



Daily News Analysis

The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE

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Page 01: GS 2 : International Relations/ Prelims

The U.S. government under President Donald Trump recently announced a sharp hike in the **H-1B visa fee to \$100,000**. Initially, confusion prevailed as Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick suggested it would be an annual fee. However, the White House later clarified that this will be a **one-time fee applicable only for new H-1B applicants starting from the next lottery cycle**. The clarification eased panic among Indian H-1B visa holders abroad, who had rushed to book last-minute flights fearing heavy re-entry charges.

One-time H-1B fee for new applicants: U.S.

Only fresh H-1B visa applicants will have to pay starting with the 'next upcoming lottery cycle'

Announcement eased fears among NRIs that triggered surge in flight bookings to the U.S.

Lutnick had stated that no more would these giant tech companies train foreign workers

Kalol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

A day after U.S. President Donald Trump hiked H-1B visa fees to \$100,000, the White House clarified that the fee will not be an annual feature, but rather a "one-time" payment that will have to be made by companies for fresh H-1B visa applicants, starting with the "next upcoming lottery cycle".

The announcement eased the fears that had triggered a surge in last-minute flight bookings to the United States by Indian H-1B visa holders who are currently outside the country, after U.S. Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick's earlier remarks indicating that the fee amount would have to be paid ev-

ery year. However, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt contradicted the Commerce Secretary's comments in a social media post early on Sunday.

"To be clear: this is not an annual fee. It's a one-time fee that applies only to the petition. Those who already hold H-1B visas and are currently outside of the country right now will not be charged \$100,000 to re-enter. H-1B visa holders can leave and re-enter the country to the same extent as they normally would: whatever ability they have to do that is not impacted by yesterday's proclamation," the Press Secretary said.

"This applies only to new visas, not renewals and not current visa holders. It will first apply in the next upcoming lottery

Clarity emerges

The White House issued a clarification after an initial announcement on the H-1B visa fee led to panic.

- The \$100,000 fee will be a 'one-time' payment.
- The fee applies only to new applicants. Those applying for renewals or current visa holders need not make the payment.
- U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick had initially said that the fee would be applied annually, leading to much of the confusion.

cycle," she added.

Lutnick's remarks

During the signing of the proclamation by Mr. Trump, Mr. Lutnick had said, "No more will these big tech companies train foreign workers. They have to pay the government a

hundred thousand dollars and then they have to pay the employee. So it's just non-economical. If you are going to train somebody, you are going to train one of the recent graduates from one of the great universities across our land." He added, "A hundred

Opposition decry failure to take a strong stand

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Opposition on Sunday took a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not taking a firm stand against the "strong-arm tactics" of the U.S. and instead adopting an

"escapist approach" by giving "vague sermons" about self-reliance. They targeted the PM over U.S. President Trump's move to impose a fee of \$100,000 for H-1B visas.

FULL REPORT ON
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turn before midnight on Saturday, telling others to remain in the U.S.

Mr. Lutnick's remarks created a rush among H-1B visa holders for last minute purchases of air tickets.

The Hindu reported on Sunday that travel agents observed a surge in last-minute flight bookings to the U.S. on Saturday as H-1B visa holders attempted to reach their work stations in the U.S. ahead of the September 20-21 midnight deadline when the proclamation came into effect.

Officials also observed the spike in last-minute flight bookings, following which the Indian government instructed its missions and embassies across the world to provide "all possible help" to Indians trying to return to the U.S. before the deadline.

Static Background

1. What is H-1B Visa?

- A non-immigrant U.S. visa that allows companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations requiring technical or theoretical expertise (e.g., IT, engineering, finance, research).
- Validity: Initially 3 years, extendable to 6 years.

2. India-U.S. Linkage

- Nearly **70% of H-1B visas** go to Indian professionals, especially in the IT sector (Infosys, TCS, Wipro, etc.).
- Acts as a **strategic bridge** between India and U.S. in technology, education, and services.

3. Historical Context

- U.S. debates over H-1B often revolve around **domestic job protection vs. need for global talent**.
- Similar controversies happened during Trump's 2017 "Buy American, Hire American" executive order.



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Current Development

- **Fee Hike:** \$100,000 one-time fee on fresh applicants only.
- **No Impact On:** Current H-1B visa holders or renewals.
- **Confusion:** Lutnick's remark created panic that it would be annual.
- **Clarification:** White House confirmed it's not recurring.
- **Immediate Consequence:**
 - Sudden surge in last-minute flight bookings by H-1B holders abroad.
 - Indian Ministry of External Affairs flagged **humanitarian concerns** due to family disruptions.
 - Companies like Microsoft, JPMorgan, and Amazon advised employees to rush back to the U.S. before the deadline.

Mains Implications

1. **For Indian IT Professionals**
 - Increased financial burden on employers → reduced hiring of Indians.
 - May push companies to look at **near-shore centers** (Canada, Mexico) or **remote work models**.
2. **For Indian Economy**
 - IT exports (~\$250 billion sector) could face slowdown.
 - Remittances from U.S. (biggest source country for India) may reduce if fewer H-1B visas are issued.
3. **For U.S. Economy**
 - Tech industry dependent on Indian talent may face **talent crunch**.
 - Could increase cost of innovation and reduce competitiveness.
4. **Diplomatic Angle**
 - India has consistently raised concerns on **visa restrictions** in bilateral talks.
 - Could become a sticking point in **India-U.S. strategic partnership**, even though defense and trade ties are growing.
5. **Social & Humanitarian Concerns**
 - Family disruptions due to sudden orders.
 - Anxiety among NRI community.

Way Forward

- **For India:**
 - Diversify IT markets (Europe, ASEAN, Africa).
 - Push for **Mode 4 liberalisation** (movement of natural persons) in WTO negotiations.
 - Invest in **domestic high-tech ecosystem** to reduce dependency on foreign markets.
- **For U.S.:**
 - Balance between protecting domestic jobs and maintaining innovation edge.
 - Structured visa policy instead of abrupt announcements.

Conclusion



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The U.S. decision to impose a **\$100,000 one-time H-1B visa fee** highlights the persistent tension between **domestic political compulsions and global talent needs**. For India, it is a reminder to strengthen its **domestic innovation capacity** and reduce over-dependence on H-1B visas for IT exports. While the clarification has reduced immediate panic, the development underscores how visa policy continues to remain a **strategic and economic variable in India-U.S. relations**.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques: Consider the following statements about the H-1B Visa:

1. It is a U.S. immigrant visa that allows permanent residence for skilled workers.
2. The visa is initially valid for 3 years and can be extended up to 6 years.
3. A majority of H-1B visas are issued to professionals from India.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Ans: (b)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques: Evaluate the implications of the U.S. H-1B visa fee hike on India's IT industry and foreign exchange earnings. What measures can India take to reduce over-dependence on H-1B visas? **(250 Words)**



Daily News Analysis

Page 04 :Prelims

On **September 26, 2025**, the **Indian Air Force (IAF)** will formally retire the **MiG-21**, its first supersonic fighter jet, after almost **62 years of service**. Known as the **"workhorse" of Indian air defence**, the MiG-21 not only fought wars and conflicts but also symbolised India's growing aerospace ambitions. Its de-induction marks the end of an era and raises questions about India's combat strength at a time of increasing regional security challenges.

IAF's legendary workhorse MiG-21 to fly into sunset on Sept. 26 after six decades of service

Saurabh Trivedi

NEW DELHI

The Indian Air Force will officially retire its legendary MiG-21 fighter jets on September 26, marking the end of nearly six decades of service for the aircraft widely hailed as the "workhorse" of India's air defence.

A ceremonial flypast and decommissioning event will be held at the IAF base in Chandigarh and will be attended by senior military leaders and veteran pilots who have flown the jet across



Glorious stint: Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh flew the aircraft recently ahead of its official retirement. FILE PHOTO

generations.

Inducted in 1963, the MiG-21 was India's first su-

personic fighter, with its maiden squadron – the 28 Squadron at Chandigarh –

earning the nickname 'First Supersonics'. Over the years, India inducted more than 700 MiG-21s of different variants, many built domestically by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.

The aircraft was the backbone of the IAF till the mid-2000s, playing crucial roles in the 1965 and 1971 wars, the 1999 Kargil conflict, the 2019 Balakot air strikes, and most recently Operation Sindoar. It was in a MiG-21 that Group Captain Abhinandan Varthaman (then Wing Commander) shot down a Pakistani

F-16 in 2019 before being captured across the border. Besides combat successes, the MiG-21 also boosted India's aerospace industry, pushing indigenous manufacturing and technological capabilities to new levels.

The IAF, in a post on X, described the MiG-21 as a "warhorse that carried the pride of a nation into the skies" and released a tribute video showcasing its storied history.

As the MiG-21 squadrons are phased out, the IAF's combat strength will dip to 29 squadrons.

Static Background

- **Induction:** 1963; first squadron = 28 Squadron, Chandigarh → "First Supersonics".
- **Numbers:** India inducted over **700 MiG-21s** (various variants, many built by HAL).
- **Wars & Operations:**
 - 1965 & 1971 Indo-Pak wars → decisive roles.
 - 1999 Kargil conflict.
 - 2019 Balakot air strike & aerial dogfight → Abhinandan Varthaman shot down Pakistani F-16.
 - 2023 "Operation Sindoar" (latest combat role).
- **Contribution to industry:** Strengthened **HAL & indigenous aerospace capability**.
- **Nicknames:** "Workhorse", "First Supersonics", "Warhorse that carried the pride of a nation into the skies" (IAF tribute).



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Current Development (2025)

- **Ceremonial Retirement:** Sept 26, 2025, IAF Base Chandigarh.
- Attended by: Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh, veterans, senior officers.
- **Symbolic Last Flight:** A flypast showcasing its 60+ years of service.
- **IAF Status After Retirement:** Combat strength dips to **29 squadrons** (below the sanctioned 42).

Implications

1. **Operational Gap**
 - Retirement reduces squadron strength → capability challenge against a **two-front threat** (China & Pakistan).
 - Greater reliance on **Su-30 MKI, Rafale, Tejas, Mirage-2000**.
2. **Indigenisation Push**
 - Opens space for accelerated induction of **LCA Tejas Mk-1A, AMCA**, and foreign collaborations.
 - Boost to Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence sector.
3. **Historical Legacy**
 - Symbol of India's Cold War-era defence ties with USSR.
 - Helped India develop **HAL's licensed production** capabilities → foundation for present aerospace industry.
4. **Strategic Concerns**
 - Pakistan still operates JF-17s (China-Pak co-production).
 - China has advanced 5th-gen jets (J-20).
 - India's fleet rationalisation and new acquisitions (Tejas, MRFA deal) become urgent.
5. **Public Sentiment**
 - Emotional connect: generations of IAF pilots trained and fought in MiG-21.
 - Also associated with safety concerns (high crash record in later years).

Way Forward

- Fast-track induction of **Tejas Mk-1A, Tejas Mk-2, Rafale-M, AMCA**.
- Strengthen **squadron numbers** towards sanctioned 42.
- Invest in **domestic manufacturing** with private sector + DRDO-HAL synergy.
- Maintain **balanced foreign partnerships** (France, Russia, U.S.) for advanced fighter jets.

Conclusion

The **MiG-21's retirement** closes a historic chapter in Indian air power. From the 1965 war to the 2019 Balakot aerial dogfight, it was the **steel spine of IAF's combat might**. However, its phasing out exposes India's urgent need to modernise its fleet amidst rising regional tensions. The legacy of the MiG-21 lies not just in victories in the sky, but also in how it laid the foundation of **India's self-reliant aerospace journey**.



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UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques: Consider the following statements about MiG-21:

1. It was the first supersonic fighter jet inducted by the Indian Air Force.
2. The first squadron of MiG-21 was based at Ambala and was called "First Supersonics."
3. Group Captain Abhinandan Varthaman flew a MiG-21 during the 2019 Balakot air skirmish.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (c)



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Page 06 :GS 2 : Indian Polity / Prelims

The Union Territory (UT) of Ladakh, carved out of Jammu & Kashmir in 2019, has witnessed repeated protests and hunger strikes led by local bodies such as the **Leh Apex Body (LAB)** and the **Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA)**. Their demands—**Statehood, Sixth Schedule inclusion, separate Lok Sabha seats for Leh and Kargil, and filling of government vacancies**—highlight the tensions between **strategic national interests** and **local aspirations of protection over land, jobs, and culture**.

‘We fear big industries; outsiders will occupy our land’

The ongoing protest in Ladakh is for Statehood, Sixth Schedule safeguards, Lok Sabha seats for Leh, Kargil, filling of job vacancies, says president of Ladakh Buddhist Association and co-convenor of Leh Apex Body; he says their primary complaint is that talks are not taking place on a regular basis

INTERVIEW

Cherring Dorjay Lakruk

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk and other residents of Ladakh are on a hunger strike to demand constitutional safeguards for the region bordering China that was converted into a Union Territory in 2019. A high-powered committee (HPC) led by Minister of State for Home Nitayanand Rai was constituted in January 2023 to address the concerns of people in Ladakh. The committee was reconstituted in November 2023, but the talks broke down in March 2024. The

discussions resumed on December 3, 2024, and the last round was held on May 27. Cherring Dorjay Lakruk, the president of the powerful Ladakh Buddhist Association and co-convenor of the Leh Apex Body, which is part of the HPC, speaks about their protest.

Why are you protesting again?

This is essentially for our four demands [inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution (tribal status), Statehood, separate Lok Sabha seats for Leh and Kargil districts, and filling of existing government vacancies]. The Home Ministry has suspended the talks, and it is being done to resume the process.

How long will it go on?



Mr. Wangchuk has declared that the protest and the hunger strike will go on for 35 days. However, this could be extended.

How many meetings did you have with the Home Ministry so far?

For the past four or five years, we have had many rounds of talks, but those have been irregular. Last year, Sonam Wangchuk had to march from Leh to Delhi and sit on a hunger strike, only then the talks

resumed. Our primary complaint is that the talks are not taking place on a regular basis.

In May, President Droupadi Murmu notified four regulations for Ladakh, defining new policies on reservation, languages, domiciles, and composition of hill councils. Didn't these incorporate your demands?

No, talks have taken place pertaining to our two major demands - Statehood and Sixth Schedule.

When Ladakh became a Union Territory, there were celebrations in Leh by the BJP. You have been associated with it.

I was in BJP then, but did

not celebrate. Our main demand then was U.T. with legislature.

Has the Home Ministry ever assured Statehood in the talks so far?

They said they will discuss, but the provision for Statehood is there in the Constitution.

What are the changes you expect if Statehood is granted?

Our main concern is land. This is a lot of barren land here. Safeguarding land is our priority. Jobs and culture can be protected by the Sixth Schedule.

What is the fear around land?

We fear big industries and hotels will come here and

outsiders will occupy our land. Here, hotels are run by family businesses; we do not have 400-500 room hotels here. Outsiders will take away our businesses.

What kind of protection you had when you were part of J&K?

Our land was 100% protected then. No outsiders could apply for jobs. Because of Article 370, outsiders could not buy land. Now they can.

What will be your next move?

The Ministry has sent us feelers for talks. It wants us to end the fast, but we cannot call off the strike. If the talks go in the right direction, we can consider. We won't suspend the hunger strike.

Current Context

- Protests:** Climate activist **Sonam Wangchuk** and civil society leaders are on a **hunger strike (planned 35 days, may extend)** demanding constitutional safeguards.



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- **Talks with Centre:** A **High-Powered Committee (HPC)** was formed in 2023 under MoS Home Nityanand Rai. Talks have been irregular, breaking down in March 2024 and resuming briefly in Dec 2024–May 2025.
- **Concerns:**
 - Fear of **outsiders buying land & setting up big industries/hotels**.
 - Lack of **regular dialogue with the Home Ministry**.
 - Discontent with recent Presidential notifications (May 2025) on **reservation, domicile, language, hill councils**—since they didn't address **Statehood & Sixth Schedule**.

Static Context

1. **Sixth Schedule (Articles 244 & 275)**
 - Provides **autonomy to tribal areas** in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram.
 - Safeguards land, culture, and jobs through **Autonomous District Councils**.
 - Ladakh leaders demand similar protection given its **95% tribal population (ST status)**.
2. **Statehood Demand**
 - Current UT status means **administration by L-G without legislature**.
 - Statehood would allow **elected representatives & greater autonomy**.
 - Precedent: Similar demand arose in **Delhi (UT with legislature)**.
3. **Article 370 Removal (2019)**
 - Earlier, Ladakh under J&K enjoyed **land & job protection**.
 - Now, land can be purchased by outsiders, raising **demographic and cultural fears**.

Issues Involved

- **Security Dimension:** Ladakh borders **China (Eastern Ladakh LAC)**→ strategic location means Centre reluctant to devolve too much power.
- **Development vs Identity:** Locals fear **uncontrolled tourism & industrialisation** will erode fragile ecosystem and cultural traditions.
- **Political Representation:** Currently, Ladakh has **1 Lok Sabha seat**; demand is for **2 seats (Leh&Kargil)** for better representation.
- **Employment:** Large number of **government job vacancies** remain unfilled.

Way Forward

- **Structured Dialogue:** Regular institutionalised talks between Centre & Ladakh leaders.
- **Tailored Safeguards:** Explore **special protections outside Sixth Schedule**, similar to **Article 371 provisions** for NE states.
- **Balanced Development:** Encourage **sustainable tourism** and local entrepreneurship instead of large industrial entry.
- **Political Empowerment:** Consider **UT with legislature** model as an intermediate step.

Conclusion



Daily News Analysis

The ongoing protests in Ladakh represent the clash between strategic centralisation and local aspirations for autonomy. While Ladakh holds immense importance in terms of national security and geopolitics, ignoring genuine concerns of land, jobs, and culture could deepen alienation. A balanced constitutional solution, possibly inspired by Sixth Schedule or Article 371 safeguards, along with regular dialogue, is essential to ensure that Ladakh becomes a model of both security and inclusivity.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques: Consider the following statements about the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution:

1. It provides for autonomous district councils in certain tribal areas.
2. It is applicable only to the Union Territories of Ladakh and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
3. Councils under the Sixth Schedule can make laws on land, forest, and culture.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Ans :b

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques: Ladakh's demand for Statehood and Sixth Schedule safeguards reflects the tension between national security interests and local aspirations. Discuss. **(150 Words)**



Daily News Analysis

Page : 07: GS 3 : Science and tech / Prelims

Astronomy continues to reshape our understanding of the cosmos. After gamma-ray bursts (GRBs) were long considered the most powerful events since the Big Bang, astronomers from the **University of Hawaii's Institute for Astronomy (IfA)** have now identified a new category: **Extreme Nuclear Transients (ENTs)**. These are rare, immensely powerful explosions caused when **massive stars are torn apart by supermassive black holes**.



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Astronomers have spotted the biggest bangs since the Big Bang

Black holes are one of nature's most inscrutable creations, and supermassive black holes that lurk near the centres of galaxies are the biggest of them all. As a star nears a black hole's event horizon, extreme forces stretch and compress the star into a long, thin stream, releasing enormous amounts of electromagnetic energy.

Prakash Chandra

For all its apparent serenity, the universe is a very violent place, teeming with catastrophic events: from colliding galaxies and supernovae (the explosive deaths of massive stars), to immensely powerful gamma rays and black holes that gobble up stars.

In this defining cosmic din, astronomers have always considered gamma rays (GRBs) as the loudest ones during the formation of black holes, to be the most powerful flares-ups in the universe. Incredibly energetic GRBs travel vast distances, making them the most luminous electromagnetic events since the Big Bang, the accepted cosmological model to explain the origin and evolution of the universe.

But recently, astronomers from the University of Hawaii's Institute for Astronomy (IfA) identified a new category of events that they found to be much more energetic than GRBs: extreme-nature transients (ENTs). In astronomy, transients refer to celestial objects whose brightness changes significantly over a relatively short period.

Inscrutable creations

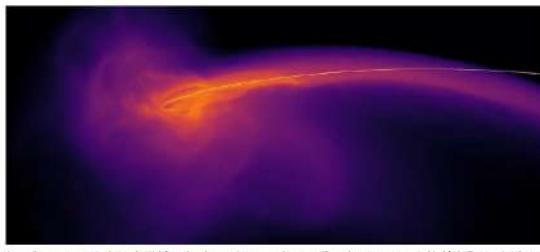
IfA's findings, published recently in *Science Advances*, describe extraordinary phenomena that occurred when extremely big stars wandered too close to supergiant black holes in galactic nuclei and literally got eaten up. Their fate was much like that of the doomed crew members who flew too close to the sun on wings of war and feathers only for the wings to melt, causing them to plummet to hell.

"ENTs are powered by accretion from the debris of a massive star at least three times heavier than our sun that has been ripped apart by a supermassive black hole," says IfA's lead author of the IfA study, written to the author.

Black holes are one of nature's most inscrutable creations, and supermassive black holes that lurk near the centres of galaxies are the biggest of them all. There is one in the Milky Way galaxy, too: Sagittarius A*.

As a star nears a black hole's event horizon—the outer edge that marks the point of no return for even light—extreme tidal forces stretch and compress the star into a long, thin spaghetti-like shape, releasing enormous amounts of electromagnetic energy. This emanates is the ENT.

These brilliant space structures traverse immense distances and remain luminous for mere milliseconds for years, making it possible for astronomers to



A screenshot from a computer simulation of a tidal disruption of a one-solar-mass star by a one-million-solar-mass supermassive black hole. The star is being "spaghettified" into a long thin stream. (Credit: JAMES STEPHEN)

study them. In fact, ENTs are so powerful than supernovae now believe they are the "biggest explosions" to have taken place since the Big Bang.

They are the most energetic class of transient events yet discovered," Dr. Hirsh said. "They emit up to ten times more energy than the previous record holders."

Turn apart

Dr. Hirsh explained that in 2023, when going through data from the European Space Agency's Gaia spacecraft, which mapped the Milky Way for more than a decade,

"we were looking for smooth, high amplitude, and long-lived events," he said. "In 2020, we began following two sources I had identified in 2018 and 2019 in the Gaia data with space-based instruments, including the Hubble and the Spitzer space telescopes, and used spectroscopy to measure physical parameters, which gave the first indication that we were seeing something special."

When the Zwicky Transient Facility (which scans the entire Northern sky every two days using an extremely wide field of view camera at the Palomar Observatory in California) published data on a third similar event in 2023, it gave additional confidence that we had found a rare, new class of transient phenomena," he said.

Astronomers have previously observed stars being torn apart in tidal disruption events (TDEs), which happens when a star is pulled apart by a black hole's tidal forces, releasing the energy equivalent of more than a hundred supernovae in the



ENTs are also much rarer than the TDEs we observe in the local universe. However, we think that ENTs are TDEs of massive stars that are just too rare to observe in the nearby universe."

JASON HIRSH
LEAD AUTHOR OF THE PAPER

process. In this sense, TDEs share many similarities with ENTs, including how luminous they are and how they produce broad emission lines. The two are actually quite different.

ENTs also differ from the mysterious fast X-ray transients (FXTs), short-lived bursts of X-rays from space that have been puzzling astronomers since they were first found in the 1970s.

The origins of FXTs remained elusive for a long time, and they are less energetic and less luminous than traditional X-ray driven GRBs. Astronomers are excited about the potential of observing the universe in the light of the extreme luminosity of ENTs. As Hirsh said, "With a 70-metre sample of ENTs, we can study massive black holes in the early universe, especially the large majority of those that we otherwise are accreting, serving as an excellent complement to studies of accreting black holes in the early universe."

It turned out that when high-energy particle jets break through a star's outer layers, they produce GRBs. But if these jets interact with the star's outer layers, they release lower-energy X-rays, just that we observe as FXTs. In other words, unlike ENTs, FXTs are essentially an X-ray phenomenon that occurs in very short timescales.

Astronomers are excited about the

possibility of observing the universe in the light of the extreme luminosity of ENTs. As Hirsh said, "With a 70-metre sample of ENTs, we can study massive black holes in the early universe, especially the large majority of those that we otherwise are accreting, serving as an excellent complement to studies of accreting black holes in the early universe."

It will be made easier by a new generation of telescopes and instruments with AI-powered data analysis, such as the *Vera C. Rubin Observatory* in Chile and the *Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope*, scheduled to be launched in 2027. These instruments will revolutionize our understanding of the extreme physics behind a universe filled with cosmic destruction on such immense scales.

(Prakash Chandra is a science writer. prakashchandra@gmail.com)

THE GIST

Astronomers have identified celestial events more powerful than gamma-ray bursts: extreme-nature transients (ENTs). ENTs are events where brightness changes over a short period. ENTs are powered by accretion from massive stars that have been stripped apart by a supermassive black hole.

ENTs traverse immense distances and remain luminous for years. Astronomers now believe ENTs are the tidal disruption events (TDEs) since the Big Bang. Researchers identified several ENTs when sifting through data from the space

Current Context

- Discovery:** ENTs were identified in 2020–2023 from **ESA's Gaia spacecraft** and the **Zwicky Transient Facility**.
- Energy Output:** ENTs emit up to 10 times more energy than gamma-ray bursts.
- Mechanism:**
 - Massive stars (≥ 3 solar masses) wander too close to a **supermassive black hole**.
 - They undergo "**spaghettification**"—stretched into thin streams by tidal forces.
 - The debris accretes into the black hole, releasing extreme **electromagnetic radiation** visible for years.
- Comparison with other phenomena:**
 - TDEs (Tidal Disruption Events):** Similar but involve smaller stars/black holes; ENTs involve bigger stars and larger black holes.
 - FXTs (Fast X-ray Transients):** Short-lived, lower-energy X-ray events; different origin.

Static Context



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1. Black Holes:

- Regions where **gravity is so strong that not even light can escape**.
- Types: Stellar-mass, Intermediate, Supermassive (e.g., Sagittarius A* in Milky Way).

2. Event Horizon:

- Boundary beyond which nothing can return; "point of no return."

3. Tidal Forces & Spaghettification:

- Extreme stretching and compression as objects approach event horizon.

4. Transients in Astronomy:

- Celestial phenomena with **short-lived, high brightness changes** (novae, supernovae, GRBs, TDEs, ENTs).

Significance of ENTs

- **Astrophysics:** Provide insights into **supermassive black holes** that are otherwise dormant and invisible.
- **Cosmology:** Help study conditions of the **early universe**, when black holes were rapidly growing.
- **Technology:** Future telescopes like the **Vera C. Rubin Observatory** and **Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope (2027)** will enhance ENT detection with **AI-powered data analysis**.
- **UPSC Relevance:** Showcases India's interest in space science collaborations (e.g., **AstroSat, Aditya L-1, ISRO-ESA projects**).

Issues & Challenges

- **Rarity:** ENTs are far less common than TDEs, making them hard to detect.
- **Data Overload:** Sky surveys generate petabytes of data; requires **AI & machine learning** for analysis.
- **Observation Limits:** Many ENTs occur in distant galaxies → only detectable with next-gen instruments.

Way Forward

- **Global Collaborations:** Data sharing among ESA, NASA, ISRO, and international observatories.
- **AI in Astronomy:** Automating transient detection.
- **Indian Role:** Leveraging ISRO's missions and potential collaborations with **Rubin & Roman telescopes**.
- **Public Science:** Communicating such discoveries boosts **STEM awareness**.

Conclusion

Extreme Nuclear Transients redefine the limits of cosmic violence, surpassing gamma-ray bursts as the most powerful explosions since the Big Bang. Their discovery illustrates how **cutting-edge telescopes, AI-driven data analysis, and global cooperation** are unlocking mysteries of the universe. For UPSC, ENTs are a reminder that science and technology not only deepen our knowledge of space but also symbolize the **frontiers of human curiosity and exploration**.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques : Consider the following astronomical phenomena:



Daily News Analysis

1. Gamma-Ray Bursts (GRBs)
2. Tidal Disruption Events (TDEs)
3. Extreme Nuclear Transients (ENTs)

Which of the above is/are associated with supermassive black holes consuming stars?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: b)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques: Extreme Nuclear Transients (ENTs) have been described as the most powerful explosions since the Big Bang. Explain how their study can help us understand supermassive black holes and the evolution of the early universe. **(150 Words)**



Daily News Analysis

The recent decision by the U.S. administration under President Donald Trump to raise the **H-1B visa fee for new applicants to \$100,000** has triggered widespread concern in India and abroad. With Indian nationals constituting over 70% of H-1B visa recipients, this policy change directly impacts India's **tech workforce, families, and the IT services industry**. It also raises broader questions about **skilled migration, protectionism, and India's need to reduce overdependence on U.S. jobs**.

Current Context

- **Fee Increase:** \$100,000 (almost 6x hike from current levels).
- **Cap:** Annual limit remains **85,000 visas** (since 2004), allocated via lottery.
- **Application Trends:** 2025 cycle saw **applications drop to 3.59 lakh (4-year low)**.
- **India's Share:** ~71% of recipients are Indian nationals; **60% earn < \$100,000**, raising cost-benefit concerns for U.S. employers.
- **Diplomatic Reaction:** India's MEA highlighted the contribution of Indian tech talent to U.S. innovation, but leverage to reverse the policy is limited.

Static Context

1. **H-1B Visa:**
 - Non-immigrant visa for skilled workers in specialty occupations (tech, engineering, medicine).
 - Initially created to fill **skill gaps** in the U.S. workforce.
2. **Brain Drain & Brain Gain:**
 - India long suffered **brain drain** of tech talent to U.S.
 - Recent policies + rise of India's IT industry → gradual shift towards **brain gain** (talent returning, remote work).
3. **Protectionism vs Globalisation:**
 - U.S. move reflects **nativist, protectionist economic policies**, clashing with principles of free movement of labor in globalisation.

Implications for India

- **Short-term:**
 - Families of potential migrants face uncertainty.
 - Indian IT firms may face **revenue dips** and rising operational costs.
 - Talent pipeline to Silicon Valley disrupted.
- **Long-term:**

H-1B, maybe

India's tech workers must reduce their reliance on U.S. jobs

President Donald Trump's decision to charge new applicants for the H-1B highly skilled non-immigrant visa \$100,000, nearly six times the current fee, has caused widespread consternation that not only might the lives of tens of thousands of potential visa applicants in the tech space be impacted, leading to "humanitarian consequences" for families, as mentioned by India's Ministry of External Affairs, but there will also be widespread disruption among major tech companies in the U.S. that rely on hiring skilled workers under this visa. While the number of visas issued in this category has been capped at 85,000 per year since 2004, and allocations are decided through a lottery, reports based on U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services data suggest that applications for the upcoming fiscal year have dropped to a four-year low of nearly 3,59,000. Indian nationals typically account for 71% of these visas, yet data also suggest that close to 60% of these visa recipients earn less than \$100,000, which, over the longer term, implies that their employers may find it harder to justify hiring such specialised workers from abroad. The External Affairs Ministry's response to the White House action included a reiteration of the fact that "Skilled talent mobility and exchanges have contributed enormously to technology development, innovation, economic growth, competitiveness and wealth creation in the U.S. and India", yet there is limited scope for South Block to apply pressure, diplomatic or political, to get the policy reversed.

However, the fallout for Indian citizens can be contained if there is a proactive approach by the Government to bolster India's infrastructure and undertake necessary reforms to improve the prospects for the Indian tech industry to make even greater strides than it has done so far. This might be achieved by capitalising on opportunities to develop new capabilities in the Artificial Intelligence space and exploring new markets across Asia, including China and Russia, and in parts of Europe, where the transatlantic contagion of nativist protectionism has not yet found willing takers. While the Trump order is set to expire within a year, there is no guarantee that it would not be extended, making it all the more pertinent for policymakers in India to evolve a long-term plan to reduce reliance of Indian tech workers on the shrinking pool of job opportunities in the U.S. economy. As India and other countries adjust to this new reality of the hostility of the Trump White House to welcoming future innovators, job-creators, and tax-payers to their shores, it is the U.S. rather than other nations that will suffer a shortage of scientific and engineering prowess to fuel economic progress.



Daily News Analysis

- Opportunity for India to **build domestic tech ecosystem** (AI, quantum computing, cybersecurity).
- Explore **new markets in Asia, Europe, Africa** to diversify dependence.
- Push for **remote work models and global freelancing** in IT.

Way Forward for India

1. **Policy Reforms:** Strengthen India's **digital infrastructure, ease of doing business**, and startup ecosystem.
2. **Upskilling:** Massive investment in **AI, semiconductor design, cloud, green tech skills** to move up value chain.
3. **Global Strategy:** Forge **bilateral talent mobility partnerships** beyond the U.S. (e.g., with EU, Japan, Australia).
4. **Leverage Diaspora:** Encourage Indian-origin tech leaders abroad to **invest back in India's innovation ecosystem**.

Conclusion

The U.S. visa fee hike underscores the risks of India's overdependence on **one country's job market for its skilled professionals**. While the U.S. may face a shortage of talent in the long run, the immediate challenge is for India to **recalibrate its tech strategy**. By diversifying markets, nurturing domestic innovation, and fostering global partnerships, India can convert this challenge into an opportunity—reducing reliance on U.S. visas and positioning itself as a **global hub of technology and innovation**.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques: With reference to the H-1B visa, consider the following statements:

1. It is a non-immigrant visa that allows U.S. companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations.
2. The annual cap for H-1B visas has been fixed at 85,000 since 2004.
3. Indian nationals account for less than 25% of H-1B recipients.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (b)

UPSC Mains Practice Question



Daily News Analysis

Ques: Critically analyse how protectionist policies such as the H-1B visa fee hike can impact India's technology sector. In this context, highlight measures India can adopt to strengthen its domestic innovation ecosystem.(150 Words)

Page : 08 Editorial Analysis

Can timelines be fixed for Governors?

Can the Governor withhold assent to a Bill passed by the State legislature based on his own discretion? Why has the Centre said that courts cannot prescribe a timeline for Governors' President to decide on a bill? What have Opposition rule States said on the matter?

EXPLAINER

Ranganjan R.

The story so far: The Supreme Court is currently hearing a presidential reference made in May 2015, which has sought the opinion of the Court on two questions, primarily regarding the timelines that a Governor can take to withhold assent or reserve a Bill for the consideration of the President, contrary to the advice of the Council of Ministers. The Court had said it would do so within a period of three months. It further held that if a Bill for which assent has been withheld is again passed by the State legislature, the Governor can withhold assent to such Bill. It had prescribed a timeline of three months for the President to act on a bill, failing which it would be subject to further consideration.

The government has raised questions regarding the timelines for the Court to prescribe timelines when they are not specified in the Constitution.

What does the Constitution say? Article 203 of the Constitution lays down that when a Bill, passed by a State legislature, is presented to the Governor for his assent, he can do any of the following alternatives (or may give assent to the Bill): (a) withhold assent to the Bill, (b) return the Bill to the State legislature with a recommendation for a law to be made by the State legislature, (c) return the Bill to the State legislature with a recommendation for a law to be made by the President.

As held by the Supreme Court in various cases including the *Shrikrishna Committee* case, the Governor can exercise his statutory powers while withholding assent for a Bill. He is also required to act as per the advice of the Council of Ministers on the Bill to be passed by the State legislature for reconsideration.

After withholding any Bill for reconsideration by the President, the Governor must reserve certain Bills those which reduce the powers of the President. He can also withhold Bills based on the advice of the Council of Ministers like those that relate to a subject enumerated in the Constitution. I.e., on any subject that is within the exclusive competence of the State legislature in relation to a Union Law. It is only under rare circumstances that the Governor can withhold a Bill for reconsideration and reserve a Bill where he/she feels that the provisions of the Bill contravene any of the provisions of the Constitution and the same cannot be sent for the consideration of the President.

The Constitution does not lay down any time limit within which the Governor is required to make a decision with



Photo credit: Tamil Nadu Governor R. M. Ravi welcomed by Chief Minister M. K. Stalin during the Republic Day celebration in Chennai on January 26, 2016.

respect to any Bill presented for his/her consideration. Article 203 of the Constitution states that once a Bill is presented to the Governor, he/she shall decide that the assent to the Bill is to be withheld or that the Bill is to be sent for the consideration of the President. The power to the article adds that the Governor may as soon as possible return the Bill for reconsideration by the State legislature.

What are the recommendations? The *Shrikrishna Committee* had stated that only the reservation of Bills for consideration of the President, under rare circumstances, can be regarded as unconstitutional, can be argued as a discretionary power of the Governor.

Article 203(2) of the Constitution states that the Governor can withhold assent to a Bill if it is against the interest of the State. The Governor must discharge his functions under Article 203 as per the advice of the Council of Ministers. It further recommended that the President can withhold assent to such Bills if they contravene any of the provisions of the Constitution.

What is the argument? Article 203(2) of the Constitution requires the Governor to act as per the advice of the Council of Ministers except in so far as the Governor is required by or under the Constitution to act on his/her own discretion. Article 161(2) further provides that if any question arises on whether the name is a name which the Governor is required to act as per his/her discretion,

the decision of the Governor in such case shall be final and shall not be called in question.

The Centre has argued that the Governor enjoys a discretion to withhold assent to a Bill which cannot be imposed into by the courts and consequently no timelines can be fixed. It also raised the objection that the timelines mentioned in the Constitution are for the President to decide on Bills which have been reserved. Article 203(2) deals with the power of the Governor to withhold assent to Bills.

The Centre has maintained that the courts cannot be an adjudicator for every question.

However, Opposition rule States have argued that the Governor in such States have been effectively delaying assent to Bills by not returning the Bills to the State legislature for the consideration of the Council of Ministers, for the consideration of the President. They have argued that the Governor has been delaying the Bills to be sent for assent and that it offends the popular mandate of the people of the State.

What should be the way forward? All the issues stated above are in the nature of a presidential reference. The dispute has also played an federal set up has been the point of contention of the gubernatorial post. Many political leaders and scholars have called for the abolition of the Governor's post in the past. However, as per our Constitutional scheme, there is need for a nominal head of the state.

except by just the President for the time being.

Nevertheless, federalism is also a basic feature of our Constitution and the Governor's office should not undermine the powers of the elected governments of the States.

The Court usually enunciates certain rules and guidelines which can be followed by the concerned authorities where rules are provided in the Constitution. However, when there are unreasonable delays, the concerned authorities can take steps like in *K. S. Singh case (2020)* where it laid down a three-month timeline for the Governor to decide on the Ten-year Schedule.

The Supreme Court has purposively interpreted the words in Article 203 to mean that the Governor shall assent to a Bill. It has interpreted that the main part of Article 203 uses the words "Governor shall" and hence it is not a discretionary power. It relied on its own interpretation of the Constitution. In *K. S. Singh case (2020)*, the recommendations of the committee as well as the Office Memorandum issued by the Home Ministry in 2005 to provide the timeline of three months for actions by Governors and the President.

The Governor and the Governors should follow the timeline prescribed by the April 2015 judgment to avoid constitutional disputes and pricks.

Hopefully, the opinion of the Supreme Court in the Presidential reference would also reiterate this position.

UPSC Mains Practice Question: Can timelines be fixed for Governors to act on Bills? Discuss in light of Articles 200, 201 and federal principles in India. (150 Words)

GS. Paper 02-Indian Polity

UPSC Mains Practice Question: Can timelines be fixed for Governors to act on Bills? Discuss in light of Articles 200, 201 and federal principles in India. (150 Words)

Context :



Daily News Analysis

The office of the Governor in India, constitutionally designed as the **nominal head of the State**, often finds itself at the center of **federal tensions**, especially when Bills passed by State legislatures are withheld, returned, or reserved for the President's consideration. A **Supreme Court judgment in April 2025** and the subsequent **Presidential reference** have reignited debates on whether **timelines can be fixed** for Governors and the President under **Articles 200 and 201** of the Constitution.

Constitutional Framework

- **Article 200:** When a Bill is presented to a Governor, he/she can:
 1. Give **assent**
 2. **Withhold assent** (reject)
 3. **Return the Bill** for reconsideration
 4. **Reserve the Bill** for the President
- **Article 201:** Governs **President's assent** for Bills reserved by Governors.
- **Article 163:** Requires Governors to act **on ministerial advice**, except in matters where discretion is mandated.

Key Points:

- Normally, **Governor does not exercise personal discretion** except in rare cases like potential **unconstitutionality** or certain Bills affecting High Courts.
- Constitution does **not prescribe timelines** for Governors/President to act on Bills.

Supreme Court Judgments & Commission Recommendations

- **Shamsher Singh Case (1974):** Governor must act per Council of Ministers' advice; discretionary powers are limited.
- **April 2025 Judgment (TN vs Governor):**
 - Specified **3-month timeline** for Governor to act on Bills.
 - If a Bill is re-passed by the legislature, the Governor must assent.
 - Timeline of 3 months also suggested for President to decide on reserved Bills.
- **Sarkaria Commission (1987):** Only rare **unconstitutional Bills** can be reserved at Governor's discretion; President to dispose within **6 months**.
- **Punchhi Commission (2010):** Recommended **Governor to act on Bills within 6 months**.

Arguments For and Against Timelines

Centre/Governor-side:

- Article 163(2) grants **discretionary powers**; courts cannot interfere.
- Constitution lacks explicit timelines; judicial imposition may **usurp executive discretion**.
- Political issues should be resolved **within the constitutional framework**, not by courts.

Opposition/State-side:



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- Governors in Opposition-ruled States have **selectively delayed Bills**.
- Such delays **undermine popular mandate** and federalism.
- Timelines ensure **accountability** and respect for elected governments.

Issues at Stake

1. **Federalism:** Protecting the balance between **Centre, Governor, and State legislature**.
2. **Democratic Mandate:** Preventing misuse of gubernatorial office to obstruct elected governments.
3. **Judicial Review:** Courts exercise restraint, but intervene when **unreasonable delays** threaten constitutional governance (e.g., K.M. Singh, 2020).
4. **Politicisation of Governor's post:** Calls for reforms, but **abolition is constitutionally impractical**.

Way Forward

- Governors should **adhere to April 2025 SC timelines** to uphold democratic norms.
- Centres and State governments must **respect federal principles**, avoiding political manipulation.
- Courts may **intervene selectively** to prevent undue delays without encroaching on executive discretion.
- Consideration of **constitutional reforms** or guidelines to reduce politicisation of Governor's office.

Conclusion

The Governor's assent powers are **largely ministerial** rather than discretionary. The April 2025 judgment reflects a **judicial attempt to protect federalism and the democratic mandate** without disturbing the constitutional office. While Article 163 allows limited discretion, **timelines for assent** reinforce accountability and prevent misuse of power, ensuring that elected governments can function without obstruction.



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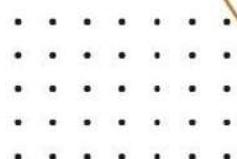


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