

DISCIPLINE



# **Important Issues of the Day**

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## Jallianwala Bagh Massacre



- **The Jallianwala Bagh massacre occurred on 13th April 1919, when hundreds of innocent Indians were killed by troops of the British Indian Army, mostly Gurkhas, on orders of Brigadier-General REH Dyer.**
- **The people had assembled peacefully to protest against the Rowlatt Act of 1919.**
- **Jallianwala Bagh is a historic garden and memorial near the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Punjab.**
- **Background: Mahatma Gandhi had called for a non-violent satyagraha (first mass strike), against the Rowlatt Act starting with a hartal on 6th April 1919.**
- **In Punjab, on 9th April, nationalist leaders Dr. Satyapal and Saifuddin Kitchlew were arrested without reason and taken to an unknown place.**

- **The Rowlatt Act (1919):** The British passed the Black Act, which allowed the government to imprison any person suspected of sedition without a trial for up to two years. This sparked widespread Rowlatt Satyagraha led by Mahatma Gandhi.
- **Day of the Incident:** On 13th April, which was Baisakhi, a large number of villagers unaware of the restrictions gathered at Jallianwala Bagh.
- **Dyer reached the spot with troops, blocked the only exit, and ordered firing on the unarmed crowd. Over 1,000 men, women, and children were killed.**
- **Aftermath:** The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre marked a turning point in India's freedom struggle, deeply shaking public faith in British rule.
- **It became a key reason for Mahatma Gandhi to launch the Non-Cooperation Movement (NCM) (1920–22), along with other factors such as the Khilafat issue, the growing demand for Swaraj, and the hardships caused by World War I.**
- **Gandhiji gave up the title of Kaiser-i-Hind and Rabindranath Tagore returned his knighthood in protest.**

- **The British Government set up the Hunter Commission (1919) to investigate the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and, in its 1920 report, it unanimously condemned General Dyer's actions. However, it did not recommend any penal or disciplinary action against him.**
- **Congress formed a non-official committee, comprising Motilal Nehru, Gandhi, and others, to investigate the incident, condemning Dyer's actions as inhuman and criticizing the imposition of martial law in Punjab as unjustifiable.**
- **Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act, 1919 (also known as Rowlatt Act of 1919) was a repressive legislation enacted by the British government of India during World War I (1914-1918) to curb anti-colonial activities.**
- **The Act was introduced based on the recommendations of the Sedition Committee, chaired by Sir Sidney Rowlatt.**

**Q. During the Indian Freedom Struggle, why did Rowlatt Act arouse popular indignation? (2009)**

**(a) It curtailed the freedom of religion**

**(b) It suppressed the Indian traditional education**

**(c) It authorized the government to imprison people without trial**

**(d) It curbed the trade union activities**

## Ganges River Dolphin



- **A report by the Wildlife Institute of India reveals that a drastic reduction in the Chambal River's water flow is forcing endangered Ganges river dolphins to shift their habitat downstream toward the Yamuna confluence.**
- **The Ganga River Dolphin, also known as the "Tiger of the Ganges," was officially discovered in 1801.**
- **It is India's National Aquatic Animal (declared in 2009) and State Aquatic Animal of Assam.**
- **It acts as a reliable indicator of river ecosystem health, highlighting biodiversity and water quality.**
- **Habitat: Historically found in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Karnaphuli-Sangu river systems across India, Nepal, and Bangladesh. But the species is extinct from most of its early distribution ranges.**

- **Features:** Exclusively a freshwater species, they are functionally blind and rely on ultrasonic echolocation to locate prey.
- **Generally solitary or in small groups, often seen as mother-calf pairs.**
- **It is locally called 'Susu' due to the sound it makes while exhaling.**
  
- **Population:** There are 6,327 river dolphins in India, according to the first nationwide survey under Project Dolphin (2020).
- **The population of Ganges dolphins has declined by over 50% since 1957, with a 25% shrinkage in range.**
  
- **IUCN: Endangered**
- **Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 : Schedule I**
- **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES): Appendix I**
- **Convention on Migratory Species (CMS): Appendix 1**

**Q. Which one of the following is the national aquatic animal of India?  
(2015)**

- (a) Saltwater crocodile**
- (b) Olive ridley turtle**
- (c) Gangetic dolphin**
- (d) Gharial**

## Saora Tribe



- **The Lanjia Saora community is in the news for its resilient efforts to preserve its unique visual heritage, such as traditional metal earrings and tattoos, while adapting these customs to modern lifestyles.**
- **The Lanjia Saoras are one of the oldest and most distinct tribes in India, belonging to the Sauras ethnic group. They are recognized by the Government of India as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) due to their stagnant population, low literacy levels, and traditional agricultural practices.**
- **The Saoras find mention in Hindu epics like the Ramayana (associated with Shabari) and the Mahabharata, marking them as an ancient indigenous lineage.**
- **Nature Intertwined: Their history is rooted in a belief system deeply intertwined with nature. Rituals are performed to appease forest deities and ancestral spirits, which they believe govern their harvest and health.**

- **Livelihood:** They sustain themselves through shifting cultivation (Podu Chasa), foraging for forest produce, and small-scale farming.
- **Artistic Heritage (Idital):** They are famous for their Saora paintings (Idital), which are wall murals made using red ochre and rice paste. These paintings serve as a visual language to communicate with the spirit world.
- **Music and Dance:** Music is intrinsic to their daily life, used during every significant life event, from birth to the Guar (funeral) ritual.
- **Social Structure:** They maintain a highly egalitarian society with a strong sense of communal resource sharing and collective decision-making.

**Consider the following statements about Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in India:**

- 1 PVTGs reside in 18 States and one Union Territory.**
- 2 A stagnant or declining population is one of the criteria for determining PVTG status.**
- 3 There are 95 PVTGs officially notified in the country so far.**
- 4 Irular and Konda Reddi tribes are included in the list of PVTGs.**

**Which of the statements given above are correct?**

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

# Export Inspection Council



- **Established Under: Export (Quality Control and Inspection) Act, 1963**
  - **Statutory Body**
  - **Established By: Government of India**
  - **Year: 1963**
  - **Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Commerce and Industry**
  - **Headquarters: New Delhi**
- 
- **Ensures quality and safety of Indian exports**
  - **Promotes sound development of export trade**
  - **Acts as official export certification body of India**

# SC raps EC on SIR 'discrepancies', says voting is a sentimental right

The poll body departed from its promise to leave voters on 2002 rolls untouched during the SIR; the category of 'logical discrepancy' was unique to West Bengal, top court says; it notes that the act of voting is the biggest expression of nationality

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
NEW DELHI

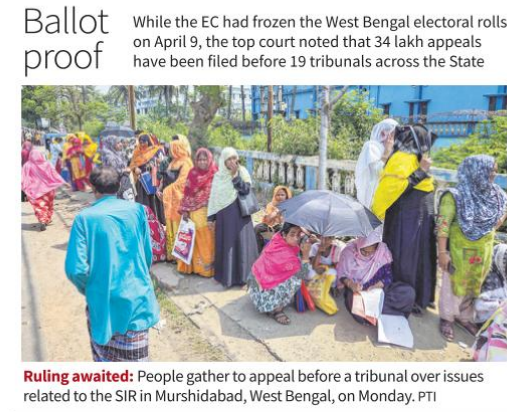
**T**he Supreme Court on Monday told the Election Commission (EC) that the right to be on the electoral roll and to vote in one's own country was not only constitutional but also sentimental.

The top court was referring to lakhs of voters excluded for "logical discrepancies" lining up for appeal hearings in West Bengal, hardly 10 days ahead of the Assembly election, following an "inquisitorial" special intensive revision (SIR).

The court said 34 lakh appeals by voters purged from the West Bengal electoral roll had been filed for hearing before 19 appellate tribunals and there were over a lakh appeals pending before each of these tribunals.

The poll body had locked in the electoral roll for the State on April 9, days ahead of the polling on April 23 and 29.

After months of interventions to make the SIR more inclusive, the top court made cutting remarks about the impact of an exercise the poll body said was necessary to "purify the electoral roll".



**Ruling awaited:** People gather to appeal before a tribunal over issues related to the SIR in Murshidabad, West Bengal, on Monday. PTI

"The right to remain on the electoral roll, the right to vote in the country you are born in is something which is not only constitutional but sentimental. It is the biggest expression of nationality and patriotism that you are in a participatory process to elect a democratic government," Justice Joymalya Bagchi, part of the Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, said while addressing the poll body.

Senior advocate Dama Seshadri Naidu, for the poll body, said "statistics" proved West Bengal did not "stand out" and was "on par" with other States

in the number of exclusions.

#### 'Question of fairness'

"We are not bothered about West Bengal 'standing out'. But no other State has a category called 'logical discrepancy'. We have examined Bihar, we did not find a single person flagged for logical discrepancy... This is not a question of inflating or shrinking the EC, but of fairness," Justice Bagchi said.

The judge noted that the Supreme COurt had permitted the poll body to embark on an inquisitorial exercise mindful of the latter's concern about the

**Ballot proof**

While the EC had frozen the West Bengal electoral rolls on April 9, the top court noted that 34 lakh appeals have been filed before 19 tribunals across the State

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**JUSTICE JOYMALYA BAGCHI**  
Supreme Court judge

SIR was argued, and the Bihar SIR was a facsimile of the SIR we are dealing with today, the EC was unequivocal when it submitted that a person in the 2002 voter list does not have to prove anything. No uploading of documents was required... And then you deviated from your original arguments," Justice Bagchi said.

#### Uncertain atmosphere

So far, the Supreme Court had avoided any direct criticism of the SIR.

The flurry of oral observations from Justice Bagchi indicated a judicial calling-out of the atmosphere of uncertainty and crisis which gripped the population during a hasty SIR process, especially in poll-bound West Bengal.

Justice Bagchi referred to how the exclusion of voters in the name of logical discrepancy came "so close" to the date of election in West Bengal that the top court had to step in and deploy judicial officers to hear out the objections. This was all the more reason why the appeal process must not be hurried, the judge said.

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- **The Supreme Court on Monday told the Election Commission (EC) that the right to be on the electoral roll and to vote in one's own country was not only constitutional but also sentimental.**
- **The top court was referring to lakhs of voters excluded for "logical discrepancies" lining up for appeal hearings in West Bengal, hardly 10 days ahead of the Assembly election, following an "inquisitorial" special intensive revision (SIR).**
- **The court said 34 lakh appeals by voters purged from the West Bengal electoral roll had been filed for hearing before 19 appellate tribunals and there were over a lakh appeals pending before each of these tribunals.**
- **The poll body had locked in the electoral roll for the State on April 9, days ahead of the polling on April 23 and 29.**

- **SIR is a comprehensive, door-to-door verification and update of electoral rolls undertaken by the Election Commission of India (ECI) to ensure accurate and error-free voter lists.**
- **Legal Basis: Conducted under Section 21(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, and empowered by Article 324 of the Constitution, allowing the ECI discretionary powers to revise rolls as it deems fit.**

### **Key Features:**

- **Intensive house-to-house verification by Booth Level Officers (BLOs).**
- **Inclusion of eligible voters, deletion of duplicates, deceased, and ineligible names.**
- **Submission of documents for residency and citizenship verification.**
- **Historical Precedent: Previous SIRs have been conducted intermittently (at least nine times) since the 1950s in various states, reflecting evolving priorities like migration and delimitation.**

- **The preparation, revision, and maintenance of electoral rolls are enshrined in the Constitution of India (Articles 324, 325, 326) and governed by the Representation of the People Act, 1950.**
- **Elimination of Duplicate and Bogus Voters: It removes fraudulent or duplicate entries, including multiple registrations, preventing electoral malpractice.**
- **By eliminating ghost voters and duplicate entries, the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) reinforces the principle of “one person, one vote”, thereby strengthening public trust in democracy.**
- **Inclusion of Newly Eligible Voters: Ensures millions of first-time voters who turned 18 since the last update are included, boosting voter participation.**

- **Judicial Acceptance:** The Supreme Court in the *Mohinder Singh Gill v. The Chief Election Commissioner Case, 1977*, upheld the ECI's broad powers under Article 324 to ensure free and fair elections, including ordering re-polls if needed, and emphasised that judicial review is restricted during elections as per Article 329(b).
- It clarified that ECI can act independently if laws under Articles 327 and 328 are silent on any aspect.
- **Article 327** deals with the power of Parliament to make provision with respect to elections to the Legislature.
- **Article 328** deals with the power of the Legislature of a State to make provision with respect to elections to such Legislature.

**Q. Consider the following statements: (2021)**

- 1. In India, there is no law restricting the candidates from contesting in one Lok Sabha election from three constituencies.**
- 2. In the 1991 Lok Sabha Election, Shri Devi Lal contested from three Lok Sabha constituencies.**
- 3. As per the existing rules, if a candidate contests in one Lok Sabha election from many constituencies, his/her party should bear the cost of bye-elections to the constituencies vacated by him/her winning in all the constituencies.**

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

**(a) 1 only**

**(b) 2 only**

**(c) 1 and 3**

**(d) 2 and 3**

## Parched again

Bengaluru is treating water supply as infinitely expandable

**W**hile Karnataka as a whole is improving its water security, Bengaluru is dealing with extreme groundwater withdrawal. The State drew 66% of the groundwater that it could sustainably extract in 2025, but Bengaluru East Taluka drew 378%. The sustainably extractable volume of groundwater is based on how much withdrawal will deplete the aquifer, so while 378% does not mean Bengaluru East has depleted its groundwater, it is reminiscent of an ongoing crisis that has, once again, turned acute. The Bengaluru region lies on crystalline rock that already stores little water and recharges slowly. The city further concentrates demand in areas with higher population density and per-capita consumption, including ‘tech parks’ and apartment complexes. The built-up area of such urban infrastructure also suppresses recharge by percolating rainwater. A growing fraction of the population depends on water from the Cauvery, which comes with a high expansion cost. Thus, the problem has a natural basis but has been compounded over the years by inconsiderate urbanisation, where the costs – monetary and, increasingly, existential – are being passed on to the populace.

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In 2024, a weak monsoon left nearly half of Bengaluru’s 14,000 borewells dry. The government launched a project to supply 775 million litres per day to 110 villages and lower groundwater stress. But to date, the project has achieved only midway coverage, leaving many residents still banking on tankers. A 2026 study found that the crisis has since moved to Koramangala and Hebbal. The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board has also been using treated sewage water to recharge lakes. It seems Bengaluru is treating supply as infinitely expandable when it is not. Its preference for grey over green infrastructure has sealed the ground against replenishment while the increasing demand liquidates ecological capital. The city does not manage its pipeline supply, groundwater, and wastewater together, allowing consumers to default to the most convenient solution: tankers. Authorities need to minimise distribution losses and penalise overextraction and mandate 100% decentralised wastewater recycling for all non-potable uses. The ideal long-term solution remains unchanged: Bengaluru needs to become a ‘sponge city’. This includes restoring the connections between lakes and wells to capture monsoon runoff, thus aligning land-use planning with the recharge capacity of each taluka, and overall sealing the ground less and increasing absorption on the surface.

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- **The State drew 66% of the groundwater that it could sustainably extract in 2025, but Bengaluru East Taluka drew 378%.**
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- **The Bengaluru region lies on crystalline rock that already stores little water and recharges slowly.**
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- **The built-up area of such urban infrastructure also suppresses recharge by percolating rainwater.**
- **A growing fraction of the population depends on water from the Cauvery, which comes with a high expansion cost.**
- **Thus, the problem has a natural basis but has been compounded over the years by inconsiderate urbanisation, where the costs — monetary and, increasingly, existential — are being passed on to the populace.**
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- **The ideal long-term solution remains unchanged: Bengaluru needs to become a ‘sponge city’.**
- **This includes restoring the connections between lakes and wells to capture monsoon runoff, thus aligning land-use planning with the recharge capacity of each taluka, and overall sealing the ground less and increasing absorption on the surface.**

# The fallout of the crisis in West Asia on India's economy

Page No.6 , GS 3

**W**hile the Russia-Ukraine war shows no sign of abatement, another major crisis in West Asia has hit the global economy. This war has disrupted production, storage, and transport of various energy products including crude oil, natural gas and fertilizers, and has led to supply disruptions and increase in sectoral prices. There is a serious, although partial, blockade of the Strait of Hormuz thereby restricting the passage of crude oil, gas and other petroleum products as well as other goods. Even if matters get resolved in the near future, it may take considerable time for the normalisation of the supply chain. However, even the temporary ceasefire that has been agreed to has brought down the Brent crude oil price from \$109.3 per barrel as on April 7 and 8, to about \$95.

India has been diversifying its sources of imported crude oil, gas and fertilizers. At present, India is importing crude oil from 41 source countries. In fact, India's dependence on imported crude has been increasing in recent years and it is presently close to 90%.

The relevant crude price index for India is the Indian crude basket comprising Sweet grade (Brent) and Sour grade (Oman and Dubai average), which remains linked to the global crude oil price (average of Brent, WTI and Dubai). Considering the average of March 2026, the Indian crude basket was about 19% higher than the global crude price. The rise in the price of the Indian crude basket in March 2026 was over 64.5% that of February 2026 on average, even though the price increase for end-users were moderated.

With the temporary ceasefire, the Indian basket has come down to \$120.28 per barrel on April 9, 2026 from the peak of \$157 per barrel on March 23, 2026 – that is by a margin of \$37/bbl.

## Multiple stressors

The impact on the Indian economy will come through several channels. First is supply disruptions. Supply bottlenecks will affect production processes primarily in energy intensive sectors. However, any disruptions in these sectors would cascade into other sections of the economy, with the affected industries likely being textiles, paints, chemicals, fertilizers, cement and tyres among others. The non-availability of fertilizers and other chemicals particularly would affect the agricultural output in the Kharif season which will start from June.

Secondly, logistics. Storage and transport are



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**D. K. Srivastava**

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Madras School of  
Economics

The non-availability of fertilizers and other chemicals would affect the agricultural output in the Kharif season which will start from June

highly energy intensive. Increased logistics costs will lead to the increase in the prices of all final products through cascading.

Third, Indian exports will take a hit from both demand and supply sides. The demand side will be affected not only due to disruptions in West Asia but also due to a slowdown in other countries, including the U.S. and Europe. The share of India's merchandise exports to West Asian countries was 16.4% of total merchandise exports in 2024-25. The depreciation of the rupee, that is already underway, may partially help Indian exporters.

Fourth, exchange rate and remittances will be affected. The Indian rupee has been depreciating in recent months. The rate of depreciation has accelerated after the start of the West Asian crisis. As global crude prices, and the prices of fertilizers and other energy products also increase, there would be an additional demand for the dollar and other hard currencies; the exchange rate will be under pressure. Moreover, India receives a considerable number of remittances from Indians employed in the Gulf countries. These remittances are bound to go down, adding further pressure on the exchange rate. However, any improvement in the overall environment may lift the rupee.

In fact, the sharp decline in the value of the rupee has been caused mainly by the substantial capital outflows triggered by uncertainty and fear. When the war ends, the value of the rupee will also rise. The net Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI) outflows in March 2026 amounted to \$13.6 billion, which is huge.

Fifth, is the current account deficit. The fall in the volume of Indian exports is expected to be accompanied by an increase in the value of Indian imports leading to an increase in the current account deficit, if the war continues. Sixth is rising inflation. Cost push inflation would affect relative prices in sectors that are directly affected such as petroleum products, fertilizers etc. However, if liquidity also increases, there would be pressure on overall inflation. The country needs to avoid any large liquidity increases.

And finally is the fiscal deficit problem. The Government of India may have to provide additional subsidies to Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) as it insists on keeping retail prices at present levels. While to some extent, the reduction in excise duty on petrol and diesel would reduce losses for the OMCs, it would be a direct revenue loss to the Indian government. If

real GDP growth goes down and profit margins fall for major producers, there will be an adverse impact on the government's tax revenues. State finances will also be affected due to lower economic activity. Their share in tax devolution would be adversely affected if the Central government's tax revenues go down. States may also face pressure to reduce sales tax/VAT on petroleum products. In fact, the government must rethink the reduction in excise duty on petroleum products. The present move is due to the ongoing State elections. After that, the retail prices should go up, if the war resumes. In that situation, the higher price may constrain demand which is desirable.

## Myriad policy responses

As per information shared by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) chairman on March 27, the fortnightly loss on account of lower excise duties on petrol and diesel will be ₹7,000 crore whereas there would be a gain of ₹1,500 crore per fortnight on account of export tax on Aviation Turbine Fuel. This implies a net loss of ₹5,500 crore per fortnight, translating into an annual loss in tax revenue of about ₹1,32,000 crore for the government, should the crisis continue for the full year.

In all likelihood, food, fertilizers and petroleum subsidies would be higher than their budget estimates for 2026-27. As already mentioned, retail prices must be allowed to go up so long as crude prices remain high.

Although it is difficult to estimate the quantitative impact of the current crisis, some impacts were given by the RBI in its October 2025 Monetary Policy Report. In their estimates, for every 10% increase in the price of the Indian crude basket from a baseline of \$70 per barrel, that is an increase of \$7 per barrel, real GDP growth may fall by around 15 basis points. Further, assuming full pass-through to domestic product prices, inflation would be higher by 30 basis points.

As on April 9, 2026, the price of the Indian crude basket at \$120.28 per barrel has exceeded the baseline by about \$50 per barrel. If this margin of increase becomes applicable for the whole year, real GDP growth may fall from baseline estimates by 1 percentage point and inflation may increase by more than 2 percentage points. While these effects would be lower if the crisis gets resolved quickly, much depends upon when true peace will dawn.

*Views expressed are personal.*

- **While the Russia-Ukraine war shows no sign of abatement, another major crisis in West Asia has hit the global economy.**
- **This war has disrupted production, storage, and transport of various energy products including crude oil, natural gas and fertilizers, and has led to supply disruptions and increase in sectoral prices.**
- **There is a serious, although partial, blockade of the Strait of Hormuz thereby restricting the passage of crude oil, gas and other petroleum products as well as other goods.**
- **Even if matters get resolved in the near future, it may take considerable time for the normalisation of the supply chain.**

- **India has been diversifying its sources of imported crude oil, gas and fertilizers. At present, India is importing crude oil from 41 source countries.**
- **In fact, India's dependence on imported crude has been increasing in recent years and it is presently close to 90%.**
- **The impact on the Indian economy will come through several channels. First is supply disruptions. Supply bottlenecks will affect production processes primarily in energy intensive sectors.**
- **Secondly, logistics. Storage and transport are highly energy intensive. Increased logistics costs will lead to the increase in the prices of all final products through cascading.**
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- **Fourth, exchange rate and remittances will be affected. The Indian rupee has been depreciating in recent months.**
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- **And finally is the fiscal deficit problem.**

Thank You!

