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No. 5, AKS Nagar, Near Gandhi Park, Coimbatore - 641 001

GS Paper I – History

Date: 15.04.26

Subhas Chandra Bose: the paradox of a revolutionary's theory and praxis

Bose's legacy is a synthesis of contradictions: a mystic who embraced science, a democrat who did not shy away from authoritarianism, a patriot who looked toward unified humanity; his egalitarian ideal remains a powerful counter-narrative to fissiparous tendencies in an independent India

Prathmesh Kher

The final part of this two-part series examines the intellectual journey of Subhas Chandra Bose from absolute idealism to a dialectic conception of reality and its influence on his political doctrine and his revolutionary praxis

IV. Equality in action: policies and praxis

Bose treated India as a vast laboratory for Samyavada, applying "secular and scientific training" to dismantle caste, communalism, and the stagnation of gender roles.

As early as his 1931 Karachi address to the All-India Naujawan Bharat Sabha, he outlined a seven-point programme that included the "abolition of the caste system and the eradication of social and religious superstitions" and the "organisation of peasants, workers, and women on a socialist programme." His most significant military-social reform was the abolition of "class" (caste/ethnic) companies, which had been the bedrock of British recruitment.

In a 1943 speech to the INA Officers' Training School, he said: "The British have tried to divide us into 'martial' and 'non-martial' races. They have kept us in separate water-tight compartments—Sikhs with Sikhs, Pathans with Pathans... In the Azad Hind Fauj, there are no such divisions. We are all Indians... a Hindu, a Muslim, and a Sikh must feel that they are brothers-in-arms."

At the Padang, Singapore (9 July 1943), Bose stated, "Remember that when you stand on the battlefield, the bullet does not ask whether you are a Hindu or a Muslim. Why then should you ask it of your brother?"

His Proclamation of the Provisional Government (21 October 1943) "guarantees religious liberty, as well as equal rights and equal opportunities to its citizens... and declares its firm resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation equally and transcending all the differences cunningly fostered by an alien Government in the past."

The praxis of equality was visible in daily soldier life. Bose used a Hindustani

adaptation of *Jana Gana Mana* as the INA's anthem, translated by Abid Hasan 'Safrani'. Likewise, while respecting 'Bande Mataram' which communal Muslims had raised objections to, Bose popularised the use of 'Jai Hind' instead. Bose's views on women were also ahead of his time. Addressing Singapore Radio (13 July 1943), he said, "There is no sphere of public activity... in which Indian women have not gladly and bravely shared, along with our men, the burden of our national struggle... Our brave sisters have also played a prominent part in the secret revolutionary movement." On 22 October 1943, he said while inaugurating the Rani of Jhansi Regiment, "We want not one Rani of Jhansi, but thousands and thousands of Ranis of Jhansi. It is not the number of rifles you may carry... equally important is the moral effect of your brave example." At the All-India Trade Union Congress (4 July 1930), Bose championed the worker's right to a living wage, "Just as every worker can claim the right to work, he can also claim the right to a living wage... Is it not a fact that in some areas at least the poor workers are still subjected to conditions which have much in common with the old institution of slavery?" He positioned his socialism explicitly between Moscow-aligned Communism and timid reformism, stating, "Between these two groups is another group which stands for socialism—for full-blooded socialism—but which desires that India should evolve her own form of socialism as well as her own methods. To this group I humbly claim to belong."

The ultimate proof of his ideas was seen in the Red Fort prisoners. As journalist Shiva Rao reported in 1945, "Hindus and Moslems had to eat the same food cooked by the same people and no questions were asked."

V. Dealing with the devil: pragmatism in the heart of darkness

Bose's alliance with the Axis powers remains his most controversial chapter. His collaboration was not born of ideological alignment with Fascism, but of a cold 'enemy of my enemy' pragmatism. Bose admired Japan but morally refused to give it a pass on China. In his 1937 article *Japan's Role in the Far East*, he

wrote, "Japan has shattered the white man's prestige... but could not all this have been achieved without Imperialism, without dismembering the Chinese Republic, without humiliating another proud, cultured and ancient race? No, with all our admiration for Japan... our whole heart goes to China in her hour of trial. China must still live for her own sake and for humanity. Out of the ashes of this conflict she will once again rise phoenix-like as she has so often done in the past."

Bose was a vocal critic of the Third Reich. In 1936, writing to Dr. Thierfelder, he wrote, "The new racial philosophy which has a very weak scientific foundation stands for the glorification of the white races in general and the German race in particular. Herr Hitler has talked of the destiny of white races to rule over the rest of the world. But the historical fact is that up till now the Asiatics have dominated Europe more than have the Europeans dominated Asia. I am saying this not because I stand for the domination of one people by another, but simply because I want to point out that it is historically false to say that Europe and Asia should not be at peace with one another." He saw through Hitler's desire to "curry favour with Great Britain" at India's expense and was unambiguous in his response. "When we are fighting the greatest Empire in the world for our freedom... we cannot brook any insult from any other nation."

By 1942, Bose framed his choices as a matter of survival. Speaking from Berlin (1 May 1942), he dismissed the charge of being an "enemy agent" and positioned the war as a struggle between the status quo and those determined to tear it apart, "I am not an apologist of the three Powers and it is not my task to defend what they have done or may do in future... My concern, however, is with India; and it is my duty as a patriotic Indian to find out and tell my countrymen the policy of the different Powers with regard to India." For Bose, the world war was a struggle between the status quo represented by the Anglo-American powers and those determined to "tear that old rag into pieces". He viewed Allied talk of "liberty and democracy" as rank hypocrisy, given the "brutal cruelty" and "cultural

degeneration" inflicted upon one-fifth of the human race in India.

VI. The higher synthesis

For Bose, India's liberation was not an end but a prerequisite for a global "higher synthesis", a bridge between the material advancements of the West and the spiritual insights of the East.

He placed this burden on youth, "The youths of today will be the nation and the leaders of tomorrow... their responsibility for making this new order a success devolves, in the last analysis, on the youths of this country." He also challenged the cynical view that nations cannot act morally: "If it is possible for one individual to be unselfish, to live one's life at a high moral level, I see no reason why an entire nation cannot also rise to that level."

As the military situation in Southeast Asia collapsed in 1945, his faith in the dialectic held. His final Special Order of the Day (15 August 1945), Bose said, "Do not be depressed at our temporary failure. Be of good cheer and keep up your spirits. Above all, never for a moment falter in your faith in India's destiny. There is no power on earth that can keep India enslaved. India shall be free and before long, Jai Hind."

In *The Indian Struggle*, he outlined what a free India could offer humanity, "In religion and philosophy, in architecture, in painting, dancing and music and in other arts and handicrafts, India could offer something unique to the world."

Conclusion: the eternal rebel

Bose's legacy is a synthesis of contradictions: a mystic who embraced science, a democrat who did not shy away from authoritarianism, a patriot who looked toward unified humanity. The Provisional Government of Azad Hind collapsed with Japan's defeat. But the egalitarian ideal Bose embodied in the INA remained a powerful counter-narrative to fissiparous tendencies in an independent India. The principle of scientific planning he championed shaped India's development. And his great wager, that a free India could contribute a "higher synthesis" to world civilisation, remains a challenge each generation must answer anew.



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GS Paper II – Polity

Centre moots inter-State redistribution of Lok Sabha seats based on 2011 Census

Govt. circulates drafts of Constitution Amendment Bill and Delimitation Bill

If proposals are accepted, share of Lok Sabha seats of southern States will shrink

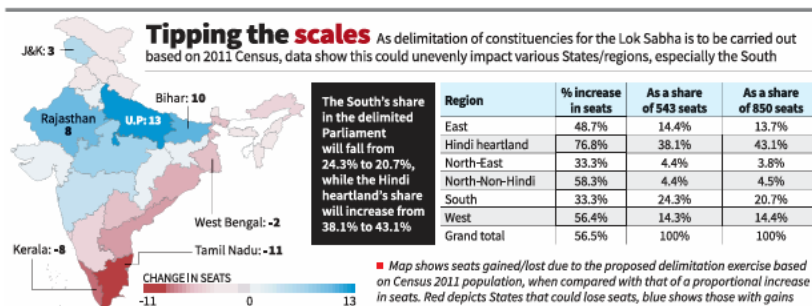
The Bills propose to raise strength of Lok Sabha to a maximum of 850 seats

Varghese K. George
Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

States that have stabilised their populations could see their share of representation in Parliament shrinking if proposals in the drafts of a Constitution Amendment Bill and a Delimitation Bill circulated by the Centre become law.

The Budget Session is reconvening on Thursday to consider the Constitution (131st) Amendment Bill, which the government says are aimed at expediting the implementation of 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies.

The Congress said the government was using women's reservation as a facade to railroad inter-State redistribution of Lok Sabha seats without consultation, and ahead of the 2029 general election. "We will oppose this backdoor delimitation. We are 100% for women's reservation and demand its immediate implementation within the existing strength of the Lok Sabha and Assemblies," Congress MP Abhishek Manu Singhvi said. "In the



Stalin warns of massive protest

T.N. Chief Minister M.K. Stalin warned of a massive protest that would bring the State to a standstill if the Centre decided on delimitation affecting southern States and offering more political power to northern States.



Build consensus, Revanth tells PM

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, calling for a national consensus on the proposed rise in seats and urging immediate implementation of women's reservation without linking it to seat expansion.



Dangerous shift: Siddaramaiah

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah opposed the proposal, saying, "If numerical strength begins to determine power, the need for broad-based support across the country will diminish. That is a dangerous shift."



Attempt to divide India: Mamata

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday said the BJP-led Union govt. has tabled the Delimitation Bill to divide West Bengal and India at large. They are doing it to gain political mileage, she said.



proposals there is not a whisper of the repeated assurance by the government that the inter-State seat distribution percentages will remain intact."

The proposals emphatically seek to change the

seat distribution – indeed, that is stated in the objects and reasons of the Constitutional Amendment Bill itself. The statement notes that "while the freeze of seats on the basis of population figures of the 1971

Census served an important policy purpose, the country's demographic profile has since undergone substantial changes, as reflected in the population figures of the latest published census, including

significant inter-State and intra-State population shifts." The draft Delimitation Bill mandates that "it shall be the duty of the Commission to readjust, on the basis of the latest census figures, the alloca-

tion of seats in the House of the People to the States." If these proposals are enacted, the Hindi heartland States will see their share of Lok Sabha seats rise from 38.1% to 43.1%, while the southern States will see theirs shrink from 24.3% to 20.7%.

In combination, the Bills propose an inter-State redistribution of Lok Sabha seats based on the latest Census figures and an increase in the size of the Lok Sabha to a maximum of 850 seats – 815 for States and 35 for Union Territories – against the current ceiling of 550, while carving out 33% for women.

Under the existing constitutional scheme, Lok Sabha seats are distributed between States on the basis of the 1971 Census and within each State on the basis of the 2001 Census. Article 82 provides that this arrangement will continue "until the relevant figures for the first census taken after the year 2026 have been published".

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GS Paper II – Social Justice

The alarming rise of medicalisation in India

The recent announcement by Air India, hinting at possible pay cuts or even de-rostering for crew members with a higher Body Mass Index (BMI), may, at first glance, appear to be a prudent and well-intentioned step toward ensuring fitness and operational safety. Aviation, after all, is a profession where physical readiness is essential. Yet, the timing of this decision – coinciding with the week an anti-obesity drug, semaglutide, went off patent and nearly 40 products entered the Indian market – signals something deeper.

India today faces a mounting burden of obesity and associated metabolic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, fatty liver disease, and dyslipidaemia. Nearly a quarter of Indians are overweight or obese. One in 10 adults live with diabetes, one in three with hypertension, and a substantial proportion has fatty liver disease. Even more concerning is the rapid rise of obesity among children. The causes, which are neither obscure nor debated, include the proliferation of ultra-processed or high fat, salt and sugar-content foods, and increasingly sedentary lifestyles shaped by urban work patterns, shrinking open spaces, chronic stress, alcohol consumption, and inadequate sleep. Compounding this is a genetic predisposition among Indians and South Asians toward excess body fat despite a seemingly lean appearance – the so-called “thin-fat” phenotype.

Historically, in a society long shaped by undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies, excess weight was once perceived as a marker of prosperity. Consequently, as overweight and obesity began rising over the past two decades, public discourse remained muted, almost reluctant to confront this emerging reality.

Then came the pharmaceutical response. Around this time last year, another anti-obesity drug, tirzepatide, entered the Indian market and rapidly became one of its highest-selling medications. Its commercial success revealed not just clinical demand but also the emergence of a vast and lucrative therapeutic marketplace. With semaglutide now available at a remarkably lower cost, the market potential has expanded further.

Sustained marketing campaign

Over the past year, however, a more troubling pattern has emerged. Prescription medicines cannot be directly advertised to the public, yet pharmaceutical companies have grown adept at navigating these constraints. Surrogate advertising – often framed as public awareness campaigns – has become increasingly sophisticated. In the past year, the country witnessed full page newspaper campaigns, and billboards at major urban areas regarding obesity;



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One of the most fundamental drivers of the obesity epidemic – the expansion of ultra-processed foods – receives comparatively limited attention

influencer endorsements for medical products; and sponsored features that resemble independent journalism, subtly shape public perception without explicitly naming the drugs.

Regulatory responses lagged behind. The restraint from the government on newspaper ads and billboards came only a year later.

The messaging on drugs from pharmaceuticals is rarely overt; instead, it is nuanced, persistent, and highly effective, gradually reshaping both public expectations and clinical practice. In such an environment, the boundary between genuine scientific advancement and commercial enthusiasm begins to blur. New drugs are presented as transformative breakthroughs, while their uncertainties receive far less attention.

The less talked about side effects

Anti-obesity medications, particularly those acting on GLP-1 pathways, are associated not only with fat loss but also with a reduction in lean muscle mass – a condition known as sarcopenia. As there is loss of fat from the body, nearly 25% to 40% is contributed by the loss of muscle mass – an unintended but serious consequence. By suppressing appetite and reducing caloric intake, these drugs can inadvertently lead to muscle loss unless accompanied by adequate protein intake and structured physical activity, especially resistance training. Sarcopenia in this context is no longer a theoretical concern. It has been documented in clinical trials and is supported by emerging real-world evidence. Yet, amid the celebration of weight loss outcomes, such risks are often understated. Individuals may achieve a lower BMI while compromising strength, metabolic resilience, and long-term health.

The trajectory does not end there. Sarcopenia itself is now emerging as a new therapeutic target. Pharmaceutical pipelines already include drugs aimed at preventing or reversing muscle loss, many in advanced stages of development. It requires little imagination to foresee the next phase – a population using anti-obesity medicines, along with additional therapies to manage the very consequences these drugs produce. What we are witnessing here is a cascading logic: one intervention begets another, each addressing the unintended consequences of the previous one. It is a self-reinforcing cycle sustained by scientific innovation, commercial incentives, and a growing societal preference for quick pharmacological solutions over sustained behavioural change.

Perhaps what is most disquieting is the evolving role of professional medical bodies within this ecosystem both globally, and increasingly in India. Clinical guidelines are being

updated with growing frequency, sometimes annually, often generating anticipation around new therapies. The interval between a drug's introduction and its inclusion in standard treatment protocols appears to be shrinking. Inclusion in such guidelines almost guarantees widespread adoption and commercial success. While scientific progress must be embraced, the pace of endorsement raises important questions: are these recommendations grounded in robust, long-term evidence, or are they shaped by the forces influencing markets and public discourse?

Meanwhile, one of the most fundamental drivers of the obesity epidemic – the rapid expansion of ultra-processed foods – receives comparatively limited attention. In India, this sector has grown at an annual rate of around 13% between 2011 and 2021. These products, aggressively marketed and widely accessible, shape dietary habits from an early age, fuelling the very conditions the pharmaceutical industry seeks to treat. Yet policy responses remain hesitant. Front-of-package warning labels, for instance, continue to face delays.

Thus, we inhabit a deeply paradoxical ecosystem. One industry promotes consumption patterns that drive metabolic disease. Another offers pharmaceutical remedies. A third emerges to treat the side effects of those remedies. From a market perspective, this system is efficient, profitable, and self-sustaining. From a public health perspective, it is profoundly misaligned with the goal of durable well-being.

Shift in perspective

Reclaiming the narrative of health demands a shift in perspective. Medicines must be recognised as adjuncts, and not substitutes, for foundational interventions such as a nourishing diet, increased physical activity, sufficient and restorative sleep, and stress management. Greater transparency about the risks of newer therapies is not just desirable but absolutely essential. At the same time, there must be stronger, evidence-based advocacy to restore lifestyle modification to the centre of clinical care. The medical profession must, above all, reaffirm its ethical compass.

Encouraging fitness among airline crew is not misguided. But if such measures become yet another entry point into a cycle of measurement, medication, and market-driven dependence, we risk losing sight of what health truly means. Anti-obesity drugs are not the destination; they are a signal revealing how deeply medicalisation is embedding itself into everyday life. This is a moment to pause, recalibrate, and reclaim health before medicine begins to define it.



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GS Paper II – Polity

Mapping the legislative vacuum in India's heat crisis

The phenomenon of extreme heat in India has undergone a profound geographic and demographic shift, transitioning from a seasonal hardship to a systemic national crisis. Once confined largely to the arid northwest and central plains, heatwaves now regularly penetrate humid coastal corridors and traditionally temperate regions. The last two years recorded unprecedented temperatures, with over 57% of Indian districts now classified as heat-prone. However, while the thermal canopy covers the entire subcontinent, its impact is sharply divided by class, caste, and gender. For the affluent, heat is an inconvenience managed through private cooling; for the nearly 400-490 million informal workers, it is a systemic violation of the right to life and a driver of "thermal injustice."

Unlike those with private infrastructure, construction workers, street vendors, and delivery partners possess zero "cooling autonomy." For these individuals, as studies consistently demonstrate, even a small rise in temperature causes a significant drop in productivity and a corresponding loss of income. These workers are routinely forced to choose between their biological survival and their economic survival.

Evidence from the frontlines

Recent evidence from the frontlines has yielded harrowing testimonies of harm that underscore this inequality. Sanitation workers and waste pickers report that extreme ambient heat, combined with toxic fumes from unsegregated waste, creates hazardous micro-climates where temperatures can be up to 5% higher than in surrounding areas. Some workers have reported suffering severe physical burns on their hands and legs due to handling heated waste materials without protective gear. This 'climate-caste nexus' ensures that those in the most dehumanising roles are also the most exposed to lethal heat, yet



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The government should launch suitable provisions for financial compensation to cover the loss of income incurred when heat extremes prevent work

they remain largely excluded from existing adaptation strategies.

These vulnerabilities are seen across sectors. Gig delivery partners operate under "algorithmic pressure" where time-sensitive penalties discourage rest even during red-alert periods. Construction workers face high metabolic heat generated by physical exertion, compounded by the heat from steel and concrete. Street vendors face the double blow of health deterioration and a drop in daily income as goods perish and customers retreat.

A profound legal and fiscal vacuum exacerbates this crisis. The Factories Act, 1948 protects only those in indoor "workrooms," while the new Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSHC) Code 2020 essentially erases outdoor heat. Although Section 23 of the Code allows the government to notify standards for weather, it does not mandate them, vesting the Centre with discretionary authority and no minimum safety floor.

And fiscally, since heatwaves are not currently on the Nationally Notified Disaster list, States are restricted by the '10% trap', where they can only utilise a small fraction of their State Disaster Response Fund for relief efforts.

However, from a worker's perspective, the issue remains one of occupational safety rather than just disaster management.

Addressing 'thermal injustice'

A comprehensive framework for legislative and executive action is required to bridge these gaps and transition from discretionary advisories to enforceable rights. This must begin with the formal acceptance of the 16th Finance Commission's recommendation to include heatwaves and lightning in the Notified National Disaster list for the 2026-31 period. Such a move would unlock the National Disaster Response Fund, bypass current spending restrictions, and

convert early warnings from simple advisories into binding mandates for district administrations. Simultaneously, the Ministry of Labour and the India Meteorological Department must transition to the Heat Index, a metric combining temperature and relative humidity to reflect true human feel, as the primary legal trigger for declaring heatwaves. This is essential to ensure that coastal areas, which face the lethal combination of heat and humidity, are not at a disadvantage in national safety protocols.

Furthermore, the government must exercise its powers under Section 23 of the OSHWC Code to notify binding heat safety rules, including protected work-rest cycles, and the provision of specialised Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as insulated flasks, as a non-negotiable employer obligation. Based on the Supreme Court's *Ranjitsinh* (2024) ruling, the 'Right to Cool' must be recognised as a fundamental right under Article 21, necessitating that Urban Local Bodies establish suitable cooling shelters and free public water kiosks.

Specialised binding directives are needed for high-hazard occupations, such as sanitation and underground mining, to mitigate risks from toxic exposure. For the gig economy, digital platforms should be legally prohibited from imposing delivery time penalties during heat alerts, ensuring a statutory thermal safety net for workers currently excluded due to their 'contractor' status. Finally, the government should launch suitable provisions for financial compensation to cover the loss of income incurred when heat extremes prevent work. Innovative models, such as the Self-Employed Women's Association parametric heat insurance scheme, provide a viable blueprint for this transition. Heat governance must be reimagined as a core component of the social contract where thermal safety is a non-negotiable mandate of constitutional justice.



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GS Paper II – Polity

What are the legal consequences of piracy?

The leak of Tamil movie *Jana Nayagan* before it could get a theatrical release could attract harsh penalties for the leakers if they are caught and chargesheeted especially due to new amendments to the Cinematograph Act, 1952

EXPLAINER

Aroon Deep

The story so far:

In a blow to the movie's producers, Vijay-starrer *Jana Nayagan*, directed by H. Vinoth, was recently leaked online in its entirety in high quality while its theatrical release has been stuck in a limbo following issues with censor certificate.

The leak indicates that someone with legitimate access to the movie mishandled or intentionally spread it further. Six people have been held by authorities in connection with the leak. Film piracy through illegal downloads is rampant, but it is less common for content to become available in the first place in such high quality.

What are the laws on piracy? How well are they enforced?

The Copyright Act, 1957, deals extensively with infringement of intellectual property such as movies, TV shows, books, articles, and other creative work. Section 63 and Section 63A of the Copyright Act provide for fines of up to ₹2 lakh and three years of imprisonment. Repeat offenders can receive those same penalties again for each subsequent violation.

The Cinematograph Act, 1952, since its amendment in 2023, provides for a much larger fine: 5% of the audited gross budget of a film. While the minimum fine is decidedly smaller, judges may not look too kindly on the *Jana Nayagan* case in particular.

This is because unlike practically every other film, the Vijay starrer was leaked before it had a chance to release in theatres, denting both its theatrical value



India is seen as a "notorious market" owing to its anemic response to piracy cases. FILE PHOTO

and home video rights valuation.

It is uncommon for film piracy cases to be investigated and pursued with vigour. India is consistently listed as a "notorious market" by U.S. authorities, for instance, for anemic responses to piracy.

However, considering the vast spectrum of voices within the film industry and political circles that has come out in support of KVN Productions, which bankrolled *Jana Nayagan*, this case may be the subject of a more serious investigation.

Judges have tended to focus more on distributors in piracy and intellectual rights cases than on individual infringers. But depending on an individual infringer's behaviour, punishments can end up hitting not just the original leaker of the film, but anyone who shares a link forward.

To boot, Tamil Nadu Police's State Cyber Crime Wing said in a press release

that those among the six arrested were sharing cloud storage links to the film.

How did this movie get leaked? How do studios protect against leaks?

Ordinarily, movies are only leaked to pirates in high quality when they appear on OTT streaming platforms. This is because once this happens, in spite of copy-resistant technologies employed by these platforms, pirates have found ways to defeat Digital Rights Management (DRM) protections on such content, and extract a video file that is close to the original stream in quality and fidelity.

As such, withholding content access from audiences at large altogether is the current gold standard. If only theatre projectionists have the movie – and that too only in an encrypted hard drive – it is much harder to copy. Invisible and barely visible watermarking enables studios to instantly identify the perpetrator if a copy

is made from a legitimate theatrical print. That makes leaking an incredibly unattractive prospect to people with access to a movie.

It is common for full videos in a film's supply chain to be visibly watermarked for the intended recipient, or to indicate a versioning. There is such a watermark for *Jana Nayagan*, but it is not yet clear if the version circulating online has enough forensic clues for investigators to zero in on a specific individual. If carelessness was involved, the harshest punishments may go to the first few people who received and distributed the film.

What happens if a movie has already been leaked?

It is incredibly challenging for a leaked film to be completely wiped from the Internet. For one, there are several sites, constantly changing their domain names to evade judicial website blocking orders. For another, private groups on messaging apps like Telegram and protocols like torrents, make the distribution of pirated content harder to stem.

However, there still remains an industry of so-called "anti-piracy" firms like AiPlex who work with filmmakers, sports broadcasters, and so on, to quickly send copyright takedown notices to social media platforms (who generally act quickly on such alerts), and torrent sites (some of whom accept and act on it).

It is also common for filmmakers to approach courts for so-called "dynamic injunctions" that allow them to constantly provide High Courts with links to non-compliant sites' URLs, after which they are blocked online. Some "John Doe" orders can be passed even before a film is leaked, in anticipation of a film becoming available on such platforms were a leak to happen.

THE GIST

It is incredibly challenging for a leaked movie to be completely wiped from the Internet

Section 63 and Section 63A of the Copyright Act, 1957, provide for fines of up to ₹2 lakh and three years of imprisonment for infringement of intellectual property

The Cinematograph Act, 1952, since its amendment in 2023, provides for a much larger fine: 5% of the audited gross budget of a film

In the *Jana Nayagan* case, the leak coming before its theatrical release has dented both its theatrical value and home video rights valuation



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Constitution Amendment Bill moots possible change in size of State Assemblies

Sandeep Phukan

NEW DELHI

The Constitution (One Hundred and Thirty-First Amendment) Bill, 2026 proposes significant changes to the size and composition of the Assemblies by restarting the process of delimitation and removing the long-standing constitutional freeze, in effect since 1976, on readjustment of seats based on population.

The Bill will be introduced in the Special Session of Parliament commencing on Thursday.

The proposed amendments, in effect, mean that Assemblies will see a change in their total number of seats depending on population changes, and constituency boundaries within States will also be redrawn as part of the delimitation exercise, the Constitution (Amendment) Bill said.

The Bill seeks to amend the provisions in Article 170, which governs the composition of the Assemblies, to enable a fresh readjustment of the number of Assembly seats and the redrawing of territorial constituencies on the basis of a future Census to be



The Bill will be introduced in a Special Session of Parliament commencing on Thursday.

specified by Parliament.

In doing so, it removes the existing freeze that has prevented such readjustments since 1976. The Bill proposes to delete the third proviso of Article 170 that had postponed the delimitation exercise until after the first Census which will be conducted in 2026.

The amendment also replaces the earlier formulation that allowed Parliament to determine the authority for delimitation with a provision explicitly assigning the task to a Delimitation Commission.

It further revises the explanation to Article 170(2) so that "population" for the purpose of seat allocation will mean the popula-

tion ascertained in the Census that Parliament decides to adopt.

The Bill substitutes Article 334A to operationalise the one-third reservation for women in the Assemblies. The provision states that the reservation will come into effect only after a fresh delimitation exercise is carried out on the basis of the latest published Census. As of now, the latest published Census is 2011.

Tribal representation

The Bill provides for safeguards to ensure the delimitation exercise does not dilute tribal representation in certain Northeastern States.

The delimitation process itself will be governed by the proposed Delimitation Bill, 2026, which provides for the constitution of a Delimitation Commission by the Centre.

The commission will be chaired by a former or sitting Supreme Court judge and will include the Chief Election Commissioner, or an Election Commissioner nominated by the Election Commission, and the State Election Commissioner of the concerned State.



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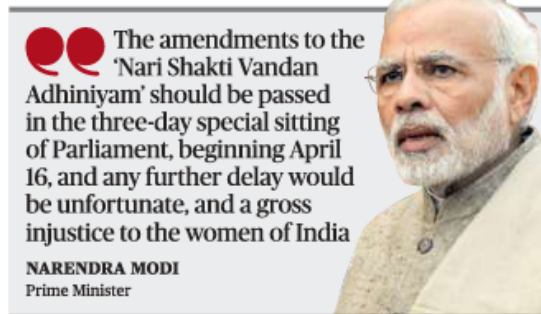
GS Paper II – Polity

Women’s participation is essential for country’s development: Modi

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the participation of women in the political process was “non-negotiable” in adding vigour to India’s development journey.

In an open letter addressed to the women of the country, he said that it was “this principle that led to the passage of the ‘Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam’ in 2023 and it is the same principle that has made this constitutional amendment the need of the hour”.



Parliament is set to debate for consideration, and pass amendments to the Constitution and the Women’s Reservation Act, 2023 this week, between April 16 to April 18. The Act seeks to reserve 33% of

seats in Parliament and State legislatures for women. Under the current law, women’s reservation would not have become enforceable before 2034, as it depends on delimitation post the 2027 Census.

To implement it from the 2029 Lok Sabha polls, amendments to the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam are being taken up in a special session. With women excelling in many fields, it was only fitting that there was an increase in the participation of women in legislative bodies, Mr. Modi said. The amendments to the ‘Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam’ should be passed in the three-day special sitting of Parliament, beginning April 16, and any further delay would be unfortunate, and a gross injustice to the women of India, he said.



Learn Beyond

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GS Paper II – Social Issue

New cell therapy shows promise to treat frailty among elderly

Frailty is not a single disease with a single cause; it arises from the effects of chronic inflammation, muscle loss, vascular ageing, immune dysfunction, and long-term stress. Because there is no single molecular target, most medical research has focused on managing the consequences of frailty, rather than reversing the condition.

Biju Dharmapalan

In many Indian homes, ageing unfolds quietly. A grandfather who once walked to the local market now pauses every few steps. A grandmother takes days to recover from a minor fall. Such changes are often dismissed as "normal ageing". Medicine, however, increasingly recognises these signs as part of a condition called frailty, which is a state of accelerated biological ageing marked by lower endurance and slower recovery.

Frailty affects up to one in four people over the age of 50 worldwide. In India, where the population aged 60 and over is projected to rise to nearly 20% by 2050, the condition is likely widespread but rarely diagnosed. Unlike diseases such as diabetes or hypertension, frailty has no standard treatment protocol and is under-visible in policy.

A new international study suggests that this long-neglected condition may finally be biologically treatable.

Measurable gain

Researchers studying elderly individuals with frailty found that a single infusion of mesenchymal stem cells significantly improved their physical endurance. Participants aged 70 to 85 years who received the highest dose walked on average 60 m farther in a six-minute walk test nine months after treatment, which is a nearly 20% improvement over their baseline performance.

The study was part of phase IIb of the CRATUS trial and was conducted by a team that included researchers from U.S.-based biotechnology firm Longeveron. The firm's mesenchymal stem cell product is called Lomecel-B (or laromestrocel). The study's findings were published in the journal *Cell Stem Cell* on March 5.

For the first time, there seems to be a treatment that targets accelerated ageing itself.

Since frailty increases the risk of falls, hospitalisation, post-surgical complications, and premature death, even modest gains in endurance can be the difference between independent living and prolonged dependence.

Mesenchymal stem cells

Frailty is not a single disease with a single cause, rather it arises from the cumulative effects of chronic inflammation, muscle loss, vascular ageing, immune dysfunction, and long-term stress. Because there is no single molecular target, most medical research has focused on managing the consequences of frailty rather than reversing the condition itself.

The authors of the new study used mesenchymal stem cells, which are naturally found in bone marrow and fat tissue. These cells are biologically versatile as they can differentiate into



Representative image. A new international study suggests that this long-neglected condition may finally be biologically treatable. VUE WU/LINDPLASH

bone, cartilage or muscle and, importantly, release molecules into the bloodstream that reduce inflammation and promote tissue repair.

An added advantage is that, unlike many cell therapies, mesenchymal stem cells do not strongly activate the recipient's immune system, thus reducing the need for immunosuppressive drugs. This is a critical safety consideration for older adults who are also frail.

The findings also confirm that while frailty has important social and psychological components, it is also a biological condition that could benefit from timely intervention. This said, how exactly laromestrocel works is unclear.

Researchers have expressed suspicion that the infused cells dampen inflammation in the tissues surrounding small blood vessels, which is a region increasingly implicated in ageing-related decline. Participants who received stem cells were found to have lower levels of a biomarker associated with inflammation in this vascular niche.

Ageing researchers are nonetheless also excited by the direction of change. Ageing-related decline is multifactorial and difficult to reverse, so seeing improvement rather than just stabilisation is encouraging. The study also reported no serious side effects. Yet the authors were careful to avoid overstating the findings, and have acknowledged that larger clinical trials and longer follow-up plans are required. Regulatory approval also remains uncertain as a phase III trial is pending and foreign regulators like India's Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) may require a

The findings confirm that while frailty has important social and psychological components, it is also a biological condition that could benefit from timely intervention

bridging trial to prove the therapy also works as intended in Indian populations.

Implications for India

India's health system is still largely oriented towards acute illness rather than chronic ageing. Frailty is a strong predictor of hospitalisation and mortality but rarely features in clinical records or insurance claims.

India's flagship public health insurance scheme 'Ayushman Bharat' focuses on hospital-based secondary and tertiary care whereas preventive geriatric assessment, functional screening, and early interventions for ageing-related vulnerabilities receive little attention. Frailty is also not recognised as a reimbursable condition.

India also has a 'National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly' but its reach remains limited. Geriatric clinics are scarce in district hospitals and healthcare workers seldom use frailty assessment tools. Medical education also continues to treat the consequences of ageing as inevitable.

As a result, elderly patients enter hospitals already physiologically fragile and face higher risks after surgery or illness. Which means a therapy that improves resilience, even modestly,

stands to significantly reduce the duration of hospital stays and risk of complications, and improve quality of life.

Role of ICMR

Stem-cell science in India also carries a complicated legacy. In the past, unregulated clinics have offered unproven "stem-cell cures" for a range of conditions, often exploiting vulnerable patients.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) recognised this risk and issued strict guidelines that limited the use of stem cells to approved clinical trials. This caution is essential: even the new study, while promising, does not justify immediate clinical use.

ICMR-led studies could evaluate whether stem-cell-based interventions reduce falls, improve surgical recovery or enhance the quality of life among older Indians relative to existing options, to ensure that treatments such as using laromestrocel have both medically and socially relevant outcomes.

Both India and the world are entering an era in which the path to living longer is well-understood, even if governments and policies have applied it highly unevenly. The bigger challenge today is to ensure that those who live, in whatever circumstances, are able to do so with dignity and independence.

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THE GIST

Frailty affects up to one in four people over the age of 50 worldwide. In India, where the population aged 60 and over is projected to rise to nearly 20% by 2050, the condition is likely widespread but rarely diagnosed.

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Learn Beyond

GS Paper III – Economic Development

Food worth ₹1.55 lakh cr. wasted annually

Each year, on March 30, the world marks the International Day of Zero Waste. This year, the theme is food waste, which is not only timely but also an emergency call for global attention to one of the most painful contradictions of our time: mountains of food going waste even as millions go to bed hungry and malnutrition prevails across the globe.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Food Waste Index Report 2024 finds that the world wasted 1.05 billion tonnes of food – inadequate post-harvest storage capacities and households accounting for 60% of it, food services 28%, and retail 12%. Beyond individual behaviour, the scale of food loss reflects systemic inefficiencies embedded in supply chains, policy failures, and consumption cultures that have normalised discarding food as an acceptable cost of abundance.

Yet, abundance is far from universal; around 783 million people still face hunger, and more than 3.1 billion are unable to afford a healthy diet. The coexistence of a billion tonnes of wasted food and a billion hungry stomachs is not an irony; it is an indictment of inefficiency and apathy.

India's position in the global picture is both consequential and deeply uncomfortable. According to the UNEP report, India ranks second globally in food waste, with 78-80 million tonnes of post-harvest crop and food worth ₹1.55 lakh crore wasted annually, following China, which wastes an estimated 108 million tonnes of food per year. At the same time, the U.S. wastes 24.7 million tonnes annually. Japan, which is long celebrated for its culture of 'mottainai' – a deep-rooted ethic of zero waste, wastes merely 5.2 million tonnes of food annually.

The per capita picture is equally revealing. Per capita household food waste in India stands at 55 kg annually, lower than 73 kg in the U.S. and 75 kg in Germany. The country ranks 111th



A.S. Mittal

Vice-Chairman,
Punjab Economic
Policy and Planning
Board

The coexistence of a billion tonnes of wasted food and a billion hungry stomachs is not an irony; it is an indictment for inefficiency and apathy

out of 125 countries in the Global Hunger Index and around 194 million of its people do not get enough food. Food waste is not a statistic; it is stolen meals from millions of mouths.

Punjab is a State that produces enough to feed hundreds of millions but then watches a significant portion of that go to waste before it reaches plates. Food loss and waste in the State is a significant issue, driven by extreme weather events and alarming levels of inefficiencies in storage and logistics. With over 8,200 tonnes of foodgrains getting spoiled in Food Corporation of India storage facilities alone in the State between 2019 and 2024, it is the highest in India.

According to a NITI Aayog report, post-harvest handling inefficiencies – inadequate covered storage facilities, under-investment in cold-chain infrastructure and timely mechanisation support, and the lack of grading, standardisation, and scientific packaging – are major bottlenecks in Punjab.

Food waste is not merely a human tragedy; it is an ecological one. Food loss and waste account for 8-10% of global annual greenhouse gas emissions. If food waste were a country, it would be the third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases after China and the U.S. Decomposing food in landfills releases methane, which has a warming potential many times more than that of CO₂.

Every morsel wasted means lost water, land, fuel, and hard work of farmers. Producing one kilogram of rice requires about 5,000 litres of water. When that rice is thrown away, the water is lost too, more so for a State like Punjab which faces groundwater depletion. In this context, integrating food loss and waste into national climate plans is urgent.

Ending food waste demands a reconfiguration of systems, incentives, and values, with human dignity at their centre. The following are five credible and sustainable ways in that direction:

Build the cold chain, break the loss chain: India processes only around 8% of its produce compared to 65% of the U.S. and 23% of China. A national cold-chain mission, particularly in States such as Punjab, Haryana, and U.P., must be treated as food security infrastructure, not an optional investment.

Legislate against waste, legislate for sharing: Several European nations have made it illegal for supermarkets to destroy unsold edible food, mandating its donation to food banks instead. India needs a law to redistribute surplus food, backed by tax incentives for businesses and institutions that donate.

Empower the farmer at the first mile: Post-harvest loss begins at the farm gate. Farmer-producer organisations must be equipped with mechanised drying, hermetic storage bags, and mobile cold units. The Jute Packaging Materials Act, which requires grain storage in porous jute sacks, needs to be urgently reviewed to allow modern hermetic solutions.

Make waste visible, make saving rewarding: India currently has no consolidated national database tracking food waste at the retail and hospitality level. Mandatory food waste measurement and public reporting, modelled on the UNEP's Food Waste Index methodology, should be introduced for large food businesses, wedding caterers, and institutional kitchens.

Revive the ethic of treating 'Anna (food)' as sacred: Every culture on this subcontinent has, in its own way, treated food as something to be revered – *Anna Brahma*, food is god. It is the most sustainable food philosophy ever devised. Schools, communities, and public institutions must rekindle this ethic, not as religious instruction but as civic responsibility.

Let's move from awareness to collective action and make food waste reduction a shared national priority.



GS Paper III – Economic Development

Consumption growth uneven among largely rural States

Differences across States indicate that growth is becoming increasingly State-specific, shaped by local economic conditions and structural factors

DATA POINT

Chandrasekar K.

In India, consumption is primarily being driven by cities, where higher incomes, better job opportunities and faster economic activity lead to stronger spending growth (Chart 1). However, this narrative does not fully capture the reality in States such as Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh, where more than 70% of the population resides in rural areas, except North East States and Union Territories. In these States, rural households play a crucial role in the economy, making it more meaningful to compare these States with each other rather than with more urbanised States.

A State with low initial consumption may show higher growth simply because it is in a catching-up phase. A simple example shows why such comparisons need care. A student improving from 25 marks to 30 marks shows a higher percentage increase than one moving from 95 to 97, yet the latter clearly performs better. By focusing exclusively on States with predominantly rural populations, the analysis allows for a more equitable comparison and offers a clearer picture of their relative performance in consumption growth.

This analysis uses Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (MPCE) data from the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) reports for 2011-12 and 2023-24 to examine how consumption patterns have evolved in rural-dominated States. The growth rates discussed are presented in real terms, meaning they have been adjusted for inflation. This adjustment is achieved using Consumer Price Index data, which removes the effects of rising prices over time. Without this adjustment, increases in consumption could reflect higher prices rather

than actual improvements in spending power. By converting nominal expenditure into real terms, this analysis provides a clearer understanding of how consumption levels have genuinely changed between 2011-12 and 2023-24.

The differences across States become clearer when we look at individual performance (Chart 2).

Bihar emerges as the leading performer among rural-dominated States. Rural consumption rose from ₹1,127 in 2011-12 to ₹3,670 in 2023-24, demonstrating significant nominal growth. After adjusting for inflation, it has expanded at a real rate of 4.7% annually, considerably higher than the all-India rural average of 3.4%. Urban consumption has also gone up swiftly at 4.6%, well above the national average of 2.9%. This shows that Bihar is not merely catching up from a low starting point but is also experiencing widespread growth in both rural and urban sectors.

In Odisha, Rural MPCE has grown at 4.5% while urban consumption has grown at 4.0%, both comfortably above the national averages. This suggests that Odisha is experiencing balanced and robust consumption growth, with urban areas showing a slight edge.

In Himachal Pradesh, rural consumption has grown at 4.0% and urban consumption at 3.7%, both above the national average in real terms. This reflects a stable and well-distributed growth pattern without sharp divergence between rural and urban areas.

In Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh, rural consumption has grown at 3.8%, above the national rural average. However, urban consumption growth is 2.9%, same as the all-India average. This suggests moderate and stable growth, with rural areas performing slightly better than urban areas.

Uttar Pradesh shows a mixed pattern. In real terms, the rural consumption has grown at 3.8%, above the national average. However, urban consumption growth is 2.8%, slightly below the all-India

urban average. This suggests that while rural areas are contributing to the growth, urban areas are limiting the overall momentum.

Rajasthan's rural consumption growth stands at 3.4%, equal to the national average, while urban growth at 3.0% is slightly above the all-India average. This indicates balanced, non-leading performance.

In Chhattisgarh, rural consumption growth is 3.1%, below the national average, while urban growth is 3.2%, above it. This suggests that urban areas are pulling ahead while rural consumption lags.

A useful way to interpret these trends is through a quadrant framework based on the all-India averages. States such as Bihar and Odisha fall in the high-growth quadrant, indicating strong and balanced performance across both rural and urban areas. Himachal Pradesh also shows steady progress above national averages. In contrast, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh show stronger rural growth than urban areas, suggesting that rural demand is driving overall consumption. Chhattisgarh shows the opposite pattern, where urban growth exceeds rural growth. Meanwhile, Rajasthan lies close to national averages, reflecting steady but not leading performance.

A notable aspect of the data is that rural consumption growth now matches or even exceeds urban growth in several States, reversing the traditional pattern in which cities led demand. This suggests that the constraint on overall consumption growth may lie more in urban moderation than in rural weakness. Still, differences across States indicate that growth is becoming increasingly State-specific, shaped by local economic conditions and structural factors. These trends collectively indicate a changing consumption landscape in which rural India is not only catching up but also playing a central role in driving demand.

(The writer is an Indian Statistical Service Officer. Views are personal.)

Uneven gains

The data for the charts were sourced from the HCES Reports for 2011-12 & 2023-24 from Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation



CHART 1: Average Monthly Per Capita Consumer Expenditure (MPCE) (in ₹) at nominal price in urban and rural areas over the years

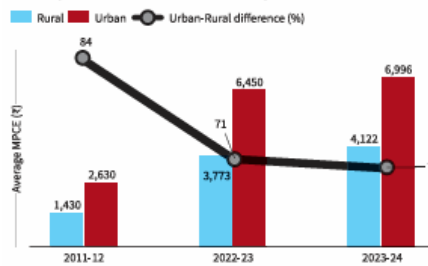
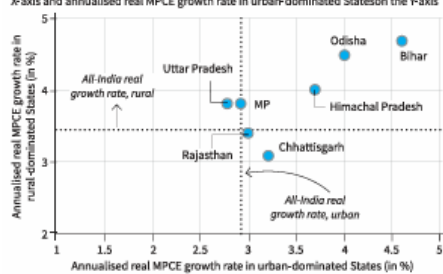


CHART 2: Annualised real MPCE growth rate in rural-dominated States (in %) on the X-axis and annualised real MPCE growth rate in urban-dominated States on the Y-axis



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