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# Caste bias, segregation of work in prisons violate dignity, says SC

Prison manuals must be revised within 3 months, rules Bench headed by CJ; it says distribution of work on basis of caste amounts to untouchability; court adds it is the highest form of discrimination when state discriminates against a citizen

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday declared that caste-based discrimination of prisoners, segregation of their work according to caste hierarchy, and the treatment of inmates from the de-notified tribes as "habitual offenders" within prison walls across India are oppressive to fundamental human dignity and personality.

The top court directed the revision of prison manuals within three months. It ordered the deletion of the 'caste column' and any references to caste from registers of undertrials and convicts maintained in prisons. The court underscored that members of de-notified tribes must not be

## Removing bias

The Bench says "everyone is born equal" and cannot suffer lifelong due to stigma attached to their caste.

### The directions include:

- States and UTs should revise their Prison Manuals/Rules in three months
- Centre should address caste-based discrimination in the Model Prison Manual 2016 and the Model Prisons and Correctional Services Act 2023 in

three months

- "Caste columns" and references to caste in prisoners' registers should be removed



subjected to arbitrary arrest.

"Everyone is born equal. There cannot be any stigma attached to the existence, touch or presence of any person... More than 75 years since Independence, we have not been able to eradicate the evil of caste discrimination," a three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y.

Chandrachud observed.

The CJ, who authored the judgment, referred to Article 15(1) of the Constitution which enshrines the fundamental right against discrimination. "But if the state itself discriminates against a citizen, then it is discrimination of the highest form. After all, the state is expected to prevent discrimination, not perpet-

uate it," he noted. He held that discrimination among prisoners and distribution of work on the basis of caste amounted to untouchability, which is forbidden under Article 17 of the Constitution.

Prison manuals, by treating members of the denotified and wandering tribes as "born criminals" and habitual offenders, re-

affirmed colonial caste-based discrimination. The court declared all loose references to 'habitual offenders' in prison manuals as unconstitutional.

The judgment declared that compelling marginalised caste inmates to perform tasks like cleaning latrines or sweeping based purely on their caste, constituted a form of coercion.

The court held that the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013, which prohibit manual scavenging, has a binding effect in prisons as well.

The court directed the Union government to make the necessary changes to address caste-based discrimination in the 2016 Manual and the 2023 Act within three months.

# Govt. opens portal for internships to bridge skill set gap



The process is expected to result in about one lakh youth joining on-the-job training exercises by December 2. ISTOCKPHOTO

**Vikas Dhoot**  
NEW DELHI

The Union government on Thursday opened up a portal for India's top 500 companies to participate in the one-year internship scheme announced in this year's Union Budget to bridge the gap between the skill sets of unemployable youth and those needed by employers.

As many as 111 corporates – including the Mahindra and Mahindra group, Max Life Insurance, and Alembic Pharma – had already signed up within hours of the portal's launch, offering 1,077 internships. This kicked off a process that is expected to result in about one lakh youngsters joining the on-the-job training exercise, officially called The Prime Minister's Internship Scheme in Top Companies, by December 2.

Top sources in the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, which is steering the scheme that aims at training one crore youth in five years, said this is a pilot project being undertaken at a cost of ₹800 crore. The lessons learnt from this will help fine-tune the scheme's design before the Cabinet's approval is sought for a full-fledged rollout.

The portal, [pminternship.mca.gov.in](http://pminternship.mca.gov.in), is likely to be opened up for youngsters in the age group of 21 to 24 years to enroll for consideration by compa-

nies on Vijaya Dasami, October 12. This window will be open till October 25 for the first batch of internships.

Candidates' data will be matched with companies' needs and locations using artificial intelligence tools, and a shortlist of candidates will then be generated for companies to consider.

The scheme is not open to post-graduates, children of regular and permanent employees in the Union or State governments, graduates from premier institutes like IITs, IIMs and NIDs, and professionals with qualifications such as CA, CS, and MBBS. Moreover, anyone from a household that includes a person who earned an income of ₹8 lakh or more in 2023-24, will not be eligible.

Internships under the scheme will be granted to candidates who have passed high school or higher secondary school, possess a certificate from an industrial training institute (ITI), hold a diploma from a polytechnic institute, or are graduates with degrees such as BA, B.Sc, B.Com, BCA, BBA, or B.Pharma. Unemployed youth enrolled in online or distance learning courses are also eligible to apply, but anyone undergoing any skilling, apprenticeship, internship, or student training programme under a Union or State government scheme will not be allowed to apply.

## Govt. opens portal for internships to bridge skill set gap (4 October)

- The Union government launched a portal for India's top 500 companies to participate in a one-year internship scheme aimed at bridging skill gaps for unemployed youth.
- Within hours of the portal's launch, 111 corporates, including Mahindra and Mahindra, Max Life Insurance, and Alembic Pharma, signed up, offering 1,077 internships.
- The initiative aims to have about one lakh young people join the internship program, officially called The Prime Minister's Internship Scheme in Top Companies, by December 2.
- The Ministry of Corporate Affairs oversees the scheme, which plans to train one crore youth over five years, with a pilot project budget of ₹800 crore.
- Lessons from the pilot will inform adjustments before seeking Cabinet approval for a full rollout.
- The portal ([pminternship.mca.gov.in](http://pminternship.mca.gov.in)) will open for applicants aged 21 to 24 years on Vijaya Dasami, October 12, and remain open until October 25 for the first batch of internships.
- Candidate data will be matched with company needs and locations using artificial intelligence, creating a shortlist for companies to consider.
- The scheme excludes post-graduates, children of regular government employees, graduates from premier institutes (IITs, IIMs, NIDs), and professionals with qualifications such as CA, CS, and MBBS.
- Individuals from households earning ₹8 lakh or more in 2023-24 are also ineligible.
- Eligible candidates include those who have completed high school or higher secondary school, have a certificate from an ITI, hold a diploma from a polytechnic, or are graduates with degrees like BA, B.Sc, B.Com, BCA, BBA, or B.Pharma.
- Unemployed youth enrolled in online or distance learning courses can apply, but those participating in any skilling, apprenticeship, internship, or student training under a government scheme are not allowed to apply.

## Centre says Wangchuk is 'free' but continues to confine him

**Vijaita Singh**  
NEW DELHI

The movements of climate activist Sonam Wangchuk continued to be restricted by police and security agencies for the fourth consecutive day on Thursday despite the Union Government informing the Delhi High Court that he has been released from detention.

On Thursday around 5 p.m., Mr. Wangchuk was stopped by security personnel from leaving the Ladakh Bhavan.

Mr. Wangchuk, who led a march of around 150 people from Ladakh on September 1 to demand constitutional safeguards for the



Sonam Wangchuk

region, was detained by Delhi Police after reaching the Delhi-Haryana boundary at Singhu on September 30. On Wednesday, Mr. Wangchuk and other members of the delegation were taken to Rajghat under heavy police presence.

Ladakh Member of Parliament Mohamad Haneefa told *The Hindu* that talks were on with Union Minis-

try of Home Affairs to ensure Mr. Wangchuk's free movement. "Even I was detained for a day by the police when I reached Singhu border on October 1 to receive protesters from Kargil. I have asked the government for an explanation," said Mr. Haneefa.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta on Thursday informed the Delhi High Court that Mr. Wangchuk and his associates have been released from detention. He told the court that the Delhi Police has withdrawn an order prohibiting assembly and protests in various parts of Delhi. (With inputs from Rocky Singh)

## Centre says Wangchuk is 'free' but continues to confine him (4 October)

- Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk's movements have been restricted by police for the fourth consecutive day despite the Union Government informing the Delhi High Court of his release from detention.
- On Thursday at around 5 p.m., Wangchuk was stopped by security personnel from leaving the Ladakh Bhavan.
- He led a march of about 150 people from Ladakh on September 1 to demand constitutional safeguards for the region.
- Wangchuk was detained by Delhi Police upon reaching the Delhi-Haryana boundary at Singhu on September 30.
- On Wednesday, he and other delegation members were taken to Rajghat under heavy police presence.
- Ladakh MP Mohmad Haneefa stated that discussions were ongoing with the Union Ministry of Home Affairs to ensure Wangchuk's free movement.
- Haneefa mentioned he was also detained for a day by police when he arrived at Singhu border on October 1 to meet protesters from Kargil, and he has sought an explanation from the government.
- Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta informed the Delhi High Court that Wangchuk and his associates have been released from detention.
- The Delhi Police has withdrawn an order prohibiting assembly and protests in various parts of Delhi.

## Leopard population in Odisha's forests jumps by 22% to 696 in two years

Satvasundar Barik  
BHUBANESWAR

Some good news for wildlife enthusiasts: Odisha's leopard population has increased by 22%, rising from 568 to 696 in two years between 2022 and 2024, despite ongoing concerns about poaching and the illegal trade of leopard skins in the State.

The All Odisha Leopard Estimation 2024, released on Thursday, estimates the State's leopard population to range between 668 and 724, with a median count of 696.

However, the present leopard population lags behind the 2018 census carried out by National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), which put Odisha's

big cats number at 760. In 2022, the population dropped to 568.

The Forest Department had conducted an estimation across 47 divisions, aimed at much more intensive State-level leopard monitoring. A State-wide field survey was also conducted to identify the pre-

Madhya Pradesh has the highest number of leopards (3,907), followed by Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu.

number of unique adult leopards based on their



Smile, big cat: A leopard captured by cameras installed in a forest in Odisha. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

distinctive rosette patterns. Camera trap identification of leopard is a scientifically recognised method and is used in national-level leopard population assessments," says the estimation report.

Susant Nanda, Principal Chief Conservator of For-

est (Wildlife), said: "The big cat population [in Odisha] is healthy. In 2022, the estimation was taken up in a limited area while we had taken up the estimation in much larger area capturing leopards in camera traps. We could discover many melanistic le-

pards in our forests."

As per the latest NTCA report, the leopard population in India stands at 13,874. The leopard population has dwindled by 75-90% across the country over the last 120-200 years.

According to Wildlife Protection Society of India, around 1,485 leopards were poached in the country in the last 10 years.

As per the information furnished by the Forest and Environment Department in the Assembly, as many as 59 leopard skins were seized from wildlife smugglers between 2018 and 2023. Similarly, a Special Task Force (STF) of the State police has recovered 57 leopard skins from poachers and wildlife article dealers from 2019 to

2024. Overall, 116 leopards were killed and their skins taken. Wildlife experts said in dozens of cases, leopard skins might have reached their destinations unnoticed and unintercepted.

### Forest cover

Odisha's forest cover accounts for 33.50% of the State's total geographic area. The State government said there is one national park, 19 wildlife sanctuaries and two conservation reserves in Odisha.

The latest population estimate report says, "Protected areas proved to be the regions with the highest leopard abundance. Similipal Tiger Reserve has the largest leopard population in Odisha. Due to its

extensive size, Similipal landscape plays a crucial role as a source population for leopards in the surrounding region. It is connected to Hadagarh Wildlife Sanctuary and Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuary, which are essential for leopards to disperse from Similipal to these other protected areas."

The report further states that Satkosia landscape turned out to be another promising site for leopards and boasts of the second highest leopard population in the State. Similarly, Hirakud Wildlife Division, which includes Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary, is another key habitat for leopards and has a significant leopard population.

"As high as 45% of the leopard population in Odisha is located outside the protected area network and thus the territorial forest divisions have considerable leopard presence. The rare melanistic leopard morph was recorded from three forest divisions," it observes.

"From the next year, this camera trap based All Odisha Leopard Estimation exercise will be synchronised with the annual All Odisha Tiger Estimation exercise. This comprehensive exercise will involve collecting data on both the big cat occupancy, prey base estimation, and assessments of vegetation structure and human disturbance in the State," the Forest Department said.

## Leopard population in Odisha's forests jumps by 22% to 696 in two years (4 October)

- Odisha's leopard population has increased by 22%, rising from 568 to 696 between 2022 and 2024, despite concerns about poaching and illegal leopard skin trade.
- The All Odisha Leopard Estimation 2024 estimates the population to be between 668 and 724, with a median count of 696.
- This current population still lags behind the 2018 census by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), which recorded 760 leopards.
- The population had dropped to 568 in 2022.
- The Forest Department conducted an estimation across 47 divisions for more intensive state-level leopard monitoring.
- A state-wide field survey was performed to identify leopard presence through various signs, such as pug marks, scrapes, scats, rakes, urine spray, vocalizations, and livestock depredation.
- Camera traps were used to monitor sites with confirmed evidence of leopards, allowing for the estimation of unique adult leopards based on their rosette patterns.
- Susant Nanda, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (Wildlife), stated that the leopard population in Odisha is healthy and that the recent estimation covered a larger area than in 2022.
- Approximately 45% of Odisha's leopard population is located outside protected areas, indicating considerable presence in territorial forest divisions.
- The rare melanistic leopard morph was recorded in three forest divisions.
- From next year, the All Odisha Leopard Estimation will be synchronized with the annual All Odisha Tiger Estimation, collecting data on big cat occupancy, prey base, vegetation structure, and human disturbance.
- The extensive Similipal landscape is a crucial source population for leopards, connected to Hadagarh and Kuldiha Wildlife Sanctuaries for dispersal.

- The Satkosia landscape has the second highest leopard population in the state, while Hirakud Wildlife Division, including Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary, is also significant for leopards.
- In 2024, 116 leopards were killed for their skins, with concerns that many skins reached their destinations unnoticed.
- Odisha's forest cover constitutes 33.50% of the state's total geographic area, with one national park, 19 wildlife sanctuaries, and two conservation reserves.
- Protected areas have the highest leopard abundance, with Similipal Tiger Reserve hosting the largest population.
- The leopard population in India stands at 13,874, having dwindled by 75-90% over the past 120-200 years.
- Approximately 1,485 leopards were poached in India over the last decade.
- Between 2018 and 2023, 59 leopard skins were seized from wildlife smugglers, and the State police's Special Task Force recovered 57 leopard skins from poachers and wildlife dealers from 2019 to 2024.

## Decks cleared for Periyar memorial in Alappuzha (4 October)

- The Tamil Nadu government has cleared the way for the construction of a memorial for social reformer Periyar E.V. Ramasamy at Arookutty in Alappuzha.
- The Kerala government has transferred the ownership of 54 cents of revenue 'poramboke' land to the Tamil Nadu government, as reflected in the office records of Arookutty village.
- The transfer of land is occurring without collecting land tax.
- Construction of the memorial is expected to commence soon, according to Manoj K.R., tahsildar of Cherthala taluk.
- Periyar spent a month in the Arookutty jail after his arrest on May 21, 1924, while participating in the Vaikom Satyagraha (March 1924-November 1925).
- The remnants of the jail still exist on the proposed memorial site.
- The memorial is planned to be constructed in the model of a prison.
- Although land ownership has been updated, the Tamil Nadu government is yet to take possession of the site and will soon collect the possession certificate.
- The memorial will honor Periyar's contribution to the Vaikom Satyagraha, and its design will incorporate a prison facade.
- The final plan will be discussed with Chief Minister M.K. Stalin and other Ministers by the end of the month.
- Last year, Mr. Stalin announced the initiative to establish a memorial for Periyar at Arookutty.
- Following the announcement, Tamil Nadu Ministers E.V. Velu and M.P. Saminathan visited the site.
- The Vaikom Satyagraha was a social reform movement against the rigid caste system associated with the Vaikom Sree Mahadeva temple.
- Prominent personalities, including Mahatma Gandhi, were involved in the satyagraha.
- The protest was initially led by T.K. Madhavan, K.P. Kesava Menon, and George Joseph, among others.
- Periyar arrived in Vaikom on April 13, 1924, after several leaders of the movement were jailed and provided crucial leadership.
- Following his release from Arookutty jail in June 1924, Periyar was arrested again in July for participating in the struggle and sentenced to four months of rigorous imprisonment in Thiruvananthapuram Central Jail.
- The satyagraha eventually led to the Temple Entry Proclamation in 1936.

# Decks cleared for Periyar memorial in Alappuzha

## GS Paper I: Social Reform Movement

**Sam Paul A.**  
ALAPPUZHA

The Tamil Nadu government has cleared the decks for the construction of a memorial for social reformer Periyar E.V. Ramasamy, one of the leaders of the Vaikom Satyagraha, at Arookutty in Alappuzha.

The Kerala government recently completed the procedures and transferred the ownership of 54 cents of revenue 'poramboke' land to the Tamil Nadu government as reflected in the office records of Arookutty village.

"The land ownership has been changed in official records. We are transferring the land to the Tamil Nadu government without collecting land tax. We expect construction of the memorial to commence soon," said Ma-



**Remembering a leader:** The land identified for the Periyar E.V. Ramasamy memorial at Arookutty in Alappuzha. SURESH ALLEPPEY

noj K.R., tahsildar, Cherthala taluk.

Periyar spent a month in the Arookutty jail, then part of the princely State of Travancore, following his arrest on May 21, 1924 while participating in the Vaikom Satyagraha (March 1924-November 1925), a major social reform move-

ment. The remnants of the jail still exist on the site where the memorial is proposed.

### Prison model

According to Tamil Nadu government officials, the plan is to construct a memorial in the model of a prison.

"Though the land ownership has been updated, the Tamil Nadu government is yet to take possession of the site. We will soon collect the possession certificate. The memorial will honour Periyar's contribution to the Vaikom Satyagraha and the design will incorporate a prison facade. The plan will be finalised after discussions with Chief Minister M.K. Stalin and other Ministers by the end of this month," a Tamil Nadu government official told *The Hindu*.

Last year, Mr. Stalin announced the initiative to establish a memorial for Periyar at Arookutty. After this, Tamil Nadu Ministers E.V. Velu and M.P. Saminathan visited the site.

The Vaikom Satyagraha was a social reform movement against the rigid caste system tied to the

Vaikom Sree Mahadeva temple. A lot of prominent political and social personalities, including Mahatma Gandhi, had a role in the satyagraha. The protest was initially led by T.K. Madhavan, K.P. Kesava Menon, and George Joseph, among others.

Periyar arrived in Vaikom on April 13, 1924 after several of the movement's leaders were jailed and he provided crucial leadership to it.

Following his release from the Arookutty jail in June 1924, Periyar was arrested again in July for participating in the struggle and sentenced to four months of rigorous imprisonment, which he served in Thiruvananthapuram Central Jail. The satyagraha eventually led to the Temple Entry Proclamation in 1936.

### Vaikom Satyagraha (GS Paper I: Social Reform Movement)

- The agitation began as part of a broader movement initiated by leaders of the **Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) Yogam**, which was founded by the social reformer **Sree Narayana Guru**.
- The movement aimed to challenge the restrictions that segregated lower-caste people in society. The leaders of the movement decided to begin their agitation at Vaikom, as the town was a symbol of caste discrimination in Kerala.

### Role of Mahatma Gandhi

- Although the movement was initially started by local leaders like **T.K. Madhavan**, **George Joseph**, and **K. Kelappan**, Mahatma Gandhi became involved as it gained national attention.
- Gandhi's involvement brought the movement into the mainstream, and he advocated for peaceful, non-violent resistance in line with his philosophy of **Satyagraha**.

### Key Events

- **March 30, 1924:** The Satyagraha officially began with a group of activists attempting to walk on the restricted roads near the Vaikom temple. They were arrested, and the movement gained momentum as more people joined the protest.
- **Women's Participation:** Women also played a crucial role in the protest, which was unusual for the time. Notable figures like **Ammu Swaminathan** and others actively participated.
- **Temple Entry:** While the protest focused on the right to use public roads, it eventually evolved into a broader demand for temple entry for lower castes.

### Resolution

- The Satyagraha resulted in success, although it took several months.
- The **Travancore government**, under the influence of the public pressure and negotiations mediated by Mahatma Gandhi, allowed lower castes to use the roads around the temple.
- However, it took several more years for the broader demand for temple entry to be fully realized. In 1936, the **Travancore Temple Entry Proclamation** was issued, allowing lower-caste people to enter temples, marking a major victory for the movement.

# USCIRF flags India's 'collapsing religious freedom'

GS Paper II: International Relations

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

## 'Biased organisation, malicious report'

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), a Washington DC-based bipartisan U.S. federal government agency, has released a country update on India, flagging "collapsing religious freedom conditions".

The report highlights that religious freedom conditions have "continued to worsen throughout 2024, particularly in the months prior to and immediately following the country's national elections". Offering an overview of the various religious freedom violations that took place in 2024, it details changes in legal framework, including the strengthening of "discriminatory legislation like state-level anti-conversion and anti-terrorism laws", as well as the publication of the rules for implementing the 2019 Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA),

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The External Affairs Ministry on Thursday said the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom should utilise its time more productively on addressing human rights issues in the U.S.

"Our views on the United States Commission

on International Religious Freedom are well known. It is a biased organisation with a political agenda," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

"It continues to misrepresent facts and peddles a motivated narrative about India. We reject this malicious report, which only serves to discredit USCIRF

further," he added.

Mr. Jaiswal was responding to queries on the report.

"We would urge USCIRF to desist from such agenda-driven efforts. The USCIRF would also be well advised to utilise its time more productively on addressing human rights issues in the United States," he said.

anti-conversion laws, "to target religious minorities across India", detailing that "since the beginning of the year, authorities have arrested dozens of Christians on allegations of conducting or participating in forced conversions".

It also flags the phenomenon of anti-cow slaughter laws being "frequently exploited" by vigilante groups to "target religious minorities, including Muslims, Christians, and Dalits", noting that the perpetrators operate with impunity, rarely face punishment and "are often released on bail within 24 hours".

The release also cites the examples of "hate speeches" by two MLAs, Nitesh Rane and Geeta Jain.

The USCIRF also recommended that the U.S. State Department designate India "as a Country of Particular Concern" for "engaging in severe religious freedom violations".

and the passing of a State-level Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill in Uttarakhand.

### Ram temple issue

In a section titled "Expropriation and demolition of places of worship and Muslim property", the report notes "since the beginning of 2024, Indian authorities have facilitated the expropriation of places of worship, including the con-

struction of Hindu temples on the sites of mosques". It details how the days following the Ayodhya temple's January 2024 consecration "were marked by a series of attacks and other instances of intolerance against religious minorities across six states", noting, "in each instance, violence erupted following Hindu nationalist processions through predominantly

Muslim neighbourhoods". It further states that "beyond demolitions, the government has expropriated several mosques for alternative purposes, directly violating India's Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act."

### Anti-conversion laws

The report notes the trend of authorities using State-level policies, especially

## USCIRF flags India's 'collapsing religious freedom' (4 October)

- The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has released a country update on India, flagging "collapsing religious freedom conditions."
- The report states that religious freedom conditions have worsened throughout 2024, especially before and after the country's national elections.
- It provides an overview of various religious freedom violations in 2024, highlighting changes in the legal framework.
- The report mentions the strengthening of "discriminatory legislation" such as state-level anti-conversion and anti-terrorism laws.
- It discusses the publication of rules for implementing the 2019 Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA).
- The passing of a state-level Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill in Uttarakhand is also noted.
- In a section titled "Expropriation and demolition of places of worship and Muslim property," the report states that Indian authorities have facilitated the expropriation of places of worship.
- The report mentions the construction of Hindu temples on the sites of mosques since the beginning of 2024.
- Following the Ayodhya temple's consecration in January 2024, there were a series of attacks and intolerance against religious minorities across six states.
- Violence erupted after Hindu nationalist processions through predominantly Muslim neighborhoods.
- The government has expropriated several mosques for alternative purposes, violating India's Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act.
- Authorities have targeted religious minorities with state-level policies, particularly anti-conversion laws.
- Since the beginning of the year, dozens of Christians have been arrested on allegations of forced conversions.
- Anti-cow slaughter laws have been exploited by vigilante groups to target religious minorities, including Muslims, Christians, and Dalits.
- Perpetrators of violence against minorities often operate with impunity and are rarely punished, often released on bail within 24 hours.
- The report cites examples of "hate speeches" by two MLAs, Nitesh Rane and Geeta Jain.
- USCIRF recommends that the U.S. State Department designate India as a "Country of Particular Concern" for severe religious freedom violations.

# All agri sector initiatives brought under 2 new schemes; States to implement them

## GS Paper II: Government Scheme

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Thursday decided to merge all Central schemes in the agriculture sector into two new schemes, Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (PM-RKVY) and Krishonnati Yojana (KY). With a projected expenditure of ₹1,01,321.61 crore, the schemes will have a Central share of ₹69,088.98 crore and the States will have to add the remaining ₹32,232.63 crore.

The PM-RKVY, with an allocation of ₹57,074.72 crore, is aimed at promoting sustainable agriculture and the KY will address food security and agricultural self-sufficiency, with a fund of ₹44,246.89 crore. Both schemes will be implemented through the State governments.

The Centre said the rationalisation of various schemes was to avoid duplication, ensure convergence, and provide flexibility to States.

Focusing on emergent challenges of agriculture such as nutrition security, sustainability, climate resilience, value chain development, and private sector participation is also envisaged under the two schemes.

“State governments will be able to draw a comprehensive strategic plan suiting their requirements for agriculture sector. Annual Action Plan (AAP) of States can be approved in one go rather than approving them individually,” the Centre said.

Schemes such as Soil Health Management, Rainfed Area Development, Agro Forestry, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas

Yojana will be merged in the two new schemes.

### Mission for edible oils

The Cabinet also approved the National Mission on Edible Oils - Oilseeds (NMEO-Oilseeds), for boosting domestic oilseed production and achieving self-reliance in edible oils.

“The Mission will be implemented over a seven-year period, from 2024-25 to 2030-31, with a financial outlay of ₹10,103 crore. The newly approved NMEO-Oilseeds will focus on enhancing the production of key primary oilseed crops such as rapeseed-mustard, groundnut, soybean, sunflower, and sesamum, as well as increasing collection and extraction efficiency from secondary sources like cottonseed, rice bran, and tree borne oils,” the Centre said. The mission aims to increase

primary oilseed production from 39 million tonnes (2022-23) to 69.7 million tonnes by 2030-31.

### India to join energy hub

The Cabinet also approved the signing of a letter of intent enabling India to join the Energy Efficiency Hub. “This move solidifies India’s commitment to sustainable development and aligns with its efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions,” the Centre said.

The Union Cabinet also approved payment of productivity-linked bonus of 78 days for ₹2,028.57 crore to 11,72,240 non-gazetted railway employees. The amount will be paid to various categories of railway staff like track maintainers, loco pilots, train managers, station masters, supervisors, technicians, ministerial staff and other Group C staff.

## All agri sector initiatives brought under 2 new schemes; States to implement them (4 October)

- The Union Cabinet decided to merge all Central agriculture schemes into two new schemes: Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (PM-RKVY) and Krishonnati Yojana (KY).
- The projected expenditure for these schemes is ₹1,01,321.61 crore, with a Central share of ₹69,088.98 crore and a State share of ₹32,232.63 crore.
- PM-RKVY has an allocation of ₹57,074.72 crore aimed at promoting sustainable agriculture.
- KY will focus on food security and agricultural self-sufficiency, with a fund of ₹44,246.89 crore.
- Both schemes will be implemented through State governments.
- The rationalization aims to avoid duplication, ensure convergence, and provide flexibility to States.
- The schemes will address challenges such as nutrition security, sustainability, climate resilience, value chain development, and private sector participation.
- States can create a comprehensive strategic plan for the agriculture sector, with Annual Action Plans (AAP) approved collectively.
- Existing schemes such as Soil Health Management, Rainfed Area Development, Agro Forestry, and Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana will be merged into the new schemes.
- The Cabinet also approved the National Mission on Edible Oils - Oilseeds (NMEO-Oilseeds) to boost domestic oilseed production and achieve self-reliance in edible oils.
- NMEO-Oilseeds will be implemented over seven years (2024-25 to 2030-31) with a financial outlay of ₹10,103 crore.
- The mission will focus on enhancing production of primary oilseed crops like rapeseed-mustard, groundnut, soybean, sunflower, and sesamum, and improving extraction efficiency from secondary sources.
- The goal is to increase primary oilseed production from 39 million tonnes (2022-23) to 69.7 million tonnes by 2030-31.
- India’s Cabinet approved signing a letter of intent to join the Energy Efficiency Hub, reinforcing India’s commitment to sustainable development and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- The Cabinet also approved a payment of productivity-linked bonus of 78 days amounting to ₹2,028.57 crore for 11,72,240 non-gazetted railway employees, covering various categories of railway staff.

## Indian push needed to end AIDS as a global health threat by 2030: UNAIDS (4 October)

- Eamonn Murphy, UNAIDS director for the Asia Pacific, emphasized that global efforts to end AIDS by 2030 rely significantly on India's involvement.
- India has shown high commitment, with a 44% decrease in annual new HIV infections from 2010 to 2023, surpassing the global average.
- To close the gap, India must accelerate HIV prevention efforts, focusing on specific states and districts.
- The next five years are crucial for India to enhance its efforts and share its experiences with other countries in the region.
- Long-term sustainability planning beyond 2030 is essential to maintain and transform the gains made in HIV response.
- Achieving the goal of ending AIDS requires not only treatment for those living with HIV but also a dramatic reduction in new infections.
- Prevention is highlighted as key; each new infection necessitates lifelong treatment.
- Sustainable health systems for HIV should be co-designed and co-implemented by communities and civil society to address people's needs.
- In India, there were 68,000 new infections last year, equating to about 185 infections per day.
- The global AIDS strategy advocates for 80% of prevention services to be delivered by community-led organizations, which need adequate space and resources.
- India has reduced annual AIDS-related deaths by nearly 80% between 2010 and 2023, exceeding the global average.
- UNAIDS is promoting new technologies, such as long-acting injectables, to ensure affordable access for all patients.

## The war on sickle cell disease: how one hospital is making a difference (4 October)

**Sickle cell disease shortens life by at least twenty years. Slow-progressing organ failure is common in older patients, and acute chest syndrome, a form of lung injury, is a significant cause of death among the young. The symptoms vary among patients, leading to a wide range of complications**

- The author shares personal experiences with sickle cell disease (SCD) based on patient suffering rather than textbook knowledge.
- SCD has transformed from a clinical diagnosis to a deeply despised affliction due to its painful impact on young patients.
- The author expresses a desperate hope for the eradication of SCD, acknowledging it as a genetic illness without a definitive cure.
- Despite feelings of hopelessness, the author emphasizes the importance of perseverance for the sake of patients.
- The author has witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by young patients with SCD at three mission hospitals.
- Patients typically present with intense pain, high fever, chest infections, or severe anemia, often requiring blood transfusions.
- Affected patients are mostly poor, young, rural, and often from the same families in regions like southern Odisha, north Maharashtra, and western Uttar Pradesh.
- SCD can shorten life expectancy by at least twenty years, with slow-progressing organ failure common in older patients.
- Acute chest syndrome is a significant cause of death among young SCD patients.
- Symptoms of SCD vary widely, leading to complications such as anemia and blood vessel blockages, which can cause severe pain and organ failure.
- Practicing medicine is challenging, but healthcare professionals typically trust their skills to provide relief.
- SCD is known for defeating even the most dedicated healthcare providers, posing significant challenges in treatment.

### Doctors on the frontlines

- The author credits Dr. Ashita Singh for her dedicated work in managing sickle cell disease (SCD) at Chinchpada Christian Hospital in Maharashtra.
- Dr. Singh has shown compassion for her patients and actively seeks ways to alleviate their suffering and improve their quality of life.
- Managing SCD presents practical challenges; it is a lifelong genetic condition with gene therapy or bone marrow transplants as the only potential cures, often inaccessible due to costs.
- Dr. Singh has implemented measures to control symptoms and make life more bearable for her patients in a resource-poor setting.

- Chinchpada Hospital secured State Blood Transfusion Council (SBTC) cards for approximately 250 out of 350 SCD patients, providing access to free blood transfusions across Maharashtra.
- Recognizing the vulnerability of SCD patients to infections, the hospital offers free preventive vaccinations against bacterial pneumonia, influenza, and meningitis.
- The hospital subsidizes hydroxyurea, a drug that reduces symptoms and crises, improving patient compliance and quality of life.
- There are calls for the government to recognize hydroxyurea's benefits and make it cost-free.
- The hospital assists SCD patients in enrolling in government disability schemes for regular pensions and benefits.
- With support from donors, the hospital treats infections and anemia at low costs or waives bills and provides free food to patients and families during hospital stays.
- The hospital has expertise in palliative care, offering effective pain relief and symptom management for SCD patients.
- Events like World Sickle Cell Day and personalized birthday cards help patients feel valued and supported.
- The hospital conducts community awareness programs in villages and schools about SCD, its symptoms, and the importance of early diagnosis and treatment.
- Teachers, including some who are patients, play a key role in identifying children with SCD symptoms for timely care.
- The hospital opposes policies that promote prenatal diagnosis of SCD, which may lead to abortions.

### **A battle that is far from over**

- Despite significant efforts, the battle against sickle cell disease (SCD) continues.
- Medical students and young doctors often lack adequate training to recognize and treat SCD.
- A lack of awareness and testing facilities exacerbates the issue, resulting in many undiagnosed and untreated cases.
- Experiences in Uttar Pradesh reveal widespread ignorance about SCD; some patients were misdiagnosed and received iron supplements for years.
- There is a pressing need to educate, manage, and provide hope for those affected by SCD, as their struggles are a collective pain.
- Dr. Ashita's message highlights the urgency of the situation after losing a patient, a reminder of the need to persist in the fight against SCD.
- A 20-year-old patient, J, suffered from acute chest syndrome following a vaso-occlusive crisis and passed away despite treatment, highlighting the disease's severity.
- The loss of patients compels ongoing efforts to combat SCD.
- The approach to addressing SCD must be comprehensive, focusing on both medical and socio-economic factors contributing to suffering.
- There is an ongoing commitment to fight for the lives of those with SCD, emphasizing that every life is worth saving and the battle must continue.

## **Stem cells to fix T1 diabetes? The Indian perspective (4 October)**

- Stem cell therapy is a promising development in regenerative medicine that could potentially cure Type 1 diabetes (T1D) by regenerating insulin-producing beta cells.
- A recent report from China highlighted a woman with T1D who regained insulin production after receiving a transplantation of reprogrammed stem cells, marking a significant milestone in diabetes management.
- This case is the first successful breakthrough in regenerating functional insulin-producing cells through stem cell therapy, with other trials ongoing.
- T1D is an autoimmune condition where the immune system attacks insulin-producing beta cells in the pancreas, requiring lifelong insulin dependence for management.
- In contrast, Type 2 diabetes involves insufficient or ineffective insulin production, typically managed with oral medications.
- Stem cell therapy involves using pluripotent stem cells that can transform into insulin-producing cells, which are then transplanted to produce insulin and regulate glucose levels.
- While stem cell therapy shows positive outcomes in controlled settings, challenges remain in real-world applications.
- Invasive procedures carry risks, including the potential rejection of transplanted cells and the need for long-term immune suppression, which can lead to infections and cancer.
- Encapsulation technology, designed to protect transplanted cells from immune rejection, also poses long-term risks.
- In India, over 860,000 people live with T1D, facing significantly higher healthcare costs compared to those with Type 2 diabetes.
- Daily life for T1D patients is challenging due to total dependence on multiple daily insulin injections, often starting early in life and leading to early complications.
- Stem cell treatments remain distant from reality in India due to high demand and costs.
- Successful stem cell therapy could potentially cure T1D, but cost and scalability issues may delay its establishment as a routine treatment.

## An obsession with ranking is harming India's universities (4 October)

- In the digital age, everything is reduced to numbers, including education.
- Global ranking agencies rank universities annually across the world.
- India has its own National Institutional Ranking Framework to rank universities.
- The purpose of a university is to teach and mentor future citizens and create knowledge through research.
- Research and teaching are the two core functions of universities: knowledge creation and dissemination.
- A university must excel in both research and teaching to fulfill its obligations to students and society.
- A university also has social and economic impacts that cannot be captured by a single ranking metric.
- Ranking systems claim to capture a university's value with one-dimensional metrics.
- Global university ranking systems place huge emphasis on research output.
- Research is quantified through metrics like published papers, journal impact factors, research funding, and PhD graduation rates.
- These numbers cannot fully capture the quality, content, relevance, or impact of research.
- Despite these flaws, Indian universities are heavily involved in the ranking race.
- A high world rank makes universities more visible and attracts international students, faculty, academic partners, and donors.
- Universities and the government adjust policies to improve rankings.
- Not being ranked can severely impact a university's perceived existence and significance.
- India has adopted the American education system, shaped by free-market capitalism and private competition.
- To boost global rankings of Indian universities, the government set up the Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA).
- HEFA mobilizes market resources to provide repayable loans for globally competitive institutions.
- The government granted full autonomy to public higher education institutions, including financial autonomy.
- Financial autonomy implies that the government will no longer fund these institutions, making them responsible for generating their own funds, mainly through increased student fees.
- This is seen as a 'win-win' strategy for universities and the government—improved ranks for universities and reduced financial responsibility for the government.
- However, if the focus on global rankings sacrifices the essential function of educating students (not included in ranking criteria), the strategy is not a true win for anyone.
- This approach may also negatively affect economically weaker sections of society.

### The importance of teaching and mentoring

- The metrics-driven, global rank-aspiring educational system has negatively impacted the teaching community.
- Excessive emphasis on research, excluding teaching and other vital functions, is problematic.
- University job aspirants are often judged by their research papers, journal impact factors, and citations.
- The ability to effectively communicate, teach, and mentor is often overlooked in career assessments.
- Once selected, career advancement for university faculty depends on research grant funds and PhD degrees awarded.
- Teaching and mentoring abilities are not key factors in faculty career progression within the current system.
- Teaching is difficult to quantify using metrics, unlike research, which is heavily measured.
- Teaching has declined in importance, with faculty prioritizing writing research papers and securing grants.
- Teaching is viewed as a distraction from the "more important" task of research.
- University professors are increasingly focused on producing research to improve rankings rather than on educating students.
- The higher education system is driven by a culture of "publish or perish."
- There is no transparent or meaningful mechanism to hold faculty accountable for teaching quality.
- The overemphasis on research has led to instances of plagiarism, data manipulation, and research misconduct.
- Teachers may be failing as mentors and role models in this research-focused system.
- Students become disillusioned or propagate the metrics-driven system, creating a downward spiral.
- Research is essential for growth and innovation, but teaching is equally important for preparing students for the real world.
- Universities should consider creating separate tracks for research-focused and teaching-focused faculty.
- Faculty members should not be expected to excel in both research and teaching simultaneously.
- The scientific content and societal impact of research papers should be valued over journal impact factors and citation counts.
- Teaching should be recognized as a critical university function, with encouragement to improve curricula.
- Metrics should be replaced with careful and unbiased judgment in evaluating faculty performance.
- Universities need a cultural shift to balance research and teaching for their overall mission as centers of education and learning.
- The current "metricocracy" mistakenly equates metrics with meritocracy.
- This system treats education as a market, with knowledge as a commodity and students as customers.
- The focus on metrics kills creativity, stifles enthusiasm for learning, and does not prepare students for the real world.
- The metrics-driven system is harmful to future generations and the purpose of education.

## Why Italy Matters to India (4 October)

- In the current age of 'polycrisis', Italy and India share common interests and face joint challenges in the Indo-Mediterranean Sea.
- This region is vital for global trade; Italy ranks sixth among the world's largest exporters.
- The region is crucial for digital connectivity, with the Blue-Raman submarine data cables soon connecting Genoa with Mumbai.
- Piracy in the Red Sea, conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon, and the effects of Russia's aggression against Ukraine on agricultural and oil trade require joint efforts to ensure a free, open, and prosperous Indo-Mediterranean.
- Italy has increased its commitment to security and defense in the Indian Ocean Region and West Asia.
- Apart from joining the Group of Friends of UNCLOS in 2021, Italy has been the second-largest contributor to the European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) Atalanta and the European Maritime Awareness in the Strait of Hormuz (EMASoH).
- Since February 2024, Italy has been a driving force in the EU military operation EUNAVFOR ASPIDES to safeguard freedom of navigation in the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Gulf.
- Italy has increased its naval presence in India.
- After joining the Information Fusion Centre of the Indian Ocean Region in March 2023, patrol ship ITS Francesco Morosini visited Mumbai in August 2023.
- The Italian Carrier Strike Group, consisting of aircraft carrier ITS Cavour and frigate ITS Alpino, is currently in Goa.
- The tall ship ITS Amerigo Vespucci is expected in Mumbai from November 28 to December 2; it is the training vessel of the Italian Navy.
- Plans are underway to build an 'Italy village' offering cultural, fashion, and culinary events, as well as conferences and exhibitions.
- ITS Cavour is a short take-off and vertical landing ship constructed by the Italian naval shipyard Fincantieri and has been in service since 2009.
- As a 'dual-use' vessel, ITS Cavour can project maritime power and also provide logistical autonomy for environmental and humanitarian interventions.
- PASSEX exercises (training exercises to develop and maintain mariner skills and strengthen interoperability) are being held during ITS Cavour's stay.
- ITS Cavour is hosting a workshop on defense industry cooperation.
- Simultaneously, it serves as a hospital to operate on children with facial malformations.
- A team of Indian and Italian doctors is performing surgeries under the framework of 'Operation Smile', organized by the Smile House Foundation, Italy.

### Defence ties

- Italy-India defence cooperation is based on a defence agreement signed in October 2023.
- The agreement facilitates expansion in various fields: research, industrial cooperation, maritime domain awareness, information sharing, education, and environmental issues related to military activities.
- Regular talks, such as the Italy-India Military Cooperation Group meeting held in March in New Delhi, support this cooperation.
- Italian companies, notably Leonardo and Fincantieri, are among the top 50 arms-producing and military services companies globally (2022).
- Other Italian firms like Beretta, Elettronica, and KNDS have significant technical expertise.
- Italian defence companies are open to joint ventures, co-production, and joint development.
- Fincantieri has partnered with Cochin Shipyard since 2020, and Elettronica signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Bharat Electronics Limited in 2019.
- This partnership aligns with India's 'Make in India' initiative and addresses the needs of the Indian armed forces.
- Italy views India as a key partner for development in the Indian Ocean Region, extending from East Africa to India via the Arabian Sea.
- Both countries promote Africa in international forums and supported the African Union's inclusion in the G20.
- Italy launched the Mattei Plan at the Italy-Africa Summit in January to create mutually beneficial partnerships for significant projects in Africa.
- The Mattei Plan involves €5.5 billion in public investments and aims for sustainable projects to drive economic and social development.
- Initial focus countries for the Mattei Plan include Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Mozambique, which are near the Indo-Mediterranean area.
- Italy supports the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) as a long-term vision for regional prosperity amid current conflicts.
- IMEC aims to enhance railway connections, ports, logistics, and customs systems to support peace along vital trade routes for both Italy and India.
- Italy has the second largest Indian diaspora in the EU, highlighting strong people-to-people ties.
- Italy is a reliable economic and defence partner, the second largest manufacturing country in Europe, and a strong security provider within the EU and NATO.
- Deep-rooted historical connections between the two civilizations inspire ongoing cultural exchanges and business successes.

## Split decision (4 October)

- The ECI and the office of the Speaker have not played fair in cases of defection
- The rivalry between the two factions of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) will influence political developments and electoral outcomes ahead of the Maharashtra Assembly elections.
- NCP founder Sharad Pawar has approached the Supreme Court to direct the Ajit Pawar-led faction to adopt a new symbol for the Assembly elections.
- The NCP's 'clock' symbol is currently with the Ajit Pawar group, as recognized by the Election Commission of India (ECI) in February.
- There are reasons for the demand for the Ajit Pawar group to relinquish the 'clock' symbol, given the ongoing Supreme Court challenge to the ECI's order.
- Early Supreme Court hearings revealed doubts about the 'legislative majority' test used by the ECI to recognize the Ajit Pawar faction as the official NCP.
- The ECI justified the legislative majority test, citing inconclusive results from the organizational majority and party aims/objectives tests.
- Ajit Pawar joined the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance, forming part of the ruling Mahayuti coalition, while Sharad Pawar's faction is part of the Maha Vikas Aghadi opposition alliance.
- In the Lok Sabha elections, Ajit Pawar's group secured only one seat, while Sharad Pawar's faction won eight seats and received a significantly higher vote share.
- The electoral outcome raises questions about using legislative majority to determine party recognition.
- Sharad Pawar has argued that the 'clock' has been the NCP's long-standing symbol, and allotting it to one faction may confuse voters.
- The Supreme Court must decide whether to deny the 'clock' symbol to both factions or allow the recognized faction to retain it while the ECI order is in effect.
- Similar disputes, including the rift over Shiv Sena representation, challenge party organizational unity amidst defections and rebellions.
- The fate of involved individuals and parties often relies on the Speaker under anti-defection law and the ECI for party recognition and symbol allotment.
- Both the Speaker and the ECI may require the Supreme Court's oversight to ensure integrity in their functions.

## Desert storm (4 October)

### Women's cricket gets the spotlight as the T20 World Cup gets underway

- The ICC T20 Women's World Cup is taking place in the UAE, alternating between Sharjah and Dubai, concluding on October 20.
- Originally scheduled to be held in Bangladesh, the tournament was moved due to recent unrest in Dhaka.
- Ten teams are participating, split into two groups of five.
- Australia enters the tournament as the defending champion after winning the 2023 edition against South Africa.
- India aims to finally claim the trophy, having lost to Australia in the 2020 final in Melbourne.
- India's first match is against New Zealand in Dubai, making a strong start crucial for the team.
- The current Indian squad, led by Harmanpreet Kaur, has moved on from legends Mithali Raj and Jhulan Goswami.
- Key players include Harmanpreet, Jemimah Rodrigues, and Smriti Mandhana, who are working to establish a new path for the team.
- The tournament carries a larger cause of gender sensitivity, highlighting the struggles of female players in a male-dominated sport.
- Despite being rivals, leading female players express solidarity and advocate for more games and Test matches.
- Mithali Raj played only 12 Tests in her long career, despite her extensive appearances in ODIs (232) and T20Is (89).
- Women's cricket often lacks the extensive bilateral contests that could enhance player development.
- Australia has won the tournament six times and is the team to beat, with Alyssa Healy leading a strong squad.
- India and Pakistan are in Group A and will face off on Sunday, with their matches limited to global events due to diplomatic tensions.

# Should EC ensure internal democracy in political parties?

GS Paper II: Elections in India

PARLEY



**O. P. Rawat**  
Former Chief Election Commissioner



**M.R. Madhavan**  
co-founder and President of the PRS Legislative Research

India's multi-party democracy thrives on diversity but often sees political parties driven by individual charisma rather than internal democracy. Despite their role in upholding the nation's democratic framework, many parties struggle to maintain democratic structures. Can the Election Commission (EC) ensure these organisations practise internal democracy? Former Chief Election Commissioner O. P. Rawat and PRS Legislative Research President M.R. Madhavan discuss this question with Sreeparna Chakrabarty. Edited excerpts:

**The EC has been thinking of nudging political parties on the issue of internal democracy. But how can they do it?**

**O. P. Rawat:** The EC is the registering authority for all the political parties in our country. As such, the EC monitors whether they are functioning according to their Constitution, by-laws, etc. And in the process, they also oversee whether the elections to their office bearers are taking place regularly.

But there has been one important point in this whole issue. This was the 2002 ruling of the Supreme Court which says that the EC cannot go into the political process and anything which is part of the political process per se. That is why it has no power to de-register a political party based on any violation of these things.

They can de-register if registration has been obtained on the basis of fraud or other things, but they cannot de-register a party if they don't have periodic elections. Otherwise, to whatever extent the laws permit, the EC is doing it.

**M. R. Madhavan:** I have a slightly different way of looking at it: what is the EC's core mandate according to the Constitution? Their mandate is to conduct elections for Parliament, State Legislatures, and the posts of President and Vice President of India. They have to maintain electoral rolls and under Article 103, they advise on disqualification of any MP. There is a similar one for MLAs other than the anti-defection disqualifications, which is decided by the Speaker and not by them. That is their limited mandate.

And the question is are they carrying out this mandate well or not? So, any institution, should first do its core job and then take on more things. And my argument is that the EC has deteriorated in its core job and they are unable to do even that.

So before giving any institution an extra mandate, I would require them to do their core job first. That is my limited point and I would not give them anything more because they are not competent enough to do what they are supposed to do in any case.



**Fair process:** A boy walks past a painting made for voter awareness by EC at Jalore in Rajasthan on April 18, 2024. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

**What would be your views on whether the EC should have the power to de-register parties at all?**

**OPR:** I would like to say that the EC does whatever is mandated to it with efficiency. The only thing is that when it comes to the de-registration of parties, it will have many different directions or dimensions.

You know, elections are challenged only by way of election petitions according to our Constitution. We have been monitoring this and find that these disputes are much less every time over the years. If you compare us with the democracy in the most developed country as well, they had a storming of their legislature when the results were against one candidate.

This kind of thing, we never witnessed in our country after any election, and political acceptance of the election results is beyond imagination for all democracies which is borne by international conferences which I attended and which my colleagues attended everywhere. Election Commissioners from different countries say that India is a golden example where acceptance of election results by all political parties is enormous.

With these credentials, if the EC is made to go into the internal process, the political process for de-registering, we will be running the risk of getting the poll body into a model where even the main stakeholders – the political parties – will start developing suspicion. So, I think we have to take a view in totality not only in the context of political parties about registration and regulation but also about the delivery of elections time and again on the stipulated time and in a free fair manner.

**MRM:** So, I am not going to talk about the EC's reputation, which has been very high, but it has, in my opinion, faltered in the rating bit.

But back to the idea of political parties being regulated by them, I would agree with Mr. Rawat in saying that they should not get into that. Because then the EC becomes political, and susceptible to various political pressures, it should maintain its distance from the politics of



Election Commissioners from different countries say that India is a golden example where acceptance of election results by all political parties is enormous

**O. P. RAWAT**

the day. So, I would say whether parties hold internal elections or not, you cannot regulate them because even today they are required to hold. But what do they do? There is somebody who manages it so that somebody is contesting unselected or it is managed so that the people know who is going to get elected. I would say the discipline of political parties should come from the electorate. If people think that this party is not democratic and you want a democratic party, don't vote for them. If people want them, they will vote for them.

**Is there any existing legal ground on which elections can be mandated within political parties?**

**OPR:** No, I feel there is nothing except for this registration of political parties by the EC and the periodical review of compliance with their Constitution, their by-laws, and all those things. But in the end, it is a very kind of loose compliance which is visible.

**Probably the most well-known instance of EC intervening in the lack of democracy issue was when they rejected the YSRCP proposal to make Jagan Mohan Reddy permanent president of the party. They said that such a step was inherently anti-democratic. Was this within its mandate?**

**OPR:** Actually, the EC does not have that kind of mandate, but within the framework of the political party registration rules, the EC is overseeing the compliance with their Constitution and their by-laws. Now amending that is contrary to the democratic idea of periodic elections and that is the point at which the EC took shelter to reject the move.

**MRM:** Does it matter? Because let them make that intervention. The party re-elects the same person again, who will contest unopposed. I mean the whole thing is that what we are talking about is not the reality but what could be in the letter of the law and what can they do. But in reality, political parties are being essentially dominated by one personality who controls the whole thing, then there is nothing that stops them from having an election with one candidate who will get selected for a post. So, it will tick the boxes, but there is absolutely no difference in practice.

**In a situation where we want or think that the EC should regulate internal democracy in political parties, how can such a law be brought in?**

**MRM:** My simple answer is that it is not needed. So, the question should not arise.

**OPR:** I agree with Mr. Madhavan. We should leave this kind of decision to the people who are the sovereign electorate and therefore I personally feel that one should not think of that.

**Why this question arises again and again, is that the EC has made certain observations in many of the cases where parties are split.**

**OPR:** Actually, these issues fall under the political party's symbols order, 1968, Paragraph 15. And under that, EC goes by four tests when there is a split, whether every faction has been following the party Constitution, whether they have been having the majority of the party the organisation whether they have been having the majority of the legislature wing or they are proceeding according to the by-laws.

All these four tests are applied every time starting from Sadiq Ali case. It always comes down to the legislative majority, because all other tests fail.

The only test which is amenable to the summary inquiry is the number of legislatures with the splinter group. So, whoever has the majority of a number of legislators with the splinter group gets the party symbol and the party name and that has been the case with the EC. In the text arguments are there where the arguments cover the aspects that since this group which was in command did not hold elections, did not sort of follow these by-laws, and therefore whatever orders they have passed for disqualifying are invalid all those things are just for by way of explanation.

**MRM:** I will just add one thing, which is that I mean, I am looking at it as a citizen, right? I mean, it is in our interest that EC has a very high credibility on whatever it does, so that we trust the process.

They need to have an objective way of making the decision and as Mr. Rawat said, if you are counting the number of legislators supporting, there is an actual number there and you can count if number A is greater than number B or is number A less than number B and make that decision. So, that is a fairly wise way of doing it without getting politically entrapped and I think they have been smart at doing that.



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## Should EC ensure internal democracy in political parties? (4 October)

- India's multi-party democracy thrives on diversity but often sees political parties driven more by individual charisma than by internal democracy.
- Many political parties struggle to maintain democratic structures, raising questions about the Election Commission's (EC) role in ensuring internal democracy.
- The EC is the registering authority for political parties in India and monitors their functioning according to their Constitution and by-laws.
- The EC oversees whether elections for party office bearers are conducted regularly.
- A significant challenge is the 2002 Supreme Court ruling stating that the EC cannot interfere in the political process, limiting its power to de-register parties for not holding periodic elections.
- The EC can only de-register a party if registration was obtained through fraud or similar issues.
- M.R. Madhavan offers a different perspective, focusing on the EC's core constitutional mandate: conducting elections for Parliament, State Legislatures, and the posts of President and Vice President, and maintaining electoral rolls.
- Madhavan argues that the EC should first focus on executing its core responsibilities effectively before taking on additional mandates.
- He suggests that the EC has deteriorated in its core functions and is not competent enough to manage extra responsibilities like regulating internal democracy in political parties.
- The discussion raises questions about whether the EC should have the authority to de-register political parties.
- O.P. Rawat states that the Election Commission (EC) efficiently fulfills its mandated responsibilities.
- De-registration of parties involves multiple dimensions, and elections are challenged only through election petitions as per the Constitution.
- There has been a decrease in election disputes over the years in India compared to other democracies.
- Rawat highlights that India is seen as a "golden example" of political acceptance of election results, with all parties generally recognizing the outcomes.
- He warns that involving the EC in internal party processes could lead to suspicion among political parties toward the commission.

- Maintaining the integrity of the electoral process is crucial for the EC's role in conducting free and fair elections.
- M.R. Madhavan agrees that the EC should not regulate internal party elections, as it could make the commission susceptible to political pressures.
- He emphasizes that the electorate should enforce discipline within political parties by choosing not to vote for those perceived as undemocratic.
- Madhavan believes that if a political party is not democratic, voters should express their dissatisfaction through their voting choices.
- Rawat notes that there is no existing legal framework mandating internal elections within political parties.
- He mentions that the EC can review compliance with party constitutions and by-laws, but this often results in loose compliance.
- A notable instance of EC intervention was rejecting the YSRCP proposal to make Jagan Mohan Reddy the permanent party president, which the EC deemed anti-democratic.
- O.P. Rawat states that the Election Commission (EC) does not have the mandate to enforce internal party elections but oversees compliance with party constitutions and by-laws.
- The EC rejected the move to make Jagan Mohan Reddy the permanent president of YSRCP, citing the democratic principle of periodic elections.
- M.R. Madhavan argues that even if the EC intervenes, political parties can still elect the same person unopposed, leading to no real change.
- Madhavan emphasizes that in reality, political parties are often dominated by one individual, making elections nominal rather than meaningful.
- When discussing the regulation of internal democracy in political parties, Madhavan asserts that such a law is unnecessary.
- Rawat agrees, suggesting that decisions about party governance should be left to the electorate, who are the sovereign power.
- Rawat mentions that the recurring questions about internal democracy arise from EC observations during party splits.
- He explains that issues of splits fall under the Political Parties Symbols Order, 1968, which involves four tests for factions.
- The EC evaluates whether factions adhere to the party constitution, have majority support, and follow by-laws.
- In practice, the majority of legislators often determines the outcome of these evaluations.
- Madhavan adds that the EC's credibility is crucial for public trust in the electoral process.
- He supports the idea that the EC should rely on objective measures, like counting legislators, to make decisions without political bias.

## On SIPCOT and Tamil Nadu industries (4 October)

**When was the State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu Limited (SIPCOT) formed? Has it generated job opportunities? Where was the first ever SIPCOT industrial park established? How has it improved the State's industrial sector? What about startups?**

- Tata Motors Group held a groundbreaking ceremony for a new production facility for cars and SUVs in the SIPCOT industrial park at Panapakkam, Tamil Nadu, on September 28.
- This facility is part of Tamil Nadu's 50th SIPCOT industrial park and the 27th under the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) government.
- The Tamil Nadu government aims to become a \$1 trillion economy by 2030, with SIPCOT playing a crucial role in this goal.
- SIPCOT was established on March 25, 1971, to plan, develop, operate, and promote industrial growth in Tamil Nadu.
- Its vision was to promote medium and large-scale industries in a state that was still developing its industrial base.
- The first industrial park was established in Ranipet in 1973, covering 729.79 acres, with initial firms like Thirumalai Chemicals Pvt. Ltd., Ultra Marines & Pigments Ltd., and SRP Tools Ltd.
- Initially, two parks were established: Ranipet (focusing on leather, chemicals, and pharma) and Hosur (focusing on automobiles and engineering).
- Kanchipuram was developed as an auto and electronics cluster, benefiting from proximity to Chennai and companies like Hyundai Motors and Samsung.
- Chengalpattu was developed as an IT cluster due to the presence of IT firms like TCS and Hexaware, becoming a data center hub.
- Hosur was developed to leverage the human and intellectual capital from Bangalore.
- SIPCOT has developed industrially backward districts like Manamadurai, Nilakotai, Pudukottai, and Gangaikondan.
- Tamil Nadu currently has 50 SIPCOT industrial parks, with 17 more planned for the next year and expansions of existing parks.
- SIPCOT has facilitated the establishment of 3,290 industrial units with a cumulative investment of about ₹1.85 lakh crore over 53 years, generating over 8.20 lakh job opportunities.

**What efforts is SIPCOT taking to improve industrial growth in T.N.?**

- SIPCOT is promoting sector-specific industrial parks, including:

- An international furniture park at Thoothukudi.
- A medical devices park at Oragadam.
- Electronic manufacturing clusters at Manallur and Pillaipakkam.
- Mega food parks at Manapparai, Tindivanam, and Theni.
- A future mobility park and an e-vehicle park at Shoolagiri and Manallur, respectively.
- Efforts are being made to provide accommodation for the workforce, with SIPCOT developing an industrial housing facility with 18,720 beds at Vallam-Vadagal.
- SIPCOT has formed the Tamil Nadu Industrial Housing Private Limited (TNIHPL) to provide affordable and sustainable housing for industrial workers.
- TNIHPL is currently developing an 807-bedded working women's hostel in the SIPCOT Industrial Park, Siruseri.
- To manage water, Tertiary Treatment Reverse Osmosis (TTRO) water is supplied to industries in Kanchipuram from a 45 MLD TTRO plant established by the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (CMWSSB) in Koyambedu.
- SIPCOT is establishing a 20 MLD TTRO plant at Kelavarapalli to meet the water needs of industries in the Hosur area.
- SIPCOT Industrial Innovation Centres (SIIC) have been established at Hosur and Sriperumbudur with a project cost of ₹33.46 crore, utilizing a grant of ₹14.20 crore from the Tamil Nadu Innovation Initiatives (TANII) scheme.
- These centres aim to be world-class incubation centres to nurture and accelerate industrial innovations and technology-powered startups.
- The initiative aims to boost the growth of the high-technology sector in Tamil Nadu and strengthen the productivity and competitiveness of the manufacturing sector.
- SIPCOT plans to evaluate over 1,000 innovative ideas, develop over 200 prototypes, and promote the graduation of 30 startups to the seed investment stage.
- A state-of-the-art skill development centre is being developed in the SIPCOT Industrial Park, Shoolagiri, Krishnagiri district.

## What is the status of the Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0?

What are the various health and environmental risks arising from legacy waste dumpsites?

### GS Paper II: Government Schemes

Sreeparna Chakrabarty

#### The story so far:

India has more than 3,000 legacy waste dumpsites, with 2,424 of them having a waste load of more than 1,000 tonnes. The Central government launched the legacy waste management project as part of the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) 2.0 in October 2021, for a period of five years till 2026. However, more than halfway through the time period, only 471 out of the 2,424, that is 19.43% of dumpsites have been completely remediated.

#### What are legacy waste dumpsites?

Legacy waste dumpsites are dumpsites that contain solid waste that have been collected and stored for years in an unscientific and uncontrolled manner. Municipal solid waste generation in India is estimated to be around 1,50,000 tonnes per day, according to the State of India's Environment 2023 report. With almost no installed facility in India for handling solid

waste, the municipal corporations, municipal councils and *nagar* (city) panchayats have traditionally opted for creating man-made garbage hills.

These dumpsites originally developed on the outskirts of the cities. However, with the expansion of cities, these sites are now often found in the heart of cities on barren land or in landfills. According to estimates of the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry, approximately 15,000 acres of prime real estate is buried under nearly 16 crore tonnes of legacy waste across the country.

#### What are the health hazards?

Legacy waste dumpsites can pose a number of health hazards for citizens. Exposure to emissions from hazardous waste can irritate the mouth and throat. Inhaling methane from landfills can cause nausea, vomiting, and loss of coordination. Ragpickers who work at landfills can develop skin allergies from years of exposure to waste. People who live near landfills may be prone to

developing tuberculosis, asthma, diabetes, depression, cholera, malaria, and other diseases. They are also a source of greenhouse gas emissions, such as methane and carbon dioxide.

#### What is the Swachh Bharat Mission?

The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) or Clean India Mission is a country-wide campaign launched by the Central government on October 2, 2014 to eliminate open defecation and to create Open Defecation Free (ODF) villages. The mission aimed to achieve an "open-defecation free" India by October 2, 2019 coinciding with the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi through the construction of toilets.

In 2021, the Government launched its second edition – the five-year Swachh Bharat (Clean India) Mission-Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0), committing to making all cities "garbage-free cities" by 2026, while maintaining ODF status across 4,372 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). It also has a vision of 100% source segregation, door

to door collection and scientific management of all fractions of waste, including safe disposal in scientific landfills. The SBM 2.0 aims to remediate all legacy dumpsites and convert them into green zones. The mission has also made provisions for scientific landfills to dispose of untreated inert waste and process rejects, in order to prevent fresh dumpsites being created.

Action plans amounting to ₹3,226 crore of Central Share (CS) assistance on remediation of legacy waste dumpsites has been approved so far. An advisory has also been issued to the States/Union Territory administrations on landfill reclamation. As per financial norms of centrally sponsored schemes, State/ UT governments are required to put in a matching share from their own side, while disbursing the funds to respective ULBs.

#### What has been the progress so far?

According to the dashboard of the Swachh Bharat Mission website, as on September 24, out of the 2,424 dumpsites, 471 sites have been remediated, remediation in 1,226 has been approved and is on-going, and 727 sites have been untouched. As far as area is concerned, of the total 17,039.71 acres, 27 % has been reclaimed and 73% is yet to be reclaimed.

Among States, Tamil Nadu has the maximum area reclaimed from dumpsites at 837 acres (42%). Gujarat is the best performing State with 75% area (698 out of 938 acres) of landfills reclaimed.

### THE GIST

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▼ Exposure to emissions from hazardous waste can irritate the mouth and throat. Inhaling methane from landfills can cause nausea, vomiting, and loss of coordination.

## What is the status of the Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0? (4 October)

What are the various health and environmental risks arising from legacy waste dumpsites?

- India has over 3,000 legacy waste dumpsites, with 2,424 sites having a waste load exceeding 1,000 tonnes.
- The Central government launched the legacy waste management project under the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) 2.0 in October 2021, set to last five years until 2026.
- As of now, only 471 out of 2,424 dumpsites (19.43%) have been fully remediated.
- Legacy waste dumpsites are locations where solid waste has been collected and stored in an unscientific manner for years.
- Municipal solid waste generation in India is estimated at around 1,50,000 tonnes per day.
- There is a lack of facilities for handling solid waste, leading municipal bodies to create man-made garbage hills.
- Initially, these dumpsites were on city outskirts, but urban expansion has placed them in city centers, covering approximately 15,000 acres of prime real estate under nearly 16 crore tonnes of waste.

## Health hazards from legacy waste dumpsites include:

- Irritation of the mouth and throat from hazardous waste emissions.
- Nausea, vomiting, and loss of coordination from inhaling methane.
- Skin allergies for ragpickers due to prolonged exposure.
- Increased risk of diseases like tuberculosis, asthma, diabetes, depression, cholera, and malaria for nearby residents.
- Contribution to greenhouse gas emissions, including methane and carbon dioxide.
- The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) is a nationwide campaign launched on October 2, 2014, to eliminate open defecation and create Open Defecation Free (ODF) villages.
- The mission aimed to achieve an ODF India by October 2, 2019, coinciding with Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary through toilet construction.
- In 2021, SBM Urban 2.0 was launched, targeting "garbage-free cities" by 2026 while maintaining ODF status across 4,372 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).
- SBM 2.0 includes goals for 100% source segregation, door-to-door waste collection, and scientific waste management.
- The mission aims to remediate all legacy dumpsites and convert them into green zones, with provisions for scientific landfills for untreated waste.
- Action plans worth ₹3,226 crore have been approved for legacy waste dumpsite remediation.

## As of September 24:

- 471 dumpsites have been remediated.
- Remediation for 1,226 sites has been approved and is ongoing.
- 727 sites remain untouched.
- Of the total 17,039.71 acres, 27% has been reclaimed while 73% is yet to be reclaimed.
- Tamil Nadu has reclaimed the most area from dumpsites at 837 acres (42%).
- Gujarat is the best-performing state, having reclaimed 75% of landfill area (698 out of 938 acres).

## SC lays down 'functionality', 'essentially' test to claim ITC (4 October)

**Procurement of goods or services must be directly essential to business operations, and inputs must be functionally integral to the performance or output to qualify for input tax credit, it says**

- The Supreme Court declared that real estate companies can claim Input Tax Credits (ITC) under GST for construction costs of commercial structures intended for renting or leasing.
- This judgment is expected to boost the real estate sector.
- Justice Oka stated that if a building qualifies as a plant, ITC can be claimed against the supply of services for renting or leasing, provided other conditions of the CGST Act are met.
- However, the court noted that if the construction is for the recipient's own use, the ITC would not be available.
- Under the CGST Act, renting or leasing immovable property is considered a supply of service and can be taxed as output supply.
- If the building qualifies as a plant, ITC can be allowed on goods and services used in setting up the immovable property classified as a plant.
- The court emphasized that whether a mall, warehouse, or other building qualifies as a 'plant' under Section 17(5)(d) of the CGST Act is a factual question.
- This classification should consider the business of the registered person and the building's role in that business.
- A functionality test will need to be applied to determine if a building qualifies as a plant.

## OPEC+ could cushion Iran oil shock but not a broader disruption (4 October)

**OPEC and the U.S. can help ease oil prices in case there is disruption in supply due to a full-blown conflict between Israel and Iran; while OPEC has enough spare capacity to compensate for the loss of Iranian supplies, much of that capacity is in the Gulf region and potentially vulnerable to attack**

- OPEC has enough spare oil capacity to compensate for a full loss of Iranian supply if Israel targets Iranian facilities.
- However, OPEC would struggle if Iran retaliates against Gulf neighbors' installations.
- Iran fired hundreds of missiles at Israel in response to Israeli attacks.
- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned Iran would pay for its actions, while Iran threatened a strong response to any retaliation.
- Israel may consider targeting Iranian oil production facilities, according to reports.
- Iran produces around 3.2 million barrels per day, accounting for 3% of total global output.

- Iranian oil exports have increased to about 1.7 million barrels per day this year, despite U.S. sanctions, with most being bought by Chinese refiners.
- Amrita Sen from Energy Aspects stated that if all Iranian production were lost, OPEC+ could theoretically compensate for the shock.
- OPEC+ has been cutting production to support prices amid weak global demand, currently totaling 5.86 million barrels per day in cuts.
- Analysts estimate Saudi Arabia could increase output by 3 million barrels per day and the UAE by 1.4 million.
- OPEC+ recently met but did not discuss the Israeli-Iranian conflict, only expressing hope for non-escalation.
- Much of OPEC's spare capacity is in the Middle East Gulf region, which is vulnerable to conflict escalation.
- The effective available spare capacity may decrease significantly if energy infrastructure is attacked in the region.
- Oil analysts suggest Israel could target Iran's oil refining sites and the Kharg Island oil port.
- During the Iran-Iraq War, Iraq regularly attacked tankers around Kharg Island.
- Iran and its proxies might target energy operations in the region to internationalize the cost of the conflict.
- In 2019, Iranian proxies attacked Saudi Arabia's oil facilities, briefly disrupting 50% of the kingdom's crude production.
- A broader conflict in the Middle East would likely increase oil prices and fuel costs.
- Rising fuel costs could impact U.S. political campaigns, notably Vice President Kamala Harris's campaign against Donald Trump.
- The U.S. may push Israel for a moderate response to avoid significant escalation in tensions.

### 1. Kol Rebellion (1831–1832)

- **Historical Background:** The Kol Rebellion occurred in present-day Jharkhand. The Kols, who belonged to various indigenous communities, revolted against the British policies that allowed large-scale land grabbing by outsiders, particularly moneylenders and zamindars. The imposition of taxes and exploitation by landlords led to widespread discontent.
- **Key Leaders:** The rebellion was led by leaders such as Buddhu Bhagat, Joa Bhagat, and Madara Mahato.
- **Important Dates:** The rebellion took place between 1831 and 1832.
- **Cause of the Rebellion:**
  - The Kols lost their ancestral lands to outsiders due to the British colonial policies that allowed wealthy landlords to exploit tribal lands.
  - The introduction of new taxation policies led to heavy economic burdens.
  - Moneylenders, who loaned money to the Kols, would seize their land when they were unable to repay debts.
- **Course of the Rebellion:** It began in Chotanagpur when the Kols attacked British officials, police, and moneylenders. The rebellion spread across Jharkhand, but it was eventually suppressed by the British, who used overwhelming military force.
- **Impact:** Though brutally suppressed, the Kol Rebellion sent a strong message to the British about indigenous unrest and their resistance to colonial economic policies.
- **Recent Updates:** Jharkhand continues to commemorate this rebellion as part of its heritage, recognizing the Kol people's resistance against oppression. Government initiatives like the Jharkhand Tribal Welfare Commission often refer to such movements to frame policies related to tribal rights.
- **Sources:** NCERT, IGNOU, Jharkhand Government Tribal Welfare Department.

### 2. Santhal Revolt (1855–1856)

- **Historical Background:** The Santhal Revolt was one of the largest uprisings by tribal people in British India. The Santhals, an indigenous group from the Rajmahal Hills (present-day Jharkhand), revolted against the British and zamindars.
- **Key Leaders:** Sidhu and Kanhu Murmu were the main leaders of the revolt.
- **Important Dates:** The Santhal Revolt began in 1855 and continued until 1856 when it was crushed by the British forces.
- **Cause of the Rebellion:**
  - The Santhals faced severe exploitation by moneylenders, traders, and zamindars who appropriated their land.
  - Heavy taxation policies and coercive methods used by the British administration worsened their plight.
  - The Santhals were pushed into extreme poverty and debt, leading to widespread anger and rebellion.
- **Course of the Rebellion:** The Santhals declared the end of British rule in their areas and attacked British government offices, police stations, and local moneylenders. Though initially successful, the British eventually suppressed the revolt by bringing in additional military forces.
- **Impact:** The revolt brought to light the deep grievances of the tribal population, leading to some changes in land tenure policies in the tribal regions. The British subsequently created the Santhal Parganas as a special area to protect the interests of the Santhal people.
- **Recent Updates:** The Santhal Revolt remains a source of pride for the Santhal community. The Santhal Pargana continues to be a politically important region in Jharkhand. The revolt is taught in schools across India as a symbol of tribal resistance.
- **Sources:** NCERT, IGNOU, Government of Jharkhand, Tribal Research Institutes.

### 3. Munda Rebellion (Ulgulan, 1899–1900)

- **Historical Background:** The Munda Rebellion, also known as Ulgulan (The Great Tumult), took place under the leadership of Birsa Munda in the Chotanagpur Plateau (now Jharkhand). This was a significant movement aiming to establish Munda Raj (self-rule) and remove British domination and exploitative landlords.
- **Key Leader:** Birsa Munda was the charismatic leader of the rebellion, and he is now revered as a folk hero.
- **Important Dates:** The rebellion began in 1899 and lasted until Birsa Munda's death in 1900.
- **Cause of the Rebellion:**
  - The Mundas faced increasing pressure as their lands were taken over by non-tribal landlords (dikus), supported by British land policies.
  - The imposition of exploitative taxes and forced labor (beth-begari) by the British and zamindars led to widespread discontent.
  - Birsa Munda called for the establishment of an indigenous rule and rejection of British authority, blending tribal religious revivalism with political aspirations.
- **Course of the Rebellion:** Under Birsa Munda's leadership, the Mundas attacked British officials, missionaries, and landlords. The British responded with severe force, and Birsa was eventually captured and died in jail under mysterious circumstances.
- **Impact:** The rebellion led to the recognition of the grievances of the Mundas and reforms in land tenancy laws, particularly the

Chotanagpur Tenancy Act (1908), which restricted the transfer of tribal land to non-tribals.

- **Recent Updates:** Birsa Munda's legacy remains strong in Jharkhand, where his birthday (15th November) is celebrated as Jharkhand Foundation Day. Statues of Birsa can be found throughout the region, and he is widely respected for his role in tribal resistance. Tribal land rights continue to be a significant issue in Jharkhand and are often linked to Birsa Munda's legacy.
- **Sources:** NCERT, IGNOU, Jharkhand Government, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, India.

#### 4. Bastar Rebellion (1910)

- **Historical Background:** The Bastar Rebellion occurred in 1910 in the Bastar region (now in Chhattisgarh) and was primarily a tribal uprising against the oppressive policies of the British.
- **Key Leaders:** The rebellion was led by local tribal leaders, particularly the Dhurwas and Maria tribes, though it did not have a single, centralized leader like other revolts.
- **Important Dates:** The rebellion took place in 1910.
- **Cause of the Rebellion:**
  - The British government's attempt to reserve forests for timber production severely restricted the rights of local tribes, particularly the Dhurwas and Maria Gonds, to access forest resources.
  - The tribes of Bastar were angered by the increasing intrusion of outsiders and the imposition of taxes and forced labor.
- **Course of the Rebellion:** The rebellion saw tribal people attacking British officials, destroying government offices, and attacking symbols of colonial authority. The British responded with military action, and the rebellion was eventually suppressed.
- **Impact:** The Bastar Rebellion highlighted the significance of forest rights for indigenous communities. Though the rebellion was crushed, it drew attention to the exploitative nature of colonial forest policies, leading to some changes in forest administration.
- **Recent Updates:** Forest rights continue to be a crucial issue in Bastar, with modern movements, such as those surrounding the Forest Rights Act (2006), often drawing inspiration from past tribal uprisings. Bastar remains an area of significant tribal activism, particularly concerning land and forest rights.
- **Sources:** NCERT, IGNOU, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Chhattisgarh Government.

#### Conclusion

Each of these revolts was a significant act of resistance against colonial policies and played a crucial role in shaping tribal land rights and political consciousness in India. While they were all suppressed by the British, their impact is felt even today, as many of the issues—land alienation, tribal autonomy, and rights over natural resources—remain central to the discourse on tribal rights.

## Input Tax Credit (ITC)

**Input Tax Credit (ITC) under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime** is a mechanism that allows businesses to reduce the tax they pay on their sales by the amount of tax they have already paid on purchases.

- **Purchases and Sales under GST:** Every business registered under GST has to pay tax when they buy goods or services (known as "input tax"). When the business sells products or services, they also collect GST from their customers (called "output tax").
- **Claiming ITC:** The business can claim a credit for the GST they paid on their purchases. This means they can subtract the GST they already paid (input tax) from the GST they need to pay on their sales (output tax). In essence, ITC helps to avoid double taxation and reduces the overall tax burden on businesses.
- **Example:** Let's say a business buys raw materials worth ₹10,000 and pays ₹1,800 as GST. Later, when they sell finished products for ₹20,000 and collect ₹3,600 as GST, they only need to pay the difference (₹3,600 - ₹1,800 = ₹1,800) to the government. The ₹1,800 already paid on the raw materials is credited against their tax liability.
- **Conditions for Claiming ITC:**
  - The business must be registered under GST.
  - The goods or services should be used for business purposes.
  - The seller must have paid the GST and filed it properly.
- These conditions ensure that the credit system is transparent and only genuine transactions receive tax benefits.
- **Purpose:** The ITC system promotes seamless tax flow in the supply chain, reducing the cascading effect of taxes. It also encourages businesses to maintain proper invoices and records for tax compliance.