

## Topics of Discussion:

1. Lanka cyclone toll 153, India sends help
  2. Export to US fall: Marine, auto, jewellery find new markets
  3. Basic structure doctrine keeps our democracy from drifting to absolutism: CJI
  4. Tamil Sangamam's 4th edition focuses on 'learning Tamil' amid three-language row
  5. The problem, its fix and impact on airline operations
- 

## Lanka cyclone toll 153, India sends help

### Syllabus:

**Preliminary Examination:** Current events of national and international importance, Geography.

**Mains Examination: General Studies-I, III:** Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclones etc., disaster management.

**What's the ongoing story:** At least 153 people have been killed in Sri Lanka after landslides and flooding caused by Cyclone Ditrwah, officials said on Saturday, with 191 others missing and more than half a million affected nationwide.

### Key Points to Ponder:

- What is a cyclone and what are its types?
- What are the favourable conditions for the formation of tropical cyclones?
- What are tropical depressions?
- What is the difference between cyclones and anticyclones?
- How is climate change impacting tropical cyclones?
- What are the challenges in cyclone disaster management in India?

— What are the cyclone disaster management, mitigation and preparedness measures in India?

### **Key Takeaways:**

— Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake has declared a state of emergency throughout the island in view of the emergency situation that has emerged following the devastation caused by a powerful cyclone, even as India delivered more relief supplies to the island nation.

— More than 78,000 people have been moved to nearly 800 relief centres, mostly set up in schools, the Disaster Management Centre said. Thousands of police, navy personnel and army troops are distributing food, clearing roads and moving trapped families to safety.

— Meteorological authorities have forecast continued rains over the weekend, raising fears of further flooding in already waterlogged regions.

— As the death toll rose to over 150 in cyclone-hit Sri Lanka, India is planning evacuation flights after sending around 21 tonnes of relief materials in two military transport aircraft under its “Operation Sagar Bandhu”.

— Sources said evacuation of stranded Indians is being planned with the help of Air force and Air India flights. But, if the commercial operations start, then they will be utilised for the evacuation flights.

— On Saturday, two transport aircraft of the IAF – C-130J and IL-76 – delivered nearly 21 tonnes of relief material to Colombo as a part of India’s humanitarian assistance extended to Sri Lanka.

— Also, INS Sukanya, carrying more humanitarian aid, has left Visakhapatnam and is expected to reach Sri Lanka soon, sources said.

— Besides, two Chetak helicopters from the Indian Navy’s aircraft carrier INS Vikrant are participating in the search and rescue operations with Sri Lanka Air Force personnel on board, they said. Under Operation Sagar Bandhu, India has provided 4.5 tonnes of dry ration, two tonnes of fresh ration, and other essential relief items from INS Vikrant and INS Udaygiri to assist the affected families, the officials said.

— The Indian High Commission in Colombo is assisting the stranded Indians at the Bandaranaike International Airport.

### **Do You Know:**

— A cyclone is a large-scale system of air that rotates around the centre of a low-pressure area. It is usually accompanied by violent storms and bad weather. As per National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), a cyclone is characterised by inward spiralling winds that rotate anticlockwise in the Northern Hemisphere and clockwise in the Southern Hemisphere. The NDMA classifies cyclones broadly into two categories: extratropical cyclones and tropical cyclones.

— Tropical cyclones form over warm ocean waters near the equator. When the warm, moist air from the ocean surface rises upward, a lower air pressure area is formed below. Air from surrounding areas with higher air pressure rushes into this low-pressure area, eventually rising, and it becomes warm and moist.

— As warm, moist air rises, it cools down, and the water in the air forms clouds and thunderstorms. This whole system of clouds and winds gains strength and momentum using the ocean's heat, and the water that evaporates from its surface.

— “The weakest tropical cyclones are called tropical depressions. If a depression intensifies such that its maximum sustained winds reach 39 miles per hour [63 kmph], the tropical cyclone becomes a tropical storm,” according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Storm systems with wind speeds of 119 kmph and above are classified as hurricanes, typhoons, or tropical cyclones.

— The category of a tropical cyclone is determined by its sustained wind speed, as measured by the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. It is classified into five categories — Category 1 to Category 5. While Category 1 tropical cyclones bring winds of 119 to 153 kmph, Category 5 tropical cyclones, which are the strongest, have winds of 252 kmph or higher. Storms that reach Category 3 and higher are considered major tropical cyclones due to their potential to inflict significant damage.

—In 2000, a group of nations called WMO/ESCAP (World Meteorological

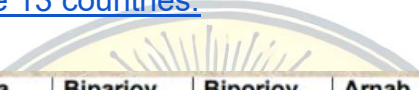
—Organisation/United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific),which comprised Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lankaand Thailand, decided to start naming cyclones in the region.

— After each country sent in suggestions, the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones(PTC) finalized the list.

—The WMO/ESCAP expanded to include five more countries in 2018 — Iran, Qatar, SaudiArabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

—The list of 169 cyclone names released by IMD in April 2020 were provided by these countries

— [13 suggestions from each of the 13 countries.](#)



Bangladesh	Nisarga	Nisarga	Biparjoy	Biporjoy	Arnab	Ornab	Upakul	Upokul
India	Gati	Gati	Tej	Tej	Murasu	Murasu	Aag	Aag
Iran	Nivar	Nivar	Hamoon	Hamoon	Akvan	Akvan	Sepand	Sepand
Maldives	Burevi	Burevi	Midhili	Midhili	Kaani	Kaani	Odi	Odi
Myanmar	Tauktae	Tau'Te	Michaung	Migjaum	Ngamann	Ngaman	Kyarthit	Kjathi
Oman	Yaas	Yass	Remal	Re-Mal	Sail	Sail	Naseem	Naseem
Pakistan	Gulab	Gul-Aab	Asna	As-Na	Sahab	Sa-Hab	Afshan	Af-Shan
Qatar	Shaheen	Shaheen	Dana	Dana	Lulu	Lulu	Mouj	Mouj
Saudi Arabia	Jawad	Jowad	Fengal	Feinjal	Ghazeer	Razeer	Asif	Aasif
Sri Lanka	Asani	Asani	Shakhti	Shakhti	Gigum	Gigum	Gagana	Gagana
Thailand	Sitrang	Si-Trang	Montha	Mon-Tha	Thianyot	Thian-Yot	Bulan	Bu-Lan
United Arab Emirates	Mandous	Man-Dous	Senyar	Sen-Yaar	Afoor	Aa-Foor	Nahhaam	Nah-Haam
Yemen	Mocha	Mokha	Ditwah	Ditwah	Diksam	Diksam	Sira	Sira

### Previous year UPSC Prelims Question Covering similar theme:

(1) In the South Atlantic and South-Eastern Pacific regions in tropical latitudes, cyclone does not originate. What is the reason? (UPSC CSE 2015)

(a) Sea surface temperatures are low



(b) Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone seldom occurs

(c) Coriolis force is too weak

(d) Absence of land in those regions

**Previous year UPSC Mains Question Covering similar theme:**

Tropical cyclones are largely confined to the South China Sea, Bay of Bengal and Gulf of Mexico. Why? (UPSC CSE 2014)

**Export to US fall: Marine, auto, jewellery find new markets**

**Syllabus:**

**Preliminary Examination:** Current events of national and international importance.

**Mains Examination: General Studies-II:** Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests, Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

**What's the ongoing story:** As steep 50 per cent US tariffs effective August 27 begin to weigh on Indian goods exports, several product categories such as shrimps, gems and jewellery, auto components and electric machinery have managed to redirect some of that output into other Asian and European markets.

**Key Points to Ponder:**

- What is the history of India-US relations?
- What are tariffs? Why are tariffs imposed?
- How are tariffs retaliated?
- What are the areas of cooperation between India and the US?
- What are the key developments in India-US relations in the various sectors?

- What are India's import and export trends with regard to the US?
- What are the implications of the higher tariff imposed by the US on India?
- Read about the India-US trade deal talks.
- What strategies is India using to tackle the challenges of higher tariffs?

### **Key Takeaways:**

- Analysis of data released by the Commerce and Industry Ministry showed that while gems and jewellery exports to the US plummeted 76 per cent in September compared with last year, total gems and jewellery exports registered only a marginal 1.5 per cent dip. Shipments to the United Arab Emirates jumped 79 per cent, to Hong Kong 11 per cent and Belgium 8 per cent, the data showed.
- A similar pattern was visible in auto components, whose exports to the US dropped 12 per cent in September, but shipments to Germany, the UAE, and Thailand, helped total auto component exports grow 8 per cent. Marine products grew 25 per cent in September and **11 per cent in October**, largely due to higher exports to China (up almost 60 per cent), Japan (37 per cent), Thailand (about 70 per cent) and the European Union.
- This reinforces the view that leveraging India's trade linkages with other parts of the world, including in different parts of the Asian region, could help somewhat mitigate the blow if a trade deal with Washington DC does not fructify soon.
- However, low-margin, labour-intensive product segments such as cotton garments, sports goods, carpets, and leather footwear, which face stiff competition from China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) countries, are struggling to diversify their shipments, indicating that the long-term impact of US tariffs could be uneven, hitting small units operating across the country more. The low-margin products are typically more susceptible to trade-related shocks due to working capital stress and unable to set up units abroad.
- Sports goods, with 40 per cent exports go to the US, have not yet found alternate markets, and hence higher tariffs have dragged down overall exports by 6 per cent in October. The cotton

garment sector, where Indian products have large competitors such as Vietnam and Bangladesh, too struggled in its diversification efforts.

— It is learnt that the Department of Commerce has asked exporters not to lower prices sharply as they scout for new markets, as this can impact India's positioning in these markets. There are still some shipments going to the US as buyers seek replacement stocks, but these are slowly being replaced by other countries in Central America and East Asia, with Indonesia and Ecuador among the top gainers.

— SBI's Ecowrap report last week said that India's exports are finding alternatives and that diversification could help India withstand the US tariff hit over a period of time. The report said India's total merchandise exports between April and September this year inched up by 2.9 per cent, and cumulative exports to the USA also registered a growth of 13 per cent during the same period, though there could be some front-loading effects, with September figures for the US registering negative year-on-year growth of 12 per cent.

### **Do You Know:**

— Tariffs are taxes or duties imposed by a government on imported goods and services. Their objective is to make foreign products more expensive compared to domestically produced goods, thereby encouraging consumers to prefer local products. Tariffs also act as a protective measure for domestic industries against foreign competition. Additionally, they serve as a source of revenue for the government.

— The US tariff move forced Indian exporters to aggressively tap new geographies. In the last two months, early signs suggest India's trade linkages with other parts of the world, including in different parts of Asia, has helped mitigate the blow of lower exports to the US. Diversification of markets will continue to remain work-in-progress.

### **UPSC Prelims practice Question Covering similar theme:**

(2) Consider the following statements:

1. Tariffs are taxes or duties imposed by a government on imported goods and services.

2. Objective of tariffs is to make foreign products more expensive compared to domestically produced goods

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Previous year UPSC Mains Questions Covering similar theme:**

‘What introduces friction into the ties between India and the United States is that Washington is still unable to find for India a position in its global strategy, which would satisfy India’s National self-esteem and ambitions’. Explain with suitable examples. UPSC CSE 2019)

**Tamil Sangamam’s 4th edition focuses on ‘learning Tamil’ amid three-language row**

**Syllabus:**

**Preliminary Examination:** Current events of national and international importance.

**Mains Examination: General Studies-I, II:** Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times, Government policies and interventions.

**What’s the ongoing story:** In a year when the Centre’s relation with Tamil Nadu was marked by a conflict over the three-language formula under the National Education Policy (NEP), the Ministry of Education has selected a campaign to learn Tamil as the focus of the Kashi Tamil Sangamam to be held next month.

**Key Points to Ponder:**

— What is the Kashi Tamil Sangamam?

— Know about the National Education Policy (NEP).



- What is the three-language formula?
- What is the history of ties between Kashi and Tamil Nadu?
- What is Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' initiative?
- What are the potential socio-economic benefits of cultural exchange programs like the Kashi Tamil Sangamam for local communities in Kashi and Tamil Nadu.

### **Key Takeaways:**

- The event, the first edition of which was held in 2022, is meant to commemorate the civilisational and cultural link between Tamil Nadu and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. It involves participants from Tamil Nadu travelling to Varanasi for a series of programmes.
- The theme of the event this time is “Tamil Karkalam” or “let us learn Tamil”, according to Higher Education Secretary Vineet Joshi.
- “The effort will be for as many people as possible to learn Tamil as part of the event. Around 50 teachers from Tamil Nadu who also know Hindi will come to Kashi and teach Tamil to students. Around 1,500 students will learn Tamil like this,” Joshi said on Saturday. As part of this, foundational spoken Tamil classes will be conducted across 50 schools in Varanasi from December 2 to 15, with each teacher teaching 30 students.
- Similarly, around 300 college students from Varanasi and surrounding areas will travel to Tamil Nadu to learn Tamil in the second half of December. They will learn the language at nine institutions in the state, including IIT Madras, Pondicherry University and Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan.
- This year's edition of Kashi Tamil Sangamam will also include a 'Sage Agastya Vehicle Expedition', which will leave from Tamil Nadu's Tenkasi district on December 2 and arrive in Kashi on December 10. Travelling by road, they will pass through Puducherry, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Madhya Pradesh, and take part in activities at several locations.
- The third edition of the Sangamam, which was held in February this year, had sage Agastya, a key spiritual figure in Tamil Nadu, as its theme.

— The Centre and Tamil Nadu have been at loggerheads over the implementation of the three-language formula, which NEP 2020 suggests. The DMK-led government in Tamil Nadu has seen the three-language policy as an attempt to impose Hindi in the state where students mostly learn two languages – Tamil and English. The Centre, however, has maintained that the three-language policy does not impose any single language on the state.

### **Do You Know:**

— Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat programme aims to enhance interaction & promote mutual understanding between people of different states/UTs through the concept of state/UT pairing. The states carry out activities to promote a sustained and structured cultural connect in the areas of language learning, culture, traditions & music, tourism & cuisine, sports and sharing of best practices, etc.

— States/UTs in India have been paired with each other for a fixed time period. The paired States/UTs signed MoUs with each other, delineating a set of activities that they would carry out. An activity calendar for each pair was prepared through mutual consultation, paving the way for a systematic process of mutual engagement. Such interaction between different segments of the population of each pair of States /UTs at the cultural level, generated the vibrance of understanding & appreciation amongst the people and forged mutual bonding, thus securing an enriched value system of unity in the nation.

### **UPSC Practice Prelims Question Covering similar theme:**

(3) What is the primary objective of the Kashi Tamil Sangamam?

- (a) To promote trade between North and South India
- (b) To celebrate the cultural and civilizational ties between Tamil Nadu and Kashi (Varanasi)
- (c) To commemorate India's freedom struggle
- (d) To promote the Sanskrit language

## Basic structure doctrine keeps our democracy from drifting to absolutism: CJI

### Syllabus:

**Preliminary Examination:** Current events of national and international importance.

**Mains Examination: General Studies-II:** Constitution of India —historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

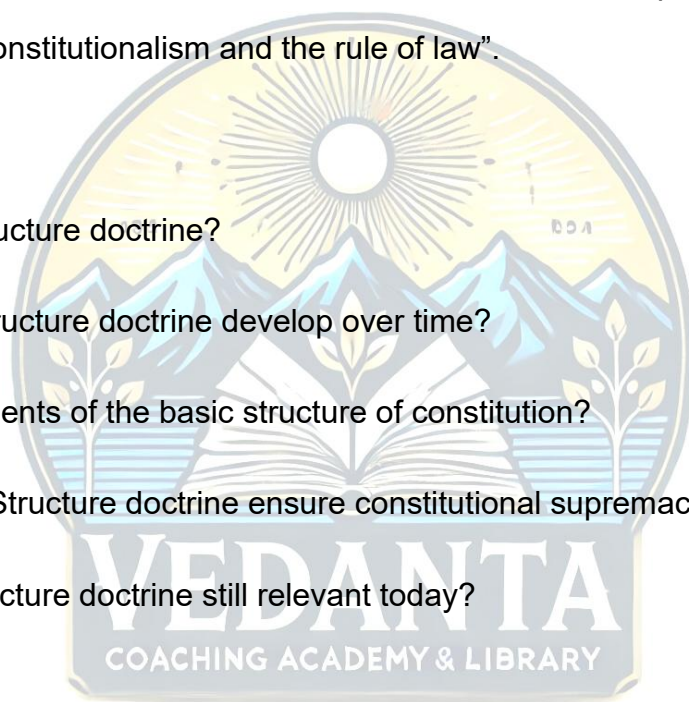
**What's the ongoing story:** Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Saturday said that the Supreme Court's 1973 Kesavananda Bharati case verdict, which enunciated the basic structure doctrine, is "not... a mere legal precedent" but "stands instead, as one of the most profound affirmations of India's commitment to constitutionalism and the rule of law".

### Key Points to Ponder:

- What is the Basic Structure doctrine?
- How did the Basic Structure doctrine develop over time?
- What are the components of the basic structure of constitution?
- How does the Basic Structure doctrine ensure constitutional supremacy?
- How is the Basic Structure doctrine still relevant today?

### Key Takeaways:

- The CJI said that the basic structure doctrine is "the conscience that keeps our democracy from drifting into absolutism".
- Speaking at the inauguration of the 'International Mooting Academy for Advocacy, Negotiation, Dispute Adjudication, Arbitration & Resolution' (IMAANDAAR) at the O P Jindal University in Haryana, the CJI said that "the basic structure doctrine... was neither a flight of judicial fancy nor an indulgence in philosophical abstraction. It was, in truth, an act of constitutional archaeology: the judges unearthed, from within the four corners of the Constitution, those foundational principles



that had always lain embedded in its design, waiting to be revealed by interpretation rather than invention.”

— He said the “true brilliance of the Kesavananda majority lay in recognising that what could not be amended, was what made the Constitution meaningful—it’s just soul, painstakingly designed by our framers.”

— During the event, the university campus hosted a re-enactment of the Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala.

— CJI Kant said, “Every generation that revisits Kesavananda Bharati, rediscovers that the Constitution’s strength does not lie in ink or parchment, but in the probity of those who interpret and defend it. Its survival has always depended on a community of custodians who read it not as a frozen command, but as a living charge.”

— He said, “... the basic structure doctrine is not to be a relic of the past, but a map for charting our future. It is the conscience that keeps our democracy from drifting into absolutism, as we modernise our institutions and confront new frontiers.”

— Justice P S Narasimha said the basic structure doctrine is “not a claim of judicial supremacy but an affirmation of constitutional supremacy,” ensuring no institution alters the Constitution’s core. Justice M M Sundresh said that “the basic structure was never defined because it already existed as a natural right,” adding that its core principles of justice, liberty and equality must be protected by constitutional courts, whenever they are put at risk.

### **Do You Know:**

— The Doctrine of Basic Structure is a form of judicial review that is used to test the legality of any legislation by the courts. It restricts the power of Parliament to alter the fundamental features of the Constitution. The origins of this doctrine are found in the post-war German Constitution law which, after the Nazi regime, was amended to protect some basic laws.



— The doctrine was evolved by the Supreme Court in the 1973 landmark ruling in *Kesavananda Bharati v State of Kerala*. In a 7-6 verdict, a 13-judge Constitution Bench ruled that the ‘basic structure’ of the Constitution is inviolable, and could not be amended by Parliament.

— If a law is found to “damage or destroy” the “basic features of the Constitution”, the Court declares it unconstitutional. The test is applied to constitutional amendments to ensure the amendment does not dilute the fundamentals of the Constitution itself. The test is widely regarded as a check on majoritarian impulses of the Parliament since it places substantive limits on the power to amend the Constitution.

**Previous year UPSC Prelims Question Covering similar theme:**

(4) Consider the following statements: (UPSC CSE 2020)

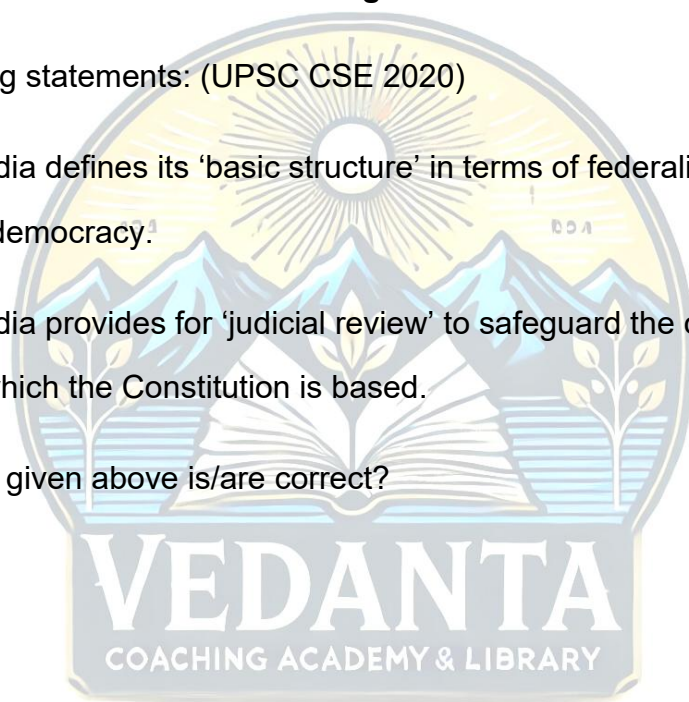
1. The Constitution of India defines its ‘basic structure’ in terms of federalism, secularism, fundamental rights and democracy.
2. The Constitution of India provides for ‘judicial review’ to safeguard the citizens’ liberties and to preserve the ideals on which the Constitution is based.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Previous year UPSC Mains Question Covering similar theme:**

Parliament’s power to amend the constitution is limited power and it cannot be enlarged into absolute power”. In light of this statement, explain whether parliament under article 368 of the constitution can destroy the basic structure of the constitution by expanding its amending power? (UPSC CSE 2018)



## The problem, its fix and impact on airline operations

### Syllabus:

**Preliminary Examination:** Current events of national importance.

**Mains Examination: General Studies-III:** Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.

**What's the ongoing story:** Airlines all over the world are scrambling to implement a fix mandated by Airbus to remedy a software vulnerability in thousands of its A320 family aircraft globally.

### Key Points to Ponder:

- How can intense solar radiation affect the flight-control systems of modern commercial aircraft?
- What are the challenges of implementing urgent software and hardware fixes in commercial aviation fleets?
- What factors contribute to aircraft accidents?
- What is a black box?
- What are the potential risk-reduction strategies and post-disaster requirements for the aircraft disaster?
- What is the role and function of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)?
- What are the challenges faced by the civil aviation sector in India?

### Key Takeaways:

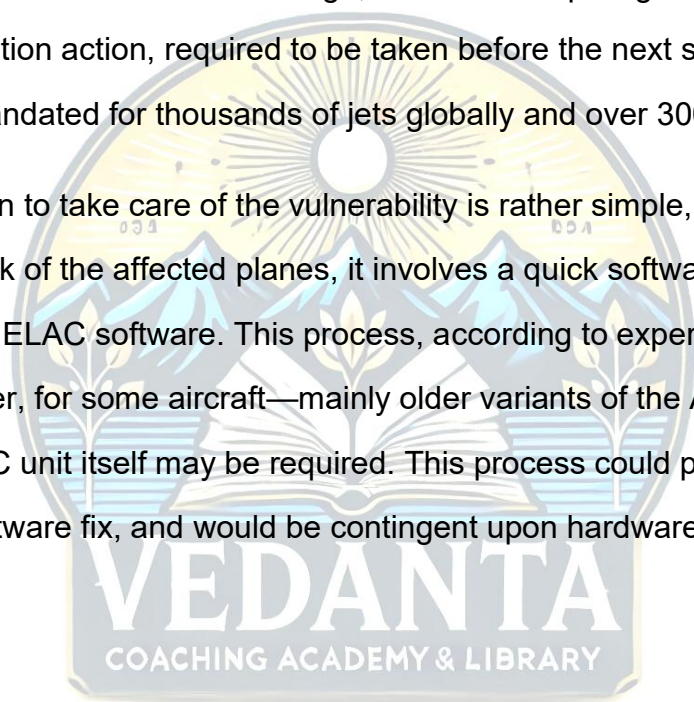
- According to the European aerospace giant, intense solar radiation could corrupt data critical to flight controls in a significant number of these aircraft, which could in turn risk flight safety. — There are over 11,000 A320 family aircraft—A319, A320, and A321—in operation globally, and over half of those might be affected by the issue. This is being seen as the biggest recall in Airbus's history, and the mandated fix to rectify the issue has had some impact on airline operations.

— A320 family aircraft are the most-flown commercial jets in the world. They also form the bulk of India's aircraft fleet, with around 540 A320 family jets being operated by Indian carriers IndiGo, Air India, and Air India Express.

— Although initially there were fears that the rectification action could lead to major disruptions, airlines in India have so far managed to limit it largely to delays and rescheduling of flights, while largely avoiding flight cancellations. While there are reports of flight cancellations from other countries, the impact on flight operations globally so far does not appear to be too significant.

— Airbus announced late Friday that a large number of its best-selling narrow-body A320 family aircraft will require an immediate software change, with some requiring hardware modifications as well. The urgent rectification action, required to be taken before the next scheduled flight of each affected aircraft, was mandated for thousands of jets globally and over 300 in India.

— The rectification action to take care of the vulnerability is rather simple, but is required to be taken urgently. For a bulk of the affected planes, it involves a quick software update—reverting to a previous version of an ELAC software. This process, according to experts, takes around a couple of hours. However, for some aircraft—mainly older variants of the A320 family—a replacement of the ELAC unit itself may be required. This process could potentially take much longer than a simple software fix, and would be contingent upon hardware availability.



## ALSO IN NEWS

### **Centre mandates SIM binding for online messaging platforms**

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has directed online messaging platforms to bar users from accessing their services without the SIM card used to register for the application.

This direction would impact companies like WhatsApp, and could pose challenges for users travelling abroad. It could also act as a potential hurdle in using such services across multiple devices, industry executives said.

These platforms must now ensure that within 90 days, their services are “continuously” linked to the SIM card used to register with them. They must also disallow access if the SIM is not there in the device.

In technical terms, this is called SIM binding. Associated web services of these platforms (like WhatsApp Web) “shall be logged out periodically” — not later than 6 hours. The Centre is drawing powers from the Telecommunication Cybersecurity Amendment Rules, 2025, that were notified in October, to introduce the concept of Telecommunication Identifier User Entity (TIUE) under the scope of telecom regulations.

### **INS Vikrant to be attraction of Navy Day celebrations on Dec 3**

INS Vikrant would be the star attraction of the grand Indian Navy Operational Demonstration as part of the Navy Day celebrations here at Shangumugham on December 3. President Droupadi Murmu will attend the event as the chief guest. Naval sources said that India’s premier aircraft carrier is now stationed near Sri Lanka and would be reaching Thiruvananthapuram in a couple of days.

1. (b) 2. (c) 3. (b) 4. (d)