DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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VISHV UMIYA FOUNDATION INSTITUTE FOR CIVIL SERVICES (VUFICS)

C/O. RADIANT SCHOOL OF SCIENCE , KH - O, STHAPAN - 2 FLAT, KH ROAD, GANDHINAGAR - 382421, GUJARAT.

भारतीय पुरातत्व सर्वेक्षण (ASI) 20 से 22 अगस्त 2025 तक ग्रेटर नोएडा में तीन दिवसीय अंतरराष्ट्रीय संगोष्ठी का आयोजन कर रहा है, जिसमें प्राचीन इतिहास की सबसे बड़ी अबूझ पहेलियों में से एक – सिंधु घाटी लिपि के अनुवाचन (डिसाइफरमेंट) – पर विचार-विमर्श किया जाएगा।

इस पहल के मुख्य बिंदु

- **कार्यक्रम:** "सिंधु लिपि का अनुवाचन: वर्तमान स्थिति और आगे की दिशा"
- **स्थान:** पं. दीनदयाल उपाध्याय पुरातत्व संस्थान, ग्रेटर नोएडा
- **प्रतिभागी:** भारतीय और विदेशी विद्वान जो हड़प्पा संस्कृति और भाषा पर शोध कर रहे हैं
- **प्रक्रिया:** ऑफलाइन और ऑनलाइन प्रस्तुतियाँ, जिनके बाद चर्चा सत्र होंगे
- **अपेक्षित परिणाम:** सिंधु लिपि पर वर्तमान और भविष्य के शोध की दिशा और विस्तार का मूल्यांकन

सिंधु घाटी लिपि के बारे में

- **स्वरूप:** 400 से अधिक चित्रात्मक चिह्न/प्रतीकों से युक्त
- **अविवेचित:** द्विभाषी शिलालेखों की अनुपस्थिति (जैसे मिस्र की रोसेटा स्टोन) के कारण अनुवाचन अत्यंत कठिन
- **लिपि प्रकार:** संभवतः लोगो-सिलेबिक (प्रत्येक प्रतीक शब्द या अक्षरांश को दर्शाता है)
- **लंबाई:** अधिकांश शिलालेख बहुत छोटे होते हैं (सिर्फ 4–5 चिह्न), जिससे भाषाई विश्लेषण सीमित हो जाता है

अनुवाचन में कठिनाइयाँ क्यों हैं

- द्विभाषी ग्रंथों का अभाव (मेसोपोटामिया या मिस्र की तरह नहीं)
- लंबे शिलालेख नहीं हैं जिनसे वाक्य संरचना का विश्लेषण किया जा सके
- आधार भाषा को लेकर अनिश्चितता (द्रविड़ियन, इंडो-आर्यन या कोई विलुप्त भाषा?)
- सीमित पुरातात्विक सन्दर्भ और तिथि निर्धारण की समस्याएँ

ASI to organise global meet on decoding Indus Valley script

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) will host a three-day international conference from August 20 to 22 in Greater Noida to discuss deciphering the Indus Valley script.

Invitations to the international conclave on "Decipherment of the Indus script: current status and the way forward", to be held at the Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay Institute of Archaeology, Greater Noida, have been sent out to experts working on the Harappan civilisation and culture both in India and abroad.

Sources in the ASI told *The Hindu* that the seminar would take place mainly through presentations, both offline and online. Thematic sessions shall be designed based on the current stage of research in this field. Discussions shall

Seals with the script of the Indus Valley Civilisation.

follow presentations at the end of each session.

"The proceedings of the seminar is anticipated to highlight the scope and quantum of current and future research in the field," a senior ASI functionary said.

The Indus script, comprising over 400 pictorial symbols, remains undeciphered due to the lack of bilingual texts and the brevity of inscriptions. The script consists of over 400 pictorial signs, leading some researchers to classify it as "logo-syllabic".

अनुवाचन का महत्व

- हड़प्पा सभ्यता की सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक, प्रशासनिक और आर्थिक संरचना पर प्रकाश डालेगा
- भारतीय उपमहाद्वीप में भाषा, लेखन प्रणाली और प्रारंभिक शहरी समाज की उत्पत्ति को समझने में मदद करेगा
- यह बाद की भारतीय लिपियों से भाषाई निरंतरता को स्थापित कर सकता है या किसी खोई हुई भाषा परिवार को उजागर कर सकता है.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques : सिंधु घाटी लिपि के बारे में निम्नलिखित में से कौन सा कथन सही है/हैं?

1. यह व्यापक रूप से ब्राह्मी के समान एक ध्वन्यात्मक लिपि माना जाता है।

2. मेसोपोटामिया में पाए गए द्विभाषी शिलालेखों के माध्यम से लिपि को समझा गया है।

3. लिपि में 400 से अधिक चित्रात्मक संकेत शामिल हैं, जिनमें से कई प्रकृति में लोगो-सिलेबिक हो सकते हैं।

नीचे दिए गए कोड का उपयोग करके सही उत्तर चुनें:

a) केवल 1 और 2

b) केवल 2 और 3

c) केवल 3

d) 1, 2 और 3

उत्तर: c)

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Page 07: GS 2 : Social Justice

भारत बढ़ती शराब की खपत के कारण एक सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य संकट का सामना कर रहा है, जिसमें अत्यधिक एपिसोडिक पीने, उच्च रोग बोझ और महत्वपूर्ण सामाजिक लागत शामिल है। इसके बावजूद, भारत में एक व्यापक **राष्ट्रीय मद्य नियंत्रण नीति** का अभाव है, और यह टुकड़ों में बनी राज्य-स्तरीय नीतियों और सीमित केंद्रीय कार्रवाई पर निर्भर है।

The unregulated drink: rethinking alcohol control in India

Alcohol consumption significantly raises the risk of injuries, mental illness, and non-communicable diseases, including cancer; it is time for a National Alcohol Control Policy and Programme that prioritises people over profit, prevention over revenue, and long-term well-being over short-term gains

Vid Karmarkar
Jitendra Chouksey

The safe limit for alcohol consumption is zero ml. Yet, 23% of Indian men and 1% of women consume alcohol (NFHS-5). India also records one of the highest rates of heavy episodic drinking, with lakhs needing clinical and social support.

Alcohol consumption significantly raises the risk of injuries, mental illness, and non-communicable diseases, including cancer. Beyond health, alcohol use is associated with aggression, crime, suicides, and risky behaviour.

In 2021, alcohol-use contributed to approximately 2.6 million DALYs (Disability-Adjusted Life Years) in India, reflecting the combined toll of premature deaths and years lived with illness or disability. The estimated societal cost of alcohol-related health is ₹6.24 trillion. Meanwhile, per capita alcohol consumption increased by about 240% in the last two decades, an underestimate because nearly half of alcohol use in India is unrecorded.

Determinants of alcohol consumption

Alcohol use is shaped by a complex web of biopsychosocial, commercial and policy-level determinants. (i) Biopsychosocial determinants: Biologically, some individuals are genetically predisposed to addiction. Alcohol activates the brain's reward system making it habit-forming. Psychologically, people drink to relieve stress, anxiety, or experience euphoria. Socially, urban lifestyles, peer pressure, and glamourised portrayals in media have normalised alcohol use. (ii) Commercial determinants: The industry has broadened its product portfolio with offerings such as fruit-flavoured spirits, pre-mixed cocktails, and other ready-to-drink options, making alcohol more appealing to new and younger users. Despite legal advertising restrictions, promotional tactics persist through surrogate advertising, brand sponsorships, and strategic product placements, where the depiction of alcohol has doubled over the past two decades. Pubs and bars offer incentives like 'Happy Hours' and free samples, while social media algorithms subtly amplify alcohol-related content (ARC).

The placement of liquor stores in residential and high-traffic areas, ensures easy access and everyday visibility. Packaging shapes consumer perception - sleek bottles, international labels, and premium branding enhance the aspirational value of alcohol.

Pricing ensures affordability. Indian Made Indian Liquor (IMIL) remains cheap and accessible to lower-income groups, especially in rural areas, while growing disposable incomes in cities have made alcohol increasingly affordable for the urban middle class.

(iii) Policy is the most influential determinant. The alcohol industry wields significant influence over regulation, often resisting stricter laws by emphasising its contribution to State revenues through excise taxes. Even bans on advertising are undermined through tactical marketing and alcohol persists in public life under different names.

Alcohol regulation in India falls under State jurisdiction, granting each State authority over legislation, excise taxes, supply chain, licensing and manufacturing, sale and consumption restrictions, prohibition, and pricing. This autonomy has led to regulatory variations across States.

For instance, Bihar, Gujarat, Mizoram, and Nagaland enforce prohibition, while Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Kerala, Manipur, and Tamil Nadu had previously imposed similar bans. In contrast, some States are now actively promoting alcohol sales. Kerala's new Akbari Policy markets toddy as a "natural, traditional beverage," while Andhra Pradesh is introducing a policy offering alcohol for ₹99 to ensure "quality, quantity, and affordability." Meanwhile, some States are exploring online alcohol delivery through platforms like Swiggy, Zomato, and Blinkit, contradicting efforts to restrict alcohol access.

Alcohol accessibility

Regulation of alcohol accessibility in India varies as equally as availability. The legal drinking age differs across States, ranging from 18 to 25 years. Alcohol pricing regulation exists in 19 of 33 States/UTs, with nine States setting only maximum prices while others setting both maximum and minimum prices. The GST Act excludes liquor from sales tax, leaving alcohol taxes to States, often vaguely defined in excise policies.

Compared to State policies, national-level policies are more specific addressing single aspects such as drunk driving or prevention of alcohol use and regulating supply-chain in an individual policy. However, India lacks a unified national policy on alcohol regulation.

Earlier, alcohol was excluded from the National Policy on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) 2012 despite being a common psychoactive substance followed by cannabis and opioids. Later, alcohol regulation was included in the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR) 2021-22 under Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan.

While the NAPDDR addresses alcohol regulation, its demand and supply reduction efforts are scattered across Central ministries and State governments. The Ministry of Social Justice leads demand reduction, while supply and harm reduction are handled by the Ministries of Home Affairs, Finance, and Health.

The National Mental Health Policy (NMHP) 2014 recognised the role of alcohol in mental illness and suicide prevention and suggested the need for a specific action plan. Similarly, the National Health Policy (NHP) 2017 mentioned curbing alcohol use through higher taxation. More recently, the National Suicide Prevention Strategy (NSPS) 2022 identified alcohol as a major risk factor for suicides, advocating for a national alcohol control policy and measures to limit alcohol accessibility.

The National Action Plan and Monitoring Framework for Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (NMAP) 2017-2022 also echoed the call for a national alcohol policy.

The way ahead

Regulating alcohol is urgent but complex, given alcohol's deep entanglement with State revenues, social norms, and political interests. It is time to move beyond short-term revenue thinking and adopt a systems approach - grounded in both evidence and equity. Based on the biopsychosocial and commercial determinants of alcohol consumption, we propose the following to regulate alcohol-use:

(i)Affordability: Alcohol pricing must deter excessive use without pushing the poor toward dangerous alternatives like illicit liquor.

(ii)Allocation: Health taxes on alcohol should not disappear into general revenues. Ear-marking these funds for public health, combined with transparent governance, can improve trust and accountability - and prevent corporate lobbying from redirecting them.

(iii)Accessibility: Alcohol access must be curbed beyond geographic distance. Urban policy must reduce availability in everyday spaces to signal a shift toward alcohol-free environments.

(iv)Advertisement: In the digital age, "alcohol influencers" in India promote consumption by framing alcohol positively. Regulating this "social surrogacy" - including algorithmic amplification - is key to reducing social appeal.

(v) Attractiveness: Plain packaging, visible warning labels, and controls on point-of-sale promotion are needed to disrupt the cycle of normalisation.

(vi) Awareness: Public understanding of alcohol's health harms - especially its link to cancer, mental illness, and generational poverty - remains low. Large-scale public education campaigns, similar to tobacco control efforts, are overdue.

(vii) Artificial Intelligence: AI tools can detect and suppress alcohol-related content on digital platforms and flag misinformation. When 180 million monthly users see health misinformation (e.g., WebMD praising alcohol), it is clear that digital regulation is a frontline public health priority.

India's alcohol crisis cannot be solved through isolated actions or State-level measures. It is time for a National Alcohol Control Policy and Programme that prioritises people over profit, prevention over revenue, and long-term well-being over short-term gains.

(Dr. Vid Karmarkar, is a venture building partner at Fittr, and the founder of Canseva Foundation. vid.karmarkar@gmail.com; Jitendra Chouksey is the Founder and CEO of Fittr, a fitness company. jc@fittr.com)

Swift action: Alcohol use in 2021 caused 2.6 million Disability-Adjusted Life Years in India. ISTOCKPHOTO

THE GIST

▼ India records one of the highest rates of heavy episodic drinking, with lakhs needing clinical and social support

▼ Alcohol use is shaped by a complex web of biopsychosocial, commercial and policy-level determinants. Policy is the most influential determinant

▼ Compared to State policies, national-level policies are more specific in addressing single aspects such as drunk driving or prevention of alcohol use

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प्रमुख चिंताएँ

- **स्वास्थ्य पर प्रभाव:** 2021 में शराब ने भारत में **2.6 मिलियन विकलांगता-समायोजित जीवन वर्षों (DALYs)** में योगदान दिया।
- **सामाजिक लागत:** स्वास्थ्य जटिलताओं, अपराध, दुर्घटनाओं और खोई हुई उत्पादकता के कारण अनुमानित लागत ₹6.24 लाख करोड़।
- **उपभोग प्रवृत्ति:** पिछले दो दशकों में प्रति व्यक्ति शराब की खपत में **240% की वृद्धि**; जिसमें से 50% अनधिकृत (unrecorded) है।

शराब सेवन के निर्धारक

- **बायोप्साइकोसोशल:** आनुवंशिक प्रवृत्ति, तनाव से राहत, सामाजिक ग्लैमराइज़ेशन
- **व्यावसायिक:** सरोगेट विज्ञापन, सोशल मीडिया इन्फ्लुएंसर, सस्ती IMIL, युवाओं को लक्षित उत्पाद नवाचार
- **नीति-स्तर:** राज्य-स्तर पर कमजोर और असंगत कानून; सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य पर वाणिज्यिक हितों का प्रभाव

नीति का विखंडन

- **संविधान के अनुसार राज्यों का पूर्ण नियंत्रण:** बिक्री, उत्पाद शुल्क, कानूनी आयु, मूल्य निर्धारण
- **उदाहरण:**
  - गुजरात, बिहार, मिज़ोरम में पूर्ण शराबबंदी
  - आंध्र प्रदेश की ₹99 शराब नीति
  - कुछ राज्यों में जोमैटो, स्विगी के माध्यम से ऑनलाइन डिलीवरी
- **केंद्र की भूमिका (सीमित):**
  - **NAPDDR (2021–22)** – नशा मुक्त भारत के तहत
  - **राष्ट्रीय मानसिक स्वास्थ्य नीति (2014)**
  - **राष्ट्रीय आत्महत्या निवारण रणनीति (2022)**
  - **राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य नीति (2017)**

प्रमुख समस्याएँ

- एकीकृत राष्ट्रीय नीति का अभाव
- शराब को GST से बाहर रखा गया है, जिससे राज्यों को अनियमित राजस्व नियंत्रण प्राप्त है
- डिजिटल मीडिया प्रचार पारंपरिक विज्ञापन प्रतिबंधों से बच निकलता है
- कैंसर, आत्महत्या और मानसिक बीमारी जैसे स्वास्थ्य जोखिमों के बारे में सार्वजनिक जागरूकता कम है

समाधान: एक राष्ट्रीय मद्य नियंत्रण नीति की रूपरेखा

- **सुलभता (Affordability):** अत्यधिक उपयोग को रोकने के लिए मूल्य निर्धारण का उपयोग, बिना अवैध शराब को बढ़ावा दिए
- **आवंटन (Allocation):** स्वास्थ्य कार्यक्रमों के लिए शराब कर को चिन्हित करना
- **सुलभता नियंत्रण (Accessibility):** खुदरा दुकानों और शहरी प्रदर्शन को सीमित करना

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- **विज्ञापन नियंत्रण:** डिजिटल प्लेटफॉर्म और शराब का प्रचार करने वाले इन्फ्लुएंसर्स की निगरानी
- **आकर्षण कम करना (Attractiveness):** सादा पैकेजिंग, ग्राफिक चेतावनियाँ, और बिक्री स्थल विपणन पर नियंत्रण
- **जागरूकता अभियान:** शराब से संबंधित बीमारियों और सामाजिक क्षति पर जन शिक्षा
- **AI नियमन:** शराब से संबंधित ऑनलाइन गलत सूचनाओं का पता लगाना और उन्हें दबाना

निष्कर्ष:

एक प्रणाली आधारित, राष्ट्रीय स्तर की शराब नीति अब बहुत आवश्यक है। यह स्वास्थ्य, सामाजिक, डिजिटल और आर्थिक पहलुओं को समग्र रूप से संबोधित करे — **लाभ से पहले लोगों और राजस्व से पहले रोकथाम** पर ध्यान केंद्रित करते हुए।

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques: भारत को शराब के सेवन से होने वाली स्वास्थ्य और सामाजिक लागतों को संबोधित करने के लिए एक एकीकृत राष्ट्रीय शराब नियंत्रण नीति की आवश्यकता है। आवश्यकता, चुनौतियों और आगे के रास्ते पर चर्चा करें। **(250 words)**

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भारतीय सरकार ने हाल ही में घोषणा की है कि अगली जनगणना वर्ष 2027 में आयोजित की जाएगी, जिससे 2011 की पिछली जनगणना के बाद यह 16 वर्षों का अंतर बन जाएगा। प्रारंभ में COVID-19 के कारण हुई देरी अब राजनीतिक, प्रशासनिक और विकासात्मक चिंताओं को जन्म दे रही है — विशेष रूप से क्योंकि यह स्वतंत्र भारत में पहली बार जातिगत आंकड़ों को शामिल करने जा रही है।

Will delaying the Census affect its implementation?

PARLEY

Sanjay Kumar,
Co-Director of Lokniti, a research programme at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi

Poonam Muttreja,
Executive Director, Population Foundation of India

On June 16, the Registrar General of India under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs issued a notification that India's population will be counted in 2027. Following demands by the Opposition parties, among other reasons, the government has also announced the inclusion of caste enumeration in the Census for the first time in independent India.

The last Census was held in 2011. The exercise was to take place in 2021, but was delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has now been further pushed to 2027. Will delaying the Census affect its implementation? Sanjay Kumar and Poonam Muttreja discuss the question in a conversation moderated by **Vijaita Singh**. Edited excerpts:

Was the Census deliberately delayed?

Sanjay Kumar: The Census should have taken place in 2021, but that was the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since everything was stalled in 2020 and we were under a strict lockdown for a good part of that year, the Census could not take place.

Do you see any political reasons for the further delay? Do you think the government wanted to time it with the delimitation exercise, which is frozen till 2026?

SK: I don't have an explanation for this delay. The pandemic was over by mid-2022. By the end of 2022, universities had opened, schools had gone back to a normal routine, and everyone had started going back to office. The delay for nearly three years after that is frankly inexplicable. I'm not sure why the government did not take the initiative earlier. Every time delimitation takes place, the exercise uses the previous Census data. So the government could have began conducting the Census in 2023 as well. Even if it did start conducting the exercise in 2025, it would have made no difference to the work of delimitation.

Can you tell us about the implications of a delayed Census?

Poonam Muttreja: The delay has serious consequences for governance and development. India continues to use Census data from 2011 data in 2025. The ground reality has changed dramatically since 2011. Population growth, internal migration, urbanisation, and fertility patterns have all accelerated/changed. But policy continues to run on outdated assumptions. The delay effects nearly every

A view of Ranganathan Street in T. Nagar, Chennai. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

sector. School enrolment projections are inaccurate. Vaccine coverage targets have missed the mark. Social welfare programmes such as PDS (public distribution system) and MGNREGS (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme) cannot adjust to the actual population needs. The delay also affects disaster preparedness and infrastructure planning.

This is going to be the first digital Census in India. Are there any concerns about that?

PM: Digitisation can bring in efficiency, reduce manual error, and allow faster data processing. But a fully digital Census also risks excluding the very people who are the hardest to reach, such as those in rural households and informal settlements, those belonging to marginalised communities, and women. They may not have smartphones, stable electricity, or digital access. Take women, for instance – only 33% of rural women use the Internet. Among women in low income households, mobile phone ownership is significantly low. A 'digital first' approach without safeguards could reinforce the existing gender bias.

To succeed, this Census must retain door-to-door in-person enumeration, especially in areas that are difficult to access. The enumerators must be trained to work with diverse populations in regional languages and have an inclusive approach. Technology should support, not replace, the human engagement that is essential for collecting accurate data.

The government is yet to announce any decision regarding the National Population Register (NPR), which is the first step towards the creation of a National Register of Citizens (NRC). In the 2021 Census, it was planned to be updated with the first phase of

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> **POONAM MUTTREJA**

the Census. Do you think if the two are combined – the NPR and population Census – it may impact the process because of the controversies and fears around the NPR?

SK: If you are trying to do one piece of work and then you combine it with other work, there is a possibility of both getting tampered with. Things could get delayed, jumbled, and some information could get misrepresented.

But do you see the Centre not going ahead with the NPR so that the Census is done in a hassle-free manner?

SK: I would be in favour of getting the Census done separately because we should not forget that this is being undertaken after a very long time – 16 years! This is the first time that caste enumeration is also taking place as part of the Census. So a new element is already there. Why overburden the enumerators?

How difficult or easy will it be for the government to collect data on caste? In the Socio-Economic and Caste Census of 2011, around 40 lakh caste names were thrown up. There were instances of people writing their surnames instead of their community names. It was based on self-disclosure. What methodology do you think the government should follow to make the process robust?

SK: If we are raising questions about caste data, we can raise questions about the collection of other information as well. If people can answer questions about their assets, age, gender, and education, why should there be any difficulty in answering questions about caste?

But yes, training is important. If we are able to train our enumerators well, the respondents will be able to answer most of the questions. The enumerators need to know that Varma, for instance, is a surname, not a caste. If a respondent mentions this surname as their caste, the enumerators will have to ask a follow-up question.

PM: Asking about a person's caste is not going to be difficult. The UPA (United Progressive Alliance) government conducted a caste census nearly a decade ago, but never released the data. I think homework needs to be done well when we collect data on caste. Enumerators must understand all the caste sub-categories. Unless they themselves are well informed, they are not going to be able to deal with erroneous answers or inappropriate answers.

Why do you think Census is important for a country?

PM: The world is changing rapidly and so many things are uncertain. In such a scenario, the Census is the most important aspect to consider in not only planning and policymaking, but also in the allocation of resources. It helps us understand how climate change is impacting us, changing population dynamics, and patterns of digitisation. In India, to understand the rapid increase in urbanisation and migration patterns, we need numbers. We also know that India is an ageing society. The number of aged people is going to nearly double in the next 20 years. You can't let people age and then start planning. So given the rapidly changing environment, planning, allocation of resources, targeting the poor and targeting those who are marginalised are all objectives. In fact, the whole purpose of having a caste census is to invest in the most marginalised communities.

Do you think the government should consider reducing the 10-year period for conducting the Census so that we can have faster and more accurate data about these changes in society?

SK: Conducting the Census is a tedious, time-consuming process. It cannot happen overnight. The Census is not merely about counting the number of people. The government's policy formulation depends on the information collected during a Census. The large amount of information gathered is valuable for the government to implement various kinds of policies. We may feel that the government can do this every five years, but it is more appropriate to do it every 10 years. But we should make sure that the Census takes place on time and there is no break in between.

To listen to the full interview
Scan the code or go to the link
www.thehindu.com

देरी से उत्पन्न प्रमुख चिंताएँ

• शासन संकट:

- नीतियाँ अब भी 2011 के आँकड़ों के आधार पर बनाई जा रही हैं, जो वर्तमान जनसांख्यिकी, प्रवासन पैटर्न या शहरीकरण स्तरों को दर्शित नहीं करतीं।
- पीडीएस, मनरेगा, टीकाकरण अभियानों, स्कूल नामांकन जैसे कल्याणकारी कार्यक्रमों में मांग और वास्तविक स्थिति के बीच अंतर देखा जा रहा है।

• योजना में डेटा की कमी:

- अद्यतन जनसंख्या डेटा की अनुपलब्धता से बुनियादी ढांचे के विकास, आपदा तैयारियों और संसाधन आवंटन में बाधा आ रही है।
- वृद्धजन, शहरी गरीब और नए स्वास्थ्य रुझानों की पहचान में कठिनाई उत्पन्न हो रही है।

• राजनीतिक प्रभाव:

- देरी को 2026 के बाद प्रस्तावित परिसीमन के समय से जोड़कर देखा जा रहा है।
- जनगणना को राष्ट्रीय जनसंख्या रजिस्टर (NPR) से जोड़ने को लेकर विवाद और नागरिकता रजिस्टर (NRC) से जुड़ी चिंताएँ मौजूद हैं।

प्रमुख घटनाक्रम और मुद्दे

• डिजिटल जनगणना:

- यह भारत की पहली "डिजिटल-प्राथमिक" जनगणना होगी, जिसका उद्देश्य दक्षता बढ़ाना है।
- हालांकि, ग्रामीण और हाशिए पर स्थित समुदायों, विशेष रूप से महिलाओं, के लिए डिजिटल पहुंच की कमी के चलते उनके बहिष्करण का खतरा है।

• जाति आधारित डेटा संग्रह:

- पहली बार जातिगत गणना की जाएगी।
- विशेषज्ञों ने प्रशिक्षित गणनाकारों, क्षेत्रीय भाषा समर्थन, और स्पष्ट कार्यप्रणाली की आवश्यकता पर बल दिया है, जिससे उपनाम और जाति पहचान के बीच भ्रम को रोका जा सके।

• एनपीआर पर कोई नया अपडेट नहीं:

- 2021 जनगणना के साथ NPR को अपडेट किया जाना प्रस्तावित था, लेकिन सरकार ने अब तक कोई नई घोषणा नहीं की है — संभवतः देरी और विवाद से बचने हेतु।

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समय पर जनगणना क्यों आवश्यक है

- साक्ष्य-आधारित नीति निर्माण के लिए अद्यतन जनसांख्यिकीय और सामाजिक-आर्थिक डेटा आवश्यक है।
- लक्षित कल्याण योजनाओं, शहरी योजना, वृद्धजनों के प्रबंधन और प्रवासन ट्रैकिंग के लिए सटीक जनगणना जानकारी अनिवार्य है।
- जाति आधारित गणना से सकारात्मक कार्रवाई (Affirmative Action), आरक्षण नीति नियोजन और सामाजिक न्याय को सुदृढ़ किया जा सकता है।

सुझाव एवं आगे की दिशा

- जनगणना को NPR से अलग रखा जाए ताकि विरोध और भ्रम से बचा जा सके।
- डिजिटल एकीकरण के साथ भी, कमजोर क्षेत्रों में **घर-घर जाकर गणना** को बनाए रखा जाए।
- गणनाकारों को जातिगत आंकड़ों, क्षेत्रीय विविधताओं और वर्गीकरण में त्रुटि से बचने के लिए गहन प्रशिक्षण दिया जाए।
- **लैंगिक संवेदनशीलता** को ध्यान में रखते हुए और दूरस्थ व वंचित आबादी की समावेशिता सुनिश्चित की जाए।
- अंतर-जनगणना वर्षों में डेटा अंतर को पाटने हेतु **राष्ट्रीय सर्वेक्षणों** जैसी वैकल्पिक नीतिगत व्यवस्थाएं अपनाई जाएं।

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques: जनसंख्या गणना में डिजिटल-प्रथम रणनीतियों से मौजूदा असमानताओं के बढ़ने का जोखिम है। भारत जैसे सामाजिक-आर्थिक रूप से विविधतापूर्ण देश में जनगणना को डिजिटल बनाने के पक्ष और विपक्ष का मूल्यांकन करें। **(250 Words)**

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भारत ने हल्के लड़ाकू विमान (LCA) तेजस और उन्नत मध्यम लड़ाकू विमान (AMCA) जैसे स्वदेशी लड़ाकू विमानों के विकास में प्रगति की है, लेकिन वह अब भी विदेशी इंजन प्रौद्योगिकी पर निर्भर है। इससे रणनीतिक जोखिम, देरी और रक्षा तैयारियों में बाधाएँ उत्पन्न होती हैं। स्वदेशी इंजन कार्यक्रम जैसे कि कावेरी की विफलता और GE इंजनों पर निरंतर निर्भरता, भारत की लंबे समय से चली आ रही प्रणोदन (propulsion) संबंधी कमी को उजागर करती है।

Why India should address its propulsion gap

Is India overly reliant on imported engines? What happened to the HF-24 Marut, India's first indigenously designed fighter jet? Why has the Kaveri engine project not been able to come to fruition? How is India affected by foreign engine supply delays? Is only the Indian Air Force affected by such dependency?

EXPLAINER

Rahul Bedi

The story so far:

There has been growing excitement in military and industrial circles over the fast-tracked indigenous fifth generation stealth Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA). Touted as a multi-role fighter with super-cruise capability, internal weapons bays, advanced avionics, and diverter-less supersonic intakes enhancing stealth and reliability, the AMCA is being hailed as a milestone in Indian aerospace history. However, a dose of historical realism is warranted particularly since India has a persistent propulsion gap, and is overly reliant on imported engines. Nearly seven decades of fighter development reveal cautionary lessons, starting with India's first indigenously designed fighter jet, the HF-24 Marut (Spirit of the Tempest).

What happened to the HF-24 Marut?

Launched in the 1950s by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) under famed German engineer Kurt Tank – designer of several WWII Luftwaffe fighters – the twin-engine, swept-wing Marut was, like the AMCA, an ambitious project of its time. Sleek and capable of transonic speeds, it embodied post-colonial India's drive for self-reliance and entered service amid high hopes in the late 1960s.

However, the Marut never reached its full potential, not because of design flaws, but entirely due to its underpowered British Bristol Siddeley Orpheus 703 turbojets. Although Tank had envisioned a more powerful engine, it never materialised, leaving the Marut's performance underwhelming. And, while it performed reasonably well in ground-attack roles during the 1971 war on the western front, its propulsion limitations ultimately proved crippling. HAL produced only 147 of these high-maintenance, low-output fighters, which were eventually 'number-plated' or retired by 1990.

Indian Air Force (IAF) veterans who flew the Marut consistently cited the lack of a powerful engine as its Achilles' heel – highlighting the enduring reality that high-end fighters live or die by propulsion technology. Engines, after all, are not mere technical parts but the core of sovereign aerospace capability, shaping a combat aircraft's power, range, and mission effectiveness.

Did India develop its own engines?

Following the Marut's disappointing engine performance, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) assigned its Gas Turbine Research and Development Establishment (GTRE) laboratory in 1989 to develop the Kaveri GTX-35VS afterburning turbofan for the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA), which had been under design development since 1981-82.

Over the next 35 years, GTRE spent around ₹2032 crore, as of 2020, on the project, but without success. Despite producing nine full-scale prototypes and four core engines – logging over 3,000 hours of ground testing and 73 hours of flight trials on an Ilyushin IL-76 flying test bed in Russia – the Kaveri failed to meet the LCA's performance benchmarks. It struggled with thrust-to-weight ratio, reliability, and thermal management under sustained high-performance conditions. Though spinoff versions were proposed for tanks, ships, and locomotives, none have so far entered

operational use.

A revival attempt in 2016, in collaboration with French engine-maker Snecma (linked to offset obligations from the IAF's Rafale deal) also collapsed. A parallel proposal by its partner Safran to co-develop a new engine for the Tejas MkII and AMCA Mk1 – too has hit a roadblock. The deal, announced during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2023 U.S. visit, has reportedly been stalled by GE's demand for an additional $500 million over the original $1.5 billion agreement.

Meanwhile, Kaveri's failure forced the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA), responsible for the LCA's design, to adopt the U.S.-made General Electric (GE) F404-IN20 afterburning turbofan engine (producing 78-80 kN of thrust) around 2004. Although barely adequate – restricting Tejas' payload and high-angle-of-attack capabilities – the engine was eventually approved by the IAF, which inducted two Mk1 squadrons from 2015 onwards, with one squadron operating without full operational clearance, nearly 34 years after the LCA programme's inception.

How is India affected by engine dependency?

India's engine dependency issues resurfaced recently when GE delayed delivery of 99 F404 engines by 13 months for the upgraded LCA Mk1A – a lighter, more capable variant equipped with an Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radar, advanced electronic warfare suites, and mid-air refuelling capability. Under a $716 million contract signed in 2021, engine deliveries were scheduled to begin by March 2024, but the first power pack arrived only in April 2025, as part of an initial batch of 12 expected by the end of the year. GE cited "unprecedented supply chain pressures," including disruptions from suppliers, as the cause for the delay, but for India it jeopardised the MK1As commissioning by deferring it further.

This triggered sharp criticism from Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh, who publicly rebuked HAL for chronic slippages in fighter deliveries amid a steep decline in IAF combat strength from a sanctioned 42.5 fighter squadrons to around 30 presently. Further reductions loom with two legacy MiG-21 'Bis' squadrons slated for imminent retirement. "We need to be now ready to be future-ready," Mr. Singh said at the CII Annual Business Summit in New Delhi on May 29. Citing HAL's blotted history of missed deadlines, he bluntly

asserted that wars are won by equipping the military, not merely planning for the future.

Simultaneously, HAL's negotiations with GE to locally manufacture the more powerful GE-F414 engine (90-96 kN thrust) – intended for the LCA Mk2 and initially the AMCA Mk1 – too has hit a roadblock. The deal, announced during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2023 U.S. visit, has reportedly been stalled by GE's demand for an additional $500 million over the original $1.5 billion agreement.

More critically, GE appears unwilling to share core engine technologies like single-crystal turbine blades, thermal barrier coatings, and advanced cooling systems, all of which are vital for boosting engine durability and thrust. HAL continues to demand full technology transfer, but industry insiders point out that such proprietary know-how, developed at great expense, is rarely shared by global engine makers. Talks, however, are still ongoing.

Both the LCA Mk2, which is under-development, and the initial AMCA Mk1 models are expected to rely on the F414 as a 'stopgap' powerplant, pending finalisation of the deal. The ADA is also scouting for a 110 kN-class engine for the AMCA Mk2, potentially via a joint venture. Intermittent discussions with France's Safran and the U.K.'s Rolls-Royce have so far yielded no concrete outcome.

And, while these possibilities may serve as a short-term workaround, it reflects the same external engine dependence that had crippled the Marut. Consequently, a cross-section of IAF veterans and aerospace experts warned that unless India developed an indigenous engine to power future AMCA blocks, the programme risks being held hostage once again to geopolitical whims.

How much is India dependent on external engines?

India's external propulsion sourcing extends well beyond aerial platforms, affecting the Army and Navy as well, both of which are exclusively reliant on imported power packs or foreign engines assembled and built domestically under licence. The Army's Arjun Main Battle Tank, for example, is powered by the German MTU MB838 Ka-501 diesel engine paired with RENK RK-304 transmissions, while the recently trialled Zorawar Light Tank uses the U.S.-origin 1,000hp

Cummins Advanced Combat Engine. The Navy too depends wholly on foreign propulsion systems – Russian, Ukrainian, French, German, and U.S. engines – that power all its indigenously designed and built frigates, destroyers, auxiliary vessels, troop carriers, corvettes, and fast attack craft. India's all-round engine development across aerospace, land, and naval platforms is critical to ensure strategic autonomy and enhance military capability.

How important is autonomous engine development ?

Aircraft engine development is vital for India to achieve aerospace autonomy and strategic self-reliance. Disruptions in foreign engine supplies delay production like that of the LCA Mk1A, hampers upgrades, and restricts exports as that would necessitate third-party approvals. The U.S., France, and China are able to assert dominance in global aerospace markets as they have harnessed indigenous propulsion.

However, for India, mastering advanced jet engine technology is not merely a prestige project but is crucial to sustaining military readiness, ensuring credible deterrence, and insulating its defence sector from external shocks and global political vagaries. Without this core capability, India's broader ambitions in aviation and defence exports risk remaining perennially compromised.

A broad spectrum of defence experts and IAF veterans contend that India's failure to develop advanced jet engines transcend technical hurdles and are fundamentally a political challenge. India's defence funding remains fragmented, largely focused on short-term projects, rather than being driven by a long-term, strategic vision.

If India is genuinely committed to closing this glaring capability gap, mere slogans like *Atmanirbhar Bharat* will not suffice. Achieving true autonomy in engine technology demands comprehensive structural reforms, unwavering political will, and the cultivation of an innovation ecosystem which will seamlessly integrate private sector participation, academic research, and defence R&D institutions into a cohesive and competitive framework.

Rahul Bedi is a veteran journalist based in New Delhi and Chandigarh specialising in military, defence and security matters.

THE GIST

▼ Launched in the 1950s by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) under famed German engineer Kurt Tank —designer of several WWII Luftwaffe fighters — the twin-engine, swept-wing Marut was, like the AMCA, an ambitious project of its time.

▼ India's engine dependency issues resurfaced recently when GE delayed delivery of 99 F404 engines by 13 months for the upgraded LCA Mk1A.

▼ India's external propulsion sourcing extends well beyond aerial platforms, affecting the Army and Navy as well, both of which are exclusively reliant on imported power packs.

Long-term vision: Three HF-24 Marut aircraft of the IAF flying in formation over Rajpath, New Delhi. THE HINDU ARCHIVES

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पृष्ठभूमि: मारुत (Marut) का मामला और उससे मिले सबक

- HF-24 मारुत, भारत का पहला स्वदेशी लड़ाकू विमान (1960 के दशक में), डिज़ाइन में सक्षम था, लेकिन एक शक्तिशाली स्वदेशी इंजन की कमी के कारण असफल रहा।

- इसमें प्रयुक्त ब्रिटिश Orpheus 703 इंजन कमशक्ति वाला था, जिससे मारुत की प्रदर्शन क्षमता सीमित हो गई।

- 1971 के युद्ध में आंशिक सफलता के बावजूद, मारुत को 1990 तक सेवानिवृत्त कर दिया गया।

- **सबक**: यदि प्रणोदन क्षमता स्वदेशी नहीं है, तो विमान डिज़ाइन निष्प्रभावी हो जाता है।

कावेरी इंजन परियोजना: एक चूका हुआ अवसर

- DRDO के GTRE द्वारा 1989 में तेजस के लिए शुरू की गई थी।

- ₹2,000 करोड़ से अधिक खर्च के बावजूद, कावेरी thrust-to-weight अनुपात, विश्वसनीयता और thermal efficiency में विफल रहा।

- Snecma (फ्रांस) और बाद में Safran के साथ सहयोग प्रयास तकनीक हस्तांतरण और विश्वास की कमी के कारण विफल हो गए।

- तेजस को अंततः GE F404-IN20 इंजन अपनाना पड़ा, जो सीमित प्रदर्शन देता है।

वर्तमान चुनौतियाँ

• इंजन आपूर्ति में देरी:

- GE द्वारा LCA Mk1A के लिए F404 इंजनों की आपूर्ति में देरी से समयसीमा प्रभावित हुई।

- इससे उत्पादन कार्यक्रम और वायुसेना की ऑपरेशनल तैयारी बाधित हो रही है।

• रणनीतिक निर्भरता:

- HAL द्वारा GE-F414 इंजनों के घरेलू उत्पादन का समझौता अटका हुआ है।

- GE ने critical तकनीकें (जैसे single-crystal blades, thermal coating) साझा करने से मना कर दिया है, जिससे पूर्ण स्वदेशीकरण रुक गया है।

• बहु-सेवा प्रभाव (Multiservice Impact):

- **सेना**: अर्जुन टैंक जर्मन इंजन पर आधारित है, ज़ोरावर टैंक अमेरिकी इंजन पर।

- **नौसेना**: सभी पोत श्रेणियों के लिए पूरी तरह विदेशी इंजनों पर निर्भर।

यह प्रणोदन अंतर क्यों महत्वपूर्ण है

- **रणनीतिक स्वायत्तता**: इंजन स्वावलंबन के बिना, भारत के रक्षा कार्यक्रम भू-राजनीतिक दबाव के प्रति संवेदनशील रहते हैं।

- **निर्यात सीमाएँ**: विदेशी इंजनों पर निर्भरता के कारण तीसरे पक्ष की अनुमति की आवश्यकता होती है, जिससे निर्यात संभावनाएँ सीमित होती हैं।

- **लड़ाकू तत्परता**: इंजन आपूर्ति में देरी से वायुसेना की क्षमता सीधे प्रभावित होती है, विशेष रूप से जब लड़ाकू स्काड्रन पहले ही स्वीकृत स्तर से नीचे हैं।

आगे की दिशा

- **दीर्घकालिक दृष्टिकोण**: विशेष रूप से जेट इंजन अनुसंधान एवं विकास पर केंद्रित 10–15 वर्ष की योजना आवश्यक है।

- **संस्थागत सुधार**: अकादमिक जगत, निजी क्षेत्र और अनुसंधान प्रयोगशालाओं को एकीकृत नवाचार पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र में शामिल किया जाए।

- **समर्पित रक्षा निधि**: परियोजना-आधारित निधिकरण से आगे बढ़कर, मिशन-आधारित और परिणाम-उन्मुख निवेश मॉडल अपनाया जाए।

- **प्रौद्योगिकी साझेदारी**: विश्वसनीय साझेदारों से सार्थक तकनीकी हस्तांतरण समझौते किए जाएं।

- **स्वदेशी बौद्धिक संपदा की रक्षा**: घटक-स्तर से घरेलू क्षमता का निर्माण कर बौद्धिक पूंजी की रक्षा की जाए।

UPSC Mains Essay Practice Question
रक्षा क्षेत्र में सच्ची आत्मनिर्भरता विमानों को असेंबल करने में नहीं, बल्कि उन्हें शक्ति प्रदान करने में निहित है।

संयुक्त राष्ट्र व्यापार और विकास सम्मेलन (UNCTAD) की वर्ल्ड इन्वेस्टमेंट रिपोर्ट 2025 ने भारत में प्रत्यक्ष विदेशी निवेश (FDI) के स्तर में एक महत्वपूर्ण गिरावट को उजागर किया है — न केवल पूर्ण रूप में, बल्कि देश के पूंजी निर्माण और सकल घरेलू उत्पाद (GDP) में इसके योगदान के अनुपात में भी। यह प्रवृत्ति इंगित करती है कि भारत के विकास वित्तपोषण में विदेशी निवेश की भूमिका घटती जा रही है।

'India FDI slid 1.8% in 2024, share in capital formation declining'

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

A new report by the United Nations (UN) shows how foreign investment is playing a shrinking role in India's development, with foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows making up 2.3% of all capital formation in India in 2024, down from 8.8% in 2020.

The World Investment Report 2025 by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, released on Thursday, further shows that the total stock of foreign investment accumulated in India over the years stood at 14% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2024, down from 17.9% in 2020.

In fact, in absolute terms, India attracted $27.6 billion of FDI in 2024, down 1.8% from 2023 or less than half seen in 2020. The report, however, noted overall capital formation in India from other sources had been robust.

मुख्य निष्कर्ष:

- **FDI प्रवाह (2024):** $27.6 बिलियन
    - 2023 की तुलना में 1.8% की गिरावट

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- 2020 की तुलना में यह मात्रा आधे से भी कम

- **FDI का पूंजी निर्माण (Gross Fixed Capital Formation) में योगदान:**

  - 2020 में 8.8% से घटकर 2024 में 2.3% हो गया

- **FDI स्टॉक का GDP में योगदान:**

  - 2020 में 17.9% से घटकर 2024 में 14% हो गया

व्याख्या और प्रभाव:

- FDI के भारत की निवेश पूंजी में योगदान में लगातार गिरावट विदेशी निवेशकों के आत्मविश्वास या रुचि में कमी को दर्शाती है, विशेषकर उच्च-पूंजी परियोजनाओं में।

- हालांकि, **घरेलू पूंजी निर्माण मजबूत बना हुआ है**, जो यह दर्शाता है कि भारत अब अपने आंतरिक संसाधनों (सार्वजनिक निवेश, घरेलू निजी निवेश) पर अधिक निर्भर हो रहा है।

नीतिगत सुझाव:

- नियामक बाधाओं को कम करना

- निवेशकों की सुरक्षा के लिए बेहतर तंत्र विकसित करना

- व्यापार करने की सुगमता में सुधार

- विशिष्ट क्षेत्रों में सुधार (जैसे: मैन्युफैक्चरिंग, इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स, सेवाएं)

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques: UNCTAD विश्व निवेश रिपोर्ट 2025 के संदर्भ में, निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार करें:

1. 2023 की तुलना में 2024 में भारत में FDI प्रवाह में 10% से अधिक की वृद्धि हुई।

2. भारत के सकल पूंजी निर्माण में FDI की हिस्सेदारी 2020 और 2024 के बीच घट गई है।

3. 2024 में भारत में FDI का कुल स्टॉक GDP के 15% से कम है।

उपर्युक्त कथनों में से कौन सा/से सही है/हैं?

a) केवल 1 और 2   b) केवल 2 और 3

c) केवल 1 और 3   d) 1, 2 और 3

उत्तर: b)

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Blame not the messenger in India's diplomacy

Suhasini Haidar

History and literature are replete with references to not 'shooting the messenger' for bringing bad news. In Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, the Egyptian queen assaults a messenger and threatens to have him "whipped with wire and stewed in brine, smarting in ling'ring pickle", for bringing her the news that the Roman General Mark Antony has married another. "I that do bring the news made not the match," the messenger replies, before making a hasty exit. Over the past two months, India's 'diplomatic messengers' too have faced an ire that is unprecedented – criticised not for the message they bring, but for failing to convey it effectively enough, the message New Delhi has sent out after Operation Sindoor (May 7-10, 2025).

Criticism of Indian diplomacy
Public commentary that is critical of the Ministry of External Affairs and its missions has focused broadly on three counts. First, that India received condolences and statements condemning the Pahalgam terror attack from all quarters, but not the kind of unequivocal support, especially from the neighbourhood, for retaliatory strikes on Pakistan, of the kind seen in 2016 (post-Uri) and 2019 (post-Pulwama). In 2016, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives backed India's decision to stay away from the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation summit in Pakistan after the Uri attack. In 2019, global solidarity with India forced even China to back a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) terror designation for Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar. Earlier, in 2008, there was international consensus in India's favour after the Mumbai attacks, when Hafiz Saeed and a number of Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists were designated by the UNSC, and Pakistan was put on the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey list for the first time. Instead, this time, unfavourable comparisons have been made to Pakistan for the lines of support it received from China, Turkiye, Azerbaijan, Malaysia and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Second, the perception is that Pakistan has scored some diplomatic wins, despite widespread global understanding that Pakistan uses terrorists as state proxies. In April, Pakistan, a non-permanent member of the UNSC, managed to amend the resolution on Pahalgam to delete any reference to The Resistance Front (TRF), that claimed responsibility for the heinous attack.

Earlier this month, Pakistan was chosen as chair of the Taliban Sanctions Committee and vice-Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee at the UNSC, and secured loans from the International Monetary Fund and Asian Development Bank despite New Delhi's opposition. Next was the White House's lunch invitation to Pakistan Army chief (now Field Marshal) General Asim Munir, despite the belief in India that his "jugular vein" speech was a virtual green signal for the Pahalgam attack. In

India's tough message on terrorism and Pakistan will find more takers if it plays to its advantage it being a secular, stable and rule-abiding democracy

July, as Security Council President for the month, Pakistan will try to schedule meetings on the India-Pakistan conflict and Kashmir, even as India accelerates efforts to designate the TRF at the UNSC, and place Pakistan on the FATF greylist. India's diplomats will be tested again.

The third aspect pertains to United States President Donald Trump, who, despite official denials from India, has chosen to muddy the narrative of how the May 10 ceasefire was achieved, hyphenating India and Pakistan in more than a dozen public statements, and offering to mediate on Kashmir. His latest iteration of the comments this week, just hours after a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and just before his meeting with Gen. Munir, was possibly the most blatant. Thus far, Mr. Trump's statements, post-ceasefire, have not had a single word on the scourge of terrorism itself, showing just far apart the understanding between Delhi and Washington is at this time.

A flurry of diplomacy does not seem to have moved the needle on these criticisms. After Operation Sindoor, special delegations of Members of Parliament and former diplomats travelled to 32 countries. The most time (six days) was spent in the United States. After the G-7 meet, Mr. Modi has meetings ahead with BRICS leaders. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar is visiting the U.S. for the Quad Foreign Ministers Meeting soon, after several visits to European capitals recently. The government had not essayed such a campaign after the 2016 or 2019 actions against Pakistan, indicating that it too feels that diplomatic efforts by the Ministry of External Affairs and missions abroad have been found wanting and need bolstering.

But much as the messenger in Shakespeare says, India's diplomats do not decide the message that India wishes to send after Operation Sindoor, and cannot be held responsible for its resonance. It is necessary for the government to study the contents of that message, the shift in geopolitical narratives and in how India is perceived, in order to build a more realistic assessment of how far international diplomacy can ensure the outcomes New Delhi desires *vis-à-vis* Pakistan.

The 'new normal'
With reference to the content of the message, Mr. Modi's three-pronged "New Normal" has raised eyebrows in some capitals. The first prong – 'Any act of terror is an act of war' – lowers the threshold for future conflicts, passing the trigger for Indian strikes into the hands of any terrorist, acting on orders on their own. The second – 'India will not bow to nuclear blackmail' – is not necessarily new, but has been left unarticulated thus far because it gives the appearance of a heightened nuclear risk for the region. The third – India will not distinguish between state and non-state actors henceforth – sends out an escalatory message, indicating that the next terror attack could well invoke 'Armageddon',

rather than the controlled four day conflict in Operation Sindoor. While India's partners have not asked for evidence of Pakistan's links to Pahalgam, they look askance at other aspects – like why India has been unable to trace the terrorists responsible yet.

Next, it is necessary to note that global shocks in the past few years have changed how the world views India's tough messaging. Take for example, a growing number of statements by Indian Ministers about "taking back Pakistan occupied Kashmir" by force if necessary. These make many of India's interlocutors uncomfortable, given the current number of conflicts over territorial aggression underway, from West Asia, to Ukraine to the South China Sea. In the light of Israel's retaliation for the October 7, 2023 terror attacks, few wish to give any state a free hand for "retribution". New Delhi's refusal to criticise Russia for its invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and to raise its oil imports from Russia in the face of sanctions, lost it some support in the western world, especially Europe. The Modi government's silence on Israel's devastation of Gaza has also been met with disappointment in the Global South.

India, as Mr. Modi told Mr. Trump this week, views terrorism emanating from Pakistan, "not as a proxy war, but as a war itself". India's diplomats have been left explaining why their stock responses that "this is not an era of war" and that "dialogue and diplomacy" are the only way forward do not apply to India and Pakistan. Thus, it may be necessary for New Delhi to rethink how it frames its message in view of these changes, notwithstanding the global double standards inherent in the expectations from India.

Democracy in decline
Finally, there is need for introspection over how the Modi government's image itself has altered in the world since 2019, leading to diplomatic challenges on a number of fronts. These range from concerns abroad over laws such as the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, the amendment of Article 370, Internet bans and summary arrests in different parts of the country, and accusations against Indian government agents of involvement in transnational killings in the U.S. and Canada. Questions over the broader decline in democracy and the status of minorities within India have also increased in the past few years. India's delegations abroad (Operation Sindoor) had to field some of those questions during their travels.

India's right to defend itself from decades of Pakistan-backed, trained and funded terrorists is unassailable. But carrying a tough message on terror is easier for the diplomats tasked with the role, if in a strife-roiled world, the government plays to India's advantages, and what differentiates it from Pakistan – as a secular, stable, pluralistic, rule-abiding democratic and economic power.

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Paper 02 : Internaional Relations

UPSC Mains Practice Question : आतंकवाद के बाद भारत की कूटनीतिक प्रतिक्रियाएँ वैश्विक भू-राजनीतिक रुझानों के साथ लगातार असंगत होती जा रही हैं। ऑपरेशन सिंदूर और भारत की कूटनीतिक रणनीति के संदर्भ में चर्चा करें। (250 words)

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Context :

भारत के ऑपरेशन सिंदूर (मई 2025) पर वैश्विक कूटनीतिक प्रतिक्रिया का मूल्यांकन करने वाला यह लेख यह तर्क देता है कि भारत के राजनयिकों की आलोचना अनुचित है। मूल समस्या संदेश पहुँचाने के तरीके में नहीं, बल्कि उस संदेश में है जो दिया गया और उस वैश्विक भू-राजनीतिक परिदृश्य में है जो अब बदल चुका है।

प्रमुख मुद्दे:

1. ऑपरेशन सिंदूर के बाद कमजोर कूटनीतिक समर्थन:

पिछले सीमापार हमलों के विपरीत:

- **2016 (उरी):** क्षेत्रीय एकजुटता (बांग्लादेश, श्रीलंका, अफगानिस्तान आदि द्वारा SAARC बहिष्कार)

- **2019 (पुलवामा):** वैश्विक दबाव के बाद मसूद अजहर को UNSC में आतंकवादी घोषित

- **2008 (मुंबई):** हाफिज सईद पर प्रतिबंध, पाकिस्तान FATF की ग्रे लिस्ट में

2025 में:

- ऑपरेशन सिंदूर के बाद **न्यूनतम समर्थन**

- OIC, चीन, तुर्किये ने पाकिस्तान का पक्ष लिया

- दक्षिण एशिया और पश्चिमी देशों का समर्थन भी **मंद रहा**

- यह दर्शाता है कि भारत की अपेक्षाएँ और वैश्विक प्राथमिकताएँ **विसंगतिपूर्ण** हैं

2. पाकिस्तान की हालिया कूटनीतिक सफलता:

आतंकवाद से जुड़ी छवि के बावजूद पाकिस्तान ने:

- UNSC के पहलगाम प्रस्ताव से TRF (The Resistance Front) का उल्लेख हटवाया

- UNSC में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिकाएँ प्राप्त कीं: **तालिबान प्रतिबंध समिति के अध्यक्ष, आतंकवाद निरोध के उपाध्यक्ष**

- IMF और ADB से फंडिंग ली — भारत के विरोध के बावजूद

- पाक सेना प्रमुख जनरल मुनीर को व्हाइट हाउस आमंत्रण मिला

- जुलाई में UNSC अध्यक्ष के रूप में **कश्मीर मुद्दा** उठाने की तैयारी

ये घटनाएँ दिखाती हैं कि पाकिस्तान ने संकट में भी **राजनयिक बढ़त** हासिल की, जबकि भारत का संदेश वैश्विक मंचों पर असरकारी नहीं रहा

3. भारत के "नए सामान्य" सिद्धांत की समस्यात्मक प्रस्तुति:

प्रधानमंत्री मोदी द्वारा स्ट्राइक के बाद प्रस्तुत तीन-स्तरीय रणनीति की आलोचना:

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i) **"आतंक का कोई भी कृत्य, युद्ध का कृत्य है"**

- अत्यधिक उकसाने वाला

- गैर-राज्य अभिनेता भी पूर्ण युद्ध भड़का सकता है

- **स्थिरता के लिए खतरा**

ii) **"भारत परमाणु ब्लैकमेल के आगे नहीं झुकेगा"**

- जोखिम भरा संकेत

- परमाणु युद्ध की आशंका वाले क्षेत्रों के प्रति विदेशी राजधानियों की चिंता बढ़ी

iii) **"राज्य और गैर-राज्य में कोई भेद नहीं"**

- पूरे पाकिस्तान पर जवाबी हमला करने का संकेत

- **नियंत्रित सैन्य प्रतिक्रिया के बजाय** पूर्ण युद्ध का संकेत

ऐसी **कट्टरपंथी भाषा** ने मित्र देशों को भी खुले समर्थन से रोक दिया

4. वैश्विक मानदंडों से कूटनीतिक विसंगति:

भारत की आक्रामक नीति अब वैसी नहीं देखी जाती जैसी 2010 के दशक में:

- **यूक्रेन, गाजा, दक्षिण चीन सागर** के बाद दुनिया और सतर्क हो गई है

- भारत की **यूक्रेन पर चुप्पी** (रूस की आलोचना नहीं) और गाजा (इज़राइल की कार्रवाई पर चुप्पी) ने पश्चिम व ग्लोबल साउथ में **नैतिक अपील को कमजोर** किया

- "PoK वापस लेने" जैसे बयानों ने **आक्रामक क्षेत्रीय विस्तारवाद की छवि** बनाई

कूटनीतिक **दोहरे मानदंडों** ने भारत की विश्वसनीयता को चोट पहुँचाई

5. भारत की लोकतांत्रिक छवि में गिरावट:

वैश्विक आलोचना बढ़ी:

- CAA, अनुच्छेद 370, इंटरनेट बंदी, अल्पसंख्यकों के अधिकार

- कनाडा व अमेरिका में कथित ट्रांसनेशनल किलिंग्स के आरोप

- मीडिया व संसदों में भारत की **लोकतांत्रिक गिरावट** की चर्चा

इससे भारत के आतंकवाद व संप्रभुता पर नैतिक तर्क कमजोर हुए हैं

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मुख्य तर्क:

भारत के राजनयिकों को दोष देना उचित नहीं है। असली समस्या:

- **संदेश की प्रकृति** और
- **वैश्विक संदर्भ की समझ में कमी** है।

भारत को पाकिस्तान से केवल सैन्य नहीं, **नैतिक और लोकतांत्रिक रूप से भी अलग दिखना होगा।**

कूटनीति की भाषा में **कटौती नहीं, संतुलन** ज़रूरी है।

निष्कर्ष: एक विश्वसनीय वैश्विक कथा का पुनर्निर्माण

भारत को वैश्विक समर्थन पुनः प्राप्त करने के लिए चाहिए:

- **सॉफ्ट पावर और नैतिक प्रतिष्ठा** पर ध्यान
- **लोकतांत्रिक मूल्यों और अंतरराष्ट्रीय मानदंडों के अनुरूप** संदेश
- युद्धोन्मादी बयानबाज़ी से बचाव, जबकि अन्य मंचों पर **संवाद की वकालत**
- **बहुपक्षीय मंचों** का रणनीतिक उपयोग, बिना आक्रामकता के

याद रखें: **विदेश नीति की विश्वसनीयता की शुरुआत देश के भीतर से होती है।**

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