

EDITORIAL HIGHLIGHTS

25-10-2026

GS 2: POLITY THE HINDU PAGE: 08

What do the Centre's steps mean for Ladakh?

What were the two main steps taken by the Centre in October? Why did the Leh Apex Body and the Kargil Democratic Alliance reject the 32-page draft proposal of a sub-committee of the Ministry of Home Affairs? How will the Centre's creation of new districts help governance?

Peerzada Ashiq

The story so far:

The Centre took two significant steps in the seven-year-old Union Territory of Ladakh on October 15 and October 16. A sub-committee of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) shared a 32-page draft proposal with civil society groups and leaders of the region, including representatives of the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA). Separately, the Lieutenant Governor's administration announced the creation of Sankoo as the eighth district of Ladakh, which had only two districts until 2026.

The two developments may come across as unrelated, but together, they point to the Centre's new approach in addressing the demands of the region. Ladakh has been witnessing frequent street protests since it was carved out as a UT in 2019 from the Kashmir division of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Since then, the region has been demanding the status of Statehood and inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. At present, Ladakh is a UT without a legislature, unlike J&K.

How have Ladakh civil society bodies reacted to the MHA's 32-page draft?

In a joint statement, the LAB and KDA categorically rejected the draft proposal in principle. These bodies claimed that the draft represented a significant departure from the assurances and commitments made during previous meetings of the sub-committee. They highlighted the draft's failure in addressing the demand for a legislative assembly and constitutional safeguards under Article 371.

The Leh Apex Body and the Kargil Democratic Alliance highlighted the draft's failure in addressing the demand for a legislative assembly and constitutional safeguards under Article 371

including a provision tailored to Ladakh's unique circumstances. These bodies urged the MHA to reconsider the proposal and accept the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), submitted by them on October 15 in Leh. They added that the people of Ladakh deserve a meaningful constitutional framework that honours prior commitments, and safeguards their political, cultural, and democratic aspirations.

However, the Civil Society Forum of Ladakh, another group headed by ex-MP Thupstan Chhewang, welcomed the road map of the MHA for Ladakh. This has led to growing friction within civil society groups of the region.

Why did the MHA constitute a High-Powered Committee (HPC)?

In the wake of the growing protests in Ladakh by civil society groups, the MHA constituted a HPC for Ladakh in 2023, under the chairmanship of the Minister of State for Home Affairs, Nityanand Rai. The committee's mandate was to suggest measures to protect Ladakh's unique culture and language, taking into consideration its geographical location and its strategic importance; to safeguard land and employment; to promote inclusive development and employment generation; to ensure empowerment of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (LAHDCs) of Leh and Kargil; and to provide constitutional safeguards to ensure the above.

What was the Centre's promise made to Ladakh earlier this year?

The Centre and Ladakh held fruitful talks on May 22. In July, the MHA released the minutes of the meeting, which underlined that "Statehood would remain the long-term aspiration of Ladakh" and that "in the present situation, as a first step, an appropriate customised model of governance by establishing a UT level elected body with executive, financial, and legislative powers would be established". The minutes also hinted at a model of constitutional safeguards under Article 371 and advocated "a customised sui generis model... most suitable for Ladakh".

The MHA had promised to work on a draft proposal defining the executive, financial, and legislative powers and functions of the proposed body. The minutes were seen as an outline of the MHA's probable model of self-governance in Ladakh, even as Ladakh's representatives continued to press for Statehood and inclusion under the Sixth Schedule.

One of the key demands that helped set the talks in motion was bringing the bureaucracy

under the elected government. It was agreed that the elected executive body would exercise control and supervision, including appraisal, over civil servants handling subjects under the purview of the UT-level elected body. The minutes also emphasised the need to frame Transaction of Business Rules to define the respective roles of the region's power centres, including the elected body and the Lieutenant Governor.

Why did Ladakh representatives express unhappiness over the latest draft proposal?

The LAB and the KDA said that the MHA offered a North-East Frontier Agency-type arrangement that fell far short of the proposed UT with a legislature. They said an elected legislature was the minimum guarantee from which a sui generis model could be developed, as was agreed upon at the May 22 meeting, and recorded in the minutes signed in July. The proposed framework appears closer to a Territorial Council model, with substantial powers concentrated in the Lieutenant Governor's administration, rather than ensuring the meaningful legislative, executive and constitutional safeguards sought by the people of Ladakh, they said.

How will new districts help improve governance in Ladakh?

Since 1947, Ladakh, with a population of around 3.5 lakh, had two districts: Buddhist-majority Leh; and Shia Muslim-majority Kargil. Spread over a vast area of 59,146 square kilometres, the region's size and the geographical challenges of its cold desert terrain made administrative access difficult for locals.

The creation of six new districts – Sankoo, Sham, Nubra, Changthang, Zaskar and Drass – this year is intended to bring the administration closer to the people. The creation of these districts will be followed by the creation of hill councils for each district, which will allow locals to elect 26 members for each hill council. This is intended to address the issue of representation and involvement in governance issues.

Earlier, Ladakh had two hill councils in Kargil and Leh. The LAHDC-Leh came into being in 1995 and the LAHDC-Kargil was set up in 2003. These councils had a say in governance by setting local priorities and allocating budgets for small-scale projects in their respective districts. After 2019, their role waned because of the Centre's direct rule and officials' takeover of the management of the districts.

The Ladakh administration is also pushing for a three-tier representation system for locals by holding elections for panchayats, municipalities, and hill councils in the coming months. Since Ladakh is a UT without a legislature, these elections will push for a participatory system and allow elected local representatives to champion the cause of locals.



Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance supporters demand statehood for Ladakh and its inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. ANI

GS 3: INTERNAL SECURITY (CYBER SECURITY)

THE HINDU PAGE: 08

How does the SBI data breach affect customers?

What information is at risk, and what should customers do? What should banks and regulators do to prevent such breaches? How can affected customers report fraud or file a complaint? Has such a breach happened before?

Lalatendu Mishra

The story so far:

The State Bank of India (SBI), India's largest commercial bank, received alerts from its Threat Intelligence Service Provider, the Defence Cyber Agency, and CERT-In about the suspected exposure of customer data on the dark web. Five days later, on October 21, it informed stock exchanges of the incident.

"During the preliminary analysis of approximately 3,75,000 records available on the dark web, 3,897 customer records containing Personally Identifiable Information were identified," SBI told the exchanges, in a disclosure made under the norms of the Securities and Exchange Board of India.

What is the motive behind exposing data?

Saurabh Sharma, security researcher with Kaspersky's Global Research and Analysis Team (GReAT), said that the data leak claim comes from an actor using the name Siriusim. "We have no basis to comment on its identity or origin. The motive is almost always money. Our April 2026 research describes the dark web as a

SBI has said it has notified all customers it identified as having had their data compromised

central hub for financial cybercrime, where stolen data are aggregated, repackaged, and sold," he said.

Data do not need to be fresh to be valuable. Kaspersky Digital Footprint Intelligence has found attackers bundling stolen data into verified "dumps" that sell in bulk for as little as \$50. The Kaspersky Security Bulletin 2025 also found that organised crime combines social engineering, insider manipulation, and technical exploitation to make use of the stolen data, he said.

What type of data are at risk?

Identity data can cause more damage than a stolen password. Reports say the alleged dataset includes customer names, loan applications, KYC documents, account-opening forms, and addresses. A password can be reset in minutes, but a photograph, ID number, and address proof cannot, Mr. Sharma explained.

"Our phishing research shows that attackers combine names, addresses, and dates of birth into 'digital dossiers' that make later scams more believable. The Kaspersky Security Bulletin 2025 also flags growing underground demand for deepfake services built to bypass KYC verification," he added.

What should SBI customers do?

Kaspersky experts say customers must assume the data are already in circulation and act before a fraudster does. They recommend never sharing an OTP, PIN, or CVV, and never clicking links in messages that claim to be from the bank. They advise changing net banking and YONO passwords, switching on two-factor authentication, enabling transaction alerts, and asking the bank to block any card customers suspect is exposed.

"Check your account for devices or IP addresses you do not recognise and end those sessions immediately. Treat any call about loans, KYC updates, or account blocks as fraud until you verify it through the SBI app or a branch, and always check the sender's address before opening an email," Mr. Sharma said.

What should the regulator do?

"The Reserve Bank of India should direct all

regulated entities to notify customers of personal data breaches within a fixed period, pending the commencement of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDP), 2023," said the Internet Freedom Foundation.

Besides, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology must bring Section 8(6) of the DPDP Act and Rule 7 of the DPDP Rules into force immediately, the Foundation said. Section 8(6) requires a data fiduciary to intimate a personal data breach to the Data Protection Board and to each affected data principal, and Rule 7 of the DPDP Rules, 2025, prescribes how this is to be done according to the Foundation. But these provisions will take effect only on May 13, 2027.

Has this happened before with SBI or other banks?

Public reports recall a 2019 exposure of an unprotected server behind SBI's SMS banking service, which SBI said did not compromise its own servers. Bank of Baroda acknowledged a data leak in July 2026.

How can you file a complaint?

Mr. Sharma said first, call the bank to block cards and accounts and report any unauthorised transaction immediately. "Under the RBI's customer protection norms, reporting within three working days limits your liability in third-party fraud," he said. Second, file a complaint on the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (cybercrime.gov.in) or call 1930. If the bank does not resolve it, escalate to the RBI Integrated Ombudsman. Keep screenshots, messages, and transaction details, since investigators will ask for them, he advised.

What are banks doing to prevent such breaches?

The better-prepared banks are moving from perimeter defence to continuous visibility: threat intelligence, round-the-clock monitoring, vendor risk reviews, and staff training. "They need to, because the Kaspersky Security Bulletin 2025 shows threats now span AI-enabled malware, supply chain compromise, and NFC fraud," according to Mr. Sharma.

What is the likely impact on customers?

These customers are the most likely to receive calls from persons posing as SBI officials who can recite their account details back to them. SBI has said it has notified all customers it identified as having had their data compromised.



A branch of the State Bank of India in Shimla. ANI

GS 3: Science and Technology

THE HINDU PAGE: 10

Two lab experiments bring bleached corals back to luminous life

Divya Gandhi

A staggering 80% of the world's coral reefs experienced extreme levels of heat stress in warming oceans between 2023 and 2025, exacerbated by the 2023 El Niño. Swathes of reefs were left bleached and dead, with India's corals, especially around Lakshadweep, being no exception. It was the fourth global mass coral bleaching event in recorded history.

Only sometimes do bleached corals recover

once the heat stress subsides. But now there appears more hope, with a little help from algae, per two separate studies published earlier this month. Algae supply most of the coral's nutrients through photosynthesis. When the ocean waters warm, corals expel the algae that causes bleaching, one study published in *Science* said.

However, its authors found that even a brief period of contact between bleached and healthy corals could transfer algae

and lead to a full recovery, often within days. The catch? The transfer could only occur between corals from the same genetic background.

Predictions suggest mass coral bleaching will occur annually by 2080 with global warming. The new findings could provide "a foundation for research into potential recovery interventions," the authors wrote in their paper. The authors of the study, in *Environmental Microbiology Reports*, used a lab-made

heat-tolerant algal strain named SS8 and injected it into two Great Barrier Reef coral species, *Galaxea fascicularis* and *Psammocora columna*, after chemically bleaching them to remove their algae. Once they recovered, these inoculated coral fragments were made to donate their algae to bleached corals in a water tank.

They found all the donor-recipient pairs fused, with *G. fascicularis* and *P. columna* taking three and nine days to do so. They al-

so found SS8 could spread through the water, too.

"Both these papers show, with eloquent simplicity, a mechanism that has been suspected was possible for a long time," Rohan Arthur, a marine biologist with the Nature Conservation Foundation, told *The Hindu*. Researchers have explored such symbiont switching as a strategy by which corals could transfer adaptive potential through contact, "and it is heartening to see this being confirmed with

experimental proof".

However, he continued, these small experimental studies are still a long way from large-scale inoculations of corals in the field: "Because bleaching resistance was only transferred between individuals of the same genet, it is difficult to conceive of how this can translate into reef-wide interventions." What it does suggest, however, is that reefs have a greater flexibility in their bleaching response than earlier imagined, Dr. Arthur added.

GS 1: GEOGRAPHY

THE HINDU PAGE: 10

Record Pacific warming sets stage for ferocious El Niño

For the first time in recorded history, the Niño 3.4 region has recorded a sea surface temperature exceeding 30°C; after the anomaly increased to 3.48°C on October 18, it dipped this week to 3.34°C

Neelima Vallangi
BENGALURU

For most of this year, climate scientists have been closely monitoring the Niño 3.4 region in the central-equatorial Pacific – the primary index area to define the phases of the El Niño Southern Oscillation and the alarming amount of ocean heat closely tracking an El Niño. The world's oceans beyond the poles reached a record-high average surface temperature of 21.18°C on August 22, and daily sea surface temperatures in the Niño 3.4 region have been consistently shattering records.

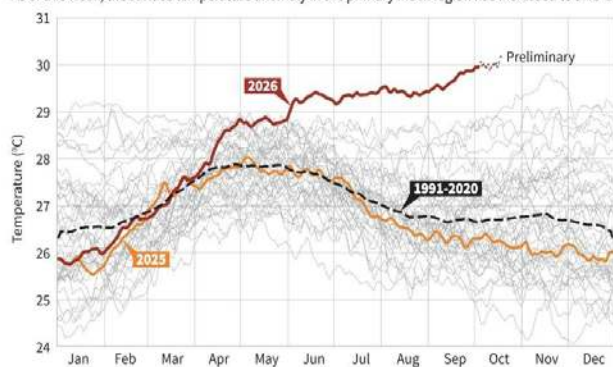
According to the U.S. NOAA's Climate Prediction Centre, a 'strong to very strong' El Niño is 83% likely, with a high chance of a historic event exceeding the strength of any previous El Niño since 1950.

The El Niño is a natural climate pattern that emerges every two to seven years and affects global weather and heightens the risk of extreme heatwaves and altered rainfall worldwide. But this year's event has put the world more on edge.

"Even though there is no direct intensity-to-impact relationship, in general we expect stronger El Niño events will have stronger impacts," Raghu Murtugudde, earth system scientist and emeritus professor at the University of

Daily sea surface temperature at Niño 3.4

As of this week, the surface temperature anomaly in the primary index region has increased to 3.48°C



Maryland and visiting professor at IIT Kanpur, said.

The relationship between global warming and El Niño is not easy to tease out and remains an area of active research. A recent study analysing the geochemistry of corals in the last millennium at the Galapagos Islands, which lie in the ocean patch where the El Niño signal is strongest, found there has been a notable amplification of its intensity over the last 40 years. "Our analysis focuses less on individual events and more on the broader pattern of increasing strength of the El Niño system – which is much greater now than in the pre-industrial era," said Julia Cole, professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences at the University of Michigan, who led the study, recently published in

Science. "But the instrumental record of temperature is clear: this event is well outside the norm."

On October 5, the Niño 3.4 region recorded a sea surface temperature of 30.06°C; the first time in recorded history the region exceeded 30°C. The surface temperature anomaly in the region increased to 3.48°C on October 18 before dipping this week to 3.34°C.

Meteorological agencies classify an El Niño's strength based on the 90-day average of the temperature anomaly in Niño 3.4. Five consecutive months exceeding 0.5°C signify the onset of the warm El Niño phase. Strong events sport an anomaly of 1.5-1.9°C, and very strong ones an anomaly exceeding 2°C. Since the modern era of instrumental records began

in the 1980s, there have been roughly a dozen significant El Niño events, with only three of these being very strong: 2015-16 (2.6°C), 1997-98 (2.4°C), 1982-83 (2.1°C).

The ongoing 2026-27 El Niño onset was declared on June 6, and it is projected to peak in December with a seasonal anomaly of 3.8°C.

Scientists say no two El Niño events are the same and predicting their effects is not straightforward. However, the relationship between El Niño and global temperatures is quite straightforward: the release of stored ocean heat during these events causes global temperatures to temporarily spike in addition to global warming.

"2027 will be warmer than 2026; that is how El Niño tends to work. It is al-

so likely that 2027 will be the warmest so far, unless a massive La Niña appears and soaks up all the heat. So heat wave season is coming; that is a guarantee," Dr. Murtugudde said.

The relationship with the monsoon is less straightforward, however. While this year's monsoon was 13% below normal, consistent with strong El Niños, severe drought did not materialise as feared. "This monsoon is not completely explained by El Niño," per Dr. Murtugudde. "I think it has a very strong component of global warming."

The Central Water Commission's latest weekly report shows that of 178 reservoirs around India, only 69% of the total storage capacity is filled. The south has the largest deficit, with only 44% storage filled.

The 1982-83 El Niño was the first 'super' event in the modern era and it had devastating consequences for communities on almost every continent. It also triggered scientific enquiry into the phenomenon, leading to widespread improvements in monitoring and prediction. With improved understanding of El Niño mechanisms and advanced forecasting capabilities today, a clearer picture is emerging of how it will evolve over the coming months.

(Neelima Vallangi is an independent climate journalist) Image credit: Climate-Reanalyzer.org

GS 2: POLITY

INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE: 11

Freedom, food and fuel



ACROSS THE AISLE

BY P CHIDAMBARAM

WHEN PEOPLE are deprived of freedom or food or fuel or any other dire necessity, they will rise in protest. Currently, there are massive protests, especially by the youth, in France, Albania, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Italy, Morocco and Portugal — and India. The government is blamed because it is not seen as doing enough to mitigate the crisis or rectify the wrongs. Some protests in Europe have turned violent which is deplorable.

In the United States, people complain that food prices are “unaffordable” and fuel prices have become “unbearable”. Mr Trump is blamed. In France, people complain of deprivation of a good education because of poor school facilities and teacher shortages. Mr Macron is blamed. In Albania, the complaint is about surrendering a precious wetland ecosystem to an American capitalist for commercial exploitation. Mr Edi Rama is blamed. Each of these protests is part of the citizen's sense that ‘I am free only if I can afford

food, have a good education, and I am able to protect my environment’. It is like the protest against the salt tax: a tax on salt does not exactly restrict one's freedom but the idea of a salt tax levied by a colonial power was abhorrent to Mahatma Gandhi's idea of freedom.

Unbelievably dense

The right to vote is, inarguably, the most precious right of a citizen in a free country. I cannot believe that the BJP government can be so dense that it convinced itself that the deletion of 13,30,00,000 names (14 per cent of the adult population of 26 states) from the electoral rolls will not raise a storm of protest. The Election Commission of India said that the names were deleted after following a ‘process’. A process is not *due process*. The ECI has confessed to the offence. Now the ECI is organising ‘special camps’ to re-enrol voters who were ‘left out’. ‘Left out’ is obfuscation: the names were unlawfully deleted.

The SIR was conducted in three phases in 26 states (see table).

How many crores of rupees were spent on SIR? How many crores of rupees will be spent on re-enrolment? Who will be surcharged for the double expenditure?

Re-enroll deleted

The entire SIR process has been comprehensively challenged in the Supreme Court on multiple grounds. The Court issued notice. The next day, the ECI did an about-turn, abandoned SIR for the re-

PHASE	STATES	ADULT POPULATION	NAMES DELETED	PERCENTAGE
I	1 state	8.21 cr	0.65 cr	7.92
II	9 states	51.60 cr	6.50 cr	12.60
III	16 states	35.50 cr	6.15 cr	17.18
	26 states		13.30 cr*	14.00

(*INCLUDING THE DEAD)

maining states, and reverted to the customary Special Summary Revision (SSR). This is the ‘confession’ that I referred to above.

The persons whose names were deleted in West Bengal alone were allowed by the Supreme Court to file appeals. Of the 22,00,000 Appeals filed, approximately 1,26,000 Appeals were disposed of in six months. Around 91-93 per cent of the Appeals were allowed and the names directed to be included in the electoral rolls; but they could not vote in the Assembly elections that had been just concluded. Crores of deleted names elsewhere (excluding the dead) have no provision of an Appeal. They cannot vote in any election until their names are re-enrolled. Re-enrolment is at the mercy of the ECI.

Fight for rights

This is no ordinary protest. This is a fight for freedom and the right to vote.

The next will be a fight for food. Food prices have soared putting food beyond the capacity of the household. While government gives 5 kg of grain free to 80 crore persons, several crores of persons, especially the internal-migrant labour, do

not get the free grain. Juxtapose the rise in food prices with the fact that real wages have stagnated or declined for casual/daily workers who constitute 20 per cent of the labour force, and the extent of suffering will be clear.

Another fight is brewing — the fight for affordable fuel. Petrol, diesel, electricity, gas, kerosene, firewood, and travel by bus, train or air, have all become dearer.

The last reading of WPI was 11.39 per cent, of CPI was 5.54 per cent and of food prices inflation was 7.74 per cent. There are many external factors such as wars and tariffs that have caused the price rise. But the government must bear responsibility. Remember, the BJP blamed the UPA government for inflation in 2009-2011 (cause: international financial crisis) and 2013-14 (cause: taper tantrum).

The fight will continue for other rights which are suppressed or curtailed. I am aware that ‘regime change’ has acquired a pejorative connotation. Read it as ‘change of government’. No one can quarrel with the right of the Opposition parties and civil society groups to organise peaceful protests to vote out a government. HV Kamath (December 1, 1964) and Pranab Mukherjee (November 19, 2016) said that: “It is the Opposition's duty to oppose, expose and depose” the government. Why deny this right to the Congress, INDIA bloc, CJP, AISA and others?

The next stops will be Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Gujarat and four other states in 2027.

The Election Commission of India has confessed to the offence. Now the ECI is organising ‘special camps’ to re-enrol voters who were ‘left out’. ‘Left out’ is obfuscation: the names were unlawfully deleted

GS 1: WORLD HISTORY

INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE: 12

The inherited politics of protest in France



HISTORY HEADLINE

BY SAPTARSHI BASAK

DO PEOPLE in France just like to protest? That is a shorthand way of asking how deeply rebellion is embedded in the country's character. But the question is worth exploring as dramatic images emerge from Paris and other parts of France of protesters being detained at the Place de la Bastille and storming Marseille city hall, and placards bearing defiant messages such as *Si nous brûlons, vous brûlerez avec nous* — 'If we burn, you will burn with us'. What began as student protests demanding better school conditions has broadened into a wider expression of discontent fuelled by the rising cost of living, inflation, and austerity measures of a centralised state.

From the storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789, to May '68 and the more recent Yellow Vests movement, France has acquired a reputation as a land of protest. The French Revolution — a legacy tarnished by the Reign of Terror that followed — transformed the meaning of protest, elevating it from an expression of local grievances (prior to it, there were riots mostly over grain and its prices) to a means of asserting political rights. The Revolution's defining document, the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, identifies "liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression" as the "natural and imprescriptible rights of man". The fourth right enshrines a principle that has been preserved for more than two centuries: Authority is not beyond question, and the people could claim a legitimate role in resisting its abuse.

No government, as is the very nature of the state, readily welcomes an open challenge to its power. In the decades following the French Revolution, successive regimes — the Napoleonic Empire and the Bourbon Restoration — sought to reverse or contain



From the storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789, to May '68 and the more recent Yellow Vests movement, France has acquired a reputation as a land of protest AP

some of its gains. An attempt at course correction came with the July Revolution of 1830, often described as the Second French Revolution, which overthrew Charles X after he issued ordinances restricting the press and dissolving the elected chamber.

But continued economic hardship and curtailed political rights, even under a regime that shifted the basis of its legitimacy from divine right to constitutional monarchy, culminated in another revolution less than two decades later. Public anger exploded in 1848, when King Louis Philippe banned the "banquets" that reformers had used to get around restrictions on public meetings. Within days, the king had abdicated. Emile Zola's open letter *J'accuse...* during the Dreyfus Affair (1894-1906) and the upheavals of May 1968, further revealed a recurring belief in French political life: Political authority can, and sometimes must, be challenged by its citizens. The legacy of 1789 provided later movements with a language of resistance, even as each generation reinterpreted its principles in response to its own grievances.

This is not to suggest that protest is the exclusive preserve of the Left, even if the history of socialist movements and trade unions may create that impression. The

French Right, too, has repeatedly mobilised large crowds around its political causes. In May 2013, hundreds of thousands took to the streets in demonstrations organised by *La Manif pour tous* to oppose the legalisation of same-sex marriage.

Nor is protest unique to France. To suggest otherwise would be to perpetuate a stereotype that does a disservice not only to France but also to other countries, particularly India, where mass mobilisation has long been a feature of political life and remains so today. Across Europe, too, protests have erupted in Spain, Albania, Italy and Belgium, driven by grievances similar to those seen in France. Part of what sets the latter apart is that it is one of Europe's most centralised states: Pensions, schools, labour law and taxes are largely decided in Paris, so a grievance anywhere becomes a national question. Add to this a system in which governments can push reforms through with narrow majorities, like the 2023 pension reform. Talks between the state and the people are often thin, and so the street becomes a place to bargain. It is this phenomenon that is worth examining — and appreciating.

Basak is Copy Editor, The Indian Express