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# PATRIOTIC IAS

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

### THE HINDU NEWSPAPER

## 12 MAY 2026

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## Baskets were in use 10,000 years ago

GS I: History: AH

Bhim Betka (Ujjain), May 11: The mesolithic man who lived in this prehistoric site (near Bhopal) some 10,000 years ago, knew the use of baskets.

Baskets were used to carry fruits, hunted animals and tiny pigs. They were also used to carry children from one place to another.

Paintings showing the use of baskets and other artifacts and tools were found in recent excavations by archaeologists of the Vikram University.

Dr. V.S. Wakankar, who is in charge of the excavations, said money collection was popular during the mesolithic period. People moving from one site to another carrying their bags over the backs and heads had also been seen in the paintings. He said the mesolithic people after coming in contact with the agricultural chalcolithic communities (3,000 to 5,000 years ago) on the plains of Malwa appeared to have lost their art of active and dynamic paintings and their style showed a static emergence influenced by the chalcolithic pottery drawings.

Cave art of the upper palaeolithic age has also been found in about 300 caves and shelters explored in the rocky terrain.

At least 1,300 such shelters have so far been explored in this region.

## 12M. Baskets were in use 10,000 years ago 10,000 वर्ष पहले टोकरियों का उपयोग होता था

• **Bhim Betka (Ujjain), May 11:** The mesolithic man who lived in this prehistoric site (near Bhopal) some 10,000 years ago, knew the use of baskets.

**भीम बेटका (उज्जैन), 11 मई:** लगभग 10,000 वर्ष पहले इस प्रागैतिहासिक स्थल (भोपाल के निकट) में रहने वाला मध्यपाषाण कालीन मानव टोकरियों के उपयोग को जानता था।

• Baskets were used to carry fruits, hunted animals and tiny pigs.

टोकरियों का उपयोग फल, शिकार किए गए जानवरों और छोटे सूअरों को ढोने के लिए किया जाता था।

• They were also used to carry children from one place to another.

इनका उपयोग बच्चों को एक स्थान से दूसरे स्थान तक ले जाने के लिए भी किया जाता था।

• Paintings showing the use of baskets and other artifacts and tools were found in recent excavations by archaeologists of the **Vikram University**.

**विक्रम विश्वविद्यालय** के पुरातत्वविदों द्वारा हाल की खुदाई में टोकरियों तथा अन्य कलाकृतियों और उपकरणों के उपयोग को दर्शाने वाली चित्रकृतियाँ मिली हैं।

• Dr. **V.S. Wakankar**, who is in charge of the excavations, said money collection was popular during the mesolithic period.

खुदाई के प्रभारी डॉ. **वी.एस. वाकणकर** ने कहा कि मध्यपाषाण काल में धन संग्रह लोकप्रिय था।

• People moving from one site to another carrying their bags over the backs and heads had also been seen in the paintings.

चित्रों में लोगों को अपनी पीठ और सिर पर थैले लेकर एक स्थान से दूसरे स्थान तक जाते हुए भी दिखाया गया है।

• He said the **mesolithic people after coming in contact with the agricultural chalcolithic communities (3,000 to 5,000 years ago) on the plains of Malwa** appeared to have lost their art of active and dynamic paintings and their style showed a static emergence influenced by the **chalcolithic pottery drawings**.

उन्होंने कहा कि **मालवा** के मैदानों में कृषि आधारित ताम्रपाषाण समुदायों (3,000 से 5,000 वर्ष पहले) के संपर्क में आने के बाद मध्यपाषाण कालीन लोगों ने सक्रिय और गतिशील चित्रकला की अपनी कला खो दी प्रतीत होती है और उनकी शैली में ताम्रपाषाणकालीन मिट्टी के बर्तनों की चित्रकारी से प्रभावित स्थिरता दिखाई देती है।

• **Cave art of the upper palaeolithic age has also been found in about 300 caves and shelters explored in the rocky terrain.**

ऊपरी पुरापाषाण काल की गुफा कला भी चट्टानी क्षेत्र में खोजी गई लगभग 300 गुफाओं और आश्रयों में पाई गई है।

• **At least 1,300 such shelters have so far been explored in this region.**

अब तक इस क्षेत्र में कम से कम 1,300 ऐसे आश्रयों की खोज की जा चुकी है।



## Anglo-Indians and the elections

GS I: History

Calcutta, May 11: A mass meeting of the Anglo-Indians and Domiciled Europeans was held this evening at the Y.M.C.A (Wellington Branch) under the presidency of Col. Gidney.

The speakers dwelt on the necessity of Anglo-Indians asserting their right to vote and urged upon the members of the Community to see that their names were entered on the electoral roll for returning members of their community to the Provincial Council and the Assembly. Col. Gidney said that the time had come when women would have to throw aside their exclusiveness and come and compete with them in the open battle of election. He hoped that in the coming elections they would have one woman member returned to the Council. He then spoke at length on the status of the Anglo-Indian community.

## 12M. Anglo-Indians and the elections एंग्लो-इंडियन्स और चुनाव

• **Calcutta, May 11:** A mass meeting of the Anglo-Indians and Domiciled Europeans was held this evening at the Y.M.C.A (Wellington Branch) under the presidency of Col. Gidney.

कलकत्ता, 11 मई: आज शाम कर्नल गिडनी की अध्यक्षता में वाई.एम.सी.ए (वेलिंगटन शाखा) में एंग्लो-इंडियन्स और अधिवासित यूरोपियनों की एक विशाल सभा आयोजित की गई।

• The speakers dwelt on the necessity of Anglo-Indians asserting their right to vote and urged upon the members of the Community to see that their names were entered on the electoral roll for returning members of their community to the Provincial Council and the Assembly.

वक्ताओं ने एंग्लो-इंडियन्स द्वारा अपने मतदान अधिकार को स्थापित करने की आवश्यकता पर जोर दिया और समुदाय के सदस्यों से आग्रह किया कि वे यह सुनिश्चित करें कि उनके नाम प्रांतीय परिषद और विधानसभा में अपने समुदाय के

प्रतिनिधियों को चुनने हेतु मतदाता सूची में दर्ज हों।

- The term **Anglo-Indian** generally referred to people of mixed Indian and European ancestry, especially British ancestry.
- An Anglo-Indian person usually had: A British or European father and an Indian mother, or Mixed European and Indian family background over generations.
- The term **Domiciled Europeans** referred to Europeans who had permanently settled in India and made India their home.
- These were “full Europeans” living permanently in India rather than temporary British officers returning to England after service.

## France woos Anglophone Africa with its ‘partnership of equals’ pitch

GS I: History: WH  
Associated Press  
NAIROBI

France is pitching what it says is a new model of partnership with African countries at a summit that begins on Monday in Kenya as it completes a military withdrawal from West African countries that has been widely seen as marking declining influence on the continent.

But Paris is expected to use the two-day Africa Forward Summit, which it is co-hosting, to push a new Africa policy that focuses more on English-speaking countries and offers what it calls a “partnership of equals”.

Its new defence agreement with Kenya marks



French President Emmanuel Macron and Kenyan President William Ruto arrive for the Africa Forward Summit in Nairobi on Monday. AFP

the direction it hopes to go.

France has long maintained a policy of economic, political, and military sway over its former colonies dubbed *Françafrique*, which included keeping thousands of troops in the region. But after years of

criticism from leaders and opposition parties in those countries over what they described as a demeaning and heavy-handed approach, France has been forced to withdraw most of those troops.

The summit will be at-

tended by more than 30 heads of state and government, including from Francophone countries. On his arrival on Sunday, French President Emmanuel Macron said France may disagree with West African governments but “never disagrees with the people”.

### Row over defence pact

Kenya’s newly ratified defence agreement with France has been criticised by civil society groups for granting too much immunity local law to French troops, a sensitive issue in a country where a similar agreement with the United Kingdom has left a trail of hard-to-prosecute crimes against locals.



## 12M. France woos Anglophone Africa with its 'partnership of equals' pitch फ्रांस 'समान साझेदारी' के प्रस्ताव के साथ अंग्रेजीभाषी अफ्रीका को लुभा रहा है

- France** is pitching what it says is a new model of partnership with African countries at a summit that begins on Monday in **Kenya**.  
फ्रांस सोमवार से केन्या में शुरू हो रहे एक शिखर सम्मेलन में अफ्रीकी देशों के साथ साझेदारी के एक नए मॉडल को प्रस्तुत कर रहा है।
- It is completing a military withdrawal from West African countries that has been widely seen as marking declining influence on the continent.  
यह पश्चिम अफ्रीकी देशों से अपनी सैन्य वापसी पूरी कर रहा है, जिसे महाद्वीप पर उसके घटते प्रभाव के संकेत के रूप में देखा जा रहा है।
- But **Paris** is expected to use the two-day **Africa Forward Summit**, which it is co-hosting, to push a new Africa policy that focuses more on English-speaking countries and offers what it calls a "partnership of equals".  
लेकिन **पेरिस** से उम्मीद है कि वह सह-मेजबानी वाले दो दिवसीय **अफ्रीका फॉरवर्ड समिट** का उपयोग नई अफ्रीका नीति को आगे बढ़ाने के लिए करेगा, जो अंग्रेजीभाषी देशों पर अधिक ध्यान केंद्रित करती है और जिसे वह "समान साझेदारी" कहता है।
- Its new defence agreement with **Kenya** marks the direction it hopes to go.  
केन्या के साथ उसका नया रक्षा समझौता उस दिशा को दर्शाता है जिसमें वह आगे बढ़ना चाहता है।
- France** has long maintained a policy of economic, political, and military sway over its former colonies dubbed **Françafrique**.  
फ्रांस लंबे समय से अपनी पूर्व उपनिवेशों पर आर्थिक, राजनीतिक और सैन्य प्रभाव बनाए रखने की नीति अपनाए हुए है, जिसे **फ्रांसाफ्रीक** कहा जाता है।
- This included keeping thousands of troops in the region.  
इसमें क्षेत्र में हजारों सैनिकों को बनाए रखना भी शामिल था।
- But after years of criticism from leaders and opposition parties in those countries over what they described as a demeaning and heavy-handed approach, **France** has been forced to withdraw most of those troops.  
लेकिन उन देशों के नेताओं और विपक्षी दलों द्वारा अपमानजनक और कठोर रवैये के रूप में वर्णित नीति की वर्षों तक आलोचना के बाद फ्रांस को अधिकांश सैनिक वापस बुलाने पड़े।
- The summit will be attended by more than 30 heads of state and government, including from **Francophone countries**.  
इस शिखर सम्मेलन में फ्रांसीसी भाषी देशों सहित 30 से अधिक राष्ट्राध्यक्ष और सरकार प्रमुख भाग लेंगे।
- Kenya's** newly ratified defence agreement with **France** has been criticised by civil society groups for granting too much immunity under local law to French troops.  
केन्या के हाल ही में अनुमोदित रक्षा समझौते की नागरिक समाज समूहों ने आलोचना की है क्योंकि यह स्थानीय कानून के तहत फ्रांसीसी सैनिकों को बहुत अधिक छूट प्रदान करता है।
- This is a sensitive issue in a country where a similar agreement with the **United Kingdom** has left a trail of hard-to-prosecute crimes against locals.  
यह ऐसे देश में एक संवेदनशील मुद्दा है जहां **यूनाइटेड किंगडम** के साथ इसी तरह के समझौते के कारण स्थानीय लोगों के खिलाफ अपराधों के मामलों में अभियोजन चलाना कठिन हो गया है।



<b>GS Paper II: Polity</b>		<b>12 May 2026</b>
<b>TOPICS COVERED</b>		
<b>12M</b>	<b>Govt. to see if schools teaching religion are charitable bodies: SC</b>	<b>धर्म की शिक्षा देने वाले स्कूल क्या धार्मिक/परोपकारी संस्थाएँ हैं, इस पर सरकार विचार करे: सुप्रीम कोर्ट</b>
<b>12M</b>	<b>SC launches 'One Case One Data' and 'Su Sahay' chatbot</b>	<b>सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने 'वन केस वन डेटा' और 'सु सहाय' चैटबॉट लॉन्च किया</b>

## Govt. to see if schools teaching religion are charitable bodies: SC

**GS II: Polity**

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday left it to the government to consider whether schools which impart religious instruction should be brought within the ambit of constitutional provisions dealing with charitable or religious establishments, rather than being recognised as 'secular or professional' educational institutions.

A Bench headed by Justice Dipankar Datta said the issue was within the domain of the Ministry of Education, and the court need not intervene for now.

The petition filed by petitioner-advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay sought a direction to declare that "any institution which imparts religious instructions to promote any religion is covered under Article 26(a) and not under Articles 19(1)(g) or Article 30(1) of the Constitution".

Article 26(a) is one of the 'freedom-of-religion' rights. It says that a religious denomination or 'any section thereof' would have the right to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes. This, if done, would mean that schools imparting religious instruction would be subject to the restrictions of public order, health and morality.

### School curriculum

The petition has argued that schools which impart religious instructions must not come under the right to profession or occupation enshrined in Article 19(1)(g), nor should they be brought within the ambit of the right given to minority communities to establish and administer "educational institutions".

The petition has clearly sought a dichotomy based on whether or not religious instruction was part of a school's curriculum. It is not clear where schools imparting both secular and religious education, latter



The court said the issue was within the domain of the Ministry of Education.

being left to the choice of the students, would fit.

Article 30(1) allows minority religious communities to establish educational institutions which impart secular and religious education. The Article reads as, "All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice".

The petition said the court must declare that 'educational institutions of their choice' in Article 30(1) should be interpreted as 'secular/professional educational institutions of their choice'.

### Monitoring mechanism

Mr. Upadhyay said the Centre must have a mechanism to "register, recognise, supervise and monitor institutions imparting education to children up to 14 years". "This is an issue of national security as young kids form the future of the nation, and can be brainwashed/manipulated in unregistered institutions," the petition said.

It also raised doubts if the quality of education could be ensured by unregistered and unrecognised institutions.

"The safety and security of children is paramount. It is the State's onus to prevent trafficking of children by unregistered and unrecognised institutions at the threshold," the petition said.

## 12M. Govt. to see if schools teaching religion are charitable bodies: SC

**धर्म की शिक्षा देने वाले स्कूल क्या धार्मिक/परोपकारी संस्थाएँ हैं, इस पर सरकार विचार करे: सुप्रीम कोर्ट**

- The **Supreme Court** on Monday left it to the government to consider whether schools which impart religious instruction should be brought within the ambit of constitutional provisions dealing with charitable or religious establishments, rather than being recognised as 'secular or professional' educational institutions.

**सुप्रीम कोर्ट** ने सोमवार को यह निर्णय सरकार पर छोड़ दिया कि धार्मिक शिक्षा देने वाले स्कूलों को 'धर्मनिरपेक्ष या पेशेवर' शैक्षणिक संस्थानों के बजाय परोपकारी या धार्मिक संस्थाओं से संबंधित संवैधानिक प्रावधानों के दायरे में लाया जाना चाहिए या नहीं।

- A Bench headed by Justice **Dipankar Datta** said the issue was within the domain of the **Ministry of Education**, and the court need not intervene for now.

न्यायमूर्ति दीपांकर दत्ता की अध्यक्षता वाली पीठ ने कहा कि यह मुद्दा शिक्षा मंत्रालय के अधिकार क्षेत्र में आता है और फिलहाल अदालत को हस्तक्षेप करने की आवश्यकता नहीं है।

- The petition filed by petitioner-advocate **Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay** sought a direction to declare that "any institution which imparts religious instructions to promote any religion is covered under **Article 26(a)** and not under **Articles 19(1)(g)** or **Article 30(1)** of the Constitution".

याचिकाकर्ता-अधिवक्ता **अश्विनी कुमार उपाध्याय** द्वारा दायर याचिका में निर्देश देने की मांग की गई कि "कोई भी संस्था जो किसी धर्म को बढ़ावा देने के लिए धार्मिक शिक्षा देती है, वह **अनुच्छेद 26(a)** के अंतर्गत आएगी, न कि **अनुच्छेद 19(1)(g)** या **अनुच्छेद 30(1)** के अंतर्गत।"

- Article 26(a)** is one of the 'freedom-of-religion' rights.

**अनुच्छेद 26(a)** 'धर्म की स्वतंत्रता' से जुड़े अधिकारों में से एक है।

- It says that a religious denomination or 'any section thereof' would have the right to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes.

इसमें कहा गया है कि कोई धार्मिक संप्रदाय या उसका कोई वर्ग धार्मिक और परोपकारी उद्देश्यों के लिए संस्थाएँ स्थापित और संचालित करने का अधिकार रखेगा।

- This, if done, would mean that schools imparting religious instruction



would be subject to the restrictions of public order, health and morality.

यदि ऐसा किया जाता है, तो इसका अर्थ होगा कि धार्मिक शिक्षा देने वाले स्कूल सार्वजनिक व्यवस्था, स्वास्थ्य और नैतिकता से संबंधित प्रतिबंधों के अधीन होंगे।

## School curriculum

### स्कूल पाठ्यक्रम

- The petition has argued that **schools which impart religious instructions must not come under the right to profession or occupation enshrined in Article 19(1)(g), nor should they be brought within the ambit of the right given to minority communities to establish and administer “educational institutions”.**

याचिका में तर्क दिया गया है that धार्मिक शिक्षा देने वाले स्कूलों को अनुच्छेद 19(1)(g) में निहित पेशा या व्यवसाय के अधिकार के अंतर्गत नहीं लाया जाना चाहिए और न ही उन्हें अल्पसंख्यक समुदायों को “शैक्षणिक संस्थान” स्थापित और संचालित करने के लिए दिए गए अधिकार के दायरे में रखा जाना चाहिए।

- The petition has clearly sought a dichotomy based on whether or not religious instruction was part of a school’s curriculum.

याचिका में स्पष्ट रूप से यह विभाजन करने की मांग की गई है कि क्या धार्मिक शिक्षा किसी स्कूल के पाठ्यक्रम का हिस्सा है या नहीं।

- It is not clear where schools imparting both secular and religious education, latter being left to the choice of the students, would fit.

यह स्पष्ट नहीं है कि वे स्कूल, जो धर्मनिरपेक्ष और धार्मिक दोनों प्रकार की शिक्षा देते हैं तथा धार्मिक शिक्षा छात्रों की पसंद पर छोड़ते हैं, इस व्यवस्था में कहाँ आएंगे।

- **Article 30(1) allows minority religious communities to establish educational institutions which impart secular and religious education.**

अनुच्छेद 30(1) अल्पसंख्यक धार्मिक समुदायों को ऐसे शैक्षणिक संस्थान स्थापित करने की अनुमति देता है जो धर्मनिरपेक्ष और धार्मिक दोनों प्रकार की शिक्षा प्रदान करते हैं।

- The Article reads as, “All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice”.

इस अनुच्छेद में कहा गया है, “सभी अल्पसंख्यकों को, चाहे वे धर्म या भाषा पर आधारित हों, अपनी पसंद के शैक्षणिक संस्थान स्थापित और संचालित करने का अधिकार होगा।”

- The petition said the court must declare that ‘educational institutions of their choice’ in **Article 30(1) should be interpreted as ‘secular/professional educational institutions of their choice’ and not ‘religious educational institutions of their choice’.**

याचिका में कहा गया कि अदालत को घोषित करना चाहिए कि अनुच्छेद 30(1) में ‘अपनी पसंद के शैक्षणिक संस्थान’ का अर्थ ‘अपनी पसंद के धर्मनिरपेक्ष/पेशेवर शैक्षणिक संस्थान’ होना चाहिए, न कि ‘अपनी पसंद के धार्मिक शैक्षणिक संस्थान’।

## Monitoring mechanism

### निगरानी तंत्र

- Mr. **Upadhyay** said the Centre must have a mechanism to “register, recognise, supervise and monitor institutions imparting education to children up to 14 years”.

श्री उपाध्याय ने कहा कि केंद्र के पास 14 वर्ष तक के बच्चों को शिक्षा देने वाली संस्थाओं को “पंजीकृत, मान्यता प्राप्त, पर्यवेक्षित और निगरानी” करने का तंत्र होना चाहिए।

- “This is an issue of national security as young kids form the future of the nation, and can be brainwashed/manipulated in unregistered institutions,” the petition said.

याचिका में कहा गया, “यह राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा का मुद्दा है क्योंकि छोटे बच्चे देश का भविष्य हैं और अपंजीकृत संस्थानों में उनका ब्रेनवॉश/दुरुपयोग किया जा सकता है।”



- It also raised doubts if the **quality of education could be ensured by unregistered and unrecognised institutions.**  
इसमें यह भी संदेह जताया गया कि क्या अपंजीकृत और गैर-मान्यता प्राप्त संस्थानों द्वारा शिक्षा की गुणवत्ता सुनिश्चित की जा सकती है।
- “The safety and security of children is paramount.  
“बच्चों की सुरक्षा और संरक्षा सर्वोपरि है।
- It is the State's onus to prevent trafficking of children by unregistered and unrecognised institutions at the threshold,” the petition said.  
याचिका में कहा गया, “अपंजीकृत और गैर-मान्यता प्राप्त संस्थानों द्वारा बच्चों की तस्करी को प्रारंभिक स्तर पर रोकना राज्य की जिम्मेदारी है।”



GS II: Polity

### SC launches 'One Case One Data' and 'Su Sahay' chatbot

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Monday announced in open court the launch of a major digital initiative – “One Case One Data” – to integrate the judicial administration at every level, from the taluk court to the top court, into a unified system. The CJI said the mechanism is aimed at creating a more comprehensive and interconnected digital database across courts. The CJI also announced the launch of ‘Su Sahay’, an artificial intelligence (AI)-powered assistance chatbot integrated with the Supreme Court website to facilitate easier access to justice and court-related services for litigants.

### 12M. SC launches 'One Case One Data' and 'Su Sahay' chatbot

**सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने 'वन केस वन डेटा' और 'सु सहाय' चैटबॉट लॉन्च किया**

- Chief Justice of India **Surya Kant** on Monday announced in open court the launch of a major digital initiative — **“One Case One Data”** — to integrate the judicial administration at every level, from the taluk court to the top court, into a unified system.

भारत के मुख्य न्यायाधीश **सूर्यकांत** ने सोमवार को खुली अदालत में एक बड़े डिजिटल पहल — **“वन केस वन डेटा”** — की शुरुआत की घोषणा की, जिसका उद्देश्य तहसील अदालत से लेकर सर्वोच्च अदालत तक हर स्तर की न्यायिक प्रशासनिक व्यवस्था को एकीकृत प्रणाली में जोड़ना है।

- The CJI said the **mechanism is aimed at creating a more comprehensive and interconnected digital database across courts.**

मुख्य न्यायाधीश ने कहा कि इस व्यवस्था का उद्देश्य अदालतों के बीच

अधिक व्यापक और परस्पर जुड़ा हुआ डिजिटल डाटाबेस तैयार करना है।

- The CJI also announced the launch of **'Su Sahay'**, an **artificial intelligence (AI)-powered assistance chatbot integrated with the Supreme Court website to facilitate easier access to justice and court-related services for litigants.**

मुख्य न्यायाधीश ने **'सु सहाय'** के शुभारंभ की भी घोषणा की, जो **कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता (AI) आधारित सहायता चैटबॉट** है और इसे **सुप्रीम कोर्ट** की वेबसाइट के साथ जोड़ा गया है ताकि वादकारियों को न्याय और अदालत से संबंधित सेवाओं तक आसान पहुंच मिल सके।

<b>GS Paper II: Governance</b>		<b>12 May 2026</b>
<b>TOPICS COVERED</b>		
<b>12M</b>	<b>Military strikes, gang massacres in Nigeria kill around 100 civilians</b> <b>नाइजीरिया में सैन्य हमलों और गिरोहों के नरसंहार में लगभग 100 नागरिकों की मौत</b>	



**ABUJA**

**Military strikes, gang massacres in Nigeria kill around 100 civilians**



GS II: Geography

AP

The Nigerian military and the "bandit" gangs it is fighting killed around 100 civilians on Sunday, sources said. The Nigerian military killed at least 72 people, many of them civilians, in an airstrike in Zamfara. Another air strike killed 13 civilians in Niger. Armed gangs also killed 30 people in a separate attack in Zamfara. AFP

**12M. Military strikes, gang massacres in Nigeria kill around 100 civilians**

नाइजीरिया में सैन्य हमलों और गिरोहों के नरसंहार में लगभग 100 नागरिकों की मौत

• The Nigerian military and the "bandit" gangs it is fighting killed around 100 civilians on Sunday, sources said.

सूत्रों ने कहा कि रविवार को नाइजीरियाई सेना और उससे लड़ रहे "बैंडिट" गिरोहों ने लगभग 100 नागरिकों की हत्या कर दी।

• The Nigerian military killed at least 72 people, many of them civilians, in an airstrike in Zamfara.

नाइजीरियाई सेना ने जमफारा में एक हवाई हमले में कम से कम 72 लोगों को मार डाला, जिनमें कई नागरिक थे।

GS Paper II: International Relations		12 May 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
12M	Ahead of UAE visit, PM to meet Iran FM and BRICS Ministers यूएई यात्रा से पहले, प्रधानमंत्री ईरान के विदेश मंत्री और BRICS मंत्रियों से मिलेंगे	
12M	A new phase in the India-Vietnam strategic partnership भारत-वियतनाम सामरिक साझेदारी का एक नया चरण	
12M	How rumours of 'shrinking genitals' triggered panic, mob attacks in Congo 'सिकुड़ते जननांगों' की अफवाहों ने कांगो में कैसे दहशत और भीड़ हमलों को जन्म दिया	

PATRIOTIC IAS



## Ahead of UAE visit, PM to meet Iran FM and BRICS Ministers

CS II: IR  
Subhasini Haider  
NEW DELHI

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi will travel to New Delhi this week to attend the BRICS Foreign Ministers meeting on May 14-15 and is expected to call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi before the latter's visit to the UAE, diplomatic sources confirmed to *The Hindu*. Mr. Araghchi, who will arrive on Wednesday, is expected to meet the Prime Minister in a joint call-on along with other BRICS Ministers from Brazil, Russia, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Indonesia on Thursday.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi is likely to be in Beijing for the visit of U.S. President Donald Trump set for the same dates. Officials did not confirm whether UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan will travel to Delhi for the BRICS meet or remain in Abu Dhabi to receive Mr. Modi. The flurry of diplomatic meetings at the highest levels indicates India is stepping up its outreach amid the West Asia war, which has had a deep economic impact on the nation and the region.

Mr. Modi's visit to the UAE will come at the start of his six-day five-nation tour to Europe from May 15 to 20. He is expected to visit the Netherlands, Sweden, Italy, and Norway for bilateral visits.

In Oslo, he will attend the Nordic-India Summit including leaders of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, and Norway.

"This visit underlines the importance of cooperation with India, Norway and the Nordic countries in these times of global instability. We stand together in promoting international cooperation and a rules-based world order," Norway's Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre said announcing Mr. Modi's visit, indicating that the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine, Iran, and Gaza are expected to



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi is scheduled to arrive in New Delhi on Wednesday. AP

be discussed during the summit.

The engagements in Delhi and Abu Dhabi will be particularly significant as they come amid a pause in the war in West Asia, and just as the government begins to implement austerity measures on oil and foreign exchange and travel, proposed by Mr. Modi at a public meeting in Hyderabad on Sunday.

### Iran-UAE tensions

Mr. Modi's meeting with Mr. Araghchi, just ahead of his talks with UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed, comes a week after tensions between Iran and the UAE escalated when Iran attacked the Fujairah oil facility with missiles.

India condemned the strikes, while Iran indicated that it was targeting the UAE for its support to the U.S. after U.S.'s warships attacked Iranian naval boats in the Strait of Hormuz.

This is Mr. Araghchi's first visit to India in a year.

In March, a few days after the U.S.-Israel strikes on Iran began, his deputy Saeed Khatibzadeh had visited Delhi and met External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar. Mr. Araghchi and Mr. Jaishankar have spoken over the telephone five times since the conflict began. Of particular concern for India is the continued blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, with 13 Indian ships and 340 seafarers stuck at the strait, and energy, fertilizer and other shipments also held up.

## 12M. Ahead of UAE visit, PM to meet Iran FM and BRICS Ministers

यूएई यात्रा से पहले, प्रधानमंत्री ईरान के विदेश मंत्री और BRICS मंत्रियों से मिलेंगे

• Mr. Modi's visit to the UAE will come at the start of his six-day five-nation tour to Europe from May 15 to 20.

श्री मोदी की यूएई यात्रा 15 से 20 मई तक होने वाले उनके छह दिवसीय पांच देशों के यूरोप दौरे की शुरुआत में होगी।

• He is expected to visit the Netherlands, Sweden, Italy, and Norway for bilateral visits.

उनके नीदरलैंड, स्वीडन, इटली और नॉर्वे की द्विपक्षीय यात्राओं पर जाने की संभावना है।

• In Oslo, he will attend the Nordic-India Summit including leaders of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, and Norway.

ओस्लो में वह नॉर्डिक-इंडिया शिखर सम्मेलन में भाग लेंगे, जिसमें डेनमार्क, फिनलैंड, आइसलैंड, स्वीडन और नॉर्वे के नेता शामिल होंगे।

• "This visit underlines the importance of cooperation with India, Norway and the Nordic countries in these times of global instability.

"यह यात्रा वैश्विक अस्थिरता के इस दौर में भारत, नॉर्वे और नॉर्डिक देशों के साथ सहयोग के महत्व को रेखांकित करती है।

• Mr. Modi's meeting with Mr. Araghchi, just ahead of his talks with UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed, comes a week after tensions between Iran and the UAE escalated when Iran attacked the Fujairah oil facility with missiles.

श्री मोदी की श्री अराघची के साथ बैठक, यूएई राष्ट्रपति मोहम्मद बिन जायद के साथ उनकी वार्ता से ठीक पहले हो रही है, जब एक सप्ताह पहले ईरान और यूएई के बीच तनाव बढ़ गया था क्योंकि ईरान ने मिसाइलों से फुजैराह तेल सुविधा पर हमला किया था।

• India condemned the strikes, while Iran indicated that it was targeting the UAE for its support to the U.S. after U.S.'s warships attacked Iranian naval boats in the Strait of Hormuz.

भारत ने इन हमलों की निंदा की, जबकि ईरान ने संकेत दिया कि वह अमेरिका को समर्थन देने के कारण यूएई को निशाना बना रहा था, जब अमेरिकी युद्धपोतों ने होर्मुज जलडमरूमध्य में ईरानी नौसैनिक नौकाओं पर हमला किया।



# A new phase in the India-Vietnam strategic partnership

CS II IR

The state visit of Vietnamese President Tô Lâm to India last week (May 5-7, 2026) marks a consequential moment in the steady deepening of India-Vietnam ties, reflecting both the maturation of a long-standing partnership amid the sharpening strategic imperatives of the Indo-Pacific. The decision to elevate bilateral relations to an Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, along with a wide range of agreements spanning defence, technology, finance, and energy, signals not merely incremental progress but a qualitative shift in the trajectory of the relationship.

The visit comes at a time of heightened geopolitical flux in the Indo-Pacific as Vietnam finds itself navigating an increasingly assertive China in the South China Sea, while India continues to consolidate its Act East policy into a more security-oriented Indo-Pacific strategy. The convergence of threat perceptions, particularly regarding maritime coercion, supply chain vulnerabilities, and strategic autonomy, has provided a durable foundation for bilateral engagement. Indeed, the evolution of India-Vietnam ties has been gradual but structurally consistent, with India's erstwhile Look East (now Act East) policy providing the initial impetus and the elevation to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2016 enabling institutionalised defence and security cooperation. Since then, regular high-level exchanges, defence dialogues, and capacity-building initiatives have deepened trust.

## The pillar of defence cooperation

Defence cooperation, in particular, has emerged as the backbone of the partnership. In addition to symbolic actions such as the transfer of the missile corvette, *INS Kirpan* (in 2023), India has offered Vietnam finance lines, training assistance, and maritime cooperation structures. The



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Indo-Pacific dynamics are reshaping the India-Vietnam bilateral relationship

current debates around the possible shipment of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles demonstrate a change in the deterrence calculation in the South China Sea from capacity-building to capability enhancement.

Similarly, economic ties, while less prominent historically, are now acquiring greater salience. Bilateral trade has crossed \$16 billion, with an ambitious target of \$25 billion by 2030, underscoring the recognition of untapped potential. A move toward next-generation economic participation is shown in the focus on supply chain resilience, rare earth collaboration, and digital payment integration. Moreover, Vietnam's position as an Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) manufacturing powerhouse makes it an essential partner for India's diversification plans, especially in terms of scaling back reliance on supply chains that are mostly focused on China.

## The regional impact

This deepening partnership has important regional ramifications. First, the relationship between India and Vietnam forms an important component of multilateral balancing in the Indo-Pacific.

Together with Japan, Australia, and the United States, both nations contribute to a wider network of strategic alliances that fight to maintain a rules-based maritime order, even if they are not legally included in U.S.-led alliance structures. A common normative framework intended to combat unilateralism in the South China Sea is shown in the explicit focus of joint statements on the "rule of law, peace, and stability".

Second, the partnership underscores the growing centrality of ASEAN in India's Indo-Pacific vision. Vietnam, as one of ASEAN's more geopolitically assertive and strategically

consequential members, serves as a linchpin for India's deeper engagement with Southeast Asia. At the same time, Hanoi's own foreign policy, characterised by diversification and strategic hedging, finds a natural complement in India's multipronged partnership approach.

Third, the expansion of cooperation into areas such as critical minerals and emerging technologies points to the evolving nature of strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific. Partnerships such as the India-Vietnam partnership will be crucial in shaping alternative economic architectures as global supply chains become more securitised. The agreements made during the visit point to an effort to move beyond conventional economic ties in favour of a more comprehensive framework for economic security.

## Structural issues

Looking ahead, the trajectory of India-Vietnam ties will depend on the ability of both sides to translate strategic intent into operational outcomes. Implementation gaps, particularly in trade, connectivity, and defence industrial cooperation, remain despite the strong political and strategic alignment. For example, navigating scientific, financial, and geopolitical obstacles will be necessary to realise defence exports such as BrahMos. In a similar vein, resolving structural obstacles, including logistics, legal frameworks, and private sector involvement, will be necessary to meet the ambitious trade goals.

India-Vietnam relations are likely to become increasingly embedded within the evolving architecture of the Indo-Pacific. Partnerships that combine functional cooperation with strategic trust will become more important as great power competition heats up. Hence, Mr. Tô Lâm's visit is more about marking the beginning of bilateral ties as a mature, multifaceted partnership than about a single diplomatic milestone.

## 12M. A new phase in the India-Vietnam strategic partnership

### भारत-वियतनाम सामरिक साझेदारी का एक नया चरण

- The **state visit** of Vietnamese President Tô Lâm to India last week (**May 5-7, 2026**) marks a **consequential moment in the steady deepening of India-Vietnam ties**, reflecting both the maturation of a long-standing partnership amid the sharpening strategic imperatives of the **Indo-Pacific**.

पिछले सप्ताह (5-7 मई, 2026) वियतनाम के राष्ट्रपति तो लाम की भारत यात्रा, भारत-वियतनाम संबंधों की निरंतर गहराई को दर्शाने वाला एक महत्वपूर्ण क्षण है। यह यात्रा हिंद-प्रशांत क्षेत्र में बढ़ती सामरिक चुनौतियों के बीच दोनों देशों की दीर्घकालिक साझेदारी की परिपक्वता को भी प्रतिबिंबित करती है।

- The **decision to elevate bilateral relations to an Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**, along with a wide range of agreements spanning **defence, technology, finance, and energy**, signals not merely incremental progress but a qualitative shift in the trajectory of the relationship.

द्विपक्षीय संबंधों को एन्हांस्ड कॉम्प्रेहेन्सिव स्ट्रैटेजिक पार्टनरशिप तक उन्नत करने का निर्णय, तथा रक्षा, प्रौद्योगिकी, वित्त और ऊर्जा जैसे क्षेत्रों में हुए अनेक समझौते, केवल क्रमिक प्रगति नहीं बल्कि संबंधों की दिशा में एक गुणात्मक परिवर्तन का संकेत देते हैं।

- The visit comes at a time of heightened **geopolitical flux** in the **Indo-Pacific** as **Vietnam finds itself navigating an increasingly assertive China in the South China Sea**, while **India continues to consolidate its Act East policy** into a more security-oriented **Indo-Pacific strategy**.

यह यात्रा ऐसे समय में हुई है जब हिंद-प्रशांत क्षेत्र में भूराजनैतिक अस्थिरता बढ़ रही है। एक ओर वियतनाम को दक्षिण चीन सागर में अधिक आक्रामक होते चीन का सामना करना पड़ रहा है, वहीं दूसरी ओर भारत अपनी एकट ईस्ट नीति को अधिक सुरक्षा-केंद्रित हिंद-प्रशांत रणनीति में परिवर्तित कर रहा है।



- The convergence of **threat perceptions**, particularly regarding **maritime coercion**, **supply chain vulnerabilities**, and **strategic autonomy**, has provided a durable foundation for bilateral engagement.  
विशेषकर समुद्री दबाव, आपूर्ति शृंखला की कमजोरियों, तथा सामरिक स्वायत्तता से संबंधित खतरों की समान समझ ने द्विपक्षीय सहयोग के लिए एक स्थायी आधार प्रदान किया है।
- Indeed, the evolution of **India-Vietnam ties** has been gradual but structurally consistent, with India's erstwhile **Look East** (now **Act East**) policy providing the initial impetus and the elevation to a **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2016** enabling **institutionalised defence and security cooperation**.  
वास्तव में, भारत-वियतनाम संबंधों का विकास धीरे-धीरे हुआ है, किन्तु यह संरचनात्मक रूप से निरंतर रहा है। भारत की पूर्व लुक ईस्ट नीति (अब एक्ट ईस्ट नीति) ने इसकी प्रारंभिक प्रेरणा प्रदान की, जबकि वर्ष 2016 में संबंधों को व्यापक सामरिक साझेदारी तक उन्नत किए जाने से संस्थागत रक्षा और सुरक्षा सहयोग को बल मिला।
- Since then, regular **high-level exchanges**, **defence dialogues**, and **capacity-building initiatives** have deepened trust.  
तब से नियमित उच्च-स्तरीय आदान-प्रदान, रक्षा संवाद, तथा क्षमता निर्माण पहलों ने दोनों देशों के बीच विश्वास को और अधिक गहरा किया है।

### The pillar of defence cooperation

#### रक्षा सहयोग का आधारस्तंभ

- **Defence cooperation**, in particular, has emerged as the backbone of the partnership.  
विशेष रूप से, रक्षा सहयोग इस साझेदारी की रीढ़ के रूप में उभरा है।
- In addition to symbolic actions such as the **transfer of the missile corvette INS Kirpan (in 2023)**, **India has offered Vietnam** finance lines, training assistance, and **maritime cooperation structures**.  
2023 में मिसाइल कॉर्वेट आईएनएस किरपन के हस्तांतरण जैसे प्रतीकात्मक कदमों के अतिरिक्त, भारत ने वियतनाम को वित्तीय सहायता, प्रशिक्षण सहयोग तथा समुद्री सहयोग संरचनाएँ प्रदान की हैं।
- The **current debates** around the possible shipment of **BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles** demonstrate a change in the **deterrence calculation** in the **South China Sea** from **capacity-building to capability enhancement**.  
ब्रह्मोस सुपरसोनिक क्रूज़ मिसाइलों की संभावित आपूर्ति को लेकर चल रही वर्तमान चर्चाएँ दक्षिण चीन सागर में प्रतिरोधक क्षमता (Deterrence) की रणनीति में परिवर्तन को दर्शाती हैं, जहाँ अब ध्यान केवल क्षमता निर्माण से आगे बढ़कर सैन्य क्षमता सुदृढीकरण पर केंद्रित हो गया है।
- **Bilateral trade** has crossed **\$16 billion**, with an ambitious target of **\$25 billion by 2030**, underscoring the recognition of untapped potential.  
द्विपक्षीय व्यापार 16 अरब डॉलर से अधिक हो चुका है, और वर्ष 2030 तक 25 अरब डॉलर का महत्वाकांक्षी लक्ष्य निर्धारित किया गया है, जो दोनों देशों के बीच अप्रयुक्त संभावनाओं की पहचान को दर्शाता है।
- A move toward **next-generation economic participation** is shown in the focus on **supply chain resilience**, **rare earth collaboration**, and **digital payment integration**.  
अगली पीढ़ी की आर्थिक भागीदारी की दिशा में बढ़ते कदमों का संकेत आपूर्ति शृंखला की मजबूती, दुर्लभ मृदा तत्वों (Rare Earths) में सहयोग, तथा डिजिटल भुगतान एकीकरण पर दिए जा रहे विशेष ध्यान से मिलता है।
- Moreover, **Vietnam's position** as an **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** **manufacturing powerhouse** makes it an essential partner for **India's diversification plans**, especially in terms of scaling back reliance on supply chains that are mostly focused on **China**.  
इसके अतिरिक्त, वियतनाम की स्थिति एक आसियान (ASEAN) विनिर्माण शक्ति-केंद्र के रूप में, उसे भारत



की विविधीकरण योजनाओं के लिए एक अनिवार्य साझेदार बनाती है, विशेषकर उन आपूर्ति शृंखलाओं पर निर्भरता कम करने के संदर्भ में जो मुख्यतः चीन पर केंद्रित हैं।

- Together with Japan, Australia, and the United States, both nations contribute to a wider network of strategic alliances that fight to maintain a rules-based maritime order, even if they are not legally included in U.S.-led alliance structures.  
जापान, ऑस्ट्रेलिया, और संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका के साथ मिलकर, दोनों देश ऐसे व्यापक सामरिक गठबंधनों के नेटवर्क में योगदान दे रहे हैं, जो नियम-आधारित समुद्री व्यवस्था को बनाए रखने का प्रयास करते हैं, भले ही वे औपचारिक रूप से अमेरिका-नेतृत्व वाली गठबंधन संरचनाओं का हिस्सा न हों।
- In a similar vein, resolving structural obstacles, including logistics, legal frameworks, and private sector involvement, will be necessary to meet the ambitious trade goals.  
इसी प्रकार, महत्वाकांक्षी व्यापारिक लक्ष्यों को प्राप्त करने के लिए संरचनात्मक बाधाओं — जैसे लॉजिस्टिक्स, कानूनी ढाँचे, तथा निजी क्षेत्र की भागीदारी — का समाधान करना आवश्यक होगा।

## How rumours of 'shrinking genitals' triggered panic, mob attacks in Congo

Claims of outsiders spreading the 'illness' and viral videos of men speaking inside crowded churches of how they were cured through prayers caused suspicion among the people in Tshopo province; four health workers killed in October, and a WHO-backed monitor linked 17 killings to the rumours

GS II: IR

NEWS ANALYSIS

Shikha Kumari A

Last year, men in parts of Congo's Tshopo province began whispering about something strange that was happening in nearby villages. At first, the stories sounded too absurd to travel far. A man in a market claimed his genitals had suddenly shrunk after brushing against a stranger. Someone else said it happened inside a taxi. In another village, people spoke about a man who returned from town convinced that the part of his body had disappeared altogether.

And then the videos started appearing, people gathered around phones watching clips of alleged victims speaking inside crowded churches while pastors stood beside them claiming they had been cured through prayer. Some videos spread through Facebook pages and TikTok accounts. Others moved from phone to phone through Bluetooth shares and WhatsApp groups, spreading across villages faster than official information ever could.

In many places, the rumours arrived before the authorities did. By the time officials in Tshopo publicly denied the existence of any mysterious illness, fear had already settled across



A file photo of Congo River port of Kisangani, in Tshopo. Many churches in Kisangani hosted testimonies from supposed victims while social media made clips of these viral. REUTERS

parts of northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo, where rumours, churches, and social media had combined to create something more powerful than a simple falsehood. Men spoke cautiously around strangers. Communities became suspicious of outsiders. Stories changed slightly depending on who was telling them, but the central fear remained the same.

### 'Theft of bodies'

Something was stealing men's bodies. In the month of October, the health workers travelling through the Isangi area of Tshopo province arrived in villages already consumed by weeks of panic. They carried tablet computers, questionnaires, and reflec-

tive jackets as part of vaccination-related field surveys, but in some communities those unfamiliar objects and routines were interpreted very differently by residents who had spent weeks hearing that outsiders were spreading a disease that caused men's genitalia to shrink or disappear.

According to Reuters, at least four health workers were later killed after crowds accused them of spreading the supposed illness.

One of them was Dr. John Tangakeya. His wife later told Reuters that the family had spoken to him earlier that day because it was his birthday. The children were waiting for him to come home that evening for celebrating together. In-

stead, news arrived that the health team he was part of had been attacked by mobs even as they tried to explain that their surveys had nothing to do with the rumours spreading in the province.

The World Health Organization (WHO)-backed Africa Infodemic Response Alliance, which monitors dangerous health misinformation across Africa, later linked at least 17 killings to the rumours, though some incidents could not be independently verified.

Long before social media existed, versions of this panic had already travelled across parts of Africa.

Researchers have documented similar episodes for decades in Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Benin, and Congo itself, where ru-

mours of "penis theft" or genital shrinking periodically triggered mob attacks against people accused of witchcraft or supernatural powers. In Ghana, during the 1990s, several people accused of "penis snatching" were beaten to death by mobs. In Kinshasa, in 2008, police detained more than a dozen suspected "sorcerers" after panic spread through the capital and led to attempted lynchings.

### Amplified by churches

Anthropologists who study such incidents have often argued that the panic is not simply about superstition. In many places, fears around genital theft became tied to larger anxieties about masculinity, illness, vulnerability, power, and social instability, particularly in societies where spiritual explanations for misfortune remain deeply embedded in everyday life.

But something about the Congo episode felt different. Earlier, panic spread through markets, crowded taxis, churches, and radio broadcasts. This time, much of the fear moved online first, where videos featuring alleged victims and miracle cures circulated rapidly through algorithm-driven feeds before local officials fully understood what was unfolding on the ground.

Several churches in Kisangani hosted testimonies from supposed victims

while Facebook pages and TikTok accounts reposted clips that gathered hundreds of thousands of views. Some videos remained online even after authorities publicly dismissed the claims as false.

Health officials later said the violence exposed a deeper crisis facing public health systems in parts of Africa, where distrust toward authorities has been shaped by years of political instability, misinformation, and memories of earlier health emergencies, including Ebola and COVID-19 outbreaks, during which some communities viewed outside medical teams with suspicion.

In villages where people had already spent weeks discussing the rumours among themselves, the arrival of unfamiliar health workers carrying devices and asking questions appeared, for some residents, to confirm the fears they already believed were true.

Months later, the rumours have still not completely disappeared.

Officials continue running radio campaigns and public awareness programmes aimed at stopping the spread of misinformation. Arrests have been made in some areas. But many of the original videos are still circulating online, resurfacing again and again across different parts of Congo, long after authorities declared that the illness itself never existed.



## 12M. How rumours of 'shrinking genitals' triggered panic, mob attacks in Congo

### 'सिकुड़ते जननांगों' की अफवाहों ने कांगो में कैसे दहशत और भीड़ हमलों को जन्म दिया

- Claims of outsiders spreading the 'illness' and viral videos of men speaking inside crowded churches of how they were cured through prayers caused suspicion among the people in **Tshopo province**.  
बाहरी लोगों द्वारा 'बीमारी' फैलाने के दावों और भीड़भाड़ वाले चर्चों में पुरुषों के प्रार्थना से ठीक होने की बात करने वाले वायरल वीडियो ने **त्शोपो प्रांत** के लोगों के बीच संदेह पैदा कर दिया।
- Four health workers were killed in October, and a **WHO-backed** monitor linked 17 killings to the rumours.  
अक्टूबर में चार स्वास्थ्यकर्मियों की हत्या कर दी गई और **WHO समर्थित** एक निगरानी समूह ने 17 हत्याओं को इन अफवाहों से जोड़ा।
- Late last year, men in parts of Congo's **Tshopo province** began whispering about something strange that was happening in nearby villages.  
पिछले वर्ष के अंत में कांगो के **त्शोपो प्रांत** के कुछ हिस्सों में पुरुष पास के गांवों में हो रही एक अजीब घटना के बारे में फुसफुसाने लगे।
- At first, the stories sounded too absurd to travel far.  
शुरुआत में ये कहानियाँ इतनी अजीब लगती थीं कि उनके दूर तक फैलने की संभावना नहीं लगती थी।
- A man in a market claimed his genitals had suddenly shrunk after brushing against a stranger.  
एक बाजार में एक व्यक्ति ने दावा किया कि किसी अजनबी से छू जाने के बाद उसके जननांग अचानक सिकुड़ गए।
- Someone else said it happened inside a taxi.  
किसी और ने कहा कि यह घटना टैक्सी के अंदर हुई।
- In another village, people spoke about a man who returned from town convinced that the part of his body had disappeared altogether.  
एक अन्य गांव में लोग एक ऐसे व्यक्ति के बारे में बात कर रहे थे जो शहर से लौटकर यह विश्वास करने लगा था कि उसके शरीर का वह हिस्सा पूरी तरह गायब हो गया है।
- And then the videos started appearing, people gathered around phones watching clips of alleged victims speaking inside crowded churches while pastors stood beside them claiming they had been cured through prayer.  
फिर वीडियो सामने आने लगे, लोग फोन के आसपास इकट्ठा होकर कथित पीड़ितों के चर्चों में बोलते हुए क्लिप देखने लगे जबकि पादरी उनके बगल में खड़े होकर दावा कर रहे थे कि वे प्रार्थना से ठीक हो गए हैं।
- Some videos spread through **Facebook** pages and **TikTok** accounts.  
कुछ वीडियो **फेसबुक** पेजों और **टिकटॉक** अकाउंट्स के जरिए फैले।
- Others moved from phone to phone through Bluetooth shares and **WhatsApp** groups, spreading across villages faster than official information ever could.  
अन्य वीडियो ब्लूटूथ शेयर और **व्हाट्सएप** समूहों के जरिए एक फोन से दूसरे फोन तक पहुंचे और गांवों में आधिकारिक जानकारी से भी तेजी से फैल गए।
- In many places, the rumours arrived before the authorities did.  
कई जगहों पर अफवाहें अधिकारियों के पहुंचने से पहले ही फैल चुकी थीं।
- By the time officials in **Tshopo** publicly denied the existence of any mysterious illness, fear had already settled across parts of northeastern **Democratic Republic of Congo**.  
जब तक **त्शोपो** के अधिकारियों ने सार्वजनिक रूप से किसी रहस्यमयी बीमारी के अस्तित्व से इनकार किया, तब तक उत्तर-पूर्वी **डेमोक्रेटिक रिपब्लिक ऑफ कांगो** के कई हिस्सों में डर फैल चुका था।
- Rumours, churches, and social media had combined to create something more powerful than a simple falsehood.



अफवाहों, चर्चा और सोशल मीडिया ने मिलकर एक साधारण झूठ से कहीं अधिक शक्तिशाली चीज़ पैदा कर दी थी।

- Men spoke cautiously around strangers.  
पुरुष अजनबियों के आसपास सावधानी से बात करने लगे।
- Communities became suspicious of outsiders.  
समुदाय बाहरी लोगों पर संदेह करने लगे।
- Stories changed slightly depending on who was telling them, but the central fear remained the same.  
कहानियाँ सुनाने वाले के अनुसार थोड़ी बदल जाती थीं, लेकिन मुख्य डर वही बना रहा।

## 'Theft of bodies'

### 'शरीर की चोरी'

- Something was stealing men's bodies.  
कुछ पुरुषों के शरीर को चुरा रहा था।
- In the month of October, the health workers travelling through the **Isangi** area of **Tshopo province** arrived in villages already consumed by weeks of panic.  
अक्टूबर महीने में **त्शोपो प्रांत** के **इसांगी** क्षेत्र से गुजर रहे स्वास्थ्यकर्मी उन गांवों में पहुंचे जो पहले से ही कई हफ्तों की दहशत से घिरे हुए थे।
- They carried tablet computers, questionnaires, and reflective jackets as part of vaccination-related field surveys.  
वे टीकाकरण संबंधी फील्ड सर्वे के हिस्से के रूप में टैबलेट कंप्यूटर, प्रश्नावली और रिफ्लेक्टिव जैकेट लेकर चल रहे थे।
- But in some communities those unfamiliar objects and routines were interpreted very differently by residents who had spent weeks hearing that outsiders were spreading a disease that caused men's genitalia to shrink or disappear.  
लेकिन कुछ समुदायों में इन अपरिचित वस्तुओं और प्रक्रियाओं को उन लोगों ने अलग तरह से समझा जो कई हफ्तों से यह सुन रहे थे कि बाहरी लोग ऐसी बीमारी फैला रहे हैं जिससे पुरुषों के जननांग सिकुड़ जाते हैं या गायब हो जाते हैं।
- According to **Reuters**, at least four health workers were later killed after crowds accused them of spreading the supposed illness.  
**रॉयटर्स** के अनुसार, भीड़ द्वारा कथित बीमारी फैलाने का आरोप लगाने के बाद कम से कम चार स्वास्थ्यकर्मियों की हत्या कर दी गई।
- One of them was Dr. **John Tangakeya**.  
उनमें से एक डॉ. **जॉन टंगाकेया** थे।
- His wife later told Reuters that the family had spoken to him earlier that day because it was his birthday.  
उनकी पत्नी ने बाद में रॉयटर्स को बताया कि परिवार ने उस दिन पहले उनसे बात की थी क्योंकि उनका जन्मदिन था।
- The children were waiting for him to come home that evening for celebrating together.  
बच्चे उस शाम उनके घर लौटने का इंतजार कर रहे थे ताकि सब मिलकर जश्न मना सकें।
- Instead, news arrived that the health team he was part of had been attacked by mobs even as they tried to explain that their surveys had nothing to do with the rumours spreading in the province.  
इसके बजाय खबर आई कि जिस स्वास्थ्य दल का वह हिस्सा था, उस पर भीड़ ने हमला कर दिया जबकि वे समझाने की कोशिश कर रहे थे कि उनके सर्वे का प्रांत में फैल रही अफवाहों से कोई संबंध नहीं है।
- The **World Health Organization (WHO)-backed Africa Infodemic Response Alliance**, which monitors dangerous health misinformation across Africa, later linked at least 17 killings to the rumours, though some incidents could not be independently verified.



पूरे अफ्रीका में खतरनाक स्वास्थ्य संबंधी गलत सूचनाओं की निगरानी करने वाले विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन (WHO) समर्थित अफ्रीका इन्फोडेमिक रिस्पॉन्स एलायंस ने बाद में कम से कम 17 हत्याओं को इन अफवाहों से जोड़ा, हालांकि कुछ घटनाओं की स्वतंत्र पुष्टि नहीं हो सकी।

- Long before social media existed, versions of this panic had already travelled across parts of Africa.  
सोशल मीडिया के अस्तित्व में आने से बहुत पहले ही इस तरह की दहशत अफ्रीका के कई हिस्सों में फैल चुकी थी।
- Researchers have documented similar episodes for decades in **Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Benin, and Congo** itself.  
शोधकर्ताओं ने दशकों से घाना, नाइजीरिया, कैमरून, बेनिन और कांगो में ऐसी घटनाओं का दस्तावेजीकरण किया है।
- Rumours of “penis theft” or genital shrinking periodically triggered mob attacks against people accused of witchcraft or supernatural powers.  
“लिंग चोरी” या जननांग सिकुड़ने की अफवाहों ने समय-समय पर जादूटोना या अलौकिक शक्तियों के आरोपियों पर भीड़ हमलों को जन्म दिया।
- In **Ghana**, during the 1990s, several people accused of “penis snatching” were beaten to death by mobs.  
1990 के दशक में घाना में “लिंग चोरी” के आरोप में कई लोगों को भीड़ ने पीट-पीटकर मार डाला।
- In **Kinshasa**, in 2008, police detained more than a dozen suspected “sorcerers” after panic spread through the capital and led to attempted lynchings.  
2008 में किंशासा में राजधानी में दहशत फैलने और भीड़ द्वारा हत्या के प्रयासों के बाद पुलिस ने एक दर्जन से अधिक संदिग्ध “जादूगरों” को हिरासत में लिया।

### Amplified by churches

#### चर्चों द्वारा बढ़ाया गया

- Anthropologists who study such incidents have often argued that the panic is not simply about superstition.  
ऐसी घटनाओं का अध्ययन करने वाले मानवविज्ञानी अक्सर कहते हैं कि यह दहशत केवल अंधविश्वास तक सीमित नहीं है।
- In many places, fears around genital theft became tied to larger anxieties about masculinity, illness, vulnerability, power, and social instability.  
कई जगहों पर जननांग चोरी का डर पुरुषत्व, बीमारी, असुरक्षा, शक्ति और सामाजिक अस्थिरता से जुड़ी बड़ी चिंताओं से जुड़ गया।
- This was particularly true in societies where spiritual explanations for misfortune remain deeply embedded in everyday life.  
यह विशेष रूप से उन समाजों में सही था जहाँ दुर्भाग्य के आध्यात्मिक स्पष्टीकरण दैनिक जीवन में गहराई से जुड़े हुए हैं।
- But something about the Congo episode felt different.  
लेकिन कांगो की यह घटना कुछ अलग महसूस हुई।
- Earlier, panic spread through markets, crowded taxis, churches, and radio broadcasts.  
पहले दहशत बाजारों, भीड़भाड़ वाली टैक्सियों, चर्चों और रेडियो प्रसारणों के जरिए फैलती थी।
- This time, much of the fear moved online first, where videos featuring alleged victims and miracle cures circulated rapidly through algorithm-driven feeds before local officials fully understood what was unfolding on the ground.  
इस बार डर सबसे पहले ऑनलाइन फैला, जहाँ कथित पीड़ितों और चमत्कारी इलाज वाले वीडियो एल्गोरिदम आधारित फीड्स के जरिए तेजी से फैल गए, इससे पहले कि स्थानीय अधिकारी स्थिति को पूरी तरह समझ पाते।



- Several churches in **Kisangani** hosted testimonies from supposed victims while **Facebook** pages and **TikTok** accounts reposted clips that gathered hundreds of thousands of views.  
किसांगानी के कई चर्चों में कथित पीड़ितों की गवाही कराई गई जबकि फेसबुक पेजों और टिकटॉक अकाउंट्स ने ऐसे क्लिप दोबारा पोस्ट किए जिन्हें लाखों बार देखा गया।
- Some videos remained online even after authorities publicly dismissed the claims as false.  
अधिकारियों द्वारा दावों को झूठा घोषित करने के बाद भी कुछ वीडियो ऑनलाइन बने रहे।
- Health officials later said the violence exposed a deeper crisis facing public health systems in parts of Africa.  
स्वास्थ्य अधिकारियों ने बाद में कहा कि इस हिंसा ने अफ्रीका के कुछ हिस्सों में सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य प्रणालियों के सामने मौजूद गहरे संकट को उजागर किया।
- Distrust toward authorities has been shaped by years of political instability, misinformation, and memories of earlier health emergencies, including **Ebola** and **COVID-19** outbreaks.  
अधिकारियों के प्रति अविश्वास वर्षों की राजनीतिक अस्थिरता, गलत सूचनाओं और **इबोला** तथा **COVID-19** जैसी पिछली स्वास्थ्य आपात स्थितियों की यादों से पैदा हुआ है।
- During those outbreaks, some communities viewed outside medical teams with suspicion.  
उन प्रकोपों के दौरान कुछ समुदाय बाहरी चिकित्सा टीमों को संदेह की दृष्टि से देखते थे।
- In villages where people had already spent weeks discussing the rumours among themselves, the arrival of unfamiliar health workers carrying devices and asking questions appeared, for some residents, to confirm the fears they already believed were true.  
जिन गांवों में लोग पहले से ही कई हफ्तों से अफवाहों पर चर्चा कर रहे थे, वहां उपकरण लेकर सवाल पूछने वाले अपरिचित स्वास्थ्यकर्मियों का आगमन कुछ लोगों को उनके डर की पुष्टि जैसा लगा।
- Months later, the rumours have still not completely disappeared.  
कई महीनों बाद भी ये अफवाहें पूरी तरह समाप्त नहीं हुई हैं।
- Officials continue running radio campaigns and public awareness programmes aimed at stopping the spread of misinformation.  
अधिकारी गलत सूचनाओं के प्रसार को रोकने के लिए रेडियो अभियान और जनजागरूकता कार्यक्रम चला रहे हैं।
- Arrests have been made in some areas.  
कुछ क्षेत्रों में गिरफ्तारियाँ भी की गई हैं।
- But many of the original videos are still circulating online, resurfacing again and again across different parts of Congo, long after authorities declared that the illness itself never existed.  
लेकिन कई मूल वीडियो अब भी ऑनलाइन प्रसारित हो रहे हैं और कांगो के विभिन्न हिस्सों में बार-बार सामने आ रहे हैं, जबकि अधिकारी बहुत पहले ही घोषित कर चुके हैं कि ऐसी कोई बीमारी कभी अस्तित्व में नहीं थी।

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TOPICS COVERED		
12M	<b>New labour codes greatest setback for workers' rights since Independence: Cong.</b> नए श्रम संहिताएँ स्वतंत्रता के बाद से श्रमिक अधिकारों के लिए सबसे बड़ा झटका: कांग्रेस	
12M	<b>Belated warning</b> विलंबित चेतावनी	
12M	<b>Goal attainment and youth aspirations are not aligned</b> लक्ष्य प्राप्ति और युवाओं की आकांक्षाएँ परस्पर अनुरूप नहीं हैं	
12M	<b>Jewellery sector bats for gold monetisation scheme</b> आभूषण क्षेत्र ने स्वर्ण मुद्रीकरण योजना का समर्थन किया	



# New labour codes greatest setback for workers' rights since Independence: Cong.

GS III: Economy

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday criticised the Centre over the full operationalisation of the four labour codes, alleging that they marked the “greatest setback for workers’ rights since Independence” and would weaken job security and unionisation.

In a statement, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said that the Narendra Modi government had, “in its typical cowardly fashion”, waited for the conclusion of the Assembly elections before notifying the final rules for the labour codes through Gazette notifications issued on May 8 and 9.

## ‘Hire-and-fire policies’

“For crores of India’s workers, these codes promise a future of hire-and-fire policies, contract employment, and limited space for unionisation,” Mr. Kharge said. He alleged that the government had drafted and implemented



Mallikarjun Kharge

the “anti-worker” labour codes without consultation and had not even convened the Indian Labour Conference since 2015.

“These codes, which benefit only the Prime Minister’s industrialist friends, are the greatest setback for workers’ rights since Independence,” he said.

Mr. Kharge said the Congress remained committed to its five-point ‘Shramik Nyay’ agenda, which includes restoration and expansion of MGNREGA to urban areas, a national minimum wage of ₹400 per day, a Right to Health law providing universal health coverage of ₹25 lakh, and

comprehensive social security measures for unorganised workers, including life and accident insurance.

He reiterated the party’s commitment to stopping “contractualisation” in core government functions and reviewing what he termed the Modi government’s dilution of labour laws.

The Centre completed the process of implementing the four labour codes after publishing the final rules in the Gazette recently.

The four codes – the Code on Wages, 2019; the Industrial Relations Code, 2020; the Code on Social Security, 2020; and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 – came into effect on November 21, 2025.

The Central government has said that the codes seek to modernise and consolidate 29 labour laws into a simplified framework while ensuring minimum wages and universal social security for workers.

## 12M. New labour codes greatest setback for workers' rights since Independence: Cong.

नए श्रम संहिताएँ स्वतंत्रता के बाद से श्रमिक अधिकारों के लिए सबसे बड़ा झटका: कांग्रेस

- The Centre completed the process of implementing the four labour codes after publishing the final rules in the Gazette recently.  
केंद्र सरकार ने हाल ही में राजपत्र में अंतिम नियम प्रकाशित करने के बाद चार श्रम संहिताओं को लागू करने की प्रक्रिया पूरी कर ली।



- The four codes — the **Code on Wages, 2019**; the **Industrial Relations Code, 2020**; the **Code on Social Security, 2020**; and the **Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020** — came into effect on November 21, 2025.  
चार संहिताएँ — **वैतन संहिता, 2019**; **औद्योगिक संबंध संहिता, 2020**; **सामाजिक सुरक्षा संहिता, 2020**; और **व्यावसायिक सुरक्षा, स्वास्थ्य और कार्य परिस्थितियाँ संहिता, 2020** — 21 नवंबर 2025 से प्रभाव में आ गईं।
- The **Central government has said that the codes seek to modernise and consolidate 29 labour laws into a simplified framework** while ensuring minimum wages and universal social security for workers.  
केंद्र सरकार ने कहा है कि इन संहिताओं का उद्देश्य 29 श्रम कानूनों को आधुनिक और एकीकृत कर एक सरल ढाँचे में बदलना है, साथ ही श्रमिकों के लिए न्यूनतम वेतन और सार्वभौमिक सामाजिक सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित करना है।

GS III: Economy

## Belated warning

Narendra Modi's suggestions to Indians imply a serious economic impact

**P** rime Minister Narendra Modi's seven-point call to action for the citizens of India lays bare the severity of the impact of the West Asia crisis. Further, apart from its implications, Mr. Modi's message is problematic for two other key reasons: its timing and content. A key part of his message was to urge people to work from home and reduce their fuel usage. A more effective approach might have been to lead by example. Yet, Mr. Modi's message comes days after he and his Cabinet colleagues flew all over the country and organised roadshows to campaign for the recent elections. Neither did any of his pre-election speeches mention these issues. His message also comes on the back of daily reassurances by his government's officials that there was nothing to worry. Clearly, there is. The Prime Minister's message also follows various Ministers' attempts to heap praise on him for not raising petrol and diesel prices. A decision not to further burden the common man is welcome, but the flip side is that it fails to impress upon them the need to curtail consumption. The government took that strategic call before the elections, and is now trying to dilute it. Perhaps a hike in fuel prices will follow soon. The Prime Minister's speech also coincided with a similar call to action for Indian corporates by the Confederation of Indian Industry. This kind of coordinated messaging points to a dire situation. Several of the Prime Minister's suggestions might also have other negative impacts that could be more serious than the problems they are trying to address. Some others might simply not be as effective as he hopes.

If farmers stop using chemical fertilizers, as he has urged, the immediate impact will be on crop output at a time when El Niño is already set to hurt it. High-frequency indicators are already revealing the economic damage of the West Asia crisis. This will only exacerbate the situation. The suggestion to stop foreign travel will conserve foreign exchange, but Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data up to February 2026 shows that Indians' foreign travel spending in 2025-26 was already down by 3%. March, the first month after the Iran war broke out, is likely to have seen an even sharper decline. The real pressure on the rupee and India's foreign exchange is because foreign institutional investors are pulling out while the RBI is using valuable dollars to shore up the falling currency. Urging Indians to buy local is another way of asking them to consume less, since purely domestic supply is not nearly enough to cater to the demand. Asking them to buy less gold is also likely to be futile. All this means that the economy is in for a hard time over the next few months — a warning the Prime Minister should have delivered much earlier, elections or no elections.

## 12M. Belated warning विलंबित चेतावनी

- **Narendra Modi's** suggestions to Indians imply a serious economic impact.  
नरेंद्र मोदी द्वारा भारतीयों को दिए गए सुझाव गंभीर आर्थिक प्रभावों की ओर संकेत करते हैं।
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi's** seven-point call to action for the citizens of India lays bare the severity of the impact of the **West Asia crisis**.  
प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी द्वारा भारतीय नागरिकों के लिए जारी सात-सूत्रीय आह्वान, **पश्चिम एशिया संकट** के प्रभावों की गंभीरता को स्पष्ट रूप से सामने लाता है।
- Further, apart from its implications, Mr. Modi's message is problematic for two other key reasons: its **timing** and **content**.  
इसके अतिरिक्त, इसके प्रभावों से अलग, श्री मोदी का संदेश दो अन्य प्रमुख कारणों से भी समस्याग्रस्त है — उसका **समय** और **विषय-वस्तु**।
- A key part of his message was to urge people to **work from home** and reduce their **fuel usage**.  
उनके संदेश का एक महत्वपूर्ण भाग लोगों से **घर से काम करने** और अपने **ईंधन उपयोग** को कम करने का आग्रह करना था।
- A more effective approach might have been to lead by example.  
एक अधिक प्रभावी तरीका उदाहरण प्रस्तुत करके नेतृत्व करना हो सकता था।
- **Yet, Mr. Modi's message comes days after he and his Cabinet colleagues flew all over the country and organised roadshows to campaign for the recent elections.**  
किन्तु श्री मोदी का यह संदेश उस समय आया है जब कुछ ही दिन पूर्व वे और उनके मंत्रिमंडल के सहयोगी हालिया चुनावों के प्रचार हेतु देशभर में यात्रा कर रहे थे और **रोड शो** आयोजित कर रहे थे।



- Neither did any of his pre-election speeches mention these issues.  
उनके किसी भी चुनाव-पूर्व भाषण में इन मुद्दों का उल्लेख नहीं किया गया था।
- His message also comes on the back of daily reassurances by his government's officials that there was nothing to worry.  
उनका यह संदेश सरकार के अधिकारियों द्वारा प्रतिदिन दिए जा रहे उन आश्वासनों के बाद आया है, जिनमें कहा जा रहा था कि चिंता की कोई बात नहीं है।
- Clearly, there is.  
स्पष्टतः, चिंता का विषय वास्तव में मौजूद है।
- The Prime Minister's message also follows various Ministers' attempts to heap praise on him for not raising **petrol and diesel prices**.  
प्रधानमंत्री का यह संदेश विभिन्न मंत्रियों द्वारा **पेट्रोल और डीज़ल की कीमतें** न बढ़ाने के लिए उनकी प्रशंसा किए जाने के बाद आया है।
- A decision not to further burden the common man is welcome, but the flip side is that it fails to impress upon them the need to curtail consumption.  
सामान्य नागरिक पर अतिरिक्त बोझ न डालने का निर्णय स्वागतयोग्य है, किन्तु इसका दूसरा पक्ष यह है कि इससे लोगों को उपभोग कम करने की आवश्यकता का पर्याप्त बोध नहीं हो पाता।
- The government took that strategic call before the elections, and is now trying to dilute it.  
सरकार ने चुनावों से पूर्व यह रणनीतिक निर्णय लिया था, और अब वह उसे कमजोर करने का प्रयास कर रही है।
- Perhaps a hike in **fuel prices** will follow soon.  
संभवतः शीघ्र ही **ईंधन की कीमतों** में वृद्धि की जा सकती है।
- The Prime Minister's speech also coincided with a similar call to action for Indian corporates by the **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)**.  
प्रधानमंत्री का भाषण **भारतीय उद्योग परिसंघ (CII)** द्वारा भारतीय कॉर्पोरेट क्षेत्र को दिए गए इसी प्रकार के आह्वान के साथ भी मेल खाता है।
- This kind of coordinated messaging points to a dire situation.  
इस प्रकार का समन्वित संदेश एक गंभीर परिस्थिति की ओर संकेत करता है।
- Several of the Prime Minister's suggestions might also have other negative impacts that could be more serious than the problems they are trying to address.  
प्रधानमंत्री के कई सुझाव ऐसे नकारात्मक प्रभाव भी उत्पन्न कर सकते हैं, जो उन समस्याओं से भी अधिक गंभीर हो सकते हैं जिन्हें वे हल करने का प्रयास कर रहे हैं।
- Some others might simply not be as effective as he hopes.  
कुछ अन्य सुझाव उतने प्रभावी सिद्ध नहीं हो सकते, जितनी अपेक्षा की जा रही है।
- **If farmers stop using chemical fertilizers, as he has urged, the immediate impact will be on crop output at a time when El Niño is already set to hurt it.**  
यदि किसान, जैसा कि उन्होंने आग्रह किया है, **रासायनिक उर्वरकों** का उपयोग बंद कर दें, तो इसका तात्कालिक प्रभाव **फसल उत्पादन** पर पड़ेगा, जबकि **एल नीनो** पहले से ही कृषि उत्पादन को प्रभावित करने वाला है।
- High-frequency indicators are already revealing the economic damage of the **West Asia crisis**.  
उच्च-आवृत्ति आर्थिक संकेतक पहले ही **पश्चिम एशिया संकट** से उत्पन्न आर्थिक क्षति को दर्शा रहे हैं।
- This will only exacerbate the situation.  
यह स्थिति को और अधिक गंभीर बनाएगा।
- The suggestion to stop **foreign travel** will conserve **foreign exchange**, but **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** data up to February 2026 shows that Indians' foreign travel spending in 2025-26 was already down by **3%**.  
विदेश यात्रा रोकने का सुझाव **विदेशी मुद्रा भंडार** को बचाने में सहायक हो सकता है, किन्तु **भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक**



(RBI) के फरवरी 2026 तक के आँकड़े दर्शाते हैं कि वर्ष 2025-26 में भारतीयों का विदेश यात्रा व्यय पहले ही 3% कम हो चुका था।

- March, the first month after the **Iran war** broke out, is likely to have seen an even sharper decline.  
**ईरान युद्ध** प्रारम्भ होने के बाद का पहला महीना मार्च, संभवतः इससे भी अधिक तीव्र गिरावट का साक्षी रहा होगा।
- The **real pressure on the rupee and India's foreign exchange is because foreign institutional investors are pulling out while the RBI is using valuable dollars to shore up the falling currency.**  
**रुपये और भारत के विदेशी मुद्रा भंडार पर वास्तविक दबाव इसलिए है क्योंकि विदेशी संस्थागत निवेशक पूंजी निकाल रहे हैं, जबकि RBI गिरती मुद्रा को संभालने के लिए बहुमूल्य डॉलर खर्च कर रहा है।**
- **Urging Indians to buy local is another way of asking them to consume less, since purely domestic supply is not nearly enough to cater to the demand.**  
भारतीयों से **स्थानीय वस्तुएँ खरीदने** का आग्रह, वस्तुतः उनसे कम उपभोग करने का एक अन्य तरीका है, क्योंकि केवल घरेलू आपूर्ति माँग को पूरा करने के लिए पर्याप्त नहीं है।
- Asking them to buy less **gold** is also likely to be futile.  
लोगों से कम **सोना** खरीदने का आग्रह भी संभवतः निष्फल सिद्ध होगा।
- All this means that the economy is in for a hard time over the next few months — a warning the Prime Minister should have delivered much earlier, elections or no elections.  
इन सभी परिस्थितियों का अर्थ यह है कि आने वाले कुछ महीनों में अर्थव्यवस्था कठिन दौर से गुजर सकती है — एक ऐसी चेतावनी, जिसे प्रधानमंत्री को चुनाव हों या न हों, बहुत पहले दे देना चाहिए था।

## Goal attainment and youth aspirations are not aligned

Keeping track of youth aspirations against the system's ability to match them is critical if the country is serious about creating a productive labour force

GS III: Economy

### DATA POINT

Garima Agarwal

India's ability to ride the cresting wave of the demographic dividend, before it recedes, depends critically on the education and employment choices of its 367 million young people. While surveys track such outcomes, little is known about how close outcomes are to initial goals. The State of Working India Report 2026, published by Azim Premji University, offers insights into youth aspirations and attainments.

The study utilises the Population Council's dataset – UDAYA: Understanding the Lives of Adolescents and Young Adults – which surveyed adolescents in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the two Indian States with the largest youth populations. The sample of interest covers girls and boys aged 15-19 when first contacted in 2015-16 and tracks them three years later in 2018-19 when they are 18-22 years old. Of the full sample of 13,141 youngsters surveyed, aspirations were recorded only for 6,300 who were enrolled in education at the time of the survey. At ages 15-19 when the 6,300 youngsters were first contacted, about 72% aimed for at least graduate education. Three years later, this share grew to 84%. Moreover, aspiration levels were similar across gender, religion, and caste. Uniformly high educational aspirations across social groups indicate a convergence of aspiration windows, possibly due to economic progress and rapid expansion in access to the Internet and social media.

Educational attainments, in contrast, showed that not all dreams came true. In the duration between the two interviews, years of schooling completed grew by only 1.2 years on average instead of the expected three years. In making progress towards their educational goals, over half the sample fell short, on average by 1.7 years

(Table 2).

About 11% of the sample had already exited education by this time. Between the two interviews, another 40% exited formal education. While some may naturally exit on completing desired education, the average number of years of education attained at exit is only 8 years.

It is striking that while aspirations across wealth quintiles are not very different, attainments diverge sharply. Those in the poorest wealth quintile are more likely to fall short of their goals compared to those in the richest quintile. While the share of boys falling below their educational goals hovers between 50% and 60% across wealth quintiles, there is a noticeable variation for girls – from 66% in the poorest to 38% in the richest quintile (Chart 1).

Over half the sample discontinues education before completing Class 12; this group is disproportionately composed of married girls. Married girls face greater barriers than their unmarried counterparts, even within the richest group. In fact, girls who remained unmarried by the time of the second interview (18-22 age group) were as ambitious as boys at setting goals and were more effective at meeting them (Table 2).

In general, girls and boys have different reasons to discontinue education. Boys leave to join the labour market while girls exit at the time of marriage. Failure or disinterest and costs of education are some gender-neutral contributing factors.

**Quality of education**

A more troubling picture emerges when learning levels are examined. UDAYA employs tools designed by the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) for students aged 5-16 to measure proficiency in reading and math. UDAYA respondents were well beyond this age and would be expected to achieve the highest levels of proficiency in both dimensions.

However, at age 15-19 when respondents were likely engaged in schooling, 70% of unmarried girls and boys could read a Class 2-level story against only 45% of married girls. The modest gender gap favouring unmarried girls in goal attainment disappears when it comes to learning levels. The share of those who could perform three-digit by one-digit division correctly was just over half for boys, 35% for unmarried girls and only 15% for married girls (Table 3).

The uncomfortable question this raises is: are some groups aspiring for education beyond their reach? This two-State study shows that while aspirations are high, attainments have not kept pace across all groups. It is worth confirming whether this is a country-wide pattern, and focusing policy attention on removing structural barriers to access.

Education programs often default to exposing students to high-achieving role models ostensibly to inspire. While well-intentioned, simply raising aspirations with no realistic pathway to achieving them is short-sighted. These programs need to be supplemented with support for identifying interests, goal-setting, and skill-building. Stronger linkages between educational institutions and employers can provide prospective graduates with a more accurate picture of the labour market and facilitate a smoother transition into the workforce.

While it is tempting to only look at the motivational aspects of goals, consistent failure to achieve targets can cause frustration, which in turn may lead to lower effort and worse life outcomes. Keeping track of youth aspirations against the system's ability to match them is critical if we are serious about creating a motivated and productive labour force for the future.

Garima Agarwal is an Assistant Professor of Economics at Azim Premji University, Bengaluru. The views expressed are personal.

### Who falls short

The data for the charts were sourced from UDAYA - Understanding the Lives of Adolescents and Young Adults



TABLE 1: Educational aspirations during both rounds of interview (in %)

Educational aspiration	First interview	Second interview
Below Grade 12	4.93	0.4
Completed Class 12 but below graduate	17.74	10.2
Graduate	53.3	60.35
Post-graduate and above	18.15	23.18
Don't know	5.87	5.87

TABLE 2: The gap between initial aspirations and subsequent attainment (in %)

Attainment-goal gap	Unmarried boys	Unmarried girls	Married girls	Total
Met goal	31.8	45.9	26.3	37.6
Exceeded goal	4.8	5.4	3.1	4.8
Below goal	54	44.2	67.5	51.8
No stated goal	9.4	4.5	3.1	5.9

CHART 1: The share of respondents who fell short of educational goals by wealth quintile and gender. Q1 = Top quintile; Q5 = Bottom quintile

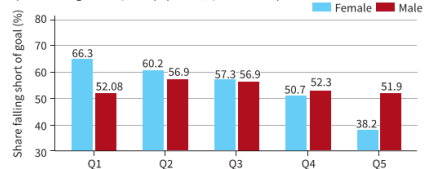


TABLE 3: Learning levels in reading and math (in %)

Learning level	Unmarried boys	Unmarried girls	Married girls	Total
Reads a story	73.97	71.84	44.65	59.74
Solves division problems	51.95	34.53	15.44	29.27

Note: Table 1 and 2 use respondents aged 15-19 years at the initial interview with recorded aspirations; marital status is as recorded at the time of the second interview (N = 6300). Table 3 reports the share of all respondents at the highest proficiency levels using UDAYA data for adolescents aged 15-19 years at the initial interview; marital status is as recorded at the second interview (N = 13141). Reading levels include recognition of letters, ability to read words, ability to read a short paragraph (Class 1 level text), and ability to read a longer story (Class 2 level text). Math levels are recognition of single-digit numbers; double-digit numbers, and ability to perform a two-digit subtraction problem with borrowing and a three-digit by one-digit division problem. Children above Class 3 (older than 8 years) should be able to perform division based on NCERT textbook curriculum



## 12M. Goal attainment and youth aspirations are not aligned

### लक्ष्य प्राप्ति और युवाओं की आकांक्षाएँ परस्पर अनुरूप नहीं हैं

- India's ability to ride the cresting wave of the **demographic dividend**, before it recedes, depends critically on the **education and employment choices of its 367 million young people**.  
भारत की जनसांख्यिकीय लाभांश की उभरती लहर का लाभ उठाने की क्षमता, उसके समाप्त होने से पहले, देश के 36.7 करोड़ युवाओं के शिक्षा और रोजगार संबंधी विकल्पों पर अत्यधिक निर्भर करती है।
- The **State of Working India Report 2026**, published by **Azim Premji University**, offers insights into **youth aspirations** and attainments.  
अज़ीम प्रेमजी विश्वविद्यालय द्वारा प्रकाशित **स्टेट ऑफ वर्किंग इंडिया रिपोर्ट 2026** युवाओं की आकांक्षाओं और उपलब्धियों पर महत्वपूर्ण जानकारी प्रदान करती है।
- The study utilises the **Population Council's dataset — UDAYA: Understanding the Lives of Adolescents and Young Adults** — which surveyed adolescents in **Uttar Pradesh and Bihar**, the two Indian States with the largest youth populations.  
इस अध्ययन में **पापुलेशन काउंसिल** के डेटा-संग्रह — **UDAYA: Understanding the Lives of Adolescents and Young Adults** — का उपयोग किया गया है, जिसमें भारत के सर्वाधिक युवा आबादी वाले दो राज्यों **उत्तर प्रदेश** और **बिहार** के किशोरों का सर्वेक्षण किया गया।
- The **sample of interest covers girls and boys aged 15-19 when first contacted in 2015-16 and tracks them three years later in 2018-19 when they are 18-22 years old**.  
अध्ययन का नमूना उन लड़कों और लड़कियों को सम्मिलित करता है जिनकी आयु **2015-16** में प्रथम संपर्क के समय **15-19 वर्ष** थी, तथा जिन्हें तीन वर्ष बाद **2018-19** में, जब उनकी आयु **18-22 वर्ष** हो गई, पुनः ट्रैक किया गया।
- Of the full sample of 13,141 youngsters surveyed, aspirations were recorded only for 6,300 who were enrolled in education at the time of the survey**.  
सर्वेक्षण में शामिल कुल **13,141 युवाओं** में से केवल उन **6,300 युवाओं** की आकांक्षाएँ दर्ज की गईं, जो सर्वेक्षण के समय शिक्षा में नामांकित थे।
- Boys leave to join the labour market while girls exit at the time of marriage**.  
लड़के **श्रम बाज़ार** में प्रवेश करने के लिए शिक्षा छोड़ते हैं, जबकि लड़कियाँ प्रायः **विवाह** के समय शिक्षा से बाहर हो जाती हैं।
- However, at age **15-19**, when respondents were likely engaged in schooling, **70% of unmarried girls and boys could read a Class 2-level story against only 45% of married girls**.  
किन्तु **15-19 वर्ष** की आयु में, जब प्रतिभागी संभवतः विद्यालयी शिक्षा में संलग्न थे, तब अविवाहित लड़कियों और लड़कों में से **70%** लोग **कक्षा 2 स्तर** की कहानी पढ़ सकते थे, जबकि विवाहित लड़कियों में यह अनुपात केवल **45%** था।
- Stronger linkages between educational institutions and employers can provide prospective graduates with a more accurate picture of the labour market and facilitate a smoother transition into the workforce**.  
**शैक्षिक संस्थानों और नियोक्ताओं** के बीच अधिक सशक्त संबंध, भावी स्नातकों को **श्रम बाज़ार** की अधिक यथार्थवादी समझ प्रदान कर सकते हैं तथा उन्हें कार्यबल में सहज संक्रमण में सहायता कर सकते हैं।



# Jewellery sector bats for gold monetisation scheme

## GS III: Economy

**M. Soundariya Preetha**  
COIMBATORE

The solution to the pressure on foreign reserves does not lie in reducing demand for gold but in unlocking the existing gold through a transparent and regulated gold monetisation scheme (GMS), said the All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council (GJC) chairman Rajesh Rokde on Monday.

Reacting to PM Narendra Modi's call to citizens on Sunday to use public transport more and curtail gold purchases and international flight trips for a year, Mr. Rokde said a revitalised, jeweller-integrated GMS can help mobilise idle household gold, cut dependence on imports and boost the formal economy.

According to Avinash Gupta, vice chairman of the council, instead of idle

gold remaining locked in households and lockers, GMS can channel it into the formal economy.

Managing director of C. Krishniah Chetty Group C. Vinod Hayagriv said India imported almost 800 tonne of gold annually, and industry estimates suggested almost 200 tonne locked away every year in the form of raw bullion purchased by individuals as passive investments.

## 12M. Jewellery sector bats for gold monetisation scheme

### आभूषण क्षेत्र ने स्वर्ण मुद्राकरण योजना का समर्थन किया

- The solution to the pressure on foreign reserves does not lie in reducing demand for gold but in unlocking the existing gold through a transparent and regulated gold monetisation scheme (GMS), said the All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council (GJC) chairman Rajesh Rokde on Monday.

सोमवार को ऑल इंडिया जेम एंड ज्वेलरी

डोमेस्टिक काउंसिल (GJC) के अध्यक्ष राजेश रोकड़े ने कहा कि विदेशी मुद्रा भंडार पर दबाव का समाधान सोने की मांग कम करने में नहीं बल्कि पारदर्शी और विनियमित गोल्ड मॉनेटाइजेशन स्कीम (GMS) के माध्यम से मौजूदा सोने को उपयोग में लाने में है।

- Reacting to PM Narendra Modi's call to citizens on Sunday to use public transport more and curtail gold purchases and international flight trips for a year, Mr. Rokde said a revitalised, jeweller-integrated GMS can help mobilise idle household gold, cut dependence on imports and boost the formal economy.

प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी द्वारा रविवार को नागरिकों से अधिक सार्वजनिक परिवहन का उपयोग करने तथा एक वर्ष तक सोने की खरीद और अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई यात्राओं में कटौती करने की अपील पर प्रतिक्रिया देते हुए श्री रोकड़े ने कहा कि पुनर्जीवित और ज्वेलर्स से जुड़ी GMS घरेलू निष्क्रिय सोने को उपयोग में लाने, आयात पर निर्भरता घटाने और औपचारिक अर्थव्यवस्था को बढ़ावा देने में मदद कर सकती है।

- According to Avinash Gupta, vice chairman of the council, instead of idle gold remaining locked in households and lockers, GMS can channel it into the formal economy.

काउंसिल के उपाध्यक्ष अविनाश गुप्ता के अनुसार, घरों और लॉकरों में निष्क्रिय पड़े सोने को बंद रखने के बजाय GMS उसे औपचारिक अर्थव्यवस्था में ला सकती है।

- Managing director of C. Krishniah Chetty Group C. Vinod Hayagriv said India imported almost 800 tonne of gold annually, and industry estimates suggested almost 200 tonne locked away every year in the form of raw bullion purchased by individuals as passive investments.

सी. कृष्णैया चेट्टी ग्रुप के प्रबंध निदेशक सी. विनोद हयग्रीव ने कहा कि भारत हर वर्ष लगभग 800 टन सोना आयात करता है और उद्योग के अनुमान बताते हैं कि लगभग 200 टन सोना हर साल व्यक्तियों द्वारा निष्क्रिय निवेश के रूप में खरीदे गए कच्चे बुलियन के रूप में बंद पड़ा रहता है।

## GS Paper III: Science and Technology

12 May 2026

### TOPICS COVERED

12M

Physical activity has stalled for 20 years, hurting health and climate

पिछले 20 वर्षों से शारीरिक गतिविधि ठहर गई है, जिससे स्वास्थ्य और जलवायु पर प्रतिकूल प्रभाव पड़ रहा है।



# Physical activity has stalled for 20 years, hurting health and climate

A series of new papers has recognised that physical activity is not just an individual choice, but is shaped by wider social factors such as gender and socioeconomic position; this perspective contrasts with earlier approaches that focused more on individual behaviour and biomedical outcomes

T.V. Padma

Global levels of physical activity remained unchanged despite policy recommendations and adoption over the last two decades, with large differences across gender and socio-economic groups, three new research reports have shown.

Current efforts to promote participation in physical activity are both insufficient and have made no dent, the reports say. Worldwide, more than five million deaths per year are attributed to physical inactivity. About one in three adults and eight in ten adolescents do not meet the World Health Organization's recommended activity guidelines, which is 150 minutes of moderate-intense weekly physical activity for adults and 60 minutes daily for children.

Deborah Salvo, associate professor and Research Center Director at the University of Texas at Austin, and her colleagues analysed physical activity data from 68 countries worldwide and found persistent inequalities in the ways in which people across the world are active.

"We were not just interested in understanding the overall levels of total physical activity in countries, but rather, in how many people in each country are meeting physical activity guidelines through active leisure, active transport, and active labour," Dr. Salvo said.

"What we found is a huge disparity: the higher the country income level, the higher the percentage of the population getting their physical activity through active leisure. And the lower the country income level, the higher the proportion of individuals getting their physical activity from active labour and transport."

The findings have been reported in *Nature Medicine*.

**Active leisure gap**  
Dr. Salvo said that within countries, the team observed a large gap in terms of who gets to be active through leisure or free time – and "it is mostly wealthy men that do".

The most striking finding was the opportunity gap (of 40% points) worldwide for active leisure among contrasting wealthy men in wealthy countries with socio-economically disadvantaged women in poor countries.

The team's paper summarised decades of evidence to show that physical activity should not merely be part of obesity and cardiometabolic disease prevention and control agendas, as it also helps prevent and treat multiple cancers as well as depression, and boosts immunity.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, evidence emerged showing lower rates of infection, severe COVID-19, hospitalisation, and mortality due to COVID-19 among active individuals, she said.

"Despite all this, for some reason, doctors, public health professionals, policy makers, and the public at large seem to only discuss and promote physical activity within the context of a limited range of health conditions."

While physical activity is certainly very important to prevent and manage these conditions, it is so much more, and sometimes even health professionals do not harness or promote the reality of its benefits, she adds.

**Rich-poor divide**  
"The problem of inactivity globally is way worse than we think it is," according to Dr. Salvo. "We need to think more carefully about the sources of physical activity for a majority of people globally – 84% of the world's population lives in low and middle-income countries – and their implications for whole health: physical, mental, societal."

The disparity between rich and low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) is again emphasised in another study, led by Erica Hinckson, professor of physical activity and urban health at the Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand, and colleagues in *Nature Health*.

Their study shows how physical activity can support climate mitigation and adaptation. They also outline how strategies that support walking, cycling, and public transport instead of driving may reduce emissions, and how climate change can disrupt activity because of extreme events such as heatwaves.

Additionally, they show how some physical activity initiatives can themselves contribute to emissions, and unintended consequences such as cities in an effort to make themselves more walkable displacing their own residents can occur.

The work points to several important gaps from LMICs, with much of the



Physical activity levels naturally fluctuate across the lifespan for many reasons, including health, work, family responsibilities, and life transitions. SHAWA ROVING/ASH

evidence linking physical activity and climate change still coming from high-income settings.

"So we know far less about how these relationships play out in LMIC contexts where the climate risks, urban conditions, and resource constraints may be very different," Dr. Hinckson says.

There is also limited evidence from LMICs on how physical activity initiatives can support both climate mitigation and adaptation in ways that are feasible, equitable, and locally relevant. For example, more research is needed on what works in informal settlements, indigenous, local, and community-facing high exposure to heat, flooding, and air pollution.

Dr. Hinckson's team's work also shows that there is a need for more context-specific evidence that includes indigenous, local, and community knowledge rather than that relying too much on models and assumptions drawn from high-income countries.

"So the gap is not only about having fewer studies, it is also about needing research that better reflects LMIC realities, priorities, and solutions," Dr. Hinckson says.

The team's paper, according to her, is that it brings environment, climate, and health together in a structured, integrated way. The four key messages are that physical inactivity and climate change are connected; physical activity initiatives are also climate mitigation and adaptation initiatives; equity, indigenous knowledge and community voice are essential to avoid unintended consequences when physical activity and climate change agendas are integrated; and that all major physical activity investments should be designed as climate-sensitive investments.

**Unclear end goals**  
In a second *Nature Health* paper, Andrea Ramirez Varela, assistant professor at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, and colleagues assessed 661 national policy documents to promote physical activity from 200 countries worldwide from 2004 to 2025. They found that although most countries have developed and adopted physical activity policies, the evidence of implementation remains limited. Just 38.7% (of 250) of the 661 policies analysed in the study assigned actions to three or more government sectors (including, for example, health and education), indicating a lack of cross-sectoral collaboration. Meanwhile, 26.5% (53) of countries with policy documents did not include measurable targets to determine their impact.

"This disconnect is significant because it challenges a common assumption in global health that once policies are developed and adopted, change will follow," Dr. Ramirez says. "In this case, the presence of written documents has not translated into implementation at scale."

**Infrastructure for physical activity**  
A major contribution of the series is the clear recognition that physical activity is not simply an individual choice, Dr. Mielke adds. Instead, it is shaped by wider social and structural factors such as gender, socioeconomic position, neighbourhood environments, and policy contexts. This perspective contrasts with earlier approaches that focused more heavily on individual behaviour and biomedical outcomes.

"In my point of view, by emphasising these broader determinants, the reports shift responsibility away from individuals and towards the societal systems that enable or constrain opportunities for

movement, and shows a clear message that meaningful increases in physical activity require supportive environments, equitable access, and policy-level change rather than individual motivation alone," Dr. Mielke says.

"While these studies offer an updated synthesis of the current state of physical activity research, some of the existing gaps are inherent to the data available to researchers, according to Dr. Mielke.

For example, the analyses of global inequalities in physical activity rely on data from 68 countries, which does not fully capture the diversity of global contexts and may underrepresent some groups of people. "This limitation highlights the need for greater investment in global surveillance systems so that future studies can draw on more comprehensive and truly representative datasets."

Systems-level solutions are required to address both the major socioeconomic and gender opportunity gaps for choice-based physical activity, according to Dr. Salvo. "We must step away from trying to blame individuals for their levels of inactivity and turn to fix the systems that promote this type of behaviour in the first place."

These include car-centric urban design, low investment in widespread infrastructure for physical activity, like parks and public open spaces, but also full sidewalks and protected bicycle lane coverage in cities, and excellent transit resources dedicated to prevention, and competing policy priorities including infectious diseases and economic development. "Patterns of physical activity also differ in important ways. In many LMICs, physical activity is more commonly associated with transportation or occupational necessity rather than leisure or recreational exercise."

"These reports reaffirm the importance of physical activity for global health but also extend our understanding beyond the traditional focus on obesity and cardiometabolic disease," says Gregoire Van Mieghem, a behavioural epidemiologist at the University of Queensland, Australia. They highlight that physical activity contributes to wellbeing in broader ways, including social and environmental dimensions.

**Infrastructure for physical activity**  
A major contribution of the series is the clear recognition that physical activity is not simply an individual choice, Dr. Mielke adds. Instead, it is shaped by wider social and structural factors such as gender, socioeconomic position, neighbourhood environments, and policy contexts. This perspective contrasts with earlier approaches that focused more heavily on individual behaviour and biomedical outcomes.

"In my point of view, by emphasising these broader determinants, the reports shift responsibility away from individuals and towards the societal systems that enable or constrain opportunities for

movement, and shows a clear message that meaningful increases in physical activity require supportive environments, equitable access, and policy-level change rather than individual motivation alone," Dr. Mielke says.

"While these studies offer an updated synthesis of the current state of physical activity research, some of the existing gaps are inherent to the data available to researchers, according to Dr. Mielke.

For example, the analyses of global inequalities in physical activity rely on data from 68 countries, which does not fully capture the diversity of global contexts and may underrepresent some groups of people. "This limitation highlights the need for greater investment in global surveillance systems so that future studies can draw on more comprehensive and truly representative datasets."

Systems-level solutions are required to address both the major socioeconomic and gender opportunity gaps for choice-based physical activity, according to Dr. Salvo. "We must step away from trying to blame individuals for their levels of inactivity and turn to fix the systems that promote this type of behaviour in the first place."

These include car-centric urban design, low investment in widespread infrastructure for physical activity, like parks and public open spaces, but also full sidewalks and protected bicycle lane coverage in cities, and excellent transit resources dedicated to prevention, and competing policy priorities including infectious diseases and economic development. "Patterns of physical activity also differ in important ways. In many LMICs, physical activity is more commonly associated with transportation or occupational necessity rather than leisure or recreational exercise."

"These reports reaffirm the importance of physical activity for global health but also extend our understanding beyond the traditional focus on obesity and cardiometabolic disease," says Gregoire Van Mieghem, a behavioural epidemiologist at the University of Queensland, Australia. They highlight that physical activity contributes to wellbeing in broader ways, including social and environmental dimensions.

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## 12M. Physical activity has stalled for 20 years, hurting health and climate

पिछले 20 वर्षों से शारीरिक गतिविधि

ठहर गई है, जिससे स्वास्थ्य और जलवायु पर प्रतिकूल प्रभाव पड़ रहा है।

- A series of new papers has
- About one in three adults and eight in ten adolescents do not meet the World Health Organization's recommended activity guidelines, which is 150 minutes of moderately intense weekly physical activity for adults and 60 minutes daily for children.

लगभग हर तीन में से एक वयस्क और दस में से आठ किशोर विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन द्वारा

अनुशंसित गतिविधि दिशानिर्देशों को पूरा नहीं करते हैं, जिनके अनुसार वयस्कों के लिए प्रति सप्ताह 150 मिनट की मध्यम तीव्रता वाली शारीरिक गतिविधि तथा बच्चों के लिए प्रतिदिन 60 मिनट की शारीरिक गतिविधि आवश्यक है।

- "We were not just interested in understanding the overall levels of total physical activity in countries, but rather, in how many people in each country are meeting physical activity guidelines through active leisure, active transport, and active labour," Dr. Salvo said.

डॉ. साल्वो ने कहा, "हम केवल देशों में कुल शारीरिक गतिविधि के समग्र स्तर को समझने में रुचि नहीं रखते थे, बल्कि यह जानने में अधिक रुचि रखते थे कि प्रत्येक देश में कितने लोग सक्रिय अवकाश, सक्रिय परिवहन और सक्रिय श्रम के माध्यम से शारीरिक गतिविधि दिशानिर्देशों को पूरा कर रहे हैं।"

- The most striking finding was the opportunity gap (of 40% points)

worldwide for active leisure when contrasting wealthy men in wealthy countries with socio-economically disadvantaged women in poor countries.

सबसे उल्लेखनीय निष्कर्ष यह था कि विश्वभर में सक्रिय अवकाश के संदर्भ में अवसरों की असमानता (40 प्रतिशत अंक) अत्यधिक व्यापक है, विशेषकर जब समृद्ध देशों के संपन्न पुरुषों की तुलना गरीब देशों की सामाजिक-आर्थिक रूप से वंचित महिलाओं से की जाती है।

- The team's paper summarised decades of evidence to show that physical activity should not merely be part of obesity and cardiometabolic disease prevention and control agendas, as it also helps prevent and treat multiple cancers as well as depression, and boosts immunity.

टीम के शोध-पत्र ने दर्शकों के प्रमाणों का सार प्रस्तुत करते हुए यह दर्शाया कि शारीरिक गतिविधि को केवल मोटापा और हृदय-चयापचय संबंधी रोगों की रोकथाम एवं नियंत्रण तक सीमित नहीं किया जाना चाहिए,



क्योंकि यह अनेक प्रकार के कैंसरों तथा अवसाद की रोकथाम और उपचार में भी सहायक है तथा प्रतिरक्षा क्षमता को बढ़ाती है।

- They also outline how strategies that support walking, cycling, and public transport instead of driving may reduce emissions, and how climate change can disrupt activity because of extreme events such as heatwaves.

उन्होंने यह भी स्पष्ट किया कि पैदल चलना, साइकिल चलाना और सार्वजनिक परिवहन को बढ़ावा देने वाली रणनीतियाँ, निजी वाहन चलाने की तुलना में, उत्सर्जन को कम कर सकती हैं, तथा किस प्रकार जलवायु परिवर्तन लू जैसी चरम घटनाओं के कारण शारीरिक गतिविधियों को बाधित कर सकता है।

- There is also limited evidence from LMICs on how physical activity initiatives can support both climate mitigation and adaptation in ways that are feasible, equitable, and locally relevant.

निम्न एवं मध्यम आय वाले देशों से इस बात के भी सीमित प्रमाण उपलब्ध हैं कि शारीरिक गतिविधि संबंधी पहले किस प्रकार व्यावहारिक, न्यायसंगत और स्थानीय परिस्थितियों के अनुरूप रहते हुए जलवायु शमन और अनुकूलन दोनों का समर्थन कर सकती हैं।

GS Paper III: Environment		12 May 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
12M	2 cheetahs released into wild in Kuno National Park कूनो राष्ट्रीय उद्यान में 2 चीते जंगल में छोड़े गए	
12M	China may not join alliance on conservation of big cats बड़ी बिल्लियों के संरक्षण गठबंधन में चीन शामिल नहीं हो सकता	
12M	A new start against noise pollution ध्वनि प्रदूषण के विरुद्ध एक नई शुरुआत	

## 2 cheetahs released into wild in Kuno National Park

GS III: Environment  
Press Trust of India  
SHEOPUR

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Monday released two female cheetahs brought from Botswana into an open forest in the Kuno National Park following the completion of their quarantine period.

The reintroduction of cheetahs brought from Nigeria, South Africa, and now Botswana is achieving consistent success, and today Madhya Pradesh has earned nationwide recognition as the 'Cheetah State', the CM said on the occasion.

This will give impetus to 'Project Cheetah' and add another important chapter to India's wildlife conservation history, an official said.

The objective of the project is to restore the endangered animal species in the state, increase their numbers, and prepare them for free hunting and roaming.

## 12M. 2 cheetahs released into wild in Kuno National Park कूनो राष्ट्रीय उद्यान में 2 चीते जंगल में छोड़े गए

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Monday released two female cheetahs brought from Botswana into an open forest in the Kuno National Park following the completion of their quarantine period.

मध्य प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री मोहन यादव ने सोमवार को बोत्सवाना से लाई गई दो मादा चीतों को उनके क्वारंटीन अवधि पूरी होने के बाद कूनो राष्ट्रीय उद्यान के खुले जंगल में छोड़ा।

- The reintroduction of cheetahs brought from Nigeria, South Africa, and now Botswana is achieving consistent success, and today Madhya Pradesh has earned nationwide recognition as the 'Cheetah State', the CM said on the occasion.

मुख्यमंत्री ने इस अवसर पर कहा कि नाइजीरिया, दक्षिण अफ्रीका और अब बोत्सवाना से लाए गए चीतों का पुनर्प्रवेश लगातार सफल हो रहा है और आज मध्य प्रदेश को पूरे देश में 'चीता राज्य' के रूप में पहचान मिली है।

- This will give impetus to 'Project Cheetah' and add another important chapter to India's wildlife conservation history, an official said.

एक अधिकारी ने कहा कि इससे 'प्रोजेक्ट चीता' को बढ़ावा मिलेगा और भारत के वन्यजीव संरक्षण इतिहास में एक और महत्वपूर्ण अध्याय जुड़ेगा।

- The objective of the project is to restore the endangered animal species in the state, increase their numbers, and prepare them for free hunting and roaming.



इस परियोजना का उद्देश्य राज्य में संकटग्रस्त पशु प्रजातियों को पुनर्स्थापित करना, उनकी संख्या बढ़ाना और उन्हें स्वतंत्र शिकार तथा विचरण के लिए तैयार करना है।

## China may not join alliance on conservation of big cats

GS III: Environment

Jacob Koshy  
NEW DELHI

China is unlikely to be a part of the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA), a global initiative spearheaded by India to focus concerted attention on conserving big cats, according to senior officials in the Environment Ministry.

The big cats consist of the tiger, lion, leopard, cheetah, puma, jaguar, and snow leopard.

Saudi Arabia has confirmed its membership of IBCA, an official said.

"We have sent an invitation to China but there has been no development on it yet," an official told *The Hindu*.

The IBCA, which is being spearheaded by India, is to hold its first-ever summit here from June 1-3, with representatives from 95 countries expected to participate. As of now, there are 24 member countries, three observer countries and several other 'range' countries as part of



Independent scientific assessments show China has a very small wild tiger population, mostly restricted to the Russian border. AP

the alliance.

Independent scientific assessments indicate that China, at present, has a very small wild tiger population, with nearly all of them restricted to the northeast borderlands with Russia. These are largely Amur (Siberian) tigers.

Camera-trap and landscape studies by Chinese and international researchers estimate roughly 50-70 wild Amur tigers in China.

India had about 3,167 wild tigers in 2022 – overwhelmingly the Bengal tiger. The tigers are spread across a network of re-

serves and forest landscapes from the Himalayas to the Western Ghats and central India.

Though IBCA members have no financial commitments, countries will be expected to, among other things, coordinate action through programmes and activities aimed at improving the state of habitats, prey, including big cat protection and conservation, innovation, research, development and capacity building; share relevant information about big cat protection and conservation programmes.



## 12M. China may not join alliance on conservation of big cats बड़ी बिल्लियों के संरक्षण गठबंधन में चीन शामिल नहीं हो सकता

- **China** is unlikely to be a part of the **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)**, a global initiative spearheaded by **India** to focus concerted attention on conserving big cats, according to senior officials in the **Environment Ministry**.  
पर्यावरण मंत्रालय के वरिष्ठ अधिकारियों के अनुसार, चीन के इंटरनेशनल बिग कैट एलायंस (IBCA) का हिस्सा बनने की संभावना कम है, जो बड़ी बिल्लियों के संरक्षण पर सामूहिक ध्यान केंद्रित करने के लिए भारत द्वारा शुरू की गई वैश्विक पहल है।
- The **big cats** consist of the **tiger, lion, leopard, cheetah, puma, jaguar, and snow leopard**.  
बड़ी बिल्लियों में बाघ, शेर, तेंदुआ, चीता, प्यूमा, जगुआर और हिम तेंदुआ शामिल हैं।
- **Saudi Arabia** has confirmed its membership of **IBCA**, an official said.  
एक अधिकारी ने कहा कि सऊदी अरब ने IBCA की सदस्यता की पुष्टि कर दी है।
- "We have sent an invitation to China but there has been no development on it yet," an official told *The Hindu*.  
एक अधिकारी ने द हिंदू से कहा, "हमने चीन को निमंत्रण भेजा है लेकिन अभी तक इस पर कोई प्रगति नहीं हुई है।"
- The **IBCA**, which is being spearheaded by **India**, is to hold its first-ever summit here from June 1-3, with representatives from 95 countries expected to participate.  
भारत के नेतृत्व वाले IBCA का पहला शिखर सम्मेलन 1 से 3 जून तक यहां आयोजित होगा, जिसमें 95 देशों के प्रतिनिधियों के भाग लेने की उम्मीद है।
- As of now, there are **24 member countries**, three observer countries and several other 'range' countries as part of the alliance.  
वर्तमान में इस गठबंधन में 24 सदस्य देश, तीन पर्यवेक्षक देश और कई अन्य 'रेंज' देश शामिल हैं।
- **Independent scientific assessments** indicate that **China**, at present, has a very small wild tiger population, with nearly all of them restricted to the northeast borderlands with **Russia**.  
स्वतंत्र वैज्ञानिक आकलनों से संकेत मिलता है कि वर्तमान में चीन में जंगली बाघों की संख्या बहुत कम है और उनमें से लगभग सभी रूस के साथ उत्तर-पूर्वी सीमावर्ती क्षेत्रों तक सीमित हैं।
- These are largely **Amur (Siberian) tigers**.  
ये मुख्य रूप से अमूर (साइबेरियन) बाघ हैं।
- Camera-trap and landscape studies by Chinese and international researchers estimate roughly **50-70 wild Amur tigers** in China.  
चीनी और अंतरराष्ट्रीय शोधकर्ताओं द्वारा किए गए कैमरा-ट्रैप और लैंडस्केप अध्ययनों के अनुसार चीन में लगभग 50-70 जंगली अमूर बाघ हैं।
- **India** had about 3,167 wild tigers in 2022 — overwhelmingly the **Bengal tiger**.  
भारत में 2022 में लगभग 3,167 जंगली बाघ थे, जिनमें अधिकांश बंगाल टाइगर थे।
- The tigers are spread across a network of reserves and forest landscapes from the **Himalayas** to the **Western Ghats** and central India.  
ये बाघ हिमालय से लेकर पश्चिमी घाट और मध्य भारत तक फैले अभयारण्यों और वन क्षेत्रों के नेटवर्क में पाए जाते हैं।
- Though **IBCA** members have no financial commitments, countries will be expected to, among other things, coordinate action through programmes and activities aimed at improving the state of habitats, prey, including big cat protection and conservation, innovation, research, development and capacity building.
- They will also share relevant information about big cat protection and conservation programmes.  
वे बड़ी बिल्लियों की सुरक्षा और संरक्षण कार्यक्रमों से संबंधित महत्वपूर्ण जानकारी भी साझा करेंगे।



# A new start against noise pollution

GS III: Environment

**F**or a few weeks now, the most insistent sound in Tamil Nadu has been the pea whistle, and that looks set to continue. Inside the Chepauk stadium, Chennai Super Kings supporters live up to the team's call to action – “*whistle podu*” (blow the whistle) – through all its Indian Premier League matches.

Outside the stadium, since the Assembly election results on May 4, supporters of the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) have flooded the streets across the State to celebrate Joseph Vijay's victory by blowing the party's election symbol, which is also a pea whistle.

Anyone who watched the 2010 football World Cup will understand how irritating this noise can be. The vuvuzelas were so relentless that international viewers complained that the football commentary had become inaudible, prompting several broadcasters to add audio filters. When hundreds or thousands of people blow pea whistles, they render a comparably terrible annoyance. A single whistle blast creates 104-116 decibels of pressure at the source, according to research from Western Michigan University. The threshold beyond which sustained exposure to air pressure can damage hearing is 85 decibels.

Some of the cricket team's matches have been rousing and the TVK's victory is unprecedented. But the fact remains that noise pollution has become the most tolerated form of pollution in India.

While even air pollution has finally forayed into the policy vocabulary as a deleterious problem, data from the National Ambient Noise Monitoring Network (NANMN) show that more than 80% of recording stations breached the prescribed noise limits during both day and night in 2019 itself – while awareness of its ills remains low. In Chennai, all 10 stations exceeded the residential nighttime



**Vasudevan  
Mukunth**

threshold of 45 decibels. A 2022 UN Environment Programme report cited a maximum reading from Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh to be the world's second-highest on its list (a ranking contested by government officials).

The actual problem is likely to be much worse as the NANMN has only 70 stations across seven metros, and the network has not been meaningfully expanded in 14 years. District towns in the Hindi belt and the Northeast generate ambient sounds whose profiles no official authority is measuring. Further, in towns with less healthy civic infrastructure and less responsive policing, loudspeaker permissions are unchecked and construction activity often runs through the night. Among the poor, the children often sleep with noise while their parents often spend several hours in conditions that, in any country with a functioning occupational health enforcement, would attract criminal liability.

## Effects of excess noise

The World Health Organization has attributed 16% of disabling hearing loss in adults to occupational noise. India is estimated to have 6.3 crore people with some degree of impaired hearing. According to studies of noise-induced hearing loss in occupational settings, the prevalence of impaired hearing ranges from 13% in a Puducherry survey of 500 construction workers to a pooled estimate of 49% in a meta-analysis of industrial cohorts.

The European Environment Agency ranks noise as the second-largest environmental cause of disability-adjusted life years lost in Europe, behind only air pollution.

A WHO synthesis attributed around 16 lakh healthy life years lost annually in Western Europe to traffic noise alone. This is because loud sounds disrupt sleep, elevate cortisol levels in the blood, render endothelial dysfunction, and impair the cognition of children

near airports and arterial roads. India also has more densely packed cities, building acoustics that are less sensitive to the need to mitigate noise, and of course looser enforcement.

## Rules against noise

If tolerance is not a feature of India's political discourse, it remains a fixture of how Indians react to pollution.

One reason is the Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules 2000, which set zone-wise limits and silence zones but which are rarely enforced. The Central Pollution Control Board only recently proposed financial penalties for violations – that too because much of the worst noise is generated by occasions that politicians would prefer not to police.

The Rules already accommodate religious and cultural observances. State governments can permit nighttime loudspeaker use between 10 pm and midnight on festive occasions for up to 15 days a year. However, public events routinely exceed decibel limits within the permitted hours, with sound systems often plonked in residential lanes and sometimes even outside hospitals.

No major political party has been willing to ask its supporters to organise a festival or procession but observe the limits. Parties fear that any restraint will be read as an attack on the faithful. It need not be and the political imagination should be capable of saying so.

Mr. Vijay has presented TVK as a fresh start for Tamil Nadu, unencumbered by the compromises of the Dravidian parties. At least for now, he possesses the political capital to set norms that his predecessors could not. One hopes the whistle that brought him to power could be the start of a new relationship with public sound that respects the right of people to work, relax, and sleep in peace.

*mukunth.v@thehindu.co.in*

The World Health Organization has attributed 16% of disabling hearing loss in adults to occupational noise



## 12M. A new start against noise pollution

### ध्वनि प्रदूषण के विरुद्ध एक नई शुरुआत

- For a few weeks now, the most insistent sound in **Tamil Nadu** has been the **pea whistle**, and that looks set to continue.  
पिछले कुछ सप्ताहों से **तमिलनाडु** में सबसे अधिक सुनाई देने वाली ध्वनि **पी-व्हिसल (मटर सीटी)** की रही है, और ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि यह आगे भी जारी रहेगी।
- Outside the stadium, since the **Assembly election results** on **May 4**, supporters of the **Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK)** have flooded the streets across the State to **celebrate Joseph Vijay's victory by blowing the party's election symbol, which is also a pea whistle**.  
स्टेडियम के बाहर, **4 मई** को आए **विधानसभा चुनाव परिणामों** के बाद से, **तमिलगा वेत्री कझगम (TVK)** के समर्थकों ने **जोसेफ विजय** की जीत का उत्सव मनाने के लिए राज्यभर की सड़कों पर भीड़ लगा दी है और **पार्टी के चुनाव चिह्न — जो कि एक पी-व्हिसल ही है —** को बजाया है।
- **A single whistle blast creates 104-116 decibels** of pressure at the source, according to research from **Western Michigan University**.  
**वेस्टर्न मिशिगन विश्वविद्यालय** के अनुसंधान के अनुसार, एक अकेली सीटी की ध्वनि स्रोत पर **104-116 डेसीबल** तक का ध्वनि-दाब उत्पन्न करती है।
- **The threshold beyond which sustained exposure to air pressure can damage hearing is 85 decibels**.  
वह सीमा जिसके आगे लगातार ध्वनि-दाब के संपर्क में रहने से श्रवण क्षमता को क्षति पहुँच सकती है, **85 डेसीबल** मानी जाती है।
- While even **air pollution** has finally forayed into the **policy vocabulary** as a **deleterious problem**, data from the **National Ambient Noise Monitoring Network (NANMN)** show that **more than 80% of recording stations breached the prescribed noise limits during both day and night in 2019** itself — while awareness of its ills remains low.  
यद्यपि **वायु प्रदूषण** को अंततः एक **हानिकारक समस्या** के रूप में **नीतिगत विमर्श** में स्थान मिल गया है, फिर भी **राष्ट्रीय परिवेशीय ध्वनि निगरानी नेटवर्क (NANMN)** के आँकड़े दर्शाते हैं कि **2019** में ही **80%** से अधिक रिकॉर्डिंग स्टेशनों ने दिन और रात दोनों समय निर्धारित **ध्वनि सीमा** का उल्लंघन किया था — जबकि इसके दुष्प्रभावों के प्रति जागरूकता अभी भी कम है।
- In **Chennai**, all **10 stations** exceeded the **residential nighttime threshold of 45 decibels**.  
**चेन्नई** में सभी **10 स्टेशनों** ने रात्रिकालीन आवासीय सीमा **45 डेसीबल** को पार कर दिया।
- A **2022 UN Environment Programme** report cited **a maximum reading from Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh to be the world's second-highest on its list (a ranking contested by government officials)**.  
**2022** के संयुक्त राष्ट्र पर्यावरण कार्यक्रम की एक रिपोर्ट में **उत्तर प्रदेश के मुरादाबाद** से प्राप्त अधिकतम ध्वनि स्तर को विश्व में **दूसरे सबसे ऊँचे स्तर** के रूप में उल्लेखित किया गया था (हालाँकि इस रैंकिंग को सरकारी अधिकारियों ने चुनौती दी थी)।
- The actual problem is likely to be much worse as the **NANMN has only 70 stations across seven metros**, and the network has not been meaningfully expanded in **14 years**.  
वास्तविक समस्या संभवतः इससे कहीं अधिक गंभीर है, क्योंकि **NANMN** के पास केवल **सात महानगरों** में **70 स्टेशन** हैं, और पिछले **14 वर्षों** में इस नेटवर्क का सार्थक विस्तार नहीं किया गया है।
- **Further, in towns with less healthy civic infrastructure and less responsive policing, loudspeaker permissions are unchecked and construction activity often runs through the night**.  
इसके अतिरिक्त, जिन नगरों में **नागरिक आधारभूत संरचना** कमजोर है और **पुलिस व्यवस्था** कम उत्तरदायी है, वहाँ **लाउडस्पीकर अनुमति** पर पर्याप्त नियंत्रण नहीं होता तथा **निर्माण कार्य** प्रायः पूरी रात चलते रहते हैं।



- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has attributed **16%** of disabling hearing loss in adults to **occupational noise**.  
विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन (WHO) ने वयस्कों में होने वाली गंभीर श्रवण हानि के **16%** मामलों का कारण व्यावसायिक शोर को माना है।
- **India is estimated to have 6.3 crore people with some degree of impaired hearing.**  
अनुमान है कि भारत में लगभग **6.3 करोड़ लोग** किसी-न-किसी स्तर की श्रवण क्षमता हानि से प्रभावित हैं।
- The **European Environment Agency** ranks **noise** as the **second-largest environmental cause** of **disability-adjusted life years (DALYs)** lost in Europe, behind only **air pollution**.  
यूरोपीय पर्यावरण एजेंसी ने यूरोप में विकलांगता-समायोजित जीवन वर्षों (DALYs) की हानि के लिए शोर को दूसरा सबसे बड़ा पर्यावरणीय कारण माना है, जो केवल वायु प्रदूषण से पीछे है।
- A **WHO synthesis** attributed around **16 lakh healthy life years lost annually** in **Western Europe** to **traffic noise** alone.  
**WHO** के एक समेकित अध्ययन ने पश्चिमी यूरोप में प्रतिवर्ष लगभग **16 लाख स्वस्थ जीवन-वर्षों की हानि** का कारण केवल यातायात जनित शोर को माना है।
- One reason is the **Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000**, which set **zone-wise limits and silence zones** but which are rarely enforced.  
इसका एक कारण ध्वनि प्रदूषण (विनियमन एवं नियंत्रण) नियम, 2000 हैं, जिनमें क्षेत्रवार ध्वनि सीमाएँ तथा शांत क्षेत्र निर्धारित किए गए हैं, किन्तु उनका पालन बहुत कम कराया जाता है।
- The **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** only recently proposed **financial penalties for violations** — that too because much of the worst noise is generated by occasions that politicians would prefer not to police.  
केंद्रीय प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड (CPCB) ने हाल ही में उल्लंघनों के लिए आर्थिक दंड का प्रस्ताव रखा है — और वह भी इसलिए क्योंकि सबसे अधिक शोर उन्हीं अवसरों पर उत्पन्न होता है, जिन पर राजनेता नियंत्रण करना पसंद नहीं करते।
- The Rules already accommodate **religious** and **cultural observances**.  
ये नियम पहले से ही धार्मिक और सांस्कृतिक आयोजनों के लिए विशेष प्रावधान उपलब्ध कराते हैं।
- **State governments can permit nighttime loudspeaker use between 10 pm and midnight on festive occasions for up to 15 days a year.**  
राज्य सरकारें त्योहारों के अवसर पर प्रतिवर्ष अधिकतम **15 दिनों** के लिए रात **10 बजे से मध्यरात्रि तक लाउडस्पीकर उपयोग** की अनुमति दे सकती हैं।  
One hopes the whistle that brought him to power could be the start of a new relationship with **public sound** that respects the right of people to **work, relax, and sleep in peace**.  
आशा की जाती है कि वह सीटी, जिसने उन्हें सत्ता तक पहुँचाया, सार्वजनिक ध्वनि के साथ ऐसे नए संबंध की शुरुआत बनेगी जो लोगों के शांतिपूर्वक काम करने, विश्राम करने और सोने के अधिकार का सम्मान करे।



# A decentralised solution for waste crisis

The Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026, disregard federalism and embody a technocratic vision of environmental governance, insufficiently attentive to ground realities; as framed, they risk producing blurred accountability, unproductive compliance work, and paper reporting rather than cleaner cities and villages

GS III: Environment

## EXPLAINER

K. Ashok Vardhan Shetty

India's waste crisis is no longer a localised urban nuisance but a national ecological emergency. Our cities are choking on waste; plastic-clogged drains worsen monsoon flooding; landfills have become mountains of methane, fire, and leachate; open burning of waste materials fouls the air; and rivers and coasts bear the burden of urban negligence. Rural India, too, is scarred by plastic, sanitary waste, pesticide containers, e-waste, and the debris of packaged consumption. A new waste-management framework was essential in this scenario.

The Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026, notified in supersession of the 2016 Rules and brought into effect from April 1, 2026, are animated by a legitimate and urgent environmental purpose. They seek to improve source segregation, regulate bulk waste generators, promote scientific processing, reduce dependence on landfills, remediate legacy dumpsites, promote a circular economy, and move towards digital monitoring. These are worthy aims. But sound environmental intent does not, by itself, ensure sound administrative design.

**Treaty power and federal balance**  
The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, under which these Rules are framed, was enacted principally under Article 253 of the Constitution, which empowers Parliament to implement international obligations – in this case, the 1972 Stockholm Declaration. This gives Parliament wide reach: even subjects touching State or local domains – land, water, public health, agriculture, sanitation or local government – may be legislated upon if linked to an international obligation. But a power meant to secure minimum national standards should not become a licence for the Centre to occupy the field, erode State competence, or centralise administration. A national form must not become an operational blueprint for every State and local body.

Mature federations follow subsidiarity: governmental functions should be performed at the lowest level capable of discharging them effectively, and moved upward only when that level demonstrably lacks capacity. Local competence is presumed; higher-level intervention must be justified. Authority is most effective when closest to knowledge, consequences, and accountability.

India often reverses this logic. It presumes central competence, distrusts sub-national capacity, and reduces States and local bodies to implementing instruments. Nobel Laureate F.A. Hayek's "knowledge problem", explained in *The Use of Knowledge in Society* (1945), is apposite: effective decisions depend on dispersed and contextual knowledge of the "particular circumstances of time and place". Such knowledge cannot be transmitted upward without distortion or delay. No authority in New Delhi, however well-intentioned, can tailor waste policy with equal fidelity to every region's ecology, settlement pattern, or administrative and fiscal capacity.

### The Centralisation Reflex

Although the draft Rules were published on December 14, 2024, inviting objections and suggestions from the public, the deeper flaw lies in a familiar pathology of Indian governance: the belief that



Choking dilemma: An aerial view shows a landfill next to a lake swathed in water hyacinth in Bengaluru on April 15. AFP

centralisation and over-regulation can cure administrative weakness, and that New Delhi must design and command while States merely execute. Its unstated premise is the incapacity argument – that States lack administrative or technical competence and therefore require Centre's supervision, if not substitution. To treat Indian States, several of which rival major nation-states in population, diversity, and complexity, as inherently incapable is incompatible with national self-respect and a calumny no patriot should tolerate.

As Nobel Laureate Kenneth Arrow pointed out in *The Economic Implications of Learning by Doing* (1962), capacity is not conferred from above; it is built through decision-making, experimentation, feedback, and correction. When States are reduced to mere implementing agencies for centrally-designed rules and schemes, their expertise atrophies, replaced by a culture of compliance and dependence on "instructions from New Delhi."

Local government is a State subject. Solid waste management lies at the intersection of environment, sanitation, public health, land use, and urban and rural local administration. It is among the most localised functions of governance, depending on household behaviour, street-level collection, informal waste workers, ward monitoring, land for composting, user charges, recycling markets, and citizen trust.

A system suited to a resource-rich metropolis like Mumbai cannot be mechanically applied to a Himalayan pilgrimage town with narrow roads and fragile slopes, an island settlement with scarce land, a coastal panchayat facing tidal flooding and marine litter, or a scattered tribal hamlet where low-density habitation makes collection and transport costly. Precisely for that reason, solid waste management requires a differentiated, federal design.

The extension of the Rules to rural local bodies is understandable; rural waste is now a real problem. But treating a gram panchayat as a miniature municipality is administrative fantasy. Most panchayats lack adequate staff let alone sanitation engineers, waste-collection vehicles, digital capacity for complex reporting, or the fiscal base to manage four-stream segregation. The

Rules also bring rural areas within a Material Recovery Facility (MRF)-linked architecture. But expecting rural local bodies to sustain such a framework betrays a disconnect with ground realities.

A realistic rural regime should have emphasised gram sabha-based awareness, household and community composting, periodic collection of plastics and sanitary waste, simple quarterly reporting, and cluster-level dry-waste aggregation and processing with nearby urban local bodies. Megacities (such as Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, and Chennai with population exceeding one crore) and metropolitan cities (population exceeding ten lakhs) require the opposite approach: not simplified compliance, but stronger institutions. They need Metropolitan Waste Management Authorities with elected local representation, State participation, technical expertise, and citizen oversight.

The rollout, too, should have been phased. Full compliance could have begun with megacities and metropolitan cities, where waste volumes and administrative capacity are greatest. Other municipal corporations and large municipalities, including tourist and pilgrimage towns, could have followed; then medium and small towns; and finally rural areas through simplified models.

### States as policy laboratories

In *New State Ice Co. v. Liebmann* (1932), Justice Louis Brandeis of the U.S. Supreme Court famously observed that a State may serve as a "laboratory" for novel social and economic experiments. That is the strength of federalism: experimentation is safer when localised, and learning is faster when multiple governments test different solutions. States can try policies at manageable scale, contain failures, and allow successful models to diffuse horizontally or be adopted nationally.

A better course therefore would have been to allow States to frame their own solid waste management rules for at least five years, subject to minimum national norms. One State might pioneer decentralised composting through women's self-help groups. Another might integrate informal waste workers into cooperatives. A third might build cluster-based facilities for small towns. A

fourth might create metropolitan waste authorities. A fifth might regulate tourist waste through user fees. After five years, the Centre could review outcomes, identify and disseminate best practices, and revise baseline standards, if necessary, based on evidence rather than assumption. The 2026 Rules do require States to prepare policies and strategies for urban and rural solid waste management, but this is more for form's sake because policy within a centrally-prescribed rulebook is not the same as State-led regulatory design.

### Other concerns

The centralised online portal raises a further federal concern. The Rules require reporting to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), data audits, report uploads, and centralised formats and modules. States and local bodies risk becoming data suppliers rather than co-owners of the governance system. Too often, officials spend more time feeding dashboards than improving service delivery. Compliance becomes reporting upward rather than governing outward. A better design would treat the portal as a shared federal data platform, allowing States and local bodies to add indicators, customise dashboards, access raw data, and publish ward-level, local-language information for citizens. Data should build capacity, not merely discipline sub-national governments.

The Rules also need stronger democratic content. Waste management succeeds only when citizens participate. Rural India has, at least in principle, the gram sabha; urban India has no satisfactory equivalent. Periodic waste reports should be submitted to municipal councils and ward committees, not merely uploaded for bureaucratic review in New Delhi.

The 2026 Rules substantially expand the obligations of municipalities and panchayats. Unless backed by predictable, adequate, and formula-based finance, they risk becoming yet another set of underfunded mandates – producing selective compliance, inflated reporting, or quiet evasion rather than genuine waste-management reform.

Under the present model, the likely trajectory is predictable. Sooner or later, a public interest litigation may allege non-implementation by States and local bodies, ignoring the reality that they cannot implement underfunded, top-down mandates in whose design they had little role. The Supreme Court may then treat the matter as legal non-compliance and begin continuing mandamus, drawing all levels of government into prolonged litigation, affidavits, and directions. What began as environmental reform may end as judicialised administration.

### Concluding remarks

The Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026, disregard federalism, local democracy, and subsidiarity. They embody a technocratic vision of environmental governance, insufficiently attentive to ground realities, institutional weaknesses, and local capacity. As framed, they risk producing blurred accountability, unproductive compliance work, and paper reporting rather than cleaner cities and villages.

To succeed, the Rules must be recast around five principles: minimum national standards, State flexibility, empowered local bodies, predictable finance, and citizen accountability. Otherwise, mountains of waste will continue to rise as monuments to centralised ambition and local neglect.

## THE GIST

Solid waste management lies at the intersection of environment, sanitation, public health, land use, and urban and rural local administration and is among the most localised functions of governance

The Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026, notified in supersession of the 2016 Rules and brought into effect from April 1, 2026, are animated by a legitimate and urgent environmental purpose

However, the deeper flaw in the new Rules lies in the belief that centralisation and over-regulation can cure administrative weakness

A system suited to a resource-rich metropolis like Mumbai cannot be mechanically applied to a Himalayan pilgrimage town with narrow roads and fragile slopes. Precisely for this reason, solid waste management requires a differentiated, federal design

## 12M. A decentralised solution for waste crisis

कचरा संकट के लिए विकेन्द्रीकृत समाधान



- The **Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026**, disregard **federalism** and embody a **technocratic vision** of environmental governance, insufficiently attentive to **ground realities**.  
ठोस अपशिष्ट प्रबंधन नियम, 2026 संघवाद की भावना की उपेक्षा करते हैं और पर्यावरणीय शासन की एक तकनीकी-प्रशासनिक दृष्टि को प्रस्तुत करते हैं, जो जमीनी वास्तविकताओं पर पर्याप्त ध्यान नहीं देती।
- As framed, they risk producing **blurred accountability**, **unproductive compliance work**, and **paper reporting rather than cleaner cities and villages**.  
वर्तमान स्वरूप में ये नियम स्वच्छ शहरों और गाँवों के बजाय **अस्पष्ट जवाबदेही**, अनुपयोगी अनुपालन कार्य, तथा केवल कागजी रिपोर्टिंग को बढ़ावा देने का जोखिम उत्पन्न करते हैं।
- **Plastic-clogged drains worsen monsoon flooding**.  
प्लास्टिक से जाम नालियाँ मानसूनी बाढ़ की समस्या को और गंभीर बना देती हैं।
- **Landfills** have become mountains of **methane**, **fire**, and **leachate**.  
लैंडफिल स्थल अब **मीथेन गैस**, **आग**, और **लीचेट** के विशाल पहाड़ों में बदल चुके हैं।
- **Open burning of waste materials fouls the air**.  
कचरे को खुले में जलाने से वायु प्रदूषित हो रही है।
- Rivers and coasts bear the burden of urban negligence.  
नदियाँ और तटीय क्षेत्र शहरी लापरवाही का भार उठा रहे हैं।
- **Rural India**, too, is scarred by **plastic**, **sanitary waste**, **pesticide containers**, **e-waste**, and the debris of packaged consumption.  
ग्रामीण भारत भी प्लास्टिक, स्वच्छता अपशिष्ट, कीटनाशक कंटेनरों, ई-कचरे, तथा पैकेज्ड उपभोग से उत्पन्न अवशेषों से प्रभावित हो चुका है।
- The **Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026**, notified in supersession of the **2016 Rules** and brought into effect from **April 1, 2026**, are animated by a legitimate and urgent environmental purpose.  
2016 के नियमों को प्रतिस्थापित करते हुए अधिसूचित **ठोस अपशिष्ट प्रबंधन नियम, 2026**, जिन्हें 1 अप्रैल 2026 से लागू किया गया, एक वैध और तात्कालिक पर्यावरणीय उद्देश्य से प्रेरित हैं।
- They seek to improve **source segregation**, regulate **bulk waste generators**, promote **scientific processing**, reduce dependence on **landfills**, remediate **legacy dumpsites**, promote a **circular economy**, and move towards **digital monitoring**.  
इनका उद्देश्य **स्रोत-स्तरीय कचरा पृथक्करण** में सुधार करना, **बड़े कचरा उत्पादकों** को विनियमित करना, **वैज्ञानिक प्रसंस्करण** को बढ़ावा देना, **लैंडफिल** पर निर्भरता कम करना, **पुराने कचरा स्थलों** का पुनर्वास करना, **परिपत्र अर्थव्यवस्था (Circular Economy)** को प्रोत्साहित करना, तथा **डिजिटल निगरानी** की दिशा में आगे बढ़ना है।
- The **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**, under which these Rules are framed, was enacted principally under **Article 253** of the Constitution, which empowers **Parliament** to implement **international obligations** — in this case, the **1972 Stockholm Declaration**.  
जिस **पर्यावरण (संरक्षण) अधिनियम, 1986** के अंतर्गत ये नियम बनाए गए हैं, उसे मुख्यतः संविधान के **अनुच्छेद 253** के तहत अधिनियमित किया गया था, जो **संसद** को **अंतरराष्ट्रीय दायित्वों** को लागू करने की शक्ति प्रदान करता है — इस मामले में **1972 की स्टॉकहोम घोषणा**।
- This gives Parliament wide reach: even subjects touching **State or local domains** — **land**, **water**, **public health**, **agriculture**, **sanitation**, or **local government** — may be legislated upon if linked to an international obligation.  
इससे संसद को व्यापक अधिकार-क्षेत्र प्राप्त होता है; यहाँ तक कि **राज्य** अथवा **स्थानीय क्षेत्रों** से संबंधित विषय — जैसे **भूमि**, **जल**, **लोक स्वास्थ्य**, **कृषि**, **स्वच्छता**, अथवा **स्थानीय शासन** — पर भी कानून बनाया जा सकता है, यदि वे किसी अंतरराष्ट्रीय दायित्व से जुड़े हों।
- But a power meant to secure minimum **national standards** should not become a licence for the Centre to occupy the field, erode **State competence**, or centralise administration.  
किन्तु न्यूनतम **राष्ट्रीय मानकों** को सुनिश्चित करने के लिए दी गई शक्ति, **केंद्र सरकार** को संपूर्ण क्षेत्र पर



नियंत्रण स्थापित करने, राज्य की क्षमता को कमजोर करने, अथवा प्रशासन के केंद्रीकरण का अधिकार नहीं बन जानी चाहिए।

- Mature federations follow **subsidiarity**: governmental functions should be performed at the **lowest level** capable of discharging them effectively, and moved upward only when that level demonstrably lacks capacity.

परिपक्व संघीय व्यवस्थाएँ **सबसिडियैरिटी (Subsidiarity)** के सिद्धांत का पालन करती हैं, जिसके अनुसार सरकारी कार्य उसी **न्यूनतम स्तर** पर किए जाने चाहिए जो उन्हें प्रभावी रूप से संपादित करने में सक्षम हो, और केवल तब उच्च स्तर पर स्थानांतरित किए जाएँ जब वह स्तर स्पष्ट रूप से अक्षम सिद्ध हो।

- **Local competence is presumed; higher-level intervention must be justified.**

**स्थानीय क्षमता** को मूल रूप से मान्यता दी जाती है; उच्च-स्तरीय हस्तक्षेप को उचित ठहराना आवश्यक होता है।

- **Nobel Laureate F.A. Hayek's "knowledge problem"**, explained in **The Use of Knowledge in Society (1945)**, is apposite: effective decisions depend on dispersed and contextual knowledge of the "particular circumstances of time and place".

**नोबेल पुरस्कार विजेता एफ. ए. हायेक** द्वारा अपनी पुस्तक **The Use of Knowledge in Society (1945)** में प्रतिपादित "**ज्ञान की समस्या (Knowledge Problem)**" यहाँ अत्यंत प्रासंगिक है। इसके अनुसार प्रभावी निर्णय, समय और स्थान की "विशिष्ट परिस्थितियों" से संबंधित बिखरे हुए और संदर्भगत ज्ञान पर निर्भर करते हैं।

- **Such knowledge cannot be transmitted upward without distortion or delay.**

ऐसे ज्ञान को बिना विकृति या विलंब के उच्च स्तर तक पहुँचाना संभव नहीं होता।

- **No authority in New Delhi, however well-intentioned, can tailor waste policy with equal fidelity to every region's ecology, settlement pattern, or administrative and fiscal capacity.**

**नई दिल्ली** में स्थित कोई भी प्राधिकरण, चाहे उसकी मंशा कितनी ही उत्तम क्यों न हो, प्रत्येक क्षेत्र की **पारिस्थितिकी, आबादी के स्वरूप, तथा उसकी प्रशासनिक और वित्तीय क्षमता** के अनुरूप समान सटीकता से कचरा नीति तैयार नहीं कर सकता।

- As Nobel Laureate **Kenneth Arrow** pointed out in **The Economic Implications of Learning by Doing (1962)**, **capacity is not conferred from above; it is built through decision-making, experimentation, feedback, and correction.**

जैसा कि **नोबेल पुरस्कार विजेता केनेथ एरो** ने अपनी पुस्तक **The Economic Implications of Learning by Doing (1962)** में स्पष्ट किया, क्षमता ऊपर से प्रदान नहीं की जाती; यह **निर्णय-निर्माण, प्रयोग, प्रतिपुष्टि, और सुधार** की प्रक्रिया से विकसित होती है।

- **Solid waste management lies at the intersection of environment, sanitation, public health, land use, and urban and rural local administration.**

**ठोस अपशिष्ट प्रबंधन** का संबंध पर्यावरण, स्वच्छता, लोक स्वास्थ्य, भूमि उपयोग, तथा शहरी और ग्रामीण **स्थानीय प्रशासन** से जुड़ा हुआ है।

- **It is among the most localised functions of governance, depending on household behaviour, street-level collection, informal waste workers, ward monitoring, land for composting, user charges, recycling markets, and citizen trust.**

यह शासन के सबसे अधिक स्थानीयकृत कार्यों में से एक है, जो **घरेलू व्यवहार, सड़क-स्तरीय संग्रह व्यवस्था, अनौपचारिक कचरा श्रमिकों, वार्ड निगरानी, कम्पोस्टिंग हेतु भूमि, उपयोगकर्ता शुल्क, रीसाइक्लिंग बाज़ार, तथा नागरिक विश्वास** पर निर्भर करता है।

- A system suited to a **resource-rich metropolis** like **Mumbai** cannot be mechanically applied to a **Himalayan pilgrimage town** with narrow roads and fragile slopes, an **island settlement** with scarce land, a **coastal panchayat** facing tidal flooding and marine litter, or a scattered **tribal hamlet** where low-density habitation makes collection and transport costly.

**मुंबई** जैसे **संसाधन-संपन्न महानगर** के लिए उपयुक्त व्यवस्था को संकीर्ण सड़कों और नाजुक ढलानों वाले किसी **हिमालयी तीर्थ नगर, सीमित भूमि वाले किसी द्वीपीय क्षेत्र, ज्वारीय बाढ़ और समुद्री कचरे से जूझ रही**



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किसी तटीय पंचायत, अथवा कम जनसंख्या घनत्व वाले किसी बिखरे हुए जनजातीय गाँव पर यांत्रिक रूप से लागू नहीं किया जा सकता, जहाँ कचरा संग्रहण और परिवहन अत्यधिक महँगा पड़ता है।

- **Most panchayats lack adequate staff, let alone sanitation engineers, waste-collection vehicles, digital capacity for complex reporting, or the fiscal base to manage four-stream segregation.**

अधिकांश पंचायतों के पास पर्याप्त कर्मचारी भी उपलब्ध नहीं हैं, जबकि स्वच्छता अभियंता, कचरा-संग्रह वाहन, जटिल रिपोर्टिंग हेतु डिजिटल क्षमता, अथवा चार-स्तरीय कचरा पृथक्करण का प्रबंधन करने हेतु वित्तीय आधार जैसी सुविधाएँ तो और भी दुर्लभ हैं।

- **Waste management succeeds only when citizens participate.**

कचरा प्रबंधन तभी सफल हो सकता है जब नागरिक सहभागिता सुनिश्चित हो।

- **The Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026, disregard federalism, local democracy, and subsidiarity.**

ठोस अपशिष्ट प्रबंधन नियम, 2026 संघवाद, स्थानीय लोकतंत्र, और सबसिडियैरिटी के सिद्धांतों की उपेक्षा करते हैं।

- **To succeed, the Rules must be recast around five principles: minimum national standards, State flexibility, empowered local bodies, predictable finance, and citizen accountability.**

सफल होने के लिए इन नियमों को पाँच सिद्धांतों के आधार पर पुनर्गठित किया जाना चाहिए — न्यूनतम राष्ट्रीय मानक, राज्यों को लचीलापन, सशक्त स्थानीय निकाय, पूर्वानुमेय वित्तीय सहायता, तथा नागरिक जवाबदेही।