



BAJIRAO IAS ACADEMY

THE HINDU ANALYSIS

17th JANUARY 2026



ANTI-DEFECITION LAW

Justice Verma impeachment

Anti-defection law

One lakh tribal healers as partners in health services

EU leaders to be chief guests at Republic day function

Nipah virus in West Bengal

Justice Verma impeachment

SC rejects Justice Varma's challenge to formation of House inquiry committee

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI



The Supreme Court on Friday rejected a petition by Justice Yashwant Varma challenging the Lok Sabha Speaker's constitution of a committee to inquire into a motion for his removal, underscoring that safeguards for judges cannot paralyse the removal process.

The court said accepting the Allahabad High Court judge's interpretation of the Judges (Inquiry) Act would result in a "disabling consequence", pushing Members of Parliament back to square one.

Justice Varma is facing an inquiry for misbehaviour after sacks of half-burnt currency were allegedly found at his official residential premises after a blaze on the night of March 14, 2025. He was then a judge in the Delhi High

A balance has to be struck between the protection afforded to the judiciary and the effective functioning of the mechanism for removal of a judge triggered by the peoples' representatives, it said.

CONTINUED ON
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Justice Varma's plea against panel rejected

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla admitted the MPs' notice of motion for the removal of Justice Varma on August 12 last year, a day after the Deputy Rajya Sabha Chairman had rejected a separate notice by the Members of his House.

The Deputy Chairman had assumed the duties of then Chairman and Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, who resigned from office on July 21, the very day both notices for removal were submitted by MPs in their respective Houses.

In court, Justice Varma had argued that the Speaker did wrong to "unilaterally" constitute the committee under the Judges (Inquiry) Act. Since the notices were given in the two Houses of Parliament on the same day, both Houses should have admitted them. The High Court judge said the committee ought to have been formed by the Rajya Sabha Chairman and the Lok Sabha Speaker jointly. He referred to the first proviso of Section 3(2) of the Act in his favour.

The judge had contended that the proviso should be read strictly. A loose interpretation would not only mar his reputation, but impact the constitutional safeguards provided to the institution of judiciary, exposing judges to arbitrary or biased removal motions by MPs.

Disagreeing with Justice Varma's reasoning, Justice Datta, who authored the verdict, held the proviso would apply only if notices given on the same day were admitted in both Houses. In the present case, one House had rejected while the other had admitted the notice.

"There is nothing in the Inquiry Act to suggest that rejection of a motion in one House would render the other House incompetent to proceed in accordance with law... The interpretation advanced by the petitioner (J. Varma) of rejection of a notice in one House resulting in the notice automatically failing in the other House would entail consequences of a most serious nature. The Members would be put to square one and the process has to be initiated afresh in either House," Justice Datta reasoned.

The court said a House of Parliament cannot be deprived of its autonomy because the other House chose to reject the notice of motion. After all, the inquiry committee's task was restricted to submission of a report. The ultimate decision of his removal would lie with the MPs.

MID-MARCH 2025



Fire personnel investigating blaze at Justice Varma's official Delhi residence find sacks of partially burnt currency

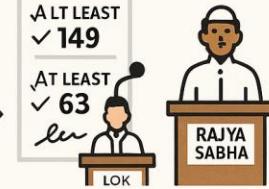


Three-judge in-house inquiry finds 'strong inferential evidence' suggesting judge's control over funds



Three-member statutory committee convened to frame charges, examine witnesses

LATE JULY



Members of Parliament submit impeachment notices against Justice Varma



SUPREME COURT WRIT PETITION

Justice Varma challenges in-house inquiry as "parallel, extra-constitutional" mechanism

REMOVAL OF JUDGES IN THE HIGHER JUDICIARY

While the Constitution does not use the term "impeachment" for judges, it is commonly applied to the removal process under

Article 124 (for Supreme Court judges) and **Article 218** (for High Court judges).

A judge can be removed **only by an order of the President**, following an address by both Houses of Parliament supported by the prescribed special majority.

GROUND FOR REMOVAL

Proved misbehaviour:

Corruption, abuse of power, or conduct unbecoming of a judge.

Incapacity

Physical or mental inability to discharge judicial duties.



Network 18

IMPEACHMENT PROCEEDINGS

- A **removal motion** signed by 100 members (in case of Lok Sabha) or 50 members (in case of Rajya Sabha) is to be given to the Speaker/Chairman.
- If the motion is admitted, then a **three-member committee to investigate** into the charges is constituted.
- If the committee finds the judge to be guilty of the charges (**misbehaviour or incapacity**), the House in which the motion was introduced, can take up the consideration of the motion.

Special majority: Majority of total membership of the House & majority of not less than two thirds members present and voting.

- Once, the House in which removal motion was introduced passes it with **special majority**, it goes to the second House which also has to pass it with a special majority.
- After the motion is passed, an **address** is presented to the President for removal of the judge. The President then passes an order removing the judge.



Anti defection law

Telangana Speaker dismisses pleas by BRS seeking disqualification of 2 MLAs

R. Ravikanth Reddy
HYDERABAD

Telangana Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar dismissed the disqualification petitions filed by the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) against two of its legislators, Chevella MLA Kalle Yadaiah and Banswada MLA Pocharam Srinivas Reddy, who were accused of having switched allegiance to the ruling Congress.

"I have issued orders dismissing the disqualification petitions," the Speaker said, according to official sources.

Following the latest orders, petitions against three other MLAs - Kadriam Srihari, Danam Nandigar, and M. Sanjay Ku-



Following the latest orders, petitions against three other legislators remain pending before the Telangana Assembly Speaker. FILE PHOTO

mar - remain pending before the Speaker.

The Speaker has so far rejected the disqualification

petitions against seven of the 10 BRS legislators facing allegations of defections under the anti-defection law. In December

The BRS approached the Supreme Court alleging that the Speaker was not initiating any action. The top court, on November 17, 2025, issued a contempt notice to the Speaker for not complying with its directive to decide expeditiously on the issue.

'Mockery of Constitution' BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao accused senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy of backing defectors "without shame" and making a mockery of the Constitution at every step.

Earlier, the Speaker had issued notices to 10 MLAs named in the petitions alleging that they defected to the Congress after the 2023 Assembly election.

He alleged that the political pressure exerted by the Congress has "corrupted" the Speaker's institution in the State.

1. Anti-defection law:

- 52nd amendment in 1985 inserted *10th schedule* (anti-defection law)
- Grounds for disqualification are mentioned in *Article 102(2) & 191(2) for MP's and MLA's*

Defected:

1. Elected member (gives up & voting)
2. Independent member
3. Nominated member

Exceptions:

1. Speaker or chairman
2. Party could be merged into another (2/3 majority)

- **Presiding Officer** decides on the question of disqualification
- Issue is – SC interpretation in *G Vishwanathan judgment* in 1996 case (unattached member) → Amar Singh(MP)

Advantages

- Stability and party discipline

Disadvantages

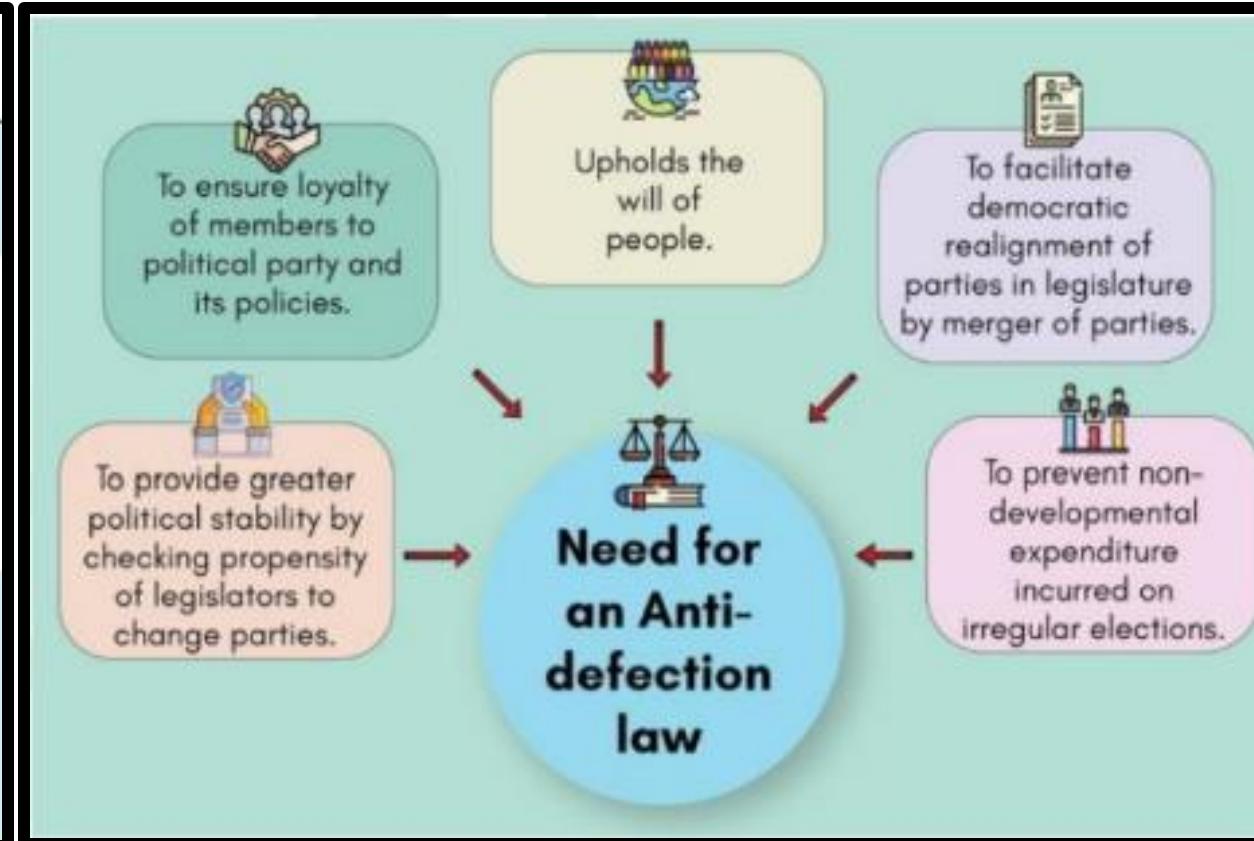
- Members freedom gets affected

'FINISH PROCEEDINGS IN 3 MTHS'

- SC sets **three months as the outer limit** for Speakers to **conclude disqualification proceedings** against defectors
- Recommends that Parliament should amend Constitution to set up a permanent tribunal to decide cases. Tribunal can be **headed by retired SC judge or HC CJ**
- SC emphasises that **ensuring purity of anti-defection law** under

the 10th Schedule is vital to democracy's functioning

- SC decision came in a case related to **Manipur Congress MLA T Shyam Kumar**, who switched to BJP and became a minister after the party formed govt in 2017
- A dozen pleas seeking Shyam's disqualification were filed but Speaker sat over them. SC asks Speaker to **decide in four weeks**



One lakh tribal healers as partners in health services

Union govt. sets goal to formally recognise one lakh tribal healers as 'partners in health services'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union government is aiming at "formally recognising" one lakh tribal healers as "partners in strengthening health services for tribal communities", officials said at a capacity building event for tribal healers held by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs in Hyderabad on Friday.

Addressing the gathering, Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram urged State governments to explore "market linkages and partnerships with FMCG and pharmaceutical companies" to generate job op-

portunities in the domain of traditional medicine.

Mr. Oram said sessions by experts from institutes like AIIMS, World Health Organization, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Health Ministry, and AYUSH Ministry would go a long way in "enhancing technical knowledge and service delivery capacities of tribal healers".

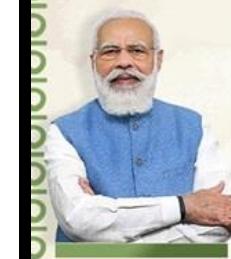
MoU inked

At the event, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs signed a memorandum of understanding with ICMR-Regional Medical Research Centre, Bhubaneswar, to set up the first national tri-

bal health observatory, which will be known as the Bharat Tribal Health Observatory. "This collaboration will institutionalise tribe-disaggregated health surveillance, implementation research, and research-driven disease elimination initiatives in tribal districts with focus on malaria, leprosy, and tuberculosis, addressing a long-standing national gap in tribal-specific health data, analytics, and evidence-based planning," read a statement from the Centre.

Over 400 healers from Scheduled Tribe communities across the country attended the event.

Tribal Health A Priority For Swasth India



Swasthya portal with innovative practices, research briefs, case studies & best practices



Dedicated health cell



Promoting indigenous medicinal knowledge and tribal healers

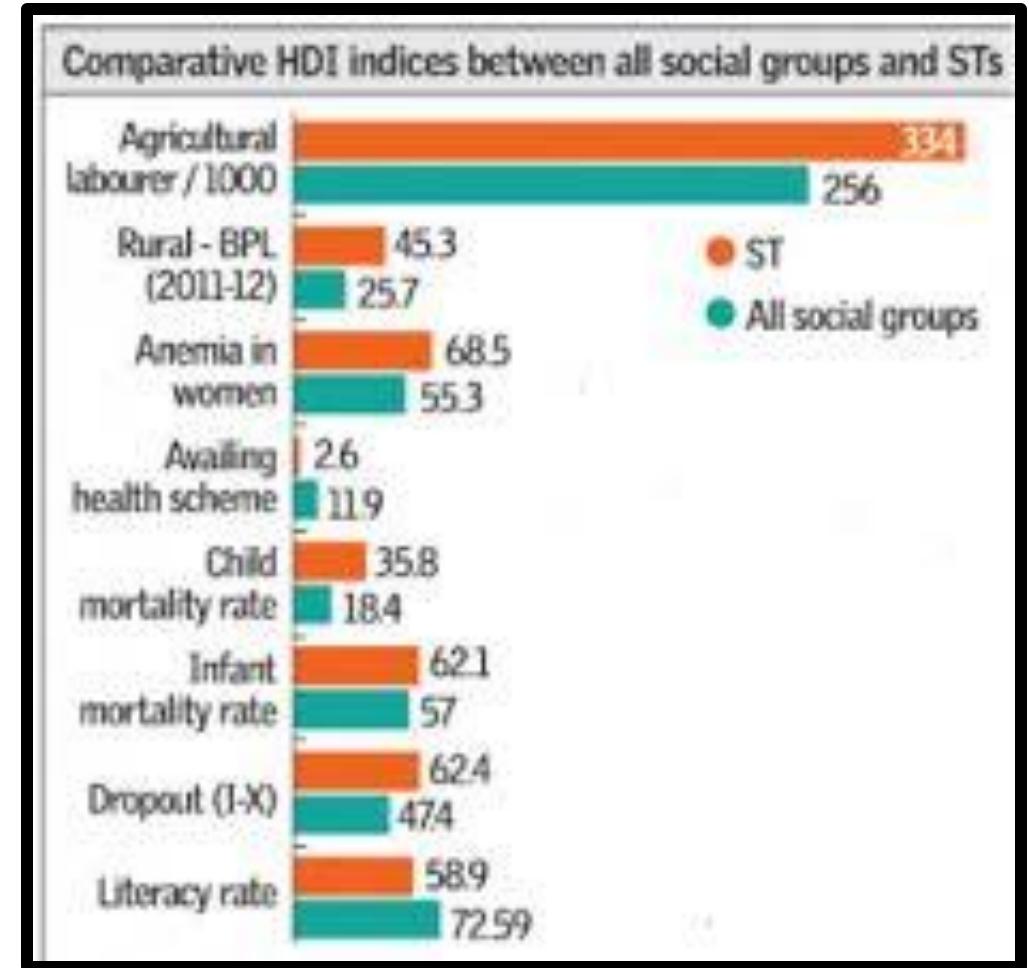
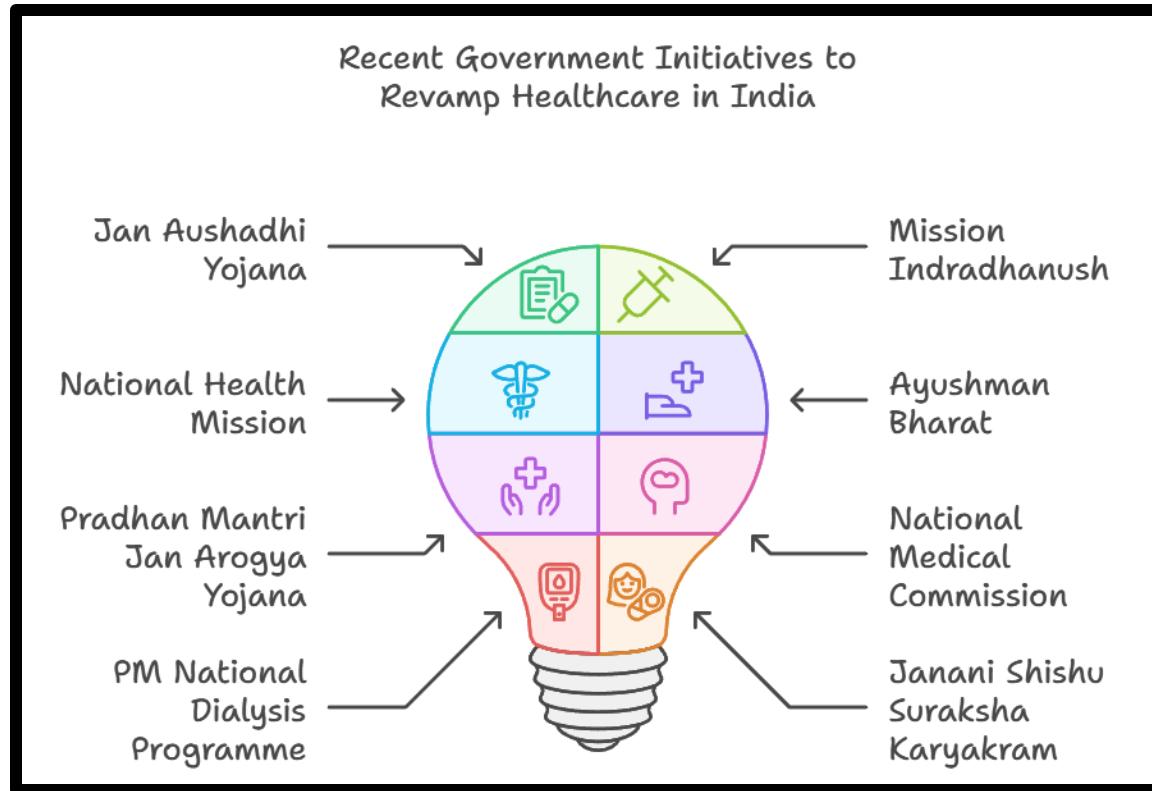


Action plan for prevention of sickle cell disease



Funding to states for basic infrastructure for sickle cell disease





Budget 2026-27 must keep growth momentum

Budget 2026-27 must keep the growth momentum

India faced global headwinds in 2025 but belied fears that America's 50% tariffs would hurt its economy. The resilience of the Indian economy had a lot to do with the government's reformist measures. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi said recently, "2025 will be remembered as a year when India treated reforms as a continuous national mission." Budget 2026-27 can give a fillip to the mission.

India needs to strengthen the domestic levers of growth. This can be done by prioritising growth-enhancing productive capital expenditure and social sector spending, while maintaining the current fiscal consolidation glide path and keeping debt risks contained.

Continue the focus on defence

First, the government should continue the focus on defence, with higher expenditure on the capex. The share of capital outlay in defence should be enhanced to 30% from the budgetary estimate for 2025-26 of 26.4%. The budgetary allocation for the Defence Research and Development Organisation should also be increased by at least ₹10,000 crore. Defence industrial corridors in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have made strides in promoting defence indigenisation and raising defence production. The government should consider establishing an eastern India defence industrial corridor.

Second, private enterprises have played a key role in augmenting defence exports in recent times, contributing nearly 65% of total defence exports in 2024-25. There can be a further boost by setting up a defence export promotion council for enhanced coordination with armed services, their foreign directorates, defence public sector undertakings, private manufacturers, the Ministry of External Affairs, Indian embassies, the Ministry of Defence, and communicate with foreign governments and buyers. This will also help achieve the target of defence exports set at ₹50,000 crore by 2028-29.

Third, a transition toward clean energy, advanced manufacturing, electric mobility,



Jyoti Vilas

is Director General, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)

semiconductors and strategic technologies is driving a demand for critical minerals. The National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM), approved in early 2025 provides a strong strategic foundation to secure these materials. This can be supplemented by a dedicated critical minerals tailings recovery programme under the NCMM, with the purpose of treating tailings recovery. The government should also consider offering dedicated financing for this.

Fourth, exports need a significant policy thrust in the current global environment. The present budgetary allocation for the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products Scheme, at around ₹18,233 crore needs to be raised significantly to make the exports more competitive.

Fifth, India has emerged as the world's leading hub for Global Capability Centres, but its transfer pricing (TP) framework has yet to evolve. The government may consider issuing clear guidance on acceptable TP models for different categories.

Sixth, to accelerate drone adoption, global competitiveness, and exports, the government should consider catalysing scale through targeted financial support, including enhancing the production linked incentive outlay from ₹120 crore to ₹1,000 crore and setting up a ₹1,000 crore drone research and development fund.

Finance credit and tax disputes

Seventh, deepening the corporate bond markets is critical for diversification of finance credit beyond the banking system. The government could consider lowering the qualifying borrowing threshold and include listed and unlisted corporates to widen the issuer base and stimulate bond supply, encourage large corporations to diversify borrowings through market issuances, increase investment caps for insurance companies beyond the current 25% limit and revise the 'Approved Investment' threshold from AA to AA-, enabling prudent allocation into high-quality but lower-rated issuers. It could also permit provident funds to invest in

non-convertible debentures issued by infrastructure investment trusts and real estate investment trusts, enabling long-term capital to support infrastructure aggregation vehicles.

Eighth, measures to address disputes pendency need to be prioritised. The first appellate level in direct tax disputes, the office of the Commissioner of Income Tax (Appeals) or CIT(A), is facing severe pendency. There is a need to prioritise high-pitched assessments, cases with complete submissions, cases covered by jurisdictional High Court or Supreme Court rulings, appeals older than five years, and matters that are chronologically the oldest. The need is a dual-track disposal system: a fast-track for simple or low-value matters and a detailed track for complex or high-value matters. Also, around 40% vacancies at the CIT(A) level need to be filled.

Ninth, newly incorporated companies (even for new companies formed by established Authorised Economic Operator or AEO-accredited groups) are ineligible for certification by the AEO. Removing this restriction for AEO-accredited groups will help enhance trade efficiency and facilitate greater trade.

Tenth, the reforms related to customs tariffs introduced in the last Budget must continue. Further reduction in the customs tariff slabs can help streamline the duty structure, address the issue of inverted duties and benefit trade. Import duties should be calibrated across the value chain to support domestic manufacturing competitiveness and address the inverted duties.

Ensure competitiveness

Budget 2026-27 must focus on sustaining India's growth momentum by deepening competitiveness across sectors and strengthening the domestic engines of expansion. By combining fiscal prudence with unlocking growth potential across industries, ensuring policy certainty and addressing structural bottlenecks, the Budget can crowd in private investment and enhance India's global competitiveness.

The steps to take must include strengthening the domestic levers of growth, policy certainty and sorting out structural bottlenecks

UNION BUDGET 2026-27:

KEY DATES & WHAT TO WATCH

THE TIMELINE

- Jan 28, 2026: Budget Session begins
- Jan 29, 2026: Economic Survey 2025-26 (to be) released
- Feb 1, 2026 (Sunday): Union Budget 2026 (to be) presented
- Feb 13, 2026: End of Phase 1 of Budget Session
- Mar 9 – Apr 2, 2026: Phase 2 of Parliament Session

UNION BUDGET 2026

- To be presented by FM Nirmala Sitharaman
- Her 9th consecutive Budget
- Budget to be presented on Feb 1 despite being a Sunday
- Practice followed consistently since 2017

BIG PICTURE

ECONOMIC SURVEY

- Presented by V Anantha Nageswaran, Chief Economic Adviser
- Acts as the macro roadmap ahead of Budget announcements
- Sets the tone on growth, inflation, fiscal math & reforms



EU leaders to be chief guests at Republic day function

EU leaders to be chief guests at Republic Day function

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh on Friday announced that European Union leaders Antonio Costa, President of the European Council, and Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, will be the chief guests at India's 77th Republic Day celebrations.

In a briefing to presspersons ahead of Republic Day, he said that the 90-minute Republic Day Parade on January 26 along Kartavya Path will be themed around 150 years of 'Vande Mataram', a theme that will also anchor the Beating the Retreat ceremony.

In a symbolic move to end "VIP culture", the Defence Secretary announced that enclosures at the Republic Day Parade will be named after rivers of India, while those at the Beating Retreat ceremony will be named after musical instruments. Earlier, these were referred to as VIP enclo-



European Council president Antonio Costa and European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen.

sures. The parade will feature several first-time military showcases, including the Bhairav Battalion, Shakibaa regiments, Drone Shakti, and a universal rocket launcher.

A major highlight will be the phased battle array format of the Indian Army, with commentary explaining the operational roles of formations and equipment. The aerial component will also be displayed in battle array formation, he said.

For the first time, a European naval contingent will also take part in the parade.

Mr. Singh further said

that the celebrations will open with 100 cultural artists performing with Indian martial musical instruments.

Marching contingents will include the Bhairav contingent in 'Uncha Kadam Taal' and the Ladakh Scouts, while an animal contingent comprising Zanskar ponies, Bactrian camels and dogs will reflect India's diverse operational landscape.

A total of 18 marching contingents and 13 bands will participate in the parade. The flypast will showcase Rafale, Su-30, P-8I, C-130, C-295, MiG-29, Apache, LCH, ALH and Mi-17 aircraft and helicopters in various formations.

'Vande Mataram' will be the central focus of the celebrations, with tableaux from six States and departments highlighting the theme.

Paintings by artist Tejendra Kumar Mitra illustrating verses of 'Vande Mataram' will be displayed at Kartavya Path.

TIMELINE OF INDIA-EU FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (FTA)

India and the European Union (EU) are aiming to conclude an FTA by December, 2025



Oct, 2006

India and the EU recognize need for a trade agreement at the India-EU Summit in Helsinki



Jul, 2022

First round of negotiations completed

Jun, 2007 to 2013

15 rounds of negotiations took place

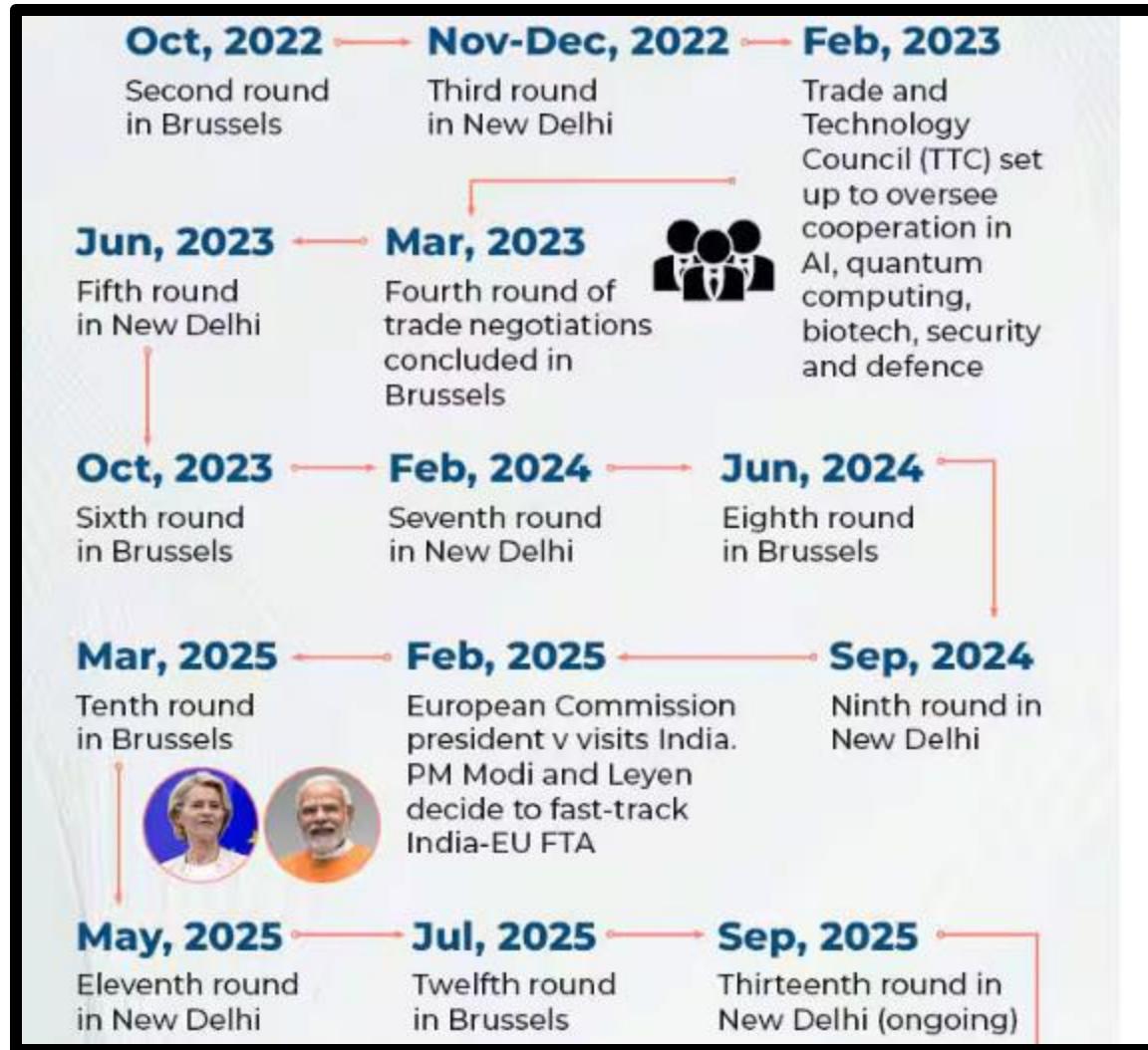


2013 to 2021

Talks stalled due to multiple unresolved issues and mutual disagreements

Jun, 2022

European Commissioner for Economy and Productivity Valdis Dombrovskis and Indian Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal relaunched EU-India negotiations



Nipah Virus cases detected in Bengal

Centre steps in as two Nipah cases detected in Bengal

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

Two healthcare workers suspected of being infected by Nipah virus in Barasat city in North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal are undergoing treatment, officials said on Monday. The cases were detected at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Kalyani in Nadia district on Sunday night.

Patients are under treatment and observation. Contact-tracing and treatment plans have already been made," Chief Secretary Nandini Chakraborty said. Both patients are employed at the hospital they are being treated in. Officials have not disclosed the name of the facility.

Ms. Chakraborty urged people to remain alert and not to panic. She appealed to people to avoid spreading misinformation and follow hygiene precautions. The State government has

launched the helpline numbers 033 23330180; 9874 708858; and 9836 046212 for the public.

Health Secretary Narayan Swaroop Nigam was present at the briefing held by Ms. Chakraborty, but both declined to share details about the patients to protect their privacy.

State government officials said the two patients had travelled to Purba Bardhaman on personal work. Contact-tracing is, therefore, being done across North 24 Parganas, Purba Bardhaman, and Nadia districts. They said the patients had not travelled outside West Bengal in the recent past and that authorities are in touch with their families.

Meanwhile, the Union Health Ministry said a national joint outbreak response team has been deployed to support the State government in containment and public health response measures.

"Given the serious na-



Officials have asked the public not to panic. They have said the patients have not travelled outside West Bengal. FILE PHOTO

ture of Nipah virus infection, which is a zoonotic disease with high mortality and potential for rapid spread, the situation is being handled with utmost priority," a senior Health Ministry official said. The official added that the Ministry immediately contacted the West Bengal government upon receiving the information to review the situation and ensure

coordinate the national response.

Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda has written to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee promising full support from the Centre. "He also spoke to the Chief Minister over telephone and reiterated the Centre's commitment to extend all necessary assistance to the State in managing the situation," an official source said.

The Centre said it is providing comprehensive technical, logistical and operational support, including laboratory services, enhanced surveillance, case management, infection prevention and control measures, and expert guidance.

Central guidelines on the disease have been shared with the State Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP). The Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC) at the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Delhi, has been activated to

Ms. Banerjee visited the hospital late on Sunday night, sources said.

(With inputs from Bindu Shajan Perappadan)

What is Nipah virus?

NIPAH VIRUS (NIV) INFECTION IS A NEWLY EMERGING ZOONOSIS THAT CAUSES SEVERE DISEASE IN BOTH ANIMALS AND HUMANS



NiV first identified in 1998 during an outbreak in Malaysia



Fruit bats are natural hosts of NiV

PREVIOUS OUTBREAKS IN INDIA

Jan-Feb, 2001 Siliguri (WB)

Cases: 66

Deaths: 45

68%

April, 2007 Nadia (WB)

Cases: 5

Deaths: 5

Fatality rate

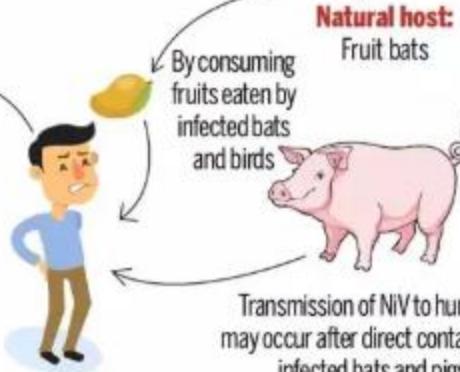
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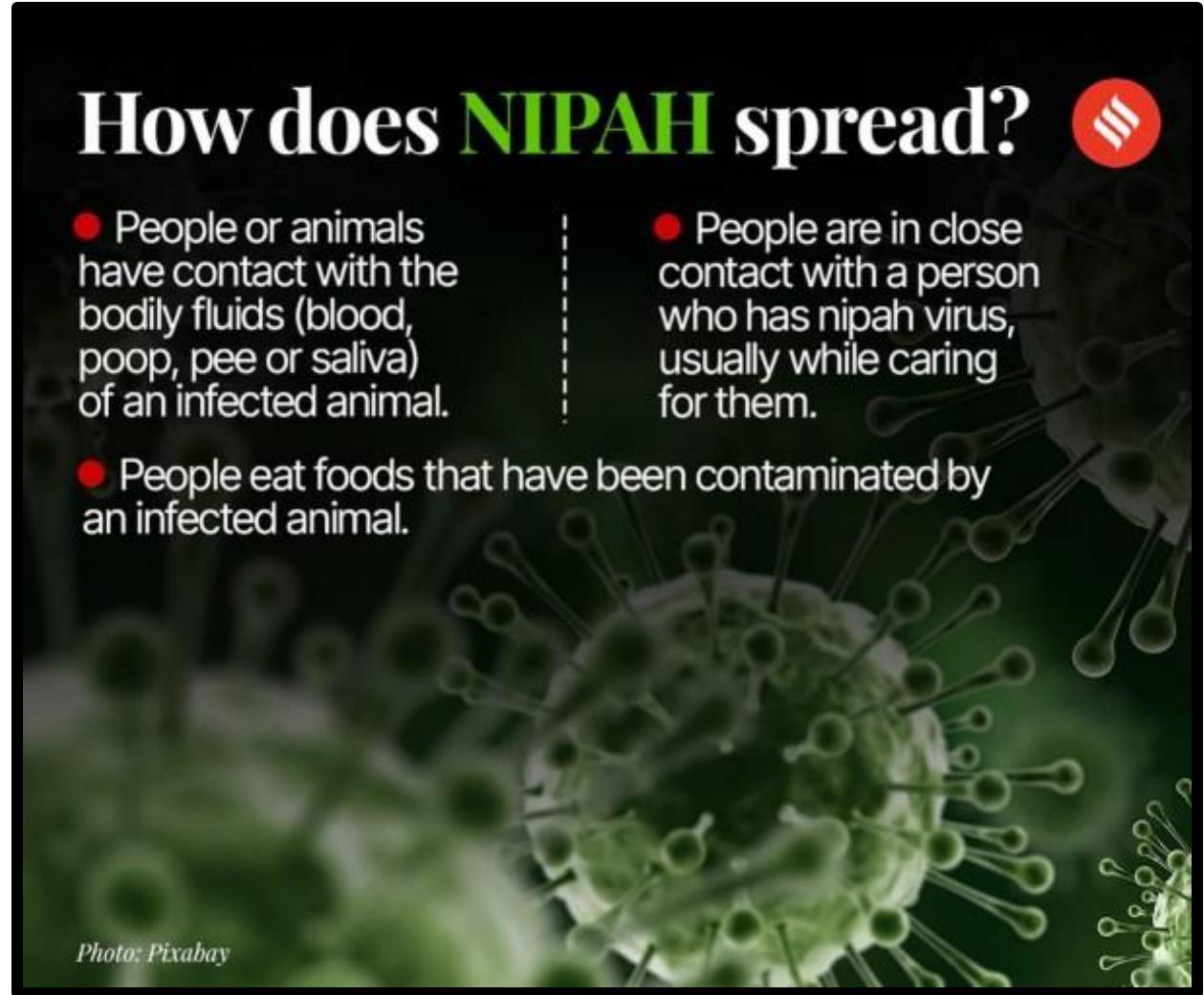
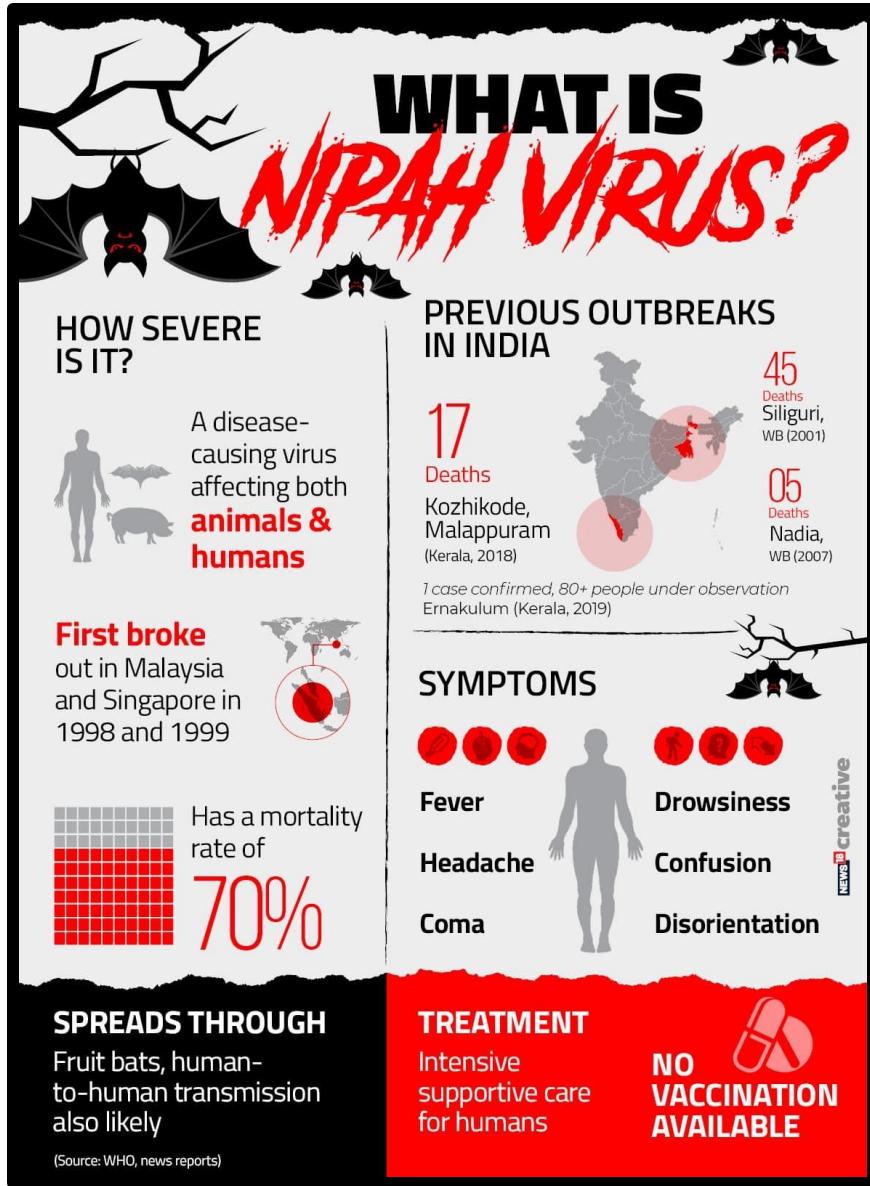
HOW IT IS TRANSMITTED



Through contact with other NiV-infected people



Transmission of NiV to humans may occur after direct contact with infected bats and pigs





Thank you

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