

TOPICS COVERED

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Centre and Cong. spar over Katchatheevu issue

PM and External Affairs Minister flay Congress regimes for indifference towards the island | Congress quotes Centre's 2015 RTI reply, which stated that the island lies on the 'Sri Lankan side' | Opposition leaders ask if the 'change of stance' by Modi govt. is related to 'election politics'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The controversy over India "ceding" the island of Katchatheevu to Sri Lanka in 1974 escalated on Monday after Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged news reports on the issue for the second day and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar declared that **previous Congress governments had given away the rights of Indian fishermen in that area.**

Hitting back, the Congress quoted the **government's Right to Information (RTI) reply** on the issue in 2015, which said the island was situated on **"the Sri Lankan side of the International Maritime**

Boundary Line". Mr. Modi, in a post on X, flagged a second news report on the issue that said the DMK, under then Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi, was kept in the loop when the Union government decided on ceding Katchatheevu to Sri Lanka.

PM questions DMK "Rhetoric aside, DMK has done NOTHING to safeguard Tamil Nadu's interests. New details emerging on #Katchatheevu have UNMASKED the DMK's double standards totally. Congress and DMK are family units. They only care that their own sons and daughters rise. They don't care for anyone else. Their callousness on Katchatheevu has harmed the inter-

The Congress and DMK raised the issue in Parliament as if they bear no responsibility for it, while they are the parties which did it

Will Foreign Minister Mr. Jaishankar please refer to the RTI reply dated 27-1-2015... the reply justified the circumstances under which India acknowledged that a small island belonged to Sri Lanka

ests of our poor fishermen and fisherwomen in particular," Mr. Modi said in his post. Mr. Jaishankar, in his press conference at the BJP's headquarters on Monday, said it was wrong to say that the ceding of Katchatheevu was an "old issue" that was being resurrected keeping the Lok Sabha election in mind. "It has been frequently raised in Parliament and has been a matter of frequent correspondence between the

Revisiting pact could affect ties: former diplomats

Any move by the government to revisit the 1974 India-Sri Lanka agreement on Katchatheevu island could have a broader diplomatic impact on India's ties in the region and raise questions about other bilateral negotiations, warned former diplomats. » PAGE 4

displayed indifference towards Katchatheevu island and gave away Indian fishermen's rights despite legal views to the contrary. Referring to documents obtained by BJP's Tamil Nadu chief K. Annamalai under the RTI Act, Mr. Jaishankar said that while the **1974 pact ensured fishing rights for Indian fishermen, a 1976 agreement between India and Sri Lanka ended them.** "We know who did it, today we are looking for who hid it," he said.

Responding to the Minister's statement, Opposition said the 2015 RTI response of the Ministry clearly stated that previous agreements did not "involve either acquiring or ceding of territory belong-

ing to India". Opposition leaders asked if the "change of stance" by the Narendra Modi government was related to "election politics". "Tit for tat is old. Tweet for Tweet is the new weapon. Will Foreign Minister Mr. Jaishankar please refer to the RTI reply dated 27-1-2015... The Reply justified the circumstances under which India acknowledged that a small island belonged to Sri Lanka," former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram said in a post on X. Former Union Minister Anand Sharma said **India's strategic interests and relationship with neighbours must not be lost to electoral narrative.**

'NO BIG CATCH'
» PAGE 5

- **Mundakkal is known as the capital of India's cashew processing activities, with important organizations like the Kerala State Cashew Development Corporation Limited (KSCDC) and Cashew Export Promotion Council of India (CEPCI) headquartered there.**
- **Mundakkal is also a popular tourist destination within Kollam, particularly because of its proximity to a thriving beach.**
- **The beach becomes especially significant during the 'Karkidaka Vavubali' festival, where thousands of devotees gather to perform the Vavubali Tharpanam ritual.**
- **Vavubali is an important Hindu ritual observed in Kerala during the month of Karkidakam, where people offer Bali (ritual offerings) to the departed souls.**
- **Men, women, and children participate in the Vavubali ritual, which holds cultural and religious significance in Kerala.**



Skeletal structure: Houses destroyed by a sea surge on Monday at Mundakkal in Kollam, Kerala. C. SURESHKUMAR

Supreme Court allows Hindu worship to continue inside Gyanvapi premises

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday managed a balancing act, allowing a chosen Hindu priest to continue to offer worship inside the cellar or *tekhana* on the Gyanvapi premises while Muslims used the mosque and the surrounding courtyard for performing *namaaz*.

A three-judge Bench of Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud found it "appropriate" to order the *status quo* in order to "enable both communities to offer religious worship".

"This way *namaaz* is offered on the premises of the mosque. The *tekhana* is safeguarded. The arrangement would be maintained between now and the trial," Chief Justice Chandrachud remarked



Police personnel deployed outside Gyanvapi Mosque and Kashi Vishwanath Temple. FILE PHOTO

orally. The court ordered that the *status quo* would not be disturbed by either contesting party.

The Hindu plaintiffs, represented by senior advocate Shyam Divan, claim that the entire area of the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi belonged to a temple of Swayambhu Lord Adi

Vishweshwar since Satyug. They said the temple, which once stood on the Gyanvapi plot, was brought down by the "Farman of Emperor Aurangzeb in the year 1669".

Senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi, for the mosque's management, Anjuman Itazamia Masjid, claimed

the suit filed in a Varanasi court was only a ruse to encroach into the mosque land.

Legal battle

The mosque managers have been fighting a prolonged legal battle after the suit by the Hindus, who started out seeking a judicial declaration of their right to worship inside the mosque premises, followed by the "discovery" of a "Shivling". However, the Muslim side claimed the structure was a fountain. The courts had allowed carbon dating and a "scientific survey" of the structure.

Back-to-back orders by the Varanasi court had allowed Hindu religious rituals in a cellar of the mosque accessed through the southern side of the premises.

No coercive action over tax notices against Cong. in view of polls: I-T Dept.

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Amidst allegations of "tax terrorism", the Income Tax Department on Monday stated in the Supreme Court its resolve not to take any "coercive steps" against the Congress on tax demands of approximately ₹3,500 crore raised in March, in view of the Lok Sabha election.

At the very outset of the hearing before a Bench headed by Justice B.V. Nagarathna, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta stated that "since election is going on, we do not want any problem to arise for any political party... We will not take any coercive steps till the case is heard again on July 24, 2024".

"He [Mehta] has rendered me speechless..." senior advocate A.M. Singh-

Poll respite

I-T Dept. submits in SC that the Congress need not have any apprehensions over tax demands till July due to upcoming polls

- Total tax demand made of Congress amounts to ₹3,567 crore
- In the latest notice, tax demand raised was ₹1,745 crore for 2014-15 to 2016-17
- Tax authorities have already withdrawn ₹135 crore from the party's accounts for other years
- Relief comes after party lost its appeal before I-T Appellate Tribunal and Delhi High Court



vi, for the Congress, reacted to the unexpected turn of events.

Mounting trouble

Trouble had been mounting for the Congress with fresh notices from the Income Tax Department raising a tax demand of ₹1,745 crore for the assessment years 2014-15 to 2016-17.

With the latest notice, the department had raised a total tax demand of ₹3,567 crore from the Congress.

The authorities had ended the tax exemption available to political parties and had taxed the party for gross receipt based on a Delhi High Court order of March 2016.

The Congress has chal-

lenged the High Court order that gross receipt was taxable.

"Gross receipt is never taxable. Only total income is taxable. We are a political party, not a profit-making organisation," Mr. Singhvi argued. He raised the issue that Section 13A of the Income Tax Act provided tax exemption to political parties.

Mr. Mehta said the total of over ₹3,500 crore was a "block assessment" of the past seven years. This was excluding the ₹135 crore recovered from the party through attachment. He said the department had willingly made the "concession" to avoid coercive measures in view of the prevailing circumstances of the elections.

THE BIGGER ISSUE
» PAGE 4

The PMLA — a law that has lost its way (GS Paper III: Internal Security)

The most serious aspect of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act is the inclusion of offences which have nothing to do with the original motive — namely, to combat the laundering of drug money

- The Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 was created with a specific goal in mind.
- It aimed to address the significant issue of **black money generated from international drug trafficking**.
- This black money posed a serious threat to the economy of various countries.
- There was a growing understanding that **black money from the drug trade, when mixed with legitimate economy, could harm the stability of the global economy.**



MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION:

Question: India's proximity to two of the world's biggest illicit opium-growing states has enhanced her internal security concerns. Explain the linkages between drug trafficking and other illicit activities such as gunrunning, money laundering and human trafficking. What

countermeasures should be taken to prevent the same? (250 Words/15 Marks) (UPSC 2018)

- Additionally, it was recognized that **this situation could jeopardize the integrity and sovereignty of nations.**

The background to the law is important

- The United Nations addressed the issue of money laundering stemming from drug trafficking by convening the **United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances in 1988.**
- In response, seven major industrial nations formed the **Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in 1989** to combat money laundering.

Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

- **Establishment:** **Founded in 1989 by the G7 Summit in Paris** to develop policies to combat money laundering.
- **Mandate:** Sets international standards and promotes measures to combat money laundering, terrorist financing, and other threats to the international financial system's integrity.
- **Membership:** Has grown from its original 16 members to include over 200 jurisdictions.
- **FATF Recommendations:** The cornerstone of the FATF's work. A set of 40 (originally) recommendations outlining measures for countries to implement **in combating money laundering and later expanded to include terrorist financing.**
- **Compliance & Monitoring:** FATF monitors member countries' progress through peer reviews ("mutual evaluations").
- **Blacklist & Greylist:** FATF identifies jurisdictions with weak **anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-terrorist financing (CFT) regimes.**
 - **Blacklist (High-Risk Jurisdictions subject to a Call for Action):** Countries with severe strategic deficiencies.
 - Currently, only **Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Iran, and Myanmar** are on this list. These countries are deemed to have serious strategic deficiencies and FATF calls on its members to apply countermeasures to protect the international financial system.
 - **Greylist (Jurisdictions Under Increased Monitoring):** Countries working with FATF to address deficiencies in their AML/CFT systems.
 - Greylist (Jurisdictions Under Increased Monitoring): As of February 2024, there are 21 countries on the greylist. These countries are actively working with the FATF to address identified weaknesses in their AML/CFT regimes. Here's a list, but it's important to note this can change:
 - Bulgaria
 - Burkina Faso
 - Cameroon
 - Croatia
 - Democratic Republic of the Congo
 - Gibraltar
 - Haiti
 - Jamaica
 - Kenya

- Mali
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- Nigeria
- Philippines
- Senegal
- South Africa
- South Sudan
- Syria
- Tanzania
- Turkey
- Uganda
- **United Arab Emirates (recently removed from grey list in February 2024)**
- Vietnam
- Yemen

- The **UN General Assembly adopted the Political Declaration and Global Programme of Action in 1990, urging member countries to enact legislation to prevent money laundering.**
- India used FATF recommendations to formulate its own legislation, resulting in the **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in 2002.**
- The PMLA primarily targeted the laundering of drug money, reflecting the focus of UN resolutions and FATF recommendations.
- The **Act contained offenses outlined in the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985.**
- The **PMLA evolved over time through amendments, deviating from its original focus on drug money laundering.**
- The Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) targets the laundering of "crime proceeds," which includes funds derived from criminal activities.
- Individuals involved directly in the crime, as well as those who participate in the laundering process later on, can be held accountable under this law.
- However, the **PMLA now includes a wide range of offenses in its schedule that go beyond its original purpose, extending to crimes unrelated to drug money laundering.**
- Despite its expanded scope, the fundamental objective of the PMLA remains rooted in addressing the significant threat posed by the laundering of illicit funds from the international drug trade, which has the potential to destabilize the global economy and compromise national sovereignty.

The PMLA's enactment

- The **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) was enacted by India's Parliament under Article 253, which allows laws to implement international conventions.**
- **Article 253 restricts such laws to the subject matter of the international decision, as specified in Item 13 of the Union list of the Constitution.**
- Originally, the PMLA focused on combating money laundering related to drug trafficking, as per the UN resolution.
- However, amendments to the PMLA expanded its scope, including offenses beyond drug-related crimes, such as those listed in the Indian Penal Code (IPC) or covered by special laws.

- For example, the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, aimed at addressing corruption among public servants, was added to the PMLA's schedule in 2009.
- Under the PMLA, accused individuals are presumed guilty until proven innocent, contrary to the fundamental principle of Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence.
- Bail provisions in the PMLA make it difficult for accused individuals to obtain bail, as judges can only grant bail if they are convinced of the accused's innocence, leading to prolonged detention without trial.

The Bail Provision

- The bail provision of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) Act, Section 45, has significant political implications in present-day India.
- It was initially deemed unconstitutional by a two-judge Bench of the Supreme Court in *Nikesh Tarachand Shah vs Union of India (2018)* for violating Article 14 and Article 21.
- However, Parliament swiftly reinstated this provision with amendments, which was later upheld by a three-judge Bench led by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar in *Vijay Madanlal Choudhary vs Union of India (2022)*.
- The Supreme Court ruled that this provision is reasonable and aligns with the objectives of the PMLA Act, which aims to combat money laundering and safeguard the economy from destabilization.
- Despite the Act's original purpose, it includes less serious offenses in its schedule, a decision considered within the legislative policy domain.
- The current judicial approach to bail in PMLA cases is seen as technical, with a departure from the perspective laid out by Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer in 1978.
- Justice Iyer emphasized the importance of personal liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution and urged a cautious and judicial exercise of curial power concerning bail decisions.
- The evolution of the Supreme Court's stance on bail from Justice Iyer to Justice Khanwilkar reflects a significant journey.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION: GS PAPER III: INTERNAL SECURITY

Question: Discuss how emerging technologies and globalisation contribute to money laundering. Elaborate measures to tackle the problem of money laundering both at national and international levels. (150 words/10 marks) (UPSC 2021)

ANSWER APPROACH

- Introduce with the emerging technologies and globalization that have significantly influenced the money laundering.
- Then bring the each of such major technology and its impact separately.
- Then further bring the measures to tackle the problem of money laundering both at national and international levels.
- Conclude with a suggestive notes.

ANSWER

Emerging technologies and globalization have significantly influenced the landscape of money laundering, posing complex challenges for authorities worldwide. Money laundering involves the process of concealing the origins of illegally obtained money, typically by passing it through a complex sequence of banking transfers or commercial transactions. Here's how emerging technologies and globalization contribute to this problem:

- **Digital Currencies:** The rise of digital currencies, such as Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies, has provided new avenues for money launderers to conceal their illicit activities. The decentralized nature of cryptocurrencies makes it difficult for authorities to track transactions and identify the individuals involved.
- **Online Banking and Payment Systems:** The proliferation of online banking and payment systems has made it easier for criminals to move money across borders quickly and anonymously. Virtual banks and peer-to-peer payment platforms further complicate the tracing of funds, allowing launderers to exploit loopholes in regulatory frameworks.
- **Cross-Border Transactions:** Globalization has facilitated cross-border transactions, enabling money launderers to exploit differences in regulatory regimes and jurisdictions. Transferring funds between countries with lax anti-money laundering laws and enforcement mechanisms makes it challenging for authorities to detect and prevent illicit financial activities.
- **Complex Financial Instruments:** The use of complex financial instruments, such as derivatives and offshore accounts, allows money launderers to obfuscate the source and destination of funds. These instruments facilitate layering and integration stages of money laundering, making it difficult for law enforcement agencies to unravel the illicit financial flows.

To tackle the problem of money laundering, both at national and international levels, comprehensive measures are required:

- **Strengthening Regulatory Frameworks:** Governments should enhance their anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-terrorism financing (CTF) regulations to keep pace with evolving financial technologies. This includes implementing know-your-customer (KYC) requirements, suspicious transaction reporting, and customer due diligence measures.
- **International Cooperation:** Given the transnational nature of money laundering, international cooperation is crucial. Countries must collaborate through organizations like the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to harmonize AML/CTF standards, share intelligence, and coordinate enforcement actions across borders.
- **Enhanced Supervision and Enforcement:** Financial regulators should increase supervision of financial institutions and impose stringent penalties for non-compliance with AML/CTF regulations. This includes conducting regular audits, imposing fines for regulatory breaches, and revoking licenses of non-compliant entities.
- **Leveraging Technology:** Governments and financial institutions should leverage emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and blockchain analytics, to enhance their capabilities in detecting and preventing money laundering activities. Advanced data analytics can help identify suspicious patterns and anomalies in financial transactions, enabling authorities to take proactive measures.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaboration between the public and private sectors is essential in combating money laundering. Financial institutions should share information and best practices with law enforcement agencies, while governments should provide incentives for cooperation and information sharing.

Thus, the convergence of emerging technologies and globalization presents significant challenges in the fight against money laundering. Addressing this problem requires a multifaceted approach involving regulatory reforms, international cooperation, enhanced supervision, technological innovation, and public-private partnerships. Only through collective action can we effectively combat money laundering and safeguard the integrity of the global financial system.

No man's land: Playing politics over Katchatheevu

Those in power should not rake up issues that affect ties with neighbours

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently brought up the issue of Katchatheevu, which has implications for India's relations with Sri Lanka, alleging that the Congress gave away the island carelessly.
- Both the BJP-led NDA government and the previous Congress-led UPA government have recognized Katchatheevu as part of Sri Lanka, as stated by the External Affairs Ministry in 2022.
- The UPA government clarified to the Supreme Court in 2013 that no Indian territory was ceded to Sri Lanka, and sovereignty over Katchatheevu was settled through agreements in 1974 and 1976.
- Despite initial claims of sovereignty by the Raja of Ramanathapuram, historical documents and agreements indicate Katchatheevu as part of Sri Lanka, posing challenges to India's claim.
- Critics of the Congress and the DMK cite Nehru's remarks and expert opinions to challenge their handling of the matter, but RTI documents suggest a sound basis for the decision.
- While it's common for political leaders in Tamil Nadu to demand the retrieval of Katchatheevu, it's concerning when the Prime Minister politicizes the issue, potentially affecting bilateral ties with Sri Lanka.

Solar surge: Moving away from imported solar panels

India's solar industry must grow without compromising on quality

- The Indian government has implemented a policy to discourage reliance on imported solar panels at the beginning of the new financial year.
- The policy, called the Approved Models and Manufacturers of Solar Photovoltaic Modules (Requirement for Compulsory Registration) Order, 2019, mandates module makers to undergo inspection by the National Institute of Solar Energy to be listed as 'approved' manufacturers.
- Being on the approved list certifies companies as legitimately manufacturing solar panels within their premises, making them eligible to compete for government tenders, including the PM solar rooftop scheme.
- The creation of this list aims to restrict imports from China, which controls nearly 80% of the global supply, amid strained diplomatic relations.

- India aims to source about 500 GW, nearly half its electricity requirement, from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030, with at least 280 GW from solar power.
- However, the country's solar capacity addition has been slow, with only about 13 GW added in the last five years due to factors like the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To meet targets, India requires more panels and component cells than its domestic industry can supply, leading to significant reliance on imports.
- Domestic panel manufacturers, who pay the government for certification, lose out to cheaper Chinese panels.
- The government has postponed the implementation of the approved list but has now decreed it will take effect from April 1.
- Success will be measured by India meeting its 2030 commitments while ensuring solar power remains affordable.
- Domestic manufacturers should undergo stringent quality checks and not compromise on cost and quality solely for nationalistic reasons.
- While the Indian solar industry should grow and gain a reputation for quality, there are no easy shortcuts in this endeavor.

AI in elections, the good, the bad and the ugly (GS Paper III: Use of S&T)

The widespread application of Artificial Intelligence is likely to cause a paradigm shift in almost every aspect of an election

- The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) aims to expand Prime Minister Narendra Modi's audience by translating his speeches into eight different languages.
- This effort is part of preparations for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, possibly considered India's "first AI election."
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) is being used for this task, highlighting its potential to revolutionize the electoral process.
- AI technology allows for efficient translation of speeches, enabling Modi's message to reach a broader linguistic audience.
- The widespread application of AI in elections is expected to bring about a significant change, marking a paradigm shift in electoral campaigning.
- This initiative reflects the BJP's strategy to leverage technology for effective communication and outreach during the elections.

Social media and campaigns

- India's electoral strategy has evolved over the past three decades due to integration with emerging technologies.
- The use of phone calls became widespread in the 1990s, followed by the first "mass mobile phone" elections in Uttar Pradesh in 2007.
- Holograms were utilized in the 2014 elections, marking a significant technological advancement.

- The current era is characterized by the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into electoral campaigns.
- Social media platforms played a crucial role in the 2014 elections, earning them the title of "social media elections" or "Facebook elections."
- The BJP capitalized on social media to connect with India's youth population, leading to significant digital spending.
- **Research published in the Asian Journal of Political Science showed a positive correlation between Facebook likes and election outcomes in 2014.**
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi gained significant social media following, ranking among the top global leaders on platforms like **Twitter and Facebook**.
- The **2019 general election was labeled the "first WhatsApp election" in India**, highlighting the platform's role in spreading political messages.
- WhatsApp has been used in elections globally, including in Nigeria, Brazil, and several Indian states, **to disseminate information and organize party workers.**
- WhatsApp's effectiveness lies in its ability to deliver targeted information to voters and mobilize party workers, as explained in Shivam Shankar Singh's book, "How to Win an Indian Election" (2019).

Global elections, AI, the dangers

- The global elections of 2024 are dubbed as "AI elections" due to the widespread use of Artificial Intelligence.
- In January, voters in New Hampshire received robocalls impersonating U.S. President Joe Biden, aimed at dissuading Democratic voters from going to polling stations.
- Similarly, **in Slovakia's parliamentary elections in September 2023, a fake recording of a conversation was shared on Facebook, allegedly discussing election manipulation methods.**
- The use of **AI-generated content, such as deepfakes, was observed in Argentina's elections in October-November 2023.**
- **Deepfakes were also employed in Assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh and Telangana, where doctored clips of the game show "Kaun Banega Crorepati" and fake videos of leaders were circulated.**
- Fake accounts powered by AI bots are used to **amplify specific messages and generate artificial trends on social media platforms.**
- This manipulation creates **a false impression of widespread support for particular politicians or subjects, impacting public opinion.**
- AI technology is now deeply integrated with social media, transforming it into a powerful instrument for political influence in elections.

The political landscape is changing

- **AI's role in elections extends beyond disseminating disinformation to encompass various campaign strategies.**
- It aids in voter identification, content development, delivery, and real-time analytics on campaign performances.
- AI's data-driven and micro-targeting strategy is revolutionizing political campaigns.

- The emergence of GenAI technology presents both potential and challenges for the 2024 elections.
- The US government has banned AI-generated robocalls in response to incidents like the Biden robocall.
- Tech giants like Microsoft, Google, OpenAI, and Meta are committed to combating AI content aimed at deceiving voters.
- Concerns exist regarding AI-generated content shaping last-minute attempts to deter voters or manipulate candidate portrayals.
- An AI-created image of Donald Trump's arrest recently went viral, highlighting the potential impact of AI manipulation on elections.
- AI is expected to become more efficient by 2029, but uncertainties remain about its deceptive effects and the world's preparedness to combat them.

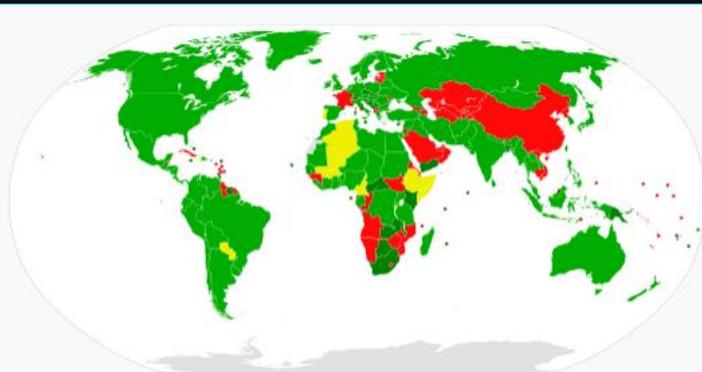
A speech that put India on the global stage

(GS Paper II: Nuclear Disarmament, Post Independence India, Ethics in International Relations)

Seventy years ago, with a speech in the Lok Sabha, Nehru cemented India's claim to leadership, gave impetus to calls that eventually yielded the Partial Test Ban Treaty, and arguably limited horizontal nuclear proliferation

- On April 2, 1954, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru delivered a significant speech in the Lok Sabha.
- The speech was prompted by the US's 'Castle Bravo' thermonuclear test in the previous month.
- 'Castle Bravo' was an extremely powerful test that overwhelmed measuring instruments.
- Nehru called for a "standstill agreement" on nuclear testing in response to 'Castle Bravo'.
- Despite India's status as a newly decolonized nation facing nation-building challenges and lacking traditional markers of power, Nehru asserted India's global standing.
- Nehru's speech demonstrated pragmatism, vision, and self-assurance.
- He consistently advocated for the moratorium on nuclear testing in various international forums.
- Nehru's leadership contributed to the eventual creation of the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT).
- The PTBT aimed to limit horizontal nuclear proliferation by categorizing nuclear weapons as unacceptable.

- The Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT),



Participation in the Partial Test Ban Treaty

- | | |
|--|---|
| ■ Signed and ratified | ■ Only signed |
| ■ Acceded or succeeded | ■ Non-signatory |

- It is also known as the 1963 Treaty **Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water**, stopped countries from testing nuclear weapons in the air, underwater, or in space.
- It **allowed testing to continue underground because it was harder to detect and caused less environmental damage.**
- Even though it didn't completely stop countries from making nuclear weapons or testing them, the treaty did lead to a decrease in the amount of dangerous radiation in the air.
- The PTBT was first signed by the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States in 1963, and it went into effect later that year.
- Over time, 123 other countries joined the treaty, agreeing not to test nuclear weapons in the air, underwater, or in space.
- However, there are still some countries that have signed the treaty but haven't officially agreed to follow it yet.

The standstill agreement

- Nehru's standstill agreement proposed an incremental approach to nuclear disarmament during the Cold War.
- The proposal had four main elements:
 1. **Immediate moratorium** on nuclear testing.
 2. Urging the **United Nations Disarmament Commission** to address both short-term and long-term goals of disarmament.
 3. Advocating for **greater disclosure on the effects of nuclear weapons** to build public pressure on nuclear states.
 4. **Calling on all nations to recognize the global threat posed by nuclear weapons.**
- Nehru's initiative aimed to **make disarmament a global issue** rather than confining it to the UN Disarmament Commission.
- India's proposal effectively put nuclear-armed states on notice, urging them to acknowledge the peril posed by their tests and calling for transparency.
- India continued its efforts at the UN, including drafting a resolution in 1955 for a testing halt and progress reports to the Disarmament Commission.
- **Nehru also organized a conference of scientists in 1954 to study atomic energy and nuclear explosion effects.**
- Plans for the first Pugwash meeting were underway in Delhi in 1956, but geopolitical events like the Suez Crisis and the Hungarian Revolution intervened.

Moral force

- In 1954, India, despite being poor and weak, played an active role in nuclear disarmament.
- India lacked support from non-aligned nations as the **Bandung Conference** had not yet occurred.
- Nehru emphasized India's moral force in global affairs, highlighting its significance despite its military limitations.
- India's stance on disarmament was driven by the need to prioritize development over an arms race.
- **The Atomic Energy Act of 1948** allowed for the sequestration of India's nuclear program, providing a Plan B for potential weapons development.
- While Nehru did not outright support nuclear weapons development, he didn't discourage it either, as evidenced by Homi Bhabha's involvement.
- Nehru's speech in the Lok Sabha laid the groundwork for **India's role in the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT), signed by India in 1963.**
- India's call for greater information on nuclear radiation effects and mobilization against atomic weapons contributed to global norms against nuclear use.
- The speech elevated India's global standing as a voice of reason and morality, aligning with Nehru's vision to be a "power for peace and for the good of the world."