

UPSC-CSE 2027/28

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

 **ONE STOP SOLUTION**

By **Faiyaz Sir**



**COMPLETE
COVERAGE**



**EXAM
FOCUSED**



**ANALYSIS
MADE EASY**



**STATIC + CURRENT
INTEGRATION**



**STAY AHEAD
STAY PREPARED**



पढ़ाई बोझ नहीं, भविष्य बदलने का सबसे ताकतवर हथियार है।

मेहनत आज
सुकून कल

हार नहीं
मानूंगा

STOP
WISHING
START
DOING



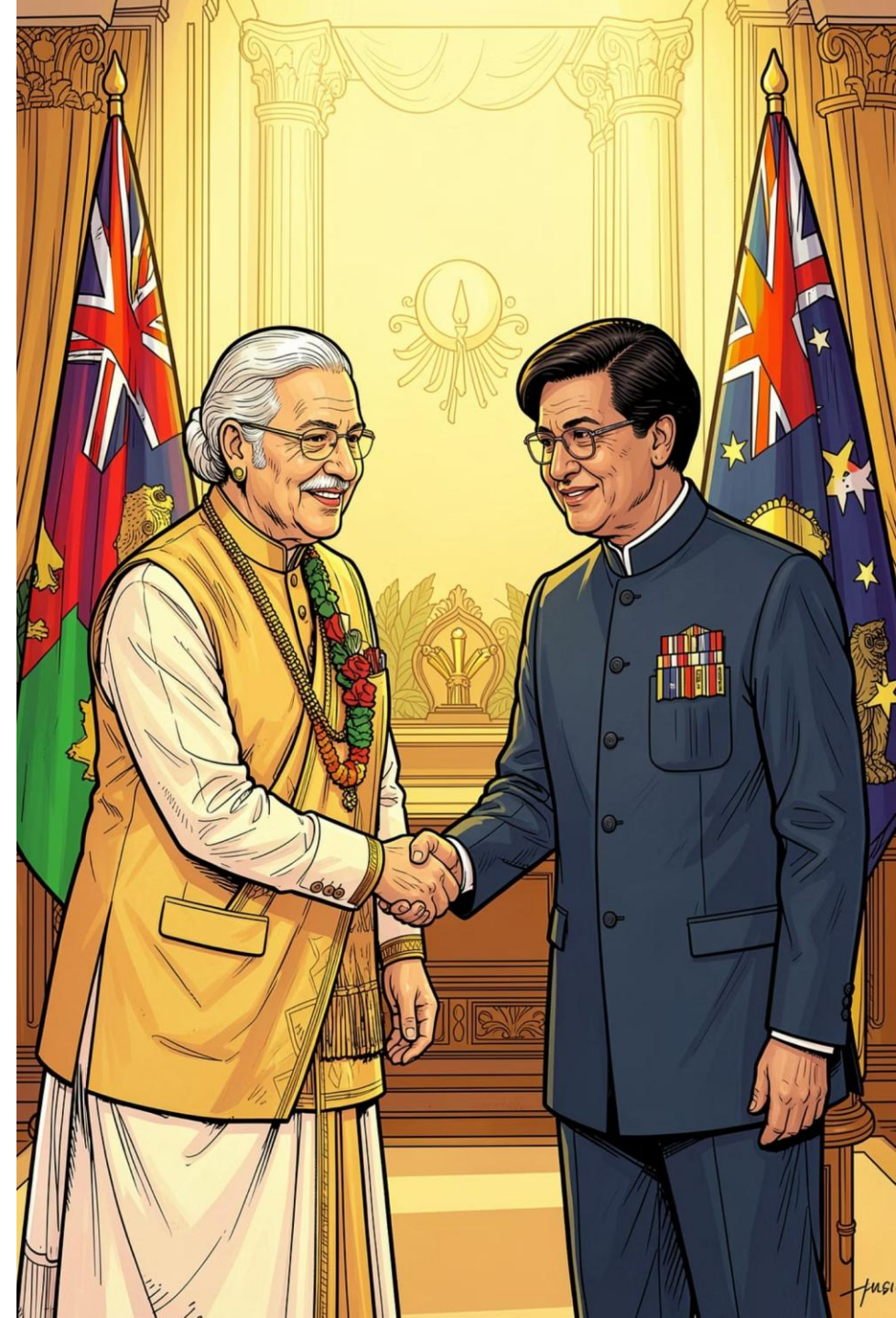
FOCUS
DISCIPLINE
CONSISTENCY
HARD WORK
SUCCESS

Dream
Plan
Work
Achieve

आज क्या पढ़ेंगे?

1. प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी की न्यूजीलैंड यात्रा
2. महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य

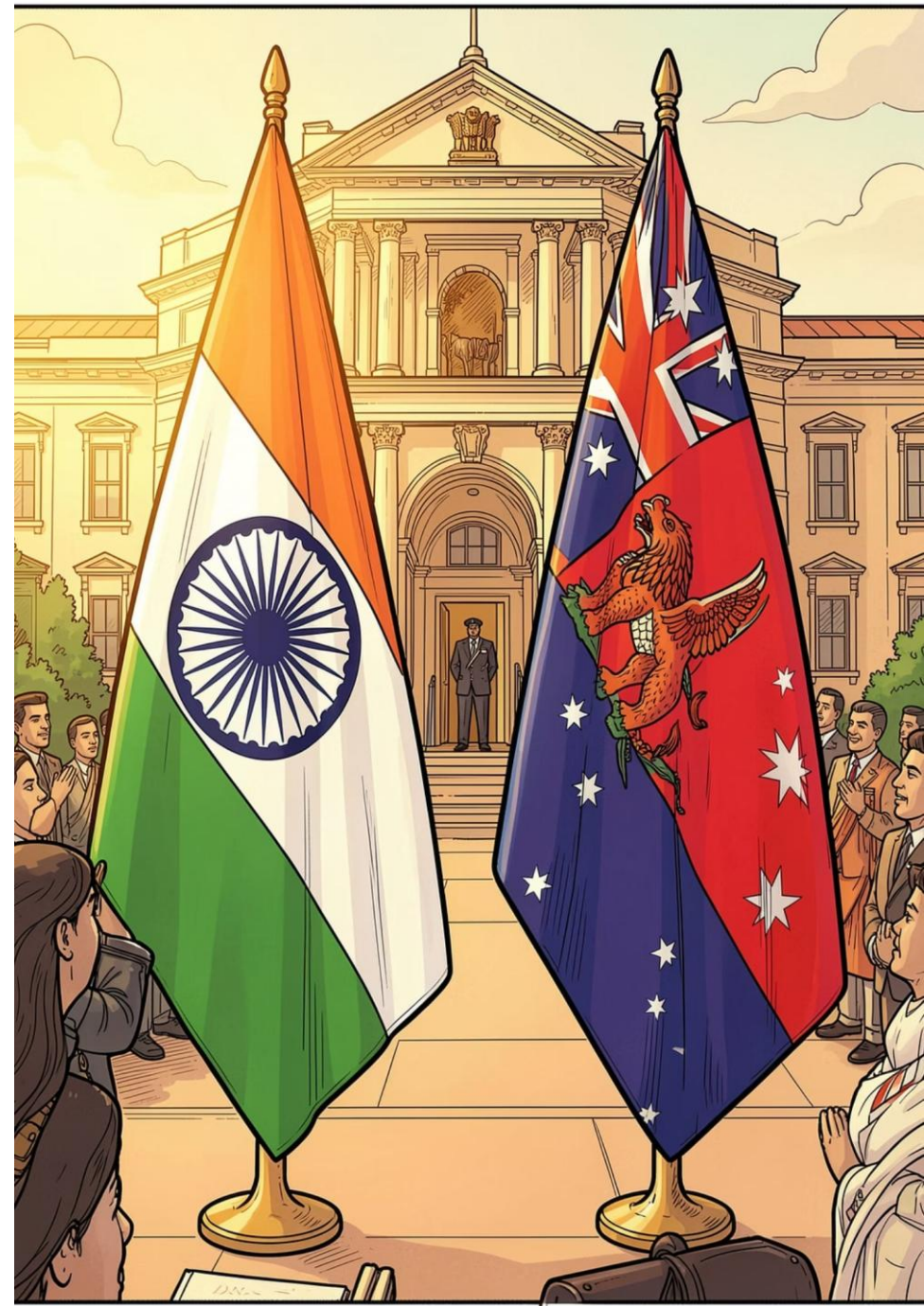
प्रधामंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी की जुलाई 2026
में हुई न्यूजीलैंड की ऐतिहासिक यात्रा



ऐतिहासिक पृष्ठभूमि और प्रमुख परिणाम

40 वर्षों में किसी भारतीय प्रधानमंत्री का पहला दौरा है।

इस यात्रा का सबसे बड़ा परिणाम दोनों देशों के बीच संबंधों को 'विशेष रणनीतिक साझेदारी' (Strategic Partnership) के स्तर पर उन्नत करना और 'रोडमैप-2030' को अपनाना है। इस दौरान 18 महत्वपूर्ण परिणाम सामने आए, जिनमें 10 प्रमुख द्विपक्षीय समझौतों/एमओयू (MoUs) पर हस्ताक्षर किए गए।



1. आर्थिक एवं व्यापारिक संबंध (Trade and Economic Cooperation)

द्विपक्षीय व्यापार का लक्ष्य

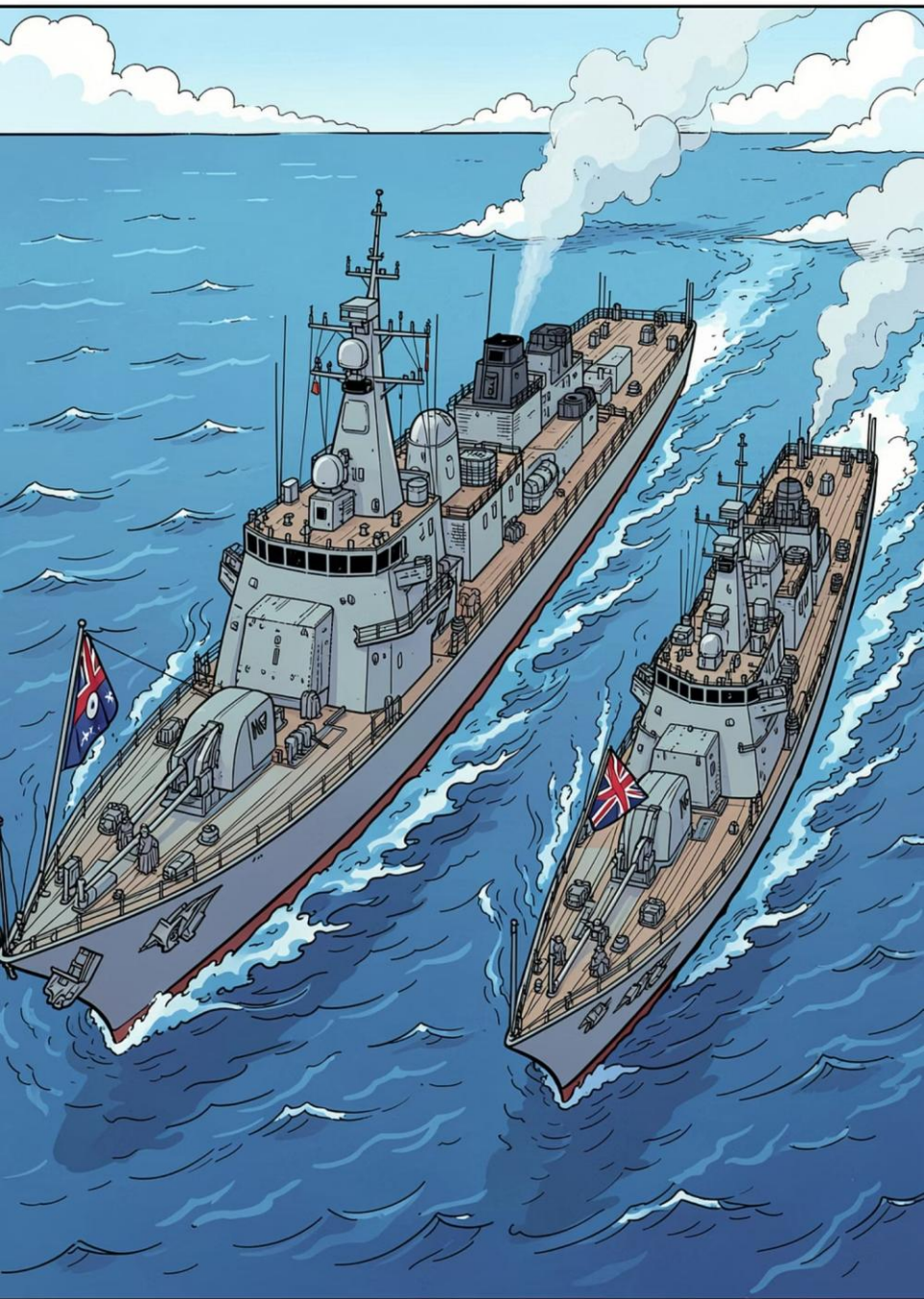
दोनों देशों ने वर्ष 2030 तक द्विपक्षीय व्यापार को दोगुना करके **₹35,000 करोड़ (7 अरब न्यूजीलैंड डॉलर)** तक पहुंचाने का महत्वाकांक्षी लक्ष्य रखा है।

मुक्त व्यापार समझौता (FTA)

हाल ही में संपन्न हुए भारत-न्यूजीलैंड मुक्त व्यापार समझौते (FTA) के शीघ्र कार्यान्वयन पर सहमति बनी, जिसके तहत न्यूजीलैंड भारत में अगले **15 वर्षों में \$20 बिलियन** का निवेश करेगा।

सीमा शुल्क सरलीकरण (Customs Facilitation)

व्यापार को सुगम बनाने के लिए '**प्राधिकृत आर्थिक ऑपरेटरों की पारस्परिक मान्यता व्यवस्था**' (AEO-MRA) को क्रियान्वित किया गया।



2. रक्षा और समुद्री सुरक्षा (Defence and Maritime Security)

हिंद-प्रशांत सहयोग

दोनों देशों ने 'Framework for Indo-Pacific Maritime Cooperation' को अपनाया। चीन के बढ़ते प्रभाव के बीच दोनों देशों ने एक मुक्त और खुले हिंद-प्रशांत क्षेत्र के लिए **वार्षिक समुद्री सुरक्षा कूटनीति (Maritime Security Dialogue)** शुरू करने का निर्णय लिया।

म्युचुअल लॉजिस्टिक्स सपोर्ट (MLSA)

भारतीय नौसेना और न्यूजीलैंड डिफेंस फोर्स के बीच सैन्य साजो-सामान के आदान-प्रदान के लिए **लॉजिस्टिक्स समझौता** हुआ।

हाइड्रोग्राफी समझौता

समुद्री मानचित्रण और हाइड्रोग्राफिक डेटा साझा करने के लिए एक **कार्यान्वयन समझौते** पर हस्ताक्षर किए गए।

IPOI में भागीदारी

न्यूजीलैंड ने भारत की पहल '**इंडो-पैसिफिक ओशंस इनिशिएटिव**' (IPOI) के तहत समुद्री सुरक्षा स्तंभ का नेतृत्व संभालने की घोषणा की।

3. आतंकवाद का मुकाबला और कानून प्रवर्तन (Counter-Terrorism & Law Enforcement)

संयुक्त कार्य समूह (JWG)

आतंकवाद, साइबर खतरों और प्रवासन (विशेषकर प्रो-खालिस्तान गतिविधियों और वित्तीय अपराधों) से निपटने के लिए Counter-Terrorism पर एक **संयुक्त कार्य समूह** स्थापित करने हेतु समझौता (MoA) हुआ।

4. कृषि, डेयरी और वैज्ञानिक अनुसंधान (Agriculture & Science)



कीवीफ्रूट एक्शन प्लान

दोनों देशों ने भारत के **नागालैंड और उत्तराखंड** में कीवीफ्रूट के लिए दो '**सेंटर ऑफ एक्सीलेंस**' स्थापित करने की घोषणा की।



डेयरी और पशुपालन

इस क्षेत्र में तकनीकी ज्ञान और सर्वोत्तम प्रथाओं को साझा करने के लिए **पशुपालन और डेयरी सहयोग ज्ञापन (MoC)** संपन्न हुआ।



ध्रुवीय अनुसंधान (Polar Research)

भारत के **नेशनल सेंटर फॉर पोलर एंड ओशन रिसर्च (NCPOR)** और न्यूजीलैंड की **यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ कैंटरबरी** के बीच अंटार्कटिका अनुसंधान पर समझौता हुआ।

5. आपदा प्रबंधन और स्वच्छ ऊर्जा (Disaster Management & Clean Energy)

आपदा प्रतिस्कंदन (Resilience)

भारत के NDMA और न्यूजीलैंड के NEMA के बीच भूकंप, सुनामी और तटीय आपदा प्रबंधन में क्षमता निर्माण के लिए समझौता हुआ।

वैश्विक गठबंधन

न्यूजीलैंड आधिकारिक तौर पर भारत के नेतृत्व वाले 'ग्लोबल बायोफ्युल्स एलायंस' (GBA) में शामिल हुआ।

6. संस्कृति, खेल और जन-से-जन संपर्क (Culture, Sport & People-to-People Connect)

खेल कार्य योजना

दोनों देशों ने 'Joint Action Plan on Sport' अपनाया, जो खेल विज्ञान, उच्च प्रदर्शन प्रशिक्षण और एथलीट विकास पर केंद्रित है।

सांस्कृतिक और समुद्री विरासत

गुजरात के **लोथल** स्थित नेशनल मैरीटाइम हेरिटेज कॉम्प्लेक्स (NMHC) और न्यूजीलैंड मैरीटाइम म्यूजियम के बीच सहयोग के लिए **एमओयू** हुआ।

हवाई संपर्क और गतिशीलता

दोनों देशों के बीच सीधी उड़ानों को बढ़ावा देने के लिए **एयर सर्विसेज एग्रीमेंट** को अपडेट किया गया।

Iranian regional reprisals follow U.S. attacks

U.S. says its attacks will weaken Tehran's ability to threaten shipping, insists the Strait is open

Tehran launches attacks on West Asian countries hosting U.S. forces, says the Strait remains closed

Iran's Revolutionary Guard said multiple vessels ignored orders; one 'was hit by a warning shot'

Associated Press
DUBAI

The U.S. attacked Iran early on Sunday over an Iranian strike on a container ship in the Strait of Hormuz that left one Indian sailor missing. Iran responded with attacks on several countries in West Asia, including Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Jordan, and Oman.

The U.S. struck again later on Sunday. Iran's state-run IRNA news agency cited the Governor of Qeshm island near the strait as saying projectiles had been fired at military targets, with no casualties. It said explosions were heard in the coastal city of Bandar Abbas and Hajarabad city to the north.

The U.S. military's Central Command (CENTCOM) said it hit 140 targets, including missile and drone launch sites, ammunition dumps, communi-



Tensions boil over: The U.S. says it hit 140 targets, including missile and drone launch sites and communication equipment, in Iran. REUTERS

cation equipment, and other sites. It said the attacks, heavier than in recent days, would weaken Iran's ability to threaten shipping. "We bombed the hell out of them last night," President Donald Trump said.

Iranian state media later reported U.S. strikes across the country, including military sites in a province near Tehran. Semi-official

news agencies said that a Navy officer was killed.

Iran retaliated by attacking nations in the region hosting U.S. military forces, while insisting it alone must control the Strait.

New questions

The U.S. military and Mr. Trump asserted that the Strait remained open on Sunday. Iran said the Strait was closed until calm is

restored. The fighting raised new questions about the interim deal Iran and the U.S. reached on June 17, beginning a 60-day period aimed at reaching a permanent end to the war.

"The era of one-sided deals is OVER," Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Speaker of Iran's Parliament and a key negotiator, wrote. "We told you: keep your word or pay the

Govt. slams ship attack off Oman; seafarer missing

CHENNAI

The government has condemned the attack on a Cyprus-flagged commercial vessel off the coast of Oman that left one of its 11 Indian crew members missing. "We condemn the attack on the commercial vessel *G-S Galaxy...*," it said. » **PAGE 4**

price. Reality is knocking." Tehran added that it would consider targeting "additional enemy bases in the region" if it faced more attacks.

Qatar's military said it intercepted incoming Iranian fire. Three people, including a child, were wounded as a result of shrapnel from the interception of Iranian attacks, Qatar's Interior Ministry

said. Missile alerts sounded in Bahrain which houses the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet. Kuwait's military also said it was intercepting incoming fire.

The Omani state news agency said drones struck sites in an area that sits on the Strait of Hormuz and issued a shelter-in-place warning for residents in the region. The attack came a day after Oman and Iran held talks on the strait. Oman summoned the Iranian Ambassador to protest the strikes, the first such move since the war began, calling Iran's acts "irresponsible."

Three Iranian missiles struck areas across Jordan, causing minor damage but no injuries, Jordan's state news agency reported. Sirens also sounded in the UAE, but the government said missiles did not cross into its territory.

A Cyprus-flagged container ship was hit by Iran

and suffered "significant engine room damage," CENTCOM said.

Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard said multiple vessels "disregarded our warnings" and ignored instructions to follow what it called an approved route. One "was struck by a warning shot and brought to a stop".

The Strait, a key route for the global supply of oil and natural gas, has become the key sticking point in negotiations, and fighting over the past week has left negotiations in danger of collapse.

Oman on Saturday said it and Iran agreed to continue discussing the Strait "at the technical and political levels." Iran offered no statement about the Strait being open to all, something sought by the Trump administration.

RELATED REPORT ON
» **PAGE 15**

Q1. निम्नलिखित में से होर्मुज़ जलडमरूमध्य किन दो जल निकायों को जोड़ता है?

1. फारस की खाड़ी (Persian Gulf)
2. ओमान की खाड़ी (Gulf of Oman)
3. अरब सागर (Arabian Sea)

नीचे दिए गए कूट का प्रयोग कर सही उत्तर चुनिए:

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| A. केवल 1 और 2 | B. केवल 2 और 3 |
| C. केवल 1 और 3 | D. 1, 2 और 3 |

Q2. निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार कीजिए:

1. लाल सागर एशिया और अफ्रीका के बीच स्थित है।
2. लाल सागर, स्वेज नहर के माध्यम से भूमध्य सागर से जुड़ता है।
3. लाल सागर सीधे काला सागर (Black Sea) से जुड़ा है।

उपरोक्त में से कौन-सा/से कथन सही है/हैं?

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| A. केवल 1 और 2 | B. केवल 2 और 3 |
| C. केवल 1 और 3 | D. 1, 2 और 3 |

PM must restore Statehood to J&K, says CM Abdullah

Peerzada Ashiq
JAMMU

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's repeated promise to restore Statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Sunday said a commitment made by the country's highest elected leader should carry weight.

"In [Jammu's] Katra, the Prime Minister talked about the restoration of J&K Statehood, with these words that 'it isn't an ordinary promise but Modi's promise'. If the Prime Minister makes a promise, it should carry some weight, and there should be some action on it," Mr. Abdullah said at a public meeting after a rally here.

This was the second major public rally by the ruling National Conference (NC) ahead of its proposed July 20 protest at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi to demand restoration of Statehood and constitutional guarantees.

"Whenever the people of J&K seek fulfilment of the promise, we are told it will happen 'at the appropriate time'," he said.

"The restoration of Statehood is not the cause of any one party; it is the cause of every citizen of Jammu and Kashmir. That is why we have invited every political party and leader to join us on July 20. With elections still years away, this is the time to rise above politics and stand united for our shared future," Mr. Abdullah added.

Referring to the Centre's outreach to Ladakh with Article 371 safeguards, Mr. Abdullah said, "If dialogue and constitutional safeguards can be offered to those who choose to prot-



NC workers listen to CM Omar Abdullah speak at a rally demanding the restoration of Statehood to J&K in Jammu on Sunday. AP

Police arrest 3 publishers for 'pro-separatist' books in J&K

The Hindu Bureau
JAMMU

The counter-intelligence unit of the Jammu and Kashmir Police on Sunday arrested three publishers for allegedly bringing out "pro-separatist" books

under Samagra Shiksha scheme. The police have lodged a case under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

CONTINUED ON
» **PAGE 4**

est, why are the democratic aspirations of the people of J&K denied? We seek nothing more than the restoration of our rightful Statehood and the authority to govern through the mandate given to us by the people."

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary said restoration of Statehood is a must to ensure good days for J&K, adding, "Give us back Statehood so that we can address employment issues. This is the voice of the people of J&K."

Meanwhile, BJP leader and Leader of the Opposition Sunil Sharma said: "Statehood is a process. The Army, intelligence agencies, and all constitutional institutions are stakeholders. It does not come overnight. It is our

commitment, and it will be restored at the appropriate time."

CPI(M) backs sit-in

Meanwhile, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) extended support to the July 20 protest. "The decision of the August 5, 2019 – when Article 370 and Article 35-A were abrogated – was taken without any consultation with stakeholders of J&K, and it remains as an unprecedented assault on the rights of the people. It was not an attack on one party or one region alone, but one that touched every community, caste and creed in the entire region," said CPI(M) State Secretary Abass Rather.

He appealed to political parties, organisations and citizens to set aside differences and join hands for this cause on July 20.

YouTube Homework

➤ Part-1

Taliban delegation on mission to 'boost agricultural ties with India'

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

The Taliban administration of Afghanistan has expressed desire to enhance agricultural cooperation with India, covering areas such as agricultural trade, infrastructure development, and irrigation, the External Affairs Ministry said on Sunday.

In a statement, the Ministry said the discussions took place during the six-day visit of Attaullah Omari, the Minister for Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock of the Taliban administration. The visit ended on Sunday.

Among the issues discussed were cooperation in food processing through value addition, capacity building and the promotion of bilateral trade in



Afghan Agriculture Minister Mawlawi Attaullah Omari at the meet at PHD House, in Delhi, on Friday. ANI

agricultural and food products.

During the visit, Mr. Omari met Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and Minister of Rural Development Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Minister of Food Processing Industries Chirag Paswan.

Mr. Omari also met Mi-

nister of State for External Affairs Pabitra Margherita.

The Afghan delegation, led by Mr. Omari, also held meetings with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), the Indian Agricultural Research Institute

(IARI), the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Recognition and aid

India has not yet formally recognised the Taliban administration in Kabul, but has upgraded the 'technical team' in the Indian Embassy in Kabul to the level of *chargé d'affaires*.

India has been sending food, medicines and other essential items to Afghanistan as the country continues to battle a shortage of essential commodities and life-saving medicines.

Much of the assistance was routed through Iran's Chabahar port before the United States-Israel war against Iran disrupted the route.

YouTube Homework

➤ **terrorist Organizations Of world**

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य

तालिबान (Taliban) अफ़ग़ानिस्तान का एक इस्लामी उग्रवादी और राजनीतिक आंदोलन है। इसकी स्थापना 1994 में दक्षिणी अफ़ग़ानिस्तान के कंधार क्षेत्र में हुई थी। "तालिबान" शब्द अरबी/पश्तो मूल के "तालिब" (छात्र) का बहुवचन है, जिसका अर्थ है "विद्यार्थी"।

संक्षिप्त इतिहास

- **1994:** Mohammad Omar के नेतृत्व में तालिबान का गठन हुआ।
- **1996:** तालिबान ने राजधानी काबुल पर कब्ज़ा कर लिया और अधिकांश अफ़ग़ानिस्तान पर शासन स्थापित किया।
- **1996-2001:** इस दौरान तालिबान ने इस्लामी कानून (शरिया) की अपनी कठोर व्याख्या लागू की।
- **2001:** 11 सितंबर के आतंकी हमलों के बाद अमेरिका के नेतृत्व वाले गठबंधन ने अफ़ग़ानिस्तान में सैन्य कार्रवाई की, क्योंकि तालिबान ने Osama bin Laden को साँपने से इनकार किया। इसके बाद तालिबान की सरकार गिर गई।
- **2001-2021:** तालिबान एक विद्रोही समूह के रूप में सक्रिय रहा।
- **2021:** अमेरिकी और नाटो सेनाओं की वापसी के दौरान तालिबान ने फिर से पूरे देश पर नियंत्रण स्थापित कर लिया और काबुल पर कब्ज़ा कर लिया।

तालिबान की विचारधारा

- तालिबान स्वयं को इस्लामी अमीरात स्थापित करने वाला आंदोलन मानता है। इसकी नीतियाँ शरिया की उसकी अपनी व्याख्या पर आधारित हैं। अंतरराष्ट्रीय स्तर पर मानवाधिकार संगठनों ने महिलाओं की शिक्षा, रोजगार, अभिव्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता और अन्य नागरिक अधिकारों पर लगाए गए प्रतिबंधों की व्यापक आलोचना की है।

महिलाओं पर प्रभाव

- **2021 के बाद:**
- अधिकांश माध्यमिक और उच्च शिक्षा तक लड़कियों की पहुँच सीमित या बंद कर दी गई।
- कई क्षेत्रों में महिलाओं के रोजगार पर प्रतिबंध लगाए गए।
- सार्वजनिक जीवन में महिलाओं की भागीदारी पर कड़े नियम लागू किए गए।

क्या तालिबान और अल-कायदा एक ही हैं?

- नहीं।
- **तालिबान** मुख्य रूप से अफ़ग़ानिस्तान पर शासन और नियंत्रण पर केंद्रित आंदोलन है।
- **अल-कायदा** एक अलग अंतरराष्ट्रीय जिहादी संगठन है। हालाँकि, ऐतिहासिक रूप से दोनों के बीच संबंध रहे हैं, लेकिन वे अलग-अलग संगठन हैं।

क्या भारत तालिबान को सरकार के रूप में मान्यता देता है?

- **नहीं।** भारत ने तालिबान सरकार को औपचारिक मान्यता नहीं दी है। हालाँकि, मानवीय सहायता और व्यावहारिक (pragmatic) संपर्क बनाए रखे हैं।

T.N. hasn't drawn full quota of rice in Central scheme in 5 of last 7 years

T. Ramakrishnan
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu drew a lower quantity of rice than the quota allocated for Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) cardholders in five of the last seven years under the public distribution system. In this context, Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay's request to Prime Minister Narendra Modi not to disturb the existing provision assumes significance.

Of the five years (from 2019-20 to 2025-26), it was during the COVID-19 pandemic year (2020-21) that the drawal was almost close to the allocated figure of around 6.99 lakh tonnes, with the off-take being about 98%.

In the remaining four years, it varied from around 73% during 2022-23 and 2023-24 to 79% during 2024-25. Only in two years (2019-20 and 2025-26) did the utilisation exceed the allocated quantity, close to 108%.

Between 2020 and 2023, the Union government implemented the Pradhan Mantri Garib Ka

Foodgrain quota			
Allocation and drawal under Antyodaya Anna Yojana in Tamil Nadu over the years			
Year	Allocation	Offtake (drawal)	Offtake %
2019-20	6,89,246	7,50,046	108.82
2020-21	6,99,628	6,86,052	98.06
2021-22	7,04,819	5,42,877	77.02
2022-23	7,43,975	5,50,171	73.95
2023-24	7,51,547	5,52,537	73.52
2024-25	7,38,492	5,85,126	79.23
2025-26	7,39,718	8,01,574	108.36

SOURCE: FOODGRAIN BULLETINS ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION OF THE UNION GOVERNMENT.

lyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) to provide free foodgrains in addition to the regular allocation in view of the pandemic.

In those years, Tamil Nadu came under criticism of the Union government that it had made more use of the free foodgrains than its regular allocation as rice was then supplied to the State at ₹3 per kg for AAY and priority household (PHH) cards. Since January 1, 2023, the Union government has not been charging any amount for rice meant for the two cate-

ries of cards. It has extended, for five years effective January 1, 2024, the period of distribution of free foodgrains, the arrangement of which is named as the PMGKAY.

In a recent letter to the Prime Minister, Mr. Vijay urged the Centre to retain the present entitlement of 35 kg of foodgrains per month for every household under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY), irrespective of the size of family. The amendment, proposed by the Centre, seeks to provide 7 kg per person

per month, subject to an overall ceiling of 35 kg per household. Mr. Vijay apprehended that the move, if implemented, would "diminish the food security" of nearly 70 lakh of the most vulnerable people of the State and result in the reduction of the monthly quota from 65,261 tonnes to approximately 42,040 tonnes.

Enquiries with field officials reveal that many undeserving persons have been added to the list of AAY beneficiaries over the years. They have to be weeded out, and a drive is in progress. As of now, there are 18,64,600 AAY ration cards, covering 69,26,983 beneficiaries. Of them, the number of AAY cardholders, having the family size of below 5, is 15.75 lakh, with 58.51 lakh beneficiaries.

A former policymaker, who handled the subject of food for long, feels that the Centre's move is well meaning, as the present entitlement of 35 kg for an AAY ration card has been giving enormous scope for misuse.

YouTube Homework

➤ NFSA - 2013

RSS expresses concern over Ram Temple embezzlement

The outfit expresses confidence in SIT probe; spokesperson says delegates at regional conveners' meeting held in Belagavi underscored the need for measures to ensure such incidents don't recur

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) on Sunday expressed concern over the alleged embezzlement of donations at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh. Delegates at the annual Akhil Bharatiya Prant Pracharak Batihak, held in Belagavi, underscored the need for measures to ensure that such incidents do not recur, a spokesperson said on the concluding day of the three-day meeting.

Sunil Ambekar, the RSS's all-India convener, communications, said the Ram Temple embezzlement case was discussed during the regional conveners' meeting.

Detailed deliberations
"The deliberations were in detail. Most speakers expressed confidence in the Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Uttar Pradesh Police. They felt that it would lead to clear results soon. The investigation was taken up after a request by the Shri Ram Jan-



mabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust. It was also decided to conduct the activities of the temple in such a way as not to disturb the faith of devotees," he said. Mr. Ambekar said that the meeting, held in the Sant Meera school in Angol, was attended by regional conveners from all States, office-bearers and executives and heads of all 42 organisations affiliated to the RSS.

"RSS Sara Sanghachalak Mohan Bhagwat and Sara Karyavaha Dattatreya Hobsabale, and other senior leaders attended and addressed some sessions. As many as 226 Pracharaks from across the country, 83 Sanghi Shiksha Varga members and 12 Karyakarta Vidas Varga members participated.

As many as 18,842 volunteers were trained in the three-day event," he said.

The issues discussed
The delegates discussed the "current situation" in the country, including organisational expansion, social initiatives, and national issues like rural development, family welfare, disaster management, environmental protection and other issues," Mr. Ambekar said.

He said the leadership held a review on the prepa-

rations for the RSS centenary celebrations. "The leadership also reviewed the implementation of action plans at the shiksha level and discussed an intensive expansion drive planned for September to increase the number of shikshas across the country. A review of the RSS centenary celebrations was held. Discussions for the valedictory programme for October were held."

"There was a proposal for engaging people who participated in centenary programmes in long-term social service activities and the 'five-fold transformation' initiative of the RSS was discussed. The annual travel programme of Dr. Bhagwat for 2026-27 was finalised," he said.

Some senior leaders addressed the issue of drug abuse. "They emphasised the need for a strong de-addiction movement in the country," Mr. Ambekar added. "Some others spoke of the RSS's role in the programme to commemorate the 650th birth anniversary of Saint Shriromani Ravidas Maharaj."

'Temple Trust to decide powers of CEO, there will be no govt. interference'

Press Trust of India
AYODHYA



Nripendra Misra

Ram Temple Construction Committee Chairman Nripendra Misra on Sunday stated that the responsibilities and powers of the first-ever Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Ayodhya temple would be determined by the temple Trust.

The primary responsibility of the CEO would be to uphold the faith of devotees in the Trust, he said.

"The new CEO will also oversee financial arrangements," Mr. Misra told reporters in Ayodhya, adding that there would not be any "government interference" in the functioning of the Trust or its CEO.

Mr. Misra added that ensuring that devotees visiting Ayodhya receive all necessary amenities and maintaining the trust in the temple would be among the new CEO's initial responsibilities.

"In a way, the CEO will work as an assistant of the Trust, sans government interference," Mr. Misra said, noting that a three-member panel has been set up to recommend candidates for the Trust's CEO post.

Ultimately, it was up to

the Trust to determine how much authority to delegate to the CEO, who would be responsible for arranging their own staff, while everything remained under the Trust's purview, Mr. Misra stated.

On July 6, the Trust announced a three-member committee comprising Justice Pramod Kohli (retd), Lieutenant-General Vishnukant Chaturvedi (retd), and former NIT-Raipur Chairperson Suresh Haware to screen candidates for the CEO post.

Mr. Misra flatly denied when asked if he would attend the meetings of the committee tasked with recommending names for the CEO post.

He said there had been no complaints from devotees visiting the Ram Tem-

ple, and that they felt positively about their experience.

"If you ask the devotees near Angad Teela and Sugriv Kila about their feelings, I assure you there is no complaint regarding their faith in Lord Ram, the temple arrangements, or the worship taking place here," he said.

Regarding any potential changes in the Trust, he said, "No decisions were made in my presence." He also clarified that he did not attend the meeting of the Trust on July 6.

Asked if he would attend the meeting scheduled for July 22, Mr. Misra said, "The meeting is on July 22, but I do not know the agenda. If the matter pertains to construction, I would have to be present. Please understand, we are ex-officio directors without voting rights. We provide our views on relevant subjects. After I know the agenda, I will decide whether to attend."

Regarding what might be discussed in the July 22 meeting, Mr. Misra suggested that this question be left to the general secretary of the temple Trust.



AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal and party leader Manish Sisodia at the launch of the drive at the Japanese Park in Delhi on Sunday. ANI

AAP starts signature campaign against 'theft of donation'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Sunday launched a nationwide signature campaign demanding strict punishment for those involved in alleged 'chanda-chori' (donation theft) at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

The party kicked off the campaign with the recitation of 'Sundarkand', a chapter of the Ramcharitmanas dedicated to Lord Hanuman, at the Japanese Park in Rohini Sector 10.

The "theft" of donations has turned into a major political row between the BJP and Opposition parties. An FIR was registered in the matter on June 25 after the SIT constituted by Uttar Pradesh government filed a preliminary report. Eight persons associated with the temple's donation and counting process have been arrested in the case so far and investigation is under way.

AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal appealed to people to participate in the drive by signing letters addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking strict action against the offenders.

As part of the campaign, Mr. Kejriwal urged devotees across the country to organise Hanuman Chalisa recitations in their localities and collect signatures on letters addressed to Mr. Modi.

"The movement should

continue until the accused are hanged. This is Lord Ram's command and our sacred duty," he said.

The AAP chief added that the "dacoity" deeply hurt devotees of Lord Ram across the world. "Within 40 days, about 70 incidents of theft were captured on CCTV cameras. Eight months of CCTV recordings were deleted. We all kept demanding action. We believed that those at the top would do something. But now it has become clear that they will do nothing because people from their own party, their own organisation and affiliated organisations are involved in this," he said.

The former Delhi CM alleged that those who carried out this theft do not believe "Ram is Bhagwan (God)". "They only want votes in Ram's name. They loot the country in Ram's name," he said.

'Bid to sway voters'

The BJP criticised AAP's move, with Delhi party chief Harsh Malhotra alleging that organising "Sundarkand" recitations was a "political gimmick" aimed at reviving Mr. Kejriwal's political fortunes. "Whenever Kejriwal finds himself politically cornered, he attempts to improve his political standing by organising Sundarkand recitations in Delhi. The gimmick is an effort to influence Hindu voters of Punjab and other States where elections are due."

Cong. seeks to turn the tables on BJP using fund row

NEWS ANALYSIS

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI

The Ayodhya dispute predates the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), but the Ram Janmabhoomi movement made it a key issue by which the party challenged the Congress's template of secularism, which sought to keep religion and electoral politics separate.

The latest controversy of alleged misappropriation of donations at the Ram Temple has, however, given the Congress an opportunity to frame its attack against the Sangh Parivar's control over the management of the temple.

"The BJP-RSS have captured the temple administration in an unauthorised manner," former Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said on July 7.

The Congress has mounted an unusually sustained campaign demanding action against the of-



The latest campaign reflects yet another nuanced repositioning of stance by the Congress on issues of the Ram Temple. FILE PHOTO

face-bearers of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust who have Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) back-grounds. It has also asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to break his "silence" on the issue and order a Supreme Court-monitored investigation.

The Congress has held eight press conferences in New Delhi and nearly 50 across the country over the past four days.

Though neither Congress nor the Nationalist Kharige nor Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha

Rahul Gandhi has spoken on the issue, the party plans to raise the matter during the Monsoon Session of Parliament, which begins on July 20.

The latest campaign reflects yet another nuanced repositioning of stance by the Congress on Ayodhya, an issue on which the party's approach has evolved with time over the past four decades.

The Congress government led by Rajiv Gandhi was accused of facilitating the early stages of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement when, in 1986, the locks of the disputed structure

were ordered to be opened, allowing Hindu devotees access to the site. The move was seen as an attempt to assuage Hindu sentiment in the wake of the political fallout over the Shah Bano alimony case, in which the Supreme Court (SC) ruled that Muslim women were entitled to maintenance.

When a section of Muslim clergy protested against the order as interference in Muslim Personal Law, the Rajiv Gandhi government enacted the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986, to dilute the top court's order.

Three years later, in November 1989, the Narayan Dutt Tiwari-led Congress government in Uttar Pradesh permitted shilanyas (foundation-laying ceremony) adjacent to the disputed structure. The government maintained that the proposed site for the shilanyas lay outside the disputed area and that permitting the ceremony would therefore not violate the status quo ordered by

the courts. After the demolition of the Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992, the Congress sharply distanced itself from the movement. Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao condemned the demolition, dismissed BJP governments in four States, and pledged to rebuild the mosque if the courts so directed.

Over the following decades, the party consistently defended the constitutional principle that the dispute should be resolved through the judiciary while arguing that the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, should remain the main framework for all other religious sites.

The SC's unanimous verdict in November 2019 allowing the construction of the Ram Temple marked another turning point. Welcoming the verdict, the Congress Working Committee (CWC) said that all parties to the dispute should honour the judicial process and the rule of law.

"We appeal to all the parties concerned and to

all communities to abide by the secular values and the spirit of fraternity enshrined in our Constitution and to maintain peace and harmony," the CWC resolution of November 9, 2019, said.

"The Indian National Congress favours the construction of the Ram temple, and pledged to rebuild the mosque if the courts so directed."

But the Congress's top leadership avoided attending the pran pratishtha (consecration) ceremony on January 22, 2024, describing it as a VHP-RSS event from which the Shankaracharyas were kept away.

Now, as the spotlight falls on the temple office-bearers, the party, by seeking accountability and transparency and asserting that the temple belongs to devotees rather than the Sangh Parivar, is attempting to recast the narrative on Ayodhya and reclaim some political ground.

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य

ISRO successfully carries out tests of Gaganyaan systems

One of the tests involved separation of the 'umbilical mechanism' that serves as a link between the crew module, where astronauts live, and the service module that provides propulsion, agency says

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Indian Space Research Organisation on Sunday said it had successfully carried out three major tests of the Gaganyaan crew module systems.

The first test pertained to ensuring an upright position of the crew module after splashdown in the sea, considered one of the most important crew safety requirements. To do this, a stored cold-gas-based uprighting system was developed and tested.

"A system-level qualification test set-up consisting of all the elements of CMUS (crew module uprighting system) was realised," the ISRO said, adding it successfully conducted inflation tests "for the primary inflation module wherein stored gas in the high-pressure gas bottle was made to inflate the floatation by operating the control valves."

The second test involved examining the separation of the umbilical mechanism that serves as a link between the crew module, where astronauts live, and the service module, which provides power



Step-by-step: (Clockwise from left) The crew module uprighting system, the service module connect-disconnect system, and the apex cover that underwent testing, ISRO

er and propulsion. The mechanism consists of two parts, each located at the crew module side, called CSU-1, and the service module side, called CSU-2.

Clean separation

During the crew module's earth re-entry stage, the service module first separates from the crew mo-

dule after the CSU-1 disconnects. Subsequently, just before re-entry, the CSU-2 is also separated.

"Separation test of CSU-2 from simulated crew module was carried out. The test demonstrated the clean separation of CSU-2 as well as structural stability of the crew module panel and their interfaces,"

the space agency said. The third test validated the structural integrity of the crew module during the apex cover separation event. The apex cover protects the parachutes and associated subsystems during the mission. It is separated before parachutes are deployed to decelerate the crew module.

YouTube Homework

- Samudrayaan
- Deep Ocean Mission

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य

- **गगनयान (Gaganyaan)** भारत का पहला **मानव अंतरिक्ष मिशन (Human Spaceflight Mission)** है, जिसे Indian Space Research Organisation द्वारा विकसित किया जा रहा है। इसका उद्देश्य भारतीय अंतरिक्ष यात्रियों (गगनयात्रियों) को पृथ्वी की निचली कक्षा (Low Earth Orbit) में भेजना और सुरक्षित वापस लाना है।

मुख्य उद्देश्य

- भारत की स्वदेशी मानव अंतरिक्ष उड़ान क्षमता विकसित करना।
- 3 भारतीय अंतरिक्ष यात्रियों को अंतरिक्ष में भेजना।
- लगभग **400 किमी** की Low Earth Orbit में मिशन संचालित करना।
- लगभग **3 दिन** अंतरिक्ष में रहने के बाद सुरक्षित वापसी कराना।

प्रमुख तथ्य

- **मिशन का नाम:** गगनयान (Gaganyaan)
- **अंतरिक्ष एजेंसी:** Indian Space Research Organisation
- **लॉन्च वाहन:** LVM3
- **कू क्षमता:** 3 अंतरिक्ष यात्री
- **लैंडिंग:** बंगाल की खाड़ी (समुद्र में स्प्लैशडाउन)
- **मिशन के प्रमुख भाग**
 - **Crew Module** – जहाँ अंतरिक्ष यात्री रहेंगे।
 - **Service Module** – ऊर्जा, प्रणोदन और अन्य प्रणालियाँ।
 - **Crew Escape System** – आपात स्थिति में कू को सुरक्षित बाहर निकालने की व्यवस्था।

गगनयात्री

- भारत ने चार वायुसेना अधिकारियों को गगनयात्री के रूप में चुना है:
- Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair
- Ajit Krishnan
- Angad Pratap
- Shubhanshu Shukla
- इनमें से मिशन के लिए अंतिम कू का चयन उड़ान से पहले किया जाएगा।

महत्व

- भारत मानव अंतरिक्ष मिशन भेजने वाले चुनिंदा देशों में शामिल होगा।
- अंतरिक्ष प्रौद्योगिकी, रोबोटिक्स, सामग्री विज्ञान और चिकित्सा अनुसंधान को बढ़ावा मिलेगा।
- भविष्य में भारतीय अंतरिक्ष स्टेशन और चंद्र अभियानों की दिशा में महत्वपूर्ण कदम होगा।

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य

CJI stresses need for women-centric infrastructure in judicial buildings

The Hindu Bureau
GURUGRAM

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Sunday said judicial infrastructure was no longer a luxury but a “very big necessity”, and called for mandatory facilities for women advocates, including separate Bar rooms and adjoining childcare facilities, in all new court complexes.

Speaking at the inauguration of the new Tower of Justice, a seven-acre judicial complex for the Gurugram District and Sessions Court near Rajiv Chowk, the Chief Justice said providing an atmosphere that instils confidence in socially and financially backward litigants was the duty of all three organs of the Constitution.

“Just as a patient reaching a hospital is given first-aid, a consumer of justice



Chief Justice of India Surya Kant speaking at the inauguration of a judicial complex in Gurugram on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

coming to court must be given first-aid in the form of basic amenities – seating, drinking water, and wash-rooms,” Chief Justice Kant said. He noted that Gurugram’s transformation from an agricultural town to an industrial hub had led to a sharp rise in legal disputes of all kinds.

Flagging the lack of facilities for women lawyers,

the CJI cited a recent Supreme Court Bar Association survey, which found that many judicial complexes across States lacked basic amenities for women members of the Bar. “Women advocates are not being provided the facilities that should be given to them in many States. It is our all-out effort that wherever new judicial infras-

tructure is constructed, it should be mandatory to provide these facilities. It would not be right to call it a modern court complex without them,” he said.

He urged the Punjab and Haryana High Court to ensure a childcare room adjoining the women advocates’ room in the new Gurugram complex.

Chief Justice Kant recalled that he had performed the *bhoomi puja* for the complex in January 2017 in his capacity as the in-charge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court Building Committee, calling the day “historic” and “memorable”.

The new court complex has 55 modern courtrooms, compared with 45 in the old building. It houses a bank, a post office, a Bar library, a mediation centre and other citizen-centric amenities.

YouTube Homework

- Supreme Court
- Appointments
- Right to Walk
- Right to Trauma
- Home Maker

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य

PYQ (UPSC Prelims 2018)

निम्नलिखित में से कौन-सा सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के मूल अधिकार क्षेत्र (Original Jurisdiction) में आता है?

- A. दो राज्यों के बीच विवाद
- B. किसी उच्च न्यायालय के निर्णय के विरुद्ध अपील
- C. राष्ट्रपति चुनाव विवाद
- D. उपर्युक्त सभी

PYQ (UPSC Prelims 2023)

निम्नलिखित में से कौन-सा अनुच्छेद सर्वोच्च न्यायालय को किसी भी निर्णय या आदेश का पुनर्विलोकन (Review) करने की शक्ति प्रदान करता है?

- A. अनुच्छेद 124
- B. अनुच्छेद 137
- C. अनुच्छेद 141
- D. अनुच्छेद 145

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य



Oil conundrum

India's energy imports from Russia seem driven by confusion, not strategy

Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MCI) data on India's May crude imports show that receipts from Russia had reached the pre-sanction levels of more than 40%, which is also the highest in two years. Though India has defended this as commercially prudent, its yuan-based payments give China an edge to internationalise its currency at India's expense, even if it has no bearing on the domestic strength of the Indian rupee due to strict capital controls. Oil import concentration from a single source, and paying a premium, is risky for India, which has long pursued a diversified energy strategy. Moreover, sourcing fuel from the Gulf spot market amid evolving sanctions has its own risks. Secondary sanctions could hit trade channels, exposing Indian refiners to severe supply shocks. India's crude imports from Russia surged in June, while UAE shipments were at record levels as refiners sought to secure supplies after the Strait of Hormuz reopened. However, renewed Iran-U.S. hostilities have put those flows at risk. And even as Venezuela has emerged as a key supplier, increasing and unsustainably high one-country concentration could weaken India's bargaining power, reduce flexibility, and erode its credibility as an independent balancing power.

MCI data highlight the price impact: Russian imports carried a \$46-per-ton premium. Import value surged 83% amid a 2% fall in volume, likely diminishing Indian refiners' margins on refined products using Russian crude. While spot purchases have enabled refiners to capture discounts of up to \$10 per barrel on Russian Urals crude relative to Brent during some periods, after February this year, narrowing discounts, weaker product cracks, and geopolitical risks have moderated gross refining margins. India must strike a balance between having long-term stable contracts with multiple producers, and selectively using the spot-market to mitigate the procurement risks. Until the Russia-Ukraine conflict, nearly 70% of India's crude imports came through long-term contracts, particularly from West Asia. True, India cannot overlook the diplomatic costs as Russian energy dependence risks sanctions. When Russian crude was cheap because of discounts on account of the Ukraine war, India reduced imports under U.S. pressure; now when it is being sold at a premium because of the Iran war, India is moving back to Russian crude. India must expand its strategic petroleum reserves to cushion temporary disruptions. Whether it increases or cuts down Russian oil imports, India seems to make decisions that are far removed from any sense of strategic autonomy.

- **भारत का तेल आयात (India's Oil Import)** UPSC, BPSC और अन्य प्रतियोगी परीक्षाओं के लिए अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण विषय है, क्योंकि यह भारत की **ऊर्जा सुरक्षा (Energy Security)**, अर्थव्यवस्था और विदेश नीति से जुड़ा है।

भारत तेल आयात क्यों करता है?

- भारत दुनिया का तीसरा सबसे बड़ा तेल उपभोक्ता है।
- देश अपनी आवश्यकता का लगभग **85% से अधिक कच्चा तेल (Crude Oil)** आयात करता है।
- घरेलू उत्पादन कुल मांग की तुलना में काफी कम है, इसलिए आयात आवश्यक है।

भारत किन देशों से तेल आयात करता है?

- हाल के वर्षों में भारत के प्रमुख आपूर्तिकर्ता रहे हैं:
- **रूस** (सबसे बड़ा आपूर्तिकर्ता)
- **इराक**
- **सऊदी अरब**
- **संयुक्त अरब अमीरात (UAE)**
- **संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका (USA)**
- रूस-यूक्रेन युद्ध के बाद रियायती दरों पर रूसी तेल की खरीद बढ़ने से रूस भारत का प्रमुख स्रोत बन गया।

तेल भारत तक कैसे पहुँचता है?

- अधिकांश तेल समुद्री मार्ग से आता है। प्रमुख मार्ग:
- **होर्मुज़ जलडमरूमध्य (Strait of Hormuz)** – पश्चिम एशिया से आने वाले तेल का मुख्य मार्ग।
- **अरब सागर**
- भारतीय बंदरगाह जैसे **जामनगर, मुंद्रा, मुंबई** आदि।

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य

Insular incentive

Ethanol-blended fuel should not be forced on consumers irrationally

The Indian government's policy to continue producing E20 petrol at a cost higher than that of pure petrol when oil prices dip under \$70 a barrel to "compensate farmers adequately" is a deceptively well-formulated proposition. Most feedstock for the fuel-blending programme is from sugarcane, one of India's most water- and fertilizer-intensive crops, mainly grown in water-stressed Maharashtra and Karnataka. Whether the policy's net economic benefit remains positive will depend on the gains from lower crude imports, environmental improvements, and higher rural incomes outweighing these additional costs. Efficiency also remains a concern. Consumers – including people who are poorer than sugarcane farmers – pay more at the pump, oil marketing companies procure ethanol at the administered price, distilleries buy feedstock, and only then do farmers receive higher prices. Higher feedstock prices also do not address most reasons farmers have lower incomes, such as post-harvest losses and limited market access. Crucially, if the government rewards every unit of ethanol irrespective of feedstock, the policy will favour whichever feedstock has the largest installed base: sugarcane. Instead, the objectives should include resource efficiency and food security. The state could invest in irrigation and logistics and institute revenue-sharing arrangements with ethanol producers and cooperatives.

India has encouraged maize and grain-based distillation capacity has expanded rapidly, periodically allowed ethanol to be produced from the Food Corporation's surplus or damaged rice holdings, and has supported commercial plants using agricultural residues such as rice straw under Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas schemes. Maize and millets are less thirsty but maize still demands significant fertilizer inputs while millets produce less fermentable starch per hectare. Sweet sorghum is less water-intensive and has a shorter growing season than sugarcane. Lignocellulosic biomass such as rice and wheat straw, maize stover and groundnut shells can also support second-generation (2G) ethanol. 2G ethanol from agricultural residues can avoid using cropland for fuel, reducing competition with food crops and addressing stubble burning. It is more expensive and technologically demanding but that is a better problem to solve, with proactive policymaking. The government could pay a premium for ethanol produced from residues, subsidise equipment and infrastructure to collect and store crop residue, facilitate contracts between aggregators and distilleries, and provide viability-gap funding and offtake agreements. Ultimately, ethanol policy should not be independent of agricultural policy. And import substitution is no excuse for consumers being forced to pay more for lower-mileage fuel than pure petrol.

भारत की एथेनॉल नीति (India's Ethanol Policy)

- भारत की एथेनॉल नीति (Ethanol Policy) का उद्देश्य पेट्रोल में एथेनॉल मिलाकर कच्चे तेल के आयात को कम करना, प्रदूषण घटाना, किसानों की आय बढ़ाना और ऊर्जा सुरक्षा को मजबूत करना है।

एथेनॉल (Ethanol) क्या है?

- एथेनॉल एक जैव ईंधन (Biofuel) है।
- यह मुख्यतः गन्ना, शीरा (Molasses), मक्का (Maize) तथा अन्य कृषि उत्पादों से बनाया जाता है।
- इसे पेट्रोल में मिलाकर वाहन ईंधन के रूप में उपयोग किया जाता है।

Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme

- शुरुआत: 2003
- कार्यान्वयन: भारत सरकार द्वारा तेल विपणन कंपनियों (OMCs) के माध्यम से।

उद्देश्य:

- पेट्रोल में एथेनॉल मिलाना
- आयातित तेल पर निर्भरता कम करना
- कार्बन उत्सर्जन घटाना
- किसानों को अतिरिक्त आय उपलब्ध कराना

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य

'National Policy on Biofuels' के संदर्भ में निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार कीजिए:

1. Biofuels का उत्पादन केवल खाद्य फसलों से किया जा सकता है।
2. Second Generation (2G) Biofuels कृषि अवशेषों और लिग्नोसेल्युलॉसिक बायोमास से बनाए जा सकते हैं।
3. Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) भी Biofuel का एक रूप हो सकता है।

निम्नलिखित में से सही उत्तर चुनिए:

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| A. केवल 2 | B. केवल 2 और 3 |
| C. केवल 1 और 3 | D. 1, 2 और 3 |

Five crore Indians wait when the courts take a break

The Supreme Court of India and the major High Courts are on a summer holiday break, i.e., shut down with some vacation Benches functioning to hear urgent matters. However, shops, markets, eating places, government and private offices, hospitals and police stations do not cease to work even though their staff enjoy personal leave. On the other hand, somewhere in an Indian jail tonight, a man who has been convicted of nothing is finishing another year behind bars, his trial still ongoing and perhaps years away from ending. He is one of the roughly three in four prisoners in this country who are undertrials: unconvicted, presumed innocent, yet serving time anyway – often longer than the sentence they would have received had they pleaded guilty. And as you read this, the courts, the public institutions that hold the fate of the poor in their hands, are functioning at only a fraction of their strength.

A three-century backlog

From June 1 to July 12, the Supreme Court is on its summer break, sitting with three or four Benches a week instead of a full court and resuming in earnest on July 13. The doors are not bolted; urgent pleas are still heard. But for six weeks, the most powerful court in the world's most populous democracy idles.

Now hold that against the number it is meant to be fighting. As of the last day of 2025, more than 5.39 crore cases were pending in Indian courts: over 4.76 crore in the district courts, 63.6 lakh in the High Courts, and more than 92,000 in the Supreme Court itself, its heaviest load in over 30 years. A government study once calculated that, at the present pace, clearing the pile could take three centuries.

Three centuries. And the Court takes the summer and winter vacations off.

To be fair, the judges deserve it. The recess is when reserved judgments finally get written, when the brutal daily cause-list eases enough to think.



Vijay L. Kelkar

Vice-Chairman of
the Pune
International Centre



Pradeep S. Mehta

Secretary-General of
CUTS International
(Consumer Unity and
Trust Society)

When courts
rest together
for vacations,
crores of
litigants across
the country
wait longer
for justice

Last year the Chief Justice of India and his four senior-most colleagues worked clean through the first week of the break. Indian judges are among the most overworked in the world. This is not an accusation of laziness; no one who has seen a judge's docket could make one.

Because that is precisely the point. When the people doing the work are exhausted and the backlog is biblical, what conceivable logic shuts the whole shop at once? Not that judges rest – which they should – but that almost all of them rest together, so the institution goes quiet for six-plus weeks every year. And the habit is a colonial hand-me-down: the calendar was built for English judges who could not stand the Indian heat and retreated to cooler climes each summer, then enjoyed long Christmas holidays in the winter.

In 2024, the Court announced a fix: it renamed the “summer vacation” as “partial court working days”. That was it. The number of days it actually sits – about 190 days in a year – did not change. You cannot rebrand your way out of a backlog; a litigant whose case is stuck does not care what the recess is called, only whether his matter is heard and disposed of.

Justice needs court continuity

So what would actually help? The first answer is one the judiciary's own watchdogs have urged for years: do not abolish judicial rest; stagger it. A parliamentary standing committee in 2023 objected to “the entire court going on vacation en masse”, and proposed the obvious: rotate the leave, keep the Benches full, and never let the court run thin. A hospital does not empty its wards because its doctors are owed time off; it builds a roster. The Law Commission and the Justice Malimath Committee said the same, long ago. They were not enemies of the courts; they were trying to save them from themselves.

The standard objection is that all this is a sideshow: the real disease is vacancies, not vacations. It is true that courts are starved of judges, with up to a third of High Court seats

lying empty. But the objection boomerangs. If the Bench is already running at half strength, thinning it further for six weeks every summer is not a defence of the recess; it is the strongest case against it. And while filling those seats depends on the government and the collegium and will drag on for years, the calendar is the judiciary's to fix. One reform needs permission; the other needs only will.

Beyond courts, towards solutions

Staggering the leave, though, only treats the symptom. The deeper fix is to keep disputes out of the courtroom in the first place; it was never meant to be the first stop for every quarrel, but the last. India already has the tools. Lok Adalats settled more than 2.59 crore cases in a single national sitting last December, and over 23.5 crore in three years. The Mediation Act of 2023 now nudges parties to attempt settlement before going to court, and arbitration can take commercial disputes entirely out of judges' hands; yet these routes remain badly underused. But none of this happens on its own.

The country has a reservoir of experience it scarcely draws on: its retired judges, who spent their careers mastering this very machinery and step down, still in full command of it, at 62 or 65. Their expertise need not retire with them. Albeit many of them do function as heads of quasi-judicial bodies and tribunals. Freed from any daily docket, a dedicated corps of former judges could be invited to take up a single targeted charge: identify where cases pile up, set public targets for their disposal, and account for progress openly. Reform that belongs to everyone belongs to no one.

The judges will keep working through the heat, as they always do. The honest demand is not that they stop resting, but that the courts stop closing ranks and falling silent at the same moment, because justice, for five crore Indians, is not on vacation. It is overdue.

With contributions from Anushka Kewlani of CUTS

Why has China banned helium exports?

Why is helium emerging as a strategic resource? How vulnerable is the world to a helium supply shock? Why is it considered a critical input for future technologies? Why is storing and transporting helium so expensive? What makes it so hard to replace?

EXPLAINER

Vasudevan Mukunth

The story so far:

On July 10, the Ministry of Commerce and General Administration of Customs, China, has temporarily but immediately banned helium exports from the country. As of 4.30 pm IST on July 10, Beijing had not published any other information as to why it took this step now or its scope.

Is China a major helium producer?

China imports more than 80% of its helium needs but produces only around 1.6% of the world's helium. The export ban follows an extended period of supply strained by Russia's export restrictions – where the Prime Minister needs to sign off on shipments through 2027 – and supply risks tied to heightened tensions in West Asia.

The world's major helium producers are the U.S. (meeting 43% of total supply), followed by Qatar, Russia, Canada, and Algeria. In 2024, the U.S. privatised its Federal Helium Reserve and, selling its assets to the Messer Group and no longer buffering shocks such as those due to the U.S.-Iran conflict.

The next year, the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform launched an investigation into Messer's Chinese interests, stoking the risk of tit-for-tat measures. Which China's latest export ban could be.

After the U.S., Qatar has been meeting 33% of the demand, especially in Asia. After the conflict with Iran escalated, as medical chemist and *Science* columnist Derek Lowe put it, "one-third of global helium production is now literally bottled up behind the Strait of Hormuz, a much higher percentage than world oil production [where the situation is bad enough already]."

In this light, China's new export restriction could preserve the country's helium supply for its domestic chip



Helium can only be transported in vacuum-jacketed stainless steel vessels that are manufactured only by a few companies worldwide. GETTY IMAGES

manufacturers and its medical sector.

How is helium obtained?

Helium is the second-lightest element, after hydrogen, and is not manufactured. It is a non-renewable resource generated deep in the earth's crust, where the radioactive decay of uranium and thorium atoms emits alpha particles, which capture electrons to form helium atoms.

Over millions of years, this helium migrates into the same reservoirs of natural gas, and they are extracted together. This said, natural gas is not processed to isolate the helium from it until the latter makes up at least 0.3% by volume.

But once it does, the gas is isolated using the fact that it has a different boiling point.

Some operators also recover helium from LNG plants and from the air but these quantities are too low to matter to the global demand. Helium for commercial use is usually at least 99.997% pure.

What is helium used for?

Helium has an extremely low boiling point – negative 269°C – and does not participate easily in chemical reactions. These are good properties for a coolant that needs to cool the magnets in MRI machines, the silicon wafers in the semiconductor fabricating industry, and, increasingly, some of the devices used in quantum computers. Its small atoms mean the gas escapes easily through gaps that might be too small for oxygen or nitrogen atoms – so engineers use helium as a leak-detector.

Helium is also used in the process of drawing optical fibres to rapidly and uniformly cool molten glass and to displace oxygen or nitrogen from forming bubbles inside the material. Spaceflight organisations like ISRO, NASA, and SpaceX use helium to pressurise fuel tanks in rockets. Research and the tourism sector in many parts of the world also use helium to inflate balloons and airships.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, laboratory use-cases account for

22% of the demand for helium, followed by controlled atmospheres and semiconductors (17%), lifting gas (17%), MRI scanners (15%), aerospace (9%), and detecting leaks (5%).

How much does helium cost?

In June 2026, the spot price for highly pure helium in Northeast Asia had reportedly spiked to \$150-205 per thousand cubic feet, almost double what it was in late 2025. At least one major supplier, the U.S.-based industrial supplier Airgas, has invoked force majeure and tacked on surcharges of \$13.50 per hundred cubic feet to existing contracts. Liquid helium is by default expensive to store and transport because helium only liquefies at -269°C.

In fact, the helium supply chain as a whole is cost-intensive because purification, storage, and transport are each expensive and technically sophisticated. A mid- to large-scale purification and liquefaction facility will require more than \$100 million while smaller ones can cost around \$10 million, thanks to the need for corrosion-resistant alloys that can withstand ultra-low temperatures.

The gas can be stored in underground salt caverns, which reduce leaks significantly – but these formations are rare and developing a new one can cost more than \$200 million. It can also be stored as compressed gas or cryogenic liquid. The former typically costs up to \$10 million to build while bulk cryogenic liquid storage systems generally need between \$0.5 million and \$20 million depending on capacity. Then there are the operational expenses.

Finally, helium can only be transported in vacuum-jacketed stainless steel vessels – which are manufactured by relatively few companies worldwide, including several Chinese ones.

Finally, the contractor transporting the containers must also ensure they are delivered before the holding time expires, after which the helium will start boiling off into the atmosphere.

THE GIST

The export ban follows an extended period of supply strained by Russia's export restrictions – where the Prime Minister needs to sign off on shipments through 2027 – and supply risks tied to heightened tensions in West Asia.

Helium is an important coolant in the semiconductor fabricating industry, where it removes heat from silicon wafers.

The helium supply chain as a whole is cost-intensive because purification, storage, and transport are each expensive and technically sophisticated.

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य

चीन ने हीलियम निर्यात पर प्रतिबंध क्यों लगाया?

- चीन ने **राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा (National Security)** और **रणनीतिक संसाधनों (Strategic Resources)** की उपलब्धता सुनिश्चित करने के उद्देश्य से हीलियम के निर्यात पर कड़े नियंत्रण लगाए हैं। हीलियम एक **महत्वपूर्ण (Critical)** संसाधन है, जिसका उपयोग कई उच्च-प्रौद्योगिकी क्षेत्रों में होता है।

मुख्य कारण

1. राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा

- हीलियम का उपयोग **रोकेट, मिसाइल, उपग्रह** और अन्य रक्षा परियोजनाओं में होता है।
- चीन पहले अपनी घरेलू आवश्यकताओं को पूरा करना चाहता है।

2. सेमीकंडक्टर उद्योग

- चिप (Semiconductor) निर्माण में अल्ट्रा-शुद्ध हीलियम का उपयोग होता है।
- चीन अपने सेमीकंडक्टर उद्योग को मजबूत करना चाहता है।

3. AI और हाई-टेक उद्योग

- AI सर्वर, क्वांटम कंप्यूटिंग और उन्नत इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स के निर्माण में भी हीलियम की आवश्यकता होती है।

4. सीमित संसाधन

- हीलियम पृथ्वी पर सीमित मात्रा में उपलब्ध है।
- इसका उत्पादन मुख्यतः प्राकृतिक गैस के साथ होता है।

हीलियम का उपयोग कहाँ-कहाँ होता है?

- MRI मशीन
- अंतरिक्ष कार्यक्रम (Rocket Launch)
- ISRO और NASA के मिशन
- Semiconductor Manufacturing
- Fiber Optics
- Nuclear Research
- Cryogenics (अत्यंत कम तापमान वाले प्रयोग)

भारत पर प्रभाव

- यदि चीन हीलियम के निर्यात पर प्रतिबंध या कड़े नियंत्रण रखता है, तो:
- इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स और सेमीकंडक्टर उद्योग प्रभावित हो सकते हैं।
- चिकित्सा क्षेत्र (MRI मशीनों) में लागत बढ़ सकती है।
- वैज्ञानिक अनुसंधान और अंतरिक्ष कार्यक्रमों के लिए आपूर्ति चुनौतीपूर्ण हो सकती है।
- भारत को अमेरिका, कतर और अन्य देशों से वैकल्पिक आपूर्ति पर अधिक निर्भर होना पड़ सकता है।

How DDCs changed local governance in J&K?

What is at stake in the debate over local democracy in Jammu and Kashmir?

Tikender Singh Panwar

The story so far: The restructuring of Jammu and Kashmir's political and administrative framework through the constitution of District Development Councils (DDCs) has remained the subject of legal and constitutional debate. Formed in 2021, the DDCs completed their five-year term on February 24, 2026. With no fresh elections held and local government institutions remaining largely inactive in recent years, questions have resurfaced about the relevance of the DDC model. Introduced as a mechanism for direct local democracy, the DDCs are viewed by supporters as a step towards grassroots governance, while critics argue they have impeded rather than strengthened democratic decentralisation in the region.

What do the 73rd and 74th Amendments provide for?

One of the core arguments presented for

the abrogation of Article 370 was the need to fully integrate J&K with the constitutional framework applicable to the rest of India.

A central element of this argument was the introduction of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, which provide for elected rural and urban bodies. This integration was intended to ensure regular, mandatory elections and empower grassroots democracy.

How is local governance structured?

The standard constitutional framework operates on a clearly defined multi-tier electoral system where citizens directly elect their local representatives:

Urban areas: Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils, and Nagar Panchayats.

Rural areas: A three-tier structure comprising Gram Panchayats (Village Pradhans), Block Development Councils (BDCs), and District-level bodies (Zila Parishads).

Mandated under Article 243ZD of the

Constitution, the District Planning Committee (DPC) is envisaged as a coordinating body that brings together development plans prepared by panchayats and municipalities and integrates them into a comprehensive district-level plan.

Unlike an independent executive authority, the DPC is intended to function as an institutional mechanism that reflects priorities generated by elected local bodies and facilitates bottom-up planning. In this sense, it is designed to strengthen democratic decentralisation by aggregating local mandates rather than exercising authority over them.

However, while the constitutional framework assigns a key role to DPCs in district-level planning, their functioning has been uneven across the country, with many remaining largely inactive, barring a few exceptions such as Kerala.

How do DDCs differ from DPCs?

The DDCs were established in J&K through an executive order rather than a

legislative process. While the government presents DDCs as directly elected bodies that strengthen grassroots democracy, it is contended that the model contains major contradictions within the governance framework.

Critics argue that the DDC structure bypasses existing institutions such as Zila Panchayats and urban local bodies. Unlike the DPC, which is intended to aggregate development priorities emerging from lower tiers of government, the DDC functions as a parallel administrative authority with executive and developmental powers. This blurs the relationship between the electorate and the actual exercise of power.

The key distinction is that the DPC seeks to strengthen local democracy by consolidating mandates generated from the ground up, whereas the DDC operates from above, competing with lower tiers of governance and functioning as an instrument of centralised bureaucratic control rather than democratic decentralisation.

The DDC structure raises concerns about unequal representation. The allocation of seats across districts does not adequately reflect variations in population, thereby diluting the principle of uniform political weight.

For instance, Srinagar, with a population of roughly 12 lakh, and Kishtwar, with around 2.5 lakh residents, are allocated the same number of DDC members. This creates an imbalance where the political voice per capita is drastically skewed.

The DDCs are being compared to the “special purpose vehicles” used in Smart City projects. They create an illusion of decentralisation, but act as capital-driven, bureaucratically managed structures. Since DDCs can easily jettison legislatively approved local initiatives, they function as a governance substitute rather than a governance supplement.

The creation of 280 DDC members across J&K has established a form of parallel ‘parliament’ in disguise. Historically, in politically fragile regions, central authorities have often sought to weaken provincial or State-level assemblies by backing district-level entities.

With the J&K State Assembly absent or weakened for years, the DDC framework has allowed key functions and financial powers that would ordinarily rest with elected legislators and local panchayats to remain concentrated under Union administration control.

What is the way forward for local democracy in J&K?

Genuine local democracy cannot be reduced to an administrative or legal exercise; it is fundamentally a political question. True decentralisation requires the restoration of the DPC model envisaged under the 73th and 74th Constitutional Amendments, ensuring financially empowered and grounded local governments accountable to the State's electorate, rather than an administrative architecture serving centralised union control.

YouTube Homework

➤ 73rd & 74th Amendment

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The key distinction is that the DPC seeks to strengthen local democracy by consolidating mandates generated from the ground up, whereas the DDC operates from above, competing with lower tiers of governance and functioning as an instrument of centralised bureaucratic control rather than democratic decentralisation.

The DDC structure raises concerns about unequal representation. The allocation of seats across districts does not adequately reflect variations in population, thereby diluting the principle of uniform political weight.

For instance, Srinagar, with a population of roughly 12 lakh, and Kishtwar, with around 2.5 lakh residents, are allocated the same number of DDC members. This creates an imbalance where the political voice per capita is drastically skewed.

The DDCs are being compared to the “special purpose vehicles” used in Smart City projects. They create an illusion of decentralisation, but act as capital-driven, bureaucratically managed structures. Since DDCs can easily jettison legislatively approved local initiatives, they function as a governance substitute rather than a governance supplement.

The creation of 280 DDC members across J&K has established a form of parallel ‘parliament’ in disguise. Historically, in politically fragile regions, central authorities have often sought to weaken provincial or State-level assemblies by backing district-level entities.

With the J&K State Assembly absent or weakened for years, the DDC framework has allowed key functions and financial powers that would ordinarily rest with elected legislators and local panchayats to remain concentrated under Union administration control.

What is the way forward for local democracy in J&K?

Genuine local democracy cannot be reduced to an administrative or legal exercise; it is fundamentally a political question. True decentralisation requires the restoration of the DPC model envisaged under the 73th and 74th Constitutional Amendments, ensuring financially empowered and grounded local governments accountable to the State's electorate, rather than an administrative architecture serving centralised union control.

YouTube Homework

➤ 73rd & 74th Amendment

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य

Question

73वें संविधान संशोधन के संदर्भ में निम्नलिखित कथनों पर विचार कीजिए:

1. ग्राम सभा पंचायत का एक अंग है।
2. राज्य निर्वाचन आयोग पंचायत चुनाव कराता है।
3. पंचायती राज संस्थाओं का कार्यकाल 5 वर्ष होता है।

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| A. केवल 1 और 2 | B. केवल 2 और 3 |
| C. 1, 2 और 3 | D. केवल 1 और 3 |

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य



ChatGPT Work is a direct competitor to Claude Gework, which can similarly complete multi-step, tool-using tasks for users, though the two differ in their plugin ecosystems and how deeply each is woven into its maker's coding tools — Codes for OpenAI, Claude Code for Anthropic. REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE.

Has OpenAI's GPT-5.6 class beaten Anthropic's Fable-class models?

Just over a week after Fable 5 came back online for all users, OpenAI unveiled its own next-generation family: GPT-5.6 Sol, Terra, and Luna; rather than a single flagship, OpenAI split the release into three capability tiers priced separately with Sol at the top and Luna at the bottom

John Xavier

Anthropic and OpenAI are locked in an increasingly tight race for frontier AI supremacy, and the gap between their flagship models are narrowing to a benchmark-by-benchmark contest.

Claude has led on real-world software-engineering tasks with Fable 5 scoring 80.3% on SWE-Bench Pro — a benchmark that evaluates an AI model's software engineering capabilities through complex, realistic programming challenges — at its June launch, well ahead of GPT-5.5's 58.6%. But OpenAI's newly released GPT-5.6 Sol claims the state-of-the-art spot on the Artificial Analysis Coding Agent Index at 80, narrowly ahead of Fable 5, while using less than half the tokens and time.

Since launching Mythos and giving a select group of companies in its Glasswing Alliance early access, Anthropic has positioned itself at the front of the frontier race. It followed up by releasing Fable 5, a version of Mythos with extra safeguards around biology, cybersecurity, and AI research, to a much broader set of users, cementing that lead.

That momentum hit a snag when a dispute with the U.S. government over export controls led Anthropic to be treated as a supply-chain risk, forcing it to suspend access to Fable 5 and Mythos 5 for 19 days — from June 12 to July 1, 2026 — before the Commerce Department lifted the relevant controls and access was restored.

Just over a week after Fable 5 came back online for all users, OpenAI unveiled its own next-generation family: GPT-5.6 Sol, Terra, and Luna. Rather than a single flagship, OpenAI split the release into three capability tiers priced separately

with Sol at the top and Luna at the bottom, arguing this lets each tier advance on its own tempo. OpenAI has been vocal that Sol edges out Anthropic's flagship on several fronts. On Agents' Last Exam, an evaluation of long-running professional workflows across 55 fields, Sol scored 53.6, which OpenAI says is 13.1 points ahead of Fable 5. On the Artificial Analysis Coding Agent Index, Sol posted a new high of 80, about 2.8 points above Fable 5. It also claims new state-of-the-art marks on BrowseComp (92.2%) and OSWorld 2.0 (62.6%).

Picture isn't one-directional
But the picture isn't one-directional. Anthropic still holds a wide lead on SWE-Bench Pro, where Fable 5's 80.3% sits far above the 64.6% OpenAI reports for Sol — a roughly 15-point gap on one of the most closely watched agentic-coding benchmarks.

Independent observers have pointed out that Terminal-Bench and SWE-Bench Pro reward different kinds of work: terminal automation favours Sol's Codes-style harness, while whole-codebase issue resolution still favours Claude.

To understand why the two companies can each claim a win, it helps to think of the two tests as different kinds of job interviews for the same candidate.

SWE-Bench Pro is like handing someone a half-finished house that a previous contractor left behind, and asking them to find exactly what's wrong and fix only that, without touching anything else or causing a different room to leak.

It rewards a model that can read carefully, navigate something large and unfamiliar, and make a precise, contained

repair — the way a software engineer fixes a specific bug in a codebase they didn't build.

Terminal-Bench 2.1, on the other hand, is less about fixing one specific thing and more about general skilfulness around the whole house. One has to evaluate whether this person can set up the electricity, get the plumbing running, and recover if a step goes wrong midway.

It's a broader test of operating a computer's control panel that includes installing software, configuring servers, running multi-step jobs, and troubleshooting failures along the way. A model can be a meticulous bugfixer without being a great all-around operator, and vice versa. This is roughly why Fable 5 leads on the "fix this one thing precisely" test while GPT-5.6 Sol leads on the "handle this whole messy workflow" test.

There's a second wrinkle worth knowing as these scores aren't just testing the AI model itself but they're also testing the toolkit it's given to work with.

OpenAI has evaluated its models using its own in-house "Codes" toolkit, tuned to work well with how its models like to operate, a bit like letting the operator using their own tools versus renting them a standard set of equipment. A contractor will be adept at executing well with the tools he is used to, but may find it difficult to use a different toolkit.

In a normal scenario, this contractor will require some additional time to get used to the new tools before they start working. And even when they work with the new tools, it will take some time to gain tacit knowledge. If one were to factor this into GPT 5.6 Sol's capability, then its lead with Fable 5 will be narrower.

Apart from the GPT-5.6 family of models, the company also announced

ChatGPT Work, an agentic mode built on GPT-5.6 that can read emails, summarise texts, create presentations, and organise inchoate ideas into charts and dashboards through a new "Sites" feature, as well as run scheduled or recurring tasks

Competing strengths, different trade-offs

This product is a direct competitor to Claude Gework, which can similarly complete multi-step, tool-using tasks for users, though the two differ in their plugin ecosystems and how deeply each is woven into its maker's coding tools — Codes for OpenAI, Claude Code for Anthropic.

So how do the two flagship frontier labs' models compare and contrast? Based on what the benchmark and eval scores show, both are capable and land close to each other overall. Each comes with a different specialty rather than one model being categorically ahead.

The place where OpenAI clearly shows distinction is in token efficiency. On the Artificial Analysis Coding Agent Index, Sol matches or exceeds Fable 5's score while using less than half the output tokens, taking less than half the time, and costing about one-third less. On the broader Artificial Analysis Intelligence Index, Sol comes within a single point of Fable 5 while finishing tasks in 61% less time at roughly half the cost.

For teams weighing cost per completed task rather than raw benchmark scores this efficiency gap may be a deciding factor than which model tops any individual leaderboard. That said, as with the Codes-versus-neutral-harness comparison above, it's worth checking whether that efficiency holds up outside OpenAI's own tuned environment before betting a production workflow on it.

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य

भारत ने AI के लिए प्रमुख कदम

- **IndiaAI Mission (2024)** – ₹10,372 करोड़ का मिशन, AI Ecosystem विकसित करने के लिए।
- **AI Compute Infrastructure** – GPU और High-Performance Computing उपलब्ध कराना।
- **Bhashini Mission** – भारतीय भाषाओं के लिए AI आधारित Translation और Voice Technology।
- **NITI Aayog – AI for All (2018)** – AI के विकास की राष्ट्रीय रणनीति।
- **AI Startups को प्रोत्साहन** – Funding, Innovation और Incubation।
- **AI Skill Development** – छात्रों और युवाओं को AI Training।
- **Responsible AI** – Ethical, Safe और Inclusive AI पर जोर।
- **AI का उपयोग** – कृषि, स्वास्थ्य, शिक्षा, साइबर सुरक्षा और शासन (Governance) में।

UPSC Prelims Fact

- **IndiaAI Mission** → 2024
- **Budget** → ₹10,372 करोड़
- **Nodal Ministry** → MeitY (Ministry of Electronics & IT)

‘Vizhinjam is no rival to Cochin Port’

Cochin Port Authority, together with DP World, is preparing an expansion plan to make the International Container Transshipment Terminal at Vallarpadam future-ready by deepening the channel draft and augmenting terminal infrastructure to tap growing opportunities in container traffic

NEWS ANALYSIS

V. Sajeew Kumar

Cochin Port Authority (CoPA) is unfazed by the rapid rise of Vizhinjam Port as a transshipment hub and is instead focusing on expanding the International Container Transshipment Terminal (ICTT) at Vallarpadam to strengthen its position as a gateway terminal.

M. Angamuthu, Chairperson-in-charge of CoPA, said the port, together with DP World, is preparing an expansion plan to make the ICTT future-ready by deepening the channel draft and augmenting terminal infrastructure to tap the growing opportunities in container traffic, particularly transshipment.

“The expansion plans are aimed at transforming ICTT into a vibrant gateway terminal and transshipment hub,” he said in an interaction.

Mr. Angamuthu said he does not see Vizhinjam as a direct competitor to Cochin at present, noting that the two ports serve different markets.

“Vizhinjam is primarily a transshipment terminal, whereas Cochin is essentially a gateway terminal, although it also handles a significant volume of transshipment cargo. ICTT has a much larger demand potential as it serves central Kerala, including Kochi, which has major commercial and industrial



Space crunch: Draft limitations remain a major challenge for ICTT in attracting larger container vessels as shipping lines increasingly deploy bigger ships to achieve economies of scale. THULASI KAKKAT

centres,” he said.

However, he acknowledged that draft limitations remain a major challenge for ICTT in attracting larger container vessels as shipping lines increasingly deploy bigger ships to achieve economies of scale. While Vizhinjam has an 18-m draft, ICTT has 14.5 m. The terminal would need a draft of around 16 m to efficiently handle the next generation of container ships.

The Cochin Port Authority and DP World have jointly proposed to deepen the draft to 16 m as part of the terminal’s expansion programme.

Mr. Angamuthu highlighted Kochi’s strategic advantages, including its proximity to major international shipping routes and strong road, rail and inland waterway connectivity, which offer signifi-



ICTT has a much larger demand potential as it serves central Kerala, including Kochi, which has major commercial and industrial centres

M. ANGAMUTHU,
Chairperson-in-charge of CoPA

cant scope for developing integrated port-based industrial zones, logistics parks, and warehousing and value-added distribution facilities.

The advantages position Cochin Port as both a major container gateway and a transshipment hub while complementing the rapid growth of India’s maritime sector, he said.

On the flip side, the limited industrialisation in the hinterland poses a major challenge for the port

due to the restricted growth in cargo.

The rising operational cost, especially the high annual maintenance dredging cost, is another factor eroding the competitiveness of the port.

The proximity of the Southern Naval Command imposes restrictions on crane heights and certain waterfront developments. Legacy labour issues, higher manpower costs and productivity constraints are some of the other factors affecting the service quality and overall competitiveness of the port.

Mr. Angamuthu said Cochin Port has the task of maintaining the channel, so the high annual dredging cost is a severe drain on its resources. The channel is extensively used by the Indian Navy, Coast Guard and Cochin Shipyard without any cost sharing.

The port has raised the issue with the government, he said. To help rationalise the cost, Cochin Port undertakes need-based dredging as the profile of the ships calling in at the port varies significantly in terms of draft.

Rail links

Asked about the idling railway line to ICTT, he replied that Container Corporation of India (CONCOR) had launched a rail service between Coimbatore and ICTT in 2016 but halted it after about 10 months due to viability issues. The rail service could not compete effectively with road transport on the short 190 km stretch between Coimbatore and Kochi.

The GST rollout in July 2017, the consequent shutdown of interstate check posts, and significant improvements in road connectivity between Cochin and Coimbatore (NH-544) also favoured road service. Today, the rail service between Coimbatore and ICTT can be revitalised only through significant cost reduction.

DP World is exploring the idea of establishing a rail service between Bengaluru and ICTT. The nearly 500 km distance augurs well for rail service vis-à-vis a road link, subject to demand potential.

He said the Kerala government’s proposed Mission Samudra is in sync with the port’s development objectives, as defined by the Centre’s Sagarmala Programme, especially in

terms of multimodal infrastructure connectivity, port-led industrialisation, green shipping and shipbuilding, and blue economy and tourism.

The Cochin-Vizhinjam cluster has the potential to become a dual-hub model for South India, reducing dependency on foreign transshipment ports and offering more options to global shipping lines, he pointed out.

He acknowledged that a few small shipping services that had earlier connected ICTT with the non-major ports of Kollam, Bepore and Azhikkal between 2014 and 2019 were irregular and were soon discontinued due to lack of viability.

The redevelopment of Willingdon Island, he said, hinges on capitalising Kochi’s growing potential in heritage and cultural tourism, cruise tourism, leisure and coastal tourism, and medical and wellness tourism.

Berth upgradation

The port plans to upgrade the Q7 berth into a dry cargo terminal, especially steel. In addition, the Q6 berth and the boat train pier will remain fully mechanised cement terminals apart from handling other dry cargo.

The port sees a major growth opportunity in handling petroleum, oil, and lubricants (POL) cargo, containers and monetisation of land.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

प्रधानमंत्री कार्यालय



प्रधानमंत्री ने दिग्गज पार्श्व गायिका एस. जानकी अम्मा के निधन पर शोक व्यक्त किया

प्रविष्टि तिथि: 12 JUL 2026 9:30AM by PIB Delhi

प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी ने प्रख्यात पार्श्व गायिका एस. जानकी अम्मा के निधन पर गहरा शोक व्यक्त किया है।

प्रधानमंत्री ने कहा कि उनका निधन संगीत और संस्कृति जगत के लिए एक अपूरणीय क्षति है। उन्होंने कहा कि विभिन्न भाषाओं में उनके गीत पीढ़ियों तक लोकप्रिय रहे और उन्होंने अद्वितीय गरिमा और बहुमुखी प्रतिभा के साथ हर भावना को अभिव्यक्त किया।

महत्वपूर्ण तथ्य

अणु ऊर्जा विभाग



कोलंबिया के बुकारामांगा में आयोजित 56वें अंतर्राष्ट्रीय भौतिकी ओलंपियाड 2026 में भारत की शानदार जीत

56वें अंतर्राष्ट्रीय भौतिकी ओलंपियाड 2026 में सभी पांच भारतीय छात्रों ने स्वर्ण पदक जीते

भारत ने अन्य देशों के साथ संयुक्त रूप से विश्व में पहला स्थान हासिल किया; 80 से अधिक देशों के 380 से ज्यादा छात्रों के बीच उत्कृष्ट प्रदर्शन