



Current Affairs of the Day

Will review sedition law provisions: Centre to SC

1. The 152-year-old colonial law on sedition in India is set to be reviewed, the Union government informed the Supreme Court while imploring the court to suspend the ongoing judicial scrutiny of the penal provision till the government takes a call on the issue.
2. Sedition law in section 124A in IPC is a non-bailable offence punishable with a jail term ranging from three years to life.

3. In the Kedar Nath case, a Constitution bench upheld the validity of the sedition law under IPC, holding that the purpose of the crime of sedition was to prevent the government established by law from being subverted because “the continued existence of the Government established by law is an essential condition of the stability of the State”.

Govt's rethink on colonial law

Stepping away from its earlier stance, the govt has decided to review provisions of the sedition law

4. At the same time, the five-judge bench defined the scope of Section 124A, saying it only penalised words that reveal an intent or tendency to disturb law-and-order or that seem to incite violence.

'COMMITTED TO SOVEREIGNTY, INTEGRITY'

"The government of India, having considered the concerns of civil liberties and human rights, while committed to maintaining and protecting the sovereignty and integrity of this great nation, has decided to re-examine and reconsider the provisions of Section 124A (sedition) of the IPC," the MHA said in its three-page affidavit, urging the top court to suspend the ongoing judicial scrutiny of the law

EARLIER, CENTRE BACKED THE LAW

Filing its submissions on Saturday evening, the central government backed the provisions of the law, saying there was no need to re-look at the validity of Section 124A. The government also told the court that instances of abuse of a provision would not be a justification to reconsider a binding judgment of the constitution bench

PM MODI'S INTERVENTION

The government's affidavit highlighted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's impetus on protection of civil liberties and the need to shed colonial baggage. It underlined that Modi "has been cognisant of various views expressed on the subject and has also periodically, in various forums, expressed his clear and unequivocal views in favour of protection of civil liberties, respect for human rights, and giving meaning to the constitutionally cherished freedoms by the people of the country"

5. The Supreme Court underlined that the presence of a pernicious tendency to incite violence is a precondition to invoking the sedition clause and that the penal provision cannot be used to stifle free speech.



Govt to reconsider minority tag for Hindus in some states

1. The Union government will initiate a “wide consultation” with states and other stakeholders to examine a plea as to whether Hindus can be granted minority status in states where their numbers are less than those of other communities, an affidavit filed by the Centre in the Supreme Court said.
2. Under the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) Act, the central government has notified only six communities, namely Christians, Sikhs, Muslims, Buddhists, Parsis and Jains, as minorities at the national level.
3. The National Commission for Minorities Educational Institutions (NCMEI) Act entitles the six communities notified under the NCM Act to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

WHO ARE THE MINORITIES IN INDIA?

Religious communities notified as minority communities under National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992

Muslims

Christians

Sikhs

Buddhists

Zoroastrians

Jains
(notified on 9th Feb 2014)

Did you know?

Minority communities in India are extended certain basic rights guaranteed under Articles 25 to 30. They also benefit in getting access to education and government jobs among other things.

In which states is the Hindu community a minority?

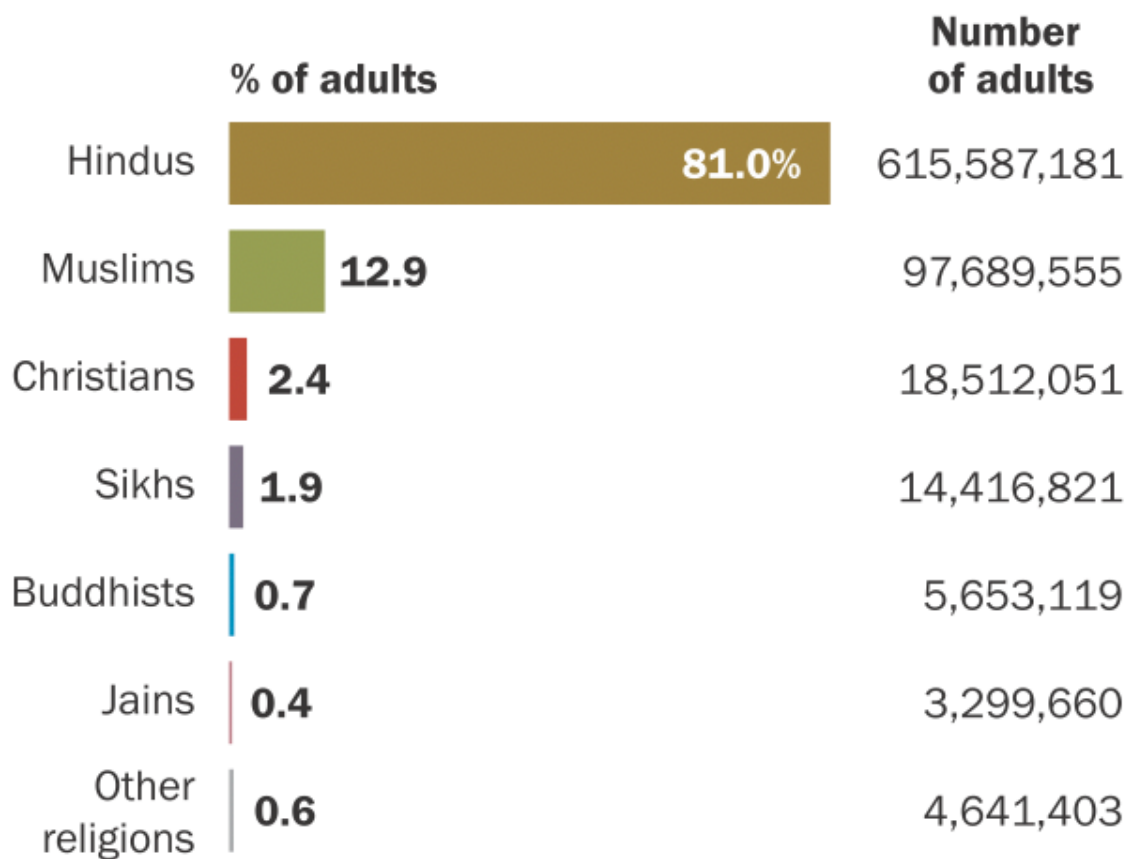
State	% of Hindus <small>(2011 Census Data)</small>
Lakshadweep	2.77%
Mizoram	2.75%
Nagaland	8.75%
Meghalaya	11.53%
Jammu & Kashmir	28.44%
Arunachal Pradesh	29.04%
Manipur	31.39%
Punjab	38.49%

Note: In Feb'2020 Hon. Supreme Court had rejected a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) which sought 'minority' status to Hindus in the above eight states.



India is majority Hindu, but religious minorities have sizable populations

India's adult population by religion (2011 census)



Note: Based on adults ages 18 and older, excluding the union territories of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep.

Source: Census of India, 2011.

"Religion in India: Tolerance and Segregation"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



Extend health cover to the 'missing middle'

1. The National Health Authority plans to extend health insurance coverage under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna (ABPM-JAY) to gig workers who earn between ₹15,000 and ₹25,000 per month.
2. This scheme, if operationalised, will be a welcome step because the economy is moving from permanent employer-employee relationships to on-demand employer-employee relationships, and many employees cannot access health coverage since they fall in what the Niti Aayog calls the "missing middle" category, a broad group of 400 million Indians who work in agriculture and non-farm sectors and are positioned between the deprived poorer sections and the relatively well-off who can access insurance products.
3. The need to cover this category is essential because the nature of their work is often subject to occupational hazards.
4. Without insurance coverage and a robust public health system that forces them to make out-of-pocket expenditures, even a small health-related incident can impoverish families.
5. Insurance can provide protection against such shocks, which may have inter-generational impacts because households try different coping strategies — reducing food consumption, pulling children out of school, dissaving, borrowing, and selling assets — to offset health-related expenditures.

The increasing cost of quality health care has made insurance imperative. Therefore, along with developing products that target the "missing middle", the government must also invest in awareness building on insurance products, identify these new customers, and devise a strategy that focuses distinctly on the segment.

Why it is critical to make semiconductors in India

- The global semiconductor manufacturing ecosystem is extremely complex and interlinked. Supply chain disruptions since the onset of Covid-19 resulted in a steep drop in chip production and supply.
- This caused a dip in the manufacturing of all devices, appliances and equipment ranging from automotive, space satellites, household, defence and



health care equipment across the globe. The chip shortage played a decisive role in the pandemic-induced economic contraction.

- After a brief period of recovery, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine is again creating conditions that may interrupt the global chip supply. This is because Russia is the supplier of nearly 40% of the world's palladium, a critical raw material in chip production, and Ukraine supplies 70% of neon, a gas used in a process called photolithography that fabricates integrated circuits.
- Taiwan, seen by many military and geopolitical analysts to be a future theatre of great power conflict, accounts for over half the global chip supply and over 90% of the market share for the most advanced chips.

Need for Independence in Semiconductor manufacturing:

1. At the moment, our semiconductor demand is fully met through imports, and the consumption is projected to cross \$110 billion, even higher than our current oil imports, by 2030. Domestic production would greatly ease our trade deficit.
2. Microchips will remain an unavoidable mainstay in every electronic device including critical defence, space and communication equipment. Indigenous products greatly reduce the threat of backdoor espionage, a very common, and difficult-to-discern practice in the global hardware market.
3. Successful execution of our semiconductor policy is, therefore, vital for India to achieve its long-term economic, security and strategic objectives with autonomy.

CABINET DECISIONS
15 DECEMBER, 2021

Development of Semiconductors and Display Manufacturing Ecosystem in India 1/2

- Incentives of ₹2.3 lakh crores to position India as global hub
- ₹76000 crores approved for development of semiconductors and display manufacturing ecosystem
- Setting up of India Semiconductor Mission to drive this sector

CABINET DECISIONS
15 DECEMBER, 2021

Development of Semiconductors and Display Manufacturing Ecosystem in India 2/2

Benefits:

- Multiplier effect across different sectors
- Deeper integration to the global value chain
- Higher domestic value addition in electronics manufacturing
- Contribute significantly to achieving a USD 1 Trillion digital economy and a USD 5 Trillion GDP by 2025

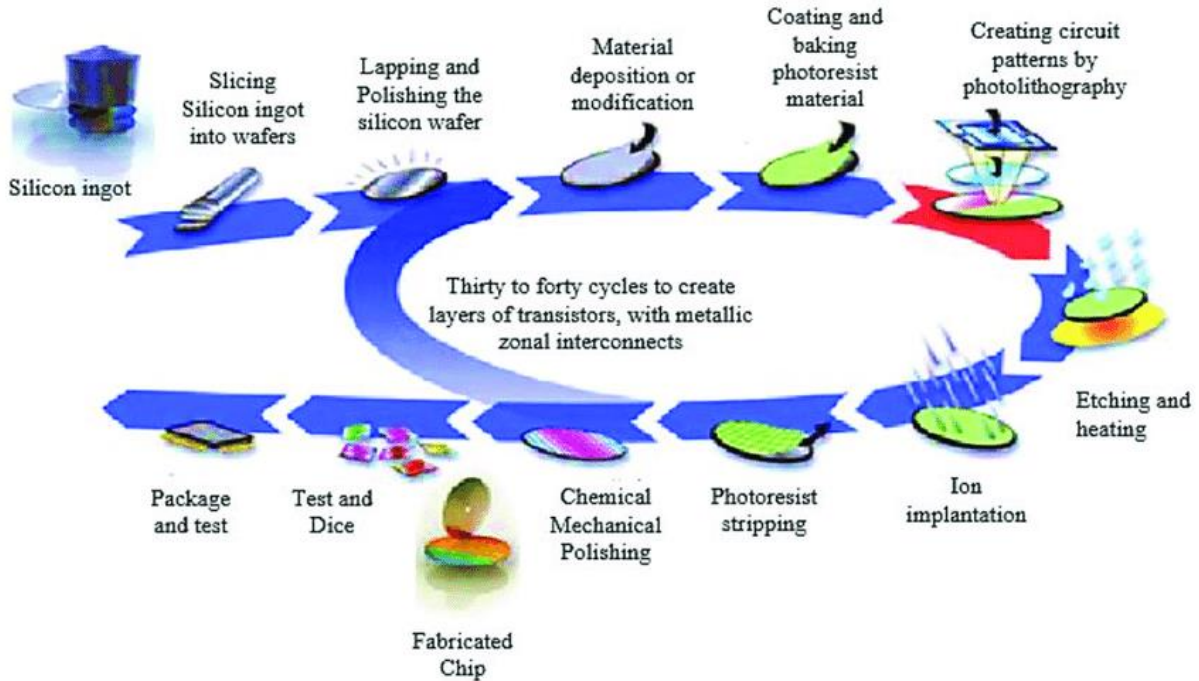


Searching for independence in Chip manufacturing:

1. In recent times, the United States (US), China, and the European Union (EU) have been making concerted efforts to diversify their chip supply chains, and decrease their dependency on this crucial yet vulnerable ecosystem.
2. For instance, the EU proposed the European Chips Act, seeking to mobilise \$49 billion of public and private investments into semiconductor technology and applications, with the stated aspiration of doubling their global market share to 20% by 2030.
3. The US is working on its own Chips Act to boost domestic manufacturing and has convinced Taiwan's Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) to build a \$12 billion facility in Arizona, aiming to produce cutting edge 5-nanometre chips by 2024.
4. India announced an ambitious semiconductor sector road map against this highly competitive and volatile backdrop at the end of last year. The initial response has been very positive, with three consortiums with requisite credentials showing interest in setting up fabrication facilities.

India's potential:

1. The fabrication plants would also have to be supported by a very diverse secondary ecosystem of packaging, testing, and design units.
2. India does have a strong foundation required to create these, with most of the global chip companies already having their research and development innovation centres here, and with the country contributing over 20% of the world's chip design engineers.
3. The government has also conceptualised a Chips-to-Startups (C2S) programme that will create a talent pool of 85,000 high skilled engineers, equipped to support the domestic industry.
4. A fabrication facility would also need an uninterrupted power supply and could use up millions of gallons of ultra-pure water. Despite these challenges, the strides we have made in sectors including IT, space, biotech and vaccine industries show that with political will and private participation, India can thrive in globally competitive environments.



MAINS DAWP	Q1. Critically discuss the need for Independence in Semiconductor manufacturing for India.
MCQs	<p>Q1. Which of the following material is used in semiconductor manufacturing?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Silicon 2. Palladium 3. Neon <p>Select the correct answer from the codes given below</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 1 and 2 only b. 1 and 3 only c. 2 only d. 1, 2 and 3