



TELEGRAM CHANNEL: <https://t.me/patrioticIAS>
YOUTUBE CHANNEL: <https://www.youtube.com/@PatrioticIAS>
CONTACT: 9971932488



PATRIOTIC IAS

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

THE HINDU NEWSPAPER

20 JANUARY 2025

YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/@PatrioticIAS>

Telegram Channel: <https://t.me/patrioticIAS>

PCS Special:

20 January 2026

1. Italy's fashion king Valentino, who pursued beauty at every turn, dies
इटली के फैशन सम्राट वॉलेंटिनो, जिन्होंने हर मोड़ पर सुंदरता को साधा, का निधन

Address : 3rd Floor, KV Tower, Padleyganj Road, Gorakhpur
Email Id : info@patrioticias.in
Contact Number : 9971932488
Website : patrioticias.in



ROME

Italy's fashion king Valentino, who pursued beauty at every turn, dies



One of the top designers of his era, Italy's elegance aficionado **Valentino Garavani** spent nearly half a century dressing the world's great beauties, from **Jackie Kennedy** to **Princess Diana** before his death on Monday at age 93. The giant in the world of haute couture died at his home in Rome, ANSA news agency reported. AFP

वर्ष की आयु में उनका निधन हो गया।

Italy's fashion king Valentino, who pursued beauty at every turn, dies
इटली के फैशन सम्राट वैलेटिनो, जिन्होंने हर मोड़ पर सुंदरता को साधा, का निधन

- Italy's fashion king Valentino, who pursued beauty at every turn, dies
हर मोड़ पर सुंदरता को साधने वाले इटली के फैशन सम्राट वैलेटिनो का निधन
- One of the top designers of his era, Italy's elegance aficionado **Valentino Garavani** spent nearly half a century dressing the world's great beauties, from **Jackie Kennedy** to **Princess Diana** before his death on Monday at age 93.
अपने दौर के शीर्ष डिज़ाइनरों में से एक, इटली की शान के दीवाने **वैलेटिनो गरावानी** ने लगभग आधी सदी तक दुनिया की महान सुंदरियों को सजाया, **जैकी कैनेडी** से लेकर **प्रिंसेस डायना** तक, और सोमवार को 93

GS Paper 1: History,
TOPICS COVERED

20 January 2026

1. QUIZ

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. This leader was the first woman Prime Minister of the world. Ans: **Sri Lanka's Sirimavo**

Bandaranaike

2. Indira Gandhi became the Prime Minister following the death of this premier. Ans: **Lal Bahadur Shastri**
3. Indira Gandhi defeated this veteran political figure to become the leader of the Congress Party. Ans: **Morarji Desai**
4. This Prime Minister holds the record of longest-serving Indian Prime Minister. Ans: **Jawaharlal Nehru**
5. Indira Gandhi was elected to the Lok Sabha from three constituencies starting with Rae Bareilly. These are the other two constituencies. Ans: **Chikmagalur and Medak**
6. Name the assassins who cut short her tenure as PM on October 31, 1984. Ans: **Satwant Singh and Beant Singh**
7. Number of women she appointed to full cabinet rank during her terms in office. Ans: **No one!**

Visual: Name this Janata Party leader. Ans: **Raj Narain**

Early Birds: C. Saravanan| Arun Kumar Singh| Suchit Narottam| Piyali Tulji| Sumana Dutta

QUIZ: First Woman Prime Minister of the World – Sirimavo Bandaranaike

- **The first woman Prime Minister in the world was Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka.**
- She assumed office on **21 July 1960**, creating a **historic global milestone** in democratic governance.
- She entered politics after the assassination of her husband, **S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike**, who was the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka.
- She led the **Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP)** and emerged as a mass leader despite having no prior political background.

First Term: 21 July 1960 – 1965

Second Term: 1970 – 1977

- Associated with major political and constitutional changes, including the **1972 Republican Constitution** of Sri Lanka.

• **Third Term: 1994 – 2000**

- Served as Prime Minister while **her daughter Chandrika Kumaratunga** was President of Sri Lanka.

Indira Gandhi Became Prime Minister After the Death of Lal Bahadur Shastri

- **Lal Bahadur Shastri** was the **second Prime Minister of India**, serving from **9 June 1964 to 11 January 1966**.
- His death occurred in **Tashkent**, shortly after signing the **Tashkent Agreement**.
- The agreement followed the **1965 India–Pakistan War** and aimed at restoring peace between the two countries.



Indira Gandhi Defeated Morarji Desai to Become Leader of the Congress Party

Indira Gandhi defeated **Morarji Desai** to become the leader of the **Indian National Congress**.

- After becoming Prime Minister in **1966**, **Indira Gandhi** initially headed a government that was perceived as being controlled by senior Congress leaders, commonly known as the **Congress Syndicate**.
- Ideologically, Morarji Desai supported **fiscal conservatism**, austerity, and strong organisational control by senior party leaders.

The Leadership Struggle

- The conflict intensified around **1969**, especially over issues such as
 - The **Presidential election of 1969**
 - Economic policies
 - Authority of the Prime Minister versus party organisation
 - Morarji Desai was projected as the preferred leader by the **Congress Syndicate**.
 - Indira Gandhi opposed this arrangement and sought to assert her independent authority as Prime Minister.

How Indira Gandhi Defeated Morarji Desai

- Indira Gandhi consolidated her position by
 - Securing the support of a majority of **Congress Members of Parliament**
 - Projecting herself as a leader committed to **social justice** and the interests of the **poor and marginalised**
 - Challenging elite control over party decision-making
 - As a result, Morarji Desai lost his dominance within the Congress leadership, and Indira Gandhi emerged as the **undisputed leader**.

Congress Split of 1969

- The leadership conflict led to the **split of the Indian National Congress in 1969**.
- The party was divided into
 - **Congress (R)**, led by **Indira Gandhi**
 - **Congress (O)**, supported by **Morarji Desai** and other senior leaders
- This split fundamentally altered the nature of **Indian party politics**.

Longest-Serving Prime Minister of India – Jawaharlal Nehru

- **Jawaharlal Nehru** was the **first Prime Minister of independent India**.
- He served continuously as Prime Minister from **15 August 1947** to **27 May 1964**.
- His total tenure was **16 years and 286 days**, which remains **unmatched** in Indian history.

Indira Gandhi and Her Lok Sabha Constituencies

She began with **Rae Bareilly**, and the **other two constituencies** were **Chikmagalur** and **Medak**.

Chikmagalur – The Comeback Seat

- **Chikmagalur** is located in **Karnataka**.
- Indira Gandhi contested from Chikmagalur in the **1978 by-election**.
- This election was politically crucial because
- She had lost the **1977 general election** after the Emergency



- She was not a Member of Parliament at that time
- Her victory from Chikmagalur marked her **return to the Lok Sabha**.

Medak – Southern Representation

- **Medak** is a Lok Sabha constituency in present-day **Telangana** (earlier part of Andhra Pradesh).
- Indira Gandhi contested and won from Medak in the **1980 general elections**.
- This election coincided with her return as **Prime Minister of India** in 1980.
- Medak highlighted her **pan-Indian political appeal**, especially in southern India.

Assassination of Indira Gandhi on 31 October 1984

Indira Gandhi was assassinated on **31 October 1984** by **Satwant Singh** and **Beant Singh**.

- Her official residence at **Safdarjung Road, New Delhi**
- Indira Gandhi was walking through the garden of her residence to meet a television crew.
- She was shot at close range by **two members of her own security detail**.

Who Were the Assassins

- **Beant Singh**
 - A **Sub-Inspector** in the Delhi Police
 - Part of Indira Gandhi's personal security
 - Fired the initial shots
- **Satwant Singh**
 - A **Constable** in the Delhi Police
 - Also part of her security detail
 - Fired additional bullets, resulting in fatal injuries

Women Appointed to Full Cabinet Rank by Indira Gandhi

The number of **women appointed to full Cabinet rank** by **Indira Gandhi** during her terms as Prime Minister was **zero (none)**.

- Highlights the **gender imbalance** in executive power during the early decades of independent India.
- Shows that **symbolic leadership at the top** did not translate into **institutional gender inclusion**.
- Reflects the **male-dominated structure** of Indian politics from the 1960s to the early 1980s.

| GS Paper 1: Society | |
|----------------------------|---|
| TOPICS COVERED | 20 January 2026 |
| 1. | A Centrist lens on 'illegal immigration' ‘अवैध आब्रजन’ पर एक मध्यमार्गी दृष्टिकोण |
| 2. | Why SIR verification needs to be completely digitised SIR सत्यापन को पूरी तरह डिजिटल किए जाने की आवश्यकता क्यों है |



A Centrist lens on 'illegal immigration'

ISS: Immigration Issue

The Special Intensive Revision (SIR), which omitted nearly 6.5 crore electors from draft rolls of nine States and three Union Territories, has triggered widespread procedural disputes. The Opposition appears determined to seize this moment to move forward with its "vote chori" campaign on which its politics has exhaustively relied.

The Opposition's mistake

But it will be naive to mistake the people's annoyance for anger. Despite the Election Commission of India's low credibility, and discontent over its shoddy handling of the SIR, few buy the Opposition's account, which depicts elections as fraudulently manufactured to suit the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and the SIR as a tool to perfect that machination.

The overwhelming sense is that a voter list revision is necessary to remove dead, shifted, and duplicate voters. The approval for the SIR also draws from mobilisation of emotion over the vexing question of 'illegal immigrants', with verifiable incidents, tendentious assertions, and inflammatory rhetoric creating a tangle that threatens to dominate Indian politics, particularly electoral possibilities in the northern States.

When Home Minister Amit Shah said recently in poll-bound West Bengal that "even Kolkata is facing a threat from infiltrators," it echoed the telling apprehensions of a sizeable section of Bengalis. The Opposition is loath to recognise the potency of the issue, often deploying lacerating wit to evade the question. Trinamool Congress leader Mahua Moitra's jibe – "who wants to come to India?" – is an example.

This behavioural pattern tinged with sourness – either you agree with me, or you are a bigot – has been counterproductive for liberal parties the world over. It was the European Union's uncritical support for wide-open borders that precipitated the steady trickle



Anando Bhakto

covers national politics, Kashmir and elections in the Hindi heartland

The Opposition's denial of undocumented immigrants in the face of evidence alienates people

of voters of the centre-left to populist, anti-immigration parties, more notably in Germany, Italy, Hungary and Poland.

The Opposition's denial of undocumented immigrants in the face of evidence alienates people. Last November, several hundred Bangladeshi nationals were intercepted by Border Security Force personnel at the Hakimpur check post in West Bengal, while allegedly attempting to return to Bangladesh. In December, 19 Bangladeshis were among the 511 people arrested in Uttarakhand under Operation Kalnemi.

The Opposition sees acting on undocumented immigrants as corrosive to universal human rights. But national security concerns are not corrosive; fulminations aimed at hijacking them are. Opposition leaders show proclivity to confuse illegal immigration with immigration, boxing everyone who talks about border security as foot-soldiers of the Right tasked with manufacturing xenophobia. While covering the 2024 U.S. presidential election, I found that in the battleground States, this boxing triggered negative sentiment. The anger was more palpable among immigrants who came to the U.S. legally. Donald Trump's share of Hispanic votes climbed from 32% in 2020 to 46% in 2024.

The more the Opposition chastises people who talk about border security, the easier it gets for right wing provocateurs to depict immigration as chaotic, and build consensus for violent crackdown. A June 2025 report by the European Policy Centre emphasised that conspiracy theories, such as those surrounding population replacement, find acceptance as they provide "a sense of control" and "understanding" for individuals who otherwise felt powerless and unheard.

A reason why the BJP under Prime Minister Narendra Modi was able to monopolise nationalism was because in the decade preceding 2014, the Congress

nearly jettisoned expositions of national pride – at least the animating kind invoking India's spiritual traditions and heritage – as though they were impediments to secularism. That misjudged fear induces its studied silence on the immigration issue.

A nuanced conversation

In June 2025, Parliament passed the Immigration and Foreigners Bill, to regulate the entry and stay of foreigners in a tech-driven, time-bound manner; the Opposition staged a walkout. A prudent course would have been to build a more nuanced conversation on immigration, reflecting its complexity and multifaceted nature, delineating both the challenges and the benefits it brings along. It must focus on legal work authorisations, spending versus contributions, and negotiations with allied countries for easing refugee intakes, as Italy's Georgia Meloni attempted with Albania.

In Europe, the Left drastically reoriented its politics to sync with public attitudes on immigration. In Denmark, Social Democrats led by Mette Frederiksen passed a law allowing asylum claims to be processed and refugees to be resettled in partner countries such as Rwanda. This ebbed the appeal of the anti-migration Danish People's Party; it plummeted to one seat in the 2024 European Parliament election.

The Congress is mistaken that whatever weighs heavily on the minds of its think tankers weighs on the minds of the public. Its preoccupation with "saving" Indian democracy before every election bears that out. It misses the point that the people are divided on where the threat to democracy comes from. People have less anxiety over weakening institutions and "vote chori" and more over the alleged immigrant influx. Centrist politics must reconstruct itself. An aptitude to reckon with people's emotive issues and give a positive spin to them is imperative to that effort.

A Centrist lens on 'illegal immigration' 'अवैध आब्रजन' पर एक मध्यमार्गी दृष्टिकोण

- The **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)**, which omitted nearly **6.5 crore electors** from **draft rolls of nine States and three Union Territories**, has triggered **widespread procedural disputes**.

विशेष गहन पुनरीक्षण (SIR), जिसमें नौ राज्यों और तीन केंद्र शासित प्रदेशों की मसौदा मतदाता सूचियों से लगभग 6.5 करोड़ मतदाताओं को बाहर कर दिया गया, ने व्यापक प्रक्रियागत विवादों को जन्म दिया है।



- The **Opposition** appears determined to seize this moment to move forward with its “**vote chori**” campaign, on which its politics has **exhaustively relied**.
विपक्ष इस मौके का उपयोग अपनी “वोट चोरी” अभियान को आगे बढ़ाने के लिए दृढ़ संकल्पित दिखता है, जिस पर उसकी राजनीति ने **अत्यधिक निर्भरता** दिखाई है।

The Opposition's mistake विपक्ष की भूल

- The **overwhelming sense** is that a **voter list revision is necessary to remove dead, shifted, and duplicate voters**.
प्रबल भावना यह है कि मृत, स्थानांतरित, और डुप्लीकेट मतदाताओं को हटाने के लिए मतदाता सूची का पुनरीक्षण आवश्यक है।
- In **December, 19 Bangladeshis** were among the **511 people arrested in Uttarakhand** under **Operation Kalnemi**.
दिसंबर में, ऑपरेशन कालनेमि के तहत उत्तराखंड में गिरफ्तार 511 लोगों में 19 बांग्लादेशी शामिल थे।
- The **Opposition** sees acting on **undocumented immigrants** as **corrosive to universal human rights**.
विपक्ष अप्रलेखित प्रवासियों पर कार्रवाई को सार्वभौमिक मानवाधिकारों के लिए हानिकारक मानता है।
- But **national security concerns** are **not corrosive**; **fulminations** aimed at **hijacking them** are.
लेकिन राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा की चिंताएँ हानिकारक नहीं हैं; उन्हें हथियाने के लिए की गई उग्र बयानबाज़ी हानिकारक है।
- Opposition leaders** show **proclivity to confuse illegal immigration with immigration**, **boxing everyone who talks about border security** as **foot-soldiers of the Right** tasked with **manufacturing xenophobia**.
विपक्षी नेता अवैध प्रवासन को प्रवासन से गड़बड़ा देने की प्रवृत्ति दिखाते हैं, और सीमा सुरक्षा की बात करने वाले हर व्यक्ति को दक्षिणपंथ के पैदल सिपाही के रूप में पेश करते हैं जिनका काम विदेशी-विरोधी भय पैदा करना बताया जाता है।
- While covering the **2024 U.S. presidential election**, I found that in the **battleground States**, this **boxing triggered negative sentiment**.
2024 के अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति चुनाव की रिपोर्टिंग के दौरान, मैंने पाया कि **स्विंग राज्यों** में इस तरह की लेबलिंग ने नकारात्मक भावना पैदा की।
- The **anger** was more **palpable among immigrants** who came to the **U.S. legally**.
यह गुस्सा उन प्रवासियों में अधिक स्पष्ट था जो कानूनी रूप से अमेरिका आए थे।
- Donald Trump's share of Hispanic votes** climbed from **32% in 2020** to **46% in 2024**.
डोनाल्ड ट्रम्प को मिलने वाले हिस्पैनिक वोटों का प्रतिशत 2020 में 32% से बढ़कर 2024 में 46% हो गया।
- The more the **Opposition chastises people who talk about border security**
सीमा सुरक्षा की बात करने वालों को जितना अधिक विपक्ष फटकारता है
- The more the **Opposition chastises people who talk about border security**, the easier it gets for **right wing provocateurs** to **depict immigration as chaotic**, and **build consensus for violent crackdown**.
सीमा सुरक्षा की बात करने वालों को जितना अधिक विपक्ष फटकारता है, उतना ही दक्षिणपंथी उकसाने वालों के लिए आत्रजन को अराजक दिखाना और हिंसक दमन के लिए सहमति बनाना आसान हो जाता है।
- In **June 2025**, **Parliament** passed the **Immigration and Foreigners Bill**, to **regulate the entry and stay of foreigners in a tech-driven, time-bound manner**; the **Opposition staged a walkout**.
जून 2025 में, संसद ने आत्रजन और विदेशी विधेयक पारित किया, जिसका उद्देश्य विदेशियों के प्रवेश और निवास को प्रौद्योगिकी-संचालित, समयबद्ध तरीके से विनियमित करना था; विपक्ष ने वाँकआउट किया।



Why SIR verification needs to be completely digitised

SIR 2.0, aimed at updating electoral rolls, has caused confusion and distress among voters. Despite the ECINet's ability to handle data entry, verification, cross-checks, and audit trails, the process has relied heavily on paper-based forms, summons, and hearings

CS: Immigration

Rajeev Kumar

The ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) 2.0 was projected as a technology-driven exercise to clean electoral rolls and include every eligible Indian resident. Instead of inspiring confidence, it has triggered widespread fear and anxiety among voters. The experience has exposed a stark mismatch between the Election Commission's (EC) digital capacity and its ground-level execution. Despite the ECINet's (the digital platform of the EC) ability to handle data entry, verification, cross-checks, and audit trails, the process has relied heavily on paper-based forms, summons, and hearings – error-prone methods that impose unnecessary hardship on voters.

As a result, even the most eminent citizens have been summoned. A Nobel laureate and Bharat Ratna awardee in his 90s received a notice over an alleged age mismatch. A former Police Commissioner of Kolkata, under whose jurisdiction SIR 2002 was conducted, was also found non-mapped. MPs, DGPs, senior secretaries, vice chancellors, professors, and other top-ranking public servants have similarly been asked to establish their identity. These are long-standing citizens with decades of documented presence – yet they are being asked to prove their residence.

The EC also summoned several monks from the Ramakrishna Math and Mission for hearings because their biological parents' names – severed upon embracing monastic life – do not match the names of gurus they now regard as parents. Several also found their names missing from the 2002 voter lists. Though these monks do not vote, in keeping with the order's apolitical principles, they seek inclusion to avoid identity-related hurdles in visa and administrative processes.

Institutions meant to safeguard democracy should honour their

contributions, not subject them to procedural indignity.

Punishing the voter

SIR 2.0's failures are not rooted in the absence of technology, but in the refusal to deploy it effectively. It was projected as user-friendly and transparent, but has instead produced confusion reminiscent of the 2002-04 SIR, which relied on pen-and-paper processes without third-party checks and left electoral rolls incomplete and inconsistent. Despite these well-known legacy flaws, the same defective rolls were carried forward as the foundation for SIR 2.0 – compounded by a continued reliance on manual filings and hearings rather than ECINet's digital capabilities.

As a result, draft rolls released across 12 States/Union Territories (UTs) have raised two primary concerns. The first is the alleged deletion of genuine voters from the 2024 final rolls, amounting to nearly 65 million deletions nationwide. For example, in Uttar Pradesh, submissions before the Supreme Court exposed a stark anomaly: the draft SIR roll lists 12.56 crore voters. In comparison, the Panchayat SIR records 12.69 crore voters in rural areas alone – an implausible outcome that highlights serious data inconsistencies and the cost of not adopting a digital-first correction.

The second concern is the emergence of a large number of "non-mapped" voters, primarily due to defects in the 2002-04 rolls, where voters missing from legacy lists are now flagged as non-mapped. Many are long-standing, law-abiding citizens who have voted in successive elections, yet are being asked to prove their residence under ad hoc SOPs that shift institutional failures onto voters. Nationwide, this category runs into several crores; in Uttar Pradesh alone, over ten million voters – about 8% of Enumeration Forms – were marked as non-mapped. Non-mapped voters are being pulled into short-notice, poorly

organised hearings for failures that originate within the EC's own systems. These hearings impose needless hardship, delay corrections, and spread anxiety. Many of those summoned are veterans, former public servants and professionals now compelled to prove their identity in their own country.

This reversal of accountability turns institutional error into citizen punishment. Voters whose names are accidentally deleted due to institutional flaws are then further trapped by the process. They are forced to seek restoration through Form 6 – meant only for first-time applicants – thereby compelling factually incorrect statements which declare that they have never been enrolled in any constituency. As a result, genuine voters seeking restoration are exposed to potential criminal liability under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023. This procedural flaw shifts legal risk onto citizens for errors originating within the system.

The need for digital verification

The dignified and effective remedy lies not in multiplying physical hearings, but in fully deploying the EC's existing digital infrastructure to replace them. A digital-first system – built on online document upload and backend cross-verification – can make voter verification faster, fairer, and far more humane, while sparing citizens the stress of summons and hearings. By reducing manual handling and reliance on flawed legacy rolls, such an approach would significantly improve the accuracy and sanctity of electoral rolls.

As a first step, the EC should notify every applicant of the status of their Enumeration Form (EF) – whether accepted or flagged – via SMS, email, or EPIC-linked accounts. Where discrepancies arise, particularly for non-mapped voters, applicants should be asked to upload identity documents via ECINet and provide the corresponding

unique identification numbers. ECINet can automatically verify them via backend interfaces – much like Aadhaar authentication – while issuing acknowledgements at each stage. Issues such as incomplete data or anomalies can be addressed through the same digital workflow, with BLOs or nearby electoral offices assisting voters who are less digitally comfortable.

As verification progresses, the voter's status on the draft roll can be updated in real time. The entire process would take only minutes – primarily for document upload – while verification remains fully automated. This audit-ready digital workflow offers a level of accuracy, integrity, and trust that no manual hearing, however well intentioned, can realistically achieve.

Safeguarding democracy

SIR 2.0 has crystallised a fundamental question: is the exercise genuinely intended to clean electoral rolls with dignity, in keeping with the EC's core mandate to ensure that no eligible voter is denied the franchise, or is it being implemented in a manner that harasses genuine citizens and pushes them toward disengagement? The tools to achieve the former are already available; the distress witnessed so far reflects not technological limits, but choices in enforcement.

The real challenge, therefore, is not a lack of technology but the failure to use it wisely. An initiative meant to strengthen electoral integrity has instead fuelled anxiety and distrust by leaning on flawed legacy data and coercive, manual processes. Electoral reform will succeed not through suspicion, but through trust, inclusion, and the responsible use of digital infrastructure – safeguarding not just procedures, but the foundations of public trust and democracy.

Rajeev Kumar is a former Professor of Computer Science at IIT Kharagpur, IIT Kanpur, BITS Pilani, and JNU, and a former scientist at DRDO and DST

Why SIR verification needs to be completely digitised

SIR सत्यापन को पूरी तरह डिजिटल किए जाने की आवश्यकता क्यों है

- The ongoing **Special Intensive Revision (SIR) 2.0** was projected as a **technology-driven exercise** to clean electoral rolls and include every eligible Indian resident. चल रहा **विशेष गहन पुनरीक्षण (SIR) 2.0** एक **प्रौद्योगिकी-आधारित प्रक्रिया** के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया गया था, जिसका उद्देश्य मतदाता सूचियों को साफ करना और प्रत्येक पात्र भारतीय निवासी को शामिल करना था।
- Instead of inspiring **confidence**, it has triggered widespread **fear and anxiety** among voters. विश्वास उत्पन्न करने के बजाय, इसने मतदाताओं के बीच व्यापक **डर और चिंता** पैदा कर दी है।
- The experience has exposed a stark mismatch between the **Election Commission's (EC) digital capacity and its ground-level execution**. इस अनुभव ने **निर्वाचन आयोग (EC)** की डिजिटल क्षमता और उसके **जमीनी स्तर के क्रियान्वयन** के बीच गंभीर असंगति को उजागर किया है।
- Despite the **ECINet's ability** to handle **data entry, verification, cross-checks, and audit trails**, the **process has relied heavily on paper-based forms, summons, and hearings**.



डेटा एंट्री, सत्यापन, क्रॉस-चेक, और ऑडिट ट्रेल्स संभालने की ECINet की क्षमता के बावजूद, यह प्रक्रिया बड़े पैमाने पर कागज़-आधारित फ़ॉर्म, समन, और सुनवाई पर निर्भर रही है।

- These are **error-prone methods** that impose unnecessary **hardship on voters**. ये त्रुटिपूर्ण तरीके हैं जो मतदाताओं पर अनावश्यक कठिनाई डालते हैं।
- As a result, even the most **eminent citizens** have been summoned. परिणामस्वरूप, सबसे प्रतिष्ठित नागरिकों को भी समन भेजे गए हैं।
- **A Nobel laureate and Bharat Ratna awardee in his 90s** received a notice over an alleged **age mismatch**. अपने 90 के दशक में एक नोबेल पुरस्कार विजेता और भारत रत्न सम्मानित व्यक्ति को कथित आयु असंगति को लेकर नोटिस मिला।
- **A former Police Commissioner of Kolkata, under whose jurisdiction SIR 2002 was conducted, was also found non-mapped.** कोलकाता के पूर्व पुलिस आयुक्त, जिनके कार्यक्षेत्र में SIR 2002 हुआ था, उन्हें भी नॉन-मैप्ड पाया गया।
- **MPs, DGPs, senior secretaries, vice chancellors, professors, and other top-ranking public servants have similarly been asked to establish their identity.** सांसदों, DGPs, वरिष्ठ सचिवों, कुलपतियों, प्रोफेसरों और अन्य शीर्ष सरकारी अधिकारियों से भी अपनी पहचान स्थापित करने को कहा गया है।
- These are long-standing citizens with **decades of documented presence**, yet they are being asked to **prove their residence**. ये दशकों से दस्तावेजों के साथ रह रहे नागरिक हैं, फिर भी उनसे निवास प्रमाण मांगा जा रहा है।
- The **EC also summoned several monks from the Ramakrishna Math and Mission for hearings.** निर्वाचन आयोग ने रामकृष्ण मठ और मिशन के कई संन्यासियों को भी सुनवाई के लिए बुलाया।
- **Their biological parents' names, severed upon embracing monastic life, do not match the names of gurus they now regard as parents.** संन्यास जीवन अपनाने के बाद उनके जैविक माता-पिता के नाम हट जाते हैं, जो अब उनके गुरुओं के नामों से मेल नहीं खाते।
- It was projected as **user-friendly and transparent**, but has instead produced **confusion** reminiscent of the **2002–04 SIR**. इसे उपयोगकर्ता-अनुकूल और पारदर्शी बताया गया था, लेकिन इसने 2002–04 के SIR जैसी भ्रमपूर्ण स्थिति पैदा कर दी है।
- That earlier SIR relied on **pen-and-paper processes**, lacked **third-party checks**, and left electoral rolls **incomplete and inconsistent**. वह पुराना SIR कागज़-कलम प्रक्रिया पर आधारित था, उसमें तृतीय-पक्ष जाँच नहीं थी और मतदाता सूचियाँ अधूरी व असंगत रह गई थीं।
- Despite these well-known **legacy flaws**, the same defective rolls were carried forward as the **foundation for SIR 2.0**. इन पुरानी खामियों के बावजूद, वही दोषपूर्ण सूचियाँ SIR 2.0 की नींव बना दी गईं।
- This was compounded by continued reliance on **manual filings and hearings** rather than **ECINet's digital capabilities**. यह समस्या मैनुअल फ़ाइलिंग और सुनवाई पर निर्भरता से और बढ़ गई, बजाय ECINet की डिजिटल क्षमताओं के उपयोग के।
- As a result, **draft rolls** released across **12 States/Union Territories** have raised two primary concerns. परिणामस्वरूप, 12 राज्यों/केंद्रशासित प्रदेशों में जारी ड्राफ्ट मतदाता सूचियों ने दो प्रमुख चिंताएँ खड़ी कर दी हैं।
- The first concern is the alleged deletion of **genuine voters** from the **2024 final rolls**, amounting to nearly **65 million deletions nationwide**. पहली चिंता 2024 की अंतिम सूचियों से वास्तविक मतदाताओं के कथित विलोपन की है, जो देशभर में लगभग 6.5 करोड़ तक है।
- For example, in **Uttar Pradesh**, submissions before the **Supreme Court** exposed a stark anomaly. उदाहरण के लिए, उत्तर प्रदेश में सुप्रीम कोर्ट के समक्ष प्रस्तुत तथ्यों ने गंभीर विसंगति उजागर की।
- The draft SIR roll lists **12.56 crore voters**, while the **Panchayat SIR** records **12.69 crore voters** in rural areas alone.



ड्राफ्ट SIR सूची में **12.56 करोड़** मतदाता हैं, जबकि पंचायत SIR में केवल **ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों** में ही **12.69 करोड़ मतदाता** दर्ज हैं।

- This implausible outcome highlights serious **data inconsistencies** and the cost of not adopting a **digital-first correction**.
यह अविश्वसनीय परिणाम गंभीर **डेटा असंगतियों** और **डिजिटल-फर्स्ट सुधार** न अपनाने की कीमत को दर्शाता है।
- The second concern is the emergence of a large number of **“non-mapped” voters**.
दूसरी चिंता बड़ी संख्या में **“नॉन-मैप्ड” मतदाताओं** के उभरने की है।
- This is primarily due to defects in the **2002–04 rolls**, where voters missing from legacy lists are now flagged as **non-mapped**.
यह मुख्यतः **2002–04 की सूचियों** की खामियों के कारण है, जहाँ पुराने रिकॉर्ड में न मिलने वाले मतदाताओं को अब **नॉन-मैप्ड** बताया जा रहा है।
- Many are long-standing, **law-abiding citizens** who have voted in successive elections. इनमें से कई लंबे समय से **कानून का पालन करने वाले नागरिक** हैं जिन्होंने लगातार चुनावों में मतदान किया है।
- Yet they are being asked to prove their **residence** under **ad hoc SOPs** that shift institutional failures onto voters.
फिर भी उनसे **तदर्थ SOPs** के तहत **निवास प्रमाण** मांगा जा रहा है, जो संस्थागत विफलताओं का बोझ मतदाताओं पर डालते हैं।
- Nationwide, this category runs into **several crores**.
देशभर में यह श्रेणी **कई करोड़ों** तक पहुँचती है।
- In **Uttar Pradesh alone**, over **ten million voters**, about **8% of Enumeration Forms**, were marked as **non-mapped**.
केवल **उत्तर प्रदेश** में ही **एक करोड़ से अधिक मतदाता**, यानी लगभग **8% गणना फॉर्म**, **नॉन-मैप्ड** चिह्नित किए गए।
- Non-mapped voters are being pulled into **short-notice, poorly organised hearings**.
नॉन-मैप्ड मतदाताओं को **अल्प सूचना पर, अव्यवस्थित सुनवाईयों** में घसीटा जा रहा है।
- These failures originate within the **EC’s own systems**.
ये विफलताएँ **निर्वाचन आयोग की अपनी प्रणालियों** से उत्पन्न होती हैं।
- These hearings impose **needless hardship**, delay corrections, and spread **anxiety**.
ऐसी सुनवाईयाँ **अनावश्यक कठिनाई** पैदा करती हैं, सुधार में देरी करती हैं और **चिंता** फैलाती हैं।
- Many of those summoned are **veterans, former public servants, and professionals**, now compelled to prove their **identity in their own country**.
जिन्हें बुलाया गया है उनमें **पूर्व सैनिक, पूर्व सरकारी अधिकारी और पेशेवर** शामिल हैं, जिन्हें अब अपने ही देश में अपनी **पहचान साबित** करनी पड़ रही है।

Reversal of Accountability and Citizen Punishment जवाबदेही का उलटाव और नागरिकों को दंड

- This reversal of **accountability** turns **institutional error** into **citizen punishment**.
जवाबदेही का यह उलटाव **संस्थागत त्रुटि** को **नागरिकों के दंड** में बदल देता है।
- Voters whose names are accidentally deleted due to **institutional flaws** are then further trapped by the process.
जिन मतदाताओं के नाम **संस्थागत खामियों** के कारण गलती से हटा दिए जाते हैं, वे प्रक्रिया में और अधिक फँस जाते हैं।
- They are forced to seek restoration through **Form 6**, meant only for **first-time applicants**.
उन्हें **फॉर्म 6** के माध्यम से नाम बहाल कराने के लिए मजबूर किया जाता है, जो केवल **पहली बार आवेदन करने वालों** के लिए है।

GS Paper II: Polity,

TOPICS COVERED

20 January 2026

1. There are four triggers of litigation, says Justice Datta
मुकदमेबाज़ी के चार कारण हैं, न्यायमूर्ति दत्ता ने कहा



2. EC to host international conference on election management, democracy चुनाव प्रबंधन और लोकतंत्र पर अंतरराष्ट्रीय सम्मेलन की मेज़बानी करेगा इसी

There are four triggers of litigation, says Justice Datta

GS II: Polity: Judiciary
Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Violence, greed, desire and anger have become the four triggers of modern litigation in India, Justice Dipankar Datta orally observed in the Supreme Court during the hearing of a land deal case on Monday.

“*Hinsa* (violence), *lobha* (greed), *kama* (desire) and *krodha* (anger) are the triggers for litigation now,” Justice Datta said. The judge was part of a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, who said it was “absolutely true”.

The Bench was hearing a petition filed by the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority against Gaursons Mega Projects Private Limited.

Justice Datta’s remarks came after the Chief Justice observed that officials were “hand in glove” with private builders in the subversion of land laws.

“Please introspect... *lobha* has gone up to such an extent that it has become unmanageable. We [the courts] have no control over citizens, we cannot give them a mandamus to abstain from *hinsa* or *lobha*,” Justice Datta said.

There are four triggers of litigation, says Justice Datta
मुकदमेबाज़ी के चार कारण हैं, न्यायमूर्ति दत्ता ने कहा

• **Violence, greed, desire and anger** have become the four triggers of modern litigation in India, Justice Dipankar Datta orally observed in the Supreme Court during the hearing of a land deal case on Monday.

हिंसा, लोभ, इच्छा और क्रोध आधुनिक मुकदमेबाज़ी के चार कारण बन गए हैं, यह टिप्पणी न्यायमूर्ति दीपंकर दत्ता ने सोमवार को सुप्रीम कोर्ट में भूमि सौदे के मामले की सुनवाई के दौरान मौखिक रूप से की।

• “**Hinsa (violence), lobha (greed), kama (desire) and krodha (anger)** are the triggers for litigation now,” Justice Datta said.

“हिंसा, लोभ, काम (इच्छा) और क्रोध अब मुकदमेबाज़ी के कारण हैं,” न्यायमूर्ति दत्ता ने कहा।

PATRIOTIC IAS



EC to host international conference on election management, democracy

GS II: Polity
The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Around a 100 delegates from over 70 countries will take part in the inaugural India International Conference on Democracy and Election Management (IICDEM), 2026 that will be held in the national capital this week.

The three-day conference, being organised by the India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM), a body under the Election Commission of India (EC), is expected to be the largest global conference of its kind hosted by India in the field of democracy and election management.

It is being held at Bharat Mandapam from January 21 to 23. Nearly 100 international delegates, representing over 70 countries from across the world, are



Nearly 100 international delegates, representing over 70 countries from across the world, are expected to participate. FILE PHOTO

expected, along with representatives of international organisations, foreign missions in India, and academic and practising experts in the electoral domain, the EC said in a statement.

The Chief Election Commissioner of India, Gyanesh Kumar, along with Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi, will receive the

delegates and inaugurate the session on January 21.

The three-day programme includes general and plenary sessions for election management bodies (EMBs), besides thematic sessions focusing on global electoral issues, model international electoral standards, and innovations and best practices in electoral processes. A total of 36 thematic groups, led by

the CEOs of States and Union Territories and supported by national and international academic experts, will contribute to in-depth deliberations during the conference.

40 bilateral meetings

The EC will hold over 40 bilateral meetings with the EMBs for further discussions and cooperation on various challenges confronting them around the world. The commission will formally launch ECINET, the EC's one-stop digital platform for all election-related information and services.

An exhibition showcasing the magnitude and complexity of conducting elections in India, along with the recent initiatives taken by the EC to strengthen the two pillars of elections, preparation of electoral rolls and conduct of elections, will also be held.

EC to host international conference on election management, democracy चुनाव प्रबंधन और लोकतंत्र पर अंतरराष्ट्रीय सम्मेलन की मेज़बानी करेगा ईसी

- Around **100 delegates** from over **70 countries** will take part in the inaugural **India International Conference on Democracy and Election Management (IICDEM), 2026** that will be held in the **national capital** this week.

इस सप्ताह राष्ट्रीय राजधानी में होने वाले पहले **इंडिया इंटरनेशनल कॉन्फ्रेंस ऑन डेमोक्रेसी एंड इलेक्शन मैनेजमेंट (IICDEM), 2026** में **70 से अधिक देशों** के लगभग **100 प्रतिनिधि** भाग लेंगे।

- The **three-day conference**, being organised by the **India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM)**, a body under the **Election Commission of India (EC)**, is expected to be the **largest global conference** of its kind hosted by India in the field of **democracy and election management**.

तीन दिवसीय सम्मेलन, जिसे **भारत निर्वाचन आयोग (ईसी)** के अधीन संस्था **इंडिया इंटरनेशनल इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ डेमोक्रेसी एंड इलेक्शन मैनेजमेंट (IIIDEM)** द्वारा आयोजित किया जा रहा है, से **लोकतंत्र और चुनाव प्रबंधन** के क्षेत्र में भारत द्वारा आयोजित अपनी तरह का **सबसे बड़ा वैश्विक सम्मेलन** होने की उम्मीद है।

- It is being held at **Bharat Mandapam** from **January 21 to 23**. यह **21 से 23 जनवरी** तक **भारत मंडपम** में आयोजित किया जा रहा है।
- Nearly **100 international delegates**, representing over **70 countries** from across the world, are expected, along with representatives of **international organisations, foreign missions in India**, and **academic and practising experts** in the **electoral domain**, the **EC** said in a statement.

ईसी ने एक बयान में कहा कि दुनिया भर के **70 से अधिक देशों** का प्रतिनिधित्व करने वाले लगभग **100 अंतरराष्ट्रीय प्रतिनिधियों** के साथ **अंतरराष्ट्रीय संगठनों, भारत में विदेशी मिशनों, और चुनावी क्षेत्र के शैक्षणिक एवं प्रैक्टिसिंग विशेषज्ञों** के प्रतिनिधि भी अपेक्षित हैं।



- The **Chief Election Commissioner of India, Gyanesh Kumar, along with Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi**, will receive the delegates and **inaugurate** the session on **January 21**.
भारत के मुख्य निर्वाचन आयुक्त ज्ञानेश कुमार, निर्वाचन आयुक्त सुखबीर सिंह संधू और विवेक जोशी के साथ, प्रतिनिधियों का स्वागत करेंगे और **21 जनवरी** को सत्र का **उद्घाटन** करेंगे।
- The **three-day programme** includes **general and plenary sessions** for **election management bodies (EMBs)**, besides **thematic sessions** focusing on **global electoral issues, model international electoral standards, and innovations and best practices** in electoral processes.
तीन दिवसीय कार्यक्रम में चुनाव प्रबंधन निकायों (ईएमबी) के लिए सामान्य और पूर्ण सत्र शामिल हैं, साथ ही वैश्विक चुनावी मुद्दों, आदर्श अंतरराष्ट्रीय चुनावी मानकों, और चुनावी प्रक्रियाओं में नवाचार एवं सर्वोत्तम प्रथाओं पर केंद्रित विषयगत सत्र भी होंगे।
- A total of **36 thematic groups**, led by the **CEOs of States and Union Territories** and supported by **national and international academic experts**, will contribute to **in-depth deliberations** during the conference.
कुल **36 विषयगत समूह**, जिनका नेतृत्व राज्यों और केंद्र शासित प्रदेशों के मुख्य निर्वाचन अधिकारी करेंगे और जिन्हें राष्ट्रीय एवं अंतरराष्ट्रीय शैक्षणिक विशेषज्ञों का समर्थन प्राप्त होगा, सम्मेलन के दौरान गहन विचार-विमर्श में योगदान देंगे।

40 bilateral meetings

40 द्विपक्षीय बैठकें

- The **EC** will hold over **40 bilateral meetings** with the **EMBs** for further discussions and **cooperation** on various challenges confronting them around the world.
ईसी दुनिया भर में सामने आ रही विभिन्न चुनौतियों पर आगे की चर्चा और सहयोग के लिए ईएमबी के साथ **40 से अधिक द्विपक्षीय बैठकें** करेगा।
- The commission will formally launch **ECINET**, the EC's **one-stop digital platform** for all **election-related information and services**.
आयोग औपचारिक रूप से ईसीआईनेट, यानी सभी चुनाव संबंधी जानकारी और सेवाओं के लिए ईसी का **वन-स्टॉप डिजिटल प्लेटफॉर्म**, लॉन्च करेगा।
- An **exhibition** showcasing the **magnitude and complexity** of conducting **elections in India**, along with the **recent initiatives** taken by the **EC** to strengthen the **two pillars of elections, preparation of electoral rolls and conduct of elections**, will also be held.
भारत में चुनाव कराने की व्यापकता और जटिलता को दर्शाने वाली एक प्रदर्शनी भी आयोजित की जाएगी, जिसमें ईसी द्वारा चुनावों के दो स्तंभों, यानी मतदाता सूची की तैयारी और चुनावों के संचालन, को मजबूत करने के लिए उठाई गई हालिया पहलें प्रदर्शित की जाएंगी।

GS Paper II: International Relations

TOPICS COVERED

20 January 2026

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1. | India signs Letter of Intent to elevate defence ties with UAE भारत ने यूएई के साथ रक्षा संबंधों को मजबूत करने के लिए आशय पत्र पर हस्ताक्षर किए |
| 2. | Foreign Ministers of India, Poland spar over neighbours भारत और पोलैंड के विदेश मंत्रियों के बीच पड़ोसी देशों को लेकर टकराव |
| 3. | Fractured Yemen विभाजित यमन |
| 4. | In a changing world, it is 'small tables, big dividends' बदलती दुनिया में, यह 'छोटी मेज़ें, बड़े लाभ' है |



India signs Letter of Intent to elevate defence ties with UAE

The signing of the pact comes amid increasing Saudi-Pakistan defence cooperation in the Arabian peninsula and especially in Yemen; the two sides also ink energy deal during UAE President's visit

GS II: IR: West Asia

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

Against the backdrop of growing military tension in the Gulf region, the United Arab Emirates and India signed a "Letter of Intent for a Bilateral Strategic Defence Partnership" on Monday. The Letter of Intent was sealed during the three-hour visit by the President of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, when the two sides set a goal of doubling bilateral trade to \$200 billion by 2032.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the UAE leader at the Palam airport and the two leaders discussed, among other issues, the situation in Gaza where U.S. President Donald Trump's peace plan will be tested in the coming weeks as well as the protests in Iran. In a press briefing after the departure of the dignitaries, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said



PM Narendra Modi with UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan during a meeting, at the PM's residence in New Delhi. PTI

the two leaders also discussed the situation in Yemen over which Saudi Arabia's relation with the UAE has nosedived.

In response to a question on whether the India-UAE strategic defence partnership could drag India into a future conflict scenario in the Gulf region, Mr. Misri said the Letter of Intent was aimed at the "work on concluding a framework agreement for Strategic Defence Partner-

ship". "So I would really characterise it as a natural evolution from the already considerable defence cooperation between the two countries and not necessarily a response to any specific event that may have taken place in the region or of any intent to get involved in a hypothetical future scenario in the region," said Mr. Misri.

There has been greater involvement of Pakistani military in safeguarding

Saudi defence and security interests in the Arabian peninsula and especially in Yemen. The Saudi-Pakistan defence cooperation has intensified since the two countries signed a mutual defence agreement on September 17, 2025.

The Saudi-Pakistan military alliance has been active in the Yemen theatre and that has increased pressure on the UAE.

During the brief visit, the two sides also signed an energy deal involving the Hindustan Petroleum Company Ltd (HPCL) and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company Gas (ADNOC) that will allow purchase of 0.5 Million Metric Tonnes Per Annum (MMPTA) LNG by the HPCL from ADNOC over 10 years starting from 2028.

Another Letter of Intent was signed between the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre and the Space Agency of the UAE for the development of space industry in the UAE.

India signs Letter of Intent to elevate defence ties with UAE

भारत ने यूएई के साथ रक्षा संबंधों को मजबूत करने के लिए आशय पत्र पर हस्ताक्षर किए

- The signing of the pact comes amid increasing **Saudi-Pakistan defence cooperation** in the **Arabian peninsula** and especially in **Yemen**; the two sides also ink an energy deal during the **UAE President's visit**.
इस समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर अरब प्रायद्वीप और विशेष रूप से यमन में बढ़ते सऊदी-पाकिस्तान रक्षा सहयोग के बीच हुए; यूएई राष्ट्रपति की यात्रा के दौरान दोनों पक्षों ने ऊर्जा समझौता भी किया।
- Against the backdrop of growing **military tension** in the **Gulf region**, the **United Arab Emirates** and **India** signed a "Letter of Intent for a **Bilateral Strategic Defence Partnership**" on **Monday**.
खाड़ी क्षेत्र में बढ़ते सैन्य तनाव की पृष्ठभूमि में संयुक्त अरब अमीरात और भारत ने सोमवार को "द्विपक्षीय रणनीतिक रक्षा साझेदारी के लिए आशय पत्र" पर हस्ताक्षर किए।



- The **Letter of Intent** was sealed during the **three-hour visit** by the **President of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan**, when the two sides set a goal of doubling **bilateral trade to \$200 billion by 2032**.
यह आशय पत्र संयुक्त अरब अमीरात के राष्ट्रपति शेख मोहम्मद बिन जायद अल नाहयान की तीन घंटे की यात्रा के दौरान संपन्न हुआ, जब दोनों पक्षों ने 2032 तक द्विपक्षीय व्यापार को 200 अरब डॉलर तक दोगुना करने का लक्ष्य रखा।
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** received the **UAE leader** at the **Palam airport** and the two leaders discussed, among other issues, the situation in **Gaza** where **U.S. President Donald Trump's peace plan** will be tested in the coming weeks as well as the **protests in Iran**.
प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने **पालम हवाई अड्डे** पर यूएई नेता का स्वागत किया और दोनों नेताओं ने अन्य मुद्दों के साथ **गाज़ा** की स्थिति पर चर्चा की, जहाँ आने वाले हफ्तों में **अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप की शांति योजना** की परीक्षा होगी, साथ ही **ईरान में विरोध प्रदर्शनों** पर भी बात हुई।
- In a press briefing after the departure of the dignitaries, **Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri** said the two leaders also discussed the situation in **Yemen** over which **Saudi Arabia's relation with the UAE** has nosedived.
विशिष्ट अतिथियों के प्रस्थान के बाद प्रेस ब्रीफिंग में **विदेश सचिव विक्रम मिसरी** ने कहा कि दोनों नेताओं ने **यमन** की स्थिति पर भी चर्चा की, जिस पर **सऊदी अरब और यूएई** के संबंध **गंभीर रूप से बिगड़ गए हैं**।
- In response to a question on whether the **India-UAE strategic defence partnership** could drag India into a future **conflict scenario** in the **Gulf region**, Mr. Misri said the **Letter of Intent** was aimed at the **"work on concluding a framework agreement for Strategic Defence Partnership"**.
भारत-यूएई रणनीतिक रक्षा साझेदारी भारत को **खाड़ी क्षेत्र** में किसी भविष्य के **संघर्ष परिदृश्य** में घसीट सकती है या नहीं, इस सवाल के जवाब में मिसरी ने कहा कि **आशय पत्र** का उद्देश्य **"रणनीतिक रक्षा साझेदारी के लिए एक ढांचा समझौता पूरा करने पर काम"** करना है।
- "So I would really characterise it as a **natural evolution** from the already considerable **defence cooperation** between the two countries and not necessarily a response to any **specific event** that may have taken place in the region or of any intent to get involved in a hypothetical future scenario in the region," said Mr. Misri.
मिसरी ने कहा, "इसलिए मैं इसे दोनों देशों के बीच पहले से मौजूद व्यापक **रक्षा सहयोग** से निकला एक **स्वाभाविक विकास** मानूंगा, न कि क्षेत्र में हुई किसी **विशिष्ट घटना** की प्रतिक्रिया या किसी काल्पनिक भविष्य के परिदृश्य में शामिल होने की मंशा।"
- There has been greater involvement of the Pakistani **military** in safeguarding **Saudi defence and security interests** in the **Arabian peninsula** and especially in **Yemen**.
अरब प्रायद्वीप और विशेष रूप से **यमन** में **सऊदी रक्षा और सुरक्षा हितों** की रक्षा में **पाकिस्तानी सेना** की भागीदारी बढ़ी है।
- The **Saudi-Pakistan defence cooperation** has intensified since the two countries signed a **mutual defence agreement** on **September 17, 2025**.
सऊदी-पाकिस्तान रक्षा सहयोग 17 सितंबर 2025 को दोनों देशों द्वारा **आपसी रक्षा समझौते** पर हस्ताक्षर के बाद से तेज़ हुआ है।
- The **Saudi-Pakistan military alliance** has been active in the **Yemen theatre** and that has increased **pressure on the UAE**.
सऊदी-पाकिस्तान सैन्य गठबंधन यमन के मोर्चे पर सक्रिय रहा है और इससे **यूएई पर दबाव** बढ़ा है।
- During the brief visit, the two sides also signed an **energy deal** involving the **Hindustan Petroleum Company Ltd (HPCL)** and **Abu Dhabi National Oil Company Gas (ADNOC)** that will allow purchase of **0.5 Million Metric Tonnes Per Annum (MMPTA) LNG** by the HPCL from ADNOC over **10 years starting from 2028**.
संक्षिप्त यात्रा के दौरान दोनों पक्षों ने **हिंदुस्तान पेट्रोलियम कंपनी लिमिटेड (एचपीसीएल)** और **अबू धाबी नेशनल ऑयल कंपनी गैस (एडीएनओसी)** से जुड़ा एक **ऊर्जा समझौता** भी किया, जिसके तहत **2028 से शुरू होकर 10 वर्षों तक** एचपीसीएल द्वारा एडीएनओसी से **0.5 मिलियन मीट्रिक टन प्रति वर्ष (एमएमपीटीए) एलएनजी** की खरीद संभव होगी।
- Another **Letter of Intent** was signed between the **Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre** and the **Space Agency of the UAE** for the development of the space industry in the **UAE**.
एक अन्य **आशय पत्र** भारतीय राष्ट्रीय अंतरिक्ष संवर्धन और प्राधिकरण केंद्र तथा **यूएई की अंतरिक्ष एजेंसी** के बीच **यूएई में अंतरिक्ष उद्योग के विकास** के लिए हस्ताक्षरित किया गया।



Foreign Ministers of India, Poland spar over neighbours

GS II: IR: Europe

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

India and Poland sparred over their respective regional rivals as External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Polish Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Radoslaw Sikorski aired their differences over Pakistan and Russia on Monday as the two Ministers met for talks in New Delhi.

Taking aim at Poland's renewed ties with Pakistan, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar told visiting Mr. Sikorski that India expects its partners not to help "fuel" terrorism in the neighbourhood. Mr. Jaishankar also delivered a severe message to the visiting dignitary about the European Union's sanctions against India's trade and oil imports from Russia, calling it "selective targeting".

In televised opening remarks at Hyderabad House, Mr. Jaishankar said he wanted to "discuss some of [Mr. Sikorski's] recent travels to the region", a direct reference to the Polish FM's visit to Pakistan in October 2025, where he had met Pakistan's top leadership. The visit to Pakistan by Mr. Sikorski appears to have upset the government as it came a few months after the India-Pakistan conflict in May.

"Poland should display zero tolerance for terrorism and not help fuel the terrorist infrastructure in our neighbourhood," Mr. Jaishankar said.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting at Hydera-

bad House, Mr. Sikorski said that the conversation about India and Poland's respective regions had been "frank", and said that while the two sides agreed on concerns over terrorism, India's participation in "Zapad-2025" military exercises in Russia and Belarus was seen as "threatening".

"We all have regional concerns and we all have neighbours, and with neighbours you have opportunities and challenges," Mr. Sikorski said, adding that on terrorism India and Poland are of "one mind".

"We also have concerns. India took part in the Zapad exercises in Russia that we find threatening," he stated.

The exchange of differences between Delhi and Warsaw was seen as unusual given that the two countries have been improving relations in recent years, and India and the European Union are close to a major trade agreement next week.

During talks, Mr. Jaishankar turned to the issue of India's imports of Russian oil that he said Mr. Sikorski had been speaking about "publicly" during his visit. In Jaipur on Monday, the Polish Foreign Minister had said that he was "pleased" that India had cut its purchase of Russian oil.

"I have repeatedly underlined that the selective targeting of India is both unfair and unjustified. I do so again today," Mr. Jaishankar said.

श्री सिकोरस्की की पाकिस्तान यात्रा संघर्ष के कुछ महीनों बाद हुई थी।

- "Poland should display zero tolerance for terrorism and not help fuel the terrorist infrastructure in our neighbourhood," Mr. Jaishankar said.

श्री जयशंकर ने कहा, "पोलैंड को आतंकवाद के प्रति शून्य सहनशीलता दिखानी चाहिए और हमारे पड़ोस में आतंकी ढांचे को बढ़ावा देने में मदद नहीं करनी चाहिए।"

Foreign Ministers of India, Poland spar over neighbours

भारत और पोलैंड के विदेश मंत्रियों के बीच पड़ोसी देशों को लेकर टकराव

- India and Poland sparred over their respective regional rivals as External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Polish Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Radoslaw Sikorski aired their differences over Pakistan and Russia on Monday as the two Ministers met for talks in New Delhi.



भारत और पोलैंड अपने-अपने क्षेत्रीय प्रतिद्वंद्वियों को लेकर आमने-सामने आए, जब विदेश मंत्री एस.

जयशंकर और पोलैंड के विदेश मंत्री एवं उप-प्रधानमंत्री राडोस्लाव सिकोरस्की ने सोमवार को नई दिल्ली में वार्ता के दौरान पाकिस्तान और रूस पर अपने मतभेद सामने रखे।

- Taking aim at Poland's renewed ties with Pakistan, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar told visiting Mr. Sikorski that India expects its partners not to help "fuel" terrorism in the neighbourhood.

पोलैंड के पाकिस्तान के साथ नए संबंधों को निशाना बनाते हुए विदेश मंत्री एस. जयशंकर ने दौरे पर आए श्री सिकोरस्की से कहा कि भारत अपने साझेदारों से उम्मीद करता है कि वे पड़ोस में आतंकवाद को "भड़काने" में मदद न करें।

- Mr. Jaishankar also delivered a severe message to the visiting dignitary about the European Union's sanctions against India's trade and oil imports from Russia, calling it "selective targeting".

श्री जयशंकर ने भारत के रूस से व्यापार और तेल आयात पर यूरोपीय संघ के प्रतिबंधों को लेकर भी कड़ा संदेश दिया और इसे "चयनात्मक निशाना बनाना" कहा।

- In televised opening remarks at Hyderabad House, Mr. Jaishankar said he wanted to "discuss some of [Mr. Sikorski's] recent travels to the region", a direct reference to the Polish FM's visit to Pakistan in October 2025, where he had met Pakistan's top leadership.

हैदराबाद हाउस में प्रसारित शुरुआती टिप्पणियों में श्री जयशंकर ने कहा कि वह "[श्री सिकोरस्की की] हाल की क्षेत्रीय यात्राओं पर चर्चा करना चाहते हैं, जो अक्टूबर 2025 में पोलैंड के विदेश मंत्री की पाकिस्तान यात्रा का सीधा संदर्भ था, जहां उन्होंने पाकिस्तान के शीर्ष नेतृत्व से मुलाकात की थी।

- The visit to Pakistan by Mr. Sikorski appears to have upset the government as it came a few months after the India-Pakistan conflict in May.

से सरकार असंतुष्ट प्रतीत हुई, क्योंकि यह मई में भारत-पाकिस्तान



- Speaking to reporters after the meeting at **Hyderabad House**, **Mr. Sikorski** said that the conversation about India and Poland's respective regions had been "**frank**", and said that while the two sides agreed on concerns over **terrorism**, India's participation in "**Zapad-2025**" **military exercises in Russia and Belarus** was seen as "**threatening**".
हैदराबाद हाउस में बैठक के बाद पत्रकारों से बात करते हुए श्री सिकोरस्की ने कहा कि भारत और पोलैंड के अपने-अपने क्षेत्रों पर बातचीत "स्पष्टवादी" रही, और जबकि दोनों पक्ष आतंकवाद को लेकर चिंताओं पर सहमत थे, रूस और बेलारूस में "ज़ापाद-2025" सैन्य अभ्यासों में भारत की भागीदारी को "खतरे के रूप में" देखा गया।
- "**We all have regional concerns and we all have neighbours, and with neighbours you have opportunities and challenges**," **Mr. Sikorski** said, adding that on **terrorism** India and Poland are of "**one mind**".
श्री सिकोरस्की ने कहा, "हम सभी की क्षेत्रीय चिंताएँ होती हैं और हमारे पड़ोसी होते हैं, और पड़ोसियों के साथ अवसर और चुनौतियाँ दोनों होती हैं," उन्होंने जोड़ा कि आतंकवाद पर भारत और पोलैंड "एक मत" हैं।
- "**We also have concerns. India took part in the Zapad exercises in Russia that we find threatening**," he stated.
उन्होंने कहा, "हमें भी चिंताएँ हैं। भारत ने रूस में ज़ापाद अभ्यासों में हिस्सा लिया, जिन्हें हम खतरनाक मानते हैं।"
- The exchange of differences between **Delhi** and **Warsaw** was seen as **unusual** given that the two countries have been improving relations in recent years, and **India** and the **European Union** are close to a major **trade agreement next week**.
दिल्ली और वारसॉ के बीच मतभेदों का यह आदान-प्रदान असामान्य माना गया, क्योंकि हाल के वर्षों में दोनों देशों के संबंध बेहतर हो रहे हैं और **भारत** तथा **यूरोपीय संघ** अगले सप्ताह एक बड़े **व्यापार समझौते** के करीब हैं।

PATRIOTIC IAS



GS II: IR: West Asia MQB

Fractured Yemen

Saudi Arabia and the UAE must help all Yemeni factions come together

The flare-up in fighting between Yemen's Saudi-backed government and the Southern Transitional Council (STC), a separatist force backed by the UAE, has exposed the country's internal vulnerabilities and the Persian Gulf region's geopolitical fault lines. The crisis escalated in early December when the Aden-based STC launched a surprise offensive in the oil-rich Hadhramaut and al-Mahra governorates, which were under government control. It gained control of nearly half of the former South Yemen state, but the advances were short-lived. Government forces, covered by Saudi air power, swiftly recaptured the lost areas. On January 7, government forces entered Aden, forcing the STC to send a delegation to Riyadh for talks. In the Saudi capital, the STC announced its dissolution, while its leader, Aidarus al-Zoubaidi, who has been charged with treason, is believed to have fled to the UAE. The crisis also brought Saudi-UAE tensions into the open. Riyadh accused Abu Dhabi of transferring weapons to Yemeni separatists, and carried out air strikes on the port of Mukalla, reportedly targeting arms shipments. Following a rare public rebuke from Saudi Arabia, the UAE announced its withdrawal of forces from Yemen and an end to its "counterterrorism operations".

The UAE was a part of Saudi Arabia's military coalition when it began bombing the Houthis (Ansar Allah), the Shia militia that captured Sanaa, Yemen's capital, in 2014. But the years-long war did little to defeat the Houthis. The Saudi-backed government operated from Aden in the south, until the STC began challenging it. The UAE then began support to the STC. Saudi Arabia, facing a direct security threat from the Houthis along its southern borders, entered into a ceasefire with the group, and sought to stabilise southern Yemen through the government. Yet, Riyadh grew increasingly alarmed by the expanding military power and defiance of the separatists. As government forces and the STC fought for influence in the south, the Houthis entrenched their position in the north, encompassing key population centres. The true victims of this multi-layered conflict, however, have been Yemen's civilians. The country faces one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, with millions on the brink of famine, an economy in ruins and devastated infrastructure. For now, an uneasy calm prevails in the south. But STC representatives in the UAE have dismissed claims that the council has been disbanded. For peace to take hold, all Yemeni factions must together establish a federal governance structure, addressing present power dynamics and historical grievances. For this to happen, Saudi Arabia and the UAE must bury the hatchet and work jointly for stability in their impoverished neighbouring country.

- The crisis also brought **Saudi-UAE tensions** into the open. इस संकट ने **सऊदी-UAE तनाव** को भी खुलकर सामने ला दिया।
- **Riyadh** accused **Abu Dhabi** of **transferring weapons to Yemeni separatists**, and carried out **air strikes on the port of Mukalla**, reportedly targeting arms shipments.

Fractured Yemen विभाजित यमन

• **Saudi Arabia** and the **UAE** must help all **Yemeni factions** come together.

सऊदी अरब और **यूएई** को सभी **यमनी गुटों** को एक साथ लाने में मदद करनी चाहिए।

The flare-up in fighting in Yemen
यमन में संघर्ष का फिर भड़कना

• The flare-up in fighting between **Yemen's Saudi-backed government** and the **Southern Transitional Council (STC)**, a separatist force backed by the **UAE**, has exposed the country's **internal vulnerabilities** and the **Persian Gulf region's geopolitical fault lines**.

सऊदी समर्थित यमन सरकार और **Southern Transitional Council (STC)**, जो कि **UAE** समर्थित **अलगाववादी बल** है, के बीच संघर्ष के फिर भड़कने से देश की **आंतरिक कमजोरियाँ** और **फ़ारस की खाड़ी क्षेत्र की भू-राजनीतिक दरारें** उजागर हुई हैं।

• The crisis escalated in **early December** when the **Aden-based STC** launched a **surprise offensive** in the **oil-rich Hadhramaut and al-Mahra governorates**, which were under **government control**.

संकट दिसंबर की शुरुआत में तब बढ़ा जब **अदन स्थित STC** ने **तेल-समृद्ध हद्रामौत और अल-महा प्रांतों** में, जो **सरकारी नियंत्रण** में थे, एक **अचानक हमला** शुरू किया।

• It gained control of nearly **half of the former South Yemen state**, but the advances were **short-lived**.

इसने **पूर्व दक्षिण यमन राज्य** के लगभग **आधे हिस्से** पर नियंत्रण हासिल कर लिया, लेकिन ये बढ़त **अल्पकालिक** रही।

• **Government forces**, covered by **Saudi air power**, swiftly **recaptured the lost areas**.

सऊदी वायु शक्ति के समर्थन से **सरकारी बलों** ने तेजी से **खोए हुए क्षेत्रों** को फिर से कब्जे में ले लिया।

• On **January 7**, government forces entered **Aden**, forcing the **STC** to send a **delegation to Riyadh** for talks.

7 जनवरी को सरकारी बल **अदन** में दाखिल हुए, जिससे **STC** को बातचीत के लिए **रियाद** में एक **प्रतिनिधिमंडल** भेजना पड़ा।

• In the **Saudi capital**, the **STC** announced its **dissolution**, while its leader, **Aidarus al-Zoubaidi**, who has been **charged with treason**, is believed to have **fled to the UAE**.

सऊदी राजधानी में **STC** ने अपने **विघटन की घोषणा** की, जबकि उसका नेता **ऐदरस अल-ज़ौबैदी**, जिस पर **देशद्रोह का आरोप** है, के बारे में माना जाता है कि वह **UAE** भाग गया है।



रियाद ने अबू धाबी पर यमनी अलगाववादियों को हथियार पहुँचाने का आरोप लगाया और कथित तौर पर हथियारों की खेप को निशाना बनाते हुए मुकल्ला बंदरगाह पर हवाई हमले किए।

- Following a rare public rebuke from Saudi Arabia, the UAE announced its withdrawal of forces from Yemen and an end to its “counterterrorism operations”.
सऊदी अरब की ओर से एक दुर्लभ सार्वजनिक फटकार के बाद, UAE ने यमन से अपने बलों की वापसी और अपनी “आतंकवाद-रोधी कार्रवाइयों” को समाप्त करने की घोषणा की।
- The UAE was a part of Saudi Arabia’s military coalition when it began bombing the Houthis (Ansar Allah), the Shia militia that captured Sanaa, Yemen’s capital, in 2014.
UAE, सऊदी अरब के सैन्य गठबंधन का हिस्सा था जब उसने हौथियों (अंसार अल्लाह) पर बमबारी शुरू की थी, जो कि वह शिया मिलिशिया है जिसने 2014 में यमन की राजधानी सना पर कब्ज़ा कर लिया था।
- But the years-long war did little to defeat the Houthis.
लेकिन कई वर्षों से चला युद्ध हौथियों को हराने में बहुत कम सफल रहा।
- The Saudi-backed government operated from Aden in the south, until the STC began challenging it.
सऊदी समर्थित सरकार दक्षिण में अदन से काम कर रही थी, जब तक कि STC ने उसे चुनौती देना शुरू नहीं किया।
- The UAE then began support to the STC.
इसके बाद UAE ने STC को समर्थन देना शुरू किया।
- Saudi Arabia, facing a direct security threat from the Houthis along its southern borders, entered into a ceasefire with the group, and sought to stabilise southern Yemen through the government.
सऊदी अरब, अपनी दक्षिणी सीमाओं पर हौथियों से प्रत्यक्ष सुरक्षा खतरे का सामना करते हुए, इस समूह के साथ संघर्षविराम में गया और सरकार के माध्यम से दक्षिणी यमन को स्थिर करने की कोशिश की।
- Yet, Riyadh grew increasingly alarmed by the expanding military power and defiance of the separatists.
फिर भी, रियाद अलगाववादियों की बढ़ती सैन्य शक्ति और अवज्ञा से लगातार अधिक चिंतित होता गया।
- As government forces and the STC fought for influence in the south, the Houthis entrenched their position in the north, encompassing key population centres.
जब सरकारी बल और STC दक्षिण में प्रभाव के लिए लड़ रहे थे, तब हौथियों ने उत्तर में अपनी स्थिति मजबूत कर ली, जिसमें प्रमुख जनसंख्या केंद्र शामिल हैं।
- The true victims of this multi-layered conflict, however, have been Yemen’s civilians.
हालाँकि, इस बहु-स्तरीय संघर्ष के वास्तविक शिकार यमन के आम नागरिक रहे हैं।
- The country faces one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises, with millions on the brink of famine, an economy in ruins, and devastated infrastructure.
देश दुनिया के सबसे गंभीर मानवीय संकटों में से एक का सामना कर रहा है, जहाँ लाखों लोग भुखमरी के कगार पर हैं, अर्थव्यवस्था तबाह है और बुनियादी ढांचा नष्ट हो चुका है।
- For this to happen, Saudi Arabia and the UAE must bury the hatchet and work jointly for stability in their impoverished neighbouring country.
इसके लिए सऊदी अरब और UAE को अपने मतभेद भुलाकर, अपने गरीब पड़ोसी देश में स्थिरता के लिए साझा रूप से काम करना होगा।



In a changing world, it is 'small tables, big dividends'

GS II: IR, Global Groupings

On January 26, 2026, Kartavya Path will send a signal that goes beyond ceremony. The chief guests at the Republic Day parade will be the European Union (EU)'s institutional leadership, representing a 27-member bloc rather than a single capital.

That break with tradition points to a wider truth about 2026. Bilateral diplomacy will remain demanding. The neighbourhood will require constant attention, and ties with Washington and Beijing will keep producing friction, from trade disputes to sharper strategic competition.

India's best openings may, therefore, lie in diplomatic white spaces. Think of them as gaps in global leadership. Problems need coordination, but no major power can credibly take charge. They are crowded rooms without a convenor. In such spaces, India can work through coalitions to shape rules and deliver global public goods, provided it chooses priorities that it can sustain.

Working with Europe

Europe is the first test. The presence of Ursula von der Leyen and António Luís Santos da Costa on January 26 signals the intent to push forward the long-pending India-EU Free Trade Agreement. While ties with Berlin, Paris or Rome matter, India's decisive engagement will be with the EU's collective trade, competition and climate policy. This is not only about customs duties. It is about market access rules, data standards and sustainability requirements. If India treats the agreement as a de-risking compact, the payoff is threefold. It strengthens access to Europe, positions India in reworked value chains, and offers some insurance against United States trade pressure. But it will raise compliance burdens for firms.

The European window is open because the EU wants to reduce exposure to China and hedge against U.S. unpredictability by deepening

MOB



Syed Akbaruddin

is a former Indian Permanent Representative to the United Nations and, currently, Dean, Kautilya School of Public Policy, Hyderabad

With bilateral diplomacy remaining demanding, India's best chances lie in diplomatic white spaces

partnerships with India. Delhi needs to move quickly. Windows close.

The next is BRICS and the Quad

Europe is the technocratic test of India's white space diplomacy. BRICS is the political one. BRICS in 2026 is not what it was. Expansion has widened its reach but blurred its focus because members do not want the same things at the same speed. That raises the key question: what is BRICS actually for, and can India help define it?

The demands BRICS represents are real. Many members want a stronger voice for the Global South, fairer representation and credible alternatives in development finance. Yet, the group's direction is contested.

As chair and host in 2026, India can steer BRICS toward delivery through better use of New Development Bank guarantees and practical toolkits that turn communiqués into action.

External risks also matter. Washington's tariff threats against countries seen as aligning with BRICS raise the cost of careless signalling. India gains little by letting the group drift into anti-West rhetoric or a de-dollarisation crusade, which would undercut its effort to attract western capital and technology. India's task is to hold the balance. Reform is not the same as rejection.

The third white space is the Quad. If India hosts a Quad leaders' summit, it could be hosting U.S. President Donald Trump. That would add political weight and raise the stakes for delivery.

The Quad's agenda on maritime domain awareness and resilient ports matters to Indian Ocean littoral states that want capacity without being drawn into great power rivalries. India can make the Quad useful by turning capabilities into services that others can access.

India's Operation Sagar Bandhu following Cyclone Ditwah in Sri Lanka showed the value of having assets that can be retasked quickly without

diplomatic drama. Success, however, will depend on Washington managing trade differences with partners without disrupting broader cooperation.

All this underlines a hard truth about large forums. The United Nations remains essential for legitimacy and norm-setting, but it is a weak instrument for delivery when major powers are at odds. Outcomes are shifting to coalitions that can move even when the centre cannot.

The G-20 shows the same strain. In theory, it is the premier table for economic coordination. In practice, it is increasingly exposed to domestic politics and agenda fights. The U.S. boycott of the Johannesburg G-20 summit in 2025 and the push to narrow the agenda under the U.S. presidency in 2026 could sideline Global South priorities and make the forum feel less inclusive.

Amid global volatility, India's momentum in 2026 will come from turning white spaces into working arrangements. Europe is about standards, BRICS is about functionality, and the Quad is about public goods.

The message for India

The AI Impact Summit in Delhi (February 2026) is India's chance to get governments, companies and researchers together to bridge differences where interests overlap. As Washington experiments with new forums, including Mr. Trump's proposed 'Board of Peace' that is focused on peace building, Delhi will need to choose carefully. An invitation for India to join Pax Silica, a U.S.-led capability club for Artificial Intelligence and semiconductor supply chains, is reportedly in the works and shows how fast these new tables are multiplying.

In a divided world, it is rarely the biggest table that shapes the future. It is the smaller tables where things actually get done. In 2026, India's advantage will lie in making the tables that it chooses work.

In a changing world, it is 'small tables, big dividends'

बदलती दुनिया में, यह 'छोटी मेज़ें, बड़े लाभ' है

- On January 26, 2026, Kartavya Path will send a signal that goes beyond ceremony. 26 जनवरी, 2026 को कर्तव्य पथ एक ऐसा संकेत देगा जो केवल औपचारिकता से आगे जाता है।
- The chief guests at the Republic Day parade will be the European Union (EU)'s institutional leadership, representing a 27-member bloc rather than a single capital. गणतंत्र दिवस परेड में मुख्य अतिथि के रूप में यूरोपीय संघ (EU) का संस्थागत नेतृत्व होगा, जो किसी एक राजधानी के बजाय 27-सदस्यीय समूह का प्रतिनिधित्व करेगा।
- The presence of Ursula von der Leyen and António Luís Santos da Costa on January 26 signals the intent to push forward the long-pending India-EU Free Trade Agreement. 26 जनवरी को उर्सुला वॉन डेर लेयेन और अंतोनियो लुइस सैंटोस दा कोस्टा की उपस्थिति लंबित भारत-EU मुक्त व्यापार समझौते को आगे बढ़ाने के इरादे का संकेत देती है।
- It is about market access rules, data standards and sustainability requirements. यह बाज़ार तक पहुँच के नियमों, डेटा मानकों और सततता आवश्यकताओं से जुड़ा है।
- If India treats the agreement as a de-risking compact, the payoff is threefold. यदि भारत इस समझौते को जोखिम-न्यूनन समझौता माने, तो इसका लाभ तीन गुना होगा।
- It strengthens access to Europe, positions India in reworked value chains, and offers some insurance against United States trade pressure. यह यूरोप तक पहुँच को मजबूत करता है, पुनर्गठित मूल्य शृंखलाओं में भारत को स्थापित करता है, और संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका के व्यापार दबाव के खिलाफ कुछ सुरक्षा प्रदान करता है।
- But it will raise compliance burdens for firms. लेकिन इससे कंपनियों पर अनुपालन का बोझ बढ़ेगा।
- The European window is open because the EU wants to reduce exposure to China and hedge against U.S. unpredictability by deepening partnerships with India. यूरोपीय अवसर इसलिए खुला है क्योंकि EU, चीन पर निर्भरता कम करना चाहता है और अमेरिकी अनिश्चितता के विरुद्ध भारत के साथ साझेदारी गहरी करना चाहता है।



- Europe is the **technocratic test** of India's **white space diplomacy**.
यूरोप भारत की **व्हाइट स्पेस कूटनीति** की तकनीकी परीक्षा है।
- **BRICS is the political one.**
BRICS इसका **राजनीतिक** परीक्षण है।
- **BRICS in 2026 is not what it was.**
2026 में **BRICS** वैसा नहीं रहा है जैसा वह पहले था।
- **Expansion has widened its reach but blurred its focus** because members do not want the **same things at the same speed.**
विस्तार ने इसकी **पहुंच** बढ़ाई है, लेकिन इसका **फोकस धुंधला** कर दिया है क्योंकि सदस्य **एक ही समय पर एक जैसी चीजें** नहीं चाहते।
- **As chair and host in 2026, India** can steer **BRICS toward delivery** through better use of **New Development Bank guarantees** and **practical toolkits** that turn **communiqués into action.**
2026 में **अध्यक्ष और मेज़बान** के रूप में **भारत**, **न्यू डेवलपमेंट बैंक** की गारंटी और **व्यावहारिक टूलकिट** के बेहतर उपयोग से **घोषणापत्रों को कार्रवाई में बदलकर BRICS को परिणामोन्मुख** बना सकता है।
- **External risks** also matter.
बाहरी जोखिम भी महत्वपूर्ण हैं।
- **Washington's tariff threats** against countries seen as aligning with **BRICS** raise the **cost of careless signalling.**
BRICS के साथ **खड़े दिखने वाले देशों** के खिलाफ **वाशिंगटन की टैरिफ धमकियाँ**, **लापरवाह संकेतों की कीमत बढ़ा** देती हैं।
- **India gains little by letting the group drift into anti-West rhetoric or a de-dollarisation crusade.**
भारत को **समूह को पश्चिम-विरोधी बयानबाज़ी** या **डी-डॉलराइजेशन अभियान** की ओर जाने देने से बहुत **कम लाभ** मिलेगा।
- **This would undercut India's effort to attract western capital and technology.**
इससे **पश्चिमी पूंजी और तकनीक** को आकर्षित करने के **भारत के प्रयास कमजोर** पड़ेंगे।
- The **United Nations** remains **essential for legitimacy and norm-setting**, but it is a **weak instrument for delivery** when **major powers are at odds.**
संयुक्त राष्ट्र वैधता और **मानदंड-निर्धारण** के लिए आवश्यक है, लेकिन जब **महाशक्तियाँ आमने-सामने हों**, तो यह **कार्यान्वयन के लिए कमजोर साधन** बन जाता है।
- Outcomes are **shifting to coalitions** that can **move even when the centre cannot.**
परिणाम अब **ऐसे गठबंधनों** की ओर जा रहे हैं जो **केंद्र के असमर्थ होने पर भी आगे बढ़** सकें।
- The **G-20** shows the **same strain.**
G-20 भी **इसी तरह के तनाव** को दर्शाता है।
- In theory, it is the **premier table for economic coordination.**
सिद्धांत रूप में, यह **आर्थिक समन्वय का प्रमुख मंच** है।
- In practice, it is increasingly exposed to **domestic politics** and **agenda fights.**
व्यवहार में, यह **घरेलू राजनीति** और **एजेंडा संघर्षों** के प्रति अधिक संवेदनशील हो गया है।
- The **U.S. boycott of the Johannesburg G-20 summit in 2025** and the push to **narrow the agenda under the U.S. presidency in 2026** could **sideline Global South priorities** and make the forum feel **less inclusive.**
2025 में **जोहान्सबर्ग G-20 शिखर सम्मेलन का अमेरिकी बहिष्कार** और **2026** में **अमेरिकी अध्यक्षता के दौरान एजेंडा सीमित करने का प्रयास**, **ग्लोबल साउथ की प्राथमिकताओं** को हाशिये पर डाल सकता है और मंच को **कम समावेशी** बना सकता है।
- Amid **global volatility**, India's **momentum in 2026** will come from turning **white spaces into working arrangements.**
वैश्विक अस्थिरता के बीच, **2026** में **भारत की गति व्हाइट स्पेस को कार्यशील व्यवस्थाओं में बदलने** से आएगी।
- **Europe** is about **standards**, **BRICS** is about **functionality**, and the **Quad** is about **public goods.**
यूरोप मानकों से जुड़ा है, **BRICS कार्यक्षमता** से, और **क्वाड सार्वजनिक वस्तुओं** से।

The message for India
भारत के लिए संदेश



- The **AI Impact Summit in Delhi (February 2026)** is India's chance to get **governments, companies and researchers together** to bridge **differences where interests overlap**.
दिल्ली में **AI इम्पैक्ट समिट (फरवरी 2026)** भारत के लिए अवसर है कि वह **सरकारों, कंपनियों और शोधकर्ताओं** को साथ लाकर **साझा हितों वाले मतभेदों को पाट सके**।
- As **Washington experiments with new forums**, including **Mr. Trump's proposed 'Board of Peace'** focused on **peace building**, **Delhi will need to choose carefully**.
जब **वाशिंगटन नए मंचों** के साथ प्रयोग कर रहा है, जिनमें **शांति निर्माण पर केंद्रित ट्रम्प का प्रस्तावित 'बोर्ड ऑफ पीस'** भी शामिल है, तब **दिल्ली को सावधानी से चयन करना होगा**।
- An invitation for India to join **Pax Silica**, a **U.S.-led capability club** for **Artificial Intelligence and semiconductor supply chains**, is reportedly **in the works**.
भारत को **Pax Silica** में शामिल होने का निमंत्रण, जो **आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलिजेंस और सेमीकंडक्टर सप्लाय चैन** के लिए **अमेरिका-नेतृत्व वाला क्षमता क्लब** है, कथित तौर पर **तैयारी में है**।
- This shows how fast these **new tables are multiplying**.
यह दिखाता है कि ये **नए मंच कितनी तेज़ी से बढ़ रहे हैं**।
- In a **divided world**, it is rarely the **biggest table** that shapes the **future**.
विभाजित दुनिया में, भविष्य को आकार देने वाला मंच अक्सर **सबसे बड़ा नहीं होता**।
- It is the **smaller tables** where things **actually get done**.
छोटे मंचों पर ही वास्तव में **काम पूरा होता है**।
- In **2026**, India's **advantage** will lie in making the **tables that it chooses work**.
2026 में, भारत की **बढ़त** इस बात में होगी कि वह **जिन मंचों को चुने, उन्हें प्रभावी ढंग से कामयाब बनाए**।

GS Paper III: Economy,

TOPICS COVERED

20 January 2026

| | |
|----|---|
| 1. | Include proposal to link digital currencies on the BRICS agenda, says RBI ब्रिक्स एजेंडा में डिजिटल मुद्राओं को जोड़ने के प्रस्ताव को शामिल किया जाए: आरबीआई |
| 2. | IMF upgrades India's growth projection to 7.3% आईएमएफ ने भारत की विकास दर का अनुमान बढ़ाकर 7.3% किया |
| 3. | What is T.N.'s new hybrid pension model? टी.एन. का नया हाइब्रिड पेंशन मॉडल क्या है? |
| 4. | Rising state borrowings complicate Indian central bank's rate playbook राज्य सरकारों के बढ़ते उधार से भारतीय केंद्रीय बैंक की दर नीति जटिल |



Include proposal to link digital currencies on the BRICS agenda, says RBI

GS III: Economy

Reuters

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recommended to the Centre that a proposal connecting the central bank digital currencies (CBDCs) of BRICS countries be included on the agenda for the 2026 summit of the grouping, two sources have said. They requested anonymity as they were not authorised to speak publicly.

The proposal seeks to make cross-border payments easier, in a move that could reduce reliance on the U.S. dollar as geopolitical tensions rise. The RBI's recommendation builds on a 2025 declaration at the BRICS summit in Brazil which pushed for interoperability between members' payment systems to make cross-border transactions more efficient.

The RBI has publicly expressed interest in linking India's digital rupee with other nations' CBDCs to expedite cross-border transactions and bolster its currency's global usage. It has, however, said its efforts to promote the rupee's global use are not aimed at promoting de-dollarisation.

India will host the next BRICS summit later this year. If the RBI's recommendation is accepted, a proposal to link the digital currencies of BRICS members would be put forward for the first time. The initiative could irritate the U.S., which has warned against any moves to bypass the dollar. U.S. President Do-

Ease of payment

If the proposal is accepted, a plan to link digital currencies will be put forward at the 2026 BRICS summit in India

■ The move could reduce reliance on the U.S. dollar as geopolitical tensions rise

■ While none of the BRICS members have fully launched their digital currencies, all five main members have been running pilot projects



■ India's digital currency - e-rupee - has attracted a total of 7 million retail users since its launch in December 2022

nald Trump has previously said the BRICS alliance is "anti-American" and he threatened to impose tariffs on its members.

While none of the BRICS members have fully launched their digital currencies, all five main members have been running pilot projects.

India's digital currency has attracted a total of 7 million retail users since its launch in December 2022, while China has pledged to boost the international use of the digital yuan.

The RBI has encouraged the adoption of the e-rupee by enabling offline payments, providing programmability for government subsidy transfers and allowing fintech firms to offer digital currency wallets.

The RBI and the central bank of Brazil did not respond to emails seeking comment. The People's Bank of China said it had no information; the South African and Russian central banks declined to comment.

For the BRICS digital currency linkages to be successful, elements like

interoperable technology, governance rules and ways to settle imbalanced trade volumes would be among the discussion topics, one of the sources said.

The source cautioned that hesitation among members to adopt technological platforms from other countries could delay work on the proposal and concrete progress would require consensus on tech and regulation.

One idea that is being explored to manage potential trade imbalances is the use of bilateral foreign exchange swap arrangements between central banks, both sources said.

Previous attempts by Russia and Indian governments to conduct more trade in their local currencies hit roadblocks.

Russia accumulated large balances of the Indian rupee for which it found limited use, prompting India's central bank to permit the investment of such balances in local bonds. Weekly or monthly settlements for transactions are being proposed to be made via the swaps, the second source said.

Include proposal to link digital currencies on the BRICS agenda, says RBI

ब्रिक्स एजेंडा में डिजिटल मुद्राओं को जोड़ने के प्रस्ताव को शामिल किया जाए: आरबीआई

• The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recommended to the Centre that a proposal connecting the central bank digital currencies (CBDCs) of BRICS countries be included on the agenda for the 2026 summit of the grouping, two sources have said.

भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक (आरबीआई) ने केंद्र सरकार से सिफारिश की है कि ब्रिक्स देशों की केंद्रीय बैंक डिजिटल मुद्राओं (सीबीडीसी) को जोड़ने से संबंधित प्रस्ताव को समूह के 2026 शिखर सम्मेलन के एजेंडा में शामिल किया जाए, ऐसा दो स्रोतों ने कहा है।

• They requested anonymity as they were not authorised to speak publicly.

उन्होंने पहचान गोपनीय रखने का अनुरोध किया क्योंकि उन्हें सार्वजनिक रूप से बोलने की अनुमति नहीं थी।

• The proposal seeks to make cross-border payments easier, in a move that could reduce reliance on the U.S. dollar as geopolitical tensions rise.

यह प्रस्ताव सीमा-पार भुगतान को आसान बनाने का प्रयास करता है, जिससे बढ़ते भू-राजनीतिक तनावों के बीच अमेरिकी डॉलर पर निर्भरता कम हो सकती है।

• The RBI's recommendation builds on a 2025 declaration at the BRICS summit in Brazil which pushed for interoperability between members' payment systems to make cross-border transactions more efficient.

आरबीआई की यह सिफारिश ब्राज़ील में ब्रिक्स शिखर सम्मेलन में हुई 2025 की घोषणा पर

इंटरऑपरेबिलिटी पर ज़ोर दिया गया था ताकि

आधारित है, जिसमें सदस्यों की भुगतान प्रणालियों के बीच सीमा-पार लेनदेन अधिक कुशल हो सकें।

• The RBI has publicly expressed interest in linking India's digital rupee with other nations' CBDCs to expedite cross-border transactions and bolster its currency's global usage.

आरबीआई ने सार्वजनिक रूप से भारत की डिजिटल रुपया को अन्य देशों की सीबीडीसी से जोड़ने में रुचि जताई है ताकि सीमा-पार लेनदेन तेज़ हों और उसकी मुद्रा का वैश्विक उपयोग बढ़े।

• It has, however, said its efforts to promote the rupee's global use are not aimed at promoting de-dollarisation.

हालांकि, उसने कहा है कि रुपये के वैश्विक उपयोग को बढ़ावा देने के प्रयास डी-डॉलराइजेशन को बढ़ावा देने के उद्देश्य से नहीं हैं।

• India will host the next BRICS summit later this year.

भारत इस वर्ष के अंत में अगले ब्रिक्स शिखर सम्मेलन की मेज़बानी करेगा।



- If the RBI's recommendation is accepted, a proposal to link the digital currencies of BRICS members would be put forward for the **first time**.
यदि आरबीआई की सिफारिश स्वीकार की जाती है, तो ब्रिक्स सदस्यों की डिजिटल मुद्राओं को जोड़ने का प्रस्ताव **पहली बार** सामने रखा जाएगा।
- The initiative could irritate the **U.S.**, which has warned against any moves to bypass the **dollar**.
यह पहल **अमेरिका** को नाराज़ कर सकती है, जिसने **डॉलर** को दरकिनार करने वाले किसी भी कदम के खिलाफ चेतावनी दी है।
- **U.S. President Donald Trump** has previously said the **BRICS alliance** is "anti-American" and he threatened to impose **tariffs** on its members.
अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप पहले कह चुके हैं कि **ब्रिक्स गठबंधन "अमेरिका-विरोधी"** है और उन्होंने इसके सदस्यों पर **शुल्क** लगाने की धमकी दी थी।
- While none of the BRICS members have fully launched their digital currencies, all **five main members** have been running **pilot projects**.
हालांकि ब्रिक्स के किसी भी सदस्य ने अपनी डिजिटल मुद्रा पूरी तरह से लॉन्च नहीं की है, लेकिन सभी **पाँच मुख्य सदस्य पायलट परियोजनाएँ** चला रहे हैं।
- **India's digital currency** has attracted a total of **7 million retail users** since its launch in **December 2022**, while **China** has pledged to boost the international use of the **digital yuan**.
भारत की डिजिटल मुद्रा ने **दिसंबर 2022** में लॉन्च होने के बाद से कुल **70 लाख खुदरा उपयोगकर्ताओं** को आकर्षित किया है, जबकि **चीन** ने **डिजिटल युआन** के अंतरराष्ट्रीय उपयोग को बढ़ाने का संकल्प लिया है।
- The RBI has encouraged the adoption of the **e-rupee** by enabling **offline payments**, providing **programmability** for government subsidy transfers and allowing **fintech firms** to offer digital currency wallets.
आरबीआई ने **ई-रुपया** को अपनाने के लिए **ऑफलाइन भुगतान** सक्षम करके, सरकारी सब्सिडी हस्तांतरण के लिए **प्रोग्रामेबिलिटी** प्रदान करके और **फिनटेक कंपनियों** को डिजिटल मुद्रा वॉलेट देने की अनुमति देकर प्रोत्साहित किया है।
- The RBI and the **central bank of Brazil** did not respond to emails seeking comment.
आरबीआई और **ब्राज़ील के केंद्रीय बैंक** ने टिप्पणी मांगने वाले ईमेल का जवाब नहीं दिया।
- The **People's Bank of China** said it had no information; the **South African and Russian central banks** declined to comment.
चीन के पीपुल्स बैंक ने कहा कि उसके पास कोई जानकारी नहीं है; **दक्षिण अफ्रीका और रूस के केंद्रीय बैंकों** ने टिप्पणी करने से इनकार कर दिया।
- For the BRICS digital currency linkages to be successful, elements like **interoperable technology, governance rules** and ways to settle **imbalanced trade volumes** would be among the discussion topics, one of the sources said.
ब्रिक्स डिजिटल मुद्रा संपर्कों की सफलता के लिए **इंटरऑपरेबल तकनीक, शासन नियम और असंतुलित व्यापार मात्रा** के निपटान के तरीकों जैसे तत्व चर्चा के विषय होंगे, ऐसा एक सूत्र ने कहा।
- The source cautioned that hesitation among members to adopt **technological platforms** from other countries could delay work on the proposal and concrete progress would require **consensus** on tech and regulation.
सूत्र ने चेतावनी दी कि अन्य देशों के **तकनीकी प्लेटफॉर्म** अपनाने में सदस्यों की हिचकिचाहट प्रस्ताव पर काम में देरी कर सकती है और ठोस प्रगति के लिए तकनीक और विनियमन पर **सहमति** आवश्यक होगी।
- One idea that is being explored to manage potential **trade imbalances** is the use of **bilateral foreign exchange swap arrangements** between central banks, both sources said.
संभावित **व्यापार असंतुलन** को प्रबंधित करने के लिए जिस एक विचार पर विचार किया जा रहा है, वह केंद्रीय बैंकों के बीच **द्विपक्षीय विदेशी मुद्रा स्वैप व्यवस्थाओं** का उपयोग है, दोनों सूत्रों ने कहा।
- Previous attempts by **Russia and Indian governments** to conduct more trade in their **local currencies** hit roadblocks.
रूस और भारत सरकारों द्वारा अपनी **स्थानीय मुद्राओं** में अधिक व्यापार करने के पिछले प्रयासों को बाधाओं का सामना करना पड़ा।
- **Russia** accumulated large balances of the **Indian rupee** for which it found limited use, prompting **India's central bank** to permit the investment of such balances in **local bonds**.
रूस ने **भारतीय रुपये** का बड़ा भंडार जमा कर लिया, जिसका उसे सीमित उपयोग मिला, जिससे **भारत के केंद्रीय बैंक** को ऐसे शेष को **स्थानीय बॉन्ड** में निवेश की अनुमति देनी पड़ी।



- **Weekly or monthly settlements** for transactions are being proposed to be made via the **swaps**, the second source said.
लेनदेन के लिए साप्ताहिक या मासिक निपटान को स्वैप के माध्यम से करने का प्रस्ताव रखा जा रहा है, दूसरे स्रोत ने कहा।

IMF upgrades India's growth projection to 7.3%

GS III: Economy

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** has revised upwards its estimate of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in the current financial year 2025-26 to 7.3% from its earlier prediction of 6.6%.

Slower figure

This upward revision, the IMF said in its January 2026 **World Economic Outlook** update released on Monday, was primarily a reflection of stronger-than-expected growth in the third quarter, and "strong momentum" in the fourth quarter of the financial

Growth forecast

IMF says the revision reflected stronger-than-expected growth in the third quarter and strong momentum in the fourth quarter

- The Centre has predicted 7.4% GDP growth for 2025-26
- IMF projects growth to moderate to 6.4% in 2026 and 2027 as cyclical and temporary factors wane

■ Global economic growth projected to remain 'resilient' at 3.3% in calendar year 2026 and at 3.2% in 2027



- Inflation expected to go back to near-target levels of 4% set by RBI, says IMF

year. "In India, growth is revised upward by 0.7 percentage point to 7.3% for 2025 [FY 2025-26], reflecting the better-than-expected outturn in the third quarter of the year and

strong momentum in the fourth quarter," the report said. "Growth is projected to moderate to 6.4% in 2026 and 2027 as cyclical and temporary factors wane," it added.

The IMF's prediction of 7.3% growth for 2025-26 is just marginally slower than the 7.4% the Union government predicted for the same period.

For the global economy, the report projects growth to remain "resilient" at 3.3% in calendar year 2026 and at 3.2% in 2027, largely the same as the 3.3% estimated for 2025.

These forecasts entail a small upward revision for 2026 and no change for 2027 as compared with the predictions made in the October 2025 World Economic Outlook. "This steady performance on the surface results from the balancing of divergent forces," the report said.

es," the report said.

"Headwinds from shifting trade policies are offset by tailwinds from surging investment related to technology, including artificial intelligence (AI), more so in North America and Asia than in other regions, as well as fiscal and monetary support, broadly accommodative financial conditions, and adaptability of the private sector."

On the inflation front, the report predicted that inflation in India is expected to go back to near-target levels after a decline in 2025 driven by subdued food prices. The Reserve Bank of India's target for inflation is 4%.

IMF upgrades India's growth projection to 7.3%

आईएमएफ ने भारत की विकास दर का अनुमान बढ़ाकर 7.3% किया

- The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** has revised upwards its estimate of **India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** growth in the current financial year 2025-26 to 7.3% from its earlier prediction of 6.6%.
अंतरराष्ट्रीय मुद्रा कोष (आईएमएफ) ने चालू वित्त वर्ष 2025-26 में भारत के सकल घरेलू उत्पाद (जीडीपी) की वृद्धि के अपने अनुमान को पहले के 6.6% से बढ़ाकर 7.3% कर दिया है।
- **Slower figure**
कम वृद्धि दर
- This upward revision, the IMF said in its **January 2026 World Economic Outlook** update released on **Monday**, was primarily a reflection of **stronger-than-expected growth** in the **third quarter**, and "**strong momentum**" in the **fourth quarter** of the financial year.
आईएमएफ ने **सोमवार** को जारी **जनवरी 2026 विश्व आर्थिक परिदृश्य अपडेट** में कहा कि यह बढ़ोतरी मुख्य रूप से **तीसरी तिमाही** में **अनुमान से अधिक मजबूत वृद्धि** और वित्त वर्ष की **चौथी तिमाही** में "**मजबूत गति**" को दर्शाती है।
- रिपोर्ट में कहा गया, "ऊपरी तौर पर यह स्थिर प्रदर्शन **विभिन्न विपरीत शक्तियों** के संतुलन का परिणाम है।"
- "**Headwinds** from shifting **trade policies** are offset by **tailwinds** from surging **investment** related to **technology**, including **artificial intelligence (AI)**, more so in **North America and Asia** than in other regions, as well as **fiscal and monetary support**, broadly accommodative **financial conditions**, and adaptability of the **private sector**."
"व्यापार नीतियों में बदलाव से आने वाली **प्रतिरोधी हवाओं** की भरपाई **प्रौद्योगिकी** से जुड़े बढ़ते निवेश, जिनमें **कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता (एआई)** शामिल है, विशेष रूप से **उत्तरी अमेरिका और एशिया** में, साथ ही **राजकोषीय और मौद्रिक समर्थन**, व्यापक रूप से अनुकूल **वित्तीय परिस्थितियाँ**, और **निजी क्षेत्र** की अनुकूलन क्षमता से होती है।"



What is T.N.'s new hybrid pension model?

The Tamil Nadu government has unveiled the Tamil Nadu Assured Pension Scheme (TAPS) for government employees, combining features of the Old and Unified Pension Schemes, amid growing demands from staff for better pension security

GS III: Economy

ECONOMIC NOTES

T. Ramakrishnan

A nonagenarian professor of physics, who retired at the age of 58 from a leading aided college in Chennai in 1985 with a monthly pension of around ₹800, now draws a pension of ₹1.3 lakh. Similarly, an official in the Public Works Department, on reaching the age of superannuation in 1998, received a pension of ₹6,000. Today, he is getting ₹35,000.

All these retirees and those who joined the State government service or government-aided educational institutions before April 1, 2003 are covered under the Old Pension Scheme (OPS). The OPS is non-contributory and fully funded by the State government. Upward pension revision, or pension reset, is allowed with the implementation of every Pay Commission's recommendations, once in every 10 years. In addition, Dearness Allowance (DA) is given at par with the serving employees. Approximately two lakh employees are covered under the OPS.

But, post-2003 recruits come under the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS), which is similar to the National Pension System (NPS). In this scheme, each employee is required to contribute 10% of basic pay plus DA with a matching contribution from the State government. At the time of retirement, employees are paid a one-time settlement and do not receive any inflation-indexed increase or pension reset. To put it simply, they do not automatically get any pension on retirement, unless they invest their savings in annuity or retirement schemes of insurance firms.

As the Tamil Nadu government did not join the NPS and had not designated a fund manager in accordance with the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority Act, the returns received by the government staff have been about two percentage points lower than those covered under the NPS, says a government official. Applicable to Union government employees who joined service on or after January 1, 2004, the NPS is a defined contribution-based scheme with market linked returns for post-retirement benefits. During normal exit, subscribers can put a minimum of 40% of their accumulations in annuity.

DMK's promise

In the run-up to the 2021 Assembly election, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), which was then in the Opposition, had committed to the restoration of the OPS.

But, as early as 25 years ago, the authorities had realised that the pension liability was becoming too heavy to bear, the primary reason being the pension reset. Also, driven by better health parameters, life expectancy was on the rise. In his Budget speech in 2001, the then Finance Minister and AIADMK leader C. Ponnambalam said that "the pension liabilities of the government have been showing an average annual increase of 30 per cent, which is unsustainable." Karnataka's former Chief Secretary B. K. Bhattacharya and his team, in their famous report of October 2003 to the RBI found that pension payment as a percentage of total revenue receipts in Tamil Nadu rose from 3.8% during 1980-90 to 6.6% during 1990-95 and 10.8% during 1995-2000. It hovered around 16% in 2001 and 2002. Moreover, according to the White Paper on the State government's finances, as produced by the present DMK regime in August 2021,



The TAPS impact

The Tamil Nadu government's expenditure on pension and retirement benefits for 25 years

| Year | Total expenditure on pension and other retirement benefits (₹ in crore) | Expenditure on pension as a percentage of total revenue receipts (%) |
|-----------|---|--|
| 2001-2002 | 3,050.48 | 16.07% |
| 2002-03 | 3,488.20 | 16.86% |
| 2003-04 | 3,279.96 | 13.84% |
| 2004-05 | 3,921.05 | 13.78% |
| 2005-06 | 4,488.83 | 13.22% |
| 2006-07 | 5,461.68 | 13.35% |
| 2007-08 | 6,038.96 | 12.71% |
| 2008-09 | 7,776.21 | 14.13% |
| 2009-10 | 8,439.24 | 15.11% |
| 2010-11 | 11,855.27 | 16.89% |
| 2011-12 | 12,687.97 | 14.89% |
| 2012-13 | 13,248.08 | 13.41% |
| 2013-14 | 14,934.37 | 13.82% |
| 2014-15 | 17,528.06 | 14.32% |
| 2015-16 | 18,490.89 | 14.33% |
| 2016-17 | 20,176.74 | 14.39% |
| 2017-18 | 22,432.23 | 15.34% |
| 2018-19 | 29,710.58 | 17.1% |
| 2019-20 | 30,219.77 | 17.32% |
| 2020-21 | 27,115.07 | 15.58% |
| 2021-22 | 26,260.37 | 12.66% |
| 2022-23 | 32,177.50 | 13.20% |
| 2023-24 | 37,696.81 | 14.25% |
| 2024-25 | 42,509.25 | 14.22% |

The table below shows the additional quantum of pension received by the Tamil Nadu government's pensioners / family pensioners aged 80 years and above

| Age group | Additional quantum of pension/family pension | As on June 30, 2017 | As on March 31, 2025 |
|-------------------|--|---------------------|----------------------|
| 80-84 years | 20% of revised basic pension/family pension | 27,707 | 70,350 |
| 85-89 years | 30% of revised basic pension/family pension | 10,459 | 32,575 |
| 90-94 years | 40% of revised basic pension/family pension | 2,730 | 8,828 |
| 95-99 years | 50% of revised basic pension/family pension | 522 | 1,432 |
| 100 years or more | 100% of revised basic pension/family pension | 71 | 195 |
| TOTAL | | 41,489 | 1,13,380 |

Source: Budget documents of the Finance Department, Tamil Nadu government

the year-on-year growth rate of pensions and other retirement benefits in 15 years (2006-07 to 2020-21) was in two digits in eight years and in single digit in six years, apart from being in the negative during 2020-21, which was not only the pandemic year but also the period where government increased the retirement age.

Apart from it being nearly impossible to return to the OPS, the State government is also grappling with the problem of deploying accumulations of its staff, who joined after 2003, in better investments. As on March 31, 2025, accumulations stood at about ₹84,507 crore. The office of Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), which had rapped Tamil Nadu several times for not joining the NPS, stated, in its report tabled in the Assembly three months ago on the State's finances for 2023-24, that the State government had, for long, invested in Treasury Bills and Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) schemes such as the New Group Superannuation Scheme with Cash Accumulation Plan, both of which yielded lower interest than the General Provident Fund (GPF) rate. At present, the investments are in LIC schemes, carrying 7.1% aligned with the GPF's rate.

OPS's comeback

Meanwhile, the staff of the Union government and several State

governments have started demanding the OPS's restoration. Rajasthan became the first in February 2022 to announce its return to the OPS. A month later, Chhattisgarh followed suit. One should not gloss over the fact that both States, ruled by the Congress then, went to Assembly polls in late 2023.

During such developments, the RBI, in its bulletin of June 2022, observed that "as the current State government retirees are primarily the beneficiaries of the old pension scheme, the immediate financial strain will not be felt if the States choose to revert to the old pension scheme. However, when State government employees who joined after 2004-05 under the NPS begin to retire from 2034 onwards, the cost of such a move will become apparent. In other words, the adoption of the old pension scheme is likely to benefit the current generation at the expense of future generations."

Despite the RBI's caution, Jharkhand, in September 2022, opted for the OPS. Two months later, Punjab and in 2023, Himachal Pradesh also joined the OPS. Former governor of the RBI D. Subbarao called the OPS restoration "a regressive move" and felt that this would give more privilege to government servants at the cost of the larger public, majority of whom had no social safety net.

However, southern States seem to have

approached the matter in a different way.

South's response

In June 2023, the Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party government in Andhra Pradesh, headed by Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, unveiled a pension scheme called the Andhra Pradesh Guaranteed Pension Scheme (APGPS). Some of the features of the APGPS include that pensioners would get 50% of the basic salary of the last drawn salary as pension, while their contribution would be the same at 10% of their basic salary. DA, as announced by the Union government once in six months, would be extended to them too. In August 2024, the Centre came out with its own variant – the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS). As part of this scheme effective April 1, 2025, an assured payout is allowed at the rate of 50% of the average basic pay drawn over the last 12 months of service with a minimum qualifying service of 25 years.

As the DMK regime came under political pressure on the pension issue at the beginning of 2025, with about one year to go for the Assembly election, it announced the formation of a committee, headed by Additional Chief Secretary (Rural Development & Panchayat Raj) Gagandeep Singh Bedi, which submitted its final report in December 2025. And on January 3, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin announced that his government would implement the Tamil Nadu Assured Pension Scheme (TAPS), a hybrid model of the OPS, the APGPS and the UPS. Apart from incurring a one-time expenditure of ₹13,000 crore, the State government's annual contributions will be approximately ₹1,000 crore.

Features of TAPS

The scheme came into effect from January 1, 2026. In addition to the monthly individual contribution of 10% along with at least a matching contribution from the government, there is no pension reset in the new scheme. And unlike in the case of UPS where 50% of the average of the last 12 months' basic pay is taken to fix the pension, TAPS enables pension determination based on 50% of the pay drawn in the last month of service. In the UPS, a minimum assured payout is made if superannuation is after 10 years or more of qualifying service whereas it will be given regardless of the length of service under TAPS. Pensioners and family pensioners under the new scheme will get a DA increase on par with the employees. When a pensioner dies, the monthly family pension will be equal to 60% of the pension last drawn by the pensioner and given to the deceased's family.

Apart from the provision of a death-cum-retirement gratuity (DCRG) of not more than ₹25 lakh, a special compassionate pension will be paid to CPS beneficiaries who retired before the TAPS implementation. The government is confident that the pension burden as a percentage of the State's own tax revenue will be "much lower than" 21%-22% in the long run, even though, for the next seven years or so, it will place the State government's finances under stress in view of the annual contribution to TAPS beneficiaries and the provision for new retirees under the OPS.

However, sections of government employees are not happy with TAPS. It remains to be seen whether TAPS will meet the fate of the UPS, which could get support from about 1.22 lakh employees of the Central government out of the estimated eligible 23 lakhs. As of now, around six lakh staff of the Tamil Nadu government are covered under CPS.

THE GIST

- ▼ The Old Pension Scheme is non-contributory and fully funded by the State government. Upward pension revision, or pension reset, is allowed with the implementation of every Pay Commission's recommendations, once in every 10 years. All those who joined the State government service or government-aided educational institutions before April 1, 2003 are covered under the OPS.
- ▼ The Union government and several State governments have started receiving vociferous demands from their staff to bring back the OPS. Rajasthan became the first in February 2022 to announce its return to the OPS.
- ▼ On January 3, Mr. Stalin announced that his government would implement the Tamil Nadu Assured Pension Scheme (TAPS)



What is T.N.'s new hybrid pension model? टी.एन. का नया हाइब्रिड पेंशन मॉडल क्या है?

- A nonagenarian professor of physics, who retired at the age of 58 from a leading aided college in Chennai in 1985 with a monthly pension of around ₹800, now draws a pension of ₹1.3 lakh.
भौतिकी के एक नब्बे वर्ष से अधिक आयु के प्रोफेसर, जो 1985 में चेन्नई के एक प्रमुख अनुदानित कॉलेज से 58 वर्ष की आयु में लगभग ₹800 मासिक पेंशन पर सेवानिवृत्त हुए थे, अब ₹1.3 लाख की पेंशन प्राप्त कर रहे हैं।
- Similarly, an official in the Public Works Department, on reaching the age of superannuation in 1998, received a pension of ₹6,000.
इसी प्रकार, लोक निर्माण विभाग के एक अधिकारी को 1998 में सेवानिवृत्ति पर ₹6,000 पेंशन मिली थी।
- Today, he is getting ₹35,000.
आज उन्हें ₹35,000 मिल रहे हैं।
- All these retirees and those who joined the State government service or government-aided educational institutions before April 1, 2003 are covered under the Old Pension Scheme (OPS).
ये सभी सेवानिवृत्त कर्मचारी और वे लोग जिन्होंने 1 अप्रैल 2003 से पहले राज्य सरकार सेवा या सरकार द्वारा सहायता प्राप्त शैक्षणिक संस्थानों में सेवा जॉइन की थी, पुरानी पेंशन योजना (OPS) के अंतर्गत आते हैं।
- The OPS is non-contributory and fully funded by the State government.
OPS एक गैर-अंशदायी योजना है और इसे पूरी तरह राज्य सरकार द्वारा वित्तपोषित किया जाता है।
- Upward pension revision, or pension reset, is allowed with the implementation of every Pay Commission's recommendations, once in every 10 years.
हर 10 वर्ष में लागू होने वाली प्रत्येक वेतन आयोग की सिफारिशों के साथ पेंशन में वृद्धि या पेंशन रीसेट की अनुमति होती है।
- In addition, Dearness Allowance (DA) is given at par with the serving employees.
इसके अतिरिक्त, महंगाई भत्ता (DA) कार्यरत कर्मचारियों के बराबर दिया जाता है।
- Approximately two lakh employees are covered under the OPS.
लगभग दो लाख कर्मचारी OPS के अंतर्गत आते हैं।
- But, post-2003 recruits come under the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS), which is similar to the National Pension System (NPS).
लेकिन 2003 के बाद भर्ती हुए कर्मचारी अंशदायी पेंशन योजना (CPS) के अंतर्गत आते हैं, जो राष्ट्रीय पेंशन प्रणाली (NPS) के समान है।
- In this scheme, each employee is required to contribute 10% of basic pay plus DA with a matching contribution from the State government.
इस योजना में, प्रत्येक कर्मचारी को मूल वेतन + DA का 10% योगदान देना होता है और उतना ही राज्य सरकार का समान योगदान होता है।
- At the time of retirement, employees are paid a one-time settlement and do not receive any inflation-indexed increase or pension reset.
सेवानिवृत्ति के समय कर्मचारियों को एकमुश्त भुगतान किया जाता है और उन्हें मुद्रास्फीति-सूचक वृद्धि या पेंशन रीसेट नहीं मिलता।
- To put it simply, they do not automatically get any pension on retirement, unless they invest their savings in annuity or retirement schemes of insurance firms.
सरल शब्दों में, सेवानिवृत्ति पर उन्हें स्वतः पेंशन नहीं मिलती, जब तक वे अपनी बचत को एन्युइटी या बीमा कंपनियों की सेवानिवृत्ति योजनाओं में निवेश न करें।
- As the Tamil Nadu government did not join the NPS and had not designated a fund manager in accordance with the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority Act, the returns received by the government staff have been about two percentage points lower than those covered under the NPS, says a government official.
चूंकि तमिलनाडु सरकार ने NPS को नहीं अपनाया और पेंशन फंड नियामक और विकास प्राधिकरण अधिनियम के अनुसार फंड मैनेजर नियुक्त नहीं किया, इसलिए सरकारी कर्मचारियों को मिलने वाला रिटर्न NPS के अंतर्गत आने वालों की तुलना में लगभग दो प्रतिशत अंक कम रहा है, ऐसा एक सरकारी अधिकारी का कहना है।
- Applicable to Union government employees who joined service on or after January 1, 2004, the NPS is a defined contribution-based scheme with market linked returns for



post-retirement benefits.

1 जनवरी 2004 या उसके बाद सेवा में शामिल हुए केंद्र सरकार के कर्मचारियों पर लागू NPS, परिभाषित अंशदान आधारित योजना है, जिसमें सेवानिवृत्ति के बाद के लाभ बाज़ार से जुड़े रिटर्न पर आधारित होते हैं।

- During normal exit, subscribers can put a minimum of 40% of their accumulations in annuity.

सामान्य निकास की स्थिति में, सदस्य अपनी कुल जमा राशि का न्यूनतम 40% एन्युइटी में निवेश कर सकते हैं।

DMK's promise

DMK का वादा

- In the run-up to the 2021 Assembly election, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), which was then in the Opposition, had committed to the restoration of OPS.
2021 के विधानसभा चुनाव से पहले, तब विपक्ष में रही द्रविड़ मुनेत्र कड़गम (DMK) ने OPS की बहाली का वादा किया था।
- But, as early as 25 years ago, the authorities had realised that the pension liability was becoming too heavy to bear, the primary reason being the pension reset.
लेकिन, 25 वर्ष पहले ही अधिकारियों ने समझ लिया था कि पेंशन देनदारी अत्यधिक बोझिल होती जा रही है, जिसका मुख्य कारण पेंशन रीसेट था।
- Also, driven by better health parameters, life expectancy was on the rise.
साथ ही, बेहतर स्वास्थ्य मानकों के कारण जीवन प्रत्याशा में वृद्धि हो रही थी।
- The office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), which had rapped Tamil Nadu several times for not joining the NPS, stated in its report tabled in the Assembly three months ago on the State's finances for 2023–24 that the State government had, for long, invested in Treasury Bills and LIC schemes.
महालेखा नियंत्रक एवं महालेखा परीक्षक (CAG) के कार्यालय ने, जिसने NPS में शामिल न होने पर तमिलनाडु को कई बार फटकार लगाई थी, 2023–24 के लिए राज्य की वित्तीय स्थिति पर तीन महीने पहले विधानसभा में रखी गई रिपोर्ट में कहा कि राज्य सरकार लंबे समय से ट्रेज़री बिल और LIC योजनाओं में निवेश करती रही है।
- These included the New Group Superannuation Scheme with Cash Accumulation Plan, both of which yielded lower interest than the GPF rate.
इनमें कैश अक्यूमुलेशन प्लान के साथ न्यू ग्रुप सुपरएन्युएशन स्कीम शामिल थी, जिनसे GPF दर से कम ब्याज मिला।
- At present, the investments are in LIC schemes, carrying 7.1%, aligned with the GPF's rate.
वर्तमान में, निवेश LIC योजनाओं में है, जिन पर 7.1% ब्याज है, जो GPF दर के अनुरूप है।

OPS's comeback

OPS की वापसी

- Meanwhile, the staff of the Union government and several State governments have started demanding the restoration of OPS.
इस बीच, केंद्र सरकार और कई राज्य सरकारों के कर्मचारियों ने OPS की बहाली की मांग शुरू कर दी है।
- Rajasthan became the first in February 2022 to announce its return to the OPS.
राजस्थान फरवरी 2022 में OPS पर लौटने की घोषणा करने वाला पहला राज्य बना।
- A month later, Chhattisgarh followed suit.
एक महीने बाद, छत्तीसगढ़ ने भी यही कदम उठाया।
- One should not gloss over the fact that both States, ruled by the Congress then, went to Assembly polls in late 2023.
इस तथ्य को नज़रअंदाज़ नहीं किया जाना चाहिए कि उस समय कांग्रेस शासित ये दोनों राज्य 2023 के अंत में विधानसभा चुनावों में गए।
- During such developments, the RBI, in its bulletin of June 2022, observed that "as the current State government retirees are primarily the beneficiaries of the old pension scheme, the immediate financial strain will not be felt."
इन घटनाक्रमों के दौरान, RBI ने जून 2022 के अपने बुलेटिन में कहा कि चूंकि वर्तमान राज्य सरकार के



सेवानिवृत्त कर्मचारी मुख्यतः पुरानी पेंशन योजना के लाभार्थी हैं, इसलिए तत्काल वित्तीय दबाव महसूस नहीं होगा।

- However, when State government employees who joined after 2004–05 under the NPS begin to retire from 2034 onwards, the cost of such a move will become apparent. हालांकि, जब 2004–05 के बाद NPS के तहत शामिल हुए राज्य सरकार के कर्मचारी 2034 के बाद से सेवानिवृत्त होना शुरू करेंगे, तब इस कदम की लागत स्पष्ट होगी।
- In other words, the adoption of the OPS is likely to benefit the current generation at the expense of future generations. दूसरे शब्दों में, OPS को अपनाने से वर्तमान पीढ़ी को लाभ होगा, लेकिन भविष्य की पीढ़ियों की कीमत पर।
- In August 2024, the Centre came out with its own variant — the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS). अगस्त 2024 में, केंद्र सरकार अपनी स्वयं की योजना लेकर आई — यूनिफाइड पेंशन स्कीम (UPS)।
- As part of this scheme effective April 1, 2025, an assured payout is allowed at the rate of 50% of the average basic pay drawn over the last 12 months of service with a minimum qualifying service of 25 years. इस योजना के तहत 1 अप्रैल 2025 से प्रभावी रूप से, 25 वर्ष की न्यूनतम पात्र सेवा के साथ, अंतिम 12 महीनों के औसत मूल वेतन का 50% सुनिश्चित भुगतान के रूप में दिया जाएगा।

GS Paper III: S&T,

TOPICS COVERED

20 January 2026

1. Scientists chase the tough task of building a graviton detector
वैज्ञानिक ग्रेविटॉन डिटेक्टर बनाने के कठिन कार्य का पीछा कर रहे हैं
2. New state of matter is a solid-liquid hybrid
पदार्थ की नई अवस्था एक ठोस-द्रव संकर है



Scientists chase the tough task of building a graviton detector

Gravitons are the hypothetical particles of gravity. To detect if they exist is a painful task because gravity is a very weak force; a simple fridge magnet can overcome the gravitational pull of the entire earth to pick up a paperclip. If gravitons exist, they could open the door to a theory of everything

YASDEVAN MAKUNTH
CHENNAI

The Stevens Institute of Technology in the U.S. recently said some of its scientists plus a group at Yale University will be building "the world's first experiment explicitly designed to detect individual gravitons". The announcement has already drawn sceptical attention from the physics community - but also \$1.3 million from the W.M. Keck Foundation.

The plan is to use an ultra-sensitive antenna of sorts to listen for the impact of the particles of gravity. The device of choice is a cylindrical resonator made of superfluid helium. The researchers chose this material because they can control it precisely at a macroscopic scale. To detect something as faint as a graviton, the detector must be completely free of noise, so the team plans to cool the cylinder down to its quantum ground state, where it will have no thermal vibrations. It will effectively be waiting in near total silence.

When a strong gravitational wave, for example from a pair of black holes merging together, passes through the detector, the theory posits that it could transfer exactly one quantum of energy, i.e. a single graviton, into the cylinder. And when it does, the energy will be converted into a mechanical vibration within the cylinder. Lasers monitoring the cylinder will watch out for this vibration, revealing when a graviton has been absorbed.

"This current project is for three years and we aim to have an operational system within this timeframe," Stevens Institute assistant professor and one of the co-leaders of the new effort Igor Pikovski told *The Hindu*. "It is unlikely it will be able to detect single gravitons then, but serve as a blueprint for the next iteration."

A bridge between camps

The graviton is the hypothetical particle of gravity. Scientists do not know if it is real but they have some reasons to believe it could exist. In modern physics, forces are transmitted by particles. For instance, when two magnets repel each other, they are actually exchanging streams of (virtual) photons. Physicists believe gravity could work the same way: if the sun pulls on the earth, it could be doing so by exchanging gravitons.

Another way to understand a graviton is to compare it to light. Light is an electromagnetic wave but at the smallest level it's made of particles called photons. Gravity acts like a wave - they're called gravitational waves - but at the smallest level, physicists believe, it could be made of particles called gravitons.

If gravitons exist, they'll open the door to a theory of everything. Currently, physics theories are split into two camps: general relativity, which explains the macroscopic universe like stars and gravity using the bending of spacetime; and quantum mechanics, which explains small things like atoms using the properties of particles.

The problem is that the maths of these two theories refuse to work together. If physicists find the graviton, it will prove that gravity is also a quantum force like the others - a bridge between the camps. But detecting gravitons, if they exist, is painful. While physicists have detected gravitational waves, they've never detected a graviton. This is like detecting tsunamis but not being sure if water molecules are real.

Impossible detector

The pain comes from the fact that gravity is such a weak force. Gravity is one of nature's four fundamental forces; the others are electromagnetism and the strong and weak nuclear forces. And gravity is 1 billion billion billion times weaker than the electromagnetic force, the next strongest.

This is why a simple fridge magnet can overcome the gravitational pull of the entire earth to pick up a paperclip. Because the force is so weak, the coupling constant - a number with which physicists measure how strongly a particle interacts with matter - is vanishingly small for gravitons. So while a photon interacts readily with atoms, allowing us to "see" a graviton would pass through matter as if it weren't there.

For a detector to "see" a particle, the particle must interact with it. The probability of this happening is defined by its cross-section. But the cross-section of a graviton is so small that a graviton with a typical amount of thermal energy could pass through a shield of lead spanning billions of light years without being absorbed.



In this artist's illustration of two merging neutron stars, the narrow beams represent a gamma-ray burst while the rippling spacetime grid indicates the gravitational waves from the merger. (Inset) An aerial view of the LIGO detector site near Livingston, U.S.

The experiment will use an ultra-sensitive antenna of sorts to listen for the impact of the particles of gravity

In a 2006 paper, physicists Tony Rothman and Stephen Boughn calculated what it would take to build a detector capable of registering a single graviton. Their findings suggested the task may be physically impossible. They figured experimenters would need a detector with the mass of Jupiter (2 billion billion billion kg), composed of 100% efficient sensor material, placed in close orbit around a neutron star, a source of high-energy gravitons. And even with this extreme setup, they estimated the detector would register one graviton event every decade.

To distinguish that single graviton from the background noise of neutrinos - the universe's second-most abundant particles and thus vastly more common - the experimenters also will need to shield the detector. But the amount of shielding required would be so massive that the detector would collapse into a black hole under its own gravity. It's a catch-22 in effect: any detector massive enough to catch a graviton would be too massive to exist.

Finally, the gravitons scientists have access to, from gravitational waves, have absurdly low energy: going by the LIGO instruments data, each graviton would have about 10^{28} eV. Even if a single graviton did deposit its energy wholesale, the resulting increase is far, far below ordinary thermal noise and below many irreducible quantum noise sources in measurement.

Breaking a wine glass

The Stevens-Yale idea is based on two studies published in 2022 and 2024, combining a theoretical prediction with advanced sensors. First, the scientists propose a gravito-phononic effect, similar to the photoelectric effect used in solar panels: that the cylinder cooled to nearly absolute zero will be able to absorb a single graviton from a gravitational wave.

This effect is expected to evade the difficulties posed by the Rothman-Boughn calculations. Rothman-Boughn assumed scientists would catch a graviton the way a wall stops a bullet. But because gravity is so weak, you need an impossibly thick wall. Instead the Stevens-Yale team is building a wine glass. An opera singer can shatter the glass not by hitting it with a rock but by singing a specific note that

matches the glass's natural vibration. Similarly, according to the team, if the helium cylinder is in a quantum state, the graviton won't have to hit a single atom but will interact with the entire fluid at once.

The resulting absorption is expected to create a single unit of vibration, called a phonon. The second study, in 2024, described a quantum sensor capable of detecting and counting these individual phonons in a massive object.

'Won't teach us anything'

Technologies based on quantum physics have already come a long way since the birth of the theory a century ago. The mid-20th century had semiconductors and transistors and the subsequent revolution in information and communication technologies. Today, scientists around the world are pushing borders by actively manipulating individual quantum states, paving the way for quantum computers, satellite-based data encryption, and ultra-sensitive detectors.

But even if the technologies exist, the physics underlying the new idea has already met with at least one rebuttal. Berkeley National Lab theoretical physicist Daniel Carney wrote on X that "this experiment will not teach us anything whatsoever about gravitons. The signal can be explained purely through classical gravity."

The basic issue appeared to be two claims in the Stevens Institute press release: (i) that a device could register an event consistent with the helium having absorbed one graviton and (ii) that seeing such events would show that gravity is quantum. But in a 2023 paper, before the new idea came to light, Dr. Carney and two other physicists had argued that (i) can be true in principle but that wouldn't mean (ii) is also true.

"I've never argued that you can't detect a graviton, assuming they exist," Dr. Carney wrote in a subsequent X post. "I've only ever been saying that doing so would not teach us anything since you have to assume their existence in the first place to draw that conclusion."

Ringing the bell

Imagine a bell that can only do two things: stay silent or sound one ding. It can't ring half a ding or any other sounds. Now say the bell sometimes dings when a gust of wind hits it. Because of the way the bell is built, each gust either fails to ding the bell or dings it once. As a result, even if there's a wind blowing continuously, you get multiple single dings or no dings, but you never get a single, continuous dinging.

The press release is effectively saying that if a gravitational wave makes the helium device sound a ding, it would mean a graviton hit it. But Carney et al.

have contended that a single ding only would reveal that the device is either single ding or no ding; it won't reveal whether the thing that dinged it came in discrete units (gravitons) or was a smooth wave (classical gravity).

"The objection by Carney is a well-known old observation, dating back even to the photoelectric effect: it is possible to describe more detection by a semi-classical model, which is what we also discuss in our paper," Dr. Pikovski said.

"Semi-classical" refers to the gravitational waves being classical and continuous whereas the detector detecting them being quantum mechanical and discrete.

To prove each single ding is really a graviton rather than a gravitational wave, the device would have to be capable of more than sounding single dings. For example it would have to have a pattern that only a graviton could produce, or at least a pattern that a smooth wave could never produce on a single-ding device.

First, detect But Dr. Pikovski said their main goal is to detect the particles rather than unambiguously test "all possible semi-classical alternatives". "The latter is not the goal of a detector but requires further advancements," he added. "The historic comparison is the 1905 photoelectric effect insight on the existence of the photon... versus the 1924 first demonstration of anti-bunching, which ruled out semi-classical alternatives. That would be a more firm test of the quantum nature, but not detection."

So then how will the scientists know if they've detected a graviton if it's also possible to explain that signal perfectly with a semi-classical model? "In short: energy conservation," Dr. Pikovski explained. "If the detector 'clicks' it absorbed something from the gravitational wave. By energy conservation, this is the definition of a graviton. But one can now also study experimentally some of its properties."

"But to reiterate again, it cannot exclude all possible semi-classical explanations. In particular, one that doesn't conserve energy would be indistinguishable in this experiment," Dr. Pikovski continued. "Just like for photons, one then has more experiments to design and do in the (far) future to really rule everything else out. So it is never 'bullet proof', just a degree of empirical evidence that steadily grows. Which is always true in all of physics."

"Overall I think it's quite possible to have a successful graviton detection within a decade," he added. "But of course you never know, and there might be surprises."

makunth.v@thehindu.co.in

Scientists chase the tough task of building a graviton detector वैज्ञानिक ग्रैविटॉन डिटेक्टर बनाने के कठिन कार्य का पीछा कर रहे हैं

Gravitons are the hypothetical particles of gravity.

ग्रैविटॉन गुरुत्वाकर्षण के काल्पनिक कण हैं।

To detect if they exist is a painful task because gravity is a very weak force; a simple fridge magnet can overcome the gravitational pull of the entire earth to pick up a paperclip.

यह पता लगाना कि वे मौजूद हैं या नहीं एक कठिन कार्य है क्योंकि

गुरुत्वाकर्षण एक बहुत कमजोर बल है; एक साधारण फ्रिज मैग्नेट पूरी पृथ्वी के गुरुत्वाकर्षण खिंचाव को पार करके एक पेपरक्लिप उठा सकता है।

If gravitons exist, they could open the door to a theory of everything.

यदि ग्रैविटॉन मौजूद हैं, तो वे थ्योरी ऑफ एवरीथिंग का द्वार खोल सकते हैं।

The plan is to use an ultra-sensitive antenna of sorts to listen for the impact of the particles of gravity.

योजना यह है कि गुरुत्वाकर्षण के कणों के प्रभाव को सुनने के लिए एक अत्यंत संवेदनशील एंटीना जैसे उपकरण का उपयोग किया जाए।

The device of choice is a cylindrical resonator made of superfluid helium.

चुना गया उपकरण सुपरफ्लूइड हीलियम से बना एक सिलिंड्रिकल रेज़ोनेटर है।

The researchers chose this material because they can control it precisely at a macroscopic scale.

शोधकर्ताओं ने इस पदार्थ को इसलिए चुना क्योंकि इसे मैक्रोस्कोपिक स्तर पर सटीक रूप से नियंत्रित किया जा सकता है।

To detect something as faint as a graviton, the detector must be completely free of noise, so the team plans to cool the cylinder down to its quantum ground state, where it will have no thermal vibrations.

ग्रैविटॉन जैसे अत्यंत कमजोर कण का पता लगाने के लिए डिटेक्टर को पूरी तरह शोर-मुक्त होना चाहिए,



इसलिए टीम सिलिंडर को उसके **क्वांटम ग्राउंड स्टेट** तक ठंडा करने की योजना बना रही है, जहाँ कोई **थर्मल वाइब्रेशन** नहीं होंगे।

- It will effectively be waiting in **near total silence**.
यह उपकरण प्रभावी रूप से **लगभग पूर्ण मौन** में प्रतीक्षा करेगा।
- **When a strong gravitational wave, for example from a pair of black holes merging together, passes through the detector, the theory posits that it could transfer exactly one quantum of energy, i.e. a single graviton, into the cylinder.**
जब कोई **मज़बूत ग्रेविटेशनल वेव**, जैसे कि **दो ब्लैक होल के विलय** से उत्पन्न, डिटेक्टर से गुजरती है, तो सिद्धांत के अनुसार वह **ऊर्जा का ठीक एक क्वांटम**, अर्थात् **एक अकेला ग्रेविटॉन**, सिलिंडर में स्थानांतरित कर सकती है।
- **And when it does, the energy will be converted into a mechanical vibration within the cylinder.**
और जब ऐसा होगा, तो वह ऊर्जा सिलिंडर के भीतर **यांत्रिक कंपन** में परिवर्तित हो जाएगी।
- **Lasers monitoring the cylinder will watch out for this vibration, revealing when a graviton has been absorbed.**
सिलिंडर की निगरानी करने वाले **लेज़र** इस कंपन को पहचानेंगे, जिससे यह पता चलेगा कि **ग्रेविटॉन अवशोषित** हुआ है।
- **"It is unlikely it will be able to detect single gravitons then, but serve as a blueprint for the next iteration."**
"संभव है कि तब यह **एकल ग्रेविटॉन** का पता न लगा पाए, लेकिन यह **अगले संस्करण के लिए एक ब्लूप्रिंट** के रूप में कार्य करेगा।"

A bridge between camps सिद्धांतों के बीच एक सेतु

- The **graviton** is the **hypothetical particle of gravity**.
ग्रेविटॉन गुरुत्वाकर्षण का एक **काल्पनिक कण** है।
- Scientists do not know if it is real but they have some reasons to believe it could exist.
वैज्ञानिक नहीं जानते कि यह वास्तविक है या नहीं, लेकिन इसके **अस्तित्व में विश्वास करने के कुछ कारण** हैं।
- **In modern physics, forces are transmitted by particles.**
आधुनिक भौतिकी में बलों का संचार **कणों** द्वारा होता है।
- **For instance, when two magnets repel each other, they are actually exchanging streams of (virtual) photons.**
उदाहरण के लिए, जब दो **चुंबक** एक-दूसरे को प्रतिकर्षित करते हैं, तो वे वास्तव में **(वर्चुअल) फोटॉनों** की धाराओं का आदान-प्रदान कर रहे होते हैं।
- **Physicists believe gravity could work the same way, if the sun pulls on the earth, it could be doing so by exchanging gravitons.**
भौतिकविद मानते हैं कि **गुरुत्वाकर्षण** भी इसी तरह कार्य कर सकता है, अर्थात् यदि **सूर्य पृथ्वी को आकर्षित करता है**, तो वह **ग्रेविटॉन के आदान-प्रदान** के माध्यम से ऐसा कर सकता है।
- **Another way to understand a graviton is to compare it to light.**
ग्रेविटॉन को समझने का एक और तरीका इसकी **प्रकाश से तुलना** करना है।
- **Light is an electromagnetic wave but at the smallest level it's made of particles called photons.**
प्रकाश एक **विद्युतचुंबकीय तरंग** है, लेकिन सबसे छोटे स्तर पर यह **फोटॉन** नामक कणों से बना होता है।
- **Gravity acts like a wave, called gravitational waves, but at the smallest level it could be made of particles called gravitons.**
गुरुत्वाकर्षण भी एक **तरंग** की तरह कार्य करता है, जिन्हें **ग्रेविटेशनल वेव्स** कहा जाता है, लेकिन सबसे छोटे स्तर पर यह **ग्रेविटॉन** नामक कणों से बना हो सकता है।
- **If gravitons exist, they'd open the door to a theory of everything.**
यदि **ग्रेविटॉन अस्तित्व में** पाए जाते हैं, तो वे **थ्योरी ऑफ एवरीथिंग** का मार्ग खोल सकते हैं।
- Currently, physics theories are split into **two camps, general relativity and quantum mechanics.**
वर्तमान में भौतिकी के सिद्धांत **दो खेमों** में बँटे हैं, **जनरल रिलेटिविटी** और **क्वांटम मैकेनिक्स**।
- **General relativity explains the macroscopic universe using the bending of spacetime, while quantum mechanics explains atoms using particle properties.**



जनरल रिलेटिविटी स्पेसटाइम के मुड़ने से मैक्रोस्कोपिक ब्रह्मांड को समझाती है, जबकि क्वांटम मैकेनिक्स परमाणुओं को कणों के गुणों से समझाती है।

- **Physicists have detected gravitational waves but never a graviton.**
भौतिकविदों ने ग्रेविटेशनल वेव्स का पता लगा लिया है, लेकिन कभी ग्रेविटॉन का नहीं।
- **This is like detecting tsunamis but not being sure if water molecules are real.**
यह ऐसा है जैसे सुनामी का पता तो लग जाए, लेकिन यह निश्चित न हो कि पानी के अणु वास्तव में मौजूद हैं या नहीं।

Impossible detector असंभव डिटेक्टर

- The pain comes from the fact that **gravity** is such a **weak force**.
यह कठिनाई इस तथ्य से आती है कि **गुरुत्वाकर्षण** एक अत्यंत **कमज़ोर बल** है।
- **Gravity is one of nature's four fundamental forces; the others are electromagnetism, and the strong and weak nuclear forces.**
गुरुत्वाकर्षण **प्रकृति के चार मूलभूत बलों** में से एक है; अन्य हैं **विद्युतचुंबकत्व**, तथा **मज़बूत और कमज़ोर नाभिकीय बल**।
- **And gravity is 1 billion billion billion billion times weaker than the electromagnetic force, the next strongest.**
और गुरुत्वाकर्षण **विद्युतचुंबकीय बल** से, जो अगला सबसे शक्तिशाली बल है, **1 अरब अरब अरब अरब गुना कमज़ोर** है।
- **This is why a simple fridge magnet can overcome the gravitational pull of the entire earth to pick up a paperclip.**
यही कारण है कि एक साधारण **फ्रिज मैग्नेट** पूरी **पृथ्वी के गुरुत्वाकर्षण आकर्षण** को पार करके एक **पेपरक्लिप** उठा सकता है।
- **They figured experimenters would need a detector with the mass of Jupiter (2 billion billion billion kg), composed of 100% efficient sensor material, placed in close orbit around a neutron star, a source of high-energy gravitons.**
उन्होंने अनुमान लगाया कि प्रयोगकर्ताओं को **बृहस्पति के द्रव्यमान (2 अरब अरब अरब किलोग्राम)** वाला, **100% दक्ष सेंसर सामग्री** से बना, और **न्यूट्रॉन तारे के निकट कक्षा** में रखा गया डिटेक्टर चाहिए होगा, जो **उच्च-ऊर्जा ग्रेविटॉन** का स्रोत है।
- **And even with this extreme setup, they estimated the detector would register one graviton event every decade.**
और इस **अत्यधिक व्यवस्था** के बावजूद, उनका अनुमान था कि डिटेक्टर **हर दस साल में केवल एक ग्रेविटॉन घटना** दर्ज करेगा।
- **To distinguish that single graviton from the background noise of neutrinos — the universe's second-most abundant particles and thus vastly more common — the experimenters also will need to shield the detector.**
उस एकल ग्रेविटॉन को **न्यूट्रिनो** की पृष्ठभूमि शोर से अलग करने के लिए — जो ब्रह्मांड के **दूसरे सबसे अधिक पाए जाने वाले कण** हैं और इसलिए बहुत सामान्य हैं — प्रयोगकर्ताओं को डिटेक्टर को **शील्ड** करना होगा।
- **But the amount of shielding required would be so massive that the detector would collapse into a black hole under its own gravity.**
लेकिन आवश्यक शील्डिंग की मात्रा इतनी विशाल होगी कि डिटेक्टर अपनी ही **गुरुत्वाकर्षण शक्ति के तहत ब्लैक होल में ढह जाएगा**।
- **It's a catch-22 in effect: any detector massive enough to catch a graviton would be too massive to exist.**
यह वास्तव में एक **कैच-22** स्थिति है: कोई भी डिटेक्टर जो ग्रेविटॉन पकड़ने लायक पर्याप्त विशाल होगा, वह **अस्तित्व में रहने के लिए ही बहुत विशाल होगा**।



New state of matter is a solid-liquid hybrid

GS III: S&T

Vasudevan Mukunth
CHENNAI

A new state of matter appears to be a solid-liquid hybrid, scientists from Ulm University in Germany and the University of Nottingham in the U.K. have reported in the journal *ACS Nano*.

The newfound material is not a slush or a gel in the macroscopic sense but refers to a specific atomic structure where different parts of a single nanoparticle exist in different states at the same time.

As a result, the nanoparticle displays the properties of solids and liquids both, but also unique behaviours that neither a pure liquid nor a pure solid would display on its own.

Conventionally, physicists assume the atoms in a solid are stationary while those in a liquid are moving fast and in random ways. The researchers sought to investigate the boundary between these phases at the nanoscale, specifically looking at how the presence of stationary atoms within a liquid nanoparticle influences the solidification process.

The most significant novel property the nanoparticle exhibited was the ability to remain liquid at temperatures far below the normal freezing point

The team used a technique called high-resolution transmission electron (HRTE) microscopy to observe nanoparticles of platinum, palladium, and gold deposited on graphene, and complemented what they observed with mathematical calculations.

This way the team found that even when nanoparticles are in a liquid state, they contain individual metal atoms that remain stationary because they are confined to gaps in the graphene's network of carbon atoms. When a large number of stationary atoms aligned along the perimeter of a nanodroplet, they would effectively corral the liquid core.

Under the HRTE microscope, the stationary atoms appeared as distinct and clearly demarcating features while the liquid core appeared transparent or blurry, since the atoms here were moving faster than the image capture time.

As a result, the nanodroplet could remain liquid at temperatures of 200-300° C, significantly lower than unconfined particles that crystallised only at around 500° C. The physical constraints also caused the supercooled liquid to not form a standard crystal lattice when it cooled. Instead it formed a disordered solid.

The findings suggest that the boundary between solid and liquid phases at the nanoscale is not as distinct as scientists have thought it to be.

The most significant novel property the nanoparticle exhibited was the ability to remain liquid at temperatures far below the normal freezing point. And when it did freeze, it formed a disordered solid that was chemically identical to the metal but structurally distinct from its natural crystal form.

This is relevant for scientists designing heterogeneous catalysts such as platinum on carbon. In fact, platinum on carbon is the primary catalyst in proton exchange membrane fuel cells and direct methanol fuel cells, which are used to power hydrogen electric vehicles and stationary power generators. In all these applications, platinum particles normally clump together or get poisoned and lose their effectiveness.

In a future catalyst, the researchers expect the corraling could pin the nanoparticles to prevent clumping while maintaining the active liquid or amorphous states, allowing catalysts to continue being effective rather than become unavailable.

परंपरागत रूप से, भौतिकविद मानते हैं कि ठोस में परमाणु स्थिर होते हैं, जबकि द्रव में वे तेज़ और अनियमित रूप से गतिमान होते हैं।

- The researchers sought to investigate the **boundary between these phases at the nanoscale**, specifically looking at how the presence of **stationary atoms within a liquid nanoparticle** influences the **solidification process**.
शोधकर्ताओं ने नैनोस्तर पर इन अवस्थाओं की सीमा का अध्ययन करने का प्रयास किया, विशेष रूप से यह देखने के लिए कि द्रव नैनोपार्टिकल के भीतर स्थिर परमाणुओं की उपस्थिति ठोस बनने की प्रक्रिया को कैसे प्रभावित करती है।
- The team used a technique called **high-resolution transmission electron (HRTE) microscopy** to observe nanoparticles of **platinum, palladium, and gold** deposited on **graphene**, and complemented what they observed with **mathematical calculations**.
टीम ने हाई-रेज़ोल्यूशन ट्रांसमिशन इलेक्ट्रॉन (HRTE) माइक्रोस्कोपी तकनीक का उपयोग ग्रेफ़ीन पर जमा प्लैटिनम, पैलेडियम और सोने के नैनोपार्टिकल्स को देखने के लिए किया और अपने अवलोकनों को गणितीय गणनाओं से पूरक किया।
- This way the team found that **even when nanoparticles are in a liquid state**, they contain individual **metal atoms** that remain **stationary** because they are **confined to gaps** in the

New state of matter is a solid-liquid hybrid
पदार्थ की नई अवस्था एक ठोस-द्रव संकर है

• A new state of matter appears to be a **solid-liquid hybrid**, scientists from **Ulm University in Germany** and the **University of Nottingham in the U.K.** have reported in the journal **ACS Nano**. पदार्थ की एक नई अवस्था ठोस-द्रव संकर के रूप में दिखाई देती है, जैसा कि जर्मनी के **Ulm University** और यू.के. के **University of Nottingham** के वैज्ञानिकों ने **ACS Nano** पत्रिका में बताया है।

• The **newfound material is not a slush or a gel in the macroscopic sense but refers to a specific atomic structure where different parts of a single nanoparticle exist in different states at the same time**.

यह नया पदार्थ स्थूल स्तर पर स्लश या जेल नहीं है, बल्कि एक विशिष्ट परमाण्विक संरचना को दर्शाता है, जिसमें एक ही नैनोपार्टिकल के विभिन्न भाग एक ही समय में अलग-अलग अवस्थाओं में मौजूद होते हैं।

• As a result, the **nanoparticle displays the properties of solids and liquids both**, but also **unique behaviours that neither a pure liquid nor a pure solid would display on its own**.

परिणामस्वरूप, नैनोपार्टिकल ठोस और द्रव दोनों के गुण प्रदर्शित करता है, साथ ही ऐसे विशिष्ट व्यवहार भी दिखाता है जो न तो शुद्ध द्रव और न ही शुद्ध ठोस अकेले प्रदर्शित करते हैं।

• Conventionally, physicists assume the **atoms in a solid are stationary while those in a liquid are moving fast and in random ways**.



graphene's network of carbon atoms.

इस प्रकार टीम ने पाया कि जब नैनोपार्टिकल द्रव अवस्था में भी होते हैं, तब भी उनमें कुछ धातु परमाणु स्थिर रहते हैं क्योंकि वे ग्रेफीन के कार्बन परमाणुओं के नेटवर्क में मौजूद रिक्त स्थानों में फँसे होते हैं।

- When a large number of stationary atoms aligned along the perimeter of a nanodroplet, they would effectively corral the liquid core.

जब बड़ी संख्या में स्थिर परमाणु नैनोड्रॉपलेट की परिधि के साथ सरिखित हो जाते हैं, तो वे प्रभावी रूप से द्रव कोर को घेर लेते हैं।

- Under the HRTE microscope, the stationary atoms appeared as distinct and clearly demarcating features while the liquid core appeared transparent or blurry, since the atoms here were moving faster than the image capture time.

HRTE माइक्रोस्कोप के तहत, स्थिर परमाणु स्पष्ट और सीमांकन करने वाली विशेषताओं के रूप में दिखाई दिए, जबकि द्रव कोर पारदर्शी या धुंधला दिखा, क्योंकि यहाँ परमाणु छवि कैप्चर समय से तेज़ गति से चल रहे थे।

- As a result, the nanodroplet could remain liquid at temperatures of 200–300°C, significantly lower than unconfined particles that crystallised only at around 500°C.

परिणामस्वरूप, नैनोड्रॉपलेट 200–300°C के तापमान पर भी द्रव बना रह सका, जो कि अप्रतिबंधित कणों से काफी कम है, जो केवल लगभग 500°C पर क्रिस्टलीकृत होते हैं।

- And when it did freeze, it formed a disordered solid that was chemically identical to the metal but structurally distinct from its natural crystal form.

और जब यह जमा, तो इसने एक अव्यवस्थित ठोस बनाया जो धातु के साथ रासायनिक रूप से समान था, लेकिन उसकी प्राकृतिक क्रिस्टल संरचना से संरचनात्मक रूप से भिन्न था।

GS Paper III: Environment,

TOPICS COVERED

20 January 2026

1. High Seas Treaty takes effect after 60 countries ratify
60 देशों द्वारा अनुमोदन के बाद हाई सीज़ संधि लागू



High Seas Treaty takes effect after 60 countries ratify

GS III: Environment

Associated Press
NEW YORK

The world's first legally binding agreement to protect marine life in international waters took effect on Saturday, marking a historic moment for ocean conservation after nearly two decades of negotiations.

The High Seas Treaty will govern nearly half the planet's surface — the vast ocean areas beyond any country's control. These waters face mounting threats from destructive fishing practices, shipping, plastic pollution, overfishing and potential deep-sea mining, all compounded by climate change. The ocean absorbs carbon dioxide and produces oxygen, making its health critical for addressing the climate crisis.

The treaty entered into force 120 days after it reached the threshold of ratification by 60 countries in September. As of Friday, 83 countries had ratified it, including the recent addition of major maritime powers such as China and Japan.

The treaty creates the first framework for establishing Marine Protected Areas on the high seas, which make up about two-thirds of the world's ocean. Currently, only around 1% of these international waters are protected.

From Saturday, ratifying countries must begin working together on ocean science and technology, as well as help developing nations build capacity to participate in ocean governance. Companies planning activities that could harm marine life must conduct environmental impact assessments that meet the treaty's standards. Those conducting research on ocean organisms that could be used commercially, such as for new medicines, must notify other countries and share their findings.

threshold of ratification by 60 countries in September.

यह संधि सितंबर में 60 देशों द्वारा अनुमोदन की सीमा पूरी होने के 120 दिन बाद प्रभाव में आई।

- As of Friday, 83 countries had ratified it, including the recent addition of major maritime powers such as China and Japan. शुक्रवार तक, 83 देशों ने इसका अनुमोदन किया था, जिनमें हाल ही में शामिल प्रमुख समुद्री शक्तियां चीन और जापान भी हैं।
- The treaty creates the first framework for establishing Marine Protected Areas on the high seas, which make up about two-thirds of the world's ocean. यह संधि हाई सीज़ पर समुद्री संरक्षित क्षेत्रों की स्थापना के लिए पहला ढांचा तैयार करती है, जो दुनिया के महासागरों के लगभग दो-तिहाई हिस्से का निर्माण करते हैं।
- Currently, only around 1% of these international waters are protected. वर्तमान में, इन अंतरराष्ट्रीय जल क्षेत्रों का केवल लगभग 1% ही संरक्षित है।
- From Saturday, ratifying countries must begin working together on ocean science and technology, as well as help developing nations build capacity to participate in ocean governance.

शनिवार से, अनुमोदन करने वाले देशों को महासागर विज्ञान और प्रौद्योगिकी पर मिलकर काम शुरू करना होगा, साथ ही विकासशील देशों को महासागर शासन में भाग लेने की क्षमता विकसित करने में मदद करनी होगी।

High Seas Treaty takes effect after 60 countries ratify 60 देशों द्वारा अनुमोदन के बाद हाई सीज़ संधि लागू



- The world's first legally binding agreement to protect marine life in international waters took effect on Saturday, marking a historic moment for ocean conservation after nearly two

decades of negotiations.

अंतरराष्ट्रीय जल क्षेत्रों में समुद्री जीवन की रक्षा के लिए दुनिया का पहला कानूनी रूप से बाध्यकारी समझौता शनिवार को लागू हुआ, जो लगभग दो दशकों की बातचीत के बाद महासागर संरक्षण के लिए एक ऐतिहासिक क्षण है।

- The High Seas Treaty will govern nearly half the planet's surface — the vast ocean areas beyond any country's control. हाई सीज़ संधि पृथ्वी की सतह के लगभग आधे हिस्से को नियंत्रित करेगी — वे विशाल महासागरीय क्षेत्र जो किसी भी देश के नियंत्रण से बाहर हैं।
- These waters face mounting threats from destructive fishing practices, shipping, plastic pollution, overfishing and potential deep-sea mining, all compounded by climate change.

इन जल क्षेत्रों को विनाशकारी मछली पकड़ने की प्रथाओं, शिपिंग, प्लास्टिक प्रदूषण, अत्यधिक मछली पकड़ने और संभावित गहरे समुद्र खनन से बढ़ते खतरों का सामना करना पड़ रहा है, जो सभी जलवायु परिवर्तन से और गंभीर हो गए हैं।

- The ocean absorbs carbon dioxide and produces oxygen, making its health critical for addressing the climate crisis. महासागर कार्बन डाइऑक्साइड को अवशोषित करता है और ऑक्सीजन उत्पन्न करता है, जिससे उसका स्वास्थ्य जलवायु संकट से निपटने के लिए अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण हो जाता है।
- The treaty entered into force 120 days after it reached the



- Companies planning activities that could harm **marine life** must conduct **environmental impact assessments** that meet the treaty's standards.
वे कंपनियां जो **समुद्री जीवन** को नुकसान पहुंचा सकती हैं, उन्हें संधि के मानकों के अनुरूप **पर्यावरणीय प्रभाव आकलन** करना होगा।
- Those conducting research on **ocean organisms** that could be used commercially, such as for **new medicines**, must notify other countries and share their **findings**.
जो लोग **महासागरीय जीवों** पर ऐसा शोध कर रहे हैं जिसका व्यावसायिक उपयोग हो सकता है, जैसे **नई दवाओं** के लिए, उन्हें अन्य देशों को सूचित करना होगा और अपने **निष्कर्ष** साझा करने होंगे।

GS Paper III: IS TOPICS COVERED

20 January 2026

1. Calling out the ED's actions, the media trials ईडी की कार्रवाइयों और मीडिया ट्रायल्स को बुलाना

Calling out the ED's actions, the media trials

GS III: Internal Security

MGB

Last year, in June, when the Madras High Court stayed all proceedings initiated by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) against film-producer Akash Bhaskaran, he was left in disbelief but was still a relieved man. Just weeks earlier, sections of the media had portrayed him as a key figure in an alleged "₹1000-crore TASMAL liquor scam". The ED had raided his home in May, seized a laptop and mobile phones, and had also sealed the premises of his associate, Vikram Ravindran. YouTube personalities claimed that investigators had discovered assets such as luxury watches. The media did not cover itself in glory by airing visuals of "incriminating WhatsApp chat print-outs" which had been "found thrown out" during one of the ED's searches. Hashtags trended, memes flourished, and political opponents quoted ever-expanding figures in this alleged scam.

All this collapsed the moment the courts examined the facts. The Madras High Court held that the raids on Mr. Bhaskaran and Mr. Ravindran were effectively illegal, noting that there was no credible information to link them to any scheduled offence, or even the alleged Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation Limited (TASMAL) scam. The High Court stayed all proceedings against the two men and directed the ED to return all seized devices and materials to them. It also held that the agency had no authority to seal premises or issue coercive summons in the absence of a predicate offence. Faced with judicial scrutiny, the ED revoked the search authorisation and unsealed the premises. And it tendered an unconditional apology. When the ED attempted to issue fresh summons, the Supreme Court of India stepped in and stayed the broader probe, observing that the ED was "crossing all limits" and violating federal principles.

Waywardness and a vague mandate
This is an episode that matters. This is because it captures a pattern that has become familiar: search and arrest first, investigate later, make selective leaks to friendly media, and then quietly retreat when courts demand evidence.

The ED has been entrusted to administer the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, which is meant to prevent criminals from enjoying the proceeds of crime. The structure of the law is clear in principle: there must first be a scheduled offence that generates proceeds of crime.

In practice, the ED has inverted this logic. In many cases, it treats the money-laundering process as independent of an underlying crime, and then proceeds to establish a predicate offence to justify its action.

The ED wields sweeping powers. Under Section 50 of the PMLA, it can summon anyone and record statements under oath without clarifying whether the person is a witness or an accused. Under Section 17, it can conduct searches on anyone and seize materials. Under Section 19, it can arrest a person without warrant based on its own subjective "reason to believe". It can provisionally attach property, freeze bank



Saravanan Annadurai

is a senior lawyer who has appeared in several Directorate of Enforcement-related cases, and an official spokesperson for the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)

accounts and cripple businesses before any trial begins. To get bail under the PMLA is notoriously difficult, reversing the presumption of innocence – requiring the accused to prove that they have not committed an offence and for the court to be satisfied that they are not likely to commit any offence while on bail.

These powers might be defensible if exercised sparingly against terror financing, drug trafficking or large-scale organised crime – as they are meant to be. Instead, these powers are increasingly deployed as tools of political intimidation.

Section 50 summons are used to keep people waiting for hours, unsure of their status and creating psychological pressure on them to comply. There have also been allegations of physical assault in custody. Despite directions by the Supreme Court mandating audio-visual recording of interrogations, the ED has been accused of only selectively recording proceedings, undermining transparency and making judicial review difficult.

Section 17 searches are conducted on the flimsiest grounds. Courts have repeatedly held that rumours and vague allegations do not constitute credible information. Yet, the ED has used these to justify raids, even on state-run institutions.

Section 19 arrests are justified on the vague grounds of "non-cooperation", which often means nothing but a refusal to endorse the agency's narrative.

Even when cases have collapsed, the ED is known not to release attached properties. Assets that were acquired long before the commission of the alleged offence are held for years.

While the Court's judgment in *Vijay Madanlal Chaudhary vs Union Of India* upheld many of these provisions, the verdict itself is under review, along with no hearings have been held, leaving citizens exposed to unchecked power.

Corruption and political misuse
An agency entrusted with extraordinary powers must by itself be beyond reproach. Over the past few years, there have been cases of many ED officers having been caught accepting bribes or extorting money. In November 2023, an ED officer in Rajasthan was arrested for taking a bribe to dilute a chit-fund case. The next month, an officer from the ED's Madurai sub-zonal office in Tamil Nadu was caught red-handed demanding money to drop a closed case. In August 2024, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) arrested an assistant director with the ED for accepting a bribe from a Mumbai-based jeweller. In May 2025, a senior ED officer was arrested in Odisha for demanding crores from a mining businessman. Every time, the ED has responded with suspension orders and press statements, yet none of these incidents have prompted institutional reform.

Claims of moral authority ring hollow when officers tasked with enforcing financial probity themselves indulge in extortion. Benches of the Supreme Court have openly questioned whether the agency is using the PMLA to prolong incarceration rather than secure convictions, and

warning that the fight against corruption cannot itself become lawless.

In West Bengal, the ED's raids on I-PAC and its legal offensive against the State Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee, show the same drift – it raises concerns about selective investigations being pushed into public view ahead of State elections before there is establishment of solid evidence. If the ED can brand a State Chief Minister as obstructionist, based on theatre rather than facts, what does that say about fairness and the rule of law? Therefore, we need to ask whether such prosecutorial zeal serves justice or political impact. The observations by Justice B.V. Nagarathna of the Supreme Court, on the misuse of Article 32, have highlighted the stark irony in the ED's West Bengal case. While the agency frequently uses its powers in a manner seen to be selective and arbitrary, its direct invocation of Article 32 underscores a double standard. This approach, amid Justice Nagarathna's broader critique of Article 32 being abused for routine or trivial grievances, has only illustrated the institutional hypocrisy in the politicised use of investigative powers.

The same template is now visible in leaked communications about Tamil Nadu Minister K.N. Nehru of the DMK. The media has reported on two letters that the ED wrote to the State's Director General of Police alleging scams. It must be noted that the ED's letters amount to recommendations, not findings. The leaks, however, achieved the desired effect: public suspicion, political pressure and reputational damage. Whether the allegations survive judicial scrutiny remains to be seen, but the pattern is unmistakable.

The need for vigil and checks

What is the takeaway in all this? First, the media must introspect. Reporting allegations without verification, especially when they stem from leaks and internal communications, amounts to complicity. Journalism is not stenography. The duty of the press is to step outside and verify the truth. Journalists must resist becoming conduits for false and politically-motivated allegations. Second, scepticism is healthy. The ED's status as a central agency does not confer infallibility. Its recent record reflects overreach, poor investigation and, at times, an outright abuse of power. Citizens are entitled to demand evidence, not theatrics.

Third, the rule of law matters. Money-laundering statutes exist to protect the integrity of the financial system, but these laws must not become tools of intimidation.

Finally, courts must urgently define the limits of the ED's powers and reinforce citizens' rights. Only firm constitutional guardrails can prevent investigative authority from mutating into arbitrary state power.

This is about the health of India's democracy. If the CBI was once described as a caged parrot, the ED today resembles a bound let loose. Every false or weak case normalises authoritarian overreach. Every media trial erodes faith in institutions. We must ensure that the institutional rot is reversed.

Calling out the ED's actions, the media trials ईडी की कार्रवाइयों और मीडिया ट्रायल्स को बुलाना

Last year, in June
पिछले वर्ष, जून में



- Last year, in **June**, when the **Madras High Court** stayed all proceedings initiated by the **Directorate of Enforcement (ED)** against **film-producer Akash Bhaskaran**, he was left in disbelief but was still a relieved man.
पिछले वर्ष **जून** में, जब **मद्रास उच्च न्यायालय** ने **प्रवर्तन निदेशालय (ED)** द्वारा **फिल्म निर्माता आकाश भास्करन** के खिलाफ शुरू की गई सभी कार्यवाहियों पर रोक लगा दी, तो वह अविश्वास में थे लेकिन फिर भी राहत महसूस कर रहे थे।
- Just weeks earlier, sections of the media had portrayed him as a key figure in an alleged **“₹1000-crore TASMAL liquor scam”**.
कुछ ही सप्ताह पहले, मीडिया के कुछ हिस्सों ने उन्हें कथित **“₹1000 करोड़ TASMAL शराब घोटाले”** में एक प्रमुख व्यक्ति के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया था।
- The **ED** had raided his home in **May**, seized a **laptop** and **mobile phones**, and had also sealed the premises of his associate, **Vikram Ravindran**.
ED ने **मई** में उनके घर पर छापा मारा था, एक **लैपटॉप** और **मोबाइल फोन** जब्त किए थे, और उनके सहयोगी **विक्रम रविंद्रन** के परिसर को भी सील कर दिया था।
- **YouTube personalities** claimed that investigators had discovered assets such as **luxury watches**.
यूट्यूब हस्तियों ने दावा किया कि जांचकर्ताओं ने **लक्जरी घड़ियों** जैसी संपत्तियाँ खोजी हैं।
- The media did not cover itself in glory by airing visuals of **‘incriminating WhatsApp chat print-outs’** which had been **‘found thrown out’** during one of the **ED’s** searches.
मीडिया ने **ED** की एक तलाशी के दौरान **‘बाहर फेंके गए पाए गए’** **‘आपत्तिजनक व्हाट्सएप चैट प्रिंट-आउट्स’** के दृश्य दिखाकर अपनी प्रतिष्ठा नहीं बढ़ाई।
- **Hashtags** trended, **memes** flourished, and **political opponents** quoted ever-expanding figures in this alleged scam.
हैशटैग ट्रेंड करने लगे, **मीम्स** फैल गए, और **राजनीतिक विरोधियों** ने इस कथित घोटाले में लगातार बढ़ते आंकड़ों का हवाला दिया।
- All this collapsed the moment the **courts examined the facts**.
यह सब उस क्षण ढह गया जब **अदालतों ने तथ्यों की जांच** की।
- The **Madras High Court** held that the raids on **Mr. Bhaskaran** and **Mr. Ravindran** were effectively **illegal**, noting that there was **no credible information** to link them to any **scheduled offence**, or even the alleged **Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation Limited (TASMAL) scam**.
मद्रास उच्च न्यायालय ने माना कि **श्री भास्करन** और **श्री रविंद्रन** पर किए गए छापे प्रभावी रूप से **अवैध** थे, क्योंकि उन्हें किसी भी **अनुसूचित अपराध** या कथित **तमिलनाडु स्टेट मार्केटिंग कॉरपोरेशन लिमिटेड (TASMAL) घोटाले** से जोड़ने के लिए **कोई विश्वसनीय जानकारी** नहीं थी।
- The High Court stayed all proceedings against the two men and directed the **ED** to **return all seized devices and materials** to them.
उच्च न्यायालय ने दोनों व्यक्तियों के खिलाफ सभी कार्यवाहियों पर रोक लगाई और **ED** को निर्देश दिया कि वह **जब्त किए गए सभी उपकरण और सामग्री वापस** करे।
- It also held that the agency had **no authority to seal premises or issue coercive summons in the absence of a predicate offence**.
अदालत ने यह भी कहा कि **पूर्ववर्ती अपराध** के अभाव में एजेंसी को **परिसर सील करने या दमनकारी समन जारी करने का कोई अधिकार नहीं** है।
- Faced with **judicial scrutiny**, the **ED** revoked the **search authorisation** and **unsealed the premises**.
न्यायिक जांच का सामना करते हुए, **ED** ने **तलाशी की अनुमति रद्द** की और **परिसर को अनसील** कर दिया।
- And it tendered an **unconditional apology**.
और उसने **बिना शर्त माफी** मांगी।
- When the **ED** attempted to issue **fresh summons**, the **Supreme Court of India** stepped in and stayed the broader probe, observing that the **ED** was **‘crossing all limits’** and **violating federal principles**.
जब **ED** ने **नए समन** जारी करने का प्रयास किया, तो **भारत के सर्वोच्च न्यायालय** ने हस्तक्षेप किया और व्यापक जांच पर रोक लगा दी, यह कहते हुए कि **ED** **‘सभी सीमाएँ पार कर रही है’** और **संघीय सिद्धांतों का उल्लंघन** कर रही है।



Waywardness and a vague mandate

भटकाव और अस्पष्ट अधिकार क्षेत्र

- This is an episode that matters.
यह एक ऐसा प्रकरण है जो महत्वपूर्ण है।
- This is because it captures a pattern that has become familiar: **search and arrest first, investigate later, make selective leaks to friendly media, and then quietly retreat when courts demand evidence.**
क्योंकि यह उस पैटर्न को दर्शाता है जो अब परिचित हो चुका है: पहले तलाशी और गिरफ्तारी, बाद में जांच, अनुकूल मीडिया को चयनात्मक लीक, और फिर अदालतों द्वारा सबूत मांगे जाने पर चुपचाप पीछे हटना।
- The **ED has been entrusted to administer the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, which is meant to prevent criminals from enjoying the proceeds of crime.**
ED को धन शोधन निवारण अधिनियम (PMLA), 2002 के क्रियान्वयन की जिम्मेदारी दी गई है, जिसका उद्देश्य अपराधियों को अपराध की आय का लाभ उठाने से रोकना है।
- The **structure of the law is clear in principle: there must first be a scheduled offence that generates proceeds of crime.**
कानून की संरचना सिद्धांततः स्पष्ट है: पहले एक अनुसूचित अपराध होना चाहिए जो अपराध की आय उत्पन्न करे।
- In practice, the **ED has inverted this logic.**
व्यवहार में, ED ने इस तर्क को उलट दिया है।
- In many cases, it treats the **money-laundering process as independent of an underlying crime, and then proceeds to establish a predicate offence to justify its action.**
कई मामलों में, यह धन शोधन प्रक्रिया को किसी मूल अपराध से स्वतंत्र मानती है और फिर अपने कार्यों को उचित ठहराने के लिए पूर्ववर्ती अपराध स्थापित करने की कोशिश करती है।
- The **ED wields sweeping powers.**
ED के पास व्यापक शक्तियाँ हैं।
- **Under Section 50 of the PMLA, it can summon anyone and record statements under oath without clarifying whether the person is a witness or an accused.**
PMLA की धारा 50 के तहत, यह किसी को भी समन कर सकती है और शपथ के तहत बयान दर्ज कर सकती है, यह स्पष्ट किए बिना कि वह व्यक्ति गवाह है या आरोपी।
- **Under Section 17, it can conduct searches on anyone and seize materials.**
धारा 17 के तहत, यह किसी पर भी तलाशी ले सकती है और सामग्री जब्त कर सकती है।
- **Under Section 19, it can arrest a person without warrant based on its own subjective "reason to believe".**
धारा 19 के तहत, यह अपने व्यक्तिपरक "विश्वास के कारण" के आधार पर बिना वारंट गिरफ्तारी कर सकती है।
- **It can provisionally attach property, freeze bank accounts and cripple businesses before any trial begins.**
यह किसी भी मुकदमे के शुरू होने से पहले अस्थायी रूप से संपत्ति कुर्क, बैंक खाते फ्रीज़, और व्यवसायों को पंगु कर सकती है।
- **To get bail under the PMLA is notoriously difficult, reversing the presumption of innocence — requiring the accused to prove that they have not committed an offence and for the court to be satisfied that they are not likely to commit any offence while on bail.**
PMLA के तहत जमानत पाना कुख्यात रूप से कठिन है, क्योंकि यह निर्दोषता की धारणा को उलट देता है — आरोपी को यह साबित करना पड़ता है कि उसने कोई अपराध नहीं किया, और अदालत को यह संतुष्ट होना पड़ता है कि वह जमानत पर रहते हुए कोई अपराध करने की संभावना नहीं रखता।
- **These powers might be defensible if exercised sparingly against terror financing, drug trafficking or large-scale organised crime — as they are meant to be.**
यदि इन शक्तियों का उपयोग आतंक वित्तपोषण, मादक पदार्थ तस्करी या बड़े पैमाने के संगठित अपराध के खिलाफ संयमित रूप से किया जाए, तो वे न्यायसंगत हो सकती हैं — जैसा कि उनका उद्देश्य है।
- **Instead, these powers are increasingly deployed as tools of political intimidation.**
इसके बजाय, इन शक्तियों का उपयोग तेजी से राजनीतिक भयादोहन के औज़ार के रूप में किया जा रहा है।

Section 50 summons

धारा 50 के समन



- Section 50 summons are used to keep people waiting for hours, unsure of their status and creating psychological pressure on them to comply.
धारा 50 के समन का उपयोग लोगों को घंटों तक प्रतीक्षा में रखने, उनकी स्थिति को लेकर अनिश्चितता पैदा करने और उन पर मनोवैज्ञानिक दबाव डालकर अनुपालन कराने के लिए किया जाता है।
- There have also been allegations of physical assault in custody.
हिरासत में शारीरिक उत्पीड़न के आरोप भी लगाए गए हैं।
- Despite directions by the Supreme Court mandating audio-visual recording of interrogations, the ED has been accused of only selectively recording proceedings, undermining transparency and making judicial review difficult.
पूछताछ की ऑडियो-वीडियो रिकॉर्डिंग अनिवार्य करने संबंधी सुप्रीम कोर्ट के निर्देशों के बावजूद, ED पर केवल चयनात्मक रूप से कार्यवाही रिकॉर्ड करने का आरोप है, जिससे पारदर्शिता कमजोर होती है और न्यायिक समीक्षा कठिन हो जाती है।

Section 17 searches धारा 17 की तलाशी

- Section 17 searches are conducted on the flimsiest grounds.
धारा 17 की तलाशी अत्यंत कमजोर आधारों पर की जाती है।
- Courts have repeatedly held that rumours and vague allegations do not constitute credible information.
अदालतें बार-बार कह चुकी हैं कि अफवाहें और अस्पष्ट आरोप विश्वसनीय सूचना नहीं होते।
- Yet, the ED has used these to justify raids, even on state-run institutions.
फिर भी, ED ने इन्हीं आधारों पर छापों को उचित ठहराया है, यहाँ तक कि राज्य संचालित संस्थानों पर भी।

Section 19 arrests धारा 19 के तहत गिरफ्तारियाँ

- Section 19 arrests are justified on the vague grounds of “non-cooperation”, which often means nothing but a refusal to endorse the agency’s narrative.
धारा 19 के तहत गिरफ्तारियों को “असहयोग” जैसे अस्पष्ट आधारों पर उचित ठहराया जाता है, जिसका अक्सर अर्थ केवल एजेंसी के कथानक का समर्थन न करना होता है।
- Even when cases have collapsed, the ED is known not to release attached properties.
यहाँ तक कि जब मामले ढह जाते हैं, तब भी ED द्वारा कुर्क की गई संपत्तियाँ छोड़ी नहीं जातीं।
- Assets that were acquired long before the commission of the alleged offence are held for years.
कथित अपराध से काफी पहले अर्जित की गई संपत्तियाँ भी सालों तक रोकी जाती हैं।
- While the Court’s judgment in Vijay Madanlal Choudhary vs Union Of India upheld many of these provisions, the verdict itself is under review, although no hearings have been held, leaving citizens exposed to unchecked power.
हालाँकि Vijay Madanlal Choudhary बनाम Union Of India में न्यायालय के फैसले ने इन प्रावधानों में से कई को बरकरार रखा, लेकिन फैसला स्वयं पुनरीक्षणाधीन है, और कोई सुनवाई नहीं हुई, जिससे नागरिक बेलगाम शक्ति के सामने असुरक्षित हैं।

Corruption and political misuse भ्रष्टाचार और राजनीतिक दुरुपयोग

- An agency entrusted with extraordinary powers must by itself be beyond reproach.
जिस एजेंसी को असाधारण शक्तियाँ सौंपी गई हों, उसका स्वयं दोषरहित होना आवश्यक है।
- Over the past few years, there have been cases of many ED officers having been caught accepting bribes or extorting money.
पिछले कुछ वर्षों में कई ED अधिकारियों के रिश्वत लेने या धन उगाही में पकड़े जाने के मामले सामने आए हैं।
- In November 2023, an ED officer in Rajasthan was arrested for taking a bribe to dilute a chit-fund case.



नवंबर 2023 में राजस्थान में एक ED अधिकारी को चिट-फंड मामले को कमजोर करने के लिए रिश्वत लेते हुए गिरफ्तार किया गया।

- The next month, an officer from the ED's Madurai sub-zonal office in Tamil Nadu was caught red-handed demanding money to drop a closed case.
अगले ही महीने, तमिलनाडु में ED के मदुरै उप-क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय का एक अधिकारी बंद मामले को खत्म करने के लिए पैसे मांगते हुए रंगे हाथों पकड़ा गया।
- In August 2024, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) arrested an assistant director with the ED for accepting a bribe from a Mumbai-based jeweller.
अगस्त 2024 में केंद्रीय जांच ब्यूरो (CBI) ने ED के एक सहायक निदेशक को मुंबई स्थित जौहरी से रिश्वत लेते हुए गिरफ्तार किया।
- In May 2025, a senior ED officer was arrested in Odisha for demanding crores from a mining businessman.
मई 2025 में ओडिशा में एक वरिष्ठ ED अधिकारी को खनन व्यवसायी से करोड़ों की मांग करने के आरोप में गिरफ्तार किया गया।
- Every time, the ED has responded with suspension orders and press statements, yet none of these incidents have prompted institutional reform.
हर बार ED ने निलंबन आदेश और प्रेस वक्तव्यों के साथ प्रतिक्रिया दी, लेकिन इनमें से किसी भी घटना ने संस्थागत सुधार को प्रेरित नहीं किया।
- Claims of moral authority ring hollow when officers tasked with enforcing financial probity themselves indulge in extortion.
जब वित्तीय शुचिता लागू करने का दायित्व निभाने वाले अधिकारी स्वयं उगाही में लिप्त हों, तो नैतिक अधिकार के दावे खोखले लगते हैं।
- Benches of the Supreme Court have openly questioned whether the agency is using the PMLA to prolong incarceration rather than secure convictions, and warning that the fight against corruption cannot itself become lawless.
सुप्रीम कोर्ट की पीठों ने खुले तौर पर सवाल उठाया है कि क्या एजेंसी PMLA का उपयोग दोषसिद्धि सुनिश्चित करने के बजाय कैद को लंबा करने के लिए कर रही है, और चेतावनी दी है कि भ्रष्टाचार के खिलाफ लड़ाई स्वयं कानूनविहीन नहीं हो सकती।

In West Bengal, the ED's raids पश्चिम बंगाल में ED की छापेमारी

- In West Bengal, the ED's raids on I-PAC and its legal offensive against the State Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee, show the same drift, raising concerns about selective investigations being pushed into public view ahead of State elections before the establishment of solid evidence.
पश्चिम बंगाल में I-PAC पर ED की छापेमारी और राज्य की मुख्यमंत्री ममता बनर्जी के खिलाफ उसका कानूनी आक्रमण उसी तरह के भटकाव को दर्शाता है, जिससे राज्य चुनावों से पहले बिना ठोस साक्ष्य के चयनात्मक जांचों को सार्वजनिक रूप से आगे बढ़ाए जाने को लेकर चिंता पैदा होती है।
- If the ED can brand a State Chief Minister as obstructionist, based on theatre rather than facts, what does that say about fairness and the rule of law?
यदि ED तथ्यों के बजाय नाटकीयता के आधार पर किसी राज्य के मुख्यमंत्री को बाधक के रूप में पेश कर सकती है, तो यह न्यायसंगतता और कानून के शासन के बारे में क्या दर्शाता है?
- Therefore, we need to ask whether such prosecutorial zeal serves justice or political impact.
इसलिए हमें यह पूछने की आवश्यकता है कि ऐसी अभियोजनात्मक उत्सुकता न्याय की सेवा करती है या राजनीतिक प्रभाव की।
- The observations by Justice B.V. Nagarathna of the Supreme Court, on the misuse of Article 32, have highlighted the stark irony in the ED's West Bengal case.
सुप्रीम कोर्ट की न्यायमूर्ति बी.वी. नागरत्ना द्वारा अनुच्छेद 32 के दुरुपयोग पर की गई टिप्पणियों ने ED के पश्चिम बंगाल मामले में मौजूद तीखी विडंबना को उजागर किया है।
- While the agency frequently uses its powers in a manner seen to be selective and arbitrary, its direct invocation of Article 32 underscores a double standard.
जहाँ एजेंसी अक्सर अपनी शक्तियों का उपयोग चयनात्मक और मनमाने ढंग से करती है, वहीं अनुच्छेद 32 का उसका प्रत्यक्ष सहारा लेना एक दोहरा मापदंड दर्शाता है।



- This approach, amid **Justice Nagarathna's broader critique** of **Article 32** being abused for **routine or trivial grievances**, has only illustrated the **institutional hypocrisy** in the **politicised use of investigative powers**.
अनुच्छेद 32 के साधारण या तुच्छ शिकायतों के लिए दुरुपयोग पर न्यायमूर्ति नागरत्ना की व्यापक आलोचना के बीच, यह दृष्टिकोण जांच शक्तियों के राजनीतिक उपयोग में मौजूद संस्थागत पाखंड को ही उजागर करता है।
- The same **template** is now visible in **leaked communications** about **Tamil Nadu Minister K.N. Nehru** of the **DMK**.
अब यही ढांचा DMK के तमिलनाडु मंत्री के.एन. नेहरू से जुड़ी लीक हुई संचार सामग्री में भी दिखाई देता है।
- The media has reported on **two letters** that the **ED** wrote to the State's **Director General of Police**, alleging **scams**.
मीडिया ने उन दो पत्रों की रिपोर्ट की है जो ED ने राज्य के पुलिस महानिदेशक को कथित घोटालों का आरोप लगाते हुए लिखे थे।
- It must be noted that the **ED's letters amount to recommendations, not findings**.
यह ध्यान दिया जाना चाहिए कि ED के पत्र निष्कर्ष नहीं, बल्कि सिफारिशें हैं।
- The **leaks**, however, achieved the **desired effect: public suspicion, political pressure and reputational damage**.
हालाँकि, इन लीकों ने वांछित प्रभाव हासिल कर लिया: जनसंदेह, राजनीतिक दबाव और प्रतिष्ठा को नुकसान।
- Whether the allegations survive **judicial scrutiny** remains to be seen, but the **pattern is unmistakable**.
ये आरोप न्यायिक जांच में टिकते हैं या नहीं, यह देखा जाना बाकी है, लेकिन पैटर्न स्पष्ट है।

The need for vigil and checks सतर्कता और नियंत्रण की आवश्यकता

- What is the **takeaway** in all this?
इस सब से **मुख्य सीख** क्या है?
- First, the **media must introspect**.
सबसे पहले, **मीडिया को आत्ममंथन** करना चाहिए।
- Reporting **allegations without verification**, especially when they stem from **leaks and internal communications**, amounts to **complicity**.
सत्यापन के बिना आरोपों की रिपोर्टिंग, विशेषकर जब वे **लीक और आंतरिक संचार** से आते हों, **सहभागिता** के समान है।
- **Journalism is not stenography**.
पत्रकारिता आशुलिपि नहीं है।
- The duty of the **press** is to step outside and **verify the truth**.
प्रेस का कर्तव्य है कि वह बाहर जाकर **सत्य की पुष्टि** करे।
- Journalists must resist becoming **conduits for false and politically-motivated allegations**.
पत्रकारों को झूठे और राजनीतिक रूप से प्रेरित आरोपों का माध्यम बनने से बचना चाहिए।
- Second, **scepticism is healthy**.
दूसरे, संशय स्वस्थ होता है।
- The **ED's status as a central agency** does not confer **infallibility**.
केंद्रीय एजेंसी के रूप में ED की स्थिति उसे **अचूक** नहीं बनाती।
- Its recent record reflects **overreach, poor investigation** and, at times, an **outright abuse of power**.
इसका हालिया रिकॉर्ड **अतिरेक, कमज़ोर जांच** और कई बार **खुला शक्ति-दुरुपयोग** दर्शाता है।
- Citizens are entitled to demand **evidence, not theatrics**.
नागरिकों को **नाटकीयता नहीं, बल्कि साक्ष्य** मांगने का अधिकार है।
- Third, the **rule of law matters**.
तीसरे, कानून का शासन मायने रखता है।
- **Money-laundering statutes** exist to protect the **integrity of the financial system**, but these laws must not become **tools of intimidation**.



धन-शोधन कानून वित्तीय प्रणाली की अखंडता की रक्षा के लिए हैं, लेकिन ये कानून डराने-धमकाने के औज़ार नहीं बनने चाहिए।

- Finally, courts must urgently define the limits of the ED's powers and reinforce citizens' rights.
अंततः, अदालतों को ED की शक्तियों की सीमाएँ तत्काल परिभाषित करनी होंगी और नागरिक अधिकारों को मज़बूत करना होगा।
- Only firm constitutional guardrails can prevent investigative authority from mutating into arbitrary state power.
केवल मज़बूत संवैधानिक सुरक्षा-रेखाएँ ही जांच अधिकार को मनमानी राज्य शक्ति में बदलने से रोक सकती हैं।
- This is about the health of India's democracy.
यह भारत के लोकतंत्र के स्वास्थ्य से जुड़ा प्रश्न है।
- If the CBI was once described as a caged parrot, the ED today resembles a hound let loose.
यदि कभी CBI को पिंजरे में बंद तोता कहा गया था, तो आज ED एक छूटा हुआ शिकारी कुत्ता प्रतीत होती है।
- Every false or weak case normalises authoritarian overreach.
हर झूठा या कमज़ोर मामला सत्तावादी अतिरेक को सामान्य बनाता है।
- Every media trial erodes faith in institutions.
हर मीडिया ट्रायल संस्थानों में विश्वास को क्षीण करता है।
- We must ensure that the institutional rot is reversed.
हमें यह सुनिश्चित करना होगा कि संस्थागत सड़ांध को पलटा जाए।

PATRIOTIC IAS