

1. PM Modi to visit RSS headquarters: All about Sangh's two main centres in Nagpur**Why in News?**

Narendra Modi has become the first sitting Prime Minister to visit the Dr Hedgewar Smruti Mandir in Reshimbagh in Nagpur, the administrative headquarters of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh which also houses memorials dedicated to its founder K B Hedgewar, and second sarsanghchalak (chief) M S Golwalkar.



Minutes away is the RSS Karyalaya, the official residence of the organisation's senior leaders, including sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat, which also contains a museum telling the story of the many travails of the once-banned outfit.

RSS has been banned thrice in Independent India: after the killing of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948, during the Emergency in 1975-77, and after the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992.

Memorial of founder, organisation's HQ

Away from the hustle and bustle of the Nagpur traffic, there is a modest but meticulously maintained structure surrounded by green trees and flowering plants: the memorial of RSS founder Dr Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, popularly known as Doctorji.

Once a Congress activist, Hedgewar grew disillusioned with the party in the 1920s. Following Hindu-Muslim riots that rocked Nagpur (as well as many other cities) in 1923, Hedgewar on vijayadasami day in 1925 launched the RSS, an organisation dedicated towards establishing a Hindu Rashtra.

He led the organisation till his death in 1940. Hedgewar was cremated at the then-open grounds of Reshmibagh where a samadhi (memorial) was erected in his honour in 1962, inaugurated by his successor Golwalkar. After Golwalkar's passing in 1973, the RSS built a memorial for him at the same site.

Apart from housing memorials of Hedgewar and Golwalkar, the premises also have a number of administrative offices, training centres, and a state-of-the-art auditorium which make up the headquarters of the RSS. All meetings and training camps take place at this location.

Residence of sarsanghchalak, museum

The Sangh's top leadership, including sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat, lives at the Karyalaya when in Nagpur. The Karyalaya has been with the RSS since its founding in 1925.

Inside the Karyala are rows of spartan rooms, equipped only with some basic necessities and with very little furniture. They are equipped with water coolers — not air-conditioners — to beat the oppressive Nagpur summer.

The second floor of the Karyalaya has been converted into a museum, displaying belongings, memoirs, letters, gifts, citations of various RSS chiefs, and senior leaders. It is designed to be a walk down the memory lane — one that tells the story of the Sangh, and the many travails faced by the once-banned organisation.

Security concerns

Although both the Karyalaya and the Dr Hedgewar Smruti Mandir are open to the public, they are heavily guarded, especially since the Lashkar-e-Taiba of 2006, when the police gunned down three terrorists targeting the Sangh's two main centres.

Today, the RSS chief is provided Z+ security — the highest category of armed VIP protection in India.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Culture

Source: Indian Express

2. Behind Nepal's violent street protests: popular discontent with corruption

Why in News?



16 years on, why thousands in Nepal are calling for return to Hindu monarchy under an ousted king

A monarch driven out of his throne 19 years ago has suddenly turned into a rallying point for citizens angry and frustrated with the system, the constitution, and the leaders at the helm in the democratic republic of Nepal.

Recently, the army was called out as supporters of the restoration of the constitutional monarchy swarmed the streets of Kathmandu, outnumbering the attendees of a rally of the Left Front, and clashing violently with police.

Three individuals were killed, and 110 arrested. At a meeting of the cabinet late in the evening, at least one prominent minister asked for the arrest

of former King Gyanendra Shah.

But Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli was in favour of caution in view of warnings from security agencies about the likely fallout of harsh action.

Genesis: The King's call

The former King has not given any clear indications of his desire to return. He has confined his activities to issuing messages expressing concern over the state of affairs in Nepal, the

worsening economic scenario, and the flight of youths abroad in search of livelihood opportunities.

However, he has remained in constant touch with the people, and has mingled with them during pilgrimage tours in the country, and occasionally to India – perhaps trying to assess the extent of the support for him on the ground.

Street violence and arrests

Two former Prime Ministers, Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda of the Maoist Centre and Madhav Kumar Nepal of the United Socialists, warned Shah not to dream of reclaiming the throne, and advised Prime Minister Oli to arrest him.

Police, who had taken up positions at a private house, dealt a harsh hand to the royalist rally. The mob attacked the party offices of Prachanda and Madhav Nepal after they demanded the arrest of the former king. Following the cabinet meeting in the evening, police put Subedi under house arrest, and arrested three other stalwarts of the movement, Dhawal Shumsher Rana, Rabindra Mishra, and Swagat Nepal.

Anger against corruption

The public unrest and anger against widespread corruption and the mega scams in which almost every Prime Minister and senior politician is boiling over.

It has been a practice since 2006 to grant immunity to politicians against investigation if a “policy decision”, which is essentially a decision by the cabinet, is taken to that effect.

Prime Minister Oli faces a contempt case in the Supreme Court for violating its order against converting a tea estate into commercial plots.

Three other former PMs, Madhav Nepal (2009-11), Baburam Bhattarai (2011-13), and Khil Raj Regmi (2013-14), are accused of making money in scams to give government land to private individuals.

Complaints are pending against three-time PM Prachanda for allegedly making billions by diverting money meant for Maoist guerrillas when they were kept in UN-monitored cantonments during the peace process that began in late 2006.

Five-time PM Sher Bahadur Deuba is accused of taking illegal commissions in the purchase of aircraft, and his wife Arzu Rana Deuba, currently the foreign affairs minister of Nepal, has often faced questions in Parliament about her alleged role in fraudulently turning Nepali citizens into Bhutanese nationals on paper, and sending them to the United States as “refugees”.

What would return to Monarchy mean?

It is widely believed that the collapse of the republican experiment and a return to Nepal's former monarchical system could lead to an investigation of the alleged misdeeds of all these politicians, and likely trials and convictions.

This would then be a likely reason for politicians belonging to both the ruling coalition as well as the Maoist opposition to come together to resist a dialogue or conciliation with Shah.

However, the royalist street protests are evidence that shutting the monarchy and traditional forces out of the negotiations may not help in the ultimate resolution of the social conflict that has wracked Nepal since the mid-1990s. The pro-republic forces may be forced at some point to course-correct and hold a dialogue with these groups.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations

Source: Indian Express

3. Why has X sued the government over SAHYOG?

Why in News?

Social media platform X has sued the Union government in the Karnataka High Court for the SAHYOG portal, which it says is a "censorship portal" that allows local police and different parts of the government to indiscriminately demand takedowns of online content.

What is the SAHYOG portal?

The SAHYOG portal is being developed to automate the process of sending notices to intermediaries by the Appropriate Government or its agency under IT Act, 2000 to facilitate the removal or disabling of access to any information, data or communication link being used to commit an unlawful act. It is run by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) with help from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

The portal is to be given over to the police across the country, MHA officials said at the meeting, and would soon be "expanded" to accommodate data requests from social media firms in such cases. The main mandate, however, remained content takedown notices under Section 79(3)(b) of the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000. X considers this illegal, as it argues internet takedowns in India is covered under another legal provision in IT act.


What are the laws?

Section 79(1) of the IT Act gives online platforms a shield from legal liability for content posted by third parties, that is, their users. Section 79(3), however, qualifies this safe harbour by stating that the shield will not apply if social media companies are given notice by any "appropriate Government or its agency," then they can also be taken to court for a piece of content, just like the user.

X argues — as have civil society groups — that this is an overreach. "Section 79(3)(b) of the IT Act does not authorise the government to issue information blocking orders," X said in its petition. "That power is governed by Section 69A of the IT Act read with the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking for Access of Information by Public) Rules, 2009."

Section 69A allows the government to block content, the IT Ministry says, if it impinges on "(i) interest of sovereignty and integrity of India, (ii) defence of India, (iii) security of the State, (iv)

friendly relations with foreign States or (v) public order or (vi) for preventing incitement to the commission of any cognizable offense relating to above."

X's legal challenge Here are the contentions of Elon Musk's company in the Karnataka High Court: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Why issue blocking orders under Section 79(3)(b) of the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000, and not under Section 69A■ Section 79(3)(b) outlines the conditions under which an intermediary loses its 'safe harbour' protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Section 69A empowers the government to block access to online content, under specific circumstances■ Union Home Ministry's Sahyog portal is a 'censorship portal'
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However, this Section has several safeguards built into it, such as giving users the opportunity to be heard. These safeguards are laid out in the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking for Access of Information by Public) Rules, 2009. However, even blockings under Section 69A have been contentious, because there have been instances where a notice has not been issued.

What is the government's stance?

While these legal challenges are being worked out, the SAHYOG portal has seen participation from most social media firms, including those owned by Meta and Google. The government has argued that the "takedown" orders (as they are called even in the model notice the IT Ministry has shared with authorities) are not blocking orders. "Section 79 regime does not envisage any 'blocking orders' and merely issues notice informing intermediaries of their due diligence obligations," the government said in a filing in the case. "In case of non-compliance of the notices, the result is lifting of safe harbour protection to intermediary and consequent action under extant law... and the same is fundamentally at a different plane altogether."

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: The Hindu

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