

The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE

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- ▶ Professor K. Chellappan, an acclaimed translator and scholar known for his Sahitya Akademi Award-winning Tamil translation of Gora and significant contributions to comparative literature, has passed away at 88.

K. Chellappan, commonly known as K.C.:

- ▶ **Awards:** Sahitya Akademi Award for Tamil translation of Rabindranath Tagore's Gora (2020)
- ▶ **Academic Focus:** Comparative studies; doctorate on "Shakespeare and Ilango as Tragedians"
- ▶ **Contributions:**
 - Authored *The World as a Stage: Shakespearean Transformations* and other literary works.
 - Translated M. Karunanidhi's works, including *Kuraloviyam* and *Thenpandi Singam*.
 - Supervised over 50 Ph.D. students.
- ▶ **Teaching and Philosophy:**
 - Known for bridging English and Tamil literary worlds.
 - Advocated translation as an act of cognition and creation.
 - Believed in balancing fidelity to the original with creative liberties.

Professor, translator K. Chellappan passes away at 88

B. Kolappan
CHENNAI

English professor K. Chellappan, who won the Sahitya Akademi award for his translation of Rabindranath Tagore's *Gora* into Tamil, passed away in Chennai, aged 88, on Monday. Fondly known as K.C. in academic circles, he won the award for the translation in 2020.

"Comparative studies is his forte, he secured his doctorate on 'Shakespeare and Ilango as Tragedians: A Comparative Study'. He is one of the English teachers who straddled the English and Tamil literary worlds with equal ease. Over 50 students did their Ph.D under his guidance," said S. Armstrong, Head of the Department of English, University of Madras.

His other books include *The World as a Stage: Shakespearean Transformations*; *R.K. Narayan: The Ironic Mythmaker*; *Literature within/across the walls: Comparative studies in classical and modern Tamil Literature*; and *Tagore, Bharathi, and T.S. Eliot: Towards Creative Unity (Tagore lectures)*.

"He also translated *Kuraloviyam*, *Thenpandi Singam*, and *Meesaimulaitha Vayathil*, the works of former Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi," said Mr. Armstrong, one of the students of Chellappan.

Views on translation

Chellappan reached out to literature students through his video recordings.



K. Chellappan won the Sahitya Akademi award for his translation of *Gora* into Tamil.

He described translation as a fundamental act of cognition and creation because, in every act of perception, there is translation and creation. Perfection in translation, according to him, was a frozen condition. "He is a versatile teacher known for his down-to-earth approach. As a literary critic, translator, and administrator, he won many laurels. The elements are so mixed in him that the present academics would say here is a teacher," said S.S. Prabhakar, Dean of Languages, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University.

In an interview with *Frontline*, Chellappan said he found it difficult to translate the works of Karunanidhi because of their poetic dimensions.

He would say that, "fidelity to original can coexist with creativity. Of course, one has to take some liberties with the original. Just as T.S. Eliot said that tradition and individual talent are not opposites, one can discover one's creativity while submitting to the other and one can find one's true self by losing it."

India and the UAE have signed a landmark MoU for civil nuclear cooperation, marking their first such agreement.

- This follows a trilateral initiative with France and builds on prior agreements on energy and food security.
- The visit also included additional pacts on LNG supply and petroleum exploration.

India, UAE ink pact for civil nuclear cooperation

MoU signed during visit of Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, to New Delhi; agreement between NPCIL and UAE's Barakah nuclear power plant

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

In a first, India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Monday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for civil nuclear cooperation.

The deal between Nuclear Power Cooperation of India Ltd. (NPCIL) and the ENEC (Emirates Nuclear Energy Company)-led Barakah Nuclear Power Plant Operations and Maintenance took place during the current visit of Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, to India.

During the August 2015 trip of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the UAE, both countries had agreed to cooperate in “peaceful use of nuclear energy”, including in areas of “safety, health, agriculture, and science and technology.”

Diplomatic sources pointed out that nothing like the agreement between the NPCIL and the ENEC had been signed before. The deal is part of the UAE's policy of expanding



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Crown Prince Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on Monday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

investments into the nuclear energy sector.

Trilateral cooperation

Monday's MoU is the result of nuclear cooperation-related discussion between India and the UAE spanning a few years. On September 19, 2022, the Foreign Ministers of France, India and the UAE met in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly and launched a trilateral cooperation format. This meeting was followed by a phone call among the

three Ministers on February 4, 2023.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had said following the three-party phone call that all three sides had agreed that the trilateral initiative “will serve as a forum to promote the design and execution of cooperation projects in the fields of energy, with a focus on solar and nuclear energy”.

The Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi was earlier in the day hosted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at

Hyderabad House in New Delhi.

LNG supply

Apart from the nuclear cooperation-related MoU, the two sides signed an MoU for long-term LNG supply between Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) and Indian Oil Corporation Ltd.

A third agreement between ADNOC and India Strategic Petroleum Reserve Ltd. (ISPRL) was also one of the outcomes during the visit of the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi. Urja Bharat and ADNOC signed a Production Concession Agreement for Abu Dhabi Onshore Block 1.

The fifth MoU was between the Government of Gujarat and Abu Dhabi Developmental Holding Company PJSC (ADQ) on food parks development in India.

India and the UAE are part of the I2U2 grouping that includes Israel and the United States. The visit also coincided with the first India-Gulf Cooperation Council meeting that took place in Saudi Arabia.

India-UAE Civil Nuclear Cooperation:

➤ First-ever MoU for Nuclear Cooperation:

- India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for civil nuclear cooperation.

- The agreement was made between Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd. (NPCIL) and the ENEC-led Barakah Nuclear Power Plant Operations and Maintenance.
- This is the first such agreement between the two nations and aligns with their commitment to “peaceful use of nuclear energy” as agreed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s 2015 UAE visit.
- ➔ **Trilateral Cooperation Initiative:**
 - The MoU is a result of ongoing discussions between India and the UAE.
 - On September 19, 2022, India, France, and the UAE established a trilateral cooperation format to enhance collaboration in energy sectors, including solar and nuclear energy.

Additional Agreements: In addition to the nuclear deal, India and the UAE signed several other agreements:

- ➔ **Long-term LNG Supply:** An MoU between Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) and Indian Oil Corporation Ltd.
- ➔ **Production Concession Agreement:** An agreement between ADNOC and India Strategic Petroleum Reserve Ltd. for Abu Dhabi Onshore Block 1.
- ➔ **Food Parks Development:** An MoU between the Government of Gujarat and Abu Dhabi Developmental Holding Company PJSC (ADQ).

Broader Diplomatic Context:

- ➔ The visit of the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi also saw the signing of agreements coinciding with the first India-Gulf Cooperation Council meeting in Saudi Arabia.
- ➔ India and the UAE are members of the I2U2 grouping, which includes Israel and the United States..

UPSC Mains PYQ : 2018

Ques : In what ways would the ongoing US-Iran Nuclear Pact Controversy affect the national interest of India? How should India respond to this situation?

—It's about quality—

India's Navy launched two new anti-submarine warfare vessels, INS Malpe and INS Mulki, at Cochin Shipyard.

- These vessels, part of an eight-ship series, enhance the Navy's capabilities in coastal anti-submarine operations and maritime security, reflecting India's commitment to self-reliance.

Analysis of the news:

- **Vessels Launched:** Two anti-submarine warfare shallow watercraft vessels, INS Malpe and INS Mulki, were launched at Cochin Shipyard.

- **Specifications:**

- **Length:** 78 metres
- **Width:** 11.36 metres
- **Draught:** 2.7 metres
- **Maximum Speed:** 25 knots
- **Endurance:** 1,800 nautical miles
- **Displacement:** 900 tonnes

- **Design and Features:**

- Designed to accommodate indigenously developed sonar for underwater surveillance.
- Equipped with light-weight torpedoes, anti-submarine warfare (ASW) rockets, and mines.
- Includes close-in weapon systems and stabilised remote-control guns.

Installed propulsion power: 12 MW

- **Purpose and Role:**

- To replace the Abhay-class ASW corvettes.
- Intended for anti-submarine operations in coastal waters, low-intensity maritime operations, mine-laying, and search and rescue.

Two anti-submarine warfare vessels for the Indian Navy launched at Cochin Shipyard

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

Two anti-submarine warfare shallow watercraft vessels of the Indian Navy were launched at the Cochin Shipyard here on Monday. The vessels are the fourth and fifth in a series of eight watercraft.

The vessels – 78 metres long, 11.36 metres wide, and with a draught of about 2.7 metres – can sail at a maximum speed of 25 knots and have an endurance of 1,800 nautical miles. Once commissioned by the Navy, the vessels will be called *INS Malpe* and *INS Mulki*. The ships, with a displacement of about 900 tonne, are designed to fit the indigenously developed sonar for underwater surveillance.

After a ceremonial puja, the vessels were launched by Vijaya Srinivas, wife of Vice-Admiral V. Srinivas,



The fourth and fifth ships in the series of eight vessels will be called *INS Malpe* and *INS Mulki*. R.K. NITHIN

the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Southern Naval Command.

The contract to design, construct and deliver the eight ships was signed between the Ministry of Defence and Cochin Shipyard Ltd. in April 2019. The Mahe-class of ships will replace the in-service Abhay-class ASW corvettes and are designed to undertake anti-submarine operations in coastal waters, low intensity maritime operations and mine-laying op-

erations, apart from search and rescue. Each vessel has an installed propulsion power of about 12 MW and is equipped with light-weight torpedoes, ASW rockets and mines, close-in weapon system and stabilised remote-control guns.

Vice-Admiral Srinivas said the construction of the vessels was in keeping with the need to be self-reliant and be prepared in view of the geo-political situation and security challenges.

UPSC Prelims PYQ : 2016

Ques : Which one of the following is the best description of 'INS Astradharini', that was in the news recently?

- a) Amphibious warfare ship
- b) Nuclear-powered submarine
- c) Torpedo launch and recovery vessel
- d) Nuclear-powered aircraft carrier

Ans : c)



The India Status Report on Road Safety 2024 highlights India's slow progress in reducing road fatalities and stresses the need for tailored approaches to improve road safety.

What does the 'India Status Report on Road Safety 2024' state?

- The report highlights India's limited success in reducing road accident fatalities, despite the country's efforts in other sectors. The report stresses that most Indian States are not on track to meet the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety goal to halve traffic deaths by 2030.

On the challenges to road safety in India

What does the 'India Status Report on Road Safety 2024' state with respect to meeting international goals of reducing road accident fatalities? Which States have the lowest rates of road accident deaths? What is a crash surveillance system?

EXPLAINER

Tikender Singh Panwar
Geetam Tiwari

The story so far:

The "India Status Report on Road Safety 2024," prepared by the TRIP Centre at IIT Delhi, not only highlights India's slow progress toward meeting international goals of reducing road accident fatalities, but also emphasises the organic connection between road construction, mobility, and the need for a differentiated approach to mitigate road accidents.

What does the report state?

This report analyses road safety in India, using data from First Information Reports (FIRs) from six States and audits of State compliance with Supreme Court directives on road safety governance. It exposes disparities in road traffic death rates across States, emphasising the vulnerability of motorcyclists and the high rate of fatal crashes involving trucks. Road traffic injuries remain a major public health challenge in India, with little progress in reducing fatalities, despite advancements in other sectors. Most Indian States are unlikely to meet the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety goal to halve traffic deaths by 2030.

In 2021, road traffic injuries were the 13th leading cause of death in India and the 12th leading cause of health loss (measured in Disability-Adjusted Life Years, or DALYs). In six States (Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh), road traffic injuries ranked among the top 10 causes of health loss.

Why is crash surveillance necessary?

India's national road safety data systems are insufficient for guiding public policy. Currently, there is no national crash-level database. Road safety statistics at both State and national levels are compiled from individual police station records,

Safety first

In 2021, road traffic injuries were the 13th leading cause of death in India and the 12th leading cause of health loss.

Percentage of road traffic deaths by victims mode of transport in six States						
	Chhattisgarh	Chandigarh	Delhi	Haryana	Maharashtra	Uttarakhand
Pedestrian	19	23	44	29	24	28
Bicycle	4	13	3	3	1	3
Motorised two-wheeler	58	51	40	47	58	48
Motorised three-wheeler	1	7	4	3	1	3
Car	4	4	5	8	6	7
Bus	1	1	0	1	1	4
Truck	5	1	2	5	5	4
Farm tractor	6	0	0	2	2	0
Others	0	1	1	1	2	1
Unknown	0	1	1	0	0	1
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100

Percentage of road traffic deaths by type of impacting vehicle in six States						
	Chhattisgarh	Chandigarh	Delhi	Haryana	Maharashtra	Uttarakhand
Bicycle	0	0	1	0	1	0
Motorised two-wheeler	13	11	6	10	14	10
Motorised three-wheeler	0	7	2	1	0	1
Car	7	36	14	25	14	21
Bus	3	5	6	4	4	7
Truck	24	12	18	32	27	28
Farm tractor	5	1	1	7	4	6
Others	11	12	5	1	5	2
None	16	9	3	2	16	5
Unknown	18	9	45	17	15	21
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: India Status Report on Road Safety 2024

which are aggregated at district, State, and national levels before being published. These tables allow only the most basic analyses, preventing effective intervention or program evaluation. Furthermore, comparisons with other datasets, such as the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) study and Sample Registration System (SRS), suggest that these tables often contain inaccurate information on key variables like the victim's mode of transport – data crucial for road safety management.

In the absence of a crash surveillance system, the report had to rely on FIRs from six States and State road safety governance audit reports.

How are States faring in road safety?

Road safety varies significantly across India, with per capita death rates differing more than threefold between States. Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Chhattisgarh recorded the highest death rates, at 21.9, 19.2, and 17.6 per 1,00,000 people, respectively. In contrast, West Bengal and Bihar had the lowest rates, at 5.9 per 1,00,000 in 2021. Six states – Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu – account for nearly half of all traffic fatalities in India.

The report also reveals that pedestrians, cyclists, and motorised two-wheeler riders are the most common

victims of road accidents, while trucks are responsible for the highest proportion of impacting vehicles. It also notes that in only seven States do more than 50% of motorised two-wheeler riders wear helmets, despite the fact that this simple safety measure could significantly reduce fatalities and serious injuries.

Only eight States have audited more than half of their National Highway lengths, and very few States have done the same for their State Highways. Basic traffic safety measures, including traffic calming, markings, and signage, are still lacking in most States. Helmet usage in rural areas is particularly low, and trauma care facilities are inadequate. Tailored strategies are essential to address the unique road safety challenges faced by different States.

How does India fare globally?

The report presents a sobering comparison between India and developed countries like Sweden and other Scandinavian nations, which have excelled in road safety governance. In 1990, an Indian was 40% more likely to die in a road accident than someone in these countries. By 2021, this figure had soared to 600%, indicating a sharp rise in road fatalities. The report questions whether better-equipped vehicles with more advanced safety features are the solution, given that two-wheeler riders, cyclists, and motorcyclists represent the majority of road fatalities.

What is the way forward?

Central and State governments need to prioritise the scale-up of road safety interventions. A national database for fatal crashes should be established. Public access to this system will improve understanding of specific risks to road users and the effectiveness of various interventions implemented in the States.

Geetam Tiwari is Professor at the Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi. Tikender Panwar is former Deputy Mayor, Shimla, and Member, Kerala Urban Commission.

THE GIST

➤ This report analyses road safety in India, using data from First Information Reports (FIRs) from six States and audits of State compliance with Supreme Court directives on road safety governance.

➤ The report reveals that pedestrians, cyclists, and motorised two-wheeler riders are the most common victims of road accidents, while trucks are responsible for the highest proportion of impacting vehicles.

➤ Central and State governments need to prioritise the scale-up of road safety interventions. A national database for fatal crashes should be established.

- It emphasizes the connection between road construction, mobility, and safety, Road traffic injuries remain a significant public health challenge. In 2021, these injuries were the 13th leading cause of death and the 12th leading cause of health loss (measured in Disability-Adjusted Life Years or DALYs).

Daily News Analysis

- The report reveals significant disparities in road traffic death rates across Indian States, with vulnerable groups such as motorcyclists and truck-involved crashes being particularly high.
- Note: The report used FIR data from six States and audits of State compliance with Supreme Court directives on road safety.

What is a crash surveillance system?

- A crash surveillance system is a national-level database that records detailed data on road accidents, including specific variables like the mode of transport of victims.
- India lacks such a system, with current data being aggregated from police station records, limiting the depth of analysis and effectiveness of interventions.
- Implementing this system would enhance road safety management and allow for better evaluation of policy interventions.

Way forward:

- **Establish a National Crash Surveillance System:** Implement a comprehensive database for road accidents to enable detailed analysis and improve targeted interventions for road safety. This would enhance data accuracy and guide more effective policies.
- **Prioritize State-Specific Road Safety Strategies:** Tailor interventions to the unique challenges of each State, focusing on vulnerable road users like motorcyclists and improving safety infrastructure, such as helmet usage, traffic calming, and trauma care facilities.

Term In News : Nilgiri Mountain Railway

The Coonoor railway station which is part of the Nilgiri Mountain Railway (NMR) line is being completely transformed as part of the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme and is criticized by heritage train and history enthusiasts.



About Nilgiri Mountain Railway:

- **Location:** The Railway line from Mettupalaiyam to Ooty is 45.88 km. long and lies partly in the Coimbatore District and partly in Nilgiri District of Tamilnadu, on the eastern slopes of the Western Ghats.
 - It is fondly called the Ooty toy train of the Nilgiris Railway Company, first chugged up the hills on June 15, 1899.
- **History:**
 - It was in 1854, that the first plans were made to build a mountain Railway from Mettupalaiyam to the Nilgiri Hills.
 - But it took the decision-makers 45 years to cut through the bureaucratic red tape and complete the construction and installation of the line.
 - The line was completed and opened for traffic in June 1899.

Daily News Analysis

- It was operated first by the Madras Railway under an agreement with the Government.
- In 2005, the Nilgiri Mountain Railway was recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, joining the ranks of India's other famous mountain railways, such as the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway and the Kalka-Shimla Railway.
- This designation underscores the railway's cultural and historical importance, as well as its role in showcasing India's rich heritage.



Next Census should be the last enumeration-based one

According to media reports, India is likely to begin conducting the long-delayed Census exercise and complete the survey within 18 months. So, realistically, the final Census report might be available sometime in late 2026 or in 2027, with a roughly 16-year gap since the last Census of 2011. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, is cited as the primary reason for the delay in the census.

As per a United Nations report, in the interim, India surpassed China in population. There have been significant changes in the demographics too. Hauz Khas, a posh neighbourhood in southern Delhi with affluent urbanites, was partly designated as rural in 2011, for example.

While many people are worried that India has been operating without proper data for a long time, in today's world, there remains a significant discrepancy between reality and the data available, even for a decennial census. This discrepancy is especially noticeable as the decade-long gap draws to a close. In actuality, the decennial format of most censuses was merely a compulsion because conducting a census is a mammoth and prohibitively expensive undertaking.

It certainly makes sense that if census exercises were conducted more frequently, a number of policies and their execution as well as socioeconomic and health-related studies, might be dynamically adjusted by observing the findings.

An idea to pursue

For the past few years, this writer has personally supported "register-based" and "dynamic" censuses, which could furnish up-to-date census data whenever needed. The database would be updated continuously in real-time during a "dynamic" census. Reportedly, a few years ago, India was preparing software by which the birth date of a child will come into the back end of the database of the Census Registrar, and after attaining the age of 18 years, this person would be



Atanu Biswas

Professor of Statistics at the Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata

There are strong reasons why India needs to have 'register-based' and 'dynamic' censuses

registered as a voter in the voter list from the Office of the Census Registrar. The name would be removed from the voter list upon death.

Global trends

This could be a significant leap in the direction of a dynamic database. However, India's next Census, which will be the nation's first "digital census", may be a complete enumeration. On the other hand, a number of countries, including Austria, Bahrain, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greenland, the Netherlands, Singapore, Sweden and Switzerland, are currently moving towards register-based censuses, which produce useful statistics primarily from government sources using data from various administrative registers, which includes population, tax, employment, school, hospital records, and data from municipalities.

These may be complemented by some well-planned small-scale sample surveys such as those conducted in Switzerland with 5%-10% of the population. Even the United States and the United Kingdom are moving towards register-based censuses. Unsurprisingly, such a census exercise will be cost-effective too. For instance, the cost of the 2001 Census in Austria was €72 million. However when the register-based approach was implemented in 2011, the cost fell to €10 million.

The United Kingdom government declared in 2014 that statistics derived from more frequent and timely administrative data will take the place of the decennial census after 2021. In place of the customary questionnaire-based approach, the U.K. will harvest the data people leave behind in their everyday lives. At the time, the Royal Statistical Society's executive director said the U.K. government had "made the right call". It is actually a "dynamic register-based census", meaning that every pertinent social, economic, and demographic activity and event in people's lives is constantly added to the census database.

Further, in order to produce its official figures,

the Office for National Statistics in the U.K. has recently begun to gather more data – reliable data, of course – even from private companies. Examples of this include data collected from supermarket scanners and data on cars and trains from Auto Trader and the Rail Delivery Groups. Notably, India already has an Aadhaar-centric database, unlike the U.K.. And, reportedly, a few years back, the Home Minister asked officials to devise a strategy to merge the voter card, Aadhaar card, and other databases into the Census database.

Database integration

However, combining many registers is never a simple operation. Even though it has been increasingly customary in India recently to integrate databases such as Aadhaar, PAN, voter ID, bank accounts, and mobile numbers, it is still a mammoth task to solve the jigsaw puzzle and to build up the "elephant" by correctly assembling different types of "registers". However, I believe the nation has sufficient expertise to accomplish that. And, by using the administrative data of various available registers instead, thousands of crores of rupees can be saved.

A census serves as a valuable repository of data pertaining to various economic endeavours, educational attainment and literacy rates, housing and domestic facilities, urbanisation, migration, mortality, fertility, religion, language, and additional socio-economic, cultural, and demographic information. It is unclear if our intended method will be able to update data on the majority of these aspects in real time. Naturally, if any data is lacking, it can be updated on a regular basis by properly conducting surveys, perhaps on a small scale.

Overall, such an exercise might usher in an era of dynamic, continuous censuses. And the greatest legacy of digital India might be that, if it can be implemented. Let the upcoming Census be India's last complete enumeration-based census.

GS Paper 02 : Social Justice – Health

UPSC Mains Practice Question Discuss the challenges in implementing drug recall guidelines and preventing the use of similar brand names in India's pharmaceutical industry. How do these challenges impact public health, and what steps can be taken to ensure effective regulatory reforms? (250 w /15 m)

Context :

- The article discusses India's ineffective regulatory framework for pharmaceuticals, focusing on drug recall guidelines, good distribution practices, and confusing brand names.
- Despite repeated calls for reform by authorities and courts, non-binding guidelines and bureaucratic delays persist, posing significant risks to public health and highlighting the need for stronger enforcement.

Introduction

- The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI), under the Ministry of Health, introduced three policy initiatives: recall guidelines, good distribution practices, and regulating the use of similar brand names.
- These initiatives aim to improve public health by ensuring drug quality, storage standards, and preventing prescription errors.

Issues with Implementation

- Despite the initiatives' importance, they either lack legal backing or are poorly conceived.
- This follows a pattern of non-binding guidelines being presented as reform, without effective enforcement.

Insights from the 59th Report of the PSC

- The 59th report of the Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health & Family Welfare (PSC) in 2012 raised concerns about drug regulation.
- **The PSC identified critical issues, including:**
 - Absence of recall guidelines
 - Lack of standards for drug storage
 - Confusing brand names for drugs.
- These issues had been flagged years earlier, including in court cases, but no substantial reform followed.

Recurring Problems and Non-Binding Guidelines

- The lack of enforceable recall guidelines has been an ongoing issue since 1976.
- Recall guidelines were proposed multiple times (2012, 2017, 2023), but the DCGI lacks the power to make binding rules.
- As a result, drugs deemed "not of standard quality" continue to be sold without legal repercussions.

Good Distribution Practices and Storage Standards

- Good distribution practices (GDP) guidelines, based on WHO standards, were discussed but never made legally binding due to anticipated opposition from pharmacy trade associations.
- Despite India's hot climate, which affects drug stability, the government hesitated to enforce these standards due to logistical challenges.

- Even after serious violations in drug storage were exposed in 2019, the government continued to delay making GDP guidelines mandatory.

Similar Brand Names and Prescription Errors

- Confusing brand names for drugs, flagged by the Supreme Court in 2001, remain a problem despite calls for reform.
- The Ministry's rule requiring pharmaceutical companies to self-declare the uniqueness of their brand names is ineffective.
- Regulators in other countries scrutinise brand names from a public health perspective, but India's approach relies on voluntary trademark registration, which lacks proper oversight.

Leadership Failures in the Ministry of Health

- The failure to enforce these measures reflects a leadership gap within the Ministry of Health.
- Drug regulation is handled by joint secretaries with limited expertise, leading to repeated consultations with industry stakeholders, who often stall reforms.
- The recurring delays suggest a lack of commitment to public health priorities.

Conclusion: Breaking the Loop

- The cycle of non-binding guidelines and ineffective reforms is unlikely to break without intervention from the Prime Minister's Office.
- Persistent leadership challenges, lack of domain expertise, and resistance from the pharmaceutical industry have stalled meaningful regulatory change for decades.