

DIA, DEOGHAR IAS ACADEMY

Daily News Feed

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Help EC bring back deleted voters: SC to parties

Court says voters can file objections online; they can use Aadhaar or any other valid documents

Bench directs parties and their booth-level agents to assist excluded voters in the process

It says party workers are best placed to help people, questions the distance between parties and voters

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday directed political parties contesting the Bihar Assembly election to help the Election Commission (EC) bring back voters left out of the draft electoral roll published as part of the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) exercise.

A Bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalaya Bagchi directed State party chiefs to instruct their booth-level agents to assist excluded voters file their claims and objections for inclusion in the rolls.

The court order conveyed a sense of urgency, with barely over a week left before the claims-and-objections stage of the SIR ends on September 1.

The court clarified that voters can file their claims and objections online in a bid to save time. Excluded

voters can either attach their Aadhaar card, as permitted by the SC, or any of the 11 indicative documents listed by the EC, as proof of identity and residence, with their claims.

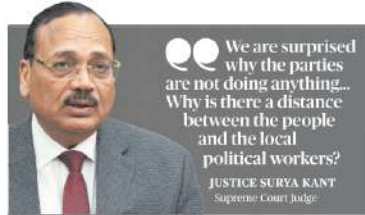
Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, representing the RJD, urged the court to extend the deadline beyond September 1.

Justice Kant asked the EC to "examine" this aspect if there was an "overwhelming response" from excluded voters.

Justice Bagchi remarked that with the inclusion of Aadhaar as a relevant document in the claims-and-objections stage, the EC may need more time to complete the verification of the pleas filed for inclusion in the electoral roll.

'Why a distance'

At one point, the court seemed to blame the political parties for not taking the initiative to assist the



voters, and for bringing things to such a pass at the eleventh hour.

"We are surprised why the parties are not doing anything. Political workers are the best persons in rural areas and villages. Why is there a distance between the people and the local political workers?" Justice Kant asked.

The EC, represented by senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, criticised political parties for taking a contrarian view about the SIR. He assured the court that no eligible voter would be left

out of the electoral process.

"Political parties have 1.6 lakh BLAs. Each BLA can verify 10 excluded names on the list. That would be 16 lakh names a day. It will take only five days for BLAs to verify the list. This is in addition to individual excluded voters also coming forward to file claims," Mr. Dwivedi said, conveying the EC's optimism in court.

He said that 84,305 claims have been initiated so far. Over 2.5 lakh new voters who have recently

reached the age of 18 in Bihar have come forward to join the electors' ranks, signalling the groundswell to join the electoral process.

"Political parties merely raise hue and cry to serve their political ends... Political parties could appoint more BLAs, but they will not," Mr. Dwivedi said, expressing the poll body's disappointment with the conduct of the parties.

'Parties can assist EC'

The Bench said that claims and objections may not come from all the 65 lakh excluded voters. It quoted the EC's figures that 22 lakh among the 65 lakh were dead, while 36 lakh had migrated out of Bihar, and eight lakh were duplicate entries on the roll. "So, it is just that names from the migrated 36 lakh have to come forward with claims," Justice Kant summarised.

"Political parties could

play a role in assisting the EC. They could verify the names. The Chief Election Commissioner had held a press conference inviting political parties, mass organisations, etc., to assist the EC," Mr. Dwivedi appealed.

The court impleaded the parties as respondents, issued notice and directed status reports to be filed on September 8, the next date of hearing.

Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, intervening on behalf of voters' groups from Bihar, objected to the emphasis on "minutiae" when the very legality of the SIR process was under dispute in the top court.

"All this minutiae is being presented as if the entire SIR is legal. There is no legal basis for filing enumeration forms. One day they will come in Delhi with pre-filled enumeration forms," Mr. Sankaran-

arayanan objected.

Justice Kant replied that larger questions would be looked into later on.

'Voter-friendly'

Mr. Sibal and senior advocate A.M. Singhvi, appearing for several other Opposition parties, including the Congress, said the present litigation was "not about BLAs, but the rights of the ordinary voters of Bihar".

Justice Kant made a brief comment that "the entire exercise should be voter-friendly".

Advocates Prashant Bhushan and Neha Rath, for the Association for Democratic Reforms, countered the EC's submission that only two claims and objections had been received through the BLAs so far.

"BLAs are not being permitted to submit objections," Mr. Bhushan submitted.

. SC to Political Parties on Bihar Electoral Roll Revision

GS Paper II – Polity & Governance

- The Supreme Court directed political parties to assist the Election Commission (EC) in including 65 lakh excluded voters during Bihar's *Special Intensive Revision (SIR)* of electoral rolls.
- Aadhaar and 11 other documents can be used as valid ID proofs.
- EC claimed that many deletions were due to death, migration, or duplication.
- SC stressed that the process must remain "voter-friendly."

हिंदी सारांश

जीएस पेपर-II – राजनीति व शासन

- सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने बिहार में *विशेष गहन पुनरीक्षण (SIR)* के दौरान हटाए गए 65 लाख मतदाताओं को शामिल करने में राजनीतिक दलों को चुनाव आयोग की मदद करने का निर्देश दिया।
- आधार व अन्य 11 दस्तावेज पहचान प्रमाण के रूप में मान्य होंगे।
- चुनाव आयोग ने कहा कि हटाए गए अधिकांश नाम मृत्यु, पलायन या दोहराव के कारण थे।
- अदालत ने कहा कि पूरी प्रक्रिया *मतदाता अनुकूल* होनी चाहिए।

Forest rights of tribals not settled for Great Nicobar project: council

Tribal representatives' body complains to Minister; says Andaman and Nicobar administration gave a 'false' report to Centre stating that tribespeople's rights under FRA were settled with regard to diversion of forest land for the ₹72,000-cr. project

Abhinav Lakshman
NEW DELHI

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands administration made a false representation to the Centre claiming that rights of the tribal people under the Forest Rights Act, 2006, had been "identified and settled", which eventually led to forest clearances being granted for the ₹72,000-crore mega infrastructure project on the Great Nicobar Islands, a council representing the Nicobarese has said in a complaint to Union Minister of Tribal Affairs Jual Oram.

The proposed Great Nicobar Island Project will include a transshipment port, an airport, a power plant, and a township.

Local tribespeople had raised several concerns, including the diversion of nearly 13,075 hectares of forest land for the project and its impact on vulnerable groups in the area.

Soon after taking charge



The proposed project on the islands will include a transshipment port, an airport, a power plant, and a township. ISTOCKPHOTO

in 2024, Mr. Oram told *The Hindu* that his Ministry would look into the issues raised by them.

Earlier this year, he said their concerns are "being examined", without going into the details.

Certificate issued

"In the last two months, we have found that the administration in A&NI issued a certificate in 2022 saying the FRA rights were identified and settled, and that the consent for diversion of forest land was taken only after this," a member of the Tribal Council of Little Nicobar

and Great Nicobar told *The Hindu* on Friday.

The council is the key representative body of the Nicobarese on the islands, and has been interacting with the administration on various issues.

The council, in a letter to Mr. Oram dated July 21, clarified that it had not given its consent for the project. "We write to you to inform that the process of settlement of forest rights under the FRA has not even been initiated. Therefore, there is no question of forest rights being settled." The council said it had recently been made

aware of an August 2022 "certificate", issued by the Deputy Commissioner of Nicobar District that claimed the opposite.

According to this forest diversion certificate under the FRA issued on August 18, 2022, a copy of which was seen by *The Hindu*, the administration said: "The complete process for identification and settlement of rights under the FRA has been carried out for the entire protected forest area of 121.87 sq. km. and deemed forest of 8.8 sq. km. falling under the project."

However, as reported by *The Hindu* earlier, the Union Territory administration has told the Ministry in its monthly reports that it need not implement the FRA on the islands as the forests there are already protected under the Protection of Aboriginal Tribes Act of 1956 (PAT56).

While the PAT56 gives the administrator of the islands full authority to divert forest land, the FRA allows such diversion only

after rights are first settled and then consent is taken from the Gram Sabhas concerned. It was not clear if the diversion of forest land for the project was made under the FRA or PAT56.

The Centre has maintained that due process was followed for getting clearances. A Gram Sabha meeting held on August 12, 2022, had consented to the diversion of forest land, it said. However, the council says the Nicobarese of Great Nicobar were not part of the meeting.

'Exploring options'

A council member who spoke to *The Hindu* on condition of anonymity said, "We are waiting for the Minister to reply. If it does not come, we will see what other options are available to us." The member said the council's complaint was marked delivered by the post office on July 30, adding that it had also sent an email to Mr. Oram's office but was yet to get a response.

Forest Rights Not Settled in Great Nicobar Project

GS Paper III – Environment & Tribal Issues

- The ₹72,000-crore Great Nicobar Island Project (port, airport, township, power plant) is under dispute.
- Tribal Council of Nicobarese accused the A&N administration of falsely claiming Forest Rights Act (FRA) compliance.
- FRA requires rights settlement and Gram Sabha consent before forest diversion, but consent procedures remain disputed.

हिंदी सारांश

जीएस पेपर-III – पर्यावरण व जनजातीय मुद्दे

- ₹72,000 करोड़ का ग्रेट निकोबार प्रोजेक्ट (बंदरगाह, हवाई अड्डा, टाउनशिप, पावर प्लांट) विवादों में है।
- निकोबारी जनजाति परिषद ने प्रशासन पर वनाधिकार कानून (FRA) के गलत अनुपालन का आरोप लगाया।
- FRA के अनुसार ग्रामसभा की सहमति व अधिकारों का निपटारा अनिवार्य है, लेकिन यहाँ यह प्रक्रिया संदिग्ध है।

NITI Aayog report recommends model policy for homestays

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

The NITI Aayog's report on "Rethinking Homestays: Navigating Policy Pathways", released in New Delhi on Friday, aims at advancing a framework that States can adopt to harmonise regulations and establish an inclusive homestay ecosystem in the country.

The planning body believes that alternative accommodation such as homestays is an opportunity with immense economic potential that can help in promoting sustainable growth of India's tourism sector. The report offers a "strategic road map" to unlock the potential of homestays and Bed and Breakfast (BnB) providers in

India's tourism landscape.

NITI Aayog said in a statement that the report draws insights from aggregators, hosts, and policy-makers and highlights the role of homestays in offering travellers "culturally immersive experiences" while fostering local entrepreneurship and employment generation. "It emphasises the need for light-touch, transparent regulatory frameworks that ensure the safety of tourists and homeowners, protect heritage, and support inclusive, sustainable economic growth," it said.

The panel also recommended financial incentives for promoting tourism at the destination level rather than focusing solely on individual homestay amenities.

NITI Aayog Report on Homestays

GS Paper III – Economy & Tourism

- Report titled *Rethinking Homestays* suggests model policy for harmonised regulation.
- Homestays can drive local entrepreneurship, employment, and cultural tourism.
- Recommends light regulation, financial incentives at destination level.

हिंदी सारांश

जीएस पेपर-III – अर्थव्यवस्था व पर्यटन

- नीति आयोग की रिपोर्ट *रीथिंकिंग होमस्टेज* ने समन्वित नियमों हेतु मॉडल नीति का सुझाव दिया।
- होमस्टे स्थानीय उद्यमिता, रोजगार और सांस्कृतिक पर्यटन को बढ़ावा दे सकते हैं।
- हल्के नियम व गंतव्य स्तर पर वित्तीय प्रोत्साहन की सिफारिश की

UN declares famine in Gaza, blames Israel for 'systematic aid obstruction'

Famine is affecting 500,000 people in the Gaza governorate, which covers about a fifth of the Palestinian territory, says Rome-based Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Initiative; Israel's Defence Minister threatens to destroy Gaza City

Agence France-Presse
JERUSALEM

The UN officially declared a famine in Gaza on Friday, blaming "systematic obstruction of aid" by Israel, hours after Defence Minister Israel Katz threatened to destroy the territory's largest city.

Israel rejected the UN-backed report as "based on Hamas lies laundered through organisations with vested interests".

Hamas urged the UN and UN Security Council to "stop the war and lift the siege", calling for unrestricted access for food, medicine, water and fuel.

The Rome-based Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Initiative (IPC) said famine was affecting 500,000 people in the Gaza governorate, which covers about a fifth of the Palestinian territory



Unending wait: A child surrounded by pots, waiting to get food from a charity kitchen in Khan Younis, Gaza, on Thursday. REUTERS

including Gaza City.

Israel has pressed ahead with plans to seize Gaza City despite an international outcry, saying it is key to defeating Hamas.

The IPC projected that the famine would expand to Deir el-Balah and Khan

Yunis governorates by the end of September, covering around two-thirds of Gaza.

With the vast majority of the territory's population displaced at least once, the UN said nearly a million people currently

live in Gaza governorate.

UN agencies and aid groups had warned for months of a looming famine in Gaza, where Israel has severely restricted aid and at times completely cut it off during its nearly two-year war with militant group Hamas.

UN aid chief Tom Fletcher said the famine was entirely preventable, saying food could not get through to the Palestinian territory "because of systematic obstruction by Israel".

War crime

UN human rights chief Volker Turk said it was "a war crime to use starvation as a method of warfare" and said it "may also amount to the war crime of wilful killing".

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for a ceasefire, saying: "We cannot allow this situation to continue with impunity."

"After 22 months of relentless conflict, over half a million people in the Gaza Strip are facing catastrophic conditions characterised by starvation, destitution and death," the IPC report said.

In early March, Israel completely banned aid from Gaza for two months, leading to severe shortages of food, medicines and fuel.

Speaking earlier on Friday, Mr. Katz warned: "The gates of hell will open upon the heads of Hamas's murderers and rapists in Gaza – until they agree to Israel's conditions for ending the war, primarily the release of all hostages and their disarmament."

"If they do not agree, Gaza, the capital of Hamas, will become Rafah and Beit Hanoun," he added, referring to two cities in Gaza largely razed during previous Israeli operations.

UN Declares Famine in Gaza

GS Paper II – International Relations / GS Paper III – Food Security

- UN officially declared famine in Gaza, blaming obstruction of aid by Israel.
- 5 lakh people affected (20% of Gaza population).
- Israel rejected the report as "Hamas propaganda."

हिंदी सारांश

जीएस पेपर-II – अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संबंध / जीएस पेपर-III – खाद्य सुरक्षा

- संयुक्त राष्ट्र ने गाज़ा में अकाल घोषित किया, कारण बताया – इज़राइल द्वारा सहायता अवरुद्ध करना।
- लगभग 5 लाख लोग प्रभावित (गाज़ा की 20% जनसंख्या)।
- इज़राइल ने रिपोर्ट को "हमास का प्रचार" बताया।

Iran and European trio to meet as snapback sanctions loom

Agence France-Presse

TEHRAN

Iran will meet with Britain, France and Germany on its nuclear programme next week, the parties said Friday, as the European powers warned Tehran to engage swiftly to avoid snapback sanctions.

Iran suspended cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in July in the wake of its 12-day war with Israel, citing the UN nuclear watchdog's failure to condemn Israeli and U.S. strikes on its nuclear facilities.

The European trio – parties to the landmark 2015 Iran nuclear deal –

Iran suspended cooperation with IAEA in July in the wake of its 12-day war with Israel

have threatened to trigger a “snapback mechanism” by the end of August.

The move would reimpose sweeping UN sanctions lifted under the 2015 agreement unless Iran agrees to curb its uranium enrichment and restore cooperation with IAEA inspectors.

“It was agreed that Iran’s talks with the three European countries and the European Union would

continue next Tuesday at the level of Deputy Foreign Ministers,” Iran’s foreign ministry said after a phone call between Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and senior European diplomats. France confirmed the talks and cautioned that Iran faced a narrowing window of time.

“We have just made an important call to our Iranian counterpart regarding the nuclear programme and the sanctions against Iran that we are preparing to reimpose,” said French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot on X, noting he was joined on the call by his British and German counterparts and the EU’s top diplomat.

Iran and European trio to meet as snapback sanctions loom

English Summary

- Iran will meet Britain, France, and Germany next week to discuss its nuclear programme.
- Iran suspended cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in July after its 12-day war with Israel, protesting IAEA’s failure to condemn Israeli & U.S. strikes.
- The European powers warned Iran that unless it resumes cooperation and curbs uranium enrichment, a “*snapback mechanism*” could be triggered by end of August.
- This would reimpose UN sanctions lifted under the 2015 nuclear deal.
- France confirmed that Iran faces a narrowing window of time, stressing that sanctions will return unless Iran complies.

Relevance for UPSC/BPSC/JPSC (GS Paper II – International Relations):

- Global nuclear non-proliferation issues.
 - Role of IAEA and UN sanctions.
 - West Asia geopolitics: Iran–Israel conflict, European diplomacy.
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हिंदी सारांश

- ईरान अगले सप्ताह ब्रिटेन, फ्रांस और जर्मनी से अपने परमाणु कार्यक्रम पर वार्ता करेगा।
- जुलाई में इज़राइल के साथ 12-दिवसीय युद्ध के बाद ईरान ने अंतर्राष्ट्रीय परमाणु ऊर्जा एजेंसी (IAEA) से सहयोग निलंबित कर दिया था, क्योंकि एजेंसी ने इज़राइल और अमेरिका की बमबारी की निंदा नहीं की।
- यूरोपीय देशों ने चेतावनी दी है कि यदि ईरान यूरेनियम संवर्धन नहीं रोका और IAEA के साथ सहयोग पुनः शुरू नहीं किया, तो अगस्त के अंत तक “स्नैपबैक मैकेनिज्म” लागू हो सकता है।
- इसके लागू होने पर 2015 के परमाणु समझौते के तहत हटाए गए संयुक्त राष्ट्र प्रतिबंध फिर से लग जाएंगे।
- फ्रांस ने कहा कि ईरान के पास अब बहुत कम समय बचा है और यदि उसने अनुपालन नहीं किया तो प्रतिबंध वापस लगाए जाएंगे।

UPSC/BPSC/JPSC प्रासंगिकता (जीएस पेपर-II - अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संबंध):

- वैश्विक परमाणु अप्रसार मुद्दे।
- IAEA और संयुक्त राष्ट्र प्रतिबंधों की भूमिका।
- पश्चिम एशिया की भू-राजनीति: ईरान-इज़राइल संघर्ष, यूरोपीय कूटनीति।

China calls for regional solidarity ahead of SCO summit in Tianjin

Vighnesh P. Venkitesh

BEIJING

It is important to have regional solidarity amid turbulence in international landscape, China said on Friday as it prepared to host heads of states and international organisations for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Tianjin on August 31 and September 1.

Chinese President Xi Jinping will chair the summit, which is expected to be attended by a host of world leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and UN

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Briefing reporters about the summit, China's Assistant Foreign Minister Liu Bin said it will follow new visions to overcome “cultural wars and cold war mentality”, while looking into new measures to advance development, maintain security, and promote prosperity. The meeting, hosting more than 20 world leaders, comes against the backdrop of uncertainties in global trade, triggered by the tariffs imposed by U.S. President Donald Trump.

“In today's world, outdated mindsets of hegemonism and power politics still have influence, with

certain countries attempting to prioritise their own interests above others, seriously threatening world peace and stability,” Mr. Liu said without naming any specific country while emphasising on the need to strengthen regional cooperation.

The SCO aims at stability to foster lasting peace, harmony, and friendship while addressing uncertainties in international environment, Mr. Liu said, adding that the summit will focus on practising multilateralism and safeguarding regional stability.

(The writer is in Beijing at an invitation from the China Public Diplomacy Association)

China calls for regional solidarity ahead of SCO summit in Tianjin

English Summary

- China emphasized the importance of **regional solidarity** amid global turbulence ahead of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit** in Tianjin (Aug 31–Sep 1).
- The summit will be chaired by President **Xi Jinping** and attended by leaders including **PM Narendra Modi, Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres**.
- China's Assistant Foreign Minister Liu Bin said the summit would:
 - Work to overcome "cultural wars and cold war mentality."
 - Focus on advancing development, security, and prosperity.
 - Address uncertainties in global trade (esp. tariffs by the U.S.).
- Liu criticised unnamed countries prioritising self-interest over global stability.
- The SCO aims to promote **peace, harmony, friendship, and multilateral cooperation** while safeguarding regional security.

Relevance for UPSC/BPSC/JPSC (GS Paper II – International Relations):

- Role of SCO in regional geopolitics.
- China's leadership in multilateral institutions.
- India's participation in Eurasian regional groupings.

हिंदी सारांश

- वैश्विक अस्थिरता के बीच चीन ने **क्षेत्रीय एकजुटता** की आवश्यकता पर जोर दिया है, आगामी **शंघाई सहयोग संगठन (SCO) शिखर सम्मेलन** (तियानजिन, 31 अगस्त-1 सितम्बर) से पहले।
- सम्मेलन की अध्यक्षता **शी जिनपिंग** करेंगे और इसमें **पीएम नरेंद्र मोदी, पाकिस्तान के पीएम शहबाज़ शरीफ़, रूस के राष्ट्रपति व्लादिमीर पुतिन और संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासचिव एंटोनियो गुटेरेस** सहित कई नेता शामिल होंगे।
- चीन के सहायक विदेश मंत्री लियू बिन ने कहा कि सम्मेलन का उद्देश्य होगा:
 - "सांस्कृतिक युद्धों और शीत युद्ध मानसिकता" को समाप्त करना।
 - विकास, सुरक्षा और समृद्धि को बढ़ावा देना।
 - वैश्विक व्यापार में अनिश्चितताओं (विशेषकर अमेरिका द्वारा लगाई गई टैरिफ़) से निपटना।
- लियू ने उन देशों की आलोचना की जो अपने हितों को वैश्विक स्थिरता से ऊपर रखते हैं।
- SCO का लक्ष्य है **शांति, सौहार्द, मित्रता और बहुपक्षीय सहयोग** को बढ़ावा देना तथा क्षेत्रीय सुरक्षा को मज़बूत करना।

UPSC/BPSC/JPSC प्रासंगिकता (जीएस पेपर-II – अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संबंध):

- क्षेत्रीय राजनीति में SCO की भूमिका।
- बहुपक्षीय संस्थानों में चीन का नेतृत्व।
- भारत की यूरेशियाई संगठनों में भागीदारी।

Decades after 1971 conflict, Pak. woos Bangladesh as India watches closely

Bangladesh is hosting Pakistan's Foreign and Trade Ministers in Dhaka, signalling a cautious thaw in ties; but calls for an apology over the 1971 killings and scars remain obstacles to reconciliation; the move carries major implications for India, which has long counted Bangladesh as a key partner

Agence France-Presse
DHAKA

Decades after Pakistani troops killed his friends in Bangladesh's independence war, veteran freedom fighter Syed Abu Naser Bukhtear Ahmed eyes warming ties between Dhaka and Islamabad with cautious pragmatism.

Bangladesh is hosting the Foreign Minister and trade envoy this week, its most senior Pakistani visitors in years, in a bid to reset relations scarred by the bloody 1971 conflict and shaped by shifting regional power balances.

"The brutality was unbounded," said Mr. Ahmed, 79, a banker, describing the war in which east Pakistan broke away to form Bangladesh.

Hundreds of thousands were killed – Bangladeshi estimates say millions – and Pakistan's military was accused of widespread atrocities.

"I would have loved to see the responsible people tried – the ones who killed six of my friends," Mr. Ahmed said.

"I don't mind normalising relations with those who opposed the war, but were not directly involved in the atrocities committed."

Contact between the two Muslim-majority nations was long limited to lit-



People celebrate at a government-organised event in Dhaka on August 5, marking the first anniversary of the overthrow of the Sheikh Hasina regime. AFP

tle more than cultural ties: a shared love of cricket, music, and Pakistan's prized cotton used to make the flowing trousers and shirt known as *shalwar kameez*.

Bangladesh instead leaned heavily on India, which almost encircles the country of 170 million people.

'Watching closely'

However, a mass uprising in Dhaka last year that toppled longtime India ally Sheikh Hasina has strained ties with New Delhi and opened the door for dialogue with Islamabad.

Pakistan's Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan

arrived in Dhaka on Thursday, and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar is expected on Saturday.

Analysts say India, which fought a four-day conflict with Pakistan in May, will be watching closely.

"Bangladesh had been one of India's closest partners in its neighbourhood, and now it is flirting with India's Chief Adversary," said Michael Kugelman, a U.S.-based analyst.

The last time a Pakistani Foreign Minister visited Dhaka was in 2012, according to Bangladeshi newspapers.

Pakistan and Bangladesh began sea trade last

year, expanding government-to-government commerce in February.

"It is the emergence of a new strategic equation – one that reduces Indian influence and instead strengthens a cooperative axis between Pakistan and Bangladesh," Azeem Khalid, a New York-based international relations expert, said.

"If sustained, this evolution has the potential to reshape South Asia's geopolitical and economic order."

Bangladesh's interim government, led by Nobel Peace laureate Muhammad Yunus, is furious that Ms. Hasina fled to India

and has defied a summons to answer charges amounting to crimes against humanity.

"Under Yunus, there have been a number of high-level meetings, trade relations have expanded, the two countries have agreed to relax visa rules and there has even been some limited military cooperation," said analyst Thomas Kean from the International Crisis Group.

'Wound remains open'

Still, reconciliation faces obstacles.

Calls for Pakistan to apologise for the 1971 killings remain popular in Bangladesh, but foreign policy expert Qamar Cheema believes it is unlikely Islamabad will oblige.

"Pakistan's engagement with Bangladesh is only possible if Bangladesh does not bring historical animosity in re-establishing ties," said Mr. Cheema, from Islamabad's Sanobar Institute.

"Bangladesh always demanded an apology, which (Pakistan) never provided – and even today, doesn't have any such intentions."

Dhaka's Foreign Affairs adviser, Mohammad Touhid Hossain, asked if Bangladesh would raise the issue of a public apology, saying that "all issues will be on the table".

Bangladesh courts have sentenced several people

for "genocide" during the 1971 war, accusing them of aiding Pakistani forces in the ethnic cleansing of Bengalis.

"As long as the wound remains open, the relationship cannot be sustainable," said anthropologist Sayeed Ferdous from Dhaka's Jahangirnagar University.

Others strike a more balanced tone.

"From a victim's perspective, I can't accept a warming of bilateral relations before Pakistan meets certain conditions," said Bangladeshi academic Meghna Guhathakurta, whose father was killed by Pakistani troops.

She said Islamabad "should make all information related to the war public".

However, the retired international relations professor from Dhaka University also accepted that it was "natural to have trade relations with Pakistan", and acknowledged the "geopolitical dimensions".

With elections in February, when Yunus's administration will hand over power, relations could shift once again.

"If the next government is prepared to patch up ties with India – and Delhi is willing to reciprocate – then the surge in ties with Islamabad could become a casualty," Mr. Kugelman said.

Decades after 1971 conflict, Pakistan woos Bangladesh as India watches closely

English Summary

- **Background:** The 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War created deep hostility between Dhaka and Islamabad due to atrocities committed by Pakistan's military. Millions were killed, and demands for an apology for "genocide" remain unresolved.
- **Current Development:** Pakistan's Foreign and Trade Ministers are visiting Dhaka — the highest-level visit in years — signaling cautious pragmatism to reset ties.
- **Bangladesh's Position:** Bangladesh has long leaned on India as a close ally, but shifting regional geopolitics are prompting Dhaka to cautiously engage Pakistan.
- **Challenges:**
 - Bangladesh seeks acknowledgment/apology for 1971 atrocities, which Pakistan has resisted.
 - Public memory of the war remains strong; reconciliation is limited.
 - India is watching closely, as Dhaka is considered a critical partner in South Asia's balance of power.
- **Implications for India:**

- Any thaw in Bangladesh–Pakistan ties could impact India’s strategic leverage in the region.
- India remains Bangladesh’s closest partner, but new dynamics in trade, security, and diplomacy could complicate equations.

Relevance for UPSC/BPSC/JPSC (GS Paper II – International Relations, GS Paper I – Modern History linkages):

- India’s strategic interests in South Asia.
- Legacy of 1971 war in shaping geopolitics.
- Diplomacy vs. historical memory in international relations.

हिंदी सारांश

- **पृष्ठभूमि:** 1971 के बांग्लादेश मुक्ति संग्राम ने ढाका और इस्लामाबाद के बीच गहरी शत्रुता पैदा की। पाकिस्तानी सेना द्वारा किए गए नरसंहार में लाखों लोग मारे गए। “नरसंहार” के लिए माफी की मांग अब तक अधूरी है।
- **वर्तमान घटनाक्रम:** पाकिस्तान के विदेश व वाणिज्य मंत्री इस सप्ताह ढाका पहुंचे हैं — यह वर्षों में सबसे उच्च स्तरीय यात्रा है, जिसका उद्देश्य संबंधों को पुनः स्थापित करना है।
- **बांग्लादेश की स्थिति:** बांग्लादेश परंपरागत रूप से **भारत का करीबी सहयोगी** रहा है, लेकिन बदलते क्षेत्रीय शक्ति समीकरण उसे पाकिस्तान से सतर्कता के साथ संवाद करने के लिए प्रेरित कर रहे हैं।
- **चुनौतियाँ:**
 - बांग्लादेश 1971 के नरसंहार के लिए पाकिस्तान से माफी चाहता है, पर पाकिस्तान अब तक तैयार नहीं।
 - युद्ध की स्मृतियाँ अभी भी प्रबल हैं, जिससे सुलह कठिन है।
 - भारत स्थिति पर करीबी नज़र रख रहा है क्योंकि ढाका उसका प्रमुख रणनीतिक साझेदार है।
- **भारत पर प्रभाव:**
 - यदि बांग्लादेश-पाकिस्तान संबंधों में गर्माहट आती है तो भारत की **रणनीतिक स्थिति प्रभावित** हो सकती है।
 - भारत बांग्लादेश का निकटतम भागीदार बना रहेगा, लेकिन नए व्यापार, सुरक्षा व कूटनीतिक समीकरण स्थिति को जटिल बना सकते हैं।

UPSC/BPSC/JPSC प्रासंगिकता (जीएस पेपर-II – अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संबंध, जीएस पेपर-I – आधुनिक इतिहास संबंध):

- दक्षिण एशिया में भारत के रणनीतिक हित।
- 1971 युद्ध की ऐतिहासिक विरासत।
- अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संबंधों में कूटनीति बनाम ऐतिहासिक स्मृति।

South Korea must navigate the “Trump risk” at key summits in Japan and U.S.

Associated Press
SEOUL

South Korea's President Lee Jae Myung faces a pivotal foreign policy test barely two months after taking office, with back-to-back summits in Tokyo and Washington that reflect the wider struggle of U.S. allies to navigate Donald Trump's unilateral push to redefine postwar orders on trade, security, and alliances.

The meetings come after Seoul and Tokyo reached trade deals with Washington that spared them from the Trump administration's highest tariffs, but only after pledging billions of dollars in new U.S. investments.

Mr. Trump's transactional approach with long-standing allies extends beyond trade to security and has fueled fears in South Korea that he will demand higher payments to support the U.S. troop presence in the country, even as he possibly seeks to scale back America's military footprint there to focus on China.

What is at stake
The looming concerns about a U.S. retreat in leadership and security commitments come as South Korea and Japan confront growing cooperation between their nuclear-armed adversaries, North Korea and Russia, partners in the war in Ukraine and in ef-

forts to break isolation and evade sanctions.

A day after confirming his August 25 summit with Mr. Trump, Mr. Lee's office announced he will visit Japan on August 23-24 to meet Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, a rare diplomatic setup that underscores how Mr. Trump is drawing closer to two often-feuding neighbours.

The meeting in Tokyo of Mr. Lee and Mr. Ishiba is largely about projecting leverage as the countries seek to coordinate their response to Mr. Trump, said Choi Eunmi, an analyst at South Korea's Asan Institute for Policy Studies. "There is now the Trump risk," Ms. Choi said. "There's especially a lot of



The meetings come after Seoul and Tokyo reached trade deals with Washington that spared them from Trump's tariffs. AP

uncertainty in the business sector, so they might discuss ways to ease that uncertainty... not necessarily in joint efforts to confront Trump, but within the framework of trilateral cooperation." Yukiko Fukagawa, a pro-

Yoshimasa Hayashi, Japan's chief Cabinet secretary, said Mr. Lee's visit will help promote the "stable development" of bilateral ties as their countries work together on international challenges by utilising the "shuttle diplomacy" of regular summits.

Mr. Lee and Mr. Ishiba could discuss restarting long stalled free trade talks and South Korea's potential entry into the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Seoul and Tokyo clearly share many crucial interests in the face of Mr. Trump's efforts to reset global trade and U.S. security commitments. They are both under pressure from

Washington to pay more for the tens of thousands of American troops stationed in their countries and also to increase their own defence spending. Their vital automobile and technology industries are vulnerable to Mr. Trump's tariff hikes. They navigate a tricky balance between the U.S. and its main rival, China, a growing regional threat that is also the largest trade partner for Seoul and Tokyo.

A trilateral framework
It makes more sense for South Korea and Japan to work with the Trump administration under a trilateral framework rather than engage Washington separately, especially given how

Mr. Trump mixes security and economic demands, said Ban Kil-joo, a professor at South Korea's National Diplomatic Academy. For example, the countries could propose a trilateral scheme to support Trump's push to expand natural gas and other energy production in Alaska, rather than negotiating potential investments bilaterally, he said.

South Korea should enter the Trump summit with a clear stance on its role in regional security, Mr. Ban said, possibly supporting U.S. efforts to maintain Indo-Pacific stability and opposing changes to the *status quo*, but without explicitly naming China as an adversary.

South Korea must navigate the 'Trump risk' at key summits in Japan and U.S.

English Summary

- **Context:** South Korea's new President **Lee Jae Myung** faces his first major diplomatic test with back-to-back summits in **Tokyo and Washington**.
- **Issue:** Donald Trump's transactional, unilateral policies on trade, security, and alliances pose uncertainty for U.S. allies. South Korea fears Trump may:
 - Demand higher payments for U.S. troop presence.
 - Scale back America's military footprint in Asia to focus on China.
- **Concerns:**
 - U.S. retreat in leadership as North Korea & Russia cooperate more closely.
 - Trump's tariff hikes threaten South Korea's automobile & tech exports.
- **Japan & South Korea Cooperation:**
 - Leaders will discuss trilateral cooperation with the U.S. to stabilize trade and security.
 - Possible restart of free trade talks and South Korea's entry into **CPTPP (Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership)**.
- **Strategic Balance:**
 - Both nations face pressure to spend more on defense.
 - A trilateral framework (U.S.-Japan-South Korea) may be more effective than bilateral talks.
- **Implication:** South Korea must balance supporting U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy while avoiding direct confrontation with China.

Relevance for UPSC/BPSC/JPSC (GS Paper II – International Relations):

- U.S.-Asia alliance dynamics.
- Trump's impact on global trade and security.
- Indo-Pacific strategy and India's role.

हिंदी सारांश

- **प्रसंग:** दक्षिण कोरिया के नए राष्ट्रपति **ली जे म्युंग** के लिए यह पहला बड़ा कूटनीतिक परीक्षण है, जिनके सामने **टोक्यो और वाशिंगटन** में लगातार शिखर बैठकें हैं।
- **मुद्दा:** डोनाल्ड ट्रम्प की लेन-देन आधारित और एकतरफा नीतियों से अमेरिका के सहयोगी देशों में अस्थिरता बढ़ी है। दक्षिण कोरिया को आशंका है कि ट्रम्प:
 - अमेरिकी सैनिकों की तैनाती के लिए अधिक धन की मांग करेंगे।
 - एशिया में सैन्य उपस्थिति घटाकर चीन पर ध्यान केंद्रित करेंगे।
- **चिंताएँ:**
 - उत्तर कोरिया और रूस की बढ़ती साझेदारी के बीच अमेरिकी नेतृत्व में कमी।
 - ट्रम्प की टैरिफ नीतियों से कोरिया के ऑटोमोबाइल और टेक उद्योग को खतरा।
- **जापान और दक्षिण कोरिया का सहयोग:**
 - अमेरिका के साथ त्रिपक्षीय सहयोग पर चर्चा होगी।
 - मुक्त व्यापार वार्ता को फिर से शुरू करने और दक्षिण कोरिया की **CPTPP (व्यापक एवं प्रगतिशील ट्रांस-पैसिफिक साझेदारी समझौता)** में संभावित भागीदारी पर बात होगी।
- **रणनीतिक संतुलन:**
 - दोनों देशों पर रक्षा खर्च बढ़ाने का दबाव है।
 - त्रिपक्षीय ढांचा (अमेरिका-जापान-दक्षिण कोरिया) द्विपक्षीय वार्ता से अधिक प्रभावी माना जा रहा है।
- **निहितार्थ:** दक्षिण कोरिया को अमेरिका की इंडो-पैसिफिक रणनीति का समर्थन करना होगा, लेकिन चीन को प्रत्यक्ष प्रतिद्वंद्वी बताए बिना संतुलन बनाना होगा।

UPSC/BPSC/JPSC प्रासंगिकता (जीएस पेपर-II – अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संबंध):

- एशिया में अमेरिका की भूमिका।
- ट्रम्प की नीतियों का वैश्विक व्यापार व सुरक्षा पर असर।
- इंडो-पैसिफिक रणनीति और भारत की स्थिति।