series.
एटनबरो का प्रस्तोता के रूप में करियर, जो **1954** में **जू क्वेस्ट** से प्रारंभ हुआ, सात दशकों और नौ वृत्तचित्र श्रृंखलाओं तक फैला हुआ है।
- His influence on how several generations of people worldwide perceive **ecology** and **conservation** is unparalleled.
विश्वभर की कई पीढ़ियों द्वारा **पारिस्थितिकी** और **संरक्षण** को देखने के दृष्टिकोण पर उनका प्रभाव अद्वितीय है।
- Yet that is also what has made his work and his efforts to communicate it so troublesome.
किन्तु यही बात उनके कार्य और उसे संप्रेषित करने के प्रयासों को विवादास्पद भी बनाती है।

Moving animals out

पशुओं को बाहर ले जाना

- **Zoo Quest** made **Attenborough** famous, especially his genuine curiosity, but it also showed **colonialism-like extractivism** in action.
जू क्वेस्ट ने एटनबरो को प्रसिद्ध बनाया, विशेषकर उनकी वास्तविक जिज्ञासा के कारण, किन्तु इसने **उपनिवेशवाद-सदृश संसाधन दोहन** को भी प्रत्यक्ष रूप से प्रदर्शित किया।
- The **BBC** filmed in exotic locations around the world, where wild animals would be captured and transported to the **London Zoo**.
BBC ने विश्वभर के दूरस्थ और आकर्षक स्थानों पर फिल्मांकन किया, जहाँ जंगली पशुओं को पकड़कर **लंदन चिड़ियाघर** ले जाया जाता था।
- While **Attenborough** has since said the show's attitude would not be acceptable today, he also stopped short of acknowledging the post-war infrastructure of **British cultural imperialism** it benefited from.
यद्यपि एटनबरो ने बाद में कहा कि उस कार्यक्रम का दृष्टिकोण आज स्वीकार्य नहीं होगा, फिर भी उन्होंने उस युद्धोत्तर **ब्रिटिश सांस्कृतिक साम्राज्यवाद** की संरचना को पूरी तरह स्वीकार नहीं किया, जिससे यह कार्यक्रम लाभान्वित हुआ था।
- The **BBC** and **London Zoo** were producing **Zoo Quest** for the metropolitan British public, using tropical countries as theatres of spectacle.
BBC और **लंदन चिड़ियाघर** महानगरीय ब्रिटिश दर्शकों के लिए **जू क्वेस्ट** का निर्माण कर रहे थे, जिसमें उष्णकटिबंधीय देशों को प्रदर्शन के मंच के रूप में उपयोग किया जा रहा था।
- What the show represented also mattered to the **BBC's** history as its attitudes were baked into the broadcaster's **Natural History Unit** and subsequent productions.
यह कार्यक्रम क्या प्रतिनिधित्व करता था, इसका महत्व **BBC** के इतिहास के लिए भी था, क्योंकि उसके दृष्टिकोण प्रसारक की **नेचुरल हिस्ट्री यूनिट** और बाद की प्रस्तुतियों में गहराई से समाहित हो गए थे।
- **Attenborough's** own professional longevity has exacerbated his flaws.
एटनबरो के लंबे पेशेवर जीवन ने उनकी कमियों को और अधिक स्पष्ट कर दिया है।
- Among others, the English journalist **George Monbiot** has criticised **Attenborough** for saying almost nothing about the **ecological catastrophe** intensifying around him for decades.
अन्य लोगों के साथ-साथ अंग्रेज़ पत्रकार **जॉर्ज मोनबायोट** ने एटनबरो की आलोचना की है कि उन्होंने दशकों से तीव्र होती जा रही **पारिस्थितिकीय आपदा** के बारे में लगभग कुछ नहीं कहा।



- At various points in his career, **Attenborough** was feted for showcasing the beauty of the **natural world** — but which he often framed in a way to make it seem pristine, untouched by the difficult realities of **ecological decline** and the human hand in it.
अपने करियर के विभिन्न चरणों में **एटनबरो** को **प्राकृतिक संसार** की सुंदरता प्रस्तुत करने के लिए सराहा गया, किन्तु उन्होंने उसे प्रायः इस प्रकार प्रस्तुत किया कि वह बिल्कुल शुद्ध और **पारिस्थितिकीय पतन** तथा उसमें मानव हस्तक्षेप की कठिन वास्तविकताओं से अछूता प्रतीत हो।
- For reasons including the **BBC's** longstanding aversion to advocacy and his personal temperament, **Attenborough** chose aesthetics over the politics of harm.
BBC की लंबे समय से सक्रिय पक्षधरता से दूरी बनाए रखने की प्रवृत्ति तथा अपने व्यक्तिगत स्वभाव जैसे कारणों से, **एटनबरो** ने क्षति की राजनीति के बजाय सौंदर्यशास्त्र को प्राथमिकता दी।
- He told **The Guardian** in **2019** that he made “natural history programs not because I was a rampaging proselytizer preaching about conservation” but because he liked “looking at animals and seeing what they do”.
उन्होंने **2019** में **द गार्जियन** से कहा था कि उन्होंने “प्राकृतिक इतिहास कार्यक्रम इसलिए नहीं बनाए क्योंकि मैं संरक्षण का उपदेश देने वाला कट्टर प्रचारक था,” बल्कि इसलिए क्योंकि उन्हें “पशुओं को देखना और यह जानना पसंद था कि वे क्या करते हैं।”
- But the thing with being the **voice of the planet**, so to speak, is that what you do not talk about can become what does not merit being talked about, and eventually what is not real.
किन्तु, रूपक रूप में यदि कोई **पृथ्वी की आवाज़** बन जाता है, तो जिस विषय पर वह बात नहीं करता, वह धीरे-धीरे ऐसा विषय बन सकता है जिस पर बात करना आवश्यक न समझा जाए, और अंततः जिसे वास्तविक ही न माना जाए।

Of People and Tigers

लोगों और बाघों के बारे में

- The **BBC Natural History Unit** for a long time presented the **natural world** as a space apart from the one humans lived in and shaped.
बीबीसी नेचुरल हिस्ट्री यूनिट ने लंबे समय तक **प्राकृतिक संसार** को मनुष्यों द्वारा बसाए और आकार दिए गए संसार से अलग एक स्थान के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया।
- This idea is closely related to **fortress conservation** — a conservation paradigm that, in India and elsewhere, has been inhumane to **Indigenous peoples** and communities that depend on forests for their survival.
यह विचार **फोर्ट्रेस कंजरवेशन** से निकटता से जुड़ा हुआ है — एक संरक्षण प्रतिमान, जो भारत तथा अन्य स्थानों पर **आदिवासी समुदायों** और जंगलों पर निर्भर लोगों के प्रति अमानवीय रहा है।
- Among other ‘features’, **fortress conservation** holds that natural parks and sanctuaries must be free of **human presence**.
अन्य विशेषताओं के साथ, **फोर्ट्रेस कंजरवेशन** यह मानता है कि प्राकृतिक उद्यानों और अभयारण्यों को **मानवीय उपस्थिति** से मुक्त होना चाहिए।
- However, researchers, scholars, activists, and members of **forest-dependent communities** have repeatedly proved that this requirement is a **myth**.
किन्तु शोधकर्ताओं, विद्वानों, कार्यकर्ताओं तथा **वन-निर्भर समुदायों** के सदस्यों ने बार-बार सिद्ध किया है कि यह धारणा एक **मिथक** है।
- These communities have played an important role throughout history by protecting these forests.
इन समुदायों ने इतिहास भर इन वनों की रक्षा करके महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई है।
- Yet governments and **forest departments** have been fond of **fortress conservation** because it confers the ability to conserve with the instruments of **bureaucratic authority** and **territorial control**, with guns if needed.
फिर भी सरकारें और **वन विभाग फोर्ट्रेस कंजरवेशन** को पसंद करते रहे हैं, क्योंकि यह उन्हें **नौकरशाही**



अधिकार और क्षेत्रीय नियंत्रण के साधनों के माध्यम से, आवश्यकता पड़ने पर हथियारों के प्रयोग सहित, संरक्षण लागू करने की शक्ति प्रदान करता है।

- The idea also has a parallel in some western models of **conservation**, which believe the wilderness must be 'defended' against, even violently, by the people who live there.
इस विचार का समानांतर कुछ पश्चिमी संरक्षण मॉडलों में भी मिलता है, जो मानते हैं कि जंगलों की रक्षा वहाँ रहने वाले लोगों के विरुद्ध, यहाँ तक कि हिंसक तरीके से भी, की जानी चाहिए।
- In the case of shows like **Zoo Quest**, these people were often **Africans** and **Asians**.
Zoo Quest जैसे कार्यक्रमों में ये लोग प्रायः अफ्रीकी और एशियाई होते थे।
- It does not brook the possibility, indeed reality, that national parks in **Europe** often have working farms and towns.
यह इस संभावना, बल्कि वास्तविकता, को स्वीकार नहीं करता कि यूरोप के राष्ट्रीय उद्यानों में प्रायः सक्रिय कृषि फार्म और कस्बे भी होते हैं।
- Partly because **Attenborough's documentaries** poured enormous ideological work into sustaining the myth of the **pristine natural**.
आंशिक रूप से इसलिए कि एटनबरो की वृत्तचित्रों ने अछूती प्रकृति के मिथक को बनाए रखने में अत्यधिक वैचारिक भूमिका निभाई।
- As the anthropologist **Zoe Todd** has said, **Attenborough** has been guilty of presenting the **Anthropocene** as a world shorn of the violence against **Indigenous peoples**.
जैसा कि मानवविज्ञानी ज़ोई टॉड ने कहा है, एटनबरो ने एंथ्रोपोसीन को इस प्रकार प्रस्तुत किया है मानो वह आदिवासी समुदायों के विरुद्ध हिंसा से रहित संसार हो।
- In one show, **Seven Worlds, One Planet**, **Attenborough** said India's **tigers** have it harder than ever to raise families.
एक कार्यक्रम **Seven Worlds, One Planet** में, एटनबरो ने कहा कि भारत के बाघों के लिए परिवार बढ़ाना पहले से अधिक कठिन हो गया है।
- This is partly true and that makes his statement doubly irksome.
यह आंशिक रूप से सत्य है और यही बात उनके कथन को और अधिक परेशान करने वाला बनाती है।
- Independent India did not massacre tens of thousands of **tigers** and push them to the brink of extinction — but the **British Raj** did.
स्वतंत्र भारत ने हजारों बाघों का नरसंहार कर उन्हें विलुप्त के कगार पर नहीं पहुँचाया — बल्कि यह कार्य ब्रिटिश राज ने किया था।
- Today, India's **tiger populations** face fragmented habitats, **poaching**, **dwindling prey**, **disease**, **conflicts with humans**, and the ravenous appetite of **crony capitalism** for natural resources.
आज भारत की बाघ आबादी खंडित आवासों, अवैध शिकार, घटते शिकार, बीमारियों, मानव-बाघ संघर्षों तथा प्राकृतिक संसाधनों के प्रति मित्र पूंजीवाद की अतृप्त लालसा जैसी चुनौतियों का सामना कर रही है।
- But India has also been striving to conserve the animal, with **tiger populations** expanding considerably since independence.
किन्तु भारत इस प्राणी के संरक्षण के लिए निरंतर प्रयासरत भी रहा है, और स्वतंत्रता के बाद से बाघों की संख्या में उल्लेखनीय वृद्धि हुई है।
- **Attenborough** painted an incomplete picture, giving the impression that what he was showing people was all of it.
एटनबरो ने एक अधूरा चित्र प्रस्तुत किया, जिससे यह आभास हुआ कि वे लोगों को सम्पूर्ण सत्य दिखा रहे हैं।
- Just like that, the supposedly clueless people in India were to blame for the **tiger's plight** rather than the forebears of his viewers back home.
इस प्रकार, भारत के तथाकथित अज्ञानी लोगों को बाघों की दुर्दशा के लिए दोषी ठहराया गया, जबकि वास्तविक जिम्मेदारी उनके पश्चिमी दर्शकों के पूर्वजों की थी।
- In fact, many **Indigenous peoples** today also want to use land in non-traditional ways, and the overall **tigers-versus-tribals debate** is much less straightforward today.



वास्तव में, आज अनेक आदिवासी समुदाय भी भूमि का उपयोग गैर-पारंपरिक तरीकों से करना चाहते हैं, और समग्र बाघ बनाम आदिवासी बहस अब पहले की तुलना में कहीं अधिक जटिल हो चुकी है।

Problem Focus

समस्या का केंद्रबिंदु

- **Attenborough** has also patronised the U.K.-based **Population Matters** charity for years and in many of his documentaries has emphasised **population growth** as an important, or even the principal, driver of **ecological distress**.
एटनबरो कई वर्षों से यूनाइटेड किंगडम स्थित **Population Matters** संस्था का समर्थन करते रहे हैं और अपनी अनेक वृत्तचित्रों में उन्होंने **जनसंख्या वृद्धि** को **पारिस्थितिक संकट** का एक महत्वपूर्ण, अथवा मुख्य, कारण बताया है।
- The focus on **population** remains disturbingly vital to this day, particularly among **conservation philanthropists**.
जनसंख्या पर यह अत्यधिक बल आज भी चिंताजनक रूप से प्रभावशाली बना हुआ है, विशेषकर **संरक्षण समर्थक परोपकारियों** के बीच।
- Many **neo-Malthusian assumptions** among environmental NGOs and government agencies are also being deepened by **climate migration** and human demographic pressure on agricultural land.
पर्यावरणीय गैर-सरकारी संगठनों और सरकारी एजेंसियों में मौजूद अनेक **नव-माल्थुसवादी धारणाएँ**, **जलवायु प्रवासन** तथा कृषि भूमि पर जनसंख्या के दबाव के कारण और अधिक गहरी होती जा रही हैं।
- But despite repeated exhortations to the contrary, the world's **population growth rate** has been dropping since the early 1960s, shortly after **Attenborough** launched his career.
किन्तु इसके विपरीत बार-बार दिए गए आग्रहों के बावजूद, विश्व की **जनसंख्या वृद्धि दर** 1960 के दशक की शुरुआत से ही घटती रही है, जो **एटनबरो** के करियर प्रारंभ होने के कुछ समय बाद की बात है।
- On the other hand, a recent report from **Oxfam** and the **Stockholm Environment Institute** found that in the 25 years from 1990, the world's richest **1%** emitted twice as much **carbon dioxide** as the poorest **50%**.
दूसरी ओर, **ऑक्सफैम** और **स्टॉकहोम पर्यावरण संस्थान** की एक हालिया रिपोर्ट में पाया गया कि 1990 से अगले 25 वर्षों के दौरान विश्व के सबसे धनी **1%** लोगों ने सबसे गरीब **50%** लोगों की तुलना में दोगुना **कार्बन डाइऑक्साइड** उत्सर्जित किया।
- Which should rank **consumption patterns** and the habits of **industrialised societies** far higher than population growth on the list of contributions to **climate change**.
यह तथ्य **जलवायु परिवर्तन** में योगदान देने वाले कारकों की सूची में **उपभोग के पैटर्न** तथा **औद्योगीकृत समाजों** की जीवनशैली को जनसंख्या वृद्धि से कहीं अधिक महत्वपूर्ण स्थान देता है।
- Yet **Attenborough** has not clarified this.
फिर भी **एटनबरो** ने इस तथ्य को स्पष्ट रूप से सामने नहीं रखा।
- Such ideologies often stem from the notion that the populations of **Commonwealth countries** are growing 'too fast' today, thus moving blame away from the **colonists**.
ऐसी विचारधाराएँ प्रायः इस धारणा से उत्पन्न होती हैं कि आज **कॉमनवेल्थ देशों** की जनसंख्या 'अत्यधिक तेज़ी' से बढ़ रही है, जिससे दोष **उपनिवेशवादियों** से हट जाता है।
- But as before, when **Attenborough** said "humans have overrun the world", he furthered a deleterious idea and amplified it to millions of people without the proper context.
किन्तु पहले की ही भाँति, जब **एटनबरो** ने कहा कि "मनुष्यों ने दुनिया पर अत्यधिक कब्ज़ा कर लिया है", तब उन्होंने एक हानिकारक विचार को आगे बढ़ाया और उचित संदर्भ दिए बिना उसे लाखों लोगों तक पहुँचा दिया।
- And it did even more harm as it entered an information landscape primed by the anxieties of **far-right ecological nationalism**.



और यह विचार उस सूचना-परिदृश्य में प्रवेश करके और भी अधिक हानिकारक सिद्ध हुआ, जो पहले से ही अति-दक्षिणपंथी पारिस्थितिक राष्ट्रवाद की चिंताओं से प्रभावित था।

- To be sure, **Attenborough** is not an **ecofascist** — only that he has seemed to be unaware of the great effects of what he was and was not saying at any time.
निस्संदेह, एटनबरो कोई पारिस्थितिक फासीवादी नहीं हैं — किन्तु ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि वे अपने कथनों और मौन के व्यापक प्रभावों से अनभिज्ञ रहे हैं।
- He has never professed any **political views** even though **environmentalism** is deeply political.
उन्होंने कभी कोई स्पष्ट राजनीतिक विचार व्यक्त नहीं किया, जबकि पर्यावरणवाद स्वयं अत्यंत राजनीतिक विषय है।
- He told **The Guardian** in the same interview that he wouldn't risk getting banned from the **BBC**.
उन्होंने उसी साक्षात्कार में द गार्डियन से कहा कि वे बीबीसी से प्रतिबंधित होने का जोखिम नहीं उठाना चाहेंगे।
- But when your voice is the most trusted on the subject of the **natural universe**, and when you decline to name **colonialism** as a historical cause of **biodiversity loss**, you implicitly exonerate it.
किन्तु जब प्राकृतिक संसार के विषय में आपकी आवाज़ सबसे अधिक विश्वसनीय मानी जाती हो, और आप जैव-विविधता हास के ऐतिहासिक कारण के रूप में उपनिवेशवाद का नाम लेने से बचें, तो आप अप्रत्यक्ष रूप से उसे दोषमुक्त कर देते हैं।
- When you insist on speaking to an undifferentiated **humanity** — rather than one aware that a **farmer in the Congo** has done much less to harm the earth than an investment banker in the **U.S.** — your false equivalence only serves **power**.
जब आप ऐसी अविभाजित मानवता की बात करते हैं — बजाय इसके कि यह स्वीकार करें कि कांगो का एक किसान पृथ्वी को अमेरिका के एक निवेश बैंकर की तुलना में कहीं कम हानि पहुँचाता है — तब आपकी यह मिथ्या समानता केवल सत्ता को लाभ पहुँचाती है।
- **Public backlash against fortress conservation** is gaining an increasingly visible momentum and is bound to prevail, especially in **Africa** and **South Asia**, where the lines between conservation and **land-grabbing** are becoming clearer.
फोर्ट्रेस कंजरवेशन के विरुद्ध जन-विरोध लगातार अधिक स्पष्ट और प्रभावशाली होता जा रहा है, और विशेष रूप से अफ्रीका तथा दक्षिण एशिया में इसके प्रबल होने की संभावना है, जहाँ संरक्षण और भूमि हड़पने के बीच की रेखाएँ अधिक स्पष्ट होती जा रही हैं।

Stopping at wonder

आश्चर्य पर ठहर जाना

- To be fair, these criticisms are not exclusive to **Attenborough**: they have become the pathologies of **conservation practices** that have only just begun to interrogate themselves in good faith.
निष्पक्ष रूप से देखा जाए तो ये आलोचनाएँ केवल एटनबरो तक सीमित नहीं हैं; वे उन संरक्षण प्रथाओं की विकृतियाँ बन चुकी हैं, जिन्होंने अभी हाल ही में ईमानदारी से स्वयं की समीक्षा प्रारंभ की है।
- **Even in 2021, 50 countries** came together to commit to the **'30 x 30' initiative**, to protect **30% of land and the oceans by 2030**.
यहाँ तक कि 2021 में भी 50 देशों ने मिलकर '30 x 30' पहल के प्रति प्रतिबद्धता व्यक्त की, जिसका उद्देश्य 2030 तक भूमि और महासागरों के 30% हिस्से की रक्षा करना था।
- It drew enthusiastic support from **Attenborough** but vehement criticism from **Indigenous rights organisations** for paving the way for a new wave of dispossession in the name of **conservation**.
इस पहल को एटनबरो का उत्साही समर्थन प्राप्त हुआ, किन्तु आदिवासी अधिकार संगठनों ने इसकी तीव्र



आलोचना की, क्योंकि उनके अनुसार यह संरक्षण के नाम पर विस्थापन की एक नई लहर का मार्ग प्रशस्त करती है।

- **Protected areas** around the world, rather than in the **Global South** alone, are what they are today thanks to millennia of human stewardship as well, in particular that of **Indigenous peoples**.

विश्वभर के संरक्षित क्षेत्र, केवल ग्लोबल साउथ में ही नहीं, बल्कि हर स्थान पर, हजारों वर्षों से मानव संरक्षण और विशेष रूप से आदिवासी समुदायों की देखरेख के कारण आज इस स्थिति में हैं।

- Mistreating these peoples leads to **biodiversity loss**.
इन समुदायों के साथ दुर्व्यवहार करने से जैव-विविधता की हानि होती है।
- It is that simple, yet many mainstream **conservation circles** still think this a radical position and instead prefer **Attenborough's sanitised aesthetics**.
यह तथ्य इतना सरल है, फिर भी अनेक मुख्यधारा के संरक्षण समूह इसे अब भी एक उग्र विचार मानते हैं और इसके स्थान पर एटनबरो की परिष्कृत सौंदर्यात्मक प्रस्तुति को प्राथमिकता देते हैं।
- None of this diminishes **Attenborough's** other achievements.
इनमें से कोई भी बात एटनबरो की अन्य उपलब्धियों को कम नहीं करती।
- It is impossible to overstate the importance of his bringing the **wild** into the living rooms of people who may otherwise have never imagined a **coelacanth** swimming through an indigo sea or the mesmerising dance of birds against a twilight sky.
उनके द्वारा जंगली प्रकृति को उन लोगों के घरों तक पहुँचाने के महत्व को बढ़ा-चढ़ाकर बताना संभव नहीं है, जिन्होंने शायद कभी सीलाकैथ मछली को गहरे नीले समुद्र में तैरते हुए या सांध्य आकाश के नीचे पक्षियों के मंत्रमुग्ध कर देने वाले नृत्य की कल्पना भी नहीं की होगी।
- Even the grief he voiced in the latter part of his career about what the world had lost in his own lifetime seemed sincere and meaningful.
अपने करियर के अंतिम चरण में उन्होंने दुनिया द्वारा अपने ही जीवनकाल में खोई हुई चीजों को लेकर जो दुःख व्यक्त किया, वह भी ईमानदार और अर्थपूर्ण प्रतीत हुआ।
- Many **wildlife biologists** and **ecologists** have anecdotes about how they were inspired to get into their fields after watching **Attenborough's documentaries**.
अनेक वन्यजीव जीवविज्ञानी और पारिस्थितिकीविद् बताते हैं कि वे एटनबरो के वृत्तचित्रों को देखकर अपने-अपने क्षेत्रों में आने के लिए प्रेरित हुए।
- And they may have gone on to ask the questions that he never did.
और संभव है कि उन्होंने आगे चलकर वे प्रश्न पूछे हों, जिन्हें एटनबरो ने कभी नहीं उठाया।
- However, there is no reason to believe the vast majority of **Attenborough's viewers** were prodded in the same direction.
हालाँकि, यह मानने का कोई ठोस कारण नहीं है कि एटनबरो के अधिकांश दर्शकों को भी उसी दिशा में प्रेरित किया गया।

GS Paper III: Disaster Management		08 May 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
08M	How does Kerala plan to tackle oil spill hazards? केरल तेल रिसाव संबंधी खतरों से निपटने की योजना कैसे बना रहा है?	



How does Kerala plan to tackle oil spill hazards?

What prompted the drafting of the Oil Spill Contingency Plan? How will it help protect Kerala's coastline?

SS III: Disaster Management
G. Krishnakumar

The story so far:

Kerala had witnessed two shipwrecks off its coast involving two separate vessels - MSC Elsa 3 and MV Wan Hai 503 - on May 25, 2025 and June 9, 2025 respectively. The incidents had raised a serious threat to the State's marine ecosystem and coastal environment. The container ship MSC Elsa 3 went down with 640 containers, including 13 with hazardous cargo and 12 with calcium carbide. A large quantity of pellets, also called nurdles, had washed ashore on the southern coast following the incident. It prompted the authorities to step up efforts to formulate an Oil Spill Contingency Plan (OSCP). The Kerala State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB), which was entrusted by the government to initiate the required measures, had

awarded the work to a Bangalore-based firm. The agency submitted a report dated April 20, 2026 before the National Green Tribunal stating that the draft OSCP is ready.

Kerala has a coastal line of 590 km, and the entire coast is prone to oil spill disasters as one of the international oil transportation routes is adjacent to the State's coastal line. As per the terms of reference for preparing the OSCP, oil tankers and other ships visiting ports in the State pose a risk to the coastline areas, when they are involved in accidents. The proposal to prepare an OSCP was initiated in 2016 as part of a governmental review of the preparedness of major accident hazard units to handle chemical accidents. However, it got delayed due to various technical and financial hurdles. The scope of work included marine oil spills that occur within 12 nautical miles (24 km) of Kerala's coastline and riverine

systems extending 40 km inland or till tidal effect is evident, whichever is greater.

What are the highlights of the OSCP?

It includes mapping of the Environmental Sensitivity Index of oil spills along the coast of Kerala and preparing response-focused contingency plans. The framework will elaborate on the oil spill contingency planning guidelines, wildlife response plans, ship board pollution emergency plans and tactical oil spill booming/site response plans. It will also include guidelines for crisis management and marine emergency response plans. The OSCP will highlight mitigation measures to be initiated in the wake of an emergency, the responsibilities of various departments, oil spill risks and protection priorities, shoreline response operations, and administrative action for clean-up. It will

identify areas involving operation of fishing boats and ships, and map environmentally vulnerable areas along the State's coast.

The OSCP will recommend a detailed response plan with chain of command, duties and responsibilities. It will have the contact details, list of all available resources to be pressed into service in an emergency, and the database of available machinery or equipment for clean-up operations. The Plan will highlight the steps to be taken before initiating the shoreline clean-up, including assessment of shoreline oil characteristics, on-site conditions, methods to be adopted and the scope of work required in each area as per the priorities. The KSPCB has stated that the OSCP will be prepared in accordance with the guidelines of the National Oil Disaster Contingency Plan (NOS-DCP) of 2015, 2018 and 2024.

What steps precede the final OSCP?

As per the KSPCB, the draft OSCP includes various aspects related to hydrodynamic, oil spill modelling, marine sensitivity index mapping and net environmental benefit analysis. It will be vetted by a committee of experts. The draft Plan will be submitted to the Indian Coast Guard - the central coordinating agency for combating oil pollution in the coastal and marine environment. The final OSCP will be published after receiving the required clearances.

THE GIST

Kerala had witnessed two shipwrecks off its coast last year, raising serious threats to the State's marine ecosystem and coastal environment. It prompted the authorities to step up efforts to formulate an Oil Spill Contingency Plan.

The framework will elaborate on the oil spill contingency planning guidelines, wildlife response plans, ship board pollution emergency plans and tactical oil spill booming/site response plans.

08M. How does Kerala plan to tackle oil spill hazards?

केरल तेल रिसाव संबंधी खतरों से निपटने की योजना कैसे बना रहा है?

- What prompted the drafting of the **Oil Spill Contingency Plan**?
ऑयल स्पिल कंटिजेंसी प्लान के निर्माण की आवश्यकता क्यों पड़ी?
- How will it help protect **Kerala's coastline**?
यह केरल के समुद्री तट की सुरक्षा में किस प्रकार सहायता करेगा?
- **Kerala had witnessed two shipwrecks off its coast involving two separate vessels - MSC Elsa 3 and MV Wan Hai 503 - on May 25, 2025 and June 9, 2025** respectively.
केरल ने अपने तट के निकट दो अलग-अलग जहाजों - **MSC Elsa 3** और **MV Wan Hai 503** - के जहाज दुर्घटनाओं को क्रमशः **25 मई 2025** और **9 जून 2025** को देखा।
- The incidents had raised a serious threat to the State's **marine ecosystem and coastal environment**.
इन घटनाओं ने राज्य के **समुद्री पारितंत्र और तटीय पर्यावरण** के लिए गंभीर खतरा उत्पन्न कर दिया।
- The **container ship MSC Elsa 3 went down with 640 containers, including 13 with hazardous cargo and 12 with calcium carbide**.
कंटेनर जहाज **MSC Elsa 3** के साथ **640 कंटेनर** समुद्र में डूब गए, जिनमें **13 खतरनाक सामग्री वाले कंटेनर** तथा **12 कैल्शियम कार्बाइड** वाले कंटेनर शामिल थे।
- A large quantity of **pellets**, also called **nurdles**, had washed ashore on the southern coast following the incident.
इस घटना के बाद बड़ी मात्रा में **पैलेट्स**, जिन्हें **नर्डल्स** भी कहा जाता है, दक्षिणी तट पर बहकर आ गए।
- It prompted the authorities to step up efforts to formulate an **Oil Spill Contingency Plan (OSCP)**.
इसने अधिकारियों को **ऑयल स्पिल कंटिजेंसी प्लान (OSCP)** तैयार करने के प्रयास तेज़ करने के लिए प्रेरित किया।
- The **Kerala State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB)**, which was entrusted by the government to initiate the required measures, had awarded the work to a **Bangalore-based firm**.
आवश्यक कदम उठाने की जिम्मेदारी प्राप्त **केरल राज्य प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड (KSPCB)** ने यह कार्य एक **बंगलुरु स्थित कंपनी** को सौंपा था।
- The agency submitted a report dated **April 20, 2026** before the **National Green Tribunal** stating that the draft **OSCP** is ready.



उस एजेंसी ने 20 अप्रैल 2026 की एक रिपोर्ट राष्ट्रीय हरित अधिकरण के समक्ष प्रस्तुत करते हुए कहा कि OSCP का प्रारूप तैयार हो चुका है।

- **Kerala has a coastline of 590 km**, and the entire coast is prone to **oil spill disasters** as one of the international oil transportation routes is adjacent to the State's coastal line.
केरल की 590 किलोमीटर लंबी तटरेखा है, और पूरा तटीय क्षेत्र तेल रिसाव आपदाओं के प्रति संवेदनशील है, क्योंकि अंतरराष्ट्रीय तेल परिवहन मार्गों में से एक राज्य की तटरेखा के समीप स्थित है।
- As per the **terms of reference** for preparing the OSCP, oil tankers and other ships visiting ports in the State pose a risk to the coastline areas when they are involved in accidents.
OSCP तैयार करने के लिए निर्धारित कार्य-क्षेत्र (Terms of Reference) के अनुसार, राज्य के बंदरगाहों पर आने वाले तेल टैंकर और अन्य जहाज़ दुर्घटनाओं की स्थिति में तटीय क्षेत्रों के लिए खतरा उत्पन्न करते हैं।
- The proposal to prepare an OSCP was initiated in 2016 as part of a governmental review of the preparedness of **major accident hazard units** to handle **chemical accidents**.
OSCP तैयार करने का प्रस्ताव वर्ष 2016 में रासायनिक दुर्घटनाओं से निपटने हेतु प्रमुख दुर्घटना जोखिम इकाइयों की तैयारी की सरकारी समीक्षा के हिस्से के रूप में प्रारंभ किया गया था।
- However, it got delayed due to various **technical** and **financial hurdles**.
हालाँकि, यह विभिन्न तकनीकी और वित्तीय बाधाओं के कारण विलंबित हो गया।
- The scope of work included **marine oil spills** that occur within **12 nautical miles (24 km)** of Kerala's coastline and **riverine systems** extending **40 km inland** or till **tidal effect** is evident, whichever is greater.
कार्य-क्षेत्र में समुद्री तेल रिसाव की वे घटनाएँ शामिल थीं, जो केरल की तटरेखा से 12 समुद्री मील (24 किमी) के भीतर घटित होती हैं, तथा वे नदी तंत्र जो 40 किमी अंदरूनी क्षेत्र तक या जहाँ तक ज्वारीय प्रभाव स्पष्ट रूप से दिखाई देता है, उनमें से जो अधिक हो, तक विस्तारित हैं।

What are the highlights of the OSCP?

ओएससीपी की प्रमुख विशेषताएँ क्या हैं?

- It includes mapping the **Environmental Sensitive Index of oil spills** along the coast of Kerala and preparing **response-focussed contingency plans**.
इसमें केरल के समुद्री तट के साथ तेल रिसावों के पर्यावरणीय संवेदनशीलता सूचकांक का मानचित्रण तथा प्रतिक्रिया-केंद्रित आकस्मिक योजनाओं की तैयारी शामिल है।
- The framework will elaborate on the **oil spill contingency planning guidelines, wildlife response plans, ship board pollution emergency plans and tactical oil spill booming/site response plans**.
यह रूपरेखा तेल रिसाव आकस्मिक योजना दिशानिर्देशों, वन्यजीव प्रतिक्रिया योजनाओं, जहाज़-आधारित प्रदूषण आपातकालीन योजनाओं तथा रणनीतिक तेल रिसाव अवरोधन/स्थल प्रतिक्रिया योजनाओं का विस्तृत विवरण प्रस्तुत करेगी।
- It will also include **guidelines for crisis management and marine emergency response plans**.
इसमें संकट प्रबंधन तथा समुद्री आपातकालीन प्रतिक्रिया योजनाओं के लिए दिशानिर्देश भी शामिल होंगे।
- The OSCP will highlight **mitigation measures** to be initiated in the wake of an emergency, the responsibilities of various departments, oil spill risks and protection priorities, shoreline response operations, and administrative action for clean-up.
ओएससीपी आपातकाल की स्थिति में प्रारंभ किए जाने वाले शमन उपायों, विभिन्न विभागों की जिम्मेदारियों, तेल रिसाव के जोखिमों और संरक्षण प्राथमिकताओं, तटीय प्रतिक्रिया अभियानों तथा सफाई हेतु प्रशासनिक कार्रवाइयों को रेखांकित करेगा।
- It will identify areas involving operation of **fishing boats** and ships, and map environmentally vulnerable areas along the State's coast.
यह मछली पकड़ने वाली नौकाओं और जहाज़ों के संचालन वाले क्षेत्रों की पहचान करेगा तथा राज्य के तटवर्ती पर्यावरणीय रूप से संवेदनशील क्षेत्रों का मानचित्रण करेगा।



- The **OSCP** will recommend a detailed **response plan** with **chain of command**, duties and responsibilities.
ओएससीपी आदेश श्रृंखला, कर्तव्यों और जिम्मेदारियों सहित एक विस्तृत प्रतिक्रिया योजना की अनुशंसा करेगा।
- It will have the contact details, list of all available resources to be pressed into service in an emergency, and the database of available machinery or equipment for clean-up operations.
इसमें संपर्क विवरण, आपात स्थिति में उपयोग हेतु उपलब्ध सभी संसाधनों की सूची तथा सफाई अभियानों के लिए उपलब्ध मशीनरी और उपकरणों का डेटाबेस सम्मिलित होगा।
- The Plan will highlight the steps to be taken before initiating the **shoreline clean-up**, including assessment of shoreline oil characteristics, on-site conditions, methods to be adopted and the scope of work required in each area as per the priorities.
यह योजना तटीय सफाई अभियान प्रारंभ करने से पूर्व उठाए जाने वाले कदमों को रेखांकित करेगी, जिनमें तट पर तेल की विशेषताओं का आकलन, स्थल की परिस्थितियाँ, अपनाई जाने वाली विधियाँ तथा प्राथमिकताओं के अनुसार प्रत्येक क्षेत्र में आवश्यक कार्य का दायरा शामिल होगा।
- The **KSPCB** has stated that the **OSCP** will be prepared in accordance with the guidelines of the **National Oil Disaster Contingency Plan (NOS-DCP) of 2015, 2018 and 2024**.
केएसपीसीबी ने कहा है कि ओएससीपी को राष्ट्रीय तेल आपदा आकस्मिक योजना (NOS-DCP) के 2015, 2018 और 2024 के दिशानिर्देशों के अनुरूप तैयार किया जाएगा।

What steps precede the final OSCP?

अंतिम OSCP से पहले कौन-कौन से चरण होते हैं?

- As per the **KSPCB**, the draft **OSCP** includes various aspects related to **hydrodynamic, oil spill modelling, marine sensitivity index mapping and net environmental benefit analysis**.
KSPCB के अनुसार, प्रारूप OSCP में हाइड्रोडायनामिक, तेल रिसाव मॉडलिंग, समुद्री संवेदनशीलता सूचकांक मानचित्रण तथा शुद्ध पर्यावरणीय लाभ विश्लेषण से संबंधित विभिन्न पहलुओं को शामिल किया गया है।
- It will be vetted by a committee of **experts**.
इसकी जाँच विशेषज्ञों की एक समिति द्वारा की जाएगी।
- The draft Plan will be submitted to the **Indian Coast Guard** — the central coordinating agency for combating **oil pollution** in the coastal and marine environment.
प्रारूप योजना को भारतीय तटरक्षक बल को प्रस्तुत किया जाएगा, जो तटीय और समुद्री पर्यावरण में तेल प्रदूषण से निपटने हेतु केंद्रीय समन्वय एजेंसी है।
- The final **OSCP** will be published after receiving the required **clearances**.
आवश्यक अनुमतियाँ प्राप्त होने के बाद अंतिम OSCP प्रकाशित किया जाएगा।

GS Paper III: Internal Security		08 May 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
08M	Suspected mastermind arrested in fake firms and hawala racket नकली फर्म और हवाला रैकेट में संदिग्ध मास्टरमाइंड गिरफ्तार	



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

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Suspected mastermind arrested in fake firms and hawala racket

GS III: Internal Security

3,200 in ₹ crore. The Uttar Pradesh Police

arrested a man accused of masterminding a network of fake firms, forged documents and suspected 'hawala' transactions worth more than ₹ 3,200 crore, with investigators probing links to GST fraud and possible terror funding. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

08M. Suspected mastermind arrested in fake firms and hawala racket

नकली फर्म और हवाला रैकेट में संदिग्ध मास्टरमाइंड गिरफ्तार

- 3,200 in ₹ crore.

₹ 3,200 करोड़।

• The **Uttar Pradesh Police** arrested a man accused of masterminding a network of **fake firms**, forged documents and suspected '**hawala**' transactions worth more than ₹ 3,200 crore, with investigators probing links to **GST fraud** and possible **terror funding**.

उत्तर प्रदेश पुलिस ने एक व्यक्ति को गिरफ्तार किया है जिस पर नकली फर्मों, जाली दस्तावेजों और संदिग्ध 'हवाला' लेनदेन के नेटवर्क का मास्टरमाइंड होने का आरोप है, जिसकी कीमत ₹ 3,200 करोड़ से अधिक

बताई जा रही है, और जांचकर्ता GST धोखाधड़ी तथा संभावित आतंक वित्तपोषण से संबंधों की जांच कर रहे हैं।

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