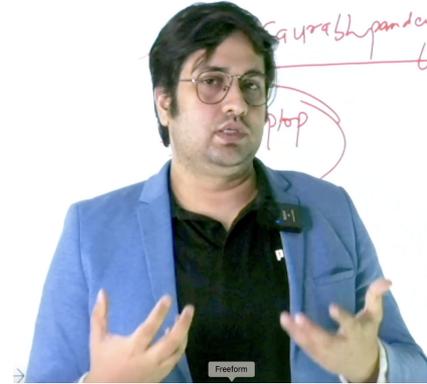


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- **Anti-Defection Law in India: An Overview**
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ISRO-DBT sign agreement to conduct biotechnology experiments in space station



Jacob Koshy

NEW DELHI

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) have inked an agreement to design and conduct experiments, which will then be integrated into the forthcoming Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS), India's proposed indigenous space station.

The BAS is expected to take shape from 2028-2035.

Health impact

Some of the experiments being mooted include how weightlessness can influence muscle loss on those in space, what kind of algae may be suitable as nutrients or to preserve food for longer, how some algae may be processed to make jet fuel, and the impact of radiation on the health of those aboard space stations.

Before the BAS, the ma-



S. Somanath

ajor mission on ISRO's plate is the Gaganyaan mission, which will be India's first crewed mission to space that is expected to launch in 2025-2026.

Prior to that there will be three uncrewed test missions. Some of the biology missions could be included in these test missions.

"In some of the test flights (uncrewed) prior to the main Gaganyaan mission, we may consider including some of these experiments. Which ones specifically, we are yet to decide," S. Somanath,

Chairman, ISRO, told *The Hindu*. "Based on what we learn, we could consider some experiments in Gaganyaan. However, the primary plan is for the BAS."

Bio-manufacturing

The ISRO-DBT collaboration stems from another initiative this year called the BIOE3 (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment) policy by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) that aims to stimulate 'bio-manufacturing' in India. The bio-economy, officials in the DBT said, would be worth \$300 billion by 2030.

"The space bio-manufacturing sector is part of this. This agreement will spur innovation and developments in human health research, novel pharmaceuticals, biotherapeutics, regenerative medicine, bio-based technologies for waste management as well as support multiple start-ups," said Rajesh Gokhale, Secretary, DBT.

– Topic → ISRO and DBT Agreement

 **ISRO and DBT Collaboration:** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) have signed an agreement to conduct experiments for the upcoming Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS).

 **Bharatiya Antariksh Station Timeline:** The BAS is projected to be developed between 2028 and 2035.

 **Health Experiments in Space:** Proposed experiments include studying muscle loss due to weightlessness, exploring algae for nutrition and food preservation, processing algae for jet fuel, and assessing radiation's health impacts on astronauts.



Gaganyaan Mission: Before the BAS, ISRO plans to launch the Gaganyaan mission, India's first crewed space mission, expected between 2025-2026, with three uncrewed test missions preceding it.



Inclusion of Biology Missions: Some biology experiments may be included in the uncrewed test flights leading up to the Gaganyaan mission, as stated by ISRO Chairman S. Somanath.



BIOE3 Initiative: The collaboration is part of the BIOE3 policy aimed at boosting bio-manufacturing in India, which is projected to contribute \$300 billion to the bioeconomy by 2030.

-  **Impact on Innovation:** The agreement is expected to foster innovation in health research, pharmaceuticals, regenerative medicine, and support startups in bio-based technologies.

Summary: ISRO and DBT's partnership aims to conduct space-related experiments for India's future space station, with a focus on health impacts and bio-manufacturing innovations

Sharpen the anti-defection law, strengthen democracy



The anti-defection law in India, a crucial instrument designed to maintain the stability of governments and uphold the integrity of democratic institutions, has been a subject of much debate since its inception. Introduced in 1985, the law sought to address the rampant party-switching by legislators, which frequently led to political instability. While it has been somewhat effective in curbing the practice of defection, various loopholes and implementation issues have surfaced over time, necessitating further reforms.

Historical genesis of the law

The problem of defection has deep roots in Indian politics, dating back to the post-Independence era. In the first few decades following Independence, India experienced a significant number of defections, which often resulted in the destabilisation of governments. This trend not only undermined the mandate of the electorate but also raised serious ethical questions about the conduct of elected representatives.

Legislators would switch parties, sometimes in exchange for financial gains or ministerial positions, leading to the fall of governments and the formation of new ones without fresh elections. This was colloquially referred to as “*Aaya Ram, Gaya Ram*”, a phrase that originated from an incident in Haryana in the 1960s, where a legislator, Gaya Lal, switched parties multiple times in a single day. Such incidents underscored the need for a law to curb this practice.

Indian Parliament enacted the anti-defection law through the 52nd Amendment to the Constitution, introducing the Tenth Schedule during Rajiv Gandhi’s tenure as Prime Minister. This law laid down the grounds for disqualification of Members of Parliament and State legislatures on the basis of defection. A member could be disqualified if they voluntarily gave up the membership of their political party or disobeyed the party whip in key votes such as confidence motions or Budget approvals. The law was aimed at providing stability to governments and ensuring that elected representatives remained loyal to the party’s mandate on which they were elected.

While the initial law provided some deterrence against defections, it still had loopholes. One significant flaw was the provision that allowed a split in a party if at least one-third of the members defected, which often led to mass defections. The 91st Amendment in 2003 addressed this issue by requiring that at least



B. Vinod Kumar

was a Member of Parliament (Bharat Rashtra Samithi) in the 14th and the 16th Lok Sabha

The anti-defection law has played a crucial role in political stability, but there are gaps which need to be addressed to make it more effective and impartial

two-thirds of the members of a party must agree for a “merger” to avoid disqualification. This made it more challenging for small-scale defections to occur and reduced the incidence of such political manoeuvring.

Despite its intentions, the anti-defection law has faced criticism and challenges in its implementation. One of the most significant challenges is the inordinate delay in deciding defection cases. In some instances, Speakers have taken several months, or even years, to render a decision. This delay allows defectors to continue holding their positions, thereby subverting the purpose of the law. The discretionary power vested in the Speaker or Chairperson, without any stipulated time frame for decision-making, has often been a point of contention.

Another issue is the lack of transparency in the issuance and communication of party whips. Whips are essential instruments used by political parties to ensure discipline among their members, especially on crucial votes. However, the internal nature of these directives has led to disputes over whether members were adequately informed about the party’s stance, making it difficult to determine the legitimacy of defection cases. While the decisions of the Speaker or Chairperson are subject to judicial review, the courts have generally been reluctant to intervene in defection cases, citing the need to respect the autonomy of the legislature. This has limited the scope for addressing potential abuses of power or ensuring timely resolutions.

Proposed amendments

To strengthen the anti-defection law and enhance its impartiality, two key amendments are proposed. The first concerns the time frame for decisions on defection cases. The absence of a fixed timeline for the Speaker or Chairperson to decide on defection cases has resulted in delays and potential misuse of discretionary power, undermining the law’s intent. To address this issue, a four-week time frame should be established for resolving defection cases. If a decision is not reached within this period, the defecting members should be deemed to be disqualified from their positions. This amendment to the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution would ensure timely resolutions, prevent arbitrary decisions, and uphold the legislative process’s integrity by limiting political bias and misuse of power.

The second is on public notice of party whips. The current lack of transparency in issuing party whips often leads to disputes over whether

members were adequately informed. To resolve this, political parties should be provided with a framework of the service of the whip in the form of a newspaper publication or through electronic communication. In *Keisham Meghachandra Singh vs The Hon’ble Speaker Manipur Legislative Assembly and Ors.* (2020), the Supreme Court of India recommended replacing the Speaker’s role in anti-defection cases with an independent tribunal or a body appointed by the Election Commission of India. However, in a democracy, the importance of the Speaker or Chairperson’s office cannot be underestimated, as they are crucial in upholding parliamentary integrity and ensuring impartiality. Instead of sidelining this institution, reforms should aim to strengthen its accountability and transparency.

The Government of India must also explore various suggestions made by the Dinesh Goswami committee report (1990), the Hashim Abdul Halim committee report (1994), the 170th report of the Law Commission of India (1999), the Report of the National Commission to review the working of the Constitution of India (2002), the Hashim Abdul Halim committee report (2003) and the 255th report of the Law Commission of India (2015) for strengthening of the anti-defection law.

Need for political will

The anti-defection law has, historically, played a crucial role in preventing instability caused by defections and maintaining the sanctity of the electoral mandate. However, its implementation has revealed certain gaps and challenges that need to be addressed to make the law more effective and impartial. The amendments to the Tenth Schedule of the Indian Constitution should be prioritised to facilitate the effective implementation of the Union Government’s “One Nation, One Election” initiative. By implementing these amendments, the anti-defection law can be revitalised to better serve its purpose in the current political context. It would ensure that elected representatives adhere to the principles of party loyalty and discipline while also protecting the democratic mandate of the electorate. Narendra Modi, the Leader of the House in the Lok Sabha, and Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of the Opposition, should take up the issue and ensure that the amendments are made to strengthen Indian democracy. In doing so, the law would continue to uphold the stability and the integrity of India’s parliamentary democracy, adapting to the evolving political landscape with greater efficacy and fairness.

Topic → **Anti-Defection Law in India: An Overview**



Introduction of the Law

Established in 1985 to prevent party-switching by legislators.
Aimed at maintaining government stability.

Historical Context

Defection issues have deep roots in post-Independence Indian politics.
Led to government instability and raised ethical concerns.

Legislative Framework

Enacted through the 52nd Amendment.
Disqualifies MPs and state legislators for:
 Voluntarily leaving their party.
 Disobeying party whips during key votes._____



Loopholes and Reforms



Initial loopholes allowed splits in parties with one-third defections.

91st Amendment in 2003 addressed these by requiring two-thirds agreement for mergers.



Implementation Challenges

Delays in deciding defection cases by Speakers.

Defectors often retain positions for extended periods.



Transparency Issues

Lack of transparency in party whip communication.

Disputes over the legitimacy of defection cases complicate enforcement.



Judicial Reluctance

Courts hesitant to intervene, emphasizing legislative autonomy. _____

Limits on accountability and timely resolutions.

Anti-Defection Law Amendments

Key Proposals and Recommendations

 Proposed Time Frame: A four-week deadline is suggested for resolving defection cases to prevent delays and misuse of power.

 Disqualification Clause: If a decision on defection is not made within the four-week period, defecting members will be disqualified from their positions.

 Transparency in Whips: A framework for public notice of party whips is proposed to enhance transparency and reduce disputes regarding member notifications.

—  Independent Tribunal Suggestion: The Supreme Court recommended _____ replacing the Speaker's role in defection cases with an independent tribunal, but the importance of the Speaker's role in maintaining parliamentary integrity is emphasized.

 Historical Recommendations: The Government of India is urged to consider various past committee reports for strengthening the anti-defection law.

 Accountability and Transparency: Reforms should focus on enhancing the accountability and transparency of the Speaker or Chairperson's office rather than sidelining it.

 Legislative Integrity: The proposed amendments aim to uphold the integrity of the legislative process and limit political bias.

-  Importance of Anti-Defection Law: The anti-defection law is essential for _____ preventing political instability and maintaining electoral integrity.
-  Need for Amendments: There are gaps in the current implementation that necessitate amendments to the Tenth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.
-  Support for "One Nation, One Election": Amendments should align with the Union Government's initiative to conduct simultaneous elections across the country.
-  Upholding Democratic Principles: The law aims to ensure party loyalty and protect the democratic mandate of voters.
-  Adaptation to Political Changes: The law must evolve to address the changing political landscape effectively and fairly.

'

-  Strengthening Democracy: Revitalizing the anti-defection law is crucial for maintaining the stability and integrity of India's parliamentary democracy.

Summary: The anti-defection law is vital for political stability in India, requiring amendments to enhance its effectiveness and support the "One Nation, One Election" initiative

Ahead of the 29th edition of the Conference of Parties in Baku, Azerbaijan, next month, there is renewed energy in government circles to accelerate Indian industry's transition to carbon markets. While the broader theme of this edition of the COP is increasing ambition on climate finance, a key item on the agenda is clarity on carbon markets. A specific section under the Paris Climate Agreement of 2015, called Article 6, lays the contours under which carbon markets – or the enabling of trading of prevented greenhouse gas emissions among countries – can be operationalised. Carbon markets incentivise climate action by enabling parties to trade in carbon credits generated by the reduction or removal of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, such as by switching from fossil fuels to renewable energy or enhancing or conserving carbon stocks in ecosystems such as forests. Subsections within Article 6 provide guidelines on what kinds of carbon-reduction activities and verification mechanisms are permissible, and how countries may enter into bilateral agreements so that emission reductions in one country may be legally claimed by another.

While carbon markets came into existence nearly two decades ago, they have been plagued by opacity and criticism that they only created the illusion of emission reductions. Although such markets have revived, confusion remains about how credits may be verified. There is optimism that Baku may see a final resolution of this problem and that the first legal credits may begin to be claimed by countries next year. India, due to its voluntary commitment to generate half its electricity from non-fossil energy sources by 2030, stands to gain as a host of several carbon-reduction projects. Additionally, there are also mushrooming private sector enterprises in India setting up innovative forestry projects that reportedly lock carbon and can be claimed as credits by multinational companies, traded through so-called voluntary carbon markets. India's iron and steel industries are among the nine types of industries expected to meet emission intensity standards by 2025. By restricting the amount of carbon per unit of production, this will, depending on regulatory enforcement, formally kick-start India's carbon market. However, this will invite complex calculations and, given the experience of a related energy-efficiency trading scheme, run the risk of not exerting enough pressure on companies to comply. While calculating carbon saved is a fraught exercise, India must aim, through its research institutions and authorities, to evolve a transparent and fair policy that is on a par with the best internationally.

Topic → Climate Finance and Carbon Markets at COP29



29th COP in Baku

Event: The Conference of Parties (COP) will convene next month in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Focus: Discussions will center on climate finance and carbon markets.

Article 6 of Paris Agreement

Framework: Establishes the operational guidelines for carbon markets.

Purpose: Enables countries to trade carbon credits for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Incentives for Climate Action

Encouragement: Carbon markets promote activities like adopting renewable energy and ecosystem conservation.

Mechanism: Facilitates the trading of carbon credits.



Challenges in Verification



Issue: Persistent confusion over the verification of carbon credits.

Impact: Leads to skepticism about the effectiveness of carbon markets.



India's Commitment

Goal: Achieve 50% electricity generation from non-fossil sources by 2030.

Opportunity: Positioning to benefit from carbon-reduction projects.



Private Sector Initiatives

Innovation: Indian enterprises are developing forestry projects.

Benefit: These projects can generate carbon credits for multinational companies.



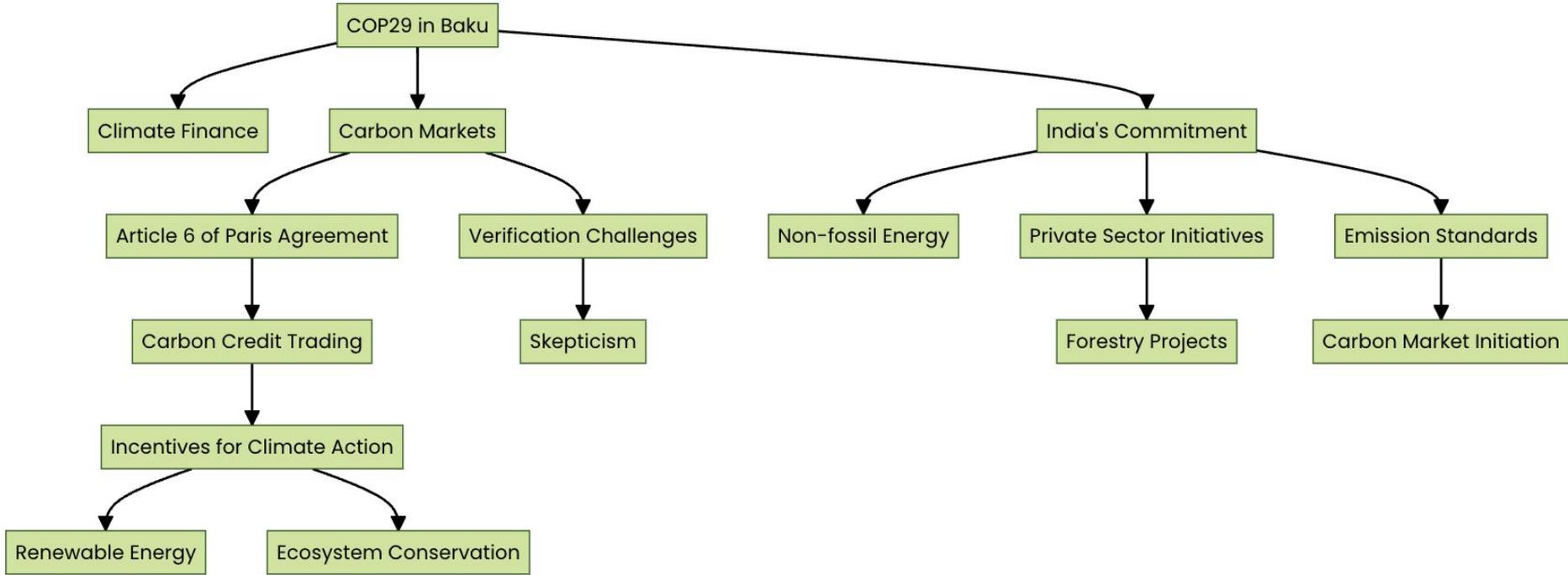
Emission Standards for Industries

Expectation: India's iron and steel industries to meet emission intensity standards by 2025.

Outcome: This may formally initiate India's carbon market.

Summary: The upcoming COP in Baku aims to clarify carbon markets under the Paris Agreement, with India poised to benefit from its commitment to non-fossil energy and emerging private sector initiatives.

Carbon Market Dynamics:



LAUREL

Tropical storm Trami leaves towns submerged, 66 dead in Philippines



AFP

Residents of the northern Philippines used spades and rakes to clear their homes of mud and debris on Friday while others still awaited rescue as the death toll from Tropical Storm Trami rose to 66. Tens of thousands remained displaced after fleeing floods driven by a torrential downpour. AFP

-Topic→ Severe Tropical Storm Trami (Kristine)

Overview



Storm Name and Classification: Severe Tropical Storm Trami, also known as Severe Tropical Storm Kristine in the Philippines, is currently active.



Timeline: The storm developed into a low-pressure area on October 19, 2024, and was named Kristine on October 20 after entering the Philippine Area of Responsibility.



Location: Trami is moving into the South China Sea after impacting the Philippines.



Development: Initially a tropical depression, it was upgraded to a tropical storm by the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) due to the formation of spiral bands of deep convection.

 **Meteorological Context:** The storm was embedded within a larger trough extending from the Philippine Islands to Guam.

 **Satellite Imagery:** Early satellite imagery indicated that the depression was exposed with elongated circulation and convective bands.

 **Impact:** The storm caused deadly impacts in the Philippines before moving into the South China Sea.

Summary: Severe Tropical Storm Trami (Kristine) is an active storm that developed in October 2024, causing significant impacts in the Philippines before moving into the South China Sea.

Tropical Cyclone Formation: Key Factors and Theories



 **Warm Ocean Requirement:** Tropical cyclones need expansive ocean areas with surface temperatures above 26°C or 27°C to develop.

 **Latitude Influence:** Initial disturbances are observed within 5° of latitude from the equator, but they intensify into hurricanes or typhoons only beyond this range.

 **Wind Shear Conditions:** Weak vertical wind shear is crucial for storm formation, highlighting regions with minimal mean zonal-wind shear.

 **Pre-existing Disturbances:** Cyclone development relies on a low-level disturbance over warm ocean waters, coupled with upper-level divergence.



— **Formation Theories:** Two primary theories explain cyclone formation: the convective theory (involving unstable air masses) and the frontal theory (involving air mass convergence).



Pressure Dynamics: Cyclone development involves a continuous pressure drop due to air movement towards the center and outward flow at high levels.



Convergence and Divergence: Effective cyclone formation requires a balance of circulation, divergence, and convergence over time and scale.

Summary: Tropical cyclones form under specific conditions involving warm ocean temperatures, latitude, weak wind shear, and the interplay of various atmospheric dynamics.

Tropical Cyclones: Formation and Impact



Regions of Formation:

-  Tropical North Atlantic
-  Western North Pacific
-  Bay of Bengal
-  South Pacific Ocean

Seasonal Occurrence:

-  Atlantic: July to October
-  Western Pacific: May to November
-  South Pacific and Indian Oceans: December to April

Exclusions:

-  South Atlantic Ocean
 -  Southeastern Pacific
-

— Equatorial Rarity: _____



Rare within 5° latitude of the equator

Movement Patterns:



Pacific: West or west-northwest at 19 km/h



South China Sea: Northward or northeast, affecting the Philippines

Global Distribution:

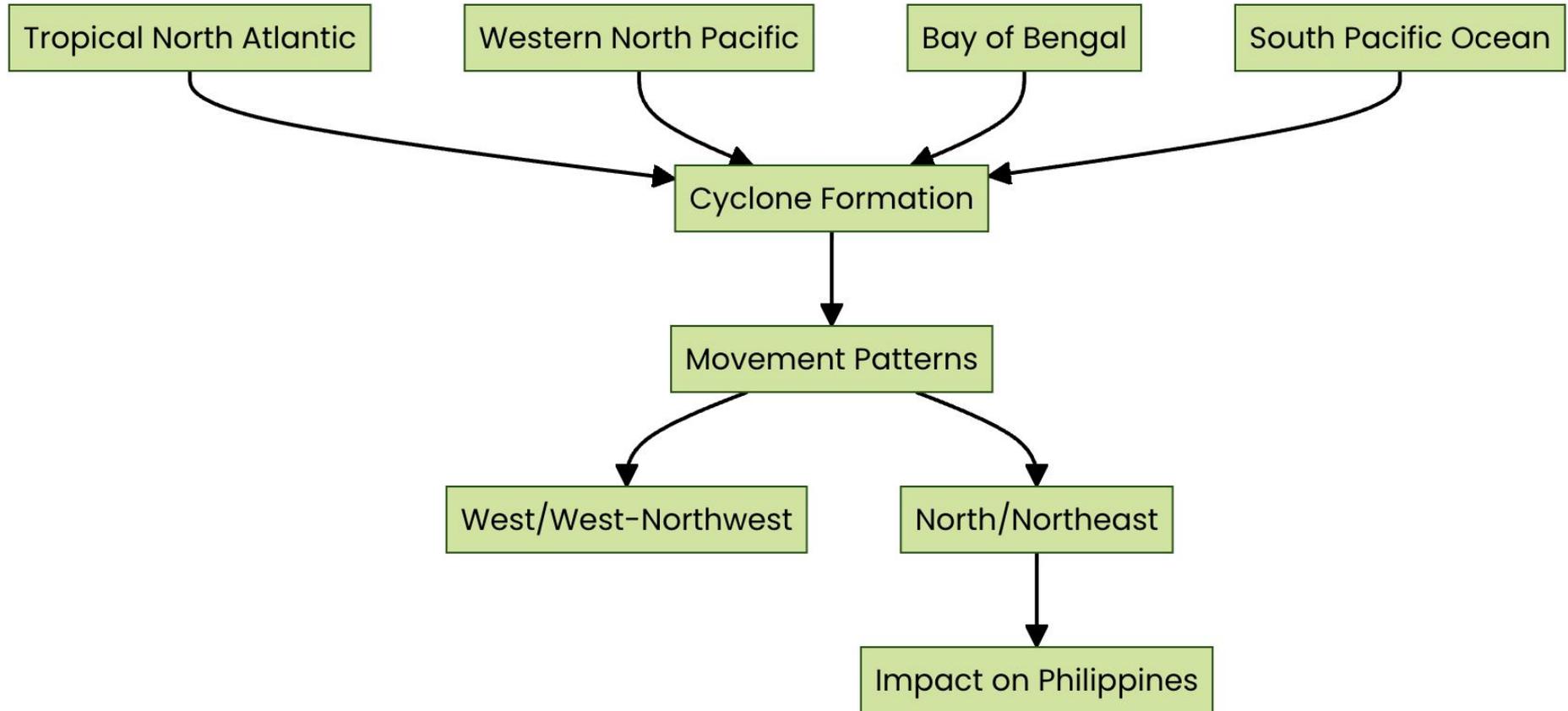


Predominantly oceanic phenomena

Summary: Tropical cyclones form in specific oceanic regions and times, significantly impacting areas like the Philippines.



Cyclone Formation and Movement:



Severe budget crisis sparks concerns over future of UN-led climate dialogue



The UN body is facing budget shortfall of at least €57 million, threatening its ability to conduct climate negotiations and implement agreements; despite some countries exceeding their payment obligations, major contributors have not yet fulfilled their commitments, exacerbating the crisis

Reuters
BRUSSELS

The leading UN body on climate change is experiencing a severe budget shortfall, according to an analysis of documents from the world body. This funding gap, diplomats said, could impair international climate dialogue.

The analysis found a budget hole of at least 57 million euros for 2024 – or nearly half of the funding needed for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat to run annual climate negotiations among almost 200 countries and to help implement any agreements that are made.

The budgets set out for the UNFCCC span two years. Its total 2024-25 budget – the body's three main budget lines combined – is 240 million euros, with about half of that expected to be allocated for this year.

The UNFCCC's member countries signed off on the budget and are expected to contribute the funds. The budget includes a core fund to which these countries are obligated to contribute, a supplementary fund drawing voluntary donations, and another voluntary fund to help diplomats from poorer countries attend UN climate negotiations. While countries such as Japan and Germany have exceeded their payment obligations,



UNFCCC confirmed that there is a shortfall in the fund meant to pay for hundreds of diplomats to attend climate talks, including its COP-29 summit next month in Baku, Azerbaijan. REUTERS

others, notably the U.S. and China have not yet met theirs. Contributions are due on January 1 each year. The secretariat, set up under the 1992 UNFCCC treaty, is the world's key body for coordinating international efforts to reduce climate-warming emissions and staging summits where countries can hold one another accountable.

The budget shortfall has forced it to curtail activities – from reducing operating hours at its headquarters in Bonn, Germany, to cancelling regional “climate week” events this year. Those regional summits in countries such as Kenya and Malaysia last year raised billions of dollars in investment pledges from governments, investors and philanthropies for renewable energy, reforestation and other climate-focused projects.

“We continue to work

relentlessly, but our resources are increasingly over-stretched,” said a UNFCCC spokesperson.

Germany's climate envoy Jennifer Morgan urged countries to find a solution. “We need a climate secretariat that can perform its functions,” she said.

Record payment delays
As of this month, the UNFCCC had received 63 million euros (\$68 million) in contributions for 2024.

Officials in the U.S. and China said the countries would make their payments this year but did not specify when. State Department spokesperson Melvin Felix said the U.S. “still intends to provide a substantial contribution” to support the secretariat this year. The Chinese Foreign Ministry said China “will fulfil its obligations as always.” As of October, the

U.S. still owed 7.3 million euros to the UNFCCC's 2024 core budget, though it has contributed 2.5 million euros to its supplementary budget. China still owed 5.6 million euros to the core budget, though it has contributed 497,000 euros to the supplementary fund.

Even if both countries meet their obligations this year, it would not be enough to cover the hole in the UNFCCC's overall budget.

Countries can be delayed in meeting the payment deadline for logistical reasons. National elections also can cause delays.

The analysis showed that, in past years, these issues typically were resolved before October and that this year's delays are by far the worst in UNFCCC history.

Eight diplomats in-

involved in U.N. climate negotiations, and with UNFCCC representatives expressed concern that the funding gap could undermine UN climate negotiations at a time when national governments are seeking trillions of dollars in climate investments.

The diplomats listed examples, not previously reported, of how the cash crunch was already affecting UNFCCC operations, such as forcing the secretariat to extend employment contracts for only months at a time or hampering its ability to fund the travel of representatives from poor nations to climate talks.

The UNFCCC confirmed exclusively that there is a 2.04 million euros shortfall in the fund meant to pay for hundreds of diplomats to attend climate talks, including its COP-29 summit next month in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Egypt's lead climate negotiator Mohamed Nasr said that any weakening of the work done by the UNFCCC by failing to fund its budget would mean “creating space for weakening climate change action globally.”

“This process is not only about negotiating the decisions but also about the global pressure being put on the leaders to deliver,” Mr. Nasr said.

As countries have voted over the years to approve more climate negotiations and events for the UNFCCC to run, they have steadily increased the UNFCCC's

budget needs while resisting increases in their own funding obligations. As a result, the UNFCCC has come to rely increasingly on voluntary donations.

The split budget – combining obligatory and voluntary contributions by nations – allows some countries to channel UNFCCC payments through different government Ministries or approval processes. Countries paying into the supplementary budget also can specify how they would like the money to be spent, though these requests are not made public and are not always binding.

One diplomat said the UNFCCC could strengthen its case for a bigger core budget by being more frugal. Others noted that the body has not yet fully implemented recommendations made by UN auditors covering areas such as staff selection and employee benefits.

Asked about criticisms, the UNFCCC spokesperson said the fact that nations are asking the body to do more work represents a “vote of confidence.” “However, when funding is not increased to match, and many existing funding pledges are not fulfilled on time, this itself causes major inefficiencies, as more time needs to be spent on stretching and re-allocating existing resources at a time when many staff are already working literally around the clock,” the spokesperson said.

TOPIC → UNFCCC Budget Shortfall: A Critical Challenge

Overview of the Budget Shortfall

 Severe Budget Shortfall: The UNFCCC is experiencing a budget gap of at least 57 million euros for 2024, which is impacting international climate dialogue.

 Total Budget Overview: The total budget for 2024-25 is 240 million euros, with half expected to be allocated for 2024.

Key Contributors to the Shortfall

 Delayed Contributions: The U.S. and China have not met their payment obligations, contributing significantly to the funding shortfall.

 Operational Impact: This financial gap has led to reduced operating hours and the cancellation of regional climate events.

Funding Structure and Challenges

 **Funding Structure:** The UNFCCC budget comprises obligatory and voluntary contributions, with many countries relying on voluntary donations.

 **Record Payment Delays:** This year has seen the worst payment delays in UNFCCC history, affecting its operations and ability to fund delegates from poorer nations.

Implications for Global Climate Action

 **Global Climate Action Risk:** Experts warn that the funding gap could weaken global climate change efforts and negotiations.

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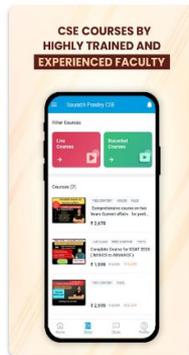
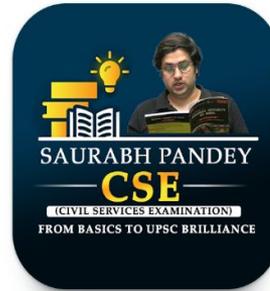
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