

CURRENTLY - FROM NEWS TO NOTES

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

The Hindu & The Indian express

Headline	Source
U.S. sanctions Russian oil majors; Indian refiners poised to cut buy	The Hindu, p.1 International Relations – India–U.S.–Russia; Energy Security
Day ahead of Rajya Sabha bypolls in J&K, Congress and PDP back ruling NC	The Hindu, p.2 Polity – Parliament; Rajya Sabha Elections
The UN matters, as a symbol of possibility	The Hindu, p.10 International Relations – United Nations; Global Governance Reform

Headline	Source
Union govt. asks CJI to recommend a successor	The Hindu, p.40 Polity – Judiciary; Appointment of Chief Justice of India
Modi to participate in ASEAN meet virtually, drops Malaysia travel plan	The Hindu, p.14 International Relations – ASEAN; India's Foreign Policy
Why cloud seeding is not a solution to Delhi's air pollution crisis	The Hindu, p.13 Environment – Pollution; Climate & Science Policy
Harvest time (GI-tagged Pokkali paddy)	The Hindu, p.6 Environment & Agriculture – GI Products; Climate-resilient Farming

U.S. sanctions Russian oil majors; Indian refiners poised to cut buy

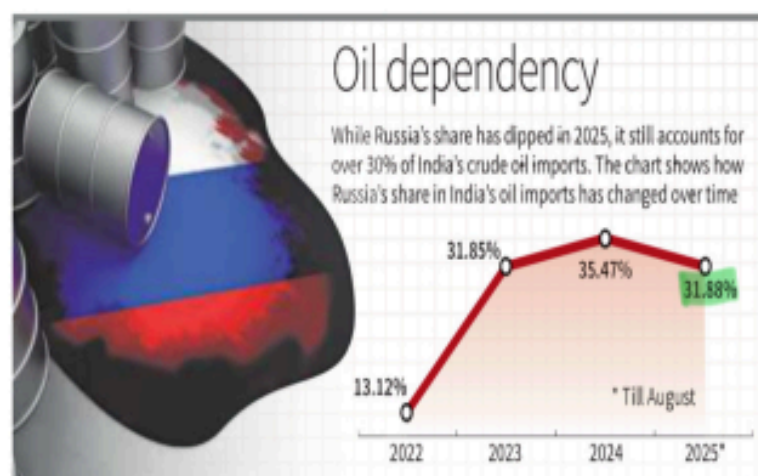
Rosneft and Lukoil hit with sanctions for 'funding Kremlin's war machine'; pushing global oil prices up 3%; Trump says India will cut down imports to 'almost nothing' by year-end; Indian firms are 'recalibrating' to align with govt. guidelines

Reuters
WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI

U.S. President Donald Trump hit Russia's two biggest oil companies with sanctions in his latest policy shift on Moscow's war in Ukraine, prompting global oil prices to rise by 3% on Thursday.

Mr. Trump also reiterated his claim that India has agreed to "stop" buying oil from Russia and would bring its oil purchases down to "almost nothing" by the end of the year, and said he would persuade China to do the same. India and China are the two biggest buyers of Russian oil.

Indian refiners – including Reliance, the top Indian buyer of Russian crude – are poised to sharply curtail imports of Russian oil to comply with



India, as you know, has told me they are going to stop [buying Russian oil]... It's a process. You can't just stop... By the end of the year, they'll be down to almost nothing

DONALD TRUMP, U.S. President

the new U.S. sanctions, industry sources said on Thursday.

'Funding war'

The U.S. sanctions target oil giants Rosneft and Lukoil, which between them account for more than 5%

of global oil output. The U.S. Treasury has given companies until November 21 to wind down their transactions with the Russian oil producers.

"Given [Russian] President [Vladimir] Putin's refusal to end this senseless

war, Treasury is sanctioning Russia's two largest oil companies that fund the Kremlin's war machine," U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said in a statement. "We encourage our allies to join us in and adhere to these sanctions."

Oil and gas revenue, currently down 21% year-on-year, accounts for a quarter of Russia's budget and is the most important source of funding for its war in Ukraine, now in its fourth year.

Mr. Trump expressed confidence regarding India's response to the sanctions. "India, as you know, has told me they are going to stop [buying Russian oil]... It's a process. You can't just stop... By the end of the year, they'll be down to almost nothing, almost 40% of the oil. India, they've been great. Spoke to Prime Minister [Narendra] Modi yesterday. They've been absolutely great," the U.S. President told reporters at the White House on Wednesday.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 14

U.S. sanctions Russian oil majors; Indian refiners to reduce imports

Source: The Hindu, Page 1

Why in News:

The U.S. has imposed sanctions on Russia's top oil companies Rosneft and Lukoil for funding the Kremlin's war in Ukraine, leading to a 3% rise in global oil prices.

Key Details:

- **Sanction Target:** Rosneft and Lukoil – together account for over 5% of global oil output.
- **U.S. Aim:** To curb Moscow's war revenue and pressurize its allies, including India and China, to reduce Russian oil imports.

Russia's Share in India's Oil Imports:

- **2022 – 13.12%**
- **2024 – 35.47%**
- **Till Aug 2025 – 31.88%**



Day ahead of Rajya Sabha bypolls in J&K, Congress and PDP back ruling NC

Numbers in the Union Territory's Assembly suggest National Conference could win three seats and BJP the fourth, but Independents and smaller parties key to the outcome on last two seats

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

The Congress and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on Thursday extended their formal support to the ruling National Conference (NC), a day ahead of the byelections to four Rajya Sabha seats of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Taking into account our sensitivities as a suffering State and our identity as a tested voice for a diverse and secular India, the Congress party has decided to keep all differences with the NC on the back burner - solely to reaffirm our commitment to our own ethos and principles," J&K Pradesh Congress Committee president Tariq Hameed Karra said.

Mr. Karra admitted that the upcoming Rajya Sabha polls have posed "a new challenge" while referring to growing differences with the NC, its coalition partner. "We sincerely hope that the NC keeps its flock together against all tempta-



Leader of the Opposition Sunil Kumar Sharma speaking during the first day of the Assembly session in Srinagar on Thursday. IMRAN NISSAR

tions and manipulations - and in that endeavour, we extend our full support. All our six Congress MLAs will support NC," Mr. Karra said, adding that his party chose unity over division during the 2024 Assembly poll as well.

The Opposition PDP, which has three legislators in the J&K Assembly, also offered support to the NC. "The PDP will back NC candidate Shammi Oberoi as a third preference to prevent BJP gains. We are giving our three votes to the NC's

third candidate. This is to ensure that if the BJP wins the fourth seat, blame is not placed on us," said PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti.

Support for Bills

She said in lieu of the support, the PDP was expecting support to the Land Rights Bill and the Daily Wager Regularisation Bill introduced in the Assembly in the ongoing session.

"NC president Dr. Farooq [Abdullah] sahab called me and asked for our party's support. I told

him that we need two Bills to be passed in the Assembly first," Ms. Mufti said.

The current arithmetic suggests the NC could win three seats and the BJP the fourth seat. At present, the 90-member Assembly has 88 legislators as two seats of Budgam and Nagrota are currently vacant. The NC-Congress combine has the highest MLAs (52), which includes the former's 41, the latter's six and Independents. The BJP has the second highest count in the Assembly at 27 seats.

Independents and smaller parties will remain key to win two Rajya Sabha seats in the Union Territory. J&K Peoples Conference (JKPC), Awami Ittehad Party, and Aam Aadmi Party have one MLA each. The JKPC has decided to abstain from voting and AAP MLA Mehraj Malik, who is in jail, is likely to be provided with a ballot box there.

The NC has fielded candidates in all four seats while the BJP has named three candidates.

Day Ahead of Rajya Sabha Bypolls in J&K, Congress and PDP Back Ruling NC

Source: The Hindu, Page No. 2 | Polity

Why in News :

Congress and PDP have officially supported the National Conference (NC) ahead of by-elections to four Rajya Sabha seats in Jammu & Kashmir, where the NC is likely to win three seats and the BJP one.

Rajya Sabha Election Procedure:

- 1. Indirect Election:** Members of the Rajya Sabha are not directly elected by the public, but by the elected MLAs of each State/UT Legislative Assembly.
- 2. Voting System:** Conducted through Proportional Representation by means of the Single Transferable Vote (STV) and open ballot.
- 3. Tenure:** Each member serves a 6-year term, and one-third retire every two years.
- 4. Conducted By:** Election Commission of India under the Representation of the People Act, 1951.





The UN matters, as a symbol of possibility

Eighty years ago, in the aftermath of the most devastating war in human history, the nations of the world came together to forge a new compact – one that would seek to prevent future conflict, promote human dignity and uphold the rule of law across borders. The United Nations (UN) was born not of triumph, but of tragedy; not as a monument to power, but as a mechanism for peace.

As someone who served the UN for nearly three decades, from 1978 to 2007, I witnessed first-hand its evolution from a Cold War battleground to a post-Cold War laboratory of global cooperation. I saw the UN falter in Rwanda and Srebrenica, and rise to the occasion in East Timor and Namibia. I saw it struggle with bureaucracy and politics, yet persist in its mission to feed the hungry, shelter the displaced, and give voice to the voiceless. The UN is not perfect – nor was it ever meant to be – but it remains indispensable.

At 80, the UN stands at a crossroads. The world it was designed to serve has changed beyond recognition. The bipolar order of 1945 gave way to American unipolarity, which in turn has yielded to a fragmented, multipolar landscape. New powers have emerged, old alliances have frayed, and transnational challenges – from climate change to cyber warfare – defy the boundaries of traditional diplomacy. The UN must adapt or risk irrelevance.

A shifting global landscape

The most striking transformation in recent years has been the erosion of the post-war consensus. The institutions built to uphold liberal internationalism are under strain, not only from authoritarian regimes but also from within democracies themselves. Multilateralism is increasingly viewed with suspicion, and nationalism – once a force for liberation – is now often wielded as a cudgel against cooperation.

In this context, the UN's foundational principles – sovereign equality, peaceful resolution of disputes, and collective security – are more vital than ever. But they are also more contested. The Security Council, for instance, remains frozen in time, reflecting the power dynamics of 1945 rather than the realities of 2025. Calls for reform have grown louder, especially from countries such as India, Germany, Japan, Brazil, and South Africa, which rightly seek a seat at the table commensurate with their global standing.

India's own case is compelling. As the world's most populous nation and largest democracy, a major contributor to UN peacekeeping, and a rising economic power, India embodies the spirit



Shashi Tharoor

is a fourth-term Member of Parliament (Congress) for Thiruvananthapuram, chair of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs and a former United Nations Under-Secretary-General

The United Nations, at 80, is a work in progress, with a vital role in global affairs

of the UN Charter. Despite all this, it remains outside the permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) – a glaring anomaly that undermines the Council's legitimacy and effectiveness.

Despite its shortcomings, the UN continues to play a vital role in global affairs. Its humanitarian agencies – UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF – deliver life-saving aid in conflict zones and disaster-stricken regions. Its peacekeepers, though stretched thin, provide a modicum of stability in fragile states. Its convening power allows nations to negotiate, deliberate, and sometimes even agree.

The UN's normative influence is perhaps its most underappreciated asset. Through its declarations, treaties, and resolutions, it has helped shape global norms on human rights, gender equality and sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015, represent a bold vision for inclusive growth and planetary stewardship – one that transcends borders and ideologies.

Yet, the UN's ability to act is often constrained by the very member-states that it serves. When powerful nations flout international law or use their vetoes to shield allies (or worse, themselves), the UN is left hamstrung. When funding is politicised or withheld, its agencies struggle to deliver. The UN is not an abstract entity. It is a mirror of the world, reflecting its differences and inequities, and the will (or lack thereof) of its members.

The challenge of strategic autonomy

India's foreign policy has long emphasised sovereignty and strategic autonomy, resisting alignment with any single power bloc. This approach has gained renewed relevance in a world marked by great-power competition and regional instability. Alongside other rising and middle powers, India seeks to protect regional interests without being drawn into rivalries among the United States, China or Russia.

This posture reflects a broader critique of global governance structures, particularly the UNSC. India has consistently called for reform that reflects contemporary realities – one that is not merely powerful but principled, inclusive and representative. The current system, shaped by post-war hierarchies, remains inequitable and unresponsive to diverse perspectives.

A reimagined global order must embrace plurality – not just of power, but of experience and voice. India's vision is not of dominance, but of dignity: a world where sovereignty is respected, cooperation is valued and institutions

are shaped by the many, not the few.

So what must be done? First, the UNSC must be reformed to reflect contemporary realities. This is not merely a matter of equity. It is a matter of efficacy. A UNSC that excludes key stakeholders cannot hope to command legitimacy or deliver results. Second, the UN must invest in agility. In a world of fast-moving crises, responsiveness is key. Streamlining decision-making, empowering field operations, and embracing digital tools are essential steps. Third, the UN must reclaim its moral voice. In an age of disinformation and polarisation, the UN's ability to speak truth to power – to uphold universal values and defend the vulnerable – is more important than ever. This requires courage, clarity and consistency.

Finally, member-states must recommit to the UN's mission. The organisation cannot function without political will and financial support. It needs champions, not just critics; partners, not just participants. Budgetary shortfalls, thanks to defaults by the U.S. and others of their dues, have forced the Secretariat to implement painful staff reductions, freeze hiring, and scale back core programmes. The irony is stark: the institution most needed to address global crises is being weakened by the very powers that helped create it.

A mandate for the future as renewal, reform

The UN at 80 is neither a relic nor a panacea. It is a work in progress – a reflection of our collective aspirations and contradictions. Its failures are real, but so are its achievements. To dismiss the UN is to abandon the idea that humanity can govern itself through dialogue rather than domination.

As someone who spent much of his adult life in its service, I remain convinced that the UN matters. It matters to the refugee seeking shelter, to the peacekeeper standing guard, to the diplomat negotiating a fragile truce. It matters to all of us who believe that cooperation is not weakness, and that justice is not a luxury.

The United Nations remains an indispensable symbol – not of perfection, but of possibility. As Dag Hammarskjöld said, it was meant “not to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell”. The UN is both stage and actor: a stage for its member-states, and an actor when they empower it to defend our common humanity. Ironically, the actor is often blamed for the failures of the stage. As it marks its 80th anniversary, its challenge is to become more representative, responsive, and resilient in a world that needs principled global cooperation more than ever.

The UN Matters, as a Symbol of Possibility

Source: The Hindu, Page No. 10 | Editorial Category: International Relations – United Nations @80

Why in News :

The UN marks 80 years of existence, standing at a crossroads – still relevant but in need of urgent reform to reflect 21st-century geopolitical realities.

Summary: 1. Idea & Purpose: Formed after WWII to prevent conflicts, uphold human dignity, and promote collective peace – a monument to cooperation, not power.

2. UN @80: Changing Global Order:

- Shift from bipolar (US–USSR) to multipolar world.
- Old alliances fading, new powers (India, Brazil, Germany, South Africa) demanding greater representation.
- UN structure reflects 1945 power dynamics, not today's realities.

3. Decline of Liberal Multilateralism:

- Rise of authoritarian nationalism even within democracies.
- Security Council frozen in time, legitimacy eroding.
- Sovereign equality and collective security—UN's core principles—are increasingly contested.

4. Continuing Relevance:

- UN remains crucial through its humanitarian & peacekeeping arms – UNICEF, WFP, UNHCR.
- Normative influence: treaties, gender equality, SDGs, and peace dialogues.
- Still provides a global platform for negotiation, legitimacy, and deliberation.

5. Key Challenges:

- Strategic rivalries (US–China, Russia–West) weaken neutrality.
- Funding crises and politicization limit UN's efficiency.
- Reflects power inequality and selective interventions \$to\$ trust deficit.

6. The Way Forward – Reform & Renewal:

- Reform UN, not replace it.
- Expand Security Council to reflect current global power realities.
- Make it inclusive, accountable, transparent, and responsive.

7. Essence: UN is not a relic but a symbol of global possibility – its revival through reform is key to a fair, cooperative world order.

Value Addition Box (For UPSC Mains Notes):

1) Quote:"The UN was not born as a monument to power, but as a mechanism for peace." – Shashi Tharoor

2) Mains Keywords:Multilateralism, Collective Security, UN Reforms, Global Governance, Legitimacy Crisis, Strategic Autonomy, Equity in Representation.



Union govt. asks CJI to recommend a successor

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Centre has, in a letter to Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai, sought his recommendation for naming his successor. The CJI is currently on a four-day visit to Bhutan. His office said he would come back and send his recommendation to the government.

As per seniority norms, Justice Surya Kant is the next in line to become the 53rd CJI. Chief Justice Gavai is scheduled to retire on November 24. Under the Memorandum of Procedure for appointment of the CJI and Supreme Court Judges, the Law Ministry seeks the recommendation of the outgoing CJI on the next appointment. The letter from the government kickstarts the appointment process for the next CJI.

Justice Kant became the youngest Advocate-General of Haryana on July 7, 2000, and was designated a senior advocate in March 2001.

He was elevated as a judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court on January 9, 2004 and was appointed the Chief Justice of the High Court of Himachal Pradesh in October, 2018.

He was appointed as a Supreme Court judge on May 24, 2019. He is due to retire on February 9, 2027.

Union Govt. asks CJI to recommend a successor

Source: The Hindu, Page No. 40 | Polity – Appointment of Chief Justice of India

Why in News :

The Union Government has written to Chief Justice of India (CJI) B.R. Gavai seeking his recommendation for his successor, as he is scheduled to retire on November 24, and Justice Surya Kant is next in line to become the 53rd CJI as per seniority.

Procedure for Appointment of the Chief Justice of India

1. Constitutional Basis:

- **Article 124(2) of the Constitution:** The President of India appoints the CJI.

2. Convention of Seniority:

- The senior-most judge of the Supreme Court is traditionally appointed as the CJI.
- This convention ensures judicial independence and continuity.

3. Memorandum of Procedure (MoP):

- The Law Ministry seeks the recommendation of the outgoing CJI for the next appointment.
- The outgoing CJI recommends the senior-most judge deemed fit to be appointed as the next CJI.

4. Presidential Appointment:

- The Prime Minister advises the President after receiving the recommendation.
- The President formally appoints the recommended judge as the new CJI.

5. Oath of Office:

- The new CJI is administered the oath of office by the President of India.

Modi to participate in ASEAN meet virtually, drops Malaysia travel plan

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will not travel to Malaysia to attend the 47th ASEAN summit on October 26, but will participate in it virtually. This was announced by him in a social media post on Thursday.

The annual summit of the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN), a 10-nation grouping, and associated meetings will be held from October 26 to 28 in Kuala Lumpur.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has not provided any reason for Mr. Modi's decision, though Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said that Mr. Modi had cited the "ongoing Deepavali celebrations" as the reason for the change in plans.

Jaishankar goes instead
The Ministry announced that External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar would represent Mr. Modi and lead the Indian delegation at the summit on October 27.

"Had a warm conversa-



Diplomatic stage: The annual summit of the ASEAN and related meetings will be held in Kuala Lumpur from October 26 to 28. AFP

tion with my dear friend, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim of Malaysia. Congratulated him on Malaysia's ASEAN Chairmanship and conveyed best wishes for the success of upcoming summits. Look forward to joining the ASEAN-India Summit virtually, and to further deepening of the ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership," Mr. Modi said.

In a statement posted on X, Mr. Ibrahim said he had discussed the details of the summit with Mr. Modi. "...I respect his decision and extended my greetings for a happy Deepavali to him and the people of India."

The summit will draw a

host of dignitaries, including U.S. President Donald Trump. It was expected that the venue would be a meeting opportunity for Mr. Modi and Mr. Trump, especially as the India-U.S. relations remain uneasy after Mr. Trump imposed punitive tariff on India because of India's purchase of Russian crude oil.

Mr. Trump and Mr. Modi exchanged greetings on Deepavali on Tuesday as the India-U.S. negotiations for a trade pact continue. The two sides, however, gave differing takes of the conversation with Mr. Trump telling a group of prominent Indian-Americans and Indian Embassy officials in the White House

that the call focused on trade deal, purchase of Russian oil and "no war with Pakistan", and the Indian sources maintaining that Pakistan was not discussed during the call.

Officials had earlier given mixed signals about Mr. Modi's travel plans for Kuala Lumpur saying that the Bihar election campaign requires the Prime Minister's attention. Earlier, Mr. Trump had invited Mr. Modi to the Sharm-el-Sheikh peace summit for ceasefire in the Gaza Strip but India was represented at the event by Kirti Vardhan Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs.

Since the U.S.'s imposition of 50% punitive tariff on India on August 7, Mr. Modi and Mr. Trump have spoken on multiple occasions, but have not met despite meeting opportunities. The official-level conversation has also become difficult as Mr. Trump continues to insist that he mediated an end to the May 2025 conflict between India and Pakistan, a claim that Indian officials have refused to confirm.

Modi to participate in ASEAN meet virtually, drops Malaysia travel plan

Source: The Hindu, Page No. 14 | International Relations – ASEAN

Why in News :

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the 47th ASEAN Summit virtually on October 26, 2025, instead of travelling to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where the summit (October 26–28) will gather leaders including U.S. President Donald Trump.

Key points:

- The ASEAN Summit is a meeting of the 10-nation grouping to strengthen regional cooperation and dialogue.
- Modi conveyed his best wishes to Malaysian PM Anwar Ibrahim for hosting the summit and cited Deepavali celebrations as the reason for not attending in person.
- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will lead the Indian delegation in Malaysia.
- The summit was expected to provide an India–U.S. engagement platform, amid strained ties over U.S. sanctions on India's Russian oil imports.

Why cloud seeding is not a solution to Delhi's air pollution crisis

Delhi's air remains polluted due to emissions from vehicles, construction, power plants, waste burning and agricultural fires; cloud seeding cannot create rain without clouds, provides only temporary relief at best, and diverts attention from evidence-based solutions that address the root causes

Shahzad Gani
Krishna AchutaRao

The story so far:

Delhi's plan for cloud seeding is being sold as a bold solution to air pollution. In reality, it is a textbook case of science misapplied and ethics ignored.

Why is Delhi's air fouler in winter?

Across North India, air quality is poor throughout the year, but it reaches extreme levels in the post-monsoon and winter months. After the monsoon withdraws, dry continental air masses from the northwest dominate the region. The winds weaken and the air becomes stagnant, keeping pollutants from being dispersed efficiently.

Cooler air holds less absolute water vapour and the stable, high-pressure systems that prevail during these months suppress the upward motion needed for clouds to form. The sky may look hazy, but that haze comes from trapped pollution, not from rain-bearing clouds. Rain cannot be conjured out of thin air. It needs water vapour.

For most of the highly polluted cooler months, the atmosphere is too dry and stable to support significant rainfall. Rain does occur occasionally during these months, but these brief spells are typically caused by western disturbances,

weather systems that originate in the Mediterranean region and can bring moisture from that region or interact with local systems drawing up moisture from our neighbouring seas. These events can be predicted a few days in advance, but are not a reliable or consistent source of rainfall for North India.

Does cloud seeding help?

Cloud seeding depends on natural clouds; it can't create them. And even when clouds exist, the evidence that seeding reliably increases rainfall remains weak and contested. And when it rains and reduces pollution, the respite is temporary at best. The overwhelming evidence is that pollution levels go back up within a day or two.

The air pollution problem is not just confined to Delhi. Across North India, air quality is dangerously poor year-round. Yet public debate often treats smog as a seasonal nuisance, normalising pollution and noticing it only when it becomes unbearable. Cloud seeding is just another gimmick in a series of similar unscientific ideas, like smog towers, suggesting that flashy interventions can substitute for serious, structural solutions.

What are the risks of cloud seeding?

The temptation to engineer a shortcut to fix air pollution is understandable – but it raises deeper ethical questions about how

science is used, what risks are justified, and who bears responsibility when things go wrong.

Even if the science behind cloud seeding were robust, which it is not, it still involves dispersing compounds such as silver iodide or sodium chloride into clouds to trigger condensation. Silver iodide works for cloud seeding because its crystal structure is very similar to that of ice, so it 'tricks' water droplets in the clouds into freezing onto it. These newly formed ice crystals then grow heavy and fall as rain or snow. While generally considered low risk in small doses, repeated use can accumulate in soils and water bodies. The long-term effects on agriculture, ecosystems, and human health remain poorly understood.

Beyond these environmental risks, there is the question of accountability. If cloud seeding coincides with intense rainfall that leads to flooding, causing damage to infrastructure, crops, and livelihoods, or loss of life, who will be responsible? Even if the rainfall and flooding are unrelated to seeding, public perception could still link the two, undermining trust in both science and governance.

What can 'fix' the air?

Science has long identified the real cause of North India's hazardous air: the lack of effective control over emissions from

vehicles, industry, construction, power plants, waste burning, and seasonal agricultural fires, compounded by unfavourable meteorology during the cooler months. The solutions are equally clear but remain largely unimplemented: cleaner transport, sustainable energy, better waste management, and urban planning that actually reduces pollution sources. Yet, instead of reinforcing these priorities, parts of the scientific ecosystem – researchers, advisors, and institutions – are lending credibility to a costly spectacle that will do little to address the sources of the crisis. By attaching their authority to the illusion of quick fixes, they risk wasting scarce public resources, undermining trust, and diverting attention from systemic changes that could make a real difference.

Snake-oil solutions will not clear the air in Delhi or the rest of North India. Instead, courage is required on the ground: to reduce the sources of pollution and pursue equitable, evidence-based action. Anything less is not just misplaced science – it is an ethical failure, a diversion from the patient, unglamorous work needed to ensure clean air throughout the year.

(Shahzad Gani is an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Atmospheric Sciences, IIT Delhi. Krishna AchutaRao is a Professor at the Centre for Atmospheric Sciences, IIT Delhi)

Why Cloud Seeding is Not a Solution to Delhi's Air Pollution Crisis

Source: The Hindu, Page No. 13 | Environment – Pollution

Why in News:

Delhi's government is exploring cloud seeding to counter severe winter pollution, but experts highlight that it is scientifically unreliable, short-lived, and distracts from long-term emission control measures necessary to address the root causes.

Summary: 1. Why Delhi's Air Worsens in Winter:

- After the monsoon withdrawal, dry continental air from the northwest dominates.
- Weak winds and high-pressure systems trap pollutants close to the ground.
- Cooler air holds less moisture, suppressing cloud formation and preventing natural rain that could clear the air.

2. What is Cloud Seeding & How It Works:

- It's a weather modification method that injects silver iodide or sodium chloride into existing clouds.
- These act like ice crystals, making water droplets freeze and fall as rain or snow.
- It cannot create clouds, only enhances rainfall if clouds already exist.

3. Why Cloud Seeding Fails for Delhi:

- Lack of clouds in Delhi's post-monsoon dry season makes the process ineffective.
- Scientific evidence shows no consistent success in improving rainfall.
- Even when it rains, pollution drops temporarily but returns within a day or two.
- Risk of chemical accumulation in soil and water from repeated use.
- Potential flooding hazards if rainfall coincides with poor urban drainage.

4. The Real Causes of Delhi's Pollution:

- Major emitters: Vehicles, industries, power plants, construction dust, waste burning, and agricultural residue fires.
- Worsened by unfavourable winter meteorology – stagnant air and temperature inversion.
- Reflects weak pollution governance and lack of effective enforcement on emission sources.

5. What Can Actually Fix the Air:

- Promote clean transport, renewable energy, waste management, and urban design that reduces emissions.
- Implement sustainable, evidence-based policies rather than temporary fixes.
- Strengthen governance, enforcement, and accountability in pollution control.
- Long-term reform is essential for structural, not symbolic, improvement in air quality.



Harvest time



Unique paddy: Migrant labourers from Assam transporting the harvested GI-tagged saltwater tolerant Pokkali paddy from the Pizhala island near Kochi on Thursday. THULASI KAKKAT

GI-tagged Pokkali Paddy

Source: The Hindu, Page No. 6 | Environment & Agriculture

About Pokkali Paddy:

- Pokkali rice is a Geographical Indication (GI)-tagged, saltwater-tolerant rice variety grown mainly in the waterlogged coastal regions of Kerala, especially in Ernakulam, Alappuzha, and Thrissur districts.
- It is one of the oldest known saline-resistant rice varieties in India – cultivated for over 3,000 years.