

## The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi's historic address to Ghana's Parliament marks a pivotal moment in India's diplomatic engagement with Africa and the Global South. It not only reflects India's deepening ties with African nations but also highlights India's broader strategic vision of reshaping global governance by amplifying the voice of the Global South in international forums.

## Key Highlights of the Speech

### 1. Recognition of Global South's Role:

- PM Modi emphasized that progress in the modern world is impossible without the inclusion of the Global South.
- He called for reforms in global governance structures to better represent developing nations.

### 2. Historic Honour:

- Modi was conferred Ghana's highest civilian award, The Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana, recognizing India-Ghana bilateral relations.

### 3. Global Challenges Highlighted:

- Climate change, pandemics, terrorism, and cybersecurity were cited as key 21st-century challenges.
- Modi warned that many colonial-era problems still exist in new forms, requiring collective resolve.

### 4. Global Governance Reforms:

- Stressed on the need for credible reform in multilateral institutions like the UN, WTO, and IMF.
- Celebrated the African Union's permanent membership in G-20 under India's presidency as a significant step.

### 5. India-Africa Solidarity:

- Quoted Ghana's founding father Kwame Nkrumah to underscore deep historical and emotional ties.
- Reaffirmed India's support for Africa's development, stressing South-South cooperation.

### 6. Democracy and Parliamentary Diplomacy:

- Praised Ghana's democratic institutions and lauded the formation of the Ghana-India Parliamentary Friendship Society.

## Global South's voice key to contemporary world's progress: PM



PM Narendra Modi receives 'The Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana' from Ghana President John Mahama on Wednesday. ANI

**Kallol Bhattacharjee**  
NEW DELHI

Progress in the contemporary world will not be possible without giving a voice to the Global South, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday while addressing a joint session of Ghana's Parliament in its capital Accra.

Mr. Modi, who received Ghana's highest state honour 'The Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana', quoted the country's founding father Kwame Nkrumah, who said that Africa and India are connected by "intrinsic" forces, in a speech outlining the widespread changes sweeping the world and the challenges that persist.

"The world order created after the Second World War is changing fast... The revolution in technology, the rise of the Global South, and the shifting demographics are contributing to its pace and scale. Challenges, such as colonial rule, that humanity has faced in earlier centuries still persist in different forms," Mr. Modi said.

The Prime Minister described the state honour that he received as the "symbol of enduring friendship" between India and Ghana, which has been a priority of India's ties with Africa since the early days of decolonisation in the 1950s.

**Governance reforms**  
"Progress cannot come

without giving voice to the Global South," he emphasised, listing "climate change, pandemics, terrorism, and cyber security" as the "new and complex crises" that are posing fresh challenges to the world. "The changing circumstances demand credible and effective reforms in global governance," the Prime Minister said, highlighting the inclusion of the African Union into the G-20.

"We put emphasis on Africa's rightful place at the global high table. We are proud that the African Union became a permanent member of the G-20 during our Presidency," Mr. Modi said.

#### Uniting forces

Quoting Dr. Nkrumah, Mr. Modi said, "The forces that unite us are intrinsic and greater than the superimposed influences that keep us apart." India is a "pillar of strength in the world" that will stand "shoulder to shoulder" with Ghana as it pursues its developmental goals, he vowed.

This is the first speech by an Indian Prime Minister in Ghana's Parliament, with the special meeting being convened by Speaker Alban Kingsford Sumana Bagbin, who had visited India in 2023. Mr. Modi appreciated Ghana's parliamentary system and expressed satisfaction over the formation of the Ghana-India Parliamentary Friendship Society.

## Analytical Insights for Mains

### 1. India's Leadership in Global South

- India is positioning itself as the voice and leader of the Global South in the evolving world order.
- As seen in forums like the Voice of Global South Summit and the G-20 Presidency, India is advocating for a multipolar world with equal representation.

### 2. Reclaiming Moral Leadership Post-Decolonization

- India's solidarity with post-colonial nations like Ghana highlights shared struggles and common developmental aspirations.
- It reinforces India's soft power diplomacy rooted in shared values of freedom, sovereignty, and inclusive growth.

### 3. Relevance of South-South Cooperation

- India's development cooperation in Africa includes:
  - Lines of Credit (LoC) under IDEAS scheme
  - Capacity building through ITEC programme
  - Digital public infrastructure and health initiatives
- This cooperation is a counter-narrative to Western aid, promoting mutual benefit over dependency.

### 4. Need for Reform in Global Institutions

- The current structure of global institutions fails to represent the interests of the Global South.
- India's push for UNSC reforms and a restructured global financial order is in sync with the aspirations of many developing countries.

## Way Forward

- **India must continue to:**
  - Actively engage with African nations in trade, tech, and energy security.
  - Promote democratic values and people-to-people ties in the Global South.
  - Strategically align development partnerships with global governance advocacy.
- Multilateral platforms like IBSA, BRICS, and G-20 must be leveraged to institutionalize Global South representation in world affairs.

## Conclusion

## Daily News Analysis

PM Modi's speech in Ghana's Parliament and his emphasis on the Global South reflects India's aspirational leadership role in a changing global order. By championing inclusive development, democracy, and reform, India aims to build a more just, equitable, and multipolar world.

### UPSC Mains Practice Question

**Ques:** Critically evaluate India's role in reforming global governance institutions to accommodate the interests of the Global South. How far has India been successful in building consensus for such reforms? **(250 Words)**





A new species of tree, *Garcinia kusumae*, has been discovered in Assam's Baksa district. Named after Kusum Devi, mother of botanist Jatindra Sarma, making it the fourth plant species named by him after family members.

### About *Garcinia kusumae*

- Genus: *Garcinia* (Family: Clusiaceae)
- Local Name: Thoikora (in Assamese)
- Tree Type: Dioecious, evergreen
- Height: Up to 18 metres
- Flowering: February to April
- Fruiting: May to June
- Discovered at: Bamunbari, Baksa district, Assam

### Significance of the Genus – *Garcinia*

- Total species worldwide: 414
- Key features:
  - Pan-tropical distribution
  - Rich floral diversity
  - Found in lowland tropical rainforests
  - High pharmacological potential (used in medicine, weight loss, etc.)

### *Garcinia* in India

- Documented species: 33
- Varieties: 7
- In Assam: 12 species and 3 varieties

### Botanical Contribution

- Jatindra Sarma, Chairman of Assam's State Expert Appraisal Committee (MoEFCC), has now named:
  - *Amomum pratisthana* – after daughter
  - *Syzygium nivae* – after wife

## New *Garcinia* species found in Assam named after botanist's mother

**Rahul Karmakar**  
GUWAHATI

Assam has yielded a new-to-science tree species belonging to the genus *Garcinia*, commonly referred to as *thoikora* in Assamese. The newly described *Garcinia kusumae* has been named in honour of Kusum Devi, the late mother of Jatindra Sarma, one of the authors of the study and the Chairman of Assam's State Expert Appraisal Committee appointed by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

The study, co-authored by Hussain A. Barbhuiya of Mumbai's Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, appears in the latest issue of *Feddes Repertorium*, a peer-reviewed journal focusing on botanical taxonomy and geobotany.

#### Four in a family

*Garcinia kusumae* marks the fourth instance of Mr. Sarma naming a botanical discovery after a family member. Previous names include *Amomum pratisthana* (after his daughter), *Syzygium nivae* (wife), and *Garcinia sibeswarrii* (father). This is the first time an Indian botanist-researcher has had four plant species named after immediate family members. "The epithet *kusumae*... is in recognition of her enduring support and sacrifices for his [Mr. Sarma's] education," the study noted.

*Garcinia*, the largest genus in the family Clusiaceae, comprises 414 species of shrubs and trees.



The distinct bloom of *Garcinia kusumae*, a newly identified tree species from Assam.  
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Pan-tropically distributed, its centres of diversity are found in Africa, Australasia, and Southeast Asia. The genus is known for its floral diversity, frequent presence in lowland tropical rainforests, and considerable pharmacological potential.

#### 33 species

In India, 33 species and seven varieties of *Garcinia* have been documented, with Assam accounting for 12 species and three varieties.

Mr. Sarma found the *thoikora* specimen in Bamunbari, located in Baksa district, in April, during a survey of *Garcinia* species. The tree's distinct morphological features prompted further investigation. Specimens were collected following standard herbarium protocols, including pressing, drying, and preservation.

A dioecious evergreen tree that can grow up to 18 metres tall, *Garcinia kusumae* was observed to flower from February to April, with fruit maturing between May and June.

- *Garcinia sibeswarii* – after father
- *Garcinia kusumae* – after mother (latest)
- A first for any Indian botanist to name four plant species after immediate family members.

### Study and Publication

- Co-authored with Hussain A. Barbhuiya, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai
- Published in Feddes Repertorium – a peer-reviewed journal on plant taxonomy

### UPSC Prelims Practice Question

*Ques: With reference to *Garcinia kusumae*, recently seen in news, consider the following statements:*

- 1. It is a newly discovered species of deciduous tree found in Arunachal Pradesh.*
- 2. It belongs to the family Clusiaceae.*
- 3. The species was named after a family member of the researcher who discovered it.*

*Which of the statements is/are correct?*

- (A) 2 only
- (B) 1 and 3 only
- (C) 2 and 3 only
- (D) 1, 2 and 3

*Ans: (C)*

India's first transgender persons-led health clinic, earlier known as Mitr Clinic, was launched in Hyderabad in 2021. It provided inclusive, community-led healthcare for transgender persons and was completely staffed and managed by members of the transgender community.

- Operations halted in January 2025 after a funding freeze from USAID.
- The clinic has now reopened as "Sabrang Clinic" in May 2025, with support from Tata Trusts.

# India's first clinic for transgender persons reopens in Hyderabad

**Siddharth Kumar Singh**  
HYDERABAD

Months after India's first transgender persons-led health clinic – Mitr Clinic – was shut down following a funding freeze by USAID, the landmark facility has made a comeback with a new name and renewed financial backing.

Now reopened as Sabrang Clinic, the community-run healthcare centre resumed services in May 2025 with support from the Tata Trusts, project lead Subash Ghosh said. The name Sabrang, meaning 'all colours', signals a more expansive vision for inclusive healthcare.

"Once the USAID issue



India's first clinic for transgender people reopened under a new name Sabrang in Hyderabad on Monday. SIDDHANT THAKUR

happened in January, we had to shut down operations. But we reached out to several philanthropic organisations and individuals. And now, Tata Trusts is supporting us," Mr. Ghosh told *The Hindu*.

Launched in 2021 in

Hyderabad's Narayanguda, Mitr Clinic broke new ground as the first in India to be entirely staffed and managed by members of the transgender community. "Over 3,000 patients have been served since the clinic started," he said.

## Significance of the Development

### 1. Inclusive Healthcare Milestone:

## Daily News Analysis

- Reinforces India's commitment to universal, equitable healthcare access, especially for marginalised communities like transgender persons.

### 2. Community-led Model:

- Empowering transgender persons not just as patients but as healthcare providers and administrators challenges systemic exclusion.

### 3. Resilience and Philanthropy:

- The transition from donor-dependent to philanthropy-supported healthcare (via Tata Trusts) is a model of resilience and sustainability.

### 4. Symbolism in Name:

- The new name "Sabrang" (All Colours) reflects diversity, dignity, and inclusion – aligning with constitutional values of equality and justice.

## Challenges in Transgender Healthcare in India

- Discrimination and stigma in mainstream health services.
- Lack of gender-affirmative care and mental health support.
- Inadequate training of medical professionals on transgender health needs.
- Limited access to affordable hormone therapy and surgeries.
- Identity documentation issues under existing health schemes.

## Policy and Legal Framework

- **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019:**
  - Mandates non-discriminatory access to healthcare and provision of gender-affirming services.
- **National Health Policy, 2017:**
  - Recognises LGBTQIA+ persons as a vulnerable group needing special attention.
- **Ayushman Bharat Scheme:**
  - Extended to include transgender-specific healthcare packages.

## Way Forward

- Institutionalise community-led clinics like Sabrang as part of urban health missions.
- Build transgender-inclusive infrastructure and training in government hospitals.
- Expand public-private partnerships (PPP) in funding inclusive health models.
- Integrate mental health services, legal aid, and social counselling into such clinics.
- Regular monitoring of implementation of the 2019 Act and awareness drives to reduce stigma.

## Conclusion



## Daily News Analysis

The revival of India's first transgender-led health clinic as Sabrang is more than just a reopening—it is a reaffirmation of the constitutional promise of dignity, equality, and social justice. It provides a scalable, inclusive model that bridges the gap between policy intent and ground-level implementation for transgender healthcare.

### UPSC Mains Practice Question

**Ques:** Discuss the constitutional and legal safeguards available for transgender persons in India. How can community-based models like Sabrang Clinic help realise these rights effectively?



The article highlights a critical health hazard emerging from plastic waste and microplastic pollution—specifically focusing on endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) and their long-term impact on reproductive health, fertility, chronic diseases, and generational wellbeing in India and beyond.

## Endocrine disruptors in plastic waste: a new public health threat

Plastic pollution is no longer a distant environmental concern; it is a biological invasion with profound implications for human health: infiltration of microplastics and plastic-derived EDCs into human bodies is triggering hormonal disruption, reproductive dysfunction and chronic diseases

Sudheer Kumar Shukla

**P**lastics have revolutionised modern living with their convenience and affordability, but this same ubiquity is spawning an invisible, long-term health crisis. Beyond choking oceans and clogging landfills, plastics are now infiltrating our bodies through microplastic particles and a cocktail of endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs).

The evidence is clear and deeply concerning: these substances are interfering with our hormonal systems, damaging reproductive health and increasing our susceptibility to chronic diseases, including cancer. India, now the world's largest generator of plastic waste, stands at the epicentre of this escalating public health emergency.

Once considered inert pollutants, microplastics – plastic particles smaller than 5 mm – are now recognised as biologically active. A 2022 study by Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam detected microplastics in the blood of 80% of human participants. Further, a 2024 study published in *Nature Scientific Reports* reported the presence of microplastics in nearly 89% of blood samples in India, with an average concentration of 4.2 particles per millilitre. These particles have also been found in human lungs, hearts, placentas, breast milk, ovarian follicular fluid, and semen. Alarmingly, testicular tissue in Indian men was found to contain three times more microplastics than in dogs.

The plastics in our lives are not chemically neutral. They often contain EDCs such as Bisphenol A (BPA) and BPS: used in water bottles, food containers, and thermal paper. They also have Phthalates (e.g., DEHP, DBP) that are used to soften plastics and found in cosmetics, toys and IV tubing and PFAS (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), found in food packaging and non-stick cookware.

These chemicals mimic or block natural hormones such as estrogen, testosterone, thyroid hormones, and cortisol. They interfere with receptor binding, disrupt gene expression in reproductive organs, and induce oxidative stress, inflammation, and apoptosis (cell death).

Animal studies published in *Food and Chemical Toxicology* (2023) showed that even low doses of polystyrene microplastics disrupted testosterone levels, impaired sperm production, and damaged the blood-testis barrier. Similar effects were observed in ovaries, where microplastics reduced anti-Müllerian hormone levels, triggered oxidative stress pathways, and induced cell death.

### Microplastics in sperm

Recent clinical studies from China and India have linked the presence of microplastics in semen to reduced sperm count, concentration and motility.

Exposure to BPA and phthalates has been associated with lower testosterone levels and elevated luteinizing hormone (LH) levels – both indicators of endocrine disruption. A global review published in



The poorest populations, often living near waste dumps or working in the informal recycling sector, bear the brunt of the plastic waste crisis. AP

*Science of the Total Environment* further supports the connection between microplastics and male subfertility. Notably, a 2023 study in *Environmental Science & Technology Letters* reported a strong correlation between microplastic levels in semen and decreased sperm count, motility, and abnormal morphology in Chinese men. In India, studies have documented a 30% decline in average sperm count over the past two decades.

A study published in *Ecotoxicology and Environmental Safety* (2025) found microplastics in 14 out of 18 follicular fluid samples collected from women undergoing fertility treatment in Italy. These particles, along with their associated endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs), were found to compromise egg quality and were linked to menstrual irregularities, reduced estradiol levels, and an increased risk of miscarriage. Epidemiological studies have also linked exposure to phthalates and BPA with conditions such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), endometriosis, and spontaneous abortions. These associations have been further supported by findings published in *Advances in Pharmacology* (2020) and *Frontiers in Cell and Developmental Biology* (2023).

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) now classifies several plastic additives as probable human carcinogens.

Case-control studies from India have shown that women with elevated levels of DEHP in their urine face nearly a threefold increased risk of breast cancer (odds ratio = 2.97). Exposure to BPA and phthalates has also been linked to higher incidences of prostate, uterine, and testicular cancers.

In addition to their carcinogenic potential, these EDCs have been implicated in metabolic disorders. By mimicking cortisol, altering insulin sensitivity, and promoting fat storage,

EDCs contribute to the development of obesity and type 2 diabetes. Moreover, PFAS exposure has been associated with metabolic syndrome, cardiovascular disease, and thyroid dysfunction, as reported in a 2024 study published in *Frontiers in Public Health*.

**Plastic waste in India**  
India generates over 9.3 million tonnes of plastic waste each year. Of this, approximately 5.8 million tonnes are incinerated, releasing toxic gases, while 3.5 million tonnes end up polluting the environment. Studies have shown that residents in cities like Mumbai are exposed to between 382 and 2,012 microplastic particles daily through air, food, and water. In Nagpur, doctors are reporting an increase in cases of early puberty, respiratory problems, obesity, and learning disorders in children – conditions increasingly linked to plastic pollution. Recent testing by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) detected phthalate concentrations in drinking water samples from Delhi, Jabalpur, and Chennai that exceeded European Union safety limits.

Despite progressive policies like the Plastic Waste Management Rules (2016, updated in 2022 and 2024), enforcement remains inconsistent. Current regulations do not account for low-dose effects or the complex interactions of EDCs, nor do they address the specific vulnerabilities of children and pregnant women.

The health burden associated with EDCs in India is staggering, costing over ₹25,000 crore annually due to increased healthcare spending and lost productivity. The poorest populations, often living near waste dumps or working in the informal recycling sector, bear the brunt of this crisis. Globally, the U.S. reports annual healthcare costs of \$250 billion linked to plastic-related chemicals, according to the Endocrine Society.

Biomonitoring and surveillance are

crucial for establishing national programmes that measure EDC levels in blood, urine, and breast milk. Longitudinal studies must be funded to assess the health impacts of EDC exposure on fertility, neurodevelopment, and chronic diseases. In addition, public awareness needs to be improved, and behaviour changes should be encouraged, such as educating people on the risks of microwaving food in plastic containers and promoting the use of glass, stainless steel, and EDC-free alternatives. It is also important to advocate for antioxidant-rich diets to help counteract oxidative stress.

Further actions should include enforcing plastic segregation, recycling, and safe disposal, while investing in microplastic filtration systems for water treatment plants. Additionally, incentivising the development of biodegradable, non-toxic materials is essential to reduce EDC exposure.

Plastic pollution is no longer a distant environmental concern; it is a biological invasion with profound implications for human health. The infiltration of microplastics and plastic-derived EDCs into our bodies is triggering hormonal disruption, reproductive dysfunction and chronic diseases.

The science is undeniable, and the time for action is now. For India, the world's most exposed population, this is more than a policy issue – it is a generational imperative. We must address this silent epidemic through science-driven regulation, robust monitoring, education, and systemic change. The health of our people, especially our children, depends on it.

(Dr. Sudheer Kumar Shukla is an environmental scientist and sustainability expert with over 20 years of experience in environmental policy, waste management and the circular economy. He currently serves as head-think tank at Mobius Foundation, New Delhi. [sshukla@mobius.org](mailto:sshukla@mobius.org))

### THE GIST

Once considered inert pollutants, microplastics – plastic particles smaller than 5 mm – are now recognised as biologically active. Further, a 2024 study reported the presence of microplastics in nearly 89% of blood samples in India

Animal studies showed that even low doses of polystyrene microplastics disrupted testosterone levels, impaired sperm production, and damaged the blood-testis barrier. Similar effects were observed in ovaries, where microplastics reduced anti-Müllerian hormone levels, triggered oxidative stress pathways, and induced cell death

The health burden associated with EDCs in India is staggering, costing over ₹25,000 crore annually due to increased healthcare spending and lost productivity. This silent epidemic must be addressed through science-driven regulation, robust monitoring, public education, and systemic change

### Key Concerns Raised:

### Microplastics as Biologically Active Pollutants:

- Microplastics (<5mm) have been found in:
  - Blood (89% of Indian samples)
  - Lungs, placentas, breast milk, ovarian fluid, and semen
- No longer inert: They interact biologically, triggering oxidative stress, apoptosis, and inflammation.

### **Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs) in Plastics:**

- **Examples:**
  - BPA/BPS – food containers, bottles
  - Phthalates – toys, cosmetics, IV tubes
  - PFAS – non-stick cookware, food packaging
- **These mimic/block hormones like estrogen, testosterone, cortisol, leading to:**
  - Infertility, PCOS, early puberty
  - Sperm damage, menstrual irregularities
  - Cancers, diabetes, thyroid disorders

### **Emerging Health Impacts:**

- Reproductive dysfunction (reduced sperm count, poor egg quality)
- Hormonal imbalances (estrogen/testosterone disruption)
- Rise in cancers (breast, prostate, uterine)
- Neurodevelopmental and metabolic disorders in children
- 30% drop in sperm count in Indian men in last two decades

### **India-specific Challenges:**

#### **Largest Generator of Plastic Waste:**

- 9.3 million tonnes/year; only partial recycling or incineration.
- Toxic gases from burning, unregulated exposure for urban poor, waste pickers.

### **EDCs in Environment:**

- Detected in air, food, water in Indian cities (Delhi, Jabalpur, Chennai).
- Found in drinking water, exceeding EU safety limits.

### **Policy Gaps:**

- Plastic Waste Management Rules (2016, updated 2022, 2024) exist but:
  - Lack of enforcement

- No focus on low-dose or cumulative EDC effects
- Do not account for vulnerable populations (pregnant women, children)

### Economic & Social Costs:

- India's annual health burden due to EDCs: ₹25,000 crore+
- Global estimate (U.S.): \$250 billion/year
- Disproportionate impact on the marginalised, working near waste sites

### Way Forward & Recommendations:

#### Scientific Measures:

- Biomonitoring programmes for blood, urine, breast milk
- Longitudinal studies to assess generational health impacts

#### Public Awareness & Behavioural Change:

- Avoid heating food in plastic containers
- Promote use of glass, steel, EDC-free alternatives
- Encourage antioxidant-rich diets to mitigate oxidative stress

#### Waste Management Solutions:

- Invest in microplastic filtration at water treatment plants
- Enforce plastic segregation, safe recycling and disposal
- Incentivise biodegradable, non-toxic material innovation

#### Policy Imperatives:

- Update existing rules to include:
  - EDC-specific regulation
  - Cumulative exposure assessment
  - Child and maternal vulnerability provisions
- Integrate health and environment governance

### Conclusion:

Plastic waste is not just polluting our environment—it is **infiltrating our biology, distorting our hormones**, and **undermining human fertility and longevity**. For India, which stands at the epicentre of



this crisis, the need of the hour is a **science-based, multi-sectoral response** that prioritises **health, sustainability, and intergenerational equity**.

### UPSC Mains Practice Question

**Ques:** What are endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs)? Explain their sources, impact on reproductive health, and strategies needed to regulate their presence in consumer products. **(250 Words)**



The Supreme Court delivered an important clarification while disposing of a contempt petition in the *Nandini Sundar & Ors. v. State of Chhattisgarh* case. The question raised was whether the Chhattisgarh Auxiliary Armed Police Forces Act, 2011, enacted after the SC's July 2011 judgment, amounted to contempt of court.

# Can the Supreme Court halt an Act passed by a State?

What did the Supreme Court mandate in the *Nandini Sundar* case on July 5, 2011?

**R.K. Vij**

### The story so far:

**D**isposing of a writ and contempt petition, the Supreme Court in *Nandini Sundar and Ors. versus State of Chhattisgarh* held that the passing of an Act by the State of Chhattisgarh, subsequent to its order, cannot be said to be an act of contempt of the order passed by the Court.

### What did SC order of July 2011 state?

The Supreme Court, on July 5, 2011 issued an order stating that the State of Chhattisgarh shall cease and desist from using Special Police Officers (SPOs) in any activities, directly or indirectly, aimed at controlling, countering, mitigating or otherwise eliminating Maoist activities. The Court ordered the State to recall all firearms issued to any of the SPOs. The order said that the State shall take all

appropriate measures to prevent the operation of any group, including but not limited to the Salwa Judum and Koya Commandos.

The Court also directed the Union of India to cease and desist from using any of its funds in supporting, directly or indirectly, the recruitment of SPOs for the purposes of engaging in any form of counter-insurgency activities against Maoists. The Court concluded that the appointment of inadequately paid and ill-trained SPOs engaged in checking Maoism was violative of Article 14 and Article 21 of the Constitution.

### Why was a contempt case filed?

Consequent to the Supreme Court order of July 2011, the State of Chhattisgarh enacted the Chhattisgarh Auxiliary Armed Police Forces Act, 2011. Section 4(1) of the Act provides that an auxiliary force shall be constituted 'to aid and assist the security forces' in the maintenance of

public order and preventing, controlling and combating Maoist/Naxal violence and insurgency, etc. Section 5(2) of the Act further states that the members of the auxiliary force 'shall not be deployed in the front-line positions of an operation and shall always work under supervision of the security forces...'. The provision of compulsory training for a period not less than six months, is also prescribed under the Act. Only those SPOs, who would be eligible as per these prescribed yardsticks, were to be inducted into the auxiliary force (by screening committee). The legislature thus had addressed all the concerns observed by the Supreme Court.

However, it was argued by the petitioners that the said enactment was not in consonance with the Court's order and therefore amounted to contempt of Court.

### Why was contempt prayer rejected?

There were reasons for rejecting the relief

sought by petitioners. One, the Supreme Court took cognisance of the fact that all the directions issued by the Court had been complied to by the State of Chhattisgarh and necessary reports were submitted.

Second, the Court said that every State legislature has plenary powers to pass an enactment so long as the said enactment was not declared to be *ultra vires* of the Constitution. Any law made by Parliament or a State Legislature cannot be held as an act of contempt. The Court clarified that a legislature has the power to pass a law, to remove the basis of a judgment or validate a law which has been struck down by a Constitutional Court. This is the core of the doctrine of separation of powers and must always be acknowledged in a constitutional democracy. Any piece of legislation enacted by a legislature can be assailed only on the twin prongs of legislative competence or constitutional validity.

In *Indian Aluminium Co. versus State of Kerala* (1996), the Supreme Court observed that Courts must maintain the delicate balance devised by the Constitution between the three sovereign functionaries. The Court therefore held that unless and until it is first established that the statute so enacted is in opposition to constitutional law or otherwise, it cannot be struck down.

*RK Vij is a former IPS officer and views are personal.*

### THE GIST

▼ The Supreme Court, on July 5, 2011 issued an order stating that the State of Chhattisgarh shall cease and desist from using Special Police Officers (SPOs) in any activities, directly or indirectly, aimed at controlling, countering, mitigating or otherwise eliminating Maoist activities.

▼ Consequent to the Supreme Court order of July 2011, the State of Chhattisgarh enacted the Chhattisgarh Auxiliary Armed Police Forces Act, 2011.

▼ It was argued by the petitioners that the said enactment was not in consonance with the Court's order and therefore amounted to contempt of Court.

## What Did the Supreme Court's July 5, 2011 Order Say?

- The State of Chhattisgarh was ordered to cease using Special Police Officers (SPOs) like Salwa Judum and Koya Commandos in anti-Maoist operations.
- SPO recruitment and operations were held unconstitutional, violating:
  - Article 14 – Equality before law
  - Article 21 – Protection of life and personal liberty
- Directed the Union Government to stop funding SPOs for counter-insurgency.

## What Did the State Do After That?

- The Chhattisgarh Auxiliary Armed Police Forces Act, 2011 was passed.
- **Key Provisions:**
  - Formation of an auxiliary police force to assist in maintaining public order and controlling Maoist violence.

## Daily News Analysis

- Recruitment was to be more regulated, with minimum 6-month training, screening, and oversight.
- Members were not to be deployed in frontline combat.
- Petitioners claimed this Act defied the SC's order and filed a contempt plea.

### Why Did the Supreme Court Reject the Contempt Petition?

#### 1. Full Compliance with Earlier Order:

- State had complied with the SC's July 2011 directions.
- Firearms were withdrawn, SPOs disbanded as directed.

#### 2. Doctrine of Separation of Powers:

- Legislature has plenary power to make laws, even after a court judgment.
- A law cannot be called "contempt of court" unless it violates the Constitution.
- A legislature can remove the basis of a judicial decision or validate a law struck down, provided it stays within its constitutional limits.

#### 3. Judicial Review Still Applies:

- Such an Act can be challenged for legislative competence or constitutional invalidity, not for contempt.

### Legal Doctrine Reinforced:

#### Separation of Powers

- Courts interpret laws, legislatures make laws, and executives implement them.
- Judiciary cannot prevent a legislature from enacting a law unless it violates the Constitution.

#### Precedent Cited:

- Indian Aluminium Co. v. State of Kerala (1996):
  - Courts must respect the functional autonomy of each organ under the Constitution.

### Implications for Governance and Internal Security:

- Clarifies the boundaries of judicial directions vis-à-vis legislative actions.
- Ensures democratic space for legislative response to complex issues like left-wing extremism.
- Encourages constitutional course correction, not confrontation.

### Conclusion:

## Daily News Analysis

The Supreme Court's verdict in the Nandini Sundar contempt matter reinforces the idea that legislative competence is not subordinate to judicial direction, as long as the Constitution is respected. This strengthens institutional balance and clarifies that laws can evolve in response to judicial concerns, without breaching constitutional morality.

### UPSC Mains Practice Question

**Ques:** Can a legislature enact a law that modifies or overrides a Supreme Court judgment? Discuss in light of the Nandini Sundar v. State of Chhattisgarh case and the doctrine of separation of powers. **(250 words)**





# Socialism, secularism are the spirit of the Constitution

India's Constitution is not merely a legal document. It is the embodiment of the ideals and the aspirations of a nation that was forged in the crucible of an anti-colonial struggle. Among its most fundamental principles are socialism and secularism, values that are not confined to the Preamble alone but which are woven throughout its text, reflected in the Directive Principles of State Policy, in the Fundamental Rights, and in its very structure. Recent calls by the leadership of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) leadership to remove the words socialism and secularism from the Preamble are not just an attack on semantics but is also a direct assault on the foundational vision of the Indian republic itself.

The RSS General Secretary made this call recently under the garb of criticising the Emergency, which happened 50 years ago, as the words socialism and secularism were added in the Preamble under the Constitution (42nd Amendment) Act, 1976 during the Emergency. It is a deceitful move by the RSS to invoke the Emergency in order to discredit these principles, especially when it colluded with the Indira Gandhi government during that time for its own survival. To use that event in history to now undermine the Constitution reflects the RSS's hypocrisy and opportunism.

## Reflected in the Preamble and beyond

Socialism, in the Indian Constitution, is a commitment to social and economic justice, the eradication of inequality, and the creation of a welfare state. The Preamble promises "Justice, social, economic and political" to all citizens, and seeks "Equality of status and of opportunity". It underlines the fact that even before the 42nd Amendment, the spirit of socialism was always present in our Constitution.

There were significant efforts in the Indian Constitution to increase the freedoms of citizens and to reduce the inequalities prevalent in society. The Fundamental Rights were major steps in that direction. Article 14 guarantees equality before law. Article 15 prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. Article 16 ensures equality of opportunity in matters of public employment. These rights, read together with the Preamble



**M.A. Baby**

is the General Secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist)

The call to erase 'socialism' and 'secularism' from the Constitution is a calculated move to have an oppressive majoritarian state

and Directive Principles, enshrine a vision of a society free from exploitation, where the dignity of every individual is upheld.

The Directive Principles of State Policy have the clearest articulation of the socialist vision, in the Indian Constitution. Articles 38 and 39 clearly lay it out, and is further explained in Articles 41, 42 and 43. These provisions are not just aspirational; they have guided landmark legislation and judicial interpretation in India.

Secularism in the Indian Constitution is not mere religious neutrality but the positive assurance that the state will treat all religions equally, protect the rights of minorities, and ensure that no citizen suffers discrimination on the basis of faith. The original text of the Preamble, even before the addition of the word secular in 1976, had already promised "Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship" and "Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual..."

Under Fundamental Rights, Articles 25 to 28 provide the Right to Freedom of Religion and further underscore the secular nature of the Indian Republic. Articles 29 and 30, on Cultural and Educational Rights, too reiterate this. These articles ensure that the state neither identifies with nor privileges any religion, and that every citizen, regardless of faith, enjoys equal rights and protections. Even the Supreme Court of India has repeatedly affirmed that secularism is part of the Constitution's 'basic structure'.

The Basic Structure Doctrine was introduced in 1973 in the Supreme Court's landmark judgment in *Kesavananda Bharati*. It holds that while Parliament can amend the Constitution, it cannot alter its fundamental structure, i.e., the basic structure of the Constitution is inviolable. As mentioned earlier, the 42nd Amendment which introduced the words socialism and secularism in the Preamble of the Constitution was enacted in 1976, three years after this historic verdict. Yet, the additions could be made precisely because they did not violate the basic structure of the Constitution.

## Inseparable from the Constitution's fabric

It is a fallacy to claim that socialism and secularism in the Preamble of the Constitution are mere 'additions' or 'impositions' from the 1970s. The Objective Resolution of the

Constituent Assembly, the Constituent Assembly debates themselves and the lived experience of India's glorious anti-colonial freedom struggle all testify that these values were central to the vision of the Republic's founders.

The Constitution's commitment to social and economic justice, equality, and fraternity is inherently socialist. Its guarantee of religious liberty, non-discrimination and minority rights is inherently secular. Even if the words socialist and secular (the word secular was there in Article 25(2)(a) even before the 42nd Amendment) were to be removed from the Preamble, the Constitution's core philosophy, structure and provisions would remain unchanged in their essence.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's final speech to the Constituent Assembly on November 25, 1949, offers profound insights that reinforce the argument that the notion of equality (which forms the foundation of the ideas of socialism and secularism) is embedded in the Constitution's spirit and structure. B.R. Ambedkar's words remain a guiding light against any attempt to dilute these foundational values.

## The real agenda has been exposed

The RSS's demand to remove socialism and secularism from the Preamble of the Constitution is a calculated move to undermine the very foundations of the Indian Republic. It exposes its long-standing agenda to replace the Constitution with a veiled Manusmriti, subvert the secular democratic republic of India, and create a theocratic Hindu Rashtra. The attempt to erase socialism and secularism from the Preamble is an attempt to rewrite history, to delegitimise the legacy of India's anti-colonial freedom struggle, and to pave the way for an oppressive majoritarian state.

The Constitution of India is a living document that is designed to secure justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity for all. Socialism and secularism are the pillars on which the edifice of the Indian Republic stands. To attack them is to attack the very soul of India's democracy. All those who cherish the values of the freedom struggle – a struggle that the RSS was not part of – must stand united in defence of the lofty values of the Constitution, and resist any attempt to destroy the idea of India.

## Paper 02 Indian Polity

**UPSC Mains Practice Question:** Critically examine the relevance of the Preamble in interpreting constitutional values like socialism and secularism in the contemporary Indian polity. (250 words)

## Context :

Recent statements from RSS leadership have reignited a national debate on whether the words “**Socialist**” and “**Secular**”, inserted in the **Preamble via the 42nd Amendment (1976)** during the Emergency, should be **removed**. M.A. Baby, General Secretary of CPI(M), defends these terms as **integral to the Constitution’s spirit**, not merely as insertions but as **reflections of foundational values**.

Core Constitutional Values: Socialism and Secularism

### 1. Socialism – Meaning and Constitutional Presence

#### *Constitutional Presence:*

- Inserted in the **Preamble** by the 42nd Amendment: “*We, the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic...*”
- Present in:
  - **Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV)** – Articles **38, 39, 41, 42, 43**
  - Fundamental Rights that promote equality – Articles **14, 15, 16**

#### *Philosophy:*

- Not Marxist socialism, but **Indian democratic socialism** – focus on **equity, welfare state, redistribution, and justice**
- *Article 39(b) and (c)* call for equitable distribution of resources and prevention of wealth concentration.

#### *Landmark Policies/Legislation Inspired by Socialist Values:*

- **Abolition of Zamindari**
- Nationalisation of banks
- MGNREGA, RTE Act
- Food Security Act

### 2. Secularism – Meaning and Constitutional Presence

#### *Constitutional Presence:*

- **Preamble (post-1976)** affirms “*Secular*” character.
- **Articles 25–28**: Right to freedom of religion
- **Articles 29–30**: Cultural and educational rights of minorities

## *Indian Model of Secularism:*

- Not complete separation of religion and state (Western model)
- Positive **state engagement with all religions**, while **not favouring any**
- Protection of religious minorities' rights

## *Judicial Backing:*

- **Kesavananda Bharati Case (1973)** – Doctrine of Basic Structure
- **S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994)** – *Secularism declared part of the basic structure*

## Criticism and Counterpoint: RSS Viewpoint vs Constitutional Ideals

### *RSS Argument:*

- The terms "socialist" and "secular" were inserted during **Emergency**, seen as **politically motivated**
- Argue that the Constitution functioned without these terms from **1950–1976**
- Call for restoration of original Preamble

### *Counterpoint (Author's Argument):*

#### *1. Values Present Since Inception:*

- Even without the words, their **spirit was embedded** in Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles
- **Objective Resolution** (1946) moved by **Jawaharlal Nehru** laid the foundation of these ideals
- Secularism was already evident in **Article 25(2)(a)**

#### *2. Basic Structure Doctrine:*

- Both **socialism and secularism** have been judicially upheld as **non-amendable core values**
- Their inclusion via the 42nd Amendment did **not violate** the Basic Structure

#### *3. Socio-Historical Context:*

- These values stem from **India's anti-colonial struggle**, vision of **egalitarianism and pluralism**
- Citing **Ambedkar's speeches**, the author reminds us that **equality and justice** form the Constitution's moral centre

## Doctrine of Basic Structure and the 42nd Amendment

## Daily News Analysis

- The **Kesavananda Bharati case (1973)** ruled that Parliament cannot alter the “basic structure” of the Constitution
- The **42nd Amendment (1976)** added “Socialist” and “Secular” – but these were already part of the Constitution’s essence
- Hence, these additions were **affirmative**, not violative

### Political and Ideological Concerns

- The author accuses the RSS of attempting to:
  - Rewrite constitutional history
  - Promote **majoritarian theocracy (Hindu Rashtra)**
  - Subvert **India’s pluralist, democratic ethos**
- He equates removing socialism and secularism with replacing the Constitution’s **egalitarian spirit with Manusmriti**-based principles, implying **caste hierarchy and exclusion**

### Conclusion:

The debate around **removing socialism and secularism** from the Preamble is not just about semantics; it is about **challenging the constitutional morality** and **core vision** that India’s founding fathers set for a **pluralistic and egalitarian nation**. Any such move must be viewed not merely as a constitutional amendment, but as a **threat to the foundational idea of India** — a republic built on **justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity** for all, regardless of caste, creed, or class.

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