

TOPICS COVERED (GS Paper I: History, Society and Geography)

1. Fencing Out Interfaith Relationships in the New India

नए भारत में अंतरधार्मिक संबंधों को सीमित करना

Fencing out interfaith relationships in the new India

GS Paper I: Secularism and Communalism

In January 27, 2025, Uttarakhand became the first Indian State to implement the **Uniform Civil Code (UCC)**, placing private relationships under state surveillance. The official claim is that it would restore gender justice, create "uniformity", and address administrative oversight. However, when taken along with existing anti-conversion laws, this marks a coordinated legal push to segregate communities – not just in faith, but also in love and daily life. The UCC is the final blow, ensuring that all forms of interfaith relationships are regulated in the 'New India'.

The introduction of more hurdles
Interfaith marriages already face immense social barriers. A survey (2014) of over 70,000 respondents found that fewer than 10% of urban Indians had a family member who married outside their caste. Interfaith unions were even rarer – barely 5% of urban respondents reported any marriages in their family outside their religion. The secular Special Marriage Act, 1954, has administrative hurdles, including a mandatory 30-day notice period, subjecting couples to scrutiny. Meanwhile, rigid anti-conversion laws, now enforced in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Rajasthan, among several other States, have further criminalised religious conversion for marriage.

These laws create bureaucratic traps – as mandatory declarations, waiting periods, and district magistrate approvals – that deter conversions for marriage. Worse, they embolden vigilante groups, often linked to right-wing organisations, to justify harassment, policing, and violence against interfaith couples, particularly Hindu-Muslim. A news portal found that at least 63 of 101 police complaints invoking the U.P. anti-conversion law against Christians, were filed by third-party vigilante groups. Instead of protecting individuals, these laws provide legal cover for extrajudicial interventions, often with police complicity.

Against this background, the UCC's provisions on live-in relationships take state scrutiny to a new extreme – even informal relationships are



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The enactment of a Uniform Civil Code, in addition to existing anti-conversion laws, is eroding individual rights and the fabric of India's pluralistic society

subject to surveillance. Live-in relationships are now legally required to be registered with district authorities. This includes a 16-page application with official documentation (Aadhaar cards, residential proof), seeking approval from "religious leaders or community heads," and notifying family members. The registrar must inform the couple's parents or guardians about their relationship. Failure to register is punishable with up to six months of imprisonment and a fine of ₹25,000.

These rules make it nearly impossible for couples, particularly interfaith ones, to live without oversight. It is no surprise, then, that only one live-in couple has successfully registered its relationship in Uttarakhand. Others have sought legal protection from the High Court, even as a Bajrang Dal leader claims to have sourced details on live-in applications. The ability of such vigilantes to interfere in private relationships underscores how the UCC and anti-conversion laws work in tandem to suppress interfaith unions.

A form of apartheid

The result is a complex legal machinery that is actively working to segregate communities, entrench religious divisions, and institutionalise a form of social apartheid: individuals cannot marry or even be in a relationship with the so-called 'other' without prior legal approval. These laws create barriers for interfaith couples at every stage whether in marriage or informal cohabitation.

This combined system functions in three ways.

First, by strengthening traditional religious institutions. The requirement for religious certification in both UCC and anti-conversion laws formalises the power of religious leaders over personal relationships in a secular democracy. This contradicts the constitutional guarantee of individual freedom, reinforcing the idea that relationships must adhere to religious and community norms rather than personal choice.

Second, by enabling families to exercise greater control over women. Both laws

disproportionately impact women, who often face pressure, coercion, or even violent punishment for engaging in interfaith and inter-caste relationships. By notifying families of live-in relationships, the UCC makes women more vulnerable to honour-based violence and familial control. Women in interfaith relationships are often framed as victims of manipulation, stripping them of agency and reinforcing patriarchal control over their choices.

Third, by providing legal cover for vigilantism. Right-wing vigilantes now have a legal framework to monitor, report, and harass interfaith couples, married and unmarried, under the guise of preserving tradition and the law. When an interfaith couple attempts to register a live-in relationship or convert for marriage, vigilante groups are often the first to know, due to the legal requirement of public notices and family notifications.

Amid rising hate speech and polarisation, these laws effectively legalise and entrench the separation of religious communities, preventing interfaith interaction at all levels. Similar to the apartheid-era South Africa or Nazi Germany, which banned inter-racial unions, the effect of the UCC and anti-conversion laws is to institutionalise segregation by making interfaith relationships, whether marital or informal, almost impossible.

It could be catching on

Looking ahead, Uttarakhand's UCC could be a blueprint for other States. Rajasthan's High Court recently considered mandatory registration of live-in relationships, closely following Uttarakhand's model. The Rajasthan Assembly enacted an anti-conversion law. Gujarat is also contemplating a draft UCC modelled on similar lines. These legal trends point toward a broader movement toward a systematic regulation of personal relationships.

In India, love and faith are deeply personal and subjective experiences that each individual defines on their own terms. These legal developments not only threaten individual rights but also undermine the very fabric of India's pluralistic society.

Fencing Out Interfaith Relationships in the New India

नए भारत में अंतरधार्मिक संबंधों को सीमित करना

On January 27, 2025, Uttarakhand became the first Indian State to implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), placing private relationships under state surveillance.

27 जनवरी 2025 को, उत्तराखंड पहला भारतीय राज्य बना जिसने समान नागरिक संहिता (UCC) लागू की, जिससे निजी संबंधों पर राज्य की निगरानी बढ़ गई।

- The official claim is that UCC would restore gender justice, create "uniformity," and address administrative oversight.

सरकार का दावा है कि UCC लैंगिक न्याय बहाल करेगा, "समानता" लाएगा, और प्रशासनिक खामियों को दूर करेगा।



- However, combined with **existing anti-conversion laws**, it represents a **coordinated legal push to segregate communities**— not just in faith but also in love and daily life.

लेकिन, मौजूदा धर्मांतरण विरोधी कानूनों के साथ मिलकर, यह समुदायों को अलग करने का एक संगठित कानूनी प्रयास है— केवल धर्म में ही नहीं, बल्कि प्रेम और दैनिक जीवन में भी।

- The **UCC ensures that all forms of interfaith relationships are regulated** in the "New India."

UCC यह सुनिश्चित करता है कि सभी प्रकार के अंतरधार्मिक संबंधों को "नए भारत" में नियंत्रित किया जाए।

The Introduction of More Hurdles

नए प्रतिबंधों की शुरुआत

- **Interfaith marriages already face immense social barriers.**
अंतरधार्मिक विवाह पहले से ही बड़े सामाजिक प्रतिबंधों का सामना कर रहे हैं।
- A **2014 survey of over 70,000 respondents** found that **fewer than 10% of urban Indians had a family member who married outside their caste.**
2014 के एक सर्वेक्षण जिसमें 70,000 से अधिक उत्तरदाता शामिल थे, पाया कि शहरी भारत में 10% से कम परिवारों में अंतरजातीय विवाह हुए थे।
- **Interfaith unions were even rarer—only 5% of urban respondents reported any marriages outside their religion.**
अंतरधार्मिक विवाह और भी दुर्लभ थे— केवल 5% शहरी उत्तरदाताओं ने बताया कि उनके परिवार में किसी ने धर्म से बाहर शादी की थी।
- The **Special Marriage Act, 1954**, has **administrative hurdles** like a **mandatory 30-day notice period, exposing couples to scrutiny.**
विशेष विवाह अधिनियम, 1954 में प्रशासनिक बाधाएं हैं, जैसे कि 30-दिन की अनिवार्य सूचना अवधि, जिससे जोड़ों को जांच का सामना करना पड़ता है।
- **Anti-conversion laws** enforced in **Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Rajasthan** criminalize **religious conversion for marriage.**
उत्तर प्रदेश, उत्तराखंड और राजस्थान में लागू धर्मांतरण विरोधी कानून विवाह के लिए धर्म परिवर्तन को अपराध बनाते हैं।

Bureaucratic Traps and Vigilante Groups

प्रशासनिक जाल और निगरानी दल

- These laws impose **mandatory declarations, waiting periods, and district magistrate approvals**, discouraging **conversion for marriage.**
इन कानूनों में अनिवार्य घोषणाएं, प्रतीक्षा अवधि, और जिला मजिस्ट्रेट की स्वीकृति की आवश्यकता होती है, जिससे विवाह के लिए धर्म परिवर्तन कठिन हो जाता है।
- They also embolden **vigilante groups**, often linked to **right-wing organisations**, leading to **harassment, policing, and violence** against interfaith couples, particularly **Hindu-Muslim couples.**
ये कानून निगरानी समूहों को बढ़ावा देते हैं, जो अक्सर दक्षिणपंथी संगठनों से जुड़े होते हैं, जिससे अंतरधार्मिक जोड़ों, विशेष रूप से हिंदू-मुस्लिम जोड़ों, को उत्पीड़न, निगरानी और हिंसा का सामना करना पड़ता है।



- A news portal found that **63 of 101 police complaints** under the **Uttar Pradesh anti-conversion law** against **Christians** were filed by **third-party vigilante groups**. एक समाचार पोर्टल ने पाया कि उत्तर प्रदेश धर्मांतरण विरोधी कानून के तहत क्रिश्चियनों के खिलाफ दर्ज 101 में से 63 पुलिस शिकायतें तीसरे पक्ष के निगरानी समूहों द्वारा दर्ज की गई थीं।
- Instead of **protecting individuals**, these laws **provide legal cover for extrajudicial interventions**, often with **police complicity**. यह कानून व्यक्तियों की रक्षा करने के बजाय, अतिरिक्त-न्यायिक हस्तक्षेप को कानूनी संरक्षण प्रदान करते हैं, जिसमें अक्सर पुलिस की मिलीभगत होती है।

Extreme State Scrutiny on Live-in Relationships

लिव-इन संबंधों पर सख्त सरकारी निगरानी

- The **UCC provisions on live-in relationships** introduce **even stricter state surveillance**. लिव-इन संबंधों पर UCC के प्रावधान और भी सख्त सरकारी निगरानी लागू करते हैं।
- **Live-in relationships** are now **legally required to be registered** with district authorities. लिव-इन संबंधों को अब कानूनी रूप से जिला अधिकारियों के साथ पंजीकृत करना अनिवार्य कर दिया गया है।
- Registration includes a **16-page application**, requiring **official documentation (Aadhaar cards, residential proof)**, **approval from religious leaders**, and **family notification**. पंजीकरण के लिए 16-पृष्ठ का आवेदन, जिसमें आधिकारिक दस्तावेज (आधार कार्ड, निवास प्रमाण), धार्मिक नेताओं की स्वीकृति, और परिवार को सूचना देना शामिल है।
- The registrar must **inform parents or guardians about the relationship**. रजिस्ट्रार को माता-पिता या अभिभावकों को संबंध के बारे में सूचित करना अनिवार्य है।
- **Failure to register is punishable** with up to **six months of imprisonment** and a **₹25,000 fine**. पंजीकरण न कराने पर छह महीने की जेल और ₹25,000 का जुर्माना लगाया जा सकता है।

Suppression of Interfaith Unions

अंतरधार्मिक संघों का दमन

- These rules make it **nearly impossible** for **interfaith couples** to live together **without oversight**. इन नियमों के कारण अंतरधार्मिक जोड़ों के लिए बिना सरकारी निगरानी के साथ रहना लगभग असंभव हो गया है।
- Only **one live-in couple** has successfully registered in **Uttarakhand**. उत्तराखंड में केवल एक लिव-इन जोड़े ने सफलतापूर्वक पंजीकरण कराया है।
- Others have **sought legal protection from the High Court**, while **right-wing vigilante groups** claim to have **access to live-in applications**. अन्य जोड़ों ने उच्च न्यायालय से कानूनी संरक्षण मांगा है, जबकि दक्षिणपंथी निगरानी समूहों ने दावा किया कि उनके पास लिव-इन आवेदनों की जानकारी है।



- The **UCC and anti-conversion laws work together** to suppress **interfaith relationships**.
UCC और धर्मांतरण विरोधी कानून मिलकर अंतरधार्मिक संबंधों को दबाने का काम करते हैं।

A Form of Apartheid

एक प्रकार का रंगभेद

- The result is a **complex legal system** that actively works to **segregate communities, entrench religious divisions, and institutionalise social apartheid**.
इसका परिणाम एक जटिल कानूनी व्यवस्था है, जो समुदायों को अलग करने, धार्मिक विभाजन गहरा करने और सामाजिक रंगभेद को संस्थागत रूप देने के लिए कार्यरत है।
- Individuals **cannot marry or be in a relationship** with someone from another community **without prior legal approval**.
व्यक्ति बिना कानूनी अनुमति के किसी अन्य समुदाय के व्यक्ति से विवाह या संबंध नहीं बना सकते।
- These laws create **barriers for interfaith couples** at every stage—whether in **marriage or informal cohabitation**.
ये कानून अंतरधार्मिक जोड़ों के लिए विवाह या सह-निवास के हर चरण में बाधाएं उत्पन्न करते हैं।

Three Ways This System Functions

यह प्रणाली तीन तरीकों से कार्य करती है

1. Strengthening Traditional Religious Institutions

1. पारंपरिक धार्मिक संस्थानों को सशक्त बनाना

- The **requirement for religious certification in both UCC and anti-conversion laws** gives **religious leaders control over personal relationships** in a secular democracy.
UCC और धर्मांतरण विरोधी कानूनों में धार्मिक प्रमाणपत्र की अनिवार्यता धर्मनिरपेक्ष लोकतंत्र में व्यक्तिगत संबंधों पर धार्मिक नेताओं का नियंत्रण स्थापित करती है।
- This **contradicts the constitutional guarantee of individual freedom** and reinforces the idea that **relationships must follow religious and community norms**.
यह व्यक्तिगत स्वतंत्रता की संवैधानिक गारंटी का उल्लंघन करता है और इस विचार को मजबूत करता है कि संबंधों को धार्मिक और सामुदायिक मानदंडों का पालन करना चाहिए।

2. Increasing Familial Control Over Women

महिलाओं पर पारिवारिक नियंत्रण बढ़ाना

- These laws **disproportionately affect women**, who often face **pressure, coercion, or violence** for engaging in **interfaith and inter-caste relationships**.



ये कानून असमान रूप से महिलाओं को प्रभावित करते हैं, जो अक्सर अंतरधार्मिक और अंतरजातीय संबंधों में शामिल होने के लिए दबाव, जबरदस्ती या हिंसा का शिकार होती हैं।

- By notifying families of live-in relationships, the UCC makes women vulnerable to honor-based violence and familial control.

लिव-इन संबंधों की सूचना परिवारों को देने के कारण, UCC महिलाओं को सम्मान आधारित हिंसा और पारिवारिक नियंत्रण के प्रति अधिक संवेदनशील बना देता है।

- Women in interfaith relationships are often portrayed as victims of manipulation, reinforcing patriarchal control over their choices.

अंतरधार्मिक संबंधों में महिलाएं अक्सर धोखे की शिकार के रूप में प्रस्तुत की जाती हैं, जिससे उनकी पसंद पर पितृसत्तात्मक नियंत्रण और मजबूत हो जाता है।

3. Providing Legal Cover for Vigilantism

सतर्कता समूहों को कानूनी संरक्षण देना

- Right-wing vigilante groups now have a legal framework to monitor, report, and harass interfaith couples under the guise of preserving tradition.

दक्षिणपंथी निगरानी समूहों को अब एक कानूनी ढांचा मिल गया है जिससे वे परंपरा की रक्षा के नाम पर अंतरधार्मिक जोड़ों की निगरानी, रिपोर्ट और उत्पीड़न कर सकते हैं।

- When an interfaith couple attempts to register a live-in relationship or convert for marriage, vigilante groups are often the first to know due to public notice requirements.

जब कोई अंतरधार्मिक जोड़ा लिव-इन संबंध पंजीकृत कराने या विवाह के लिए धर्म परिवर्तन करने का प्रयास करता है, तो निगरानी समूह अक्सर सबसे पहले इसकी जानकारी प्राप्त कर लेते हैं क्योंकि कानून में सार्वजनिक सूचना की आवश्यकता होती है।

Legalizing Religious Segregation

धार्मिक अलगाव को कानूनी रूप देना

- Amid rising hate speech and polarization, these laws legalize and entrench the separation of religious communities, preventing interfaith interaction at all levels.

बढ़ती घृणा भाषण और धुवीकरण के बीच, ये कानून धार्मिक समुदायों के अलगाव को कानूनी रूप देते हैं, जिससे सभी स्तरों पर अंतरधार्मिक संपर्क को रोका जाता है।

- Similar to apartheid-era South Africa or Nazi Germany, which banned inter-racial unions, the UCC and anti-conversion laws institutionalize segregation by making interfaith relationships nearly impossible.

यह दक्षिण अफ्रीका के रंगभेद युग या नाजी जर्मनी की तरह है, जहां अंतरजातीय विवाहों पर प्रतिबंध था। UCC और धर्मांतरण विरोधी कानूनों के माध्यम से धार्मिक अलगाव को संस्थागत रूप दिया जा रहा है, जिससे अंतरधार्मिक संबंध लगभग असंभव हो जाते हैं।

It Could Be Catching On

यह अन्य राज्यों में भी फैल सकता है

- Uttarakhand's UCC could serve as a blueprint for other States.
उत्तराखंड का UCC अन्य राज्यों के लिए एक मॉडल बन सकता है।



- **Rajasthan's High Court** recently considered **mandatory registration of live-in relationships**, closely following **Uttarakhand's model**.
राजस्थान उच्च न्यायालय ने हाल ही में लिव-इन संबंधों के अनिवार्य पंजीकरण पर विचार किया, जो उत्तराखंड के मॉडल का अनुसरण करता है।
- The **Rajasthan Assembly** has enacted an **anti-conversion law**, and **Gujarat** is also **contemplating a draft UCC on similar lines**.
राजस्थान विधानसभा ने एक धर्मांतरण विरोधी कानून पारित किया, और गुजरात भी इसी तरह के UCC का मसौदा तैयार करने पर विचार कर रहा है।
- These legal trends indicate a **broader movement toward systematic regulation of personal relationships**.
ये कानूनी प्रवृत्तियां व्यक्तिगत संबंधों के व्यवस्थित विनियमन की ओर एक व्यापक आंदोलन का संकेत देती हैं।

A Threat to India's Pluralism

भारत की बहुलवादी संस्कृति के लिए खतरा

- In India, **love and faith are deeply personal and subjective experiences** that each individual defines **on their own terms**.
भारत में, प्रेम और आस्था गहराई से व्यक्तिगत और आत्मनिष्ठ अनुभव हैं, जिन्हें प्रत्येक व्यक्ति अपने तरीके से परिभाषित करता है।
- These legal developments **threaten individual rights** and **undermine the very fabric of India's pluralistic society**.
ये कानूनी परिवर्तन व्यक्तिगत अधिकारों के लिए खतरा हैं और भारत के बहुलवादी समाज की मूल संरचना को कमजोर करते हैं।

25_02_2025 DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

(GS Paper II: Polity, Governance, and International Relations)

1. Merz Seeks to Form a Govt. with Germany's Centre-Left

मर्ज़ जर्मनी के सेंटर-लेफ्ट के साथ सरकार बनाने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं

2. Gupta Elected Delhi Assembly Speaker; MLAs Take Oath in Maithili, Sanskrit, Urdu

गुप्ता दिल्ली विधानसभा अध्यक्ष चुने गए; विधायकों ने मैथिली, संस्कृत, उर्दू में शपथ ली



3. Ukraine Says in 'Final Stages' of Talks on Mineral Deal with U.S.

यूक्रेन ने कहा कि अमेरिका के साथ खनिज समझौते पर बातचीत 'अंतिम चरण' में है

4. Tribal Families Stage Protest, Say Sacred Groves in Similipal Turned into Enclosure for Tigris

आदिवासी परिवारों ने किया प्रदर्शन, कहा - सिमिलिपाल में पवित्र उपवन बाघिन के लिए घेराबंदी में बदले

5. The RTI is Now the 'Right to Deny Information'

आरटीआई अब 'सूचना न देने का अधिकार' बन गया है

6. New Direction: Germany Needs to Talk to Russia to Drive a Hard Bargain for Europe

नई दिशा: जर्मनी को यूरोप के लिए रूस से बातचीत कर सख्त समझौता करना चाहिए

7. The UGC's Mandate is to Elevate, Not Strangulate

यूजीसी का उद्देश्य सुधारना है, बाधा डालना नहीं

8. Why Are Pilots Asking for More Rest Hours?

पायलट अधिक विश्राम समय की मांग क्यों कर रहे हैं?

9. Surveillance Capitalism: The Power to Control Personal Data

निगरानी पूंजीवाद: व्यक्तिगत डेटा को नियंत्रित करने की शक्ति



Merz seeks to form a govt. with Germany's centre-left

GS Paper II: Europe

Agence France-Presse

Germany's conservative election winner Friedrich Merz said on Monday he would seek talks with the centre-left to speedily build a government as Europe faces tectonic changes in transatlantic ties.

The Christian Democrats' (CDU) leader said he would reach out to the Social Democrats (SPD) of vanquished Chancellor Olaf Scholz with hopes of forging a stable ruling alliance of the two traditional big-tent parties.

After the surge of the far-right AfD, Mr. Merz said the mainstream parties must answer concerns of voters drifting to the fring-



Friedrich Merz

es, calling the AfD's record 20% result "the last warning to the political parties of the democratic centre in Germany".

Mr. Merz, 69, has said he wants a ruling coalition in place within two months so Berlin can act again on the European and world stage after months of para-

lysis since Scholz's coalition imploded in November. Mr. Merz, a committed trans-Atlanticist, said he would seek good ties with the United States under Donald Trump but was also ready for "the worst-case scenario". "All the signals we are receiving from the United States indicate that interest in Europe is decreasing," he said.

Mr. Merz also said he had a "lengthy" call with Emmanuel Macron late Sunday, as the latter headed to Washington to meet with Mr. Trump.

PLEDGE TO UNITE EUROPE

» PAGE 14

EDITORIAL

» PAGE 6

Merz Seeks to Form a Govt. with Germany's Centre-Left

मर्ज़ जर्मनी के सेंटर-लेफ्ट के साथ सरकार बनाने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं

Germany's conservative election winner Friedrich Merz said on Monday he would seek talks with the centre-left to speedily build a government as Europe

faces tectonic changes in transatlantic ties.

जर्मनी के कंजर्वेटिव चुनाव विजेता फ्रेडरिक मर्ज़ ने सोमवार को कहा कि वह सेंटर-लेफ्ट से बातचीत करेंगे ताकि तेजी से सरकार बनाई जा सके, क्योंकि यूरोप ट्रांसअटलांटिक संबंधों में बड़े बदलावों का सामना कर रहा है।

- The **Christian Democrats' (CDU) leader** said he would reach out to the **Social Democrats (SPD) of vanquished Chancellor Olaf Scholz** with hopes of forging a **stable ruling alliance** of the two **traditional big-tent parties**.
क्रिश्चियन डेमोक्रेट्स (CDU) के नेता ने कहा कि वह पराजित चांसलर ओलाफ शॉलज की सोशल डेमोक्रेट्स (SPD) से संपर्क करेंगे, ताकि दो पारंपरिक बड़ी पार्टियों के बीच एक स्थिर शासक गठबंधन बनाया जा सके।
- After the **surge of the far-right AfD**, Mr. Merz said the **mainstream parties** must answer concerns of voters drifting to the fringes, calling the **AfD's record 20% result "the last warning to the political parties of the democratic centre in Germany."**
दक्षिणपंथी AfD के उभार के बाद, मर्ज़ ने कहा कि **मुख्यधारा की पार्टियों** को उन मतदाताओं की चिंताओं का जवाब देना चाहिए जो किनारे की ओर बढ़ रहे हैं, और उन्होंने **AfD के 20% रिकॉर्ड परिणाम** को "जर्मनी के लोकतांत्रिक केंद्र की राजनीतिक पार्टियों के लिए अंतिम चेतावनी" बताया।
- Mr. Merz, **69**, has said he wants a **ruling coalition in place within two months** so **Berlin can act again on the European and world stage** after months of paralysis since **Scholz's coalition imploded in November**.
मर्ज़, **69**, ने कहा कि वह **दो महीनों के भीतर एक शासक गठबंधन** बनाना चाहते हैं ताकि **बर्लिन यूरोपीय और विश्व मंच पर फिर से सक्रिय हो सके**, क्योंकि नवंबर में शॉलज़ के गठबंधन के टूटने के बाद **महीनों से सरकार ठप पड़ी थी**।



- Mr. Merz, a **committed trans-Atlanticist**, said he would seek **good ties with the United States under Donald Trump** but was also ready for the “**worst-case scenario.**”
मर्ज़, एक प्रतिबद्ध ट्रांस-अटलांटिक समर्थक, ने कहा कि वह डोनाल्ड ट्रंप के तहत अमेरिका के साथ अच्छे संबंध बनाए रखना चाहेंगे, लेकिन वह "सबसे बुरे हालात" के लिए भी तैयार हैं।
- “**All the signals we are receiving from the United States indicate that interest in Europe is decreasing,**” he said.
"अमेरिका से हमें मिल रहे सभी संकेत दर्शाते हैं कि यूरोप में उनकी रुचि घट रही है," उन्होंने कहा।
- Mr. Merz also said he had a “**lengthy**” call with **Emmanuel Macron** late **Sunday**, as the latter **headed to Washington** to meet with Mr. Trump.
**मर्ज़ ने यह भी कहा कि उन्होंने रविवार देर रात इमैनुएल मैक्रों के साथ "लंबी" बातचीत की, क्योंकि मैक्रों वाशिंगटन में ट्रंप से मिलने जा रहे थे।

Gupta elected Delhi Assembly Speaker; MLAs take oath in Maithili, Sanskrit, Urdu

GS Paper II: Polity

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Three-time Rohini MLA and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Vijender Gupta was elected the Speaker of Delhi's eighth Legislative Assembly on Monday after pro tem Speaker Arvinder Singh Lovely administered oath to the legislators.

Several legislators in the 70-member House took the oath in their native languages, including Maithili (spoken widely in Bihar) and Punjabi, while many others opted for Hindi, Urdu, Sanskrit, and English.

Addressing the House after being elected, Mr. Gupta said, “Members of the ruling and the Opposition parties are equal for me. Protecting the democratic



(From left) Delhi pro tem Speaker Arvinder Singh Lovely, Leader of the Opposition Atishi, Speaker Vijender Gupta, and CM Rekha Gupta during the first session of the Assembly in New Delhi on Monday. ANI

values of the House will be my priority. We all must work together for the development of Delhi.”

Reposing faith

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said, “I have full faith that the House will run smoothly under your guidance. As Leader of the Opposition (in the previous Legislative Assembly), you faced sev-

eral issues; you were marshalled out several times.”

The day started with Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena swearing in Mr. Lovely, the most senior MLA in the House, as pro tem Speaker at Raj Niwas.

The Gandhi Nagar MLA then started proceedings in the House by administering oath to Ms. Gupta and the Cabinet Ministers.

Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa took the oath in Punjabi, while Law Minister Kapil Mishra did so in Sanskrit. Several MLAs, including AAP's Sanjeev Jha, took the oath in Maithili. Aaley Mohammad Iqbal of AAP took the oath in Urdu. Mr. Lovely objected to BJP's Tarvinder Singh Marwah raising religious slogans after taking the oath. He also criticised AAP's Anil Jha for chanting “Jai Bhim” after his swearing-in and asked all MLAs to stick to the printed text.

Following the oaths, Mr. Gupta was elected as Speaker and, as per tradition, accompanied to the chair by the Chief Minister.

AAP, BJP CLASH

» PAGE 2

Gupta Elected Delhi Assembly Speaker; MLAs Take Oath in Maithili, Sanskrit, Urdu

गुप्ता दिल्ली विधानसभा अध्यक्ष चुने गए; विधायकों ने मैथिली, संस्कृत, उर्दू में शपथ ली

Three-time Rohini MLA and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Vijender Gupta was elected the Speaker of Delhi's eighth Legislative Assembly on Monday after pro tem Speaker Arvinder



Singh Lovely administered oath to the legislators.

तीन बार रोहिणी से विधायक और भारतीय जनता पार्टी (BJP) के नेता विजेंदर गुप्ता को सोमवार को दिल्ली की आठवीं विधानसभा के अध्यक्ष के रूप में चुना गया, जब प्रोटेम स्पीकर अरविंदर सिंह लवली ने विधायकों को शपथ दिलाई।

- Several legislators in the 70-member House took the oath in their native languages, including Maithili (spoken widely in Bihar) and Punjabi, while many others opted for Hindi, Urdu, Sanskrit, and English.
70 सदस्यीय सदन में कई विधायकों ने अपनी मातृभाषाओं में शपथ ली, जिनमें मैथिली (जो बिहार में व्यापक रूप से बोली जाती है) और पंजाबी शामिल हैं, जबकि अन्य ने हिंदी, उर्दू, संस्कृत और अंग्रेज़ी को चुना।
- Addressing the House after being elected, Mr. Gupta said, “Members of the ruling and the Opposition parties are equal for me. Protecting the democratic values of the House will be my priority. We all must work together for the development of Delhi.”
चुनाव के बाद सदन को संबोधित करते हुए, श्री गुप्ता ने कहा, "सत्तारूढ़ और विपक्षी दलों के सदस्य मेरे लिए समान हैं। सदन के लोकतांत्रिक मूल्यों की रक्षा करना मेरी प्राथमिकता होगी। हमें सभी को मिलकर दिल्ली के विकास के लिए काम करना चाहिए।"
- Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said, “I have full faith that the House will run smoothly under your guidance. As Leader of the Opposition (in the previous Legislative Assembly), you faced several issues; you were marshalled out several times.”
मुख्यमंत्री रेखा गुप्ता ने कहा, "मुझे पूरा विश्वास है कि आपके नेतृत्व में सदन सुचारू रूप से चलेगा। विपक्ष के नेता (पिछली विधानसभा में) के रूप में, आपने कई समस्याओं का सामना किया; आपको कई बार सदन से बाहर किया गया था।"
- The day started with Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena swearing in Mr. Lovely, the most senior MLA in the House, as pro tem Speaker at Raj Niwas.
दिन की शुरुआत उपराज्यपाल वी.के. सक्सेना द्वारा सदन के सबसे वरिष्ठ विधायक श्री लवली को राज निवास में प्रोटेम स्पीकर की शपथ दिलाने से हुई।
- The Gandhi Nagar MLA then started proceedings in the House by administering oath to Ms. Gupta and the Cabinet Ministers.
गांधी नगर के विधायक ने फिर सुश्री गुप्ता और कैबिनेट मंत्रियों को शपथ दिलाकर सदन की कार्यवाही शुरू की।
- Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa took the oath in Punjabi, while Law Minister Kapil Mishra did so in Sanskrit.
पर्यावरण मंत्री मंजींदर सिंह सिरसा ने पंजाबी में शपथ ली, जबकि कानून मंत्री कपिल मिश्रा ने संस्कृत में शपथ ली।
- Several MLAs, including AAP's Sanjeev Jha, took the oath in Maithili. Aaley Mohammad Iqbal of AAP took the oath in Urdu.
AAP के संजीव झा सहित कई विधायकों ने मैथिली में शपथ ली। AAP के आली मोहम्मद इक़बाल ने उर्दू में शपथ ली।
- Mr. Lovely objected to BJP's Tarvinder Singh Marwah raising religious slogans after taking the oath.



श्री लवली ने BJP के तरविंदर सिंह मारवाह द्वारा शपथ के बाद धार्मिक नारे लगाने पर आपत्ति जताई।

- He also criticised AAP's Anil Jha for chanting "Jai Bhim" after his swearing-in and asked all MLAs to stick to the printed text.

उन्होंने AAP के अनिल झा को शपथ ग्रहण के बाद "जय भीम" के नारे लगाने के लिए आलोचना की और सभी विधायकों से मुद्रित पाठ का पालन करने को कहा।

- Following the oaths, Mr. Gupta was elected as Speaker and, as per tradition, accompanied to the chair by the Chief Minister.

शपथ ग्रहण के बाद, श्री गुप्ता को अध्यक्ष चुना गया और परंपरा के अनुसार, मुख्यमंत्री द्वारा अध्यक्ष की कुर्सी तक ले जाया गया।

Ukraine says in 'final stages' of talks on mineral deal with U.S.

**GS Paper II:
US-Ukraine**

KYIV

Ukraine and the U.S. are working out details of an agreement that would give Washington access to Ukrainian natural resources in exchange for U.S. support, Kyiv said on Monday.

Negotiations have triggered tensions with U.S. officials pressuring Ukraine to sign a deal despite Kyiv's insistence that initial drafts lacked vital guarantees.

"Ukrainian and U.S. teams are in the final stages of negotiations regarding the minerals agreement. The negotiations have been very constructive, with nearly all key details finalised," Deputy Prime

Minister Olga Stefanishyna said on X.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said he aims at getting concrete security guarantees from the U.S. in exchange for granting access to critical resources.

U.S. President Donald Trump has demanded that Ukraine give access to rare minerals to compensate for the wartime aid Kyiv received under Joe Biden.

Ms. Stefanishyna said she hoped that Mr. Trump and Mr. Zelenskyy would sign the deal in Washington "to showcase our commitment for decades to come".

RUSSIA'S STAND

» PAGE 14

with U.S. officials pressuring Ukraine to sign a deal despite Kyiv's insistence that initial drafts lacked vital guarantees.

बातचीत के चलते तनाव बढ़ गया है क्योंकि अमेरिकी अधिकारी यूक्रेन पर समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर करने का दबाव बना रहे हैं, जबकि कीव का कहना है कि प्रारंभिक मसौदों में महत्वपूर्ण गारंटी की कमी है।

Ukraine Says in 'Final Stages' of Talks on Mineral Deal with U.S.

यूक्रेन ने कहा कि अमेरिका के साथ खनिज समझौते पर बातचीत 'अंतिम चरण' में है

Ukraine and the U.S. are working out details of an agreement that would give Washington access to Ukrainian natural resources in exchange for U.S. support, Kyiv said on Monday.

यूक्रेन और अमेरिका एक समझौते के विवरण पर काम कर रहे हैं, जिसके तहत वाशिंगटन को यूक्रेन के प्राकृतिक संसाधनों तक पहुंच मिलेगी, बदले में उसे अमेरिकी समर्थन मिलेगा, यह बात सोमवार को कीव ने कही।

- Negotiations have triggered tensions



- "Ukrainian and U.S. teams are in the **final stages** of negotiations regarding the **minerals agreement**. The negotiations have been **very constructive**, with nearly all **key details finalised**," Deputy Prime Minister **Olga Stefanishyna** said on X.
"यूक्रेनी और अमेरिकी टीमों खनिज समझौते पर बातचीत के अंतिम चरण में हैं। यह बातचीत बहुत रचनात्मक रही है और लगभग सभी महत्वपूर्ण विवरण अंतिम रूप से तय हो चुके हैं," उप प्रधानमंत्री ओल्गा स्टेफानिशयना ने X पर कहा।
- **President Volodymyr Zelenskyy** has said he aims at getting **concrete security guarantees from the U.S.** in exchange for **granting access to critical resources**.
राष्ट्रपति वोलोडिमिर ज़ेलेन्स्की ने कहा कि वह महत्वपूर्ण संसाधनों तक पहुंच देने के बदले में अमेरिका से ठोस सुरक्षा गारंटी प्राप्त करना चाहते हैं।
- **U.S. President Donald Trump** has demanded that **Ukraine give access to rare minerals** to compensate for the **wartime aid Kyiv received under Joe Biden**.
अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप ने मांग की है कि यूक्रेन दुर्लभ खनिजों तक पहुंच प्रदान करे ताकि जो बाइडेन के तहत युद्धकालीन सहायता के बदले इसकी भरपाई की जा सके।
- **Ms. Stefanishyna** said she hoped that **Mr. Trump and Mr. Zelenskyy** would sign the **deal in Washington** "to showcase our commitment for decades to come."
सुश्री स्टेफानिशयना ने कहा कि उन्हें उम्मीद है कि श्री ट्रंप और श्री ज़ेलेन्स्की वॉशिंगटन में समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर करेंगे "ताकि आने वाले दशकों तक हमारी प्रतिबद्धता को प्रदर्शित किया जा सके।"

Tribal families stage protest, say **sacred groves in Similipal** turned into enclosure for tigress

GS Paper I: Munda Tribe and Munda Rebellion
GS Paper III: Genetic Diversity
BHUBANESWAR

Tribal families, which once inhabited the **Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR)** in Odisha, have alleged that their rights to continue their age-old rituals in the sacred forest groves have been denied following the translocation of a tigress from Maharashtra.

According to them, their villages in STR have been fenced off, now deemed part of the territory of Zeenat, who was translocated to Similipal to boost the genetic diversity of the reserve's big cat population.

On Monday, members of the **Munda tribe**, former residents of Jamunagarh village in STR, held a demonstration in Bhubaneswar in an attempt to bring to light their deep-seated anguish over the issue.

"Zeenat was preferred over our traditional rights to worship nature," says Ramrai Sae, a Pahan (tribal



Former residents of Jamunagarh submitting a memo to the **Principal Chief Conservator of Forests** on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

priest) of the erstwhile Jamunagarh village of STR.

As part of efforts to make Similipal free from human habitations, residents of Jamunagarh were evicted in two phases in 2015 and 2022 and relocated. The eviction happened despite protest and against the wishes of people, said Telenga Pasa, a former resident of Jamunagarh. The village has been transformed into a meadow af-

ter the eviction.

"Even after our relocation, we continued to visit our sacred groves, abodes of our deities and sacred burial grounds, every year. It was a ritual to honour our sacred lands and ancestral and traditional worship practices which is integral to our community's very existence," said Mr. Pasa.

"Many of our family members have fallen ill

and elders even died after getting separated from our homelands, deities, and ancestors," said Mr. Sae.

'Not allowed'

"Since last month, the authorities of STR are preventing us from entering Jamunagarh and worshipping at our sacred spaces. The Deputy Director of South Wildlife Division categorically told us that we cannot go to our village to perform our sacred rites because our lands are now being used for tiger supplementation programme," said Sagar Aleya, another villager.

Zeenat, the three-year-old tigress, was translocated from the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra to STR on November 14. She then strayed into Jharkhand and West Bengal keeping forest department officials in the three States on their toes for days before being finally captured and relocated to STR again.



Tribal Families Stage Protest, Say Sacred Groves in Similipal Turned into Enclosure for Tigress

आदिवासी परिवारों ने किया प्रदर्शन, कहा - सिमिलिपाल में पवित्र उपवन बाघिन के लिए घेराबंदी में बदले

Tribal families, which once inhabited the Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) in Odisha, have alleged that their rights to continue age-old rituals in sacred forest groves have been denied following the translocation of a tigress from Maharashtra.

ओडिशा के सिमिलिपाल टाइगर रिजर्व (STR) में कभी बसे हुए आदिवासी परिवारों ने आरोप लगाया कि महाराष्ट्र से एक बाघिन के स्थानांतरण के बाद उनके पवित्र जंगलों में सदियों पुराने अनुष्ठान जारी रखने के अधिकार को छीन लिया गया है।

- According to them, their **villages in STR have been fenced off**, now deemed part of the **territory of Zeenat**, who was translocated to **boost the genetic diversity of the reserve's big cat population**.

उनके अनुसार, STR में उनके गांवों को घेराबंदी कर दिया गया है, जिसे अब ज़ीनत के क्षेत्र का हिस्सा माना जा रहा है। ज़ीनत को रिजर्व में बाघों की आनुवंशिक विविधता बढ़ाने के लिए लाया गया था।

- On **Monday**, members of the **Munda tribe**, former residents of **Jamunagarh village in STR**, held a **demonstration in Bhubaneswar** to bring to light their **deep-seated anguish** over the issue.

सोमवार को मुंडा जनजाति के सदस्य, जो STR के जमुनागढ़ गांव के पूर्व निवासी हैं, ने भुवनेश्वर में प्रदर्शन किया ताकि इस मुद्दे पर अपनी गहरी पीड़ा व्यक्त कर सकें।

- "**Zeenat was preferred over our traditional rights to worship nature**," says **Ramrai Sae**, a **Pahan (tribal priest)** of the erstwhile **Jamunagarh village of STR**. "**ज़ीनत को हमारी पारंपरिक प्रकृति पूजा के अधिकारों से ऊपर रखा गया**," कहते हैं **रामराय साए**, जो STR के पूर्ववर्ती जमुनागढ़ गांव के पाहन (आदिवासी पुजारी) हैं।

- As part of **efforts to make Similipal free from human habitations**, residents of **Jamunagarh were evicted in two phases in 2015 and 2022** and relocated.

सिमिलिपाल को मानव बस्तियों से मुक्त करने के प्रयासों के तहत, जमुनागढ़ के निवासियों को 2015 और 2022 में दो चरणों में विस्थापित कर पुनर्वासित किया गया।

- The **eviction happened despite protests and against the wishes of people**, said **Telenga Pasa**, a former resident of **Jamunagarh**.

निवासियों के विरोध और उनकी इच्छाओं के खिलाफ यह निष्कासन किया गया, कहते हैं **तेलेंगा पासा**, जो जमुनागढ़ के पूर्व निवासी हैं।

- The **village has been transformed into a meadow** after the eviction.

गांव को निष्कासन के बाद एक घास के मैदान में बदल दिया गया है।

- "**Even after our relocation, we continued to visit our sacred groves, abodes of our deities, and sacred burial grounds every year. It was a ritual to honour our sacred lands, ancestors, and traditional worship practices, which is integral to our community's existence**," said **Mr. Pasa**.



"पुनर्वास के बाद भी, हम हर साल अपने पवित्र उपवन, देवताओं के निवास स्थान और पवित्र समाधि स्थलों की यात्रा करते रहे। यह हमारी पवित्र भूमि, पूर्वजों और पारंपरिक पूजा पद्धतियों को सम्मान देने की परंपरा थी, जो हमारे समुदाय के अस्तित्व का अभिन्न हिस्सा है," कहते हैं श्री पासा।

- "Many of our family members have fallen ill, and elders even died after getting separated from our homelands, deities, and ancestors," said Mr. Sae.

"हमारे कई परिवारजन बीमार पड़ गए, और बुजुर्गों की मृत्यु भी हो गई क्योंकि वे अपनी मातृभूमि, देवताओं और पूर्वजों से अलग हो गए," कहते हैं श्री साए।

- "Since last month, the authorities of STR are preventing us from entering Jamunagarh and worshipping at our sacred spaces," said Sagar Aleya, another villager.

"पिछले महीने से STR प्रशासन हमें जमुनागढ़ में प्रवेश करने और अपने पवित्र स्थलों पर पूजा करने से रोक रहा है," कहते हैं सागर अलेया, एक अन्य ग्रामीण।

- The Deputy Director of South Wildlife Division categorically told them that they cannot go to their village to perform sacred rites because the land is now being used for the tiger supplementation programme.

दक्षिण वन्यजीव प्रभाग के उपनिदेशक ने स्पष्ट रूप से उन्हें बताया कि वे अपने गांव में पवित्र अनुष्ठान करने नहीं जा सकते, क्योंकि अब इस भूमि का उपयोग बाघ पुनरुत्पादन कार्यक्रम के लिए किया जा रहा है।

- Zeenat, the three-year-old tigress, was translocated from the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra to STR on November 14.

तीन वर्षीय बाघिन ज़ीनत को महाराष्ट्र के ताडोबा-अंधारी टाइगर रिजर्व से 14 नवंबर को STR में स्थानांतरित किया गया था।

- She then strayed into Jharkhand and West Bengal, keeping forest department officials in the three states on their toes for days before being finally captured and relocated to STR again.

इसके बाद वह झारखंड और पश्चिम बंगाल में भटक गई, जिससे तीनों राज्यों के वन विभाग के अधिकारी कई दिनों तक सतर्क रहे, और अंततः उसे पकड़कर फिर से STR में वापस लाया गया।



The RTI is now the 'right to deny information'

GS Paper II: RTI

The introduction of the Right to Information (RTI) Act was a move that generated great hope among citizens since it recognised them to be the rulers of the nation. It empowered them to seek information from the government, with dignity and respect. It looked as if the 'swaraj' that they had missed would be delivered to them. The Act codified their fundamental right to information and was one of the best transparency laws in the world. It appeared that it would curb corruption and arbitrariness, with citizens being the vigilance monitors of their government. But, it must be conceded, it has fallen far short of our expectations and the state of our democracy is not better.

Within a few months, the government realised that this was a transfer of power from public servants to the citizens. In less than a year it moved to amend the law which would have weakened the RTI Act. But there were widespread protests by citizens across the nation. Sensing the mood of the nation, the government dropped the amendments.

A gradual erosion

The RTI Act had created Information Commissions as the final appellate authorities to implement the law. Most of the posts of 'information commissioner' were taken up by retired bureaucrats. After working for decades as senior bureaucrats, it was difficult for them to hand over power to citizens and recognise that they were the rightful owners of the government. No attempt was made to select people with a record in transparency. Many of them looked at these jobs as post-retirement sinecures and worked only for a few hours. While the national average of the disposal of cases by High Court judges is over 2,500 in a year, the national average of disposal of cases by the commissioners was less than this. Given the fact that the complexity of cases before commissions is far less than the cases before the High Courts, each commissioner should have been clearing at least over 5,000 cases in a year. While the law mandated a period of 30 days for the information to be provided and the same period for the first appellate authorities, it did not specify any time limit for the commissioners. Many commissions began to have pendency of over a year. The right to information was being converted into a right to history. Many ordinary citizens could not pursue the issue of what was now a denial of information. The penal provisions of the RTI Act were the teeth of the Act, but most information commissioners were reluctant to use them. The governments delayed appointing commissioners, which only increased the backlogs.

The clear message of various High Court



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judgments was that the exemptions listed under Section 8 of the RTI Act were restrictions on a citizen's fundamental right and had to be construed strictly as in the law. Parliament intended most information to be provided and crafted the exemptions carefully.

The entire approach to a citizen's right to information changed in August 2011 when the Supreme Court of India held in *Central Board of Secondary Education & Anr. vs Aditya Bandopadhyay & Ors.*, in paragraph 33: "Some High Courts have held that section 8 of RTI Act is in the nature of an exception to section 3 which empowers the citizens with the right to information, which is a derivative from the freedom of speech; and that therefore section 8 should be construed strictly, literally and narrowly. This may not be the correct approach."

In paragraph 37 it made a comment without any evidence: "Indiscriminate and impractical demands or directions under RTI Act for disclosure of all and sundry information (unrelated to transparency and accountability in the functioning of public authorities and eradication of corruption) would be counterproductive as it will adversely affect the efficiency of the administration and result in the executive getting bogged down with the non-productive work of collecting and furnishing information. The Act should not be allowed to be misused or abused, to become a tool to obstruct the national development and integration, or to destroy the peace, tranquility and harmony among its citizens. Nor should it be converted into a tool of oppression or intimidation of honest officials striving to do their duty."

This justified treating RTI as an undesirable activity and labelling RTI users as outcasts. It justified not giving information and attacks on RTI users.

The subject of 'personal information'

The second major blow came with the judgment in *Girish Ramchandra Deshpande vs Cen. Information Commr. & Ors.*, in October 2012.

A RTI applicant, Girish Ramchandra Deshpande, had sought copies of all memos, show cause notices and censure/punishment awarded to a public servant. A.B. Lute. He had also sought other details such as his movable and immovable properties and details of his investments, lending and borrowing from banks and other financial institutions.

This was denied claiming exemption under Section 8(O)(j). This section exempts "information which relates to personal information the disclosure of which has no relationship to any public activity or interest, or which would cause unwarranted invasion of the privacy of the individual unless the Central Public Information

Officer ... is satisfied that the larger public interest justifies the disclosure of such information: Provided that the information, which cannot be denied to the Parliament or a State Legislature shall not be denied to any person."

A simple reading shows that under this clause, 'personal' can be denied if it has apparently no relationship to any public activity or interest; or the disclosure of the said information would cause unwarranted invasion of the privacy of the individual.

The Court did not rule on whether the information was an outcome of a public activity or if its disclosure would amount to an unwarranted invasion of the privacy of the individual. It denied the information by reading only the first seven words of the provision and saying it was 'personal information'. Most information can be linked to some person. Realising that it may be difficult for public information officers and other appellate authorities to decide on what constitutes privacy, Parliament gave a simple test in the proviso – that information which would not be denied to Parliament or legislature would not be denied to any person. This can only have one meaning. That anyone claiming that information would be denied to the citizen would make a subjective statement that he would deny the information to Parliament.

It is well settled that literal interpretation should be given to a statute if the same does not lead to absurdity. In *Nasiruddin and others vs Sita Ram Agarwal* (2003) 2 SCC 577, the Court has stated: "37. The court's jurisdiction to interpret a statute can be invoked when the same is ambiguous... It cannot re-write or recast legislation. It is also necessary to determine that there exists a presumption that the legislature has not used any superfluous words. It is well settled that the real intention of the legislation must be gathered from the language used."

Girish Ramchandra Deshpande amends the RTI Act and has been used as a precedent in six subsequent Court judgments and has become the gold standard to convert RTI into an RDI, or Right to Deny Information. The Digital Personal Data Protection Act takes a cue from this and amends the RTI Act itself. There are other cases in which words in the law have not been accorded their usual meanings.

A call to citizens

To ensure that the RTI fulfils its original promise we should go by the original Act and not allow any distortions. Citizens and the media must take up the responsibility to discuss and defend it. Otherwise, we will have a dilution of our fundamental right under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India.

Citizens and the media must take up the responsibility to ensure that the original RTI Act is followed and not allow any distortions

The RTI is Now the 'Right to Deny Information'

आरटीआई अब 'सूचना न देने का अधिकार' बन गया है

The introduction of the Right to Information (RTI) Act was a move that generated great hope among citizens since it recognised them as the rulers of the nation.

सूचना का अधिकार (RTI) अधिनियम की शुरुआत एक ऐसा कदम था जिसने नागरिकों में बड़ी आशा जगाई क्योंकि इसने उन्हें राष्ट्र के शासक के रूप में मान्यता दी।

- It empowered citizens to seek information from the government, with dignity and respect.

इसने नागरिकों को गरिमा और सम्मान के साथ सरकार से सूचना प्राप्त करने का अधिकार दिया।



- The RTI Act codified the fundamental right to information and was considered one of the **best transparency laws in the world.**
आरटीआई अधिनियम ने सूचना के मौलिक अधिकार को संहिताबद्ध किया और इसे दुनिया के सर्वश्रेष्ठ पारदर्शिता कानूनों में से एक माना गया।
- It was expected to **curb corruption and arbitrariness**, allowing citizens to act as **vigilance monitors of the government.**
इससे भ्रष्टाचार और मनमानेपन पर रोक लगने की उम्मीद थी और नागरिकों को सरकार की निगरानी करने वाले प्रहरी के रूप में सशक्त बनाया गया था।

A Gradual Erosion

धीरे-धीरे हो रही गिरावट

- Within a few months, the **government realised that RTI transferred power from public servants to the citizens.**
कुछ ही महीनों में, सरकार को एहसास हुआ कि आरटीआई के कारण सत्ता का हस्तांतरण लोक सेवकों से नागरिकों की ओर हो गया है।
- In **less than a year**, the government attempted to **amend the RTI Act**, which would have **weakened its provisions.**
एक वर्ष से भी कम समय में, सरकार ने आरटीआई अधिनियम में संशोधन करने का प्रयास किया, जिससे इसके प्रावधान कमजोर हो जाते।
- However, **widespread protests by citizens across the nation** forced the government to **drop the amendments.**
लेकिन, देशभर में नागरिकों द्वारा किए गए व्यापक विरोध के कारण सरकार को संशोधन वापस लेना पड़ा।
- The RTI Act created **Information Commissions** as the **final appellate authorities** to **implement the law.**
आरटीआई अधिनियम के तहत सूचना आयोगों का गठन किया गया ताकि वे कानून को लागू करने के लिए अंतिम अपील प्रधिकरण बन सकें।
- However, **most information commissioners were retired bureaucrats**, who found it difficult to **hand over power to citizens.**
हालांकि, अधिकांश सूचना आयुक्त सेवानिवृत्त नौकरशाह थे, जिन्हें नागरिकों को सत्ता सौंपना मुश्किल लगा।
- The **selection process ignored transparency activists**, and many commissioners **treated the role as a post-retirement benefit.**
चयन प्रक्रिया में पारदर्शिता कार्यकर्ताओं की अनदेखी की गई, और कई आयुक्तों ने इस पद को सेवानिवृत्ति के बाद का लाभ समझा।
- While **High Court judges dispose of over 2,500 cases annually**, RTI commissioners cleared **far fewer cases** despite having **less complex issues.**
जहां उच्च न्यायालय के न्यायाधीश सालाना 2,500 से अधिक मामलों का निपटारा करते हैं, वहीं आरटीआई आयुक्तों ने कम जटिल मामलों के बावजूद बहुत कम मामलों का निपटारा किया।
- **Many commissions developed pendency of over a year**, converting the right to information into a right to history.
कई आयोगों में एक वर्ष से अधिक की लंबित फाइलें जमा हो गईं, जिससे सूचना का अधिकार इतिहास जानने के अधिकार में बदल गया।



- **Most information commissioners were reluctant to impose penalties, reducing the effectiveness of RTI's penal provisions.**

अधिकांश सूचना आयुक्त दंड लगाने में अनिच्छुक थे, जिससे आरटीआई के दंडात्मक प्रावधान प्रभावहीन हो गए।

Judicial Interpretation Weakens RTI

न्यायिक व्याख्या से आरटीआई कमजोर हुआ

- **High Courts ruled that Section 8 exemptions should be strictly interpreted as restrictions on a citizen's fundamental right.**
उच्च न्यायालयों ने फैसला दिया कि धारा 8 के अपवादों को नागरिकों के मौलिक अधिकारों पर प्रतिबंध के रूप में सख्ती से लागू किया जाना चाहिए।
- However, in August 2011, the Supreme Court in **CBSE vs. Aditya Bandopadhyay case** held that this approach may not be correct.
लेकिन अगस्त 2011 में, सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने **CBSE बनाम आदित्य बंदोपाध्याय** मामले में कहा कि यह दृष्टिकोण सही नहीं हो सकता।
- In paragraph 37 of the judgment, the Court argued that "indiscriminate RTI requests" could obstruct national development and administration efficiency.
निर्णय के पैरा 37 में, अदालत ने तर्क दिया कि "बेतरतीब आरटीआई अनुरोध" राष्ट्रीय विकास और प्रशासन की दक्षता में बाधा डाल सकते हैं।
- The Court also warned against RTI being used to intimidate honest officials, justifying refusals to provide information.
अदालत ने यह भी चेतावनी दी कि आरटीआई का उपयोग ईमानदार अधिकारियों को डराने के लिए किया जा सकता है, जिससे जानकारी न देने को उचित ठहराया गया।
- This shifted the perception of RTI from a tool of empowerment to an undesirable activity, making RTI activists more vulnerable.
इससे आरटीआई को सशक्तिकरण के उपकरण से एक अवांछनीय गतिविधि के रूप में देखा जाने लगा, जिससे आरटीआई कार्यकर्ताओं की स्थिति और अधिक असुरक्षित हो गई।

The Subject of 'Personal Information'

'व्यक्तिगत जानकारी' का विषय

- The second major blow to RTI came with the judgment in **Girish Ramchandra Deshpande vs. Central Information Commissioner & Others**, in October 2012.
आरटीआई को दूसरा बड़ा झटका गिरीश रामचंद्र देशपांडे बनाम केंद्रीय सूचना आयुक्त एवं अन्य, अक्टूबर 2012 के फैसले के साथ लगा।
- **Girish Ramchandra Deshpande**, an RTI applicant, sought copies of all memos, show cause notices, and censure/punishments awarded to a public servant, **A.B. Lute**.
आरटीआई आवेदक गिरीश रामचंद्र देशपांडे ने एक लोक सेवक ए.बी. लूटे को जारी सभी मेमो, कारण बताओ नोटिस और दी गई सजा की प्रतियां मांगी थीं।
- He also requested details about **movable and immovable properties, investments, and financial dealings** of the public servant.
उन्होंने चल-अचल संपत्ति, निवेश और वित्तीय लेन-देन की जानकारी भी मांगी थी।



- The request was **denied under Section 8(1)(j)**, which exempts **personal information** that has **no relation to public activity or interest** or causes **unwarranted invasion of privacy**.

इस अनुरोध को धारा 8(1)(j) के तहत खारिज कर दिया गया, जो ऐसी व्यक्तिगत जानकारी को छूट देता है जिसका सार्वजनिक गतिविधि या हित से कोई संबंध नहीं होता या जो गोपनीयता के अकारण उल्लंघन का कारण बनती है।

Misinterpretation of the Law

कानून की गलत व्याख्या

- The Court **did not assess** whether the information was **related to a public activity** or if its disclosure would **violate privacy**.
अदालत ने यह नहीं आंका कि क्या यह जानकारी सार्वजनिक गतिविधि से संबंधित थी या इसके प्रकटीकरण से गोपनीयता का उल्लंघन होगा।
- It **denied the information** by reading only **the first seven words of the provision**, concluding that it was **"personal information."**
अदालत ने केवल प्रावधान के पहले सात शब्द पढ़कर सूचना को "व्यक्तिगत जानकारी" मानते हुए इसे अस्वीकार कर दिया।
- Parliament had provided a **simple test** in the proviso: **Any information that cannot be denied to Parliament or State Legislature should not be denied to citizens.**
संसद ने एक सरल परीक्षण दिया था: जो जानकारी संसद या राज्य विधानसभा को नहीं रोकी जा सकती, वह नागरिकों से भी नहीं रोकी जानी चाहिए।
- This ruling **contradicted the fundamental principle of RTI**, making it easier for authorities to **deny information**.
यह फैसला आरटीआई के मूल सिद्धांत के खिलाफ था, जिससे अधिकारियों को सूचना देने से इनकार करने में आसानी हुई।

Judicial Precedents and the Weakening of RTI

न्यायिक मिसालें और आरटीआई की कमजोर पड़ती स्थिति

- The **Supreme Court**, in **Nasiruddin vs. Sita Ram Agarwal (2003) 2 SCC 577**, stated that statutes should be **interpreted literally unless it leads to absurdity**.
सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने नसीरुद्दीन बनाम सीताराम अग्रवाल (2003) 2 SCC 577 में कहा था कि कानून की व्याख्या शाब्दिक रूप से की जानी चाहिए जब तक कि यह किसी असंगति की ओर न ले जाए।
- However, in **Girish Ramchandra Deshpande's case**, the RTI Act was **effectively amended** through judicial interpretation.
लेकिन गिरीश रामचंद्र देशपांडे मामले में, आरटीआई अधिनियम को न्यायिक व्याख्या के माध्यम से प्रभावी रूप से संशोधित कर दिया गया।
- This judgment has since been used as a **precedent in six subsequent cases**, making it the **gold standard for denying RTI requests**.
इस फैसले को बाद के छह मामलों में एक मिसाल के रूप में इस्तेमाल किया गया, जिससे यह आरटीआई अनुरोधों को अस्वीकार करने के लिए मानक बन गया।
- The **Digital Personal Data Protection Act** has taken inspiration from this ruling to further **amend the RTI Act itself**.



डिजिटल व्यक्तिगत डेटा संरक्षण अधिनियम ने इस फैसले से प्रेरणा लेकर आरटीआई अधिनियम में और संशोधन किए हैं।

A Call to Citizens

नागरिकों के लिए आह्वान

- To ensure that RTI fulfills its original promise, citizens must adhere to the original Act and resist distortions.

यह सुनिश्चित करने के लिए कि आरटीआई अपने मूल उद्देश्य को पूरा करे, नागरिकों को मूल अधिनियम का पालन करना चाहिए और विकृतियों का विरोध करना चाहिए।

GS Paper II: Global World Order

New direction

Germany needs to talk to Russia to drive a hard bargain for Europe

When Germans went to vote on Sunday, in one of the most consequential elections in the country's post-reunification history, there was little doubt about the outcome. The Olaf Scholz-led three-party coalition had collapsed months earlier and his centrist Social Democratic Party (SPD) was hugely unpopular. Germany, once hailed as a model country, was in its third year of economic contraction and the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), with neo-Nazi roots, was surging ahead with its anti-establishment and anti-immigrant campaign. In the results, the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and its Bavarian sister party, Christian Social Union, led by Friedrich Merz, emerged as the largest bloc, with 28.5% votes, while the AfD doubled its vote share to 20.8%. The Social Democrats got a 16.1% share, one of its worst performances since the 19th century, while the Greens won 11.6%. The left-wing Die Linke saw rising popularity, with 8.8% of the vote. Mr. Merz had asked voters for a strong mandate to fix Germany's problems. While the CDU's performance is weaker than expected, its strong lead puts it on the path toward power. He will now kick off a complicated process of coalition talks.

Mr. Merz has already ruled out any alliance with the AfD, which would be allocated 152 seats. In the 630-member Bundestag, a coalition needs at least 316 seats to form a government. So, it is likely that Mr. Merz, whose bloc has 208 seats, would form a two-party coalition government with the Social Democrats, with its 120 seats. But government formation would be the least of his challenges. He must reboot a contracting economy, which has barely grown since the pre-COVID years, tackle the immigration problem, which was exploited by the far-right, and formulate foreign policy that addresses both the Ukraine war and Europe's security challenges. As Germany joined western allies in imposing sanctions on Russia, it effectively lost access to cheap Russian gas. The country is today grappling with a deep recession and deindustrialisation. And as the crisis deepened, the German elites' bid to weaken the AfD through a political 'firewall' ceased working. But Mr. Merz has the advantage of leading a new government on a new mandate. He should look at the U.S. reset with Russia to begin afresh rather than as an impediment to furthering the old policies that have backfired. His focus should be on bringing the Ukraine war to a quick and just end and rebuilding the economy. He should also drive a new, hard bargain with Russia for security and stability in Europe. Only a peaceful Europe can guarantee Germany's continued rise as the continent's economic and political engine.

- Citizens and the media must take responsibility to defend RTI, or else it will dilute our fundamental right under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution.

नागरिकों और मीडिया को आरटीआई की रक्षा करने की जिम्मेदारी लेनी होगी, अन्यथा यह संविधान के अनुच्छेद 19(1)(a) के तहत हमारे मौलिक अधिकार को कमजोर कर देगा।

New Direction: Germany Needs to Talk to Russia to Drive a Hard Bargain for Europe

नई दिशा: जर्मनी को यूरोप के लिए रूस से बातचीत कर सख्त समझौता करना चाहिए

On January 27, 2025, Germans voted in one of the most consequential elections in post-reunification history.

27 जनवरी 2025 को जर्मनों ने पुनर्एकीकरण के बाद के सबसे महत्वपूर्ण चुनावों में मतदान किया।

- The Olaf Scholz-led three-party coalition had collapsed months earlier, and his centrist Social Democratic Party (SPD) was hugely unpopular.

ओलाफ शॉलज़ के नेतृत्व वाला तीन-पार्टी गठबंधन कुछ महीने पहले ही बिखर गया था, और उनकी मध्यमार्गी सोशल डेमोक्रेटिक पार्टी (SPD) बेहद अलोकप्रिय थी।

- Germany was in its third year of economic contraction, and the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) surged ahead with its anti-establishment and anti-immigrant campaign.

जर्मनी लगातार तीसरे वर्ष आर्थिक संकुचन से गुजर रहा था, और दक्षिणपंथी अल्टरनेटिव फॉर जर्मनी (AfD) ने अपनी विरोधी-सरकार और प्रवासी विरोधी अभियान के कारण बढ़त हासिल की।

Election Results



चुनावी परिणाम

- The **Christian Democratic Union (CDU)** and its **Bavarian sister party, Christian Social Union (CSU)**, led by **Friedrich Merz**, emerged as the **largest bloc with 28.5% votes**.
फ्रेडरिक मर्ज़ के नेतृत्व वाली क्रिश्चियन डेमोक्रेटिक यूनियन (CDU) और इसकी बवेरियन सहयोगी पार्टी, क्रिश्चियन सोशल यूनियन (CSU), 28.5% वोटों के साथ सबसे बड़े गठबंधन के रूप में उभरी।
- The **AfD** doubled its vote share to **20.8%**, while the **Social Democrats (SPD)** received only **16.1%**, one of their **worst performances since the 19th century**.
AfD ने अपनी वोट हिस्सेदारी बढ़ाकर 20.8% कर ली, जबकि सोशल डेमोक्रेट्स (SPD) को केवल 16.1% वोट मिले, जो 19वीं सदी के बाद उनकी सबसे खराब प्रदर्शन में से एक था।
- The **Greens** secured **11.6%**, and the **left-wing Die Linke** gained popularity with **8.8%** of the votes.
ग्रीन्स को 11.6% वोट मिले, और वामपंथी डाई लिंके ने 8.8% वोटों के साथ लोकप्रियता हासिल की।

Coalition Formation and Challenges Ahead

गठबंधन सरकार और आगे की चुनौतियाँ

- **Friedrich Merz** sought a **strong mandate to fix Germany's economic and social problems**.
फ्रेडरिक मर्ज़ ने जर्मनी की आर्थिक और सामाजिक समस्याओं को हल करने के लिए एक मजबूत जनादेश मांगा।
- Though the **CDU's performance was weaker than expected**, it still holds a **clear lead toward forming the government**.
हालांकि CDU का प्रदर्शन अपेक्षा से कमजोर था, फिर भी यह सरकार बनाने की दिशा में स्पष्ट बढ़त बनाए हुए है।
- **Merz ruled out an alliance with the AfD**, which won **152 seats**.
मर्ज़ ने AfD के साथ गठबंधन की संभावना खारिज कर दी, जिसे 152 सीटें मिलीं।
- In the **630-member Bundestag**, a coalition needs at least **316 seats** to form a government.
630 सदस्यीय बंडेस्टाग में, सरकार बनाने के लिए कम से कम 316 सीटों की जरूरत होती है।
- **Merz's CDU-CSU bloc holds 208 seats**, making a coalition with the **Social Democrats (SPD) (120 seats)** the most likely outcome.
मर्ज़ के CDU-CSU गठबंधन के पास 208 सीटें हैं, जिससे सोशल डेमोक्रेट्स (SPD) (120 सीटें) के साथ गठबंधन सबसे संभावित विकल्प बन गया है।

Key Challenges for Merz

मर्ज़ के लिए प्रमुख चुनौतियाँ

- **Rebooting the economy**, which has **barely grown since pre-COVID years**.
अर्थव्यवस्था को पुनर्जीवित करना, जो COVID-19 से पहले के वर्षों से मुश्किल से बढ़ी है।
- **Tackling immigration issues**, which were **exploited by the far-right for political gains**.



प्रवासन (इमिग्रेशन) की समस्याओं को हल करना, जिसे दक्षिणपंथी दलों ने राजनीतिक लाभ के लिए इस्तेमाल किया।

- **Formulating a foreign policy that addresses the Ukraine war and Europe's security concerns.**

एक विदेश नीति बनाना, जो यूक्रेन युद्ध और यूरोप की सुरक्षा चिंताओं को हल करे।

Germany's Economic and Political Crisis

जर्मनी की आर्थिक और राजनीतिक संकट

- As part of **sanctions against Russia**, Germany **lost access to cheap Russian gas**.
रूस के खिलाफ प्रतिबंधों के कारण, जर्मनी ने सस्ते रूसी गैस की आपूर्ति खो दी।
- This has led to **deep recession and deindustrialisation**.
इससे गंभीर मंदी और औद्योगीकरण में गिरावट आई है।
- **Germany's elite tried to weaken the AfD** through political strategies, but **this approach failed**.
जर्मनी के शीर्ष नेताओं ने AfD को कमजोर करने की कोशिश की, लेकिन यह रणनीति असफल रही।

A New Approach: Negotiating with Russia

एक नई रणनीति: रूस के साथ बातचीत

- **Merz has the advantage** of leading a **new government with a fresh mandate**.
मर्ज़ के पास एक नई सरकार और ताजा जनादेश का लाभ है।
- Instead of **continuing failed old policies**, he should **reset Germany's approach toward Russia**.
पुरानी असफल नीतियों को जारी रखने के बजाय, उन्हें रूस के प्रति जर्मनी की नीति को पुनः परिभाषित करना चाहिए।
- The **focus should be on bringing the Ukraine war to a quick and just end**.
ध्यान यूक्रेन युद्ध को जल्दी और न्यायसंगत तरीके से समाप्त करने पर होना चाहिए।
- He must **rebuild the economy by negotiating a new energy agreement with Russia**.
उन्हें रूस के साथ एक नए ऊर्जा समझौते के माध्यम से अर्थव्यवस्था को पुनर्जीवित करना चाहिए।
- A **stable Europe is essential for Germany's continued growth** as the continent's **economic and political engine**.
एक स्थिर यूरोप जर्मनी की निरंतर वृद्धि के लिए आवश्यक है, क्योंकि यह महाद्वीप का आर्थिक और राजनीतिक केंद्र है।



The UGC's mandate is to elevate, not strangle

GS Paper II: Education Sector

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has been in the news again, with the States pushing back on its directive on the procedure for appointment of vice chancellors. It is unusual for chief ministers to concern themselves so closely with minutiae of this kind, but those of Kerala and Tamil Nadu have campaigned against it, terming the directive unconstitutional as it impinges upon matters that are the prerogative of the States. They are particularly unhappy that the UGC may be cementing the practice of Governors choosing vice chancellors. As the States shoulder much of the burden of financing universities, and have a deciding role in instituting them, their insistence that the elected State government rather than the Governor appointed by the Centre have the final say has validity.

A meaningful innovation

However, the substantive part of the UGC's recent directive was an amended guideline for the qualifications for a vice chancellor. The requirement that the vice chancellor must be an academic has been rescinded, and eligibility has been extended to persons who have distinguished themselves in other fields, including industry. This is actually a rare instance in recent times of a meaningful and potentially gainful innovation by the UGC. Globally, heads of academic institutions have not always been professional academics. In the U.S., former secretaries of state are invited to serve as faculty in the best universities of that country. The colleges of Oxford and Cambridge have distinguished themselves by choosing as their heads ex-parliamentarians, writers, and journalists, and no one has thought the practice odd. The public very likely see such appointments as adding value, as most of these individuals would have had exceptional careers.

India is not a stranger to this practice. Over 50 years ago, Prime



Pulapre Balakrishnan,

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Micro management by the UGC and excessive social engineering imposed by political parties have resulted in the persistent under-performance of our universities

Minister Indira Gandhi appointed G. Parthasarathy as the first vice chancellor of JNU. He had played many roles in a distinguished career of public service and went on to launch JNU as a premier university of India. So the suggestion that inducting persons from outside to assume leadership of the university is likely to be damaging is unwarranted.

How the UGC should be judged

Not only is it far fetched to decry the UGC recommendation on the qualifications for a vice chancellor as "unconstitutional" and against the spirit of federalism, but such complaints detract from a scrutiny of the UGC's record on the parameter by which it ought to be judged. The UGC was established, by an Act of Parliament, in 1956, with the express intention that it maintains acceptable standards of higher education across the country. What it has instead succeeded in achieving is to have imposed a uniformity of rules and regulations across universities while achieving next to nothing in elevating them to global standards in the dissemination and production of knowledge. The poor preparedness of India's graduates has been flagged in public. Recently, a judge of the Supreme Court lamented the quality of young lawyers practising in India's courts. Some years ago, the head of a leading company of the Tata Group spoke of the quality of engineers India is producing. Note that this only points to the standard of instruction in the higher education system. We have not even begun to talk of the quality of research, including that of the PhDs being awarded.

Curiously, the UGC seems to have nothing to say on the quality of education in universities. Instead, it deploys all its resources and energies to procedural matters that are best left to the educational institutions themselves. Its interventions encompass rules on an attendance requirement for students, the

regulation of faculty time, the maintenance of records on examinations conducted, and procedure by which the curriculum is chosen. Some of these requirements were part of the apparatus of generalised surveillance of the natives in colonial times. It is unfortunate that they have not been junked. Much of it has no bearing on learning, apart from undermining faculty performance, the lifeblood of the university. Having managed to tie down a university's functioning to the last detail, the UGC has succeeded in expunging all agency from faculty, who once took responsibility for learning outcomes but consider themselves no longer accountable for them, as their wings have been clipped. Fifty years ago, the university was a freer space and with greater faculty presence. It is difficult to make sense of the development that the 1991 reforms have been accompanied by more intrusive regulation of India's universities. It is also difficult to make sense of the fact that as the country's per capita income has risen, the stature of its public university has measurably declined. Work at the cutting edge of science by Satyen Bose in Dacca and S. Chandrasekar in Madras in the early part of the last century took place in public universities at a time when India was far poorer.

The production of knowledge is an enterprise without borders. Nothing demonstrates this better than the spectacular emergence of **DeepSeek, the AI App from China**. We must reflect deeply on why **India is not a player in this game**. Globally, universities are one of the sites of production of knowledge but those in India are not governed with a view to attaining this goal. A high compliance burden due to **micro management by the regulator and excessive social engineering imposed by political parties** have resulted in their persistent underperformance. The UGC's original mandate behoves it to address the situation.

The UGC's Mandate is to Elevate, Not Strangle

यूजीसी का उद्देश्य सुधारना है, बाधा डालना नहीं



The University Grants Commission (UGC) has been in the news again, with States opposing its directive on vice chancellor appointments.

विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग (UGC) फिर से चर्चा में है, क्योंकि राज्य इसके कुलपति नियुक्ति संबंधी निर्देश का विरोध कर रहे हैं।

- **Chief Ministers of Kerala and Tamil Nadu** have called the directive **unconstitutional**, arguing that it interferes with **State rights**.
केरल और तमिलनाडु के मुख्यमंत्री इस निर्देश को असंवैधानिक बता रहे हैं, क्योंकि यह राज्यों के अधिकारों में हस्तक्षेप करता है।
- They are particularly unhappy that the UGC may be reinforcing the practice of **Governors selecting vice chancellors**.
वे विशेष रूप से इस बात से नाखुश हैं कि यूजीसी राज्यपालों द्वारा कुलपतियों की नियुक्ति की प्रथा को मजबूत कर सकता है।
- Since **States finance universities**, they argue that **elected State governments, not centrally appointed Governors, should have the final say**.
क्योंकि राज्य विश्वविद्यालयों के वित्तपोषण का भार उठाते हैं, उनका मानना है कि निर्वाचित राज्य सरकार को अंतिम निर्णय लेने का अधिकार होना चाहिए, न कि केंद्र द्वारा नियुक्त राज्यपालों को।

A Meaningful Innovation

एक सार्थक नवाचार

- The UGC's recent directive also includes changes in qualifications for vice chancellors.
यूजीसी के हालिया निर्देश में कुलपतियों की योग्यता को लेकर भी बदलाव किए गए हैं।
- The requirement that a vice chancellor must be an academic has been removed, extending eligibility to **distinguished professionals from other fields, including industry**.
अब कुलपति के लिए अकादमिक होना अनिवार्य नहीं रहा, और अन्य क्षेत्रों के प्रतिष्ठित व्यक्तियों, जैसे उद्योग से जुड़े विशेषज्ञों, को भी पात्रता दी गई है।
- This is a rare and potentially beneficial innovation by the UGC.
यह यूजीसी द्वारा एक दुर्लभ और संभावित रूप से लाभकारी नवाचार है।
- Globally, heads of top universities have **not always been professional academics**.
विश्व स्तर पर, शीर्ष विश्वविद्यालयों के प्रमुख हमेशा पेशेवर शिक्षाविद नहीं रहे हैं।
- In the **U.S.**, former secretaries of state have been invited to serve as faculty in leading universities.
अमेरिका में, पूर्व विदेश सचिवों को शीर्ष विश्वविद्यालयों में संकाय सदस्य के रूप में आमंत्रित किया गया है।
- **Oxford and Cambridge** have often appointed **ex-parliamentarians, writers, and journalists** as heads of their colleges.
ऑक्सफोर्ड और कैम्ब्रिज ने अक्सर पूर्व सांसदों, लेखकों और पत्रकारों को अपने कॉलेजों का प्रमुख नियुक्त किया है।

India's Past Examples



भारत के पूर्व उदाहरण

- **India is not new to this practice.**
भारत इस प्रथा से अपरिचित नहीं है।
- **Over 50 years ago, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi appointed G. Parthasarathy as the first vice chancellor of JNU.**
50 साल पहले, प्रधानमंत्री इंदिरा गांधी ने जी. पार्थसारथी को जेएनयू के पहले कुलपति के रूप में नियुक्त किया था।
- **He had an exceptional career in public service and played a key role in launching JNU as a premier university in India.**
उनका सार्वजनिक सेवा में एक प्रतिष्ठित करियर रहा और उन्होंने जेएनयू को भारत के प्रमुख विश्वविद्यालय के रूप में स्थापित करने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई।
- **The argument that bringing in experts from outside academia will harm universities is unfounded.**
यह तर्क कि शिक्षा क्षेत्र के बाहर से विशेषज्ञों को नियुक्त करने से विश्वविद्यालयों को नुकसान होगा, असंगत है।

How the UGC Should Be Judged

यूजीसी का मूल्यांकन कैसे किया जाना चाहिए

- **It is unrealistic to call the UGC's recommendation on vice chancellor qualifications "unconstitutional" or against federalism.**
यह यूजीसी की कुलपति योग्यता संबंधी सिफारिश को "असंवैधानिक" या संघवाद के खिलाफ कहना अव्यावहारिक है।
- **Such complaints divert attention from the real issue—how well the UGC has performed its core function.**
इस तरह की शिकायतें ध्यान भटकाती हैं असली मुद्दे से— यूजीसी ने अपनी मुख्य जिम्मेदारी कितनी अच्छी तरह निभाई है।

The UGC's Original Mandate

यूजीसी का मूल उद्देश्य

- **The UGC was established in 1956 to maintain acceptable standards of higher education across India.**
यूजीसी की स्थापना 1956 में उच्च शिक्षा के मानकों को बनाए रखने के लिए की गई थी।
- **Instead of elevating universities to global standards, the UGC has focused on uniform rules and regulations.**
विश्वविद्यालयों को वैश्विक मानकों तक पहुँचाने के बजाय, यूजीसी ने केवल नियमों और प्रक्रियाओं को एकरूप बनाने पर ध्यान दिया है।

Quality of Higher Education in India

भारत में उच्च शिक्षा की गुणवत्ता

- **India's graduates lack preparedness, as noted in public discussions.**
भारत के स्नातकों की तैयारी कमजोर है, जैसा कि सार्वजनिक चर्चाओं में सामने आया है।



- A **Supreme Court judge** recently criticized the **quality of young lawyers in Indian courts.**
एक सुप्रीम कोर्ट के न्यायाधीश ने हाल ही में भारतीय अदालतों में युवा वकीलों की गुणवत्ता पर चिंता व्यक्त की।
- A **Tata Group leader** had earlier raised concerns about the **quality of engineers graduating in India.**
टाटा समूह के एक प्रमुख अधिकारी ने पहले भारत में स्नातक होने वाले इंजीनियरों की गुणवत्ता पर चिंता जताई थी।
- These issues highlight **poor instruction in higher education.**
ये समस्याएँ उच्च शिक्षा में कमजोर शिक्षण पद्धति को दर्शाती हैं।
- **Research quality is another concern, especially the standard of PhD degrees being awarded.**
शोध कार्य की गुणवत्ता भी एक प्रमुख चिंता है, विशेष रूप से पीएचडी डिग्री के मानक को लेकर।

UGC's Misplaced Focus

यूजीसी का गलत प्राथमिकता देना

- The UGC has remained silent on the **quality of education in universities.**
यूजीसी विश्वविद्यालयों में शिक्षा की गुणवत्ता पर चुप्पी साधे हुए है।
- Instead, it spends resources on **procedural matters that should be handled by universities themselves.**
इसके बजाय, यह अपनी ऊर्जा ऐसे प्रक्रियात्मक मामलों पर खर्च कर रहा है, जिन्हें स्वयं विश्वविद्यालयों द्वारा प्रबंधित किया जाना चाहिए।
- UGC interventions cover:
 - **Attendance requirements for students.**
 - **Faculty work hours regulation.**
 - **Record-keeping for examinations.**
 - **Curriculum selection procedures.**
 - छात्रों की उपस्थिति संबंधी नियम।
 - शिक्षकों के कार्य समय का नियमन।
 - परीक्षाओं के लिए रिकॉर्ड बनाए रखना।
 - पाठ्यक्रम चयन की प्रक्रियाएँ।
- Many of these regulations are **reminiscent of colonial-era bureaucratic controls.**
इनमें से कई नियम औपनिवेशिक काल के प्रशासनिक नियंत्रण की याद दिलाते हैं।

Impact on Faculty and Learning

शिक्षकों और शिक्षण पर प्रभाव

- **Excessive micro-management by UGC** has undermined **faculty autonomy.**
यूजीसी द्वारा अत्यधिक सूक्ष्म-प्रबंधन ने शिक्षकों की स्वायत्तता को कमजोर किया है।
- Professors, who were once **responsible for learning outcomes,** now feel **powerless due to rigid regulations.**
जो प्रोफेसर पहले सीखने के परिणामों के लिए जिम्मेदार थे, वे अब कठोर नियमों के कारण असहाय महसूस करते हैं।



- 50 years ago, universities were freer, with greater faculty involvement.
50 साल पहले, विश्वविद्यालय अधिक स्वतंत्र थे, और शिक्षकों की अधिक भागीदारी थी।

The Paradox of Over-Regulation and Economic Growth

अत्यधिक विनियमन और आर्थिक विकास का विरोधाभास

- It is ironic that India's 1991 economic reforms were accompanied by more intrusive regulations on universities.
यह विडंबना है कि 1991 के आर्थिक सुधारों के साथ ही विश्वविद्यालयों पर और अधिक कठोर नियम लागू कर दिए गए।
- Despite rising per capita income, the quality and stature of public universities have declined.
प्रति व्यक्ति आय में वृद्धि के बावजूद, सार्वजनिक विश्वविद्यालयों की गुणवत्ता और प्रतिष्ठा गिर गई है।
- In contrast, early 20th-century scientists like Satyen Bose and S. Chandrasekhar conducted world-class research in India's public universities despite financial limitations.
इसके विपरीत, 20वीं सदी की शुरुआत में सत्येंद्र बोस और एस. चंद्रशेखर जैसे वैज्ञानिकों ने आर्थिक सीमाओं के बावजूद भारत के सार्वजनिक विश्वविद्यालयों में विश्व स्तरीय शोध किया था।

Global Knowledge Production and India's Lagging Universities

वैश्विक ज्ञान उत्पादन और भारत के पिछड़ते विश्वविद्यालय

- Knowledge creation is a global enterprise, with cutting-edge research happening worldwide.
ज्ञान उत्पादन एक वैश्विक प्रक्रिया है, और दुनिया भर में अत्याधुनिक शोध हो रहा है।
- The emergence of DeepSeek, China's AI app, highlights the growing role of universities in global innovation.
DeepSeek, चीन का AI ऐप, यह दर्शाता है कि विश्वविद्यालय वैश्विक नवाचार में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभा रहे हैं।
- India is absent from this innovation landscape, raising concerns about the effectiveness of its universities.
भारत इस नवाचार परिदृश्य में अनुपस्थित है, जिससे इसके विश्वविद्यालयों की प्रभावशीलता पर सवाल उठते हैं।

The Root Causes of Underperformance

कमजोर प्रदर्शन के मूल कारण

- Excessive compliance burden due to UGC micro-management.
यूजीसी के अत्यधिक सूक्ष्म-प्रबंधन के कारण अनुपालन का अधिक बोझ।
- Political interference and social engineering, which restrict universities from focusing on knowledge creation.
राजनीतिक हस्तक्षेप और सामाजिक नियंत्रण, जो विश्वविद्यालयों को ज्ञान सृजन पर ध्यान केंद्रित करने से रोकते हैं।



- Failure of the UGC to address fundamental issues, such as research quality, faculty independence, and global competitiveness.
यूजीसी की बुनियादी मुद्दों को हल करने में विफलता, जैसे शोध गुणवत्ता, शिक्षकों की स्वतंत्रता, और वैश्विक प्रतिस्पर्धा।

Conclusion: UGC Must Return to Its Core Mandate

निष्कर्ष: यूजीसी को अपने मूल उद्देश्य पर लौटना चाहिए

- The UGC must shift focus from bureaucratic control to improving education quality.
यूजीसी को प्रशासनिक नियंत्रण से हटकर शिक्षा की गुणवत्ता सुधारने पर ध्यान देना चाहिए।
- Universities should be governed with the goal of fostering knowledge creation, rather than mere rule enforcement.
विश्वविद्यालयों का संचालन ज्ञान सृजन को बढ़ावा देने के उद्देश्य से किया जाना चाहिए, न कि केवल नियमों को लागू करने के लिए।
- If India wants to compete globally, its universities must be freed from unnecessary regulations and allowed to innovate.
यदि भारत को वैश्विक स्तर पर प्रतिस्पर्धा करनी है, तो इसके विश्वविद्यालयों को अनावश्यक नियमों से मुक्त करके नवाचार की स्वतंत्रता दी जानी चाहिए।



Why are pilots asking for more rest hours?

Why were the relaxed rules brought out by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation in 2024 opposed by airlines? How many days of leave do pilots get? What has the Delhi High Court ruled with respect to duty norms for pilots?

GS Paper II: Governance
EXPLAINER

Jagriti Chandra

The story so far:

After at least a year-long tussle over the new relaxed duty norms for pilots brought out by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the Delhi High Court on February 24, ruled that a vast chunk of these rules would come into effect from July 1, 2025. This brings to a close a six-year battle in Delhi High Court waged by pilot unions against the punitive provisions of the DGCA's 2019 norms that raised permissible night flying from one night to two consecutive nights, slashed rest periods including for ultra-long range flights, and allowed airlines special dispensation for utilising pilots during unforeseen circumstances such as inclement weather or emergencies.

What did the High Court rule?

The Delhi High Court ruled that a vast chunk of the liberalised duty and rest norms for pilots that were unveiled in January 2024, but put under abeyance after opposition from airlines, would come into effect from July 1, 2025. These include provisions such as increased weekly rest from 36 hours to 48 hours. Airlines would also be required to submit quarterly reports of fatigue complaints filed by pilots as well as subsequent action taken by airlines to the DGCA.

Some of the more contentious provisions have been postponed for implementation on or before November 1. This includes the new definition of night duty – 00:00 hrs to 05:00 hours being widened to 06:00 hours – which would bring down the quantum of night flying as pilots can't be rostered for more than two consecutive nights of flying. The number of landings for flights encroaching night duty will be capped to two; while on night duty pilots can also not be assigned more than eight hours of flying duty or 10 hours of total duty that encompasses pre and post flight tasks. The special dispensation given to airlines in the event of unforeseen circumstances has been tightened where the additional duration for which pilots can be utilised has been brought down from three hours to two hours, and their rest in such events has been raised.

Pilots were forced to go to Delhi High Court in May 2024, after the DGCA put its own January 2024 rules on hold because of stiff opposition from airlines. Several airlines had told the DGCA that provisioning for more rest and reduced flying would require them to hire more pilots which would need time, in the absence of which there could be flight cancellations and increase in airfare.

The volte face from the DGCA though came after it had admonished airlines for engaging in scaremongering and pressed for an urgent "wake-up call" as there had been incidents of pilot deaths "ostensibly due to punishing rosters". On August 17, 2023, IndiGo's Captain Manoj Balasubramani died due to a cardiac arrest at the boarding gate of Nagpur airport minutes before his flight to Pune.

Why are there demands for rest?

Following the resurgence in travel post COVID-19, pilots say their share of daily flying has increased considerably, which includes up to four landings in a day that entail a flying duty of upto 10 hours and total duty period of 12-13 hours. As approaches and landings demand a higher level of concentration and complex decision-making, more flights



Long hours: An Air India aircraft takes off as an IndiGo aircraft waits at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport in Ahmedabad, in 2017. REUTERS

mean a substantial increase in workload.

Since a change in DGCA's rules in 2019, airlines are also allowed to deploy pilots on two consecutive nights of flying, which is one of the most staunchly opposed provisions because it requires pilots to stay awake against their natural body clock, with the window of circadian low, between 2am and 6am, being the toughest. When these night flights are combined with 3-4 landings per day involving a duty period of 10 to 13 hours, pilots are often at their tether's end. With low-cost carriers massively increasing their short-haul international flying over the past decade, there has been a spurt in night flying. Over the years, this has become more hectic with airlines removing hotel rest at the destination, and requiring pilots to operate the return leg to improve cost and manpower efficiency. Pilots are known to overshoot their mandatory duty hours on routes in the Gulf such as to Bahrain and Jeddah.

While pilots typically fly between 50 to 90 hours in a month, their monthly duty period that include pre and post flight tasks could be up to 140-150 hours. While this may seem like a much lighter schedule than the average 200 hours a month for anyone working a 9-5 job, there are many factors that need to be considered. For instance, the legal entitlement of weekly rest within 168 hours provided by the DGCA implies that pilots get their weekly off only on the eighth day. There are no public or government holidays and only six casual leaves, 12 sick leaves and 30 privilege leaves (Air India) which have to be applied for a year in advance. IndiGo provides 12 PLS to pilots in command, and 22 to First Officers. This may also be due to the nature of the business that requires rostering and commercial teams to ensure sanctity of flight schedules which have been sold to passengers.

Then there is the cockpit environment that makes flying fatiguing. These include factors such as movement restriction, poor air flow, low light levels, background

noise, and vibration as well as multiple cycles of changes in oxygen pressurisation requiring one's body to constantly adjust to rapid shifts resulting in fatigue. Automation has replaced hands on flying in the cockpit, making greater demands on the crew to perform vigilant monitoring which is tiring.

Erratic or unstable rosters in some airlines are widely infamous for disturbing how pilots plan their rest. For example, a 10am reporting time could be rescheduled to 4pm duty time that concludes at 2am allowing one little window for re-jiggling their pre-flight rest after waking up at 6am or 7am. Alternating night and day shifts, unlike a fixed night or duty shift for a specific number of days, where the human body's natural circadian rhythm struggles to adjust to disruptions, does take its toll.

While the DGCA norms are broadly based on those framed by the U.S. and European aviation regulators, the Federation Aviation Administration and European Union Aviation Safety Agency, pilot unions underline that these are only prescriptive outer limits that are further negotiated by various airline unions, whereas cockpit crew in India have no such negotiating power as their unions are not recognised by airlines, who enforce only the upper thresholds laid down by the DGCA.

The impact of the exacting rosters is such that pilots are known to sleep inside the cockpit for 1.5 to 2.5 hours even on domestic and short-haul international flights of upto five hours

Add to these, the revised contract implemented by Air India and Air India Express since 2023, where pilots get a fixed pay equivalent to 40 hours of flying, down from 70-hours earlier, further pushing pilots to fly more to earn more.

What do the airlines say?

"Air India is committed to the safety and wellbeing of its crew members and has been implementing robust fatigue management protocols. Fatigue

Management is a key area of our operation, and we follow a comprehensive Fatigue Risk Management (FRM) process to assess any such report. This involves engaging the bio-mathematical fatigue tool (Jeppesen Boeing Alertness Model -BAM) for risk analysis and a dedicated review committee – Fatigue Safety Action Group (F-SAG) – besides, sustained monitoring by the regulator," the airline spokesperson told *The Hindu*. They added that they also have a non-punitive, confidential nature of fatigue reporting system for proactive and transparent feedback from the pilots. There was no response from IndiGo on its fatigue management practices.

Air India has over 3,500 pilots, which it said was more than adequate for the existing fleet and the "current" DGCA norms on pilot rest and duty times.

While there is a surge in travel demand, allowing airlines to raise airfares and witness record profits, they are also faced with the need to closely watch their costs as airport tariffs have gone up post-pandemic and an acute shortage of new aircraft due to supply-chain challenges has pushed the cost of the few available on lease by 20-30% higher than in 2019. Profit margins in airline business are slim, and according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), net profits are expected to be \$36.6 billion in 2025 with a 3.6% net profit margin which translates into average net profit per passenger being \$7.0. Flight crew salaries and expenses account for the third biggest cost for airlines globally at 8.7% of the total cost.

There were 11,775 pilots employed across airlines in the country as of November 2024, with a fleet size of nearly 800 aircraft. As the world's fastest growing aviation market, which has 1,000 aircraft on order between Air India and IndiGo alone set to be delivered by 2035, the demand for more pilots is expected to continue to grow and so will efforts to optimise their utilisation.

THE GIST

The Delhi High Court ruled that a vast chunk of the liberalised duty and rest norms for pilots that were unveiled in January 2024, but put under abeyance after opposition from airlines would come into effect from July 1, 2025.

Following the resurgence in travel post COVID-19, pilots say their share of daily flying has increased considerably, which includes up to four landings in a day that entail a flying duty of upto 10 hours and total duty period of 12-13 hours.

The impact of the exacting rosters is such that pilots are known to sleep inside the cockpit for 1.5 to 2.5 hours even on domestic and short-haul international flights of upto five hours

Why Are Pilots Asking for More Rest Hours?

पायलट अधिक विश्राम समय की मांग क्यों कर रहे हैं?

Post-COVID travel resurgence has increased pilots' daily flying hours, often requiring up to four landings in a day.



COVID-19 के बाद यात्रा में वृद्धि के कारण पायलटों की दैनिक उड़ान घंटे बढ़ गए हैं, जिससे उन्हें एक दिन में चार बार तक लैंडिंग करनी पड़ती है।

- **Approaches and landings require high concentration and complex decision-making, making excessive flying mentally and physically exhausting.**
अप्रोच और लैंडिंग में उच्च स्तर की एकाग्रता और जटिल निर्णय लेने की आवश्यकता होती है, जिससे अत्यधिक उड़ान मानसिक और शारीरिक रूप से थकाने वाली होती है।
- **Since 2019, pilots can be assigned two consecutive nights of flying, disrupting their natural sleep cycle (circadian rhythm), especially between 2 AM and 6 AM.**
2019 से, पायलटों को लगातार दो रातों तक उड़ान भरने के लिए नियुक्त किया जा सकता है, जिससे उनकी प्राकृतिक नींद की लय (सर्कैडियन रिदम) प्रभावित होती है, विशेष रूप से रात 2 बजे से सुबह 6 बजे के बीच।
- **Low-cost carriers have increased night flights, and many airlines no longer provide hotel rest at destinations, forcing pilots to operate return flights immediately.**
कम लागत वाली एयरलाइंस ने रात की उड़ानों में वृद्धि की है, और कई एयरलाइंस गंतव्य पर होटल में विश्राम की सुविधा नहीं देती, जिससे पायलटों को तुरंत वापसी उड़ान संचालित करनी पड़ती है।
- **Pilots' mandatory duty hours are often exceeded on routes to Gulf countries like Bahrain and Jeddah.**
गल्फ देशों (बहरीन और जेद्दा) के मार्गों पर, पायलटों के अनिवार्य ड्यूटी घंटे अक्सर पार हो जाते हैं।

Why Were the Relaxed Rules Opposed by Airlines?

एयरलाइंस ने शिथिल नियमों का विरोध क्यों किया?

- Airlines argued that **increasing rest hours and reducing flight time would require hiring more pilots, leading to operational delays and higher airfares.**
एयरलाइंस का तर्क था कि विश्राम के घंटे बढ़ाने और उड़ान समय कम करने से अधिक पायलटों की भर्ती करनी होगी, जिससे ऑपरेशनल देरी और किराए में वृद्धि होगी।
- **The DGCA initially supported stricter rest norms, citing incidents of pilot deaths due to fatigue.**
डीजीसीए ने शुरुआत में कड़े विश्राम नियमों का समर्थन किया, यह बताते हुए कि थकान के कारण पायलटों की मृत्यु की घटनाएं हुई हैं।
- **On August 17, 2023, IndiGo's Captain Manoj Balasubramani suffered a cardiac arrest at Nagpur airport just before his flight to Pune.**
17 अगस्त 2023 को, इंडिगो के कैप्टन मनोज बालासुब्रमण्यम को नागपुर हवाई अड्डे पर कार्डियक अरेस्ट हुआ, जब वे पुणे के लिए उड़ान भरने वाले थे।
- **Despite this, airlines pressured the DGCA to put the new rules on hold, leading pilots to approach the Delhi High Court in May 2024.**
इसके बावजूद, एयरलाइंस ने डीजीसीए पर दबाव डाला कि वह नए नियमों को स्थगित करे, जिससे पायलटों ने मई 2024 में दिल्ली हाई कोर्ट का रुख किया।

What Did the Delhi High Court Rule?

दिल्ली हाई कोर्ट का फैसला क्या था?



- On **February 24, 2025**, the Delhi High Court ruled that **most of the relaxed duty and rest norms would take effect from July 1, 2025**.
24 फरवरी 2025 को, दिल्ली हाई कोर्ट ने फैसला दिया कि अधिकांश नए विश्राम और इयूटी नियम 1 जुलाई 2025 से लागू होंगे।
- **Weekly rest will increase from 36 hours to 48 hours.**
साप्ताहिक विश्राम समय 36 घंटे से बढ़ाकर 48 घंटे कर दिया जाएगा।
- **Airlines must submit quarterly reports on pilot fatigue complaints and actions taken to the DGCA.**
एयरलाइंस को हर तिमाही में पायलटों की थकान संबंधी शिकायतों और उन्हें दूर करने के लिए उठाए गए कदमों की रिपोर्ट डीजीसीए को देनी होगी।
- **Some rules will be implemented by November 1, 2025, including:**
 - **Expanding the definition of night duty from 00:00-05:00 hrs to 00:00-06:00 hrs.**
 - **Capping night-duty landings to two per flight.**
 - **Reducing maximum flying duty to 8 hours on night shifts.**
 - **घोषित रात्री इयूटी की समय सीमा 00:00-05:00 से बढ़ाकर 00:00-06:00 की जाएगी।**
 - **रात्री इयूटी के दौरान अधिकतम दो लैंडिंग की अनुमति होगी।**
 - **रात्री इयूटी में अधिकतम उड़ान समय 8 घंटे तक सीमित होगा।**
- **Special allowances for unforeseen circumstances (weather delays, emergencies) have been reduced from three hours to two hours.**
अप्रत्याशित परिस्थितियों (मौसम, आपात स्थिति) में इयूटी समय को तीन घंटे से घटाकर दो घंटे कर दिया गया है।

How Many Days of Leave Do Pilots Get?

पायलटों को कितने दिनों की छुट्टी मिलती है?

- The **DGCA mandates weekly rest within 168 hours**, meaning pilots **get a weekly off only on the eighth day**.
डीजीसीए नियमों के अनुसार पायलटों को हर 168 घंटे में एक दिन का विश्राम मिलता है, यानी सप्ताह में केवल आठवें दिन अवकाश मिलता है।
- **Public or government holidays do not apply to pilots.**
पायलटों को कोई सार्वजनिक या सरकारी अवकाश नहीं मिलता।
- Different airlines provide varying leave benefits:
 - **Air India:** 6 casual leaves, 12 sick leaves, and 30 privilege leaves (applied a year in advance).
 - **IndiGo:** 42 privilege leaves for commanders, 22 for first officers.
 - **एयर इंडिया:** 6 आकस्मिक छुट्टियां, 12 बीमार अवकाश, और 30 विशेषाधिकार छुट्टियां (एक वर्ष पहले आवेदन करना आवश्यक)।
 - **इंडिगो:** कमांडरों के लिए 42 विशेषाधिकार छुट्टियां, प्रथम अधिकारियों के लिए 22।

Challenges Faced by Pilots Due to Erratic Rosters

अनियमित शेड्यूल के कारण पायलटों को होने वाली समस्याएं

- **Frequent last-minute schedule changes** disrupt pilots' sleep and rest cycles.
बार-बार अंतिम समय में शेड्यूल बदलने से पायलटों की नींद और विश्राम चक्र प्रभावित होता है।



- **Example:** A pilot with a **10 AM duty** may have it rescheduled to **4 PM**, which ends at **2 AM**, making pre-flight rest difficult.

उदाहरण: अगर किसी पायलट की ड्यूटी सुबह 10 बजे निर्धारित थी लेकिन उसे बदलकर शाम 4 बजे कर दिया गया, और रात 2 बजे समाप्त हुई, तो पूर्व-उड़ान विश्राम संभव नहीं होता।

- **Cockpit conditions contribute to fatigue:**
 - Restricted movement.
 - Low airflow and lighting.
 - Background noise and vibrations.
 - Oxygen pressure fluctuations.
 - सीमित गतिशीलता।
 - कम वायु प्रवाह और प्रकाश।
 - पृष्ठभूमि शोर और कंपन।
 - ऑक्सीजन दबाव में उतार-चढ़ाव।

Financial Pressure on Pilots

पायलटों पर आर्थिक दबाव

- Since 2023, Air India and Air India Express revised pilot contracts to reduce fixed pay from 70 flying hours to 40 flying hours.
2023 से, एयर इंडिया और एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस ने पायलट अनुबंधों में बदलाव किया, जिससे निश्चित वेतन 70 उड़ान घंटे से घटाकर 40 कर दिया गया।
- This forces pilots to fly more hours to maintain earnings.
इससे पायलटों को अधिक उड़ान भरने के लिए मजबूर किया जाता है ताकि उनकी आय बनी रहे।

Conclusion

निष्कर्ष

- Pilots demand more rest due to increased workload, disrupted sleep cycles, and extreme fatigue.
पायलट अधिक विश्राम की मांग कर रहे हैं क्योंकि उनका कार्यभार बढ़ गया है, नींद की लय बिगड़ गई है, और वे अत्यधिक थकान महसूस कर रहे हैं।
- The Delhi High Court ruling brings relief, but airlines continue to resist these changes due to cost concerns.
दिल्ली हाई कोर्ट का फैसला पायलटों के लिए राहत लेकर आया है, लेकिन एयरलाइंस लागत बढ़ने के कारण इन परिवर्तनों का विरोध कर रही हैं।

What Do the Airlines Say?

एयरलाइंस का क्या कहना है?

- Air India states that it is committed to the safety and well-being of its crew members and has implemented robust fatigue management protocols.
एयर इंडिया का कहना है कि वह अपने कर्मीयों की सुरक्षा और कल्याण के लिए प्रतिबद्ध है और उसने मजबूत थकान प्रबंधन प्रोटोकॉल लागू किए हैं।
- Fatigue Management is a key area of operation, and Air India follows a comprehensive Fatigue Risk Management (FRM) process to assess risks.



थकान प्रबंधन संचालन का एक प्रमुख क्षेत्र है, और एयर इंडिया व्यापक थकान जोखिम प्रबंधन (FRM) प्रक्रिया का पालन करता है।

- It uses the **Jeppesen Boeing Alertness Model (BAM)** for risk analysis and has a **Fatigue Safety Action Group (F-SAG)** for review and monitoring.

यह जेपसेन बोइंग अलर्टनेस मॉडल (BAM) का उपयोग जोखिम विश्लेषण के लिए करता है और थकान सुरक्षा कार्यवाही समूह (F-SAG) के माध्यम से समीक्षा और निगरानी करता है।

- Air India has a **non-punitive and confidential fatigue reporting system** to ensure **transparent feedback from pilots**.

एयर इंडिया के पास एक गैर-दंडात्मक और गोपनीय थकान रिपोर्टिंग प्रणाली है, जिससे पायलटों से पारदर्शी प्रतिक्रिया सुनिश्चित की जाती है।

- **IndiGo has not provided any response** regarding its fatigue management practices.

इंडिगो ने अपने थकान प्रबंधन उपायों पर कोई प्रतिक्रिया नहीं दी है।

Current Pilot Strength and Operational Challenges

वर्तमान पायलट संख्या और संचालन संबंधी चुनौतियाँ

- Air India employs over 3,500 pilots, which it claims is **sufficient for its current fleet and existing DGCA duty norms**.

एयर इंडिया के पास 3,500 से अधिक पायलट हैं, और उसका कहना है कि यह वर्तमान बेड़े और मौजूदा डीजीसीए ड्यूटी नियमों के लिए पर्याप्त है।

- **Despite high travel demand and increased airfare revenues**, airlines must control costs due to rising airport tariffs and aircraft leasing prices.

यात्रा की मांग और हवाई किराए से बढ़ी हुई आय के बावजूद, एयरलाइंस को बढ़ते हवाई अड्डा शुल्क और विमान लीजिंग लागत पर नियंत्रण रखना पड़ रहा है।

- **Aircraft leasing costs have risen by 20-30% since 2019** due to global supply chain issues.

वैश्विक आपूर्ति श्रृंखला की समस्याओं के कारण, विमान लीजिंग की लागत 2019 से 20-30% तक बढ़ गई है।

- **Profit margins in the airline business remain low.**

एयरलाइन व्यवसाय में लाभ मार्जिन अभी भी कम है।

- According to the **International Air Transport Association (IATA)**, global airline **net profits in 2025 are expected to be \$36.6 billion**, with a **3.6% profit margin**.

अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई परिवहन संघ (IATA) के अनुसार, वैश्विक एयरलाइंस का 2025 में शुद्ध लाभ \$36.6 बिलियन होने की उम्मीद है, जिसका लाभ मार्जिन 3.6% रहेगा।

- This translates to an **average profit of just \$7 per passenger**.

इसका अर्थ है कि प्रति यात्री औसत लाभ केवल \$7 होगा।

Pilot Workforce in India

भारत में पायलटों की संख्या

- As of **November 2024**, India had **11,775 employed pilots** and a total fleet of **nearly 800 aircraft**.

नवंबर 2024 तक, भारत में 11,775 पायलट कार्यरत थे और कुल लगभग 800 विमानों का बेड़ा था।



- India is the fastest-growing aviation market, with 1,000 aircraft on order from Air India and IndiGo alone, set for delivery by 2035.

भारत दुनिया का सबसे तेजी से बढ़ता हुआ विमानन बाजार है, जिसमें एयर इंडिया और इंडिगो द्वारा ही 1,000 विमानों का ऑर्डर दिया गया है, जो 2035 तक वितरित किए जाएंगे।

- The demand for more pilots is expected to continue rising, along with efforts to optimize pilot utilization.

अगले वर्षों में पायलटों की मांग लगातार बढ़ने की संभावना है, और एयरलाइंस उनके उपयोग को अधिकतम करने के प्रयास कर रही हैं।

KEYWORD

Surveillance capitalism: the power to control personal data

A look at how surveillance capitalism relies on the commodification of personal data; its impact on privacy and autonomy; and its deep ties to state surveillance

GS Paper II: Political Theory
Rebecca Rose Varghese

A was chatting with B and C in a social media group about an upcoming wedding she was attending. She casually mentioned needing a new dress and some accessories. Later that evening, as she scrolled through her social media feed, she was bombarded with advertisements for dresses, shoes, and jewellery – precisely like the ones she had described. Have you ever experienced this? And if you have, do you wonder how and why this happens, and whether your private conversations can be accessed by some other entity?

In simple terms, this is exactly what happens under surveillance capitalism. Surveillance capitalism is an economic system in which personal data is collected, analysed, and sold by tech conglomerates to predict and manipulate human behaviour. This system is so integral to the digital economy that it has reshaped capitalism itself, as American author and professor Shoshana Zuboff argues in her 2018 book *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. She describes surveillance capitalism as a new economic order that appropriates human experience for data-driven profit, and compares it to earlier exploitative systems like colonialism and industrial capitalism.

The concept
Unlike traditional capitalism, which revolves around goods and services, surveillance capitalism extracts human experience as raw material to mine data, predict behaviour, and influence decisions. This data is sold to advertisers, political campaigns, and other entities. Companies like Google, Meta, and Amazon have turned the internet into a vast surveillance machine, tracking and monetising every click, search, purchase, and in some cases even offline movements.

Zuboff describes the power from extensive data collection as instrumental power – control that does not rely on coercion but which subtly shapes behaviour. This is achieved through predictive analytics, recommendation algorithms, and targeted content, nudging individuals towards actions that benefit corporations. Alex Pentland's concept of social physics further illustrates how analysing vast datasets of human interactions reveals patterns, allowing corporations and policymakers to model, predict, and influence collective behaviour. This makes individuals more predictable economic actors, reinforcing surveillance capitalism's role in shaping consumer choices and social trends while prioritising profit over autonomy.

Different from past forms
Surveillance capitalism differs fundamentally from industrial capitalism. While industrial capitalism relies on labour and material production, surveillance capitalism profits from behavioural data extraction. Instead of tangible goods, companies commodify human experience, making users both consumers and raw material for



data-driven predictions.
Under industrial capitalism, companies focus on efficiency, productivity, and the exploitation and control of labour in manufacturing. Surveillance capitalism, however, is about controlling behaviour. Algorithms keep users engaged and guide them toward choices that benefit tech giants. This system prioritises data collection over autonomy, making every interaction a chance for monetisation.
One of the most concerning aspects of surveillance capitalism is its entanglement with state surveillance. Governments increasingly rely on private tech companies for intelligence gathering, policing, and social control. Instead of developing independent surveillance infrastructures, states now have access to

vast amounts of privately collected data, which they can obtain through legal means such as data-sharing agreements or extra-legal methods. The collaboration between corporations and states creates a system where the private sector's profit motives and public security interests align, at the expense of individual privacy and civil liberties. This reduces democratic accountability, as much of this surveillance happens within private corporations, beyond public scrutiny. Policies that favour deregulation and corporate autonomy allow this model to persist with minimal oversight, reinforcing a structure where both states and corporations benefit from mass surveillance while individuals face increasing risks of data exploitation and

loss of autonomy.

Eroding autonomy
Surveillance capitalism's reliance on extensive data collection has created a fragile and interconnected digital network. The sheer volume of data flowing through corporate and state surveillance systems mean that disruptions in one area can lead to cascading failures across multiple sectors. This systemic fragility becomes evident during major data breaches and algorithmic failures, which have led to real-world consequences such as financial instability and misinformation crises.

A notable example is the Cambridge Analytica scandal, where vast amounts of Facebook user data were harvested without consent in 2014, and used to build a system that could target voters in the U.S. with personalised political advertisements. This demonstrated how personal data, when exploited, can influence democratic processes, reinforcing concerns over the unchecked power of surveillance capitalism.
The pervasive data monitoring and predictive analytics employed by corporations further erode personal autonomy. Every action online is recorded, analysed, and used to refine behavioural predictions. Over time, users are subtly conditioned by algorithmic content, influencing their preferences and decisions in ways that serve the interests of advertisers and tech corporations rather than their own. While this seems harmless, it slowly erodes autonomy, allowing those in power to shape individual thinking for their benefit.

Challenges in regulation
Despite growing awareness of the dangers of surveillance capitalism, regulatory frameworks struggle to keep pace with technological advancements. Laws such as the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and India's Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDPA) attempt to give users more control over their data. However, these regulations fail to address the core issue – the commodification of personal information. This is largely because existing legal frameworks are designed to manage data privacy within traditional capitalist models rather than protect individuals from the structural impact of surveillance capitalism.

Moreover, corporate lobbying and political interests, particularly those in power, bungle these efforts as surveillance capitalism is highly beneficial for them. The rise of tech leaders as politicians is also an example of the interplay between surveillance capitalism and the surveillance state. When tech giants gain increasing influence over policymaking, they ensure that regulations remain favourable to their business interests. This dynamic makes it difficult to implement meaningful restrictions on data collection and behavioural manipulation. The blurred lines between political authority and corporate power reinforce the dominance of surveillance capitalism, limiting accountability and individual autonomy.
The concept of surveillance capitalism is crucial as our lives become increasingly entangled with technology. It serves as a warning of the potential dangers if we are not cautious and if states fail to implement proper regulations and restrictions on what private companies can access and use. This is an academic concept that must be widely discussed to bring about meaningful policy changes. Recognising its impact enables individuals to critically engage with digital platforms and demand stronger protections for their privacy and autonomy.

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Surveillance Capitalism: The Power to Control Personal Data

निगरानी पूंजीवाद: व्यक्तिगत डेटा को नियंत्रित करने की शक्ति

Surveillance capitalism is an economic system where personal data is collected, analyzed, and sold to predict and manipulate human behavior.

निगरानी पूंजीवाद एक आर्थिक प्रणाली है जिसमें व्यक्तिगत डेटा एकत्र किया जाता है, विश्लेषण किया जाता है और बेचा जाता है ताकि मानव व्यवहार की भविष्यवाणी और हेरफेर किया जा सके।

- This system has reshaped capitalism itself and is integral to the digital economy.

इस प्रणाली ने पूंजीवाद को ही नया रूप दे दिया है और यह डिजिटल अर्थव्यवस्था का अभिन्न हिस्सा बन गई है।

- Author Shoshana Zuboff, in her 2018 book *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, compares it to colonialism and industrial capitalism, calling it an exploitative economic order.

लेखिका शोशाना जूबॉफ ने अपनी 2018 की पुस्तक "द एज ऑफ सर्विलांस कैपिटलिज्म" में इसकी तुलना औपनिवेशिकवाद और औद्योगिक पूंजीवाद से की है, और इसे शोषणकारी आर्थिक व्यवस्था बताया है।

How Does Surveillance Capitalism Work?

निगरानी पूंजीवाद कैसे काम करता है?

- Unlike traditional capitalism, which is based on goods and services, surveillance capitalism extracts human experience as raw material to mine data, predict behavior, and influence decisions.

पारंपरिक पूंजीवाद जो सामान और सेवाओं पर आधारित होता है, उसके विपरीत निगरानी पूंजीवाद मानव अनुभव को कच्चे माल के रूप में उपयोग करता है ताकि डेटा प्राप्त किया जा सके, व्यवहार की भविष्यवाणी की जा सके और निर्णयों को प्रभावित किया जा सके।

- Companies like Google, Meta, and Amazon have turned the internet into a surveillance machine, tracking every click, search, and purchase.

गूगल, मेटा और अमेज़न जैसी कंपनियों ने इंटरनेट को निगरानी तंत्र में बदल दिया है, जो हर क्लिक, खोज और खरीदारी को ट्रैक करता है।

- Some platforms can even track offline movements, leading to concerns about privacy and data security.

कुछ प्लेटफॉर्म ऑफलाइन गतिविधियों को भी ट्रैक कर सकते हैं, जिससे गोपनीयता और डेटा सुरक्षा को लेकर चिंताएँ बढ़ रही हैं।

Instrumentarian Power: Control Without Coercion

इंस्ट्रुमेंटेरियन पावर: बिना जबरदस्ती नियंत्रण



- Zuboff introduces the term "instrumentarian power," which refers to a form of control that subtly shapes human behavior without force.
जूबॉफ ने "इंस्ट्रुमेंटैरियन पावर" शब्द पेश किया है, जो ऐसे नियंत्रण को दर्शाता है जो बिना जबरदस्ती किए मानव व्यवहार को प्रभावित करता है।
- This is achieved through predictive analytics, recommendation algorithms, and targeted content.
यह पूर्वानुमान विश्लेषण, सिफारिशी एल्गोरिदम और लक्षित सामग्री के माध्यम से किया जाता है।
- Social physics, a concept by Alex Pentland, explains how analyzing large datasets of human interactions allows companies and governments to predict and influence collective behavior.
सोशल फिजिक्स, जो एलेक्स पेंटलैंड द्वारा प्रस्तुत एक अवधारणा है, यह दर्शाती है कि मानव संपर्कों के विशाल डेटा का विश्लेषण करके कंपनियाँ और सरकारें सामूहिक व्यवहार की भविष्यवाणी और नियंत्रण कर सकती हैं।
- This makes individuals more predictable as consumers, reinforcing corporate profits over personal autonomy.
यह व्यक्तियों को एक अनुमानित उपभोक्ता में बदल देता है, जिससे कंपनियों को लाभ होता है और व्यक्तिगत स्वतंत्रता सीमित होती है।

Different from Past Forms

पिछले रूपों से भिन्न

- Surveillance capitalism differs from industrial capitalism, as it profits from behavioral data extraction rather than relying on labor and material production.
निगरानी पूंजीवाद औद्योगिक पूंजीवाद से भिन्न है, क्योंकि यह श्रम और भौतिक उत्पादन पर निर्भर होने के बजाय व्यवहार डेटा के संग्रह से लाभ कमाता है।
- Instead of tangible goods, companies commodify human experience, making users both consumers and raw material for data-driven predictions.
वास्तविक वस्तुओं के बजाय, कंपनियाँ मानव अनुभव का व्यवसायीकरण करती हैं, जिससे उपयोगकर्ता उपभोक्ता और डेटा-संचालित भविष्यवाणी के लिए कच्चे माल दोनों बन जाते हैं।
- Industrial capitalism focuses on efficiency and labor control, while surveillance capitalism prioritizes controlling behavior through algorithms and data collection.
औद्योगिक पूंजीवाद दक्षता और श्रम नियंत्रण पर केंद्रित होता है, जबकि निगरानी पूंजीवाद एल्गोरिदम और डेटा संग्रह के माध्यम से व्यवहार नियंत्रण को प्राथमिकता देता है।

Connection with State Surveillance

राज्य निगरानी से संबंध

- Governments increasingly rely on private tech companies for intelligence gathering, policing, and social control.
सरकारें बुद्धि एकत्र करने, कानून प्रवर्तन और सामाजिक नियंत्रण के लिए निजी टेक कंपनियों पर अधिक निर्भर होती जा रही हैं।
- States gain access to vast amounts of privately collected data through legal agreements or extralegal methods.



राज्य कानूनी समझौतों या गैर-कानूनी तरीकों से निजी कंपनियों द्वारा एकत्र किए गए विशाल डेटा तक पहुंच प्राप्त करते हैं।

- This aligns corporate profit motives with public security interests, often at the expense of individual privacy and civil liberties.

यह कॉर्पोरेट लाभ उद्देश्यों को सार्वजनिक सुरक्षा हितों के साथ जोड़ता है, जो अक्सर व्यक्तिगत गोपनीयता और नागरिक स्वतंत्रता को नुकसान पहुंचाता है।

- Private corporations operate beyond public scrutiny, making democratic accountability weaker.

निजी कंपनियाँ सार्वजनिक निगरानी से बाहर कार्य करती हैं, जिससे लोकतांत्रिक जवाबदेही कमजोर हो जाती है।

Eroding Autonomy

स्वायत्तता का क्षरण

- Surveillance capitalism has created an interconnected digital network, where data breaches and algorithmic failures can cause widespread disruptions.
निगरानी पूंजीवाद ने एक आपस में जुड़ा हुआ डिजिटल नेटवर्क बना दिया है, जहाँ डेटा उल्लंघन और एल्गोरिदम विफलताएँ व्यापक गड़बड़ियों का कारण बन सकती हैं।
- Example: The Cambridge Analytica scandal (2014), where Facebook user data was exploited to manipulate voter behavior in the U.S. elections.
उदाहरण: कैम्ब्रिज एनालिटिका घोटाला (2014), जिसमें फेसबुक उपयोगकर्ता डेटा का दुरुपयोग करके अमेरिकी चुनावों में मतदाता व्यवहार को प्रभावित किया गया।
- Every online action is recorded and analyzed, influencing preferences and decisions in ways that benefit advertisers and tech corporations.
हर ऑनलाइन गतिविधि को रिकॉर्ड और विश्लेषण किया जाता है, जिससे पसंद और निर्णय प्रभावित होते हैं, जो विज्ञापनदाताओं और टेक कंपनियों के हित में होते हैं।
- Over time, users are conditioned by algorithmic content, gradually reducing their autonomy and independent thinking.
समय के साथ, उपयोगकर्ता एल्गोरिदम-आधारित सामग्री से प्रभावित होते हैं, जिससे उनकी स्वायत्तता और स्वतंत्र सोच धीरे-धीरे घटती जाती है।

Challenges in Regulation

विनियमन में चुनौतियाँ

- Regulations like the EU's GDPR and India's DPDPA aim to give users more control over their data.
यूरोपीय संघ के जीडीपीआर और भारत के डिजिटल व्यक्तिगत डेटा संरक्षण अधिनियम (DPDPA) का उद्देश्य उपयोगकर्ताओं को उनके डेटा पर अधिक नियंत्रण देना है।
- However, these laws fail to address the core issue—the commodification of personal data.
हालाँकि, ये कानून मुख्य समस्या का समाधान नहीं करते—जो कि व्यक्तिगत डेटा का व्यवसायीकरण है।
- Corporate lobbying and political interests hinder strict regulations, as surveillance capitalism benefits both businesses and governments.



कॉर्पोरेट लॉबिंग और राजनीतिक हित सख्त नियमों को बाधित करते हैं, क्योंकि निगरानी पूंजीवाद से व्यवसायों और सरकारों दोनों को लाभ होता है।

- The rise of tech leaders as politicians further blurs the line between political authority and corporate influence.

टेक उद्योग के नेताओं का राजनीति में बढ़ता प्रभाव राजनीतिक अधिकार और कॉर्पोरेट प्रभाव के बीच की रेखा को और धुंधला कर देता है।

- As a result, strong regulations on data collection and behavioral manipulation remain difficult to implement.

परिणामस्वरूप, डेटा संग्रह और व्यवहार हेरफेर पर मजबूत नियम लागू करना मुश्किल हो जाता है।

Conclusion: Need for Awareness and Policy Changes

निष्कर्ष: जागरूकता और नीति परिवर्तन की आवश्यकता

- Surveillance capitalism is shaping modern society, making it critical to implement proper regulations.

निगरानी पूंजीवाद आधुनिक समाज को आकार दे रहा है, जिससे उचित नियम लागू करना आवश्यक हो जाता है।

- If left unchecked, it will continue to erode privacy, autonomy, and democratic accountability.

अगर इस पर नियंत्रण नहीं रखा गया, तो यह गोपनीयता, स्वायत्तता और लोकतांत्रिक जवाबदेही को कमजोर करता रहेगा।

- Public discourse and awareness are necessary to demand stronger legal protections against mass surveillance.

सार्वजनिक चर्चा और जागरूकता की आवश्यकता है ताकि व्यापक निगरानी के खिलाफ मजबूत कानूनी सुरक्षा की मांग की जा सके।



USAID: Cong., BJP take swipe at each other

Opposition party cites Finance Ministry report to say none of the seven USAID projects being implemented is related to voter turnout, while ruling party says the former is trying to deflect blame, adds that India's governance will not be dictated by foreign agents masquerading as benefactors

GS Paper II: Cooperative Federalism

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party on Monday again targeted the Congress over the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funding issue, saying the party and its "ecosystem" were "desperate" to deflect blame.

The Congress, however, said the USAID was currently implementing seven projects in collaboration with the Union government, and none were related to voter turnout, as per a report from the Finance Ministry.

The BJP's Information Technology Cell head, Amit Malviya, posted on X:

As stated in the Finance Ministry's annual report for 2023-24, USAID is currently implementing seven projects in collaboration with the Government of India... Not a single of these projects has to do with voter turnout

JAIRAM RAMESH
Congress leader

"The desperation of the Congress and its ecosystem of journalists and influencers to deflect from the controversial USAID funding – routed through various George Soros-linked fronts and a labyrinth of NGO structures to meddle with India's electoral process – is a dead giveaway. It is now obvious who the beneficiaries are."

Mr. Malviya's statement came in response to a post by Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh.

Mr. Ramesh said: "None other than the Union Fi-

The USAID projects in question are official govt.-to-govt. partnerships, transparently executed as Externally Aided Projects. The Centre simply channels these funds to States... which is well within the framework of cooperative federalism

AMIT MALVIYA
BJP IT cell head

nance Ministry has thoroughly exposed the lies of the PM and his jhoot brigade, including his dapper External Affairs Minister. As stated in the Finance Ministry's annual report for 2023-24, USAID is currently implementing seven projects in collaboration

with the Government of India, with a combined budget of approximately \$750 million. Not a single of these projects has to do with voter turnout. ALL of them are with and through the Union Government."

'Official partnerships'

Replying to his remarks, the BJP leader said: "...let us be clear –the USAID projects in question are official government-to-government partnerships, transparently executed as Externally Aided Projects (EAPs). The Centre simply channels these funds to States for development, which is well within the framework of cooperative federalism."

He said: "In fact, the ve-

ry projects cited in the Finance Ministry's 2023-24 report (uploaded in July 2024) trace their origins back to 2010-11. This isn't new – even the 2014-15 report confirms the same. The question is: why is the Congress defending covert interference by foreign donors and organisations linked to George Soros, which seek to destabilise our democracy under the guise of philanthropy? India's sovereignty is not up for sale."

"Let us drop the selective amnesia and political theatrics. Facts matter. India's governance will not be dictated by foreign agents masquerading as benefactors," Mr. Malviya said.

USAID: Congress and BJP Take Swipes at Each Other

यूएसएआईडी: कांग्रेस और बीजेपी के बीच आरोप-प्रत्यारोप

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) accused the Congress and its supporters of trying to deflect attention from the USAID funding issue.

भारतीय जनता पार्टी (बीजेपी) ने कांग्रेस और उसके समर्थकों पर यूएसएआईडी फंडिंग मुद्दे से ध्यान भटकाने का आरोप लगाया।

- The Congress cited a Finance Ministry report, stating that USAID is implementing seven projects in collaboration with the Indian government, and none of them are related to voter turnout.

कांग्रेस ने वित्त मंत्रालय की रिपोर्ट का हवाला दिया, जिसमें कहा गया कि यूएसएआईडी वर्तमान में भारत सरकार के साथ मिलकर सात परियोजनाओं को लागू कर रहा है, और इनमें से कोई भी मतदाता भागीदारी से संबंधित नहीं है।

BJP's Allegations

बीजेपी के आरोप

- Amit Malviya, head of BJP's IT Cell, claimed that USAID funding is linked to George Soros-backed organizations that aim to interfere in India's electoral process.
- बीजेपी के आईटी सेल प्रमुख अमित मालवीय ने दावा किया कि यूएसएआईडी फंडिंग जॉर्ज सोरोस समर्थित संगठनों से जुड़ी हुई है, जो भारत की चुनावी प्रक्रिया में हस्तक्षेप करना चाहते हैं।



- He stated that Congress and its ecosystem of journalists and influencers are trying to cover up this interference.
उन्होंने कहा कि कांग्रेस और उसके समर्थक पत्रकार और प्रभावशाली लोग इस हस्तक्षेप को छिपाने का प्रयास कर रहे हैं।

Congress' Response

कांग्रेस की प्रतिक्रिया

- Congress leader Jairam Ramesh countered BJP's claims, stating that the Finance Ministry's 2023-24 report confirms that USAID projects are official collaborations with the Indian government.
कांग्रेस नेता जयराम रमेश ने बीजेपी के दावों का खंडन किया, यह कहते हुए कि वित्त मंत्रालय की 2023-24 की रिपोर्ट पुष्टि करती है कि यूएसएआईडी परियोजनाएं भारत सरकार के साथ आधिकारिक सहयोग में हैं।
- He accused the Prime Minister and External Affairs Minister of spreading false claims regarding USAID's involvement in voter turnout.
उन्होंने प्रधानमंत्री और विदेश मंत्री पर यूएसएआईडी की मतदाता भागीदारी में संलिप्तता को लेकर झूठ फैलाने का आरोप लगाया।

BJP's Counterattack

बीजेपी का जवाबी हमला

- BJP emphasized that USAID projects are externally aided projects (EAPs), which follow cooperative federalism and are transparently executed.
बीजेपी ने कहा कि यूएसएआईडी परियोजनाएं बाहरी सहायता प्राप्त परियोजनाएं (EAPs) हैं, जो सहकारी संघवाद के तहत पारदर्शी तरीके से लागू की जाती हैं।
- BJP pointed out that these projects originated in 2010-11, during Congress-led UPA government, and similar funding continued even in 2014-15.
बीजेपी ने कहा कि इन परियोजनाओं की शुरुआत 2010-11 में कांग्रेस के नेतृत्व वाली यूपीए सरकार के दौरान हुई थी, और 2014-15 में भी ऐसी फंडिंग जारी रही।
- The party questioned why Congress is defending foreign organizations like George Soros-linked groups, which, according to BJP, attempt to destabilize India under the guise of philanthropy.
पार्टी ने पूछा कि कांग्रेस जॉर्ज सोरोस से जुड़े विदेशी संगठनों का बचाव क्यों कर रही है, जो, बीजेपी के अनुसार, दान के नाम पर भारत को अस्थिर करने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं।

India's Sovereignty and Governance

भारत की संप्रभुता और शासन व्यवस्था

- BJP asserted that India's governance will not be dictated by foreign agents masquerading as benefactors.





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बीजेपी ने कहा कि भारत की शासन व्यवस्था विदेशी एजेंटों द्वारा संचालित नहीं होगी, जो खुद को दानदाता के रूप में पेश कर रहे हैं।

Malviya accused Congress of selective amnesia and political theatrics, stating that facts matter and India's sovereignty is non-negotiable.

मालवीय ने कांग्रेस पर Selective Amnesia (चुनिंदा भूलने की बीमारी) और राजनीतिक नाटक करने का आरोप लगाया, यह कहते हुए कि तथ्य महत्वपूर्ण हैं और भारत की संप्रभुता किसी भी हालत में समझौते के लिए नहीं है।

To watch an in-depth discussion on the topic, click on the YouTube link below:

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

For regular updates on UPSC and PCS preparation, join our Telegram Channel: <https://t.me/patrioticIAS>

25_02_2025 DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

(GS Paper III: Economy, S&T, Environment, DM, IS)

1. Not Business as Usual

यह सामान्य व्यापार नहीं है

2. M.P. Receives Investment Proposals Worth Over ₹3 Lakh Crore on First Day of Mega Investor Meet

मध्य प्रदेश को मेगा इन्वेस्टर मीट के पहले दिन ₹3 लाख करोड़ से अधिक के निवेश प्रस्ताव मिले

3. Our Aim is to Reach Defence Exports Worth ₹50,000 Crore by 2029: Rajnath Singh

2029 तक रक्षा निर्यात ₹50,000 करोड़ तक पहुँचाने का लक्ष्य: राजनाथ सिंह

4. House Panel Members Question Govt. on Impact of Corporate Tax Cut

संसदीय समिति ने सरकार से कॉर्पोरेट टैक्स कटौती के प्रभाव पर सवाल किए

5. Emission Intensity Targets to be Released by Month-End

Website: patrioticias.in

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



महीने के अंत तक उत्सर्जन तीव्रता लक्ष्य जारी किए जाएंगे

6. Indian Tech Industry Revenue Projected to Grow 5.1% Even as Job Loss Concerns Persist

भारतीय टेक उद्योग की राजस्व वृद्धि 5.1% रहने की उम्मीद, लेकिन नौकरियों की चिंता बनी हुई

GS Paper III: Pharmaceutical Industry

Not business as usual

India's reputation for high-quality generic drugs should not be put at risk

The pharmacy of the global South is facing a crisis of reputation. After cough syrups made by pharmaceutical companies based in India, which had unacceptable amounts of diethylene glycol and/or ethylene glycol, killed 66 children in Gambia, 65 children in Uzbekistan in 2022, and 12 children in Cameroon in 2023, and India-made eye drops contaminated by drug-resistant bacteria killed three persons and blinded eight in the U.S., again in 2023, the spotlight is back on Indian drug companies for all the wrong reasons. A BBC Eye investigation has brought to light the criminal actions of Aveo Pharmaceuticals, a Maharashtra-based company, which was manufacturing and exporting unapproved, highly addictive opioid drug combinations to West Africa. The "medicines" contain tapentadol, a powerful opioid, and carisoprodol, a highly addictive muscle relaxant. While the Indian drug regulator has approved tapentadol and carisoprodol as standalone drugs, the combination has no clearance. Even if the company's claim that the drug combination has been approved by the State drug authority turns out to be correct, it is still illegal as only the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) can approve any novel fixed dose combination (FDC) drugs for safety and efficacy. It is only after this approval that State drug authorities can issue a manufacturing licence. The Health Ministry routinely banning FDCs is only because the State drug authorities ignore this provision in the law with impunity.

India questioned and denied the World Health Organization's report about the lethal cough syrup sent to Gambia, but in the latest case, CDSCO and the State regulatory authority swung into action even in the absence of any complaint by West African countries. The reason: the BBC investigation's irrefutable video evidence that the company was in the "business" of manufacturing and exporting the dangerous combination drug despite knowing the harmful effects. The seizure of nearly 13 million "medicines" and 26 batches of active pharmaceutical ingredients of tapentadol and carisoprodol are clinching evidence for taking criminal action against the company. While the moves by the authorities – to issue a 'stop activity' order, withdraw the manufacturing licence and permission to export the drugs by any company, and a show cause notice – inspire some confidence, only stringent punishment can serve as a deterrent. Indian pharmaceutical companies are known in the global South for their high-quality generic drugs. It is for the drug regulator to ensure that India continues to be famous for this and not gain notoriety for producing and exporting deadly synthetic opioids as drugs. Manufacturing synthetic opioid drugs cannot be any pharmaceutical company's "business".

Not Business as Usual

यह सामान्य व्यापार नहीं है

India's reputation as the "pharmacy of the global South" is under threat due to recent pharmaceutical scandals.

भारत की "वैश्विक दक्षिण की फार्मसी" के रूप में प्रतिष्ठा हाल ही की फार्मास्युटिकल घोटालों के कारण खतरे में है।

- Contaminated cough syrups made in India led to the deaths of 66 children in Gambia (2022), 65 in Uzbekistan (2022), and 12 in Cameroon (2023).

भारत में बने दूषित खांसी के सिरप के कारण गाम्बिया में 66 (2022), उज्बेकिस्तान में 65 (2022), और कैमरून में 12 (2023) बच्चों की मौत हुई।

- In 2023, India-made eye drops contaminated with drug-resistant bacteria caused three deaths and blinded eight people in the U.S.

2023 में, भारत में बने आई ड्रॉप्स में ड्रग-प्रतिरोधी बैक्टीरिया पाए गए, जिससे अमेरिका में तीन लोगों की मौत हुई और आठ लोग अंधे हो गए।

BBC Investigation and Aveo Pharmaceuticals Scandal

बीबीसी जांच और एवियो फार्मास्युटिकल्स घोटाला

- A BBC Eye investigation exposed Aveo Pharmaceuticals, a Maharashtra-based company, for illegally manufacturing and exporting highly addictive opioid drugs to West Africa.

बीबीसी आई जांच ने महाराष्ट्र स्थित एवियो फार्मास्युटिकल्स को अवैध रूप से अत्यधिक नशे की लत वाली ओपिओइड दवाओं को पश्चिम अफ्रीका में निर्यात करने के लिए उजागर किया।



- These "medicines" contained tapentadol (a powerful opioid) and carisoprodol (a muscle relaxant), which had no regulatory approval as a combination drug. ये "दवाएँ" टापेंटाडोल (एक शक्तिशाली ओपिओइड) और कारिसोप्रोडोल (एक मांसपेशी शिथिलक) से बनी थीं, जिनकी संयुक्त रूप से कोई नियामक स्वीकृति नहीं थी।
- Even if the State drug authority approved it, such drugs require mandatory clearance from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO). भले ही राज्य दवा प्राधिकरण ने इसे मंजूरी दी हो, ऐसी दवाओं के लिए केंद्रीय औषधि मानक नियंत्रण संगठन (CDSCO) की अनिवार्य स्वीकृति आवश्यक होती है।

Regulatory Action Against Aveo Pharmaceuticals

एवियो फार्मास्युटिकल्स के खिलाफ नियामक कार्रवाई

- CDSCO and State regulatory authorities acted swiftly, even without a formal complaint from West African nations. CDSCO और राज्य नियामक प्राधिकरणों ने तेजी से कार्रवाई की, भले ही पश्चिम अफ्रीकी देशों से कोई औपचारिक शिकायत न मिली हो।
- The BBC investigation provided video evidence that Aveo Pharmaceuticals knowingly manufactured and exported the dangerous drug. बीबीसी जांच ने वीडियो साक्ष्य प्रस्तुत किए, जिसमें एवियो फार्मास्युटिकल्स को जानबूझकर खतरनाक दवा का उत्पादन और निर्यात करते दिखाया गया।
- Authorities seized nearly 13 million "medicines" and 26 batches of active pharmaceutical ingredients used in these drugs. अधिकारियों ने लगभग 1.3 करोड़ "दवाएँ" और 26 बैच सक्रिय फार्मास्युटिकल घटकों को जब्त किया।

Need for Stronger Regulations

मजबूत नियमों की आवश्यकता

- The Health Ministry frequently bans Fixed Dose Combination (FDC) drugs because State drug authorities continue approving them illegally. स्वास्थ्य मंत्रालय अक्सर निश्चित खुराक संयोजन (FDC) दवाओं पर प्रतिबंध लगाता है, क्योंकि राज्य दवा प्राधिकरण उन्हें अवैध रूप से स्वीकृत करते रहते हैं।
- Indian pharmaceutical companies are renowned for high-quality generic drugs, and this reputation must be preserved. भारतीय फार्मास्युटिकल कंपनियाँ उच्च गुणवत्ता वाली जेनेरिक दवाओं के लिए प्रसिद्ध हैं, और इस प्रतिष्ठा को बचाए रखना आवश्यक है।
- Manufacturing synthetic opioids for illicit trade should never be considered a legitimate pharmaceutical business. अवैध व्यापार के लिए सिंथेटिक ओपिओइड का उत्पादन किसी भी परिस्थिति में फार्मास्युटिकल व्यवसाय नहीं हो सकता।
- Strict punishment for offenders is necessary to ensure that India remains known for quality medicine, not for illegal drug trade. अपराधियों के लिए सख्त सजा आवश्यक है, ताकि भारत गुणवत्तापूर्ण दवाओं के लिए जाना जाए, न कि अवैध नशीली दवाओं के व्यापार के लिए।



M.P. receives proposals of over ₹3 lakh crore on first day of mega investor meet

GS Paper III: Investment

Mehur Maupani
BHOPAL

The Adani Group, Reliance Industries, National Thermal Power Corporation, Avaada Group and Hindalco Industries were among the major companies that committed to invest in Madhya Pradesh on the inaugural day of the State's Global Investors Summit (GIS) in Bhopal on Monday.

The State government signed memoranda of understanding (MoUs) worth more than ₹3 lakh crore at the two-day summit inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The MoUs were inked in various sectors such as renewable energy, trade, innovation and skill development.

In his inaugural address, Mr. Modi said that Madhya Pradesh was turning into a preferred investment destination and this was the right time to invest in the State with a strong talent pool and thriving industries.



Narendra Modi

“Madhya Pradesh is the fifth largest State of India in terms of population. It is among the top States of India in terms of agriculture and is also among the top five States of the country in terms of minerals. It has every possibility, every potential, to be among the top five States of the country in terms of GDP,” Mr. Modi said.

In a veiled attack at the State's Congress regime before 2003, Mr. Modi said that industrial development in the State was a challenge two decades ago but later BJP governments had focused on good governance.

Among the significant investment proposals received by the State, the Adani Group promised ₹1.1 lakh crore into pumped storage, cement, mining, smart meters and thermal energy. The Group's chairman, Gautam Adani, said that the move will create 1.2 lakh employment opportunities by 2030.

NTPC Green Energy Ltd. signed an MoU with Madhya Pradesh Power Generating Company Ltd. for renewable power generation projects with an investment of ₹1.2 lakh crore.

The Reliance Industries also entered into an MoU with the State for investment of ₹60,000 crore for biofuel based projects.

Avaada Group chairman Vineet Mittal announced an investment of ₹50,000 crore in renewable energy projects over the next five years.

Aditya Birla Group's Hindalco Industries promised an investment of ₹15,000 crore over the next five years.

M.P. Receives Investment Proposals Worth Over ₹3 Lakh Crore on First Day of Mega Investor Meet



मध्य प्रदेश को मेगा इन्वेस्टर मीट के पहले दिन ₹3 लाख करोड़ से अधिक के निवेश प्रस्ताव मिले

Major companies like Adani Group, Reliance Industries, NTPC, Avaada Group, and Hindalco Industries committed to investing in Madhya Pradesh during the Global Investors Summit (GIS) in Bhopal.

अदानी समूह, रिलायंस इंडस्ट्रीज, एनटीपीसी, अवाडा ग्रुप और हिंदाल्को इंडस्ट्रीज जैसी प्रमुख कंपनियों ने भोपाल में ग्लोबल इन्वेस्टर्स समिट (GIS) के दौरान मध्य प्रदेश में निवेश करने का संकल्प लिया।

- The State government signed MoUs worth over ₹3 lakh crore on the first day of the two-day summit, which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. राज्य सरकार ने दो दिवसीय समिट के पहले दिन ₹3 लाख करोड़ से अधिक के समझौता ज्ञापनों (MoUs) पर हस्ताक्षर किए, जिसका उद्घाटन प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने किया।

Key Sectors of Investment

निवेश के प्रमुख क्षेत्र

- MoUs were signed in renewable energy, trade, innovation, and skill development. नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा, व्यापार, नवाचार और कौशल विकास के क्षेत्रों में समझौता ज्ञापनों पर हस्ताक्षर किए गए।
- PM Modi highlighted that Madhya Pradesh is becoming a preferred investment destination due to its strong talent pool and thriving industries. प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने कहा कि मध्य प्रदेश एक पसंदीदा निवेश गंतव्य बन रहा है क्योंकि यहां मजबूत प्रतिभा पूल और समृद्ध उद्योग हैं।

Madhya Pradesh's Growth Potential

मध्य प्रदेश की विकास क्षमता

- M.P. is India's fifth-largest State by population and among the top States in agriculture and minerals. **मध्य प्रदेश भारत का पांचवां सबसे बड़ा राज्य है और कृषि और खनिजों में शीर्ष राज्यों में शामिल है।
- PM Modi stated that M.P. has the potential to be among India's top five States in GDP. प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने कहा कि मध्य प्रदेश में भारत के शीर्ष पांच राज्यों में जीडीपी के मामले में आने की क्षमता है।
- He criticized the Congress-led government before 2003, stating that industrial development was a challenge back then, but BJP governments have focused on good governance.



उन्होंने 2003 से पहले कांग्रेस सरकार की आलोचना की, यह कहते हुए कि तब औद्योगिक विकास एक चुनौती था, लेकिन बीजेपी सरकारों ने सुशासन पर ध्यान केंद्रित किया।

Major Investment Proposals

प्रमुख निवेश प्रस्ताव

- **Adani Group committed ₹1.1 lakh crore in pumped storage, cement, mining, smart meters, and thermal energy.**
अदानी समूह ने ₹1.1 लाख करोड़ का निवेश करने का वादा किया पंपड स्टोरेज, सीमेंट, खनन, स्मार्ट मीटर और थर्मल ऊर्जा में।
 - **This investment will create 1.2 lakh employment opportunities by 2030.**
इस निवेश से 2030 तक 1.2 लाख रोजगार के अवसर पैदा होंगे।
- **NTPC Green Energy Ltd. signed an MoU worth ₹1.2 lakh crore with Madhya Pradesh Power Generating Company Ltd. for renewable power projects.**
एनटीपीसी ग्रीन एनर्जी लिमिटेड ने ₹1.2 लाख करोड़ का समझौता ज्ञापन (MoU) किया मध्य प्रदेश पावर जनरेटिंग कंपनी लिमिटेड के साथ नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा परियोजनाओं के लिए।
- **Reliance Industries signed an MoU worth ₹60,000 crore for biofuel-based projects.**
रिलायंस इंडस्ट्रीज ने ₹60,000 करोड़ के समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर किए जैव ईंधन (बायोफ्यूल) आधारित परियोजनाओं के लिए।
- **Avaada Group Chairman Vineet Mittal announced a ₹50,000 crore investment in renewable energy projects over the next five years.**
अवाडा ग्रुप के चेयरमैन विनीत मित्तल ने अगले पांच वर्षों में नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा परियोजनाओं में ₹50,000 करोड़ के निवेश की घोषणा की।
- **Hindalco Industries (Aditya Birla Group) pledged ₹15,000 crore investment over the next five years.**
हिंदाल्को इंडस्ट्रीज (आदित्य बिड़ला ग्रुप) ने अगले पांच वर्षों में ₹15,000 करोड़ के निवेश का वादा किया।



Our aim is to reach defence exports worth ₹50,000 crore by 2029, says Rajnath Singh

GS Paper III: Defence

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday said India had achieved 88% self-sufficiency in ammunition production, and defence exports had reached about ₹23,000 crore in 2023-24.

He was speaking at the 16th Foundation Day of the Indian Institute of Technology, Mandi in Himachal Pradesh.

“Our goal is to reach ₹50,000 crore in defence exports by 2029,” Mr. Singh said.

Economic growth

The Minister said the government was committed to creating a robust defence industry in India, which supported the security of the nation and contributed to the country's economic growth.

He called upon IIT-Mandi students to contribute to this vision by focusing on technological solutions that would enhance India's defence capabilities and



Rajnath Singh

further advance the nation's self-reliance in this critical sector.

Emphasising the necessity of innovation and knowledge-creation in shaping the future of technology, Mr. Singh underscored the importance of fostering a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation that would allow India to lead in emerging fields, including artificial intelligence, machine learning, and digital technologies.

He asked the students to excel in technological innovation in order to make India a developed country by 2047, and advised them to follow the principles of

“initiate, improve, and transform (IIT)”.

“India's technological sector is on the rise and is expected to reach \$300-350 billion dollars in the next five years. With more than 1.25 lakh start-ups and 110 unicorns, our country is emerging as the third-largest startup ecosystem in the world,” Mr. Singh said.

Digital economy

The Defence Minister highlighted India's digital economy.

“India's telecom sector is now the second-largest in the world. With the success of initiatives like UPI (Unified Payments Interface), India is setting global standards in digital transactions. We are in the midst of an unparalleled digital revolution. The students should actively contribute to the development of India's digital ecosystem as technological innovation is central to India's growth story in the coming decades,” Mr. Singh said.

Our Aim is to Reach Defence Exports Worth ₹50,000 Crore by 2029: Rajnath Singh

2029 तक रक्षा निर्यात

₹50,000 करोड़ तक पहुँचाने

का लक्ष्य: राजनाथ सिंह

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh stated that India had achieved 88% self-sufficiency in ammunition production and defence exports reached ₹23,000 crore in 2023-24.

रक्षा मंत्री राजनाथ सिंह ने कहा

कि भारत ने 88% गोला-बारूद

उत्पादन में आत्मनिर्भरता हासिल

कर ली है और 2023-24 में रक्षा

निर्यात ₹23,000 करोड़ तक पहुँच

गया।

- He announced that India's goal is to achieve ₹50,000 crore in defence exports by 2029.

उन्होंने घोषणा की कि भारत का लक्ष्य 2029 तक रक्षा निर्यात ₹50,000 करोड़ तक पहुँचाना है।

Economic Growth and Defence Industry

आर्थिक वृद्धि और रक्षा उद्योग

- The Minister emphasized that the government is committed to developing a strong defence industry that ensures national security and contributes to economic growth.

मंत्री ने जोर दिया कि सरकार एक मजबूत रक्षा उद्योग के विकास के लिए प्रतिबद्ध है, जो राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित करेगा और आर्थिक विकास में योगदान देगा।

- He urged IIT-Mandi students to focus on technological innovations to enhance India's defence capabilities.



उन्होंने आईआईटी-मंडी के छात्रों से अनुरोध किया कि वे तकनीकी नवाचारों पर ध्यान केंद्रित करें ताकि भारत की रक्षा क्षमता को बढ़ाया जा सके।

Need for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

नवाचार और उद्यमशीलता की आवश्यकता

- **Innovation and knowledge creation** are crucial for **shaping the future of technology**.
नवाचार और ज्ञान सृजन तकनीक के भविष्य को आकार देने के लिए महत्वपूर्ण हैं।
- Mr. Singh emphasized fostering a **culture of entrepreneurship and technological leadership** in emerging fields such as **Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), and Digital Technologies**.
श्री सिंह ने उद्यमशीलता और तकनीकी नेतृत्व को बढ़ावा देने पर जोर दिया, विशेष रूप से कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता (AI), मशीन लर्निंग (ML), और डिजिटल तकनीकों के क्षेत्र में।
- He advised students to **follow the principles of "Initiate, Improve, and Transform (IIT)"** to help make **India a developed country by 2047**.
उन्होंने छात्रों को "आरंभ करें, सुधार करें और रूपांतरित करें (IIT)" के सिद्धांतों का पालन करने की सलाह दी, ताकि भारत 2047 तक एक विकसित राष्ट्र बन सके।

India's Growing Technological Sector

भारत का बढ़ता तकनीकी क्षेत्र

- **India's technological sector is expected to grow to \$300-350 billion** in the next five years.
भारत का तकनीकी क्षेत्र अगले पांच वर्षों में \$300-350 अरब तक पहुँचने की उम्मीद है।
- **With over 1.25 lakh startups and 110 unicorns**, India is emerging as the **third-largest startup ecosystem in the world**.
1.25 लाख से अधिक स्टार्टअप्स और 110 यूनिकॉर्न्स के साथ, भारत दुनिया में तीसरा सबसे बड़ा स्टार्टअप इकोसिस्टम बन रहा है।

India's Digital Economy and Telecom Sector

भारत की डिजिटल अर्थव्यवस्था और दूरसंचार क्षेत्र

- **India's telecom sector is the second-largest in the world**.
भारत का दूरसंचार क्षेत्र दुनिया में दूसरा सबसे बड़ा है।
- **The success of UPI (Unified Payments Interface)** has positioned India as a **global leader in digital transactions**.
यूपीआई (यूनिफाइड पेमेंट्स इंटरफेस) की सफलता ने भारत को डिजिटल लेन-देन में वैश्विक नेता बना दिया है।
- **India is witnessing a major digital revolution**, and students should **contribute to the development of India's digital ecosystem**.



House panel members question govt. on impact of corporate tax cut

GS Paper III;
economics

The Hindu
NEW DELHI

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance, during a six-hour meeting on Monday, questioned the government on the impact of the corporate tax cut introduced five years ago.

As part of a review of the Union Budget, during recess of the Budget Session of Parliament which will reconvene on March 10, the Standing Committee headed by BJP MP Bhartuhari Mahtab met officials from the departments of Economic Affairs, Expenditure, Financial Services, Public Enterprises, Invest-

ment and Public Asset Management, and Revenue. a meeting, they sought answers on whether the 2019 tax cut had increased private investment

ment and Public Asset Management, and Revenue.

According to sources, many Opposition members sought answers from the Finance Ministry on whether the corporate tax cuts introduced in September 2019 had increased private investment.

“The government has forgone revenue of nearly ₹1.84 lakh crore due to corporate tax cuts in just the

first two years of implementation of this cut. It is a valid question to ask that in lieu of giving up this revenue, what has been the corresponding private investment,” one of the Opposition MPs said.

Segueing into this debate were questions about how the government planned to meet the shortfall arising out of the income tax rebate announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech on February 1. “With this measure, the government is forgoing income tax receipts of ₹1 lakh crore. How will the government meet this shortfall, considering

the already unhealthy debt-to-GDP ratio,” another member said. There were also questions on the number of “zero-filers” after the changes in the income tax slabs.

The BJP MPs, according to sources, also used the opportunity to allege “harassment” caused by the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime. They highlighted the complicated slabs and arbitrary arrest powers. One of the BJP MPs asked for a detailed review of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), asking for the number of successful convictions upheld by the Supreme Court so far.

House Panel Members Question Govt. on Impact of Corporate Tax Cut

संसदीय समिति ने सरकार से कॉर्पोरेट टैक्स कटौती के प्रभाव पर सवाल किए

- The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance held a six-hour meeting on Monday to question the government on the impact of corporate tax cuts introduced five years ago.

संसदीय वित्त स्थायी समिति ने सोमवार को छह घंटे की बैठक की, जिसमें पांच साल पहले लागू की गई कॉर्पोरेट टैक्स कटौती के प्रभाव पर सरकार से सवाल किए गए।

- The meeting was part of a Union Budget review during the recess of the Budget Session, which will reconvene on March 10.

यह बैठक संघीय बजट की समीक्षा के तहत हुई, जिसका सत्र 10 मार्च को फिर से शुरू होगा।

Questions on Corporate Tax Cut Impact

कॉर्पोरेट टैक्स कटौती के प्रभाव पर सवाल



- **Opposition members questioned** whether the **corporate tax cuts of September 2019 increased private investment.**
विपक्षी सदस्यों ने सवाल उठाया कि क्या सितंबर 2019 की कॉर्पोरेट टैक्स कटौती से निजी निवेश में वृद्धि हुई।
- **Government revenue loss of ₹1.84 lakh crore in the first two years of tax cuts raised concerns about private investment returns.**
सरकार को पहले दो वर्षों में ₹1.84 लाख करोड़ के राजस्व नुकसान को लेकर यह सवाल उठा कि इसके बदले निजी निवेश कितना हुआ।

Concerns Over Income Tax Rebate

आयकर छूट पर चिंता

- **The Finance Minister announced an income tax rebate on February 1, leading to ₹1 lakh crore revenue loss.**
वित्त मंत्री ने 1 फरवरी को आयकर छूट की घोषणा की, जिससे सरकार को ₹1 लाख करोड़ का राजस्व नुकसान होगा।
- **Opposition MPs asked how the govt. plans to compensate for this shortfall amid an already high debt-to-GDP ratio.**
विपक्षी सांसदों ने पूछा कि सरकार इस राजस्व घाटे की भरपाई कैसे करेगी, जब पहले से ही राजकोषीय घाटा (Debt-to-GDP Ratio) बढ़ा हुआ है।
- **Members also raised questions about the number of "zero-filers" after the income tax slab changes.**
सदस्यों ने आयकर स्लैब परिवर्तन के बाद "शून्य फाइलर" (zero-filers) की संख्या पर भी सवाल उठाए।

BJP MPs' Concerns on GST and PMLA

बीजेपी सांसदों की जीएसटी और पीएमएलए पर चिंता

- **BJP MPs expressed concerns about the "harassment" caused by the GST regime.**
बीजेपी सांसदों ने जीएसटी प्रणाली से उत्पन्न "उत्पीड़न" को लेकर चिंता व्यक्त की।
- **They criticized complex tax slabs and arbitrary arrest powers under GST laws.**
उन्होंने जीएसटी कानूनों में जटिल कर स्लैब और मनमानी गिरफ्तारी शक्तियों की आलोचना की।
- **A BJP MP called for a detailed review of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).**
एक बीजेपी सांसद ने मनी लॉन्ड्रिंग रोकथाम अधिनियम (PMLA) की विस्तृत समीक्षा की मांग की।
- **The MP asked for data on successful convictions upheld by the Supreme Court under PMLA.**
सांसद ने सुप्रीम कोर्ट द्वारा PMLA के तहत दी गई सफल दोषसिद्धियों (convictions) पर डेटा मांगा।



Emission Intensity Targets to be Released by Month-End

Emission intensity targets to be released by month-end

Industries will have a year to set up compliance measures; trading in carbon credits likely to begin by October 2026; Indian carbon market establishes framework to reduce, remove, or avoid GHGs

GS Paper III: Environment

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

The Union government is expected to announce emissions intensity targets for nine industrial sectors by February-end – a crucial step to operationalise India's carbon trading scheme. Following this, these industries will have a year to put in place compliance measures to cut emissions, and trading in carbon credits is likely to begin by October 2026, Saurabh Diddi, Director, Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) under the Union Ministry of Power, told *The Hindu* on the sidelines of a conclave here on India's carbon markets.

Despite a notification by the BEE in June 2023 announcing a carbon credit trading scheme, and follow-up notifications in March 2024 on the industrial sectors that would have to mandatorily comply, emissions intensity targets have not been specified. Without these, it will not be possible to generate or trade carbon credits.

The Indian carbon market establishes a framework to reduce, remove, or



Industries in India will not be required to cut carbon emissions, rather they must produce their goods more efficiently. AP

avoid greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the Indian economy. It achieves this by pricing the greenhouse gases emission reduction through trading of carbon credit certificates.

Different types of carbon markets exist globally. In European emission trading markets, every carbon credit represents a tonne of carbon dioxide prevented from getting into the atmosphere. Its price fluctuates and is determined by whether companies, which must comply with government-mandated emission caps, manage to meet them or choose to buy credits from compa-

nies that have cut more emissions than they were required to. These carbon credits can then be traded like shares.

In the case of India, industries will not be required to cut carbon emissions. Rather, they must produce their goods – for example, a kilogram of steel – more efficiently. This can mean implementing technology that will burn, say, in this instance, less coal to produce that same kilogram of steel. Or recover the heat from burning a kg of steel and reusing it.

Emissions intensity refers to the amount of greenhouse gases emitted per

unit of activity. The nine sectors that must comply with emission intensity targets in India are iron and steel, aluminium, chlor-alkali, cement, fertilizers, pulp and paper, petrochemicals, petroleum refineries, and textiles.

“We have been having multiple consultations with industry in these past months and we are almost ready with the targets. Along with the compliance scheme (of emission intensity) there is also a market emerging of voluntary offsets. We are hoping that these offset markets can begin trading even this year, provided certain criteria are met,” Mr. Diddi said.

Voluntary offsets refer to measures undertaken by private individuals, including afforestation, that can trap carbon dioxide as commercial projects. These too generate carbon credits and companies sell them, internationally as of now, to those that require them to meet the compliance regulations. As part of its climate commitments, India has said it will reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP at 45% of 2005 levels by 2030.

महिने के अंत तक उत्सर्जन तीव्रता लक्ष्य जारी किए जाएंगे

The Union government is expected to announce emission intensity targets for nine industrial sectors by February-end.

केंद्र सरकार फरवरी के अंत तक नौ औद्योगिक क्षेत्रों के लिए उत्सर्जन तीव्रता लक्ष्य घोषित करने की उम्मीद कर रही है।



- Industries will have a year to set up compliance measures before carbon credit trading begins in October 2026.
उद्योगों को अनुपालन उपाय स्थापित करने के लिए एक वर्ष मिलेगा और अक्टूबर 2026 से कार्बन क्रेडिट व्यापार शुरू होने की संभावना है।

India's Carbon Market and Trading Mechanism

भारत का कार्बन बाजार और व्यापार तंत्र

- India's carbon market aims to reduce, remove, or avoid greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by pricing emission reductions through carbon credit trading.
भारत का कार्बन बाजार ग्रीनहाउस गैस (GHG) उत्सर्जन को कम करने, हटाने या रोकने का लक्ष्य रखता है और यह कार्बन क्रेडिट व्यापार के माध्यम से उत्सर्जन में कटौती की कीमत निर्धारित करता है।
- In European carbon markets, a carbon credit represents one tonne of CO₂ emissions prevented.
यूरोपीय कार्बन बाजारों में, एक कार्बन क्रेडिट का अर्थ एक टन CO₂ उत्सर्जन की रोकथाम होता है।
- Companies can trade carbon credits like shares, depending on whether they meet or exceed their emission limits.
कंपनियां अपने उत्सर्जन लक्ष्यों को पूरा करने या अधिक कटौती करने के आधार पर कार्बन क्रेडिट का व्यापार शेयरों की तरह कर सकती हैं।

India's Approach to Carbon Credits

भारत में कार्बन क्रेडिट की प्रक्रिया

- Industries in India will not be required to cut total emissions but must improve production efficiency.
भारत में उद्योगों को कुल उत्सर्जन में कटौती करने की आवश्यकता नहीं होगी, लेकिन उन्हें उत्पादन दक्षता में सुधार करना होगा।
- For example, steel production should consume less coal or recover heat for reuse.
उदाहरण के लिए, स्टील उत्पादन में कम कोयले की खपत होनी चाहिए या गर्मी को पुनः उपयोग के लिए पुनर्प्राप्त किया जाना चाहिए।

Nine Industrial Sectors to Comply with Emission Intensity Targets

नौ औद्योगिक क्षेत्रों को उत्सर्जन तीव्रता लक्ष्यों का पालन करना होगा

- The nine sectors identified for compliance are:
अनुपालन के लिए पहचाने गए नौ क्षेत्र हैं:
 - Iron and Steel (लोहा और इस्पात)
 - Aluminium (एल्युमिनियम)
 - Chlor-Alkali (क्लोर-एल्कली)
 - Cement (सीमेंट)
 - Fertilizers (उर्वरक)



- Pulp and Paper (कागज और लुगदी)
- Petrochemicals (पेट्रोकेमिकल्स)
- Petroleum Refineries (पेट्रोलियम रिफाइनरी)
- Textiles (कपड़ा उद्योग)

Government Consultations and Future Plans

सरकार की चर्चा और भविष्य की योजना

- The government has held multiple consultations with industries and is almost ready with the targets.
सरकार ने उद्योगों के साथ कई दौर की चर्चा की है और लक्ष्यों को अंतिम रूप देने के करीब है।
- A voluntary carbon offset market is also emerging, which could start trading this year.
एक स्वैच्छिक कार्बन ऑफसेट बाजार भी उभर रहा है, जो इस साल व्यापार शुरू कर सकता है।
- Voluntary offsets include private projects like afforestation, which trap CO₂ and generate carbon credits.
स्वैच्छिक ऑफसेट में निजी परियोजनाएं शामिल हैं, जैसे कि वनीकरण, जो CO₂ को अवशोषित करके कार्बन क्रेडिट उत्पन्न करती हैं।

India's Climate Commitment

भारत की जलवायु प्रतिबद्धता

- India has committed to reducing emissions intensity of GDP by 45% of 2005 levels by 2030.
भारत ने 2030 तक 2005 के स्तर से जीडीपी की उत्सर्जन तीव्रता को 45% तक कम करने की प्रतिबद्धता जताई है।



Indian tech industry revenue projected to grow 5.1% even as job loss concerns persist

About 55% CEOs surveyed expected hiring to plateau or reduce in FY26; some CEOs sought to approach changes brought in by AI with “paranoia”, stressing this would ensure competitiveness

**GS Paper III:
Employment**

Asht
MUMBAI

Amid concerns over jobs shrinking due to the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI), the National Association of Software Services Companies (NASSCOM) has projected the Indian technology industry’s revenue growth at 5.1% to \$282.6 billion in FY 2025-26.

“While the CEO outlook for FY26 remains measured yet positive, with increased tech and AI spending, sustaining the growth momentum requires a strategic vision,” Rajesh Nambiar, the President of NASSCOM, said at the 33rd NASSCOM Technology and Leadership Forum here on Monday.

‘Upskilling a priority’

“However, upskilling in niche and core tech areas will continue to remain of paramount importance for the industry,” he added.

Domestic revenue is projected to grow at a faster 7% to \$58.2 billion as compared with revenue growth in exports at 4.6%.

The proportion of IT Services and Engineering research and development (R&D) will continue to dominate in the total revenue, according to the NASSCOM Annual Strategic Review 2026.

Tepid growth

India’s tech sector growth will likely be “measured yet positive”

- Revenue is expected to grow 5.1% to \$282.6 billion in 2025-26

- Domestic revenue will likely rise by 7% to \$58.2 billion; exports by 4.6%

- Two-thirds of CEOs say over 10% of tech spends will be on AI



Upskilling in niche and core tech areas will continue to remain of paramount importance for the industry



RAJESH NAMBIAR
NASSCOM President

DBS Bank may cut 4,000 jobs in 3-5 years: CEO

Ashokamithran T.

About 4,000 employees may lose their jobs in the next three to four years owing to Artificial Intelligence (AI),” Piyush Gupta, CEO of DBS Bank said at the event.

This would be a tenth of the company’s workforce, he added.

“My current prediction, in the next three years,

we’d shrink our workforce by 4,000, 10%. And that is because, AI is different,” Mr. Gupta said. While he acknowledged that people will continue to find jobs, he said there would be “massive dislocations.”

The company’s representatives later clarified the job cuts would be limited to temporary or contract employees.

While the estimated growth is robust, the report also stated that about 55% of the CEOs surveyed believed that hiring was expected to stay the same or reduce in fiscal 2026.

About two-thirds of them said that more than 10% of the tech spends would be on artificial intelligence.

In a media briefing, Fractal co-founder Sri-

kanth Velamakanni, reiterated the data saying companies would spend more on technology than human resources.

In another session, the CEOs of HCL and Infosys C. Vijayakumar and Salil Parikh sought to approach changes resulting from AI adoption with “paranoia” and not be complacent about them. They said this would ensure firms emerged as “winners”.

‘State to emerge AI hub’

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis asserted that the State would emerge as an AI hub. He said this would be an important step toward Maharashtra becoming a \$1 trillion economy.

In the final session, Minister of Information and Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnaw said the response to the tender to procure 10,000 graphics processing units (GPUs) was encouraging and that they had received orders for 18,000 units, all for less than a dollar per unit. Mr. Vaishnaw said that the industry had to maintain competitiveness.

“I request that to maintain competitiveness of the industry, NASSCOM as a body and the government, must put our maximum effort on creating that pipeline of time,” he said.

Indian Tech Industry Revenue Projected to Grow 5.1% Even as Job Loss Concerns Persist



भारतीय टेक उद्योग की राजस्व वृद्धि 5.1% रहने की उम्मीद, लेकिन नौकरियों की चिंता बनी हुई

Despite concerns over job losses due to AI, the Indian tech industry is projected to grow by 5.1% in FY 2025-26 to reach \$282.6 billion, according to NASSCOM.

AI के कारण नौकरियों में गिरावट की चिंता के बावजूद, भारतीय टेक उद्योग की वृद्धि FY 2025-26 में 5.1% रहने की उम्मीद है, जिससे कुल राजस्व \$282.6 बिलियन तक पहुंचने की संभावना है (NASSCOM)।

- Domestic revenue is expected to grow at a faster rate of 7% (\$58.2 billion), while export revenue is projected to grow at 4.6%.
घरेलू राजस्व 7% (₹58.2 बिलियन) की तेज़ गति से बढ़ने की उम्मीद है, जबकि निर्यात राजस्व में 4.6% की वृद्धि का अनुमान है।

Hiring Trends and AI Investments

नौकरी प्रवृत्तियां और एआई निवेश

- 55% of surveyed CEOs believe hiring will remain the same or decline in FY 2026.
सर्वेक्षण में शामिल 55% सीईओ का मानना है कि FY 2026 में भर्ती की गति स्थिर रहेगी या घटेगी।
- Two-thirds of CEOs stated that more than 10% of tech spending will be on AI.
दो-तिहाई सीईओ का कहना है कि 10% से अधिक टेक खर्च एआई पर होगा।
- Fractal co-founder Srikanth Velamakanni noted that companies would invest more in technology than in human resources.
Fractal के सह-संस्थापक श्रीकांत वेलमाकन्नी ने कहा कि कंपनियां मानव संसाधनों की तुलना में प्रौद्योगिकी में अधिक निवेश करेंगी।

Industry Leaders on AI and Competitiveness

उद्योग नेताओं की एआई और प्रतिस्पर्धा पर राय

- HCL and Infosys CEOs emphasized approaching AI changes with “paranoia” to maintain competitiveness.
HCL और Infosys के सीईओ ने कहा कि एआई में बदलाव को गंभीरता से अपनाना आवश्यक है ताकि प्रतिस्पर्धात्मक लाभ बना रहे।
- Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis stated that the State would emerge as an AI hub, supporting its goal of becoming a \$1 trillion economy.
महाराष्ट्र के मुख्यमंत्री देवेंद्र फडणवीस ने कहा कि राज्य एआई हब के रूप में उभरेगा, जिससे \$1 ट्रिलियन अर्थव्यवस्था बनने का लक्ष्य पूरा होगा।

Government Initiatives and GPU Procurement



सरकारी पहल और GPU खरीदारी

- **Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said India has received orders for 18,000 GPUs at a cost of less than a dollar per unit.**
केंद्रीय मंत्री अश्विनी वैष्णव ने कहा कि भारत को 18,000 GPU के ऑर्डर मिले हैं, जिसकी कीमत प्रति यूनिट एक डॉलर से कम है।

He urged NASSCOM and the government to ensure India's digital ecosystem remains competitive.

उन्होंने NASSCOM और सरकार से अनुरोध किया कि भारत के डिजिटल पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र को प्रतिस्पर्धात्मक बनाए रखें।

PATRIOTIC IAS

