

Topics

- HC0+
- Baobab
- Radical democracy
- Windfall tax,
- Brent crude
- Scarborough Shoal
- Political Apathy
- Mains



By saurabh Pandey



Target Mains -2024/25

Q "Representative form of democracy is not the solution but radical democracy is ". Explain this statement in the context of changing nature and context of democracy

प्रश्न "लोकतंत्र का प्रतिनिधि स्वरूप समाधान नहीं है बल्कि कट्टरपंथी लोकतंत्र है"। इस कथन को लोकतंत्र के बदलते स्वरूप एवं संदर्भ में स्पष्ट कीजिए

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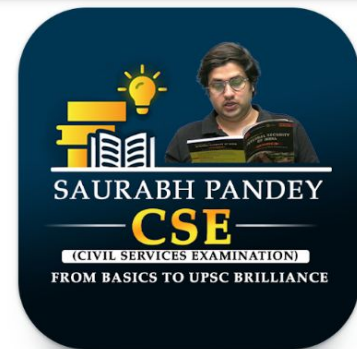
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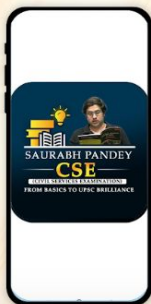
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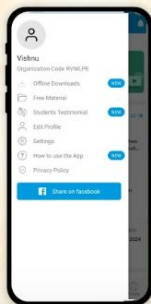
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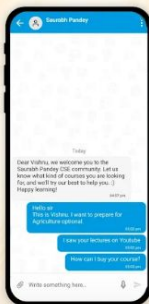
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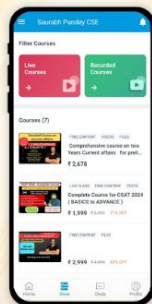
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An overlooked molecule could solve the Venus water mystery

That Venus is 100,000-times drier than earth is an anomaly that deserves an explanation. Is Venus abnormally dry? Is the earth abnormally wet? Depending on which one is the exception, the implications for planetary habitability are different, a planetary scientist said

Karthik Vinod

More than four billion years ago, Venus had enough water to cover its surface with an ocean 3 km deep. Today, the planet only has enough for this ocean to be 3 cm deep.

Scientists have been able to account for a lot of the water Venus lost in this time – but not all of it. Now, a team of scientists in the U.S. may have made a crucial advance.

The team's findings, reported in a paper in *Nature*, could plug a long-standing gap between the amount of water scientists expected Venus to have lost in the last 4.5 billion years and how much satellite observations say the planet has actually lost, which is a lot more.

"We have a pretty cool thing here," co-author Lynn Gangi, a planetary scientist at the University of Colorado Boulder, told *The Hindu*. "And it was time to release it into the community and see what they make of it."

"The bigger picture is about planetary habitability, and more specifically the history of water on Venus compared to the earth," Emmanuel Marcu, a planetary scientist at France's Laboratoire Atmosphères, Milieux, Observations Spatiales, who was not involved in the study, said.

Following the water trail

There are two reasons why Venus lost its water. The first is its hellish atmosphere – a result of its carbon dioxide-rich composition, which causes a strong greenhouse effect. The planet's surface is hotter than water's boiling point, simmering at 450 degrees C. So water can only exist as vapour in Venus' atmosphere.

Second, water was a victim of the planet's proximity to the Sun. The Sun's heat and ultraviolet radiation combined to shred water molecules into their constituent hydrogen and oxygen atoms in Venus' ionosphere – the upper region of the atmosphere, where charged atoms, molecules, and their electrons zoom around at high speeds.

However, we don't know the rates at which these processes happened.

"There's a couple different theories about how [water levels] changed over time," Dr. Gangi said. "The two theories broadly blame thermal and non-thermal processes for the water loss."

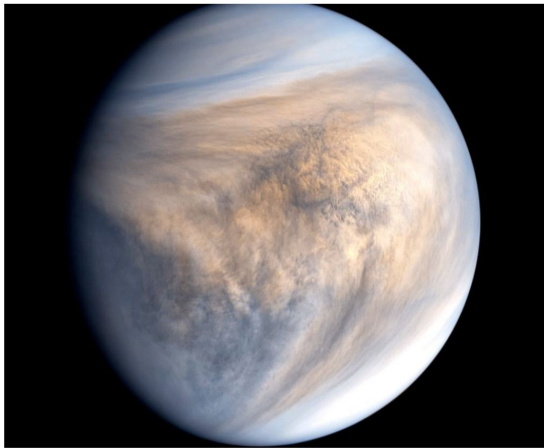
The thermal process refers to hydrodynamic escape. As the Sun heated Venus' outer atmosphere, it expanded, allowing hydrogen gas to leak to space. This escape lasted until the outer atmosphere sufficiently cooled, by about 2.5 billion years ago.

Dr. Gangi and her colleagues' research focused on how water loss occurs in the present day, specifically via a non-thermal process.

They focused on hydrogen atoms escaping Venus to space. Water levels drop as a result because the oxygen atoms left behind have fewer hydrogen atoms with which to form water.

However, estimates of the water-loss rate before Dr. Gangi's study suggested the planet had more water than what satellite observations indicated.

Dr. Gangi and her colleagues reported that the discrepancy vanished when they accounted for a chemical reaction that,



Scientists have been able to account for a lot of the water Venus lost, but not all of it. [view H. GALL. CC BY 2.0](#)

according to a statement accompanying the paper, the scientific community had overlooked for more than five decades.

The key findings

Dr. Gangi first encountered the formal cation (HCO⁺) – a positively charged molecule – during her PhD days, when she was studying water loss in Mars' atmosphere.

Scientists have known for a while that HCO⁺ molecules drive hydrogen escape on Mars. According to Dr. Gangi, the Venusian and the Martian upper atmospheres are similar, so she and her colleagues decided to model the same underlying reactions in Venus' ionosphere. On Venus, the team found that a particular reaction, called the HCO⁺ dissociative recombination reaction (DR) occurs in bulk at an altitude of about 125 km, above the clouds made of sulphuric acid.

HCO⁺ is created when a carbon monoxide molecule (CO) loses an electron while absorbing an hydrogen atom. DR is the reverse reaction: HCO⁺ absorbs an electron and breaks up into CO and an hydrogen atom. These energetic hydrogen atoms then escape into space.

The team built models to simulate the influence of this reaction on the upper atmosphere, and found that it accelerated water decline once the hydrodynamic escape of hydrogen gas ended.

Specifically, the researchers found HCO⁺ DR could have doubled the rate at which Venus lost water by hydrogen escape.

This means if Venus had oceans in the past, they could have lasted longer than



The planet's surface is hotter than water's boiling point, simmering at 450 degrees C. So water can only exist as vapour in Venus' atmosphere

expected – because the faster rate of hydrogen escape means the planet could have lost more water in the same amount of time.

Further, the model predicted that the amount of water on Venus would have stayed roughly the same from nearly 2 billion years ago. This is because, as a non-thermal process, the HCO⁺ DR reaction would've gone on indefinitely and drained all the water. (The thermal process was time-bound because the upper atmosphere returned to thermal equilibrium.) Yet Venus still has some water today. According to Dr. Marcu, one way water could have been replenished was by comet impacts.

The missing molecule

However, we have no proof that HCO⁺ ions existed in Venus' atmosphere in the first place – let alone proof that they participated in the HCO⁺ DR process.

The authors wrote in their paper that past space missions had neglected looking for HCO⁺ ions, and that orbiters sent to Venus couldn't decipher the chemical signatures of HCO⁺ DR from afar. These missions instead paid attention to other important atmospheric chemical reactions that scientists were interested in. According to Dr. Gangi, there would

have had to be a connection between HCO⁺ DR and water loss on Venus for scientists to have shown interest.

This said, she said the team's analysis of data collected by the NASA Pioneer Venus orbiter (launched 1978) contained some indirect evidence of HCO⁺ DR.

"By looking at the other molecules that are important in the chemistry to form it, we saw that those are present in an amount that would imply [HCO⁺] should be there," Dr. Gangi said.

Future Venus missions

Dr. Marcu referred to a *Nature Astronomy* paper published in April in which scientists reported finding a signature of carbon ions escaping Venus in data collected by the *BepiColombo* spacecraft.

"At least qualitatively, it seems to support the [HCO⁺ DR] model," Dr. Marcu said. The quantitative evidence remains wanting.

Dr. Gangi implored scientists working on future Venus missions to look for HCO⁺ in the planet's upper atmosphere. She referred to NASA's MAVEN mission to Mars as an example of a mission dedicated to probing the upper atmosphere. "If we had a similar mission to Venus, I think we could learn a lot."

Most upcoming Venus missions are focused on the lower atmosphere instead.

"The fact that Venus is [100,000-times] drier than the earth is – an anomaly that deserves an explanation," Dr. Marcu said. "Is Venus abnormally dry? Is the earth abnormally wet? Depending on which one is the exception, the implications for planetary habitability are different."

(Karthik Vinod is an intern with *The Hindu*.)

HCO⁺



- **formyl cation (HCO⁺) — a positively charged molecule.**
- **HCO⁺ molecules drive hydrogen escape on Mar**
- **Dissociative recombination reaction (DR) occurs in bulk at an altitude of about 125 km, above the clouds made of sulphuric acid.**
- **HCO⁺ is created when a carbon monoxide molecule (CO) loses an electron while absorbing an hydrogen atom. DR is the reverse reaction: HCO⁺ absorbs an electron and breaks up into CO and an hydrogen atom.**
- **These energetic hydrogen atoms then escape into space**



The baobab lineage originated in Madagascar roughly 21 million years ago. (1/17/18)

The baobab's journey from Madagascar to Africa and Australia

Reuters

The baobab tree is a distinctive sight on the landscape. When its contorted branches are leafless during the dry season, they resemble jumbled roots emanating from a thick trunk, making it appear as if someone had yanked the tree from the ground, flipped it on its head, and jammed it back into the earth.

But the origins and history of the baobab, found in Madagascar and parts of Africa and Australia, have been something of a mystery. A new study has resolved this based on genomic analyses of all eight recognized species, as well as ecological and geological data.

The baobab lineage originated in Madagascar roughly 21 million years ago and reached Africa and Australia sometime in the past 12 million years, the researchers found. Madagascar, an island off Africa's southeastern coast, is a biodiversity hot spot and home to unusual flora and fauna.

Two baobab lineages went extinct in Madagascar, but not before establishing themselves elsewhere, one in Africa and one in Australia, the study found.

The tale of how a tree crossed the Indian Ocean to put down roots in two distant destinations is dramatic. It appears baobab seed pods floated from

The dispersal to Australia was probably facilitated by the Indian Ocean gyre which likely picked up baobab seed pods as it moved past Madagascar

Madagascar to mainland Africa, located about 400 km to the west, and to Australia, situated more than nearly 7,000 km to the east.

"The plants almost certainly got to Africa and Australia floating on or with vegetation rafts," said botanist Tao Wan of the Wuhan Botanical Garden in China, one of the authors of the study published on May 14 in the journal *Nature*.

"The long-distance dispersal to Australia was probably facilitated by the Indian Ocean gyre, which is an oceanic current that circulates south past Madagascar, where it probably picked up baobab seed pods, before the current swings east to Australia, where it delivered the pods. The current then circulates north and then swings west past Mauritius and to Africa once again, where it completes the gyre," Dr. Wan added.

Baobabs, found in dry savannah habitats, provide food, shelter and nesting sites for wildlife. Their fruits also provide nutrients and medicines for people, and the leaves are edible. The trees produce large, sweet-smelling flowers whose sugary nectar attracts nocturnal pollinators as well as two types of primates, lorises in Madagascar and bush babies in Africa.

"They can reach huge dimensions ... in both height and diameter, and are reported to live for thousands of years. The root systems are also massive, which are considered to play an important ecological role, helping to slow down soil erosion and enabling nutrient recycling," plant geneticist and study co-author Rita Leitch of the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew in London said.

Baobab

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Baobabs are long-lived deciduous, small to large trees from 5 to 30 m (20 to 100 ft) tall with broad trunks and compact crowns.



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Radical democracy: why is it still relevant today?

Scientific humanism and its political correlate offer a philosophical perspective of human freedom based on scientific knowledge in an age harangued by orthodoxy and regression

Prathmesh Kher

Periods of crisis call attention to the necessity for a radical reorganisation of society. This was the case with 19th century liberal democracy, which had degenerated into exploitation under capitalism, forcing revolutionaries to seek out a better alternative. In time, a large number of these radicals came under the influence of new collectivist doctrines, which offered a transitional dictatorship and centralised economic planning as a remedy to solve the defects of liberal democracy and capitalist exploitation.

The initial enthusiasm of that revolutionary age came to a close when the "spectre of communism" had once threatened capitalist hegemony but had itself degenerated into a dictatorship. The concurrent rise of 20th century fascism led to the development of a political situation where there were outright dictatorships on one end and what some called, the mere panacea of democratic formalities on the other. With the concluding period of the Second World War, millions were dead and the world was in a state of chaos. Many who had been champions of solving humanity's problems saw dictatorship as no solution at all. However, the question of reconciling the aspirations of freedom, and the desire for justice, continued to remain a quandary as before.

During this period of social crisis, the Indian freedom fighter and humanist philosopher Manabendra Nath Roy, and his Marxist colleagues, developed a theory which they felt offered a solution—they referred to it as radical democracy.

A new orientation
Before a contour of a radical democratic political economy can be laid out, a scientifically consistent philosophical outlook must be iterated. To this end, Roy and his colleagues developed the philosophy of new humanism.

Humanism, the radicals argued, was as ancient as human beings, and could only be enriched by the new discoveries in scientific thought. A humanism enriched by these new developments in the understanding of the natural world would be best described as 'scientific' or 'new' Humanism.

Human behaviour includes the capacity for rational thought, the radicals argued. "Morality results from man's intelligent response to his surroundings. Therefore, it can be deduced from his innate rationality. Since rationality is inherent in human nature, it is only necessary to remind him of his biological heritage, and he will regain faith in himself and undo the harm done to him," Roy writes in his *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution*. The realisation of the possibility of a secular rational morality opens up a new perspective before the modern world. The concepts of human dignity, sovereignty, and creativeness have meaning only when they arise, not as a token to divine writ, but from the rational faculty of the individual.

To that end, Roy proposes in his *New Orientation*, "Revolution is not inevitable... Fundamental changes in the structure of society take place only when there is a group of individuals who feel



ISTOCKPHOTO

the necessity, who see the possibility of fulfilling it, and who can develop an adequate amount of will to bring about the changes which are both necessary and possible." That is, women and men, cognisant of their own capacity for reason, and driven to reshape the conditions around them, can do so by cooperating with each other to develop a just and free society.

A radical approach to elections
Democracy, if it is to mean a mere regularised counting of votes is not much more than deception, particularly if the voters have not had a chance to raise themselves up in dignity. In parliamentary democratic conventions, demagogues take power, by promising utopia to a hapless electorate: though once in power the demagogue is evidently unable to deliver, and must invariably resort to strongarm tactics to ensure retaining political power.

The decay of liberal democracies encouraged the rise of various collectivist doctrines which denied the possibility of individual freedom, ridiculing it as an empty abstraction. These doctrines, in turn, proclaimed that in order to be free the individual must merge himself in the mass. This also favoured political demagogues who preferred a mob that acts on appeals to passions. It was easier to sway voters by calls to their sentiments than to their reason. The more backward a populace is, the more easily they could be swayed by appeals to emotional prejudices. "The character of a party is to be judged not by its ability to catch votes, but by the merit of its proclaimed principles and published programme. The people should be asked to vote not

for professions and promises, but by judging the record of a government... Under the formal parliamentary system, unscrupulous demagogues can always come to the top," he writes.

A conscious will to freedom, a sense of responsibility and the ability to critically examine the promises and programmes put before the people by parties and politicians are the preconditions for any successful democracy. One must become a judge as to whether such conditions exist in a given society. "To ensure that elections reflect an intelligent public opinion, there has to be an intelligent public opinion first," Roy writes.

The radical democratic approach to election begins with people in their localities meeting in local or regional conferences for discussions. Having come to understand political questions and economic problems for themselves, the people will see that they need not merely vote for this or that party to solve their problems. This would also cultivate the ability for independent judgement and as such the people could choose to elect candidates of their own choice, from amongst themselves.

These candidates would enjoy greater independence since they would not be dependent on any political outfit; they can rely on their own conscience and be directly responsible to the electorate. This would do away with the mechanical nature of party politics and the demagoguery and corruption that comes in its wake. Such 'people's committees' would not only have the ability to pick independent candidates from amongst themselves but also eventually become the focus of a pyramidal democracy. Empowered with the right of recall and the ability to hold

referendums, these organised local democracies would wield a direct and effective control of the mechanics of the State. A progressive democratic movement can occur only with the intelligent and conscious participation of the individuals who constitute a society. As such, the more individuals choose to think about and participate in the democratic process the more organically democratic it becomes.

A humanist economics

"It is indeed a stupendous task to plan the economic life of a fifth of the human race," Roy had written in his *People's Plan for Economic Development*. Centralisation of politics is concurrent with the centralisation of economics. Under the so-called 'free market' economies this is done by capitalist concentration of wealth, and under nationalised economies it reverts to State capitalism. Capitalism produces goods not with the primary consideration of supplying the needs of the people, but of selling them at a profit. When goods cannot be sold with sufficient profit, capitalists will curtail production. This is compounded in the case of countries like India where a large and continually expanding population is seen as detrimental to the economic development of the country. Rapid industrialisation is offered as a solution to many of these problems. However, industries can succeed only on the basis of a home market. A healthy export trade begins only when the home market is satisfied.

"Modernisation of agriculture is the greatest need of the economic life of our country if production of wealth is to be increased. But this is more a matter of organisation of rural economy than of mechanisation," Roy said in a 1940 lecture in Patna. Given the primary for agriculture, the radical democrats cite three problems that need to be overcome in that regard. Firstly, a lack of irrigation which must be countered by the development of wells, reservoirs, canals, et al. Secondly, an improvement for the fertility of the land which could be incentivised by the State. Thirdly, the development of new roads, and the repair of old ones for the countryside. Finally, an organisation of rural consumers and local industries on a co-operative basis in order to protect employment and income for the rural populace.

A radical democratic programme includes provisions for unemployment insurance, old age pension, and other provisions for the upliftment of the citizens. But these must be made with the principle that economic production is in line with use and with reference to human needs, with a specific focus on the development of health infrastructure, housing and education.

Why radical democracy?

The conditions of the contemporary world present a dismal picture for those who desire freedom and do not see it as a contradiction to justice. Even as humanity is the most aware it has been about the cosmos and the laws that govern it, it is simultaneously the closest it has ever been to disintegration.

The way out must be one that harkens to the principles of scientific thought and humanist philosophy. Roy writes in *New Humanism*, "The brain is the means of production, and produces the most revolutionary commodity. Revolutions presuppose economic ideas. An increasingly large number of men and women, conscious of their creative power, motivated by an indomitable will to improve the world, moved by the adventure of ideas, and fired with the ideal of a free society, can create the conditions of democracy. Empowered with the possibility which democracy will be possible"



FROM MARCH TO THE PRESENT

Radical democracy

- **Radical democracy is a type of democracy that advocates the radical extension of equality and liberty.**
- **Radical democracy is concerned with a radical extension of equality and freedom, following the idea that democracy is an unfinished, inclusive, continuous and reflexive process**

- **Radical democracy implies returning to the roots of democracy and its core values**
- **The radical democratic approach to election begins with people in their localities meeting in local or regional conferences for discussions.**
- **Having come to understand political questions and economic problems for themselves, the people will see that they need not merely vote for this or that party to solve their problems.**
- **This would also cultivate the ability for independent judgement and as such the people could choose to elect candidates of their own choice, from amongst themselves**

North Sea energy firms look beyond U.K. after tax squeeze

NEWS ANALYSIS

Reuters
LONDON

North Sea oil and gas producers are merging and shifting overseas as Britain's windfall tax slashes profits and as the opposition Labour Party threatens more tax if it wins the next general election.

The change of strategy could accelerate the decline of domestic production, risking increased dependency on imports, greater vulnerability to higher consumer prices and more job losses.

Oil majors such as Shell, Chevron and Exxon Mobil have long since pulled back from the ageing basin in pursuit of more profitable

oilfields, divesting assets to smaller producers such as Harbour Energy, Ithaca Energy and Serica Energy.

These independent oil and gas producers are now looking further afield and merging to cut costs and boost revenue.

"Unfortunately, the U.K. government has turned the U.K. North Sea into a very harsh business environment," Gilad Myerson, executive chairman of Ithaca Energy, one of the largest North Sea producers, told Reuters last month.

In 2022, the U.K. imposed a 25% Energy Profit Levy on the sector after a jump in energy prices resulting from Russia's invasion of Ukraine swelled profits as consumers faced higher prices, following si-



Lower supplies: Stifel projects that the UK's oil and gas output would halve by 2030. REUTERS

milar measures in other European countries.

Finance Minister Jeremy Hunt subsequently extended the levy until 2029 and raised it to 35%, bringing the total tax burden to

75%, among the highest in the world. The levy, however, exempts most profits that are re-invested in oil and gas production, in what is known as the investment allowance.

"The temporary windfall tax on oil and gas firms actively encourages investment to create jobs and grow the economy—the more investment they make the less tax they will

pay," a spokesperson for the U.K. Treasury said.

The tax wiped out most profits for producers last year and many, including Harbour Energy, the largest North Sea producer pared back investments and cut hundreds of jobs.

Serica acquired smaller rival Tailwind Energy and is eyeing neighbouring North Sea countries.

"We're more interested in doing something that diversifies us outside of the U.K. right now, because that's probably our biggest risk," said David Latin, Chairman of Serica Energy, highlighting opportunities in Norway.

Ithaca, which has stakes in two of the largest remaining undeveloped oil fields in the North Sea, has agreed to combine its oper-

ations with the U.K. assets of Italy's Eni.

"When you have a fiscal challenge, the bigger you are, the stronger you are," Ithaca's Myerson said, adding the company was looking to expand overseas to Norway, Denmark and elsewhere.

Harbour Energy, meanwhile, agreed in December to acquire oil and gas assets from Wintershall Dea in an \$11.2 billion deal which will drastically cut its dependence on the U.K.

Rapid decline

Production in the North Sea has declined to around 1.2 million barrels of oil equivalent per day (boed) in recent years from a peak of over 4.5 million boed in 1999.

Analysts at brokerage

Stifel estimate that over the remaining lifespan of the North Sea basin, a higher tax rate and removal of the investment allowance would lower investment by 30 billion pounds (\$38 billion) more than its current estimates, leading to a faster decline in output.

Under that scenario, Stifel projects that by 2030, the U.K.'s oil and gas output would halve, and it could be paying around 2.5 billion pounds (\$3.2 billion) a year to import 80% of its gas.

Serica's finance chief Martin Copeland said the recent consolidation in the North Sea has been significantly driven by tax optimization, calling it "a sign of huddling together for warmth against a very, very chill backdrop."

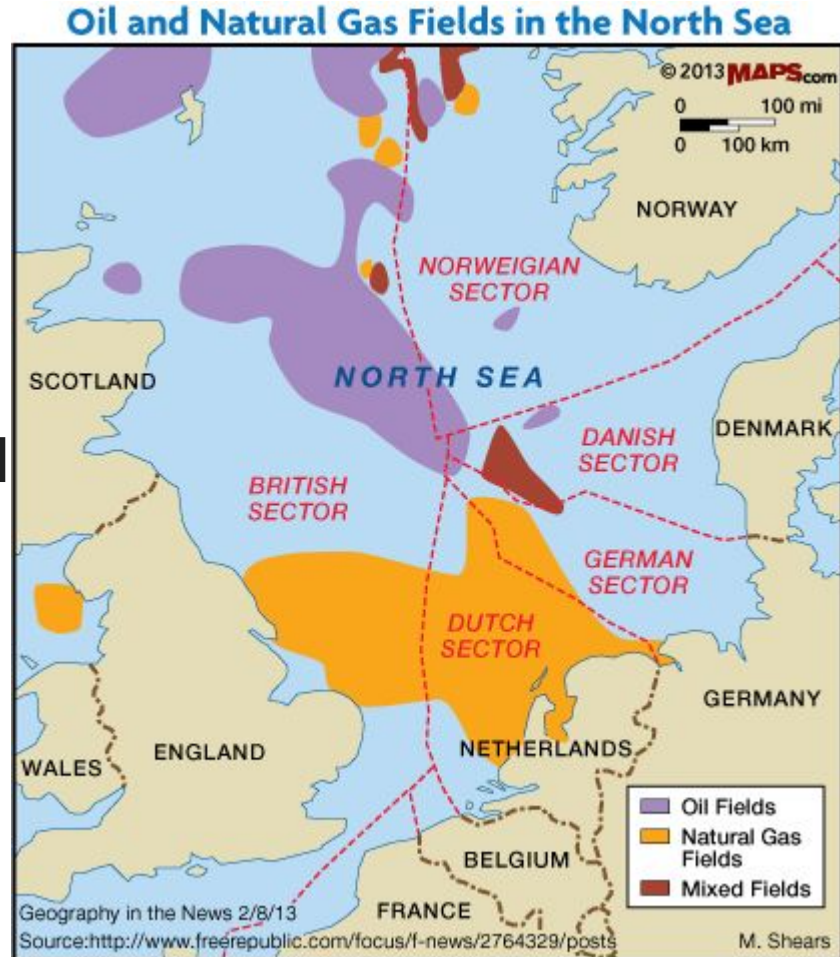
What is Windfall Tax?

A windfall tax is a higher tax levied by the government on specific industries when **they experience unexpected and above-average profits.**

e.g. Petrol prices in India when barrel prices increase.



Brent Crude may refer to any or all of the components of the Brent Complex, a physically and financially traded oil market based around the North Sea of Northwest Europe



MANILA

Philippines blames China for loss of giant clams in disputed shoal



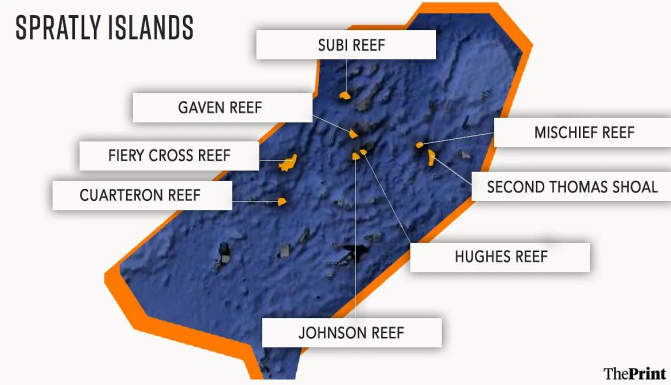
AP

Presenting surveillance photographs, the Philippines blamed Chinese fishermen on Monday for a massive loss of giant clams in the disputed Scarborough Shoal controlled by China's coast guard in the South China Sea and called for an international inquiry into the amount of environmental damage in the area. AP

Scarborough Shoal

- **Scarborough Shoal and the Spratly Islands.** The former is about **120 nautical miles (222 km)** west of the Philippine island of **Luzon** and is considered a part of the Philippines' **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)**.
- **The Spratly Islands** are a group of **over 100 islands and reefs**, and while the Philippines claims some parts, **China lays claim to the entire archipelago**.

China calls the Scarborough Shoal ‘Huangyan Dao’ while the Filipino name for it is ‘Panatag Shoal’ or ‘Bajo de Masinloc’.



- **Located in the middle of the South China Sea and near shipping lanes carrying an estimated \$3.4 trillion of annual commerce, its position is strategic for Beijing.**
- **There are concerns China might one day build a manmade island there, as it has on submerged reefs in the Spratly islands, some equipped with radar, runways and missile systems.**

WHO DOES THE SHOAL BELONG TO?

- **The Philippines and China lay claim to the shoal but sovereignty has never been established and it remains effectively under Beijing's control.**
- **A landmark 2016 ruling on the South China Sea by the Permanent Court of Arbitration, which went largely in favour of the Philippines was not tasked with establishing sovereignty. It ruled China's blockade of the shoal violated international law and said the area was a traditional fishing ground for several countries.**

- **China seized the shoal in 2012 after a standoff with the Philippines and has since maintained a constant deployment of coastguard and fishing trawlers, some accused by Manila of being maritime militia**

'Urban apathy' drives down polling to 60.4%

Election Commission has flagged low turnout in cities such as Mumbai, Thane, Nashik, Lucknow

Maharashtra records the lowest turnout in Phase 5 at 54.33%, West Bengal logs highest at 76.05%

Incidents of violence mar polling in West Bengal with the EC saying it received 1,036 complaints

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

The fifth phase of the Lok Sabha election on Monday saw a 60.48% voter turnout till 11.50 p.m., amid reports of minor incidents of violence from West Bengal.

Maharashtra recorded the lowest turnout at 54.33%, while West Bengal saw the highest at 76.05%.

The voting percentage in Bihar was 54.85, Jharkhand 63.09, Odisha 69.34, Uttar Pradesh 57.79 and Lakshadweep 69.62.

The Election Commission (EC) said in a statement that "parliamentary constituencies in various cities such as Mumbai, Thane, Nashik and Lucknow continued the trend of urban apathy as noticed in 2019."

With this phase, polling has ended in all 48 seats of Maharashtra.

Alleging mismanagement by the EC, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray said the poll body was attempting to sabotage the election and benefit the BJP by less voting.

Polling in West Bengal, which saw the highest turnout, was marred by scattered incidents of violence. Workers of the Trinamool Congress and the BJP clashed in various parts of Barrackpore, Bongaon, and Arambagh.

The EC said it had received 1,036 complaints from different political parties alleging malfunctioning of electronic voting machines (EVMs) and agents being stopped from entering booths.

Clashes broke out between supporters of the Trinamool and the BJP in the Khanakul area of the Arambagh constituency.

In Hooghly, BJP MP and candidate Locket Chatter-



Patient wait: People wait to cast their votes in the Lok Sabha election in Saran of Bihar on Monday. PTI

jee was allegedly heckled when she was on her way to a booth. Violence was also reported from various parts of the Howrah constituency. In the Bongaon constituency, a local BJP leader was allegedly beaten up by Trinamool supporters outside a booth.

EVM glitches were reported from some booths in Odisha and West Bengal.

Rae Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh saw a turnout of 57.85%, while neighbouring Amethi saw 54.15% turning out to vote.

EVM malfunctions

The Congress claimed EVM malfunctioning and accused the BJP of not allowing people to cast votes in certain booths in Rae Bareilly. "Booth number 5, Ra-

sulpur in Sareni in Rae Bareilly is closed since 8 a.m. (and) voters are going back. So this is how (the target of) 400 (seats) will be crossed!" the Uttar Pradesh Congress said in a post on X.

It also alleged that Samajwadi Party candidate from Gonda, Shreya Verma, complained to the EC that fair polling was not

Baramulla polls at 58.17%, highest count since 1996

BARAMULLA

The Baramulla seat in Kashmir Valley logged 58.17% polling by 11.50 p.m. on Monday, breaking its previous record of 46.65% in 1996. An unprecedented number of women, relatives of active militants and cadres of banned Jamaat-e-Islami turned up to cast their votes. » PAGE 5

taking place at two booths in the Mankapur area of the constituency.

Voters of Hisampur Madho village in Kaushambi boycotted the polls.

Voting took place for five Lok Sabha seats and 35 Assembly seats in Odisha.

Some unidentified persons allegedly hacked an autorickshaw driver to death near Sarsara in Bar-

garh district of the State. The deceased was carrying some voters to a polling booth. While the family members claimed it was a political murder, police say personal enmity was the reason behind the crime.

Of the 49 Lok Sabha seats which went to the polls on Monday, the BJP had won 32 while the Congress won only Rae Bareilly in 2019. This time, the BJP is contesting in 40 seats, while the Congress has limited itself to just 18 seats, leaving the rest to its allies.

This phase has 695 candidates, including 82 women, in the fray. With the fifth phase, the polling process in 25 States and Union Territories will be over. The next two phases will be on May 25 and June 1 while the counting of votes will be on June 4.

MORE REPORTS

» PAGES 2, 5 & 6

political apathy

- **political apathy is a lack of interest or apathy towards politics.**
- **This includes voter apathy, information apathy and lack of interest in elections, political events, public meetings, and voting.**

Focus on Increased participation

- **Clean** electoral roll
- **Low Turnout Polling Stations** identified in each Assembly
- Intensive and targeted outreach by respective DEOs in such PSs

Targeting **URBAN APATHY**

- MoUs with Departments & organizations having direct connect with people
- Organizations with 500+ employees to appoint Nodal Officer for awareness sessions for leave taking & non-voting employees.
- Focus on Young Voters – Special outreach campaign in Colleges/Universities



URBAN APATHY



भारत निर्वाचन आयोग
Election Commission of India



Mission 300 - 5 lowest turnout polling stations per AC identified for intensive SVEEP Campaign

Outreach programme through Traditional Heads (Rangbah Shnong) & Youth Organizations (Seng Samla) to target young voters

Mobile Studios with RJs to motivate voters to enrol and vote

Educational campaign to motivate voters

Newly registered first time voters felicitated with certificates and medals

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प्रश्न "लोकतंत्र का प्रतिनिधि स्वरूप समाधान नहीं है बल्कि कट्टरपंथी लोकतंत्र है"। इस कथन को लोकतंत्र के बदलते स्वरूप एवं संदर्भ में स्पष्ट कीजिए

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