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Bangladesh government jobs quota scaled back by Supreme Court after deadly unrest

Associated Press
Agence France-Presse
DHAKA

The Bangladesh Supreme Court on Sunday scaled back a controversial quota system for government job applicants.

The move comes as a partial victory for student protesters after days of nationwide unrest and deadly clashes that left at least 155 people dead.

"We welcome the Supreme Court verdict," a spokesperson for **Students Against Discrimination**, the main group responsible for organising the protests, said on condition of anonymity.

"But we will not call off our protests until the government issues an order



Police on the streets during a curfew in Dhaka. AP

reflecting our demands."

The Supreme Court's Appellate Division dismissed a lower court order that had reinstated the quotas, directing that 93% of government jobs would be open to candidates on merit. **Students have been demanding an end to a quota that reserved 30% of go-**

vernment jobs for relatives of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's War of Independence in 1971. The government previously halted it in 2018 following mass student protests, but in June, Bangladesh's High Court reinstated the quotas, setting off a new round of protests.

The ruling curtailed the number of reserved jobs, from 56% of all positions to 7%, and brought down the veterans' quota from 30% to 5%. The remaining 2% will be set aside for members of ethnic minorities, transgender community, and people with disability.

'Historic decision'

The Supreme Court was due to decide next month on the legality of the reintroduced scheme but brought forward its verdict as civil strife intensified.

It decided that the lower Bench's order last month to reintroduce the scheme was "illegal", Bangladeshi Attorney General A.M. Amin Uddin said.

Shah Monjurul Haque, a lawyer representing some

student groups, called the court's decision historic. He said it was a start to reforming the problematic quota system. "Everyone should abide by the verdict. I urge all protestors to return to their homes," Mr. Haque said.

Law Minister Anisul Haq of the ruling Awami League party also welcomed the court's decision and said it was "well thought of."

Soldiers patrolled cities across the country ahead of the Supreme Court hearing, even as Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said the stay-at-home order will be relaxed from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

'BENGAL WILL GIVE SHELTER'
» PAGE 4

Bangladesh government jobs quota scaled back by Supreme Court after deadly unrest (22 July)

- The Bangladesh Supreme Court reduced a controversial quota system for government jobs on Sunday.
- The decision is seen as a partial win for student protesters who had been involved in violent clashes, resulting in at least 155 deaths.
- The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court overturned a lower court ruling that reinstated the quota system.
- The new ruling allows 93% of government jobs to be filled based on merit, reducing the veterans' quota from 30% to 5%.
- The remaining 2% of jobs will be reserved for ethnic minorities, transgender individuals, and people with disabilities.
- Students had protested against a 30% quota for veterans' relatives, which had been previously abolished but reinstated by the High Court in June.
- The Supreme Court expedited its decision due to escalating civil unrest.
- The ruling was called "historic" and a step towards reforming the quota system.
- Soldiers patrolled cities ahead of the hearing, and a stay-at-home order was relaxed for a few hours on Sunday.

In another cyberscam, 77-year-old woman cheated of ₹1.2 crore in Bengaluru (22 July)

- Cyber fraudsters posing as telecom and Mumbai Crime Branch officials targeted a 77-year-old woman, Lakshmi Shivakumar.
- Over 20 days, they intimidated her and eventually swindled ₹1.2 crore.
- The fraudsters, identified as Sandeep Rao and Akash Kulhari, were charged under the Information Technology Act, 2000, and for cheating.
- On June 26, Ms. Shivakumar received a call from someone claiming to be from the Telecom Department, saying a SIM card was purchased in her name and used illegally.
- She was then contacted by Rao and Kulhari, who pretended to be from the Mumbai Crime Branch and accused her of laundering ₹60 crore.
- They demanded her bank account details and investment proofs, threatening arrest if she didn't cooperate.
- They showed her a fake FIR and arrest warrant to convince her.
- Ms. Shivakumar provided her details, and the fraudsters transferred ₹1,28,70,000 from her account, promising to return it after their investigation.
- When she tried to follow up, they were unreachable.
- Realizing she had been scammed, Ms. Shivakumar reported the incident to the police after discussing it with family and friends.



Capt. Supreetha C.T.

Mysuru's Capt. Supreetha 1st woman officer at Siachen

PCS
The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

Captain Supreetha C.T., from Mysuru, has become the first woman officer from the Corps of Army Air Defence, to be operationally deployed at Siachen Glacier.

“Breaking Barrier-s....Conquering Challenges.....Captain Supreetha C T joins the league of #SiachenWarriors. With her enduring strength & determination, she is now operationally deployed at the world’s highest battlefield #Siachen,” said a post on X by the Additional Directorate General of Public Information (ADG PI) - Indian Army.

Capt. Supreetha joined the Indian Army as a Lieutenant in 2021 and had been posted in the Army Air Defence after undergoing training at Chennai.

Mysuru’s Capt. Supreetha 1st woman officer at Siachen (22 July)

- Captain Supreetha C.T. from Mysuru is the first woman officer from the Corps of Army Air Defence to be deployed at Siachen Glacier.
- She was celebrated on social media by the Indian Army for her achievement, highlighting her strength and determination.
- Capt. Supreetha joined the Indian Army as a Lieutenant in 2021.
- After training in Chennai, she was posted to the Army Air Defence.

Kerala issues guidelines to manage amoebic brain infection (22 July)

- Kerala reported five cases of amoebic meningoencephalitis, including three deaths, in adolescents over the past three months.
- The Health Department has released guidelines on how to prevent, diagnose, and treat this rare but fatal infection.
- Four cases were caused by the amoeba *Naegleria fowleri*, and one case was caused by *Vermamoeba vermiformis*.
- These guidelines are intended for use by hospitals dealing with acute meningitis cases.
- Amoebic meningoencephalitis (PAM) is a severe brain infection caused by free-living amoebae found in freshwater, not seawater.
- *Naegleria fowleri*, known as the “brain-eating amoeba,” infects through the nasal passages, causing brain swelling and often death.
- Effective treatment is uncertain but should ideally involve drugs that kill the amoeba and can cross the blood-brain barrier.

Recommended SOP

- If a patient with acute meningitis has been exposed to freshwater through the nose in the last 14 days, ask about this history.
- For such patients, test their cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) quickly for *Naegleria fowleri* or other free-living amoebae.
- If patients with bacterial meningitis are not improving with antibiotics or are getting worse, consider PAM, even if they haven't been exposed to freshwater.
- Start recommended multi-drug treatment and supportive care immediately for any PAM cases diagnosed through CSF microscopy.

- Preventive measures include avoiding diving or jumping into stagnant water and using nose plugs during water activities.

Kerala issues guidelines to manage amoebic brain infection

GS Paper II: Basic Science

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

With five cases of amoebic meningoencephalitis, including three deaths, being reported in adolescents in Kerala in the past three months, the State’s Health Department has come out with technical guidelines on the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of the infection, possibly the first set of guidelines in the country on this rare but fatal infection.

In all but one case, the causative organism was the amoebic parasite, *Naegleria fowleri*. In one case, the organism was *Vermamoeba*

ba vermiformis, another free-living amoeba found in human environment.

These guidelines/standard operating procedures (SOPs) are to be followed by all hospitals when dealing with cases of acute meningitis. Primary amoebic meningoencephalitis (PAM) is a rare but lethal central nervous system infection of rapid fatality caused by free-living amoebae (FLA) found in freshwater, lakes, and rivers (never in seawater). It is usually caused by an infection by *Naegleria fowleri*, a microscopic amoeba commonly called a “brain-eating amoeba”. The amoeba



A pond in Feroke in Kozhikode district has been closed after a boy who had taken bath there was diagnosed with amoebic meningoencephalitis recently. FILE PHOTO

enters through the nasal channels and destroys brain tissue, causing severe brain swelling and death in most cases.

As far as treatment is concerned, the optimal approach is uncertain. In theory, the best drug regimen should include an amoebi-

cidal drug (or a combination of drugs) with good in-vitro activity capable of crossing the blood-brain barrier, experts say.

Recommended SOP

A history of nasal exposure to freshwater in the 14 days before symptom onset should be asked of any patient who presents with symptoms of acute meningitis. For patients with meningitis who have a history of recent nasal exposure to fresh water, the cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) specimen should undergo rapid testing for *N. fowleri*/FLA. In patients with clinical and CSF pictures suggestive of

bacterial meningitis who are not responding to antibiotics or are rapidly deteriorating, consider PAM even in the absence of exposure to fresh water, experts have suggested.

All cases diagnosed as PAM through CSF microscopy should be immediately initiated on the recommended multi-drug regimen and supportive therapy aimed at lowering intracranial pressure.

As for preventive steps, experts suggest avoiding diving and jumping into stagnant water, and use of nose plugs when participating in water-related activities.

दिल्ली से भी बेहतर

आपके शहर गोरखपुर में

Patriotic IAS

IAS/PCS wali Pathshala

पैडलेगंज, गोरखपुर Mob. 9971932488



Team Led by:
Amit Kumar

(More than 4 Years of Teaching Experience
In Vision IAS Delhi & Qualified 4
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Patriotic

India's garment export woes self-inflicted: report

At \$14.5 billion, exports from the job-intensive sector were lower in 2023-24 than a decade earlier, owing to barriers on raw material imports and difficult customs, trade procedures, says think tank

GS Paper III: Manufacturing and Export

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI

Exports from India's labour-intensive garment sector, which have been losing ground to rivals such as Vietnam and Bangladesh and were lower than the 2013-14 levels last year, have been dented more by the country's high duties and barriers on raw material imports along with difficult customs and trade procedures, rather than other nations' competitive strengths, a research report has flagged.

India's garment exports in 2023-24 stood at \$14.5 billion, compared with \$15 billion in 2013-14. Between 2013 and 2023, garment exports from Vietnam have grown nearly 82% to hit \$33.4 billion while that of Bangladesh has grown nearly 70% to hit \$43.8 billion. China exported about \$114 billion of garments in the same year, nearly a quarter lower than a decade earlier.

A production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for textiles launched by the Centre in 2021 has failed to



The report pointed out that recent quality control orders have complicated the process of bringing in essential raw materials. AFP

gain traction with investors and needs significant modifications to be effective, the think tank, Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI), has noted in a report titled "How Complex Procedures, Import Restrictions and Domestic Interests Hinder India's Garments Exports".

The report has also raised concerns about a steady rise in India's garments and textiles imports in recent years, which had grown to almost \$9.2 billion in the calendar year 2023. It warned that this tally could rise faster if the

export slide is not arrested, especially with firms like Reliance Retail expected to kick off sales of Chinese brands such as Shein in the country.

"Complex procedures, import restrictions and domestic vested interests are holding up Indian garment export growth. At the root of the exporters' problem is difficulty in obtaining quality raw fabric particularly synthetic fabric," the report said, adding that Bangladesh and Vietnam do not suffer from these complexities, while Indian firms have to "waste time

and money" on them.

The report, based on interactions with small, medium-sized, and large garment exporters, pointed out that recent quality control orders, or QCOs, issued for fabric imports have complicated the process of bringing in essential raw material. This is pushing up costs for exporters who have to rely on pricier options from domestic firms who dominate the market for raw materials like polyester staple fibre and viscose staple fibre.

"This scenario forces exporters to use expensive domestic supplies, making Indian garments overpriced," it explained.

Moreover, the procedures laid down by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade and Customs are archaic, requiring exporters to meticulously account for every square centimetre of imported fabric, buttons, and zippers, ensuring these are used in the production process and reflected in export product description, the report said, mooting a comprehensive overhaul to change the *status quo*.

India's garment export woes self-inflicted: report (22 July)

At \$14.5 billion, exports from the job-intensive sector were lower in 2023-24 than a decade earlier, owing to barriers on raw material imports and difficult customs, trade procedures, says think tank

- India's garment exports have been declining and are now lower than in 2013-14.
- Exports in 2023-24 were \$14.5 billion, down from \$15 billion in 2013-14.
- Competitors like Vietnam and Bangladesh have seen significant growth in their garment exports over the same period.
- Vietnam's exports grew nearly 82% to \$33.4 billion, and Bangladesh's exports grew nearly 70% to \$43.8 billion.
- China's garment exports were about \$114 billion, a 25% decrease from a decade ago.
- India's high duties, barriers on raw material imports, and complex customs procedures are major obstacles.
- The Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for textiles introduced in 2021 has not been effective and needs improvements.
- India's imports of garments and textiles have risen, reaching \$9.2 billion in 2023, which could increase further if the export decline continues.
- Major retailers like Reliance Retail are expected to start selling Chinese brands such as Shein in India.
- Indian garment exports are hindered by complex procedures, import restrictions, and domestic interests.
- Difficulty in obtaining quality raw fabrics, especially synthetic ones, is a major issue for Indian exporters.
- Bangladesh and Vietnam do not face these complexities, unlike India where exporters waste time and money.
- Recent quality control orders (QCOs) for fabric imports have made it harder and more expensive to get essential raw materials.
- Exporters are forced to use costly domestic supplies, making Indian garments more expensive.
- Outdated procedures from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade and Customs require detailed tracking of every imported component.

- This complexity adds to the costs and complicates the export process, suggesting a need for a comprehensive overhaul.

Sustainable solutions by Rajasthan tribes make a mark at UN forum

GS Paper III: Environment

Mohammed Iqbal

JAIPUR

The solutions offered by indigenous tribal communities in Rajasthan to global challenges, and their role in the execution of policies were highlighted at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development at the United Nations headquarters in New York over the weekend.

The forum was held under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with the theme, "Reinforcing the 2030 agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions". A ministerial declaration adopted at the forum called for renewed impetus to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Indigenous solutions
ECOSOC president Paula Narvaez said the ministerial declaration had reinforced the urgency of implementing the 2030 agenda for sustainable de-



Tribal women farmers in Rajasthan pledge to protect traditional practices to advance the 2030 agenda for SDGs. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

velopment, while the UN body would continue to make multilateral efforts to fulfil the promise to "leave no one behind" in the implementation of SDGs. Experts addressing the forum underlined the significance of acknowledging indigenous communities for their solutions in the context of biodiversity and ecosystems.

The indigenous communities should be globally engaged in the formulation of strategies, which could offer vital insights into sustainable development through traditional practices, the experts said. "Indigenous solutions

not only meet their own needs but also contribute to broader sustainability goals," said secretary of the Banswara-based voluntary group Vaagdhara, Jayesh Joshi.

Vaagdhara, working on the tribal livelihood issues in southern Rajasthan, recently organised over 90 events as part of its movement for preservation of indigenous seed varieties to restore links between crop diversity and climate resilience.

He said the tribal farmers had taken a pledge at these events to save indigenous seeds and use them in their regular agricultural

practice.

These practices have helped tribal communities reduce their dependence on the market and survive during the difficult phases, including the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-21. Mr. Joshi said since the global community was facing an unprecedented crisis, including climate change and its socio-economic consequences, the other challenges of economic inequality and environmental degradation would only aggravate in the near future. The tribals in Rajasthan had adopted an innovative approach guided by sustainable and resilient solutions, he added.

Mr. Joshi said these practices would not only fulfil their own aspirations, providing them with sustainable and resilient solutions, but would also help address the issues of poverty, inequality and vulnerability, in order to potentially advance the 2030 agenda for SDGs. "Drawing from the principles of *swaraj* (sovereignty), tribals' lifestyle and cultural values have led to self-sufficiency," Mr. Joshi said.

Sustainable solutions by Rajasthan tribes make a mark at UN forum (22 July)

- Indigenous tribal communities in Rajasthan presented their solutions to global challenges at the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York.
- The forum, hosted by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), focused on achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and addressing poverty amidst multiple crises.
- A ministerial declaration from the forum emphasized the need to renew efforts to meet the SDGs and ensure no one is left behind.
- Experts highlighted the importance of recognizing indigenous communities for their contributions to biodiversity and sustainable practices.
- Indigenous solutions offer valuable insights into sustainable development and should be included in global strategy discussions.
- Jayesh Joshi from Vaagdhara, a Banswara-based group, noted that indigenous practices help meet local needs and support broader sustainability goals.
- Vaagdhara, a group working on tribal livelihood issues in southern Rajasthan, organized over 90 events to promote the preservation of indigenous seed varieties.
- Tribal farmers pledged at these events to save and use indigenous seeds in their farming practices.
- These traditional practices helped tribal communities rely less on the market and endure difficult times, including the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Jayesh Joshi noted that global challenges like climate change and economic inequality are worsening, and tribal practices in Rajasthan offer innovative, sustainable solutions.
- These practices aim to meet the tribal communities' needs while also addressing poverty, inequality, and vulnerability.
- The approach is based on the principle of "swaraj" (sovereignty), which fosters self-sufficiency and aligns with broader Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

'Nitish repeatedly raised Bagmati river flooding concerns with Nepal ex-PM'

GS Paper I: Geography

Nistula Hebbar
NEW DELHI

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has "repeatedly" raised concerns about the annual flooding of the Bagmati river with multiple leaders from Nepal, including former Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', a senior leader of the Janata Dal(U) told *The Hindu*.

The Bagmati, which is currently in spate, is one of the major cross-border rivers that flow through the plains of Bihar, carrying a large amount of water from the upper reaches of the Himalayas in Nepal.

"While there are long-term relationships between the socialist leadership in India and Nepal's leadership, this is one issue where nothing has moved. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has raised this issue repeatedly with many leaders, including former Prime Minister of Nepal Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', but nothing moved," the source said.

The senior JD(U) leader said that neither India nor Nepal have shown any urgency to resolve the issue despite the advocacy of the Bihar government.

The Bagmati flows from Nepal and crosses the Bi-

har districts of Darbhanga, Sitamarhi, Sheohar, Muzaffarpur, and Khagaria, before meeting the river Kamala in Samastipur.

New course

In the past, the river had a different course, draining directly into the Ganga, but it is the new course that has created the flooding issue.

The worst flood it caused occurred in 1994, but the problem has continued to recur, leaving the State government anxious for some way to resolve the issue.

Nepal has recently undergone a political change

of guard and Prachanda has been replaced as Prime Minister by Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli, who is yet to meet with the Indian interlocutors.

Bihar has been urging Nepal to create the infrastructure needed to prevent the annual flooding that takes place in the State because of the cross-border river systems. Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh share a large number of cross-border rivers that are important for States like Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Meghalaya, and Tripura.

(With inputs from Kallol Bhattacharjee)

Nitish repeatedly raised Bagmati river flooding concerns with Nepal ex-PM (22 July)

- Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has often discussed the issue of flooding caused by the Bagmati river with Nepali leaders, including former Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'.

Bail cannot be denied on ground of serious charges: SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has clarified that seriousness of charges alone cannot be a factor to deny bail to undertrials nor can courts impose "freakish" bail conditions.

A Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Ujjal Bhuyan ordered Sheikh Javed Iqbal, a man awaiting trial under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) for nine years, to be released on bail, in yet another decision which upheld the right of an individual's personal liberty over the state's claim that bail should not be made easy when serious crimes were involved.

"Bail cannot be denied only on the ground that the charges are very serious though there is no end in sight for the trial to conclude... Seriousness of charges would have to be balanced with other facts like the period of custody suffered and the likely period within which the trial can be expected to be completed," the Bench held.

An undertrial has a fundamental right to speedy trial, the court said.

"If the alleged offence is a serious one, all the more necessary for the prosecution to ensure that the trial is concluded expeditious-

An undertrial has a fundamental right to speedy trial, the Supreme Court said in its judgment

ly," the judgment reasoned.

The man was arrested near the India-Nepal border in February 2015 allegedly with fake Indian currency notes with a total face value of ₹23 lakh. He has been behind bars since then. The man appealed to the Supreme Court after the Allahabad High Court denied him bail. Justice Bhuyan noted that the statements of only two witnesses had been recorded in all these years.

"A reasonable view can be taken that the trial is likely to take a considerable time," the July 18 verdict noted.

In a similar decision on July 3, the same Bench had held that the state should not oppose bail if it had no intention or was devoid of the ability to hold a speedy trial. This order was based on an appeal filed by Javed Gulam Nabi Shaikh against a Bombay High Court decision refusing him bail in a UAPA case.

"Article 21 of the Constitution applies irrespective of the nature of the crime," the Bench had laid down.

- The Bagmati river, which flows from the Himalayas in Nepal into Bihar, is currently experiencing high water levels.
- Despite repeated discussions and advocacy by Nitish Kumar, neither India nor Nepal has taken urgent action to address the flooding problem.
- The Bagmati river flows through several districts in Bihar: Darbhanga, Sitamarhi, Sheohar, Muzaffarpur, and Khagaria, before joining the Kamala river in Samastipur.

New course

- The Bagmati river used to flow directly into the Ganga, but its new course is causing flooding issues.
- The most severe flooding from the Bagmati occurred in 1994, and the problem has continued to recur.
- The Bihar government is seeking a solution to this ongoing issue.
- Nepal recently experienced a political change; former Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' was replaced by Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli.
- Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli has not yet met with Indian representatives regarding the flooding issue.
- Bihar is urging Nepal to build infrastructure to prevent annual flooding caused by cross-border river systems.
- Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh share many cross-border rivers that impact states like Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Meghalaya, and Tripura.

Bail cannot be denied on ground of serious charges: SC (22 July)

- The Supreme Court has clarified that serious charges alone cannot be a reason to deny bail to undertrials.
- Courts should not impose unreasonable bail conditions.
- Sheikh Javed Iqbal, who has been awaiting trial under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) for nine years, was ordered to be released on bail.
- The Court stated that the seriousness of the charges must be balanced with other factors such as the duration of custody and the expected trial time.
- An undertrial has a fundamental right to a speedy trial.
- The Court emphasized that for serious offenses, it is crucial for the prosecution to conclude the trial quickly.
- Sheikh Javed Iqbal was arrested in February 2015 with fake currency notes and has been in jail since then. The Supreme Court intervened after the Allahabad High Court denied him bail.

- Only two witnesses had been heard in the case over the years, indicating a lengthy trial ahead.
- In a similar decision on July 3, the Court ruled that the state should not oppose bail if it cannot conduct a speedy trial.
- The Court reaffirmed that Article 21 of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to personal liberty, applies regardless of the crime's severity.

India is moving ahead with vision of development and heritage: Modi

GS Paper II: International Organization

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that India, moving ahead with a vision of “development as well as heritage”, was committed to promoting global cooperation and engaging local communities in heritage conservation efforts.

“It is India’s clarion call to the world to come together to promote each other’s heritage and amplify the spirit of human welfare,” Mr. Modi said, inaugurating the 46th session of the World Heritage Committee in the national capital.

The World Heritage Committee meets annually and is responsible for managing all matters on World Heritage sites, and deciding on sites to be inscribed on the UNESCO



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, in New Delhi on Sunday. ANI

World Heritage List. India is hosting the World Heritage Committee meeting for the first time.

“India’s vision is development as well as heritage – vikas bhi, virasat bhi,” he said.

The Prime Minister said that more than 350 heritage items have been brought back in recent

times. “This return of ancient heritage artifacts is a display of global generosity and respect for history,” he said.

Mr. Modi mentioned that Northeast India’s historic ‘Maidam’ has been nominated to enter UNESCO’s popular World Heritage List, and is India’s 43rd World Heritage Site and

the Northeast’s first heritage to secure the status of Cultural World Heritage.

“India’s history and sense of history are older and more elaborate than the normal, leading to the need for new perspectives to witness the past with technological developments and new discoveries,” he said.

Bringing to notice the findings in Sinauli in Uttar Pradesh, including the discovery of a “4,000-year-old horse-driven chariot”, he said such discoveries stress that in order to know India, there is a need for prejudice-free new concepts.

He invited the gathering to be part of this new stream. He encouraged people to use this potential of heritage for the betterment of the world, and to connect hearts.

India is moving ahead with vision of development and heritage: Modi (22 July)

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasized India’s commitment to both development and heritage.
- He spoke at the inauguration of the 46th World Heritage Committee session in New Delhi.
- The World Heritage Committee meets annually to manage World Heritage sites and decide on new UNESCO World Heritage listings.
- This is the first time India is hosting the World Heritage Committee meeting.
- Modi highlighted India’s vision of combining development with heritage

preservation, stating “vikas bhi, virasat bhi” (development and heritage).

- Over 350 heritage artifacts have been returned recently, showcasing global respect for history.
- Northeast India’s historic ‘Maidam’ has been nominated for the UNESCO World Heritage List, marking India’s 43rd World Heritage Site and the Northeast’s first Cultural World Heritage site.
- Modi noted that India’s rich history and recent discoveries, like a 4,000-year-old chariot found in Uttar Pradesh, highlight the need for new perspectives and technologies to understand India’s past.
- He invited global participants to engage with India’s heritage and use it to benefit the world and foster connections.

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)

Overview:

- **Founded:** 16 November 1945
- **Headquarters:** Paris, France
- **Objective:** Promoting international collaboration in education, sciences, culture, and communication to foster peace and security.

Structure:

1. **General Conference:** Decision-making body with representatives from all member states.
2. **Executive Board:** Ensures proper implementation of programs and guides the work of UNESCO.
3. **Director-General:** Head of UNESCO responsible for administration.

Major Functions and Programs:

1. **Education:**
 - **Universal Access:** Promoting equal access to education for all.
 - **Global Citizenship Education:** Fostering a sense of global responsibility and understanding.
 - **Education for Sustainable Development:** Integrating sustainable practices in educational curricula.
 - **UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning:** Advocates for lifelong learning and adult education.
2. **Natural Sciences:**
 - **Scientific Knowledge:** Promotes scientific research and policy to address global challenges like climate change.
 - **Man and the Biosphere Programme:** Encourages sustainable development through the conservation of biodiversity.
 - **Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission:** Supports oceanographic research and sustainable use of marine resources.
3. **Social and Human Sciences:**
 - **Human Rights:** Advocates for social inclusion and human rights.
 - **Ethics of Science and Technology:** Promotes ethical standards in scientific and technological advancements.
 - **Youth Development:** Focuses on peacebuilding and empowerment of youth.
4. **Culture:**
 - **Cultural Heritage Protection:** Identifies and protects World Heritage Sites.
 - **Intangible Cultural Heritage:** Safeguards traditions, languages, and rituals.
 - **Cultural Diversity:** Promotes intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity.

5. Communication and Information:

- **Freedom of Expression:** Supports press freedom and the safety of journalists.
- **Universal Access to Information:** Ensures access to information for all.
- **Digital Literacy:** Encourages the development of digital skills and knowledge societies.

Key Conventions and Programs:

- **World Heritage Sites:** Protects sites of cultural and natural significance.
- **Man and the Biosphere Programme:** Encourages conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.
- **Intangible Cultural Heritage:** Protects non-physical aspects of culture.
- **Global Geoparks:** Promotes geological heritage conservation.

Membership:

- **States:** 193 member states and 11 associate members.
- **NGOs:** Collaborates with various NGOs for program implementation.

Global Impact:

- **Cultural Preservation:** Recognition and protection of global cultural heritage.
- **Educational Initiatives:** Improving access to quality education.
- **Scientific Cooperation:** Facilitating international scientific research and policy development.
- **Information Access:** Promoting freedom of information and digital literacy.

UNESCO in India:

- **UNESCO New Delhi Office:** Established in 1948, it is a cluster office covering Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.
- **Focus Areas:** Education, natural sciences, social and human sciences, culture, and communication and information.
- **Projects:** Initiatives include promoting literacy, protecting cultural heritage, and supporting scientific research and ethical standards.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



SPIRITUAL



ECOLOGICAL



PEOPLE

Dyson sphere: an energy devourer

GS Paper III: Basic
Science

Imagine you are an astronomer looking deep into space in search of extraterrestrial life. You spot a star that is emitting infrared radiation in anomalous fashion. You zoom in and see a swarm of solar panels covering the star like a shell, quietly collecting an enormous amount of solar energy from the star. Et voila: you have found a Dyson sphere.

The Dyson sphere is named after theoretical physicist Freeman Dyson (1923-2020), who hypothesised its existence. He said that technologically advanced civilisations will have such a tremendous demand for energy that they will have to harness the entire radiative power of a star, using solar energy collectors arranged in a sphere around the orb.

Dyson also figured that these spheres would emit excess heat from the star as infrared radiation, which he said astronomers could look for as an indirect sign of intelligent life — especially life capable of building such megastructures.

Of course, not all unusual infrared radiation emissions are indicative of Dyson spheres. In May this year, scientists set out to look specifically for the signature of



Freeman Dyson said that technologically advanced civilisations will harness the entire radiative power of a star.

Dyson spheres. They scanned 5 million stars within 1,000 light years of the earth. After analysing this data, they found seven stars whose infrared radiation they could not explain. There is no conclusive evidence still, but might one of these seven stars have a Dyson sphere surrounding it?

For feedback and suggestions
for 'Science', please write to
science@thehindu.co.in
with the subject 'Daily page'

Dyson sphere: an energy devourer (22 July)

- As an astronomer, you spot a star emitting unusual infrared radiation.
- Zooming in, you see solar panels surrounding the star, collecting solar energy—a Dyson sphere.
- Named after physicist Freeman Dyson, who theorized its existence.
- Dyson proposed that advanced civilizations might build such spheres to capture all the energy from a star.
- These spheres would emit excess heat as infrared radiation, which could be detected by astronomers as a sign of advanced life.
- Not all unusual infrared emissions are Dyson spheres.
- In May, scientists searched for Dyson spheres by scanning 5 million stars within 1,000 light years.
- They found seven stars with unexplained infrared radiation.
- There is no conclusive evidence yet, but one of these stars might have a Dyson sphere.

Focus on female employment to counter unemployment

GS Paper III: Employment

The difficulty in getting jobs and inflation were the two major issues that played a role in the results of the Lok Sabha Elections 2024, according to the Lokniti-CSDS pre-poll survey (*The Hindu*, April 11, 2024). The **India Employment Report (IER) 2024**, published by the Institute for Human Development and the International Labour Organization, also illustrated a rise in the unemployment rate from a little more than 2% in 2000 and 2012 to 5.8% in 2019. Unemployment reduced somewhat to 4.1% in 2022, although time-related underemployment was high at 7.5%. The labour force participation rate (LFPR) also fell from 61.6% in 2000 to 49.8% in 2018 but recovered halfway to 55.2% in 2022. But in this gloomy picture marked by unemployment and underemployment, there was a steep and steady upward trend of female LFPR from 24.6% in 2018 to 36.6% in 2022 in rural India. It also increased by around 3.5% from 20.4% in 2018 in urban areas. This is in contrast with male LFPR, which rose marginally by 2% in rural areas and almost stagnant in urban areas.

Female LFPR in India is low when compared to the world average of 53.4% (2019), and it has decreased from 38.9% in 2000 to 23.3% in 2018. Against this backdrop, the current increasing trend in female LFPR, especially a 12% rise in rural India during 2018-22, indicates an untapped opportunity for employment generation. Women have been engaged in unpaid family labour work in both rural and urban areas. While 9.3% of males were employed as unpaid family workers, the same was as high as 36.5% for females in 2022. Moreover, the difference between female and male unpaid family labour employment was 31.4% in rural areas against only 8.1% in urban areas. Hence, if appropriate strategies are taken, there is a much greater opportunity for female employment generation, especially in rural areas.

The choice of employment for earnings may be extremely gendered, which makes generating employment opportunities for females tricky. Our study on work conditions and employment for women in the slums of Bhuj, Gujarat, shows that women are more interested in engaging in traditional employment activities from home,



Indranil De

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A better female labour force participation rate can improve overall family income and welfare, especially in rural India

such as *bandhani*, embroidery and fall beading, rather than other opportunities, including non-farm casual labour. The flexibility of work and the possibility of working from home were the major reasons for preferring traditional occupations despite their low income. The study also found that 30% of women were stuck to their traditional occupations due to the unavailability of other options. A lower rise of female LFPR in urban than rural areas during 2018-22, as shown in IER 2024, also indicates a lack of appropriate and gainful opportunities for females in urban areas. The opportunity to develop one's own enterprise was difficult due to limited access to capital and binding social norms where males of a particular community control the dominant business of the locality – tie and dye. Collectivising women under self-help groups (SHG), and, further, through federations may benefit women involved in traditional occupations. SHG women may be trained to acquire new skills, and federations may link women directly to the market for better returns. The Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan (KMVS), a local non-profit organisation, is working in the region towards this end.

Traditional occupations are accepted by society as they conform to local gender norms. These occupations have emerged as the dominant choice of women. Traditional occupations support women's practical gender needs, such as managing both household work and earnings. However, they may not help in meeting strategic gender needs, such as challenging regressive gender norms. Moving out of their own dwelling and working in a professional environment increases women's agency and empowers them to meet strategic gender needs.

The importance of market access
The foray of women into male-dominated workspaces would increase competition for labour work. This competition can be avoided by generating new opportunities in previously neglected arenas. In a study on the relationship between the type of dominant irrigation source of a region (canal or groundwater) and women's empowerment (farm employment and decision-making abilities) in the villages in the Upper Gangetic Plains of Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh, we found that women's wages in farm labour work and decision-making abilities increased with the expansion of relatively less dominant source of irrigation and vice versa. Males may take more interest if more water is available through the dominant source of the region. Further, the expansion of canal irrigation during *Ziad* (summer slump season), when males had less interest in agriculture, positively affected female empowerment.

Additional non-conventional irrigation benefits women, as this writer's recent field visits to villages in West Bengal showed. Women have initiated farming, pisciculture, nursery and vermicompost after water is made available

through ponds or tube wells in arid and monocropped regions. These women are part of an all-women water user's association supported by the West Bengal Accelerated Development of Minor Irrigation Project, Government of West Bengal. Availability of work near home has reduced female migration with the whole family and has increased family welfare. Male family members help in heavy activities that demand strength, such as ploughing or netting in ponds. In most tribal villages, women are barred from ploughing due to gender norms. Similar norms exist for netting in ponds. Women said that they could carry on without the help of male family members if they used hired tractors for ploughing and hired labour for netting. More market interaction empowers women by enabling them to circumvent gender norms and reduce dependency on male family members. Far away, in the Upper Gangetic Plains, a more vibrant water market was found to be associated with higher agency by women to influence the purchase of agricultural inputs.

The earnings of both men and women contribute to family income and welfare. Hence, the strategy to enhance women's workforce participation and reduce underutilisation of time can be possible by developing income-earning opportunities where males need not be confronted and driven out of the labour market. Women's work opportunities at or near home can enhance the family income and women's position in the family. Strikingly, a woman in West Bengal was proud that she could lend money to her husband to buy agricultural inputs. In another study in the slums of Kolkata, it was observed that women's participation in the workforce has reduced economic vulnerability and improved resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

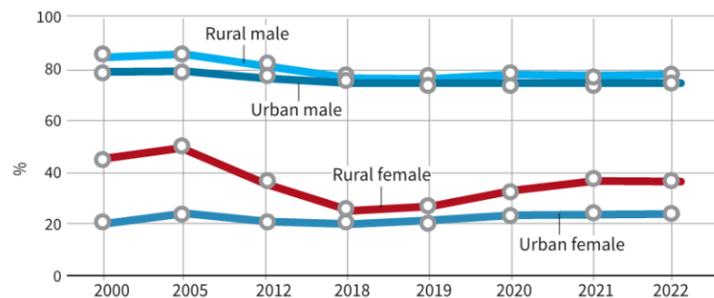
Need for a better work environment
At the same time, participation in work outside the home should be focused. This has a more direct impact on women's empowerment. However, a long-term strategy is required to develop a better work environment for women. Safety and basic facilities in the workplace (toilets and crèches) should be made available. Public policy should mandate these facilities in small- and medium-manufacturing or business units.

A strategy of focusing on the improvement of female LFPR would improve overall employment and the family income. In rural areas, public policy should help women by providing more access to resources (such as water) and markets (to buy inputs and implements and to sell produce). In urban areas, better facilities in the workplace should be mandated. Collectivising women and federating collectives in rural and urban India under planned economic activities will be most helpful. The *Lakshpati Didi* programme aiming at raising an SHG woman's annual income to ₹1 lakh or above may pave the way.

The views expressed are personal

Labour force participation rate in India

A sharp rise in the female labour force participation rate, especially in rural India, from 2018 indicates new opportunities for employment generation



Source: India Employment Report 2024

Focus on female employment to counter unemployment (22 July)

- Difficulty in getting jobs and inflation were major issues in the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections (source: Lokniti-CSDS pre-poll survey).
- The India Employment Report (IER) 2024 showed the unemployment rate increased from just over 2% (2000, 2012) to 5.8% (2019), then decreased to 4.1% (2022), with time-related underemployment at 7.5% (2022).
- Labour force participation rate (LFPR) fell from 61.6% (2000) to 49.8% (2018), then recovered to 55.2% (2022).
- Female LFPR increased from 24.6% (2018) to 36.6% (2022) in rural areas, and by around 3.5% from 20.4% (2018) in urban areas.
- Male LFPR rose marginally by 2% in rural areas and remained almost stagnant in urban areas.
- Female LFPR in India is low compared to the world average of 53.4% (2019) and decreased from 38.9% (2000) to 23.3% (2018).
- The rise in female LFPR, especially a 12% increase in rural areas (2018-2022), indicates potential for employment generation.
- Women are more engaged in unpaid family labor (36.5% for females vs. 9.3% for males in 2022).
- The difference in unpaid family labor employment is 31.4% in rural areas and 8.1% in urban areas.
- There is a greater opportunity for female employment generation, especially in rural areas, with appropriate strategies.
- Employment choices for earnings are highly gendered, making it challenging to generate employment opportunities for women.
- Study in Bhuj, Gujarat slums shows women prefer traditional home-based work (bandhani, embroidery, fall beading) over non-farm casual labor due to flexibility and working from home.
- 30% of women remain in traditional occupations due to a lack of other options.

- Lower rise in female LFPR in urban areas (2018-22) indicates a lack of appropriate opportunities.
- Developing own enterprises is difficult due to limited access to capital and social norms controlling business.
- Collectivizing women under self-help groups (SHGs) and federations can benefit women in traditional occupations.
- SHGs can provide training for new skills and link women to markets for better returns.
- Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan (KMVS) is a local NGO working towards this goal.
- Traditional occupations conform to local gender norms and support women's practical needs (household work and earnings).
- These occupations do not meet strategic gender needs (challenging regressive norms).
- Working outside the home in a professional environment can increase women's agency and empower them.

The importance of market access

- Women's entry into male-dominated workspaces can increase labor competition, avoidable by creating opportunities in neglected areas.
- Study in Upper Gangetic Plains found women's wages and decision-making improved with the expansion of less dominant irrigation sources.
- Canal irrigation expansion during the Ziad season increased female empowerment as males showed less interest in agriculture.
- Non-conventional irrigation in West Bengal enabled women to start farming, pisciculture, nurseries, and vermicomposting.
- Women in West Bengal's water user's association benefited from work near home, reducing migration and increasing family welfare.
- Male family members assist in heavy tasks like ploughing or netting, but women can manage with hired help.
- Market interaction empowers women, reducing dependency on men and circumventing gender norms.
- Earnings from both men and women enhance family income and welfare.
- Strategies should focus on developing income opportunities where men are not driven out of the labor market.
- Women's work near home can improve family income and their position in the family.
- Women's workforce participation in Kolkata slums reduced economic vulnerability and improved resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Need for a better work environment

- Participation in work outside the home should be focused on for direct impact on women's empowerment.
- A long-term strategy is needed to develop a better work environment for women.
- Safety and basic facilities (toilets and crèches) should be available in workplaces.
- Public policy should mandate these facilities in small and medium manufacturing or business units.
- Improving female LFPR would enhance overall employment and family income.
- In rural areas, public policy should provide more access to resources (water) and markets (inputs and selling produce).
- In urban areas, better workplace facilities should be mandated.
- Collectivizing women and federating collectives in rural and urban areas under planned economic activities is beneficial.
- The Lakhpati Didi programme, aiming to raise an SHG woman's annual income to ₹1 lakh or above, may pave the way.

Reasonable accommodations and disability rights

GS Paper II: Vulnerable Section of Society

The principle of reasonable accommodations (RA) is foregrounded in the legal framework through the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016. The Act, in 2.(y), describes RAs as those adjustments which ensure that Persons with Disabilities (PwD) are able to exercise their rights equally with others. These RAs may range from building ramps or providing assistive technologies to restructuring job requirements and modifying workplace policies. However, public and private institutions are exempt from implementing these RAs if they can prove that such an exercise would cause them disproportionate or “undue burden”.

The reluctance of Indian institutions

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) charts out an illustrative set of factors which should aid an institution in objectively determining its undue burden. However, from a financial standpoint, Indian institutions are still reluctant to bear the costs of complying with such anti-discrimination legislation. The reason is not far to see.

When institutions are made the sole cost-bearers of RAs, they adopt efficiency-enhancing, utilitarian approaches rather than a welfare-based approach towards PwDs. Informed by prejudices that PwDs are inherently less productive, or that providing RAs is always expensive, institutions tend to use the defence of undue burden for reasons of expediency more than for reasons of actual hardship. This directly compromises the rights of PwDs and makes them the subject of a cost-benefit analysis. Thus, setting a uniform legal standard to determine undue burden becomes imperative in order to prevent misuse. However, compliance with this standard can only thrive in an ecosystem where institutions realise that in addition to fulfilling the legal mandate, an investment in RAs can also generate tangible business benefits for them.

The Constitution of India puts the state under



Tanishk Goyal

an advocate at the Allahabad High Court, a former law clerk of the Supreme Court of India and an incoming LL.M candidate at Harvard Law School

A practical model exists to diminish the institutional reluctance to accommodate persons with disabilities

a positive obligation to create conditions wherein individuals can effectively exercise their right to equality. Since the rights of PwDs directly depend on how accessible institutions are to them, the state is bound to create positive ecosystems which not only mandate but also encourage institutions to accommodate PwDs.

A model that can be implemented

First, a state can do so by sensitising institutions about the fact that a majority of the requested RAs can be procured at inexpensive prices. Second, by giving targeted incentives to such institutions for providing RAs such as deductions, subsidies or tax credits. And, third, by sharing the costs of RAs with those remaining institutions that demonstrate actual hardship in providing RAs due to a true shortfall in their resources. This incentive and cost-sharing model will not only redress disadvantage and stigma against PwDs but also develop a policy response that increases PwD participation in institutional ecosystems and also accommodates their differences.

This model is also practically implementable. It can be operationalised by using the provisions in the RPwD Act. Section 86 of the Act highlights the creation of a National Fund for PwDs. Its corpus, inter alia, includes substantial contributions from banks and financial institutions in pursuance of the judgment of the Supreme Court of India in *Indian Banks' Association, Bombay vs M/s Devkala Consultancy Service*. Rule 42 of the RPwD Rules, 2017, supplements this provision by mandating that the corpus should be used to implement the objectives of the RPwD Act. However, despite these provisions, the corpus of the National Fund still remains underutilised. Further, its scope remains severely restricted and its coverage remains capped at dismally low amounts. This roadblock can be addressed by ensuring a continuous flow of funds towards the National Fund while also optimally utilising the funds already available therein. The state can do so by

designating the National Fund as a separate line item in every annual budget and framing the following rules for the disbursement of its corpus.

Ensuring a welfare approach

Whenever RAs are requested, institutions should first assess their resource deficit which precludes them from procuring the said RAs. This inquiry should be undertaken in light of the incentives such as tax credits or expense deductions that may have already been provided to them.

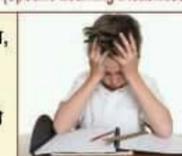
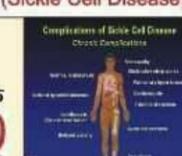
Institutions can then submit a request to the National Fund's governing body to compensate them for the shortfall.

Borrowing from the standards under the Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990, the National Fund's governing body can also require them to state in their request, their overall financial resources, access to external funding and the lack of alternative and efficacious RAs in the market which could be procured at a lesser cost. This can eliminate any deliberate cost avoidance by institutions. Upon receiving such a request, the designated authority under the National Fund can conduct a fact-finding inquiry to assess the veracity of the resource-deficit claims. Subsequently, the National Fund's governing body can consult the Office of Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities to assess the proportionality of the requested RAs as contemplated under the CRPD before sanctioning funds to make up for the shortfall. This safeguard will ensure that any proportionality analysis of an RA is guided by a welfare rather than a utilitarian approach.

With these approaches, the Incentive and Cost-Sharing Model can achieve a three-fold objective. It can diminish the reluctance of erring institutions to accommodate PwDs; provide the prospects of positive market outcomes to new and upcoming institutions and, concurrently, ensure that institutions satisfy a uniform legal threshold of 'undue burden' before they can be allowed to avoid the costs of providing RAs.



दिव्यांगजन अधिकारी अधिनियम 2016 के अन्तर्गत निशक्तता के 21 प्रकार एवं उनके पहचान के लक्षण

1. मानसिक मंदता (Mental Retardation) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> समझने/बोलन में कठिनाई अभिव्यक्त करने में कठिनाई 	2. ऑटिज्म (Autism Spectrum Disorder) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> किसी कार्य पर ध्यान केन्द्रित करने में कठिनाई आँखे मिलाकर बात न कर पाना गुमसुम रहना 	3. सेरेब्रल पाल्सी (Cerebral Palsy)/पोलिया/नर्व इंजरी <ul style="list-style-type: none"> पैरों में जकड़न चलने में कठिनाई हाथ से काम करने में कठिनाई 
4. मानसिक रोगी (Mental Illness) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> अस्वाभाविक व्यवहार खुद से बातें करना भ्रम जाल मतिभ्रम व्यसन (नशे का आदि) किसी से डर/भय गुमसुम रहना 	5. श्रवण बाधित (Hearing Impairment) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> बहरापन ऊँचा सुनना या कम सुनना 	6. मूक निःशक्ता (Speech Impairment) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> बोलने में कठिनाई सामान्य बोली से अलग बोलना जिसे अन्य लोग समझ नहीं पाते 
7. दृष्टि बाधित (Blindness) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> देखने में कठिनाई पूर्ण दृष्टिहीन 	8. अल्प दृष्टि (Low-Vision) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> कम दिखना (60 वर्ष से कम आयु की स्थिति में रंगों की पहचान नहीं कर पाना) 	9. चलन निःशक्ता (Locomotor Disability) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> हाथ या पैर अथवा दोनों की निःशक्ता लकवा हाथ या पैर कट जाना 
10. कुष्ठ रोग से मुक्त (Leprosy-Cured) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> हाथ या पैर या अंगुलिया में विकृति टेडापन शरीर की त्वचा पर रंगहीन धब्बे हाथ या पैर या अंगुलियां सुन्न हो जाना 	11. बौनापन (Dwarfism) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> व्यक्ति का कद व्ययस्क होन पर भी 4 फुट 10 इंच या 147 सेमी या इससे कम होना 	12. तेजाब हमला पीड़ित (Acid Attack Victim) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> शरीर के अंग हाथ/पैर/आँख आदि तेजाब हमले की वजह से असामान्य/प्रभावित होना 
13. मांसपेशी दुर्बिकार (Muscular Dystrophy) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> मांसपेशीयों में कमजोरी एवं विकृति 	14. स्पेसिफिक लर्निंग डिसेप्टिविटी (Specific Learning Disabilities) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> बोलने, श्रुत, लेख, लेखन, साधारण जोड़, बाकी, गुणा, भाग में आकार, भार, दूरी इत्यादि समझने में कठिनाई 	15. बौद्धिक निःशक्ता (Intellectual Disability) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> सीखने, समस्या समाधान, तार्किकता आदि में कठिनाई प्रतिदिन के कार्यों में सामाजिक कार्यों में एवं अनुकूलन व्यवहार में कठिनाई 
16. मल्टीपल स्क्लेरोसिस (Multiple Sclerosis) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> दिमाग एवं रीढ़ की हड्डी के समन्वय में परेशानी 	17. पार्किंसंस रोग (Parkinsons Disease) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> हाथ/पांव/मांसपेशियों में जकड़न तंत्रिका तंत्र प्रणाली संबंधी कठिनाई 	18. हीमोफीलिया/अधि रक्तस्त्राव (Hemophilia) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> चोट लगने पर अत्यधिक रक्त स्त्राव रक्त बहना बन्द नहीं होना 
19. थैलेसीमिया (Thalassemia) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> खून में हीमोग्लोबिन की विकृति खून मात्रा कम होना 	20. स्किल सेल डिजीज (Sickle Cell Disease) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> खून की कमी अत्यधिक कमी (रक्त अल्पता) खून की कमी से शरीर के अंग/अवयव खराब होना 	21. बहु निःशक्ता (Multiple Disabilities) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> दो या दो से अधिक निःशक्ता से ग्रसित 

Reasonable accommodations and disability rights (22 July)

- The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 defines reasonable accommodations (RAs) as adjustments ensuring equal rights for Persons with Disabilities (PwD).
- RAs can include building ramps, providing assistive technologies, restructuring job requirements, and modifying workplace policies.
- Institutions are exempt from RAs if they can prove it would cause an undue burden.
- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) provides factors to determine undue burden.
- Indian institutions are reluctant to bear the costs of RAs, often citing undue burden for expediency rather than actual hardship.
- Prejudices and cost concerns lead to utilitarian approaches, compromising PwDs' rights.
- A uniform legal standard for undue burden is needed to prevent misuse.
- Compliance with this standard requires institutions to see RAs as beneficial investments.
- The Constitution of India obliges the state to create conditions for equality, requiring accessible institutions for PwDs.
- The state must create positive ecosystems that mandate and encourage accommodation for PwDs.

A model that can be implemented

- Sensitize institutions about the low cost of most requested RAs.
- Provide targeted incentives to institutions for RAs, such as deductions, subsidies, or tax credits.
- Share the costs of RAs with institutions demonstrating actual hardship due to resource shortfalls.
- This model can reduce disadvantage and stigma against PwDs and increase their participation in institutional ecosystems.
- The model is practically implementable using provisions in the RPwD Act.
- Section 86 of the RPwD Act highlights the creation of a National Fund for PwDs, with contributions from banks and financial institutions.
- Rule 42 of the RPwD Rules, 2017 mandates using the National Fund to implement the objectives of the RPwD Act.

GS Paper III: Cyber Security

Shock-proof state

India must ensure its democratic digital infrastructure is shock-proof

A bright light fell on the extent of the world's dependence on information technologies when on July 19, supermarkets, banks, hospitals, airports, and many other services in between suffered a simultaneous blackout after a common software solution they used glitched. Between then and the time at which the solution's developers rolled out a fix, news of the problem and the resulting downtime spread around the world through the same networks that have been erected to facilitate communications between these systems. Technological advancements are inevitable and desirable, but the concurrent responsibility to set up failsafes and emergency protocols is often less glamorous. These gaps are exacerbated in societies where the adoption of new technologies is concentrated in sectors competing in the global market and in piecemeal fashion *vis-à-vis* services provided in local markets. Thus, for example, the glitch may have caused an airline operator to suffer greater monetary losses but it would have been more debilitating for cardiac facilities at a tertiary care centre, or a computer trying to access a thermal power facility during peak demand.

Such glitches are more common than people realise thanks to otherwise trivial process- or business-level failures. The focus must instead be on the network interconnections that allow these technologies to be useful and the implementation of life-saving redundancies. Unfortunately, unlike most other technological enterprises, information technologies are yet to develop a mature self-awareness of their pansocial character and the impetus to adjust for this rudiment lies with the state. This requires a 'Digital India' push that is cognisant of software solutions' relationship with digital privacy and data sovereignty, layered over the challenges that income inequality and political marginalisation impose on communities navigating more socially interconnected settings. For example, public distrust in electronic voting machines, stoked by an incomplete understanding of software security among the political class, the judiciary, and civil society, could have been restored with open-source software and modes of integrity testing that violate neither physical nor digital property rights. The July 19 outage offers a similar opportunity: to rejig the software that public sector institutions need to provide their essential services and to incorporate redundancies, including moving away from single-vendor policies, that preserve the links between these institutions and people engaged in informal economies in the event of a network-level outage. The state was previously duty-bound to develop democratic digital infrastructure. Now, cognisant of more powerful interlinks among social, economic, and cultural realities, it is also duty-bound to ensure that this infrastructure is shock-proof.

- The National Fund remains underutilized, with restricted scope and low coverage.
- Ensure a continuous flow of funds to the National Fund and optimize the use of existing funds.
- Designate the National Fund as a separate line item in every annual budget and frame rules for its disbursement.

Ensuring a welfare approach

- Institutions should assess their resource deficit preventing them from procuring RAs, considering any incentives received.
- Submit a request to the National Fund's governing body to cover the shortfall.
- Requests should include details of financial resources, access to external funding, and the lack of alternative, cost-effective RAs.
- The National Fund's designated authority will conduct a fact-finding inquiry to verify resource-deficit claims.
- The governing body consults the Office of Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities to assess the proportionality of requested RAs.
- The Incentive and Cost-Sharing Model aims to:
 - Reduce institutions' reluctance to accommodate PwDs.
 - Provide positive market outcomes for new and upcoming institutions.
 - Ensure institutions meet a uniform legal threshold of 'undue burden' before avoiding RA costs.

Shock-proof state (22 July)

India must ensure its democratic digital infrastructure is shock-proof

- On July 19, a software glitch caused widespread disruptions affecting supermarkets, banks, hospitals, and other services.
- The problem highlighted the need for failsafes and emergency protocols alongside technological advancements.
- Disruptions were more severe in critical services like cardiac care or power facilities compared to less critical sectors.
- Information technologies often lack mature self-awareness about their broad social impact, placing the responsibility on the state.
- A 'Digital India' initiative should address issues of software security, digital privacy, and data sovereignty.
- Public distrust in electronic voting machines could be mitigated with open-source software and integrity testing.
- The July 19 outage presents an opportunity to improve public sector software, incorporate redundancies, and avoid single-vendor reliance.
- The state must ensure that digital infrastructure is resilient to shocks and interconnected with social, economic, and cultural realities.

PCS

Medal count

India needs a strong showing in Paris as it bids for 2036 Olympics

As Paris is ready to host its third Olympics after a century, the 117 Indian athletes are gearing up earnestly to increase the country's medal count in the post-COVID Games, kicking off on the banks of the majestic river Seine on July 26. When the pandemic-delayed Olympics were staged behind closed doors in Tokyo three years ago, India claimed seven medals to record its best-ever tally. With the country aiming to bid for the 2036 Games, it is understandable that the government, pumping in money into sports promotion, is optimistic about double-digit medals. World and Olympic champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra is the brightest medal contender for India. The second Indian individual gold medallist after shooter Abhinav Bindra, he is fourth among the leading throwers this season with a mark of 88.36m. To bolster his legendary status, he must perform at his peak and overcome several elite competitors. Shuttler P.V. Sindhu, the only Indian woman with two Olympic medals, will seek to overcome a slump and bag an unprecedented third medal. The other two individual medallists from Tokyo, weightlifter Mirabai Chanu and boxer Lovlina Borgohain will also look to secure second consecutive medals and make history. Mirabai, the women's 49kg silver medallist, has recovered from a hip injury and needs to perform at her best to register a 200kg-plus total for a podium finish. Lovlina, a 69kg Tokyo bronze medallist, will try to live up to her current status – the 75kg World champion.

Another World champion boxer Nikhat Zareen (50kg), former Worlds silver medallist Amit Panghal (51kg), Worlds bronze medallist wrestler Anshu Singh (53kg) and two-time bronze medallist Vinesh Phogat (50kg), who was a prominent face during the wrestlers' protest, World No.3 men's doubles badminton pair Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will be some of the names expected to contribute to the medal kitty. Altogether, 21 shooters have qualified this time and will be determined to end Indian shooting's flop show in the last two Olympics. Pistol shooters Manu Bhaker, Anish Bhanwala, and rifle shooters Sift Kaur Samra and Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar hold much promise. The Indian hockey team, which ended a 41-year medal drought in Tokyo by landing a bronze, will hope to excel under new coach Craig Fulton and repeat its glorious performance in Tokyo. An improved medals tally in Paris would lift the country's profile as a sporting nation and help build the momentum for India's aspirations to embrace the Olympic movement in the near future.

Medal count (22 July)

India needs a strong showing in Paris as it bids for 2036 Olympics

- Paris will host its third Olympics starting July 26, with 117 Indian athletes participating.
- India aims to improve its medal count, following a record seven medals at the Tokyo Olympics.
- The government is investing in sports promotion with hopes for double-digit medals.
- Neeraj Chopra, a world and Olympic champion in javelin throw, is a leading medal contender.
- Shuttler P.V. Sindhu, aiming for her third Olympic medal, seeks to overcome recent performance issues.
- Weightlifter Mirabai Chanu and boxer Lovlina Borgohain, both medalists from Tokyo, aim for consecutive medals.
- Mirabai, recovering from a hip injury, targets a total lift over 200kg.
- Lovlina, the World champion in her weight class, hopes to build on her Tokyo bronze.

- World champion boxer Nikhat Zareen (50kg) and former Worlds silver medallist Amit Panghal (51kg) are key Indian contenders.
- Wrestlers Antim Panghal (53kg) and Vinesh Phogat (50kg), who has won two bronze medals, are also expected to perform well.
- Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, the World No.3 men's doubles badminton pair, are hopeful medalists.
- India has 21 shooters aiming to improve their performance from the last two Olympics.
- Promising shooters include Manu Bhaker, Anish Bhanwala, Sift Kaur Samra, and Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar.
- The Indian hockey team, which won bronze in Tokyo after a 41-year gap, seeks to excel under new coach Craig Fulton.
- A successful showing in Paris would enhance India's reputation in sports and support its bid to strengthen its Olympic presence.

The importance of both Quad and BRICS

GS Paper II: IR

The Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting in Japan end-July, after a long gap of 10 months, comes at a time when the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is paralysed and its reform nowhere in sight, international law is violated with impunity both in the Ukraine war and in the assault on Gaza by Israel, an axis of Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran is gaining traction, and Chinese influence is growing not just in the Indo-Pacific, but elsewhere too.

The U.S. has, in turn, realised that it needs not just allies, but also credible partners in its security architecture, including in the Indo-Pacific, and reached "across the aisle" to "non-ally" countries like India to partner with them in smaller pluri-lateral groupings and joint security initiatives. Further, ASEAN countries are getting increasingly vulnerable, with South China Sea remaining a flashpoint.

While India is a member of many pluri-lateral groups on both sides of the geo-strategic "divide", its engagement in Quad and with BRICS present the country with interesting, and sometimes contrasting, dilemmas.

India has enthusiastically embraced Quad and its strategic objectives. U.S. President Joe Biden's belief in the Quad has given it the necessary fillip at the highest level since 2021. The fact that India, during its presidency of the UNSC in August 2021, held a high-level virtual event on 'Enhancing Maritime Security', presided over by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and attended by Russian President Vladimir Putin, among others, indicates the importance India attaches to strengthening maritime security in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.

India's role in the Quad

While Quad has always had a geopolitical security objective vis-à-vis China, India's vision goes beyond this narrow thrust to a much broader redrawing of the security and techno-economic architecture of the Indo-Pacific



T.S. Tirumurti

Foreign Service Officer who was India's Permanent Representative to the UN, New York, and India's Sherpa for BRICS

With India being the only country common to both Quad and BRICS and a founding member of both, it cannot afford to downplay one for the other

region. With Quad now working on reorientation of global supply chains of critical technologies and on a range of areas of direct strategic relevance to the region, including digital, telecom, health, power, and semi-conductors, it has underlined that development too has a security perspective which cannot be ignored. India, in its turn, has benefited through enhanced bilateral relations with Quad partners, especially the U.S.

On the other hand, the formation of AUKUS with the U.S., Australia, and the U.K., with a view to enhance their military capabilities, especially Australia's with nuclear submarines, has put securitisation of the Indo-Pacific region and deterrence of China at the centre. The Ukraine war and enhanced focus on NATO has made the West look at Asia too through a military lens. AUKUS may well suit India's geo-strategic interests, but India's reluctance to go the whole nine yards in embracing a purely security vision for Quad is seen as a dampener, in spite of the Indian External Affairs Minister clarifying that Quad is not an Asian NATO and India is not a treaty ally unlike the other three. In fact, I used to tell my Quad colleagues in the UN that the only value-add we have in Quad is India. Instead of factoring in India's viewpoint, if they merely want to convert India to their cause, then they are wasting the opportunity to become inclusive and enhance their overall impact in the region, which includes developing countries with differing compulsions, not all of which are military-centric.

India's independent policy of close relations with Russia and calling for a diplomatic solution to the Ukraine war, both of which are frowned upon by the West, do not distract India from strengthening the Quad. Some Quad members and European countries are themselves enhancing their bilateral engagement with China, underlining their differing bilateral and regional compulsions.

Against the backdrop of India's enthusiastic engagement with

Quad, its engagement with BRICS presents a different conundrum. India was an enthusiastic founder of BRICS. In fact, at the 10th annual summit of the BRICS in 2018 in Johannesburg, South Africa, it was Mr. Modi who reminded the leaders that BRICS was founded to reform the multilateral system and proposed for the first time his vision of "reformed multilateralism." However, India's participation in BRICS has fluctuated from enthusiastic to lukewarm. While BRICS' initiatives such as New Development Bank and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement have been pioneering, the attempt by China to use BRICS to grandstand and push its world view on the Global South and now, to push back the West has made India wary of giving BRICS a higher profile.

The potential of BRICS

India had, consequently, been reluctant to expand BRICS. In fact, in 2018, Mr. Putin too underlined his reluctance to expand BRICS by quoting former South African President Nelson Mandela: "After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb." But after Quad and the situation in Ukraine, Russia too realised the potential of BRICS, which includes pushing back the West, and lined up behind China. The change of guard in Brazil leaves India as the lone member to push back China. A reluctant India decided to accept BRICS's expansion than oppose it and now many more countries are reportedly waiting to join. Even if India has the best of bilateral relations with all the new members, we need to make sure it all adds up to support for India inside BRICS. For this, India cannot afford to be ambivalent about BRICS any more. To counter moves to take BRICS in a direction India does not like, we need to be more engaged, not less. With India being the only country common to both Quad and BRICS, the country cannot afford to downplay one for the other.

The importance of both Quad and BRICS (22 July)

- The Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting in Japan, after a 10-month break, highlights ongoing global issues.
- The UNSC is ineffective, and international laws are being violated in Ukraine and Gaza.
- An axis of Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran is gaining influence.
- Chinese influence is growing globally, including in the Indo-Pacific.
- The U.S. is seeking partners like India for joint security initiatives and pluri-lateral groupings.
- ASEAN countries are becoming more vulnerable, with the South China Sea remaining a conflict zone.
- India's involvement in both Quad and BRICS presents strategic challenges and opportunities.
- India supports Quad's strategic goals, boosted by U.S. President Biden's endorsement.
- India's UNSC presidency in August 2021 focused on enhancing maritime security, emphasizing its commitment to the Indo-Pacific.

India's role in the Quad

- Quad aims to reshape the Indo-Pacific's security and techno-economic landscape, addressing critical technologies like digital, telecom, health, power, and semiconductors.
- India benefits from stronger bilateral relations with Quad partners, especially the U.S.
- AUKUS, formed by the U.S., Australia, and the U.K., focuses on military capabilities and deterrence against China, influencing India's approach to security in the Indo-Pacific.
- India's reluctance to fully embrace a security-focused Quad vision contrasts with the military-centric AUKUS approach, though India values its role in Quad beyond a military alliance.
- India's independent stance on Russia and the Ukraine war, and its call for diplomatic solutions, do not weaken its Quad engagement.
- India's involvement with BRICS is complex; while India helped found BRICS and supports its multilateral reform goals, it is cautious due to China's dominant role and its use of BRICS to challenge the West.
- BRICS initiatives like the New Development Bank and Contingent Reserve Arrangement are pioneering, but China's influence makes India wary of elevating BRICS' profile.

The potential of BRICS

- India was initially reluctant to expand BRICS, with Putin also expressing similar concerns in 2018.
- The changing global dynamics, including the Quad's activities and the situation in Ukraine, shifted Russia's stance, aligning with China on BRICS expansion.
- With Brazil's leadership change, India is now the primary country resisting China's influence within BRICS.
- India has decided to accept BRICS expansion rather than oppose it, with many new countries interested in joining.
- India needs to actively engage in BRICS to ensure its interests are supported and cannot afford to neglect its role in either BRICS or Quad.

On the student protests in Bangladesh

Why have students in Bangladesh took to the streets? Why is the 30% quota for freedom fighters and their descendants an emotive matter for the Awami League? How did the protests turn violent? Have the quotas been misused?

GS Paper II: IR

EXPLAINER

Kallol Bhattacharjee

The story so far:

At least 130 people have been killed in the student protest clashes against quotas for government jobs in Bangladesh. In a new development, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court dismissed the order of the High Court that had precipitated the crisis, and reserved 93% of the seats in government services for merit, allocating just 5% jobs for freedom fighters and their descendants. A one per cent quota each has been allocated for tribes, differentially abled people and sexual minorities.

What do the protests mean for the Sheikh Hasina government?

The anti-quota protests have come at a time when Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was settling down to power after winning a controversial election in January that gave her an unprecedented fourth consecutive term. Ms. Hasina was aware that the biggest challenge this time was high inflation and unemployment, and had started looking for solutions from partner countries like India and China as she wanted to increase employment opportunities in the manufacturing sector. The agitation, coupled with her own intemperate remarks, has created one of the biggest crises that she has faced since coming to power for her first term in 1996.

How did the agitation begin?

The seeds of the present quota reform movement lies in the smaller anti-quota movement of 2018. On March 8, 2018, the Bangladesh High Court rejected a petition challenging the legality of the quota system in the country that had existed since the early 1970s. In this backdrop, Ms. Hasina declared that she would maintain the quota for the descendants of the veterans of the liberation war. It was broadly understood that this quota which was started by her father Sheikh Mujib was an emotional matter for her. But this declaration of support for the quota for the descendants of the liberation war triggered a major agitation by students.

Responding to the agitation, Ms. Hasina cancelled all quotas in the Bangladesh Civil service through an executive order. This was a jolt for the students who just wanted a reform of the quota system and not abolition. It was clear that if freedom fighters were not to get any quota then no one else would either. During the next two years, over several rounds of discussion, Ms. Hasina stuck to her decision to abolish all quotas and in 2020, the executive order became operational.

What role did the court play in the quota agitation?

On June 5, 2024, the Bangladesh High Court nullified Ms. Hasina's executive order that had dissolved all quotas. This action by the judiciary restored all quotas in the Bangladesh civil service. This judicial intervention was brought upon by an appeal filed by the descendent of a freedom fighter and six other individuals. Responding to the High Court's verdict, the government filed an appeal with the appellate division of the Supreme Court. It became apparent that since the court had brought back the quota system, Ms. Hasina would try and ensure that the earlier system of 30% quota for descendants of freedom fighters is reintroduced in the new quota system. This triggered the current protests.

The appellate division of the Supreme



Violent clashes: Police takes position to disperse students protesting over the quota system, in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on July 19. AP

Court then issued an order halting the High Court's order till the government's appeal was fully heard. Ms. Hasina appealed to the students to allow the Supreme Court's appellate division to complete the hearing. However, there was uncertainty about the judiciary's decision. Students wanted the Prime Minister to consult them and other stakeholders and come up with an inclusive quota system and implement the same through an executive order. It was felt that if Ms. Hasina could abolish the quota system as she did in 2018, she could also bring in a quota as per the demand of the protesters.

At the core of the negotiations was the concern of the protesters about the 30% quota for freedom fighters and their descendants and the possibility that Ms. Hasina would bring back the quota for freedom fighters in jobs through either an appellate tribunal or executive decision which would limit the availability of merit-based jobs.

What triggered the clashes?

In the backdrop of the hearing in the appellate division and the protests, Ms. Hasina termed the protesters who opposed quota for freedom fighters' families as 'razakars' or traitors who supported the Pakistani military in carrying out large-scale atrocities against men and women in 1971. This enraged the students who demanded an apology from her and occupied public squares. The situation escalated as the police and the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) cracked down on protesters. The Awami League, the ruling party of Bangladesh, was also accused of using its student leaders to crack down on the protests.

This led to further confrontation and finally the military had to be pressed into service. As violence spiralled out of control, the protesters were offered a dialogue with the law minister but protesters refused stating "no dialogue

while bloodshed continues".

What is quota for freedom fighters?

After the war of 1971, Bangladesh was remodelled and one of the main planks of the creation of the state was Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's promise to do justice to those who had sacrificed and endured atrocities by the Pakistani military. In 1972, immediately after returning to Dhaka he resolved to create a quota for freedom fighters. Apart from freedom fighters, Mujib also gave a quota for the women who were tortured by Pakistani soldiers. After the assassination of Sheikh Mujib, the quota system was diluted and extended to unrepresented sections of the country. Thus Bangladesh's varying and evolving quota system spanned freedom fighters, women, underdeveloped areas and ethnic minorities or tribes.

Over the years, the quota system at times remained underutilised as the number of freedom fighters dwindled, and therefore possibilities of abuse of the quota arose. The argument of the critics was that as long as Mukti joddhas (freedom fighters) were young and seeking jobs, it was fair to give them reservation. After the mukti joddhas passed, their children have been getting reservation in jobs. And now the grand children of the mukti joddhas are also going to benefit from the revived quota system. At times, when the families were not available, there were suspicions that the quota was extended to party operatives of Ms. Hasina's Awami League.

Bangladesh's political system has been dominated by Ms. Hasina and the Awami League for a long time. There has been a growing sentiment among opposition parties and critics that the quota for freedom fighters was essentially an attempt to create a group of close supporters for the Awami League within the bureaucracy or civil service who would perpetuate the Awami League's rule. This is one of the main reasons that

prompted the students to launch the quota reform movement after the government filed an appeal with the appellate division of the court.

Why does the govt. feel strongly about the freedom fighters quota?

From the beginning, Ms. Hasina has fashioned her government around the agenda of Sheikh Mujib. She feels that the quota for freedom fighters and women who survived the torture camps of the Pakistan military are part of the sacred duty that she as the daughter of Sheikh Mujib has to carry forward. Her previous negotiations with the students have indicated that she suspects that by criticising freedom fighters, critics and students are allowing themselves to be used as a Trojan horse of opposition parties such as the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Jamaat-e-Islami.

How does the student movement reflect the political landscape?

Sheikh Hasina won the January election that was boycotted by the BNP who wanted the elections to be conducted under a caretaker government. The Awami League's position towards the quota for freedom fighters indicates that the party feels that Jamaat and the BNP are using the movement to embarrass her and show that her electoral victory did not reflect the anti-incumbency sentiment that is raging in the country.

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court has now drastically cut the quota for freedom fighters indicating that Prime Minister Hasina has taken a step back to address the concern of the protesting students. There is also talk that Ms. Hasina may constitute a commission that will work on creating a more representative quota system. However, she has not yet indicated whether she would be willing to engage with opposition parties who have also participated in the anti-quota protests.

THE GIST

The seeds of the present quota reform movement lies in the smaller anti-quota movement of 2018. On March 8, 2018, the Bangladesh High Court rejected a petition challenging the legality of the quota system in the country that had existed since the early 1970s. In this backdrop, Ms. Hasina declared that she would maintain the quota for the descendants of the veterans of the liberation war.

Bangladesh's political system has been dominated by Ms. Hasina and the Awami League for a long time. There has been a growing sentiment among opposition parties and critics that the quota for freedom fighters was essentially an attempt to create a group of close supporters for the Awami League within the bureaucracy or civil service who would perpetuate the Awami League's rule.

Ms. Hasina termed the protesters who opposed quota for freedom fighters' families as 'razakars' or traitors who supported the Pakistani military in carrying out large-scale atrocities against men and women in 1971.

On the student protests in Bangladesh (22 July)

Why have students in Bangladesh took to the streets? Why is the 30% quota for freedom fighters and the irdescendants an emotive matter for the Awami League? How did the protests turn violent? Have the quotas been misused?

- At least 130 people have died in Bangladesh due to clashes over job quotas.
- The Supreme Court dismissed a High Court order that reserved 93% of government job seats for merit, with only 5% for freedom fighters and 1% each for tribes, disabled individuals, and sexual minorities.
- The protests challenge Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who recently won a controversial fourth term and faces high inflation and unemployment.

- The quota reform movement started from smaller protests in 2018 when the High Court rejected a challenge to the long-standing quota system.
- Hasina's support for quotas for liberation war veterans triggered student protests.
- In response, Hasina abolished all quotas via an executive order in 2020, which led to further unrest among students who wanted only reforms, not abolition.

What role did the court play in the quota agitation?

- On June 5, 2024, the Bangladesh High Court reinstated all quotas in the civil service, nullifying Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's executive order that had abolished them.
- The reinstatement followed an appeal by descendants of freedom fighters and others.
- The government appealed to the Supreme Court, which temporarily halted the High Court's order until the appeal was heard.
- Protests erupted as students opposed the possible reintroduction of a 30% quota for freedom fighters' descendants.
- Hasina's comments labeling protesters as 'razakars' (traitors) inflamed tensions.
- The protests escalated, leading to police and Rapid Action Battalion crackdowns, and eventually military intervention.
- Protesters demanded a dialogue but refused to engage while violence continued.

What is quota for freedom fighters?

- After the 1971 war, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman promised to honor those who suffered under Pakistani military by creating a quota system in 1972.
- The initial quotas were for freedom fighters and women tortured by Pakistani soldiers.
- After Sheikh Mujib's assassination, the quota system expanded to include various underrepresented groups, such as ethnic minorities and people from underdeveloped areas.
- Over time, the system faced issues like underutilization and abuse, especially as the number of freedom fighters decreased.
- Critics argue that reservations were extended to the descendants of freedom fighters and possibly to supporters of the ruling Awami League.
- There are allegations that the quota system was used to build a loyal bureaucracy for the Awami League and perpetuate its rule.
- This perceived misuse of the quota system contributed to the student-led quota reform movement.

Why does the govt. feel strongly about the freedom fighters quota?

- Sheikh Hasina has modeled her government on the legacy of her father, Sheikh Mujib, and considers the quota for freedom fighters and women tortured by Pakistani soldiers a sacred duty.
- She suspects that critics and students who oppose the quota are being manipulated by opposition parties like the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami.
- The student movement reflects political tensions, especially since the BNP boycotted the January election, alleging it was unfair.
- The Awami League believes that the student protests are being used to discredit Hasina and challenge the legitimacy of her recent electoral victory.
- The Supreme Court has reduced the quota for freedom fighters, showing that Hasina is making concessions to address student concerns.
- There is speculation that Hasina might form a commission to develop a more balanced quota system, but it is unclear if she will engage with opposition parties involved in the protests.

What is a PC emulator, and why did Apple allow it on the App Store?

An emulator, as the name suggests, is a software that allows a computer device to emulate another software. The difference in how a device operates allows it to run and use software designed for other, previously, incompatible devices

Nabeel Ahmed

The story so far:

Apple approved a PC emulator for iOS for the first time this week. The move will allow users to run classic software, mostly games on iOS, iPadOS and visionOS. Earlier this year, Apple updated its App Store guidelines to allow retro game console emulators, mini games, and HTML5 mini apps on iPhones.

What is an emulator in PC?

An emulator, as the name suggests, is a software that allows a computer device to emulate another software. The difference in how a device operates allows it to run and use software designed for other, previously, incompatible devices.

For example, software designed for a Windows PC will have to be redesigned to run on macOS. This redesign will have to be done by developers, who may choose to not include all the functionalities available on Windows to Mac users.

An emulator can be used in this scenario to run software designed for Windows on macOS by emulating the design architecture of Windows.

Emulators are commonly used to run applications designed for different operating systems, play video games from

older consoles, and test software across different platforms.

Why did Apple allow emulators?

Apple, in the past, did not allow emulators on its platform. The Cupertino-based tech giant approved UTM SE, an app for emulating a computer, to run classic software and games. The move came weeks after the company rejected it and barred it from being notarised for third-party app stores in the European Union. The move may be an attempt by the company to shake off anti-trust allegations in the U.S. for operating as a monopoly and restricting certain gaming apps on its App Store and preventing competition.

Allowing emulators on its App Store could help the iPhone-maker ensure users do not use third-party app stores in the EU to download emulators.

Are PC emulators legal?

Emulators come in handy when testing and designing software, and they do not use proprietary codes. So, they are considered legal to use. However, sharing copyrighted ROMs (Read Only Memory) online is illegal.

But, as most emulators are used to running software not originally meant for a particular device, the question of

legality becomes complicated.

Using an emulator is considered legal if users own the software they are running on the emulator. However, if they use the emulator to run pirated copies of a software or use the emulator to distribute or download ROMs of software they do not own, it is considered illegal.

Are emulators risky?

Unlike proprietary software, which receives timely updates to ensure smooth and secure functions, using an emulator can be a risky proposition. Especially, if the emulator is downloaded from unofficial sources. These can contain malware that can compromise the security of a system.

Additionally, depending on the software users choose to emulate, they may inadvertently end up violating licensing agreements or copyright laws. This can result in refusal by the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) to provide maintenance, or technical support and even lead to users being penalised for using proprietary ROMs.

Emulators can also impact the performance of a device. They are resource-intensive and may lead to decreased CPU performance, overheating, and potential damage to the battery. Additionally, poorly designed and

untested emulators may lead to data corruption, especially if the emulator crashes or if there are compatibility issues with the ROMs or software being used.

Are emulators banned?

Due to their ability to help developers use different operating ecosystems for testing purposes without having to switch hardware or the underlying software, emulators are not typically banned in any country. However, the legal status of emulators depends on specific laws in each country, and on how they are used in that jurisdiction.

Are emulators legal in India?

In India, the laws do not specifically ban the use of emulators. However, their use is subject to copyright and intellectual property laws.

While it is legal to use and distribute emulators in India, users may land in trouble if they use emulators to run software such as games, operating systems, or applications without the proper licences or ownership. Distributing ROMs without proper ownership can be problematic.

Additionally, the concept of fair use applies if users own an original copy of the software and are using the emulator as a backup.

What is a PC emulator, and why did Apple allow it on the App Store? (22 July)

An emulator, as the name suggests, is a software that allows a computer device to emulate another software. The difference in how a device operates allows it to run and use software designed for other, previously, incompatible devices

- Apple has approved a PC emulator for iOS, iPadOS, and visionOS, allowing users to run classic software and games on these devices.
- An emulator is a software that allows one device to mimic another, enabling it to run software designed for a different system (e.g., running Windows software on macOS).
- Previously, Apple did not permit emulators on its platform.
- Apple approved the UTM SE app for emulating older software and games after initially rejecting it and barring it from being notarized in the EU.
- This change might be part of Apple's effort to address antitrust concerns in the U.S. and to discourage users from relying on third-party app stores in the EU for downloading emulators.

Are PC emulators legal?

- Emulators are legal to use for testing and designing software as they don't use proprietary codes.
- Sharing copyrighted ROMs online is illegal.
- Using an emulator is legal if you own the software being run on it.
- It becomes illegal if you use the emulator for pirated software or to download unauthorized ROMs.
- Emulators can be risky if downloaded from unofficial sources, as they might contain malware.
- They may also lead to issues with licensing agreements or copyright laws.
- Emulators can affect device performance, causing decreased CPU performance, overheating, and potential battery damage.
- Poorly designed emulators may cause data corruption and crashes.

Are emulators banned?

- Emulators are generally not banned worldwide due to their utility for developers testing different systems.
- The legality of emulators varies by country and depends on how they are used.
- In India, emulators are not specifically banned.
- Using and distributing emulators is legal, but using them to run unlicensed software or ROMs can cause legal issues.
- Fair use is allowed if users own the original software and use the emulator for backup purposes.

Taiwan must protect its sovereignty, know its own history, says President

Reuters
TAIPEI

Taiwan must protect its sovereignty and know its own culture and history, President Lai Ching-te said on Sunday, rejecting what he said was the previous mistaken belief the island could serve as a base to "retake" China.

Mr. Lai, who took office in May, and his ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) champion Taiwan's separate identity from China, a position that frequently angers Beijing

which views the island as an inviolable part of Chinese territory.

Speaking to the DPP's annual convention, Mr. Lai said those who fought to bring democracy to Taiwan – martial law only ended in 1987 – had a clear understanding of the island's place in the world.

They "did not hesitate to shed blood and used their lives to debunk the mistaken idea that 'Taiwan is a base to retake the mainland', and instituted the national policy of putting Taiwan first," said Mr. Lai,



Lai Ching-te

who is also DPP chairman. Chiang Kai-shek and his defeated Republic of China government fled to Taiwan in 1949 after losing a civil

war with Mao Zedong's communists. Chiang hoped to regroup his forces on Taiwan and attack China to destroy Mao's People's Republic of China. Chiang died in 1975 without achieving that dream.

Mr. Lai said Taiwan had different priorities.

"Now, our responsibility to unite the people, oppose annexation [by China] and ensure national sovereignty," he said, speaking in Taiwanese, also known as Hokkien, rather than the main language of government, Mandarin.

belief that Taiwan could be used to "retake" China.

- Lai and his party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), advocate for Taiwan's distinct identity from China, which upsets Beijing.
- He praised those who fought for Taiwan's democracy and rejected the idea of Taiwan as a base for attacking China.
- Chiang Kai-shek, who fled to Taiwan in 1949 after losing the civil war, had hoped to use Taiwan as a base to attack China but died without fulfilling this goal.
- Lai highlighted Taiwan's current focus on uniting its people, opposing Chinese annexation, and ensuring its sovereignty.

Taiwan must protect its sovereignty, know its own history, says President (22 July)

- President Lai Ching-te of Taiwan emphasized the importance of protecting Taiwan's sovereignty and understanding its own culture and history.
- He rejected the outdated

Ruto says Kenya demonstrations must stop, Opposition urges 'justice before talks'

Agence France-Presse
NAIROBI

Kenyan Opposition leader Raila Odinga on Sunday insisted "justice" was a prerequisite for any talks with the government after deadly clashes, as President William Ruto warned unrest could "destroy" the country.

Initially peaceful rallies that started last month against planned tax rises descended into violence with dozens killed after some marchers stormed Parliament.



William Ruto

Mr. Ruto shelved his tax reform and proposed a national dialogue.

"Justice must come first before any talks," said Mr.

Odinga on Sunday, however. He demanded "compensation for every victim of police brutality" during the rallies.

Rallies continue

Despite Mr. Ruto's concessions, rallies have continued across the country. The Opposition has called for fresh demonstrations next week.

"I want to promise it is going to stop. Enough is enough," Mr. Ruto said on Sunday.

A court on Thursday suspended a police move

to ban protests in the centre of the capital Nairobi. Mr. Ruto vowed to stop "looters" and "killers" who he said "risk destroying our country".

Mr. Odinga, 79, who lost out to Mr. Ruto in the 2022 presidential election, said there had to be a "national conversation" between different sectors of society.

Such discussions, he said in a post on X, "should come from various sectors including youth, government, religious leaders, health care professionals, lawyers and teachers".

clashes.

- President William Ruto warned that ongoing unrest could harm the country and has proposed a national dialogue.
- Protests, initially peaceful, turned violent last month due to planned tax hikes, resulting in numerous deaths and damage to Parliament.
- Ruto canceled the tax reform and suggested a national dialogue.
- Odinga demands compensation for victims of police brutality before engaging in talks.
- Protests have continued despite Ruto's concessions, with more demonstrations planned for next week.
- Ruto has pledged to stop "looters" and "killers" he says are threatening the country.
- A court temporarily blocked a police ban on protests in Nairobi's city center.
- Odinga calls for a broad "national conversation" involving various sectors like youth, government, religious leaders, healthcare professionals, lawyers, and teachers.

Ruto says Kenya demonstrations must stop, Opposition urges 'justice before talks' (22 July)

- Kenyan Opposition leader Raila Odinga insists that "justice" is needed before any talks with the government following recent violent

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