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## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

### THE HINDU NEWSPAPER

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## R.K. Shriramkumar receives Sangita Kalanidhi award

PCS

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

Hindustani violinist N. Rajam on Thursday advised students of music to pursue their practice without interruption, saying it would keep opening doors they never expected.

Conferring the Sangita Kalanidhi award on violinist R.K. Shriramkumar on the occasion of the Sadas of the Music Academy in Chennai, Ms. Rajam, Emeritus Professor and former Dean of the Faculty of Performing Arts at Banaras Hindu University, said that even after more than 85 years of rigorous practice and *sadhana*, she still felt like a student.

While presenting the

award, she encouraged the audience to give a standing ovation to Mr. Shriramkumar, an authority on the *keertanas* of Muthuswami Dikshitar.

"Music is such an unfathomable ocean – Carnatic or Hindustani, north or south. What we learn in one lifetime is just a speck of that ocean. I strongly feel that all the great musicians we encounter with prodigious proficiency must have been practising the art for multiple births," said Ms. Rajam, recalling the days when she attended concerts at the Academy as a child.

She said she would sit in the last row of the Academy and try to observe and absorb veteran musicians



Violinist N. Rajam presenting the Sangita Kalanidhi award to R.K. Shriramkumar at the Sadas of the Music Academy on Thursday. N. Murali, President of the Academy, is seen. RAGU R.

rendering complex *Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi*.

"I would run home immediately after the concert, where my father would be eagerly waiting. I would render verbatim the *pallavi* line, *anulomam*

and *pratilomam*. I would rest only after my father approved what I had absorbed," she recalled.

She also appreciated the Music Academy's century-long service to the cause of music, as well as the music

school attached to it.

N. Murali, President of the Academy, said it was at Banaras Hindu University that Ms. Rajam decided to pursue Hindustani music, having earlier listened to recordings of Pt. Omkarnath Thakur. Ms. Rajam, sister of violinist T.N. Krishnan, later became a student of Pt. Thakur.

"Before her, the violin was not truly an accompanying instrument in Hindustani music. Moreover, instrumentalists in that system played accompanying instruments in a style distinct from the gayaki style adopted by Rajam. She thus played a pioneering role in introducing the gayaki style to Hindustani violin," Mr. Murali said. He

also appreciated the teamwork of his colleagues, staff, volunteers and scouts who contributed to the music season's success.

Thavil player T.R. Govindarajan and musician Shyamala Venkateswaran received the Sangita Kala Acharya awards.

Kathakali musician Madambi Subramanian Namboodiri and veena-playing couple J.T. Jeyaraaj Krishnan and Jaysri Jeyaraaj Krishnan received the TTK awards.

The Musicologist award went to Professor C.A. Sreedhara.

Prizes were given to winners of various competitions. N. Ramji, secretary of the Academy, proposed a vote of thanks.

## R.K. Shriramkumar receives Sangita Kalanidhi award आर.के. श्रीरामकुमार को संगीत कलानिधि पुरस्कार मिला

- Hindustani violinist **N. Rajam** on Thursday advised students of music to pursue their practice without interruption, saying it would keep opening doors they never expected.  
हिंदुस्तानी वायलिन वादक **एन. राजम** ने गुरुवार को संगीत के छात्रों को बिना रुकावट अभ्यास जारी रखने की सलाह दी, यह कहते हुए कि इससे ऐसे द्वार खुलते रहेंगे जिनकी उन्होंने कभी अपेक्षा नहीं की होगी।
- Conferring the **Sangita Kalanidhi award to violinist R.K. Shriramkumar** on the occasion of the **Sadas of the Music Academy in Chennai**, Ms. Rajam, **Emeritus Professor** and former **Dean of the Faculty of Performing Arts at Banaras Hindu University**, said that even after more than **85 years** of rigorous practice and *sadhana*, she still felt like a student.  
चेन्नई में **म्यूज़िक अकादमी के सदस** के अवसर पर वायलिन वादक **आर.के. श्रीरामकुमार** को **संगीत कलानिधि पुरस्कार** प्रदान करते हुए, **एमेरिटस प्रोफेसर** और **बनारस हिंदू विश्वविद्यालय में परफॉर्मिंग आर्ट्स संकाय की पूर्व डीन** रहीं **सुश्री राजम** ने कहा कि **85 वर्षों** से अधिक के कठोर अभ्यास और **साधना** के बाद भी वह स्वयं को एक छात्रा ही महसूस करती हैं।
- While presenting the award, she encouraged the audience to give a standing ovation to **Mr. Shriramkumar, an authority on the keertanas of Muthuswami Dikshitar**.  
पुरस्कार प्रदान करते समय उन्होंने दर्शकों से **मुथुस्वामी दीक्षितर की कीर्तनाओं** के प्रामाणिक विद्वान **श्री श्रीरामकुमार** को खड़े होकर तालियाँ देने के लिए प्रोत्साहित किया।
- "Music is such an unfathomable ocean — **Carnatic or Hindustani**, north or south. What we learn in one lifetime is just a speck of that ocean. I strongly feel that all the great musicians we encounter with prodigious proficiency must have been practising the art for multiple births," said Ms. Rajam, recalling the days when she attended concerts at the Academy as a child.  
"संगीत एक अथाह महासागर है — **कर्नाटक या हिंदुस्तानी**, उत्तर या दक्षिण। एक जीवन में हम जो सीखते हैं वह उस महासागर का एक कण मात्र है। मेरा दृढ़ विश्वास है कि जिन महान संगीतकारों की अद्भुत दक्षता हम देखते हैं, उन्होंने यह कला अनेक जन्मों से साधी होगी," **सुश्री राजम** ने अकादमी में बचपन में संगीत सभाओं में भाग लेने के दिनों को याद करते हुए कहा।
- She said she would sit in the last row of the Academy and try to observe and absorb veteran musicians rendering complex **Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi**.  
उन्होंने कहा कि वह अकादमी की अंतिम पंक्ति में बैठती थीं और वरिष्ठ संगीतकारों द्वारा प्रस्तुत जटिल **रागम-तानम-पल्लवी** को देखने और आत्मसात करने का प्रयास करती थीं।
- "I would run home immediately after the concert, where my father would be eagerly waiting. I would render verbatim the *pallavi* line, **anulomam** and **pratilomam**. I would rest only after my father approved what I had absorbed," she recalled.  
"संगीत सभा के तुरंत बाद मैं घर दौड़कर जाती थी, जहाँ मेरे पिता उत्सुकता से प्रतीक्षा करते थे। मैं **अनुलोमम**



और **प्रतिलोमम** सहित पल्लवी की पंक्ति शब्दशः प्रस्तुत करती थी। मेरे पिता द्वारा मेरी समझ को स्वीकृति मिलने के बाद ही मुझे विश्राम मिलता था,” उन्होंने स्मरण किया।

- She also appreciated the **Music Academy's century-long service** to the cause of music, as well as the music also appreciated the teamwork of his colleagues, staff, volunteers and scouts who contributed to the music season's success.  
उन्होंने संगीत के उद्देश्य के लिए **म्यूज़िक अकादमी की शताब्दी-लंबी सेवा** की भी सराहना की, साथ ही संगीत ने अपने सहयोगियों, कर्मचारियों, स्वयंसेवकों और स्काउट्स के **टीमवर्क** की भी प्रशंसा की जिन्होंने संगीत सत्र की सफलता में योगदान दिया।
- **Thavil player T.R. Govindarajan and musician Shyamala Venkateswaran received the Sangita Kala Acharya awards.**  
**थविल वादक टी.आर. गोविंदराजन और संगीतज्ञ श्यामला वेंकटेश्वरन को संगीत कला आचार्य पुरस्कार प्रदान किए गए।**
- **Kathakali musician Madambi Subramanian Namboodiri and veena-playing couple J.T. Jeyaraaj Krishnan and Jaysri Jeyaraaj Krishnan received the TTK awards.**  
**कथकली संगीतज्ञ मदंबी सुब्रमणियन नमबूदीरी और वीणा वादन करने वाले दंपति जे.टी. जेयराज कृष्णन और जयश्री जेयराज कृष्णन को टीटीके पुरस्कार प्रदान किए गए।**
- The **Musicologist award** went to **Professor C.A. Sreedhara.**  
**संगीतशास्त्री पुरस्कार प्रोफेसर सी.ए. श्रीधर को प्रदान किया गया।**
- Prizes were given to winners of various competitions. **N. Ramji**, secretary of the Academy, proposed a vote of thanks.  
विभिन्न प्रतियोगिताओं के विजेताओं को पुरस्कार दिए गए। अकादमी के सचिव **एन. रामजी** ने धन्यवाद प्रस्ताव रखा।

school attached to it.  
उससे संबद्ध विद्यालय।

- **N. Murali**, President of the Academy, said it was at **Banaras Hindu University** that Ms. Rajam decided to pursue **Hindustani music**, having earlier listened to recordings of **Pt. Omkarnath Thakur.**  
अकादमी के अध्यक्ष **एन. मुरली** ने कहा कि **बनारस हिंदू विश्वविद्यालय** में ही **सुश्री राजम** ने **पंडित ओंकारनाथ ठाकुर** की रिकॉर्डिंग सुनने के बाद **हिंदुस्तानी संगीत** अपनाने का निर्णय लिया।
- Ms. Rajam, sister of violinist **T.N. Krishnan**, later became a student of **Pt. Thakur.**  
वायलिन वादक **टी.एन. कृष्णन** की बहन **सुश्री राजम** बाद में **पंडित ठाकुर** की शिष्या बनीं।
- “Before her, the violin was not truly an accompanying instrument in Hindustani music. Moreover, instrumentalists in that system played accompanying instruments in a style distinct from the **gayaki style** adopted by Rajam. She thus played a pioneering role in introducing the gayaki style to Hindustani violin,” Mr. Murali said. He  
“उन्से पहले हिंदुस्तानी संगीत में वायलिन वास्तव में संगत वाद्य नहीं था। इसके अलावा, उस परंपरा में वाद्य कलाकार संगत वाद्यों को **गायकी शैली** से भिन्न शैली में बजाते थे जिसे राजम ने अपनाया। इस प्रकार, उन्होंने हिंदुस्तानी वायलिन में गायकी शैली को प्रस्तुत करने में अग्रणी भूमिका निभाई,” **श्री मुरली** ने कहा। उन्होंने
- also appreciated the **teamwork** of his colleagues, **staff, volunteers** and **scouts** who contributed to the **music season's success.**  
साथ ही उन्होंने अपने सहयोगियों, **कर्मचारियों, स्वयंसेवकों** और **स्काउट्स** के **टीमवर्क** की भी सराहना की, जिन्होंने **संगीत सत्र की सफलता** में योगदान दिया।
- **Thavil player T.R. Govindarajan and musician Shyamala Venkateswaran received the Sangita Kala Acharya awards.**  
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- Prizes were given to winners of various competitions. N. Ramji, secretary of the Academy, proposed a vote of thanks.

# First Vande Bharat sleeper train to ply between Guwahati and Kolkata

PCS

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off the first Vande Bharat sleeper train later this month, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Thursday. It will ply between Guwahati and Kolkata.

The 16-coach train, with a capacity of 823 passengers, has a design speed of upto 180 kmph. It has 11 three-tier and four two-tier AC coaches, and a first-class AC coach.

The third-AC fare will be ₹2,300, second AC ₹3,000, and first AC ₹3,600.

The train boasts ergonomically designed berths with improved cushioning, automatic doors, and enhanced ride comfort with superior suspension and noise reduction. Safety measures include Kavach, an indigenously deve-



**Ready to roll:** The sleeper rake of a Vande Bharat Express at the Integral Coach Factory in Chennai. FILE PHOTO

**The 16-coach train, with a capacity of 823 passengers, has a design speed of upto 180 kmph**

veloped, high-tech automatic train protection system designed to prevent collision, advanced controls, and safety systems inside the driver's cabin. There will be CCTV cameras on

all coaches, and specially designed seats for passengers with disabilities, he said.

The districts that will benefit from this service include Kamrup Metropolitan and Bongaigaon in Assam and Coochbehar, Jalpaiguri, Maldah, Murshidabad, Purba Bardhaman, Hooghly, and Howrah in West Bengal.

Assamese cuisine will be

served aboard when the train originates from Guwahati and Bengali cuisine on its return journey.

## Bullet train

The Minister also announced that the country's first bullet train would be ready in August 2027, and the route would be opened in a phased manner. The first section to open will be from Surat to Bilimora, followed by Vapi to Surat, Vapi to Ahmedabad, Thane to Ahmedabad, and finally Mumbai to Ahmedabad.

The 508-km Mumbai-Ahmedabad high-speed rail corridor has been steadily progressing, with significant work completed on viaducts, bridges, tunnels, and stations. The corridor will see speeds of up to 320 kmph and is set to reduce travel time between Mumbai and Ahmedabad to two hours.

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## First Vande Bharat sleeper train to ply between Guwahati and Kolkata गुवाहाटी और कोलकाता के बीच चलेगी पहली वंदे भारत स्लीपर ट्रेन

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off the **first Vande Bharat sleeper train** later this month, **Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw** said on Thursday.  
रेल मंत्री अश्विनी वैष्णव ने गुरुवार को कहा कि प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी इस महीने के अंत में पहली वंदे भारत स्लीपर ट्रेन को हरी झंडी दिखाएंगे।
- It will **ply between Guwahati and Kolkata**.  
यह गुवाहाटी और कोलकाता के बीच चलेगी।
- The **16-coach train**, with a capacity of **823 passengers**, has a design speed of upto **180 kmph**.  
**16 कोचों** वाली इस ट्रेन की क्षमता **823 यात्रियों** की है और इसकी डिज़ाइन गति **180 किमी प्रति घंटा** तक है।
- It has **11 three-tier and four two-tier AC coaches**, and a **first-class AC coach**.  
इसमें **11 थ्री-टियर**, **चार टू-टियर एसी कोच**, और एक **फर्स्ट क्लास एसी कोच** है।
- The **third-AC fare will be ₹2,300**, **second AC ₹3,000**, and **first AC ₹3,600**.  
**थर्ड एसी का किराया ₹2,300**, **सेकंड एसी ₹3,000**, और **फर्स्ट एसी ₹3,600** होगा।
- The train boasts ergonomically designed **berths** with improved cushioning, **automatic doors**, and enhanced ride comfort with superior **suspension and noise reduction**.  
ट्रेन में बेहतर कुशनिंग के साथ एर्गोनॉमिक रूप से डिज़ाइन किए गए **बर्थ**, **स्वचालित दरवाज़े**, और उन्नत **सस्पेंशन व शोर में कमी** के साथ बेहतर यात्रा आराम की सुविधा है।
- **Safety measures include Kavach**, an indigenously developed, high-tech **automatic train protection system** designed to prevent collision, advanced controls, and safety systems inside the **driver's cabin**.  
सुरक्षा उपायों में **कवच** शामिल है, जो टक्कर रोकने के लिए विकसित स्वदेशी, उच्च-तकनीक **स्वचालित ट्रेन सुरक्षा प्रणाली** है, साथ ही **ड्राइवर के केबिन** में उन्नत नियंत्रण और सुरक्षा प्रणालियाँ हैं।
- There will be **CCTV cameras** on all coaches, and specially designed seats for **passengers with disabilities**, he said.  
उन्होंने कहा कि सभी कोचों में **सीसीटीवी कैमरे** होंगे और **दिव्यांग यात्रियों** के लिए विशेष रूप से डिज़ाइन की गई सीटें होंगी।
- The districts that will benefit from this service include **Kamrup Metropolitan and Bongaigaon in Assam** and **Coochbehar, Jalpaiguri, Maldah, Murshidabad, Purba Bardhaman, Hooghly, and Howrah in West Bengal**.  
इस सेवा से लाभान्वित होने वाले जिलों में **असम के कामरूप मेट्रोपोलिटन और बोंगाईगांव**, तथा **पश्चिम बंगाल के कूचबिहार, जलपाईगुड़ी, मालदा, मुर्शिदाबाद, पूर्व बर्धमान, हुगली, और हावड़ा** शामिल हैं।
- **Assamese cuisine** will be served aboard when the train originates from **Guwahati** and **Bengali cuisine** on its return journey.  
जब ट्रेन **गुवाहाटी** से रवाना होगी तो उसमें **असमिया व्यंजन**, और वापसी यात्रा में **बंगाली व्यंजन** परोसे जाएंगे।

### Bullet train बुलेट ट्रेन

- The Minister also announced that the **country's first bullet train would be ready in August 2027**, and the route would be opened in a **phased manner**.  
मंत्री ने यह भी घोषणा की कि देश की **पहली बुलेट ट्रेन अगस्त 2027** में तैयार होगी और मार्ग को **चरणबद्ध तरीके** से खोला जाएगा।



- The first section to open will be from **Surat to Bilimora**, followed by **Vapi to Surat**, **Vapi to Ahmedabad**, **Thane to Ahmedabad**, and finally **Mumbai to Ahmedabad**.  
खुलने वाला पहला खंड **सूरत से बिलीमोरा** होगा, इसके बाद **वापी से सूरत**, **वापी से अहमदाबाद**, **ठाणे से अहमदाबाद**, और अंत में **मुंबई से अहमदाबाद** होगा।
- The **508-km Mumbai–Ahmedabad high-speed rail corridor** has been steadily progressing, with significant work completed on **viaducts, bridges, tunnels, and stations**.  
**508 किलोमीटर लंबे मुंबई–अहमदाबाद हाई-स्पीड रेल कॉरिडोर** पर लगातार प्रगति हो रही है, जिसमें **वायाडक्ट, पुल, सुरंगों, और स्टेशनों** पर महत्वपूर्ण कार्य पूरा हो चुका है।
- The corridor will see speeds of up to **320 kmph** and is set to reduce travel time between **Mumbai and Ahmedabad to two hours**.  
इस कॉरिडोर पर ट्रेन की गति **320 किमी प्रति घंटा** तक होगी और यह **मुंबई और अहमदाबाद** के बीच यात्रा समय को घटाकर **दो घंटे** करने के लिए निर्धारित है।

<b>GS Paper 1: History,</b>	
<b>TOPICS COVERED</b>	<b>02 January 2026</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Arunachal welcomes first sunrise with 'Dance of Dawn'</b> <b>अरुणाचल ने 'डांस ऑफ़ डॉन' के साथ पहली सूर्योदय का स्वागत किया</b>

## Pop goes Pappanji



GS I: History

An effigy of Pappanji is burnt at the Parade Ground in Fort Kochi, as part of an annual tradition, to usher in the New Year. Thousands from across the globe converged to witness the iconic event on Wednesday night. THULASI KAKKAT

An effigy of Pappanji is burnt at the Parade Ground in Fort Kochi, as part of an annual tradition, to usher in the New Year. Thousands from across the globe converged to witness the iconic event on Wednesday night.



GS I: History

## Arunachal welcomes first sunrise with 'Dance of Dawn'

Dong, India's easternmost village in Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh, welcomed the first sunrise of 2026 on Thursday with "Alo Prabhat: Dance of the Dawn", a performance drawn from the cultural traits of indigenous Meyor and Mishmi communities. The performance was part of Sunrise Festival organised by the State's Tourism Department at Dong, the first human habitation to receive the first rays of the sun in India. The festival began on December 29 and concludes on Friday. Organisers said 'Dance of the Dawn' is an artistic narrative presented through chants, songs, and indigenous rhythms.

## Arunachal welcomes first sunrise with 'Dance of Dawn' अरुणाचल ने 'डांस ऑफ़ डॉन' के साथ पहली सूर्योदय का स्वागत किया

Dong, India's easternmost village in Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh, welcomed the first sunrise of 2026 on Thursday with "Alo Prabhat: Dance of the Dawn", a performance drawn from the cultural traits of indigenous Meteor and Mishmi communities.

डोंग, अरुणाचल प्रदेश के अंजाँ ज़िले में स्थित भारत का सबसे पूर्वी गांव, ने गुरुवार को 2026 के पहले सूर्योदय का स्वागत "एलो प्रभात: डांस ऑफ़ द डॉन" के साथ किया, जो स्वदेशी मेयोर और मिशमी समुदायों की सांस्कृतिक विशेषताओं से प्रेरित एक प्रस्तुति थी।

The performance was part of the Sunrise Festival organised by the State's Tourism Department at Dong, the first human habitation to receive the first rays of the sun in India.

यह प्रस्तुति डोंग में राज्य के पर्यटन विभाग द्वारा आयोजित सनराइज़ फ़ेस्टिवल का हिस्सा थी, जो भारत में सूरज की पहली किरणें प्राप्त करने वाला पहला मानव आवास है।

The festival began on December 29 and concluded on Friday. यह महोत्सव 29 दिसंबर को शुरू हुआ और शुक्रवार को समाप्त होता है।

Organisers said 'Dance of the Dawn' is an artistic narrative presented through chants, songs, and indigenous rhythms.

### GS Paper 1: Society

#### TOPICS COVERED

02 January 2026

1.	What transgender men face when they access healthcare ट्रांसजेंडर पुरुषों को क्या सामना करना पड़ता है जब वे स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं तक पहुँचते हैं
2.	Mob rule भीड़ का शासन



# What transgender men face when they access healthcare

The healthcare system for trans men and gender-diverse people remains constrained by limited research, poor understanding of their identities, and a one-size-fits-all model of care, say experts: from judgmental stares and misgendering to the outright denial of care based on their identity, the barriers are many

**SS J Society**  
**Meenakshy S.**

Three years ago, when Manohar, a transgender man, visited a tertiary government hospital in southern Tamil Nadu seeking gender-affirming care, he was met not with support, but with judgment. "I had not come out to my family at that point, so I had to go to the hospital wearing a churidar. I had long hair too. The doctors refused to treat me. They told me, 'If you are a trans man, why are you dressed like a woman?'" he alleges.

Mr. Manohar, now 28, had to seek a certificate of "recognition" from the District Magistrate, in line with the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, after which the doctors agreed to treat him.

Accessing healthcare is still a Herculean task for transgender and gender-diverse people, even in Tamil Nadu, a State celebrated for its progressive transgender welfare policies. From judgmental stares and misgendering to the outright denial of care based on their identity, the barriers are many. Although trans women, too, face serious challenges, the experiences of trans men and gender-diverse people who were assigned female at birth (AFAB) – including non-binary people – reveal a different set of hurdles, say activists and transgender health experts.

They say the healthcare system for such individuals remains constrained by limited research, poor understanding of their identities, and a one-size-fits-all model of care.

**Gaps in medical understanding**  
Fred Rogers, transgender rights activist and director of the Urimai Kural Trust, a trans rights organisation based in Chennai, says that even accessing general healthcare – such as treatment for a fever or cold – often feels impossible for transmasculine people. "Many healthcare professionals are not even aware of these identities to begin with. People in the community are forced to rely on a small network of recommended doctors: doctors who will treat us with dignity, who will not judge us, misgender us, or use our deadname."

L. Ramakrishnan, a public health professional and vice-president of SAATHI, a Chennai-based NGO, explains that the trans movement in India was led by trans women, and they have historically and culturally been more visible. "This, therefore, has shaped our view on gender incongruence, and there is a lack of understanding of who trans men and AFAB individuals are, even among healthcare professionals."

Air Commodore Sanjay Sharma (ret.), who heads the Association for Transgender Health of India (ATHI), says that for transmasculine people, primary care is generally given by gynaecologists, but since specialists delivering these services are usually trained to see gender in a binary fashion, patients often experience ridicule or hostility.

**Unsupervised hormonal therapy**  
For trans men, gender-affirming care may include hormone replacement therapy (HRT), in which testosterone is administered to induce masculinisation and suppress female secondary sex characteristics. There is however, a two-fold problem with hormones: inadequate information given by medical professionals many of whom are also not fully aware of the effects of the hormones, and self-medication by patients.

Hafiz, a 29-year-old trans man who has been on HRT for over two years, says he used to receive his testosterone injections

from doctors at the government hospital. However, with the introduction of the Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme in T.N., accessing free hormones now requires a two-day hospital admission. "As I come from a conservative family, I cannot get admitted to hospital without raising concerns. So I get the prescriptions and buy the hormones elsewhere," he says. This is the case with many other trans men too.

While hormones are generally prescribed in doses of 100 mg, 250 mg, or 1,000 mg, there is no strict guideline linking dosage to body weight, according to trans persons. Mr. Hafiz says, often, the available stock determines what is given. "Some trans men may seek higher doses to achieve desired masculinisation, such as increased beard growth, because proper guidance is not provided. Hormones are readily available in the market and online, and there is little oversight from medical professionals on dosage."

Mr. Hafiz adds: "These are steroids, and they can lead to serious long-term side effects, including kidney problems, heart attack, stroke, and diabetes. For individuals with underlying health conditions, hormone therapy may also have immunosuppressive effects, yet this is rarely addressed by doctors."

Mr. Ramakrishnan points out that in the private sector, the unavailability of affordable endocrinologists, who are also



Medical professionals often do not know whether trans men undergoing hormone therapy can safely receive vaccinations, for instance. They simply do not have the information because it has not been studied or taught

**GOPESHANKAR MADURAI**  
Intersex activist

trans-affirming, causes many to self-medicate.

**Gatekeeping, unethical practices**

According to intersex activist Gopi Shankar Madurai, the fundamental issue is that medical professionals do not provide affirmative care; they treat gender incongruence as a disorder. "There is always this question of whether you are trans enough. Not everyone can come out to their families, and doing so might be harmful for them but this is not something that is widely understood."

Dr. Sharma says that care providers also tend to gatekeep care. "Only after a psychiatrist gives you a diagnosis of gender dysphoria can you receive other care. Care, however, should not depend upon whether you have dysphoria or not; it should depend upon whether you are gender incongruent or not."

Dr. Ramakrishnan further points out

that some medical professionals also view trans men through a patriarchal, heteronormative, and reproduction-oriented lens – because of their sex assigned at birth. "There have been instances of surgeons refusing hysterectomies for trans men who have not birthed children," he notes. He also highlights that certain unethical and unscientific practices continue, such as vaginal examination or asking patients to expose their chests, even when they have clearly stated that they have not undergone top surgery.

**What needs to change**

One of the key issues, says Gopi Shankar Madurai, is the lack of research on gender-affirming care. "Medical professionals often do not know whether trans men undergoing hormone therapy can safely receive vaccinations for instance. They simply do not have the information because it has not been studied or taught," they explain. Dr. Sharma notes that while there has been tremendous progress in transgender healthcare research, it has nearly all happened in the West.

The training of care providers poses another massive barrier. "There is an effort by the government to make space for gender-affirming care. But care providers, even if they are well-meaning and sympathetic, are not completely trained," Dr. Sharma notes. He calls for a structured training of medical professionals and the application of standardised protocols, which have been peer-reviewed and are evidence-based. He also highlights the importance of a community-based cadre: people who have lived experiences to be brought into the government's healthcare delivery system.

## THE GIST

Accessing healthcare is still a Herculean task for transgender and gender-diverse people, even in Tamil Nadu, a State celebrated for its progressive transgender welfare policies

Many healthcare professionals are not even aware of these identities to begin with. People in the community are forced to rely on a small network of recommended doctors: doctors who will treat them with dignity, who will not judge them, misgender them, or use their deadname, say experts

They call for a structured training of medical professionals and the application of standardised protocols, which have been peer-reviewed and are evidence-based



**Slight, slow progress**  
Certain contentious practices, such as to do with clothes, have been discarded by the government at the gender clinics now, says M. Sugumar, who previously headed the gender clinic at Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital, Chennai.

Moreover, "this is an evolving discipline, so medical practices will also evolve accordingly," he notes. The Tamil Nadu government, he adds, conducts periodic gender sensitisation training, with the help of NGOs, for not just doctors specialising in gender care, but also for medical practitioners across hospitals.

Mr. Rogers and others, in 2024, filed a petition in the Madras High Court seeking better healthcare protocols for trans individuals.

The court, hearing the petition recently, has allowed the petitioner to file a rejoinder affidavit suggesting improvements to the government's existing SOPs with respect to medical and surgical care for transpersons. (meenakshy.s@thehindu.co.in)

What

## transgender men face when they access healthcare

ट्रांसजेंडर पुरुषों को क्या सामना करना पड़ता है जब वे स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं तक पहुँचते हैं

- The **healthcare system** for trans men and gender-diverse people remains constrained by **limited research, poor understanding** of their identities, and a **one-size-fits-all model of care**, say experts

स्वास्थ्य प्रणाली ट्रांस पुरुषों और लैंगिक-विविध लोगों के लिए सीमित शोध, उनकी पहचान की कम समझ, और वन-साइज़-फिट्स-ऑल देखभाल मॉडल के कारण बाधित बनी हुई है, ऐसा विशेषज्ञ कहते हैं

- From **judgmental stares and misgendering** to the **outright denial of care** based on their **identity**, the **barriers** are many



- They told me, 'If you are a trans man, why are you dressed like a woman?' he alleges उन्होंने मुझसे कहा, 'अगर तुम ट्रांस पुरुष हो, तो महिला की तरह कपड़े क्यों पहने हो?' ऐसा उनका आरोप है
- Mr. Manohar, now 28, had to seek a certificate of "recognition" from the District Magistrate, in line with the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, after which the doctors agreed to treat him  
28 वर्ष के हो चुके श्री मनोहर को जिला मजिस्ट्रेट से "मान्यता" का प्रमाणपत्र लेना पड़ा, जो ट्रांसजेंडर व्यक्ति (अधिकारों का संरक्षण) अधिनियम, 2019 के अनुरूप था, इसके बाद ही डॉक्टर इलाज के लिए सहमत हुए
- Accessing healthcare is still a Herculean task for transgender and gender-diverse people, even in Tamil Nadu, a State celebrated for its progressive transgender welfare policies  
स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं तक पहुंच आज भी ट्रांसजेंडर और जेंडर-डाइवर्स लोगों के लिए एक कठिन कार्य बनी हुई है, यहां तक कि तमिलनाडु जैसे राज्य में भी, जिसे प्रगतिशील ट्रांसजेंडर कल्याण नीतियों के लिए जाना जाता है
- From judgmental stares and misgendering to the outright denial of care based on their identity, the barriers are many  
आलोचनात्मक नजरों और गलत जेंडर संबोधन से लेकर पहचान के आधार पर इलाज से इनकार तक, बाधाएं अनेक हैं
- Although trans women, too, face serious challenges, the experiences of trans men and gender-diverse people who were assigned female at birth (AFAB) including non-binary people reveal a different set of hurdles, say activists and transgender health experts
- Fred Rogers, transgender rights activist and director of the Urimai Kural Trust, a trans rights organisation based in Chennai, says that even accessing general healthcare such as treatment for a fever or cold often feels impossible for transmasculine people  
Unsupervised hormonal therapy  
अनियंत्रित हार्मोनल थेरेपी
- For trans men, gender-affirming care may include hormone replacement therapy (HRT), in which testosterone is administered to induce masculinisation and suppress female secondary sex characteristics  
ट्रांस पुरुषों के लिए जेंडर-अफर्मिंग केयर में हार्मोन रिप्लेसमेंट थेरेपी (HRT) शामिल हो सकती है, जिसमें टेस्टोस्टेरोन दिया जाता है ताकि मर्दानगी विकसित हो और महिला द्वितीयक लैंगिक विशेषताएं दबाई जा सकें
- There is however, a two-fold problem with hormones  
हालांकि, हार्मोन से जुड़ी एक दोहरी समस्या है
- Inadequate information given by medical professionals many of whom are also not fully aware of the effects of the hormones  
चिकित्सा पेशेवरों द्वारा दी गई अपर्याप्त जानकारी, जिनमें से कई स्वयं हार्मोन के प्रभावों के बारे में पूरी तरह जागरूक नहीं होते

#### Self-medication by patients मरीजों द्वारा स्व-चिकित्सा

- Hafiz, a 29-year-old trans man who has been on HRT for over two years, says he used to receive his testosterone injections from doctors at the government hospital  
हाफिज, एक 29 वर्षीय ट्रांस पुरुष, जो दो वर्षों से अधिक समय से HRT पर हैं, कहते हैं कि उन्हें पहले सरकारी अस्पताल में डॉक्टरों से टेस्टोस्टेरोन इंजेक्शन मिलते थे
- However, with the introduction of the Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme in T N, accessing free hormones now requires a two-day hospital admission  
हालांकि, तमिलनाडु में मुख्यमंत्री समग्र स्वास्थ्य बीमा योजना लागू होने के बाद, अब मुफ्त हार्मोन प्राप्त करने के लिए दो दिन का अस्पताल में भर्ती होना आवश्यक है
- As I come from a conservative family, I cannot get admitted to hospital without raising concerns
- These are steroids, and without careful monitoring, they can lead to serious long-term side effects, including kidney problems, heart attack, stroke, and diabetes  
ये स्टेरॉइड हैं, और बिना सावधानीपूर्वक निगरानी के ये गंभीर दीर्घकालिक दुष्प्रभाव पैदा कर सकते हैं, जिनमें किडनी की समस्याएं, हार्ट अटैक, स्ट्रोक, और डायबिटीज शामिल हैं



- For individuals with **underlying health conditions**, **hormone therapy may also have immunosuppressive effects**, yet this is **rarely addressed by doctors**  
जिन व्यक्तियों को पहले से **स्वास्थ्य संबंधी समस्याएं** हैं, उनके लिए हार्मोन थेरेपी के **प्रतिरक्षा-दमनकारी प्रभाव** भी हो सकते हैं, लेकिन इसे **डॉक्टरों द्वारा शायद ही संबोधित किया जाता है**
- Mr **Ramakrishnan** points out that in the **private sector**, the unavailability of **affordable endocrinologists**, who are also **trans-affirming**, causes many to **self-medicate**  
**रामकृष्णन** बताते हैं कि **निजी क्षेत्र में किफायती एंडोक्रिनोलॉजिस्ट** की कमी, जो **ट्रांस-अफर्मिंग** भी हों, कई लोगों को **स्व-चिकित्सा** के लिए मजबूर करती है

### Gatekeeping, unethical practices गेटकीपिंग, अनैतिक प्रथाएँ

- According to **intersex activist Gopi Shankar Madurai**, the fundamental issue is that **medical professionals do not provide affirmative care they treat gender incongruence as a disorder**
- There have been instances of **surgeons refusing hysterectomies** for trans men who have **not birthed children**  
ऐसे उदाहरण सामने आए हैं जहां **सर्जनों** ने उन ट्रांस पुरुषों के लिए **हिस्टेरेक्टॉमी से इनकार** किया है जिन्होंने **बच्चों को जन्म नहीं दिया है**
- He also highlights that certain **unethical and unscientific practices** continue, such as **vaginal examination** or **asking patients to expose their chests**, even when they have clearly stated that they have **not undergone top surgery**
- The **Tamil Nadu government** he adds conducts **periodic gender sensitisation training with the help of NGOs**  
वे जोड़ते हैं कि **तमिलनाडु सरकार एनजीओ** की मदद से **नियमित जेंडर सेंसिटाइजेशन प्रशिक्षण** कराती है
- For not just doctors specialising in **gender care**, but also for **medical practitioners across hospitals**  
यह न केवल **जेंडर केयर** में विशेषज्ञ डॉक्टरों के लिए बल्कि **सभी अस्पतालों के चिकित्सकों** के लिए भी होता है
- **Mr Rogers** and others in **2024** filed a **petition** in the **Madras High Court** seeking **better healthcare protocols for trans individuals**  
**श्री रोजर्स** और अन्य लोगों ने **2024** में **मद्रास उच्च न्यायालय** में **ट्रांस व्यक्तियों** के लिए **बेहतर स्वास्थ्य प्रोटोकॉल** की मांग करते हुए **याचिका** दायर की
- The court hearing the petition recently has allowed the petitioner to file a **rejoinder affidavit** suggesting **improvements** to the government's existing **SOPs** with respect to **medical and surgical care for transpersons**  
हाल ही में याचिका की सुनवाई करते हुए अदालत ने याचिकाकर्ता को **पुनर्जवाबी हलफनामा** दाखिल करने की अनुमति दी है जिसमें **ट्रांस व्यक्तियों** के लिए **चिकित्सीय और शल्य चिकित्सा देखभाल** से संबंधित सरकार की मौजूदा **एसओपी** में **सुधार** सुझाए जा सकें



GS I. Society

## Mob rule

The bogey of infiltration is resulting in hate crimes across India

In the closing weeks of 2025, a series of violent incidents across India exposed a disturbing pattern of mob violence directed at migrants who were labelled foreigners – Bangladeshis and Chinese – by their attackers. In these cases, the three victims were Indian citizens from various parts of the country. Suspicion based on language, region, appearance or presumed nationality is escalating into mob violence in different regions. This is extremely worrying and the police must act strictly. The political leadership in States and the Centre must make it clear that such violence is unacceptable. In Palakkad district, Kerala, Ram Narayan Baghel, a 31-year-old migrant worker from Chhattisgarh was lynched by a mob on December 17. Baghel was accused of theft and repeatedly questioned about his identity, with his attackers allegedly asking him whether he was “Bangladeshi” before beating him to death. Kerala is heavily dependent on migrant labour, and prides itself on its high levels of education and law and order. The lynching is a blot on its reputation. On December 24, in Sambalpur in Odisha, a young migrant worker from West Bengal was beaten to death by a mob that accused him of being a “Bangladeshi”. Juel Sheikh, a daily wage labourer, was confronted at a tea stall by unidentified persons who demanded his identity documents and accused him of being an illegal Bangladeshi immigrant. Two days later, in another incident from Odisha, a Bengali-speaking street vendor from West Bengal was assaulted.

In Tamil Nadu, a man from Odisha was attacked while travelling on a train, in Tiruvallur district, by juveniles armed with machetes and sickles. The assault was filmed and circulated on social media. In Dehradun, on December 28, Anjel Chakma, a 22-year-old student from Tripura, was stabbed by a group that had allegedly hurled racial slurs at him and his brother. He died in hospital later. People from the northeastern States are often treated as perpetual outsiders in other parts of India; Chakma was called “Chinese” by his attackers. These are not isolated incidents: they occur amid numerous other cases of mob intimidation, sometimes targeting worshippers of minority communities, at other times, even young students celebrating a friend’s birthday. The police in the States have responded to these horrible crimes by making some arrests, but that is not sufficient. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has turned its incendiary campaign against “illegal infiltration” from Bangladesh as a central plank in the forthcoming Assembly elections in Assam and West Bengal. It is no coincidence that mobs across the country feel emboldened to raise this bogey at random against helpless people. The BJP should realise the dangers of its campaign and restrain itself.

बांग्लादेशी प्रवासी बताया

- Two days later, in another incident from Odisha, a Bengali-speaking street vendor from West Bengal was assaulted

## Mob rule भीड़ का शासन

• The bogey of infiltration is resulting in hate crimes across India

घुसपैठ का भय पूरे भारत में घृणा अपराधों का कारण बन रहा है

• In the closing weeks of 2025, a series of violent incidents across India exposed a disturbing pattern of mob violence directed at migrants who were labelled foreigners Bangladeshis and Chinese by their attackers

• Suspicion based on language, region, appearance or presumed nationality is escalating into mob violence in different regions

भाषा, क्षेत्र, दिखावट या अनुमानित राष्ट्रीयता के आधार पर संदेह अलग अलग क्षेत्रों में भीड़ हिंसा में बदल रहा है

• This is extremely worrying and the police must act strictly यह स्थिति अत्यंत चिंताजनक है और पुलिस को सख्ती से कार्रवाई करनी चाहिए

• The political leadership in States and the Centre must make it clear that such violence is unacceptable राज्यों और केंद्र की राजनीतिक नेतृत्व को स्पष्ट करना चाहिए कि ऐसी हिंसा अस्वीकार्य है

• In Palakkad district, Kerala, Ram Narayan Baghel, a 31-year-old migrant worker from Chhattisgarh was lynched by a mob on December 17

केरल के पलक्कड़ ज़िले में, छत्तीसगढ़ से आए 31 वर्षीय प्रवासी मजदूर राम नारायण बघेल को 17 दिसंबर को भीड़ ने पीट पीटकर मार डाला

• Baghel was accused of theft and repeatedly questioned about his identity, with his attackers allegedly asking him whether he was Bangladeshi before beating him to death बघेल पर चोरी का आरोप लगाया गया और उनसे बार बार उनकी पहचान के बारे में पूछा गया, कथित तौर पर हमलावरों ने उन्हें मारने से पहले पूछा कि क्या वह बांग्लादेशी हैं

• Kerala is heavily dependent on migrant labour, and prides itself on its high levels of education and law and order केरल प्रवासी श्रम पर काफी हद तक निर्भर है और अपनी उच्च शिक्षा तथा कानून व्यवस्था पर गर्व करता है

• The lynching is a blot on its reputation यह लिंचिंग उसकी प्रतिष्ठा पर धब्बा है

• On December 24, in Sambalpur in Odisha, a young migrant worker from West Bengal was beaten to death by a mob that accused him of being a Bangladeshi

24 दिसंबर को, ओडिशा के संबलपुर में, पश्चिम बंगाल के एक युवा प्रवासी मजदूर को भीड़ ने पीट पीटकर मार डाला, यह आरोप लगाते हुए कि वह बांग्लादेशी है

• Juel Sheikh, a daily wage labourer, was confronted at a tea stall by unidentified persons who demanded his identity documents and accused him of being an illegal Bangladeshi immigrant

जुएल शेख, एक दिहाड़ी मजदूर, को एक चाय की दुकान पर अज्ञात लोगों ने घेर लिया, जिन्होंने उनसे पहचान पत्र मांगे और उन्हें अवैध



दो दिन बाद, ओडिशा की एक अन्य घटना में, पश्चिम बंगाल के एक बांग्ला भाषी सड़क विक्रेता पर हमला किया गया

- In Tamil Nadu, a man from Odisha was attacked while travelling on a train, in Tiruvallur district, by juveniles armed with machetes and sickles  
तमिलनाडु में, ओडिशा के एक व्यक्ति पर तिरुवल्लूर ज़िले में ट्रेन यात्रा के दौरान छुरियों और दरारंतियों से लैस किशोरों ने हमला किया
- The assault was filmed and circulated on social media  
इस हमले का वीडियो बनाया गया और उसे सोशल मीडिया पर फैलाया गया
- In Dehradun, on December 28, Anjel Chakma, a 22-year-old student from Tripura, was stabbed by a group that had allegedly hurled racial slurs at him and his brother

## GS Paper 1: Geography

### TOPICS COVERED

02 January 2026

1. **Ukrainian drone strike in Kherson kills 24, wounds at least 50: Russia**  
खेरसॉन में यूक्रेनी ड्रोन हमले में 24 की मौत, कम से कम 50 घायल: रूस

# Ukrainian drone strike in Kherson kills 24, wounds at least 50: Russia

GS I: Geography, Mapping

Associated Press  
KYIV

Russian officials on Thursday said a Ukrainian drone strike killed 24 people and wounded at least 50 as they celebrated the New Year in a Russian-held village in Ukraine's Kherson region, as tensions between the two nations continue to spike despite diplomats hailing productive peace talks.

Three drones struck a cafe and hotel in the resort town of Khorly on the Black Sea coast, the region's Moscow-installed leader, Vladimir Saldo, said in a statement on Telegram. He said that one of the drones carried an incendiary mixture, sparking a blaze.

Ukrainian officials did not immediately comment on the claim of a strike.

The attack could not be independently verified by The Associated Press.

The attack was condemned by a number of Russian officials. Valentina Matviyenko, the chair of Russia's Upper House of Parliament, the Federation Council, said that the strike "strengthened" Russia's resolve to quickly achieve its goals in its almost four-year invasion of Ukraine.

The strike "once again demonstrates the validity of our initial demands," Ms. Matviyenko said. The statement follows claims from Moscow that Ukraine launched a long-range drone attack against one of Russian President Vladimir Putin's official residences in northwestern Russia on Tuesday. Kyiv has denounced the claims as a "lie".

Russia's Ministry of De-



War wreckage: The damaged hotel after the drone attack on Thursday in a Russian-held village in Ukraine's Kherson. AFP

fence said Thursday that its specialists had accessed the navigation system in one of the drones it claimed was used in the attack and used its data to confirm that Mr. Putin's residence was the drone's final destination.

The claim could not be verified as the Ministry did not share evidence on the findings, but officials said it

would transfer the data to U.S. officials "through established channels."

On Wednesday, Russia's Defense Ministry also released a video on Wednesday of a downed drone it said was involved in the attack.

The nighttime clip showed a man in camouflage, a helmet and a Kevlar vest standing near a dam-

aged drone lying in snow. The man, his face covered, talks about the drone. Neither the man nor the Defense Ministry provided any location or date and neither the video nor its claims could be independently verified.

Kyiv has called the allegations of an attack on Mr. Putin's residence a ruse to derail ongoing peace negotiations, which have ramped up in recent weeks on both sides of the Atlantic.

In his New Year's address, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that a peace deal was "90% ready" but warned that the remaining 10%, believed to include key sticking points such as territory, would "determine the fate of peace, the fate of Ukraine and Europe, how people will live".

U.S. President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff said on Wednesday that he, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Mr. Trump's son-in-law and adviser Jared Kushner had a "productive call" with the national security advisers of Britain, France, Germany and Ukraine.

"We focused on how to move the discussions forward in a practical way on behalf of [Trump's] peace process, including strengthening security guarantees and developing effective deconfliction mechanisms to help end the war and ensure it does not restart," Mr. Witkoff said in a post on X.

Lead Ukrainian negotiator Rustem Umerov reaffirmed that European and Ukrainian officials plan to meet on Saturday, while Mr. Zelenskyy is due to

hold talks next week with European leaders.

Elsewhere in Ukraine, Russia attacked the Odesa region overnight, targeting civilian infrastructure in several waves of drone attacks, according to regional head Oleh Kiper.

In a post on Telegram, Kiper said a two-story residential building was damaged and that a drone hit an apartment on the 17th floor of a high-rise building without detonating. There were no casualties reported. In its daily report, Ukraine's air force said air defence forces had downed or suppressed 176 of 205 drones targeting the country overnight. It said hits by 24 strike drones were recorded at 15 locations and the attack was still ongoing.

RELATED REPORT ON  
» PAGE 14

## Ukrainian drone strike in Kherson kills 24, wounds at least 50: Russia

खेरसॉन में यूक्रेनी ड्रोन हमले में 24 की मौत, कम से कम 50 घायल: रूस

- Russian officials on Thursday said a **Ukrainian drone strike** killed **24 people** and wounded at least **50** as they celebrated the **New Year** in a Russian-held village in **Ukraine's Kherson region**, as tensions between the two nations continue to spike despite diplomats hailing productive peace talks.

## GS Paper II: International Relations



<b>TOPICS COVERED</b>	<b>02 January 2026</b>
<p><b>1. Bulgaria adopts the euro, nearly 20 years after joining European Union</b> यूरोपीय संघ में शामिल होने के लगभग 20 साल बाद बुल्गारिया ने यूरो को अपनाया</p>	

## Bulgaria adopts the euro, nearly 20 years after joining European Union

GS II: IR  
Agence France Presse  
SOFIA

Bulgaria on Thursday became the 21st country to switch to the euro, a milestone met with both cheers and fears, nearly 20 years after the Balkan nation joined the European Union.

At midnight, Bulgaria gave up the lev, in use since the late 19th century, and Bulgarian euro coins were projected onto the central bank's building.

"I warmly welcome Bulgaria to the euro family," said Christine Lagarde, president of the European Central Bank, calling the euro a "powerful symbol" of "shared values and collective strength".



'Final step': A person holds change in euros as customers shop in Fantastico store in Sofia, Bulgaria, on Thursday. REUTERS

"Great! It works!" exclaimed Dimitar, a 43-year-old man after withdrawing 100 euros from an automated teller machine shortly after midnight.

Successive governments in the country of 6.4 million people have advocat-

ed joining the euro, hoping that it will boost the economy of the European Union's poorest member, reinforce ties to the West and protect against Russia's influence.

But Bulgarians have long been divided over the

switch, with many worrying the introduction could usher in higher prices and add to the political instability rattling the country.

In a speech broadcast shortly before midnight, President Rumen Radev hailed it as the "final step" in Bulgaria's EU integration, as thousands of people braved sub-zero temperatures in Sofia to celebrate the New Year.

Mr. Radev however voiced regret that Bulgarians had not been consulted by referendum on the adoption.

European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen said that Bulgaria's move into the eurozone marked "an important milestone" for Bulgarians.

### Bulgaria adopts the euro, nearly 20 years after joining European Union यूरोपीय संघ में शामिल होने के लगभग 20 साल बाद बुल्गारिया ने यूरो को अपनाया

- Bulgaria on **Thursday** became the **21st country** to switch to the **euro**, a milestone met with both cheers and fears, nearly **20 years** after the Balkan nation joined the **European Union**. गुरुवार को बुल्गारिया यूरो अपनाने वाला 21वां देश बन गया, यह उपलब्धि यूरोपीय संघ में शामिल होने के लगभग 20 साल बाद खुशी और आशंकाओं दोनों के साथ सामने आई।
- At **midnight**, Bulgaria gave up the **lev**, in use since the **late 19th century**, and Bulgarian **euro coins** were projected onto the **central bank's building**. आधी रात को बुल्गारिया ने लेव को छोड़ दिया, जो 19वीं सदी के अंत से प्रचलन में था, और बुल्गारियाई यूरो सिक्कों को केंद्रीय बैंक की इमारत पर प्रदर्शित किया गया।



- “I warmly welcome Bulgaria to the **euro family**,” said **Christine Lagarde**, president of the **European Central Bank**, calling the euro a “**powerful symbol**” of “**shared values and collective strength**”.  
“मैं बुल्गारिया का यूरो परिवार में गर्मजोशी से स्वागत करती हूँ,” यूरोपीय सेंट्रल बैंक की अध्यक्ष क्रिस्टीन लगार्ड ने कहा, और यूरो को “साझा मूल्यों और सामूहिक शक्ति” का “शक्तिशाली प्रतीक” बताया।
- “**Great! It works!**” exclaimed **Dimitar**, a **43-year-old man** after withdrawing **100 euros** from an **automated teller machine** shortly after midnight.  
“बहुत बढ़िया! यह काम करता है!” 43 वर्षीय व्यक्ति दिमितार ने आधी रात के तुरंत बाद एटीएम से 100 यूरो निकालने के बाद कहा।
- Successive governments in the country of **6.4 million people** have advocated joining the euro, hoping that it will boost the economy of the **European Union’s poorest member**, reinforce ties to the **West** and protect against **Russia’s influence**.  
64 लाख आबादी वाले इस देश में लगातार सरकारों ने यूरो में शामिल होने का समर्थन किया है, उम्मीद है कि इससे यूरोपीय संघ के सबसे गरीब सदस्य की अर्थव्यवस्था को बढ़ावा मिलेगा, पश्चिम के साथ संबंध मज़बूत होंगे और रूस के प्रभाव से सुरक्षा मिलेगी।
- But Bulgarians have long been divided over the switch, with many worrying the introduction could usher in **higher prices** and add to the **political instability** rattling the country.  
लेकिन बुल्गारियाई लंबे समय से इस बदलाव पर बंटे हुए हैं, कई लोग आशंका जता रहे हैं कि इससे ऊंची कीमतें आ सकती हैं और देश को झकझोर रही राजनीतिक अस्थिरता बढ़ सकती है।
- In a speech broadcast shortly before midnight, President **Rumen Radev** hailed it as the “**final step**” in Bulgaria’s **EU integration**, as thousands of people braved **sub-zero temperatures** in **Sofia** to celebrate the **New Year**.  
आधी रात से ठीक पहले प्रसारित भाषण में राष्ट्रपति रुमेन रादेव ने इसे बुल्गारिया के ईयू एकीकरण में “अंतिम कदम” बताया, जब सोफिया में हज़ारों लोग नव वर्ष मनाने के लिए शून्य से नीचे तापमान में डटे रहे।
- Mr. Radev however voiced regret that Bulgarians had not been consulted by **referendum** on the adoption.  
हालांकि श्री रादेव ने इस बात पर खेद व्यक्त किया कि इसे अपनाने पर बुल्गारियाईयों से जनमत संग्रह के माध्यम से परामर्श नहीं किया गया।
- **European Commission** president **Ursula von der Leyen** said that Bulgaria’s move into the **eurozone** marked “**an important milestone**” for Bulgarians.  
यूरोपीय आयोग की अध्यक्ष उर्सुला वॉन डेर लेयेन ने कहा कि यूरोज़ोन में बुल्गारिया का प्रवेश बुल्गारियाईयों के लिए “एक महत्वपूर्ण मील का पत्थर” है।

<b>GS Paper II: Governance,</b>	
<b>TOPICS COVERED</b>	
	<b>02 January 2026</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Mandating student presence, erasing learning</b> छात्रों की उपस्थिति अनिवार्य करना, सीखने की प्रक्रिया को मिटाना
<b>2.</b>	<b>The water divide</b> जल विभाजन
<b>3.</b>	<b>From encroachment to legal ownership</b> अतिक्रमण से कानूनी स्वामित्व तक



## Mandating student presence, erasing learning

SS II: Governance

The Delhi High Court's affirmation that law students may sit for examinations without satisfying rigid attendance thresholds has provoked predictable anxiety among administrators still tethered to an older, bureaucratized conception of education. But the ruling, far from eroding academic seriousness, restores a truth that Indian universities have resisted for decades, a truth that learning cannot be secured through surveillance. Compulsory attendance belongs to a paternalistic era that believed that students must be prodded into intellectual life rather than invited into it. A university worthy of its name should cultivate curiosity, not compliance.

**The obsession with a student's presence**  
I say this not only as a critic of the managerial culture that has consumed our campuses, but as someone who has spent more than 40 years in the classroom. In all those years, I rarely took attendance and almost never prevented a student from taking an examination. I believed, and still believe, that coercion produces neither seriousness nor scholarship. If students do not wish to attend a class, the proper response is not punishment but introspection. A teacher must ask the harder question: what did I fail to offer that could have made this hour indispensable to them? Attendance is not a measure of learning; at best it is a measure of obedience.

The obsession with physical presence, understandably, flourishes where the classroom has been reduced to the perfunctory transfer of "yellowing" notes, the rote delivery of prefabricated knowledge that students could obtain faster and more efficiently through digital means. The ruling disrupts this apathy. It forces institutions of law to confront a truth long evaded, that a classroom that enforces attendance is already pedagogically bankrupt. This ruling of the High Court, I hope, will go a long way in changing the attendance norms across the country in all universities of higher learning.

Paulo Freire saw this with a clarity that remains electrifying. For him, education was never the mechanical depositing of information but a dialogic encounter, an awakening of consciousness through questioning, debate, and the shared labour of inquiry. In his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, a seminal classic, students are not passive vessels receiving knowledge but beings who "name the world" and interpret through thought, and critical imagination.

For instance, my strongest classrooms have always been those born not of obligation but of desire. I remember speaking with Sir Isaiah Berlin, the renowned historian of ideas, over lunch in Oxford many years ago, and he confessed, with characteristic generosity, how rigorously he prepared his notes, outlines, marginalia, a meticulously constructed road map of ideas, jokes, narrative turns, and emotional crescendos. His lectures captivated not by accident but because they were acts of



**Shelley Wallia**  
has taught Cultural and Literary Theory at the Panjab University, Chandigarh

craftsmanship. Students came not out of duty but anticipation.

I carried that ethic into my own teaching. I never entered a lecture room unprepared, often working late into the night before class. And like Sir Berlin, I believed that the teacher's labour should disappear into the pleasure of learning, an effort made invisible but unmistakable in its effect. I was not alone in thinking this way. Terry Eagleton's lectures overflowed not because he demanded attendance but because his ideas were intensely incendiary. Germaine Greer filled halls because she brought intellectual rebellion to the podium. The Cambridge historian, Professor Sir Christopher Bayly, spoke history as if it were happening in the present tense. Frank Kermode, the influential literary critic, lectured after dinner with a glass of wine in hand, and this atmosphere of informal brilliance made literature feel even more urgent. None of them needed the threat of consequences to fill a classroom. They made absence unthinkable. This is what the Indian university has forgotten.

### Classroom experiences

My strongest classrooms have always been those born not of obligation but of desire. I recall an afternoon when I took my students to a ridge overlooking the valley to read Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey." I wanted them to encounter the poem not as a museum piece but as a living meditation on memory and perception. The students dispersed under the pines and wild grass where, suddenly, Wordsworth's idea of nature as "nurse," "guide" and "guardian of my heart" felt neither archaic nor maudlin but provocatively contemporary. I asked a single question: What does it mean for nature to educate us? What followed was not conventional interpretation but a collective reflection on how landscape shapes consciousness. The poem seemed to open of its own accord, demanding a point of view, rather than receiving it.

A similar transformation occurred when we carried Thoreau's Walden to the edge of a wooded trail. The students sat on stones and fallen branches, thumbing through a text, interpreting individually and not merely toeing the line. Thoreau's claim that most lives are lived in "quiet desperation" kindled an unexpected debate about our own system, its addiction to metrics, its reduction of intellectual life to attendance charts, its inability to recognise solitude, reflection, or slowness as virtues. Reading outdoors, my classroom dissolved, and what emerged instead was inquiry in its most rudimentary form.

The ruling, perhaps inadvertently, moves us closer to this ideal. In an era where digital resources, Artificial Intelligence tools, and open-access archives place vast knowledge at students' fingertips, the insistence on physical presence feels not only antiquated but also pedagogically unimaginative. The finest universities, Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, MIT and others, do not treat attendance as the

measure of commitment. They assume maturity, always trusting a student's intellectual autonomy. Their confidence lies in the quality of their teaching, not in the surveillance of their students.

### The sorry state of the Indian university

In this context, the Indian university has been reduced to a mere shell of its former self, suffocated by bureaucratic rigidity and administrative overreach. The Centre's increasing control has transformed campuses into intellectual vassals, where curricula are scrutinised, dissent is silenced, and administrative positions are filled by those who prioritise loyalty over scholarly merit. Within this stifling paradigm, mandatory attendance policies serve as a tool of pedagogical pacification, undermining student autonomy and intellectual curiosity.

A university that prioritises attendance over engagement ultimately betrays its fundamental purpose to nurture critical thinkers who can challenge and transform society. This is why the attendance debate is not administrative but philosophical, asking whether we trust students as thinking beings, or whether we regard them as wards of the institution. Coercion, indeed, is always the refuge of a pedagogy that has lost confidence.

The High Court ruling opens up a transformative possibility for rethinking the very fabric of teaching across higher education. By removing the coercive element of compulsory attendance, educators will be compelled to innovate and reimagine their pedagogical approaches. An empty classroom can be a catalyst for introspection, prompting teachers to craft learning spaces that are intellectually compelling and inherently engaging. Peer dynamics also undergo a paradigmatic shift, where the shame lies not in absence but in being disconnected from a class that has garnered admiration and enthusiasm from other students. This reorients the incentive structure, shifting the locus of motivation from external compulsion to intrinsic curiosity.

Learning, in this context, is reconceptualised as a dynamic and evolving process, marked by its restless and vital nature. It thrives on contradiction, dialogue, imagination and risk-taking. The true university is built on this refusal of stasis, its purpose not to disseminate information but to facilitate discovery. The future of education hinges on recognising and embracing this fundamental distinction.

The ruling therefore, serves as a testament to the inherent tension between freedom and coercion in the pursuit of knowledge. By decoupling attendance from examination eligibility, the Court has highlighted the futility of attempting to legislate intellectual engagement. True learning cannot be mandated. It can only be cultivated through the creation of spaces that foster intellectual curiosity and freedom. The university's future depends on its ability to navigate this fundamental distinction.

Indian universities must confront a truth that they evade — a classroom where attendance is enforced is pedagogically bankrupt

## Mandating student presence, erasing learning

### छात्रों की उपस्थिति अनिवार्य करना, सीखने की प्रक्रिया को मिटाना

- The Delhi High Court's affirmation that law students may sit for examinations without satisfying rigid attendance thresholds has provoked predictable anxiety among administrators still tethered to an older bureaucratized conception of education दिल्ली उच्च न्यायालय द्वारा यह पुष्टि कि कानून के छात्र कठोर उपस्थिति मानकों को पूरा किए बिना परीक्षा दे सकते हैं, ने उन प्रशासकों में अपेक्षित चिंता पैदा की है जो अभी भी शिक्षा की नौकरशाही अवधारणा से जुड़े हुए हैं
- But the ruling, far from eroding academic seriousness, restores a truth that Indian universities have resisted for decades, a truth that learning cannot be secured through surveillance लेकिन यह फैसला शैक्षणिक गंभीरता को कमजोर करने के बजाय उस सत्य को पुनर्स्थापित करता है जिसका भारतीय विश्वविद्यालयों ने दशकों तक विरोध किया है, कि निगरानी के माध्यम से सीख सुनिश्चित नहीं की जा सकती



- **Compulsory attendance belongs to a paternalistic era that believed that students must be prodded into intellectual life rather than invited into it**  
अनिवार्य उपस्थिति एक पितृसत्तात्मक युग की देन है जो मानता था कि छात्रों को बौद्धिक जीवन में धकेलना चाहिए, न कि उसमें आमंत्रित करना
- **A university worthy of its name should cultivate curiosity, not compliance**  
अपने नाम के योग्य विश्वविद्यालय को अनुपालन नहीं बल्कि जिज्ञासा का विकास करना चाहिए

### The obsession with a student's presence छात्र की उपस्थिति के प्रति जुनून

- I say this not only as a critic of the **managerial culture** that has consumed our campuses, but as someone who has spent more than **40 years in the classroom**  
मैं यह केवल उस **प्रबंधकीय संस्कृति** के आलोचक के रूप में नहीं कह रहा हूँ जिसने हमारे परिसरों को घेर लिया है, बल्कि एक ऐसे व्यक्ति के रूप में भी जिसने **40 से अधिक वर्ष कक्षा में** बिताए हैं
- In all those years, I rarely took **attendance** and almost never prevented a student from taking an **examination**  
उन सभी वर्षों में, मैंने शायद ही कभी **उपस्थिति** ली और लगभग कभी भी किसी छात्र को **परीक्षा** देने से नहीं रोका
- I believed, and still believe, that **coercion produces neither seriousness nor scholarship**  
मैं मानता था, और अब भी मानता हूँ, कि **जबरदस्ती** न तो **गंभीरता** पैदा करती है और न ही **विद्वत्ता**
- **If students do not wish to attend a class, the proper response is not punishment but introspection**  
यदि छात्र कक्षा में आना नहीं चाहते, तो उचित प्रतिक्रिया **दंड** नहीं बल्कि **आत्ममंथन** है
- **A teacher must ask the harder question what did I fail to offer that could have made this hour indispensable to them**  
एक शिक्षक को यह कठिन प्रश्न पूछना चाहिए कि मैंने ऐसा क्या **प्रस्तुत नहीं किया** जो इस एक घंटे को उनके लिए **अनिवार्य** बना सकता था
- **Attendance is not a measure of learning at best it is a measure of obedience**  
**उपस्थिति सीखने का मापदंड नहीं है**, अधिकतम यह **आज्ञाकारिता** का माप हो सकती है
- The obsession with **physical presence**, understandably, flourishes where the classroom has been reduced to the perfunctory transfer of **yellowing notes**, the rote delivery of **prefabricated knowledge** that students could obtain faster and more efficiently through **digital means**  
**शारीरिक उपस्थिति** के प्रति यह जुनून स्वाभाविक रूप से वहीं पनपता है जहां कक्षा को **पीले पड़ चुके नोट्स** के औपचारिक हस्तांतरण और **पूर्वनिर्मित ज्ञान** की रटत आपूर्ति तक सीमित कर दिया गया है, जिसे छात्र **डिजिटल माध्यमों** से कहीं तेजी और कुशलता से प्राप्त कर सकते हैं
- The ruling disrupts this **apathy**  
यह फैसला इस **उदासीनता** को तोड़ता है
- It forces institutions of law to confront a truth long evaded, that a classroom that enforces **attendance** is already **pedagogically bankrupt**  
यह कानून के संस्थानों को उस लंबे समय से टाले गए सत्य का सामना करने के लिए मजबूर करता है कि जो कक्षा **उपस्थिति थोपती है** वह पहले से ही **शैक्षणिक रूप से दिवालिया** है
- This ruling of the **High Court**, I hope, will go a long way in changing the **attendance norms** across the country in all **universities of higher learning**  
मुझे आशा है कि **उच्च न्यायालय** का यह फैसला देश भर के सभी **उच्च शिक्षा संस्थानों** में **उपस्थिति मानकों** को बदलने में दूरगामी प्रभाव डालेगा
- **Paulo Freire** saw this with a clarity that remains **electrifying**  
**पाउलो फ्रेरे** ने इसे ऐसी स्पष्टता से देखा जो आज भी **विद्युत्स्फूर्त** है
- For him, **education was never the mechanical depositing of information but a dialogic encounter, an awakening of consciousness through questioning, debate, and the shared labour of inquiry**  
उनके लिए **शिक्षा** कभी भी **जानकारी** का यांत्रिक जमा करना नहीं थी, बल्कि एक **संवादी अनुभव** थी, जो **प्रश्न, बहस, और अन्वेषण** के साझा श्रम के माध्यम से **चेतना** को जाग्रत करती है
- In his **Pedagogy of the Oppressed**, a **seminal classic**, **students are not passive vessels receiving knowledge but beings who name the world and interpret through thought, and**



### critical imagination

उनकी **Pedagogy of the Oppressed** नामक **मौलिक कृति** में, छात्र **निष्क्रिय पात्र** नहीं हैं जो ज्ञान ग्रहण करते हैं, बल्कि ऐसे प्राणी हैं जो **दुनिया को नाम देते हैं** और **विचार** तथा **आलोचनात्मक कल्पना** के माध्यम से उसकी व्याख्या करते हैं

- For instance, my strongest classrooms have always been those born not of **obligation** but of **desire**  
उदाहरण के लिए, मेरी सबसे प्रभावशाली कक्षाएं हमेशा **कर्तव्य** से नहीं बल्कि **इच्छा** से उत्पन्न हुई हैं
- I remember speaking with **Sir Isaiah Berlin**, the renowned **historian of ideas**, over lunch in **Oxford** many years ago  
मुझे कई वर्ष पहले **ऑक्सफोर्ड** में दोपहर के भोजन के दौरान **सर आइज़ाया बर्लिन**, प्रसिद्ध **विचार इतिहासकार**, से हुई बातचीत याद है
- He confessed, with characteristic **generosity**, **how rigorously he prepared his notes, outlines, marginalia, a meticulously constructed road map of ideas, jokes, narrative turns, and emotional crescendos**  
उन्होंने अपनी विशिष्ट **उदारता** के साथ स्वीकार किया कि वे कितनी कठोरता से अपने **नोट्स, आउटलाइन, हाशिये की टिप्पणियां**, विचारों का सटीक **रोडमैप**, चुटकुले, कथानक मोड़ और **भावनात्मक उत्कर्ष** तैयार करते थे
- **His lectures captivated not by accident but because they were acts of craftsmanship**  
उनके **व्याख्यान** संयोग से नहीं बल्कि **शिल्पकला** के कारण मन मोह लेते थे
- Students came not out of **duty** but **anticipation**  
छात्र **कर्तव्य** से नहीं बल्कि **उत्सुक अपेक्षा** के साथ आते थे
- I carried that **ethic** into my own teaching  
मैंने उसी **नैतिकता** को अपने शिक्षण में अपनाया
- I never entered a lecture room **unprepared**, often working late into the **night** before class  
मैं कभी भी **बिना तैयारी** के कक्षा में नहीं गया, अक्सर कक्षा से पहले **रात देर तक** काम करता था
- And like **Sir Berlin**, I believed that the **teacher's labour should disappear into the pleasure of learning, an effort made invisible but unmistakable in its effect**  
और **सर बर्लिन** की तरह, मैं मानता था कि शिक्षक का **परिश्रम सीखने के आनंद** में विलीन हो जाना चाहिए, एक ऐसा **प्रयास** जो दिखे नहीं लेकिन अपने **प्रभाव** में स्पष्ट हो
- I was not alone in thinking this way  
मैं इस सोच में अकेला नहीं था
- **Terry Eagleton's lectures** overflowed not because he demanded **attendance** but because his **ideas** were intensely **incendiary**  
**टेरी ईगलटन** के व्याख्यान इसलिए भरे रहते थे क्योंकि उन्होंने **उपस्थिति** नहीं मांगी, बल्कि इसलिए कि उनके **विचार** अत्यंत **उत्तेजक** थे
- **Germaine Greer** filled halls because **she brought intellectual rebellion to the podium**  
**जर्मन ग्रीयर** ने सभागार इसलिए भर दिए क्योंकि वह मंच पर **बौद्धिक विद्रोह** लेकर आईं
- The **Cambridge historian, Professor Sir Christopher Bayly**, spoke history as if it were happening in the **present tense**  
**कैम्ब्रिज के इतिहासकार, प्रोफेसर सर क्रिस्टोफर बेली**, इतिहास को ऐसे प्रस्तुत करते थे जैसे वह **वर्तमान काल** में घट रहा हो
- **Frank Kermode, the influential literary critic**, lectured after dinner with a **glass of wine in hand, and this atmosphere of informal brilliance made literature feel even more urgent**  
प्रभावशाली **साहित्यिक आलोचक फ्रैंक केर्मोड** रात के खाने के बाद हाथ में **शराब का गिलास** लिए व्याख्यान देते थे, और यह **अनौपचारिक प्रतिभा** का वातावरण साहित्य को और भी **तत्काल** बना देता था
- None of them needed the **threat of consequences** to fill a classroom  
उनमें से किसी को भी कक्षा भरने के लिए **दंड के भय** की आवश्यकता नहीं पड़ी
- They made **absence unthinkable**  
उन्होंने **अनुपस्थिति को अकल्पनीय** बना दिया
- This is what the **Indian university** has **forgotten**  
यही वह बात है जिसे **भारतीय विश्वविद्यालय भूल चुका है**

Classroom experiences  
कक्षा के अनुभव



- My strongest classrooms have always been those born not of **obligation** but of **desire** मेरी सबसे सशक्त कक्षाएँ हमेशा **कर्तव्य** से नहीं बल्कि **इच्छा** से उत्पन्न हुई हैं
- I recall an afternoon when I took my students to a **ridge overlooking the valley** to read **Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey"** मुझे एक दोपहर याद है जब मैं अपने छात्रों को **घाटी की ओर देखने वाली पहाड़ी** पर ले गया ताकि वे **वर्ड्सवर्थ की "टिन्टर्न एबे"** पढ़ सकें
- I wanted them to encounter the poem not as a **museum piece** but as a **living meditation on memory and perception** मैं चाहता था कि वे कविता को **संग्रहालय की वस्तु** की तरह नहीं बल्कि **स्मृति और अनुभूति** पर एक **जीवंत चिंतन** के रूप में अनुभव करें
- The students dispersed under the **pin**s and **wild grass** where suddenly Wordsworth's idea of **nature as nurse, guide and guardian of my heart** felt neither **archaic** nor **maudlin** but **provocatively contemporary** छात्र **चीड़ के पेड़ों और जंगली घास** के बीच फैल गए जहाँ अचानक वर्ड्सवर्थ का **प्रकृति को पालक, मार्गदर्शक और मेरे हृदय की संरक्षक** मानने का विचार न तो **पुरातन** लगा न ही **भावुक**, बल्कि **उत्तेजक रूप से समकालीन** प्रतीत हुआ
- I asked a single question What does it mean for **nature to educate us** मैंने केवल एक प्रश्न पूछा कि **प्रकृति हमें शिक्षित करती है** इसका क्या अर्थ है
- What followed was not **conventional interpretation** but a **collective reflection** on how **landscape shapes consciousness** इसके बाद जो हुआ वह **पारंपरिक व्याख्या** नहीं बल्कि इस पर **सामूहिक चिंतन** था कि **परिदृश्य चेतना को कैसे आकार देता है**
- The poem seemed to **open of its own accord**, demanding a **point of view**, rather than receiving it कविता मानो **अपने आप खुल गई**, किसी दृष्टिकोण को स्वीकार करने के बजाय उसे **मांगने** लगी
- A similar transformation occurred when we carried **Thoreau's Walden** to the edge of a **wooded trail** ऐसा ही परिवर्तन तब हुआ जब हम **थोरो की वाल्डन** को एक **वन पथ** के किनारे ले गए
- The students sat on **stones and fallen branches**, thumbing through a text, **interpreting individually** and not merely **toeing the line** छात्र **पत्थरों और गिरी हुई डालियों** पर बैठे, पाठ को पलटते हुए, **व्यक्तिगत रूप से व्याख्या** करते हुए न कि केवल **निर्धारित मार्ग** पर चलते हुए
- Thoreau's claim that most lives are lived in **quiet desperation** kindled an **unexpected debate** about our own **system**, its **addiction to metrics**, its **reduction of intellectual life to attendance charts**, its **inability to recognise solitude, reflection, or slowness as virtues** थोरो का यह दावा कि अधिकांश जीवन **मौन निराशा** में जिए जाते हैं, हमारे अपने **तंत्र**, उसकी **मेट्रिक्स की लत**, **बौद्धिक जीवन को उपस्थिति चार्ट तक सीमित करने**, और **एकांत, चिंतन व धीमेपन को गुण न मान पाने** पर एक **अप्रत्याशित बहस** को जन्म देता है
- Reading outdoors, my **classroom dissolved**, and what emerged instead was **inquiry** in its most **rudimentary form** बाहर पढ़ते हुए मेरी **कक्षा भंग हो गई**, और उसके स्थान पर **अन्वेषण** अपने सबसे **मूल रूप** में उभरा
- The ruling, perhaps **inadvertently**, moves us closer to this **ideal** यह फैसला, शायद **अनजाने में**, हमें इस **आदर्श** के और निकट ले जाता है
- In an era where **digital resources, Artificial Intelligence tools, and open access archives** place **vast knowledge** at students' **fingertips**, the insistence on **physical presence** feels not only **antiquated** but also **pedagogically unimaginative** उस युग में जहाँ **डिजिटल संसाधन, कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता उपकरण, और ओपन एक्सेस अभिलेखागार** छात्रों की **उंगलियों पर विशाल ज्ञान** उपलब्ध कराते हैं, वहाँ **शारीरिक उपस्थिति** पर ज़ोर न केवल **पुराना** बल्कि **शैक्षणिक रूप से कल्पनाशून्य** लगता है
- The **finest universities Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, MIT and others do not treat attendance as the measure of commitment** श्रेष्ठ विश्वविद्यालय **ऑक्सफोर्ड, कैम्ब्रिज, हार्वर्ड, एमआईटी** और अन्य उपस्थिति को **प्रतिबद्धता का मापदंड** नहीं मानते
- They assume **maturity**, always trusting a student's **intellectual autonomy** वे **परिपक्वता** को मानकर चलते हैं और छात्र की **बौद्धिक स्वायत्तता** पर विश्वास करते हैं



- Their **confidence** lies in the **quality of teaching**, not in the **surveillance** of their students  
उनका आत्मविश्वास शिक्षण की गुणवत्ता में निहित होता है, न कि छात्रों की निगरानी में

### The sorry state of the Indian university भारतीय विश्वविद्यालय की दयनीय स्थिति

- In this context, the **Indian university** has been reduced to a **mere shell** of its former self, **suffocated by bureaucratic rigidity** and **administrative overreach**  
इस संदर्भ में भारतीय विश्वविद्यालय अपने पूर्व स्वरूप के खोखले खोल में सिमट गया है, जो नौकरशाही जड़ता और प्रशासनिक अतिक्रमण से दम घुटने की स्थिति में है
- The **Centre's increasing control** has transformed campuses into **intellectual vassals**, where **curricula are scrutinised**, **dissent is silenced**, and **administrative positions are filled by those who prioritise loyalty over scholarly merit**  
केंद्र का बढ़ता नियंत्रण परिसरों को बौद्धिक जागीरदारों में बदल चुका है, जहाँ पाठ्यक्रमों की जांच, असहमति का दमन, और शैक्षणिक योग्यता पर निष्ठा को प्राथमिकता दी जाती है
- Within this **stifling paradigm**, **mandatory attendance policies** serve as a tool of **pedagogical pacification**, undermining **student autonomy** and **intellectual curiosity**  
इस घुटन भरे ढांचे में अनिवार्य उपस्थिति नीतियाँ शैक्षणिक शांतिकरण का औजार बन जाती हैं, जो छात्र स्वायत्तता और बौद्धिक जिज्ञासा को कमजोर करती हैं
- A university that prioritises **attendance over engagement** ultimately betrays its **fundamental purpose** to nurture **critical thinkers** who can **challenge and transform society**  
जो विश्वविद्यालय संलग्नता के बजाय उपस्थिति को प्राथमिकता देता है, वह आलोचनात्मक चिंतकों को विकसित करने के अपने मूल उद्देश्य से विश्वासघात करता है
- This is why the **attendance debate** is not **administrative** but **philosophical**  
यही कारण है कि उपस्थिति पर बहस प्रशासनिक नहीं बल्कि दार्शनिक है
- It asks whether we **trust students as thinking beings**, or whether we regard them as **wards of the institution**  
यह पूछती है कि क्या हम छात्रों को सोचने वाले प्राणी मानते हैं या उन्हें संस्था के संरक्षित आश्रित समझते हैं
- **Coercion** indeed is always the **refuge** of a **pedagogy** that has lost **confidence**  
वास्तव में जबरदस्ती हमेशा उस शिक्षाशास्त्र का आश्रय होती है जिसने आत्मविश्वास खो दिया हो
- The **High Court ruling** opens up a **transformative possibility** for **rethinking** the very **fabric of teaching** across **higher education**  
उच्च न्यायालय का फैसला उच्च शिक्षा में शिक्षण की संरचना पर पुनर्विचार की एक परिवर्तनकारी संभावना खोलता है
- By removing the **coercive element of compulsory attendance**, educators will be compelled to **innovate** and **reimagine pedagogical approaches**  
अनिवार्य उपस्थिति के जबरदस्ती तत्व को हटाकर, शिक्षक नवाचार और शैक्षणिक दृष्टिकोण के पुनर्कल्पन के लिए विवश होंगे
- An **empty classroom** can be a **catalyst for introspection**, prompting teachers to craft **intellectually compelling** and **inherently engaging** learning spaces  
एक खाली कक्षा आत्ममंथन का उत्प्रेरक बन सकती है, जो शिक्षकों को बौद्धिक रूप से आकर्षक और स्वतः संलग्न सीखने के स्थान गढ़ने के लिए प्रेरित करती है
- **Peer dynamics** also undergo a **paradigmatic shift**, where the **shame** lies not in **absence** but in being **disconnected** from a class that has garnered **admiration and enthusiasm**  
सहपाठी गतिशीलता में भी मौलिक परिवर्तन आता है, जहाँ लज्जा अनुपस्थिति में नहीं बल्कि उस कक्षा से कटाव में होती है जिसने प्रशंसा और उत्साह अर्जित किया हो
- This **reorients the incentive structure**, shifting motivation from **external compulsion** to **intrinsic curiosity**  
यह प्रेरणा संरचना को पुनः उन्मुख करता है, जहाँ प्रेरणा बाहरी दबाव से हटकर आंतरिक जिज्ञासा पर आधारित होती है
- **Learning** in this context is **reconceptualised** as a **dynamic and evolving process**, marked by its **restless and vital nature**  
इस संदर्भ में सीखने को एक गतिशील और विकसित होती प्रक्रिया के रूप में पुनर्परिभाषित किया जाता है, जो अपनी चंचल और जीवंत प्रकृति से चिह्नित है



- It thrives on **contradiction, dialogue, imagination and risk taking**  
यह विरोधाभास, संवाद, कल्पना और जोखिम उठाने पर फलती फूलती है
- The **true university** is built on this **refusal of stasis**, its purpose not to **disseminate information** but to **facilitate discovery**  
सच्चा विश्वविद्यालय इसी स्थिरता के अस्वीकार पर निर्मित होता है, जिसका उद्देश्य सूचना बांटना नहीं बल्कि खोज को संभव बनाना है
- The **future of education** hinges on recognising and embracing this **fundamental distinction**  
शिक्षा का भविष्य इसी मौलिक अंतर को पहचानने और अपनाने पर निर्भर करता है
- The ruling therefore serves as a **testament** to the inherent **tension between freedom and coercion** in the **pursuit of knowledge**  
इसलिए यह फैसला ज्ञान की खोज में स्वतंत्रता और जबरदस्ती के बीच अंतर्निहित तनाव का प्रमाण बनता है
- By **decoupling attendance from examination eligibility**, the Court has highlighted the **futility** of attempting to **legislate intellectual engagement**  
परीक्षा पात्रता से उपस्थिति को अलग करके, न्यायालय ने बौद्धिक संलग्नता को कानून से थोपने की निरर्थकता को उजागर किया है
- **True learning cannot be mandated**  
सच्ची सीख अनिवार्य नहीं की जा सकती
- It can only be **cultivated** through the creation of spaces that foster **intellectual curiosity and freedom**  
इसे केवल ऐसे वातावरण बनाकर संवर्धित किया जा सकता है जो बौद्धिक जिज्ञासा और स्वतंत्रता को प्रोत्साहित करें
- The **university's future** depends on its ability to **navigate this fundamental distinction**  
विश्वविद्यालय का भविष्य इसी मौलिक अंतर को समझने और संतुलित करने की उसकी क्षमता पर निर्भर करता है

PATRIOTIC IAS



GS II: Governance

## The water divide

The quality of piped water supply must be checked at delivery point

An indicator of public health is the well-being of the poorer sections of the people. Health, education, infrastructure, clean air and clean water all fall under basic needs, and various institutions should be busy working round the clock to improve lives. On most of these counts, however, India appears to be falling short, with the latest being the tragedy unfolding in Indore, Madhya Pradesh. At least four people, including a baby (official toll; unofficial is 14), have lost their lives after drinking municipality-supplied water, with more than 2,000 people falling ill. Over 200 people are in hospital and 32 are in the ICU. It is a development steeped in irony because Indore has been voted India's cleanest city for several years in a row for its exemplary waste segregation and management practice among other cleanliness measures it undertook. As has become the unfortunate norm after every mishap, the blame game began swiftly with authorities pinning it on tardy progress on installing a fresh supply line. A committee is to investigate the issue, but things should not have been allowed to precipitate such a deathly crisis in the first place. This is the second instance of a water issue in the State in the past two months. In November, students at the Vellore Institute of Technology campus near Bhopal vehemently protested against contaminated water supply after many of them began contracting jaundice.

It is a shame that despite progress under the Swachh Bharat Mission and Jal Jeevan Mission, water woes continue. The National Family Health Survey data show that despite a rural-urban divide, 96% of households use an improved source of drinking water. A municipal supply is always considered to be a safe and "improved source", and if checks and balances were in place, the authorities at Indore would have spotted the contamination and let people know of the dangers. Giving access to water is meaningless unless the quality of the supply is assured. There needs to be better enforcement of water guidelines and other environmental laws at all levels. Air pollution is already wreaking havoc on citizens' health; unsafe drinking water should not be added to the list. The incidents in Madhya Pradesh should be taken as a wake-up call for India's water management. With a population that is close to 147 crore, India's water-borne disease burden is also high. All States should immediately check water supply sources for chemical and sewage contaminants. Old infrastructure including pipes must be repaired or replaced. There should be strict enforcement of policy and monitoring of practice along with awareness campaigns. Indore and many more cities in India have to clean up their act, or risk more deaths.

## The water divide जल विभाजन

The quality of piped water supply must be checked at delivery point

पाइप से जल आपूर्ति की गुणवत्ता को डिलीवरी बिंदु पर अवश्य जाँचा जाना चाहिए

An indicator of public health is the well-being of the poorer sections of the people

सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य का एक संकेतक समाज के गरीब वर्गों का कल्याण है

Health, education, infrastructure, clean air and clean water all fall under basic needs, and various institutions should be busy working round the clock to improve lives

स्वास्थ्य, शिक्षा, अवसंरचना, स्वच्छ हवा और स्वच्छ पानी सभी मूलभूत आवश्यकताओं में आते हैं, और विभिन्न संस्थानों को जीवन बेहतर बनाने के लिए चौबीसों घंटे काम करना चाहिए

On most of these counts, however, India appears to be falling short, with the latest being the tragedy unfolding in Indore, Madhya Pradesh

हालांकि इनमें से अधिकांश मामलों में भारत पीछे छूटता हुआ दिखाई देता है, जिसका ताज़ा उदाहरण मध्य प्रदेश के इंदौर में घटित त्रासदी है

At least four people, including a baby (official toll; unofficial is 14), have lost their lives after drinking municipality-supplied water, with more than 2,000 people falling ill

कम से कम चार लोगों, जिनमें एक शिशु भी शामिल है (आधिकारिक आंकड़ा; अनौपचारिक 14), की नगरपालिका द्वारा आपूर्ति किए गए पानी को पीने के बाद मौत हो गई, जबकि 2,000 से अधिक लोग बीमार पड़े

Over 200 people are in hospital and 32 are in the ICU

200 से अधिक लोग अस्पताल में भर्ती हैं और 32 आईसीयू में हैं

It is a development steeped in irony because Indore has been voted India's cleanest city for several years in a row for its exemplary waste segregation and management practice among other cleanliness measures it undertook

यह घटना विडंबना से भरी है क्योंकि इंदौर को लगातार कई वर्षों तक भारत का सबसे स्वच्छ शहर चुना गया है, विशेष रूप से कचरा पृथक्करण और प्रबंधन जैसी

स्वच्छता पहलों के लिए

As has become the unfortunate norm after every mishap, the blame game began swiftly with authorities pinning it on tardy progress on installing a fresh supply line

जैसा कि हर दुर्घटना के बाद दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण रूप से होता है, तुरंत दोषारोपण का खेल शुरू हो गया और अधिकारियों ने इसे नई जल आपूर्ति लाइन लगाने में देरी पर टाल दिया

A committee is to investigate the issue, but things should not have been allowed to precipitate such a deathly crisis in the first place

मामले की जांच के लिए एक समिति बनाई गई है, लेकिन शुरुआत में ही ऐसी घातक स्थिति पैदा होने नहीं दी जानी चाहिए थी

This is the second instance of a water issue in the State in the past two months

पिछले दो महीनों में राज्य में पानी से जुड़ी यह दूसरी घटना है

In November, students at the Vellore Institute of Technology campus near Bhopal vehemently protested against contaminated water supply after many of them began contracting jaundice

नवंबर में, भोपाल के पास वेल्लोर इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ टेक्नोलॉजी परिसर के छात्रों ने दूषित जल आपूर्ति के खिलाफ जोरदार प्रदर्शन किया जब कई छात्रों को पीलिया हो गया

It is a shame that despite progress under the Swachh Bharat Mission and Jal Jeevan Mission, water woes continue

यह शर्मनाक है कि स्वच्छ भारत मिशन और जल जीवन मिशन के तहत प्रगति के बावजूद पानी की समस्याएं जारी हैं



- The **National Family Health Survey** data show that despite a **rural-urban divide**, **96% of households** use an **improved source of drinking water**  
राष्ट्रीय परिवार स्वास्थ्य सर्वेक्षण के आंकड़े दिखाते हैं कि ग्रामीण-शहरी अंतर के बावजूद **96%** परिवार सुधारित पेयजल स्रोत का उपयोग करते हैं
- A **municipal supply** is always considered to be a **safe and improved source**, and if **checks and balances** were in place, the authorities at **Indore** would have spotted the **contamination** and let people know of the **dangers**  
नगरपालिका की जल आपूर्ति को हमेशा सुरक्षित और सुधरा हुआ स्रोत माना जाता है, और यदि निगरानी व्यवस्था होती तो इंदौर के अधिकारी दूषण को पहचान कर लोगों को खतरे से आगाह कर सकते थे
- **Giving access to water** is meaningless unless the **quality of the supply** is assured  
जब तक जल आपूर्ति की गुणवत्ता सुनिश्चित न हो, तब तक पानी तक पहुंच देना निरर्थक है
- There needs to be **better enforcement of water guidelines** and other **environmental laws at all levels**  
सभी स्तरों पर जल दिशानिर्देशों और अन्य पर्यावरणीय कानूनों का कठोर प्रवर्तन आवश्यक है
- **Air pollution** is already wreaking havoc on **citizens' health**; **unsafe drinking water** should not be added to the list  
वायु प्रदूषण पहले ही नागरिकों के स्वास्थ्य को नुकसान पहुंचा रहा है; असुरक्षित पेयजल को इस सूची में नहीं जोड़ा जाना चाहिए
- The incidents in **Madhya Pradesh** should be taken as a **wake-up call** for **India's water management**  
मध्य प्रदेश की ये घटनाएं भारत के जल प्रबंधन के लिए एक चेतावनी के रूप में ली जानी चाहिए
- **With a population that is close to 147 crore**, India's **water-borne disease burden** is also **high**  
लगभग **147 करोड़** की आबादी के साथ, भारत पर जलजनित रोगों का बोझ भी अधिक है
- All **States** should immediately **check water supply sources** for **chemical and sewage contaminants**  
सभी राज्यों को तुरंत रासायनिक और सीवेज प्रदूषकों के लिए जल आपूर्ति स्रोतों की जांच करनी चाहिए
- **Old infrastructure including pipes must be repaired or replaced**  
पुरानी अवसंरचना, जिनमें पाइपलाइन शामिल हैं, को मरम्मत या प्रतिस्थापन की आवश्यकता है
- There should be **strict enforcement of policy** and **monitoring of practice** along with **awareness campaigns**  
नीतियों का सख्त प्रवर्तन, व्यवहार की निगरानी, और साथ में जागरूकता अभियान होने चाहिए
- **Indore** and many more **cities in India** have to **clean up their act**, or **risk more deaths**  
इंदौर और भारत के कई अन्य शहरों को अपनी व्यवस्थाएं सुधारनी होंगी, नहीं तो और मौतों का खतरा बना रहेगा



# From encroachment to legal ownership

Haryana government regularises unauthorised occupation of village panchayat land through payment, aiming to reduce litigation and resolve disputes; this risks converting encroachment into ownership, stabilising gains for those with ability to pay while limiting access for marginalised households on village commons

ISSUE: Governance

LETTER & SPIRIT

Anand Mehra  
Vignesh Karthik K.R.

In late November 2024, the Haryana Legislative Assembly amended the Haryana Village Common Lands (Regulation) Act, 1961, to permit the conversion of certain categories of *Shamilat deh* under unauthorised occupation into private ownership through payment to the gram panchayat, a framework further streamlined and expanded in 2025 by shifting approval powers and diluting the market-rate constraint. The government presents this as an administrative settlement to reduce litigation, recover value for panchayats, and resolve long-running disputes over commons pending in revenue courts. It argues that widespread residential and agricultural encroachments have made a negotiated buy-out preferable to protracted legal battles.

A year on, the question is not only whether the amendment clears the docket, but what kind of rural order it consolidates. Common lands are a political institution, shaping livelihood security, bargaining power in rural markets, and dependence for the landless. If the ability to pay becomes the operative criterion for title, regularisation risks converting de facto possession into de jure ownership in ways that validate elite capture rather than correct it.

#### Commons and power

This risk must be read against Haryana's longer history of *Shamilat deh* governance and Dalit exclusion, where encroachment is rarely accidental. Field-based work on village commons (Sucha Singh Gill, Pramajit Judge, Manjit Singh) and K. Gopal Iyer's synthesis documents how Dalits' "due rights" on common land have been systematically denied, with encroachment often sustained through patronage, sarpanch and official complicity, and unequal access to paperwork and coercive



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authority. This is not only a scholarly claim.

A 2007 Haryana Institute of Rural Development (HIRD) study of Bhiwani and Karnal districts recorded outsiders benefiting from village common land, panchayats not enabling Dalit families' access to cultivable parcels, and Dalit households failing to realise statutory shares because they could not compete with dominant landowners in lease markets. It further noted that roughly 15% of encroachment by dominant landowning communities had the backing of sarpanches, officials, or politically influential persons, while richer households captured disproportionate benefits by bidding higher lease rates.

#### Scale of capture

The same HIRD exercise provides a sense of scale. It reported 28,628 acres under encroachment out of 2,01,875 acres of cultivable *shamilat* land, constituting 14.18% of the cultivable commons. It also compiled administrative data on 8,270 cases filed between 1994 and 1995 for illegal possession of 21,137 acres of *shamilat* land. The trend line is the point: by 2009-10, encroachment cases pending in revenue courts reportedly reached 19,476, about 2.35 times the 1994-95 figure. These

numbers clarify what is at stake.

Field-based agrarian political economy from Haryana reinforces this broader diagnosis. Agrarian life is stratified by land and caste, while landless Dalit households remain concentrated in insecure wage work and tiny self-employment. In such a setting, regularisation through payment is not a neutral technique.

The State's rationale is intelligible; litigation is costly, and decades-long occupations create uncertainty, constrain panchayat planning, and foreclose revenue. Yet technocratic settlement is not distributively neutral. By treating the problem as backlog management rather than a continuing pattern of dispossession, the amendment risks normalising encroachment and converting that normality into ownership through payment.

A contrast with policies elsewhere clarifies the normative hinge. In restitution-oriented frameworks, common or specially earmarked lands are treated as corrective instruments to buffer the landless and historically oppressed, and some States have implemented this logic with relative seriousness. Madhya Pradesh's initiative of distributing a big portion of *charnoi* land to Dalits is a clear example. Tamil Nadu's Panchami lands

were similarly earmarked for Dalits, reflecting an explicit premise of protection rather than treating the commons as a negotiable asset. In purchase-oriented frameworks, by contrast, the commons become a negotiable asset allocated through willingness and ability to pay. Haryana's amendment leans toward this latter logic: without first addressing historical entitlement, caste-based deprivation, and the statutory intent of commons as a social safety net, it risks granting *malikana haq* while leaving the underlying injustice intact.

A fairer design would hardwire safeguards so regularisation does not become a conveyor belt for elite capture. Titles should follow mandatory socio-economic and caste profiling with panchayat-level disclosure and privacy protections, and hierarchy of claims aligned with statutory intent, including priority for landless and historically excluded groups. Ecologically and socially critical commons should be excluded from conversion. The process should be independently audited, with credible grievance redress insulated from local executive discretion. Finally, proceeds should be earmarked for distributive repair, and case clearance should be time-bound and paired with legal aid so marginalised claimants are not priced out while better-resourced occupants close disputes through payment.

#### Justice or tidiness

The 2024 amendment thus crystallises a wider tension in contemporary rural governance: land policy as social justice versus land policy as administrative tidiness. In a rural political economy, legalising encroachment without first correcting for structural inequality is not merely dispute resolution. It is the State selecting a settlement in a long-running social conflict, and calling it efficiency. Anand Mehra is a doctoral researcher at the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi. Vignesh Karthik K.R. is a postdoctoral research affiliate at King's India Institute, King's College London

#### THE GIST

The Haryana government regularises unauthorised occupation of village commons through payment, framing it as an administrative settlement to reduce litigation and recover value for panchayats.

This process risks converting encroachment into ownership, privileging those with the ability to pay and reinforcing elite capture.

Marginalised households, particularly landless Dalits, face limited access to commons, undermining the social and livelihood functions these lands are intended to provide.

## From encroachment to legal ownership अतिक्रमण से कानूनी स्वामित्व तक

- Haryana government regularises unauthorised occupation of village panchayat land through payment, aiming to reduce litigation and resolve disputes; this risks converting encroachment into ownership, stabilising gains for those with ability to pay while limiting access for marginalised households on village commons

हरियाणा सरकार भुगतान के माध्यम से ग्राम पंचायत भूमि पर अनधिकृत कब्जे को नियमित करती है, जिसका उद्देश्य मुकदमेबाजी कम करना और विवादों का समाधान करना है; इससे अतिक्रमण को स्वामित्व में बदलने का जोखिम पैदा होता है, भुगतान करने की क्षमता रखने वालों के लिए लाभों को स्थिर करता है, जबकि ग्राम कॉमन्स पर हाशिए पर रहने वाले परिवारों के लिए पहुंच सीमित हो जाती है

In late November 2024 Haryana Village Common Lands amendment  
नवंबर 2024 के अंत में हरियाणा ग्राम साझा भूमि संशोधन

- In late November 2024, the Haryana Legislative Assembly amended the Haryana Village Common Lands Regulation Act 1961 to permit the conversion of certain categories of *Shamilat deh* under unauthorised occupation into private ownership through payment to the gram panchayat  
नवंबर 2024 के अंत में हरियाणा विधान सभा ने हरियाणा ग्राम साझा भूमि विनियमन अधिनियम 1961



में संशोधन कर **अनधिकृत कब्जे** के तहत आने वाली कुछ **शामलात देह** श्रेणियों को **ग्राम पंचायत को भुगतान** के माध्यम से **निजी स्वामित्व** में बदलने की अनुमति दी

- A framework further **streamlined and expanded in 2025** by **shifting approval powers and diluting the market rate constraint**  
इस ढांचे को **2025** में और **सरल व विस्तारित** किया गया जिसमें **अनुमोदन शक्तियों का स्थानांतरण** और **बाज़ार दर की शर्तों में ढील** दी गई
- The **government presents this as an administrative settlement to reduce litigation, recover value for panchayats, and resolve long running disputes over commons pending in revenue courts**  
**सरकार** इसे **प्रशासनिक समाधान** के रूप में प्रस्तुत करती है ताकि **मुकदमों को कम किया जा सके**, **पंचायतों के लिए मूल्य वसूला जा सके**, और **राजस्व न्यायालयों में लंबित साझा भूमि विवादों का समाधान** हो सके
- It argues that **widespread residential and agricultural encroachments** have made a **negotiated buy out** preferable to **protracted legal battles**  
सरकार का तर्क है कि **व्यापक आवासीय और कृषि अतिक्रमणों** के कारण **लंबी कानूनी लड़ाइयों** की तुलना में **समझौता आधारित खरीद** अधिक उपयुक्त हो गई है
- A year on the question is not only whether the **amendment clears the docket**, but **what kind of rural order it consolidates**  
एक वर्ष बाद प्रश्न केवल यह नहीं है कि **संशोधन मामलों का बोझ कम करता है**, बल्कि यह भी है कि यह **किस प्रकार की ग्रामीण व्यवस्था** को मजबूत करता है
- **Common lands are a political institution shaping livelihood security, bargaining power in rural markets, and dependence for the landless**  
**साझा भूमि** एक **राजनीतिक संस्था** है जो **आजीविका सुरक्षा**, **ग्रामीण बाज़ारों में सौदेबाज़ी शक्ति**, और **भूमिहीनों की निर्भरता** को आकार देती है
- If the **ability to pay** becomes the **operative criterion** for title, **regularisation risks** converting **de facto possession** into **de jure ownership**  
यदि **भुगतान करने की क्षमता** स्वामित्व का **मुख्य मापदंड** बन जाती है तो **नियमितीकरण** का जोखिम **वास्तविक कब्जे को कानूनी स्वामित्व** में बदलने का है
- In ways that **validate elite capture** rather than **correct it**  
ऐसे तरीकों से जो **अभिजात वर्ग के कब्जे को सुधारने के बजाय वैध ठहराते हैं**

### Commons and power साझा भूमि और सत्ता

- This risk must be read against **Haryana's longer history of Shamilat deh governance and Dalit exclusion where encroachment is rarely accidental**  
इस जोखिम को **हरियाणा के लंबे इतिहास** के संदर्भ में पढ़ा जाना चाहिए जिसमें **शामलात देह शासन** और **दलित बहिष्करण** शामिल है जहाँ **अतिक्रमण शायद ही कभी आकस्मिक** होता है
- **Field based work** on village commons by **Sucha Singh Gill Pramajit Judge Manjit Singh** and **K Gopal Iyer's synthesis** documents how Dalits' **due rights** on common land have been **systematically denied**  
**सुचा सिंह गिल प्रमजीत जज मनजीत सिंह** के क्षेत्र आधारित अध्ययनों और **के गोपाल अय्यर** के विश्लेषण से यह दर्ज होता है कि **साझा भूमि पर दलितों के वैध अधिकारों को व्यवस्थित रूप से नकारा गया है**
- **With encroachment often sustained through patronage, sarpanch and official complicity, and unequal access to paperwork and coercive authority**  
जहाँ **अतिक्रमण अक्सर संरक्षण, सरपंच व अधिकारियों की मिलीभगत**, और **दस्तावेज़ों व दमनकारी शक्ति तक असमान पहुँच** के माध्यम से बना रहता है
- This is **not only a scholarly claim**  
यह **केवल शैक्षणिक दावा** नहीं है
- A **2007 Haryana Institute of Rural Development HIRD study of Bhiwani and Karnal districts** recorded **outsiders benefiting** from village common land  
**2007 में हरियाणा ग्रामीण विकास संस्थान HIRD** के **भिवानी और करनाल जिलों** पर अध्ययन में **बाहरी लोगों को ग्राम साझा भूमि से लाभ उठाते हुए दर्ज किया गया**
- **Panchayats not enabling Dalit families' access to cultivable parcels**  
**पंचायतों द्वारा दलित परिवारों को कृषि योग्य भूमि तक पहुँच न देना**



- **And Dalit households failing to realise statutory shares because they could not compete with dominant landowners in lease markets**  
और दलित परिवारों द्वारा वैधानिक हिस्सेदारी प्राप्त न कर पाना क्योंकि वे पट्टा बाज़ार में प्रभावशाली भूमिधारकों से प्रतिस्पर्धा नहीं कर सके
- **It further noted that roughly 15% of encroachment by dominant landowning communities had the backing of sarpanches officials or politically influential persons**  
अध्ययन में यह भी पाया गया कि प्रभावशाली भूमिधारी समुदायों द्वारा किए गए लगभग 15% अतिक्रमण को सरपंचों अधिकारियों या राजनीतिक रूप से प्रभावशाली व्यक्तियों का समर्थन प्राप्त था
- **While richer households captured disproportionate benefits by bidding higher lease rates**  
जबकि समृद्ध परिवारों ने उच्च पट्टा दरों पर बोली लगाकर अनुपातहीन लाभ प्राप्त किए

### Scale of capture कब्ज़े का पैमाना

- The same **HIRD exercise** provides a sense of **scale**  
वही **HIRD अध्ययन** इस पैमाने का अंदाज़ा देता है
- It reported **28,628 acres under encroachment** out of **2,01,875 acres of cultivable shariat land**, constituting **14.18%** of the **cultivable commons**  
इसमें **2,01,875 एकड़** की कृषि योग्य शामिल भूमि में से **28,628 एकड़** पर अतिक्रमण दर्ज किया गया जो कृषि योग्य साझा भूमि का **14.18%** है
- It also compiled **administrative data** on **8,270 cases** filed between **1994 and 1995** for **illegal possession** of **21,137 acres of shariat land**  
इसने **1994 से 1995** के बीच **21,137 एकड़** शामिल भूमि के अवैध कब्ज़े से जुड़े **8,270 मामलों** का प्रशासनिक डेटा भी संकलित किया
- The **trend line** is the point  
मुख्य बात **रुझान रेखा** है
- By **2009–10**, **encroachment cases** pending in **revenue courts** reportedly reached **19,476**, about **2.35 times** the **1994–95 figure**  
**2009–10** तक **राजस्व न्यायालयों** में लंबित **अतिक्रमण मामलों** की संख्या **19,476** तक पहुँच गई जो **1994–95** के आँकड़े से लगभग **2.35 गुना** थी
- These **numbers** clarify **what is at stake**  
ये **आँकड़े** स्पष्ट करते हैं कि **दाँव पर क्या लगा है**
- **Field based agrarian political economy** from **Haryana** reinforces this **broader diagnosis**  
**हरियाणा** से प्राप्त क्षेत्र आधारित कृषि राजनीतिक अर्थव्यवस्था इस व्यापक निष्कर्ष की पुष्टि करती है
- **Agrarian life** is **stratified** by **land and caste**  
कृषि जीवन भूमि और जाति के आधार पर **स्तरीकृत** है
- **While landless Dalit households** remain concentrated in **insecure wage work** and **tiny self employment**  
जबकि **भूमिहीन दलित परिवार असुरक्षित मज़दूरी कार्य** और **छोटे आत्म रोज़गार** में सिमटे रहते हैं
- In such a setting **regularisation through payment** is **not a neutral technique**  
ऐसी स्थिति में **भुगतान के माध्यम से नियमितीकरण** कोई **तटस्थ तकनीक** नहीं है
- The **State's rationale** is **intelligible**  
**राज्य का तर्क** समझने योग्य है
- **Litigation** is **costly**, and **decades long occupations** create **uncertainty**, constrain **panchayat planning**, and **foreclose revenue**  
**मुकदमेबाज़ी** महँगी है और **दशकों पुराने कब्ज़े अनिश्चितता** पैदा करते हैं **पंचायत योजना** को सीमित करते हैं और **राजस्व** को रोकते हैं
- Yet **technocratic settlement** is **not distributively neutral**  
फिर भी **तकनीकी समाधान वितरण** की दृष्टि से **तटस्थ** नहीं है
- By treating the problem as **backlog management** rather than a **continuing pattern of dispossession**, the **amendment risks** normalising **encroachment**  
समस्या को **वंचना के निरंतर पैटर्न** की बजाय **लंबित मामलों के प्रबंधन** के रूप में देखने से यह **संशोधन अतिक्रमण** को सामान्य बना देने का जोखिम उठाता है



- And converting that normality into ownership through payment और उस सामान्यता को भुगतान के ज़रिए स्वामित्व में बदल देता है
- A contrast with policies elsewhere clarifies the normative hinge अन्य स्थानों की नीतियों से तुलना मानक बिंदु को स्पष्ट करती है
- In restitution oriented frameworks, common or specially earmarked lands are treated as corrective instruments to buffer the landless and historically oppressed पुनर्स्थापन उन्मुख ढाँचों में साझा या विशेष रूप से चिह्नित भूमि को भूमिहीनों और ऐतिहासिक रूप से उत्पीड़ितों के लिए सुधारक साधन माना जाता है
- And some States have implemented this logic with relative seriousness और कुछ राज्यों ने इस तर्क को काफी गंभीरता से लागू किया है
- Madhya Pradesh's initiative of distributing a big portion of charnoi land to Dalits is a clear example मध्य प्रदेश द्वारा चरनोई भूमि का एक बड़ा हिस्सा दलितों को देना इसका स्पष्ट उदाहरण है
- Tamil Nadu's Panchami lands were similarly earmarked for Dalits तमिलनाडु की पंचमी भूमि भी इसी तरह दलितों के लिए आरक्षित की गई थी
- Reflecting an explicit premise of protection rather than treating the commons as a negotiable asset जो संरक्षण के स्पष्ट आधार को दर्शाता है न कि साझा भूमि को सौदेबाज़ी की संपत्ति मानने को
- In purchase oriented frameworks, by contrast, the commons become a negotiable asset allocated through willingness and ability to pay इसके विपरीत खरीद उन्मुख ढाँचों में साझा भूमि भुगतान की इच्छा और क्षमता के आधार पर बाँटी जाने वाली सौदेबाज़ी संपत्ति बन जाती है
- Haryana's amendment leans toward this latter logic हरियाणा का संशोधन इसी दूसरे तर्क की ओर झुकता है
- Without first addressing historical entitlement, caste based deprivation, and the statutory intent of commons as a social safety net, it risks granting malikana haq ऐतिहासिक अधिकार, जाति आधारित वंचना, और सामाजिक सुरक्षा जाल के रूप में साझा भूमि के वैधानिक उद्देश्य को पहले संबोधित किए बिना यह मालिकाना हक देने का जोखिम उठाता है
- While leaving the underlying injustice intact और मूल अन्याय को ज्यों का त्यों छोड़ देता है
- A fairer design would hardwire safeguards so regularisation does not become a conveyor belt for elite capture एक न्यायसंगत डिज़ाइन में ऐसे सुरक्षा उपाय अंतर्निहित होने चाहिए कि नियमितीकरण अभिजात कब्ज़े की कन्वेयर बेल्ट न बन जाए
- Titles should follow mandatory socio economic and caste profiling with panchayat level disclosure and privacy protections स्वामित्व अधिकार अनिवार्य सामाजिक आर्थिक और जातिगत प्रोफाइलिंग के बाद दिए जाएँ जिसमें पंचायत स्तर पर प्रकटीकरण और गोपनीयता सुरक्षा हो
- And hierarchy of claims aligned with statutory intent, including priority for landless and historically excluded groups और दावों की प्राथमिकता वैधानिक उद्देश्य के अनुरूप हो जिसमें भूमिहीनों और ऐतिहासिक रूप से बहिष्कृत समूहों को प्राथमिकता मिले
- Ecologically and socially critical commons should be excluded from conversion पर्यावरणीय और सामाजिक रूप से महत्वपूर्ण साझा भूमि को रूपांतरण से बाहर रखा जाना चाहिए
- The process should be independently audited with credible grievance redress insulated from local executive discretion प्रक्रिया का स्वतंत्र ऑडिट हो और विश्वसनीय शिकायत निवारण को स्थानीय कार्यकारी विवेक से अलग रखा जाए
- Finally proceeds should be earmarked for distributive repair अंततः प्राप्त धन को वितरणात्मक सुधार के लिए आरक्षित किया जाना चाहिए
- And case clearance should be time bound and paired with legal aid और मामलों का निपटान समयबद्ध हो तथा कानूनी सहायता से जोड़ा जाए
- So marginalised claimants are not priced out while better resourced occupants close disputes through payment



ताकि हाशिये के दावेदार बाहर न हो जाएँ जबकि अधिक संसाधन वाले कब्जेदार भुगतान के माध्यम से विवाद निपटा लें

### Justice or tidiness

### न्याय या प्रशासनिक सफ़ाई

- The **2024 amendment** thus crystallises a **wider tension** in **contemporary rural governance** इस प्रकार **2024 का संशोधन समकालीन ग्रामीण शासन** में एक **व्यापक तनाव** को स्पष्ट करता है
- **Land policy as social justice** versus **land policy as administrative tidiness** सामाजिक न्याय के रूप में भूमि नीति बनाम प्रशासनिक सुव्यवस्था के रूप में भूमि नीति
- In a **rural political economy**, **legalising encroachment** without first correcting for **structural inequality** is **not merely dispute resolution** ग्रामीण राजनीतिक अर्थव्यवस्था में संरचनात्मक असमानता को पहले सुधारे बिना **अतिक्रमण को वैध बनाना** केवल **विवाद समाधान** नहीं है
- It is the **State selecting a settlement** in a **long running social conflict**, and calling it **efficiency** यह राज्य द्वारा लंबे समय से चले आ रहे सामाजिक संघर्ष में एक **समझौते का चयन** है और उसे **कुशलता** कहा जा रहा है

<b>GS Paper III: Economy,</b>	
<b>TOPICS COVERED</b>	<b>02 January 2026</b>
1.	<b>Tobacco tax rejig to take effect from Feb. 1</b> तंबाकू कर में बदलाव 1 फरवरी से लागू होगा
2.	<b>Has housing become prohibitively expensive in Indian cities?</b> क्या भारतीय शहरों में आवास अत्यधिक महंगा हो गया है?
3.	<b>India allows banks to sponsor pension funds under NPS</b> भारत ने बैंकों को एनपीएस के तहत पेंशन फंड प्रायोजित करने की अनुमति दी
4.	<b>Global reinsurers from Spain, U.K., Singapore queue up at GIFT City</b> स्पेन, यू.के., सिंगापुर के वैश्विक पुनर्बीमाकर्ता गिफ्ट सिटी में कतार में



# Tobacco tax rejig to take effect from Feb. 1

Compensation cess ends; introduced to make up States' losses from implementation of GST

Bid to 'ensure cigarette prices rise faster than income', as per global public health guidance

New cess will create a non-lapsable, predictable financial stream to fund security preparedness

GS III: Economy  
T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan  
NEW DELHI

The Union Finance Ministry on Thursday issued a series of notifications that will give effect to the new taxation regime for tobacco products from February 1.

The Central Excise (Amendment) Act, 2025, passed in the recently concluded Winter Session of Parliament, specifies new rates of excise duty on tobacco products.

Levy on pan units

The Finance Ministry also notified that provisions of the Health Security and National Security Act, 2025, which intends to levy a cess on pan masala units, will come into force from

February 1. In an accompanying FAQ note, the Ministry explained that under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime, the excise duty on cigarettes had so far been rendered a nominal amount of a "fraction of a paisa" per cigarette stick, and the GST compensation cess rate on tobacco products had not been increased since it was implemented in July 2017.

"For India, affordability has either stagnated or increased in the past decade, meaning cigarettes have not become more expensive relative to consumers' purchasing power," the note said.

"This is contrary to global public health guidance, which emphasises annual

## Tax reset

The Central Excise (Amendment) Act, 2025 specifies new rates of excise duty on tobacco products

- The Finance Ministry has notified that provisions of the Health Security and National Security Act, 2025, which intends to levy a cess on pan masala units, will come into force from February 1.
- Beedis have been moved to the 18% GST category from the now-defunct 28% slab
- All other tobacco products have been moved to the 40% slab



increases in specific excise duties to ensure that real cigarette prices rise faster than incomes," the note added.

At the same time, the Ministry notified February 1 as the date from which the GST compensation cess would cease to exist.

The cess was originally

introduced for a period of five years to compensate States for any loss arising out of the implementation of GST.

## Tax slabs

The Finance Ministry also notified the new GST rates for tobacco products.

Beedis have been

moved to the 18% category from the now-defunct 28% slab. All other tobacco products have been moved to the 40% slab. These new rates will be effective from February 1.

The GST compensation cess was to end in 2022. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the cess collections were not enough to compensate the States and so the Centre borrowed money to compensate them.

Hence, it was extended until 2026, with the proceeds being used to repay the loan.

With the impending end of the loan, the government on September 22, 2025, removed the incidence of the cess on most items except on tobacco

products. From February 1, 2026, the cess will no longer apply on these items either, effectively ending it.

Finally, the Ministry introduced a new valuation mechanism for tobacco products such as chewing tobacco, filter khaini, jarda, scented tobacco, and gutkha, whereby the GST value would be determined based on the retail sale price declared on the package.

## Need for dedicated cess

Regarding the Health Security and National Security Act, 2025, the Ministry justified the inclusion of the national security aspect by saying that conventional tax revenues cannot always guarantee funding for

national security functions, and so a dedicated cess is needed for the purpose.

"General tax revenues are subject to competing developmental priorities and cannot always guarantee sustained long-term funding for core national security functions," the FAQ note said.

"A dedicated purpose-specific cess enables the Union to create a non-lapsable, predictable financial stream that supports multi-year security preparedness, technological upgradation, capacity creation, and advanced equipment procurement – without increasing the tax burden on the general population or raising broad-based rates such as GST"

## Tobacco tax rejig to take effect from Feb. 1 तंबाकू कर में बदलाव 1 फरवरी से लागू होगा

Compensation cess ends; introduced to make up States' losses from implementation of GST

क्षतिपूर्ति उपकर समाप्त; जीएसटी लागू होने से राज्यों को हुए नुकसान की भरपाई के लिए शुरू किया गया था

Bid to 'ensure cigarette prices rise faster than income', as per global public health guidance

वैश्विक सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य मार्गदर्शन के अनुसार 'सुनिश्चित करने का प्रयास कि सिगरेट की कीमतें आय से तेज़ बढ़ें'

New cess will create a non-lapsable, predictable financial stream to fund security preparedness

नया उपकर सुरक्षा तैयारी के लिए एक गैर-लैप्सेबल, पूर्वानुमेय वित्तीय स्रोत बनाएगा

- The Union Finance Ministry on Thursday issued a series of notifications that will give effect to the new taxation regime for tobacco products from February 1. केंद्रीय वित्त मंत्रालय ने गुरुवार को अधिसूचनाओं की एक श्रृंखला जारी की, जो 1 फरवरी से तंबाकू उत्पादों के लिए नई कर व्यवस्था को प्रभावी बनाएगी।
- The Central Excise (Amendment) Act, 2025, passed in the recently concluded Winter Session of Parliament, specifies new rates of excise duty on tobacco products. हाल ही में संपन्न संसद के शीतकालीन सत्र में पारित केंद्रीय उत्पाद शुल्क (संशोधन) अधिनियम, 2025 तंबाकू उत्पादों पर उत्पाद शुल्क की नई दरें निर्धारित करता है।

## Levy on pan units

पान इकाइयों पर उपकर

- The Finance Ministry also noted that provisions of the Health Security and National Security Act, 2025, which intends to levy a cess on pan masala units, will come into force from February 1.



वित्त मंत्रालय ने यह भी अधिसूचित किया कि **हेल्थ सिग्वोरिटी सह नेशनल सिग्वोरिटी एक्ट, 2025** के प्रावधान, जिनका उद्देश्य पान मसाला इकाइयों पर उपकर लगाना है, **1 फरवरी** से लागू होंगे।

- In an accompanying **FAQ note**, the Ministry explained that under the **Goods and Services Tax (GST)** regime, the excise duty on cigarettes had so far been rendered a nominal amount of a “fraction of a paisa” per cigarette stick, and the **GST compensation cess** rate on tobacco products had not been increased since it was implemented in **July 2017**.  
साथ में जारी **एफएक्स्यू नोट** में मंत्रालय ने बताया कि **वस्तु एवं सेवा कर (GST)** व्यवस्था के तहत अब तक सिगरेट पर उत्पाद शुल्क प्रति सिगरेट स्टिक केवल “पैसे के अंश” के बराबर रह गया था, और तंबाकू उत्पादों पर **जीएसटी क्षतिपूर्ति उपकर** की दर **जुलाई 2017** से नहीं बढ़ाई गई थी।
- “For India, affordability has either stagnated or increased in the past decade, meaning cigarettes have not become more expensive relative to consumers’ purchasing power,” the note said.  
नोट में कहा गया, “भारत में पिछले एक दशक में वहन-क्षमता या तो स्थिर रही है या बढ़ी है, जिसका अर्थ है कि उपभोक्ताओं की क्रय शक्ति की तुलना में सिगरेट महंगी नहीं हुई हैं।”
- “This is contrary to global public health guidance, which emphasises annual increases in specific excise duties to ensure that real cigarette prices rise faster than incomes,” the note added.  
नोट में आगे कहा गया, “यह वैश्विक सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य मार्गदर्शन के विपरीत है, जो यह सुनिश्चित करने के लिए विशिष्ट उत्पाद शुल्क में वार्षिक वृद्धि पर जोर देता है कि वास्तविक सिगरेट कीमतें आय से तेज़ बढ़ें।”
- At the same time, the Ministry notified **February 1** as the date from which the **GST compensation cess** would cease to exist.  
इसी समय, मंत्रालय ने **1 फरवरी** को वह तिथि अधिसूचित किया, जिससे **जीएसटी क्षतिपूर्ति उपकर** समाप्त हो जाएगा।
- The cess was originally introduced for a period of **five years** to compensate States for any loss arising out of the implementation of **GST**.  
यह उपकर मूल रूप से **पांच वर्षों** की अवधि के लिए **जीएसटी** के कार्यान्वयन से राज्यों को हुए किसी भी नुकसान की भरपाई के लिए शुरू किया गया था।

## Tax slabs कर स्लैब

- The Finance Ministry also notified the new **GST rates** for tobacco products.  
वित्त मंत्रालय ने तंबाकू उत्पादों के लिए नई **जीएसटी दरें** भी अधिसूचित कीं।
- **Beedis** have been moved to the **18%** category from the now-defunct **28%** slab.  
**बीड़ी** को अब समाप्त हो चुके **28%** स्लैब से हटाकर **18%** श्रेणी में रखा गया है।
- All other tobacco products have been moved to the **40%** slab. These new rates will be effective from **February 1**.  
अन्य सभी तंबाकू उत्पादों को **40%** स्लैब में स्थानांतरित किया गया है। ये नई दरें **1 फरवरी** से प्रभावी होंगी।
- The **GST compensation cess** was to end in **2022**.  
**जीएसटी क्षतिपूर्ति उपकर** का अंत **2022** में होना था।
- However, due to the **COVID-19 pandemic**, the cess collections were not enough to compensate the States and so the Centre borrowed money to compensate them.  
हालांकि, **कोविड-19 महामारी** के कारण उपकर संग्रह राज्यों की भरपाई के लिए पर्याप्त नहीं था, इसलिए केंद्र ने उन्हें मुआवजा देने के लिए धन उधार लिया।
- Hence, it was extended until **2026**, with the proceeds being used to repay the loan.  
इसलिए, इसे **2026** तक बढ़ाया गया, और इससे प्राप्त राशि का उपयोग ऋण चुकाने के लिए किया गया।
- With the impending end of the loan, the government on **September 22, 2025**, removed the incidence of the cess on most items except on tobacco products.  
ऋण की समाप्ति निकट आने पर सरकार ने **22 सितंबर 2025** को तंबाकू उत्पादों को छोड़कर अधिकांश वस्तुओं पर उपकर हटा दिया।
- From **February 1, 2026**, the cess will no longer apply on these items either, effectively ending it.  
**1 फरवरी 2026** से इन वस्तुओं पर भी उपकर लागू नहीं रहेगा, जिससे इसका प्रभावी अंत हो जाएगा।
- Finally, the Ministry introduced a new valuation mechanism for tobacco products such as **chewing tobacco, altar khaini, jarda, scented tobacco, and gutkha**, whereby the **GST**



value would be determined based on the **retail sale price** declared on the package.  
अंततः, मंत्रालय ने चबाने वाला तंबाकू, फ़िल्टर खैनी, जर्दा, सुगंधित तंबाकू और गुटखा जैसे तंबाकू उत्पादों के लिए एक नई मूल्यांकन प्रणाली शुरू की, जिसके तहत जीएसटी मूल्य पैकेट पर घोषित खुदरा बिक्री मूल्य के आधार पर तय किया जाएगा।

## Need for dedicated cess समर्पित उपकर की आवश्यकता

- Regarding the **Health Security se National Security Act, 2025**, the Ministry justified the inclusion of the national security aspect by saying that conventional tax revenues cannot always guarantee funding for national security functions, and so a dedicated cess is needed for the purpose.  
**हेल्थ सिक्योरिटी सह नेशनल सिक्योरिटी एक्ट, 2025** के संदर्भ में, मंत्रालय ने राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा पहलू को शामिल करने को यह कहते हुए उचित ठहराया कि पारंपरिक कर राजस्व हमेशा राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा कार्यों के लिए धन सुनिश्चित नहीं कर सकता, इसलिए एक समर्पित उपकर आवश्यक है।
- “General tax revenues are subject to competing developmental priorities and cannot always guarantee sustained long-term funding for core national security functions.” the **FAQ note** said.  
**एफएक्वू नोट** में कहा गया, “सामान्य कर राजस्व प्रतिस्पर्धी विकासात्मक प्राथमिकताओं के अधीन होते हैं और हमेशा मुख्य राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा कार्यों के लिए दीर्घकालिक सतत वित्तपोषण सुनिश्चित नहीं कर सकते।”
- “A **dedicated purpose-specific cess** enables the Union to create a **non-lapsable, predictable financial stream** that supports **multiyear security preparedness, technological upgradation, capacity creation, and advanced equipment procurement** — without increasing the tax burden on the general population or raising broad-based rates such as **GST.**”  
“एक समर्पित उद्देश्य-विशिष्ट उपकर केंद्र को गैर-लैप्सेबल, पूर्वानुमेय वित्तीय स्रोत बनाने में सक्षम बनाता है, जो बहुवर्षीय सुरक्षा तैयारी, तकनीकी उन्नयन, क्षमता निर्माण और उन्नत उपकरणों की खरीद का समर्थन करता है — बिना आम जनता पर कर बोझ बढ़ाए या जीएसटी जैसी व्यापक दरें बढ़ाए।”

## Has housing become prohibitively expensive in Indian cities?



**Ashok B. Lall**  
Practising architect for over four decades who has helped integrate sustainable urban development practices into curricula for architecture students.

### PARLEY

**R**oti, kapda aur makaan (roti, clothes, and housing) has been a political promise for decades in India. Now, with housing becoming increasingly expensive, makaan has been taken out of the equation in urban India. In Patna, for instance, buying a 2 BHK (bedroom, hall, kitchen) costs over ₹1 crore. This is the case in other rapidly urbanising cities as well. In metropolises such as Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Bengaluru, it can be twice the amount or more, making ownership of a house out of reach for most Indians. According to the World Bank, the per capita income in India is ₹2,42,487.70 (2024). However, this does not reflect income inequality among individuals and across States, which is extremely wide. Has housing become prohibitively expensive in Indian cities? Ashok B. Lall and Tikender Singh Panwar discuss the question in a conversation moderated by Serish Nanisetti. Edited excerpts:

#### Why is India in a grip of a housing crisis?

**Ashok B. Lall:** Economists explain the shortage of housing and the rising costs of housing in desirable locations as a problem of demand and supply. But there is another angle to it and it has to do with urban policies and urban land management. Let's say a house or a flat of 1,500 square feet is priced at ₹1 crore. The cost of construction would be ₹3,000 per sq ft at the most. Yet, the flat is being sold at more than ₹1 crore. What does that mean? It means that ₹50 lakh or ₹55 lakh is attributable to the advantage of the location, the price of land, the profit that the developer wants to make on it.

The problem we are facing is land policy. In the open market, people acquire land at very low prices, wait for the city to grow, hold on to the land, and then ask for high FARs (Floor Area Ratio) or permission to build a lot on the same piece of land and sell it. In this way, the land policy of the state and of the city administration makes affordable housing unaffordable.

**Tikender Singh Panwar:** This is a social question. It emerges when what I call shelter is transformed from a social necessity into a commodity, subject to speculation, rent extraction, and unequal power relations. Nearly 150 years of Friedrich Engels' observations (*The Condition of the Working Class in England, 1845*), we confront the same contradiction, only amplified by what we call financialisation, land monopolies, and state retreat.

Housing in Indian cities today is not unaffordable because houses are scarce. Houses are abundant, but in the wrong form, the wrong



High-rise apartments overlook Mullaikathuva Cheruvu near Hitech City in Hyderabad. SIDHWANT THAKUR

location, and at the wrong price. When you see cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru, and even smaller urban centres, you will see a paradox. It is that lots of vacant houses coexist with overcrowded slums or informal settlements. At the heart of India's housing crisis is the real estate model of urban development. In the last three decades, we have seen how housing has increasingly functioned as a financial asset rather than a social good. Land is being hoarded, apartments are parked, and stores of value and housing supplies calibrated not to need, but to purchasing power. The state largely plays the role of facilitator.

#### What are the sociological implications when a large percentage of people cannot afford to own a house or even dream of it?

**ABL:** It is about time the state and the government recognise that one of the essential features of a stable polity and a stable economy is access to affordable housing for all citizens in locations and places that support their progress in life. Let's look at the Singapore model. (Former Prime Minister) Lee Kuan Yew had said at the beginning of the very large housing programme that Singapore would fall unless 70-80% of its population was given affordable homes, the necessary comforts and security, and were well connected to the city and to the urban economic system. In the 1960s and 70s, Singapore passed legislation that preserved land at certain prices so that it was taken out of speculative markets. It is not necessary for us to own homes, but we need to have affordable rental housing in favourable locations.



At the heart of India's housing crisis is the real estate model of urban development. In the last three decades, we have seen how housing has increasingly functioned as a financial asset rather than a social good.

**TIKENDER SINGH PANWAR**

**TSP:** The sociological consequences of unaffordable housing are profound and long lasting. When a large share of the population cannot afford stable housing, cities become sites of permanent insecurity. Families postpone education, healthcare, and social mobility to pay rent; they cannot stay in the city if they are unable to pay the rent. And migrants remain unregistered, invisible, and politically voiceless. So informality becomes the norm. And more dangerously, housing exclusion fractures the idea of urban citizenship. If you are not able to shape the city yourself, the whole question of your right to the city framework gets fractured. This eventually leads to a ghettoisation and it is a kind of apartheid. People who build cities — construction workers, sanitation workers, care workers, and so on — are systematically denied the right to live within them. There is a great Indian segregation, especially of the marginalised sections: the Dalits and Muslims. And what will happen to the children? They inherit not just poverty, but also instability.

#### Is there a play book to address this housing crisis in India?

**TSP:** I would say there is no single solution, but there is direction for sure. Vacant housing and underutilised land must be brought into use with anti-speculation measures. Land policy is central. This means mobilising vacant housing and underutilised land through taxation, inclusionary zoning, and other regulatory measures to curb speculation. In the Kerala Urban Policy Commission, what we have recommended is a kind of inverse taxation. If you are occupying a house, then there is one tax slab, and if you are not occupying one, then you will be paying more. But laws alone, as we know, are insufficient without political will. So, housing reforms must challenge entrenched interests and therefore require a democratic reimagining of the city.

**ABL:** A recent document that I read by Niti Aayog views the city and land as assets for making money and increasing the GDP. Not as a place to live, where everyone can share and prosper equally. They believe that the more

revenue you extract from land by auctioning it to the highest bidder and permitting the highest FAR, the more prices can be pushed up. And they think that this is how a city gets enriched — because the higher the value of transaction, the higher the value of land, the higher the taxes that the city can claim. The document completely misses the fundamental purpose of city planning and city management, which is to give everyone the opportunity to grow economically and give them spatial justice. Therefore, it is a fundamental flaw in the political and economic imagination of policy.

#### Can transit solutions solve this problem?

**ABL:** This transit solution is alright but only if the alternative locations they connect to have social amenities that are required for building a reasonably well-rounded, healthy, and prosperous life. But if transit is mostly seen as transportation, with everything else thrown to the winds, then no, it is not a solution. If you look at Singapore's case, at the new townships that have been set up around the heart of the old city of Singapore, some 5 or 7 or 10 kilometres away, there are very good transit connections. Each of those townships is fully developed. That is the imagination you want.

Let's also look at the Dutch example. Early development — even of commercial housing in a municipality — has to designate a certain section as social housing. This is where the pricing of housing for rental and for purchase is kept at half the value of the market value. That is how the bulk of the population that is below the median income level gets integrated into the city economy. The enabling action is to integrate the population below the economic median line into the economy of the city as rapidly as possible. The purpose of urban development is to help society to develop.

**TSP:** New housing supply often worsens exclusion by pushing the poor further to the peripheries, increasing commuting costs, and fragmenting social life. Looking at transit to address the housing question is too premature. What are the drivers of economic conditions? Those need to be kept in mind. I would like to place the market-oriented solution in perspective. More than cheap passes or commute cards, it is the larger ecosystem that needs to be borne in mind. Which way do we want India's urbanisation to go?



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## Has housing become prohibitively expensive in Indian cities? क्या भारतीय शहरों में आवास अत्यधिक महंगा हो गया है?

- Roti, kapda aur makaan (roti, clothes, and housing) has been a political promise for decades in India.  
रोटी, कपड़ा और मकान (भोजन, कपड़े और आवास) दशकों से भारत में एक राजनीतिक वादा रहा है।
- Now, with housing becoming increasingly expensive, makaan has been taken out of the equation in urban India.  
अब, आवास के लगातार महंगा होने के साथ, शहरी भारत में मकान को समीकरण से बाहर कर दिया गया है।
- In Patna, for instance, buying a 2 BHK (bedroom, hall, kitchen) costs over **₹1 crore**.  
उदाहरण के लिए, पटना में 2 बीएचके (बेडरूम, हॉल, किचन) खरीदने की लागत **₹1 करोड़** से अधिक है।
- This is the case in other rapidly urbanising cities as well.  
अन्य तेज़ी से शहरीकरण कर रहे शहरों में भी यही स्थिति है।
- In metropolises such as **Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Bengaluru**, it can be twice the amount or more, making ownership of a house out of reach for most Indians.  
**दिल्ली, मुंबई, हैदराबाद और बेंगलुरु** जैसे महानगरों में यह राशि दोगुनी या उससे भी अधिक हो सकती है, जिससे अधिकांश भारतीयों के लिए घर का मालिक बनना असंभव हो गया है।
- According to the **World Bank**, the per capita income in India is **₹2,42,487.70 (2024)**.  
**विश्व बैंक** के अनुसार, भारत में प्रति व्यक्ति आय **₹2,42,487.70 (2024)** है।
- However, this does not reflect income inequality among individuals and across States, which is extremely wide.  
हालाँकि, यह व्यक्तियों और राज्यों के बीच अत्यधिक व्यापक आय असमानता को नहीं दर्शाता है।
- Has housing become prohibitively expensive in Indian cities?  
क्या भारतीय शहरों में आवास अत्यधिक महंगा हो गया है?
- **Ashok B. Lall** and **Tikender Singh Panwar** discuss the question in a conversation moderated by **Serish Nanisetti**. Edited excerpts:  
**अशोक बी. लल्ल और टिकेंदर सिंह पंवार** इस प्रश्न पर **सेरिश नानिसेटी** द्वारा संचालित बातचीत में चर्चा करते हैं। संपादित अंश:

## Why is India in the grip of a housing crisis? भारत आवास संकट की चपेट में क्यों है?

- Ashok B. Lall: Economists explain the shortage of housing and the rising costs of housing in desirable locations as a problem of demand and supply.  
अशोक बी. लल्ल: अर्थशास्त्री वांछनीय स्थानों में आवास की कमी और बढ़ती लागत को माँग और आपूर्ति की समस्या के रूप में समझते हैं।
- But there is another angle to it and it has to do with urban policies and urban land management.  
लेकिन इसका एक और पहलू भी है और वह शहरी नीतियों और शहरी भूमि प्रबंधन से जुड़ा है।
- Let's say a house or a flat of **1,500 square feet** is priced at **₹1 crore**.  
मान लीजिए **1,500 वर्ग फुट** का एक घर या फ्लैट **₹1 करोड़** में बिक रहा है।
- The cost of construction would be **₹3,000 per sq ft** at the most.  
निर्माण की लागत अधिकतम **₹3,000 प्रति वर्ग फुट** होगी।
- Yet, the flat is being sold at more than **₹1 crore**.  
फिर भी, फ्लैट **₹1 करोड़** से अधिक में बेचा जा रहा है।
- What does that mean?  
इसका क्या अर्थ है?
- It means that **₹50 lakh or ₹55 lakh** is attributable to the advantage of the location, the price of land, the profit that the developer wants to make on it.  
इसका अर्थ है कि **₹50 लाख या ₹55 लाख** स्थान के लाभ, भूमि की कीमत और डेवलपर के मुनाफे के कारण हैं।
- The problem we are facing is land policy.  
हम जिस समस्या का सामना कर रहे हैं वह भूमि नीति है।



- In the open market, people acquire land at very low prices, wait for the city to grow, hold on to the land, and then ask for high **FARs (Floor Area Ratio)** or permission to build a lot on the same piece of land and sell it.  
खुले बाज़ार में लोग बहुत कम कीमत पर ज़मीन खरीदते हैं, शहर के बढ़ने का इंतज़ार करते हैं, ज़मीन को रोके रखते हैं, और फिर उसी ज़मीन पर उच्च **एफ़एआर (फ़्लोर एरिया रेशियो)** या अधिक निर्माण की अनुमति माँगते हैं और उसे बेच देते हैं।
- In this way, the land policy of the state and of the city administration makes affordable housing unaffordable.  
इस प्रकार, राज्य और शहर प्रशासन की भूमि नीति किफायती आवास को महँगा बना देती है।
- Tikender Singh Panwar: This is a social question.  
टिकेंदर सिंह पंवार: यह एक सामाजिक प्रश्न है।
- It emerges when what I call shelter is transformed from a social necessity into a commodity, subject to speculation, rent extraction, and unequal power relations.  
यह तब उत्पन्न होता है जब जिसे मैं आश्रय कहता हूँ, वह सामाजिक आवश्यकता से बदलकर सट्टेबाज़ी, किराया वसूली और असमान शक्ति संबंधों वाली वस्तु बन जाता है।
- Nearly **150 years** of **Friedrich Engels'** observations (*The Condition of the Working Class in England, 1845*), we confront the same contradiction, only amplified by what we call **financialisation**, land monopolies, and state retreat.  
**फ्रेडरिक एंगेल्स** की लगभग **150 वर्ष** पुरानी टिप्पणियों (*इंग्लैंड में श्रमिक वर्ग की स्थिति, 1845*) के बाद भी, हम उसी विरोधाभास का सामना कर रहे हैं, जो अब **वित्तीयकरण**, भूमि एकाधिकार और राज्य की पीछे हटने की भूमिका से और बढ़ गया है।
- Housing in Indian cities today is not unaffordable because houses are scarce.  
आज भारतीय शहरों में आवास इसलिए महँगा नहीं है क्योंकि घरों की कमी है।
- Houses are abundant, but in the wrong form, the wrong location, and at the wrong price.  
घर प्रचुर मात्रा में हैं, लेकिन गलत रूप में, गलत स्थान पर और गलत कीमत पर।
- When you see cities such as **Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru**, and even smaller urban centres, you will see a paradox.  
जब आप **मुंबई, दिल्ली** और **बेंगलुरु** जैसे शहरों और यहाँ तक कि छोटे शहरी केंद्रों को देखते हैं, तो एक विरोधाभास दिखता है।
- It is that lakhs of vacant houses coexist with overcrowded slums or informal settlements.  
यह है कि लाखों खाली घर भीड़भाड़ वाली झुगियों या अनौपचारिक बस्तियों के साथ सह-अस्तित्व में हैं।
- At the heart of India's housing crisis is the real estate-led model of urban development.  
भारत के आवास संकट के केंद्र में रियल एस्टेट-आधारित शहरी विकास मॉडल है।
- In the last three decades, we have seen how housing has increasingly functioned as a financial asset rather than a social good.  
पिछले तीन दशकों में हमने देखा है कि आवास सामाजिक भलाई की बजाय एक वित्तीय संपत्ति के रूप में काम करने लगा है।
- Land is being hoarded, apartments are parked, and stores of value and housing supplies calibrated not to need, but to purchasing power.  
भूमि जमा की जा रही है, अपार्टमेंट खाली रखे जा रहे हैं, और आवास की आपूर्ति आवश्यकता के बजाय क्रय शक्ति के अनुसार तय की जा रही है।
- The state largely plays the role of facilitator.  
राज्य मुख्य रूप से एक सहायक की भूमिका निभाता है।

**What are the sociological implications when a large percentage of people cannot afford to own a house or even dream of it?**

**जब बड़ी आबादी घर खरीदने या उसका सपना देखने में भी सक्षम नहीं होती, तो इसके समाजशास्त्रीय प्रभाव क्या होते हैं?**

- ABL: It is about time the state and the government recognise that one of the essential features of a stable polity and a stable economy is access to affordable housing for all citizens in locations and places that support their progress in life.  
एबीएल: अब समय आ गया है कि राज्य और सरकार यह स्वीकार करें कि एक स्थिर राजनीति और स्थिर अर्थव्यवस्था की एक आवश्यक विशेषता सभी नागरिकों को जीवन में प्रगति के अनुकूल स्थानों पर किफायती आवास की उपलब्धता है।



- Let's look at the **Singapore model**.  
आइए **सिंगापुर मॉडल** को देखें।
- (Former Prime Minister) **Lee Kuan Yew** had said at the beginning of the very large housing programme that Singapore would fail unless **70-80%** of its population was given affordable homes.  
(पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री) **ली कुआन यू** ने कहा था कि यदि **70-80%** आबादी को किफायती घर नहीं दिए गए, तो सिंगापुर असफल हो जाएगा।
- In the **1960s and '70s**, Singapore passed legislation that preserved land at certain prices so that it was taken out of speculative markets.  
**1960 और 1970 के दशक** में सिंगापुर ने ऐसे क़ानून बनाए जिनसे भूमि को निश्चित कीमतों पर संरक्षित किया गया और उसे सट्टेबाज़ी बाज़ार से बाहर रखा गया।
- It is not necessary for us to own homes, but we need to have affordable rental housing in favourable locations.  
हमारे लिए घर का मालिक होना अनिवार्य नहीं है, लेकिन अनुकूल स्थानों पर किफायती किराये के आवास आवश्यक हैं।
- TSP: The sociological consequences of unaffordable housing are profound and long lasting.  
टीएसपी: किफायती आवास की कमी के समाजशास्त्रीय परिणाम गहरे और दीर्घकालिक हैं।
- When a large share of the population cannot afford stable housing, cities become sites of permanent insecurity.  
जब आबादी का बड़ा हिस्सा स्थिर आवास वहन नहीं कर पाता, तो शहर स्थायी असुरक्षा के केंद्र बन जाते हैं।
- Families postpone education, healthcare, and social mobility to pay rent.  
परिवार किराया चुकाने के लिए शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य सेवा और सामाजिक गतिशीलता को टाल देते हैं।
- And migrants remain unregistered, invisible, and politically voiceless.  
और प्रवासी अपंजीकृत, अदृश्य और राजनीतिक रूप से निराश्रित बने रहते हैं।
- So informality becomes the norm.  
इस प्रकार अनौपचारिकता सामान्य बन जाती है।
- And more dangerously, housing exclusion fractures the idea of urban citizenship.  
और इससे भी अधिक खतरनाक यह है कि आवास से वंचित होना शहरी नागरिकता की अवधारणा को तोड़ देता है।
- This eventually leads to a ghettoisation and it is a kind of apartheid.  
यह अंततः घेद्रीकरण की ओर ले जाता है और यह एक प्रकार का रंगभेद है।
- People who build cities — construction workers, sanitation workers, care workers, and so on — are systematically denied the right to live within them.  
जो लोग शहर बनाते हैं — निर्माण श्रमिक, स्वच्छता कर्मी, देखभाल कर्मी आदि — उन्हें व्यवस्थित रूप से उन्हीं शहरों में रहने के अधिकार से वंचित किया जाता है।
- There is a great Indian segregation, especially of the marginalized sections: the **Dalits** and **Muslims**.  
भारत में एक बड़ा विभाजन है, विशेषकर हाशिए के वर्गों — **दलितों** और **मुसलमानों** का।
- And what will happen to the children?  
और बच्चों का क्या होगा?
- They inherit not just poverty, but also instability.  
वे केवल गरीबी ही नहीं, बल्कि अस्थिरता भी विरासत में पाते हैं।

### Is there a play book to address this housing crisis in India? क्या भारत में इस आवास संकट से निपटने के लिए कोई मार्गदर्शिका है?

- TSP: I would say there is no single solution, but there is direction for sure.  
टीएसपी: मैं कहूँगा कि कोई एक समाधान नहीं है, लेकिन दिशा ज़रूर है।
- Vacant housing and underutilised land must be brought into use with anti-speculation measures.  
खाली आवास और कम उपयोग की जा रही भूमि को सट्टा-विरोधी उपायों के साथ उपयोग में लाया जाना चाहिए।
- Land policy is central.  
भूमि नीति केंद्रीय है।



- This means mobilising vacant housing and underutilised land through taxation, inclusionary zoning, and other regulatory measures to curb speculation.  
इसका अर्थ है कराधान, समावेशी ज़ोनिंग और अन्य नियामक उपायों के माध्यम से खाली आवास और कम उपयोग वाली भूमि को सक्रिय करना।
- In the **Kerala Urban Policy Commission**, what we have recommended is a kind of inverse taxation.  
**केरल अर्बन पॉलिसी कमीशन** में हमने एक प्रकार के उल्टे कराधान की सिफारिश की है।
- If you are occupying a house, then there is one tax slab, and if you are not occupying one, then you will be paying more.  
यदि आप घर में रह रहे हैं तो एक कर स्लैब होगा, और यदि आप नहीं रह रहे हैं तो आपको अधिक कर देना होगा।
- But laws alone, as we know, are insufficient without political will.  
लेकिन जैसा कि हम जानते हैं, राजनीतिक इच्छाशक्ति के बिना केवल क़ानून पर्याप्त नहीं हैं।
- So, housing reforms must challenge entrenched interests and therefore require a democratic reimagining of the city.  
इसलिए, आवास सुधारों को जमे हुए हितों को चुनौती देनी होगी और इसके लिए शहर की लोकतांत्रिक पुनर्कल्पना आवश्यक है।
- ABL: A recent document that I read by **Niti Aayog** views the city and land as assets for making money and increasing the **GDP**.  
एबीएल: **नीति आयोग** के एक हालिया दस्तावेज़ में शहर और भूमि को पैसा कमाने और **जीडीपी** बढ़ाने की संपत्ति के रूप में देखा गया है।
- Not as a place to live, where everyone can share and prosper equally.  
न कि एक ऐसे स्थान के रूप में जहाँ हर कोई समान रूप से रह सके और समृद्ध हो सके।
- They believe that the more revenue you extract from land by auctioning it to the highest bidder and permitting the highest **FAR**, the more prices can be pushed up.  
उनका मानना है कि भूमि को उच्चतम बोलीदाता को नीलाम करके और उच्चतम **एफ़एआर** की अनुमति देकर जितना अधिक राजस्व निकाला जाएगा, उतनी ही कीमतें बढ़ाई जा सकती हैं।
- The document completely misses the fundamental purpose of city planning and city management.  
दस्तावेज़ शहर नियोजन और प्रबंधन के मूल उद्देश्य को पूरी तरह से नज़रअंदाज़ करता है।
- Which is to give everyone the opportunity to grow economically and give them spatial justice.  
जो कि सभी को आर्थिक रूप से बढ़ने का अवसर देना और उन्हें स्थानिक न्याय प्रदान करना है।
- Therefore, it is a fundamental flaw in the political and economic imagination of policy.  
इसलिए, यह नीति की राजनीतिक और आर्थिक कल्पना में एक बुनियादी दोष है।

### Can transit solutions solve this problem?

#### क्या परिवहन समाधान इस समस्या को हल कर सकते हैं?

- ABL: This transit solution is alright but only if the alternative locations they connect to have social amenities that are required for building a reasonably well-rounded, healthy, and prosperous life.  
एबीएल: परिवहन समाधान तभी ठीक है जब जिन वैकल्पिक स्थानों से यह जुड़ता है, वहाँ एक संतुलित, स्वस्थ और समृद्ध जीवन के लिए आवश्यक सामाजिक सुविधाएँ हों।
- But if transit is mostly seen as transportation, with everything else thrown to the winds, then no, it is not a solution.  
लेकिन यदि परिवहन को केवल आवागमन के रूप में देखा जाए और बाकी सब नज़रअंदाज़ कर दिया जाए, तो यह समाधान नहीं है।
- If you look at **Singapore's** case, at the new townships that have been set up around the heart of the old city, there are very good transit connections.  
यदि आप **सिंगापुर** के मामले को देखें, तो पुराने शहर के केंद्र के आसपास बनाए गए नए टाउनशिप में बहुत अच्छी परिवहन सुविधाएँ हैं।
- Each of those townships is fully developed.  
उनमें से प्रत्येक टाउनशिप पूरी तरह विकसित है।
- That is the imagination you want.  
यही वह कल्पना है जिसकी आवश्यकता है।



- Let's also look at the **Dutch example**.  
आइए **डच उदाहरण** को भी देखें।
- Every development — even of commercial housing in a municipality — has to designate a certain section as social housing.  
हर विकास — यहाँ तक कि किसी नगरपालिका में वाणिज्यिक आवास का भी — एक निश्चित हिस्से को सामाजिक आवास के रूप में निर्धारित करना होता है।
- This is where the pricing of housing for rental and for purchase is kept at half the value of the market value.  
यहाँ किराये और खरीद के लिए आवास की कीमत बाज़ार मूल्य के आधे पर रखी जाती है।
- That is how the bulk of the population that is below the median income level gets integrated into the city economy.  
इसी तरह औसत आय स्तर से नीचे की अधिकांश आबादी शहर की अर्थव्यवस्था में शामिल हो पाती है।
- The enabling action is to integrate the population below the economic median line into the economy of the city as rapidly as possible.  
सहायक कदम यह है कि आर्थिक औसत रेखा से नीचे की आबादी को यथाशीघ्र शहर की अर्थव्यवस्था में शामिल किया जाए।
- The purpose of urban development is to help society to develop.  
शहरी विकास का उद्देश्य समाज को विकसित करने में सहायता करना है।
- TSP: New housing supply often worsens exclusion by pushing the poor further to the peripheries.  
टीएसपी: नई आवास आपूर्ति अक्सर गरीबों को और दूर परिधियों की ओर धकेलकर बहिष्करण को बढ़ा देती है।
- Increasing commuting costs, and fragmenting social life.  
जिससे आवागमन लागत बढ़ती है और सामाजिक जीवन खंडित होता है।
- Looking at transit to address the housing question is too premature.  
आवास प्रश्न के समाधान के लिए केवल परिवहन पर ध्यान देना बहुत जल्दबाज़ी है।
- What are the drivers of economic conditions?  
आर्थिक परिस्थितियों के चालक क्या हैं?
- Those need to be kept in mind.  
इन्हें ध्यान में रखना आवश्यक है।
- I would like to place the market-oriented solution in perspective.  
मैं बाज़ार-उन्मुख समाधान को परिप्रेक्ष्य में रखना चाहूँगा।
- More than cheap passes or commute access, it is the larger ecosystem that needs to be borne in mind.  
सस्ते पास या आवागमन सुविधा से अधिक, पूरे पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र को ध्यान में रखना ज़रूरी है।
- Which way do we want India's urbanisation to go?  
हम भारत के शहरीकरण को किस दिशा में ले जाना चाहते हैं?



# India allows banks to sponsor pension funds under NPS

GS III: Economy

Reuters  
MUMBAI

India's pension fund regulator has allowed banks to sponsor pension funds that will manage monies under the **National Pension System (NPS)**, in a bid to bolster competition in the sector.

The **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)**, which oversees assets worth more than **\$177 billion**, said in a statement on Wednesday that it had given in-principle approval for banks to independently set up pension funds to manage the **NPS, subject to eligibility norms aligned with the Reserve Bank of India's guidelines.**

**Meet eligibility criteria**  
Banks will have to meet eligibility criteria linked to net worth, market capitalisation, and prudential soundness, it added.

Currently, banks serve as points of presence, handling subscriber registrations, contributions, and other system services.

Some existing pension funds have ties to financial institutions, including banks.

**In Dec last year, PFRDA allowed NPS to invest in gold, silver exchange traded funds**

At present, there are as many as 10 registered pension funds with the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority.

**Broader reforms**

The change is part of broader reforms by the regulator.

In December last year, the PFRDA allowed NPS subscribers to invest in gold and silver exchange-traded funds, the Nifty 50 index, and Alternative Investment Funds.

**Fee revised**

The regulator also revised the Investment Management Fee structure for pension funds starting April 1, 2026, according to the latest release.

Additionally, three new trustees have been appointed to the NPS Trust Board, including Dinesh Kumar Khara, a former chairman of the country's largest lender, the State Bank of India.

## India allows banks to sponsor pension funds under NPS

### भारत ने बैंकों को एनपीएस के तहत पेंशन फंड प्रायोजित करने की अनुमति दी

India's pension fund regulator has allowed banks to sponsor pension funds that will manage monies under the **National Pension System (NPS)**, in a bid to bolster competition in the sector.

भारत के पेंशन फंड नियामक ने क्षेत्र में प्रतिस्पर्धा बढ़ाने के उद्देश्य से बैंकों को **नेशनल पेंशन सिस्टम (एनपीएस)** के तहत धन प्रबंधन करने वाले पेंशन फंड प्रायोजित करने की अनुमति दी है।

• The **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)**, which oversees assets worth more than **\$177 billion**, said in a statement on Wednesday that it had given in-principle approval for banks to independently set up pension funds to manage the **NPS**, subject to eligibility norms aligned with the **Reserve Bank of India's** guidelines.

**पेंशन फंड नियामक और विकास प्राधिकरण (पीएफआरडीए)**, जो **\$177 अरब** से अधिक की परिसंपत्तियों की देखरेख करता है, ने बुधवार को एक बयान में कहा कि उसने **भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक** के दिशानिर्देशों के अनुरूप पात्रता मानदंडों के अधीन बैंकों को एनपीएस प्रबंधन के लिए स्वतंत्र रूप से पेंशन फंड स्थापित करने की सैद्धांतिक मंजूरी दी है।

### Meet eligibility criteria पात्रता मानदंड पूरे करने होंगे

• Banks will have to meet eligibility criteria linked to **net worth, market capitalisation, and prudential soundness**, it added.

बैंकों को **नेट वर्थ, मार्केट कैपिटलाइज़ेशन**, और **विवेकपूर्ण वित्तीय सुदृढ़ता** से जुड़े पात्रता मानदंड पूरे

करने होंगे, ऐसा इसमें जोड़ा गया।

- Currently, banks serve as points of presence, handling subscriber registrations, contributions, and other system services.  
वर्तमान में, बैंक प्वाइंट ऑफ प्रेज़ेंस के रूप में कार्य करते हैं, जहाँ वे ग्राहकों का पंजीकरण, योगदान और अन्य प्रणाली सेवाएँ संभालते हैं।
- Some existing pension funds have ties to financial institutions, including banks.  
कुछ मौजूदा पेंशन फंडों के वित्तीय संस्थानों, जिनमें बैंक भी शामिल हैं, से संबंध है।
- At present, there are as many as **10 registered pension funds** with the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority.  
वर्तमान में, पेंशन फंड नियामक और विकास प्राधिकरण के साथ **10 पंजीकृत पेंशन फंड** हैं।

### Broader reforms

#### व्यापक सुधार

- The change is part of broader reforms by the regulator.  
यह बदलाव नियामक द्वारा किए जा रहे व्यापक सुधारों का हिस्सा है।



- In **December last year**, the PFRDA allowed NPS subscribers to invest in **gold and silver exchange-traded funds**, the **Nifty 50 index**, and **Alternative Investment Funds**.  
पिछले वर्ष दिसंबर में, पीएफआरडी ने एनपीएस ग्राहकों को सोना और चाँदी एक्सचेंज-ट्रेडेड फंड, निफ्टी 50 इंडेक्स, और वैकल्पिक निवेश फंड में निवेश करने की अनुमति दी थी।

### Fee revised शुल्क में संशोधन

- The regulator also revised the **Investment Management Fee** structure for pension funds starting **April 1, 2026**, according to the latest release.  
नवीनतम विज्ञप्ति के अनुसार, नियामक ने 1 अप्रैल 2026 से पेंशन फंडों के लिए निवेश प्रबंधन शुल्क संरचना में भी संशोधन किया है।
- Additionally, **three new trustees** have been appointed to the **NPS Trust Board**, including **Dinesh Kumar Khara**, a former chairman of the country's largest lender, the **State Bank of India**.  
इसके अतिरिक्त, एनपीएस ट्रस्ट बोर्ड में तीन नए ट्रस्टी नियुक्त किए गए हैं, जिनमें देश के सबसे बड़े ऋणदाता स्टेट बैंक ऑफ इंडिया के पूर्व अध्यक्ष दिनेश कुमार खारा शामिल हैं।

## Global reinsurers from Spain, U.K., Singapore queue up at Gift City

### GS III: Economy

**Avinash Nair**  
AHMEDABAD

Global reinsurance majors from Spain, the U.K. and Singapore are lining up to enter India's **International Financial Services Centre (IFSC)** at Gift City, signalling rising international confidence in the country's reinsurance ecosystem under the **International Financial Services Centre Authority (IFSCA)**.

According to applications filed with the IFSCA in December, Madrid-based **Mapfre Re Compania De Reasegueros SA** has submitted an application to be registered as an Insu-



**Insurers' focus:** A general view of the GIFT City in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

rance Office (IO) for undertaking reinsurance business under the IFSCA (Registration of Insurance Business) Regulations,

2021. Mapfre Re is the global reinsurance arm of Spain's MAPFRE Group, headquartered in Madrid, ranked among the world's

largest reinsurers with operations in over 100 countries through 18 offices.

In a similar move, London-based C&C Insurance Group, a specialty insurance and reinsurance platform, also applied for reinsurance presence in GIFT City through an IFSC entity named C&C RE IFSC Private Ltd., seeking approval to operate as an IO.

Adding to the list, Partner Reinsurance Asia Pte Ltd, headquartered in Singapore, has also filed an application with the IFSCA to undertake reinsurance business from GIFT City.

*(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)*

### Global reinsurers from Spain, U.K., Singapore queue up at GIFT City स्पेन, यू.के., सिंगापुर के वैश्विक पुनर्बीमाकर्ता गिफ्ट सिटी में कतार में

- Global reinsurance majors from Spain, the U.K. and Singapore are lining up to enter India's **International Financial Services Centre (IFSC)** at **GIFT City**, signalling rising international confidence in the country's **reinsurance ecosystem** under the **International Financial Services Centre Authority (IFSCA)**.  
स्पेन, यू.के. और सिंगापुर के वैश्विक पुनर्बीमा क्षेत्र की प्रमुख कंपनियाँ भारत के अंतरराष्ट्रीय वित्तीय सेवा केंद्र (आईएफएससी) गिफ्ट सिटी में प्रवेश के लिए कतार में हैं, जो अंतरराष्ट्रीय वित्तीय सेवा केंद्र प्राधिकरण (आईएफएससीए) के तहत देश के पुनर्बीमा इकोसिस्टम में बढ़ते वैश्विक भरोसे का संकेत देता है।
- According to applications filed with the IFSCA in December, **Madrid-based Mapfre Re Compania De Reasegueros SA** has submitted an application to be registered as an **Insurance Office (IO)** for undertaking **reinsurance business** under the **IFSCA (Registration of Insurance Business) Regulations, 2021**.  
दिसंबर में आईएफएससीए के पास दायर आवेदनों के अनुसार, मैड्रिड स्थित मैफ्रे रे कम्पानिया डी



रीएसेग्यूरोस एसए ने आईएफएससीए (बीमा व्यवसाय पंजीकरण) विनियम, 2021 के तहत पुनर्बीमा व्यवसाय करने के लिए इंश्योरेंस ऑफिस (आईआईओ) के रूप में पंजीकरण हेतु आवेदन प्रस्तुत किया है।

- **Mapfre Re** is the global reinsurance arm of **Spain's MAPFRE Group**, headquartered in **Madrid**, ranked among the world's **largest reinsurers** with operations in over **100 countries** through **18 offices**.

मैपफ्रे रे, स्पेन के मैपफ्रे समूह की वैश्विक पुनर्बीमा इकाई है, जिसका मुख्यालय मैड्रिड में है, और यह 18 कार्यालयों के माध्यम से 100 से अधिक देशों में परिचालन के साथ दुनिया के सबसे बड़े पुनर्बीमाकर्ताओं में शामिल है।

- In a similar move, **London-based C&C Insurance Group**, a **specialty insurance and reinsurance platform**, also applied for reinsurance presence in **GIFT City** through an IFSC entity named **C&C RE IFSC Private Ltd.**, seeking approval to operate as an **IIO**.

इसी तरह के कदम में, लंदन स्थित सी एंड सी इंश्योरेंस ग्रुप, जो एक विशेष बीमा और पुनर्बीमा मंच है, ने सी एंड सी आरई आईएफएससी प्राइवेट लिमिटेड नामक आईएफएससी इकाई के माध्यम से गिफ्ट सिटी में पुनर्बीमा उपस्थिति के लिए आवेदन किया है और आईआईओ के रूप में संचालन की मंजूरी मांगी है।

- Adding to the list, **Partner Reinsurance Asia Pte Ltd**, headquartered in **Singapore**, has also filed an application with the **IFSCA** to undertake **reinsurance business** from **GIFT City**.

सूची में और जोड़ते हुए, सिंगापुर मुख्यालय वाली पार्टनर रीइंश्योरेंस एशिया प्रा. लि. ने भी गिफ्ट सिटी से पुनर्बीमा व्यवसाय करने के लिए आईएफएससीए के पास आवेदन दायर किया है।

<b>GS Paper III: S&amp;T,</b>	
<b>TOPICS COVERED</b>	<b>02 January 2026</b>
1.	<b>Commercial cylinder price up by ₹111, ATF cut by 7%</b> वाणिज्यिक सिलेंडर की कीमत ₹111 बढ़ी, एटीएफ में 7% कटौती
2.	<b>Anti-cholesterol drugs may reduce risk of death in diabetes patients'</b> कोलेस्ट्रॉल-रोधी दवाएँ मधुमेह रोगियों में मृत्यु के जोखिम को कम कर सकती हैं
3.	<b>U.S. FDA approves motion sickness drug from Vanda Pharmaceuticals</b> यू.एस. एफडीए ने वांडा फ़ार्मास्यूटिकल्स की मोशन सिकनेस दवा को मंजूरी दी
4.	<b>Hair loss drug use by mothers may pose risks to infants, finds analysis</b> माताओं द्वारा हेयर लॉस दवा का उपयोग शिशुओं के लिए जोखिम पैदा कर सकता है, विश्लेषण में पाया गया



## Commercial cylinder price up by ₹111, ATF cut by 7%

GS III: S&T

Press Trust of India  
NEW DELHI

Price of **aviation turbine fuel (ATF)**, or jet fuel, was reduced by 7.3% on Thursday, while commercial LPG rate was raised by ₹111 per cylinder, as state-owned oil marketing companies implemented their monthly price revisions aligned with global fuel benchmarks.

The ATF price in Delhi was cut by ₹7,353.75 a kilolitre, or 7.3%, to ₹92,323.02 per kl, according to fuel retailers. The latest reduction is expected to ease pressure on airlines.

The price of a 19-kg commercial LPG cylinder used by hotels and restaurants was hiked by a steep ₹111 to ₹1,691.50 in Delhi.

Winter heating requirements have pushed up LPG rates in global markets.

## Commercial cylinder price up by ₹111, ATF cut by 7%

वाणिज्यिक सिलेंडर की कीमत ₹111 बढ़ी, एटीएफ में 7% कटौती

The price of **aviation turbine fuel (ATF)**, or jet fuel, was reduced by 7.3% on Thursday, while **commercial LPG rate** was raised by ₹111 per cylinder, as **state-owned oil marketing companies** implemented their **monthly price revisions** aligned with **global fuel benchmarks**.

एविएशन टरबाइन फ्यूल (एटीएफ) या जेट फ्यूल की कीमत गुरुवार को 7.3% घटाई गई, जबकि वाणिज्यिक एलपीजी दर में ₹111 प्रति सिलेंडर की बढ़ोतरी की गई, क्योंकि राज्य स्वामित्व वाली तेल विपणन कंपनियों ने वैश्विक ईंधन बेंचमार्क के अनुरूप अपनी मासिक मूल्य संशोधन लागू की।

The ATF price in Delhi was cut by ₹7,353.75 a kilolitre, or 7.3%, to ₹92,323.02 per kl, according to fuel retailers.

ईंधन खुदरा विक्रेताओं के अनुसार, दिल्ली में एटीएफ की कीमत ₹7,353.75 प्रति किलोलीटर, यानी 7.3%, घटाकर ₹92,323.02 प्रति किलोलीटर कर दी गई।

The latest reduction is expected to ease pressure on airlines.

नवीनतम कटौती से एयरलाइंस पर दबाव कम होने की उम्मीद है।

The price of a 19-kg commercial LPG cylinder used by hotels and restaurants was hiked by a steep ₹111 to ₹1,691.50 in Delhi.

होटल और रेस्तरां में उपयोग होने वाले 19 किलोग्राम के वाणिज्यिक एलपीजी सिलेंडर की कीमत में ₹111 की तेज बढ़ोतरी कर इसे दिल्ली में ₹1,691.50 कर दिया गया।

Winter heating requirements have pushed up LPG rates in global markets.

सर्दियों की हीटिंग आवश्यकता के कारण वैश्विक बाजारों में एलपीजी दरें बढ़ी हैं।



## 'Anti-cholesterol drugs may reduce risk of death in diabetes patients'

GS III: S&T

Statins, which help treat high cholesterol, may significantly reduce risk of death and major cardiovascular events in adults with type 2 diabetes, including among those considered at low cardiovascular risk, a study said. The findings published in *Annals of Internal Medicine* challenge uncertainty about whether patients at the lowest risk benefit from statin therapy, researchers said.

*Annals of Internal Medicine* में प्रकाशित निष्कर्ष इस अनिश्चितता को चुनौती देते हैं कि क्या सबसे कम जोखिम वाले मरीजों को स्टैटिन थेरेपी से लाभ होता है, शोधकर्ताओं ने कहा।

## Anti-cholesterol drugs may reduce risk of death in diabetes patients'

कोलेस्ट्रॉल-रोधी दवाएँ मधुमेह रोगियों में मृत्यु के जोखिम को कम कर सकती हैं

Statins, which help treat high cholesterol, may significantly reduce risk of death and major cardiovascular events in adults with type 2 diabetes, including among those considered at low cardiovascular risk, a study said.

स्टैटिन, जो उच्च कोलेस्ट्रॉल के इलाज में मदद करते हैं, टाइप 2 मधुमेह वाले वयस्कों में मृत्यु और प्रमुख हृदय संबंधी घटनाओं के जोखिम को उल्लेखनीय रूप से कम कर सकते हैं, जिनमें वे लोग भी शामिल हैं जिन्हें कम हृदय जोखिम वाला माना जाता है, एक अध्ययन में कहा गया।

The findings published in *Annals of Internal Medicine* challenge uncertainty about whether patients at the lowest risk benefit from statin therapy, researchers said.



## U.S. FDA approves motion sickness drug from Vanda Pharmaceuticals

GS III: S&T

Vanda Pharmaceuticals has said that its drug for the prevention of motion-induced vomiting was approved by the U.S. health regulator, becoming the first treatment for the condition to receive the nod in more than 40 years. The company expects to launch the drug, Nereus, in the coming months. The drug works by blocking a brain receptor linked to nausea and vomiting. REUTERS

(Nereus) नामक दवा को लॉन्च करेगी।

- The drug works by blocking a brain receptor linked to nausea and vomiting. यह दवा मतली और उल्टी से जुड़े मस्तिष्क रिसेप्टर को अवरुद्ध करके काम करती है।

## U.S. FDA approves motion sickness drug from Vanda Pharmaceuticals यू.एस. एफडीए ने वांडा फ़ार्मास्यूटिकल्स की मोशन सिकनेस दवा को मंजूरी दी

- Vanda Pharmaceuticals has said that its drug for the prevention of motion-induced vomiting was approved by the U.S. health regulator, becoming the first treatment for the condition to receive the nod in more than 40 years.

वांडा फ़ार्मास्यूटिकल्स ने कहा है कि मोशन-प्रेरित उल्टी की रोकथाम के लिए उसकी दवा को यू.एस. स्वास्थ्य नियामक ने मंजूरी दी है, जिससे यह इस स्थिति के लिए 40 वर्षों से अधिक समय में स्वीकृत होने वाला पहला उपचार बन गया है।

- The company expects to launch the drug, Nereus, in the coming months. कंपनी को उम्मीद है कि वह आने वाले महीनों में नेरियस



## Hair loss drug use by mothers may pose risks to infants, finds analysis

GS III: S&T

Mothers using minoxidil, a common hair loss drug, could pose a risk of infantile hypertrichosis — abnormal hair growth over the body, including in areas not typically hairy, a global analysis suggests. Researchers from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and AIIMS, New Delhi, analysed 2,664 cases of minoxidil-suspected infantile hypertrichosis from around the world.

hypertrichosis from around the world.

स्वास्थ्य और परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय और एम्स, नई दिल्ली के शोधकर्ताओं ने दुनिया भर से मिनाक्सिडिल-संदिग्ध इन्फैन्टाइल हाइपरट्रिकोसिस के 2,664 मामलों का विश्लेषण किया।

## Hair loss drug use by mothers may pose risks to infants, finds analysis

माताओं द्वारा हेयर लॉस दवा का उपयोग शिशुओं के लिए जोखिम पैदा कर सकता है, विश्लेषण में पाया गया

- Mothers using minoxidil, a common hair loss drug, could pose a risk of infantile hypertrichosis — abnormal hair growth over the body, including in areas not typically hairy, a global analysis suggests. मिनाक्सिडिल, जो एक सामान्य हेयर लॉस दवा है, का उपयोग करने वाली माताएँ इन्फैन्टाइल हाइपरट्रिकोसिस — पूरे शरीर पर असामान्य बालों की वृद्धि, जिसमें वे क्षेत्र भी शामिल हैं जहाँ सामान्यतः बाल नहीं होते — का जोखिम पैदा कर सकती हैं, ऐसा एक वैश्विक विश्लेषण सुझाता है।

- Researchers from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and AIIMS, New Delhi, analysed 2,664 cases of minoxidil-suspected infantile



<b>GS Paper III: Environment,</b>	
<b>TOPICS COVERED</b>	<b>02 January 2026</b>
1.	<b>T.N. revises rules on use of mining operation funds</b> तमिलनाडु ने खनन संचालन निधियों के उपयोग पर नियमों में संशोधन किया
2.	<b>Why does India need climate-resilient agriculture?</b> भारत को जलवायु-लचीली कृषि की आवश्यकता क्यों है?
3.	<b>The Aravalli question faces the brunt of India's fondness for 'strategic exemptions'</b> अरावली से जुड़ा प्रश्न 'रणनीतिक छूटों' के प्रति भारत की रुचि का खामियाजा भुगत रहा है

## T.N. revises rules on use of mining operation funds

**GS III: Environment**  
**Dennis S. Jesudasan**  
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government has revised the **District Mineral Foundation (DMF) Rules** regarding the use of funds from the District Mineral Trust for the benefit of people and areas affected by mining-related operations.

The Tamil Nadu District Mineral Foundation Rules, 2025, notified a few days ago, would supersede the Tamil Nadu District Mineral Foundation Rules, 2017.

As per the revised rules, if the holder of a mining lease, composite license, quarry lease, or permit contravenes the rule regarding contributions to the fund, they will be penalised with an amount equivalent to a one-time payment of the contribution, in addition to the contribution to be paid, along with 12% of interest, for the period of contravention.

Earlier, as per the Tamil Nadu District Mineral Foundation Rules, 2017, such contravention was punishable with imprisonment up to two years, or fine extending to ₹5 lakh, or both.

In case of continuing contravention, the penalty includes additional fine that may extend to ₹50,000 for each day during which contravention continues after the first conviction.

The District Collector concerned would be the chairperson of the District Mineral Foundation Trust, Managing Committee, as



Funds must be spent on high priority areas such as drinking water supply, the rules say.

well as the Governing Council of the DMF.

All payments of royalty or seigniorage fee must be collected with the Trust Fund component and no royalty or seigniorage fee shall be accepted without mandatory contribution towards the Trust Fund.

The rules specify that a minimum of 70% of the Trust Fund must be spent only on the directly affected area, as well as for high-priority sectors such as drinking water supply, environment preservation, health care, education, and welfare of women.

### Endowment fund

The districts having an annual collection of ₹10 crore or more shall maintain an endowment fund with a reasonable amount not exceeding 10% of the annual receipts for providing sustainable livelihoods. This fund shall be used to create and sustain livelihoods in areas where mining activity has been halted due to any reason, including exhaustion of minerals.

## T.N. revises rules on use of mining operation funds

तमिलनाडु ने खनन संचालन निधियों के उपयोग पर नियमों में संशोधन किया

The Tamil Nadu government has revised the **District Mineral Foundation (DMF) Rules** regarding the use of funds from the District Mineral Trust for the benefit of people and areas affected by mining-related operations. तमिलनाडु सरकार ने खनन से संबंधित गतिविधियों से प्रभावित लोगों और क्षेत्रों के लाभ के लिए **डिस्ट्रिक्ट मिनरल फाउंडेशन (DMF) नियमों** में **डिस्ट्रिक्ट मिनरल ट्रस्ट** की निधियों के उपयोग से संबंधित संशोधन किया है।

The **Tamil Nadu District Mineral Foundation Rules, 2025**, notified a few days ago, would supersede the **Tamil Nadu District Mineral Foundation Rules, 2017**. कुछ दिन पहले अधिसूचित तमिलनाडु डिस्ट्रिक्ट मिनरल फाउंडेशन नियम, 2025, तमिलनाडु डिस्ट्रिक्ट मिनरल फाउंडेशन नियम, 2017 का स्थान लेंगे।

As per the revised rules, if the holder of a mining lease, composite license, quarry lease, or permit contravenes the rule regarding contributions to the fund, they will be penalised with an amount equivalent to a **one-time payment** of the contribution, in addition to the contribution to be paid, along with **12% interest**, for the period of contravention.

संशोधित नियमों के अनुसार, यदि खनन पट्टा, संयुक्त लाइसेंस, खदान पट्टा या परमिट का धारक निधि में योगदान से संबंधित नियमों का उल्लंघन करता है, तो उसे उल्लंघन की अवधि के लिए देय योगदान के अतिरिक्त **एकमुश्त भुगतान** के बराबर राशि और **12% ब्याज** के साथ दंडित किया जाएगा।

Earlier, as per the **Tamil Nadu District Mineral Foundation Rules, 2017**, such contravention was punishable with **imprisonment up to two years**, or **fine extending to ₹5 lakh**, or both.

पहले, तमिलनाडु डिस्ट्रिक्ट मिनरल फाउंडेशन नियम, 2017 के अनुसार, ऐसे उल्लंघन पर **दो वर्ष तक का कारावास**, या **₹5 लाख तक का जुर्माना**, या दोनों का प्रावधान था।

In case of continuing contravention, the penalty includes additional fine that may extend to **₹50,000 for each day** during which contravention continues after the first



conviction.

लगातार उल्लंघन की स्थिति में, पहले दोषसिद्धि के बाद उल्लंघन जारी रहने पर प्रति दिन ₹50,000 तक का अतिरिक्त जुर्माना लगाया जा सकता है।

- The **District Collector** concerned would be the **chairperson** of the **District Mineral Foundation Trust, Managing Committee**, as well as the **Governing Council of the DMF**. संबंधित **जिला कलेक्टर, डिस्ट्रिक्ट मिनरल फाउंडेशन ट्रस्ट, प्रबंध समिति, तथा DMF की गवर्निंग काउंसिल के अध्यक्ष** होंगे।

- All payments of **royalty** or **seigniorage fee** must be collected with the **Trust Fund component** and no royalty or seigniorage fee shall be accepted without mandatory contribution towards the Trust Fund.

**रॉयल्टी** या **सीनियोरेंज शुल्क** के सभी भुगतान **ट्रस्ट फंड घटक** के साथ ही वसूले जाएंगे और **ट्रस्ट फंड** में अनिवार्य योगदान के बिना कोई रॉयल्टी या सीनियोरेंज शुल्क स्वीकार नहीं किया जाएगा।

- The rules specify that a minimum of **70% of the Trust Fund** must be spent only on the **directly affected area**, as well as for **high-priority sectors** such as **drinking water supply, environment preservation, health care, education, and welfare of women**.

नियमों में यह निर्धारित किया गया है कि **ट्रस्ट फंड का न्यूनतम 70%** केवल **प्रत्यक्ष रूप से प्रभावित क्षेत्रों** तथा **उच्च प्राथमिकता वाले क्षेत्रों** जैसे **पेयजल आपूर्ति, पर्यावरण संरक्षण, स्वास्थ्य सेवा, शिक्षा, और महिलाओं के कल्याण** पर ही खर्च किया जाएगा।

## Endowment fund

### एंडोमेंट फंड

- The districts having an annual collection of **₹10 crore or more** shall maintain an **endowment fund** with a reasonable amount not exceeding **10% of the annual receipts** for providing **sustainable livelihoods**.

जिन जिलों की वार्षिक संग्रह राशि **₹10 करोड़ या उससे अधिक** है, वे **सतत आजीविका** प्रदान करने के लिए वार्षिक प्राप्तियों के **10% से अधिक नहीं** की एक उचित राशि के साथ **एंडोमेंट फंड** बनाए रखेंगे।

- This fund shall be used to create and sustain livelihoods in areas where mining activity has been halted due to any reason, including **exhaustion of minerals**.

यह फंड उन क्षेत्रों में आजीविका के सृजन और संरक्षण के लिए उपयोग किया जाएगा, जहाँ **खनिजों के समाप्त हो जाने** सहित किसी भी कारण से खनन गतिविधि रोक दी गई है।

# Why does India need climate-resilient agriculture?

What makes a **coherent national climate-resilient agriculture roadmap necessary?**

ISS III: Environment

Shambhavi Naik

The story so far:

Climate change is real, and for India to continue meeting domestic food demands, agriculture needs to cope with the increasing unpredictability of the weather, declining soil health, and growing air pollution.

**What is climate-resilient agriculture?**

Climate-resilient agriculture uses a range of biotechnology and complementary technologies to guide farming practices and reduce dependence on chemical inputs, while maintaining or improving productivity. These tools include biofertilizers and biopesticides, and soil-microbiome analyses. Genome-edited crops can be developed to withstand drought, heat, salinity, or pest pressures. In parallel, AI-driven analytics can integrate multiple environmental and agronomic variables to generate locally tailored farming strategies.

**Why does India need CRA?**

India is an agricultural nation with a rapidly growing population, which places increasing pressure on the need for more reliable farm productivity. Yet around 51% of India's net sown area is rainfed, and this land produces nearly 40% of the country's food, making it especially vulnerable to climate variability. Conventional farming methods alone may not withstand the rising stresses of climate change. Climate-resilient agriculture offers a suite of technologies that can enhance productivity while protecting environmental health.

**Where does India stand today?**

In 2011, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) launched a flagship network project 'National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture'. For enhancing the resilience and adaptive capacity of farmers to climate variability, location-specific climate resilient technologies such as system of rice intensification, aerobic rice, direct

seeding of rice, zero till wheat sowing, cultivation of climate resilient varieties tolerant to extreme weather conditions, in-situ incorporation of rice residues, etc., have been demonstrated under the project in 448 climate-resilient villages. The National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture has been formulated to enhance agricultural productivity, especially in rainfed areas, focusing on integrated farming, water use efficiency, soil health management, and synergising resource conservation.

More recently, the BioE3 policy also positioned CRA as a key thematic area for the development of biotechnology-led solutions. Several technologies relevant to CRA are already commercialised.

Leading companies supply bio-inputs that improve soil health and reduce chemical dependence. India also has an expanding digital agriculture sector, with agritech startups offering AI-enabled advisories, precision irrigation, crop-health monitoring, and yield prediction tools.

**What is the way forward?**

India faces several risks in scaling CRA, including low adoption among small and marginal farmers due to limited access, awareness, and affordability, and quality inconsistencies in biofertilizers and biopesticides that undermine trust in biological alternatives. The rollout of climate-resilient seeds remains slow, with the adoption of new tools such as gene editing still emerging and uneven distribution across States. Further, the digital divide limits the reach of precision agriculture and AI-based decision tools. These challenges are compounded by ongoing soil degradation, water scarcity, and accelerating climate volatility, which may outpace current adaptation efforts. Fragmented policy coordination further risks slowing progress.

The way forward requires accelerating the development and deployment of climate-tolerant and genome-edited crops, strengthening quality standards and supply chains for biofertilizers and biopesticides, and provision of digital tools and climate advisories to support adoption by small landholders. Financial incentives, climate insurance, and credit access are essential to support farmers during the transition. Above all, India needs a coherent national CRA roadmap under the BioE3 framework, aligning biotechnology, climate adaptation, and policies to deliver resilience at scale. *Shambhavi Naik is chairperson, Takshashila Institution's Health & Life Sciences Policy*

**THE GIST**

Climate-resilient agriculture uses biotechnology, biofertilizers, biopesticides, genome-edited crops, and AI-driven tools to enhance farm productivity while reducing dependence on chemical inputs.

Scaling CRA in India requires a coherent national roadmap under the BioE3 framework, stronger adoption among small and marginal farmers, quality bio-inputs, climate-tolerant seeds, and digital tools to deliver resilience at scale.

**Why does India need climate-resilient agriculture?**



## भारत को जलवायु-लचीली कृषि की आवश्यकता क्यों है?

### Climate change and Indian agriculture जलवायु परिवर्तन और भारतीय कृषि

- Climate change is **real**, and for **India** to continue meeting **domestic food demands**, **agriculture** needs to cope with the **increasing unpredictability of the weather**, **declining soil health**, and **growing air pollution**  
जलवायु परिवर्तन वास्तविक है और भारत को घरेलू खाद्य आवश्यकताओं को पूरा करते रहने के लिए कृषि को मौसम की बढ़ती अनिश्चितता, मिट्टी के स्वास्थ्य में गिरावट, और बढ़ते वायु प्रदूषण से निपटना होगा

### What is climate resilient agriculture जलवायु सहनशील कृषि क्या है

- Climate resilient agriculture uses a range of biotechnology and complementary technologies to guide farming practices and reduce dependence on chemical inputs, while maintaining or improving productivity**  
जलवायु सहनशील कृषि जैव प्रौद्योगिकी और पूरक तकनीकों की एक श्रृंखला का उपयोग करती है ताकि कृषि पद्धतियों को दिशा दी जा सके और रासायनिक इनपुट पर निर्भरता कम की जा सके जबकि उत्पादकता को बनाए रखा या बढ़ाया जा सके
- These tools include biofertilizers, biopesticides, and soil microbiome analyses**  
इन उपकरणों में जैव उर्वरक, जैव कीटनाशक, और मृदा माइक्रोबायोम विश्लेषण शामिल हैं
- Genome edited crops can be developed to withstand drought, heat, salinity, or pest pressures**  
जीनोम संपादित फसलें सूखा, गर्मी, लवणता, या कीट दबाव को सहन करने के लिए विकसित की जा सकती हैं
- In parallel, **AI driven analytics can integrate multiple environmental and agronomic variables to generate locally tailored farming strategies**  
साथ ही एआई आधारित विश्लेषण कई पर्यावरणीय और कृषि संबंधी कारकों को जोड़कर स्थानीय स्तर पर अनुकूलित कृषि रणनीतियाँ तैयार कर सकता है

### Why does India need CRA

#### भारत को जलवायु सहनशील कृषि की आवश्यकता क्यों है

- India is an **agricultural nation** with a **rapidly growing population**, which places increasing pressure on the need for **more reliable farm productivity**  
भारत एक कृषि प्रधान राष्ट्र है जिसकी तेजी से बढ़ती जनसंख्या अधिक भरोसेमंद कृषि उत्पादकता की आवश्यकता पर दबाव डालती है
- Yet around **51% of India's net sown area is rainfed**, and **this land produces nearly 40% of the country's food, making it especially vulnerable to climate variability**  
फिर भी भारत का लगभग 51% शुद्ध बोया गया क्षेत्र वर्षा आधारित है और यह भूमि देश के लगभग 40% खाद्य उत्पादन का स्रोत है जिससे यह जलवायु परिवर्तनशीलता के प्रति अत्यंत संवेदनशील बनती है
- Conventional farming methods** alone may not withstand the rising stresses of **climate change**  
केवल पारंपरिक कृषि पद्धतियाँ जलवायु परिवर्तन के बढ़ते दबावों को सहन नहीं कर सकतीं
- Climate resilient agriculture offers a suite of technologies that can enhance productivity while protecting environmental health**  
जलवायु सहनशील कृषि प्रौद्योगिकियों का एक समूह प्रदान करती है जो उत्पादकता बढ़ाने के साथ पर्यावरणीय स्वास्थ्य की रक्षा कर सकता है

### Where does India stand today आज भारत कहाँ खड़ा है

- In 2011, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research ICAR launched a flagship network project National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture**



2011 में भारतीय कृषि अनुसंधान परिषद ICAR ने राष्ट्रीय जलवायु सहनशील कृषि नवाचार नामक प्रमुख नेटवर्क परियोजना शुरू की

- For enhancing the **resilience and adaptive capacity** of farmers to **climate variability, location specific climate resilient technologies** have been demonstrated  
जलवायु परिवर्तनशीलता के प्रति किसानों की सहनशीलता और अनुकूलन क्षमता बढ़ाने के लिए स्थान विशेष जलवायु सहनशील तकनीकों का प्रदर्शन किया गया
- Such as **system of rice intensification, aerobic rice, direct seeding of rice, zero till wheat sowing, cultivation of climate resilient varieties tolerant to extreme weather conditions, in situ incorporation of rice residues**  
जैसे धान सघनता प्रणाली, एरोबिक चावल, धान की सीधी बुवाई, शून्य जुताई गेहूं बुवाई, अत्यधिक मौसम परिस्थितियों को सहन करने वाली जलवायु सहनशील किस्मों की खेती, और धान अवशेषों का स्थल पर समावेशन
- These have been demonstrated under the project in **448 climate resilient villages**  
इनका प्रदर्शन इस परियोजना के अंतर्गत **448 जलवायु सहनशील गाँवों** में किया गया है
- The **National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture** has been formulated to enhance **agricultural productivity, especially in rainfed areas**  
राष्ट्रीय सतत कृषि मिशन को विशेष रूप से वर्षा आधारित क्षेत्रों में कृषि उत्पादकता बढ़ाने के लिए तैयार किया गया है
- **Focusing on integrated farming, water use efficiency, soil health management, and resource conservation**  
जो एकीकृत कृषि, जल उपयोग दक्षता, मृदा स्वास्थ्य प्रबंधन, और संसाधन संरक्षण पर केंद्रित है
- More recently, the **BioE3 policy** also positioned **CRA as a key thematic area for the development of biotechnology led solutions**  
हाल ही में **BioE3** नीति ने भी जलवायु सहनशील कृषि को जैव प्रौद्योगिकी आधारित समाधानों के विकास के लिए एक **मुख्य विषयगत क्षेत्र** के रूप में स्थापित किया
- Several technologies relevant to **CRA** are already **commercialised**  
जलवायु सहनशील कृषि से जुड़ी कई तकनीकें पहले से **व्यावसायिक रूप से उपलब्ध** हैं
- Leading companies supply **bio inputs** that **improve soil health and reduce chemical dependence**  
प्रमुख कंपनियाँ ऐसे **जैव इनपुट** उपलब्ध कराती हैं जो **मिट्टी के स्वास्थ्य में सुधार** करते हैं और **रसायनों पर निर्भरता घटाते** हैं
- **India also has an expanding digital agriculture sector, with agritech startups offering AI enabled advisories, precision irrigation, crop health monitoring, and yield prediction tools**  
भारत में **डिजिटल कृषि क्षेत्र** भी तेजी से बढ़ रहा है जहाँ **एग्रीटेक स्टार्टअप्स एआई आधारित परामर्श, सटीक सिंचाई, फसल स्वास्थ्य निगरानी, और उपज पूर्वानुमान उपकरण** प्रदान कर रहे हैं

**What is the way forward**  
**आगे का रास्ता क्या है**

- **India faces several risks in scaling CRA, including low adoption among small and marginal farmers due to limited access, awareness, and affordability**  
भारत को **जलवायु सहनशील कृषि के विस्तार** में कई **जोखिमों** का सामना करना पड़ रहा है जिनमें **छोटे और सीमांत किसानों द्वारा कम अपनाना** शामिल है जो **सीमित पहुँच, जागरूकता, और वहन क्षमता** के कारण है
- And **quality inconsistencies in biofertilizers and biopesticides** that undermine **trust in biological alternatives**  
साथ ही **जैव उर्वरकों और जैव कीटनाशकों** में **गुणवत्ता असंगतियाँ** जैविक विकल्पों पर **विश्वास** को कमजोर करती हैं
- The **rollout of climate resilient seeds** remains **slow**  
जलवायु सहनशील बीजों का **विस्तार अभी भी धीमा** है
- With the adoption of **gene editing** still **emerging** and **uneven distribution across States**  
जहाँ **जीन संपादन** का उपयोग अभी **उभरता हुआ** है और **राज्यों में असमान वितरण** है
- Further, the **digital divide** limits the reach of **precision agriculture and AI based decision tools**



इसके अलावा डिजिटल विभाजन सटीक कृषि और एआई आधारित निर्णय उपकरणों की पहुँच को सीमित करता है

- **These challenges are compounded by ongoing soil degradation, water scarcity, and accelerating climate volatility**  
ये चुनौतियाँ मिट्टी के क्षरण, जल संकट, और तेजी से बढ़ती जलवायु अस्थिरता से और बढ़ जाती हैं
- Which may **outpace current adaptation efforts**  
जो वर्तमान अनुकूलन प्रयासों से आगे निकल सकती हैं
- **Fragmented policy coordination** further risks **slowing progress**  
खंडित नीति समन्वय प्रगति को और धीमा करने का जोखिम पैदा करता है
- The way forward requires **accelerating development and deployment of climate tolerant and genome edited crops**  
आगे का रास्ता जलवायु सहनशील और जीनोम संपादित फसलों के विकास और विस्तार को तेज़ करने की मांग करता है
- **Strengthening quality standards and supply chains** for biofertilizers and biopesticides  
जैव उर्वरकों और जैव कीटनाशकों के लिए गुणवत्ता मानकों और आपूर्ति श्रृंखलाओं को मजबूत करना
- And **provision of digital tools and climate advisories** to support adoption by **small landholders**  
और छोटे भूमि धारकों द्वारा अपनाने के लिए डिजिटल उपकरणों और जलवायु परामर्श की उपलब्धता
- **Financial incentives, climate insurance, and credit access** are essential to support farmers during the **transition**  
वित्तीय प्रोत्साहन, जलवायु बीमा, और ऋण तक पहुँच किसानों को संक्रमण काल में सहारा देने के लिए आवश्यक हैं
- Above all, India needs a **coherent national CRA roadmap** under the **BioE3 framework**  
सबसे बढ़कर भारत को **BioE3 ढाँचे** के अंतर्गत एक **सुसंगत राष्ट्रीय जलवायु सहनशील कृषि रोडमैप** की आवश्यकता है
- Aligning **biotechnology, climate adaptation, and policies** to deliver **resilience at scale**  
जो **जैव प्रौद्योगिकी, जलवायु अनुकूलन, और नीतियों** को जोड़कर **बड़े स्तर पर सहनशीलता** प्रदान करे
- **Shambhavi Naik, chairperson, Takshashila Institution's Health and Life Sciences Policy**  
शांभवी नाइक, अध्यक्ष, तक्षशिला संस्थान स्वास्थ्य और जीवन विज्ञान नीति



# The Aravalli question faces the brunt of India's fondness for 'strategic exemptions'

India does not resolve clashes between its climate commitments and industrial demand through any clear rules; instead, it often resorts to executive discretion and opaque measures, citing 'national defence' or 'strategic considerations' to bypass scrutiny

**GS III: Environment**

Vasudevan Mukunth

## The story so far:

In December 23, Air Marshal and the Integrated Defence Staff chief Ashutosh Dixit laid out the defence establishment's case for critical minerals. Modern defence systems, he said, rely on reliable access to these minerals and import dependence has become a strategic vulnerability because global supply chains are concentrated and exposed to export controls and geopolitics. He also linked self-sufficiency in defence manufacturing and operational readiness to secure mineral value chains and pointed to the National Critical Mineral Mission as the policy vehicle of choice. His words came as the defence establishment's contribution to the charged public debate over how the Aravalli Hills should be protected and whether their mineral wealth should be mined.

## What is the Aravalli Hills issue?

Controversy over the Aravalli Hills flared up after November 20, when the Supreme Court adopted a uniform way to identify the "hills and ranges", froze new mining leases until the Environment Ministry had prepared a sustainable mining plan for the landscape, and said mining should be prohibited in "core" or "inviolate" areas, with an exception for critical, strategic and atomic minerals notified under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act 1957. The Court called this a "strategic exemption".

In the new operational definition vis-a-vis mining, "Aravalli Hills" is any landform in the Aravalli districts that rises at least 100 m above the local relief (measured from the lowest contour line encircling the landform). Likewise, the "Aravalli Range" is two or more such Aravalli Hills that lie within 500 m of each other, including the landforms in between.

Environmental groups and opposition parties have argued that this definition could still weaken enforcement in large parts of a landscape already stressed by illegal mining, urban expansion, denudation, and a dropping water table. For instance, if a surveyor draws the Aravalli Hills' boundary using the elevation and distance rules, the new landscape that emerges will be of 'Aravalli'-like feature sitting like islands in a sea of non-'Aravalli' features, including valleys, plains, scrubland, and forests. Yet the latter connect the Aravalli Hills and make the current landscape as good as it currently is.

Last week, then, the Supreme Court placed this definition in abeyance and decided to constitute a new committee to examine the issue afresh.

## What is the issue with a 'strategic exemption'?

The Environment Ministry that must execute the sustainable mining plan (however it looks) has also weakened the legal environment protection framework to promote ease of doing business, creating gaps that make exemptions easier to misuse.

Further, right now, India doesn't resolve clashes between its climate commitments and industrial demand through any clear rules. Instead, the Environment Ministry often resorts to



**Under pressure:** A view of Aravalli Hills; the landscape is stressed by illegal mining, urban expansion, denudation, and a dropping water table. GETTY IMAGES

executive discretion and opaque instruments like office memoranda, project-specific exemptions, and ad hoc appraisals that treat "national defence" or "strategic considerations" as sufficient reason to evade scrutiny.

The environmental impact assessment (EIA) framework itself allows exemptions from public consultation for projects linked to security and other strategic considerations "as determined by the Central Government". This together with the government's disinclination to bind itself to transparent criteria has often rendered the scope of "national interest" arbitrary and opaque.

## What have the government and courts done?

The Ministry has repeatedly softened India's environmental clearance process to reduce friction for projects and industrial investments since 2014. Two decisions in 2025 are notable. First, in May, the Supreme Court had held that ex post facto clearances are alien to environmental jurisprudence and "anathema" to the environmental impact assessment (EIA) framework because they invert the logic of prior scrutiny and can lead to irreparable environmental damage. But in November, the Court recalled that judgment and reopened the space for post facto regularisation, this time with the Court's own uncertainty built into the regulatory space. This element wasn't there before.

Second, in September, the Environment Ministry issued an office memorandum to accelerate mining projects involving critical minerals by exempting them from public consultations as required by the EIA Notification 2006. This move didn't require the notification to be amended because it already includes a special clause for "strategic considerations", and the Ministry used that to accelerate projects while also reducing the formal space where affected communities and independent experts could force the

government to disclose details of risks and cumulative impact. Ministers also defended the move in Parliament on national security grounds.

Next, the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act 2023 and subsequent administrative practices have widened the exemptions for certain activities and have introduced new categories of land and projects with modified clearance requirements. The amended Act applies to land notified as 'forest' under the Indian Forest Act 1927 (or other laws) and land recorded as forest in government records on or after October 25, 1980, yet it exempted land that had already been shifted to non-forest use on or before December 12, 1996, by a State or U.T. order. It also exempted land along roads and railway tracks, the international border, and near "security-related infrastructure" and expanded the list of activities not treated as "non-forest purpose".

As a result, the Centre and States can now collect information by drilling narrow holes during exploration to pull up rock samples before having to file a mining proposal. And in forest districts with mineral deposits and which overlap with areas notified as harbouring left-wing extremism, it's now easier to establish some connective infrastructure like roads and power lines, which can also support exploration and other mining work.

The amendments don't exempt mining outright but there's a scope creep that, together with the government's sympathetic attitude towards businesses and the post facto regularisation regime, merits scrutiny.

## How are the Aravalli Hills threatened?

This is also why the public controversy over the Aravalli Hills matters so much. The Supreme Court order itself linked the Hills to groundwater recharge and to functions that prevent desertification, which are the same ecosystem services

that India needs to preserve to meet outcomes linked to the Sustainable Development Goals, including clean air, water security, and good living conditions.

The Hills also contain or are believed to have potential for minerals that India's strategic planners care about, including base metals in certain established belts, minerals such as tungsten and others often classified as 'strategic', and other bulk minerals including stone and rocks. The Court-appointed committee has also emphasised the potential for minerals relevant to the green energy transition, including lithium and rare-earth elements. This combination, together with the Ministry's weakening of safeguards, makes the Court's "strategic exemption" precarious.

The State has also effectively reduced the information that outsiders can access to hold claims of greenness – including "sustainable mining" and the circular economy of critical minerals that the new National Critical Minerals Mission promises – accountable.

If India is going to invoke a "strategic" need to carve out exceptions in sensitive areas, there needs to be more clarity on how India will arbitrate these conflicts, rather than fall back on negotiated exemptions and post-hoc regularisation. Specifically, the government or the Court is expected to set up a binding test for when "strategic considerations" merit simpler or easier procedures; require landscape-level cumulative-impact and groundwater assessments before all leases; and disclose, in the public record, assumptions about the alternatives – including imports, substitution, recycling, and sourcing from less sensitive areas – that were rejected.

Without such a framework, however, climate action and economic growth will keep colliding through ad hoc decisions while environmental law is left to absorb the political pressure.

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**The Aravalli question faces the brunt of India's fondness for 'strategic exemptions'**

**अरावली से जुड़ा प्रश्न 'रणनीतिक छूटों' के प्रति भारत की रुचि का खामियाजा भुगत रहा है**



- India does not **resolve clashes** between its **climate commitments** and **industrial demand** through any **clear rules**; instead, it often resorts to **executive discretion** and **opaque measures**, citing '**national defence**' or '**strategic considerations**' to **bypass scrutiny**  
भारत अपनी जलवायु प्रतिबद्धताओं और औद्योगिक मांग के बीच टकराव को किसी स्पष्ट नियमों के माध्यम से हल नहीं करता; इसके बजाय वह अक्सर कार्यपालिका के विवेक और अपारदर्शी उपायों का सहारा लेता है, और जांच से बचने के लिए 'राष्ट्रीय रक्षा' या 'रणनीतिक विचारों' का हवाला देता है

### On December 23 defence and critical minerals 23 दिसंबर रक्षा और महत्वपूर्ण खनिज

- On **December 23**, Air Marshal and the **Integrated Defence Staff chief Ashutosh Dixit** laid out the defence establishment's case for **critical minerals**  
23 दिसंबर को एयर मार्शल और इंटीग्रेटेड डिफेंस स्टाफ प्रमुख अशुतोष दीक्षित ने महत्वपूर्ण खनिजों पर रक्षा प्रतिष्ठान का पक्ष रखा
- Modern **defence systems** rely on reliable access to these **minerals** and **import dependence** has become a **strategic vulnerability** because global **supply chains** are concentrated and exposed to **export controls** and **geopolitics**  
आधुनिक रक्षा प्रणालियाँ इन खनिजों की विश्वसनीय उपलब्धता पर निर्भर करती हैं और आयात पर निर्भरता एक रणनीतिक कमजोरी बन गई है क्योंकि वैश्विक आपूर्ति शृंखलाएँ केंद्रित हैं और निर्यात नियंत्रण व भूराजनीति के प्रभाव में हैं
- He linked **self sufficiency in defence manufacturing** and **operational readiness** to secure **mineral value chains** and pointed to the **National Critical Mineral Mission** as the policy vehicle of choice  
उन्होंने रक्षा विनिर्माण में आत्मनिर्भरता और संचालनात्मक तैयारी को सुरक्षित खनिज मूल्य शृंखलाओं से जोड़ा और राष्ट्रीय महत्वपूर्ण खनिज मिशन को उपयुक्त नीति साधन बताया
- His words came as the defence establishment's contribution to the charged public debate over how the **Aravalli Hills** should be protected and whether their **mineral wealth** should be mined  
उनके शब्द अरावली पहाड़ियों की सुरक्षा और उनकी खनिज संपदा के खनन पर चल रही तीखी सार्वजनिक बहस में रक्षा प्रतिष्ठान का योगदान थे

### What is the Aravalli Hills issue अरावली पहाड़ियों का मुद्दा क्या है

- Controversy over the **Aravalli Hills** flared up after **November 20**, when the **Supreme Court** adopted a uniform way to identify the **hills and ranges**  
20 नवंबर के बाद अरावली पहाड़ियों पर विवाद तब भड़का जब सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने पहाड़ियों और श्रेणियों की पहचान के लिए एक समान तरीका अपनाया
- The Court froze **new mining leases** until the **Environment Ministry** had prepared a **sustainable mining plan** for the landscape  
न्यायालय ने नए खनन पट्टों को तब तक स्थगित कर दिया जब तक पर्यावरण मंत्रालय परिदृश्य के लिए सतत खनन योजना तैयार न कर ले
- It said **mining should be prohibited in core or inviolate areas**  
न्यायालय ने कहा कि मुख्य या अस्पर्शनीय क्षेत्रों में खनन प्रतिबंधित होना चाहिए
- With an exception for **critical strategic and atomic minerals notified under the Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation Act 1957**  
हालाँकि खान एवं खनिज विकास एवं विनियमन अधिनियम 1957 के तहत अधिसूचित महत्वपूर्ण रणनीतिक और परमाणु खनिजों के लिए अपवाद रखा गया
- The Court called this a **strategic exemption**  
न्यायालय ने इसे रणनीतिक छूट कहा
- In the new **operational definition** vis à vis mining **Aravalli Hills** is any landform in the **Aravalli districts** that rises at least **100 m** above the local relief  
खनन से संबंधित नई संचालनात्मक परिभाषा के अनुसार अरावली पहाड़ियाँ वे सभी भू आकृतियाँ हैं जो अरावली जिलों में स्थानीय भू स्तर से कम से कम **100 मीटर** ऊँची हों



- Measured from the **lowest contour line** encircling the landform जिसे भू आकृति को घेरने वाली **न्यूनतम समोच्च रेखा** से मापा जाएगा
- Likewise the **Aravalli Range is two or more such Aravalli Hills that lie within 500 m of each other including the landforms in between**  
इसी प्रकार **अरावली श्रेणी** दो या अधिक ऐसी **अरावली पहाड़ियों** को कहा गया है जो एक दूसरे से **500 मीटर** के भीतर हों और उनके बीच की भू आकृतियाँ भी शामिल हों

### Concerns raised उठाई गई चिंताएँ

- **Environmental groups and opposition parties** have argued that this definition could still weaken **enforcement** in large parts of a landscape already stressed by **illegal mining, urban expansion, denudation, and a dropping water table**  
पर्यावरण समूहों और विपक्षी दलों का तर्क है कि यह परिभाषा पहले से ही **अवैध खनन, शहरी विस्तार, वनस्पति ह्रास, और गिरते भूजल स्तर** से दबाव में आए परिदृश्य के बड़े हिस्सों में **प्रवर्तन** को कमजोर कर सकती है
- If a surveyor draws the Aravalli Hills boundary using the **elevation and distance rules**, the new landscape will appear as **islands** of Aravalli like features in a sea of non Aravalli features यदि सर्वेक्षक **ऊँचाई और दूरी के नियमों** से अरावली पहाड़ियों की सीमा तय करे तो नया परिदृश्य गैर अरावली विशेषताओं के सागर में अरावली जैसी **द्वीपाकार संरचनाओं** जैसा दिखेगा
- Including **valleys, plains, scrubland, and forests** जिसमें **घाटियाँ, मैदान, झाड़ीदार भूमि, और वन** शामिल होंगे
- Yet these areas connect the Aravalli Hills and make the current landscape as good as it currently is  
फिर भी यही क्षेत्र अरावली पहाड़ियों को जोड़ते हैं और वर्तमान परिदृश्य को जैसा है वैसा बनाए रखते हैं
- **Last week the Supreme Court placed this definition in abeyance and decided to constitute a new committee to examine the issue afresh**  
पिछले सप्ताह **सुप्रीम कोर्ट** ने इस परिभाषा को **स्थगित** कर दिया और मामले की नए सिरे से जाँच के लिए **नई समिति** गठित करने का निर्णय लिया

### What is the issue with a strategic exemption रणनीतिक छूट से जुड़ी समस्या क्या है

- The **Environment Ministry** that must execute the sustainable mining plan has also **weakened the legal environmental protection framework** to promote **ease of doing business**  
पर्यावरण मंत्रालय, जिसे सतत खनन योजना लागू करनी है, उसने **व्यवसाय सुगमता** बढ़ाने के लिए **कानूनी पर्यावरण संरक्षण ढाँचे** को भी कमजोर किया है
- This has created **gaps** that make exemptions **easier to misuse**  
इससे ऐसे **रिक्त स्थान** बने हैं जिनका **दुरुपयोग** करना आसान हो जाता है
- At present India does not resolve clashes between **climate commitments** and **industrial demand** through any **clear rules**  
वर्तमान में भारत **जलवायु प्रतिबद्धताओं** और **औद्योगिक मांग** के टकराव को किसी **स्पष्ट नियम** के माध्यम से हल नहीं करता
- Instead the **Environment Ministry** often resorts to **executive discretion and opaque instruments like office memoranda, project specific exemptions, and ad hoc appraisals**  
इसके बजाय पर्यावरण मंत्रालय अक्सर **कार्यकारी विवेकाधिकार** और **अस्पष्ट साधनों** जैसे **कार्यालय ज्ञापन, परियोजना विशिष्ट छूट, और तदर्थ मूल्यांकन** का सहारा लेता है
- **These treat national defence or strategic considerations as sufficient reason to evade scrutiny**  
जो **राष्ट्रीय रक्षा** या **रणनीतिक विचारों** को **जाँच से बचने** का पर्याप्त कारण मान लेते हैं
- The **environmental impact assessment framework** itself allows exemptions from **public consultation** for projects linked to **security and strategic considerations**  
पर्यावरण प्रभाव आकलन ढाँचा स्वयं **सुरक्षा और रणनीतिक कारणों** से जुड़े परियोजनाओं के लिए **जन परामर्श** से छूट देता है



- As determined by the **Central Government** जैसा कि **केंद्र सरकार** द्वारा निर्धारित किया जाता है
- Together with the government's **disinclination** to bind itself to **transparent criteria**, this has rendered the scope of **national interest arbitrary and opaque** सरकार की **पारदर्शी मानदंडों** से स्वयं को बाँधने की **अनिच्छा** के साथ मिलकर इसने **राष्ट्रीय हित** की सीमा को **मनमाना और अपारदर्शी** बना दिया है

### What have the government and courts done सरकार और न्यायालयों ने क्या किया है

- The **Ministry** has repeatedly **softened India's environmental clearance process** to reduce friction for projects and **industrial investments** since **2014** मंत्रालय ने **2014** से परियोजनाओं और **औद्योगिक निवेशों** के लिए बाधाएँ कम करने हेतु **भारत की पर्यावरणीय स्वीकृति प्रक्रिया को बार-बार नरम** किया है
- **Two decisions in 2025** are notable **2025 के दो निर्णय** विशेष रूप से उल्लेखनीय हैं
- First, in **May**, the **Supreme Court had held that ex post facto clearances are alien to environmental jurisprudence and anathema to the environmental impact assessment EIA framework** पहला, **मई** में **सुप्रीम कोर्ट** ने माना कि **एक्स पोस्ट फैक्टो मंजूरियाँ पर्यावरणीय न्यायशास्त्र से असंगत** हैं और **पर्यावरण प्रभाव आकलन EIA ढाँचे** के लिए **अस्वीकार्य** हैं
- Because they **invert the logic of prior scrutiny** and can lead to **irreparable environmental damage** क्योंकि वे **पूर्व जाँच के तर्क को उलट देती हैं** और **अपूरणीय पर्यावरणीय क्षति** का कारण बन सकती हैं
- But in **November**, the **Court recalled that judgment and reopened the space for post facto regularisation** लेकिन **नवंबर** में **न्यायालय** ने उस निर्णय को **वापस ले लिया** और **पोस्ट फैक्टो नियमितीकरण** की गुंजाइश फिर से खोल दी
- This time with the **Court's own uncertainty** built into the **regulatory space** इस बार **नियामक क्षेत्र** में **न्यायालय की अपनी अनिश्चितता** भी अंतर्निहित रही
- This element **wasn't there before** यह तत्व **पहले मौजूद नहीं था**
- Second, in **September**, the **Environment Ministry** issued an **office memorandum to accelerate mining projects involving critical minerals** दूसरा, **सितंबर** में **पर्यावरण मंत्रालय** ने **महत्वपूर्ण खनिजों से जुड़ी खनन परियोजनाओं को तेज़ करने** के लिए एक **कार्यालय ज्ञापन** जारी किया
- By **exempting them from public consultations** as required by the **EIA Notification 2006** **EIA अधिसूचना 2006** के अनुसार आवश्यक **जन परामर्श से उन्हें छूट** देकर
- This move **didn't require the notification to be amended** because it already includes a **special clause for strategic considerations** इस कदम के लिए **अधिसूचना में संशोधन** की आवश्यकता नहीं पड़ी क्योंकि इसमें पहले से ही **रणनीतिक विचारों** के लिए **विशेष प्रावधान** है
- And the **Ministry used that** to accelerate projects while also **reducing the formal space** where **affected communities and independent experts** could force disclosure of **risks and cumulative impact** और **मंत्रालय ने उसी का उपयोग** परियोजनाओं को तेज़ करने के लिए किया तथा **औपचारिक मंच** को भी सीमित किया जहाँ **प्रभावित समुदाय और स्वतंत्र विशेषज्ञ जोखिमों और समग्र प्रभाव** का खुलासा कराने का दबाव बना सकते थे
- **Ministers defended the move in Parliament** on **national security grounds** मंत्रियों ने **संसद में** इस कदम का **राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा** के आधार पर बचाव किया
- Next, the **Forest Conservation Amendment Act 2023** and subsequent **administrative practices** have **widened exemptions** for certain activities इसके बाद **वन संरक्षण संशोधन अधिनियम 2023** और बाद की **प्रशासनिक प्रथाओं** ने कुछ गतिविधियों के लिए **छूटों का विस्तार** किया



- And have introduced new categories of land and projects with modified clearance requirements  
और संशोधित स्वीकृति आवश्यकताओं के साथ भूमि और परियोजनाओं की नई श्रेणियाँ पेश कीं
- The amended Act applies to land notified as forest under the Indian Forest Act 1927 or other laws  
संशोधित अधिनियम भारतीय वन अधिनियम 1927 या अन्य कानूनों के तहत वन के रूप में अधिसूचित भूमि पर लागू होता है
- And land recorded as forest in government records on or after October 25 1980 और 25 अक्टूबर 1980 को या उसके बाद सरकारी अभिलेखों में वन के रूप में दर्ज भूमि पर
- Yet it exempted land that had already been shifted to non forest use on or before December 12 1996 by a State or UT order  
फिर भी इसने उस भूमि को छूट दी जिसे 12 दिसंबर 1996 को या उससे पहले राज्य या केंद्रशासित प्रदेश के आदेश से गैर-वन उपयोग में बदला जा चुका था
- It also exempted land along roads and railway tracks, the international border, and near security related infrastructure  
इसने सड़कों और रेलवे पटरियों के किनारे, अंतरराष्ट्रीय सीमा, और सुरक्षा संबंधी अवसंरचना के पास की भूमि को भी छूट दी
- And expanded the list of activities not treated as non forest purpose और गैर-वन प्रयोजन न माने जाने वाली गतिविधियों की सूची का विस्तार किया
- As a result, the Centre and States can now collect information by drilling narrow holes during exploration to pull up rock samples  
परिणामस्वरूप अब केंद्र और राज्य अन्वेषण के दौरान संकीर्ण छेद ड्रिल कर चट्टानों के नमूने निकालकर जानकारी एकत्र कर सकते हैं
- Before having to file a mining proposal और इसके लिए पहले खनन प्रस्ताव दाखिल करने की आवश्यकता नहीं होती
- And in forest districts with mineral deposits which overlap with areas notified as harbouring left wing extremism और उन वन जिलों में जहाँ खनिज भंडार हैं और जो वामपंथी उग्रवाद से प्रभावित क्षेत्रों से ओवरलैप करते हैं
- It is now easier to establish connective infrastructure like roads and power lines अब सड़कें और बिजली लाइनें जैसी संयोजक अवसंरचना स्थापित करना आसान हो गया है
- Which can also support exploration and other mining work जो अन्वेषण और अन्य खनन कार्यों को भी सहारा दे सकती हैं
- The amendments don't exempt mining outright ये संशोधन खनन को पूरी तरह छूट नहीं देते
- But there is a scope creep that together with the government's sympathetic attitude towards businesses and the post facto regularisation regime merits scrutiny लेकिन कार्य-क्षेत्र का धीरे-धीरे विस्तार हुआ है जो सरकार के व्यवसाय-समर्थक रवैये और पोस्ट फैक्टो नियमितीकरण व्यवस्था के साथ मिलकर गंभीर जाँच की माँग करता है

#### How are the Aravalli Hills threatened अरावली पहाड़ियाँ किस प्रकार खतरे में हैं

- This is also why the public controversy over the Aravalli Hills matters so much  
इसी कारण अरावली पहाड़ियों पर सार्वजनिक विवाद इतना महत्वपूर्ण है
- The Supreme Court order itself linked the Hills to groundwater recharge and to functions that prevent desertification  
सुप्रीम कोर्ट के आदेश ने स्वयं पहाड़ियों को भूजल पुनर्भरण और मरुस्थलीकरण को रोकने वाले कार्यों से जोड़ा
- Which are the same ecosystem services that India needs to preserve to meet outcomes linked to the Sustainable Development Goals  
ये वही पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र सेवाएँ हैं जिन्हें भारत को सतत विकास लक्ष्यों से जुड़े परिणाम प्राप्त करने के लिए संरक्षित करना आवश्यक है
- Including clean air, water security, and good living conditions  
जिसमें स्वच्छ वायु, जल सुरक्षा, और बेहतर जीवन स्थितियाँ शामिल हैं



- The **Hills** also contain or are believed to have **potential for minerals** that India's **strategic planners** care about  
इन पहाड़ियों में खनिज मौजूद हैं या ऐसा माना जाता है कि इनमें ऐसे खनिजों की संभावना है जिनमें भारत के रणनीतिक योजनाकारों की रुचि है
- Including **base metals** in certain established belts  
जिसमें कुछ स्थापित पट्टियों में आधार धातुएँ शामिल हैं
- Minerals such as **tungsten** and others often classified as **strategic टंगस्टन** जैसे खनिज और अन्य जिन्हें अक्सर रणनीतिक श्रेणी में रखा जाता है
- And other **bulk minerals** including **stone and rocks** और पत्थर और चट्टानों सहित अन्य थोक खनिज
- The **Court appointed committee** has also emphasised the potential for minerals relevant to the **green energy transition**  
न्यायालय द्वारा नियुक्त समिति ने भी हरित ऊर्जा संक्रमण से जुड़े खनिजों की संभावना पर जोर दिया है
- Including **lithium** and **rare earth elements**  
जिसमें लिथियम और दुर्लभ मृदा तत्व शामिल हैं
- This combination together with the **Ministry's weakening of safeguards** makes the Court's **strategic exemption precarious**  
यह संयोजन और साथ ही मंत्रालय द्वारा सुरक्षा उपायों का कमजोर किया जाना, न्यायालय की रणनीतिक छूट को अस्थिर बनाता है
- The **State has also effectively reduced information** that outsiders can access  
राज्य ने प्रभावी रूप से उस जानकारी को भी कम कर दिया है जिसे बाहरी लोग प्राप्त कर सकते हैं
- To hold claims of **greenness** including **sustainable mining** and the **circular economy of critical minerals** accountable  
ताकि हरितता के दावों, जिनमें सतत खनन और महत्वपूर्ण खनिजों की परिपत्र अर्थव्यवस्था शामिल है, को जवाबदेह ठहराया जा सके
- That the new **National Critical Minerals Mission** promises  
जिसका वादा नया राष्ट्रीय महत्वपूर्ण खनिज मिशन करता है
- If India is going to invoke a **strategic need** to carve out **exceptions in sensitive areas**  
यदि भारत संवेदनशील क्षेत्रों में अपवाद बनाने के लिए रणनीतिक आवश्यकता का हवाला देता है
- There needs to be **more clarity** on how India will **arbitrate these conflicts**  
तो यह स्पष्ट होना चाहिए कि भारत इन टकरावों का समाधान कैसे करेगा
- Rather than fall back on **negotiated exemptions** and **post hoc regularisation**  
ना कि केवल समझौते आधारित छूटों और बाद में नियमितीकरण पर निर्भर होकर
- Specifically, the **government or the Court** is expected to set up a **binding test**  
विशेष रूप से सरकार या न्यायालय से अपेक्षा है कि वे एक बाध्यकारी परीक्षण स्थापित करें
- For when **strategic considerations** merit **simpler or easier procedures**  
जिससे यह तय हो सके कि कब रणनीतिक विचार सरल या आसान प्रक्रियाओं को उचित ठहराते हैं
- Require **landscape level cumulative impact** and **groundwater assessments** before all **leases**  
सभी पट्टों से पहले परिदृश्य स्तर के समग्र प्रभाव आकलन और भूजल आकलन को अनिवार्य किया जाए
- And **disclose in the public record** assumptions about the **alternatives** that were rejected  
और सार्वजनिक अभिलेख में उन विकल्पों से जुड़ी मान्यताओं को उजागर किया जाए जिन्हें अस्वीकार किया गया
- Including **imports, substitution, recycling, and sourcing from less sensitive areas**  
जिसमें आयात, प्रतिस्थापन, पुनर्चक्रण, और कम संवेदनशील क्षेत्रों से स्रोत शामिल हैं
- Without such a **framework** however  
हालाँकि ऐसे किसी ढाँचे के बिना
- **Climate action** and **economic growth** will keep colliding through **ad hoc decisions**  
जलवायु कार्रवाई और आर्थिक विकास तदर्थ निर्णयों के माध्यम से टकराते रहेंगे
- While **environmental law** is left to **absorb the political pressure**  
और पर्यावरण कानून को राजनीतिक दबाव सहने के लिए छोड़ दिया जाएगा



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# DRDO will play key role in India's air defence: Rajnath

Organisation will equip critical installations across the nation with advanced air defence systems for comprehensive aerial protection, under the **Sudarshan Chakra initiative**, says Defence Minister

**GS III: Internal Security**

**Saurabh Trivedi**  
NEW DELHI

**D**efence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday said the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) would play a pivotal role in the creation of Sudarshan Chakra, an ambitious air defence initiative announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his Independence Day 2025 address from the Red Fort.

Mr. Singh was addressing scientists and senior officials during his visit to the DRDO headquarters in New Delhi on the occasion of the organisation's 68th Foundation Day. Under the Sudarshan Chakra initiative, the DRDO will equip critical installations across the country with advanced air defence systems for comprehensive aerial protection over the next decade.

Highlighting the lessons from Operation Sindoor, the Minister said modern warfare underscored the importance of robust and reliable air defence capabilities. The DRDO would



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with DRDO Chairman Samir V. Kamat at the DRDO headquarters in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI

achieve the objectives of the Sudarshan Chakra initiative with dedication and urgency, strengthening India's preparedness against evolving aerial threats, he said.

Weapon systems developed by the DRDO played a decisive role during Operation Sindoor, he said, underlining the organisation's professionalism and commitment to safeguarding national interests. Commending the DRDO for significantly bolstering India's indigenous defence capabilities, he said the state-of-the-art technolo-

gies and equipment supplied to the armed forces performed seamlessly during the operation. He noted that their reliable performance boosted the morale of soldiers and demonstrated the growing maturity of India's defence research ecosystem.

Mr. Singh praised the DRDO not only as a technology creator but also as a trust builder, stating that the organisation had emerged as a symbol of hope, certainty, and belief for the nation. He acknowledged the DRDO's expanding collaboration with

the private sector, academia, start-ups, and micro, small and medium enterprises, which has contributed to the creation of a synergistic and vibrant defence ecosystem.

Visible improvements across processes – from procurement and project management to industry engagement – had made systems faster, easier, and more reliable, he said.

Calling upon the DRDO to remain aligned with the rapidly evolving global technological landscape, Mr. Singh urged the organisation to continue focusing on innovation, deep tech, and next generation technologies.

Emphasising the need for continuous learning and development, he said technology scanning, capability assessment, and future readiness were essential to ensure India remains prepared for emerging warfare domains.

During the visit, Samir V. Kamat, Chairman of the DRDO, briefed the Minister on the organisation's achievements in 2025, ongoing R&D activities, and reforms planned for 2026.

## DRDO will play key role in India's air defence: Rajnath

**भारत की वायु रक्षा में DRDO निभाएगा अहम भूमिका: राजनाथ**

- Organisation will equip critical installations across the nation with **advanced air defence systems for comprehensive aerial protection**, under the **Sudarshan Chakra initiative**, says



## Defence Minister

रक्षा मंत्री के अनुसार, **सुदर्शन चक्र पहल** के तहत संगठन देश भर में महत्वपूर्ण प्रतिष्ठानों को उन्नत वायु रक्षा प्रणालियों से लैस करेगा ताकि **समग्र हवाई सुरक्षा** सुनिश्चित की जा सके।

- Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** on Thursday said the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** would play a pivotal role in the creation of **Sudarshan Chakra**, an ambitious air defence initiative announced by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** during his **Independence Day 2025** address from the **Red Fort**.  
रक्षा मंत्री **राजनाथ सिंह** ने गुरुवार को कहा कि **रक्षा अनुसंधान और विकास संगठन (DRDO)** **सुदर्शन चक्र** के निर्माण में केंद्रीय भूमिका निभाएगा, जो **प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी** द्वारा **लाल किले** से दिए गए **स्वतंत्रता दिवस 2025** के संबोधन में घोषित एक महत्वाकांक्षी वायु रक्षा पहल है।
- Mr. Singh was addressing scientists and senior officials during his visit to the **DRDO headquarters in New Delhi** on the occasion of the organisation's **68th Foundation Day**.  
श्री सिंह **नई दिल्ली** में **DRDO मुख्यालय** के अपने दौरे के दौरान संगठन के **68वें स्थापना दिवस** के अवसर पर वैज्ञानिकों और वरिष्ठ अधिकारियों को संबोधित कर रहे थे।
- Under the Sudarshan Chakra initiative, the DRDO will equip critical installations across the country with advanced air defence systems for comprehensive aerial protection over the next decade.**  
**सुदर्शन चक्र पहल** के तहत, DRDO **अगले दशक** में देश भर के महत्वपूर्ण प्रतिष्ठानों को **उन्नत वायु रक्षा प्रणालियों** से लैस करेगा ताकि **समग्र हवाई सुरक्षा** सुनिश्चित हो सके।
- Highlighting the lessons from **Operation Sindoor**, the Minister said modern warfare underscored the importance of robust and reliable air defence capabilities.  
**ऑपरेशन सिंदूर** से मिली सीखों को रेखांकित करते हुए मंत्री ने कहा कि आधुनिक युद्ध ने **मजबूत और विश्वसनीय वायु रक्षा क्षमताओं** के महत्व को उजागर किया है।
- The DRDO would achieve the objectives of the **Sudarshan Chakra initiative** with dedication and urgency, strengthening India's preparedness against evolving aerial threats, he said.  
उन्होंने कहा कि DRDO **समर्पण और तात्कालिकता** के साथ **सुदर्शन चक्र पहल** के उद्देश्यों को हासिल करेगा, जिससे बदलते हवाई खतरों के विरुद्ध भारत की तैयारी मजबूत होगी।
- Weapon systems developed by the DRDO played a decisive role during **Operation Sindoor**, he said, underlining the organisation's professionalism and commitment to safeguarding national interests.  
उन्होंने कहा कि DRDO द्वारा विकसित **हथियार प्रणालियों** ने **ऑपरेशन सिंदूर** के दौरान निर्णायक भूमिका निभाई, जो संगठन की **पेशेवरता और राष्ट्रीय हितों की रक्षा** के प्रति प्रतिबद्धता को दर्शाती है।
- Commending the DRDO for significantly bolstering India's **indigenous defence capabilities**, he said the **state-of-the-art technologies and equipment** supplied to the armed forces performed seamlessly during the operation.  
भारत की **स्वदेशी रक्षा क्षमताओं** को उल्लेखनीय रूप से मजबूत करने के लिए DRDO की सराहना करते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि सशस्त्र बलों को आपूर्ति की गई **अत्याधुनिक प्रौद्योगिकियाँ और उपकरण** ऑपरेशन के दौरान निर्बाध रूप से कार्यरत रहे।
- He noted that their reliable performance boosted the morale of soldiers and demonstrated the growing maturity of India's **defence research ecosystem**.  
उन्होंने कहा कि उनकी **विश्वसनीय कार्यक्षमता** ने सैनिकों का मनोबल बढ़ाया और भारत के **रक्षा अनुसंधान पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र** की बढ़ती परिपक्वता को प्रदर्शित किया।
- Mr. Singh praised the DRDO not only as a **technology creator** but also as a **trust builder**, stating that the organisation had emerged as a symbol of **hope, certainty, and belief** for the nation.  
श्री सिंह ने DRDO की सराहना केवल एक **प्रौद्योगिकी निर्माता** के रूप में ही नहीं बल्कि एक **विश्वास निर्माता** के रूप में भी की, यह कहते हुए कि संगठन राष्ट्र के लिए **आशा, निश्चितता और विश्वास** का प्रतीक बनकर उभरा है।
- He acknowledged the DRDO's expanding collaboration with the **private sector, academia, start-ups, and micro, small and medium enterprises**, which has contributed to the creation of a **synergistic and vibrant defence ecosystem**.  
उन्होंने **निजी क्षेत्र, शिक्षा जगत, स्टार्ट-अप्स, और सूक्ष्म, लघु एवं मध्यम उद्यमों** के साथ DRDO के बढ़ते सहयोग को स्वीकार किया, जिसने एक **समन्वित और जीवंत रक्षा पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र** के निर्माण में योगदान दिया है।



- **Visible improvements** across processes — from **procurement** and **project management** to **industry engagement** — had made systems **faster, easier, and more reliable**, he said. उन्होंने कहा कि प्रक्रियाओं में — खरीद, परियोजना प्रबंधन से लेकर उद्योग सहभागिता तक — दृश्य सुधारों ने प्रणालियों को तेज़, आसान, और अधिक विश्वसनीय बनाया है।
- Calling upon the DRDO to remain aligned with the rapidly evolving **global technological landscape**, Mr. Singh urged the organisation to continue focusing on **innovation, deep tech, and next generation technologies**. तेजी से बदलते वैश्विक प्रौद्योगिकी परिदृश्य के अनुरूप बने रहने का आह्वान करते हुए श्री सिंह ने संगठन से नवाचार, डीप टेक, और अगली पीढ़ी की प्रौद्योगिकियों पर निरंतर ध्यान केंद्रित करने को कहा।
- Emphasising the need for **continuous learning and development**, he said **technology scanning, capability assessment, and future readiness** were essential to ensure India remains prepared for emerging warfare domains. निरंतर सीखने और विकास की आवश्यकता पर जोर देते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि प्रौद्योगिकी स्कैनिंग, क्षमता आकलन, और भविष्य की तैयारी उभरते युद्ध क्षेत्रों के लिए भारत की तत्परता सुनिश्चित करने के लिए आवश्यक हैं।
- During the visit, **Samir V. Kamat, Chairman of the DRDO**, briefed the Minister on the organisation's **achievements in 2025, ongoing R&D activities, and reforms planned for 2026**. दौरे के दौरान, DRDO के अध्यक्ष समीर वी. कामत ने मंत्री को संगठन की 2025 की उपलब्धियों, चल रही अनुसंधान एवं विकास गतिविधियों, और 2026 के लिए नियोजित सुधारों के बारे में जानकारी दी।

PATRIOTIC IAS