

# DAILY PT POINTERS

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## India, Spain slam attacks on UN troops in Lebanon

Inviolability of UN premises, sanctity of their mandate must be respected, Modi and Spanish PM Pedro Sanchez say; the two leaders open the C-295 aircraft manufacturing unit in Vadodara

Dinakar Peri  
NEW DELHI

India and Spain on Monday condemned the attacks on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and highlighted that the safety and security of peacekeepers are of “paramount importance and must be ensured by all.” The two countries are major troop-contributing nations to the UNIFIL.

The inviolability of UN premises and the sanctity of their mandate must be respected, a joint statement, issued after talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Spanish counterpart Pedro Sanchez, said.

The UNIFIL has come under a series of attacks since the Israeli offensive



**Aiming high:** Narendra Modi with Pedro Sanchez at the inauguration of a Tata aircraft complex in Vadodara on Monday. ANI

in Lebanon, and on several occasions, peacekeepers and positions were targeted by the Israel Defence Forces. India has 903 troops under the UNIFIL, while Spain has 676 soldiers as on October 20.

Earlier in the day, the two leaders inaugurated the final assembly line

(FAL) for the C-295 transport aircraft in Vadodara, set up by Tata Advanced Systems Limited in collaboration with Airbus under a ₹21,935-crore contract signed in Spain in September 2021 for 56 aircraft. These are meant to replace the legacy Avro aircraft in service with the Indian Air

Force (IAF). The FAL will manufacture 40 of the 56 aircraft, while 16 aircraft will come in fly-away condition.

India's defence exports have increased 30 times over the past decade, with the country now exporting equipment to more than 100 countries, Mr. Modi said. He expressed confidence that the C-295 transport aircraft manufactured at the Tata aircraft complex will be exported worldwide in future.

The IAF has inducted six aircraft in its 11 Squadron based in Vadodara. The first C-295 aircraft was delivered in September 2023 and the last of the 16 fly-away aircraft will be delivered by August 2025.

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### The burgeoning expenditure of elections

What is the difference between the election expenditure limits for candidates and political parties in India? How does the U.S. handle election financing, and what role do Super PACs play? Why is curbing the illegal distribution of cash to voters crucial?

#### EXPLAINER

Rangarajan R.

#### The story so far:

The total expenditure for U.S. presidential and Congressional elections in November 2024 is estimated at around U.S. \$16 billion (equivalent to ₹1,36,000 crores). According to the Centre for Media Studies (CMS), the total expenditure by various political parties for the general election to Lok Sabha this year was around ₹1,00,000 crores.



Behind the curtains: In India, candidates from all major parties breach the election expenditure limits by a wide margin. FILE PHOTO

#### What are the limits in India?

The election expenditure limit for candidates is ₹95 lakh per Lok Sabha constituency in larger States and ₹75 lakh in smaller States. With respect to Legislative Assemblies, they are ₹40 lakh and ₹28 lakh for larger and smaller States respectively. These limits are set, from time to time, by the Election Commission (EC). There are no limits on the expenditure of political parties during elections.

#### What are international standards?

In the U.S., the financing for elections happens primarily by contributions from individuals, corporations, and political action committees (PAC). While there are limits on individual and PAC contributions to candidates, various judgments of the U.S. Supreme Court have resulted in the creation of Super PACs on which there are no limits for spending. Out of the estimated expenditure in the November 2024 election cycle, around \$5.5 billion is estimated to be spent on the presidential

Congress. This humungous raise is due to large donations by organisational donors and Super PACs.

In the U.K., a political party is allowed to spend £54,000 for each constituency they contest. This translates to a limit of £35 million for parties contesting all constituencies. There are also limits placed on candidates' spending during the campaign period. It translates, per constituency, to an average of £46-49,000 during the long campaign period (beginning five months before the full term of the House of Commons ends) and £17-20,000 during the short campaign period after elections are announced.

#### What are the challenges?

Elections across the world democracies have become very expensive. Such increased expenditure that is met primarily through large donations creates an unwholesome nexus between the elected representatives and donors who seek

In India, candidates from all major political parties breach the election expenditure limits by a wide margin. Further, there are no limits on political party spending during elections. The official expenditures declared by the BJP and Congress for the 2019 election were ₹1,264 crores and ₹820 crores, respectively. However, according to a report by the CMS, ₹50,000 crore was spent by various parties during the 2019 election.

The report suggests that 35% of this money was spent on campaigns and publicity, while 25% was illegally distributed among voters. The CMS has estimated that spending during the 2024 election by various political parties was close to ₹1,00,000 crores. Such inflated election expenditure fuels corruption, resulting in a vicious cycle.

#### What can be possible reforms?

The Indrajit Gupta Committee (1998) and

partially bears the election expenditures of candidates nominated by recognised political parties. However, the feasibility and mechanism for implementing this measure are doubtful in the present context.

Simultaneous elections are touted as a panacea for addressing the issue of rising election expenditures. There are challenges on account of principles of federalism and constitutional amendments to this idea that need to be debated. It must also be noted that this mechanism may rein in campaign and publicity expenditure to some extent. However, without curbing the illegal distribution of cash to voters, any form of simultaneous election will not have a significant impact on election expenditure.

In this regard, certain practical steps to create a level playing field regarding election expenditure can be implemented if there is political will. These are based on the EC's 2016 report on 'Proposed Electoral Reforms'. Firstly, the law must be amended to explicitly provide that 'financial assistance' by a political party to its candidate should also be within the candidate's prescribed election expenditure limits. Secondly, there should be a ceiling on political party expenditures. This may be kept at not more than the expenditure ceiling limit provided for a candidate multiplied by the number of candidates of the party contesting the election. Finally, additional judges may be appointed in High Courts for the speedy disposal of election-related cases, which would act as a deterrent against violating these norms. These reforms would require bipartisan political support and need to be expeditiously implemented.

#### THE GIST

In India, candidates from major political parties frequently exceed the election expenditure limits set by the Election Commission. These limits are meant to regulate spending and prevent undue influence, but they are often disregarded.

In the U.S., spending is largely driven by Super PACs with no spending limits. The U.K. has strict caps on both party and candidate expenditures.

Rising election costs in India, as well as globally, create significant challenges. In India, inflated election expenditures foster a deep-rooted nexus between politicians and donors, creating entry barriers for genuine candidates without deep financial backing.

- The estimated total expenditure for the U.S. presidential and Congressional elections in November 2024 is around \$16 billion, while the Centre for Media Studies reports that the expenditure for India's Lok Sabha elections this year was approximately ₹1,00,000 crores. In India, candidates face expenditure limits of ₹95 lakh in larger states and ₹75 lakh in smaller states for Lok Sabha elections, with no limits on political party spending.
- Major parties in India often exceed spending limits. Reforms suggested include state funding for elections, simultaneous elections to reduce costs, and stricter regulations on party and candidate expenditures. Amendments to current laws and increased judicial resources for election-related cases are also proposed to enforce compliance and enhance accountability. Effective implementation of these reforms would require bipartisan support.

### What challenges does India face in fertilizer imports?

What impact has the conflict in Ukraine had on the global fertilizer market and its effects on India?

A. M. Jigeesh

#### The story so far:

With the crisis continuing in Ukraine and Gaza, experts and policymakers are concerned about further increases in the prices of the components used for making petroleum-based chemical fertilizers. Recently, Senior Economist of the Food and Agriculture Organization Nicholas Sitko told *The Hindu* that India has to increase its own fertilizer production capacity. The Agriculture Minister of the country's largest foodgrains producing Uttar Pradesh recently complained that the State has the stock of fertilizers for only 10 more days. The sowing of winter rabi crops has started in almost all the wheat-growing States and fertilizers such as Diammonium phosphate (DAP) and NPK [Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and Potassium] are essential for its growth.

#### What is the current import fertilizer import scenario?

Though the latest data on import is yet to be made available by the Ministry, the Standing Committee of Parliament on

tabled a report on 'Planning for Fertilizers Production and Import Policy on Fertilizers Including GST and Import Duty Thereon' in both the Houses. It expressed concern that the "production capacity of fertilizers does not commensurate with its demand/requirement and, therefore, the gap between demand and supply is met through imports." According to the report, about 20% of the domestic requirement of urea, 50-60% of the domestic requirement of DAP, and 100% of the domestic requirement of Muriate of Potassium (MOP, or Potash) is met through imports.

#### How has India's fertilizer production changed?

In 2021-22, India's yearly consumption of all major chemical fertilizers was approximately 579.67 lakh metric tonnes (LMT), comprising 341.73 LMT of urea, 92.64 LMT of DAP, 23.93 LMT of MOP, and 121.37 LMT of NPK. In 2020-21, the total consumption of fertilizers was about 629.83 LMT. The country produced 435.95 LMT of chemical fertilizers in 2021-22, resulting in a shortfall of 143.72 LMT relative to demand. While MOP is not produced here, in 2021-22, India

of DAP, 89.67 LMT of NPK, and 53.34 LMT of Single Super Phosphate (SSP). Total production in 2014-15 was 385.39 LMT, indicating an increase of only about 50 LMT over seven years.

In the case of Urea, the most consumed fertilizer, in 2019-20, the production was 244.58 LMT and the use was 336.96 LMT. In 2020-21, the country produced 246.05 LMT of urea and consumed 350.51 LMT. In 2021-22, the figure was 250.72 LMT and 341.72 LMT, respectively.

The Centre allocated ₹ 1.79 lakh crore as fertilizer subsidy under the Budget estimates for 2023-24. Out of this, for indigenous P&K Fertilizers, the subsidy amount was ₹ 25,500 crore and ₹ 18,500 crore for imported P&K Fertilizers. For indigenous Urea, the subsidy was ₹ 1,04,063.20 crore while the subsidy for imported urea was ₹ 31,000 crore.

#### What is the situation in Ukraine and Gaza?

Dr. Sitko said that he does not see any stability in fertilizer markets now due to the situations in Ukraine and Gaza. He is primarily bothered about the impact of the crisis on the oil prices, which will spill over to the by-products such as fertilizers.

#### THE GIST

The conflict in Ukraine has led to rising prices of raw materials used in fertilizer production, affecting global fertilizer costs and subsequently increasing prices in India.

The instability in fertilizer markets is likely to impact agricultural production in India, posing risks to food security and increasing dependence on government subsidies.

The Standing Committee of Parliament also pointed out the need for policy initiatives aimed at creating an environment that would facilitate investments in the public, co-operatives, and private sectors engaged in the manufacturing and marketing of fertilizers.

Commenting on the new investment policy, implemented in 2012, to streamline fertilizer production, the committee said it is satisfying to note that six new Urea plants have since been set up each having an annual production capacity of 12.7 LMT thereby adding Urea production capacity of 76.2 LMT per annum. "Now, 36 Urea manufacturing units are functioning, out of which, four new Urea Units viz Ramgundam, Gorakhpur, Sindri Unit of Fertilizers Corporation of India Limited and Barauni unit of Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation Limited, have been revived by setting up of new gas-based Greenfield units," the

- With ongoing crises in Ukraine and Gaza, there are rising concerns about the impact on the prices of components for petroleum-based chemical fertilizers, prompting experts like Nicholas Sitko from the FAO to call for increased fertilizer production capacity in India.
- The Agriculture Minister of Uttar Pradesh highlighted an urgent fertilizer shortage, with stocks sufficient for only 10 more days as the sowing of winter rabi crops begins. India currently imports a significant portion of its fertilizers: approximately 20% of its urea needs, 50-60% of DAP, and all of its Muriate of Potassium (MOP). In the 2021-22 fiscal year, India consumed around 579.67 lakh metric tonnes of fertilizers but produced only 435.95 lakh metric tonnes, leading to a shortfall of 143.72 lakh metric tonnes. Urea production has seen marginal increases over the years, with a subsidy allocation of ₹1.79 lakh crore for 2023-24 aimed at supporting domestic and imported fertilizers.

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### Justice K.S. Puttaswamy, a champion of privacy who challenged Aadhaar, dead

Krishnadas Rajagopal  
NEW DELHI

Justice K.S. Puttaswamy, who disabused the government of the notion that privacy is a privilege of the affluent, died at the age of 98 in his Bengaluru residence on Monday.

The former Karnataka High Court judge, whose faded black-and-white photograph on the Karnataka High Court website shows a dapper suited man in a striped tie, became a key petitioner in the Supreme Court years after his retirement in 1986.

Justice Puttaswamy was born on February 8, 1926. He went to Maharaja's College, Mysore and later obtained a law degree from the Government Law College, Bengaluru.

He was enrolled as an advocate in 1952 and appointed a judge of the Karnataka High Court in November 1977. He had initially challenged the Aadhaar identity scheme. He said its biometric regis-



Justice K.S. Puttaswamy

tration process and linkage to public welfare and essential subsidies amounted to sheer violation of the citizens' right to privacy. The government had pooh-poohed the challenge as the flighty imagination of urban elitists.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Justice Puttaswamy had said the Aadhaar project "infringes upon our right to privacy, which flows from Article 21 that deals with the fundamental right to life".

The nine-judge Bench agreed with the retired High Court judge in a unanimous judgment in August 2017. Justice Rohinton

Nariman wrote privacy was not an elitist construct. The desire for privacy was fundamental to every human being, rich or poor.

Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, in his separate opinion, termed privacy a "natural" fundamental right inseparable from the human personality. Justice Puttaswamy's litigation to champion privacy touched every walk of life. The verdict became instrumental in the abolition of adultery as a crime.

At one point, the top court had to even deal with an argument that the right to privacy subsisted even after death in a case concerning the verification of the fingerprints of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J.Jayalalithaa from her Aadhaar data.

In the Pegasus spying case, the court observed that the snooping exercise had widely impacted the rights to privacy and freedom of speech of ordinary citizens.

- Justice K.S. Puttaswamy, a former Karnataka High Court judge, passed away at 98 in Bengaluru.
- A prominent advocate for privacy rights, he challenged the Aadhaar identity scheme, arguing it violated citizens' privacy. His case led to a landmark Supreme Court ruling in August 2017, affirming privacy as a fundamental right for all. This judgment also contributed to the decriminalization of adultery and addressed privacy concerns in cases like the Pegasus spying incident. Puttaswamy's work significantly shaped privacy law in India.

## The Hindu –GS 2(Health)-Page 3-International Edition

### New study by NIMHANS researchers sheds light on association between sleep apnea and stroke

**Afshan Yasmeen**  
BENGALURU

While it is known that sleep apnea, a disorder in which breathing stops briefly during sleep, is common in stroke patients, the question whether this disorder is a cause or consequence of stroke has not been established. A recent study by researchers at National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) has now found that a substantial part of severe sleep apnea improves in the course of time on its own, indicating that at least a part of the burden of this disorder is a consequence of stroke.

Funded by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the study has been accepted for publication in *Annals of*



Sleep apnea is a disorder in which breathing stops briefly during sleep. GETTY IMAGES

*Indian Academy of Neurology (AIAN)*, the official journal of the Indian Academy of Neurology.

To evaluate the proportion, severity, type, and evolution of sleep-disordered breathing and arousals in ischemic stroke patients, a team of doctors from the Department of Neurology at NIMHANS, studied 105 stroke patients

aged above 50, using polysomnography (PSG) that studies brain waves together with sleep time breathing pattern. The study was done twice - initially within one month of stroke and a follow-up study three months after.

"Of the 105 patients studied, 88% had sleep apnea, while 38% had severe sleep apnea. In the follow-up study, 26% had sleep apnea, while 12% had severe sleep apnea. While waking up after sleep onset and brief arousals during sleep were high in the patients in the first examination, these abnormalities improved substantially in the follow-up study. This indicates that at least a part of the sleep apnea burden is a consequence of stroke," said P.R. Srijithesh, Additional Professor of Neurology at NIMHANS, who is the lead author of the paper. "The study also found a novel laterality in sleep efficiency in patients with stroke-related damage in the right side of the brain," he told *The Hindu* on Monday. October 29 is observed as World Stroke Day.

#### Snoring risk factor

Meanwhile, doctors have recognised snoring as a vital risk factor for stroke. While all those who snore loudly do not necessarily have sleep apnea, many with this disorder may not have snoring. While snoring and sleep apnea are closely related, it does not mean that a person who snores has sleep apnea, doctors said.

N.K. Venkataramana, founder-chairman and director of Neurology at NIMHANS, said breathing pauses during sleep can lead to a drop in the oxygen concentration in the blood. "The number of such episodes at night can vary from person to person. This increases the risk of stroke, given the significant duration of hypoxia or decreased level of oxygen that can cause damage to the brain and increased risk of blood coagulation."

Amit Kulkarni, lead neurology and stroke at Sakra World Hospital, said apart from conventional stroke risk factors such as diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, obesity, and heart rhythm problems, obstructive sleep apnea is a modifiable risk factor for stroke.

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- A recent study by researchers at National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) has now found that a substantial part of severe sleep apnea improves in the course of time on its own, indicating that at least a part of the burden of this disorder is a consequence of stroke.
- Funded by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the study has been accepted for publication in *Annals of Indian Academy of Neurology (AIAN)*, the official journal of the Indian Academy of Neurology.
- Sleep apnea is a disorder that causes you to stop breathing while asleep

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## New MIDH guidelines to support vertical farming, hydroponics among 4 components

Centre's initiative will also encourage aquaponics and precision agriculture

HARIKISHAN SHARMA  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

THE MINISTRY of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare has begun the process of revising the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) operational guidelines and cost support, which will be released within a month, sources said.

For this, the Centre is set to include four new components—Hydroponics, Aquaponics, Vertical Farming, and Precision Agriculture.

The cost support under the MIDH may see an upward revision of 20 per cent as compared to the existing rates, the sources said. The MIDH is a Centre sponsored scheme that promotes cultivation of fruits, vegetables, root & tuber crops, mushrooms, spices, flowers, aromatic plants, coconut, cashew, cocoa and bamboo.

The existing cost norms and guidelines were fixed in April 2014. Since then, the Centre has

management, processing and marketing activities under the MIDH.

The 4 new components to be added to the MIDH include: Hydroponics, a technique of growing plants using a water-based nutrient solution rather than soil; Aquaponics, a practice of combining aquaculture and hydroponics into one system; Vertical Farming, is a method of growing plants in a controlled environment stacked vertically; and Precision Agriculture, farming system that uses information technology (IT) to ensure that crops and soil receive exactly quantity of inputs to improve production and sustainability.

The move to revise guidelines comes after several states raised the issue of old rates under the MIDH. For instance, during the recently held RabiMI conference, Agriculture Ministers of states raised the issues of non-revision of the MIDH guidelines. Odisha Agriculture Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo said that subsidy rates under the National Horticulture Mission were fixed

- The Union Government has reportedly decided to include four new components – Hydroponics, Aquaponics, Vertical Farming, and Precision Agriculture – under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) – a Central Sponsored Scheme (CSS) that promotes the cultivation of fruits, vegetables, root and tuber crops, mushrooms, spices, flowers, aromatic plants, coconut, cashew, cocoa and bamboo.
- According to sources, the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare** has also begun the process of revising the MIDH operational guidelines and cost norms and the same will be released within a month. The cost norms under the MIDH may see an upward revision of 20 per cent as compared to the existing rates,

### Greenhouse gas levels surge to a new record in 2023: WMO

NIKHIL GHANEKAR  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

PLANET-WARMING greenhouse gas (GHG) levels surged to a new record in 2023, with annual mean levels of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), the most important GHG in the atmosphere, rising by 2.3 parts per million (PPM) between 2022 and 2023, the World Meteorological Organization said Monday. This was the 12th consecutive year when the annual mean CO<sub>2</sub> rose by over 2 PPM.

The globally averaged surface concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide GHG reached new highs in 2023, with CO<sub>2</sub> at 420 ppm. According to the WMO, the last time the earth had a similar CO<sub>2</sub> concentration was 3-5 million years ago, when temperatures were 2-3°C higher and sea levels were 10-20 metres higher than they are now.

The increase in CO<sub>2</sub> between 2022 and 2023, WMO said, was slightly higher than the 2021-2022 period but slightly lower than the average annual growth rate over the last decade, and was partly caused by natural variability. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

#### EXPLAINED E Long-term impact

EXPERTS HAVE warned that given the extremely long life of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere, even if emissions reduce rapidly due to net zero targets, the observed temperature levels will persist for several decades.

bon absorption by forests combined with stubbornly high fossil fuel CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from human and industrial activities drove the CO<sub>2</sub> increase in 2023, according to WMO's annual Greenhouse Gas Bulletin.

The El Niño weather phenomenon, which leads to warmer weather and reduced rainfall, especially in South Asia, caused record high temperatures, drier vegetation and wildfires, thus releasing more GHGs into the earth. "During El Niño years, greenhouse gas levels tend to rise because drier vegetation and forest fires reduce the effi-

of the United Nations whose mandate covers weather, climate and water resources.

WMO scientists warned that the rising CO<sub>2</sub> concentration and its impact on climate change could cause the natural ecosystems to become sources of greenhouse gases. "The bulletin warns that we face a potential vicious cycle. Natural climate variability plays a big role in carbon cycle. But in the near future, climate change itself could cause ecosystems to become larger sources of greenhouse gases. Wildfires could release more carbon emissions into the atmosphere, whilst the warmer ocean might absorb less CO<sub>2</sub>," said WMO deputy secretary-general Ko Barrett.

She added, "Consequently, more CO<sub>2</sub> could stay in the atmosphere to accelerate global warming. These climate feedbacks are critical concerns to human society."

From 1990 to 2023, radiative forcing—the warming effect on our climate—by long-lived greenhouse gases increased by 51.5 per cent, with CO<sub>2</sub> accounting for about 81 per cent of this increase, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

- In 2023, greenhouse gas (GHG) levels reached a new record, with carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) rising by 2.3 parts per million (ppm) to an annual mean of 420 ppm, according to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). This marks the 12th consecutive year of CO<sub>2</sub> increases exceeding 2 ppm. Current CO<sub>2</sub> levels are comparable to those from 3-5 million years ago, when temperatures and sea levels were significantly higher.
- The rise in CO<sub>2</sub> for 2023 was influenced by factors including large vegetation fires, reduced carbon absorption by forests, and persistent fossil fuel emissions. The El Niño phenomenon exacerbated conditions by leading to warmer temperatures and increased wildfires, further releasing GHGs.
- WMO officials warned that rising CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations could lead to a feedback loop where natural ecosystems become net sources of GHGs, potentially accelerating climate change.



## PIB –Welfare Schemes(GSII)

### Pradhan Mantri Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana

*Empowering Tribal Communities in India*

(Ministry of Tribal Affairs)

*“The government is putting in all its efforts to ensure that every scheme of the government reaches our most backward tribal brothers and sisters as soon as possible. No backward brother or sister of mine will now be left out of the benefits of the government’s scheme.”*

- *Prime Minister, Narendra Modi*

October 28, 2024

- The Pradhan Mantri Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana (PMVKY) is a landmark initiative that was launched on October 28, 2014.
- This ambitious scheme has been conceived as a comprehensive strategy to address the unique challenges faced by tribal communities in India, which constitute about 8.9% of the country's population. With over 700 scheduled tribes spread across diverse regions— from the Himalayas to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands—India's tribal populations often remain marginalized in terms of socio-economic development