

A black and white photograph of Nelson Mandela speaking at a podium with microphones. He is wearing a dark suit and has his right fist raised in the air. The background is a blurred crowd of people.

“

The greatest glory in living
lies not in never falling,
but in rising every time we fall.

”

— NELSON MANDELA

Important Issues of the Day

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- **Voter enthusiasm – Page No. 6, GS 2**
- **Rebuilding ties – Page No.6 , GS 2**
- **Submarine dominance – Page No. 6, GS 3**
- **The National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation – Prelims**
- **Helium Crisis – Prelims**

Justice Varma resigns amid proceedings for removal

Ishita Mishra

NEW DELHI

Justice Yashwant Varma, of the Allahabad High Court, who was facing a parliamentary motion for removal, submitted his resignation to President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday.

His resignation came amid reports that a panel, appointed by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, was set to look into the allegations of burnt currency being recovered from his official residence in Delhi during a fire in March last year.

CONTINUED ON

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- Constitutional and Legal Provisions: Articles 124(4) of the Constitution of India, along with the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, provide the framework for removing judges of the Supreme Court. Article 218 extends these provisions to High Court judges.
- • Judges can only be removed for Proved misbehaviour (serious ethical or professional misconduct) and incapacity (Inability to discharge duties due to physical or mental reasons).
- • Initiating the Motion: An impeachment motion can be introduced in either the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha. It must have the support of at least 100 MPs in the Lok Sabha or 50 MPs in the Rajya Sabha.
- • The motion can proceed only if accepted by the Speaker or the Chairman.

- Inquiry Committee: A three-member committee is set up under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968. It includes a Supreme Court judge (or the Chief Justice of India), the Chief Justice of a High Court, and an eminent jurist.
- • Committee Report and Parliamentary Debate: The committee submits its findings to the House that initiated the motion. If the judge is found guilty, the matter is debated in both Houses.
- • Removal of a judge requires a special majority in both Houses of Parliament during the same session. This means the motion must be passed by an absolute majority (more than 50% of the total membership) and also by at least two-thirds of the members present and voting.
- • Presidential Approval: The Constitution provides that based on a motion passed by both Houses of Parliament, a judge can be removed only by an order of the President.

- Justice V. Ramaswami (1993): First SC judge to face impeachment. The panel found him guilty of misuse of funds, but motion failed in Lok Sabha due to abstentions.
- • Justice Soumitra Sen (2011): Accused of misappropriating funds. Rajya Sabha passed the motion, but he resigned before it reached Lok Sabha.

Which of the following correctly describes the “special majority” required for removal of a judge?

- (a)** Majority of total membership of each House only
- (b)** Two-thirds of members present and voting only
- (c)** Majority of total membership and two-thirds of members present and voting
- (d)** Unanimous approval of both Houses

Consider the following statements regarding the removal of judges of the High Courts of India:

1. The procedure for removal is the same as that of Supreme Court judges.
2. A High Court judge can be removed by the Governor of the state.
3. Parliament regulates the procedure through law.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a)** 1 and 3 only
- (b)** 1 only
- (c)** 2 and 3 only
- (d)** 1, 2 and 3

Which of the following statements is correct regarding initiation of impeachment motion?

1. It can be introduced in either House of Parliament.
2. It requires support of at least 100 members in Lok Sabha or 50 members in Rajya Sabha.
3. It must be introduced only after approval by the Chief Justice of India.

Select the correct answer:

- (a)** 1 and 2 only
- (b)** 2 and 3 only
- (c)** 1 and 3 only
- (d)** 1, 2 and 3

Turning up

Voter enthusiasm is a sign of a healthy democracy

Assam and Puducherry recorded historically the highest, and Kerala close to the highest, turnout in Assembly polls held on April 9. In Assam, 85.91% of the electorate turned up to vote, while in Puducherry it was 89.97% and in Kerala, 78.27%. It is hazardous to pinpoint the reasons for high turnouts and treacherous to read meanings into them. However, some reasons are objectively identifiable and some meaningful conjectures can be made. The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in Puducherry and Kerala culled considerable numbers of names – 7.5% and 3.2%, respectively. In Assam, given that a process for the creation of a National Register of Citizens for the State is underway, it was a Special Revision which is a less rigorous updating of the rolls that led to its shrinking by less than 1%. The smaller size of the denominator – the size of the electorate – is one reason why the turnout percentages are high. Ghost voters and duplicate entries may have been eliminated in the process. Another reason for the higher turnout is that due to intense con-

cerns regarding potential disenfranchisement around the SIR/SR, voters may have taken a keener interest in turning up at the booth. In Assam, for instance, large numbers of migrant voters travelled home to vote. In Kerala, anecdotal reporting suggests that its migrant voters from West Asia who travel during polling season could not do so this time due to the ongoing war.

The Election Commission of India, which is facing flak on various issues, took pride in the high turnout. CEC Gyanesh Kumar termed it a “historic testimony not only for India but for the entire democratic world.” Chief Ministers of all three States hailed the voter enthusiasm as a mark of popular support for the continuation of their governments, while the Opposition in all three sought to interpret it as a bugle of change. That dispute will be settled when the votes are counted on May 4, but regardless of the outcome, voter enthusiasm is the sign of a healthy democracy. That precisely is the reason why the ECI should take on board in an enabling rather than a restrictive manner all the disputes regarding the SIR. While the SIR can clean up the voter rolls, it should never become a case of throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

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- **Voter Registration:** A rigorous revision of the electoral rolls and remote voting that can empower millions of internal migrants.
- **Voter Awareness:** A comprehensive voter education campaign that covers all aspects of electoral participation, such as how to register, how to verify, how to vote, and how to report any issues or grievances.
- **Voter Facilitation:** A user-friendly and accessible ICT platform that provides various services and information to voters, such as online registration, polling station location, voter helpline, etc.
- **Voter Feedback:** A feedback mechanism that collects data and insights from voters, election officials, civil society organisations, and media on various aspects of electoral processes and outcomes.

- **Systematic Voter Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) Program:** Launched in 2009, it is a flagship program of the ECI for voter education, spreading voter awareness and promoting voter literacy in India.
- The SVEEP program is based on multiple general as well as targeted interventions that are designed according to the socio-economic, cultural and demographic profile of the state as well as the history of electoral participation in previous rounds of elections and learning thereof.
- **Voter Helpline App:** It was launched in 2019 and is a mobile application that provides a single point of service and information delivery to voters across the country.
- The app allows voters to verify their name in the electoral roll, register online, apply for corrections, download voter ID cards, get election-related information, lodge grievances, and get real-time voter turnout data.

Q. Consider the following statements: (2020)

- 1. According to the Constitution of India a person who is eligible to vote can be made a minister in a State for six months even if he/she is not a member of the Legislature of that State.**
- 2. According to the Representation of People Act, 1951, a person convicted of a criminal offence and sentenced to imprisonment for five years is permanently disqualified from contesting an election even after his release from prison.**

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**

Rebuilding ties

India must approach foreign relations with more pragmatism, less emotion

New Delhi's recent moves to re-engage diplomatically and hold Foreign Office Consultations with diplomats in Turkiye and Azerbaijan is a considerable shift in the government's policy, especially over the past year. Since the India-Pakistan conflict and Operation Sindoor in May 2025, the government had expressed its anger not just at Pakistan, but at countries that were seen as supportive of Pakistan, diplomatically or militarily during the conflict. In particular, the Ministry of External Affairs had expressed its disappointment with statements made by Turkiye, Azerbaijan and Malaysia, that questioned the government's decision to launch strikes on terror sites in Pakistan after the Pahalgam terror attacks. During briefings about Operation Sindoor, as the 96-hour military conflict from May 7-10 was named, the government left out envoys from countries that it felt had not expressed solidarity with India. In a military briefing in July, the deputy chief of army staff said India had had to contend with at least three adversaries on its border with Pakistan, including Turkiye. Azerbaijan too was believed to have helped Pakistan with technological support. Trade and tourism to Turkiye and Azerbaijan dropped significantly for several months, as calls to boycott them went out from influential accounts. During its evacuation of Indians from Iran after U.S.-Israel airstrikes on nuclear installations in June 2025, the MEA point-

of Indians from Iran after U.S.-Israel airstrikes on nuclear installations in June 2025, the MEA pointedly told those heading out by land routes to use Armenia and Turkmenistan, not either Turkiye or Azerbaijan. In addition, foreign policy commentary suggested that India was building an alliance of India, Armenia, and Greece as a counter to their age-old rivals - Pakistan, Azerbaijan and Turkiye - who had already formed a strong trilateral grouping. Given the heated rhetoric, and the freeze in diplomatic ties, the decision to send Secretary West in the MEA, Sibi George, to Baku to revive Foreign Office Consultations with Azerbaijani counterparts last week, and to invite the Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister to Delhi this week, are significant diplomatic moves that indicate that Baku and Ankara too feel that better bilateral relations are in their interests.

In a world more fraught with conflicts that fast spiral out of control, it is necessary for New Delhi to pick its diplomatic battles more carefully. The quick escalation from government demarches to online outrage and calls for boycotts have in the past few years had a detrimental impact on bilateral ties with close friends as well as neighbours. With countries that are adversaries, as both Turkiye and Azerbaijan have been, given their closeness to Pakistan and positions on the Kashmir dispute, New Delhi must consider its options with less emotion and more pragmatism. India has traditionally managed relations between rivals without allowing itself to be hyphenated with Pakistan, or by falling into multilateral "camps".

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Bolstering deterrence through submarine dominance

On April 3, the word 'Aridhaman' found mention in Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's cryptic post on X. This prompted widespread speculation that it signalled the quiet commissioning of INS Aridhaman, the third submarine in the Indian Navy's SSBN (nuclear ballistic missile submarine) programme. Launched in 2009, the Indian Navy commissioned its first SSBN, INS Arihant, in 2016, followed by the second submarine, INS Arighat, in 2024. Speculation about the commissioning of INS Aridhaman assumed momentum since last year after Admiral Dinesh Tripathi, Chief of Naval Staff, confirmed that the submarine was in the final stages of its trials. The next submarine in this series, which is of the Arihant class as well, is likely to be commissioned next year.

Compared to its predecessors, INS Arihant and INS Arighat, INS Aridhaman has greater firing power and marks a gradual upgrade in the series of SSBNs commissioned by the Indian Navy. It is a larger 7000-tonne vessel, which can reportedly carry up to 24 K-15 Sagarika missiles, and up to eight nuclear-tipped K-4 or K-5 missiles. In contrast, the previous submarines in this series hold the capacity for carrying 12 K-15 Sagarika missiles and four K-4 missiles.

Through the commissioning of INS Aridhaman, India appears to have further emboldened its nuclear triad, which refers to New Delhi's capability to launch strategic nuclear delivery systems from land, sea, and air. Importantly, apart from India, the P5 countries - the U.S., Russia, China, France and the U.K. - possess the nuclear triad capabilities. In addition to this, the commissioning of the submarine further enhances India's deterrence capabilities in the maritime domain. Strengthening of



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Given the changing nature of warfare, it is essential to strengthen deterrence capabilities across land, air, and sea

sea-based deterrence is seen as especially critical, given that it has rapidly emerged as a key imperative in bolstering India's nuclear capabilities. To be sure, India's nuclear outlook is anchored on its 'no first use' policy. However, the strategic environment in the Indian Ocean is continually worsening, led by increasing Chinese presence in the region by way of research and survey vessels which possess dual-use technologies and run the risk of being deployed for the purpose of intelligence gathering. Sea-based deterrence is indeed critical to forestall adversarial manoeuvres by China and even Pakistan.

Notably, the Indian Ocean has for long remained dormant due to the lack of any significant maritime security conflict. However, in today's time, the changing nature of warfare, which possesses the possibility of swift transition from one domain to the other, makes it essential to strengthen deterrence capabilities across all domains - land, air, and sea. More recently, the evolving conflict in West Asia serves as a crucial reminder of how modern warfare is not limited to a single domain anymore. What started as American and Israeli air campaigns against Iran has quickly assumed a critical maritime character, whereby the Strait of Hormuz has now emerged as the epicentre shaping much of the future of this war. Furthermore, last year, Operation Sindoor, India's measured counter-terror response against Pakistan, too demonstrated that a naval dimension to the campaign could have indeed been a possibility. Wars in this era do not belong with different domains in silos but rather remain susceptible to spilling over to other domains as well. This complexity of modern warfare underlines why

possessing nuclear triad capabilities, especially boosting deterrence, will continue to remain a key priority for India's national security apparatus.

Furthermore, the SSBN project has significantly boosted India's defence establishment's quest for self-reliance in defence production. With active conflicts persisting in different strategic pockets of the world, a strain in defence supply chains appears to be on the horizon. For India, the prolonged Russia-Ukraine war has spurred momentum in strategies to work towards self-reliance in defence production given Moscow's importance for India as a traditional defence partner.

In addition to this, plans to soon induct a fourth vessel of the Arihant class is likely to guide India's SSBN programme going forward. Importantly, New Delhi also seeks to commission India's first fully indigenously designed nuclear attack submarine (SSN) by 2036, with the commissioning of the second in the programme in 2038. The rapid strides taken by the Indian Navy is building its nuclear-powered submarine programme signals that submarine dominance is fast emerging as a key component in scripting New Delhi's strategy to bolster deterrence.

Going forward, the key challenges confronting the Indian Navy in this domain are likely going to emanate from how efficiently New Delhi balances spending its resources on upgrading its submarines programme with how it inducts new technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and autonomous systems in design and production of these vessels. At a time when the roster of the Indian Navy's assets is continually compared with that of China, it will be critical for New Delhi to keep pace with Beijing.

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- **This prompted widespread speculation that it signalled the quiet commissioning of INS Aridhaman, the third submarine in the Indian Navy's SSBN (nuclear ballistic missile submarine) programme.**
- **Launched in 2009, the Indian Navy commissioned its first SSBN, INS Arihant, in 2016, followed by the second submarine, INS Arighat, in 2024.**
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The National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation



National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation

A Government of India Undertaking - Under Ministry of Tribal Affairs

- **The National Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSTFDC) is celebrating its 25th Foundation Day in New Delhi to mark a quarter-century of tribal empowerment.**
- **NSTFDC is a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) operating under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India. It serves as the apex national organization specifically dedicated to the economic upliftment and financial inclusion of Scheduled Tribes.**
- **Established in: The corporation was established in 2001.**
- **Aim: The primary goal of NSTFDC is to catalyze the economic development of Scheduled Tribes by providing them with the necessary financial means to start income-generating activities and improve their quality of life.**

- **Concessional Financial Assistance:** Extending low-interest loans to ST individuals and groups to help them start or expand small businesses.
- **Livelihood Promotion:** Funding a wide variety of sectors including handicrafts, poultry, dairy, fisheries, retail, and healthcare services to create sustainable local jobs.
- **Channelizing Resources:** Operating through State Channelizing Agencies (SCAs) to ensure that financial aid reaches tribal communities in remote and underserved areas.
- **Entrepreneurial Support:** Providing the capital required for tribal youth and women to transition from traditional labor to independent business ownership.
- **Capacity Building:** Assisting beneficiaries in establishing sustainable enterprises through structured financial schemes and guidance.

Helium Crisis



- **The 2026 West Asia geopolitical crisis has disrupted global helium supply, exposing India's heavy import dependence and posing risks to critical sectors like healthcare, semiconductors, and advanced technology industries.**
- **About: Helium is a colorless, odorless, tasteless, inert, and non-flammable noble gas with the lowest boiling and melting points of all elements, allowing it to remain liquid even near absolute zero, and it plays a vital role in modern technology.**
- **Despite being abundant in the universe, helium is relatively rare on Earth because its low density allows it to escape the atmosphere.**
- **It is not manufactured synthetically, instead, it is obtained as a by-product during the cryogenic processing of natural gas into Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG).**

- **Cryogenics & Healthcare:** The most critical use of helium is as a cooling agent for Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) machines.
- **Liquid helium** cools the superconducting magnets in MRIs to temperatures near absolute zero, allowing them to conduct electricity without resistance and create the strong magnetic fields needed for internal imaging.
- **Aerospace & Rocketry:** Helium is vital for space exploration and satellite launches.
- **Pressurizing Fuel Tanks:** In liquid-fueled rockets, helium is used to fill the ullage space (the empty space in fuel tanks). As fuel is consumed, helium maintains the pressure to ensure a steady flow to the engines.
- **High-Tech Manufacturing:** Helium plays a "behind-the-scenes" role in the gadgets we use daily.
- **Semiconductors:** It provides an inert atmosphere and rapid cooling during the manufacturing of computer chips.
- **Fiber Optics:** It is used as a cooling medium during the high-speed drawing of glass fibers used for global internet cables.

- **The USA, Qatar, and Algeria are the leading producers of Helium. The West Asia crisis has severely impacted global supply, particularly due to disruptions in Qatar, which contributes around 34% of global helium exports.**
- **Damage and operational issues at the Ras Laffan complex (Qatar) significantly reduced export capacity.**
- **Helium's "use-it-or-lose-it" volatility makes long-term storage difficult, meaning global buffer reserves are naturally low and highly sensitive to supply shocks.**

- **India is 100% import-dependent on helium, with an estimated demand of 3.4 million cubic meters in 2025.**
- **Since over 50% of India's helium imports come from Qatar, such disruptions have immediate and serious consequences.**
- **The country maintains only 7–10 days of inventory, making it highly vulnerable to supply shocks.**
- **Although traces of helium are present in natural gas fields in West Bengal and Jharkhand, their concentrations remain below the 0.2% threshold required for economic extraction.**
- **Consequently, commercial viability is still estimated to be at least 5–10 years away, according to S&P Global Energy.**

- “In an age of information abundance, wisdom remains scarce.” Examine.
- सूचना की प्रचुरता के युग में भी बुद्धिमत्ता दुर्लभ बनी हुई है।” विश्लेषण कीजिए।
- “Not all change leads to progress, but all progress requires change.” Examine.
- “हर परिवर्तन प्रगति नहीं लाता, परंतु हर प्रगति के लिए परिवर्तन आवश्यक है।” परीक्षण कीजिए।
- “Peace is not merely the absence of conflict, but the presence of justice.” Discuss.
- “शांति केवल संघर्ष की अनुपस्थिति नहीं, बल्कि न्याय की उपस्थिति है।” चर्चा कीजिए।

Thank You!

