



Motivation gets you
going, but discipline
keeps you growing.

John C. Maxwell

Important Issues of the Day

- **Iran, U.S. blame each other – Page No.1 , GS 2**
- **Delimitation – Page No. 6, GS 2**
- **Tourism and trade – Page No. 6, GS 3**
- **India's established elite – Page No. 6, GS 3**
- **Mahatma Jyotiba Phule – Prelims**
- **The National Human Rights Commission – Prelims**
- **Exercise Cyclone – Prelims**

Iran, U.S. blame each other as talks end without a deal

Talks collapsed after Iran's refusal to commit to abandoning its path to a nuclear weapon, says U.S. after the 21-hour-long talks in Pakistan; Iran blames 'U.S. overreach' for breakdown of dialogue

Associated Press
ISLAMABAD

The United States and Iran ended face-to-face talks in Pakistan on Sunday without an agreement, each side keeping the onus on the other without narrowing their differences and leaving a fragile two-week ceasefire in the war in West Asia in doubt.

U.S. officials said the talks collapsed over Iran's refusal to commit to abandoning the path to a nuclear weapon, while Iranian officials blamed the "U.S. overreach" for the breakdown of the talks without mentioning specific sticking points.

Neither side indicated what will happen after the truce expires on April 22. Pakistani Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said his country will try to facilitate a new dialogue in the coming days.

"We need to see an affirmative commitment that they will not seek a nuclear weapon, and they will not seek the tools that would enable them to quickly achieve a nuclear weapon," U.S. Vice-President J.D. Vance said after the 21-hour talks. Iran's Parlia-

Hanging in the balance

The breakdown of talks leaves doubt over the future of the two-week ceasefire in the war in West Asia



We need to see an affirmative commitment that they [Iran] will not seek a nuclear weapon
J.D. VANCE, U.S. Vice-President



It is time for the U.S. to decide whether it can gain our trust or not — **MOHAMMAD BAGHER GHALIBAF, Iran Speaker**



Winding up: Pakistan officials escort U.S. delegation leaving after the talks on Sunday. AFP

ment Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, who led the Iran delegation, said it was time for the U.S. "to decide whether it can gain our trust or not".

Iran had very good initiatives to show goodwill in talks with the United States which led to progress in the negotiations, he said in comments carried by state media on Sunday. The Iranian Speaker did not mention the core disputes in his series of social media posts, though Iranian officials earlier said the talks fell apart over two or three key issues, blaming what they called U.S. overreach.

"It is imperative that the parties continue to uphold

their commitment to cease fire," Pakistan's Foreign Minister said.

Iran has long denied seeking nuclear weapons but has insisted on its right to a civilian nuclear programme. It has offered "affirmative commitments" in the past in writing, including in the landmark 2015 nuclear deal. Experts say its stockpile of enriched uranium, though not weapons-grade, is only a short technical step away.

Since the U.S. and Israel launched the war on February 28, it has killed at least 3,000 people in Iran, 2,020 in Lebanon, 23 in Israel, and more than a dozen in Gulf Arab states, and caused lasting damage to

Trump threatens blockade of Strait of Hormuz

ISLAMABAD/WASHINGTON
U.S. President Donald Trump on Sunday said the U.S. Navy would "immediately" begin a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz. » **PAGE 14**

infrastructure in half-a-dozen West Asian countries. Iran's grip on the Strait of Hormuz has largely cut off the Persian Gulf and its oil and gas exports from the global economy, sending energy prices soaring.

CONTINUED ON
» **PAGE 10**

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- **U.S. President Donald Trump on Sunday said the U.S. Navy would “immediately” begin a blockade to stop ships from entering or leaving the Strait of Hormuz, after U.S.-Iran peace talks in Pakistan ended without an agreement.**
- **“Effective immediately, the United States Navy, the Finest in the World, will begin the process of BLOCKADING any and all Ships trying to enter, or leave, the Strait of Hormuz,” Mr. Trump said on his Truth Social platform.**
- **“Any Iranian who fires at us, or at peaceful vessels, will be BLOWN TO HELL!”**
- **Mr. Trump initially suggested that “other countries” would be involved in the blockade effort, and then told Fox News’ “Sunday Morning Futures with Maria Bartiromo” that Britain “and a couple of other countries” would be sending minesweepers.**



Which of the following countries directly border the Strait of Hormuz?

1. Iran
2. Oman
3. Saudi Arabia
4. United Arab Emirates

Select the correct answer using the code below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (c) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Mains Question

“Strategic maritime chokepoints in West Asia have emerged as critical nodes influencing global energy security and geopolitics.”

Discuss with reference to the Strait of Hormuz, Bab el-Mandeb Strait and Suez Canal.

“पश्चिम एशिया के सामरिक समुद्री चोकपाइंट वैश्विक ऊर्जा सुरक्षा और भू-राजनीति को प्रभावित करने वाले प्रमुख केंद्र बन गए हैं।”

Strait of Hormuz, Bab el-Mandeb Strait तथा Suez Canal के संदर्भ में चर्चा कीजिए।

Delimitation, and not women's reservation, is the issue

The Prime Minister is making appeals to Opposition parties to support Bills that the government wants to bulldoze in a special session of Parliament when the election campaign in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal will be at its peak. There can be only one reason for the extraordinary hurry, which is to derive political advantage and place the Opposition on the defensive.

The Prime Minister is, as usual, being economical with the truth.

The Parliament passed the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023 unanimously in September 2023 during a special session. The Adhiniyam introduced Article 334-A in the Constitution which mandated one-third reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabhas, scheduled to come into effect after the completion of the next Census and the Census-based delimitation process. The Opposition had not asked for this condition. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Shri Mallikarjun Kharge, had forcefully demanded that the reservation provision be implemented from the 2024 Lok Sabha elections itself. For reasons best known to itself, the government did not agree.

Now, we are given to understand that Article 334-A will be amended to make women's reservation applicable from 2029 itself. Why did it take the Prime Minister 30 months to make his U-turn? And why can he not wait a few weeks to convene the special session? Opposition leaders have written to the government not once but thrice requesting that an all-party meeting be convened after the last phase of elections is over in West Bengal on April 29, to discuss what the new proposals of the government are. But that perfectly reasonable request has been turned down. Instead, the Prime Minister has resorted to writing op-eds, making appeals to political parties, and organising *sammelans*. It is an underhand tactic that reflects the Prime Minister's one-upmanship and his 'my way or the highway' approach to decision-making.

Lessons from the past

Contrast this with the manner in which the 73rd



Sonia Gandhi

Chairperson of the Congress Parliamentary Party

Any delimitation involving an increase in the strength of the Lok Sabha must be politically – and not just arithmetically – equitable

and 74th Constitution Amendment Bills were finally passed by Parliament in April 1993 and June 1993, respectively. The Bills took almost five years of discussion and debate, following which reservation for women in elections to panchayats and *nagarpalikas* became law. This was a singular achievement of the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Today, there are about 15 lakh elected women representatives in rural and urban local bodies, constituting over 40% of the total. The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023 stands on the shoulders of this achievement.

The last decadal Census was due in 2021. The Modi government kept postponing it. One consequence of this has been that over 10 crore people have been deprived of their legal entitlements under the National Food Security Act, 2013 that provides the basis for the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana. Census operations have begun only after an inexplicable delay of five years. It is being proudly claimed that it is a digital Census. Senior officials have themselves publicly declared that because of its digital nature, most of the population enumeration numbers will be available in 2027 itself. The government's excuses for its tearing hurry to call this session and conduct delimitation are evidently hollow.

Almost exactly a year ago, the Prime Minister announced that the 2027 Census would also be a caste census. This was after filing affidavits in the Supreme Court and answering questions in Parliament rejecting the idea of conducting a caste census. This was also after the Prime Minister accused Congress leaders calling for a caste census as suffering from what he called "an urban naxal mindset". Be that as it may, Census 2027 is supposed to enumerate the population by caste in order to give greater meaning to social justice and empowerment. Bihar and Telangana have carried out comprehensive caste surveys in their respective States, with the whole process not taking more than six months.

It is clear, therefore, that the propaganda that a caste census will delay the publication of the Census 2027 is just not true. In fact, the Prime Minister's real intention now is to further delay and derail the caste census.

The special session is scheduled to begin on April 16. Yet till now, there has been no official proposal shared with MPs on what exactly the government wants the session to consider. It appears that some formula for delimitation is being suggested. Any delimitation must be preceded by a Census exercise as in the past. And it goes without saying that any delimitation involving an increase in the strength of the Lok Sabha must be politically – and not just arithmetically – equitable. States that have been pioneers in family planning, and smaller States, must not be placed at an absolute or relative disadvantage.

A proportionate increase may, in fact, result in the loss of relative influence because the difference in absolute numbers get magnified.

Need for careful consideration

The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023 provides for reservation within reservation. This means that the one-third of seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes respectively will also be reserved for women.

During the debate in September 2023, the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha had demanded that a similar reservation be also provided for women belonging to the Other Backward Classes (OBCs). Reservation for OBCs has been already provided for in higher education and government employment.

The monsoon session of Parliament will begin in mid-July. The heavens will not fall if the government were to call an all-party meeting after April 29, to discuss its proposals with the Opposition, allowing time for a public debate, and then have the Constitution Amendment Bills considered in the monsoon session. There is simply no justification, except narrative management during troubled times, for this tearing hurry to bulldoze extremely far-reaching changes to our polity. The process is deeply flawed and anti-democratic. Reservation for women is not the issue here. That has already been settled. The real issue is delimitation which, based on the information unofficially available, is extremely dangerous and an assault on the Constitution itself.

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Mains Question

Women's political representation is essential for substantive democracy, not merely symbolic inclusion.

In this context, analyse the need for reservation of women in Parliament and State Legislatures.

महिलाओं का राजनीतिक प्रतिनिधित्व केवल प्रतीकात्मक नहीं, बल्कि सार्थक लोकतंत्र के लिए आवश्यक है।

इस संदर्भ में संसद एवं राज्य विधानसभाओं में महिलाओं के आरक्षण की आवश्यकता का विश्लेषण कीजिए।

Tourism and trade

Consensus is vital in leveraging the strategic importance of Nicobar

The Union government's ₹92,000 crore mega-infrastructure project for the holistic development of the Great Nicobar Island (GNI) by building it up as a port and tourism-led economy has gathered speed in the last six months, even as concerns remain about its impact on the Island's ecology and the rights of local populations, the Nicobarese and the Shompen – two indigenous tribal groups. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands administration has notified a draft master plan for the project. Apart from the International Container Transshipment Port (ICTP), the airport, and power plants, the draft master plan envisions developing the GNI as a “seaside destination in a pristine, unspoilt, protected environment”, outlining plans for business, adventure, biodiversity tourism, family entertainment, amusement parks, etc., along with adequate social infrastructure for healthcare, education, and livelihood. The draft is planned for a projected population of over 3.36 lakh by 2055, by which time the expected tourist inflow will be a million a year. Over 70% of the direct employment the government hopes to create will be in tourism and allied sectors. The current population of the GNI is a little less than 10,000. This transformation of the GNI, aided by the ICTP, is crucial to leverage the “strategic importance” of the Island's location at the western entrance to the Malacca Strait. The draft plan has

current population of the GNI is a little less than 10,000. This transformation of the GNI, aided by the ICTP, is crucial to leverage the “strategic importance” of the Island's location at the western entrance to the Malacca Strait. The draft plan has said the port will help India achieve its “aims to capture a significant share in global sea trade”.

But while the administration has sought public suggestions and objections for 30 days, it remains unclear till when this window will remain open, given that the draft does not mention when it was notified. This draft plan follows another draft plan to relocate local Nicobarese communities to make way for the project. The two plans seemingly contradict each other with regard to where existing populations may be relocated, which has renewed fears among these groups. These communities have been opposing the project's clearance since 2022, alleging that their forest rights had not been settled. While the National Green Tribunal has set aside concerns about the project's impact on the GNI's biodiversity by citing its “strategic importance”, a challenge to the project's clearances remains in the Calcutta High Court. Some have also questioned the project's commercial and naval merits. Considering that the project aims to irreversibly alter the demography, and ecology of the GNI, the most prudent path for the government is to take the time needed to build a more holistic consensus over it.

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Mains Question

“Tourism is a double-edged sword that promotes economic growth while posing significant environmental challenges.”

Discuss in the context of sustainable development.

“पर्यटन आर्थिक विकास को बढ़ावा देता है, किन्तु यह पर्यावरणीय चुनौतियाँ भी उत्पन्न करता है।”

सतत विकास के संदर्भ में चर्चा कीजिए।

Why India's established elite is afraid of taking risks

Page No.7 , GS 3

In F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned*, Anthony Patch possesses everything except the willingness to act. He has education, social connections, and even reasonable intelligence. What destroys him is not external circumstance but internal paralysis. He spends years waiting for his grandfather's inheritance, and by the time it arrives, he has forgotten how to exercise agency. The money comes, but the man capable of using it meaningfully no longer exists. While this might seem like a distant literary tragedy, versions of it are unfolding across India's business elite today.

Something unusual has been happening in Indian business over the past few years. Well-managed family businesses with healthy cash flows are being sold not because they face distress or strategic dead ends, but because the next generation prefers liquidity over operational continuity. VIP Industries, a leading player in the Indian branded luggage market, is one example.

What makes this pattern strange is that these exits are happening during a period of unprecedented opportunity. India's domestic market is expanding, global supply chains are diversifying, and capital is abundant. Yet many second- and third-generation business families seem to be choosing passive investment avenues, such as running family offices, over the businesses their parents built, even though these generations are better educated and more globally networked than their predecessors. Why are they choosing not to build?

Preservation over creation

Peter Turchin's theory of elite overproduction offers one lens for understanding this. He argues that societies become unstable when they produce more credentialed elite aspirants than the number of elite positions available. The usual result is political instability as the surplus elites challenge the incumbents for power. But India seems to be generating a different outcome. While there is clearly an oversupply of educated, well-connected individuals relative to the number of influential positions, rather than triggering open conflict or displacement, what the country is seeing is a risk retreat among incumbents.

Existing business families are not being forced



Kiran Mahasuar

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The inherited elite, the people who control the most capital and have the most institutional access, are opting out of the riskiest, and most transformational kinds of building

out. They are choosing custodianship over creation. Capital gets recycled into assets that preserve wealth, rather than create it, such as real estate portfolios, financial market positions, and established brands. Succession planning becomes about maintaining control, and not about expanding the frontier of what the family enterprise does. The result is stasis rather than revolution. India has surplus elite capacity, but that capacity is not being channelled into high-risk, long-gestation ventures. It is being absorbed into wealth preservation.

The R&D problem

Consider how India's private sector approaches Research and Development (R&D). As a percentage of revenue, Indian companies spend dramatically less on R&D than their counterparts in China, South Korea, or Taiwan. This is not because Indian firms are less profitable or because the regulatory environment makes R&D impossible. The issue seems to be that R&D represents exactly the kind of risk that second-generation business families find unattractive. It requires patient capital; and results are uncertain. Failures are visible and cannot be easily explained to minority shareholders accustomed to steady dividends. The payoff, if it comes, arrives years later and may benefit successors rather than the decision-maker. By contrast, acquiring an existing brand, expanding into real estate, or optimising an inherited manufacturing process offers more legible returns with less reputational exposure. The anomaly becomes clearer when you compare today's business elite with first-generation entrepreneurs. When Dhirubhai Ambani built the Patalganga refinery, he was betting everything on an outcome that was far from certain. The investment could not be quickly reversed, and failure would have been total and public. But that irreversibility was precisely what made the bet transformational. India's pivot to a market-oriented economy is interspersed with many such stories of first-generation entrepreneurs taking risky bets. So, what changed in the last two decades or so?

One hypothesis is that for someone inheriting a successful business, the calculation reverses.

Risk is no longer the source of differentiation. It is a threat to something already secured. Moreover, there are more avenues for being a passive investor, such as a venture capitalist or a limited partner. Then, how can India's private sector be incentivised to invest in R&D?

Oswald Spengler made a distinction that feels relevant here, though he was writing about civilisational cycles rather than emerging economies. He argued that societies move from what he called 'culture' to 'civilisation'. Culture is rooted, productive, and comfortable with risk because it is still building foundational institutions. Civilisation is abstract, financial, and focused on administering and extracting value from what already exists. The pattern he describes maps uncomfortably well onto what is happening among India's urban business elite. Increasingly, wealth is held by people who think like portfolio managers rather than operators. Their assets are internationally diversified. Their downside is cushioned by family networks and political connections. They sell, diversify, and preserve. However, the aggregate outcome is a business elite that no longer behaves like it has skin in the game over generational time horizons.

India's dilemma

The problem is not that India lacks emerging and taking risks. The problem is that the inherited elite, the people who control the most capital and have the most institutional access, are opting out of the riskiest, and most transformational kinds of building. Anthony Patch's tragedy was that his inheritance arrived after he had lost the capacity to use it. India now has an inheritance class that receives wealth and position early enough to use it, but chooses not to, because the social structures that would make risk-taking rational have been replaced by ones that make waiting and selling more attractive.

The question, then, is not whether India has capital. The question is whether the people who control that capital still see themselves as builders of something larger than their own portfolio returns. And if they do not, what does that mean for the kind of economy India becomes over the next several decades?

- **Something unusual has been happening in Indian business over the past few years.**
- **Well-managed family businesses with healthy cash flows are being sold not because they face distress or strategic dead ends, but because the next generation prefers liquidity over operational continuity.**
- **What makes this pattern strange is that these exits are happening during a period of unprecedented opportunity. India's domestic market is expanding, global supply chains are diversifying, and capital is abundant.**
- **While there is clearly an oversupply of educated, well-connected individuals relative to the number of influential positions, rather than triggering open conflict or displacement, what the country is seeing is a risk retreat among incumbents.**

- **Existing business families are not being forced out. They are choosing custodianship over creation.**
- **Capital gets recycled into assets that preserve wealth, rather than create it, such as real estate portfolios, financial market positions, and established brands. Succession planning becomes about maintaining control, and not about expanding the frontier of what the family enterprise does.**
- **The result is stasis rather than revolution. India has surplus elite capacity, but that capacity is not being channelled into high-risk, long-gestation ventures. It is being absorbed into wealth preservation.**
- **Consider how India's private sector approaches Research and Development (R&D). As a percentage of revenue, Indian companies spend dramatically less on R&D than their counterparts in China, South Korea, or Taiwan.**

- **India's dilemma**
- **The problem is not that India lacks entrepreneurs. First-generation founders are still emerging and taking risks.**
- **The problem is that the inherited elite, the people who control the most capital and have the most institutional access, are opting out of the riskiest, and most transformational kinds of building.**
- **Anthony Patch's tragedy was that his inheritance arrived after he had lost the capacity to use it.**
- **India now has an inheritance class that receives wealth and position early enough to use it, but chooses not to, because the social structures that would make risk-taking rational have been replaced by ones that make waiting and selling more attractive.**

Mains Question

“Private sector participation is crucial for boosting R&D in India.”

Examine the role of industry–academia collaboration in fostering innovation and technological advancement.

“भारत में R&D को बढ़ावा देने के लिए निजी क्षेत्र की भागीदारी अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण है।”
उद्योग–शैक्षणिक सहयोग की भूमिका का परीक्षण कीजिए।

Mahatma Jyotiba Phule



- **Mahatma Jyotiba Phule was a visionary Indian social reformer, activist, and writer who championed the cause of equality for women, laborers, and marginalized castes. He was a staunch critic of the Hindu caste system and is regarded as a foundational figure in India's social justice movement.**
- **Birth: He was born on April 11, 1827, in the Bombay Presidency (now Maharashtra) to a family of fruit and vegetable farmers belonging to the Mali caste.**
- **Education: After briefly stopping his studies to work on the family farm, he attended a secondary school run by Scottish Christian missionaries in Pune during the 1840s.**
- **Influences: He was deeply inspired by Thomas Paine's Rights of Man, the American anti-slavery movement, and the egalitarian teachings of the Buddha and the mystic poet Kabir.**

- **Education for All:** In 1848, he opened one of India's first schools for lower-caste girls in Pune. He educated his wife, Savitribai Phule, who became the school's teacher.
- **Satyashodhak Samaj:** Founded in 1873, the Society of Truth Seekers aimed to unite and uplift Shudras and Dalits, advocating for a social order free from Brahminical dominance.
- **Social Reform:** He advocated for widow remarriage, opposed child marriage, and established a home for pregnant widows and an orphanage.
- **Symbolic Acts:** To challenge untouchability, he opened his personal water well to people of all castes, symbolizing his commitment to universal equality.

- **Gulamagiri (Slavery):** Published in 1873, this is his most famous work. It presented a scathing attack on the caste system, comparing the oppression of lower castes in India to the enslavement of people in the United States.
- **Diverse Mediums:** He used books, essays, poems, and plays to publicize his rationalist ideology and call for social justice.

Last Days:

- **Title of Mahatma:** In 1888, he was honored with the title Mahatma (Great Soul) in recognition of his selfless service to society.
- **Illness and Death:** He suffered a stroke in 1888 that left him paralyzed. He passed away on November 28, 1890, in Pune at the age of 63.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)



- **The NHRC is a statutory public body in India, acting as a watchdog for human rights. It is an independent institution designed to protect the rights of individuals relating to life, liberty, equality, and dignity as guaranteed by the Constitution of India and international covenants.**
- **Established in: The NHRC was established on October 12, 1993, under the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993.**
- **The Commission consists of a chairperson, five full-time Members and seven deemed Members.**
- **Chairman is a former Chief Justice of India or a Supreme Court judge.**

- **Chairman and members appointed by the President on the recommendations of a six-member committee.**
- **The committee consists of the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, leaders of the Opposition in both Houses of Parliament, and the Union Home Minister.**
- **The chairman and members hold office for a term of three years or until they reach the age of 70.**
- **The NHRC lacks the authority to punish violators. Despite identifying perpetrators of human rights abuses, the NHRC cannot directly impose penalties or award relief to victims. This limitation undermines its effectiveness.**

Exercise Cyclone



- **The Indian Army contingent has departed for Egypt to participate in the fourth edition of the Joint Special Forces Exercise Cyclone – IV.**
- **Exercise Cyclone is a bilateral military drill specifically designed for the Special Forces units of India and Egypt.**

Aim:

- **To enhance joint mission planning capabilities between the two specialized wings.**
- **To improve interoperability by exchanging best practices in tactical special operations.**
- **To foster greater understanding of each other's military traditions, cultures, and operational philosophies.**

Thank You!

