

The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE

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चीन द्वारा विवादित अक्साई चिन में काउंटियों का निर्माण तथा यारलुंग त्सांगपो पर विशाल बांध बनाने से भारत के साथ तनाव बढ़ गया है।

India 'protests' new Chinese counties in Ladakh

Beijing forms 2 new counties in Hotan prefecture that incorporate territory of India's Ladakh

India has 'never accepted' illegal Chinese occupation in this area, says the Ministry of External Affairs

MEA raises 'concerns' over announcement of mega dam project over Yarlung Tsangpo

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

India has lodged a "solemn protest" with China over the formation of two counties in the Hotan prefecture that incorporates territory of India's Ladakh.

Speaking to reporters during the weekly briefing on Friday, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal reminded China that India "never accepted" Beijing's "illegal occupation of Indian territory in this area".

Concerns conveyed

He further stated categorically that India has also conveyed its "concerns" about the building a mega hydro power project in the upstream Yarlung Tsangpo, which is the Tibetan

name of Brahmaputra, that flows through Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.

"We have never accepted the illegal Chinese occupation of Indian territory in this area. Creation of new counties will neither have a bearing on India's long-standing and consistent position regarding our sovereignty over the area nor lend legitimacy to China's illegal and forcible occupation of the same," said Mr. Jaiswal. "We have lodged a solemn protest with the Chinese side through diplomatic channels," he said.

The protest from the Indian side came after Chinese news agency Xinhua reported on December 27, 2024 that the authorities in northwest Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region had declared the formation of



Fresh row: New counties in Hotan will have no bearing on India's sovereignty over the area, says MEA spokesperson. GETTY IMAGES

He'an County and Hekang County, in the Hotan prefecture. The Hotan prefecture contains parts of Aksai Chin that India accuses China of occupying and formation of the two new counties appears like Beijing firming up administra-

tive measures in the region.

India-China meet

The protest from the Indian side is significant as it comes against the backdrop of the December 18, 2024 meeting between the

Special Representatives for the border mechanism – National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

The meeting is to resolve the tension that erupted in eastern Ladakh in June 2020 that has since been termed the 'Galwan clashes'.

In another significant turn, Mr. Jaiswal categorically spelled out India's concern on the announced mega dam project over Yarlung Tsangpo in the deep gorges of the eastern Himalayas that fall under Chinese control. "As a lower riparian state with established user rights to the waters of the river, we have consistently expressed, through expert-level as well as diplomatic channels, our views and concerns to the Chinese side

over mega projects on rivers in their territory," said Mr. Jaiswal.

World's largest dam

Chinese news agency Xinhua had earlier announced that Beijing has approved the construction of the world's largest dam, estimated at \$137 billion on the Brahmaputra river in Tibet close to the Indian border.

The Chinese authorities have approved the construction of the hydel power project in the lower reaches of Yarlung Tsangpo. The mega dam is designed to be the largest infrastructure project in the world. Once constructed, the gigantic dam would dwarf even the Three Gorges Dam, which is now considered to be the largest. The MEA spokesperson hinted that the announce-

ment of the dam was not communicated to India through official channels as is the norm in the case of neighbours sharing major rivers and said the Ministry of External Affairs got to know the information through a news report by Xinhua on December 25, 2024. India's view, Mr. Jaiswal said, was "reiterated, along with need for transparency and consultation with downstream countries, following the latest report."

"The Chinese side has been urged to ensure that the interests of downstream states of the Brahmaputra are not harmed by activities in upstream areas. We will continue to monitor and take necessary measures to protect our interests," said Mr. Jaiswal.

ध्यान देने योग्य स्थान

- **होटन प्रान्त (झिंजियांग, चीन)**
 - चीन के झिंजियांग उइगर स्वायत्त क्षेत्र में स्थित है।
 - इसमें अक्साई चिन के कुछ हिस्से शामिल हैं, जो भारत द्वारा दावा किया जाने वाला एक विवादित क्षेत्र है।
 - प्राचीन सिल्क रोड के साथ अपने स्थान के कारण रणनीतिक रूप से महत्वपूर्ण है।
 - व्यापार मार्गों में अपने जेड उत्पादन और ऐतिहासिक महत्व के लिए जाना जाता है।
- **अक्साई चिन (लद्दाख, भारत)**
 - भारतीय केंद्र शासित प्रदेश लद्दाख के उत्तरपूर्वी भाग में एक उच्च ऊंचाई वाला पठार।
 - चीन द्वारा प्रशासित लेकिन भारत द्वारा लद्दाख के हिस्से के रूप में दावा किया जाता है।
 - 1962 के युद्ध के दौरान भारत-चीन क्षेत्रीय विवादों में एक महत्वपूर्ण फ्लैशपॉइंट।
 - इसकी कठोर, शुष्क जलवायु के कारण कम आबादी वाला।

- **यारलुंग त्संगपो (तिब्बत, चीन)**
 - तिब्बत में उत्पन्न होने वाली ब्रह्मपुत्र नदी का ऊपरी मार्ग।
 - भारत और बांग्लादेश में प्रवेश करने से पहले हिमालय में गहरी घाटियों से होकर बहती है।
 - चीन की प्रस्तावित 137 बिलियन डॉलर की मेगा बांध परियोजना का स्थल।
 - निचले इलाकों में क्षेत्रीय जल विज्ञान और पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र के लिए महत्वपूर्ण।



भारत चीन में ह्यूमन मेटान्यूमोवायरस के मामलों में वृद्धि पर नजर रख रहा है। यह एक श्वसन वायरस है जो बच्चों और बुजुर्गों को प्रभावित करता है। घरेलू स्तर पर इसका कोई मामला सामने नहीं आया है।

Health Ministry monitoring HMPV outbreak in China

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry said on Friday that it was closely monitoring the alleged outbreak of Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) in China. The Ministry maintained that while China had reported a rise in respiratory illness, particularly HMPV, India had not registered any unusual spike in winter respiratory diseases.

Five years after the COVID pandemic, China is experiencing a surge in HMPV cases, particularly in children under 14 years of age. Symptoms include cough, fever, and shortness of breath, with potential complications like bronchitis and pneumonia. The country has seen cases rise in its northern provinces, *Reuters* had re-

ported. Cases of HMPV had been reported in 2011-12 in the U.S., Canada, and Europe.

The Ministry's National Centre for Disease Control is closely monitoring respiratory and seasonal influenza cases in the country and is in touch with international agencies, noted a senior official.

No cause of alarm

Meanwhile, Director-General of Health Services Atul Goel told presspersons on Friday that no case of the respiratory illness – HMPV – has been reported in the country yet. Stating that the Union government was closely monitoring news about the possible HMPV outbreak in China, he added that as of now, there was no cause for alarm.

"HMPV is like any other respiratory virus that caus-



Under watch: The Ministry said it is closely monitoring respiratory and seasonal influenza cases in the country. FILE PHOTO

es flu-like symptoms, mostly in the elderly and children," said Dr. Goel, adding that respiratory illnesses are common during winters and that hospitals in India are equipped to deal with them. "Special

medicines are not needed because there are no antiviral drugs against this. There are no major cases, in hospitals or as per Indian Council of Medical Research data," he added.

According to the Cen-

ters for Disease Control and Prevention, the public health agency of the United States, HMPV can cause upper and lower respiratory disease in people of all ages, especially among young children, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems.

Discovered in 2001, the HMPV belongs to the Pneumoviridae family along with respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

Broader use of molecular diagnostic testing has increased identification and awareness of HMPV as an important cause of upper and lower respiratory infection.

Symptoms commonly associated with the virus include cough, fever, nasal congestion, and shortness of breath. Clinical symptoms of HMPV infection

may progress to bronchitis or pneumonia and are similar to other viral infections that cause upper and lower respiratory infections. The estimated incubation period is three to six days, and the median duration of illness can vary depending upon severity but is like other respiratory infections caused by viruses.

The HMPV is most likely to spread from an infected person to others through secretions from coughing and sneezing, and close personal contact such as touching or shaking hands, touching objects or surfaces that have the viruses on them before touching the mouth, nose, or eyes.

In the U.S., the HMPV circulates in distinct annual seasons. HMPV circulation begins in winter and lasts until or through spring.

मानव मेटान्यूमोवायरस (HMPV) अवलोकन:

- खोज: 2001 में पहचाना गया; न्यूमोविरिडे परिवार से संबंधित है, जो रेस्पिरेटरी सिंसिटियल वायरस (RSV) से संबंधित है।
- प्रभावित समूह: छोटे बच्चों, बड़े वयस्कों और कमजोर प्रतिरक्षा प्रणाली वाले लोगों में आम है।
- लक्षण: खांसी, बुखार, नाक बंद होना और सांस लेने में तकलीफ़ होती है। गंभीर मामलों में ब्रोंकाइटिस या निमोनिया हो सकता है।
- संचरण: श्वसन स्राव (खांसना/छींकना), नज़दीकी व्यक्तिगत संपर्क या दूषित सतहों के माध्यम से फैलता है।
- ऊष्मायन: 3-6 दिनों की अवधि; बीमारी की अवधि गंभीरता के आधार पर भिन्न होती है।
- मौसमी: सर्दियों और वसंत के दौरान सक्रिय।
- उपचार: कोई विशिष्ट एंटीवायरल दवा नहीं; सहायक देखभाल की सिफारिश की जाती है।

यह आलेख कोंडा रेड्डी जनजातीय परंपराओं, लिव-इन रिलेशनशिप, उनकी सांस्कृतिक प्रथाओं और सामाजिक परिवर्तनों पर ध्यान केंद्रित करता है।



Partners for a Lifetime: M. Pratap Reddy and his partner Pandama, in a live-in relationship since 2012, with their three children at Ukuluru village, in Alluri Sitharama Raju district, Andhra Pradesh. (APPRA/ANU)

This tribe prefers to live and let 'live-in'

Some youngsters of the tribal group living on the banks of the Godavari river in Andhra Pradesh, to avoid expensive traditional wedding rituals, now prefer live-in relationships with partners of their choice. With the elders of the tribe accepting the arrangement and offering the same community support that they give married couples, the live-in couples' families are thriving, writes **T. Appala Naidu**

Thirty-two-year-old Konda Reddi tribal woman Margela Pandama, a mother of three girls, is pregnant with her fourth baby. The first three deliveries were normal and uneventful. Now, in her third trimester, Ms. Pandama says she had to abandon her sewing machine, which lies in a corner on the veranda of the house, upon her doctor's recommendation. The woman from the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) manages all her household chores to prepare an early dinner for her family even as she engages her daughters in their play. And her chilling cold on a windy evening, she waits for her husband to return from work. Mr. Pratap Reddy, her husband, is toiling to build their dream house adjacent to the house they live in, which his parents built. Next summer, the couple will complete 12 years in their live-in relationship and they are eager to move into their new home with their fourth baby. It all started with Mr. Pratap, a Jeep driver, falling in love with Ms. Pandama. He managed to win her heart. After deciding to enter into a live-in relationship, the couple convinced their parents first and then sought the tribe members' consent to their relationship. "Our marriage was not solemnized under any tradition. We began to live together after our parents and community elders consented to our request to allow us to live as a couple," recalls Ms. Pandama. "Both of us preferred a live-in relationship to a traditional wedding, which involves huge expenditure. Neither of our families could bear that kind of expense," says Mr. Pratap, who discontinued education after falling Class X. He began earning a livelihood as a driver and rose to become the vice-sarpanch of Chaulwada gram panchayat of Mareduhilli mandal in Alluri Sitharama Raju (ASR) district. Mr. Pratap's fortune turned as tourists from across India began thronging Goddus, Andhra Pradesh's only grassland destination. He owns a Jeep and operates it for tourists throughout the year. The couple lives in Ukuluru village, 20 kilometres from the Mareduhilli headquarters, in the Mareduhilli forest. Deep inside the reserve

In the past eight years, only five weddings were performed as per our tribal tradition. However, 21 couples, including my wife and me, have opted to live in Prapat, Visweswarach, Chaulwada gram panchayat, ASR district.

forest, the tiny village consists of 36 families, all of which are Konda Reddis. Ten kilometres ahead of the village are naturally-grown Jamun (*Syzygium cumini*) orchards on both sides of the road in the reserve forest. Jamun is a sacred tree, without it, Konda Reddi's traditional wedding would not be solemnized. In the winter, the Annatto plantations in full bloom greet as the entry of Ukuluru. The Annatto, locally known as Jappa, is used in lipstick-making. It is the prime commercial crop grown by the Konda Reddis of Mareduhilli forests. The red soil applied on their mud-walled houses is integral to the tribe's housing architecture. Andala Sani Reddy, 26, Mr. Pratap's neighbour, claims, "In the past eight years, only five weddings were performed as per our tribal tradition. However, 21 couples, including my wife and me, have opted to live in." Mr. Sani Reddy, an auto-rickshaw driver and farmer, and Ms. Aruna Kumari, 20, entered into their live-in relationship last summer.

Elaborate wedding rituals The traditional Konda Reddi tribal wedding ritual lasts four days and mandates a feast for the guests every day. Chicken and mutton are a must on the menu, and guests from across the gram panchayat and nearby Konda Reddi tribal villages must be invited, irrespective of the wedding budget. Ms. Aruna Kumari belongs to Chalkwada village, 10 kilometres from Ukuluru. She dropped out of college in the first year of intermediate to help her parents in shifting cultivation-based agriculture. Ms. Kumari is the eldest child of her family and has three siblings, including one brother. "I fell in love with Sani Reddy and decided to marry him. Since I was of marriageable age, I proposed to my parents about my plans for a live-in relationship with him. My family also could not afford a traditional wedding. We got a nod from both our parents," says Ms. Kumari. Now, this couple is preparing to build a new house by reaping profits from the Annatto farming. "Vice-sarpanch Mr. Pratap says, "In any marriage or a live-in relationship, our tribe does not give or seek anything in dowry. It is an unwritten

practice that exists in our society. However, the man voluntarily helps his in-laws in agriculture work in their fields and receives a payment, which is considered a gift from the in-laws. "I have brought nothing in dowry. I simply came with a bag of clothes to Mr. Pratap's house. Our property depends on the hard work we do in any of their relatives house, where they need to stay together for a week. Later, they would return to the man's house to be accepted by the family and community to live as 'wife and husband'." In union, the Prataps and Sani Reddis say that none of the couples who entered a live-in relationship in their village had been separated.

Bigger issues to worry However, minor disputes that mostly arise between couples are resolved by village elders, a team which has an authority on the affairs of the village and cultural practices. The majority of the disputes between couples arise over men's drinking problem, they say. Elaborating on the legal sanctity of live-in relationships among the Konda Reddi tribe, Rampachodaram-based lawyer Venka Ratra Prakash says, "Any Scheduled Tribe, including the Konda Reddi tribe (PVTG), does not come under the purview of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955. However, they have their traditional system comprising community heads to deal with their issues of marriage."

SARLA LINGA REDDY Former MPPC, Katurwada village. "Our village does not have a history of visiting the police station in matters of live-in relationships. No couple have gone to such an extent. In fact, they live in harmony, leading a happy life," says Pallala Chamamma of Ukuluru. A decade ago, Ms. Chamamma, 60, was widowed after her husband, Mangi Reddy, succumbed to alcoholism-related health complications. The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 (Sec. 2) states, "Nothing contained in this Act shall apply to the members of any Scheduled tribe within the meaning of clause (25) of article 366 of the Constitution unless the Central Government, by notification in the Official Gazette, otherwise directs."

In the event of the death of the husband, the Public Distribution System ration card and birth certificates of the children would be submitted to establish the 'live-in relationship' to claim the benefits, including pensions under the 'widow/single woman' category. **Lauguda tradition** Ms. Chamamma was nostalgic about her wedding, which happened according to the Konda Reddi's Lauguda, a tradition that existed before the emergence of live-in relationships. In this tradition, the village elders and the groom's friends would 'abduct' the woman when she is alone at the stream, farm field, or carnival. She would be kept in a house along with the groom for a day or until the wedding talks commence. "I was abducted by the village elders and friends of my husband while I was attending a carnival of Gangamma. They put me in the room along with my husband. The next day, our wedding talks were held, and everything was set for the wedding ritual," recalls Ms. Chamamma. "Our wedding was held as per Lauguda. It was a minimal affair. A branch of the Jamun tree was placed next to me, the bride. The groom then tied a yellow thread with a piece of turmeric tied to the branch," she says. There was no waiting for an auspicious date and time. The next day of the abduction was the ideal time to tie the knot. It happens in every Konda Reddi village. The woman is freed from the abduction if she rejects the wedding proposal during the wedding talks attended by her parents. Festivals are the most suitable time for Lauguda. The tribe had scheduled all the major festivals in the summer season as most of the crops grown by the tribe would be harvested by then. Night rituals and dances are integral to most of the festivals wherein it is common to see women of marriageable age getting abducted by men who are confident of winning their hearts. "In the Lauguda, too, we never heard of any separated couples, and divorce is unheard of," says Ms. Chamamma, a firm supporter of the live-in relationship trend emerging in her tribe. Her eldest daughter, Meena Kumari is in a live-in relationship while her son, Chitraprasad Kumar, had recently proposed to a woman to a live-in and talks are in progress, she says. The major festivals are the Gangamma festival, in which the village deity is worshipped for the peace in the village and the Hindu festival, celebrated seeking blessings for the bountiful harvest. The uniqueness of the Pradi festival in the community feast, in which food prepared with millet is served. "The decision of the elders during the wedding talk is final, and every couple should stick to it till their last breath. Nowadays, the same commitment is also seen among couples in the live-in relationship," says Pallala Rajamma. The 65-year-old woman wedded Mr. Sani Reddy under the Lauguda tradition, and their marriage is still intact. Another wedding tradition, Thokkudu, exists among the Konda Reddis who live on the hills and are still hunter-gatherers, wherein the man can take a woman of his choice if she is a relative and agrees to the marriage. If both families formally consented to the proposed wedding, the woman's family will be invited to the man's house during a community festival. During the festival day, the wedding between the man and the woman is solemnized after the man touches the woman's feet with his feet at the entrance of the house. In the Mogral tradition of the wedding which happens among the relatives, both man and woman who like each other voluntarily go to any of their relatives house, where they need to stay together for a week. Later, they would return to the man's house to be accepted by the family and community to live as 'wife and husband'.

"The aim of these live-in relationships or other marriage traditions that have evolved in our tribe was to avoid or minimise the financial burden on the families for wedding rituals. We have been accepting every tradition as long as that does not harm the relationship between man and woman," said 70-year-old Sarla Linga Reddy, former Mandal Parishad Territorial Constituency member.

He lives in Kutravada village under Pannuru Gram Panchayat in Mareduhilli mandal. Kutravada is one of the biggest villages where more than one hundred Konda Reddi families live. Mr. Linga Reddy couple have been blessed with eight children: five boys and three girls. Seven of them were married. He had consented to his two sons to choose the 'live-in' relationship. His 33-year-old daughter, Lalitha Kumari, is the Mareduhilli Mandal Parishad president (MPP). Ms. Lalitha Kumari is the youngest MPP and holds a bachelor's degree in Nursing. "Over the past decade, less than ten weddings happened with the four-day rituals and lavish feasts in our village. Most of them are government employees. However, the number of couples who choose a live-in relationship is more than 40," said Mr. Linga Reddy, the former president (2000-09) of erstwhile East Godavari District Konda Reddi Tribe Society. Society strives to fight for the causes and rights of the tribe.

'Inevitable change' Ms. Lalitha Kumari, who meets the tribal elders and various political representatives, opines, "New challenges have emerged in our society. Some of us who cracked government jobs and live in nearby towns prefer to marry outside our tribe. Some disputes over property are being reported among those couples." "Change is inevitable in any tradition and society. The institution of marriage in our tribe may have encountered more challenges as a consequence of marriages with non-tribals, which are happening more often nowadays," she says. Vice-sarpanch Mr. Pratap and Mr. Linga Reddy say that all disputes, including land disputes, are resolved at the village level. During a meeting of a three-member group of elders decides on a particular issue. "The village elders are asked to decide if any problem arises in any family in the event of the death of any partner in the live-in relationship. However, disputes between couples over land or property are rare in our society," says Mr. Linga Reddy. As the family of Ms. Pandama prepares to go to bed, she remarks, "Within a few weeks, I will become the mother of four children born out of a bond called live-in. It had never betrayed any woman in our village. It never will."

कोंडा रेड्डी जनजाति का स्थान और जनसंख्या:

- कोंडा रेड्डी जनजाति मुख्य रूप से आंध्र प्रदेश के पहाड़ी और वन क्षेत्रों में निवास करती है।
- यह जनजाति मुख्य रूप से पूर्वी गोदावरी, पश्चिमी गोदावरी, खम्मम और श्रीकाकुलम जिलों में केंद्रित है।

आर्थिक गतिविधियाँ:

- यह जनजाति मुख्य रूप से झूम खेती करती है।
- मुख्य व्यावसायिक फसल: एनाट्रो, जिसका उपयोग लिपस्टिक बनाने में किया जाता है।
- इस क्षेत्र की लाल मिट्टी का उपयोग पारंपरिक मिट्टी की दीवारों वाले घरों के निर्माण के लिए किया जाता है।

विवाह परंपराएँ:

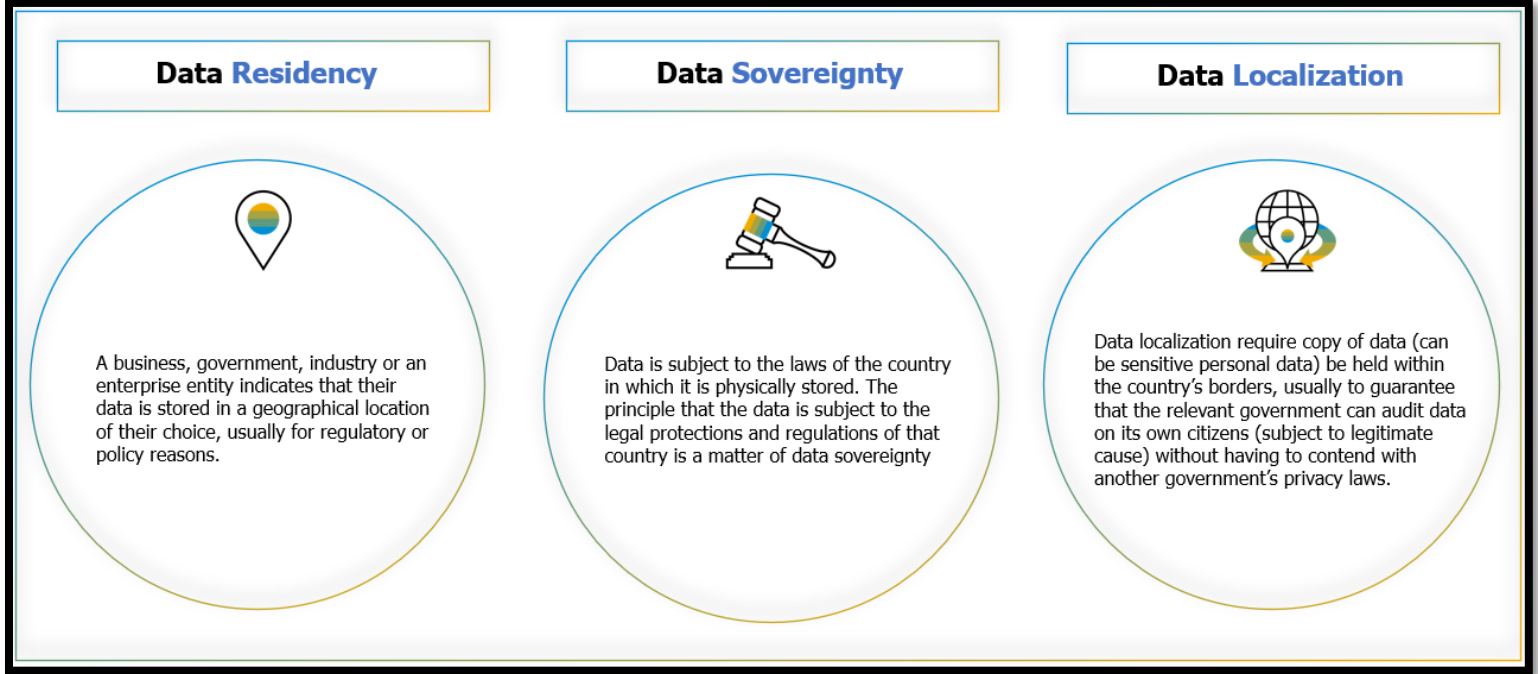
- लिव-इन रिलेशनशिप: पारंपरिक शादियों के वित्तीय बोझ के कारण इसे तेज़ी से पसंद किया जा रहा है।
- पारंपरिक शादियाँ: चार दिनों तक चलने वाले अनुष्ठान समारोह, जिसमें अनिवार्य रूप से चिकन और मटन के व्यंजन के साथ दावत शामिल होती है।
- लागुडु परंपरा: दुल्हन को दूल्हे के परिवार द्वारा "अपहरण" किया जाता है, जिसके बाद शादी की बातचीत होती है।

समुदाय और सांस्कृतिक परिवर्तन:

- यह जनजाति धीरे-धीरे सांस्कृतिक बदलावों का अनुभव कर रही है, जैसे कि गैर-आदिवासियों के साथ अंतर्जातीय विवाह।
- समुदाय के भीतर विवादों को पारंपरिक रूप से गाँव के बुजुर्गों द्वारा सुलझाया जाता है।

In News : Data Localisation Returns: Draft Rules Aim to Tighten Digital Privacy and Sovereignty

डिजिटल व्यक्तिगत डेटा संरक्षण नियम, 2025 का मसौदा डेटा स्थानीयकरण आवश्यकताओं को पुनः प्रस्तुत करता है, जिससे तकनीकी कंपनियां प्रभावित होंगी और भारत में डेटा संप्रभुता मजबूत होगी।



समाचार का विश्लेषण:

➔ **डेटा स्थानीयकरण पुनः प्रस्तुत किया गया**

○ मसौदा डिजिटल व्यक्तिगत डेटा संरक्षण नियम, 2025, डेटा स्थानीयकरण आवश्यकताओं को पुनः प्रस्तुत करता है, जो महत्वपूर्ण डेटा फ़िड्यूसरी को भारत के भीतर विशिष्ट व्यक्तिगत और ट्रेफ़िक डेटा को संग्रहीत और संसाधित करने के लिए अनिवार्य बनाता है।

○ यह 2023 अधिनियम से एक बदलाव को दर्शाता है, जिसने अधिसूचित प्रतिबंधों के साथ सीमा पार डेटा स्थानांतरण की अनुमति दी थी।

➔ **महत्वपूर्ण डेटा फ़िड्यूसरी: परिभाषित और विनियमित**

○ संप्रभुता, सुरक्षा या सार्वजनिक व्यवस्था के लिए निहितार्थ वाले विशाल या संवेदनशील डेटा को संभालने वाली संस्थाएँ, जैसे कि बड़ी टेक कंपनियाँ, महत्वपूर्ण डेटा फ़िड्यूसरी के रूप में वर्गीकृत की जाती हैं।

○ वे कड़े डेटा स्थानीयकरण मानदंडों और अनुपालन आवश्यकताओं के अधीन होंगे।

- ➔ **सरकारी डेटा प्रोसेसिंग के लिए सुरक्षा उपाय**
 - मसौदा नियम सरकारी संस्थाओं द्वारा "वैध" डेटा प्रोसेसिंग का प्रस्ताव करते हैं, लेकिन राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा और सार्वजनिक व्यवस्था के लिए 2023 अधिनियम के तहत दी गई छूट के कारण जांच का सामना करते हैं। इन व्यापक छूटों को संबोधित करने के लिए सुरक्षा उपायों की अपेक्षा की जाती है।
- ➔ **बच्चों के डेटा के लिए माता-पिता की सहमति तंत्र**
 - टेक कंपनियों को बच्चों के डेटा को संसाधित करते समय माता-पिता की सहमति के लिए सत्यापन योग्य तंत्र विकसित करना चाहिए, हालांकि यह चुनौतीपूर्ण बना हुआ है।
 - स्वास्थ्य, शिक्षा और चाइल्डकैअर से संबंधित प्रतिष्ठानों के लिए अपवाद बनाए गए हैं।
- ➔ **डेटा उल्लंघन अधिसूचना और दंड**
 - डेटा फ़िड्युशियरी को उल्लंघनों के बारे में उपयोगकर्ताओं को तुरंत सूचित करना चाहिए, उनकी प्रकृति, प्रभाव और शमन उपायों का विवरण देना चाहिए।
 - सुरक्षा उपायों का पालन न करने पर ₹250 करोड़ तक का जुर्माना लग सकता है।
- ➔ **बढ़ी हुई उपयोगकर्ता सहमति आवश्यकताएँ**
 - मसौदा डेटा संग्रह के लिए स्पष्ट, विशिष्ट और स्टैंडअलोन नोटिस अनिवार्य करता है, जो एकत्र किए गए डेटा के प्रकार और उसके इच्छित उद्देश्य के बारे में पारदर्शिता सुनिश्चित करता है।
- ➔ **बड़ी टेक कंपनियों के लिए निहितार्थ**
 - डेटा संप्रभुता को बढ़ावा देते हुए, स्थानीयकरण को फिर से शुरू करने से मेटा और Google जैसी कंपनियों के लिए परिचालन लागत बढ़ सकती है, जो संभावित रूप से उनकी सेवाओं को प्रभावित कर सकती है।
 - वैश्विक संचालन के लिए इसके व्यापक निहितार्थों के कारण स्थानीयकरण के प्रति उद्योग का प्रतिरोध बना हुआ है।

The looming threat to federalism and democratic tenets

The ruling government, led by the Bharatiya Janata Party/National Democratic Alliance, has been pursuing the One Nation, One Election framework (ONOE) with all seriousness. This proposal seeks to synchronise the Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections under one single electoral cycle. While the advocates of the ONOE have cited several administrative and fiscal efficiencies, its opponents point to the far-reaching consequences of this plan on the democratic and federalist character of India, as laid out in the Constitution of India.

The historical context

Simultaneous elections are not something very new in India. During the initial years after Independence, the Election Commission of India (ECI) used to conduct simultaneous elections for both Parliament and State Assemblies. But this cycle of cooperative federalism was disrupted at the very outset with the appearance and imposition of Article 356, which is popularly known as President's Rule. When this was done for the first time in Kerala in 1959, an element of federal overreach began to take hold of the Union-State relations, as the will of the Union appeared to override State autonomy. The arrangement was essentially meant to be a constitutional mechanism and provided for restoring normalcy in States where governance had become well-nigh impossible.

Article 356 was optimistically termed a "dead letter" by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, to be used sparingly. Yet, as H.V. Kamath aptly remarked, "Dr. Ambedkar is dead, and the Articles are very much alive", reflecting the misuse that is implicit in this provision as a tool of political expediency. From 1950 to 1994, successive governments, notwithstanding their political hue, indulged in the misuse of Article 356 to the extent of dismissing 'politically obnoxious' elected State governments. Even after the S.R. Bommai case judgment, which aims to restore the federal government's rights and limit the arbitrary acts of Governors, incidents continue. Its frequent invocation – over 130 times since Independence – has distorted that purpose.

Defection has also emerged as a strong threat to the stability of State governments. Democratically-elected governments have fallen after legislators have changed sides over various enticements. It was to prevent this form of democratic erosion that the Anti-Defection Law was enacted through the 52nd Amendment Act of 1985 as part of the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution, which attracts the disqualification penalty against defectors. But there are still loopholes. The absence of any sort of time-bound framework for Speakers to decide on



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disqualification petitions and provisions for "group defections" has rendered the law ineffective. The result is that defections are still commonplace, leading to unconstitutional changes in regimes.

This is where the proposition put forward by the ONOE to align State election cycles with that of the Lok Sabha gets deeply problematic. In fact, the proposal goes all the way to make amendments in the Constitution, particularly in Articles 83 and 172, which guarantee a five-year term for Parliament and State Assemblies. Some blatant omissions in the governance regime include the misuse of Article 356 and the inadequacy of anti-defection laws. The State governments would face a much tighter squeeze in the ONOE, as their terms would be curtailed or extended to bring them in line with the national election cycle. This reduction in State autonomy is more than an administrative nuisance. It constitutes a deep attack on the federalist structure of the Constitution.

Federal structure under siege

The federal system of India, being a basic feature of Indian democracy, enables States to function as relatively independent units in solving problems of a localised nature. State elections that would have to be held along with the national elections would blur and impair the ability of electors to evaluate the performance of the State government. If the ONOE is held and if there happens to be a midterm ONOE, then State governments which were elected only for 'abbreviated' tenures would breach the democratic principle of "one person, one vote, one value". In case a State government falls midterm, say after three years, the ONOE would lead to elections for a new government that would serve only the remaining time in the synchronised electoral cycle, roughly two years.

This cuts down the tenure of a government, making the mandate of the voter of little value; a new government would not complete its full term, reducing the democratic principle of complete representation. Truncated terms are not only an issue when it comes to State governments but are also of concern to the Lok Sabha too. For instance, from the political turbulence of the mid-1990s, there were elections in 1996, 1998, and 1999.

In fact, if the ONOE had been in place, there would have been another election in 2001, which would add up to four elections in five years. The frequency of elections results in increased costs – financial, administrative, and in terms of human capital – which are not realised in the efficiency that the ONOE is touted to bring. On nominal and practical grounds, each government needs a realistic time period to analyse the existing

socio-political-economic state of affairs, frame adaptive policies and do course corrections. This artificially imposed reduction in the tenure of a government could disrupt governance, resulting in negative consequences that outweigh the usual policy paralysis caused by the enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct during elections.

The challenges in terms of logistics in implementing the ONOE are monumental. India's large electorate base, of over 900 million voters, demands enormous resources to conduct elections. If the Lok Sabha, State and local body elections are aligned, the burden would increase manifold and eventually affect the ECI, security forces, and administrative machinery. The risk of voter fatigue and confusion cannot be ruled out.

Address the issues first

There needs to be reflection before the ONOE can be espoused for fiscal and administrative efficiencies. There is a need to revisit some of the systemic challenges that plague State governments. There needs to be course correction to ensure that the ONOE does not become a device for the centralisation of powers without addressing issues such as the misuse of Article 356, a strengthening of anti-defection laws, and the issue of the stability of State governments. The federal character of the Constitution is not an arrangement in procedure but a recognition of the diversity and the plurality that constitute the country. Forcing States to fall in line with a unified electoral cycle unduly erodes the autonomy of States and dilutes the democratic essence of governance.

A hurried imposition of the ONOE, without sets of systemic reforms that are necessary to stem the erosion of federalism, would indeed be a frontal attack on the Constitution's basic structure. If this does not happen, then the ONOE can even be a blot instead of being deliverance for Indian democracy.

The fact that a malfunctioning fax machine sat at the heart of a cynical operation aimed at dispensing with the elected government of Jammu and Kashmir, illuminates the frailty as well as opacity regarding certain institutional processes in India, all too sharply. A few such instances make it clear that systemic reform is the immediate need so that people become accountable to the principles of the Constitution.

As long as these foundational areas remain unsorted, the ONOE, rather than solving those structural vulnerabilities, may end up making them starker. True democratic governance requires much more than a routine exercise of simultaneous elections. It is an imperative commitment to the letter and spirit of federalism and to strengthening State governments as equal partners in the federal polity of India.

'One Nation One Election' should not become a device for the centralisation of powers; issues such as a strengthening of anti-defection laws cannot be glossed over

GS Paper 02 : भारतीय राजनीति

PYQ : (UPSC CSE (M) GS-2 2017) : 'लोकसभा और राज्य विधानसभाओं के लिए एक साथ चुनाव कराने से चुनाव प्रचार में लगने वाला समय और धन सीमित हो जाएगा, लेकिन इससे सरकार की जनता के प्रति जवाबदेही कम हो जाएगी।' चर्चा करें। (150 words/10m)

UPSC Mains Practice Question: भारत के संघीय ढांचे और लोकतांत्रिक सिद्धांतों पर इसके संभावित प्रभाव के संदर्भ में 'एक राष्ट्र, एक चुनाव' (ONOE) के प्रस्ताव की आलोचनात्मक जाँच करें। इसके कार्यान्वयन से जुड़ी संवैधानिक, तार्किक और शासन संबंधी चुनौतियों पर प्रकाश डालें। (250 Words /15 marks)

संदर्भ:

- ▶ सत्तारूढ़ भारतीय जनता पार्टी के नेतृत्व वाली सरकार ने लोकसभा और राज्य विधानसभा चुनावों को एक साथ कराने के लिए ONOE ढांचे का प्रस्ताव रखा है।

एक साथ चुनाव कराने का ऐतिहासिक संदर्भ

- ▶ स्वतंत्रता के बाद भारत में एक साथ चुनाव कराना आम बात थी, लेकिन अनुच्छेद 356 (राष्ट्रपति शासन) लागू होने से इसमें बाधा उत्पन्न हुई।
- ▶ अनुच्छेद 356 का पहला दुरुपयोग 1959 में केरल में हुआ, जो संघीय अतिक्रमण को दर्शाता है और संघ-राज्य संबंधों को बाधित करता है।
- ▶ बी.आर. अंबेडकर ने अनुच्छेद 356 को "मृत पत्र" कहा था, लेकिन इसका 130 से अधिक बार इस्तेमाल किया गया, जिसके कारण कई राज्य सरकारों को बर्खास्त करना पड़ा।

दलबदल और दलबदल विरोधी कानून का प्रभाव

- ▶ दलबदल से राज्य सरकारें अस्थिर होती हैं, जिससे असंवैधानिक शासन परिवर्तन होता है।
- ▶ 1985 में 52वें संशोधन के माध्यम से पेश किया गया दलबदल विरोधी कानून दलबदलियों को दंडित करता है, लेकिन इसमें स्पीकर के निर्णयों में देरी और समूह दलबदल के लिए छूट जैसी खामियाँ हैं।

ONOE फ्रेमवर्क के साथ चुनौतियाँ

- ▶ **संवैधानिक और प्रशासनिक निहितार्थ**
 - ONOE के लिए अनुच्छेद 83 और 172 में संशोधन की आवश्यकता है, जो संसद और राज्य विधानसभाओं के लिए पाँच साल के कार्यकाल की गारंटी देते हैं।
 - राज्य चुनाव चक्रों को राष्ट्रीय चुनावों के साथ संरेखित करने से राज्य सरकार के कार्यकाल में कटौती या विस्तार हो सकता है, जिससे राज्य की स्वायत्तता कमज़ोर हो सकती है।

► **लोकतांत्रिक चिंताएँ**

- एक साथ चुनाव होने के कारण मतदाताओं को राज्य और राष्ट्रीय सरकारों का स्वतंत्र रूप से मूल्यांकन करने में कठिनाई हो सकती है।
- मध्यावधि ONOE चक्रों में राज्य सरकारों के लिए संक्षिप्त शब्द "एक व्यक्ति, एक वोट, एक मूल्य" के सिद्धांत को कमजोर करते हैं।
- 1990 के दशक के मध्य में पिछली राजनीतिक उथल-पुथल इस बात पर प्रकाश डालती है कि ONOE के कारण कम अवधि में लगातार चुनाव हो सकते हैं, जिससे लागत-दक्षता तर्कों को नकार दिया जा सकता है।

► **लॉजिस्टिक और प्रशासनिक चुनौतियाँ**

- लोकसभा, राज्य विधानसभाओं और स्थानीय निकायों में 900 मिलियन से अधिक मतदाताओं के लिए चुनावों का प्रबंधन संसाधनों और संस्थानों पर दबाव डालेगा।
- मतदाता थकान और भ्रम पैदा कर सकते हैं, जिससे चुनावी प्रभावशीलता कम हो सकती है।

ध्यान देने योग्य प्रणालीगत मुद्दे

► **अनुच्छेद 356 का दुरुपयोग**

- राज्य की स्वायत्तता को बहाल करने के लिए एस.आर. बोम्मई मामले के फैसले जैसे न्यायिक प्रयासों के बावजूद अनुच्छेद 356 का दुरुपयोग जारी है।

► **दलबदल विरोधी कानून में सुधार**

- राज्य सरकारों में स्थिरता सुनिश्चित करने के लिए दलबदल विरोधी ढांचे में खामियों को दूर करने की जरूरत है।

► **संघवाद को मजबूत करना**

- संघीय ढांचा भारत की विविधता और बहुलता को मान्यता देता है, जिसके लिए राज्य की स्वायत्तता बरकरार रहना जरूरी है।
- प्रणालीगत सुधारों के बिना ONOE, सत्ता को केंद्रीकृत करने और शासन के संघीय चरित्र को खत्म करने का जोखिम उठाता है।

निष्कर्ष

- ONOE, राजकोषीय और प्रशासनिक दक्षता का वादा करते हुए, भारत के संघीय और लोकतांत्रिक ढांचे के लिए महत्वपूर्ण जोखिम पैदा करता है।
- लोकतांत्रिक शासन को संविधान के सार को संरक्षित करने के लिए संघवाद और केंद्र और राज्यों के बीच समान भागीदारी के सिद्धांतों को प्राथमिकता देनी चाहिए।