



Indian Scientists Develop Novel Gene Therapy For Haemophilia

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

CONTEXT: Indian scientists have developed a promising new gene therapy for severe haemophilia A, offering a potential one-time cure for this debilitating condition and potentially improving treatment access for patients in India and globally.



1. Breakthrough in Haemophilia A Treatment

- **Successful Gene Therapy Trial:** Indian scientists have successfully treated severe haemophilia A using gene therapy in a small trial.
- **Significant Clinical Improvement:** Five patients in Tamil Nadu experienced no bleeding episodes for an average of 14 months after treatment, a remarkable improvement compared to the frequent bleeding episodes typical of the condition.
- **Published in Prestigious Medical Journal:** These promising results were published in the prestigious New England Journal of Medicine.

2. Addressing the Challenges of Haemophilia

- **Significant Disease Burden:** Haemophilia, particularly severe haemophilia A, significantly impacts patients' lives, requiring frequent and often costly treatments.
- **High Prevalence in India:** India has a substantial number of haemophilia patients, emphasizing the need for effective and accessible treatment options.
- **Limitations of Current Therapies:** Traditional treatments, such as frequent injections of clotting factors, can be burdensome and expensive for patients.

3. Gene Therapy: A Promising Therapeutic Approach

- **Potential for a One-Time Cure:** Gene therapy offers the potential for a one-time treatment by introducing a functional gene into the patient's body.
- **Improved Quality of Life:** By enabling the body to produce its own clotting factor, gene therapy can significantly reduce the frequency and severity of bleeding episodes, improving patients' quality of life.
- **Safer Approach:** The novel Indian approach is reported to be safer than existing gene therapies that utilize adenoviruses as vectors.

4. Challenges and Future Directions

- **Need for Larger Clinical Trials:** The current study involved a limited number of patients, necessitating larger trials to confirm long-term efficacy and safety.
- **Addressing Cost Considerations:** While potentially cost-effective in the long term, the initial cost of gene therapy can be substantial.
- **Ensuring Equitable Access:** Ensuring equitable access to this groundbreaking treatment for all patients in India and globally is crucial.

5. Global Implications

- **A Landmark Achievement in Medical Innovation:** The successful development and implementation of gene therapy for haemophilia in India demonstrates the potential for medical innovation even in resource-constrained settings.
- **Global Impact:** This research holds significant potential to improve the lives of people with haemophilia worldwide.

CONCLUSION

The successful development and initial clinical trial of a novel gene therapy for haemophilia A in India represent a significant breakthrough in the treatment of this debilitating condition. This innovative approach offers the promise of a

one-time cure, potentially transforming the lives of patients by significantly reducing the frequency and severity of bleeding episodes. While further research and larger clinical trials are necessary, this study demonstrates the potential for medical innovation in India and highlights the global impact of this promising therapeutic approach.

India Does Not Endorse Former Bangladesh Pm Sheikh Hasina's Statements, Says Misri

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: India has distanced itself from former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's critical statements about interim governments in neighbouring countries, emphasizing that its relationship with Bangladesh is grounded in people-to-people ties rather than affiliations with any specific political party. This stance was clarified by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri during discussions with a parliamentary panel and his Bangladeshi counterpart in Dhaka.



India's Stance on Former PM Sheikh Hasina's Statements

- **Non-Endorsement of Statements:** India does not endorse former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's criticism of the interim government in Bangladesh.
- **Neutrality in Political Matters:** Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri clarified that India's relationship with Bangladesh is not based on any single political party or government but focuses on the people of Bangladesh.
- **Non-Interference Policy:** India adheres to its policy of non-interference in third-country affairs and does not provide Sheikh Hasina any platform or facility for her

political activities.

Key Discussions in Dhaka

- **Meetings with Officials:** Vikram Misri met Bangladesh's Foreign Secretary Mohammad Jashim Uddin, Foreign Affairs Adviser Touhid Hossein, and Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus during his visit to Dhaka.
- **Focus on Stability:** India emphasized the need for a democratic, peaceful, stable, and inclusive Bangladesh.
- **Communication of Concerns:** Misri conveyed India's concerns about incidents of violence against minority communities and other related issues.

India-Bangladesh Bilateral Relations

- **Prioritization of People-to-People Ties:** India views its relationship with Bangladesh as one based on goodwill and mutual benefit, beyond political reciprocity.
- **Key Areas of Cooperation:** Significant progress has been made in trade, connectivity, rail links, bus services, and inland waterways. However, passenger rail services remain suspended.

Incidents and Violence in Bangladesh

- **Arrests Related to Violence:** Misri welcomed reports that Bangladesh authorities had arrested 88 individuals involved in violence against minority communities.
- **Acknowledgment of Incidents:** India urged Bangladesh to acknowledge credible reports of attacks on minority groups, temples, and cultural centers.
- **Credibility of Reports:** Misri dismissed attempts to downplay incidents as media exaggeration, citing documentation by reliable organizations.

Concerns Raised During Briefing

- **Terrorism and Anti-India Rhetoric:** India expressed concern over the release of convicted terrorists who engage in anti-India rhetoric.
- **Disinformation Campaigns:** Bangladesh raised concerns about disinformation in the Indian press regarding its internal matters.
- **ISKCON Monks Arrests:** Parliamentary committee members raised the issue of ISKCON monks' arrests in

Bangladesh, but Misri provided no specific reply.

Visa Issuance and Cultural Ties

- **Largest Visa Issuance:** In 2023, India issued 1.6 million visas to visitors from Bangladesh, more than to any other country.
- **Cultural Cooperation:** India remains committed to fostering cultural and people-to-people exchanges with Bangladesh.

Response from Bangladesh Interim Government

- **Acknowledgment of Arrests:** Following India's concerns, the Chief Adviser's press secretary announced arrests related to attacks on minority groups.
- **Justifications Rejected:** Misri refuted attempts to justify attacks as targeting activists of the Awami League, calling such explanations unacceptable.

Treaty Discussions

- **No Treaty Review Talks:** Misri confirmed that the review of bilateral treaties was not discussed during his meetings in Dhaka.

CONCLUSION

India's approach to its relationship with Bangladesh remains rooted in mutual respect, people-to-people ties, and non-interference in internal matters. By addressing key concerns and emphasizing cooperation, India seeks to foster a stable, inclusive, and democratic Bangladesh while strengthening bilateral ties across trade, connectivity, and cultural exchanges for mutual benefit.

Will Go To 'Any Extent Possible' To Eradicate Manual Scavenging: SC

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The Supreme Court has reiterated its commitment to eradicating manual scavenging in India, vowing to take stringent action against authorities failing to implement measures to eliminate this inhumane practice.



1. Supreme Court Vows to Eradicate Manual Scavenging

- **Strong Condemnation:** The Supreme Court has strongly condemned the continued practice of manual scavenging in India, deeming it a violation of human dignity.
- **"Any Extent Possible":** The Court has vowed to take "any extent possible" to ensure the complete eradication of manual scavenging and hazardous manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks.
- **Focus on Enforcement:** The Court has emphasized the need for strict enforcement of its previous judgment (October 20, 2023) which directed the Union and State governments to take

measures to eliminate this practice.

2. Concerns over Continued Prevalence of Manual Scavenging

- **Continued Occurrence of Sewer Deaths:** The Court noted that despite the 2013 Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, sewer deaths continue to occur, highlighting the continued prevalence of this inhumane practice.
- **Lack of State Action:** The Court expressed disappointment over the lack of significant progress made by States in implementing the directives outlined in its previous judgment.
- **Continued Reliance on Manual Labor:** The Court questioned the effectiveness of the government's National Action for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) scheme, given the continued occurrence of sewer deaths.

3. Court's Call for Action

- **Meeting with States:** The Court directed the Social Justice Ministry to meet with all States within two weeks to formulate a comprehensive action plan for the implementation of its previous judgment.
- **Warning of Contempt Action:** The Court warned the government of potential contempt action if significant progress is

- not made in eradicating manual scavenging.

CONCLUSION

The Supreme Court's strong stance against manual scavenging underscores the urgent need to address this critical issue. The Court's directive to the government to develop and implement a comprehensive action plan within a strict timeline is a crucial step towards ensuring the complete eradication of this inhumane practice and upholding the fundamental right to dignity for all citizens.

Opposition Plans Motion To Impeach Uttar Pradesh Judge

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The Opposition is initiating an impeachment motion against Allahabad High Court judge Shekhar Kumar Yadav, citing his controversial remarks, with efforts led by Kapil Sibal to gather the required MP endorsements in both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha for the motion's consideration.



Key Developments

- **Controversial Statements:** The impeachment motion is being initiated against Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav for his remarks at a recent Vishwa Hindu Parishad event.
- **Initiative by Kapil Sibal:** Independent MP and senior lawyer Kapil Sibal is leading the effort to submit notices to both Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

Requirements for Impeachment Motion

- **Endorsements Needed:**
 - Rajya Sabha: 50 MP endorsements are required for consideration by the Chairman.

Lok Sabha: 100 MP endorsements are necessary for the motion to be admitted in the Lok Sabha.

- **Current Status:**
 - Approximately 40 signatures have been secured in the Rajya Sabha.
 - Over 100 MPs in the Lok Sabha have shown willingness to sign the notice.

Procedure for Impeachment

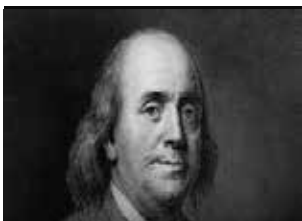
- **Investigation Committee Formation:** If the notices are accepted, a three-member committee will be formed, consisting of:
 - The Chief Justice or another Supreme Court judge.
 - The Chief Justice of a High Court.
 - A distinguished jurist.
- **Joint Admission Requirement:**
 - If notices are submitted on the same day in both Houses, the committee will be formed jointly by the Speaker and the Chairman.
 - If submitted on different dates, the notice given later will be rejected.

Historical Context

- Parliament has previously considered five impeachment notices, including one against Justice Soumitra Sen, showcasing the rarity and significance of such proceedings.

CONCLUSION

The Opposition's move to impeach Justice Yadav highlights its disapproval of his controversial statements and underscores the structured parliamentary process required to uphold judicial accountability.



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

—Benjamin Franklin

Amid Din, Lok Sabha Clears Railways Bill To Enhance Independence Of Board

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The Lok Sabha passed the Railways (Amendment) Bill, 2024, aiming to enhance the independence of the Railway Board, streamline operations, and facilitate private sector participation in the Indian Railways.



1. Railways (Amendment) Bill 2024 Passed in Lok Sabha

- **Bill Passed Amidst Disruptions:** The Lok Sabha passed the Railways (Amendment) Bill, 2024, despite disruptions to parliamentary proceedings.
- **Key Objectives:** The Bill aims to simplify the legal framework for Indian Railways, enhance the independence of the Railway Board, and improve operational efficiency.
- **Statutory Backing for Railway Board:** The Bill provides statutory backing to the Railway Board, which has previously operated without formal legal sanction.

2. Enhancing Railway Board's Functioning and Independence

- **Government Authority over Board Composition:** The Bill grants the Union government authority to determine the composition of the Railway Board, including the number of members, their terms of service, and qualifications.
- **Decentralization of Powers:** The Bill aims to decentralize powers, granting greater autonomy to railway zones, a long-standing demand supported by various committees.
- **Establishment of Independent Regulator:** The Bill proposes the establishment of an independent regulator to oversee tariffs, safety, and private sector participation in the railways.

3. Expected Benefits of the Amendment

- **Streamlined Approvals:** The amendment is expected to speed up the approval process for train services, addressing pending demands from various regions.
- **Faster Infrastructure Development:** The Bill will facilitate faster infrastructure development and the introduction of superfast train operations, benefiting regions like Bihar.
- **Modernization of Railway Operations:** By simplifying the legal framework and enhancing the Railway Board's independence, the Bill aims to modernize railway operations in India.

Conclusion

The passage of the Railways (Amendment) Bill, 2024, marks a significant step towards modernizing the Indian Railways. By enhancing the independence of the Railway Board, streamlining operations, and facilitating private sector participation, the Bill aims to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of India's railway network. While challenges remain, this legislation holds the potential to transform the Indian Railways into a more efficient, passenger-friendly, and commercially viable entity.

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Recent Killings In Bastar Raise Concern Amid Security Gains

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The recent killings of five civilians, allegedly by Maoists in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, underscore emerging vulnerabilities in conflict-hit Bastar, even as intensified anti-Maoist operations have led to record casualties among insurgents, highlighting both security gains and persistent challenges for local communities.



EMERGING VULNERABILITIES IN CONFLICT-HIT BASTAR

Targeted Killings:

- Five civilians were killed allegedly by Maoists in the past week in Bijapur district, Chhattisgarh.
- Victims include a BJP worker, two former sarpanches, a woman anganwadi assistant, and another woman, all accused of being police informers.
- Murders were reportedly carried out by militia cadres in plainclothes.

High-Profile Incident: BJP Worker Kudiam Mado

- Kudiam Mado, 35, was dragged from his home in Somanpalli village and strangled to death.

- Maoists claimed responsibility through a pamphlet, alleging Mado was a police informer.

Pattern of Violence and Police Actions

- Identified Perpetrators: Police have identified militia members involved in at least four cases.
- Wider Trend: Of the 68 civilian deaths attributed to Maoists in 2023, nearly half (32) occurred in Bijapur.

Possible Triggers for Violence

- Historically, spikes in killings have occurred around panchayat elections and other significant events.
- Police suggest current violence is fueled by Maoist frustration over intensified anti-Maoist operations.

Security Operations and Maoist Casualties

- 207 Maoists have been killed in 2023, the highest number since 2001.
- Anti-Maoist operations have particularly targeted the Gangloor area of Bijapur, a key Maoist recruitment base.

CONCLUSION

The surge in civilian killings in Bastar reflects a dual reality: significant security gains through intensified operations and the persistent threat to vulnerable communities. While the State's crackdown on Maoists has disrupted their operations, the violence highlights the need for strengthened protection and support for last-mile workers and residents in conflict-affected areas.

A WIDE AISLE Parliament must remain the forum for airing the views of all representatives

POLITY & GOVERNANCE T

CONTEXT: The Opposition's unprecedented no-confidence motion against Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar highlights growing tensions and a trust deficit between the Chair and Opposition members, raising concerns about partisanship and the erosion of democratic discourse in Parliament.

Trust Deficit in Rajya Sabha: Concerns Over Partisanship and Democratic Integrity

Key Points

1. Unprecedented No-Confidence Motion

- 60 Rajya Sabha Members, primarily from the Opposition, expressed a loss of confidence in Chairman Jagdeep

Dhankhar, who is also the Vice-President of India.

- A notice for his removal was submitted, marking a historic move in Indian parliamentary proceedings.
- Although unlikely to pass or face a vote, the motion reflects a deeper issue of mistrust.

2. Allegations Against the Chairman

- The Opposition accused Mr. Dhankhar of partisanship in his rulings and public statements.
- A significant trigger was his decision to allow BJP MPs to speak on an adjournment motion he had earlier rejected.
- Opposition members highlighted incidents where the Leader of the Opposition, Mallikarjun Kharge, was prevented from speaking.

3. Broader Context of Political Polarization

- The no-confidence motion comes amidst a broader BJP campaign perceived as shrinking Opposition space.
- Criticism of the government is often labeled anti-national, leading to limited dialogue between the ruling party and the Opposition.
- Institutions and individuals face targeted attacks, further deepening divisions.

4. Impact on Parliamentary Democracy

- Parliament risks becoming a platform for political hostility rather than constructive discourse.
- The government's majority ensures its agenda moves forward, but the Opposition's voice must be respected for democracy to thrive.

5. Role of the Chair in Mediation

- The Chair is expected to act as a neutral mediator during conflicts between the government and Opposition.

Perceptions of partisanship undermine the Chair's credibility and the institutional integrity of Parliament.

CONCLUSION

The trust deficit between the Rajya Sabha Chairman and Opposition members is a troubling development for Indian democracy. For Parliament to remain a forum for diverse voices and effective governance, the Chair must demonstrate impartiality and engage proactively to address grievances, ensuring the institution's sanctity and democratic values are upheld.

Chief Justices Need Longer Tenures

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The short tenures of High Court Chief Justices in India, coupled with their extensive administrative and judicial responsibilities, raise concerns about the effectiveness and sustainability of the judiciary, highlighting an urgent need for systemic reforms to ensure longer and more impactful terms.



THE NEED FOR LONGER TENURES OF CHIEF JUSTICES

1. Challenges of Short Tenures

- Chief Justices often retire before understanding the Court's full functioning.
- Recently appointed Chief Justices in eight High Courts, except one, have very short tenures.
- Example: Justice Rajiv Shakdher retired after just 24 days as Chief Justice of Himachal Pradesh High Court.

2. Recent Tenures of Chief Justices

- Several Chief Justices have tenures ranging from a few months to just over a year:
- Justice Tashi Rabstan (6 months), Justice Suresh Kumar Kait (8 months), and Justice K.R. Shiram (1 year).

- Justice M.S. Ramachandra Rao (4 years in Jharkhand) is an exception.
- Short terms leave little time for meaningful contributions.

3. Responsibilities of Chief Justices

- Oversee institutional health, financial management, and judge appointments.
- Address legal education issues, administrative tasks, and disciplinary actions.
- Participate in bar council events and ensure smooth judicial functioning.
- Short tenures hinder their ability to fulfill these extensive responsibilities effectively.

4. Historical Perspective

- During British rule, Chief Justices enjoyed longer tenures, averaging about 8 years.
- Post-independence, tenures have drastically reduced, with an average of about 2-3 years.
- Examples from the Madras High Court illustrate the significant drop in tenure length.

5. Expert Opinions

- Justice L. Nageswara Rao suggested Chief Justices need at least 7-8 years to make an impact.
- Many retiring Chief Justices have expressed frustration over their inability to contribute due to short terms.

6. Impact on Judicial Reforms

- Limited tenure leaves little room for innovation or addressing systemic challenges.
- High Court-specific complexities require substantial time to comprehend and address.

7. Call for Solutions

- A collaborative approach involving stakeholders like the Bar is essential.
- Joint deliberations are necessary to propose reforms ensuring longer tenures.

CONCLUSION

Short tenures of Chief Justices undermine the judiciary's institutional effectiveness by limiting their ability to initiate and implement meaningful reforms. A systemic solution must be devised urgently to ensure Chief Justices have sufficient time to understand and address the multifaceted challenges of their role.

The Mosques Which Face Survey Petitions

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The growing wave of petitions and judicial surveys challenging the origins of historic mosques and dargahs in India, including Ajmer Dargah and Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra, fueled by contestations over their religious character and conflicting interpretations of the Places of Worship Act, 1991, highlights a contentious debate over heritage, law, and communal harmony.



SURVEY PETITIONS TARGETING MOSQUES AND HISTORIC SITES: A DETAILED ANALYSIS

1. Context and Overview

- **Rise in Survey Petitions:** Recent judicial orders have prompted an increase in petitions demanding surveys of mosques and dargahs, questioning their historical origins.
- **Key Locations:** Sites under contention include Ajmer Dargah, Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra, Shahi Jama Masjid in Sambhal, Teelewali Masjid in Lucknow, Shamsi Jama Masjid in Badaun, Atala Masjid in Jaunpur, Gyanvapi Masjid in Varanasi, and Eidgah in Mathura.
- **Triggering Factor:** Oral observation by former Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud in 2022 that certain sections of the Places of Worship Act, 1991 do not prohibit examining the "religious character" of a site, has emboldened petitioners.

2. Increasing Calls for Surveys

• Sambhal Incident:

- A civil judge in Sambhal ordered a survey of Jama Masjid on November 19, 2023, sparking violence that resulted in six deaths.
- The Supreme Court intervened to seal the survey report and directed the mosque committee to approach the Allahabad High Court.

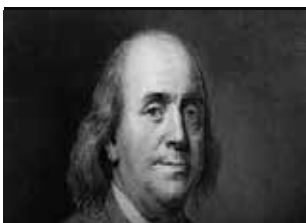
• Ajmer Dargah:

- A petition claimed the dargah was originally a Sankat Mochan Mandir.
- The dargah, frequented by people of all faiths and endorsed by the Prime Minister during annual Urs celebrations, has drawn significant attention.

- **Public Backlash:** A group of retired officials urged the Prime Minister to prevent what they called an “ideological assault” on India’s heritage.
- ### 3. The Case of Adhai Din Ka Jhonpra
- **Historical Significance:**
 - Built by Qutubuddin Aibak around 1200 AD and later beautified by Sultan Iltutmish in 1213 AD.
 - A protected site under the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
 - **Contestation:**
 - Claims suggest it was originally a Jain temple and Sanskrit college built in 660 AD, destroyed by Ghor invaders in 1192 AD.
 - ASI attributes its architecture to recycled temple material but identifies it as a mosque built during the Delhi Sultanate.
 - **Demand for Survey:** Raised by Ajmer’s Deputy Mayor and Rajasthan Assembly Speaker for validating pre-Islamic claims.
- ### 4. Shamsi Jama Masjid Controversy
- **Claims and Counterclaims:**
 - Hindu Mahasabha claims the 800-year-old mosque was once a Neelkanth Mahadev temple.
 - The mosque committee has argued the case is non-maintainable.
 - **Historical Importance:**
 - Among the oldest mosques in North India, built in the Sultanate period.
 - Situated on an elevated site in Badaun, with significant architectural value.
- ### 5. Legal Provisions and Challenges
- **Places of Worship Act, 1991:**
 - Sections 3 and 4 prohibit altering the religious character of places of worship as they stood on August 15, 1947.
 - Oral observations by the Supreme Court have led to ambiguous interpretations, encouraging lower courts to admit petitions.
 - **Concerns Over Judicial Overreach:**
 - The All India Muslim Personal Law Board has sought Supreme Court intervention to restrict lower courts from entertaining such cases.
- ### 6. Implications of These Surveys
- **Communal Tensions:** The surge in surveys and associated violence risks deepening societal divides.
 - **Historical Integrity:** Unverified claims and counterclaims could undermine the documented history of protected monuments.
 - **Judicial Accountability:** The inconsistent application of the Places of Worship Act raises questions about judicial consistency and impartiality.
- ### 7. Broader Context and Patterns
- **Historical Precedents:** Similar controversies have targeted other prominent mosques, including Gyanvapi Masjid and Jama Masjid in Delhi.
 - **Political and Ideological Drivers:** These disputes often emerge as part of broader ideological campaigns aimed at reclaiming alleged pre-Islamic heritage.
 - **Cultural Consequences:** Repeated challenges to established heritage sites disrupt the inclusive ethos of shared cultural and religious traditions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The recent wave of petitions and surveys targeting historic mosques reveals deep-seated tensions between heritage preservation, legal frameworks, and ideological narratives. While the judiciary must uphold the Places of Worship Act, 1991, proactive measures are essential to curtail frivolous litigation that threatens social harmony. A balanced approach involving scholarly research, legal clarity, and public engagement is crucial to resolving these disputes without undermining India’s rich and diverse cultural heritage.



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

–Benjamin Franklin

Has The Government Clarified Its Stance On ONOS?

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The Indian government's "One Nation, One Subscription" (ONOS) initiative, launched to centralize access to research journals for public institutes, has sparked widespread debate over its implementation, funding, and implications for open-access publishing and domestic research efforts.



THE GIST

Ø On November 25, the Indian government announced the launch of its 'One Nation, One Subscription' (ONOS) plan to improve access to research journals for the country's public education and research institutes.

Ø At the time of announcement, a Ministry of Education press release didn't specify which journals would be part of ONOS, how ONOS would be implemented, how its allocation of ₹6,000 crore (for three calendar years) would be spent, and how ONOS would support efforts to make research OA.

Ø On December 11, government officials conducted a press conference that addressed many of these concerns.

THE STORY SO FAR

- On November 25, 2023, the Indian government launched the One Nation, One Subscription (ONOS) initiative.
- Its primary goal is to provide unified access to research journals for India's public education and research institutes.
- However, the plan faced criticism due to the lack of details, concerns over high costs (₹6,000 crore for three years), and perceived neglect of open-access (OA) publishing.
- On December 11, government officials clarified several aspects of the program during a press conference.

WHAT IS ONOS'S PURPOSE?

- **Unified Journal Access:** ONOS replaces 10+ existing subscription consortia with a centralized system, granting access to over 13,000 journals from 30 international publishers.
- **Supporting Research Dissemination:** Journals are integral to disseminating research findings, offering services such as peer review, editing, and archiving for fees.
 - Subscription-based journals charge readers for access.
 - Open-access models, like 'gold' OA, charge researchers via article processing charges (APCs).
- ONOS aims to simplify and expand access for government-funded institutes.

WHY DID ONOS PROVOKE CRITICISM?

1. LACK OF TRANSPARENCY:

- Initial announcements did not specify:
 - Journals included in ONOS.
 - Details of its implementation.
 - Spending plans for the ₹6,000 crore allocation.
 - Concerns arose about potential mismanagement or inefficiency.

2. OVERLOOKING OPEN-ACCESS EFFORTS:

- Uncertainty over whether ONOS supports payment of APCs for gold OA journals.
- Critics questioned whether transformative OA models would be included.

3. NEGLECTING DOMESTIC PUBLISHERS:

- Critics argued that funds might be better used to strengthen domestic journals and research repositories.
- Questions arose about how ONOS aligns with global movements towards open and equitable access to research.

REVELATIONS FROM THE DECEMBER 11 PRESS CONFERENCE

KEY FEATURES OF ONOS

- **Broad Access:** Students and staff at public institutes can access all participating journals, regardless of discipline. Negotiations are underway to include more publishers.

Phased Implementation:

- Merge existing consortia and extend journal access to all public institutes.
- Expand access to private institutions.
- Offer “universal access” through public libraries for citizens.

OPEN-ACCESS SUPPORT

- A ₹150-crore annual fund has been allocated for APCs in a pilot phase.
- Negotiated APC discounts with certain journals.
- Commitment to incorporate transformative OA models over time.

SUPPORT FOR DOMESTIC RESEARCH ECOSYSTEM

- Identified five existing repositories for free access to Indian research papers, but acknowledged underutilization.
- Emphasis on:
 - Promoting Indian Journals: Enhanced visibility and quality of domestic publications.
 - Reforming Evaluation Metrics: Reduce reliance on journal titles for assessing researchers; focus on research merit.

IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS**1. Balancing Global and Domestic Needs:**

- ONOS emphasizes international access but risks overshadowing the development of domestic journals and repositories.
- Investment in Indian journals could bolster local research credibility and foster global collaboration.

2. Sustainability of Open Access:

- While the APC fund and transformative models are promising, their long-term sustainability depends on continued investment and publisher cooperation.
- ONOS must strike a balance between subscription-based access and advancing OA goals.

3. Transparency and Accountability:

- Detailed frameworks for spending and implementation are essential to avoid misallocation and ensure public trust.

4. Equitable Access for All:

- The phased approach toward universal access is commendable but ensuring robust infrastructure in public libraries is crucial for inclusivity.

CONCLUSION

The One Nation, One Subscription (ONOS) initiative is an ambitious step toward democratizing access to research in India. While the program addresses some immediate concerns, its success hinges on maintaining transparency, supporting open-access efforts, and balancing global and domestic research needs. With proper execution, ONOS has the potential to transform India's academic and research landscape, fostering a more inclusive and innovative environment for knowledge creation and dissemination.

Railways Should Review Ac Class Fares To Boost Revenues: Parliamentary Committee

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: A Parliamentary Committee has recommended that Indian Railways review AC class fares and increase private sector participation to boost passenger revenue and improve overall financial performance.

1. Concerns Over Passenger Revenue Disparity

- Disparity in Revenue Streams:** The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways observed a significant disparity between passenger and freight revenue, with freight earnings substantially higher.
- Low Passenger Revenue Estimates:** The committee noted that the budgeted passenger revenue for 2024-25 was significantly lower than the estimated freight revenue.

2. Recommendations to Increase Passenger Revenue

- Fare Review:** The committee recommended a comprehensive review of passenger fares across different trains and classes, with a focus on aligning AC class fares with the associated costs to reduce losses in the passenger segment.
- Increased Private Sector Participation:** The committee emphasized the need for the Railway Ministry to explore ways to increase private sector participation in the creation of railway infrastructure.

3. Concerns Regarding Coach Production and Replacement

- Inadequate Coach Production:** The committee noted that the Railways had not met its target for coach production.

- **Urge to Expedite Coach Replacement:** The committee urged the Ministry to expedite the replacement of older ICF coaches with modern LHB coaches, suggesting repurposing ICF coaches as NMG coaches for freight transport.

4. Budget Allocation for Rolling Stock

- **Increased Budget Allocation:** The Budget allocation for rolling stock in 2024-25 was increased by ₹156 crore compared to the actual spending in 2023-24.

CONCLUSION

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways has highlighted the need for Indian Railways to improve its passenger revenue streams to enhance its overall financial performance. The committee's recommendations, including a comprehensive review of passenger fares, increased private sector participation, and expediting coach production and replacement, offer crucial insights for the sustainable growth and development of the Indian Railways.

RBI Governor Malhotra Vows Best Batting Stance In Public Interest

ECONOMY & DEVELOPMENT

CONTEXT: Sanjay Malhotra, the 26th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, took charge on Wednesday, emphasizing his commitment to upholding public trust, ensuring financial stability, and focusing on innovation and financial inclusion, while also highlighting the importance of continuity and external expertise in tackling economic challenges.



RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra's Vision for the Central Bank: A New Innings

Key Points:

1. Sanjay Malhotra Takes Charge as 26th RBI Governor:

- Sanjay Malhotra, the Revenue Secretary, assumed office as the 26th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday.
- Malhotra's tenure will last for three years.

2. Commitment to Public Trust and Stability:

- In his first address, Malhotra committed to upholding public trust in the RBI and emphasized the importance of continuity and stability in policy-making.

- He assured that the central bank would act in the public interest, focusing on trust, growth, stability, and certainty in policies.
- #### 3. Focus on Technology and Financial Inclusion:
- Malhotra emphasized the need to integrate technology and innovation to enhance financial inclusion and expand the reach of financial services across the country.
 - The RBI will remain agile in responding to emerging challenges while maintaining its core focus on stability.
- #### 4. Approach to Economic Issues:
- While he refrained from commenting on immediate issues such as inflation and growth, Malhotra highlighted the importance of a measured and thoughtful approach, akin to a cricket player's cautious stance at the start of an innings.
- #### 5. Leadership and External Expertise:
- Malhotra acknowledged the tremendous work done by the RBI in monetary policy and financial inclusion. He also emphasized the value of tapping into external expertise and insights to ensure informed decision-making.
 - His leadership aims to continue the RBI's legacy of sound monetary management.
- #### 6. Personal Background and Connection to Mumbai:
- Originally from North India, Malhotra will now be based in Mumbai for the next three years, gaining firsthand experience of the city's financial ecosystem.
 - He also referenced the RBI's 90th anniversary theme of stability, trust, and growth, highlighting their relevance to the Indian economy.

CONCLUSION: Sanjay Malhotra's appointment as RBI Governor marks the beginning of a period of continuity and adaptation. While focusing on financial stability and inclusivity, he is also committed to embracing innovation and leveraging

external expertise. His cautious yet forward-thinking approach suggests that Malhotra will prioritize the long-term health of India's financial system while addressing emerging challenges effectively.

Ukraine Crisis Bigger Priority Than West Asia, Says Trump

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: U.S. President-elect Donald Trump emphasized that resolving the Ukraine crisis would be his top international priority, describing it as a more complex issue than conflicts in West Asia, while also expressing support for Ukraine's efforts and a hands-off approach to Syria's internal challenges.



Trump Prioritizes Ukraine Crisis Over West Asia Conflicts

- **Ukraine Crisis as Top Priority:** U.S. President-elect Donald Trump has stated that resolving the Ukraine crisis with Russia will be his main focus when he assumes office. He highlighted the massive loss of life, with both Moscow and Kyiv losing hundreds of thousands of soldiers in the conflict, emphasizing the need for a solution to the ongoing war.
- **West Asia Viewed as Less Complex:** Trump described the ongoing issues in West Asia, including the Gaza conflict, as "less difficult" than the situation in Ukraine, despite acknowledging the region's importance on the global stage.
- **International Diplomacy in France:** During his visit to France, Trump met with French President Emmanuel Macron and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. This marked Trump's first international trip since his re-election.
- **Trump's Position on Syria:** Trump reiterated his stance on Syria, stating that the country would need to address its own internal challenges, especially after the dramatic fall of the Assad regime. He affirmed that the U.S. should not intervene in Syria's situation.

CONCLUSION: Trump's remarks signal a shift in foreign policy priorities, with a focus on ending the war in Ukraine while taking a more hands-off approach to conflicts in West Asia, particularly Syria. His discussions with Zelenskyy underscore his commitment to bringing an end to the ongoing war, while his reluctance to engage in Syria suggests a more isolationist approach to the Middle East.



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