

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (3 October 2024)

TOPICS COVERED

1. Modi says toilet coverage reached 100% after launch of Swachh Bharat Mission (GS Paper-II: Government Scheme)
2. 2 women Navy officers begin voyage around the world (PCS)
3. PM launches special welfare package for tribal villages
4. Nanodiamonds spun at a billion RPM to test the limits of physics (GS Paper-III: Basic Science)
5. A case of nothing but patent censorship (GS Paper-II: Freedom of Speech and Expression)
6. The net result will be poor doctoral research (GS Paper-II: Education Sector)
7. China-Vietnam red diplomacy
8. What special status is Ladakh seeking? (GS Paper-II: Special Status of The State)
9. The myriad tales of historic Delhi: a walk through its many forts (GS Paper-I: Medieval History)
10. Every Odisha daily wagger wants to be tagged as a construction worker
11. MIP extension to boost local textile industry capacity
12. Divanshi, Mukesh win sports pistol gold in World juniors
13. India to host first kho kho World Cup next year

Modi says toilet coverage reached 100% after launch of Swachh Bharat Mission

GS Paper II: Government Scheme

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said that more than 12 crore toilets have been built and the scope of toilet coverage reached 100% from previously less than 40% in the country since the launch of the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) 10 years ago.

Addressing an event to mark the completion of 10 years of the SBM, Mr. Modi said that more than 60% of India's population was compelled to defecate in the open due to a lack of toilets until 10 years ago.

It was against human dignity and disrespectful towards the country's poor, Dalits, tribals, and backward communities as well as detrimental to the health and safety of women, the Prime Minister said.

Praising the efforts of sa-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with school students during a cleanliness drive on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti. ANI

faimitras (sanitation workers), celebrities, and non-governmental organisations in transforming the SBM into a huge public movement, he underlined the change in thinking brought about by the Swachh Bharat Mission and gave the example of people involved in cleaning work who were looked down upon earlier.

"When the cleaners got respect, they too felt proud of their role in changing the country," he said.

Mr. Modi called upon State governments to intensify their efforts by implementing cleanliness initiatives at the district, block, village, and local levels and highlighted that projects worth about ₹10,000 crore related to cleanliness had been started under it.

The SBM or Clean India Mission was launched on October 2, 2014, to eliminate open defecation and improve solid waste management.

Modi says toilet coverage reached 100% after launch of Swachh Bharat Mission (3 October)

- More than 12 crore toilets have been built since the launch of the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) 10 years ago.
- Toilet coverage in India increased from less than 40% to 100%.
- Before SBM, over 60% of India's population had to defecate in the open due to a lack of toilets.
- Open defecation was seen as an affront to human dignity, particularly for the poor, Dalits, tribals, backward communities, and posed health and safety risks for women.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised safaimitras (sanitation workers), celebrities, and NGOs for transforming SBM into a public movement.
- SBM brought a change in thinking, with increased respect for sanitation workers, making them proud of their role.
- PM Modi urged State governments to intensify cleanliness efforts at district, block, village, and local levels.
- Projects worth about ₹10,000 crore related to cleanliness have been initiated under SBM.
- Swachh Bharat Mission was launched on October 2, 2014, with the goals of eliminating open defecation and improving solid waste management.

2 women Navy officers begin voyage around the world

They will attempt to circumnavigate the globe on the 56-foot boat *Tarini*, covering 23,000 nautical miles over eight months; Navy chief Admiral Dinesh Tripathi flags off the expedition from Goa

PCS

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Lieutenant Commander Dilna K. and Lieutenant Commander Roopa A. of the Indian Navy on Wednesday embarked from Goa on a challenging expedition to circumnavigate the globe, covering 23,000 nautical miles over 240 days.

The second edition of the Navika Sagar Parikrama was flagged off from Ocean Sailing Node, *INS Mandovi*, by Navy chief Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi. The two women officer set sail on the *INSV Tarini*.

The voyage will take the two women officers across four continents through three oceans and three challenging capes.

"I am pleased to note that *Navika Sagar Parikrama* will contribute towards progressing national scientific research in collaboration with the National Institute of Oceanography for study on marine micro-



The journey will take the two women officers across four continents through three oceans and three challenging capes. PTI

plastics and ferrous content across the seas; Wildlife Institute of India for exploration on Mega Faunas or large sea mammals; Sagar Defence for their drones that promise us spectacular visuals of the voyage; and Defence Food Research Laboratory towards providing customised precooked Indian meals so that our valiant warriors always feel at home," Admiral Tripathi

told the gathering. He also released a special chart commemorating the expedition on the occasion.

It will unfold in five legs with stopovers at four ports for replenishment and maintenance. The five legs are Goa to Fremantle, Australia; Fremantle to Lyttleton; New Zealand to Port Stanley, Falkland; Port Stanley to Cape Town, South Africa; and from Cape Town to Goa.

INSV Tarini, a 56-foot sailing vessel built by Aquarius Shipyard Ltd., was inducted in the Indian Navy on February 18, 2017. The vessel has clocked more than 66,000 nautical miles (1,22,223 km) and participated in the first edition of *Navika Sagar Parikrama* in 2017, trans-oceanic expedition from Goa to Rio, Goa to Port Louis, and other significant expeditions.

The boat is equipped with advanced navigation, safety and communication equipment and has undergone necessary maintenance and equipment upgrade recently, the Navy said in a statement.

Both officers with a sailing experience of 38,000 nautical miles (70,376km) have trained vigorously for this epic voyage for more than three years. They have been trained on ocean sailing aspects of seamanship, meteorology, navigation, survival techniques and medicare at sea.

2 women Navy officers begin voyage around the world (3 October)

They will attempt to circumnavigate the globe on the 56-foot boat *Tarini*, covering 23,000 nautical miles over eight months; Navy chief Admiral Dinesh Tripathi flags off the expedition from Goa

- Lieutenant Commander Dilna K. and Lieutenant Commander Roopa A. of the Indian Navy embarked from Goa on a challenging expedition to circumnavigate the globe.
- They aim to cover 23,000 nautical miles over 240 days.
- This is the second edition of the *Navika Sagar Parikrama*,

flagged off from *INS Mandovi* by Navy chief Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi.

- The two women officers are sailing on the *INSV Tarini*.
- Their voyage will take them across four continents, through three oceans, and three challenging capes.
- *Navika Sagar Parikrama* will contribute to national scientific research in collaboration with:
 - National Institute of Oceanography for marine microplastics and ferrous content studies.
 - Wildlife Institute of India for exploring Mega Faunas (large sea mammals).
 - Sagar Defence for drone visuals of the voyage.
 - Defence Food Research Laboratory for providing customised precooked Indian meals.
- Admiral Tripathi released a special chart commemorating the expedition.
- **The expedition will unfold in five legs with stopovers at four ports for replenishment and maintenance:**
 - Goa to Fremantle, Australia.
 - Fremantle to Lyttleton, New Zealand.
 - Lyttleton to Port Stanley, Falkland.
 - Port Stanley to Cape Town, South Africa.
 - Cape Town to Goa.
- *INSV Tarini*, a 56-foot sailing vessel built by Aquarius Shipyard Ltd., was inducted into the Indian Navy on February 18, 2017.
- The vessel has clocked more than 66,000 nautical miles (122,223 km) and participated in the first edition of *Navika Sagar Parikrama* in 2017.
- *INSV Tarini* has participated in trans-oceanic expeditions, including Goa to Rio, Goa to Port Louis, and other significant voyages.
- The boat is equipped with advanced navigation, safety, and communication equipment and recently underwent maintenance and upgrades.
- Both officers have sailing experience of 38,000 nautical miles (70,376 km) and have trained for more than three years.
- They have been trained in ocean sailing aspects of seamanship, meteorology, navigation, survival techniques, and medicare at sea.

PM launches special welfare package for tribal villages

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday launched the **Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan**, a package for basic scheme saturation in **tribal-majority villages across 550 districts**, at an event in Jharkhand's Hazaribag district, where he also laid the foundation stones for a host of other projects intended to benefit tribal people across the country.

The package, originally coined as the **PM Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan (PM-JUGA)**, was cleared by the Union Cabinet last month as an **umbrella package to implement existing schemes in 63,000 Scheduled Tribe-majority villages**. There are 25 interventions planned under the package. An outlay of **₹79,156 crore**, to be spent over five years, has been cleared by the Union Cabinet. The Central share will be **₹56,333 crore** and the share of respective States will be **₹22,823 crore**.

PM launches special welfare package for tribal villages (3 October)

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan on Wednesday.
- The package aims for basic scheme saturation in tribal-majority villages across 550 districts.
- The event took place in Hazaribag district, Jharkhand.
- The Prime Minister also laid the foundation stones for other projects to benefit tribal people across the country.
- The package was initially called PM Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan (PMJUGA).
- It was approved by the Union Cabinet last month as an umbrella package to implement existing schemes in 63,000 Scheduled Tribe-majority villages.
- There are 25 planned interventions under the package.
- The package has an approved outlay of ₹79,156 crore to be spent over five years.
- The Central share will be ₹56,333 crore, and the respective States will contribute ₹22,823 crore.

Nanodiamonds spun at a billion RPM to test the limits of physics

Fluorescent nanodiamonds may be small, but they pack a punch big enough to reverberate across many industries. They are produced in a high temperature and high pressure process. FNDs have applications in high-resolution imaging, temperature sensing, and correlative microscopy

GS Paper III: Basic Science

Qudsia Gani

As scientists' understanding of the basic properties of matter has improved over time, they have been able to engineer materials with the best properties for specific applications. Such bespoke materials have revolutionised various sectors, including medical diagnostics, spaceflight, cryptography, commercial electronics, and computing. One such material is the fluorescent nanodiamond (FND).

FNDs are nanometre-sized diamonds made of carbon nanoparticles. They are produced in a high temperature and high pressure process. FNDs are stable under light and aren't toxic to living things, so they have many applications in high-resolution imaging, microscale temperature sensing, and correlative microscopy, among others. In biology, scientists use FNDs to track cells and their progeny over long periods.

Fluorescence is the property of some materials to emit light of lower frequency when irradiated with light of a higher frequency. But unlike many other nano-scale fluorescent materials, FNDs don't blink when irradiated for a long time. Their fluorescence lifespan is greater than 10 nanoseconds (ns) – a relatively long duration – which makes them better than quantum dots, whose inventors won the chemistry Nobel Prize last year.

In a recent study published in *Nature Communications*, physicists from Purdue University in the U.S. reported levitating FNDs in a high vacuum and spinning them very fast. It sounds like a simple, even comical, feat but is actually quite difficult. And now that it has been successfully demonstrated, it paves the way for multiple applications in industry, especially as sensors, and in fundamental research.

Quantum spin

One of the basic features of the building blocks of matter, like electrons and nuclei, is a property called spin. At any given moment, its value is a combination of two states called *up* and *down*. For a simplistic illustration, the spin of an electron can be 30% *up* and 70% *down*. If the *down* component is zero, the spin will be *up*, and vice versa. A computer can map these values to 0s and 1s and use the electrons to encode information. This is how a magnetic hard drive in a computer stores your data.

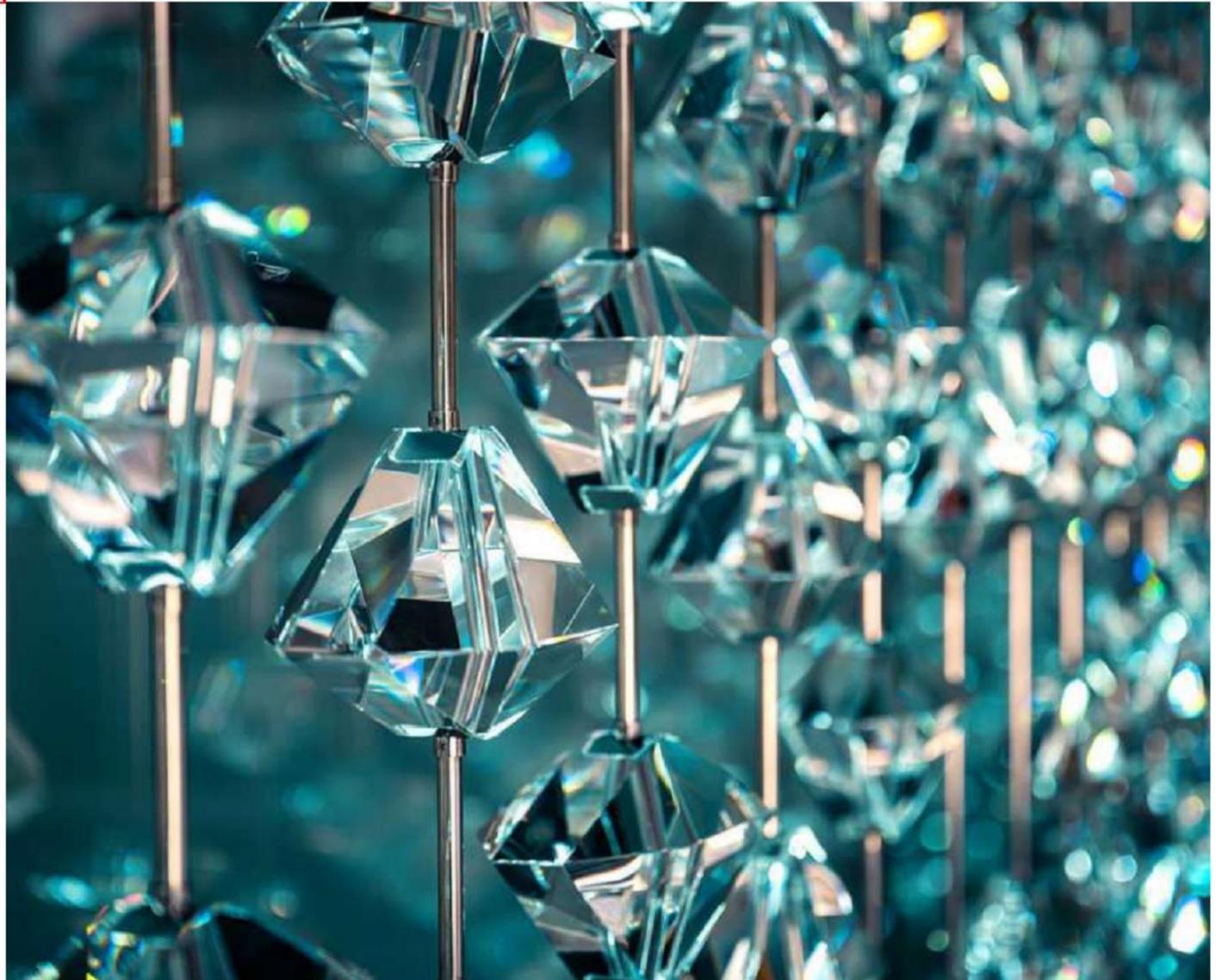
When a quantum computer manipulates the spin of some particles to perform its operations, each particle is called a spin qubit of the computer.

The Berry phase

The Purdue University team made some FNDs and spun them at an ultra-fast rate, making multiple notable findings.

For one, the team was able to record the Berry phase of the spin qubits due to the rotation.

Depending on the context, an electron can be a particle or a wave. When it's a wave, it will have properties like frequency, wavelength, and phase. The phase of a wave tells us how much of a wave is completed in a given amount of time. This is like checking how much of an eye-blink has been completed in, say, 2



Representative image of diamond-shaped crystals adorning a wall. Purdue University physicists have reported levitating nanodiamonds in a vacuum and spinning them very fast. It sounds like a simple, even comical, feat but is actually quite difficult. DECLAN SUN/UNSPLASH

milliseconds, how far up the Sun has risen by 11 am or what fraction of an F1 race has been completed after 30 minutes.

There are some simple ways to control the state of an electron inside a material, like changing its energy by varying the strength and direction of an applied magnetic field. Say we cycle the electron through multiple states before bringing it back to its original state. If the electron wave's phase in the final state is different from the original one, the phase difference is called the Berry phase.

It is named for Michael Berry, a physicist who provided a generalised description of this attribute in 1986. (Indian physicist S. Pancharatnam had discovered a particular form of it 30 years prior.) The Berry phase is important for us to understand certain quantum effects and the properties of strange materials called topological insulators. By showing they could measure the Berry phase of the spin qubits due to the rotation, the Purdue team's work opens the door for using FNDs in new contexts.

Testing the limits

Reconciling quantum physics with the classical physics of gravity is one of the biggest open problems in modern science. In the past, physicists have proposed that rapidly rotating FNDs containing spin qubits can be used to "test the limit of quantum mechanics and the quantum nature of gravity," per the statement. But they hadn't been able to put together a functional version of the setup required until now.

Fluorescence is the property of some materials to emit light of lower frequency when irradiated with light of a higher frequency. Unlike many other nano-scale materials, FNDs don't blink when irradiated for a long time

The Purdue researchers confined the FNDs in a cage made of electric and magnetic fields, and used the electric fields to set them spinning at up to 20 million times per second.

"With this method, the rotation frequency of a levitated nanodiamond is extremely stable and easily controllable," the team wrote in its paper.

Tongcang Li, a professor of physics, astronomy and electrical and computer engineering at Purdue and the study leader, said in a statement, "In the past, experiments with these floating diamonds had trouble in preventing their loss in vacuum and reading out the spin qubits. However, in our work, we successfully levitated a diamond in a high vacuum ... For the first time, we could observe and control the behaviour of the spin qubits inside the levitated diamond in high vacuum."

Applications in industry

When the FNDs were irradiated with lasers, they emitted light of different colours in different directions.

As the statement put it, it was as if the diamonds were throwing the world's

smallest disco party.

But beyond such simple pleasures, levitated FNDs are also sensitive to acceleration and electric fields, which means they can be used as sensors in many high-value industries and strategic sectors. The researchers also wrote in their paper that "the effect of the Berry phase generated by rotation ... will be useful for creating a gyroscope for rotation sensing."

FNDs can also be doped to enhance their electrical, magnetic, thermal, and/or optical properties. For instance, some carbon atoms in an FND can be replaced with nitrogen atoms. The substitution creates points in the atomic lattice called nitrogen vacancy (NV) centres. These NV centres host the electron spin qubits. When they are illuminated by green light, they emit red light, and vice versa.

The nitrogen atom has three valence electrons that can form bonds with three of the four valence electrons of carbon. When a neutral nitrogen vacancy centre (denoted NV⁰) accepts one more electron from the donor carbon atoms in the lattice, it forms a negatively charged centre called NV⁻. Physicists expect that FNDs containing NV⁻ centres can be used to produce the macroscopic version of the quantum superposition of electrons.

In sum, FNDs may be smaller than small, but they can pack a punch to reverberate across both theoretical and applied physics.

(Qudsia Gani is an assistant professor in the Department of Physics, Government Degree College Pattan, Baramulla. qudsiagani6@gmail.com)

Nanodiamonds spun at a billion RPM to test the limits of physics

(3 October)

Fluorescent nanodiamonds may be small, but they pack a punch big enough to reverberate across many industries. They are produced in a high temperature and high pressure process. FNDs have applications in high-resolution imaging, temperature sensing, and correlative microscopy

- Scientists have improved their understanding of matter and can now engineer materials with specific properties for various applications.
- These bespoke materials have transformed sectors like medical diagnostics, spaceflight, cryptography, commercial electronics, and computing.
- One such material is the fluorescent nanodiamond (FND).
- FNDs are nanometre-sized diamonds made of carbon nanoparticles, produced under high temperature and pressure.
- FNDs are stable under light, non-toxic, and have applications in high-resolution imaging, microscale temperature sensing, and correlative microscopy.
- In biology, FNDs are used to track cells and their progeny over long periods.
- Fluorescence is the emission of lower frequency light when irradiated by higher frequency light.
- Unlike other nanoscale fluorescent materials, FNDs don't blink when irradiated for a long time.
- FNDs have a fluorescence lifespan greater than 10 nanoseconds (ns), longer than quantum dots, which won the chemistry Nobel Prize last year.
- A recent study by physicists from Purdue University, published in Nature Communications, demonstrated levitating and spinning FNDs very fast in a high vacuum.
- This feat, though difficult, opens up multiple applications in industry, particularly in sensors, and fundamental research.
- Quantum spin is a property of particles like electrons and nuclei, involving a combination of two states: up and down.
- The spin value of an electron can be, for example, 30% up and 70% down, and if the down component is zero, the spin will be fully up.
- Computers can map these spin values to 0s and 1s for data encoding, similar to how a magnetic hard drive stores data.
- In quantum computing, manipulating the spin of particles allows them to serve as spin qubits for computations.

The Berry phase

- The Purdue University team made fluorescent nanodiamonds (FNDs) and spun them at an ultra-fast rate, leading to several significant findings.
- They recorded the Berry phase of the spin qubits due to the rotation of the FNDs.
- An electron can behave as both a particle and a wave; when it's a wave, it has properties like frequency, wavelength, and phase.
- The phase of a wave indicates how much of a wave has been completed in a given amount of time.
- The Berry phase occurs when the phase of an electron wave in its final state differs from its initial state after being cycled through multiple states.
- The Berry phase is named after physicist Michael Berry, who provided a generalized description of this effect in 1986, though Indian physicist S. Pancharatnam had discovered a form of it 30 years earlier.
- Understanding the Berry phase helps in studying quantum effects and topological insulators.
- The Purdue team's work demonstrated their ability to measure the Berry phase of spin qubits, opening the possibility of using FNDs in new contexts.
- One of the major unsolved problems in modern science is reconciling quantum physics with classical physics, particularly gravity.
- Physicists had previously proposed that rotating FNDs with spin qubits could be used to test the limits of quantum mechanics and quantum gravity, but a functional setup had not been achieved until now.
- The Purdue researchers confined the FNDs in a cage made of electric and magnetic fields and set them spinning at up to 20 million times per second.
- The team noted that the rotation frequency of the levitated FNDs is extremely stable and controllable.
- Tongcang Li, professor of physics, astronomy, and electrical and computer engineering at Purdue, stated that previous experiments with floating diamonds faced challenges in preventing their loss in vacuum and reading spin qubits.
- In this study, they successfully levitated a diamond in a high vacuum, observing and controlling the behavior of spin qubits inside the levitated diamond for the first time.

Applications in industry

- When FNDs (fluorescent nanodiamonds) were irradiated with lasers, they emitted light of different colors in different directions.
- This phenomenon was described as if the diamonds were hosting the world's smallest disco party.

- Beyond this visual effect, levitated FNDs are sensitive to acceleration and electric fields, making them useful as sensors in various high-value industries and strategic sectors.
- The researchers mentioned in their paper that the Berry phase generated by the rotation of FNDs could be utilized to create a gyroscope for rotation sensing.
- FNDs can be doped to enhance their electrical, magnetic, thermal, and optical properties.
- For instance, some carbon atoms in an FND can be replaced with nitrogen atoms, forming nitrogen vacancy (NV) centers.
- These NV centers host electron spin qubits, and when illuminated by green light, they emit red light, and vice versa.
- Nitrogen atoms have three valence electrons that bond with three of the four valence electrons of carbon atoms in the diamond lattice.
- A neutral nitrogen vacancy center (NV⁰) can accept an additional electron from donor carbon atoms, forming a negatively charged NV⁻ center.
- Physicists expect that FNDs containing NV⁻ centers can be used to produce macroscopic versions of quantum superposition of electrons.
- In summary, despite their small size, FNDs have significant potential to impact both theoretical and applied physics.

A case of nothing but patent censorship

GS Paper II: Freedom of Speech and Expression

On September 20, 2024, Justice A.S. Chandurkar of the Bombay High Court broke a tie that emanated out of a previously split verdict and delivered a ruling in defence of the right to free speech. He declared unconstitutional an amendment made to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (IT Rules). This law, had it been allowed to stand, would have given the Union government an Orwellian carte blanche to decide for us how any news about its operations ought to be carried on the Internet.

The provision in question, Rule 3(1)(b)(v), casts an onerous obligation on intermediaries – companies that facilitate the use of the Internet, ranging from our service providers to social media platforms. If the Union government's "Fact Check Unit" (FCU), which had been created under the amendment, identified any reporting on the government's business as fake, false, or misleading, intermediaries were required to make reasonable efforts not to host, display, upload, or publish such information. Should they choose to ignore a directive they stood to lose their "safe harbour" – an immunity from liability which is integral to the design of the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 and the protections it offers both to businesses and to the larger public's right to free expression.

There can be little doubt that fake and misleading information on the Internet is a problem. Its proliferation, given the medium's influence, ought to be a matter of serious public concern. To that end, the state has a legitimate interest in ensuring that it finds solutions towards its tackling. But any measure that it takes has to be found within the Constitution's boundaries.

Petition and response

The petitioners in the Bombay High Court argued that the introduction of Rule 3(1)(b)(v) indubitably breached those walls of protection. The state, through the amendment, effectively appropriated the power to determine what information was fake or misleading. It did so in a manner that maintained no fidelity to the slew of restrictions that the Constitution otherwise permits on free speech. What is more, the state, they added, had failed to so much as acknowledge that there existed other, less intrusive measures that could have been adopted to counter the problem.

In response, the Union government made two primary arguments. First, it argued that the law was anything but coercive, and that an intermediary was by no means compelled to act on the FCU's instructions. To the contrary, intermediaries were always at liberty to contest a loss of safe harbour in appropriate proceedings. Second, no person enjoyed a licence to spread



Suhrit Parthasarathy

an advocate practising in the Madras High Court

The Bombay High Court ruling on the amendment made to the IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 is a verdict in defence of the right to free speech

fake or misleading information and there was no constitutional protection that could be accorded to untrue speech. Therefore, according to the state, the Rule fell well within the government's powers to regulate online expression.

The judges on a Division Bench of the High Court had come to differing conclusions on the Rule's validity in January. Justice G.S. Patel found the provision *ultra vires*. In his reading, the Rule was vague and overbroad; was disproportionate to its avowed objective; and imposed on intermediaries a chilling effect that had a direct bearing on a citizen's right to equal treatment and free speech. Justice Neela Gokhale disagreed. She concluded that the intermediary's loss of safe harbour provided no direct threat to a citizen's right to freedom of expression.

The tie-breaking opinion rejected the Union government's defence of the Rule. In doing so, it deferred to Justice Patel's opinion on the importance of safe harbour and the chilling effect that the Rule was likely to have on intermediaries.

Intermediaries and safe harbour

Section 79 of the IT Act, right from its inception, contained an exemption, releasing intermediaries from liability for any third party information hosted by them so long as they discharged due diligence in observing their duties under the law. This safe harbour would, however, be lost if the intermediary had "actual knowledge", or received any communication, among others, from a government agency, that their resource was being used to commit an unlawful act.

The logic here was simple enough: to allow entities such as Facebook, X, and WhatsApp to act free from the responsibilities vested in traditional publishers. After all, these platforms merely hosted and transmitted material and did not by themselves act as writers or producers of that content. Therefore, if they were to face liability for what others posted on their sites, the threat of prosecution would be so severe as to effectively incapacitate the Internet's very working.

This basic foundational reason for safe harbour immunity also worked parallelly in promoting free speech on the Internet. Often, the intermediaries themselves do not have any direct interest in the information disseminated by users on their platform. But should they cede to external pressure, it is the users' right to free expression that is at stake.

In the case of Rule 3(1)(b)(v), were the FCU to write to an intermediary pointing out that some information about the central government on its portal was fake, the company's choice would have been limited. It could have either taken down the information flagged, or it could have stood up for the user's right to free speech,

sacrificing, in the process, its own safe harbour.

Here, as Justice Patel wrote, the intermediary faced a Hobson's choice. "No intermediary is quixotic enough to take up cudgels for free speech. Compromising one particular chunk of content is a small price to pay; better the user content is thrown under the bus than having the bus run over the entire business."

The government's second argument was easier to dismiss. No doubt, the traditional idea that the right to free speech ought to be built on a notion of a marketplace of ideas – where one believes that an open clash of views would lead to the correct, truthful opinion coming out – has its limitations. Free speech, properly understood, depends on a number of attendant requirements. Its exercise can be hampered, among other things, by a person's access to resources, economic and social conditions, and varying equations of power and authority.

Free speech and restrictions

But insofar as our jurisprudence on free speech has been built on any doctrine it is this: it is not up to anyone, least of all the state, to determine what kinds of expression ought to be tolerated. The only restrictions available are those explicitly contained in Article 19(2) of the Constitution, which includes matters such as defamation, public order, friendly relations with foreign states and the security and integrity of India.

Our guarantee of free speech, contained in Article 19(1)(a), can be traced to both instrumental and intrinsic values. The first, for example, because an uninhibited discussion of ideas, is likely to lead to better politics. The second because free speech matters not only for the results it produces but also for the recognition it accords to citizens as equal moral beings. That is, that our dignity and our autonomy as human beings depends on our ability to exercise a right to free conscience and free thought.

Neither of these justifications advocate absolutism. There are legitimate grounds on which free speech can be reasonably constrained. Those grounds, in our case, are contained in Article 19(2).

There is here no clause sanctioning a limitation on speech that is false, misleading, or untrue. Yet, through the Rule, the government seized a power to act as the ultimate arbiter on what manner of information about its own actions ought to be seen as constituting the truth. In doing so, it failed to locate itself within any of the permissible categories expressly stipulated under the Constitution. Therefore, the law, as the Bombay High Court has correctly recognised, is nothing but patent censorship. Condoning it would undermine principles that are ingrained in the cornerstone of our democracy.

A case of nothing but patent censorship (3 October)

- On September 20, 2024, Justice A.S. Chandurkar of the Bombay High Court resolved a tie in a split verdict and delivered a ruling supporting the right to free speech.
- Justice Chandurkar declared unconstitutional an amendment to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (IT Rules).
- The amendment would have allowed the Union government broad power to decide how news about its operations should be presented on the Internet.
- The specific provision, Rule 3(1)(b)(v), placed a heavy obligation on intermediaries (companies like service providers and social media platforms).
- If the Union government's Fact Check Unit (FCU) identified any report on its operations as fake, false, or misleading, intermediaries were required to make efforts to prevent the information from being hosted, displayed, or published.
- Intermediaries that ignored such a directive risked losing their "safe harbour" protections, which shield them from liability under the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000.
- Fake and misleading information on the Internet is a significant problem, and the state has a legitimate interest in addressing it, but any action must remain within constitutional limits.
- Petitioners in the Bombay High Court argued that Rule 3(1)(b)(v) violated the constitutional protections of free speech.
- They contended that the amendment gave the government undue power to determine what information was fake or misleading, without considering less intrusive solutions.
- **The Union government countered with two main arguments:**
 - The law was not coercive, and intermediaries could challenge the loss of safe harbour in legal proceedings.
 - There is no constitutional protection for spreading fake or misleading information, and the Rule was within the government's powers to regulate online expression.
- A Division Bench of the High Court had previously reached different conclusions on the Rule's validity in January.
- Justice G.S. Patel found the provision unconstitutional, calling it vague, overbroad, disproportionate, and having a chilling effect on intermediaries and citizens' rights to free speech and equal treatment.
- Justice Neela Gokhale disagreed, stating that losing safe harbour did not directly threaten citizens' freedom of expression.
- Justice Chandurkar, in his tie-breaking decision, rejected the Union government's defense and agreed with Justice Patel on the importance of safe harbour and the chilling effect the Rule could have on intermediaries.

Intermediaries and safe harbour

- Section 79 of the IT Act provides exemption to intermediaries from liability for third-party information they host, as long as they observe due diligence under the law.
- This safe harbour is lost if intermediaries have "actual knowledge" or receive communication, such as from a government agency, indicating their platform is being used for unlawful acts.
- The logic behind this exemption is to allow platforms like Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and WhatsApp to operate without the responsibilities of traditional publishers.
- These platforms merely host and transmit material and are not creators or producers of the content, meaning holding them liable for what users post could incapacitate the functioning of the Internet.
- Safe harbour immunity also promotes free speech on the Internet, as intermediaries generally have no vested interest in the information disseminated by users.
- If intermediaries give in to external pressure, it is the users' right to free expression that is compromised.
- Under Rule 3(1)(b)(v), if the Fact Check Unit (FCU) informs an intermediary that certain information about the central government is fake, the intermediary is forced to either remove the flagged content or defend the user's right to free speech, risking their safe harbour.
- Justice Patel noted that intermediaries face a Hobson's choice — it's easier to remove the content than to risk the entire business by standing up for free speech.
- The government's second argument — that no constitutional protection is provided for false or misleading information — was dismissed as irrelevant in this context.
- Free speech is built on the principle that it is not for anyone, least of all the state, to decide which expressions are acceptable, except for restrictions explicitly mentioned in Article 19(2) of the Constitution.
- Article 19(2) includes permissible restrictions on speech, such as defamation, public order, foreign relations, and the security and integrity of India.

The right to free speech in Article 19(1)(a) is based on both instrumental and intrinsic values:

- It encourages open discussion and better politics.
- It recognizes citizens' dignity and autonomy as moral beings with a right to free thought and conscience.
- While free speech is not absolute, the Constitution outlines specific, legitimate grounds for reasonable restrictions.
- There is no constitutional clause allowing speech restrictions based on false, misleading, or untrue information.
- By enacting Rule 3(1)(b)(v), the government granted itself the power to judge what information about its actions constitutes the truth, without fitting within the constitutional categories of permissible restrictions.
- The Bombay High Court ruled this as censorship, stating that allowing the Rule would undermine fundamental democratic principles.

The net result will be poor doctoral research

GS Paper II: Education Sector

The use of the National Eligibility Test (NET) as a primary criterion for PhD admissions in India has sparked significant debate within the academic community. Traditionally, the NET has served as a qualifying examination for Junior Research Fellowships (JRF) and in determining eligibility for assistant professorships. However, its growing role in determining PhD admissions raises hard questions about its efficacy in identifying true research potential. The nature of the test, which is entirely multiple-choice question based (MCQs), predominantly assesses lower-order cognitive abilities such as memory and recall. This approach, while useful in certain contexts, falls short in evaluating the critical thinking and analytical skills essential for successful doctoral research.

PhD research demands a deep engagement with complex ideas, the ability to critique existing knowledge, and the creativity to contribute to original research. These skills, crucial for academic success, are largely overlooked in the NET's current format. In disciplines such as literature, social sciences and the humanities, where interpretation and analysis are key, the emphasis on factual recall through MCQs reduces intricate subject matter to trivial questions. For instance, asking candidates to identify specific details from literary texts or historical events does little to gauge their ability to engage with broader theoretical concepts or develop nuanced arguments.

Disadvantage for marginalised communities

The consequences of this approach are particularly pronounced for students from marginalised communities. As reported by this daily, the reliance on NET scores disproportionately disadvantages these students, who often face greater barriers in accessing the resources needed to prepare for such examinations. The high cost of coaching, which has become almost essential for passing the NET, exacerbates this inequality. As a result, many talented students from these backgrounds may be excluded from pursuing PhD programmes – not



Amit Mitra

Research Associate at the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), New Delhi

Using National Eligibility Test (NET) scores as the sole criterion for PhD admissions in India is a step backwards

because of a lack of intellectual capability but because of systemic barriers that the current admissions process fails to address.

Will affect institutional autonomy

The centralisation of PhD admissions through the NET poses a significant threat to the autonomy of higher educational institutions, which have traditionally played a pivotal role in selecting candidates based on unique criteria such as research proposals, interviews, and discipline-specific tests. This one-size-fits-all approach undermines the diversity and innovation that are essential to academic research. The autonomy of universities to shape their research programmes and recruit candidates who align with specific institutional and disciplinary needs is crucial in maintaining the integrity and the quality of higher education in India.

This concern is not merely theoretical. Recent experiences with centralisation, such as the introduction of the Common University Entrance Test (CUET) for undergraduate admissions, have already sparked fears about the erosion of institutional autonomy. The new directive takes this centralising approach further, diminishing the role of universities in shaping their research programmes and faculty recruitment. Critics argue that such centralisation could lead to a homogenisation of academic standards, thereby stifling the innovation and the diversity that are the lifeblood of scholarly research.

The current system, by laying emphasis on such a limited range of skills, fails to prepare students for the demands of doctoral research. PhD candidates are expected to contribute original insights to their fields, publish in peer-reviewed journals, and engage in scholarly discourse. These tasks require not only subject knowledge but also strong analytical abilities, creativity, and effective communication skills. The NET, however, does little to foster these competencies, instead encouraging rote learning and a superficial engagement with the subject.

As India aspires to become a global leader in education and research, it is worth considering

why so many students are increasingly opting to pursue PhDs abroad. The exodus of bright minds to foreign institutions can be seen as a response to the limitations of the domestic system, where the emphasis on standardised testing such as the NET may stifle the creativity and the critical thinking that are nurtured in more holistic and flexible admission processes elsewhere. If the current trend continues, with a rigid, centralised approach to PhD admissions, we may see even more students seeking opportunities overseas – where their research potential is evaluated more comprehensively, and where academic environments are more conducive to fostering innovation and diversity in scholarship.

A narrowing of inquiry

Further, the growing reliance on NET scores as the primary criterion for PhD admissions could inadvertently narrow the scope of research in India. Research thrives on diversity – of thought, methodology, and perspective. By funnelling all PhD aspirants through a standardised test that values rote memorisation over critical thinking, we risk cultivating a generation of scholars more adept at passing examinations than at pushing the boundaries of knowledge. This narrowing of academic inquiry threatens to limit the development of original ideas and innovative research that are critical for progress in any field of study.

The challenge, then, is not merely to select candidates who can excel in standardised tests, but to cultivate a system that recognises and nurtures the full range of talents required for ground-breaking research. By doing so, India can retain its brightest minds and ensure that its higher education system remains dynamic, inclusive, and globally competitive. To maintain its position on the global academic stage, India must embrace a more holistic approach to PhD admissions – one that values creativity, critical thinking, and the ability to contribute to the complex, multifaceted world of academic research.

The views expressed are personal

The net result will be poor doctoral research (3 October)

- The use of the National Eligibility Test (NET) as a primary criterion for PhD admissions in India has sparked debate within the academic community.
- Traditionally, the NET serves as a qualifying examination for Junior Research Fellowships (JRF) and eligibility for assistant professorships.
- Its increasing role in PhD admissions raises concerns about its effectiveness in identifying true research potential.
- The NET, which is entirely multiple-choice question-based (MCQs), mainly assesses lower-order cognitive abilities like memory and recall.
- While this method may be useful in certain contexts, it falls short in evaluating critical thinking and analytical skills essential for doctoral research.
- PhD research requires deep engagement with complex ideas, the ability to critique existing knowledge, and creativity to contribute original research.
- These crucial skills are overlooked in the NET's current format.
- In disciplines such as literature, social sciences, and humanities, where interpretation and analysis are key, the emphasis on factual recall through MCQs reduces intricate subject matter to trivial questions.
- For example, asking candidates to identify specific details from literary texts or historical events does little to assess their ability to engage with broader theoretical concepts or develop nuanced arguments.
- The reliance on NET scores disproportionately disadvantages students from marginalized communities, who often face greater barriers in accessing resources to prepare for such exams.
- The high cost of coaching, which has become essential for passing the NET, worsens this inequality, potentially excluding talented students from marginalized backgrounds from pursuing PhD programs.
- Many talented students may be excluded not because of intellectual limitations but due to systemic barriers in the current admissions process.
- Centralizing PhD admissions through the NET threatens the autonomy of higher educational institutions, which have traditionally selected candidates based on research proposals, interviews, and discipline-specific tests.
- This one-size-fits-all approach undermines the diversity and innovation essential for academic research.
- The autonomy of universities to shape their research programs and recruit candidates that align with their specific institutional and disciplinary needs is crucial for maintaining the quality of higher education in India.
- Recent experiences with centralization, such as the introduction of the Common University Entrance Test (CUET) for undergraduate admissions, have raised fears about the erosion of institutional autonomy.

- The new directive centralizing PhD admissions takes this approach further, diminishing the role of universities in shaping their research programs and faculty recruitment.
- Critics argue that centralization could lead to homogenization of academic standards, stifling innovation and diversity, which are essential for scholarly research.
- The current system, which emphasizes a limited range of skills, fails to prepare students for the demands of doctoral research.
- PhD candidates are expected to contribute original insights to their fields, publish in peer-reviewed journals, and engage in scholarly discourse, which requires subject knowledge, analytical abilities, creativity, and communication skills.
- The NET does not foster these competencies, instead promoting rote learning and superficial engagement with the subject.
- As India aspires to become a global leader in education and research, the exodus of students to foreign institutions reflects the limitations of the domestic system, where standardized tests like the NET may stifle creativity and critical thinking.
- If the trend of a rigid, centralized approach to PhD admissions continues, more students may seek opportunities abroad, where research potential is evaluated more comprehensively.
- The growing reliance on NET scores for PhD admissions could inadvertently narrow the scope of research in India.
- Research thrives on diversity of thought, methodology, and perspective, and funneling all PhD aspirants through a standardized test may limit the development of original ideas and innovative research.
- This narrowing of academic inquiry could limit progress in any field of study.
- The challenge is not only to select candidates who excel in standardized tests but to create a system that nurtures the full range of talents required for groundbreaking research.
- By adopting a more holistic approach to PhD admissions, India can retain its brightest minds and ensure that its higher education system remains dynamic, inclusive, and globally competitive.
- To maintain its position on the global academic stage, India must embrace an approach that values creativity, critical thinking, and contributions to complex academic research.

China-Vietnam red diplomacy

Vietnamese President To Lam's recent visit to China aims to revive red connections and Mao Zedong-Ho Chi Minh comradeship to strategically infuse political trust in the bilateral relationship. For a Beijing that is frustrated with the Western alliance salvo, the communist breeze from the South China Sea felt like a soothing balm. The visit comes against the backdrop of the U.S. and the Philippines wooing Vietnam to pressure and corner China in the South China Sea.

President Lam, after assuming the role of general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), strategically chose China as his first foreign visit destination, starting in Guangzhou, the birthplace of the CPV.

Unlike the Vietnam-U.S. relationship, where CPV actions are scrutinised for human rights violations and the American establishment's condescending attitudes toward the Vietnam political system, the Vietnam-China comradeship is mutually appreciative and supportive, barring territorial contestations.

'Shared future'

Vietnam and China also issued a joint statement, renewing their efforts to "strengthen the comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership between the two countries" and envisage building "a Vietnam-China community with a shared future", given the overly antagonistic outer world.

The statement also underscored Xi Jinping's emphasis on giving Vietnam a priority in China's neighbourhood diplomacy and supporting Vietnam in upholding CPV leadership.

Mr. Lam also had a "working session" with the Central Party School of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in Beijing to learn from Chinese Communist Party experiences in combating corruption and economic development. He also addressed



Rajiv Ranjan

Associate Professor of Chinese Studies, Department of East Asian Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Delhi

Vietnam-China comradeship is mutually appreciative and supportive, barring territorial contestations

the meeting and appreciated the CPC's theoretical innovations and cadre training as integral to the Chinese governance model.

Mr. Lam was accompanied by six out of 15 members of the politburo of CPV. This reflects the current National Party Congress, CPV leadership aspirations in replicating CPC successes in strengthening the legitimacy at home to get re-elected at the 14th Party Congress, scheduled for 2026. This is also concordant with the CPV leadership's ambition to build Vietnam into a socialist-oriented, high-income, developed country by 2045.

The joint statement emphasised the need for theoretical exchanges, experience sharing, and close cooperation between the CPV and CPC to advance socialism, highlighting their compatibility and cooperation. These alignments are being constructed to promote Chinese experiences as successful models for CPV and align with the socialist cause. Interestingly, during the Mao era, China agreed to transfer Bach Long Vi Island to Vietnam in 1957 because Beijing considered Hanoi a "comrade and brother", as Julia Lovell argues. But this bonhomie was rather short-lived with the China-Vietnam 1979 war. This system compatibility, therefore, does not necessarily exhibit the convergence of their worldviews or strategic interests.

Expanding partnerships

During the visit, Vietnam and China signed 14 agreements, ranging from connectivity and infrastructure to healthcare, customs media, etc., to further consolidate and expand strategic partnerships. In 2023, the bilateral trade between China and Vietnam was valued at \$171.9 billion. China remained Vietnam's largest import market in the first seven months of 2024, up 34.9% from the previous year, with an estimated turnover of \$79.2 billion. China was also Vietnam's second-largest export market in the same period, with an estimated turnover of \$33.38

billion, up 7.2%. China ranked fourth among countries investing in Vietnam in 2023 with \$4.47 billion, up 77% from the previous year, and investing in over 700 projects. With 29.7% of all new projects in Vietnam during the first seven months of 2024, Beijing ranked as Hanoi's most active investment partner. These high-level visits and trade investment data invariably exhibit burgeoning political bonhomie, given Washington's apathy towards Hanoi and its growing economic dependence on Beijing.

Territorial disputes over the Paracel Islands, trade deficits, and security worries prompted Hanoi to pursue Bamboo Diplomacy, as proposed by Nguyen Phu Trong, the late general secretary of the CPV. Vietnam is carefully manoeuvring in complex international and regional security theatres, softly 'hedging' with the U.S., India, Russia, and Japan to safeguard and maximise its strategic interests.

For Vietnam, India is a monastery for religious pilgrimage, given Buddhist civilisational connections, while China is a site for ideological pilgrimage. China is revitalising shared revolutionary history and ideological alliances for strategic collaboration.

New Delhi may harness cultural connections and a shared history of colonial resistance to enhance its extensive strategic partnership with Hanoi.

While China-Vietnam exchanges are often hindered by inherent irritants, the relationship between India and Vietnam is free of any obstacles and characterised by shared ambitions for a prosperous and multi-polar Asia. "Act East" policy under Prime Minister Narendra Modi aims to accelerate engagement with the region. By further deepening cultural and sustainable economic ties, Vietnam will be a driving force and natural partner, for India in the Southeast to uphold a shared vision for regional stability and global order.

China-Vietnam red diplomacy (3 October)

- Vietnamese President To Lam's recent visit to China aims to revive connections and enhance the Mao Zedong-Ho Chi Minh comradeship to strategically boost political trust in the bilateral relationship.
- The visit comes at a time when Beijing is frustrated with the Western alliance's actions, and the communist solidarity from Vietnam is seen as a positive influence.
- The backdrop includes U.S. and Philippines efforts to woo Vietnam to pressure China in the South China Sea.
- President Lam chose China as his first foreign visit destination after assuming the role of general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), starting in Guangzhou, the birthplace of the CPV.
- The Vietnam-China relationship contrasts with the Vietnam-U.S. relationship, which faces scrutiny over human rights violations and perceived condescension from the American establishment.
- The Vietnam-China comradeship is characterized by mutual appreciation and support, aside from territorial disputes.

- Vietnam and China issued a joint statement renewing efforts to strengthen their comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership and to build a “Vietnam-China community with a shared future” in light of external antagonism.
- The statement emphasized Xi Jinping's prioritization of Vietnam in China's neighborhood diplomacy and support for Vietnam in upholding CPV leadership.
- Mr. Lam had a “working session” with the Central Party School of the Communist Party of China (CPC) to learn from their experiences in combating corruption and economic development.
- He appreciated the CPC's theoretical innovations and cadre training as integral to the Chinese governance model.
- Mr. Lam was accompanied by six out of 15 members of the CPV's politburo, reflecting current National Party Congress aspirations to replicate CPC successes for re-election at the 14th Party Congress in 2026.
- The CPV aims to build Vietnam into a socialist-oriented, high-income, developed country by 2045.
- The joint statement emphasized theoretical exchanges, experience sharing, and close cooperation between CPV and CPC to advance socialism, highlighting compatibility and cooperation.
- Alignments are constructed to promote Chinese experiences as successful models for CPV and align with the socialist cause.
- Historically, during the Mao era, China transferred Bach Long Vi Island to Vietnam in 1957, viewing Hanoi as a "comrade and brother," but this relationship soured after the 1979 China-Vietnam war.
- This compatibility does not necessarily indicate a convergence of worldviews or strategic interests between the two countries.

Expanding partnerships

- During the visit, Vietnam and China signed 14 agreements covering areas such as connectivity, infrastructure, healthcare, and customs media to consolidate and expand strategic partnerships.
- In 2023, bilateral trade between China and Vietnam was valued at \$171.9 billion.
- China was Vietnam's largest import market in the first seven months of 2024, with a 34.9% increase from the previous year, totaling an estimated turnover of \$79.2 billion.
- China was also Vietnam's second-largest export market during the same period, with an estimated turnover of \$33.38 billion, up 7.2%.
- In 2023, China ranked fourth among countries investing in Vietnam, with investments of \$4.47 billion, up 77% from the previous year, across over 700 projects.
- Beijing accounted for 29.7% of all new projects in Vietnam during the first seven months of 2024, making it Hanoi's most active investment partner.
- These high-level visits and trade investment data reflect a growing political camaraderie, particularly given Washington's apathy towards Hanoi and Vietnam's increasing economic dependence on Beijing.
- Territorial disputes over the Paracel Islands, trade deficits, and security concerns have led Hanoi to adopt Bamboo Diplomacy, a strategy proposed by Nguyen Phu Trong, the late general secretary of the CPV.
- Vietnam is navigating complex international and regional security scenarios, softly hedging with the U.S., India, Russia, and Japan to protect and enhance its strategic interests.
- For Vietnam, India represents a site for religious pilgrimage due to Buddhist civilizational connections, while China serves as a site for ideological pilgrimage.
- China is revitalizing shared revolutionary history and ideological alliances to promote strategic collaboration.
- New Delhi can leverage cultural ties and a shared history of colonial resistance to strengthen its extensive strategic partnership with Hanoi.
- While exchanges between China and Vietnam often face challenges, the India-Vietnam relationship is free from obstacles and characterized by shared ambitions for a prosperous, multipolar Asia.
- India's “Act East” policy, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, aims to enhance engagement with the region.
- By deepening cultural and sustainable economic ties, Vietnam is positioned as a driving force and natural partner for India in Southeast Asia to support a shared vision for regional stability and global order.

What special status is Ladakh seeking?

Which are the other States seeking constitutional safeguards? Do the Fifth and Sixth schedules grant areas under them more autonomy? Why did the British create provisions for 'excluded' and 'partially excluded' areas under the Government of India Act, 1935?

GS Paper II: Special Status of the State.

EXPLAINER

Rangarajan R.

The story so far:

Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk was detained on the Delhi border on Monday night as he led a group of protesters to petition the Central government for the inclusion of Ladakh in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution among other demands for autonomy to the region. Similar demands have been raised in Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur. These discussions relate to special provisions for various ethnic groups in the Constitution.

What is asymmetrical federalism?

The Indian Constitution follows 'asymmetrical' federalism. Asymmetrical federalism is where some States and areas have more autonomy than others. A classical federation like the U.S. or Australia is a symmetrical federation as all States enjoy the same set of powers and autonomy. In India, there are a few States/ areas that enjoy more autonomy or have special provisions under the Constitution than others.

What is the history of the Fifth and Sixth Schedules?

Tribal populations were never fully subjugated by earlier Muslim rulers before the British. They did not intervene in tribal customary laws or their lifestyles. Till the entry of the British, the tribals were the masters of their forests and ancestral lands. However, the initial British laws and their forest policies affected the tribal way of life. Their traditional rights over forest lands were not recognised and their movement inside forests became restricted. This discontentment resulted in various tribal rebellions like the Kol rebellion (1831-32), Santhal revolt (1885), Munda Rebellion (1899-1900) and Bastar rebellion (1911).

These rebellions culminated in the British policy of 'isolation' towards the tribals, and the creation of 'excluded' and 'partially excluded' areas under the Government of India Act, 1935. The 'excluded' areas mainly consisted of hilly regions in the northeast. In these areas, the power of legislation was in the hands of the Governor. 'Partially excluded' areas consisted of tribal tracts in present day Bihar, Bengal, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. In these areas, central and provincial legislature laws were applicable but with modifications or exceptions as decided by the Governors.

The Fifth and Sixth Schedules have been modelled on the basis of these provisions which allowed 'partially excluded' and 'excluded' areas under the Government of India Act, 1935. The Fifth Schedule is applicable to what are officially called 'scheduled areas' that are declared by the President. The guiding norms for declaring an area as a 'scheduled area' include preponderance of tribal populations, compactness of area, a viable administrative unit like a district or block, and economic backwardness. At present 10 States have such 'scheduled areas.' There are Tribes Advisory Councils (TAC) that are set up in these States, consisting of not more than 20 members, of which three-fourths shall be tribal MLAs from the State. The TAC provides advice pertaining to welfare and advancement of the Scheduled Tribes (ST) in these States. The Governor, subject to the approval of the Central government, shall make regulations for the allotment and transfer of lands among the members of the STs. The Governor



Strong protest: Activist Sonam Wangchuk during his padayatra from Leh to Delhi demanding the Sixth Schedule status for Ladakh, on September 15. ANI

shall also regulate the businesses of money-lenders in 'scheduled areas.' The Governor may direct that a particular act of Parliament or State legislature shall not apply or apply with modifications to such 'scheduled areas.'

The Sixth Schedule is applicable to what are officially called as 'tribal areas' in the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura. There are 10 such 'tribal areas' at present in these four States. Autonomous District Councils (ADC) are formed in these 'tribal areas.' These ADCs shall consist of 30 members, where not more than four are nominated by the Governor of the State and the rest are elected by the people. The ADC shall have powers to make laws with respect to the use and management of land, regulate shifting cultivation, inheritance of property, marriage and divorce, social customs etc. These laws take effect after being approved by the Governor. For all such matters, the laws by the State legislature will not be applicable in these 'tribal areas' unless extended by the ADC. The ADCs are empowered to establish and manage primary schools, dispensaries, roads and waterways in the districts. They can assess and collect land revenue and impose taxes on profession, trade etc. They can grant licences or leases for the extraction of minerals. The ADCs are empowered to constitute village and district council courts for the trial of suits and cases where the parties to the dispute belong to STs within the district.

Thus, the 'tribal areas' included within the Sixth Schedule enjoy greater autonomy through the ADC with more executive, legislative, judicial and financial powers than the 'scheduled

areas' of the Fifth Schedule. However, both these areas are aimed at protecting the indigenous culture and interests of STs while integrating them with the mainstream through various developmental policies.

What are special provisions for northeastern States?

Apart from the Fifth and Sixth Schedules, there are special provisions applicable to many of the northeastern States under Part XXI of the Constitution. These are contained in Articles 371A (Nagaland), 371B (Assam), 371C (Manipur), 371F (Sikkim), 371G (Mizoram) and 371H (Arunachal Pradesh). They provide for the protection of local customary laws and practices with respect to Nagaland and Mizoram; mandates committees of MLAs from 'Tribal Areas' and 'Hill areas' in Assam and Manipur respectively; and lists out special responsibilities of the Governors of Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh for the development and maintenance of law and order.

Are further reforms needed?

Despite these provisions enshrined in the Constitution, there are still further reforms that are required. First, the autonomy of the Fifth and Sixth Schedule areas are more on paper than in actual practice. The regulations made by the Governor in 'scheduled areas' are subject to approval by the Central government. Similarly, the laws made by ADCs in 'tribal areas' are subject to the approval of the Governor of the State. When different parties are in power at the Centre, State as well as ADC, political differences affect the autonomy of these areas. Clear

guidelines need to be laid down and followed to uphold the spirit behind the provisions of the Fifth and Sixth schedule. Second, there are numerous ST habitations across the country – both within the 10 States under the Fifth Schedule and other States – that are not notified as 'scheduled areas', thereby denying these areas constitutional rights and protection. These need to be notified as 'scheduled areas' after due diligence. Third, the 125th Constitutional amendment bill (2019) introduced and pending in Rajya Sabha aims to grant more financial, executive and administrative powers to the existing 10 ADCs. The Union government has agreed to form a committee headed by the Minister of State for Home Affairs to resolve the issues that have been holding up the passage of this bill. This process needs to be expedited to the satisfaction of all stakeholders. Fourth, the Arunachal Pradesh Assembly and the Manipur Hill Area Committee for the 'Hill areas' in the State have passed resolutions in recent years for their inclusion in the Sixth Schedule. There is a growing demand for the inclusion of the Union territory of Ladakh as well in the Sixth Schedule. These demands have to be examined promptly and necessary decisions taken at the earliest to protect the interests of the tribals in these areas. Finally, the recognition and vesting of forest rights to tribals under the Forest Rights Act, 2006 should be ensured throughout the country including in the Fifth and Sixth schedule areas.

Rangarajan. R is a former IAS officer and author of 'Polity Simplified'. Views expressed are personal.

THE GIST

The Fifth Schedule is applicable to what are officially called 'scheduled areas' that are declared by the President. The Sixth Schedule is applicable to what are officially called as 'tribal areas' in the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura.

Apart from the Fifth and Sixth Schedules, there are special provisions applicable to many of the northeastern States under Part XXI of the Constitution. These are contained in Articles 371A (Nagaland), 371B (Assam), 371C (Manipur), 371F (Sikkim), 371G (Mizoram) and 371H (Arunachal Pradesh).

The Arunachal Pradesh Assembly and the Manipur Hill Area Committee for the 'Hill areas' in the State have passed resolutions in recent years for their inclusion in the Sixth Schedule. There is a growing demand for the inclusion of the Union territory of Ladakh as well in the Sixth Schedule.

What special status is Ladakh seeking? (3 October)

Which are the other States seeking constitutional safeguards? Do the Fifth and Sixth schedules grant areas under them more autonomy? Why did the British create provisions for 'excluded' and 'partially excluded' areas under the Government of India Act, 1935?

- Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk was detained on the Delhi border while leading protesters to petition the Central government for Ladakh's inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, along with demands for regional autonomy.
- Similar demands for autonomy have been raised in Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur, relating to special provisions for various ethnic groups in the Constitution.
- Asymmetrical federalism refers to a system where some states and areas have more autonomy than others, as opposed to symmetrical federations like the U.S. or Australia, where all states enjoy the same powers and autonomy.
- The Indian Constitution embodies asymmetrical federalism, with certain states or areas having special provisions granting them greater autonomy.
- The history of the Fifth and Sixth Schedules is rooted in the treatment of tribal populations by earlier rulers and the British colonial administration.
- Tribal populations were never fully subjugated by earlier Muslim rulers and maintained their customs and lifestyles until British laws affected their way of life.
- British forest policies restricted tribal movement and did not recognize traditional rights over forest lands, leading to discontent and tribal rebellions (e.g., Kol rebellion, Santhal revolt, Munda Rebellion, and Bastar rebellion).
- These rebellions led to the British policy of 'isolation' towards tribals and the establishment of 'excluded' and 'partially excluded' areas under the Government of India Act, 1935.
- 'Excluded' areas mainly consisted of hilly regions in the northeast, where legislative power was held by the Governor, while 'partially excluded' areas included tribal tracts in various states with modified legislative applicability.
- The Fifth and Sixth Schedules are based on the provisions allowing 'partially excluded' and 'excluded' areas under the Government of India Act, 1935.
- The Fifth Schedule applies to 'scheduled areas' declared by the President, guided by norms such as tribal population predominance, compactness, administrative viability, and economic backwardness.
- Currently, 10 states have 'scheduled areas' and have established Tribes Advisory Councils (TAC) with a maximum of 20 members, three-fourths of whom must be tribal MLAs.
- The TAC advises on the welfare and advancement of Scheduled Tribes (ST) in these states.
- The Governor, with Central government approval, can regulate land allotment and transfer among ST members and manage money-lending businesses in 'scheduled areas.'
- The Governor may exempt particular acts of Parliament or State legislature from applying or modify their application to 'scheduled areas.'
- The Sixth Schedule applies to 'tribal areas' in Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura, with a total of 10 such areas currently.
- Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) are formed in these tribal areas, consisting of 30 members, with a maximum of four nominated by the Governor and the rest elected by the people.
- ADCs have the power to make laws regarding land use and management, shifting cultivation, inheritance of property, marriage and divorce, and social customs, subject to Governor approval.
- Laws made by the State legislature do not apply in these tribal areas unless extended by the ADC.
- ADCs can establish and manage primary schools, dispensaries, roads, and waterways, as well as assess and collect land revenue and impose taxes on professions and trades.
- They can grant licenses or leases for mineral extraction and establish village and district council courts for disputes involving Scheduled Tribes (STs).
- Tribal areas under the Sixth Schedule enjoy greater autonomy than scheduled areas of the Fifth Schedule, with more executive, legislative, judicial, and financial powers.
- Both the Fifth and Sixth Schedules aim to protect the indigenous culture and interests of STs while integrating them into the mainstream through developmental policies.
- Special provisions for northeastern States exist under Part XXI of the Constitution, contained in Articles 371A (Nagaland), 371B (Assam), 371C (Manipur), 371F (Sikkim), 371G (Mizoram), and 371H (Arunachal Pradesh).
- These provisions protect local customary laws and practices in Nagaland and Mizoram, mandate committees of MLAs from tribal and hill areas in Assam and Manipur, and outline the special responsibilities of Governors in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh for law and order maintenance.
- Further reforms are needed to enhance autonomy in Fifth and Sixth Schedule areas, as current regulations are more theoretical than practical.
- Regulations made by the Governor in scheduled areas require Central government approval, and ADC laws in tribal areas also need Governor approval, affecting autonomy due to political differences.
- Guidelines should be established to uphold the spirit of the Fifth and Sixth Schedule provisions.
- Many ST habitats across the country are not notified as 'scheduled areas,' denying constitutional rights and protections; these need to be designated appropriately.
- The 125th Constitutional Amendment Bill (2019), pending in the Rajya Sabha, seeks to grant more powers to existing ADCs, and a committee has been formed to expedite its passage.
- Recent resolutions from the Arunachal Pradesh Assembly and the Manipur Hill Area Committee call for inclusion in the Sixth Schedule, along with demands for Ladakh's inclusion as well.

- Timely examination of these demands and necessary decisions are essential to protect the interests of tribals in these areas.
- Recognition and vesting of forest rights for tribals under the Forest Rights Act, 2006, should be ensured across the country, including in Fifth and Sixth Schedule areas.

The myriad tales of historic Delhi: a walk through its many forts

Delhi, often called the city of tombs, is dotted with forts, each with its unique story. From Mahmud of Ghazni, Mohammed Ghorī, the Mongols, Babur, Nadir Shah, the Marathas, to the British, every conqueror has wanted a piece of the city, which rose again every time it was destroyed

GS Paper I: Medieval History

Ziya Us Salam

Delhi, as many a history teacher has been known to tell students, is a city of tombs; the city of the dead. The remark is made only half in jest, but it conveys the story of a place that has attracted invaders like a candle draws moths. Forget the days and dynasties of ancient India, in medieval India itself, Mahmud of Ghazni, Mohammed Ghorī, the Mongols, Babur, Nadir Shah, Ahmed Shah Abdali, the Marathas, the British have all coveted, and even conquered the place. Yet, every time Delhi was destroyed, it rose again, partly because of the spirit of its denizens, but largely because Delhi has massive forts which staved off many an invader, or at least minimised the losses.

Writing in *City of Djinnns*, William Dalrymple, who recently moved back in time to test the waters of ancient India with *The Golden Road*, recalls much of the violence that has visited the city, the last one being the conflagration of Partition. "It was not just the invaders who put the people of Delhi to the sword...**Out of the first twelve Sultans, only two died peacefully in their beds; the rest were killed...**Invaders like Timur the Lame were able to storm the high walls of the city only because the inhabitants were already busy cutting each others' throats." The violence and brutality of death

failed to dim the right to life in the city. Forts were built for defence, and many like the **Purana Quila, the Lal Quila, the Salimgarh Fort** transcended history to become part of folklore. In fact, for centuries, a story went that every few 'kos' there was a quila (fort) in Delhi. A slight exaggeration but not much when you add the names of **Tughlaqabad, Siri Fort, Qila-e-Rai Pithora, Adilabad and Kotla Feroz Shah**, etc. Now, put **Najafgarh Fort and Nai ka Kot** into the mix and the claim could be an understatement.

Naming the Red Fort

Like the men who guarded them, every fort is unique, and has a story, indeed a personality of its own. For instance, the **Lal Quila**, from where the Prime Minister addresses the nation on Independence Day, was **built in 1648**. The fort almost did not come up at the location. The courtiers of the Mughal emperor **Shah Jahan** had pencilled in the Raisina Hills as the site of his capital, and a new fort. The emperor's architects Ustad Hira and Ustad Hamid rejected the Raisina Hills and opted to build the fort on the banks of the Yamuna. When the fort was completed, it was a sight for tired eyes. Maheshwar Dayal writes in his much-appreciated book, *Rediscovering Delhi*, "Shahjahan entered with a glorious retinue, Prince Dara Shikoh scattering gold and silver over his father's head till he reached the gates." The emperor entered through the

Khizr Gate. Back then, the **Red Fort** was called the **Urdu-i-Mualla**. Later, during the reign of Akbar-II, it was called the **Qila-i-Mu'alla**.

Such was the aura of the Red Fort that at the time of Partition, there was talk in social circles of Delhi remaining as the capital of the twin nations of India and Pakistan with the flags of the two countries flying atop the Red Fort. In *The School at Ajmeri Gate*, Azra Razzack and Atyab Siddiqui write, "It was unimaginable that Delhi, a seat of Muslim rule and culture for centuries, could go exclusively to Hindustan. Delhi was indeed a Muslim city with the Red Fort, the Jama Masjid, the Qutub Minar..." All that debate is confined to the yellowed pages of history.

Delhi's reality

The reality is, in Delhi, history accompanies you all the time, one step at a time. For evidence just pick up a copy of *Delhi in Historical Perspectives* by K.A. Nizami. Translated with professional integrity by Ather Farouqui, the book revealed Delhi's earliest date with history. Nizami writes: "The ruins unearthed during the excavations near Purana Quila...bear witness to the antiquity of this city....Anangpal constructed the oldest city wall called Lal Kot....The Rajput ruler Prithviraj Chauhan carried out extensions to the structure at Lal Kot." Just recently, Delhi's fort story got a

fresh fillip with Vikramjit Singh Rooprai's lucidly written, aptly photographed book, *Delhi Forts*. Rooprai's book is a labour of great patience, considering he references Bashir-ud-Din Ahmed's *Waqiaat-i-Dar-ul-Hukumat-i-Delhi*, Maulvi Zafar Hasan's timeless book, *Monuments of Delhi: Lasting Splendours of the Great Mughals* and even **Syed Ahmed Khan's Asar-us-Sanadid**. While Rooprai gives space to well known historic forts like Purana Quila and Tughlaqabad, he does not include "smaller fortifications like Kotla Isa Khan, Kotla Mubarakpur" and Naraina Fort, etc. He does, however, include a chapter on Najafgarh, otherwise omitted in most accounts. It is named after **Mirza Najaf Khan, an 18th century Mughal general. Initially appointed by Shah Alam as Amir-ul-Umra**, he later took charge of the Mughal army and built a fort on the outskirts of the city where an attack was feared. This was the Najafgarh Fort about which Rooprai writes in his book, "There used to be a ditch around the Fort wall, which was filled when the British took over after the **Battle of Najafgarh in 1857**." Around 800 Indian soldiers lost their lives here. The Najafgarh battle is emblematic of the city which has survived a million battles and is dotted with a thousand tombs. Yet the "city comprising the cemetery of our past life", as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad once said, **refuses to die**. The forts saved countless lives. Delhi lives on.

The myriad tales of historic Delhi: a walk through its many forts (3 October)

Delhi, often called the city of tombs, is dotted with forts, each with its unique story. From Mahmud of Ghazni, Mohammed Ghorī, the Mongols, Babur, Nadir Shah, the Marathas, to the British, every conqueror has wanted a piece of the city, which rose again every time it was destroyed

- Delhi is often referred to as a city of tombs, highlighting its historical significance.
- The city has attracted numerous invaders throughout history, including Mahmud of Ghazni, Mohammed Ghorī, Babur, and the British.
- Despite destruction, Delhi has continually rebuilt itself, aided by its massive forts that offered protection.
- William Dalrymple's book, *City of Djinnns*, recounts the violence experienced in Delhi, particularly during the Partition.
- Historical accounts note that out of the first twelve Sultans, only two died peacefully; the others were often killed.
- Delhi's inhabitants often faced violence from both invaders and internal conflicts.
- Many forts in Delhi, such as the Purana Quila and Lal Quila, have become integral to its folklore and history.
- The Lal Quila, built in 1648, was originally intended for a different site, the Raisina Hills, but was constructed on the banks of the Yamuna.
- Shah Jahan entered the completed Red Fort with a grand procession, marking its significance.
- The Red Fort was originally called Urdu-i-Mualla and later Qila-i-Mu'alla.
- During Partition, there were discussions about Delhi remaining a joint capital for India and Pakistan.
- Historical works describe Delhi as a city with a rich Muslim heritage, exemplified by landmarks like the Jama Masjid and Qutub Minar.

- Delhi's history is ever-present, as illustrated in K.A. Nizami's Delhi in Historical Perspectives, detailing archaeological findings.
- Anangpal built the oldest city wall, Lal Kot, which was later expanded by Prithviraj Chauhan.
- Vikramjit Singh Rooprai's book, Delhi Forts, provides a comprehensive look at the forts in Delhi.
- Rooprai references historical texts, shedding light on both major and lesser-known forts in Delhi.
- Najafgarh Fort, named after an 18th-century Mughal general, is noted for its strategic significance and historical battles.
- The Najafgarh battle in 1857 resulted in significant casualties and symbolized Delhi's resilience.

Every Odisha daily wager wants to be tagged as a construction worker

JOB SCENARIO

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

Registrations with the Other Building and Construction Workers' Welfare Board (OBCWWB) have significantly increased, with almost every daily wager in Odisha now identifying himself/herself as part of the construction sector.

More than 42.66 lakh people have already registered as construction workers with the OBCWWB, which manages a dedicated fund providing various welfare measures to registered beneficiaries engaged in building and construction work. The number is increasing.

Although the statistics do not accurately reflect the employment scenario in the State, they clearly indicate the workers' desperation to come under any social security net.

The recently released **Economic Survey of Odisha for 2023-24** says at an aggregate level, the State has almost 351 lakh population in the age group of 15 and above, out of which 214 lakh are part of the labour force. This implies either they are working already or seeking work.

"Of the total labour force, almost 96% (205.3 lakh) are employed. Of the total employed (in the age group of 15+), 64% (131.6 lakh) are self-employed and the balance 36% are either regular wage/salaried (29.6 lakh) workers or casual workers (44.1 lakh)," the survey mentions.

Experts believe the construction sector in Odisha is not large enough to accommodate such a large labour force. "In a State like



Little cheer: In 5 years, 36,329 youth were put under placement linked training programme but only 10,544 could get jobs. PTI

Odisha, with more 42 lakh construction workers, it is unrealistic. The construction volume does not justify employing so many workers. Casual labourers often identify themselves as construction worker to access benefits," said Umi Daniel, a migration expert.

Former State Finance Minister Panchanan Kanungo said, "people in service or agriculture sectors are grossly underpaid. They immediately slip into a debt trap in the event of health exigency or social commitment. As OBCWWB has a huge fund, all want to get a slice of it."

Construction cess

A 1% cess is collected from all construction activities in the State and deposited into the OBCWWB Fund. This fund is used to provide various welfare measures to registered beneficiaries involved in construction work. Cumulatively, ₹4,571.84 crore has been collected in Odisha while ₹3,588 crore has been spent. The government now targets to collect ₹1,000 crore every year.

The board provides assistance during accidents, death, medical emergencies, marriages, pregnancies, education, to buy

working tools and bicycles and housing assistance under Nirmana Shramik Pakka Ghar Yojana.

Ironically, 1.34 crore labourers from Odisha have registered themselves in the e-shram portal to avail accident benefits. Of them, only 13.25 lakh have identified themselves as construction workers.

"We are aware of the presence of ghost beneficiaries in OBCWWB. Everyone is free to register as construction workers with the board. Now, we have started verifying identity at the time of benefit disbursement," said Vijay Amruta Kulange, State's Labour Commissioner.

Odisha's unemployment rate of 8.2% for the first quarter of this fiscal is higher compared with the all-India average of 5.8% for the same period. But Odisha's Labour Force Participation Rate (for more than 15 year-olds) is 29.5%, which is more than the all-India average of 25.2% for the same period.

Odisha has 9 lakh individuals who are identified as unemployed. In response to a query in the State Assembly on July 30, Ganesh Ram Singhkhuntia, State's Labour Minister, said between 2020 and 2024, as

many as 9,90,696 persons registered in employment exchanges seeking jobs. Only 1,176 obtained jobs in the said period.

Although public anger has not erupted on the streets in Odisha like in Bihar, Maharashtra, and others States, both the previous Naveen Patnaik-led Government and the current Mohan Majhi-led Government are well aware of the repercussions the issue could have on their political future.

To signify the importance given to job creation, Mr. Patnaik would distribute appointment letters to all fresh government recruits. In fact, Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar was booked twice in the recent past to hand out appointment letters to newly-recruited teachers.

Mr. Kanungo said, "the former CM tried his best to deliver the message that his government was serious in hiring people."

The BJP came to power in Odisha this past May promising 1.5 lakh jobs in government sector. Governor Raghubar Das in his inaugural speech said the government is committed to creating more than 3.5 lakh jobs in automobile, semiconductor, and IT/ITES industries.

Besides, the government would ensure recruitment for 1.5 lakh vacant government posts is conducted in a fair and transparent manner, with 65,000 positions to be filled within the next two years, he said. Despite such claims, a large chunk of technical jobs have gone to persons from outside the State. Employable youths from Odisha are often blamed for not having requisite skills for jobs.

- Despite numerous conflicts, Delhi remains a vibrant city, embodying the spirit of survival amid its historical past.

Every Odisha daily wager wants to be tagged as a construction worker (3 October)

- Registrations with the Other Building and Construction Workers' Welfare Board (OBCWWB) in Odisha have significantly increased.
- Almost every daily wager in Odisha now identifies as part of the construction sector.
- Over 42.66 lakh people have registered as construction workers with the OBCWWB.
- The OBCWWB manages a dedicated fund for various welfare measures for registered beneficiaries engaged in building and construction work.
- The number of registrations is increasing, reflecting workers' desperation for social security.
- The Economic Survey of Odisha for 2023-24 indicates that the state has a population of approximately 351 lakh aged 15 and above, with 214 lakh in the labor force.
- Of the labor force, about 96% (205.3 lakh) are employed; 64% (131.6 lakh) are self-employed, while the rest are regular wage/salaried or casual workers.
- Experts believe the construction sector in Odisha cannot accommodate such a large labor force, as the construction volume does not justify employing over 42 lakh workers.
- Casual laborers often identify as construction workers to access benefits.
- Former State Finance Minister Panchanan Kanungo noted that underpayment in service or agriculture sectors leads to debt traps in health emergencies or social commitments.
- A 1% cess is collected from all construction activities in the state, deposited into the OBCWWB Fund.
- Cumulatively, ₹4,571.84 crore has been collected for the fund, with ₹3,588 crore already spent.
- The government aims to collect ₹1,000 crore annually from the cess.
- The OBCWWB provides assistance for accidents, death, medical emergencies, marriages, pregnancies, education, tools, bicycles, and housing assistance under Nirmana Shramik Pakka Ghar Yojana.
- Approximately 1.34 crore laborers from Odisha have registered on the e-Shram portal for accident benefits; only 13.25 lakh identify as construction workers.
- State's Labour Commissioner Vijay Amruta Kulange acknowledged the presence of ghost beneficiaries in the OBCWWB and stated verification of identity has begun during benefit disbursement.
- Odisha's unemployment rate is 8.2%, higher than the all-India average of 5.8%.
- Odisha's Labour Force Participation Rate is 29.5%, above the all-India average of 25.2%.
- There are 9 lakh unemployed individuals in Odisha.
- Between 2020 and 2024, 9,90,696 registered in employment exchanges seeking jobs, but only 1,176 secured employment.
- Despite public unrest not being as pronounced in Odisha compared to other states, both the previous and current governments are aware of the political implications of unemployment.
- Former Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik emphasized job creation by distributing appointment letters to fresh government recruits.
- The BJP government, which came to power in May, promised 1.5 lakh jobs in the government sector.
- Governor Raghubar Das committed to creating over 3.5 lakh jobs in industries like automobile, semiconductor, and IT/ITES.
- The government plans to conduct recruitment for 1.5 lakh vacant government posts fairly, with 65,000 positions to be filled within the next two years.
- A significant number of technical jobs have been filled by individuals from outside the state, with local youth often lacking requisite skills for available jobs.

MIP extension to boost local textile industry capacity

M. Soundariya Preetha
COIMBATORE

With 13 categories of knitted fabrics brought under **Minimum Import Price (MIP)** till December 31, the textile sector is hopeful of the domestic industry improving its capacity utilisation.

China is facing a downturn in domestic demand for the last two years and hence, there is a surge in dumping of Chinese goods in the international markets, said Prabhu Dhamodharan, Convenor, Indian Texpreneurs Federation (ITF). By bringing a majority of knitted fabric categories under MIP, cheap imports from China are expected to reduce.

According to a notifica-



tion issued on October 1, synthetic, man-made fibre, and cotton knitted fabrics under 13 HS codes are now in the prohibited list of imports. "The imports will, however, be free if the value of the fabric is \$3.5 per kg or more," it said.

Industry sources said the Government introduced MIP for five categories of knitted fabrics earlier this year. It is extended till December 31 for these

categories with eight more added based on representations from industry. This will bring down cheap import of fabrics, especially from China, they said.

Textile and garment industry bodies such as Tiruppur Exporters' Association welcomed the move. The ITF said imposition of MIP during the end of FY24 on certain HS codes cut imports of knitted fabrics from almost \$ 30 million in February this year to \$ 17 million in July.

However, the imports in some other HS codes jumped from \$30 million to \$57 million. Extension of the MIP to 13 categories of knitted fabrics will benefit stakeholders across value chain and improve domestic capacity utilisation.

MIP extension to boost local textile industry capacity (3 October)

- Thirteen categories of knitted fabrics have been brought under Minimum Import Price (MIP) until December 31.
- The textile sector is optimistic about improved capacity utilization in the domestic industry.
- China has faced a downturn in domestic demand for the past two years, leading to a surge in the dumping of Chinese goods in international markets.
- Prabhu Dhamodharan, Convenor of the Indian Texpreneurs Federation (ITF), stated that the MIP aims to reduce cheap imports from China.

- A notification issued on October 1 listed synthetic, man-made fiber, and cotton knitted fabrics under 13 HS codes as prohibited for import.
- Imports will remain free if the fabric's value is \$3.5 per kg or more.
- Earlier this year, the government introduced MIP for five categories of knitted fabrics, which has now been extended with eight additional categories based on industry requests.
- This extension aims to reduce the import of cheap fabrics, particularly from China.
- Textile and garment industry bodies, such as the Tiruppur Exporters' Association, welcomed the MIP move.
- The imposition of MIP at the end of FY24 resulted in a reduction of knitted fabric imports from almost \$30 million in February to \$17 million in July.
- However, imports in some other HS codes increased from \$30 million to \$57 million.
- The extension of MIP to 13 categories of knitted fabrics is expected to benefit stakeholders across the value chain and enhance domestic capacity utilization.



Divanshi, Mukesh win sports pistol gold in World juniors (3 October)

Divanshi and Mukesh Nelavalli won the gold medals in the women's and men's 25m sports pistol events at the World Junior Shooting Championships in Lima.

Results:

- **Junior Men: 25m Sports Pistol:**
 - Mukesh Nelavalli - 585
 - Suraj Sharma - 583
 - Vladyslav Medushevskyi (Ukraine) - 580
 - Raajwardan Paatil - 573
 - Parth Rana - 566
 - Pradhyumn Singh - 561

Team:

- India - 1729
- Poland - 1726
- Italy - 1712
- **50m Rifle 3 Position:**
 - Braden Peiser (USA) - 460.3 (588)
 - Victor Lindgren (Sweden) - 460.2 (586)
 - Jens Oestli (Norway) - 447.4 (585)
 - Shourya Saini - 400.8 (583)
 - Vedant Waghmare - 583

Divanshi, Mukesh win sports pistol gold in World juniors

Divanshi and Mukesh Nelavalli clinched the women's and men's 25m sports pistol gold medals in the World junior shooting in Lima.

The results: Junior men: 25m sports pistol: 1. Mukesh Nelavalli 585, 2. Suraj Sharma 583, 3. Vladyslav Medushevskyi (Ukr) 580; 10. Raajwardan Paatil 573; 16. Parth Rana 566; 22. Pradhyumn Singh 561. **Team:** 1. India 1729, 2. Poland 1726, 3. Italy 1712. **50m rifle 3 position:** 1. Braden Peiser (USA) 460.3 (588), 2. Victor Lindgren (Swe) 460.2 (586), 3. Jens Oestli (Nor) 447.4 (585); 7. Shourya Saini 400.8 (583); 9. Vedant Waghmare 583; 14. Parikshit Brar 582. **Team:** 1. India 1753 (EWR); 2. Norway 1748; 3. Sweden 1746. **Junior women: 25m sports pistol:** 1. Divanshi 35 (577), 2. Cristina Magnani (Ita) 33 (580), 3. Heloise Fourre (Fra) 30 (578); 13. Tejaswani 569; 22. Vibhuti Bhatia 565. **Team:** 1. India 1711; 2. Czech Republic 1696 (38x); 3. Germany 1696 (31x).

- Parikshit Brar - 582

Team:

- India - 1753 (EWR)
- Norway - 1748
- Sweden - 1746

- **Junior Women: 25m Sports Pistol:**

- Divanshi - 35 (577)
- Cristina Magnani (Italy) - 33 (580)
- Heloise Fourre (France) - 30 (578)
- Tejaswani - 569
- Vibhuti Bhatia - 565

Team:

- India - 1711
- Czech Republic - 1696 (38x)
- Germany - 1696 (31x)

India to host first kho kho World Cup next year

Sports Bureau

NEW DELHI

The Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI) will host the first ever World Cup next year as the sport continues to push for greater international recognition. The week-long tournament, tentatively scheduled early next year in the national capital, will see participation from 24 countries with 16 men's and 16 women's teams each.

The KKFI is targeting 200 elite schools across 10 cities hoping to register at least 50 lakh players ahead of the World Cup.

India to host first kho kho World Cup next year (3 October)

- The Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI) will host the first-ever World Cup next year.
- The sport is pushing for greater international recognition.
- The week-long tournament is tentatively scheduled for early next year in the national capital.
- 24 countries will participate, with 16 men's and 16 women's teams each.
- The KKFI is targeting 200 elite schools across 10 cities.
- The goal is to register at least 50 lakh players ahead of the World Cup.

