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Institute Of Civil Services

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TATHASTU
Institute Of Civil Services

9560300770  www.tathastuics.com  support@tathastuics.com

HEAD OFFICE: 53/1, UPPER GROUND FLOOR, BADA BAZAR ROAD,
OLD RAJINDER NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110060



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ONE NATION ONE ELECTION AND REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

One Nation One Election and representative democracy

The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Ninth Amendment) Bill, 2024, that was tabled in the Lok Sabha, proposes simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and State/Union Territory Legislative Assemblies with the insertion of Article 82(A). This ambitious reform seeks to synchronise elections, fix the tenure of the Lok Sabha, and simultaneously align elections to the State Assemblies. If the Lok Sabha or a State Assembly is dissolved before its five-year term, mid-term elections will only cover the remainder of the original tenure.

The Bill also amends Articles 83, 172, and 327, with changes effective from an 'appointed date', post-2029 general elections, thereby initiating simultaneous elections in 2034. A second Bill, the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, aligns the tenure of Union Territories' legislative Assemblies with the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.

While the proposal seeks administrative efficiency and reduced election fatigue, critical questions arise: has the 'One Nation, One Election (ONOE)' process been truly inclusive and representative? Are there limits to our understanding of the representative spirit of Indian democracy?

Understanding representative democracy

Representative democracy is a system wherein citizens elect representatives to make decisions on their behalf. Rooted in the principles of free and fair elections, political accountability, and the protection of individual rights, it balances majority rule with the protection of minority interests. This form of governance becomes especially critical in diverse and populous countries such as India.

The theoretical underpinnings emphasise that elected representatives act as intermediaries, ensuring stable governance while accommodating competing interests. Citizens, being too numerous and diverse to participate directly in governance, delegate authority to their elected representatives. The system thrives on periodic elections, informed citizen participation, and institutional checks and balances.

Despite its theoretical merits, representative democracy faces growing challenges in practice. A 2024 Pew Research Center study across 24 nations, including Brazil, India, Nigeria, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States, revealed widespread disillusionment with



K. Gireesan
is with the Department of Public Administration, Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development, Regional Centre, Chandigarh



Chinmay Bendre
is Senior Research Associate, MIT School of Government (MIT-SOG), Pune

The process adopted for the One Nation One Election Bill had lapses that affect India's democratic fabric

the system. Citizens increasingly questioned its effectiveness, with some exploring alternatives such as direct democracy, expert rule, or even authoritarian regimes.

In 13 countries, significant segments supported strong leaders bypassing parliamentary checks, reflecting frustration with institutional inefficiencies. Alarmingly, military rule garnered between 15% to 17% support in nations such as Greece, Japan, the U.K., and the U.S. Such trends underscore growing distrust in representative systems, driven by perceived inefficiencies, corruption, and unfulfilled promises.

Jayaprakash Narayan's critique

In India, debates about representative democracy are not new. Jayaprakash Narayan, in his seminal work, *A Plea for Reconstruction of Indian Polity* (1959), offered a deep critique of parliamentary democracy. JP argued that the reliance on individual voting created an 'atomized society', where fragmented, partisan politics overshadowed the collective national interest.

JP highlighted the following defects – risks of minority governments: In a multi-party system like India, he warned that parliamentary democracy risks unstable and unrepresentative governments.

First, demagoguery and populism: JP highlighted how political parties manipulate public opinion through half-truths, empty promises, and divisive rhetoric.

Second, centralisation of power: Parliamentary democracy, according to JP, concentrates power in the state, weakening intermediary institutions between citizens and the national government.

Third, financial costs of elections: JP critiqued the exorbitant cost of elections, tethering democracy to moneyed interests and large organisations.

While critical, JP's analysis aimed to reform and strengthen democracy. His concerns resonate today as India debates ONOE and its implications for democratic representation.

For a reform as significant as ONOE, an inclusive and representative process is crucial. In representative democracies, public opinion shapes policy, holding governments accountable to citizens' aspirations and concerns. To achieve this, pre-legislative consultation becomes indispensable, enabling policymakers to gather diverse views, address challenges, and enhance transparency.

The Pre-Legislative Consultation Policy, 2014,

mandates a minimum 30-day period for public feedback on proposed legislation. It requires draft Bills to be accompanied by explanatory notes that clarify key provisions in accessible terms.

However, the process adopted for ONOE fell short. First, inadequate consultation period: The high-level committee issued a public notice on January 5, 2024, inviting suggestions on ONOE. Citizens were given just 10 days – until January 15 – to respond, undermining the spirit of the 2014 policy. Second, lack of explanatory material: Despite the high-level committee being established in September 2023, no explanatory notes or background papers were provided, limiting citizens' understanding of the proposal's scope and challenges. Third, framing of questions: The high-level committee's approach, seeking 'yes/no' responses on supporting ONOE, appeared perfunctory, giving the impression the matter was already settled.

Such procedural lapses risk alienating citizens and stakeholders, undermining trust in the reform process. In a diverse democracy like India, meaningful public engagement is vital to ensure that policy reflects varied perspectives and fosters consensus.

Implications for representative democracy

The ONOE Bill raises critical questions about the representative nature of Indian democracy. First, centralisation versus federalism: synchronising elections risks a further centralising of power, potentially undermining the federal spirit of the Constitution. State-specific issues may be overshadowed by national narratives. Second, inclusivity and participation: by curtailing consultation and rushing reforms, the government risks sidelining citizens' voices, weakening democratic inclusivity. Third, electoral accountability: frequent elections, while resource-intensive, enhance accountability by enabling voters to evaluate governments regularly. Simultaneous elections could dilute this accountability.

India's democratic fabric thrives on citizen participation, inclusivity, and accountability. Reforms such as ONOE, while aimed at efficiency, must not compromise these principles. A rushed process undermines trust and risks centralisation. Only by adhering to the principles above can our democracy remain truly representative in letter and spirit.

The views expressed are personal

- ❖ **The Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill, 2024**, proposes simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and State/Union Territory Assemblies by inserting **Article 82(A)**.
- ❖ Elections **will align from 2034**, fixing terms and holding mid-terms only for the remaining tenure.
- ❖ The Bill also amends **Articles 83, 172, and 327**, with changes effective from an 'appointed date', post-2029 general elections.

Administrative Efficiency vs. Democratic Concerns

- ❖ While ONOE aims to enhance efficiency and reduce election fatigue, it raises critical concerns about **federalism, public participation, and electoral accountability** in India's representative democracy.





Understanding representative democracy:

- ❖ Representative democracy? –
 - It balances majority rule with the protection of minority interests.
 - Critical in diverse and populous countries such as India.
 - The system thrives on **periodic elections, informed citizen participation, and institutional checks and balances.**
- ❖ Growing challenges?
 - **A 2024 Pew Research Center study across 24 nations revealed widespread disillusionment with the system.**
 - Citizens increasingly **questioned its effectiveness**, with some exploring alternatives such as **direct democracy, expert rule, or even authoritarian regimes.**

Jayaprakash Narayan's critique:

- ❖ First, **demagoguery and populism**: JP highlighted how political parties manipulate public opinion through half-truths, empty promises, and divisive rhetoric.
- ❖ Second, **centralisation of power**: Parliamentary democracy, according to JP, concentrates power in the state, weakening intermediary institutions between citizens and the national government.
- ❖ Third, **financial costs of elections**: JP critiqued the exorbitant cost of elections, tethering democracy to moneyed interests and large organisations.

(His concerns resonate today as India debates ONOE and its implications for democratic representation)

Shortcomings in the ONOE Consultation Process

- ❖ **Failed to meet the standards of inclusivity outlined in the Pre-Legislative Consultation Policy, 2014**, which mandates:
 1. **Minimum 30-day Consultation Period**: The high-level committee issued a public notice on January 5, 2024, with a deadline of January 15, providing only 10 days for public feedback. This undermines the spirit of the 2014 policy.
 2. **Lack of Explanatory Material**: No explanatory notes or background papers were shared. This limited public understanding of the proposal's scope and implications.
 3. **Framing of Questions**: Citizens were asked to provide simple 'yes/no' responses on supporting ONOE, giving the impression that the decision was already predetermined.

Challenges to Representative Democracy

- ❖ ONOE raises significant concerns about the representative nature of Indian democracy:
 1. **Centralisation vs. Federalism**: Synchronised elections risk centralising power, overshadowing state-specific issues with national narratives and undermining the federal spirit of the Constitution.
 2. **Inclusivity and Participation**: The rushed process sidelines citizens' voices, weakening democratic inclusivity and reducing trust in the system.
 3. **Electoral Accountability**: Frequent elections, while resource-intensive, ensure regular government evaluation by voters. Simultaneous elections could reduce this accountability, weakening democratic oversight.





THE CHALLENGE OF HOLDING JUDGES ACCOUNTABLE

The challenge of holding judges accountable

The review mechanism for judges in India requires 'proved misbehaviour or incapacity' to be decided by a committee set up under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968. This committee functions like a trial court, but is set in motion only after a successful attempt to impeach the judge is moved either in the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha

LETTER & SPIRIT

Kunal Shankar

A speech delivered by Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav of the Allahabad High Court, that made apparent his biases against the Muslim community, at an event organised by the legal cell of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad within the Court precincts on December 8, has once again spotlighted the difficulty in India's review mechanism to hold judges of the higher judiciary accountable.

The review mechanism requires "proved misbehaviour or incapacity" to be decided by a three-member committee set up under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968. This committee functions like a trial court, but is set in motion only after a successful attempt to impeach the concerned judge is moved either in the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha, which must be approved by the presiding officer of the House – the Speaker in the case of the Lok Sabha, or the Vice-President/Chairman in case of the Rajya Sabha. The provisions for this mechanism flows from Articles 124 (4), (5), 217, and 218 of the Constitution of India, and the those of the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968.

Justice V. Ramaswami's trial

Only two judges out of seven so far, aside from Justice Yadav against whom impeachment has been attempted, have been found guilty for their "misbehaviour" by the three-member committee, which must comprise of a Supreme Court judge, a Chief Justice of a High Court and an eminent jurist.

The first was retired Supreme Court Justice V. Ramaswami, who was found guilty of extravagant spending on his official residence such as buying air conditioners, plush furniture and bedding, without following due process, much like the accusations made against Trinamooli Congress MP Mahua Moitra by the ruling BJP last year. While such misdemeanours by current accounts of corruption seem like an arcane quibble over propriety, they nevertheless animated public discourse on a judge's conduct in the late 80s and early 90s. Such discussions led to the foundation of the "Restatement of Values of Judicial Life" adopted by the Supreme Court on May 7, 1997, as the code of conduct for those holding high offices in judiciary.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, retired Madras High Court Justice K. Chandru, who played a pivotal role in the impeachment proceedings against Justice Ramaswami, recollected how the judge "bought 6+1 = 7 maces, one with a silver head to denote the Chief Justice's arrival and took it on a cargo plane in 1988, and not by rail," following his elevation as the Chief Justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

"There was no tendering process that was followed for the purchase of the maces," Justice Chandru added. He was referring to the colonial practice followed at the Madras HC where an orderly precedes a judge, to signal his arrival to ensure those in the hallway and the courthouse "maintain decorum". Justice Ramaswami deemed it fit to continue this practice at the Punjab and Haryana High Court, which did not have this practice as it was founded in independent India, much to the shock of his "brother judges". In his Tamil book, *I too became a judge*, Justice Chandru recalled a letter dated August 18, 1988, in which then Chief Justice V. Ramaswami's colleagues wrote "You will remember that most of us told you later



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too that we are opposed to the introduction of maces. Maces are but a relic of the imperial past and out of tune with our socialistic pattern of society."

The adverse verdict by the three-member panel constituted under the Judges Inquiry Act against V. Ramaswami set the precedent of then CJI Sabyasachi Mukherjee deciding not to allocate any work to him in 1993. The failure of the impeachment motion in the Lok Sabha that year, did not lead to a reversal of the CJI's decision. No cases were listed for hearing before Justice Ramaswami's Bench until his retirement three years later.

Article 124 (4) of the Constitution stipulates that the panel's finding must be voted upon by Parliament. The motion requires either a two-thirds majority of present MPs voting in favour of the motion or an absolute majority in each House, for the judge to be removed. On May 10, 1993, of the 401 members present in the Lok Sabha, 196 voted for Ramaswami's removal. While no one voted against the motion, 205 abstentions by the ruling Congress ensured the defeat of the impeachment.

Resignation before accountability

The second judge to face an impeachment motion was Justice Soumitra Sen of the Calcutta High Court. Justice Sen became the first judge of India's higher judiciary who was voted to be removed by the Rajya Sabha by an

August 6 that year, seeking a continuation of the committee's investigations arguing that "the jurisdiction of the Committee is untouched by the factum of removal...". The FJA's contention was that there were two separate parts to the removal process of a justice – one that concerns finding guilt, which is governed by Article 124 (5) and the second, which is impeachment, which is governed by article 124 (4) and is within the jurisdiction of Parliament. "The purpose of impeachment is not merely removal from office, but a more substantial one about accountability to the people whose trust is alleged to be breached and whose confidence in judiciary needs to be reinforced," the FJA argued.

"Though Article 124(5) of the Constitution uses the words "removed from office" and is silent on the issue of disqualification from holding future office, the finding of guilt by the Committee and the subsequent proceedings in Parliament will have the effect of disqualifying the person from holding public office in future. It may be noted that Justice V.Ramasami having been found guilty by the Committee, continued to hold office as a judge of the Supreme Court and retired with all the benefits, taking advantage of the defeat of the impeachment motion. Post retirement he was appointed as Chairperson of the Tamil Nadu Law Commission," said FJA.

The need to complete proceedings

RTI petitions by former *Frontline* legal affairs editor, V. Venkatesan revealed that both jurist Mohan Gopal and the Chairman of the three-member panel retired Justice Aftab Alam believed the work of the committee must continue. The RTI replies made public a set of correspondence between Mohan Gopal and the two members of the committee, and of the committee with the Rajya Sabha Chairperson Hamid Ansari. Mr. Venkatesan has included these letters as annexures to his 2014 book *Constitutional Condurms: Challenges to India's Democratic Process*. In his August 15, 2011 letter to Justice Aftab Alam and J. S. Kehar, the then Chief Justice of the Karnataka HC, Mr. Gopal writes, "the resignation of Justice P.D. Dinakaran presents our Committee with an unprecedented situation. Any decision we take will have a profound and far-reaching impact on the framework for judicial accountability in our country – both in terms [of the] future implementation of the Judges Inquiry Act, 1968, and in terms of the manner in which the current Constitutional and legal framework for judicial accountability is reformed...While undoubtedly the investigation and the proof stage arises only when there is a prayer for removal from office and is the essential first step or that purpose, it would be an error to ignore the independent role and value of the investigation and proof part of the process in and by itself... A view that the resignation would result in the investigation and proof process being aborted would in effect place in the hands of the judge who is the object of the investigation the power to end the investigation against him by resigning – an absurd situation that the legislature could not have intended. In such circumstances, there would be no incentive arising from this process for any judge to avoid misbehaviour as any judge can end investigation into charges against him at any point by resigning from office."

While the Chair justice Aftab Alam concurred and sought the continuation of the Committee, the request was rejected by Rajya Sabha Chairman Hamid Ansari.

Such instances highlight that members of India's higher judiciary enjoy a disproportionately greater level of immunity when compared with even elected officials as they "continue to enjoy the perks of being a retired judge, like pension" and other benefits, said jurist Mohan Gopal.

THE GIST

Only two judges so far have been found guilty for their "misbehaviour" by the three-member committee, which must comprise of a Supreme Court judge, a Chief Justice of a High Court and an eminent jurist.

Article 124 (4) of the Constitution stipulates that the panel's finding must be voted upon by Parliament. The motion requires either a two-thirds majority of present MPs voting in favour of the motion or an absolute majority in each House, for the judge to be removed.

Such instances highlight that members of India's higher judiciary enjoy a disproportionately greater level of immunity when compared with even elected officials as they "continue to enjoy the perks of being a retired judge, like pension" and other benefits, said jurist Mohan Gopal.





Judicial Bias and Accountability:

- ❖ The Case of Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav
- ❖ This incident has reignited concerns about the accountability mechanisms for judges of the higher judiciary in India.

Current Mechanism for Judicial Accountability

- ❖ Under the **Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968**, a judge's removal requires proof of "**misbehaviour or incapacity**" determined by a **three-member committee** comprising a **Supreme Court judge**, a **High Court Chief Justice**, and an **eminent jurist**.
- ❖ This **process is initiated only after an impeachment motion** is moved and admitted in either the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha.
 - **Articles 124(4), 124(5), 217, and 218** of the Constitution, along with the **Judges (Inquiry) Act**, provide the legal basis for this mechanism.
 - **Parliament must approve the impeachment with a two-thirds majority or an absolute majority in each House.**

Justice V. Ramaswami's Case: A Precedent

- ❖ Justice V. Ramaswami was the first Supreme Court judge to face impeachment for extravagant spending on his official residence without due process.
 - A three-member panel found him guilty, leading the then Chief Justice of India (CJI) to stop assigning him cases.
 - Despite the findings, the impeachment motion failed in the Lok Sabha in 1993 due to abstentions by the ruling Congress.
 - Justice Ramaswami continued in office until his retirement, retaining all post-retirement benefits.



Resignations Before Accountability

- ❖ Two other prominent judges faced impeachment proceedings but resigned before the process could conclude:
 1. **Justice Soumitra Sen (Calcutta High Court):** Found guilty of misappropriating ₹33.23 lakh in 1983, Justice Sen resigned in 2011 after the Rajya Sabha voted for his removal.
 2. **Justice P.D. Dinakaran (Sikkim High Court):** Accused of grave misconduct, including land-grabbing, Justice Dinakaran resigned in 2011 on the day the inquiry panel was to convene.
- ❖ These resignations aborted the accountability process, **allowing judges to retain post-retirement benefits and evade full scrutiny.**

Calls for Continued Investigations

- ❖ Resignations should not terminate investigations.



- Accountability involves both proving misconduct (Article 124(5)) and impeachment (Article 124(4)).
- The goal is not just removal but restoring public trust in the judiciary.
- ❖ RTI petitions by journalist V. Venkatesan revealed correspondence among members of the Dinakaran inquiry panel, emphasizing the need to continue investigations post-resignation. However, Rajya Sabha Chairperson Hamid Ansari rejected the request to proceed.

Challenges in Judicial Accountability

- ❖ The current system disproportionately shields judges:
 - Unlike elected officials, judges retain post-retirement perks even if they resign during investigations.
 - The process is susceptible to political influences, as seen in the failure of Justice Ramaswami's impeachment despite adverse findings.

Reforming Judicial Accountability

- ❖ To ensure accountability, the judicial inquiry process must:
 1. **Continue Post-Resignation:** Resignations should not abort investigations or shield judges from scrutiny.
 2. **Strengthen Mechanisms:** Amend the **Judges (Inquiry) Act** to allow independent investigations without requiring impeachment motions.





ACCELERATED MOVEMENT: LOGISTICS SECTOR HIGH ON DELIVERY, LOW ON COST

Accelerated movement: logistics sector high on delivery, low on cost

Logistics whether road, rail, air, waterways or warehouses is now a booming sector, given its crucial role in supply chains; while experts remain bullish on the sector's future prospects, industry seeks policy support to cut costs further and focus on upgrading workforce skills

NEWS ANALYSIS

T.E. Raja Simhan

For the logistics sector, the year gone by was marked by efforts to move closer to the goals envisaged by the National Logistic Policy (NLP) in 2022. Following India's elevation to the 38th rank among 139 nations in the World Bank Index in 2023, the focus in 2024 was on reducing logistics cost from the prevailing 10-14%.

The Economic Survey 2023-24 states the Centre launched the NLP and the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan (in 2021) to boost efficiency and lower logistics costs, alongside digital reforms like the Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP) and the Logistics Data Bank.

The electrification of the short railway lines connecting railway yards to inland container depots and container freight stations has facilitated faster movement and release of wagons by the Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI); additionally, the NLP Marine policy was launched for port-related logistics.

Since the launch of the NLP, over 614 entities have registered on ULIP, with 106 private companies signing non-disclosure agreements (NDAs); 142 companies cumulatively



Cheaper to move: Logistics cost slid 0.8-0.9 percentage points of GDP between FY14- FY22. THE HINDU

submitted 382 use cases for ULIP, including data exchange, document digitisation and process automation; 57 applications have been made live, as of September 2023, to facilitate logistical requirements such as cross-border trade, last-mile delivery optimisation, and reverse logistics.

Crucial role

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) played a remarkable role in reducing logistics cost. The 'one nation, one tax' regime has cut the waiting time of trucks at State borders, thereby reducing travel time by nearly 30%. This, has reduced logistics cost and increased the average distance covered by trucks to 300-325 km from 225



The sector, valued at \$250 billion and contributing 14% to India GDP, demonstrated resilience as it transitioned from unorganised to a structured industry

km, the survey said.

A report by the National Council of Applied Economic Research in December 2023 shows logistics cost declined by 0.8-0.9 percentage points of GDP between FY14 and FY22. The improvement in logistics performance is reflected at the State-level too.

Logistics is now a booming sector, given its crucial

role in supply chains. Experts remain bullish on the sector's future prospects.

Rampraveen Swaminathan, MD and CEO of Mahindra Logistics Ltd., says the industry underwent transformative changes in 2024, driven by macro trends such as deeper digital adoption, and an intensified focus on risk management.

Government-led initiatives like Gati Shakti, One Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) and ULIP further empowered the sector to meet evolving customer expectations, he said. Combined with the China Plus One strategy (diversifying manufacturing and sourcing operations beyond China), India's position as a critical

player in the global supply chain ecosystem has been reinforced.

"As we enter 2025, the logistics sector is poised for significant growth, supported by rising data transparency and advanced digitisation. Supportive policies in warehousing, including grant of infrastructure status and expanded foreign direct investment, are accelerating the development of multi-client warehousing facilities," he says.

As the logistics landscape evolves, the 11.1% rise in capital expenditure for infrastructure signals significant growth opportunities in the sector, driving India's ambition of becoming a \$5-trillion economy by 2027, he says.

Skilling needs

Mahesh Fogla, ED, Patel Integrated Logistics Ltd., the robust growth in the logistics sector in 2024 was driven by a 12% annual expansion rate, increasing domestic consumption, and government-backed initiatives like Gati Shakti and NLP. The sector, valued at \$250 billion and contributing 14% to India's GDP, demonstrated resilience as it transitioned from unorganised to a structured industry.

He calls for more efforts towards streamlining operations and enhancing workforce skills to fully unlock the sector's potential.

E-commerce growth, demand for faster delivery, and export expansion driven by the productivity-linked incentive scheme will amplify goods movement, positioning India to capitalise on global trade opportunities, he says. He also foresees that government initiatives such as UDAN (to promote regional air connectivity) and NLP, will cut logistics cost by 4-5%, enhancing competitiveness in global markets.

Multi-modal strength

Progress in rail and waterway freight movement, alongside extensive highway construction, heralded new era of multi-modal connectivity, strengthening India's position as a rising global economic powerhouse, says Ketan Kulkarni, Deputy MD, Gati Express and Supply Chain.,

What remains to be done, according to Rajesh Menon, a maritime expert, includes technology integration to further reduce logistics cost, measuring the ease of doing business on ground and bringing to fruition the maritime connectivity projects identified in the Union Budget at an outlay of ₹75,000 crore. The Indian Port Bill awaits implementation, while transition from land-based to coastal transportation needs to be hastened.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

- ❖ In 2024, India's logistics sector made strides toward achieving the goals of the **National Logistics Policy (NLP)**, launched in 2022. Efforts focused on reducing logistics costs from **10-14%**, improving efficiency, and leveraging digital reforms like the **Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP)**. These developments followed India's elevation to the **38th rank in the World Bank Logistics Performance Index 2023**.

- ❖ Logistics encompasses planning, coordinating, storing, and moving resources —people, raw materials, inventory, equipment, etc., from one location to another, from the production points to consumption, distribution, or other production points.





Key Achievements

- ❖ Launch of **PM Gati Shakti** in 2021 for infrastructure development.
- ❖ Over **614 entities** registered on **ULIP**, with **57 live applications** supporting cross-border trade, last-mile delivery, and reverse logistics.
- ❖ Introduction of the **NLP Marine Policy** to enhance port-related logistics.
- ❖ Electrification of railway lines for faster freight movement.
- ❖ Reduced truck waiting times at state borders. Increased truck travel distances to **300-325 km per day**, cutting logistics costs significantly.

Challenges and Future Prospects

- ❖ **Skill Development and Operational Efficiency:**
 - **Workforce upskilling and streamlining operations**
 - Policies supporting warehousing (e.g., infrastructure status, expanded FDI) are critical for multi-client warehousing growth.
- ❖ **Pending Reforms:**
 - Implementation of the **Indian Port Bill**.
 - Speeding up **maritime connectivity** projects
 - Transitioning from **land-based to coastal transportation**.

Way Forward:

- ❖ Advanced **digitization** and data transparency will redefine efficiency.
- ❖ Government initiatives like **UDAN** and productivity-linked incentives will drive faster deliveries and export expansion.
- ❖ With an **11.1% rise in capital expenditure for infrastructure**, the sector is a cornerstone of India's ambition to become a **\$5-trillion economy by 2027**.

Prelims Practice Question

Q.1 Consider the following Statements with respect to National Logistics Policy :

1. It deals with logistical challenges of both national and international trade.
2. India currently has higher share of rail than road in transportation of goods.
3. WTO releases Logistics Performance Index to measure logistics ease across countries.

Select the Correct Code:

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



SUEZ CANAL'S NEW 10-KM EXTENSION WITNESSES TRIAL RUN



- ❖ Egypt has tested a **10-kilometre extension** of the Suez Canal to enhance navigational safety, minimise the impact of currents, and increase the canal's capacity.

Challenge:

- ❖ The canal has faced challenges like ships running aground due to strong winds and sandstorms.
- ❖ In **2021, the Ever Given incident blocked the canal for nearly a week**, causing trade disruptions worth billions of dollars.

Other Challenges:

- ❖ Revenue from the canal has dropped by up to **70%** since last year, according to the IMF, due to attacks on Red Sea shipping by Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels.
- ❖ These attacks have forced companies to alter routes, reducing the canal's share of global maritime trade, which once accounted for **10% of total trade**.



ISRO TO SIGN OFF 2024 WITH SPACE DOCKING EXPERIMENT MISSION TODAY

- ❖ ISRO is set to end the year with the **PSLV-C60/SpaDeX mission**, launching on **Monday at 9:58 p.m.** from Sriharikota.
- ❖ The mission will mark India's **first-ever Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX)**, showcasing in-space docking between two small satellites, **Chaser (SDX01)** and **Target (SDX02)**.
- ❖ The docking is expected in the **first week of January** after precision maneuvers and gradual orbital adjustments.
- ❖ The mission also includes **24 PS4-Orbital Experiment Module payloads**.

Prelims Practice Question

Q.2 What is the primary objective of the SpaDeX mission?

- (a) Testing satellite navigation systems
- (b) Demonstrating in-space docking technology
- (c) Launching a lunar rover
- (d) Improving interplanetary communication

