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Simplified two-rate GST structure gets GoM's nod, awaits Council's approval

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

The Group of Ministers (GoM) on Rate Rationalisation, formed by the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council, has decided to accept the Centre's two-rate structure proposal for GST and will be recommending this to the GST Council, the GoM chairperson and Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary said on Thursday.

This is the first of two steps the proposals must pass before implementation. The second step would be for the GST Council to accept the changes. "It was the Centre's proposal to end two slabs of GST, the 12% and 28% slabs," Mr. Choudhary told reporters. "We have recommended it, and now the GST Council will decide on this."

The Centre has not announced the date of the next GST Council meeting, although it is expected to take place in early September.

Talking to *The Hindu*, Kerala Finance Minister K.N. Balagopal, a member of the GoM, said the proposal from the Union government was not discussed in detail by the GoM. "The discussion should happen within the GST Council, and the Council will take a final decision. The GoM has forwarded the proposal of the Centre with some observations that it should discuss the possibility of loss in revenue for the

Effective rate

After the rationalisation, the weighted average GST rate (effective rate) is expected to decline from the notional rate of 14.4% in May 2017 to 9.5% in FY26-27*, according to the SBI Research

May 2017	14.4%
Nov. 2017	12.6%
Jan. 2018	12.2%
July 2018	11.8%
Dec. 2018	11.6%
Sept. 2019	11.6%
FY26-27	9.5%*

* based on SBI estimates



States too. We have suggested that there should be a mechanism to compensate the States," Mr. Balagopal said.

In his Independence Day speech, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the "next-generation GST reforms" would be a "Deepavali gift" from the Centre.

The proposal involves retaining just the 5% and 18% slabs in the current GST structure and doing away with the 12% and 28% slabs. This would entail 99% of the items in the 12% slab moving to 5%, and 90% of the items in the 28% slab moving to 18%.

The remaining items in the 28% slab would be moved to a higher 40% slab. However, the compensation cess currently being levied on the items in the 28% slab would no longer apply.

Relief for households

"The proposed shift of most items promises tangi-

ble relief for households and MSMEs, while aligning with the government's broader agenda of growth and financial inclusion," said Manoj Mishra, Partner and Tax Controversy Management Leader at Grant Thornton Bharat.

However, he added that there needs to be "careful calibration" to preserve revenue neutrality and avoid inflationary pressures.

According to Saurabh Agarwal, Tax Partner at EY India, the Centre's proposals are an acknowledgement of the importance of consumption to the Indian economy. "This is a clear signal of confidence in India's domestic consumer base as the primary engine of growth, especially amid global trade uncertainties," he said. "By easing costs for households and enhancing affordability, this framework is poised to strengthen our consumption-driven economy."

(With inputs from Jigeeesh A.M.)

GS Paper III – Indian Economy

Summary (English):

The GoM on GST has approved the Centre's proposal to rationalize GST rates into just two slabs—5% and 18%—eliminating 12% and 28%. Most items from 12% will move to 5%, while 90% from 28% will shift to 18%. Some luxury/sin goods will move to 40%. Experts caution about revenue loss for states but say it will benefit households and MSMEs.

सारांश (Hindi):

जीएसटी दरों को सरल बनाते हुए अब केवल दो स्लैब (5% और 18%) रखने का प्रस्ताव है। 12% और 28% स्लैब समाप्त किए जाएंगे। 12% वाले अधिकांश वस्तुएँ 5% में जाएँगी, और 28% वाली 90% वस्तुएँ 18% में। लग्जरी वस्तुओं पर 40% तक टैक्स होगा। राज्यों के राजस्व नुकसान की आशंका है, परंतु उपभोक्ताओं व MSMEs को लाभ होगा

U.S. asked India to buy oil from Russia to stabilise energy market: Jaishankar

Kallol Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI

The United States asked India to do “everything to stabilise” global energy market “including buying oil from Russia” and the latest U.S. accusations have “perplexed” India, said External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar in Moscow on Thursday, defending New Delhi's energy policy as India deals with the aftermath of penalty tariffs imposed by U.S. President Donald Trump.

Mr. Jaishankar met President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and highlighted India's plans to access the Russian market and called



High stakes: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with Russian President Vladimir Putin, in Moscow, on Thursday. ANI

for the fast processing of cases of Indians who were fraudulently recruited to fight for the Russian Army in Ukraine.

“We are a country where the Americans have said for the last few years that we should do everyth-

ing to stabilise the world energy market, including buying oil from Russia. Incidentally, we also buy oil from the U.S., and that amount has increased,” he said in response to a question.

Mr. Jaishankar dis-

cussed the overall diplomatic setting between India and Russia with Mr. Putin.

Mr. Jaishankar met Mr. Lavrov, where he raised a number of issues, including the necessity to focus on infrastructure and logistics to enhance overland and maritime connectivity between India and Russia, and described India-Russia relations “among the steadiest of the major relationships in the world after the Second World War”. He identified sectors like pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and textiles as areas where India can enhance exports to Russia and help in correcting the imbalance that exists in India-Russia trade.

GS Paper II – International Relations

Summary (English):

EAM S. Jaishankar in Moscow stated the U.S. asked India to stabilize energy markets, even by buying Russian oil. He defended India's right to diversify energy imports and highlighted trade opportunities in pharma, agriculture, and textiles to balance India-Russia trade.

सारांश (Hindi):

विदेश मंत्री एस. जयशंकर ने मॉस्को में कहा कि अमेरिका ने भारत से ऊर्जा बाज़ार स्थिर करने के लिए रूस से तेल खरीदने तक को कहा था। भारत ने अपने ऊर्जा हितों का बचाव किया और रूस के साथ दवा, कृषि व वस्त्र क्षेत्रों में व्यापार बढ़ाने पर जोर दिया

Should SC sit idly as Governors block Bills: CJI

Solicitor-General says the top court has encroached into the terrain of law-making

Is the court supposed to suspend its role and watch as the people's will is thwarted, asks CJI

The CJI refers to how the T.N. Governor had kept Bills pending for almost four years

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai on Thursday asked the Union government if the Supreme Court is supposed to suspend its role as the "custodian of the Constitution" and sit powerless while Governors make competent State legislatures defunct and thwart the democratic will of the people by sitting on Bills for years together.

The Chief Justice, heading a Presidential Reference Bench of five judges, referred to how the Tamil Nadu Governor had kept crucial State Bills pending for almost four years without a word explaining why.

The oral observations from the Chief Justice came in response to Solicitor General Tushar Mehta's submissions for the Union government that the top court, through its April 8 judgment, had encroached into the terrain of law-making and slighted high Constitutional authorities like the Governors and the Pre-

sident by imposing time limits on them.

Mr. Mehta said that inaction on the part of a Constitutional authority like the Governor was better addressed in the political sphere. The Supreme Court was not the only problem-solver in the country. Every problem cannot be resolved through a judicial order, he said.

The Solicitor General said the court should stick to its role declared in the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) judgment that each organ of governance – the legislature, executive, and judiciary – must stick to its turf.

"We do not intend to micro-manage the government. We will never interfere. But suppose, if a particular function is entrusted to the Governor, and for years together he withholds a Bill, will that also be beyond the power of judicial review of this court... When this Court has in the past set aside the very Constitutional Amendment [The Forty-second Constitutional

Suppose a constitutional functionary entrusted with certain functions refuses to discharge those functions without any valid reasons, are the hands of the constitutional courts tied? Are we powerless?

JUSTICE B.R. GAVAI
Chief Justice of India



Amendment Act of 1976], which had limited the power of judicial review as a violation of the Basic Structure, can we say this court is now powerless?" CJI Gavai asked Mr. Mehta.

Constitutional powers

The Solicitor General responded that time limits may apply to statutory authorities like a District Collector, but not to Constitutional powers like the President and Governors. He said a Governor's position was *sui generis*, as they are appointed by the Union government but are also an integral part of the State legislature.

The law officer said there may be several reasons, at times political or democratic, for a Governor to delay assent to a State Bill. How could the Supreme Court step in and prescribe deadlines when none exist in the Constitution, he asked.

Justice P.S. Narasimha said State Bills would be left hanging in vacuum if no outer time limits were set for the Governor to grant assent.

"Though you cannot specify a time limit, but, at the same time, there should be some way by which the process [of assenting to Bills] works. Can

it be a situation when it means 'full stop' if the Governor chooses to not act on a Bill... there is nothing further?" Justice Narasimha asked.

Mr. Mehta responded that only "two or three States" have come to the Supreme Court complaining of their Governors. There was no flood of litigation against Governors.

To this, Justice Surya Kant observed that Governors' decisions to act or not act varied from State to State. He asked whether the Centre was shutting off aggrieved States from approaching the court against gubernatorial inaction.

The Centre's law officer maintained that the judiciary cannot tie down the President and Governors to three-month timelines as done in the April 8 judgment.

"But if there is a wrong, there must be a remedy... This court is a custodian of the Constitution," the Chief Justice reacted. Mr. Mehta said each organ was a custodian of the Constitution

in its own field.

Justice Narasimha said seeking a solution in the political sphere each time would result in a logjam.

The Solicitor replied that issues like delays in assenting to Bills were not solvable by the court. The solution lay in the political sphere where elected representatives were answerable to the people, at least every five years.

"But the Governor is not answerable to the people," the CJI pointed out.

'Judicial restraint'

Referring to the April 8 judgment's direction that pending State Bills would be deemed as approved if the President and Governors did not act within the three-month deadline, Mr. Mehta said that restraint in the exercise of judicial power, especially when it concerned high Constitutional authorities, was a facet of the separation of powers, which was a part of the basic structure of the Constitution.

The Chief Justice said that while the Bench could

quite appreciate the Centre's arguments against restricting Governors and the President to a "time-bound programme" and the grant of 'deemed assent', it could not accept a situation in which the Governor merely sat for four years on State Bills.

"Then what happens to the democratic set-up of the government? What happens to the will of the two-third of the majority of the legislature of a particular State? We are on the question of a Governor, however high he may be, sitting on Bills passed by a competent legislature," Chief Justice Gavai observed.

The Solicitor's reply was illustrative. He asked if the President could step in and decide long-pending cases in the Supreme Court.

"It cannot be that every problem has a solution only at the doors of this court, and political and democratic solutions are not solutions," Mr. Mehta said, concluding his submissions for the Union government.

SC vs Governor Assent Delay

- **GS Paper II – Polity & Constitution**
- **Summary (English):**

CJI B.R. Gavai questioned if SC should remain silent when Governors block State Bills for years. The Union argued judiciary should not set deadlines for Governors. SC emphasized it is the custodian of the Constitution and cannot allow democracy to be stalled.

- **सारांश (Hindi):**

मुख्य न्यायाधीश बी.आर. गवई ने सवाल किया कि क्या सुप्रीम कोर्ट चुप बैठे जब राज्यपाल वर्षों तक विधेयक अटका देते हैं। केंद्र का तर्क है कि राज्यपाल को समय सीमा नहीं दी जा सकती। अदालत ने कहा कि लोकतंत्र और संविधान की रक्षा उसका दायित्व है

Dal Lake hosts first-ever Khelo India water games with eye on Olympics

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

The picturesque and iconic Dal Lake in Srinagar on Thursday hosted the first-ever races under rowing, kayaking, and canoeing categories under the Khelo India Water Sports Festival, with an eye on improving the rank in water sports at the Olympics in the coming years.

409 athletes from 36 States and Union Territories are participating in the water sports events, competing for 24 gold medals over the next three days. Of the 409 participants, 202 are female athletes.

Madhya Pradesh has sent the largest contingent of 44 athletes, followed by Haryana (37), Odisha (34),



Athletes participating in the first-ever Khelo India Water Sports Festival, at the Dal Lake in Srinagar on Thursday. IMRAN NISSAR

and Kerala (33).

“The waters of the Dal Lake offer the same setting as in Europe. It’s going to unmask talent in J&K as well as across the country. Water sports have 16 medals in the Olympics and remain the key to bettering our ranks at the international platform,” Bilquis

Mir, who became India’s first jury member in the Olympics in 2025, said.

The Khelo India Water Sports Festival is also the first consolidated open-age category championship, where all 14 kayaking and canoeing events and the 10 rowing events are Olympic events.

Dal Lake hosts first-ever Khelo India water games with eye on Olympics

English Summary (GS Paper II & III – Sports, Youth Development, Governance)

- The first-ever **Khelo India Water Sports Festival** was inaugurated at **Dal Lake, Srinagar**.
- Events included **rowing, kayaking, and canoeing**, all of which are Olympic disciplines.
- **409 athletes from 36 States/UTs** are participating, including **202 female athletes**.
- Largest contingents: Madhya Pradesh (44), Haryana (37), Odisha (34), Kerala (33).
- Aim: To boost India’s performance in water sports at the Olympics, where 16 medals are at stake.
- Bilquis Mir, India’s first Olympic jury member (2025), highlighted Dal Lake’s suitability for international-level competitions.
- This is India’s first consolidated **open-age championship** in water sports.

हिंदी सारांश (जीएस पेपर II एवं III – खेल, युवा विकास, शासन)

- श्रीनगर की डल झील पर पहली बार खेलो इंडिया वाटर स्पोर्ट्स फेस्टिवल आयोजित हुआ।
- इसमें रोइंग, कयाकिंग और कैनोइंग जैसी ओलंपिक विधाएँ शामिल की गईं।
- इसमें 36 राज्यों/केंद्र शासित प्रदेशों से 409 खिलाड़ी भाग ले रहे हैं, जिनमें 202 महिला खिलाड़ी हैं।
- सबसे बड़ा दल मध्यप्रदेश (44 खिलाड़ी) का है, इसके बाद हरियाणा (37), ओडिशा (34) और केरल (33)।
- उद्देश्य: भारत की ओलंपिक जल क्रीड़ा प्रदर्शन में सुधार करना (कुल 16 पदक दाँव पर)।
- बिलकिस मीर (भारत की पहली ओलंपिक ज्यूरी सदस्य, 2025) ने कहा कि डल झील यूरोप जैसी प्रतियोगिताओं के लिए उपयुक्त है।
- यह भारत का पहला ओपन-एज कैटेगरी वाटर स्पोर्ट्स चैंपियनशिप है।

‘Kerala India’s first fully digitally literate State’

The Hindu Bureau

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday declared Kerala the first fully digitally literate State in India, marking the completion of the first phase of the Digi Kerala project, a grass-roots-level intervention across all local bodies to bridge the digital divide.

Following the formal declaration, Mr. Vijayan interacted on a video call with 104-year old M.A. Abdullah Moulavi Baqavi from Asamanoor panchayat in Er-

nakulam district, one of the oldest students who were trained under the Digi Kerala project.

In the surveys carried out among 1.5 crore people from 83.46 lakh families across the State, 21.88 lakh people were identified as digitally illiterate. Out of this, 21.87 lakh people, comprising 99.98% of the participants have completed the training and successfully completed the evaluation. “Kerala has put forward yet another model worth emulating for the country,” said Mr. Vijayan.

Digital Literacy in Kerala

- **GS Paper II – Governance / GS Paper III – Science & Technology**
- **Summary (English):**

Kerala became the first fully digitally literate State. Under the Digi Kerala project, over 1.5 crore people were surveyed; 21.87 lakh digitally illiterate trained and certified. Almost 100% literacy achieved.

- **सारांश (Hindi):**

केरल देश का पहला पूर्णतः डिजिटल साक्षर राज्य बना। 'डिजी केरल' परियोजना में 1.5 करोड़ लोगों का सर्वे हुआ और 21.87 लाख डिजिटल निरक्षरों को प्रशिक्षण देकर प्रमाणित किया गया

'Silence will only embolden the bully'

Possibly setting the tone for the SCO Summit, Chinese Ambassador to India Xu Feihong says Beijing stands with India and criticised the U.S. over tariffs, terming it a 'bully'; he also made a pitch for better relations with New Delhi after a four-year military stand-off by pointing to growing trade ties

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

China will "firmly stand" with India to uphold World Trade Organization (WTO) principles, said Chinese Ambassador to India Xu Feihong, taking direct aim at the U.S. for imposing 50% tariffs on Indian goods.

In a speech about the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Russian President Vladimir Putin and leaders of Central Asia, Pakistan, Iran and Belarus will be hosted by Chinese President Xi Jinping, Mr. Xu was particularly

sharp on the "trade and tariff wars" that he said had disrupted the multilateral trading system, and referred to the U.S. as a "bully". The comments by a diplomat in India about a third country were unusual, possibly indicating that the SCO Summit in Tianjin on September 1 will be critical of the U.S.'s actions.

"The United States has long benefited greatly from free trade, but now it is using tariffs as a bargaining chip to demand exorbitant prices from various countries," Mr. Xu said at a discussion, organised by two Delhi-based think-tanks Chintan Research Foundation and the Centre for Glo-



bal India Insights, titled "SCO Summit & Resetting India-China relations".

Referring to U.S. President Donald Trump's announcement of 50% tariffs on Indian goods, which include 25% penalty tariffs for the import of Russian oil, due to come into effect next week, Mr. Xu said that China "firmly opposes" the

move. While the Chinese Foreign Ministry has opposed the U.S.'s reciprocal tariffs and China even imposed counter-tariffs on the U.S., this is the first such unequivocal support from China over the tariffs imposed on India.

"In the face of such acts, silence or compromise only emboldens the bully,

China will firmly stand with India to uphold the multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization at its core," Mr. Xu continued.

Making a pitch for better India-China ties after the four-year military stand-off at the Line of Actual Control, the Chinese Ambassador pointed to the improvement in ties over the past 10 months since the Modi-Xi meeting in Kazan in October 2024, pointing to many more visas and high-level engagements as well as the re-opening of the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra. He also said that bilateral trade in 2025 had already crossed \$75 billion, indicating a 10% rise from

the previous year.

To a question about India's concerns over cross-border terrorism and China's support to Pakistan, Mr. Xu said that "not only China and India, Pakistan is also a victim of terrorism, so what we should do is to make joint efforts to fight against terrorism," in comments that would not be viewed as positively by New Delhi.

Speaking to journalists after the event, Mr. Xu said the 10-point consensus reached by Mr. Doval and Mr. Wang was important, adding that experts would now work on an "early harvest agreement for the proper management of border areas".

China Stands with India Against U.S. Tariffs

- **GS Paper II – International Relations**
- **Summary (English):**

Chinese envoy Xu Feihong said Beijing will firmly support India at the WTO against U.S. tariffs (50% on Indian goods, including 25% on Russian oil). He criticized the U.S. as a "bully" and pitched for better India-China ties, highlighting increased trade and resumed Kailash Mansarovar Yatra.

- **सारांश (Hindi):**

भारत में चीनी राजदूत ने कहा कि चीन WTO में भारत के साथ खड़ा रहेगा और अमेरिकी टैरिफ का विरोध करेगा। उन्होंने अमेरिका को "धौंसिया" कहा और भारत-चीन संबंध सुधारने की बात की, यह बताते हुए कि व्यापार बढ़ा है और कैलाश मानसरोवर यात्रा पुनः शुरू हुई है

42,000 Myanmar nationals mapped since December 2024: Assam Rifles

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Some 42,000 people from Myanmar entering India through specific points along the 1,643 km border between the two countries have been mapped since December 2024, the paramilitary Assam Rifles said in a statement on Thursday.

These Myanmar nationals primarily stay temporarily in four northeastern States – Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, and Nagaland – and return to their country according to the provisions of the revised Free Movement Regime (FMR) policy, it said.

The statement followed a video of Assam Rifles Director General, Lieutenant General Vikas Lakhera, speaking at a seminar at



People fleeing Myanmar cross a bridge that connects Myanmar and India at Champhai in Mizoram in November 2023. FILE PHOTO

Manipur University on Wednesday. The video was shared by former Manipur Chief Minister, Nongthombam Biren Singh, with a caption claiming these 42,000 “outsiders” had entered Manipur.

The Assam Rifles stated that the Director General’s speech was being misrepresented.

It quoted Lt. Gen. Lakhera as saying, “After the new FMR policy came into effect, the Myanmar nationals entering India through crossing points are now being mapped. Since December, 42,000 individuals have been mapped with the help of biometrics and various measures instituted by all

After the new FMR policy came into effect, Myanmar nationals entering India are now being mapped, says Lt. Gen. Vikas Lakhera

government agencies concerned. The data is being shared with all government agencies.”

Limit of free travel

Brought into place in 1968 due to ethnic and familial relations between people on either side of the border, the territorial limit of free travel for the border residents was reduced from 40 km to 16 km in 2004. The distance was further reduced to 10 km from the border less than a year ago.

Myanmar Nationals & Border Security

- **GS Paper III – Internal Security**
- **Summary (English):**

Assam Rifles reported mapping of 42,000 Myanmar nationals since Dec 2024 under new Free Movement Regime. They temporarily stay in NE States but data is now recorded biometrically. FMR travel limit reduced to 10 km from border.

- **सारांश (Hindi):**

असम राइफल्स ने बताया कि दिसंबर 2024 से अब तक 42,000 म्यांमार नागरिकों को बायोमेट्रिक रूप से दर्ज किया गया है। वे असम, मणिपुर, नागालैंड, मिजोरम में अस्थायी रूप से रहते हैं। अब सीमा से केवल 10 किमी तक ही फ्री मूवमेंट की अनुमति है

Lawfare politics

Federal principles must not be undermined in the name of probity

Three Bills, including one for a constitutional amendment, introduced hurriedly by the Centre towards the end of the Parliament session, are purportedly meant to improve probity and accountability for the Prime Minister, Chief Ministers and Ministers. They will lose their position if any of them is detained by a law enforcement agency in connection with an offence that is punishable with imprisonment of five years or more. Upon acquittal, they could return. Any objective observer would be sceptical of the stated intent of these proposals. The concern expressed by the Opposition and legal minds that the proposals open a new avenue for concentration of power with the Centre is legitimate. The claim that the proposed legal regime applies equally to the Prime Minister too is weak, considering the fact that all investigative agencies are under the administrative control of the Centre. No central agency will ever detain a Prime Minister; but they have already arrested several Opposition Chief Ministers. When viewed against the backdrop of the pattern of the functioning of central agencies, such as the Enforcement Directorate and the Central Bureau of Investigation, the real intent of the new proposals by the Centre appears to be to empower itself with sweeping and arbitrary powers, which can be used against political rivals.

The police are eager to arrest. The increasing difficulty in obtaining bail due to harsh provisions in laws such as the Prevention of Money Laundering Act and Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, as well as a judicial diffidence in granting bail is making liberty disturbingly dispensable. Corruption is dangerous for a society, but combating it cannot be at the cost of the principles of justice. Corruption prosecutions have attained an unmistakable political character in recent years. The pattern of an individual being a target of investigation when in the Opposition, but no longer once he or she switches sides to the Bharatiya Janata Party is noticeable. If the new proposals are enacted into law, an elected official can be removed from office by mere police action, and without a fair trial, not to mention a judicial conviction. Considering the certainty that this will, in practice, only apply to State/Union Territory governments, it will also be a violation of federal principles. It is not a mere coincidence that the Centre is seeking to invest in State Governors a veto over any and all decisions of elected legislatures. The existing laws provide for the removal from office of elected officials who are convicted in cases as defined in the new proposals. These proposals amount to holding someone guilty until proven innocent, and also dishonouring the verdict of the people who elected them.

Lawfare Politics – Federal principles must not be undermined in the name of probity
English Summary (GS Paper II – Polity & Governance, Federalism, Accountability)

- The Centre hurriedly introduced three Bills at the end of the Parliament session, including one Constitutional amendment, aimed at ensuring accountability of PM, CMs, and Ministers.
- Proposal: If any such leader is detained for an offence punishable with **5+ years imprisonment**, they must vacate their post; if acquitted, they may return.
- Critics argue this strengthens **central power** rather than probity.
- Investigative agencies (ED, CBI) are under Centre's control and have largely targeted **Opposition leaders**, raising doubts about fairness.
- Denial of bail and stringent laws like **PMLA and UAPA** already make political arrests a tool for harassment.
- The editorial warns that the move could erode **federalism**, as it primarily impacts State/UT leaders and legislatures, giving the Centre arbitrary control.
- Current laws already allow removal of convicted officials; the new Bills risk punishing leaders without conviction, undermining both **justice** and **federal principles**.

हिंदी सारांश (जीएस पेपर II – राजनीति एवं शासन, संघवाद, जवाबदेही)

- केंद्र ने संसद सत्र के अंत में तीन विधेयक (एक संवैधानिक संशोधन सहित) पेश किए, जिनका उद्देश्य प्रधानमंत्री, मुख्यमंत्री और मंत्रियों की जवाबदेही सुनिश्चित करना बताया गया।
- प्रावधान: यदि किसी मंत्री/सीएम/पीएम को **5 साल या उससे अधिक की सजा वाले अपराध** में गिरफ्तार किया जाता है, तो उन्हें पद छोड़ना होगा। बरी होने पर वापसी संभव होगी।
- आलोचना: यह **संघीय ढांचे को कमजोर** करता है और केंद्र को अत्यधिक शक्ति देता है।
- केंद्रीय एजेंसियाँ (ईडी, सीबीआई) केंद्र के अधीन हैं और अक्सर विपक्षी नेताओं को ही निशाना बनाती रही हैं।
- पहले से ही कठोर कानून (PMLA, UAPA) और जमानत कठिन होने के कारण गिरफ्तारी एक राजनीतिक हथियार बन चुकी है।
- नया कदम न्यायिक सिद्धांतों को दरकिनार कर **चुने हुए प्रतिनिधियों को बिना दोषसिद्धि पद से हटाने** का मार्ग खोलता है।
- यह न केवल लोकतंत्र व न्याय के सिद्धांतों के विपरीत है, बल्कि **संघवाद का उल्लंघन** भी है।

As RS passes real money gaming ban bill, companies at crossroads

AROON DEEP

NEW DELHI

With The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, 2025, passed by the Rajya Sabha on Thursday, the legislation is now headed to President Droupadi Murmu for assent after which it will be curtains for firms such as Dream11, MPL and PokerBaazi's with main revenue generating activity being pay-to-play stakes-based gaming.

"It is the responsibility of the government and Parliament to take strict action against malpractices in society, like chit funds," Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw said in the Lok Sabha.

"Problems [due to online money games] have led to several families be-



Dangerous game: "Problems [due to online money games] led to several families being destroyed, says Vaishnaw. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

ing destroyed."

Quick enforcement

Mr. Vaishnaw said the law would not be subject to the prolonged timelines of other key laws worked on by the IT Ministry, namely the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 and the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines

and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

"With a prohibition, you can't do consultations," Mr. Vaishnaw said.

The industry appealed to Union Home Minister Amit Shah for reprieve.

Zupzee, a prominent RMG ludo app, said it was "discontinuing" its "paid" games. Nazara Technolo-

gies Ltd., which invested \$122 million in PokerBaazi, saw its shares dip 2% on Thursday. It had slid about 15% since the Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha.

"Nazara has no direct exposure to real money gaming (RMG) businesses," the firm said in a filing.

"The company's only indirect exposure to RMG is its 46.07% stake in Moonshine Technologies Private Ltd. (PokerBaazi).

'No financial impact'

"As Nazara does not hold majority stake or exercise control, Moonshine's revenue is not consolidated in the firm's financial statements and has no impact on the company's reported revenue or EBITDA."

Delta Corp Ltd., a casino and gaming company, also saw its shares dip 3.14%.

As RS passes real money gaming ban bill, companies at crossroads

English Summary (GS Paper II – Governance, GS Paper III – Economy & Technology)

- The **Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, 2025** was passed in the Rajya Sabha and now awaits Presidential assent.
- The Bill **bans real money gaming (RMG)** such as Dream11, MPL, and PokerBaazi, whose revenues largely come from pay-to-play games.
- Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said strict action was necessary against malpractices like chit funds, highlighting how **online money games have ruined families**.
- The law will be implemented quickly, unlike other IT legislations. It will be enforced under **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023** and **Digital Media Ethics Code Rules, 2021**.
- Industry players, including Zupzee and PokerBaazi investors, expressed concern. Shares of PokerBaazi investors (Nazara Technologies, Delta Corp) dropped after the Bill's introduction.
- Government insists prohibition is necessary, but industry argues the move threatens jobs, startups, and innovation.

हिंदी सारांश (जीएस पेपर II – शासन, जीएस पेपर III – अर्थव्यवस्था और प्रौद्योगिकी)

- ऑनलाइन गेमिंग (प्रमोशन और रेगुलेशन) विधेयक, 2025 राज्यसभा से पारित हो गया है और अब

राष्ट्रपति की स्वीकृति की प्रतीक्षा में है।

- यह विधेयक **रीयल मनी गेमिंग (RMG)** पर प्रतिबंध लगाता है, जिससे Dream11, MPL और PokerBaazi जैसी कंपनियों का मुख्य राजस्व प्रभावित होगा।
- केंद्रीय मंत्री अश्विनी वैष्णव ने कहा कि जैसे चिट फंड समाज को नुकसान पहुँचाते हैं, वैसे ही ऑनलाइन मनी गेम्स ने कई परिवार बर्बाद किए हैं, इसलिए सख्त कदम जरूरी हैं।
- कानून को तेजी से लागू किया जाएगा और यह **डिजिटल पर्सनल डेटा प्रोटेक्शन अधिनियम, 2023** तथा **डिजिटल मीडिया एथिक्स कोड नियम, 2021** के तहत लागू होगा।
- उद्योग जगत (जैसे Zuppee और PokerBaazi निवेशक) ने चिंता जताई, क्योंकि इससे रोजगार, स्टार्टअप और निवेश पर असर पड़ सकता है।
- PokerBaazi निवेशक कंपनियों (Nazara Tech, Delta Corp) के शेयर गिर गए हैं।
- सरकार का तर्क है कि समाज की रक्षा के लिए प्रतिबंध जरूरी है, जबकि उद्योग कहता है कि यह **नवाचार और स्टार्टअप इकोसिस्टम के लिए खतरा** है।

Exam Relevance:

- **GS Paper II:** Regulation, role of Parliament, governance vs freedom of industry.
- **GS Paper III:** Startup ecosystem, Digital economy, impact of government regulation

Many cancer drugs don't fall within price control rules: report

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

A substantial number of cancer drugs are beyond the ambit of current price control mechanisms, the 163rd report of the Committee on Petitions observed earlier this week in its report of recommendations placed in Parliament.

'No statutory ceiling'

With the notification of the National List of Essential Medicines 2022, the number of anti-cancer medicines under price control increased from 40 in 2011 to 63 in 2022. Nevertheless, a significant number of oncology medications are not included under the Drugs (Prices Control) Order (DPCO), 2013, and are thus not subject to any statutory price ceiling, the report said.

"This regulatory non-inclusion has led to excessive and often unaffordable pricing, thereby limiting access for a large section of the patient population," it said.

The government should undertake urgent measures to expand the scope of the DPCO to include the widest possible range of cancer drugs, the Committee on Petitions has recommended in its report. Additionally, regular and comprehensive market assessments should be instituted to monitor prevailing drug prices and availability trends, it said.



The number of anti-cancer medicines under price control has increased since 2011.

The quality of generics available in the country should be monitored and sustained since many medical professionals hesitate to prescribe generics as they are not certified under the World Health Organization's Good Manufacturing Practices, the report said.

While provisions exist for accelerated access to new cancer drugs, the report said, regulatory delays, insufficient domestic R&D, and pricing constraints limit timely and equitable access.

"Domestic research infrastructure should be enhanced, value-based approvals prioritised, regulatory pathways should be streamlined, and measures should be taken to support indigenous development of novel oncology therapies. The committee also recommends that the government must encourage research in the private sector and pharmaceutical companies should be encouraged to invest in high level research in oncology," the report said.

Price Control on Cancer Drugs

- **GS Paper II – Health / Governance**

- **Summary (English):**

A Parliamentary committee report noted that many cancer drugs are outside price control, making treatment unaffordable. It recommended expanding DPCO coverage, strengthening domestic R&D, and ensuring quality of generics.

- **सारांश (Hindi):**

संसदीय समिति ने कहा कि कई कैंसर दवाएँ मूल्य नियंत्रण से बाहर हैं, जिससे इलाज महंगा है। उसने सुझाव दिया कि दवा मूल्य नियंत्रण आदेश (DPCO) में अधिक कैंसर दवाएँ शामिल हों, घरेलू अनुसंधान मजबूत हो और जेनेरिक दवाओं की गुणवत्ता सुनिश्चित हो