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1. All set for Makaravilakku festival at Sabarimala सबरीमला में मकरविलक्कु उत्सव के लिए सभी तैयारियाँ पूरी	
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Magh Bihu

Bonding over fish

Villagers participate in a community fishing event as part of the Magh Bihu festivities in Kamrup district, Assam, on Tuesday. RITU RAJ KONWAR

• **Magh Bihu**, also known as **Bhogali Bihu**, is one of the three major Bihu festivals of **Assam** and marks the **end of the harvesting season** and the beginning of a period of feasting and community celebration.
• It is celebrated every year in the month of **January**, coinciding with **Makar Sankranti**, when the Sun enters the zodiac sign of Capricorn.
• Magh Bihu symbolises **gratitude for agricultural abundance**, social unity, and cultural continuity.

• The origins of Magh Bihu can be traced back to **ancient agrarian traditions** of the Brahmaputra Valley, where farming communities celebrated the successful completion of the harvest.
• The festival has deep links with **indigenous Assamese culture**, especially the Ahom, Moran, and Chutiya traditions.
• Over time, Magh Bihu evolved into a **state-wide cultural event**, blending folk rituals with modern community celebrations.

• Magh Bihu is celebrated on **January 14 or 15**, depending on the solar calendar.
• It coincides with **Makar Sankranti**, which marks the **northward movement of the Sun** (Uttarayan).
• In agrarian societies, this period signifies the end of the agricultural cycle and the beginning of a relatively relaxed season.

All set for Makaravilakku festival at Sabarimala
सबरीमला में मकरविलक्कु उत्सव के लिए सभी तैयारियाँ पूरी

Makaravilakku Festival

• **Makaravilakku** is a major religious festival associated with the **Sabarimala Sree Ayyappa Temple** in **Pathanamthitta district**, Kerala.
• It is observed every year on **January 14 or 15**, coinciding with **Makara Sankranti**, which marks the **Sun's transition into the zodiac sign Capricorn (Makara)**.

Connection with Lord Ayyappa

• The festival is dedicated to **Lord Ayyappa**, who is worshipped at Sabarimala as a **Naishtika Brahmachari** (eternal celibate).
• Devotees observe a strict **41-day vratham (penance)** before visiting the temple, which includes
abstinence,

simplicity of living,
daily prayers and discipline.

• The word **Makaravilakku** literally means **"the sacred light of Makara"**.
• It refers to the appearance of a **light on the Ponnambalamedu hill**, visible from the Sabarimala temple during the evening of Makara Sankranti.
• For devotees, the light symbolises
divine presence,
spiritual fulfilment,
and the culmination of the pilgrimage.

• On Makaravilakku day, the sacred ornaments of Lord Ayyappa, known as **Thiruvabharanam**, are brought in a ceremonial procession from **Pandalam Palace** to Sabarimala.
• This procession passes through traditional forest routes and villages, reinforcing the **cultural continuity** of the festival.

The importance of blue

GS I: History

In India, the colour blue has an age-old association with the struggles of the marginalised. In early 1859, peasants in Bengal, who had been exploited by white planters for decades, took a cue from a magistrate's notice that made the sowing of indigo non-obligatory, and for the first time refused to cultivate the plant. Though many historians have termed the protests that ensued as non-violent, some others say that besides non-cooperation, peasants attacked factories and defended themselves against armed goons sent by the planters. The Bengali bourgeoisie were careful not to antagonise the British government. This fence-sitting by the intellectuals may have been one of the reasons why this 'blue movement', which sustained for over a year, remained local and anti-planter, and did not develop into a larger anti-colonial campaign. Nearly 60 years after this episode, the indigo blue came back into focus. But this time, it was as the launch pad for an entirely new method of anti-colonial activism. One that played a pivotal role in freeing us from the colonial yoke in 1947.

The Champaran Satyagraha

Gandhi's first experiment with satyagraha, or civil disobedience, in India was in Champaran, Bihar, in 1917. Champaran was full of indigo plantations. The tenants of the plantation were bound by law to plant indigo on a portion of their land. 'This system was known as the tinkathia system, as three kathas out of twenty kathas (which make one acre) had to be planted with Indigo,' Gandhi noted. The tenants lived in oppressive conditions, and landlords used force and extortion to make sure they remained subjugated. Even when the price of indigo began falling, they had no choice but to grow the crop.

Gandhi first went to Champaran on the invitation of Rajkumar Shukla, an agriculturalist. He studied the problem, listened to the voices of the tenants, and mobilised public participation for a peaceful agitation. His overtures to the office-bearers of the planters' association were rudely rebuffed; he was an outsider.

Still, Gandhi's investigations were having an impact and made the government uneasy. He was issued a notice to leave Champaran, but he stayed on. Then the administration issued him a summons. The night before Gandhi was to appear in court, crowds gathered around the house where he was staying. The following day, the court was overflowing. In his characteristic style, Gandhi said, 'In my humble opinion it is a question of difference of opinion between the Local Administration and myself. I have entered the country with motives of rendering humanitarian and national service. I have done so in response to a pressing invitation to come and help the ryots, who urge they are not being fairly treated by the indigo planters ... As a law-abiding citizen my first instinct would be, as it was, to obey the order served upon me. But I could not do so without doing violence to my sense of duty to those for whom I have come. I feel that I could just now serve them only by remaining in their midst....'

Ambedkar's suit

But the dark blue of indigo soon faded from memory. It needed Ambedkar to bring it back into the public imagination. Ambedkar statues have him attired in a blue suit, holding the Constitution in one hand and urging us to move forward. There are many theories about how the association between blue and Dalit movements came about. Ambedkar's suit was a social statement and the choice of blue possibly just his preference. Some associate blue with the expanse of his vision and the non-discriminatory nature of the sky itself. Blue is also considered the colour of equality, representative of the working class. Buddhist and folklore associations with the colour blue have also been pointed out.

Could there have been another reason for the choice of blue? In his *Riddles of Hinduism: An Exposition to Enlighten the Masses*, Ambedkar reviewed what the *Puranas* had to say on the origin of the varna system. He quoted from John Muir's translations of some sections of the *Mahabharata* and the vulgate version of *Harivamsha*.

From the *Mahabharata*: 'The colour (varna) of the Brahmans was white; that of the Kshatriyas red; that of the Vaishyas yellow, and that of the Sudras black.'

From *Harivamsha*: 'The Brahmans, beautiful (or, dear to Soma), were formed from an imperishable (akshara), the Kshattriyas from a perishable (kshara), element, the Vaisyas from alteration, the Sudras from a modification of smoke ... Hence in the world men have become divided into castes, being of four descriptions, Brahmans, Kshattriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras ...'

That the colours blue and black are used as interchangeable shades was not important in these correlations. The scholar Nick Allen demonstrates that equivalences between certain colours and people's social functions, nature and even appearance are found in many cultures. These cultural associations also reveal that people at the lowest rung of society are invariably allocated dark colours, very often blue or black. Allen calls black a 'non-colour' which is connected with the semiotics of inferiority and otherness. This makes me wonder if his choice of blue was influenced by the association of this colour with shudras.

The blue chakra is at the literal heart of the Indian flag, holding within itself the strength of the Dalit community and the spirit of civil disobedience. It is a reflection of our right to assemble peaceably and without arms. An assertion that we will assemble to protect our rights and ally with all those society forgets to notice. It is also a reminder of our unkept promises.

T.M. Krishna
Carnatic musician and author.
This is an edited excerpt from his latest book, 'We the People of India: Decoding a Nation's Symbols,' Context/Westland. ₹899

The dark blue of indigo, which was related to the Champaran Satyagraha, soon faded from memory. It needed Ambedkar to bring it back into the public imagination

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The importance of blue
नीले रंग का महत्व

- Gandhi's first experiment with **satyagraha**, or **civil disobedience**, in India was in **Champaran, Bihar**, in **1917**.
  भारत में **सत्याग्रह** या **नागरिक अवज्ञा** का गांधी का पहला प्रयोग **1917** में **बिहार के चंपारण** में हुआ।
- 'This system was known as the **tinkathia system**, as three kathas out of twenty kathas which make one acre had to be planted with Indigo,' Gandhi noted.

गांधी ने लिखा कि 'इस व्यवस्था को **तीनकठिया प्रथा** कहा जाता था, क्योंकि बीस कट्ठों में से तीन कट्ठों पर नील बोना अनिवार्य था।'

- Gandhi first went to Champaran on the invitation of **Rajkumar Shukla**, an agriculturalist.
  गांधी पहली बार **राजकुमार शुक्ल**, एक कृषक, के निमंत्रण पर चंपारण गए।

- He studied the problem, listened to the voices of the tenants, and mobilised **public participation** for a peaceful agitation.
  उन्होंने समस्या का अध्ययन किया, किसानों की बात सुनी और शांतिपूर्ण आंदोलन के लिए **जनभागीदारी** को संगठित किया।

- He was issued a notice to leave Champaran, but he stayed on.
  उन्हें चंपारण छोड़ने का नोटिस दिया गया, लेकिन वे वहीं डटे रहे।

- **Blue** is also considered the colour of **equality**, representative of the **working class**.
  नीला रंग समानता का प्रतीक भी माना जाता है और **श्रमिक वर्ग** का प्रतिनिधि है।

- **Buddhist** and **folklore** associations with the colour **blue** have also been pointed out.
  नीले रंग के साथ **बौद्ध** और **लोककथाओं** से जुड़े संबंधों की ओर भी ध्यान दिलाया गया है।

- From the **Mahabharata**: 'The colour (**varna**) of the **Brahmans** was **white**; that of the **Kshatriyas red**; that of the **Vaishyas yellow**, and that of the **Sudras black**.'
  महाभारत से: '**ब्राह्मणों** का रंग (**वर्ण**) **सफेद** था; **क्षत्रियों** का **लाल**; **वैश्यों** का **पीला**, और **शूद्रों** का **काला**।'

- The **blue chakra** is at the literal heart of the **Indian flag**, holding within itself the strength of the **Dalit community** and the spirit of **civil disobedience**.
  नीला चक्र भारतीय ध्वज के शाब्दिक हृदय में है, जिसमें **दलित समुदाय** की शक्ति और **नागरिक अवज्ञा** की भावना समाहित है।

- It is a reflection of our right to assemble **peaceably** and **without arms**.
  यह हमारे **शांतिपूर्ण** और **निहत्थे** एकत्र होने के अधिकार का प्रतिबिंब है।

GS Paper 1: Society	
TOPICS COVERED	**14 January 2026**
1.	Are India's small towns being increasingly urbanised? क्या भारत के छोटे शहर तेजी से शहरीकृत हो रहे हैं?
2.	Festschrift for Mahasweta Devi: three books by marginalised voices महाश्वेता देवी के लिए फेस्टश्रीफ्ट: हाशिए के स्वर की तीन किताबें

Are India's small towns being increasingly urbanised?

GS I: Society   MQB

Are small towns an alternative to the over-accumulation witnessed in the country's metro cities?

Tikender Singh Panwar

The story so far:

India continues to narrate its urban future through the loud vocabulary of megacities. But a quieter and far more consequential transformation is unfolding. Of India's nearly 9,000 census and statutory towns, barely 500 qualify as large cities. The overwhelming majority are small towns, with populations below 1,00,000. This proliferation of small towns is a structural product of India's capitalist development – and of its crisis.

How have small towns proliferated?

From the 1970s through the 1990s, capital accumulation was organised through metropolisation. Large cities became the primary sites for industrial production, state investment, infrastructure, and labour absorption. Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and later Bengaluru and Hyderabad became spatial fixes for capitalism by absorbing surplus labour; concentrating consumption; and by creating conditions for accumulation. However, today, India's metros have run into the classic problem of over-accumulation. Land prices have detached from productive use, infrastructure systems are stretched beyond repair, and rising costs have become unbearable for working groups.

It is in this moment that small towns have emerged. Across India, one can see this shift. Towns like Sattenapalle in Andhra Pradesh, Dhamtari in Chhattisgarh, Barabanki in Uttar Pradesh, Hassan in Karnataka, Bongaigaon in Assam, or Una in Himachal Pradesh are now logistics nodes, agro-processing hubs, warehouse towns, construction economies, service centres and consumption markets. They absorb migrant workers pushed out of metros and rural youth with few agrarian options. These small towns are not outside the urban process; they are fully inside it. Small towns are urbanised under conditions of capitalist stress – cheaper land, pliable labour, weaker regulation, and minimal political scrutiny.

Are small towns a better alternative?

They offer no inherent emancipatory promise. What is unfolding is not inclusive growth but the urbanisation of rural poverty. Informal labour dominates – construction workers without contracts, women in home-based piecework, and youth trapped in platform economies with no security. In towns like Shahdol in Madhya Pradesh or Raichur in Karnataka, one sees new hierarchies hardening: real estate brokers, local contractors, micro-financiers and political intermediaries are controlling land and labour. This is where policy failure becomes glaring. India's flagship urban missions remain deeply metro-centric.

AMRUT, even in its expanded version, effectively excludes most small towns from meaningful infrastructure investment. Water supply and sewerage projects are designed for large cities, while small towns survive on fragmented schemes and temporary fixes. The result is predictable: tanker economies flourish, groundwater is mined indiscriminately, and ecological stress deepens. Moreover, governance remains the weakest link. Small-town municipalities are underfunded and understaffed. Planning is outsourced to consultants unfamiliar with local realities and participation is reduced to procedural hearings.

What next?

The first step is political recognition. Small towns must be acknowledged as the primary frontier of India's urban future. Second, planning must be reimagined. Town-level plans must integrate housing, livelihoods, transport and ecology, rather than replicate metropolitan templates. Third, small towns need empowered municipalities, transparent budgets, and institutional space for workers' collectives, environmental actors and cooperatives. Finally, capital must be disciplined. Platform economies and digital infrastructures need regulation to ensure labour rights, local value retention and data accountability.

Tikender Singh Panwar is a member of the Kerala Urban Commission.

THE GIST

▼ Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and later Bengaluru and Hyderabad became spatial fixes for capitalism by absorbing surplus labour; concentrating consumption; and by creating conditions for accumulation.

▼ India's flagship urban missions remain deeply metro-centric. AMRUT, even in its expanded version, effectively excludes most small towns from meaningful infrastructure investment.

▼ Small towns must be acknowledged as the primary frontier of India's urban future.

Are India's small towns being increasingly urbanised?

क्या भारत के छोटे शहर तेजी से शहरीकृत हो रहे हैं?

- India continues to narrate its urban future through the loud vocabulary of **megacities**.
  भारत अपने शहरी भविष्य को अब भी **मेगासिटी** की ऊँची आवाज़ वाली शब्दावली में बयान करता रहता है।
- But a quieter and far more **consequential transformation** is unfolding.
  लेकिन एक कहीं अधिक **महत्वपूर्ण परिवर्तन** चुपचाप सामने आ रहा है।
- Of India's nearly **9,000 census and statutory towns**, barely **500** qualify as large cities.
  भारत के लगभग **9,000 जनगणना और वैधानिक शहरों** में से केवल **500** ही बड़े शहरों की श्रेणी में आते हैं।
- The overwhelming majority are **small towns**, with populations below **1,00,000**.
  अधिकांश **छोटे शहर** हैं, जिनकी आबादी **1,00,000** से कम है।
- This proliferation of small towns is a **structural product** of India's **capitalist development** — and of its **crisis**.
  छोटे शहरों की यह बढ़ोतरी भारत के **पूँजीवादी विकास** और उसके **संकट** की एक **संरचनात्मक देन** है।

How have small towns proliferated
छोटे शहर कैसे बढ़े

- From the **1970s through the 1990s**, capital accumulation was organised through **metropolisation**.
  1970 के दशक से 1990 के दशक तक पूँजी संचय **महानगरीकरण** के माध्यम से संगठित होता रहा।
- Large cities became the primary sites for **industrial production**, **state investment**, **infrastructure**, and **labour absorption**.
  बड़े शहर **औद्योगिक उत्पादन**, **राज्य निवेश**, **बुनियादी ढाँचे**, और **श्रम अवशोषण** के मुख्य केंद्र बन गए।
- **Delhi**, **Mumbai**, **Chennai**, **Kolkata**, and later **Bengaluru** and **Hyderabad** became spatial fixes for capitalism by absorbing **surplus labour**, concentrating **consumption**, and creating conditions for **accumulation**.
  दिल्ली, **मुंबई**, **चेन्नई**, **कोलकाता**, और बाद में **बेंगलुरु** तथा **हैदराबाद** ने **अधिशेष श्रम** को समेटकर, **उपभोग** को केंद्रित कर, और **संचय** की स्थितियाँ बनाकर पूँजीवाद के स्थानिक आधार का काम किया।
- However, today, India's metros have run into the classic problem of **over-accumulation**.
  लेकिन आज भारत के महानगर **अतिसंचय** की पारंपरिक समस्या से जूझ रहे हैं।
- **Land prices** have detached from productive use, **infrastructure systems** are stretched beyond repair, and rising **costs** have become unbearable for working groups.
  भूमि की कीमतें उत्पादक उपयोग से अलग हो चुकी हैं, **इन्फ्रास्ट्रक्चर सिस्टम** मरम्मत से परे खिंच चुके हैं, और बढ़ती **लागतें** कामकाजी वर्ग के लिए असहनीय हो गई हैं।
- It is in this moment that **small towns** have emerged.
  इसी दौर में **छोटे शहर** उभरकर सामने आए हैं।
- Towns like **Sattenapalle** in **Andhra Pradesh**, **Dhamtari** in **Chhattisgarh**, **Barabanki** in **Uttar Pradesh**, **Hassan** in **Karnataka**, **Bongaigaon** in **Assam**, or **Una** in **Himachal Pradesh** are now **logistics nodes**, **agro-processing hubs**, **warehouse towns**, **construction economies**, **service centres**, and **consumption markets**.
  आंध्र प्रदेश के **सत्तेनापल्ले**, **छत्तीसगढ़** के **धमतरी**, **उत्तर प्रदेश** के **बाराबंकी**, **कर्नाटक** के **हासन**, **असम** के **बोंगाईगांव**, और **हिमाचल प्रदेश** के **ऊना** जैसे शहर अब **लॉजिस्टिक्स नोड**, **एग्रो-प्रोसेसिंग हब**, **वेयरहाउस टाउन**, **निर्माण अर्थव्यवस्था**, **सेवा केंद्र**, और **उपभोक्ता बाजार** बन चुके हैं।
- They absorb **migrant workers** pushed out of metros and **rural youth** with few agrarian options.
  ये शहर महानगरों से बाहर किए गए **प्रवासी श्रमिकों** और सीमित कृषि विकल्पों वाले **ग्रामीण युवाओं** को समेट लेते हैं।
- These small towns are not outside the **urban process**; they are fully inside it.
  ये छोटे शहर **शहरी प्रक्रिया** से बाहर नहीं हैं, बल्कि पूरी तरह उसके भीतर हैं।
- Small towns are urbanised under conditions of **capitalist stress** — cheaper land, **pliable labour**, **weaker regulation**, and **minimal political scrutiny**.
  छोटे शहर **पूँजीवादी दबाव** की परिस्थितियों में शहरीकृत हो रहे हैं — **सस्ती ज़मीन**, **लचीला श्रम**, **कमज़ोर नियमन**, और **न्यूनतम राजनीतिक निगरानी** के साथ।

Are small towns a better alternative
क्या छोटे शहर बेहतर विकल्प हैं

- They offer no inherent **emancipatory promise**.
  वे अपने आप में कोई **मुक्तिदायी वादा** नहीं करते।
- What is unfolding is not **inclusive growth** but the **urbanisation of rural poverty**.
  जो सामने आ रहा है वह **समावेशी विकास** नहीं, बल्कि **ग्रामीण गरीबी का शहरीकरण** है।
- **Informal labour** dominates — **construction workers** without contracts, **women** in home-based piecework, and **youth** trapped in platform economies with no security.
  यहाँ **अनौपचारिक श्रम** हावी है — बिना अनुबंध के **निर्माण श्रमिक**, घर से काम करने वाली **महिलाएँ**, और बिना सुरक्षा के प्लेटफॉर्म अर्थव्यवस्था में फँसे **युवा**।
- In towns like **Shahdol** in **Madhya Pradesh** or **Raichur** in **Karnataka**, one sees new hierarchies hardening.
  मध्य प्रदेश के **शहडोल** या **कर्नाटक** के **रायचूर** जैसे शहरों में नई पदानुक्रमें सख्त होती दिखती हैं।
- **Real estate brokers**, **local contractors**, **micro-financiers** and **political intermediaries** are controlling land and labour.
  रियल एस्टेट ब्रोकर, **स्थानीय ठेकेदार**, **माइक्रो-फाइनेंसर**, और **राजनीतिक बिचौलिए** ज़मीन और श्रम पर नियंत्रण कर रहे हैं।
- This is where **policy failure** becomes glaring.
  यहीं पर **नीतिगत विफलता** साफ़ दिखाई देती है।
- India's **flagship urban missions** remain deeply **metro-centric**.
  भारत की **प्रमुख शहरी योजनाएँ** अब भी गहराई से **महानगर-केंद्रित** हैं।
- **AMRUT**, even in its expanded version, effectively excludes most small towns from meaningful **infrastructure investment**.
  अमृत, अपने विस्तारित रूप में भी, अधिकांश छोटे शहरों को सार्थक **बुनियादी ढाँचा निवेश** से बाहर ही रखता है।
- **Water supply** and **sewerage projects** are designed for large cities, while small towns survive on **fragmented schemes** and **temporary fixes**.
  जल आपूर्ति और **सीवरेज परियोजनाएँ** बड़े शहरों के लिए बनाई जाती हैं, जबकि छोटे शहर **खंडित योजनाओं** और **अस्थायी समाधानों** पर निर्भर रहते हैं।
- The result is predictable — **tanker economies** flourish, **groundwater** is mined indiscriminately, and **ecological stress** deepens.
  नतीजा अनुमानित है — **टैंकर अर्थव्यवस्था** फलती-फूलती है, **भूजल** का अंधाधुंध दोहन होता है, और **पर्यावरणीय दबाव** बढ़ता जाता है।
- Moreover, **governance** remains the weakest link.
  इसके अलावा, **शासन व्यवस्था** सबसे कमजोर कड़ी बनी हुई है।
- Small-town **municipalities** are **underfunded** and **understaffed**.
  छोटे शहरों की **नगरपालिकाएँ कम संसाधनों** और **कम कर्मचारियों** से जूझ रही हैं।
- **Planning** is outsourced to consultants unfamiliar with local realities and **participation** is reduced to procedural hearings.
  योजना निर्माण ऐसे सलाहकारों को सौंप दिया जाता है जो स्थानीय हकीकत से अनजान होते हैं और **भागीदारी** केवल औपचारिक सुनवाइयों तक सीमित रह जाती है।

What next
आगे क्या

- The first step is **political recognition**.
  पहला कदम **राजनीतिक मान्यता** है।
- Small towns must be acknowledged as the **primary frontier** of India's **urban future**.
  छोटे शहरों को भारत के **शहरी भविष्य** की **मुख्य अग्रिम पंक्ति** के रूप में स्वीकार करना होगा।
- Second, **planning** must be reimagined.
  दूसरा, **योजना निर्माण** को नए सिरे से सोचना होगा।
- **Town-level plans** must integrate **housing**, **livelihoods**, **transport**, and **ecology**, rather than replicate metropolitan templates.

शहर-स्तरीय योजनाओं में **आवास**, **रोज़गार**, **परिवहन**, और **पर्यावरण** को जोड़ना होगा, न कि महानगरीय मॉडल की नकल करनी होगी।

- Third, small towns need **empowered municipalities**, **transparent budgets**, and **institutional space** for **workers' collectives**, **environmental actors**, and **cooperatives**.
  तीसरा, छोटे शहरों को **सशक्त नगरपालिकाएँ**, **पारदर्शी बजट**, और **श्रमिक संगठनों**, **पर्यावरण समूहों**, तथा **सहकारिताओं** के लिए **संस्थागत स्थान** चाहिए।

- Finally, **capital** must be **disciplined**.
  अंत में, **पूँजी** को **नियंत्रित** करना होगा।

- **Platform economies** and **digital infrastructures** need **regulation** to ensure **labour rights**, **local value retention**, and **data accountability**.
  प्लेटफॉर्म अर्थव्यवस्था और **डिजिटल इन्फ्रास्ट्रक्चर** को **नियमन** की आवश्यकता है ताकि **श्रम अधिकार**, **स्थानीय मूल्य संरक्षण**, और **डेटा जवाबदेही** सुनिश्चित की जा सके।

Festschrift for Mahasweta Devi: three books by marginalised voices

In her centenary year — Mahasweta Devi would have turned 100 today — we read three writers, Sushila Takbhaure, Rakshit Sonawane and Mayyu Ali, who chronicle their lives of oppression. Their stories would have struck a chord with a writer who always kept an eye out for the dispossessed

GS I: Society

Sudipta Datta

Mahasweta Devi always looked out for the poorest of the poor. The writer and activist, who would have turned 100 on January 14, 2026, spent her life seeking a life of equality and justice for the dispossessed, particularly Adivasis, and the impoverished people of urban and rural India.

She wrote several books, *Aranyer Adhikar* (Rights of the Forest), *Hajar Churashir Ma* (Mother of [prisoner number] 1084), *Rudali*, *Titu Mir*, *Chotti Munda and his Arrow*, anthologies of short stories which include tales like 'Draupadi/Dopdi', 'The Breast Giver' and more.

Drawn to people who were forced to lead a "subhuman existence", she wrote about people with no access to education, health care, and income. In 1997, when Mahasweta Devi was honoured with the Ramon Magsaysay Award, she said: "My India still lives behind a curtain of darkness. A curtain that separates mainstream society from the poor and the deprived."

Mahasweta Devi passed away in 2016, but her chronicles will always feel urgent and contemporary as long as there is oppression and injustice in the world. She also always encouraged people to tell their story – the manner in which she played a role in Manoranjan Byapari becoming a writer and narrate his life as a Dalit in Bengal is well-documented.

The three books we feature in this article, by Sushila Takbhaure, Rakshit Sonawane and Mayyu Ali, would have struck a chord with a writer who always kept an eye out for the marginalised.

A Dalit and a woman
Sushila Takbhaure foregrounds the Dalit experience and women's concerns in her work. Her autobiography, *My Shackled Life*, translated by Deeba Zafir and Preeti Dewan from the Hindi 'Shikanje ka Dard', is first off all, as rightly noted by the translators, an act of courage. And this is the first autobiography in Hindi by a Dalit woman writer to be translated and published in English, thus reaching a wider audience. Kannada, Telugu, Marathi translations are in the works.

In the preface to the Hindi edition, she explains why she chose to call her autobiography, 'Shikanje ka Dard'. "Merely speaking of the 'shikanja – the vice of caste and patriarchy – would have been inadequate; what pressed upon me to tell was the pain [dard] that 'shikanja' inflicted."

In general, she writes that women encounter far greater challenges than men. Her book expresses the pain of being both Dalit and a woman. Sushila was born in 1954 in Banapura, a village in Madhya Pradesh, where "discrimination based on caste was widespread, and untouchability was deeply entrenched." What made her life different though is that her parents and grandmother valued education and ensured that all the children – there were several – studied as far as their resources allowed.

But life was harder for girls, and it seemed that they existed only to do housework. "What was worse, not only men but women too reinforced patriarchy by giving preference to sons." Sushila refused to give in and persevered with her education against all odds, even going on a hunger strike to ensure that her father and brothers agreed to her college admission.

Her life took another turn when she got married to a much older man, Sunderlal Takbhaure, from Nagpur who was a high school teacher. She writes in detail about everyday humiliations, but also her immense joy at being able to pursue her education and earning a PhD degree. Her purpose, she says, is to show how education can become a tool of liberation for women.

The die is caste
Rakshit Sonawane tells the story of Avinash Gaikwad who grew up in a one-room hut in the slums of Mumbai, and how he clawed his way out of poverty and caste discrimination. The story, *Scum of the Earth: A True Story From the Margins* (HarperCollins), mirrors his own.

Sonawane grew up in a slum, worked in a factory and at the port but continued his studies alongside. He got a postgraduate degree in literature, besides studying law and journalism, and finally became a reporter in 1985.

His protagonist, Avinash, never forgets the story about his father, Dagadoo, who was beaten for asking for leftover puranpoli, a Marathi delicacy. Dagadoo joined Ambedkar's social revolution to fight caste oppression and moved to Mumbai, with the belief that his son would have a better life with education. Avinash didn't disappoint his parents. Once he had a job, he began teaching students for free on Sunday, telling them to never discriminate on the basis of caste, gender, class or religion. He didn't want to adopt illegal means to earn a little extra just because he had "experienced poverty, illiteracy, humiliation and injustice."

Sonawane documents the urban Dalit experience, in which comments like "the caste system is a thing of the past" or that "the caste system was just a division of labour" were commonplace. To each, Avinash patiently explained that casteism was alive and kicking in forms both obvious and subtle.

Against a genocide
In the country he hails from, Myanmar, poet Mayyu Ali's existence is not recognised; in fact, the word 'Rohingya' is prohibited. Mayyu and his family fled to Bangladesh when the atrocities against the Rohingya began. But life wasn't any easier in the refugee camps. Yet, he never stopped writing poems, dedicated to his people. "I want to be their voice," he told Emilie Lopes. Together, they wrote *Eradication: A Poet at the Heart of the Rohingya Genocide* (Pan Macmillan India), translated from French by Siba Barkataki.

"The earth orbits with two different worlds;/The hell and heaven/I left one, to discover other," Mayyu writes in 'A New Heaven'. He had experienced the worst that man can do – "the scent of death, the sound of bullets, the taste of erasure, the sight of blood flowing over the bodies of my brother."

In 2021, as he opened the door to his new apartment in Toronto, he finally realised he was free. Though he has been forced to live in hiding, he has promised himself that he will never forget to be the voice of his people. The publication of *Eradication* is proof of that.

Festschrift for Mahasweta Devi: three books by marginalised voices
महाश्वेता देवी के लिए फेस्टश्रीफ्ट: हाशिए के स्वर की तीन किताबें

- She wrote several books, **Aranyer Adhikar (Rights of the Forest)**, **Hajar Churashir Ma (Mother of [prisoner number] 1084)**, **Rudali**, **Titu Mir**, **Chotti Munda and his Arrow**, anthologies of short stories which include tales like **'Draupadi/Dopdi'**, **'The Breast Giver'** and more.

उन्होंने कई पुस्तकें लिखीं, **अरण्येर अधिकार (वनों के अधिकार)**, **हजार चौरासी की माँ**, **रुदाली**, **टीटू मीर**, **छोटी मुंडा और उसका तीर**, तथा लघुकथा संग्रह जिनमें **'द्रौपदी/दोपदी'**, **'द ब्रेस्ट गिवर'** जैसी कहानियाँ शामिल हैं।

- Drawn to people who were forced to lead a **"subhuman existence"**, she wrote about people with no access to **education**, **health care**, and **income**.
  जिन लोगों को **"अमानवीय जीवन"** जीने के लिए मजबूर किया गया, महाश्वेता देवी उनके प्रति आकर्षित रहीं और उन्होंने उन लोगों पर लिखा जिनकी पहुँच **शिक्षा**, **स्वास्थ्य सेवा**, और **आय** तक नहीं थी।

- In **1997**, when Mahasweta Devi was honoured with the **Ramon Magsaysay Award**, she said, "My India still lives behind a curtain of **darkness**. A curtain that separates mainstream society from the **poor and the deprived**."
  1997 में जब महाश्वेता देवी को **रेमन मैग्सेसे पुरस्कार** से सम्मानित किया गया, तब उन्होंने कहा, "मेरा भारत आज भी **अँधेरे** के परदे के पीछे जीता है, जो मुख्यधारा के समाज को **गरीबों और वंचितों** से अलग करता है।"

- Mahasweta Devi passed away in **2016**, but her chronicles will always feel urgent and contemporary as long as there is **oppression and injustice** in the world.
  महाश्वेता देवी का निधन **2016** में हुआ, लेकिन उनकी रचनाएँ तब तक प्रासंगिक और जरूरी रहेंगी, जब तक दुनिया में **दमन और अन्याय** मौजूद हैं।

- "What was worse, not only men but **women too reinforced patriarchy** by giving preference to sons."
  "सबसे बुरा यह था कि केवल पुरुष ही नहीं, बल्कि **महिलाएँ भी बेटों को तरजीह देकर पितृसत्ता को मज़बूत करती थीं**।"

- Her life took another turn when she got married to a much older man, **Sunderlal Takbhaure**, from **Nagpur** who was a **high school teacher**.
  उनके जीवन में एक नया मोड़ तब आया जब उन्होंने **नागपुर** के एक उम्र में बड़े व्यक्ति **सुंदरलाल तकभौरे**, जो एक **हाई स्कूल शिक्षक** थे, से विवाह किया।

- She writes in detail about **everyday humiliations**, but also her **immense joy** at being able to pursue her education and earning a **PhD degree**.
  वह **दैनिक अपमानों** के बारे में विस्तार से लिखती हैं, लेकिन साथ ही अपनी पढ़ाई जारी रखने और **पीएचडी की डिग्री** हासिल करने की **अपार खुशी** का भी ज़िक्र करती हैं।

- Her purpose, she says, is to show how **education** can become a tool of **liberation for women**.
  वह कहती हैं कि उनका उद्देश्य यह दिखाना है कि कैसे **शिक्षा** महिलाओं के लिए **मुक्ति का साधन** बन सकती है।

The die is caste
पासा है जाति

- **Dagadoo** joined **Ambedkar's social revolution** to fight **caste oppression** and moved to **Mumbai**, believing that his son would have a better life with **education**.
  दगाडू ने **जातिगत उत्पीड़न** के खिलाफ **आंबेडकर के सामाजिक आंदोलन** से जुड़कर **मुंबई** का रुख किया, इस विश्वास के साथ कि **शिक्षा** से उनके बेटे का जीवन बेहतर होगा।

- Once he had a job, he began **teaching students for free on Sunday**, telling them to never discriminate on the basis of **caste, gender, class or religion**.
  नौकरी मिलने के बाद उन्होंने **रविवार को बच्चों को मुफ्त पढ़ाना** शुरू किया और उन्हें **जाति, लिंग, वर्ग या धर्म** के आधार पर भेदभाव न करने की सीख दी।

- He didn't want to adopt **illegal means** to earn extra just because he had "experienced **poverty, illiteracy, humiliation and injustice**."
  उन्होंने सिर्फ इसलिए कि उन्होंने "**गरीबी, अशिक्षा, अपमान और अन्याय**" झेला था, **अवैध तरीकों** से पैसे कमाने का रास्ता नहीं चुना।

- **Sonawane** documents the **urban Dalit experience**, where comments like "**the caste system is a thing of the past**" or that "**the caste system was just a division of labour**" were commonplace.
  सोनावने शहरी दलित अनुभव को दर्ज करते हैं, जहाँ "**जाति व्यवस्था अब बीते ज़माने की बात है**" या "**जाति व्यवस्था सिर्फ श्रम विभाजन थी**" जैसे कथन आम थे।

- To each, **Avinash** patiently explained that **casteism** was alive and kicking in forms both **obvious and subtle**.
  हर बार **अविनाश** धैर्यपूर्वक समझाते थे कि **जातिवाद** आज भी **स्पष्ट और सूक्ष्म** दोनों रूपों में ज़िंदा है।

- He had experienced the worst that man can do — "the **scent of death**, the **sound of bullets**, the **taste of erasure**, the **sight of blood** flowing over the bodies of my brother."
  उन्होंने इंसान की सबसे बुरी क्रूरता देखी — "**मौत की गंध**, **गोलियों की आवाज़**, मिटा दिए जाने का स्वाद, और मेरे भाई के शरीर पर बहते **खून का दृश्य**।"

GS Paper II: Polity,	
TOPICS COVERED	**13 January 2026**
1.	**SC questions EC on voter deletion, citizenship** मतदाता सूची से नाम हटाने और नागरिकता पर SC ने EC से सवाल किए
2.	**Governor's Rule in Mizoram tribal council extended** मिज़ोरम की जनजातीय परिषद में राज्यपाल शासन बढ़ाया गया
3.	**Equality in society has to start in school, says Supreme Court** समाज में समानता की शुरुआत स्कूल से होनी चाहिए, सुप्रीम कोर्ट का कहना
4.	**Language of harmony** सामंजस्य की भाषा

SC questions EC on voter deletion, citizenship

Court asks if removal from the rolls could bring into doubt a person's right to remain in India

EC counsel says citizenship and delimitations are the cornerstones of the electoral process

Poll body says voters excluded in the special intensive revision have the right to appeal

GS II: Polity

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Election Commission (EC) whether an Electoral Registration Officer's (ERO) decision to strike a person off the electoral rolls after an "inquisitorial" enquiry into his citizenship under the special intensive revision (SIR) exercise could be referred to by the Centre to commence an investigation into the individual's right to remain in India or be deported.

Justice Joymalya Bagchi, a member of the Division Bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant, asked whether EROs could exclude a person from the electoral rolls even before the Centre took a final call to "strip him of the colour of citizenship".
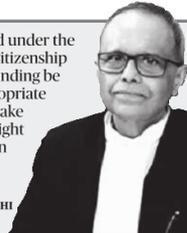
The questions raised by the Supreme Court have gained significance as draft electoral rolls published in nine States and three Union Territories, including West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu, witnessed the deletion of nearly 6.5 crore names in the second phase of the special intensive revision process.

The queries from the Bench followed submissions made by senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi that Article 326 (the right of adult Indian citizens to vote), the Representation of the People Act, and the Registration of Electors Rules of 1960 collectively empower the EC, through the EROs, with competence to conduct an inquisitorial enquiry into citizenship for specific purposes.

Mr. Dwivedi said the Election Commission was entitled to verify citizenship for the purpose of inclusion in the electoral rolls. It was for the Centre to decide if a person would

> Is it required under the scheme of Citizenship Act that his [ERO's] finding be referred for an appropriate decision?... can you take away his [a voter's] right till a decision is taken by the Central government?
>
> **JUSTICE JOYMALYA BAGCHI**
> Supreme Court judge

The questions gain significance as draft rolls have removed nearly 6.5 crore names during SIR

stay on in India or be deported.

"He [ERO] can enquire.

But after he records a finding, is it required under the scheme of Citizenship Act that his finding be referred for an appropriate decision and steps by the Central government? And till then... can you take away his right till a decision is taken by the Central government stripping him of the colour of citizenship?" Justice Bagchi asked.

Mr. Dwivedi said a decision has to be taken "then and there".

"The consequence the other way would be that even though the ERO has found that he is not a citizen, he would continue in the electoral roll and vote. Once a shadow is cast on his citizenship, as long as it is not perverse or arbitrary, he needs to stand out. Nothing is perfect, but

we have to chase the utopia of perfection as closely as possible," Mr. Dwivedi responded.

The senior counsel said persons excluded from the electoral roll under the special intensive revision had the right to appeal.

"These things happen. The whole electoral exercise cannot be halted or modified for the sake of some persons. Of course, if the order [of exclusion] is perverse on individual facts, it would have to go. We are not entitled to wait until the final or ultimate decision [by the Centre], which may go one way or the other. There is, in the meanwhile, enough safeguards. He can file an appeal, and if the ERO order is set aside, he can be put back. These are normal

processes of law," Mr. Dwivedi submitted.

"Your argument is that non-citizens are not entitled?" Chief Justice Kant queried.

"It is not that a decision of the EC *ipso facto* leads to deportation. That is for the Centre to undertake," the EC counsel reasoned.

The Election Commission counsel said citizenship and delimitations were the cornerstones of electoral process.

Mr. Dwivedi said various statutes, including the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, mandated citizenship from applicants.

Mr. Dwivedi said a person had to be a citizen even to get a mining lease and authorities were entitled to verify his citizenship claim.

SC questions EC on voter deletion, citizenship
मतदाता सूची से नाम हटाने और नागरिकता पर SC ने EC से सवाल किए

- Court asks if removal from the rolls could bring into doubt a person's right to remain in **India**
  कोर्ट ने पूछा कि क्या मतदाता सूची से नाम हटाने से किसी व्यक्ति के **भारत** में रहने के अधिकार पर सवाल खड़ा हो सकता है

- EC counsel says **citizenship** and **delimitations** are the cornerstones of the **electoral process**
  EC के वकील ने कहा कि **नागरिकता** और **निर्वाचन क्षेत्रों का परिसीमन चुनावी प्रक्रिया** की आधारशिला हैं

- Poll body says voters excluded in the **special intensive revision** have the **right to appeal**
  चुनाव आयोग ने कहा कि **विशेष गहन पुनरीक्षण** में बाहर किए गए मतदाताओं को **अपील का अधिकार** है

- The **Supreme Court** on Tuesday asked the **Election Commission (EC)** whether an **Electoral Registration Officer's (ERO)** decision to strike a person off the electoral rolls after an "**inquisitorial**" enquiry into his **citizenship** under the **special intensive revision (SIR)** exercise could be referred to by the **Centre** to commence an investigation into the individual's right to remain in **India** or be deported
  सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने मंगलवार को **चुनाव आयोग (EC)** से पूछा कि क्या **विशेष गहन पुनरीक्षण (SIR)** अभ्यास के तहत **नागरिकता** की "**जांचात्मक**" जांच के बाद किसी व्यक्ति का नाम मतदाता सूची से हटाने का **निर्वाचन पंजीकरण अधिकारी (ERO)** का फैसला **केंद्र** द्वारा भारत में उस व्यक्ति के रहने के अधिकार की जांच शुरू करने या उसे निर्वासित करने के लिए संदर्भित किया जा सकता है

- **Justice Joymalya Bagchi**, a member of the **Division Bench** headed by **Chief Justice Surya Kant**, asked whether EROs could exclude a person from the electoral rolls even before the Centre took a final call to "**strip him of the colour of citizenship**"
  मुख्य न्यायाधीश सूर्य कांत की अध्यक्षता वाली **डिवीजन बेंच** के सदस्य **न्यायमूर्ति जॉयमाल्य बागची** ने पूछा कि क्या ERO केंद्र द्वारा "**नागरिकता का रंग छीनने**" पर अंतिम निर्णय लेने से पहले ही किसी व्यक्ति को मतदाता सूची से बाहर कर सकते हैं

- The questions raised by the **Supreme Court** have gained significance as draft electoral rolls published in **nine States and three Union Territories**, including **West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh**, and **Tamil Nadu**, witnessed the deletion of nearly **6.5 crore names** in the second phase of the **special intensive revision** process
  सुप्रीम कोर्ट द्वारा उठाए गए प्रश्न इसलिए महत्वपूर्ण हो गए हैं क्योंकि **पश्चिम बंगाल, उत्तर प्रदेश** और **तमिलनाडु** सहित **नौ राज्यों और तीन केंद्र शासित प्रदेशों** में प्रकाशित प्रारूप मतदाता सूचियों में **विशेष गहन पुनरीक्षण** प्रक्रिया के दूसरे चरण में लगभग **6.5 करोड़ नाम** हटाए गए

- The queries from the Bench followed submissions made by senior advocate **Rakesh Dwivedi** that **Article 326** (the right of adult Indian citizens to vote), the **Representation of the People Act**, and the **Registration of Electors Rules of 1960** collectively empower the EC, through the EROs, with competence to conduct an inquisitorial enquiry into citizenship for specific purposes
  पीठ के प्रश्न वरिष्ठ अधिवक्ता **राकेश द्विवेदी** की दलीलों के बाद आए, जिनमें कहा गया कि **अनुच्छेद 326** (वयस्क भारतीय नागरिकों को मतदान का अधिकार), **जनप्रतिनिधित्व अधिनियम**, और **1960 के निर्वाचक पंजीकरण नियम** सामूहिक रूप से EC को EROs के माध्यम से विशेष उद्देश्यों के लिए नागरिकता की जांचात्मक जांच करने का अधिकार देते हैं

- Mr. Dwivedi said the **Election Commission** was entitled to verify citizenship for the purpose of inclusion in the electoral rolls
  श्री द्विवेदी ने कहा कि **चुनाव आयोग** को मतदाता सूची में शामिल करने के उद्देश्य से नागरिकता की जांच करने का अधिकार है

- It was for the **Centre** to decide if a person would stay on in **India** or be deported
  किसी व्यक्ति के **भारत** में बने रहने या निर्वासित होने का निर्णय **केंद्र** को करना है

- "He [ERO] can enquire. But after he records a finding, is it required under the scheme of **Citizenship Act** that his finding be referred for an appropriate decision and steps by the **Central government**? And till then... can you take away his right till a decision is taken by the Central government stripping him of the colour of citizenship?" **Justice Bagchi** asked
  "वह [ERO] जांच कर सकता है। लेकिन जब वह कोई निष्कर्ष दर्ज करता है, तो क्या **नागरिकता अधिनियम** की योजना के तहत उस निष्कर्ष को **केंद्र सरकार** द्वारा उचित निर्णय और कदमों के लिए संदर्भित करना आवश्यक है? और तब तक… क्या केंद्र सरकार द्वारा नागरिकता का रंग छीने जाने का निर्णय होने से पहले आप उसका अधिकार छीन सकते हैं?" **न्यायमूर्ति बागची** ने पूछा

- Mr. Dwivedi said various statutes, including the **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act**, mandated **citizenship** from applicants
  श्री द्विवेदी ने कहा कि **खान और खनिज (विकास और विनियमन) अधिनियम** सहित विभिन्न कानूनों में आवेदकों के लिए **नागरिकता** अनिवार्य की गई है

- Mr. Dwivedi said a person had to be a citizen even to get a **mining lease** and authorities were entitled to verify his citizenship claim

श्री द्विवेदी ने कहा कि **खनन पट्टा** पाने के लिए भी व्यक्ति का नागरिक होना आवश्यक है और प्राधिकरण उसकी नागरिकता के दावे की जांच करने के हकदार हैं

Governor's Rule in Mizoram tribal council extended

GS II: Polity

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Mizoram Governor Vijay Kumar Singh has extended Governor's Rule in the Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC) for six more months, citing continuing political uncertainty. Governor's Rule was imposed in CADC following prolonged instability, triggered by the removal of Bharatiya Janata Party leader Molin Kumar Chakma from the post of Chief Executive Member through a no-confidence motion on June 16, 2025.

The Governor had sought the opinion of the Council of Minister after the expiry of the first six months of Governor's rule, which was imposed on July 7, 2025. The Council had said that there was no justification in extending Governor's Rule, as the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) enjoyed a clear majority. However, Mr. Singh noted that frequent shifts in political allegiance by the elected members necessitated continuation of Governor's Rule in CADC.

Governor's Rule in Mizoram tribal council extended
मिज़ोरम की जनजातीय परिषद में राज्यपाल शासन बढ़ाया गया

- Governor's Rule in **Mizoram tribal council** extended
  मिज़ोरम जनजातीय परिषद में **राज्यपाल शासन** बढ़ाया गया

- **Mizoram Governor Vijay Kumar Singh** has extended **Governor's Rule** in the **Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC)** for **six more months**, citing continuing **political uncertainty**.
  मिज़ोरम के राज्यपाल विजय कुमार सिंह ने **चकमाआ स्वायत्त जिला परिषद (CADC)** में **राज्यपाल शासन** को **छह और महीनों** के लिए बढ़ा दिया है, इसका कारण लगातार बनी **राजनीतिक अनिश्चितता** बताया गया है।

- **Governor's Rule** was imposed in **CADC** following prolonged **instability**, triggered by the removal of **Bharatiya Janata Party** leader **Molin Kumar Chakma** from the post of **Chief Executive Member** through a **no-confidence motion** on **June 16, 2025**.
  CADC में **राज्यपाल शासन** लंबे समय से चली आ रही **अस्थिरता** के बाद लगाया गया था, जिसकी शुरुआत **भारतीय जनता पार्टी** के नेता **मोलिन कुमार चकमा** को **मुख्य कार्यकारी सदस्य** के पद से **16 जून 2025** को **अविश्वास प्रस्ताव** के जरिए हटाए जाने से हुई थी।

- The **Governor** had sought the opinion of the **Council of Minister** after the expiry of the **first six months** of Governor's Rule, which was imposed on **July 7, 2025**.
  राज्यपाल ने **राज्यपाल शासन** के **पहले छह महीनों** की अवधि समाप्त होने के बाद, जो **7 जुलाई 2025** को लगाया गया था, **मंत्रिपरिषद** की राय मांगी थी।

- The **Council** had said that there was no **justification** in extending **Governor's Rule**, as the **Zoram People's Movement (ZPM)** enjoyed a clear **majority**.
  मंत्रिपरिषद ने कहा था कि **राज्यपाल शासन** बढ़ाने का कोई **औचित्य** नहीं है, क्योंकि **ज़ोरम पीपुल्स मूवमेंट (ZPM)** को स्पष्ट **बहुमत** प्राप्त है।

- However, **Mr. Singh** noted that frequent **shifts in political allegiance** by the **elected members** necessitated continuation of **Governor's Rule** in CADC.
  हालांकि, **श्री सिंह** ने कहा कि **निर्वाचित सदस्यों** द्वारा बार-बार **राजनीतिक निष्ठा में बदलाव** के कारण **CADC** में **राज्यपाल शासन** जारी रखना आवश्यक हो गया है।

Equality in society has to start in school, says Supreme Court

Krishnadas Rajagopal
Aaratrika Bhaumik
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court, in a judgment on Tuesday, said that equality in society had to start in school, where the child of a multi-millionaire or a Supreme Court judge had to sit shoulder-to-shoulder with a child of an autorickshaw driver or a street vendor.

A Bench headed by Justice P.S. Narasimha elaborated that the obligation of the government under the Right to Education Act (RTE) to ensure that neighbourhood schools admit children belonging to weaker and disadvantaged sections has an "extraordinary capacity to transform the social structure of our society".

"The statutory design [of the RTE Act] is normatively ambitious. It envisag-

> The statutory design [of the RTE Act] is normatively ambitious. It envisages elementary education for all children, across the spectrum of class, caste, gender and economic position, in a shared institutional space. It makes it possible... for the child of a multi-millionaire or even of a judge of SC to sit in the same classroom... as the child of an autorickshaw driver or a vendor
>
> **SUPREME COURT JUDGMENT**

es elementary education for all children, across the spectrum of class, caste, gender and economic position, in a shared institutional space. It makes it possible, normatively and structurally, for the child of a multimillionaire or even of a judge of the Supreme Court of India to sit in the same classroom and at the same bench as the child of an autorickshaw driver or a street vendor," Justice Na-

rasimha, who authored the judgment, wrote.

The top court's judgment rose from the bitter experience of the petitioner, Dinesh Biwaji Ashtikar, who was quietly snubbed off when he had approached a neighbourhood school to admit his children for free and compulsory elementary education in 2016.

"It is his case that, even though information

through RTI indicated that seats were available, the neighbourhood school did not respond," Justice Narasimha narrated.

The judge observed that educating "young India" and achieving "equality of status" demanded an earnest implementation of the constitutional right under Article 21A to free and compulsory education, followed by the statutory mandate of the 2009 Act.

'National mission'

"Ensuring admission of such students must be a national mission and an obligation of the appropriate government and the local authority. Equally, courts, be it constitutional or civil, must walk that extra mile to provide easy access and efficient relief to parents who complain of denial of the right," the Supreme Court declared.

Equality in society has to start in school, says Supreme Court
समाज में समानता की शुरुआत स्कूल से होनी चाहिए, सुप्रीम कोर्ट का कहना

- Equality in society has to start in school, says Supreme Court
  समाज में समानता की शुरुआत स्कूल से होनी चाहिए, सुप्रीम कोर्ट का कहना
- The Supreme Court, in a judgment on Tuesday, said that equality in society had to start in school, where the child of a multi-millionaire or a Supreme Court judge had to sit shoulder-to-shoulder with the child of an autorickshaw driver or a street vendor.
  सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने मंगलवार को एक फैसले में कहा कि समाज में समानता की शुरुआत स्कूल से होनी चाहिए, जहां एक मल्टी-मिलियनेयर या सुप्रीम कोर्ट के जज का बच्चा, एक ऑटो रिक्शा चालक या स्ट्रीट वेंडर के बच्चे के साथ कंधे से कंधा मिलाकर बैठे।
- A Bench headed by Justice P.S. Narasimha elaborated that the obligation of the government under the Right to Education Act (RTE) to ensure that neighbourhood schools admit children belonging to weaker and disadvantaged sections has an "extraordinary capacity to transform the social structure of our society".
  न्यायमूर्ति पी.एस. नरसिम्हा की अध्यक्षता वाली पीठ ने स्पष्ट किया कि शिक्षा का अधिकार अधिनियम (RTE) के तहत सरकार का दायित्व कि पड़ोस के स्कूल कमजोर और वंचित वर्गों के बच्चों को प्रवेश दें, हमारे समाज की सामाजिक संरचना को बदलने की असाधारण क्षमता रखता है।
- "The statutory design [of the RTE Act] is normatively ambitious. It envisages elementary education for all children, across the spectrum of class, caste, gender and economic position, in a shared institutional space.
- The top court's judgment rose from the bitter experience of the petitioner, Dinesh Biwaji Ashtikar, who was quietly snubbed off when he had approached a neighbourhood school to admit his children for free and compulsory elementary education in 2016.

शीर्ष अदालत का फैसला याचिकाकर्ता **दिनेश बीवाजी अष्टिकर** के कड़वे अनुभव से उपजा, जिन्हें **2016** में अपने बच्चों के लिए **मुफ्त और अनिवार्य प्राथमिक शिक्षा** के तहत **पड़ोस के स्कूल** में प्रवेश के लिए जाने पर चुपचाप **नज़रअंदाज़** कर दिया गया था।

- "It is his case that, even though information through **RTI** indicated that **seats were available**, the **neighbourhood school** did not respond," **Justice Narasimha** narrated.

  "उनका यह कहना है कि **RTI** के माध्यम से जानकारी मिलने के बावजूद कि **सीटें उपलब्ध थीं**, **पड़ोस के स्कूल** ने कोई प्रतिक्रिया नहीं दी," **न्यायमूर्ति नरसिम्हा** ने बताया।

- The judge observed that educating "**young India**" and achieving "**equality of status**" demanded an earnest implementation of the **constitutional right** under **Article 21A** to **free and compulsory education**, followed by the **statutory mandate** of the **2009 Act**.

  न्यायाधीश ने कहा कि "**यंग इंडिया**" को शिक्षित करने और "**स्थिति की समानता**" प्राप्त करने के लिए **अनुच्छेद 21A** के तहत **मुफ्त और अनिवार्य शिक्षा** के **संवैधानिक अधिकार** के ईमानदार क्रियान्वयन और उसके बाद **2009 अधिनियम** के **वैधानिक प्रावधान** का पालन आवश्यक है।

'National mission'
'राष्ट्रीय मिशन'

- "Ensuring admission of such students must be a **national mission** and an **obligation** of the appropriate **government** and the **local authority**. Equally, **courts**, be it **constitutional** or **civil**, must walk that **extra mile** to provide **easy access** and **efficient relief** to parents who complain of **denial of the right**," the **Supreme Court** declared.

  "ऐसे छात्रों का प्रवेश सुनिश्चित करना एक **राष्ट्रीय मिशन** होना चाहिए और संबंधित **सरकार** तथा स्थानीय **प्राधिकरण** का **दायित्व** होना चाहिए। इसी प्रकार, **न्यायालय**, चाहे वे **संवैधानिक** हों या **सिविल**, उन्हें **अधिकार से वंचित किए जाने** की शिकायत करने वाले अभिभावकों को **आसान पहुंच** और **प्रभावी राहत** प्रदान करने के लिए वह **अतिरिक्त प्रयास** करना चाहिए," **सुप्रीम कोर्ट** ने घोषित किया।

GS II: Polity

Language of harmony

The rights of linguistic minorities must be protected in every State

The Malayalam Language Bill, 2025, which seeks to promote the language and passed by the Kerala Assembly, is being opposed by leaders in Karnataka. The concern that minority languages in the State, particularly Tamil and Kannada, would be adversely affected is misplaced and arises out of misunderstanding of the provisions. The Bill's objective is to provide for the "adoption of the Malayalam language as the official language of the State of Kerala and for Malayalam to be used for all official purposes, to provide for the use of the Malayalam language in all sectors in Kerala, subject to the provisions of the Constitution of India", and to advance the overall progress and enrichment of the language. The Bill proposes the adoption of Malayalam as the first language for schoolchildren and measures to promote the language in various sectors, from the judiciary to IT. The Bill states that Tamil and Kannada linguistic minorities in notified areas may correspond with the State Secretariat, Heads of Departments, and local State offices in their respective languages, and replies shall be issued in those languages; and that students whose mother tongue is not Malayalam may pursue education in other available languages in State schools, in accordance with the National Education Curriculum. Additionally, students from other States or foreign countries studying in Kerala whose mother tongue is not Malayalam are exempt from writing Malayalam examinations at the classes IX, X, and higher secondary levels.

An earlier version of the Bill, passed in 2015, was languishing for the Centre's clearance for 10 years. After the Centre returned the Bill following a Supreme Court of India decision that Bills cannot be indefinitely delayed, the State passed the current version. The Centre, ostensibly, has a policy of promoting all Indian languages, as do several States. As long as such measures are undertaken alongside those for the protection of the rights of linguistic minorities, no other State or the Centre should have any objection. Most States, including Kerala and Karnataka, have multiple linguistic communities. The linguistic division of States was only an approximation, and language borders have weakened due to migration. Language policies at the national and regional levels must account for these realities rather than pursuing a blind cultural agenda of Hindi or any single language promotion. To be clear, all these languages must have their rightful places in administration and the public sphere. To achieve that objective without allowing hostilities between communities is a challenge of nation-building. Mechanisms such as the Inter-State Council, which has been dormant, must be invested with more authority, and wider, good-faith conversations across linguistic groups promoted.

Language of harmony
सामंजस्य की भाषा

• The **Malayalam Language Bill, 2025**, which seeks to promote the language and passed by the **Kerala Assembly**, is being opposed by leaders in **Karnataka**.
मलयालम भाषा विधेयक, 2025, जिसका उद्देश्य भाषा को बढ़ावा देना है और जिसे **केरल विधानसभा** ने पारित किया है, उसका **कर्नाटक** के नेताओं द्वारा विरोध किया जा रहा है।

• The Bill's objective is to provide for the **adoption of the Malayalam language as the official language of the State of Kerala** and for Malayalam to be used for **all official purposes**, to provide for the use of the Malayalam language in **all sectors in Kerala**, subject to the provisions of the **Constitution of India**, and to advance the overall progress and enrichment of the language.
विधेयक का उद्देश्य **मलयालम भाषा को केरल राज्य की आधिकारिक भाषा के रूप में अपनाने**, इसे **सभी आधिकारिक उद्देश्यों** के लिए उपयोग में लाने, **भारत के संविधान** के प्रावधानों के अधीन केरल के **सभी क्षेत्रों** में मलयालम के प्रयोग को सुनिश्चित करने तथा भाषा के समग्र विकास और समृद्धि को आगे बढ़ाना है।

• The Bill proposes the adoption of Malayalam as the **first language for schoolchildren** and measures to promote the language in various sectors, from the **judiciary to IT**.
विधेयक में मलयालम को **स्कूली बच्चों की प्रथम भाषा** के रूप में अपनाने तथा **न्यायपालिका से लेकर आईटी** तक विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में भाषा को बढ़ावा देने के उपाय प्रस्तावित किए गए हैं।

• The Bill states that **Tamil and Kannada linguistic minorities** in notified areas may correspond with the **State Secretariat**, **Heads of Departments**, and local **State offices** in their respective languages, and replies shall be issued in those languages.
विधेयक में कहा गया है कि अधिसूचित क्षेत्रों में **तमिल और कन्नड़ भाषाई अल्पसंख्यक** अपने-अपने भाषाओं में **राज्य सचिवालय**, **विभागाध्यक्षों** और स्थानीय **राज्य कार्यालयों** से पत्राचार कर सकते हैं, और उत्तर भी उन्हीं भाषाओं में दिए जाएंगे।

• It also states that students whose **mother tongue is not Malayalam** may pursue education in other available languages in **State schools**, in accordance with the **National Education Curriculum**.
इसमें यह भी कहा गया है कि जिन छात्रों की **मातृभाषा मलयालम नहीं** है, वे **राज्य के स्कूलों** में **राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा पाठ्यक्रम** के अनुसार अन्य उपलब्ध भाषाओं में शिक्षा प्राप्त कर सकते हैं।

• Additionally, students from **other States or foreign countries** studying in Kerala whose mother tongue is not Malayalam are exempt from writing Malayalam examinations at the **classes IX, X, and higher secondary levels**.
इसके अतिरिक्त, केरल में अध्ययन कर रहे **अन्य राज्यों या विदेशी देशों** के वे छात्र जिनकी मातृभाषा मलयालम नहीं है, उन्हें **कक्षा 9, 10 और उच्च माध्यमिक स्तर** पर मलयालम की परीक्षा से छूट दी गई है।

- An earlier version of the Bill, passed in **2015**, was languishing for the Centre's clearance for **10 years**.
  विधेयक का एक पूर्व संस्करण, जिसे **2015** में पारित किया गया था, **10 वर्षों** तक केंद्र की स्वीकृति के लिए लंबित रहा।
- After the Centre returned the Bill following a **Supreme Court of India decision** that Bills cannot be indefinitely delayed, the State passed the current version.
  भारत के सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के इस निर्णय के बाद कि विधेयकों को अनिश्चितकाल तक रोका नहीं जा सकता, केंद्र द्वारा विधेयक लौटाए जाने पर राज्य ने वर्तमान संस्करण पारित किया।
- The linguistic division of States was only an **approximation**, and language borders have weakened due to **migration**.
  राज्यों का भाषाई विभाजन केवल एक **अनुमान** था और **प्रवासन** के कारण भाषा की सीमाएँ कमजोर हो गई हैं।
- Mechanisms such as the **Inter-State Council**, which has been **dormant**, must be invested with more **authority**, and wider, **good-faith conversations** across linguistic groups promoted.
  अंतर-राज्य परिषद जैसी व्यवस्थाएँ, जो लंबे समय से **निष्क्रिय** रही हैं, उन्हें अधिक **अधिकार** दिए जाने चाहिए और भाषाई समूहों के बीच व्यापक **सद्भावनापूर्ण संवाद** को प्रोत्साहित किया जाना चाहिए।

GS Paper II: Governance,	
TOPICS COVERED	**13 January 2026**
1.	**SC split on sanction to prosecute public servants** लोक सेवकों के अभियोजन की अनुमति पर सुप्रीम कोर्ट में मतभेद

SC split on sanction to prosecute public servants

GS II: Governance

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday delivered a split verdict on the legality of a provision in an anti-corruption law which mandates prior sanction before prosecuting public servants.

Justice B.V. Nagarathna concluded that Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, was plainly unconstitutional, while Justice K.V. Viswanathan, the puisne judge on the Division Bench, said that sanction must be decided by an independent authority like the Lok Pal or the Lok Ayukta.

Justice Viswanathan said the mere possibility of abuse of an otherwise valid provision cannot be a ground for declaring it unconstitutional. He compared striking down Section 17A to "throwing the baby out with the bathwater".

"If honest public servants are not given a basic assurance that decisions taken by them will not be subjected to frivolous complaints, it is the nation that will suffer. Public servants will resort to a play-it-safe syndrome, and that will result in policy paralysis. The panacea of striking down will turn out to be worse than the disease," Justice Viswanathan wrote in his opinion.

He directed that an independent inquiry of the facts of a corruption complaint would be ideal before a grant of sanction.

The case will now be referred to the Chief Justice of India to be placed before a Bench of three judges.

"A fine balance has to be maintained between the need to protect a public

The case will be referred to the Chief Justice to be placed before a Bench of three judges.

servant against *mala fide* prosecution on the one hand and the object of upholding the probity in public life by prosecuting the public servant against whom *prima facie* material in support of allegation of corruption exists, on the other," Justice Viswanathan observed in his opinion.

He said the Lokpal had the authority to conduct an inquiry into even an allegation of corruption made against the Prime Minister of the country.

"If Section 17A is invalidated on the ground that prior approval should not exist at all, the immediate consequence would be that any complaint alleging corruption in official decision-making could straightaway result in a police inquiry or investigation. This would permit immediate registration of FIRs, commencement of investigation and resort to coercive steps... whether the complaint is frivolous, motivated or based on hindsight. Such a result would be regressive," Justice Viswanathan reasoned in his opinion.

'Illegal and unequal'
Justice Nagarathna, however, concluded that Section 17A was in violation of Article 14 (equal treatment by law) of the Constitution as it afforded the protection of prior approval only to a higher category of civil servants. She found the classification based on the nature of duties illegal and unequal.

The judge found Section 17A arbitrary in the manner in which it foreclosed the possibility of even a bare enquiry into the conduct of a high civil servant facing corruption allegations without prior approval. This scenario, she pointed out, was against the rule of law.

Justice Nagarathna said the requirement of prior approval under Section 17A to protect "honest" officers was not a valid reason and was fundamentally opposed to the objects and purpose of the anti-corruption law.

SC split on sanction to prosecute public servants
लोक सेवकों के अभियोजन की अनुमति पर सुप्रीम कोर्ट में मतभेद

- SC split on sanction to prosecute public servants
  लोक सेवकों के अभियोजन की अनुमति पर सुप्रीम कोर्ट में मतभेद

- The **Supreme Court** on Tuesday delivered a **split verdict** on the legality of a provision in an **anti-corruption law** which mandates prior sanction before prosecuting **public servants**.
  सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने मंगलवार को **भ्रष्टाचार-रोधी कानून** के एक प्रावधान की वैधता पर विभाजित फैसला सुनाया, जो **लोक सेवकों** के अभियोजन से पहले पूर्व स्वीकृति अनिवार्य करता है।

- Justice **B.V. Nagarathna** concluded that **Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988**, was plainly unconstitutional, while Justice **K.V. Viswanathan**, the puisne judge on the Division Bench, said that sanction must be decided by an independent authority like the **Lok Pal** or the **Lok Ayukta**.
  न्यायमूर्ति **बी.वी. नागरत्ना** ने निष्कर्ष निकाला कि **भ्रष्टाचार निवारण अधिनियम, 1988** की **धारा 17A** स्पष्ट रूप से असंवैधानिक है, जबकि डिवीजन बेंच के कनिष्ठ न्यायाधीश **के.वी. विश्वनाथन** ने कहा कि स्वीकृति **लोकपाल** या **लोकायुक्त** जैसी स्वतंत्र प्राधिकरण द्वारा तय की जानी चाहिए।

- Justice **Viswanathan** said the mere possibility of abuse of an otherwise valid provision cannot be a ground for declaring it unconstitutional. He compared striking down **Section 17A** to "throwing the baby out with the bathwater".
  न्यायमूर्ति **विश्वनाथन** ने कहा कि अन्यथा वैध प्रावधान के दुरुपयोग की मात्र संभावना उसे असंवैधानिक घोषित करने का आधार नहीं हो सकती। उन्होंने **धारा 17A** को रद्द करने की तुलना "नहाने के पानी के साथ बच्चे को फेंक देने" से की।

- "If honest public servants are not given a basic assurance that decisions taken by them will not be subjected to frivolous complaints, it is the nation that will suffer. Public servants will resort to a play-it-safe syndrome, and that will result in policy paralysis. The panacea of striking down will turn out to be worse than the disease," Justice **Viswanathan** wrote in his opinion.
  "यदि ईमानदार लोक सेवकों को यह बुनियादी आश्वासन नहीं दिया गया कि उनके द्वारा लिए गए निर्णयों को तुच्छ शिकायतों के अधीन नहीं किया जाएगा, तो इसका नुकसान देश को होगा। लोक सेवक 'सेफ खेलने' की प्रवृत्ति अपनाएंगे, जिससे नीतिगत जड़ता आएगी। रद्द करने का उपाय बीमारी से भी बदतर साबित होगा," न्यायमूर्ति **विश्वनाथन** ने अपनी राय में लिखा।

- He directed that an independent inquiry of the facts of a corruption complaint would be ideal before a grant of sanction.
  उन्होंने निर्देश दिया कि स्वीकृति देने से पहले भ्रष्टाचार शिकायत के तथ्यों की **स्वतंत्र जांच** आदर्श होगी।

- The case will now be referred to the **Chief Justice of India** to be placed before a Bench of **three judges**.
  मामले को अब **भारत के मुख्य न्यायाधीश** के पास भेजा जाएगा ताकि इसे **तीन न्यायाधीशों** की पीठ के समक्ष रखा जा सके।

- "A fine balance has to be maintained between the need to protect a public servant against **mala fide prosecution** on the one hand and the object of upholding the **probity in public life** by prosecuting the public servant against whom **prima facie material** in support of allegation of corruption exists, on the other," Justice **Viswanathan** observed in his opinion.
  "एक ओर **दुराशयपूर्ण अभियोजन** से लोक सेवक की रक्षा की आवश्यकता और दूसरी ओर **सार्वजनिक जीवन में शुचिता** बनाए रखने के उद्देश्य से उस लोक सेवक के अभियोजन के बीच, जिसके खिलाफ भ्रष्टाचार के आरोप के समर्थन में **प्रथमदृष्टया सामग्री** मौजूद है, एक सूक्ष्म संतुलन बनाए रखना होगा," न्यायमूर्ति **विश्वनाथन** ने अपनी राय में कहा।

- He said the **Lokpal** had the authority to conduct an inquiry into even an allegation of corruption made against the **Prime Minister** of the country.
  उन्होंने कहा कि **लोकपाल** के पास देश के **प्रधानमंत्री** के खिलाफ लगाए गए भ्रष्टाचार के आरोप की भी जांच करने का अधिकार है।

- "If **Section 17A** is invalidated on the ground that prior approval should not exist at all, the immediate consequence would be that any complaint alleging corruption in official decision-making could straightaway result in a police inquiry or investigation. This would permit immediate registration of **FIRs**, commencement of investigation and resort to **coercive steps**… whether the complaint is frivolous, motivated or based on hindsight. Such a result would be **regressive**," Justice **Viswanthan** reasoned in his opinion.
  "यदि **धारा 17A** को इस आधार पर अमान्य कर दिया जाता है कि पूर्व स्वीकृति बिल्कुल नहीं होनी चाहिए, तो इसका तात्कालिक परिणाम यह होगा कि आधिकारिक निर्णय-निर्माण में भ्रष्टाचार का आरोप लगाने वाली कोई भी शिकायत सीधे पुलिस जांच या विवेचना का कारण बन सकती है। इससे तुरंत **एफआईआर** दर्ज करने, जांच

शुरू करने और **दबावात्मक कदम** उठाने की अनुमति मिल जाएगी… चाहे शिकायत तुच्छ, प्रेरित या पश्चदृष्टि पर आधारित हो। ऐसा परिणाम **प्रतिगामी** होगा," न्यायमूर्ति **विश्वनाथन** ने अपनी राय में तर्क दिया।

'Illegal and unequal'
'अवैध और असमान'

- Justice **Nagarathna**, however, concluded that **Section 17A** was in violation of **Article 14** (equal treatment by law) of the Constitution as it afforded the protection of prior approval only to a higher category of **civil servants**. She found the classification based on the nature of duties illegal and unequal.
  हालांकि, न्यायमूर्ति **नागरत्ना** ने निष्कर्ष निकाला कि **धारा 17A** संविधान के **अनुच्छेद 14** (कानून के समक्ष समानता) का उल्लंघन करती है क्योंकि यह केवल उच्च श्रेणी के **सिविल सेवकों** को ही पूर्व स्वीकृति का संरक्षण देती है। उन्होंने कर्तव्यों की प्रकृति पर आधारित वर्गीकरण को अवैध और असमान पाया।

- The judge found **Section 17A** arbitrary in the manner in which it foreclosed the possibility of even a bare enquiry into the conduct of a high civil servant facing corruption allegations without prior approval. This scenario, she pointed out, was against the **rule of law**.
  न्यायाधीश ने **धारा 17A** को इस आधार पर मनमाना पाया कि यह पूर्व स्वीकृति के बिना भ्रष्टाचार के आरोपों का सामना कर रहे किसी उच्च सिविल सेवक के आचरण की साधारण जांच की संभावना तक को बंद कर देती है। उन्होंने कहा कि यह स्थिति **कानून के शासन** के विरुद्ध है।

- Justice **Nagarathna** said the requirement of prior approval under **Section 17A** to protect "honest" officers was not a valid reason and was fundamentally opposed to the objects and purpose of the **anti-corruption law**.
  न्यायमूर्ति **नागरत्ना** ने कहा कि "ईमानदार" अधिकारियों की रक्षा के लिए **धारा 17A** के तहत पूर्व स्वीकृति की आवश्यकता कोई वैध कारण नहीं है और यह **भ्रष्टाचार-रोधी कानून** के उद्देश्यों और प्रयोजन के मूलतः विपरीत है।

GS Paper II: International Relations	
TOPICS COVERED	**13 January 2026**
1.	**Trump's latest 25% tariff warning brings India-Iran ties under renewed strain** **ट्रंप की ताज़ा 25% टैरिफ चेतावनी से भारत-ईरान संबंधों पर फिर दबाव**
2.	**More for later** **बाद के लिए और भी**
3.	**Decisive new factors in the Iranian conundrum** **ईरानी पहेली में निर्णायक नए कारक**
4.	**QUIZ**
5.	**Pugwash meet opens: call for abolition of nuclear weapons** **पगवॉश बैठक शुरू: परमाणु हथियारों के उन्मूलन का आह्वान**
6.	**China is a threat to Greenland, Trump argues but analysts claim otherwise** **चीन ग्रीनलैंड के लिए खतरा है, ट्रम्प का दावा लेकिन विशेषज्ञों का मत अलग है**
7.	**Somaliland's status and the new geopolitical scramble for Horn of Africa** **सोमालिलैंड की स्थिति और हॉर्न ऑफ़ अफ़्रीका के लिए नई भू-राजनीतिक दौड़**

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Trump's latest 25% tariff warning brings India-Iran ties under renewed strain

GS II: IR

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

India's ties with Iran have come under renewed pressure after U.S. President Donald Trump announced on Tuesday that "any country" having trade ties with Tehran would face a 25% tariff if it sought to do business with the U.S.

Government sources told *The Hindu* that India was preparing to bring down its trade with Iran in the current financial year, citing "external economic factors".

The developments have come even as India still last weekend, was getting ready to host Iran's president Masoud Pezeshkian for the upcoming BRICS summit, which India will host this year as it marks the 75th anniversary of establishment of India-Iran diplomatic ties.

The U.S. policy on increasing pressure on Iran has also put a question mark on the expected visit of Iranian Foreign Minister Syed Abbas Araghchi to New Delhi later this

Iran Foreign Minister Syed Abbas Araghchi is expected to visit India this month.

month. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar announced India's vision for BRICS 2026 on Tuesday, saying that as BRICS Chair, India would highlight that the intergovernmental organisation is capable of absorbing "global shocks". India's policy on Iran will be keenly watched as the Islamic Republic is a member of BRICS of which India has been a founding member.

At both bilateral and multilateral levels, the India-Iran relation was expected to see multiple high points this year as India was getting ready to broa-

den its presence in Iran's Chabahar port, which is of crucial importance for both India's connectivity plans with Central Asia and Russia as well as for its newly unfolding partnership with the anti-Pakistan Taliban administration in Afghanistan. Iran joined BRICS as a full member on January 1, 2024, as the grouping expanded by including Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates at the 2023 summit in South Africa. Officials said that as a member of the BRICS, Iran's President may not face legal hurdles while travelling to India. However, they indicated that Iran's escalating confrontation with the U.S. President has pushed the country into crisis for at least one month.

An official with knowledge of India's assessment of the situation said that the ongoing public protests in Iran pose a serious threat to the current regime in Tehran. The official added India's embassy was in contact with the Indian citizens in Iran.

Trump's latest 25% tariff warning brings India-Iran ties under renewed strain
ट्रंप की ताज़ा 25% टैरिफ चेतावनी से भारत-ईरान संबंधों पर फिर दबाव

- Trump's latest **25% tariff** warning brings **India-Iran ties** under renewed strain
  ट्रंप की ताज़ा **25% टैरिफ** चेतावनी से **भारत-ईरान संबंधों** पर फिर दबाव
- India's ties with **Iran** have come under renewed pressure after **U.S. President Donald Trump** announced on Tuesday that "any country" having trade ties with **Tehran** would face a **25% tariff** if it sought to do business with the **U.S.**
  ईरान के साथ भारत के संबंधों पर फिर दबाव आया है, जब **अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप** ने मंगलवार को घोषणा की कि **तेहरान** के साथ व्यापारिक संबंध रखने वाला "कोई भी देश" यदि **अमेरिका** के साथ कारोबार करना चाहेगा तो उसे **25% टैरिफ** का सामना करना पड़ेगा।

- Government sources told **The Hindu** that **India** was preparing to bring down its trade with **Iran** in the current **financial year**, citing "external economic factors".
  सरकारी सूत्रों ने **द हिंदू** को बताया कि "बाहरी आर्थिक कारकों" का हवाला देते हुए **भारत** मौजूदा **वित्तीय वर्ष** में **ईरान** के साथ अपना व्यापार घटाने की तैयारी कर रहा है।

- The developments have come even as **India, still** last weekend, was getting ready to host **Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian** for the upcoming **BRICS summit**, which **India** will host this year as it marks the **75th anniversary** of establishment of **India-Iran diplomatic ties**.
  ये घटनाक्रम ऐसे समय में सामने आए हैं जब **भारत** पिछले सप्ताहांत तक आगामी **ब्रिक्स शिखर सम्मेलन** के लिए **ईरान के राष्ट्रपति मसूद पेज़ेशकियान** की मेज़बानी की तैयारी कर रहा था, जिसे **भारत** इस वर्ष आयोजित करेगा, क्योंकि यह **भारत-ईरान कूटनीतिक संबंधों** की स्थापना की **75वीं वर्षगांठ** है।

- The **U.S. policy** on increasing pressure on **Iran** has also put a question mark on the expected visit of **Iranian Foreign Minister Syed Abbas Araghchi** to **New Delhi** later this month. **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar** announced **India's vision for BRICS 2026** on Tuesday, saying that as **BRICS Chair**, **India** would highlight that the intergovernmental organisation is capable of absorbing "**global shocks**".
  ईरान पर दबाव बढ़ाने की **अमेरिकी नीति** ने इस महीने के अंत में **नई दिल्ली** में होने वाली **ईरानी विदेश मंत्री सैयद अब्बास अराघची** की संभावित यात्रा पर भी प्रश्नचिह्न लगा दिया है। **विदेश मंत्री एस. जयशंकर** ने मंगलवार को **ब्रिक्स 2026 के लिए भारत की दृष्टि** की घोषणा करते हुए कहा कि **ब्रिक्स अध्यक्ष** के रूप में **भारत** यह रेखांकित करेगा कि यह अंतर-सरकारी संगठन "**वैश्विक झटकों**" को सहन करने में सक्षम है।

- **India's policy** on **Iran** will be keenly watched as the **Islamic Republic** is a member of **BRICS** of which **India** has been a founding member.
  ईरान पर भारत की नीति पर कड़ी नज़र रखी जाएगी क्योंकि **इस्लामिक रिपब्लिक ब्रिक्स** का सदस्य है, जिसका **भारत** संस्थापक सदस्य रहा है।

- At both **bilateral** and **multilateral levels**, the **India-Iran relation** was expected to see multiple high points this year as **India** was getting ready to broaden its presence in **Iran's Chabahar port**, which is of crucial importance for both **India's connectivity plans with Central Asia and Russia** as well as for its newly unfolding partnership with the **anti-Pakistan Taliban administration in Afghanistan**.
  द्विपक्षीय और **बहुपक्षीय** दोनों स्तरों पर, इस वर्ष **भारत-ईरान संबंधों** में कई महत्वपूर्ण उपलब्धियाँ अपेक्षित थीं, क्योंकि **भारत ईरान के चाबहार बंदरगाह** में अपनी मौजूदगी बढ़ाने की तैयारी कर रहा था, जो **मध्य एशिया और रूस** के साथ **भारत की संपर्क योजनाओं** तथा **अफगानिस्तान में पाकिस्तान-विरोधी तालिबान प्रशासन** के साथ उसकी उभरती साझेदारी के लिए अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण है।

- **Iran** joined **BRICS** as a full member on **January 1, 2024**, as the grouping expanded by including **Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates** at the **2023 summit in South Africa**.
  ईरान ने **1 जनवरी 2024** को **ब्रिक्स** में पूर्ण सदस्य के रूप में प्रवेश किया, जब **दक्षिण अफ्रीका में 2023 शिखर सम्मेलन** में **ईरान, मिस्र, इथियोपिया और संयुक्त अरब अमीरात** को शामिल कर समूह का विस्तार किया गया।

- Officials said that as a member of the **BRICS**, **Iran's President** may not face **legal hurdles** while travelling to **India**. However, they indicated that **Iran's escalating confrontation with the U.S. President** has pushed the country into **crisis** for at least **one month**.
  अधिकारियों ने कहा कि **ब्रिक्स** के सदस्य के रूप में **ईरान के राष्ट्रपति** को **भारत** यात्रा के दौरान **कानूनी बाधाओं** का सामना नहीं करना पड़ सकता है। हालांकि, उन्होंने संकेत दिया कि **अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति** के साथ **ईरान के बढ़ते टकराव** ने देश को कम से कम **एक महीने** के लिए **संकट** में डाल दिया है।

- An official with knowledge of **India's assessment** of the situation said that the ongoing **public protests in Iran** pose a **serious threat** to the current **regime in Tehran**. The official added **India's embassy** was in contact with the **Indian citizens in Iran**.
  स्थिति पर **भारत के आकलन** की जानकारी रखने वाले एक अधिकारी ने कहा कि **ईरान में जारी जन विरोध प्रदर्शन** तेहरान की मौजूदा सरकार के लिए **गंभीर खतरा** पैदा कर रहे हैं। अधिकारी ने यह भी जोड़ा कि **ईरान में भारत का दूतावास** वहां मौजूद **भारतीय नागरिकों** के संपर्क में है।

MQB
GS II: IR

More for later

Chancellor Merz's India visit signals a wider engagement with the EU

Amid tensions on several other foreign policy fronts, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz was the first of several high-level visitors to Delhi to strengthen India-Europe ties. Preparations are on for the EU-India Summit later this month, when the Presidents of the European Commission and Council will attend the Republic Day parade; plans for French President Emmanuel Macron's visit – he will attend the AI summit in February – are also being finalised. The meet between Chancellor Merz and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Ahmedabad was about more than bilateral relations. It was about reaffirming elements of talks with the EU to conclude a long-awaited trade agreement, as Germany is its biggest economy, as well as exchanging notes on geopolitical turmoil, especially the U.S.'s actions. The leaders also attended a business council meeting, where they pitched more investments. With trade passing $50 billion in 2024-25, Germany remains India's largest trading partner in Europe. While the talks are understood to have been substantive, the outcomes were in essence a series of "Joint Declarations of Interest (JDI)" and MoUs. Among the JDIs signed, several deal with cooperation on strategic issues, including a Defence Industrial Cooperation Roadmap to promote collaborations and technology partnerships in defence equipment. This is seen as a precursor to the enabling agreements for defence purchases that India and Germany have been discussing but have yet to sign on to.

Where India and Germany have a less common view is on the Ukraine war, and the European contention that India must curtail its relationship with Russia. Chancellor Merz may have overstepped as he sought to portray India's German defence relationship as a means to reduce its "dependence" on Russian hardware. The statement was refuted by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri later. While Germany and the EU are also hoping for a closer dialogue with India on the Indo-Pacific, Germany's bilateral trade with China, pegged at $287 billion in 2024-25, has not diversified and China is Germany's largest trading partner. It is therefore doubly significant that Chancellor Merz made India his first stop in Asia. The two sides also have differences over the upbringing of five-year-old Ariha Shah, who was taken away by German child services in 2021 over allegations that her Indian parents abused her. Despite India's appeals, Ms. Shah continues to live in German foster care, with only periodic consular and parental visits, and little sustained exposure to Indian culture or languages. The case of an individual may seem less important, but should be resolved without further delay.

More for later
बाद के लिए और भी

• Preparations are on for the **EU–India Summit** later this month, when the Presidents of the **European Commission and Council** will attend the **Republic Day parade**; plans for French President **Emmanuel Macron's visit** — he will attend the **AI summit in February** — are also being finalised

इस महीने के अंत में होने वाले **ईयू–भारत शिखर सम्मेलन** की तैयारियाँ चल रही हैं, जब **यूरोपीय आयोग और परिषद** के अध्यक्ष **गणतंत्र दिवस परेड** में शामिल होंगे; फ्रांस के राष्ट्रपति **इमैनुएल मैक्रों** की यात्रा की योजनाएँ भी अंतिम चरण में हैं — वे **फरवरी में एआई शिखर सम्मेलन** में भाग लेंगे

• It was about reaffirming elements of talks with the **EU** to conclude a long-awaited **trade agreement**, as Germany is its biggest economy, as well as exchanging notes on **geopolitical turmoil**, especially the **U S's actions**

यह **ईयू** के साथ लंबे समय से लंबित **व्यापार समझौते** को अंतिम रूप देने हेतु बातचीत के तत्वों की पुनः पुष्टि और **भू-राजनीतिक उथल-पुथल**, विशेषकर **अमेरिका की कार्रवाइयों**, पर विचार-विमर्श से जुड़ा था

• With trade passing **$50 billion in 2024–25**, Germany remains India's **largest trading partner in Europe**

2024–25 में 50 अरब डॉलर से अधिक व्यापार के साथ, जर्मनी यूरोप में भारत का **सबसे बड़ा व्यापारिक भागीदार** बना हुआ है

• While Germany and the EU are also hoping for a closer dialogue with India on the **Indo-Pacific**, Germany's bilateral trade with **China**, pegged at **$287 billion in 2024–25**, has not diversified and China is Germany's **largest trading partner**

जहाँ जर्मनी और ईयू **इंडो-पैसिफिक** पर भारत के साथ करीबी संवाद की उम्मीद कर रहे हैं, वहीं **2024–25 में 287 अरब डॉलर** का **चीन** के साथ जर्मनी का द्विपक्षीय व्यापार विविधीकृत नहीं हुआ है और चीन जर्मनी का **सबसे बड़ा व्यापारिक भागीदार** बना हुआ है

• The two sides also have differences over the upbringing of **five-year-old Ariha Shah**, who was taken away by **German child services in 2021** over allegations that her Indian parents abused her

दोनों देशों के बीच **पाँच वर्षीय अरिहा शाह** के पालन-पोषण को लेकर भी मतभेद हैं, जिन्हें **2021 में जर्मन बाल सेवाओं** ने इस आरोप पर अलग कर दिया था कि उनके भारतीय माता-पिता ने उनके साथ दुर्व्यवहार किया

Decisive new factors in the Iranian conundrum

GS II: IR   MQB

Mahesh Sachdev

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The recent civic unrest in Iran has been enveloped in a media fog and has polarised binary narratives, making an objective analysis difficult. Yet, given Iran's geopolitical importance and economic potential, such a granular exercise is required, particularly as it lies in India's extended proximity.

The genesis of the ongoing crisis lies in the increasingly dire eco-political conditions. It began on December 28, 2025, when a group of Tehran merchants ("Bazaari") staged a shutdown to protest the frequent devaluation of the market value of the rial, the national currency. While the rial's official exchange rate to a dollar was 42,000, the market rate was nearly 35 times lower at 1.45 million, having fallen 20,000 times since the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Its 45% decline in 2025 made importing essential commodities such as rice, sugar and edible oil and selling them in the rial at officially controlled prices, unprofitable.

Subsequently, other disaffected sections of the population, such as unemployed youth and low-paid employees, also joined the stir, making it a country-wide anti-government movement. Arson, vandalism and anti-establishment violence were reported. On January 13, authorities disclosed that over 2,000 people had died during the unrest, blaming the casualties on unnamed "terrorists".

Crises and the official playbook

Since the founding of the Islamic Republic in 1979, the authorities have perfected a four-stage playbook for dealing with recurring mass civic unrest, as seen in the election fraud in 2009, petrol price hike in 2019 and Hijab protests in 2022 – none of which succeeded. In the first phase, stern police action is taken to contain the law-and-order problem. If the agitation persists, a "good-cop, bad-cop' routine is played: while some high officials warn of enemy conspiracies, others exude sympathy for the "legitimate grievances", offering talks and concessions. Social media is locked down. The third stage involves weeks of attrition, seeding confusion, splitting the organisers and holding pro-government rallies. These three stages normally succeed in tapering off the protests. Thereafter, the leading protesters are rounded up and sentenced exemplarily with long prison terms or even execution. During all this time, the western media plays the role of an agent provocateur to the hilt.

The current melodrama now seems to be entering the third phase. Over the next four months, a token 10 million rials ($7), as a monthly handout, will be directly transferred to all citizens to mitigate inflation. The funerals of the security personnel killed and pro-establishment rallies were accompanied by a denunciation of foreign attempts to hijack the agitation.

The Pasdaran (Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps or IRGC) and the army have stayed loyal, condemning the agitation as a continuation of the 12-day Israel-United States war of June 2025 against Iran. The oil industry, the mainstay of the

The genesis of Iran's ongoing crisis lies in growing and dire eco-political conditions, but it has also shown up new systemic vulnerabilities

national economy, has stayed unaffected, and the governing elite has also not splintered. Moreover, no alternative leadership has emerged among the protesters.

The dynamics in Iran, foreign threats

Although the establishment seems to have managed to overcome the protest, the outbreak has exposed new systemic vulnerabilities. First, the Bazaari strike against the clergy-led regime was unprecedented. In Iran's modern history, the Bazaaris have been an influential bellwether lobby, at times forcing Iranian rulers to retract. Their withdrawal of support doomed the Shah in 1979. Their informal symbiosis with the clergy initially permitted profiteering from unfettered imports at a preferred exchange rate and selling domestically at market rates.

However, during the past two decades, this bromance has cooled. The economic conditions worsened mainly due to the U.S.'s "maximum pressure" sanctions. Further, they were also squeezed by the IRGC and the Bonyads (various ostensibly charitable foundations for war veterans, widows and orphans), muscling into lucrative sectors of trading, manufacturing and contracting. While Iran's President, Masoud Pezeshkian, recently claimed resolution of the merchants' grievances, the details have not been made public. It remains to be seen if the omnipotent IRGC, currently crucial to government survival, would agree to roll back their businesses.

Second, while Tehran may have tactics to curb protests, the ruling elite lacks eco-political levers to fix the root causes of the recurring social convulsions. The Iranian leadership's steadfast pursuit of a nuclear and missile programme and support to regional proxies diverts scarce economic resources and triggers western economic sanctions, causing social angst.

Over two-thirds of Iranians were born after the Revolution and have different aspirations than their gerontocratic politico-theocratic leadership. They see the affluence of their Gulf Arab neighbours and hold the leadership responsible for their abject penury. They also notice the kleptocracy and corruption in the top echelons of power. Moreover, with radicals in control of the clergy, parliament and judiciary, and a relatively powerless executive, significant social groups, such as women and non-Shia minorities feel alienated. While the managed election of a moderate President in 2024 raised hopes, these have been belied due to regional turmoil.

Third, the foreign abatement of the agitators has become mainstream, with U.S. President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu openly encouraging them with military threats to punish the Iranian regime and possibly replace it. However, they lack any smart and easy options, and the outcome of any precipitous foreign action cannot be guaranteed. In 1980, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein attacked Iran to exploit the post-Islamic revolutionary chaos, only to see all Iranians unite against foreign aggression. Moreover, Iran's Shia majority

has a long tradition of glorifying martyrdom and sacrifice, making them more inured to foreign military threats.

Despite its losses during the June 2025 military bout with Israel and the U.S., Iran retains sufficient retaliatory capability to thwart a repetition. Tehran's options include targeting U.S. interests in the geoeconomically sensitive and febrile region, making the Gulf Arab states wary about paying for a U.S. military misadventure.

Moreover, when driven to a corner, Iran could close the Strait of Hormuz, raising global oil prices. Mr. Trump has often criticised his predecessors for dragging the U.S. into "endless wars" and has so far avoided having "boots on the ground", preferring surgical airborne strikes and smart economic coercion. Although he has been emboldened by his tactical success against President Nicolás Maduro Moros of Venezuela, there is a clear realisation that the multiplicity of power centres in Iran makes military decapitation a risky and even counter-productive endeavour.

Instead, Mr. Trump is veering toward non-kinetic measures such as cyberattacks and the imposition of secondary punitive tariffs on the countries trading with Iran, encouraged by the outcome of a similar exercise in curbing Indian imports of Russian crude. Their efficacy remains uncertain as Iran has long been subject to Israeli cyberattacks and has a well-oiled sanctions-busting machinery in place, from marshalling cryptocurrencies to dark oil-tankers smuggling crude to China and dhows to Dubai (the world's largest trans-shipment port just 150 kilometres across the Persian Gulf).

Despite U.S. pressure, China and the United Arab Emirates are Iran's top two trading partners, with respective bilateral commerce estimated at $40 billion and $30 billion last year, totalling over half of the entire Iranian foreign trade. The proposed secondary sanctions by the U.S. may not curb such trade but only obfuscate it. Still, as a diversionary tactic, Tehran has offered to reopen talks with Washington.

Impact on India

The notion that turmoil in Tehran is inconsequential for India is misplaced. First, any conflagration in Iran would affect the security and stability in the Gulf, where India has substantive stakes in terms of diaspora, oil supplies, remittances and trade and investments.

Second, it would allow Pakistan to project itself as a dubious security arbiter to both Iran and the Gulf Arabs and earn brownie points with the White House. India also needs Iran to access Afghanistan and Central Asia. Third, after Iran, South Asia has the largest number of Shias, with their number in India estimated at around 25 million. They are natural stakeholders in what happens to their Iranian co-confessionals. Lastly, once four decades of western sanctions are lifted, the resuscitation of the Iranian economy would provide lucrative opportunities for India, particularly as Tehran has long pursued its version of Atmanirbharta.

Decisive new factors in the Iranian conundrum
ईरानी पहेली में निर्णायक नए कारक

- It began on **December 28, 2025**, when a group of **Tehran merchants Bazaari** staged a shutdown to protest the frequent devaluation of the market value of the **rial**, the national currency.

  इसकी शुरुआत **28 दिसंबर 2025** को हुई, जब **तेहरान के व्यापारियों बाज़ारी** के एक समूह ने राष्ट्रीय मुद्रा **रियाल** के बार-बार अवमूल्यन के विरोध में बंद का आयोजन किया।

- While the rial's **official exchange rate** to a dollar was **42,000**, the market rate was nearly **35 times lower** at **1.45 million**, having fallen **20,000 times since the Islamic Revolution in 1979**.

  जहाँ डॉलर के मुकाबले रियाल की **आधिकारिक विनिमय दर 42,000** थी, वहीं बाज़ार दर लगभग **35 गुना कम होकर 1.45 मिलियन** रह गई थी, जो **1979 की इस्लामी क्रांति के बाद से 20,000 गुना** गिर चुकी थी।

- Subsequently, other disaffected sections of the population, such as **unemployed youth** and **low-paid employees**, also joined the stir, making it a **country-wide anti-government movement**.

इसके बाद समाज के अन्य असंतुष्ट वर्ग, जैसे **बेरोज़गार युवा** और **कम वेतन पाने वाले कर्मचारी**, भी आंदोलन में शामिल हो गए, जिससे यह **देशव्यापी सरकार-विरोधी आंदोलन** बन गया।

- **Arson, vandalism and anti-establishment violence** were reported.
  आगज़नी, तोड़फोड़ और सत्ता-विरोधी हिंसा की घटनाएँ सामने आईं।

- On **January 13**, authorities disclosed that over **2,000 people** had died during the unrest, blaming the casualties on unnamed **terrorists**.
  13 जनवरी को अधिकारियों ने बताया कि अशांति के दौरान **2,000 से अधिक लोग** मारे गए, और इन मौतों का दोष अज्ञात **आतंकवादियों** पर डाला गया।

Crises and the official playbook
संकट और सरकारी रणनीति पुस्तिका

- Since the founding of the **Islamic Republic in 1979**, the authorities have perfected a **four-stage playbook** for dealing with recurring mass civic unrest, as seen in the **election fraud in 2009**, **petrol price hike in 2019** and **Hijab protests in 2022** — none of which succeeded.
  1979 में इस्लामी गणराज्य की स्थापना के बाद से, सरकार ने बार-बार होने वाली जन-आंदोलन स्थितियों से निपटने के लिए एक **चार-चरणीय रणनीति** विकसित की है, जैसा कि **2009 के चुनावी धोखाधड़ी**, **2019 के पेट्रोल मूल्य वृद्धि** और **2022 के हिजाब विरोध प्रदर्शनों** में देखा गया — जिनमें से कोई भी सफल नहीं हुआ।

- In the **first phase**, stern police action is taken to contain the **law-and-order problem**.
  पहले चरण में **कानून-व्यवस्था की समस्या** को नियंत्रित करने के लिए कड़ी पुलिस कार्रवाई की जाती है।

- If the agitation persists, a **good-cop, bad-cop routine** is played: while some high officials warn of **enemy conspiracies**, others exude sympathy for the **legitimate grievances**, offering talks and concessions.
  यदि आंदोलन जारी रहता है, तो **गुड-कॉप बैड-कॉप रणनीति** अपनाई जाती है: कुछ वरिष्ठ अधिकारी **दुश्मन की साजिशों** की चेतावनी देते हैं, जबकि अन्य **वैध शिकायतों** के प्रति सहानुभूति दिखाते हुए बातचीत और रियायतों की पेशकश करते हैं।

- **Social media** is locked down.
  सोशल मीडिया को बंद कर दिया जाता है।

- The **third stage** involves weeks of attrition, seeding confusion, splitting the organisers and holding **pro-government rallies**.
  तीसरे चरण में हफ्तों तक चलने वाली थकावट की रणनीति अपनाई जाती है, भ्रम फैलाया जाता है, आयोजकों को विभाजित किया जाता है और **सरकार समर्थक रैलियाँ** आयोजित की जाती हैं।

- These three stages normally succeed in **tapering off the protests**.
  ये तीनों चरण सामान्यतः **प्रदर्शनों को धीरे-धीरे खत्म करने** में सफल हो जाते हैं।

- Thereafter, the leading protesters are rounded up and sentenced exemplarily with **long prison terms or even execution**.
  इसके बाद प्रमुख प्रदर्शनकारियों को पकड़कर **लंबी कैद या यहाँ तक कि फाँसी** जैसी उदाहरणात्मक सजाएँ दी जाती हैं।

- The **oil industry**, the mainstay of the national economy, has stayed **unaffected**, and the **governing elite** has also not splintered.
  राष्ट्रीय अर्थव्यवस्था की रीढ़ मानी जाने वाली **तेल उद्योग** अप्रभावित रही है और **शासक वर्ग** में भी कोई विभाजन नहीं हुआ है।

- Moreover, **no alternative leadership** has emerged among the protesters.
  इसके अलावा, प्रदर्शनकारियों के बीच से **कोई वैकल्पिक नेतृत्व** भी उभरकर सामने नहीं आया है।

- First, the **Bazaari strike** against the clergy-led regime was **unprecedented**.
  पहला, धर्मगुरु-नेतृत्व वाली सरकार के खिलाफ **बाज़ारी हड़ताल अभूतपूर्व** थी।

- In Iran's modern history, the **Bazaaris** have been an influential **bellwether lobby**, at times forcing Iranian rulers to retract.
  ईरान के आधुनिक इतिहास में **बाज़ारी** एक प्रभावशाली **दिशा-सूचक लॉबी** रहे हैं, जिन्होंने कई बार शासकों को पीछे हटने पर मजबूर किया है।

- Their withdrawal of support doomed the **Shah in 1979**.
  उनके समर्थन वापसी ने **1979 में शाह शासन** का अंत तय कर दिया था।

- The economic conditions worsened mainly due to the **U S's maximum pressure sanctions**.
  आर्थिक हालात मुख्यतः **अमेरिका की मैक्सिमम प्रेशर प्रतिबंध नीति** के कारण बिगड़े।

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- The Iranian leadership's steadfast pursuit of a **nuclear and missile programme** and support to **regional proxies** diverts scarce economic resources and triggers **western economic sanctions**, causing social angst.

  ईरानी नेतृत्व का **परमाणु और मिसाइल कार्यक्रम** तथा **क्षेत्रीय प्रतिनिधि समूहों** को समर्थन सीमित आर्थिक संसाधनों को भटका देता है और **पश्चिमी आर्थिक प्रतिबंधों** को जन्म देता है, जिससे सामाजिक असंतोष बढ़ता है।

- Over **two-thirds of Iranians** were born after the **Revolution** and have different aspirations than their **gerontocratic** politico-theocratic leadership.

  दो-तिहाई से अधिक **ईरानी क्रांति** के बाद जन्मे हैं और उनकी आकांक्षाएँ उनके **वृद्धतांत्रिक** राजनीतिक-धार्मिक नेतृत्व से अलग हैं।

- They see the affluence of their **Gulf Arab neighbours** and hold the leadership responsible for their **abject penury**.

  वे अपने **खाड़ी अरब पड़ोसियों** की समृद्धि देखते हैं और अपनी **घोर गरीबी** के लिए नेतृत्व को जिम्मेदार मानते हैं।

- They also notice the **kleptocracy** and corruption in the top echelons of power.

  वे सत्ता के शीर्ष स्तरों पर **क्लेप्टोक्रेसी और भ्रष्टाचार** भी देखते हैं।

- In **1980**, Iraqi President **Saddam Hussein** attacked Iran to exploit the post-Islamic revolutionary chaos, only to see all Iranians unite against **foreign aggression**.

  1980 में, इराकी राष्ट्रपति **सद्दाम हुसैन** ने इस्लामी क्रांति के बाद की अराजकता का लाभ उठाने के लिए ईरान पर हमला किया, लेकिन इसके परिणामस्वरूप सभी ईरानी **विदेशी आक्रमण** के खिलाफ एकजुट हो गए।

- Moreover, Iran's **Shia majority** has a long tradition of glorifying **martyrdom and sacrifice**, making them more inured to **foreign military threats**.

  इसके अलावा, ईरान की **शिया बहुसंख्या** में **शहादत और बलिदान** का महिमामंडन करने की पुरानी परंपरा है, जिससे वे **विदेशी सैन्य धमकियों** के प्रति अधिक सहनशील बन जाते हैं।

- Mr **Donald Trump** has often criticised his predecessors for dragging the **U S** into **endless wars** and has so far avoided having **boots on the ground**, preferring **surgical airborne strikes** and **smart economic coercion**.

  श्री **डोनाल्ड ट्रंप** ने अक्सर अपने पूर्ववर्तियों की आलोचना की है कि उन्होंने **अमेरिका** को **अंतहीन युद्धों** में झोंक दिया, और अब तक उन्होंने **जमीनी सैन्य तैनाती** से बचते हुए **सटीक हवाई हमलों** और **चतुर आर्थिक दबाव** को प्राथमिकता दी है।

- Instead, Mr **Trump** is veering toward **non-kinetic measures** such as **cyberattacks** and the imposition of **secondary punitive tariffs** on the countries trading with **Iran**, encouraged by the outcome of a similar exercise in curbing **Indian imports of Russian crude**.

  इसके बजाय, श्री **ट्रंप** अब **गैर-सैन्य उपायों** की ओर बढ़ रहे हैं, जैसे **साइबर हमले** और ईरान के साथ व्यापार करने वाले देशों पर **द्वितीयक दंडात्मक शुल्क**, जो **रूसी कच्चे तेल के भारतीय आयात** को सीमित करने के एक समान प्रयास के परिणाम से प्रेरित है।

- Their **efficacy** remains uncertain as **Iran** has long been subject to **Israeli cyberattacks** and has a well-oiled **sanctions-busting machinery** in place, from marshalling **cryptocurrencies** to **dark oil-tankers** smuggling crude to **China** and **dhows to Dubai**, the world's largest **trans-shipment port** just **150 kilometres** across the **Persian Gulf**.

  इनकी **प्रभावशीलता** अनिश्चित बनी हुई है क्योंकि **ईरान** लंबे समय से **इज़राइली साइबर हमलों** का सामना कर रहा है और उसके पास **प्रतिबंधों को तोड़ने की सुसंगठित व्यवस्था** है, जिसमें **क्रिप्टोकरेंसी** का उपयोग, **डार्क ऑयल टैंकरों** से **चीन** तक कच्चे तेल की तस्करी और **धोवों** के ज़रिये **दुबई** तक आपूर्ति शामिल है, जो **फ़ारस की खाड़ी** के पार मात्र **150 किलोमीटर** दूर दुनिया का सबसे बड़ा **ट्रांस-शिपमेंट पोर्ट** है।

- Despite **U S pressure**, **China** and the **United Arab Emirates** are **Iran's top two trading partners**, with respective bilateral commerce estimated at **40 billion dollars** and **30 billion dollars** last year, totalling over **half of the entire Iranian foreign trade**.

  अमेरिकी दबाव के बावजूद, **चीन** और **संयुक्त अरब अमीरात** ईरान के दो सबसे बड़े व्यापारिक साझेदार बने हुए हैं, जिनका द्विपक्षीय व्यापार पिछले वर्ष क्रमशः **40 अरब डॉलर** और **30 अरब डॉलर** आँका गया, जो **ईरान के कुल विदेशी व्यापार के आधे से अधिक** है।

- First, any **conflagration in Iran** would affect the **security and stability in the Gulf**, where India has substantive stakes in terms of **diaspora, oil supplies, remittances, trade and investments**.

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पहला, **ईरान में कोई भी बड़े पैमाने का संघर्ष खाड़ी क्षेत्र की सुरक्षा और स्थिरता** को प्रभावित करेगा, जहाँ भारत के प्रवासी समुदाय, तेल आपूर्ति, प्रेषण, व्यापार और निवेश से जुड़े बड़े हित हैं।

- Second, it would allow **Pakistan** to project itself as a dubious **security arbiter** to both **Iran** and the **Gulf Arabs** and earn **brownie points with the White House**.
  दूसरा, इससे **पाकिस्तान** को **ईरान** और **खाड़ी अरब देशों** दोनों के सामने खुद को एक संदिग्ध **सुरक्षा मध्यस्थ** के रूप में पेश करने और **व्हाइट हाउस** में **अतिरिक्त अंक** कमाने का अवसर मिलेगा।

- India also needs **Iran** to access **Afghanistan and Central Asia**.
  भारत को **अफगानिस्तान और मध्य एशिया** तक पहुँच के लिए भी **ईरान** की आवश्यकता है।

- Third, after **Iran**, **South Asia** has the largest number of **Shias**, with their number in **India** estimated at around **25 million**.
  तीसरा, **ईरान** के बाद **दक्षिण एशिया** में **शियाओं** की सबसे बड़ी संख्या है, जिनकी संख्या **भारत** में लगभग **25 मिलियन** आँकी जाती है।

- They are natural stakeholders in what happens to their **Iranian co-confessionals**.
  वे अपने **ईरानी सह-धार्मिकों** के साथ होने वाली घटनाओं में स्वाभाविक हितधारक हैं।

- Lastly, once **four decades of western sanctions** are lifted, the **resuscitation of the Iranian economy** would provide **lucrative opportunities for India**, particularly as **Tehran** has long pursued its version of **Atmanirbharta**.
  अंततः, जब **चार दशकों के पश्चिमी प्रतिबंध** हटेंगे, तो **ईरानी अर्थव्यवस्था का पुनरुद्धार भारत** के लिए **लाभकारी अवसर** प्रदान करेगा, विशेषकर क्योंकि **तेहरान** लंबे समय से अपनी **आत्मनिर्भरता** की नीति पर काम करता रहा है।

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz:
1. By legitimising the Somaliland administration, Israel is said to be pursuing these two strategic objectives. **Ans: Establish a military base to counter the Houthis; facilitate forced transfer of Palestinians**
2. The STC is backed by this West Asian country whose leader recently fled the country. **Ans: United Arab Emirates; Aidarous al-Zubaidi**
3. The modern political identity of Somaliland traces back to this moment of sovereignty in 1960. **Ans: British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland gained independence and unified briefly as the Somali Republic.**
4. Before unification in 1990, the official name of South Yemen was this. **Ans: People's Democratic Republic of Yemen**
5. Somaliland declared independence in this year. **Ans: 1991**
6. This 2019 accord sought to reconcile southern separatists with Yemen's government. **Ans: Riyadh Agreement**
Visual: This ancient site is known for its well-preserved rock art. **Ans: Laas Geel caves**
Early Birds: Sonali Das| Dodo Jayaditya| Sudhir Thapa| Sumana Dutta| Jagrati Shukla

QUIZ: **Strategic Context of Israel–Somaliland Engagement**

- **Somaliland** declared independence from Somalia in **1991**, but remains **unrecognised by the UN** and most states
- It controls a **strategic coastline on the Gulf of Aden**, close to the **Bab-el-Mandeb Strait**
- Since **2023–2025**, media and strategic circles have debated whether **Israel may seek closer ties** with Somaliland for regional security and geopolitical leverage
- The two objectives attributed to Israel are **analytical claims**, not officially confirmed policies

- The **Houthi movement** in Yemen has targeted **Red Sea shipping** since late **2023**
- Houthis are aligned with the **Iran-led "Axis of Resistance"**.

What "Forced Transfer" Means in International Law

- Defined under
  – **Fourth Geneva Convention**
  – **Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court**
- Refers to
  – Removal of a population
  – Without genuine consent
  – From occupied territory

Southern Transitional Council (STC) and Its External Backing

- The **Southern Transitional Council (STC)** is a political-military organisation in **southern Yemen**
- It seeks the **restoration of an independent South Yemen**, which existed until **1990**

• It is **strongly backed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE)**
• Its leader is **Aidarous al-Zubaidi**, former governor of Aden

• The UAE entered the Yemen conflict in **2015** as part of the **Saudi-led coalition**
• Over time, Abu Dhabi shifted focus from
– Supporting Yemen's central government
– To building influence in **southern Yemen**

Strategic Interests of the UAE

• **Maritime Security**
– Control over ports like **Aden, Mukalla, Mocha**
– Protection of shipping routes near the **Bab-el-Mandeb Strait**

• **Counter-Islamist Policy**
– The STC opposes the **Islah Party** (Muslim Brotherhood-linked)
– UAE views political Islam as a major security threat

• **Regional Power Projection**
– Influence across the **Red Sea–Gulf of Aden corridor**
– Part of UAE's broader strategy in **Horn of Africa** and **Yemen**

Modern Political Identity of Somaliland

• Somaliland's contemporary political identity is rooted in the events of **1960**, when
– **British Somaliland** and
– **Italian Somaliland**
gained independence and **voluntarily united** to form the **Somali Republic**
• This brief moment of unity later became the **legal and historical basis** for Somaliland's claim that it had once been a **sovereign state** and therefore retains the right to reclaim that status

• Came under British control in **1884**
• Administered as a **British Protectorate**
• Had its own
– Administrative system
– Legal institutions
– Political elite

Italian Somaliland

• Came under Italian colonial rule in **1889**
• Later administered as a **UN Trust Territory under Italy** from **1950 to 1960**
• Prepared for independence under international supervision

Riyadh Agreement (2019)

• The **Riyadh Agreement** is a political accord signed in **2019** to end fighting between
– The **internationally recognised Government of Yemen** and
– The **Southern Transitional Council (STC)**
• Its main purpose was to
– **Reconcile southern separatists with Yemen's government**
– Restore unity within the anti-Houthi camp
• The agreement was **brokered by Saudi Arabia**

• Yemen has been in civil war since **2014–15**
• By **2018–2019**, a new conflict emerged in the south between
– Government forces loyal to President **Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi**
– The **STC**, which demanded southern autonomy

• In **August 2019**, intense fighting broke out in **Aden**
– The STC took control of key government institutions
– The anti-Houthi coalition became internally divided

Pugwash meet opens: call for abolition of nuclear weapons

GS II: IR

Madras, Jan. 13: A short speech by the Pugwash President Nobel Laureate, Prof. Dorothy Hodgkin, in which she expressed the interest of the scientific community in the abolition of nuclear weapons, and indeed of all other weapons, and in the re-building of society on equitable lines, heralded the opening of the week-long deliberations of the 25th Pugwash Conference at the spacious Ball Room in Taj Coromandel here.

She said India had a very special place in the history of the Pugwash Movement in as much as the late Prime Minister Nehru organised a Committee of Scientists to explain nuclear energy which preceded the actual Russell-Einstein Manifesto from which the dating of the Movement was usually made.

Prof. Dorothy Hodgkin recalled how the late Dr. Radhakrishnan, when he was India's envoy in Moscow and also a Professor of Philosophy of Eastern Religions at Oxford, had urged her to visit the Soviet Union for contacts with her scientist counterparts in that country for a thaw in the cold war which was then at its peak. She actually made the visit three years later.

Pugwash meet opens: call for abolition of nuclear weapons
पगवॉश बैठक शुरू: परमाणु हथियारों के उन्मूलन का आह्वान

• Madras, **Jan. 13**: A short speech by the **Pugwash President**, **Nobel Laureate Prof. Dorothy Hodgkin**, in which she expressed the interest of the **scientific community** in the **abolition of nuclear weapons**, and indeed of **all other weapons**, and in the **re-building of society on equitable lines**, heralded the opening of the **week-long deliberations** of the **25th Pugwash Conference** at the spacious **Ball Room in Taj Coromandel** here.

मद्रास, **13 जनवरी**: पगवॉश की अध्यक्ष, नोबेल पुरस्कार विजेता प्रो. डोरोथी हॉजकिन द्वारा दिया गया एक संक्षिप्त भाषण, जिसमें उन्होंने वैज्ञानिक समुदाय की **परमाणु हथियारों के उन्मूलन**, बल्कि **सभी अन्य हथियारों** के उन्मूलन और **समतामूलक आधार पर समाज के पुनर्निर्माण** में रुचि व्यक्त की, ने यहाँ **ताज कोरोमंडल के विशाल बॉलरूम में 25वें पगवॉश सम्मेलन** की **सप्ताह भर चलने वाली चर्चाओं** के उद्घाटन का संकेत दिया।

• She said **India** had a very special place in the history of the **Pugwash Movement** in as much as the late **Prime Minister Nehru** organised a **Committee of Scientists** to explain **nuclear energy** which preceded the actual **Russell-Einstein Manifesto** from which the dating of the **Movement** was usually made.

उन्होंने कहा कि **भारत** का **पगवॉश आंदोलन** के इतिहास में एक विशेष स्थान है, क्योंकि दिवंगत **प्रधानमंत्री नेहरू** ने **परमाणु ऊर्जा** को समझाने के लिए **वैज्ञानिकों की एक समिति** का गठन किया था, जो वास्तविक **रसेल-आइंस्टीन घोषणापत्र** से पहले हुआ, जिससे सामान्यतः **आंदोलन** की तिथि मानी जाती है।

• **Prof. Dorothy Hodgkin** recalled how the late **Dr. Radhakrishnan**, when he was **India's envoy in Moscow** and also a **Professor of Philosophy of Eastern Religions at Oxford**, had urged her to visit the **Soviet Union** for contacts with her **scientist counterparts** in that country for a thaw in the **cold war** which was then at its peak.

प्रो. डोरोथी हॉजकिन ने याद किया कि कैसे दिवंगत **डॉ. राधाकृष्णन**, जब वे **मॉस्को में भारत के दूत** थे और साथ ही **ऑक्सफोर्ड में पूर्वी धर्मों के दर्शन के प्रोफेसर** थे, उन्होंने उनसे **सोवियत संघ** की यात्रा करने का आग्रह किया था ताकि वहाँ अपने **वैज्ञानिक समकक्षों** से संपर्क स्थापित कर उस समय चरम पर रहे **शीत युद्ध** में नरमी लाई जा सके।

- She actually made the visit **three years later**.
  उन्होंने वास्तव में यह यात्रा **तीन वर्ष बाद** की।

China is a threat to Greenland, Trump argues but analysts claim otherwise

The Polar Silk Road project seeks to push Beijing's influence in the Arctic, with investments in research stations in Iceland and Norway, and plans to develop the Northern Sea Route with Russia; experts say China's presence is growing, albeit slowly; however, its military presence is underwhelming

NEWS ANALYSIS

GS II: IR

Agence France-Presse
BEIJING

United States President Donald Trump has repeatedly threatened to take Greenland by force from NATO ally Denmark in order to keep the Arctic island from Beijing's hands.

But analysts suggest China is a small player in the Arctic region, and thus far from the threat Mr. Trump has argued.

Despite Mr. Trump's claim that, without U.S. intervention, Greenland would have "Chinese destroyers and submarines all over the place", Beijing's Arctic military presence is underwhelming.

"Greenland is not swarming with Chinese and Russian vessels. This is nonsense," said Paal Sigurd Hilde at the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies.

Moscow matters
In other parts of the Arctic, China's modest military presence has grown in collaboration with Russia since the 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

"China's only pathway to gaining significant influence in the Arctic goes through Russia," Mr. Hilde said.

The two countries have increased joint Arctic and

Way of the water: A Hong Kong-flagged ship leaving Kirkenes in the north of Norway on route to China via the Arctic Northeast passage. AFP

coast guard operations, including a 2024 bomber patrol near Alaska.

China also operates a handful of icebreakers equipped with deep-sea mini-submarines, which could map the seabed – potentially useful for military deployment – and satellites for Arctic observation.

Beijing says they are for scientific research.

These activities are "potential security concerns if China's military or military-linked assets establish a regular presence in the region", said Helena Legarda at the Mercator Institute for China Studies in Berlin.

"China has clear ambitions to expand its footprint and influence in the

> **Greenland has the world's eighth-largest rare earth reserves, according to the U.S. Geological Survey**

region, which it considers an emerging arena for geopolitical competition," she said.

Beijing launched the Polar Silk Road project in 2018 – the Arctic arm of its transnational Belt and Road infrastructure initiative – and aims to become a "polar great power" by 2030.

It has established scientific research stations in Iceland and Norway, while Chinese firms have invested in projects like Russian

liquefied natural gas and a Swedish railway line.

Competition with China for resources and access to trade routes in the Arctic could threaten European interests, Ms. Legarda said.

Recently, however, China has faced pushback.

Proposals to buy an abandoned naval station in Greenland and an airport in Finland have failed. The U.S. reportedly pressured nations to reject Chinese companies. In 2019, Greenland opted against using China's Huawei for its 5G networks.

Russia remains the exception, with China investing heavily in resources and ports along Russia's northern coast.

Greenland has the

world's eighth-largest rare earth reserves, elements vital for technologies including electric vehicles and military equipment, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

While China dominates global production of these critical materials, its attempts to tap Greenland's resources have seen limited success.

A Chinese-linked project at a massive deposit in Kvanefjeld was halted by the Greenland government in 2021 over environmental concerns, while another deposit in southern Greenland was sold to a New York-based firm in 2024 after U.S. lobbying.

"There was a fear in Denmark and the U.S. that mining investments several times the GDP of Greenland could have led to Chinese influence a decade ago, but the investments never materialised," said Jesper Willaing Zeuthen, associate professor at Aalborg University. More recently, "Beijing discourages engagement, because the diplomatic costs have been too high".

Key trade routes
The Polar Silk Road aims to link China to Europe via Arctic routes increasingly accessible as warming temperatures melt Arctic sea ice.

China and Russia agreed in October to develop the Northern Sea Route (NSR)

along Russia's northern border.

Last year, a Chinese ship reached Britain in 20 days via the Arctic, half the time of the regular Suez Canal route. The passage could transform global shipping and reduce Chinese reliance on the Straits of Malacca for its trade.

Chinese ships made just 14 NSR voyages last year, mostly carrying Russian gas.

Another possible route – the Northwest Passage – follows the Canadian archipelago, potentially mitigating the risks of a Russian and Chinese-dominated northern passage.

The NSR does not pass by Greenland, so it is not the source for Mr. Trump's claim of Chinese ships prowling the island's coastline.

Mr. Zeuthen maintains there is no sign of Chinese military activity in or around the Arctic part of Greenland. "Actual security issues are very hard to identify," he said.

China on Monday said its activities in the Arctic comply with international law, in an apparent response to Mr. Trump's comments. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said: "China's activities in the Arctic are aimed at promoting peace, stability, and sustainable development in the region and are in accordance with international law."

China is a threat to Greenland, Trump argues but analysts claim otherwise
चीन ग्रीनलैंड के लिए खतरा है, ट्रम्प का दावा लेकिन विशेषज्ञों का मत अलग है

- The **Polar Silk Road project** seeks to push **Beijing's influence** in the **Arctic**, with investments in **research stations** in **Iceland and Norway**, and plans to develop the **Northern Sea Route** with **Russia**; experts say **China's presence is growing**, albeit slowly; however, its **military presence** is underwhelming.
  पोलर सिल्क रोड परियोजना का उद्देश्य **आर्कटिक में बीजिंग के प्रभाव** को बढ़ाना है, जिसमें **आइसलैंड और नॉर्वे** में **अनुसंधान केंद्रों** में निवेश और **रूस** के साथ **नॉर्दन सी रूट** विकसित करने की योजना शामिल है; विशेषज्ञों का कहना है कि **चीन की उपस्थिति बढ़ रही है**, हालांकि धीरे-धीरे; फिर भी, इसका **सैन्य प्रभाव** औसत दर्जे का है।

- **United States President Donald Trump** has repeatedly threatened to take **Greenland** by force from **NATO ally Denmark** in order to keep the **Arctic island** from **Beijing's hands**.
  संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका के राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रम्प ने बार-बार धमकी दी है कि वे **ग्रीनलैंड** को बलपूर्वक **नाटो सहयोगी डेनमार्क** से ले लेंगे ताकि **आर्कटिक द्वीप** को **बीजिंग के हाथों** से बचाया जा सके।

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- But analysts suggest **China** is a **small player** in the **Arctic region**, and thus far from the **threat** Mr. Trump has argued.
  लेकिन विशेषज्ञों का कहना है कि **चीन आर्कटिक क्षेत्र** में एक **छोटा खिलाड़ी** है, और अभी तक वह **खतरे से** बहुत दूर है, जैसा कि ट्रम्प ने दावा किया था।

- Despite Mr. Trump's claim that, without **U.S. intervention**, **Greenland** would have "**Chinese destroyers and submarines all over the place**", **Beijing's Arctic military presence** is underwhelming.
  ट्रम्प के दावे के बावजूद कि **यूएस हस्तक्षेप** के बिना, **ग्रीनलैंड** में "**चीनी विध्वंसक और पनडुब्बियाँ हर जगह होंगी**", **बीजिंग की आर्कटिक सैन्य उपस्थिति** औसत दर्जे की है।

- "Greenland is not swarming with Chinese and Russian vessels. This is nonsense," said **Paal Sigurd Hilde** at the **Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies**.
  "**ग्रीनलैंड** चीनी और रूसी जहाजों से भरा हुआ नहीं है। यह बकवास है," ने **पाल सिगर्ड हिल्डे**, नॉर्वेजियन इंस्टिट्यूट फॉर डिफेंस स्टडीज में कहा।

Moscow matters
मॉस्को का महत्व

- In other parts of the **Arctic**, **China's modest military presence** has grown in collaboration with **Russia** since the **2022 invasion of Ukraine**.
  आर्कटिक के अन्य हिस्सों में, **चीन की मामूली सैन्य उपस्थिति रूस** के सहयोग से **2022 यूक्रेन आक्रमण** के बाद बढ़ी है।

- "**China's only pathway to gaining significant influence in the Arctic goes through Russia**," Mr. Hilde said.
  "**आर्कटिक में महत्वपूर्ण प्रभाव हासिल करने का चीन का एकमात्र मार्ग रूस के माध्यम से है**," श्री हिल्डे ने कहा।

- The two countries have increased **joint Arctic and coast guard operations**, including a **2024 bomber patrol near Alaska**.
  दोनों देशों ने **सांयुक्त आर्कटिक और कोस्ट गार्ड संचालन** बढ़ाए हैं, जिसमें **अलास्का के पास 2024 बॉम्बर गश्ती** शामिल है।

- **China** also operates a handful of **icebreakers** equipped with **deep-sea mini-submarines**, which could map the **seabed** — potentially useful for **military deployment** — and **satellites for Arctic observation**.
  चीन कुछ **आइसब्रेकर** भी संचालित करता है, जिनमें **डीप-सी मिनी-पनडुब्बियाँ** हैं, जो **समुद्र तल का नक्शा** बना सकती हैं — संभावित रूप से **सैन्य तैनाती** के लिए उपयोगी — और **आर्कटिक अवलोकन के लिए उपग्रह**।

- Beijing says they are for **scientific research**.
  बीजिंग कहता है कि ये **वैज्ञानिक अनुसंधान** के लिए हैं।

- These activities are "**potential security concerns if China's military or military-linked assets establish a regular presence in the region**", said Helena Legarda at the **Mercator Institute for China Studies in Berlin**.
  ये गतिविधियाँ "**संभावित सुरक्षा चिंता हैं यदि चीन की सैन्य या सैन्य-संबद्ध संपत्तियाँ क्षेत्र में नियमित उपस्थिति स्थापित करती हैं**," ने कहा **हेलेना लेगार्डा, बर्लिन में मर्केटर इंस्टिट्यूट फॉर चाइना स्टडीज** में।

- "**China has clear ambitions to expand its footprint and influence in the region, which it considers an emerging arena for geopolitical competition**," she said.
  "**चीन के स्पष्ट लक्ष्य हैं कि वह क्षेत्र में अपनी पहुंच और प्रभाव बढ़ाए, जिसे वह भू-राजनीतिक प्रतिस्पर्धा के उभरते मंच के रूप में मानता है**," उसने कहा।

- **Beijing** launched the **Polar Silk Road project in 2018** — the **Arctic arm** of its **transnational Belt and Road infrastructure initiative** — and aims to become a "**polar great power**" by **2030**.
  बीजिंग ने **2018** में **पोलर सिल्क रोड परियोजना** शुरू की — जो इसके **अंतरराष्ट्रीय बेल्ट एंड रोड इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर पहल** का **आर्कटिक हिस्सा** है — और **2030 तक** एक "**ध्रुवीय महाशक्ति**" बनने का लक्ष्य रखा है।

- It has established **scientific research stations** in **Iceland and Norway**, while **Chinese firms** have invested in projects like **Russian liquefied natural gas** and a **Swedish railway line**.

इसने **आइसलैंड और नॉर्वे** में **वैज्ञानिक अनुसंधान केंद्र** स्थापित किए हैं, जबकि **चीनी कंपनियों** ने **रूसी तरल प्राकृतिक गैस** और **स्वीडिश रेलवे लाइन** जैसे परियोजनाओं में निवेश किया है।

Competition with China
चीन के साथ प्रतिस्पर्धा

- Competition for **resources and access to trade routes** in the **Arctic** could threaten **European interests**, Ms. Legarda said.
  आर्कटिक में संसाधनों और व्यापार मार्गों तक पहुँच के लिए प्रतिस्पर्धा **यूरोपीय हितों** के लिए खतरा हो सकती है, श्रीमती लेगार्डा ने कहा।

- Recently, however, **China** has faced **pushback**.
  हालाँकि हाल ही में, **चीन** को **विरोध का सामना** करना पड़ा है।

- Proposals to buy an **abandoned naval station in Greenland** and an **airport in Finland** have failed.
  ग्रीनलैंड में **परित्यक्त नौसैनिक स्टेशन** और **फ़िनलैंड** में **हवाई अड्डा** खरीदने के प्रस्ताव असफल रहे हैं।

- The U.S. reportedly pressured nations to reject **Chinese companies**.
  संभवतः **यू.एस.** ने देशों को **चीनी कंपनियों** को अस्वीकार करने के लिए दबाव डाला।

- In **2019**, **Greenland** opted against using **China's Huawei** for its **5G networks**.
  2019 में, **ग्रीनलैंड** ने अपने **5G नेटवर्क** के लिए **चीन की हुवावे** का उपयोग नहीं करने का निर्णय लिया।

- **Russia** remains the exception, with **China investing heavily in resources and ports** along **Russia's northern coast**.
  रूस अपवाद बना हुआ है, जहां **चीन ने रूस के उत्तरी तट** के साथ **संसाधनों और बंदरगाहों में भारी निवेश** किया है।

- **Greenland** has the **world's eighth-largest rare earth reserves**, elements vital for technologies including **electric vehicles and military equipment**, according to the **U.S. Geological Survey**.
  ग्रीनलैंड के पास **विश्व के आठवें सबसे बड़े दुर्लभ पृथ्वी भंडार** हैं, जो **इलेक्ट्रिक वाहन और सैन्य उपकरण** जैसी तकनीकों के लिए महत्वपूर्ण हैं, **यू.एस. जियोलॉजिकल सर्वेक्षण** के अनुसार।

- While **China dominates global production** of these critical materials, its attempts to tap **Greenland's resources** have seen **limited success**.
  जबकि इन महत्वपूर्ण सामग्रियों का **वैश्विक उत्पादन चीन** के प्रभुत्व में है, इसके प्रयास **ग्रीनलैंड के संसाधनों** को खंगालने में **सीमित सफलता** प्राप्त हुई है।

- A **Chinese-linked project** at a massive deposit in **Kvanefjeld** was halted by the **Greenland government in 2021** over **environmental concerns**, while another deposit in **southern Greenland** was sold to a **New York-based firm in 2024** after **U.S. lobbying**.
  क्वानेफजेल्ड में एक **चीनी-संबद्ध परियोजना** को **ग्रीनलैंड सरकार** ने 2021 में **पर्यावरणीय चिंताओं** के कारण रोका, जबकि **दक्षिणी ग्रीनलैंड** में एक अन्य भंडार को **2024 में न्यूयॉर्क स्थित कंपनी** को **यू.एस. लॉबीइंग** के बाद बेचा गया।

- "There was a fear in **Denmark and the U.S.** that **mining investments several times the GDP of Greenland** could have led to **Chinese influence a decade ago**, but the investments never materialised," said **Jesper Willaing Zeuthen**, **associate professor at Aalborg University**.
  "**डेनमार्क और यू.एस.** में यह डर था कि **ग्रीनलैंड की GDP से कई गुना बड़े खनन निवेश** से एक दशक पहले **चीनी प्रभाव** हो सकता था, लेकिन ये निवेश कभी वास्तविक रूप में नहीं आए," ने कहा **जेस्पर विलिंग ज्यूथेन**, आलबोर्ग विश्वविद्यालय में एसोसिएट प्रोफेसर।

- More recently, "**Beijing discourages engagement, because the diplomatic costs have been too high**".
  हाल ही में, "**बीजिंग सहभागिता को हतोत्साहित करता है, क्योंकि कूटनीतिक लागत बहुत अधिक रही है।**"

Key trade routes
मुख्य व्यापार मार्ग

- The **Polar Silk Road** aims to link **China to Europe** via **Arctic routes** increasingly accessible as **warming temperatures melt Arctic sea ice**.

पोलर सिल्क रोड का उद्देश्य **चीन को यूरोप से जोड़ना** है **आर्कटिक मार्गों** के माध्यम से, जो **गर्मी के कारण आर्कटिक समुद्र बर्फ के पिघलने** के साथ अधिक सुलभ हो रहे हैं।

- **China and Russia** agreed in **October** to develop the **Northern Sea Route (NSR)** along **Russia's northern border**.
  चीन और रूस ने **अक्टूबर** में **नॉर्दन सी रूट (NSR)** को **रूस के उत्तरी सीमा** के along विकसित करने पर सहमति दी।

- Last year, a **Chinese ship** reached **Britain in 20 days** via the **Arctic**, half the time of the regular **Suez Canal route**.
  पिछले साल, एक **चीनी जहाज 20 दिनों में ब्रिटेन पहुँचा आर्कटिक** के मार्ग से, जो नियमित **सुएज़ नहर मार्ग** का आधा समय था।

- The passage could **transform global shipping** and reduce **Chinese reliance on the Straits of Malacca** for its trade.
  यह मार्ग **वैश्विक शिपिंग को बदल** सकता है और अपने व्यापार के लिए **चीनी निर्भरता मलेक्का जलडमरूमध्य पर** कम कर सकता है।

- **Chinese ships** made just **14 NSR voyages last year**, mostly carrying **Russian gas**.
  चीनी जहाजों ने पिछले साल केवल **14 NSR यात्राएँ** कीं, अधिकांश **रूसी गैस** ले जा रहे थे।

- Another possible route — the **Northwest Passage** — follows the **Canadian archipelago**, potentially mitigating the risks of a **Russian and Chinese-dominated northern passage**.
  एक और संभावित मार्ग — **नॉर्थवेस्ट पासेज़** — कनाडाई द्वीपसमूह का अनुसरण करता है, संभावित रूप से **रूसी और चीनी-प्रभुत्व वाले उत्तरी मार्ग** के जोखिम को कम कर सकता है।

- The **NSR** does not pass by **Greenland**, so it is not the source for Mr. Trump's claim of **Chinese ships prowling the island's coastline**.
  NSR ग्रीनलैंड के पास से नहीं गुजरता, इसलिए यह **ट्रम्प के दावे** का स्रोत नहीं है कि **चीनी जहाज द्वीप की तटरेखा पर घुम रहे हैं।**

- Mr. Zeuthen maintains there is **no sign of Chinese military activity** in or around the **Arctic part of Greenland**.
  श्री ज्यूथेन का कहना है कि **ग्रीनलैंड के आर्कटिक हिस्से में या उसके आसपास चीनी सैन्य गतिविधि का कोई संकेत नहीं** है।

- "**Actual security issues are very hard to identify**," he said.
  "**वास्तविक सुरक्षा समस्याओं की पहचान करना बहुत कठिन है**," उन्होंने कहा।

- **China on Monday** said its **activities in the Arctic comply with international law**, in an apparent response to Mr. Trump's comments.
  चीन ने सोमवार को कहा कि उसके **आर्कटिक में गतिविधियाँ अंतरराष्ट्रीय कानून के अनुरूप हैं**, जो स्पष्ट रूप से ट्रम्प की टिप्पणियों का जवाब है।

- **Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning** said: "**China's activities in the Arctic are aimed at promoting peace, stability, and sustainable development in the region and are in accordance with international law**".
  विदेश मंत्रालय के प्रवक्ता माओ निंग ने कहा: "**आर्कटिक में चीन की गतिविधियों का उद्देश्य क्षेत्र में शांति, स्थिरता और सतत विकास को बढ़ावा देना है और ये अंतरराष्ट्रीय कानून के अनुसार हैं।**"

Somaliland's status and the new geopolitical scramble for Horn of Africa

GS II: IR

Agence France-Presse
NAIROBI

Since Israel recognised Somaliland last month, the self-declared republic on the Gulf of Aden has become central to a struggle over military access, ports and regional influence across the Red Sea corridor.

Somaliland sits astride one of the world's most strategic maritime choke points, flanked by multiple conflicts in the Horn of Africa and West Asia.

It declared independence from Somalia in 1991 but had never been recognised internationally until Israel's move.

The recent recognition was fiercely opposed by the Somali government as an attack on its territorial unity – a position backed by most African and Arab leaders.

Military access
But Somaliland's assets – most crucially the port and airfield at Berbera, which have been developed by the United Arab Emirates since 2016 to be capable of hosting large naval and air assets – outweighed any potential concern about the diplomatic fall-out.

A Somaliland official said new buildings and an airbase facility were recently completed at Berbera by the UAE, which has a 25-year concession to build a military base.

"What is at stake right now is military access," said Roland Marchal, an expert on the region with France's National Centre for Scientific Research.

For the Israelis, Somaliland offers a prime spot from which to attack Yemen's Houthi rebels, who have targeted Israel to show solidarity with Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

Berbera offers another hub for the quiet military cooperation between the UAE and Israel that has expanded since the Emiratis formally recognised Israel under the U.S.-sponsored Abraham Accords in 2020.

The UAE did not criticise Israel for recognising Somaliland. The Somali government said on Monday it was cancelling all agreements with the UAE for "undermining national sovereignty".

Analysts say the Emiratis are unlikely to formally recognise Somaliland as that would worsen its already terrible ties with regional rival Saudi Arabia.

The Saudis "would view (recognition) as another affront and another example of the UAE undermining Saudi Arabia's authority and the 'Arab consensus'", said Anna Jacobs, a Gulf analyst.

Turkey has sided with Somalia, its key strategic partner in the region – host of its largest international military base, a planned space-port and imminent oil-drilling projects.

The fragmentation of Somalia "could jeopardise Turkey's progress and interests in the country", said Scott Romaniuk, a researcher at Budapest's Corvinus University.

Not to mention Turkey's long-standing opposition to Israel's war in Gaza and fear of encouraging its own separatists, the Kurds.

Turkey has maintained a foothold in Somaliland, said Federico Donelli of the University of Trieste, and is closely allied with the UAE in other areas – highlighting the complexity of regional dynamics.

Meanwhile, Somaliland is the only African territory, besides the tiny state of Eswatini, to recognise Taiwan – enough to attract the ire of China, which also has significant investments in Somalia.

Washington defended what it said was its Israeli ally's right to recognise Somaliland, although President Donald Trump said he was unlikely to follow suit, despite pressure from some within his Republican party.

"The United States is not at all in a position to recognise Somaliland," Mr. Marchal said.

"The United States needs local allies. They can't alienate Egypt, the Turks and Saudi Arabia (all supporters of Somalia) at the same time."

The United States can count on plenty of other military assets in the region, including ships in the Red Sea and the Gulf, and the Baledogle airfield in Somalia.

Sovereign oversight
Lost in the geopolitical scramble is any assessment of Somaliland's own case for independence.

It has run its own affairs since 1991 and been far more stable and democratic than the rest of Somalia, but those are secondary considerations for its partners.

"It's sad because the merits of Somaliland aren't discussed," Mr. Marchal said. "What Somaliland has achieved, what it has failed at, is completely ignored."

Euphoric vibes: Locals celebrate Israel's recognition of Somaliland's statehood in capital Hargeisa on December 26, 2025. AFP

Somaliland's status and the new geopolitical scramble for Horn of Africa
सोमालिलैंड की स्थिति और हॉर्न ऑफ़ अफ़्रीका के लिए नई भू-राजनीतिक दौड़

- **Somaliland** last month, the self-declared republic on the **Gulf of Aden** has become central to a struggle over **military access, ports and regional influence** across the **Red Sea corridor**.
  पिछले महीने, **सोमालिलैंड**, जो गल्फ ऑफ़ एडन में स्वघोषित गणराज्य है, **रेड सी कॉरिडोर में सैन्य पहुँच, बंदरगाहों और क्षेत्रीय प्रभाव** के लिए संघर्ष का केंद्र बन गया है।

- **Somaliland** sits astride one of the world's most strategic **maritime choke points**, flanked by multiple conflicts in the **Horn of Africa** and **West Asia**.
  सोमालिलैंड दुनिया के सबसे रणनीतिक **समुद्री जाम बिंदुओं** में से एक पर स्थित है, जिसके पास **हॉर्न ऑफ़ अफ़्रीका** और **पश्चिमी एशिया** में कई संघर्ष हैं।

- It declared **independence** from **Somalia in 1991** but had never been recognised internationally until **Israel's move**.
  इसने **1991 में सोमालिया से स्वतंत्रता** घोषित की, लेकिन इसे अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर कभी मान्यता नहीं मिली जब तक कि **इज़राइल की पहल** नहीं हुई।

- The recent **recognition** was fiercely opposed by the **Somali government** as an attack on its **territorial unity** — a position backed by most **African and Arab leaders**.
  हाल की **मान्यता** का **सोमाली सरकार** द्वारा कड़ा विरोध किया गया क्योंकि इसे उसकी **क्षेत्रीय एकता** पर हमला माना गया — यह स्थिति अधिकांश **अफ्रीकी और अरब नेताओं** द्वारा समर्थित थी।

Military access
सैन्य पहुँच

- But **Somaliland's assets** — most crucially the **port and airfield at Berbera**, which have been developed by the **United Arab Emirates since 2016** to be capable of hosting large **naval and air assets** — outweighed any potential concern about the **diplomatic fall-out**.
  लेकिन **सोमालिलैंड की संपत्तियाँ** — सबसे महत्वपूर्ण **बेरबेरा का बंदरगाह और हवाई क्षेत्र**, जिसे **संयुक्त अरब अमीरात ने 2016 से विकसित किया है** ताकि बड़े **नौसैनिक और हवाई संपत्ति** को होस्ट किया जा सके — किसी भी संभावित **कूटनीतिक परिणाम** की चिंता से अधिक महत्वपूर्ण थे।

- A **Somaliland official** said new buildings and an **airbase facility** were recently completed at **Berbera** by the **UAE**, which has a **25-year concession** to build a **military base**.
  एक **सोमालिलैंड अधिकारी** ने कहा कि **बेरबेरा** में नई इमारतें और हवाई क्षेत्र सुविधा हाल ही में **यूएई** द्वारा पूरी की गई, जिसके पास **25 साल का अनुबंध** है कि वह एक **सैन्य अड्डा** बनाए।

- "What is at stake right now is **military access**," said **Roland Marchal**, an expert on the region with **France's National Centre for Scientific Research**.
  "अभी जो दांव पर है वह है **सैन्य पहुँच**," ने कहा **रोलांड मार्चल**, जो **फ्रांस के राष्ट्रीय वैज्ञानिक अनुसंधान केंद्र** में क्षेत्र विशेषज्ञ हैं।

- For the **Israelis, Somaliland** offers a prime spot from which to attack **Yemen's Houthi rebels**, who have targeted **Israel** to show solidarity with **Palestinians in the Gaza Strip**.
  इज़राइलियों के लिए, **सोमालिलैंड** एक प्रमुख स्थान प्रदान करता है जिससे वे **यमन के हूथी विद्रोहियों** पर हमला कर सकते हैं, जिन्होंने **गाजा पट्टी में फिलिस्तीनियों के साथ एकजुटता** दिखाने के लिए **इज़राइल** को निशाना बनाया।

- **Berbera** offers another hub for the quiet **military cooperation** between the **UAE and Israel** that has expanded since the **Emiratis formally recognised Israel under the U.S.-sponsored Abraham Accords in 2020**.
  बेरबेरा यूएई और इज़राइल के बीच शांत **सैन्य सहयोग** के लिए एक और केंद्र प्रदान करता है, जो **2020 में यूएस-प्रायोजित अब्राहम समझौतों** के तहत अमीराती द्वारा इज़राइल को औपचारिक रूप से मान्यता देने के बाद से बढ़ा है।

- The **UAE** did not criticise **Israel** for recognising **Somaliland**.
  यूएई ने **सोमालिलैंड को मान्यता** देने के लिए **इज़राइल** की आलोचना नहीं की।

- The **Somali government** said on Monday it was cancelling all agreements with the **UAE** for "**undermining national sovereignty**".
  सोमाली सरकार ने सोमवार को कहा कि वह **यूएई** के साथ सभी समझौतों को रद्द कर रही है क्योंकि उन्होंने "**राष्ट्रीय संप्रभुता को कमजोर किया**"।

- Analysts say the **Emiratis** are unlikely to formally recognise **Somaliland** as that would worsen its already terrible ties with regional rival **Saudi Arabia**.
विशेषज्ञों का कहना है कि **अमीराती** औपचारिक रूप से **सोमालिलैंड** को मान्यता देने की संभावना नहीं रखते क्योंकि इससे उनके पहले से ही खराब संबंध क्षेत्रीय प्रतिद्वंद्वी **सऊदी अरब** के साथ और बिगड़ जाएंगे।

- The **Saudis** "would view recognition as another affront and another example of the UAE undermining Saudi Arabia's authority and the 'Arab consensus'", said **Anna Jacobs**, a **Gulf analyst**.
सऊदी अरब "मान्यता को एक और अपमान और यूएई द्वारा **सऊदी अरब की सत्ता और 'अरब कंसेंसस' को कमजोर करने** का एक और उदाहरण मानेंगे", कहा **अन्ना जैकब्स**, गल्फ विश्लेषक।

- Turkey has sided with **Somalia**, its key strategic partner in the region — host of its largest **international military base**, a planned **space-port** and imminent **oil-drilling projects**.
तुर्की ने क्षेत्र में अपने प्रमुख रणनीतिक सहयोगी **सोमालिया** का समर्थन किया है — जिसमें इसका सबसे बड़ा **अंतरराष्ट्रीय सैन्य अड्डा**, एक नियोजित **स्पेस-पोर्ट** और निकट भविष्य के **तेल ड्रिलिंग प्रोजेक्ट्स** हैं।

- The fragmentation of **Somalia** "could jeopardise **Turkey's progress and interests** in the country", said **Scott Romaniuk**, a researcher at **Budapest's Corvinus University**.
सोमालिया के विखंडन से "देश में **तुर्की की प्रगति और हितों** को खतरा हो सकता है", कहा **स्कॉट रोमनियूक**, बुडापेस्ट के **कॉर्विनस विश्वविद्यालय** के शोधकर्ता।

- Not to mention **Turkey's long-standing opposition to Israel's war in Gaza** and fear of encouraging its own **separatists, the Kurds**.
इसके अलावा, **तुर्की का लंबे समय से विरोध गाजा में इज़राइल के युद्ध** के लिए और अपने **विभाजनकारी समूह, कुर्दों** को प्रोत्साहित करने का डर।

- Turkey has maintained a **foothold in Somaliland**, said **Federico Donelli** of the **University of Trieste**, and is closely allied with the **UAE** in other areas — highlighting the **complexity of regional dynamics**.
तुर्की ने सोमालिलैंड में एक पकड़ बनाए रखी है, कहा फेडेरिको डोनेली, **त्रिएस्ट विश्वविद्यालय** के, और अन्य क्षेत्रों में **यूएई** के साथ निकट सहयोग में है — यह **क्षेत्रीय गतिशीलता की जटिलता** को उजागर करता है।

- Meanwhile, **Somaliland** is the only African territory, besides the tiny state of **Eswatini**, to recognise **Taiwan** — enough to attract the ire of **China**, which also has significant investments in **Somalia**.
इसी बीच, **सोमालिलैंड** अकेला अफ्रीकी क्षेत्र है, छोटे राज्य **एस्वातिनी** के अलावा, जो **ताइवान** को मान्यता देता है — इतना कि **चीन** का गुस्सा आकर्षित करता है, जिसका **सोमालिया** में भी महत्वपूर्ण निवेश है।

- Washington defended what it said was its **Israeli ally's right to recognise Somaliland**, although President **Donald Trump** said he was unlikely to follow suit, despite pressure from some within his **Republican party**.
वाशिंगटन ने रक्षा की कि यह उसका **इज़राइली सहयोगी का सोमालिलैंड को मान्यता देने का अधिकार है**, हालांकि राष्ट्रपति **डोनाल्ड ट्रम्प** ने कहा कि वह ऐसा करने की संभावना नहीं रखते, अपने **रिपब्लिकन पार्टी** के कुछ दबावों के बावजूद।

- "The United States is not at all in a position to recognise **Somaliland**," Mr. Marchal said.
"**संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका बिल्कुल भी सोमालिलैंड को मान्यता देने की स्थिति में नहीं है**," श्री मार्चल ने कहा।

- "The United States needs local allies. They can't alienate **Egypt, the Turks and Saudi Arabia** (all supporters of **Somalia**) at the same time."
"**संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका को स्थानीय सहयोगियों की आवश्यकता है। वे एक साथ मिस्र, तुर्की और सऊदी अरब (सभी सोमालिया के समर्थक) को नाराज़ नहीं कर सकते।**"

- The United States can count on plenty of other **military assets in the region**, including **ships in the Red Sea and the Gulf**, and the **Baledogle airfield in Somalia**.
संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका क्षेत्र में कई अन्य **सैन्य संपत्तियों** पर भरोसा कर सकता है, जिसमें **रेड सी और खाड़ी में जहाज**, और **सोमालिया में बालेडोगले हवाई क्षेत्र** शामिल हैं।

Sovereign oversight
संप्रभु निगरानी

- Lost in the **geopolitical scramble** is any assessment of **Somaliland's own case for independence**.
भू-राजनीतिक दौड़ में खो गया है **सोमालिलैंड के स्वतंत्रता के अपने मामले का कोई मूल्यांकन।**

- It has run its own affairs since **1991** and has been far more **stable and democratic** than the rest of **Somalia**, but those are secondary considerations for its partners.
  इसने 1991 से अपने मामले खुद संभाले हैं और बाकी **सोमालिया की तुलना में अधिक **स्थिर और लोकतांत्रिक** रहा है, लेकिन ये इसके भागीदारों के लिए गौण विचार हैं।
- "It's sad because the merits of **Somaliland** aren't discussed," Mr. Marchal said.
  "यह दुखद है क्योंकि **सोमालिलैंड की योग्यताओं** पर चर्चा नहीं होती," श्री मार्चल ने कहा।
- "What **Somaliland** has achieved, what it has failed at, is completely ignored."
  "**सोमालिलैंड** ने क्या हासिल किया, इसमें क्या विफल रहा, इसे पूरी तरह नजरअंदाज किया गया है।"

GS Paper III: Economy,	
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3.	**Rice exporters seek Commerce Ministry's help to clear payments** **चावल निर्यातक भुगतान निपटाने के लिए वाणिज्य मंत्रालय से मदद मांगते हैं**
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Quick commerce platforms to stop 10-minute service

GS III: Economy

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Delivery platforms Blinkit, Zepto, Zomato, and Swiggy are learnt to have decided to remove the 10-minute delivery system from their applications after an intervention by Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya.

Gig and platform workers went on a one-day strike on December 31 and one of their demands was to end the delivery of items in 10 minutes, citing accidents and health issues. A senior official said Mr. Mandaviya had raised the issue at a meeting held with the aggregators last week.

The Ministry sources told *The Hindu* that Blinkit has removed the 10-minute delivery promise from its branding and others are expected to follow suit in the coming days.

"They told the Minister that it [10-minute delivery] is being made possible through warehouses at various locations and not by putting pressure on workers. However, Minister urged them to to stop this branding practice considering the health and welfare of delivery workers and the companies agreed," the official said.

The government source added that the move is aimed at ensuring greater safety, security, and improved working conditions for gig workers. Accordingly, Blinkit has informed the Ministry that the company's principal tagline has been revised from "10,000+ products delivered in 10 minutes" to "30,000+ products delivered at your doorstep."

The gig workers, in their memorandum to Mr. Mandaviya, had requested his intervention to urgently discontinue the 10-20 minute service delivery mandate to prioritise workers' safety. The workers' unions have been arguing that the practice put tremendous pressure on the delivery workers and had also sought the Minister's help for regulating the platforms and their work practices.

'A win for gig workers'
General secretary of Indian Federation of App-Based Transport Workers Shaik Salauddin welcomed the intervention of the government and the subsequent decision of the platforms.

"The 10-minute delivery model forced delivery partners into dangerous road behaviour, extreme stress, and unsafe working conditions. We welcome and thank Mr. Mandaviya for listening to workers' voices and intervening decisively in the interest of their safety," he said. He added that the Minister's intervention is a victory for all gig and platform workers, especially in the context of the nationwide flash strike and protests held from December 25 to 31, highlighting unsafe work practices.

Aam Aadmi Party MP Raghav Chadha, who had voiced the problems faced by gig workers in Parliament last month, posted on his X handle: "Satyamev Jayate. Together, we have won..."

Gig workers had cited health issues, accidents to discontinue 10-minute delivery. FILE PHOTO

Quick commerce platforms to stop 10-minute service
क्विक कॉमर्स प्लेटफॉर्म 10-मिनट सेवा बंद करेंगे

- Quick commerce platforms to stop 10-minute service
क्विक कॉमर्स प्लेटफॉर्म 10-मिनट सेवा बंद करेंगे

- Delivery platforms **Blinkit**, **Zepto**, **Zomato**, and **Swiggy** are learnt to have decided to remove the **10-minute delivery system** from their applications after an intervention by **Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya**.
डिलीवरी प्लेटफॉर्म **ब्लिंकिट**, **ज़ेप्टो**, **ज़ोमैटो** और **स्विगी** ने केंद्रीय **श्रम मंत्री मनसुख मंडाविया** के हस्तक्षेप के बाद अपने ऐप्लिकेशन से **10-मिनट डिलीवरी सिस्टम** हटाने का फैसला किया है।

- Gig and platform workers went on a **one-day strike on December 31** and one of their demands was to end the delivery of items in **10 minutes**, citing accidents and health issues.
गिग और प्लेटफॉर्म वर्कर्स **31 दिसंबर** को एक-दिवसीय हड़ताल पर गए थे और उनकी मांगों में **10 मिनट में डिलीवरी** को खत्म करना शामिल था, जिसमें दुर्घटनाओं और स्वास्थ्य समस्याओं का हवाला दिया गया था।

- A senior official said Mr. **Mandaviya** had raised the issue at a meeting held with the aggregators last week.
एक वरिष्ठ अधिकारी ने कहा कि श्री **मंडाविया** ने पिछले सप्ताह एग्रीगेटर्स के साथ हुई बैठक में यह मुद्दा उठाया था।

- The Ministry sources told **The Hindu** that **Blinkit** has removed the **10-minute delivery promise** from its branding and others are expected to follow suit in the coming days.
मंत्रालय के सूत्रों ने **द हिंदू** को बताया कि **ब्लिंकिट** ने अपने ब्रांडिंग से **10-मिनट डिलीवरी का वादा** हटा दिया है और अन्य कंपनियों से भी आने वाले दिनों में ऐसा करने की उम्मीद है।

- "They told the Minister that it [**10-minute delivery**] is being made possible through warehouses at various locations and not by putting pressure on workers. However, Minister urged them to stop this branding practice considering the **health and welfare of delivery workers** and the companies agreed," the official said.
"उन्होंने मंत्री को बताया कि [**10-मिनट डिलीवरी**] विभिन्न स्थानों पर गोदामों के माध्यम से संभव हो रही है, न कि श्रमिकों पर दबाव डालकर। हालांकि, मंत्री ने **डिलीवरी वर्कर्स के स्वास्थ्य और कल्याण** को ध्यान में रखते हुए इस ब्रांडिंग प्रथा को रोकने का आग्रह किया और कंपनियां सहमत हो गईं," अधिकारी ने कहा।

- The government source added that the move is aimed at ensuring greater **safety**, **security**, and improved **working conditions** for gig workers.
सरकारी सूत्र ने जोड़ा कि यह कदम गिग वर्कर्स के लिए अधिक **सुरक्षा**, **संरक्षा** और बेहतर **कार्य परिस्थितियों** को सुनिश्चित करने के उद्देश्य से है।

- Accordingly, **Blinkit** has informed the Ministry that the company's principal tagline has been revised from "**10,000+ products delivered in 10 minutes**" to "**30,000+ products delivered at your doorstep**."
इसके अनुसार, **ब्लिंकिट** ने मंत्रालय को सूचित किया है कि कंपनी

का मुख्य टैगलाइन "**10 मिनट में 10,000+ उत्पाद डिलीवर**" से बदलकर "**आपके दरवाज़े तक 30,000+ उत्पाद डिलीवर**" कर दिया गया है।

- The gig workers, in their memorandum to Mr. **Mandaviya**, had requested his intervention to urgently discontinue the **10-20 minute service delivery mandate** to prioritise workers' **safety**.
  गिग वर्कर्स ने श्री **मंडाविया** को दिए अपने ज्ञापन में श्रमिकों की **सुरक्षा** को प्राथमिकता देने के लिए **10-20 मिनट सेवा डिलीवरी अनिवार्यता** को तत्काल बंद कराने का अनुरोध किया था।

- The workers' unions have been arguing that the practice put tremendous pressure on the delivery workers and had also sought the Minister's help for regulating the platforms and their work practices.
  वर्कर्स यूनियनों का तर्क रहा है कि यह प्रथा डिलीवरी वर्कर्स पर अत्यधिक दबाव डालती है और उन्होंने प्लेटफॉर्म और उनकी कार्य प्रथाओं के नियमन के लिए भी मंत्री से मदद मांगी थी।

'A win for gig workers'
'गिग वर्कर्स के लिए जीत'

- General secretary of **Indian Federation of App-Based Transport Workers Shaik Salauddin** welcomed the intervention of the government and the subsequent decision of the platforms.
  इंडियन फेडरेशन ऑफ ऐप-बेस्ड ट्रांसपोर्ट वर्कर्स के महासचिव **शेख सल्लाउद्दीन** ने सरकार के हस्तक्षेप और प्लेटफॉर्म के बाद के फैसले का स्वागत किया।

- "The **10-minute delivery model** forced delivery partners into dangerous road behaviour, extreme stress, and unsafe working conditions. We welcome and thank Mr. **Mandaviya** for listening to workers' voices and intervening decisively in the interest of their safety," he said.
  "**10-मिनट डिलीवरी मॉडल** ने डिलीवरी पार्टनर्स को खतरनाक सड़क व्यवहार, अत्यधिक तनाव और असुरक्षित कार्य परिस्थितियों में धकेल दिया। हम श्रमिकों की आवाज़ सुनने और उनकी सुरक्षा के हित में निर्णायक हस्तक्षेप करने के लिए श्री **मंडाविया** का स्वागत और धन्यवाद करते हैं," उन्होंने कहा।

- He added that the Minister's intervention is a victory for all gig and platform workers, especially in the context of the nationwide **flash strike and protests from December 25 to 31**, highlighting unsafe work practices.
  उन्होंने जोड़ा कि मंत्री का हस्तक्षेप सभी गिग और प्लेटफॉर्म वर्कर्स के लिए जीत है, खासकर **25 से 31 दिसंबर** तक हुए देशव्यापी **फ्लैश स्ट्राइक और विरोध प्रदर्शनों** के संदर्भ में, जिन्होंने असुरक्षित कार्य प्रथाओं को उजागर किया।

- **Aam Aadmi Party MP Raghav Chadha**, who had voiced the problems faced by gig workers in Parliament last month, posted on his **X handle**: "**Satyamev Jayate. Together, we have won...**"
  आम आदमी पार्टी सांसद राघव चड्ढा, जिन्होंने पिछले महीने संसद में गिग वर्कर्स की समस्याएं उठाई थीं, ने अपने **X हैंडल** पर पोस्ट किया: "**सत्यमेव जयते। साथ मिलकर हमने जीत हासिल की है...**"

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Trump's latest tariff threat on Iran to have little impact on India

India's trade with Iran declined significantly after 2019 following U.S. sanctions against that country, while overall trade levels have been small

GS III: Economy

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

India's overall trade scenario is not likely to face much of an impact if it were to stop trading with Iran in response to U.S. President Donald Trump's new threat of a 25% tariff on any country doing business with Iran, official data showed.

However, it could temporarily impact some sectors such as rice, tea, fresh fruits, and essential oils, as per the data.

"Effective immediately, any Country doing business with the Islamic Republic of Iran will pay a Tariff of 25% on any and all business being done with the United States of America," Mr. Trump posted on Truth Social early morning on January 13.

Mr. Trump's actions are in reaction to the Iranian government's apparent crackdown on protestors in that country.

India has a history of stopping or reducing trade with Iran in response to U.S. actions. India's trade with Iran declined significantly after 2019, following the sanctions imposed on that country by the U.S. However, even prior to this, the overall trade levels had remained relatively small, with the two countries largely engaging with each other in a few sectors.

Firing line: Trump's actions are in reaction to the Iran government's apparent crackdown on protestors in that country. REUTERS

According to trade experts, if India were to stop trading with Iran, while some sectors might feel short-term pain, Iran's share is small enough that India will soon be able to find alternatives. Others say that most of what India exports to Iran can be classified as humanitarian products, and so it remains to be seen whether they will be counted as "doing business" with that country.

"As we all know that the trade with Iran is outside the sanctions imposed by U.S., given the humanitarian nature of most of these products," the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) said in a statement. "And therefore, FIEO is of the view that the impact of additional 25% tariff imposed by U.S. on any country doing business with Iran will almost have no impact on India."

An analysis by The Hindu of the latest trade data with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry shows that Iran accounted for 0.26% ($764.5 million) of India's total exports in FY26 up to November 2025. This share has been falling consistently since FY20, when Iran's share in India's exports was 1.1%.

Of India's exports to Iran, a whopping 61% ($756 million) in 2025-26 so far was basmati rice. If India were to stop exporting to Iran in response to the U.S. tariff threats, this is a sector that could face some pain as basmati rice exports to Iran made up 13.1% of India's total basmati rice exports this year.

The other sectors that might feel an impact are tea, with Iran making up 5.6% of India's tea exports, essential oils (5.4%), and fresh fruits (5.3%).

Iran's share in India's total imports stood at 2.7% in FY17, and was 0.04% as of November 2025.

- India's trade with Iran declined significantly after **2019**, following the **sanctions** imposed on that country by the **U.S.**
  अमेरिका द्वारा लगाए गए **प्रतिबंधों** के बाद **2019** के बाद भारत का ईरान के साथ व्यापार काफ़ी घट गया।

- However, even prior to this, the overall trade levels had remained relatively **small**, with the two countries largely engaging with each other in a few sectors.
  हालांकि, इससे पहले भी दोनों देशों के बीच कुल व्यापार स्तर अपेक्षाकृत **कम** ही रहा और व्यापार कुछ ही क्षेत्रों तक सीमित था।

- According to **trade experts**, if India were to stop trading with Iran, while some sectors might feel **short-term pain**, Iran's share is small enough that India will soon be able to find alternatives.
  व्यापार विशेषज्ञों के अनुसार, यदि भारत ईरान के साथ व्यापार बंद करता है तो कुछ क्षेत्रों को **अल्पकालिक नुकसान** हो सकता है, लेकिन ईरान की हिस्सेदारी इतनी कम है कि भारत जल्द ही **विकल्प** ढूंढ लेगा।

- Others say that most of what India exports to Iran can be classified as **humanitarian products**, and so it remains to be seen whether they will be counted as "**doing business**" with that country.
  कुछ का कहना है कि भारत द्वारा ईरान को निर्यात किए जाने वाले अधिकांश उत्पाद **मानवीय उत्पाद** हैं, इसलिए यह देखना बाकी है कि इन्हें "**व्यापार करना**" माना जाएगा या नहीं।

- "As we all know that the trade with Iran is outside the **sanctions imposed by the U.S.**, given the **humanitarian nature** of most of these products," the **Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO)** said in a statement.
  भारतीय निर्यात संगठन महासंघ (FIEO) ने एक बयान में कहा, "जैसा कि हम जानते हैं, इन उत्पादों की **मानवीय प्रकृति** के कारण ईरान के साथ व्यापार **अमेरिकी प्रतिबंधों** के दायरे से बाहर है।"

- "And therefore, FIEO is of the view that the impact of additional **25% tari•** imposed by the U.S. on any country doing business with Iran will have almost **no impact on India**."
  "इसलिए, FIEO का मानना है कि ईरान के साथ व्यापार करने वाले किसी भी देश पर अमेरिका द्वारा लगाए गए अतिरिक्त **25% टैरिफ़** का भारत पर लगभग **कोई प्रभाव नहीं पड़ेगा**।"

- An analysis by **The Hindu** of the latest trade data with the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry** shows that Iran accounted for **0.26% ($764.5 million)** of India's total exports in **FY26** up to **November 2025**.
  वाणिज्य और उद्योग मंत्रालय के नवीनतम व्यापार आंकड़ों के **द हिंदू** द्वारा किए गए विश्लेषण से पता चलता है कि **नवंबर 2025** तक **FY26** में भारत के कुल निर्यात में ईरान की हिस्सेदारी **0.26% ($764.5 मिलियन)** थी।

- This share has been falling consistently since **FY20**, when Iran's share in India's exports was **1.1%**.
  यह हिस्सेदारी **FY20** के बाद से लगातार घट रही है, जब भारत के निर्यात में ईरान की हिस्सेदारी **1.1%** थी।

- Of India's exports to Iran, a whopping **61% ($756 million)** in **2025-26** so far was **basmati rice**.
  2025-26 में अब तक ईरान को भारत के निर्यात में से **61% ($756 मिलियन)** हिस्सा **बासमती चावल** का रहा।

- If India were to stop exporting to Iran in response to the U.S. tariff threats, this is a sector that could face some pain as basmati rice exports to Iran made up **13.1%** of India's total basmati rice exports this year.
  यदि अमेरिका की टैरिफ़ धमकियों के जवाब में भारत ईरान को निर्यात बंद करता है, तो यह क्षेत्र प्रभावित हो सकता है क्योंकि इस वर्ष ईरान को बासमती चावल का निर्यात भारत के कुल बासमती चावल निर्यात का **13.1%** रहा।

- The other sectors that might feel an impact are **tea**, with Iran making up **5.6%** of India's tea exports, **essential oils (5.4%)**, and **fresh fruits (5.3%)**.
  अन्य प्रभावित होने वाले क्षेत्र **चाय** हैं, जिसमें ईरान की हिस्सेदारी **5.6%**, **आवश्यक तेल (5.4%)**, और **ताज़े फल (5.3%)** है।

- Iran's share in India's total imports stood at **2.7% in FY17**, and was **0.04%** as of **November 2025**.
  भारत के कुल आयात में ईरान की हिस्सेदारी **FY17 में 2.7%** थी, जो **नवंबर 2025** तक घटकर **0.04%** रह गई।

Rice exporters seek Commerce Ministry's help to clear payments

GS III: Economy

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Rice exporters sought the Union Commerce Ministry's help on Tuesday to clear pending dues from importers in Iran amid growing civil unrest in that country, one of the major importers of basmati and other varieties of Indian rice. While Iran continues to be one of India's most significant destinations for basmati rice, the current financial year has seen growing stress on order flows, payment cycles, and shipment schedules due to the prevailing instability in the country, the Indian Rice Exporters Federation (IREF) has said in an advisory issued to its members.

The IREF's office-bearers met senior Commerce Ministry officials and apprised them of the situation. The IREF said in a release that the immediate fallout of the situation in Iran is evident in Indian markets too, where basmati prices have softened sharply within days.

"Exporters must exercise heightened caution, particularly with respect to credit exposure and shipment timelines," the IREF's statement said. India exported 5.99 lakh tonnes of basmati rice worth $468.10 million to Iran during April-November of the 2025-26 financial year, according to the IREF. The prices of popular domestic basmati rice varieties, including 1121, 1509, and 1718, have fallen by about ₹5 in a week.

"Iran has historically been a pillar market for Indian basmati. However, the current internal turmoil has disrupted trade channels, slowed payments and dented buyer confidence," the IREF's national president Prem Garg said in the statement.

"Importers have conveyed their inability to honour existing commitments and remit payments to India, creating uncertainty for exporters," the IREF said.

Rice exporters seek Commerce Ministry's help to clear payments
चावल निर्यातक भुगतान निपटाने के लिए वाणिज्य मंत्रालय से मदद मांगते हैं

- Rice exporters sought the **Union Commerce Ministry's** help on Tuesday to clear pending dues from importers in **Iran** amid growing **civil unrest** in that country, one of the major importers of **basmati** and other varieties of **Indian rice**.
 चावल निर्यातकों ने मंगलवार को **केंद्रीय वाणिज्य मंत्रालय से ईरान** के आयातकों से लंबित बकाया राशि निपटाने में मदद मांगी, जहां बढ़ती **नागरिक अशांति** के बीच यह देश **बासमती** और अन्य **भारतीय चावल** किस्मों का एक प्रमुख आयातक है।

- While Iran continues to be one of India's most **significant destinations** for basmati rice, the current **financial year** has seen growing stress on **order flows**, **payment cycles**, and **shipment schedules** due to the prevailing instability in the country, the **Indian Rice Exporters Federation (IREF)** has said in an advisory issued to its members.
 जबकि ईरान बासमती चावल के लिए भारत के सबसे **महत्वपूर्ण गंतव्यों** में से एक बना हुआ है, **वर्तमान वित्तीय वर्ष** में देश की मौजूदा अस्थिरता के कारण **ऑर्डर प्रवाह**, **भुगतान चक्र**, और **शिपमेंट शेड्यूल** पर बढ़ता दबाव देखा गया है, ऐसा **इंडियन राइस एक्सपोर्टर्स फेडरेशन (IREF)** ने अपने सदस्यों को जारी परामर्श में कहा है।

- The **IREF's ice-bearers** met senior **Commerce Ministry officials** and apprised them of the situation.
 IREF के पदाधिकारियों ने वरिष्ठ **वाणिज्य मंत्रालय के अधिकारियों** से मुलाकात कर उन्हें स्थिति से अवगत कराया।

- The IREF said in a release that the immediate fallout of the situation in Iran is evident in **Indian markets** too, where **basmati prices** have softened sharply within days.
 IREF ने एक विज्ञप्ति में कहा कि ईरान की स्थिति का तत्काल असर **भारतीय बाजारों** में भी दिख रहा है, जहां **बासमती की कीमतें** कुछ ही दिनों में तेज़ी से नरम पड़ी हैं।

- "Exporters must exercise **heightened caution**, particularly with respect to **credit exposure** and **shipment timelines**," the IREF's statement said.
 IREF के बयान में कहा गया, "निर्यातकों को विशेष रूप से **क्रेडिट जोखिम** और **शिपमेंट समयसीमा** के संदर्भ में **अधिक सतर्कता** बरतनी चाहिए।"

- India exported **5.99 lakh tonnes** of basmati rice worth **$468.10 million** to Iran during **April–November of the 2025-26 financial year**, according to the IREF.
 IREF के अनुसार, भारत ने **2025-26 वित्तीय वर्ष** के **अप्रैल–नवंबर** के दौरान ईरान को **5.99 लाख टन** बासमती चावल **$468.10 मिलियन** मूल्य का निर्यात किया।

- The prices of popular domestic basmati rice varieties, including **1121**, **1509**, and **1718**, have fallen by about **₹5** in a week.
 लोकप्रिय घरेलू बासमती चावल किस्मों **1121**, **1509**, और **1718** की कीमतें एक सप्ताह में लगभग **₹5** गिर गई हैं।

- "Iran has historically been a **pillar market** for Indian basmati. However, the current **internal turmoil** has disrupted **trade channels**, slowed **payments** and dented **buyer confidence**," the IREF's **national president Prem Garg** said in the statement.

IREF के **राष्ट्रीय अध्यक्ष प्रेम गर्ग** ने बयान में कहा, "ईरान ऐतिहासिक रूप से भारतीय बासमती के लिए एक **स्तंभ बाज़ार** रहा है। हालांकि, मौजूदा **आंतरिक उथल-पुथल** ने **व्यापार चैनलों** को बाधित किया है, **भुगतान** धीमे किए हैं और **खरीदारों के भरोसे** को नुकसान पहुंचाया है।"

- "Importers have conveyed their inability to honour **existing commitments** and remit **payments to India**, creating **uncertainty** for exporters," the IREF said.
  IREF ने कहा, "आयातकों ने **मौजूदा प्रतिबद्धताओं** को निभाने और **भारत को भुगतान** भेजने में अपनी असमर्थता जताई है, जिससे निर्यातकों के लिए **अनिश्चितता** पैदा हो गई है।"

Insurance Foreign Direct Investment, coming a full circle

GS III: Economy

K. Nitya Kalyani

In 1991, alongside India's big liberalisation push and the new industrial policy, planning began for reform of the insurance industry which was then a government monopoly. In 1993, a committee was set up to recommend changes.

The core recommendation of the Report of the Committee for Reforms in the Insurance Sector (1994), headed by Dr R. N. Malhotra, former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, was to allow private and foreign capital into the industry in a phased manner. Last month, the Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha (Amendment of Insurance Laws) Act, 2025, was passed allowing 100% foreign direct investment (FDI). With that, the industry has come a full circle in terms of ownership.

When the Malhotra Committee Report (MCR) was submitted, the very idea of private or foreign capital was the subject of intense debate. It was loudly decried as the beginning of the end of many things, including infrastructure investments and government social welfare spending supported by the investment portfolio of insurers, particularly the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC).

For the better part of the 1990s, it was a case of much talk and little - often aborted - action. Each government tabled a Bill to liberalise insurance, and the Opposition failed to support it. When the government changed, it was action replay, but with players reversing roles.

IRA set up
A 'voluntary' body called the Insurance Regulatory Authority (IRA) was created and it set about hearing opinions from various sections of business and society and studying insurance regulations in other countries to work out India-specific rules for the future.

Stakeholders in the insurance space from within India and abroad met frequently at conferences and seminars organised by the three apex industry associations to discuss liberalisation of the industry.

New entrants into this circle were reporters like myself, tasked with covering an industry that was just beginning to emerge in public consciousness as a business rather than a social service like business activity operating in a black box.

As an insider - having worked in the insurance industry earlier and later in the financial press - I could sense both excitement and hope among those who wanted in, and resentment, confusion and despair among the incumbents. There was anticipation among some insurance company employees too, because new companies offered lucrative jobs and high-flying careers outside the bounds of the public sector.

As it happened then
The Indian insurance industry had been nationalised for various historical reasons, and this was done in two instalments. Life insurance was taken over in 1956, leading to the monolithic LIC. General insurance was nationalised in 1972, consolidated into four companies with equal business sizes, and the General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC) was created as a holding company.

These new companies had exemplary technical training, structured professional qualification systems and well-defined management systems - including accounts, audit and internal audit. Their transparent recruitment, promotion and posting/transfer policies became more refined over time.

With its strong focus on training in a business replete with technicalities, legal frameworks and deep domain knowledge across industries - from aviation to agriculture, manufacturing to healthcare and transportation and the vast area of investment of all kinds - the general insurance sector became hunting ground for talent to staff and lead a significant number of insurance companies in the Gulf and several Asian countries.

A similar story unfolded in life insurance, with an important addition. Indian actuaries of pre-LIC vintage suddenly found themselves with only one employer. Many emigrated and went on to excel in independent practice and senior actuarial roles across the world.

Liberalisation in the 1990s promised to recreate such opportunities within India.

MCR or IRA notwithstanding, insurance reforms waited for over half a decade until the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) Act, 1999, was passed. It crystallised the framework for the industry going forward.

Not just FDI
Apart from private capital, both Indian and foreign, other key objectives included more products, better customer service, higher penetration and density and expanded coverage in rural areas and among economically weaker sections. Each of these areas remains a work in progress, with varying degrees of success after 25 years.

How much is too much?
There are certainly more insurance products today, offered by over 60 insurance companies. They are innovative, push the envelope and offer solutions to many known problems, some unknown problems and some that probably do not really exist!

In fact, the industry may just have over performed here and there are too many policies now, making decision-making extremely challenging for customers since too many options means no options. With quantity, clarity is lost and the time may be ripe to simplify and streamline offerings, keeping sophisticated insurance covers for select, corporate segments or high net worth individuals rather than for everyday motor or home insurance policies for the common man.

On the subject of streamlining, simplifying policy wordings would go a long way in making access to insurance more realistic and meaningful for the common man.

Penetration, density
Insurance penetration and insurance density are two important metrics of the industry's development. They are also markers of a country's economic development, indicating adequacy or otherwise of social security and financial protection in the context of death of earning members of families, hospitalisation expenses, post-retirement living expenses or loss of property.

Insurance penetration is the percentage of insurance premiums to GDP and insurance density is the ratio of premium to population, in other words, per capita premium.

A comparison of these parameters for India between around 1998-1999 to 2024-25 is eye-opening. Statistics show that both have grown over this period, but have a long way to catch up with other countries.

Insurance penetration in 1999 was 1.93% of the GDP of ₹1.15 lakh crore. After about a quarter century of liberalisation, in 2024-25, it grew to 3.7% of the GDP of ₹330.68 lakh crore. That is, penetration has almost doubled as a percentage of GDP, which has itself grown over 17 times.

Similarly, when it comes to insurance density, in 1999, the per capita spend on insurance (life and non-life together) was $8.5 (about ₹432), and the population then was 99.1 crore. In 2024-25 it was about $97 per capita (about ₹9,000), the population being 144 crore.

The world's average insurance penetration for 2024 was around 7.3% in 2024 and density was $943, showing that India has a way to go yet.

Delight & despair
Customer service was a sore point during the public sector monopoly era. After liberalisation, competitive forces, aided by technology and growing awareness have transformed this parameter. Whether it is sufficient remains an open question, given the rise in complaints, their nature and the rate at which they are resolved. Having said that, the awareness would also be contributing to willingness to raise complaints and disputes.

There are many channels for insurance grievances. The insurance company itself, IRDAI's website where customers can complain simultaneously overseen by the regulator, the IRDAI initiated insurance portal Bima Bharosa, and the most formal forum, the quasi-judicial Insurance Ombudsman. While some channels saw as much as a 20% increase in complaints compared to last year, some had the same volumes. However, pendency seems to have grown alarmingly, almost doubling in many channels. A significant portion of the complaints related to claims and mis-selling.

With time and technology, customer awareness grows. And with it, expectations of better service. Alongside customer delight where claims are settled in a faceless environment and without follow ups, insurance customers have also become more familiar with the frustration of never being able to speak to a real human being when policy service is actually needed.

An important focus area of insurance reforms, insurance for weaker sections, has been a relatively high-profile success. This is mainly due to mass health insurance schemes for below-poverty-line families, enthusiastically adopted by State governments as a social welfare measure. Ayushman Bharat, the Centre's flagship mass health insurance scheme, was largely inspired by programmes such as Andhra Pradesh's Arogyasri and Tamil Nadu's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme. Ayushman Bharat covers over 55 crore beneficiaries, who earlier did not have this ₹5 lakh financial security against illness and hospitalisation. Add to this about 16 crore beneficiary families of various State government run mass insurance schemes.

These schemes have glaring gaps in execution and operation, but are reportedly learning to fix them and correct errors as they go along.

It does follow that significant awareness about insurance is being created at this socio-economic level and this could well be seeping into other walks of life.

Apart from companies, regulators and consumers, an important stakeholder that drives progress in any industry is the press.

Much more coverage of insurance, as a financial product and as one of the country's most impactful financial industries, is yet to come of age in India. It must begin with deeper homework, a study of technicalities of the subject and the market, sharper questions to the industry and regulatory agencies and the ability to recognise whether the answers offered are sufficient and truly appropriate.

(The writer is a business journalist focusing n insurance & corporate history)

Lot to cover: Much more coverage of insurance is yet to come of age in India. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

मल्होत्रा, **भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक** के पूर्व **गवर्नर** ने की, उद्योग में **निजी और विदेशी पूंजी** को **चरणबद्ध तरीके** से अनुमति देने की थी।

- Last month, the **Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha (Amendment of Insurance Laws) Act, 2025**, was passed allowing **100% foreign direct investment (FDI)**.
  पिछले महीने, **सबका बीमा सबकी रक्षा (बीमा क़ानून संशोधन) अधिनियम, 2025** पारित किया गया, जिसमें **100% विदेशी प्रत्यक्ष निवेश (FDI)** की अनुमति दी गई।

- With that, the industry has come a **full circle** in terms of **ownership**.
  इसके साथ ही, **स्वामित्व** के संदर्भ में उद्योग ने **पूर्ण चक्र** पूरा कर लिया।

- When the **Malhotra Committee Report (MCR)** was submitted, the very idea of **private or foreign capital** was the subject of **intense debate**.
  जब **मल्होत्रा समिति रिपोर्ट (MCR)** प्रस्तुत की गई, तब **निजी या विदेशी पूंजी** का विचार ही **तीव्र बहस** का विषय था।

- It was loudly decried as the beginning of the end of many things, including **infrastructure investments** and **government social welfare spending** supported by the **investment portfolio of insurers**, particularly the **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)**.
  इसे कई चीज़ों के अंत की शुरुआत के रूप में कड़े शब्दों में नकारा गया, जिनमें **अवसंरचना निवेश** और **सरकारी सामाजिक कल्याण व्यय** शामिल थे, जिन्हें बीमाकर्ताओं के **निवेश पोर्टफोलियो**, विशेष रूप से **भारतीय जीवन बीमा निगम (LIC)**, का समर्थन प्राप्त था।

- For the better part of the **1990s**, it was a case of much talk and little – often **aborted – action**.
  1990 के दशक के अधिकांश समय में, यह बहुत चर्चा और बहुत कम – अक्सर **अधूरी – कार्रवाई** का मामला रहा।

- Each government tabled a **Bill** to liberalise insurance, and the **Opposition** failed to support it.
  प्रत्येक सरकार ने बीमा उदारीकरण के लिए एक **विधेयक** पेश किया, और **विपक्ष** उसका समर्थन करने में विफल रहा।

- When the government changed, it was **action replay**, but with players **reversing roles**.
  जब सरकार बदली, तो वही **कार्रवाई दोहराई गई**, लेकिन भूमिकाएँ **उलट** गईं।

IRA set up
IRA की स्थापना

- A '**voluntary**' body called the **Insurance Regulatory Authority (IRA)** was created and it set about hearing opinions from various sections of business and society and studying insurance regulations in other countries to work out **India-specific rules** for the future.
  बीमा नियामक प्राधिकरण (IRA) नामक एक '**स्वैच्छिक**' निकाय बनाया गया, जिसने व्यवसाय और समाज के विभिन्न वर्गों से राय सुनना शुरू किया और अन्य देशों के बीमा नियमों का अध्ययन कर भविष्य के लिए **भारत-विशिष्ट नियम** तैयार करने का प्रयास किया।

- Stakeholders in the insurance space from within India and abroad met frequently at **conferences and seminars** organised by the **three apex industry associations** to discuss **liberalisation of the industry**.
  भारत और विदेश से बीमा क्षेत्र के हितधारक **तीन शीर्ष उद्योग संघों** द्वारा आयोजित **सम्मेलनों और सेमिनारों** में अक्सर मिलते रहे ताकि **उद्योग के उदारीकरण** पर चर्चा की जा सके।

- New entrants into this circle were **reporters like myself**, tasked with covering an industry that was just beginning to emerge in public consciousness as a **business** rather than a **social service** like business activity operating in a **black box**.
  इस दायरे में नए प्रवेशकर्ता **मेरे जैसे पत्रकार** थे, जिन्हें ऐसे उद्योग को कवर करने का काम सौंपा गया था जो सार्वजनिक चेतना में **व्यवसाय** के रूप में उभरना शुरू कर रहा था, न कि **सामाजिक सेवा** जैसी **ब्लैक बॉक्स** में चलने वाली गतिविधि के रूप में।

- As an **insider** – having worked in the insurance industry earlier and later in the **financial press** – I could sense both **excitement and hope** among those who wanted in, and **resentment, confusion and despair** among the incumbents.
  एक **अंदरूनी व्यक्ति** के रूप में – जिसने पहले बीमा उद्योग में और बाद में **वित्तीय प्रेस** में काम किया – मैं प्रवेश चाहने वालों में **उत्साह और आशा**, और मौजूदा कर्मचारियों में **आक्रोश, भ्रम और निराशा** महसूस कर सकता था।

- There was **anticipation** among some insurance company employees too, because new companies **offered lucrative jobs** and **high-flying careers** outside the bounds of the **public**

sector.

कुछ बीमा कंपनी कर्मचारियों में भी **उत्सुकता** थी, क्योंकि नई कंपनियाँ **आकर्षक नौकरियाँ** और **सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र** की सीमाओं से बाहर **उच्च उड़ान वाले करियर** प्रदान कर रही थीं।

- **As it happened then**
  उस समय क्या हुआ
- The **Indian insurance industry** had been **nationalised** for various historical reasons, and this was done in **two instalments**.
  भारतीय बीमा उद्योग को विभिन्न ऐतिहासिक कारणों से **राष्ट्रीयकृत** किया गया था, और यह **दो चरणों** में किया गया।
- **Life insurance** was taken over in **1956**, leading to the monolithic **LIC**.
  जीवन बीमा को **1956** में अधिग्रहित किया गया, जिससे विशाल **LIC** अस्तित्व में आई।
- **General insurance** was nationalised in **1972**, consolidated into **four companies** with equal business sizes, and the **General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC)** was created as a **holding company**.
  सामान्य बीमा को **1972** में राष्ट्रीयकृत किया गया, समान व्यवसाय आकार वाली **चार कंपनियों** में समेकित किया गया, और **भारतीय सामान्य बीमा निगम (GIC)** को **होल्डिंग कंपनी** के रूप में बनाया गया।
- These new companies had **exemplary technical training**, **structured professional qualification systems** and **well-defined management systems** – including **accounts, audit and internal audit**.
  इन नई कंपनियों में **उत्कृष्ट तकनीकी प्रशिक्षण, संरचित पेशेवर योग्यता प्रणालियाँ** और **सुस्पष्ट प्रबंधन प्रणालियाँ** थीं – जिनमें **लेखा, ऑडिट और आंतरिक ऑडिट** शामिल थे।
- Their **transparent recruitment, promotion and posting/transfer policies** became more **refined** over time.
  उनकी **पारदर्शी भर्ती, पदोन्नति और पोस्टिंग/स्थानांतरण नीतियाँ** समय के साथ अधिक **परिष्कृत** होती गईं।
- With its strong focus on **training** in a business replete with **technicalities, legal frameworks and deep domain knowledge** across industries – from **aviation to agriculture, manufacturing to healthcare and transportation** and the vast area of **investment** of all kinds – the **general insurance sector** became **hunting ground for talent** to staff and lead a significant number of insurance companies in the **Gulf and several Asian countries**.
  तकनीकी पहलुओं, कानूनी ढाँचों और गहन डोमेन ज्ञान से भरपूर व्यवसाय में **प्रशिक्षण** पर मजबूत ध्यान के साथ – **विमानन से कृषि, विनिर्माण से स्वास्थ्य सेवा और परिवहन** तथा सभी प्रकार के **निवेश** के विशाल क्षेत्र तक – **सामान्य बीमा क्षेत्र प्रतिभा का शिकार क्षेत्र** बन गया, जिसने **खाड़ी और कई एशियाई देशों** में अनेक बीमा कंपनियों को स्टाफ और नेतृत्व प्रदान किया।
- A similar story unfolded in **life insurance**, with an important addition.
  जीवन बीमा में भी इसी तरह की कहानी सामने आई, एक महत्वपूर्ण जोड़ के साथ।
- Indian **actuaries** of pre-LIC vintage suddenly found themselves with **only one employer**.
  LIC से पहले के दौर के भारतीय **एक्चुअरीज़** अचानक खुद को **केवल एक नियोक्ता** के साथ पाते थे।
- Many **emigrated** and went on to excel in **independent practice** and **senior actuarial roles** across the world.
  कई लोग **विदेश चले गए** और दुनिया भर में **स्वतंत्र प्रैक्टिस** और **वरिष्ठ एक्चुअरियल भूमिकाओं** में उत्कृष्ट प्रदर्शन किया।
- **Liberalisation in the 1990s** promised to recreate such opportunities within **India**.
  1990 के दशक का उदारीकरण भारत के भीतर ऐसी ही अवसरों को पुनः सृजित करने का वादा करता था।
- **MCR or IRA notwithstanding**, insurance reforms waited for over **half a decade** until the **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) Act, 1999**, was passed.
  MCR या IRA के बावजूद, बीमा सुधारों को **आधे दशक से अधिक** प्रतीक्षा करनी पड़ी, जब तक कि **बीमा नियामक और विकास प्राधिकरण (IRDA) अधिनियम, 1999** पारित नहीं हुआ।
- It **crystallised the framework** for the industry going forward.
  इसने आगे के लिए उद्योग के **ढाँचे को स्पष्ट रूप** दिया।

Not just FDI
केवल FDI ही नहीं

- Apart from **private capital**, both **Indian and foreign**, other key objectives included **more products, better customer service, higher penetration and density** and **expanded**

coverage in **rural areas** and among **economically weaker sections**.
 निजी पूंजी, भारतीय और विदेशी दोनों के अलावा, अन्य प्रमुख उद्देश्यों में **अधिक उत्पाद**, **बेहतर ग्राहक सेवा**, **उच्च पैठ और घनत्व** तथा **ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों** और **आर्थिक रूप से कमजोर वर्गों** में **विस्तारित कवरेज** शामिल थे।

*   Each of these areas remains a **work in progress**, with **varying degrees of success** after **25 years**.
 इनमें से प्रत्येक क्षेत्र **कार्य प्रगति पर** बना हुआ है, और **25 वर्षों** के बाद **विभिन्न स्तर की सफलता** देखी गई है।

How much is too much?
 कितना अधिक बहुत अधिक है?

*   There are certainly **more insurance products today**, offered by **over 60 insurance companies**.
 आज निश्चित रूप से **अधिक बीमा उत्पाद** हैं, जिन्हें **60 से अधिक बीमा कंपनियाँ** पेश कर रही हैं।
*   They are **innovative**, **push the envelope** and offer **solutions** to many **known problems**, some **unknown problems** and some that probably **do not really exist!**
 वे **नवोन्मेषी** हैं, **सीमाएँ आगे बढ़ाते हैं** और कई **ज्ञात समस्याओं**, कुछ **अज्ञात समस्याओं** और कुछ ऐसी समस्याओं के **समाधान** प्रदान करते हैं जो शायद **वास्तव में मौजूद ही नहीं** हैं!
*   In fact, the industry may just have **over performed** here and there are **too many policies now**, making **decision-making extremely challenging** for customers since **too many options means no options**.
 वास्तव में, उद्योग ने शायद यहाँ **अति-प्रदर्शन** किया है और अब **बहुत अधिक पॉलिसियाँ** हैं, जिससे ग्राहकों के लिए **निर्णय लेना अत्यंत चुनौतीपूर्ण** हो गया है क्योंकि **बहुत अधिक विकल्प** का अर्थ है **कोई विकल्प नहीं**।
*   With **quantity**, **clarity is lost** and the time may be ripe to **simplify and streamline offerings**, keeping **sophisticated insurance covers** for select, **corporate segments** or **high net worth individuals** rather than for everyday **motor or home insurance policies** for the **common man**.
 मात्रा के साथ **स्पष्टता खो जाती है** और समय आ गया है कि **प्रस्तावों को सरल और सुव्यवस्थित** किया जाए, और **उन्नत बीमा कवर** को चुनिंदा **कॉर्पोरेट सेगमेंट** या **उच्च निवल मूल्य वाले व्यक्तियों** तक सीमित रखा जाए, न कि **सामान्य व्यक्ति** के लिए रोज़मर्रा की **मोटर या होम बीमा पॉलिसियों** में।
*   On the subject of **streamlining**, **simplifying policy wordings** would go a long way in making **access to insurance** more **realistic and meaningful** for the **common man**.
 सरलीकरण के विषय में, **पॉलिसी की भाषा को सरल बनाना** सामान्य व्यक्ति के लिए **बीमा तक पहुँच** को अधिक **व्यावहारिक और अर्थपूर्ण** बनाने में बहुत मदद करेगा।

Penetration, density
 पैठ, घनत्व

*   **Insurance penetration** and **insurance density** are two important **metrics** of the industry's **development**.
 बीमा पैठ और **बीमा घनत्व** उद्योग के **विकास** के दो महत्वपूर्ण **मापदंड** हैं।
*   They are also **markers** of a country's **economic development**, indicating **adequacy or otherwise of social security and financial protection** in the context of **death of earning members of families**, **hospitalisation expenses**, **post-retirement living expenses** or **loss of property**.
 ये किसी देश के **आर्थिक विकास** के भी **संकेतक** हैं, जो **परिवार के कमाने वाले सदस्य की मृत्यु**, अस्पताल खर्च, **सेवानिवृत्ति के बाद के जीवन खर्च** या संपत्ति की हानि के संदर्भ में **सामाजिक सुरक्षा और वित्तीय संरक्षण** की **पर्याप्तता या कमी** को दर्शाते हैं।
*   **Insurance penetration** is the **percentage of insurance premiums to GDP** and **insurance density** is the **ratio of premium to population**, in other words, **per capita premium**.
 बीमा पैठ GDP के अनुपात में बीमा प्रीमियम का प्रतिशत है और **बीमा घनत्व** जनसंख्या के अनुपात में प्रीमियम, अर्थात **प्रति व्यक्ति प्रीमियम** है।
*   A comparison of these parameters for **India** between around **1998-1999 to 2024-25** is **eye-opening**.
 1998-1999 से 2024-25 के बीच **भारत** के लिए इन मापदंडों की तुलना **आँखें खोलने वाली** है।

- Statistics show that both have **grown over this period**, but have a **long way to catch up** with other countries.
  आँकड़े दिखाते हैं कि दोनों इस अवधि में **बढ़े हैं**, लेकिन अन्य देशों की तुलना में **अभी लंबा रास्ता तय करना बाकी** है।

- **Insurance penetration** in 1999 was **1.93% of the GDP** of **₹1.15 lakh crore**.
  1999 में बीमा पैठ **₹1.15 लाख करोड़** के **GDP** का **1.93%** थी।

- After about a **quarter century of liberalisation**, in 2024-25, it grew to **3.7% of the GDP** of **₹330.68 lakh crore**.
  लगभग **एक चौथाई सदी के उदारीकरण** के बाद, 2024-25 में यह **₹330.68 लाख करोड़** के **GDP** का **3.7%** हो गई।

- That is, penetration has **almost doubled** as a percentage of GDP, which has itself **grown over 17 times**.
  अर्थात, GDP के प्रतिशत के रूप में पैठ **लगभग दोगुनी** हो गई है, जबकि GDP स्वयं **17 गुना से अधिक** बढ़ चुका है।

- Similarly, when it comes to **insurance density**, in 1999, the **per capita spend on insurance** (life and non-life together) was **$8.5 (about ₹432)**, and the **population** then was **99.1 crore**.
  इसी प्रकार, **बीमा घनत्व** के संदर्भ में, **1999** में **बीमा पर प्रति व्यक्ति खर्च** (जीवन और गैर-जीवन मिलाकर) **$8.5 (लगभग ₹432)** था, और उस समय **जनसंख्या 99.1 करोड़** थी।

- In **2024-25** it was about **$97 per capita (about ₹9,000)**, the **population** being **144 crore**.
  2024-25 में यह लगभग **$97 प्रति व्यक्ति (लगभग ₹9,000)** था, और **जनसंख्या 144 करोड़** थी।

- The **world's average insurance penetration** for 2024 was around **7.3%** in 2024 and **density** was **$943**, showing that **India has a way to go yet**.
  2024 के लिए **विश्व औसत बीमा पैठ** लगभग **7.3%** थी और **घनत्व $943** था, जो दर्शाता है कि **भारत को अभी और आगे जाना** है।

Delight & despair
संतोष और निराशा

- **Customer service** was a **sore point** during the **public sector monopoly era**.
  सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के एकाधिकार काल में **ग्राहक सेवा** एक **दुखद बिंदु** थी।

- After **liberalisation**, **competitive forces**, aided by **technology** and **growing awareness** have **transformed** this parameter.
  उदारीकरण के बाद, **प्रतिस्पर्धी शक्तियों**, **तकनीक** और **बढ़ती जागरूकता** की सहायता से इस मापदंड में **परिवर्तन** आया है।

- Whether it is **sufficient** remains an **open question**, given the **rise in complaints**, their **nature** and the **rate** at which they are **resolved**.
  क्या यह **पर्याप्त** है, यह **खुला प्रश्न** बना हुआ है, क्योंकि **शिकायतों में वृद्धि**, उनकी **प्रकृति** और उनके **निपटान की दर** को देखा जाए।

- Having said that, the **awareness** would also be contributing to **willingness to raise complaints and disputes**.
  यह भी कहा जा सकता है कि **जागरूकता शिकायतें और विवाद उठाने की इच्छा** में भी योगदान दे रही होगी।

- There are **many channels** for **insurance grievances**.
  बीमा शिकायतों के लिए **कई माध्यम** हैं।

- The **insurance company itself**, **IRDAI's website** where customers can complain simultaneously overseen by the **regulator**, the **IRDAI initiated insurance portal Bima Bharosa**, and the most formal forum, the **quasi-judicial Insurance Ombudsman**.
  बीमा कंपनी स्वयं, **IRDA की वेबसाइट** जहाँ ग्राहक शिकायत कर सकते हैं और जिसे **नियामक** द्वारा देखा जाता है, **IRDA द्वारा शुरू किया गया बीमा पोर्टल बीमा भरोसा**, और सबसे औपचारिक मंच, **अर्ध-न्यायिक बीमा लोकपाल**।

- While some channels saw as much as a **20% increase in complaints** compared to last year, some had the **same volumes**.
  जहाँ कुछ माध्यमों में पिछले वर्ष की तुलना में **20% तक शिकायतों में वृद्धि** देखी गई, वहीं कुछ में **समान मात्रा** रही।

- However, **pendency** seems to have **grown alarmingly**, almost **doubling** in many channels.
  हालाँकि, **लंबित मामलों** में **चिंताजनक वृद्धि** दिखती है, कई माध्यमों में यह लगभग **दोगुनी** हो गई है।
- A **significant portion** of the complaints related to **claims and mis-selling**.
  शिकायतों का एक **महत्वपूर्ण हिस्सा दावों और मिस-सेलिंग** से संबंधित था।
- With **time and technology**, **customer awareness grows**.
  समय और तकनीक के साथ **ग्राहक जागरूकता** बढ़ती है।
- And with it, **expectations of better service**.
  और इसके साथ **बेहतर सेवा की अपेक्षाएँ** भी।
- Alongside **customer delight** where claims are settled in a **faceless environment** and without **follow ups**, insurance customers have also become more familiar with the **frustration** of never being able to **speak to a real human being** when **policy service** is actually needed.
  जहाँ एक ओर **ग्राहक संतोष** है, जब दावे **बिना चेहरे के वातावरण** में और बिना **फॉलो-अप** के निपट जाते हैं, वहीं बीमा ग्राहक उस **निराशा** से भी अधिक परिचित हो गए हैं जब **पॉलिसी सेवा** की वास्तव में आवश्यकता होने पर **किसी वास्तविक इंसान से बात** नहीं हो पाती।
- An important focus area of insurance reforms, **insurance for weaker sections**, has been a relatively **high-profile success**.
  बीमा सुधारों का एक महत्वपूर्ण फोकस क्षेत्र, **कमजोर वर्गों के लिए बीमा**, अपेक्षाकृत **उच्च-प्रोफ़ाइल सफलता** रहा है।
- This is mainly due to **mass health insurance schemes** for **below-poverty-line families**, enthusiastically adopted by **State governments** as a **social welfare measure**.
  यह मुख्य रूप से **गरीबी रेखा से नीचे के परिवारों** के लिए **सामूहिक स्वास्थ्य बीमा योजनाओं** के कारण है, जिन्हें **राज्य सरकारों** ने **सामाजिक कल्याण उपाय** के रूप में उत्साहपूर्वक अपनाया।
- **Ayushman Bharat**, the **Centre's flagship mass health insurance scheme**, was largely inspired by programmes such as **Andhra Pradesh's Arogyasri** and **Tamil Nadu's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme**.
  आयुष्मान भारत, केंद्र की प्रमुख **सामूहिक स्वास्थ्य बीमा योजना**, काफी हद तक **आंध्र प्रदेश की आरोग्यश्री** और **तमिलनाडु की व्यापक स्वास्थ्य बीमा योजना** जैसे कार्यक्रमों से प्रेरित थी।
- **Ayushman Bharat** covers over **55 crore beneficiaries**, who earlier did not have this **₹5 lakh financial security** against **illness and hospitalisation**.
  आयुष्मान भारत 55 करोड़ से अधिक लाभार्थियों को कवर करता है, जिनके पास पहले **बीमारी और अस्पताल में भर्ती** के विरुद्ध **₹5 लाख की वित्तीय सुरक्षा** नहीं थी।
- Add to this about **16 crore beneficiary families** of various **State government run mass insurance schemes**.
  इसके अलावा विभिन्न **राज्य सरकारों द्वारा संचालित सामूहिक बीमा योजनाओं** के लगभग **16 करोड़ लाभार्थी परिवार** भी शामिल हैं।
- These schemes have **glaring gaps in execution and operation**, but are reportedly learning to **fix them and correct errors** as they go along.
  इन योजनाओं में **कार्यान्वयन और संचालन में स्पष्ट कमियाँ** हैं, लेकिन बताया जाता है कि वे चलते-चलते **उन्हें ठीक करना और त्रुटियाँ सुधारना** सीख रही हैं।
- It does follow that **significant awareness about insurance** is being created at this **socio-economic level** and this could well be **seeping into other walks of life**.
  इससे यह निष्कर्ष निकलता है कि इस **सामाजिक-आर्थिक स्तर** पर बीमा के बारे में **महत्वपूर्ण जागरूकता** बन रही है और यह **जीवन के अन्य क्षेत्रों** में भी प्रवेश कर सकती है।
- Apart from **companies, regulators and consumers**, an important stakeholder that drives progress in any industry is the **press**.
  कंपनियों, नियामकों और उपभोक्ताओं के अलावा, किसी भी उद्योग में प्रगति को आगे बढ़ाने वाला एक महत्वपूर्ण हितधारक **प्रेस** है।
- Much more **coverage of insurance**, as a **financial product** and as one of the country's most **impactful financial industries**, is yet to **come of age** in India.
  वित्तीय उत्पाद के रूप में और देश के सबसे **प्रभावशाली वित्तीय उद्योगों** में से एक के रूप में **बीमा का व्यापक कवरेज** भारत में अभी **परिपक्व** होना बाकी है।
- It must begin with **deeper homework**, a **study of technicalities of the subject and the market**, **sharper questions** to the industry and **regulatory agencies** and the ability to **recognise whether the answers offered are sufficient and truly appropriate**.

यह **गहन तैयारी**, **विषय और बाज़ार की तकनीकी समझ का अध्ययन**, उद्योग और **नियामक एजेंसियों से तेज़ प्रश्न**, और यह पहचानने की क्षमता से शुरू होना चाहिए कि दिए गए उत्तर **पर्याप्त और वास्तव में उपयुक्त** हैं या नहीं।

GS Paper III: S&T,	
TOPICS COVERED	**14 January 2026**
1.	**What an edible insects stall revealed about acceptance, 'normal' food** खाद्य कीटों के स्टॉल ने स्वीकृति और 'सामान्य' भोजन के बारे में क्या बताया
2.	**What is the NASA Artemis II mission?** नासा का आर्टेमिस II मिशन क्या है?
3.	**India must focus on AI and its environmental impact** भारत को एआई और उसके पर्यावरणीय प्रभाव पर ध्यान केंद्रित करना चाहिए

What an edible insects stall revealed about acceptance, 'normal' food

Despite their nutritional and environmental benefits, people are increasingly moving away from insect-based foods; urbanisation has created both physical and cultural distance from such practices; many younger generations that have grown up or settled in cities are often unaware that insects are eaten across several parts of India

GS III: S&T

Sahanashree R.
BENGALURU

Why does the idea of eating insects provoke discomfort, even before taste or nutrition enters the conversation? At an edible insects stall during a food mela at the Science Gallery, Bengaluru, this question surfaced repeatedly as visitors negotiated curiosity, disgust, and the boundaries of what they considered "normal" food.

Many assumed they were encountering a foreign idea. "This is eaten in other countries, right?" was a common question at the stall, curated under the exhibition theme 'Calorie'. Few realised that eating insects has long been part of food cultures within India itself.

Entomophagy, the practice of eating insects, is often imagined as something that happens elsewhere, outside India. Yet insects have been consumed across several Indian States for generations. This is particularly visible in parts of Northeast India, such as Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh, where insects are eaten seasonally and sold in markets like Dimapur's Mava Market.

At the stall, visitors were offered cricket cookies, chilli garlic crickets, and fried silkworms. Curiosity often preceded commitment: nearly 60% of those who tasted the insects were trying for the first time. For many, the experience was marked by uncertainty followed by surprise. "It was my first time eating insects, so I didn't know what to expect," said a student who tried the fried silkworms. "But it turned out to be a good experience."

Taste makes a difference

Taste, more than curiosity, seemed to shift perception. One visitor described the silkworm as tasting "like overcooked kidney beans", while another, who tried both chilli garlic crickets and silkworms, noted the contrast clearly: "The cricket had more flavour. The silkworm had a more eggy texture."

Beyond perception, insects are often framed as an efficient source of calories and protein in a world facing growing food demands. As populations increase and food systems strain under climate and resource pressures, edible insects are frequently cited as a sustainable alternative protein source.

Many insect species are rich in protein, vitamins and micronutrients, with a much higher proportion of their body mass being edible, around 80%, compared to about 55% for poultry. They also require significantly less land, water and feed to produce the same amount of protein. For instance, crickets need far fewer resources than conventional livestock such as sheep or broiler chickens, making them an efficient source of protein from a production standpoint.

Yet despite these nutritional and

Protein source: Entomophagy, the practice of eating insects, is often imagined as something that happens elsewhere, outside India. Yet insects have been consumed across several Indian States for generations. SAHANASHREE R.

Insects are often framed as an efficient source of calories and protein in a world facing growing food demands; as populations increase and food systems strain under climate and resource pressures, edible insects are frequently cited as a sustainable alternative protein source

environmental benefits and despite insects being part of many food cultures, people are increasingly moving away from them. Urbanisation has created both physical and cultural distance from such practices. Many younger generations who have grown up or settled in cities are often unaware that insects are eaten across several parts of India, sometimes even within their own home States.

Distance and disconnect

During conversations at the stall, insect-eating was frequently framed as something "indigenous" acknowledged but distanced. It was seen as belonging to rural communities rather than to urban food cultures. In this framing, eating insects became less about nutrition and more about class: it did not fit into dominant ideas of modern, aspirational food.

Ironically, in the regions where these practices continue, insect-based foods are neither novel nor marginal. They are seasonal, familiar, and often tied to specific occasions and generations. Yet from an urban lens, these foods are frequently dismissed as backward,

revealing how ideas of progress shape what is considered acceptable to eat.

Some visitors recognised this disconnect. "People should start overlooking the typical stereotypes and experiment more," said a working professional, reflecting on how discomfort often precedes experience. Others framed the hesitation against sustainability concerns. "It's a sustainable protein source that is cost-effective to produce and with low environmental impact," noted another visitor, pointing to the gap between environmental awareness and everyday food choices.

Even among visitors who were open to the idea, acceptance was often accompanied by hesitation. Questions emerged not just about taste or sustainability, but about sufficiency and substitution. "I'm wondering how filling this would be as a complete meal," one visitor said. "I don't know if it can really replace the food groups we have now."

Others echoed this caution. "I don't see it becoming a staple food," a student visitor noted, while still describing the stall as "a good initiative for public health." Alongside this, some visitors raised ethical questions about knowledge and credit. "If this practice is being promoted," one remarked, "it's important to acknowledge the communities and regions it comes from."

Low-pressure spaces

The stall did not resolve these questions; it was not meant to. Instead, it made visible the assumptions, hesitations and hierarchies that shape what we call food. It raised quieter, more uncomfortable

questions: why some foods are embraced while others are dismissed, why sustainability is easier to discuss than to practise, and why foods familiar to many communities still feel unfamiliar in urban spaces.

From my perspective, making insect-based foods more acceptable is as much about form and familiarity as it is about nutrition. At the stall, insects were intentionally offered in different formats, both ground into cookies and served whole, flavoured with garlic and chilli. Presenting insects in processed forms appeared to lower psychological barriers, allowing visitors to engage with taste and texture without the immediate discomfort often associated with whole insects. Public-facing experiments like food stalls can play an important role in this process by creating low-pressure spaces where curiosity can precede judgement.

As Priyadarsanan Dharma Rajan, who works on edible insects, noted, his lab, the Insect Biosystematics and Conservation (IBC) Laboratory at ATREE, is increasingly focusing on developing sustainable ways of rearing insects. Establishing standardised rearing protocols allows insects to be produced at scale rather than harvested from the wild, reducing pressure on natural populations while ensuring consistency, safety and nutritional quality. In this sense, changing how insects are produced may be as important as changing how they are perceived.

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THE GIST

▼ Many insect species are rich in protein, vitamins, and micronutrients, with a much higher proportion of their body mass being edible

▼ They also require significantly less land, water, and feed to produce the same amount of protein as from poultry

▼ Insect-based foods are seasonal, familiar, and often tied to specific occasions and generations in the areas where it is consumed

▼ Making insect-based foods more acceptable is as much about form and familiarity as it is about nutrition

What an edible insects stall revealed about acceptance, 'normal' food
खाद्य कीटों के स्टॉल ने स्वीकृति और 'सामान्य' भोजन के बारे में क्या बताया

- **Entomophagy**, the practice of eating insects, is often imagined as something that happens elsewhere, outside India.
  एंटोमोफैगी, यानी कीड़े खाने की प्रथा, को अक्सर भारत के बाहर की चीज़ माना जाता है।

- Yet insects have been consumed across several **Indian States** for generations.
  जबकि कई **भारतीय राज्यों** में पीढ़ियों से कीड़े खाए जाते रहे हैं।

- This is particularly visible in parts of **Northeast India**, such as **Nagaland** and **Arunachal Pradesh**, where insects are eaten seasonally and sold in markets like **Dimapur's Mava Market**.
  यह परंपरा खासतौर पर **पूर्वोत्तर भारत** के हिस्सों जैसे **नागालैंड** और **अरुणाचल प्रदेश** में दिखती है, जहां कीड़े मौसमी रूप से खाए जाते हैं और **दीमापुर के मावा मार्केट** जैसे बाजारों में बिकते हैं।

- They have a much higher proportion of their body mass being edible, around **80%**, compared to about **55%** for poultry.
  इनके शरीर का लगभग **80%** हिस्सा खाने योग्य होता है, जबकि पोल्ट्री में यह करीब **55%** होता है।

- They also require significantly less **land, water and feed** to produce the same amount of protein.
  उसी मात्रा का प्रोटीन पैदा करने के लिए इन्हें काफी कम **ज़मीन, पानी और चारे** की जरूरत होती है।

- For instance, **crickets** need far fewer resources than conventional livestock such as **sheep** or **broiler chickens**.
  उदाहरण के तौर पर **क्रिकेट्स** को **भेड़** या **ब्रॉयलर मुर्गियों** जैसे पारंपरिक पशुओं से कहीं कम संसाधन चाहिए।

- This makes them an **efficient source of protein** from a production standpoint.
  इससे वे उत्पादन के लिहाज से **प्रोटीन का प्रभावी स्रोत** बन जाते हैं।

- In this framing, eating insects became less about **nutrition** and more about **class**.
  इस दृष्टिकोण में, कीड़े खाना **पोषण** से कम और **वर्ग** से अधिक जुड़ा हुआ माना गया।

- It did not fit into dominant ideas of **modern, aspirational food**.
  यह **आधुनिक, आकांक्षी भोजन** की प्रचलित धारणा में फिट नहीं बैठता था।

- They are **seasonal**, **familiar**, and often tied to **specific occasions and generations**.
  वे **मौसमी, परिचित**, और अक्सर **विशिष्ट अवसरों और पीढ़ियों** से जुड़े होते हैं।

- Yet from an **urban lens**, these foods are frequently dismissed as **backward**.
  लेकिन **शहरी नजरिये** से इन्हें अक्सर **पिछड़ा** मानकर खारिज कर दिया जाता है।

- This reveals how ideas of **progress** shape what is considered acceptable to eat.
  यह दिखाता है कि **प्रगति** की धारणाएं तय करती हैं कि क्या खाना स्वीकार्य माना जाएगा।

Onward and moonward

Q: What is the NASA Artemis II mission?

GS III: S&T

A: Artemis II is the first crewed mission of NASA's Artemis programme. It will be the first time humans will travel to the vicinity of the moon since 1972. The 10-day flight will test the Space Launch System (SLS) rocket and the Orion spacecraft to ensure all life-support and navigation systems are safe for future lunar missions.

On January 9, NASA said the mission was in its final preparation stages. The earliest targeted launch date is February 6, 2026. NASA has also identified launch windows across February, March, and April 2026. The rocket stack is expected to be rolled out to Launch Pad 39B at the Kennedy Space Centre in mid-January for the final tests.

Artemis II has a four-person crew. The commander is Reid Wiseman; the pilot, Victor Glover; and Christina Koch and Jeremy Hansen are the mission specialists. Mr. Hansen is from the Canadian Space Agency, the rest are from NASA.

Rather than land on the moon, the crew will fly in a hybrid free-return trajectory. Specifically, after liftoff onboard the SLS, the Orion spacecraft

(From left) Astronauts Jeremy Hansen, Victor Glover, Reid Wiseman, and Christina Koch, who will be part of Artemis II. NASA

will orbit the earth twice to check life support and manual handling capabilities. Then, it will travel around 10,300 km beyond the far side of the moon, after which gravity will pull the spacecraft back towards the earth for a splashdown in the Pacific Ocean.

This mission is a critical test flight. If it is successful, NASA will greenlight Artemis III, which aims to land astronauts on the lunar South Pole.

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What is the NASA Artemis II mission?
नासा का आर्टेमिस II मिशन क्या है?

- Artemis II is the first **crewed mission** of NASA's **Artemis programme**.
आर्टेमिस II, नासा के **आर्टेमिस कार्यक्रम** का पहला **मानवयुक्त मिशन** है।

- It will be the first time humans will travel to the vicinity of the moon since **1972**.
यह **1972** के बाद पहली बार होगा जब इंसान चांद के पास तक यात्रा करेंगे।

- The **10-day flight** will test the **Space Launch System (SLS)** rocket and the **Orion spacecraft**.
यह **10 दिनों की उड़ान**, **स्पेस लॉन्च सिस्टम (SLS)** रॉकेट और **ओरियन अंतरिक्ष यान** का परीक्षण करेगी।

- It will ensure all **life-support** and **navigation systems** are safe for future lunar missions.
यह सुनिश्चित करेगा कि भविष्य के चंद्र अभियानों के लिए सभी **लाइफ-सपोर्ट** और **नेविगेशन सिस्टम** सुरक्षित हैं।

- **NASA has also identified launch windows** across **February, March, and April 2026**.
नासा ने **फरवरी, मार्च और अप्रैल 2026** के दौरान भी प्रक्षेपण की संभावित तिथियां चिन्हित की हैं।

- The rocket stack is expected to be rolled out to **Launch Pad 39B** at the **Kennedy Space Centre** in **mid-January** for the final tests.
अंतिम परीक्षणों के लिए रॉकेट को **मध्य जनवरी** में **केनेडी स्पेस सेंटर** के **लॉन्च पैड 39B** तक ले जाया जाना अपेक्षित है।

- Artemis II has a **four-person crew**.
आर्टेमिस II में **चार सदस्यीय दल** होगा।

- Rather than land on the moon, the crew will fly in a **hybrid free-return trajectory**.
चांद पर उतरने के बजाय, दल एक **हाइब्रिड फ्री-रिटर्न ट्राजेक्टरी** में उड़ान भरेगा।

- After liftoff onboard the **SLS**, the **Orion spacecraft** will orbit the earth **twice**.
SLS से प्रक्षेपण के बाद, **ओरियन अंतरिक्ष यान** पृथ्वी की **दो बार परिक्रमा** करेगा।

- Artemis III aims to land astronauts on the **lunar South Pole**.
आर्टेमिस III का लक्ष्य अंतरिक्ष यात्रियों को **चंद्रमा के दक्षिणी ध्रुव** पर उतारना है।

India must focus on AI and its environmental impact

GS III: S&T   MQB

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) takes up much discussion in sectors that range from health care to agriculture. But concerns about its impact on the environment have not attracted much discussion. According to an OECD working paper, "Measuring the Environmental Impacts of Artificial Intelligence Compute and Applications", the development of AI algorithms comes with certain environmental costs such as an increased carbon footprint which exacerbates climate change-related challenges. The report says that the global ICT industry (including hardware such as televisions) is estimated to be responsible for 1.8%-2.8% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; other calculations have a figure as high as 2.1%-3.9%.

It is worth noting that data about the carbon footprint of AI models and their use are not always authentic. A Google report (August 2025) claims that a single text AI prompt consumes electricity of only 0.24 watt-hours. What may seem to be low levels of electricity consumption has also drawn criticism for the report's incomplete and misleading conclusions.

Impact on the environment

In September 2024, an issue note by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), on the environmental impact of the full AI life cycle, said that house AI servers may utilise 4.2 billion cubic meters (bcm) to 6.6 bcm of water in 2027, leading to water scarcity. The note also refers to a study which indicates that training a single Large Language Model (LLM) can generate almost 3,00,000 kilograms of carbon emissions.

Similarly, a study, "Energy and Policy Considerations for Deep Learning in NLP" (June 2019), has assessed that the training of a single large AI model entails the emission of over 6,26,000 pounds of carbon dioxide. This is equivalent to emissions caused by five cars in

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There are several AI sustainable practices that India can adopt

their lifespan. A look at the energy consumption in the use of ChatGPT, a widely used AI virtual Assistant, helps understand how AI algorithms impact the environment and contribute towards climate change. According to a study, "Navigating New Horizons" (UNEP, July 15, 2024), any request made through ChatGPT leads to energy consumption that is 10 times more than what it would be through a Google search.

Solutions, the world versus India

In 2021, UNESCO released its "Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence", which emphasised recognising the "negative impacts of AI on societies, environment". These non-binding recommendations were adopted by around 190 countries. The United States and the European Union (EU) appear to be the prominent jurisdictions that have proposed legislation dealing with the environmental impact of AI, as the Artificial Intelligence Environmental Impacts Act of 2024 and The European Union's resolution on harmonized AI rules.

Since there are global conversations about the carbon cost of AI use and deployment, India also needs to recognise the environmental costs of developing AI models. Current discussions now on AI and climate change are on how AI can help protect the environment, but without going into the demerits of developing large AI algorithms.

The first step to address this challenge is to carry out an exercise to measure the environmental impacts of developing and deploying AI models. In India, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is mandatory as in the EIA Notification, 2006. While an EIA is often conducted to evaluate projects concerning the environment such as river water projects, its scope can be extended to include assessing the impact of development of AI algorithms on the environment.

The government could also focus on the establishment of measuring standards in order to assess AI's impact. It can be done by involving stakeholders such as tech companies that are developing large-scale AI algorithms, think tanks, and non-governmental organisations that are working toward reducing carbon footprints and mitigating other environment-related challenges. This will help in building consensus on terminology, standards, and consistent indicators and reporting requirements, ultimately leading to informed policy decisions.

Another essential exercise is data collection which can be done by deploying sustainability metrics such as GHG emissions, energy, water and natural resources consumption that are utilised by AI algorithms. Environmental costs beyond energy, such as the impacts on freshwater and land use, could also be evaluated.

As a part of disclosure standards

The government can also explore the possibility of making the environmental impact of developing and deploying AI models as part of environmental, social and governance (ESG) disclosure standards by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Security and the Securities and Exchange Board of India. It can take inspiration from the EU, as its Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) framework requires the disclosure of emissions data from data centres and high compute activities, which includes training of LLMs.

The focus should shift to including AI as a part of solutions toward global sustainability goals. There are several AI sustainable practices that can be adopted to mitigate the adverse impact of AI on the environment such as deploying pre-trained models, using renewable resources to power data centres, and reporting AI-specific estimates.

India must focus on AI and its environmental impact
भारत को एआई और उसके पर्यावरणीय प्रभाव पर ध्यान केंद्रित करना चाहिए

- The use of **Artificial Intelligence AI** takes up much discussion in sectors that range from **health care to agriculture**.
  कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता एआई का उपयोग **स्वास्थ्य सेवा से लेकर कृषि** तक के क्षेत्रों में व्यापक चर्चा का विषय बना हुआ है।
- But concerns about its impact on the **environment** have not attracted much discussion.
  लेकिन **पर्यावरण** पर इसके प्रभाव को लेकर अधिक चर्चा नहीं हुई है।
- According to an **OECD working paper**, "**Measuring the Environmental Impacts of Artificial Intelligence Compute and Applications**", the development of AI algorithms comes with certain environmental costs such as an increased **carbon footprint** which exacerbates **climate change-related challenges**.
  एक **ओईसीडी कार्यपत्र** "**Measuring the Environmental Impacts of Artificial Intelligence Compute and Applications**" के अनुसार, एआई एल्गोरिद्म के विकास के साथ कुछ पर्यावरणीय लागतें जुड़ी हैं, जैसे बढ़ता हुआ **कार्बन फुटप्रिंट**, जो **जलवायु परिवर्तन से जुड़ी चुनौतियों** को और गंभीर बनाता है।
- The report says that the global **ICT industry** including hardware such as televisions is estimated to be responsible for **1.8%–2.8%** of global **greenhouse gas GHG emissions**, while other calculations put the figure as high as **2.1%–3.9%**.
  रिपोर्ट बताती है कि वैश्विक **आईसीटी उद्योग**, जिसमें टेलीविज़न जैसे हार्डवेयर भी शामिल हैं, वैश्विक **ग्रीनहाउस गैस उत्सर्जन** के लगभग **1.8%–2.8%** के लिए जिम्मेदार है, जबकि अन्य आकलनों में यह आँकड़ा **2.1%–3.9%** तक बताया गया है।
- It is worth noting that data about the **carbon footprint of AI models** and their use are not always authentic.
  यह ध्यान देने योग्य है कि **एआई मॉडलों के कार्बन फुटप्रिंट** और उनके उपयोग से संबंधित आँकड़े हमेशा प्रामाणिक नहीं होते।
- A **Google report August 2025** claims that a single text AI prompt consumes electricity of only **0.24 watt-hours**.

एक **गूगल रिपोर्ट अगस्त 2025** का दावा है कि एक अकेला टेक्स्ट एआई प्रॉम्प्ट केवल **0.24 वॉट-घंटे** की बिजली खर्च करता है।

- What may seem to be low levels of electricity consumption has also drawn criticism for the report's **incomplete and misleading conclusions**.

  जो बिजली की खपत कम लगती है, उस पर भी रिपोर्ट के **अधूरे और भ्रामक निष्कर्षों** के लिए आलोचना हुई है।

Impact on the environment
पर्यावरण पर प्रभाव

- In **September 2024**, an issue note by the **United Nations Environment Programme UNEP**, on the environmental impact of the full AI life cycle, said that house AI servers may utilise **4.2 billion cubic meters to 6.6 bcm of water in 2027**, leading to **water scarcity**.

  सितंबर 2024 में संयुक्त राष्ट्र पर्यावरण कार्यक्रम यूएनईपी की एक नोट में कहा गया कि पूरे एआई जीवन चक्र के पर्यावरणीय प्रभाव के तहत एआई सर्वरों के लिए **2027 में 4.2 से 6.6 अरब घन मीटर** पानी की आवश्यकता हो सकती है, जिससे **जल संकट** बढ़ेगा।

- The note also refers to a study which indicates that training a single **Large Language Model LLM** can generate almost **3,00,000 kilograms of carbon emissions**.

  नोट में एक अध्ययन का भी उल्लेख है, जिसके अनुसार एक **लार्ज लैंग्वेज मॉडल एलएलएम** को प्रशिक्षित करने से लगभग **3,00,000 किलोग्राम कार्बन उत्सर्जन** हो सकता है।

- Similarly, a study "**Energy and Policy Considerations for Deep Learning in NLP**" June **2019**, has assessed that the training of a single large AI model entails the emission of over **6,26,000 pounds of carbon dioxide**.

  इसी तरह, **जून 2019** के अध्ययन "**Energy and Policy Considerations for Deep Learning in NLP**" के अनुसार, एक बड़े एआई मॉडल के प्रशिक्षण से **6,26,000 पाउंड से अधिक कार्बन डाइऑक्साइड** का उत्सर्जन होता है।

- This is equivalent to emissions caused by **five cars in their lifespan**.

  यह उनके पूरे जीवनकाल में **पाँच कारों** द्वारा किए गए उत्सर्जन के बराबर है।

- A look at the energy consumption in the use of **ChatGPT**, a widely used AI virtual assistant, helps understand how AI algorithms impact the environment and contribute towards **climate change**.

  व्यापक रूप से उपयोग किए जाने वाले एआई वर्चुअल असिस्टेंट **चैटजीपीटी** की ऊर्जा खपत पर नज़र डालने से यह समझने में मदद मिलती है कि एआई एल्गोरिद्म कैसे पर्यावरण को प्रभावित करते हैं और **जलवायु परिवर्तन** में योगदान देते हैं।

- According to a study "**Navigating New Horizons**" UNEP July 15 2024, any request made through **ChatGPT** leads to energy consumption that is **10 times more** than what it would be through a **Google search**.

  अध्ययन "**Navigating New Horizons**" यूएनईपी 15 जुलाई 2024 के अनुसार, चैटजीपीटी के माध्यम से किया गया कोई भी अनुरोध **गूगल सर्च** की तुलना में **10 गुना अधिक ऊर्जा** की खपत करता है।

Solutions, the world versus India
समाधान, विश्व बनाम भारत

- In **2021**, **UNESCO** released its **Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence**, which emphasised recognising the **negative impacts of AI on societies and the environment**.

  2021 में **यूनेस्को** ने **कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता की नैतिकता पर सिफारिश** जारी की, जिसमें **समाज और पर्यावरण पर एआई के नकारात्मक प्रभावों** को पहचानने पर ज़ोर दिया गया।

- These **non-binding recommendations** were adopted by around **190 countries**.

  इन **गैर-बाध्यकारी सिफारिशों** को लगभग **190 देशों** ने अपनाया।

- The **United States** and the **European Union EU** appear to be the prominent jurisdictions that have proposed legislation dealing with the **environmental impact of AI**, as the **Artificial Intelligence Environmental Impacts Act of 2024** and the **European Union's resolution on harmonized AI rules**.

  संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका और **यूरोपीय संघ ईयू** वे प्रमुख क्षेत्र हैं जिन्होंने **एआई के पर्यावरणीय प्रभाव से**

संबंधित कानून प्रस्तावित किए हैं, जैसे **2024 का आर्टिफ़िशियल इंटेलिजेंस एनवायरनमेंटल इम्पैक्ट्स एक्ट** और **ईयू का हार्मोनाइज्ड एआई नियमों पर प्रस्ताव**।

- Since there are global conversations about the **carbon cost of AI use and deployment**, **India** also needs to recognise the **environmental costs of developing AI models**.
  चूँकि **एआई के उपयोग और तैनाती की कार्बन लागत** पर वैश्विक चर्चा हो रही है, इसलिए **भारत** को भी **एआई मॉडल विकसित करने की पर्यावरणीय लागत** को पहचानने की आवश्यकता है।

- Current discussions now on **AI and climate change** are on how AI can help protect the environment, but without going into the **demerits of developing large AI algorithms**.
  एआई और जलवायु परिवर्तन पर वर्तमान चर्चाएँ इस बात पर केंद्रित हैं कि एआई पर्यावरण की रक्षा कैसे कर सकता है, लेकिन **बड़े एआई एल्गोरिद्म विकसित करने के नुकसान** पर ध्यान नहीं दिया जा रहा।

- The **first step** to address this challenge is to carry out an exercise to measure the **environmental impacts of developing and deploying AI models**.
  इस चुनौती से निपटने का **पहला कदम** यह है कि एआई मॉडल के विकास और तैनाती के **पर्यावरणीय प्रभावों** को मापने का अभ्यास किया जाए।

- In India, an **Environmental Impact Assessment EIA** is mandatory as in the **EIA Notification 2006**.
  भारत में **पर्यावरण प्रभाव आकलन ईआईए** को **ईआईए अधिसूचना 2006** के तहत अनिवार्य बनाया गया है।

- While an EIA is often conducted to evaluate projects concerning the environment such as **river water projects**, its scope can be extended to include assessing the **impact of development of AI algorithms on the environment**.
  जहाँ ईआईए आमतौर पर **नदी जल परियोजनाओं** जैसे पर्यावरण से जुड़े कार्यों के मूल्यांकन के लिए किया जाता है, वहीं इसका दायरा **एआई एल्गोरिद्म के विकास के पर्यावरणीय प्रभाव** के आकलन तक बढ़ाया जा सकता है।

- The government could also focus on the establishment of **measuring standards** in order to assess **AI's impact**.
  सरकार **एआई के प्रभाव** के आकलन के लिए **मापन मानकों** की स्थापना पर भी ध्यान केंद्रित कर सकती है।

- It can be done by involving stakeholders such as **tech companies**, **think tanks**, and **non-governmental organisations** working toward reducing **carbon footprints** and mitigating other **environment-related challenges**.
  यह कार्य **टेक कंपनियों**, **थिंक टैंकों** और **गैर-सरकारी संगठनों** को शामिल करके किया जा सकता है, जो **कार्बन फुटप्रिंट कम करने** और अन्य **पर्यावरणीय चुनौतियों** को कम करने पर काम कर रहे हैं।

- This will help in building **consensus on terminology, standards, consistent indicators and reporting requirements**, ultimately leading to **informed policy decisions**.
  इससे **शब्दावली, मानकों, सुसंगत संकेतकों और रिपोर्टिंग आवश्यकताओं** पर सहमति बनेगी, जो अंततः **सूचित नीति निर्णयों** तक ले जाएगी।

- Another essential exercise is **data collection**, which can be done by deploying **sustainability metrics** such as **GHG emissions, energy, water and natural resources consumption** utilised by AI algorithms.
  एक अन्य आवश्यक अभ्यास **डेटा संग्रह** है, जिसे **सततता संकेतकों** जैसे **जीएचजी उत्सर्जन, ऊर्जा, जल और प्राकृतिक संसाधनों की खपत** के माध्यम से किया जा सकता है, जिनका उपयोग एआई एल्गोरिद्म करते हैं।

- Environmental costs beyond energy, such as the impacts on **freshwater and land use**, could also be evaluated.
  ऊर्जा से परे पर्यावरणीय लागतें, जैसे **मीठे पानी और भूमि उपयोग** पर प्रभाव, का भी मूल्यांकन किया जा सकता है।

As a part of disclosure standards
प्रकटीकरण मानकों के हिस्से के रूप में

- The government can also explore the possibility of making the **environmental impact of developing and deploying AI models** as part of **environmental, social and governance ESG disclosure standards** by the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Security** and the **Securities and Exchange Board of India**.
  सरकार **कॉर्पोरेट कार्य और सुरक्षा मंत्रालय** तथा **भारतीय प्रतिभूति और विनिमय बोर्ड** द्वारा **पर्यावरण, सामाजिक और शासन ईएसजी प्रकटीकरण मानकों** के हिस्से के रूप में **एआई मॉडल के विकास और तैनाती के पर्यावरणीय प्रभाव** को शामिल करने की संभावना पर भी विचार कर सकती है।

- It can take inspiration from the **EU**, as its **Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive CSRD** framework requires the disclosure of **emissions data from data centres and high compute activities**, which includes training of **LLMs**.
  यह **ईयू** से प्रेरणा ले सकता है, क्योंकि उसके **कॉरपोरेट सस्टेनेबिलिटी रिपोर्टिंग डायरेक्टिव सीएसआरडी** ढाँचे में **डेटा सेंटर्स और उच्च कंप्यूट गतिविधियों** से होने वाले उत्सर्जन के आँकड़ों के प्रकटीकरण की आवश्यकता होती है, जिसमें **एलएलएम प्रशिक्षण** भी शामिल है।

- The focus should shift to including **AI as a part of solutions toward global sustainability goals**.
  ध्यान को **वैश्विक सततता लक्ष्यों** की दिशा में **एआई को समाधान का हिस्सा** बनाने पर केंद्रित किया जाना चाहिए।

- There are several **AI sustainable practices** that can be adopted to mitigate the adverse impact of AI on the environment such as deploying **pre-trained models**, using **renewable resources to power data centres**, and reporting **AI-specific estimates**.
  पर्यावरण पर एआई के प्रतिकूल प्रभाव को कम करने के लिए कई **एआई सतत प्रथाएँ** अपनाई जा सकती हैं, जैसे **प्री-ट्रेंड मॉडल्स** का उपयोग, **डेटा सेंटर्स को चलाने के लिए नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा संसाधन**, और **एआई-विशिष्ट आकलनों** की रिपोर्टिंग।

GS Paper III: Environment,	
TOPICS COVERED	**14 January 2026**
1.	**Uttarakhand seeks IAF's help as forest fire rages in Valley of Flowers for the fifth day** **फूलों की घाटी में पाँचवें दिन भी जंगल की आग जारी, उत्तराखंड ने IAF से मदद मांगी**

Uttarakhand seeks IAF's help as forest fire rages in Valley of Flowers for the fifth day

GS III: Environment

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

With a forest fire raging in the Valley of Flowers, a UNESCO heritage site, for the last five days, the Uttarakhand Disaster Management Department has sought the Indian Air Force's (IAF) help to douse the inferno.

Situated at an altitude of 3,300 metres above sea level in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand, the Valley of Flowers has around 600 exotic varieties of flowers.

According to the officials of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), the fire broke out in the forests of Painkhanda under the Valley of Flowers range of the Nanda Devi National Park. Due to the difficult

Situated at an altitude of 3,300 metres above sea level, the Valley of Flowers has around 600 exotic variety of flowers. FILE PHOTO

terrain and the lack of access routes, it has become difficult for firefighters to reach the area, they said.

"Under these circumstances, the State has sought support from the IAF," said Uttarakhand Disaster Management Secretary Vinod Kumar Suman.

The State authorities are

not leaving any stone unturned. "The district administration is making all efforts. The authorities have conducted a helicopter survey, and if necessary, plans have been made to pour water from helicopters into the affected area to extinguish the fire," Chamoli District Magistrate

Gaurav Kumar said.

Unusual occurrence
Experts expressed shock over the incident, as forest fires are generally reported from February to June and usually peak in May and June. "Almost no or nominal snowfall in the hills might be the reason for the incidents of forest fires being reported in early January. The snow keeps the surface wet and prevents such incidents," an SDRF official said.

Data from the Forest Survey of India stated that Uttarakhand received a high number of forest fire alerts in December 2025. The State received 1,153 forest fire alerts in 2025, which destroyed hundreds of hectares of forest land.

Uttarakhand seeks IAF's help as forest fire rages in Valley of Flowers for the fifth day
फूलों की घाटी में पाँचवें दिन भी जंगल की आग जारी, उत्तराखंड ने IAF से मदद मांगी

- Uttarakhand seeks **IAF's help** as forest fire rages in **Valley of Flowers** for the fifth day
  फूलों की घाटी में पाँचवें दिन भी जंगल की आग जारी, उत्तराखंड ने **IAF की मदद** मांगी
- With a forest fire raging in the **Valley of Flowers**, a **UNESCO heritage site**, for the last five days, the **Uttarakhand Disaster Management Department** has sought the **Indian Air Force's (IAF)** help to douse the inferno.
  पिछले पाँच दिनों से **यूनेस्को विश्व धरोहर स्थल फूलों की घाटी** में जंगल की आग जारी रहने के कारण **उत्तराखंड आपदा प्रबंधन विभाग** ने आग बुझाने के लिए **भारतीय वायुसेना (IAF)** की मदद मांगी है।
- Situated at an altitude of **3,300 metres above sea level** in the **Chamoli district of Uttarakhand**, the Valley of Flowers has around **600 exotic varieties of flowers**.
  उत्तराखंड के चमोली ज़िले में **समुद्र तल से 3,300 मीटर** की ऊँचाई पर स्थित फूलों की घाटी में लगभग **600 दुर्लभ किस्मों के फूल** पाए जाते हैं।
- According to the officials of the **State Disaster Response Force (SDRF)**, the fire broke out in the forests of **Painkhanda** under the Valley of Flowers range of the **Nanda Devi National Park**.
  राज्य आपदा प्रतिक्रिया बल (SDRF) के अधिकारियों के अनुसार, आग **नंदा देवी राष्ट्रीय उद्यान** की फूलों की घाटी रेंज के अंतर्गत **पैंखण्डा** के जंगलों में लगी।
- Due to the difficult terrain and the lack of access routes, it has become difficult for firefighters to reach the area, they said.
  उन्होंने कहा कि **कठिन भौगोलिक स्थिति** और **पहुंच मार्गों की कमी** के कारण दमकलकर्मियों के लिए क्षेत्र तक पहुँचना मुश्किल हो गया है।
- "Under these circumstances, the State has sought support from the **IAF**," said **Uttarakhand Disaster Management Secretary Vinod Kumar Suman**.
  "इन परिस्थितियों में राज्य ने **IAF** से सहयोग मांगा है," **उत्तराखंड आपदा प्रबंधन सचिव विनोद कुमार सुमन** ने कहा।
- The State authorities are not leaving any stone unturned.
  राज्य प्राधिकरण कोई कसर नहीं छोड़ रहे हैं।
- "The district administration is making all efforts. The authorities have conducted a **helicopter survey**, and if necessary, plans have been made to pour water from helicopters into the affected area to extinguish the fire," **Chamoli District Magistrate Gaurav Kumar** said.
  "ज़िला प्रशासन हरसंभव प्रयास कर रहा है। अधिकारियों ने **हेलीकॉप्टर सर्वेक्षण** किया है और आवश्यकता पड़ने पर प्रभावित क्षेत्र में हेलीकॉप्टरों से पानी डालकर आग बुझाने की योजना बनाई गई है," **चमोली ज़िला मजिस्ट्रेट गौरव कुमार** ने कहा।

Unusual occurrence
असामान्य घटना

- Experts expressed shock over the incident, as forest fires are generally reported from **February to June** and usually peak in **May and June**.
  विशेषज्ञों ने इस घटना पर हैरानी जताई, क्योंकि जंगल की आग आमतौर पर **फरवरी से जून** के बीच दर्ज होती है और प्रायः **मई और जून** में चरम पर होती है।
- "Almost no or nominal snowfall in the hills might be the reason for the incidents of forest fires being reported in early January. The snow keeps the surface wet and prevents such incidents," an **SDRF official** said.
  "पहाड़ों में लगभग न के बराबर या बहुत कम बर्फबारी होने के कारण जनवरी की शुरुआत में जंगल की आग की घटनाएँ सामने आ रही हैं। बर्फ ज़मीन को नम रखती है और ऐसी घटनाओं को रोकती है," एक **SDRF अधिकारी** ने कहा।
- Data from the **Forest Survey of India** stated that Uttarakhand received a high number of forest fire alerts in **December 2025**.
  भारतीय वन सर्वेक्षण के आंकड़ों के अनुसार **दिसंबर 2025** में उत्तराखंड को जंगल की आग से जुड़े बड़ी संख्या में अलर्ट मिले।

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- The State received **1,153 forest fire alerts in 2025**, which destroyed hundreds of hectares of forest land.
  राज्य को **2025 में 1,153 जंगल की आग के अलर्ट** मिले, जिनसे सैकड़ों हेक्टेयर वन भूमि नष्ट हुई।

GS Paper III: IS	
TOPICS COVERED	**14 January 2026**
1.	**Send more IPS officers to Centre, Union Home Secretary tells States despite SC order** एससी आदेश के बावजूद केंद्र में और आईपीएस अधिकारियों को भेजें, केंद्रीय गृह सचिव ने राज्यों से कहा
2.	**Inter-departmental panel formed to combat 'digital arrests': govt. to SC** 'डिजिटल अरेस्ट' से निपटने के लिए अंतर-विभागीय पैनल गठित: सरकार ने सुप्रीम कोर्ट को बताया
3.	**Is the government seeking phones' source code?** क्या सरकार फोन का सोर्स कोड मांग रही है?

Send more IPS officers to Centre, Union Home Secretary tells States despite SC order

GS III: Internal Security

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan has written to the States to send more Indian Police Service (IPS) officers on Central deputation.

The deputation is to fill middle to senior positions in the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and Central Police Organisations (CPOs), including the Central Bureau of Investigation and the National Investigation Agency.

The letter sent to the States in the first week of January comes though the

Govind Mohan

Supreme Court on October 28, 2025, dismissed a review petition filed by the Centre against the court's May 23, 2025, ruling to "progressively reduce" the deputation of IPS officers in the senior administrative grade or up to the rank of Inspector-General in the CAPFs.

At present, 20% posts in the rank of Deputy Inspector-General (DIG) and 50% in the rank of Inspector-General (IG) in the CAPFs are reserved for IPS officers. The court's decision is meant to reduce the IPS dominance in the CAPFs.

Posts vacant
As on December 23, of the 188 posts at the DIG/IG level that are reserved for IPS officers in the CAPFs such as the BSF and the CRPF, 36 posts are vacant.

The letter by Mr. Mohan said 40% of senior duty posts in each cadre are earmarked as Central Deputation Reserve. "However, some of the States/cadres do not send sufficient number of nominations for deputation. Many a time, the States send more names of senior IPS officers, but do not propose the names for appointment to the posts of Superintendent of Police to Inspector-General. It would, therefore, be appropriate if a conscious attempt is made by the States to forward the nominations of officers for deputation in such a manner that officers of different levels/ranks are adequately and proportionately represented as well as every eligible officer gets an opportunity to serve at the Centre," the letter stated.

"Sometimes State governments withdraw the names of officers from offer, subsequent to their selection to a post or do not relieve them for taking up the assignment at the Centre. This results in considerable delay in their placement at the Centre and adversely impacts the entire process of selection, deputation and cadre management," it said.

Send more IPS officers to Centre, Union Home Secretary tells States despite SC order
एससी आदेश के बावजूद केंद्र में और आईपीएस अधिकारियों को भेजें, केंद्रीय गृह सचिव ने राज्यों से कहा

- Send more **IPS officers** to **Centre**, **Union Home Secretary** tells **States** despite **SC order**
  एससी आदेश के बावजूद **केंद्र** में और **आईपीएस अधिकारियों** को भेजने के लिए **केंद्रीय गृह सचिव** ने **राज्यों** से कहा
- **Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan** has written to the **States** to send more **Indian Police Service (IPS) officers** on **Central deputation**.

केंद्रीय गृह सचिव गोविंद मोहन ने राज्यों को केंद्रीय प्रतिनियुक्ति पर अधिक भारतीय पुलिस सेवा (आईपीएस) अधिकारियों को भेजने के लिए पत्र लिखा है।

- The deputation is to fill **middle to senior positions** in the **Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)** and **Central Police Organisations (CPOs)**, including the **Central Bureau of Investigation** and the **National Investigation Agency**.

   यह प्रतिनियुक्ति **केंद्रीय सशस्त्र पुलिस बलों (CAPFs)** और **केंद्रीय पुलिस संगठनों (CPOs)** में **मध्य से वरिष्ठ पदों** को भरने के लिए है, जिनमें **केंद्रीय अन्वेषण ब्यूरो** और **राष्ट्रीय जांच एजेंसी** शामिल हैं।

- The letter sent to the **States** in the **first week of January** comes though the **Supreme Court** on **October 28, 2025**, dismissed a **review petition** filed by the **Centre** against the court's **May 23, 2025**, ruling to "**progressively reduce**" the deputation of **IPS officers** in the **senior administrative grade** or up to the rank of **Inspector-General** in the **CAPFs**.

   जनवरी के पहले सप्ताह में राज्यों को भेजा गया यह पत्र तब आया है जब सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने **28 अक्टूबर 2025** को **केंद्र** द्वारा दायर **पुनर्विचार याचिका** को खारिज कर दिया था, जो **23 मई 2025** के उस फैसले के खिलाफ थी जिसमें **CAPFs** में **वरिष्ठ प्रशासनिक ग्रेड** या **महानिरीक्षक** तक के रैंक में **आईपीएस अधिकारियों** की प्रतिनियुक्ति को "**क्रमिक रूप से कम**" करने का निर्देश दिया गया था।

- At present, **20% posts** in the rank of **Deputy Inspector-General (DIG)** and **50%** in the rank of **Inspector-General (IG)** in the **CAPFs** are reserved for **IPS officers**. The court's decision is meant to reduce the **IPS dominance** in the **CAPFs**.

   वर्तमान में **CAPFs** में **उप महानिरीक्षक (DIG)** रैंक के **20% पद** और **महानिरीक्षक (IG)** रैंक के **50% पद** आईपीएस अधिकारियों के लिए आरक्षित हैं। अदालत का यह फैसला **CAPFs** में **आईपीएस वर्चस्व** को कम करने के उद्देश्य से है।

Posts vacant
 रिक्त पद

- As on **December 23**, of the **188 posts** at the **DIG/IG level** that are reserved for **IPS officers** in the **CAPFs** such as the **BSF** and the **CRPF**, **36 posts** are vacant.

   23 दिसंबर तक BSF और CRPF जैसे **CAPFs** में DIG/IG स्तर के **188 पदों** में से, जो **आईपीएस अधिकारियों** के लिए आरक्षित हैं, **36 पद** रिक्त हैं।

- The letter by **Mr. Mohan** said **40% of senior duty posts** in each cadre are earmarked as **Central Deputation Reserve**.

   श्री मोहन के पत्र में कहा गया है कि प्रत्येक कैडर में **वरिष्ठ ड्यूटी पदों का 40% केंद्रीय प्रतिनियुक्ति रिज़र्व** के रूप में चिन्हित है।

- "However, some of the **States/cadres** do not send sufficient number of nominations for deputation.

   "हालांकि, कुछ **राज्य/कैडर** प्रतिनियुक्ति के लिए पर्याप्त संख्या में नामांकन नहीं भेजते हैं।

- Many a time, the **States** send more names of **senior IPS officers**, but do not propose the names for appointment to the posts of **Superintendent of Police** to **Inspector-General**.

   कई बार **राज्य वरिष्ठ आईपीएस अधिकारियों** के अधिक नाम भेजते हैं, लेकिन **पुलिस अधीक्षक** से **महानिरीक्षक तक** के पदों पर नियुक्ति के लिए नाम प्रस्तावित नहीं करते।

- It would, therefore, be appropriate if a **conscious attempt** is made by the **States** to forward the nominations of officers for deputation in such a manner that officers of **different levels/ranks** are adequately and proportionately represented as well as **every eligible officer** gets an opportunity to serve at the **Centre**," the letter stated.

   इसलिए यह उचित होगा कि **राज्य** प्रतिनियुक्ति के लिए अधिकारियों के नाम इस प्रकार भेजने का **सचेत प्रयास** करें कि **विभिन्न स्तरों/रैंकों** के अधिकारी पर्याप्त और आनुपातिक रूप से प्रतिनिधित्व पाएँ और **हर पात्र अधिकारी** को **केंद्र** में सेवा करने का अवसर मिले," पत्र में कहा गया।

- "Sometimes **State governments** withdraw the names of officers from offer, subsequent to their selection to a post or do not relieve them for taking up the assignment at the **Centre**.

   "कभी-कभी **राज्य सरकारें** किसी पद के लिए चयन के बाद अधिकारियों के नाम प्रस्ताव से वापस ले लेती हैं या उन्हें **केंद्र** में कार्यभार ग्रहण करने के लिए मुक्त नहीं करतीं।

- This results in **considerable delay** in their placement at the **Centre** and adversely impacts the entire process of **selection, deputation and cadre management**," it said.
  इससे **केंद्र** में उनकी नियुक्ति में **काफी देरी** होती है और **चयन, प्रतिनियुक्ति तथा कैडर प्रबंधन** की पूरी प्रक्रिया पर प्रतिकूल प्रभाव पड़ता है," इसमें कहा गया।

Inter-departmental panel formed to combat 'digital arrests': govt. to SC

GS III: Internal Security

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Union government has swung into action to combat digital arrests, which has deprived citizens, mostly elderly and the vulnerable, of thousands of crores of hard-earned money, by forming an inter-departmental committee chaired by its Special Secretary (Internal Security) Ministry of Home Affairs. The committee has held multiple meeting, and representatives of the online platforms Google, WhatsApp, Telegram and Microsoft attended the latest.

The government has informed the Supreme Court, which is hearing the case on January 13, in a status report that inputs to combat digital arrest scams have been received from the Department of Telecom (DoT) and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

The committee would guide enforcement agencies examine real-time issues and provide inputs. REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE

The high-level inter-departmental committee (IDC) was formed on December 26, and has officials from multiple agencies to "comprehensively examine all facets of the issue of digital arrests".

Chaired by the Special Secretary (Internal Security), the IDC has representations at the level of Joint Secretary and and above, officers from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology(MeitY), DoT, Ministry of External Affairs, Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Law & Justice, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, RBI, Central Bureau of Investigation, National Investigation Agency, Delhi Police, and Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), with its Chief Executive Officer acting as the member-secretary.

Attorney-General R. Venkataramani would attend the meetings of the IDC on a regular basis.

The IDC was formed after a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant had directed inter-departmental Ministerial consultations, under the guidance of the Attorney General, to clear the way to end the bane which has affected a large populace.

The Centre said the IDC would examine and guide enforcement agencies examine "real-time issues"; identify relevant legislations, rules, circulars and implementation gaps, suggest corrective measures and provide inputs for further directions, as may be required, by the Supreme Court.

Inter-departmental panel formed to combat 'digital arrests': govt. to SC
'डिजिटल अरेस्ट' से निपटने के लिए अंतर-विभागीय पैनल गठित: सरकार ने सुप्रीम कोर्ट को बताया

- Inter-departmental panel formed to combat **'digital arrests'**: **govt.** to **SC**
  'डिजिटल अरेस्ट' से निपटने के लिए **अंतर-विभागीय पैनल** गठित: **सरकार** ने **सुप्रीम कोर्ट** को बताया
- The **Union government** has swung into action to combat **digital arrests**, which has deprived citizens, mostly **elderly** and the **vulnerable**, of **thousands of crores** of hard-earned money, by forming an **inter-departmental committee** chaired by its **Special Secretary (Internal Security)**, **Ministry of Home Affairs**.
  केंद्र सरकार ने डिजिटल अरेस्ट से निपटने के लिए कार्रवाई शुरू कर दी है, जिसने नागरिकों, खासकर **बुजुर्गों** और **कमजोर वर्गों**, को उनकी मेहनत की कमाई के **हजारों करोड़ रुपये** से वंचित किया है, इसके लिए **गृह मंत्रालय** के **विशेष सचिव (आंतरिक सुरक्षा)** की अध्यक्षता में एक **अंतर-विभागीय समिति** गठित की गई है।
- The committee has held **multiple meetings**, and representatives of the online platforms **Google**, **WhatsApp**, **Telegram** and **Microsoft** attended the latest.

समिति ने **कई बैठकें** की हैं, और नवीनतम बैठक में ऑनलाइन प्लेटफॉर्म **गूगल**, **व्हाट्सएप**, **टेलीग्राम** और **माइक्रोसॉफ्ट** के प्रतिनिधियों ने भाग लिया।

- The government has informed the **Supreme Court**, which is hearing the case on **January 13**, in a **status report** that inputs to combat **digital arrest scams** have been received from the **Department of Telecom (DoT)** and the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**.

 सरकार ने **सुप्रीम कोर्ट** को, जो इस मामले की सुनवाई **13 जनवरी** को कर रहा है, एक स्थिति रिपोर्ट में बताया कि **डिजिटल अरेस्ट घोटालों** से निपटने के लिए **दूरसंचार विभाग (DoT)** और **भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक (RBI)** से सुझाव प्राप्त हुए हैं।

- The **high-level inter-departmental committee (IDC)** was formed on **December 26**, and has officials from multiple agencies to "**comprehensively examine all facets of the issue of digital arrests**".

 उच्च-स्तरीय अंतर-विभागीय समिति (IDC) का गठन **26 दिसंबर** को किया गया था, जिसमें **डिजिटल अरेस्ट** के मुद्दे के "**सभी पहलुओं की व्यापक जांच**" के लिए कई एजेंसियों के अधिकारी शामिल हैं।

- Chaired by the **Special Secretary (Internal Security)**, the **IDC** has representations at the level of **Joint Secretary and above**, officers from the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**, DoT, **Ministry of External Affairs**, **Department of Financial Services**, **Ministry of Law & Justice**, **Ministry of Consumer Affairs**, **RBI**, **Central Bureau of Investigation**, **National Investigation Agency**, **Delhi Police**, and **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)**, with its **Chief Executive Officer** acting as the **member-secretary**.

 विशेष सचिव (आंतरिक सुरक्षा) की अध्यक्षता वाली **IDC** में **संयुक्त सचिव और उससे ऊपर** के स्तर के प्रतिनिधि शामिल हैं, जिनमें **इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स और सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्रालय (MeitY)**, DoT, विदेश मंत्रालय, **वित्तीय सेवा विभाग, कानून एवं न्याय मंत्रालय, उपभोक्ता मामले मंत्रालय, RBI**, केंद्रीय जांच ब्यूरो, राष्ट्रीय जांच एजेंसी, दिल्ली पुलिस, और **भारतीय साइबर अपराध समन्वय केंद्र (I4C)** के अधिकारी शामिल हैं, जिसमें **मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी सदस्य-सचिव** के रूप में कार्य कर रहे हैं।

- **Attorney-General R. Venkataramani** would attend the meetings of the **IDC** on a regular basis.

 अटॉर्नी जनरल आर. वेंकटरमणी नियमित रूप से **IDC** की बैठकों में भाग लेंगे।

- The **IDC** was formed after a **Bench** headed by **Chief Justice of India Surya Kant** had directed **inter-departmental Ministerial consultations**, under the guidance of the **Attorney General**, to clear the way to end the **bane** which has affected a **large populace**.

 IDC का गठन उस समय किया गया जब **भारत के मुख्य न्यायाधीश सूर्य कांत** की अध्यक्षता वाली **पीठ** ने **अटॉर्नी जनरल** के मार्गदर्शन में **अंतर-विभागीय मंत्रिस्तरीय परामर्श** का निर्देश दिया था, ताकि **बड़ी आबादी** को प्रभावित करने वाली इस **समस्या** का समाधान किया जा सके।

- The **Centre** said the **IDC** would examine and guide **enforcement agencies** to examine "**real-time issues**"; identify relevant **legislations**, **rules**, **circulars** and **implementation gaps**, suggest **corrective measures** and provide inputs for **further directions**, as may be required, by the **Supreme Court**.

 केंद्र ने कहा कि **IDC**, **प्रवर्तन एजेंसियों** को "**रीयल-टाइम मुद्दों**" की जांच के लिए मार्गदर्शन देगी; संबंधित **कानूनों, नियमों, परिपत्रों** और **कार्यान्वयन की खामियों** की पहचान करेगी, **सुधारात्मक उपाय** सुझाएगी और **सुप्रीम कोर्ट** द्वारा आवश्यकतानुसार **आगे के निर्देशों** के लिए सुझाव देगी।

Is the government seeking phones' source code?

What is the issue around the government seeking source code data from companies? What is source code, and why don't companies want to give access to it? Will keeping the code open for review risk security threats and cyberattacks? What has the government said?

GS III: Internal Security

EXPLAINER

Aroon Deep

The story so far:

The newswire agency *Reuters* reported that the Indian government was contemplating a requirement for smartphone makers to disclose their source code to third party testing agencies, and make this code open for review. A further requirement the agency reported was that phone makers would have to notify the government before pushing major software updates to user devices. The Union government has downplayed the nature of these conversations, and refuted the source code demand allegation.

What is source code?

Source code is the core repository of software programmes and their associated digital assets that drives a digital system. While some parts of the code, especially of Android phones, is open to begin with, there are significant modifications and adaptations that phone manufacturers make to that codebase. Also, each firm jealously guards the technology driving these respective changes. Source code is kept secret not just for commercial reasons, but also as a security measure. If a software system's complete inner workings are visible to a malicious attacker, then the system is at risk of being probed for weaknesses that can be exploited, and can lead to data breaches and other types of cyberattacks.

Why is such a demand controversial?

It is highly unusual for source code of any kind of system to be disclosed outside a company, except perhaps in sensitive fields like defence, and that too in specific countries. Apple Inc., for instance, has not disclosed its source code to the Chinese government, even as the firm has carved out policies specific to that country to make user data stored on the cloud potentially more accessible in response to legal requests.

These reports have come shortly after a bruising episode for the government; just weeks before, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) was at the receiving end of massive political and public pushback due to an order it sent to smartphone manufacturers to "pre-install" the spam reporting app Sanchar Saathi. There were widespread concerns that the app could be used for snooping at worst, and represent a security threat by a third party attacker at best. This was also a demand global smartphone makers generally don't entertain.

But source code disclosure would be a far more intrusive demand, as it would require smartphone makers to essentially expose their entire code base to a third party. Cyber attackers that find and take advantage of software vulnerabilities often do so with aspects of computer systems that are visible externally; internal visibility would greatly amplify the risks of such vulnerabilities being found, especially if the source code includes detailed documentation on a system's inner workings. As such, mobile phone operating systems, even if they are running on open source Android, do not expose every detail of their actual implementation.

Is the Indian government demanding that source code be made public?

In 2023, the National Centre for Communication Security (NCSS), under the DoT, finalised a document called an Indian Telecom Security Assurance Requirement (ITSAR) for "consumer equipment". ITSARs are technical standards used in the Mandatory Testing and Certification of Telecommunication Equipment (MTCTE) framework, a key bureaucratic step for importing telecom gear into India.

The MTCTE framework stems from the Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Rules, 2017. However, shortly after the Telecommunications Act, 2023 was passed, the DoT and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) decided that the MTCTE regime should be done away with for smartphones, which already go through a certification process for India administered by the Bureau of Indian Standards. A senior MeitY official told *The Hindu* that since the baton had now been passed to the IT Ministry, the discussions were picking up where the DoT had left off. A press statement by MeitY stated that the IT Ministry was keeping an "open mind" and would decide on what was best for the country and for consumers. The India Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA), which represents some smartphone firms, also downplayed the seriousness of the discussions.

The Internet Freedom Foundation, a digital rights advocacy group, pushed back on that denial, pointing out that the meetings the government was holding were not transparently conducted, and that the ITSARs remain public.

"If the government claims these proposals do not exist, it must explain the specific documentation currently hosted on its own website and also disclose the minutes of meetings," IFF said in a statement.

"IFF asserts that "stakeholder consultation" cannot be limited to closed-door meetings with big tech giants. If the PIB's claim that "no final regulations have been framed" is true, then the government should have no hesitation in releasing the current draft of the ITSAR for public scrutiny immediately. We reassert the need for transparency and an open public consultation."

THE GIST

▼ Source code is the core repository of software programmes and their associated digital assets that drives a digital system.

▼ It is highly unusual for source code of any kind of system to be disclosed outside a company, except perhaps in sensitive fields like defence, and that too in specific countries.

▼ *Reuters* reported that the Indian government was contemplating a requirement for smartphone makers to disclose their source code to third party testing agencies, and make this code open for review.

Is the government seeking phones' source code?
क्या सरकार फोन का सोर्स कोड मांग रही है?
Source code disclosure and smartphone policy debate
सोर्स कोड खुलासा और स्मार्टफोन नीति पर बहस

- The newswire agency **Reuters** reported that the **Indian government** was contemplating a requirement for **smartphone makers** to disclose their **source code** to **third party testing agencies**, and make this code open for review.
  समाचार एजेंसी **रॉयटर्स** ने रिपोर्ट किया कि **भारत सरकार स्मार्टफोन निर्माताओं** से उनके **सोर्स कोड** को **थर्ड पार्टी टेस्टिंग एजेंसियों** के सामने उजागर करने और समीक्षा के लिए खोलने की आवश्यकता पर विचार कर रही थी।

- A further requirement the agency reported was that phone makers would have to notify the government before pushing major **software updates** to user devices.
  एजेंसी ने यह भी बताया कि फोन निर्माता उपयोगकर्ताओं के उपकरणों में बड़े **सॉफ्टवेयर अपडेट** भेजने से पहले सरकार को सूचित करने के लिए बाध्य होंगे।

- The **Union government** has downplayed the nature of these conversations, and refuted the **source code demand** allegation.
  केंद्र सरकार ने इन चर्चाओं की प्रकृति को कमतर बताते हुए **सोर्स कोड की माँग** के आरोपों का खंडन किया है।

What is source code
सोर्स कोड क्या है

- **Source code** is the core repository of **software programmes** and their associated **digital assets** that drives a digital system.

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सोर्स कोड सॉफ्टवेयर प्रोग्रामों और उनसे जुड़े **डिजिटल एसेट्स** का मूल भंडार होता है, जो किसी डिजिटल सिस्टम को चलाता है।

- While some parts of the code, especially of **Android phones**, is open to begin with, there are significant **modifications and adaptations** that phone manufacturers make to that codebase.
  हालाँकि कोड के कुछ हिस्से, खासकर **एंड्रॉयड फोन** के, पहले से ही खुले होते हैं, लेकिन फोन निर्माता उस कोडबेस में महत्वपूर्ण **संशोधन और अनुकूलन** करते हैं।

- Also, each firm jealously guards the **technology** driving these respective changes.
  साथ ही, हर कंपनी इन बदलावों को संचालित करने वाली **तकनीक** की कड़ी सुरक्षा करती है।

- Source code is kept secret not just for **commercial reasons**, but also as a **security measure**.
  सोर्स कोड को केवल **व्यावसायिक कारणों** से ही नहीं, बल्कि **सुरक्षा उपाय** के रूप में भी गोपनीय रखा जाता है।

- If a software system's complete inner workings are visible to a **malicious attacker**, then the system is at risk of being probed for **weaknesses** that can be exploited, and can lead to **data breaches** and other types of **cyberattacks**.
  यदि किसी सॉफ्टवेयर सिस्टम की पूरी आंतरिक संरचना किसी **दुष्ट हमलावर** को दिख जाए, तो सिस्टम की **कमज़ोरियों** की जाँच कर उनका दुरुपयोग किया जा सकता है, जिससे **डेटा उल्लंघन** और अन्य प्रकार के **साइबर हमले** हो सकते हैं।

Why is such a demand controversial
ऐसी माँग विवादास्पद क्यों है

- It is highly unusual for source code of any kind of system to be disclosed outside a company, except perhaps in sensitive fields like **defence**, and that too in specific countries.
  किसी भी प्रकार के सिस्टम का सोर्स कोड कंपनी के बाहर उजागर करना बेहद असामान्य है, सिवाय कुछ संवेदनशील क्षेत्रों जैसे **रक्षा** के, वह भी केवल कुछ खास देशों में।

- **Apple Inc.**, for instance, has not disclosed its source code to the **Chinese government**, even as the firm has carved out policies specific to that country to make user data stored on the **cloud** potentially more accessible in response to legal requests.
  उदाहरण के लिए, **एप्पल इंक.** ने **चीनी सरकार** को अपना सोर्स कोड नहीं दिया है, भले ही कंपनी ने उस देश के लिए ऐसी नीतियाँ बनाई हैं जिनसे **क्लाउड** पर रखा उपयोगकर्ता डेटा कानूनी अनुरोधों के जवाब में अधिक सुलभ हो सके।

- These reports have come shortly after a bruising episode for the government.
  ये रिपोर्टें सरकार के लिए एक कठिन प्रकरण के तुरंत बाद आई हैं।

- Just weeks before, the **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** was at the receiving end of massive **political and public pushback** due to an order it sent to smartphone manufacturers to **pre-install** the spam reporting app **Sanchar Saathi**.
  कुछ ही हफ्ते पहले, **दूरसंचार विभाग (DoT)** को स्मार्टफोन निर्माताओं को स्पैम रिपोर्टिंग ऐप **संचार साथी** को **प्री-इंस्टॉल** करने के आदेश के कारण भारी **राजनीतिक और जन विरोध** का सामना करना पड़ा था।

- There were widespread concerns that the app could be used for **snooping** at worst, and represent a **security threat** by a third party attacker at best.
  इस बात को लेकर व्यापक चिंता थी कि यह ऐप सबसे खराब स्थिति में **जासूसी** के लिए इस्तेमाल हो सकता है, और कम से कम किसी थर्ड पार्टी हमलावर द्वारा **सुरक्षा खतरा** बन सकता है।

- This was also a demand global smartphone makers generally don't entertain.
  यह भी एक ऐसी माँग थी जिसे वैश्विक स्मार्टफोन निर्माता आमतौर पर स्वीकार नहीं करते।

- But **source code disclosure** would be a far more **intrusive demand**, as it would require smartphone makers to essentially expose their **entire code base** to a third party.
  लेकिन **सोर्स कोड का खुलासा** कहीं अधिक **हस्तक्षेपकारी माँग** होगी, क्योंकि इसमें स्मार्टफोन निर्माताओं को अपना पूरा **कोड बेस** किसी तीसरे पक्ष के सामने खोलना पड़ेगा।

- **Cyber attackers** that find and take advantage of **software vulnerabilities** often do so with aspects of computer systems that are visible externally.
  साइबर हमलावर जो **सॉफ्टवेयर की कमजोरियों** का फायदा उठाते हैं, वे अक्सर कंप्यूटर सिस्टम के उन हिस्सों से ऐसा करते हैं जो बाहर से दिखाई देते हैं।

- Internal visibility would greatly **amplify the risks** of such vulnerabilities being found, especially if the source code includes detailed **documentation** on a system's inner workings.

आंतरिक दृश्यता ऐसी कमजोरियों के मिलने के **जोखिम को कई गुना बढ़ा** देगी, खासकर तब जब सोर्स कोड में सिस्टम की आंतरिक कार्यप्रणाली का विस्तृत **दस्तावेजीकरण** शामिल हो।

- As such, mobile phone **operating systems**, even if they are running on **open source Android**, do not expose every detail of their actual **implementation**.
  इसी कारण, मोबाइल फोन के **ऑपरेटिंग सिस्टम**, भले ही वे **ओपन सोर्स एंड्रॉयड** पर ही क्यों न चल रहे हों, अपनी वास्तविक **इम्प्लीमेंटेशन** का हर विवरण उजागर नहीं करते।

Is the Indian government demanding that source code be made public
क्या भारत सरकार सोर्स कोड को सार्वजनिक करने की माँग कर रही है

- In **2023**, the **National Centre for Communication Security (NCSS)**, under the **DoT**, finalised a document called an **Indian Telecom Security Assurance Requirement (ITSAR)** for "**consumer equipment**".
  2023 में, दूरसंचार विभाग (DoT) के अंतर्गत **नेशनल सेंटर फॉर कम्युनिकेशन सिक्योरिटी (NCSS)** ने "**कंज्यूमर इक्विपमेंट**" के लिए **इंडियन टेलीकॉम सिक्योरिटी एश्योरेंस रिक्वायरमेंट (ITSAR)** नामक दस्तावेज़ को अंतिम रूप दिया।

- **ITSARs** are technical standards used in the **Mandatory Testing and Certification of Telecommunication Equipment (MTCTE)** framework, a key bureaucratic step for importing telecom gear into **India**.
  ITSAR तकनीकी मानक हैं, जिनका उपयोग **मैंडेटरी टेस्टिंग एंड सर्टिफिकेशन ऑफ टेलीकम्युनिकेशन इक्विपमेंट (MTCTE)** ढाँचे में होता है, जो **भारत** में दूरसंचार उपकरण आयात करने की एक अहम नौकरशाही प्रक्रिया है।

- The **MTCTE framework** stems from the **Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Rules, 2017**.
  MTCTE ढाँचा इंडियन टेलीग्राफ (संशोधन) नियम, 2017 से उत्पन्न हुआ है।

- However, shortly after the **Telecommunications Act, 2023** was passed, the **DoT** and the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** decided that the **MTCTE regime** should be done away with for **smartphones**, which already go through a certification process for India administered by the **Bureau of Indian Standards**.
  हालाँकि, **टेलीकम्युनिकेशंस एक्ट, 2023** पारित होने के तुरंत बाद, DoT और **इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स व सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्रालय (MeitY)** ने तय किया कि **स्मार्टफोनों** के लिए **MTCTE व्यवस्था** समाप्त की जाए, क्योंकि वे पहले से ही **ब्यूरो ऑफ इंडियन स्टैंडर्ड्स** द्वारा संचालित प्रमाणन प्रक्रिया से गुजरते हैं।

- A senior **MeitY** official told **The Hindu** that since the baton had now been passed to the **IT Ministry**, the discussions were picking up where the **DoT** had left off.
  MeitY के एक वरिष्ठ अधिकारी ने **द हिंदू** को बताया कि अब जिम्मेदारी **आईटी मंत्रालय** को सौंप दी गई है, इसलिए चर्चाएँ वहीं से आगे बढ़ रही हैं जहाँ DoT ने छोड़ी थीं।

- A press statement by **MeitY** stated that the **IT Ministry** was keeping an "**open mind**" and would decide on what was best for the country and for **consumers**.
  MeitY की एक प्रेस विज्ञप्ति में कहा गया कि **आईटी मंत्रालय** "**ओपन माइंड**" रखे हुए है और देश व **उपभोक्ताओं** के हित में जो सबसे बेहतर होगा, वही निर्णय करेगा।

- The **India Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA)**, which represents some smartphone firms, also **downplayed** the seriousness of the discussions.
  कुछ स्मार्टफोन कंपनियों का प्रतिनिधित्व करने वाला **इंडिया सेल्युलर एंड इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स एसोसिएशन (ICEA)** भी इन चर्चाओं की गंभीरता को **कमतर** बता रहा है।

- The **Internet Freedom Foundation**, a digital rights advocacy group, pushed back on that denial, pointing out that the meetings the government was holding were not **transparently conducted**, and that the **ITSARs remain public**.
  डिजिटल अधिकारों के लिए काम करने वाला समूह **इंटरनेट फ्रीडम फाउंडेशन** इस इनकार पर पलटवार करते हुए कहता है कि सरकार द्वारा की जा रही बैठकों में **पारदर्शिता** नहीं है और **ITSAR** अभी भी **सार्वजनिक** हैं।

- "If the government claims these proposals do not exist, it must explain the **specific documentation** currently hosted on its own website and also disclose the **minutes of meetings**," **IFF** said in a statement.
  "यदि सरकार कहती है कि ये प्रस्ताव मौजूद नहीं हैं, तो उसे अपनी वेबसाइट पर मौजूद **विशिष्ट दस्तावेज़ों** की व्याख्या करनी चाहिए और **बैठकों की कार्यवाही** भी सार्वजनिक करनी चाहिए," **IFF** ने बयान में कहा।

- "IFF asserts that '**stakeholder consultation**' cannot be limited to **closed-door meetings** with big tech giants."

- "**IFF** का कहना है कि '**स्टेकहोल्डर परामर्श**' को केवल बड़ी टेक कंपनियों के साथ **बंद कमरे की बैठकों** तक सीमित नहीं किया जा सकता।"

- "If the **PIB's** claim that '**no final regulations have been framed**' is true, then the government should have no hesitation in releasing the **current draft of the ITSAR** for **public scrutiny** immediately."
  "यदि **PIB** का यह दावा सही है कि '**कोई अंतिम नियम तय नहीं किए गए हैं**', तो सरकार को **ITSAR के मौजूदा मसौदे** को तुरंत **सार्वजनिक समीक्षा** के लिए जारी करने में कोई हिचक नहीं होनी चाहिए।"

- "We reassert the need for **transparency** and an **open public consultation**."
  "हम **पारदर्शिता** और **खुली सार्वजनिक परामर्श प्रक्रिया** की आवश्यकता को फिर से दोहराते हैं।"

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS(GS Paper IV and Essay)	
TOPICS COVERED	14 January 2026
1.	Shun the mad race for material assets: Justice Nagarathna
	भौतिक संपत्तियों की अंधी दौड़ से दूर रहें: न्यायमूर्ति नागरथना

Shun the mad race for material assets: Justice Nagarathna

GS IV: Ethics

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Supreme Court judge, Justice B.V. Nagarathna, in a postscript to a judgment, observed that corruption stems from mutual greed and envy over material assets. She said material covetousness can be avoided by developing and enhancing a "spiritual bent of mind".

Justice B.V. Nagarathna

"One's attitude of greed and envy ought to be curbed and erased from one's mind, otherwise corruption and bribery resulting in acquisition of wealth beyond the known sources of income cannot be reduced nor removed from our governance. One of the ways in which such tendencies could be curbed is to develop and enhance a spiritual bent of mind resulting in detachment from materialistic possessions and thereby, inter alia, focusing on service to the nation," she wrote in her separate opinion.

The Bench, also comprising Justice K.V. Viswanathan, delivered a split verdict over the constitutionality of Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act. The provision mandated prior sanction before initiating criminal action against civil servants on the basis of allegations of corruption.

The judge quoted from a precedent that corruption has become a cancerous growth affecting the moral standards of the people and all forms of governmental administration.

She wrote that children and the youth could act as guiding lights if their parents and guardians stray away from the straight and honest path.

Shun the mad race for material assets: Justice Nagarathna
भौतिक संपत्तियों की अंधी दौड़ से दूर रहें: न्यायमूर्ति नागरथना

- Shun the mad race for **material assets**: **Justice Nagarathna**
  भौतिक संपत्तियों की अंधी दौड़ से दूर रहें: **न्यायमूर्ति नागरथना**

- **Supreme Court judge**, **Justice B.V. Nagarathna**, in a postscript to a judgment, observed that **corruption** stems from mutual **greed** and **envy** over **material assets**.
  सुप्रीम कोर्ट की न्यायाधीश, **न्यायमूर्ति बी.वी. नागरथना** ने एक निर्णय के परिशिष्ट में कहा कि **भ्रष्टाचार** की जड़ आपसी **लालच** और **ईर्ष्या** है, जो **भौतिक संपत्तियों** को लेकर उत्पन्न होती है।

- She said **material covetousness** can be avoided by developing and enhancing a "**spiritual bent of mind**".
  उन्होंने कहा कि **भौतिक लालसा** से बचा जा सकता है यदि "**आध्यात्मिक प्रवृत्ति**" को विकसित और सुदृढ़ किया जाए।

- "One's attitude of **greed** and **envy** ought to be curbed and erased from one's mind, otherwise **corruption** and **bribery** resulting in acquisition of **wealth beyond the known sources of income** cannot be reduced nor removed from our **governance**.
  "व्यक्ति के मन से **लालच** और **ईर्ष्या** की प्रवृत्ति को नियंत्रित कर समाप्त किया जाना चाहिए, अन्यथा **भ्रष्टाचार** और **रिश्वतखोरी**, जिसके कारण **ज्ञात आय स्रोतों से अधिक संपत्ति** अर्जित होती है, हमारे **शासन** से न तो घटाई जा सकती है और न ही समाप्त की जा सकती है।

- One of the ways in which such tendencies could be curbed is to develop and enhance a **spiritual bent of mind** resulting in **detachment** from **materialistic possessions** and thereby, inter alia, focusing on **service to the nation**," she wrote in her separate opinion.
  ऐसी प्रवृत्तियों को नियंत्रित करने का एक तरीका **आध्यात्मिक प्रवृत्ति** को विकसित करना है, जिससे **भौतिक**

वस्तुओं से **वैराग्य** उत्पन्न हो और इसके परिणामस्वरूप **राष्ट्र सेवा** पर ध्यान केंद्रित किया जा सके," उन्होंने अपने पृथक मत में लिखा।

- The **Bench**, also comprising **Justice K.V. Viswanathan**, delivered a **split verdict** over the **constitutionality** of **Section 17A** of the **Prevention of Corruption Act**.
  पीठ, जिसमें **न्यायमूर्ति के.वी. विश्वनाथन** भी शामिल थे, ने **भ्रष्टाचार निवारण अधिनियम** की **धारा 17A** की **संवैधानिकता** पर **विभाजित फैसला** सुनाया।

- The provision mandated **prior sanction** before initiating **criminal action** against **civil servants** on the basis of allegations of **corruption**.
  यह प्रावधान **भ्रष्टाचार** के आरोपों के आधार पर **सिविल सेवकों** के विरुद्ध **आपराधिक कार्रवाई** शुरू करने से पहले **पूर्व स्वीकृति** को अनिवार्य बनाता है।

- The judge quoted from a **precedent** that **corruption** has become a **cancerous growth** affecting the **moral standards** of the people and all forms of **governmental administration**.
  न्यायाधीश ने एक **न्यायिक मिसाल** का उल्लेख करते हुए कहा कि **भ्रष्टाचार** एक **कैंसरनुमा वृद्धि** बन चुका है, जो लोगों के **नैतिक मानकों** और **सरकारी प्रशासन** के सभी रूपों को प्रभावित कर रहा है।

- She wrote that **children** and the **youth** could act as **guiding lights** if their **parents and guardians** stray away from the **straight and honest path**.
  उन्होंने लिखा कि यदि **माता-पिता और अभिभावक सीधे और ईमानदार मार्ग** से भटक जाएं, तो **बच्चे** और **युवा मार्गदर्शक प्रकाश** बन सकते हैं।