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THE HINDU NEWSPAPER

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On the brink of defeat: Sumo wrestlers fight it out at the Nagoya Grand Sumo Tournament in **Nagoya, Japan**, on Tuesday.

NAGOYA PROTOCOL

- The **Nagoya Protocol** is an international agreement under the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**.
- It was **adopted on 29 October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan**, and came into force on **12 October 2014**.
- Its main objective is to ensure that the **benefits arising from the use of genetic resources** (plants, animals, microorganisms, etc.) are shared **fairly and equitably**, while encouraging the **conservation of biodiversity and its sustainable use**.

Show of strength



On the brink of defeat: Sumo wrestlers fight it out at the Nagoya Grand Sumo Tournament in **Nagoya, Japan**, on Tuesday. [APF](#)

Example:

- Imagine a village has a rare medicinal plant that has been used for generations to treat fever.
- A pharmaceutical company discovers this plant, develops a profitable medicine, and earns millions of dollars.
- **Should the village and the country that conserved this plant receive any benefit?**
- The **Nagoya Protocol** says yes.

The Three Pillars of the Nagoya Protocol

- **Access to Genetic Resources (Provider Countries)**
Countries have the sovereign right over the biological resources found within their borders. If a foreign researcher or company wants to collect a rare plant, medicinal herb, or microorganism, it must first obtain the permission of the country where that resource exists.
- **Example:** A foreign company wishes to study a medicinal herb found in the Western Ghats of India. It cannot simply collect samples without India's approval.
- **Fair and Equitable Benefit-Sharing (ABS Rules)**
If the collected biological resource leads to a successful product, the provider country should receive a fair share of the benefits. These benefits may be **monetary**, such as royalties or profits, or **non-monetary**, such as technology transfer, scientific training, research collaboration, or sharing of knowledge.
- **Example:** If the medicinal herb is used to develop a new anti-cancer drug, India may receive royalty payments, while Indian scientists may be involved in future research.
- **Monitoring Compliance**
Every country that is a party to the Protocol must ensure that companies or researchers within its territory comply with the **Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS)** rules of the country from which the genetic resource was obtained.
- **Example:** If a European company uses a plant collected from India, European authorities must verify that the company obtained the plant legally and has honoured its benefit-sharing commitments.

Nagoya Protocol Important

- The Protocol discourages **biopiracy**—the unauthorized use of biological resources or traditional knowledge without permission or compensation.
- It ensures that countries and indigenous communities that protect biodiversity are rewarded, creating an incentive to conserve nature while supporting sustainable development.
- Thus, it promotes both **environmental conservation** and **economic fairness**.

Africa surpasses Asia with highest population facing hunger, says UN



APCS Africa has for the first time become the continent with the largest number of people facing hunger, a UN report said on Tuesday, as a growing number of Africans have faced undernourishment. "The centre of gravity of hunger has shifted from Asia to Africa," said an official with Food and Agriculture Organisation. AFP

22J7. Africa surpasses Asia with highest population facing hunger, says UN संयुक्त राष्ट्र के अनुसार, भूख से प्रभावित सर्वाधिक आबादी वाला महाद्वीप अब अफ्रीका

- **Africa** has for the first time become the continent with the largest number of people facing **hunger**, a **United Nations (UN)** report said on **Tuesday**, as a growing number of Africans have faced **undernourishment**.
संयुक्त राष्ट्र (यूएन) की मंगलवार को जारी एक रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, अफ्रीका पहली बार ऐसा महाद्वीप बन गया है जहाँ **भूख** का सामना करने वाले लोगों की संख्या सबसे अधिक है, क्योंकि वहाँ **कुपोषण** से प्रभावित लोगों की संख्या लगातार बढ़ रही है।
- "The **centre of gravity of hunger** has shifted from **Asia to Africa**," said an official with the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**.

खाद्य एवं कृषि संगठन (एफएओ) के एक अधिकारी ने कहा, "भूख का केंद्र अब एशिया से अफ्रीका की ओर स्थानांतरित हो गया है।"

French Parliament backs social media ban for under-15s in EU first



APCS France's Parliament approved a Bill banning social media access for children under 15, making France the first European country to bar children from apps such as TikTok. President Emmanuel Macron has championed the ban as a flagship reform of his final term in office and pledged to enforce it by September. AFP

22J7. French Parliament backs social media ban for under-15s in EU first

फ्रांस की संसद ने 15 वर्ष से कम आयु के बच्चों के लिए सोशल मीडिया पर प्रतिबंध का समर्थन किया, यूरोपीय संघ में पहली पहल

- **France's Parliament** approved a **Bill** banning **social media** access for children **under 15 years** of age, making **France** the first country in the **European Union (EU)** to prohibit children from using platforms such as **TikTok**.
फ्रांस की संसद ने 15 वर्ष से कम आयु के बच्चों के लिए **सोशल मीडिया** के उपयोग

पर प्रतिबंध लगाने वाले एक **विधेयक** को मंजूरी दे दी है। इसके साथ ही **फ्रांस**, **यूरोपीय संघ (ईयू)** का पहला देश बन गया है जिसने बच्चों को **टिकटॉक** जैसे मंचों के उपयोग से प्रतिबंधित किया है।

22J7. World champion Spain supplants Argentina atop FIFA rankings

विश्व चैंपियन स्पेन ने फीफा रैंकिंग में अर्जेंटीना को शीर्ष स्थान से

World champion Spain supplants Argentina atop FIFA rankings



APCS World champion Spain replaced Argentina at the top of the FIFA rankings released on Monday, while France, which lost to England in the third-place play-off, is placed third ahead of the English. Brazil (fifth, up 1) and Morocco (sixth, up 1) leapfrogged Portugal. Belgium, the Netherlands and Mexico complete the top 10.



हटया

- **World champion Spain** replaced **Argentina** at the top of the **FIFA rankings** released on Monday, while **France**, which lost to **England** in the **third-place play-off**, is placed third ahead of the English.
 विश्व चैंपियन स्पेन ने सोमवार को जारी फीफा रैंकिंग में अर्जेंटीना को शीर्ष स्थान से हटा दिया, जबकि फ्रांस, जो तीसरे स्थान के प्ले-ऑफ में इंग्लैंड से हार गया था, अंग्रेज़ टीम से आगे तीसरे स्थान पर है।
- **Brazil** (fifth, up 1) and **Morocco** (sixth, up 1) leapfrogged **Portugal**.
 ब्राज़ील (पाँचवाँ, एक स्थान ऊपर) और मोरक्को (छठा, एक स्थान ऊपर) ने पुर्तगाल को पीछे छोड़ दिया।
- **Belgium**, the **Netherlands** and **Mexico** complete the **top 10**.
 बेल्जियम, नीदरलैंड्स और मेक्सिको ने शीर्ष 10 की सूची को पूरा किया।

GS Paper 1: Society		22 July 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
22J7	What India's young people are saying about families भारत के युवा परिवारों के बारे में क्या कह रहे हैं	
22J7	Why Punjab's Dalits remain divided पंजाब के दलित अब भी विभाजित क्यों हैं	

What India's young people are saying about families

CS II: Society

Ask a grandmother in India what has changed since her time, and she will not talk to you about fertility rates. She will talk about her granddaughter, who finished college, has a city job, and is in no hurry to start a family. She will say it with pride and concern in the same breath, a blend the data reflects too.

The UNFPA survey

On World Population Day this year (July 11), UNFPA released the Demographic Futures Survey, the largest study of its kind, with over 1,08,000 young adults surveyed across 73 countries. It asked a simple question: not whether young people still wanted partnership and family, but what stood between them and it. (This year, India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare set the theme, "Healthy Timing and Spacing of Pregnancies" or HTSP, a reminder that at the heart of every demographic number is a question of choice: whether young people can decide, freely and on their own timeline, when and how to build their families.)

India's fertility rate has settled at two children per woman, below the replacement level of 2.1. Some will hear that and reach for words like "baby bust" or "population crisis". At UNFPA, we see something else entirely. This is not a warning sign but the outcome of sustained government investment across decades, in girls' education, the National Health Mission, and expanding contraceptive choice and maternal health services. The share of young women married before 18 years has fallen from 23.3% to 20.1% in just the last few years. That is a policy achievement India's institutions can rightly take credit for.

But numbers tell more than one story at once, and if we stop at the good news, we miss what young India is trying to say.

Ask young people directly, and most want what generations before them wanted. Across the



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Young Indians still want families, but the conditions they seek reveal their aspirations, anxieties, and changing realities

country, four in 10 women and a third of men say that two children is their ideal family size. The Demographic Futures Survey found the same pattern across countries: young people are not turning away from family life; they are asking whether the conditions exist to build it. So why the hesitation here? When we ask young couples what stands between them and the life they picture, the answers are almost always practical. Money comes first, cited by nearly four in 10. Then housing. Then job security. Then a very simple, human worry: how well can we care for our children?

That last question falls on one set of shoulders far more than another. Young women in India spend over five hours a day on unpaid housework and caregiving; young men spend about half an hour. Only 15 in every 100 young women are in paid work, compared to 55 in every 100 young men. These are not merely statistics. They help explain why so many capable young women feel that they must choose between a career and a family, when no one should have to choose at all.

The climate change issue

There is a newer worry layered on top of the old ones. The survey found that nearly all young people say climate change is disrupting their lives, and about half say it affects their peace of mind. Nearly half of young Indians also report being very worried about conflict, economic insecurity and environmental risk all at once, among the higher rates recorded anywhere. Add high youth unemployment and a mental health conversation that is only beginning in many Indian households, and a fuller picture emerges. This is not a generation rejecting parenthood. It is a generation asking, quite reasonably, whether the ground beneath it is steady enough to build on.

India is also marked by inter-State disparity. Bihar's fertility rate stands at 2.7, while Sikkim's is

just 1.0. Kerala, Delhi and Tamil Nadu have long settled below the replacement level, while Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand are still catching up. These differences show that India's demographic transition is unfolding at different speeds across States, and that no single national policy can fully address every State's realities.

Responding to youth aspiration

The UNFPA's partnership with the Indian government and communities is aimed at translating what young people are telling us into practical support: high-quality, affordable and accessible childcare; families that share caregiving more equally; continued investment in stable, dignified work for young people entering the labour force; and greater attention to youth mental health, including climate anxiety, in conversations about family and the future. The private sector also has a vital role to play through parental leave, flexible work arrangements and family-friendly workplaces that enable young people to balance work and caregiving. The UNFPA has a unique role in the United Nations development system as a leader in data collection, population dynamics and evidence-based policymaking. The Demographic Futures Survey shows how population data can and must be deployed to help countries understand, plan for and adapt to demographic shifts.

India is home to 255 million young people aged 15 to 24 years, the largest generation this country, or perhaps any country, has ever raised. This is India's demographic dividend, a window of opportunity that will not remain open indefinitely. The choices we make today will determine whether this generation can fully realise its potential before that window begins to close. Young Indians are not walking away from the idea of family. They are waiting for the conditions that would let them say yes to it fully.

22J7. What India's young people are saying about families

भारत के युवा परिवारों के बारे में क्या कह रहे हैं

- Ask a **grandmother** in India what has changed since her time, and she will not talk to you about **fertility rates**.
यदि आप भारत में किसी दादी से पूछें कि उनके समय से अब तक क्या बदला है, तो वह आपसे **प्रजनन दर** के बारे में बात नहीं करेंगी।
- On **World Population Day this year (July 11)**, **UNFPA** released the **Demographic Futures Survey**, the largest study of its kind, with over **1,08,000 young adults** surveyed across **73 countries**.
इस वर्ष **विश्व जनसंख्या दिवस (11 जुलाई)** के अवसर पर **यूएनएफपीए** ने **डेमोग्राफिक फ्यूचर्स सर्वेक्षण** जारी किया, जो अपने प्रकार का सबसे बड़ा अध्ययन है। इसमें **73 देशों** के **1,08,000 से अधिक युवाओं** का सर्वेक्षण किया गया।
- It asked a simple question: not whether young people still wanted **partnership** and **family**, but what stood between them and it.
इस सर्वेक्षण में एक सरल प्रश्न पूछा गया—यह नहीं कि क्या युवा अब भी **साझेदारी** और **परिवार** चाहते हैं, बल्कि यह कि उनके और इन आकांक्षाओं के बीच कौन-सी बाधाएँ हैं।
- (This year, India's **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** set the theme, "**Healthy Timing and Spacing of Pregnancies**" (**HTSP**), a reminder that at the heart of every demographic number is a question of **choice**: **whether young people can decide, freely and on their own timeline, when and how to build their families.**)



(इस वर्ष भारत के स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय ने “स्वस्थ समय और गर्भधारण के बीच उचित अंतर” (एचटीएसपी) को विषय बनाया, जो यह स्मरण कराता है कि प्रत्येक जनसांख्यिकीय आँकड़े के केंद्र में चयन का अधिकार निहित है—क्या युवा स्वतंत्र रूप से और अपनी सुविधा के अनुसार यह निर्णय ले सकते हैं कि वे कब और कैसे अपना परिवार बनाएँ।)

- This is not a warning sign but the **outcome of sustained government investment across decades, in girls' education, the National Health Mission, and expanding contraceptive choice and maternal health services.**
यह कोई चेतावनी का संकेत नहीं है, बल्कि कई दशकों तक सरकारी निवेश, बालिका शिक्षा, राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य मिशन, तथा गर्भनिरोधक विकल्पों और मातृ स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं के विस्तार का परिणाम है।
- **Money comes first, cited by nearly four in 10.**
धन सबसे बड़ी चिंता के रूप में सामने आता है, जिसका उल्लेख लगभग हर 10 में से चार लोगों ने किया।
- **Then housing.**
इसके बाद आवास की समस्या आती है।
- **Then job security.**
उसके बाद रोज़गार की सुरक्षा का स्थान है।
- **Then a very simple, human worry: how well can we care for our children?**
इसके बाद एक अत्यंत मानवीय चिंता सामने आती है—हम अपने बच्चों की देखभाल कितनी अच्छी तरह कर पाएँगे?
- That last question falls on one set of shoulders far more than another.
यह अंतिम प्रश्न एक वर्ग के कंधों पर दूसरे की तुलना में कहीं अधिक भार डालता है।
- **Young women in India spend over five hours a day on unpaid housework and caregiving; young men spend about half an hour.**
भारत में युवा महिलाएँ प्रतिदिन पाँच घंटे से अधिक समय अवैतनिक घरेलू कार्यों और देखभाल में व्यतीत करती हैं, जबकि युवा पुरुष इस कार्य में लगभग आधा घंटा ही लगाते हैं।
- **Only 15 in every 100 young women are in paid work, compared to 55 in every 100 young men.**
प्रत्येक 100 युवा महिलाओं में केवल 15 ही वेतनभोगी कार्य में संलग्न हैं, जबकि 100 युवा पुरुषों में 55 ऐसे कार्य करते हैं।

The climate change issue

जलवायु परिवर्तन का मुद्दा

- **Bihar's fertility rate stands at 2.7, while Sikkim's is just 1.0.**
बिहार की प्रजनन दर 2.7 है, जबकि सिक्किम की प्रजनन दर केवल 1.0 है।
- **Kerala, Delhi and Tamil Nadu have long settled below the replacement level, while Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand are still catching up.**
केरल, दिल्ली तथा तमिलनाडु लंबे समय से प्रतिस्थापन स्तर से नीचे पहुँच चुके हैं, जबकि बिहार, उत्तर प्रदेश तथा झारखंड अभी भी उस स्तर की ओर अग्रसर हैं।
- **The UNFPA has a unique role in the United Nations development system as a leader in data collection, population dynamics and evidence-based policymaking.**
यूएनएफपीए संयुक्त राष्ट्र विकास प्रणाली में डेटा संग्रह, जनसंख्या गतिकी तथा साक्ष्य-आधारित नीति-निर्माण के क्षेत्र में अग्रणी भूमिका निभाता है।
- **The Demographic Futures Survey shows how population data can and must be deployed to help countries understand, plan for and adapt to demographic shifts.**
डेमोग्राफिक फ्यूचर्स सर्वेक्षण यह दर्शाता है कि जनसंख्या संबंधी आँकड़ों का उपयोग देशों को जनसांख्यिकीय परिवर्तनों को समझने, उनके लिए योजना बनाने तथा उनके अनुरूप स्वयं को ढालने में किस प्रकार किया जाना चाहिए।



- India is home to **255 million young people** aged **15 to 24 years**, the largest generation this country, or perhaps any country, has ever raised.
भारत 15 से 24 वर्ष आयु वर्ग के 25.5 करोड़ युवाओं का घर है, जो इस देश, और संभवतः किसी भी देश, की अब तक की सबसे बड़ी युवा पीढ़ी है।
- This is India's **demographic dividend**, a **window of opportunity** that will not remain open indefinitely.
यह भारत का **जनसांख्यिकीय लाभांश** है, अर्थात् ऐसा अवसर का कालखंड, जो अनिश्चित काल तक खुला नहीं रहेगा।

Why Punjab's Dalits remain divided

As 2027 elections inch closer, party leaders have again started wooing SC groups

STATE OF PLAY

GS I: Society
Vikas Vasudeva

The Scheduled Caste (SC) community of Punjab is close to 32% of the total population of the State, the highest in the country, yet they remain politically marginalised, having produced only one Dalit Chief Minister and that too for a brief period in the year 2021.

With elections due in early 2027 in the State, mainstream parties, including the Congress, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), are once again courting Dalit voters.

While the SCs in Punjab are close to 32% of the total population, the Jat Sikh population is over 20%; yet since 1977, the State has not seen a single non-Jat Sikh Chief Minister till 2021, when Charanjit Singh Channi held the top post for a brief period during the Congress regime, indicating the political dominance of the Jat Sikh community. Before Mr. Channi, it was Giani Zail Singh who was the last non-Jat Sikh Chief Minister of Punjab between 1972-77.

Sharp divisions

Even as political parties continue to make efforts to garner their support, sharp caste divisions among SCs is believed to be among the key deterrents to their emergence as a unified force. Punjab's SCs, like their counterparts in many other parts of the country, are not a homogeneous community. They are split into about 39 different castes, and are further divided by religions and mixed faiths that have taken the form of sects, popularly known as 'Deras'.

While some of the SC De-



ras, such as the Ravidassias and Ad-Dharmi groups are well-off in terms of education and have attained upward social mobility, others, like the Balmikis and Mazhabis, are the 'marginalised within the marginalised'. They are spread over different religions as well, including Christian, Hindu, Sikh, and independent religions. This prevents them from coming together as one community or working with a unified approach to make a forceful impact in politics.

Kanshi Ram, the founder of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), tried hard to unite the different SC castes in Punjab politically, but when he didn't see much success, he moved his focus to Uttar Pradesh instead. The inability of the BSP's ideological plank to thrive in the socio-cultural terrain of Punjab, reinforces the argument that the Dalit community here remains far from being a unified voting bloc.

As the elections to the 2027 Punjab Assembly draws nearer, the beeline of politicians across party lines at different Deras in the State has already begun. Several leaders of all key political parties have been seen visiting different Deras in order to seek their 'blessings', which is aimed at garnering support and votes of the respective Dera followers.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Dera Sachkhand Ballan in Jalandhar on February 1 on the occasion of

the 649th birth anniversary of Guru Ravidass, and his latest meeting with the Dera Head Sant Niranjan Dass on July 17 in Jalandhar, indicate the party's Dalit outreach attempt, which has yet again renewed the debate surrounding Dalit-centric politics. Mr. Dass has recently been conferred the Padma Shri as well.

In 2023, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, along with AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal, met Sant Niranjan and paid obeisance at Dera Sachkhand Ballan and laid the foundation stone of the Guru Ravidass Bani Adhiyan Centre. In August 2025, Mr. Mann again met the Dera head and laid the foundation stone for a Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) at Dera Sachkhand Ballan. These repeated visits only show the significance of Dalit voters.

Leaders from other parties, including the SAD and the Congress, have also been visiting Deras as the countdown to the polls has begun.

Appeasement politics

As per an academic estimate, in Punjab, Dalit voters have a high to moderate electoral influence in at least 55 Assembly constituencies of the total 117 Assembly constituencies.

While the division among the SCs has been one of the reasons behind their political marginalisation, over the years, political parties have often made what observers see as token gestures toward the Dalit community's upliftment, rather than pursue genuine empowerment by sincerely implementing constitutional protections and reservation laws. Mainstream political parties have largely kept their focus on appeasement politics and have hardly nurtured any genuine Dalit leadership.

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22J7. Why Punjab's Dalits remain divided

पंजाब के दलित अब भी विभाजित क्यों हैं

- The **Scheduled Caste (SC)** community of Punjab is close to **32%** of the total population of the State, the highest in the country, yet they remain **politically marginalised**, having produced only **one Dalit Chief Minister** and that too for a brief period in the year **2021**.

पंजाब का अनुसूचित जाति (एससी)

समुदाय राज्य की कुल जनसंख्या का लगभग **32%** है, जो देश में सर्वाधिक है, फिर भी वे **राजनीतिक रूप से हाशिए पर** बने हुए हैं। वर्ष **2021** में भी राज्य को केवल **एक दलित मुख्यमंत्री** मिला, और वह भी बहुत ही संक्षिप्त अवधि के लिए।

- While the **SCs** in Punjab are close to **32%** of the total population, the **Jat Sikh** population is over **20%**; yet since **1977**, the State has not seen a single **non-Jat Sikh Chief Minister** till **2021**, when **Charanjit Singh Channi** held the top post for a brief period during the **Congress** regime, indicating the **political dominance** of the **Jat Sikh** community.

यद्यपि पंजाब में **अनुसूचित जातियों** की जनसंख्या लगभग **32%** है, जबकि **जाट सिख** समुदाय की जनसंख्या **20%** से कुछ अधिक है, फिर भी **1977** से लेकर **2021** तक राज्य में कोई भी **गैर-जाट सिख मुख्यमंत्री** नहीं बना। वर्ष **2021** में कांग्रेस शासन के दौरान **चरणजीत सिंह चन्नी** ने संक्षिप्त अवधि के लिए यह पद संभाला,

जो जाट सिख समुदाय के राजनीतिक प्रभुत्व को दर्शाता है।

- Before **Mr. Channi**, it was **Giani Zail Singh** who was the last **non-Jat Sikh Chief Minister of Punjab** between **1972-77**.

श्री चन्नी से पहले ज्ञानी ज़ैल सिंह ही पंजाब के अंतिम गैर-जाट सिख मुख्यमंत्री थे, जिन्होंने 1972 से 1977 के बीच यह पद संभाला।

Sharp divisions

गहरे विभाजन

- While some of the **SC Deras**, such as the **Ravidassias** and **Ad-Dharmi** groups are well-off in terms of **education** and have attained upward **social mobility**, others, like the **Balmikis** and **Mazhabis**, are the '**marginalised within the marginalised**'.

जहाँ कुछ अनुसूचित जाति डेरे, जैसे रविदासिया और आद-धर्मी समुदाय, शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में अपेक्षाकृत समृद्ध हैं और उन्होंने सामाजिक उन्नति प्राप्त की है, वहीं बाल्मीकि और मजहबी जैसे समुदाय 'हाशिए पर स्थित समुदायों के भीतर भी सबसे अधिक हाशिए पर' हैं।

GS Paper 1: Geography		22 July 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
22J7	Toxic gas kills 20 in Sikkim tunnel; 5 workers still trapped सिक्किम की सुरंग में विषैली गैस से 20 श्रमिकों की मृत्यु; 5 श्रमिक अब भी फँसे हुए	

A fire lights up the night on **Senganatham hill in Vellore** on Tuesday. C. VENKATACHALAPATHY

Chenganatham Hill (also spelled **Senganatham Hill**) is a scenic hill located on the outskirts of **Vellore city** in **Tamil Nadu**. It forms part of the **Palamathi Hills** region, which belongs to the **Eastern Ghats** landscape.

Fire on the hill



A fire lights up the night on Senganatham hill in Vellore on Tuesday. C. VENKATACHALAPATHY

Toxic gas kills 20 in Sikkim tunnel; 5 workers still trapped

GS I: Geography
The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI/NEW DELHI

A sudden release of suspected methane gas killed at least 20 workers inside an under-construction tunnel of the **National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC)'s Teesta State-VI Hydroelectric Project in Namchi district of Sikkim**. Efforts were under way to rescue five others trapped inside the structure.

The incident occurred inside the head race tunnel under construction at Samardung on Monday afternoon "due to sudden explosive release of suspected methane gas trapped/embedded in the rocks, resulting in the generation of dense smoke and toxic gases", the NHPC

said in a statement.

Twenty-five personnel were inside the tunnel during the incident, the NHPC said, citing information received from officials at the project site. Seven of the dead workers have been identified so far.

Three of them were from West Bengal, one each from Sikkim and Uttarakhand, and the rest from Assam, Sonam Dolma Bhutia, told journalists. A few bouts of rainfall since Monday have affected the rescue operations to some extent, she said.

"Our site engineering teams are working round the clock alongside the authorities to assist in stabilising the tunnel environment and ensuring rescue.



An ambulance inside the tunnel in Namchi, Sikkim, on Tuesday. PTI

A detailed investigation will be conducted to ascertain the cause of the incident," the NHPC said.

Rescue efforts on

The NHPC said the project team was working in close coordination with the district administration, the National Disaster Response

Force, the State Disaster Response Force, local authorities, and other emergency agencies to support the rescue operations. Apart from top officials of the NHPC, a special rescue team from the Director-General of Mines Safety has reached the site.

On Tuesday morning,

Prime Minister Narendra Modi called Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang to enquire about the situation. "The Prime Minister expressed deep concern and compassion for the affected workers and their families. He assured the State government of all possible assistance," a Sikkim government statement said.

The Chief Minister inspected the project site with Governor Om Prakash Mathur. He announced that the State government would constitute a high-level inquiry committee to ascertain the cause of the incident. The government would provide ex gratia assistance to the families of the deceased workers, Mr. Tamang said.

22J7. Toxic gas kills 20 in Sikkim tunnel; 5 workers still trapped

सिक्किम की सुरंग में विषैली गैस से 20 श्रमिकों की मृत्यु; 5 श्रमिक अब भी फँसे हुए

- A sudden release of suspected **methane gas** killed at least **20 workers** inside an under-construction tunnel of the **National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC)'s Teesta Stage-VI Hydroelectric Project in Namchi district of Sikkim**.

सिक्किम के नामची जिले में नेशनल हाइड्रोइलेक्ट्रिक पावर कॉर्पोरेशन (एनएचपीसी) की तीस्ता चरण-VI

जलविद्युत परियोजना की निर्माणाधीन सुरंग में संदिग्ध मीथेन गैस के अचानक रिसाव से कम-से-कम 20 श्रमिकों की मृत्यु हो गई।

- Apart from top officials of the **NHPC**, a special rescue team from the **Director-General of Mines Safety** has reached the site.

एनएचपीसी के वरिष्ठ अधिकारियों के अतिरिक्त खनन सुरक्षा महानिदेशक की एक विशेष बचाव टीम भी घटनास्थल पर पहुँच गई है।

GS Paper II: Polity		22 July 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
22J7	Is Yashwant Varma still a judge? क्या यशवंत वर्मा अब भी न्यायाधीश हैं?	



Is Yashwant Varma still a judge?

The power to resign at will protects judicial independence; when misused, it helps evade accountability; the report by the committee tasked with investigating charges of misbehaviour against former judge Varma is set to come up in Parliament; what will become of Varma now that he has resigned?

SS II: Polity

EXPLAINER

G. Mohan Gopal
V. Venkatesan

Parliament is set to take up in the coming Monsoon Session the report of the committee appointed by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, to investigate charges of misbehaviour against former judge of the Allahabad and Delhi High Courts, Yashwant Varma, who has since resigned. The allegations against him arise from the discovery in March 2025 of partially burnt currency notes in an outhouse at his official residence. Mystery surrounds his current status and the future course of the pending proceedings in Parliament.

On one hand, three months after his resignation, Mr. Varma continues to be listed by the Allahabad High Court and by the Department of Justice of the Union government as a sitting judge. This has given rise to misgivings about whether his resignation has taken effect or remains subject to acceptance by the President.

On the other, it has been reported that following Mr. Varma's resignation on April 9, 2026, his status at the Bar was changed to "active" on resumption of practice. Some of his dues and benefits as a sitting judge have reportedly been stopped since the resignation.

Four questions follow.

(1) Is Mr. Varma's resignation subject to acceptance by the President?

Our Constitution vests 13 constitutional functionaries with the "power to resign at will", without their resignation being subject to acceptance by any authority. They may resign merely by writing under their hand addressed to an authority specified in the Constitution. Needing no acceptance, the power to resign at will is an essential safeguard for the independence of these offices. It protects incumbents from being forced to work under coercion.

The offices vesting incumbents with this power are: the President; the



Publicly available data suggests that past resignations of judges have been handled in compliance with the law. S. SUBRAMANIAM

Vice-President; the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha; the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha; a judge of the Supreme Court; a judge of High Courts; the Governor; the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of a State Assembly; the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of a State Legislative Council; and a member of Public Service Commissions.

In contrast, Article 101 (3)(b) of the Constitution expressly says that the resignation of Members of Parliament is subject to acceptance by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha or the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. Under Article 190(3)(b), the resignations of members of State Legislative Assemblies and Legislative Councils are subject to acceptance by the Speaker or the Chairman.

A five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court in *Union of India vs Gopal Chandra Misra* (1978) unanimously reaffirmed the power of Supreme Court and High Court judges to resign at will.

Justice S. Murtaga Fazal Ali dissented from majority judges who held that a resigning judge could choose a future date and withdraw the resignation before that date. But Justice Ali reflected the unanimous view of the Bench that no acceptance was needed for resignation of judges. He wrote categorically that "the effectiveness of the resignation does not depend upon the acceptance of the resignation by the President...the

resignation acts *ex proprio vigore*" (automatically without requiring any external action). At least 12 High Court judges have resigned since 2017. One Supreme Court judge, Justice Dalveer Bhandari, resigned in 2012 to join the International Court of Justice. Publicly available data suggests that these resignations have been handled in compliance with the law described above.

(2) Can Mr. Varma still be held out as a sitting judge?

Since Mr. Varma ceased to be a judge on April 9, describing him after that date as a sitting judge of the Allahabad High Court in the Department of Justice's list on the website of the Allahabad High Court is clearly wrong.

There is no justification for retaining the name of a person who is not a judge in lists of sitting judges for over three months. It would only be proper for the Union Department of Justice and the Allahabad High Court to correct the error and delete his name. It would, needless to say, be illegal for him to receive any salary or benefit as a sitting High Court judge.

(3) Do the proceedings survive the resignation, now that removal from office is moot?

The Committee's report pertains to Mr. Varma's conduct prior to his resignation. The resignation, therefore, does not affect the laying of the report before both Houses and its being made public.

Indeed, there is a statutory duty to do so. The public also has a legitimate right to know whether the Committee found any proved misbehaviour on the part of a sitting judge of a constitutional court.

If the report finds Mr. Varma not guilty of the charges, the matter ends there. Even if the report finds him guilty, the motion for his removal can no longer be moved. Having resigned, Mr. Varma does not hold the office of a judge and cannot be removed from it. Under Section 6, the report is to be discussed by Parliament along with the motion. As the motion lapses and cannot be discussed, the report too cannot be discussed by Parliament under the Act.

(4) Should the Constitution be amended so that judges facing removal cannot evade accountability by resigning?

There is a genuine concern that the framework for judicial accountability through removal proceedings under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968 suffers from a loophole. Judges may resign at will before Parliament takes up the motion for their removal, halting the entire process.

This loophole is best addressed by amending the Constitution, rather than by executive or judicial interpretation of the Constitution or of the 1968 Act. The amendment may provide that the resignation of a judge facing removal proceedings is subject to acceptance during their pendency. To safeguard judicial independence, the power to accept the resignation of a judge should vest in the Chief Justice of India rather than in the President. Should Parliament want to discuss the report submitted by the Inquiry Committee set up under the Act despite the judge's resignation, it should be amended to enable it for the purpose. Interpreting inadvertent silence in the Constitution or the Act to suit the concerns of Parliament or the Executive would be against the rule of law.

(G. Mohan Gopal is former Director of the National Judicial Academy and former Vice-Chancellor of National Law School of India University, Bengaluru. V. Venkatesan is Contributing Editor at Supreme Court Observer. The views are their own)

THE GIST

Three months after his resignation, Mr. Varma continues to be listed by the Allahabad High Court and the Department of Justice of the Union government as a sitting judge.

Mr. Varma's resignation subject to acceptance by the President? Will the 'power resign at will' continue to apply in his case?

Do the proceedings survive the resignation, now that removal from office is moot? What happens if he is found guilty of the charges?

22J7. Is Yashwant Varma still a judge?

क्या यशवंत वर्मा अब भी न्यायाधीश हैं?

- Parliament is set to take up in the coming Monsoon Session the report of the committee appointed by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, to investigate charges of misbehaviour against former judge of the Allahabad and Delhi High Courts, Yashwant Varma, who has since resigned.

आगामी मानसून सत्र में संसद लोकसभा अध्यक्ष द्वारा न्यायाधीश (जांच) अधिनियम, 1968 के अंतर्गत गठित समिति की रिपोर्ट पर विचार करेगी। इस समिति का गठन इलाहाबाद तथा दिल्ली उच्च न्यायालयों के पूर्व न्यायाधीश यशवंत वर्मा के विरुद्ध लगाए गए दुराचरण के आरोपों की जांच के लिए किया गया था, जिन्होंने बाद में इस्तीफा दे दिया।

- The allegations against him arise from the discovery in March 2025 of partially burnt currency notes in an outhouse at his official residence. उनके विरुद्ध आरोप मार्च 2025 में उनके आधिकारिक आवास के आउटहाउस में आंशिक रूप से जले हुए मुद्रा नोटों की बरामदगी से जुड़े हैं।
- Mystery surrounds his current status and the future course of the pending proceedings in Parliament. उनकी वर्तमान स्थिति तथा संसद में लंबित कार्यवाही की भावी दिशा को लेकर अब भी अनिश्चितता बनी हुई है।
- On one hand, three months after his resignation, Mr. Varma continues to be listed by the Allahabad High Court and by the Department of Justice of the Union government as a sitting judge. एक ओर, इस्तीफे के तीन महीने बाद भी इलाहाबाद उच्च न्यायालय तथा केंद्र सरकार के न्याय विभाग की सूची में श्री वर्मा को अब भी कार्यरत न्यायाधीश के रूप में दर्शाया जा रहा है।

- This has given rise to misgivings about whether his resignation has taken effect or remains subject to acceptance by the **President**.
इससे यह आशंका उत्पन्न हुई है कि क्या उनका इस्तीफा प्रभावी हो चुका है अथवा अब भी राष्ट्रपति की स्वीकृति पर निर्भर है।
- On the other, it has been reported that following Mr. Varma's resignation on **April 9, 2026**, his status at the **Bar** was changed to "**active**" on resumption of practice.
दूसरी ओर, यह भी बताया गया है कि **9 अप्रैल 2026** को श्री वर्मा के इस्तीफे के बाद, पुनः वकालत प्रारंभ करने पर **बार** में उनकी स्थिति "**सक्रिय**" कर दी गई।
- Some of his dues and benefits as a **sitting judge** have reportedly been stopped since the resignation.
यह भी बताया गया है कि इस्तीफे के बाद **कार्यरत न्यायाधीश** के रूप में मिलने वाले उनके कुछ देयक और लाभ रोक दिए गए हैं।
- **Four questions** follow.
इसके बाद **चार प्रश्न** उत्पन्न होते हैं।
- **(1) Is Mr. Varma's resignation subject to acceptance by the President?**
- **(1) क्या श्री वर्मा का इस्तीफा राष्ट्रपति की स्वीकृति पर निर्भर है?**
- **Our Constitution vests 13 constitutional functionaries with the "power to resign at will", without their resignation being subject to acceptance by any authority.**
हमारा संविधान 13 संवैधानिक पदाधिकारियों को "इच्छानुसार इस्तीफा देने की शक्ति" प्रदान करता है, जिसके लिए किसी भी प्राधिकारी की स्वीकृति आवश्यक नहीं होती।
- **They may resign merely by writing under their hand addressed to an authority specified in the Constitution.**
वे संविधान में निर्दिष्ट प्राधिकारी को संबोधित करते हुए केवल अपने हस्ताक्षरयुक्त पत्र द्वारा इस्तीफा दे सकते हैं।
- **Needing no acceptance, the power to resign at will is an essential safeguard for the independence of these offices.**
किसी स्वीकृति की आवश्यकता न होने के कारण **इच्छानुसार इस्तीफा देने की शक्ति** इन पदों की स्वतंत्रता की एक महत्वपूर्ण संवैधानिक सुरक्षा है।
- It protects incumbents from being forced to work under coercion.
यह पदधारकों को किसी प्रकार के दबाव या बाध्यता के अंतर्गत कार्य करने के लिए विवश किए जाने से सुरक्षा प्रदान करती है।
- The offices vesting incumbents with this power are: the **President; the Vice-President; the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha; the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha; a judge of the Supreme Court; a judge of High Courts; the Governor; the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of a State Assembly; the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of a State Legislative Council; and a member of Public Service Commissions.**
जिन पदों पर आसीन व्यक्तियों को यह शक्ति प्राप्त है, उनमें राष्ट्रपति, उपराष्ट्रपति, राज्यसभा के उपसभापति, लोकसभा के अध्यक्ष और उपाध्यक्ष, उच्चतम न्यायालय के न्यायाधीश, उच्च न्यायालयों के न्यायाधीश, राज्यपाल, राज्य विधानसभा के अध्यक्ष और उपाध्यक्ष, राज्य विधान परिषद के सभापति और उपसभापति, तथा लोक सेवा आयोगों के सदस्य शामिल हैं।
- In contrast, **Article 101(3)(b) of the Constitution expressly says that the resignation of Members of Parliament is subject to acceptance by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha or the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.**
इसके विपरीत, संविधान के अनुच्छेद 101(3)(b) में स्पष्ट किया गया है कि संसद सदस्यों का इस्तीफा लोकसभा अध्यक्ष अथवा राज्यसभा के सभापति द्वारा स्वीकार किए जाने पर ही प्रभावी होगा।
- Under **Article 190(3)(b)**, the resignations of members of **State Legislative Assemblies and Legislative Councils** are subject to acceptance by the **Speaker or the Chairman**.

इसी प्रकार, अनुच्छेद 190(3)(b) के अंतर्गत राज्य विधानसभाओं तथा विधान परिषदों के सदस्यों के इस्तीफे अध्यक्ष अथवा सभापति द्वारा स्वीकार किए जाने पर ही प्रभावी होते हैं।

- A five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court in **Union of India vs Gopal Chandra Misra (1978)** unanimously reaffirmed the power of Supreme Court and High Court judges to resign at will.

उच्चतम न्यायालय की पाँच न्यायाधीशों की संविधान पीठ ने **Union of India vs Gopal Chandra Misra (1978)** मामले में सर्वसम्मति से उच्चतम न्यायालय और उच्च न्यायालयों के न्यायाधीशों के इच्छानुसार इस्तीफा देने के अधिकार की पुनः पुष्टि की।

- Justice **S. Murtaza Fazal Ali** dissented from majority judges who held that a resigning judge could choose a future date and withdraw the resignation before that date.
न्यायमूर्ति एस. मुरतज़ा फ़ज़ल अली ने बहुमत के उस मत से असहमति व्यक्त की, जिसमें कहा गया था कि इस्तीफा देने वाला न्यायाधीश भविष्य की कोई तिथि निर्धारित कर सकता है और उस तिथि से पूर्व अपना इस्तीफा वापस ले सकता है।

- But Justice Ali reflected the unanimous view of the Bench that **no acceptance** was needed for resignation of judges.

किन्तु न्यायमूर्ति अली ने पीठ की इस सर्वसम्मति राय का समर्थन किया कि न्यायाधीशों के इस्तीफे के लिए किसी स्वीकृति की आवश्यकता नहीं होती।

- He wrote categorically that “the effectiveness of the resignation does not depend upon the acceptance of the resignation by the President...the resignation acts *ex proprio vigore*” (automatically without requiring any external action).

उन्होंने स्पष्ट रूप से लिखा कि “इस्तीफे की प्रभावशीलता राष्ट्रपति द्वारा उसकी स्वीकृति पर निर्भर नहीं करती... इस्तीफा *ex proprio vigore* के सिद्धांत के अनुसार स्वयं ही प्रभावी हो जाता है”, अर्थात् बिना किसी बाहरी कार्रवाई के स्वतः प्रभावी हो जाता है।

- At least **12 High Court judges** have resigned since **2017**.

2017 के बाद से कम-से-कम **12 उच्च न्यायालयों के न्यायाधीश** इस्तीफा दे चुके हैं।

- One **Supreme Court judge**, Justice **Dalveer Bhandari**, resigned in **2012** to join the **International Court of Justice**.

उच्चतम न्यायालय के एक न्यायाधीश न्यायमूर्ति दलवीर भंडारी ने **2012** में अंतरराष्ट्रीय न्यायालय में नियुक्ति स्वीकार करने के लिए इस्तीफा दिया था।

- Publicly available data suggests that these resignations have been handled in compliance with the law described above.

सार्वजनिक रूप से उपलब्ध आँकड़ों से संकेत मिलता है कि इन सभी इस्तीफों का निपटान उपर्युक्त विधिक प्रावधानों के अनुरूप किया गया है।

- (2) Can Mr. Varma still be held out as a sitting judge?

- (2) क्या श्री वर्मा को अब भी कार्यरत न्यायाधीश माना जा सकता है?

- Since Mr. Varma ceased to be a judge on **April 9**, describing him after that date as a **sitting judge** of the **Allahabad High Court** in the **Department of Justice's** list or on the website of the **Allahabad High Court** is clearly wrong.

चूँकि श्री वर्मा 9 अप्रैल को न्यायाधीश के पद से पृथक हो चुके थे, इसलिए उस तिथि के बाद विधि एवं न्याय विभाग की सूची अथवा इलाहाबाद उच्च न्यायालय की वेबसाइट पर उन्हें कार्यरत न्यायाधीश के रूप में दर्शाना स्पष्ट रूप से अनुचित है।

- There is no justification for retaining the name of a person who is not a **judge** in lists of **sitting judges** for over **three months**.

जो व्यक्ति न्यायाधीश नहीं है, उसका नाम कार्यरत न्यायाधीशों की सूची में तीन महीने से अधिक समय तक बनाए रखने का कोई औचित्य नहीं है।

- It would only be proper for the **Union Department of Justice** and the **Allahabad High Court** to correct the error and delete his name.



केंद्रीय विधि एवं न्याय विभाग तथा इलाहाबाद उच्च न्यायालय के लिए यह उचित होगा कि वे इस त्रुटि को सुधारें और उनका नाम सूची से हटा दें।

- It would, needless to say, be **illegal** for him to receive any **salary** or **benefit** as a **sitting High Court judge**.

यह कहना अनावश्यक है कि कार्यरत उच्च न्यायालय के न्यायाधीश के रूप में उनके लिए किसी भी प्रकार का वेतन अथवा लाभ प्राप्त करना अवैध होगा।

- (3) **Do the proceedings survive the resignation, now that removal from office is moot?**
- (3) क्या त्यागपत्र के बाद भी कार्यवाही जारी रह सकती है, जबकि पद से हटाने का प्रश्न अब अप्रासंगिक हो गया है?

- The **Committee's report** pertains to Mr. **Varma's conduct** prior to his **resignation**.

समिति की रिपोर्ट श्री वर्मा के त्यागपत्र से पूर्व उनके आचरण से संबंधित है।

- The **resignation**, therefore, does not affect the laying of the **report** before both **Houses** and its being made public.

अतः त्यागपत्र का दोनों सदनों के समक्ष रिपोर्ट प्रस्तुत करने तथा उसे सार्वजनिक किए जाने पर कोई प्रभाव नहीं पड़ता।

- **Indeed, there is a statutory duty to do so.**

वास्तव में, ऐसा करना एक वैधानिक दायित्व है।

- The public also has a legitimate right to know whether the **Committee** found any proved **misbehaviour** on the part of a **sitting judge** of a **constitutional court**.

जनता को यह जानने का भी वैध अधिकार है कि क्या समिति ने किसी संवैधानिक न्यायालय के कार्यरत न्यायाधीश के विरुद्ध किसी सिद्ध दुराचरण का निष्कर्ष निकाला है।

- **Under Section 6, the report is to be discussed by Parliament along with the motion.**

धारा 6 के अनुसार रिपोर्ट पर संसद में प्रस्ताव के साथ विचार किया जाना है।

- **As the motion lapses and cannot be discussed, the report too cannot be discussed by Parliament under the Act.**

चूँकि प्रस्ताव स्वतः निष्प्रभावी हो जाता है और उस पर विचार नहीं किया जा सकता, इसलिए अधिनियम के अंतर्गत रिपोर्ट पर भी संसद में चर्चा नहीं की जा सकती।

- (4) **Should the Constitution be amended so that judges facing removal cannot evade accountability by resigning?**

(4) क्या संविधान में संशोधन किया जाना चाहिए ताकि पद से हटाने की कार्यवाही का सामना कर रहे न्यायाधीश त्यागपत्र देकर जवाबदेही से बच न सकें?

- There is a genuine concern that the framework for **judicial accountability** through **removal proceedings** under the **Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968** suffers from a **loophole**.

यह वास्तविक चिंता का विषय है कि न्यायाधीश (जाँच) अधिनियम, 1968 के अंतर्गत पद से हटाने की कार्यवाही के माध्यम से न्यायिक जवाबदेही सुनिश्चित करने की व्यवस्था में एक खामी विद्यमान है।

- **Judges may resign at will before Parliament takes up the motion for their removal, halting the entire process.**

न्यायाधीश अपने पद से हटाने के प्रस्ताव पर संसद द्वारा विचार किए जाने से पहले स्वेच्छा से त्यागपत्र देकर पूरी प्रक्रिया को रोक सकते हैं।

- **This loophole is best addressed by amending the Constitution, rather than by executive or judicial interpretation of the Constitution or of the 1968 Act.**

इस खामी का सर्वोत्तम समाधान संविधान में संशोधन करके किया जा सकता है, न कि संविधान या 1968 के अधिनियम की कार्यपालिका अथवा न्यायिक व्याख्या के माध्यम से।

- **The amendment may provide that the resignation of a judge facing removal proceedings is subject to acceptance during their pendency.**

संशोधन में यह प्रावधान किया जा सकता है कि पद से हटाने की कार्यवाही का सामना कर रहे न्यायाधीश का त्यागपत्र कार्यवाही लंबित रहने के दौरान स्वीकृति के अधीन होगा।



- To safeguard **judicial independence**, the power to accept the **resignation** of a **judge** should vest in the **Chief Justice of India** rather than in the **President**.
 न्यायिक स्वतंत्रता की रक्षा के लिए न्यायाधीश का त्यागपत्र स्वीकार करने की शक्ति राष्ट्रपति के स्थान पर भारत के मुख्य न्यायाधीश में निहित होनी चाहिए।
- Should **Parliament** want to discuss the **report** submitted by the **Inquiry Committee** set up under the **Act** despite the **judge's resignation**, it should be amended to enable it for the purpose.
 यदि संसद न्यायाधीश के त्यागपत्र के बावजूद अधिनियम के अंतर्गत गठित जाँच समिति द्वारा प्रस्तुत रिपोर्ट पर विचार करना चाहे, तो इस उद्देश्य की पूर्ति हेतु अधिनियम में संशोधन किया जाना चाहिए।
- Interpreting inadvertent silences in the **Constitution** or the **Act** to suit the concerns of **Parliament** or the **Executive** would be against the **rule of law**.
 संविधान अथवा अधिनियम में अनजाने में रह गई मौन व्यवस्थाओं की व्याख्या संसद या कार्यपालिका की सुविधानुसार करना विधि के शासन के सिद्धांत के विरुद्ध होगा।

GS Paper II: Governance		22 July 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
22J7	For the first time, undergraduate enrolments decline in India पहली बार भारत में स्नातक स्तर पर नामांकन में गिरावट	

For the first time, undergraduate enrolments decline in India

AISHE reports released after a prolonged delay show a drop in students enrolled in undergrad courses, particularly in States such as Maharashtra and U.P.

GS II: Governance

DATA POINT

Sambavi Parthasarathy
Pon Vasanth B.A.

Even as issues around education have momentarily taken centre-stage amid the protests led by the Cockroach Janta Party and activist Sonam Wangchuk, the reports of the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) for two years released together after a prolonged delay by the Union Ministry of Education (MoE) has largely gone unnoticed.

Importantly, the strange trend that has gone unreported is the inexplicable decline in the total number of students enrolled in undergraduate courses across the country. Such a decline has happened for the first time ever since the Union government started publishing AISHE reports from 2011.

In the government's own words, AISHE "serves as the primary source of official statistics on higher education in India and provides critical insights for policy formulation, planning, and monitoring of the sector". Yet, the MoE inordinately delayed the release of these reports. The AISHE report for 2021-22 had a delayed release in January 2024. More than two years later, the Ministry released the reports for 2022-23 and 2023-24 together earlier this month without much fanfare.

The total enrolment in higher education, which include undergraduate, postgraduate, diploma, Ph.D and other types of courses, increased by 3.7 lakh (0.8%) in 2023-24 compared to 2022-23, which is the lowest-ever increase. However, the number of students enrolled in undergraduate courses, who account for over 75% of all enrolments, declined by 93,000 (0.27%) in the same period (Chart 1). This is despite the fact that the youth population in the eligible age group saw an increase, along with an increase in the number of Higher Education Institutions

(HEIs) that participated in AISHE, which went up from 56,180 in 2022-23 to 59,533 in 2023-24.

Neither the 2023-24 report, which played up the marginal increase in Gross Enrolment Ratio from 29.5 to 30, nor the Minister for Education Dharmendra Pradhan, who cited the report to highlight the increased enrolment of female students in STEM courses, have offered an explanation for this decline. Interestingly, the decline is seen only among male students since the number of female students enrolled in undergraduate courses saw an increase although they were fewer in numbers than the males. The enrolment of male students dropped by 2.2% between 2022-23 and 2023-24 while that of female students increased by 1.8% (Chart 2).

In absolute numbers, two States – Maharashtra (-6%) and Uttar Pradesh (-3%) – accounted for the highest drop in undergraduate enrolments (Chart 3). While the chart shows only 10 States with the highest number of enrolments, several other States such as Jammu and Kashmir and West Bengal saw steep falls in undergraduate enrolments by 13% and 8% respectively. Delhi, a major hub for education, registered a decline of 6%.

The States that saw declines accounted for a drop of over six lakh enrolments. The overall decline in the country would have been far higher, if not for the increase reported in few other States such as Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Karnataka and Odisha. Tamil Nadu in particular recorded the highest increase of 1.6 lakh, which is more than the 1.53 lakh decline reported in Uttar Pradesh. The latter in particular saw a sharp decline in undergraduate enrolments, accompanied by an almost similar increase in enrolments in Diploma courses – a trend not noticed in other major States (Chart 5).

Programme type-wise analysis showed that the decline was in Arts, Sciences, and Commerce (Chart 4).

Unexplained drop

Data for the charts were sourced from All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) reports released by the Ministry of Education. With inputs from Gauri Singavarapu, Gandla Sneha and Sachin Swaraj, who are interning with The Hindu's Data team

CHART 1: This chart shows the overall enrolment and enrolment in undergraduate (UG) courses. UG enrolments declined for the first time in 2023-24. Value within brackets is GER

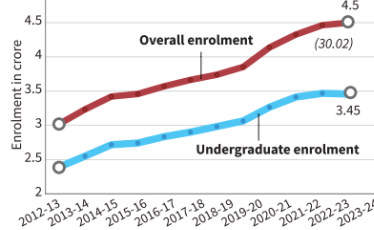


CHART 2: The gender-wise number of students enrolled in UG courses show that the decline in 2023-24 was noticed only among male students

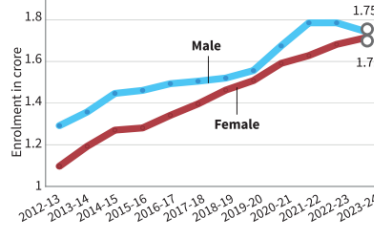


CHART 3: This chart shows the changes in student enrolments in UG courses in the 10 States with highest number of enrolments. Tamil Nadu's sharp increase offset the overall decline in UG enrolments

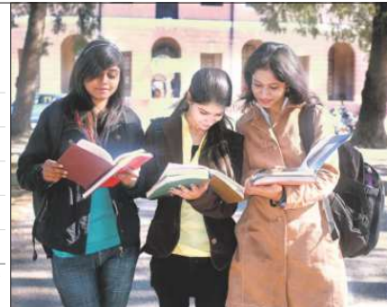
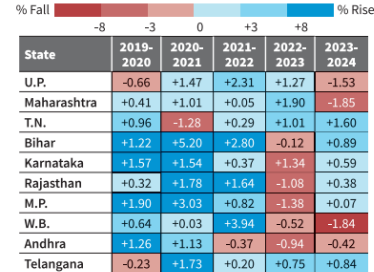


CHART 4: Among the top five types of programmes with highest number of enrolments, Arts, Science and Commerce saw declines

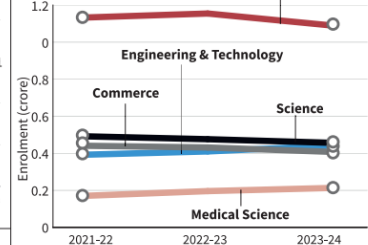
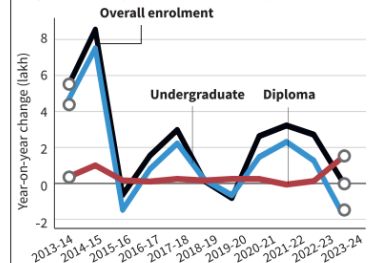


CHART 5: Uttar Pradesh was a standout case, where the sharp decline in UG courses was offset almost completely by the sudden spike in enrolments in Diploma courses



22J7. For the first time, undergraduate enrolments decline in India

पहली बार भारत में स्नातक स्तर पर नामांकन में गिरावट

- Even as issues around **education** have momentarily taken centre-stage amid the protests led by the **Cockroach Janta Party** and activist **Sonam Wangchuk**, the reports of the **All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE)** for two years released together after a prolonged delay by the **Union Ministry of Education (MoE)** has largely gone unnoticed.

यद्यपि शिक्षा से जुड़े मुद्दे काँकरोच जनता पार्टी तथा सामाजिक कार्यकर्ता सोनम वांगचुक के नेतृत्व में हुए विरोध प्रदर्शनों के कारण कुछ समय के लिए चर्चा के केंद्र में रहे, फिर भी केंद्रीय शिक्षा मंत्रालय (एमओई) द्वारा लंबे विलंब के बाद एक साथ जारी किए गए दो वर्षों के **अखिल भारतीय उच्च शिक्षा सर्वेक्षण (एआईएसएचई)** की रिपोर्टों पर व्यापक रूप से ध्यान नहीं दिया गया।

- Importantly, the strange trend that has gone unreported is the inexplicable decline in the total number of students enrolled in **undergraduate courses** across the country.



महत्वपूर्ण बात यह है कि जिस असामान्य प्रवृत्ति पर ध्यान नहीं दिया गया, वह देशभर में स्नातक पाठ्यक्रमों में नामांकित विद्यार्थियों की कुल संख्या में अस्पष्ट गिरावट है।

- Such a decline has happened for the **first time** ever since the Union government started publishing **AISHE reports** from **2011**.

2011 से केंद्र सरकार द्वारा एआईएसएचई रिपोर्ट प्रकाशित किए जाने के बाद से पहली बार इस प्रकार की गिरावट दर्ज की गई है।

- In the government's own words, **AISHE** "serves as the primary source of official statistics on **higher education** in India and provides critical insights for **policy formulation, planning, and monitoring** of the sector".

सरकार के अपने शब्दों में, एआईएसएचई भारत में उच्च शिक्षा से संबंधित आधिकारिक आँकड़ों का प्रमुख स्रोत है तथा इस क्षेत्र के नीति-निर्माण, योजना निर्माण और निगरानी के लिए महत्वपूर्ण जानकारी उपलब्ध कराता है।

- Yet, the **MoE** inordinately delayed the release of these reports.
फिर भी शिक्षा मंत्रालय ने इन रिपोर्टों को जारी करने में अत्यधिक विलंब किया।
- The **AISHE report** for **2021-22** had a delayed release in **January 2024**.

2021-22 की एआईएसएचई रिपोर्ट जनवरी 2024 में विलंब से जारी की गई।

- The total enrolment in **higher education**, which include **undergraduate, postgraduate, diploma, Ph.D and other types of courses**, increased by **3.7 lakh (0.8%)** in **2023-24** compared to **2022-23**, which is the **lowest-ever increase**.

उच्च शिक्षा, जिसमें स्नातक, स्नातकोत्तर, डिप्लोमा, पीएच.डी. तथा अन्य प्रकार के पाठ्यक्रम शामिल हैं, में कुल नामांकन 2022-23 की तुलना में 2023-24 में 3.7 लाख (0.8%) बढ़ा, जो अब तक की सबसे कम वृद्धि है।

- However, the number of students enrolled in **undergraduate courses**, who account for over **75%** of all enrolments, declined by **93,000 (0.27%)** in the same period (Chart 1).
हालाँकि, स्नातक पाठ्यक्रमों में नामांकित विद्यार्थियों की संख्या, जो कुल नामांकन का 75% से अधिक है, उसी अवधि में 93,000 (0.27%) घट गई (चार्ट 1)।

- This is despite the fact that the **youth population** in the eligible age group saw an increase, along with an increase in the number of **Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)** that participated in **AISHE**, which went up from **56,180** in **2022-23** to **59,533** in **2023-24**.

यह तब हुआ जबकि पात्र आयु वर्ग की युवा जनसंख्या में वृद्धि हुई तथा एआईएसएचई में भाग लेने वाले उच्च शिक्षा संस्थानों (एचईआई) की संख्या भी 2022-23 के 56,180 से बढ़कर 2023-24 में 59,533 हो गई।

- Neither the **2023-24 report**, which played up the marginal increase in **Gross Enrolment Ratio** from **29.5** to **30**, nor the **Minister for Education Dharmendra Pradhan**, who cited the report to highlight the increased enrolment of **female students in STEM courses**, have offered an explanation for this decline.

न तो 2023-24 की रिपोर्ट, जिसमें सकल नामांकन अनुपात के 29.5 से बढ़कर 30 होने पर विशेष बल दिया गया, और न ही केंद्रीय शिक्षा मंत्री धर्मेंद्र प्रधान, जिन्होंने एसटीईएम पाठ्यक्रमों में छात्राओं के बढ़ते नामांकन को रेखांकित करने के लिए इस रिपोर्ट का उल्लेख किया, इस गिरावट का कोई स्पष्टीकरण दे सके।

- Interestingly, the decline is seen only among **male students** since the number of **female students** enrolled in undergraduate courses saw an increase although they were fewer in numbers than the males.

रोचक तथ्य यह है कि यह गिरावट केवल पुरुष विद्यार्थियों में देखी गई, जबकि महिला विद्यार्थियों की संख्या, यद्यपि पुरुषों से कम थी, फिर भी स्नातक पाठ्यक्रमों में बढ़ी है।

- In absolute numbers, two States — **Maharashtra (-6%)** and **Uttar Pradesh (-3%)** — accounted for the highest drop in **undergraduate enrolments** (Chart 3).

पूर्ण संख्या के आधार पर दो राज्यों—महाराष्ट्र (-6%) और उत्तर प्रदेश (-3%)—में स्नातक नामांकन में सर्वाधिक गिरावट दर्ज की गई (चार्ट 3)।



TOPICS COVERED	
22J7	New trade pact a win-win for India and U.K. भारत और यूनाइटेड किंगडम के लिए नई व्यापार संधि दोनों पक्षों के लिए लाभकारी
22J7	India's ICI gets an updated series: what has changed? भारत के आईसीआई की अद्यतन श्रृंखला: क्या परिवर्तन हुए हैं?
22J7	Global wars delaying FTA negotiations वैश्विक युद्धों के कारण मुक्त व्यापार समझौतों (एफटीए) की वार्ताएँ प्रभावित
22J7	Will India's plastic notes be a better alternative? क्या भारत में प्लास्टिक मुद्रा नोट बेहतर विकल्प होंगे?

New trade pact a win-win for India and U.K.

GS III: Economy

The India-U.K. Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), which came into force on July 15, marks a pivotal moment in the evolution of bilateral ties. More than a conventional tariff-reduction pact, the agreement reflects a strategic alignment between two major democracies seeking to recalibrate their economic engagement in a rapidly shifting global order.

The India-U.K. CETA represents one of the most wide-ranging trade agreements concluded by India in recent years. Aligned with the broader India-U.K. Vision 2035, the CETA seeks to deepen cooperation across trade, technology, climate, and innovation. The agreement reflects the growing maturity of the India-U.K. economic partnership and provides a strong institutional framework for expanding trade and investment.

Both countries have further set a target of doubling bilateral trade to over \$100 billion by 2030, an objective that now appears more achievable with the new institutional framework in place.

Gains for both sides

The headline gain for India is the zero-duty access secured for 99% of Indian exports to the U.K. This is expected to boost labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, leather, footwear, marine products, and gems and jewellery, which are sensitive to pricing. It will also benefit high-value sectors such as engineering goods and chemicals, where margins depend on consistent market access. Tariffs ranging from 70% on processed foods to 12% on textiles will now come down to zero.

The Indian government has also addressed concerns relating to steel exports. Recognising the U.K.'s new steel measures that came into effect on July 1, both sides have agreed on arrangements that protect commercial interests, minimise market disruptions, and provide



Chandrajit Banerjee

Director General, CII

The CETA can reshape trade and investment flows, create quality jobs and growth, and transition India to a more competitive and innovation-driven economy

greater certainty for Indian exporters. Moreover, the import of electric vehicles will be subject to tariff-rate quotas, with tariffs being reduced in a phased manner. This reflects India's calibrated approach to balancing consumer access with continued support for domestic manufacturing. India has also retained appropriate safeguards in sensitive sectors such as agriculture and dairy.

The deal also opens access to government procurement markets, enabling Indian firms to bid for a wider range of public contracts in the U.K., especially in sectors such as infrastructure services and consulting.

Equally important is the agreement's emphasis on services and professional mobility. Expanded access for Indian IT, education, healthcare, financial and professional service providers strengthens India's position as a global services hub. The agreement also strengthens cooperation in education and skills by enabling U.K. institutions to establish campuses in India.

Modern provisions on digital trade, labour, gender, intellectual property, and innovation, make the agreement future-ready, enabling Indian firms to integrate into the U.K. and global value chains, while attracting investments for emerging sectors such as fintech and green technologies. These provisions will also create new opportunities for startups and Global Capability Centres to further advance collaboration in emerging technologies such as AI.

The U.K. is already India's sixth-largest investor, contributing around 5% of cumulative FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) equity inflows into India since April 2000. The agreement is expected to further strengthen bilateral investment flows.

To maximise benefits from the CETA, the Indian industry must invest in quality upgradation, standards compliance, and sustainability. Indian companies should leverage mobility

provisions to deepen their presence in the U.K. services market, build partnerships, and invest in long-term capabilities.

Again, with opportunities in sectors such as processed foods, textiles, handicrafts, and IT-enabled services and business services, industry bodies have a critical role to play in enabling Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to benefit from the agreement. This requires guidance on compliance and regulatory requirements, as well as procurement opportunities.

Template for the future

At a time of rising regulatory barriers across the world, the India-U.K. CETA reaffirms the value of open, rules-based trade. It supports India's Atmanirbhar Bharat vision by enhancing competitiveness and complements the Make in India and Digital India schemes through greater market access, services exports, and mobility. For the U.K., the agreement strengthens its strategic economic partnership with one of the world's fastest-growing major economies.

Upon implementation, the CETA can reshape trade and investment flows, create quality jobs and growth, and transition India to a more competitive and innovation-driven economy thereby serving as a benchmark for trade agreements.

Furthermore, the India-U.K. CETA can also serve as a foundation for trilateral economic partnerships by combining India's manufacturing strength and skilled workforce with the U.K.'s financial, technological, and global commercial networks. The U.K.'s membership in the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, together with the proposed India-EU trade agreement, can further create complementary opportunities for Indian businesses to integrate into wider regional value chains, diversify exports, and strengthen supply chain resilience.

22J7. New trade pact a win-win for India and U.K.

भारत और यूनाइटेड किंगडम के लिए नई व्यापार संधि दोनों पक्षों के लिए लाभकारी

- The **India-U.K. Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)**, which came into force on **July 15**, marks a pivotal moment in the evolution of **bilateral ties**.
भारत-यूनाइटेड किंगडम व्यापक आर्थिक एवं व्यापार समझौता (सीईटीए), जो 15 जुलाई से प्रभावी हुआ, द्विपक्षीय संबंधों के विकास में एक महत्वपूर्ण मील का पत्थर है।
- More than a conventional **tariff-reduction pact**, the **agreement reflects a strategic alignment between two major democracies seeking to recalibrate their economic engagement in a rapidly shifting global order**.
यह समझौता केवल एक पारंपरिक **शुल्क-कटौती समझौता** नहीं है, बल्कि तीव्र गति से बदलती वैश्विक व्यवस्था में अपने **आर्थिक सहयोग** को पुनर्संतुलित करने का प्रयास कर रहे **दो प्रमुख लोकतंत्रों** के बीच रणनीतिक सामंजस्य को भी प्रतिबिंबित करता है।
- The **India-U.K. CETA** represents one of the most wide-ranging **trade agreements** concluded by India in recent years.
भारत-यूनाइटेड किंगडम सीईटीए हाल के वर्षों में भारत द्वारा संपन्न किए गए सबसे व्यापक व्यापार समझौतों में से एक है।
- Aligned with the broader **India-U.K. Vision 2035**, the **CETA** seeks to deepen cooperation across **trade, technology, climate, and innovation**.
व्यापक भारत-यूनाइटेड किंगडम विज़न 2035 के अनुरूप, सीईटीए का उद्देश्य व्यापार, प्रौद्योगिकी, जलवायु और नवाचार के क्षेत्रों में सहयोग को और अधिक सुदृढ़ करना है।
- The agreement reflects the growing maturity of the **India-U.K. economic partnership** and provides a strong **institutional framework** for expanding **trade and investment**.
यह समझौता भारत-यूनाइटेड किंगडम आर्थिक साझेदारी की बढ़ती परिपक्वता को दर्शाता है तथा व्यापार और निवेश के विस्तार के लिए एक सुदृढ़ संस्थागत ढाँचा प्रदान करता है।
- **Both countries have further set a target of doubling bilateral trade to over \$100 billion by 2030**, an objective that now appears more achievable with the new institutional framework in place.
दोनों देशों ने 2030 तक द्विपक्षीय व्यापार को बढ़ाकर 100 अरब अमेरिकी डॉलर से अधिक करने का लक्ष्य निर्धारित किया है, जो नए संस्थागत ढाँचे के लागू होने के बाद अब अधिक प्राप्त करने योग्य प्रतीत होता है।

Gains for both sides

दोनों पक्षों के लिए लाभ

- The **headline gain for India is the zero-duty access secured for 99% of Indian exports to the U.K.**
भारत के लिए सबसे बड़ा लाभ यह है कि यूनाइटेड किंगडम में भारत के 99% निर्यात को शून्य-शुल्क प्रवेश प्राप्त हो गया है।
- **This is expected to boost labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, leather, footwear, marine products, and gems and jewellery, which are sensitive to pricing.**
इससे श्रम-प्रधान क्षेत्रों, जैसे वस्त्र, चमड़ा, जूते-चप्पल, समुद्री उत्पाद तथा रत्न एवं आभूषण, को प्रोत्साहन मिलने की अपेक्षा है, क्योंकि ये मूल्य निर्धारण के प्रति अत्यधिक संवेदनशील हैं।
- **It will also benefit high-value sectors such as engineering goods and chemicals, where margins depend on consistent market access.**
इससे उच्च-मूल्य वाले क्षेत्रों, जैसे इंजीनियरिंग उत्पाद और रसायन, को भी लाभ होगा, जहाँ लाभ का स्तर निरंतर बाज़ार पहुँच पर निर्भर करता है।
- **Tariffs ranging from 70% on processed foods to 12% on textiles will now come down to zero.**



प्रसंस्कृत खाद्य पदार्थों पर 70% तक तथा वस्त्रों पर 12% तक लगाए जाने वाले शुल्क अब घटकर शून्य हो जाएंगे।

- The Indian government has also addressed concerns relating to steel exports. भारत सरकार ने इस्पात निर्यात से संबंधित चिंताओं का भी समाधान किया है।
- Recognising the U.K.'s new steel measures that came into effect on July 1, both sides have agreed on arrangements that protect commercial interests, minimise market disruptions, and provide greater certainty for Indian exporters. 1 जुलाई से प्रभावी हुए यूनाइटेड किंगडम के नए इस्पात उपायों को ध्यान में रखते हुए, दोनों पक्ष ऐसे प्रबंधों पर सहमत हुए हैं जो व्यावसायिक हितों की रक्षा करेंगे, बाज़ार में व्यवधान को न्यूनतम करेंगे तथा भारतीय निर्यातकों को अधिक निश्चितता प्रदान करेंगे।
- Moreover, the import of electric vehicles will be subject to tariff-rate quotas, with tariffs being reduced in a phased manner. इसके अतिरिक्त, विद्युत वाहनों के आयात पर टैरिफ-दर कोटा लागू होगा तथा शुल्कों में चरणबद्ध तरीके से कमी की जाएगी।
- This reflects India's calibrated approach to balancing consumer access with continued support for domestic manufacturing. यह भारत के संतुलित दृष्टिकोण को दर्शाता है, जिसके अंतर्गत उपभोक्ता पहुँच और घरेलू विनिर्माण को निरंतर समर्थन देने के बीच संतुलन स्थापित किया गया है।
- India has also retained appropriate safeguards in sensitive sectors such as agriculture and dairy. भारत ने कृषि तथा दुग्ध क्षेत्र जैसे संवेदनशील क्षेत्रों में उपयुक्त सुरक्षात्मक प्रावधान भी बनाए रखे हैं।
- The deal also opens access to government procurement markets, enabling Indian firms to bid for a wider range of public contracts in the U.K., especially in sectors such as infrastructure services and consulting. यह समझौता सरकारी खरीद बाज़ारों तक भी पहुँच प्रदान करता है, जिससे भारतीय कंपनियाँ यूनाइटेड किंगडम में सार्वजनिक अनुबंधों की व्यापक श्रृंखला के लिए बोली लगा सकेंगी, विशेषकर अवसंरचना सेवाओं और परामर्श जैसे क्षेत्रों में।
- Equally important is the agreement's emphasis on services and professional mobility. इतना ही महत्वपूर्ण इस समझौते का सेवाओं तथा पेशेवर गतिशीलता पर दिया गया विशेष बल है।
- Expanded access for Indian IT, education, healthcare, financial and professional service providers strengthens India's position as a global services hub. भारतीय सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी, शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य सेवा, वित्तीय तथा पेशेवर सेवा प्रदाताओं को विस्तारित पहुँच मिलने से वैश्विक सेवा केंद्र के रूप में भारत की स्थिति और सुदृढ़ होगी।
- The agreement also strengthens cooperation in education and skills by enabling U.K. institutions to establish campuses in India. यह समझौता यूनाइटेड किंगडम के शैक्षणिक संस्थानों को भारत में परिसर स्थापित करने की अनुमति देकर शिक्षा तथा कौशल विकास के क्षेत्र में सहयोग को भी सुदृढ़ बनाता है।
- Modern provisions on digital trade, labour, gender, intellectual property, and innovation, make the agreement future-ready, enabling Indian firms to integrate into the U.K. and global value chains, while attracting investments for emerging sectors such as fintech and green technologies. डिजिटल व्यापार, श्रम, लैंगिक समानता, बौद्धिक संपदा तथा नवाचार से संबंधित आधुनिक प्रावधान इस समझौते को भविष्य के लिए तैयार बनाते हैं, जिससे भारतीय कंपनियाँ यूनाइटेड किंगडम तथा वैश्विक मूल्य श्रृंखलाओं में बेहतर ढंग से एकीकृत हो सकेंगी और फिनटेक तथा हरित प्रौद्योगिकियों जैसे उभरते क्षेत्रों में निवेश आकर्षित होगा।
- The U.K. is already India's sixth-largest investor, contributing around 5% of cumulative FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) equity inflows into India since April 2000.



यूनाइटेड किंगडम पहले से ही भारत का छठा सबसे बड़ा निवेशक है और अप्रैल 2000 से भारत में प्राप्त कुल प्रत्यक्ष विदेशी निवेश (FDI) इक्विटी प्रवाह में इसका योगदान लगभग 5% है।

- To maximise benefits from the CETA, the Indian industry must invest in **quality upgradation, standards compliance, and sustainability**.
- सीईटीए (CETA) से अधिकतम लाभ प्राप्त करने के लिए भारतीय उद्योग को गुणवत्ता उन्नयन, मानकों के अनुपालन तथा सततता में निवेश करना होगा।
- It supports **India's Atmanirbhar Bharat vision** by enhancing **competitiveness** and complements the **Make in India** and **Digital India** schemes through greater **market access, services exports, and mobility**.

यह भारत के आत्मनिर्भर भारत दृष्टिकोण को प्रतिस्पर्धात्मकता बढ़ाकर समर्थन देता है तथा अधिक बाज़ार पहुँच, सेवा निर्यात और गतिशीलता के माध्यम से मेक इन इंडिया तथा डिजिटल इंडिया जैसी योजनाओं का पूरक बनता है।

- For the **U.K.**, the agreement strengthens its **strategic economic partnership** with one of the world's **fastest-growing major economies**.

यूनाइटेड किंगडम के लिए यह समझौता विश्व की सबसे तीव्र गति से बढ़ती प्रमुख अर्थव्यवस्थाओं में से एक भारत के साथ उसकी रणनीतिक आर्थिक साझेदारी को और सुदृढ़ करता है।

- Furthermore, the **India-U.K. CETA** can also serve as a **foundation for trilateral economic partnerships** by combining **India's manufacturing strength** and **skilled workforce** with the **U.K.'s financial, technological, and global commercial networks**.

इसके अतिरिक्त भारत-यूनाइटेड किंगडम सीईटीए भारत की विनिर्माण क्षमता तथा कुशल कार्यबल को यूनाइटेड किंगडम के वित्तीय, प्रौद्योगिकीय तथा वैश्विक वाणिज्यिक नेटवर्कों के साथ जोड़कर त्रिपक्षीय आर्थिक साझेदारियों की आधारशिला भी बन सकता है।

- The **U.K.'s membership** in the **Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership**, together with the proposed **India-EU trade agreement**, can further create complementary opportunities for **Indian businesses** to integrate into wider **regional value chains**, diversify exports, and strengthen **supply chain resilience**.

यूनाइटेड किंगडम की कॉम्प्रिहेन्सिव एंड प्रोग्रेसिव एग्रीमेंट फॉर ट्रांस-पैसिफिक पार्टनरशिप की सदस्यता तथा प्रस्तावित भारत-यूरोपीय संघ व्यापार समझौते के साथ मिलकर भारतीय व्यवसायों के लिए व्यापक क्षेत्रीय मूल्य शृंखलाओं में एकीकृत होने, निर्यात में विविधता लाने तथा आपूर्ति शृंखला की लचीलापन क्षमता को सुदृढ़ करने के पूरक अवसर उत्पन्न कर सकते हैं।

India's ICI gets an updated series: what has changed?

The Centre has released a revised series of the ICI, updating the base year, sectoral coverage and weights. Here is what has changed and what it means for industrial growth

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

The story so far:

The Union Government has released an updated series of its Index of Core Industries (ICI), which is a key measure of how the main industrial sectors in India's economy are doing. This update now brings the ICI on a par with other recently updated metrics such as the national accounts (Gross Domestic Product and Gross Value Added), inflation, and the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

What are the key changes in the new ICI series?

The previous ICI had a base year of 2011-12, which was significantly outdated. So, the first major update of the new series of the index was to bring forward

the base year to 2022-23. This makes the data more reflective of current reality, and thus makes it a more useful gauge of industrial activity.

The second major change was to increase the number of sectors covered to nine from the previous eight. The eight sectors earlier covered were coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, steel, cement, electricity, and fertilizers.

Now, the government has said that owing to the intensive use of iron ore in industrial production, it has been added to the list of core industries.

Other sectoral changes include calculating steel production on a gross output basis rather than a net output basis so as to bring this in line with the IIP, which is the other major industrial production metric.

In the coal sector, the updated series

will only measure raw coal, and has excluded middling and washed coal. This change was made to eliminate the double counting that occurred in the previous series, as both middling and washed coal are made using raw coal.

Which sectors have gained or lost weight in the new ICI?

The inclusion of the iron ore sector and the resultant increase in the total number of sectors to nine would naturally lead to a redistribution of the weights among the sectors. Further, according to the government, it has revised the weights in the new series of the ICI to reflect the weights of the same sectors in the IIP.

Both of these factors have led to a significant redistribution of weights among the sectors of the ICI. The newly added iron ore sector has been assigned a

weight of 4.905% in the index, leaving that much less of the total share to be distributed among the other sectors.

The coal sector has seen a big downward revision in its significance, with its weight coming down from 10.33% to 5.596%. The natural gas sector, too, saw a major downward revision from 6.88% to 3.841%. Refinery products saw its weightage reduced from 28.04% to 22.572%.

Some sectors increased in significance. The electricity sector, for example, now makes up 30.932% of the entire index, up from the earlier 19.85%. The fertilizers sector saw its weightage increase marginally to 2.731% from 2.63%.

Have these revisions changed the final growth picture?

There is certainly a difference in the data output generated from the old series and the new series for the same periods of time. However, these variations become smaller when scaled up over time and as you move further back. That is, while the May 2026 growth of the ICI has been revised from 0.5% as per the old series to 3.2% in the new series, the full-year growth for 2025-26 was only revised from 1.1% to 1%.

Hence, just because the series has been updated, it does not mean the industrial growth picture has radically changed.

THE GIST

▼ The Union Government has released an updated series of its Index of Core Industries (ICI), which is a key measure of how the main industrial sectors in India's economy are doing

▼ This update now brings the ICI on a par with other recently updated metrics such as the national accounts. Changes include bringing forward the base year and increasing the number of sectors covered

22J7. India's ICI gets an updated series: what has changed?

भारत के आईसीआई की अद्यतन श्रृंखला: क्या परिवर्तन हुए हैं?

- The **Union Government** has released an updated series of its **Index of Core Industries (ICI)**, which is a key measure of how the main industrial sectors in India's economy are doing. **केंद्र सरकार ने कोर उद्योग सूचकांक (आईसीआई) की अद्यतन श्रृंखला जारी की है, जो भारत की अर्थव्यवस्था के प्रमुख औद्योगिक क्षेत्रों के प्रदर्शन को मापने का एक महत्वपूर्ण संकेतक है।**
- This update now brings the **ICI** on a par with other recently updated metrics such as the **national accounts (Gross Domestic Product and Gross Value Added)**, **inflation**, and the **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)**. **इस अद्यतन के साथ आईसीआई अब हाल ही में अद्यतन किए गए अन्य प्रमुख संकेतकों, जैसे राष्ट्रीय लेखे (सकल घरेलू उत्पाद एवं सकल मूल्य वर्धन), मुद्रास्फीति, तथा औद्योगिक उत्पादन सूचकांक (आईआईपी) के समकक्ष हो गया है।**

What are the key changes in the new ICI series?

नई आईसीआई श्रृंखला में प्रमुख परिवर्तन क्या हैं?

- The **previous ICI had a base year of 2011-12**, which was significantly outdated. **पूर्ववर्ती आईसीआई का आधार वर्ष 2011-12 था, जो काफी पुराना हो चुका था।**
- So, the **first major update of the new series of the index was to bring forward the base year to 2022-23**. **इसलिए नई श्रृंखला में पहला प्रमुख परिवर्तन आधार वर्ष को बदलकर 2022-23 करना है।**
- This makes the data more reflective of current reality, and thus makes it a more useful gauge of **industrial activity**. **इससे आँकड़े वर्तमान परिस्थितियों का अधिक यथार्थ प्रतिबिंब प्रस्तुत करते हैं और औद्योगिक गतिविधियों के आकलन के लिए अधिक उपयोगी बनते हैं।**
- The **second major change was to increase the number of sectors covered to nine from the previous eight**. **दूसरा प्रमुख परिवर्तन यह है कि शामिल क्षेत्रों की संख्या आठ से बढ़ाकर नौ कर दी गई है।**
- The **eight sectors earlier covered were coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, steel, cement, electricity, and fertilizers**. **पूर्व में शामिल आठ क्षेत्र थे—कोयला, कच्चा तेल, प्राकृतिक गैस, रिफाइनरी उत्पाद, इस्पात, सीमेंट, विद्युत तथा उर्वरक।**
- Now, the government has said that **owing to the intensive use of iron ore in industrial production, it has been added to the list of core industries**. **अब सरकार ने कहा है कि औद्योगिक उत्पादन में लौह अयस्क के व्यापक उपयोग को देखते हुए इसे कोर उद्योगों की सूची में शामिल किया गया है।**
- Other sectoral changes include calculating steel production on a gross output basis rather than a net output basis so as to bring this in line with the IIP**, which is the other major industrial production metric. **अन्य क्षेत्रीय परिवर्तनों में इस्पात उत्पादन की गणना शुद्ध उत्पादन आधार के स्थान पर सकल उत्पादन आधार पर करना शामिल है, ताकि इसे औद्योगिक उत्पादन सूचकांक (आईआईपी) के अनुरूप बनाया जा सके, जो औद्योगिक उत्पादन का एक अन्य प्रमुख संकेतक है।**
- In the coal sector, the updated series will only measure raw coal, and has excluded middling and washed coal**. **कोयला क्षेत्र में अद्यतन श्रृंखला अब केवल कच्चे कोयले का मापन करेगी तथा मिडलिंग कोयला और धोया हुआ कोयला को इसमें शामिल नहीं किया जाएगा।**

- This change was made to eliminate the **double counting** that occurred in the previous series, as both **middling** and **washed coal** are made using **raw coal**.

यह परिवर्तन पूर्ववर्ती श्रृंखला में होने वाली दोहरी गणना को समाप्त करने के लिए किया गया है, क्योंकि मिडलिंग कोयला और धोया हुआ कोयला दोनों का उत्पादन कच्चे कोयले से ही किया जाता है।

Which sectors have gained or lost weight in the new ICI?

नई आईसीआई (ICI) श्रृंखला में किन क्षेत्रों का भार बढ़ा या घटा है?

- The inclusion of the **iron ore sector** and the resultant increase in the total number of **sectors to nine** would naturally lead to a redistribution of the **weights** among the sectors.
लौह अयस्क क्षेत्र को शामिल किए जाने तथा कुल क्षेत्रों की संख्या बढ़कर नौ हो जाने के परिणामस्वरूप विभिन्न क्षेत्रों के भार का पुनर्वितरण स्वाभाविक था।
- Further, according to the **government**, it has revised the **weights** in the new series of the ICI to reflect the weights of the same sectors in the **IIP**.
इसके अतिरिक्त, सरकार के अनुसार नई आईसीआई (ICI) श्रृंखला में भारों को इस प्रकार संशोधित किया गया है कि वे औद्योगिक उत्पादन सूचकांक (IIP) में संबंधित क्षेत्रों के भार को प्रतिबिंबित करें।
- Both of these factors have led to a significant redistribution of **weights** among the sectors of the ICI.
इन दोनों कारणों से आईसीआई (ICI) के विभिन्न क्षेत्रों के भार में उल्लेखनीय पुनर्वितरण हुआ है।
- The newly added **iron ore sector** has been assigned a weight of **4.905%** in the index, leaving that much less of the total share to be distributed among the other sectors.
नव सम्मिलित लौह अयस्क क्षेत्र को सूचकांक में 4.905% का भार प्रदान किया गया है, जिसके कारण अन्य क्षेत्रों के बीच वितरित होने वाला कुल हिस्सा उतना कम हो गया है।
- The **coal sector** has seen a big downward revision in its significance, with its weight coming down from **10.33%** to **5.596%**.
कोयला क्षेत्र के महत्व में उल्लेखनीय कमी की गई है और उसका भार 10.33% से घटाकर 5.596% कर दिया गया है।
- The **natural gas sector**, too, saw a major downward revision from **6.88%** to **3.841%**.
इसी प्रकार प्राकृतिक गैस क्षेत्र का भार भी 6.88% से घटाकर 3.841% कर दिया गया है।
- Refinery products** saw its weightage reduced from **28.04%** to **22.572%**.
रिफाइनरी उत्पादों का भार 28.04% से घटाकर 22.572% कर दिया गया है।
- Some sectors increased in significance.
कुछ क्षेत्रों का महत्व बढ़ा है।
- The **electricity sector**, for example, now makes up **30.932%** of the entire index, up from the earlier **19.85%**.
उदाहरण के लिए, विद्युत क्षेत्र का भार अब पूरे सूचकांक का 30.932% हो गया है, जो पहले 19.85% था।
- The **fertilizers sector** saw its weightage increase marginally to **2.731%** from **2.63%**.
उर्वरक क्षेत्र का भार भी मामूली रूप से बढ़कर 2.731% हो गया है, जो पहले 2.63% था।

Have these revisions changed the final growth picture?

क्या इन संशोधनों से अंतिम वृद्धि का परिदृश्य बदल गया है?

- There is certainly a difference in the **data output** generated from the **old series** and the **new series** for the same periods of time.
निश्चित रूप से समान समयावधि के लिए पुरानी श्रृंखला और नई श्रृंखला से प्राप्त आँकड़ों के परिणामों में अंतर है।
- However, these variations become smaller when scaled up over time and as you move further back.

हालाँकि, समय के साथ दीर्घ अवधि के स्तर पर तथा पीछे के वर्षों की ओर जाने पर ये अंतर अपेक्षाकृत कम हो जाते हैं।

- That is, while the **May 2026** growth of the **ICI** has been revised from **0.5%** as per the old series to **3.2%** in the new series, the **full-year growth** for **2025-26** was only revised from **1.1%** to **1%**.
अर्थात्, जहाँ **मई 2026** के लिए **आईसीआई (ICI)** की वृद्धि दर को पुरानी श्रृंखला के **0.5%** से संशोधित कर नई श्रृंखला में **3.2%** कर दिया गया है, वहीं **2025-26** की **वार्षिक वृद्धि दर** केवल **1.1%** से घटाकर **1%** की गई है।
- Hence, just because the series has been updated, it does not mean the **industrial growth** picture has radically changed.
अतः केवल श्रृंखला के अद्यतन हो जाने का यह अर्थ नहीं है कि **औद्योगिक वृद्धि** का समग्र परिदृश्य मूलभूत रूप से बदल गया है।

Global wars delaying FTA negotiations

The deals facing various degrees of delays include separate free trade agreements with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Israel, and the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union, cumulatively accounting for about \$243 billion worth of trade for India, or about 20% of its total trade

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

The ongoing wars in the world have led to varying degrees of delays in the negotiations of at least three separate trade deals that India is working on, sources in the government have confirmed.

These deals involve countries that cumulatively account for about 20% of India's total trade.

These negotiations are on separate FTAs with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, Israel, and the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union.

"The GCC team had come to Delhi for the signing of the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the deal and

so it is our turn to go there for the round of negotiation," a senior official in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry told *The Hindu*. "But with all this happening [the ongoing war in West Asia], that visit is pending."

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and the Secretary General of the GCC, Jassem Mohamed Albudaiwi, on February 24, 2026, formally launched negotiations for a free trade agreement (FTA) between India and the GCC countries – Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

However, later that month, the U.S. launched its attack on Iran.

As a result, the first round of negotiations is yet

War risk

India's trade deals facing delays because of global wars
In \$ billion, unless specified

	Exports	Imports	Total Trade	Share in India's Total Trade
GCC	55.7	122.9	178.7	14.70%
EAEU	5.1	55.6	60.7	5%
Israel	2.2	1.7	3.9	0.30%
Total	63	180.3	243.3	20%

Source: Ministry of Commerce and Industry • Note: GCC - Gulf Cooperation Council; EAEU - Eurasian Economic Union

to take place.

"This FTA is of particular importance for India not just as a strategic one, but also because of access," the official said. "It will mean that any one of the ports of the GCC countries will give Indian exporters access to all the other countries."

The negotiations regarding the India-Israel FTA, too, are facing similar delays. The ToR for the deal was signed in Tel Aviv in November 2025 by Mr. Goyal and Israel's Economy Minister Nir Barkat. The first round of negotiations took place in February 2026 in New Delhi and

the second round was to be in May in Tel Aviv.

However, the war in the region delayed these talks as well and changed the location. Talks have only now resumed, with the Israeli negotiating team currently in New Delhi until July 23 to discuss the deal.

"Our team was to go there, but safety was obviously an issue," the official explained.

He added that similar concerns are leading to delays in India's in-person negotiations with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) as well. The EAEU comprises Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Belarus and Armenia.

"The first round of the EAEU FTA was held in November 2025 and the se-

cond round in Moscow was held all the way in June 2026," he explained. "The back-end talks are progressing well, but actual visits are becoming difficult to coordinate especially now that Ukraine has intensified its counteroffensive."

India conducts \$60.7 billion worth of annual trade with the EAEU nations, predominantly with Russia. It has a total annual trade of about \$178.7 billion with the GCC countries and \$3.9 billion with Israel.

In total, therefore, the wars are delaying negotiations on trade deals involving about \$243 billion worth of trade for India, or about 20% of India's total trade.

22J7. Global wars delaying FTA negotiations

वैश्विक युद्धों के कारण मुक्त व्यापार समझौतों (एफटीए) की वार्ताएँ प्रभावित

- The ongoing **wars** in the world have led to varying degrees of delays in the negotiations of at least **three separate trade deals** that **India** is working on, sources in the **government** have confirmed.

दुनिया में जारी **युद्धों** के कारण **भारत** जिन कम-से-कम **तीन अलग-अलग व्यापार समझौतों** पर कार्य कर रहा है, उनकी वार्ताओं में विभिन्न स्तरों पर देरी हुई है। इसकी पुष्टि **सरकारी सूत्रों** ने की है।

- These deals involve countries that cumulatively account for about **20%** of **India's total trade**. इन समझौतों में शामिल देश सामूहिक रूप से **भारत के कुल व्यापार** का लगभग **20%** हिस्सा रखते हैं।
- These negotiations are on separate **FTAs** with the **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)** countries, **Israel**, and the **Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)**.

ये वार्ताएँ **खाड़ी सहयोग परिषद (जीसीसी)** के सदस्य देशों, **इज़राइल**, तथा **रूस-नेतृत्व वाले यूरेशियन आर्थिक संघ (ईएईयू)** के साथ अलग-अलग **मुक्त व्यापार समझौतों (एफटीए)** से संबंधित हैं।



- “The **GCC** team had come to **Delhi** for the signing of the **Terms of Reference (ToR)** of the deal and so it is our turn to go there for the round of negotiation,” a senior official in the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry** told *The Hindu*.
वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग मंत्रालय के एक वरिष्ठ अधिकारी ने द हिन्दू को बताया, “समझौते के कार्यादेश (टीओआर) पर हस्ताक्षर करने के लिए जीसीसी का प्रतिनिधिमंडल दिल्ली आया था, इसलिए अब वार्ता के अगले दौर के लिए हमारी टीम को वहाँ जाना था।”
- “But with all this happening [the ongoing war in **West Asia**], that visit is pending.” उन्होंने कहा, “लेकिन पश्चिम एशिया में चल रहे युद्ध के कारण वह यात्रा फिलहाल लंबित है।”
- **Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal** and the **Secretary General of the GCC, Jasem Mohamed Albudaiwi**, on **February 24, 2026**, formally launched negotiations for an **FTA** between **India** and the **GCC** countries — **Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia** and the **United Arab Emirates**.
24 फरवरी 2026 को वाणिज्य मंत्री पीयूष गोयल और जीसीसी के महासचिव जासेम मोहम्मद अलबुदैवी ने भारत तथा जीसीसी के सदस्य देशों—बहरीन, कुवैत, ओमान, कतर, सऊदी अरब और संयुक्त अरब अमीरात—के बीच मुक्त व्यापार समझौते की औपचारिक वार्ता शुरू की।
- However, later that month, the **United States** launched its attack on **Iran**. हालाँकि, उसी महीने बाद में संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका ने ईरान पर हमला किया।
- As a result, the **first round of negotiations** is yet to take place. इसके परिणामस्वरूप वार्ता का पहला दौर अब तक आयोजित नहीं हो पाया है।
- “This **FTA** is of particular importance for **India** not just as a strategic one, but also because of access,” the official said. अधिकारी ने कहा, “यह एफटीए भारत के लिए केवल रणनीतिक दृष्टि से ही नहीं, बल्कि बाज़ार तक पहुँच के कारण भी अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण है।”
- “It will mean that any one of the ports of the **GCC** countries will give Indian exporters access to all the other countries.” “इसका अर्थ होगा कि जीसीसी के किसी भी सदस्य देश का एक बंदरगाह भारतीय निर्यातकों को अन्य सभी सदस्य देशों तक पहुँच प्रदान करेगा।”
- The negotiations regarding the **India-Israel FTA**, too, are facing similar delays. भारत-इज़राइल मुक्त व्यापार समझौते की वार्ताएँ भी इसी प्रकार की देरी का सामना कर रही हैं।
- The **ToR** for the deal was signed in **Tel Aviv** in **November 2025** by **Piyush Goyal** and **Israel's Economy Minister Nir Barkat**. इस समझौते के कार्यादेश (टीओआर) पर नवंबर 2025 में तेल अवीव में पीयूष गोयल और इज़राइल के अर्थव्यवस्था मंत्री निर बरकत ने हस्ताक्षर किए थे।
- The **first round of negotiations** took place in **February 2026** in **New Delhi** and the **second round** was to be held in **May** in **Tel Aviv**. वार्ता का पहला दौर फरवरी 2026 में नई दिल्ली में हुआ था और दूसरा दौर मई में तेल अवीव में प्रस्तावित था।
- However, the **war** in the region delayed these talks as well and changed the location. किन्तु क्षेत्र में जारी युद्ध के कारण इन वार्ताओं में भी देरी हुई और उनका स्थान बदलना पड़ा।
- Talks have only now resumed, with the **Israeli negotiating team** currently in **New Delhi** until **July 23** to discuss the deal. अब जाकर वार्ताएँ पुनः शुरू हुई हैं और इज़राइली वार्ता दल 23 जुलाई तक इस समझौते पर चर्चा के लिए नई दिल्ली में मौजूद है।
- “Our team was to go there, but **safety** was obviously an issue,” the official explained. अधिकारी ने कहा, “हमारी टीम को वहाँ जाना था, लेकिन सुरक्षा एक स्पष्ट चिंता का विषय थी।”
- He added that similar concerns are leading to delays in **India's** in-person negotiations with the **Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)** as well. उन्होंने कहा कि इसी प्रकार की चिंताओं के कारण भारत और यूरेशियन आर्थिक संघ (ईएईयू) के बीच प्रत्यक्ष वार्ताओं में भी देरी हो रही है।



- The EAEU comprises Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Belarus and Armenia.
ईएईयू में रूस, किर्गिस्तान, कज़ाखस्तान, बेलारूस और आर्मेनिया शामिल हैं।
- “The first round of the EAEU FTA was held in November 2025 and the second round in Moscow was held only in June 2026,” he explained.
उन्होंने बताया, “ईएईयू मुक्त व्यापार समझौते का पहला दौर नवंबर 2025 में हुआ था और दूसरा दौर मॉस्को में जून 2026 में जाकर आयोजित हो सका।”
- “The back-end talks are progressing well, but actual visits are becoming difficult to coordinate especially now that Ukraine has intensified its counteroffensive.”
उन्होंने कहा, “पृष्ठभूमि स्तर की वार्ताएँ अच्छी प्रगति कर रही हैं, लेकिन विशेषकर अब जबकि यूक्रेन ने अपना जवाबी सैन्य अभियान तेज कर दिया है, प्रत्यक्ष यात्राओं का समन्वय करना कठिन होता जा रहा है।”
- India conducts \$60.7 billion worth of annual trade with the EAEU nations, predominantly with Russia.
भारत का ईएईयू देशों के साथ वार्षिक व्यापार लगभग 60.7 अरब डॉलर का है, जिसमें अधिकांश व्यापार रूस के साथ होता है।
- It has a total annual trade of about \$178.7 billion with the GCC countries and \$3.9 billion with Israel.
जीसीसी देशों के साथ भारत का कुल वार्षिक व्यापार लगभग 178.7 अरब डॉलर तथा इज़राइल के साथ लगभग 3.9 अरब डॉलर का है।
- In total, therefore, the wars are delaying negotiations on trade deals involving about \$243 billion worth of trade for India, or about 20% of the country's total trade.
इस प्रकार, युद्धों के कारण लगभग 243 अरब डॉलर मूल्य के व्यापार से जुड़े समझौतों की वार्ताएँ प्रभावित हो रही हैं, जो भारत के कुल व्यापार का लगभग 20% है।



Will India's plastic notes be a better alternative?

GS III: Economy

EXPLAINER

Santosh V. Perumal
CHENNAI

India, which is among the five largest economies of the world, is still toying with the idea of introducing plastic currency, three decades after Australia put in place a full series of its denominations and as many as 60 nations use such currency in some form.

Early this month, the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) currency printing arm invited global Expressions of Interest for supplying polymer substrates with embedded security features, signalling its most concrete step towards implementation since the original 2009 proposal.

Plastic banknotes, which last 2.5 to 4 times longer than cotton-paper notes, depending on denomination, need highly specialised biaxially oriented polypropylene – derived from petroleum and natural gas, a sector with direct correlation to environmental concerns.

Although polymer currency offers an opportunity to modernise cash management by enhancing durability, reducing lifecycle costs and strengthening security, apprehensions concern production cost as some calculations project that it can approach or even exceed the face value of low-denomination notes. Many countries found that the production cost alone was 20-24% of the currency's value for low denominations.

The supporters of plastic currency nevertheless say lower replacement frequency can justify the higher production cost. ₹10 and ₹20 notes see the highest frequency of handling and physical deteriora-



Note the costs: Plastic banknotes may also be costlier to make than cotton-paper ones. GETTY IMAGES

tion, leading to disproportionately high replacement costs.

Large savings

Polymer notes could potentially deliver large lifecycle savings in these lower denominations, even though they are not the largest by value since the ₹500 note has consistently been the single most widely circulated denomination in India over the last five years, both by volume and by value, as per RBI annual reports.

Sustainability concerns centered around higher initial carbon footprint, plastic waste disposal and the need for specialised recycling facilities even as a previous study commissioned by the RBI and conducted by The Energy and Resources Institute found that the extended circulation lifespan will stand in good stead as fewer notes would need to be manufactured and transported over time, giving polymer a smaller overall carbon footprint than paper.

Key queries

The logic behind RBI's latest move to revive the plastic currency comes at a

time when India the country is fast going less cash-intensive and digital transactions expanding exponentially. While the stand of both the RBI and the government may seem justifiable, some certain queries stay remain unanswered.

Why should India invest heavily in plastic currency, most importantly when there is due to the volatility in petrochemical prices owing to the West Asian crisis-led global disruptions. Since polymer is derived from polypropylene, fluctuations in crude prices could increase manufacturing costs of plastic currency over time.

India is dependent on imports for polypropylene, which constitutes for roughly a fifth of domestic consumption even as major domestic players as Reliance Industries and Indian Oil Corporation are undertaking major capacity expansion aimed at scaling capacity significantly by 2030.

Secondly, why at a time when digital payments are booming? The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) now processes more than 24,000 crore transactions

annually, accounting for 85% of retail digital payments, while currency-to-GDP ratio (the percentage of total cash in circulation relative to GDP), which had hit a low of 8.7% in two decades during demonetisation in 2016-17, has stayed above 11%, reflecting a structural shift in payment behaviour.

The monetary system's dichotomy or currency demand paradox, as coined by the RBI, showed UPI grew exponentially amid steady growth in currency in circulation, which exceeded ₹41 lakh crore by 2025-26 against ₹16-17 lakh crore a decade earlier. This apparently could be due to informal sector and low digital acceptance in rural pockets where digital connectivity is poor.

Cost curve

In India, data on the cost of printing banknotes is not available per denomination but the RBI provides the cost of security printing as part of its income statement in the annual reports, which show that the aggregate expenditure on printing currency was ₹5,101 crore in FY2023-24, ₹6,373 crore in FY2024-25

and ₹4,875 crore in FY2025-26. Moreover, India reportedly spends almost ₹5,000 crore annually to replenish and maintain its stock of banknotes and destroys 20-24 billion soiled notes a year, most of them lower denominations, under its Clean Note Policy.

Polymer banknotes typically cost 30-60% more to manufacture than traditional cotton-paper notes as they use specialised polypropylene substrates, transparent windows, sophisticated anti-counterfeiting features and complex printing technologies.

Added to these costs, ATMs, currency sorting machines and banknote processing equipment may require recalibration to handle polymer notes. Commercial banks, cash logistics firms and retailers would incur transition costs initially.

A research paper in the *International Journal of Economics* found the cost almost doubled in lead up to the period of demonetisation (2016), driven by the printing and issue of two new series of banknotes (₹500 and ₹2,000) to replace all prior series of the same denomination in circulation. Since demonetisation, ₹200 has also been issued, leading to an increase in the cost of printing banknotes.

Average cost per note printed, it noted, follows a similar pattern, rising from ₹1.5 pre-2016 to ₹2.7 during demonetisation and resetting to pre-demonetisation levels as of 2019 suggesting marginal costs of printing currency in India may not always decrease with increased supply.

Historical perspective

RBI first mooted in 2009 to introduce 100 crore ₹10

polymer banknotes. In 2012, the Ministry of Finance informed the Parliament the notes would be introduced on a pilot basis in five cities – Kochi, Mysuru, Jaipur, Bhubaneswar, and Shimla, selected for diverse climatic conditions.

The primary objective was to increase the shelf life but the project was shelved due to technological challenges.

In 2013 and 2014, the Parliament was informed that the Government remained committed to the pilot project, after which the project apparently went silent because of demonetisation and its apurtenant costs, including in printing new series.

What next?

Bharatiya Reserve Bank Note Mudran has now invited eligible domestic and international manufacturers to submit bids by August 18 for manufacturing opacified polymer substrate sheets designed for banknote printing.

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra had last month confirmed that polymer currency was again under active consideration.

As India moves towards a digital rupee and deeper financial digitisation, the long-term demand for physical cash may expand slowly, potentially reducing the economic justification for large-scale polymer adoption.

A currency is efficient only when its production and maintenance costs remain a small proportion of its purchasing power. It is not about choosing between paper and plastic; but about designing a smarter, more efficient cash ecosystem in an economy where over ₹41 lakh crore worth of currency remains in circulation despite the UPI revolution.

22J7. Will India's plastic notes be a better alternative?

क्या भारत में प्लास्टिक मुद्रा नोट बेहतर विकल्प होंगे?

- India, which is among the **five largest economies** of the world, is still toying with the idea of introducing **plastic currency**, three decades after **Australia** introduced a full series of such banknotes and as many as **60 countries** now use such currency in some form.

भारत, जो विश्व की पाँच सबसे बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्थाओं में शामिल है, अब भी प्लास्टिक मुद्रा शुरू करने के विचार पर विचार कर रहा है। यह तब है जब ऑस्ट्रेलिया ने लगभग तीन दशक पहले अपने सभी मूल्यवर्गों में प्लास्टिक नोट लागू कर दिए थे और आज लगभग 60 देश किसी-न-किसी रूप में ऐसी मुद्रा का उपयोग कर रहे हैं।



- Early this month, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**'s currency printing arm invited global **Expressions of Interest (Eoi)** for supplying **polymer substrates** with embedded **security features**, signalling its most concrete step towards implementation since the original **2009** proposal.
इसी महीने की शुरुआत में भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक (आरबीआई) की मुद्रा मुद्रण इकाई ने अंतर्निहित सुरक्षा विशेषताओं वाले पॉलीमर सब्सट्रेट की आपूर्ति के लिए वैश्विक रुचि अभिव्यक्ति (ईओआई) आमंत्रित की, जो 2009 के मूल प्रस्ताव के बाद इस दिशा में सबसे ठोस कदम माना जा रहा है।
- Plastic banknotes**, which last **2.5 to 4 times longer** than **cotton-paper notes**, depending on denomination, need highly specialised **biaxially oriented polypropylene**, derived from **petroleum** and **natural gas**, a sector directly linked to environmental concerns.
प्लास्टिक बैंक नोट, जो मूल्यवर्ग के अनुसार कॉटन-पेपर नोटों की तुलना में 2.5 से 4 गुना अधिक समय तक चलते हैं, उनके निर्माण के लिए अत्यधिक विशिष्ट द्विअक्षीय उन्मुख पॉलीप्रोपाइलीन की आवश्यकता होती है, जो पेट्रोलियम और प्राकृतिक गैस से प्राप्त होता है तथा पर्यावरणीय चिंताओं से सीधे जुड़ा हुआ है।
- Although **polymer currency** offers an opportunity to modernise **cash management** by enhancing durability, reducing **life-cycle costs**, and strengthening **security**, apprehensions remain about its **production cost**, as some estimates suggest that it can approach or even exceed the **face value** of **low-denomination notes**.
यद्यपि पॉलीमर मुद्रा अधिक टिकाऊपन, कम जीवन-चक्र लागत और बेहतर सुरक्षा के माध्यम से नकद प्रबंधन को आधुनिक बनाने का अवसर प्रदान करती है, फिर भी इसकी उत्पादन लागत को लेकर चिंताएँ बनी हुई हैं, क्योंकि कुछ आकलनों के अनुसार निम्न मूल्यवर्ग के नोटों के मामले में यह उनकी अंकित कीमत के बराबर या उससे भी अधिक हो सकती है।
- Many countries found that the **production cost** alone was **20–24%** of the currency's value for **low denominations**.
कई देशों के अनुभव बताते हैं कि निम्न मूल्यवर्ग के नोटों के लिए केवल उत्पादन लागत ही मुद्रा के मूल्य का लगभग 20–24% होती है।
- The supporters of **plastic currency** nevertheless say lower replacement frequency can justify the higher production cost.
फिर भी प्लास्टिक मुद्रा के समर्थकों का तर्क है कि नोटों को कम बार बदलने की आवश्यकता इसकी अधिक उत्पादन लागत को उचित ठहराती है।
- ₹10** and **₹20** notes see the highest frequency of handling and physical deterioration, leading to disproportionately high replacement costs.
₹10 और ₹20 के नोटों का सबसे अधिक उपयोग होता है तथा वे सबसे जल्दी खराब होते हैं, जिससे उनके प्रतिस्थापन की लागत असमान रूप से अधिक हो जाती है।

Large savings

बड़ी बचत की संभावना

- Polymer notes** could potentially deliver large **life-cycle savings** in these lower denominations, even though they are not the largest by value since the **₹500 note** has consistently been the single most widely circulated denomination in India over the last **five years**, both by **volume** and **value**, according to **RBI annual reports**.
पॉलीमर नोट निम्न मूल्यवर्गों में जीवन-चक्र लागत के स्तर पर उल्लेखनीय बचत प्रदान कर सकते हैं, यद्यपि मूल्य के आधार पर ये सबसे बड़े नहीं हैं। आरबीआई की वार्षिक रिपोर्टों के अनुसार पिछले पाँच वर्षों से ₹500 का नोट संख्या और मूल्य—दोनों दृष्टियों से भारत में सबसे अधिक प्रचलित मूल्यवर्ग रहा है।

Sustainability concerns

स्थिरता से जुड़ी चिंताएँ

- **Sustainability concerns** centre around a higher initial **carbon footprint**, **plastic waste** disposal, and the need for specialised **recycling facilities**, even though a previous study commissioned by the **RBI** and conducted by **The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)** found that the longer circulation life of polymer notes means fewer notes need to be manufactured and transported over time, giving them a smaller overall **carbon footprint** than paper notes.

स्थिरता संबंधी चिंताएँ मुख्यतः प्रारंभिक कार्बन पदचिह्न, प्लास्टिक अपशिष्ट के निपटान तथा विशेष पुनर्चक्रण सुविधाओं की आवश्यकता से जुड़ी हैं। हालांकि, आरबीआई द्वारा प्रायोजित तथा द एनर्जी एंड रिसोर्स इंस्टीट्यूट (टेरी) द्वारा किए गए एक अध्ययन में पाया गया कि पॉलीमर नोटों की लंबी उपयोग अवधि के कारण समय के साथ कम नोटों का निर्माण और परिवहन करना पड़ता है, जिससे उनका कुल कार्बन पदचिह्न कागजी नोटों की तुलना में कम हो जाता है।

Key queries

मुख्य प्रश्न

- The logic behind the **RBI's** latest move to revive **plastic currency** comes at a time when **India** is becoming progressively **less cash-intensive** and **digital transactions** are expanding exponentially.
आरबीआई द्वारा प्लास्टिक मुद्रा को पुनर्जीवित करने का यह प्रयास ऐसे समय में किया जा रहा है जब भारत तेजी से कम नकदी-आधारित अर्थव्यवस्था की ओर बढ़ रहा है और डिजिटल लेनदेन तीव्र गति से बढ़ रहे हैं।
- While the stand of both the **RBI** and the **government** may seem justifiable, certain important questions remain unanswered.
यद्यपि आरबीआई और सरकार का दृष्टिकोण उचित प्रतीत हो सकता है, फिर भी कुछ महत्वपूर्ण प्रश्न अब भी अनुत्तरित हैं।
- Why should **India** invest heavily in **plastic currency**, especially when **petrochemical prices** remain volatile due to the **West Asia** crisis and related global disruptions?
जब पश्चिम एशिया संकट और उससे उत्पन्न वैश्विक व्यवधानों के कारण पेट्रो-रसायन की कीमतों में अस्थिरता बनी हुई है, तब भारत को प्लास्टिक मुद्रा में भारी निवेश क्यों करना चाहिए?
- Since polymer is derived from **polypropylene**, fluctuations in **crude oil prices** could increase the manufacturing cost of plastic currency over time.
चूँकि पॉलीमर पॉलीप्रोपाइलीन से बनता है, इसलिए कच्चे तेल की कीमतों में उतार-चढ़ाव समय के साथ प्लास्टिक मुद्रा की निर्माण लागत बढ़ा सकता है।
- **India** depends on imports for **polypropylene**, which accounts for roughly **one-fifth** of domestic consumption, even though major domestic companies such as **Reliance Industries** and **Indian Oil Corporation** are undertaking significant capacity expansion aimed at substantially increasing production by **2030**.
भारत अपनी पॉलीप्रोपाइलीन आवश्यकता का लगभग पाँचवाँ हिस्सा आयात से पूरा करता है, जबकि रिलायंस इंडस्ट्रीज़ और इंडियन ऑयल कॉर्पोरेशन जैसी प्रमुख घरेलू कंपनियाँ 2030 तक उत्पादन क्षमता में उल्लेखनीय वृद्धि के लिए बड़े विस्तार कार्यक्रम चला रही हैं।
- Secondly, why introduce **plastic currency** at a time when **digital payments** are booming?
दूसरा प्रश्न यह है कि जब डिजिटल भुगतान तेजी से बढ़ रहे हैं, तब प्लास्टिक मुद्रा की आवश्यकता क्यों है?
- The **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** now processes more than **24,000 crore transactions annually**, accounting for about **85%** of **retail digital payments**, while the **currency-to-GDP ratio**, which had fallen to a **20-year low of 8.7%** during **demonetisation** in **2016-17**, has remained above **11%**, reflecting a structural shift in payment behaviour.
यूनिफाइड पेमेंट्स इंटरफेस (यूपीआई) अब प्रतिवर्ष 24,000 करोड़ से अधिक लेनदेन संसाधित करता है और खुदरा डिजिटल भुगतानों का लगभग 85% हिस्सा संभालता है। वहीं मुद्रा-से-जीडीपी अनुपात, जो 2016-17 की नोटबंदी के दौरान 20 वर्षों के न्यूनतम 8.7% तक गिर गया था, अब 11% से ऊपर बना हुआ है, जो भुगतान व्यवहार में संरचनात्मक परिवर्तन को दर्शाता है।



- The **currency demand paradox**, as described by the **RBI**, shows that **UPI** has grown exponentially while **currency in circulation** has also continued to increase, exceeding **₹41 lakh crore** by **2025-26**, compared with **₹16–17 lakh crore** a decade earlier.
आरबीआई द्वारा वर्णित **मुद्रा मांग विरोधाभास** दर्शाता है कि जहाँ **यूपीआई** का विस्तार अत्यधिक तेजी से हुआ है, वहीं **प्रचलन में मुद्रा** भी लगातार बढ़ती रही और **2025-26** तक यह **₹41 लाख करोड़** से अधिक हो गई, जबकि एक दशक पहले यह लगभग **₹16–17 लाख करोड़** थी।
- This could be because of the **informal sector** and the relatively low acceptance of **digital payments** in many **rural areas**, where **digital connectivity** remains inadequate.
इसका एक प्रमुख कारण **अनौपचारिक क्षेत्र** में नकदी की निरंतर आवश्यकता तथा अनेक **ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों** में **डिजिटल कनेक्टिविटी** की कमी के कारण **डिजिटल भुगतान** का सीमित प्रसार हो सकता है।

Cost curve लागत की प्रवृत्ति

- In **India**, data on the cost of printing **banknotes** is not available per **denomination**, but the **RBI** provides the cost of **security printing** as part of its **income statement** in the **annual reports**, which show that the aggregate expenditure on printing currency was **₹5,101 crore** in **FY2023-24**, **₹6,373 crore** in **FY2024-25** and **₹4,875 crore** in **FY2025-26**.
भारत में **मुद्रा नोटों** की छपाई की लागत का **मूल्यवर्ग-वार** विवरण उपलब्ध नहीं है, किंतु **भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक (RBI)** अपनी **वार्षिक रिपोर्टों** के **आय विवरण** में **सुरक्षा मुद्रण** की लागत का उल्लेख करता है। इसके अनुसार **मुद्रा छपाई पर कुल व्यय वित्त वर्ष 2023-24 में ₹5,101 करोड़, वित्त वर्ष 2024-25 में ₹6,373 करोड़ तथा वित्त वर्ष 2025-26 में ₹4,875 करोड़ रहा।**
- Moreover, **India** reportedly spends almost **₹5,000 crore** annually to replenish and maintain its stock of **banknotes** and destroys **20–24 billion** soiled notes a year, most of them lower denominations, under its **Clean Note Policy**.
इसके अतिरिक्त, **भारत** प्रतिवर्ष **मुद्रा नोटों** के भंडार को पुनः पूरित एवं बनाए रखने पर लगभग **₹5,000 करोड़** व्यय करता है तथा अपनी **स्वच्छ नोट नीति (Clean Note Policy)** के अंतर्गत हर वर्ष **20 से 24 अरब** गंदे और क्षतिग्रस्त नोटों को नष्ट करता है, जिनमें अधिकांश निम्न मूल्यवर्ग के होते हैं।
- Polymer banknotes** typically cost **30–60%** more to manufacture than traditional **cotton-paper notes** as they use specialised **polypropylene substrates**, **transparent windows**, sophisticated **anti-counterfeiting features** and complex **printing technologies**.
पॉलीमर मुद्रा नोटों के निर्माण की लागत सामान्यतः पारंपरिक **सूती कागज़ के नोटों** की तुलना में **30–60%** अधिक होती है, क्योंकि इनमें विशेष **पॉलीप्रोपाइलीन सबस्ट्रेट**, **पारदर्शी खिड़कियाँ**, उन्नत **जालसाजी-रोधी सुरक्षा विशेषताएँ** तथा जटिल **मुद्रण प्रौद्योगिकियाँ** प्रयुक्त होती हैं।
- Added to these costs, **ATMs**, **currency sorting machines**, **vending machines** and **banknote processing equipment** may require recalibration to handle polymer notes.
इन लागतों के अतिरिक्त **एटीएम**, **मुद्रा छंटाई मशीनें**, **वेंडिंग मशीनें** तथा **मुद्रा प्रसंस्करण उपकरणों** को पॉलीमर नोटों के अनुरूप पुनः समायोजित करना पड़ सकता है।
- Commercial banks**, **cash logistics firms** and **retailers** would incur transition costs initially.
प्रारंभिक चरण में **वाणिज्यिक बैंक**, **नकद लॉजिस्टिक्स कंपनियाँ** तथा **खुदरा विक्रेताओं** को संक्रमण संबंधी अतिरिक्त लागत वहन करनी पड़ेगी।
- A research paper in the **International Journal of Economics** found the cost almost doubled in the lead-up to the period of **demonetisation (2016)**, driven by the printing and issue of two new series of **banknotes (₹500 and ₹2,000)** to replace all prior series of the same denomination in circulation.
इंटरनेशनल जर्नल ऑफ़ इकोनॉमिक्स में प्रकाशित एक शोधपत्र के अनुसार **विमुद्रीकरण (2016)** से पूर्व की अवधि में लागत लगभग दोगुनी हो गई थी। इसका प्रमुख कारण प्रचलन में मौजूद पुराने **₹500 और ₹2,000** मूल्यवर्ग के नोटों के स्थान पर नई श्रृंखला के **मुद्रा नोटों** की छपाई और जारी किया जाना था।



- Since **demonetisation**, ₹200 has also been issued, leading to an increase in the cost of printing **banknotes**.
विमुद्रीकरण के बाद ₹200 के नोट भी जारी किए गए, जिससे मुद्रा नोटों की छपाई की लागत में वृद्धि हुई।
- Average cost per note printed, it noted, follows a similar pattern, rising from ₹1.5 pre-2016 to ₹2.7 during **demonetisation** and resettling to pre-demonetisation levels as of 2019, suggesting marginal costs of printing currency in **India** may not always decrease with increased supply.
शोधपत्र में यह भी उल्लेख किया गया है कि प्रति नोट औसत छपाई लागत भी इसी प्रवृत्ति का अनुसरण करती है। यह 2016 से पूर्व ₹1.5 से बढ़कर विमुद्रीकरण के दौरान ₹2.7 हो गई और 2019 तक पुनः पूर्व स्तर के निकट पहुँच गई। इससे संकेत मिलता है कि भारत में मुद्रा छपाई की सीमांत लागत अधिक आपूर्ति के साथ हमेशा कम नहीं होती।

Historical perspective ऐतिहासिक परिप्रेक्ष्य

- The **RBI** first mooted in 2009 to introduce **100 crore ₹10 polymer banknotes**.
भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक (RBI) ने पहली बार 2009 में ₹10 मूल्यवर्ग के 100 करोड़ पॉलीमर नोट जारी करने का प्रस्ताव रखा था।
- In 2012, the **Ministry of Finance** informed the **Parliament** the notes would be introduced on a pilot basis in **five cities** — **Kochi, Mysuru, Jaipur, Bhubaneswar, and Shimla**, selected for diverse climatic conditions.
2012 में वित्त मंत्रालय ने संसद को सूचित किया कि इन नोटों को विविध जलवायु परिस्थितियों के आधार पर चयनित पाँच शहरों—कोच्चि, मैसूर, जयपुर, भुवनेश्वर और शिमला—में पायलट परियोजना के रूप में जारी किया जाएगा।
- The primary objective was to increase the **shelf life** but the project was shelved due to **technological challenges**.
इस परियोजना का मुख्य उद्देश्य नोटों की उपयोगी आयु बढ़ाना था, किंतु तकनीकी चुनौतियों के कारण इसे स्थगित कर दिया गया।
- In 2013 and 2014, the **Parliament** was informed that the **Government** remained committed to the pilot project, after which the project apparently went silent because of **demonetisation** and its appurtenant costs, including printing new series.
2013 और 2014 में संसद को बताया गया कि सरकार इस पायलट परियोजना के प्रति प्रतिबद्ध है। इसके बाद विमुद्रीकरण तथा उससे संबंधित लागतों, विशेषकर नई श्रृंखला के नोटों की छपाई, के कारण यह परियोजना व्यावहारिक रूप से ठंडे बस्ते में चली गई।

What next? आगे की राह क्या है?

- Bharatiya Reserve Bank Note Mudran** has now invited eligible **domestic and international manufacturers** to submit bids by **August 18** for manufacturing **opacified polymer substrate sheets** designed for **banknote printing**.
भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक नोट मुद्रण प्राइवेट लिमिटेड ने अब पात्र घरेलू और अंतरराष्ट्रीय निर्माताओं से 18 अगस्त तक मुद्रा नोटों की छपाई के लिए अपारदर्शी पॉलीमर सब्सट्रेट शीटों के निर्माण हेतु निविदाएँ आमंत्रित की हैं।
- RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra** had last month confirmed that **polymer currency** was again under active consideration.
भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक के गवर्नर संजय मल्होत्रा ने पिछले महीने पुष्टि की थी कि पॉलीमर मुद्रा को पुनः सक्रिय रूप से विचाराधीन रखा गया है।



- As **India** moves towards a **digital rupee** and deeper **financial digitisation**, the long-term demand for **physical cash** may expand slowly, potentially reducing the economic justification for large-scale **polymer** adoption.
जैसे-जैसे **भारत डिजिटल रुपया** तथा व्यापक **वित्तीय डिजिटलीकरण** की दिशा में आगे बढ़ रहा है, **भौतिक नकदी** की दीर्घकालिक माँग अपेक्षाकृत धीमी गति से बढ़ सकती है, जिससे बड़े पैमाने पर **पॉलीमर नोटों** को अपनाने का आर्थिक औचित्य कम हो सकता है।
- A **currency** is efficient only when its **production** and **maintenance costs** remain a small proportion of its **purchasing power**.
कोई **मुद्रा** तभी प्रभावी मानी जाती है, जब उसकी **उत्पादन** तथा **रखरखाव लागत** उसकी **क्रय शक्ति** की तुलना में बहुत कम हो।
- It is not about choosing between **paper** and **plastic**; but about designing a smarter, more efficient **cash ecosystem** in an economy where over **₹41 lakh crore** worth of currency remains in circulation despite the **UPI revolution**.
यह केवल **कागज़** और **प्लास्टिक** के बीच चयन का प्रश्न नहीं है, बल्कि ऐसी अर्थव्यवस्था में अधिक बुद्धिमत्तापूर्ण और कुशल **नकद मुद्रा पारितंत्र** विकसित करने का विषय है, जहाँ **यूपीआई** क्रांति के बावजूद **₹41 लाख करोड़** से अधिक मूल्य की मुद्रा अब भी प्रचलन में है।

GS Paper III: Science and Technology	22 July 2026
TOPICS COVERED	
22J7	Beta Pictoris b: hide and seek बीटा पिक्टोरिस b: आँख-मिचौली का खेल

Beta Pictoris b: hide and seek

GS III: S&T
Associated Press

Astronomers have discovered a faint, elusive planet orbiting a young star after more than a decade of cosmic hide-and-seek. In an unusual twist, two groups working independently detected the cold gas giant a few days apart late last year using different telescopes. It's the dimmest planet ever directly imaged from earth, scientists said.

A Scottish and German-led team spied the new planet around the star Beta Pictoris using the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope in Chile, then dug through archives to confirm its orbit. The planet had remained hidden in the data all this time, overshadowed by its considerably brighter star and two companion planets. Beta Pictoris is located in the easel-shaped southern constellation Pictor and 63 light-years from earth.

A California-led team made the discovery with NASA's Webb Space Telescope. Two observations were all it took with Webb, the biggest telescope ever launched into space. Both teams reported their findings in the *Astrophysical Journal Letters* on July 15.

Each team was studying one of the star's already identified planets when they spotted a less massive one



This image provided by the European Southern Observatory shows the Beta Pictoris region on March 6, 2014. ESO/AP

100-times fainter lurking farther out. They deliberately kept their work from one another so as not to bias the results.

The new planet is slightly bigger than Jupiter and takes 91 years to orbit its star, a little longer than it takes Uranus to orbit our sun. Born into a star system barely 20 million years old, the planet is probably similar to a much younger Jupiter, said the University of California San Diego's Aidan Gibbs, who led the second team.

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22J7. Beta Pictoris b: hide and seek

बीटा पिक्टोरिस b: आँख-मिचौली का खेल

Astronomers have discovered a faint, elusive planet orbiting a young star after more than a decade of cosmic hide-and-seek.

खगोलविदों ने एक मंद एवं दुर्लभ ग्रह की खोज की है, जो एक युवा तारे की परिक्रमा कर रहा है। यह खोज एक दशक से अधिक समय तक चले ब्रह्मांडीय आँख-मिचौली के खेल के बाद संभव हो सकी।

In an unusual twist, two groups working independently detected the cold gas giant a few days apart late last year using different telescopes.

एक असामान्य घटनाक्रम में, स्वतंत्र रूप से कार्य कर रहे दो अनुसंधान दलों ने पिछले वर्ष के अंत में कुछ दिनों के अंतराल पर विभिन्न दूरबीनों का उपयोग करते हुए इस शीत गैसीय विशाल ग्रह का पता लगाया।

It's the dimmest planet ever directly

imaged from Earth, scientists said.

वैज्ञानिकों के अनुसार, यह पृथ्वी से प्रत्यक्ष रूप से चित्रित किया गया अब तक का सबसे मंद ग्रह है।

- A Scottish and German-led team spied the new planet around the star Beta Pictoris using the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope in Chile, then dug through



archives to confirm its orbit.

स्कॉटलैंड और जर्मनी के नेतृत्व वाले एक अनुसंधान दल ने चिली स्थित यूरोपीय दक्षिणी वेधशाला के वेरी लाज टेलीस्कोप का उपयोग करके बीटा पिक्टोरिस तारे के चारों ओर इस नए ग्रह का पता लगाया और बाद में अभिलेखीय आँकड़ों का अध्ययन कर इसकी कक्षा की पुष्टि की।

- The planet had remained hidden in the data all this time, overshadowed by its considerably **brighter star** and **two companion planets**.

यह ग्रह इतने समय तक उपलब्ध आँकड़ों में छिपा रहा, क्योंकि उसका अधिक चमकीला तारा तथा उसके दो सहचर ग्रह उस पर हावी रहे।

- Beta Pictoris** is located in the **easel-shaped southern constellation Pictor** and **63 light-years** from **Earth**.

बीटा पिक्टोरिस चित्रफलक (ईज़ल) के आकार वाले दक्षिणी तारामंडल पिक्टर में स्थित है तथा पृथ्वी से 63 प्रकाश-वर्ष की दूरी पर है।

- A **California-led team** made the discovery with **NASA's Webb Space Telescope**. कैलिफोर्निया के नेतृत्व वाले एक अनुसंधान दल ने नासा के वेब अंतरिक्ष दूरदर्शी की सहायता से इस खोज को अंजाम दिया।

- Two observations** were all it took with **Webb**, the **biggest telescope ever launched into space**.

अंतरिक्ष में प्रक्षेपित अब तक के सबसे बड़े दूरदर्शी वेब से केवल दो प्रेक्षण ही इस खोज के लिए पर्याप्त सिद्ध हुए।

- Each team was studying one of the star's already **identified planets** when they spotted a **less massive one 100-times fainter** lurking farther out.

प्रत्येक अनुसंधान दल तारे के पहले से पहचाने गए ग्रहों में से एक का अध्ययन कर रहा था, तभी उन्होंने उससे अधिक दूरी पर स्थित कम द्रव्यमान वाले, 100 गुना अधिक मंद ग्रह को देखा।

- They deliberately kept their work from one another so as not to bias the results.

उन्होंने जानबूझकर अपने कार्य को एक-दूसरे से गोपनीय रखा ताकि परिणामों में किसी प्रकार का पूर्वाग्रह न आए।

- The **new planet** is slightly bigger than **Jupiter** and takes **91 years** to orbit its star, a little longer than it takes **Uranus** to orbit our **Sun**.

यह नया ग्रह बृहस्पति से थोड़ा बड़ा है और अपने तारे की परिक्रमा करने में 91 वर्ष लेता है, जो हमारे सूर्य की परिक्रमा करने में अरुण (यूरेनस) द्वारा लिए जाने वाले समय से थोड़ा अधिक है।

- Born into a star system barely 20 million years old**, the planet is probably similar to a much **younger Jupiter**, said the **University of California San Diego's Aidan Gibbs**, who led the second team.

दूसरे अनुसंधान दल का नेतृत्व करने वाले यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ कैलिफोर्निया, सैन डिएगो के एडन गिब्स ने कहा कि लगभग 2 करोड़ वर्ष पुराने तारकीय तंत्र में जन्मा यह ग्रह संभवतः काफी युवा बृहस्पति के समान है।

GS Paper III: Environment		22 July 2026
TOPICS COVERED		
22J7	Clean energy push is answer to transition challenges faced by India, says UN climate chief संयुक्त राष्ट्र जलवायु प्रमुख ने कहा— स्वच्छ ऊर्जा को बढ़ावा भारत की ऊर्जा संक्रमण चुनौतियों का समाधान है	
22J7	India's rarest heron faces a silent end as new dam ignores its home नई बाँध परियोजना द्वारा इसके आवास की उपेक्षा किए जाने से भारत का सबसे दुर्लभ बगुला मौन अंत की ओर अग्रसर	



22J7. Clean energy push is answer to transition challenges faced by India, says UN climate chief

Clean energy push is answer to transition challenges faced by India, says UN climate chief

GS III: Environment
JACOB KUSHY
NEW DELHI

India's main response to the technical and financial challenges of its energy transition lies in decarbonisation and electrification – steps that serve the country's own self-interest and are being backed by both public and private finance, the UN's top climate official said here on Tuesday.

Simon Stiell, Executive Secretary of UN Climate Change, was responding to questions from journalists after two days of talks with Indian Ministers and business leaders. The challenges India faces, he said, run "across a spectrum", from technical hurdles at one end to finance at the other.

On the technical side, Mr. Stiell pointed to (electric) "grids and storage". These were problems, he noted, that most major



Simon Stiell

economies advancing their energy transitions are grappling with. International cooperation could deliver common solutions, he said, adding that grids and storage sit at the heart of the electrification agenda that Türkiye and Australia, holding the COP31 presidency, have made a priority this year. The intermittent nature of solar and wind energy means that relying on coal power, which could be harnessed

night or day, is crucial for India. On the other hand, this also means that the vast amount of solar power available during the day had to be intentionally wasted to keep the electric grid stable. The electrification agenda refers to a plan to ensure at least 35% of the total energy used globally is sourced from electricity, by 2035.

Finance marks the other end of that spectrum. Decarbonisation and electrification fall squarely within India's self-interest, and efforts are under way to mobilise both public and private money to support them, Mr. Stiell said. "India, like many developing countries, struggles in terms of finance for areas such as adaptation... So, the areas of climate finance are key and have been highlighted in our discussions," he added.

says UN climate chief

संयुक्त राष्ट्र जलवायु प्रमुख ने कहा— स्वच्छ ऊर्जा को बढ़ावा भारत की ऊर्जा संक्रमण चुनौतियों का समाधान है

• International cooperation could deliver common solutions, he said, adding that grids and storage sit at the heart of the electrification agenda that Türkiye and Australia, holding the COP31 presidency, have made a priority this year.

उन्होंने कहा कि अंतरराष्ट्रीय सहयोग इन समस्याओं के

साझा समाधान उपलब्ध करा सकता है। उन्होंने यह भी जोड़ा

कि विद्युत ग्रिड और ऊर्जा भंडारण उस विद्युतीकरण एजेंडा

के केंद्र में हैं, जिसे तुर्किये और ऑस्ट्रेलिया, जो इस वर्ष

COP31 की अध्यक्षता कर रहे हैं, ने प्राथमिकता दी है।

• The electrification agenda refers to a plan to ensure at least 35% of the total energy used globally is sourced from electricity, by 2035.

विद्युतीकरण एजेंडा का उद्देश्य यह सुनिश्चित करना है कि

2035 तक विश्व में उपयोग की जाने वाली कुल ऊर्जा का कम-

से-कम 35% भाग विद्युत से प्राप्त हो।

India's rarest heron faces a silent end as new dam ignores its home

Once the dam in the Lohit river basin is built, it could alter the water's turbidity and flow, and lead to the local extinction of white-bellied herons; the bird was first described in 1878 based on specimens from the Teesta region, the species does not occur there today; in fact, it has been 'critically endangered' since 2007

SS III: Environment
Aditya Ansh

The white-bellied heron (*Ardea insignis*) is amongst the world's most elusive birds, nesting along fast-flowing rivers lined with old growth forests.

"India has a population of six to nine individuals distributed in three rivers: Noa-Dehing River, Lahm River and Lohit River," Yumlam Benjamin Bida, project manager, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, Bengaluru, said. "Out of these three rivers, Lahm is a tributary of the Lohit River and the river basin harbours 70% of India's white-bellied herons."

Yet on the Lohit, the Forest Advisory Committee under the Union Environment Ministry has granted in-principle clearance to a 1,200-MW hydroelectric power project that will fell more than 33,000 trees. The environmental impact assessment for the project also omitted white-bellied herons.

Borrowed time

"White-bellied herons have a very unique foraging strategy due to their huge body size" — up to around four-feet-tall, Mr. Bida said. "They hunt in shallow water and their dietary composition is only fish. They wait for the fish to come near and then strike it."

He added that the dam, once it is built, will alter the water's turbidity and flow, which could lead to the bird's "local extinction".

In 1878, the British ornithologist and naturalist Allan Octavian Hume first scientifically described the white-bellied heron based on specimens from the Teesta region in eastern India. The species is not known to occur there today.

According to Mr. Bida, it is not unknown for substantial changes in river conditions to lead to highly specialised species vanishing from that landscape.

Also, "The riparian mature forest plays a critical role for white-bellied herons, both for roosting and nesting. The hydroelectric power project will clear the mature riparian forest and let it get submerged, impacting the breeding of the species."

'No human disturbance'

White-bellied herons are in Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, thus enjoying the highest level of legal protection. Even so, their range and population have declined significantly in the last century.

A 2019 review by the Tropical Resources Institute recorded the birds in parts of Sikkim, Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar at the beginning of the 20th century. Today, they are restricted to pockets of Arunachal Pradesh, Bhutan, and Myanmar.

"The white-bellied heron is known to inhabit Himalayan river systems up to



A white-bellied heron in Arunachal Pradesh. "White-bellied herons have a very unique foraging strategy due to their huge body size" — up to around four-feet-tall. "They hunt in shallow water and their dietary composition is only fish." RAJNIMAR99 (CC BY-SA)

elevations of about 1,500m above sea level," Murali Krishna, a wildlife ecologist who has worked extensively in the Eastern Himalayas, said.

"Based on my several years of observation in Arunachal Pradesh, the species appears to avoid even minimal anthropogenic disturbance and usually uses tall trees for nesting, in those areas where there is no human disturbance."

Overlooked in assessment

The project is being developed by Tehri Hydro Development Corporation India, Ltd. in partnership with the Arunachal Pradesh government. Its environmental impact assessment was prepared by WAPCOS, Ltd, a consultancy firm under the Ministry of Jal Shakti.

Although the Lohit River basin harbours most of these birds in India, the species did not feature in the project's impact assessment. According to the minutes of the Forest Advisory Committee meeting on December 19, 2025, State officials told the committee the birds had not been included because they had not been recorded within the project's diversion area.

The project also faced sustained opposition from local communities. Roshman Tawisk, resident of the Nukung Village and president of the District Congress Party Committee, said residents opposed the project since it was first proposed in 2008. "We do not want to sacrifice so much of our land and watch it getting submerged," he said.

During a public hearing in August 2025, community members questioned the reliability of the baseline data



For a species like white-bellied herons, ... there should be a basin-level approach, which entails assessing Lohit basin as one connected habitat, rather than looking at the site in isolation while assessing impacts.

YUMLAM BENJAMIN BIDA
Project manager at Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment

WAPCOS used in its assessment and said the draft assessment did not accurately reflect local realities. One participant noted that important flora and fauna, including a medical plant, had been excluded. Mr. Tawisk also criticised the report for not documenting the tribe's cultural practice of using natural indicators.

The draft also left out the affected villages of Nukung and Mla as well as the amended social impact assessment.

Ecological complexity

The Committee's consent will allow for compensatory afforestation in 51 patches of land in Madhya Pradesh, over a thousand kilometres away from the Lohit River basin. "Natural forests are highly complex ecological systems that develop over long periods through interactions of climatic, edaphic, and biotic factors, and hence cannot be fully recreated through human interventions," Mr. Krishna said.

"The Eastern Himalayas are highly complex due to their topography, climatic

variability and diverse forest types, and they form part of a global biodiversity hotspot," he added. So developmental interventions require "careful planning and a strong ecological understanding", and authorities must "move from region specific impact and look into impact at a broader level".

"For a species like white-bellied herons, ... there should be a basin-level approach, which entails assessing Lohit basin as one connected habitat, rather than looking at the site in isolation while assessing impacts on nesting, roosting, and feeding areas for white-bellied herons," Mr. Bida said.

Imon Abedin, a field biologist with Aaranyak, an environmental protection organisation, also said the species faces multiple pressures, including changes in river courses, removal of large river boulders, unregulated tourism, fish poisoning, sand extraction, and pollution.

As a result, "there is often no clear roadmap to adequately compensate for its ecological impacts, especially for species like the white-bellied herons that already exist in extremely precarious conditions."

Mr. Krishna said he believes conservation planning needs to move beyond its narrow focus on charismatic wildlife, like tigers and elephants, and adopt a more informed approach that would treat conservation efforts "like on a war-footing" and giving rare species like white-bellied herons the same level of urgency afforded to better-known conservation priorities.

(Aditya Ansh is an independent media writer in New Delhi. adityaansh30@gmail.com)

THE GIST

India has a population of six to nine white-bellied herons distributed in three rivers: Noa-Dehing River, Lahm River and Lohit River

On the Lohit, the Forest Advisory Committee under the Union Environment Ministry has granted in-principle clearance to a 1,200-MW hydroelectric power project that will fell more than 33,000 trees

However, the white-bellied herons did not feature in the project's impact assessment drawing criticism from conservationists

22J7. India's rarest heron faces a silent end as new dam ignores its home

नई बाँध परियोजना द्वारा इसके आवास की उपेक्षा किए जाने से भारत का सबसे दुर्लभ बगुला मौन अंत की ओर अग्रसर

- The **white-bellied heron (*Ardea insignis*)** is amongst the **world's most elusive birds**, nesting **along fast-flowing rivers lined with old growth forests**.

श्वेत-उदर बगुला (*Ardea insignis*) विश्व के सबसे दुर्लभ पक्षियों में से एक है, जो तीव्र प्रवाह वाली नदियों के किनारे स्थित प्राचीन प्राकृतिक वनों में घोंसला बनाता है।

- "India has a population of six to nine individuals distributed in three rivers: **Noa-Dehing River, Lahm River and Lohit River**," Yumlam Benjamin Bida, project manager, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, Bengaluru, said.

“भारत में इसकी छह से नौ संख्या वाले पक्षी तीन नदियों—नोआ-देहिंग नदी, लाहम नदी और लोहित नदी—में वितरित हैं,” बेंगलुरु स्थित अशोका ट्रस्ट फॉर रिसर्च इन इकोलॉजी एंड द एनवायरनमेंट के परियोजना प्रबंधक युमलाम बेंजामिन बिडा ने कहा।

- “Out of these three rivers, Lahm is a tributary of the Lohit River and the river basin harbours 70% of India’s white-bellied herons.”

“इन तीन नदियों में से लाहम नदी, लोहित नदी की एक सहायक नदी है और इसका नदी बेसिन भारत के 70% श्वेत-उदर बगुलों का आश्रयस्थल है।”

- “White-bellied herons have a very unique foraging strategy due to their huge body size” — up to around four-feet-tall, Mr. Bida said.

श्री बिडा ने कहा कि श्वेत-उदर बगुलों की विशाल शारीरिक बनावट—लगभग चार फुट ऊँचाई—के कारण उनकी भोजन खोजने की रणनीति अत्यंत विशिष्ट होती है।

- “They hunt in shallow water and their dietary composition is only fish.”

“वे उथले जल में शिकार करते हैं और उनका आहार केवल मछलियों पर आधारित होता है।”

- “They wait for the fish to come near and then strike it.”

“वे मछली के निकट आने की प्रतीक्षा करते हैं और फिर उस पर प्रहार करते हैं।”

- He added that the dam, once it is built, will alter the water’s turbidity and flow, which could lead to the bird’s local extinction.

उन्होंने आगे कहा कि बाँध बनने के बाद जल की गंदलापन (टर्बिडिटी) तथा प्रवाह में परिवर्तन होगा, जिससे इस पक्षी का स्थानीय विलुप्त होना संभव है।

- Also, “The riparian mature forest plays a critical role for white-bellied herons, both for rooting and nesting.”

इसके अतिरिक्त, “नदी तटीय परिपक्व वन श्वेत-उदर बगुलों के लिए विश्राम तथा घोंसला बनाने—दोनों दृष्टियों से अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाते हैं।”

- White-bellied herons are in Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, thus enjoying the highest level of legal protection.

श्वेत-उदर बगुला वन्यजीव संरक्षण अधिनियम, 1972 की अनुसूची-I में शामिल है, जिससे इसे कानूनी संरक्षण का सर्वोच्च स्तर प्राप्त है।

- Even so, their range and population have declined significantly in the last century. इसके बावजूद, पिछले एक शताब्दी में इनके वितरण क्षेत्र तथा जनसंख्या में उल्लेखनीय गिरावट आई है।

- A 2019 review by the Tropical Resources Institute recorded the birds in parts of Sikkim, Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar at the beginning of the 20th century.

ट्रॉपिकल रिसोर्सेज इंस्टीट्यूट की 2019 की समीक्षा के अनुसार 20वीं शताब्दी की शुरुआत में यह पक्षी सिक्किम, नेपाल, भूटान और म्यांमार के कुछ भागों में पाया जाता था।

- Today, they are restricted to pockets of Arunachal Pradesh, Bhutan, and Myanmar. आज यह केवल अरुणाचल प्रदेश, भूटान और म्यांमार के सीमित क्षेत्रों तक ही सिमट गया है।

- “The white-bellied heron is known to inhabit Himalayan river systems up to elevations of about 1,500 m above sea level,” Murali Krishna, a wildlife ecologist who has worked extensively in the Eastern Himalaya, said.

पूर्वी हिमालय में व्यापक कार्य कर चुके वन्यजीव पारिस्थितिकीविद् मुरली कृष्णा ने कहा, “श्वेत-उदर बगुला सामान्यतः हिमालयी नदी तंत्रों में समुद्र तल से लगभग 1,500 मीटर की ऊँचाई तक पाया जाता है।”

- “Based on my several years of observation in Arunachal Pradesh, the species appears to avoid even minimal anthropogenic disturbance and usually uses tall trees for nesting, in those areas where there is no human disturbance.”

“अरुणाचल प्रदेश में कई वर्षों के मेरे अवलोकन के आधार पर यह प्रजाति अत्यंत न्यूनतम मानवीय हस्तक्षेप से भी बचती है तथा सामान्यतः ऊँचे वृक्षों पर उन्हीं क्षेत्रों में घोंसला बनाती है जहाँ मानवीय हस्तक्षेप नहीं होता।”

Overlooked in assessment

आकलन में उपेक्षित पहलू

- The **project** is being developed by **Tehri Hydro Development Corporation India, Ltd.** in partnership with the **Arunachal Pradesh government**.
यह परियोजना टेहरी हाइड्रो डेवलपमेंट कॉर्पोरेशन इंडिया लिमिटेड द्वारा अरुणाचल प्रदेश सरकार के सहयोग से विकसित की जा रही है।
- Its environmental impact assessment was prepared by WAPCOS, Ltd., a consultancy firm under the Ministry of Jal Shakti.**
इसका पर्यावरणीय प्रभाव आकलन जल शक्ति मंत्रालय के अधीन कार्यरत परामर्शदाता संस्था WAPCOS लिमिटेड द्वारा तैयार किया गया।
- Although the **Lohit River basin** harbours most of these **birds** in India, the **species** did not feature in the project's **impact assessment**.
यद्यपि लोहित नदी बेसिन भारत में इन पक्षियों का प्रमुख आवास है, फिर भी इस प्रजाति को परियोजना के प्रभाव आकलन में सम्मिलित नहीं किया गया।
- One participant noted that important **flora** and **fauna**, including a **medicinal plant**, had been excluded.
एक प्रतिभागी ने बताया कि एक औषधीय पौधे सहित महत्वपूर्ण वनस्पतियों और जीव-जंतुओं को इसमें सम्मिलित नहीं किया गया।
- Mr. **Tawsik** also criticised the report for not documenting the **tribe's cultural practice of using natural indicators**.
श्री टॉसिक ने रिपोर्ट की यह कहकर भी आलोचना की कि इसमें जनजाति की सांस्कृतिक परंपरा, जिसमें प्राकृतिक संकेतकों का उपयोग किया जाता है, का दस्तावेजीकरण नहीं किया गया।
- The **Committee's consent** will allow for **compensatory afforestation** in **51 patches** of land in **Madhya Pradesh**, over a thousand kilometres away from the **Lohit River basin**.
समिति की स्वीकृति के परिणामस्वरूप लोहित नदी बेसिन से एक हजार किलोमीटर से अधिक दूर मध्य प्रदेश में 51 भू-खंडों पर प्रतिपूरक वनीकरण किया जाएगा।
- Imon Abedin**, a field biologist with **Aaranyak**, an environmental protection organisation, also said the **species** faces multiple pressures, including changes in **river courses**, removal of large **river boulders**, **unregulated tourism**, **fish poisoning**, **sand extraction**, and **pollution**.
पर्यावरण संरक्षण संगठन आरण्यक के क्षेत्रीय जीवविज्ञानी इमोन आबेदीन ने भी कहा कि यह प्रजाति अनेक दबावों का सामना कर रही है, जिनमें नदी के प्रवाह-पथ में परिवर्तन, बड़े नदी शिलाखंडों का हटाया जाना, अनियंत्रित पर्यटन, मछलियों को विष देना, बालू खनन, तथा प्रदूषण शामिल हैं।

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TOPICS COVERED		
22J7	Tribunal overturns most FEMA charges against Lalit, BCCI अधिकरण ने ललित मोदी और बीसीसीआई के विरुद्ध अधिकांश फेमा आरोप निरस्त किए	

Tribunal overturns most FEMA charges against Lalit, BCCI

GS III: Internal Security
The Hindu Bureau

The Appellate Tribunal under the Smugglers and Foreign Exchange Manipulators (Forfeiture of Property) Act (SAFEMA) has largely overturned the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) findings and penalties against the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), former Indian Premier League (IPL) chairman Lalit Modi, and other appellants in the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) case relating to the 2009 IPL's shift to South Africa.

The ED had alleged that the BCCI contravened FEMA provisions by remitting funds overseas to organise the tournament and had imposed penalties amounting to several crores on the Board and its office-bearers.

A bench of the Tribunal comprising its Chairman Justice Munishwar Nath Bhandari and Member Rajesh Malhotra partly allowed the appeals against the ED's order dated May 31, 2018. The order had imposed penalties on the BCCI, Mr. Modi, former BCCI president N. Srinivasan, M.P. Pandove, the State Bank of India, and its



Lalit Modi

former Chief Manager A.K. Nazeer Khan for alleged violations of FEMA.

In its order, the Tribunal set aside most of the ED's conclusions against the BCCI, Mr. Modi and the other appellants.

However, the Tribunal upheld the ED's findings on two specific counts. It retained the penalty of ₹4 crore imposed on the BCCI for remitting an amount abroad that exceeded what was reflected in its books of accounts. The Tribunal also agreed that there had been a delay in bringing back the proceeds from ticket sales to India. While it upheld the finding of a FEMA violation on this count, it reduced the penalty on the BCCI from ₹4 crore to ₹1 crore, observing that the funds had eventually been repatriated.

22J7. Tribunal overturns most FEMA charges against Lalit, BCCI

अधिकरण ने ललित मोदी और बीसीसीआई के विरुद्ध

अधिकांश फेमा आरोप निरस्त किए

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तस्कर एवं विदेशी मुद्रा हेरफेरकर्ता (संपत्ति की जब्ती) अधिनियम

(SAFEMA) के अंतर्गत गठित अपीलिय अधिकरण ने प्रवर्तन

निदेशालय (ED) द्वारा भारतीय क्रिकेट नियंत्रण बोर्ड (BCCI), पूर्व

इंडियन प्रीमियर लीग (IPL) अध्यक्ष ललित मोदी तथा अन्य

अपीलकर्ताओं के विरुद्ध विदेशी मुद्रा प्रबंधन अधिनियम (FEMA) के

तहत 2009 आईपीएल को दक्षिण अफ्रीका स्थानांतरित किए जाने से

संबंधित मामले में दिए गए अधिकांश निष्कर्षों और दंडों को निरस्त

कर दिया है।