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# PATRIOTIC IAS

THE HINDU NEWSPAPER

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

06 APRIL 2025

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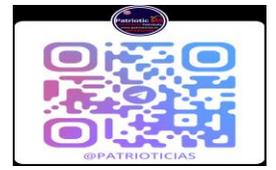
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06\_04\_2025 DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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# Panel seeks reform of ASI monument delisting protocols

**GS Paper I: A&C**

**Sreeparna Chakrabarty**

NEW DELHI

Amid the controversy over demands for the removal of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb's grave, a Parliamentary Committee has asked the Union Culture Ministry to form an independent panel to revisit and reform the criteria required for delisting a monument from the list of Archaeological Survey of India-protected spots.

Delisting of sites means removing a monument from the ASI list of protected sites, effectively releasing the institution from its responsibility to conserve, protect, and maintain that monument, and allowing regular construction and urbanisation activities in the area.

Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat informed Parliament that the ASI has been continuously taking "proactive measures" in coordination with the district administration to "mitigate" any damage to the tomb of Aurangzeb in Khuldabad.



Gajendra Singh Shekhawat

The Parliamentary Standing Committee in its report said delisting protocols require reform. "An independent panel should reassess criteria to ensure delisting occurs only after rigorous documentation and public consultation, paired with a relic repatriation policy for displaced artefacts."

By combining technology, legal rigour, climate adaptation, and community participation, India can balance heritage conservation with developmental pressures, safeguarding its cultural legacy for future generations. These steps would align with ASI's mandate while addressing systemic gaps in monument management, it said.

## Panel seeks reform of ASI monument delisting protocols

एसआई स्मारक डीलिस्टिंग

प्रोटोकॉल में सुधार की मांग करता

पैनल

Amid the controversy over demands for the removal of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb's grave, a Parliamentary Committee has asked the Union Culture Ministry to form an independent panel to revisit and reform the criteria required for delisting a monument from the list of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)-protected spots.

मुगल सम्राट औरंगज़ेब की कब्र को हटाने की मांग को लेकर उठे विवाद के बीच, एक संसदीय समिति ने केंद्रीय संस्कृति मंत्रालय से एक स्वतंत्र पैनल गठित करने को कहा है, ताकि भारतीय पुरातत्व सर्वेक्षण (एसआई) द्वारा संरक्षित स्मारकों की सूची से किसी स्मारक को डीलिस्ट करने के मानदंडों की समीक्षा और सुधार किया जा सके।

• **Delisting of sites** means removing a monument from the **ASI list of protected sites**, effectively releasing the institution from its responsibility to **conserve, protect, and maintain** that monument, and allowing **regular construction and urbanisation** activities in the area.



डीलिस्टिंग का अर्थ है किसी स्मारक को एसआई की संरक्षित स्थलों की सूची से हटाना, जिससे यह संस्था उस स्मारक को संरक्षित, सुरक्षित और संरक्षित रखने की जिम्मेदारी से मुक्त हो जाती है, और उस क्षेत्र में नियमित निर्माण और शहरीकरण गतिविधियों की अनुमति मिल जाती है।

● Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat informed Parliament that the ASI has been continuously taking "proactive measures" in coordination with the district administration to "mitigate" any damage to the tomb of Aurangzeb in Khuldabad.

केंद्रीय संस्कृति मंत्री गजेंद्र सिंह शेखावत ने संसद को सूचित किया कि एसआई ने खुल्दाबाद में औरंगज़ेब की कब्र को किसी भी क्षति से बचाने के लिए जिला प्रशासन के साथ मिलकर लगातार "सक्रिय कदम" उठाए हैं।

● The Parliamentary Standing Committee in its report said delisting protocols require reform.

संसदीय स्थायी समिति ने अपनी रिपोर्ट में कहा कि डीलिंग प्रोटोकॉल में सुधार की आवश्यकता है।

● "An independent panel should reassess criteria to ensure delisting occurs only after rigorous documentation and public consultation, paired with a relic repatriation policy for displaced artefacts."

"एक स्वतंत्र पैनल को मानदंडों का पुनर्मूल्यांकन करना चाहिए ताकि यह सुनिश्चित हो सके कि डीलिंग केवल सख्त दस्तावेजीकरण और सार्वजनिक परामर्श के बाद हो, और इसके साथ ही विस्थापित कलाकृतियों के लिए अवशेष प्रत्यावर्तन नीति भी हो।"

● By combining technology, legal rigour, climate adaptation, and community participation, India can balance heritage conservation with developmental pressures, safeguarding its cultural legacy for future generations.

प्रौद्योगिकी, कानूनी कठोरता, जलवायु अनुकूलन और समुदाय की भागीदारी को जोड़कर, भारत विकासात्मक दबावों के साथ विरासत संरक्षण में संतुलन बना सकता है और अपनी सांस्कृतिक विरासत को आने वाली पीढ़ियों के लिए सुरक्षित रख सकता है।

● These steps would align with ASI's mandate while addressing systemic gaps in monument management, it said.

रिपोर्ट में कहा गया कि ये कदम एसआई के दायित्वों के अनुरूप होंगे और स्मारक प्रबंधन में मौजूद प्रणालीगत खामियों को भी दूर करेंगे।



Students learn Gondi at the Paramparik Koya Dnyanboudh Sanskar Ghotul School in Mohagaon, Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra. It is the only school in the State where the tribal language is taught. EMANUAL YOGINI

# Lost in translation

A school in Maharashtra's tribal-dominated district Gadchiroli is caught between two laws, resulting in litigation. Started by the Gondi tribe four years ago to further their language and culture, there is now fear that it will be shut down. Snehal Mutha speaks to the community on their hopes for the school

GS Paper 1: History

**A**vinash Shirirame, 35, enters the room that holds about 30 students wearing red-and-green checked uniforms. They greet him with a loud "Good morning, Sir" and a "Jai maa" shouted out three, to the rhythm of clapping. Shirirame asks students to open their textbooks as he turns to the blackboard. Hanging the board are portraits of Rani Durgamati, the queen of Gondwana who fought the Mughals in the 16th century; and Babur, Sheshma, a Gondi chieftain who rose against the British in the 1857 war.

Shrirame is a volunteer on an honorarium, teaching Gondi in the Paramparik Koya Dnyanboudh Sanskar Ghotul School in Mohagaon, Gadchiroli. Gondi is the language of the Gonds, a tribe spread across at least seven States, including Karnataka, where the first standardised dictionary was published in 2018 by Kannada University, India. It has the world's second largest tribal population, at 8.7%, as per the 2011 Census.

The summer sun shines on the pink walls of Shirirame's classroom, with children from Classes 1 to 5 attending the Gondi language class. "The last four years have been difficult," says Shirirame, who arrived a year ago, from Bhiwari town, 65 km away, after working in a bank for six years. He is a certified Computer Operator and Programming Assistant from the Industrial Training Institute (ITI), Nagpur.

"We have been caught up in litigation, and it feels like the school is stagnant because of it," he says. He remembers his own childhood and his confusion at not being able to understand English, the medium of education. "Other children my age were thinking of the moon, I was just petrified of grammar," says Shirirame, who has learnt Gondi over the last year.

The school is the only one in Maharashtra that teaches Gondi. It is run up to Class 5, by the Sanyukt Ganrigha Gram Sabha Parishad, a grouping of 15 gram sabhas (village councils, at the basic level of tribal governance), including Mohagaon.

In 2022, the school got a notice from Maharashtra's Education Department saying it was not registered with the zila parishad, an elected body at the apex of village-level governance at the district level. The notice asked it to be shut.

The Gram Sabha Parishad filed a petition in the HC in November 2022 asking for recognition. The case is still on, and the school's plan to start Class 6 has been delayed indefinitely. The teachers worry that the 16 children in Class 5 will have to leave the school if they cannot start Class 6.

The seven-room ghotul reconnects school-going members of the Gondi tribe with their language that is in danger of being subsumed by Marathi, much like the other States where Gonds are. Thirty lakh people speak this language with its roots in the Dravidian language family, says Karnataka-based researcher Ganesh Narayandas Devy, who headed the People's Linguistic Survey of India, which provides an overview of at-risk languages.

The school runs on the Tribal Department's *ashram Shala* syllabus, teaching regular subjects such as Mathematics, History, English, and Marathi. The books for these subjects are supplied

by the Department free of cost, as is the norm. Gondi is an addition. The syllabus for Gondi was developed in 2018 by the Education Department of Maharashtra. "There is no teacher's training for Gondi, so Shirirame learns from the elders in the tribe and uses YouTube to help him with teaching methods. All the teachers use Gondi as an informal way of teaching students, so they can easily grasp the concepts."

## Mother tongue matters

The idea of establishing a Gondi-centric school stemmed from the need to revive the language and pass on the Gondi culture to children and the youth, to protect the language and knowledge from extinction. The Gram Sabha Parishad passed a resolution to start the school in February 2020. A year later, they wrote a letter to then State Governor Bhupat Singh Kolsapur for approval of the residential English-medium school.

In the letter, the village representatives stated that India was a signatory to the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by the United Nations on September 13, 2007. The tribal community, therefore, had the right to establish and control an independent school to educate its students using their native language. It was inaugurated in February 2021 by Nanddeo Usendi, then MIA from the Congress.

Scheduled Areas - predominantly occupied by tribals - are governed by the Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas, PESA) Act, 1996. This says that the gram sabha would "exercise command over natural resources, resolve disputes and manage institutions under it like schools and cooperatives". The Gram Sabha Parishad says the school is a constitutional body, as it comes under PESA.

However, the Education Department says that the school does not fall under the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, as it is not registered. In the

notice sent, the Department said the school was violating Section 18 (5) of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education of Children Act, 2009. This section stipulates that anyone who establishes a school without a certificate of recognition will have to pay a fine of 1 lakh in arrears and 10,000 per day if it continues to operate.

## Between the laws

"Why has the Education Department penalised us? Our region falls under the Scheduled Area, and self-governance is constitutional," says Devsal Aarla, 47, a member of the Gram Sabha Parishad and the owner of the land on which the school operates. His grandchildren study here.

Walking along the banks of the pond behind the classroom, Devsal says that since the country's independence 75 years ago, no effort has been made to preserve Gondi language. "Marathi is not our identity, but the government keeps imposing it on us," Devsal says, adding that because of this, Gondi history remains undocumented. Zila parishad Deputy Education Officer Vivek Nakale says, "We did not receive any proposal for the school. In our routine scrutiny, we found the school operation unauthorised, and then sent the notice." Nakale says the government is not against schools. "All we require is the registration under the RTE Act."

Gondi is not among India's 22 official languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. However, the National Education Policy of 2022 recommended "the promotion of multi-lingualism in education at every level so that learners get the opportunity to study in their own languages". To promote mother-tongue-based learning in the early years, primers (textbooks) in 104 dialects have been developed. While Gondi-Odia has a primer, the dialect spoken in Maharashtra does not.

The Gram Sabha Parishad wants the Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) code based on the PESA Act. "This will help students get admission to courses after graduating from school. We would also be able to expand beyond Class 5 with minimal difficulty," says Devsal. Under UDISE, the Ministry of Education collects school details related to its resources and assigns a number to the school, so it is counted. A Gram Sabha Parishad member and a parent of a student, Maniram Aarla, 35, points out that the school is established on the lines of a ghotul, a community space for socialising, sharing knowledge, and engaging in cultural activities.

## Resources and funding

In the room next to the pink-walled classroom, "A, ar, a", "e, er, a", and "u, ur, u" are Gondi words that are being chanted. A six-year-old says "a", and the class replies in chorus, "ara", sitting on the floor and books and bags. The wall has Gondi and English alphabet charts. The room works as a classroom for first and second-grade students during school hours, doubling as a hostel

for girls after school.

The residential school operates from three rooms, accommodating 69 students: 31 girls and 38 boys. Devsal claims, "We have many people inquiring about admissions, but we are not admitting any more, because the litigation has made things uncertain."

The students come from over 20 villages across Gadchiroli district, including Pendarhi and Hadapeth in Dhanora block, and Rekhabatal and Kasaur in Itapali block, at least 65 km from Mohagaon.

The school is funded by the incomes of all the villages that are a part of the Gram Sabha Parishad. From March until the first half of June, people from these 15 villages come together to collect *amla* leaves, used for wrapping bids. The leaves are wrapped in bundles of 70 each, given to the village gram sabha, and later brought to the Gram Sabha Parishad, where it is sold. The money earned is distributed among villagers, according to how much they collected, after keeping 5%. This is used to fund the school. The school is supported by stationary donations from NGOs. Some parents too make contributions. Devsal says, "We require infrastructure to accommodate more students and funds to pay teachers what they deserve."

## Culture and competition

The Hinda's analysis of UDISE data reveals that, in 2022, dropout rates among ST girls in Maharashtra were higher than the national average by the secondary stage of schooling. Additionally, the gap in dropout rates between girls of the unreserved category and the ST category in the State is significantly wider than the national average. Furthermore, the rate at which Maharashtra has narrowed this gap over the past eight years has been significantly slower compared to the progress made at the national level.

"Students turn their backs on education due to language difficulties," says Shekhar Ganade, 28, who teaches Science and Gondi at the school. "Teaching children in Gondi can help us explore so many opportunities and this school will be a great experiment. We have so many plans. We want to introduce Gondi knowledge on medicinal plants and herbs," he says.

In Pendarhi village, about 5 km from the school, Munda Aarla, 38, sits near the *murmunda* (a wooden pillar with floral carvings) in the centre of the hut that supports the thatched roof. *Murmunda* (marriage in Gondi) is a symbol of marriage, installed during the wedding ceremony at the man's parents' home.

Manda has just come home after collecting Mahua flowers throughout the day. These are used year-round to cook with and make juices and alcohol.

Manda takes pride in her son's familiarity with the Gondi script. She can only speak the language. She shows off her 10-year-old son's workbook and says, "Gondi is making it easy for him to learn other languages. He quickly understands when English words are explained in it."

Over 25 km from Pendarhi, is Kasaur village, where another parent, Nareesh Narote, 45, says his nine-year-old daughter, who studies at the Gondi-medium school, grasps concepts quicker compared to his other daughter studying in Itapali Zila Parishad School.

One of the reasons for this is the extra-curricular activities that integrate their lives at home with their curricula. Students take part in songs, storytelling, and dances. "We have folklore that talks about the evolution of humans, gravitation, mythology, and the art of living," adds Devsal.

A Tribal Department officer, on condition of anonymity, says, "When we visited the school, students seemed cheerful. Students don't feel pressured." He says one way of registering the school is to go the *ashram Shala* route, residential schools created for tribals. "It is bizarre that PESA can facilitate the decisions concerning *jal* (water), *panje*, *janje* (land) but not education. This would be an experiment, and the government should think on these lines," he says.

With inputs from Ujjesh R.J. snehal.mutha@thehindu.co.in



Students inside a classroom of the Gondi-centric school in Mohagaon, Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra. EMANUAL YOGINI



## Lost in translation

### अनुवाद में खो जाना

A school in Gadchiroli, Maharashtra's tribal-dominated district, is stuck between two laws, leading to litigation.

महाराष्ट्र के आदिवासी बहुल जिले गड़चिरौली का एक स्कूल दो कानूनों के बीच फंसा हुआ है, जिससे मुकदमा शुरू हो गया है।

- Started by the **Gond tribe** in 2020 to promote their *language and culture*, now faces the threat of **closure**.  
गोंड जनजाति द्वारा 2020 में अपनी भाषा और संस्कृति को बढ़ावा देने के लिए शुरू किया गया यह स्कूल अब बंद होने की कगार पर है।
- Snehal Mutha spoke to the community about their *hopes* regarding the school.  
स्नेहल मुथा ने समुदाय से स्कूल के प्रति उनकी आशाओं पर बातचीत की।

## Classroom scenes and tribal icons

### कक्षा का दृश्य और आदिवासी प्रतीक

- Avinash Shrirame (35)** teaches around **30 students** in red-and-green uniforms.  
35 वर्षीय अविनाश श्रीरामे लगभग 30 छात्रों को लाल और हरे चेकदार यूनिफॉर्म में पढ़ाते हैं।
- Students greet him with "Good morning, Sir" and shout "**Jai Seva**" thrice while clapping.  
छात्र उन्हें "Good morning, Sir" कहते हैं और तालियाँ बजाते हुए तीन बार "**जय सेवा**" बोलते हैं।
- Classroom has portraits of **Rani Durgavati** and **Baburao Shedmake**, Gond freedom fighters.  
कक्षा में रानी दुर्गावती और बाबूराव शेडमाके की तस्वीरें हैं, जो गोंड स्वतंत्रता सेनानी थे।

## Teaching and language challenges

### शिक्षण और भाषा की चुनौतियाँ

- Shrirame teaches **Gondi** at **Paramparik Koya Dnyanbodh Sanskar Ghotul School** in **Mohgaon, Gadchiroli**.  
श्रीरामे गड़चिरौली के मोहगांव स्थित परंपरिक कोया ज्ञानबोध संस्कार घाटुल स्कूल में गोंडी पढ़ाते हैं।
- Gondi** is spoken by the *Gond tribe*, present in **seven States** including **Karnataka**.  
गोंडी गोंड जनजाति द्वारा बोली जाती है, जो कर्नाटक सहित सात राज्यों में फैली है।
- First **standardised dictionary** of Gondi was published in **2018** by **Kannada University**.  
गोंडी की पहली मानकीकृत शब्दकोश 2018 में कन्नड़ विश्वविद्यालय द्वारा प्रकाशित की गई थी।



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- As per **2011 Census**, India's tribal population is **8.9%**, second-largest in the world.  
2011 की जनगणना के अनुसार, भारत की आदिवासी जनसंख्या 8.9% है, जो दुनिया में दूसरी सबसे बड़ी है।

## Struggles of the teacher

### शिक्षक की संघर्षभरी यात्रा

- Shrirame came from **Bhiwapur (165 km away)** after working **6 years** in a bank.  
श्रीरामे भिवापुर (165 किमी दूर) से आए, जहाँ उन्होंने 6 साल बैंक में काम किया था।
- He is a certified **Computer Operator and Programming Assistant** from ITI Nagpur.  
वे आईटीआई नागपुर से कंप्यूटर ऑपरेटर और प्रोग्रामिंग असिस्टेंट प्रमाणित हैं।
- He struggled with **English-medium education** during his childhood.  
उन्होंने अपने बचपन में अंग्रेज़ी माध्यम की पढ़ाई में कठिनाइयाँ झेली थीं।
- Learned **Gondi** in the last **1 year** to teach at the school.  
उन्होंने पिछले 1 साल में गोंडी सीखी ताकि वह स्कूल में पढ़ा सकें।

## Legal battle and uncertainty

### कानूनी लड़ाई और अनिश्चितता

- This is the *only school* in **Maharashtra** that teaches **Gondi**.  
यह महाराष्ट्र का एकमात्र स्कूल है जहाँ गोंडी पढ़ाई जाती है।
- It operates up to **Class 5** and is run by **Sanyukt Ganrajya Gram Sabha Parishad** (15 gram sabhas).  
यह कक्षा 5 तक चलता है और 15 ग्राम सभाओं द्वारा संचालित संयुक्त गणराज्य ग्राम सभा परिषद के अधीन है।
- In **2022**, Education Department said it was not registered with **Zila Parishad** and must be closed.  
2022 में शिक्षा विभाग ने कहा कि यह जिला परिषद में पंजीकृत नहीं है और इसे बंद किया जाना चाहिए।
- Parishad filed a petition in **High Court** in **November 2022** for recognition.  
परिषद ने नवंबर 2022 में हाई कोर्ट में मान्यता के लिए याचिका दायर की।
- Plan to start **Class 6** has been delayed **indefinitely** due to the case.  
कक्षा 6 शुरू करने की योजना अनिश्चित काल तक टल गई है।

## Language preservation and community efforts

### भाषा संरक्षण और सामुदायिक प्रयास

- School helps Gonds reconnect with **Gondi**, which is being overtaken by **Marathi**.  
यह स्कूल गोंड समुदाय को गोंडी से जोड़ता है, जिसे मराठी जैसी भाषाएँ दबा रही हैं।



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- **30 lakh people speak Gondi**, which belongs to the **Dravidian language family**.  
30 लाख लोग गोंडी बोलते हैं, जो द्रविड़ भाषा परिवार से संबंधित है।
- School follows **Tribal Department's ashram shala syllabus** including subjects like **Math, History, English, Marathi**.  
स्कूल में आदिवासी विभाग के आश्रम शाला पाठ्यक्रम के अंतर्गत गणित, इतिहास, अंग्रेज़ी, मराठी पढ़ाया जाता है।
- **Gondi syllabus** was taken from a school in **Sarona village, Kanker district, Chhattisgarh (250 km away)**.  
गोंडी का पाठ्यक्रम छत्तीसगढ़ के कांकेर जिले के सरोना गांव (250 किमी दूर) से लिया गया है।
- No formal **teacher training** for Gondi; teachers use help from **tribal elders** and **YouTube**.  
गोंडी के लिए कोई औपचारिक शिक्षक प्रशिक्षण नहीं है; शिक्षक आदिवासी बुजुर्गों और YouTube की मदद लेते हैं।

## Mother tongue matters

### मातृभाषा का महत्व

- School was proposed in **February 2020** by **Gram Sabha Parishad**.  
स्कूल का प्रस्ताव फरवरी 2020 में ग्राम सभा परिषद द्वारा रखा गया।
- Letter sent to Governor **Bhagat Singh Koshyari** in **2021** for *English-medium residential school*.  
2021 में राज्यपाल भगत सिंह कोश्यारी को अंग्रेज़ी-माध्यम आवासीय स्कूल के लिए पत्र भेजा गया।
- They cited **UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples (September 13, 2007)**.  
उन्होंने 13 सितंबर 2007 को अपनाई गई संयुक्त राष्ट्र की आदिवासी अधिकार घोषणा का हवाला दिया।
- School was inaugurated in **February 2021** by **Namdeo Usendi (Congress MLA)**.  
स्कूल का उद्घाटन फरवरी 2021 में कांग्रेस विधायक नमदेव उसेंदी द्वारा किया गया।

## Conflict between PESA and RTE Acts

### PESA और RTE कानूनों के बीच टकराव

- **Scheduled Areas** are governed by **PESA Act, 1996**, giving *gram sabhas* control over institutions like schools.  
अनुसूचित क्षेत्रों में PESA अधिनियम, 1996 लागू होता है, जो ग्राम सभाओं को स्कूल जैसे संस्थानों का नियंत्रण देता है।
- Parishad claims school is a *constitutional body* under **PESA**.  
परिषद का दावा है कि यह स्कूल PESA के तहत संवैधानिक संस्था है।



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- **Education Department** says it violates **RTE Act, 2009** since it's not *registered*.  
शिक्षा विभाग का कहना है कि यह *पंजीकृत* नहीं होने के कारण **RTE अधिनियम, 2009** का उल्लंघन करता है।
- As per **Section 18 (5)**, operating a school without recognition can lead to a fine of **₹1 lakh**, and **₹10,000 per day**.  
धारा **18 (5)** के अनुसार, बिना मान्यता के स्कूल चलाने पर **₹1 लाख जुर्माना** और प्रतिदिन **₹10,000** का जुर्माना लग सकता है।

## Between the laws

### कानूनों के बीच

- “Why has the Education Department penalised us? Our region falls under the Scheduled Area, and self-governance is constitutional,” says Devsai Aatla, **47**, a member of the **Gram Sabha Parishad** and the owner of the land on which the school operates.  
“शिक्षा विभाग ने हमें दंडित क्यों किया है? हमारा क्षेत्र अनुसूचित क्षेत्र के अंतर्गत आता है, और स्व-शासन संविधानिक है,” कहते हैं देवसाई आतला, **47 वर्ष**, जो **ग्राम सभा परिषद** के सदस्य हैं और स्कूल की भूमि के मालिक हैं।
- His grandchildren study here.  
उनके पोते-पोतियां यहां पढ़ाई करते हैं।
- Walking along the banks of the pond behind the classroom, Devsai says that since the country's independence **75 years ago**, no effort has been made to preserve **Gondi language**.  
कक्षा के पीछे तालाब के किनारे चलते हुए देवसाई कहते हैं कि देश को आज़ाद हुए **75 साल** हो गए लेकिन **गोंडी भाषा** को बचाने के लिए कोई प्रयास नहीं किया गया।
- “Marathi is not our identity, but the government keeps imposing it on us,” Devsai says, adding that because of this, **Gond history** remains undocumented.  
“मराठी हमारी पहचान नहीं है, लेकिन सरकार इसे हम पर थोपती रहती है,” देवसाई कहते हैं और जोड़ते हैं कि इसी कारण **गोंड इतिहास** दर्ज नहीं हो पाया है।
- Zila Parishad Deputy Education Officer **Vivek Nakade** says, “We did not receive any proposal for the school. In our routine scrutiny, we found the school operation unauthorised, and then sent the notice.”  
जिला परिषद के उप शिक्षा अधिकारी **विवेक नाकाडे** कहते हैं, “हमें स्कूल के लिए कोई प्रस्ताव नहीं मिला। नियमित जांच में हमें स्कूल अवैध रूप से संचालित मिला, इसलिए हमने नोटिस भेजा।”
- Nakade says the government is not against schools: “All we require is the registration under the **RTE Act**.”  
नाकाडे कहते हैं कि सरकार स्कूलों के खिलाफ नहीं है: “हमें सिर्फ **आरटीई अधिनियम** के तहत पंजीकरण चाहिए।”



- **Gondi** is not among India's **22 official languages** in the **Eighth Schedule** of the Constitution.  
गोंडी भारत के संविधान की आठवीं अनुसूची में शामिल 22 आधिकारिक भाषाओं में से नहीं है।
- However, the **National Education Policy of 2022** recommended “the promotion of **multi-lingualism** in education at every level so that learners get the opportunity to study in their own language(s)”.  
हालांकि, **2022 की राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति** ने “**बहुभाषिकता** को बढ़ावा देने” की सिफारिश की ताकि छात्रों को अपनी मातृभाषा में पढ़ने का अवसर मिल सके।
- To promote **mother-tongue-based learning**, primers in **104 dialects** have been developed.  
**मातृभाषा आधारित शिक्षा** को बढ़ावा देने के लिए **104 बोलियों** में प्राथमिक पाठ्यपुस्तकें तैयार की गई हैं।
- While **Gondi-Odia** has a primer, the dialect spoken in **Maharashtra** does not.  
जहां **गोंडी-ओड़िया** के लिए एक पाठ्यपुस्तक है, वहीं **महाराष्ट्र** में बोली जाने वाली गोंडी के लिए नहीं है।
- The Gram Sabha Parishad wants the **Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+)** code based on the **PESA Act**.  
ग्राम सभा परिषद चाहती है कि स्कूल को **PESA अधिनियम** के आधार पर **यूडीआईएसई+ (UDISE+)** कोड दिया जाए।
- “This will help students get admission to courses after graduating from school,” says Devsai.  
“इससे छात्रों को स्कूल से पास होने के बाद पाठ्यक्रमों में दाखिला लेने में मदद मिलेगी,” देवसाई कहते हैं।
- “We would also be able to expand beyond **Class 5** with minimal difficulty.”  
“हम **कक्षा 5** के बाद की कक्षाओं का विस्तार भी आसानी से कर पाएंगे।”
- Under **UDISE**, the **Ministry of Education** collects school details and assigns a number to the school.  
**यूडीआईएसई** के तहत, **शिक्षा मंत्रालय** स्कूल से संबंधित जानकारी एकत्र करता है और उसे एक पहचान संख्या देता है।
- A Gram Sabha Parishad member and a parent, **Maniram Aatla, 35**, points out that the school is based on a **ghotul** — a traditional space for social and cultural activities.  
ग्राम सभा परिषद के सदस्य और छात्र के पिता **मनिराम आतला, 35 वर्ष**, बताते हैं कि यह स्कूल **घोटुल** की परंपरा पर आधारित है — जो सामाजिक और सांस्कृतिक गतिविधियों की जगह होती है।

## Resources and funding

### संसाधन और वित्तीय सहायता

- In the next room, students chant Gondi alphabets — “A, ara”; “e, era”; and “u, ura”.  
अगली कक्षा में छात्र गोंडी वर्णमाला पढ़ते हैं — “A, ara”; “e, era”; और “u, ura”।



- A six-year-old says “a”, and the class responds “ara”, sitting on the floor.  
एक छह साल का बच्चा “a” बोलता है और पूरी कक्षा फर्श पर बैठकर “ara” दोहराती है।
- The wall has Gondi and English alphabet charts.  
दीवार पर गोंडी और अंग्रेजी वर्णमाला के चार्ट लगे हैं।
- The room works as a classroom for **Class 1 and 2** during school hours, and a **hostel for girls** after school.  
यह कमरा कक्षा 1 और 2 के लिए कक्षा के रूप में काम करता है और स्कूल के बाद लड़कियों के हॉस्टल में बदल जाता है।
- The **residential school** runs in **three rooms**, accommodating **69 students: 31 girls and 38 boys**.  
यह आवासीय स्कूल तीन कमरों में चलता है, जिसमें 69 छात्र हैं: 31 लड़कियां और 38 लड़के।
- Devsai says many inquire for admission, but litigation has made things uncertain.  
देवसाई कहते हैं कि बहुत लोग प्रवेश के लिए पूछते हैं, लेकिन मुकदमेबाजी के कारण स्थिति अनिश्चित हो गई है।
- Students come from **20+ villages** in **Gadchiroli**, some from as far as **65 km** away.  
छात्र गडचिरोली जिले के 20 से अधिक गांवों से आते हैं, कुछ तो 65 किमी दूर से।
- The school is funded by **income from 15 villages** who collect **tendu leaves** from **March to June**.  
यह स्कूल 15 गांवों की मार्च से जून तक तेन्दू पत्तों की आय से संचालित होता है।
- Leaves are bundled and sold by the **Gram Sabha Parishad**, with **5% kept** for the school.  
पत्ते बंडलों में बांधकर ग्राम सभा परिषद द्वारा बेचे जाते हैं, जिसमें से 5% हिस्सा स्कूल के लिए रखा जाता है।
- The school also receives **stationery from NGOs** and some **parental contributions**.  
स्कूल को एनजीओ से स्टेशनरी और कुछ माता-पिता से योगदान भी मिलता है।
- Devsai says, “We need infrastructure and proper salaries for teachers.”  
देवसाई कहते हैं, “हमें अधिक सुविधाएं और शिक्षकों के लिए उचित वेतन की जरूरत है।”

## Culture and competition

### संस्कृति और प्रतिस्पर्धा

- **UDISE 2022 data** shows **ST girl dropout rates** in Maharashtra are **higher than the national average** by secondary level.  
यूडीआईएसई 2022 के आंकड़े बताते हैं कि महाराष्ट्र में एसटी लड़कियों का ड्रॉपआउट रेट माध्यमिक स्तर तक राष्ट्रीय औसत से अधिक है।
- The **gap** between **unreserved girls** and **ST girls** in dropout rate is **wider** than the national average.  
एसटी और सामान्य वर्ग की लड़कियों के बीच ड्रॉपआउट रेट का अंतर राष्ट्रीय औसत से अधिक है।



- Maharashtra's progress in **reducing this gap** over the last **8 years** is **slower** than the national level.  
महाराष्ट्र ने पिछले **8 वर्षों** में इस अंतर को **कम करने में धीमी गति** दिखाई है।
  - "Students quit education due to **language barriers**," says **Sheshrao Gawade, 28**, who teaches **Science and Gondri**.  
"भाषाई बाधाओं\*\* के कारण छात्र पढ़ाई छोड़ देते हैं," कहते हैं **शेशराव गावड़े, 28**, जो **विज्ञान और गोंडी** पढ़ाते हैं।
  - "Teaching in Gondri opens many opportunities; we want to teach **Gond medicinal knowledge**," he adds.  
"गोंडी में पढ़ाने से कई अवसर मिलते हैं; हम **गोंड चिकित्सा ज्ञान** भी पढ़ाना चाहते हैं," वे कहते हैं।
  - In **Pendhari village, Manda Aatla, 38**, takes pride in her son's grasp of **Gondri script**.  
**पेंधरी गांव में, मांडा आतला, 38 वर्ष**, अपने बेटे की **गोंडी लिपि** की समझ पर गर्व करती हैं।
  - She says, "Gondri helps him learn other languages; he understands **English** better when explained in Gondri."  
वह कहती हैं, "गोंडी उसकी अन्य भाषाएं सीखने में मदद करती है; जब **अंग्रेजी** गोंडी में समझाई जाती है तो वह जल्दी समझता है।"
  - In **Kasansur village, Naresh Narote, 45**, says his **9-year-old daughter** in the Gondri school learns faster than the one in **Etapalli ZP School**.  
**कसंसूर गांव में, नरेश नारोटे, 45**, कहते हैं कि उनकी **9 साल की बेटी** जो गोंडी स्कूल में पढ़ती है, **एटापल्ली जिला परिषद स्कूल** में पढ़ने वाली बेटी से जल्दी सीखती है।
  - **Extracurricular activities** like **songs, stories, and dances** integrate culture with the curriculum.  
**गाने, कहानियां, और नृत्य** जैसी **अतिरिक्त गतिविधियां** पाठ्यक्रम के साथ संस्कृति को जोड़ती हैं।
  - "We have folklore on human evolution, gravity, mythology, and living," adds Devsai.  
देवसाई कहते हैं, "हमारे पास मानव विकास, गुरुत्वाकर्षण, पौराणिक कथाओं और जीवन जीने की लोककथाएं हैं।"
  - A **Tribal Department officer** said, "Students appeared happy; they don't feel pressured."  
एक **आदिवासी विभाग के अधिकारी** ने कहा, "छात्र खुश दिखे; वे दबाव महसूस नहीं करते।"
  - He suggests registering the school as an **ashram shala**.  
वह सुझाव देते हैं कि स्कूल को **आश्रम शाला** के रूप में पंजीकृत किया जा सकता है।
- "It's strange that **PESA** governs **jal, jungle, zameen**, but not education," says **Devy**.  
"ये अजीब है कि **PESA** **जल, जंगल, जमीन** को नियंत्रित कर सकता है, लेकिन शिक्षा को नहीं," **देवी** कहते हैं।



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**06\_04\_2025 DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**TOPICS COVERED GS Paper II: Polity, Governance, and International Relations)**

**1. India and Sri Lanka sign 7 MoUs, enhance ties in defence, energy**

भारत और श्रीलंका ने 7 समझौता ज्ञापनों पर हस्ताक्षर किए, रक्षा और ऊर्जा में संबंधों को मजबूत किया

**2. People should not misuse their rights in a democracy, says Shinde on Kamra row**

लोकतंत्र में लोगों को अपने अधिकारों का दुरुपयोग नहीं करना चाहिए, कमरा विवाद पर शिंदे का बयान

**3. Will the Waqf Bill usher in transparency?**

क्या वक्फ बिल पारदर्शिता लेकर आएगा?

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# India and Sri Lanka sign 7 MoUs, enhance ties in defence, energy

Agreements signed during Modi's visit cover defence, energy, digitisation, health; interest rates on loans to Sri Lanka cut; \$100 million of loans converted into grants; island nation expresses gratitude to India for support in its economic recovery

**GS Paper II: India-Sri Lanka**

**Meera Lanka**  
COLOMBO

India and Sri Lanka inked seven MoUs – including one on defence cooperation – during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the island nation on Saturday, even as Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Disسانayake reaffirmed his government's commitment to ensuring that Sri Lankan territory is not used to undermine India's security or regional stability.

"We believe that we have shared security interests. The security of both countries is interconnected and co-dependent. I am grateful to President Disسانayake for his sensitivity towards India's interests," Mr. Modi said in his address following the signing of the MoUs at the Presidential Secretariat.

**Expanding cooperation**  
The MoUs signed were on the topics of energy sector cooperation – including energy grid connection and developing Trincomalee as an energy hub in partnership with the United Arab Emirates, digitisation efforts, health, and multi-sectoral assistance to Sri Lanka's Eastern Province, taking off on discussions held during President Disسانayake's visit to New Delhi in December 2024.

Briefing the media later, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri described the defence sector MoU as an "umbrella agreement" that provided a framework to pursue ongoing defence sector cooperation in a more "structured" manner.

During the ceremony, the leaders virtually launched a cold storage plant in the central Dambulla district, and a solar power plant in the eastern Trincomalee district.

Further, India has decided to reduce the interest rates on loans extended



**Strengthening cooperation:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi with President Anura Kumara Disسانayake ahead of a bilateral meeting at the Presidential Secretariat in Colombo. AFP

to Sri Lanka to support the country's external debt treatment, Mr. Modi said, adding that loans totalling over \$100 million have been converted to grants.

Mr. Disسانayake conferred the 'Sri Lanka Mitra Vibhushana' title on Mr. Modi, saying that it was "a symbol of the enduring friendship and unwavering, multifaceted support that he has consistently extended to Sri Lanka and its people."

Sri Lanka, like India, "firmly believes" in the potential of South Asia to rise and shine on the world stage and the two countries must strive to achieve that goal together, the leftist Sri Lankan leader observed.

## Temple renovation

In his statement, Mr. Modi announced that relics of the Buddha, found in 1960 in the Aravali region in Gujarat, would be sent to Sri Lanka for an exposition during the Vesak festivities in May this year.

India would also support the renovation of the Thirukoneswaram temple in Trincomalee and the construction of the sacred city in the Anuradhapura Mahabodhi temple complex, and the Sita Eliya temple in Nuwara Eliya, Mr. Modi said.

## 'Bottom-trawling ban must to end fisheries conflict'

COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's Tamil political leaders on Saturday urged India to ban bottom trawling in order to resolve the fisheries conflict affecting the fishermen of northern Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu. Ilankai Tamil Arasu Katchi general secretary M.A. Sumanthiran recalled the 2016 agreement between India and Sri Lanka to "expedite the transition towards ending the practice of bottom trawling at the earliest". > PAGE 3

## Tamil parties seek India's constant involvement for a political solution

**Meera Srinivasan**  
COLOMBO

The historic Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987 remains the only instrument to achieve a political solution for the Tamils of the island, and India's "legitimate involvement" will be important to reach this goal, Sri Lanka's Tamil parties told Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday.

Mr. Modi, who is in the island nation on a state visit, held talks with different groups of Opposition politicians on Saturday afternoon.

He met with a delegation of leaders and representatives from Tamil parties of the north and east, including the Ilankai Tamil Arasu Katchi (ITAK), All Ceylon Tamil Congress, People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam, and the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation.

They discussed the pending political solution and other concerns of Tamils, including an ongoing land grab by state agencies, amid a growing perception that India's interest in the Tamil question may be



PM Modi with Sri Lankan Tamil leaders in Colombo.

waning in the wake of growing geopolitical challenges.

## 'Meaningful devolution'

"We told the Prime Minister that the Tamil question is yet to be resolved and that it has been acknowledged that the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment [a constitutional amendment ensuring a measure of power devolution] does not meet the ideals of the Accord. As a friendly, close neighbour, we urged India to encourage the Sri Lankan government to take steps towards meaningful devolution," ITAK general secretary M.A. Sumanthiran told *The Hindu*.

"We told him that our party was called the Federal Party and has pushed for

a federal structure in governance," he said.

The delegation also sought India's intervention in ensuring the conduct of the Provincial Council elections, as "part of the process of achieving meaningful power devolution". In his address earlier on Saturday, Mr. Modi said he had discussed reconstruction and reconciliation with Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Disسانayake.

"He appraised me of his inclusive approach. We hope that the Sri Lankan government will meet the aspirations of the Tamil people and fulfil its commitment towards fully implementing the Constitution of Sri Lanka, and conducting Provincial Council elections," Mr. Modi said.

Mr. Modi also met with Sri Lankan Leader of Opposition Sajith Premadasa. Following the meeting, Mr. Premadasa posted on X: "Sri Lanka and India have the chance to shape a future of Shared Ascent, where growth is not just measured in trade, but in the wellbeing of our people."



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## India and Sri Lanka sign 7 MoUs, enhance ties in defence, energy

भारत और श्रीलंका ने 7 समझौता ज्ञापनों पर हस्ताक्षर किए, रक्षा और ऊर्जा में संबंधों को मजबूत किया

India and Sri Lanka inked seven MoUs — including one on defence cooperation — during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the island nation on Saturday.

भारत और श्रीलंका ने शनिवार को प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी की यात्रा के दौरान सात समझौता ज्ञापनों पर हस्ताक्षर किए, जिनमें एक रक्षा सहयोग पर भी था।

- Sri Lankan President **Anura Kumara Dissanayake** reaffirmed his government's commitment to ensuring that **Sri Lankan territory** is not used to undermine **India's security** or **regional stability**.

श्रीलंकाई राष्ट्रपति अनुर कुमारा डिसानायके ने यह दोहराया कि उनकी सरकार भारत की सुरक्षा या क्षेत्रीय स्थिरता को कमजोर करने के लिए श्रीलंकाई क्षेत्र का उपयोग नहीं होने देगी।

- "We believe that we have **shared security interests**. The security of both countries is **interconnected** and **co-dependent**. I am grateful to President Dissanayake for his **sensitivity towards India's interests**," Mr. Modi said.

"हमें विश्वास है कि हमारे बीच साझा सुरक्षा हित हैं। दोनों देशों की सुरक्षा एक-दूसरे से जुड़ी हुई और परस्पर निर्भर है। मैं राष्ट्रपति डिसानायके का भारत के हितों के प्रति संवेदनशीलता के लिए आभार प्रकट करता हूँ," श्री मोदी ने कहा।

### Expanding cooperation

#### सहयोग का विस्तार

- The MoUs signed were on the topics of **energy sector cooperation**, including **energy grid connection** and developing **Trincomalee** as an **energy hub** in partnership with the **United Arab Emirates**.

हस्ताक्षर किए गए समझौते ऊर्जा क्षेत्र सहयोग, ऊर्जा ग्रिड कनेक्शन, और त्रिंकोमाली को संयुक्त अरब अमीरात की साझेदारी में ऊर्जा हब के रूप में विकसित करने से संबंधित थे।

- Other areas included **digitisation efforts**, **health**, and **multi-sectoral assistance** to **Sri Lanka's Eastern Province**, based on discussions held during President Dissanayake's **visit to New Delhi in December 2024**.

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अन्य क्षेत्रों में डिजिटलीकरण प्रयास, स्वास्थ्य, और श्रीलंका के पूर्वी प्रांत के लिए बहु-क्षेत्रीय सहायता शामिल थी, जो दिसंबर 2024 में राष्ट्रपति डिसानायके की नई दिल्ली यात्रा के दौरान की गई चर्चा पर आधारित थी।

• Foreign Secretary **Vikram Misri** described the **defence sector MoU** as an “**umbrella agreement**” that provided a **framework** to pursue ongoing defence sector cooperation in a more “**structured**” manner.

विदेश सचिव **विक्रम मिश्री** ने रक्षा क्षेत्र के समझौते को एक “**छत्र समझौता**” बताया, जो रक्षा क्षेत्र में चल रहे सहयोग को अधिक “**संरचित**” ढंग से आगे बढ़ाने के लिए **ढांचा** प्रदान करता है।

• During the ceremony, the leaders **virtually launched a cold storage plant in central Dambulla district**, and a **solar power plant in the eastern Trincomalee district**.

समारोह के दौरान नेताओं ने **मध्य दम्बुला जिले** में एक **कोल्ड स्टोरेज प्लांट** और **पूर्वी त्रिंकोमाली जिले** में एक **सौर ऊर्जा संयंत्र** का **वर्चुअल उद्घाटन** किया।

## Financial Support and Grants

### वित्तीय सहायता और अनुदान

• India has decided to **reduce interest rates on loans** extended to Sri Lanka to support the country’s **external debt treatment**.

भारत ने श्रीलंका को दिए गए ऋणों की **ब्याज दरों को कम करने** का निर्णय लिया है ताकि देश की **बाह्य ऋण समस्या** को सुलझाने में सहायता मिल सके।

• Loans **totalling over \$100 million** have been **converted into grants**, Mr. Modi said.

श्री मोदी ने कहा कि **\$100 मिलियन से अधिक** के ऋणों को **अनुदान में परिवर्तित** कर दिया गया है।

## Recognition and Regional Aspiration

### सम्मान और क्षेत्रीय आकांक्षा

• Mr. Dissanayake conferred the ‘**Sri Lanka Mitra Vibhushana**’ title on Mr. Modi, calling it a symbol of the **enduring friendship** and **multifaceted support** extended by him to Sri Lanka and its people.

श्री डिसानायके ने श्री मोदी को ‘**श्रीलंका मित्र विभूषण**’ की उपाधि दी और इसे श्रीलंका और उसके लोगों के प्रति उनकी **स्थायी मित्रता** और **बहुआयामी समर्थन** का प्रतीक बताया।

• Sri Lanka, like India, “**firmly believes**” in the **potential of South Asia** to rise and shine on the world stage and both countries must strive to achieve that goal **together**, the **leftist** Sri Lankan leader observed.

श्रीलंका भी भारत की तरह मानता है कि **दक्षिण एशिया** में **विश्व मंच पर उभरने और चमकने की पूरी क्षमता** है और दोनों देशों को यह लक्ष्य **साझा रूप से** प्राप्त करने की दिशा में प्रयास करना चाहिए, **वामपंथी** श्रीलंकाई नेता ने कहा।

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## Temple renovation मंदिरों का पुनर्निर्माण

● In his statement, Mr. Modi announced that **relics of the Buddha**, found in **1960** in the **Aravali region in Gujarat**, would be sent to **Sri Lanka** for an exposition during the **Vesak festivities in May this year**.

अपने बयान में श्री मोदी ने घोषणा की कि गुजरात के अरावली क्षेत्र में 1960 में प्राप्त बुद्ध के अवशेषों को इस वर्ष मई में वेसाक उत्सव के दौरान प्रदर्शनी के लिए श्रीलंका भेजा जाएगा।

● India would also support the **renovation** of the **Thirukoneswaram temple in Trincomalee** and the construction of the **sacred city in the Anuradhapura Mahabodhi temple complex**, and the **Sita Eliya temple in Nuwara Eliya**, Mr. Modi said.

श्री मोदी ने कहा कि भारत त्रिंकोमाली में थिरुकोनेस्वरम मंदिर के पुनर्निर्माण, अनुराधापुरा महाबोधि मंदिर परिसर में पवित्र नगर के निर्माण और नुवारा एलिया में सीता एलिया मंदिर के निर्माण में भी सहायता करेगा।

## Political engagement with Tamil parties तमिल पार्टियों के साथ राजनीतिक संवाद

● The historic **Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987** remains the only instrument to achieve a **political solution** for the **Tamils** of the island, and India's "**legitimate involvement**" will be important to reach this goal, **Sri Lanka's Tamil parties** told Prime Minister Narendra Modi on **Saturday**.

1987 का ऐतिहासिक भारत-श्रीलंका समझौता द्वीप के तमिलों के लिए राजनीतिक समाधान प्राप्त करने का एकमात्र साधन बना हुआ है, और इस लक्ष्य को प्राप्त करने में भारत की "वैध भागीदारी" महत्वपूर्ण होगी, ऐसा श्रीलंका की तमिल पार्टियों ने शनिवार को प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी से कहा।

● Mr. Modi, who is in the island nation on a **state visit**, held talks with different groups of **Opposition politicians** on **Saturday afternoon**.

राजकीय दौरे पर आए श्री मोदी ने शनिवार दोपहर को विपक्षी नेताओं के विभिन्न समूहों के साथ बातचीत की।

● He met with a delegation of leaders and representatives from **Tamil parties** of the **north and east**, including the **Ilankai Tamil Arasu Katchi (ITAK)**, **All Ceylon Tamil Congress**, **People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam**, and the **Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation**.

उन्होंने उत्तर और पूर्व की तमिल पार्टियों के नेताओं और प्रतिनिधियों के एक प्रतिनिधिमंडल से मुलाकात की, जिनमें इलंकाई तमिल अरसु कच्ची (ITAK), ऑल सीलोन तमिल कांग्रेस, पीपुल्स लिबरेशन ऑर्गनाइजेशन ऑफ तमिल ईलम, और तमिल ईलम लिबरेशन ऑर्गनाइजेशन शामिल थे।

● They discussed the **pending political solution** and other concerns of **Tamils**, including an ongoing **land grab by state agencies**, amid a growing perception that **India's interest** in the Tamil question may be waning due to **geopolitical challenges**.

उन्होंने लंबित राजनीतिक समाधान और तमिलों की अन्य चिंताओं पर चर्चा की, जिसमें राज्य एजेंसियों द्वारा



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ज़मीन हथियाने का मुद्दा भी शामिल था, साथ ही यह धारणा भी कि भूराजनीतिक चुनौतियों के चलते तमिल मुद्दे में भारत की रुचि कम होती जा रही है।

## ‘Meaningful devolution’

### ‘अर्थपूर्ण अधिकारों का विकेंद्रीकरण’

• “We told the Prime Minister that the **Tamil question is yet to be resolved** and that it has been acknowledged that the **13th Amendment** does not meet the ideals of the Accord.

“हमने प्रधानमंत्री से कहा कि तमिल मुद्दा अभी तक हल नहीं हुआ है और यह स्वीकार किया गया है कि 13वां संविधान संशोधन समझौते के आदर्शों को पूरा नहीं करता।

• As a friendly, close neighbour, we urged India to encourage the **Sri Lankan government** to take steps towards **meaningful devolution**,” ITAK general secretary **M.A. Sumanthiran** told *The Hindu*.

एक मित्र और निकट पड़ोसी के रूप में, हमने भारत से आग्रह किया कि वह श्रीलंकाई सरकार को अर्थपूर्ण विकेंद्रीकरण की दिशा में कदम उठाने के लिए प्रोत्साहित करे,” ITAK के महासचिव एम.ए. सुमंथिरन ने द हिंदू को बताया।

• “We told him that our party was called the **Federal Party** and has pushed for a **federal structure** in governance,” he said.

“हमने उनसे कहा कि हमारी पार्टी को फेडरल पार्टी कहा जाता है और हम शासन में संघीय ढांचे की मांग करते रहे हैं,” उन्होंने कहा।

• The delegation also sought **India’s intervention** in ensuring the **conduct of the Provincial Council elections**, as “part of the process of achieving meaningful power devolution”.

प्रतिनिधिमंडल ने प्रांतीय परिषद चुनावों के आयोजन को सुनिश्चित करने में भारत की हस्तक्षेप की मांग की, ताकि यह “अर्थपूर्ण सत्ता हस्तांतरण की प्रक्रिया” का हिस्सा बन सके।

## India’s support for Tamil aspirations

### तमिल आकांक्षाओं के लिए भारत का समर्थन

• In his address earlier on **Saturday**, Mr. Modi said he had discussed **reconstruction and reconciliation** with **Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake**.

शनिवार को पहले दिए अपने भाषण में श्री मोदी ने कहा कि उन्होंने श्रीलंकाई राष्ट्रपति अनुर कुमारा डिसानायके के साथ पुनर्निर्माण और सुलह पर चर्चा की।

• “He appraised me of his **inclusive approach**. We hope that the **Sri Lankan government** will meet the **aspirations of the Tamil people** and fulfil its commitment towards fully **implementing the Constitution** of Sri Lanka, and conducting **Provincial Council elections**,” Mr. Modi said.

“उन्होंने मुझे अपनी समावेशी नीति से अवगत कराया। हमें आशा है कि श्रीलंकाई सरकार तमिल जनता की

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आकांक्षाओं को पूरा करेगी और श्रीलंका के संविधान को पूरी तरह लागू करने तथा प्रांतीय परिषद चुनाव कराने की प्रतिबद्धता को निभाएगी,” श्री मोदी ने कहा।

## Meeting with Sri Lankan Opposition Leader

### श्रीलंकाई विपक्ष के नेता से मुलाकात

- Mr. Modi also met with **Sri Lankan Leader of Opposition Sajith Premadasa**. श्री मोदी ने श्रीलंकाई विपक्ष के नेता साजिथ प्रेमदासा से भी मुलाकात की।
- Following the meeting, Mr. Premadasa posted on X: **“Sri Lanka and India have the chance to shape a future of Shared Ascent, where growth is not just measured in trade, but in the wellbeing of our people.”**

मुलाकात के बाद श्री प्रेमदासा ने एक्स पर पोस्ट किया: **“श्रीलंका और भारत के पास एक साझे उत्थान के भविष्य को आकार देने का मौका है, जहां विकास सिर्फ व्यापार में नहीं बल्कि हमारे लोगों की भलाई में भी मापा जाएगा।”**

## People should not misuse their rights in a democracy, says Shinde on Kamra row

**GS Paper II: FR**  
**Vinaya Deshpande Pandit**  
MUMBAI

Speaking elaborately on the Kunal Kamra controversy for the first time, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said on Saturday that people should not misuse their rights in a democracy.

However, he clarified that he does not support the violence by Shiv Sena workers at the studio

where Mr. Kamra allegedly made offensive remarks against Mr. Shinde as part of a show.

In an exclusive interview for the launch episode of 'Pulse Maharashtra' on *The Hindu's* YouTube channel on Saturday, Mr. Shinde hinted at the Opposition party's involvement in the incident.

"I am a peace-loving person. I tell everyone, they should let me work in

peace. I don't provoke anyone. I keep working though people level allegations against me. But I never respond to allegations with counter-allegations. I reply to them with my work. That's why I could succeed as the common man's CM," he said.

**'Against violence'**  
Asked about the violence by his party members, the Deputy Chief Minister said,

"I will not support the violence that happened at the studio. But in a democracy, in the name of right to freedom of expression, to defame someone, to insult someone, to misuse their rights, or follow anarchy. Everyone has rights. But we cannot take them away from someone else."

Hinting at the Opposition party's [the Shiv Sena



Eknath Shinde

UBT] involvement, Mr. Shinde said, "Like someone was continuously le-

velling allegations against me that I had brought in an unconstitutional government. I have nothing to do with these things. I keep working. And the people have proved that they are with me. They [Opposition party] have to think. They have to introspect."

He congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the passage of the amended Waqf Bill in Parliament, slamming the Shiv Sena

(UBT) for opposing it. He said that his party was the true flag-bearer of Balasaheb Thackeray's ideology. "Modiji must be congratulated as he has ended corruption. Entire village was claimed by Waqf once in Maharashtra. Several such incidents have been reported in the past. Now, there will be transparency," he said.

Asked about the Opposition's criticism comparing

them [the BJP and the Shiv Sena] to the founder of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, he said, "Those who stay with Rahul Gandhi will see only Jinnah. What else can be expected of them?" (You can watch the video interview on 'Pulse Maharashtra', a show launched on *The Hindu's* YouTube channel on Saturday)

**KAMRA SKIPS SUMMONS**  
» PAGE 3

## People should not misuse their rights in a democracy, says Shinde on Kamra row

**लोकतंत्र में लोगों को अपने अधिकारों का दुरुपयोग नहीं करना चाहिए, कमरा विवाद पर शिंदे का बयान**

Speaking elaborately on the Kunal Kamra controversy for the first time, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said on Saturday that people should not misuse their rights in a democracy.

कुनाल कमरा विवाद पर पहली बार विस्तार से बोलते हुए, महाराष्ट्र के उपमुख्यमंत्री



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एकनाथ शिंदे ने शनिवार को कहा कि लोगों को लोकतंत्र में अपने अधिकारों का दुरुपयोग नहीं करना चाहिए।

● However, he clarified that he does not support the **violence by Shiv Sena workers** at the **studio** where Mr. Kamra allegedly made **offensive remarks** against Mr. Shinde as part of a show.

हालांकि, उन्होंने यह स्पष्ट किया कि वह उस **स्टूडियो** में हुई **शिवसेना कार्यकर्ताओं की हिंसा** का समर्थन नहीं करते, जहां श्री कमरा ने एक शो के दौरान श्री शिंदे के खिलाफ कथित रूप से **आपत्तिजनक टिप्पणी** की थी।

● In an **exclusive interview** for the **launch episode** of 'Pulse Maharashtra' on **The Hindu's YouTube channel** on **Saturday**, Mr. Shinde hinted at the **Opposition party's involvement** in the incident.

**शनिवार** को **द हिंदू के यूट्यूब चैनल** पर '**पल्स महाराष्ट्र**' के **प्रारंभिक एपिसोड** के लिए दिए गए **एक्सक्लूसिव इंटरव्यू** में श्री शिंदे ने इस घटना में **विपक्षी पार्टी की संलिप्तता** का संकेत दिया।

● "I am a **peace-loving person**. I tell everyone, they should let me work in peace. I don't provoke anyone. I keep working though people level **allegations** against me. But I never respond to allegations with counter-allegations. I reply to them with my work. That's why I could succeed as the **common man's CM**," he said.

उन्होंने कहा, "मैं एक **शांतिप्रिय व्यक्ति** हूं। मैं सबको कहता हूं कि मुझे शांति से काम करने दें। मैं किसी को उकसाता नहीं हूं। मेरे खिलाफ लोग **आरोप** लगाते हैं, लेकिन मैं **जवाब** में **जवाबी आरोप** नहीं लगाता। मैं काम से जवाब देता हूं। इसीलिए मैं **आम आदमी का मुख्यमंत्री** बन सका।"

**'Against violence'**

**'हिंसा के खिलाफ'**

● Asked about the **violence** by his party members, the Deputy Chief Minister said, "I will not support the violence that happened at the studio. But in a democracy, in the name of **right to freedom of expression**, to **defame** someone, to **insult** someone, is not right. Nobody should, in a democracy, **misuse their rights**, or follow **anarchy**. Everyone has rights. But we cannot take them away from someone else."

अपनी पार्टी के कार्यकर्ताओं द्वारा की गई **हिंसा** के बारे में पूछे जाने पर उपमुख्यमंत्री ने कहा, "मैं **स्टूडियो** में हुई हिंसा का समर्थन नहीं करता। लेकिन एक **लोकतंत्र** में **अभिव्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता** के नाम पर किसी को **अपमानित** करना या **बदनाम** करना सही नहीं है। कोई भी अपने अधिकारों का **दुरुपयोग** नहीं कर सकता या **अराजकता** नहीं फैला सकता। सभी को अधिकार हैं, लेकिन हम दूसरों के अधिकार नहीं छीन सकते।"

● Hinting at the **Opposition party's (Shiv Sena UBT)** involvement, Mr. Shinde said, "Like someone was continuously levelling **allegations** against me that I had brought in an **unconstitutional government**. I have nothing to do with these things. I keep working. And the **people have proved** that they are with me. They [Opposition party] have to think. They have to



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introspect.”

विपक्षी पार्टी (शिवसेना यूबीटी) की संलिप्तता का संकेत देते हुए श्री शिंदे ने कहा, “जैसे कोई लगातार यह आरोप लगा रहा था कि मैंने एक असंवैधानिक सरकार बनाई। मेरा इन सब चीजों से कोई लेना-देना नहीं है। मैं बस काम करता हूँ। और जनता ने साबित कर दिया है कि वे मेरे साथ हैं। उन्हें (विपक्ष) को सोचना चाहिए, आत्मनिरीक्षण करना चाहिए।”

● He congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the passage of the amended Waqf Bill in Parliament, slamming the Shiv Sena (UBT) for opposing it. He said that his party was the true flag-bearer of Balasaheb Thackeray’s ideology.

उन्होंने प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी को संशोधित वक्फ बिल के संसद में पारित होने पर बधाई दी और शिवसेना (यूबीटी) को इसका विरोध करने पर आड़े हाथों लिया। उन्होंने कहा कि उनकी पार्टी ही बालासाहेब ठाकरे की विचारधारा की असली वाहक है।

● “Modiji must be congratulated as he has ended corruption. Entire village was claimed by Waqf once in Maharashtra. Several such incidents have been reported in the past. Now, there will be transparency,” he said.

उन्होंने कहा, “मोदीजी को बधाई देनी चाहिए क्योंकि उन्होंने भ्रष्टाचार खत्म कर दिया। एक समय महाराष्ट्र में पूरे गांव को वक्फ घोषित कर दिया गया था। पहले भी कई ऐसे मामले सामने आ चुके हैं। अब पारदर्शिता आएगी।”

● Asked about the Opposition’s criticism comparing them (the BJP and Shiv Sena) to the founder of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, he said, “Those who stay with Rahul Gandhi will see only Jinnah. What else can be expected of them?”

जब उनसे यह पूछा गया कि विपक्ष ने भाजपा और शिवसेना की तुलना पाकिस्तान के संस्थापक मोहम्मद अली जिन्ना से की है, तो उन्होंने कहा, “जो लोग राहुल गांधी के साथ रहते हैं, उन्हें तो जिन्ना ही नजर आएगा। उनसे और क्या उम्मीद की जा सकती है?”



# Will the Waqf Bill usher in transparency?

What are the changes sought in the Waqf (Amendment) Bill? Why are critics and Opposition parties arguing that the amendments encroach upon the religious autonomy of the Muslim community? Will non-Muslims be part of waqf boards? What is the 'waqf by user' doctrine?

## GS Paper II: FR

Aaratrika Bhaumik

The story so far:

Parliament passed the contentious Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025, on April 4, after a nearly 14-hour debate in the Rajya Sabha. The Bill was cleared with 128 votes in favour and 95 against, and has received the President's assent as well. The margin was significantly narrower than in the Lok Sabha, which passed it with a 56-vote lead. Originally introduced last year, the Bill was referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) chaired by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Jagdambika Pal for scrutiny. The report was laid before both Houses on February 13, 2025.

What does the Bill aim to do?

In Islamic law, waqf refers to property dedicated in the name of god for religious or charitable purposes. Proceeds from such properties are typically used to maintain mosques, fund educational institutions, or support the poor. Once designated as waqf, the property becomes inalienable – it cannot be sold, inherited, or gifted. The Waqf Act, 1995 (1995 Act), and its 2013 amendments under the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government created the legal framework for managing waqf properties and established State Waqf Boards.

The Bill seeks to amend the 1995 Act, now renamed the Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency and Development Act. It proposes sweeping reforms that significantly expand the government's role in regulating such properties and adjudicating disputes related to them. While the government justifies these amendments as necessary for transparency, critics and Opposition parties

'Once a person embraces Islam, they are entitled to all associated rights, including the right to religious dedication'

argue that they encroach upon the religious autonomy of the Muslim community.

**Who is eligible to make a waqf dedication?**

Under the original law, any person, regardless of religion, could dedicate property as waqf. However, the new amendments restrict this right to only those who have practised Islam for at least five years. The Bill now requires individuals to "show or demonstrate" adherence to Islam for this duration to establish a waqf. Dr. Faizan Mustafa, Vice-Chancellor of Chanakya National Law University, Patna, has criticised this requirement as constitutionally suspect. "Once a person embraces Islam, they are entitled to all associated rights, including the right to religious dedication. This provision also violates the right to equality under Article 14 of the Constitution, as it discriminates against recent converts by selectively barring them from endowing property for religious purposes", he told *The Hindu*.

**What about 'waqf by user' properties?**

Last year, the government proposed a complete repeal of the doctrine of "waqf by user" – a principle rooted in Islamic legal tradition that recognised properties as religious or charitable endowments based on uninterrupted communal use, even in the absence of formal documentation. However, the JPC report cautioned that dismantling this doctrine could destabilise the legal standing of such properties, many of which have been informally managed by local communities for decades. Accordingly, the new Bill now clarifies that all existing "waqf by user" properties registered on or before the law's enactment will retain their status unless they are disputed as government land.

**Will government oversight intensify?**

The 2024 Bill reallocated the responsibility of surveying waqf properties from dedicated survey commissioners to District Collectors. It also repealed Section 40 of the 1995 Act, which had empowered the Waqf Boards to initiate *suo motu* inquiries to determine whether a property qualified as waqf, even without official documentation. However, the JPC recommended that such surveys be conducted by senior State officials. Accordingly, the revised Bill now mandates that "an officer above the rank of Collector" survey properties where government ownership is disputed.

"The claim that there was no government oversight is a myth. The existing law already allows the government to issue directions to Waqf Boards, nominate members, and even supersede them. Replacing trained survey

commissioners with District Magistrates who are already overburdened undermines institutional capacity," Dr. Mustafa pointed out.

**Is there non-Muslim representation?**

One of the Bill's most contentious provisions is the inclusion of non-Muslims in key waqf institutions. It mandates that both the Central Waqf Council and State Waqf Boards must have at least two non-Muslim members. It also removes the requirement that the Chief Executive Officer of a Waqf Board should be a Muslim. In line with a JPC recommendation, the Bill stipulates that the State government's representative on the Waqf Board must be a joint secretary-level officer specifically overseeing waqf affairs.

Opposition parties argue that these changes infringe upon the community's constitutionally guaranteed right to manage its religious affairs. However, welcoming the reforms, Dr. Mustafa said, "The diversity of the nation must be reflected in all its institutions, including Waqf Boards, which are statutory bodies. The inclusion of women, non-Muslims, and members of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) is a positive step. The real question is whether similar reforms will be introduced in temple boards as well."

**What about financial accountability?**

To enhance financial oversight, the Bill introduces a centralised registration system for waqf properties. *Muttawalis* (custodians of waqfs) will be required to upload property details within six months of the law's enactment, and all future registrations must be routed exclusively through this portal to the respective Waqf Boards.

The Bill also seeks to repeal Section 107 of the 1995 Act, which had exempted waqf properties from the applicability of the Limitation Act, 1963. This provision allowed Waqf Boards to recover encroached land without being constrained by the Act's standard limitation period of 12 years. However, critics argue that its removal would permit encroachers to claim ownership through adverse possession, legitimising illegal occupations of waqf land.

**What lies ahead?**

Congress MP Mohammed Jawed, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimin (AIMIM) chief Asaduddin Owaisi, Delhi legislator Amanatullah Khan, and the NGO Association for Protection of Civil Rights have filed separate petitions before the Supreme Court, contending that the proposed legislation infringes upon constitutionally guaranteed rights to religious freedom and property. "When the constitutionality of a law is challenged, courts begin with a presumption in favour of its validity. Therefore, the burden lies heavily on the petitioner to demonstrate that the law violates fundamental rights," said Dr. Mustafa.



Rupturing social fabric: People hold a protest against the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, in Kolkata on April 4. ANI

## Will the Waqf Bill usher in transparency?

क्या वकफ बिल पारदर्शिता लेकर आएगा?



Parliament passed the contentious Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025 on April 4, after a nearly 14-hour debate in the Rajya Sabha.

4 अप्रैल 2025 को संसद ने राज्यसभा में लगभग 14 घंटे की बहस के बाद विवादास्पद वक्फ (संशोधन) विधेयक, 2025 पारित किया।

- The Bill was cleared with **128 votes in favour** and **95 against**, and has received the **President's assent** as well.  
यह विधेयक 128 पक्ष में और 95 विपक्ष में वोटों के साथ पारित हुआ, और इसे राष्ट्रपति की स्वीकृति भी मिल गई है।
- The margin was significantly narrower than in the Lok Sabha, which passed it with a **56-vote lead**.  
यह अंतर लोकसभा की तुलना में काफी कम था, जहां यह विधेयक 56 वोटों के अंतर से पारित हुआ था।
- Originally introduced last year, the Bill was referred to a **Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC)** chaired by **BJP MP Jagdambika Pal** for scrutiny.  
यह विधेयक मूल रूप से पिछले वर्ष पेश किया गया था और इसकी जांच के लिए इसे संयुक्त संसदीय समिति (JPC) को सौंपा गया था, जिसकी अध्यक्षता भाजपा सांसद जगदंबिका पाल ने की थी।
- The report was laid before both Houses on **February 13, 2025**.  
यह रिपोर्ट 13 फरवरी 2025 को दोनों सदनों में पेश की गई थी।
- **What does the Bill aim to do?**  
**इस विधेयक का उद्देश्य क्या है?**
- In Islamic law, **waqf** refers to **property dedicated in the name of God for religious or charitable purposes**.  
इस्लामी कानून में, वक्फ का अर्थ है ईश्वर के नाम पर धार्मिक या परोपकारी उद्देश्यों के लिए समर्पित संपत्ति।
- Proceeds from such properties are typically used to **maintain mosques, fund educational institutions, or support the poor**.  
ऐसी संपत्तियों की आमदनी का उपयोग आमतौर पर मस्जिदों के रखरखाव, शैक्षणिक संस्थानों को सहायता, या गरीबों की मदद के लिए किया जाता है।
- Once designated as waqf, the property becomes **inalienable** — it cannot be **sold, inherited, or gifted**.  
एक बार वक्फ घोषित हो जाने के बाद, संपत्ति अविनाशी हो जाती है — इसे बेचा, विरासत में दिया, या उपहार में नहीं दिया जा सकता।
- The **Waqf Act, 1995**, and its **2013 amendments** under the **UPA government** created the legal framework for managing waqf properties and established **State Waqf Boards**.  
वक्फ अधिनियम, 1995, और 2013 में यूपीए सरकार द्वारा किए गए संशोधनों ने वक्फ संपत्तियों के प्रबंधन के लिए कानूनी ढांचा तैयार किया और राज्य वक्फ बोर्डों की स्थापना की।
- The Bill seeks to amend the **1995 Act**, now renamed the **Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency and Development Act**.



यह विधेयक 1995 अधिनियम में संशोधन करना चाहता है, जिसे अब यूनैफाइड वक्फ मैनेजमेंट, एम्पावरमेंट, एफिशिएंसी एंड डेवलपमेंट एक्ट नाम दिया गया है।

- It proposes **sweeping reforms** that significantly expand the **government's role** in regulating such properties and adjudicating disputes related to them.

यह विधेयक व्यापक सुधारों का प्रस्ताव करता है, जिससे ऐसी संपत्तियों को विनियमित करने और उनसे संबंधित विवादों के निपटान में सरकार की भूमिका काफी बढ़ जाती है।

- While the government justifies these amendments as necessary for **transparency**, critics and Opposition parties argue that they **encroach upon the religious autonomy** of the Muslim community.

जहां सरकार इन संशोधनों को पारदर्शिता के लिए आवश्यक बताती है, वहीं आलोचक और विपक्षी दल कहते हैं कि ये मुस्लिम समुदाय की धार्मिक स्वायत्तता पर अतिक्रमण करते हैं।

- **Who is eligible to make a waqf dedication?**

वक्फ समर्पण करने के लिए कौन पात्र है?

- Under the original law, **any person**, regardless of religion, could dedicate property as waqf.

मूल कानून के तहत, किसी भी धर्म का व्यक्ति वक्फ के रूप में संपत्ति समर्पित कर सकता था।

- However, the new amendments **restrict this right** to only those who have **practised Islam for at least five years**.

हालांकि, नए संशोधन इस अधिकार को केवल उन लोगों तक सीमित करते हैं, जिन्होंने कम से कम पांच वर्षों तक इस्लाम का पालन किया हो।

- The Bill now requires individuals to “**show or demonstrate**” adherence to Islam for this duration to establish a waqf.

अब विधेयक व्यक्तियों को यह “दिखाने या प्रमाणित करने” की आवश्यकता करता है कि उन्होंने इस अवधि के दौरान इस्लाम का पालन किया है, तभी वे वक्फ बना सकते हैं।

- **Dr. Faizan Mustafa**, Vice-Chancellor of **Chanakya National Law University, Patna**, has criticised this requirement as **constitutionally suspect**.

डॉ. फैज़ान मुस्तफा, कुलपति, चाणक्य नेशनल लॉ यूनिवर्सिटी, पटना, ने इस प्रावधान की आलोचना करते हुए इसे संवैधानिक रूप से संदिग्ध बताया है।

- “Once a person embraces Islam, they are entitled to all associated rights, including the right to religious dedication.

“एक बार कोई व्यक्ति इस्लाम अपना लेता है, तो उसे सभी संबंधित अधिकार मिलते हैं, जिनमें धार्मिक समर्पण का अधिकार भी शामिल है।

- This provision also violates the **right to equality under Article 14** of the Constitution, as it discriminates against recent converts by selectively barring them from endowing property for religious purposes,” he told **The Hindu**.

यह प्रावधान संविधान के अनुच्छेद 14 के तहत समानता के अधिकार का उल्लंघन करता है, क्योंकि यह हाल ही में धर्मांतरण करने वालों को धार्मिक उद्देश्यों के लिए संपत्ति समर्पित करने से चयनात्मक रूप से वंचित करता है, उन्होंने द हिंदू को बताया।



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- **What about 'waqf by user' properties?**  
'उपयोगकर्ता द्वारा वक्फ' संपत्तियों का क्या होगा?
- Last year, the government proposed a complete repeal of the doctrine of “**waqf by user**” — a principle rooted in **Islamic legal tradition** that recognised properties as religious or charitable endowments based on **uninterrupted communal use**, even in the absence of formal documentation.  
**पिछले वर्ष**, सरकार ने “उपयोगकर्ता द्वारा वक्फ” सिद्धांत को पूरी तरह से खत्म करने का प्रस्ताव रखा — यह सिद्धांत **इस्लामी कानूनी परंपरा** में निहित है, जो संपत्तियों को **लगातार सामुदायिक उपयोग** के आधार पर धार्मिक या परोपकारी घोषित करता है, भले ही औपचारिक दस्तावेज न हों।
- However, the **JPC report** cautioned that dismantling this doctrine could **destabilise the legal standing** of such properties, many of which have been **informally managed** by local communities for **decades**.  
हालांकि, **JPC रिपोर्ट** ने चेतावनी दी कि इस सिद्धांत को खत्म करने से ऐसी संपत्तियों की **कानूनी स्थिति अस्थिर** हो सकती है, जिनमें से कई **दशकों** से स्थानीय समुदायों द्वारा **अनौपचारिक रूप से संचालित** की जा रही हैं।
- Accordingly, the new Bill now clarifies that all existing “**waqf by user**” properties registered on or before the law’s enactment will **retain their status**, unless they are **disputed as government land**.  
इसी के अनुसार, नया विधेयक स्पष्ट करता है कि **कानून लागू होने से पहले या उस दिन तक** पंजीकृत सभी मौजूदा “उपयोगकर्ता द्वारा वक्फ” संपत्तियां अपनी स्थिति बनाए रखेंगी, जब तक कि उन्हें **सरकारी भूमि के रूप में विवादित** न किया जाए।

## Will government oversight intensify?

### क्या सरकारी निगरानी बढ़ेगी?

- The **2024 Bill** reallocated the responsibility of surveying waqf properties from dedicated survey commissioners to **District Collectors**.  
**2024 के बिल** ने वक्फ संपत्तियों के सर्वेक्षण की जिम्मेदारी विशेष सर्वेक्षण आयुक्तों से लेकर **जिला कलेक्टरों** को सौंप दी।
- It also repealed **Section 40** of the **1995 Act**, which had empowered the Waqf Boards to initiate **suo motu inquiries** to determine whether a property qualified as waqf, even without official documentation.  
इसने **1995 अधिनियम** की **धारा 40** को भी रद्द कर दिया, जो वक्फ बोर्डों को **स्वतः संज्ञान जांच** शुरू करने का अधिकार देता था, भले ही औपचारिक दस्तावेज़ न हों।
- However, the **JPC** recommended that such surveys be conducted by senior **State officials**.  
हालांकि, **संयुक्त संसदीय समिति (JPC)** ने सिफारिश की कि ऐसे सर्वेक्षण **वरिष्ठ राज्य अधिकारियों** द्वारा किए जाएं।



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• Accordingly, the revised Bill now mandates that “an officer above the rank of **Collector**” survey properties where **government ownership is disputed**.

इसके अनुसार, संशोधित बिल अब यह अनिवार्य करता है कि जहां **सरकारी स्वामित्व विवादित** है, वहां **कलेक्टर से ऊपर के अधिकारी** संपत्तियों का सर्वेक्षण करें।

• “The claim that there was no government oversight is a myth... Replacing trained survey commissioners with **District Magistrates** who are already overburdened undermines institutional capacity,” Dr. Mustafa pointed out.

डॉ. मुस्तफा ने कहा, “यह दावा कि सरकारी निगरानी नहीं थी, एक भ्रम है... पहले से ही कार्यभार से दबे **जिलाधिकारियों** को प्रशिक्षित सर्वेक्षण आयुक्तों की जगह देना संस्थागत क्षमता को कमजोर करता है।”

## Is there non-Muslim representation?

### क्या गैर-मुस्लिम प्रतिनिधित्व है?

• One of the Bill’s most **contentious provisions** is the inclusion of **non-Muslims** in key waqf institutions.

बिल के सबसे **विवादास्पद प्रावधानों** में से एक है प्रमुख वक्फ संस्थाओं में **गैर-मुस्लिमों** को शामिल करना।

• It mandates that both the **Central Waqf Council** and **State Waqf Boards** must have at least **two non-Muslim members**.

यह अनिवार्य करता है कि **केंद्रीय वक्फ परिषद** और **राज्य वक्फ बोर्डों** में कम से कम दो **गैर-मुस्लिम सदस्य** होने चाहिए।

• It also removes the requirement that the **Chief Executive Officer** of a Waqf Board should be a **Muslim**.

यह आवश्यकता भी हटाता है कि वक्फ बोर्ड का **मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी** एक **मुस्लिम** होना चाहिए।

• In line with a **JPC recommendation**, the Bill stipulates that the **State government’s representative** on the Waqf Board must be a **joint secretary-level officer** specifically overseeing **waqf affairs**.

**JPC की सिफारिश** के अनुसार, बिल यह निर्धारित करता है कि राज्य सरकार का प्रतिनिधि वक्फ बोर्ड में **संयुक्त सचिव स्तर का अधिकारी** हो जो **वक्फ मामलों** की निगरानी करता हो।

• Opposition parties argue that these changes **infringe upon** the community’s **constitutionally guaranteed right** to manage its **religious affairs**.

विपक्षी पार्टियों का तर्क है कि ये बदलाव समुदाय के **संविधान द्वारा गारंटीकृत धार्मिक मामलों के प्रबंधन के अधिकार** का **उल्लंघन** करते हैं।

• However, welcoming the reforms, Dr. Mustafa said, “The **diversity** of the nation must be reflected in all its institutions... inclusion of **women, non-Muslims, and OBCs** is a positive step.”



हालांकि, इन सुधारों का स्वागत करते हुए डॉ. मुस्तफा ने कहा, “देश की विविधता सभी संस्थाओं में दिखनी चाहिए... महिलाओं, गैर-मुस्लिमों, और अन्य पिछड़े वर्गों (OBCs) को शामिल करना एक सकारात्मक कदम है।”

• He added, “The real question is whether similar reforms will be introduced in **temple boards** as well.”

उन्होंने यह भी जोड़ा, “वास्तविक सवाल यह है कि क्या ऐसे ही सुधार **मंदिर बोर्डों** में भी लाए जाएंगे?”

## What about financial accountability?

### वित्तीय जवाबदेही के बारे में क्या?

• To enhance **financial oversight**, the Bill introduces a **centralised registration system** for waqf properties.

वित्तीय निगरानी को बढ़ाने के लिए, बिल वक्फ संपत्तियों के लिए एक **केंद्रीकृत पंजीकरण प्रणाली** प्रस्तुत करता है।

• **Muttawalis** (custodians of waqfs) will be required to upload **property details** within **six months** of the law's enactment.

**मुतावल्ली** (वक्फों के संरक्षक) को कानून के लागू होने के **छह महीनों** के भीतर **संपत्ति का विवरण** अपलोड करना अनिवार्य होगा।

• All future registrations must be routed exclusively through this **portal** to the respective **Waqf Boards**.

सभी भविष्य की पंजीकरण **इस पोर्टल** के माध्यम से संबंधित **वक्फ बोर्डों** तक ही किए जा सकेंगे।

• The Bill also seeks to repeal **Section 107** of the **1995 Act**, which had exempted waqf properties from the **Limitation Act, 1963**.

बिल **1995 अधिनियम** की धारा **107** को भी निरस्त करना चाहता है, जो वक्फ संपत्तियों को **1963 की परिसीमा अधिनियम** से छूट देता था।

• This provision allowed Waqf Boards to recover encroached land without being constrained by the Act's standard **limitation period of 12 years**.

यह प्रावधान वक्फ बोर्डों को **12 वर्षों की मानक सीमा अवधि** से बाधित हुए बिना अतिक्रमित भूमि को पुनः प्राप्त करने की अनुमति देता था।

• However, critics argue that its removal would allow **encroachers** to claim ownership through **adverse possession**, legitimising **illegal occupations**.

हालांकि, आलोचकों का कहना है कि इसके हटाए जाने से **अतिक्रमणकारियों** को **विपरीत कब्जे** के जरिए स्वामित्व का दावा करने की अनुमति मिल जाएगी, जिससे **अवैध कब्जे** वैध हो जाएंगे।

## What lies ahead?

### आगे क्या होगा?



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• Congress MP Mohammed Jawed, AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi, Delhi legislator Amanatullah Khan, and the NGO Association for Protection of Civil Rights have filed petitions in the Supreme Court.

कांग्रेस सांसद मोहम्मद जावेद, एआईएमआईएम प्रमुख असदुद्दीन ओवैसी, दिल्ली विधायक अमानतुल्लाह खान, और NGO एसोसिएशन फॉर प्रोटेक्शन ऑफ सिविल राइट्स ने सुप्रीम कोर्ट में याचिकाएं दायर की हैं।

• They contend that the legislation infringes upon **constitutionally guaranteed rights** to religious freedom and property.

उनका तर्क है कि यह कानून धार्मिक स्वतंत्रता और संपत्ति के संविधान प्रदत्त अधिकारों का उल्लंघन करता है।

• “When the **constitutionality of a law** is challenged, courts begin with a **presumption in favour of its validity**... burden lies on the petitioner,” said Dr. Mustafa.

डॉ. मुस्तफा ने कहा, “जब किसी कानून की **संवैधानिकता** को चुनौती दी जाती है, तो अदालतें **वैधता के पक्ष में अनुमान** से शुरू करती हैं... इसलिए **याचिकाकर्ता** पर ही यह सिद्ध करने का भार होता है।”

## TOPICS COVERED GS Paper III: Economy, S&T, Environment, DM, IS)

### 1. European Union envoys discuss climate action with Indian officials

यूरोपीय संघ के दूतों ने भारतीय अधिकारियों के साथ जलवायु कार्रवाई पर चर्चा की

### 2. Why are student visas being revoked in the U.S.?

अमेरिका में छात्र वीजा क्यों रद्द किए जा रहे हैं?

### 3. What is the protocol for defence exports?

रक्षा निर्यात के लिए प्रोटोकॉल क्या है?

### 4. ACTREC's CRISPR-based test detects a rare blood cancer

ACTREC का CRISPR-आधारित परीक्षण एक दुर्लभ रक्त कैंसर का पता लगाता है

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## 6. Avoiding collisions

टकराव से बचाव

## 7. Rebuilding the bridge to Rameswaram

रामेश्वरम तक पुल का पुनर्निर्माण

# European Union envoys discuss climate action with Indian officials

Joint diplomatic mission aims at reinforcing EU-India cooperation on climate action, trade, and investment, particularly in the lead-up to future international climate talks; the attempt is to better understand India's challenges and objectives

**GS Paper III:**  
**Environment**  
NEW DELHI

Climate envoys representing Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the European External Action Service (EEAS) held a series of meetings in New Delhi earlier this week with officials from the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministries of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, and New and Renewable Energy, and representatives from industry and research institutions.

The joint diplomatic mission aimed to reinforce EU-India cooperation on climate action, trade, and investment, particularly in the lead-up to future international climate negotiations. Organised in coordination with the European Commission (EC), the talks come in the wake of the recent visit by the College of Commissioners in February, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi and EC Pre-



**Furthering dialogue:** European Union climate envoys during a discussion with officials from the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy in New Delhi. @MNRINDIA/X

sident Ursula von der Layen announced expediting the conclusion of the India-EU Free Trade Agreement by 2025-end.

Speaking at a briefing on Friday, Prince Jaime de Bourbon de Parme, Climate Envoy for the Netherlands, highlighted the significance of the relationship. "India is an incredibly important trading partner. We are recal-

ibrating and refocusing on our partners. The EU is a stable partner in a very dynamic world. Following our meetings, we sense that India too is extremely receptive," he said.

Anthony Agotha, Special Envoy for Climate and Environment at the EEAS, emphasised the reliability of the European Union. "Coming from the EU, you [India] do not always have

to like us. We do not have the monopoly on virtue, but neither on vice. What you see is what you get. We fulfil our treaties. As PM Modi and the EC President have reiterated, we are big democracies, huge pluralist societies with an intent to uphold the multi-lateral order," Mr. Agotha said.

This year, the 30th edition of the annual climate meet is expected to take

place in Belem, Brazil in November. While bilateral meetings involving climate envoys are not unusual, the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement as well as the tariff war unleashed by President Donald Trump has thrown up questions on decisive future action on climate.

The joint diplomatic mission, organised in coordination with the European Commission, comes in the wake of the recent visit by the college of European Commissioners in February. The five European envoys travelled to Delhi not only to underline that the EU is staying the course on its clean transition but also to listen to and better understand India's challenges and objectives with a view to the further diplomatic strengthening of India-EU cooperation on multilateral climate diplomacy and bilateral climate related trade and investment, an accompanying statement added.

## European Union envoys discuss climate action with Indian officials

यूरोपीय संघ के दूतों ने भारतीय अधिकारियों के साथ जलवायु कार्रवाई पर चर्चा की

Joint diplomatic mission aims at reinforcing EU-India cooperation on climate action, trade, and investment, particularly in the lead-up to future international climate talks; the attempt is to better understand



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## India's challenges and objectives.

संयुक्त राजनयिक मिशन का उद्देश्य भविष्य की अंतरराष्ट्रीय जलवायु वार्ताओं से पहले जलवायु कार्रवाई, व्यापार और निवेश पर यूरोपीय संघ-भारत सहयोग को मजबूत करना है; इसका प्रयास भारत की चुनौतियों और उद्देश्यों को बेहतर समझना है।

● **Climate envoys** representing **Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the European External Action Service (EEAS)** held a series of meetings in **New Delhi** earlier this week with officials from the **Prime Minister's Office**, the **Ministries of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**, and **New and Renewable Energy**, and representatives from industry and research institutions.

डेनमार्क, जर्मनी, नीदरलैंड, स्वीडन और यूरोपीय बाह्य कार्रवाई सेवा (EEAS) का प्रतिनिधित्व करने वाले जलवायु दूतों ने इस सप्ताह की शुरुआत में नई दिल्ली में प्रधानमंत्री कार्यालय, पर्यावरण, वन और जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, नवीन और नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा मंत्रालय, और उद्योग व अनुसंधान संस्थानों के प्रतिनिधियों के साथ कई बैठकें कीं।

● The joint diplomatic mission aimed to reinforce **EU-India cooperation on climate action, trade, and investment**, particularly in the lead-up to future international climate negotiations.

संयुक्त राजनयिक मिशन का उद्देश्य विशेष रूप से भविष्य की अंतरराष्ट्रीय जलवायु वार्ताओं से पहले जलवायु कार्रवाई, व्यापार और निवेश पर यूरोपीय संघ-भारत सहयोग को मजबूत करना था।

● Organised in coordination with the **European Commission (EC)**, the talks come in the wake of the recent visit by the **College of Commissioners in February**, when **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** and **EC President Ursula von der Leyen** announced expediting the conclusion of the **India-EU Free Trade Agreement by 2025-end**.

यूरोपीय आयोग (EC) के समन्वय में आयोजित ये वार्ताएं फरवरी में आयोग के आयुक्तों के कॉलेज की हालिया यात्रा के बाद हुईं, जब प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी और इसी अध्यक्ष उर्सुला वॉन डेर लेयेन ने 2025 के अंत तक भारत-ईयू मुक्त व्यापार समझौते को शीघ्र समाप्त करने की घोषणा की थी।

● Speaking at a briefing on **Friday, Prince Jaime de Bourbon de Parme, Climate Envoy for the Netherlands**, highlighted the significance of the relationship.

शुक्रवार को एक ब्रीफिंग में नीदरलैंड्स के जलवायु दूत प्रिंस जैमे डी बॉर्बन डी पार्मे ने इस साझेदारी के महत्व को रेखांकित किया।

● **"India is an incredibly important trading partner. We are recalibrating and refocusing on our partners. The EU is a stable partner in a very dynamic world. Following our meetings, we sense that India too is extremely receptive,"** he said.

उन्होंने कहा, "भारत एक बेहद महत्वपूर्ण व्यापारिक साझेदार है। हम अपने साझेदारों पर पुनः ध्यान केंद्रित कर

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रहे हैं। यूरोपीय संघ एक स्थिर साझेदार है इस परिवर्तनशील दुनिया में। हमारी बैठकों के बाद हमें महसूस हुआ कि भारत भी बहुत ग्रहणशील है।”

• **Anthony Agotha, Special Envoy for Climate and Environment at the EEAS**, emphasised the reliability of the **European Union**.

EEAS के जलवायु और पर्यावरण मामलों के विशेष दूत एंथनी एगोथा ने यूरोपीय संघ की विश्वसनीयता पर बल दिया।

• “Coming from the **EU**, you [India] do not always have to like us. We do not have the **monopoly on virtue**, but neither on **vice**. What you see is what you get. We fulfil our treaties. As **PM Modi** and the **EC President** have reiterated, we are **big democracies, huge pluralist societies** with an intent to uphold the **multilateral order**,” Mr. Agotha said.

एगोथा ने कहा, “यूरोपीय संघ से होने के नाते, आपको (भारत) हमें हमेशा पसंद करना जरूरी नहीं है। हमारे पास न तो नैतिकता का और न ही अनीति का एकाधिकार है। जो आप देखते हैं वही आपको मिलता है। हम अपने समझौतों को निभाते हैं। जैसा कि प्रधानमंत्री मोदी और ईसी अध्यक्ष ने दोहराया है, हम बड़ी लोकतंत्रात्मक, बहुलतावादी समाजों वाले हैं, और बहुपक्षीय व्यवस्था को बनाए रखने के लिए प्रतिबद्ध हैं।”

• This year, the **30th edition** of the **annual climate meet** is expected to take place in **Belem, Brazil in November**.

इस वर्ष, वार्षिक जलवायु सम्मेलन का 30वां संस्करण नवंबर में ब्राजील के बेलेम में आयोजित होने की उम्मीद है।

• While bilateral meetings involving **climate envoys** are not unusual, the **U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Agreement** as well as the **tariff war** unleashed by **President Donald Trump** has thrown up questions on decisive **future action on climate**.

हालांकि जलवायु दूतों की द्विपक्षीय बैठकें असामान्य नहीं हैं, लेकिन संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका द्वारा पेरिस समझौते से हटने और राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप द्वारा शुरू किए गए टैरिफ युद्ध ने भविष्य की जलवायु कार्रवाई पर गंभीर सवाल खड़े कर दिए हैं।

• The joint diplomatic mission, organised in coordination with the **European Commission**, comes in the wake of the recent visit by the **college of European Commissioners in February**.

यूरोपीय आयोग के समन्वय में आयोजित यह संयुक्त राजनयिक मिशन फरवरी में यूरोपीय आयोग के आयुक्तों के कॉलेज की हालिया यात्रा के बाद आया है।

• The **five European envoys** travelled to **Delhi** not only to underline that the **EU is staying the course on its clean transition** but also to listen to and better understand **India's challenges and objectives** with a view to further **diplomatic strengthening** of **India-EU cooperation on multilateral climate diplomacy** and **bilateral climate-related trade and investment**, an accompanying statement added.

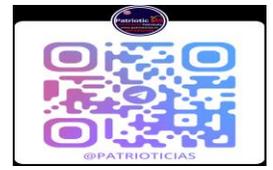
पांच यूरोपीय दूतों ने दिल्ली की यात्रा सिर्फ यह दिखाने के लिए नहीं की कि यूरोपीय संघ अपने स्वच्छ संक्रमण के



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मार्ग पर अडिग है, बल्कि इसलिए भी की ताकि वे भारत की चुनौतियों और उद्देश्यों को सुन सकें और समझ सकें, ताकि बहुपक्षीय जलवायु कूटनीति और द्विपक्षीय जलवायु-से संबंधित व्यापार और निवेश पर भारत-ईयू सहयोग को और अधिक कूटनीतिक रूप से मजबूत किया जा सके, ऐसा एक संबद्ध बयान में कहा गया।

## Why are student visas being revoked in U.S.?

What is Trump's 'Catch and Revoke' programme? How many foreign students are enrolled in the U.S.?

GS Paper III: India-US

Narayan Lakshman

The story so far:

The Trump administration has cracked down on the visas of anyone suspected of being involved in campus protests or otherwise linked, howsoever loosely, to advocating for human rights in Gaza.

What is the U.S. policy on student visas?

Addressing the student visa revocation issue, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio recently noted that nobody had a right to a U.S. visa, adding, "...We have seen on campuses across the country where students literally cannot go to school... buildings are being taken over, activities going on - this is clearly an organised movement. And if you are in this country on a student visa and are a participant in those movements, we have a right to deny your visa."

Under the aegis of the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, the Secretary of State has the authority to revoke visas of foreigners deemed a threat. According to reports, U.S. immigration officials are now said to be also scrutinising new applications for academic (F), exchange (J), and vocational (M) visas, with the intention of refusing visas to those associated with such protests.

Under the second Trump administration's so-called 'Catch and Revoke' programme, Mr. Rubio noted that by March 27, the State

The State Department is said to be using AI-assisted reviews of social media posts by foreign students in the U.S. to decide who among them might qualify for visa revocation followed by deportation to their country of origin

Department had already revoked the visas of more than 300 in-country foreign students. Reports suggest there are Indian students too on the list. There were reportedly 3,31,600 Indian students in the U.S. in the 2023-24 academic year,

according to the U.S. State Department numbers. Under the 'Catch and Revoke' programme, linked to President Donald Trump signing an executive order in January to counter "anti-Semitic" movements on university campuses, the State Department is said to be using AI-assisted reviews of social media posts by foreign students to decide who among them might qualify for visa revocation followed by deportation to their country of origin.

In this context, the Trump White House has also signalled its seriousness of intent by tightening the screws in multiple spheres against major U.S. universities, including by cutting hundreds of millions of dollars in annual federal government support to Columbia University, University of Pennsylvania and Johns Hopkins, among others.

How does the govt. monitor such enrolment?

According to the Migration Policy Institute, the number of international students enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities has experienced strong overall growth, soaring from 26,000 international students in 1949-50 to nearly 1.1 million in 2019-20. International students also increased as a share of all students enrolled in U.S. higher education: from 1% to nearly 6% during the same period.

Following the discovery that one of the 9/11 hijackers had entered the U.S. on a student visa but never attended class, the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) was set up in 2003 to "collect, maintain, and manage information about all foreign students and exchange visitors" in the country. To this date, SEVIS requires all schools to "submit and regularly update student information in a central database that can be accessed by the government; students who do not appear or who stop attending classes can have their visas revoked and face deportation." In this context, the list of universities at which foreign students have had their visas revoked is long and growing. Besides the above, it includes Arizona State, Georgetown University, University of Minnesota, Cornell etc.

What are the challenges to the policy?

The question of legal remedies is a complex one in this case given that the present immigration enforcement action is not directed against U.S. citizens but against foreigners.

Nevertheless, last week the American Civil Liberties Union published an open letter asking universities to stand up to federal government pressure including surveillance or threats to international students and faculty. The group of academics noted that the protests were defined as protected free speech and assembly, guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment. Additionally, the American Association of University Professors and the Middle East Studies Association are reported to have filed lawsuits against the Trump administration, arguing that targeting students based on their views is unconstitutional and detrimental to academic freedom. Despite this, comments by Mr. Rubio suggest that unless challenged in court, the revocation programme could continue for the foreseeable future.

## Why are student visas being revoked in the U.S.?

अमेरिका में छात्र वीजा क्यों रद्द किए जा रहे हैं?

The Trump administration has initiated a crackdown on visas of individuals suspected of participating in campus protests or being linked to advocacy for human rights in Gaza.

ट्रम्प प्रशासन ने उन व्यक्तियों के वीजा पर कार्रवाई शुरू की है जो कैंपस प्रदर्शनों में भाग लेने या गाजा में मानवाधिकारों की वकालत से जुड़े होने के संदेह में हैं।

What is Trump's 'Catch and Revoke' programme?

ट्रम्प का 'कैच एंड रिवोक' कार्यक्रम क्या है?

Under the 'Catch and Revoke' programme, the U.S. State Department is revoking visas of foreign students involved in protests deemed disruptive. 'कैच एंड रिवोक'

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कार्यक्रम के तहत, अमेरिकी विदेश विभाग उन विदेशी छात्रों के वीजा रद्द कर रहा है जो विघटनकारी माने जाने वाले प्रदर्शनों में शामिल हैं।

- By March 27, over 300 foreign students had their visas revoked. 27 मार्च तक, 300 से अधिक विदेशी छात्रों के वीजा रद्द किए गए थे।
- Reports indicate that Indian students are among those affected. रिपोर्टों के अनुसार, प्रभावित छात्रों में भारतीय छात्र भी शामिल हैं।

## How many foreign students are enrolled in the U.S.?

### अमेरिका में कितने विदेशी छात्र नामांकित हैं?

- In the 2023-24 academic year, the U.S. hosted over 1.1 million international students, an all-time high. 2023-24 शैक्षणिक वर्ष में, अमेरिका में 1.1 मिलियन से अधिक अंतरराष्ट्रीय छात्र थे, जो अब तक का सबसे अधिक है।
- India became the top source of international students, with 331,602 Indian students, surpassing China. भारत 331,602 भारतीय छात्रों के साथ अंतरराष्ट्रीय छात्रों का शीर्ष स्रोत बन गया, जिसने चीन को पीछे छोड़ दिया।

## What is the U.S. policy on student visas?

### अमेरिका की छात्र वीजा पर नीति क्या है?

- U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio stated that participation in organized campus movements could lead to visa denial or revocation. अमेरिकी विदेश मंत्री मार्को रुबियो ने कहा कि संगठित कैंपस आंदोलनों में भाग लेने से वीजा अस्वीकार या रद्द हो सकता है।
- The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 grants the Secretary of State authority to revoke visas of foreigners deemed a threat. 1952 का इमिग्रेशन एंड नेशनलिटी एक्ट विदेश मंत्री को खतरा माने जाने वाले विदेशियों के वीजा रद्द करने का अधिकार देता है।
- Immigration officials are scrutinizing new applications for academic (F), exchange (J), and vocational (M) visas to identify associations with protests. इमिग्रेशन अधिकारी अकादमिक (F), एक्सचेंज (J), और व्यावसायिक (M) वीजा के नए आवेदनों की जांच कर रहे हैं ताकि प्रदर्शनों से जुड़े लोगों की पहचान की जा सके।

## How does the government monitor such enrollment?

### सरकार इस तरह के नामांकन की निगरानी कैसे करती है?

- The Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS), established in 2003, collects and manages information about all foreign students and exchange visitors. 2003



में स्थापित स्टूडेंट एंड एक्सचेंज विज़िटर इंफॉर्मेशन सिस्टम (SEVIS) सभी विदेशी छात्रों और एक्सचेंज विज़िटरों की जानकारी एकत्र और प्रबंधित करता है।

- Schools are required to regularly update student information in this central database; students who fail to appear or stop attending classes may have their visas revoked and face deportation. स्कूलों को इस केंद्रीय डेटाबेस में छात्र जानकारी नियमित रूप से अपडेट करनी होती है; जो छात्र उपस्थित नहीं होते या कक्षाओं में भाग लेना बंद कर देते हैं, उनके वीज़ा रद्द किए जा सकते हैं और उन्हें निर्वासन का सामना करना पड़ सकता है।

## What are the challenges to the policy?

### इस नीति के सामने क्या चुनौतियाँ हैं?

- Legal remedies are complex since the enforcement actions target foreigners, not U.S. citizens. कानूनी उपाय जटिल हैं क्योंकि प्रवर्तन कार्रवाइयाँ अमेरिकी नागरिकों पर नहीं, बल्कि विदेशियों पर लक्षित हैं।
- The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has urged universities to resist federal pressure, arguing that protests are protected free speech under the First Amendment. अमेरिकन सिविल लिबर्टीज यूनियन (ACLU) ने विश्वविद्यालयों से संघीय दबाव का विरोध करने का आग्रह किया है, यह तर्क देते हुए कि प्रदर्शनों को प्रथम संशोधन के तहत संरक्षित मुक्त भाषण माना जाता है।
- Faculty unions and academic associations have filed lawsuits against the administration, claiming that targeting students based on their views is unconstitutional and harms academic freedom. फैकल्टी यूनियनों और शैक्षणिक संघों ने प्रशासन के खिलाफ मुकदमे दायर किए हैं, यह दावा करते हुए कि छात्रों को उनके विचारों के आधार पर लक्षित करना असंवैधानिक है और शैक्षणिक स्वतंत्रता को नुकसान पहुंचाता है।
- Despite these challenges, comments by Mr. Rubio suggest that unless legally contested, the revocation programme may continue. इन चुनौतियों के बावजूद, श्री रुबियो की टिप्पणियाँ संकेत देती हैं कि यदि कानूनी रूप से चुनौती नहीं दी गई, तो वीज़ा रद्द करने का कार्यक्रम जारी रह सकता है।



# What is the protocol for defence exports?

What are the rules laid down in the Handbook on India's Strategic Trade Control Systems? Why is there a 'harmonised list' on export control of dual-use and military items, including software and technologies? What is the primary objective of strategic export controls on defence equipment?

## GS Paper III: External Sector

**Dinakar Peri**

### The story so far:

India's robust legal and regulatory framework on strategic trade continues to guide overseas commercial ventures by its companies, the **Ministry of External Affairs** said last week. It was responding to a U.S. media report it termed "factually incorrect and misleading", which claimed that **Defence Public Sector Undertaking (DPSU) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** supplied items sourced from a British firm to Russia.

### What did the MEA say?

The MEA said the Indian entity mentioned in the report has scrupulously followed all its **international obligations on strategic trade controls and end-user commitments**. It observed that the report had tried to "frame issues and distort facts" to suit a "political narrative". This is not the first time such an allegation has been made. There have been similar allegations in the last couple of years, since the beginning of the **Ukraine war in 2022**.

### Why is the regulation important?

The primary objective of strategic trade controls/export controls is to **prevent the**

Effective export controls are critical as India looks to significantly expand its defence exports

proliferation of **Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)** and their delivery systems, as well as the uncontrolled transfer of conventional arms/military items, states the **Handbook on India's Strategic Trade Control Systems** released by the **Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)**, under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**. "Accordingly, **India maintains a harmonised list on export control of dual-use and military items, including software and technologies, having potential civilian/industrial applications as well as military and WMD use**. It is restricted/permitted under an export authorisation or licence (unless specifically exempted), except for certain items that are prohibited," it states.

Effective export controls are critical as **India looks to significantly expand its defence exports with a current target of reaching ₹50,000 crore by 2029**. On April 1, the **Defence Ministry announced that defence exports have hit a new high of ₹23,622 crore for FY 2024-25, a growth of ₹2,539 crore or 12.04% over the previous financial year**. The government, in the last few years, has taken a series of steps to boost exports by **simplifying licensing requirements**. As reported by *The Hindu*, defence sources had stressed that in the initial days of the Gaza offensive, **Israel had requested artillery shells but India took a policy decision not to supply them; it similarly decided to stay neutral between Russia and Ukraine and took a stand to not supply "kinetic equipment" to either of them**.

### How does the licensing system work?

India is a member-signatory to international conventions on disarmament and non-proliferation such as the **Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)** and **Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)**. India is also a member of major multilateral export control regimes – the **Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)**, the **Wassenaar Arrangement on munitions and military items**; and the **Australia Group on biological and chemical items**. In line with this, **India maintains a list of items controlled for export under the Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment and Technologies**

(SCOMET) list. There are eight categories under the SCOMET list and the **Department of Defence Production (DDP)** issues authorisation for export of **Munitions List items covered in Category 6**.

According to a December 2024 report, the Defence Secretary informed the Parliamentary standing committee, "I will tell you very briefly that we are exporting to more than 100 countries and most of them are done by our PSUs. But now the private sector is also coming forward. The major platforms we have done are Dornier 228 aircraft, 155 mm advanced towed artillery gun, Brahmos missile, Akash missiles, radar simulators, Pinaka rockets etc. There are many things, but most of the exports are PSU-driven."

### What are the steps taken to boost exports?

Various policy measures have been adopted to ease the approval/certifications for Indian firms for defence production while maintaining effective controls. The **Defence Products list** requiring industrial licences has been rationalised and the manufacture of most of the parts or components does not require an industrial licence. A **Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy** has also been formulated. The DDP issues the **authorisation for export of items on the Munitions List**. In a written reply to Parliament in February 2023, the Defence Ministry stated that, "These equipment are exported to different countries all over the world. Names of the countries with whom contracts have been signed and negotiations held cannot be divulged due to strategic reasons."

The Defence Ministry further informed the standing committee that the standard operating procedures for export have been streamlined, an **Export Promotion Cell** has been set up and **DPSUs** have been assigned geographical areas for marketing. A **Defence Export Promotion Scheme** was launched in 2018 to promote Make in India products. A complete end-to-end online portal for receiving and processing export authorisation permission has been developed. The applications submitted on this portal are digitally signed and the authorisation is also issued digitally, improving the pace, according to the Defence Ministry. "The requirement of government signed End User Certification in cases of providing engineering services (transfer of technology) related to Munitions List to Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) countries has been dispensed with," the Defence Ministry said.



**Larger scale:** A model of a Brahmos missile on display at Aero India 2025, at the Yelahanka Air Force Station in Bengaluru, on February 12. PTI

## What is the protocol for defence exports?

### रक्षा निर्यात के लिए प्रोटोकॉल क्या है?

India's robust legal and regulatory framework on strategic trade continues to guide overseas commercial ventures by its companies, the **Ministry of External Affairs** said last week.

पिछले सप्ताह विदेश मंत्रालय ने कहा कि भारत का मजबूत कानूनी और नियामक ढांचा



रणनीतिक व्यापार पर आधारित है, जो कंपनियों के विदेशी वाणिज्यिक उपक्रमों का मार्गदर्शन करता है।

- It was responding to a U.S. media report it termed “factually incorrect and misleading”, which claimed that **Defence Public Sector Undertaking (DPSU) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** supplied items sourced from a **British firm to Russia**. यह बयान अमेरिकी मीडिया रिपोर्ट के जवाब में था, जिसे मंत्रालय ने “तथ्यात्मक रूप से गलत और भ्रामक” बताया, जिसमें कहा गया था कि HAL ने रूस को ब्रिटिश फर्म से प्राप्त वस्तुएं भेजीं।

**What did the MEA say?**

**विदेश मंत्रालय ने क्या कहा?**

- The MEA said the Indian entity mentioned in the report has scrupulously followed all its international obligations on strategic trade controls and end-user commitments. विदेश मंत्रालय ने कहा कि रिपोर्ट में उल्लिखित भारतीय संस्था ने रणनीतिक व्यापार नियंत्रण और एंड-यूजर प्रतिबद्धताओं पर अपने सभी अंतरराष्ट्रीय दायित्वों का पूरी तरह पालन किया है।
- It observed that the report had tried to “frame issues and distort facts” to suit a “political narrative”. इसने यह भी कहा कि रिपोर्ट ने “मुद्दों को गढ़ने और तथ्यों को तोड़-मरोड़ने” की कोशिश की है ताकि एक “राजनीतिक कथा” को बढ़ावा दिया जा सके।
- This is not the first time such an allegation has been made. यह पहली बार नहीं है जब ऐसा आरोप लगाया गया है।
- There have been similar allegations in the last couple of years, since the beginning of the **Ukraine war in 2022**. 2022 में यूक्रेन युद्ध शुरू होने के बाद से पिछले कुछ वर्षों में इसी तरह के आरोप लगाए गए हैं।

**Why is the regulation important?**

**यह नियमन क्यों महत्वपूर्ण है?**

- The primary objective of strategic trade controls/export controls is to prevent the proliferation of **Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)** and their **delivery systems**, as well as the uncontrolled transfer of **conventional arms/military items**. रणनीतिक व्यापार नियंत्रण/निर्यात नियंत्रण का प्रमुख उद्देश्य जनसंहारक हथियारों (WMD) और उनके प्रेषण प्रणालियों के प्रसार को रोकना तथा पारंपरिक हथियारों/सैन्य वस्तुओं के अनियंत्रित हस्तांतरण को रोकना है।
- India maintains a **harmonised list** on export control of **dual-use and military items**, including **software and technologies**, having potential civilian/industrial applications as well as military and WMD use. भारत दोहरे उपयोग और सैन्य वस्तुओं, जिनमें सॉफ्टवेयर और प्रौद्योगिकियां शामिल हैं, के निर्यात



नियंत्रण पर एक समरूप सूची बनाए रखता है, जिनका नागरिक/औद्योगिक और सैन्य या WMD उपयोग हो सकता है।

- It is restricted/permitted under an **export authorisation or licence**, unless specifically exempted, except for certain items that are **prohibited**.

यह सूची निर्यात प्राधिकरण या लाइसेंस के तहत नियंत्रित/अनुमत होती है, जब तक कि विशेष रूप से छूट न दी गई हो; कुछ वस्तुएं निषिद्ध भी होती हैं।

- Effective export controls are critical as India looks to significantly expand its **defence exports** with a current target of reaching **₹50,000 crore by 2029**.

भारत अपने रक्षा निर्यात को 2029 तक ₹50,000 करोड़ तक पहुंचाने के लक्ष्य के साथ, प्रभावी निर्यात नियंत्रण को अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण मानता है।

- On **April 1**, the Defence Ministry announced that **defence exports** have hit a new high of **₹23,622 crore** for **FY 2024-25**, a growth of **₹2,539 crore** or **12.04%** over the previous year.

1 अप्रैल को रक्षा मंत्रालय ने घोषणा की कि **FY 2024-25** में रक्षा निर्यात **₹23,622 करोड़** तक पहुंच गया, जो पिछले वर्ष की तुलना में **₹2,539 करोड़** या **12.04%** की वृद्धि है।

- India took a policy decision not to supply **artillery shells to Israel** and also to stay **neutral between Russia and Ukraine** and not supply **kinetic equipment** to either.

भारत ने इजराइल को तोप के गोले न भेजने और रूस-यूक्रेन युद्ध में तटस्थ बने रहने का नीतिगत निर्णय लिया और किसी को भी घातक उपकरण नहीं भेजने का फैसला किया।

## How does the licensing system work?

### लाइसेंसिंग प्रणाली कैसे काम करती है?

- India is a member-signatory to international conventions on disarmament and non-proliferation such as the **Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)** and **Biological Weapons Convention (BWC)**.

भारत रासायनिक हथियार सम्मेलन (CWC) और जैविक हथियार सम्मेलन (BWC) जैसे अपरमाणुकरण और अप्रसार से संबंधित अंतरराष्ट्रीय समझौतों का सदस्य है।

- India is also a member of major multilateral export control regimes — the **Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)**, the **Wassenaar Arrangement**, and the **Australia Group**.

भारत MTCR, Wassenaar Arrangement और Australia Group जैसे प्रमुख बहुपक्षीय निर्यात नियंत्रण व्यवस्था का भी सदस्य है।

- India maintains a list of items controlled for export under the **Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment and Technologies (SCOMET)** list.

भारत SCOMET (विशेष रसायन, जीव, सामग्री, उपकरण और प्रौद्योगिकी) सूची के तहत निर्यात के लिए नियंत्रित वस्तुओं की सूची बनाए रखता है।

- There are **eight categories** under the SCOMET list and the **Department of Defence Production (DDP)** issues authorisation for **Munitions List items (Category 6)**.



SCOMET सूची में 8 श्रेणियां होती हैं और रक्षा उत्पादन विभाग (DDP) शस्त्र सूची (श्रेणी 6) में आने वाली वस्तुओं के लिए प्राधिकरण जारी करता है।

- According to a **December 2024 report**, the **Defence Secretary** informed that India is exporting to **more than 100 countries**, mostly by **PSUs**, but the **private sector** is also joining.

दिसंबर 2024 की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, रक्षा सचिव ने जानकारी दी कि भारत 100 से अधिक देशों को निर्यात कर रहा है, ज्यादातर PSU के माध्यम से, लेकिन निजी क्षेत्र भी आगे आ रहा है।

- The major platforms include **Dornier 228 aircraft**, **155 mm advanced towed artillery gun**, **Brahmos missile**, **Akash missiles**, **radar simulators**, **Pinaka rockets**.

मुख्य प्लेटफॉर्म में डोर्नियर 228 विमान, 155 मिमी आधुनिक तोप, ब्रह्मोस मिसाइल, आकाश मिसाइलें, रडार सिमुलेटर, पिनाका रॉकेट्स शामिल हैं।

## What are the steps taken to boost exports?

### निर्यात बढ़ाने के लिए क्या कदम उठाए गए हैं?

- Various **policy measures** have been adopted to ease approval/certifications for Indian firms for **defence production**, while maintaining **effective controls**.

रक्षा उत्पादन के लिए भारतीय कंपनियों की स्वीकृति/प्रमाणन प्रक्रिया को सरल करने हेतु विभिन्न नीतिगत उपाय अपनाए गए हैं, साथ ही प्रभावी नियंत्रण भी बनाए रखा गया है।

- The **Defence Products list** requiring industrial licences has been **rationalised**, and most components now **do not require licences**.

औद्योगिक लाइसेंस की आवश्यकता वाली रक्षा उत्पाद सूची को तर्कसंगत बनाया गया है और अब अधिकांश पुर्जों के निर्माण के लिए लाइसेंस की आवश्यकता नहीं है।

- A **Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy** has been formulated and DDP issues authorisation for **Munitions List items**.

एक रक्षा उत्पादन और निर्यात प्रोत्साहन नीति तैयार की गई है और DDP शस्त्र सूची की वस्तुओं के लिए प्राधिकरण जारी करता है।

- In **February 2023**, the Defence Ministry informed Parliament that details of countries with whom **contracts are signed** cannot be revealed due to **strategic reasons**.

फरवरी 2023 में रक्षा मंत्रालय ने संसद को बताया कि जिन देशों के साथ अनुबंध हुए हैं, उनके नाम रणनीतिक कारणों से उजागर नहीं किए जा सकते।

- The **standard operating procedures** for export have been **streamlined**, an **Export Promotion Cell** has been set up, and **DPSUs** assigned **geographical areas** for marketing.

निर्यात की मानक संचालन प्रक्रियाओं को सरलीकृत किया गया है, एक निर्यात प्रोत्साहन प्रकोष्ठ स्थापित किया गया है, और DPSUs को विपणन के लिए भौगोलिक क्षेत्र आवंटित किए गए हैं।

- A **Defence Export Promotion Scheme** was launched in **2018** to promote **Make in India** products.

मेक इन इंडिया उत्पादों को बढ़ावा देने के लिए 2018 में रक्षा निर्यात प्रोत्साहन योजना शुरू की गई।



**TELEGRAM CHANNEL:** <https://t.me/patrioticIAS>

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**CONTACT: 9971932488**



- A complete **end-to-end online portal** has been developed for export authorisation, making the process **digital and faster**.  
निर्यात प्राधिकरण के लिए एक सम्पूर्ण ऑनलाइन पोर्टल विकसित किया गया है, जिससे प्रक्रिया डिजिटल और तेज़ हो गई है।
- The requirement of **government-signed End User Certification for engineering services** related to **Munitions List to Wassenaar Arrangement countries** has been **dispensed with**.  
शस्त्र सूची से संबंधित इंजीनियरिंग सेवाओं के लिए **Wassenaar Arrangement देशों** को सरकार द्वारा हस्ताक्षरित एंड यूजर प्रमाणपत्र की आवश्यकता को हटा दिया गया है।

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# ACTREC's CRISPR-based test detects a rare blood cancer

The new test developed using CRISPR technology can quickly and accurately diagnose acute promyelocytic leukemia (APL), a rare and aggressive form of leukemia, under three hours and costs less than existing tests

**GS Paper III: S&T**

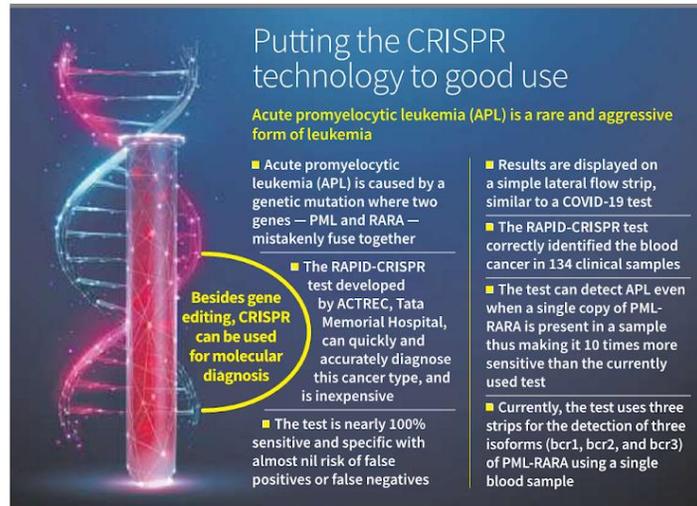
**Syed K. Hasan**  
**Akash Maity**

**A**cute promyelocytic leukemia (APL) is a rare and aggressive form of leukemia, a cancer that affects blood cells. It is caused by a genetic mutation where two genes, PML and RARA, mistakenly fuse together. The fusion of the two genes leads to the production of fewer white blood cells and platelets, which reduces the body's ability to fight infections and control bleeding.

What sets this cancer apart from other types of cancer is that it can cause severe internal bleeding in organs such as the lungs and brain, which can result in death within a few days if not treated immediately. But the brighter side is that acute promyelocytic leukemia is highly curable if diagnosed and treated early. Current treatments can cure most patients.

Acute promyelocytic leukemia (APL) is a subtype of acute myeloid leukemia (AML) and accounts for about 10-15% of newly diagnosed AML cases. At Tata Memorial Hospital, we see nearly 50-60 new APL cases annually. The median age at diagnosis is around 34 years, with a male:female ratio of 1.5:1.

The problem, however, is that the tests that are currently available to diagnose this rare type of blood cancer take a long time, which delays life-saving treatment. Moreover, these tests require expensive machines and trained specialists, making them difficult



**Putting the CRISPR technology to good use**

Acute promyelocytic leukemia (APL) is a rare and aggressive form of leukemia

- Acute promyelocytic leukemia (APL) is caused by a genetic mutation where two genes — PML and RARA — mistakenly fuse together
- The RAPID-CRISPR test developed by ACTREC, Tata Memorial Hospital, can quickly and accurately diagnose this cancer type, and is inexpensive
- The test is nearly 100% sensitive and specific with almost nil risk of false positives or false negatives
- Results are displayed on a simple lateral flow strip, similar to a COVID-19 test
- The RAPID-CRISPR test correctly identified the blood cancer in 134 clinical samples
- The test can detect APL even when a single copy of PML-RARA is present in a sample thus making it 10 times more sensitive than the currently used test
- Currently, the test uses three strips for the detection of three isoforms (bcr1, bcr2, and bcr3) of PML-RARA using a single blood sample

Besides gene editing, CRISPR can be used for molecular diagnosis

to use in smaller hospitals, rural areas, and developing countries.

Using the CRISPR technology, our team at ACTREC, the cancer research division of Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai, has developed a new test called RAPID-CRISPR, which can quickly and accurately diagnose this cancer type. Given the limitations of the currently available tests, the test developed at ACTREC can deliver results in under three hours, costs less than existing tests, and does not require complex laboratory equipment. While the name RAPID-CRISPR reflects the speed of diagnosis, RAPID stands for Redefined Apl Identification. The study, which was supported by the Department of Atomic Energy, has been published in the journal *Blood Advances*.

The CRISPR-based technology has two applications — besides the well-known role of gene editing, CRISPR can also be used for molecular diagnosis. In this case, the RAPID-CRISPR test is added to a patient's peripheral blood sample in a test tube. The test looks for the cancer-causing PML-RARA gene mutation, which is the cause of this rare blood cancer, in the sample and automatically cuts it. The process of detection of the mutation and cutting it triggers a signal that is detected using a simple, easy-to-read strip similar to a home pregnancy test.

Peripheral blood is sufficient for the diagnosis in 80% of cases. In 20% of cases where the white blood cell count is very low (less than 1,000 cells per microlitre; normal range is 4,000-10,000 cells per mi-

cro litre), bone marrow aspiration is an ideal sample for diagnosis.

Since the test is designed to detect the mutation, it has nearly 100% sensitivity and specificity with almost nil risk of false positives or false negatives. Unlike the currently available test that requires specialised equipment to extract and amplify the genetic material, the RAPID-CRISPR test uses a simple process that works directly on patient samples. Hence, the test does not require extensive laboratory setups, expensive machines, or highly trained personnel, thereby making the test affordable and accessible to people. The results are displayed on a simple lateral flow strip (similar to a COVID-19 test), making it easy for doctors to read and act quickly.

Our team evaluated the

RAPID-CRISPR test on 134 clinical samples, and in every case, the test correctly identified the blood cancer without any mistakes. Impressively, it detected even when a single copy of PML-RARA was present in a sample, thus making the RAPID-CRISPR test 10 times more sensitive than the currently used gold-standard test (RQ-PCR).

Many hospitals and clinics in developing countries lack the resources to perform complex genetic tests, leading to delays in diagnosis and even deaths where the patients could be saved if the cancer were detected at an early stage. The RAPID-CRISPR test can bridge this gap and ensure that patients receive the right treatment as soon as possible.

Currently, the test uses three strips for the detection of three isoforms (bcr1, bcr2, and bcr3) of PML-RARA using a single blood sample. Our team is working to optimise the assay for a single-tube reaction that can detect isoforms using a single strip.

Since the test does not rely on complex technology, we hope that with further development, this test can become a standard tool in hospitals. The team also intends to refine the technology to make it even easier to use, potentially allowing at-home testing in the future.

(Syed K. Hasan is Professor at Advanced Centre for Treatment, Research and Education in Cancer, Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai, and Akash Maity is a PhD scholar at ACTREC)



## ACTREC's CRISPR-based test detects a rare blood cancer ACTREC का CRISPR-आधारित परीक्षण एक दुर्लभ रक्त कैंसर का पता लगाता है

The new test developed using CRISPR technology can quickly and accurately diagnose acute promyelocytic leukemia (APL), a rare and aggressive form of leukemia, under three hours and costs less than existing tests.

CRISPR तकनीक का उपयोग करके विकसित किया गया यह नया परीक्षण तीन घंटे से कम समय में acute promyelocytic leukemia (APL), जो कि एक दुर्लभ और आक्रामक प्रकार का ल्यूकेमिया है, का तेज़ और सटीक निदान कर सकता है और यह मौजूदा परीक्षणों से सस्ता है।

- **Acute promyelocytic leukemia (APL)** is a rare and aggressive form of leukemia, a cancer that affects **blood cells**.  
**Acute promyelocytic leukemia (APL)**, ल्यूकेमिया का एक दुर्लभ और आक्रामक रूप है, जो रक्त कोशिकाओं को प्रभावित करता है।
- It is caused by a **genetic mutation** where two genes, **PML and RARA**, mistakenly **fuse together**.  
यह एक **आनुवंशिक उत्परिवर्तन** के कारण होता है, जिसमें **PML और RARA** नामक दो जीन गलती से आपस में जुड़ जाते हैं।
- The fusion of the two genes leads to the production of **fewer white blood cells and platelets**, which reduces the body's ability to **fight infections and control bleeding**.  
इन दोनों जीनों के जुड़ने से शरीर में **श्वेत रक्त कोशिकाएं और प्लेटलेट्स कम** बनते हैं, जिससे संक्रमण से लड़ने और रक्तस्राव को नियंत्रित करने की **शारीरिक क्षमता घट जाती है**।
- What sets this cancer apart is that it can cause **severe internal bleeding** in organs like the **lungs and brain**, which can lead to **death within a few days** if not treated immediately.  
यह कैंसर अन्य से अलग इसलिए है क्योंकि यह **फेफड़ों और मस्तिष्क** जैसे अंगों में **गंभीर आंतरिक रक्तस्राव** कर सकता है, जिससे अगर तुरंत इलाज न हो तो **कुछ ही दिनों में मृत्यु** हो सकती है।
- The brighter side is that **APL is highly curable** if diagnosed and treated **early**.  
अच्छी बात यह है कि अगर **जल्दी निदान और इलाज** किया जाए तो **APL पूरी तरह ठीक** किया जा सकता है।
- Current treatments can **cure most patients**.  
वर्तमान इलाज **अधिकांश मरीजों को ठीक** कर सकता है।



- **APL is a subtype of acute myeloid leukemia (AML)** and accounts for about **10-15%** of newly diagnosed **AML** cases.  
APL, acute myeloid leukemia (AML) का एक प्रकार है और यह नई AML के मामलों के लगभग 10-15% के लिए जिम्मेदार है।
- At **Tata Memorial Hospital**, around **50-60 new APL cases** are seen annually.  
टाटा मेमोरियल अस्पताल में हर साल लगभग 50-60 नए APL मामले देखे जाते हैं।
- The **median age** at diagnosis is around **34 years**, with a **male: female ratio of 1.5:1**.  
निदान के समय की औसत आयु लगभग 34 वर्ष होती है और पुरुष:महिला अनुपात 1.5:1 होता है।
- Current tests take a **long time**, delaying **life-saving treatment**.  
वर्तमान परीक्षणों में बहुत समय लगता है, जिससे जीवन रक्षक उपचार में देरी होती है।
- These tests require **expensive machines** and **trained specialists**, making them **difficult to use in rural or small hospitals**.  
इन परीक्षणों में महंगे उपकरण और प्रशिक्षित विशेषज्ञों की आवश्यकता होती है, जिससे इन्हें गांवों या छोटे अस्पतालों में उपयोग करना मुश्किल हो जाता है।
- Using **CRISPR technology**, ACTREC developed a new test called **RAPID-CRISPR** to **quickly and accurately diagnose APL**.  
CRISPR तकनीक का उपयोग करके ACTREC ने **RAPID-CRISPR** नामक एक नया परीक्षण विकसित किया जो APL का तेज़ और सटीक निदान करता है।
- The **RAPID-CRISPR test** gives results in **under 3 hours**, costs **less**, and **does not require complex lab equipment**.  
RAPID-CRISPR परीक्षण 3 घंटे से कम समय में परिणाम देता है, कम खर्चीला है और जटिल लैब उपकरणों की आवश्यकता नहीं होती।

**RAPID stands for Redefined APL Identification.**

**RAPID का मतलब है Redefined APL Identification।**

- The study was **supported by the Department of Atomic Energy** and published in the journal **Blood Advances**.  
यह अध्ययन परमाणु ऊर्जा विभाग द्वारा समर्थित था और इसे **Blood Advances** नामक पत्रिका में प्रकाशित किया गया।
- **CRISPR technology** is also used for **molecular diagnosis**, apart from gene editing.  
CRISPR तकनीक का उपयोग **जीन एडिटिंग** के अलावा **आणविक निदान** के लिए भी किया जाता है।
- In this test, **RAPID-CRISPR** is added to a patient's **blood sample** in a test tube.  
इस परीक्षण में **RAPID-CRISPR** को मरीज के रक्त के नमूने में टेस्ट ट्यूब में जोड़ा जाता है।
- The test looks for **PML-RARA gene mutation** and **automatically cuts it**, triggering a signal detected by a **strip similar to a pregnancy test**.



यह परीक्षण PML-RARA जीन म्यूटेशन को खोजता है और उसे स्वतः काटता है, जिससे एक संकेत उत्पन्न होता है जिसे गर्भावस्था परीक्षण जैसी स्ट्रिप से पढ़ा जाता है।

- **Peripheral blood is sufficient in 80% of cases** for diagnosis.  
80% मामलों में परिधीय रक्त निदान के लिए पर्याप्त होता है।
- In **20% cases**, where **white blood cell count is very low (<1,000 cells/microlitre)**, **bone marrow aspiration** is needed.  
20% मामलों में जहां श्वेत रक्त कोशिकाओं की संख्या बहुत कम (<1,000 प्रति माइक्रोलिटर) होती है, वहां बोन मैरो एस्पिरेशन आवश्यक होता है।
- The test has **nearly 100% sensitivity and specificity**, with almost **no false positives or negatives**.  
इस परीक्षण की संवेदनशीलता और विशिष्टता लगभग 100% है और इसमें गलत पॉज़िटिव या निगेटिव की संभावना नगण्य है।
- Unlike current tests, **RAPID-CRISPR works directly on patient samples without amplification or extraction**, and does **not require trained personnel**.  
वर्तमान परीक्षणों के विपरीत, **RAPID-CRISPR रोगी के नमूने पर सीधे कार्य करता है**, जिसमें आनुवंशिक सामग्री निकालने या बढ़ाने की आवश्यकता नहीं होती और विशेषज्ञों की भी जरूरत नहीं होती।
- Results are shown on a **simple lateral flow strip**, similar to **COVID-19 tests**, making it **easy and quick** for doctors.  
परिणाम एक सरल लेटरल फ्लो स्ट्रिप पर दिखाई देते हैं, जैसे कि **COVID-19 परीक्षण**, जिससे डॉक्टरों के लिए इसे पढ़ना आसान और त्वरित होता है।
- The **RAPID-CRISPR test was evaluated on 134 clinical samples** and correctly identified **every case**.  
**RAPID-CRISPR परीक्षण को 134 नैदानिक नमूनों पर परीक्षण किया गया और इसने हर मामले को सही तरीके से पहचाना।**
- It can detect even a **single copy of PML-RARA**, making it **10 times more sensitive** than the **gold-standard RQ-PCR test**.  
यह परीक्षण **PML-RARA की एकल प्रति** को भी पहचान सकता है, जिससे यह **स्वर्ण मानक RQ-PCR परीक्षण से 10 गुना अधिक संवेदनशील** बनता है।
- **Many developing country hospitals lack complex testing facilities**, causing **delays and preventable deaths**.  
कई विकासशील देशों के अस्पतालों में जटिल परीक्षण सुविधाओं की कमी होती है, जिससे देरी और रोके जा सकने वाली मौतें होती हैं।
- **RAPID-CRISPR can bridge this gap** and ensure **early treatment**.  
**RAPID-CRISPR इस अंतर को भर सकता है और समय पर इलाज सुनिश्चित कर सकता है।**
- Currently, the test uses **three strips** to detect **three isoforms (bcr1, bcr2, and bcr3)** of PML-RARA.



वर्तमान में यह परीक्षण तीन स्ट्रिप्स का उपयोग करता है ताकि PML-RARA के तीन रूपों (bcr1, bcr2, और bcr3) का पता लगाया जा सके।

- The team is working to **optimize it into a single-tube reaction with one strip.**

टीम इसे एकल ट्यूब अभिक्रिया और एक स्ट्रिप में समाहित करने पर काम कर रही है।

- Since it does **not rely on complex technology**, it could become a **standard tool** in hospitals.

चूंकि यह परीक्षण जटिल तकनीक पर निर्भर नहीं करता, यह भविष्य में अस्पतालों में मानक उपकरण बन सकता है।

- The team aims to **simplify the test further**, potentially enabling **at-home testing.**

टीम इस परीक्षण को और भी सरल बनाने का प्रयास कर रही है, जिससे भविष्य में घरेलू परीक्षण भी संभव हो सके।

## Aquaculture for feeding the world

GS Paper III: Economy



**SPEAKING OF SCIENCE**

**D. Balasubramanian**

India has made impressive gains in adapting aquaculture for the nutritional demands of its population. It is the third largest producer overall, ranking second in the production of prawns. Andhra Pradesh is by far the largest producer, with West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Odisha making sizeable contributions along with Gujarat.

Dietary preferences, too, have changed – prawns, with their high protein and low fat content, are increasingly in demand both domestically and in the export market. Our aquaculture farms are supported by a network of industries that meet their many require-

ments, from aquafeed to measures for infection control. Farmers and local entrepreneurs constantly strive to come up with innovative measures that improve the quantity and quality of yield and meet climate change-induced environmental challenges.

The terms prawn and shrimp are often used interchangeably, although they are biologically distinct species. A prized product is the black tiger prawn, *Penaeus monodon*. This high-value marine species is grown wherever the conditions are right, and farmers strive to achieve the market-driven demand for 30 or less prawns per kilogram. Like many other aquaculture species, these prawns require a degree of salinity in their pond water: 10-25 grams of salts per litre of water is optimal (sea water has 35 grams of salts per litre).



Prawns require 10-25 grams of salts per litre of water. GETTY IMAGES

In low-lying farms, such as in the Midnapore district of West Bengal, seawater is brought into aquaculture ponds during high tide. In coastal Andhra Pradesh and in other places, the groundwater is brackish and is pumped out and mixed with fresh water from rivers and canals.

A typical aquaculture pond is about 150 x 100 metres in size, with a depth of about two metres. After each production cy-

cle of four-six months, the water is emptied, and the pond is dried in preparation for the next harvest. An enterprising farmer, Siva Rama Rudraraju of Bapatla district in Andhra Pradesh, has successfully advocated smaller ponds for better yields of prawns along with better control of pathogens. Smaller ponds help in containing economic losses when disease outbreaks occur, and bacterial pathogens such as *Vibrio*

*harveyi* are a serious threat. In India, annual losses can amount to 25% of the expected yield. The white spot syndrome virus can be even more damaging in outbreak years.

Many laboratories now offer tests for identifying infectious agents, and an infected pond is quickly emptied. However, farmers fear the spread of the pathogens to nearby ponds. Crows are usually the culprits, carrying infected prawns and dropping them as they fly home. Plastic nets are often used to cover ponds. Sometimes, hunters are employed to cull the crow population.

Our farmers adopted other methods for containing pathogens. Probiotics are added to the pond water. These are *Bacillus* bacteria that do not harm the prawn but grow faster than the pathogenic species, outcompeting them.

Another clever strategy involves the young, nursery-reared juvenile prawns that are used as starters in prawn cultivation. The Central Institute of Brackishwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIBA) in Chennai has pioneered the development of 'specific pathogen-free' prawn broodstock. Grown in biosecure facilities, these are certified to be free of specific high-risk pathogens. And 'phage therapy' uses bacteriophages that only target *Vibrio* bacteria. Bacteriophages are viruses that infect and kill bacteria.

Whether developed in the field by experienced farmers or from research-driven initiatives, all these measures have led to a 17% growth rate in India's annual prawn production. (The article was written in collaboration with Sushil Chandani, who works in molecular modelling)

## Aquaculture for feeding the world

### दुनिया को भोजन देने के लिए जलीय कृषि

India has made impressive gains in adapting aquaculture for the nutritional demands of its population.



भारत ने अपनी जनसंख्या की पोषण संबंधी जरूरतों को पूरा करने के लिए जलीय कृषि में सराहनीय प्रगति की है।

• It is the **third largest producer overall**, ranking **second** in the production of **prawns**.

भारत कुल मिलाकर तीसरा सबसे बड़ा उत्पादक है और झींगा (prawns) उत्पादन में दूसरे स्थान पर है।

• **Andhra Pradesh** is by far the **largest producer**, with **West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, and Gujarat** making sizeable contributions.

आंध्र प्रदेश सबसे बड़ा उत्पादक है, जबकि पश्चिम बंगाल, तमिलनाडु, ओडिशा और गुजरात भी महत्वपूर्ण योगदान देते हैं।

• Dietary preferences have changed — **prawns**, with their **high protein** and **low fat** content, are increasingly in demand both domestically and in the **export market**.

आहार संबंधी प्राथमिकताओं में बदलाव आया है — झींगा, जिनमें प्रोटीन अधिक और वसा कम होता है, की देश और निर्यात बाजार दोनों में मांग बढ़ रही है।

• Aquaculture farms are supported by industries providing **aquafeed** and **infection control**.

जलीय कृषि फार्मों को आक्वाफीड और संक्रमण नियंत्रण जैसी आवश्यकताओं को पूरा करने वाली उद्योगों की सहायता मिलती है।

• Farmers and local entrepreneurs strive for **innovative measures** to improve **yield quality**, and combat **climate change** impacts.

किसान और स्थानीय उद्यमी पैदावार की गुणवत्ता बढ़ाने और जलवायु परिवर्तन की चुनौतियों से निपटने के लिए नवाचारपूर्ण उपाय अपनाते हैं।

• The terms **prawn** and **shrimp** are often used interchangeably but are **biologically distinct species**.

पॉर्न (prawn) और श्रिम्प (shrimp) शब्दों का उपयोग अक्सर एक-दूसरे के स्थान पर किया जाता है, लेकिन वे जैविक रूप से अलग प्रजातियाँ हैं।

• A prized species is the **black tiger prawn** (*Penaeus monodon*), grown in **saline water** conditions.

एक महत्वपूर्ण प्रजाति है ब्लैक टाइगर झींगा (*Penaeus monodon*), जिसे नमकीन पानी की स्थिति में पाला जाता है।

• Farmers aim to meet demand of **30 or less prawns per kilogram**.

किसान प्रति किलोग्राम 30 या उससे कम झींगा की मांग को पूरा करने की कोशिश करते हैं।

• **Optimal salinity** for prawns is **10–25 grams of salts per litre** of water. (Sea water has **35 grams/litre**).

झींगा के लिए उपयुक्त लवणता होती है प्रति लीटर पानी में 10–25 ग्राम नमक। (समुद्री पानी में 35 ग्राम/लीटर नमक होता है।)

• In low-lying farms of **Midnapore (West Bengal)**, **seawater** is used during **high tide**.

मिदनापुर (पश्चिम बंगाल) की निचली जमीन वाले फार्मों में ज्वार के दौरान समुद्री पानी लाया जाता है।

• In **coastal Andhra Pradesh**, **brackish groundwater** is mixed with **fresh river/canal water**.

आंध्र प्रदेश के तटीय इलाकों में खारा भूजल, नदी/नहर के मीठे पानी से मिलाया जाता है।



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• A typical pond is **150 x 100 metres**, with **2-metre depth**. Each **cycle lasts 4-6 months**, followed by drying.

एक सामान्य तालाब **150 x 100 मीटर** आकार का और लगभग **2 मीटर गहरा** होता है। प्रत्येक चक्र **4-6 महीने** का होता है, जिसके बाद तालाब को सुखाया जाता है।

• Farmer **Siva Rama Rudraraju** from **Bapatla (Andhra Pradesh)** promotes **smaller ponds** for better yield and **pathogen control**.

**बापटला (आंध्र प्रदेश)** के किसान **शिवा रामा रुद्रराजू** ने छोटे तालाबों को बेहतर पैदावार और रोगजनक नियंत्रण के लिए बढ़ावा दिया है।

• Smaller ponds reduce **economic loss** during **disease outbreaks**.

छोटे तालाब बीमारी के फैलाव के दौरान आर्थिक नुकसान को कम करते हैं।

• **Vibrio harveyi** bacteria and **White Spot Syndrome Virus** cause serious damage, with **25% annual yield loss**.

**Vibrio harveyi** बैक्टीरिया और **व्हाइट स्पॉट सिंड्रोम वायरस** गंभीर क्षति पहुंचाते हैं, जिससे सालाना **25% पैदावार की हानि** होती है।

• Many labs now offer **tests for infectious agents**; **infected ponds** are quickly emptied.

अब कई प्रयोगशालाएँ **संक्रामक एजेंटों की जांच** करती हैं; **संक्रमित तालाबों** को तुरंत खाली कर दिया जाता है।

• **Crows** spread infection by carrying prawns; hence **plastic nets** or **hunters** are used for **control**.

**काँवे** संक्रमित झींगा ले जाकर संक्रमण फैलाते हैं; इसलिए **प्लास्टिक जाल** या **शिकारियों** का उपयोग नियंत्रण के लिए किया जाता है।

• Farmers add **probiotics (Bacillus bacteria)** to water; they grow faster and outcompete pathogens.

किसान **प्रोबायोटिक्स (Bacillus बैक्टीरिया)** पानी में डालते हैं; ये तेजी से बढ़ते हैं और रोगजनकों को हटा देते हैं।

• Juvenile prawns used in farms are nursery-reared and **pathogen-free**, developed by **ICAR-CIBA (Chennai)**.

फार्म में उपयोग होने वाले **नर्सरी-पालित किशोर झींगे** रोगजनकों से मुक्त होते हैं, जिन्हें **ICAR-CIBA (चेन्नई)** ने विकसित किया है।

• **Phage therapy** uses **bacteriophages (viruses)** to kill **Vibrio bacteria**.

**फेज थेरेपी** में **बैक्टीरियोफेज (वायरस)** का उपयोग करके **Vibrio बैक्टीरिया** को नष्ट किया जाता है।

• These combined efforts have led to a **17% annual growth** in India's prawn production.

इन सभी प्रयासों से भारत में झींगा उत्पादन में **सालाना 17% वृद्धि** हुई है।

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## Question Corner

GS Paper III: S&T

# Avoiding collisions

**How do bats avoid collisions while exiting a cave in thousands?**

Bats perceive their world mostly through echolocation. Many bats echolocate at once when a whole colony emerges from a cave. As a result, the calls of others are drowned out. Scientists call this loss of acoustic information "jamming". When exiting the cave, bats experience a cacophony of calls, with 94% of echolocation being jammed. Within five seconds of leaving the cave, bats reduced the echolocation jamming. Researchers found that bats made two behavioural changes – first, they

fanned out from the dense colony core while maintaining the group structure; and second, they emitted shorter and weaker calls at higher frequency. Bats changed their echolocation to a higher frequency, despite more calls only increasing the problem of jamming. The reason: a bat needs to know only about the bat directly in front. Though most of the information available is missed because of jamming, it does not matter because bats only need enough detail to avoid crashing into the bat in front.

Readers may send their questions / answers to [questioncorner@thehindu.co.in](mailto:questioncorner@thehindu.co.in)

jammed.

गुफा से बाहर निकलते समय चमगादड़ को शोरपूर्ण आवाज़ों का अनुभव होता है, और 94% इकोलोकेशन जैम होती है।

• Within **five seconds** of leaving the cave, bats reduced the **echolocation jamming**.

गुफा से निकलने के पांच सेकंड के भीतर, चमगादड़ों ने इकोलोकेशन जैमिंग को कम कर दिया।

**Researchers found that bats made two behavioural changes —**

**शोधकर्ताओं ने पाया कि चमगादड़ों ने दो व्यवहारिक बदलाव किए —**

• First, they **fanned out** from the dense colony core while maintaining the **group structure**.

• पहला, उन्होंने घनी कॉलोनी से बाहर निकलकर **समूह की संरचना बनाए रखते हुए फैलाव** किया।

**Avoiding collisions**

**टकराव से बचाव**

**Bats perceive their world mostly through echolocation.**

**चमगादड़ अपनी दुनिया को मुख्य रूप से इकोलोकेशन के माध्यम से समझते हैं।**

• Many bats echolocate at once when a whole colony emerges from a cave.

जब पूरी कॉलोनी गुफा से बाहर निकलती है, तो कई चमगादड़ एक साथ इकोलोकेशन करते हैं।

• As a result, the calls of others are **drowned out**.

इस कारण, दूसरों की आवाज़ें दब जाती हैं।

• Scientists call this loss of **acoustic information "jamming"**.

वैज्ञानिक इस ध्वनिक जानकारी के नुकसान को "जैमिंग" कहते हैं।

• When exiting the cave, bats experience a **cacophony of calls**, with **94%** of echolocation being



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- Second, they emitted **shorter and weaker calls** at **higher frequency**.
- दूसरा, उन्होंने **कम समय और कम ताकत वाली उच्च फ्रीक्वेंसी** की आवाज़ें निकालीं।
- Bats changed their echolocation to a **higher frequency**, despite more calls only increasing the problem of **jamming**.  
चमगादड़ों ने **उच्च आवृत्ति (higher frequency)** पर इकोलोकेशन करना शुरू किया, भले ही इससे **जैमिंग** की समस्या और बढ़ सकती थी।
- The reason: a bat needs to know only about the bat **directly in front**.  
कारण: एक चमगादड़ को केवल अपने **सामने वाले चमगादड़** की जानकारी की आवश्यकता होती है।
- Though most of the information available is missed because of **jamming**, it does not matter because bats only need enough detail to avoid crashing into the bat in front.  
हालांकि **जैमिंग** के कारण अधिकांश जानकारी **छूट** जाती है, लेकिन इससे फर्क नहीं पड़ता क्योंकि चमगादड़ों को केवल इतनी जानकारी चाहिए होती है कि वे **सामने वाले से टकराएं नहीं**।

PATRIOTIC IAS



# Rebuilding the bridge to Rameswaram

The new sea bridge at Pamban is all set to be dedicated to the nation by Prime Minister Narendra Modi today. What is the technology the new bridge works on? How different is it from the old bridge, and why the old bridge had to be decommissioned... S. Sundar asks these questions and more, and finds answers to them

## GS Paper III: Infrastructure

The new lift span bridge at Pamban glistens in the summer sun. Dubbed as an engineering marvel, this imposing lifting-span structure facilitates better train operations in the Palk Strait, connecting Ramanaathapuram with the Rameswaram island.

The British-era old Pamban Rail Bridge, comprising two cantilever bridges, had to be replaced because its highly corroded centre span made the structure vulnerable. All trains had to slow down while passing through the bridge. When Southern Railway decided to spruce things up, it wanted the new lift span as a single piece, between two sub-structures.

### Search for design

As India did not have any bridge with a lift span, other than the Pamban bridge, engineers of Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL), which implemented the new bridge project, scouted for the best design. They inspected some 2,000 functional bridges in the U.S., RVNL Chairman and Managing Director Pradeep Gaur said. Among the three choices, including a swing bridge and a single-leaf bascule bridge, the vertical lift span best suited the Indian Railways' requirements of stability and cost-effectiveness. Then the engineers looked for a state-of-the-art design with the world's best practices which could also tackle the issue of corrosion, as Pamban is situated in the world's second most corrosive environment, in the Bay of Bengal.

Spanish company TYPASA was appointed the consultant for the project. Its design was proof-checked by IIT-Madras. Subsequently, it was altered by IIT-Bombay for improving the stability with an additional 60 tonnes of steel in the vertical lift section. As a consequence, machinery and specifications had to be changed, and it took longer than anticipated. The design change and the suspension of construction due to the COVID-19 pandemic also affected the supply of materials for several months. "In one case, after producing 500 composite sleepers out of 2,500 sleepers ordered by the RVNL, the company in the U.S. was shut because of COVID-19," Mr. Gaur pointed out.

### Challenges

The engineers and the workers faced several challenges at the worksite, including space constraints in the sea and strong winds that held up the installation of the machinery. The biggest challenge was the narrow approach road to the site from the Pamban side through which materials, especially huge equipment, were transported.

Besides, the shallow but rough sea at the site and the monsoon which allowed work only for six

The materials could be moved to the site only by barge. But the barges would run aground during low tide, and we would wait for high tide to move them again.

S. ANBALAGAN,  
RVNL consultant

months a year threw up major challenges, RVNL consultant S. Anbalagan said. "The materials could be moved to the site only by barge. But the barges would run aground during low tide, and we would wait for high tide to move them again," he added.

### Project cost goes up

The two-year delay and the consequent inflation drove up the project cost from ₹279 crore to ₹531 crore. However, Mr. Gaur said the longest vertical bridge in Hamburg, Germany, measuring 133 metres and commissioned in 2020, was constructed in five years, though its total length was 257 metres. However, the Pamban bridge, which is 2.08-km long with a 72.5-metre vertical bridge, was completed in the same time frame, he said. "If we have to build a similar bridge, we can do it in three years with the experience gained in the construction of this bridge," he said.

As corrosion was the old Pamban bridge's Achilles heel, a lot of precautionary measures were taken to tackle it in the new bridge. The RVNL team had visited Florida, the most corrosive part of the world, to study the painting scheme. The officials came up with a proven painting technology used around the world. "The scheme with zinc metallising, Epilux zinc rich primer, and Polysiloxane paint has withstood corrosion for 40 years, though the design period for one coat of painting under the scheme is only 38 years," Mr. Gaur said.

The scheme is being used for the first time by the Indian Railways. "If proper inspection and maintenance is done, the life of this coat of painting can be extended by 40%: the first coat of painting can protect the bridge for at least 55 years," he said.

While the Indian Railways paints its steel structures once in five years, the old Pamban bridge became so unstable owing to corrosion that painting was done once in three months. "That way, I am confident the new bridge would require the next coat of paint only after 50 years," he said.

Mr. Gaur was all praise for the Spanish designer behind the structural design of the lift span. "The design has a huge significance. It has no rough edges and everything has been rounded off to avoid water ingress or stagnation [anywhere over it]. The lift span has been made with a box-type section and it is closed to prevent moisture intrusion," he added. The smoothening of the surface has removed the edges, thus stymieing corrosion. He credited the designer with having taken care of not only the painting scheme but also the structural aspect to minimise the chances of corrosion.

The RVNL fabricated all the steel structures –



Except for the gears, brakes, and spherical bearings, all the materials used for the new bridge have been sourced domestically. The imported materials would constitute only 2%-3% of the total materials.

PRADEEP GAUR,  
RVNL Chairman and Managing Director

including the girders, 34-metre-high towers of the vertical lift, and its counter-weights – at Sathirakudi, 30 km away from the construction site. "We chose a farther place as it was very important to fabricate the steel structures at least 50 km away from the coast to avoid corrosion. The RVNL has handed over the bridge to Southern Railway and the engineers have been trained in operating the vertical lift," he said.

The RVNL used 3.38 lakh bags of cement for the pile foundation, which has an average depth of 38 metres below the seabed. It used 5,772 metric tonnes of stainless steel reinforcement and 4,500 tonnes of structural steel. "Except for the gears, brakes, and spherical bearings, all the materials used for the new bridge have been sourced domestically. The imported materials would constitute only 2%-3% of the total materials," he added.

Furthermore, this imposing structure has been constructed by Indian contractors, though it has been designed by a Spanish company. Even the software for operating the vertical lift span has been developed indigenously. "This is a real case study in displaying the prowess of India in [carrying out the construction] of such an iconic and unique bridge," he said. Mr. Gaur was quick to add that even the design of the vertical lift is now owned by the Indian Railways.

### Longer lifespan

The new bridge has been designed for 25-tonne axle loading, the maximum loading factor in the Indian Railways (except on the dedicated freight corridor). The structure has been designed for operating trains without any speed restriction. "I don't see any reason why it should not last much beyond the lifespan of the existing [old] Pamban bridge [108 years]," Mr. Gaur said.

The commissioning of the new bridge on Sunday will also mark the resumption of train services between Mandapam and Rameswaram after more than 26 months as rail movement on the old bridge was suspended on December 22, 2022, and then cancelled permanently because of its poor structural stability.





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• All trains had to **slow down** while passing through the bridge.  
पुल से गुजरते समय सभी ट्रेनों को **धीमा चलना** पड़ता था।

• When **Southern Railway** decided to spruce things up, it wanted the new **lift span as a single piece**, between two sub-structures.

जब **दक्षिण रेलवे** ने इसे सुधारने का निर्णय लिया, तो वह नया **लिफ्ट स्पैन एकल खंड** में दो उप-संरचनाओं के बीच बनाना चाहता था।

## Search for design

### डिज़ाइन की तलाश

• As India did not have any bridge with a **lift span**, other than the Pamban bridge, **RVNL engineers** scouted for the best design.

भारत में **पंबन पुल** के अलावा कोई **लिफ्ट स्पैन वाला पुल** नहीं था, इसलिए **आरवीएनएल** के इंजीनियरों ने सर्वश्रेष्ठ डिज़ाइन की तलाश की।

• They inspected some **2,000 functional bridges in the U.S.**, RVNL Chairman and MD **Pradeep Gaur** said.

**आरवीएनएल** के चेयरमैन और एमडी प्रदीप गौड़ ने बताया कि उन्होंने **अमेरिका में लगभग 2,000 चालू पुलों** का निरीक्षण किया।

• Among the three choices — **swing bridge, single-leaf bascule bridge, and vertical lift span** — the last one best suited the Indian Railways' requirements.

**स्विंग ब्रिज, सिंगल-लीफ बैस्क्यूल ब्रिज और वर्टिकल लिफ्ट स्पैन** — इन तीन विकल्पों में से अंतिम विकल्प भारतीय रेलवे की आवश्यकताओं के लिए सबसे उपयुक्त था।

• Pamban is situated in the **world's second most corrosive environment**, in the **Bay of Bengal**.

**पंबन** दुनिया के दूसरे सबसे अधिक जंग लगने वाले वातावरण में, **बंगाल की खाड़ी** में स्थित है।

• **Spanish company TYPSA** was appointed the consultant for the project.

इस परियोजना के लिए **स्पेन की कंपनी TYPSA** को सलाहकार नियुक्त किया गया।

• Its design was **proof-checked by IIT-Madras**, and later **altered by IIT-Bombay** for **stability improvement** by adding **60 tonnes of steel**.

इस डिज़ाइन को पहले **आईआईटी-मद्रास** द्वारा जांचा गया और बाद में **आईआईटी-बॉम्बे** ने इसमें **60 टन स्टील** जोड़कर **स्थिरता सुधार** के लिए संशोधन किया।

• This led to **machinery and specifications** being changed and **delays** in construction.

इससे **मशीनरी और तकनीकी विनिर्देशों** में बदलाव हुआ और **निर्माण में देरी** हुई।

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• The **COVID-19 pandemic** affected the supply of materials for **several months**.  
कोविड-19 महामारी के कारण कई महीनों तक सामग्री की आपूर्ति प्रभावित हुई।

• One U.S. company shut down after producing only **500 composite sleepers out of 2,500 ordered**.

एक अमेरिकी कंपनी ने 2,500 में से केवल 500 कंपोजिट स्लीपर बनाने के बाद काम बंद कर दिया।

## Challenges

### चुनौतियाँ

• Engineers faced **space constraints, strong winds**, and a **narrow approach road** from the Pamban side.

इंजीनियरों को सीमित स्थान, तेज़ हवाएं और पंबन की ओर से संकीर्ण पहुँच मार्ग जैसी चुनौतियों का सामना करना पड़ा।

• The **shallow but rough sea** and the **monsoon**, allowing work for only **six months a year**, added more difficulties.

उथला लेकिन उग्र समुद्र और मॉनसून, जिससे हर साल सिर्फ छह महीने काम हो सकता था, ने समस्याएं और बढ़ा दीं।

• Materials had to be moved **by barge**, but **low tide** caused barges to run aground, delaying progress.

सामग्री को बार्ज के माध्यम से ले जाया गया, लेकिन ज्वार कम होने पर बार्ज रुक जाती थीं, जिससे काम में देरी होती थी।

## Project cost goes up

### परियोजना लागत में वृद्धि

• The **two-year delay** and **inflation** raised the project cost from **₹279 crore to ₹531 crore**.  
दो वर्षों की देरी और मुद्रास्फीति के कारण परियोजना लागत ₹279 करोड़ से बढ़कर ₹531 करोड़ हो गई।

• The **longest vertical bridge** in **Hamburg, Germany**, measuring **133 metres**, took **five years** to complete.

हैम्बर्ग, जर्मनी में बना 133 मीटर लंबा सबसे लंबा वर्टिकल ब्रिज पांच वर्षों में पूरा हुआ।

• The **Pamban bridge** is **2.08 km long** with a **72.5-metre vertical lift span**, and was completed in the **same time frame**.

पंबन पुल की लंबाई 2.08 किलोमीटर है, जिसमें 72.5 मीटर का वर्टिकल लिफ्ट स्पैन है, और यह भी उसी अवधि में पूरा हुआ।



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• Mr. Gaur said India could build a similar bridge in **three years** now, using the **experience** gained.

श्री गौड़ ने कहा कि अब भारत इसी अनुभव का उपयोग करके ऐसा पुल **तीन वर्षों** में बना सकता है।

## Corrosion precautions

### जंग से बचाव के उपाय

• The **Achilles heel** of the old bridge was **corrosion**, so **precautionary measures** were taken in the new bridge.

पुराने पुल की **कमजोरी (Achilles heel)** जंग थी, इसलिए नए पुल में **रोकथाम के उपाय** किए गए।

• RVNL team studied **painting schemes** used in **Florida**, the **most corrosive part of the world**.

आरवीएनएल टीम ने **फ्लोरिडा**, जो दुनिया का **सबसे अधिक जंग वाला क्षेत्र** है, में इस्तेमाल होने वाली **पेंटिंग तकनीक** का अध्ययन किया।

• The scheme included **zinc metallising**, **Epilux zinc-rich primer**, and **Polysiloxane paint**. इस योजना में **जिंक मेटलाइजिंग**, **एपिलक्स जिंक रिच प्राइमर**, और **पॉलीसिलोक्सेन पेंट** शामिल था।

• This scheme has withstood corrosion for **40 years**, though its design period is only **38 years**. इस तकनीक ने **40 वर्षों** तक जंग को रोका है, जबकि इसकी डिज़ाइन अवधि केवल **38 वर्ष** है।

• With proper **inspection and maintenance**, the life of the **first coat** can be extended to **55 years**.

सही निरीक्षण और रखरखाव के साथ **पहली परत** की उम्र **55 वर्षों** तक बढ़ाई जा सकती है।

• Old bridge needed painting **once every three months**, while the new one may not need it for **50 years**.

पुराने पुल को **हर तीन महीने** में पेंट किया जाता था, जबकि नए पुल को **50 वर्षों** तक इसकी आवश्यकता नहीं होगी।

• The **Spanish designer** ensured **no rough edges** and a **closed box-type section** to prevent water stagnation and moisture.

**स्पेनिश डिज़ाइनर** ने सुनिश्चित किया कि पुल में **कोई खुरदरे किनारे** न हों और **बॉक्स टाइप बंद संरचना** हो ताकि पानी जमा न हो और नमी न घुसे।

• The **smooth surface** helps in **corrosion prevention** and increases the life of the bridge.

**चिकनी सतह** जंग रोकने में मदद करती है और पुल की **आयु बढ़ाती** है।

## Fabrication and Materials for the New Pamban Bridge

### नए पंबन ब्रिज के लिए निर्माण और सामग्री

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• The RVNL fabricated all the **steel structures** — including the **girders, 34-metre-high towers** of the vertical lift, and its **counter-weights** — at **Sathirakudi, 30 km** away from the construction site.

RVNL ने सभी **स्टील स्ट्रक्चर** — जिसमें **गर्डर्स, 34 मीटर ऊंचे टावर्स** और **काउंटर-वेट्स** शामिल हैं — का निर्माण **सथिराकुड़ी**, जो निर्माण स्थल से **30 किमी** दूर है, में किया।

• “We chose a farther place as it was very important to fabricate the steel structures at least **50 km away from the coast** to avoid **corrosion**.”

“हमने एक दूर की जगह इसलिए चुनी क्योंकि **स्टील संरचनाओं को तटीय क्षेत्र से कम से कम 50 किमी दूर** बनाना **जंग से बचाव** के लिए बहुत जरूरी था।

• The RVNL has handed over the bridge to **Southern Railway** and the engineers have been trained in operating the **vertical lift**,” he said.

RVNL ने ब्रिज को **दक्षिण रेलवे** को सौंप दिया है और इंजीनियरों को **वर्टिकल लिफ्ट** चलाने का प्रशिक्षण दिया गया है,” उन्होंने कहा।

• The RVNL used **3.38 lakh bags of cement** for the **pile foundation**, which has an **average depth of 38 metres** below the seabed.

RVNL ने **3.38 लाख सीमेंट बैग** का उपयोग **पाइल फाउंडेशन** के लिए किया, जिसकी औसत गहराई समुद्र तल के नीचे **38 मीटर** है।

• It used **5,772 metric tonnes of stainless steel reinforcement** and **4,500 tonnes of structural steel**.

इसमें **5,772 मीट्रिक टन स्टेनलेस स्टील रिइन्फोर्समेंट** और **4,500 टन स्ट्रक्चरल स्टील** का उपयोग किया गया।

• “Except for the **gears, brakes, and spherical bearings**, all the materials used for the new bridge have been **sourced domestically**.”

“**गियर, ब्रेक, और स्फेरिकल बेयरिंग्स** को छोड़कर, नए ब्रिज में उपयोग की गई सारी सामग्री **घरेलू स्तर पर** प्राप्त की गई है।

• The **imported materials** would constitute only **2%-3%** of the total materials,” he added.

उन्होंने कहा कि **आयातित सामग्री** कुल सामग्री का केवल **2% से 3%** ही है।

## **Indian Expertise and Indigenous Development**

### **भारतीय विशेषज्ञता और स्वदेशी विकास**

• This imposing structure has been constructed by **Indian contractors**, though it has been **designed by a Spanish company**.

इस विशाल संरचना का निर्माण **भारतीय ठेकेदारों** द्वारा किया गया है, हालांकि इसका डिजाइन **स्पेनिश कंपनी** द्वारा तैयार किया गया है।

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• Even the **software** for operating the **vertical lift span** has been **developed indigenously**.  
वर्टिकल लिफ्ट स्पैन को संचालित करने के लिए सॉफ्टवेयर भी स्वदेशी रूप से विकसित किया गया है।

• “This is a real case study in displaying the **proWess of India** in carrying out the construction of such an **iconic and unique bridge**,” he said.

“यह एक सच्चा केस स्टडी है जो दर्शाता है कि भारत इस तरह के प्रतीकात्मक और अनोखे ब्रिज के निर्माण में कितनी क्षमता रखता है,” उन्होंने कहा।

• Mr. Gaur was quick to add that even the **design of the vertical lift** is now **owned by the Indian Railways**.

श्री गौर ने यह भी जोड़ा कि वर्टिकल लिफ्ट का डिजाइन अब भारतीय रेलवे के पास है।

## Longer Lifespan and Improved Operations

### लंबी उम्र और बेहतर संचालन

• The new bridge has been designed for **25-tonne axle loading**, the **maximum loading factor** in the Indian Railways (except on the dedicated freight corridor).

नया ब्रिज 25 टन एक्सल लोडिंग के लिए डिजाइन किया गया है, जो कि भारतीय रेलवे (डेडिकेटेड फ्रेट कॉरिडोर को छोड़कर) में अधिकतम लोडिंग क्षमता है।

• The structure has been designed for operating trains **without any speed restriction**.

इस संरचना को बिना किसी गति प्रतिबंध के ट्रेन संचालन के लिए डिजाइन किया गया है।

• “I don’t see any reason why it should not last much beyond the lifespan of the existing [old] Pamban bridge [108 years],” Mr. Gaur said.

“मुझे कोई कारण नहीं दिखता कि यह ब्रिज मौजूदा [पुराने] पंबन ब्रिज की आयु [108 साल] से कहीं अधिक नहीं टिकेगा,” श्री गौर ने कहा।

## Resumption of Train Services

### ट्रेन सेवाओं की बहाली

• The **commissioning** of the new bridge on **Sunday** will also mark the **resumption of train services** between **Mandapam** and **Rameswaram** after more than **26 months**.

रविवार को नए ब्रिज का शुभारंभ मंडपम और रामेश्वरम के बीच 26 महीने बाद ट्रेन सेवाओं की बहाली को भी चिह्नित करेगा।

• Rail movement on the old bridge was **suspended on December 22, 2022**, and then **cancelled permanently** because of its **poor structural stability**.

पुराने ब्रिज पर 22 दिसंबर 2022 को रेल संचालन निलंबित कर दिया गया था और बाद में इसकी संरचनात्मक अस्थिरता के कारण इसे स्थायी रूप से रद्द कर दिया गया।

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