To watch an in-depth discussion on the topic, click on the YouTube link below: https://www.youtube.com/@PatrioticIAS

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21_11_2024 DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

TOPICS COVERED

1. Deadline looms for climate summit negotiators seeking a deal for funds to check global warming
2. Delhi govt. Implements work-from-home policy amid severe pollution
3. D'Cunha committee calls for probe into ventilator purchase during pandemic
4. Delhi HC asks SBI to credit ₹2.6 lakh siphoned from victim's account
5. An overturning of Sri Lanka's old political order
6. The long fight for accessibility, dignity in Indian prisons
7. Turning tide
8. Grind along
9. Clearing the air on Delhi's pollution crisis
10. T .N. heatwave policy is only a start
11. Tribal, non-tribal divide apparent in Jharkhand in recent polls
12. President opens Godavari Bridge
13. International Radio Week
14. Should packaged food content be labelled?
15. How does PM Vidyalaxmi differ from other schemes?

Swamped: Rainwater stagnating at the Sri Mangalanathaswamy Temple in Ramanathapuram district, Tamil Nadu, on Wednesday. The district saw torrential rain throughout the day owing to a cloudburst. L. BALACHANDAR

Cloudburst

- Cloudburst refers to an extreme, sudden rainfall over a small area in a short amount of time. The term is often used when the rainfall is exceptionally heavy, typically more than 100 millimeters (4 inches) in less than an hour.
- This can lead to flash floods and significant damage to infrastructure, agriculture, and sometimes result in casualties.
-

  क्लाउडबर्स्ट एक चरम, अचानक वर्षा होती है जो एक छोटे क्षेत्र में बहुत कम समय में होती है।

- जब वर्षा अत्यधिक भारी होती है, आमतौर पर एक घंटे से कम समय में 100 मिलीमीटर (4 इंच) से अधिक, तो इसे क्लाउडबर्स्ट कहा जाता है।

- इससे अचानक बाढ़ आ सकती है और बुनियादी ढांचे, कृषि और कभी-कभी जनहानि में महत्वपूर्ण नुकसान हो सकता है।

- Cloudbursts occur when the atmospheric conditions are conducive to rapid and extreme condensation of water vapor, leading to the sudden release of a large volume of water.
- The primary factors include high humidity, rapid vertical lifting of air, and cooling of air masses at higher altitudes.
- Cloudbursts commonly occur in mountainous regions, particularly in India in states like Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Kerala.
- क्लाउडबर्स्ट तब होते हैं जब वायुमंडलीय स्थितियाँ पानी के वाष्प के तेज और अत्यधिक संघनन के लिए अनुकूल होती हैं, जिसके परिणामस्वरूप पानी की बड़ी मात्रा का अचानक निष्कासन होता है।

- प्रमुख कारक में उच्च आर्द्रता, हवा का तेजी से ऊर्ध्वाधर उत्थान, और उच्च ऊँचाई पर हवा के द्रव्यमान का ठंडा होना शामिल है।

- क्लाउडबर्स्ट आमतौर पर पहाड़ी क्षेत्रों में होते हैं, विशेष रूप से भारत के जम्मू और कश्मीर, हिमाचल प्रदेश, उत्तराखंड और केरल जैसे राज्यों में।

Causes of Cloudbursts

- **Geographical Conditions**: Mountains or hilly areas have a higher likelihood of cloudbursts because of the steep slopes and rising air currents that cause rapid cooling and condensation.
- **Climate Change**: Climate change has led to unpredictable weather patterns and increased rainfall intensity, making cloudbursts more frequent and intense in certain regions.

- **Monsoon Winds**: During the monsoon season, moisture-laden winds from the sea, when forced upwards by mountain ranges, cause intense rainfall.

क्लाउडबर्स्ट के कारण

- **भौगोलिक स्थितियाँ**: पहाड़ी या पर्वतीय क्षेत्रों में क्लाउडबर्स्ट की संभावना अधिक होती है क्योंकि यहाँ की खड़ी ढलानें और हवा की तेज धाराएँ तेजी से ठंडक और संघनन का कारण बनती हैं।
- **जलवायु परिवर्तन**: जलवायु परिवर्तन ने अप्रत्याशित मौसम पैटर्न और वर्षा की तीव्रता को बढ़ा दिया है, जिससे कुछ क्षेत्रों में क्लाउडबर्स्ट अधिक बार और तीव्र हो गए हैं।
- **मानसून हवाएँ**: मानसून के मौसम के दौरान, समुद्र से आर्द्र हवाएँ जब पर्वत श्रृंखलाओं द्वारा ऊपर धकेली जाती हैं, तो तीव्र वर्षा का कारण बनती हैं।

Deadline looms for climate summit negotiators seeking a deal for funds to check global warming

GS Paper III: Environment
Associated Press
BAKU

With time running out, negotiators at the United Nations annual climate talks, COP-29, on Wednesday remained mired in the maze of a trillion-dollar money problem, turning to host Azerbaijan to lead the way to daylight with a promised map to be released in the dark of night.

Vulnerable nations are seeking $1.3 trillion to deal with damage from climate change and to adapt to that change, including building out their own clean-energy systems. Experts agree that at least $1 trillion is called for, but both figures are far more than the developed world has so far offered.

After 10 days of talks, the host presidency of COP-29 promised a draft proposal around midnight local time, which they acknowledged will be far from final and have many decisions still to be made.

German special climate envoy Jennifer Morgan late on Wednesday afternoon put the onus on the COP-29 presidency. "Much is really now in the presidency's hands and the options that they will put in front of us, the text that will come out," Ms. Morgan said.

'Not enough'
Diego Pacheco Balanza, the chair of the Like-Minded Developing Countries

Global concern: An activist takes part in a demonstration for climate finance at the COP-29 summit in Baku on Wednesday. AP

negotiating bloc, said the group was also hearing a figure of $200 billion in negotiating corridors. That's not enough, he said. "Developed countries whose legal obligations it is to provide finance continue to shift their responsibility to developing countries," Mr. Pacheco Balanza said.

Alden Meyer of the Eu-

ropean think tank E3G summed up the state of negotiations on Wednesday by saying the word of the day at the talks is "circle... as in going around in circles."

Juan Pablo Hoffmaister of the Environmental Defense Fund said "the frustration is palpable" as time starts to run out.

Mr. Hoffmaister, a former negotiator for developing countries, said that while potential climate finance goals are finally out, it is still unclear how they will be delivered – loans, grants or other means. "We need to fix this over the next 72 hours," he said.

The summit concludes on November 22.

UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change)

Historical Background and Establishment

- The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was adopted during the **United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)**, also known as the **Earth Summit**, held in **Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992**.
- It became the first multilateral legal framework to address climate change.
- 1992 में **संयुक्त राष्ट्र पर्यावरण और विकास सम्मेलन (UNCED)**, जिसे **पृथ्वी शिखर सम्मेलन** के रूप में भी जाना जाता है, के दौरान **रियो डी जनेरियो, ब्राज़ील** में **जलवायु परिवर्तन पर संयुक्त राष्ट्र फ्रेमवर्क कन्वेंशन (UNFCCC)** को अपनाया गया।
- यह जलवायु परिवर्तन से निपटने के लिए पहला बहुपक्षीय कानूनी ढांचा बना।

Objective

- UNFCCC aims to **stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations** in the atmosphere to prevent dangerous anthropogenic (human-induced) interference with the climate system.
- इसका उद्देश्य वातावरण में **ग्रीनहाउस गैसों के सांद्रण को स्थिर करना** है ताकि जलवायु प्रणाली पर मानवीय हस्तक्षेप से होने वाले खतरनाक प्रभावों को रोका जा सके।

Membership

- The Convention currently has **195 parties** (194 countries and the European Union), reflecting a near-global commitment.
- वर्तमान में कन्वेंशन के **195 सदस्य** (194 देश और यूरोपीय संघ) हैं, जो वैश्विक प्रतिबद्धता को दर्शाते हैं।

Key Principles

- **Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR):** Developed and developing countries share responsibilities but differ in their capabilities and contributions.
- **Sustainability:** Sustainable development is integral to climate action.
- **Precautionary Approach:** Lack of full scientific certainty should not delay measures to combat climate change.
- **Equity:** Fair distribution of efforts among nations.

- o **सामान्य लेकिन विभेदित जिम्मेदारियाँ (CBDR):** विकसित और विकासशील देशों की जिम्मेदारियाँ साझा होती हैं लेकिन उनकी क्षमताएँ और योगदान भिन्न होते हैं।
- o **सततता:** सतत विकास जलवायु कार्रवाई का अभिन्न अंग है।
- o **सावधानीपूर्ण दृष्टिकोण:** पूर्ण वैज्ञानिक प्रमाण की अनुपस्थिति में भी जलवायु परिवर्तन से निपटने के उपायों में देरी नहीं होनी चाहिए।
- o **समानता:** देशों के बीच प्रयासों का उचित वितरण।

Structure of UNFCCC

- o **Conference of the Parties (COP):** The supreme decision-making body that meets annually.
- o **Subsidiary Bodies:** These advise and assist COP in technical and policy matters.
- o **COP Bureau:** Deals with procedural and organizational matters.
- o **Parties:** Countries that have ratified the Convention.
- o **पार्टियों का सम्मेलन (COP):** सर्वोच्च निर्णय लेने वाली संस्था, जो वार्षिक रूप से मिलती है।
- o **सहायक निकाय:** ये तकनीकी और नीति मामलों में COP को सलाह और सहायता देते हैं।
- o **COP ब्यूरो:** प्रक्रियात्मक और संगठनात्मक मामलों से संबंधित।
- o **पार्टियाँ:** देश जिन्होंने कन्वेंशन को अनुमोदित किया है।

Key Developments under UNFCCC

- o **Kyoto Protocol (1997):** Legally binding emission reduction targets for developed countries.
- o **Paris Agreement (2015):** Aimed at limiting global warming to **1.5–2°C above pre-industrial levels**.
- o **Doha Amendment (2012):** Extended Kyoto Protocol's commitment period.
- o **क्योटो प्रोटोकॉल (1997):** विकसित देशों के लिए कानूनी रूप से बाध्यकारी उत्सर्जन कटौती लक्ष्य।
- o **पेरिस समझौता (2015):** वैश्विक तापमान को **औद्योगिक क्रांति से पहले के स्तर से 1.5-2°C तक सीमित** करने का लक्ष्य।
- o **दोहा संशोधन (2012):** क्योटो प्रोटोकॉल की प्रतिबद्धता अवधि का विस्तार।

Recent Updates

- o **COP28 (2023):** Focused on scaling up renewable energy and climate finance.
- o **Global Stocktake:** Evaluating collective progress under the Paris Agreement.
- o **Loss and Damage Fund:** Establishment of a fund to assist vulnerable countries in addressing climate change impacts.
- o **COP28 (2023):** नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा और जलवायु वित्त को बढ़ाने पर ध्यान केंद्रित।

- o **वैश्विक मूल्यांकन:** पेरिस समझौते के तहत सामूहिक प्रगति का मूल्यांकन।
- o **हानि और क्षति कोष:** जलवायु परिवर्तन के प्रभावों से निपटने के लिए कमजोर देशों की सहायता हेतु कोष की स्थापना।

Planetary crisis puts children at risk: UNICEF report

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

The world is facing an unprecedented planetary crisis with nearly half the world's children – about one billion – living in countries that face high risk of climate and environmental hazards, said the UNICEF's State of the World's Children 2024 (SOWC-2024) report, released on Wednesday.

The report examines impact of three long-term global forces – demographic shifts, climate and environmental crises, and frontier technologies – which it claims will have a profound effect on children's lives between now and 2050.

The report notes that climate destabilisation, biodiversity collapse and widespread pollution threats are intensifying globally.

"Children are confront-

Future of childhood

India and China will remain the two countries with the most children in the 2050s, even as the number of children will have dropped by about 106 million in India and by 203 million in China

Country	Number of children (in million)
India	350
China	141
Nigeria	132
Pakistan	129
Democratic Republic of Congo	101
Ethiopia	82
United States	73
Indonesia	72
United Republic of Tanzania	56
Bangladesh	49

Note: Countries which may have the largest number of children in the 2050s

SOURCE: THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN 2024, UNICEF

ing a more unpredictable, hazardous environment than any previous generation," it warns.

Explaining the adverse impact, UNICEF said that children's developing bodies are uniquely susceptible to these hazards.

From before their first breath, children's brains, lungs and immune systems are vulnerable to pollution and extreme weather. Air pollution is especially harmful to children; its impact on their respiratory health and development can last a lifetime.

Rising temperatures increase mosquito populations, spreading diseases such as malaria, dengue and Zika. Floods contaminate water supplies, leading to waterborne diseases, which are a major cause of death for children under five years of age. Extreme weather limits food production and access, increasing children's risk of food insecurity. Climate-related disasters can also cause feelings of helplessness, trauma and anxiety in children, the report notes.

"Since 2022, 400 million students around the world have experienced school closures due to extreme weather. In addition to violating child rights, inhibiting learning stifles economic growth. Climate and environmental hazards also displace children from their homes," the report states.

Additionally, it notes that by the 2050s, the global child population is projected to stabilise at around 2.3 billion. However, this global figure obscures regional shifts where while South Asia will remain one of the regions with the largest child populations, it will be joined by eastern and southern Africa, as well as western and Central Africa.

"These regions already struggle to meet children's basic needs, while also facing significant climate risks and lacking adequate digital infrastructure," says the report adding that with fewer young dependents relative to workers, more resources could be freed to support children and boost the economy.

On frontier technologies, the report notes that artificial intelligence, neurotechnology, next-generation renewable energy and vaccine breakthroughs could significantly improve childhood in the future.

"Digitalisation can empower children but it can also expose children to online risks, including sexual exploitation and abuse," the report cautions.

It adds that over 95% of people in high-income countries are connected to the Internet, compared with barely 26% in low-income countries. Infrastructure limitations, high costs and permission barriers continue to impede progress. This digital exclusion threatens to exacerbate existing inequalities, especially in regions with rapidly growing child populations.

Planetary Crisis Puts Children at Risk: UNICEF Report
ग्रहीय संकट बच्चों को जोखिम में डाल रहा है: यूनिसेफ रिपोर्ट

- The world is facing an **unprecedented planetary crisis**, with nearly **half the world's children** — about **one billion** — living in countries that face **high risk of climate and environmental hazards**, according to the **UNICEF's State of the World's Children 2024 (SOWC-2024)** report, released on **Wednesday**.

  दुनिया **अभूतपूर्व ग्रहीय संकट** का सामना कर रही है, जहां लगभग **आधी दुनिया के बच्चे** — लगभग **एक अरब** — ऐसे देशों में रहते हैं जो **जलवायु और पर्यावरणीय खतरों के उच्च जोखिम** का

सामना कर रहे हैं, यह बात **यूनिसेफ की स्टेट ऑफ द वर्ल्ड्स चिल्ड्रन 2024 (SOWC-2024)** रिपोर्ट, जो **बुधवार** को जारी की गई, में कही गई है।

- The report examines the impact of **three long-term global forces** — **demographic shifts**, **climate and environmental crises**, and **frontier technologies** — which it claims will have a **profound effect on children's lives between now and 2050**.

रिपोर्ट **तीन दीर्घकालिक वैश्विक शक्तियों** — **जनसांख्यिकीय परिवर्तन**, **जलवायु और पर्यावरणीय संकट**, और **फ्रंटियर टेक्नोलॉजीज** — के प्रभाव की जांच करती है, जो **अब से 2050 तक बच्चों के जीवन पर गहरा प्रभाव** डालेंगे।

- The report notes that **climate destabilisation**, **biodiversity collapse**, and **widespread pollution threats** are intensifying globally.

रिपोर्ट में उल्लेख किया गया है कि **जलवायु अस्थिरता**, **जैव विविधता का पतन**, और **व्यापक प्रदूषण खतरों** की तीव्रता वैश्विक स्तर पर बढ़ रही है।

- "Children are confronting a more **unpredictable, hazardous environment** than any previous generation," it warns.

"बच्चे किसी भी पूर्व पीढ़ी की तुलना में अधिक **अप्रत्याशित, खतरनाक पर्यावरण** का सामना कर रहे हैं," यह चेतावनी देती है।

- Explaining the adverse impact, UNICEF said that children's **developing bodies** are uniquely susceptible to these hazards.

प्रतिकूल प्रभाव को समझाते हुए, यूनिसेफ ने कहा कि बच्चों के **विकसित होते शरीर** इन खतरों के प्रति विशेष रूप से संवेदनशील होते हैं।

- From before their **first breath**, children's **brains, lungs, and immune systems** are vulnerable to **pollution and extreme weather**.

पहली सांस लेने से पहले ही, बच्चों का **मस्तिष्क, फेफड़े और प्रतिरक्षा तंत्र प्रदूषण और चरम मौसम** के प्रति संवेदनशील होते हैं।

- **Air pollution** is especially harmful to children; its impact on their **respiratory health and development** can last a lifetime.

वायु प्रदूषण बच्चों के लिए विशेष रूप से हानिकारक है; इसका प्रभाव उनकी **श्वसन स्वास्थ्य और विकास** पर **जीवनभर** रह सकता है।

- Rising temperatures increase **mosquito populations**, spreading diseases such as **malaria, dengue, and Zika**.

बढ़ते तापमान **मच्छरों की संख्या** बढ़ाते हैं, जिससे **मलेरिया, डेंगू और ज़ीका** जैसी बीमारियां फैलती हैं।

- **Floods contaminate water supplies**, leading to **waterborne diseases**, which are a major cause of death for children under **five years of age**.

बाढ़ जल आपूर्ति को दूषित करती है, जिससे **जलजनित बीमारियां** होती हैं, जो **पांच साल से कम उम्र के बच्चों** की मौत का एक प्रमुख कारण हैं।

- **Extreme weather** limits **food production and access**, increasing children's risk of **food insecurity**.

चरम मौसम खाद्य उत्पादन और उपलब्धता को सीमित करता है, जिससे बच्चों में **खाद्य असुरक्षा** का खतरा बढ़ता है।

- Climate-related disasters can also cause **feelings of helplessness, trauma, and anxiety** in children, the report notes.

  जलवायु से संबंधित आपदाएं बच्चों में **बेबसपन, आघात और चिंता** की भावना भी उत्पन्न कर सकती हैं, रिपोर्ट में उल्लेख किया गया है।

Impact of Climate Crisis on Children's Education and Demographics
बच्चों की शिक्षा और जनसांख्यिकी पर जलवायु संकट का प्रभाव

- Since **2022**, around **400 million students worldwide** have experienced **school closures due to extreme weather**. This violates **child rights**, inhibits learning, and stifles **economic growth**. Climate and environmental hazards also displace children from their homes.

  2022 से, लगभग **400 मिलियन छात्र** दुनिया भर में **चरम मौसम के कारण स्कूल बंद** का सामना कर चुके हैं। यह **बाल अधिकारों** का उल्लंघन करता है, सीखने में बाधा डालता है, और **आर्थिक विकास** को धीमा करता है। **जलवायु और पर्यावरणीय खतरे** बच्चों को उनके घरों से विस्थापित भी करते हैं।

- By the **2050s**, the global child population is projected to stabilise at around **2.3 billion**. However, regional shifts indicate that while **South Asia** will remain a region with a large child population, it will be joined by **eastern and southern Africa**, as well as **western and Central Africa**.

  2050 के दशक तक, वैश्विक बाल जनसंख्या लगभग **2.3 बिलियन** पर स्थिर हो जाएगी। हालांकि, क्षेत्रीय परिवर्तन दिखाते हैं कि **दक्षिण एशिया** बड़ी बाल जनसंख्या वाला क्षेत्र बना रहेगा और इसमें **पूर्वी और दक्षिणी अफ्रीका**, साथ ही **पश्चिमी और मध्य अफ्रीका** भी शामिल होंगे।

- These regions already struggle to meet **children's basic needs**, face **significant climate risks**, and lack adequate **digital infrastructure**. With fewer **young dependents relative to workers**, more resources could be freed to support children and boost the economy.

  ये क्षेत्र पहले से ही **बच्चों की बुनियादी जरूरतें** पूरी करने में संघर्ष कर रहे हैं, **महत्वपूर्ण जलवायु जोखिम** का सामना कर रहे हैं, और पर्याप्त **डिजिटल बुनियादी ढांचे** की कमी है। **कामगारों की तुलना में कम युवा आश्रितों** के साथ, बच्चों का समर्थन करने और अर्थव्यवस्था को बढ़ावा देने के लिए अधिक संसाधन उपलब्ध हो सकते हैं।

Role of Frontier Technologies in Children's Future
फ्रंटियर टेक्नोलॉजीज का बच्चों के भविष्य में योगदान

- Frontier technologies such as **artificial intelligence**, **neurotechnology**, **next-generation renewable energy**, and **vaccine breakthroughs** could significantly improve childhood in the future.

  आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलिजेंस, न्यूरोटेक्नोलॉजी, अगली पीढ़ी की नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा, और **वैक्सीन की प्रगति** जैसी फ्रंटियर टेक्नोलॉजीज भविष्य में बचपन में महत्वपूर्ण सुधार ला सकती हैं।

- Digitalisation can empower children but also exposes them to **online risks**, including **sexual exploitation and abuse**, the report cautions.

  डिजिटलाइजेशन बच्चों को सशक्त कर सकता है लेकिन यह उन्हें **ऑनलाइन खतरों**, जैसे **यौन शोषण और दुर्व्यवहार**, के प्रति भी संवेदनशील बनाता है, रिपोर्ट चेतावनी देती है।

Digital Divide and Inequality
डिजिटल विभाजन और असमानता

- Over **95% of people** in **high-income countries** are connected to the Internet, compared with barely **26% in low-income countries**.

  उच्च आय वाले देशों में **95% से अधिक लोग** इंटरनेट से जुड़े हैं, जबकि **निम्न आय वाले देशों** में यह आंकड़ा केवल **26%** है।

- Infrastructure limitations, high costs, and permission barriers continue to impede progress. This **digital exclusion** threatens to exacerbate **existing inequalities**, especially in regions with rapidly growing child populations.

  बुनियादी ढांचे की सीमाएं, उच्च लागत, और अनुमति बाधाएं प्रगति को धीमा करती हैं। यह **डिजिटल बहिष्करण मौजूदा असमानताओं** को बढ़ाने की धमकी देता है, विशेष रूप से उन क्षेत्रों में जहां बाल जनसंख्या तेजी से बढ़ रही है।

GM crops can help fight hunger depending on farming method

Tools like CRISPR help scientists make targeted changes to a plant's genome. People are also accepting GM when the plant doesn't have foreign genes. But the costs of regulation and ensuring nothing harmful enters the market is still too high for institutions that don't only work for profit

Rohini Subrahmanyam

The world's population is growing and more people need more food. But indiscriminately expanding agricultural land and practice is not desirable. Cutting forests to plant more crops will only push already-fragile ecosystems over the edge. Dousing fields with pesticides is similarly toxic and depletes soils and groundwater.

The genetically modified (GM) crops provide a way out. In the 1990s, researchers found a way to modify a plant's genome and make specific changes that prevented insects from eating them. In the Bt cotton grown in India and Bt brinjal in Bangladesh, scientists added a gene from the bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* to the plants' genomes, making them produce a toxin that kills some insects.

Weeds threaten farms but spraying herbicides to kill them may kill the crops as well. Now there are herbicide-tolerant (HT) GM crops immune to some weed-killing substances, helping farmers kill the weeds alone. Researchers can also modify crops to have higher yield and/or more nutrients, reducing the need to plant more crops.

The trick of farming GM crops

The advent of GM crops has helped farmers practise sustainable methods while increasing food production. But depending on the kind of GM crops being grown, there are still broader, longer term effects. Frederik Noack, an economist at the University of British Columbia (UBC), Canada, and others delved into the scientific literature surrounding how farming GM crops may affect human health and the environment.

Their review, published in *Science* in August, said there are negligible adverse health effects of actually consuming GM crops whereas the farming methods have complex effects.

"What's complicated about GMs is you're not just adding a new genetic organism, you're also adding a whole suite of management changes that come along with it," Risa Sargent, an ecologist at UBC and one of the review's authors, said. "The evidence is that those management changes are the risk, not the genetics of the organism *per se*."

The use of insecticide-resistant crops, like ones with the Bt toxin trait, has shown low levels of risk and resulted in farmers spraying less insecticides.

"To me, this trait is one of the more positive stories about GM," said Devang Mehta, a plant biologist at KU Leuven in Belgium. "If you look at India ... you see a reduction in insecticide use. Farmers are getting less poisoned by those insecticides because they don't use those insecticides anymore." This is important because Indian farmers often lack specialised protective gear.

Profit versus the environment

In some cases, however, pests can develop resistance to the Bt toxin over time, leading to increased pesticide use. This can be countered by diversifying the kinds of Bt crops being planted, including areas where non-Bt crops are planted side-by-side, or by adding more genes to bolster the plant's resistance to pests.

"If we put in just a single resistance gene, you place a lot of pressure on the pathogen to overcome that gene, but if there's a stack of multiple resistance genes, it's much more difficult for the pathogen to overcome it," said Brande Wulff, a plant and food scientist at the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), Saudi Arabia.

The effects are more nuanced with HT crops, however. They are generally made to resist a specific broad-spectrum herbicide.

The farmers benefit because they don't need to expend more labour and money to mechanically remove the weeds: they can just use the herbicide and not worry about their crops dying.

This also reduces tilling, where farmers turn the soil over to kill some weeds before planting crops. Tilling can release carbon trapped in the soil, so no-till agriculture reduces carbon emissions to some extent.

But only a few major companies are developing most of these HT crops in the U.S., so farmers don't have much say in which herbicide to use.

"GM can be whatever you want it to be. But what it will be depends on who develops it," Mr. Noack said. "The benefit of [HT crops] for the company is that they also sell the herbicide. You can only use that specific herbicide." The most
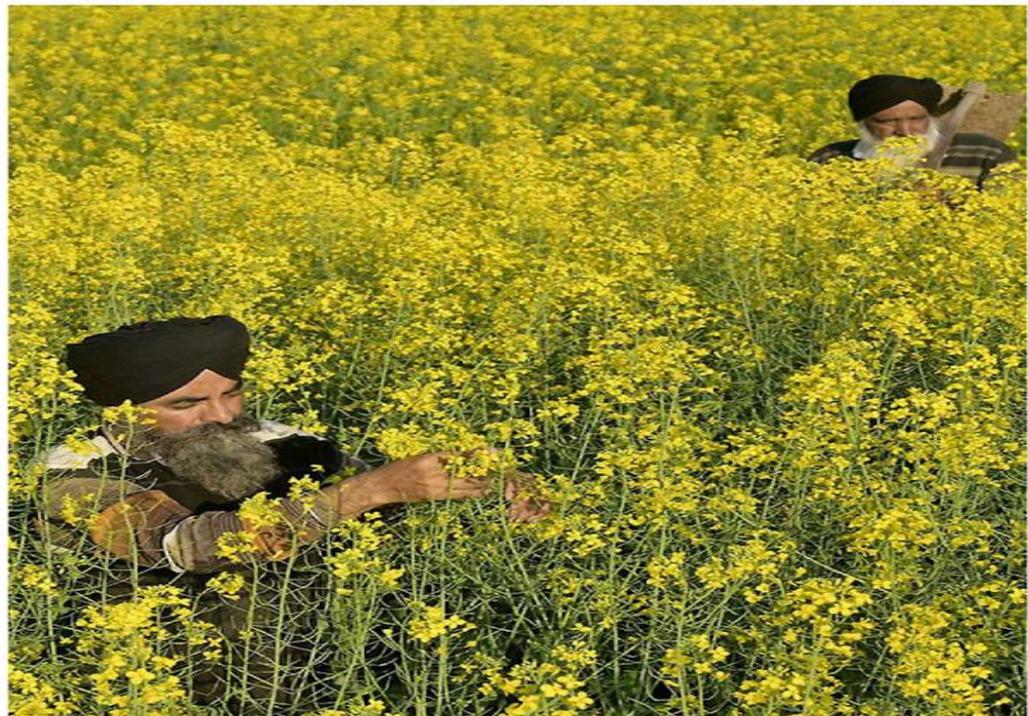
Farmers walk through the mustard field. While India's Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee recommended the environmental release of GM mustard variety DMH-11 in 2022, the Supreme Court blocked it in July 2024. AFP

prominent one companies sell now is glyphosate.

There is no straightforward answer to whether these for-profit companies always keep the environment in mind when they develop and sell their HT crop seeds and the accompanying herbicide.

For every solution, a problem

According to the review, farmers adopting HT crops have not mitigated herbicide use; in some cases it has even led to an increase, especially of glyphosate.

"Initially, people thought glyphosate would be less toxic because it decays pretty fast if it gets into the environment," said Noack. "Now, very recent studies are showing that it's actually really harmful for human health."

A lot of the increased use is also driven by weeds rapidly developing resistance against the herbicides. The more farmers are driven to using a specific herbicide, including glyphosate, the more the weeds can become resistant.

"It's a little bit similar to the antibiotic resistance in medicine, right? Where if you constantly use the same antibiotic, you have a big problem because the bacteria become resistant to that," Mr. Mehta said. "... if you use the same herbicide over and over in your field, you are building that problem slowly."

To counter the weed's resistance to glyphosate, some GM crops have additional modifications that equip them to also resist dicamba, a broad-spectrum herbicide. However, dicamba is potentially more toxic to humans and good at spreading around.

"If you are the neighbour of the farmer who uses that herbicide, and you don't plant GM crops, it just kills all of your crops," Mr. Noack said. "The general problem is each time we come up with a new pesticide, we'll create problems downstream."

Somewhere in the middle

Scientists ascertain a pesticide's toxicity by testing its short-term effects on rats, although that doesn't reveal the full extent of its effects. "That's of course a very different question than to see what's the long-term impact on infant health,"

> What's complicated about GMs is you're not just adding a new genetic organism, you're also adding a whole suite of management changes that come along with it

RISA SARGENT
Ecologist

Mr. Noack added. "If it's causing cancer, we won't see that in the rat population because the rats won't live long enough to show that."

"Industry wants the release right away. They've developed some new technology. They want to be able to sell it, which makes sense. That's the capitalistic driver of it," Ms. Sargent said. "But we can't just give pesticides to people and see what happens. Often it takes years and years of very careful science to tease out the impacts."

Mr. Noack believes another reason resistance develops and spreads is if the farmers all plant the same crops and use the same herbicides. Crop rotation — where farmers plant different crops in the same area — can help reduce the reliance on agro-chemicals and lower resistance.

Ms. Sargent suggested using evidence-based precautionary measures of pest management, which involve not excessively using herbicides to kill every weed in the field. "Let's say a complete ban on pesticides is one extreme, and probably our current agricultural system in many places is the other extreme. Somewhere in the middle is an approach such as ... or integrated pest management," she said.

"The protocol is that there's a certain level of accepted weeds in a field that would be determined between a ... specialist and the farmer working together."

'A very black and white way'

The few companies that make and sell HT crops have monopolised their production. It's prohibitively expensive to regulate GM crops (more than $40 million

for a single GM trait to be regulated and eventually commercialised), leaving most government institutions and smaller companies behind.

Modern tools like CRISPR help scientists make targeted changes to a plant's genome, cutting the cost of development. People are also more accepting of GM when the plant doesn't have foreign genes. But the costs of regulation and ensuring nothing harmful enters the market is still too high for institutions that don't only work for profit.

"I think the problem is that a lot of the regulations, including in India, are based on 'is it a GM or is it not a GM'. It's not about whether it's herbicide, insecticide or nutrition," said Mr. Mehta. "They don't care about the trait, they care only about the method, which is a very black and white way of doing things."

The review also found more data is required to assess the true impact of GM on biodiversity. In some places, the number of insect pollinators has dropped but whether that's due to GM crops or to urbanisation, climate change, and/or other drivers of habitat loss is unclear.

"We have very little longitudinal data on species trends for almost any species. For most insects, most amphibians, most mammals, how would you possibly go back and say, 'here are the clear effects on biodiversity' when we have almost no data?" Ms. Sargent asked.

Another confounding factor is that a lot of the research on GM and biodiversity is sponsored by industries, according to Sargent, which is muddying the waters.

Mark Tester, a botanist at KAUST, said many of the potential environmental effects attributed to GM crop-farming are not unique to GM: they're just the natural consequences of agriculture. "You can think of it as a war between agriculture and nature, where we're trying to feed eight billion people," he said. "We're using the same amount of land that we were using for feeding six billion, which means we must increase production efficiencies by 30%."

"That's definitely difficult."

(Rohini Subrahmanyam is a Bangalore based freelance journalist)

GM Crops Can Help Fight Hunger Depending on Farming Method

जीएम फसलें खेती के तरीकों पर निर्भर करते हुए भूख से लड़ने में मदद कर सकती हैं

Tools like CRISPR help scientists make targeted changes to a plant's genome.

CRISPR जैसे उपकरण वैज्ञानिकों को पौधों के जीनोम में लक्षित परिवर्तन करने में मदद करते हैं।

- People are more accepting of GM crops when the plant doesn't have foreign genes.
  लोग **जीएम फसलों** को अधिक स्वीकार करते हैं जब उनमें विदेशी जीन शामिल नहीं होते।
- The costs of regulation and ensuring nothing harmful enters the market are still too high for non-profit institutions.
  नियमन की लागत और यह सुनिश्चित करना कि बाजार में कुछ हानिकारक न आए, अभी भी गैर-लाभकारी संस्थानों के लिए बहुत अधिक है।

Need for GM Crops
जीएम फसलों की आवश्यकता

- The world's population is growing, requiring more food.
  विश्व की जनसंख्या बढ़ रही है, जिससे अधिक भोजन की आवश्यकता हो रही है।
- Expanding agricultural land by cutting forests threatens fragile ecosystems.
  वनों को काटकर कृषि भूमि बढ़ाना पहले से ही नाजुक पारिस्थितिक तंत्र को खतरे में डालता है।
- Excessive pesticide use depletes soils and groundwater and is toxic.
  अत्यधिक कीटनाशकों का उपयोग **मिट्टी और भूजल** को नुकसान पहुंचाता है और विषाक्त है।

How GM Crops Work
जीएम फसलें कैसे काम करती हैं

- **Bt cotton** in India and **Bt brinjal** in Bangladesh include a gene from the bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* to produce **a toxin that kills insects**.
  भारत में **बीटी कपास** और बांग्लादेश में **बीटी बैंगन** में *Bacillus thuringiensis* बैक्टीरिया का जीन शामिल होता है, जो कीड़ों को मारने वाला विष पैदा करता है।
- **Herbicide-tolerant (HT) GM crops** help farmers kill weeds without harming crops.
  हर्बिसाइड-प्रतिरोधी (एचटी) जीएम फसलें किसानों को खरपतवारों को मारने में मदद करती हैं, बिना फसलों को नुकसान पहुंचाए।

- GM crops can also be modified for **higher yield** and/or **more nutrients**.
जीएम फसलों को **उच्च पैदावार** और/या **अधिक पोषक तत्वों** के लिए संशोधित किया जा सकता है।

Impact of GM Crops on Farming Methods
खेती के तरीकों पर जीएम फसलों का प्रभाव

- GM crops have helped farmers practice sustainable methods while increasing food production.
जीएम फसलों ने किसानों को **सतत खेती के तरीकों** का पालन करते हुए खाद्य उत्पादन बढ़ाने में मदद की है।
- According to a **Science review published in August**, consuming GM crops has negligible adverse health effects.
अगस्त में प्रकाशित साइंस समीक्षा के अनुसार, जीएम फसलों के उपभोग से स्वास्थ्य पर नगण्य प्रतिकूल प्रभाव पड़ता है।
- Management changes associated with GM farming, not the genetics itself, pose risks.
जीएम खेती से जुड़े **प्रबंधन परिवर्तन**, जीनोटिक्स नहीं, जोखिम पैदा करते हैं।

Reduction in Pesticide Use
कीटनाशकों के उपयोग में कमी

- **Bt crops** have led to reduced insecticide use, lowering farmer exposure to harmful chemicals.
बीटी फसलों ने कीटनाशकों के उपयोग को कम किया है, जिससे किसानों का **हानिकारक रसायनों** से संपर्क कम हुआ है।
- However, **pests can develop resistance to Bt toxins over time**, requiring additional measures like diversified crops or stacked resistance genes.
हालांकि, समय के साथ कीट **बीटी विषाक्त पदार्थों** के प्रति प्रतिरोध विकसित कर सकते हैं, जिसके लिए **विविध फसलें** या **स्टैक्ड प्रतिरोध जीन** जैसी अतिरिक्त उपायों की आवश्यकता होती है।

Challenges with Herbicide-Tolerant (HT) Crops
हर्बिसाइड-प्रतिरोधी (एचटी) फसलों से चुनौतियां

- HT crops allow farmers to **reduce labour and money spent on weed removal.**
एचटी फसलें किसानों को **खरपतवार हटाने में श्रम और धन** बचाने में मदद करती हैं।
- They support **no-till agriculture**, reducing carbon emissions.
यह **नो-टिल कृषि** का समर्थन करती हैं, जिससे **कार्बन उत्सर्जन** कम होता है।
- Farmers have limited herbicide options, often restricted to company-sold products like **glyphosate**.
किसानों के पास **हर्बिसाइड विकल्प सीमित** होते हैं, आमतौर पर **ग्लाइफोसेट** जैसे कंपनी-निर्मित उत्पादों तक।

Concerns Over Herbicide Use
हर्बिसाइड उपयोग पर चिंताएं

- Glyphosate, once considered safe, is now linked to **human health risks**.
  पहले सुरक्षित माने जाने वाले **ग्लाइफोसेट** को अब **मानव स्वास्थ्य जोखिमों** से जोड़ा गया है।
- Weeds can develop resistance to herbicides, similar to **antibiotic resistance** in medicine.
  खरपतवार हर्बिसाइड्स के प्रति प्रतिरोध विकसित कर सकते हैं, जैसे चिकित्सा में **एंटीबायोटिक प्रतिरोध**।
- Dicamba, a new herbicide used in some GM crops, is more toxic and harmful to neighboring non-GM crops.
  डिकाम्बा, कुछ जीएम फसलों में उपयोग किया जाने वाला नया हर्बिसाइड, **अधिक विषाक्त** और पड़ोसी गैर-जीएम फसलों के लिए हानिकारक है।

Every Solution Brings New Problems
हर समाधान नई समस्याएं लाता है

- **New pesticides or herbicides often create downstream problems**, necessitating continuous innovation.
  नए कीटनाशक या हर्बिसाइड अक्सर **डाउनस्ट्रीम समस्याएं** पैदा करते हैं, जिससे लगातार नवाचार की आवश्यकता होती है।

Scientists ascertain a pesticide's toxicity by testing its short-term effects on rats
वैज्ञानिक चूहों पर अल्पकालिक प्रभावों का परीक्षण करके कीटनाशक की विषाक्तता निर्धारित करते हैं

- Testing on rats does not reveal the full extent of the pesticide's effects.
  चूहों पर परीक्षण कीटनाशक के प्रभावों की पूरी सीमा को उजागर नहीं करता।
- **Short-term tests cannot determine long-term impacts like cancer because rats don't live long enough**.
  अल्पकालिक परीक्षण **कैंसर** जैसे दीर्घकालिक प्रभावों का निर्धारण नहीं कर सकते क्योंकि चूहे पर्याप्त लंबे समय तक जीवित नहीं रहते।

"Industry wants the release right away"
"उद्योग तुरंत रिलीज़ चाहता है"

- Companies push for immediate release of new pesticide technologies to capitalize on profits.

कंपनियां लाभ कमाने के लिए नई कीटनाशक तकनीकों की तुरंत रिलीज़ के लिए दबाव डालती हैं।

- Long-term studies are necessary but take **years** to uncover the actual impacts.
  दीर्घकालिक अध्ययन आवश्यक हैं लेकिन वास्तविक प्रभावों को उजागर करने में **वर्षों** लगते हैं।

Resistance develops due to uniform crop planting and excessive herbicide use
समान फसल बोने और अत्यधिक शाकनाशक उपयोग के कारण प्रतिरोध विकसित होता है

- Planting the same crops and using the same herbicides increases resistance in pests.
  एक ही फसल बोने और एक ही शाकनाशक का उपयोग करने से कीटों में प्रतिरोध बढ़ता है।
- Crop rotation and reduced reliance on agrochemicals can mitigate resistance.
  फसल चक्रीकरण और कृषि रसायनों पर कम निर्भरता प्रतिरोध को कम कर सकती है।

Evidence-based pest management suggested
साक्ष्य-आधारित कीट प्रबंधन का सुझाव दिया गया

- Avoid excessive use of herbicides to kill every weed in the field.
  खेत में हर खरपतवार को खत्म करने के लिए शाकनाशकों का अत्यधिक उपयोग न करें।
- **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** allows for a **certain level of accepted weeds** in collaboration with specialists.
  एकीकृत कीट प्रबंधन (IPM) **स्वीकार्य खरपतवारों के एक निश्चित स्तर** की अनुमति देता है, विशेषज्ञों के साथ सहयोग में।

"A very black and white way"
"एक बहुत ही श्वेत-श्याम दृष्टिकोण"

- GM crop regulation focuses on whether a plant is **GM or non-GM**, not on traits like herbicide or nutrition.
  जीएम फसल नियमन का ध्यान इस पर है कि पौधा **जीएम है या नहीं**, न कि जड़ी-बूटियों या पोषण जैसे लक्षणों पर।
- Regulation costs exceed **$40 million** per GM trait, limiting small companies and institutions.
  प्रत्येक जीएम लक्षण के लिए नियमन लागत **$40 मिलियन** से अधिक है, जिससे छोटे संस्थानों और कंपनियों की क्षमता सीमित होती है।

More data needed on GM crops and biodiversity
जीएम फसलों और जैव विविधता पर अधिक डेटा की आवश्यकता है

- Pollinator insect numbers have declined in some areas, but causes are unclear (GM crops, urbanization, or climate change).
  कुछ क्षेत्रों में परागण करने वाले कीड़ों की संख्या घटी है, लेकिन कारण स्पष्ट नहीं हैं (जीएम फसलें, शहरीकरण या जलवायु परिवर्तन)।
- Longitudinal data on species trends is minimal, making impact assessments difficult.
  प्रजातियों की प्रवृत्तियों पर दीर्घकालिक डेटा न्यूनतम है, जिससे प्रभाव आकलन कठिन हो जाता है।

Research bias due to industry sponsorship
उद्योग प्रायोजन के कारण शोध में पक्षपात

- Many studies on GM crops are funded by industries, affecting reliability.
  जीएम फसलों पर कई अध्ययन उद्योगों द्वारा वित्तपोषित होते हैं, जिससे विश्वसनीयता प्रभावित होती है।

"A war between agriculture and nature"
"कृषि और प्रकृति के बीच युद्ध"

- Feeding **8 billion** people requires increasing production efficiency by **30%** on the same amount of land.
  8 अरब लोगों को खिलाने के लिए उसी भूमि पर **30%** उत्पादन क्षमता बढ़ाने की आवश्यकता है।

An overturning of Sri Lanka's old political order

The National People's Power (NPP), led by Sri Lanka's President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, has swept the Sri Lankan parliamentary polls with an astounding majority.

The NPP's success, built on Mr. Dissanayake's win in September 2024 (the presidential election), was made possible by an astute reading of the ground sentiment, patient planning and execution of a smart election strategy. There is another side to this story: Sri Lanka is Asia's oldest electoral democracy, with universal suffrage going back to 1931, and its citizenry, in an awesome political swing, have not only given the new government an overwhelming mandate but also clearly rejected the political status quo.

The elections have, more or less, cleansed the 225-member Parliament, purging the country's arrogant old guard. While the NPP gained 159 seats (61.6% votes), the main Opposition Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) was reduced to 40 seats (17.7% votes). The parties of former Presidents Ranil Wickremesinghe and the Rajapaksas have been crushed – five (4.5% votes) and three seats (3.1%), respectively. The Ilankai Tamil Arasu Katchi (ITAK) in the north and the east, which claims to be the main Tamil voice, was reduced to eight seats (2.3% votes), with similar electoral haemorrhage in the hill country for the candidates contesting from established regional and national parties. Significantly, three women from the hill country Tamil community have been elected. The new Parliament will look drastically different from the earlier stale house of pompous old men.

Sri Lanka's worst economic crisis since Independence has led to unimaginable political changes. Like Humpty Dumpty, the old political order has had a mighty fall and cannot be put back together. Indeed, political parties, for decades, merely served the class interests of the elite in Colombo, the geopolitical stakes of powerful global actors, and the long distance nationalist agenda of the Tamil diaspora. The historic electoral shift radically alters the political terrain. It cannot be business as usual any more. Either the NPP has to deliver on peoples' huge expectations, or risks being displaced by polarising right-wing forces.

Historic shift

This historic election is comparable to the one in 1977 during the decade-long global economic downturn. The right wing UNP government of J.R. Jayewardene came to power with a five-sixths majority in Parliament. J.R. Jayewardene, who was the Finance Minister at Independence in 1948, had waited for almost three decades to change the political and economic history of the country with a new Constitution, a presidential system and a liberalised economy.

Similarly, Mr. Dissanayake and the JVP have

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The dramatic electoral shift following the Sri Lankan parliamentary election radically alters the political terrain; it cannot be business as usual any more

been waiting for three decades since taking the parliamentary path, after being decimated during their second brutal insurrection, to finally gain state power. The economic depression and the people's mass struggles for system change over the last three years provided the perfect storm for their rise. Will they end majoritarian policies and finally abolish the authoritarian executive presidency? Will they rebuild an inclusive economy, and depart from the neoliberal project with tremendous inequalities?

Tamil nationalist splintering

The political wave towards the NPP had started even before the presidential elections, and a parliamentary majority was widely expected. However, the more surprising result was the unimaginable shift in the northern Tamil electorate.

The NPP has become the first national party to win both electoral districts in the Northern Province, historically in the firm grip of Tamil nationalist politics. This major upset comes amid the splintering of Tamil nationalist parties. A recent factor was the projection of a "Tamil Common Candidate" in the last presidential election to avoid engaging with national politics, supposedly to show Tamil unity and gain support from international actors. The initiative failed spectacularly, as only a fraction voted for them. It further earned the wrath of its own supporters, as its "unity" crumbled soon after with the announcement of parliamentary elections. The self-serving politics of all those hiding behind Tamil nationalism was exposed by the record number of parties contesting for just the dozen seats in the north.

In reality, the fall of Tamil nationalist politics was long overdue. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam had decimated the Tamil political leadership, including by assassinating many Tamil parliamentarians, and it was only the shell of Tamil politics that remained financed by the diaspora. These political parties could not mobilise people on the ground, and claimed they would deliver Tamil nationalist aspirations through international pressure, in forums such as the UN Human Rights Council and by lobbying in capitals, particularly New Delhi. They consistently failed to recognise the travails of their long-suffering people – the disrupted livelihoods, the abject poverty and social disintegration with no future for the youth that have marred the war-torn regions for a decade and a half.

The NPP's victory is a reckoning that people in the north share many of the challenges faced in the rest of the country. The Tamil political elite claim that remittances from the diaspora have ensured that the war-torn people are not affected by the economic crisis.

In reality, it is a small section of the middle class with one foot in the diaspora that receive such remittances, while most rural communities grapple with joblessness, hunger and school dropouts. The NPP now has a great responsibility to demonstrate that Colombo will finally start addressing the travails and long-term grievances of the ethnic minorities.

Space for change

The NPP has now been given an exceptional mandate to deal with an unprecedented crisis. In its long march to power, it has made many promises including providing relief to people, eliminating corruption, abolishing the executive presidency, and repealing the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). It now has the legislative strength to bring about a new Constitution, since a two-thirds majority in parliament is necessary for major amendments. The new government will have to move on a number of issues, from addressing the economic crisis to political reconciliation following the tragic civil war.

The economic challenges are formidable. And while the domestic challenges are clear, the tumultuous world order may lead to new economic shocks. The NPP leadership would do well to learn the lessons of its left-leaning predecessors. The strong United Front Government of the 1970s was wiped out in the next election by the onslaught of a global economic downturn and a capital strike by the West punishing the country for embracing the Non-Aligned Movement.

Sri Lanka is also now in unknown waters having defaulted on its external debt for the first time in its history. The straight jacket of an International Monetary Fund programme with severe austerity measures and debt restructuring privileging powerful creditors, particularly bondholders, allows little wiggle room. The bureaucracy entrenched in a pro-liberalisation state structure, may obstruct progress. The business elite in Colombo aligned to the West are nakedly extracting the working people and will be looking for every opportunity to undercut the new government.

Most of all, the global powers, whether it be India, China or the United States, from their vulture-like grabbing of Sri Lanka's strategic assets, are likely to torpedo this centre-left regime at the first opportunity to shift the country towards their own geopolitical interests. The island-nation and its people have gone through much turmoil during the past decades, and they should be given the space to find their own democratic way out of the crisis.

For now, these great powers need not support the rebuilding of the country. If they can end their cynical tutelage and hegemonic manoeuvring, and instead focus on democratising their own countries, that itself would allow Sri Lanka to move forward.

An Overturning of Sri Lanka's Old Political Order
श्रीलंका के पुराने राजनीतिक व्यवस्था का बदलाव

- The National People's Power (NPP), led by President **Anura Kumara Dissanayake**, has swept the Sri Lankan parliamentary polls with an astounding majority.
  राष्ट्रपति **अनुरा कुमारा डिसानायके** के नेतृत्व में नेशनल पीपल्स पावर (NPP) ने श्रीलंका के संसदीय चुनावों में भारी बहुमत से जीत दर्ज की है।
- NPP's success was built on **Mr. Dissanayake's win in September 2024 (the presidential election)**, an astute reading of the ground sentiment, and smart election strategy.

NPP की सफलता **सितंबर 2024 के राष्ट्रपति चुनाव** में डिसानायके की जीत, ज़मीनी भावनाओं को सही तरीके से समझने और एक चतुर चुनावी रणनीति पर आधारित थी।

- Sri Lanka is Asia's **oldest electoral democracy** with universal suffrage dating back to **1931**.
  श्रीलंका एशिया का **सबसे पुराना चुनावी लोकतंत्र** है, जहां **1931** से सार्वभौमिक मताधिकार है।

- The elections have transformed the **225-member Parliament**, purging the old political guard.
  चुनावों ने **225 सदस्यीय संसद** को बदल दिया है, पुरानी राजनीतिक व्यवस्था को हटाते हुए।

- NPP won **159 seats** (61.6% votes), while the main Opposition Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) was reduced to **40 seats** (17.7% votes).
  NPP ने **159 सीटें** (61.6% वोट) जीतीं, जबकि मुख्य विपक्षी पार्टी समागी जना बालावेगया (SJB) **40 सीटों** (17.7% वोट) तक सिमट गई।

- The parties of former Presidents Ranil Wickremesinghe and the Rajapaksas secured only **five (4.5% votes)** and **three seats (3.1%)**, respectively.
  पूर्व राष्ट्रपति रानिल विक्रमसिंघे और राजपक्षों की पार्टियों को क्रमशः केवल **5 सीटें (4.5% वोट)** और **3 सीटें (3.1%)** मिलीं।

- The Ilankai Tamil Arasu Katchi (ITAK) was reduced to **eight seats (2.3% votes)**, and similar declines were seen in other regional and national parties.
  इलंकाई तमिल अरसु काच्ची (ITAK) को केवल **8 सीटें (2.3% वोट)** मिलीं, और अन्य क्षेत्रीय व राष्ट्रीय पार्टियों में भी गिरावट देखी गई।

- Notably, **three women from the hill country Tamil community** were elected to Parliament.
  गौरतलब है कि **पहाड़ी क्षेत्रों की तमिल समुदाय की तीन महिलाएं** संसद में चुनी गईं।

- The new Parliament is drastically different from the earlier house of **pompous old men**.
  नई संसद पहले की **घमंडी बुजुर्गों की सभा** से बिल्कुल अलग दिखती है।

Impact of Economic Crisis
आर्थिक संकट का प्रभाव

- Sri Lanka's **worst economic crisis since Independence** has led to drastic political changes, dismantling the old order.
  श्रीलंका के **स्वतंत्रता के बाद के सबसे बड़े आर्थिक संकट** ने पुराने राजनीतिक ढांचे को पूरी तरह बदल दिया।

- For decades, political parties served elite class interests, global powers, and the Tamil diaspora's nationalist agenda.
  दशकों तक राजनीतिक दल केवल अभिजात वर्ग, वैश्विक शक्तियों और तमिल प्रवासी के राष्ट्रवादी एजेंडे की सेवा करते रहे।

- The historic electoral shift radically alters the **political terrain** and demands change.
  ऐतिहासिक चुनावी बदलाव ने **राजनीतिक परिदृश्य** को पूरी तरह बदल दिया है और बदलाव की मांग की है।

- The NPP must deliver on the people's expectations or risk displacement by **right-wing forces**.

  NPP को लोगों की अपेक्षाओं को पूरा करना होगा, नहीं तो **दक्षिणपंथी ताकतें** इसे हटाने का खतरा पैदा कर सकती हैं।

Historic Shift
ऐतिहासिक बदलाव

- The election is comparable to the **1977 right-wing UNP government** victory under J.R. Jayewardene, who transformed the country with a new Constitution and liberalised economy.

  यह चुनाव **1977 के दक्षिणपंथी UNP सरकार** की जीत से तुलनीय है, जब जे.आर. जयवर्धने ने नए संविधान और उदार अर्थव्यवस्था के साथ देश को बदला।

- Similarly, Mr. Dissanayake and the JVP have waited for **three decades** since their second insurrection to gain state power.

  इसी तरह, श्री डिसानायके और JVP ने **तीन दशकों** तक सत्ता पाने का इंतजार किया।

- Economic depression and **mass struggles over the last three years** facilitated their rise.

  आर्थिक मंदी और **पिछले तीन वर्षों के जनसंघर्षों** ने उनके उदय में मदद की।

- Questions remain on whether they will **end majoritarian policies**, abolish the **authoritarian executive presidency**, and rebuild an **inclusive economy**.

  यह सवाल बना हुआ है कि क्या वे **बहुसंख्यक नीतियों** को समाप्त करेंगे, **सत्तावादी कार्यकारी राष्ट्रपति पद** को खत्म करेंगे, और एक **समावेशी अर्थव्यवस्था** का निर्माण करेंगे।

Tamil Nationalist Splintering
तमिल राष्ट्रवादी विभाजन

- The **political wave** towards the **NPP** had started even before the **presidential elections**, and a parliamentary majority was widely expected.

  राष्ट्रपति चुनावों से पहले ही **NPP की राजनीतिक लहर** शुरू हो गई थी, और एक संसदीय बहुमत की व्यापक उम्मीद थी।

- The more surprising result was the **unimaginable shift** in the **northern Tamil electorate**.

  सबसे चौंकाने वाला परिणाम **उत्तरी तमिल मतदाताओं** में **अकल्पनीय बदलाव** था।

- The **NPP** has become the first **national party** to win **both electoral districts** in the **Northern Province**, historically dominated by **Tamil nationalist politics**.

  NPP पहली **राष्ट्रीय पार्टी** बन गई है जिसने **उत्तरी प्रांत के दोनों चुनावी जिलों** में जीत हासिल की है, जो ऐतिहासिक रूप से **तमिल राष्ट्रवादी राजनीति** के गढ़ रहे हैं।

- This major upset comes amid the **splintering of Tamil nationalist parties**.

  यह बड़ा बदलाव **तमिल राष्ट्रवादी पार्टियों के विभाजन** के बीच हुआ है।

- A recent factor was the projection of a **"Tamil Common Candidate"** in the last **presidential election** to avoid engaging with national politics and gain international

support.

हाल के दिनों में, **पिछले राष्ट्रपति चुनाव** में **"तमिल कॉमन कैंडिडेट"** की प्रस्तुति इस उद्देश्य से की गई थी कि वे राष्ट्रीय राजनीति से बचें और अंतरराष्ट्रीय समर्थन प्राप्त करें।

- The initiative failed spectacularly, as only a **fraction** voted for them, and **unity crumbled** soon after with the announcement of parliamentary elections.
  यह पहल बुरी तरह विफल रही क्योंकि केवल **थोड़े से लोगों** ने उनका समर्थन किया, और **एकता** जल्द ही संसदीय चुनावों की घोषणा के बाद टूट गई।

- The **self-serving politics** of those hiding behind **Tamil nationalism** was exposed by the **record number of parties** contesting for just a dozen seats in the north.
  तमिल राष्ट्रवाद के पीछे छिपी **स्वार्थी राजनीति** को **उत्तरी क्षेत्र की दर्जनभर सीटों** के लिए रिकॉर्ड संख्या में पार्टियों के खड़े होने से उजागर किया गया।

- The **fall of Tamil nationalist politics** was long overdue.
  तमिल राष्ट्रवादी राजनीति का पतन बहुत पहले हो जाना चाहिए था।

- The **Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)** had decimated the Tamil political leadership, including by assassinating many Tamil parliamentarians.
  लिबरेशन टाइगर्स ऑफ तमिल ईलम (LTTE) ने तमिल राजनीतिक नेतृत्व को समाप्त कर दिया था, जिसमें कई तमिल सांसदों की हत्या शामिल थी।

- Tamil nationalist parties could not mobilise people on the ground and relied on forums like the **UN Human Rights Council** and **lobbying in capitals**, particularly **New Delhi**, for international pressure.
  तमिल राष्ट्रवादी पार्टियां जमीन पर लोगों को संगठित नहीं कर सकीं और **UN मानवाधिकार परिषद** और विशेष रूप से **नई दिल्ली** में **लॉबिंग** जैसे अंतरराष्ट्रीय दबाव मंचों पर निर्भर रहीं।

- These parties failed to address the issues like **joblessness, poverty**, and **social disintegration** that have plagued **war-torn regions** for 15 years.
  इन पार्टियों ने **15 वर्षों से युद्धग्रस्त क्षेत्रों** में **बेरोज़गारी, गरीबी** और **सामाजिक विघटन** जैसे मुद्दों को हल करने में विफलता दिखाई।

- The **NPP's victory** reflects that people in the **north** share many challenges with the rest of the country.
  NPP की जीत दिखाती है कि **उत्तर के लोग** देश के बाकी हिस्सों के साथ कई चुनौतियों को साझा करते हैं।

- Tamil political elites claim that **diaspora remittances** shielded war-torn people from the **economic crisis**, but this benefits only a **small middle class**.
  तमिल राजनीतिक अभिजात वर्ग का दावा है कि **प्रवासी समुदाय से मिलने वाले धन** ने युद्धग्रस्त लोगों को **आर्थिक संकट** से बचाया है, लेकिन इसका लाभ केवल **छोटे मध्यम वर्ग** को मिलता है।

- Most rural communities face **joblessness, hunger**, and **school dropouts**.
  अधिकांश ग्रामीण समुदाय **बेरोज़गारी, भूख**, और **स्कूल छोड़ने** की समस्या से जूझ रहे हैं।

- The **NPP** must demonstrate that **Colombo** will address the **grievances of ethnic minorities**.
  NPP को यह दिखाना होगा कि **कोलंबो** जातीय अल्पसंख्यकों की **शिकायतों** को संबोधित करेगा।

Space for Change
परिवर्तन के लिए स्थान

- The **NPP** has received an **exceptional mandate** to deal with an **unprecedented crisis**.
  NPP को एक **अभूतपूर्व संकट** से निपटने के लिए **असाधारण जनादेश** मिला है।

- The party has promised to provide **relief**, eliminate **corruption**, abolish the **executive presidency**, and repeal the **Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA)**.
  पार्टी ने **राहत देने**, **भ्रष्टाचार खत्म करने**, **कार्यकारी राष्ट्रपति पद समाप्त करने**, और **आतंकवाद निवारण अधिनियम (PTA)** को रद्द करने का वादा किया है।

- The **NPP** has the legislative strength to bring a **new Constitution**, as a **two-thirds majority** is required for major amendments.
  NPP के पास **नए संविधान** लाने के लिए विधायी शक्ति है, क्योंकि बड़े संशोधनों के लिए **दो-तिहाई बहुमत** की आवश्यकता होती है।

- The government faces challenges like addressing the **economic crisis**, achieving **political reconciliation**, and dealing with global **economic shocks**.
  सरकार को **आर्थिक संकट**, **राजनीतिक मेल-मिलाप**, और वैश्विक **आर्थिक झटकों** जैसे मुद्दों से निपटना होगा।

- **Sri Lanka** has defaulted on its **external debt** for the first time in history.
  श्रीलंका ने अपने इतिहास में पहली बार **बाहरी ऋण** चुकाने में विफलता दिखाई है।

- The **IMF programme**, with its **severe austerity measures**, offers little flexibility.
  IMF कार्यक्रम, अपने **कठोर बचत उपायों** के साथ, बहुत कम लचीलापन प्रदान करता है।

- The **business elite in Colombo**, aligned with the **West**, continues to exploit the working people.
  कोलंबो के व्यापारिक अभिजात वर्ग, जो **पश्चिम के साथ जुड़े हैं**, श्रमिक वर्ग का शोषण करते रहते हैं।

- Global powers like **India, China**, and the **United States** are likely to exploit **Sri Lanka's strategic assets**.
  भारत, चीन, और **संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका** जैसे वैश्विक शक्तियां **श्रीलंका की रणनीतिक संपत्तियों** का फायदा उठाने की कोशिश कर सकती हैं।

- For now, these powers should cease **hegemonic manoeuvring** and let **Sri Lanka** find its democratic path.
  अभी के लिए, इन शक्तियों को **प्रभुत्व वाली चालों** को रोककर **श्रीलंका** को उसका लोकतांत्रिक रास्ता खोजने देना चाहिए।

The long fight for accessibility, dignity in Indian prisons

The story of Professor G.N. Saibaba is not just one of a travesty of justice but is also a glaring indictment of the cruelty faced by prisoners with disabilities in India. His bittersweet victory came in March 2024, when he was finally exonerated after a decade behind bars. But just months later, in October 2024, he passed away.

While recounting at a press conference the unimaginable horrors he had endured during his incarceration, he described the challenges he had with even basic tasks – using the toilet, fetching water or having a bath – due to the complete lack of wheelchair accessibility at the Nagpur Central jail premises. His *"anda* cell" was so cramped that he had to rely on fellow inmates to lift his wheelchair, which often led to injuries.

Prisons in India have been plagued by violence, abuse, and neglect. In 1979-80, the infamous "Bhagalpur blindings" incidents, where acid was poured into prisoners' eyes, shocked the nation. In the early 1980s, the Mulla Committee report on prison reforms was released, recommending extensive measures to improve prison conditions and administration. Yet, in typical Indian policy fashion, no substantial improvements followed.

Somya Jain

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Stuffed prisons, appalling conditions
In 1996, a Bengaluru's Central Jail inmate wrote to the Chief Justice of India about deplorable prison conditions. Consequently, *Rama Murthy vs State of Karnataka* was a landmark case where the Supreme Court of India directed the government to address key issues such as overcrowding, trial delays, torture, and neglect in prisons, in line with the Mulla Committee recommendations. Again, nearly three decades later, no substantial progress has been made, evident in the current state of prisons.

Indian prisons house around 5.73 lakh people, far exceeding their capacity of 4.36 lakh, with many operating at over 100% or even 200%

While the general conditions of Indian prisons have always been abhorrent for all prisoners, those with disabilities face even greater challenges

capacity (National Crime Records Bureau, 2022; Maharashtra Prison Department, 2024). While the conditions of Indian prisons have always been appalling, they are exacerbated for prisoners with disabilities. Prisoners with disabilities are easy targets for abuse and violence from other prisoners and prison staff. Their special needs are simply ignored when they need special assistance with essential daily activities. While the government lacks data on the number or the condition of prisoners with disabilities, there are numerous news reports highlighting the challenges they encounter. One of the most prominent examples includes Father Stan Swamy who had Parkinson's disease and was denied essential assistive items such as a straw and a sipper during his imprisonment, making it difficult for him to eat and drink.

Further, prisoners with disabilities also encounter rampant inaccessibility. A 2018 audit of the Tihar, Rohini, and Mandoli jails in Delhi conducted by the Nipman Foundation highlighted accessibility gaps such as the unavailability of functional wheelchairs, inaccessible prison cells, toilets, mulaqat rooms, and recreational spaces, and water coolers located on floors which lacked accessible entries.

Rights that are only on paper
All prisoners in India have the right to equality, freedom and life and personal liberty, as enshrined in the Constitution, a principle upheld by the Supreme Court in multiple judgments. Notably, in *Upendra Baxi vs State of U.P.* (1983), the Court affirmed that prisoners have the right to live in humane conditions with dignity.

As regards prisoners with disabilities, India has obligations under various international covenants for the protection of their rights. The Nelson Mandela Rules (2015) require prison administrations to make reasonable accommodations and adjustments for prisoners with disabilities. The United Nations Convention

on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities prohibits torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment for persons with disabilities. These obligations are reflected in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 which requires the state to protect persons with disabilities from abuse, violence, exploitation, and the denial of food and fluids. Thus, the denial of a straw and sipper to Father Stan Swamy constituted a clear violation of the law.

The Ministry of Home Affairs' Model Prison Manual (2016) also specifies dignified living conditions in prisons. In July 2024, the Ministry further issued the 'Accessibility Guidelines for MHA Specific Built Infrastructures & Associated Services for Police Stations, Prisons & Disaster Mitigation Centres' outlining detailed requirements to make prison facilities accessible.

While the rights of prisoners with disabilities, both against abuse and for accessibility, appear promising on paper, they are seldom enforced like many other pieces of social welfare legislation in India. Had the reality been different, Prof. Saibaba would not have suffered the way he did as a person with disability.

A lack of political will
Many in society believe that cruelty to prisoners is deserved, fuelling a troubling indifference that undermines the political will for prison reforms. However, the message to the state is clear: compliance with the law, in spirit and in substance, is non-negotiable. Regardless of political will, all prisoners, including those with disabilities, are the responsibility of the government. Given that 'prisons' is a State subject, State governments bear the explicit responsibility to ensure that the rights of prisoners with disabilities are upheld. It is critical that the suffering endured by Prof. Saibaba is a wake-up call for state authorities to reevaluate and reorient their attitudes toward prisoners with disabilities.

The Long Fight for Accessibility, Dignity in Indian Prisons

भारतीय जेलों में पहुंच और गरिमा के लिए लंबा संघर्ष

(GS Paper II: Vulnerable Section fo Society and Their Rights)

- **The story of Professor G.N. Saibaba highlights the cruelty faced by prisoners with disabilities in India.**
  प्रोफेसर जी.एन. साईबाबा की कहानी भारत में दिव्यांग कैदियों द्वारा झेली गई **क्रूरता** को उजागर करती है।

- In **March 2024**, after a decade of imprisonment, he was exonerated but passed away in **October 2024**.
  मार्च 2024 में दस साल की कैद के बाद उन्हें **निर्दोष** करार दिया गया, लेकिन वह **अक्टूबर 2024** में निधन हो गया।

- During his imprisonment, Saibaba faced unimaginable challenges, including lack of **wheelchair accessibility** in Nagpur Central Jail.
  कैद के दौरान साईबाबा को नागपुर सेंट्रल जेल में **व्हीलचेयर पहुंच की कमी** सहित अकल्पनीय कठिनाइयों का सामना करना पड़ा।

- His cramped "anda cell" forced him to rely on fellow inmates for moving his wheelchair, leading to frequent injuries.

उनकी तंग **"अंडा सेल"** ने उन्हें व्हीलचेयर उठाने के लिए अन्य कैदियों पर निर्भर बना दिया, जिससे बार-बार चोट लगती थी।

Violence and Neglect in Prisons

जेलों में हिंसा और उपेक्षा

- **Prison violence** in India has a long history, with incidents like the **"Bhagalpur blindings" (1979-80)** where acid was poured into prisoners' eyes.
  भारत में जेल हिंसा का एक लंबा इतिहास है, जैसे **"भागलपुर ब्लाइंडिंग्स" (1979-80)** जिसमें कैदियों की आंखों में एसिड डाला गया था।
- The **Mulla Committee (1980s)** recommended **reforms for prison conditions**, but substantial improvements remain unfulfilled.
  मुल्ला समिति (1980 के दशक) ने जेलों की स्थिति सुधारने के लिए सिफारिशें कीं, लेकिन बड़े सुधार अभी भी अधूरे हैं।
- In **1996**, the Supreme Court addressed key issues in **Rama Murthy vs State of Karnataka**, including **overcrowding, trial delays, and torture**.
  1996 में, सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने **राम मूर्ति बनाम कर्नाटक राज्य** में **भीड़भाड़, सुनवाई में देरी और यातना** जैसे मुद्दों को संबोधित किया।

Overcrowding and Poor Conditions

भीड़भाड़ और खराब स्थिति

- Indian prisons house **5.73 lakh prisoners**, exceeding their capacity of **4.36 lakh**, with many operating at **over 100% capacity**.
  भारतीय जेलों में **5.73 लाख कैदी** हैं, जबकि उनकी क्षमता **4.36 लाख** है, और कई जेलें **100% क्षमता से अधिक** पर चल रही हैं।
- **National Crime Records Bureau (2022)** and **Maharashtra Prison Department (2024)** data highlight severe overcrowding.
  राष्ट्रीय अपराध रिकॉर्ड ब्यूरो (2022) और **महाराष्ट्र जेल विभाग (2024)** के आंकड़े गंभीर भीड़भाड़ दिखाते हैं।
- Prisoners with disabilities face neglect, violence, and lack of assistance for daily activities.
  दिव्यांग कैदियों को उपेक्षा, हिंसा और दैनिक गतिविधियों में सहायता की कमी का सामना करना पड़ता है।
- **Father Stan Swamy**, a Parkinson's patient, was denied essential items like a **sipper** during imprisonment, causing hardship.
  फादर स्टैन स्वामी, जो पार्किंसंस से पीड़ित थे, को जेल में **सिपर** जैसी आवश्यक वस्तुएं नहीं दी गईं, जिससे उन्हें कठिनाइयां हुईं।

Accessibility Issues in Prisons

जेलों में पहुंच संबंधी समस्याएं

- A **2018 Nipman Foundation audit** of Delhi jails (Tihar, Rohini, Mandoli) revealed significant accessibility gaps.
  2018 में निपमैन फाउंडेशन के ऑडिट ने दिल्ली की जेलों (तिहाड़, रोहिणी, मंडोली) में महत्वपूर्ण पहुंच की खामियां उजागर कीं।
- Issues included lack of functional **wheelchairs**, inaccessible **prison cells, toilets, mulaqat rooms**, and recreational spaces.
  समस्याओं में **व्हीलचेयर की कमी**, **जेल सेल, शौचालय, मुलाकात कक्ष** और मनोरंजन स्थलों तक पहुंच की कमी शामिल थी।
- **Water coolers** were often located on floors without accessible entries.
  पानी के कूलर अक्सर उन मंजिलों पर थे जहां पहुंचने का मार्ग नहीं था

Rights that are only on paper
केवल कागज पर मौजूद अधिकार

- All prisoners in India have the right to **equality, freedom, life, and personal liberty**, as enshrined in the Constitution, a principle upheld by the Supreme Court in multiple judgments.
  भारत में सभी कैदियों को संविधान द्वारा **समानता, स्वतंत्रता, जीवन और व्यक्तिगत स्वतंत्रता** का अधिकार दिया गया है, जिसे **सुप्रीम कोर्ट** ने कई फैसलों में बरकरार रखा है।
- In **Upendra Baxi vs State of U.P. (1983)**, the Supreme Court affirmed that prisoners have the right to live in **humane conditions with dignity**.
  उपेंद्र बक्सी बनाम उत्तर प्रदेश राज्य (1983) मामले में **सुप्रीम कोर्ट** ने पुष्टि की कि कैदियों को **सम्मानजनक और मानवीय परिस्थितियों** में रहने का अधिकार है।
- For prisoners with disabilities, India has obligations under international covenants such as the **Nelson Mandela Rules (2015)**, which require reasonable accommodations and adjustments for such prisoners.
  विकलांग कैदियों के लिए, भारत के पास **नेल्सन मंडेला नियम (2015)** जैसे अंतरराष्ट्रीय संधियों के तहत उन्हें **उचित सुविधाएं और समायोजन** प्रदान करने की जिम्मेदारी है।
- The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** prohibits **torture, cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment** for persons with disabilities.
  संयुक्त राष्ट्र विकलांग व्यक्तियों के अधिकारों पर सम्मेलन विकलांग व्यक्तियों के प्रति **यातना, क्रूरता, अमानवीय या अपमानजनक व्यवहार या दंड** पर रोक लगाता है।
- The **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016** mandates the state to protect persons with disabilities from **abuse, violence, exploitation, and denial of food and fluids**.
  विकलांग व्यक्तियों के अधिकार अधिनियम, 2016 राज्य को विकलांग व्यक्तियों को **दुर्व्यवहार, हिंसा, शोषण और भोजन तथा पानी से वंचित होने** से बचाने का दायित्व देता है।

- The denial of a **straw and sipper** to **Father Stan Swamy** constituted a **clear violation** of this law.

  फादर स्टेन स्वामी को **स्ट्रॉ और सिपर** न देना इस कानून का **स्पष्ट उल्लंघन** था।

- The **Ministry of Home Affairs' Model Prison Manual (2016)** specifies **dignified living conditions** for prisoners.

  गृह मंत्रालय के मॉडल जेल मैनुअल (2016) में कैदियों के लिए **सम्मानजनक जीवन स्थितियों** का उल्लेख है।

- In **July 2024**, the Ministry issued **'Accessibility Guidelines for MHA Specific Built Infrastructures'**, detailing requirements to make prison facilities **accessible**.

  जुलाई 2024 में, मंत्रालय ने **'गृह मंत्रालय विशिष्ट निर्माण ढांचे के लिए पहुंच निर्देशिका'** जारी की, जिसमें जेल सुविधाओं को **सुलभ** बनाने की आवश्यकताओं का उल्लेख है।

- Despite these rights, enforcement remains weak, reflecting the gap between **policy and implementation** in India.

  इन अधिकारों के बावजूद, इनका अनुपालन **कमजोर** है, जो भारत में **नीति और कार्यान्वयन** के बीच की खाई को दर्शाता है।

A lack of political will
राजनीतिक इच्छाशक्ति की कमी

- Societal beliefs that **cruelty to prisoners is deserved** fuel **indifference**, undermining political will for prison reforms.

  समाज में यह धारणा कि कैदियों के साथ **क्रूरता जायज** है, **उदासीनता** को बढ़ावा देती है और जेल सुधारों के लिए **राजनीतिक इच्छाशक्ति** को कमजोर करती है।

- The state must comply with the law, both in **spirit and substance**, as prisoners, including those with disabilities, are the **government's responsibility**.

  राज्य को कानून का पालन **भावना और सार** दोनों में करना चाहिए, क्योंकि कैदी, जिनमें विकलांग भी शामिल हैं, सरकार की **जिम्मेदारी** हैं।

- **'Prisons' is a State subject** under the Indian Constitution, making **State governments responsible** for upholding the rights of prisoners.

  भारतीय संविधान के तहत **'जेल'** एक राज्य सूची का विषय है, जिससे **राज्य सरकारें कैदियों के अधिकारों को बनाए रखने** के लिए जिम्मेदार हैं।

- The suffering endured by **Prof. Saibaba** should serve as a **wake-up call** for authorities to reorient their attitudes towards prisoners with disabilities.

  प्रो. साईबाबा द्वारा झेली गई पीड़ा अधिकारियों के लिए **विकलांग कैदियों के प्रति अपने दृष्टिकोण को बदलने** की चेतावनी के रूप में काम करनी चाहिए।

Turning tide
मौड़ बदलना

Turning tide

October's export rebound is heartening but fresh headwinds loom large

From a reasonably healthy show at the onset of this financial year, India's goods exports had stumbled sharply in the second quarter, shrinking an average 5.8% over the first two months and rising a mere 0.5% in September. With half the year gone by, exports were up just 1%. In this backdrop, the 17.25% surge in merchandise shipments to overseas markets through October is a positive surprise, with the year's second-highest tally of $39.2 billion. Trade mandarins have attributed the uptick to stronger demand for the Christmas season in developed markets. If this festive demand holds, at least the next couple of months should see healthy numbers. With services exports rising 14.6% by September, official hopes of cumulative exports through 2024-25 crossing a record $800 billion may yet be attained. Non-petroleum exports led the way in October with a 25.6% rise, and such shipments have now hit the highest ever tally for the first seven months of a year, at $211.3 billion.

The petroleum story, however, is starkly different and a tad puzzling. India's oil imports rose 13.2% in October to $18.3 billion (almost 46.4% over September), while exports tanked for the fifth straight month, by over 22% to $4.6 billion, the lowest in almost three years. The oil trade deficit has hit a record $13.7 billion. While one can attribute the export slide to significantly lower global oil prices vis-à-vis last year, the same should have held true at least partly for the import bill as well, even if higher domestic demand is factored in. The oil influx spike has also lifted the overall import bill to a fresh high of $66.3 billion, breaking this August's tally of $64.3 billion, which was fuelled by gold imports. Over the past three months, the trade deficit has widened to its second- and third-highest level. While gold imports are likely to stay high till the wedding season ends, oil trends and the widening import bill warrant closer monitoring even if the foreign exchange reserves situation is comfortable, and adequate to cover about a year's imports. The World Trade Organization has pegged global trade growth at 3% in 2025, relative to a 2.7% estimate for this year. Apart from the slowdown in China and festering conflicts around the world, the biggest fly in the ointment for all such hopes is likely to be the incoming United States administration, with Donald Trump expected to prioritise the elevation of import tariffs and sops for domestic production. India must avoid any policy gestures such as the updated laptop import management system – it is in the works, with possible curbs – that could draw the U.S. government's focus away from Mr. Trump's primary trade target – China.

- October's export rebound is a **positive surprise**, with a **17.25% surge** in merchandise shipments to overseas markets, reaching **$39.2 billion**, the second-highest tally of the year.

अक्टूबर में निर्यात का पुनरुत्थान एक **सकारात्मक आश्चर्य** है, जिसमें विदेशों में माल भेजने में **17.25% वृद्धि** हुई, जो **$39.2 बिलियन** तक पहुंच गई, जो वर्ष का दूसरा सबसे बड़ा आंकड़ा है।

- **Trade mandarins** attribute the uptick to **stronger demand for the Christmas season** in developed markets.

व्यापार **विशेषज्ञ** इस वृद्धि को विकसित बाजारों में **क्रिसमस सीजन के लिए मजबूत मांग** का श्रेय देते हैं।

- If this festive demand holds, at least the next couple of months should see **healthy numbers**.

यदि यह त्योहारों की मांग बनी रहती है, तो अगले कुछ महीनों में **स्वस्थ आंकड़े** देखने को मिल सकते हैं।

- With **services exports** rising **14.6% by September**, official hopes of cumulative exports through **2024-25 crossing a record $800 billion** may yet be attained.

सेवा निर्यात में सितंबर तक **14.6% की वृद्धि** के साथ, आधिकारिक उम्मीदें हैं कि **2024-25** तक कुल निर्यात **$800 बिलियन** के रिकॉर्ड को पार कर सकता है।

- **Non-petroleum exports** led the way in October with a **25.6% rise**, reaching **$211.3 billion**, the highest ever tally for the first seven months of a year.

अक्टूबर में **गैर-तेल निर्यात** ने **25.6% की वृद्धि** के साथ **$211.3 बिलियन** तक पहुँचकर एक वर्ष के पहले सात महीनों का अब तक का सबसे बड़ा आंकड़ा छुआ।

- India's oil imports rose **13.2% in October**, to **$18.3 billion**, while exports **dipped by 22%**, reaching the lowest level in almost **three years**.

अक्टूबर में भारत के तेल आयात में **13.2% की वृद्धि** हुई, जो **$18.3 बिलियन** तक पहुंच गए, जबकि निर्यात में **22% की गिरावट** आई, जो लगभग **तीन वर्षों में सबसे निचला स्तर** है।

- The **oil trade deficit** has reached a record **$13.7 billion**.

तेल व्यापार घाटा एक रिकॉर्ड **$13.7 बिलियन** तक पहुँच गया है।

- The **overall import bill** has risen to a fresh high of **$66.3 billion**, breaking the previous record of **$64.3 billion** in August.

कुल आयात बिल $66.3 बिलियन तक बढ़कर एक नया उच्चतम स्तर छू गया है, जो अगस्त में **$64.3 बिलियन** के पिछले रिकॉर्ड को तोड़ता है।

- Over the past three months, the trade deficit has widened to its **second- and third-highest levels**.

  पिछले तीन महीनों में व्यापार घाटा अपने **दूसरे और तीसरे सबसे उच्चतम स्तर** पर पहुँच गया है।

- While **gold imports** are likely to stay high till the wedding season ends, the **oil trends** and the widening import bill warrant closer monitoring.

  सोने का आयात शादी के मौसम के अंत तक उच्च स्तर पर रहने की संभावना है, लेकिन **तेल के रुझान** और बढ़ते आयात बिल पर करीबी निगरानी की आवश्यकता है।

- The **World Trade Organization (WTO)** has pegged global trade growth at **3% in 2025**, relative to a **2.7% estimate for this year**.

  विश्व व्यापार संगठन (WTO) ने 2025 में वैश्विक व्यापार वृद्धि **3%** और इस वर्ष के लिए **2.7% अनुमान** किया है।

- Apart from the **slowdown in China** and **festering conflicts** around the world, the biggest fly in the ointment for all such hopes is likely to be the **incoming United States administration**.

  चीन में मंदी और दुनिया भर में **लंबे समय से चल रहे संघर्षों** के अलावा, इन सभी उम्मीदों के लिए सबसे बड़ा खतरा **अमेरिका प्रशासन** हो सकता है।

- **Donald Trump** is expected to prioritize the elevation of **import tariffs** and sops for domestic production.

  डोनाल्ड ट्रम्प से उम्मीद की जाती है कि वे **आयात शुल्कों** में वृद्धि और घरेलू उत्पादन के लिए **सहायताएँ** प्राथमिकता देंगे।

- India must avoid any policy gestures, like the **updated laptop import management system**, which could draw the U.S. government's focus away from its primary trade target, **China**.

  भारत को किसी भी नीति की बयानों से बचना चाहिए, जैसे **अपडेटेड लैपटॉप आयात प्रबंधन प्रणाली**, जो **अमेरिकी सरकार** का ध्यान अपने मुख्य व्यापार लक्ष्य **चीन** से हटा सकता है।

Arrest of Actor Kasthuri for Hate Speech
अभिनेता कस्तूरी की घृणा भाषण के लिए गिरफ्तारी

[GS Paper II: Fundamental Rights, Article 19 (1) (a)]

- **Kasthuri's arrest** by **Greater Chennai Police** in **Hyderabad on November 17** raised concerns about **hate speech** and **freedom of expression**.

  17 नवंबर को हैदराबाद में अभिनेता कस्तूरी की **ग्रेटर चेन्नई पुलिस** द्वारा गिरफ्तारी ने **घृणा भाषण** और **अभिव्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता** पर सवाल उठाए।

- The **Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court** rejected her plea for **anticipatory bail**, making the arrest seem inevitable.

Grind along

Arrest should not be the reflexive response of the state in all cases

The arrest of actor Kasthuri by the Greater Chennai Police in Hyderabad on November 17 – she was granted bail by a metropolitan magistrate in Chennai on Wednesday – raises questions over hate speech and the right to freedom of expression. Just a few days earlier, her arrest seemed inevitable after the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court rejected her plea for anticipatory bail, which she had sought fearing police action for her distasteful and derogatory remarks on the Telugu community at an event in Chennai earlier this month. The High Court did not accept her apology, but concluded that her speech "clearly hovers around hate speech" with "…no genuine attempt [on her part] to apologise for using such a bad and intemperate language". One cannot but agree with the High Court's position of the need for speakers using public platforms to observe caution in this age of social media, as "what is said becomes a permanent record". The context that the actor touched upon was about the migration of people, and if anyone is keen on making a point on such a serious matter, they ought to do their homework and consult historical works of eminent historians and archaeologists. Every public speaker has to internalise the importance of exercise of restraint in thought and words. Public personalities have a responsibility to ensure that their words do not instigate any social group. But arrest should not be the reflexive response of the state in every instance of transgressions by citizens.

Three months ago, the Supreme Court of India had held that "bail is the rule and jail is an exception even in money laundering cases". The Madurai Bench could have kept this principle in mind before dismissing the actor's petition. Subsequently, the authorities could have looked at the matter afresh. But in her case, a special team was formed to make the arrest. The need for custodial interrogation did not arise in view of the availability of basic material with the police. Any attempt by her to tamper with witnesses is unlikely. Nor has there been any visible law and order problem following her speech. It was against this backdrop that her arrest appeared untenable. However, it was a matter of relief that the prosecution, on Wednesday, did not object to her getting the bail. The Kasthuri episode should remind public speakers that while the principle of the freedom of expression is vital to any democratic and vibrant society, its existence is bound by reasonable restrictions. The state too should not rush to curtail individual freedoms at the first sign of transgression by citizens. The wheels of justice can grind exceedingly fine without being forced to turn hurriedly by the law enforcement agencies.

मद्रास हाई कोर्ट की मदुरै बेंच ने उनकी **अग्रिम ज़मानत** की याचिका खारिज कर दी, जिससे गिरफ्तारी अपरिहार्य लगने लगी।

- The **High Court** did not accept her **apology**, stating her speech **"clearly hovers around hate speech"**.

हाई कोर्ट ने उनकी **माफी** को स्वीकार नहीं किया और कहा कि उनका भाषण "**घृणा भाषण** के आसपास स्पष्ट रूप से घूमा"।

- The actor's comments were on **migration**, and public figures must ensure their words do not incite any social group.

अभिनेता की टिप्पणियाँ **प्रवासन** पर थीं, और सार्वजनिक हस्तियों की जिम्मेदारी है कि वे अपने शब्दों से किसी भी **सामाजिक समूह** को उत्तेजित न करें।

- The **Madurai Bench** should have considered that **bail is the rule and jail is an exception**.

मदुरै बेंच को उस सिद्धांत पर विचार करना चाहिए था कि **ज़मानत नियम है और जेल अपवाद है।**

- The **Supreme Court of India** also emphasized that **bail is the rule, even in money laundering cases**.

भारत के सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने भी कहा कि **ज़मानत** नियम है, यहां तक कि **मनी लॉन्ड्रिंग** मामलों में भी।

- The **arrest** seemed unnecessary, as the **police had the basic material** to handle the case.

गिरफ्तारी अनावश्यक लग रही थी, क्योंकि **पुलिस के पास मामले को संभालने के लिए बुनियादी सामग्री** थी।

- It was a **relief** that the **prosecution did not object to her bail**.

यह **राहत** की बात थी कि अभियोजन पक्ष ने उनकी **ज़मानत** पर आपत्ति नहीं की।

- The **Kasthuri episode** highlights the need for balancing **freedom of expression** with **reasonable restrictions**.

कस्तूरी प्रकरण अभिव्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता और **उचित प्रतिबंधों** के बीच संतुलन की आवश्यकता को उजागर करता है।

- The state should not quickly **curtail individual freedoms** at the first sign of transgressions.

राज्य को नागरिकों द्वारा उल्लंघन के पहले संकेत पर **व्यक्तिगत स्वतंत्रताओं** को संकुचित नहीं करना चाहिए।

- The **justice system** can function effectively without being rushed by **law enforcement agencies**.

न्याय व्यवस्था कानून प्रवर्तन एजेंसियों द्वारा जल्दी में न किए जाने के बावजूद प्रभावी रूप से काम कर सकती है।

Clearing the air on Delhi's pollution crisis

Mukul Sanwal

served as policy adviser to the Executive Director of UNEP and later to the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC and was closely associated with Inter-Agency Relations in the Chief Executives Board of the UN

Since 1984, when M.C. Mehta filed a public interest litigation petition, there has been a flurry of activity to combat air pollution beginning in October and then a long lull. A lot has been achieved, but the growing economy and population have outpaced these measures. This is not unique to Delhi. Los Angeles established its air pollution control programme in 1947 and currently remains among the worst in the U.S., both for PM 2.5 and ozone. The lesson is that urban toxicity is a 'wicked problem' where the problem itself is debated and requires long-term measures.

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) began the process of taking a new look at an old problem by asking the government to list the causes of air pollution. However, the National Clean Air Programme, launched in 2019 with its "collaborative and participatory approach," focus on monitoring, set targets, emergency measures, and inclusion of international organisations, has made minimal impact.

The Supreme Court held the right to a clean environment and good health is an inherent part of the fundamental right to life and personal liberty. This is the context of judicial review moving from guiding government decisions to implementing them.

The court has asked pertinent questions: despite compliance reports why results on the ground are negligible and what the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), set up in 2021, is doing? It has been dealing with the symptoms developing linear solutions and not responding to interdependent causes driven by rapid urbanisation. The challenge is to move away from coordination between discrete administrative units and enforcement, which is also the standard response of the Delhi government, to transformative action.

The population of the city and

The population of the city and the surrounding area significantly contributes to year-round toxicity because of vehicular emissions and traffic congestion

the surrounding area significantly contributes to year-round toxicity because of vehicular emissions and traffic congestion. Driven by sunlight and low temperatures, a photochemical reaction combines hydrocarbons from the partially unburned exhaust of automobiles with nitrogen oxides, a combustion by-product, to form ozone. This concentration of particulate matter (PM 2.5) causes serious health problems.

Dispersed sources

In Delhi, Los Angeles, and Beijing, 60% of toxicity comes from vehicles. Another 20% comes from soil dust and less than 20% is from other sources. Stubble burning is temporary and official data show its share in Delhi's PM 2.5 was less than 1% on October 17, prompting the Delhi government to set up committees for dust control.

The usual response to point sources of pollution – legislating new technology and enforcing stringent prosecution – does not work for dispersed sources, which have a strong societal component and few viable options. For example, 35 years ago, when new vehicle emission standards were being discussed, Rahul Bajaj argued that his foreign collaborator was not parting with technology and that he needed two years to develop his own. The government successfully explained the situation to Parliament and the court.

Today, the farmers of Haryana and Punjab are in a worse situation. To conserve groundwater, they are required to delay sowing, reducing the time between harvesting and planting the next crop, and technological solutions have not worked.

The Supreme Court is not adjudicating between the fundamental rights of the farmers and those of the residents of Delhi to implement a management plan. We have a case of goal displacement, with Haryana and Punjab being pushed to bear the burden of providing clean air to

Delhi, even as Delhi itself is not being similarly prodded.

Delhi is facing the classic bureaucratic response to a complex political problem. Cosmetic steps, unverified claims, statistical compliance, and shifting responsibility, were earlier noted by the NGT. This raises the question of whether the CAQM can discharge a political function for the needed hard choices.

A review of Beijing's approach to controlling air pollution by the United Nations Environment Programme provides useful lessons. The population sizes of both cities are comparable, and Delhi shares with Beijing, and other cities, the three stages of dealing with urban air pollution as a long-term task. It begins with end-of-pipe air pollution control, gradually moving to integrated measures targeting primary pollutants, with the government playing the main role. Later, the focus shifts to secondary pollutants, or particulate matter leading to toxic smog, primarily PM2.5, which requires a regional mechanism, our current stage. The similarity ends there.

The UN review points to Beijing's techno-political management system, which builds public awareness to deal with toxicity. First, forecasting severe smog levels through warnings issued at least 24 hours in advance with over 1000 PM 2.5 sensors throughout the city to accurately monitor high-emission areas and periods. Second, Beijing has over 30,000 low-floor buses, five times the number operated by Delhi Transport Corporation. Third, both Beijing and Delhi, as transit centres with no peak-hour traffic, require additional measures to manage regional transportation.

The Court should be mandating the Graded Response Action Plan and the preparation of a toxicity management plan for the national capital and surrounding areas with budgetary allocations and political endorsement rather than episodic prosecution of farmers or requiring smog towers.

- Since **1984**, when **M.C. Mehta filed a public interest litigation petition**, there has been a flurry of activity to combat air pollution beginning in **October** and then a long lull.

  1984 से, जब **एम.सी. मेहता ने सार्वजनिक हित याचिका दायर की थी**, अक्टूबर में वायु प्रदूषण से निपटने के लिए कई गतिविधियाँ शुरू हुईं और फिर लंबा ठहराव हुआ।

- A lot has been achieved, but the growing **economy** and **population** have outpaced these measures.

  बहुत कुछ हासिल किया गया है, लेकिन बढ़ती **आर्थिक** और **जनसंख्या** वृद्धि इन उपायों से आगे निकल गई है।

- This is not unique to **Delhi**. **Los Angeles** established its air pollution control programme in **1947** and currently remains among the worst in the **U.S.**, both for **PM 2.5** and **ozone**.

  यह **दिल्ली** के लिए विशिष्ट नहीं है। **लॉस एंजिल्स** ने **1947** में अपने वायु प्रदूषण नियंत्रण कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत की थी और वर्तमान में यह **अमेरिका** में **PM 2.5** और **ओजोन** के लिए सबसे खराब में से एक है।

- The lesson is that urban toxicity is a **'wicked problem'** where the problem itself is debated and requires **long-term measures**.

  पाठ यह है कि शहरी विषाक्तता एक **'जटिल समस्या'** है जहाँ समस्या स्वयं बहस का विषय है और इसके लिए **दीर्घकालिक उपाय** आवश्यक हैं।

- The **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** began the process of taking a new look at an old problem by asking the government to list the causes of air pollution.

  राष्ट्रीय हरित न्यायाधिकरण (NGT) ने वायु प्रदूषण के कारणों की सूची तैयार करने के लिए सरकार से कहकर एक पुराने समस्या पर नया दृष्टिकोण शुरू किया।

- The **National Clean Air Programme**, launched in **2019**, with its "**collaborative and participatory approach**," focus on **monitoring**, set targets, emergency measures, and inclusion of international organisations, has made **minimal impact**.

  राष्ट्रीय स्वच्छ वायु कार्यक्रम, जो **2019** में शुरू किया गया, अपने "**सहयोगात्मक और भागीदारी दृष्टिकोण**" के साथ **मॉनिटरिंग**, लक्ष्य निर्धारित करने, आपातकालीन उपायों और अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संगठनों को शामिल करने पर केंद्रित था, इसका **न्यूनतम प्रभाव** पड़ा है।

- The **Supreme Court** held the **right to a clean environment** and good health is an inherent part of the fundamental right to life and personal liberty.

  सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने कहा कि **स्वच्छ पर्यावरण** और अच्छे स्वास्थ्य का अधिकार जीवन और व्यक्तिगत स्वतंत्रता के मौलिक अधिकार का एक अभिन्न हिस्सा है।

- The court has asked pertinent questions: despite compliance reports why results on the ground are negligible and what the **Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)**, set up in **2021**, is doing?

  अदालत ने महत्वपूर्ण सवाल उठाए हैं: अनुपालन रिपोर्ट के बावजूद ज़मीन पर परिणाम क्यों नगण्य हैं और **वायु गुणवत्ता प्रबंधन आयोग (CAQM)**, जिसे **2021** में स्थापित किया गया, क्या कर रहा है?

- The challenge is to move away from coordination between discrete administrative units and enforcement, which is also the standard response of the Delhi government, to **transformative action**.

चुनौती यह है कि **संवेदनशील कार्यवाही** की ओर बढ़ने के लिए अलग-अलग प्रशासनिक इकाइयों और प्रवर्तन के बीच समन्वय से बाहर निकलें, जो दिल्ली सरकार की सामान्य प्रतिक्रिया भी है।

- The **population** of the city and the surrounding area significantly contributes to year-round toxicity because of **vehicular emissions** and **traffic congestion**.
  शहर और आस-पास के क्षेत्र की **जनसंख्या वाहन उत्सर्जन** और **यातायात जाम** के कारण साल भर की विषाक्तता में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान देती है।

- **Photochemical reaction** combines hydrocarbons from the partially unburned exhaust of automobiles with **nitrogen oxides**, a combustion by-product, to form **ozone**.
  फोटोकेमिकल प्रतिक्रिया आटोमोबाइल के आंशिक रूप से जलने वाले उत्सर्जन से **हाइड्रोकार्बन** को **नाइट्रोजन ऑक्साइड** के साथ मिलाकर **ओजोन** का निर्माण करती है।

- This concentration of particulate matter (**PM 2.5**) causes **serious health problems**.
  कण पदार्थ (**PM 2.5**) की इस सांद्रता से **गंभीर स्वास्थ्य समस्याएँ** होती हैं।

- In **Delhi**, **Los Angeles**, and **Beijing**, 60% of toxicity comes from **vehicles**.
  दिल्ली, **लॉस एंजल्स**, और **बीजिंग** में, विषाक्तता का **60%** हिस्सा **वाहनों** से आता है।

- Another **20%** comes from **soil dust** and less than **20%** is from other sources.
  एक और **20% मिट्टी के धूल** से आता है और **20%** से कम अन्य स्रोतों से आता है।

- **Stubble burning** is temporary and official data show its share in Delhi's **PM 2.5** was **less than 1%** on October 17.
  पराली जलाना अस्थायी है और सरकारी आंकड़े बताते हैं कि दिल्ली के **PM 2.5** में इसकी हिस्सेदारी **17 अक्टूबर** को **1% से कम** थी।

- The usual response to point sources of pollution — legislating new technology and enforcing stringent prosecution — does not work for **dispersed sources**, which have a strong **societal component** and few viable options.
  प्रदूषण के बिंदु स्रोतों का सामान्य प्रतिक्रिया – नई प्रौद्योगिकी को कानूनन लागू करना और कड़ी अभियोजन करना – **विखंडित स्रोतों** के लिए काम नहीं करता, जिनमें एक मजबूत **सामाजिक घटक** और कुछ प्रचलित विकल्प होते हैं।

- The **Supreme Court** is not adjudicating between the **fundamental rights** of the farmers and those of the residents of Delhi to implement a management plan.
  सर्वोच्च न्यायालय किसानों के मौलिक अधिकारों और दिल्ली निवासियों के **मौलिक अधिकारों** के बीच निर्णय नहीं दे रहा है, जो प्रबंधन योजना को लागू करने के लिए हैं।

- The **Graded Response Action Plan** and the preparation of a **toxicity management plan** for the **national capital** and surrounding areas is necessary with **budgetary allocations** and **political endorsement**.
  ग्रेडेड रिस्पांस एक्शन प्लान और **राष्ट्रीय राजधानी** और आसपास के क्षेत्रों के लिए **विषाक्तता प्रबंधन योजना** की तैयारी **बजटीय आवंटन** और **राजनीतिक समर्थन** के साथ आवश्यक है।

- **Beijing's approach** to controlling air pollution provides **useful lessons**.
  बीजिंग का दृष्टिकोण वायु प्रदूषण को नियंत्रित करने के लिए **उपयोगी पाठ** प्रदान करता है।

- The **United Nations Environment Programme** provides a review of Beijing's management system, including the use of **PM 2.5 sensors** and forecasting severe **smog levels**.

संयुक्त राष्ट्र पर्यावरण कार्यक्रम बीजिंग के प्रबंधन प्रणाली की समीक्षा प्रदान करता है, जिसमें **PM 2.5 सेंसर** और गंभीर **धुंआ स्तर** की भविष्यवाणी करना शामिल है।

- **Beijing** has over **30,000 low-floor buses**, five times the number operated by the **Delhi Transport Corporation**.

  बीजिंग में **30,000 से अधिक लो-फ्लोर बसें** हैं, जो **दिल्ली परिवहन निगम** द्वारा चलाए जाने वाली संख्या से पांच गुना हैं।

- The **Court** should be mandating the **Graded Response Action Plan** and the preparation of a **toxicity management plan** for the **national capital** and surrounding areas with **budgetary allocations** and **political endorsement**.

  अदालत को **ग्रेडेड रिस्पांस एक्शन प्लान** और **राष्ट्रीय राजधानी** और आसपास के क्षेत्रों के लिए **विषाक्तता प्रबंधन योजना** की तैयारी को **बजटीय आवंटन** और **राजनीतिक समर्थन** के साथ अनिवार्य करना चाहिए।

T.N. heatwave policy is only a start

Government's policy provides short-term relief but lacks long-term measures

STATE OF PLAY

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In October, the Tamil Nadu government notified extreme heat as a State-specific disaster. As things stand, the decision is good because it allows those at risk of heat-related morbidity or mortality to avail institutional mechanisms and recompense in the event of a deadly heatwave. This expands the State's responsibility to guarantee public welfare to the new and unique threats posed by climate change. But there are also reasons to wait and watch.

First, the gazette notification says the government will provide "medical care including supply of oral rehydration solution packets" and "drinking water in tonic kiosks". These are incentives in the policy, but there are no sanctions should the State fail to act appropriately or in the event that these measures are deemed insufficient.

The next paragraph in the notification is more illuminating: that a heat-related death is diagnosed "based on a history of exposure to high ambient temperature and the reasonable exclusion of other causes of hyperthermia". Further, "diagnosis shall be established from the circumstance surrounding the death, investigative reports concerning environmental temperature, and/or measured ante-mortem body temperature at the time of collapse".

Estimates of a heatwave's deadliness are typically based on the extent to which the ambient temperature deviates from the historical average at a specific location and the number of lives lost during and because of the heatwave. This is a tricky, even devious, combination as illustrated by the accompanying rider: "to the reasonable exclusion of other causes of hyperthermia".

A heatwave injures and/or kills by first pushing more vulnerable people over the edge; the less vulnerable are further down the line. The new policy is presumably designed to help the State catch those whose risk exposure the State has not been able to mitigate in time. However, the goal should be to altogether reduce the number of people requiring such catching. The policy lacks the instruments to guide the State toward this outcome.

This detail serves as a crucial reminder: this is well begun, and well begun is half done. But bearing in mind governments' penchant for taking isolationist views of how climate change affects the people, there is value in keeping what remains pending in sight.

As a second example, the policy skirts the State's responsibility by limiting itself to the consequences of a heatwave or a heatwave declaration and does not mitigate the deadliness of high heat in advance and in contexts beyond climate change. Such inaction could potentially facilitate a disaster, risking people's lives even before the ambient temperature has crossed legally recognised thresholds. For example, if a doctor concludes a person died of a heat-related injury because they could not ventilate themselves, yet the weather department has not declared a heatwave, the person's family will not qualify to receive the *ex-gratia* solatium in the new policy. That is, the policy will not help catch in advance the same people who are likelier than others to be injured or killed during a heatwave.

On a related note, if a person dies during a (declared) heatwave, the ambient heat itself will be less responsible for stressing an individual than the heat interacting with pre-existing vulnerabilities and co-morbidities. At the least, the Tamil Nadu health department should clarify the interaction between high heat and comorbidities and which of the latter might disqualify families from receiving the solatium.

Finally, the Tamil Nadu government has adopted a climate change mission that could address some of the anthropogenic components responsible for aggravating heatwaves. But actions to mitigate climate change and to adapt to a future with it are long-term, whereas keeping a heatwave from being deadlier has many short-term solutions such as better urban planning, improving access to green spaces, better enforcement of working conditions in the informal sector, etc.

For now, the gratuitous relief is effectively a self-imposed penalty on the State's failure to lower its people's vulnerability to heat injury during a declared heatwave, at the expense of the State Disaster Response Fund. Tamil Nadu will miss the forest for the trees if it does not expand the policy in the future to include its implicit long-term responsibilities.

T.N. Heatwave Policy is Only a Start
तमिलनाडु की हीटवेव नीति सिर्फ शुरुआत है

- In October, the Tamil Nadu government notified extreme heat as a State-specific disaster.
  अक्टूबर में, तमिलनाडु सरकार ने अत्यधिक गर्मी को राज्य-विशिष्ट आपदा के रूप में अधिसूचित किया।

- The decision allows those at risk of heat-related morbidity or mortality to avail institutional mechanisms and recompense in the event of a deadly heatwave.
  यह निर्णय उन लोगों को गर्मी से संबंधित बीमारी या मृत्यु के जोखिम से बचने के लिए संस्थागत तंत्र और मुआवजे का लाभ प्रदान करता है।

- The policy lacks sanctions for failure to act or insufficient measures.
  नीति में कार्रवाई में विफलता या अपर्याप्त उपायों के लिए कोई दंड नहीं है।

- Heat-related deaths are diagnosed based on the history of exposure to high ambient temperature and the exclusion of other causes of hyperthermia.
  गर्मी से संबंधित मौतों का निदान उच्च वातावरणीय तापमान के संपर्क के इतिहास और अन्य हाइपरथर्मिया कारणों को बाहर करने के आधार पर किया जाता है।

- The policy aims to help the State catch those whose risk exposure the State has not been able to mitigate in time.
  नीति का उद्देश्य राज्य को उन लोगों का पता लगाने में मदद करना है जिनके जोखिम को राज्य समय पर कम करने में सक्षम नहीं हो सका।

- The goal should be to reduce the number of people requiring such interventions altogether.
  लक्ष्य यह होना चाहिए कि ऐसे हस्तक्षेपों की आवश्यकता वाले लोगों की संख्या को पूरी तरह से कम किया जाए।

- The policy limits itself to the consequences of a heatwave and does not mitigate the deadliness of high heat in advance.

नीति खुद को हीटवेव के परिणामों तक सीमित करती है और उच्च गर्मी की मृत्यु दर को पहले से कम नहीं करती।

- If a person dies due to heat-related injury before a heatwave is declared, they won't qualify for the ex-gratia solatium under the policy.

यदि कोई व्यक्ति हीटवेव घोषित होने से पहले गर्मी से संबंधित चोट के कारण मर जाता है, तो वे नीति के तहत अतिरिक्त सहायता के पात्र नहीं होंगे।

- The interaction between high heat and comorbidities should be clarified by the health department.

स्वास्थ्य विभाग को उच्च गर्मी और सह-रोगों के बीच इंटरएक्शन को स्पष्ट करना चाहिए।

- The Tamil Nadu government has adopted a climate change mission that could address some components responsible for aggravating heatwaves.

तमिलनाडु सरकार ने एक जलवायु परिवर्तन मिशन को अपनाया है जो हीटवेव को बढ़ाने के जिम्मेदार कुछ घटकों को संबोधित कर सकता है।

- Long-term actions to mitigate climate change and adapt to it are required, but short-term solutions like urban planning and better enforcement of working conditions are also needed.

जलवायु परिवर्तन को कम करने और इसके अनुकूलन के लिए दीर्घकालिक क्रियाएं आवश्यक हैं, लेकिन शहरी योजना और कार्य स्थितियों को बेहतर लागू करने जैसे तात्कालिक समाधान भी आवश्यक हैं।

- The current policy is a self-imposed penalty on the State's failure to lower vulnerability during a heatwave.

वर्तमान नीति एक स्व-निर्मित दंड है जो हीटवेव के दौरान राज्य की विफलता को कम करने के लिए है।

- Tamil Nadu must expand the policy in the future to include long-term responsibilities.

तमिलनाडु को भविष्य में नीति का विस्तार करना चाहिए ताकि दीर्घकालिक जिम्मेदारियां शामिल की जा सकें।

DATA POINT

Nitika Francis
Padma Sowndarya V
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The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-led INDIA bloc had won the Scheduled Tribes-reserved seats in Jharkhand in the Lok Sabha election decisively but lost the rest of the nine out of the 14 constituencies in the State. Clearly, to retain the Assembly, it is striving to increase its support beyond just tribal voters. For the Bharatiya Janata Party-led NDA, its vice-versa.

In the Assembly, 28 seats are reserved for Scheduled Tribes, while 44 are open for general competition. Nine seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes. In this analysis, past votes are recalculated based on the alliances formed for the 2024 Assembly election: the JMM-led alliance, which includes the Congress, CPI(ML)(L), and RJD, and the NDA alliance, comprising the BJP, AJSU, JD(U) and LJP (RV).

Tables 1A, 1B, and **1C** show a comparison of the past voting patterns including the 2024 Parliamentary elections and the Assembly elections in the years 2019 and 2014, among various seat types. The table lists the vote share and the seats/Assembly segments won/led. The JMM-led alliance's vote share in tribal seats increased marginally from 42% to 43% between the 2014 and 2019 State polls, and further rose to 49.6% in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, which was fought after the arrest of Chief Minister Hemant Soren in a corruption case – he was released on bail later. The vote share secured in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls is the highest the alliance got in the tribal seats even if the comparison is extended to the 2014 and 2019 Parliamentary elections.

However, among non-reserved seats, the JMM-led alliance's vote share has remained stagnant at around 35%, while that of the NDA

has increased from 37% to 42% between the 2014 and 2019 Assembly polls and even higher to 51.5% in the recent Lok Sabha polls. As noted before, the calculations are based on present alliances.

The gap between the voting preferences of ST and non-ST voters has widened over the last three elections. It is to be seen on the results day whether the gap has widened or narrowed in the 2024 State polls.

Also, notably, the JMM-led coalition has shown weakness in the nine seats reserved for Scheduled Castes, failing to win any in the 2014 Assembly election. Even in the 2019 State polls, when the BJP contested without alliance partners, the JMM-led coalition managed to secure only three of these seats. In the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, they led in none of the segments reserved for SCs.

A region-wise breakdown of past vote shares reveals a more nuanced picture of tribal voting patterns **(Tables 2A, 2B, 2C)**. Among the five regions – Kolhan (14 seats), North Chotanagpur (25), Palamu (9), Santhal Parganas (18), and South Chotanagpur (15) – the first and the last are dominated by seats reserved for STs. In Kolhan 64% of seats are reserved for STs, 73% in South Chotanagpur, and 39% in Santhal Pargana.

In the 2014 Assembly polls, the JMM alliance was weaker in the South Chotanagpur region securing only three seats, which improved to eight seats in the 2019 State polls and to eleven segments in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. In the Kolhan region, the JMM alliance's vote share has remained stagnant at around 43%, while the NDA has increased its vote share from 37% to 39% between the 2014 and 2019 Assembly polls and even further to 46.6% in the Lok Sabha polls.

Clearly, the Kolhan region is key for NDA if it is planning to secure more tribal seats, while JMM would want a repeat of the 2019 polls in the region.

Tribal, non-tribal divide apparent in Jharkhand in recent polls
झारखंड में हालिया चुनावों में आदिवासी और गैर-आदिवासी विभाजन स्पष्ट

- The **Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-led INDIA bloc** won the **Scheduled Tribes reserved seats** in Jharkhand in the **Lok Sabha election decisively** but lost the rest of the nine out of the 14 constituencies in the State.

झारखंड मुक्ति मोर्चा (JMM) के नेतृत्व वाले INDIA गठबंधन ने झारखंड में लोकसभा चुनावों में अनुसूचित जनजाति (ST) के आरक्षित सीटों पर निर्णायक जीत हासिल की, लेकिन राज्य की 14 सीटों में से बाकी 9 सीटें हार गए।**

- Clearly, to retain the Assembly, **JMM** is striving to increase its support beyond just tribal voters. For the **NDA**, its vice-versa.

स्पष्ट रूप से, विधानसभा को बनाए रखने के लिए, JMM सिर्फ आदिवासी मतदाताओं से परे अपनी समर्थन बढ़ाने की कोशिश कर रहा है। NDA के लिए इसका उल्टा है।

A widening divide

The data for the tables were sourced from Lok Dhaba, Chief Electoral Officer of Jharkhand, and the Election Commission of India

A trip to the polls: Voters in Dhanbad, Jharkhand wait in queues to cast votes at a polling station during the second and final phase of Jharkhand Assembly election.

- In the Assembly, **28 seats are reserved for Scheduled Tribes**, while **44 are open for general competition**. **Nine seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes.**

  विधानसभा में, 28 सीटें अनुसूचित जनजातियों (ST) के लिए आरक्षित हैं, जबकि **44 सामान्य प्रतिस्पर्धा के लिए खुली हैं। नौ सीटें अनुसूचित जातियों (SC) के लिए आरक्षित हैं।**

- The **JMM-led alliance's vote share** in tribal seats increased marginally from **42% to 43%** between the **2014 and 2019 State polls**, and further rose to **49.6% in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.**

  JMM के नेतृत्व वाले गठबंधन का आदिवासी सीटों में वोट शेयर 2014 और 2019 राज्य चुनावों के बीच 42% से बढ़कर 43% हुआ, और फिर 2024 लोकसभा चुनावों में 49.6% तक बढ़ गया।

- However, among **non-reserved seats**, the **JMM-led alliance's vote share has remained stagnant at around 35%**, while that of the **NDA has increased from 37% to 42% between the 2014 and 2019 Assembly polls** and even higher to **51.5% in the recent Lok Sabha polls.**

  हालांकि, गैर-आरक्षित सीटों में, JMM के नेतृत्व वाले गठबंधन का वोट शेयर लगभग 35% पर स्थिर रहा, जबकि NDA का वोट शेयर 2014 और 2019 विधानसभा चुनावों के बीच 37% से बढ़कर 42% हुआ और हालिया लोकसभा चुनावों में यह और बढ़कर 51.5% हो गया।

- The gap between the voting preferences of **ST** and **non-ST** voters has widened over the last three elections.

ST और गैर-ST मतदाताओं के वोटिंग प्राथमिकताओं के बीच अंतर पिछले तीन चुनावों में बढ़ गया है।

- The **JMM-led coalition** has shown weakness in the **nine seats reserved for Scheduled Castes**, failing to win any in the **2014 Assembly election.**
  JMM के नेतृत्व वाले गठबंधन ने अनुसूचित जातियों के लिए आरक्षित नौ सीटों में कमजोर प्रदर्शन किया है, 2014 विधानसभा चुनाव में इनमें से कोई भी सीट नहीं जीत सके।

- A **region-wise breakdown** of past vote shares reveals a more nuanced picture of tribal voting patterns.
  अतीत के वोट शेयर का क्षेत्रवार विभाजन आदिवासी वोटिंग पैटर्न का एक अधिक सूक्ष्म चित्र प्रस्तुत करता है।

- In the **Kolhan region**, the **JMM alliance's vote share has remained stagnant at around 43%**, while the **NDA has increased its vote share from 37% to 39% between the 2014 and 2019 Assembly polls** and further to **46.6% in the Lok Sabha polls.**
  कोल्हान क्षेत्र में, JMM गठबंधन का वोट शेयर लगभग **43%** पर स्थिर रहा है, जबकि **NDA ने** 2014 और 2019 विधानसभा चुनावों के बीच अपने वोट शेयर को 37% से बढ़ाकर 39% किया और लोकसभा चुनावों में इसे बढ़ाकर **46.6% कर लिया।**

- The **Kolhan region** is key for **NDA** if it is planning to secure more tribal seats, while **JMM would want a repeat of the 2019 polls** in the region.
  कोल्हान क्षेत्र NDA के लिए महत्वपूर्ण है यदि वह अधिक आदिवासी सीटें हासिल करने की योजना बना रहा है, जबकि **JMM इस क्षेत्र में 2019 चुनावों की पुनरावृति चाहता है।**

Should packaged food content be labelled?

What does the report published by the Access to Nutrition Initiative state? How does a health star rating system work? Why have non-communicable diseases become so common in India? Can front-of-pack labelling help?

EXPLAINER

Zubeda Hamid

The story so far:

A new report published by Access to Nutrition Initiative (ATNi) a non-profit global foundation, has found that leading food and beverage (F&B) companies, on average, sell products that are less healthy in low-and-middle income countries (LMICs) compared to what they sell in high-income countries (HICs). This report, which is the fifth edition of the 'Global Access to Nutrition Index', states that it assessed 30 of the world's largest F&B manufacturers – 23% of the global F&B market – on their performance to improve access to nutritious foods.

What were the report's findings?

The report analysed 52,414 products – including those from popular brands such as Nestle, Pepsico, Unilever, Coca-Cola and Hershey among others – using a health star rating system.

Under this system products are ranked out of 5 on their healthiness, with 5 being the best, and a score above 3.5 considered to be a healthier choice. The system assesses components of food considered to increase risk (energy, saturated fat, total sugars and sodium) and offsets these against components considered to decrease risk (protein, fibre and fruit, vegetable, nut and legume) to calculate a final score that is converted to a star rating. The ATNi report found that 'portfolio healthiness' was found to be lowest in LMICs, highlighting disparities in products offered across different markets. Food product healthiness in LMICs scored much lower – 1.8 on the system – than in HICs where it scored 2.3. Only 30% of companies have demonstrated a strategy to price some of their 'healthier' products affordably for lower income consumers, the report found. It also found that in LMICs, micronutrient data were available for a

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smaller proportion of products as compared to those in HICs.

Is this the first time?

This is not the first instance of such a finding: in April this year, a report by Swiss NGO, Public Eye and the global coalition International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), found that Nestle's baby food products sold in India as well as in African and Latin American countries, had higher sugar content compared to the same products sold in European markets. While Nestle denied this, the Central government asked the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to initiate "appropriate action" against Nestle.

Why is this of significance in India?

India is staring at a Non-Communicable

Disease (NCD) burden of epic proportions – an estimated 10.13 crore Indians have diabetes, and as per National Family Health Survey 5 data, obesity stands at 24% among women and 23% among men. At the same time, undernutrition, anaemia and micronutrient deficiencies continue to remain pressing problems.

A large chunk of the NCD burden, experts say, has to do with diets changing over the past few decades and becoming unhealthier. Citing the Indian Council of Medical Research's (ICMR) dietary guidelines, published in April this year, the Economic Survey of India 2023-24 noted that 56.4% of the total disease burden in India is due to unhealthy diets. The ICMR report had said the upsurge in the consumption of highly processed foods, laden with sugars and fat, coupled with reduced physical activity and limited

access to diverse foods, exacerbate micronutrient deficiencies and overweight/obesity problems.

Another significant issue here is affordability: as per UN data over 50% of Indians cannot afford a healthy diet. At the same time, Indian government data reveals that households' expenditure on processed food as a proportion of their food expenditure has risen, says development economist Dipa Sinha.

What about food package labelling?

India is a party to the World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions, one of which is a resolution on marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children, highlighting the need to protect children from harmful marketing of junk foods. In 2017, India launched the National Multisectoral Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Common NCDs, 2017-22 (NMAP). However, there has been very little progress made to address front-of-pack labelling of food.

Activists have, for years, been pushing the government to bring in regulations for front-of-package labelling of foods that would indicate high sugar, fat and sodium content. A draft notification: Food Safety and Standards (Labelling & Display) Amendment Regulation 2022 was brought in, but has made no headway in two years, says Arun Gupta, convener, Nutrition Advocacy for Public Interest (NAPi). Studies have shown, Dr. Gupta points out, that labelling on the front of packaged food is effective: in Chile and Mexico for instance, the consumption of sugary beverages decreased after such mandatory labelling.

An analysis by NAPi of 43 advertisements of pre-packaged food products and their composition revealed that these foods were high in one or more nutrients of concern such as saturated fat etc. "Policymakers and governments should introduce mandatory policies. To date, voluntary efforts by companies have been insufficient to ensure widespread and strong nutrition-related performance," the ATNi report states.

THE GIST

▼

A new report published by Access to Nutrition Initiative (ATNi), a non-profit global foundation, has found that leading multinational food and beverage companies, on average, sell products that are less healthy in low-and-middle income countries (LMICs) compared to what they sell in high-income countries (HICs).

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An analysis by NAPi of 43 advertisements of pre-packaged food products and their composition revealed that these foods were high in one or more nutrients of concern such as saturated fat etc.

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India is staring at a Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) burden of epic proportions — an estimated 10.13 crore Indians have diabetes, and as per National Family Health Survey 5 data, obesity stands at 24% among women and 23% among men.

Should packaged food content be labelled?
क्या पैकेज्ड खाद्य सामग्री को लेबल किया जाना चाहिए?

- A new report published by **Access to Nutrition Initiative (ATNi)**, a **non-profit global foundation**, found that leading **food and beverage (F&B) companies**, on average, sell products that are **less healthy** in **low-and-middle-income countries (LMICs)** compared to what they sell in **high-income countries (HICs)**.

एक नई रिपोर्ट जो Access to Nutrition Initiative (ATNi) द्वारा प्रकाशित की गई है, जो एक गैर-लाभकारी वैश्विक संस्था है, ने पाया कि प्रमुख खाद्य और पेय (F&B) कंपनियाँ, औसतन, कम स्वस्थ उत्पाद बेचती हैं निम्न- और मध्यम-आय वाले देशों (LMICs) में, तुलना में उच्च-आय वाले देशों (HICs) के मुकाबले।

- This report, the **fifth edition** of the '**Global Access to Nutrition Index**', states that it assessed **30 of the world's largest F&B manufacturers — 23% of the global F&B market** — on their performance to improve access to nutritious foods.
  यह रिपोर्ट, 'Global Access to Nutrition Index' का पाँचवां संस्करण है, जिसमें बताया गया है कि इसने दुनिया की 30 सबसे बड़ी F&B कंपनियों का मूल्यांकन किया – जो वैश्विक F&B बाजार का 23% हैं – उनके पोषक तत्वों तक पहुंच सुधारने के प्रदर्शन पर।

What were the report's findings?
रिपोर्ट के निष्कर्ष क्या थे?

- The report analysed **52,414 products** — including those from popular brands such as **Nestle, Pepsico, Unilever, Coca-Cola, and Hershey** — using a **health star rating system**.
  रिपोर्ट ने 52,414 उत्पादों का विश्लेषण किया – जिसमें Nestle, Pepsico, Unilever, Coca-Cola, और Hershey जैसे लोकप्रिय ब्रांड्स के उत्पाद भी शामिल थे – health star rating system का उपयोग करके।

- Under this system, products are ranked out of **5** on their healthiness, with **5** being the best, and a score above **3.5** considered to be a healthier choice.
  इस प्रणाली के तहत, उत्पादों को उनके स्वास्थ्यवर्धकता पर 5 में से रेट किया जाता है, जिसमें 5 सबसे अच्छा होता है, और 3.5 से ऊपर का स्कोर एक स्वस्थ विकल्प माना जाता है।

- The system assesses components of food considered to **increase risk** (energy, saturated fat, total sugars, and sodium) and offsets these against components considered to **decrease risk** (protein, fiber, and fruit, vegetable, nut, and legume) to calculate a final score that is converted to a star rating.
  यह प्रणाली खाद्य पदार्थों के घटकों का मूल्यांकन करती है जिन्हें जोखिम बढ़ाने के रूप में माना जाता है (ऊर्जा, संतृप्त वसा, कुल शर्करा, और सोडियम) और इन्हें उन घटकों के खिलाफ संतुलित करती है जिन्हें जोखिम घटाने के रूप में माना जाता है (प्रोटीन, फाइबर, और फल, सब्जियां, नट्स, और फलियां) ताकि एक अंतिम स्कोर गणना किया जा सके जिसे स्टार रेटिंग में बदला जाता है।

- The **ATNi report** found that '**portfolio healthiness**' was found to be **lowest in LMICs**, highlighting disparities in products offered across different markets.
  ATNi रिपोर्ट में पाया गया कि 'पोर्टफोलियो स्वास्थ्य' LMICs में सबसे कम था, जो विभिन्न बाजारों में पेश किए गए उत्पादों के बीच असमानताओं को उजागर करता है।

- **Food product healthiness** in LMICs scored much lower — **1.8** on the system — than in HICs where it scored **2.3**.
  LMICs में खाद्य उत्पादों की स्वास्थ्यवर्धकता सिस्टम पर काफी कम स्कोर हुई – **1.8**, जबकि HICs में इसका स्कोर **2.3** था।

- Only **30% of companies** have demonstrated a strategy to price some of their '**healthier**' products affordably for lower income consumers, the report found.
  रिपोर्ट में पाया गया कि केवल **30% कंपनियों** ने अपनी कुछ '**स्वस्थ**' उत्पादों की कीमत कम आय वाले उपभोक्ताओं के लिए सस्ती बनाने की रणनीति दिखाई है।

- It also found that in **LMICs**, **micronutrient data** were available for a smaller proportion of products as compared to those in **HICs**.

  रिपोर्ट में यह भी पाया गया कि **LMICs** में **माइक्रोन्यूट्रिएंट डेटा** उत्पादों के एक छोटे अनुपात के लिए उपलब्ध था, जबकि **HICs** में यह ज्यादा था।

Is this the first time?
क्या यह पहली बार है?

- This is not the first instance of such a finding: in **April this year**, a report by **Swiss NGO**, **Public Eye** and the global coalition **International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)**, found that **Nestle's baby food products** sold in **India** as well as in **African** and **Latin American countries**, had **higher sugar content** compared to the same products sold in **European markets**.

  यह पहली बार नहीं है जब ऐसा पाया गया है: इस साल **अप्रैल में, एक रिपोर्ट द्वारा **स्विस एनजीओ**, **Public Eye** और वैश्विक गठबंधन **International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)** ने पाया कि **Nestle के बेबी फूड उत्पाद** जो **भारत** के साथ-साथ **अफ्रीकी** और **लातीनी अमेरिकी देशों** में बेचे जाते हैं, उनमें **यूरोपीय बाजारों** में बेचे गए समान उत्पादों की तुलना में **चीनी की मात्रा अधिक** थी।

- While **Nestle denied** this, the **Central government** asked the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** to initiate "appropriate action" against **Nestle**.

  हालांकि **Nestle ने इसका इनकार किया**, केंद्र सरकार ने Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) से **Nestle** के खिलाफ "उचित कार्रवाई" शुरू करने को कहा।

Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) Burden in India
भारत में गैर-संचारी रोग (NCD) का बोझ

- India is staring at a Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) burden of **epic proportions** — an estimated **10.13 crore Indians** have diabetes, and as per **National Family Health Survey 5** data, **obesity** stands at **24%** among women and **23%** among men.

  भारत एक विशाल गैर-संचारी रोग (NCD) के बोझ का सामना कर रहा है – अनुमानित **10.13 करोड़ भारतीय** मधुमेह से पीड़ित हैं, और **राष्ट्रीय परिवार स्वास्थ्य सर्वेक्षण 5** के आंकड़ों के अनुसार, महिलाओं में **मोटापा 24%** और पुरुषों में **23%** है।

- At the same time, **undernutrition, anaemia** and **micronutrient deficiencies** continue to remain pressing problems.

  साथ ही, **कुपोषण, ख़ून की कमी (एनीमिया)** और **सूक्ष्म पोषक तत्वों की कमी** गंभीर समस्याएं बनी हुई हैं।

- A large chunk of the NCD burden, experts say, has to do with **diets changing** over the past few decades and becoming **unhealthier**.

  विशेषज्ञों के अनुसार, NCD बोझ का एक बड़ा हिस्सा पिछले कुछ दशकों में **आहार में बदलाव** और उनके **अस्वस्थ होने** के कारण है।

- Citing the **Indian Council of Medical Research's (ICMR)** dietary guidelines, published in **April this year**, the **Economic Survey of India 2023-24** noted that **56.4%** of the total disease burden in India is due to **unhealthy diets**.

  भारतीय चिकित्सा अनुसंधान परिषद (ICMR) की आहार संबंधी दिशानिर्देशों का हवाला देते हुए, जो **इस वर्ष अप्रैल** में प्रकाशित हुईं, **भारत के आर्थिक सर्वेक्षण 2023-24** ने यह उल्लेख किया कि भारत में कुल रोग बोझ का **56.4% अस्वस्थ आहार** के कारण है।

- The ICMR report had said the upsurge in the consumption of **highly processed foods**, laden with **sugars and fat**, coupled with **reduced physical activity** and **limited access to diverse foods**, exacerbate **micronutrient deficiencies** and **overweight/obesity** problems.

  ICMR रिपोर्ट में कहा गया था कि **उच्च प्रसंस्कृत खाद्य पदार्थों** का सेवन, जो **चीनी और वसा** से भरे होते हैं, साथ ही **शारीरिक गतिविधि में कमी** और **विविध खाद्य पदार्थों तक सीमित पहुंच**, **सूक्ष्म पोषक तत्वों की कमी** और **अधिपोषण/मोटापे** की समस्याओं को बढ़ाते हैं।

- Another significant issue here is **affordability**: as per **UN data** over **50% of Indians** cannot afford a **healthy diet**.

  यहां एक और महत्वपूर्ण समस्या **सस्तीता** है: **संयुक्त राष्ट्र (UN) के आंकड़ों** के अनुसार **50% से अधिक भारतीय स्वस्थ आहार** का खर्च नहीं उठा सकते।

- At the same time, **Indian government data** reveals that households' expenditure on **processed food** as a proportion of their food expenditure has risen, says development economist **Dipa Sinha**.

  साथ ही, **भारतीय सरकारी आंकड़े** यह दर्शाते हैं कि घरों का **प्रसंस्कृत खाद्य** पर खर्च उनके खाद्य खर्च का एक हिस्सा के रूप में बढ़ा है, विकास अर्थशास्त्री **दीपा सिन्हा** कहती हैं।

Food Package Labelling
खाद्य पैकेज लेबलिंग

- India is a party to the **World Health Assembly (WHA)** resolutions, one of which is a resolution on **marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children**, highlighting the need to protect children from harmful marketing of **junk foods**.

  भारत **विश्व स्वास्थ्य सभा (WHA)** के प्रस्तावों का हिस्सा है, जिनमें से एक प्रस्ताव **बच्चों को खाद्य और गैर-मादक पेय पदार्थों के विपणन** पर है, जो **जंक फूड्स** के हानिकारक विपणन से बच्चों को बचाने की आवश्यकता को उजागर करता है।

- In **2017**, India launched the **National Multisectoral Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Common NCDs, 2017-22 (NMAP).**

  2017 में, भारत ने **सामान्य NCDs की रोकथाम और नियंत्रण के लिए राष्ट्रीय बहुआयामी कार्य योजना, 2017-22 (NMAP)** लॉन्च की।

- However, there has been very little progress made to address **front-of-pack labelling** of food.

  हालांकि, खाद्य के **फ्रंट-ऑफ-पैक लेबलिंग** को संबोधित करने में बहुत कम प्रगति हुई है।

- Activists have, for years, been pushing the government to bring in regulations for **front-of-package labelling** of foods that would indicate **high sugar**, **fat** and **sodium** content.

सक्रियकर्ता वर्षों से सरकार से **फ्रंट-ऑफ-पैकेज लेबलिंग** के लिए नियम लाने की मांग कर रहे हैं, जो **चीनी**, **वसा** और **सोडियम** की मात्रा को दर्शाएगा।

- A draft notification: **Food Safety and Standards (Labelling & Display) Amendment Regulation 2022** was brought in, but has made no headway in two years, says **Arun Gupta**, convener, **Nutrition Advocacy for Public Interest (NAPi)**.

  खाद्य सुरक्षा और मानक (लेबलिंग और डिस्प्ले) संशोधन नियम 2022 का एक मसौदा अधिसूचना लाया गया था, लेकिन दो वर्षों में इसमें कोई प्रगति नहीं हुई है, **अरुण गुप्ता**, संयोजक, **पब्लिक इंटरेस्ट के लिए पोषण प्रवचन (NAPi)** कहते हैं।

- Studies have shown, Dr. Gupta points out, that **labelling on the front of packaged food** is effective: in **Chile** and **Mexico**, for instance, the consumption of **sugary beverages** decreased after such mandatory labelling.

  अध्यानों ने दिखाया है, डॉ. गुप्ता बताते हैं, कि **पैकेज्ड खाद्य पदार्थों पर फ्रंट लेबलिंग** प्रभावी है: उदाहरण के लिए, **चिली** और **मेक्सिको** में, ऐसे अनिवार्य लेबलिंग के बाद **चीनी युक्त पेय** का सेवन घटा।

- An analysis by NAPi of **43 advertisements** of **pre-packaged food products** and their composition revealed that these foods were **high in one or more nutrients of concern** such as **saturated fat** etc.

  NAPi द्वारा **43 विज्ञापनों** का विश्लेषण किया गया, जिसमें **प्री-पैकेज्ड खाद्य उत्पादों** और उनके संघटन का अध्ययन किया गया, जिससे यह खुलासा हुआ कि ये खाद्य पदार्थ **एक या अधिक पोषक तत्वों की चिंता में उच्च थे**, जैसे **संतृप्त वसा** आदि।

- "Policymakers and governments should introduce **mandatory policies**. To date, **voluntary efforts** by companies have been insufficient to ensure widespread and strong nutrition-related performance," the **ATNi report** states.

  "**नीतिनिर्माताओं और सरकारों को अनिवार्य नीतियां** लानी चाहिए। अब तक, कंपनियों के द्वारा किए गए **स्वैच्छिक प्रयासों** ने व्यापक और मजबूत पोषण-संबंधी प्रदर्शन सुनिश्चित करने के लिए पर्याप्त नहीं किया है," **ATNi रिपोर्ट** कहती है।

How does PM Vidyalaxmi differ from other schemes?

Does this central scheme cover middle-income students? Does it depend on NAAC and NBA certifications? Why have a lot of institutions been left out from the list?

Ravina Warkad

The story so far:

On November 6, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved a new Central Sector Scheme, PM Vidyalaxmi, which seeks to provide financial support to meritorious students applying for higher education. Students will now be eligible to get collateral-free, guarantor-free loans from banks and financial institutions to cover the full amount of tuition fees and other expenses related to the course.

What does the scheme cover?

The government has said that students who have gained admission in 860 quality higher education institutions, as defined by the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), are eligible for the loans. The scheme will potentially cover 22 lakh students, a Ministry of Education spokesperson said. For students with an annual family income of up to ₹8 lakh, and not eligible for benefits under any other government scholarship, a 3% interest subvention for loans up to ₹10 lakh will be provided during the moratorium period. The interest subvention support will be given to one lakh students every year. Preference will be given to students from government institutions who have opted for technical or professional courses. "An outlay of ₹3,600 crore has been made during 2024-25 to 2030-31, and seven lakh fresh students are expected to get the benefit of this interest subvention during the period," the Ministry added.

What about past schemes?

PM Vidyalaxmi differs from previous central government schemes in the number of institutions eligible, mode of processing of loans, the income cap, and the amount of money to be disbursed. For example, students can apply for loans through the Vidyalaxmi portal, which simplifies loan applications and has links to all major public sector as well as private banks. It also facilitates the tracking of the loan status.

Moreover, while previous schemes offered benefits to only low-income groups, the Vidyalaxmi scheme expands coverage to middle-income families, irrespective of other factors such as caste.

For earlier schemes, the eligible institutions needed to be accredited with the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and the National Board of Accreditation (NBA). With 820 universities of NAAC and 15,501 colleges, along with 3,348 NBA institutions, the total was about 20,000 institutions. However, under Vidyalaxmi, only institutions with NIRF ranks are eligible. This means that the scheme will be applicable to all government and private institutions ranked within the top 100 in NIRF rankings in the overall list as well as all institutions in the category-specific and domain-specific lists. Professor O R S Rao, Chancellor, ICFAI University, Sikkim, who helped to compile the list of universities eligible for the scheme, says the list does not feature 860 unique institutes as some are ranked in multiple categories. An institute has to register for the ranking as a prerequisite to feature in the rankings. While some institutions apply to a single category, some others apply for multiple categories and hence feature on more than one list.

What are the implications?

Rankings are now becoming more and more important with loan eligibility being conditional on them. As this scheme significantly reduces the number of eligible institutions, the stakes of performing well in higher education entrance tests just got higher. Banker Thomas Franco said that this makes it difficult for students who do not have excellent marks to avail the loan. Banks may charge higher rates of interest for other institutions or straight away reject them if they don't have a good rank.

PM Vidyalaxmi Scheme
पीएम विद्यालक्ष्मी योजना

(GS Paper II: Government Scheme)

On November 6, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved a new Central Sector Scheme, PM Vidyalaxmi, which seeks to provide financial support to meritorious students applying for higher education.

6 नवंबर को, प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी की अध्यक्षता में केंद्रीय कैबिनेट ने एक नई केंद्रीय क्षेत्रीय योजना, पीएम विद्यालक्ष्मी, को मंजूरी दी, जिसका उद्देश्य प्रतिभाशाली छात्रों को उच्च शिक्षा के लिए वित्तीय सहायता प्रदान करना है।

- Students will now be eligible to get **collateral-free, guarantor-free loans** from banks and financial institutions **to cover the full amount of tuition fees and other expenses related to the course.**

  अब छात्र **कोलैटरल-मुक्त, गारंटर-मुक्त ऋण** प्राप्त करने के पात्र होंगे, जो **कोर्स की पूरी ट्यूशन फीस** और अन्य खर्चों को कवर करेंगे।

- **What does the scheme cover?**
  योजना क्या कवर करती है?

- The government has said that students who have gained admission in **860 quality higher education institutions**, as defined by the **National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)**, are eligible for the loans.

  सरकार ने कहा है कि छात्र जो **860 गुणवत्ता वाली उच्च शिक्षा संस्थानों** में प्रवेश प्राप्त कर चुके हैं, जो **नेशनल इंस्टीट्यूशनल रैंकिंग फ्रेमवर्क (NIRF)** द्वारा परिभाषित हैं, वे ऋण प्राप्त करने के पात्र होंगे।

- The **scheme will potentially cover 22 lakh students**, a Ministry of Education spokesperson said.

  योजना संभावित रूप से **22 लाख छात्रों** को कवर करेगी, जैसा कि शिक्षा मंत्रालय के एक प्रवक्ता ने कहा।

- For students with an annual family income of up to **₹8 lakh**, and not eligible for benefits under any other government scholarship, a **3% interest subvention** for loans up to ₹10 lakh will be provided during the **moratorium period.**

  ₹8 लाख तक की वार्षिक पारिवारिक आय वाले छात्रों के लिए, और यदि वे अन्य सरकारी छात्रवृत्तियों के तहत लाभ के पात्र नहीं हैं, तो **₹10 लाख** तक के ऋण पर **3% ब्याज सब्सिडी** प्रदान की जाएगी, जो **मोराटोरियम अवधि** के दौरान लागू होगी।

- The interest subvention support will be given to **one lakh students** every year.

  प्रत्येक वर्ष एक लाख छात्रों को ब्याज सब्सिडी सहायता दी जाएगी।

- Preference will be given to students from **government institutions** who have opted for **technical or professional courses**.

  सरकारी संस्थानों के छात्रों को प्राथमिकता दी जाएगी जिन्होंने **तकनीकी या पेशेवर पाठ्यक्रम** चुने हैं।

- An outlay of **₹3,600 crore** has been made during **2024-25 to 2030-31**, and **seven lakh fresh students** are expected to get the benefit of this interest subvention during the period.

  2024-25 से 2030-31 तक एक **₹3,600 करोड़** का आवंटन किया गया है, और इस अवधि में **सात लाख नए छात्रों** को इस ब्याज सब्सिडी का लाभ मिलने की उम्मीद है।

- **What about past schemes?**
  पिछली योजनाओं के बारे में क्या?

- PM Vidyalaxmi differs from previous central government schemes in the **number of institutions eligible**, **mode of processing of loans**, the **income cap**, and the **amount of money to be disbursed**.

  PM विद्यालक्ष्मी पिछली केंद्रीय सरकारी योजनाओं से **पात्र संस्थानों की संख्या**, **ऋण प्रसंस्करण की विधि**, **आय सीमा**, और **राशि वितरित करने** में भिन्न है।

- For example, students can apply for loans through the **Vidyalaxmi portal**, which simplifies loan applications and has links to all major public sector as well as private banks.

  उदाहरण के लिए, छात्र **विद्यालक्ष्मी पोर्टल** के माध्यम से ऋण के लिए आवेदन कर सकते हैं, जो ऋण आवेदन को सरल बनाता है और सभी प्रमुख सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के साथ-साथ निजी बैंकों के लिंक प्रदान करता है।

- Moreover, while previous schemes offered benefits to only **low-income groups**, the **Vidyalaxmi scheme** expands coverage to **middle-income families**, irrespective of other factors such as caste.

  इसके अलावा, जबकि पिछली योजनाओं ने केवल **निम्न-आय समूहों** को लाभ प्रदान किया, **विद्यालक्ष्मी योजना मध्यम-आय वाले परिवारों** को लाभ का विस्तार करती है, चाहे अन्य कारकों जैसे जाति से कोई फर्क नहीं पड़ता।

- For earlier schemes, the eligible institutions needed to be accredited with the **National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)** and the **National Board of Accreditation (NBA)**.

  पिछली योजनाओं के लिए, पात्र संस्थानों को **नेशनल असेसमेंट एंड एक्रेडिटेशन काउंसिल (NAAC)** और **नेशनल बोर्ड ऑफ एक्रेडिटेशन (NBA)** से मान्यता प्राप्त होना आवश्यक था।

- With **820 universities** of NAAC and **15,501 colleges**, along with **3,348 NBA institutions**, the total was about **20,000 institutions**.

  NAAC के 820 विश्वविद्यालयों और **15,501 कॉलेजों** के साथ, और **3,348 NBA संस्थानों** के साथ, कुल लगभग **20,000 संस्थान** थे।

- However, under Vidyalaxmi, only institutions with **NIRF ranks** are eligible.

  हालाँकि, विद्यालक्ष्मी के तहत केवल **NIRF रैंक** वाले संस्थान ही पात्र हैं।

- This means that the scheme will be applicable to all **government and private institutions ranked within the top 100 in NIRF rankings** in the overall list as well as all institutions in the category-specific and domain-specific lists.

  इसका मतलब है कि योजना **NIRF रैंकिंग में टॉप 100 में रैंक किए गए सभी सरकारी और निजी संस्थानों** पर लागू होगी, साथ ही श्रेणी-विशेष और डोमेन-विशेष सूचियों में सभी संस्थान शामिल होंगे।

- **What are the implications?**

  इसके क्या परिणाम होंगे?

- Rankings are now becoming more and more important with **loan eligibility** being conditional on them.

  अब रैंकिंग अधिक से अधिक महत्वपूर्ण हो रही हैं क्योंकि **ऋण पात्रता** इन पर निर्भर करेगी।

- As this scheme significantly reduces the number of eligible institutions, the stakes of performing well in higher education entrance tests just got higher.

  चूंकि यह योजना पात्र संस्थानों की संख्या को महत्वपूर्ण रूप से घटाती है, उच्च शिक्षा प्रवेश परीक्षणों में अच्छे प्रदर्शन की **दांव** अब अधिक बढ़ गई है।

- **Banker Thomas Franco** said that this makes it difficult for students who do not have excellent marks to avail the loan.

  बैंकर्स थॉमस फ्रांको ने कहा कि यह उन छात्रों के लिए ऋण प्राप्त करना मुश्किल बना देता है जिनके अंक उत्कृष्ट नहीं हैं।

- Banks may charge **higher rates of interest** for other institutions or straight away reject them if they don't have a good rank.

  बैंक अन्य संस्थानों के लिए **उच्च ब्याज दर** वसूल सकते हैं या उन्हें सीधे अस्वीकार कर सकते हैं यदि उनके पास अच्छा रैंक नहीं है।

Justice Krishnakumar is new Chief Justice of Manipur High Court

PCS

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The President on Wednesday appointed Justice D. Krishnakumar Chief Justice of the Manipur High Court following the superannuation of the incumbent, Justice Siddharth Mridul.

Justice D. Krishnakumar

Prime Minister proposes seven key pillars to strengthen ties between India, 'CARICOM'

GS Paper II: India-South America

PCS

GEORGETOWN (GUYANA)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday proposed seven key pillars to strengthen ties between India and 'CARICOM' as he held talks with the Caribbean partner countries focusing on areas such as trade, technology and tourism among others.

Mr. Modi, who arrived in Guyana on Wednesday – the first visit by an Indian head of the State in more than 50 years, made the remarks as he joined leaders from the Caribbean partner countries for the second India-CARICOM Summit here. They discussed ways to strengthen ties in areas such as economic cooperation, agriculture and food security, health and pharmaceuticals, and science and innovations.

During the summit, Mr. Modi proposed seven key pillars to strengthen ties between India and 'CARICOM'.

Mr. Modi also said that "to promote five Ts – trade, technology, tourism, talent and tradition, an online portal could be made to connect the private sector and stakeholders of all countries."

"India is moving ahead in the SME [small and medium enterprises] sector. During the India-CARICOM meeting last year, we had announced a grant of one million dollars for SME sectors. We should focus on its implementation now," Mr. Modi said.

CARICOM Heads of Government and the Prime Minister last met in 2019 on the margins of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), where they discussed cooperation modalities in renewable energy and climate change through a $150 million credit line from India.

During the summit, Guyana President Irfaan Ali said, "[I want to] thank you and people of India for your selfless attributes when you delivered to this region the first set of vaccines during the COVID pandemic."

According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), there are around 3.2 lakh people of Indian origin in Guyana.

The Prime Minister arrived here from Brazil where he attended the G-20 Summit and also met with global leaders, including U.S. President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron and U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

Narendra Modi receives a warm welcome from Guyana President Mohamed Irfaan Ali on his arrival, in Georgetown on Wednesday. ANI