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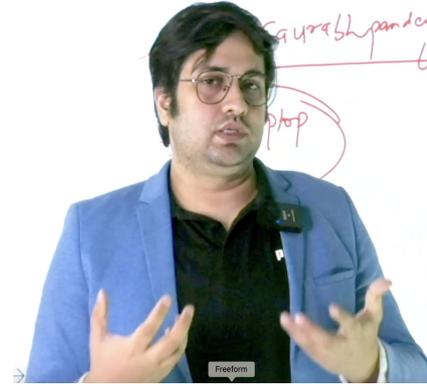
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By saurabh Pandey



THE HINDU

**India's Aquaculture Revolution: Meeting Nutritional Demands**

**South Korea's Political Turmoil:**

# SC slams T.N. Governor, fixes time for assent

Court slams R.N. Ravi's inaction on 10 re-passed Bills, deems them to have received assent

It cites sense of expediency in Article 200, says Governor should be a 'guide' and not a 'hindrance'

Justice Pardiwala emphasises that Governors have no such 'absolute or pocket veto'

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
NEW DELHI

**T**he Supreme Court on Tuesday slammed Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi's conduct as "unconstitutional", criticising his prolonged inaction on 10 key Bills. The court noted that he failed to act for months before swiftly referring the Bills to the President, only after they were re-passed by the State Legislature and came under judicial scrutiny.

The top court deemed the 10 Bills to have received assent, declaring the actions of President Droupadi Murmu – who assented to only one of the Bills, rejecting seven, and not considering two others – to be void. It also fixed time limits, of one to three

months, for Governors to take action on future Bills.

The court said that a Governor must be a "friend, guide and philosopher" to the State, not a hindrance. "A Governor is envisaged as a sagacious counsellor... What unfolded in the current litigation was quite the opposite," a Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan observed.

Justice Pardiwala, who authored the judgment, said that Mr. Ravi had acted as a "roadblock" by delaying action on the Bills sent to him for consent by the Assembly under Article 200 of the Constitution.

The Article gives a Governor three choices: to assent, withhold assent, or reserve the Bills for consideration by the President. A Governor cannot indefinitely delay exercising his

## On the clock

SC sets time frame for Governors, saying the phrase 'as soon as possible' permeates Article 200 with a sense of expediency

- A Governor has a maximum of **one month** to withhold assent on the aid and advice of the State Cabinet
- A maximum of **three months** is given to return the Bill with a message specifying reasons if the Governor withholds assent contrary to the Cabinet's advice
- The Governor has **three months** to reserve a Bill for the President's consideration against the advice of the Cabinet
- The Governor 'must' grant assent to a Bill re-passed by the State Legislature under Article 200 within a **maximum of one month**



or her choice, the court said. "Once a Bill is presented to the Governor, he is under a Constitutional obligation to opt for one of the three choices... The phrase 'as soon as possible' permeates Article 200 with a sense of expediency

and does not allow Governors to sit on Bills and exercise pocket veto over them," Justice Pardiwala explained.

The court said that Governors must look within themselves and reflect whether their actions were

in line with the Constitutional ethos and aspirations of the people. Delaying assent indefinitely on Bills passed by the State Legislature reduced these proposed laws, Justice Pardiwala observed.

## Time limits

In a significant move, the court fixed time limits of one to three months, variously, for Governors to take a call on Bills.

A Governor has a maximum of one month to withhold assent on the aid and advice of the State Cabinet, the court said. If he withholds assent contrary to the Cabinet's advice, he has a maximum of three months to return the Bill with a message specifying his reasons. The Governor has three months to reserve a Bill for the Presi-

dent's consideration against the advice of the State Cabinet. The Governor "must" grant assent to a Bill re-passed by the State Legislature under Article 200 within a maximum of one month.

Justice Pardiwala said that Governors should be put on the clock, as the Constitutional significance of Article 200 and federal polity required that their conduct answer to "determinable judicial standards." Any failure by a Governor to comply with the timelines would invite judicial review, the court warned.

Senior advocates A.M. Singhvi, Rakesh Dwivedi, P. Wilson and advocate Sarbarish Subramanian appeared for the State of Tamil Nadu. The Attorney General of India R. Venkat-

aramani appeared for the Governor's office in the case.

The judgment said Mr. Ravi had flouted the first proviso of Article 200, which required Governors to communicate with the Assembly 'as soon as possible' their reasons for refusing consent to Bills.

Justice Pardiwala emphasised that Governors have no such "absolute or pocket veto". "Governors cannot withhold assent *simpliciter* [in a summary manner]," the court declared. Besides, a Governor cannot exercise his personal discretion if a House passed the same Bill again and returned it to him for consent, the court pronounced.

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# The Supreme Court's Stance on Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi's Conduct.

## Introduction

- On a significant Tuesday, the Supreme Court of India took a firm stand against the conduct of Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi, labeling it as “unconstitutional.”
- This ruling has sparked discussions about the role of Governors in the legislative process and the importance of timely action on bills



## Background of the Case

- **Role of the Governor in Legislative Process:**
  - **Governors act as a bridge between the state legislature and the central government.**
  - **They ensure laws passed by the state align with constitutional provisions.**
- **Overview of the 10 Key Bills:**
  - **The Supreme Court scrutinized the prolonged inaction of Governor R.N. Ravi on ten key bills passed by the Tamil Nadu Assembly**



## Supreme Court's Criticism of Governor R.N. Ravi

- Unconstitutional Conduct:
  - The Supreme Court criticized the Governor's actions as unconstitutional, emphasizing that a Governor should not hinder the legislative process.
- Prolonged Inaction on Bills:
  - Governor Ravi's delay in acting on the bills was seen as a significant roadblock in the legislative process.



## The Court's Ruling on the Bills

- Deeming the Bills Assented:
  - The Supreme Court deemed the ten bills to have received assent, nullifying the actions of President Droupadi Murmu.
- Actions of President Droupadi Murmu:
  - The court declared the President's actions void, highlighting the need for clarity and adherence to constitutional timelines.



## Time Limits Imposed by the Court

- New Guidelines for Governors:
  - Governors now have a maximum of one month to withhold assent based on the advice of the State Cabinet.
  - If they choose to withhold assent contrary to the Cabinet's advice, they must return the bill with reasons within three months.
- Importance of Timely Action:
  - Timely action is essential for the functioning of democracy, as delays can undermine the legislative process.

## The Role of a Governor: A Friend or a Roadblock?

- Constitutional Obligations:
  - A Governor must act as a “friend, guide, and philosopher” to the state.
- Reflection on Governance:
  - Governors are urged to reflect on their actions to ensure they align with constitutional ethos and the aspirations of the people.



## Conclusion

- The Supreme Court's ruling against Governor R.N. Ravi is a significant step towards ensuring a robust legislative process in India.
- By imposing time limits on Governors, the court has reinforced the importance of timely governance and accountability.

# Genome study: 180 million genetic variants found in 9,772 individuals

**R. Prasad**  
CHENNAI

Preliminary findings of the GenomeIndia project, which genotyped 10,074 healthy and unrelated Indians from 85 populations – 32 tribal and 53 non-tribal populations – across India, were published in the journal *Nature Genetics* on Tuesday. Blood samples were collected from nearly 20,000 individuals, of which DNA samples from 10,074 individuals were subjected to whole genome sequencing.

Nearly 100 samples were collected from each population with a median of 159 samples from each non-tribal group and 75 from each tribal group to estimate the relatively rare variants that are important to understand complex diseases.

After excluding two populations, the prelimin-



The samples were collected from 32 tribal and 53 non-tribal populations. ISTOCKPHOTO

ary findings are based on the genetic information of 9,772 individuals – 4,696 male participants and 5,076 female participants. The genome sequence data are deposited in the Indian Biological Data Centre housed in the Regional Centre for Biotechnology in Faridabad, Haryana.

The genomes of Tibeto-Burman tribe, Indo-Euro-

pean tribe, Dravidian tribe, Austro-Asiatic tribe, and continentally admixed outgroup were sequenced. In the case of non-tribes, the genomes of Tibeto-Burman non-tribe, Indo-European non-tribe, and Dravidian non-tribe were sequenced.

## Different variants

In all, 180 million genetic variants were found when the genomes of 9,772 individuals were sequenced. Some of the variants are associated with diseases; some others are rare while some variants are unique to India; and some others are unique to particular communities or small populations.

“We are now trying to find out the implications of these variants,” said Dr. Kumarasamy Thangaraj of the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CSIR-CCMB), Hyderabad, and

one of the corresponding authors of the Comment piece. “We are looking for variants which are functionally relevant – related to diseases, those associated with therapeutic responses or no responses, and those that are causing adverse effects to therapeutic agents.”

Dr. Thangaraj said the information on variants associated with specific diseases can be utilised for developing low-cost diagnostic kits and for personalised medicine. “In-depth analyses of 9,772 diverse genomes along with the blood biochemistry and anthropometry data will improve disease diagnostics, predict the genetic basis of drug responses, and kickstart precision medicine efforts in India,” the authors write. A detailed paper will be published in the next couple of months.



# Preliminary Findings of the Genome India Project

## Introduction to the GenomeIndia Project

- The GenomeIndia project is a pioneering effort to map the genetic diversity of the Indian population.
- Preliminary findings were published in *Nature Genetics*.
- The study involved genotyping 10,074 healthy and unrelated Indians from 85 populations, including 32 tribal and 53 non-tribal groups



# Methodology of the Genome Sequencing

## Sample Collection Process:

- Blood samples were collected from nearly 20,000 individuals.
- DNA from 10,074 samples was sequenced, focusing on 9,772 individuals (4,696 males and 5,076 females).

## Whole Genome Sequencing:

- Included diverse tribes: Tibeto-Burman, Indo-European, Dravidian, and Austro-Asiatic.
- Data stored at the Indian Biological Data Centre, Faridabad, Haryana.



## Key Findings from the Genome Sequencing

- **Genetic Variants Discovered:**
  - Identified 180 million genetic variants.
  - Variants linked to diseases and unique to specific communities.
- **Disease-Associated Variants:**
  - Emphasized by Dr. Kumarasamy Thangaraj.
  - Focus on functionally relevant variants related to diseases or therapeutic responses.
- **Rare and Unique Variants:**
  - Unique to India or specific populations.
  - Insights into genetic factors contributing to health disparities



## Implications of the Findings

- **Personalized Medicine and Diagnostic Kits:**
  - Potential for low-cost diagnostic kits.
  - Future of personalized medicine guided by genetic makeup.
- **Future Research Directions:**
  - Analysis of 9,772 genomes with blood biochemistry and anthropometry data.
  - Enhances disease diagnostics and predicts genetic responses to drugs

## Conclusion

- The GenomeIndia project marks a milestone in understanding India's genetic diversity.
- With 180 million genetic variants identified, the potential for advancing personalized medicine is vast.
- Ongoing research promises a future of more tailored and effective healthcare

# The making of a fruit

**Q**

**Q: How do fruits ripen?**

**A1:** Ripening of fruits is associated with the process of senescence or

ageing in plants. It involves changes in colour, texture, flavour, sugar content, and acidity, and is influenced by the ripening hormone ethylene. As ripening begins, there is a corresponding increase in respiration, which is followed by increased ethylene production.

It triggers a series of biochemical changes such as lateral growth and loosening of cell walls, resulting in more intercellular spaces, the conversion of starch and organic acids into sugars, hydrolysis of stored materials, decrease in chlorophyll content, with corresponding increase in colouring pigments, and emission of characteristic volatile oils.

— *T. Nagendra Pillai of Guruvayoor*

**A2:** Colour changes occur due to synthesis of carotenoids (yellow and red) and phenolic compounds like anthocyanins (red and blue). Changes in texture occur by limited degradation of cell walls followed by an increase in



Ripening of fruits is associated with the process of senescence or aging in plants. JONAS KAKAROTO/UNSPLASH

polygalacturonase and pectinesterase activity. In bananas and apples, the enzymes phosphorylase and in mangoes amylase break the starch into glucose and sucrose, leading to their sweet taste. Volatile compounds such as ethyl-2-methyl butrate (in apples) also elicit a sweet smell.

Acidity of fruits is due to the presence of malic acid (in apples, apricots, bananas, cherries, and plums), citric acid (in gooseberry, tomatoes, and peaches), and malic acid and tartaric acid (in grapes).

Ripening is a prerequisite for the development of embryos after fertilisation and for better dispersal of seeds for survival.

— *P.S. Dheenadayalan, Coimbatore*



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# Fruit Ripening: A Biochemical Journey

## Ripening Process

Senescence: Fruits undergo changes in color, texture, flavor, sugar content, and acidity.

Ethylene Influence: This hormone plays a crucial role in the ripening process.

## Respiration Increase

Initial Trigger: Begins with a rise in respiration.

Ethylene Production: Leads to biochemical changes.

## Color Changes

Synthesis of Compounds: Carotenoids and phenolic compounds create yellow, red, and blue hues.

## Texture and Sweetness

Cell Wall Degradation: Alters texture.

Enzymatic Action: Enzymes like phosphorylase and amylase convert starch into sugars, enhancing sweetness.



## Acidity Sources

Organic Acids: Includes malic acid in apples and citric acid in tomatoes and peaches.

## Embryo Development

Post-Fertilization: Ripening is vital for embryo development and seed dispersal.

## Survival Mechanism

Seed Dispersal: Enhances plant species survival through effective seed dispersal.

Summary: The ripening of fruits involves biochemical changes influenced by ethylene, affecting color, texture, flavor, and acidity, which are crucial for seed dispersal and plant survival

# The gradual transformation of the Home Ministry

**G**overnments are often judged by how well they react, but true leadership is about how well they reform. Ministries tend to excel in responding to crises such as managing disasters, controlling conflicts, and restoring law and order. While necessary, this approach only addresses immediate threats without securing long-term solutions. Reforms, on the other hand, shape governance for the future.

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks of 'Reform, Perform, and Transform', he highlights the need for structural reforms rather than temporary fixes. This shift is very much visible in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), which was traditionally seen as a 'Crisis Ministry,' stepping in when riots erupted, insurgencies escalated, or States faced governance failures. Its interventions were often reactive, tackling unrest rather than preventing it through institutional reforms.

## A new focus

In recent years, the MHA has fundamentally transformed itself, moving from crisis response to building a structured security architecture. It now focuses on strengthening counter-terror laws, modernising agencies, adopting technology and improving inter-agency coordination. From legislative overhauls to institutional restructuring, the Ministry is pre-empting threats, ensuring that India's internal security is future ready.

The MHA is the backbone of India's internal security and federal governance. Unlike many countries that divide security and governance, the MHA integrates them, making it a critical pillar of national stability. The Indian Constitution empowers the MHA through Articles 355, 256, and 356, ensuring Centre-State coordination on security matters.

The MHA's growth has largely been shaped by security challenges of the day. The rise of terrorism and insurgency since the 1980s led to increased security spending. Punjab's militancy, Kashmir's terrorism, and Maoist violence required direct intervention, as State police struggled to contain these threats. Many States were slow to modernise their police forces, increasing their reliance on the Central Armed Police Forces or the CAPFs (Assam Rifles; Border Security Force; Central Industrial Security Force, or CISF; Central Reserve Police Force; Indo-Tibetan Border Police; National Security Guard and Sashastra Seema Bal). Reliance on the Rapid Action Force (RAF) of the CRPF for riot control is one example..

Industrial unrest in the 1970s-80s had some role in the creation of the CISF – to manage strikes, particularly in West Bengal and Kerala.



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is currently pursuing public administration at the Harvard Kennedy School. He has an interest in politics, security, and technology

There has been an evolution, from a crisis-response body to a structured and proactive institution

Meanwhile, administrative restructuring saw north-east affairs and the Department of Justice separated from the MHA, while Disaster Management and the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) were added.

For nearly four decades, India's three major security hotspots, i.e., Kashmir, the North-East, and Central India (Naxal areas) dominated the MHA's priorities, costing thousands of lives. The lives of nearly 36,000 personnel and an equal number of civilians have been lost, with security forces largely turning their focus on these conflict zones.

This focus on insurgency, terrorism and border security has meant that other critical areas such as police modernisation, agency coordination, narcotics control, technology adoption, disaster management and federal governance have received less attention.

Frequent leadership changes have historically affected the Home Ministry's policymaking. Indira Gandhi's third term and Rajiv Gandhi's tenure saw four Home Ministers, leading to instability in internal security reforms. It is only Prime Ministers P.V. Narasimha Rao and Atal Bihari Vajpayee who had a single Home Minister throughout their full tenure. Mr. Modi has maintained stability at the MHA, in a reinforcement of a long-term vision for internal security and governance.

## Reforms and a shift in responses

On the legislative front, the MHA's earlier responses were largely event-driven. The Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, or TADA, was enacted after the Punjab insurgency, the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) after the 2001 Parliament attack, and the National Investigation Agency (NIA) was formed after the 26/11 Mumbai attacks. These laws, though critical, were reactive/reactions rather than being a part of a structured security framework. But since 2019, over 27 legislative reforms have established a strong security jurisprudence, shaping law enforcement and national stability. These include transformative changes in terror jurisprudence, Kashmir integration and the criminal justice system.

The idea of whole-of-government now drives a multi-agency approach, where legislative provisions are backed by operational strengthening, budgetary support and outcome-oriented reviews.

India has long faced terror threats, but past responses have often been short-sighted and temporary. The current Home Ministry has strengthened terror jurisprudence – amending the NIA Act and the Unlawful Activities

(Prevention) Act, or UAPA, by defining terrorism in Indian criminal law, and aiming to financially choke terror groups. But at the same time, this has been complemented by strengthening and expanding the NIA, creating technology databases, revamping the Multi-Agency Centre (MAC), and promoting a 'duty to share' intelligence culture.

A similar approach is visible in criminal justice system reforms. Three new criminal laws (the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam) have been enacted but their foundation was laid much earlier. There has also been the establishment of the National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU) and full implementation of the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) which integrates 17,130 police stations, courts, jails and forensic laboratories. States are now encouraged to separate investigation from forensics, further strengthening the justice system.

In 2019, for the first time, the MHA budget crossed ₹1 lakh crore. The 2025 Budget allocation has surged to ₹2.33 lakh crore, reflecting the government's focus on internal security and modernisation. The expenditure on the Central Paramilitary Forces has also risen, from ₹38,000 crore in 2013-14 to ₹97,000 crore in 2024-25, highlighting the enhanced investment in national security and force modernisation.

## Impact on the ground

The new approach has led to a significant reduction in violence across Kashmir, the North-East, and Naxal-affected areas. The dilution of Article 370, peace deals in the North-East, and a dual strategy of a filling up of security and development vacuums in Naxal-affected regions have collectively transformed India's internal security landscape. These measures have attempted full integration, political stability, and economic growth in conflict-prone areas. The impact is evident – violence across these three major hotspots has declined by 70%, incidents of stone pelting in Kashmir have declined, insurgency in the North-East has weakened, and Naxal strongholds are witnessing social transformation.

The MHA has evolved from a crisis-response body to a structured, proactive institution. By shifting from reactionary interventions to strategic reforms, it has strengthened India's internal security architecture and built a future-ready governance framework. The MHA is now preempting threats rather than merely responding to them, shaping India's internal security for the years ahead.



# The Transformation of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)

- The MHA has shifted from a Crisis Ministry to a focus on structured security.
- Key areas include strengthening counter-terror laws and modernizing agencies.

## The Role of the MHA in National Stability

The MHA integrates security and governance, crucial for India's stability. The Indian Constitution empowers the MHA to coordinate security matters



## Historical Context of MHA's Growth

- The MHA's growth is shaped by security challenges like terrorism and insurgency.
- Reliance on Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) has increased.

## Legislative Reforms and Their Impact

- Since 2019, over 27 legislative reforms have been introduced.
- The shift from event-driven responses to a structured framework is crucial



## The Ground-Level Impact of Reforms

- Reforms have led to a 70% reduction in violence in conflict-prone areas.
- Measures like the dilution of Article 370 have transformed internal security.

## Conclusion

- The MHA has evolved into a proactive institution, focusing on strategic reforms.
- This shift strengthens India's internal security architecture, shaping a secure future.

## A regional revival

The BIMSTEC summit provided a platform for bilateral meetings

Last week's Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) summit – the sixth – which brought the leaders of seven neighbouring countries to Bangkok at a time of global turbulence, was an opportunity to reignite the regional grouping after years of stasis. Originally cast as a “bridging” mechanism between South Asia's SAARC and South East Asia's ASEAN countries, the grouping has languished due to a lack of purpose or due to political underpinnings. After the collapse of India-Pakistan ties, post-2014, SAARC has made little movement, whereas the micro-grouping of Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal ran aground after the Bhutanese Parliament rejected the Motor Vehicles Agreement between them, as a result of which New Delhi has invested in BIMSTEC. While the objective of having a summit every two years was derailed by the COVID-19 pandemic, what is important is that the summit was held in spite of a possible derailment after the earthquake in Myanmar and Thailand. But the summit proved useful, given the number of agreements and areas of cooperation. These include a BIMSTEC chamber of commerce and work on the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway that will connect India's North-East region, billed a BIMSTEC “hub”, all the way to the Pacific ocean. The BIMSTEC region is prone to natural disasters and building a joint mechanism for disaster management is critical. Negotiating a free trade agreement (FTA) and Customs agreements are among other plans outlined in a ‘Vision 2030’ document that was adopted.

Apart from the multilateral outcomes, the summit provided the leaders a rare opportunity for bilateral meetings. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladesh Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus put aside months of acrimony and aired their grievances over the treatment of minorities, border killings and former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's stay in India. Mr. Modi's advice that “rhetoric” must be avoided between neighbours is important, but must be followed in Dhaka and Delhi. Mr. Modi's meeting with Nepal leader K.P. Sharma Oli came after months of tensions over India's refusal to issue Mr. Oli an invite, and it is hoped that these exchanges will lead to an early visit and the resolution of issues. The inclusion of Myanmar's Prime Minister General Min Aung Hlaing was a special gesture by the BIMSTEC grouping, and it is hoped that Mr. Modi's counsel to Gen. Min and Mr. Yunus on restoring democratic processes in Myanmar and Bangladesh will be heeded. While the summit was productive, many of its initiatives are replicas of agreements once adopted by SAARC, and it is important that member-states focus on the group's cohesion and sustainability so that BIMSTEC is not allowed to atrophy the same way as SAARC did.



# BIMSTEC Summit Overview

## Sixth BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok

- Objective: Revitalize the regional grouping of seven neighboring countries amidst global challenges.
- Historical Context: Initially intended as a bridge between South Asia's SAARC and Southeast Asia's ASEAN.
- Challenges: Struggled due to political issues and lack of direction



## **BIMSTEC's Role and Challenges**

SAARC Stagnation: Post-2014 deterioration of India-Pakistan relations.

BBIN Setbacks: Bhutan's rejection of a key agreement.



## **Summit Agreements and Initiatives**

New Agreements: Establishment of a BIMSTEC chamber of commerce.

Infrastructure Projects: Initiatives for the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway.

Disaster Management: Joint mechanism highlighted due to regional vulnerability.



## Vision 2030 and Bilateral Meetings

- Vision 2030 Document: Plans for a free trade agreement and customs agreements.
- Bilateral Meetings: Indian PM Modi met with leaders from Bangladesh and Nepal to address past tensions.



## Inclusion of Myanmar's Leader

Significance: Gesture of hope for progress on democratic processes in Myanmar and Bangladesh.

Summary: The sixth BIMSTEC summit in Bangkok aimed to rejuvenate regional cooperation among seven countries, resulting in key agreements and fostering bilateral discussions despite past tensions



## Section 1: Understanding BIMSTEC

- **Formation and Membership:** The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is an international organization comprising seven member states, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. It aims to promote regional cooperation and integration in various sectors.
- **Geopolitical Significance:** Situated in a strategically vital region, BIMSTEC serves as a bridge between South and Southeast Asia, fostering economic, technological, and cultural exchanges among its member **states. Its location along the Bay of Bengal enhances its regional importance.**
- **Focus Areas:** BIMSTEC's areas of cooperation encompass trade, investment, energy, technology, tourism, fisheries, agriculture, public health, poverty alleviation, counter-terrorism, and environmental conservation, reflecting its multi-sectoral approach to regional development.



## Organizational Structure

- **Secretariat and Working Mechanism:** BIMSTEC operates through a Secretariat based in Dhaka, Bangladesh, which serves as the focal point for the organization's activities and initiatives. It facilitates coordination and collaboration among member states, promoting the effective implementation of BIMSTEC's agenda.
- **Decision-Making Process:** The organization functions on the principles of consensus and non-interference in the internal affairs of member states. Decisions are made through consultations and mutual agreement, ensuring equitable participation and respect for sovereignty.
- **Cooperation with External Partners:** BIMSTEC engages with international organizations, development partners, and other regional groupings to enhance its outreach and leverage expertise, resources, and best practices for the benefit of its member states.

# Why is active mobility necessary in India?

What is active mobility and how is it a sustainable mode of transportation? What is the Karnataka Active Mobility Bill, 2022? How will non-motorised modes of transport increase health benefits? How have other countries integrated active mobility in their infrastructures?

## EXPLAINER

**Dev Nath Pathak**  
**Ruth Anna. A**

### The story so far:

**S**poradic reports of accidental deaths and injuries of pedestrians, cyclists, street-hawkers, and others in the metro cities of India are on the rise. While urban development in various metro cities include patches of dedicated service lanes for pedestrians and cyclists, motor vehicles tend to ply on them as well. As a result, the risk of accidents are as high on these pathways as on the main roads with vehicular traffic. In such a grim situation, active mobility is the need of the hour.

### What is active mobility?

Active mobility refers to modes of transportation that use human power instead of a motorised form of mobility. Active modes of transport include walking, cycling, skateboarding, and other non-motorised modes that are used for travel and not recreational activities.

Active mobility in India has gained attention due to increasing traffic congestion, pollution, health concerns, and rising pedestrian deaths. This is accompanied by the growing importance of sustainable transport in national policies like the National Transit Oriented Development (NTOD) policy and the Smart Cities Mission (SCM), along with international efforts such as the Paris Agreement which emphasises reducing carbon emissions and promoting eco-friendly mobility.

Bengaluru's first Bicycle Mayor, Sathya Sankaran, has been a key advocate for cycling and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure since 2018. His efforts contributed to the drafting of the Karnataka Active Mobility Bill, 2022. In 2020, Karnataka recorded the highest number of pedestrian deaths in the country at 13%. Therefore, the Bill aims to promote urban mobility through the



**Towards a healthy city:** Cycling lanes in Bengaluru. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

protection of the rights of pedestrians and cyclists. The inherent goal of this bill is to provide a legal structure protecting and promoting active mobility, and ensuring equal access to public space. Several other States are also giving attention to active mobility. Delhi is expanding cycling tracks and pedestrian-friendly streets under its Delhi EV policy. Pune has implemented a Comprehensive Bicycle Plan and developed over 300 km of cycling lanes. Chennai is redesigning roads under the SCM to improve pedestrian safety, while Kochi has introduced a Public Bicycle Sharing (PBS) system to enhance last-mile connectivity.

### What is its significance?

As stated by the World Health Organization (WHO), active mobility in all its forms has economic, social, environmental, and health benefits. The

economic benefits include reduced household expenditure on fuel and transportation and lower healthcare costs due to enhanced public health. It also boosts local businesses since pedestrian-friendly infrastructure attracts higher foot traffic.

Walking and cycling are sustainable modes of transport as compared to motorised vehicles due to their marginal carbon emissions. They enhance energy security and significantly reduce India's 12% carbon emissions from road transportation. Cities with well-developed infrastructure for active transport report cleaner air and reduced traffic congestion. Moreover, active modes of transport are known to reduce the risk of chronic diseases, improve cardiovascular health, promote mental well-being, and enhance public health among citizens. It is a mode of transportation that makes

cities more vibrant and climate-conscious.

## THE GIST

### What are the barriers?

Active mobility remains severely underutilised because urban infrastructure actively discourages it. The lack of adequate pedestrian and cyclist-friendly infrastructure hinders active mobility as a primary mode of transport. As of 2021, more than 85% of roads do not meet the minimum safety requirements for walking and cycling. This is also accompanied by the availability of low-cost, alternative modes of motorised transport. Additionally, extreme weather conditions and long distances of travel discourage people from adopting active modes of transport.

Moreover, social perceptions act as significant barriers. In many regions, cars and bikes are associated with a higher social status. India has a burgeoning number of privately owned motor vehicles plying on the road. According to the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers, over 12,000 cars are sold every day in India. High traffic congestion, along with weak enforcement of traffic regulations, makes walking and cycling unsafe.

### How have other countries fared?

With more than 35,000 km of dedicated cycling lanes, The Netherlands is a global leader in promoting active mobility through cycling. The European Union's Mobility and Transport department prioritises promoting walking and cycling as a means of transport to enable more sustainable mobility. This is accompanied by Vision Zero, which aims to mitigate the number of incidents between pedestrians, cyclists, and motor vehicles. Germany's Berlin Mobility Act mandates wider sidewalks and dedicated cycling lanes, reduced speed limits for motorised vehicles within city limits, and prioritises pedestrians/cyclists in urban planning.

*Dev Nath Pathak, Associate Dean, Faculty of Social Science, South Asian University. Ruth Anna A is a Research Scholar, Christ University.*

▼ Active modes of transport include walking, cycling, skateboarding, and other non-motorised modes that are used for travel and not recreational activities.

▼ Bengaluru's first Bicycle Mayor, Sathya Sankaran, has been a key advocate for cycling and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure since 2018. His efforts contributed to the drafting of the Karnataka Active Mobility Bill, 2022.

▼ With more than 35,000 km of dedicated cycling lanes, The Netherlands is a global leader in promoting active mobility through cycling.



# Active Mobility in India: A Growing Movement

## **Rising Accidents**

Increasing Reports: Accidental deaths and injuries among pedestrians, cyclists, and street-hawkers in Indian metro cities are on the rise.

## **Active Mobility Defined**

Human-Powered Transport: Includes modes like walking, cycling, and skateboarding, focusing on travel rather than recreation.

## **Sustainability Focus**

Policy Alignment: Supports national policies like the National Transit Oriented Development (NTOD) and international agreements such as the Paris Agreement to reduce carbon emissions.

## **Legislative Efforts**

Karnataka Active Mobility Bill, 2022: Aims to protect the rights of pedestrians and cyclists, addressing the high pedestrian death rate in the state.



## State Initiatives

Delhi: Expanding cycling tracks.

Pune: Developed over 300 km of cycling lanes.

Chennai: Redesigning roads for safety.

Kochi: Launched a Public Bicycle Sharing system.



## Health and Environment

Driving Factors: Concerns over traffic congestion, pollution, and health issues linked to urban transport are driving the rise in active mobility.



## Advocacy

Bengaluru's Bicycle Mayor: Sathya Sankaran has been promoting cycling and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure since 2018.

Summary: Active mobility is gaining traction in India as a response to rising pedestrian accidents, with various states implementing initiatives to promote safer, sustainable transport options.

# What is the current political situation in South Korea?

Why did former President Yoon Suk Yeol declare martial law last year? Did the Corruption Investigation Office try to arrest the former President?

**Femy Francis**

## The story so far:

**O**n April 4, South Korea's constitutional court upheld the impeachment of former President Yoon Suk Yeol. The Court unanimously (8-0) agreed in favour of the impeachment. Mr. Yoon is the second president to be removed from office in the last eight years. According to the constitution, South Korea will have to elect a new President within 60 days.

## What led to his impeachment?

On December 3, 2024, President Yoon announced an emergency and declared martial law to protect South Korea from “anti-state forces” and to eliminate “despicable pro-North Koreans.” This was the 17th martial law in the history of independent South Korea. Six hours later, the National Assembly convened and 190

members voted in favour of lifting the martial law under Article 77. On December 14, 2024, in its second motion, the Assembly succeeded in voting President Yoon out of office with 204 votes in favour. Of the 300 seats in the National Assembly, the Democratic Party of Korea (DPK) holds 170, while the People's Power Party (PPP), to which Mr. Yoon belongs, has 108 seats.

## What happened after impeachment?

The declaration of martial law and the impeachment motion ignited public protests across South Korea. It polarised society; thousands protested against the impeachment, supporting Mr. Yoon, while 2,00,000 people gathered outside the parliament, supporting his removal. On January 17, the Corruption Investigation Office requested an arrest warrant against Mr. Yoon, which was approved, leading to Yoon supporters

attacking the courthouse. The 11th and final hearing on the martial decree took place on February 25. In his last hearing, he stated that his intention was only to warn the public of anti-state forces.

## What does the verdict say?

The constitutional court upheld the impeachment of Mr. Yoon and expressed disillusionment with his reasoning. It held that Mr. Yoon did not follow the constitutional mandate, rules, and procedure. While Mr. Yoon argued that he imposed martial law due to the presence of anti-state forces, the verdict contradicted the same and stated that he declared martial law to overcome the National Assembly, which composed mostly of the opposition. The verdict ruled that his actions threatened the military's political neutrality and placed the soldiers serving the nation in direct confrontation with its people.

Furthermore, the verdict argued that the political and economic cost of impeachment is more acceptable than the negative repercussions of a violated constitutional and democratic process. Mr. Yoon's claims of alleged election fraud were also dismissed. Based on all the above, the court upheld the removal of Mr. Yoon and said he “abandoned his duty to uphold the Constitution and gravely betrayed the trust of the sovereign citizens of Korea.” Mr. Yoon will now face a series of criminal charges that he was shielded from during his tenure.

## What is next for South Korea?

The Presidential elections will be held on June 3. As crowds of supporters and protestors clear off the streets, the interim heads and security forces are on high alert to maintain peace and order.

The PPP is now in disarray, with Mr. Yoon being seen as a wronged leader by many of his supporters. Lee Jae-Myung of the DPK is the most favoured contender for the elections. He had led his party to victory in last year's parliamentary elections. South Korea also faces an external challenge with the U.S. imposing 25% “reciprocal tariffs”. Thus, the next President will have to address both political and economic challenges.

*Femy Francis is a researcher at Global Politics Area Studies on China, East Asia and the Pacific at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru*

## THE GIST

▼  
On December 3, 2024, President Yoon announced an emergency and declared martial law to protect South Korea from “anti-state forces” and to eliminate “despicable pro-North Koreans.”

▼  
On December 14, 2024, in its second motion, the Assembly succeeded in voting President Yoon out of his office with 204 votes in favour.

▼  
The constitutional court upheld the impeachment of Mr. Yoon and expressed disillusionment with his reasoning.

# South Korea's Political Turmoil:

## Key Events in South Korea's Political Crisis

 **Impeachment Upheld:** On April 4, South Korea's constitutional court unanimously upheld the impeachment of former President Yoon Suk Yeol with an 8-0 decision.

 **Second President Removed:** Yoon becomes the second president to be impeached in South Korea in the last eight years.

 **New Election Required:** The constitution mandates a new presidential election within 60 days following the impeachment.

 **Martial Law Declaration:** On December 3, 2024, Yoon declared martial law to combat "anti-state forces," marking the 17th instance of martial law in the nation's history.



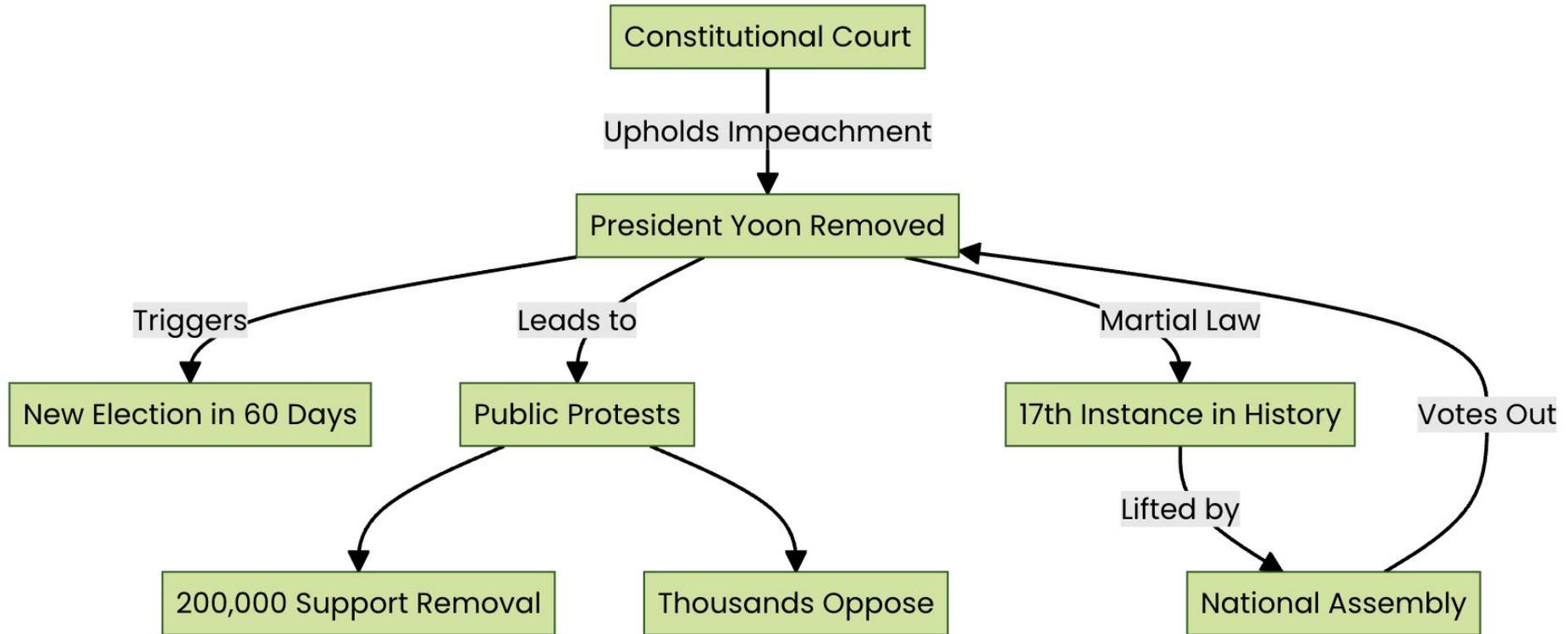
 **National Assembly Actions:** The National Assembly swiftly lifted the martial law within six hours and subsequently voted Yoon out of office with 204 votes in favor.

 **Political Landscape:** The Democratic Party of Korea (DPK) holds 170 seats in the National Assembly, while Yoon's People's Power Party (PPP) has 108 seats.

 **Public Protests:** The impeachment led to significant public protests, with 200,000 people supporting Yoon's removal and thousands opposing the impeachment



## Political Dynamics:



**Summary:** South Korea's constitutional court upheld the impeachment of President Yoon Suk Yeol, leading to public protests and a requirement for a new presidential election within 60 days.

# Brahminy Blind Snake: (FLOWER POT SNAKE )

- The Brahminy blind snake, scientifically known as *Indotyphlops braminus*, is a fascinating creature that often slips under the radar of snake enthusiasts.
- These little serpents are non-venomous and entirely harmless to humans, making them a delightful subject of study for those intrigued by the mysteries of nature



## Physical Characteristics

The Brahminy blind snake is notably diminutive, typically measuring between 10–20 cm (4–8 inches) in length. Its slender, shiny body can be adorned in a palette of colors such as silver gray, charcoal gray, or a deep purple hue. This striking appearance not only makes them visually appealing but also helps them camouflage within their natural habitats.

**Size: 10–20 cm (4–8 inches)**

**Color Variations: Silver gray, charcoal gray, and purple**

**Body Structure: Thin and shiny, aiding in burrowing**



## Habitat and Distribution

Brahminy blind snakes thrive in tropical and subtropical climates, primarily found in regions across Southeast Asia. Remarkably adaptable, they have been introduced globally, often making their homes in potted plants. This ability to flourish in diverse environments showcases their resilience and resourcefulness.

Native Range: Southeast Asia

Global Distribution: Introduced in various countries, often through horticulture

Preferred Habitat: Damp soil and leaf litter

## Diet and Feeding Habits

These non-venomous serpents primarily feast on ants and termites, playing a crucial role in controlling these insect populations within their ecosystems. Their burrowing nature allows them to hunt effectively in leaf litter and damp soil.

Primary Diet: Ants and termites

Feeding Method: Active hunting in burrows

Ecological Role: Pest control



## Behavior and Lifestyle

Brahminy blind snakes are predominantly burrowing creatures, often found in moist environments rich in organic matter. Their secretive nature makes them elusive, and they are typically encountered only when digging through leaf litter or when disturbed.

Burrowing Behavior: Prefer to stay hidden underground

Habitat Interaction: Thrives in damp, organic-rich soil

## Conclusion

The Brahminy blind snake is a remarkable example of nature's ingenuity, showcasing unique adaptations that allow it to thrive in various environments. Understanding and appreciating such lesser-known species is crucial for conservation efforts, as they play critical roles in maintaining ecological balance



# Topic → India's Aquaculture Revolution: Meeting Nutritional Demands

## Introduction to Aquaculture in India

- Aquaculture is a vital part of India's agricultural landscape.
- India ranks as the third-largest producer of fish and seafood globally.
- The country is making significant strides in prawn production.

## India's Ranking in Aquaculture Production

India is the second-largest producer of prawns worldwide. This achievement highlights the innovation and hard work of local farmers.



## Major Contributors to Prawn Production

Andhra Pradesh is the leading state in prawn production.

Other key states include West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, and Gujarat.

## Changing Dietary Preferences

Prawns are becoming popular due to their high protein and low-fat content.

They are now a staple in many Indian households.



# The Science Behind Aquaculture

Understanding the difference between prawns and shrimp is crucial.  
The Black Tiger Prawn is a high-value species due to its size and taste

## Optimal Conditions for Prawn Farming

Prawns require specific salinity levels for optimal growth.  
Innovative techniques are being used to improve yields.

## Challenges in Prawn Farming

Pathogens like *Vibrio harveyi* cause significant economic losses.  
Farmers use probiotics and specific pathogen-free broodstock to combat these threats.



# The Future of Aquaculture in India

Ongoing research and development promise a bright future.

Innovations in sustainable practices are paving the way for growth.

## Conclusion

India's aquaculture sector is meeting nutritional demands and contributing to the global seafood market.

Continuous innovation and adaptation ensure a promising future for prawn farming

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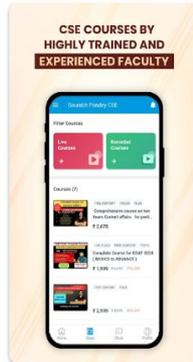
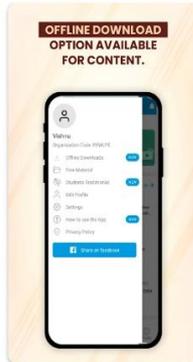
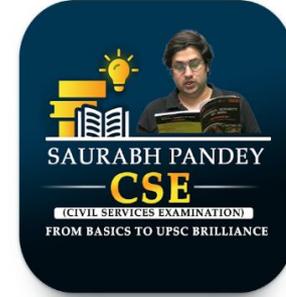
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