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ANALYSIS

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20 June | 7PM

1. Pg 6 – GS II (Polity) → Anti-Defection → 10th Schedule

Defection as merger

The Tenth Schedule is hollowed out by unprincipled politics

There is something deeply troubling about the wave of defections sweeping India's elected representatives, Members of Parliament chief among them. In the latest episode, six Shiv Sena (UBT) MPs are seeking to join the Eknath Shinde faction of the Sena, which emerged after an earlier split in the parent party. This group constitutes exactly two-thirds of the party's Lok Sabha strength, giving them the escape route that their crossover will constitute a merger under the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, or the anti-defection law. Under the Tenth Schedule, a member can be disqualified if they voluntarily resign from their party or defy a party whip during a division of votes in the House. In 2003, the law was strengthened by an amendment that removed the earlier "split" provision – which had allowed one-third of a party's members to defect without penalty – and retained only the "merger" exception, under which disqualification does not apply if two-thirds of a party's legislators agree to merge with another party. Engineered splits are now dressed up as mergers, letting groups defect without inviting disqualification. The legal validity of such claims is itself contested, as the Supreme Court of India has, in a past judgment, made clear that a merger cannot be of the legislature party alone, and must involve the parent party as well.

With the Court holding back judgments on several constitutional questions related to this, presiding officers keep waving through such stretched claims – and the practice keeps gathering pace. The Sena splintering follows close on the heels of the TMC rebellion. A rebel group claiming the support of 20 of the TMC's 28 Lok Sabha MPs – led by four-time MP Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar – has aligned itself with the BJP-led NDA, seeking a merger with another party. In April, AAP MPs in the Rajya Sabha had joined the BJP, reducing AAP's Rajya Sabha strength from 10 to three. Now, three TMC members of the Rajya Sabha, Sukhendu Sekhar Ray, Sushmita Dev and Prakash Chik Baraik, have resigned. For all practical purposes, the Tenth Schedule has become redundant and irrelevant, as the Court keeps key decisions pending. The surge in these crossovers, which has the cumulative effect of increasing the strength of the ruling NDA in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, raises questions beyond technicalities. At present, the NDA does not have the two-thirds majority in Parliament needed to pass constitutional amendments. The threshold of two-thirds for constitutional amendments is kept high to ensure a wide political consensus. Bypassing that intent through defections – whatever name they go by – is an affront to representative democracy and the spirit of the Constitution.

Six Uddhav Sena rebel MPs write to Speaker Om Birla, eye Shinde Sena merger: Sources

Merger

AAP MPs

20 — TMC

NCPI

NDA

BJP

Anti-Defection Law → 1967

What is the anti-defection law?

Aaya Ram Gaya Ram was a phrase that became popular in Indian politics after a Haryana MLA Gaya Lal changed his party thrice within the same day in 1967. The anti-defection law sought to prevent such political defections which may be due to reward of office or other similar considerations.[3]

The Tenth Schedule was inserted in the Constitution in 1985. It lays down the process by which legislators may be disqualified on grounds of defection by the Presiding Officer of a legislature based on a petition by any other member of the House. A legislator is deemed to have defected if he either *voluntarily gives up the membership of his party or disobeys the directives of the party leadership on a vote*. This implies that a legislator defying (abstaining or voting against) the party whip on any issue can lose his membership of the House. The law applies to both Parliament and state assemblies.

10th Schedule → Anti-Defection

Whip

MLA MP

Presiding Officer

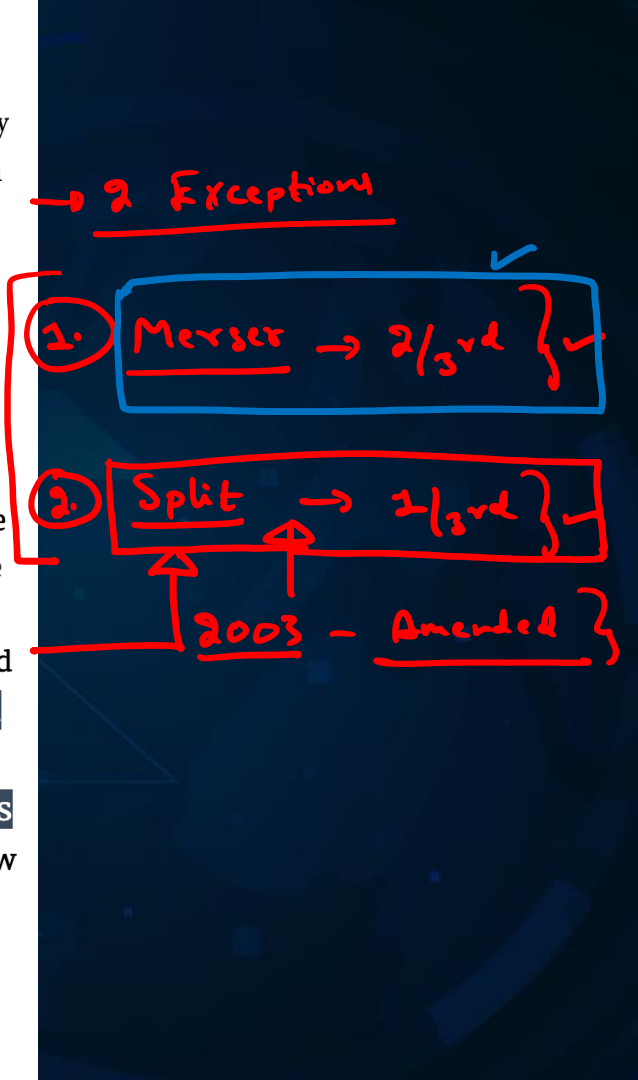
Decide

Disqualification

Are there any exceptions under the law?

Yes, legislators may change their party without the risk of disqualification in certain circumstances. The law allows a party to merge with or into another party provided that at least two-thirds of its legislators are in favour of the merger. In such a scenario, neither the members who decide to merge, nor the ones who stay with the original party will face disqualification.

There is something deeply troubling about the wave of defections sweeping India's elected representatives, Members of Parliament chief among them. In the latest episode, six Shiv Sena (UBT) MPs are seeking to join the Eknath Shinde faction of the Sena, which emerged after an earlier split in the parent party. This group constitutes exactly two-thirds of the party's Lok Sabha strength, giving them the escape route that their crossover will constitute a merger under the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, or the anti-defection law. Under the Tenth Schedule, a member can be disqualified if they voluntarily resign from their party or defy a party whip during a division of votes in the House. In 2003, the law was strengthened by an amendment that removed the earlier "split" provision — which had allowed one-third of a party's members to defect without penalty — and retained only the "merger" exception, under which disqualification does not apply if two-thirds of a party's legislators agree to merge with another party. Engineered splits are now dressed up as mergers, letting groups defect without inviting disqualification. The legal validity of such claims is itself contested, as the Supreme Court of India has, in a past judgment, made clear that a merger cannot be of the legislature party alone, and must involve the parent party as well.



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Mains Practice Question

Q. For all practical purposes, the Tenth Schedule has become redundant and irrelevant. Critically examine. (250 words; 15 marks)

2. Pg 6 – GS III (Economy)

India's cheapest power is here, the grid must catch up

Amol Phadke

Faculty at the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley, U.S.

Nikit Abhyankar

Faculty at the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley, U.S.

India is leaving tens of gigawatts (GW) of cheap solar and wind power stranded – not because the projects are not ready, but because the grid is not. Upgrading the existing grid with advanced technologies and adding storage at key nodes can unlock 1,000 GW of new clean energy, without acquiring any additional land for transmission.

India is on the verge of a major shift in its electricity system. Solar and wind are now the country's cheapest power sources, and deployment is accelerating, with over 45 GW added in 2025, roughly matching the United States. Paired with some of the world's lowest battery costs, India can now deliver firm clean power at about ₹3.5 per kWh.

Yet, just as technology and prices have aligned, transmission has become the defining constraint. More than 50 GW of clean capacity is already stranded because projects can come online in 12 to 18 months, but transmission takes three to five years to build, slowed by land acquisition, multi-agency approvals, and restrictions on new corridors. Without faster and smarter grid expansion, the benefits of low-cost clean energy will remain out of reach.

India has about 250 GW of renewables today, 100 GW under construction, and will need about 2,000 GW by 2050 to meet rising demand and electrify industry and transport. This implies one of the largest transmission build-outs anywhere in the world. The question is no longer whether India must build more lines – it must –but whether new lines alone will suffice. They will not. India needs both major new transmission and far better use of the network it already has.

Creating clean-energy superhighways

India can unlock the equivalent of nearly 1,000 GW of renewable energy far faster than building new lines by tapping the vast potential of its existing grid. Much of this potential is hidden in plain sight. Four opportunities stand out.

Storage unlocks more from the same wires. First, most renewable plants today use their transmission connections only about 25% of the time. For example, solar energy fills the transmission line during the day, but the same connection sits idle during evening peaks and at night. It is a bit like a highway used only during rush hour – busy for a few hours, empty the rest of the day. Adding batteries at the same locations allows power to be stored and delivered during evening peaks and at night, raising utilisation two to three times without new corridors or land. This directly enables the equivalent of 400 GW of additional clean energy.

Coal corridors can also carry clean power. Second, power lines connected to coal-based power plants offer another major opportunity. Many high-cost or old coal plants, totalling about 100 GW, operate at low output for long periods despite having valuable transmission connections. Locating solar and wind near these stations allows clean power to use this underused capacity whenever coal units are not fully loaded. In many hours it is cheaper to transmit renewable power than to run the coal plant, giving developers access to scarce grid connection and providing coal plant owners new revenue from underutilised assets. This approach can enable the equivalent of 100 GW of additional clean energy.

The country's clean-energy future depends on faster, smarter grid expansion and optimisation

Using existing substations. A third opportunity sits at existing transmission substations. Many of these locations can take on new grid connections, letting more renewable projects plug straight into the system. Coupling these nodes with batteries can further support peak-demand supply and help manage power flows. Nationally, this could support around 100 GW of additional clean energy.

Modern wires can carry double the power. And fourth, much of India's grid still uses older wires or conductors that sag under heat and restrict flow. Replacing them with high-temperature, low-sag conductors – manufactured domestically – can nearly double transfer capacity on the same towers and rights-of-way. It is like upgrading the engines on a train so it can haul twice as many goods on the same track – no new land, just better technology. This added headroom allows reconductoring to double the clean energy enabled by storage and shared transmission connections – raising the total potential to over 1,000 GW within the current transmission footprint and effectively transforming today's corridors into clean-energy superhighways.

A rapid path

Crucially, these solutions can be deployed within months, not years. They require no new land for transmission, minimal permitting, and far fewer approvals than building new corridors. They can relieve bottlenecks immediately, connect stranded clean power, and let new renewable projects advance while new lines catch up. They also improve grid utilisation and lower the average cost of using the grid.

New renewable energy projects will still require significant land, but locating them near coal plants, renewable energy hubs, or substations – where some land and grid access already exist – offers a practical, lower-conflict pathway as suitable land becomes increasingly difficult to secure.

India must build new transmission, but it must build it smart. A new line built with advanced conductors and designed to work with storage can carry four to five times more clean power for only a modest additional cost. And with India planning a 40% expansion of its grid over the next decade, costing well over $100 billion and ranking among the world's largest buildouts, every kilometre must be future-proofed from the start.

India will need both approaches. Upgrading and optimising the existing grid offers the fastest relief to today's bottlenecks, while smarter, higher-capacity new transmission infrastructure will be essential to support the massive renewable energy expansion required in the coming decades.

The policy shifts that will determine success

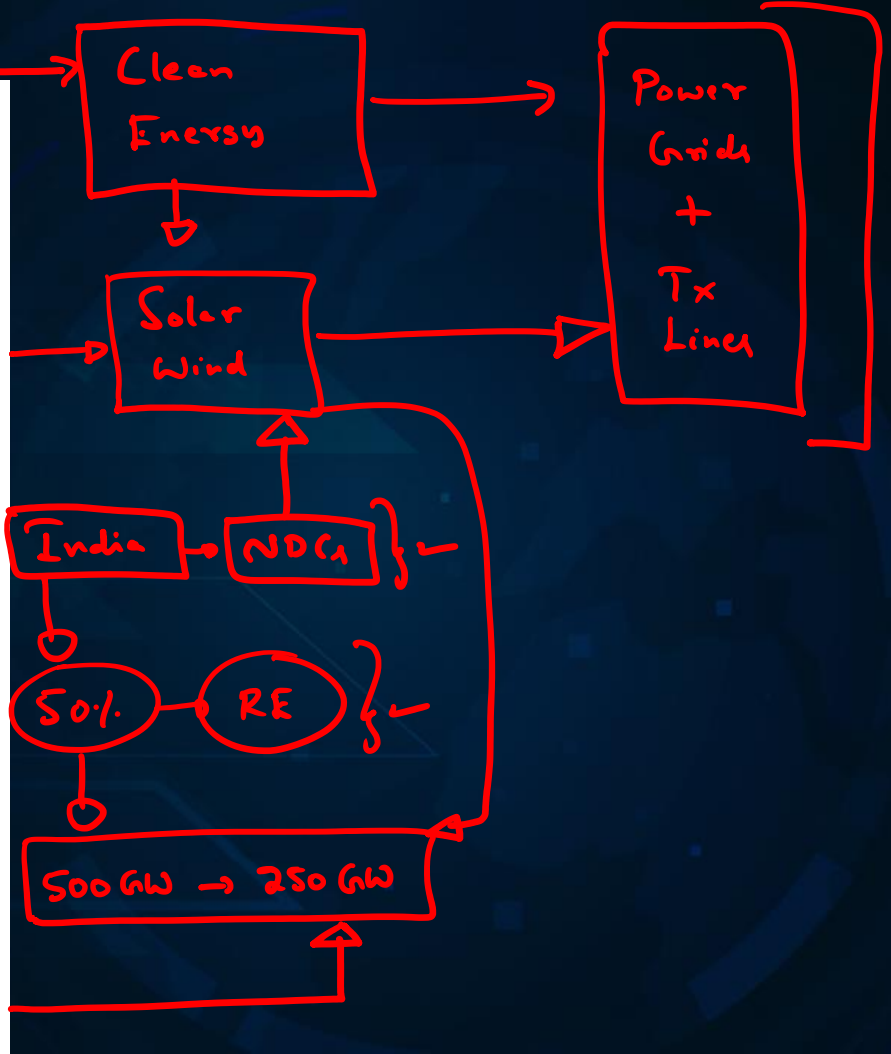
India already enjoys structural advantages: a unified national grid and a track record of adding transmission capacity faster than many developed countries. In the U.S. and parts of Europe, the inability to connect low-cost renewable energy to the grid has become the most severe bottleneck in the energy transition. As India accelerates renewable deployment, it can avoid this trap through forward-looking policy.

Three shifts matter most. First, India's national electricity regulator has already created enabling rules that require solar plants to make better use of their grid access by pairing with storage. This approach now needs to be implemented and expanded at the State level, with regulators and utilities actively incorporating it into planning and procurement decisions.

Second, regulation and procurement norms should reward the use of advanced transmission technologies that cost slightly more upfront but deliver greater system-wide benefits over their lifetime by expanding capacity without the need for new corridors.

Third, the coordinated development of large renewable energy zones and optimised transmission corridors is essential to overcome site-selection, planning, and timing challenges, and to enable the efficient movement of vast volumes of low-cost clean energy.

These measures will help India sustain its lead in low-cost clean power at a time when industries such as steel, aluminium, cement, data centres and chemicals are increasingly demanding reliable 24X7 electricity at predictable prices. The path ahead is clear: build all the transmission India can – and get far more out of every line. The grid is no longer background infrastructure. It is India's next engine of growth, and a cornerstone of a low-cost, high-productivity future.



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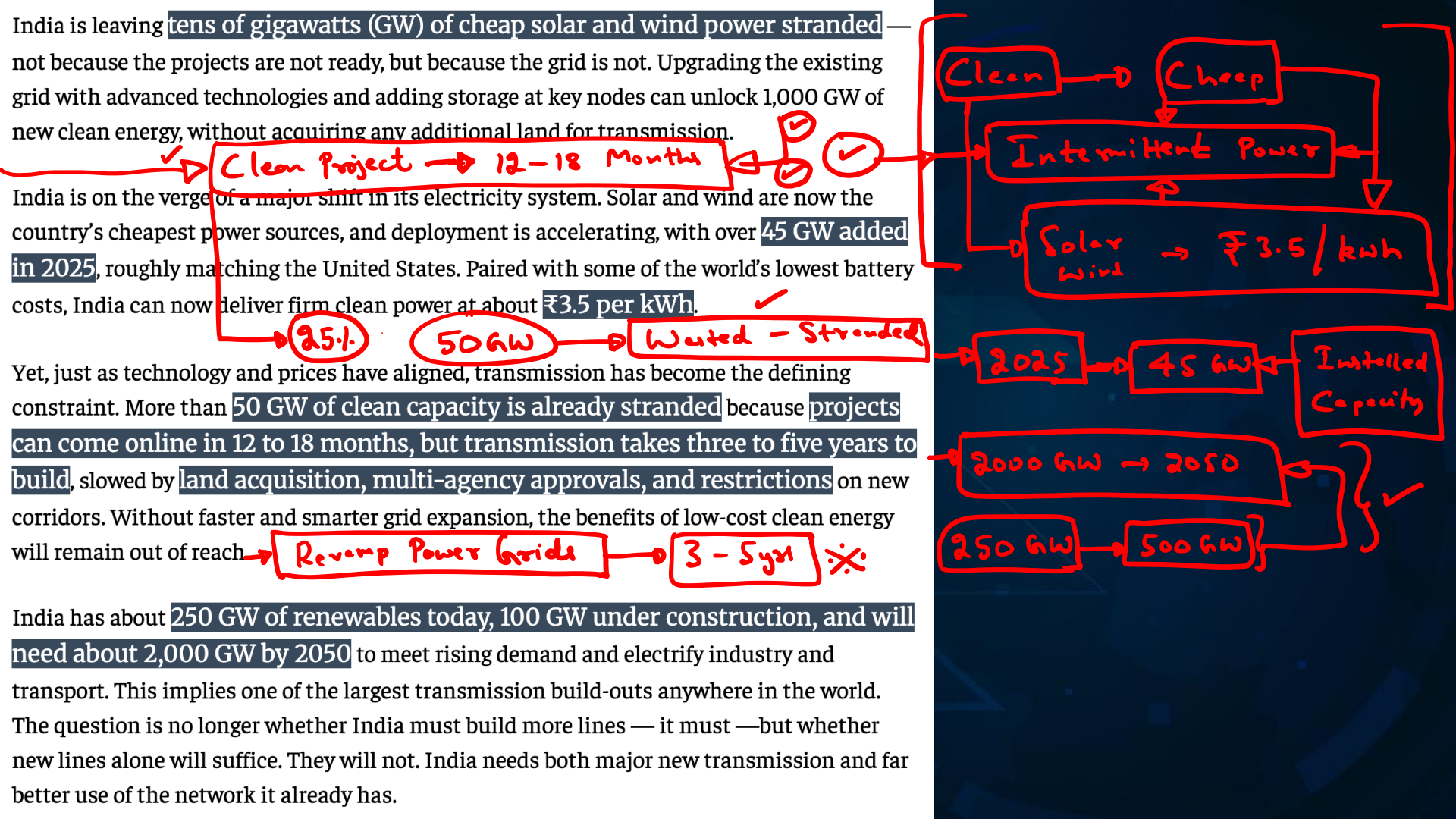

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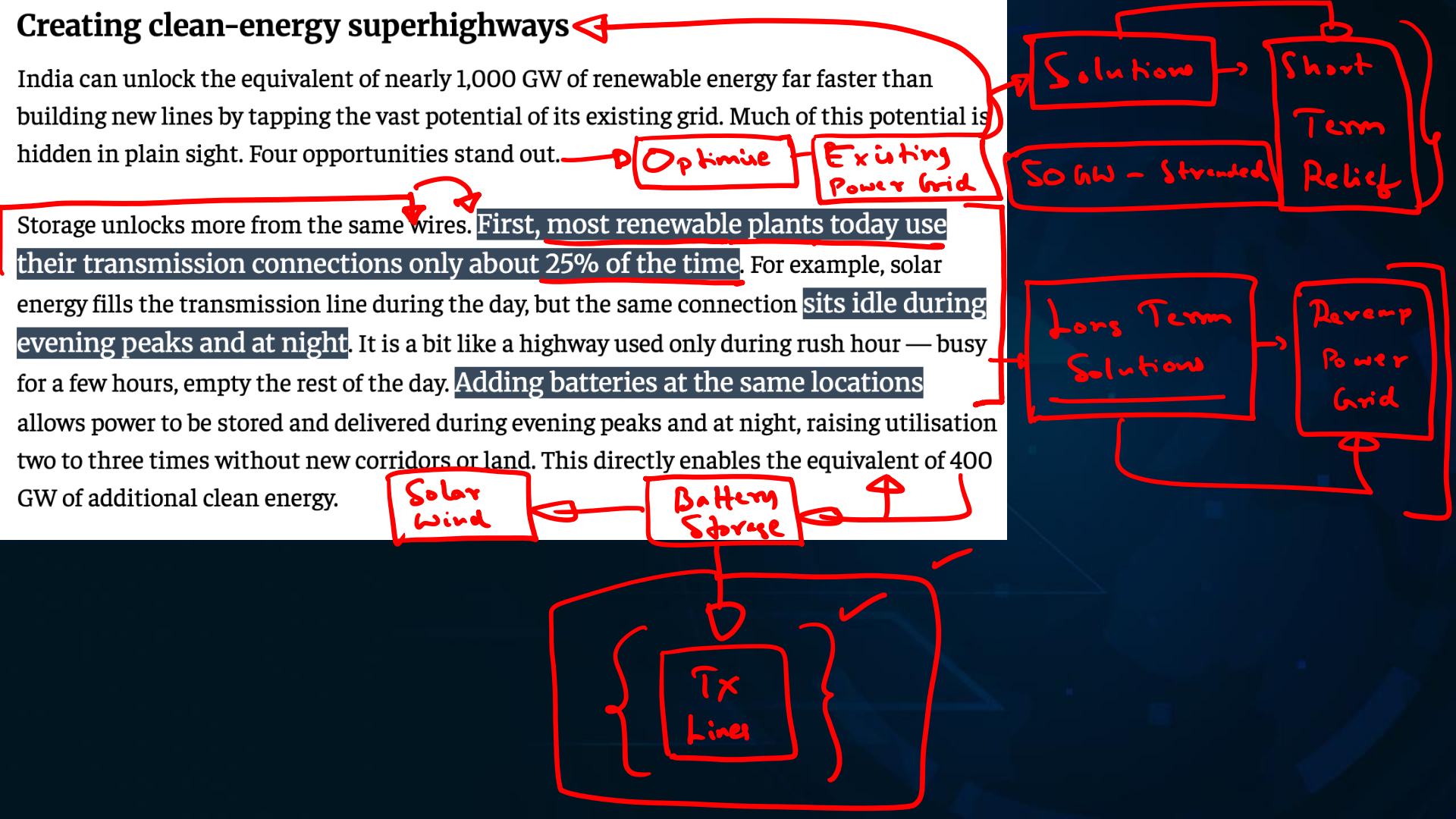

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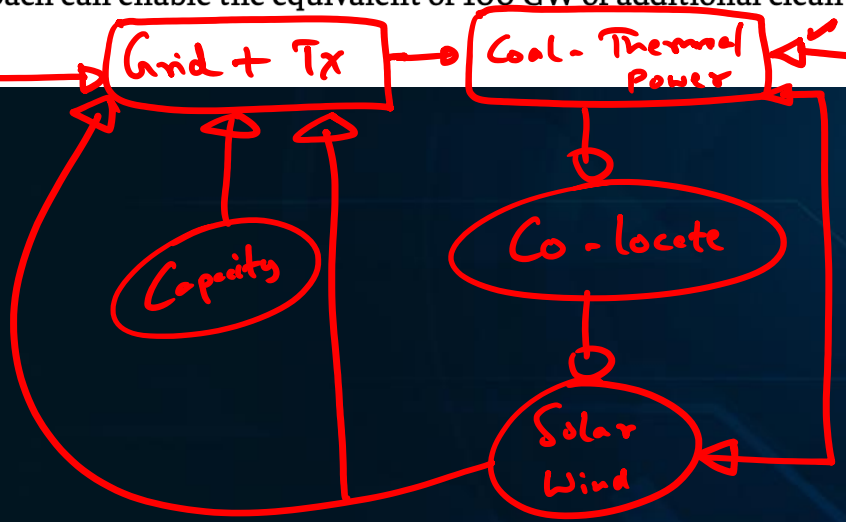

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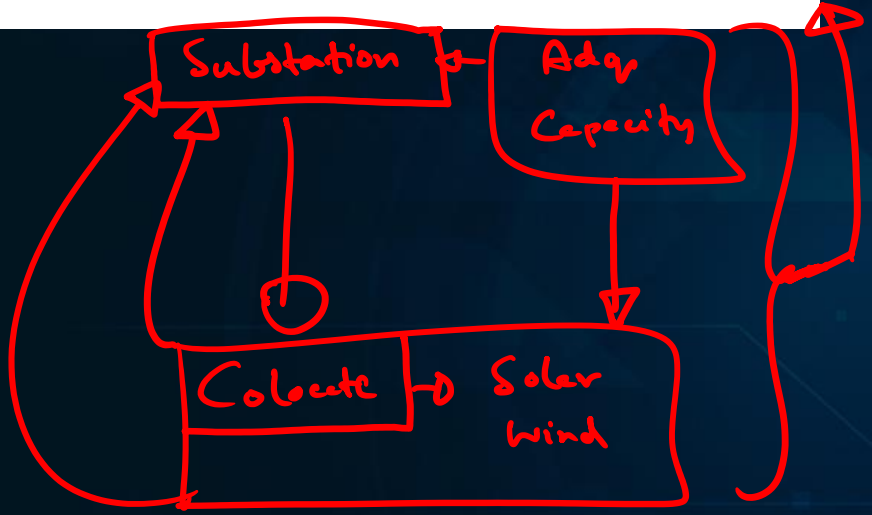

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Wires & Equipment

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Mains Practice Question

Q. The country's clean-energy future depends on faster, smarter grid expansion and optimisation. Discuss. (250 words; 15 marks)

3. Pg 6 – GS III (Security)

Drone Warfare

UC AVs

Moving from drone purchases to drone partnerships

The Indian government's planned $2 billion drone procurement from domestic manufacturers reinforces its commitment to indigenous manufacturing and will boost the country's growing drone industry. It also signals a shift from buying large, sophisticated platforms such as fighter aircraft to smaller, cheaper and more attritable systems. This shift also means procurement practices will have to address the challenges that come with the territory.

Long-term capital procurement that deals with systems such as tanks and fighter jets, is likely to struggle to keep pace with the rapid demand for upgrades and modifications. The willingness to spend money on these platforms is a good sign, but the question now is whether procurement systems will spend it well.

The economics of drones

Although public conversations about military drones typically focus on large uncrewed combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs) such as the MQ-9B Reaper and the Bayraktar TB-2, recent conflicts have exemplified the utility of smaller, cheaper drones.

These typically fall within the 'micro' and 'nano' drone categories, and are built to be cost-effective. Both Iran's use of drones against the United States and Israel, and the use of drones in the Russia-Ukraine war, have followed this principle. Intercepting drones that are being used to strike high-priced hardware, is typically far more expensive than the drones themself. The trend across recent wars has been to produce vast numbers of cheap drones, and deploy them in large numbers. Creative uses and modifications of drones that were originally manufactured for commercial use, have also served as an inexpensive means to achieve military objectives.

Ukraine's use of first-person-view (FPV) drones that have been retrofitted with warheads has made many headlines. Innovation in the defence drone sector is therefore closely linked to innovation in civilian drone technology, creating a need for more iterative and collaborative research and development (R&D) processes. The case of the Chinese drone industry demonstrates the benefits of closer collaboration among industry, academia and the military.

Adya Madhavan

Researcher at the Takshashila Institution

India's drone ambitions require smarter contracts and continuous innovation

The challenge of drone relevance

The other unique aspect of procuring tactical drones, is that the challenge lies not in acquiring them, but in ensuring that they stay relevant. A state-of-the-art fighter jet or tank bought in 2015 is still relatively new today, and is reasonably competitive. Tactical drones bought today can be obsolete in as little as two to three years, as enemy capabilities and threat environments continue to evolve. Enemy electronic warfare (EW) units can adapt their jammers to the signal of a new drone in as little as six to eight weeks.

When Ukrainian engineers faced this issue, the solution was not to procure new systems with different communication links, but to replace radio links with fibre-optic cables. Processes need to be quick, and allow for rapid modifications and upgrades without the constraint of red tape and bureaucratic timelines.

Indian procurement frameworks have made some good provisions in this direction, but there is still scope for change. For instance, the draft Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) allows the armed forces to procure commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) systems, enabling them to purchase commercial drones wherever they can be utilised. The DAP also has provisions to streamline upgrades. The Defence Procurement Manual (DPM) allows financial buffers for unforeseen repairs and upgrade costs. These are sensible moves.

The key shortcoming of current procurement frameworks is that buyer-seller relationships remain fundamentally transactional. The underlying assumption is that once the government identifies a requirement, it can issue a tender and procure a product that meets it.

However, in a domain where technology evolves rapidly, products require continuous iteration and improvement.

Partnerships, not transactions

A more suitable model for tactical drone procurement may resemble a managed service contract rather than like purchasing hardware.

Much like large organisations that procure computers with maintenance, software updates and replacement support, the armed forces could enter longer-term agreements with drone manufacturers. Such contracts would provide industry with demand predictability while ensuring assured supply, upgrade pathways and surge production capacity during conflicts. They would also create a framework for continuous improvements, including performance enhancements and adaptations to evolving electronic warfare threats. Most importantly, they would foster closer collaboration between the armed forces and industry in a domain where technology changes rapidly and future requirements are constantly evolving.

While Indian policy frameworks continue to take steps in the right direction, perhaps structural changes within these frameworks could create an environment better suited to keeping pace with the evolution of tactical drones. India's domestic drone industry has the technical foundation to support a more sophisticated procurement relationship. The $2 billion commitment is the clearest signal yet that the political will exists. Translating that into the right contractual architecture, one that prioritises sustained capability over one-off delivery, is the logical next step.

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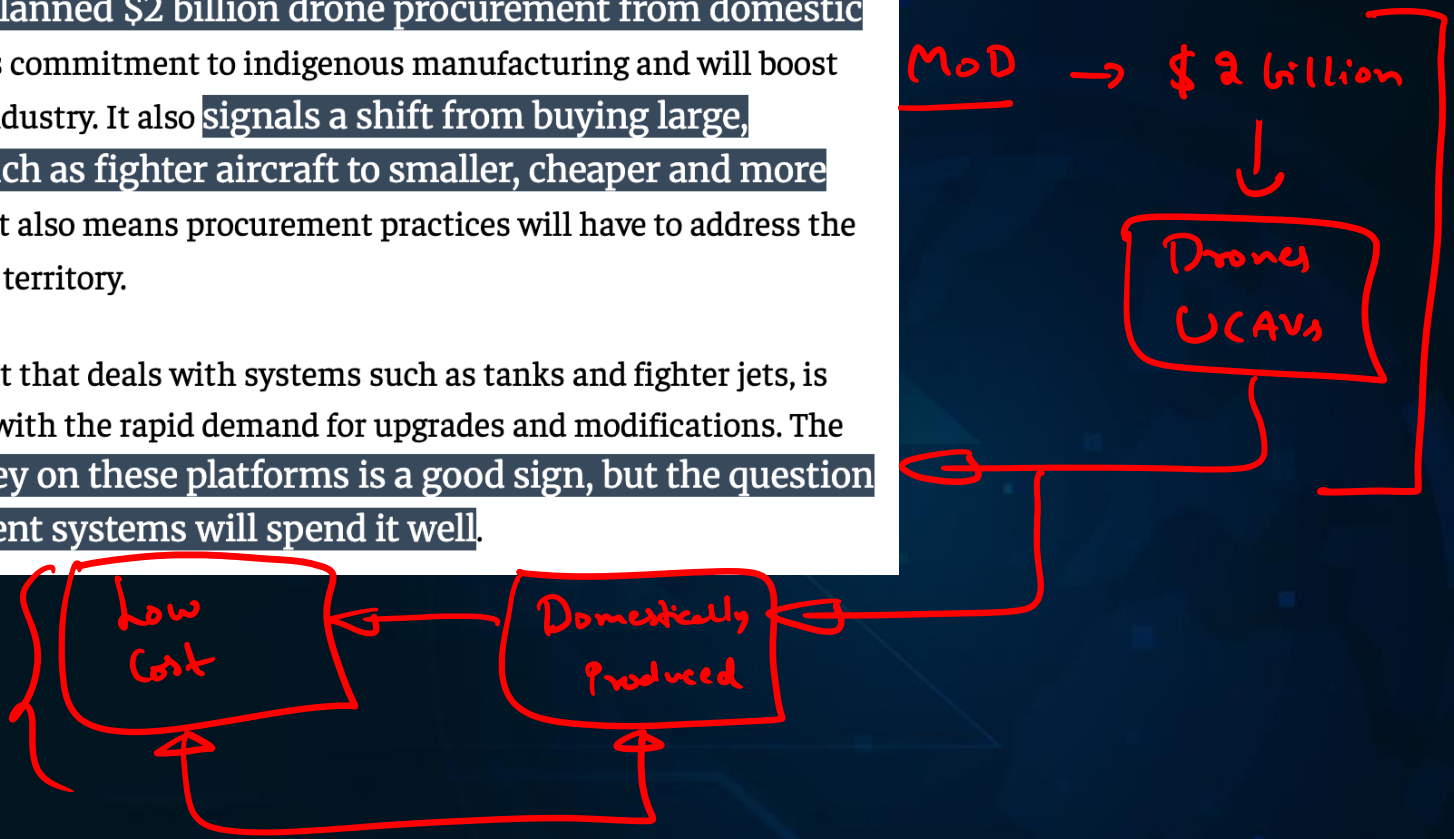

Armed

FPV Quadcopters

EW

Shahed

OFC

Warheads

Israel

Heron Searcher

ISR

Armed Drones

Harop Harpy

USA

MQ-9B Reaper

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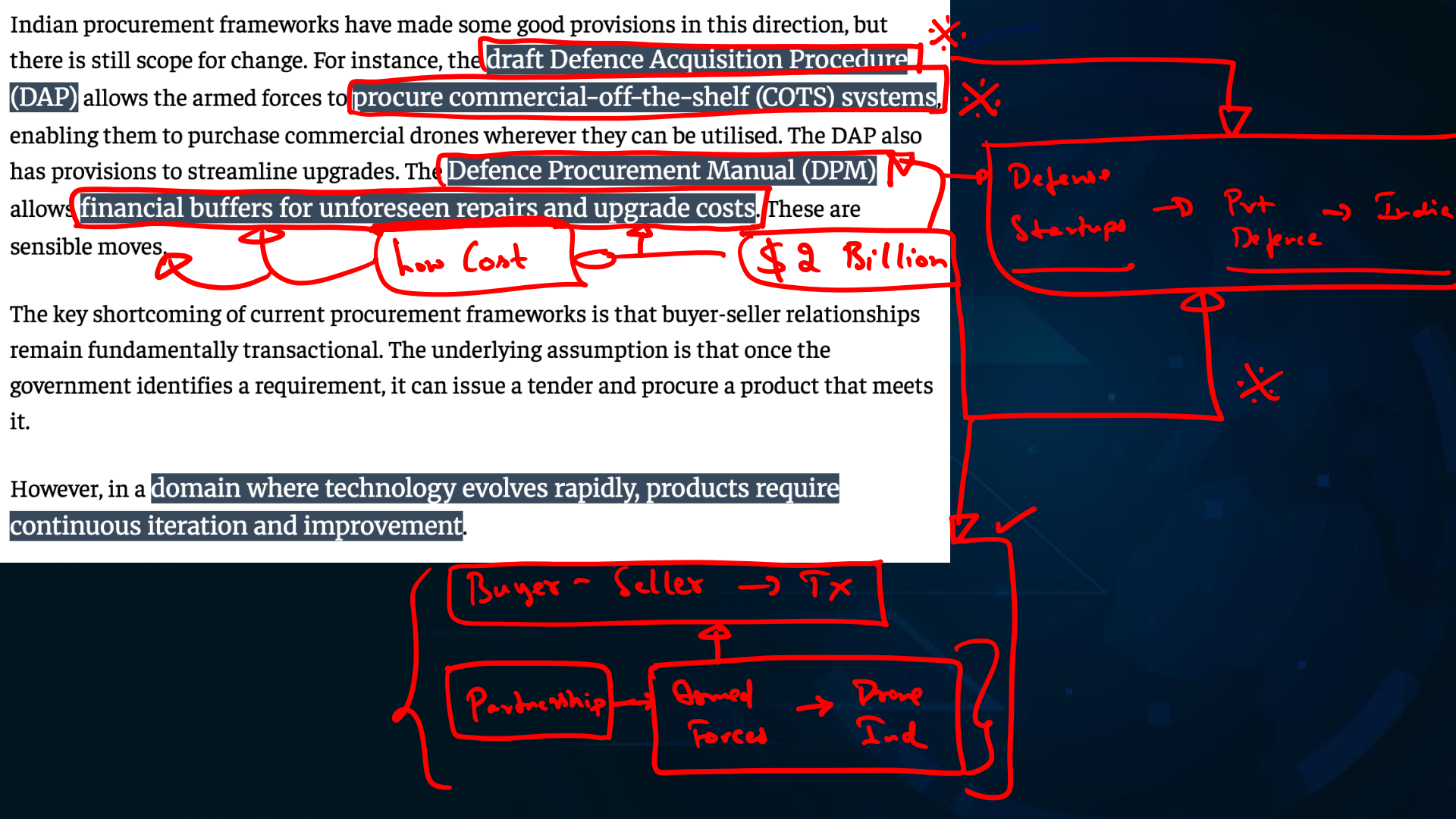

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4. Pg 1 & 6 – GS II (Polity)

Walking on footpaths a fundamental right, rules Supreme Court

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday, in a judgment, declared the freedom to walk on demarcated and well-maintained footpaths a fundamental right which has priority over movement by motorised vehicles. The court highlighted the need to lay down a statutory framework, not only for declaring the right to walk a fundamental right, but also to recognise the duty-bearers.

"If a road exists, there must then be a duty to ensure that a footpath is demarcated and maintained for the walkers. This is an enforceable duty. The fundamental right to walk on demarcated footpaths shall override the privilege of a motorised vehicle," Justice P.S. Narasimha, who authored the judgment, held.

The judgment came in a case of the death of a five-year-old boy who was crushed to death by a truck while walking to the school with his father.

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>
> SUPREME COURT

Justice Narasimha said walking safely and carefree along wide footpaths, without danger lurking at every turn, was the most basic of rights.

CONTINUED ON
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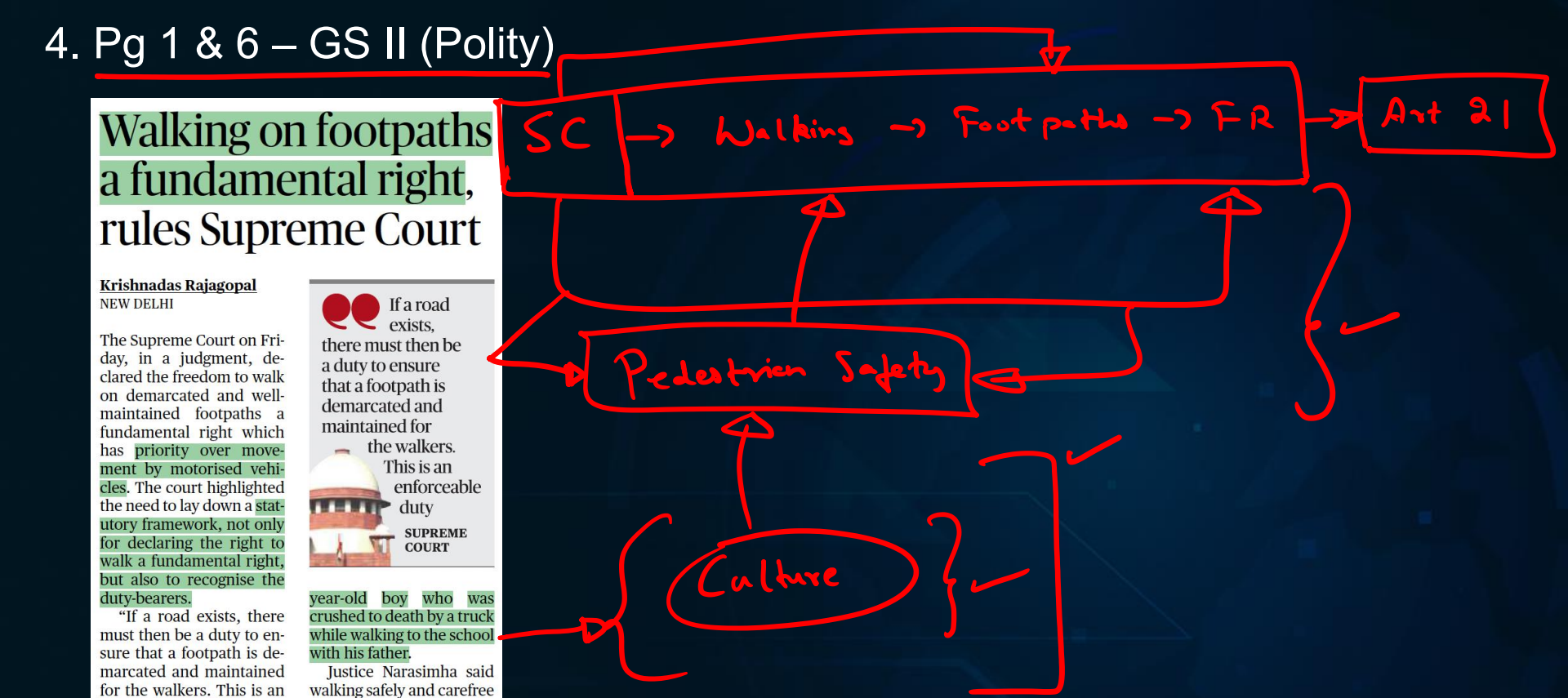
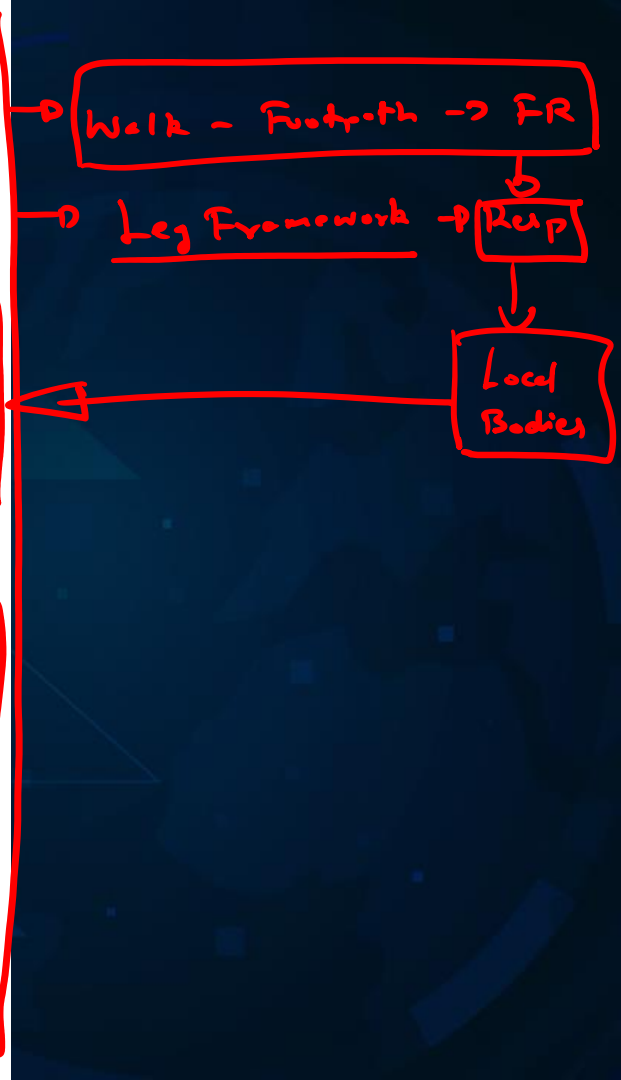
EDITORIAL: RIGHT OF WAY
» PAGE 6



As part of the Supreme Court's expansion of Article 21 since the 1970s, it has declared the right to walk on demarcated footpaths a fundamental right. The Bench of Justices P.S. Narasimha and Atul S. Chandurkar reaffirmed the right in a case seeking higher compensation for a five-year-old boy's death after being struck and killed by a tanker lorry in Karnataka. As motorised transport has become more widespread, the Bench noted with regret that walking has become an inconvenience, with motorists often treating pedestrians as a 'nuisance' to be tolerated or cleared. In the absence of a national law governing pedestrian rights, responsibility for pedestrian safety is split across municipal laws, town-planning statutes, and street design guidelines. As such, pedestrians are considered to be safe if they face no immediate physical harm. Most cities also lack continuous unobstructed footpaths; where footpaths do exist, they are often encroached on by parking, vendors, utilities, and construction debris, and competing pressures such as road widening work.

While a right to walk is desirable, the ideas that pavements belong to pedestrians and that they have right of way should be cultural in order to endure. Rights-based legislation in India that has sought to change public culture has had mixed success. The Street Vendors Act 2014 sought to protect vendors from harassment as under Article 19(1)(g). But in most cities, municipalities still conduct "eviction drives" while implementation has lagged because the Act requires surveys, town vending committees, and the demarcation of vending zones — processes that many urban local bodies have delayed or simply abandoned. Weak implementation has allowed informal rent-seeking by officials to persist in some cases. The new judgment is also likely to set up disputes with the 2014 Act. Second, the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act 2003 curtailed public smoking over 20 years, but not by "restitutionary remedies", as the Court has suggested for walking, but with consistent social messaging and small, immediate fines. Finally, despite strict laws and 'Swachh Bharat' mandates, the culture of littering remains because the law focuses on citizens' duty to segregate whereas the state has often overlooked its duty to collect segregated waste. Similarly, if the state does not build footpaths, the citizen's right will be meaningless. The Court's constitutional nudge may thus lead to no real change if it remains a legal tool for compensation after a tragedy. A state using it to 'cleanse' streets of informal commercial activity could also gentrify these public spaces and criminalise the survival of the urban poor. The nudge's principal path to success will be by moving the state's funds towards pedestrian infrastructure.



5. Pg 1 – GS II (Polity) & GS III (Security)

Delhi HC upholds curbs on Telegram amid NEET row

Centre followed procedure as per Section 69A of IT Act and gave reasons for invoking emergency powers, says court; definition of 'information' in Act includes software and programmes, it says

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday upheld the Centre's temporary ban on messaging platform Telegram, noting that the government's action was proportionate and justified in view of the alleged use of the platform by organised cheating networks linked to the NEET (UG), 2026, controversy.

Dismissing Telegram's challenge to the June 16 emergency blocking order, the court found that the Union government had followed the procedure prescribed under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act and had recorded adequate reasons for invoking its emergency powers.

Court's endorsement

What the Delhi High Court said in the Telegram case

- Centre empowered under Section 69A of the IT Act to restrict 'entire platform' access
- Centre has cited circulation of purported examination papers and fraudulent activities targeting students as reason
- Govt. order not disproportionate as attempts to resolve through channel-specific take-downs failed
- Temporary restrictions were proportionate to the objective of preventing misinformation and criminal activity

A significant aspect of the ruling is the court's endorsement of the government's interpretation of Section 69A.

'Entire platform'

Rejecting Telegram's argument that the provision permits blocking only specific content and not an entire platform, the court held that the Act's broad definition of "information" encompasses software and computer programmes. Since Telegram functions through software infrastructure constituting a "computer resource", the government was legally empowered to direct a temporary block on the platform, the court said.

"An application or platform performs logical, arithmetic and memory functions through electronic, magnetic or optical impulses, and includes input, output, processing, storage, computer software and communication facilities connected with a computer system or computer network. Accordingly, this court is of the view that Respondent No. 1 was empowered under Section 69A of the IT Act to issue directions for blocking public access to Telegram," it said.

The court rejected Telegram's contention that the order reflected non-application of mind.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8
RELATED REPORT ON
» PAGE 8

HC upholds Telegram curbs amid NEET row

The court observed that the government had specifically cited the circulation of purported examination papers, fraudulent activities targeting students and the inability of existing measures to curb recurring violations.

Accepting the Centre's argument that repeated attempts to tackle the problem through channel-specific takedowns on Telegram had failed, the court said, "The government's measures are least restrictive. It cannot be held that the order is disproportionate."

According to material placed before the government, operators of fraudulent networks were routinely creating mirror channels, backup groups and successor accounts after enforcement action, rendering targeted removals ineffective, the court said. The judgment noted that authorities had concluded that "nothing short of a platform-level measure" would protect the integrity of the examination during the critical period preceding the June 21 re-test.

Telegram had argued that it was being unfairly singled out while other social media platforms continued to operate. The company told the court that it had cooperated with authorities, removed flagged content within hours, and had taken down over 900 links related to unlawful NEET content using a combination of artificial intelligence tools and manual moderation.

However, the court held that the emergent circumstances surrounding the NEET-UG controversy justified the government's intervention and that the temporary restrictions were proportionate to the objective of preventing misinformation and criminal activity.

6. Pg 10 – GS III (E&E and DM)

Four glacial lakes in Arunachal have expanded in a decade: study

Analysis by geospatial intelligence firm shows that the 'high-risk' lakes have increased in area, with one of them growing by 10 hectares; expert says expansion warrants attention but should not be interpreted as evidence of an impending disaster

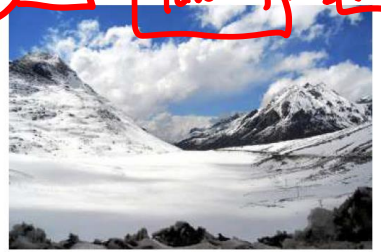
Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

A satellite-based assessment of five glacial lakes in the Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh has found that four have expanded over the last decade, with one lake showing rapid growth, adding fresh evidence to concerns over the threat posed by Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) in the eastern Himalaya.

The analysis – a report and not a peer-reviewed study – conducted by the Noida-based geospatial intelligence firm Suhora Technologies, examined five lakes in the Mago Chu basin that have been classified by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) as "high-risk" or "very high-risk".

The assessment comes amid heightened attention on glacial hazards in the region following a recent risk evaluation by the Centre for Earth Sciences and Himalayan Studies (CESHS), Arunachal Pradesh.

Using imagery from ICEYE, PlanetScope, and LISS-IV satellites, Suhora compared the extent of the lakes between 2016 and June 2026. In a press statement, the company said that "four out of five lakes have expanded, reflecting a general trend of glacial retreat and meltwater storage". However, it cautioned that "lake expansion does not directly indicate a flood event" and said the findings instead highlighted "the importance of regular monitoring and further assessment to better understand future risks".



A new satellite study has flagged the importance of continuous monitoring of high-risk glacial lakes in Arunachal Pradesh. PTI

High-risk lakes

Among the lakes analysed, Sanhapo Lake showed the most significant growth. Suhora estimated its area at 78.07 hectares in 2019, increasing to 88.81 hectares by mid-June 2026. The company said that while uncertainties remain regarding its historical extent because of ice cover visible in its 2016 imagery, the lake has exhibited sustained expansion in recent years. Given its size and continued growth, Suhora identified it as the highest-priority lake among those assessed for detailed hazard modelling, continuous monitoring and possible early-warning systems.

The remaining lakes showed more modest changes. Two lakes categorised by the NDMA as "very high risk" expanded by about a hectare over the decade, while Dharkha Tso, listed as "high risk", also recorded gradual growth. A fifth lake remained broadly stable over the observation period.

Amit Kumar, co-founder and chief operating officer of Suhora Technologies, said satellite observations were increasingly important for monitoring remote mountain regions where field access was often difficult. "By comparing satellite imagery across multiple years, it is possible to track changes in glacial lake extent...with the monsoon season approaching, continuous observation of glacial lakes becomes increasingly important", he added.

Anil Kulkarni, glaciologist and distinguished fellow at the Divecha Centre for Climate Change, Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru and who wasn't connected to the study, said the observed expansion warranted attention but should not be interpreted as evidence of an impending disaster.

"If lakes are expanding, then it is considered as an unstable lake," he said. However, he stressed that the key question was why a lake was growing. Lakes impounded by moraines – ridges of rock and debris deposited by glaciers – can become hazardous when retreating glaciers increase the volume of water trapped behind them. Yet several other factors determine risk, including the possibility of landslides, avalanches or rockfalls entering the lake.

"Mere increase in area, even over a decade, cannot be a single criterion" for judging how dangerous a lake is, Mr. Kulkarni told *The Hindu*. "It can be a concern, but how risky it is, we do not know."

Concerns over floods

Worries over Himalayan glacial hazards have intensified since the October 2023 disaster in Sikkim, when a breach associated with South Lhonak Lake triggered floods that killed dozens of people and destroyed the Chungthang hydropower dam. GLOFs can occur when natural moraine dams fail or when large avalanches, landslides, or icefalls suddenly displace water and generate destructive waves.

Mr. Kulkarni said India's ability to identify potentially dangerous glacial lakes had improved considerably through satellite monitoring and modelling. However, he argued that translating scientific assessments into practical risk reduction remained a major challenge.

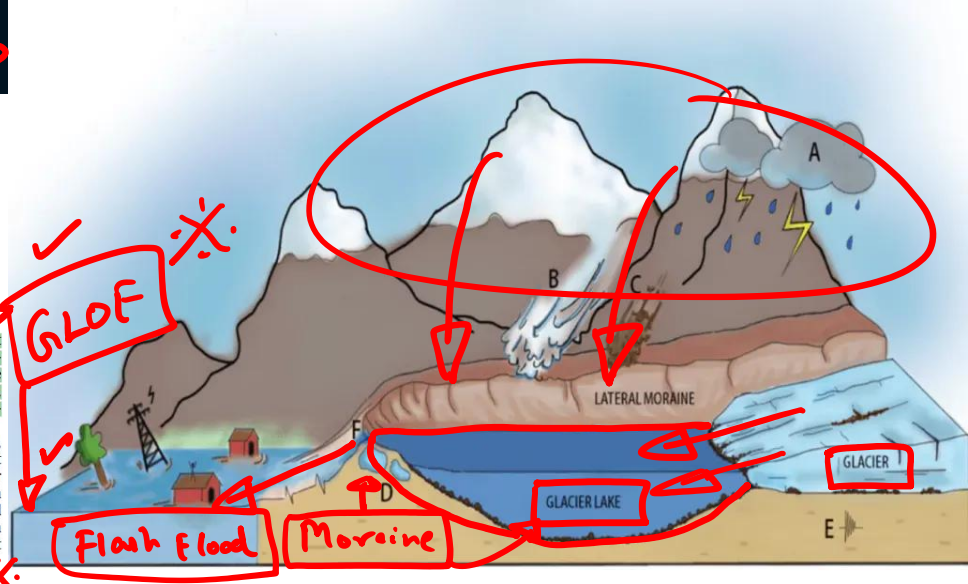
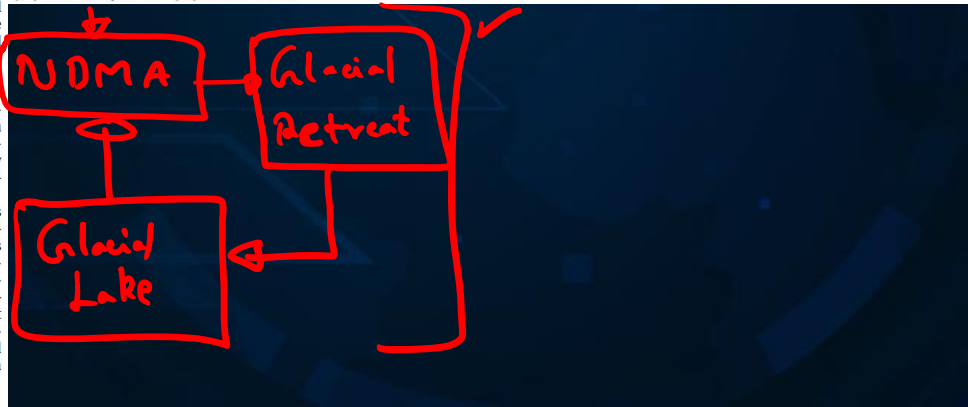


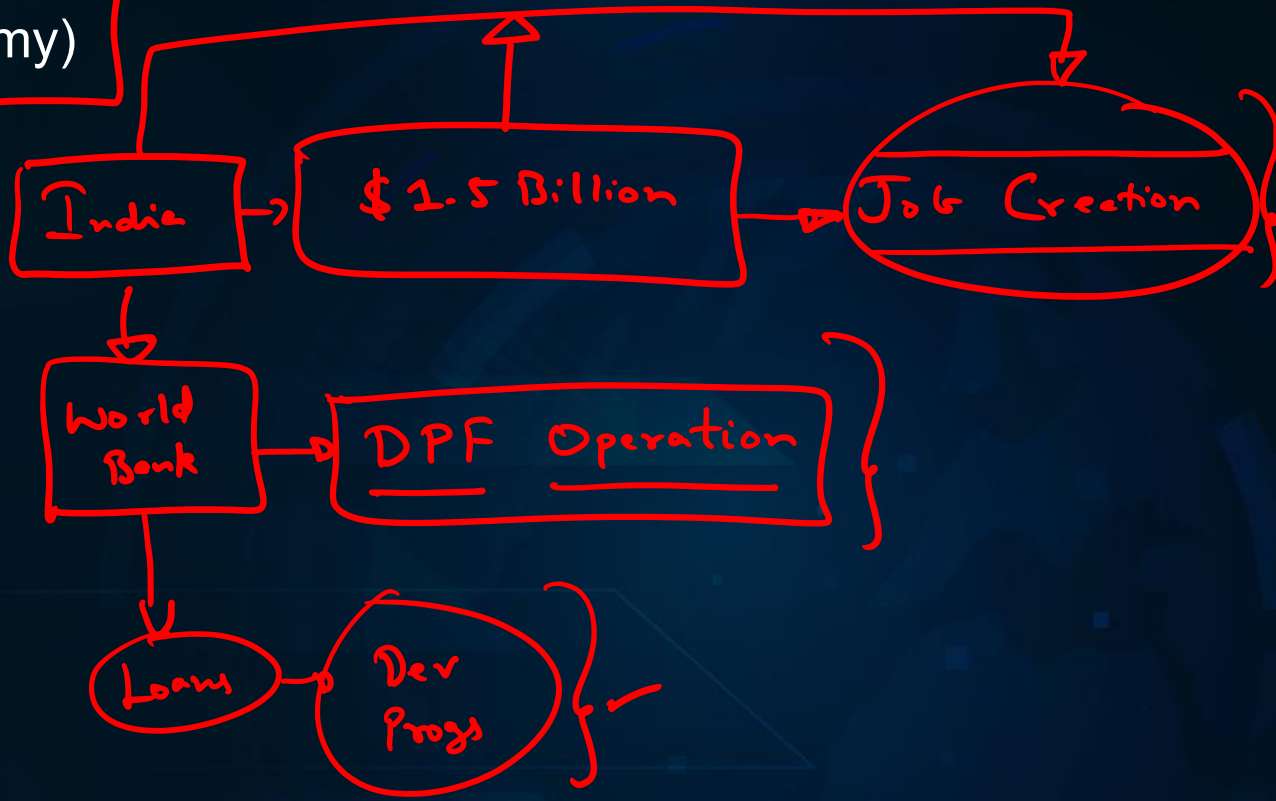
Figure: Illustrative graphic showing various reasons for GLOF occurrence
(A) Cloudburst (B) Snow avalanche (C) Landslide (D) Melting of ice in moraine
(E) Earthquake (F) Overflow



7. Pg 11 – GS III (Economy)

World Bank approves $1.5 bn support for India reform plan

The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors on Friday approved $1.5 billion financing to India to support structural reforms aimed at boosting private sector-led job creation and economic growth, it said in a statement. It added the financing, being provided under Development Policy Financing (DPF) Operation, can create job opportunities for 11 million youth who would be entering the labour market every year over the next two decades. The Bank's DPF seeks to rapidly disburse financing to help a borrower country address existing or anticipated development financing requirements. The statement read, "The DPF operation builds on many structural reforms undertaken or initiated in recent years, including tax simplification, trade integration, and legislative and regulatory reforms to improve ease of living and the ease of doing business."



Prelims Bytes

8 Pg 1 & 8 – Security

Police, probe agencies get app to scan fingerprints on the go

Abhigyan app will let police verify thumb impressions collected on portable scanners against NAFIS database within seconds; this will strengthen ground-level policing, says Home Minister

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Police and investigating agencies across the country will soon be equipped with portable fingerprint scanners linked to a national database of 1.3 crore criminal suspects and convicts, letting them stop individuals anywhere, even on the streets, to collect thumb impressions and instantly check for any pending criminal records on their smartphones.

Abhigyan, an app developed by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) to implement the procedure, was launched by Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday.

The app links to the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS), which stores fingerprint scans of accused, convicts, and those in prisons. A demonstration of the app showed that prints can be matched with the NAFIS database in 35 seconds.

Data patrol: The app enables field police personnel to access a vast repository of criminal records directly on their smartphones. PTI

Routine checks

"During routine vehicle checks on the streets, biometric scans of any suspicious individual can be conducted to identify persons wanted in connection with crimes. Field officers can get the criminal history of the suspect in few seconds. This will provide protection to the police as they will be alerted of the presence of a hardened criminal," the demonstration stated.

An NCRB official told *The Hindu* that the Criminal Procedure Identification Act, 2022 provides the legal basis for such checks. However, Section 3 of the Act seems to limit the mandatory recording of measurements, including fingerprints, to people who have been convicted or arrested, and those ordered to give security for good behaviour or maintaining peace under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. The Act does not mention the possibility of random testing of individuals without any evidence linking them to a punishable offence.

At present, the facility to check fingerprints against the NAFIS database is only available through 1,556 workstations deployed at police stations and district headquarters across the country. The current process involves bringing an individual to the workstation to match his or her fingerprints with the database.

Mr. Shah said that the app enables field police personnel to access a vast repository of criminal records directly on their smartphones. "Secured with two-step authentication, it allows real-time fingerprint identification within seconds, strengthening ground-level policing. Equipped with features such as fast identification, portability, and access to millions of records, 'Abhigyan' is a highly powerful tool," the minister said.

NAFIS should not be used merely to identify offenders, he said, noting that its effectiveness depends on continuously enriching the database by uploading fingerprints collected from every crime scene, Mr. Shah said.

Focus on prosecution

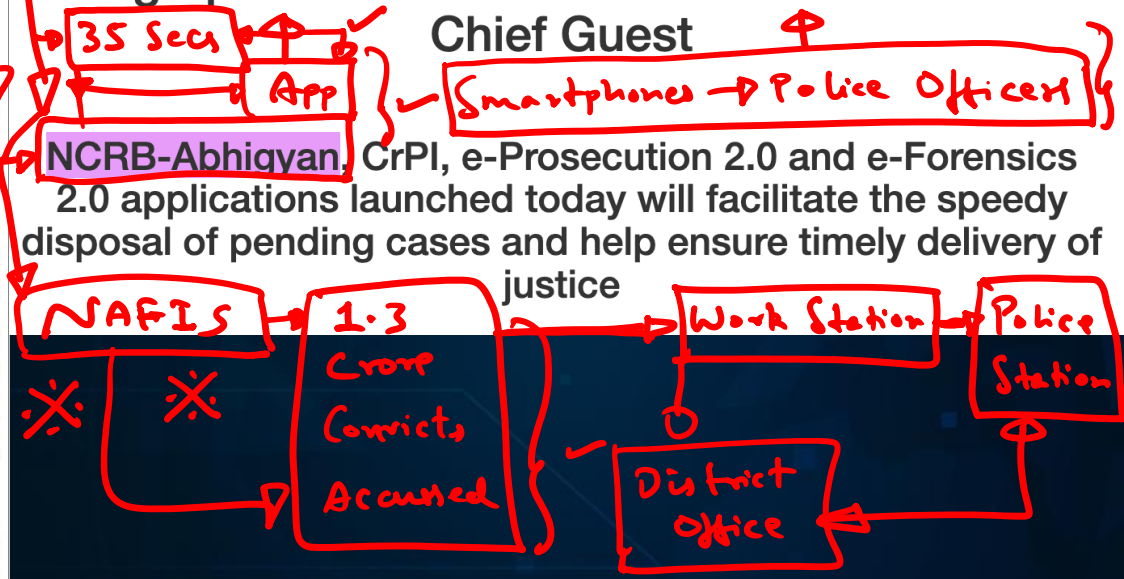
He said that continued emphasis must be placed not only on apprehending offenders but also on ensuring that crimes are proven in a time-bound manner. The focus should not be limited merely to the arrest of criminals but on time-bound justice, he added.

The Home Minister said that training modules should incorporate the art of drafting concise chargesheets, along with the precise processes of collecting, preserving, and uploading scientific evidence.

PIB

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah addresses the inaugural session of the 26th All India Fingerprint Conference 2026 in New Delhi as Chief Guest

NCRB-Abhigyan, CrPI, e-Prosecution 2.0 and e-Forensics 2.0 applications launched today will facilitate the speedy disposal of pending cases and help ensure timely delivery of justice



9. Pg 8 – IR

Palestine envoy seeks medical assistance for Gaza, West Bank

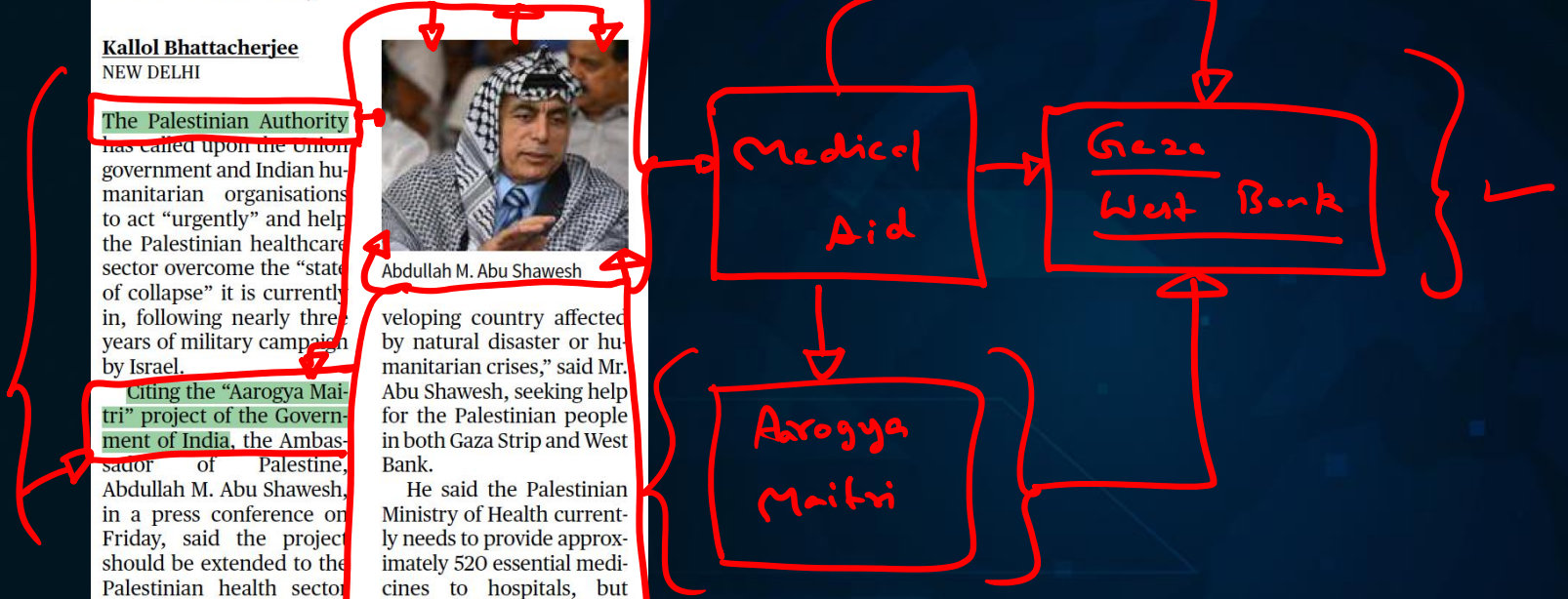
Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

Abdullah M. Abu Shawesh

The Palestinian Authority has called upon the Union government and Indian humanitarian organisations to act "urgently" and help the Palestinian healthcare sector overcome the "state of collapse" it is currently in, following nearly three years of military campaign by Israel.

Citing the "Aarogya Maitri" project of the Government of India, the Ambassador of Palestine, Abdullah M. Abu Shawesh, in a press conference on Friday, said the project should be extended to the Palestinian health sector that is facing a "catastrophic" situation. "Recently, the Honourable Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi announced the 'Aarogya Maitri' project, where he pledged, and I quote his words, "Under this project India will provide essential medical supplies to any developing country affected by natural disaster or humanitarian crises," said Mr. Abu Shawesh, seeking help for the Palestinian people in both Gaza Strip and West Bank.

He said the Palestinian Ministry of Health currently needs to provide approximately 520 essential medicines to hospitals, but almost 180 of these drugs are "completely unavailable". "Furthermore, out of 97 medicines specialised for cancer and tumour treatment, 50 are currently at zero stock levels, placing nearly 4,000 cancer patients at immediate risk," he said.



PROJECT BHISHM

Decoding World's First Indigenous Portable Hospital

Posted On: 28 AUG 2024 1:32PM

2024

During the historic visit to Kyiv last week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi presented four 'Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog Hita & Maitri' (BHISHM) Cubes to the Ukrainian government, showcasing India's commitment to humanitarian aid.

Ukraine

Maldives

G20

2023

Aarogya Maitri Project

Announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during Voice of Global South Summit in January 2023, the 'Aarogya Maitri' project is a humanitarian initiative that extends India's commitment to global health and disaster relief.

Building on the success of the 'Vaccine Maitri' program, which provided Indian-made COVID-19 vaccines to over 100 countries during the pandemic, 'Aarogya Maitri' aims to offer essential medical supplies to developing nations affected by natural disasters or humanitarian crises.

This project underscores India's role as a responsible global partner, ready to provide crucial support when and where it's most needed. By offering medical aid to countries in times of distress, India continues to strengthen its diplomatic ties and reinforce its position as a key player in international humanitarian efforts.

Understanding BHISHM

The Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog Hita & Maitri (BHISHM), part of Project Aarogya Maitri, is an innovative emergency medical aid program. At its core are compact, portable "mini cubes" filled with essential medicines and equipment, designed for rapid deployment in various emergencies.

The BHISHM system is highly modular and scalable. Thirty-six mini cubes combine to form a mother cube, and two mother cubes create a full BHISHM Cube. Each complete cube can support medical care for up to 200 cases, including surgical procedures. The system incorporates advanced technology, featuring inventory management via Radio-frequency identification (RFID) and digital support in 180 languages.

10. Pg 10 – IR & Security

Culture Secretary Vivek Aggarwal is new FATF Vice-President

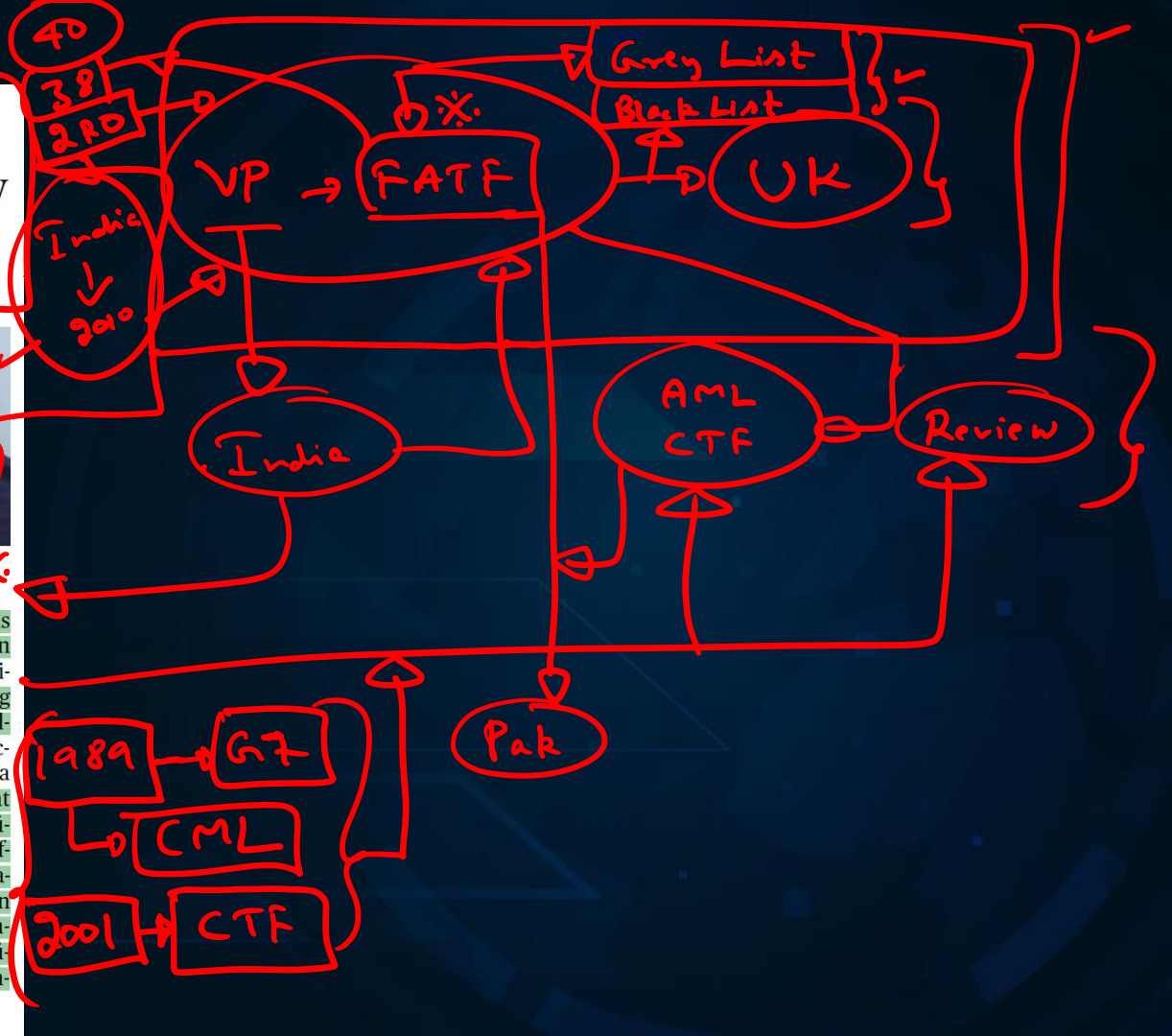
The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI


Vivek Aggarwal

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Plenary has appointed Union Culture Secretary Vivek Aggarwal as the next Vice-President of the global anti-money laundering and counterterrorist financing watchdog for the 2026-2027 term.

"Members approved the priorities of the FATF under the incoming U.K. Presidency, and appointed Mr. Vivek Aggarwal of India as the incoming Vice-President of the FATF (July 2026-June 2027)," said an FATF release. Mr. Aggarwal will succeed Giles Thomson, who has served as FATF Vice-President since July 1, 2025.

Currently serving as Secretary in the Culture Ministry, Mr. Aggarwal has headed India's delegation to the FATF. He led a multidisciplinary team during India's FATF Mutual Evaluation process. His selection is being viewed as a significant development for India's role in global financial governance and efforts to strengthen international cooperation on issues of anti-money laundering, counterterrorist financing, and illicit financial flows.



11. Pg 10 – Govt Schemes

Sickle cell anaemia to be eradicated by 2047: Murmu

The Hindu Bureau
BHOPAL

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday said that the country would eradicate sickle cell anaemia well before the government-set target of 2047, while calling for collective efforts to raise awareness about the disorder, especially among tribal communities.

Addressing a Madhya Pradesh Government event in Khandwa district's Omkareshwar, the President said, "Through collective strength and active participation of all States, India would achieve its national goal of eliminating sickle cell-related diseases well before 2047."

She also said that various key targets set during the launch of the National Mission in 2023 have been achieved ahead of schedule, including the screening of seven crore people between zero and 40 years of age. The President said that various scientific studies had shown that sickle cell anaemia among tribal communities was many times higher than in the general population. "I would like to urge all State governments and officials not to take this disease lightly because it passes from one generation to another. Efforts should be made to eradicate it completely," she said.

- Sickle-cell disease is a serious inherited blood disorder caused by a mutation in the HBB gene, leading to abnormal, sickle-shaped red blood cells that block blood flow and cause severe health complications.
- In 2021, an estimated 7.74 million people were living with sickle-cell disease globally, with 515 000 new births, primarily in sub-Saharan Africa, which accounts for nearly 80% of global cases.
- Sickle-cell disease causes substantial under-5 mortality: 81 100 deaths in 2021, making it the 12th leading cause of death in this age group when considering the total mortality burden.
- Traditional mortality recording underestimates sickle-cell disease impact – actual deaths are 11 times higher than cause-specific statistics suggest (376 000 vs 34 400 deaths in 2021).
- Common complications include acute pain crises, anaemia, stroke, infections, kidney failure, and pregnancy-related risks.
- Effective interventions exist, including disease modifying agents such as hydroxyurea and vaccinations to prevent infection.
- Urgent action is needed to integrate sickle-cell disease care into primary health systems and ensure access to essential medicines.

Sickle cell disease is a genetic blood disease which affects the whole life of affected patient. It is more common in the tribal population of India, but occurs in non tribals too. It not only causes anemia but also pain crises, reduced growth, and affects many organs like lungs, heart, kidney, eyes, bones and the brain. India has the largest density of tribal population, globally. As per Census 2011, India has a 8.6% tribal population which is 67.8 million across the Indian states. The MoHFW tribal health expert committee report has listed sickle cell disease as one of the 10 special problems in tribal heath that affect the tribal people disproportionately, thus making this an important intervention. Ministry of health under NHM initiated the work on hemoglobinopathies (Thalassemia & Sickle Cell Disease) in 2016 wherein comprehensive guidelines on prevention and management of heamoglobinopathies were released and provision of funds towards screening and management of Sickle cell disease were made. Thereafter, as per the State's proposals, support is continuously being provided. However, the pandemic reduced the efforts towards prevention through screening and IEC activities. Now, it is felt that a separate scheme/Mission to detect, management, prevention and awareness needs to be initiated.

Prime Minister launches National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission from Shahdol, Madhya Pradesh

National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission aims to eliminate Sickle Cell Anaemia by 2047

PM Distributes sickle cell genetic status cards to beneficiaries

National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission prioritizes the health of tribal communities in India: Prime Minister

Mission targets screening approximately 7.0 crore people under 40 years of age in the next 3 years

Prime Minister kickstarts the distribution of about 3.57 crore Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) cards

People should match Sickle Cell Genetic Status Cards before marriage, to ensure that the disease is not transferred to the next generation: Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya

Sabka Saath, Sabka prayaas can stop the spread of Sickle Cell Disease: Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya

प्रविष्टि तिथि: 01 JUL 2023 7:19PM by PIB Delhi

About National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission:

The National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Program, introduced in the Union Budget 2023, focuses on addressing the significant health challenges posed by sickle cell disease, particularly among tribal populations of the country. Sickle cell disease (SCD) is a chronic single gene disorder causing a debilitating systemic syndrome characterized by chronic anemia, acute painful episodes, organ infarction and chronic organ damage and by a significant reduction in life expectancy. Implemented in 17 high-focus states across the country, this program aims to improve the care and prospects of all sickle cell disease patients while reducing the prevalence of the disease. The 17 states are- Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Bihar, and Uttarakhand.

The program is executed in a mission mode as part of the National Health Mission (NHM), aims to eliminate sickle cell genetic transmission by the year 2047, showing a long-term commitment to eradicating the disease.

Over a period of three years, spanning from the fiscal year 2023-24 to 2025-26, the program targets screening approximately 7.0 crore people. This ambitious goal highlights the program's dedication to reaching a large portion of the population, promoting early diagnosis and intervention.

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ANALYSIS