

SC UPHOLDS SPECIAL INTENSIVE REVISION (SIR)

- The Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of the Election Commission's (EC) Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar, while permitting similar exercises in other States and Union Territories.
- The ruling addresses the scope of the EC's powers under **Article 324**, electoral integrity, and the sensitive overlap between voter eligibility and citizenship determination.

Supreme Court's Key Observations:

- **EC's power under Article 324:**
 - The Bench held that the SIR neither replaces the provisions of the Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1950, nor the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960.
 - Instead, it operationalises the constitutional mandate under Article 324 – Superintendence, direction and control of elections vested in the EC.
 - The Court described Article 324 as a “**continuous wellspring of power**”, enabling the EC to safeguard the sanctity of the democratic process at every stage of election management.
- **Justification for the SIR:**
 - The Court accepted the EC's rationale for undertaking an intensive revision after more than two decades.
 - It cited rapid urbanisation, large-scale migration, non-reporting of deaths, duplicate voter entries, and frequent additions and deletions in electoral rolls.
 - The Bench observed that electoral rolls are not static documents and **must evolve** with demographic and residential changes.
- **Supporters:**
 - They view the judgment as **reinforcing electoral purity**, accuracy of voter rolls, and prevention of duplication and fraudulent entries.
 - The ruling expands the functional scope of Article 324 and strengthens the EC's supervisory authority.

- **Critics:**
 - They fear the judgment may **increase disenfranchisement risks**, blur the line between electoral administration and citizenship determination, and burden marginalised populations with documentary verification.
 - The decision may also revive debates similar to those surrounding the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Conclusion:

- The SC's ruling validates the EC's authority to undertake intensive electoral roll revisions as part of its constitutional responsibility under Article 324.
- The long-term impact of the ruling will depend on how transparently and fairly the SIR process is implemented across States before upcoming elections.

DELHI GYMKHANA CLUB ROW AND DELHI'S LAND RULES

The Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs' Land and Development Office (L&DO) wrote to the Delhi Gymkhana Club asking it to vacate its 27.3-acre leased premises on Safdarjung Road by June 5, 2026 — citing the need for defence infrastructure.

The decision has triggered a major controversy, leading to legal challenges in the Delhi High Court. Recently, the HC recorded Solicitor General Tushar Mehta's assurance that due process of law will be followed for eviction.

History of the Delhi Gymkhana Club

- The Delhi Gymkhana Club has a **colonial legacy** spanning over a century. It was founded in **July 1913** — shortly after the British Indian government decided to shift the capital from Kolkata to Delhi in 1911.
- Since 2022, the club has been run by a **government-appointed general committee** on the orders of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).
 - This was after the Corporate Affairs Ministry approached the NCLT alleging the club was being run in violation of norms and mishandled.
 - The club is a registered company under the Companies Act, 1956.

- **Leasehold vs Freehold**

- Over the years, L&DO has converted many residential properties from leasehold to freehold — granting owners full property rights.
- As per a CAG report (2021), out of approximately 60,000 properties on L&DO land, around 35,000 had been converted from leasehold to freehold by 2021.

The Current Controversy — Eviction Notice

- The L&DO's letter cited **Clause 4** of the Lease Deed — which allows the government to "re-enter" the land for a "public purpose".
- The government stated that the 27.3-acre plot is critically required for "strengthening and securing Defence infrastructure and other vital public security purposes" — describing the location as a highly sensitive and strategic area of Delhi.
- **The Larger Plan**
 - Significantly, the club's land is adjacent to the Prime Minister's residence on Lok Kalyan Marg.
 - This suggests a larger integrated plan to free up the entire surrounding area for defence or governance infrastructure purposes.

Impact of the Eviction

- The club's general committee — which met on May 23 — wrote to the L&DO requesting "no dislocation of the club", citing the impact on:
 - 14,000 club members who have been paying fees regularly.
 - 500 employees whose livelihoods depend on the club's operations.

Legal Position and What Lies Ahead

- The eviction notice has triggered multiple legal challenges in the Delhi High Court.
- The HC, recently, recorded the Solicitor General's assurance that due process of law will be followed and declined to issue further directions — keeping the matter sub judice.
- The legal question at the heart of the dispute is whether the government's invocation of Clause 4 (public purpose re-entry) on a perpetual lease is legally valid and whether adequate notice and compensation provisions have been followed.

VB-G RAM G TO REPLACE MGNREGS FROM JULY 1

The Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025 — popularly known as VB-G RAM G — is set to come into force from July 1, 2026, replacing the two-decade-old Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

- MGNREGA (enacted 2005) was India's flagship rural employment guarantee scheme — providing **100 days** of guaranteed wage employment per year to rural households willing to do **unskilled manual work**. It benefited over five crore rural families in 2025-26 and was entirely **Centre-funded** for wages.

Key Features of VB-G RAM G

- VB-G RAM G now replaces MGNREGA with significant structural changes.
- **Increased Work Days — With a Seasonal Pause**
 - The guaranteed employment has been increased from 100 to 125 days per year — a 25% increase in the employment guarantee.
- **Shift in Funding — States Bear More Burden**
 - This is the most significant and controversial change. Under MGNREGA, the Centre bore 100% of the wage bill.
 - Under VB-G RAM G, states must now bear 40% of the funding burden.
 - The only exceptions are northeastern and Himalayan states and UTs with a legislature (where the Centre bears 90%) and UTs without legislature (where the Centre bears 100%).
- **Top-Down Allocation — Centre Determines Devolutions**
 - VB-G RAM G reverses the MGNREGA model where Central allocations were based on state-submitted labour budgets (demand-driven).
 - Now, the **Centre determines** the normative allocation to each state — making the resource allocation process top-down rather than demand-driven.
 - This gives the Centre greater control over fund flows but reduces states' ability to respond to fluctuating local demand.

- **States Bear Excess Expenditure**
 - If a state's demand for employment exceeds its normative allocation and expenditure goes beyond the Centre's share, the state must bear all additional expenditure — creating a significant fiscal risk for high-demand states.
- **DBT Wage Payments**
 - All wage and unemployment allowance payments under VB-G RAM G will be made through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) into bank or post office accounts — improving transparency and reducing leakages.

What Happens to Existing MGNREGS Workers?

- The existing **MGNREGS job cards** — once renewed and verified through **e-KYC** — will remain valid for seeking employment under VB-G RAM G.
- This arrangement continues until state governments issue **Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Cards** under the new law. No worker will be left without access to work during the transition period.

Key Concerns and Implications

- **For States** — The shift of 40% wage burden to states is a major fiscal challenge, particularly for high-demand states like Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu — which may also receive lower allocations under the new formula. States with weak fiscal positions may struggle to fund demand surges.
- **For Workers** — The 25 additional days of guaranteed work is positive. However, the 60-day agricultural pause and the yet-to-be-declared wage rate create uncertainty. The performance-based withheld allocation could also indirectly affect workers if states under-invest in compliance.
- **For Centre-State Relations** — The shift from demand-driven to top-down allocation and the imposition of performance conditions on fund release represents a significant centralisation of control over a flagship rural welfare programme — raising federalism concerns.

PM-WANI



- PM-WANI (Prime Minister Wi-Fi Access Network Interface) scheme was launched by the Department of Telecommunication in 2020.
- It aims to enhance the proliferation of public WiFi hotspots to create robust digital communications infrastructure in the country, especially in rural areas.
- Objectives:
 - To overcome the digital divide by increasing internet connectivity, especially in remote and rural regions.
 - To empower individuals and businesses to participate in the digital economy through affordable internet access.
 - To encourage local entrepreneurs by enabling shopkeepers and individuals to become Public Data Office (PDO) operators.
- PM-WANI Ecosystem Components:
 - Public Data Office (PDO): It will establish, maintain, and operate only WANI-compliant Wi-Fi access points and deliver broadband services to subscribers. No license is required from DoT.
 - The local shops and small establishments as PDOs may earn extra income from selling internet without any requirement of license, registration, and/or any fees to DoT.
 - Public Data Office Aggregator (PDOA): It will be an aggregator of PDOs and perform the functions relating to authorization and accounting.
 - App Provider: It will develop an App to register users and discover WANI-compliant Wi-Fi hotspots in the nearby area and display the same within the App for accessing the internet services.

It is currently maintained by the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DoT).

GLOBAL CRISES DEMAND MORE THAN 'CITIZEN SACRIFICE'

- Recently the Indian Prime Minister made an appeal encouraging citizens to adopt **restraint, self-reliance, and responsible consumption**.
- It reflects a growing trend in modern governance where governments increasingly depend on behavioural messaging during crises.
- While responsible citizenship and support for domestic industries are important, behavioural appeals alone cannot resolve structural economic and institutional problems.

The Shift from State Responsibility to Citizen Responsibility

- **Weakening of the Social Contract**
 - Modern democracies function through a social contract in which citizens pay taxes, obey laws, and participate in democratic processes, while governments provide **public goods**, health care, education, infrastructure, and economic stability.
 - Governments are expected not merely to advise citizens during crises, but to create resilient systems capable of protecting society from economic and geopolitical shocks.
 - A serious concern arises when governments respond to structural crises mainly through symbolic appeals for sacrifice and patriotism without implementing equivalent **institutional reforms**.
 - Such an approach gradually shifts responsibility from the state to individuals.
- **A Global Trend in Governance**
 - This phenomenon is not limited to India. Across the world, governments facing inflation, **climate change**, energy insecurity, or economic slowdown often urge citizens to reduce consumption, recycle more, or conserve electricity.
 - While individual behaviour matters, such appeals frequently obscure the larger role of governments, corporations, and global systems in shaping outcomes.
 - Structural crises ultimately require structural solutions.

Limits of Behavioural Nationalism

- **Interconnected Global Economy**
 - The modern global economy is deeply interconnected through trade, technology, finance, and energy systems.
 - No country can achieve complete insulation through behavioural nationalism alone. **Patriotism** may inspire social unity, but it cannot replace long-term **economic planning**, scientific investment, and policy coherence.
 - True national resilience depends on capable institutions and sustained public investment.
- **The Asymmetry in Expectations**
 - Citizens are repeatedly advised to conserve resources, become self-reliant, and adapt to uncertainty.
 - However, governments rarely issue equivalent commitments regarding **transparency**, public accountability, or institutional reform.

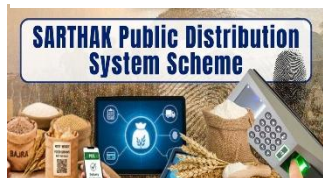
Responsibilities of the Government

- **Strengthening Social Protection**
- **Addressing Economic Inequality**
- **Investing in Education and Innovation**
- **Building Public Trust**
- **Ensuring Regulatory Stability**
- **Protecting Democratic Dialogue**

Conclusion

- Behavioural nationalism may encourage unity and responsible citizenship during uncertain times, but it cannot replace institutional strength and accountable governance.
- National resilience is built not only through citizen discipline, but through **accountability**, **foresight**, public investment, and policy seriousness.
- The true test of leadership lies in creating systems capable of protecting citizens during crises while preserving democratic values and institutional trust.

SARTHAK PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM SCHEME



- SARTHAK PDS (Scheme for Assistance in Ration Transport and Handling-Income with Automation in PDS) is conceived as an umbrella scheme that integrates two ongoing initiatives:
 - Assistance to State Agencies for intra-State movement of foodgrains and FPS dealers' margin under NFSA
 - Scheme for Modernization and Reforms through Technology in Public Distribution System (SMART PDS)
- **Aim:** The government aims to create a **single administrative structure** for improving **foodgrain distribution** and strengthening **implementation of the National Food Security Act, 2013**.
- It will run **until 2031**.
- **Components:**
 - **Advanced Technology Use:** It involves the use of advanced technologies such as **Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Natural Language Processing (NLP)** and Blockchain to streamline operations in the public distribution system.
 - **Unified Data& Architecture:** Under the approved plan, the government intends to create unified databases and standardised digital architecture for real-time monitoring of the PDS network.
 - The scheme also proposes **AI-enabled analytics and grievance redressal systems** along with State Command Control Centres for monitoring operations through data-based oversight.
 - **Certification:** Government will introduce **ISO-certified process frameworks** will be introduced to strengthen transparency, security standards and operational sustainability within the system.