

DIA, DEOGHAR IAS ACADEMY

Daily News Feed

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U.S. sanctions Russian oil; Indian refineries poised to cut imports

Rosneft and Lukoil hit with sanctions for 'funding Kremlin's war machine', pushing global oil prices up 3%; Trump says India will cut down imports to 'almost nothing' by the year-end; Indian firms are 'recalibrating' to align with new govt. guidelines

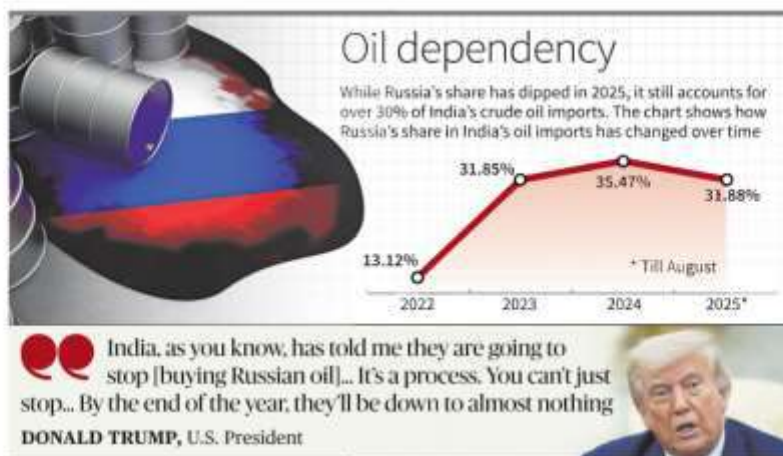
Reuters

WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI

U.S. President Donald Trump hit Russia's two biggest oil companies with sanctions in his latest policy shift on Moscow's war in Ukraine, prompting global oil prices to rise by 3% on Thursday.

Mr. Trump also reiterated his claim that India has agreed to "stop" buying oil from Russia and would bring its oil purchases down to "almost nothing" by the end of the year, and said he would persuade China to do the same. India and China are the two biggest buyers of Russian oil.

Indian refiners – including Reliance, the top Indian buyer of Russian crude – are poised to sharply curtail imports of Russian oil to comply with the new U.S. sanctions, industry sources said on Thursday.



The U.S. sanctions target oil giants Rosneft and Lukoil, which between them account for more than 5% of global oil output.

'Funding war'

The U.S. Treasury has given companies until November 21 to wind down their transactions with the

Russian oil producers.

"Given [Russian] President [Vladimir] Putin's refusal to end this senseless war, Treasury is sanctioning Russia's two largest oil companies that fund the Kremlin's war machine," U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said in a statement.

"We encourage our al-

lies to join us in and adhere to these sanctions."

Oil and gas revenue, currently down 21% year-on-year, accounts for a quarter of Russia's budget and is the most important source of funding for its war in Ukraine, now in its fourth year.

Mr. Trump expressed confidence regarding In-

dia's response to the sanctions. "India, as you know, has told me they are going to stop [buying Russian oil]... It's a process. You can't just stop... By the end of the year, they'll be down to almost nothing, almost 40% of the oil. India, they've been great. Spoke to Prime Minister [Narendra] Modi yesterday. They have been absolutely great," the U.S. President told the reporters at the White House on Wednesday.

Reliance Industries, which operates the world's biggest refining complex at Jamnagar in Gujarat, has a long-term deal to buy nearly 500,000 barrels per day of crude from Rosneft and also buys Russian oil from intermediaries.

It now plans to reduce or cease imports of Russian oil, including halting purchases under its deal with Rosneft, people familiar with the matter said.

GS Paper: GS-II (International Relations) & GS-III (Energy Security, Economy)

English Summary:

The U.S. imposed sanctions on Russia's largest oil firms, Rosneft and Lukoil, accusing them of financing Moscow's war in Ukraine. Global oil prices rose 3%. The U.S. Treasury gave firms until November 21 to end transactions. President Trump claimed India agreed to reduce Russian oil imports to "almost nothing." Reliance Industries, a major buyer, is planning to halt purchases from Rosneft.

Hindi Summary:

अमेरिका ने रूस की प्रमुख तेल कंपनियों — रॉसनेफ्ट और लुकोइल — पर प्रतिबंध लगाए, यह कहते हुए कि वे यूक्रेन युद्ध को वित्तपोषित कर रही हैं। वैश्विक तेल कीमतों में 3% की वृद्धि हुई। राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप ने कहा कि भारत वर्ष के अंत तक रूसी तेल खरीद लगभग शून्य कर देगा। रिलायंस इंडस्ट्रीज ने भी रूसी तेल आयात में कटौती का निर्णय लिया है।

Pan-India SIR to cover more than 10 States in first phase

Sreeparna Chakrabarty

NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) is all set to announce the schedule for a country-wide roll-out of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls at a press conference in the next few days. The first phase of the process will be implemented in more than 10 States and one Union Territory, including election-bound Assam, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala, and West Bengal.

The EC took stock of the preparedness of all States and Union Territories for the pan-India SIR, at the

two-day conference of Chief Electoral Officers (CEO) that concluded here on Thursday.

Schedule soon

The full commission will now discuss the matter and take a call on the schedule, which would be announced soon, sources told *The Hindu*.

The process is expected to be rolled out in two phases, beginning with Assam, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala, and West Bengal, where Assembly elections are due in 2026. Those States where local body polls are scheduled to be held and are likely to

experience harsh weather conditions during the winter will be tackled in later phases.

The sources said the commission heard the points raised by the CEOs of all States at the conference and while it responded to general queries and held a presentation on the SIR, no concrete decisions were announced at the meeting. It was stated that a decision would be communicated to all CEOs after the meeting of the Election Commission members.

The two-day conference was presided over by Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.

GS Paper Mapping:

GS Paper 2 – Polity & Governance (Election Commission, Electoral Reforms, Institutional Mechanisms)

English Summary:

The Election Commission (EC) is preparing to announce the schedule for the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls across India.

The process will begin with more than 10 States and one Union Territory, including Assam, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala, and West Bengal—where elections are due in 2026.

The SIR will be rolled out in two phases, starting with these election-bound States, followed by others where local body polls or harsh winter conditions may delay operations.

The Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar chaired a two-day conference of Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs), where States reviewed preparedness and data verification mechanisms.

The EC will soon announce the final schedule after internal discussions.

Hindi Summary (हिन्दी सारांश):

भारत निर्वाचन आयोग (EC) पूरे देश में मतदाता सूचियों के विशेष गहन पुनरीक्षण (Special Intensive Revision - SIR) की घोषणा करने वाला है।

इस प्रक्रिया का पहला चरण 10 से अधिक राज्यों और एक केंद्र शासित प्रदेश में लागू किया जाएगा, जिनमें असम, तमिलनाडु, पुडुचेरी, केरल और पश्चिम बंगाल शामिल हैं — जहाँ 2026 में विधानसभा चुनाव होने वाले हैं। यह प्रक्रिया दो चरणों में चलाई जाएगी। पहले चरण में चुनावी राज्य होंगे और बाद में उन राज्यों को शामिल किया जाएगा जहाँ स्थानीय निकाय चुनाव या सर्द मौसम की कठिनाइयाँ हैं। मुख्य निर्वाचन आयुक्त ज्ञानेश कुमार की अध्यक्षता में हुई दो दिवसीय बैठक में राज्यों ने अपनी तैयारियों की समीक्षा की। निर्वाचन आयोग आंतरिक चर्चा के बाद जल्द ही औपचारिक कार्यक्रम घोषित करेगा।

Exam Relevance:

- Role of Election Commission in maintaining electoral integrity.
- Mechanism of revision of electoral rolls.
- Importance of SIR for free and fair elections before major Assembly polls (e.g., Assam, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, WB – due in 2026).
- Institutional coordination through Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs).

Modi to participate in ASEAN meet virtually, drops Malaysia travel plan

Kallol Bhattacharjee

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will not travel to Malaysia to attend the 47th ASEAN summit on October 26, but will participate in it virtually. This was announced by him in a social media post on Thursday.

The annual summit of the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN), a 10-nation grouping, and associated meetings will be held from October 26 to 28 in Kuala Lumpur.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has not provided any reason for Mr. Modi's decision, though Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said that Mr. Modi had cited the "ongoing Deepavali celebrations" as the reason for the change in plans.

Jaishankar goes instead

The Ministry announced that External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar would represent Mr. Modi and lead the Indian delegation at the summit on October 27.

"Had a warm conversa-



Diplomatic stage: The annual summit of the ASEAN and related meetings will be held in Kuala Lumpur from October 26 to 28. AFP

tion with my dear friend, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim of Malaysia. Congratulated him on Malaysia's ASEAN Chairmanship and conveyed best wishes for the success of upcoming summits. Look forward to joining the ASEAN-India Summit virtually, and to further deepening of the ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership," Mr. Modi said.

In a statement posted on X, Mr. Ibrahim said he had discussed the details of the summit with Mr. Modi. "...I respect his decision and extended my greetings for a happy Deepavali to him and the people of India."

The summit will draw a

host of dignitaries, including U.S. President Donald Trump. It was expected that the venue would be a meeting opportunity for Mr. Modi and Mr. Trump, especially as the India-U.S. relations remain uneasy after Mr. Trump imposed punitive tariff on India because of India's purchase of Russian crude oil.

Mr. Trump and Mr. Modi exchanged greetings on Deepavali on Tuesday as the India-U.S. negotiations for a trade pact continue. The two sides, however, gave differing takes of the conversation with Mr. Trump telling a group of prominent Indian-Americans and Indian Embassy officials in the White House

that the call focused on trade deal, purchase of Russian oil and "no war with Pakistan", and the Indian sources maintaining that Pakistan was not discussed during the call.

Officials had earlier given mixed signals about Mr. Modi's travel plans for Kuala Lumpur saying that the Bihar election campaign requires the Prime Minister's attention. Earlier, Mr. Trump had invited Mr. Modi to the Sharm-el-Sheikh peace summit for ceasefire in the Gaza Strip but India was represented at the event by Kirti Vardhan Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs.

Since the U.S.'s imposition of 50% punitive tariff on India on August 7, Mr. Modi and Mr. Trump have spoken on multiple occasions, but have not met despite meeting opportunities. The official-level conversation has also become difficult as Mr. Trump continues to insist that he mediated an end to the May 2025 conflict between India and Pakistan, a claim that Indian officials have refused to confirm.

GS Paper: GS-II (International Relations – India and ASEAN)

English Summary:

PM Modi decided not to travel to Kuala Lumpur for the ASEAN Summit, citing Deepavali and Bihar election commitments. He will attend virtually, while External Affairs Minister **S. Jaishankar** will lead the delegation. U.S. President Trump is attending, and this decision avoids a possible face-off amid tensions over trade tariffs and Russian oil.

Hindi Summary:

प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने मलेशिया में होने वाले आसियान शिखर सम्मेलन में व्यक्तिगत रूप से शामिल न होने का निर्णय लिया है और अब वह इसे वर्चुअल रूप से संबोधित करेंगे। विदेश मंत्री एस. जयशंकर भारतीय प्रतिनिधिमंडल का नेतृत्व करेंगे। यह कदम डोनाल्ड ट्रंप से टकराव से बचने के रूप में देखा जा रहा है, क्योंकि भारत-अमेरिका के बीच हाल में व्यापारिक तनाव बढ़ा है।

India, Bhutan review security cooperation, border management

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

India and Bhutan reviewed border management and security in a meeting held at Thimphu from October 16-17, a statement by the Union Home Ministry said on Thursday.

The Ministry said the two countries had reviewed bilateral security cooperation and border management issues, including mobile signal spillover, future road map for integrated check posts, maintenance of boundary pillars, and cross-border movement.

Discussions covered capacity building for Bhutan's police. The delegations expressed satisfaction at the cordial and constructive discussions and reiterated their resolve to work together for a safe, secure and prosperous border, the Ministry said.

This was the 14th India-Bhutan Border Management and Security meeting. The last meeting was held in 2019.

The Indian delegation was led by Rajendra Kumar, Secretary, Department of Border Management, Home Ministry, while the Bhutanese side was headed by Sonam Wangyel, Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs.

India shares a 699-km border with Bhutan, running along the States of Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. "Reaffirming their strong friendship, India and Bhutan committed to deepening cooperation across traditional and emerging areas... Their enduring partnership, rooted in shared geography, culture, and people-to-people ties, continues to serve as a model for regional cooperation," the Ministry said.

English Summary:

India and Bhutan held the **14th India-Bhutan Border Management and Security Meeting in Thimphu (October 16-17)** to review bilateral cooperation on **security and border management**.

The discussions covered:

- **Mobile signal spillover,**
- **Integrated check posts,**
- **Boundary pillar maintenance,**
- **Cross-border movement, and**
- **Capacity building for Bhutan's police.**

Both sides reiterated their commitment to strengthen coordination and enhance cooperation for a **secure and peaceful border region**.

The Indian delegation was led by **Rajendra Kumar, Secretary (Border Management), Ministry of Home Affairs**, while Bhutan's delegation was headed by **Sonam Wangyel, Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs**. India shares a **699 km border** with Bhutan, touching **Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam, and Arunachal Pradesh**.

The Ministry reaffirmed that India and Bhutan's partnership, rooted in shared geography and people-to-people ties, continues to serve as a **model for regional cooperation** in South Asia.

Hindi Summary (हिन्दी सारांश):

भारत और भूटान के बीच **14वीं सीमा प्रबंधन एवं सुरक्षा बैठक (16-17 अक्टूबर, थिम्फू)** में आयोजित हुई, जिसमें द्विपक्षीय **सुरक्षा सहयोग और सीमा प्रबंधन** पर विस्तार से चर्चा हुई।

बैठक में निम्न मुद्दों पर विचार किया गया:

- मोबाइल सिग्नल के फैलाव को रोकना,
- एकीकृत जांच चौकियों की रूपरेखा,
- सीमा स्तंभों का रखरखाव,
- सीमा पार आवाजाही का प्रबंधन,
- और भूटान की पुलिस के लिए क्षमता निर्माण।

दोनों देशों ने **सीमा क्षेत्र में शांति और सुरक्षा** बनाए रखने के लिए सहयोग को और मजबूत करने पर सहमति जताई।

भारतीय पक्ष का नेतृत्व **राजेंद्र कुमार (सचिव, सीमा प्रबंधन विभाग, गृह मंत्रालय)** ने किया, जबकि भूटान की ओर से **सोनम वांग्येल (सचिव, गृह मंत्रालय)** ने प्रतिनिधित्व किया।

भारत और भूटान के बीच **699 किमी लंबी सीमा** है, जो **सिक्किम, पश्चिम बंगाल, असम और अरुणाचल प्रदेश** राज्यों से होकर गुजरती है।

बैठक में यह भी कहा गया कि दोनों देशों की साझेदारी **साझी भूगोल, संस्कृति और जन-से-जन संबंधों** पर आधारित है और यह क्षेत्रीय सहयोग का **आदर्श उदाहरण** बनी हुई है।

DCGI brings in stricter norms for tracking supply chain of high-risk solvents

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

The Drugs Controller General (India) has directed digital monitoring on the Online National Drugs Licensing System (ONDLS) for tracking the supply chain of high-risk solvents.

The order, issued earlier this week, comes following serious safety concerns after the death of over 20 children under the age of five years allegedly due to contamination of cough syrups with diethylene glycol (DEG) recently in Madhya Pradesh. DEG is a toxic colourless and odourless liquid with a sweet taste, often used as an industrial solvent.

ONDLS is a single-window digital platform in India for processing drug- and cosmetic-related applications for manufacturing



A digital monitoring system on the ONDLS portal has to be set up for monitoring the supply chain of the high-risk solvents. GETTY IMAGES

and sales licences, and various certificates.

In his letter, DCGI head Rajeev Singh Raghuvanshi noted, "It has been decided that a Digital Monitoring System on the ONDLS portal needs to be established for monitoring the supply chain as well as the quality of the high-risk solvents, including Propylene Glycol."

Dr. Raghuvanshi said

that as per the latest order, all the manufacturers of pharma grade solvents should obtain manufacturing licence through the ONDLS portal. The letter noted that in case the manufacturer already held the manufacturing licence, he must register on the ONDLS portal and submit the data through Old Licence Management under ONDLS.

GS Paper 2 – Governance (Health Regulation & Institutional Mechanisms)

GS Paper 3 – Science & Technology (Pharmaceutical Regulation, Industrial Safety)

English Summary:

The **Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI)** has introduced **digital monitoring** under the **Online**

National Drugs Licensing System (ONDLS) to strengthen the tracking and regulation of **high-risk industrial solvents** such as **Diethylene Glycol (DEG)** and **Propylene Glycol**.

This move follows recent incidents, including the death of over **20 children** in **Madhya Pradesh**, allegedly due to **DEG contamination in cough syrups**.

DEG is a **toxic, colourless, odourless liquid** often used as an industrial solvent but misused in pharmaceutical formulations, leading to fatalities.

Under the new directive:

- A **Digital Monitoring System** will monitor both the **supply chain** and **quality** of such solvents.
- Manufacturers of **pharma-grade solvents** must obtain their manufacturing licence through the **ONDLS portal**.
- Even existing licence holders must register on ONDLS and submit their data through the **Old Licence Management** system.
- ONDLS acts as a **single-window digital platform** for drug-related licences, approvals, and certifications across India.

The initiative aims to ensure **traceability, accountability**, and **prevent adulteration** in medicines by closing regulatory gaps in the pharmaceutical supply chain.

Hindi Summary (हिन्दी सारांश):

भारत के औषधि नियंत्रक महानियंत्रक (DCGI) ने ऑनलाइन नेशनल ड्रग लाइसेंसिंग सिस्टम (ONDLS) के माध्यम से उच्च जोखिम वाले औद्योगिक सॉल्वेंट्स की आपूर्ति श्रृंखला की निगरानी हेतु डिजिटल मॉनिटरिंग प्रणाली लागू की है। यह निर्णय हाल ही में मध्य प्रदेश में डाइएथिलीन ग्लाइकोल (DEG) युक्त खांसी की दवाओं से 20 से अधिक बच्चों की मृत्यु के बाद लिया गया।

DEG एक विषैला, रंगहीन और गंधहीन द्रव है जिसका उपयोग उद्योगों में सॉल्वेंट के रूप में किया जाता है, किंतु औषधियों में मिलाए जाने पर यह घातक सिद्ध होता है।

नए आदेश के अनुसार:

- **ONDLS पोर्टल** पर एक **डिजिटल मॉनिटरिंग सिस्टम** स्थापित किया जाएगा जो इन सॉल्वेंट्स की **आपूर्ति श्रृंखला और गुणवत्ता** दोनों की निगरानी करेगा।
- **फार्मा-ग्रेड सॉल्वेंट्स** के सभी निर्माता अब **ONDLS पोर्टल** से निर्माण लाइसेंस प्राप्त करेंगे।
- पहले से लाइसेंसधारी निर्माताओं को भी पोर्टल पर पंजीकरण कर डेटा अपलोड करना होगा।
- यह कदम **दवा निर्माण प्रक्रिया में पारदर्शिता, उत्तरदायित्व और गुणवत्ता नियंत्रण** सुनिश्चित करने के लिए उठाया गया है।

Exam Relevance:

- Regulatory framework for **pharmaceutical safety in India** (DCGI, CDSCO).
- Importance of **digital governance** in health and industry sectors.
- Case study for **policy response after public health tragedy**.
- Topic linkage: *Ethics in Public Administration, GS-III Industrial Regulation, GS-II Health Governance.*

Tri-services to get systems, platforms for ₹79,000 cr.

The acquisitions are designed to enhance lethality, mobility and intelligence-gathering capabilities across the services; Defence Acquisition Council, chaired by Rajnath, approves the proposals

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, on Thursday approved a series of capital acquisition proposals worth around ₹79,000 crore aimed at strengthening the operational capabilities of the Army, Navy and Air Force.

The Defence Ministry said the approvals granted during a meeting at South Block would cover a wide spectrum of platforms and systems designed to enhance lethality, mobility, and intelligence-gathering capabilities across the Services.

For the Army, the DAC accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for the procurement of the Nag missile system (tracked) Mk-II (NAMIS), ground-based mobile ELINT System (GBMES), and high-mobility vehicles (HMs) with material handling cranes.

The NAMIS (Tracked) will bolster the Army's ability to destroy enemy armoured vehicles, bunkers,



The Anti Tank Guided Missile Nag Mk II being successfully tested from a light tank developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation. PTI

and other fortified positions, while the GBMES will provide round-the-clock electronic intelligence on enemy emitters. The induction of HMs is expected to significantly enhance logistic support in challenging terrains.

For the Navy, the AoN was granted for the acquisition of landing platform docks (LPDs), 30 mm naval surface guns, advanced light weight torpedoes (ALWTs), electro-optical infrared search-and-track systems, and smart ammunition for 76 mm super rapid gun mounts.

The LPDs will augment the Navy's amphibious warfare capabilities and enable it to undertake joint operations with the Army and Air Force. They will also enhance India's capacity to conduct peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief (HADR) missions. The indigenously developed ALWT by the DRDO's Naval Science and Technological Laboratory is capable of engaging conventional, nuclear, and midjet submarines.

For the Indian Air Force, the AoN was accorded for

the collaborative long-range target saturation/destruction system (CLRTS/DS) and other related systems. The CLRTS/DS features autonomous take-off and landing, navigation, target detection and payload delivery capabilities, aimed at augmenting the IAF's long-range precision engagement capacity.

The approvals reflect the government's continuing emphasis on modernisation, self-reliance and indigenisation under the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative, officials said.

GS Paper 3 – Defence, Internal Security, Science & Technology (Indigenisation of Defence Technology, Modernisation of Armed Forces)

English Summary:

The **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)**, chaired by **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh**, has approved capital acquisition proposals worth **₹79,000 crore** to enhance the operational capabilities of the **Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force**.

These acquisitions aim to improve **lethality, mobility, and intelligence-gathering capabilities**

under the government's "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" initiative for self-reliance in defence manufacturing.

Key Approvals:

- **For the Army:**
 - Procurement of **Nag Missile System (NAMIS)** – an anti-tank guided missile platform.
 - **Ground-based mobile ELINT System (GBMES)** for electronic intelligence on enemy emitters.
 - **High Mobility Vehicles (HMs)** with material-handling cranes for logistics in difficult terrains.
- **For the Navy:**
 - **Landing Platform Docks (LPDs)** to strengthen amphibious warfare and joint operations.
 - **30 mm naval surface guns, advanced lightweight torpedoes (ALWTs), and electro-optical search-and-track systems.**
 - These will enhance **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)**, peacekeeping, and combat missions.
- **For the Air Force:**
 - **Collaborative Long-Range Target Saturation/Destruction System (CLRTS/DS)** to increase precision strike capacity.
 - Features include **autonomous take-off and landing, navigation, and target detection.**

All systems are to be **indigenously developed** under the **Make in India** framework, focusing on strengthening India's defence manufacturing base through DRDO and domestic industries.

Hindi Summary (हिन्दी सारांश):

रक्षा अधिग्रहण परिषद (DAC) की बैठक में, जिसकी अध्यक्षता **रक्षा मंत्री राजनाथ सिंह** ने की, **₹79,000 करोड़** के पूंजीगत अधिग्रहण प्रस्तावों को स्वीकृति दी गई।

इनका उद्देश्य **थलसेना, नौसेना और वायुसेना** की **घातकता, गतिशीलता और खुफिया क्षमताओं** को सुदृढ़ बनाना है।

मुख्य स्वीकृतियाँ:

- **थलसेना के लिए:**
 - **नाग मिसाइल सिस्टम (NAMIS)** — टैंक रोधी मिसाइल प्रणाली।
 - **ग्राउंड-बेस्ड मोबाइल ईएलआईएनटी सिस्टम (GBMES)** — दुश्मन संचार और सिग्नल पर इलेक्ट्रॉनिक खुफिया निगरानी हेतु।
 - **हाई मोबिलिटी वाहन (HMs)** — कठिन क्षेत्रों में लॉजिस्टिक सहायता हेतु।
- **नौसेना के लिए:**
 - **लैंडिंग प्लेटफॉर्म डॉक (LPDs)** — उभयचर युद्ध क्षमता और त्रि-सेना अभियानों में सहयोग के लिए।
 - **30 मिमी नौसैनिक बंदूकें, एडवांस्ड लाइटवेट टॉरपीडो (ALWTs), और इलेक्ट्रो-ऑप्टिकल ट्रैकिंग सिस्टम।**
 - इन प्रणालियों से नौसेना की **शांति स्थापना, मानवीय सहायता (HADR) और आपदा राहत क्षमता** बढ़ेगी।
- **वायुसेना के लिए:**
 - **लॉन्ग-रेंज टारगेट सैचुरेशन/डिस्ट्रक्शन सिस्टम (CLRTS/DS)** — सटीक हमले की क्षमता में वृद्धि।
 - इसमें **स्वचालित टेक-ऑफ/लैंडिंग, नेविगेशन और लक्ष्य पहचान** जैसी उन्नत विशेषताएँ होंगी।

सभी प्रणालियाँ '**आत्मनिर्भर भारत**' कार्यक्रम के अंतर्गत **स्वदेशी रूप से विकसित** की जाएँगी, जिससे **रक्षा निर्माण में स्वावलंबन और घरेलू उद्योगों की भागीदारी** को बल मिलेगा।

90% of Gaganyaan development work done: ISRO chief

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman V. Narayanan on Thursday said that about 90% of the development work on the Gaganyaan mission had been completed.

“The Gaganyaan mission is going on very well. A lot of technological development has to take place. Number one, the rocket has to be human-rated, the life support system, the crew escape system and of course, human-centric products. I can say today that approximately 90% of the development work has been completed,” Mr. Narayanan told presspersons in Bengaluru. He added that the crewed mission to launch the Indian astronauts into space would take place in 2027 and prior to that, ISRO would undertake three uncrewed missions.

“Three uncrewed missions have to be accomplished, the first uncrewed mission with the humanoid Vyomitra is expected to take flight by the end of this year. We want to accomplish the crewed mission by 2027,” he said.



V. Narayanan

The Gaganyaan project envisages demonstration of human spaceflight capability by launching a crew of three members to an orbit of 400 km for a three-day mission and bringing them back safely to Earth by landing in Indian sea waters.

On the NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) satellite launched on July 30, 2025, Mr. Narayanan said that the satellite was healthy and it would be declared operational in another 10-15 days.

NISAR is the first satellite to observe the earth with a dual-frequency Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) – NASA’s L-band and ISRO’s S-band – both using NASA’s 12-metre unfurlable mesh reflector antenna, integrated with ISRO’s modified I3K satellite bus.

GS Paper 3 – Science & Technology | Space Technology | Achievements of Indians in Science & Technology

English Summary:

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman V. Narayanan announced that nearly **90% of the development work** on India's maiden **human spaceflight mission — Gaganyaan —** has been completed.

Key Highlights:

- **Gaganyaan Mission Objective:**
 - To demonstrate **human spaceflight capability** by sending a **three-member Indian crew** to **400 km low Earth orbit** for **three days**, followed by a **safe splashdown in Indian waters**.
- **Technological Milestones:**
 - **Human-rating** of the launch vehicle (LVM3).
 - **Crew escape system** for astronaut safety.
 - **Life support system** and human-centric design products.
 - **Uncrewed missions** for testing before the actual crewed flight.
- **Timeline:**
 - Three uncrewed missions will precede the human mission.
 - The **first uncrewed mission with the humanoid Vyommitra** is scheduled for **late 2025**, while the **manned mission** is targeted for **2027**.
- **NISAR Collaboration:**
 - The **NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR)** satellite (launched July 30, 2025) — first dual-frequency SAR satellite (L-band & S-band) — is healthy and will become operational soon.

Significance:

This mission will make India the **fourth nation** to independently send humans to space (after the U.S., Russia, and China). It demonstrates **technological maturity, self-reliance, and indigenous capability** in space exploration.

Hindi Summary (हिन्दी सारांश):

भारतीय अंतरिक्ष अनुसंधान संगठन (ISRO) के अध्यक्ष **वी. नारायणन** ने बताया कि भारत के पहले **मानव अंतरिक्ष मिशन “गगनयान”** से संबंधित लगभग **90% विकास कार्य पूरा हो चुका है**।

मुख्य बिंदु:

- **गगनयान मिशन का उद्देश्य:**
 - तीन भारतीय अंतरिक्ष यात्रियों को **400 किलोमीटर की निम्न पृथ्वी कक्षा (Low Earth Orbit)** में **तीन दिन तक** भेजना और उन्हें **भारतीय समुद्री जल में सुरक्षित लैंडिंग** के साथ वापस लाना।
- **तकनीकी उपलब्धियाँ:**
 - प्रक्षेपण यान (LVM3) का **मानव-रेटिंग**।
 - **कू एस्केप सिस्टम** (आपातकालीन बचाव प्रणाली)।
 - **लाइफ सपोर्ट सिस्टम** और मानव-केंद्रित डिज़ाइन उत्पाद।
 - वास्तविक मानव मिशन से पहले **तीन मानवरहित परीक्षण मिशन**।
- **समयरेखा:**
 - **पहला मानवरहित मिशन**, जिसमें ह्यूमैनाईड “**व्योममित्रा**” शामिल होगी, **2025 के अंत तक** किया जाएगा।
 - **मानव मिशन 2027 में प्रस्तावित है**।
- **नासा-इसरो सहयोग:**
 - **NISAR उपग्रह** (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar), जो **दोहरे आवृत्ति (L-band और S-band)** पर पृथ्वी का अवलोकन करेगा, **स्वस्थ है और 15 दिनों में परिचालन में आने की उम्मीद है**।

महत्व:

यह मिशन भारत को **अमेरिका, रूस और चीन** के बाद चौथा देश बनाएगा जो स्वतंत्र रूप से **मानव को अंतरिक्ष में**

भेज सकेगा। यह भारत की वैज्ञानिक क्षमता, आत्मनिर्भरता और तकनीकी दक्षता का प्रतीक है।

Exam Relevance:

- **Gaganyaan:** objectives, technology, significance for India's space program.
- **NISAR Satellite:** Indo-US space cooperation.
- **Space Technology** in GS-III – achievements, applications, and future missions.
- **Ethics & Governance link:** Promoting indigenous innovation under *Atmanirbhar Bharat*.

Bombay HC sets up panel to protect Sanjay Gandhi park from encroachments

Purnima Sah

MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court has constituted a high-powered committee headed by former Allahabad High Court Chief Justice Dilip Babasaheb Bhosale to protect and preserve the Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) after observing that successive governments have failed to implement its directions to safeguard the park for nearly 30 years.

The Division Bench of Chief Justice Shree Chandrashekhar and Justice Gautam A. Ankhad was hearing a contempt petition and a PIL alleging “gross contempt” of multiple orders aimed at safeguarding SGNP, a 104 sq.km. green expanse within Mumbai and Thane. Despite repeated judicial interventions since the late 1990s, the court noted that the State had not taken “effective steps” to comply with its directions.

The order passed on October 16 and made available on Wednesday (October 22, 2025), said, “Various orders passed by this Court over a period of thirty years are still to be complied with. This has perhaps led to further encroachments in SGNP.”

The court recorded that



Urban oasis: The park acts as Mumbai's 'green lung', absorbing carbon emissions and replenishing groundwater. FILE PHOTO

only 49 km of the 154 km boundary wall has been built, despite orders in 1997, 1999, 2000 and a final judgment in 2003. Even subsequent directions in 2024 and early 2025 were not followed. The judges observed that this prolonged inaction has allowed encroachments to spread deeper into the park.

Calling SGNP “a crown jewel for the cities of Mumbai and Thane”, the Bench observed, “Considering the present scenario, and to ensure that steps are taken for protection of SGNP, we deem it necessary to constitute a High Power Committee.”

SGNP is one of the few national parks in the world located within city limits. Spread over 104 sq km, it is home to leopards, over 1,000 plant species, and the ancient Kanheri caves

dating back to the 1st century BCE. The park acts as Mumbai's “green lung”, absorbing carbon emissions and replenishing groundwater. Encroachments and unchecked urbanisation have long threatened its ecosystem.

The committee will include Justice Bhosale as chairperson, former Maharashtra Chief Secretary Nitin Kareer, former Director General of Police Subodh-kumar Jaiswal, and Anita Patil, Conservator of Forests and SGNP director, as member secretaries.

The panel has to expedite construction of the boundary wall, suggest measures for compliance, identify land and oversee rehabilitation of encroachers, and recommend steps for removal of illegal structures.

The matter will be heard next on February 19, 2026.

GS Paper: GS-III (Environment, Conservation, Biodiversity)

English Summary:

The Bombay High Court constituted a **High-Powered Committee** led by Justice Dilip Bhosale to safeguard **Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP)**, citing 30 years of non-compliance by successive governments. The park faces encroachment and boundary-wall construction delays. The court called SGNP “Mumbai’s green lung.”

Hindi Summary:

बॉम्बे हाईकोर्ट ने संजय गांधी राष्ट्रीय उद्यान (SGNP) की सुरक्षा और अतिक्रमण से रक्षा हेतु पूर्व न्यायमूर्ति दिलीप भोसले की अध्यक्षता में उच्च-स्तरीय समिति गठित की है। न्यायालय ने कहा कि पिछले तीन दशकों से सरकारें इसके आदेशों का पालन करने में विफल रही हैं। उद्यान को मुंबई का “ग्रीन लंग” कहा गया है।

Good job

Factories must provide facilities for women employed in hazardous jobs

Small, incremental steps are what set a fly-wheel in motion. As far as labour laws go, the Tamil Nadu government's proposal to allow women to be employed in about 20 operations listed as 'dangerous', and from which they were prohibited from being employed in so far, is progressive. The government has proposed amendments to the Tamil Nadu Factories Rules, 1950, to allow women to take up even jobs titled hazardous or dangerous, when these Rules come into practice; only pregnant women and young persons will be barred from these jobs. Earlier, the government had amended the Rules to allow women to be deployed on the night shift in factories, changing the historic practice of keeping them out. In this recent amendment, which was hosted in the public realm for feedback in September, factories are also required to get the woman's consent in writing for the night shift. These are changes that have come literally, rule by rule, but in effect, the government has shrugged off its patriarchal stance here, freeing up women from the perception that they are vulnerable and weak and will have to be protected by the State. The operations which are set to be opened for women include electrolytic process, glass manufacture, manufacture and treatment of lead, generation of gas and petroleum, blasting, liming and tanning of raw hides and skins, graphite powdering, manufacture of dichromates and carcinogenic dye intermediates, fireworks and match factories, manufacture of manganese, dangerous pesticides, use of benzene, and operations involving high noise and vibration levels.

Removing legal barriers is the first step toward implementing progressive measures that will facilitate more equitable workplaces. However crucial this first step is in rectifying age-old patriarchy-reinforced assigned gender roles in society and industry, it is not enough. This should be followed up by provision of adequate amenities and facilities for women, including separate toilets, changing rooms, and closed areas for conducting medical checks which are mandated for such industries, besides drop home facilities in places that have hitherto had no women workers at all. This will clearly require some investment, close involvement of the management, and at least initially, active monitoring by State labour authorities. The government must also take care to ensure that women who are in circumstances that might not enable their participation in these jobs are not forced into them, or penalised for not opting for these tasks. Without this being set in place, any progressive measure to dismantle the barriers that keep Indian society from being a more equitable job market will turn out to be a damp squib.

GS Paper 2 – Governance (Women Empowerment, Labour Laws, Social Justice)
GS Paper 3 – Inclusive Growth and Employment, Industrial Reforms

English Summary:

The editorial appreciates the **Tamil Nadu government's progressive amendment** to the **Tamil Nadu Factories Rules, 1950**, which allows **women to work in hazardous and dangerous operations** previously restricted to men.

Key Highlights:

- The amendment permits women to be employed in **around 20 hazardous sectors**, including:
 - Electrolytic processes, glass manufacture, lead treatment, petroleum and gas generation, tanning, graphite and manganese manufacture, pesticides, and fireworks industries.
- **Exceptions:** Only **pregnant women and minors** are barred.
- **Earlier Reform:** Women were allowed to work **night shifts** with **written consent**.
- **Objective:** To end **gender-based occupational segregation** and challenge the **patriarchal perception** that women are vulnerable and need protection.

Concerns and Recommendations:

- Removing legal barriers is just a **first step**; ensuring **safety, facilities, and equality** is essential.
- Factories must provide:
 - **Separate toilets, changing rooms, rest areas, medical check-up rooms, and drop-home facilities** for night-shift women.
- Implementation requires **monitoring by State Labour Departments** and cooperation from **factory management**.
- Women must not be **coerced** into such jobs or **penalised** for refusing hazardous work.
- The goal should be to create a **safe, equitable, and dignified workspace** for all genders.

Editorial Insight:

The move is a **step toward gender equality in industrial labour**, but success will depend on how effectively the State enforces **workplace safety norms and social safeguards**.

Hindi Summary (हिन्दी सारांश):

संपादकीय में तमिलनाडु सरकार द्वारा फैक्ट्री नियम, 1950 में किए गए संशोधन की सराहना की गई है, जिसके तहत अब महिलाएँ उन **खतरनाक या जोखिमपूर्ण कार्यों** में भी नियोजित की जा सकती हैं, जिन पर पहले प्रतिबंध था।

मुख्य बिंदु:

- संशोधन के तहत महिलाएँ लगभग **20 प्रकार के खतरनाक उद्योगों** में काम कर सकती हैं, जैसे:
 - इलेक्ट्रोलाइटिक प्रक्रिया, कांच निर्माण, सीसे का उपचार, पेट्रोलियम उत्पादन, चमड़ा टैनिंग, ग्रेफाइट व मैंगनीज़ उत्पादन, कीटनाशक, और आतिशबाज़ी उद्योग।
- **अपवाद:** केवल **गर्भवती महिलाएँ और नाबालिग** इन नौकरियों से वंचित रहेंगी।
- **पूर्व सुधार:** महिलाओं को **रात्रिकालीन पाली (Night Shift)** में कार्य करने की अनुमति दी गई थी, लेकिन **उनकी लिखित सहमति** आवश्यक है।
- **उद्देश्य:** समाज में व्याप्त **पितृसत्तात्मक धारणा** को चुनौती देना कि महिलाएँ कमजोर हैं और खतरनाक कार्यों के योग्य नहीं।

चिंताएँ और सुझाव:

- कानूनी अनुमति पर्याप्त नहीं है; **सुरक्षा और सुविधाओं** की व्यवस्था आवश्यक है।
- कारखानों को प्रदान करनी होंगी:
 - **अलग शौचालय, वस्त्र परिवर्तन कक्ष, विश्राम स्थल, चिकित्सा जांच कक्ष, और रात्रि पाली में ड्रॉप-होम सुविधा।**
- **राज्य श्रम विभाग** को निगरानी करनी चाहिए ताकि नियमों का पालन हो।
- महिलाओं को ऐसे कार्यों के लिए **मजबूर या दंडित** नहीं किया जाना चाहिए।
- उद्देश्य होना चाहिए कि महिलाओं को **सुरक्षित, समान और सम्मानजनक कार्यस्थल** प्राप्त हो।

संपादकीय दृष्टिकोण:

यह पहल **महिला सशक्तिकरण और समान अवसर** की दिशा में एक महत्वपूर्ण कदम है, लेकिन सफलता **व्यवहारिक क्रियान्वयन और कार्यस्थल सुरक्षा** पर निर्भर करेगी।

🌟 Exam Relevance:

- Labour Reforms in India – Tamil Nadu Factories Rules, 1950.
- Women Empowerment in Workplace – Maternity, Safety, Equality.
- GS-II (Governance, Policies, Social Justice).
- GS-III (Inclusive Growth, Labour and Industrial Safety).
- Essay Paper relevance: *Gender Equality and Work Participation in India*.

How do monsoons affect Tamil Nadu?

How are heavy rains affecting cities, farmland, and infrastructure? What are the health and environmental risks of prolonged heavy rainfall? What role is the Mullaperiyar Dam playing in rising flood risk? Can Tamil Nadu manage simultaneous inflows from Kerala and local monsoon rains?

EXPLAINER

Yasudevan Mukunth

The story so far

The northeast monsoon has kicked in early this year, at least four days sooner for the second year running, over Tamil Nadu. Last year, this phase of the monsoon ended with the State recording 33% more rain than the long-period average, and forecasters expect this year to go the same way.

Historically, policymakers and State authorities have consistently interpreted excess rain as a positive. Climate change is complicating this calculus because while rainfall volumes increase, they are often concentrated in short and localised bursts, delivering over-large quantities of water in places that often can't absorb them in full. As a result, it might be time to reconsider the idea that "excess is good".

Why is excess rainfall a concern?

In urban areas, surfaces paved with concrete and asphalt keep them from absorbing heavy rainfall, leading to rapid runoff that overwhelms drainage systems, leading to flash floods, low-lying areas being inundated, property damage, and disrupted transportation.

As seen during Cyclone Michaung and Tamil Nadu in 2023, urban power authorities are also prone to cutting power supply in such circumstances, citing loose cables. The sheer volume of water can also lead to sewage overflows, where untreated wastewater is discharged into streets and waterbodies, unleashing significant health and environmental hazards.

The agricultural sector's vulnerability to excessive rainfall is well-known: waterlogged soil suffocates plant roots, washes away seeds and young crops, sheds the nutrient-rich topsoil over time, and ultimately loses its long-term fertility.



Raging flow: Surplus water being released from the Mullaperiyar Dam. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Too much moisture can also ease the spread of fungal diseases and pests that devastate crops and undercut yield, leading to significant financial losses for farmers. Intense bursts can also wash fertilizers, pesticides, and other agricultural debris into waterbodies, including reservoirs, degrading water quality. Finally, stagnant water becomes a breeding ground for mosquitoes, increasing the risk of vector-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue fever and zoonotic diseases like leptospirosis, Japanese encephalitis, and scrub typhus.

What are the wider impacts?

Prolonged periods of rainfall also raise the water table, the level below which the ground is saturated with water. And a persistently high water table can compromise the stability of building foundations, roads, and other infrastructure: it can also exert pressure on basement walls, leading to cracks, leaks, and the growth of mold. Saturated soil also loses its load-bearing capacity and causes foundations to shift or settle, potentially leading to significant structural damage over time.

The cumulative impact of these issues translates to significant economic and social costs. Damage to buildings, public infrastructure, and agricultural land warrants substantial investments in repair and rebuilding solutions. Disruptions to businesses and transport networks hamper economic activity. Flooding and landslides can also displace communities, injure people, and even kill them if they are particularly vulnerable. The psychological toll on affected populations, including stress and anxiety, is another significant and often overlooked consequence.

Why is Tamil Nadu particularly vulnerable?

Tamil Nadu, in particular, needs to consider the Kerala factor as well. The two States receive rain from two different monsoon patterns: Kerala's primary rainy season is the southwest monsoon from June to September, whereas Tamil Nadu receives most of its rain during the northeast monsoon from October to December. An important problem arises when these monsoon periods overlap or when both States experience intense

rainfall simultaneously. This is currently the case with the early onset of the northeast monsoon.

At the heart of the issue is the Mullaperiyar Dam, which, while it is located in Kerala's Idukki district, is operated by the Tamil Nadu government to divert water to irrigate farmlands. There is, as a result, a 'direct' link between the rainfall in Kerala's catchment areas and the water levels in Tamil Nadu's river systems.

When the catchment areas of the Mullaperiyar Dam receive heavy rainfall, the reservoir fills up rapidly. To ensure the dam's safety and to manage the rising water levels, Tamil Nadu's authorities are compelled to open the dam's shutters. The released water flows in two directions and risks creating a double whammy. One portion flows down the Periyar river within Kerala, potentially flooding the low-lying areas of Idukki district and creating an inter-State issue while the primary flow is diverted to Tamil Nadu's Vaigai Dam. And this influx may arrive precisely when Tamil Nadu's own rivers and reservoirs are already swollen from the ongoing northeast monsoon.

What is happening on the ground now?

This simultaneous influx thus turns Kerala's "excess" water from a potential resource into an immediate flood risk for Tamil Nadu. Instead of just managing the rainwater falling within its own borders, Tamil Nadu must also handle a massive, concentrated inflow from its neighbour. The State is currently keeping all 13 shutters of the Mullaperiyar Dam open, releasing thousands of cusecs of water to make room for the incessant influx. As a result, both farmland and residential areas in Thiruvananthapuram are already submerged even as the district is being battered by its own monsoon rains.

For these reasons, it may be time for Tamil Nadu and other States like it, including Kerala, to reconsider the "excess is good" notion vis-à-vis rainfall.

THE GIST

➤ The northeast monsoon has arrived at least four days earlier for the second consecutive year, bringing heavy rainfall that is expected to exceed the long-period average.

➤ Excess rain is overwhelming urban areas, waterlogging farmland, and straining infrastructure, while the Mullaperiyar Dam inflow adds a "double whammy" to Tamil Nadu rivers and reservoirs.

➤ Waterlogged soil, overflowing rivers, and stagnant water create crop damage, health hazards, and threats to buildings, roads, and public safety, emphasising the need to rethink the "excess is good" notion.

GS Paper 1 – Geography (Monsoon Patterns, Floods, Climate Change)

GS Paper 3 – Disaster Management, Environmental Impact, Infrastructure Resilience

English Summary:

The **northeast monsoon** has arrived early in Tamil Nadu for the **second consecutive year**, bringing the risk of **prolonged heavy rainfall** and **urban flooding**. The article explains how climatic changes, urbanisation, and inter-State hydrological links—especially with the **Mullaperiyar Dam**—compound these challenges.

Key Points:

1. **Excess Rainfall – A Changing Perception:**
 - Policymakers traditionally viewed heavy rainfall as beneficial for agriculture and reservoirs.
 - Now, **climate change** causes short, intense bursts of rainfall that **urban infrastructure cannot absorb**, turning "excess" into a liability.
2. **Urban Vulnerability:**
 - Concrete and asphalt surfaces prevent absorption, leading to **runoff, waterlogging, and**

- floods.**
 - Events such as **Cyclone Michaung (2023)** showed how cities like Chennai suffer due to poor drainage and encroachment on wetlands.
 - 3. **Agricultural and Health Impacts:**
 - Excess water damages crops, depletes soil nutrients, spreads fungal and vector-borne diseases like **leptospirosis**, and creates economic instability for farmers.
 - Stagnant water fosters mosquito breeding, increasing risks of **malaria and dengue**.
 - 4. **Mullaperiyar Dam – The Double Whammy:**
 - Located in Kerala's Idukki district but operated by Tamil Nadu, the **Mullaperiyar Dam** diverts water to Tamil Nadu's **Vaigai basin**.
 - When Kerala receives excess rain, both States release dam water simultaneously—creating a **“dual inflow”** into Tamil Nadu's river systems.
 - This intensifies flood risk, particularly in **Theni, Madurai, and Dindigul districts**.
 - 5. **Environmental and Infrastructure Concerns:**
 - Waterlogged soil weakens roads, buildings, and bridges.
 - It disturbs economic activities and can displace communities.
 - 6. **Way Forward:**
 - Tamil Nadu must modernise drainage and dam management, adopt **integrated rainfall monitoring**, and coordinate real-time with Kerala.
 - Authorities should shift from the outdated notion that “excess rainfall is good” to a more nuanced, **climate-resilient policy framework**.
-

Hindi Summary (हिन्दी सारांश):

उत्तर-पूर्व मानसून इस वर्ष भी तमिलनाडु में समय से पहले पहुंचा है, जिससे लगातार भारी वर्षा, शहरी बाढ़ और स्वास्थ्य संकट की स्थिति उत्पन्न हो रही है। लेख में बताया गया है कि कैसे **जलवायु परिवर्तन**, **शहरीकरण**, और **मुल्लपेरियार बाँध** जैसे अंतर-राज्यीय जल प्रबंधन मुद्दे इस संकट को और बढ़ा रहे हैं।

मुख्य बिंदु:

1. **अधिक वर्षा – बदलती सोच:**
 - पहले नीति-निर्माताओं के लिए अधिक वर्षा कृषि के लिए लाभकारी मानी जाती थी।
 - लेकिन अब **जलवायु परिवर्तन** के कारण अल्प अवधि में **तीव्र वर्षा** होती है, जिसे शहरी तंत्र संभाल नहीं पाता और यह बाढ़ का कारण बनती है।
2. **शहरी क्षेत्रों की संवेदनशीलता:**
 - कंक्रीट और डामर की सतहों से वर्षा जल अवशोषित नहीं हो पाता, जिससे **जलभराव और नालों का उफान** होता है।
 - **2023 का साइक्लोन मिर्कांग** इसका उदाहरण है, जब चेन्नई जैसे शहर जलमग्न हो गए।
3. **कृषि और स्वास्थ्य पर प्रभाव:**
 - अत्यधिक नमी से **फसलें नष्ट, मिट्टी की गुणवत्ता घटती** है, और **फंगल व वेक्टर-जनित बीमारियाँ फैलती** हैं।
 - ठहरे पानी में **मच्छर पनपते हैं** जिससे **मलेरिया, डेंगू और लेप्टोस्पायरोसिस** बढ़ते हैं।
4. **मुल्लपेरियार बाँध – दोहरा खतरा:**
 - यह बाँध **केरल के इडुक्की जिले** में स्थित है, लेकिन इसका संचालन **तमिलनाडु** करता है।
 - जब केरल में अधिक वर्षा होती है, तो बाँध का जल छोड़ा जाता है जिससे तमिलनाडु के नदियों में **दोहरी बाढ़** की स्थिति बनती है।
 - विशेष रूप से **थेनी, मदुरै, डिंडीगुल** जिले प्रभावित होते हैं।
5. **पर्यावरण और ढाँचागत चुनौतियाँ:**
 - अधिक जल से **सड़कें, इमारतें, पुल कमजोर** पड़ जाते हैं।
 - **आर्थिक नुकसान और जन विस्थापन** बढ़ जाता है।
6. **आगे की राह:**
 - राज्य को **ड्रेनेज सिस्टम का आधुनिकीकरण**, बाँध प्रबंधन में **समन्वय**, और **रियल-टाइम वर्षा निगरानी प्रणाली** विकसित करनी चाहिए।

- यह धारणा कि “अधिक वर्षा सदैव अच्छी होती है” अब बदलनी आवश्यक है।

Exam Relevance:

- **GS-I (Geography):** Monsoon system, climate variability, flood control, river basin management.
- **GS-III (Disaster Management & Environment):** Flood mitigation, inter-State coordination, health & agricultural impact.
- **GS-II (Governance):** Centre–State coordination on environmental hazards.
- **Essay Paper:** “Climate Resilience and Urban Preparedness in India.”



Air hazard: A municipal worker sweeps Delhi streets as authorities announce potential cloud seeding to tackle rising pollution. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Why cloud seeding is not a solution to Delhi's air pollution crisis

Delhi's air remains polluted due to emissions from vehicles, construction, power plants, waste burning and agricultural fires; cloud seeding cannot create rain without clouds, provides only temporary relief at best, and diverts attention from evidence-based solutions that address the root causes

Shahzad Gani
Krishna AchutaRao

The story so far:

Delhi's plan for cloud seeding is being sold as a bold solution to air pollution. In reality, it is a textbook case of science misapplied and ethics ignored.

Why is Delhi's air fouler in winter?

Across North India, air quality is poor throughout the year, but it reaches extreme levels in the post-monsoon and winter months. After the monsoon withdraws, dry continental air masses from the northwest dominate the region. The winds weaken and the air becomes stagnant, keeping pollutants from being dispersed efficiently.

Cooler air holds less absolute water vapour and the stable, high-pressure systems that prevail during these months suppress the upward motion needed for clouds to form. The sky may look hazy, but that haze comes from trapped pollution, not from rain-bearing clouds. Rain cannot be conjured out of thin air. It needs water vapour.

For most of the highly polluted cooler months, the atmosphere is too dry and stable to support significant rainfall. Rain does occur occasionally during these months, but these brief spells are typically caused by western disturbances,

weather systems that originate in the Mediterranean region and can bring moisture from that region or interact with local systems drawing up moisture from our neighbouring seas. These events can be predicted a few days in advance, but are not a reliable or consistent source of rainfall for North India.

Does cloud seeding help?

Cloud seeding depends on natural clouds; it can't create them. And even when clouds exist, the evidence that seeding reliably increases rainfall remains weak and contested. And when it rains and reduces pollution, the respite is temporary at best. The overwhelming evidence is that pollution levels go back up within a day or two.

The air pollution problem is not just confined to Delhi. Across North India, air quality is dangerously poor year-round. Yet public debate often treats smog as a seasonal nuisance, normalising pollution and noticing it only when it becomes unbearable. Cloud seeding is just another gimmick in a series of similar unscientific ideas, like smog towers, suggesting that flashy interventions can substitute for serious, structural solutions.

What are the risks of cloud seeding?

The temptation to engineer a shortcut to fix air pollution is understandable – but it raises deeper ethical questions about how

science is used, what risks are justified, and who bears responsibility when things go wrong.

Even if the science behind cloud seeding were robust, which it is not, it still involves dispersing compounds such as silver iodide or sodium chloride into clouds to trigger condensation. Silver iodide works for cloud seeding because its crystal structure is very similar to that of ice, so it 'tricks' water droplets in the clouds into freezing onto it. These newly formed ice crystals then grow heavy and fall as rain or snow. While generally considered low risk in small doses, repeated use can accumulate in soils and water bodies. The long-term effects on agriculture, ecosystems, and human health remain poorly understood.

Beyond these environmental risks, there is the question of accountability. If cloud seeding coincides with intense rainfall that leads to flooding, causing damage to infrastructure, crops, and livelihoods, or loss of life, who will be responsible? Even if the rainfall and flooding are unrelated to seeding, public perception could still link the two, undermining trust in both science and governance.

What can 'fix' the air?

Science has long identified the real cause of North India's hazardous air: the lack of effective control over emissions from

vehicles, industry, construction, power plants, waste burning, and seasonal agricultural fires, compounded by unfavourable meteorology during the cooler months. The solutions are equally clear but remain largely unimplemented: cleaner transport, sustainable energy, better waste management, and urban planning that actually reduces pollution sources. Yet, instead of reinforcing these priorities, parts of the scientific ecosystem – researchers, advisors, and institutions – are lending credibility to a costly spectacle that will do little to address the sources of the crisis. By attaching their authority to the illusion of quick fixes, they risk wasting scarce public resources, undermining trust, and diverting attention from systemic changes that could make a real difference.

Snake-oil solutions will not clear the air in Delhi or the rest of North India. Instead, courage is required on the ground: to reduce the sources of pollution and pursue equitable, evidence-based action. Anything less is not just misplaced science – it is an ethical failure, a diversion from the patient, unglamorous work needed to ensure clean air throughout the year.

(Shahzad Gani is an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Atmospheric Sciences, IIT Delhi. Krishna AchutaRao is a Professor at the Centre for Atmospheric Sciences, IIT Delhi)

GS Paper 3 – Environment (Pollution, Technology-based Mitigation, Sustainable Development)

GS Paper 2 – Governance (Policy Interventions, Environmental Regulation)

English Summary:

The article critically analyses Delhi's plan to use **cloud seeding** as a solution to the capital's worsening **air pollution** and explains why it is **scientifically weak, temporary, and ethically questionable**.

The Story So Far:

- Delhi's air pollution reaches hazardous levels during **post-monsoon and winter months** due to **vehicular emissions, construction dust, coal-based power plants, stubble burning, and waste fires**.
- Low wind speed and temperature inversion trap pollutants close to the ground.

What is Cloud Seeding?

- It involves **artificially inducing rainfall** by dispersing chemicals like **silver iodide, potassium iodide, or dry ice** into clouds to promote condensation and precipitation.
- It depends entirely on **natural clouds and favourable weather conditions**.
- It **cannot generate rain** where there are **no clouds**—which is often the case in Delhi during winter.

Why It Won't Work for Delhi:

1. **Scientific Limitations:**
 - India's rainfall largely depends on unpredictable weather systems from the **Mediterranean (Western Disturbances)**; these cannot be controlled.
 - Cloud seeding results are **inconsistent**—it may not increase rainfall reliably.
2. **Temporary Relief, Not a Cure:**
 - Even if successful, the rain only **cleans air for a short period**, while emissions resume immediately after.
 - It diverts attention from **long-term structural solutions** such as emission control and green energy transition.
3. **Environmental and Ethical Concerns:**
 - Silver iodide and similar chemicals used in seeding can **contaminate soil and water**, affecting agriculture and human health.
 - There are **accountability issues** — who takes responsibility if pollution reduction fails or damage occurs?
4. **Root Causes Ignored:**
 - Delhi's pollution crisis stems from **systemic governance failures**, such as:
 - Poor enforcement of emission norms.
 - Inefficient waste management.
 - Open burning of waste and crop residue.
 - Lack of sustainable urban planning.

Author's Argument:

- **Cloud seeding is a “scientific gimmick”** that provides a false sense of action.
 - The **real solutions** lie in:
 - Cleaner energy transitions,
 - Stricter vehicular norms,
 - Sustainable agriculture (to prevent stubble burning),
 - Urban afforestation and public transport reform.
-

Hindi Summary (हिन्दी सारांश):

लेख में दिल्ली सरकार की **क्लाउड सीडिंग (Cloud Seeding)** योजना की आलोचनात्मक समीक्षा की गई है और बताया गया है कि यह **वायु प्रदूषण का स्थायी समाधान नहीं** बल्कि एक **वैज्ञानिक भ्रम और अल्पकालिक उपाय** है।

पृष्ठभूमि:

- दिल्ली में सर्दियों के दौरान **वाहन उत्सर्जन, निर्माण धूल, थर्मल पावर संयंत्र, कचरा और पराली जलाना** — वायु

- प्रदूषण के प्रमुख स्रोत हैं।
- कम तापमान और कमजोर हवाएँ प्रदूषकों को जमीन के निकट फँसा देती हैं।
- क्लाउड सीडिंग क्या है?**
- इसमें बादलों में कृत्रिम वर्षा कराने के लिए रासायनिक पदार्थ (जैसे सिल्वर आयोडाइड, पोटेशियम आयोडाइड) का छिड़काव किया जाता है।
 - यह केवल मौजूद बादलों पर निर्भर है — बिना बादलों के वर्षा नहीं कराई जा सकती।
- क्यों यह उपाय असफल रहेगा:**
1. **वैज्ञानिक सीमाएँ:**
 - भारत में वर्षा पश्चिमी विक्षोभों पर निर्भर करती है, जो नियंत्रण में नहीं हैं।
 - क्लाउड सीडिंग से वर्षा की गारंटी नहीं होती।
 2. **अल्पकालिक प्रभाव:**
 - अगर बारिश होती भी है, तो यह केवल कुछ दिनों तक प्रदूषण कम करती है।
 - प्रदूषण के मूल कारण — जैसे उद्योग, परिवहन, और कचरा प्रबंधन — बने रहते हैं।
 3. **पर्यावरणीय जोखिम:**
 - सिल्वर आयोडाइड जैसे रसायन मिट्टी और जल स्रोतों को दूषित कर सकते हैं।
 - इससे कृषि उत्पादन और मानव स्वास्थ्य पर प्रभाव पड़ता है।
 4. **नीतिगत और नैतिक प्रश्न:**
 - यदि यह प्रयोग विफल रहता है, तो जिम्मेदारी किसकी होगी?
 - यह कदम वैज्ञानिक संसाधनों की बर्बादी है और असली समाधान से ध्यान भटकाता है।
- लेखक का निष्कर्ष:**
- क्लाउड सीडिंग मात्र “वैज्ञानिक दिखावा” (scientific showmanship) है।
 - असली समाधान हैं:
 - स्वच्छ ऊर्जा, वाहनों के उत्सर्जन नियंत्रण, कचरा प्रबंधन, और
 - हरित नगरीकरण और सार्वजनिक परिवहन सुधार।

What France and others can learn from Sweden's hard budget lessons

Sweden's public finances among the best in Europe; fiscal strength built on belt-tightening after crash in 1990s; among the most critical changes was a shift in pension system political polarisation makes lessons hard for Europe to follow; deeper crisis need prompt action from debt-heavy nations

NEWS ANALYSIS

Reuters
STOCKHOLM

When Sweden's then-Finance Minister Goran Persson dashed to New York during the country's early 1990s financial crisis to plead with Wall Street investors to keep buying its debt, he stayed in a budget hotel infested with cockroaches.

That reflected the Finance Ministry's strict "absolutely no extravagance" policy, Mr. Persson, who later became PM, wrote in his 1997 book "Those Who Are in Debt Are Not Free". Penny-pinching on Ministerial travel was one small part of a decades-long austerity drive, which has created fiscal leeway much of the belt-tightening Europe is lacking, allowing Sweden this year to pledge billions for defence, energy and tax cuts in its largest public spending package in decades.

The lessons for other countries, especially France, deep in its own budget crisis, are simple, if not easy. First, things may need to get really bad before politicians are ready to act. Secondly, buy-in from voters, unions and opposition parties is crucial for long-term success.

Finally, a strong global economy and a slice of



Trial by fire: Former Swedish PM Goran Persson during his visit to Tallinn, Estonia. REUTERS (FILE)

luck on timing really help.

Living beyond means

After decades of living beyond its means, Sweden's debt had by 1994 roughly doubled to around 80% of gross domestic product from 44% in 1990. At worst, the budget deficit hit 12% and investor confidence collapsed and the Riksbank briefly hiked interest rates to 500%.

The government responded with cuts in spending on welfare, defence and education worth 8% of GDP. The economy shrank more than 1% three years in a row, unemployment soared and bank credit losses piled up in Sweden's worst downturn since the 1930s Great Depression.

"We had a banking cri-



sis, a foreign exchange crisis and a debt crisis," said Stefan Ingves, a former central bank governor who oversaw the clean up of Sweden's "bad banks" after the crash.

"In some sense, we were at the end of the road," he told Reuters.

The government set a spending ceiling and budgeted for surpluses over

the economic cycle. Pensions were reformed to encourage private savings and deepen capital markets, while labour unions and employers agreed to limit wage growth.

Gradually those reforms, helped by the fact that a weakened currency was boosting exports, started to work: the economy grew 4.1% in 1994, and debt fell below 50% of GDP within a decade.

"In an open economy, structural change pays," Ingves said.

Among the most critical changes was a shift to a pension system where payments are adjusted for market returns and life expectancy, easing the pressure on the budget from the ageing population and

passing the shortfall risk onto individuals.

France, where the retirement age remains a hot-button issue, spends just over 13% of its GDP on pensions compared with 10.7% in Sweden, according to Eurostat data, and the gap gets bigger when healthcare and other social benefits are included.

No free lunch

To be sure, it came at a price: thousands of public employees lost their jobs and Sweden was left with a legacy of underinvestment in infrastructure, from energy and transport networks to hospital beds. But painful memories of the crisis have ensured there has been no backsliding.

"Government after government has held the line," Finance Minister Elisabeth Svantesson told Reuters. "There is a consensus, which is a strength for Sweden."

Decades of frugality are now paying dividends. With public debt now at just over a third of GDP, Sweden was able to hike defence spending to 3.5% of GDP, pump up to 440 billion crowns (\$46.73 billion) into nuclear power expansion and provide 105 billion crowns to support Ukraine.

At the same time, the government cut income taxes and VAT on food and raised spending on job measures and yet its bor-

rowing costs remain lower than Germany's. Unlike many other developed nations, Sweden also managed to ride out the financial crisis of 2008-2009 and the COVID pandemic without piling on much new debt. Replicating Sweden's path, however, will be hard for France and other euro zone countries faced with rising debt.

Sweden's exporters operated in a buoyant 1990s world economy fuelled by an IT boom and rapid globalisation – a far cry from the protectionist tilt seen from Washington to Beijing now. "Sweden was not okay, but the rest of the world was reasonably okay," noted Ingves.

Moreover, since the 1990s the political landscape has become more fragmented with the rise of far-right parties across Europe including in Sweden – making it much harder to build consensus on unpopular measures, such as tax hikes or welfare cuts. Ultimately, some argue, France has not yet reached a tipping point like Sweden did in the 1990s and Ireland, Portugal, Italy and Greece two decades later during the euro zone sovereign debt crisis, which forced them to repair their public finances.

Despite all its woes, France still has access to borrowing at a reasonably affordable 3.35%, allowing it to muddle through.

GS Paper 3 – Economy (Fiscal Policy, Public Finance, Debt Management, Economic Reforms)

GS Paper 2 – Governance & Comparative Political Systems (Lessons from other countries' policies)

English Summary:

The article analyses how **Sweden's economic reforms and fiscal discipline** during its **1990s financial crisis** helped it emerge as one of the strongest economies in Europe — and what lessons countries like **France and other Eurozone nations** can learn today amid rising debt, inflation, and political polarisation.

Background: The 1990s Crisis

- Sweden faced a severe **financial meltdown** in the early 1990s.
- **Public debt doubled** from 40% to 80% of GDP by 1994.
- The government was forced to **cut spending** in welfare, defence, and subsidies, and raised interest rates to 500%.
- The Swedish Finance Ministry's motto was **"absolutely no extravagance."**

Key Reforms & Lessons:

1. Fiscal Austerity & Discipline:

- Sweden enforced **strict budgetary limits**, reduced welfare expenditure, and prioritised

- **structural reforms** over populism.
 - Government spending fell below **50% of GDP**, down from over 60%.
 - 2. **Living Beyond Means – The Warning:**
 - After decades of overspending, Sweden realised that **long-term prosperity** cannot be built on **debt-financed consumption**.
 - Fiscal consolidation improved investor confidence and restored stability.
 - 3. **Structural Economic Changes:**
 - The **pension system** was reformed by tying payouts to economic performance, preventing future fiscal burdens.
 - Tax reforms encouraged savings and productivity instead of consumption.
 - 4. **Export-led Recovery:**
 - Post-crisis, Sweden leveraged its **tech and manufacturing exports**, especially during the 1990s IT boom, to revive its economy.
 - Pragmatic monetary policy ensured inflation control without suppressing growth.
 - 5. **Social Consensus & Political Will:**
 - Despite painful cuts, Sweden's citizens accepted austerity due to **trust in governance** and **transparent policymaking**.
 - The approach reflected a balance between **economic realism** and **social welfare**.
- Comparison with France & Eurozone:**
- France spends over **13% of GDP on pensions**, compared to Sweden's **10.7%**, making reforms politically harder.
 - Political polarisation and populism in France hinder deep reforms.
 - Sweden's approach—**tight budgets, fiscal prudence, and reform-linked welfare**—offers a model for Europe's debt-burdened nations like **Italy, Greece, and France**.
- Contemporary Relevance:**
- With Europe facing **post-COVID fiscal stress** and ageing populations, Sweden's 1990s model demonstrates that **short-term austerity** can lead to **long-term sustainability** if backed by political courage.

Hindi Summary (हिन्दी सारांश):

लेख में बताया गया है कि कैसे **स्वीडन** ने 1990 के दशक के अपने **आर्थिक संकट** से उबरकर कठोर **राजकोषीय अनुशासन** और **संरचनात्मक सुधारों** के माध्यम से यूरोप की सबसे स्थिर अर्थव्यवस्था बनाई — और कैसे **फ्रांस** तथा अन्य यूरोपीय देश इससे सीख सकते हैं।

पृष्ठभूमि – 1990 का आर्थिक संकट:

- स्वीडन में 1990 के दशक की शुरुआत में गंभीर **वित्तीय संकट** आया।
- देश का **सार्वजनिक ऋण 40% से बढ़कर 80% जीडीपी तक** पहुँच गया।
- सरकार ने **कल्याण व्यय, रक्षा और सव्सीडी में कटौती** की और ब्याज दरें **500% तक बढ़ाईं**।
- वित्त मंत्रालय का सिद्धांत था — **“बिलकुल कोई फिजूलखर्ची नहीं।”**

मुख्य सुधार और सबक:

1. **राजकोषीय अनुशासन:**
 - सरकार ने सख्त बजटीय नियंत्रण लागू किए और अनावश्यक खर्च घटाया।
 - सार्वजनिक व्यय **जीडीपी के 60% से घटकर 50% से कम** कर दिया गया।
2. **‘उधार पर जीवन’ का खतरा:**
 - स्वीडन ने समझा कि **उधारी पर आधारित विकास** स्थायी नहीं हो सकता।
 - घाटा घटाने और निवेशकों का विश्वास बढ़ाने से अर्थव्यवस्था स्थिर हुई।
3. **संरचनात्मक सुधार:**
 - **पेंशन प्रणाली में सुधार** किया गया — अब पेंशन भुगतान आर्थिक प्रदर्शन से जुड़ा हुआ है।
 - **कर प्रणाली** को संशोधित कर बचत और उत्पादन को प्रोत्साहित किया गया।
4. **निर्यात आधारित विकास:**
 - संकट के बाद, स्वीडन ने **प्रौद्योगिकी और निर्माण क्षेत्र** पर ध्यान केंद्रित कर निर्यात को बढ़ाया।
 - सावधान मौद्रिक नीति से **मुद्रास्फीति नियंत्रित** रही और विकास भी जारी रहा।

5. राजनीतिक इच्छाशक्ति और सामाजिक सहमति:

- जनता ने अस्थायी कटौतियों को स्वीकार किया क्योंकि सरकार पर विश्वास था।
- सुधारों में पारदर्शिता और संतुलन ने जनता का समर्थन सुनिश्चित किया।

फ्रांस और यूरोप के लिए सबक:

- फ्रांस पेंशन व्यय पर 13% जीडीपी खर्च करता है, जबकि स्वीडन 10.7%।
- राजनीतिक धुवीकरण और लोकलुभावन राजनीति सुधारों को कठिन बनाते हैं।
- स्वीडन का मॉडल — कठोर बजट, दीर्घकालिक योजना और सुधार आधारित कल्याण नीति — यूरोप के ऋणग्रस्त देशों (जैसे फ्रांस, ग्रीस, इटली) के लिए अनुकरणीय है।

वर्तमान संदर्भ:

- कोविड-19 और जनसंख्या वृद्धावस्था के बाद यूरोप को दीर्घकालिक वित्तीय स्थिरता की आवश्यकता है।
- स्वीडन का अनुभव दिखाता है कि अल्पकालिक 'कठिन फैसले' दीर्घकालिक समृद्धि का आधार बन सकते हैं — बशर्ते उनमें राजनीतिक ईमानदारी और जनता का भरोसा शामिल हो।

Malnutrition to have 'generational' impact on newborns in Gaza: UN

70% of newborns are premature or underweight, compared to 20% before Hamas's October 2023 attack on Israel kicked off the war; UN Population Fund director calls for a surge of aid to help prevent potential lifelong health issues in the enclave

Agence France-Presse
UNITED NATIONS

A senior UN official warned on Wednesday of "generational" impacts in Gaza from malnutrition among pregnant women and babies, urging a surge of aid to help prevent potential lifelong health issues.

"The sheer extent of the devastation looked like the set of a dystopian film," Andrew Saberton, deputy executive director of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), told presspersons after his visit to the war-torn enclave.

He said a quarter of Gaza's population is "starving".

"That includes 11,500 pregnant women for whom starvation is particularly catastrophic for both mother and newborn," said Mr. Saberton, whose agency leads reproductive and maternal health programs around the world.



Humanitarian crisis: Wedad Abdelaal, her 9-month-old son Khaled who suffers from malnutrition, with the rest of her children who show signs of malnutrition, in their tent at a camp in Khan Younis. AP

As a result, 70% of newborns are premature or underweight, compared to 20% before Hamas's October 2023 attack on Israel kicked off the war.

"Malnutrition will have generational effects, not on the mother, but on the newborn, likely to result in ever longer lasting care and problems throughout

the life of the baby," he said at UN headquarters in New York.

The recent ceasefire has allowed more freedom of movement for humanitarian workers, said Mr. Saberton, but only a "trickle of aid" is being allowed in, that is "nowhere near enough".

The lack of medical sup-

plies and facilities is also a major factor, he said, with over 94% of hospitals damaged or destroyed, and only 15% of operational facilities offering emergency obstetric care.

"Maternal death rates are high, partly due to the fact that simple things like contraception are no longer available," he said, not-

ing some potential mothers are "looking for and doing unsafe abortions".

In addition, some 7,000 women and girls struggle each month with a lack of privacy, water and sanitary pads during their menstrual cycle.

'Unmapped minefield'

Separately, an aid group said that clearing the surface of Gaza of unexploded ordnance will likely take between 20 to 30 years. An official with aid group Humanity & Inclusion described the enclave as an "unmapped minefield".

"If you're looking at a full clearance, it's never happening, it's subterranean. We will find it for generations to come," said Nick Orr, an Explosive Ordnance Disposal expert at Humanity & Inclusion, comparing the situation with British cities after the Second World War.

"It's going to be a very small chipping away at a very big problem."

English Summary:

A senior official from the **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** has warned of "**generational impacts**" of malnutrition in **Gaza**, especially among **pregnant women and newborns**, following the prolonged war that began after Hamas's October 2023 attack on Israel.

Key Points:

1. **Alarming Malnutrition Levels:**
 - Around **70% of newborns** in Gaza are now **premature or underweight**, compared to **20% before the war**.
 - Over **11,500 pregnant women** are suffering from **severe hunger and lack of nutrition**.
 - A **quarter of Gaza's population** is currently "starving."
2. **Generational Impact:**
 - Malnutrition will affect not only mothers but also **future generations**, as poor nutrition during pregnancy leads to **lifelong health issues** such as stunted growth, low immunity, and cognitive deficiencies in children.
 - This is being termed a "**generational crisis**."
3. **Health System Collapse:**
 - Over **94% of hospitals** in Gaza have been **damaged or destroyed**, and **15% of facilities offering obstetric care** are still operational.
 - **Maternal deaths** are rising due to **lack of prenatal and delivery care**, absence of contraceptives, and unsafe abortion practices.
4. **Women's Suffering:**
 - About **7 million women and girls** in Gaza lack access to **privacy, sanitation, and menstrual hygiene facilities**.
 - Many are resorting to unsafe abortion practices because of restricted healthcare access.
5. **"Unmapped Minefield" Warning:**
 - Aid groups estimate that clearing Gaza of **unexploded ordnance (UXO)** could take **20-30 years**, creating long-term safety hazards.
 - The region is described as an "**unmapped minefield**" that will affect future reconstruction efforts.
6. **Humanitarian Response:**
 - The **UNFPA** and other UN agencies are calling for a "**surge of humanitarian aid**", saying that the current response is "nowhere near enough."
 - The recent ceasefire has not sufficiently improved **access to health supplies** or ensured safety for aid workers.

Significance:

The situation highlights how **armed conflict leads to humanitarian, social, and health crises**, especially for **women and children**, and how **international humanitarian law and aid mechanisms** are crucial for global peace and security.

Hindi Summary (हिन्दी सारांश):

संयुक्त राष्ट्र की **जनसंख्या कोष (UNFPA)** की एक वरिष्ठ अधिकारी ने चेतावनी दी है कि **गाज़ा में चल रहे युद्ध और कुपोषण** के कारण **गर्भवती महिलाओं और नवजात शिशुओं पर "पीढ़ीगत प्रभाव"** पड़ेगा, जिससे आने वाली पीढ़ियों तक स्वास्थ्य संकट बना रह सकता है।

मुख्य बिंदु:

1. **कुपोषण की भयावह स्थिति:**
 - गाज़ा में **70% नवजात शिशु समय से पहले जन्मे या कम वज़न के** हैं, जबकि युद्ध से पहले यह आंकड़ा **20%** था।
 - **11,500 गर्भवती महिलाएँ** गंभीर भूख और पोषण की कमी से जूझ रही हैं।
 - गाज़ा की **25% आबादी भूखमरी की स्थिति** में है।
2. **पीढ़ीगत प्रभाव:**
 - यह कुपोषण केवल माताओं तक सीमित नहीं रहेगा बल्कि **भविष्य की पीढ़ियों** के स्वास्थ्य को भी प्रभावित करेगा।
 - इससे बच्चों में **कमज़ोर प्रतिरोधक क्षमता, मस्तिष्कीय विकास की कमी, और दीर्घकालिक बीमारियाँ** हो सकती हैं।
3. **स्वास्थ्य तंत्र का पतन:**
 - **94% अस्पताल नष्ट या क्षतिग्रस्त**, केवल **15% प्रसूति सुविधाएँ** काम कर रही हैं।
 - गर्भवती महिलाओं की **मृत्यु दर बढ़ रही है**, क्योंकि **स्वास्थ्य सेवाएँ, दवाइयाँ और गर्भनिरोधक साधन**

- उपलब्ध नहीं हैं।
4. **महिलाओं की दयनीय स्थिति:**
 - 70 लाख महिलाएँ और किशोरियाँ निजता, स्वच्छ जल और मासिक धर्म स्वच्छता की सुविधाओं से वंचित हैं।
 - कुछ महिलाएँ असुरक्षित गर्भपात करने को मजबूर हैं।
 5. **“अनमैण्ड माइनफील्ड” खतरा:**
 - गाज़ा की सतह पर फैले अनफटे बम और विस्फोटक पदार्थ (UXO) को हटाने में 20-30 वर्ष लग सकते हैं।
 - इससे पुनर्निर्माण और मानवीय सहायता लंबे समय तक प्रभावित रहेगी।
 6. **संयुक्त राष्ट्र की अपील:**
 - UNFPA ने कहा कि वर्तमान मानवीय सहायता पर्याप्त नहीं है, और तुरंत अंतर्राष्ट्रीय सहायता बढ़ाने की आवश्यकता है।

महत्व:

यह घटना दर्शाती है कि युद्ध और संघर्षों का सबसे बड़ा प्रभाव महिलाओं और बच्चों पर पड़ता है। यह मानवीय कानून, महिला स्वास्थ्य अधिकार और वैश्विक सहयोग की आवश्यकता को रेखांकित करता है।

U.S. blockade aims at isolating Cuba, says envoy, seeking stronger ties with BRICS

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

Ahead of a crucial vote at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) condemning the U.S.-imposed economic and financial blockade of Cuba, the Cuban envoy in New Delhi said the blockade imposed by the Trump administration is “most painful” for Cuba and that his country would like to explore possibilities of greater financial integration with the BRICS



Juan Carlos Marsán Aguilera

economies.

“The U.S. blockade aims to isolate Cuba and discourage investors and busi-

nessmen from travelling to the country. Earlier, we had around one million tourists every year, but now barely three hundred thousand visit. On October 28-29, we will submit this resolution to the UN General Assembly,” said Ambassador Juan Carlos Marsán Aguilera at a press conference at the Press Club of India.

“Had the blockade and trade restrictions not prevented U.S. tourists from travelling to Cuba, our

country would receive 1-2 million U.S. visitors every year, representing nearly \$2 billion in revenue for the Cuban economy,” Mr. Aguilera said.

Mr. Aguilera said the Trump administration has heightened tensions between the U.S. and Cuba by including Cuba on the list of state sponsors of terrorism, adding, “For decades, it is the United States that has sponsored terror attacks targeting Cuba.”

English Summary:

The Cuban envoy in New Delhi, **Juan Carlos Marsán Aguilera**, criticized the **U.S.-imposed economic blockade on Cuba**, calling it “most painful” and a deliberate attempt to **isolate Cuba** from global trade and finance. The statement came ahead of a **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** vote condemning the U.S. blockade.

Key Highlights:

1. **About the Blockade:**
 - The **U.S. economic and financial embargo** on Cuba was intensified under the **Trump administration**.
 - It restricts **trade, investment, banking transactions, and tourism**, effectively **crippling Cuba's economy**.
 - Cuba has been **listed as a state sponsor of terrorism** by the U.S., worsening tensions.
2. **Impact on Cuban Economy:**

- Before the blockade, Cuba received **1–2 million U.S. tourists annually**, generating **\$2 billion in revenue**.
 - Currently, only **~300,000 tourists** visit the country due to travel restrictions.
 - The blockade has also discouraged **foreign investments** and **trade partnerships**.
 - 3. **Cuba's Appeal at the UN:**
 - Cuba plans to submit a **resolution at the UNGA** on **October 28–29**, seeking global condemnation of the U.S. embargo.
 - The UN has consistently voted against the blockade for decades, but it remains enforced.
 - 4. **Cuba's Strategic Response:**
 - Cuba seeks **closer ties with BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa)** to diversify trade and investment.
 - BRICS is viewed as a **counterbalance to Western-dominated institutions** such as the IMF and World Bank.
 - Strengthening ties with **India and Russia** is part of Cuba's strategy to **enhance financial independence**.
 - 5. **Diplomatic Context:**
 - The envoy accused the U.S. of “**sponsoring acts of terror**” against Cuba for decades.
 - The U.S. blockade is widely criticized as **violating international law** and **humanitarian norms**.
- Broader Context:**
- The issue reflects **Cold War legacies**, where **U.S.–Cuba tensions** persist despite shifting global alignments.
 - The event also underscores the **emerging role of BRICS** as an alternative diplomatic and financial platform for nations facing Western sanctions.

Hindi Summary (हिन्दी सारांश):

नई दिल्ली में क्यूबा के राजदूत **जुआन कार्लोस मार्सान एगुइलेरा** ने अमेरिका द्वारा क्यूबा पर लगाए गए **आर्थिक प्रतिबंध (Economic Blockade)** की कड़ी आलोचना की और कहा कि यह **क्यूबा को अलग-थलग करने की साज़िश** है। यह बयान **संयुक्त राष्ट्र महासभा (UNGA)** में इस नाकेबंदी की निंदा पर होने वाले मतदान से पहले दिया गया।

मुख्य बिंदु:

1. **अमेरिकी नाकेबंदी क्या है:**
 - अमेरिका ने क्यूबा पर **आर्थिक और वित्तीय प्रतिबंध** लगा रखे हैं जिन्हें **ट्रम्प प्रशासन** ने और कड़ा कर दिया।
 - इससे **व्यापार, निवेश, बैंकिंग और पर्यटन** पूरी तरह प्रभावित हुआ है।
 - अमेरिका ने क्यूबा को “**आतंकवाद को प्रायोजित करने वाले देशों**” की सूची में भी शामिल किया है।
2. **क्यूबा की अर्थव्यवस्था पर प्रभाव:**
 - प्रतिबंधों से पहले हर साल **10–20 लाख अमेरिकी पर्यटक** क्यूबा आते थे, जिससे **2 अरब डॉलर की आय** होती थी।
 - अब केवल **3 लाख पर्यटक** ही आते हैं।
 - विदेशी निवेश और व्यापार में भी भारी गिरावट आई है।
3. **संयुक्त राष्ट्र में क्यूबा की पहल:**
 - क्यूबा **28–29 अक्टूबर** को UNGA में **अमेरिकी प्रतिबंधों की निंदा का प्रस्ताव** पेश करेगा।
 - संयुक्त राष्ट्र पिछले कई दशकों से इस नाकेबंदी के खिलाफ प्रस्ताव पारित कर रहा है।
4. **BRICS के साथ संबंध:**
 - क्यूबा अब **BRICS देशों (ब्राज़ील, रूस, भारत, चीन, दक्षिण अफ्रीका)** के साथ **आर्थिक सहयोग बढ़ाना चाहता है**।
 - BRICS को पश्चिमी संस्थाओं (IMF, World Bank) के **विकल्प** के रूप में देखा जा रहा है।
 - भारत और रूस के साथ संबंध मज़बूत करने से **क्यूबा आर्थिक स्वतंत्रता** हासिल करना चाहता है।
5. **राजनयिक परिप्रेक्ष्य:**
 - दूत ने कहा कि “**कई दशकों से अमेरिका ही क्यूबा पर आतंकवादी हमलों का प्रायोजक रहा है।**”
 - यह प्रतिबंध **अंतरराष्ट्रीय कानूनों और मानवीय सिद्धांतों** का उल्लंघन है।

प्रासंगिकता:

- यह प्रकरण **शीत युद्ध की विरासत** को दर्शाता है, जहाँ अमेरिका-क्यूबा संबंध अब भी तनावपूर्ण हैं।
- यह **BRICS** जैसे बहुध्रुवीय मंचों के बढ़ते महत्व को भी रेखांकित करता है, जो **पश्चिमी प्रभुत्व** के संतुलन का प्रयास कर रहे हैं।