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By **Faiyaz Sir**



28
SEPTEMBER



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आज क्या पढ़ेंगे?

- COP-31
- Voting Right
- महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य

COP31 hosts Australia and Türkiye face the fossil-fuel question

There is likely to be pressure on the COP31 presidencies to include fossil fuel language as part of the agenda. The catastrophic floods in Nepal on August 26 and the damage they wrought are also set to add momentum to both mitigation action, including the language surrounding fossil fuels at COP31

Rishika Pardikar
TRABZON, TÜRKİYE

The next United Nations climate change conference, COP31, will be held in Antalya in Türkiye in November this year. Türkiye will be hosting the event, with its Minister of Environment Murat Kurum serving as COP31 President. Australia will oversee the negotiations process, with its Minister for Climate Change and Energy Chris Bowen as the Vice-President of COP31.

This is a novel arrangement – a result of both Australia and Türkiye not being willing to concede their demand to host, and where both countries share crucial responsibilities. In previous editions, the COP's physical host has differed from the President only for logistical reasons.

A pre-COP event will be held in Fiji on October 5-8, where Pacific Island countries and Australia will discuss preparations for the main event, including what to negotiate. These pre-COPs are a routine affair before the annual summits.

Domestic fossil reliance

Both Türkiye and Australia are heavy users of fossil fuels. Australia is the world's third-largest fossil fuels exporter, after Russia and the U.S. Domestically, Australia as well as Türkiye rely on coal, gas, and oil to generate respectively around 90% and 80% of their energy needs. Three weeks ago, Australia also came under fire from climate groups for approving the expansion of a coal mine.

The primary goal at COP31 is a target to electrify industry and vehicles and in turn "to raise the share of final energy demand met by electricity from just over 20% today to 35% by 2035".

'Oceans and Seas' are also a priority agenda: Türkiye hosted a 'Blue Dialogue' on September 10-11 whose focus was on protecting marine resources.

However, none of the themes listed as a priority for the event make direct reference to transitioning away from fossil fuels.

That said, various industries in Australia, including iron-ore mining, are trying to decarbonise by investing in hybrid or electric heavy machinery. Local governments are also pushing for electric vehicles (EVs), which recently overtook petrol car sales for the first time in Australia.

Türkiye, on the other hand, is working to augment recycling and so eventually reduce methane emissions. In fact, the country has listed 'zero waste and a circular economy' on the COP31 priority list. The fortunes of a local EV brand,



An oil rig is visible in the distance near Cape Town harbour. ALPHA PERSPECTIVE/UNSPASH

Togg, has ballooned so much that the government hopes it will herald a new era in the automobiles market.

Loss and damage financing

At the COP30 in Belém, Brazil, last year, the European Union pushed for a "fossil fuel roadmap" to help countries worldwide transition away from fossil fuels. While many countries supported the call, observers have said it took the focus away from developing countries' calls to triple adaptation finance and developed countries' resistance to that.

That said, most countries involved in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) did not oppose the call for the "fossil fuel road map" at COP30.

India did not oppose either, on the condition that it incorporate the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and that countries are not expected to follow uniform energy transition pathways. Beyond the UNFCCC framework as well, and partly because of the slow pace of negotiations at the COP summits, there have been calls for concrete action to transition away from fossil fuels. In April this year, the first conference on 'Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels' was held in Santa Marta in Colombia, co-hosted by Colombia and the Netherlands.

The second conference is scheduled

for 2027, to be co-hosted by Tuvalu and Ireland.

Given such momentum, there is likely to be pressure on the COP31 Presidencies to include fossil fuel language as part of the agenda. The catastrophic floods in Nepal on August 26, boosted no doubt by climate change, and the damage they wrought are also set to add momentum to both mitigation action, including the language surrounding fossil fuels at COP31, and to loss and damage financing. But as with their not mentioning the transition away from fossil fuels, the joint Australian-Türkiye presidents have also included no loss and damage financing, or even the broader climate finance question, among the priority topics.

"We know there are strong views on all sides of this topic," the Türkiye Presidency said in response to questions from the author about whether this will change. "We will create space for Parties to discuss the transition and listen carefully to the positions they bring forward to see what we can agree by consensus. But listening to Parties' views on negotiations does not mean we are standing still. We are taking the next logical steps in the energy transition by making electrification the flagship thematic priority of the COP31 Presidency's Action Agenda, because electrifying buildings, transport and industry is key to reducing emissions and

should be accompanied by complementary efforts to expand renewable energy.

Likewise, the reply said on mitigation financing: "we have been clear that we need to close the climate finance chasm, and we are holding donors to the financial commitments made at past COPs, while also introducing innovative new mechanisms, such as the 'Climate Implementation Bridge', to address the gap between ambitious climate plans and the finance needed to make them a reality."

The Australian Presidency did not respond.

Countries participating at COPs can propose new agenda items for consideration during negotiations. For example, the European Union introduced the "road map" in the formal negotiations agenda at the last minute at COP30. That said, it remains to be seen whether countries will do so at COP31, and if so what the items will be – and ultimately how the event's two fossil fuel-heavy stewards will navigate negotiations.

The author was in Türkiye September 8-13 at the invitation of the government for a COP31-themed media tour. She also visited Australia in October 2025 on a similar official tour.

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THE GIST

▼ Australia and Türkiye are heavy users of fossil fuels; both countries rely on coal, gas, and oil to generate respectively around 90% and 80% of their domestic energy needs; Australia is the world's third-largest fossil fuels exporter

▼ The primary goal at COP31 is a target to electrify industry and vehicles and in turn 'to raise the share of final energy demand met by electricity from just over 20% today to 35% by 2035'; 'Oceans and Seas' are also a priority agenda

▼ At COP30, the EU advocated a global 'fossil fuel roadmap' to guide the transition away from fossil fuels; critics said it diverted attention from developing nations' demand for tripling adaptation finance

UNFCCC COP31 कहाँ और कब होगा?

- **स्थान:** अंताल्या, तुर्की (Antalya, Türkiye)
- **तिथि:** 9 नवंबर से 20 नवंबर 2026 तक आयोजित किया जाएगा।

इसमें क्या खास/पहली बार (First Time) हो रहा है?

- **पहली बार साझा/द्विपक्षीय प्रेसीडेंसी (Shared Presidency):** आमतौर पर सम्मेलन का आयोजक देश ही इसकी अध्यक्षता करता है, लेकिन COP31 में तुर्की और ऑस्ट्रेलिया के बीच एक अनूठा समझौता हुआ है। तुर्की भौतिक रूप से मेजबानी (Host City) करेगा, जबकि ऑस्ट्रेलिया वार्ता प्रक्रिया की अध्यक्षता (President of Negotiations) करेगा।
- **पैसिफिक देशों की भागीदारी:** ऑस्ट्रेलिया ने पैसिफिक द्वीप समूह (Pacific Island nations) के साथ मिलकर इस सम्मेलन की रणनीति बनाई है और सम्मेलन से जुड़ी पूर्व-बैठकें (Pre-COP) फिजी और तुवालु में आयोजित होंगी।

COP31 का मुख्य एजेंडा क्या है?

- **जीवाश्म ईंधन (Fossil Fuels) से दूरी:** कोयले, तेल और गैस के इस्तेमाल को कम करने (Phase-out/Transitioning away) पर जोर।
- **क्लीन एनर्जी और विद्युतीकरण (Electrification):** 2035 तक कुल ऊर्जा मांग में बिजली का हिस्सा बढ़ाकर 35% तक ले जाना।
- **जलवायु वित्त पोषण (Climate Finance) और लॉस एंड डैमेज:** विकासशील और जलवायु आपदाओं से प्रभावित देशों (जैसे पैसिफिक आइलैंड्स) के लिए नुकसान एवं क्षति की भरपाई के लिए वित्तीय मदद।
- **महासागर और समुद्र संरक्षण:** समुद्री संसाधनों और पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र की रक्षा करना।

COP31 के मेजबान ऑस्ट्रेलिया और तुर्की के सामने जीवाश्म ईंधन (Fossil Fuels) का बड़ा सवाल

- इस साल नवंबर में तुर्की के अंताल्या शहर में अगला संयुक्त राष्ट्र जलवायु परिवर्तन सम्मेलन (COP31) आयोजित किया जाएगा। तुर्की इसकी मेजबानी करेगा और उसके पर्यावरण मंत्री मूरत कुरुम COP31 के अध्यक्ष होंगे। वहीं ऑस्ट्रेलिया इसके वार्ता सत्रों (negotiations) की देखरेख करेगा और उसके जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्री क्रिस बोवेन उपाध्यक्ष के रूप में कार्य करेंगे।

मुख्य बिंदु

- **जीवाश्म ईंधन पर निर्भरता:** ऑस्ट्रेलिया और तुर्की दोनों ही कोयले, गैस और तेल के बड़े उपभोक्ता हैं। ऑस्ट्रेलिया अपनी ऊर्जा जरूरतों का लगभग 90% और तुर्की लगभग 80% इन्हीं से पूरा करता है। ऑस्ट्रेलिया दुनिया का तीसरा सबसे बड़ा जीवाश्म ईंधन निर्यातक भी है।
- **COP31 का प्राथमिक लक्ष्य:** उद्योग और वाहनों को बिजली से चलाना (electrify) और 2035 तक अंतिम ऊर्जा मांग में बिजली का हिस्सा 20% से बढ़ाकर 35% करना।
- **जीवाश्म ईंधन से दूरी:** COP30 में यूरोपीय संघ (EU) ने जीवाश्म ईंधन से दूर जाने के लिए एक वैश्विक "रोडमैप" की मांग की थी।

मुख्य खबरें और विवरण

जीवाश्म ईंधन पर घरेलू निर्भरता (Domestic Fossil Reliance)

- ऑस्ट्रेलिया रूस और अमेरिका के बाद दुनिया का तीसरा सबसे बड़ा जीवाश्म ईंधन निर्यातक है।
- ऑस्ट्रेलिया में हाल ही में इलेक्ट्रिक वाहनों (EVs) की बिक्री ने पहली बार पेट्रोल कारों की बिक्री को पीछे छोड़ दिया है।
- तुर्की अपने नए स्थानीय ईवी ब्रांड 'Togg' और रीसाइक्लिंग (Zero Waste) पर जोर दे रहा है।

हानि और क्षति वित्तपोषण (Loss and Damage Financing)

- पिछले साल ब्राजील के बेलेम में आयोजित COP30 में, यूरोपीय संघ (EU) ने दुनिया भर के देशों को जीवाश्म ईंधन से दूर जाने में मदद करने के लिए "जीवाश्म ईंधन रोडमैप" का प्रस्ताव रखा था।
- भारत ने इसका विरोध नहीं किया, लेकिन शर्त रखी कि इसमें **"समान लेकिन अलग-अलग जिम्मेदारियों"** (common but differentiated responsibilities) के सिद्धांत को शामिल किया जाए।

COP31 में चुनौतियाँ

- 26 अगस्त को नेपाल में आई विनाशकारी बाढ़ से जलवायु परिवर्तन से निपटने के प्रयासों में तेजी लाने की मांग बढ़ गई है।
- COP31 के आयोजकों पर एजेंडे में जीवाश्म ईंधन पर स्पष्ट बातचीत को शामिल करने का दबाव रहेगा।

UNFCCC क्या है?

- **पूरा नाम:** United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (जलवायु परिवर्तन पर संयुक्त राष्ट्र फ्रेमवर्क कन्वेंशन)।
- **स्थापना:** 1992 के रियाडो डी जनेरियो (ब्राजील) पृथ्वी सम्मेलन (Earth Summit) में इसे अपनाया गया था।
- **उद्देश्य:** वातावरण में ग्रीनहाउस गैसों के उत्सर्जन को नियंत्रित करना ताकि खतरनाक जलवायु परिवर्तन को रोका जा सके।
- **COP क्या है? COP (Conference of the Parties)**
UNFCCC का निर्णय लेने वाला सर्वोच्च निकाय है, जो हर साल दुनिया भर के नेताओं, वैज्ञानिकों और जलवायु कार्यकर्ताओं की बैठक आयोजित करता है।

भारत ने कब-कब COP की अध्यक्षता/मेजबानी की है?

- भारत ने अब तक केवल एक बार COP की मेजबानी की है:
 - **COP8 (2002):** भारत ने 2002 में नई दिल्ली में 8वें सम्मेलन की अध्यक्षता और मेजबानी की थी। इसमें ऐतिहासिक 'दिल्ली घोषणापत्र' (Delhi Declaration) पारित किया गया था, जिसमें विकासशील देशों की जरूरतों और प्रौद्योगिकी हस्तांतरण पर बल दिया गया था।

प्रारंभिक परीक्षा प्रश्न (Prelims Practice Questions)

- **प्रश्न 1: COP31 और UNFCCC के संदर्भ में निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार कीजिए:**
 1. COP31 की मेजबानी तुर्की द्वारा की जाएगी, जबकि इसकी वार्ता प्रक्रिया (negotiations) की अध्यक्षता ऑस्ट्रेलिया करेगा।
 2. UNFCCC की स्थापना 1992 के रियो अर्थ समिट (Rio Earth Summit) के दौरान की गई थी।
 3. भारत ने अभी तक किसी भी UNFCCC COP की मेजबानी या अध्यक्षता नहीं की है।

ऊपर दिए गए कथनों में से कौन सा/से सही हैं?

- A. केवल 1 और 2
- B. केवल 2 और 3
- C. केवल 1 और 3
- D. 1, 2 और 3

मुख्य परीक्षा प्रश्न (Mains Practice Questions)

- "जलवायु सम्मेलनों (COPs) में 'साझा अध्यक्षता' (Shared Presidency) जैसे नए प्रयोग विश्व के सामने उपस्थित जलवायु चुनौतियों को कितना प्रभावी तरीके से हल कर सकते हैं? COP31 के विशेष संदर्भ में चर्चा कीजिए।"

(शब्द सीमा: 150 शब्द | अंक: 10)

Should voting be a fundamental right?

A recent *Indian Express* report revealed an unprecedented rift within the EC over alleged unilateral changes to rules, voter additions/deletions, and centralised data access, prompting a re-examination of the argument that the 'right to vote' ought to be elevated from a statutory guarantee to a fundamental one

LETTER & SPIRIT

Kartikay Singh

On September 23, an *Indian Express* investigation revealed an unprecedented rift within the three-member Election Commission of India (EC), with Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi recording 14 objections over 10 months against Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, regarding alleged unilateral changes to rules, voter additions/deletions, and centralised data access, without the Commission's full approval.

The report also found that 97 eligible voters from Goa were excluded from the electoral roll after the centralised ECNet software prevented ground-level Electoral Registration Officers (ERO) from reversing decisions. More concerning, the consequences extend beyond the loss of voting rights. Reportedly, several State schemes use electoral rolls to establish eligibility, including the Goa Mediclaim Scheme. The scheme covers super-specialty treatments unavailable in government hospitals, such as dialysis, angioplasty, open-heart surgery, transplants, chemotherapy and cochlear implants, and is available only to State voters. This issue has once again cast a spotlight on the 'right to vote', the foundational processes of India's electoral machinery, and the genesis of India's electoral 'universal adult suffrage' (UAS).

What shaped adult suffrage in India? India's constitutional promise of the 'right to vote' differs significantly from that of many Western democracies. Reflecting the flawed belief, espoused by thinkers like J.S. Mill, that voting should be reserved for the "enlightened", countries like the U.K. initially restricted the franchise to male property owners. Universal male suffrage emerged only in 1918, and women were granted the 'right to vote' a decade later in 1928. In the U.S., although the 15th and 19th Amendments extended voting rights to African Americans (1870) and women (1920), systemic barriers such as poll taxes and literacy tests continued to disenfranchise many for decades thereafter.

In sharp contrast, India's choice of immediate, universal inclusion ensured 'democratic equality' from the outset, bypassing the prolonged and often violent struggles seen elsewhere. Article 326 of the Constitution granted every adult citizen the 'right to vote', regardless of gender, caste, religion, education, or property. This commitment to a robust, inclusive democracy found further constitutional reinforcement in a series of Supreme Court judgments, notably starting with *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala* (1973), which established democracy as part of the 'basic structure' doctrine. For this ideal to function meaningfully, people should be able to freely decide the fate of their government.

This inclusive vision was operationalised through two key laws: the Representation of the People Act, 1950, which governs the preparation and revision of electoral rolls; and the 1951 Act, which regulates election conduct, candidature, and electoral offences. The EC has repeatedly introduced administrative innovations to realise this 'constitutional promise'.

Notably, the then Chief Election Commissioner Sukumar Sen, faced with the task of enrolling 173 million largely illiterate voters, turned a logistical hurdle into a democratic breakthrough by



Enabling democracy: Courts have regarded the right to vote as an inseparable part of democracy, as it enables citizens to shape governance. R. ASHOK

introducing election symbols, making UAS practically accessible. In India, the EC has the responsibility to reach the last citizen, wherever they may be, to actualise their 'right to elect'.

What is the legal status of right to vote?

The legal status of the 'right to vote' in India has long been debated, and whether it is classified as a statutory, constitutional, or fundamental right determines how easily it can be changed, how it is enforced, and the level of legal protection it receives. Although Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and K.T. Shah proposed including it in the Constitution's fundamental rights part, the Constituent Assembly's Advisory Committee ultimately rejected the idea. Importantly, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court in *Kuldip Nayyar v. Union of India* (2006) held that the 'right to elect' is a statutory right under Section 62 of the RPA, 1951, and not a fundamental or constitutional right.

Though a two-judge Bench in *Rajbala v. State of Haryana* described the 'right to vote' as a constitutional right in 2015, the larger bench ruling in *Kuldip Nayyar* prevails. Again, in *Anoop Barumal v. Union of India* (2023), the top court declined to pronounce on the issue, noting that it had already been settled by the five-judge Bench in the *Kuldip Nayyar* case. However, in his dissent, Justice Ajay Rastogi asserted that the 'right to vote' is an expression of Article 190(a) and reflects the essence of Article 21. Yet, as this view remains a minority opinion, the 'right to elect' continues to be recognised as a statutory right.

Nevertheless, even though it is not a fundamental right, courts have regarded the 'right to vote' as an inseparable part of democracy, anchoring their reasoning in the idea that it enables citizens to shape governance, making it a "democratic imperative" vital to the Indian republic's survival.

Why do we need accurate poll rolls?

Free and fair elections rest on accurate electoral rolls under the RPA, 1950. Inaccuracies – such as mass omissions, ineligible inclusions, duplicates, or incorrect entries – undermine the "one person, one vote" principle by enabling impersonation, disenfranchisement, or

dilution of votes, ultimately distorting the people's mandate. Therefore, the EC is empowered under Section 21 of the 1950 Act to prepare and revise these rolls to ensure integrity. The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023 lays down how the EC must transact its business. Section 17 requires the Commission's business to be conducted in accordance with the Act, while Section 18 provides that its procedure and allocation of business may be regulated by unanimous decision. It further requires business to be transacted as far as possible unanimously, but where the CEC and other Commissioners differ, the matter is decided by majority.

Deriving its authority from Article 324, the EC serves as the constitutional guardian of elections, with powers of superintendence, direction, and control. A key duty is preparing accurate electoral rolls, guided by Section 19 of the RPA, 1950, which mandates that any citizen aged 18 or above, "ordinarily resident" in a constituency and not disqualified, is entitled to be registered. "Ordinary resident" implies a genuine, continuous presence, not a temporary stay.

While discrepancies may arise, courts have consistently held that only substantial and systemic errors that demonstrably "materially affected" the election outcome can compromise the sanctity of the electoral roll. Minor mistakes or isolated disenfranchisement are insufficient.

Yet the recent Goa episode complicates this comfortable "substantial versus isolated" binary that courts have relied on. The *Indian Express* report revealed that 97 eligible voters were dropped from the 'right to vote' as an inseparable part of democracy, anchoring their reasoning in the idea that it enables citizens to shape governance, making it a "democratic imperative" vital to the Indian republic's survival. The EROs reportedly flagged the anomalies to the Commission by email, yet the corrections were not restored. This is not the isolated clerical error that courts have historically forgiven; it is a systemic failure baked into the software's design, compounded by administrative inertia. While the right to inclusion or

objection in electoral rolls is conferred on individuals, not political parties, the court in *Lakshmi Chauran Sen v. A.K.M. Hassan Uzuman* (1985) observed that in a largely illiterate and politically unaware electorate, parties should take steps to ensure eligible voters are included, and ineligible ones are removed. Given India's party-based Parliamentary system, such vigilance will help in preserving 'electoral integrity'.

What lies ahead?

The revelations against the EC lend fresh urgency to the argument that the 'right to vote' ought to be elevated from a statutory guarantee to a fundamental one. If the body constitutionally tasked with safeguarding the franchise can itself be riven by disputes over unilateral action, leaving the citizen's only recourse to the EC's internal correction mechanisms, or to a statutory right that the Parliament could dilute at will, is precarious.

Many scholars argue that the 'right to vote' cannot be regarded as merely a statutory right, as it flows from Article 326, and any legislation regulating it must conform to the parameters prescribed by Articles 325 and 326. It is therefore necessary to ensure that the legislature does not impose irrational or unreasonable restrictions on the 'right to vote', particularly since "free and fair elections" and "democracy" are basic features of the Constitution.

Justice Rastogi's dissent in *Anoop Barumal*, over the legal status of the 'right to vote', offers doctrinal ground for a larger Bench to revisit the question that the majority in *Kuldip Nayyar* considered settled.

Elevating the 'right to vote' to fundamental status would not diminish the EC's authority to purify rolls; it would instead subject that authority to the heightened standard of judicial review reserved for fundamental rights, ensuring that the drive to centralise electoral administration is always weighed against, rather than allowed to override, the citizen's claim to be counted. In a democracy where software now mediates the relationship between the voter and the ballot, the constitutional status of the 'right to vote' can no longer remain a matter of legislative grace. (Kartikay Singh is a lawyer based in New Delhi.)

THE GIST

India's choice of immediate, universal adult suffrage ensured democratic equality from the outset. Article 326 of the Constitution granted every adult citizen the 'right to vote'.

An *Indian Express* report revealed that 97 eligible voters from Goa were dropped from the rolls because the ECNet software denied EROs the authority to reverse erroneous deletions. This is not an isolated clerical error, but a systemic failure, compounded by administrative inertia.

If the body constitutionally tasked with safeguarding the voting rights can be riven by disputes over unilateral action, leaving the citizen's only recourse to the EC's internal correction mechanisms, or to a statutory right that the Parliament could dilute at will is precarious.

क्या मतदान का अधिकार एक मौलिक अधिकार होना चाहिए?

(Should voting be a fundamental right?)

- इंडियन एक्सप्रेस की एक हालिया रिपोर्ट में नियमों में एकतरफा बदलाव, मतदाताओं के नाम जोड़ने/हटाने और केंद्रीकृत डेटा एक्सेस को लेकर चुनाव आयोग के भीतर अभूतपूर्व मतभेद का खुलासा हुआ है। इसने इस बहस को फिर से जन्म दिया है कि 'वोट देने के अधिकार' को वैधानिक गारंटी से बढ़ाकर मौलिक अधिकार का दर्जा दिया जाना चाहिए या नहीं।

मुख्य बातें

- **सार्वभौमिक वयस्क मताधिकार (Universal Adult Suffrage):** भारत द्वारा शुरुआत से ही सार्वभौमिक वयस्क मताधिकार को अपनाने से लोकतांत्रिक समानता सुनिश्चित हुई। संविधान का अनुच्छेद 326 प्रत्येक वयस्क नागरिक को 'वोट देने का अधिकार' प्रदान करता है।
- **प्रणालीगत कमियाँ (Systemic Failures):** रिपोर्ट से पता चला कि गोवा के 97 पात्र मतदाताओं के नाम मतदाता सूची से हटा दिए गए क्योंकि ECINet सॉफ्टवेयर ने जमीनी स्तर के अधिकारियों को गलतियों को सुधारने की अनुमति नहीं दी।

- **मौलिक अधिकार की आवश्यकता:** यदि मतदान के अधिकारों की रक्षा करने वाली संस्था ही आंतरिक विवादों से घिरी हो, तो नागरिकों के पास सीमित विकल्प बचते हैं। वैधानिक अधिकार को संसद अपनी इच्छा से कमजोर कर सकती है, इसलिए इसे मौलिक अधिकार बनाने की मांग बढ़ रही है।

1. भारत में सार्वभौमिक वयस्क मताधिकार की क्या भूमिका रही?

- पश्चिमी देशों के विपरीत (जहाँ शुरू में केवल शिक्षित या संपत्ति रखने वाले पुरुषों को ही वोट का अधिकार मिला था), भारत ने अनुच्छेद 326 के तहत बिना किसी भेदभाव के (धर्म, जाति, लिंग या संपत्ति के आधार पर) प्रत्येक वयस्क नागरिक को मतदान का अधिकार दिया।
- सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने केशवानंद भारती मामले (1973) में लोकतंत्र को संविधान का 'मूल ढांचा' (Basic Structure) घोषित किया। इस समावेशी दृष्टिकोण को दो मुख्य कानूनों के माध्यम से लागू किया गया:
- **लोक प्रतिनिधित्व अधिनियम, 1950 (RPA, 1950):** यह मतदाता सूची की तैयारी और संशोधन को नियंत्रित करता है।
- **लोक प्रतिनिधित्व अधिनियम, 1951 (RPA, 1951):** यह चुनावों के संचालन, उम्मीदवारी और चुनावी अपराधों को विनियमित करता है।

2. वोट देने के अधिकार की कानूनी स्थिति क्या है? (Legal Status of Right to Vote)

- भारत में 'वोट देने का अधिकार' मौलिक अधिकार है, संवैधानिक अधिकार है या वैधानिक अधिकार, इस पर लंबा विवाद रहा है:
- **संविधान सभा की बहस:** डॉ. बी.आर. अंबेडकर और के.टी. शाह ने इसे मौलिक अधिकारों में शामिल करने का प्रस्ताव रखा था, लेकिन अंततः इसे स्वीकार नहीं किया गया।
- **सुप्रीम कोर्ट का रुख:** कुलदीप नायर बनाम भारत संघ (2006) मामले में सुप्रीम कोर्ट की पीठ ने फैसला सुनाया कि 'चुनाव चुनने का अधिकार' RPA, 1951 की धारा 62 के तहत एक वैधानिक अधिकार (Statutory Right) है, न कि मौलिक अधिकार।
- **असहमति (Dissenting Views):** अनूप बरनवाल बनाम भारत संघ (2023) मामले में जस्टिस अजय रस्तोगी ने तर्क दिया कि 'वोट देने का अधिकार' अनुच्छेद 19(1)(a) के तहत अभिव्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता और अनुच्छेद 21 के तहत जीवन के अधिकार का हिस्सा है। हालांकि, अदालतें इसे लोकतंत्र का एक अविभाज्य अंग मानती हैं।

'वोट देने के अधिकार' को मौलिक अधिकार का दर्जा देने से:

- यह चुनाव आयोग के अधिकार को कम नहीं करेगा, बल्कि उसे अधिक जवाबदेह बनाएगा।
- यह चुनावी प्रशासन के केंद्रीकरण को न्यायिक समीक्षा (Judicial Review) के दायरे में लाएगा, जिससे किसी भी नागरिक का वोट छीनना आसान नहीं होगा।

3. हमें सटीक मतदाता सूची की आवश्यकता क्यों है?

- निष्पक्ष चुनाव पूरी तरह से सटीक मतदाता सूची पर निर्भर करते हैं। गलतियाँ— जैसे बड़े पैमाने पर मतदाताओं के नाम छूट जाना, फर्जी नाम, या गलत प्रविष्टियाँ—'एक व्यक्ति, एक वोट' के सिद्धांत को कमजोर करती हैं।
- गोवा की घटना यह दर्शाती है कि सॉफ्टवेयर की गड़बड़ी और प्रशासनिक लापरवाही के कारण पात्र नागरिकों को उनके लोकतांत्रिक अधिकार से वंचित कर दिया गया, जिसे स्थानीय स्तर पर सुधारा भी नहीं जा सका।

4. आगे का रास्ता क्या है? (What Lies Ahead?)

- 'वोट देने के अधिकार' को केवल एक वैधानिक अधिकार के रूप में नहीं देखा जा सकता; इसे संविधान के अनुच्छेद 325 और 326 के मापदंडों के अनुरूप होना चाहिए।
- यह सुनिश्चित करना आवश्यक है कि विधायिका 'वोट देने के अधिकार' पर कोई अनुचित या अकारण प्रतिबंध न लगाए, क्योंकि "स्वतंत्र और निष्पक्ष चुनाव" और "लोकतंत्र" संविधान की मूल विशेषताएं हैं।

प्रारंभिक परीक्षा प्रश्न (Prelims Practice Questions)

प्रश्न 1: भारत में 'मतदान के अधिकार' (Right to Vote) के कानूनी स्वरूप के संदर्भ में निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार कीजिए:

1. संविधान सभा में डॉ. बी.आर. अंबेडकर ने मतदान के अधिकार को मौलिक अधिकारों में शामिल करने का प्रस्ताव रखा था।
2. सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने कुलदीप नायर बनाम भारत संघ (2006) मामले में निर्णय दिया कि वोट देने का अधिकार एक वैधानिक अधिकार (Statutory Right) है।
3. भारतीय संविधान का अनुच्छेद 326 प्रत्येक वयस्क नागरिक को मतदान का अधिकार प्रदान करता है।

ऊपर दिए गए कथनों में से कौन सा/से सही हैं?

- A. केवल 1 और 2
- B. केवल 2 और 3
- C. केवल 1 और 3
- D. 1, 2 और 3

मुख्य परीक्षा प्रश्न (Mains Practice Questions)

- "क्या भारत में 'वोट देने के अधिकार' को केवल एक वैधानिक अधिकार से बढ़ाकर एक 'मौलिक अधिकार' का दर्जा दिया जाना चाहिए? हालिया प्रशासनिक और तकनीकी चुनौतियों के आलोक में समालोचनात्मक विश्लेषण कीजिए।"

(शब्द सीमा: 250 शब्द | अंक: 15)

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य



EC failed to undo 'disenfranchisement': Cong.

Poll body's measures amount to an admission that SIR exercise has been a 'disaster', says party

What is the value of promising second round of visits which likely will not happen, asks Ramesh

Targeted removal of marginalised voters meant to benefit the BJP, alleges party spokesperson

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A day after the Election Commission announced multiple steps to address the concerns raised about the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, the Congress on Sunday termed it a "desperate attempt at damage control" that "hides all and reveals nothing".

Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh said the proposed measures amounted to an admission that the exercise had been a "disaster", warning that the "piecemeal" steps for deleted or at-risk voters would do little to mitigate what he called "mass disenfranchisement".

He questioned several of the assurances given by the EC, including its proposal to review the ECINet software and plan for

booth-level officers to visit the electors who received notices instead of requiring them to attend public hearings. "We know that in practice these visits were sparse and sporadic. What is the value of promising a second round of visits which likely will not happen? The logic of repeating a process done poorly once must be examined," he said.

Questioning the rationale of the entire SIR process, which he described as a "colossal waste" of resources, Mr. Ramesh said that nearly 14 crore voters whose names were deleted across the three phases from the rolls were now being asked to apply afresh for inclusion. The targeted removal of marginalised voters was meant to benefit the BJP, he said.

The Congress leader said the EC had failed to address concerns about ECINet, which he claimed



Congress workers hold a protest rally in Kolkata on Saturday demanding suspension of the SIR. AP

had been used to delete eligible voters and override electoral registration officers. The EC's proposal to review the software's compliance with existing laws was an admission that its legality was in question,

Mr. Ramesh said. He asked whether the issues flagged in Goa had occurred elsewhere, including in West Bengal. He also questioned the lack of transparency over ECINet's operation and the use of artificial in-

telligence in electoral roll preparation.

Form 6 changes

Mr. Ramesh further alleged that an illegal change to Form 6 had not been adequately explained. He said

Over 2,000 citizens write to CJI against EC

NEW DELHI

Over 2,000 citizens across the country have signed an open letter to Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, urging him to initiate *suo motu* proceedings against the conduct of the Election Commission regarding the SIR and the deployment of the ECINet software. The letter seeks the immediate stay and rescission of SIR in all States and Union Territories pending an independent judicial review of its legality and procedural integrity. » **PAGE 5**

the online Form 6 for all voters, and not only for those covered under the SIR exercise.

"The same judgment also states that the ECI on its own cannot depart from the statutory procedure without a rational basis," he said.

Mr. Ramesh also contended that the non-SIR Form 6 route being offered to voters was misleading because the Special Summary Revision (SSR) had remained frozen since 2024, and no non-SIR voter roll was being published through which voters could have their names added.

He further argued that the Commission's assurances on meeting procedures and compliance effectively acknowledged that established norms had not been followed, describing the situation as deeply troubling for a constitutional authority.

YouTube Homework

➤ Form-6/7/8

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य



1. ECI (भारतीय निर्वाचन आयोग - Election Commission of India) क्या है?

- भारत निर्वाचन आयोग एक स्वतंत्र और संवैधानिक निकाय (Constitutional Body) है, जो देश में स्वतंत्र और निष्पक्ष चुनाव कराने के लिए जिम्मेदार है।
- **संविधान का प्रावधान:** भारतीय संविधान के भाग 15 और अनुच्छेद 324 से 329 में चुनाव आयोग और उसके सदस्यों की शक्तियों, कार्यप्रणाली व अधिकार क्षेत्र का उल्लेख है।
- **संरचना:** यह एक बहु-सदस्यीय निकाय है, जिसमें 1 मुख्य चुनाव आयुक्त (CEC - Chief Election Commissioner) और 2 चुनाव आयुक्त (EC - Election Commissioners) होते हैं।

2. CEC और EC की नियुक्ति, कार्यकाल और पद से हटाना (Removal)

- **A. नियुक्ति (Appointment)**
- **नियुक्ति प्रक्रिया:** CEC और ECs की नियुक्ति राष्ट्रपति द्वारा की जाती है।
- **नई प्रक्रिया (2023 अधिनियम के तहत):** वर्ष 2023 में पारित नए कानून के अनुसार, एक चयन समिति (Selection Committee) की सिफारिश पर राष्ट्रपति द्वारा नियुक्ति की जाती है। इस समिति में निम्नलिखित शामिल होते हैं:
 - प्रधानमंत्री (अध्यक्ष)
 - लोकसभा में विपक्ष के नेता / सबसे बड़े विपक्षी दल के नेता
 - प्रधानमंत्री द्वारा नामित एक केंद्रीय कैबिनेट मंत्री

B. कार्यकाल (Tenure)

- मुख्य चुनाव आयुक्त (CEC) और चुनाव आयुक्तों (ECs) का कार्यकाल 6 वर्ष या 65 वर्ष की आयु (जो भी पहले पूरा हो) तक होता है।
- इन्हें भारत के सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के न्यायाधीशों के समान वेतन और सुविधाएं मिलती हैं।

C. पद से हटाना (Removal)

- **CEC को हटाने की प्रक्रिया:** मुख्य चुनाव आयुक्त को उनके पद से केवल उसी प्रक्रिया और आधारों पर हटाया जा सकता है, जैसे सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के न्यायाधीश को हटाया जाता है (यानी संसद के दोनों सदनों में विशेष बहुमत से साबित कदाचार या अक्षमता के आधार पर महाभियोग जैसी प्रक्रिया द्वारा)।
- **EC को हटाने की प्रक्रिया:** अन्य चुनाव आयुक्तों (ECs) को मुख्य चुनाव आयुक्त (CEC) की सिफारिश के बिना राष्ट्रपति द्वारा उनके पद से नहीं हटाया जा सकता।

3. हालिया मुद्दों और समाचार पत्रों के संदर्भ में ECI/CEC से जुड़े मुख्य विवाद

- हालिया रिपोर्टों और समाचारों के अनुसार, चुनाव आयोग के कामकाज, निर्णयों और स्वायत्तता को लेकर निम्नलिखित प्रमुख बिंदुओं पर सवाल और बहस जारी है:
- **आंतरिक मतभेद और निर्णय प्रक्रिया (Internal Rift & Unilateral Decisions):**
 - आयोग के तीन सदस्यों (CEC और दो ECs) के बीच नियमों में बदलाव, डेटा एक्सेस और प्रशासनिक निर्णयों को लेकर मतभेद उभर कर सामने आए हैं।
 - यह सवाल उठ रहा है कि क्या आयोग के निर्णय सर्वसम्मति/बहुमत से हो रहे हैं या एकतरफा निर्णय लिए जा रहे हैं।
- **सॉफ्टवेयर और डेटा का केंद्रीकरण (Centralisation & Technical Glitches):**
 - केंद्रीकृत सॉफ्टवेयर (जैसे ECINet) के उपयोग के कारण जमीनी स्तर के अधिकारियों (EROs - Electoral Registration Officers) की अधिकार क्षेत्र और गलतियों को सुधारने की क्षमता प्रभावित हुई है।
 - तकनीकी व प्रशासनिक कमियों के कारण योग्य मतदाताओं के नाम मतदाता सूची से हटने (जैसे हाल ही में गोवा में 97 पात्र मतदाताओं के नाम हटने का मामला) जैसी समस्याएं देखने को मिली हैं।

- **मतदान के अधिकार की कानूनी स्थिति (Statutory vs Fundamental Right):**
- मतदाता सूची में गड़बड़ी और नाम हटने की घटनाओं के बाद यह बहस तेज़ हो गई है कि क्या 'वोट देने का अधिकार' केवल एक वैधानिक अधिकार (Statutory Right) बना रहना चाहिए या इसे **मौलिक अधिकार (Fundamental Right)** का दर्जा दिया जाना चाहिए ताकि नागरिकों के अधिकारों की अदालतों द्वारा कड़ी सुरक्षा (Judicial Review) हो सके।
- **चयन समिति की संरचना पर सवाल (Selection Committee Neutrality):**
- 2023 के नए नियुक्ति कानून में मुख्य न्यायाधीश (CJI) की जगह एक कैबिनेट मंत्री को चयन समिति में शामिल करने पर विवाद है। आलोचकों का मानना है कि इससे सरकार का पलड़ा भारी रहता है, जिससे आयोग की निष्पक्षता और स्वायत्तता पर असर पड़ सकता है।

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य



- ECINET (Election Commission of India Network) भारत निर्वाचन आयोग (ECI) द्वारा शुरू किया गया एक एकीकृत डिजिटल प्लेटफॉर्म और मोबाइल ऐप है। इसका मुख्य उद्देश्य चुनाव से जुड़ी तमाम सेवाओं और जानकारीयों को एक ही जगह (वन-स्टॉप समाधान) पर उपलब्ध कराना है।
- इसे जनवरी 2026 में नई दिल्ली में आयोजित 'भारत अंतर्राष्ट्रीय लोकतंत्र और चुनाव प्रबंधन सम्मेलन' (IICDEM 2026) के दौरान आधिकारिक रूप से लॉन्च किया गया था।

ECINET की प्रमुख विशेषताएं:

- 40+ ऐप्स का एकीकरण: पहले चुनाव आयोग के अलग-अलग कामों के लिए कई ऐप्स और वेबसाइट्स हुआ करती थीं। ECINET ने इन सभी 40 से अधिक मोबाइल और वेब एप्लिकेशनों को एक ही इंटरफेस में जोड़ दिया है।
- शामिल प्रमुख ऐप्स: इसमें वोटर हेल्पलाइन ऐप (VHA), c-VIGIL (आचार संहिता उल्लंघन की शिकायत के लिए), सक्षम (दिव्यांगों के लिए), नो योर कैंडिडेट (KYC) और सुविधा 2.0 जैसे प्रमुख प्लेटफॉर्म शामिल हैं।
- नागरिकों और अधिकारियों दोनों के लिए उपयोगी: यह ऐप आम मतदाताओं के साथ-साथ चुनाव अधिकारियों (जैसे BLO) और राजनीतिक दलों को भी एक साथ जोड़ता है। अधिकारियों के लिए इसमें सुरक्षित, रोल-स्पेसिफिक लॉगिन की व्यवस्था है।

इसके जरिए आप क्या-क्या कर सकते हैं?

- 1. वोटर लिस्ट में नाम खोजना: आप अपने नाम, EPIC नंबर या विधानसभा क्षेत्र के ज़रिए वोटर लिस्ट में अपना नाम चेक कर सकते हैं।
- 2. वोटर आईडी में सुधार व नया रजिस्ट्रेशन: नए वोटर कार्ड के लिए अप्लाई करने (Form 6/8) और उसमें सुधार करने की सुविधा।
- 3. डिजिटल वोटर आईडी (e-EPIC) डाउनलोड करना: आप सीधे यहाँ से अपना डिजिटल वोटर कार्ड डाउनलोड कर सकते हैं।
- 4. शिकायत दर्ज करना व ट्रैक करना: चुनावी धांधली या आचार संहिता के उल्लंघन की शिकायत (cVIGIL के ज़रिए) करना और अपने आवेदनों का स्टेटस ट्रैक करना।
- 5. उम्मीदवारों की जानकारी: अपने क्षेत्र के चुनाव लड़ रहे उम्मीदवारों के बारे में जानना।

SPOTLIGHT

Jacob Koshy

Indian Standard Time (IST) is created at the CSIR-National Physical Laboratory (NPL) in a room the size of an office cubicle on a sprawling Delhi campus. This, not in the Einsteinian way of space and gravity doing mysterious things, nor in the pejorative way about Indian time being stretchable. Time here emerges as a consensus of a parliament of clocks.

On August 27, the Department of Consumer Affairs notified the Legal Metrology (Indian Standard Time) Rules, 2026, which make IST the only permissible time reference in the country for legal, administrative, commercial and official purposes, require that it be drawn from an authorised Indian source, and come into force in the last week of February 2027.

It is easy to forget that a second does not exist. Not in the existentialist, what-really-is-time sense, but in the same way that a decibel is just a ratio of perceived sound to the quietest imaginable quiet. The 'second', that way, is a mathematical derivative and a unit of repetition.

Take anything that repeats regularly, divide its duration into equal parts, and those parts become 'units'. For millennia that thing was the Earth:

86,400 seconds made a day. Nothing could seem more regular, until it emerged that it was not. The Moon's pull, ocean currents, the breathing atmosphere and the churn of magma deep inside the planet all, incrementally, upset its rotation.

Atoms are steadier. If elements were musical genres, the soft silvery-golden caesium would be punk; it melts at room temperature and reacts violently with water. In a vacuum, however, it is unusually well behaved. Its atoms possess a switch between two internal states, triggered by radiation, at one exact frequency. In 1967, the General Conference on Weights and Measures ordained that a second was 9,192,631,770 cycles of that radiation.

An atomic clock does not count seconds by watching anything move. NPL's are beige boxes stacked on two grey racks, and inside each is a sealed tube under vacuum. The

clock needs a signal at roughly the right frequency, and something to tell it when that signal is exactly right. The signal comes from an ordinary quartz oscillator, of the sort in a ₹2,000 watch, whose hum the electronics multiply up into microwaves. The second is caesium. Atoms boil in a small oven and fly the length of the tube through those microwaves; if the frequency is exactly

right, some flip to their other state, and a detector counts how many did. Otherwise the count falls, and the electronics nudge the oscillator back. The atoms are a referee. They do not keep time and only judge the crystal that does.

Governing time

The atom may be incorruptible but the apparatus around it is not. Caesium clocks drift, and adding

more does not fix that. So NPL governs time the way its birth twin – India – has governed itself since 1952. It holds elections. Five caesium clocks and three hydrogen masers run together weighted by a secret in-house algorithm and reweighted as individual clocks misbehave. Caesium alone defines the second, so the five set the rate; the masers, smooth over hours, dispense it.

What results is a local realisation of Coordinated Universal Time (UTC), plus five and a half hours. UTC itself is computed at Sèvres, outside Paris, from 450 clocks at 85 laboratories – and is never broadcast, because it does not exist in real time. It is published monthly, as backlog, telling each laboratory how far off it was 30 days ago. Every timekeeper is thus steering towards a tar-

get that will not be known for another month. "We need to steer it as close to the UTC, predicting it – that is the art," says Professor Venugopal Achanta, Director, CSIR-NPL.

"The problem now comes in the dissemination," Achanta says, and this is where the achievement leaks away.

The clocks are good to one part in a hundred trillion but what leaves the building by satellite is good only to a few billionths of a second. Fibre does better – BSNL lost just 40 picoseconds carrying a signal 460 km from Bengaluru to the National Stock Exchange in Chennai. For everybody else, who do not need fastidious fidelity, there is a ping: NPL's 20-odd servers field 30,000 requests a second.

GPS has broadcast excellent time, free for four decades and virtually every network in India takes it from there. "At the user level, there's nothing much we have to do," he says.

The government has decided otherwise. On August 27, it notified the Legal Metrology (Indian Standard Time) Rules, 2026, making IST the only permissible time reference for legal, administrative, commercial and official purposes, requiring that it be drawn from an authorised Indian source, and coming into force in the last week of February 2027.

"The Akashvani bulle-

tins used to start with a beep, a time check – that was from NPL," Achanta muses. "We evolved standards for everything except time."

Inspectors who for decades weighed the sweet-shop's scale will now audit whether a bank's servers are traceable to IST.

Why bother? GPS is a U.S. Air Force asset, and its signal can be denied, jammed or falsified. "We don't know what Trump will say next second. He may say 'Block all signals', or 'Pay me for using the satellite'," Achanta says.

Timestamps are also evidence: if two parties dispute when a bid was made, "both are correct, because one is taken from some other country and this guy is taking it from IST".

NavIC experience

Those same fears produced NavIC, approved in 2006. But its rubidium clocks came from a single European vendor and began failing from 2016. On March 13 this year, only three satellites were left transmitting navigation signals against a minimum of four. NavIC is, for now, not a navigation system though the rules name it an authorised source of time.

The rules also put responsibility on the end entity rather than its supplier, requiring it to monitor its drift from IST and hold auditable records. Rule 11 says non-compliance is

"punishable", without naming the section. Achanta thinks compliance runs through the network of Internet service providers: "At the level of Airtel and Jio, all they have to do is just update this to NPL".

The industry is less sure. Operators use a variety of architectures to synchronise time across their networks, says one telecom source, declining to be identified. "There are some challenges since there are multiple systems aligned in a different way," the executive says, adding that telcos were in discussions with NPL. "There are also issues with latency and the timeframe under which this has to be implemented. The functionality of NavIC is also a concern."

And the clocks themselves? "Russian is better, cheaper, faster," Achanta says. The masers that carry IST between caesium verdicts are made by Vremya-CH in Nizhny Novgorod, cheaper still since the invasion of Ukraine pushed European laboratories towards American suppliers. NPL builds its own caesium fountain and is designing an optical clock, but the lasers, mirrors and cavities inside them are imported. "We in the country, unfortunately, are not making any of these things," he says.

(With inputs from Aroon Deep)

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Making every second count

From February 2027, Indian Standard Time – ascertained in one room in Delhi – will become the country's only legal time.

Getting there means audits of every bank, telco, and data centre, and reviving India's home-grown satellite network



CSIR-National Physical Laboratory Director Venu Gopal Achanta flanked by senior scientists Poonam Arora and Sumit Kumar Mishra at the NPL campus in New Delhi. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

right, some flip to their other state, and a detector counts how many did. Otherwise the count falls, and the electronics nudge the oscillator back. The atoms are a referee. They do not keep time and only judge the crystal that does.

Governing time

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more does not fix that. So NPL governs time the way its birth twin – India – has governed itself since 1952. It holds elections. Five caesium clocks and three hydrogen masers run together weighted by a secret in-house algorithm and reweighted as individual clocks misbehave. Caesium alone defines the second, so the five set the rate; the masers, smooth over hours, dispense it.

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महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य



लीगल मेट्रोलॉजी (भारतीय मानक समय) नियम, 2026

- **क्या है?** यह नियम देश के सभी कानूनी, व्यावसायिक और डिजिटल प्लेटफॉर्मों के लिए **भारतीय मानक समय (IST)** का उपयोग अनिवार्य बनाता है ताकि "एक राष्ट्र, एक समय" (One Nation, One Time) लागू हो सके।
- **उद्देश्य:** जीपीएस जैसे विदेशी स्रोतों पर निर्भरता खत्म कर भारत के अपने **NavIC** और **CSIR-NPL** के समय से बैंकिंग, टेलीकॉम, पावर ग्रिड और साइबर सुरक्षा प्रणालियों को सिंक करना।
- **कब लागू होगा?** अगस्त 2026 में अधिसूचित हुआ; प्रकाशन के **180** दिनों बाद (फरवरी 2027 के अंत तक) पूरी तरह लागू होगा।
- **कौन लागू करेगा?** केंद्रीय उपभोक्ता मामले मंत्रालय (Ministry of Consumer Affairs), **CSIR-NPL** (समय-रक्षक के रूप में) और राज्यों का नाप-तौल विभाग (Legal Metrology Dept)।

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य



YouTube Homework

➤ Maharashtra Government on RTI

T.N. rescinds G.O. exempting Public Dept. from RTI Act

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

After facing severe backlash from political parties and activists, the Tamil Nadu government on Sunday decided to withdraw a controversial order exempting the Public (Law and Order) Department from the ambit of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005, on the ground that it was an intelligence and security organisation.

A Government Order (dated September 21) to this effect was issued by the Human Resources Management Department under Section 24(4) of the RTI Act and then notified in the Government Gazette. Minister for Energy Resources and Law C.T.R. Nirmal Kumar wrote on X that the G.O. had been withdrawn. Speaking to reporters earlier in the day in Madurai, he had defended the order, saying that only certain provisions, including details of communal clashes, were kept out of the ambit of the RTI Act, given the sensitivity of the information.

AMMK founder T.T.V. Dhinakaran, environmental activist G. Sundarajan of Poovulagin Nanbargal, and Arappor Iyakkam convener Jayaram Venkatesan opposed the G.O.

The Public (Law and Order) Department deals with subjects such as communal and caste clashes; the appointment of Commissions of Inquiry into law and order matters and follow-up action on their

The G.O., issued by the Department of Human Resources Management, drew severe backlash from political parties

recommendations; all matters relating to COFEPOSA and NSA detentions, including representations by detenus and *habeas corpus* petitions filed by detenus or on their behalf in the High Court and the Supreme Court; and the conduct of monthly law and order review meetings and special law and order meetings under the instructions of the Chief Secretary.

It includes examining inquiry reports into the opening of fire by the police and inquiry reports into deaths in police custody, police torture and deaths of remand prisoners; NHRC references relating to matters dealt with by the law and order wing; furnishing monthly reports on law and order and communal incidents to the Government of India; furnishing replies to Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha questions relating to law and order matters; dealing with agitations by students, agricultural labourers and political parties; requests for withdrawal of cases registered on political grounds, communal/caste clashes, political and student agitations; and matters relating to sanction of prosecution for defamatory articles, news items and speeches.

Keralam researchers discover new *Begonia* species on cliffs

The Hindu Bureau

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Researchers have identified a new species of the genus *Begonia* from the Western Ghats region in Kollam district of Kerala.

A research team of the Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (JNTBGRI) in Thiruvananthapuram spotted the plant during an exploration for collecting wild ornamental plants from the evergreen forests of Rosemala in Kollam.

The discovery has been reported at a time when the ghats region is back in the news in connection with the State government's recommendations regarding Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA).



Begonia rajvikramanii

They named the species *Begonia rajvikramanii* after R. Raj Vikraman, former Head of the Garden Management Division, JNTBGRI, in recognition of his contributions to the development of the JNTBGRI

garden and the management of ex-situ plant conservation programmes at the institute.

A paper on the discovery and the plant's identification as a new species by E.S. Santhosh Kumar, S.M. Shareef, P.P. Anusha and Rejitha Joseph of JNTBGRI has been published in the latest issue of *Phytotaxa*.

The plant was found growing on wet rocky cliffs. "This new species is currently known only from its type locality at Rosemala. It grows in wet habitats, particularly on rocky cliffs and road-cut walls, at elevations of approximately 200 metres-350 metres," the paper said.

Its flowering and fruiting occurs between August and April.

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य



बेगोनिया (Begonia) वंश (genus) की एक नई खोजी गई प्रजाति के फूल

- जिसका नाम *Begonia rajvikramanii* (बेगोनिया राजविक्रमणी) रखा गया है।
- **खोज स्थान (Location):** इसे केरल के कोल्लम जिले में पश्चिमी घाट (Western Ghats) के रोजमाला (Rosemala) के सदाबहार जंगलों में खोजा गया है।
- **आवास (Habitat):** यह पौधा गीली चट्टानी चट्टानों (wet rocky cliffs) और सड़क के किनारे की ढलानदार दीवारों पर लगभग 200 से 350 मीटर की ऊंचाई पर उगता है।
- **फूल और फल आने का समय (Flowering & Fruiting):** इस पौधे में फूल और फल अगस्त से अप्रैल के महीनों के बीच आते हैं।
- **नामकरण (Naming):** इस नई प्रजाति का नाम आर. राज विक्रमन (R. Raj Vikraman) के सम्मान में रखा गया है, जो JNTBGRI (जवाहरलाल नेहरू ट्रॉपिकल बॉटैनिक गार्डन एंड रिसर्च इंस्टीट्यूट) के गार्डन मैनेजमेंट डिवीजन के पूर्व प्रमुख रहे हैं।
- **शोधकर्ता और पत्रिका (Researchers & Journal):** JNTBGRI के शोधकर्ताओं (ई.एस. सन्तोष कुमार, एस.एम. शरीफ, पी.पी. अनुषा और रेजीथा जोसेफ) द्वारा की गई इस खोज को प्रसिद्ध वानस्पतिक पत्रिका *Phytotaxa* में प्रकाशित किया गया है।

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य



New equilibrium

As the U.S. and China recalibrate ties, implications for other nations are huge

On the surface, Chinese President Xi Jinping's Washington visit appeared to be more about ceremony than substance. President Donald Trump rolled out the red carpet, personally welcoming the Chinese leader at the base where he landed. The last time that a U.S. President accorded such an honour to a foreign leader was when John F. Kennedy welcomed British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan in 1962. Mr. Trump also laid out a grand state dinner at the White House, inviting some of the biggest names in tech and business in the U.S. Beyond the optics, the concrete outcomes from the Trump-Xi talks were modest. The most immediate one was an agreement for both leaders to meet twice this year at the APEC summit in Shenzhen and the G-20 in Miami, marking an unusual four meetings in one year, with Mr. Trump having visited Beijing in May. Both sides also agreed to operationalise a board of trade and investment. No new trade agreement was reached, although both have extended for another two months the trade truce agreed to at Busan last year as well as an arrangement for a \$30 billion reciprocal tariff reduction. China reaffirmed its commitment to buy \$17 billion worth of agricultural products annually, but offered no new ones. Other long pending issues such as semiconductors, rare earths and U.S. arms sales to Taiwan appear deferred for now. Both did, however, announce the establishment of a new dialogue on Artificial Intelligence and the opening of a channel for incidents, amid growing concerns over the consequences of an unregulated AI race.

The modest outcomes from the Xi visit should not obscure the broader shift that recent U.S.-China engagement has underlined. The agreement between the world's two biggest powers to pursue what they call a constructive relationship of strategic stability based on fairness, respect and reciprocity points to a new equilibrium. Their relationship certainly remains beset by serious structural challenges and will remain one marked by rivalry. At the same time, both sides appear eager to set a floor to ensure a rivalry that is more managed, stable and predictable. Countries in the region will be watching closely how this may temper an "America First" Washington's appetite to push back against China in waters far from home. New Delhi will need to carefully watch this evolving new equilibrium. The recent U.S. tariff threats aimed at India have offered a stark contrast to the measured language with which Washington has been engaging Beijing. For long, a strand of Indian strategic thinking has been predicated on the assumption that U.S. strategy in the region was centred on the idea of a relationship with India as a bulwark against Chinese influence. That assumption increasingly appears open to question.

YouTube Homework

- Mecca Pact
- USA – Denmark – Greenland
- USA – Saudi Arab Civil Nuclear Agreement
- India-Australia CAN
- India-UK Trade

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य



YouTube Homework

- BNSS
- Section – 173, 173(1), 187, 356, 47, 48, 56

The pitfalls of mandatory FIRs

On August 5, the Supreme Court, in *G. Ganesh v. State of Tamil Nadu and Others*, reiterated that the police must register an FIR upon receiving any information about a missing 'person'. The court clarified that the expression 'person' did not refer only to missing children but included every person.

The Supreme Court in May issued certain directions which inter alia included setting up a special portal by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) dedicated to human trafficking, registration of an FIR without waiting for any preliminary enquiry or leaving it to the guardians or family of the missing person to first search for him/her, activating the anti-human trafficking units (AHTUs) of districts, restoring the recovered child to the rightful guardian in accordance with law and Aadhaar verification or issuance of an Aadhaar card.

Presumption for children

The directions issued in *G. Ganesh* are no different from the directions issued by the Supreme Court in *Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA) versus Union of India and Others* in January 2013, in which the court was dealing only with 'missing children'. The court then issued two directions.

The first related to mandatory recording of FIR so that police authorities are activated in taking steps to trace the child. Second, the court asked each State to set up a Special Juvenile Police Unit at every police station in accordance with the provisions of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Rules, 2007.

In May 2013, when Madhya Pradesh expressed



RK Vij
is a former IPS officer

A week or fortnight could allow the police to filter cases where there is credible information that the person reported missing was neither abducted nor trafficked

some doubt with respect to the provisions of Section 154 CrPC (now Section 173 BNSS), which relates to information in cognisable cases, the court said that there will be an initial presumption of either abduction or trafficking, unless, in the investigation, the same is proved otherwise.

Second, at least one specially trained police officer at each police station was directed to be designated as a Juvenile Welfare Officer as per Section 63 of the JJ Act, 2000. In case a missing child is not recovered within four months from the date of the FIR, the matter is to be forwarded to the AHTU.

While, in the case of a missing child, the presumption of a cognisable offence to set the law in motion is understandable, as a child's consent has no relevance in law, such a presumption may be problematic when an adult leaves the house of his or her own volition.

Adults have agency

It is a matter of common knowledge that many adults leave their homes to live together as partners or get married without the consent of their parents. But in some cases, couples have been killed (in the name of family honour) after being found, with or without the assistance of the police.

It is also undisputed that initially every such case is reported as a missing-person case. If an FIR is registered in every case, it will become the duty of the police to trace such couples or an adult and hand them over to their parents. A person may leave information indicating his or her willingness before leaving, but the police would

still trace them to verify it. Thus, consenting couples may still face unnecessary police investigation.

The case of *G. Ganesh* involved a one-year-and-10-month-old child who went missing from Chennai in 2011, following which a 'child missing' case was registered. The case was transferred first to the Central Crime Branch and then to a Special Investigation Team, but the child remained untraced for 14 years. The petitioner alleged that the MHA guidelines issued in June 2013 for missing children were not followed and that the case was not transferred to the AHTU after four months. The Madras High Court dismissed the petition in March 2025, holding that the police had made all efforts to trace the child and that the 2013 guidelines were not applicable in 2011.

There was no occasion for the Supreme Court to *suo motu* take up the issue of missing adults. The May judgment also does not indicate that the States were heard on the issue. While the court's intention to deal firmly with human trafficking cannot be doubted, not allowing even a small window for the police to conduct a preliminary enquiry is difficult to fathom. A week or fortnight could allow the police to filter cases where there is credible information that the person reported missing was neither abducted nor trafficked. A blanket presumption of kidnapping or trafficking in every case of a missing adult, without any evidence, is against the spirit of the statute. To that extent, the court needs to review its direction mandating the registration of an FIR.

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य



- 5 अगस्त को, सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने जी. गणेश बनाम तमिलनाडु राज्य व अन्य मामले में यह दोहराया कि पुलिस को किसी भी लापता 'व्यक्ति' (missing person) की जानकारी मिलने पर तुरंत एफआईआर (FIR) दर्ज करनी चाहिए। अदालत ने स्पष्ट किया कि 'व्यक्ति' (person) शब्द केवल लापता बच्चों के लिए नहीं है, बल्कि इसमें हर उम्र का व्यक्ति शामिल है।

मुख्य बिंदु (Key Highlights)

- सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के निर्देश:**
 - गृह मंत्रालय (MHA) द्वारा मानव तस्करी के लिए समर्पित एक विशेष पोर्टल बनाना।
 - बिना किसी प्रारंभिक जांच (preliminary enquiry) के तुरंत एफआईआर दर्ज करना।
 - एंटी-ह्यूमन ट्रेफिकिंग यूनिट्स (AHTUs) को सक्रिय करना और यदि लापता बच्चा 4 महीने के भीतर नहीं मिलता है, तो मामला AHTU को सौंपना।
- बच्चों के मामले में पूर्वाग्रह/अनुमान (Presumption for Children):**
 - बच्चों के लापता होने पर अपहरण या मानव तस्करी का अनुमान लगाना समझ में आता है, क्योंकि कानून में बच्चों की सहमति (consent) का कोई कानूनी महत्व नहीं होता।

वयस्कों (Adults) के लिए समस्या:

- वयस्कों के मामले में हर बार एफआईआर और अपहरण/तस्करी का अनुमान लगाना समस्या पैदा करता है।
- कई वयस्क अपनी मर्जी से अपने साथी के साथ रहने या शादी करने के लिए घर छोड़ते हैं।
- हर मामले में एफआईआर दर्ज होने से पुलिस उन बालिग जोड़ों को ढूंढकर उनके माता-पिता को सौंपने के लिए मजबूर हो जाती है, जिससे उनकी सुरक्षा और निजता खतरे में पड़ सकती है।

प्रारंभिक जांच (Preliminary Enquiry) की आवश्यकता:

- लेखक का मानना है कि पुलिस को कम से कम 1 से 2 सप्ताह का समय मिलना चाहिए ताकि वे प्रारंभिक जांच कर सकें।
- इससे पुलिस उन मामलों को अलग कर सकेगी जहां व्यक्ति अपनी मर्जी से गया है और कोई अपहरण या तस्करी नहीं हुई है।
- बिना किसी सबूत के लापता वयस्क के हर मामले में अपहरण या तस्करी का अनुमान लगाना कानून की भावना के खिलाफ है।

Form 26 and the statutory mandate

On June 12, the Supreme Court dismissed the petition filed by Congress leader Meenakshi Natarajan challenging the Returning Officer's decision, rejecting her nomination for the Rajya Sabha election from Madhya Pradesh. The Returning Officer held that Natarajan had failed to disclose, in her Form 26 affidavit, a pending criminal complaint against her and had thereby suppressed material information.

The criminal complaint, instituted in 2025, alleged that Natarajan failed to take appropriate action against a party leader accused of misconduct. The case raises important questions about the scope of the disclosure obligations imposed on electoral candidates and the constitutional remedies available when nomination papers are rejected.

History of legislation

The statutory obligation requiring electoral candidates to disclose their criminal antecedents is of relatively recent origin. Parliament in 2002 inserted Section 33-A into the Representation of the People Act, 1951, or ROPA. The legislative amendment was prompted by the top court's landmark decision in *Union of India v. Association for Democratic Reforms* (2002), where the court held that mandatory disclosure neither imposed an additional qualification for contesting elections nor conflicted with the scheme of the ROPA. Rather, it advanced the electorate's right to make an informed choice and strengthened the purity of the electoral process.

Pursuant to the judgment, the Election



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The case raises questions about the scope of the disclosure obligations imposed on candidates and constitutional remedies available when nomination papers are rejected

Commission was directed to mandate disclosure of specified criminal antecedents, assets, liabilities and educational qualifications through an affidavit. The government subsequently introduced Sections 33-A, 33-B, 75-A and 125-A into ROPA and amended the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, prescribing Form 26 as the affidavit to accompany every nomination paper.

Form 26 was initially aligned with Section 33-A; a significant departure occurred in 2018. Paragraph 5 of the Form was amended to require disclosure of all pending criminal cases, whereas Section 33-A mandates disclosure only of those cases involving offences punishable with imprisonment of two years or more in which charges have already been framed by a competent court.

It is this apparent divergence between the parent statute and delegated legislation that lies at the heart of the present controversy.

Disclosure mandate

The disclosure requirement is operationalised through Rule 4A of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, which requires every candidate to file an affidavit in Form 26 along with the nomination papers. Rule 4A, however, is merely a procedural mechanism for implementing Section 33A and thus, it cannot become an independent source of substantive obligations. Yet, the 2018 amendment to Form 26 appears to do precisely that. Paragraph 5 now requires disclosure of all pending criminal cases, regardless of whether charges have been framed.

The constitutional

question, therefore, extends beyond Natarajan's candidature. Can delegated legislation, under the guise of prescribing the manner of disclosure, enlarge a substantive statutory obligation?

Constitutional remedies

While describing Article 32, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar famously called it the "heart and soul" of the Constitution. However, while dismissing Natarajan's challenge to the rejection of her nomination, the top court relied upon the Constitution Bench decision in *N.P. Ponnuswami v. Returning Officer* (1952), which held that Article 329(b) bars judicial intervention in electoral disputes once the election process has commenced, leaving an election petition as the exclusive post-election remedy.

Natarajan's case exposes the limits of that doctrine. Should the constitutional remedies under Articles 32 and 226 remain unavailable even where the Returning Officer's decision is alleged to be manifestly arbitrary or patently without jurisdiction? Ponnuswami's rationale was to prevent judicial intervention from interrupting the electoral process, not to insulate totally perverse administrative decisions.

Although Natarajan has been granted liberty to challenge her rejection through an election petition under Section 100 of ROPA, the broader constitutional question survives. It may be time for the Supreme Court to revisit *Ponnuswami* and clarify whether constitutional courts should remain powerless even in the face of patent arbitrariness during the electoral process.

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य



फॉर्म 26 और वैधानिक जनादेश (Form 26 and the statutory mandate)

- 12 जून को, सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने कांग्रेस नेता मीनाक्षी नटराजन द्वारा दायर याचिका को खारिज कर दिया, जिसमें उन्होंने मध्य प्रदेश से राज्यसभा चुनाव के लिए उनका नामांकन पत्र खारिज करने के रिटर्निंग ऑफिसर (RO) के फैसले को चुनौती दी थी। रिटर्निंग ऑफिसर का मानना था कि नटराजन अपने **फॉर्म 26 हलफनामे (Affidavit)** में अपने खिलाफ लंबित एक आपराधिक शिकायत का खुलासा करने में विफल रहीं और इस तरह उन्होंने महत्वपूर्ण जानकारी छिपाई।

कानून का इतिहास (History of Legislation)

- उम्मीदवारों द्वारा अपने आपराधिक इतिहास का खुलासा करने की बाध्यता का इतिहास अपेक्षाकृत नया है।
- 2002 में संसद ने लोक प्रतिनिधित्व अधिनियम, 1951 (ROPA) में धारा 33-A जोड़ी।** यह संशोधन सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के लैंडमार्क फैसले (यूनियन ऑफ इंडिया बनाम एसोसिएशन फॉर डेमोक्रेटिक रिफॉर्म्स, 2002) के बाद किया गया था।
- चुनाव आयोग को यह निर्देश दिया गया कि वह एक हलफनामे के माध्यम से उम्मीदवारों से उनके आपराधिक इतिहास, संपत्ति, देनदारियों और शैक्षणिक योग्यता की जानकारी मांगना अनिवार्य करे। इसके बाद सरकार ने **चुनाव संचालन नियम, 1961** में संशोधन करके **फॉर्म 26** को हलफनामे के रूप में लागू किया।

मूल कानून और नियमों में अंतर (Divergence in Rules)

- धारा 33-A का नियम:** लोक प्रतिनिधित्व अधिनियम की धारा 33-A केवल उन मामलों का खुलासा अनिवार्य करती है जिनमें **2 साल या उससे अधिक की सजा का प्रावधान हो और अदालत द्वारा आरोप तय (charges framed)** किए जा चुके हों।
- 2018 का संशोधन:** 2018 में फॉर्म 26 के पैरा 5 में संशोधन करके **सभी लंबित आपराधिक मामलों का खुलासा करना अनिवार्य** कर दिया गया, चाहे आरोप तय हुए हों या नहीं।
- विवाद की वजह:** मूल अधिनियम (धारा 33-A) और अधीनस्थ नियम (फॉर्म 26) के बीच यह अंतर ही इस पूरे विवाद के केंद्र में है।

संवैधानिक उपचार (Constitutional Remedies)

- अनुच्छेद 32:** डॉ. बी.आर. अंबेडकर ने इसे संविधान का "हृदय और आत्मा" कहा था।
- पोंनुस्वामी फैसला (1952):** नटराजन की याचिका खारिज करते हुए शीर्ष अदालत ने एन.पी. पोंनुस्वामी बनाम रिटर्निंग ऑफिसर (1952) के संविधान पीठ के फैसले पर भरोसा किया। इस फैसले के अनुसार **अनुच्छेद 329(b)** चुनाव प्रक्रिया शुरू होने के बाद अदालती हस्तक्षेप पर रोक लगाता है, और चुनाव के बाद 'चुनाव याचिका' (Election Petition) दायर करना ही एकमात्र कानूनी विकल्प छोड़ता है।

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WHAT IS IT?

UN Sea Level Declaration

Vasudevan Mukunth

On September 24, the United Nations General Assembly approved the Declaration on Sea Level Rise by consensus.

Perhaps its most important provision concerns international law. The Declaration affirms that low-lying countries especially threatened by rising seas, such as Fiji, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu, will continue to retain their statehood, sovereign rights, and UN membership. It also says maritime zones will continue to be defined in line with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, even if rising waters cause coastlines to retreat further inland.

The Declaration arose from a high-level meeting in 2024 and which member countries had since negotiated under a mandate calling for an action-oriented agreement. Spanning four pages, the Declaration organises action around (i) science and data, (ii) adaptation and financing, (iii) livelihoods, socio-economic development, data-sharing, and early-warnings, and (iv) the legal consequences of sea-level rise.

It also calls on countries to respond to sea-level rise in a way that addresses livelihoods and cultural heritage and with the involvement of affected communities.

The world's low-lying island states — which have organised themselves as the Alliance of Small Island States in international fora, including the COP



The current global mean sea-level rise is 4-5 mm/year. LOOK UP LOOK DOWN
PHOTOGRAPHY/UNSPLASH

climate talks — need these assurances because the seas surrounding them threaten to swallow most or all of their habitable territory in the coming decades. If they do, the Declaration will ensure their citizens continue to retain their nationality and economic rights.

The pact also commits UN member countries to continue to engage on issues related to sea-level rise, including a high-level meeting before the 84th session of the General Assembly ends.



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Russia sanctions in focus as Foreign Secretary Misri hosts U.S. delegation

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Days after members of the U.S. Congress passed a new Russia sanctions law targeting India and other oil importers of Russian crude oil, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Sunday met with a five-member Congressional Delegation headed by the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Brian Mast.

The delegation included Bill co-sponsor Jimmy Patronis, Republican representative James Gallagher, and Democrat Haley Stevens, both of whom voted in favour of it, as well as Shri Thanedar, an Indian-born U.S. lawmaker, who had voted against the Bill.

The meeting follows days after External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar raised India's concerns about possible sanctions with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio in New York, and Mr. Misri discussed the issue with U.S. Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Allison Hooker.



Wide-ranging talks: Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri during the meeting with the U.S. Congressional delegation. PTI

The Lindsey O. Graham Sanctions against Russia and Iran Act (SRIA), passed in the U.S. Congress on September 16, mandates that U.S. President Donald Trump impose up to 100% sanctions on countries that buy Russian oil and extends sanctions on trade with Iran.

A determination on what kind of sanctions, if any, would be imposed on India is expected to be made next month, with a 30-day deadline pending. Officials did not comment on whether Mr. Misri discussed or received any as-

surances on a waiver of the sanctions that can be granted under certain conditions.

"Discussions covered the entire gamut of India-U.S. relations, including the recently enacted SRIA legislation and the future trajectory of the relationship," Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a post about the meeting that was held at Mr. Misri's residence. "They also exchanged views on international issues of mutual concern, energy security, counter-terrorism and

freedom of navigation," he added.

Mr. Mast is an American Army veteran who lost both his legs in a blast in Kandahar in 2010. He works on counter-terrorism issues and has an interest in South Asia. During the India-Pakistan conflict in May 2025, Mr. Mast said in an interview that he had spoken to "both sides", and sought de-escalation after India's strikes on Pakistan following the Pahalgam terror attacks. He has also advocated sanctions on Russia and supports secondary sanctions that have now been proposed against China and India, which are major buyers of Russian oil. He has criticised China in particular for military supplies to Russia during the war in Ukraine.

Mr. Thanedar was the only member of the delegation who voted against the Bill, and was one of five Indian-Americans who opposed it, largely over concerns about the powers it would grant the U.S. President.

Iran stands firm on plan to reopen Hormuz after Trump rejects move

Tehran insists on diplomacy, but says it has never backed down from its rights; the proposal seeks cessation of all hostilities in the region, lifting of sanctions and release of frozen assets; U.S. envoy to the UN calls the deal cynical for asking too much

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON, TEHRAN

Iran stood firm on Sunday on its conditions for reopening the Strait of Hormuz, despite U.S. President Donald Trump's rejection of the proposal, leaving the war in West Asia locked in a stalemate.

Iran's plan called for a cessation of all hostilities in the region, including in Lebanon, according to Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, and a return to the conditions in the ceasefire deal that fell apart a few months ago.

That agreement had called for the release of frozen Iranian assets, the lifting



Ocean view: A boy stands with his bicycle on a beach overlooking vessels anchored in the Strait of Hormuz off Bandar Abbas, Iran. AP

ing of sanctions on Iranian oil and an end to the U.S. naval blockade.

"Our conditions are clear, and any move toward reopening Hormuz is contingent upon these conditions being fulfilled.

We will not back down from them," Mr. Araghchi said on Sunday, according to state media. "We have never closed the door to diplomacy, but we have also never backed down from our rights."

But Mr. Trump said on Saturday that he rejected the truce deal. "They want to make a deal where they open the Strait immediately because they're losing so badly," he told reporters.

His Ambassador to the UN, Mike Waltz, accused Tehran of demanding too much in exchange for a return to the negotiating table. "This was, I think, a pretty cynical attempt to put something on the table that they knew was unacceptable. To ask for the release of the blockade, the sanctions, international sanctions and access to billions in assets, just to talk," he said.

Meanwhile, Iran's Revolutionary Guards said that

they seized an American submarine drone on Sunday in the Strait of Hormuz. It said the underwater vehicle was being used "for espionage purposes".

Economic isolation
Hailing new restrictions targeting Iran's airlines and banks, U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said on Saturday that Washington's efforts to pressure countries to economically isolate Iran was delivering results.

"At my direction, teams were dispatched across the globe to engage with countries and demand action against Tehran," he said on X. "These efforts are delivering results".

Houthis accuse Saudi Arabia of deadly air raids on Yemen

Agence France-Presse
SANAA

Saudi airstrikes on Taiz in southwest Yemen caused dozens of casualties in an area controlled by the Houthis, the Iran-aligned group said on Sunday, as fighting escalated further after a truce broke down months ago.

The Houthi's military spokesman Yahya Saree accused Saudi Arabia of launching two air raids that hit a market on the outskirts of the city, saying nearly 50 people were killed or wounded.

The spokesman said blood was "unjustly and aggressively spilled" in a statement posted online, vowing there would be consequences for the attack.

Earlier, the group's Al-Masirah TV channel said a



Smoke rises near buildings in Taiz Governorate, Yemen, following air strikes. REUTERS

strike killed seven people and wounded 40 more at a market in Taiz, minutes after reporting that a Saudi fighter jet had targeted the area.

Images broadcast by Al-Masirah showed vehicles with blown-out windows

as well as damaged warehouses.

Fighting intensified in September as the Houthis launched a lightning offensive that saw them seize Yemen's entire Red Sea coast, including the Bab al-Mandab Strait, a vital shipping lane. The Houthis have in parallel launched a blockade on Saudi Arabian energy exports, already choked off by Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Schools in Riyadh shut

On Saturday, Saudi Arabia said it intercepted two Houthi drones that were heading in the direction of the capital Riyadh.

Schools in Riyadh announced on Sunday that they would be shifting to remote learning for a week, without giving a reason, according to messages sent to parents.

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य



India claims silver in open event; women bag the bronze medal

Arjun scores over Leko to help the team secure a draw against Hungary; Humpy stars in the draw against Georgia to ensure the side finishes on the podium; the country wins the Gaprindashvili Trophy and board medals; Uzbekistan and China emerge champions

CHESS OLYMPIAD

Sports Bureau

The men won the silver, and the women the bronze. India, the defending champion in both the open and women's sections, could not repeat the stunning twin success of 2024, but at least finished with medals at the Chess Olympiad in Samarkand.

In the open section, host Uzbekistan emerged the champion, while China came up with a dominant show to win the women's title despite not fielding some of its best players.

On the final day, the Indian men drew with Hungary 2-2, while the women shared the honours with Georgia (2-2).

The Indian men finished with 18 points, two less than the host, which defeated Ukraine 2.5-1.5. Germany, which surprised many, won the bronze after its 2.5-1.5 win over the Nether-



Impressive show: The Indian teams finished among the medals while Praggnanandhaa, Gukesh, Humpy, Divya and Savitha Shri, second right, came up with consistent displays and also took home individual prizes. FIDE



lands. Arjun Erigaisi's win over Peter Leko on the second board proved crucial, as D. Gukesh was beaten by Gleb Dudin. R. Praggnanandhaa and Nihal Sarin drew their games.

Significant win

For the Indian women, Koneru Humpy scored a significant win on the top board against Nana Dzagnidze. Though Divya Deshmukh lost on the second board, to Bela Khotenashvili, Vantika Agrawal and

the magnificent B. Savitha Shri both drew their games to ensure India would end up on the podium, after all.

Slew of board medals

India also retained the Gaprindashvili Trophy, given to the team with the best overall score.

India is the only country to win a medal in both open and women's sections.

India also won a slew of board medals. Savitha struck gold on the reserve

board in the women's section while Divya won the silver on the second board.

Humpy and Vantika the bronze on the top and fourth boards respectively. In the open section, Gukesh won the silver on the fourth board, while Praggnanandhaa claimed the bronze on the top board.

Important results (final round): Open:

India drew with Hungary 2-2 (R. Praggnanandhaa drew with Richard Rapport; Arjun Erigaisi bt Peter Leko; Nihal Sarin drew with

Benjamin Gledura; D. Gukesh lost to Gleb Dudin).
Uzbekistan bt Ukraine 2.5-1.5;
Germany bt Netherlands 2.5-1.5;
USA bt Turkiye 3-1; Serbia bt Azerbaijan 2.5-1.5; Armenia bt Croatia 3-1; China bt Uzbekistan (2) 3-1; France bt Denmark 3.5-0.5; England bt Italy 2.5-1.5; Spain bt Georgia 3-1.

The standings: 1. Uzbekistan 20; 2-3. India and Germany 18; 4-7. USA, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Hungary 17; 8-10. China, France and Spain 16.

Women: India drew with Georgia 2-2 (Koneru Humpy bt Nana Dzagnidze; Divya

Deshmukh lost to Bela Khotenashvili; Vantika Agrawal drew with Lela Javakhishvili; B. Savitha Shri drew with Meri Arabidze).

Armenia bt Uzbekistan 3-1; China bt Vietnam 3-1; Kazakhstan drew with Poland 2-2; USA bt Romania 3-1; Mongolia bt Greece 2.5-1.5; France drew with Slovenia 2-2; Bulgaria drew with Latvia 2-2; Indonesia drew with Spain 2-2; Turkiye bt Sri Lanka 3-1.

The standings: 1. China 20; 2. Kazakhstan 18; 3-7. India, USA, Poland, Armenia and Mongolia 17; 8-10. Georgia, Vietnam and Slovenia 16.

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य



46वें शतरंज ओलंपियाड (46th Chess Olympiad 2026)

- कहाँ हुआ (Venue): समरकंद, उज्बेकिस्तान (Silk Road International Exhibition Centre, Samarkand, Uzbekistan)
- कब से कब तक हुआ (Dates): 15 सितंबर से 27 सितंबर 2026 तक।
- भारत ने कौन-से मेडल जीते? (India's Medals)
- भारत ने इस टूर्नामेंट में कुल 2 टीम मेडल (Team Medals) हासिल किए:
 - ओपन सेक्शन (Open Section): रजत पदक (Silver Medal) 
 - महिला वर्ग (Women's Section): कांस्य पदक (Bronze Medal) 
- गोल्ड मेडल: चीन (China)
- सिल्वर मेडल: कजाकिस्तान (Kazakhstan)
- ब्रॉन्ज मेडल: भारत (India)
- गैप्रिंडाशविली ट्रॉफी (Gaprindashvili Trophy):
- दोनों वर्गों (ओपन और महिला) के सर्वश्रेष्ठ संयुक्त प्रदर्शन के लिए भारत को गैप्रिंडाशविली ट्रॉफी से भी सम्मानित किया गया।

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य



प्रधानमंत्री कार्यालय

प्रधानमंत्री ने एशियाई खेलों में पुरुषों की डेकाथलॉन स्पर्धा में कांस्य पदक जीतने पर तेजस्विन शंकर को बधाई दी

प्रतिष्ठित तिथि: 27 SEP 2026 9:26PM by PIB Delhi

प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी ने आज एशियाई खेलों में पुरुषों की डेकाथलॉन स्पर्धा में कांस्य पदक जीतने पर तेजस्विन शंकर को बधाई दी।

प्रधानमंत्री ने कहा कि दो दिनों तक चलने वाले इतने कठिन इवेंट्स में टिके रहने के लिए गजब की क्षमता, सहनशक्ति और पक्के इरादे की जरूरत होती है। श्री मोदी ने कहा कि उन्होंने इन तीनों का शानदार उदाहरण पेश करते हुए अपने अभियान का मजबूती से समापन किया, जो कि एक सराहनीय उपलब्धि है। प्रधानमंत्री ने उनके भविष्य के सभी प्रयासों के लिए अपनी शुभकामनाएँ भी दीं।

एक्स पर एक पोस्ट में, प्रधानमंत्री कार्यालय ने जानकारी दी:

"एशियाई खेलों में पुरुषों की डेकाथलॉन स्पर्धा में कांस्य पदक जीतने पर तेजस्विन शंकर को बहुत-बहुत बधाई! दो दिनों तक चलने वाले इतने कठिन इवेंट्स में भाग लेने के लिए गजब की क्षमता, सहनशक्ति और पक्के इरादे की जरूरत होती है। उन्होंने इन तीनों का जबरदस्त प्रदर्शन करते हुए अपने अभियान का शानदार समापन किया। यह एक सराहनीय उपलब्धि है। भविष्य की हर प्रयास के लिए उन्हें ढेरों शुभकामनाएँ: पीएम @narendramodi"



प्रधानमंत्री कार्यालय

प्रधानमंत्री ने एशियाई खेलों में महिलाओं की 3000 मीटर स्टीपलचेज स्पर्धा में कांस्य पदक जीतने पर पारुल चौधरी को बधाई दी

प्रतिष्ठित तिथि: 27 SEP 2026 9:24PM by PIB Delhi

प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी ने आज एशियाई खेलों में महिलाओं की 3000 मीटर स्टीपलचेज स्पर्धा में कांस्य पदक जीतने पर पारुल चौधरी के शानदार प्रदर्शन की सराहना करते हुए उन्हें बधाई दी।

प्रधानमंत्री ने कहा कि पोलियम तक पहुँचने के साथ-साथ अपना सर्वश्रेष्ठ व्यक्तिगत प्रदर्शन दर्ज करना इस उपलब्धि को और भी खास बनाता है। उन्होंने रेखांकित किया कि पारुल के समर्पण और अटूट लगन ने पूरे देश को गौरवान्वित किया है और साथ ही उनके भविष्य के सभी प्रयासों के लिए अपनी शुभकामनाएँ भी दीं।

एक्स पर एक पोस्ट में प्रधानमंत्री कार्यालय ने साझा किया:

"एशियाई खेलों की महिला 3000 मीटर स्टीपलचेज में पारुल चौधरी का शानदार प्रदर्शन, उन्होंने कांस्य पदक अपने नाम किया! इस उपलब्धि को और भी खास बात यह बनाती है कि उन्होंने पोलियम तक पहुँचने के साथ-साथ अपना सर्वश्रेष्ठ व्यक्तिगत प्रदर्शन भी दिया। उनके समर्पण और अटूट लगन पर पूरे भारत को गर्व है। उनके भविष्य के प्रयासों के लिए ढेरों शुभकामनाएँ: पीएम @narendramodi"



प्रधानमंत्री कार्यालय

प्रधानमंत्री ने एशियाई खेलों में महिलाओं की लंबी कूद स्पर्धा में रजत पदक जीतने पर ऐसी सोजन को बधाई दी

प्रतिष्ठित तिथि: 27 SEP 2026 8:33PM by PIB Delhi

प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी ने आज एशियाई खेलों में महिलाओं की लंबी कूद में रजत पदक जीतने पर ऐसी सोजन को बधाई दी।

प्रधानमंत्री ने कहा कि उनका प्रदर्शन दमदार और जोश से भरपूर रहा, जिसने देश को बहुत उत्सास से भर दिया। श्री मोदी ने उन्हें आने वाले समय में और अधिक सफलता हासिल करने की शुभकामनाएँ दीं।

एक्स पर एक पोस्ट में प्रधानमंत्री कार्यालय ने कहा:

"एशियाई खेलों में महिलाओं की लंबी कूद स्पर्धा में रजत पदक जीतने पर ऐसी सोजन को बधाई! उनका प्रदर्शन शानदार और जोश से भरा रहा, जिससे देश को बहुत खुशी मिली है। आने वाले समय में उन्हें और भी सफलता मिले: PM @narendramodi"



प्रधानमंत्री कार्यालय

प्रधानमंत्री ने एशियाई खेलों में महिलाओं की 200 मीटर दौड़ में कांस्य पदक जीतने पर हरिता भद्रा को बधाई दी

प्रतिष्ठित तिथि: 27 SEP 2026 8:29PM by PIB Delhi

प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी ने आज एशियाई खेलों में महिलाओं की 200 मीटर स्पर्धा में शानदार कांस्य पदक जीतने पर हरिता भद्रा को बधाई दी।

प्रधानमंत्री ने कहा कि एशियाई खेलों में अपने पहले ही मुकाबले में उन्होंने आत्मविश्वास और दृढ़ संकल्प के साथ दौड़ लगाई और पोलियम पर अपनी जगह बनाई। श्री मोदी ने इस शानदार उपलब्धि पर उन्हें बधाई दी और कहा कि भारत को उन पर गर्व है।

एक्स पर एक पोस्ट में प्रधानमंत्री कार्यालय ने कहा:

"एशियाई खेलों में महिलाओं की 200 मीटर दौड़ में हरिता भद्रा ने शानदार कांस्य पदक जीता! एशियाई खेलों में अपने पहले ही मुकाबले में उन्होंने पूरे आत्मविश्वास और दृढ़ संकल्प के साथ दौड़ लगाई और पोलियम पर अपनी जगह पक्की की। इस शानदार उपलब्धि के लिए उन्हें बधाई। भारत को उन पर गर्व है: PM @narendramodi"



प्रधानमंत्री कार्यालय

प्रधानमंत्री ने एशियाई खेलों में पुरुषों की एकल स्क्वॉश स्पर्धा में रजत पदक जीतने पर अभय सिंह को बधाई दी

प्रतिष्ठित तिथि: 27 SEP 2026 8:24PM by PIB Delhi

प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी ने आज एशियाई खेलों में पुरुषों की एकल स्क्वॉश स्पर्धा में रजत पदक जीतने पर अभय सिंह को बधाई दी।

प्रधानमंत्री ने कहा कि उनकी प्रतिभा और लगन ने भारत को गौरवान्वित किया है और यह उपलब्धि उनके द्वारा वर्षों से की गई कड़ी मेहनत को दर्शाती है। श्री मोदी ने भविष्य के लिए उन्हें शुभकामनाएँ दीं।

प्रधानमंत्री कार्यालय ने एक्स पर एक पोस्ट में साझा किया:

"एशियाई खेलों में पुरुषों की एकल स्क्वॉश स्पर्धा में रजत पदक जीतने पर @abhaysinghk98 को बधाई! उनकी प्रतिभा और लगन ने भारत को गौरवान्वित किया है। यह उपलब्धि उनके द्वारा वर्षों से की गई कड़ी मेहनत को दर्शाती है। भविष्य के लिए उन्हें ढेरों शुभकामनाएँ: पीएम @narendramodi"

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य



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Social Welfare

विश्व पर्यटन दिवस 2026

भारत में पर्यटन का विकास और डिजिटल बदलाव

Posted On: 26 SEP 2026 2:22PM

27 सितंबर 2026 को "डिजिटल एजेंडा और आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलिजेंस से पर्यटन को नया रूप देना" (Digital Agenda and Artificial Intelligence to Redesign Tourism) थीम के तहत मनाए जाने वाले विश्व पर्यटन दिवस पर, पर्यटन के भविष्य को आकार देने में तकनीक की भूमिका पर जोर दिया जाएगा। भारत में, यह सेक्टर आर्थिक विकास, रोजगार और आजीविका के लिए एक महत्वपूर्ण योगदानकर्ता के रूप में उभर रहा है; 2023-24 में इसने जीडीपी में 5.22% का योगदान दिया और 8.46 करोड़ नौकरियों को समर्थन दिया। 2025 में घरेलू पर्यटकों की संख्या 428.55 करोड़ तक पहुंच गई, जबकि विदेशी पर्यटकों की संख्या बढ़कर 2.53 करोड़ हो गई और पर्यटन से विदेशी मुद्रा की कमाई ₹2,76,831 करोड़ तक पहुंच गई। भारत ई-वीजा, 'इनक्रेडिबल इंडिया' डिजिटल प्लेटफॉर्म और निधि प्लस (NIDHI+) के जरिए अपने डिजिटल पर्यटन इकोसिस्टम को भी मजबूत कर रहा है, जिसमें एआई यात्रा के अनुभव को ज्यादा व्यक्तिगत और आसान बना रहा है। डिजिटल नवाचार के साथ-साथ, स्वदेश दर्शन 2.0, प्रसाद (PRASHAD), कूज टूरिज्म और पर्यटन कौशल विकास जैसी पहल गंतव्यों का विस्तार कर रही हैं, पर्यटकों के अनुभव को बेहतर बना रही हैं और आजीविका के अवसर पैदा कर रही हैं। भारत के विश्व पर्यटन दिवस 2026 समारोह के अवसर पर एक ज्यादा जुड़े हुए, समावेशी और टिकाऊ पर्यटन क्षेत्र को बनाने की भारत की कोशिशों को उजागर करता है।

पर्यटन: समुदायों, संस्कृति और सतत विकास को जोड़ना

पर्यटन लोगों, जगहों और संस्कृतियों को करीब लाता है। यह समुदायों के लिए अवसर पैदा करता है, आजीविका में मदद करता है और आर्थिक विकास में अहम योगदान देता है। दुनिया भर में, 2024 में यात्रा और पर्यटन ने वैश्विक जीडीपी का 10% यानी 10.9 ट्रिलियन डॉलर का योगदान दिया, साथ ही 357 मिलियन नौकरियों को समर्थन दिया और अंतरराष्ट्रीय पर्यटकों के खर्च से 1.9 ट्रिलियन डॉलर की कमाई हुई।

जैसे-जैसे यह क्षेत्र बढ़ रहा है, लोगों के यात्रा करने और जगहों का अनुभव करने का तरीका बदल रहा है। इस बदलाव में तकनीक एक अहम भूमिका निभा रही है और आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलिजेंस (एआई) टूरिज्म को नई दिशा देने वाली अगली बड़ी ताकत बनकर उभर रहा है। बेहतर फैसले लेने से लेकर कौशलों को मजबूत करने और पर्यटकों के अनुभव को बेहतर बनाने तक, एआई पर्यटन को ज्यादा स्मार्ट, समावेशी और टिकाऊ बनाने में मदद कर सकता है। बदलते हुए इस माहौल पर विश्व पर्यटन दिवस 2026 के दौरान खास ध्यान दिया जाएगा। यह दिन 27 सितंबर को अल साल्वाडोर में "डिजिटल एजेंडा और आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलिजेंस से पर्यटन को नया रूप देना" (Digital Agenda and Artificial Intelligence to Redesign Tourism) थीम के साथ मनाया जाएगा। यह थीम बताती है कि कैसे डिजिटल नवाचार और एआई पर्यटन के भविष्य को बदल सकते हैं और साथ ही पर्यटन स्थलों के अनुभव और उनके प्रबंधन के तरीके को बेहतर बना सकते हैं।

Home Assignment



1. International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies

2. Blue Bond

प्रश्न: राष्ट्रीय स्वच्छ वायु कार्यक्रम (NCAP) किस वर्ष शुरू किया गया था?

(A) 2017

(B) 2019

(C) 2021

(D) 2023

Overview

- COP-31
- Voting Right
- ECI
- Indian Standard Time Rules 2026
- RTI 2005 Section 24(4)
- Flower Discovery
- US-China
- FIR in Missing cases
- Form-26
- UN Sea Level Declaration
- USA sanction on Russia and Iran
- Iran-USA-HOUTHIS-SAUDI ARAB
- Chess Olympiad
- Asian Games
- World Tourism Day

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