



LOGJAM ENDS, PARLIAMENT TO DEBATE CONSTITUTION

POLITICS & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The Indian Parliament, after a prolonged deadlock over contentious issues such as the Adani indictment and regional violence, reached a breakthrough with an agreement to debate the Constitution, marking a step toward restoring parliamentary functionality during the Winter Session. However, disputes persist as the ruling party limits the scope of discussions, prompting continued protests by the Opposition outside Parliament.



Key Agreement: Constitution Debate Scheduled

The Lok Sabha will discuss the Constitution on December 13 and 14, while the Rajya Sabha will follow on December 16 and 17. This consensus emerged during a meeting of floor leaders, where the ruling party agreed to address specific issues during Zero Hour but declined to discuss allegations against the Adani Group.

Opposition's Stance: Protest Despite Concessions

Although the Congress has decided not to disrupt parliamentary proceedings over the Adani indictment, it announced a protest outside the Parliament complex on Tuesday. Party leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi had earlier written to legislative heads, urging discussions on key national issues.

Congress sources described the government's willingness to debate the Constitution as a "climbdown," highlighting their demand for accountability on broader issues.

Government's Position: Limited Discussions Allowed

Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju emphasized the need to ensure Parliament's functionality, stating that all parties agreed it was inappropriate to waste taxpayers' money. However, the government maintained that the Adani indictment, involving bribery charges in a U.S. court, occurred outside India and thus was not a matter for parliamentary debate.

During Zero Hour, specific concerns, including Sambhal violence, Cyclone Fengal's impact, and the situation in Bangladesh, will be raised by parties like the Samajwadi Party, DMK, and Trinamool Congress.

Parliamentary Paralysis: A Week of Stalemate

The Winter Session, which commenced on November 25, had been virtually non-functional, with the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha operating for only 67 and 93 minutes, respectively. Disruptions over issues like the Adani row, Sambhal violence, and the Manipur conflict continued to paralyze proceedings.

Opposition Divisions and Strategic Shifts

The Congress faced criticism from some Opposition allies, who felt prolonged disruptions played into the government's hands by sidelining people-centric issues. The Trinamool Congress, which had refrained from INDIA bloc meetings, expressed discomfort with the stalemates.

Monday's Proceedings: Tensions Persist

Both Houses witnessed repeated disruptions:

- Lok Sabha: Opposition members raised slogans about the Adani indictment and Sambhal violence. Despite Speaker Om Birla's appeals, proceedings were adjourned multiple times. The Coastal Shipping Bill, 2024, was introduced amidst the chaos.

- Rajya Sabha: Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar rejected 20 notices under Rule 267, including eight seeking discussion on Adani-related bribery allegations. He urged members to respect decorum, quoting Murphy's Law to criticize the stalemates.

Looking Ahead: Functionality Restored?

The first bill of the session is set to be passed on Tuesday, signaling a return to legislative business. The government's readiness to discuss constitutional issues is seen as a step toward normalcy, though unresolved disputes and external protests suggest ongoing tensions.

This resolution underscores the delicate balance between maintaining parliamentary decorum and addressing pressing national concerns.

PUTIN TO VISIT INDIA EARLY NEXT YEAR FOR SUMMIT WITH MODI

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: India and Russia are deepening their diplomatic ties, with a planned summit between Prime Ministers Modi and Putin early next year.



INDIA AND RUSSIA STRENGTHEN TIES AMIDST GLOBAL TENSIONS

In a significant development signaling closer diplomatic ties between India and Russia, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has extended an invitation to Russian President Vladimir Putin for a bilateral summit early next year. This would be Putin's first visit to India since the onset of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in February 2022.

Diplomatic Overtures and Preparatory Meetings: The announcement comes on the heels of recent high-level diplomatic interactions between the two nations. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar recently met with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov for inter-governmental discussions. Additionally, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is scheduled to visit Russia this weekend, further indicating active preparations for the upcoming summit.

Annual Summit and Peace Efforts: Yury Ushakov, a key foreign policy advisor to President Putin, confirmed that the upcoming meeting will be the 23rd annual summit between the two leaders. This signifies the strong bilateral relationship and the commitment to regular high-level dialogue.

Beyond bilateral issues, the summit is expected to delve into global concerns, particularly the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. India, under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, has maintained a balanced stance on

the crisis, seeking to facilitate diplomatic efforts for a peaceful resolution.

India's Role in Global Diplomacy: In 2024, Prime Minister Modi made notable visits to both Moscow and Kyiv, engaging with both Russian President Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. This proactive diplomacy has positioned India as a potential mediator in the conflict, with External Affairs Minister Jaishankar emphasizing India's ability to bridge the gap between the two sides.

CONCLUSION: The upcoming summit between India and Russia is poised to be a significant event, shaping the trajectory of bilateral relations and India's role in global affairs.

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PROTESTERS BARGE INTO BANGLADESH MISSION IN AGARTALA, PULL DOWN FLAG

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: Tensions between India and Bangladesh escalated after a group of protesters stormed the Bangladesh Assistant High Commission in Agartala, leading to diplomatic concerns and calls for increased security.



Protesters Storm Bangladesh Mission in Agartala

A tense situation unfolded in Agartala, Tripura, on Monday as a group of protesters, primarily from the Hindu Sangharsh Samiti, stormed the Bangladesh Assistant High Commission. The protesters, fueled by concerns over alleged persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh, breached the mission's security, pulled down the Bangladeshi flag, and vandalized property.

Diplomatic Fallout and Security Concerns

The incident has sparked significant diplomatic tension between India and Bangladesh. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) expressed deep regret over the breach, assuring that steps would be taken to enhance security at all Bangladeshi diplomatic missions in India.

Bangladesh, on the other hand, has strongly condemned the attack, accusing the Indian authorities of failing to prevent the intrusion. The Bangladeshi Foreign

Ministry expressed concerns over the safety of its diplomatic personnel, citing a pre-planned nature of the attack.

Underlying Causes and Future Implications

The protest was triggered by the recent arrest of a prominent Hindu leader in Bangladesh, Chinmoy Krishna Das, and the subsequent freezing of bank accounts of several Hindu individuals. This has led to growing concerns among the Hindu community in India about the safety and well-being of their counterparts in Bangladesh.

The incident underscores the delicate nature of India-Bangladesh relations and the potential for cross-border issues to escalate. Both countries will need to engage in diplomatic dialogue to address the underlying concerns and prevent further deterioration of bilateral ties.



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NO VOTER MUST BE TURNED DOWN, SC TELLS EC OVER INCREASED VOTER LIMIT

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna, is reviewing a petition challenging the Election Commission's decision to increase the maximum number of voters per polling station from 1,200 to 1,500, with concerns raised about potential disenfranchisement and longer voting queues, especially affecting underprivileged voters. The court has sought the EC's explanation, emphasizing that no voter should be turned away.



The Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna, on Monday addressed a petition challenging the Election Commission's (EC) decision to increase the maximum number of voters per polling station from 1,200 to 1,500. Emphasizing the importance of inclusivity, CJI Khanna remarked, **"No voter should be turned down."**

Concerns Over Disenfranchisement

The petition, filed by activist Indu Prakash Singh and represented by senior advocate A.M. Singhvi and advocates Talha Abdul Rahman and Shadan Farasat, argued that the decision could lead to disenfranchisement, particularly among marginalized communities. It alleged that the move

disproportionately affects daily wagers and other underprivileged groups by creating longer queues and extended waiting times at polling stations.

"The Constitution works for the teeming millions," the petition stated, urging the court to intervene immediately due to upcoming elections in Delhi and Bihar. It further pointed out that the Representation of People Act, 1951, obligates the EC to ensure a sufficient number of polling stations for each constituency.

EC's Rationale Questioned

The petition highlighted that the August 7, 2024, decision appeared aimed at reducing election costs rather than increasing accessibility. It noted the lack of updated Census data since 2011 to justify the change.

Chief Justice Khanna questioned the rationale behind the decision, particularly why the maximum voter limit was pushed to a uniform 1,500 voters across rural and urban areas, a change from the earlier caps of 1,200 and 1,400, respectively.

Election Commission Defends Decision

Responding to the court's concerns, senior advocate Maninder Singh, representing the EC, explained that the 1,500-voter limit had been in place since 2015. He cited advancements in electoral technology and the absence of complaints about the arrangement. "People have not complained. There is no problem about franchise," Singh argued.

Supreme Court Seeks Explanation

Acknowledging the petition's argument that the increase could undermine the principles of free and fair elections, the court directed the EC to file an affidavit within three weeks explaining its decision.

The court stressed that elections must be inclusive and accessible, ensuring equal participation by all voters.

"If you invest more in your education, then you are likely to get more interest in it."

—Benjamin Franklin

DEALS FOR 26 RAFALE-M JETS, 3 SCORPENE SUBMARINES TO BE SIGNED: NAVY CHIEF

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: India is advancing its naval capabilities with plans to finalize multi-billion dollar deals for Rafale-M jets and Scorpene submarines, while showcasing progress in its strategic nuclear program with successful missile tests from its second nuclear ballistic missile submarine, INS Arighaat.

Boost for Indian Navy

Navy chief Admiral Dinesh Tripathi on Monday said that India is likely to ink two deals with France in January for Rafale-M fighter jets and Scorpene-class submarines

Rafale-M jets

The navy chief said that the deal for 26 Rafale-M jets, worth around ₹50,000 crore, was at an "advanced stage". The fighter jets will be deployed on INS Vikrant

More ships, submarines in the pipeline

Tripathi said the Centre has approved the construction of two nuclear-powered submarines, with plans to deploy six of them in the Indo-Pacific. The defence ministry has accorded acceptance of necessity (AoN) for 31 ships and submarines

Underwater capabilities

India is in talks with France to build three Scorpene-class submarines at Mazagon Dock. The navy will soon commission Vagsheer, its sixth Kalvari-class submarine

"Many Pakistan Navy warships and submarines are being built with Chinese support showing that China is interested in making Pakistan's Navy stronger"

— ADMIRAL DK TRIPATHI, Navy chief



Key Highlights from the Navy Chief's Remarks

Progress on Rafale-M Jets and Scorpene Submarines Deals

- Two major defense procurement deals with France are in advanced stages:
 - 26 Rafale-M Fighter Jets:
- Final clearance pending from the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS).
- The deal is a government-to-government agreement, expected to be signed soon after CCS approval.
 - Three Additional Scorpene Submarines:
- This is a repeat order with Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd. (MDL) in collaboration with France's Naval Group.
- Five out of six submarines from the earlier contract have been inducted, with the sixth set for commissioning later this month.
- Both deals are anticipated to be finalized by next month.

Advancements in Strategic Nuclear Capabilities

- INS Arighaat:
 - Successfully launched a Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM) during trials.
 - The missile test, involving the K4 SLBM with a 3,500-km range, was confirmed as successful, and trajectory data is

under review.

- Recently commissioned and undergoing further trials.
- INS Arihant:
 - Has completed several deterrence patrols, marking its operational role in India's strategic deterrence capabilities.

Development of Indigenous Nuclear Attack Submarines (SSN)

- The first indigenously designed and manufactured nuclear attack submarine is expected to be operational by 2036-37, highlighting India's commitment to expanding its naval strength.

Navy's Vision

- These developments align with India's efforts to enhance its maritime security, boost defense collaboration with global partners, and advance its indigenous defense manufacturing capabilities.

DELHI CURBS WILL BE EASED ONLY AFTER FALL IN AIR POLLUTION: SC

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The Supreme Court is grappling with balancing the need to curb severe air pollution in Delhi with the socio-economic implications of stringent measures like GRAP-IV, while also addressing safety concerns for its officials tasked with monitoring pollution levels.

Balancing Environmental Concerns and Economic Realities

The Supreme Court of India is currently navigating a delicate balance between addressing Delhi's severe air pollution and the socio-economic implications of stringent measures. The court is particularly concerned about the impact of Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) Stage 4, a set of emergency measures implemented to curb pollution during severe episodes.



What is GRAP Stage 4?

GRAP Stage 4 is a series of stringent measures, including restrictions on construction activities, industrial operations, and vehicle movement, implemented when air quality reaches hazardous levels. While effectively reducing pollution, these measures can have significant economic consequences, particularly for marginalized communities and daily wage earners.

Challenges Faced by Court Commissioners

The court has also expressed deep concern over the safety of its Court Commissioners, young lawyers tasked with monitoring compliance with GRAP measures at Delhi's border entry points. These Commissioners have faced threats and intimidation from individuals involved in polluting activities. The court has emphasized the

importance of their work in ensuring public health and safety.

Who are Court Commissioners and Why are They Appointed?

Court Commissioners are individuals appointed by the court to oversee the implementation of its orders and judgments. In this case, they are tasked with monitoring compliance with GRAP measures to ensure that authorities are taking necessary steps to reduce pollution.

Legal and Constitutional Basis of Appointment

The Supreme Court's power to appoint Court Commissioners derives from its inherent powers under Article 142 of the Indian Constitution. This article empowers the court to pass such orders as may be necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it. In this case, the court has exercised its power to appoint Commissioners to assist in the enforcement of its orders related to air pollution control.

OXFORD STUDY LAUDS PRAGATI SYSTEM FOR FAST-TRACKING PROJECTS

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The Oxford University study highlights the transformative impact of Prime Minister Modi's PRAGATI system, emphasizing its role in accelerating infrastructure projects, fostering inter-governmental collaboration, and contributing to India's economic growth and social development.



PRAGATI: A CATALYST FOR INDIA'S INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT Oxford Study Lauds PM Modi's Initiative

A recent study conducted by Oxford University's Saïd Business School has hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation) initiative as a game-changer in India's infrastructure development. The system, launched in 2015, has been instrumental in accelerating over 340 projects worth a staggering \$205 billion.

Overcoming Bureaucratic Hurdles

The study, titled "From Gridlock to Growth: How Leadership Enables India's PRAGATI Ecosystem to

Power Progress," highlights PRAGATI's role in breaking down bureaucratic barriers. By bringing together key stakeholders from central and state governments onto a single platform, the system has streamlined decision-making processes and expedited project clearances.

Economic and Social Impact

The economic benefits of PRAGATI are substantial. According to the Reserve Bank of India and the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, every rupee invested in infrastructure yields a return of ₹2.5 to ₹3.5 in GDP. By accelerating projects in sectors like roads, railways, water, and electricity, PRAGATI has directly improved the lives of millions of Indians. A Sustainable Approach

The study also emphasizes the initiative's commitment to sustainability. PRAGATI has facilitated faster environmental clearances and promoted the adoption of green technologies, ensuring that India's development is both inclusive and environmentally friendly.

A Model for Effective Governance

PRAGATI serves as a model for effective governance, demonstrating the power of technology and strong leadership in driving positive change. By fostering a culture of accountability and efficiency, the initiative has positioned India as a global leader in infrastructure development.

WHEN A DNA ANALYSIS REVEALS A CLOSELY GUARDED FAMILY SECRET

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY



THE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF DNA TESTING

The Case of the Levirate Marriage

- **A Family Secret Revealed:** A DNA analysis conducted for an organ transplant inadvertently exposed a closely guarded family secret: a levirate marriage.
- **The Power of DNA:** DNA, a powerful tool for scientific inquiry, can also uncover hidden truths, sometimes with unintended consequences. In this case, it revealed a practice that, while once common, is now often considered taboo.
- **The Limits of Privacy:** The incident raises questions about the limits of genetic

privacy and the ethical implications of DNA testing, particularly in contexts where the results could have significant social and emotional consequences.

Understanding DNA Profiles

- **The Basics of Genetics:** Every individual inherits genetic material from their parents, which is organized into chromosomes.
- **Unique DNA Sequences:** Specific DNA sequences, known as Short Tandem Repeats (STRs), vary between individuals.
- **DNA Profiling:** By analyzing the number of repeats at multiple STR loci, scientists can create a unique DNA profile for each individual.

The Implications of Levirate Marriages

- **Cultural and Historical Context:** Levirate marriage, a practice where a widow marries her deceased husband's brother, was once common in many cultures, including ancient India.
- **The Role of Patriarchy:** This practice was often driven by patriarchal norms that emphasized the importance of male lineage and the continuation of family lines.
- **The Shift Towards Biological Kinship:** The increasing emphasis on biological kinship and genetic inheritance has challenged traditional practices like levirate marriage.

The Future of Genetic Privacy

- **Ethical Considerations:** As DNA technology continues to advance, it is crucial to consider the ethical implications of genetic testing and the potential for unintended consequences.
- **Legal Framework:** There is a need for robust legal frameworks to protect genetic privacy and ensure that DNA information is used responsibly.
- **Balancing Scientific Advancements and Ethical Concerns:** Striking a balance between scientific progress and ethical considerations is essential to harness the power of DNA technology for the benefit of society.

A WAKE-UP CALL

ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

Policymakers must not make light of underwhelming growth numbers

CONTEXT: India's recent economic slowdown has increased the challenges faced by policymakers. The government must address the issue of declining urban demand and rising inflation through a combination of fiscal and monetary measures to revive economic growth.

India's Economic Growth Stumbles

A Sharp Decline in Economic Momentum

- **Unexpected Slowdown:** The Indian economy experienced a significant downturn in the July-September quarter, with GDP growth falling to 5.4%.
- **Missed Expectations:** This figure was significantly lower than the 6.5% growth predicted by most economists and the 7% target set by the Reserve Bank of India.
- **Urban Demand Weakness:** The slowdown was primarily driven by weakening urban demand, reflected in declining GST revenue growth and sluggish consumer spending.

Policy Challenges Ahead

- **Balancing Growth and Inflation:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) faces a difficult task of balancing the need to stimulate growth with the need to control inflation.
- **Conflicting Policy Calls:** While some policymakers advocate for interest rate cuts to boost growth, others prioritize maintaining price stability.
- **Fiscal Policy Considerations:** The government may need to consider fiscal measures, such as tax cuts and increased public spending, to revive demand and support economic growth.

The Road Ahead

- **Addressing Urban Demand:** The government must address the underlying factors affecting urban consumption, including stagnant wages and rising prices.
- **Reviving Rural Demand:** While rural demand is expected to improve, sustained economic growth will require a revival of urban consumption.

- **A Balanced Approach:** A balanced approach combining monetary and fiscal measures is essential to navigate the current economic challenges and ensure a sustainable recovery.

NEW CRIMES, OLD TOOLS

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Fraudsters thrive when they do not fear prosecution; they must be put on notice

CONTEXT: The growing threat of cybercrime in India highlights the urgent need for effective law enforcement and public awareness campaigns to protect citizens from falling victim to these sophisticated scams.

The Looming Threat of Cybercrime in India

The Rise of Digital Fraud

- **Sophisticated Techniques:** Cybercriminals are increasingly employing sophisticated techniques to exploit vulnerabilities in telecom infrastructure and deceive unsuspecting victims.
- **Collusion with Local Authorities:** A disturbing trend is the collusion between cybercriminals and local law enforcement, enabling them to operate with impunity.
- **Far-Reaching Consequences:** The financial and emotional toll of cybercrime is immense, with victims losing significant sums of money and suffering irreparable damage to their reputation.

Combating Cybercrime: A Multi-faceted Approach

- **Aggressive Prosecution:** Strict enforcement of cybercrime laws and stringent punishment for offenders are crucial to deterring potential criminals.
- **Public Awareness:** Educating the public about the latest cyber threats and preventive measures is essential to safeguard individuals and businesses.
- **Technological Advancements:** Leveraging advanced technology to detect and prevent cyberattacks is vital in the fight against cybercrime.
- **International Cooperation:** Collaborating with international law enforcement agencies to track down and apprehend cybercriminals operating across borders is crucial.

The Menace of Deepfakes

- **Non-Consensual Deepfakes:** The misuse of AI-powered deepfake technology to create non-consensual intimate imagery poses a serious threat to individuals' privacy and reputation.
- **The Need for Legal Frameworks:** Strong legal frameworks are required to address the challenges posed by deepfakes and hold perpetrators accountable.
- **Technological Solutions:** Developing advanced tools to detect and mitigate the impact of deepfakes is essential.

By adopting a comprehensive approach that combines technological solutions, legal frameworks, and public awareness campaigns, India can effectively combat cybercrime and protect its citizens from the growing threat of digital fraud and deepfakes.

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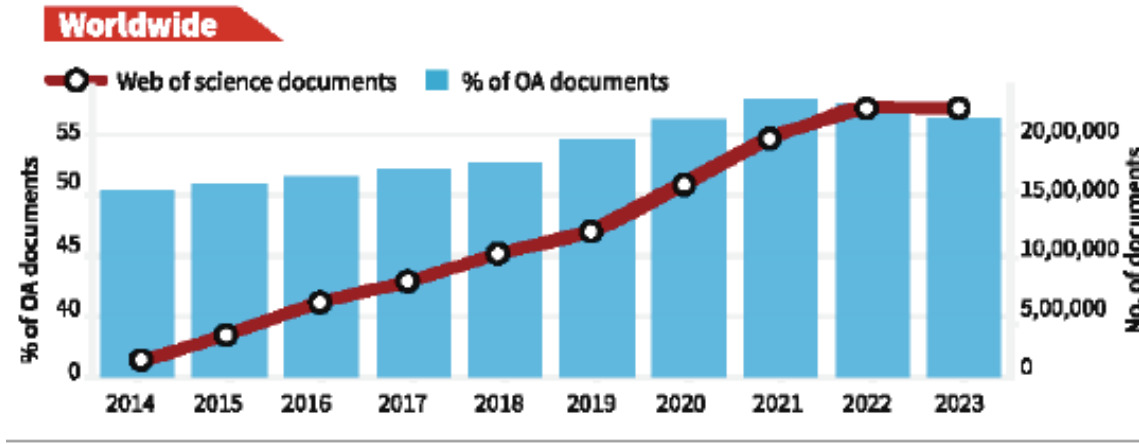
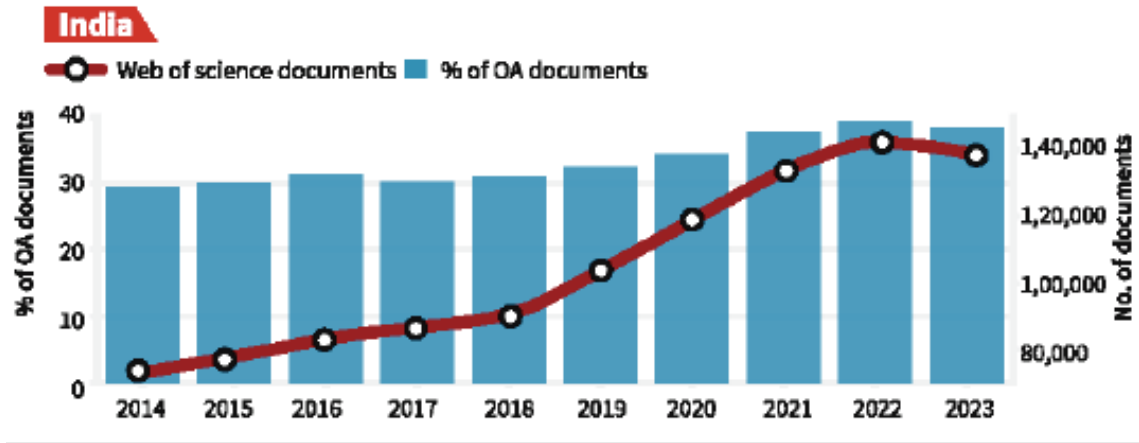
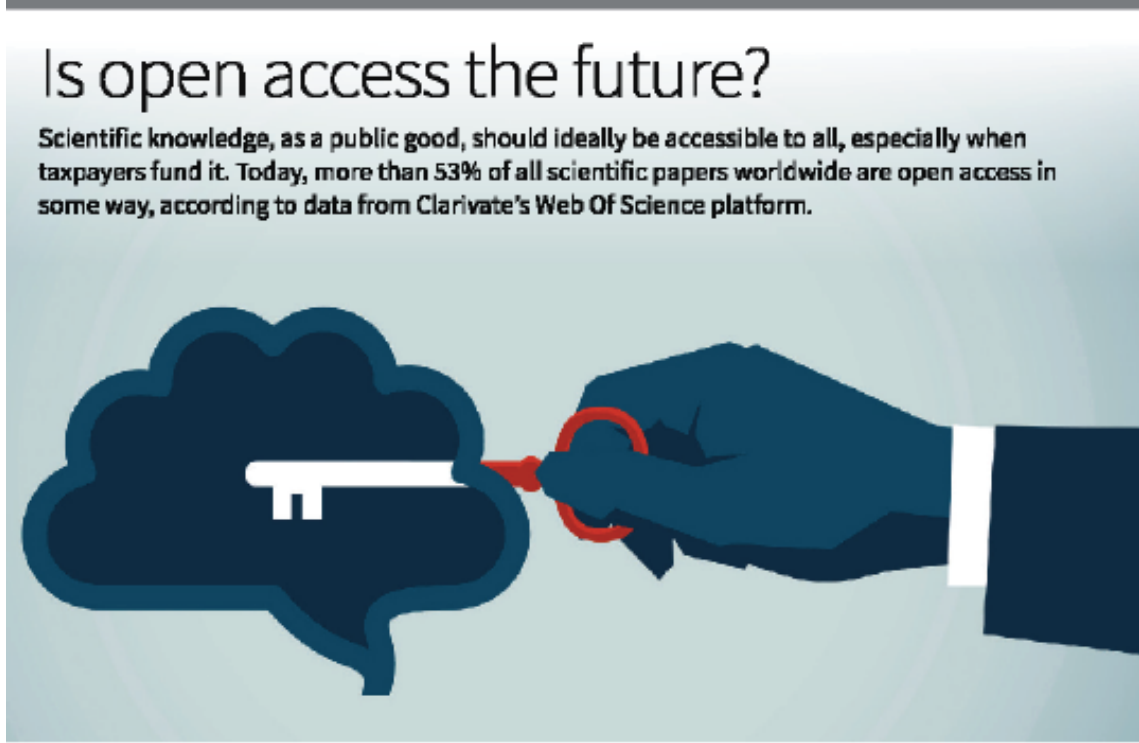


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INDIA'S 'ONE NATION, ONE SUBSCRIPTION' PLAN

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: India's 'One Nation, One Subscription' (ONOS) scheme, some argue that it is an outdated approach to scholarly publishing and fails to address the fundamental issues of access, copyright, and self-reliance in the face of a global shift towards open access.



Source: Web of Science* The data only covers science, technology, engineering, and mathematics papers.

Understanding the ONOS Scheme

- Aim: To provide equitable access to scholarly journals for all public institutions in India.
- Funding: A significant allocation of ₹6,000 crore over three years to pay for subscriptions to major international publishers.

The Global Shift Towards Open Access

- Open Access (OA): A publishing model where research articles are freely available to the public.
- Gold OA: A type of OA where authors pay an article processing charge (APC) to the publisher.
- Increasing Trend: The global research community is increasingly adopting OA models.

The Limitations of ONOS

- Outdated Approach: ONOS relies on a traditional subscription model, which is becoming less relevant in the era of open access.
- High Costs: The scheme involves significant expenditure on subscriptions, potentially draining public funds.
- Neglecting Copyright Issues: ONOS fails to address the issue of copyright ownership and the need for researchers to retain control over their work.
- Limited Impact on Self-Reliance: The scheme does not prioritize building a strong domestic publishing ecosystem.

A More Sustainable Path

- Embrace Open Access: India should actively promote open access publishing, encouraging researchers to self-archive their work in institutional repositories.
- Support Indigenous Publishing: Invest in developing high-quality Indian journals and promoting them on the global stage.
- Advocate for Fair Licensing: Negotiate fair licensing deals with publishers to reduce costs and ensure equitable access.
- Promote Data Sharing and Preprints: Encourage data sharing and the use of preprint servers to accelerate scientific discovery.

By adopting these strategies, India can foster a more equitable, efficient, and sustainable scholarly publishing ecosystem.

GOVT. SCRAPS WINDFALL TAX ON DOMESTIC CRUDE OIL, EXPORT OF FUELS

ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

CONTEXT: The Indian government has withdrawn the windfall profit tax on domestic crude oil and fuel exports, a move aimed at reducing the financial burden on domestic producers and exporters amid declining global oil prices.

India scraps windfall profit tax on fuel exports

Understanding Windfall Profit and Windfall Tax

- Windfall Profit: An unexpected and sudden gain in profits, often due to external factors like a sudden surge in commodity prices.
- Windfall Tax: A tax levied by a government on unexpected profits made by certain sectors, particularly during periods of economic boom or crisis.

India's Windfall Profit Tax

- Imposition: The Indian government first imposed a windfall profit tax on domestic crude oil production and fuel exports in July 2022.
- Rationale: The tax was implemented to capitalize on the surge in global oil prices and reduce the burden on consumers.
- Revenue Generation: The government collected significant revenue through this tax, particularly in the initial years.

Reasons for the Scrapping

- Declining Oil Prices: The recent decline in international oil prices has reduced the need for a windfall profit tax.
- Easing the Burden: Removing the tax aims to reduce the financial burden on domestic oil producers and exporters.

By rescinding the windfall profit tax, the Indian government aims to provide relief to the energy sector and potentially stimulate economic growth.

PANEL PREPARING NEW BASE YEAR FOR NATIONAL ACCOUNTS: MINISTER

ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

CONTEXT: The Indian government is taking steps to update the base year for calculating GDP from 2011-12 to 2022-23.

What is a Base Year?

- A base year is a specific year used as a reference point for economic calculations.
- It serves as a benchmark to measure economic growth and other economic indicators over time.

Why Change the Base Year?

- **Economic Changes:** The Indian economy has undergone significant structural changes since 2011-12, including shifts in consumption patterns, technological advancements, and new economic activities.
- **Data Accuracy:** Updating the base year helps to incorporate these changes and ensure more accurate and relevant economic data.
- **International Comparisons:** A more recent base year aligns India's economic data with international standards and facilitates better comparisons with other countries.

The Process of Updating the Base Year

- **Expert Committee:** A committee comprising experts from the Reserve Bank of India, central and state governments, and academia has been formed.
- **Data Source Identification:** The committee will identify new data sources to capture the evolving economic landscape.
- **Methodology Review:** The committee will review and refine the methodology used to calculate GDP and other economic indicators.

By updating the base year, India aims to improve the accuracy and reliability of its economic data, enabling better policymaking and economic planning.

GLOBAL PUSH FOR COOPERATION AS SPACE TRAFFIC CROWDS EARTH ORBIT

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

CONTEXT: The increasing congestion in low Earth orbit due to satellite launches and debris poses a significant threat to space sustainability. To address this issue, international cooperation is crucial to establish a global framework for space traffic management and ensure the long-term viability of space activities.



THE GROWING THREAT OF SPACE JUNK

The Problem of Space Debris

- **Increasing Congestion:** Low Earth Orbit (LEO) is becoming increasingly congested with active satellites and debris.
- **Collision Risk:** The risk of collisions between satellites and debris is rising, which can lead to further fragmentation and exacerbate the problem.
- **Impact on Space Operations:** Space debris can damage or destroy operational satellites, hindering critical services like communication, navigation, and weather forecasting.

The Need for International Cooperation

- **Shared Responsibility:** International cooperation is

essential to address the growing problem of space debris.

- **Data Sharing:** Countries and companies need to share data on satellite orbits and debris to prevent collisions.
- **Global Standards:** Developing and enforcing international standards for responsible space activities is crucial.

Challenges to Cooperation

- **Geopolitical Tensions:** Geopolitical tensions and mistrust between nations can hinder cooperation.
- **Commercial Interests:** Commercial space companies may be reluctant to share sensitive data.
- **Technical Challenges:** Tracking and monitoring space debris requires advanced technology and international coordination.

Potential Solutions

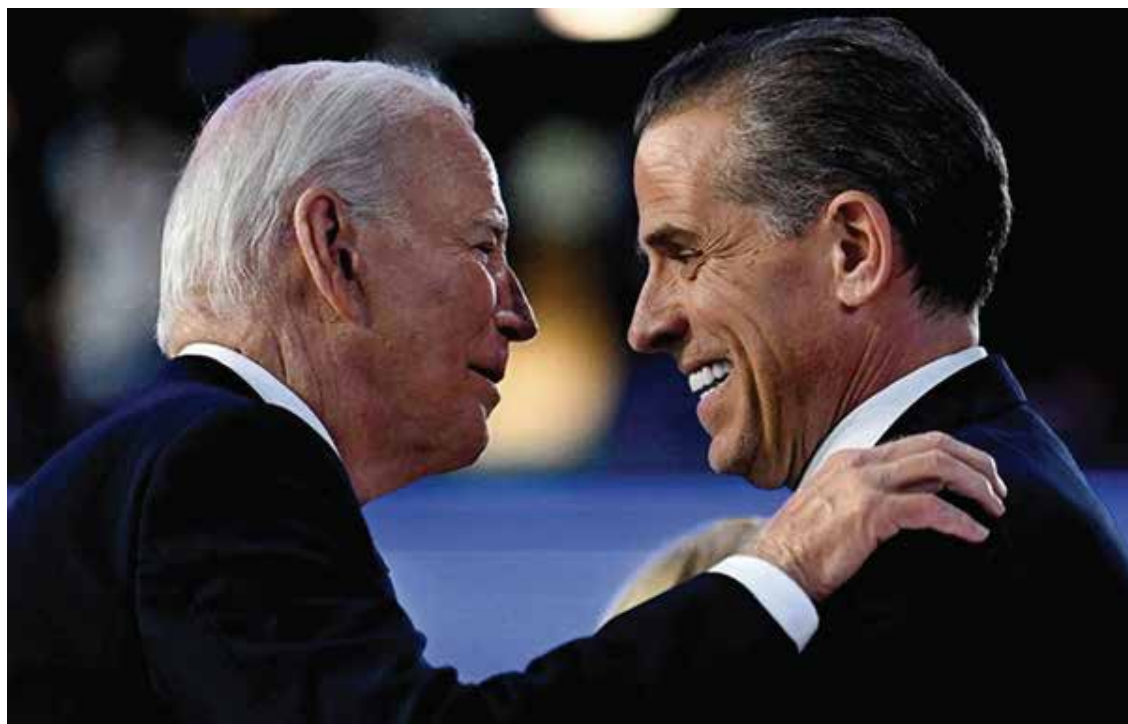
- **Active Debris Removal:** Developing technologies to remove large pieces of debris from orbit.
- **Passive Debris Removal:** Designing satellites with features that reduce debris generation and promote natural decay.
- **International Agreements:** Establishing international treaties and agreements to regulate space activities and promote responsible behavior.

By addressing these challenges and implementing effective solutions, the international community can ensure the long-term sustainability of space activities and mitigate the risks posed by space debris.

BIDEN PARDONS SON HUNTER DESPITE PAST PLEDGES NOT TO

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: U.S. President Joe Biden pardoned his son, Hunter Biden, for federal gun and tax convictions, reversing earlier commitments not to use presidential powers for family matters. The comprehensive pardon, addressing potential offenses from 2014 to 2024, comes shortly before Hunter's sentencing, amidst debates over justice and political influence.



President Biden Pardons Hunter Biden

- **Key Action:** U.S. President Joe Biden issued a pardon for his son, Hunter Biden, covering federal felony gun and tax convictions.
- **Past Commitment:** The decision reverses earlier promises by the President not to use the powers of his office to benefit his family.
- **Scope of Pardon:** The pardon extends to any offenses Hunter Biden may have committed between January 1, 2014, and December 1, 2024.

Timeline of Events

- **Legal Challenges:** Hunter Biden faced convictions in gun and tax

cases, with a trial conviction in a gun case and a guilty plea on tax charges.

- **Public Disclosure:** Hunter Biden publicly acknowledged being under federal investigation in December 2020.
- **Impending Sentencing:** The pardon comes just weeks before Hunter was set to receive punishment for these convictions.

President's Justification

- **Statement:** President Biden cited concerns about "raw politics" affecting the judicial process, claiming it led to a "miscarriage of justice."
- **Criticism and Debate:** The decision has drawn attention to the implications of using presidential powers for familial matters, especially given earlier pledges to avoid such actions.

What Is a Presidential Pardon in the United States?

Definition

A presidential pardon is the constitutional power granted to the U.S. President under Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution.

This authority allows the President to grant clemency for federal crimes, either before or after conviction.

Forms of Clemency

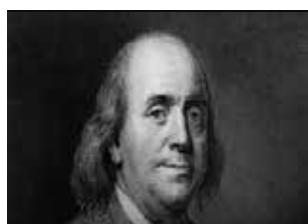
- **Full Pardon:** Completely absolves an individual of guilt and restores their civil rights, including voting and the ability to hold public office.
- **Commutation:** Reduces the severity of a sentence without nullifying the conviction.
- **Reprieve:** Delays the enforcement of a sentence, typically in death penalty cases.

Implications of a Presidential Pardon

1. Legal Impact:
 - Nullifies penalties associated with the pardoned offense.
 - Does not imply innocence; the crime remains on record unless explicitly stated otherwise.
2. Political and Ethical Considerations:
 - Pardons can be controversial when perceived as politically motivated.
 - In this case, Biden’s pardon raises questions about using executive powers for personal reasons, particularly given his earlier commitments.
3. Public Perception:
 - Pardons may lead to scrutiny of the President’s impartiality.
 - Critics argue they could undermine the judiciary’s role and the principle of equal justice under the law.
4. Limitations:
 - A presidential pardon only applies to federal offenses and does not extend to state crimes.
 - It does not erase collateral consequences in non-legal domains, such as reputational damage.

This pardon for Hunter Biden adds to debates about the balance between justice, familial loyalty, and the proper use of presidential powers in a politically polarized environment.

Feature	United States	India
Constitutional Basis	Article II, Section 2	Article 72
Scope of Authority	Federal offenses only	Union and state offenses (in certain cases)
Mechanism and Process	Sole discretion of the President	Advice of the Council of Ministers
Forms of Clemency	Pardon, Commutation, Reprieve	Pardon, Commutation, Remission, Respite, Reprieve
Key Implications	Presidential independence, potential for political controversy	Parliamentary oversight, less flexibility



“If you invest more in your education, then you are likely to get more interest in it.”

–Benjamin Franklin



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