

# DAILY PT POINTERS

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## The Hindu-Polity and Governance(GSII)-Page 11

### Do coalition governments slow down the economic reforms agenda?



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is Associate Professor of Politics and Public Administration, and holds the leadership research chair at London Metropolitan University. He is also the author of 'The End of the Coalition Politics in India'.

#### PARLEY

Until the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, when the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) won 282 seats and Prime Minister Narendra Modi rode to power, India had had coalition governments for 21 years. Ten years later, the BJP has 240 seats in the Lok Sabha and India once again has a coalition government in power. Each had stated that coalition politics and a weakened mandate for the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) could make it challenging to pass legislation on the more ambitious parts of the reform agenda. Do coalition governments slow down the economic reforms agenda? C.K. Kalliah and Sanjay Ruparelia discuss the question in a conversation moderated by Subhansu K. Nair. Edited excerpts:

**Do coalition governments end up making too many policy concessions?**

**C.K. Kalliah:** This question is based on two assumptions. The first is that a coalition government is a compromise between the national order of things and single-party governments are an aberration and will therefore have undesirable consequences. Comparative studies show that this is not necessarily true. Second, that a single-party government behaves as a unitary actor. Once we remove these two assumptions, we will see that differences between coalition and single-party governments have actually reduced. There will always be competing ideas and interests and as a consequence, we are likely to see policy compromises and bargains in India. The only difference, perhaps, is that in multi-party governments, much of it (compromises) takes place in the public, so in a way they are more transparent. So far, India's experience with coalition governments has not been bad. There have been checks and balances which have helped governments work better as compared to single-party governments.

**Sanjay Ruparelia:** Economic growth requires reform. We often believe that reform requires decisiveness, and that decisiveness, in turn, requires a single-party majority government. But it is more complicated than that, since the form of government is just one of the many factors influencing economic growth. The process of liberalisation of the economy tentatively began under the Janata Party government and was then taken forward by the Congress under Rajiv Gandhi and the National Front government. The minority government of Narasimha Rao introduced it fully. And then it accelerated under the United Front government and since.

On the question of social policy reforms, earlier coalition governments, despite their rhetorical commitment to a more social



Prime Minister Narendra Modi in conversation with IUP chief H. Chandrababu Naidu and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar in New Delhi.

democratic agenda, actually had quite a few setbacks. The right-based welfare paradigm was introduced under the United Progressive Alliance (UPA). If you have to negotiate and bargain and compromise in order to settle on a policy, it is true that there can be multiple win points that coalition partners can exercise. As Manoj Singh Ahirwalia once said, "There is a strong consensus for weak reforms". But the fact that parties are engaging in negotiations means that there is less radical change and there is more policy stability that facilitates investments over the longer term. The lowest checks and balances are seen under single party majority governments. They could lead to rather capricious policy decisions. We have seen some of those in the last decade.

**How have coalition governments in the past performed on the economic agenda?**

**KKK:** There has actually been a great deal of continuity between governments and their policies, and one has not seen any major reversals. Policy change has been gradual and incremental since 1991. Public bargaining between parties signals that different viewpoints are being heard and accommodated. Coalitions over a period of time have institutionalised certain decision-making mechanisms which accommodate different voices. The V.P. Singh government had six committees to examine the most pressing issues of the time. These evolved and in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government, they took the form of 'Groups of Ministers', and they continued in the UPA era too.

When it comes to reforms, coalition governments have worked better. In contrast, in a single-party government, there have been decisions, such as the farm laws, which were taken without putting everyone on board. Something like that would not have probably happened in a coalition because there would have been greater dialogue.

**SR:** Institutions that are meant to facilitate and promote Centre-State relations are more



The more people involved in decision-making, the more likely that the policy will be stable and continue for longer.  
**C.K. KALLIAH**

activated in coalition governments. That is unsurprising because the allies are often regional parties. You have a more informed policy-making process even if it might be more turbulent.

**Dialogues can also get acrimonious in coalition governments. And have there been examples where reforms have been stalled?**

**SR:** Absolutely. The Janata Party government had an ideological commitment to pro-poor, pro-labour policies, but we did see more industrial de-rating and an increase in agricultural subsidies to relatively well-off communities and castes. The fiscal deficit drove up again. India suffered a recession at the end of that government. But there was also a world-class recession then. Overall, I don't think there is something inherently worse in coalition governments. Rajiv Gandhi's government had the largest seat majority in the history of independent India. It tried to pursue economic liberalisation. That speeds ground a bit because of internal checks within the Congress.

**KKK:** Often we look only at the outcome and not how the decision was arrived at. The more people involved in the decision-making, the more likely that the policy will be stable and continue for longer. The decision-making process is as important as the decision itself.

**In the last few years, the debate has sharpened on the States' share in the divisible pool of taxes. Can States expect to get a larger share now that a coalition government is in power?**

**SR:** The role of State governments is higher in a national coalition. It is also ironic that we have to ask this question considering that when Prime Minister Narendra Modi first took power, he pledged to strengthen Indian federalism by embracing a concept of 'cooperative federalism'. The government also accepted the 14th Finance Commission's recommendations to increase the State governments' share of the divisible pool of taxes. But over the last decade, the Centre's share of revenue increased because of the introduction of special cesses which were not part of the divisible pool. Second, the Planning Commission was dissolved. It was a flawed institution, but it did provide an institutional space for negotiation. M.J. Akbar is a

far more technocratic space and much more beholden to the Centre. In the last decade there has been political centralisation of decision-making right up to the Prime Minister's office. There is also a greater control over social welfare benefits and their packaging as directly coming from the Union government. That is what is fueling a lot of the discontent.

**KKK:** The division of taxes between the Centre and State is a complex problem. The amount of funds available to the States is also a function of the way in which the economy is functioning. When the economy does well, there will be more to go around, and vice versa. At the same time, we also need to take into account, for instance, the regional and income disparities between States. And then there is the vertical imbalance between the Centre and the States. Another source of tension is with regard to sharing of taxes under GST. The negotiations went on for 17 years. But when the system was adopted, not all States were on board. The goods that were taxed at a higher rate in the pre-GST regime were put under a lower bracket, so there was a decline in revenue for the States. The number of commodities that were taxed at a higher rate under the pre-GST regime was reduced. I think either the States' voices were either not heard, or the States did not articulate their voices effectively. Overall, the GST architecture does not favour the States.

**The NDA is just beginning its term. Do you see their constituents have a similar economic vision?**

**SR:** The BJP needs its allies to have a majority, but all the important ministries remain with the BJP. It is an open question whether the style of decision-making and governance that we have seen in the last 10 years will change substantially or not. As far as the economic outlook of the allies is concerned, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu was the earliest liberator. The difference is about the distribution of power and the style of decision-making.

**KKK:** I don't see any conflict in terms of economic policies as such as parties across the spectrum are sold on economic reforms. The only possible difference would be the pace of decisions. This also depends on how the decisions are taken and the mechanisms that are used. That might give us a clue to whether economic reforms get stalled or economic reforms are taken forward.



To listen to the full interview, scan the code or go to the link [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com)

- A coalition government involves more than one political party or individuals working together, sometimes with differing viewpoints.
- Coalitions can be either a) pre-poll and b) post-election. Generally, member political parties in a coalition form a political alliance and adopt a common programme.
- The main aim of a coalition government is to ensure majority control of the parliament or legislative assembly and the implementation of a common minimum programme.
- In India, the first coalition government to complete its full-term was the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led National Democratic Alliance from 1999 to 2004.

The Hindu-Economy(GSIII)Page 17

## GST Council to meet for the first time this year on June 22

**Vikas Dhoot**  
NEW DELHI

The Centre has decided to convene a meeting of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council on June 22, eight-and-a-half months after its last meeting, the Finance Ministry said on Thursday.

“The 53rd meeting of the GST Council will be held on 22nd June, 2024 at New Delhi,” a ministry statement informed.

The Council that is generally expected to meet ev-

- The GST Council is a constitutional body responsible for making recommendations on issues related to the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in India. The first meeting of the GST Council was held on September 22-23, 2016, and since then, the Council meets periodically to deliberate and decide on various issues related to GST.
- The GST Council, consisting of the Union Finance Minister and representatives from all States and Union Territories, was established to make decisions on various aspects of GST, including tax rates, exemptions, and administrative procedures. It played a crucial role in shaping the GST framework in India. On 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2017, GST laws were implemented, replacing a complex web of Central and State taxes.



## The Hindu : \_GS 3-S&T –Page 22

### Rapid, diagnostic test for UTIs may help stem super bug crisis

The Longitude Prize-winning device offers an affordable, quick, point-of-care test for urinary tract infections, which promises to revolutionise infection management and global efforts to tackle antimicrobial resistance

Abdul Ghaffar

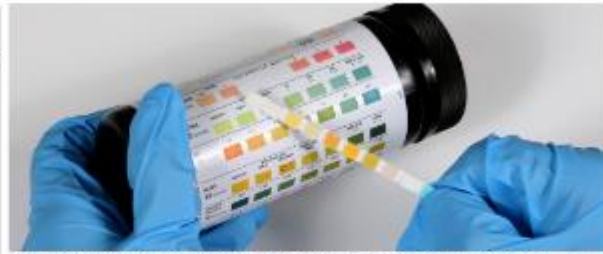
This week, a prize was announced that is likely to have far-reaching implications in the world of health care. Despite its importance, most of the world's attention is focused on the winner of the Longitude Prize is poised to spearhead a revolution in the field of infection management and global efforts to tackle antimicrobial resistance. The device is the PA-100 Longitude Prize on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), first announced in 2014, awarded to Sygmex Astrego in a high-tech, transformative, point-of-care test for UTIs (Urinary Tract Infection).

Rapid diagnostic tests are changing the approach to antibiotics, choosing the appropriate antibiotic for the correct patient at the optimal time — a fundamental to curing, then and containing the superbug crisis. Rapid diagnostics are poised to be central in this effort. The winner of the Longitude Prize is set to spearhead the use of emerging rapid diagnostic technologies in a transformative manner. The application for the Longitude Prize, the Longitude Prize, suggesting that through infection management, we can look forward to a future protected from the threat of antimicrobial resistance.

The crisis in antibiotic resistance is a global health crisis. In 2019, an estimated 1.2 million people died from antibiotic resistance, and an estimated 10 million deaths a year by 2050, with a similar impact. The global economy may lose \$4.4 trillion by 2050 and up to \$100 trillion by 2080 due to the AMR crisis.

What does the prize mean? Most advanced tests in need of practice are PCR-based. In the PA-100 AST System from Sysmex Astrego, has developed a transformative technology based on a phenotypic test. The test identifies the bacteria causing the urinary tract infection and performs antibiotic susceptibility testing (AST) to determine the effective antibiotic. For the specific patient, within 45 minutes.

The test costs a single-use cartridge, the size of a matchbox. Less than half a millilitre of the urine is added to this cartridge. Inside the cartridge, a trapped >10,000 microbe traps in a sterile array and exposed to the different antibiotics at five different concentrations. The cartridge is immersed in a reader instrument the size of a shoe box, where bacterial growth is monitored by phase-contrast imaging. The reader identifies a specific antibiotic or resistance for each antibiotic in 30-45 minutes. This supports doctors and health workers in their clinical decision making at the point of care, and opening



The device can be used in a variety of settings, from the point-of-care to the laboratory. It is designed to be used in a variety of settings, from the point-of-care to the laboratory.

lines use for the majority of patients. Accurate, rapid diagnosis of bacterial infection that helps doctors and health workers manage and target antibiotics, will slow the development and spread of antibiotic resistance infections, improve health care and potentially save millions of lives.

The test represents a huge advance over the current turnaround time of 2-3 days. The test will help doctors prescribe the right antibiotic at the right time, rather than waiting for 3 days and not knowing if an empirical antibiotic prescription. The test can be performed at a doctor's clinic rather than sending the urine sample to a laboratory. When a patient with symptoms of a urinary infection visits a doctor, if a new technology is used, the doctor will know within 45 minutes whether the patient has a urinary infection or not and if there is an infection, in which antibiotic will work. The test is transformative, accurate, and affordable for patients and doctors.

Currently, there are two types of tests available to diagnose urinary infections. The first one is the urine dipstick test that can be done as a point-of-care test. Point-of-care diagnostic tests are tests that can be performed in the clinic, at emergency departments, hospital wards, or pharmacy counters, without the need to send the sample to a laboratory. The advantage of the dipstick is that results are available in a couple of minutes, which helps doctors decide whether to start antibiotics or not. Unfortunately, accuracy is not more than 50-60%. Even if the doctor carries out a dipstick despite its limitations, the test doesn't help the doctor choose the right antibiotic. For this, the urine sample must be sent to the laboratory for culture. The culture results take a minimum of 2-3 days. The doctor cannot wait 2-3 days to start an antibiotic, so, even if the doctor wants a



The PA-100 AST System identifies the bacteria causing the infection and performs antibiotic susceptibility testing to determine an effective antibiotic in under 45 minutes.

standard procedure, before the culture results are ready. By this time, the patient has already completed a full or partial course of antibiotics. Such kind of antibiotic prescriptions are a major cause of the antibiotic resistance crisis, especially in countries like India. A transformative, rapid point-of-care diagnostic test that is accurate and affordable has the potential to revolutionise urinary tract infection treatment in India and worldwide.

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transformative, rapid, point-of-care test for urinary tract infections, which promises to revolutionise infection management and global efforts to tackle antimicrobial resistance.

In the 18th century, the accuracy of ships was low as it was because sailors could not determine the position of the ship at sea. If a ship doesn't know where it is, it risks being shipwrecked. To determine the position of a ship, both its latitude and longitude are needed. Latitude was easier to measure by observing the sun, moon, and stars, but longitude was a mystery.

The British government announced the Longitude Prize for an invention that helps calculate longitude. With this prize, a mathematician developed an ingenious device that could calculate longitude precisely and soon the prize.

200 years after the first Longitude Prize, Britain launched a second Longitude Prize. The public was asked to solve a major challenge that would have a wide impact on global navigation, land surveys, and other industries. The prize, noted for AMR (Antimicrobial Resistance). A £10 million Longitude Prize was announced in 2014. Of this, £2 million was awarded to various inventors to refine the technology. The first winner received £5 million. The Longitude Prize on AMR intends to incentivise the creation of new diagnostic tests that is a matter of minutes, can identify whether an infection is bacterial and, if so, the right antibiotic to prescribe to slow the spread of antibiotic resistant infections. The goal is to replace the 2-3 day lab test process that doctors and patients must currently endure, and end "jar in jar" prescribing that is prevalent as a result. This will promote the development of antibiotic resistance. Dr. Abdul Ghaffar, Consultant in Infectious Diseases, Apollo Spectra, Chennai, and a member of the

- The PA-100 AST System from Sysmex Astrego is a high-tech, transformative, rapid, point-of-care test for UTIs (Urinary Tract Infection).
- It is developed by the Sweden-based in vitro diagnostic company.
- The Longitude Prize-winning device offers an affordable, quick, point-of-care test for urinary tract infections, which promises to revolutionise infection management and global efforts to tackle antibiotic resistance
- PA-100 AST System from Sysmex Astrego has developed a transformative technology based on a phenotypic test. This test identifies the bacteria causing the urinary tract infection and performs antibiotic susceptibility testing (AST) to determine the effective antibiotic for the specific patient in under 45 minutes.
- Do you know? Longitude Prize on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), first announced in 2014, In 1714, the British government announced the Longitude Prize to solve the longitude problem, literally.

The Hindu :\_GS 3-S&T –Page 22



Sriram Natarajan (fourth from left), founder and CEO, Molbio, was part of a panel at the WHA, discussing point-of-care diagnostics in India, as per a press release. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## *India-made TB diagnostics tech wins acclaim at World Health Assembly*

**The Hindu Bureau**

The Truenat platform, a rapid molecular test for the diagnosis of pulmonary, extrapulmonary, and rifampicin-resistant tuberculosis, that was developed in India, has been hailed for its role in combating TB and as a possible component of global healthcare solutions at the recently held 77th World Health Assembly in Geneva.

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- Developed by Goa-based Molbio, a point-of-care molecular diagnostics company, Truenat was first launched in 2017 and is a real-time quantitative micro-PCR system. It is a portable, battery-operated machine that can be deployed at labs, health centres, and in the field. Truenat delivers results from samples in less than an hour and can test for over 40 diseases.

## The Hindu : \_GS 2-Health –Page 22

### A comprehensive immunisation schedule for women is ready

The Hindu Bureau

The Federation of Obstetric and Gynaecological Societies of India (FOGSI) recently unveiled a comprehensive immunisation schedule for women that provides a list of essential vaccines that adult women should receive, and the recommended frequency of each vaccine. Actor and women's health champion Kajal Aggarwal unveiled the immunisation schedule at an event in Mumbai recently.

The importance of immunisation and vaccine preventable diseases in women cannot be overstated. A recent report highlighted that women spend 25% more time in poor health compared to men. Vaccination can help change this and safeguard women from vaccine-preventable diseases, contributing to an improved quality of life. The report, jointly written by the World Economic Forum and consultant McKinsey, 'Closing the Women's Health Gap: A \$1 Trillion Opportunity to Improve



Women spend 25% more time in poor health compared to men. AP

showcases how the narrowing of the women's health gap would allow 3.9 billion women to live healthier, higher-quality lives.

**Preventive health care** Jaydeep Tank, President of FOGSI said, "The launch of FOGSI's updated immunisation schedule for women represents a significant milestone in preventive health care for women. This resource will provide a clear actionable roadmap for both women and doc-

increased awareness about vaccination. Immunisation is critical in protecting women against vaccine-preventable diseases and thereby helping reduce its burden in India. I firmly believe that this schedule will make a substantial contribution to the overall health and well-being of women in India and benefit society as a whole."

Explaining how vaccination is not merely for children and that it is recommended at different points of time in life to prevent or

diseases, Hrishikesh Pai, immediate past president of FOGSI and currently trustee (Asia-Oceania) at The International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics Trustee, added that adult vaccine coverage in India is almost negligible and this needed to change.

"There is an urgent need to sensitise people and health care providers on adult vaccination as it can help save millions of lives in India. Initiatives like the revised immunisation schedule can go a long way in

protecting more people in future."

"The tendency of women to play down their own health concerns is a factor that must be acknowledged and prepared for, when looking at adult vaccination. Actor Kajal Aggarwal said: "As a mother, my priority is to always be there for my children. And that can only happen when I prioritise my own health. Women should take proactive steps to protect themselves from preventable diseases like cervical cancer. But the challenge often lies in not knowing where to start. I urge all women, regardless of age or stage in life, to take control of their health and consult their gynaecologist today to learn more about the right vaccines for them."

#### Vulnerable period

A vulnerable period for women is after child birth, when the woman's body changes. After birth a woman's immune and hormonal system undergo changes which increase the risk of infection. "For example, 31% of women are at a high-risk of an HPV infec-

tion plays a crucial role in a new mother's health. The immunisation schedule specifically highlights vaccinations that are of utmost importance to new mothers," explained Madhuri Patel, secretary general of FOGSI.

In this venture, FOGSI and MSD Pharma have collaborated to raise awareness about women's immunisation and help prevent vaccine-preventable diseases across India. Priya Ganeshkumar, Chairperson of the FOGSI oncology committee and Co-ordinator for FOGSI Mahila Kavach Kendra, pointed out how studies have shown that increasing physicians' knowledge and awareness on vaccines significantly improves vaccination rates. "FOGSI has therefore decided to provide their member gynaecologists the FOGSI Handbook on Prevention & Management of Cervical Cancer and has also recently launched FOGSI FOCUS PLUS on Adult Women Vaccination, which will build confidence amongst the gynaecologists to counsel their patients on the available

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## The Hindu- GS 3/Economy

### CAMSRep unveils Bima Central to plan insurance portfolio

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

CAMSRep (CAMS Insurance Repository Services) unveiled Bima Central, a one-stop platform for simplifying insurance portfolio management.

Bima Central allows users to manage life, health and motor policies through their secure e-insurance account (eIA), said CAMS wholly owned subsidiary in a statement.

Registered users of eIA will get access to Bima Central for managing their policies with various insurers, with features such as simplified policy information, renewals and reminders, profile management of

**The interface allows users to manage policies through their secure e-insurance account**

personal data and nominee information, policy calendar, and more.

The current interface is available in English and Hindi on Android, iOS and on the web portal.

SBI General has been the anchor insurer from the research and design phase. ICICI Prudential Life, Star Union Daichi Life, TATA AIA and Aditya Birla Health are at various stages of integrating their services with Bima Central.

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# HEADLINES OF THE DAY

## The Hindu –IR(GSII)



- The United Nations has said today that a record-breaking 120 million people were living in a forcibly displaced status globally between the beginning of 2023 to May 2024.
- The new data was revealed in the Global Trends report by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR). The report said, that around 117.3 million people remained forcibly displaced at the end of 2023, having been forced to flee persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations and events seriously disturbing public order. UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi told reporters that conflict remains an important driver of mass displacement.
- Myanmar, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Palestine, Congo, Somalia, Haiti, Syria and Armenia were among the countries mentioned where conflict and violence had forced people to seek safety elsewhere.



## Indian Express:GS 2-Polity and Governance (GSII)

### Red Fort case: standards for awarding death & President's 'mercy' power

AJOY SINHA KARPURAM  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 13

PRESIDENT DR RAJENDRA PRASAD MURMU has rejected a mercy petition filed by Pakistan national Mohammed Arif who was sentenced to death for the December 22, 2000 terrorist attack at the Red Fort in which three people including two Army jawans were killed. The President's decision, made on May 27, came after Arif failed to obtain relief from the Delhi High Court and Supreme Court in his appeals against a trial court order of October 2005. He can challenge the President's decision and prolong the proceedings further.

#### What standard do courts apply in death sentence cases?

In 1980, the Supreme Court (Bachan Singh v. State of Punjab) upheld the constitutionality of the death penalty, but established important guardrails. "Judges", the court said, "should never be bloodthirsty", and the death penalty should not be awarded "save in the rarest of rare cases when the alternative option is unquestionably foreclosed", and all possible mitigating circumstances have been considered. The court has reaffirmed the "rarest of rare" standard in several decisions since then.

The Report of the 262nd Law Commission published in 2015 recommended the "absolute abolition" of the death penalty "for all crimes other than terrorism related offences and waging war". On the President's power to "grant pardons, etc., and to suspend, remit or commute sentences in certain cases" (Article 72 of the Constitution), the Law Commission Report said these 'mercy powers' provided additional protection against possible miscarriage of justice and, "therefore, cases found unfit for mercy merit capital punishment."

#### What happened during the attack at the Red Fort? How was Arif arrested?

Late evening on December 22, 2000, two Lashkar-e-Tayyiba terrorists scaled into the Red Fort and opened fire, killing two jawans of the Army's Rajputana Rifles regiment and a civilian security guard before escaping. Investigators made a breakthrough after assault rifles were found abandoned outside the Red Fort, and four detonators with tags which said in Urdu: "Khobarah. Grenade firing ke liye tayyar hai. Safety pin sirf humle ke waqt nikalain", according to reporting by The Indian Express. A polythene bag containing cash and a slip with a mobile phone number on it was also found, which led Delhi Police to Arif alias Asfaq. He was arrested on December 26,



In November 2022, the Supreme Court rejected Arif's review petition. Archive

along with his wife Rehana Yusuf Farooqi. Arif directed police to one Abu Shyama alias Faizal, who was killed in an encounter at his hideout in Bata House, Okhla. Another alleged militant identified as Abu Sufian was killed in an encounter in Srinagar. Delhi Police filed a chargesheet against Arif and 21 others on February 20, 2001, and a supplementary chargesheet on March 25 that year. The trial of 11 accused began on September 11, 2001. Over the next three years, the prosecution examined 235 witnesses, and the trial court reserved judgment on October 14, 2005. On October 31, the court found seven of the accused guilty,

**EXPLAINED  
LAW**

and sentenced Arif to death. How did Arif's appeals process progress? In 2007, the Delhi High Court confirmed the trial court's decision to sentence Arif to death. Arif then appealed to the Supreme Court. On August 10, 2011, a Bench of Justices V S Sirpurkar and T S Thakur rejected the appeal, calling the attack an "undeclared war by some foreign mercenaries". Providing a historical overview of Red Fort to highlight its significance as a national monument, the Bench stated that "even without any reference to any other case law", the case

satisfies the standard of the "rarest of rare". Arif continued to file petitions at the Supreme Court against the death sentence. The first review petition was rejected in August 2012, and the following curative petition – where the apex court can only interfere if there is an obvious error in its decision – was rejected in January 2014.

That same year, Arif filed another writ petition, arguing that cases arising out of a death sentence should be heard by a Bench of three judges or more, and that his 2012 review petition should be heard afresh. A five-judge Constitution Bench in September 2014 agreed with his arguments, and held that "at least three judicially trained minds need to apply their minds at the final stage of the journey of a convict on death row".

The case was then placed before a three-judge Bench led by former Chief Justice of India U U Lalit. On November 3, 2022, nearly 22 years after the attack, the Bench rejected Arif's plea, finding that "there was a direct attack on the unity, integrity and sovereignty of India."

The court set aside findings based on call data records, but held that "other circumstances on record do clearly spell out and prove beyond any doubt the involvement of the review petitioner in the crime...".

President Murmu received Arif's mercy petition on May 15, 2024.

#### What can happen here onward?

Arif has the option of challenging the President's rejection of his mercy petition.

As a procedural level, the apex court has held that the President's power must be exercised based on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers, and can be challenged on multiple grounds – including that relevant material was not considered, the power was exercised based on political considerations, or that there was no application of mind.

The top court has also commuted the death sentence in cases of inordinate delay in deciding mercy petitions, such as in the case of *Shatrughan Chauhan v. State of UP* (2014).

The court also commuted the sentence of one Gurmeet Singh after he spent 27 years in custody (and 21 years on death row). The court found that there was an inordinate delay in deciding his mercy petition, which was disposed of in March 2013 more than seven years after the Supreme Court first upheld the death sentence.

In April 2023, the Supreme Court declined to interfere with an order of the Bombay High Court, which commuted the death sentence awarded to a woman and her sister on grounds of inordinate delay in deciding the mercy petitions of the accused.

Arif has spent over 23 years in custody, and close to 19 years under a death sentence.

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# HEADLINES OF THE DAY



## PIB:GS 3-Economy

Ministry of Commerce & Industry

APEDA facilitates first Consignment of MD 2 Pineapples from India to UAE

Posted On: 13 JUN 2024 11:54AM by PIB Delhi

- In a significant stride for India's fresh fruit export sector, the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, facilitated the successful export of the first consignment of MD 2 variety pineapples to the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- The MD 2 pineapple, also known as "Golden Ripe" or "Super Sweet," has become the gold standard in the pineapple industry, with significant cultivation in countries like Costa Rica, the Philippines, and Thailand.