

The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE

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No: 1521, Second Floor, H-Block, 5th Street, Anna Nagar, Chennai-80.

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- A new genus of jumping spiders, named 'Tenkana', has been discovered across southern India. It includes two previously known species and a newly discovered one called *Tenkana jayamangali* from Karnataka.

Three scientists discover new genus of jumping spiders 'Tenkana' in South India

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

A team of arachnologists has discovered a new genus of jumping spiders, 'Tenkana', found across southern India, encompassing two previously known species. It also introduced a new species, *Tenkana jayamangali*, from Karnataka.

The name Tenkana comes from the Kannada word for south, reflecting that all the known species are from southern India and northern Sri Lanka. This new group belongs to the *Plexippina* subtribe of jumping spiders and is different from related groups such as *Hyllus* and *Telamonia*. The research team in-



The newly identified *Tenkana jayamangali* has been named after the Jayamangali river in Karnataka. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

cluded scientists from various institutions in India and Canada, and their findings were published in the journal *Zookeys*. They used both genetic studies and physical examinations to support their work.

Unlike related species that live in forests, Tenka-

na spiders prefer drier areas and ground habitats. They have been found in Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

Kiran Marathe and Wayne Maddison from the University of British Columbia, Canada, and John

Caleb T.D. from Saveetha Institute in Chennai established this new genus. The genetic analysis was done with Krushnamegh Kunte from the National Centre for Biological Sciences in Bengaluru.

Two species that were previously in *Colopsus* – *Tenkana manu* (found in south India and Sri Lanka) and *Tenkana arkavathi* (from Karnataka) – have now been moved to the new genus. Interestingly, the former was named after a retired professor, Dr. Manu Thomas, in 2014.

The team also described *Tenkana jayamangali* for the first time, named after the Jayamangali river in Karnataka, where it was first seen.

Analysis of the news:

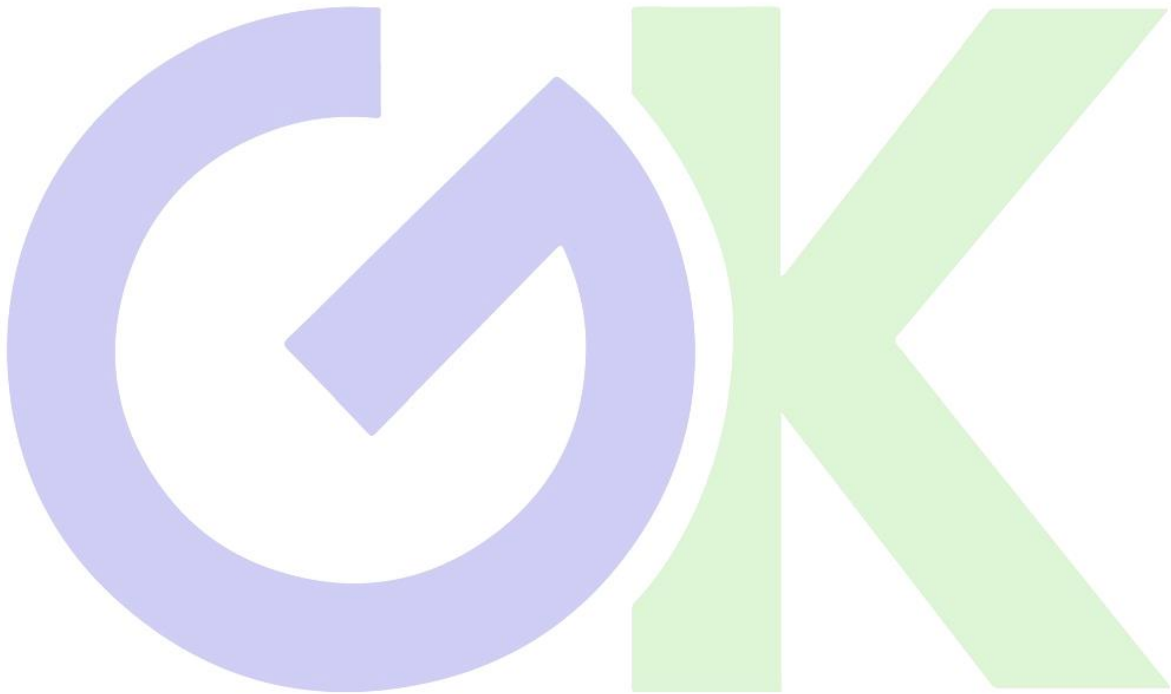
- A new genus of jumping spiders called 'Tenkana' has been discovered across southern India, with species found in Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karnataka, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh.
- The genus includes two previously known species and a newly introduced one, *Tenkana jayamangali*, from Karnataka.

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Daily News Analysis

- The name 'Tenkana' is derived from the Kannada word for south, as the species are found in southern India and northern Sri Lanka.
- The research was conducted by a team of scientists from institutions in India and Canada, with their findings published in the journal Zookeys.
- Both genetic studies and physical examinations were used to identify the new genus.
- Tenkana spiders prefer drier, ground habitats, unlike related species that inhabit forests.
- Two previously known species, Tenkana manu and Tenkana arkavathi, have been reassigned to the new genus.



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India and Pakistan have renewed the Kartarpur Corridor agreement for another five years, ensuring continued access for Indian pilgrims to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib.

- ➔ The renewal reflects ongoing communication between the two nations, despite unresolved issues regarding service fees for pilgrims.



More About Kartarpur Corridor:

- ➔ The Kartarpur Corridor is a travel route connecting India and Pakistan, facilitating Indian pilgrims to visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur in Pakistan, a significant Sikh religious site.
- ➔ An agreement was initially signed on October 24, 2019, to allow this corridor's operation, valid for five years.
- ➔ The agreement has been renewed for another five years, extending its validity until 2029, ensuring uninterrupted access for pilgrims.
- ➔ The corridor allows approximately 5,000 pilgrims daily, but current daily numbers have decreased to only a few hundred.
- ➔ Pilgrims are required to pay a service fee of \$20 (around ₹1,680), which India has requested Pakistan to waive.
- ➔ Pakistan claims the fee is necessary to cover the \$17 million spent on refurbishing the gurdwara.
- ➔ The corridor represents a significant step in facilitating religious tourism and enhancing cultural ties between the two nations.

India, Pakistan renew their agreement on Kartarpur Corridor

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

India and Pakistan on Tuesday agreed to renew their agreement for another five years to operate the Kartarpur Corridor to facilitate pilgrims from India to visit the Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara.

"The Agreement, signed on 24 October 2019 to facilitate the visit of pilgrims from India to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur, Narowal, Pakistan through the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor, was valid for a period of five years," the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement on Tuesday, adding that the extension until 2029 would ensure "uninterrupted operation of the Corridor for use by the pilgrims from India to visit the holy Gurdwara in Pakistan".

The announcement comes a week after External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar visited Pakistan for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation meet and met briefly with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar.

Sharing the news of the agreement's renewal on social media, Mr. Jaishankar said the Narendra Modi government would "continue to facilitate our Sikh community's access to

New Delhi is unable to convince Pakistan to drop the service fee of \$20 that it levies per pilgrim

their holy sites".

Although the successful conclusion of the talks over the renewal of the agreement indicates that the channels of communication between the two countries are operational, New Delhi was unable to convince Pakistan to drop the service fee of \$20 (approximately ₹1,680) that it levies per pilgrim.

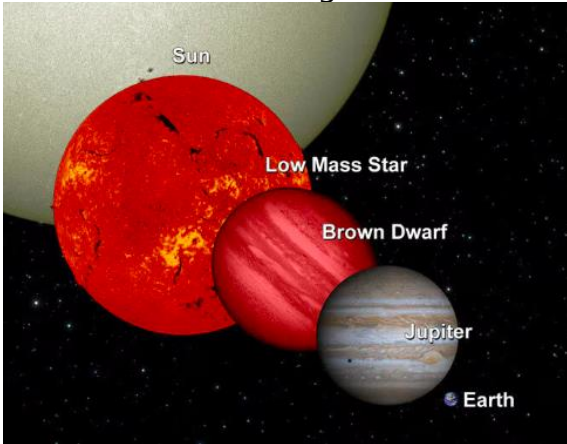
"In view of the continued requests of pilgrims regarding the removal of USD 20 service charge levied by Pakistan per pilgrim, India has once again urged Pakistan to not levy any fee on the pilgrims," the Ministry said.

Pakistan has maintained that it needs to levy the charges as it has spent the bulk of the estimated \$17 million cost of refurbishing the gurdwara.

Officials in Pakistan also told *The Hindu* that they are disappointed by the dwindling numbers of pilgrims being "allowed" to visit, as the quota given by Pakistan is for 5,000 pilgrims daily, but the numbers are down to only a few hundred a day at present.

Astronomers recently re-examined the first discovered brown dwarf, Gliese 229B, and found it to be two brown dwarfs in a rare binary system.

- ➔ These "failed stars" are located 19 light-years away and orbit each other while circling a small star.



What Are Brown dwarfs?

- ➔ Brown dwarfs are objects that are too big to be planets but too small to be stars.
- ➔ They lack enough mass to ignite nuclear fusion like stars but are more massive than the largest planets.
- ➔ Brown dwarfs can burn a heavy form of hydrogen called deuterium but not regular hydrogen like stars.
- ➔ The first brown dwarf, Gliese 229B, was discovered in 1995.
- ➔ Recently, researchers found that there are actually two brown dwarfs, Gliese 229Ba and Gliese 229Bb, in a rare binary system.
- ➔ These two brown dwarfs are gravitationally locked and orbit each other, while also orbiting a small star.
- ➔ Gliese 229Ba and Gliese 229Bb have masses 38 and 34 times greater than Jupiter, respectively.

QUESTION CORNER

Brown dwarfs: wannabe stars



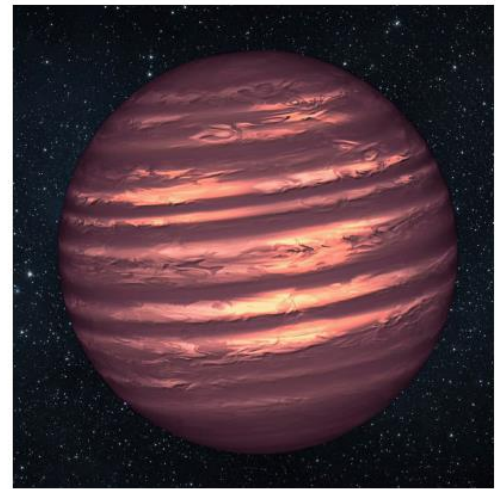
Q.What is a brown dwarf?

A: In 1995, astronomers confirmed the discovery for the first time of

a brown dwarf, a body too small to be a star and too big to be a planet. They could be considered wannabe stars that, during their formative stages did not reach the mass necessary to ignite nuclear fusion at their core like a star. But they are more massive than the biggest planets.

"They are formally defined as objects that can burn a heavy form of hydrogen, called deuterium, but not the most common basic form of hydrogen," said Sam Whitebook, a graduate student in Caltech's division of physics, mathematics, and astronomy. Recently, researchers took a closer look at the first brown dwarf discovered and found that it's actually two brown dwarfs orbiting astonishingly close to each other while also circling a small star. The research papers were published in the *Astrophysical Journal Letters*.

These two brown dwarfs are gravitationally locked to each other in what is called a binary



An artist's concept of a brown dwarf. NASA/JPL-CALTECH

system, an arrangement commonly observed among stars but quite rare among brown dwarfs. So the brown dwarf that three decades ago was named Gliese 229B is now recognised as Gliese 229Ba, with a mass 38 times greater than Jupiter, and Gliese 229Bb, with a mass 34 times greater than Jupiter.

They are located 19 light-years from our solar system, rather close in cosmic terms, in the constellation Lepus. - Reuters

For feedback and suggestions

for 'Science', please write to science@thehindu.co.in with the subject 'Daily page'

Page 10 : GS 2 : Indian Polity – Indian constitution – Significant Provisions

The Supreme Court upheld Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955, which grants citizenship to Assam migrants who entered before March 25, 1971.

- ➔ This provision stems from the 1985 Assam Accord to manage migration during the Bangladesh Liberation War.
- ➔ The ruling addresses key concerns around citizenship, equality, and Assam's demography.

On Section 6A of the Citizenship Act

What does the contentious provision state? What does the Assam Accord signed in 1985 stipulate? Why are there different cut-off dates for citizenship in Assam? What are the court's findings? What are the potential implications?

EXPLAINER

Aaratrika Bhaumik

The story so far:

In a landmark ruling, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court on October 18 upheld the constitutional validity of Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, 1955 (1955 Act) which laid out an exclusive regime for migrants in Assam from erstwhile East Pakistan (present Bangladesh) to obtain Indian citizenship as long as they entered India before March 25, 1971. The decision was rendered by a 4:1 majority. Justice Surya Kant authored the lead majority opinion on behalf of himself, CJI D.Y. Chandrachud, Justices M. M. Sundresh, and Manoj Mishra, while Justice Pardiwala delivered the lone dissenting opinion.

What does Section 6A stipulate?

Section 6A originates from the "Assam Accord", a political settlement signed on August 15, 1985, between the Rajiv Gandhi-led Congress government and Assam's student groups, following a six-year-long agitation against the influx of undocumented migrants from Bangladesh into Assam. It established a framework for granting or denying Indian citizenship to migrants in Assam based on a cut-off date – March 25, 1971. The date marked the onset of the genocide in East Pakistan, leading to the Bangladesh Liberation War and the eventual creation of Bangladesh. The conflict drove millions of Bengalis to flee East Pakistan and seek refuge in Assam, which shares a 263-km border with Bangladesh. Accordingly, all those who entered the State after March 25, 1971, would be treated as foreigners and deported in accordance with law.

The provision also conferred Indian citizenship upon migrants of "Indian origin" who entered Assam before January 1, 1966, and had been "ordinarily resident" in the State since then. Meanwhile, those who arrived between January 1, 1966, and March 24, 1971, were granted the full rights of Indian citizens, except for voting rights, which were withheld for a decade.

Why was it challenged?

The petitioners, including the NGO Assam Public Works and the Assam Sanmilita Mahasangha, contended that setting a different cut-off date for citizenship in Assam is discriminatory and violates the right to equality enshrined in Article 14 of the Constitution. Concerns were also raised about the provision's inconsistency with Articles 6 and 7, which regulate citizenship pertaining to Partition-era migration for the rest of the country. Article 6 grants citizenship to individuals who migrated to India from Pakistan before July 19, 1948, provided they have resided in the country since then.

Meanwhile, Article 7 denies citizenship to those who moved to Pakistan after March 1, 1947, while allowing it for those who returned to India under a permit for resettlement or permanent return. They also claimed the provision resulted in a "perceptible change in the demographic pattern of the State," thereby violating the cultural and linguistic rights of the "indigenous" population of Assam, as guaranteed under Article 29. This, they argued, constituted both "external aggression" and "internal disturbance" under Article 355 of the Constitution, thereby imposing an obligation upon the Union government to protect the State.

What did the majority rule?

Both Justices Kant and Chandrachud



Final word: Members of the All Assam Students' Union light lamps to celebrate the verdict on Section 6A of the Citizenship Act, in Guwahati, on October 18. PTI

upheld the differentiated treatment of Assam under Section 6A, citing the region's unique historical and political considerations. They reasoned that the provision does not violate the equality clause under Article 14, as it represents Parliament's careful balancing act between its humanitarian approach toward Bangladeshi immigrants and the significant strain their mass exodus has imposed on Assam's economic and cultural resources.

The majority also opined that Section 6A is not inconsistent with the citizenship provisions in Articles 6 and 7 of the Constitution. The Chief Justice pointed out that while these Articles establish a cut-off date for conferring citizenship at the commencement of the Constitution—January 26, 1950—Section 6A specifically addresses individuals not covered by these two provisions. Justice Kant concurred, asserting that Section 6A aligns with the constitutional philosophy of Articles 6 and 7, as it is rooted in the "same underlying policy of granting citizenship to the people of Indian origin migrating from Pakistan due to political disturbances in a foreign territory". Both judges also concluded that Article 11 of the Constitution grants Parliament substantial flexibility in formulating laws related to citizenship, including the authority to establish conditions for granting citizenship that may differ from those outlined in Articles 6 and 7.

Adopting a multicultural and pluralistic interpretation of Article 29, the judges further observed that Section 6A does not violate the cultural rights of the "indigenous" Assamese people. They reasoned that while the Article aims to

"conserve" the culture of a specific group, it does not preclude the coexistence of other cultures. In fact, Justice Kant highlighted that such grievances may stem from the failure of authorities to implement the other leg of Section 6A—specifically, the deportation of individuals who migrated to Assam after the cut-off date. He accordingly urged the Chief Justice to constitute a Bench to monitor the identification, detection and deportation of illegal immigrants in the State in a time-bound manner.

Both the judges also noted that "external aggression" referred to military actions and did not cover within its ambit humanitarian migration driven by economic or other distress. Accordingly, they found no breach of the Union's duty under Article 355. The Chief Justice further cautioned that allowing the Union to exercise such "emergency powers" would be detrimental to federalism and could undermine the constitutional status of States.

Why did Justice Pardiwala dissent?

In a sharply reasoned dissent, Justice Pardiwala declared Section 6A unconstitutional, effective only from the date of the judgment. He reasoned that while the provision may have been justifiable at the time of its enactment, its failure to curb illegal migration in Assam had rendered it inconsistent with constitutional principles over time. He also noted that the lack of a sunset clause on the application of Section 6A incentivises illegal immigration and exacerbates demographic imbalances in the region.

The judge further highlighted that

Section 6A does not allow for self-declaration or voluntary identification as a foreigner thereby leaving the detection process entirely reliant on state intervention. He concluded that this marked a clear departure from the scheme of the Citizenship Act and Articles 6 and 7 of the Constitution, which allow citizenship to be acquired through registration.

"The manner in which the provision is worded, counter-serves the very purpose of its enactment, which is the speedy and effective identification of foreigners of the 1966-71 stream, their deletion from the electoral rolls, registration with the registering authority and conferring of regular citizenship", the dissent noted.

What are the potential ramifications?

The March 25, 1971, cut-off date endorsed by the majority serves as the foundation for the contentious National Register of Citizens which was prepared in 2019 following the top court's directives. Although the register is yet to be implemented, it has identified 19 lakh residents (5.77% of Assam's population) as potential non-citizens. Moreover, the ruling bolsters the long-standing demand of Assamese organisations to repeal the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 (CAA), which sets December 31, 2014, as the cut-off date for granting citizenship to non-Muslim migrants who illegally entered India from Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Critics argue that by prescribing a different timeline, the CAA creates a loophole that exempts Bengali Hindus who migrated to Assam from Bangladesh after 1971 from the application of Section 6A.

THE GIST

Section 6A originates from the "Assam Accord", a political settlement signed on August 15, 1985, between the Rajiv Gandhi-led Congress government and Assam's student groups, following a six-year-long agitation against the influx of undocumented migrants from Bangladesh into Assam. It established a framework for granting or denying Indian citizenship to migrants in Assam based on a cut-off date – March 25, 1971.

Both Justices Kant and Chandrachud upheld the differentiated treatment of Assam under Section 6A, citing the region's unique historical and political considerations.

In a sharply reasoned dissent, Justice Pardiwala declared Section 6A unconstitutional, effective only from the date of the judgment.

Why Was Section 6A Challenged?

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Daily News Analysis

- Petitioners argued that having a different cut-off date for Assam violated Article 14 (right to equality) and conflicted with Articles 6 and 7, which regulate citizenship for the rest of India.
- Concerns were raised about the demographic impact on Assam and the alleged threat to indigenous cultural and linguistic rights under Article 29 of the Constitution.

What Does Section 6A Stipulate?

- Section 6A of the Citizenship Act originates from the Assam Accord of 1985, a political settlement between the Indian government and Assam's student groups.
- It provides a legal framework for granting or denying Indian citizenship to migrants in Assam based on the cut-off date of March 25, 1971, marking the start of the Bangladesh Liberation War.
- Migrants of "Indian origin" who entered before January 1, 1966, were given full citizenship, while those who entered between January 1, 1966, and March 24, 1971, were granted limited citizenship rights for a decade, including the withholding of voting rights.

Majority Ruling

- Justices Kant and Chandrachud upheld Section 6A, noting Assam's unique historical and political context, balancing humanitarian concerns and the strain on Assam's resources.
- They ruled that Section 6A is consistent with Articles 6 and 7, addressing migrants not covered by the Constitution's citizenship provisions.
- The judges also clarified that "external aggression" in Article 355 refers to military threats, not migration driven by humanitarian reasons.

Dissenting Opinion

- The dissent argued that Section 6A had failed to control illegal migration and was now inconsistent with constitutional principles.
- The dissent noted that the provision lacked a sunset clause and incentivized illegal immigration.
- It criticised the identification process, relying solely on state intervention without provisions for self-declaration of foreign status.

Potential Ramifications

- The March 25, 1971, cut-off date underpins the National Register of Citizens (NRC), which identified 19 lakh residents in Assam as potential non-citizens.
- The ruling could bolster demands to repeal the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) of 2019, which has a different cut-off date for granting citizenship to non-Muslim migrants from neighbouring countries.

In News : eShram - One Stop Solution

- Recently, the Union Ministry of Labour & Employment and Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports launched eShram One Stop Solution in New Delhi.



About eShram - One Stop Solution:

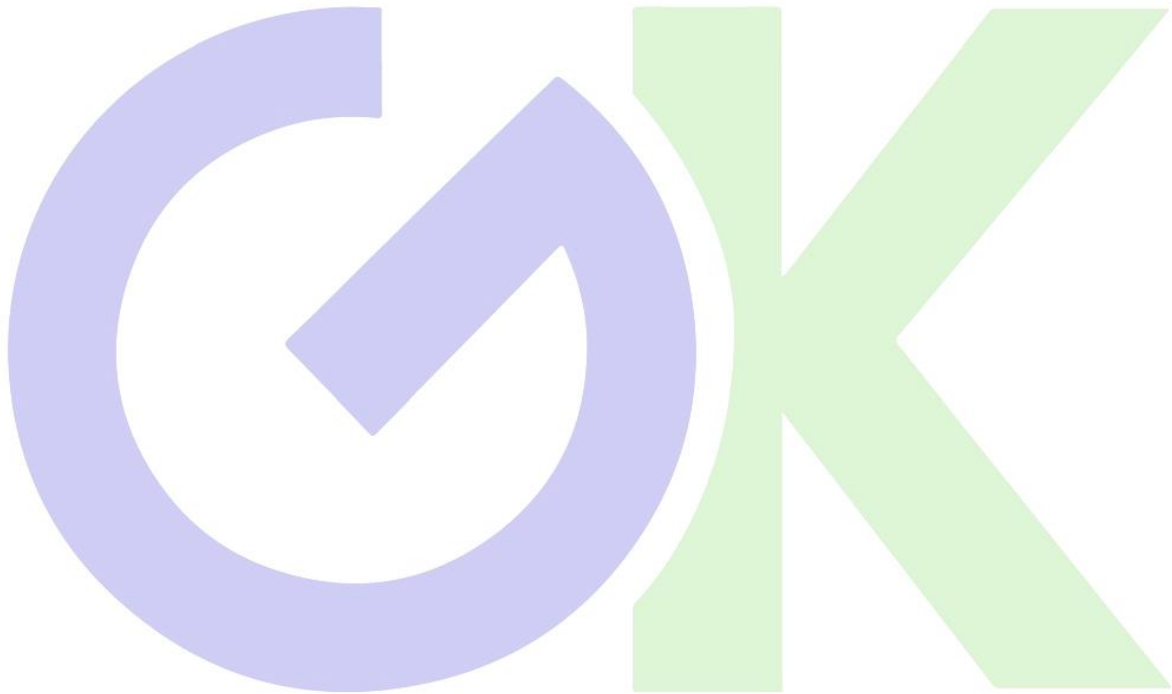
- It will provide seamless access of different Social Security Schemes to the unorganised workers registered on eShram portal.
- Purpose:** The primary purpose of the eShram One Stop Solution is to simplify the registration process for unorganised workers and facilitate their access to government welfare schemes.
- This platform will act as a bridge, connecting the workers to the numerous benefits offered by the government and making the registration process easier and more transparent,"
- It entails consolidating and integrating data from various Central Ministries/Departments into a single repository.
- Key welfare schemes such as One Nation One Ration Card, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, National Social Assistance Programme, National Career Service, Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan etc. have been integrated with eShram.

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What is eShram Portal?

- It was launched by the Ministry of Labour and Employment in 2021 for registration and creation of a comprehensive National Database of Unorganized Workers.
- The registration in the portal is fully Aadhaar verified and Aadhaar seeded. Any unorganised worker can register himself or herself on the portal on a self-declaration basis.
- It allows an unorganised worker to register himself or herself on the portal on self-declaration basis, under 400 occupations in 30 broad occupation sectors.



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The world needs blue helmets who act as blue helmets

Thou shalt not be a victim, thou shalt not be a perpetrator, but, above all, thou shalt not be a bystander." In suggesting this, Yehuda Bauer, Holocaust historian, rested his case wherein the 'bystander' was brought centre-stage and held accountable alongside the perpetrator for crimes against humanity. The 'bystander' implies the collective conscience of the world which must work as the weapon of the powerless. So, while the United Nations through Chapter VI of its Charter is committed to the peaceful settlement of disputes, Chapter VII of the same Charter prescribes the use of armed force with the authorisation of the Security Council in cases of aggression and breaches of peace threatening international security. Chapter VII further exhorts member-states to make available such military or police forces as may be required to establish peace. In fact Chapter VIII goes further and prescribes robust 'regional arrangement' in enforcing peace upon authorisation by the Security Council.

Hits and misses

Thus, one would be led to an erroneous belief that the UN has everything in place – in its strongly worded Charter and over 1,00,000 peacekeepers on the ground – to eliminate wars and exploitation from the world. UN political diplomacy and peace operations have established peace in many theatres in seven decades of peacekeeping such as in Cambodia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Angola, Timor Leste, Liberia and Kosovo, to name a few notably successful UN engagements.

Yet, there have been glaring instances, such as in Rwanda (1994) and Bosnia (1995) where the UN was accused of being a bystander, unwilling or unable to protect non-combatants and vulnerable sections, especially women and children. That in subsequent missions, notably Sierra Leone (UNSMIL), Timor Leste (UNMIT), Darfur (UNAMID), South Sudan (UNMISS) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), the UN brought the protection of civilians centre-stage, thus restoring substantially, if not wholly, its commitment to its core values, is a tribute to its willingness to use institutional memory in improving peacekeeping to give primacy to protection of civilians.

Today the world is again on the brink of a much bigger war in Europe and West Asia precisely because, over the last three years, the UN has frittered away the dividends of its



Hermanprit Singh

a retired Indian Police Service officer with experience in United Nations peace operations as Acting Police Commissioner and Principal Officer in Timor Leste and in the Office of Operations at the UN headquarters

By being reduced to 'bystander' status in the ongoing and serious conflicts in the world, the United Nations is frittering away the dividends of its 'enforceable peacekeeping'

'enforceable peacekeeping' between 2006 and 2020. It has been reduced to a 'Bystander' status again in the ongoing conflict in West Asia and the war in Ukraine.

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the Hamas-led massacre of non-combatants in Israel, followed by an even larger offensive of Israel on hapless civilians in Gaza, the UN response in both theatres has failed to call out the perpetrator in no uncertain terms and take decisive action in protecting civilian lives. This has happened despite it having a 1,00,000-strong UN military and police forces at its disposal, as battle ready infantry battalions and as 'standing capacity' at its logistics hub in Brindisi, Italy, that could have been deployed in robust numbers to contain a further loss of life and destruction of cities. There is little point in having such strong forces and yet be a bystander as both conflicts have widened, with the world continuing to witness unprecedented destruction. Even though 1,00,000 UN uniformed forces are deployed in many missions in Africa and elsewhere, it would have done no grave damage to the current missions were over half of them re-deployed in Ukraine, Gaza and West Bank, right between the warring forces, just as they continue to be in Cyprus between the Turks and Greeks or were deployed in Timor Leste, between Indonesian forces and the Timor Leste freedom fighters, the FRETILIN.

A lost chance to act with decision

Extraordinary situations demand extraordinary interventions. The fact that contributing member-countries have committed these forces to not just maintain but also to enforce peace implies their consent to protect civilians regardless of the 'theatre'. Otherwise, these well-armed and well provisioned troops are just biding their time till their rotation and pocketing the green bucks as a tribute. Blue helmets must act as blue helmets, impartially and decisively, as in Kosovo (UNMIK 1999-2008) and Timor Leste (UNTAET, UNMIT 1999-2008), with legitimacy to use reasonable force. It needed just over 6,000 UN uniformed personnel (typically, two infantry brigades) in Kosovo and 3,000 UN police personnel (including the lightly-armed formed police units) and an infantry brigade from Australia, under operational command of UN Mission (UNMIT) in Timor Leste to restore peace and bring back the rule of law and an elected government.

A deployment of similar numbers in a

similar-sized geographical area of Israel-Gaza-West Bank would have contained the colossal loss of lives that has followed and is making this theatre a killing field with mounting civilian casualties.

There is a need for UNSC reform

This also brings us to the subject of much-needed reform in the functioning of the Security Council. The veto power of the P5, the Permanent Security Council members, instead of being a rock of stability for the UN peace operations to stand on, has more often than not acted as a mill-stone around their neck. The world has repeatedly witnessed the negative power of veto precisely at a time when 'enforcing peace' has become an urgent necessity in the face of threats to civilian lives. Nearly a million Tutsi civilians were killed in the now infamous Rwanda genocide of 1994-95 even as the French continued to support the Rwandan Army, the main perpetrators of the genocide, and UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) was a bystander.

The case for reform of the Security Council to obviate such genocides in future by swift deployment and having a decisive role for the blue helmets rests on a two-pronged approach. The first is for the expansion of Permanent membership of the Security Council to include India (by virtue of it being the most vibrant voice of the global South) and South Africa (for long overdue representation from Africa). The second is to bell the veto cat.

In an expanded Council of P7, rather than each member having veto power, contentious issues such as the use of force in West Asia to stop an expansionist Israel or in Ukraine to thwart the expansionist designs of Russia – which in the current scenario will be vetoed by the U.S. and Russia, respectively – should have a division of votes of a P7 to decide on UN intervention. Once such a division of votes is in favour of peace operations to thwart hostilities, the deployment of UN standing troops or shifting troops between 'missions' should be enabled under Chapters VII and VIII of the UN Charter, with full executive powers to the UN military and police commanders on the ground.

Ultimately, if the UN cannot stand on its own feet and enforce peace despite having standing uniformed forces of the size of a sovereign nation, then UN-led peace operations must close and the plush halls of the UN be used only for exalted deliberations by another international non-governmental organisation or a think-tank.

GS Paper 02 : International Relations – Important International institutions

UPSC Mains Practice Question : Discuss the role of the United Nations in global peacekeeping, highlighting its successes and failures. Critically analyse the need for Security Council reforms to improve its effectiveness in enforcing peace. (250 Words /15 marks)

Context :

- The article discusses the United Nations' (UN) role in global peacekeeping. It highlights both successes and failures in conflicts like Rwanda, Bosnia, Ukraine, and Gaza.
- It stresses the need for Security Council reform, focusing on limiting veto power and strengthening peace enforcement mechanisms to protect civilians effectively.

Introduction

- "Thou shalt not be a victim, thou shalt not be a perpetrator, but, above all, thou shalt not be a bystander."
- In suggesting this, Yehuda Bauer, Holocaust historian, rested his case wherein the 'bystander' was brought centre-stage and held accountable alongside the perpetrator for crimes against humanity.
- The 'bystander' implies the collective conscience of the world which must work as the weapon of the powerless.
- The United Nations through Chapter VI of its Charter is committed to the peaceful settlement of disputes,
- Chapter VII of the same Charter prescribes the use of armed force with the authorisation of the Security Council in cases of aggression and breaches of peace threatening international security.
- Chapter VIII further exhorts member-states to make available such military or police forces as may be required to establish peace.
 - Chapter VIII goes further and prescribes robust 'regional arrangement' in enforcing peace upon authorisation by the Security Council.

The Challenges of UN Peacekeeping: Hits and misses

- **Erroneous Beliefs About UN Effectiveness:**— in its strongly worded Charter and over 1,00,000 peacekeepers on the ground — to eliminate wars and exploitation from the world.
 - UN political diplomacy and peace operations have established peace in many theatres in seven decades of peacekeeping such as in Cambodia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Angola, Timor Leste, Liberia and Kosovo, to name a few notably successful UN engagements.

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Daily News Analysis

- ➔ **Instances of Failure:** Yet, there have been glaring instances, such as in Rwanda (1994) and Bosnia (1995) where the UN was accused of being a bystander, unwilling or unable to protect non-combatants and vulnerable sections, especially women and children.
- ➔ **Restoration of commitment to civilian protection:** That in subsequent missions, notably Sierra Leone (UNSMIL), Timor Leste (UNMIT), Darfur (UNAMID), South Sudan ((UNMISS) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), the UN brought the protection of civilians centrestage, thus restoring substantially, if not wholly, its commitment to its core values
 - It highlights a tribute to its willingness to use institutional memory in improving peacekeeping to give primacy to protection of civilians.
- ➔ **Current global conflicts:** Today the world is again on the brink of a much bigger war in Europe and West Asia precisely because, over the last three years,
 - the UN has frittered away the dividends of its 'enforceable peacekeeping' between 2006 and 2020.
- ➔ It has been reduced to a 'Bystander' status again in the ongoing conflict in West Asia and the war in Ukraine.

Inadequate UN Response to recent conflicts

- ➔ **The UN's response:** Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the Hamas-led massacre of non-combatants in Israel
 - followed by an even larger offensive of Israel on hapless civilians in Gaza, the UN response in both theatres has failed to call out the perpetrator in no uncertain terms and take decisive action in protecting civilian lives.
 - This has happened despite it having a 1,00,000-strong UN military and police forces at its disposal, as battle ready infantry battalions and as 'standing capacity" at its logistics hub in Brindisi, Italy, that could have been deployed in robust numbers to contain a further loss of life and destruction of cities.
- ➔ **Missed Opportunities for deployment:** There is little point in having such strong forces and yet be a bystander as both conflicts have widened, with the world continuing to witness unprecedented destruction.
 - Even though 1,00,000 UN uniformed forces are deployed in many missions in Africa and elsewhere,
 - it would have done no grave damage to the current missions were over half of them re-deployed in Ukraine, Gaza and West Bank, right between the warring forces, just as they continue to be in Cyprus between the Turks and Greeks or were deployed in Timor Leste, between Indonesian forces and the Timor Leste freedom fighters, the FRETILIN.

A lost chance to act with decision

- ➔ **The need for extraordinary interventions:** The fact that contributing member-countries have committed these forces to not just maintain but also to enforce peace implies their consent to protect civilians regardless of the 'theatre'.

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- Otherwise, these well-armed and well provisioned troops are just biding their time till their rotation and pocketing the green bucks as a tribute.
- ➔ **Role of UN peacekeepers:** Blue helmets must act as blue helmets, impartially and decisively, as in Kosovo (UNMIK 1999-2008) and Timor Leste (UNTAET, UNMIT 1999-2008), with legitimacy to use reasonable force.
 - It needed just over 6,000 UN uniformed personnel (typically, two infantry brigades) in Kosovo and
 - 3,000 UN police personnel (including the lightly-armed formed police units) and an
 - infantry brigade from Australia, under operational command of UN Mission (UNMIT) in Timor Leste to restore peace and bring back the rule of law and an elected government.
- ➔ **Potential Impact of deployment:** A deployment of similar numbers in a similar-sized geographical area of Israel-Gaza-West Bank would have contained the colossal loss of lives that has followed and is making this theatre a killing field with mounting civilian casualties.

There is a need for UNSC reform

- ➔ **Veto Power of the P5:** This also brings us to the subject of much-needed reform in the functioning of the Security Council.
 - The veto power of the P5, the Permanent Security Council members, instead of being a rock of stability for the UN peace operations to stand on, has more often than not acted as a mill-stone around their neck.
- ➔ **Impact of Veto on veace enforcement:** The world has repeatedly witnessed the negative power of veto precisely at a time when 'enforcing peace' has become an urgent necessity in the face of threats to civilian lives.
 - Nearly a million Tutsi civilians were killed in the now infamous Rwanda genocide of 1994-95 even as the French continued to support the Rwandan Army,
 - the main perpetrators of the genocide, and UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) was a bystander.

The case for reform of the Security Council

- ➔ **Two-Pronged Approach to Prevent Future Genocides:** ○ obviate such genocides in future by swift deployment and having a decisive role for the blue helmets rests on a two-pronged approach.
- ➔ **Expansion of Permanent Membership:** The first is for the expansion of Permanent membership of the Security Council to include India (by virtue of it being the most vibrant voice of the global South) and South Africa (for long overdue representation from Africa).
 - The second is to bell the veto cat.

Way Forward: Proposed Reforms for an Expanded Security Council

- ➔ **Structure of the Expanded Council:** In an expanded Council of P7, rather than each member having veto power,
 - contentious issues such as the use of force in West Asia to stop an expansionist Israel or in Ukraine to thwart the expansionist designs of Russia

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- which in the current scenario will be vetoed by the U.S. and Russia, respectively — should have a division of votes of a P7 to decide on UN intervention.
- ➔ **Enabling UN Peace Operations:** Once such a division of votes is in favour of peace operations to thwart hostilities, the deployment of UN standing troops or shifting troops between 'missions' should be enabled under Chapters VII and VIII of the UN Charter, with full executive powers to the UN military and police commanders on the ground.

Conclusion: The Future of UN Peacekeeping

- ➔ If the UN cannot effectively enforce peace despite its vast resources, the future of UN-led peace operations is in jeopardy.
- ➔ There is a need for reform and decisive action if the UN is to fulfil its mandate of maintaining global peace.
- ➔ Otherwise, the UN risks becoming irrelevant in the face of growing global conflicts, and its halls may serve merely for deliberations rather than action.

United Nations Peacekeeping Force

- ➔ The United Nations Peacekeeping Force, established in 1948, is tasked with maintaining peace and security in conflict zones worldwide.
- ➔ It consists of military, police, and civilian personnel from member states, working under UN mandates to prevent violence, protect civilians, and support post-conflict recovery.
- ➔ With over 100,000 uniformed personnel currently deployed across missions, these forces operate under strict impartiality and in challenging environments.
- ➔ They are called "Blue Helmets" because they wear distinctive light blue helmets or berets as part of their uniform, symbolising their neutral and non-combatant role in maintaining peace.