



DAILY NEWS PAPER ANALYSIS

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**CIVILS WITH AKASH
SECTOR 25 CHANDIGARH**

Opposition stalls Parliament for second day over NEET paper leak, police crackdown

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Both Houses of Parliament remained paralysed on the second day of the Monsoon Session on Tuesday as Opposition members protested over the alleged NEET paper leak, the police crackdown on students protesting in New Delhi, and the alleged Ram Temple donation theft.

Lok Sabha proceedings were adjourned twice at 11 a.m. and noon before the House was adjourned for the day at 2 p.m. Similar scenes were witnessed in the Rajya Sabha.

MPs meet Speaker

A delegation of Opposition MPs from both Houses, led by the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, met Speaker Om Birla and demanded a discussion on alleged police brutality against students protesting the education system in the national capital on Monday.

"Met the Hon'ble Lok Sabha Speaker today along with MPs of the Opposition. Our demand is simple: Parliament must have a detailed discussion on the brutality unleashed on students yesterday and on the government's complete lack of accountability for the examination crisis. Students were beaten for asking legitimate questions about their own future. If Parliament cannot discuss the future of India's youth,



Amid the din: A section of lawmakers raise slogans in the Lok Sabha in New Delhi on Tuesday. ANI

what is it for? The Opposition will not let this be buried. We will ensure that the students' voice is heard on the streets and in Parliament," Mr. Gandhi posted on X.

Later, speaking to the media in the Parliament Complex, Mr. Gandhi said the Speaker had told the delegation that "he has to take permission from the government for a discussion".

Earlier in the day, INDIA bloc floor leaders met in the chamber of the Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, and discussed the Opposition's strategy for the day.

As soon as the Lok Sabha assembled for the Question Hour in the morning, Opposition members started raising slogans over the alleged NEET paper leak and the police lathi-charge on protesting students. Mr. Birla assured members that they would get an opportunity to raise their is-

sues as per the rules. However, as the protests continued, the Speaker adjourned the House. In the Rajya Sabha too, the first adjournment came within seven minutes of the House convening. After official papers were laid, Mr. Kharge rose to speak on the police action. Treasury Bench members raised slogans, and before Mr. Kharge could finish his remarks, Chairman C.P. Radhakrishnan adjourned the House till noon.

Slogans continue

When the House met again, Secretary-General P. C. Mody read out a message from the Lok Sabha amid commotion. The House was adjourned almost immediately. During the post-lunch sitting, Opposition MPs started raising slogans as soon as proceedings started. Deputy Chairman Harivansh then adjourned the House for the day.

- Informal mechanism for raising urgent public matters immediately after Question Hour.

- Education
 - Concurrent List (Entry 25, List III) after the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976.
- Fundamental Rights
 - Article 19(1)(a): Freedom of speech and expression.
 - Article 19(1)(b): Right to assemble peacefully without arms.
 - Subject to reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2) & 19(3).

Static Linkages

- Parliamentary accountability is ensured through:
 - Question Hour
 - Zero Hour
 - Short Duration Discussion (Rule 193, Lok Sabha)
 - Calling Attention
 - Adjournment Motion
 - No-Confidence Motion
 - Parliamentary Committees
- Parliamentary debates strengthen responsible government under the parliamentary system.
- Parliament performs:
 - Legislative
 - Financial
 - Deliberative
 - Executive oversight functions.

Critical Analysis

Significance

- Parliamentary discussion is the principal mechanism for executive accountability.
- Examination integrity directly affects governance, human capital and public trust.
- Peaceful democratic dissent is protected under constitutional provisions.

Challenges

- Repeated disruptions reduce legislative productivity.
- Loss of Question Hour weakens executive scrutiny.
- Political deadlock delays important legislative business.
- Public confidence in examination institutions may decline.

Constitutional Perspective

- Balance between:
 - Right to protest.
 - Maintenance of public order.
 - Effective functioning of Parliament.
- Accountability of public institutions is an essential feature of constitutional democracy.

Way Forward

- Strengthen transparency and security in public examinations.
- Improve institutional accountability of examination agencies.
- Utilize parliamentary procedures for structured debate rather than disruptions.
- Protect peaceful democratic expression while ensuring public order.
- Strengthen legislative oversight through effective use of Question Hour and Parliamentary Committees.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

Context

- Both Houses of Parliament witnessed repeated adjournments during the Monsoon Session over Opposition demands for discussion on:
 - Alleged irregularities in NEET.
 - Police action against protesting students.
- Opposition sought discussion through parliamentary procedures, but proceedings remained disrupted.

Key Points

- Article 79: Parliament consists of the President, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.
- Article 85: President summons, prorogues Parliament and dissolves the Lok Sabha.
- Article 105: Freedom of speech and parliamentary privileges.
- Article 75(3): Council of Ministers is collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha.
- Speaker of Lok Sabha
 - Presides over House proceedings.
 - Maintains order and discipline.
 - Decides admissibility of various parliamentary motions.
 - Interpretation of Rules of Procedure is final.
- Question Hour
 - First hour of every sitting.
 - Primary instrument of executive accountability.
 - Frequent disruptions weaken parliamentary oversight.
- Zero Hour

Building an Atmanirbhar philanthropy ecosystem

India's philanthropic landscape has changed more in the past decade than many realise. Domestic private giving – through family philanthropy, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and individual donors – has grown rapidly and now far outstrips annual foreign philanthropic inflows. A new generation of entrepreneurs is rethinking differently about giving, while millions of Indians are entering the markets through mutual funds, systematic investment plans (SIP), and Unified Payments Interface (UPI). Against this backdrop, the debate around the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) takes on a different meaning: less a dispute about foreign funding than a chapter in India's move towards self-reliant philanthropic future.

The first principle should not be controversial. Every sovereign nation has both the right and the responsibility to regulate foreign capital flowing into organisations that shape public life. This is neither unique to India nor illiberal: the United States requires disclosure under its Foreign Agents Registration Act, and Australia and several European democracies run comparable regimes. The question worth debating is not whether foreign funding should be regulated, but whether that regulation is proportionate, predictable and efficiently run.

There is also a gap between perception and reality. The impression is that tighter FCRA rules have hollowed out Indian development work, the numbers say otherwise. NTPI's annual portal NGO Darpan portal lists roughly six lakh voluntary organisations, of which only about 14,500 hold active FCRA registration. Foreign contributions have themselves doubled over the decade, from about ₹10,000 crore to around ₹22,000 crore. The sector has not been starved of money from abroad.

The rise of domestic giving
The bigger change lies at home. Domestic private philanthropy now exceeds ₹1.18 lakh crore a year – more than five times foreign inflows – according to the Bain-Dasra India Philanthropy Report 2026.

Family philanthropy is growing at double-digit rates as a new generation of wealth creators comes to see giving as part of wealth stewardship. The centre of gravity of Indian philanthropy has quietly shifted home.

Note of this erases the hardship of the transition. A small number of organisations faced delayed renewals, long processing times, or cancelled registrations, disrupting work in



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education, health, livelihoods, and rural development. This was not true of the sector as a whole, but for those affected, the disruption was real and deserves acknowledgement rather than dismissal.

The transition also exposed how unevenly the sector had prepared. Many organisations operate with exemplary governance; others had gone dormant or were well-meaning groups whose documentation had not kept pace with rising expectations.

India's companies went through a similar reckoning over the past three decades: stronger governance initially felt like a burden, but it ultimately became the very thing that won investor confidence and drew in capital. The social sector can follow the same path. If money is the fuel of philanthropy, trust is its currency.

Better, not tighter regulation

The goal should be better regulation, not just tighter regulation. An administrative slip should not carry the same penalty as fraud. A structured path comprising deficiency notices, defined violations to correct errors, opportunities to provide clarification, and an independent appellate body would protect the integrity of the law while sparing genuine organisations avoidable disruption. The newly launched FCRA 2.0 platform offers a real opportunity to simplify compliance and move towards risk-based supervision.

Fixing FCRA's administration, though, is only half the task; the larger prize is to build what we would call an Atmanirbhar ('self-reliant') philanthropy ecosystem. India's giving has moved through three phases: first, a reliance on foreign philanthropy, and second, the transformation wrought by CSR, which now channels over ₹40,000 crore a year into development. The third phase must be powered by Indian families, entrepreneurs and citizens.

The most immediate opportunity sits with India's fast-growing community of high-net-worth individuals, whose giving has lagged well behind the growth in their wealth. This is where the largest pool of new domestic capital can be unlocked over the coming decade, and where policy can help most.

India's tax framework does not yet signal that philanthropy is a national priority. Deductions under Section 80G are usually limited to half the donation and capped at 10% of adjusted gross total income. Few large donors hit those limits, but tax policy is also about signalling intent – and other countries have been emphatic, from

Singapore's 250% deduction to Britain's Gift Aid top-up and America's carry-forward provisions. India need not copy them wholesale, but raising the 80G deduction from 50% to 100%, as is already allowed for some categories, and lifting the ceiling to 25%, would cost the exchequer little while meaningfully improving the flow of long-term social capital.

Expanding the donor base

One mechanism deserves particular mention. Most first-generation entrepreneurs hold their wealth in equity, not cash. A framework allowing donations of appreciated listed shares to eligible charities – with appropriate safeguards and a reasonable disposal window of, say, one to three years so that recipients can sell in orderly fashion – could become one of the most powerful ways to unlock domestic philanthropic capital.

The next frontier, over a longer horizon, is to widen the base. India now has over 220 million demat accounts, widespread SIP investing and UPI in every pocket; the infrastructure for mass participation already exists. If even a fraction of households gave ₹100, ₹500 or ₹1,000 a month through trusted digital platforms, millions of citizens would become active partners in solving the country's social problems. The Social Stock Exchange could do for social capital what India's markets did for financial capital – a trusted national platform linking credible organisations to ordinary citizens through clear disclosures and measurable impact.

The argument runs deeper than the sums involved. Domestic philanthropy creates more than money; it creates ownership. When Indian citizens and businesses fund India's own social challenges, they bring governance, ideas, volunteering and accountability along with their capital, strengthening not just the non-profit sector but also the wider social contract. That is the real case for an Atmanirbhar philanthropy ecosystem.

Foreign philanthropy will still matter, particularly in research, innovation and the exchange of ideas. But as India approaches developed nation status, it should complement India's social development, not shape it. The aspiration, in the end, is not merely to regulate foreign philanthropy well. It is to build a country where the overwhelming share of social transformation is financed, led and owned by Indians themselves.

That is the promise of an Atmanirbhar philanthropy ecosystem – and, we believe, the next chapter of India's development story.

- Aadhaar identification mandatory for key functionaries.
- Suspension of registration extended up to 360 days.

Important Facts

- Around 6 lakh voluntary organisations are registered on NGO Darpan.
- Only about 14,500 NGOs possess active FCRA registration.
- Foreign contributions increased from nearly ₹10,000 crore to ₹22,000 crore during the last decade.
- Domestic private philanthropy has reached approximately ₹1.18 lakh crore annually.
- CSR spending exceeds ₹40,000 crore annually.
- India has over 220 million Demat accounts, creating potential for retail philanthropy.

Emerging Trends

- Increasing role of High-Net-Worth Individuals (HNIs).
- Rise of family philanthropy.
- Growth of digital giving through UPI and online platforms.
- Expansion of Social Stock Exchange (SEBI) as a transparent fundraising platform.

Static Linkages

- Article 19(1)(c): Freedom to form associations.
- Article 19(4): Reasonable restrictions in the interest of sovereignty and integrity.
- Article 38: Promotion of social welfare.
- Article 39: Reduction of inequalities.
- Section 135, Companies Act, 2013: Corporate Social Responsibility.
- Section 80G, Income Tax Act, 1961: Tax deduction for eligible donations.
- Social Stock Exchange regulated by SEBI.
- Principles of Good Governance:
 - Transparency
 - Accountability
 - Rule of Law
 - Proportionality
 - Ease of Doing Charity

Critical Analysis

Significance

- Protects national sovereignty from undue foreign influence.
- Encourages self-reliant financing of development.
- Enhances transparency in NGO funding.
- CSR and domestic philanthropy reduce dependence on foreign grants.
- Strengthens accountability and public trust.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

Context

- India's philanthropy ecosystem is shifting from dependence on foreign funding to domestic philanthropy.
- The debate around the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010 has gained importance amid rising domestic charitable giving.
- According to the Bain-Dasra India Philanthropy Report 2026, domestic philanthropy now far exceeds foreign philanthropic inflows.
- The focus is now on creating an Atmanirbhar (self-reliant) philanthropy ecosystem while ensuring transparent regulation of foreign contributions.

Key Points

Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010

- Regulates acceptance and utilization of foreign contributions by individuals, NGOs and associations.
- Administered by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- Objective:
 - Protect sovereignty and integrity of India.
 - Prevent foreign influence on political, social and public institutions.
 - Ensure transparency and accountability in utilization of foreign funds.

Major Provisions of FCRA (Amendment), 2020

- Mandatory FCRA account in SBI, New Delhi Main Branch.
- Prohibits transfer of foreign contribution to another FCRA-registered NGO.
- Administrative expenditure limit reduced from 50% to 20%.

Concerns

- Delay in FCRA registration/renewal affects genuine NGOs.
- Compliance burden is high for grassroots organizations.
- Lack of distinction between procedural lapses and fraud.
- Reduced flexibility for collaborative development projects.
- Smaller NGOs face capacity constraints.

Way Forward

- Adopt risk-based and proportionate regulation under FCRA.
- Ensure time-bound registration and renewal.
- Differentiate procedural violations from serious offences.
- Strengthen FCRA 2.0 digital compliance system.
- Rationalize Section 80G tax incentives to encourage domestic giving.
- Promote philanthropy by HNIs and family foundations.
- Enable donation of listed shares to eligible charities with safeguards.
- Strengthen the Social Stock Exchange to widen citizen participation.
- Improve governance, disclosure and impact assessment of NGOs.

What India's young people are saying about families

Ask a grandmother in India what has changed since her time, and she will not talk to you about fertility rates. She will talk about her granddaughter, who finished college, has a city job, and is in no hurry to start a family. She will say it with pride and concern in the same breath, a blend the data reflects too.

The UNFPA survey
On World Population Day this year (July 10), UNFPA released the Demographic Futures Survey, the largest study of its kind, with over 1,08,000 young adults surveyed across 73 countries. It asked a simple question: not whether young people still wanted partnership and family, but what stood between them and it. (This year, India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare set the theme, "Healthy Timing and Spacing of Pregnancies" or HTSP, a reminder that at the heart of every demographic number is a question of choice: whether young people can decide, freely and on their own terms, when and how to build their families.)

India's fertility rate has settled at two children per woman, below the replacement level of 2.1. Some will hear that and reach for words like "baby bust" or "population crisis". At UNFPA, we see something else entirely. This is not a warning sign but the outcome of sustained investment across decades, in girls' education, the National Health Mission, and expanding contraceptive choice and maternal health services. The share of young women married before 18 years has fallen from 23.3% to 20.1% in just the last few years. That is a policy achievement India's institutions can rightly take credit for.

But numbers tell more than one story at once, and if we stop at the good news, we miss what young India is trying to say. Ask young people directly, and most want what generations before them wanted. Across the



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country, four in 10 women and a third of men say that two children is their ideal family size. The Demographic Futures Survey found the same pattern across countries: young people are not turning away from family life; they are asking whether the conditions exist to build it. So why the hesitation here? When we ask young couples what stands between them and the life they picture, the answers are almost always practical. Money comes first, cited by nearly four in 10. Then housing. Then job security. Then a very simple, human worry: how well can we care for our children?

That last question falls on one set of shoulders far more than another. Young women in India spend over five hours a day on unpaid housework and caregiving; young men spend about half an hour. Only 15 in every 100 young women are in paid work, compared to 55 in every 100 young men. These are not merely statistics. They help explain why so many capable young women feel that they must choose between a career and a family, when no one should have to choose at all.

The climate change issue

There is a newer worry layered on top of the old ones. The survey found that nearly all young people say climate change is disrupting their lives, and about half say it affects their peace of mind. Nearly half of young Indians also report being very worried about conflict, economic insecurity and environmental risk all at once, among the higher rates recorded anywhere. Add high youth unemployment and a mental health conversation that is only beginning in many Indian households, and a fuller picture emerges. This is not a generation rejecting parenthood. It is a generation asking, quite reasonably, whether the ground beneath it is steady enough to build on.

India is also marked by inter-State disparity. Bihar's fertility rate stands at 2.7, while Sikkim's is

just 1.0. Kerala, Delhi and Tamil Nadu have long settled below the replacement level, while Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand are still catching up. These differences show that India's demographic transition is unfolding at different speeds across States, and that no single national policy can fully address every State's realities.

Responding to youth aspiration

The UNFPA's partnership with the Indian government and communities is aimed at translating what young people are telling us into practical support: high-quality, affordable and accessible childcare; families that share caregiving more equally; continued investment in stable, dignified work for young people entering the labour force; and greater attention to youth mental health, including climate anxiety, in conversations about family and the future. The private sector also has a vital role to play through parental leave, flexible work arrangements and family-friendly workplaces that enable young people to balance work and caregiving. The UNFPA has a unique role in the United Nations development system as a leader in data collection, population dynamics and evidence-based policymaking. The Demographic Futures Survey shows how population data can and must be deployed to help countries understand, plan for and adapt to demographic shifts.

India is home to 255 million young people aged 15 to 24 years, the largest generation this country, or perhaps any country, has ever raised. This is India's demographic dividend, a window of opportunity that will not remain open indefinitely. The choices we make today will determine whether this generation can fully realise its potential before that window begins to close. Young Indians are not walking away from the idea of family. They are waiting for the conditions that would let them say yes to it fully.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

Context

- UNFPA released the Demographic Futures Survey 2026 on World Population Day (11 July).
- Survey covered 1.08 lakh+ respondents across 73 countries to assess barriers to family formation.
- India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has declined to 2.0, below the replacement level fertility (2.1).
- The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare observed World Population Day with the theme "Healthy Timing and Spacing of Pregnancies (HTSP)."

Key Points

- TFR: 2.0 (below replacement level).
- Most young Indians still prefer two children as the ideal family size.
- Major barriers to childbearing:
 - Economic insecurity.
 - Housing costs.
 - Job insecurity.
 - Childcare burden.
- Young women perform significantly more unpaid care work than men.
- Climate change, unemployment and mental health concerns increasingly influence family planning decisions.
 - Inter-State fertility variation: Bihar – 2.7
 - Sikkim – 1.0
- India has around 255 million people (15–24 years), providing a demographic dividend opportunity.

Static Linkages

- Total Fertility Rate (TFR): Average number of children expected to be born per woman.
- Replacement Level Fertility: Around 2.1 children per woman.
- Demographic Dividend: Economic growth resulting from a larger working-age population.

- Demographic Transition: India is in the late transition stage with declining fertility and mortality.
 - National Population Policy (2000): Achieve replacement-level fertility.
 - Improve reproductive and child health.
- National Health Mission (NHM) and Mission Parivar Vikas support family planning and maternal health.
- SDGs: Goals 3, 5, 8 and 10.

Critical Analysis

Significance

- Indicates successful demographic transition.
- Reflects improvements in women's education, healthcare and family planning.
- Supports long-term human capital development.

Challenges

- Regional disparities in fertility.
- Low female labour force participation.
- Rising ageing population in low-fertility States.
- Youth unemployment delaying family formation.
- Climate change and economic uncertainty influencing reproductive choices.

Way Forward

- Strengthen maternal and reproductive healthcare.
- Expand affordable childcare facilities.
- Increase female workforce participation.
- Promote equal sharing of unpaid care work.
- Create quality employment for youth.
- Adopt State-specific population policies.
- Invest in skills to maximise demographic dividend.

Lists of folly

A flawed SIR should not be the basis
for distribution of benefits

The Supreme Court has reiterated its position that exclusion from the electoral rolls cannot have consequences unrelated to voting. The Court was responding to West Bengal government orders, issued in May-June, that linked welfare benefits and official caste certifications to the outcomes of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. Those removed would become ineligible for certain welfare benefits and certifications under these orders. A May 19 notification directed that persons removed from the electoral roll should not continue as beneficiaries of the Annapurna Yojana, a cash transfer scheme for women, unless they had filed appeals before the SIR tribunal. A June 4 order directed the deletion of beneficiaries from the Public Distribution System. On May 14, the government decided to re-verify and cancel caste certificates of those persons whose names had been deleted from the rolls. These decisions run contrary to the clear instructions of the Court in the Bihar SIR case, which specifically barred authorities from using SIR outcomes for any purpose other than determining voting rights. The Court has now issued notices to the Election Commission of India, the West Bengal government and the State's Chief Electoral Officer. Approximately 34 lakh appeals have been filed against SIR outcomes in West Bengal, and only a tiny fraction of them has been disposed of, leaving millions in a precarious state of uncertainty. Their exclusion from welfare benefits, including food support, is unconscionable.

There is a legal paradox in the relationship between citizenship and the electoral roll. The roll is meant to include only citizens, but enrolment on the roll is not, by itself, proof of citizenship. This paradox apart, it is a sound and commonsensical assumption that many citizens are not enrolled as voters. In other words, all those enlisted as voters must be citizens, but not all citizens are necessarily enrolled as voters. While this may be a simple and straightforward proposition, for the State to link the absence of a person's name from the electoral roll to other aspects of civic life – especially subsistence benefits – is both illogical and cruel. In its Bihar SIR judgment, the Court clearly stated that exclusion from an electoral roll cannot by itself determine citizenship status and that SIR outcomes are linked only to electoral purposes. The specific facts and legal principles relating to the SIR notwithstanding, larger issues are also at stake. These include universal human rights that must apply to all persons, citizens and non-citizens alike. Clean electoral rolls and targeted welfare delivery can contribute to better governance. But the state must not take leave of logic and common sense.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

Context

- The Supreme Court reiterated that exclusion from the electoral roll cannot have consequences beyond voting rights.
- It was hearing petitions against West Bengal Government orders linking Special Intensive Revision (SIR) outcomes with:
 - Welfare benefits (Annapurna Yojana).
 - Public Distribution System (PDS) benefits.
 - Verification/cancellation of caste certificates.
- The Court referred to its earlier Bihar SIR judgment, which held that SIR outcomes are only for electoral purposes and cannot determine citizenship or affect other legal rights.
- Around 34 lakh appeals have reportedly been filed against SIR-related exclusions in West Bengal.

Key Points

- Special Intensive Revision (SIR): Conducted by the Election Commission of India (ECI) to maintain accurate electoral rolls.
- Governed by the Representation of the People Act, 1950.

- Supreme Court's observations: Electoral roll exclusion does not determine citizenship.
- Electoral roll is not proof of citizenship.
- Absence from the electoral roll cannot be used to deny welfare benefits, food security, or caste certificates.
- Welfare schemes and electoral rolls operate under different legal frameworks.
- Any deprivation of statutory benefits must follow the relevant law governing that scheme, not electoral roll status.

Static Linkages

- Article 324 – Powers and functions of the Election Commission.
- Article 326 – Elections based on Adult Suffrage.
- Article 14 – Equality before Law.
- Article 21 – Right to Life and Dignity.
- Representation of the People Act, 1950 – Preparation and revision of electoral rolls.
- Representation of the People Act, 1951 – Conduct of elections.
- Citizenship Act, 1955 – Acquisition and determination of citizenship.
- National Food Security Act, 2013 – Legal framework for food security.

Critical Analysis

Constitutional Issues

- Electoral roll exclusion cannot be equated with loss of citizenship.
- Linking welfare with electoral status may violate Articles 14 and 21.
- Denial of statutory entitlements without due process undermines the Rule of Law.

Governance Issues

- Administrative errors in electoral rolls may deprive genuine beneficiaries.
- Pending appeals create prolonged uncertainty.
- Interlinking unrelated databases increases the risk of exclusion errors.

Judicial Significance

- Reinforces the distinction between electoral eligibility and citizenship.
- Limits executive action beyond the scope of election laws.
- Strengthens constitutional protection against arbitrary administrative decisions.

Way Forward

- Keep electoral roll revision strictly confined to electoral purposes.
- Ensure time-bound disposal of SIR appeals.
- Avoid automatic linkage between electoral databases and welfare schemes.
- Strengthen due process before depriving any person of statutory benefits.
- Improve voter enrolment and grievance redressal mechanisms.

Political minefields

Andy Burnham cannot deliver for the UK if he remains in survival mode

Andy Burnham, the former Mayor of Greater Manchester and the new Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, has picked a challenging time to enter office. The revolving doors at 10 Downing Street appear to be spinning off their hinges – he will be the seventh Prime Minister in just over a decade, and the fifth in four years. Nevertheless, he has promised a fresh start, and an economic and social revival. To truly set himself apart from the fumbling approach of his predecessor, Keir Starmer, he might have to spearhead a radical change in governance, and be willing to redefine the traditional Labour Party framework to tackle the spiralling crises of cost of living, fraying global alliances, disagreements on immigration policy and the fiscal pressures of an ageing population. He might learn from Mr. Starmer's missteps, who won Labour a resounding victory in 2024 with just 34% of the popular vote. It was, however, a "loveless landslide" according to some analysts, and had more to do with deep disenchantment with the previous Conservative governments for losing their grip on macroeconomic policy management. Although Mr. Starmer at the time vowed to restore "respect to politics", a mini scandal over government officials accepting gifts, a policy furore over botched plans to cut welfare spending, and an error of judgement in appointing Peter Mandelson, discredited by his association with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, as U.K. Ambassador to the U.S., led to Mr. Starmer's ousting by his party.

To avoid continuing this cycle of leaders who appear to be unable to govern what appears to be an increasingly ungovernable polity after Brexit, and a weary public that is looking for a new model of governance to stabilise their embattled nation amidst political storms, Mr. Burnham will need to quickly implement reforms while tamping down on infighting and factionalism within Labour. He has little room to manoeuvre on public revenue given his party's promise not to raise taxes; yet he will have to find innovative ways to cut the U.K.'s welfare bill and entitlements. Similarly, he cannot abandon European allies in their support for Ukraine against Russian depredations on its soil, yet he will have to act quickly to mend fences with the Donald Trump administration to prevent further breakdown in the "special relationship". On immigration, net migration to the U.K. is said to be down compared to previous years, yet the thirst for even tighter immigration policies in some quarters is being contested by some Labour MPs and progressive leaders, who are seeking a compromise approach. He will have to step nimbly across the many political minefields in tackling these challenges, yet remember that history rewards dynamism and fresh thinking, rather than leaders stuck in survival mode.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

Context

- Andy Burnham became the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, succeeding Keir Starmer after a Labour Party leadership change.
- The leadership transition comes amid:
 - Slow economic growth.
 - High cost of living.
 - Fiscal pressures due to an ageing population.
 - Immigration debates.
 - Post-Brexit economic and diplomatic challenges.
 - Continued support for Ukraine while maintaining UK-US relations.
- The development is important from the perspective of comparative governance, parliamentary democracy, and India-UK relations.

Key Points

- Country: United Kingdom
- Government System: Constitutional Monarchy with Parliamentary Democracy.
- Head of State: Monarch.
- Head of Government: Prime Minister.

- Legislature: Bicameral Parliament
 - House of Commons (Lower House)
 - House of Lords (Upper House)
 - Major Challenges Before the Government: Economic slowdown and inflation.
 - Welfare expenditure and fiscal deficit.
 - Immigration management.
 - Strengthening post-Brexit trade.
 - Maintaining strategic ties with the US, EU and NATO.

Static Linkages

- The UK follows the Westminster Model, which influenced India's parliamentary system.
- The Prime Minister is normally the leader of the majority party in the House of Commons.
- The UK has an uncoded Constitution, unlike India's written Constitution.
- Brexit (2020) refers to the UK's withdrawal from the European Union.
- NATO (1949) is a collective defence alliance of Europe and North America; the UK is a founding member.
- The UK is a permanent member (P5) of the UN Security Council.

Critical Analysis

Significance

- Leadership change may improve political stability in the UK.
- Economic reforms can influence global trade and investment.
- Stable UK governance is important for India-UK FTA negotiations.
- UK's foreign policy will affect European security and Indo-Pacific cooperation.

Challenges

- Limited fiscal space due to high public expenditure.
- Managing immigration without affecting labour supply.
- Balancing relations with the EU and the US.
- Addressing ageing population and rising welfare costs.
- Sustaining economic growth after Brexit.

Relevance for India

- Progress in the India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA).
- Defence and technology cooperation.
- Investment and financial services.
- Mobility of Indian professionals and students.

Way Forward

- Pursue sustainable fiscal reforms.
- Promote productivity-led economic growth.
- Strengthen regional cooperation with Europe.
- Balance immigration control with labour market needs.
- Enhance India-UK cooperation in trade, defence, education and technology.

I was part of the protest march in Delhi, saw democratic politics take a new turn



DESHKAAL
BY YOGENDRA YADAV

THE REGIME — and the silence — often made me wonder whether I'm completely crazy for coming back... But today — to see this democratic spirit which has been silenced for so long come back alive again — I feel whole again. Even if temporarily.

I read these lines well past 3 am, still trying to process all that I had witnessed on the streets of Delhi this Monday. These lines, posted on X by Yung Vaidish Bhargava, herself a fine political theorist, captured why July 20 may be remembered in the history of Indian democracy.

This column has argued that as we slip from competitive authoritarianism to electoral autocracy, the focus of the Opposition must switch from electoral politics to a politics of resistance. Here are six reasons why the Jantar Mantar protest was a perfect illustration of what the politics of resistance may look like.

Firstly, the numbers. No one has a good estimate. But it was undoubtedly many times more than the 15,000-20,000 the regime had hoped and planned for. Drone images suggest that well over a lakh joined this protest. Originally planned as a march, it turned into a rally, then a rally — a mass flow. By the afternoon, every road leading to

Parliament and much of Lutyens' Delhi was packed with the protesters. It was India's 'Occupy' moment.

What made the numbers stand out even more is that this was an organic mobilisation. Far from the culture of rent-a-crowd political rallies or spectacles of organisational prowess, the Jantar Mantar protest comprised almost entirely self-mobilised youth responding to a social media call, ar-ranging for their travel and walking long distances. The last time I witnessed this spontaneous synchronisation was the famous Republic Day tractor march organised by the farmers' movement in 2021.

Third, notice their 'utterly abroad diversity' — as a friend called it. I met a person who travelled from Arunachal Pradesh, a group of adults from Dharamshala in Himachal Pradesh, a wheel-chair bound student of Spain, a group of girls from Dehradun, scores of boys and girls from all over UP, Bihar and MP, students from elite private universities, national public universities as well as time-pass colleges, and of course a large chunk of 'aspirants' from Mukesh Nagar and similar hotspots. The proportion of women was striking and exhilarating. These were not your usual suspects. An overwhelming majority were first-time participants in any protest. Their families proudly supported the JLP.

So did they, till yesterday. That must worry the regime.

Fourth, the issue that brought them together was much larger and more enduring than just the recent paper leaks. There were, of course, students who suffered the NEET cancellation and the CBSE scam, and others who lost their children due to this fiasco, aspirants waiting in-

definitely for jobs, and victims of recruitment scams. But more than direct sufferers, the protesters were primarily potential sufferers, those who know that it could be their turn tomorrow, those who realise that the education-employment system has broken down. Pradham is only the tip of the iceberg. The underlying urge is for an equitable, meaningful and quality education and for a universal right to employment. It is after half a century — since the JP movement in Bihar in 1974 — that a youth protest has placed education and employment at the centre of the national agenda.

Fifth, the spirit of resistance goes beyond names and labels. Sonam Wangchuk is clearly their hero, but the hero-worship quotient is much more muted than during the Anna movement. The youth related to the GJP and its leadership, but were not shy to offer healthy criticism. They heard and cheered political leaders and activists from the podium, but were not swayed by any one personality. This democratic spirit augurs well for the future.

Sixth, the repeated chants of 'Godi media, go back' were a reminder that the youth have found a way past the narratives of mainstream media. For the last one month, the Noida channels and the national press more or less erased the protest at Jantar Mantar, when not mocking or demonising it. Yet every calculation of the regime and every narrative of its spin doctors was defied. Just as in the farmers' movement, media black-outs actually spurred the participants into developing their parallel information channels through social media, word of mouth and WhatsApp.

App. Their posters were punchy: "The true test of democracy isn't the protest. It's how the state responds to it". Their slogans were innovative. I heard this one for the first time: "Jai-Jai-Modi darta hai, Hindus-Muslims karta hai". The authoritarian narrative is being punctured.

Seventh, and above all, July 20 shows a fracturing of the spell of fear. Today's youth understand the risks of surveillance and profiling under the present regime, something absent during the Kamilla-Mulden mobilisation of the anti-corruption movement. That deterred many of them from coming to Jantar Mantar for the first two weeks. But somehow, something shattered it on Monday. Perhaps the safety of the crowd. Perhaps the adrenaline of hopelessness. Or maybe a faint hope. But these young people were not afraid of being heard, photographed or even tear-gassed.

Finally, in a way almost unnoticed, the movement could mark a new phase in the politics of social justice. The youth of India have come together in a movement led by a Dalit, Abhimat Dikhe, and inspired by an Adivasi, Sonam Wangchuk, one not limited to the stereotypical 'SC/ST issues'. Instead of demanding to share in the nation, bahujan politics can now define what the nation is.

For many months now, I have been re-peating a dialogue to anyone who asks me about the future of India: "Sawal ye nahin hai ki jamata tamaskhali ke khilaf khari hogi ya nahin. Sawal ye hai ki jab jamata khari hogi toh kahan hain toh nahin health jagenge". Yesterday, I saw it unfold before my eyes. Jamata was standing. And so was I.

The writer is member, Swarg India, and national convenor, Bharat Jodo Abhiyan. Views are personal

More than direct sufferers, the protesters were primarily potential sufferers, those who know that it could be their turn tomorrow, those who realise that the education-employment system has broken down

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

Context

- A large youth-led protest at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi, highlighted issues of competitive examination paper leaks, recruitment delays, unemployment, and transparency in public recruitment.
- The movement revived debates on constitutional rights, democratic dissent, accountability, and governance reforms.

Key Points

- Peaceful protest is a constitutional democratic right.
- Growing concerns over:
 - Examination paper leaks.
 - Delayed government recruitments.
 - Transparency and credibility of recruitment agencies.
- Social media played a major role in mobilization.
- The issue links education, employment, governance, and accountability.

Static Linkages

- Preamble – Justice, Liberty, Equality.
- Article 14 – Equality before Law.
- Article 19(1)(a) – Freedom of Speech and Expression.
- Article 19(1)(b) – Right to Assemble Peacefully without Arms.
- Article 19(2) & 19(3) – Reasonable Restrictions.
- Article 21 – Right to Life and Dignity.
- Article 39(a) – Adequate Means of Livelihood.
- Article 41 – Right to Work (DPSP).
- Fundamental Duties (Article 51A) – Respect Constitution and Public Property.

Critical Analysis

Significance

- Reinforces democratic participation through peaceful protest.
- Highlights the need for credible examination and recruitment systems.
- Reflects growing youth aspirations regarding education and employment.

Challenges

- Frequent paper leaks undermine institutional credibility.
- Delayed recruitment increases unemployment and social frustration.
- Balancing the right to protest with maintenance of public order.
- Spread of misinformation through digital platforms.

Way Forward

- Strengthen cybersecurity and digital safeguards for examinations.
- Ensure time-bound recruitment and vacancy filling.
- Strict implementation of anti-paper leak laws.
- Increase transparency through technology-enabled recruitment.
- Establish independent audits of examination agencies.
- Strengthen grievance redressal mechanisms for candidates.

Students need to guard against undermining institutions



ADITI
NARAYANI
PASWAN

TO UNDERSTAND the chaos gripping our educational spaces—as seen in the recent protests in Delhi and elsewhere—it is necessary to revisit Jean-Jacques Rousseau's concept of the Social Contract. Rousseau has noted, "True political liberty is never found in a state of chaos or unbridled individual impulse."

But real freedom is built when citizens willingly enter a community, agreeing and binding themselves to shared rules and institutional structures." He had also warned that when individuals choose disruption over collective agreement, it leads to the fracturing of the civic bond that underpins democratic existence.

Public institutions and administration are a microcosm of the social contract. Participating in them calls for mutual agreement to listen, follow the process, and respect the forum.

As teachers, when we allow students to treat these structures as permanently broken or as enemies, we are misinforming and mis-educating them. It leads to alienation from the tools of civic governance that students need to master.

We need to establish a dialogue between government bodies and their citizens; we need to demand institutional accountability rather than disrupt governance and create an environment of political polarisation.

Democracy is kept alive through the day-to-day, exhausting work of policy implementation and institutional negotiation. It does not function through continuous agitation.

Our real job as educators is to anchor students and their energies in constitutional boundaries and civic responsibility. Classrooms need to be the spaces where these evolving state reforms are understood, where we promote curiosity and scepticism and encourage critical thinking.

But there is a fine line between questioning a system and trying to dismantle its legitimacy in public. When students are misled and continuously pushed to-

ward confrontation, it leads to a shrinking of the faith citizens have in their public institutions, with the focus shifting to physical clashes.

Therefore, any genuine progress in administrative reforms is sidelined by political polarisation. The debate is now not about improving education or public institutions. They are now consumed by binary shouting matches with zero outcomes.

When, as a teacher, I see impatience among India's youth, I feel that it is a healthy sign of an aspirational democracy. It means these ignited minds aspire for rapid development.

But this passion must go hand in hand with maintaining the stability of our foundational institutions, which form the cornerstone of democracy. There are multiple democratic tools to effect changes. The state has built robust, highly responsive institutional tools—from transparent online RTI portals to localised grievance cells and elected academic councils.

These handle student anxieties. Our public institutions must be spaces where youth and students learn to navigate institutional realities, and master the art of constructive civil discourse in the larger spirit of democracy.

Ultimately, we must remember Mahatma Gandhi, who built our independence struggle on the principle of peaceful *satyagraha*. For Gandhi, the means were as pure as the end itself.

The raw disruption and aggression we witnessed in Delhi this week from all stakeholders violated the true Gandhian spirit. It replaced moral persuasion with force.

The true task before our youth today is to look past structural anger. True democratic empowerment is born when we partner with and reform the public institutions through engagement from within, rather than letting raw friction bring them to a halt.

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- Public Grievance Redressal mechanisms.
- Judicial Review.
- Parliamentary oversight.
- Local Self-Government Institutions.
- Democratic Principle Dissent is an essential feature of democracy but should be exercised through constitutional and peaceful means.

Static Linkages

- Preamble: Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.
- Rule of Law (A.V. Dicey).
- Constitutional Morality (Supreme Court jurisprudence).
- Fundamental Rights vs Fundamental Duties.
- Gandhian Principle of Satyagraha—peaceful and non-violent resistance.
- Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC): Citizen-centric and accountable governance.

Critical Analysis

Significance

- Peaceful protests strengthen participatory democracy.
- Promote governmental accountability.
- Encourage policy reforms through democratic engagement.
- Reflect active citizen participation.

Challenges

- Violent protests undermine the Rule of Law.
- Damage public property and disrupt essential services.
- Increase political polarization.
- Erode public trust in democratic institutions.

Constitutional Perspective

- Rights must be balanced with Fundamental Duties.
- Democratic dissent should remain within constitutional limits.
- Institutional reforms should be pursued through lawful mechanisms.

Way Forward

- Strengthen institutional grievance redressal mechanisms.
- Promote constitutional literacy and civic education.
- Encourage structured dialogue between governments and stakeholders.
- Ensure timely institutional response to public grievances.
- Uphold peaceful democratic participation while maintaining public order.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

Context

- Recent student protests in Delhi have revived the debate on the balance between democratic dissent and institutional stability.
- The issue highlights the importance of constitutional methods, peaceful protests, and institutional accountability in a democracy.
- It also brings attention to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Social Contract Theory, emphasizing citizens' consent to laws and institutions for ensuring collective welfare.

Key Points

- Social Contract (Jean-Jacques Rousseau) State derives legitimacy from the consent of the governed.
- Citizens accept laws for the common good (General Will).
- Rights are accompanied by civic responsibilities.
- Constitutional Framework Article 19(1)(a): Freedom of Speech and Expression.
- Article 19(1)(b): Right to assemble peacefully without arms.
- Articles 19(2) & 19(3): Reasonable restrictions in the interests of public order, sovereignty, integrity, etc.
- Article 51A: Fundamental Duties—abide by the Constitution, safeguard public property, promote harmony, develop scientific temper.
- Institutional Mechanisms Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005.

Our public institutions must be spaces where youth and students learn to navigate institutional realities, and master the art of constructive civil discourse in the larger spirit of democracy

Lifting off, reaching a new space milestone

THE SUCCESSFUL launch of Skyroot Aerospace's Vikram-1 rocket marks a defining moment in India's space journey. It signals a transition from a programme led almost exclusively by the state-run ISRO to one in which private enterprise is emerging as a driver of innovation. With this achievement, India entered an exclusive league: Until Skyroot's mission on Saturday, only private companies in the United States and China had independently developed and launched rockets that reached orbit. The milestone comes six years after the government opened the space sector to private participation in 2020, a reform that was then institutionalised through the Indian Space Policy, 2023. The results of the policy are beginning to show. The country is now home to around 400 space start-ups working across the value chain, from launch vehicles and satellites to space-grade electronics and downstream applications. The sector is currently valued at roughly Rs 70,000 crore, and the government expects it to expand four- to five-fold over the coming decade.

Skyroot's mission is also important because it's directed at the Low Earth Orbit (LEO) — a region of space where an increasing number of countries are looking to carve a niche. Today, Earth observation, weather forecasting and telecommunication are no longer the preserve of government agencies. While the large geostationary satellites that operate at altitudes close to 37,000 km are unlikely to be obsolete anytime soon, much of the space economy in the coming decades is expected to be driven by satellites that orbit between 160-2,000 km above Earth's surface. The proliferation of satellites weighing anywhere from a few kg to a few hundred kg has created a market that is expanding faster than any national space agency can serve on its own. Shifting commercial launches to private players would, therefore, free ISRO to focus on deep-space exploration missions such as Chandrayaan and Gaganyaan.

That said, ISRO's handholding role cannot be discounted. India's premier space research agency provided most of the infrastructure used to design Vikram-1. By all accounts, the contours of the public-private partnership in India will be very different from the US for at least a decade — companies such as SpaceX design and build products independently of NASA and then sell them to the space research agency. Indian companies like Skyroot could, instead, become competitive by working on the country's traditional strength in low-cost manufacturing. This is the way forward, but they will have their work cut out in an ecosystem whose unforgiving nature has been demonstrated by the collapse of US companies such as Vector Launch and Virgin Orbit.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

Context of the News

- Skyroot Aerospace successfully launched Vikram-1, becoming the first Indian private company to develop and launch an orbital-class rocket.
- The achievement marks the success of the space sector reforms (2020) and the Indian Space Policy, 2023.
- It strengthens India's position in the rapidly growing commercial space economy, particularly in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite launches.

Key Points

- Space sector opened: 2020.
- Indian Space Policy: 2023.
- Private ecosystem: Around 400 space start-ups.
- Estimated size of India's space economy: ~₹70,000 crore.
- Government target: 4–5 times growth over the next decade.
- LEO altitude: 160–2,000 km.
- Geostationary Orbit (GEO): 35,786 km above Earth.
 - Major institutions: ISRO – Research & strategic missions.
 - IN-SPACe – Promotion, authorization and regulation of private space activities.
 - NSIL – Commercial arm of ISRO.
 - Major applications of LEO satellites: Earth Observation
 - Communication
 - Weather Forecasting

- Navigation
- Remote Sensing
- Greater private participation enables ISRO to focus on Gaganyaan, Chandrayaan and future deep-space missions.

Static Linkages

- Department of Space functions under the Prime Minister.
- India's space programme was founded under Dr. Vikram Sarabhai.
- PSLV is India's workhorse launch vehicle for polar and sun-synchronous satellites.
- GSLV/LVM3 are used for heavier payloads and GTO missions.
- LEO satellites have short orbital periods and lower communication latency than GEO satellites.
- GEO satellites remain fixed relative to Earth and are ideal for communication and meteorology.

Critical Analysis

Significance

- Boosts India's commercial launch capability.
- Reduces dependence on government-led space missions.
- Enhances India's share in the global space economy.
- Promotes indigenous technology and manufacturing.
- Creates high-skilled employment and attracts investment.
- Allows ISRO to prioritize strategic and scientific missions.

Challenges

- High capital and technology requirements.
- Dependence on ISRO infrastructure.
- Regulatory framework still evolving.
- Competition from established global launch companies.
- Space debris and orbital sustainability concerns.
- Limited access to private funding and insurance.

Way Forward

- Strengthen implementation of the Indian Space Policy, 2023.
- Expand launch and testing infrastructure for private firms.
- Increase R&D and venture capital support.
- Develop a comprehensive space insurance and liability framework.
- Promote industry-academia collaboration.
- Strengthen space situational awareness and debris mitigation.
- Enhance global commercial partnerships while safeguarding strategic interests.

Protect seafarers, and the maritime order

THE KILLING of four Indian seafarers in the Russia-Ukraine war is tragic. It also signals the erosion of long-standing norms, underpinned by international law, that are meant to protect civilian maritime commerce. The *MV Golden Leo*, struck by a Russian missile in an attack that killed 10 seafarers in all while departing a Ukrainian port, was not a military vessel but a merchant ship. New Delhi has summoned Russia's chargé d'affaires and lodged a protest — rightly so, given the loss of Indian lives and India's stake in the freedom and safety of commerce at sea. In the past few weeks, Indian seafarers, including three aboard the *MT Settebello*, have been among sailors killed in and around the Strait of Hormuz, as merchant shipping and civilian crews are increasingly caught in the line of fire.

The purpose of International Humanitarian Law is to shield non-combatants from the horrors of war. Repeated attacks on shipping suggest that these protections are being increasingly violated, especially when great-power interests are involved. Merchant vessels engaged in civilian commerce cannot lawfully be attacked unless they are being used for military purposes. The *MV Golden Leo* was reportedly carrying grain when it was struck. The global economy depends on maritime shipping and its continuance even amid conflict. Ukraine remains one of the world's leading grain exporters, supplying markets across Europe, North Africa and Asia; disruptions across the Hormuz have already exposed the vulnerability of global energy supplies.

More than 10 per cent of the world's seafarers are Indian, many serving aboard foreign-flagged vessels such as the *MV Golden Leo* (Guinea-Bissau) and the *MT Settebello* (Palau). Following the deaths of two Indian seafarers in West Asia last week, the Directorate General of Shipping has advised shipowners, ship managers and recruitment agencies against deploying Indian seafarers on voyages through the Strait of Hormuz. These are necessary steps. New Delhi must also defend the norms that protect civilian shipping. When merchant ships become targets, it is not only seafarers who are at risk, but the maritime order that has long kept the world's commerce afloat.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

Context

- Four Indian seafarers were killed after the *MV Golden Leo*, a civilian merchant vessel, was struck by a missile while departing a Ukrainian port.
- India lodged a diplomatic protest and summoned the Russian Chargé d'Affaires.
- Earlier, Indian seafarers aboard *MT Settebello* were also killed amid hostilities near the Strait of Hormuz.
- DG Shipping advised against deploying Indian seafarers on voyages through the Strait of Hormuz due to security risks.
- The incident highlights concerns regarding the protection of civilian shipping under International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the security of global Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs).

Key Points

- Merchant vessels are protected under International Humanitarian Law (IHL) unless used for military purposes.
- Geneva Conventions (1949) and customary IHL require distinction between civilian and military targets.
- UNCLOS, 1982 guarantees freedom of navigation on the high seas.
- Around 90% of world merchandise trade (by volume) moves through sea routes. (UNCTAD)

- India contributes over 10% of the global seafaring workforce, making protection of seafarers a strategic concern.
- The Strait of Hormuz carries nearly one-fifth of global oil trade, while the Black Sea is a major grain export corridor.

Static Linkages

- Geneva Conventions, 1949.
- International Humanitarian Law (Principles of Distinction & Proportionality).
- United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982.
- Freedom of Navigation.
- Innocent Passage & Transit Passage.
- International Maritime Organization (IMO).
- Directorate General of Shipping (DG Shipping).
- Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs).
- India's SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) initiative.

Critical Analysis

Significance

- Reinforces the importance of rules-based maritime order.
- Highlights India's growing responsibility as a major supplier of global seafarers.
- Underlines the strategic importance of secure global shipping lanes.

Challenges

- Increasing attacks on civilian merchant shipping.
- Weak enforcement of International Humanitarian Law.
- Threat to global food, energy and supply chains.
- Rising insurance and freight costs.
- Greater risks for Indian seafarers on foreign-flagged vessels.

Way Forward

- Strengthen compliance with International Humanitarian Law.
- Enhance maritime security cooperation through IMO and regional mechanisms.
- Expand Indian Navy's protection of commercial shipping in high-risk regions.
- Improve intelligence-sharing and maritime domain awareness.
- Strengthen welfare, insurance and evacuation mechanisms for Indian seafarers.
- Promote diplomatic efforts to ensure freedom of navigation and protection of civilian shipping.