Resubmit enumeration form: ECI to ousted voters

ASDD electors in seven States, Union Territories can seek inclusion in poll rolls by resubmitting enumeration forms; officials are directed to display fresh lists of excluded voters at polling stations

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

Voters marked as Absent, Shifted, Dead and Duplicate (ASDD) in the seven States and Union Territories where the special intensive revision (SIR) is under way can submit the enumeration form again to get their names included in the electoral rolls, instead of having to use Form 6, which is meant for registration of first-time voters.

These electors were marked as absent because their enumeration forms had been issued but not received back, resulting in their exclusion from the draft electoral rolls during the ongoing SIR exercise.

The Election Commission of India's (ECI) directive comes after the Supreme Court, while hearing a petition filed by activists Anjali Bhardwaj and Amrita Johri on October 28 against the deletion of voters during the SIR in Delhi, asked the Commission why the deleted voters were being asked to use Form 6 for re-inclusion in the electoral rolls and why Form 8 could not be used. In a directive to the Chief Electoral Officers of Delhi, Maharashtra, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Telangana, and Nagaland on Friday, the ECI said booth-wise lists of all electors marked as ASDD, whose enumeration forms were not received back and who could not be included in the draft electoral roll during the ongoing SIR, should be displayed afresh on the notice boards of the respective polling stations. The lists should also mention the probable reasons for the non-inclusion of their names.

Partially filled enumeration forms for all such ASDD electors will also be generated afresh in the Electoral Registration Officer dashboard in ECINET.

Electors who have not shifted their residence can submit their duly filled-in enumeration forms along with an enclosed statement, mentioning the reason as to why they could not submit their forms earlier.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 8

A second chance

The ECI allows Absent, Shifted, Dead, and Duplicate-marked voters in seven States/U.T. to resubmit enumeration forms

- The directive covers Delhi, Maharashtra, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Telangana, and Nagaland
- Polling stations will redisplay excluded voters' names and probable reasons for exclusion
- Voters must explain why they missed the earlier deadline; those who moved within the State must provide their new address



- Those who have already submitted Form 6 need not file an enumeration form again

Ousted voters can use enumeration form: ECI

Those who have shifted residence within the State shall submit the Enumeration Form along with the statement enclosed, indicating their new address and the Assembly Constituency.

Till now, voters whose names were missing from the draft rolls had to submit Form 6 to re-enter the electoral rolls. Form 6 includes a declaration that the said applicant has not been registered as a voter elsewhere. This had led to concerns among many regarding the legality of the process.

The ECI clarified that electors who have already submitted Form 6 need not submit the enumeration form with the statement afresh.

Shortly after the ECI issued the directive, Ms. Bharadwaj and Ms. Johri welcomed the move. "We believe this is an important step in addressing large-scale exclusions caused during SIR.

The provision to re-assign the old EPIC numbers is important as it will ensure preservation of voters' historical record of being an existing voter," they said.

GS 2: Polity

Key Pointers:

- Who are ASDD electors?
- What corrective measures has ECI directed?
- What is Special Intensive Revision (SIR)?
- What is ECINET?
- Why was the use of Form 6 controversial?

OBC creamy layer ruling will not alter past allocations: SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday clarified that its March 11, 2026 judgment, upholding a 1993 Office Memorandum that excluded parental salary and agricultural income from the income/wealth test for determining OBC non-creamy layer status, did not call for a sweeping revision of service allocations or seniority across successive recruitment years.

A Bench of Justices P.S. Narasimha and R. Mahadevan, in its order, said the Union government, represented by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, had erred in assuming that a "retrospective implementation of the March 11 judgment would have far-reaching consequences for recruitment, service and cadre allocation, seniority and admissions to Higher Educational Institutions".

In a series of applications, the Centre had expressed apprehensions that a retrospective application of the court's verdict on the assessment of creamy-layer status would unsettle the completed selection process and prejudice candidates. Mr. Mehta had taken the case of the Civil Services Examination (CSE) 2025, of which the results had been announced five days prior to the judgment on March 6.

> No direction was issued for the retrospective reopening of concluded selections, appointments or service allocations so as to affect the rights of persons who were not parties to the proceedings
>
> SUPREME COURT



The government had argued the "potential impact" of the judgment on more than 6.69 lakh reserved vacancies, including 3.7 lakh OBC vacancies, filled over the preceding 10 years across various government departments and public institutions, as well as the consequential effects on seniority, pay, promotional prospects and the Foundation Course for CSE-2025 candidates.

Addressing these apprehensions, the court made it clear that the judgment "cannot be construed as directing a general revision of service allocations or seniority across successive recruitment years, nor does it confer individual relief upon persons who were not parties to the original proceedings".

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 8

'Creamy layer ruling will not alter past allocations'

The Supreme Court clarified that although the result of the Civil Service Examination 2025 was declared on March 6, services had still not been allocated to the successful candidates. It said that since the process of allocation was pending, there would be no reasonable justification to defer the implementation of the March 11 judgment.

It said the creamy layer principle, as interpreted in the judgment, would govern the allocation of services of OBC candidates selected through the Civil Service Examination 2025.

Justice Mahadevan clarified that the March 11 judgment had determined only the rights of the parties (candidates) who approached the Supreme Court.

Setting the record straight

"We find no observation or direction [in the March 11 judgment] requiring the Union government to revisit appointments already made, revise the seniority of any person, or undertake any selection, appointment or service allocation exercise afresh. No direction was issued for the retrospective reopening of concluded selections, appointments or service allocations so as to affect the rights of persons who were not parties to the proceedings," Justice Mahadevan, who authored the order, set the record straight.

The judgment had held that the candidates who approached the apex court, represented by advocate Shashank Ratnoo, fell within the non-creamy layer of the OBC category and were clearly entitled to the benefit of reservation together with consequential placement and allotment of posts in the selection processes in which they participated.

"The grant of such benefit shall not, by itself, operate to the detriment of the seniority of any other person or entail the reopening of selections or appointments already concluded... The ratio laid down in the judgment shall not, by itself, furnish a ground for reopening selections or appointments already concluded prior to the judgment dated March 11, 2026," the court reiterated.

GS 2: Polity

Key Pointers:

- What is creamy layer principle in OBC reservation?
- Article 16(4) of the constitution
- Indra Sawhney v. Union of India (1992)
- What was the March 11, 2026 judgment about?
- What protection has the Court provided to previously appointed candidates?

Epic failures

The electoral roll cannot be used to determine welfare beneficiaries

Union Panchayati Raj Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh's statement that voter identity cards, with biometric authentication, will replace Aadhaar as the basis for identifying beneficiaries and making payments under his Ministry's schemes runs contrary to existing laws and regulations. Essentially, the electoral roll, prepared in several States through the flawed Special Intensive Revision (SIR) by the Election Commission of India (ECI), will become the dataset to vet the identities of beneficiaries. This contradicts the Supreme Court's May 27 judgment on the Bihar SIR and its observations while hearing petitions against West Bengal's orders removing people deleted during the SIR from the Public Distribution System and the Annapurna Yojana. The Court held that the ECI may undertake only a "limited enquiry" into citizenship to decide who belongs on the electoral roll, and that "any action taken pursuant thereto is confined to electoral consequences alone". The consequence of deletion from the rolls, it said, is "correspondingly limited" to a person's place on the roll and their right to vote. The Court also called the EPIC "a derivative document, issued on the basis of inclusion in the electoral roll", and held that relying on it to verify that very roll would defeat the exercise. It is ironic that Mr. Singh now wants this "derivative document" to be the determinant of welfare benefits.

Not every citizen is an eligible voter, and tying benefits to the electoral roll is illogical and also cruel. In West Bengal, lakhs were deleted from the rolls, many for dubious "logical discrepancies". In the appeals heard for reinstatement, 93% resulted in the restoration of names by September 2026, pointing to massive pre-election disenfranchisement. The Court has stated that it is yet to adjudicate on the legality of the ECI's "logical discrepancies" method. The SIR was designed by the ECI to restrict enrolment through stringent residency criteria; thus, itinerant voters had to prove their eligibility. The Opposition, civil society and even some of the BJP's allies have objected to this, but the BJP refuses to acknowledge the SIR's flaws. This is partly because it has benefited from disenfranchisement – as in West Bengal. But the Minister's remarks suggest another reason. The BJP-led coalition sees the pruned electoral rolls as a way to limit welfare, especially at a time when growth in tax revenues has slowed because of the Centre's policies. Inordinately delaying the Census, changing the procedure to appoint Election Commissioners, who then run an exercise that disenfranchises millions by design, and now, using the resultant rolls to decide who gets welfare, all cut at the heart of the painstakingly built constitutional welfare state. The sooner the Court decides the petitions against the SIR, and reiterates that its rolls cannot be used to curtail welfare, the better.

GS 2: Polity

Key Pointers:

- Why is using electoral rolls for welfare delivery problematic?
- Why did the SC call EPIC a derivative document?
- Public distribution system
- Annapurna Yojana
- Functions of ECI
- How can linking welfare benefits to electoral rolls affect vulnerable groups?

The struggle for justice is indivisible



Brinda Karat
Senior leader of the Communist Party of India (Marxist)

From Panna to Delhi, the fight against displacement and disenfranchisement has a common thread — a struggle against state repression and the systematic erosion of a citizen's constitutional rights

In the district jail in Panna, in Madhya Pradesh, a 24-year-old woman walked into the Superintendent's office, her bright eyes alight as she stretched out her hands to greet us. She is Divya Ahirwar, an elected ward councillor from a Scheduled Caste-reserved seat, who has been in jail since September 27 on a fabricated charge of attempted murder. She has now been granted bail by the High Court of Madhya Pradesh in Jabalpur. Along with Amit Bhatnagar, founder of the Jai Kisan Sangathan, Divya has been at the forefront of a movement seeking justice for thousands of Adivasi and Dalit families facing displacement because of three projects in the State's Panna and Chhatarpur districts. Amit, who undertook a hunger strike lasting several weeks, has also faced arrest.

The three projects are the Majhgaya dam, the Runjh dam and the Ken-Betwa river-linking project. These are distinct projects, with different administrative histories and varying scales of displacement. But they share a common thread: the flagrant violation of the rights of project-affected families. The project sites have become centres of intense repression and brave resistance. The conflict raises fundamental questions about the power equations between the state, the class interests it represents and those against whom that power is exercised.

We fight to save the Constitution. Yet, under this very Constitution, every minute of every day, somewhere in India, the state runs its savage bulldozer over the constitutional rights of citizens simply because they are poor. It crushes lives, livelihoods and the very means of survival. Such is its power that even the sound of its movement is silenced. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar said that the Constitution is only as good or as bad as those responsible for implementing it. A few days spent in these villages reveal the profound truth of his words.

Water projects, displaced lives

Our team from the CPI(M) and the Adivasi Adhikar Rashtriya Manch met hundreds of affected families. The first two projects are medium irrigation projects undertaken by the Madhya Pradesh government and are now nearing completion. Started more than a decade ago, they have left hundreds of affected households, most of them Adivasi, still waiting for fair compensation.

Take Banharikala village, for instance. The backwaters of the Majhgaya dam had already begun flooding homes and fields, submerging standing crops. With no shelter for their livestock, residents were forced to sell their cows and goats at distress prices. The government initially offered some families ₹5 lakh as a "package". Sustained protests eventually forced it, as late as December 2025, to increase the package to ₹12.5 lakh.

Section 38(1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013, mandates that, for irrigation projects, "the rehabilitation and resettlement shall be completed six months prior to submergence of the lands acquired".

These requirements were wilfully disregarded. An incomplete survey resulted in the underestimation of compensation for land, houses and trees. The government refuses to revise the 2018 cut-off date, despite implementation taking place eight years later. Children who were minors then have since become adults, yet are denied their legally mandated separate compensation entitlements as adult members of a household. Scores of families have received nothing. The uncertainty has gripped the village: children have dropped out of school and families are deep in debt. None of this need have happened had the government acted according to the law. The same situation prevails in most villages affected by the Majhgaya and Runjh dams.

Residents have responded with the now well-known *chita andolan*, or funeral pyre movement, in which they lie on funeral pyres, put their heads in nooses or stand waist-deep in water. Their slogan is: "*Nyay do ya maar do* (Give us justice or kill us"). The state has sent battalions of police and cut off electricity. It was here that Divya was dragged and beaten by dozens of police personnel, most of them men. Her clothes were torn, and she was nearly stripped in an attempt to break the movement. But the villagers, many of whom were also beaten and arrested, stand firm.

The third project is the controversial Ken-Betwa river-linking project, which involves constructing a 96.7 metre-high (about 317 feet high) dam near Daudhan village on the Ken. Its stated objective is to bring water to the perennially dry areas of Bundelkhand and neighbouring Uttar Pradesh. However, experts have questioned its viability and environmental consequences.

Judicial scrutiny

In 2019, a central empowered committee constituted by the Supreme Court of India in response to petitions challenging the project delivered a scathing indictment of the official clearances. It questioned whether the Ken had sufficient water, pointed out that 6,000 hectares of the 9,000 hectares required for the project was forest land, including a substantial part of the Panna Tiger Reserve, and warned of the serious environmental consequences of felling an estimated 2.3 million trees. Strangely, the case has remained virtually frozen in the Court since 2019, even as the project moves ahead. The tender was awarded to Hyderabad-based NCC, listed as one of the Bharatiya Janata Party's electoral bond donors. By the time the courts turn their attention to the issue, the project and the resulting submergence could have become a *fait accompli*.

Around 8,000 Adivasi families across 22 villages are directly affected. The Forest Rights Act (FRA) is explicit: under Section 4(5), forest dwellers cannot be evicted until the recognition and verification of their forest rights are complete. Yet, not a single village has had these rights recognised. Community forest rights have been ignored, and gram sabha consent has not been obtained. Four villages lie within the core tiger reserve and are additionally covered by the Wildlife (Protection) Act, which mandates voluntary relocation. There is nothing remotely voluntary about the process being imposed on these communities. Adivasis have lived here for generations. As in the Niyamgiri case, where the Court protected ancestral Adivasi land from being taken over without gram sabha consent, the land here is far more than an economic asset. Sacred groves and places of worship dedicated to village deities and ancestors, integral to Adivasi identity and culture, will be obliterated.

Displacement from three villages has already begun. We visited the so-called resettlement colony, where the promised land-for-land rehabilitation has proved a travesty. Families have been allotted plots of stony land, measuring just 20 feet by 50 feet, without infrastructure, water or even a nearby school. Instead of land titles, families showed us two-inch slips of paper bearing their plot numbers and an illegible signature purportedly that of the Tehsildar, meant to serve as a land title. Within a few months, 10 families have already received notices to move again because the land on which they were resettled is needed for a canal. The scrap of paper issued as a land title has proved worthless.

Across the country, governments are waging an undeclared war on Adivasis. From Simjhali in Odisha and the coal-affected Adivasi villages of the Santhal Parganas to Chhatarpur and Panna, the pattern is the same. Those who have lived in and protected these forests for generations are treated as enemies of the forests, all in the name of development.

The many struggles

On October 2, 2026, the protest at Jantar Mantar in Delhi was against the assault on the right to vote, guaranteed under Article 326 of the Constitution. Here, the protest is against an assault on the right to life itself, guaranteed under Article 21. The two struggles are closely linked. In one instance, selected voters, most of them poor, women, minorities, displaced persons and the homeless, are branded as *ghuspetias* and their right to vote eliminated. In the other, thousands of Adivasis are labelled encroachers and denied their basic constitutional and legal rights. In both cases, what is at stake is citizenship and the struggle against being stripped of the rights of a citizen.

The demands of the numerous struggles taking place across the country are different. But their core is common: defending the Constitution and the struggle to save it from the assault of those in power. The demands for Divya's release, justice for Randal Sequeira and Laxmi Naik, and for the hundreds of Adivasis facing false cases must resonate in the many Jantar Mantars emerging across India. The struggle for justice is indivisible. When this principle is translated into action, it will shake the citadels of class-based power.

GS 2: Polity

Key Pointers:

- Conflict between infrastructure-led development and constitutional protection of vulnerable communities
- Which three projects have triggered displacement-related protests?
- Section 38(1) of the RFCTLARR Act, 2013
- How does the Forest Rights Act, 2006 protect Adivasi communities?
- Why is Gram Sabha consent important in forest diversion and displacement?
- What is the significance of the Niyamgiri judgment?

Demonetisation and the health costs of cash shortages

Anindya Chakrabarti
Associate Professor of Economics at the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad

Chirantan Chatterjee
Professor of Economics at U-Sussex and a 2025 Founding Fellow of the Royal Economic Society

Samarth Gupta
Assistant Professor of Economics at the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta

On November 8, 2016, 86% of India's currency by value was demonetised at four hours' notice, ostensibly to curb black money and counterfeit currency and promote digital payments. Nearly 99.3% of the withdrawn notes returned to the banking system, according to the Reserve Bank of India. Research has shown that the exercise caused a temporary contraction in money supply.

Kenya in 2019 and Nigeria in 2022-23 experienced similar cash shortages after currency withdrawals. As digital public infrastructure expands, an important question remains: how do sudden cash shortages affect access to essential goods such as medicines?

Acute versus chronic, a natural lens

This is the focus of forthcoming research by these writers in the *Journal of Economics and Management Strategy*. The All India Organisation of Chemists and Druggists (AIOCD) database was used using monthly sales of every stock keeping unit (SKU) across 805 pharmaceutical firms, 31 regions and 18 illness categories. It is the first product-region-time level dataset used to study demonetisation. Building on sound economic theory of search costs, the writers theorised that drugs for chronic conditions, purchased monthly, compel consumers to find the cheaper options. Drugs for acute conditions such as infections, pain, gastro-intestinal are bought due to unanticipated onset for a short duration, with less opportunity to search. The writers borrowed these ideas on search costs from Alan Sorensen and his influential *Journal of Political Economy* study published in 2000.

When a household faces a sudden cash constraint, which purchase is more likely to be deferred? The expensive, unplanned, unsearched item. That is what was found in the data. Using a difference-in-differences design accounting for dynamic region, company and illness variations at the molecule level, it was found that sales volume for acute drugs fell by nearly 3.6% and value by 3.1% relative to chronic drugs. This was not driven by products exiting the market or by price hikes - the number of unique SKUs and inter-quartile range of prices remained unchanged. It was a pure intensive margin contraction.

Research shows the hidden public health costs of India's demonetisation and the importance of liquidity

Two alternative explanations did not hold. Prescription data from IQVIA, a global provider of health information and analytics, and outbreak data from the Government of India's Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) showed no break in prescription trends or acute disease outbreaks around the time of demonetisation.

The paper by these writers overall complements the literature that has found small or zero elasticity of health care to wealth shocks in insured, developed economies in prior work. In a setting such as India with high out-of-pocket expenditure, cash can essentially be binding for essential purchases.

Lessons for the future

Overall, the study highlights global lessons for any economy contemplating such measures. First, while the stated objectives for currency replacement may differ, cash dependence is similar. Das *et al.* ask whether going cashless made one tax-rich, finding only modest tax gains in the Indian experiment in a paper in the *Journal of Public Economics*. Understanding welfare costs upfront is also important. The implication is not about intent – which was to address legitimate policy concerns – but about distributional impact. Essential medicines behaved differently from other goods. Search costs matter for essential goods. The test by these writers covering product characteristics, inventory-channel, physician behaviour and price rigidity ruled out several competing explanations. While observational data cannot rule out all mechanisms, the search-cost interpretation is consistent across checks. It complements work on price elasticity and transparency.

Second, a public health buffer helps. Complementing AIOCD with HMIS public health centre data, we find areas with lower public health infrastructure saw larger declines.

Physician behaviour and disease incidence did not change, but poorer, under-served regions consumed fewer acute drugs. Thus, PHC density mitigated the shock. Post-2016, India has significantly expanded Jan Aushadhi Kendras, AB-PMJAY, and UPI-based payment options at pharmacies, which improve resilience for future shocks. Explicitly incorporating a health-sector protocol – for instance, ensuring credit lines or digital payment facilitation at pharmacies – during any large-scale currency operation would be prudent. Prior literature on out-of-pocket payments underscores this.

Need for better data

Third, there needs to be better data to measure welfare. The analysis by these writers captures drug sales, but not household-level health outcomes due to data limitations. Ten years later, building linked consumption-health datasets and, where such extreme instruments are considered, requiring a pre-registered evaluation protocol would enable more precise causal estimation.

On November 14, 2016, an economist wrote: "ATM lines are long, but PayTM is up. Should be fine." For many, it was. Digital adoption did accelerate as economists like Crouzet *et al.* have documented and counterfeit stock was reduced overnight. For the mother in Bihar however, deciding whether to buy Amoxycillin that week, the data suggests it was harder.

Liquidity, these writers' findings suggest, is an economic determinant of health. Recognising this can help make future monetary and public health policy more resilient and inclusive.

GS 3: Economy

Key Pointers:

- What was the impact of demonetisation on India's money supply?
- How did demonetisation affect access to essential medicines?
- What is the significance of Primary Health Centres (PHCs)?
- Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana

As high as 31% ethanol found in petrol samples

Rashmi Patil
BENGALURU

Petrol sold by major oil companies in Karnataka contained ethanol far above the prescribed 20% level, in some cases as high as 31.2%, the State government has claimed, raising questions about transparency in the ethanol-blended petrol being sold to consumers across the country.

The samples in question were taken recently by the Department of Legal Metrology from Bengaluru Urban, Bengaluru Rural, Kolar, Chikkaballapura, Tumakuru and Dakshina Kannada districts, said Karnataka Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Rizwan Arshad on Friday. Petrol samples from major oil marketing companies (OMCs), Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL), recorded ethanol blend percentages of 31.2% and 30.5%, respectively. Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), Nayara and Shell petrol samples revealed ethanol blends of 26.5%, 26.1% and 25.5%, respectively, he said.

Fuelling concerns

Sample from OMC outlets	Fuel	Ethanol % in samples collected*
IOCL	Petrol (Motor Spirit)	31.2, 20.8
HPCL	Petrol (MS-Power)	30.5
HPCL	Petrol (MS)	27.0, 22.4
BPCL	Petrol (MS)	24.2, 22.6
BPCL	Petrol (MS-Speed)	26.5
MRPL	Petrol (MS)	19.2
Nayara	Petrol (MS)	26.1, 20.6
Shell	Petrol (MS)	25.5, 13.5

Source: Department of Food and Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Karnataka | *Multiple values indicate separate samples of fuel collected from different outlets operated by the same OMC.

'No transparency'

Mr. Arshad said the samples were initially submitted to the in-house laboratories of IOCL and BPCL. But he claimed the test reports issued by these laboratories did not disclose the ethanol content in the fuel, despite it being one of the prescribed testing parameters. "This raises serious concerns about transparency on the part of the oil majors and what they are hiding from consumers," he said.

"The Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Karnataka, later got the same samples tested at laboratories recognised by the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) and the International Organisation for Standardisation. These reports have revealed higher ethanol blends," Mr. Arshad said.

However, the three State-owned oil-marketing companies stated the tests were not conducted in accordance with prescribed statutory and technical procedures.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 8

GS 3: Economy

Key Pointers:

- What is the controversy regarding ethanol-blended petrol?
- Why has the issue raised concerns about transparency?
- What is E20 petrol?
- Why can excessive ethanol blending affect vehicles?

As high as 31% ethanol found in petrol samples

Citing discrepancies with findings from their own quality monitoring, they urged the State government to share the complete counterpart sampling documentation, outlet-wise laboratory reports and details about the adopted testing methodology, and samples for retesting.

Mr. Arshad said 99% of India's over 35 crore vehicles are not built for ethanol blends of more than 20%, and the risk is not limited to old vehicles."Vehicles sold after April 2023 have been certified only up to E20. With lower-ethanol-blend petrol withdrawn from nearly one lakh fuel stations, consumers have been left with no alternative," he said.

The Minister provided copies of six lab test reports from Shriram Research Institute, Bengaluru, a non-profit unit of Shriram Tilak Dhar Research Foundation. All six reports showed ethanol blends beyond the permissible 20%. Assuming a 10% mileage loss at ₹100 a litre, he said the hidden loss to consumers would amount to around ₹62,000 crore, based on India's annual fuel consumption of 6,200 crore litres.

The Minister claimed that, after factoring in damage and repair costs due to higher blends, the loss would be around ₹1 lakh crore, but did not elaborate on how he arrived at this figure.

'Penalty for excess ethanol blending'

Mr. Arshad demanded that the Union government penalise OMCs for "over-blending", even as the Karnataka government would continue to conduct these tests and release their findings. "Every fuel station in the country should be mandated to display the ethanol blend percentage, allowing consumers to choose between the range of blends available," he said.

The Minister demanded that the Union government establish an E20 spoilage fund and compensate every consumer whose vehicle has been damaged through a time-bound claims process, with damage certified by authorised service centres.

Union govt. mandates weekly disclosure of rice and paddy stocks

New norms to prevent hoarding and black marketing will remain in force till Jan. 31; govt. lets 5 southern States impose stock limits as prices climb

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

With rice prices rising due to a deficient and uneven monsoon, the Centre on Friday directed traders, retailers, wholesalers, processors and millers across the country to declare their rice and paddy stocks.

Under a November 6 order, stocks under six categories must be declared – Basmati rice, non-Basmati premium rice, non-Basmati rice, parboiled rice, broken rice and paddy. Every unit holding stocks will have to update details on the Food Stock Portal (foodstock.dfpd.gov.in) every Friday, the Food Ministry said in a statement.

Units that are not registered on the portal or that violate stock limits will face action under Sections 6 and 7 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955.

In a separate letter, the Centre has given its consent to Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Telangana to impose stock limits on paddy and rice through control orders.

The limits will remain in force till January 31, 2027. The Centre and States will monitor implementation to ensure adequate availability, and prevent hoarding and black marketing, an official statement said.

To improve availability, the Centre is allocating additional rice stocks to NAFED, NCCF and Kendriya Bhandar for sale as Bharat Rice, and has asked them to explore distribution channels, especially in the southern States.

The Centre has also doubled the target for rice sales through e-auction under the Open Market Sale Scheme (Domestic) for 2026-27 from 25 lakh tonnes to 50 lakh tonnes. Around 25 lakh tonnes had been sold to private parties by October 31, compared to 11 lakh tonnes in the same period of last year.



To improve availability, the Centre is allocating extra rice stocks to NAFED, NCCF and Kendriya Bhandar for sale as Bharat Rice. V. RAJU

GS 3: Economy

Key Pointers:

- Why has the Centre mandated weekly disclosure of rice and paddy stocks?
- Sections 6 and 7 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955
- Open Market Sale Scheme (Domestic) – OMSS(D)
- Functions of FCI

SC says curbs on vehicles and construction are 'failed tools'

Court asks Centre if it has scientific solutions to pollution; govt. says CAQM measures not complete failure; urbanisation, festive activities, stubble burning make pollution control uphill task, it says

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday termed measures such as banning vehicles and construction to curb air pollution in the national capital as "old, tried and failed tools".

A Bench, headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, asked the Union government and the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) if they had any "significant scientific method other than stopping vehicles and stopping construction".

Additional Solicitor-General Aishwarya Bhati, arguing for the CAQM and the Centre, said that it would not be completely true to call such measures a "complete failure". Ms. Bhati said emergency and pre-emptive measures like Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) have at least been able to arrest air pollution at sustainable levels.

"For us, it is either 'severe' and 'very severe'. 'Very poor' is normal. We are already touching 400. Let us not talk about a utopia where the AQI would become 100 or less," Justice Joymalya Bagchi, on the three-judge Bench, addressed the CAQM.

> Any vehicle can come to Delhi... You cannot monitor what kind of fuel is being used, what kind of pollution they are generating. What is the overall condition of these vehicles? Is there a mechanism to check? But even if you tell them to go back, the damage would already have been done
>
> JUSTICE JOYMALYA BAGCHI
> Supreme Court judge



"But every human activity, particularly in a festive season, will cause pollution. How much can we stop? Delhi invites and attracts talent and search for livelihoods from across the country. There is also a little stubble burning. In many ways, we are only doing management. But human activities have expanded so fast that we are still catching up to it," Ms. Bhati said.

The exchange in open court happened merely hours before the national capital graduated to GRAP-III restrictions with the air quality index rising over 400. The court said the "commodification and commercialisation" of Deepavali by affluent, status-driven people has worsened air pollution. The poorest sections of the population, who cannot afford the splurge, often bear the worst consequences.

The CJI said it was "free for all" on the capital's roads. Even improving the fuel would not change the pollution statistics.

"Any vehicle can come to Delhi... You cannot monitor what kind of fuel is being used, what kind of pollution they are generating; What is the overall condition of these vehicles? Is there a mechanism to check? But even if you tell them to go back, the damage would already have been done," the CJI addressed the government's law officer.

Chief Justice Kant said no orders from the court could possibly clear the thickening smog unless the public decided to mend their ways. Justice V. Mohana suggested awareness campaigns as a desperate measure to reign in the toxic air.

The judge said people need to revert to the "original customs and cultural practices" around Deepavali. "Going back to *diyas* and the simple things in life, that would be ideal," *amicus curiae*, senior advocate Aparajita Singh, agreed.

Senior advocate Sanjiv Sen, who appeared for the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), faced questions about the long trail of vehicles lying idle at Delhi borders. Mr. Sen said the only way that could be prevented during Deepavali would be to ban people from rushing to and fro with gifts.

The court agreed to pass directions, and list the case after the Deepavali vacations.

GS 3: Environment

Key Pointers:

- What is Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)?
- What is Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)?
- Why is Delhi-NCR facing persistent air pollution?

REACH becomes first Indian civil society group to get Kochon Prize

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Resource group for Education and Advocacy for Community Health (REACH), a not-for-profit organisation working to strengthen the tuberculosis (TB) response in India, has been awarded the Kochon Prize 2026, becoming the first civil society, non-profit organisation from India to receive this prestigious global recognition for its contributions to combating TB, a press release said.

Presented by the Kochon Foundation, an independent Korean non-profit foundation, in partnership with the Stop TB Partnership, the Kochon Prize recognises individuals and organisations that have made significant contributions to the fight against TB.

The 2026 Kochon Prize is shared by REACH, the Centre for Health Solutions, Kenya, and the Marshall Islands TB Control Program.



REACH has been honoured for its contributions to fighting tuberculosis. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"Treat the person, not the disease - our journey with TB communities has been just that. We realised early on that overcoming barriers to care means addressing more than clinical needs - it means recognising social, community, family, mental health and situational challenges. That is the essence of integrated care: seeing the whole person, understanding their realities, and doing whatever it takes to ensure that no one is left behind," said Nalini Krishnan, chairperson and co-founder, REACH.

"REACH is a remarkable and rare organisation that has been consistently ahead of the curve in terms of public health action, and particularly in the field of TB. A women-led organisation, they genuinely care about the people they're supporting, beyond the numbers, data and reports to donor. However, they combine this with a robust scientific and technical approach and a shrewd understanding of the public health landscape in the country," said Soumya Swaminathan, chairperson, M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation and former chief scientist, WHO, who nominated REACH for the award.

"This recognition is testimony to the dedication of the community health workers, TB Nanbans and TB Champions who work alongside us, and to the families who have placed their trust in us. We are deeply grateful to their unwavering commitment and fortitude, " said Ramya Ananthakrishnan, director, REACH.

GS 2: Social Justice_Health

Key Pointers:

- What is the Kochon Prize?
- Why is REACH significant?
- What is REACH's approach to TB control?
- Why is community participation important in TB elimination?
- Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana and Ni-kshay Mitra initiative
- National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP)

Asian parties reject 'unilateral actions', call for respect for international law

Stanly Johny
SEOUL

The International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP) on Friday adopted the Seoul Declaration, expressing concern over unilateral actions and reaffirming state sovereignty and territorial integrity, while also calling for strict adherence to the principles of the UN Charter amid growing geopolitical tensions.

The declaration was unanimously adopted at the 13th General Assembly of ICAPP, held in Seoul from November 4 to 6, with representatives of 83 political parties from across Asia participating. The summit was jointly hosted by South Korea's governing Democratic Party and the Opposition People Power Party.



International Conference of Asian Political Parties logo.

The plenary sessions of the Assembly, attended by representatives from Palestine, Iran, China, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and others, saw discussions on contemporary conflicts, including in Palestine and Iran. Though there is no reference to these conflicts in the declaration, members expressed "great concern" on unilateral actions, intensifying geopolitical rivalry and weakening international cooperation. It said non-interference in the internal affairs of states, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and the equal status of all nations were essential to maintaining peace, stability and reconciliation.

"We were particularly concerned that in international relations, unilateral actions, the use of the threat of force, and selective observance of international obligations can erode confidence in the international legal order," reads the declaration.

Answering a question from *The Hindu* on whether ICAPP can be a platform for mediation and conflict resolution in Asia, Chung Eui-yong, Chairperson of the ICAPP Standing Committee and former Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Korea, said ICAPP is a platform for dialogue between political parties, and that parties can influence governments in moving towards peaceful settlement of disputes.

"We are not governments. What we can do is influence our governments. The governing as well as Opposition parties should put in their best effort to influence government policies and promote peace," said Mr. Chung.

The correspondent is in Seoul at the invitation of the ICAPP.

AMRITA IAS
An Amrita Group Institution

GS 2: International Relations

Key Pointers:

- What is International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP)?
- What is the Seoul Declaration (2026)?
- Can ICAPP directly mediate international conflicts?