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GENERAL Knowledge

TOPICS

- March, 2021 Important Current Events
- Monthly Compendium
- Important Current Affairs Event in Detail

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17TH BIMSTEC MINISTERIAL MEETING

Recently, the **External Affairs Minister of India** participated in the **17th Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Ministerial Meeting**. The meeting, chaired by Sri Lanka, was held in virtual mode.



INDIA'S STAND AT THE MINISTERIAL MEETING

- **India's Commitment:** To further build the momentum of regional cooperation under the **BIMSTEC framework and make the organization stronger**, vibrant, more effective and result-oriented.
- **Progress:** Highlighted progress achieved in sectors where India is the Lead Country viz Counter Terrorism & Trans-national Crime, Transport & Communication, **Tourism, and Environmental & Disaster management and other activities**.
- **Importance of Connectivity:** Robust connectivity is an essential prerequisite for economic integration of the region with smooth cross-border movement of people and goods.
- **Outcome of the Meeting:** The meeting endorsed the BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity for adoption **at the next BIMSTEC Summit, which will be held in Sri Lanka**. India's northeastern states form a key part of the master plan, with **several road and river links passing through the region**. Called for early adoption of the **BIMSTEC Charter**. The meeting also endorsed three MoUs/agreements relating to convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal matters, cooperation between diplomatic and training academies and establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility in Colombo (Sri Lanka). Took note that the **BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate, being hosted in India**, is fully functional with state of the art facilities to provide Disaster Early Warnings.

- **Concern:** Cohesion among the members has been difficult to achieve mainly because of the **Rohingya refugee crisis which created bitterness between Myanmar and Bangladesh.** This affected the working of the organisation to some extent as it could not develop a common charter.

'BIMSTEC' A MULTILATERAL ORGANISATION

The **Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)** is a regional multilateral organisation. Its members lie in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal constituting a contiguous regional unity. Out of the 7 members, Five are from South Asia – **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka**, Two are from Southeast Asia – **Myanmar, Thailand**



BIMSTEC not only connects South and Southeast Asia, but also the ecologies of the **Great Himalayas and the Bay of Bengal**. It mainly aims to create an enabling environment for rapid economic development; accelerate social progress; and promote collaboration on matters of common interest in the region.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND & GENESIS OF BIMSTEC

This **sub-regional organization** came into being in 1997 through the **Bangkok Declaration**. Initially, it was formed with four Member States with the acronym '**BIST-EC**' (**Bangladesh, India, Sri-Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation**). It became renamed '**BIMST-EC**' in 1997, following the inclusion of Myanmar. With the admission of **Nepal and Bhutan in 2004**, the name of the grouping was changed to '**Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation**' (**BIMSTEC**).

OBJECTIVES OF THE ORGANISATION

Creating an enabling environment for the rapid **economic development of the sub-region. Encouraging the spirit of equality and partnership.** Promoting active collaboration and mutual assistance in the areas of common interests of the member countries Accelerating support for each other in the fields of education, science, and technology, etc. **Bridge between South and the South East Asia** and represents a reinforcement of relations among these countries. Platform for **intra-regional cooperation between SAARC and ASEAN members.** Home to around 1.5 billion people that constitute around 22% of the global population. With a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of 2.7 trillion economy, BIMSTEC Member States have been able to sustain an average 6.5% economic growth trajectory in the last five years. A fourth of the world's traded goods cross the bay every year.

Important connectivity Projects

Kaladan Multimodal Project – **links India and Myanmar.**

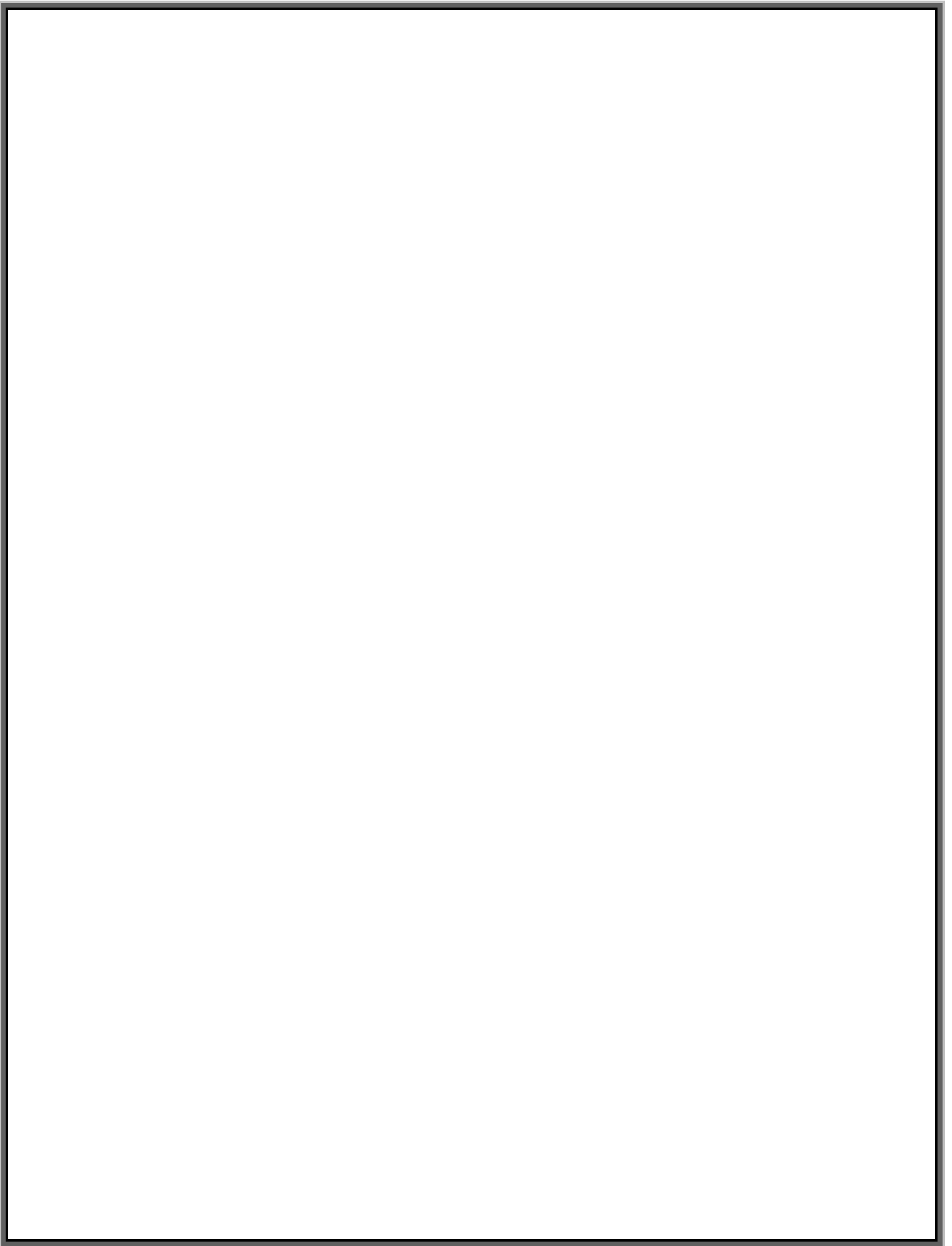
Asian Trilateral Highway - connecting India and Thailand through Myanmar.

Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement - for seamless flow of passenger and cargo traffic.

SIGNIFICANCE OF BIMSTEC FOR INDIA

Allows India to pursue three core policies: Neighborhood First - **primacy to the country's immediate periphery; Act East** - connect India with Southeast Asia; and Economic development of India's northeastern states – by linking them to the **Bay of Bengal region via Bangladesh and Myanmar.** Allows India to counter China's creeping influence in countries around the Bay of Bengal due to the **spread of its Belt and Road Initiative.** A new platform for India to engage with its neighbors with the **South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)** becoming dysfunctional **because of differences between India and Pakistan.**





APPOINTMENT OF AD-HOC JUDGES

Recently, the **Supreme Court pushed for the appointment of retired judges** to battle the **pendency of cases** in High Courts. The court orally outlined prospective guidelines for the appointment and functioning of an ad-hoc judge. If in a particular jurisdiction, the pendency goes beyond a certain limit, say eight or 10 years, the Chief Justice may **appoint a certain [retired] judge with expertise in those fields of laws as an ad hoc judge**. The term of such a judge could be extendable. The appointment of ad-hoc judges would not be a threat to the services of other judges as the Ad-hoc judges will be treated as the junior most. The **retired judges would be chosen on the basis of their expertise** in a particular field of dispute and allowed to retire once the pendency in that zone of law was over.



ARGUMENTS FOR APPOINTING RETIRED JUDGES

The **retired judges** who had handled certain **disputes and fields of law for over 15 years could deal** with them faster if brought back into harness as **ad-hoc judges**. The Supreme Court at the apex of the **Indian Judiciary is the highest authority** to uphold the Constitution of India, to protect the rights and liberties of the citizens, and to uphold the values of rule of law. Hence, **it is known as the Guardian of our Constitution**. The Indian Constitution provides for a provision of the **Supreme Court under Part V (The Union) and Chapter 6 titled 'The Union Judiciary'**. The Constitution of India has provided an independent judiciary with a hierarchical setup containing High Courts and Subordinate Courts under it.

RELATED CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

Appointment of ad hoc judges- Article 127 states that if at any time there is lack of quorum of Judges of Supreme Court, the CJI may with the previous consent of the President and Chief Justice of High Court, concerning request in writing the **attendance of Judge of High Court duly qualified to be appointed as Judge of the Supreme Court**.

Appointment of retired judges of the Supreme Court or High Court - Article 128 states that the CJI at any time with the previous consent of the President and the person to be so appointed can appoint any person who **had previously held the office of a Judge of SC.**

Appointment of acting Chief Justice- Article 126 states that when the **office of CJI is vacant or when the Chief Justice** is by reason of absence or otherwise unable to perform duties of the office, the President in such case can appoint the Judge of the court to discharge the duties of the office.

REASONS FOR PENDENCY OF CASES

- **The Government is the Biggest Litigant:** According to the **Economic Survey 2018-19** poorly drafted orders have resulted in contested tax revenues equal to 4.7% of the GDP and it is rising.
- **Less Budgetary Allocation:** The budget allocated to the judiciary is **between 0.08 and 0.09% of the GDP.** Only four countries — **Japan, Norway, Australia and Iceland** — have a lesser budget allocation and they do not have problems of pendency like India.
- **Practice of Seeking Adjournments:** Usually the lower courts seek adjournment ad infinitum.
- **Lack of Assessment:** When a new legislation is formed, there is no judicial impact assessment done by the government on how much burden is going to be casted on the judiciary. The probabilities of generating more litigations or requirement of more judges are not taken into account.
- **Delay in Judicial Appointment:** Collegium recommendations have been pending with the government for over seven months to a year to get approval in order to fill vacancies in High Courts. **The total sanctioned judicial strength in the 25 High Courts is 1,080.** However, the present working strength is 661 with 419 vacancies as of March 2021. The



government has countered that it's the fault of the Collegium and the High Court for delaying the process.

CONCLUSION

- **Streamlining the Appointment System:** The vacancies must be filled without any unnecessary delay. A proper time frame for the appointment of judges must be laid down and the recommendations must be given in advance. The **Constitution of the All India Judicial Services** is also an important factor which can definitely help India establish a **better judicial system.**
- **Use of Technologies:** People are becoming more and more aware of their rights and which is why the **number of cases filed in court are also increasing.** To deal with that judicial officers need to be trained, vacancies for the judges must be filled up expeditiously and in addition the use of technology **particularly artificial intelligence must be encouraged.**
- **Out of Court Settlement:** Resolving every case within the court premises is not mandatory; other **possible systems must also be accessed.** There is also a need to promote the alternate dispute resolution mechanism for which the **arbitration and conciliation act** has been amended three times to ensure that people go for commercial litigation mode and sort it out **either by mediation, conciliation or arbitration.**

APPROPRIATION BILL CLEARED BY LOK SABHA

Recently, the **Lok Sabha cleared the Appropriation Bill**, allowing the Central government to draw funds from the **Consolidated Fund of India**. **Appropriation Bill** gives power to the government to withdraw funds from the Consolidated Fund of India for meeting the expenditure during the financial year. **As per article 114 of the Constitution**, the government can withdraw money from the Consolidated Fund only after receiving approval from Parliament.



The amount withdrawn is used to meet the **current expenditure during the financial year**.

PROCEDURE FOLLOWED FOR APPROPRIATION BILL

The **Appropriation Bill is introduced in the Lok Sabha after discussions on Budget proposals and Voting on Demand for Grants**. The defeat of an Appropriation Bill in a parliamentary vote would lead to the resignation of a government or a general election. Once it is **passed by the Lok Sabha it is sent to the Rajya Sabha**.

Power of Rajya Sabha: It has the power to recommend any amendments in this Bill. However, it is the **prerogative of the Lok Sabha to either accept or reject the recommendations** made by the Rajya Sabha. After the bill receives assent from the president it becomes an Appropriation act. The **unique feature of the Appropriation Bill is its automatic repeal clause**, whereby the Act gets repealed by itself after it meets its statutory purpose. The government cannot withdraw money from the **Consolidated Fund of India till the enactment of the appropriation bill**. However, this takes time and the government needs money to carry on its normal activities. To meet the immediate expenses the Constitution has authorised the Lok Sabha to make any grant in advance for a part of the financial year. **This provision is known as the 'Vote on Account'**.

VOTE ON ACCOUNT

A **vote on account**, as defined by Article 116 of the Indian Constitution, is a grant in advance for the central government to **meet short-term expenditure** needs from the Consolidated Fund of India, generally lasting for a few months till the new financial year kicks in. During an election year the Government either opts for **‘interim Budget’** or for **‘Vote on Account’** as after the election the Ruling Government may change and so the policies. **No amendment can be proposed to an Appropriation Bill** which will have the effect of varying the amount or altering the destination of any grant so made or of varying the amount of any expenditure charged on the Consolidated Fund of India, and the **decision of the Lok Sabha Speaker** as to whether such an **amendment is admissible is final**.



APPROPRIATION BILL V. FINANCE BILL

While the **Finance Bill** contains provisions on financing the expenditure of the government; an Appropriation Bill specifies the quantum and purpose for withdrawing money. Both appropriation and finance bills are classified as money bills which do not require the explicit consent of the Rajya Sabha. The **Rajya Sabha only discusses them and returns the bills**.



There are four types of Bills, namely:-

Constitution Amendment Bills: These are Bills which seek to amend the Constitution.

Money Bills: A Bill is said to be a Money Bill if it only contains provisions related to **taxation, borrowing of money by the government, expenditure from or receipt to the Consolidated Fund of India**. Bills that only contain provisions that are incidental to these matters would also be regarded as Money Bills.

Financial Bills: A Bill that contains some provisions related to **taxation and expenditure, and additionally contains provisions related to any other matter is called a Financial Bill.** Therefore, if a Bill merely involves expenditure by the government, and addresses other issues, it will be a financial bill.

Ordinary Bills: All other Bills are called ordinary bills.

HOW THESE BILLS ARE PASSED?

- **Constitution Amendment Bills:** A Constitution Amendment Bill must be passed by both Houses of Parliament. It would require a **simple majority of the total membership of that House, and a two thirds majority of all members present and voting.** Further, if the Bill relates to matters like the election of the President and Governor, executive and legislative powers of the centre and states, the judiciary, etc., it must be ratified by at least half of the state legislatures.
- **Money Bills:** A Money Bill may only be introduced in Lok Sabha, on the recommendation of the President. It must be **passed in Lok Sabha by a simple majority of all members present and voting.** Following this, it may be sent to the Rajya Sabha for its recommendations, which Lok Sabha may reject if it chooses to. If such recommendations are not given within 14 days, it will deem to be passed by Parliament.
- **Financial Bills:** A Financial Bill may only be introduced in Lok Sabha, **on the recommendation of the President.** The Bill must be passed by both Houses of Parliament, after the President has recommended that it be taken up for consideration in each House.
- **Ordinary Bills:** An Ordinary Bill may be introduced in either House of Parliament. It must be **passed by both Houses by a simple majority of all members present and voting.**

CONSOLIDATED FUND OF INDIA

It was **constituted under Article 266 (1) of the Constitution of India. It is made up of:** All revenues received by the Centre by way of taxes (**Income Tax, Central Excise, Customs and other receipts**) and **all non-tax revenues**. All loans raised by the Centre by issue of Public notifications, treasury bills (internal debt) and from foreign governments and international institutions (external debt). All government expenditures are incurred from this fund (except exceptional items which are met from the Contingency Fund or the Public Account) and no amount can be withdrawn from the Fund **without authorization from the Parliament. The Comptroller and Auditor-General of India (CAG)** audits the fund and reports to the relevant legislatures on the management.

Stages of Budget in the parliament

- *Presentation of Budget.*
- *General discussion.*
- *Scrutiny by Departmental Committees.*
- *Voting on Demands for Grants.*
- *Passing an Appropriation Bill.*
- *Passing of Finance Bill.*

EUROPEAN UNION AN ' LGBTIQ FREEDOM ZONE'

Recently, in response to the **backsliding of LGBTIQ rights in some EU countries**, notably Poland and Hungary, the European Parliament has declared the European Union an “**LGBTIQ Freedom Zone**”. A majority of countries in the EU (23/27) recognise same-sex unions, with 16 legally recognizing same-sex marriage. LGBTIQ stands for **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Inter-sex and Queer**.



BACKGROUND OF THE ISSUE

Same-sex relationships are not legally recognized in Poland, and the country already bans same-sex couples from adopting children together. However, as single people are permitted to adopt, some have managed to get around the ban by applying to adopt as single parents. Now, Poland has come up with the proposal wherein a person is liable to criminal offence if he/she is found to be applying for **adoption as a single parent being in a same-sex relationship**. LGBTIQ community in Poland is subject to increased discrimination and attacks, notably growing hate speech from public authorities and elected officials. Since March 2019, more than 100 Polish regions, counties and municipalities have adopted resolutions **declaring themselves to be free from LGBTIQ “ideology”**. Recently, the Parliament of Hungary too, adopted constitutional amendments that restrict the rights of LGBTIQ people. **Hungary and Poland** have been at loggerheads with the **European Commission (executive body of the European Union)** over an array of issues, mostly centering around abuses to the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary and the rights of minorities. The **Hungarian and Poland authorities** have described **LGBTIQ principles of governance as “foreign” ideology**.



THE EUROPEAN UNION RESOLUTION

The **EU Parliament resolution** declared the entire **European Union as an “LGBTIQ Freedom Zone”**. The resolution provides LGBTIQ persons everywhere in the EU the **freedom to live and publicly show their sexual orientation** and gender identity without fear of intolerance, discrimination or persecution. It further urged the authorities at all levels of governance across the EU to protect and promote equality and the fundamental rights of all, including LGBTIQ persons.

GLOBAL SCENARIO OF LGBTIQ COMMUNITY

- **Ireland:** Ireland legalized same-sex marriage. The country, which had **decriminalized homosexuality in 1993**, became the first country to allow same-sex marriage at a national level by popular vote.
- **USA:** US Supreme Court ruled that same-sex marriage was legal.
- **Nepal:** Nepal **legalized homosexuality in 2007** and the new Constitution of the country gives many rights to the LGBTIQ community.

LGBT COMMUNITY IN INDIA

- **Even after section 377 of IPC** was removed by the Supreme Court in **Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India, 2018** case, there is a wide gap in implementing a policy for the LGBTIQ community and **making a better environment for them**. Right now, they are facing many issues that are underlined below.



- **Family:** The **problem of sexual orientation and gender identity leads to fighting and family disruption**. Lack of communication and misunderstanding between parents and their LGBTIQ children increases family conflict.

- **Discrimination at Work Place:** LGBTIQ suffers from the **socio-economic inequalities** in large part due to discrimination in the workplace.
- **Injustice:** Human rights and fundamental rights are applicable to all people, but the state has failed to create special legislation which **protects the rights of LGBTIQ Minority community and to provide real justice to them.**
- **Health Issues:** Criminalisation of homosexuality leads to discrimination and results in LGBTQ people getting poor or inadequate access to services within the health system. It also creates barriers to both the availability and the ability to access HIV prevention, testing and treatment services.
- **Isolation and Drug Abuse:** They gradually develop low self-esteem and low self-confidence and become isolated from friends and family. These people mostly get addicted to drugs, alcohol, and tobacco to get **themselves relieved of stress and rejection and discrimination.**

RELATED LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS

- **Naz Foundation vs. Govt. of NCT of Delhi (2009):** Delhi High Court struck off section 377, legalising consensual homosexual activities between adults.
- **Suresh Kumar Koushal Case (2013):** SC overturned the previous judgment by Delhi High Court (2009) arguing that "**plight of sexual minorities**" could not be used as an argument for deciding constitutionality of law.
- **Justice K.S. Puttaswamy vs. Union of India (2017):** SC ruled that Fundamental Right to Privacy is intrinsic to life and liberty and thus, comes under Article 21 of the Indian constitution. It held that "sexual orientation is an essential attribute of privacy".

- **Navtej Singh Johar vs. Union Of India (2018):** Dismissed the position taken by SC in **Suresh Kumar Koushal case (2013)** and decriminalised homosexuality.
- **Shafin Jahan v. Asokan K.M. and others (2018):** The Supreme Court observed that choice of a partner is a person's fundamental right, and it can be a same-sex partner.
Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019: The Parliament has passed the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019 which has been criticised for its poor understanding of gender and sexual identity.
- **Same-sex Marriage:** In February, 2021, the Central Government opposed same-sex marriage in Delhi High Court stating that a marriage in India can be recognised only if it is between a “**biological man**” and a “**biological woman**” **capable of producing children.**
- The **LGTBQ community needs an anti-discrimination** law that empowers them to build productive lives and relationships irrespective of gender identity or sexual orientation and place the onus to change on state and society and not the individual. Government bodies, especially related to **Health, and Law and Order need to be sensitised to ensure that the LGTBQ community** is not denied public services or harassed for their sexual orientation.

GLOBAL GENDER GAP REPORT 2021

India has fallen 28 places in the **World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Gender Gap Report 2021**. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, One Stop Centre (OSC) Scheme, Ujjawala Scheme are some the initiatives launched by the government to address the **issue of gender inequality**. Further, the principle of gender equality is enshrined in the **Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles**.



OTHER INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE WOMEN

- **Vigyan Jyoti Scheme:** **Vigyan Jyoti Scheme** is launched by the **Department of Science & Technology (DST)**. It is intended to create a level-playing field for the meritorious girls in high school to pursue **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)** in their higher education. It also offers exposure for girl students from the rural background to help to plan their journey from school to a job of their choice in the field of science.
- **GATI Scheme:** The **Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI)** will develop a comprehensive Charter and a framework for assessing **Gender Equality in STEM**
- **KIRAN Scheme:** Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through Nurturing (**KIRAN**) Scheme is started by the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)** aimed to bring gender parity in the Science & Technology sector by inducting more women talent in the research & development domain.

GLOBAL GENDER GAP REPORT

It was **first published in 2006 by the WEF**. It benchmarks 156 countries on their progress towards gender parity in four dimensions: **Economic Participation and Opportunity**, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, Political Empowerment. Over the Index, the **highest possible score is 1 (equality) and the lowest possible score is 0 (inequality)**. Its aim is to serve as a compass to track progress on



relative gaps between women and men on health, education, economy and politics. Through this annual yardstick, the stakeholders within each country are able to set priorities relevant in each specific economic, political and cultural context.

INDIA'S POSITION: OVERALL RANKINGS

India is now one of the worst performers in South Asia, it is now ranked 140 among 156 countries. In South Asia, Bangladesh ranked 65, Nepal 106, Pakistan 153, Afghanistan 156, Bhutan 130 and Sri Lanka 116. **India had ranked 112th among 153 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index 2020.**

Political Empowerment: India has declined on the political empowerment index as well by 13.5 percentage points, and a decline in the number of women ministers, from 23.1% in 2019 to 9.1% in 2021. However, it has still performed relatively well compared to other countries, **ranking at 51 in women's participation in politics.**

Education Attainment: In the index of education attainment, **India has been ranked at 114.**

Economic Participation: The report notes that the economic participation **gender gap actually widened in India by 3% this year**. The share of women in professional and technical roles declined further to 29.2%. The share of women in senior and managerial positions also is at 14.6% and only 8.9% firms in the country have top female managers. The estimated earned income of women in India is **only one-fifth of men's, which puts the country among the**

bottom 10 globally on this indicator. In Pakistan and Afghanistan, the income of an average woman is below 16% of that of an average man, while in India it is 20.7%.

Health and Survival index: On this India has fared the worst, ranking at 155. The only country to **have fared worse is China.** The report points to a skewed sex ratio as the major factor. It says the ratio can be attributed to norms of son preference and gender-biased prenatal sex-selective practices. China and India together account for **about 90 to 95% of the estimated 1.2 to 1.5 million** missing female births annually worldwide due to gender-biased prenatal sex selective practices.

GLOBAL SCENARIO: REGION WISE RANKING

- **South Asia** incidentally is one of the worst performing regions, followed only by the **Middle East and northern Africa.**
- **Political Empowerment:** The gender gap in political empowerment remains the largest: women represent only 26.1% of some 35,500 parliament seats and just 22.6% of over 3,400 ministers worldwide. In 81 countries, there has never been a woman head of state, as of 15th January, 2021. Bangladesh is the **only country where more women have held head-of-state positions than men in the past 50 years.**
- **Economic Participation:** The countries with the largest gender gaps in economic participation include **Iran, India, Pakistan, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, and Afghanistan.**
- **Timeframe to Close the Gap:** It will take **South Asia 195.4 years** to close the gender gap, while Western Europe will take 52.1 years.



WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM (WEF)

The **World Economic Forum** is the **International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation.** It was established in 1971 as a not-for-profit foundation and is headquartered in

Geneva, Switzerland. It is independent, impartial and not tied to any special interests. The Forum strives in all its efforts to demonstrate entrepreneurship in the global public interest while upholding the highest standards of governance.

Some major reports published by WEF are:

- **Energy Transition Index.**
- **Global Competitiveness Report.**
- **Global IT Report**
- **WEF along with INSEAD, and Cornell University publishes this report.**
- **Global Gender Gap Report.**
- **Global Risk Report.**
- **Global Travel and Tourism Report**

GOI LAUNCHED 'GRAM UJALA' PROGRAMME

Recently, the **Government has launched the Gram UJALA Programme** - an ambitious scheme offering the world's cheapest LED bulbs in rural areas at a mere Rs. 10.



Coverage: In its first phase launched from Arrah in Bihar, 15 million LED bulbs will be distributed across villages of **5 districts - Aarah (Bihar), Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh), Nagpur (Maharashtra)**, and villages in western Gujarat. The light-emitting diode (LED) is one of today's most energy-efficient and rapidly-developing lighting technologies.

Implementation: 7 watt and 12-watt LED bulbs with 3 years warranty will be given to rural consumers against submission of working Incandescent bulbs. **Each household will get up to 5 LEDs.** Participating rural households will also have metres installed in their houses to account for usage. **The LED bulbs are offered by state-run Energy Efficiency Services Ltd's (EESL's) subsidiary Convergence Energy Services Ltd (CESL). EESL is a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) under the Ministry of Power.**

Financing Mechanism: The programme will be financed entirely through carbon credits and will be the first such programme in India. **The revenue earned from carbon credits will contribute Rs. 60 per LED bulb piece, with the balance Rs. 10 to be paid by the rural consumer.** Carbon credit (or "carbon offsets") are certificates generated by projects or activities that reduce, avoid, or destroy greenhouse gases. Project owners, such as solar and wind energy developers, or protectors of endangered forestlands can sell these certificates to an individual or a company to earn revenues to keep expanding their projects into the future.

When one purchases carbon offsets, one is funding the reduction or elimination of carbon. **Further on, carbon credit documentation will be sent to United Nations (UN) accredited validators for inclusion into the Shine Program of activities.** Carbon credits will be prepared under the Shine Program of Activities with an option for verifying under the Voluntary Carbon

Standard, depending on the needs of buyers. **Carbon Credit Buyers** will also be sought through an open process based on initial discussions with the market.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SCHEME

Help in meeting intended nationally determined contributions under paris climate accord. If all 300 million lights in India were replaced, the total energy savings would be **40,743 million kWh/year**, avoiding peak demand of 22,743MW/year and CO₂ reductions of 37 million tons per year. Through extra carbon credit, India will boost its position in global carbon trade. Boost



to efforts to ensure 24-hour power supply. The **Prime Minister of India, in his Independence Day speech of 2015**, promised that all villages where electricity was yet to reach, will have power within 1,000 days. To create basic power infrastructure and connectivity, the government had announced a scheme - the **Deendayal Upadhyay Gram Jyoti Yojana**. Help in the growth of **domestic LED markets**. Meet the benefit of **sustainable development goals (SDG)**. **Specially SDG7:** To ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services.

CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

‘Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of **future generations to meet their own needs**’. This most widely accepted definition of Sustainable Development was given by the **Brundtland Commission in its report Our Common Future (1987)**. Sustainable development (SD) calls for concerted efforts towards building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for people and planet.

CORE ELEMENTS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Three core elements of sustainable development are economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. It is crucial to harmonize them. Sustainable economic growth,

achieving sustainable livelihood, living in harmony with nature and appropriate technology are important for sustainable development.

- **Environmental Sustainability:** It prevents nature from being used as an inexhaustible source of resources and ensures its protection and rational use. Aspects such as environmental conservation, investment in **renewable energy, saving water, supporting sustainable mobility, and innovation in sustainable construction** and architecture, contribute to achieving environmental sustainability on several fronts.
- **Social Sustainability:** It can foster gender equality, development of people, communities and cultures to help achieve a reasonable and fairly-distributed quality of life, healthcare and education across the Globe.
- **Economic Sustainability:** Focuses on equal economic growth that generates wealth for all, without harming the environment. Investment and equal distribution of economic resources. **Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions.**

UNNAT JYOTI BY AFFORDABLE LEDs FOR ALL (UJALA):

UJALA is a zero-subsidy scheme launched by the Government in 2015. It is touted as the world's largest domestic lighting project. Also known as the **LED-based Domestic Efficient Lighting Programme (DELP)**, it aims to promote the efficient usage of energy for all i.e., its consumption, savings and lighting. Every domestic household having a metered connection from their respective **Electricity Distribution Company is eligible to get the**

LED bulbs under the Scheme. Under **UJALA**, **EESL** has distributed over 36.69 crore LED bulbs across India. This has resulted in estimated energy savings of 47.65 billion kWh per year with avoided peak demand of 9,540 MW and estimated **GreenHouse Gas (GHG) emission reduction** of 38.59 million tonnes CO₂ per year. It has helped in the growth of domestic **LED**



(Light-Emitting Diode) markets. It has helped to bring down the average household electricity bills by 15%.

GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2021

Recently, the central government introduced the **Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021** in the Lok Sabha to amend the **Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991**. It aims to "further define the responsibilities of the elected government and **Lieutenant Governor (LG) in Delhi**".



PROVISIONS OF THE BILL

- ***“Government” to mean “Lieutenant Governor (LG)”***: The expression 'Government' referred to in any law to be made by the Legislative Assembly shall mean the **Lieutenant Governor (LG)**.
- ***Widening of Discretionary Powers of LG***: The Bill gives discretionary powers to the LG even in matters where the Legislative Assembly of Delhi is empowered to make laws.
- ***Necessarily Granted an Opportunity to LG***: It seeks to ensure that the LG is **“necessarily granted an opportunity”** to give her/his opinion before any decision taken by the Council of Ministers (or the Delhi Cabinet) is implemented.
- ***Related to Administrative Decisions***: The amendment also says that “Legislative Assembly shall not make any rule to enable itself to consider the matters of day-to-day administration of the Capital or conduct inquiries **in relation to the administrative decisions**”.

NEED OF THE AMENDMENT OF THE BILL

For Structural Clarity: The Ministry of Home Affairs’ statement on **“objects and reasons”** of the Bill stated that **Section 44 of the 1991 Act deals with conduct of business** and there is no

structural mechanism for effective time-bound implementation of the said section. Also, there is no clarity as to what proposal or matters are required to be **submitted to Lieutenant Governor** before issuing order thereon. **Section 44 of the 1991 Act** says that all executive actions of the LG, whether taken on the advice of his Ministers or otherwise shall be expressed to be taken in the name of the LG.

BACKGROUND OF THE EVENTS

In its 2018 verdict, the five-judge Bench had held that the LG's concurrence is not required on issues other than police, public order and land. It had added that decisions of the Council of Ministers will, however, have to be communicated to the LG. The LG was bound by the aid and advice of the council of ministers. The court also said that the status of the **LG of Delhi is not that of a Governor of a State,**



rather he remains an Administrator, in a limited sense, working with the designation of **Lieutenant Governor**". It had also pointed out that the elected government must keep in mind that Delhi is not a state. Encouraged by the Supreme Court verdict, the elected government had stopped sending files on executive matters to the LG before the implementation of any decision. It has been **keeping the LG informed of all administrative developments,** but not necessarily before implementing or executing any decision. But the amendment, if cleared, will force the elected government to take LG's advice before taking any action on any cabinet decision.

GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI ACT, 1991

Delhi's current status as a Union Territory with a Legislative Assembly is an outcome of the 69th Amendment Act through which Articles 239AA and 239BB were introduced in the Constitution. The **Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) Act** was passed simultaneously to supplement the constitutional provisions relating to the Assembly and the Council of Ministers in the national capital. For all practical purposes, the **GNCTD Act outlines the powers of the Assembly,** the discretionary powers enjoyed by the LG, and the duties of the Chief Minister with respect to the need to furnish information to the LG.

Delhi has a peculiar federal architecture. Before the **69th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1991**, Delhi was a Union Territory. The amendment re-designated it as National Capital Territory of Delhi and **designated the administrator of Delhi as the Lieutenant Governor (LG)**. Further, it created a Legislative Assembly and a Council of Ministers for Delhi. The assembly can make laws on all matters of the State List except public order, land and police. The **Council of Ministers (CoM) headed by the Chief Minister** aid and advice the LG in exercise of his functions except in so far as he is required to act in his discretion.

The recent cases of **conflicts between the LG and the government** have largely happened due to assertion of this discretion by the LG with regards to matters such as appointments, like that of **Parliamentary Secretaries**. The ambiguities with respect to the discretion of LG have resulted in a tussle between his office and the government. The government has accused **the LG of acting on behalf of the centre to prevent proper functioning of the government**. It claims that the LG should act on the aid and advice of CoM on matters except those stated in the amendment. Since Delhi is the seat of both the national capital territory as well as that of the central government, the centre is bound to have a say in the matters of the city. At the same time, **the LG should not interfere in the day to day running of the government**. The LG has a dual role to play as an administrative and constitutional head. A balance of jurisdictions needs to be determined so that the citizens don't suffer as a result of the policy paralysis happening due to this turf war. The ultimate loser is governance and people of Delhi.

CONCLUSION

This **impasse is not new altogether**. Since 1967, when the parties ruling at centre and state started varying, **there has been trust deficit between the state/UT govts and the governors or administrators acting on behalf of centre**. In Delhi also, successive governments have asked for more power and full statehood. It has just been magnified in current times due to presence of strong leadership at both central and state level. There is a need for harmonious functioning based on the **spirit of co-operative federalism between the two**.

GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2021

Recently, the central government introduced the **Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021** in the Lok Sabha to amend the **Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi Act, 1991**. It aims to "further define the responsibilities of the elected government and **Lieutenant Governor (LG) in Delhi**".



PROVISIONS OF THE BILL

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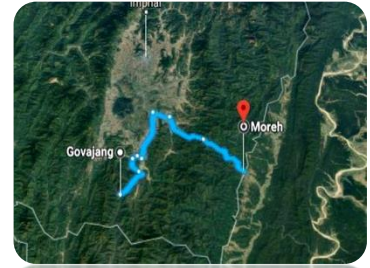
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ILLEGAL INCURSION FROM MYANMAR TO INDIA

Recently, the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** has directed **Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh** to check illegal influx from Myanmar into India. The instructions have also been given to **Border Guarding Force (BGF)**, i.e. Assam rifles. India already has a lot of Rohingya migrated from Myanmar. India, treats all refugees entering the country **as illegal immigrants**. In 2020, it was estimated that 40,000 Rohingya refugees lived in India, scattered across different states.



MHA's Instructions: The State governments have no powers to grant **“refugee status to any foreigner”** and India is not a signatory to the United Nations Refugee Convention of 1951 and its 1967 Protocol. Similar Instructions were Issued in August 2017 and February 2018.

BACKGROUND OF THE ISSUE

Recently, the **Myanmar military has grabbed power in a coup - the third time** in the nation's history since its independence from British rule in 1948. A one-year state of emergency has been imposed and **democratically elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi has been detained**. ‘Coup’ is generally described as a sudden, violent, and illegal seizure of power from a government.



About the Military Coup: In the November 2020 parliamentary election, **Suu Kyi's party National League for Democracy (NLD)** secured the majority of the seats. In the Myanmar's Parliament, the military holds 25% of the total seats according to the 2008 military-drafted constitution and several key ministerial positions are also reserved for military appointees. When the newly elected Myanmar lawmakers were to hold the **first session of Parliament in 2021**, the military imposed a state of emergency for one year citing massive voting fraud in the parliamentary elections.

Global Reaction: China: ‘All parties in Myanmar will properly handle their differences under the constitution and legal framework to maintain political and social stability’.

- **USA:** The **USA President threatened to reimpose sanctions on Myanmar** following a coup by the country’s military leaders and called for a concerted international response to press them to relinquish power.
- **ASEAN Countries:** ASEAN’s current chair, **Brunei**, called for ‘**dialogue among parties**, reconciliation and the return to normalcy’. **Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia** expressed concern, while **Thailand, Cambodia, and the Philippines** noted that this was Myanmar’s ‘internal affair’.
- **India’s Reaction:** India supports the process of democratic transition in Myanmar. **Though India has expressed deep concern over recent developments in Myanmar**, cutting off from the Myanmar military is not a viable option as India has significant economic and strategic interests in Myanmar and its neighbourhood

INDIA-MYANMAR BORDER SHARING

India and Myanmar share a 1,643 km border and people on either side have familial ties. Mizoram shares 510-km. Manipur shares 398-km. Arunachal Pradesh shares 520 kms. Nagaland shares 215 kms The border along the four states is unfenced and porous.

Free Movement Regime: A **Free Movement Regime (FMR)** exists between India and Myanmar. Under FMR every member of the hill tribes, who is either a citizen of India or a citizen of Myanmar and who is resident of any area within 16 km on either side of the **Indo-Myanmar Border (IMB)** can cross the border with a border pass (with one-year validity) issued by the competent authority and can stay up to two weeks per visit.

UNITED NATIONS REFUGEE CONVENTION: 1951

It is a **United Nations multilateral treaty that defines who is a refugee**, and sets out the rights of individuals who are granted asylum and the responsibilities of nations that grant asylum. It also set out which people do not qualify as refugees, such as war criminals. It grants certain rights to people fleeing persecution because of race, religion, nationality, affiliation to a particular social group, or political opinion. The Convention also provides



for some visa-free travel for holders of travel documents issued under the convention. The **Convention builds on Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948**, which recognizes the right of persons to seek asylum from persecution in other countries. A refugee may enjoy rights and benefits in a state in addition to those provided for in the Convention. The **1967 Protocol** included refugees from all countries as opposed to the **1951 Convention that only included refugees from Europe. India is not a member of this convention.**

CONCLUSION

India should continue to engage with the present regime in Myanmar working towards mutual development of people of both the countries while it should support sharing experiences in **constitutionalism and federalism to assist Myanmar in resolving the prevailing stalemate.**

INDIA & PHILIPPINES AGREEMENT ON BRAHMOS EXPORT

Recently, India and the Philippines have signed the “Implementing Arrangement” for “procurement of defense material and equipment procurement”. This agreement lays the groundwork for the highly anticipated export of the BrahMos cruise missile, through the government-to-government route. Apart from this, India is in advanced talks with several countries like **Vietnam, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Indonesia, and South Africa** to sell them the BrahMos missile system. Exporting the BrahMos missile system will be of great significance, as it would boost the credibility of India as a defense exporter, help it meet the **target of \$5 billion in defense exports by 2025**, and elevate its stature as a regional superpower. However, there are many challenges that lie ahead.



ABOUT THE BRAHMOS MISSILES

Research and development of the BrahMos cruise missile systems began in the late 1990s. Manufactured by **BrahMos Aerospace Limited**, a joint venture between the Defence Research and Development Organisation and Russia’s Military Industrial Consortium NPO Mashinostroyenia. This is the **first supersonic cruise missile** to enter service. It is capable of attaining a speed of Mach 2.8 (almost three times the speed of sound), it has a range of at least 290 km (a new version can reach up to 400km). Traveling with such velocity means that it would be difficult for air defense systems utilizing **surface-to-air missiles to intercept the BrahMos**. Early naval and land variants of the BrahMos were inducted into service by the Indian Navy in 2005 and the Indian Army in 2007. Subsequently, an air-launched variant was successfully tested in November 2017 by the **Indian Air Force from its Sukhoi-30MKI fighter jet**, giving the missile a dominating presence in all three domains. Further, efforts to increase the speed and range of the missile in its next iterations are underway, with a goal of achieving hypersonic speeds (at or above Mach 5) and a maximum range of 1,500 km. These **advanced**



and powerful capabilities of the BrahMos not only augment the strength of the Indian military but make it a highly desirable product for other countries to procure as well.

SIGNIFICANCE OF BRAHMOS MISSILES EXPORT

Stronger Indo-Pacific Presence: The implications of the Philippines becoming the first country to import the **BrahMos** would be wide-ranging and consequential in the **Indo-Pacific**. Also, concluding stronger defense relationships with the **U.S., Japan, and ASEAN countries** actually put India on a stronger footing in its dealings with China.



Tackling China's Military Assertiveness: India's decision to sell the BrahMos missile system to **ASEAN countries like the Philippines** and Vietnam reflects concerns about China's growing military assertiveness in its neighborhood. Further, India tries to answer China in its own language, as China provides military assistance to **India's arch-rival Pakistan** and threatens India by docking its **submarines in Sri Lanka**.

Expanding India's Geopolitical Horizons: The BrahMos export will boost India's economic, soft, and hard power profile in the region and provide the Indo-Pacific with a strong and dependable anchor with **which they can protect their sovereignty and territory**.

Shift from Importer to Exporter: Selling the supersonic **BrahMos missile** would mark a shift for India, which is till now one of the world's biggest arms importer, to establishing itself as a major defense exporter. Further, it will help in making the country '**Atmanirbhar**' in the **defense manufacturing** sector, shore up partners' defenses, and boost revenues. In the present scenario, India accounts for 0.2% of the share of **global arms exports during 2016-20**, making the country the **world's 24th largest exporter of major arms**.

CHALLENGES RELATED TO EXPORT OF BRAHMOS

CAATSA: BrahMos export remains hostage to unresolved concerns over the **US's Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions or CAATSA**. The United States, of which India is a major defense partner, has maintained ambiguity over whether it will introduce sanctions **over India's acquisition of the S-400**, licensed production of the AK-203 assault rifle, and export of the BrahMos. So far, **Turkey and China have been penalized under CAATSA for purchasing the S-400 Triumf** air defense systems from Russia. **NPO Mashinostroyenia** is one of the listed Russian entities. And since 65% of the components, including the ramjet engine and radar seeker used in the BrahMos, are reportedly provided by **NPO Mashinostroyenia**, the export of the missile systems may attract sanctions.

Russia-China Defense Cooperation: Post-Crimea annexation Russia has looked to improve relations with China. Currently, Russia is even helping **China develop a missile-attack warning system** that only Russia and the US have, among other joint projects of huge strategic significance. Thus, **Russia-China strategic relations** may come in the **way of BrahMos missile export**.

CONCLUSION

- **Engaging With US on CAATSA:** Some analysts believe that CAATSA, which otherwise has had little or no impact on Russia, is being 'leveraged' by the US to 'persuade' India to import additional military equipment from the US. Further, BrahMos export to ASEAN countries can help contain a confrontational China. Thus, **India should negotiate with the new US administration to receive a waiver from CAATSA**.
- **Providing a Line of Credit:** The cost of the systems has been a major hurdle in moving forward to reach a deal with the Philippines. To remedy this, India has offered a **\$100 million line of credit**.

- ***Indigenous Defense Production:*** The joint-venture development of BrahMos may pose issues in its exports. Therefore, if India wants to become a major defense exporter, it **should strive to achieve indigenization of defense technology.**

INDIA TRANSFORMING INTO NET ZERO EMISSIONS

Recently, **The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)** and shell have released a report titled “**India: Transforming to a Net-Zero Emissions Energy System**”. It illustrates a pathway to steer the domestic energy system towards net-zero emissions by 2050, while achieving India’s sustainable economic development ambitions.



Possible yet Challenging: India needs a suitable policy and innovation-driven context to deploy clean energy technologies on a massive scale. Increase Renewables: **The share of renewables in the power mix needs to increase to 90% for India to meet its net-zero goal.** This is around 11% in 2019-2020.

Coal-fired Power Plants: India must phase out its coal-fired power plants and remove it altogether by 2050. The **availability, or absence, of Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)** would define the shape of India’s energy systems. If CCS technology were commercially unviable: Biofuels would have to **account for 98% of India’s oil**, compared to a negligible share currently. Over two-thirds of India’s industrial and transport energy use would have to be electrified, compared to less than **20% share of electricity in industrial energy use** and negligible share in transport energy use as of now.

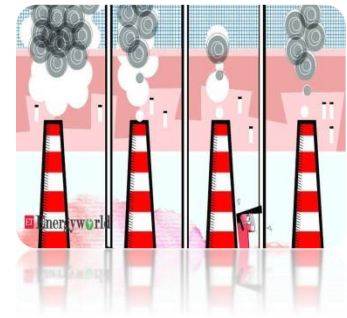
SUGGESTIONS GIVEN BY TERI

- **Focus on Energy Efficiency:** Will need energy efficient buildings, lighting, appliances and industrial practices to **meet the net-zero goal.**
- **Use of Biofuels:** Can help reduce emissions from light commercial vehicles, tractors in agriculture.
- In aviation, the only practical solution for reducing emissions is greater use of biofuels, **until hydrogen technology gains scale.**

- **Carbon Sequestration:** India will have to rely on natural and man-made carbon sinks to soak up those emissions. **Trees can capture 0.9 billion tons**, the country will need carbon capture technologies to sequester the rest.
- **Carbon Pricing:** India, which already taxes coal and petroleum fuels, should consider putting a tax on emissions to drive change.
- **Deploying lower-carbon Energy:** There are four main types of low-carbon energy: wind, solar, hydro or nuclear power. The first three are renewable, which means these are good for the environment – as **natural resources are used (such as wind or sun) to produce electricity**. Deploying lower carbon energy would help address both domestic and international climate challenges while simultaneously improving the economic well-being of India's citizens.

WHAT IS NET-ZERO EMISSIONS?

'Net zero emissions' refers to achieving an overall **balance between greenhouse gas emissions produced and greenhouse gas emissions taken out of the atmosphere**. First, human-caused emissions (like those from fossil-fueled vehicles and factories) should be reduced as close to zero as possible. Second, any remaining GHGs should be balanced with an equivalent amount of carbon removal, for example by restoring forests.



Time-Frame: The time frame for reaching net-zero emissions differs significantly if one is referring to CO₂ alone, or referring to all major GHGs (**including methane, nitrous oxide, and HFCs**). For non-CO₂ emissions, the net-zero date is later because some of these emissions — such as methane from agricultural sources — are somewhat more difficult to phase out. In scenarios that limit warming to **1.5 degrees C, carbon dioxide (CO₂) reaches net-zero on average by 2050**. Total GHG emissions reach net-zero between 2063 and 2068.

Global Scenario: As of June 2020, twenty countries and regions have adopted net-zero targets. This list only includes countries that adopted a net-zero target in law or another policy document. **The Kingdom of Bhutan is already carbon-negative, i.e. absorbs more CO₂ than it emits.**

Indian Scenario: India's per capita CO₂ emissions – at 1.8 tonnes per person in 2015 – are around a **ninth of those in the USA and around a third of the global average of 4.8 tonnes per person.** However, overall, India is now the planet's **third-largest emitter of CO₂,** behind China and the USA.

Debate around Commitment: There is global pressure on India to commit net-zero emissions by 2050. On one hand, few argue that India should pledge to reduce its “**net**” **emissions (emissions minus uptake of emissions)** to zero by 2050, backed by a climate law. This will make India “hypercompetitive”, attract investment and create jobs. For example, more ambitious policies to promote electric vehicles along with cleaner electricity and hydrogen electrolysis can create jobs in the auto manufacturing industry and in the electricity and construction sectors. While, on the other hand, there is a long-standing principle of “**common but differentiated responsibility**” that requires richer countries to lead and argue against any pledge that risks **prematurely limiting Indian energy use for development.**

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CONCLUSION

A vital step should be explicitly including policies for climate mitigation in the government budget, along with **energy, roads, health and education**. Specifically, growth targets should include timelines for switching to cleaner energy. There is also a need to launch a major campaign to mobilise climate finance and focus should be given on **energy efficiency, use of biofuels, Carbon sequestration, carbon pricing**. Strong environmental policies can create prosperity and well-being. With **imaginative policies, robust institutions, and international finance**, India will be able to declare its freedom from polluting fossil fuels in the **hundredth year of its independence**.

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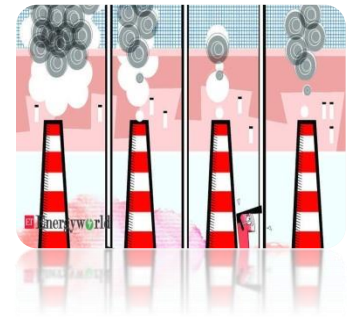
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INDIA'S ROLE IN AFGHANISTAN PEACE PROCESS

Recently, the **USA President** has envisaged a **New Peace Initiative (Plan)** to decide on the roadmap for **peace in Afghanistan**. Under the plan, the **USA proposed a regional conference under the United Nations** auspices with foreign ministers of the **USA, India, Russia, China, Pakistan** and Iran to discuss a “**unified approach**” on Afghanistan.

USA'S PRESIDENT NEW PEACE INITIATIVE

Delay in Withdrawal of Troops: This peace plan has kept open the possibility that the **USA troops, currently deployed in Afghanistan**, might stay on for a longer time. **Under the earlier USA- Taliban Deal**, the USA had promised to withdraw all troops by May, 2021.



Immediate Action: The USA is pressing the Taliban to accept an immediate agreement to reduce violence for 90 days that will provide the space for the peace initiative. **Inclusive Process:** **The USA will not be “dictating terms”** to the Afghan parties, but facilitating an inclusive interim government, an agreement on the “foundational principles” for a new political order, and a “permanent and comprehensive ceasefire”.

Turkey’s Role: The USA is asking Turkey to convene a **meeting of the government in Kabul (capital of Afghanistan)** and the Taliban to finalise a peace settlement.

Unified Approach: The USA asked the United Nations to convene a meeting of the foreign ministers from **China, Russia, Pakistan, Iran, India and the United States** to develop a “**unified approach**” to peace in Afghanistan.

INDIA'S ROLE IN THE PEACE PROCESS

India is an important player in the peace process – it has also been acknowledged by the **USA**. India supports all efforts for peace and reconciliation in **Afghanistan** which are inclusive and **Afghan-led, Afghan owned and Afghan-controlled**. India has invested heavily in infrastructure developments, training security forces and supplying them with necessary equipment. India has a **major stake in the stability of Afghanistan** since it has invested considerable resources in Afghanistan's development. India hopes to have a role in setting the **terms especially concerning terrorism, violence, women's rights and democratic values**.



INDIA'S INTEREST IN AFGHANISTAN

Economic and Strategic Interest: Afghanistan is a gateway to the **oil and mineral-rich Central Asian republics**. Anyone who is in power in Afghanistan controls the land routes connecting **India with Central Asia (via Afghanistan)**.

Developmental Projects: The massive reconstruction plans for the country to offer a lot of opportunities for Indian companies. **Major projects include the Afghan Parliament, the Zaranj-Delaram Highway, and the Afghanistan-India Friendship Dam (Salma Dam)**. Also India's assistance of more than USD 3 billion in projects, hundreds of small development projects (of schools, hospitals and water projects) have cemented its position in Afghanistan.

Security Interest: India has been the victim of **state-sponsored terrorism** emanating from Pakistan supported terrorist group operating in the region (**e.g. Haqqani network**). Thus, setting up a friendly government in Afghanistan can help tackling Pakistan supported terrorism.

CHALLENGES AHEAD OF IT:

The **Afghan government as well as Taliban** is unwilling for any power sharing. Taliban is even not willing to give up its sanctuaries in Pakistan. Nor will it accept any dilution of the strict Islamic system that it wants to enforce. Also, the Taliban is fragmented or divided internally. It is composed of various regional and tribal groups acting semi-autonomously. Therefore, it is possible that some of them may continue to engage in **violence impacting the peace process and dialogue**.

US-TALIBAN PEACE DEAL

The **United States** has signed a historic deal with Taliban earlier this year that could pave the way for **ending the 18-year-war in Afghanistan**. The deal was signed in **Doha (Qatar)** and thus termed as **Doha Agreement**. India has welcomed the signing of the **U.S.-Taliban peace** deal by accepting an invitation to attend the meeting for the same in Doha. The agreement set out a course for the next 14 months. Comprehensive Ceasefire between the **Afghan**



Government and Taliban. Timeline for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Afghanistan will be carried out, provided the Taliban adhere to their security guarantees and ceasefire. The **prevention of the use of Afghanistan** by any group or individual against the security of the United States and its allies. The facilitation of an **intra-Afghan dialogue**. The participants of **intra-Afghan negotiations** will discuss the date and modalities of a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire, including agreement over the **future political roadmap of Afghanistan**. In turn, the Taliban has demanded the release of 5000 fighters from Afghan-run jails. **Taliban has the ultimate goal of imposing Sharia in their respective regions**. This is in conflict with what the people in Afghanistan want. **Afghanistan has its own Constitution and people want to be governed as per the Constitution**. This will make any peace deal that they would have, unsustainable. The Taliban will hardly share power with the Afghan Government. Thus it is quite possible that even after the peace deal, the country will be back to civil war again.

Then, the world will face twin challenges in

CONCLUSION

An **independent, sovereign, democratic, pluralistic and inclusive Afghanistan** is crucial for peace and stability in the region. In order to ensure the same, the Afghan peace process should be **Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled**. Also, there is a need for the global community to fight against the global concern of terrorism. In this context, it high time to adopt the **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism** (proposed by India at UN in 1996). Though the **new initiative by the USA is a good step, the road** ahead would not be easy. Achieving lasting peace in Afghanistan will require patience and compromise among all parties.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 8TH OF MARCH

International Women's Day was observed on March 8, 2021. The day celebrates the achievements of women and calls for action to empower women to create a gender-equal world. The theme of International Women's Day 2021 is **#ChooseToChallenge**. **“A challenged world is an alert world and from challenge comes change.** So let's all choose to challenge. ” The International Day highlights how we can help to forge a gender-equal world- by celebrating women's achievements, taking action for gender equality and raising awareness against bias.



WOMEN IN NEWS IN 2021

- **Kamala Harris:** Kamala Harris created history by becoming the **first female, African-American and Asian-American to be sworn in as Vice President of the United States**. The 56-year-old was born to immigrant parents from India and Jamaica.
- **Ngozi Okonjo- Iweala:** Ngozi Okonjo- Iweala has become the **new Chief of the World Trade Organisation**. She is the first woman and African to hold the position at WTO. She was appointed after she received the complete support of Joe Biden's administration on February 5, 2021. **She is the former Finance Minister of Nigeria** and will hold the position from March 1, 2021, to August 31, 2025.
- **Kaja Kallas:** Kaja Kallas became the **first female Prime Minister of Estonia** on January 26, 2021 after the new two-party coalition government was sworn in. This would be the first time that the Baltic nation will be led by a woman ever since it regained independence in 1991. Kaja Kallas is a lawyer, former **European Parliament Member and daughter of former Prime Minister of Estonia, Sim Kallas**.



- **Linda Thomas-Greenfield:** Linda Thomas-Greenfield was confirmed by the **US Senate** on February 23, 2021 as the **US ambassador to the United Nations**. She will be the third African-American and the second African American woman to hold the post of UN ambassador to the UN. She is a **three-decade veteran of the US State Department**.
- **Bhawana Kanth:** Flight Lieutenant Bhawana Kanth was the **first woman fighter pilot to take part in the parade of Republic Day 2021**. She was a part of the tableau of the Indian Air Force that **showcased the LAC- Light Combat Aircraft, the Sukhoi-30 fighter plane, and light combat helicopter**. Bhawana Kanth was also one of the first women fighter pilots in the Indian Air Force. She was **inducted in IAF in 2016 along with Mohana Singh and Avani Chaturvedi** as the first women fighter pilots. Flt Lt Bhawana Kanth is set to become the first woman fighter pilot to take part in the Republic Day parade.
- **Dr. Swati Mohan:** Dr. Swati Mohan was the **Indian American woman** who led the complex landing operation of **NASA's Perseverance rover on Mars**. Perseverance rover became the fifth NASA rover to successfully touch down on the **Red Planet after Sojourner, twin rovers Spirit and Opportunity and Curiosity**. Dr. Mohan had spearheaded the development of attitude control and the landing system for the rover. She was also the lead systems engineer during the development process of the rover. She has been a **part of many important NASA missions in the past including the Cassini mission and GRAIL**.

TOP GOVT. INITIATIVES FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

To **create a gender-equal world**, the first step is providing equal opportunities to women and enabling their welfare and safety and providing ease in day-to-day living. Following are few schemes that were launched by the government in recent years to empower women, especially those living in rural areas.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana: Launched in January 2015, the scheme aims to celebrate the girl child and enable her education. The scheme's main objectives are to **prevent gender-biased sex-selective eliminations, ensure survival and protection of girl child and ensure the education of the girl child.**

One Stop Centre Scheme: The One Stop Centre will provide support and assistance to women affected by **violence, both in private and public spaces.**

Women Helpline Scheme: The scheme aims to provide 24 hours immediate and emergency response to **women affected by violence through referral and information about women-related government schemes** programs across the country through a single uniform number.

UJJAWALA scheme: The scheme's objective is to prevent **trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation** through social mobilization and involvement of local communities, awareness generation programmes, generate public discourse through workshops/seminars and such events and any other innovative activity

Mahila-E-Haat: Mahila-E-Haat was launched in 2016 as a bilingual online marketing platform that leverages technology to help aspiring women entrepreneurs, self-help groups, and NGOs to showcase their products and services.

Mahila Shakti Kendra: The **Mahila Shakti Kendra was launched in 2017** to empower rural women with opportunities for skill development, employment, digital literacy, health and nutrition. The **Kendras work through community engagement** through student volunteers in the 115 most backward districts.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

International Women's Day is celebrated on the 8th of March every year. This day is celebrating the **social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women.** The day also marks a call to action for accelerating women's equality. International Women's Day is a time to

reflect on progress made, to call for change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women, who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their countries and communities. **Women stand at the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis**, as health care workers, caregivers, innovators, community organizers and as some of the most exemplary and effective national leaders in combating the pandemic. The **crisis has highlighted both the centrality of their contributions and the disproportionate** burdens that women carry. The **United Nations** began celebrating **International Women's Day** in the International Women's Year, 1975. In 1977, the **United Nations General Assembly** invited member states to proclaim **March 8 as the UN Day for women's rights and world peace.**

JAPAN'S LOAN FOR SEVERAL PROJECTS IN INDIA

Japan has finalised loans and a grant totalling around **233 billion yen for several key infrastructure projects in India**, including for a project in the Andaman and Nicobar islands.



Grant for Andaman and Nicobar Islands (ANI): A grant of **4.01 billion yen for a project for the improvement of power supply** in strategically located Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The grant would be used to procure 15MWh batteries as well as power system stabilisers to allow better utilisation of solar power generated in South Andaman. **This grant is Japan's first ever Official Development Assistance (ODA) to a project in the A&N islands.**

ABOUT OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (ODA)

ODA is defined as government aid designed to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries. Loans and credits for military purposes are excluded. India has been the top recipient of the **Japanese government's financial aid under the ODA.**

Japan's Aid for Other Projects: For Delhi Metro's fourth phase. For Metro lines under **Namma Metro's second phase in Bengaluru.** For crop diversification in Himachal Pradesh. For mitigating fluorosis in **Rajasthan's Jhunjhunu and Barmer districts.**

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS BETWEEN INDIA AND JAPAN

Recently, the first summit of the leaders' of the **QUAD (Quadrilateral Framework)** was held virtually. **QUAD is a four-nation alliance of India, Australia, USA and Japan.** In 2020, India and Japan signed a logistics agreement that will allow armed forces of both sides to coordinate closely in services and supplies. The agreement is known as the **Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA).** In 2019, India and Japan held the first-ever ministerial-level 2+2 dialogue.



This dialogue involved the **Defence and Foreign Ministers** on both sides and is seen as an endorsement of the special strategic partnership between India and Japan. An **“India-Japan Digital Partnership (I-JDP)”** was launched during the visit of the Prime Minister of India to Japan in October 2018, furthering existing areas of cooperation as well as new initiatives within the scope of cooperation in S&T/ICT, focusing more on **“Digital ICT Technologies”**. In 2014, India and Japan upgraded their relationship to **'Special Strategic and Global Partnership'**.

The **India-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** that came into force in August 2011 covers trade in goods, services, movement of natural persons, investments, Intellectual Property Rights, custom procedures and other trade related issues. India and Japan defence forces organize a series of bilateral exercises namely, **JIMEX (naval), SHINYUU Maitri (Air Force), and Dharma Guardian (Army)**. Both countries also participate in **Malabar exercise (Naval Exercise) with the USA**.

SIGNIFICANCE OF ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLAND

The **Andaman and Nicobar Islands (ANI)** are located at the juncture of the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea. It is a group of 572 islands, which straddles some of the busiest trade routes in the world. ANI spans 450 nautical miles in a **roughly north-south configuration adjacent** to the western entrance to the



Malacca Strait, which is itself a major Indian Ocean chokepoint. Geopolitically, the **ANI connects South Asia with South-East Asia**. While the northernmost point of the archipelago is only 22 nautical miles from Myanmar, the southernmost point, Indira Point, is a mere 90 nautical miles from Indonesia. **The islands dominate the Bay of Bengal, the Six Degree and the Ten Degree Channels that more than sixty thousand commercial vessels traverse each year.** The **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** constitute just 0.2% of India's landmass but provide near **30% of its Exclusive Economic Zone**. Due to the presence of ANI in the Bay of Bengal, India has a better position to play a vital **role in Indo-Pacific**. Recently, the Prime Minister has declared that the ANI will be developed as a **"maritime and startup hub"**.

Fluorosis: Fluorosis is a cosmetic condition that affects the teeth. It's caused by overexposure to fluoride during the first eight years of life. This is the time when most permanent teeth are being formed. After the **teeth come in, the teeth of those affected by fluorosis may appear mildly discolored.**

CONCLUSION

India needs **sophisticated technology from Japan**, so more collaboration and cooperation can prove beneficial to both nations. There is a huge potential with **respect to Make in India**. Joint ventures could be created by merging Japanese digital technology with Indian raw materials and labour. Close **cooperation is the best measure to combat China's growing role in Asia and Indo-Pacific**, in physical as well as digital space.

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JUSTICE NV RAMANA TO TAKE CHARGE AS NEXT CJI

Chief Justice of India (CJI) SA Bobde in a letter to the central government has recommended appointing **senior-most Supreme Court Judge Justice NV Ramana as the next Chief Justice of India**. The Chief Justice of India SA Bobde is scheduled to retire from the position on April 23rd. Hence, it is likely that Justice N V Ramana will take over as the **48th Chief Justice of India** on April



24th. **Chief Justice of India (CJI) SA Bobde** sends a letter to the Central government recommending to appoint senior most **Supreme Court Judge Justice NV Ramana as the next CJI**.

ABOUT JUSTICE NV RAMANA

Justice NV Ramana is currently the senior-most judge in the Supreme Court of India. He **was previously serving as the Delhi High Court Chief Justice and acting Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court**. He was elevated as a **Supreme Court Judge** on February 17, 2014. With a term of 8 years in the Supreme Court of India, he is now next in line to be Chief Justice of India with effect from 24 April 2021 after the retirement of Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde. Justice NV Ramana is due to retire on August 26, 2022. He has previously served as the **President of the Andhra Pradesh Judicial Academy**. He had enrolled as an advocate in February 1983 and specialized in criminal, service, constitutional and inter-state River laws.

He has also served as a panel counsel for several Government Organizations. Overall, **he has practiced in the Andhra Pradesh HC, Central and Andhra Pradesh Administrative Tribunals as well as the Supreme Court in Civil, Criminal, Constitutional, Labour, Service and Election matters**. He has been credited for presiding over path-breaking judgments in constitution, tax, arbitration and criminal law. He has previously headed SC benches that dealt with matters such as fast-tracking of trials in cases against legislators and restrictions imposed in Jammu and Kashmir after the **abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution**. In March 2020, a bench headed by him rejected proposals to send petitions challenging the abrogation of **Article**

370 to a larger bench. He had also headed the constitution bench that had rejected the curative petitions filed by the convicts in the December 2012 gang rape and murder case, finally paving the way for their execution. As for his personal life, he was born into a **humble family of agriculturalists in Ponnavaram Village, Krishna district in undivided Andhra Pradesh.**

APPOINTMENT OF JUDGES OF SUPREME COURT

The **judges of the Supreme Court are appointed by the President.** The CJI is appointed by the President after consultation with such judges of the Supreme Court and high courts as he deems necessary. **The other judges are appointed by the President after consultation with the CJI** and such other judges of the Supreme Court and the high courts as he deems necessary. The consultation with the chief justice is obligatory in the case of appointment of a judge other than Chief justice.



Appointment of Chief Justice From 1950 to 1973: The practice has been to appoint the senior most judge of **the Supreme Court as the chief justice of India.** This established convention was violated in 1973 when **A N Ray was appointed as the Chief Justice of India** by superseding three senior judges. Again in 1977, **M U Beg was appointed as the chief justice of India** by superseding the then senior-most judge. This discretion of the government was curtailed by the **Supreme Court in the Second Judges Case (1993)**, in which the Supreme Court ruled that the senior most judge of the Supreme Court should alone be appointed to the office of the Chief Justice of India.

Collegium System: Collegium system was born through “**three judges case**” and it is in practice since 1998. It is used for appointments and transfers of judges in High courts and Supreme Courts. There is no mention of the **Collegium either in the original Constitution of India or in successive amendments.**

Qualifications of judges: A person to be appointed as a judge of the **Supreme Court** should have the following qualifications:

- He should be a **citizen of India**.
- He should have been a **judge of a High Court (or high courts in succession) for five years;**
- He should have been an **advocate of a High Court (or High Courts in succession) for ten years;**
- He should be a **distinguished jurist in the opinion of the president**.
- The Constitution has not **prescribed a minimum age for appointment as a judge of the Supreme Court**.

REMOVAL OF JUDGES OF SUPREME COURT

A **judge of the Supreme Court can be removed from his office by an order of the President**. The President can issue the removal order only after an address by Parliament has been presented to him in the same session for such removal. The address must be supported by a special majority of each House of Parliament (**i.e., a majority of the total membership of that House and a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of that House present and voting**). The grounds of removal are two—proved misbehavior or incapacity.

The **Judges Enquiry Act (1968)** regulates the procedure relating to the removal of a judge of the Supreme Court by the process of impeachment: No judge of the Supreme Court has been impeached so far. **Impeachment motions of Justice V Ramaswami (1991–1993) and Justice Dipak Misra (2017-18)** were defeated in the Parliament.

OBJECTIONS TO NEW SOCIAL MEDIA CODES

The latest norms for social media intermediaries in the **New IT Rules 2021** have drawn objections from privacy experts and lawyers. The **Supreme Court (SC)** had in 2015 struck down Section 66A of the Information Technology Act finding it contrary to both **Articles 19 (free speech) and Article 21 (right to life) of the Constitution.**

OBJECTION TO NEW RULES

Asking ‘significant social media intermediaries’ to have automated tools to proactively track certain words is akin to **“active hunting”, and will “make suspects out of people”**. For example: For track words like interfaith marriage or love jihad, its like criminalising an entire population as most of the people must be using these words in their normal **discussions**. This way, an entire citizenry is being made a suspect.



Against Right to Privacy: According to the **New IT Rules of 2021**, significant social media intermediaries providing services primarily in the nature of messaging shall enable identification of the first originator of the information. This provision would end up weakening overall security, harm privacy and contradict the principles of data minimisation endorsed in the **IT Ministry’s Draft Data Protection Bill 2019**. Identification of the first originator will require end to end encryption to be broken, thereby compromising the fundamental technology on which most apps are based on. Moreover, owing to the volume of data, encryption has become more important now as more personal data is being aggregated and analysed at a scale that was never possible before.

Data Minimisation: **Data Minimisation is a principle** that states that data collected and processed should not be held or further used unless this is essential for reasons that were clearly stated in advance to support data privacy. It will **“undermine the principles of open and accessible internet and the fundamental right of privacy enshrined in the Constitution,**

particularly in the absence of robust data protection law. For Example: It contains a provision requiring significant intermediaries to provide the option for users to voluntarily verify their identities.

This would likely entail users sharing phone numbers or sending photos of government issued IDs to the companies. This provision will incentivize the collection of sensitive personal data that are submitted for this verification, which can then be also used to profile and target users

RIGHT TO PRIVACY

The SC described privacy and its importance in the landmark decision of **K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India in 2017** as a **fundamental and inalienable right and attaches to the person covering all information about that person and the choices that he/ she makes.** The right to privacy is protected as an intrinsic part of the right to life and personal liberty under Article 21 and as a part of the freedoms guaranteed by Part III of the Constitution.



Against Freedom of Expression: Automated forms of censorship and surveillance could disproportionately impact users' **freedom of speech and expression, suppressing creativity.** Article 19(1)(a) of the Indian constitution guarantees the freedom of speech and expression.

Over Censorship: The new rules provide stricter and wide-ranging obligations on intermediaries for proactive monitoring of content. The fear of legal liability or action could lead to over-censorship of content.

Lack of Accountability and Transparency: The news rules require social media to “**deploy technology-based measures, including automated tools (Artificial Intelligence (AI)) to filter out objectionable content like child sexual abuse.** However, as history has shown, such tools not only suffer from major accuracy problems but also can lead to function creep. Earlier in 2020

an **AI-powered tool Genderify designed to identify a person's gender by analyzing their name, username or email address was shut down just a week after launch after it was blamed to be biased.** Coding biases in the development of AI often lead to discrimination, inaccuracies, and a lack of accountability and transparency.

Gag on Online News Media: The rules open the way for increased scrutiny as well as increased costs of compliance and may lead to gagging of free and unhindered news reporting.

OUTCOMES OF PM VISIT TO BANGLADESH

The **Prime Minister of India** paid a **State Visit to Bangladesh** to join the celebrations of the Golden Jubilee of the Independence of Bangladesh, the **Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman** and 50 years of establishment of diplomatic relations **between India and Bangladesh**.

CELEBRATION OF HISTORICAL LINKS

Bangladesh thanked India for conferring Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2020 on **Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**. Jointly inaugurated the **Bangabandhu - Bapu Digital Exhibition in Dhaka**.



To mark the **50th anniversary of India-Bangladesh friendship**: Both sides released respective commemorative postage stamps.

Decided to **commemorate 6th December as Maitri Diwas**, the day when India recognized Bangladesh in the year 1971. India announced the establishment of the **Bangabandhu Chair** at the University of Delhi. Bangladesh thanked India for naming the **historic road from Mujib Nagar to Nadia on the Bangladesh-India border as "Shadhinota Shorok"** commemorating the historic significance of the road during Bangladesh's Liberation War.

Water Resources Cooperation: Bangladesh reiterated its long-pending request for concluding the interim agreement on the **sharing of the waters of the Teesta river**. The draft agreement has already been agreed upon by both Governments in January 2011. India also requested for early finalization of the draft of the interim **agreement for sharing of water of Feni River, pending with the Bangladesh side which had been agreed upon by both sides in 2011**. Also, requested working towards an early conclusion of the Framework of Interim Agreement on sharing of waters of six common rivers, namely, **Manu, Muhuri, Khowai, Gumti, Dharla and Dudhkumar**. Directed the Joint Technical Committee to expeditiously commence the feasibility

study of the **Ganges-Padma barrage for optimum utilization of the Ganges waters** received by **Bangladesh as per the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty, 1996.**

TRADE RELATIONS B/W INDIA & BANGLADESH

Stressed the need for predictability of trade policies, regulations and procedures and the need for removal of non-tariff barriers. Stressed the urgent need for up-gradation of infrastructure and facilities of the **Land Customs Stations (LCSs)/Land Ports** in a coordinated manner to facilitate trade between the two countries. Reiterated the importance of harmonization of standards and mutual recognition of agreements and certificates for enhancing bilateral trade. **Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute (BSTI)** and **the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** would collaborate for the capacity building and development of testing and Lab facilities. India congratulated Bangladesh on its upcoming graduation from the **Least Developed Country (LDC) status.** Emphasized on expeditious conclusion of the ongoing joint study on the prospects of entering into a **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).** Bangladesh invited Indian investment in the jute mills of Bangladesh to revitalize and modernize the jute sector. India requested early finalization of modalities for implementation of the **Katihar – Parbotipur – Bornagar** cross border electricity interconnection. Took stock of progress in the implementation of the **India Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline and unit-1 of the Maitree Super Thermal Power Project.**



Connectivity for Prosperity: India expressed gratitude for Bangladesh's initiative of revitalizing the **pre-1965 rail connectivity.** Bangladesh reiterated its eagerness to partner in the ongoing initiative of the India – Myanmar - Thailand trilateral highway project. Also agreed to an early operationalization of the **BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement** through expeditious signing of the **Enabling MoU for Bangladesh, India, and Nepal** to commence the movement of goods and passengers, with provision for Bhutan to join at a later date. India urged for early operationalization of the trans-shipment Agreement on the use of **Chattogram and Mongla Ports for the Movement of Goods** to and from India (**Kolkata to Agartala via Chattogram**).

India also requested for trans-shipment arrangement in Munshiganj and Pangaon as part of the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade.

Recently, Maitree Setu (between India and Bangladesh) over River Feni in South Tripura has been inaugurated. Bangladesh offered the use of Chattogram and Sylhet International Airport, by the people of North East India, especially of Tripura.

Cooperation in Public Health: Bangladesh thanked the Government of India for giving **3.2 million doses of Oxford Astra Zeneca, Covishield vaccine made in India.**

BORDER MANAGEMENT & SECURITY COOPERATION

Bangladesh reiterated the request for 1.3 km Innocent Passage through river route along with **River Padma**, on humanitarian grounds. India requested for completion of border fencing at all pending sectors at the **international border at the earliest, beginning from the Tripura (India) - Bangladesh sector.**



Defence Cooperation: Emphasized on the frequent exchange of programs and enhancing cooperation in training and capacity building. India has offered a **USD 500 million line of credit for defence imports from India into Bangladesh** and thus requested for early operationalization of this **defense Line of Credit**. Welcomed the signing of an **MoU on Disaster Management, Resilience and Mitigation.**

NEW AREAS OF COOPERATION

Acknowledged the potential of new and emerging areas of cooperation in cutting edge areas of **science, artificial intelligence, peaceful uses of nuclear technology, big data and technology enabled services in health and education.** 50 young entrepreneurs from Bangladesh were invited to visit India and present their ideas to venture capitalists.

Partners in the Region and the World: Agreed to continue working together for common objectives in the United Nations and other multilateral fora. **Emphasized that the regional organizations, such as SAARC and BIMSTEC** have an important role to play, particularly in the post-Covid-19 situation. Bangladesh thanked India for convening the **SAARC leaders Video Conference in March 2020** and for proposing creation of the **SAARC Emergency Response Fund** to counter effects of the global pandemic in the South Asian region. Bangladesh highlighted that the country **would assume chairmanship of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) for the first time** in October 2021 and requested the support of India for working towards greater maritime safety and security in the Indian Ocean region. India welcomed the decision of **Bangladesh to join the New Development Bank (NDB)**.

PROGRAMS UNVEILED BY BOTH THE PMs

Foundation stone laying ceremony for a memorial in the honour of the **Martyrs of the Indian Armed Forces** who sacrificed their lives during Liberation War of 1971 at **Ashuganj, Brahmanbaria**. Foundation stone for five packages out of total eight packages of **Rooppur Power Evacuation Project**. Inauguration of 3 border haats, Nalikata (India) - **Saydabad (Bangladesh)**, Ryngku (India) - **Bagan Bari (Bangladesh) and Bholagunj (India) – Bholagunj (Bangladesh)**. Border Haats aim at promoting the wellbeing of the people dwelling in remote areas across the borders of two countries, by establishing a traditional system of marketing the local produce through local markets. **Inauguration of ‘Mitali Express’ - passenger train** connecting Dhaka on Bangladesh side and New Jalpaiguri on the Indian.

PERMANENT INDUS COMMISSION B/W INDIA & PAKISTAN

The **116th Meeting of Permanent Indus Commission (PIC)** between **India and Pakistan** is underway in New Delhi. The first day of the Meeting coincided with the **National Day of Pakistan** (marks **Lahore Resolution of 23rd March, 1940**).

ABOUT THE LATEST MEETING B/W INDIA & PAK

The meeting is being held after a gap of more than two-and-a-half years, a period that witnessed: **Pulwama attack (14th February, 2019)**, **Balakot air strike (26th february, 2019)**, and **Abrogation of special provisions under Article 370** that gave special status to J&K. A discussion on Pakistan's objections about two India Projects - **Pakal Dul** and **Lower Kalnai** - is expected to be held.



India is building **Pakal Dul Hydro Electric Project** (1,000 MW) on river Marusudar, a tributary of the Chenab. The project is located in Kishtwar district of J&K. **The second project – Lower Kalnai** – is being developed on the Chenab. Routine issues such as flood data exchange mechanisms are also expected to be discussed. The meeting is being seen as a positive step after both countries agreed to “strict observance of all agreements, understanding and ceasefire along the **Line of Control and all other sectors**” last month.

ABOUT THE PERMANENT INDUS COMMISSION

It is a **bilateral commission of officials from India and Pakistan**, created to implement and manage goals of the Indus Waters Treaty, 1960. The Commission, according to the treaty, shall meet regularly at least once a year, alternately in India and Pakistan.

The **functions of the Commission include**: To study and report to the **two Governments on any problem relating to the development on the waters of the rivers**. To solve disputes arising over water sharing. To arrange technical visits to projects' sites and critical river head

works. To undertake, once in every five years, a general tour of inspection of the Rivers for ascertaining the facts. To take necessary steps for the **implementation of the provisions of the treaty**. **The 115th meeting of the PIC was held in Lahore** in August, 2018.

INDUS WATER TREATY, 1960

It is a **treaty brokered by the World Bank** and signed by then **Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistan's President Ayub Khan** which administers how the waters of the Indus and its tributaries that flow in both the countries will be utilised. According to the treaty, waters of the eastern rivers — **Sutlej, Beas and Ravi had been allocated to India, while the western**



ivers — the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab to Pakistan. Under the treaty, India has been given the right to generate hydroelectricity through a run of the river projects on the western rivers subject to specific criteria for design and operation. India has cleared several hydropower projects in Ladakh: **Darbuk Shyok (19 MW), Shankoo (18.5 MW), Nimu Chilling (24 MW), Rongdo (12 MW), Ratan Nag (10.5 MW) for Leh; and Mangdum Sangra (19 MW), Kargil Hunderman (25 MW) and Tamasha (12 MW) for Kargil.** It also gives Pakistan the right to raise concerns on the design of Indian hydroelectric projects on western rivers. The Treaty also provides an arbitration mechanism to solve disputes amicably. There have been disagreements and differences between India and Pakistan over dams. For eg. In 2010, Pakistan instituted international arbitration proceedings over India's 330-megawatt hydropower project on a small Indus tributary, the **Kishenganga (known as Neelum in Pakistan).** Though Indus originates from Tibet, China has been kept out of the Treaty. If China decides to stop or change the flow of the river, it will affect both **India and Pakistan.** Climate change is causing **melting of ice in Tibetan plateau, which scientists believe will affect the river in future.**

LAHORE RESOLUTION: A HISTORIC SESSION

A **historic session of the All-India Muslim League** was held at **Lahore in March 1940.** **Muhammad Ali Jinnah explained how Hindus and Muslims cannot co-exist peacefully.** On

23rd March, an epoch-making resolution was moved at that session demanding that areas of the subcontinent of India in which the Muslims were numerically in a majority, as in the **North-Western and Eastern Zones**, should be grouped to constitute independent States. Having regard to the place of its adoption, the resolution was originally referred to as the **Lahore Resolution**. The Hindu Press, however, dubbed it as the **Pakistan Resolution** and eventually, in popular parlance, it came to be called as such. The Lahore Resolution was the beginning of the end of the **administrative unity of the entire sub continent**, which had been created by the **Muslim Emperors and continued by the British**; within eight years of its adoption the subcontinent was partitioned and Pakistan appeared as an **independent sovereign State on its map**.

PM MODI AT THE VIRTUAL QUAD SUMMIT 2021

The **first-ever summit of the leaders of QUAD** took place in a virtual mode on March 12, 2021. PM Modi participated in the discussion between the leaders. The summit also witnessed the participation of the **Prime Minister of Japan Yoshihide Suga, President of the United States Joe Biden, and Prime Minister of Australia Scott Morrison**. As per the statement by the External Affairs Ministry, the Quad leaders will be discussing the ongoing efforts to combat the pandemic. They will also explore the opportunities for collaboration in ensuring equitable, safe as well as **affordable vaccines in the Indo-Pacific region**.



QUAD IS THE FORCE FOR GLOBAL GOOD

Prime Minister Modi while addressing the first summit of **Quad leaders** mentioned that today's agenda of the Quad leaders covering areas such as **climate change, vaccine, and emerging technologies make Quad a force** for global good. Our agenda today covering areas like vaccines, climate change and emerging technologies makes the Quad, a force for global good. While highlighting the **significance of Quad in today's world**, **PM Modi** stated that Quad has come of age and will remain an important pillar of stability in the indo-pacific region. Quad has come of age and will remain an **important pillar of stability in the Indo Pacific**.

PROMOTING STABLE, SECULAR & PROSPEROUS INDO-PACIFIC

PM Modi noted that he sees the positive vision of Quad as an extension of India's ancient philosophy of '**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**' which regards the world as one family. He further added that the leaders of Quad will work together as closely as ever before to advance **shared values as well as promote stable, secular, and prosperous indo-pacific**. I see this positive vision as an extension of India's ancient philosophy of '**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**' which

regards the world as one family. We will work together closely as ever before for advancing shared values & promoting secular, stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific

INDO-PACIFIC TO SHAPE DESTINY OF THE WORLD

During his address at the virtual summit of Quad, the Prime Minister of Australia highlighted that Indo-Pacific will now shape the destiny of the world in the 21st century. He further added that as the four leaders of great democracies in the indo-pacific region, let this **partnership be an enabler of stability, peace, and prosperity. It's the Indo-Pacific** that'll now shape the destiny of the world in the 21st Century. As four leaders of great democracies in **Indo-Pacific**, let our partnership be an enabler of peace, stability & prosperity and to do so inclusively with many nations in the region

US COMMITTED TO ACHIEVE STABILITY IN THE REGION

The **President of the United States Joe Biden** assured that the country is committed to be working with the Quad leaders and with other allies in the region to achieve stability. The **President further added that this group** is particularly significant as it is dedicated to concrete results and practical solutions. **United States** is committed to working with you & with all our allies in the region to achieve



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REGIONAL & GLOBAL ISSUES ON AGENDA

During the **virtual summit of the Quad- Quadrilateral Security Summit** on March 12, the leaders of the powerful economies will discuss the global and regional issues of mutual interest. They will also talk about the practical areas of cooperation for **maintaining an open, free, and inclusive Indo-pacific region**. The summit in a virtual mode will provide an opportunity to exchange views and ideas on contemporary challenges such as emerging and critical technologies, resilient supply chains, climate change, and maritime security.



QUADRILATERAL SECURITY DIALOGUE (QUAD)

Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) is the informal strategic dialogue between India, USA, Japan and Australia with a shared objective to ensure and support a “**free, open and prosperous**” **Indo-Pacific region**. The idea of Quad was first mooted by **Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007**. However, the idea couldn't move ahead with Australia pulling out of it, apparently due to Chinese pressure. In December 2012, Shinzo Abe again floated the **concept of Asia's “Democratic Security Diamond”** involving Australia, India, Japan and the US to safeguard the maritime commons from the Indian Ocean to the western Pacific. In November 2017, **India, US, Australia and Japan** gave shape to the long-pending "Quad" Coalition to develop a new strategy to keep the critical sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any influence (especially China).

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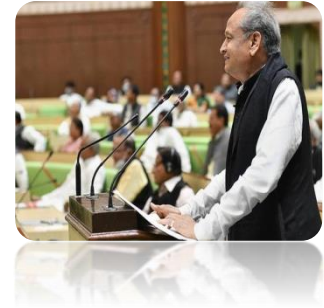


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RAJASTHAN MODEL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Recently, the **Chief Minister of Rajasthan** announced the implementation of the **Rajasthan Model of Public Health** that would **include a Right to Health** as well as measures for preventive, primary and curative care as envisioned by the **World Health Organization (WHO)**.



The **Mukhya Mantri Chiranjeevi Yojana** will also be launched as a **Universal Health Care scheme** as part of measures to reinforce health infrastructure and **ensure accessibility to all citizens**. The scheme stipulates cashless health services up to **Rs. 5 lakh to every family** in the State. The **Indian Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR)** has recommended setting of standards in accordance with the resources available in the State to match with the rights of patients as well as the service providers. The **Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS)** set by the Union government, have also been revised keeping in view the changing protocols of the existing programmes.

INDIAN PUBLIC HEALTH STANDARDS

IPHS are a set of uniform standards envisaged to improve the **quality of health care delivery** in the country. The IPHS documents have been revised keeping in view the changing protocols of the existing programmes and introduction of new programmes especially for **Non-Communicable Diseases**. Flexibility is allowed to suit the diverse needs of the States and regions. The IPHS guidelines act as the main driver for continuous improvement in quality and serve as the benchmark for **assessing the functional status of health facilities**. States and UTs adopt these IPHS guidelines for strengthening the Public Health Care Institutions.

Right to Health: The right to health, as with other rights, includes both freedoms and entitlements: Freedoms include the right to control one's health and body (**for example, sexual and reproductive rights**) and to be free from interference (**for example, free from torture and non-consensual medical treatment and experimentation**). Entitlements include the right to a

system of health protection that gives everyone an equal opportunity to enjoy the highest attainable level of health.

PROVISION RELATED TO RIGHT TO HEALTH IN INDIA

- **International Conventions:** India is a signatory of the **Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)** by the United Nations that grants the right to a standard of living **adequate for the health and well-being** to humans including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services.
- 
- **Fundamental Rights: Article 21 of the Constitution of India** guarantees a fundamental right to life & personal liberty. The right to health is inherent to a life with dignity.
 - **Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP): Articles 38, 39, 42, 43, & 47** put the obligation on the state in order to ensure the effective realization of right to health.
 - **Judicial Pronouncements:** Supreme Court in **Paschim Bangal Khet Mazdoor Samity case (1996)** held that in a welfare state, primary duty of the government is to secure the welfare of the people and moreover it is the obligation of the government to provide **adequate medical facilities for its people.**
 - Also in its **landmark judgment in Parmanand Katara Vs Union Of India (1989)**, Supreme Court had ruled that every doctor whether at a government hospital or otherwise has the professional obligation to extend his services with due expertise for protecting life.

SIGNIFICANCE OF RIGHT TO HEALTH IN INDIA

- **Right Based Healthcare Services:** The people are entitled to the right to health and it puts a compulsion for the government to take steps toward this.
- **Wide Access to Health Services:** Enables everyone to access the services and ensures that the quality of those services is good enough to improve the health of the people who receive them.
- **Reduce Out of Pocket Expenditure:** Protects people from the financial consequences of paying for **health services out of their own pockets** and reduces the risk of people getting pushed into poverty.



CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH IT:

- **Lack of Primary Healthcare Services:** The existing public primary health care model in the country is limited in scope. Even where there is a well-functioning public primary health centre, only **services related to pregnancy care, limited childcare and certain services** related to national health programmes are provided.
- **Inadequate Funding:** Expenditure on public health funding has been consistently low in India (**approximately 1.3% of GDP**). As per OECD, India's total out-of-pocket expenditure is around 2.3 % of GDP.
- **Sub-optimal Public Health System:** Due to this, it is challenging to tackle **Non-communicable Diseases**, which is all about prevention and early detection. It diminishes preparedness and effective management for new and emerging threats such as pandemic like Covid-19.

CONCLUSION

- **More Funding:** Public funding on health should be increased to at least **2.5% of GDP as envisaged in the National Health Policy, 2017**. A comprehensive public health legislation incorporating the right to health may be passed by the Parliament.
- **Creating a Nodal Health Agency:** There is need to create a designated and autonomous agency to perform the functions of disease surveillance, information gathering on the **health impact of policies of key non-health departments**, maintenance of national health statistics, enforcement of public health regulations, and dissemination of information to the public.

RATAN TATA VERSUS CYRUS MISTRY

Cyrus Mistry's family Shapoorji Pallonji (SP) owns **18.46% equity capital in Tata Sons**, the main holding company of **Tata Group**. **66% of Tata Sons** is owned by **Tata Trusts**, currently controlled by Ratan Tata, the **group's former Chairman**.



TIMELINE OF THE CONTROVERSY

- **December 2012–Appointment of Mistry:** Cyrus Mistry is appointed Chairperson of Tata Sons Limited.
- **October 2016- Removal of Mistry:** He is sacked from the post of Executive Chairperson by most of the Board of Directors.
- **February 2017– Case filed against Tata Sons:** The shareholders vote for Mistry's removal from the board of Tata Sons during an extraordinary general meeting. Mistry, subsequently, files a suit under various sections of the Companies Act, 2013, alleging oppression and mismanagement in Tata Sons.
- **July 2018- Tatas win in NCLT:** The Mumbai Bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) dismisses Mistry's plea against Tata Sons. While rejecting his allegations, NCLT rules that the Board of Directors are competent enough to remove him as Chairman. The tribunal also states that it found no merit in the arguments on mismanagement in Tata Sons.
- **December 2019– Tatas lose in NCLAT:** The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) overturns the NCLT judgment, and states that Mistry's removal as Chairman of Tata Sons was illegal.

NCLAT also found that the affairs of Tata Sons were conducted in a manner prejudicial and oppressive to its minority shareholders, namely **Cyrus Mistry & his family companies**, as well as to the interests of the company itself. **January 2020- Appeal to SC:** Tata Sons and Ratan Tata challenge the **NCLAT decision** before the Supreme Court saying that the **NCLAT verdict** undermined Corporate Democracy and the rights of its Board of Directors.

Subsequently, the **Supreme Court stays the NCLAT judgment** to reinstate Mistry as the **executive chairman of Tata Sons**. September 2020: The Supreme Court restrains **Mistry's Shapoorji Pallonji Group** from pledging its shares in Tata Sons to raise funds.

March 2021: Final Verdict on the case

ALLEGATIONS & CONCERNS RAISED BY MISTRY

Rights of Minority Shareholder's oppressed: SP Group had also alleged that Tata Sons was being run and operated in a manner which was **"oppressive" and "prejudicial" to the rights of minority shareholders**. It was alleged that the removal of Cyrus Mistry meant oppression of minority shareholders. **Article 75 of the Articles of Association of the Tata Group**. Article 75 gives the company the right to purchase shares from a minority or a small shareholder at a fair market value. Fearing that the **Tata Group may use it to try and buyout the SP Group**, the latter urged the company law tribunals and the Supreme Court to not allow Article 75 to be used.



Decisions disproportionately impacted minority shareholders: Apart from this, the Mistry camp had also alleged that the Tata Group had taken several commercial decisions which did not yield the desired result and thus resulted in more loss for the **minority shareholders than the majority shareholders**.

DECISION OF THE SUPREME COURT

No Entitlement to seat on Board: Discussing the rights of minority and small shareholders and their importance in the board of a company, the **Supreme Court** held that minority shareholders or their representatives are not automatically entitled to a seat on the private company's board

like a small shareholder's representative. This meant that SC set aside **NCLAT order and dismissed the appeals of Mistry & SP Group.**

Small Vs Minority Shareholder: SC noted that the provisions contained in the 2013 Companies Act only protects the rights of small shareholders of listed companies by asking such companies to have on their board at least one director elected by such small shareholders. Small shareholders, **according to the Companies Act**, is a shareholder or group of shareholders who hold shares of nominal value of not more than Rs 20,000. Since the Mistry family and the SP Group were not **“small” shareholders, but “minority shareholders”**, there was no statutory provision which gave them the “right to claim proportionate representation,” on the board of Tata Sons.

No Right to Proportionate Representation: SC noted that the right to claim proportionate representation is not available for the SP Group even contractually, in terms of the Articles of Association. **Neither SP Group nor CPM (Cyrus Pallonji Mistry) can request the Tribunal (NCLAT) to rewrite the contract, by seeking an amendment of the Articles of Association.** The Articles of Association, as they exist today, are binding upon **SP Group and CPM.**

IMPACT OF THE JUDGEMENT

The **Supreme Court** has not negated the concept of **quasi-partnership or a contractual agreement.** Though the judgment does not directly impact the right of minority shareholders, it does mean that going ahead, such shareholders will have to ensure that they have a contract with the majority shareholders or the promoters of the company to **ensure they have adequate representation on the board.**



NATIONAL COMPANY LAW APPELLATE TRIBUNAL

The **NCLAT** was constituted under **Section 410** of the Companies Act, 2013 to hear appeals against the orders of the **National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)**. NCLT is a quasi-judicial body that adjudicates issues relating to companies. It is also the appellate tribunal for orders passed by the **NCLT(s) under Section 61 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016**, and for orders passed by the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) under **Sections 202 and 211 of the IBC**. Any person aggrieved by any order of the NCLAT may file an appeal to the Supreme Court. NCLAT is also the Appellate Tribunal to hear and dispose of appeals against any direction issued or decision made or order **passed by the Competition Commission of India (CCI)**.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS BETWEEN PAKISTAN & SRI LANKA

Recently, **Pakistan's Prime Minister visited Sri Lanka**. It is the first Pakistani PM visit to Sri Lanka since 2016 and first visit by any head of government to Sri Lanka since the Covid-19 pandemic began.

SRI LANKA-PAKISTAN RELATIONSHIP (BACKGROUND)

Trade: Sri Lanka and Pakistan have a **free trade agreement dating back to 2005**. Pakistan is Sri Lanka's second largest trading partner in **South Asia after India**.



Culture: Over the last decade, Pakistan has also tried to work on a cultural connection with Sri Lanka by **highlighting its ancient Buddhist connections and sites**.

Defence Cooperation: Defence ties are a strong pillar of the Sri Lanka-Pakistan bilateral relationship. **During the 1971 Indo-Pak war, Sri Lanka allowed refuelling of Pakistani Jets**. In its Civil war against the **Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)** in 2009, Sri Lanka turned to Pakistan for arms and ammunition, as well as training for its fighter pilots, in the last stages of the war. Recently, **Sri Lanka participated in Pakistan's multi-nation naval exercise Aman-21**.

ABOUT THE RECENT VISIT OF PAKISTAN'S PM

Defence Credit Line Facility: **Pakistan has offered a USD 50 million new credit line to Sri Lanka to boost cooperation in defence and security sectors**.

Enhancing Cultural Ties: **Pakistan will set up a centre for the study of Asian cultures and civilisation at Peradeniya University in Kandy**. Sri Lanka also named a **sports institute in Colombo after Pakistan's PM, highlighting the cricket connection between the two countries**.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VISIT

For Pakistan: **Pakistan invited Sri Lanka to “take advantage” of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor to enhance trade ties.** In the past, Colombo had pitched for an economic corridor overland for access to countries beyond.



For Sri Lanka: Seeking Support in UNHRC, Recently, Sri Lanka has made an appeal to the member states of the **United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)** to reject the impending resolution on the island nation's human rights accountability and reconciliation. **Sri Lanka is facing a new UNHRC resolution calling on it to hold human rights abusers to account and deliver justice to victims of the 26-year civil war (1983-2009) between the Sinhalese-dominated Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) insurgent group fighting for Tamilian minorities.**

MAINTAINING TIES WITH INDIA & PAKISTAN

It provided an opportunity to Sri Lanka to balance its ties with India and Pakistan. **Sri Lanka cancelled Pakistan’s PM address to the Parliament over concerns that he would raise the Kashmir issue.**

Repairing Anti-Muslim Image: This visit may repair the damage of Sri Lanka’s image in the Islamic world as it recently denied burials of bodies of Muslims who have died of Covid-19. Muslims, who make up about 11% of Sri Lanka’s population, **have had tense relations with the Sinhala Buddhist majority for much of the last decade, with riots shattering the uneasy calm every few years.**

CONCERNS FOR INDIA

Hamper Efforts of Isolating Pakistan: As Sri Lanka's closest neighbour with strong, all encompassing ties, India has not perceived Pakistan as a serious rival in Colombo so far. However, this visit signalled that despite **India's best efforts at "isolating" Pakistan, it has friends in the neighbourhood.**



Increasing Closeness to China: Pakistan's PM visit soon after Sri Lanka's abrupt withdrawal from a **tripartite agreement (along with Japan and India) for the development of the East Container Terminal at Colombo port**, and the award of a contract to a Chinese company to set up a hybrid renewable energy in an island off Jaffna is a reason for concern for India.


Threatening India's Interests in Indian Ocean Region: **Increasing convergence of interests between Sri Lanka, China, and Pakistan in the Indian Ocean region is a matter of concern.** Sri Lanka's role is central in accomplishment of India's strategic vision (**SAGAR**) for the Indian Ocean, and countering China's String of Pearls strategy. Pakistan's extension of the line of credit to Sri Lanka comes close on the heels of **India extending USD 50 million line of credit to neighbouring Maldives for strengthening navy capabilities and USD 100 million to Mauritius for shoring up coastal defences.**

Connectivity: **The Gwadar port is connected to China's Xinjiang province by the CPEC** which in turn is a strand of the ambitious multi-billion dollar Belt and Road Initiative launched by China in 2013. The latest invitation to Sri Lanka from Pakistan comes as India is trying to get work restarted on **Chabahar port in Iran** which New Delhi sees as a route to landlocked **Central Asia and Afghanistan bypassing Pakistan.**

Concerns over Radicalisation by Pakistan: Sporadically, the Indian security establishment has voiced concerns about Pakistan's role in the radicalisation of Muslims — especially in Eastern Sri Lanka.

CONCLUSION

Sri Lanka has learnt to balance its ties with India and Pakistan expertly, signalling to both that it treats the two relationships separately. India too should not get threatened by Sri Lanka-Pakistan ties instead it should readjust alignments in its interests. Reviving a **trilateral maritime dialogue with Sri Lanka and the Maldives** in 2020 is a positive step in that direction. India should also consider adding to the mix an old idea proposed first by **former Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Ranil Wickremesinghe** — **an overland economic corridor through India that would provide Sri Lanka a land route to Central Asia and beyond.**

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